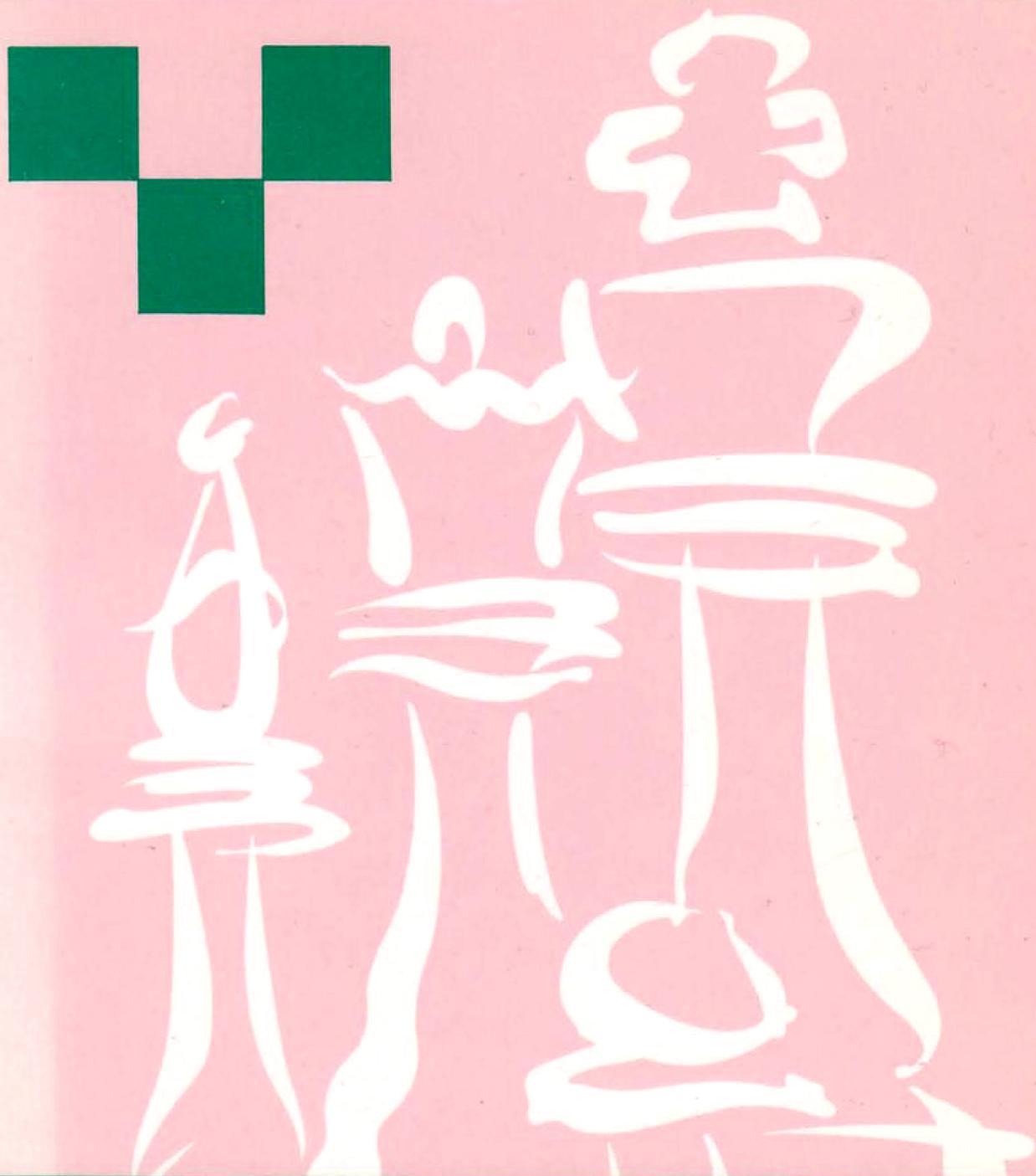


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Introduction

The emphasis in this book is on marvellous combinations and brilliant sacrifices. There are also many unusual and striking strategical concepts to be brought to the reader's attention. However, in the annotations I have tried to be entirely objective. We all know that brilliancy in chess relies on the assistance of blunders by the opponent, and that the index of a player's strength is his ability to prevent his opponent playing good moves. No one beats Kasparov brilliantly in this book: he doesn't give them the chance! And yet traditionally the course of a miniature game is depicted as follows:

In stage one White makes a sacrifice; stage two, Black (naturally!) accepts the sacrifice; and stage three, Black's king is driven from its castled position, capturing one white piece after another (whether or not he has to) until he is eventually mated somewhere in the centre of the board.

Such games are often described in books in the spirit of a mediaeval morality play. The courageous, daring White, who shows contempt for material possessions, punishes Black for his worldly greed. After admonishing Black for his mean-spirited behaviour, it only remains for the commentator to endorse White's play with epithets like 'a fine king hunt' or 'an exceedingly brilliant finish' and we have a book on miniatures.

Alas, this subjectivity hasn't been swept away by the modern analytical approach to chess. Nor is it limited to miniatures. Many winners when annotating a game in *Informator* seem to think it will detract from their achievement if they point out all the errors by the opponent. Vanity permits them to shower their own moves with exclamation marks, but then it becomes somehow embarrassing to admit the opponent had a saving move just before he resigned. This is particularly true when the victor has played a new move in the opening (inevitably adorned with a '!'). He may be proud of his act of creativity and then turn a blind eye to any variation that suggests it fails to win by force.

This failure to point out errors also diminishes the instructional value of a game. For example, by obscuring the decisive turning points

in the struggle it can give the false impression that a 'big' advantage can magically be transformed into a 'decisive' advantage without the help of any further blunder. It also tends to exaggerate the strength of new moves, as we have seen above.

And yet if Beauty is Truth and Truth Beauty, there can be no real satisfaction in ignoring the mistakes in a game. Therefore, successfully or otherwise, I have attempted to point out the critical moments in each game.

Finally, a word on the nature of a (good) miniature game. Miniatures offer a more spectacular or gaudier demonstration of the principles that govern all chess games. The underlying themes such as the coordination of the pieces, manoeuvring, and exploiting weaknesses, are no different from the methods used in long, dour positional battles. But in miniatures everything is exaggerated: mistakes are bigger, punishment is more immediate and severe, manoeuvres have a clear and decisive effect.

The games in this collection illustrate the triumph of imagination and logic over disorder and indecision. At first the reader will find most pleasure in sacrificial feats and the dramatic contortions of the pieces, but I hope that he or she will eventually grow to appreciate the cold and austere beauty of a well formulated and logical plan.

Neil McDonald
Gravesend, September 1995

1 From the Sublime to the Ridiculous

If a player wins quickly and easily, it can only be because his opponent has had a very bad day. Nevertheless, it can be entertaining to look at games which are decided by grotesque blunders, especially if the perpetrator of the blunder is a strong player, preferably a World Champion.

Why is this? Perhaps it appeals to our *schadenfreude* - the pleasure we feel in other people's misfortune - to see our so-called 'betters' humiliated. But I prefer to think it is because of natural human curiosity: we like to muse and speculate as to why a human 'chess machine' suddenly develops a 'bug'. Whatever the real reason, this chapter is presented as a serious inquiry into the psychology of blunders. Though the bloodthirsty will also find much to satisfy them...!

Losing all sense of danger

The Petroff Defence is one of the most solid, not to say turgid, defences to 1 e4. Indeed, it is so boring that the British grandmaster James Plaskett makes the prediction: 'because of the excruciatingly bland middlegames

it all too frequently generates, it will be thought necessary, in the not too distant future, to proscribe the Petroff Defence.' (*Playing to Win*, Batsford, 1988)

And some years ago, there was talk of a conspiracy among English grandmasters to flood the mailing office of *Informator* with White wins in the Petroff in order to deter potential Petroff devotees.

Let us see how World Championship Challenger Anand fares with the Petroff:

A. Zapata-V. Anand Biel 1988 *Petroff's Defence, Hari-Kari Variation*

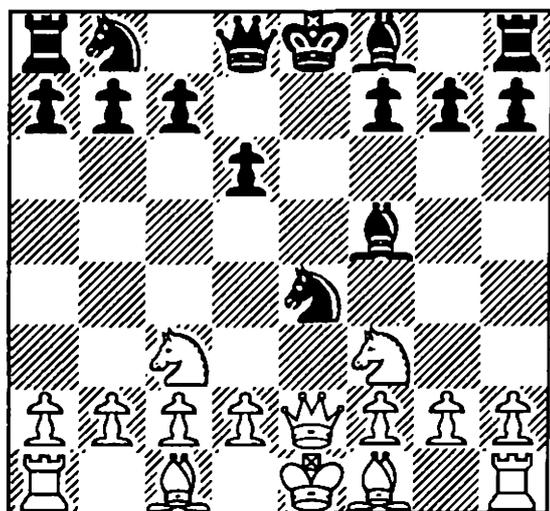
1	e4	e5
2	♘f3	♘f6
3	♗xe5	d6
4	♗f3	♗xe4
5	♗c3	♙f5??
6	♚e2	

(see following diagram)

And Black resigned since 6...♚e7 is met by 7 ♗d5.

How can a chess genius like Anand make such a childish

blunder? An annotator would be ashamed to give these moves as a variation in his notes, and yet Anand played it! Apparently he didn't believe it was possible to lose a piece after five moves in a dull variation of an insipid opening, and that's the reason he proceeded to do exactly that.



Here is a more 'meaty' example, but the losing theme is exactly the same. Black's sense of danger completely deserts him.

J. Hodgson-J. van der Wiel
Amsterdam 1994
Trompowsky Attack

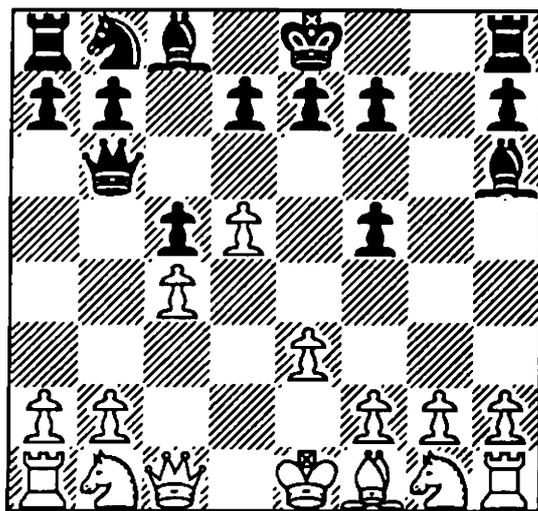
1	d4	♘f6
2	♙g5	c5
3	♙xf6	gxf6
4	d5	♚b6
5	♚c1	♙h6!

It may seem unnecessary to point out that 6 ♚xh6? now loses to 6... ♚xb2. However, jumping ahead, it will be seen that Black loses precisely because he has

convinced himself that White's queen can never give up the defence of b2. It is always worth checking whether or not an 'obvious' blunder is a brilliant move!

6	e3	f5
7	c4	

Clearing c3 for the knight. Black was perhaps hoping for 7 ♘d2 when 7...f4! is good.



7	...	f4?
---	-----	-----

To summarise the play so far: The Achilles heel of the Trompowsky is the pawn left undefended on b2. So first Black attacked it with his queen (4... ♚b6) and then threatened the white queen when it rushed to the pawn's defence (5... ♙h6). This plan is perfectly feasible, but now Black gets overconfident and thrusts forward his f-pawn, hoping to break up White's centre and gain ascendancy over the dark squares. He is obsessed with his plan of attack and does not imagine that there is any danger in the position. How can such an

experienced grandmaster go so completely wrong?

I offer three explanations, two psychological and one practical but with psychological overtones:

1. In their many encounters prior to this game, van der Wiel had never lost to Hodgson. Therefore his sense of danger was blunted.

2. On a similar theme: White has been 'pushed about' by Black over the last couple of moves, so van der Wiel feels that he has the initiative and should attack. He isn't expecting the worm to suddenly turn.

3. Jan van der Wiel is a strong grandmaster who is well versed in opening theory. But even an opening expert can go completely wrong when he is set new and unexpected problems. It doesn't 'look' as if White's pieces, which are all on the back rank, are about to strike a deadly blow.

8 **exf4** **xf4**

9 **xf4!**

White plays the 'impossible' move and gains a strong attack!

9 ... **xb2**

10 **e2** **xa1**

11 **c3**

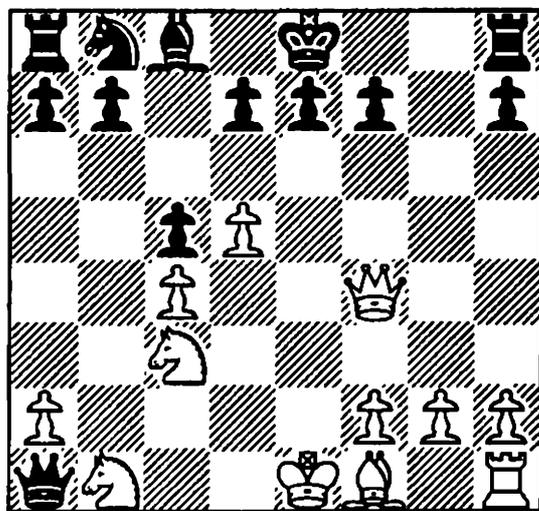
(see following diagram)

11 ... **b2?**

Black emerges with his queen before her retreat is cut off with 12 **d2**. White would then threaten to win the stricken damsel by the straightforward plan of developing his bishop, castling and then playing **a3**. But it is not

quite so simple. Incredibly, the position after 11 **c3** was reached in a later game A.Aleksandrov-Zelnin, St Petersburg 1994. Here, armed with some home preparation Black played 11...**d6!** when 12 **d2** **g8!** (so that if 13 **e2** then 13...**xg2** prevents 14 0-0) 13 **g3** **a6** followed by ...**b5** and ...**b4** led to a messy position.

So it is not so easy for White to actually win the trapped queen. Why then have we criticised van der Wiel for playing 7...**f4** when it is possible that he could have escaped into an unclear position later on with 11...**d6?**



Sometimes new moves in the opening are praised because they set the opponent difficult tactical problems. These complexities may be almost impossible to solve over the board, but they can be successfully neutralised after home preparation. During the game, with limited thinking time and a disturbed state of mind, it requires a huge mental effort or a lucky guess for the victim of such

a novelty to find a way to safety.

If such new moves are to be rewarded by annotators with exclamation marks, then a move such as 7...f4 has to be adorned with a plump question mark. Rather than setting his opponent an almost impossible practical task, van der Wiel inflicts it upon himself! To risk a move such as 11...d6, allowing the queen to be buried, requires the aid of home preparation.

12 d6!

A move with many strengths, clearing the d5 square for a knight, undermining the black king's defensive wall of pawns and burying the black bishop on c8. This is why Black had to preempt this advance by playing his own pawn to d6!

12	...	♞c6
13	♙d3	exd6
14	0-0	

White nonchalantly completes his development. Hodgson knows that, despite his opponent's nominal material advantage, White will always have a decisive advantage in fire-power where it matters, since Black will never be able to develop his rook on a8 or his bishop on c8 to aid the defence of his king.

14	...	♞e5
15	♙f6	0-0
16	♞d5	♞e8
17	♙g5+	♞g6

If 17...♞h8 then 18 ♞f6 ♞xd3 19 ♙h6 ♙xf6 20 ♙xf6+ ♞g8 21 f4! (Hodgson) and White wins by

bringing his rook into the attack. Or if 18...♙d4 in this sequence then 19 ♞xe8 ♞xd3 20 ♞f6 and Black can only prevent mate on g8 by giving up his queen.

18	♞f6+	♞f8
19	♙h6+	♞e7
20	♞d5+	♞d8
21	♙xg6	hxg6
22	♞bc3!	

The knight on b1 finally awakes and straightaway Black must resign, since 23 ♙g5+ will force checkmate. Julian Hodgson wryly remarked in *Chess Monthly*: 'It is not often in my life that I have developed my queen's knight to c3 forcing instant resignation - I hope the trend continues!'

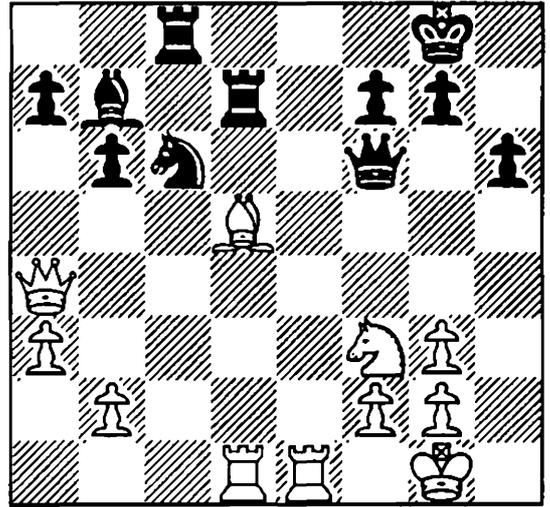
The Russian grandmaster Alexei Suetin once remarked that one tactical blunder is often worse than three strategical mistakes. If you lose a piece, normally all you can do is grit your teeth, stop the clock and congratulate your opponent on a victory. On the other hand, if you play a superfluous pawn move, deploy a piece to a bad square and then make an unwise exchange, you will undoubtedly suffer, but all may not be lost. I once watched Kasparov blunder a rook in a simultaneous display. He shook his head in disbelief, laughed, and then resigned. There was no chance of resistance, even for a World Champion. Yet in some of the other games in that

display he salvaged draws (and wins!) from desperate looking positions where he had been completely outplayed.

All the errors discussed thus far were basically due to a lack of concentration. Anand was a little bored, van der Wiel was carelessly overconfident and Kasparov was overworked by having to play 25 games simultaneously. Often mistakes are caused by the opposite failing: an over-eagerness to do well which leads to excessive tension. Karpov lost game 11 of the 1985 World Championship match in a mere 25 moves. I remember hearing about this shock defeat at the time in a news report. Naturally I was eager to see the moves. 'How could Kasparov have won so quickly?' I wondered. But I was asking the wrong question. I should have been thinking along the lines of 'How could Karpov have lost so quickly?' When I saw the moves I was very disappointed. There was nothing magical. Rather, it demonstrated how the relentless pressure of a World Championship Match could destroy a fantastic chess talent.

(see following diagram)

Here Kasparov played 22 ♖g4! whereupon Karpov, instead of the safe 22...♖dd8, doubled his rooks with 22...♖cd8?? After 23 ♖xd7! ♖xd7 24 ♖e8+ ♔h7 25 ♕e4+ he resigned, since 25...g6 26 ♖xd7 ♕a6 27 ♕xc6 loses a huge amount of material.



Let's take a look at a few typical scenarios in which it is possible for even very strong players to disengage their brains.

Mental Block 1:

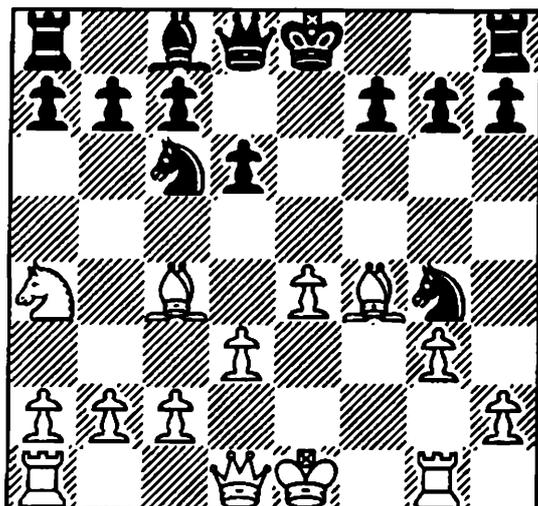
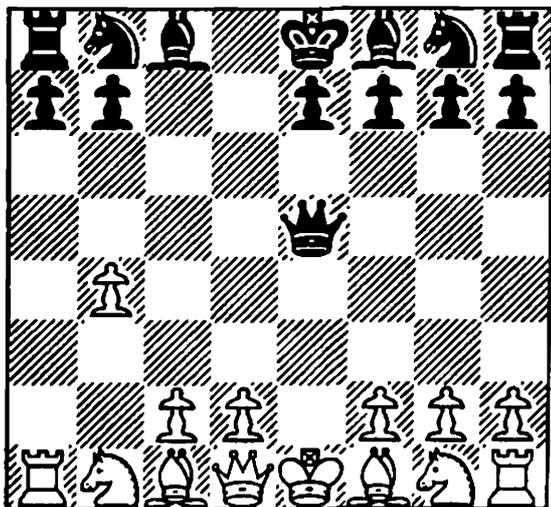
The double attack by the queen

If a strong player loses a game in under 15 moves, it is almost always because he has missed a double attack by the enemy queen. Typically, the double attack involves a check diagonally and an attack on a piece laterally, or vice versa. There are many variations on this theme. For example, Grandmaster Farago lost a game in Budapest in 1994 after the moves 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♕g5 c6 3 e3?? ♚a5+. Or how about this shocker:

K. Shirazi-J. Peters
USA Championship 1984
Sicilian Defence,
Wing Gambit

1 e4 c5

2 b4 cxb4
 3 a3 d5
 4 exd5 ♖xd5
 5 axb4?? ♖e5+



9 ... ♘xb2??
 10 ♚h5

and the double attack is again fatal.

Spare a thought for poor Kamran Shirazi: although he is a strong player, he will probably only ever be remembered as the loser of this awful game.

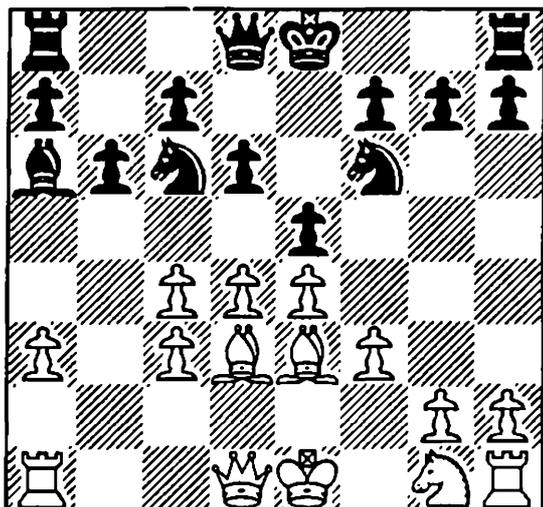
Even former World Champions can overlook a killing double attack:

H. Lieb-B. Spassky
 Munich 1979
Vienna Opening

1 e4 e5
 2 ♘c3 ♘f6
 3 ♙c4 ♘c6
 4 d3 ♙c5
 5 f4 d6
 6 ♘a4 ♙xg1
 7 ♖xg1 ♘g4
 8 g3 exf4
 9 ♙xf4

F. Sämisch-J. Capablanca
 Karlsbad 1929
Nimzo-Indian Defence,
Sämisch Variation

1 d4 ♘f6
 2 c4 e6
 3 ♘c3 ♙b4
 4 a3 ♙xc3+
 5 bxc3 d6
 6 f3 e5
 7 e4 ♘c6
 8 ♙e3 b6
 9 ♙d3 ♙a6??



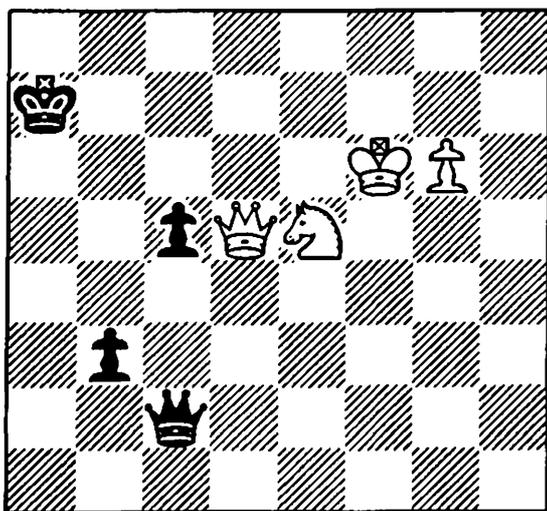
10 ♔a4!

Here the double attack by the queen along file and diagonal wins enough time to instigate a fatal pin.

10 ... ♖b7

11 d5

This looks like the end. However, Capablanca had no intention of losing in eleven moves, and fought on stubbornly. After another 51 moves he was finally subdued:



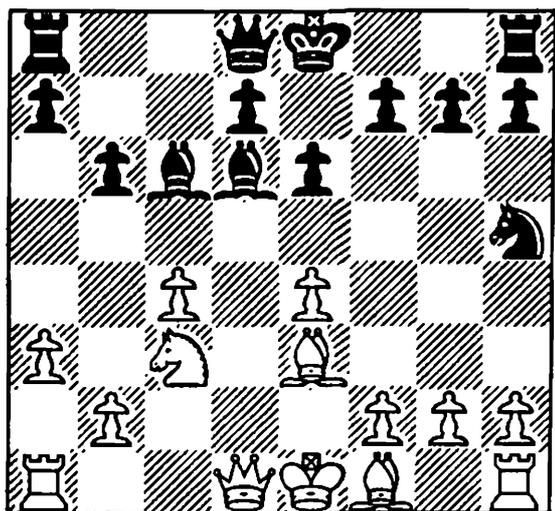
Here White played 62 g7 and Black resigned.

Capablanca's excuse after the game was that he thought he had already castled(!) when he played 9...♔a6. But the most fascinating consequence of the blunder in my opinion, is how close the former World Champion came to holding the game a piece down for a pawn against a top flight grand-master! Like Morphy before him, could Capablanca at his peak in the early 1920s have offered any rival a pawn and move odds, and still have hoped for success? I think only Lasker and Alekhine would have annihilated him.

Here another former World Champion bites the dust in similar fashion in a knock-out tournament in Holland:

L. Christiansen-A. Karpov
 Wijk aan Zee 1993
Queen's Indian Defence,
Petrosian Variation

- | | | |
|----|------|-------|
| 1 | d4 | ♘f6 |
| 2 | c4 | e6 |
| 3 | ♘f3 | b6 |
| 4 | a3 | ♔a6 |
| 5 | ♔c2 | ♖b7 |
| 6 | ♘c3 | c5 |
| 7 | e4 | cxd4 |
| 8 | ♘xd4 | ♘c6 |
| 9 | ♘xc6 | ♔xc6 |
| 10 | ♔f4 | ♘h5 |
| 11 | ♔e3 | ♔d6?? |
| 12 | ♔d1 | |



Here Karpov resigned. Fortunately for him, each round of the knock-out had two legs. Karpov showed commendable fortitude in winning the second game to force a quick chess play-off and eventually managed to progress to the next round. Three matches later he won the final!

These games are in the nature of freaks. However, they do serve a useful instructional purpose if they remind us that the queen's ability to move like a rook and a bishop simultaneously can generate unusual possibilities. Here is a good example from the game I. Sokolov-Kir.Georgiev, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

(see following diagram)

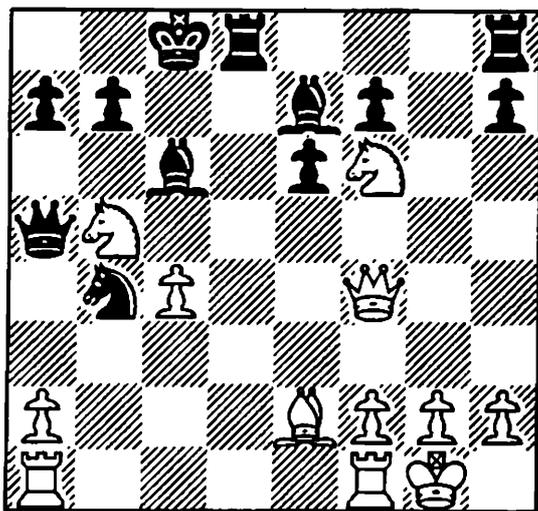
It is White's move. His queen and the knight on b5 bear down menacingly on Black's king's position. Therefore after

18 ♖e4

...it was possibly with some relief that Black replied

18 ... ♙xe4

eliminating one of his tormentors. But now comes the big surprise:



19 ♛xf7!!

A brilliant move. Instead of the automatic recapture of the piece, White finds a way to destroy Black's centre. Once again we see the devastating power of the queen to threaten like a rook (20 ♛xe7) and a bishop simultaneously (20 ♛xe6+, picking up the bishop on e4).

19 ... ♜d7!

This seems to be a defence to both threats, but White has calculated further.

20 ♛xe6 ♙c6

21 ♙g4!

The decisive move. The immediate threat is 21 ♛xe7.

21 ... h5

22 ♙h3 ♙d8

The threat was still 23 ♛xe7, and if 22...♙b8 there would be another double attack by the queen: 23 ♛e5+! forking b8 and h8. Sokolov says he planned to answer 22...♜e8 with 23 ♜ad1

♔d8 24 ♘xa7+ when Black's position collapses, e.g. 24...♕c7 25 ♘xc6 ♖xd1 26 ♘xd8 ♖xf1+ 27 ♕xf1, and Black can resign.

23 ♖ad1 ♖h7

24 a3!!

A lovely finishing touch, preparing yet another queen fork!

24 ... ♘c2

The knight has no good retreat square. If 24...♘a6, then 25 ♘xa7+ ♕c7 26 ♘xc6 attacks the queen and destroys the defender of the rook on d7.

25 ♖g6!

The double threat of 26 ♖xc2 and 26 ♖xh7! breaks Black's resistance.

25 ... ♖e7

26 ♖xc2 a6

27 ♘a7+ **Black resigned**

He will be the exchange down with a ruined position after 28 ♘xc6. A fantastic display by Ivan Sokolov.

Mental Block 2:

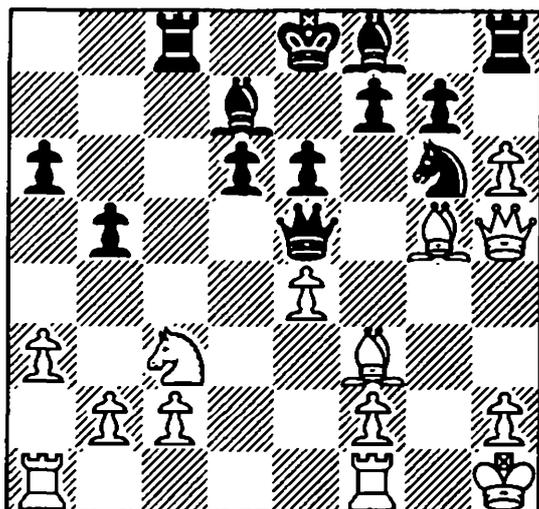
The sideways motion of the rook
Sometimes an unexpected lateral movement of the rook can throw a spanner in the works, as in the game Fedorowicz-Ehlvest, New York 1994.

(see following diagram)

Here White (to move) should retreat his bishop to e3. Instead he played the routine centralising move

18 ♖ad1?

The reader can probably guess Black's reply. After



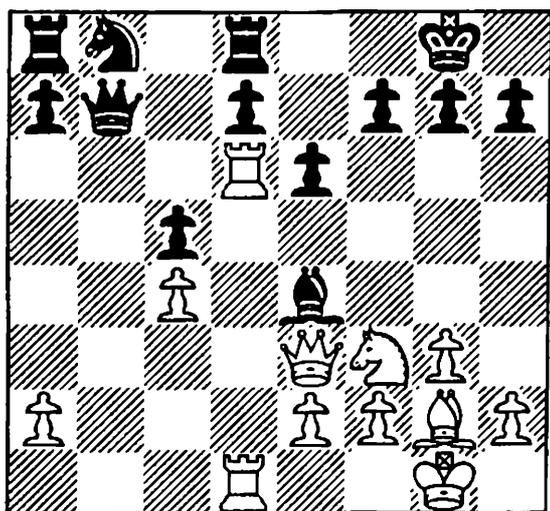
18 ... ♖c5!

Black won material because of the pin on the queen. I'm sure White would have spotted a vertical threat to win a piece in a flash. But he completely missed the horizontal threat. The game concluded 19 ♘d5 (a desperate attempt to confuse matters since if 19 ♖g1 then 19...gxf6 fatally reinforces the pin) 19...exd5 20 exd5 ♖xh6! (another powerful and unexpected entrance by a black rook) 21 ♕xh6 ♖xh5 22 ♕xh5 gxf6 (Black has returned some material in order to kill off White's attack) 23 ♖fe1+ ♕e7 24 ♕xg6 fxf6 25 ♖d4 ♕f7 and White resigned. A slightly premature resignation, perhaps, but the two black bishops would eventually overwhelm White.

In the next example, White showed real imagination to overcome this mental block.

This position (with White to move) was reached after 16 moves of the game H.Olafsson-

Levitt, Reykjavik 1990. Black's queen and bishop form a battery along the a8-h1 diagonal, pinning the knight on f3 and therefore preventing any immediate attack. So it seems that White has nothing better than 17 ♖xc5, regaining his sacrificed pawn, when Black develops with 17...♘c6 and the danger has passed.



However, instead of the stereotyped 17 ♖xc5, White found an amazing winning combination.

17 ♖xe6!!

An astonishing conception, the point of which only becomes clear on the next move. White sacrifices a rook on a square which to a human - but not to a computer - appears to be one of the safest in Black's position.

17 ... ♗xe6

18 ♘g5!!

White's rook sacrifice has given him the time to free his kingside pieces from the pin along the diagonal, by counter-pinning the black bishop on e4

against a threat of mate: if 18...♙xg2 then 19 ♚xe6+! and Black has the choice between a mate on the back rank or a smothered mate after 19...♙h8 20 ♘f7+, etc. So Black has to give up his bishop.

18 ... ♗h6

19 ♘xe4 ♘c6

20 ♘xc5 ♚c7

21 ♘xd7!

Completing the task begun by the rook at move 17. The black centre, which looked so compact only a few moves ago, is completely demolished.

21 ... ♖ac8

If 21...♖xd7 then 22 ♚xe6+ ♖f7 23 ♙xc6 followed by 24 ♖d7 wins (Olafsson).

22 ♚xe6+ ♙h8

23 ♙e4!

The bishop, which was useless at move 17, finds itself in control of a lethal diagonal. Black has no good answer to the threat of 24 ♚g6.

23 ... ♘e7

24 ♖d6!

Even stronger than 24 ♚xe7, when Black can answer 24...♖e8. Olafsson plays the whole attack with great accuracy.

24 ... ♚xc4

25 ♚xe7

Now 25...♖e8 can be answered by 26 ♖xh6+! mating.

25 ... ♚c1+

26 ♙g2 ♖e8

27 ♚f7

Of course 27 ♖xh6+?? ♚xh6 would be a sad end to the game.

However, we point this out because backward diagonal moves by the queen and, especially, the bishop, are another notorious mental block for most players.

27 ... ♖xe4
28 ♖g6!

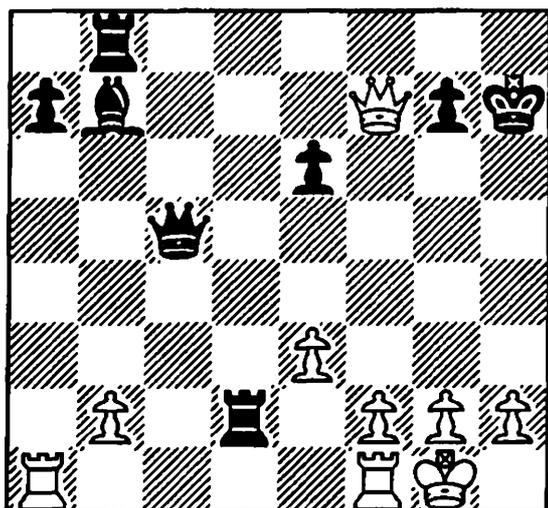
And Black resigned, since 28... ♛c3 (if 28... ♖g8 29 ♘f6!) 29 ♘f6! ♛c7! 30 ♖xg7! as given by Olafsson, leads to mate after 30... ♛xf7 31 ♖xf7 ♖g7 32 ♖f8+.

There are further examples of lateral rook moves in Chapter 10, where the subject is discussed in detail.

Mental Block 3:

Quiet moves and captures

Let's now take a look at the game Gelfand-Anand, Biel 1993, which demonstrated another common mental block.



White played

22 ♖a4!

to which Black replied

22 ... ♛g5

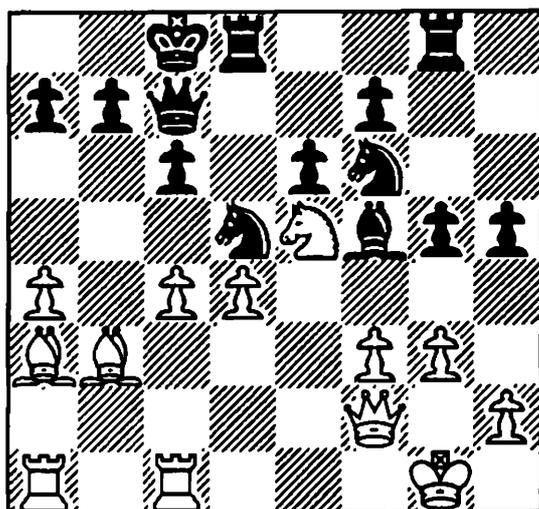
to stop the mate, and threaten a mate of his own. But after the

calm

23 g3!!

there was no defence against 24 ♖h4+. Anand battled on with 23...e5 but after 24 ♖h4+ ♛xh4 25 gxh4 ♖d6 26 h5! (this pawn has proved most annoying to Black) 26... ♙e4 27 ♛e7 ♖bb6 28 ♛xe5 ♖e6 29 ♛f4 he resigned. Clearly Anand had missed the strength of 23 g3 in his earlier calculations. His thoughts were on the threats from White's pieces - he wasn't looking at quiet pawn moves.

The human mind seems naturally biased towards moves which involve captures, even when the value of the move has no relevance to any material gain. This bias led Black to defeat in the following game, despite the imagination shown in some of his earlier moves (Lalic-Kirov, Benasque 1994).



Black (to play) began a sacrificial attack with

20 ... ♘f4!

21 gxf4 gxf4+
 22 ♔h1 ♖e4!
 23 ♚b2

White declined the offer of the second knight, since if 23 fxe4 then 23...♚xe5! wins after 24 dxe5 ♙xe4+ 25 ♚g2 ♙xg2+ 26 ♔g1 ♚d2! followed by a decisive discovered check (Lalic).

23 ... ♚xd4?

Black cannot escape from the idea of sacrificing his queen. The correct way to continue is given by Lalic in *Informator 61*: 23...f6! 24 ♖d3 ♖g3+ 25 hxg3 ♙xd3 26 ♙c2 ♙xc4 27 ♙e4 ♙d5 when Black has a clear advantage. He has three pawns for the piece, while the white bishop on a3 does nothing and the white king is in danger.

24 ♚xd4 ♚xe5
 25 ♚xa7!

Of course 25 ♚xe5 ♖f2 is mate. But how is Black to continue his attack now? In the game he faltered.

25 ... ♔c7?

With the idea of 26...♚a8. For example, if 27 ♚g1 then 27...♚a8! 28 ♚xa8 ♖f2+ 29 ♔g2 ♙h3+ 30 ♔xf2 ♚e3 mate. But this remains a fantasy after White's clinical reply.

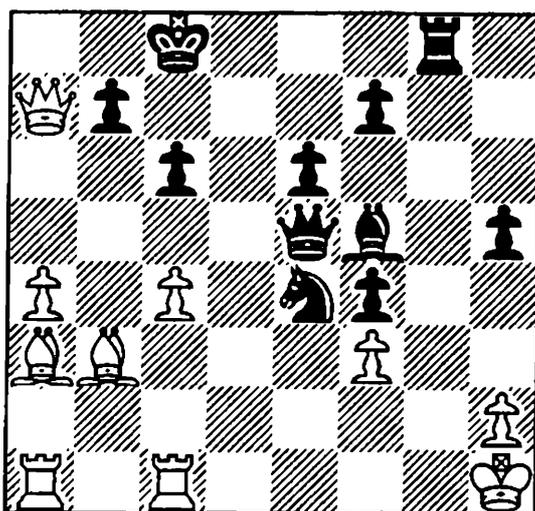
26 ♚a2!

adding a defender to f2. The attack has fizzled out.

26 ... h4
 27 ♙b4 **Black**
 resigned

Let's return to the position

after 25 ♚xa7.



Black had the right idea: he needed to chase the white queen from the a7-g1 diagonal. But the method he chose was too slow. To find the correct move would take a computer about one second, but for a human player would involve overcoming a serious mental block. Kirov had no problem finding 24...♚xe5 because it was a capture (indeed, it would have been better for Kirov if he hadn't seen this move). It is something of a paradox that we are all prejudiced towards moves which take things, even when we are thinking about making a sacrifice rather than gaining material.

Imagine a white knight on a5 in the diagram position. The threat is now 26 ♚xb7+ ♔d8 27 ♖xc6+ ♔e8 28 ♚e7 mate. It shouldn't be too difficult to see the defence 25...♚xa5! and if 26 ♚xa5 then 26...♖f2 mate. Or imagine the white pawn on a5 rather than a4. Even this should

make it much easier to find the correct move. 25...♖xa5! challenges the white queen again. Now put the White a pawn back on a4. Here 25...♖a5!! puts the queen en prise very quietly. Now if 26 ♖d4, once again the black queen pursues: 26...♖e5! and we have a repetition after 27 ♖a7 ♖a5 etc. A remarkable drawing sequence.

Conclusion

A horrible blunder demonstrates the frailties of the human mind. We should therefore feel sympathy for the crushed ego of the battered loser. I like the following

extract from Levy's biography *Svetozar Gligoric's Chess Career*. The Yugoslav grandmaster had just mangled former World Champion Vasily Smyslov with the black pieces in 19 moves. Is he celebrating with vodka and caviar? No, 'I felt very bad, because I knew it was a terrible shock to lose with White so quickly. Smyslov is normally a great gentleman, but at that moment he just stopped the clock and left immediately, because he felt ashamed of himself for losing such a game.' The reader should try to emulate Gligoric's humanity.

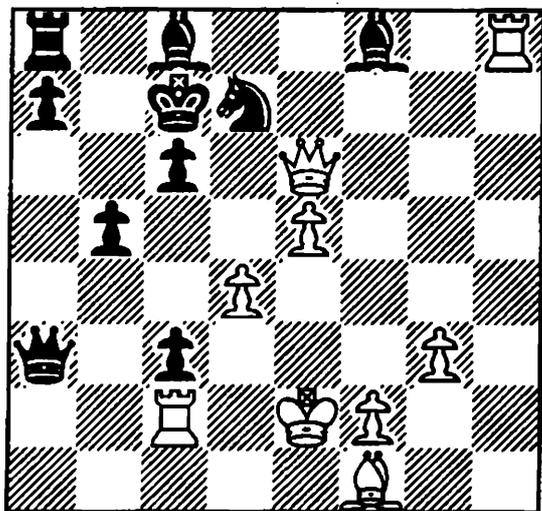
2 Every Schoolboy Knows...

If there is one common explanation for defeat, other than grotesque blunders, then it is the neglect of chess principles. Most of these principles are outlined in the present chapter, along with a game which illustrates both the crime and punishment.

The reader may be sceptical. Surely it shows childish naiveté to imagine that the games of the great masters are decided by errors such as ‘failing to develop the pieces’ or ‘grabbing pawns’? Imagine if you were Karpov’s trainer in a World Championship match (I know it’s difficult, but try anyway). After watching your protégé’s catastrophic 27-move defeat on page 24, would you take him aside and say gently, ‘Tolya, you clearly forgot to develop your pieces. Castling is also quite popular nowadays. Perhaps you should give both of these ideas a try in your next game?’ He probably wouldn’t take too kindly to your advice, and you would find yourself waiting at the airport for the next flight home.

Such advice is clearly inappropriate in that Karpov, like any

other strong player, is quite aware that development is a vital principle in chess. Why then do the very strongest players so often go wrong? The best way of answering this question is to examine a practical example.



This position was reached (with White to play) in the game Khalifman-Shirov, Pardubice 1994, after the moves 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 ♘f3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 e6 5 ♙g5 dxc4 6 e4 b5 7 e5 h6 8 ♙h4 g5 9 ♘xg5 hxg5 10 ♙xg5 ♘bd7 11 g3 ♖g8 12 h4 ♖xg5 13 hxg5 ♘d5 14 g6 fxg6 15 ♗g4 ♗e7 16 ♖h8 ♘xc3 17 bxc3 ♗a3 18 ♗xg6+ ♔d8 19 ♖d1 ♗xc3+ 20 ♔e2 ♗b2+ 21 ♖d2 ♗b4 22 ♗xe6 c3 23 a3 ♗xa3 24 ♖c2 ♔c7

A sharp and seemingly irrational position. Yet there is a logic behind White's next move. Both White and Black have three passed pawns; Black has two pieces for a rook, and should he succeed in coordinating his pieces he will stand better. Amid the hectic battle, two minor pieces are slumbering peacefully. The undeveloped bishop on f1 and the undeveloped bishop on c8, which form a mirror image of each other, hold the key to the position.

Imagine if White plays 25 ♖g2. Then his counterpart also awakes: 25...♙b7. And if White follows up with 26 ♖h7, pressurising d7, then 26...♗d8 27 ♖h3 ♖c8 28 ♖g2 ♙b7 29 ♖h3 ♖c8 30 ♖g2 occurs for eternity. Defence and attack are perfectly balanced. Is this the way that the game is destined to end?

When calculating a tactical sequence, a golden rule is: try playing the moves in a different order! We see that the rook on a8 doesn't come to life until the bishop on c8 awakes. So let's play

25 ♖h7!

immediately. At first glance this seems less effective than 25 ♖g2, which carried a direct tactical threat: 26 ♗xc6+. However, 25 ♖h7 stops both the bishop on c8 and the rook on a8 ever entering the game. And there is now the quiet but deadly threat of 26 ♖g2. Black has no defence.

Shirov tried

25 ... b4

to relieve the queen of the duty to defend c3, and answer 26 ♖g2 with 26...♗a6+. But

26 ♖a2!

was fatal since if the queen flees to c1 then 27 ♖g2 will tear him apart. So Shirov, true to style, sacrificed his queen, but it didn't do much good:

26 ... b3!?

27 ♖xa3 c2

28 ♖a4! c1(♗)

29 ♖c4 Black

resigned

The queen has been reborn but now c6 collapses under frontal rather than diagonal pressure.

Let us return to the diagram position.

We have seen that the specific features of the position require the paradoxical 25 ♖h7 rather than the 'natural', 'developing', 'classical' 25 ♖g2. If such an obvious move as 25 ♖g2 requires a question mark must we therefore reject all general principles in chess as untrustworthy and instead concentrate exclusively on close tactical analysis to find the best move?

No! Close analysis is necessary, but not just of tactical variations. You have to sift through various general principles, and put them into a hierarchy which applies in the particular individual circumstances.

In this instance, 25 ♖g2 conforms well to the general

principle that you should develop your pieces rapidly. This is especially so since it harasses Black with an immediate tactical threat (26 ♖xc6+) and develops the bishop to an almost open diagonal.

But in this specific position another law overrides the law of rapid development. This is the law that says you should prevent your opponent from developing his pieces! 25 ♖h7 prevents the coordination of Black's pieces forever, and this is much more important than the immediate development of the bishop. Both the bishop on c8 and the rook on a8 are paralysed. How do we know this? Here we need the aid of tactical analysis, which confirms the dominance of this principle.

It is the failure to grasp the real essence of a position that leads a player to defeat. He begins a plan which is inappropriate to the nature of the position. This 'unnatural' sequence is then 'rejected' by the logic of the position in the same way that invading microbes, which lack the necessary genetic codes, are relentlessly attacked and destroyed by the defenders of a healthy immune system.

To summarise: it is not sufficient to have a thorough grasp of the general principles of chess. You must remember that they are all in conflict with each other and try to work out which one really

is best. Tactical analysis is necessary in this checking process.

Here we will examine the main errors that lead to the neglect of the correct chess principles in a given position.

1 Errors in analysis

A player can misjudge a position and thereby violate the governing principle, simply because he has missed a move in analysis. No one is completely immune from this weakness, as the following game demonstrates.

A. Karpov-G. Kasparov
Linares 1993
King's Indian Defence,
Sämisch Variation

1	d4	♘f6
2	c4	g6
3	♘c3	♙g7
4	e4	d6
5	f3	

This is the move that characterises the Sämisch variation, a reliable and respectable system, but one which requires careful handling. If White is careless and loses control of the position before he is fully mobilised, he may be struck down by a lightning attack from Black's pieces, since he has weakened the dark squares somewhat with 5 f3, and also delayed his development.

5	...	0-0
6	♙e3	e5
7	♘ge2	♘bd7

8 ♖d2 c6
 9 ♜d1 a6
 10 dxe5 ♘xe5
 11 b3 b5!

Vigorous play which is demanded by the position. Black cannot defend his d-pawn (11...♘e8 12 c5 would be very bad), so he sacrifices it immediately, hoping to gain sufficient tactical chances against White's king, which is still at least three moves from the safety of castling.

12 cxb5 axb5
 13 ♖xd6

Of course White accepts the offer.

13 ... ♘fd7
 14 f4?

White should play 14 ♖d2, retreating his queen to safety. Then Kasparov analyses the sacrificial continuation 14...b4 15 ♘a4 ♜xa4 16 bxa4 ♘c4 17 ♖c1 ♘xe3 18 ♖xe3 ♖a5. White maintains a substantial material advantage, but on the other hand he has lost his important dark-squared bishop and still has to solve the problems of his king's safety and overall development. An interesting battle would be in prospect.

Karpov, however, has other ideas. He plans to answer 14...♘g4, which looks forced, with 15 ♙d4 when he will eliminate Black's strong dark-squared bishop (unless Black plays 15...♘gf6, but then 16 e5 looks good). However, he has mis-assessed the position: White doesn't get the chance to carry

out his plan because of a tactical blow.

14 ... b4!

Karpov must have missed or underestimated this move. If now 15 ♖xb4 then 15...c5! 16 ♙xc5 ♘xc5! 17 ♜xd8 ♘ed3+ wins (Kasparov).

15 ♘b1

No doubt shocked by his oversight, Karpov reacts badly to the changed circumstances. Kasparov gives a long analysis in *Informator 57* which shows that White can avoid disaster with 15 fxe5 bxc3 16 ♘xc3. However, it would be by no means easy to see this in the quiet of one's study, let alone when sitting opposite Kasparov with a ticking clock.

15 ... ♘g4
 16 ♙d4 ♙xd4
 17 ♖xd4

So Karpov has carried out his plan: the elimination of Black's dark-squared bishop. But everything else has gone wrong.

17 ... ♜xa2

Black regains his pawn and seizes the seventh rank with his rook. White is helpless since he will never be allowed to develop his kingside and castle.

18 h3 c5
 19 ♖g1 ♘gf6
 20 e5 ♘e4
 21 h4

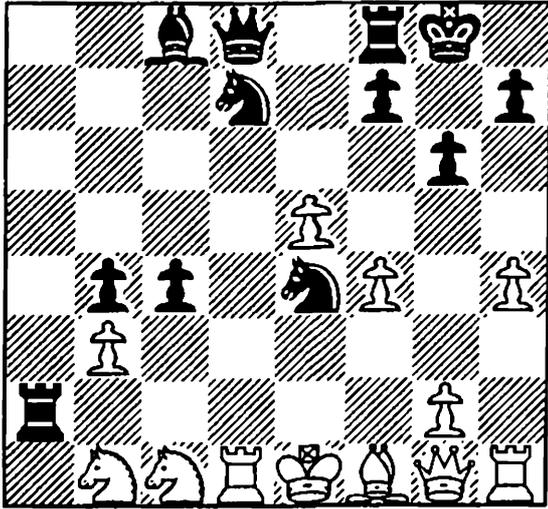
A desperate attempt to develop the king's rook via h3.

21 ... c4!

With all of White's pieces tied up, the simplest way to win is to

create a passed pawn.

22 ♖c1



The most amazing position in the whole of this book. How is it possible to drive all Karpov's pieces to such ridiculous squares, without even sacrificing a piece?

Tartakower once said that the only mistake in chess was underestimating your opponent. Everything else was either bad luck or weakness. Indeed, the most common failing among the losers in this book is an underestimation of their opponents' counter chances. Players become engrossed in their own schemes and barely seem to notice the storm-clouds gathering over their position. Karpov, having prepared his strategy, was rocked by the tactical stroke 14...b4! Then, perplexed by the multitude of variations, he went wrong again, after which he could no longer control events.

Or can we criticise Karpov for his lack of understanding of the position which manifested itself

in 14 f4? A move like 14 f4, weakening the kingside and centre, looks highly suspicious in view of White's parlous state of development. It shouldn't be too surprising that there is a tactical refutation.

Either way, this wasn't a good day at the office for Karpov. Either he showed astonishing tactical carelessness or a dreadful lack of positional understanding.

22 ... c3!

In such a position it is easy to be brilliant. Nevertheless, Kasparov concludes the game with some remarkably energetic play.

23 ♖xa2 c2

24 ♕d4

Kasparov points out 24 ♖c1 ♖xe5! 25 fxe5 cxb1(♕) 26 ♖xb1 ♕d2 mate!

24 ... cxd1(♕)+

25 ♔xd1 ♖dc5!

The exchange of queens strengthens Black's attack, since White is deprived of his one active piece.

26 ♕xd8 ♖xd8+

27 ♔c2 ♖f2

And White resigned, since it is mate in three moves: 28 ♖g1 ♕f5+ 29 ♔b2 ♖d1+ 30 ♔a1 ♖xb3.

J. Ehvest-U. Andersson

Belfort 1988

Sicilian Defence,

Taimanov Variation

The Swedish grandmaster Ulf

Andersson is well respected for his subtle positional style and great defensive skill. When the USSR played a match against the Rest of the World team in London in 1984, Andersson was assigned top board for the Rest of the World, despite being lower rated than several other members of the team, since it was thought he had the best chance of containing Karpov. He successfully carried out his task; the World Champion only managed one win in four games, a gruelling 85-move victory.

It therefore arouses great interest when Andersson is downed in a mere 19 moves. Did his opponent come up with a brilliant new idea which evaded the sophisticated radar of his near-invincible opponent? The answer is more prosaic, and proves once again Suetin's adage that one tactical blunder is worse than three positional mistakes.

1	e4	c5
2	♘f3	e6
3	d4	cxd4
4	♘xd4	♘c6
5	♘c3	a6
6	♙e2	♚c7
7	f4	♘xd4
8	♚xd4	b5
9	♙e3	♙b7
10	0-0-0	♚c8
11	♚d2	

White has taken up a most aggressive posture against the Taimanov variation. Here he defends c2 against the threatened b4

advance and prepares to add pressure to the weak point in Black's position - the d7 square.

11	...	♘f6
12	♙f3	♙e7
13	♚hd1	0-0

Black has successfully completed his development and now plans to seize the initiative with ...b4. White is therefore compelled to act fast:

14	e5!	♙xf3?
----	-----	-------

A common oversight in analysis. Black plays his moves in the wrong order! First he should play 14...b4! when a disastrous response for White is 15 exf6 since after 15...bxc3 (but not 15...♙xf6? 16 ♚xb4) White's rook on d2 has no good move and 16 fxe7 cxd2 is check! So White has to answer 14...b4 with 15 ♘a4 when Black has good play with 15...♙xf3 16 gxf3 ♘d5. Ehlvest analyses a possible continuation 17 ♘b6 ♘xb6 18 ♚xb6 ♚c4 as leading to an unclear position.

15	gxf3	b4?
----	------	-----

Continuing his fatal plan. Retreating the knight would lose the d-pawn, but it was the only chance.

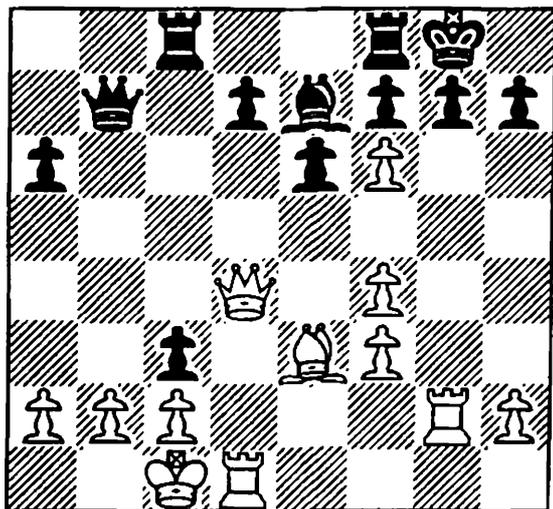
16	exf6	bxc3
17	♚g2!	

Now we see why Black blundered by exchanging bishops before playing b4: the white rook has been given access to this lethal attacking square.

17	...	♚b7
----	-----	-----

The culmination of Black's

counterattack. How should White respond to the threat of mate?



18 ♖xg7+ ♔h8
19 ♖g8+! Black
resigned

Black has a choice of losing captures: 19...♔xg8 20 ♖g1+ ♔h8 21 fxe7+ f6 22 exf8 (♚)+ and 23 ♚xc3 leaves Black a piece down, while after 19...♖xg8 20 fxe7+ ♖g7 21 ♖g1! as given by Ehlvest, Black has two checks before worrying about his kingside: 21...♚xb2+ 22 ♔d1 ♚b1+ 23 ♖c1. Now he must play 23...♖g8 when White replies with three checks, the first being 23 ♚xg7+! and the third being mate. An attractive attacking display by the leading Estonian player.

2 Wasting time in the opening

The element of time is the subject of Chapter 3, so here we will satisfy ourselves with just a single example.

I. Smirin-B. Kurajica Zagreb 1993 Sicilian Defence, Kan Variation

1 e4 c5
2 ♘f3 e6
3 ♘c3 a6
4 d4 cxd4
5 ♘xd4 ♚c7
6 f4 b5
7 ♖d3 ♖c5?

An opening experiment that is severely punished. Black should continue his queenside deployment with 7...♖b7.

8 ♘b3 ♖e7

Beginners are often told to avoid developing their queen early in the game. The reason is obvious: the queen is an attractive target for the enemy pieces, which can be developed with gain of time by harassing a piece which must run away from any possible exchange (unless of course the proposed exchange is with the opposing queen). Her very strength is a weakness.

In the same way, there are pieces which are so vital to certain opening setups that they must be preserved from exchange, even if the enemy piece is nominally of the same value. Black's dark-squared bishop in the Kan variation of the Sicilian is just such a piece. Even if it involves losing time and exposing the kingside to attack, Kurajica

cannot allow White to play 9 ♞xc5 . The bishop must be saved to guard the dark squares, especially the important centre square d6, which cannot be defended by a pawn. A drastic example of what could happen if Black flaunts this 'law' is 8... ♞f6? 9 ♞xc5 ♞xc5 10 e5 ♞d5 11 ♞e4 and 12 ♞d6+ and the dominant knight gives White a winning position.

9 ♞g4!

Black has no good answer to the attack on g7. If 9... ♞f8 he loses the right to castle and the rook on h8 will be very difficult to develop. After 9... ♞f6 10 ♞xg7 ♞g8 11 ♞h6 ♞xg2 12 ♞h3 ♞g7 13 e5, as pointed out by Smirin, Black also fails to solve his problems since he will lose his h-pawn.

9 ... b4
10 e5!

Black was hoping for 10 ♞xg7? ♞f6 . But now if 10... bxc3 then 11 ♞xg7 will win at least the exchange. 10 e5 also rules out 10... ♞f6 and clears e4 for White's knight, whilst generally increasing White's grip on the dark squares.

10 ... g6
11 ♞e4 ♞b7
12 ♞e2!

One of those inconspicuous moves which in reality decide the outcome of a game. If instead White had developed in stereotyped fashion with 12 ♞e3 then 12... ♞xe4! 13 ♞xe4 f5! (as rec-

ommended by Smirin) would have allowed Black to break free from his constricted position, since White has nothing better than to allow 14 exf6 ♞xf6 , mobilising Black's kingside.

12 ... f5
13 ♞ed2

Now on the other hand, White maintains his strong pawn on e5. He plans to besiege the dark squares c5, b6 and d6 and attack the backward d-pawn.

13 ... ♞c6
14 ♞c4 ♞h4+

A sortie aimed at making the kingside untenable for White's king.

15 g3 ♞e7
16 ♞g1

Side-stepping the threat of 17... ♞xe5 .

16 ... ♞h6
17 ♞e3 0-0
18 0-0-0 a5

Black has virtually forced White to castle queenside with his 14th move, and now hopes to start an attack on the enemy king, sacrificing pawns if necessary. White, however, has a tremendous grip on the centre; so it is no surprise that he is able to prevent and defeat Black's plan.

19 ♞b6 ♞ab8?

Black had to go in for the miserable 19... ♞ad8 , bolstering d7. Smirin then planned 20 ♞a4! blocking the black queenside pawns and threatening 21 ♞b6 . Black would be in a stranglehold which could be tightened with

moves such as ♖f2, ♜d2 intending ♜gd1, ♙c4 and ♙c5.

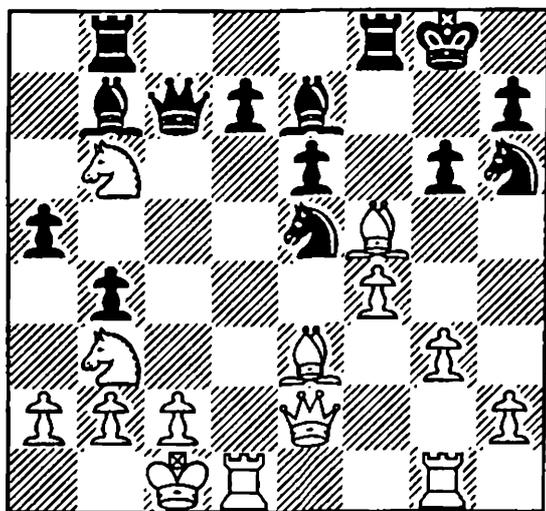
Kurajica tries a tactical breakout, but as usual complications favour the player with the better piece coordination.

20 ♙xf5!

The first blow. Black's position is so congested that the queen is trapped after 20...♘xf5 21 ♜xd7.

20 ... ♘xe5

Kurajica probably saw this far when he played 19...♞ab8. Now after 21 fxe5 ♘xf5 22 ♜xd7 ♖xe5 or 22 ♘xd7 a4 he has some counter chances. But the logic of the position is against him.



21 ♜xd7!

Demolishing Black's centre. It is interesting that Black's dark-square weaknesses lead to a collapse on the light squares. Such is justice in chess, which is sometimes revealed in an unexpected manner.

21 ... ♘xd7

22 ♙xe6+ ♞f7

22...♘f7 23 ♘xd7 forks the

rooks.

23 ♘xd7 a4

At last a glimmer of counterplay, but Black's position is completely wrecked.

24 ♘bc5 ♙xc5

25 ♙xc5 ♞a8

26 ♙xf7+ ♘xf7

27 ♖e7 ♜c8

28 ♞e1 b3

A last desperate lunge. If you think Black has escaped the worst, remember what we said earlier about the importance of Black's dark-squared bishop in the Kan variation. Then look at Black's kingside...

29 ♖e8+!

And Black resigned since it is mate in three moves.

3 Thoughtless pawn moves

In our section on 'mighty pawns' (Chapter 6) we will see that pawns can do virtually anything. They can bludgeon the opponent's kingside or break his defensive line; en masse, they can strangle the enemy in a linked chain, or suffocate him with a rapid march; they can form a bulwark to defend their own king or heroically block an attack; and of course they can queen. But what they can't do is go backwards. Once they have committed themselves there is no retreat. That is why every intended pawn move must be given the utmost scrutiny. And every irrelevant pawn move deserves the severest censure.

V. Kramnik-S. Lputian
 Debrecen 1992
Queen's Gambit Declined

1	d4	♠f6
2	c4	e6
3	♠f3	d5
4	♠c3	♙e7
5	♙f4	0-0
6	e3	c6
7	♚c2	♠bd7
8	h3	a6
9	♖d1	

Black has a solid and safe position. His only problem is the usual one in the Queen's Gambit: how to go about developing his queen's bishop. Here he should have devised a plan to bring it into action. For example, 9...b5 suggests itself, especially since White has already committed his rook to d1 rather than the c-file. After 9...b5 White has three alternatives:

(a) 10 cxd5 cxd5 and after ...♙b7 and ...♖c8 Black has nothing to fear;

(b) 10 b3 ♚a5 with the idea of ...♙b4 and ...♠e4 could prove awkward for White;

(c) 10 c5 but then the queen-side is closed and White will find it very hard to prove an advantage.

Instead, Black played

9 ... h6?

The expression 'if two men do the same thing it is not the same thing' comes to mind here. Both

players have played 'pawn to king's rook three', but whereas for White it is a useful move, safeguarding the bishop against capture after ...♠h5, for Black it is a weakening move. Why? Because White has the initiative: his pieces are on more active squares. Therefore he can dictate the course of the game.

10 a3 dxc4

And this is also bad. He should still play 10...b5 to develop the bishop. The text move relinquishes his hold on the centre and allows the white bishop to reach a crucial diagonal, as we will soon see.

11 ♙xc4 ♠d5

This is Black's idea. He attacks White's bishop, no doubt expecting it to retreat, when he has gained the time to exchange off the knights after ...♠xc3; it is strategically desirable for Black to ease his game by exchanges. However, White has a little surprise in store for him.

12 0-0! ♠xf4

White also has a good game after 12...♠xc3 13 ♚xc3 ♠b6 14 e4 ♠xc4 15 ♚xc4 or 14 ♙a2 ♠d5 15 ♚c2 ♠xf4 16 exf4, but this was perhaps preferable. The more pieces that are exchanged, the more chance Black has to free his game.

13 exf4 ♚c7?

Rather surprisingly, the queen proves exposed on this square. Better was 13...♠b6 14 ♙a2 ♠d5, occupying the strongest

point in the centre with his knight. Then after 15 ♖b1 g6 16 ♘e5 (threatening ♘xg6!) 16...♚e8 (forced) 17 ♚e4 White maintains the initiative, but Black can hope to escape.

Incidentally, this variation shows why 9...h6 was such a bad move. If the pawn was on h7, there would be no threat of ♘xg6! after 16 ♘e5 and Black could hope to expel the knight from e5 with ...f6.

Of course, if Black had avoided ...h6 then White would have chosen a different method to maintain a small advantage.

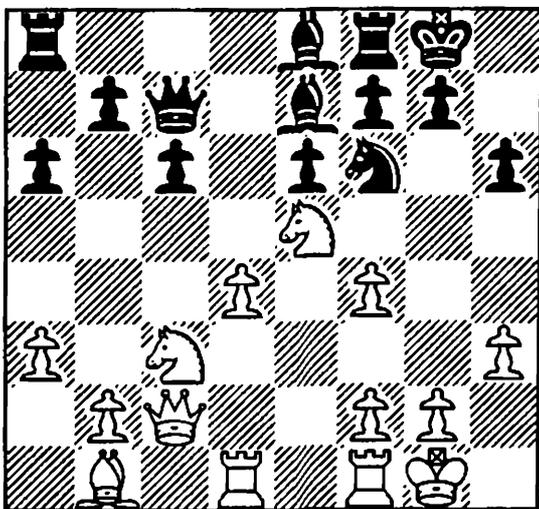
14 ♘e5 ♘f6

If now 14...♘b6 15 ♖a2 ♘d5 16 ♖b1 and Black no longer has the option of ...g6 and ...♚e8, since he has misplaced his queen.

The best chance was 14...♘xe5 15 fxe5 (15 dxe5 is also good) 15...♞d8, continuing 16 ♖a2 ♖f8 17 ♖b1 g6 18 ♘e4 ♖g7.

15 ♖a2! ♖d7

16 ♖b1 ♖e8



According to Kramnik,

16...♞fd8 was imperative here and he gives the variation 17 ♘e4 ♚f8 18 ♘xf6 ♖xf6 19 ♚h7+ ♚e7 20 ♞fe1 ♞h8 21 ♚c2 as clearly good for White. Black has overlooked White's fine reply.

17 d5!!

If now 17...exd5 then 18 ♘xd5! followed by 19 ♘xf6+ and mate on h7. Or if 17...cxd5 then 18 ♘xd5! ♚xc2 19 ♘xe7+ wins a piece.

17 ... ♞d8

18 ♞fe1

Keeping the tension for one more move. The immediate 18 dxe6 was also good.

18 ... ♚h8

Threatening to capture on d5 by avoiding a check on e7 or f6. It is time for White to wreck Black's kingside.

19 dxe6 ♞xd1

20 ♞xd1 fxe6

21 ♘e4 g6

Black has to cut the white queen's route to h7, but more weaknesses appear.

22 ♘c5! ♖xc5

A gruesome move, completely giving up the defence of the dark squares. But also hopeless was 22...♚c8 23 ♘xg6+ ♖xg6 24 ♚xg6 ♖xc5 25 ♚xh6+ ♚g8 26 ♚g5+ ♚h8 27 ♚xc5 (Kramnik).

23 ♚xc5 ♞g8

24 ♖a2!

A decisive return to a familiar diagonal. Kramnik is ready to answer 24...♖f7 with 25 ♚d6! so e6 drops.

24 ... ♚g7

25 ♔xe6 ♖f8

26 ♘d7!

So that if 26...♗xd7 then 27 ♗xd7+! wins. Black resigned.

4 Putting pieces on awkward squares

Every football manager knows that it is useless having a group of brilliant individuals who refuse to work together. Such a so-called 'team' will be beaten by disciplined and well-organised opponents, who, although less talented, give each other support and act in unison for defence and attack.

Likewise in chess it is essential to coordinate the action of the pieces. In the following examples we see one player deploying his pieces in an efficient and concerted manner, while the opponent sets out his game in an irregular and disorganised fashion. The outcome is never really in doubt.

I. Sokolov-R. Vaganian

Tilburg 1994

Queen's Gambit Declined

1	d4	d5
2	c4	e6
3	♗c3	♔e7
4	cxd5	exd5
5	♔f4	c6
6	e3	♔f5
7	♗ge2	♗d7
8	♗g3	♔g6
9	♔e2	♗f8

10 ♔g4!

Black is solidly entrenched, preparing to develop his pieces with ...♗e6 and ...♗f6. However, his whole plan of development looks faulty. When his minor pieces eventually emerge they will be bunched together in the centre and vulnerable to an f4-f5 pawn advance by White. This advance would be a prelude to an all-out attack on Black's king (assuming it has castled king-side). The bishop on g6 in particular is in danger of being snuffed out by f5.

With 10 ♔g4! White redeploys his bishop to a strong diagonal before Black's knight on f6 bars the way. Also, he avoids the routine 10 0-0 here, after which his chances would be severely limited, as we shall soon see.

10 ... ♗f6

11 ♔h3 ♗e6

12 ♔e5

The bishop moves willingly, since now the way is cleared for the f4-f5 advance, which threatens havoc among Black's congested pieces. Black's next move is therefore more or less forced.

12 ... ♗g5

13 ♔f5 0-0

So Black has obstructed the f4-f5 advance. However, in defending against one threat he allows another, equally powerful, plan. This is often the case when a player has chosen an incorrect strategy: the logic of the position does not allow him to escape

from his troubles with a few careful moves. And if he defeats one plan then another plan emerges to menace him.

14 h4!

Beginning a direct attack on Black's king that is very difficult to meet. Note how the black knight on g5, which was a hero in helping to prevent 14 f4, here abets White in gaining time for his attack.

If White had castled at move 10 or elsewhere then this attack would be impossible, and with no direct attack to face Black would have had a safe game. We are reminded of Pillsbury's adage that you should only castle because you must or because you want to, never just because you can. Countless attacking opportunities have been lost because a player has played a mechanical 0-0.

And yet, on the other hand, in this book we see countless disasters because a player didn't castle! It would be easy to draw the conclusion from this that the classical advice to beginners 'castle within the first ten moves' is ignored by modern grandmasters at their peril. However, compelling evidence could be collected to prove that you should never fly in an aeroplane or even cross a road. An acceptance of risk, however slight, is as necessary in chess as it is in everyday life. Otherwise, life and chess would lack both adventure and

novelty. We would all stay at home all day and play the Petroff!

14	...	♘ge4
15	♙xg6	hxg6
16	♘gxe4	♘xe4
17	♘xe4	dxe4
18	h5	gxh5?

This leads to disaster. Sokolov recommends 18...♙f6 19 hxg6 fxg6 as the best chance. However, it is not surprising that Vaganian wants to avoid the wrecking of his kingside pawn structure.

19	♙xh5	♙a5+
20	♙f1	f6

This is Black's idea. The white bishop is attacked, and when it moves Black will exchange queens with an equal position. Instead there came

21 ♙g6!

A tactical manoeuvre which the reader should observe carefully. When attacking the enemy king along an open file with queen and rook, it is almost always best to have the rook in front and the queen at the rear. Then at the same time that it supports the rook's incursion the queen can use its diagonal power to follow up the attack on the fleeing king or, as is the case here, prevent its flight altogether. Hence, White would achieve nothing here with 21 ♙h7+ since after 21...♙f7 there is no good continuation. On the other hand, after 21 ♙g6 White is ready to answer 21...fxe5 with 22 ♖h7 ♙f7

23 ♖h5! The vital turnaround has occurred, and Black will be mated by 24 ♖h8.

21 ... ♖d5

But how is White to continue now? If 22 ♖h7 then 22...♗f7 defends.

22 ♖f4 ♖fd8

Now it is easy. Other options were:

a) 22...f5 (with the idea of 23...♖f6) when 23 ♖e5 ♖f6 24 ♖h7+ ♗f7 25 ♖xf5 wins a pawn and maintains a strong attack;

b) 22...♖ad8. Now White can fall for a nasty trap: 23 ♖h7 ♖f7 24 ♖xe4?? f5! wins a rook. Instead, 23 ♖h5 ♖e6 24 g4!! plans 25 ♗g2 and 26 ♖ah1, mating. If now 24...♖c4+ then 25 ♗g2 ♖e2 26 ♖h7 ♖f3+ 27 ♗g1 ♖f7 28 ♖h5 mates. However, 24...♖d5! is a stronger defence. Then White plays 25 ♖h3! Here we see the point of 24 g4 rather than 24 g3. Black doesn't have the defence ...♗f5! which would exchange queens. The game could end 25...♖d6 26 ♗g2! (Black's last chance was 26 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 27 ♗g2 f5!) 26...♖xf4 27 exf4 (27 ♖ah1 ♖xg4+!? 28 ♖xg4 ♖g5 29 ♖h8+ ♗f7 30 ♖xf8+ ♗xf8 31 ♖xg5 ♖xg5 is a winning end-game for White, but we want to win a miniature, even if it's only in the notes!) and Black has no defence to ♖ah1. For example, 27...♖f7 28 f5 ♖d6 29 ♖h8+ ♗xh8 30 ♖xf7 and 31 ♖h1 mate.

23 ♖h5!

An important intermediate

move, which chases Black's queen from d5 and thereby allows White to play a subsequent ♖h5 without allowing the exchange of queens.

23 ... ♖e6

Black's 22...♖fd8 has cleared f8 for the king, but it means that Black no longer has the defence 23...♗f7 because of 24 ♖h8+. Therefore, after

24 ♖h7!

Black can only play 24...♖f8, but then 25 ♖h5 mates him on h8. He therefore resigned.

Kir. Georgiev-G. Sax
Reggio Emilia 1988/89
Sicilian Defence,
Keres Attack

1	e4	c5
2	♗f3	d6
3	d4	cx d4
4	♗xd4	♗f6
5	♗c3	e6
6	g4	h6
7	h4	♗c6
8	♖g1	h5
9	g x h5	♗x h5
10	♖g5	

Both sides have achieved something. Black has broken up White's phalanx of pawns on the kingside, and in view of the weakness of the White h-pawn any endgame will be good for him. White, on the other hand, has the g-file, a lead in development, and can ask Black: 'Where will your king be safe in the

midlegame?'

10 ... ♖f6

11 ♖g3!

An excellent square for the rook. It is poised for action in the centre or on the queenside.

11 ... a6

12 ♘xc6 bxc6

13 ♚f3 ♙d7?

Georgiev suggests 13...♚b6 here. Then after 14 0-0-0, 14...♖b8 generates counterplay.

The bishop proves awkwardly placed on d7...

14 0-0-0 ♙e7

15 e5!

... which encourages White to sacrifice a pawn to open up the d-file and attack the unfortunate cleric.

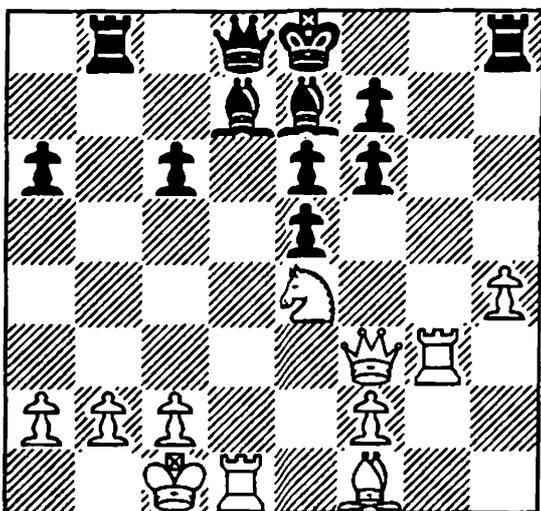
15 ... dxe5

16 ♘e4 ♖b8

After 16...♘xe4 17 ♚xe4 the threat of 18 ♖gd3 is strong.

17 ♙xf6 gxf6

Georgiev points out 17...♙xf6? 18 ♖xg7! when 18...♙xg7 allows mate in two.



18 ♚g2!

The queen modestly retreats one square, and suddenly the rook on g3 is infused with a new power: there is an immediate threat of 19 ♖g8+ ♖xg8 20 ♚xg8+ ♙f8 21 ♘d6+ ♙e7 22 ♚xf7 mate, while the rook is also ready to swing sideways to attack (♖d3) or defend (♖b3, if ...♚b6 ever attacks b2).

Quiet moves such as 18 ♚g2 are the necessary prelude to a violent attack. They are also extremely difficult to find! In fact, the great masters of attack can be distinguished from 'merely' excellent tacticians by their ability to nurture an attack at its early stages, before it is possible to rely on calculation to find the winning variation. That is what the Viennese grandmaster Rudolf Spielmann meant when he said: 'I could have made any of Alekhine's combinations. But I can't get the positions from which the combinations begin.'

Whether attacking, defending or manoeuvring, the most important principle in chess is the co-ordination of the pieces. Before White's 18th move the queen on f3 and the rook on g3 were two powerful pieces, but they failed to act together. After 18 ♚g2! their total power is more than the sum of their parts.

18 ... ♖f8

19 ♙c4 ♚b6

Georgiev gives some attractive variations which demonstrate the power of the queen and rook

when acting in unison:

a) 19... ♖a5 20 ♜a3! ♙xa3? 21 ♘xf6+ ♚e7 22 ♜xd7+ ♚xf6 23 ♜g5 mate!

b) 19...f5 20 ♙xe6! and Black has to give up his queen with 20...♙xe6 since 20...fxe6 21 ♜g7 ♜b6 22 ♜xe7+ ♚xe7 23 ♜g5+ ♚e8 24 ♘d6 is mate.

20 ♜b3 ♜a7

21 ♜bd3 ♜b7

22 ♜g7 f5

The pawn cluster around Black's king starts to disintegrate.

23 ♘d6+

Black's dark-squared bishop is the only defender of the squares d6 and f6. Therefore it makes good sense for White to force its exchange.

23 ... ♙xd6

24 ♜xd6 ♜xf2

This leads to instant destruction, but there was no good alternative: if Black were to do nothing then White could simply advance his h-pawn to the queening square. It may seem ironic that a pawn should carry the winning threat after White has been attacking exclusively with his pieces, but such is often the case: the defender has the defensive resources to avoid being directly mated, but cannot also fend off the sudden advance of a pawn. The reader will find many examples of such pawn power in this collection of games. Perhaps the most striking is Kasparov's game against Salov (see page 91).

25 ♙xe6!

Here, however, no pawn advance is necessary (and never in a million games would Georgiev fall for 25 ♜xd7? ♜xd7 26 ♜xd7 ♚xd7 27 ♜xf8?? ♜e1 mate).

The fact that the sacrificial breakthrough occurs on the most fortified square in Black's position should not surprise us. The pressure of the white pieces is so intense that even the strongest fortress must crumble.

25 ... fxe6

Or 25...♙xe6 26 ♜d8+ ♚e7 27 ♜xf8 mate: disaster on the dark squares.

26 ♜xd7

Disaster on the white squares. The reader may be reminded of the game Smirin-Kurajica earlier in this chapter, where at move 21 White also struck the deadly blow on a white square when he was dominant on the dark squares. Perhaps there is some rule of chess strategy to be unearthed here?

26 ... ♜f4+

27 ♚b1

Now Black has no defence against 28 ♜g6+ or a mate on e7.

27 ... ♜xb2+

But what's this? Can Black achieve perpetual check?

28 ♚xb2

And Black resigned (or lost on time!?). This was just as well, since a few more checks and the game would be lost to us as a miniature. After 28...♜b4+ 29 ♚c1 ♜a3+ 30 ♚d2 ♜b4+ (30...f4

31 ♖d3) 31 c3 ♕b2+ (if 31...♕f4+ the king runs to a1) 32 ♔e1 ♕xc3+ 33 ♔f2 ♕c5+ 34 ♔f1 ♕c4+ 35 ♖7d3 (threat 36 ♕d7 mate) 35...♕f4+ 36 ♔g1 there are no more useful checks. It is amusing that if Black's f-pawn had been at f4 rather than f5 after 30...♕b4+, then Black would draw because 29 ♔c1 ♕a3+ 30 ♔d2?? could be answered by 30...♕e3 mate! But of course this is pure fantasy: if the pawn had been on f4 in the game, White would chosen a slower method to win, one that didn't allow 27...♖xb2+. Not to mention the fact that 26...♕f4+ would have been impossible ...

This was a powerful display of aggression by Kiril Georgiev, conducted against a player who is himself recognised as a master of attack.

5 Opening lines/the centre for the enemy pieces

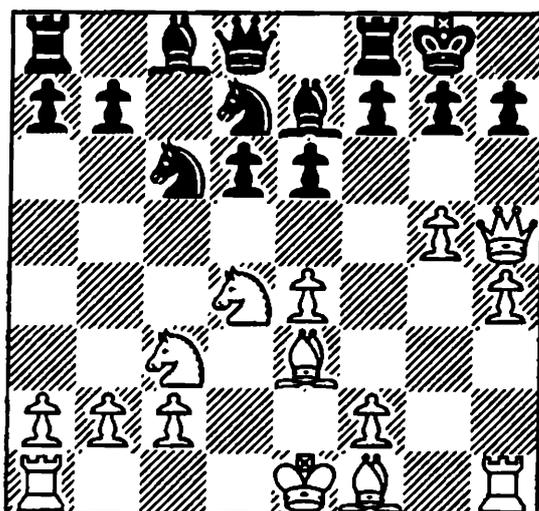
One of the most respected principles in chess says: if you are attacked on the wing, launch a counter action in the centre. However, if you are behind in development or have a bad piece setup, then this advice can backfire horribly. The lines you open in the centre will be gratefully seized by the opponent's more efficiently placed pieces, and your plight will become even worse. This is precisely what happened to Black in the following game.

G. Sax-J. Ehlvest
Reggio Emilia 1988/89
Sicilian Defence,
Keres Attack

1	e4	c5
2	♘f3	e6
3	d4	cxd4
4	♘xd4	♘f6
5	♘c3	d6
6	g4	♙e7

Instead of the preventive 6...h6, Black allows White to continue his kingside advance and force the knight from the ideal f6 square. On the positive side, Black's kingside remains free of structural weakness and he achieves a rapid development.

7	g5	♘fd7
8	h4	♘c6
9	♙e3	0-0
10	♕h5!?	

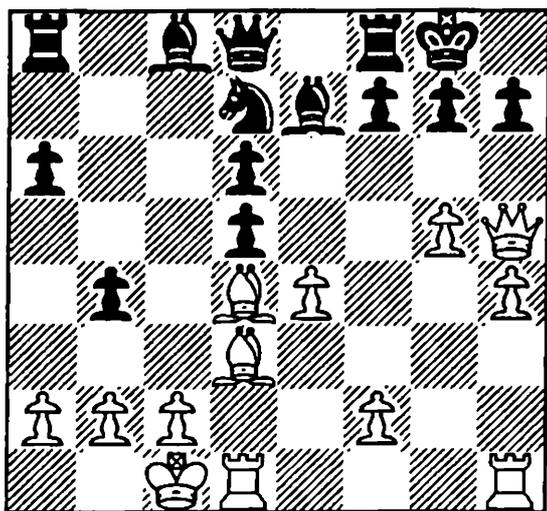


An unusual idea. The queen leads the attack from the front, instead of waiting patiently for the pawns to open up some

attractive inroads into the opponent's position.

If now 10...g6?, then the queen would retreat, say to e2 (11 ♖h6? allowing 11...♗e8 and 12...♕f8 isn't advisable) and then, after some preparatory moves such as 0-0-0 and f4, White would be ready to steamroller down the h-file. Black would have no counterplay either in the centre or on the queenside.

So perhaps Black should refuse to be provoked and play 10...a6, preparing some counterplay on the queenside. This was tried in the game Szalanczi-Gavrikov, Debrecen 1988, but it didn't quite work out: 11 0-0-0 ♘xd4 12 ♕xd4 b5 13 ♕d3 and Black fell for the trap: 13...b4?? 14 ♘d5! exd5



Here Black was no doubt expecting 15 exd5, when he can defend with 15...g6 16 ♖h6 ♘e5. Instead, there came 15 ♕xg7!! Now if 15...♔xg7 16 ♖h6+ ♔g8 17 exd5 wins quickly, because there is no g-pawn to block the

mate on h7. A possible finish is 17...f5 18 gxf6 ♘xf6 (or 18...♗f7 19 ♖hg1+ ♔h8 20 ♗g7!) 19 ♗hg1+ ♔f7 (if 19...♕g4 20 ♗xg4+) 20 ♕g6+! and mates. In the game Gavrikov tried 15...♗e8, a cunning move that plans to answer 16 exd5 with 16...f5!! However, after 16 ♕f6! Black resigned. Perhaps he should have tried one last gamble: 16...♕xf6. Now 17 gxf6 or 17 e5! both win easily, but the plausible 17 exd5 could be answered by 17...♕xb2+! and 18...f5, when Black can still defend.

If Black doesn't fall for the trap at move 13, he has an adequate position. Perenyi-Hellers, Budapest 1988 continued 13...♘e5! (rather than 13...b4??) preparing to eliminate the dangerous bishop at d3. Now best play is 14 f4 ♘xd3+ 15 ♗xd3 ♕b7 according to Hellers, with sufficient activity for Black.

We now return to our main game, in which Black tried a less effective way to achieve counterplay.

10 ... d5?

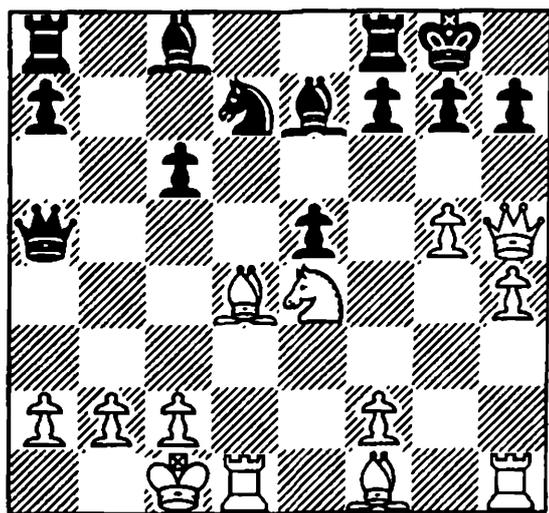
Black is understandably alarmed by White's kingside buildup, but this is no solution. Opening lines in the centre favours the better developed player, which is unquestionably White.

11 0-0-0! dxe4?!

Sax and Hazai examine this game in some detail in *Informator* 47, and their comments have

been incorporated into the analysis which follows. Here they claim that White would have a positional advantage after 11...♞xd4 12 ♜xd4 ♙c5 13 ♜d2 ♙xe3 14 fxe3 since the dark squares in Black's centre would be vulnerable. However, this was probably Black's best line, since now he faces a strong attack.

12	♞xe4	♚a5
13	♞xc6	bxc6
14	♙d4!	e5



Closing the bishop's diagonal before feasting on the a-pawn. The immediate 14...♚xa2 appears at first sight to be hopeless after 15 ♞f6+! e.g. 15...gxf6 16 gxf6 and mate will follow on the g-file or on h7 after ♙d3, or alternatively 15...♙xf6 16 gxf6 e5 17 fxg7, as given by Sax and Hazai, when again Black's kingside crumbles.

I was happy with this analysis until I noticed 15...♞xf6 16 gxf6 ♙b4! threatening mate on a1. Now:

(a) If 17 c3? ♙a3! and 18 bxa3

♜b8 threatens mate on b1 or b2, while 18 ♜d2 ♚a1+ 19 ♚c2 ♚xb2+ is highly unpleasant for White;

(b) The alternative 17 c4 ♚a1+ 18 ♚c2 ♚a4+ 19 ♚c1 ♚a1+ is a draw, since 19 ♚d3? ♜d8 is too risky and 19 ♚b1 g6 20 ♚h6 ♚xd1+ 21 ♚a2 ♚a4+ 22 ♚b1 ♚d1+ is also a draw;

(c) 17 b3 ♜d8! 18 ♙d3 (threatening mate in two; if 18 ♚g4 simply 18...g6 intending 19...e5, while 18 ♚g5 ♙a3+ 19 ♚d2 g6 is bad, e.g. 20 ♚h6? ♜xd4+ 21 ♚e3 ♙f8) 18...g6 19 ♚h6 ♙f8 20 ♚e3 e5!? 21 ♙xe5 ♙f5! with strong threats (if 22 ♙xf5? ♙a3+ will mate).

So it seems that White has nothing better than a draw after 16...♙b4 17 c4.

Do we therefore have to re-evaluate Black's play up to this point, and replace some question marks with exclamation marks? The answer is no, since instead of 15 ♞f6+, White can play 15 ♙d3. Now 16 ♞f6+ really will be crushing and the heroic 15...♙b4 meets with 16 ♞c3!! stopping the threat of mate and with a fatal double attack on a2 and h7. Black has to resign after 16...♚a1+ 17 ♚d2 ♙xc3+ 18 ♙xc3 g6 19 ♚h6. Also inadequate would be 15...e5 since after 16 ♙xe5! ♞xe5 (16...g6 17 ♚h6 ♞xe5 18 ♞f6+ ♙xf6 19 gxf6) 17 ♞f6+ White mates.

We now return to the actual game. Starting from the last

diagram, it is White to move.

15 ♖c3 ♜xa2

There is no turning back. If 15...♜c7, Sax and Hazai give as the winning continuation 16 ♜xd7! ♖xd7 17 ♖d3 g6 18 ♜h6 planning 19 ♘f6+ or, if this is prevented, 19 h5. Instead of 17...g6, a tougher defence is 17...♖f5. However, after 18 ♘f6+ ♖xf6 19 gxf6 (not 19 ♖xf5 g6) 19...♖g6 20 ♜g5 h6 21 ♜g3 the threat of 22 h5 is decisive.

16 ♜xd7!

An essential defender of Black's kingside is eliminated on the d-file. This is decisive proof that it was the incorrect strategy for Black to open the centre.

16 ... ♖xd7
17 ♘f6+! ♖xf6

There is no choice: 17...gxf6 18 gxf6 ♖xf6 19 ♜g1+ wins at once after either 19...♖g7 20 ♜h6 or 19...♜h8 20 ♖d3.

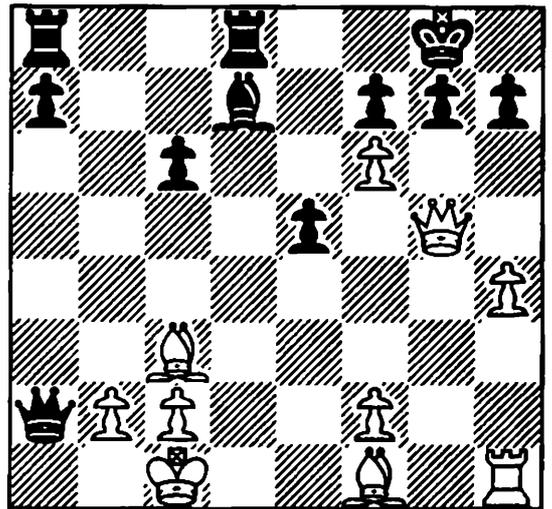
18 gxf6 ♜a1+

This loses the queen.

In their analysis, Sax and Hazai point out a beautiful trap into which White could fall. Black plays 18...♜fd8, when it seems as if the reply 19 ♜g5 forces resignation.

(see following diagram)

Not quite. Black has 19...♜a1+ 20 ♜d2 ♜d1+!! 21 ♜xd1? ♖g4+ and mate next move! An incredible resource. If White recovered from the shock of 20...♜d1+ he would play 21 ♜e3, but then 21...♜g4! allows Black to stave off the mate.



However, if White were vigilant he would see through the threatened trap and answer 18...♜fd8 with 19 ♖d3! Now Black has to try 19...h6, when if 20 fxf6? Black can defend with 20... ♜a1+ 21 ♜d2 ♜xh1 22 ♜xh6 f5! and no win is apparent for White since 23 ♖c4+ is answered by 23...♖e6, also check. Sax and Hazai point out the correct line for White: 20 b3! ♜a3+ 21 ♖b2 ♜d6 22 ♜g1 ♜xf6 23 ♖xe5 and wins. Therefore 18...♜fd8 has to be rejected.

The Hungarian analysts recommend 18...♜e6! as the best move, defending against 19 ♜g5. They continue 19 ♖h3 ♜xf6 20 ♖xd7, when White has two bishops for a rook and two pawns. White would have good winning chances. On the other hand, an attempt to decide the game by direct attack could rebound on White: 19 ♜g1 g6 (19...♜xf6 20 ♖xe5 wins) 20 ♖xe5 ♜h8 (the only defence against 21 ♜h6) 21 ♜xg6?! (21 ♜h6 ♜g8 22 f4! is

still good for White) 21...♚f5!
 (White was hoping for
 21...fxg6?? 22 f7+ mating or the
 similar 21...♖g8? 22 ♜xg8+
 ♜xg8 23 ♔d3 ♖g6 24 ♔xg6 fxg6
 25 f7+) 22 ♖g5 ♚xf2! 23 ♔d3
 ♚e1+ and the exchange of
 queens saves Black.

19 ♔d2 ♚a4

Ready to answer 20 ♚g5 with
 20...♚f4+ exchanging queens. Or
 if 20 ♖g1 then 20...♚f4+ and
 21...♚xf6. But there is a nasty
 surprise awaiting Black.

20 b4!!

One exclamation mark because
 this is an excellent positional
 move, cutting off the black queen
 from the kingside, and thereby
 threatening 21 ♚g5. Another ex-
 clamation mark because it is an
 excellent tactical move: how is
 Black to stop 21 ♔d3 and 22 ♖a1
 winning the queen?

20 ... ♜fd8

Unfortunately for Black
 21...♔g4 is now easier to see now
 than in the variation at move 18
 above.

21 ♔d3 gxf6

22 ♖a1

Simplest.

22 ... ♚b5

23 ♚xh7+ ♔f8

24 ♚h6+

Of course he doesn't fall for 24
 ♔xb5? ♔f5+.

24 ... ♔e7

25 ♔xb5 cxb5

26 ♚e3 Black

resigned

This game illustrates how dif-
 ficult it is to play chess correctly.
 It was easy to censure 10...d5, but
 in order to show why it was
 wrong White had to play with
 great energy and imagination.

3 Time is of the Essence

‘The most powerful weapon in chess is the next move.’ David Bronstein.

‘White to play and win’, is the most common exhortation in the chess press. It can be found appended to thousands of chess puzzles in newspapers, magazine articles and books. Sometimes these trials of wit are taken from the conclusion of games in which White has sacrificed heavily, hoping (successfully, as we now know) to win by a direct attack. In such a case ‘White to play and win’ is an unnecessary instruction. If it were Black’s move he would be winning so easily with all his extra pieces that there would be no point in setting the puzzle.

This conflict - the next move against more pieces - is really a battle between two key positional elements: time and material. Time claims it can strike a fatal blow before material can exploit his superior numbers. It is clear that other elements are also involved here, such as the coordination of the pieces, development and space. In fact, the time-space

dilemma runs through all phases of the game. In the opening, a player often has to ask himself:

‘Do I have time to build a pawn centre, or must I develop some pieces?’

in the middlegame;

‘Do I have time to continue my space gaining queenside advance, or must I reinforce my kingside immediately?’

and in the endgame;

‘Do I have time to advance my passed pawn, or must I centralise my king straight-away?’

In miniature games, as in puzzles, the element of time is usually seen to triumph over all its rivals. We shall examine why this is so towards the end of this chapter. But we begin by looking at instances in which White or Black misjudged the time situation, whether to gain material, seize space or achieve some other positional objective, and was severely punished by the energetic play of his opponent.

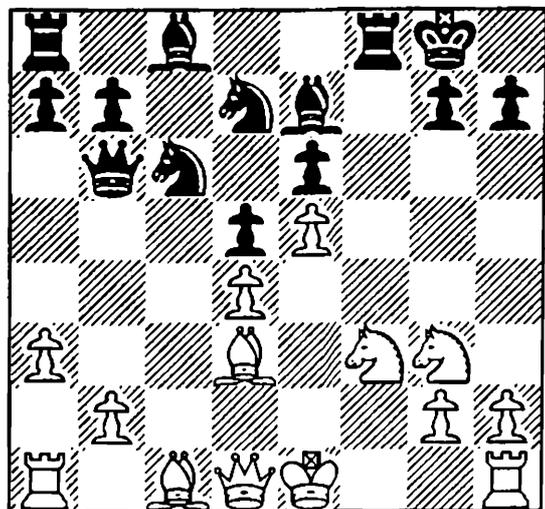
The games have been divided into two sections, according to the ‘punishment’ meted out: part one examines attacks on the king

in the centre, while part two considers attacks on the king when castled (either kingside or queenside).

1 Attacking the king in the centre

E. Kengis-R. Djurhuus Gausdal 1991 *French Defence, Tarrasch Variation*

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♘d2	♘f6
4	e5	♘fd7
5	f4	c5
6	c3	♘c6
7	♘df3	♚b6
8	♘e2	cxd4
9	cxd4	♙e7
10	a3	0-0
11	♘g3	f6
12	♙d3	fxe5
13	fxe5	



The opening phase is now over, and it is time to sum up the

chances for both sides. White has maintained his space advantage and in consequence all his minor pieces have freedom of action. Black's minor pieces, on the other hand, are severely restricted by the white pawns on d4 and e5, which deprive them of key centre squares. Even the black bishop on e7, supposedly the 'good' one, has no safe squares apart, of course, from the square it stands on and d8. The knight on d7, denied the use of c5 and f6, has no good move, and shuts the bishop on c8 out of the game, which in turn entombs the rook on a8. Black's position is therefore severely congested and it is not clear how he will be able to coordinate his pieces and find a good middlegame plan.

However, White has achieved his positional trump - a space advantage - at a cost: time. He has not yet castled, and even if it were his move now he could not play 0-0 because of Black's combination ...♘xe5! winning material after ♘xe5 ♚xd4+. Nevertheless, if Black does nothing White could play a move such as 14 ♙c2 adding a defender to d4, when he will complete his development whilst maintaining all his positional advantages. Black's chances would then be very bleak indeed.

Therefore, Black must do something immediately to exploit his lead in development. No time must be lost or he will be left

struggling for the rest of the game. Djurhuus found an interesting solution:

13 ... ♖dxe5!

14 dxe5 ♖xe5

With two pawns, freedom of action and attacking chances for the piece.

15 ♔e2 ♔d7

16 ♖xe5?

This loses. An interesting possibility was 16 b4!? taking the c5 square from the bishop on e7 and preparing to bring the rook on a1 into the game with ♖a2! A tough fight would then be in prospect.

16 ... ♗f2+

17 ♔d2 ♖ac8!

The most important thing is to cut off the white king's escape to the queenside. The threat is now 18...♔g5+ 19 ♔d3 ♔b5 mate. If 18 ♖xd7 then 18...♖f4! and there is no good way to prevent ♖d4 mate. Other moves also allow a quick mate, e.g. 18 a4 (preventing ...♔b5) 18...♗d4+! 19 ♔e1 ♔b4+ 20 ♔d2 ♗f2 mate.

18 ♗b3 ♔g5+

19 ♔d3

White loses his queen after 19 ♔d1 ♗d4+ 20 ♖d3 ♔a4 (Djurhuus). But now comes an elegant finishing touch.

19 ... ♖f4!

20 ♖f3

If 20 ♔xf4 then 20...♗xf4, and nothing can stop mate on e3 or d2, except 21 ♖f1, but then 21...♗e4 is mate.

20 ... ♔e8!

Black's pieces are now beauti-

fully coordinated. White resigned, since one threat is 21...♔g6+ 22 ♔d2 ♖d4. This would be the most powerful horizontal rook move of all time: it is double checkmate!

One of the most famous miniature games of all time is that played between Anderssen and Kieseritzky in London back in 1851. This went 1 e4 e5 2 f4 exf4 3 ♔c4 ♗h4+ 4 ♔f1 b5 5 ♔xb5 ♖f6 6 ♖f3 ♗h6 7 d3 ♖h5 8 ♖h4 ♗g5 9 ♖f5 c6 10 g4 ♖f6 11 ♖g1! cxb5 12 h4 ♗g6 13 h5 ♗g5 14 ♗f3 ♖g8 15 ♔xf4 ♗f6 16 ♖c3 ♔c5 17 ♖d5! ♗xb2 18 ♔d6!! ♔xg1 19 e5! ♗xa1+ 20 ♔e2 ♖a6 21 ♖xg7+ ♔d8 22 ♗f6+! ♖xf6 23 ♔e7 mate. A real tour de force by Anderssen.

The following game has a similar theme: a double rook sacrifice seals the doom of the enemy king. The denouement is not so spectacular, but in some ways Bareev's achievement is more impressive. First, he was playing a modern world-class grandmaster, who was armed with all the improvements in defensive technique and strategy that have occurred in the 143 years that separate the two games. It only took one blunder from Topalov to unleash the fatal attack. Kieseritzky's play, on the other hand, would disgrace that of any self-respecting club player. Secondly, our modern game was played in a top-level

grandmaster event, whereas the Anderssen game was a 'friendly' one. Perhaps this gives us the politest excuse for the ineptitude of Kieseritzky's play: he was in an experimental mood and eager to see how much material he could snatch. And thirdly, Bareev did it all as Black. The reader will become aware from this book that it is much easier to be brilliant as White.

Whatever the relative merits of the two games, the lesson to be learnt by the loser is the same. If you seriously delay your development to gain material or improve your strategic chances in some other way then tread carefully. Perhaps your opponent has immediate tactical chances that will overwhelm you before you can complete your development. It is no good having an extra pawn for the endgame or the strategical advantage of two bishops for two knights if you are unable to develop in time to beat off an attack.

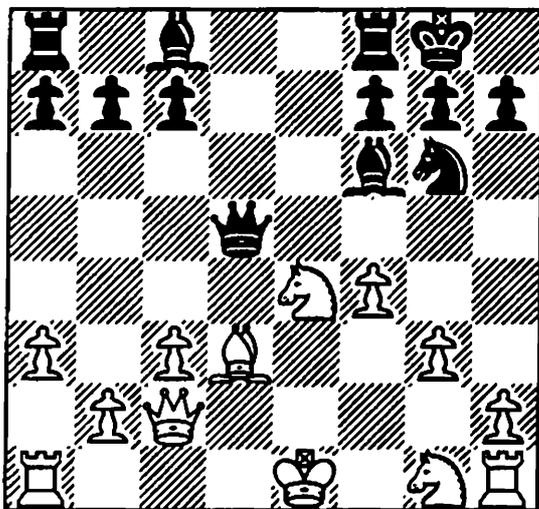
V. Topalov-E. Bareev
 Linares 1994
French Defence,
Classical Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♘c3	♘f6
4	♙g5	dx e4
5	♘xe4	♙e7
6	♙xf6	♙xf6

7	c3	♘d7
8	♚c2	e5
9	dx e5	♘xe5
10	f4	♘g6
11	g3	0-0
12	♙d3	♚d5!

White's opening has not been a success. He has failed to gain a space advantage, inflict a weakness on his opponent or prevent him from developing his pieces. However, after 13 ♘e2, completing the deployment of his own pieces, there is no reason for him to lose. Instead, he refuses to admit that he has squandered the advantage of the first move.

13 a3?



White's ambitious plan involves queenside castling, but the immediate 13 0-0-0 allows 13...♚xa2. So Topalov spends a move safeguarding the pawn, intending to follow up with 14 0-0-0. Then his ideas will include 15 ♘xf6+ and 16 ♙e4, when Black's kingside is weakened.

However, 13 a3 is a criminal waste of time in such an open

position. It is a classic example of a player becoming so wrapped up in his own ideas that he fails to see the opponent's counter chances.

As recommended above, White should quietly play 13 ♖e2 (but not of course 13 ♖xf6+? gxf6 14 ♙e4 ♜e8 and Black wins).

13 ... ♗xf4!

Now White has completely lost control of the position and can only respond to Black's threats.

14 ♗xf6+

Bareev planned to answer 14 gxf4 with 14...♙h4+ 15 ♖f1 f5! when 16 ♗g3 or 16 ♗f2 both fail to bishop takes knight followed by 17...♜xh1. So Black would regain his piece, leaving White with a wrecked position on the kingside.

14 ... gxf6

15 ♙xh7+ ♖g7

16 ♜e4!

Undoubtedly the most challenging defence. Hopeless is 16 gxf4 ♜xh1 or 16 ♙e4 ♜e8, and White's king is indefensible. Now Bareev finds a brilliant continuation.

16 ... ♜e8!!

17 ♜xe8 ♙f5!

A double rook sacrifice to get at the white king.

18 ♜xa8

If 18 ♜e3? then 18...♗g2+ wins, while if 18 ♜e7 Bareev intended the simple 18...♗d3+ 19 ♖f1 ♙xh7 according to his analysis in *Informator 60*. Then White would be faced with the

threats of 20...♜xh1 or 20...♜f5+ 21 ♖e2 (21 ♖g2 ♜f2+ 22 ♖h3 ♙f5+ also leads to mate) 21...♜f2+ 22 ♖b1 ♗xb2+ and mate on c2.

But now the queen has disappeared into the corner and can no longer aid the defence. It is a case of all the black pieces against White's king.

18 ... ♜e4+

19 ♖f2

Other moves lead to a quicker mate: 19 ♖f1 ♙h3+! 20 ♗xh3 (20 ♖f2 ♗d3 mate) 20...♜e2+ 21 ♖g1 ♜g2, or 19 ♖d1 ♜c2+ 20 ♖e1 ♗d3+ 21 ♖f1 ♜f2.

19 ... ♜g2+

20 ♖e3 ♗d5+

21 ♖d4 ♜d2+

22 ♖c5 ♜e3+!

23 ♖c4

If 23 ♖xd5, 23...♙e6 is mate.

23 ... ♗b6+

and White resigned, since 24 ♖b3 ♜e6+ 25 ♖b4 ♜c4+ 26 ♖a5 ♜a4 or 26...♜c5 is mate. Or if 24 ♖b4 then 24...♜e4+ 25 ♖c5 (or 25 ♖b3) 25...♜c4 is mate. 25 ♖b5 ♜e5+ will transpose to these variations.

A most drastic punishment of White's time-wasting 13 a3.

The resulting king hunt is more reminiscent of the 19th century than modern grandmaster chess. If a player rated 2640 on the FIDE list can lose with White in this fashion, then there is hope for us all.

V. Akopian-I. Khenkin
 Tilburg 1994
Sicilian Defence, 3 b3

1	e4	c5
2	♘f3	e6
3	b3	a6
4	♙b2	♘c6
5	c4	f6?!
6	♙e2	♘h6
7	0-0	e5

Black hopes to erect a permanent barrier to the white bishop on b2. And White plans to demolish it.

8	♘h4!	♙d6
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Black doesn't want to allow f4. Now if White does nothing drastic - say he plays the slow 9 ♘c3 - then Black will castle with a reasonable position. White must strike immediately, or he will lose all hope of an advantage.

9	♙h5+	g6
10	♙xg6+!	

It is best to retain the knight and sacrifice the bishop. A white knight can terrorise Black on both light and dark squares, and will be a better piece in combination with the queen in the forthcoming attack. Besides, the rook on h8 will be attacked after the recapture.

10	...	hxg6
11	♘xg6	♙g8
12	♙h5	♘f7

At the moment White is attacking with only a knight and queen, while Black has a rook, knight

and bishop all available for the defence. In view of the vast superiority in fire-power needed to overwhelm a defence, White's attack looks doomed to failure. However, the key to White's attack is that it can be strengthened: he can bring up his reserves faster than Black can reinforce the defence.

13 f4!

The rook will enter the fray via the f-file. Black's reply is forced, since 13...b6 (or any other 'pass' move) allows a finish such as 14 fxe5 ♘cxe5 15 ♙xe5 ♙xe5 16 ♘xe5 fxe5 17 ♚xf7 mate.

13 ... exf4

Now the barrier against the bishop on b2 has collapsed and it becomes a most threatening piece.

14 ♘c3!

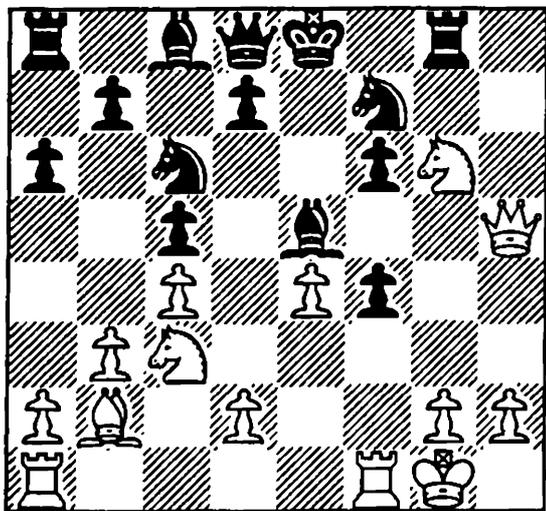
Timing is very important in chess. At move nine, this would have been a routine developing move which squandered a vital tempo. It would have deprived White of the attractive attacking possibilities he has gained in the game. Here, however, as soon as it awakes the knight is ready to leap into the attack with 15 ♘d5.

This dynamic approach is the hallmark of modern chess. It is much more effective than 14 ♙h7, which would regain the exchange but slow down the attack.

14 ... ♙e5

Black attempts to shore up the vital diagonal. However, the balance in firepower has shifted

decisively in White's favour since move 12: Black's queenside is still inert. Therefore, it is time for White to make a sacrificial breakthrough.



15 ♖xf4! ♗xf4

Akopian justifies his sacrifice with some pretty variations in *Informator 61*. Black must accept the offer, since after 15...♖xg6 16 ♗xg6 ♘e7 (or 16...♗xf4 17 ♘d5 ♘e7 18 ♘xf6+ ♙f8 19 ♘h7+ ♙e8 20 ♗g7! and mate on f6 or f8 follows) 17 ♗g7 ♗xf4 18 ♘d5 ♘xd5 (or mate on f6 follows) 19 exd5 ♗e7 20 ♗xf6 ♗e5 21 ♖e1! d6 (if 21...♗xf6 22 ♗g8 mate) 22 ♖xe5 dxe5 23 ♗xe7 ♙xe7 24 d6+! White wins.

16 ♘d5!

No time is wasted with recaptures! The momentum of the attack must be maintained. If now 16...♗e5 then Akopian gives the incredible variation 17 ♗xe5 fxe5 18 h4!! ruling out 18...♗g5 and preparing 19 ♖f1, with the winning threat of 20 ♘f6+.

16 ... ♘ce5

17 ♘dxf4 d6

18 ♖f1 ♖g7?

White has played with imagination and creativity, but even so Black's error at move five was not enough to lose the game. Akopian suggests the defence 18...♖xg6! 19 ♘xg6 ♗e6 when White retains an attack after both 20 ♗h7 or 20 d4 cxd4 21 ♗xd4, but Black still has his extra piece and has achieved some solidity in the centre and cooperation between his pieces.

However, even if objectively White's sacrifices only lead to a dynamic equality, subjectively they are very strong. Khenkin was already in time-pressure and no doubt exhausted and demoralised by his desperate defence when he made the fatal blunder.

19 ♗xe5! fxe5

20 ♘d5

And suddenly Black has no defence against 21 ♘f6+.

20 ... ♙d7

21 ♗f5+ ♙e8

22 ♘f6+ Black

resigned

Although Akopian gives some fine analysis to justify his sacrifices, I wonder how much he actually saw during the game. It was impossible to work out all the variations to an end, especially in the early stages of the game. So intuition must have played a large part. This in no way demeans Akopian's achievement: a subtle judgment of positions is one of the highest

qualities in a chess player. And we can admire his bravery in making such heavy sacrifices when there was an element of risk. We cannot feel the same way when a computer makes a sacrifice which has been coldly calculated to the final ply. Akopian proved equal to the task, but many lesser players would have faltered at some point in the game: perhaps they would have snatched back some material rather than playing the consistent attacking move. It is easy to panic when one is a rook down.

But annotating this game seriously spoilt my mood. Up to move 18, I was continuously awarding Akopian exclamation marks, yet still his position refused to become winning or even (objectively) better! 'Is there any justice in chess?' I grumbled to myself, 'if a player can play with energy, courage and flair, and afterwards still only have an equal game?' Fortunately I did manage to answer my question. Yes, there is justice in chess, but its underlying law is not interested in aesthetics or special pleading. It says: to lose, you must do something wrong. Without this law there would be no logic in chess. And without logic, the outcome to games would be random and anarchic. So occasional annoyance is a small price to pay for the comfort of knowing that you control your own destiny. You don't have to lose just

because you are playing a strong or imaginative opponent! Play logically and you may not win, but you definitely won't lose.

H. Sobura-Ar. Pieniazek
Poland 1988
Sicilian Defence,
Keres Attack

1	e4	c5
2	♘f3	d6
3	d4	cxd4
4	♘xd4	♘f6
5	♘c3	e6
6	g4	h6
7	h4	♙e7
8	♚f3	h5
9	gxh5	♘xh5
10	♙g5!?	

White is willing to gambit a pawn to open up the kingside.

10	...	♘c6
11	♘xc6	bxc6
12	0-0-0	♙xg5+

White is persistent so Black finally accepts the offer. Sobura claims that it was better to play 12...♚b8 and seek counterplay immediately against b2.

13	hxc6	♚xg5+
14	♙b1	♙e7
15	♙e2	g6

Apparently all is well with Black. White has no pawn advances to wreck his opponent's position, and if White attacks the one weak point in Black's centre - the d6 square - then it can easily be strengthened: 16 ♚d3 ♚d8 or 16...♚e5. However, Black has

overlooked White's brilliant next move.

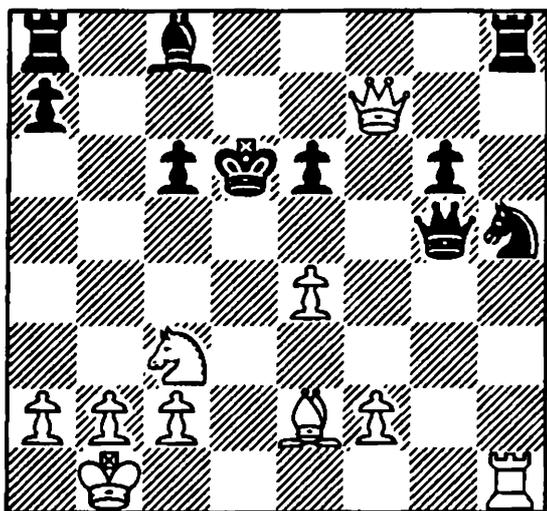
16 ♖xd6!!

White doesn't need to attack d6 - he simply captures it!

16 ... ♔xd6?

This loses quickly. The only chance was to exchange queens with 16...♕f4! Then 17 ♕xf4 ♖xf4 18 ♖xh8 ♔xd6 gives White nothing clear (19 ♙a6? ♙b7!). However, 17 ♖xc6 leaves White a clear pawn up.

17 ♕xf7



Black now has an extra rook, but his position is hopeless. Here are some variations:

a) 17...c5 18 ♖d1+ ♔c6 19 ♙b5+ ♔b6 20 ♖d6+ ♔a5 21 ♕c7+ ♔b4 22 a3 mate, as given by Sobura;

b) 17...♖d8 18 e5+! ♔xe5 (18...♕xe5 19 ♖d1+ ♔c5 20 ♖xd8 with a winning attack, or 18...♔c5? 19 ♖e4+) 19 ♙xh5 gxh5? (but 20 ♖e1+ is a winning threat anyway) 20 f4+! ♕xf4 21 ♖e1+ wins the queen.

c) 17...♕f6 18 ♖d1+ ♔c5 19

♕c7 a5 (to stop 20 ♕a5 mate) 20 ♖a4+ ♔b4 21 ♕b6+ ♔xa4 22 ♕b3 mate.

Black's choice in the game proves equally hopeless.

17 ... a5

18 ♖d1+ ♔e5

After 18...♔c5, you can remove White's queen from the board and it is still mate: 19 ♖a4+ ♔b4 20 ♖d4. Winning is easy when your opponent has his two rooks and a bishop on their starting square, and his king is flitting about in the centre.

19 ♙xh5!

Eliminating the only piece besides the queen that Black has found time to develop.

19 ... ♖xh5

20 f4+! ♕xf4

21 ♕g7+!

White is after bigger game than the black queen (21 ♕c7+). Now 21...♕f6 is forced, but then 22 ♕c7 is mate. So Black resigned.

A pleasing gamelet, though more reminiscent of Morphy crushing an unknown in the 19th century than a battle between two strong modern players.

N. Short-L. Ljubojevic
Belgrade 1989
Sicilian Defence,
Keres Attack

1	e4	c5
2	♖f3	d6
3	d4	cxd4
4	♖xd4	♖f6

5 ♖c3 e6
 6 g4 h6
 7 h4 ♘c6
 8 ♖g1 h5
 9 gxh5 ♘xh5
 10 ♙e3

In the previous game White tried 10 ♙g5. Short has a different plan in mind.

10 ... ♘f6

Taking the h-pawn isn't a good idea: 10... ♙xh4? 11 ♙g5 ♙h2 12 ♘f3 and if Black now does the decent thing and resigns we have another very short miniature!

11 ♘f3!

The beginning of a remarkable manoeuvre. What is the weakest point in Black's position? It is the g5 square, since it can no longer be defended by a pawn on h6. Short therefore dispatches his knight to this square, where it will loom threateningly over Black's kingside.

11 ... a6
 12 ♙e2 ♙c7
 13 0-0-0 b5
 14 ♘g5

Completing his plan, and just in time, since Black was threatening 14...b4 15 ♘a4 ♘xe4.

14 ... ♙a5

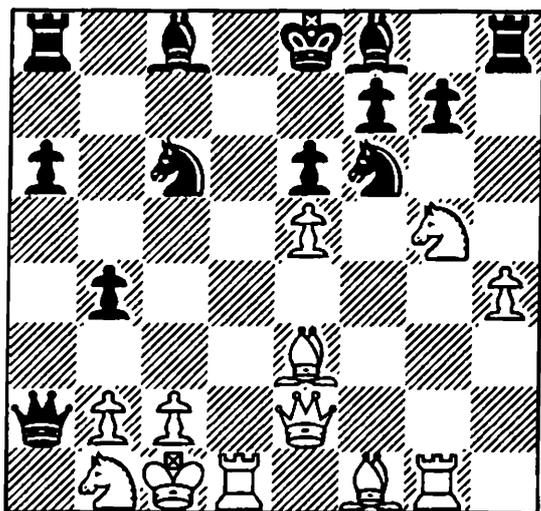
It is better not to waste time with 14... ♖xh4, when 15 f4 follows with the same plan of attack as in the game. The struggle will almost certainly be decided in a middlegame mêlée, so being a pawn up would be of little relevance, while the time lost in gaining the material could prove

significant. Instead Black plans to capture White's other rook's pawn and gain attacking chances against the enemy king. With hindsight, it seems better to mobilise the queenside immediately with 14... ♙d7 and 15... ♖c8.

15 f4! b4
 16 ♘b1 ♙xa2

So Black has carried out his plan. But can he survive White's attack?

17 e5! dxe5
 18 fxe5



18 ... ♘d5

Taking the second pawn would be disastrous: 18... ♘xe5 19 ♙g2 ♘c4 (if 19... ♘d5 20 ♙xd5 exd5 21 ♙d4 f6 22 ♙xe5 tears Black apart, or if 19... ♖b8 20 ♙d4 ♘c4 21 ♙c6+, transposing to 19... ♘c4) 20 ♙d4 ♖b8 21 ♙c6+ ♙d7 (21... ♘d7 22 ♘xe6! fxe6 23 ♙xe6+ ♙d8 with many ways to win for White, the most interesting perhaps being 24 ♙b6+ ♘4xb6 - or it's mate in two - 25 ♙xa2) 22 ♙xd7+ ♘xd7 23 ♘xe6! fxe6 24 ♙xe6+ with a

quick mate after 24...♔e7 25 ♖xg7 or 24...♕d8 25 ♖f6+.

19 ♖g2 ♔e7

Now Black wants to eliminate the white knight with ...♖xg5!, play ...g6 in reply to the recapture hxg5 (thereby ruling out a white breakthrough with the pawn sacrifice g6) and after ...♖d7, ...♗c8 and ...b3, to start a winning attack on White's king. Black's pieces would be solidly entrenched on the white squares, and it would be very difficult for White to open lines to get at his opponent's king.

White is therefore facing a strong positional threat. Immediate and resolute action is called for. He must exploit his lead in development to disrupt his opponent's plans. Otherwise, in a couple of moves he could end up in a lost position.

20 ♘xf7!

This ensures the position will never be closed.

20 ... ♔xf7

21 ♖e4!!

This is one of my favourite moves. White has just sacrificed a piece and now calmly centralises his bishop, as if to say to his opponent: 'It's your move. What can you do?'

Although Black is nominally a piece up, he faces great difficulties because his heavy pieces, the rooks and queen, are so ineffectively placed to help defend his king. The queen bolsters d5 and ties down White's knight on b1

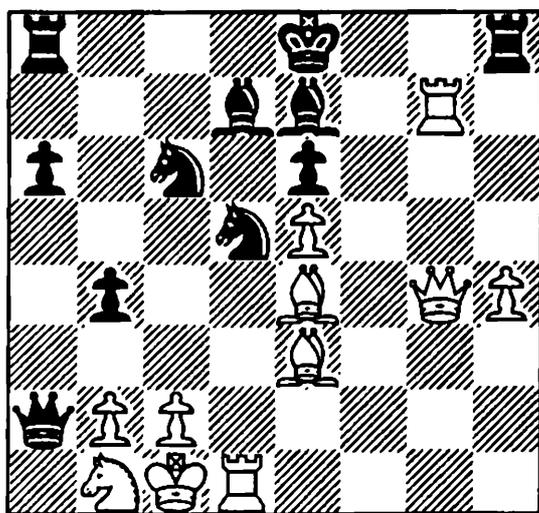
from joining in the attack, but the main impression is of a piece marooned on a distant square, waiting to take the lead role in a future attack on her opponent's king, but badly misplaced for the present task: desperate defence of her own king. The rooks are also spectators as the black king flees for his life across the board.

21 ... ♔e8

There was an immediate threat of 22 ♖g6+ when 22...♔g8 23 ♗f3 ♘d8 24 ♖df1 will be fatal after ♖f7+. Black is in principle right to run with his king towards the queenside, where most of the other black pieces are.

22 ♖xg7 ♖d7

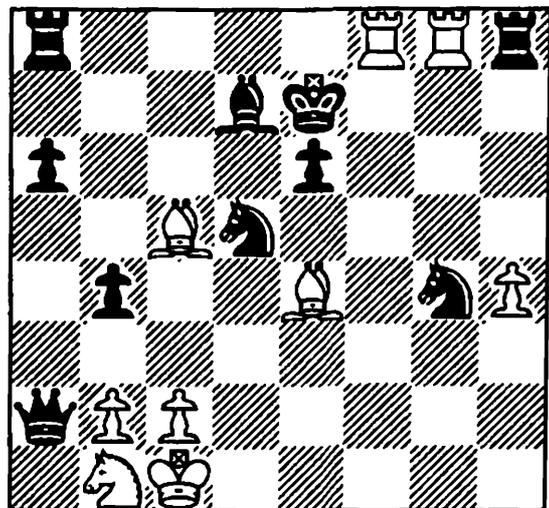
23 ♗g4!



Now the queen joins in the attack. White plays with a delightful unconcern for the material balance. If now 23...♘xe3 24 ♖g8+ wins: 24...♖xg8 25 ♗xg8+ ♖f8 26 ♖g6+ ♔d8 (26...♔e7 27 ♗f7+ mates) 27 ♗xf8+ ♔c7 28 ♖xd7+ ♔xd7 29 ♗d6+ ♔c8 30 ♗xc6+ ♔b8 31 ♗b6+ and after

32 ♖xe3 White has a big material plus. Or if instead 24...♙f8 White has the pretty move 25 ♖g7!! threatening mate by capturing either bishop. And no, Black cannot respond with the equally brilliant 25...0-0-0!!

Black could also try 23...♘xe5, but a more modest appetite is no healthier for the black king. Matanovic now recommends 24 ♖xe7+, but 24 ♖g8+ looks stronger. Black now loses after both 24...♙f7? 25 ♖g7 mate and 24...♖xg8 25 ♖xg8+ ♙f8 26 ♙xd5 exd5 27 ♙c5! There is a beautiful refutation of his third choice, 24...♙f8: 25 ♖f1!! ♘xg4 26 ♖fxf8+ ♙e7 27 ♙c5 mate!



An amazing demonstration of the power of rooks and bishops against a king. Remove all of White's pieces except the bishop on c5 and the rook on f8, and it will still be mate.

In the game, Black continued the flight of his king, but the end was near.

23 ... ♙d8

24 ♙xd5 exd5

25 e6

Opening up the dark-squared diagonal h2-b8, along which the queen can invade Black's position.

25 ... ♙e8

26 ♙b6+ ♙c8

27 ♖f4!

The black king has finally arrived on the queenside, and finds it is no more a safe refuge than the centre or kingside. There is no good answer to the threat of 28 ♖c7 mate, since if 27...♙d8, 28 ♖c7+ ♙b8 29 ♖a7+! mates in two moves.

Now the three pieces whose laziness has spelt doom for Black's king all suddenly spring to life. But it is late, much too late.

27 ... ♖a7

The beginning and the end of the rook's career.

28 ♙xa7 ♖xh4

29 ♖g3

So White's play wasn't perfect after all. If his queen had gone to g3 at move 27 the game would have ended one move sooner, since Black would have been deprived of his irrelevant attack on White's queen. But this is a very minor blemish on an excellent display by Short.

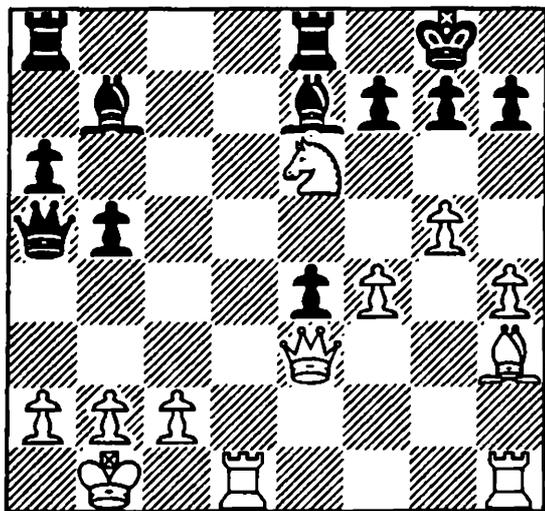
29 ... ♖c4

30 ♖xe7

This would also have been the reply to 29...♘xa7. Now 30...♘xe7 31 ♖b8 is mate, so Black resigned.

2 Attacking the castled king

The next diagram is taken from another Short-Ljubojevic encounter, this time at Reykjavik 1987. It is White to move.



White's knight is attacked, and after the apparently forced retreat 22 ♖d4 Black can play ...♗c5 with a good position: the two bishops, a passed pawn in the centre, and an annoying pin on White's knight.

What a pity the knight must retreat! On e6 it eyes g7, the most vulnerable square in Black's kingside. If the white f-pawn were already on f5, then a sacrifice 22 ♖xg7! ♗xg7 23 f6+ would be possible, ripping open Black's defences. But of course the pawn is only on f4.

Nevertheless, Short found a way to justify his kingside pawn advances. He ignored the threat to his knight and played:

22 h5!

Once again the time element is the key to the position. Short has judged correctly that he can give

a vital impetus to his attack by ignoring Black's threat to his knight.

If now 22...fxe6, then 23 ♗xe6+ ♖h8 24 h6! demonstrates the power of a pawn avalanche against an enemy king. All the defensive pawn cover is torn away. Black is immediately mated after 24...gxh6? or 24...g6? by 25 ♕d4+, while 24...♗f8 25 hxg7+ ♗xg7 26 ♖xh7+! ♖xh7 27 ♕h3+ ♗h6 28 ♕xh6 is also mate. A similar variation occurs after 24...♗c5: 25 hxg7+ ♗xg7 26 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 27 ♕h3+ ♖g7 28 ♕h6 mate.

22 ... ♗d8

Note how 22 h5! has destroyed the career of this bishop. After 22 ♖d4? ♗c5 it would have been excellently placed, and Black would have had good dark-square control. Instead, by remaining on e6 the knight denies the bishop the c5 square and also keeps open the d4 square for White's queen. Hence, White has achieved, or rather made permanent, his ascendancy over the dark squares in the centre; the enemy piece which could contest this control is idly placed on d8.

23 ♖d7!

Seizing the seventh rank with gain of time. White's attack has gained decisive momentum. If now 23...fxe6 then 24 ♖xb7 intending 25 ♕xe4 and 26 ♗xe6+, when Black's position crumbles.

23 ... ♗c6

24 ♕d4!

The g7 point comes under pressure both direct and indirect: 24...fxe6 25 ♖xg7 is mate. And if 24...♖xe6 then Short intended simply 25 ♔xe6 ♔xd7 26 ♖xd7, and Black cannot defend against both 27 ♖e8 mate and 27 ♖xf7+. For example, if Black tries 26...♔b6 27 ♖xf7+ ♔h8 28 h6 ♔d4 then White mates in a way we have already seen: 29 hxg7+ ♔xg7 30 ♖xh7+ ♔xh7 31 ♖h5+.

24 ... ♔f6

A last attempt to confuse White.

25 gxf6 ♔xd7

26 ♖xd7 ♖b6

27 ♖xg7

The key square finally collapses.

27 ... ♖ed8

28 ♖g4 ♔h8

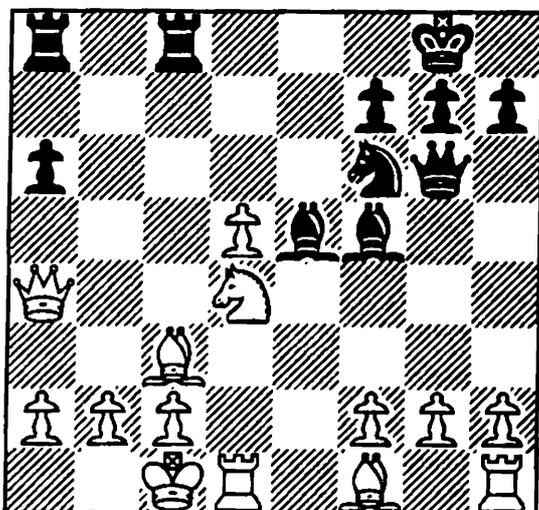
29 ♖e8!

A move for our clearance and interference section. White clears g7 to allow 30 ♖g7 mate, and interferes with the rook on d8 to prevent the defence 29...♖g8. At the same time the pawn on f6 is defended to stop 29...♖xf6, except of course at the cost of Black's queen. So the worst has come to pass as far as Black is concerned: he is mated on his weakest square. So here he resigned.

(see following diagram)

Black (to play) has sacrificed three pawns to open up lines against White's king. If it were White's move he could play 17 ♖xf5 (threatening 18 ♖e7+)

17...♖xf5 18 ♔d3, or the immediate 17 ♔d3. Then he would avoid most of the danger. However, it is Black's move, and he sacrificed more material, followed by a quiet move:



16 ... ♖xc3!

17 bxc3 ♖b8!

The threat is now 18...♔f4+ 19 ♖d2 ♖e4 20 ♖f3 ♖xc3! 21 ♖xf4 ♖b1 mate. If 18 g3 then 18...♖e4 threatens both the queen (19...♖b1+! 20 ♔xb1 ♖xc3+) and the king (19...♖h6+ 20 f4 ♔xf4+ leads to mate). Or if 18 ♖xf5 then 18...♖xf5 19 ♔d3 ♖xf2 20 ♖hf1 (or 20 ♖d2 ♔f4 21 ♖hd1 ♖b6! 22 ♖b3 ♔xd2+ 23 ♖xd2 ♖g1+ 24 ♖d1 ♖e3+ wins the queen) 20...♖e3+ 21 ♖d2 ♔xc3 22 ♖fd1 ♔b2+ 23 ♔b1 ♔a3+ 24 ♔a1 ♖e5+ mates.

White has no good defence. The game finished 18 ♖b3 (a sure sign that White's position is tottering; the last thing White wants to do is retreat his excellently placed knight) 18...♖e4! 19 ♖xa6 ♖g5+ 20 ♔b2 ♖xc3 21

♠e1 ♚d2 22 ♙d3 ♘e2+ 23 ♔b1 ♛c3 and White resigned (Hebden-Jadoul, Tarnby 1987).

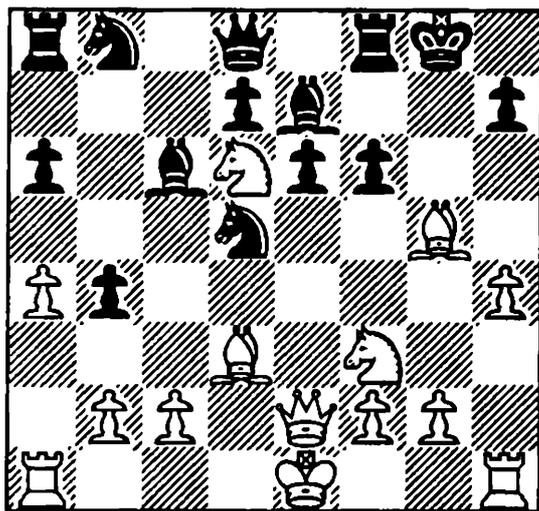
Note how the dark squares in White's position have completely collapsed. It is well known that opposite-coloured bishops favour the attacking side. What would White give here for a dark-squared bishop? Certainly more than the exchange that Black sacrificed for it!

This game is a good illustration of the maxim that to carry out a successful wing attack you need control of the centre. White was one move short - ♙d3! - of fighting for the e4 square. If he could have answered Black's 18...♘e4 with ♙xe4, White would have thwarted Black's attack. As it was, the black knight was unchallenged on e4, and this led to disaster on the dark squares (the square c3, the diagonal c1-h6 in particular). However, to complete White's demise a specific tactical feature was necessary: on a4 the queen was separated from d1 and b1 by the distance of a knight fork, so that the threat of ...♘xc3 was doubly powerful in some variations.

(see following diagram)

This position was reached (with White to move) after 14 moves in the game Volovik-Kozlov, USSR 1987, which began **1 e4 a6 2 d4 b5 3 ♘f3 ♙b7 4 ♙d3 ♘f6 5 ♛e2 e6 6 a4 c5 7 dxc5 ♙xc5 8 ♘bd2 b4 9 e5 ♘d5 10 ♘e4 ♙e7 11 ♙g5 0-0 12 ♘d6**

♙c6 13 h4 f6 14 exf6 gxf6



Black's kingside looks fragile but a decisive breakthrough can only be achieved if the white queen can be brought into the attack. If 15 ♛e4 then 15...f5 leads to nothing clear. How then can White gain the time he needs to carry his attack? The answer is by remembering that time often outweighs material. White made the clearance sacrifice

15 ♘e5!

opening the queen's path to h5. Now Black has a choice of which of three(!) white pieces to snaffle. He chose to capture the bishop.

In their analysis in *Informator* 44, Ulybin and Volovik show that capturing a knight also fails:

a) 15...fxe5 16 ♛h5 ♜f5 17 ♙xf5 exf5 18 ♛f7+ ♔h8 19 ♘e8 winning the queen or mating on g7. We can add the variation 16...e4 (instead of 16...♜f5) 17 ♙xe4 ♘f6 18 ♙xf6 ♙xe4 19 ♛g5+ ♙g6 20 ♙xe7 and White wins;

b) 15...♙xd6 16 ♙xh7+ ♔xh7?

17 ♖h5+ ♔g8 18 ♖g6+ ♔h8 19 ♙h6 ♗e7 20 ♙xf8 ♗xf8 21 ♜f7+ and again Black loses his queen. The best defence is 16...♔g7! when Ulybin and Kozlov analyse 17 ♜xc6 ♜xc6 18 ♖h5! and White has a fierce attack. But I find 17 ♜xc6 a rather wimpish move. Why develop Black's queenside and eliminate a harmless bishop for a strong knight? Is this really the way to conduct an attack? 17 ♖g4! looks more fearsome, threatening 18 ♙h6+! when it is mate next move whichever bishop is captured (this is the answer to moves such as 17...♞h8, or 17...f5, while 17...♙xe5 18 ♙h6+ ♔f7 19 ♖g7+ ♔e8 20 ♙g6+ also mates). If 17...♔xh7 then 18 ♖h5+ transposes to 16...♔xh7? above. Or 17...♔h8 18 ♖h5 with a quick mate. The prettiest end is 17...♗e8 18 ♙xf6+! ♔xf6 19 ♖g5 mate.

The game ended quickly after

15 ... fxc5
16 ♖h5 ♞f5

If 16...♜f6 then 17 ♖xc5+ and mate in two moves.

17 ♙xf5 exf5
18 ♖f7+ ♔h8
19 ♜g6+!

And Black resigned since it is discovered checkmate next move. The rook on h1 covers itself in glory without moving once in the whole game! Churchill's famous remark that some are born great, others achieve greatness and others still have greatness thrust

upon them seems apposite here.

3 A counter blast in favour of greed

In a book on miniatures, it is inevitable that the time-space and time-material 'battles' appear to be won most often by time. The player who delays his development to snatch material or achieve some other strategical purpose is seen to be blown away by an opponent who has rapidly mobilised his pieces. After playing through the examples in this book, the reader may wonder why Black ever risks the Sicilian Defence, since it seems clearly suicidal, or why White ever allows the King's Indian Defence, since he is lucky if he reaches move 25. Of course, this is an illusion. Black often survives White's attack in the Sicilian and then has the better middlegame or endgame; and more often than not it is Black who suffers in the King's Indian after some alert defensive moves by White. But to win takes more than 30 moves.

Lest the reader is mesmerised by the beauty of sacrifice and loses touch with chess reality, here we warmly recommend the judicious snatching of material. The great World Champion Steinitz, 'the father of positional chess' once said that 'a pawn ahead is worth a little trouble'. Steinitz certainly upheld this principle in his own games and almost always accepted gambits.

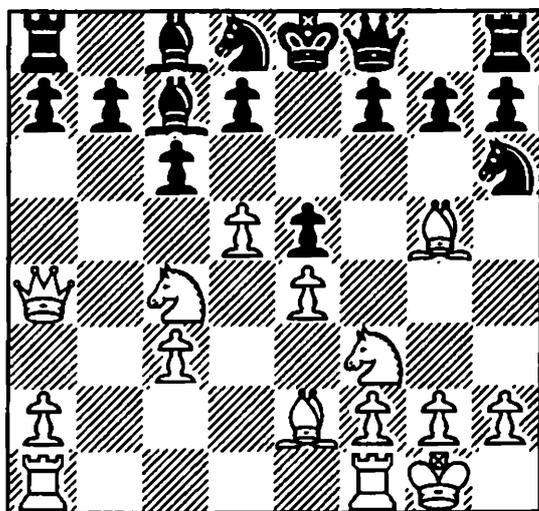
Nowadays, a heroic rearguard action, with all the defender's pieces on the back rank, is described, or even celebrated, as a 'Steinitzian Defence'.

And yet to modern eyes Steinitz's judgment of defensive positions sometimes seems extraordinarily poor. One can cite his World Championship match against Isidoro Gunsberg in 1890-91. Gunsberg was a dangerous tactician but not in Steinitz's class when it came to strategy or overall chess comprehension. Nevertheless, the final score in the match was an unconvincing 10½-8½ victory for Steinitz. Playing through the games of this match, you get the impression that if Steinitz could reach move 20 without a lost position he would win the game, due to his greater understanding of the middlegame. Of Gunsberg's four wins, the twelfth game is a good example of Steinitz's unsure play when facing a sacrifice.

of the Evans Gambit. The queen is exposed on this square and can be harried by White's pieces. Also, the knight on g8 is deprived of a natural square. 6...♚f6, which shows a fundamental lack of understanding of the dynamics of the position.

7	d4	♘h6
8	♙g5	♚d6
9	d5	♘d8
10	♚a4	♙b6
11	♘a3	c6
12	♙e2!	♙c7
13	♘c4	♚f8

The queen has been driven back and White's position is now overwhelming.



14	d6!	♙xd6
15	♘b6	♙b8
16	♚xa7	♘g4
17	♘h4	

A decisive strengthening of the attack.

17	...	♘e6
18	♙xg4	♘xg5
19	♘f5	♘e6
20	♙fd1	♙c7

I. Gunsberg-W. Steinitz

World Championship Match,
New York 1890-91, Game 12
Evans Gambit

1	e4	e5
2	♘f3	♘c6
3	♙c4	♙c5
4	b4	♙xb4
5	c3	♙a5
6	0-0	♚f6?

Steinitz's risky interpretation

21 ♖a8 ♜xa8
 22 ♚xa8 ♞d8
 23 ♜xd7+! ♚xd7
 24 ♜d1+ Black
 resigned

Steinitz was evidently not convinced by this comprehensive defeat as he stubbornly chose to repeat 6...♚f6 in the sixteenth game of the same match. This time his demise was even shorter:

I. Gunsberg-W. Steinitz

World Championship Match,
 New York 1890-91, Game 16
Evans Gambit

1 e4 e5
 2 ♖f3 ♖c6
 3 ♙c4 ♙c5
 4 b4 ♙xb4
 5 c3 ♙a5
 6 0-0 ♚f6?
 7 d4 h6

'Improving' on 7...♖h6.

8 ♚a4 ♙b6
 9 ♙b5 ♖ge7
 10 ♙a3 exd4
 11 e5

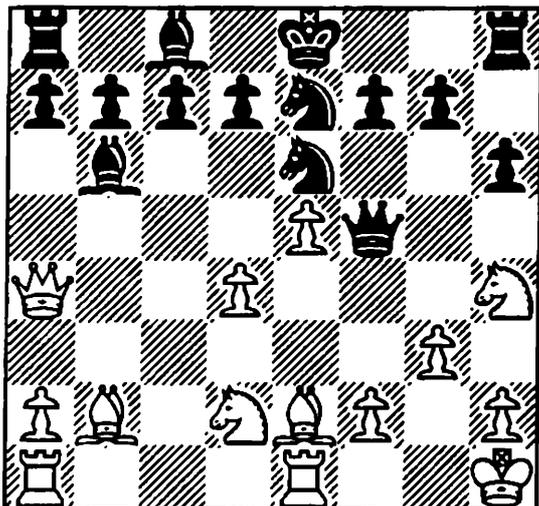
The queen proves a target.

11 ... ♚g6
 12 cxd4 ♖d5
 13 ♜e1 ♖f4
 14 g3 ♚g4
 15 ♖bd2 ♖h3+

Black is playing without his queenside, so it is no surprise this attack fails.

16 ♙g2 ♖g5
 17 ♙b2 ♖e7
 18 ♙e2 ♖e6

19 ♚h1 ♚f5
 20 ♖h4



20 ... ♚xf2?

Perhaps a pawn is worth a little trouble, but not this one.

21 ♖e4!

And Black resigned since the queen is lost after 21...♚e3 22 ♙f1. His position was difficult anyway before the blunder.

Games such as these have inspired the false dictum 'never snatch pawns in the opening' or put more formally 'complete your development before you try to win material'. Here is a modern example, also an Evans Gambit, which reinforces the impression that the white b-pawn is somehow poisoned:

G. Kasparov-V. Anand

Novgorod 1995
Evans Gambit

1 e4 e5
 2 ♖f3 ♖c6
 3 ♙c4 ♙c5

4 b4 ♖xb4
5 c3 ♗e7

A modern refinement over 5...♗a5. Black avoids the danger of an 'offside' bishop and prepares to give back the pawn with 6 d4 ♖a5 7 ♖xe5 ♖xc4 8 ♖xc4 d5 when chances are roughly equal.

6 d4 ♖a5

Chasing the white bishop from its strong diagonal.

7 ♗e2!? exd4
8 ♕xd4!

An unusual looking move which shows this game is of 1995 rather than 1895 'vintage'. The 'classical' move here is 8 cxd4, building a pawn centre and clearing c3 for the knight on b1. But Kasparov has carefully examined the specific, tactical features of the position, and sees a way to redeploy his queen to a good and safe attacking square on the kingside.

8 ... ♖f6
9 e5 ♖c6
10 ♕h4 ♖d5
11 ♕g3

The queen is a notoriously difficult piece to fit into an aggressive strategy. If she leads from the front she may be exposed to danger; if she remains safely at the rear then the attack is greatly weakened by the absence of her help. The queen needs a happy medium: a safe haven in the midst of the action, from which she can direct and aid the attack. Here g3 is such a square. Now g7

is once again attacked and White is able to force a breach in Black's kingside.

11 ... g6
12 0-0

See the note to move six. Only now does White pause to castle, since there are no attacking moves or plans that require immediate completion. White's attacking play hasn't resulted in an immediate blitzkrieg, but he maintains a space advantage and pressure on Black's centre. Black has to solve the problem of how to complete his development without allowing the position to open up before he is ready.

12 ... ♖b6
13 c4 d6

Here in *Informer 63* Kasparov gives the laconic recommendation 13...d5 14 cxd5 ♕xd5 15 ♖c3 as 'equal and unclear' or 13...♖a4!? without comment. Perhaps he expects to play this position again and is reticent to give away any secrets.

14 ♗d1 ♖d7
Defending against 15 c5.

15 ♗h6

White sacrifices a second pawn in order to keep Black's king bottled up in the centre.

(see following diagram)

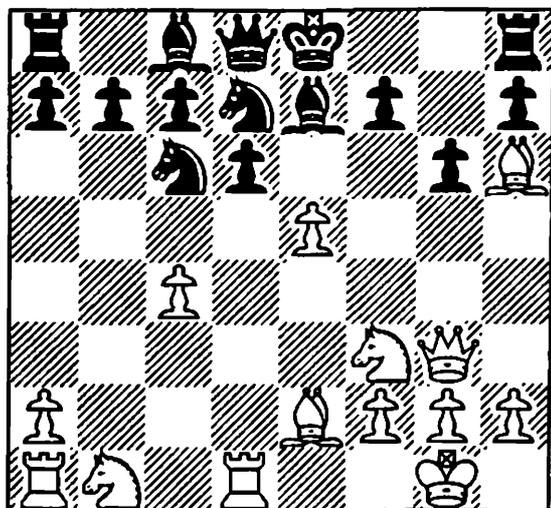
15 ... ♖xe5!

A move that would have warmed Steinitz's heart.

16 ♖xe5 ♖xe5
17 ♖c3

White would gain nothing concrete after 17 ♗g7 ♗f6 18 ♗xh8

♙xh8. Black would have a bishop and two pawns for the exchange plus a solid position, while White's attack would have fizzled out. So Kasparov continues in gambit style.



17 ... f6
18 c5!

The only way to continue the attack, but a strong one. Now after 18...♙d7, continuing his development, the position remains unclear. Rogers in the *British Chess Magazine* reports that Anand and Kasparov agreed after the game that 18...♙d7 would give Black an 'excellent position'. In his *Informator* notes, Kasparov makes no mention of 18...♙d7. Is this another example of a professional not willing to give away any secrets? Or is it that Kasparov doesn't want to sully his creative achievement by pointing out that even after he has awarded himself three exclamation marks, Anand, with the black pieces, has achieved at least equality?

Whatever the reason, the result of this omission in Kasparov's notes is to perpetuate the myth that snatching material is intrinsically bad.

In the game Anand blundered, leading to a typical Kasparov attack:

18 ... ♘f7?
19 cxd6 cxd6
20 ♚e3!

Kasparov has an exceptional mastery of every chess piece. He judges that it is now right for the queen to leave her 'observation post' on g3 and penetrate the black kingside.

20 ... ♘xh6

The threat was 21 ♙g7 and 22 ♙xf6, or, more powerfully, 21 ♘d5 and 22 ♘xf6 mate!

21 ♚xb6 ♙f8

Keeping the queen out of g7, but it finds another way through.

22 ♚e3+ ♙f7

23 ♘d5 ♙e6

This loses quickly, but White has a decisive attack anyway after 24 ♖ac1 and 25 ♖c7+. Black has no time to coordinate his pieces.

24 ♘f4 ♚e7

25 ♖e1! Black

resigned

He is helpless. If 25...♙h6 then 26 ♙c4! wins, while 25...g5 26 ♙h5+ or 25...♙d7 26 ♙c4+ ♙e8 27 ♚d2 or 25...♖e8 26 ♙b5 ♙d7 27 ♚b3+ are all fatal.

Three Evans Gambits, and three crushing wins for White. But objectively, both Steinitz and

Anand were justified in capturing the pawn: they simply failed to defend correctly in the resulting position. A century ago defensive play was of a much lower standard than nowadays, which explains why even a great mind like Steinitz had such problems. As for Anand, he was no doubt still in a state of shock at facing this ancient defence when he blundered.

Lasker, who succeeded Steinitz as World Champion, had similar ideas about accepting gambit pawns. Discussing the position after 1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♜c6 3 ♙b5 ♜f6 4 0-0 in *Common Sense in Chess* he muses about the capture 4...♜xe4: 'Is Black to accept the offer? I consider this matter at some length, because it frequently presents itself, for instance, in all gambits...' and he concludes: 'You should accept the sacrifice of an important pawn, as the e-pawn, d-pawn or c- and f-pawns. If you do not, as a rule, the pawn which you have rejected will become very troublesome to you.'

So Lasker philosophises not only that you should capture gambit pawns but that you must capture them to achieve a free position.

Capablanca is of a similar opinion: 'Before development has been completed no piece should be moved more than once, *unless it is essential in order to obtain either material advantage, or to*

secure freedom of action.' (*Chess Fundamentals*, Cadogan, 1994)

It is certainly far better to suffer an occasional defeat than to be a coward who declines all sacrifices 'on principle'. You should have the courage of your convictions rather than spend your whole chess career afraid of ghosts. Take the following example.

A. Shirov-E. Bareev
Novgorod 1994
Closed Sicilian

1	e4	e6
2	d3	d5
3	♞d2	♞f6
4	♞gf3	c5
5	g3	b6
6	c3	♙a6
7	c4	dxe4
8	dxe4	♙b7
9	♙g2	♚c7
10	e5	♞g4
11	0-0	♞c6
12	♞e4	♜d8
13	♚a4	♚d7
14	♙g5	

(see following diagram)

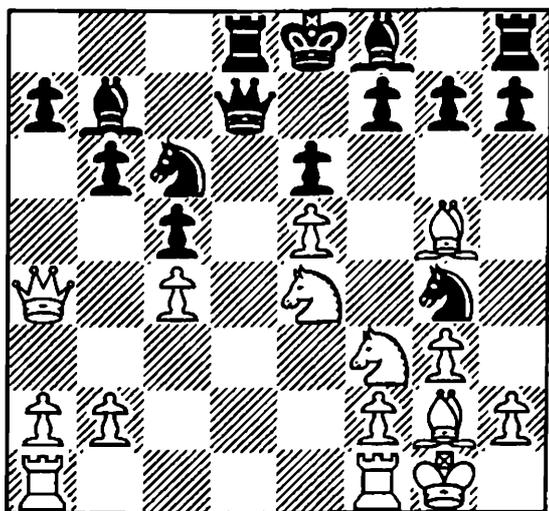
14 ... ♞cxe5??

Here 14...♞d4! is fine, but why not win a pawn?

15 ♜ad1! **Black resigned**

Loss of the queen or mate follows. A terrible defeat, but Bareev was right to take the pawn since he saw no refutation! Many lesser players would have been

too terrified to take any pawn against such a feared attacker as Shirov, even if they couldn't foresee any evil consequence. Bareev lost, but clearly he isn't afraid of reputations and trusts his own analysis. That is why he is one of the finest players in the world.



To summarise: always capture pawns and pieces that are offered to you, if you cannot see a clear refutation. Don't be fooled into thinking that sacrifices have some magical property by the short, crisp attacking games that appear in newspapers, magazines and books (such as this one!). When a

strong player captures a pawn and wins a long dour endgame, as Bareev for example has done countless times, no one is interested. But when he makes a terrible oversight and loses quickly the game is printed everywhere. As far as I can recall, Bobby Fischer only lost one game in the Najdorf Poisoned Pawn Variation throughout his career. But this unique loss was against Boris Spassky in their 1972 match, a (very) high profile defeat which perpetuates the myth that capturing the b-pawn is a heinous sin.

We can expect a renaissance in the Evans Gambit after Kasparov used it to defeat Anand (and soon afterwards Piket) in convincing style. However, the new adherents of this system will soon find that there is nothing intrinsically strong about the pawn sacrifice. It is how well they play the resulting positions that matters.

So let's end by quoting Tartakower's maxim that 'it is always better to sacrifice one's opponent's pieces!'

4 Opening (and Closing) a Can of Worms

In 1895, the reigning World Champion Emanuel Lasker gave a series of chess lectures in London. These talks covered many aspects of chess strategy: the laws of defence and attack, how to play the openings and what to do in the endgame. Eventually these lectures were published in book form under the title *Common Sense In Chess* (Dover, 1965).

As the title suggests, Lasker was a great believer in the value of logical reasoning in chess. He strove to find relationships between all fields of play, and simplify all the vagaries of chess strategy into a few governing principles. He managed to simplify all chess moves into three kinds:

a) developing moves, i.e. bringing new force into play;

b) attacking moves, i.e. making pieces do something, or work;

c) moves serving defensive purposes, i.e. undoing the work of the hostile men.

The third definition strikes me as particularly valuable, since it not only explains obvious defensive moves, but also illuminates

positional manoeuvring which as often as not is an attempt to undo the work of the enemy pieces by keeping them out of key squares. It also reminds us that we should be keeping a watch on the opponent's plans and ideas and not become engrossed in our own schemes. The easiest way to lose a game is to ignore your opponent's threats.

The best illustration of Lasker's principle of 'doing' and 'undoing' is the theme of line opening and line closing. This is the subject of the present chapter.

J. Ehvest-Pr. Nikolic

Reykjavik 1988

Ruy Lopez, Closed Variation

1	e4	e5
2	♘f3	♘c6
3	♙b5	a6
4	♙a4	♘f6
5	0-0	♙e7
6	♖e1	b5
7	♙b3	0-0
8	c3	d6
9	h3	a5
10	d3	a4
11	♙c2	♙d7

12 ♖bd2 ♚b8?

Nikolic plans to redeploy the queen to b7 - where it proves to be uselessly placed. While Black is wasting time on this manoeuvre, White builds up a menacing attack. Ehlvest recommends the solid alternative 12...♞e8, which prepares to fianchetto with ...♙f8, ...g6 and ...♙g7, thereby strengthening the king's defences.

13 d4 ♚b7

14 ♗f1 exd4?

Black is still looking for queenside counterplay and pressure against e4 to justify his queen manoeuvre. It seems that once a player, even a grandmaster, has embarked upon an incorrect plan it is very difficult to admit an error has been made, and switch to a more promising strategy. But this is what Black should do, and think defensively with 14...♞e8. Conceding the centre looks wrong since it exposes Black to a huge attack.

15 cxd4 ♖b4

16 ♙b1 ♞ad8

17 ♗g3 ♞fe8

18 ♙d2 ♖a6

19 e5!

Now Black will pay for his failure to keep e5 as a pawn bastion.

19 ... dxe5

20 dxe5 ♗d5

21 ♗g5 h6

If 21...g6 then, according to his notes in *Informator* 46, Ehlvest had planned 22 ♚f3 ♞f8 23

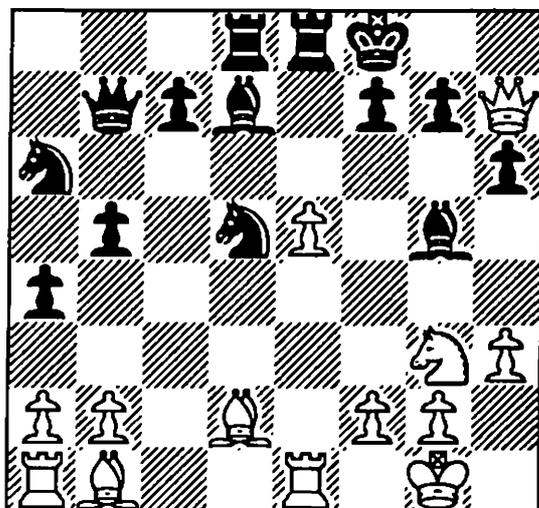
♗xh7! ♙xh7 24 ♚h5+ ♙g8 25 ♙xg6 fxg6 26 ♚xg6+ ♙h8 27 ♗h5 with a winning attack. He recommends 21...♙xg5, but this would be a horrible positional concession.

22 ♚c2 ♙xg5

Nevertheless, Black must play this move since 22...hxg5 allows mate in two, while after 22...g6, 23 ♗xf7! destroys the kingside. And Ehlvest analyses 22...f5 23 exf6 ♗xf6 24 ♗h5! as leading to a forced win.

23 ♚h7+ ♙f8

Now the black king is preparing to flee, and White has to ensure that he cuts off the escape route.



24 e6!

This is it! If now

a) 24...♙xe6 White completes his line opening strategy with 25 ♗f5! when 25...♙xf5 26 ♚h8 and 25...♗f6 26 ♚xg7 are both mate;

b) 24...♞xe6 allows a variant on the second mate above: 25 ♚h8+ ♙e7 26 ♗f5+ ♙f6 28

♖xg7.

In the second variation and in the game continuation 24 e6! has an important function in interfering with the ability of the bishop on d7 to eliminate a knight on f5. In this variation, Black's rook on e6 obstructed the bishop; in the game it is the black pawn on e6 that will block out the bishop.

If we recall Lasker's definition above, then it will be seen that Black's choice is either to allow White's pieces to do more work (by allowing the opening of the e-file, when the rook on e1 comes into action) or to allow the undoing of the work of the bishop on d7, as occurs in the game and in the second variation above: the bishop loses its influence over f5, with fatal consequences.

24 ... fxe6
25 ♖xg5 hxg5
26 ♖g6!

White makes sure his bishop isn't shut out of the game by the knight. Now since f7 is covered there is a threat of 27 ♖f5! and mate next move.

26 ... ♖f6

In contrast, Black cannot renew the influence of his bishop on the f5 square: 26...e5 27 ♖h8+ ♔e7 28 ♜xe5+ ♔d6 29 ♖xe8! ♔xe5 30 ♖xg7+ ♔d6 31 ♖e4+ ♔c6 32 ♖xd7+ is the most crushing method according to Ehlvest.

27 ♖h8+ ♖g8
28 ♖h7 ♜b8
29 ♖f5!

At last! Black resigned since it is mate next move.

A. Kosten-K. Berg
Naestved 1988
Caro-Kann Defence,
Panov-Botvinnik Attack

1	e4	c6
2	d4	d5
3	exd5	cxd5
4	c4	♖f6
5	♖c3	g6
6	♖b3	♖g7
7	cxd5	0-0
8	♖e2	b6
9	♖g5	♖b7
10	♖xf6	exf6
11	♖f3	♖a6
12	♖ge2	♖d6
13	0-0	♜fd8
14	♜ad1	f5
15	♜fe1	♖c7

Black now hopes to regain his sacrificed pawn when he will have a good position in view of the weakness of d4. However, White has a little surprise waiting for him.

16 ♖c1!

A paradoxical way to defend the d5 pawn. If now 16...♖xd5? then 17 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 18 ♖xd5 ♖xd5 19 ♜e8+! wins a rook. This is a very common tactical device, which the reader should look for in his own games.

16 ... ♜d7
17 ♖d3 ♖xd4?

But now Black really should capture the d5 pawn: 17...♖xd5

18 ♖e5 ♖xc3 19 ♜xc3 and, although Kosten claims a slight advantage for White here, it is negligible after 19...♞c7.

18 ♖b4 ♙xc3?

If Black's previous move was inaccurate, then this is suicidal. Under no circumstances should he gratuitously exchange his vital bishop. After 18...♙g7 19 ♖c6 he would have had an uncomfortable, but safe, position.

19 ♜xc3 ♖a6

20 ♖c6

Now Black's dark squares on the kingside are painfully weak, and this dominant knight cannot be shifted. The interest now rests on how White will exploit his advantage.

20 ... ♞c8

21 ♜e3 ♞a8

Black cannot undertake anything.

22 b4!

Depriving the black knight of c5.

22 ... ♖xb4?

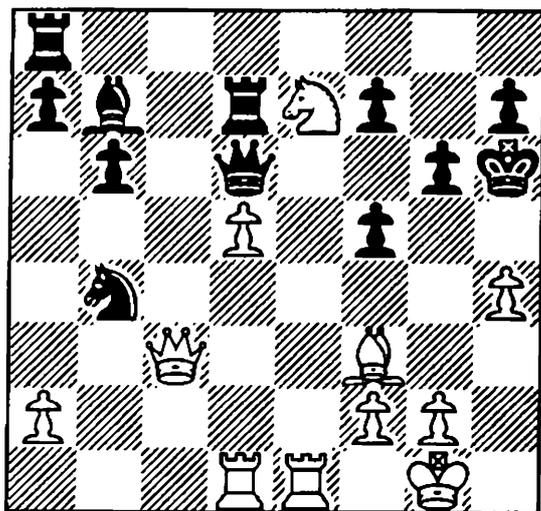
Black demise has been in three stages. First, a minor inaccuracy; then a serious positional misjudgment; and now a crowning tactical blunder. He should wait patiently, though White can strengthen his game with 23 h4 planning 24 h5. Black could only prevent the further advance of this pawn with 24...h5, but then after 25 a3 White would be ready to exploit the dark-square weaknesses in Black's kingside with 26 ♜g5, threatening 27 ♙xh5.

Interesting sacrificial variations would arise for White, but none as interesting as those that now appear in the game...

23 ♖e7+ ♙g7

24 ♜c3+ ♙h6

If 24...♜f6 then 25 ♜xb4 wins a knight, since e7 is doubly defended. Or if 24...f6, then 25 ♞e6 will be decisive.



The position is ripe for a combination because:

1. White's pieces are all on optimum centre squares;

2. There are no black defenders on the kingside; and

3. The dark squares in Black's kingside remain severely weak.

The sacrifice which follows is an excellent example of interference. It is also a reminder of another theme that we have explored: when the dark squares have fallen to the opponent, structural collapse normally follows on the white squares.

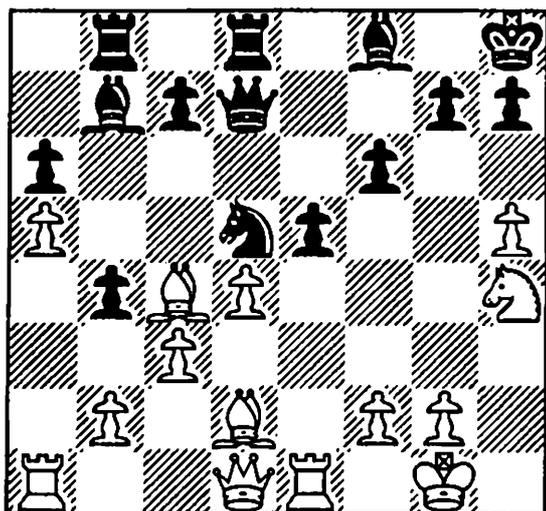
25 ♖xf5+! gxf5

26 ♞e6+!

And Black resigned since

26...fxe6 27 ♖f6 is mate. The pawn on e6 cuts off, or interferes with, the queen's defence of f6. In Lasker's terminology, White's rook sacrifice undid the work of the black queen by severing her link with the f6 square.

Here are two episodes from the career of Michael Adams which illustrate his proficiency with the themes of interference and clearance.



This position was reached in the game Adams-N. Tumurhuyag, Moscow Olympiad 1994. Here White played

23 ♘g6+!

and Black saw no reason not to capture the knight (in fact, he has little choice, since if 23...♔g8 then 24 ♘xf8 followed by 25 dxe5, with a winning advantage for White). After the forced sequence

23 ... hxc6

24 hxc6 ♔d6

25 ♖h5+ ♔g8

White launched the second wave of his sacrificial attack:

26 dxe5 ♔xe5

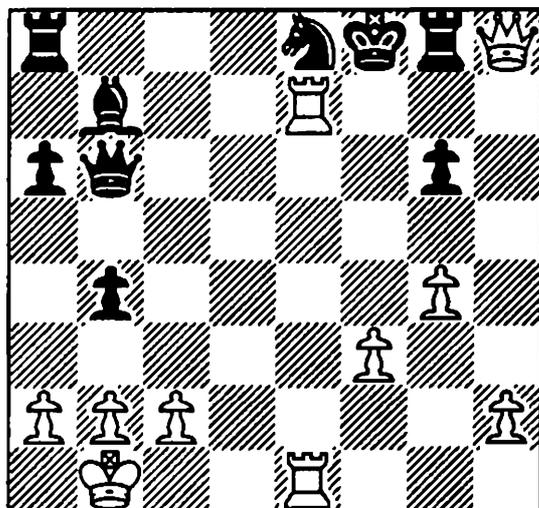
27 ♖xe5! fxe5

28 ♔g5 ♖e6

The only way to guard against mate in two. Now after 29 ♖h7+ ♔f8 30 ♖h8+ ♖g8 there is no win for White who remains a rook down. How is White to continue? He threw a spanner in the works with the beautiful

29 ♔e7!!

This threatens mate in one, and if the bishop is captured then the black queen cuts off the king's escape route via e7. Black resigned since it is mate in two: 29...♖xe7 30 ♖h7+ ♔f8 31 ♖h8 mate. An unusual twist to the theme of blocking lines.



This position (with White to move) arose in Adams-Comas Fabrego, Adelaide 1988. White has sacrificed two pieces to achieve this attacking position. At first glance things look unclear, but in fact White now uncorked

27 ♖e5!!

after which he wins in all lines.

27...♖g7 allows mate in two beginning 28 ♖xe8+ because the rook on g7 blocks an escape square. In the game, Black played

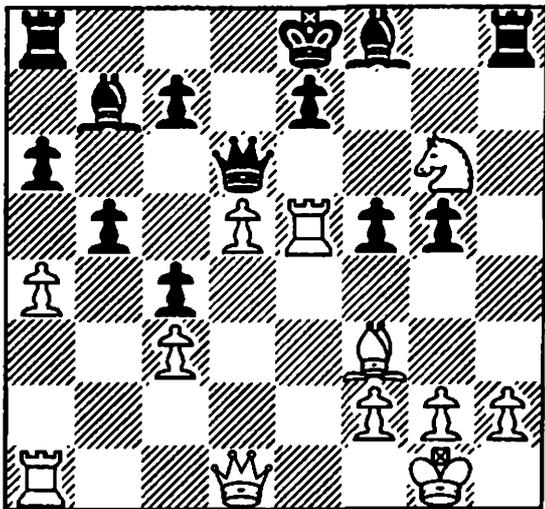
27 ... ♘g7

and may have been feeling quite happy with his position. Until, that is, White replied

28 ♖f7+!

clearing e7 for his queen... A simple example of a clearance sacrifice.

Our next example is White to play in Belyavsky-Dlugy, Tunis 1985.



If 20 ♖e6? then 20...♙xh2+ is awkward. So let's take the rook:

20 ♘xh8 ♙xe5

Now 21 ♗h5+ is good after 21...♚d8?? 22 ♘f7+, but not so effective after 21...♚d7! when Black has a clear advantage - both d5 and h8 are attacked. Can we somehow deprive the black king of d7? The answer is yes:

21 d6!!

and if 21...♗xf3 then 22 d7+ ♚d8 23 ♘f7+ not only wins the

queen, it is also mate! Black has no good move, e.g. if 21...0-0-0 then 22 ♗xb7+ ♚xb7 23 ♘f7 wins a rook, or if 21...♙xh8 22 ♗xb7 ♖d8 23 dxc7! ♖xd1+ 24 ♖xd1 and next move White will have a new queen. In the game Black tried

21 ... ♖d8

but resigned after

22 ♗h5+

since 22...♚d7 23 dxc7+ ♚xc7 24 ♙xd8+! and 25 ♘f7+ wins a rook.

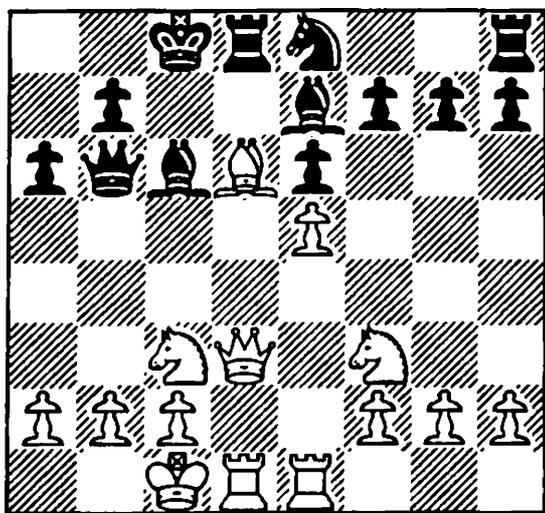
This finish illustrates several of the themes examined in this book, for example pawn power and line opening, but what I find most interesting is how the knight on h8 proves to be excellently coordinated with the other white pieces. If we believe the adage that 'a knight on the rim is dim', then a knight in the corner should be barely visible. But not this one! In fact Suba ascribes to a theory that a knight is best placed in the corner rather than the centre, since it only dissipates its energy over two squares rather than eight!

Now let's take a look at Ljubojevic-Timman, Amsterdam 1988, with White to move.

(see following diagram)

White has an extra pawn, but Black is threatening to regain it immediately with 14...♘xd6 15 exd6 ♗xd6, when in view of his possession of the two bishops he

has a good position. White cannot retreat his bishop since it is pinned against the queen. So it seems he must acquiesce to a slightly worse game after, say, 14 ♖e2, which at least defends the f2 pawn.



However, Ljubojevic has no intention of defending passively. Instead he comes up with a startling move based on the theme of interference:

14 ♘d5! ♙xd5

There is of course no choice.

15 ♙xe7

Now that the black bishop has been enticed to d5, the pin is broken and White's bishop has regained its freedom of movement.

15 ... ♞d7

Black's dreams of an easy game have vanished, and he now faces a difficult defence. As is well known, in a middlegame position the presence of opposite-coloured bishops often favours a player who has the initiative and is attacking his opponent's king. This is because the attacker, if he

concentrates all his fire at an enemy point which is on the same colour square as his bishop, in effect has an extra piece: the defender's bishop cannot aid the defence of such a square. Therefore, the attacker has a good chance of gaining control of the key square or making a breakthrough.

In this specific instance, the dark squares around Black's king are very weak since they lack pawn cover. So White's strategy is clear: a direct attack on the enemy king, using the dark squares.

16 ♛a3!

An excellent move, and much better than the routine 16 ♙a3?

Observe how much better placed the queen is on a3 rather than d3. On a3 she not only defends the bishop, but also gives it extra attacking options (see the note to move 18). She also has designs of her own on the weak dark squares around Black's king. On d3, she was in danger of a sudden discovered attack from Black's rook, and also stood in the way of White's own rooks if they wanted to start an attack on Black's king along the third rank (♞e3 and ♞c3, or ♞d4 and ♞b4). In other words, 16 ♛a3 has improved the coordination of White's pieces.

16 ... ♜xf2

He must regain his pawn.

17 ♞d2

Besides forcing the queen's retreat, the rook has a more

sinister purpose on d2, as soon becomes apparent.

17 ... ♖b6
18 ♘d4!

Bringing up the reserves. Note how all of White's pieces are now on dark squares, where they are safe from attack by Black's bishop. Black's queen, on the other hand, finds the dark squares dangerous: if 18...♘c7, 19 ♙c5! and she has no escape square!

18 ... ♔f6!

A bid to break White's stranglehold on the dark squares.

19 ♙c5 ♖c7
20 c4!

Very thematic. White's pieces are on their optimum squares, so it is now time to use the pawns to strengthen the attack. The remainder of the game demonstrates that when the dark squares collapse, there is no refuge for pieces on the light squares. White now rips open the c-file and puts Black in a devastating pin.

20 ... ♙xc4

Rajkovic gives the alternative 20...fxe5 21 cxd5 exd4 22 ♖c2 ♖f4+ 23 ♔b1 ♔b8 24 dxe6, which is truly horrible for Black.

21 ♖c2

So this was the idea behind White's 17th move!

21 ... fxe5
22 ♘xe6!

The logic of the position says that White should win, since Black's rook on h8 is out of the game and his other pieces are all awkwardly placed. Besides,

White's pressure on the c-file must be decisive. Nevertheless, White has to proceed carefully: his own king is slightly vulnerable and in pressing home his advantage he will be required place his pieces on undefended squares.

22 ... ♖c6

If 22...♙xe6 then 23 ♙b6 wins the queen.

23 ♖xe5!

The only move, since 23 ♖xc4? ♖xe6 allows Black to escape the worst.

23 ... ♘c7!

Black carries on wriggling.

24 ♖xc4

Here 24 ♘xc7 seems to win, for example 24...♖xc7 25 ♖xc4 ♖xe5 26 ♙d6+ and wins. Ljubojevic may have been afraid of 24...♖hd8, counterattacking against d1. However, 25 ♖e1! then seems to be a complete answer, when the spectacular 25...♖e4, hoping for 26 ♙f2?? ♖xe1+! and mate, can be answered very simply by 26 ♖e3! ♖xe3+ 27 ♙xe3 ♖xc7 28 ♙b6, winning the exchange.

24 ... ♘xe6

25 ♖h3

This puts Black in another pin.

25 ... ♘c7

26 b3!

Defending his rook and making a bolt-hole for the king.

26 ... ♖f6

27 ♙d4 ♖hd8?

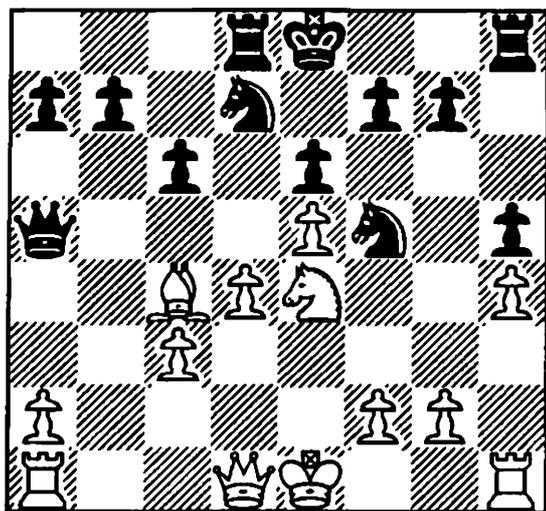
Black finally collapses under the continuous pressure. He had

to try 27...♚f1+, but after 28 ♔b2 there are no more checks and he is threatened with 29 ♖b6, 29 ♜e7 or 29 ♜ec5.

28 ♜xc7+! Black resigned

He loses his queen after 28...♔xc7 29 ♜c5+. An excellent game by Ljubojevic, despite the slight blemish at move 24.

Here is an example from Chandler-Speelman, British Championship 1985, with White to move.

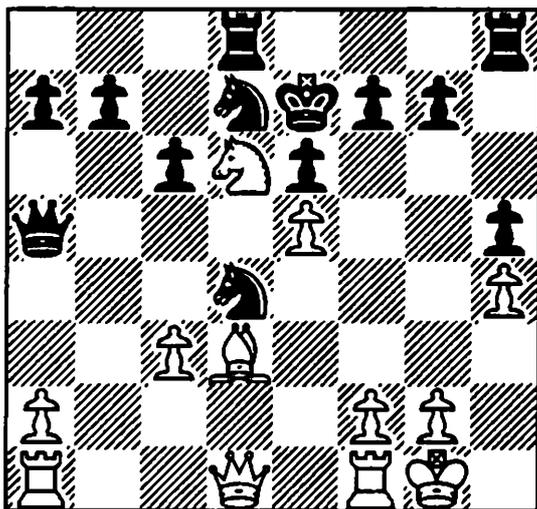


White has a rather awkward position. Black threatens 17...♘xe5, and if the queen leaves the d-file then another pin comes into force: 17 ♚e2 or 17 ♚c2 is answered by 17...♘xd4. Furthermore, if White ever castles kingside then the h4 pawn will drop.

So Chandler elects to sacrifice two pawns to regain the initiative and attack Black's king in the centre.

17 ♖d3! ♘xd4

18 ♘d6+ ♔e7
19 0-0



White seems to have achieved his aim. He threatens both the knight on d4 and the fork 20 ♘xb7. The obvious reply to both threats is 19...♚xc3, but then after 20 ♜c1 ♚a3 21 f4 White has the makings of a strong attack against Black's king which is uncomfortably placed on e7. However, Speelman has prepared an incredible refutation of White's plan.

19 ... ♘f3+!!

Imagine that you showed someone this position and asked them to suggest Black's last move. They would probably guess that he has just captured a white knight on f3, giving check. Instead, the knight has sacrificed itself 'for nothing'! But of course the sacrifice isn't for nothing. The knight removes itself from the d-file with gain of time. If now 20 ♚xf3, then 20...♘xe5, attacking White's queen and also destroying the support of the

knight on d6. Then, after the queen retreats, Black would capture the knight and be two pawns up. And this time there would be no white attack in sight. So White's reply is forced.

20 gxf3 ♖xe5

The real point of Black's sacrifice. The white knight is hanging, and if it retreats the bishop on d3 will be lost. A real catastrophe for White on the d-file. However, the battle is not yet over.

21 ♖xb7

Has White saved himself by forking Black's rook and queen?

21 ... ♔c7!

Speelman has judged that he will lose the exchange but in return gain a massive attack against White's weakened kingside.

22 ♖xd8

If 22 ♖c5 then 22...♔d6 regains the piece with two extra pawns

22 ... ♖xd8

23 f4

The only defence against 23...♖xd3 and 24...♖xf3+.

23 ... ♖xd3

24 ♔xh5 ♖f3+

25 ♔g2 ♔xf4

26 ♖fd1 ♖xc3!

This is not mere pawn-grabbing: Black wants to avoid exchanging the rook, which will be needed for the final attack.

27 ♖ab1

White has defended as best he can, and now threatens mate beginning with 28 ♖b7+. However,

Black has calculated that he gets in first. Everything is now with check:

27 ... ♔h2+

28 ♔f1 ♔h3+

29 ♔e2 ♖c2+

30 ♔e3

Or if 30 ♔d3, then 30...♖e1+! defending the rook on c2, giving double check and mating with a pawn after 31 ♔d4 c5+ 32 ♔e4 ♖c4+ 33 ♔e5 f6.

30 ... ♖xh4+

And White resigned as he loses his queen in all lines, e.g. 31 ♔e4 ♖c4+ 32 ♖d4 ♖xd4+ 33 ♔xd4 ♖f5+. A fine game by Speelman.

M. Chandler-R. Vaganian
Dubai Olympiad 1986
French Defence,
Winawer Variation

1	e4	e6
2	d4	d5
3	♖c3	♗b4
4	e5	b6
5	a3	♗f8

Black seems to be taking liberties with his development, but in view of the closed nature of the centre he is unlikely to come under a sudden attack. This is especially true because White's knights on c3 (and soon f3) block the c- and f-pawns, and prevent them being used to undermine Black's centre with the flanking blows c4 or f4.

6 ♖f3 ♔d7?

Here, however, it is better to

play 6...♖a6. This forces the exchange of Black's so-called 'bad' bishop, which is impeded by its own pawn centre, for White's 'good' bishop. Also, in a more general way it would help Black's cramped position if there were one less piece to house.

7 ♖b5! c6

8 ♖a4

In this way White avoids the exchange of light-squared bishops and secures a long-term advantage.

8 ... ♖a6

9 ♘e2

It may seem as though White plays this move unwillingly, in order to be able to castle next move. This is not true: the knight begins its journey to the kingside where it will be effectively deployed. And the way is cleared for the c-pawn to strengthen White's centre.

9 ... h5

Gaining space on the kingside and preparing to manoeuvre the knight on g8 to f5, without allowing White to subsequently attack it with g4. But the weakness on the g5 square created by this move proves important.

10 0-0 ♘h6

11 ♗e1 ♖e7

12 c3 g6?

This looks like an unnecessary weakening of the dark squares. However, Black sees it will be a forced move after White's intended ♘f4 threatening ♘xh5, and so decides to play it straight-

away. Nevertheless, in view of how useless the bishop on a6 proves, and how strong and eventually deadly the knight on e2 will become, Black should try 12...♗xe2! here. Tarrasch called exchanging a bishop for a knight 'the loss of the minor exchange', but he didn't have this position in mind! After 12...♗xe2 White would retain good chances, but a disaster would be unlikely to befall Black.

13 ♘f4!

Now the moment for ...♗xe2 is gone forever. The bishop remains idly on its diagonal while the knight takes part in a powerful manoeuvre to seize control of the dark squares on the kingside.

13 ... ♘f5

14 ♘h3! ♖b5

Beginning a bad plan and chasing the white bishop to a better square. It was more accurate to complete development with 14...♞c7, 15...♘d7 and 16...0-0-0. White would have had an excellent position after 15 ♖g5, but Black could still have made a fight of it.

15 ♖c2!

White has been to so much trouble to preserve this bishop that he is not going to allow its exchange now. Besides, the bishop at c2 has a useful strategic function: it can eliminate the knight on f5 if required.

15 ... c5

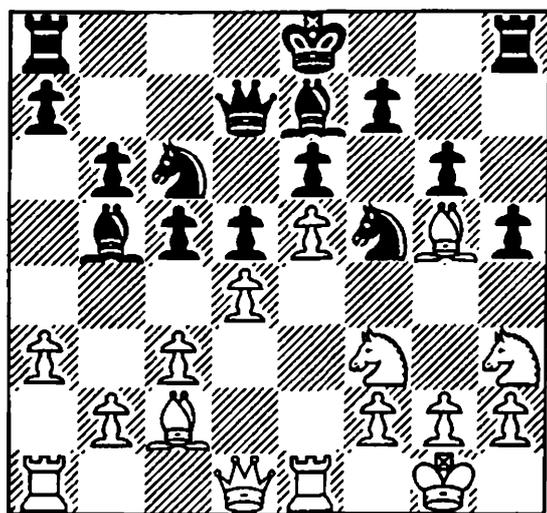
Black hastens to gain some counterplay, but the usual 'rule'

applies: opening lines favours the better developed or coordinated player. And here of course it is White.

16 ♖g5!

Black tried unsuccessfully to trade his light-squared bishop, and now he is forced into the unwelcome exchange of his other, 'good' bishop. After 16...♗xg5 17 ♖hxg5 the dark squares on the kingside are left very weak. Black hesitates to make this exchange and even worse befalls.

16 ... ♖c6



17 ♗f6!

Now Black is virtually compelled to exchange bishops on f6 and after:

17 ... ♗xf6

18 exf6

a new strategic point has appeared on e5. This is a dark square which will sooner or later fall into White's hands. Chandler gives the plausible variation 18...cxd4 19 ♗xf5! gxf5 20 ♖xd4. Taking this further, after 20...♖xd4 21 ♗xd4 White has a

bind on d4 and e5, and has a clear strategical plan: put the knight on e5 and then play a4 and a5, forcing further weaknesses in Black's camp. The black bishop on b5 would be a miserable piece that cannot threaten anything. Black's chances of carrying out a successful counter-action along the g-file would be almost zero in view of White's dominance of the centre and the bishop's inability to offer any help. Also, in assessing the position we shouldn't ignore the value of the pawn on f6. It would be very strong in an endgame, especially in combination with a knight on e5 attacking f7. And in the middlegame it deprives the black knights of the important manoeuvring square e7.

So Vaganian decides to eliminate the pawn straight-away.

18 ... ♗d8

19 dxc5 bxc5

20 ♖f4 ♗xf6

21 ♗xd5

Better than 21 ♖xd5 ♗d8. Now the c5 pawn is doomed.

21 ... ♖c8

The only chance is Chandler's recommendation 21...♖fe7 22 ♗xc5 ♗xf4 23 ♗xb5. Now after 23...♖b8 24 ♗c5 Black can castle, but then 25 ♖ab1 and White should win with his extra pawn. Alternatively, Black can try to maintain material equality with 24...♖xb2, but there follows 25 ♗e4 ♗c7 26 ♖d4 ♖b6 and White can play 27 ♖b5 and 28 ♖d6+ with a very strong attack, or

maybe the quiet 27 a4!? intending 27...0-0 28 a5 ♖a6 29 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 30 ♔d3.

22 ♖xc5 a6

If 22...♔a6 then 23 ♔a4 and the pin is fatal.

23 a4 ♗ce7

Black had been counting on this move. Now after the white queen retreats he can play 24...♔c6 with chances against White's king. Instead there came:

24 ♗d5!!

A beautiful line opening move. Black has a wide choice of instantly losing moves:

a) 24...♖xc5 25 ♗xf6+ ♕f8 26 axb5 wins a piece;

b) 24...exd5 25 ♖xc8 is mate;

c) 24...♗xd5 25 ♖xc8+ ♕e7 26 ♖b7+! ♔d7 27 ♖xd5 and White has an extra rook;

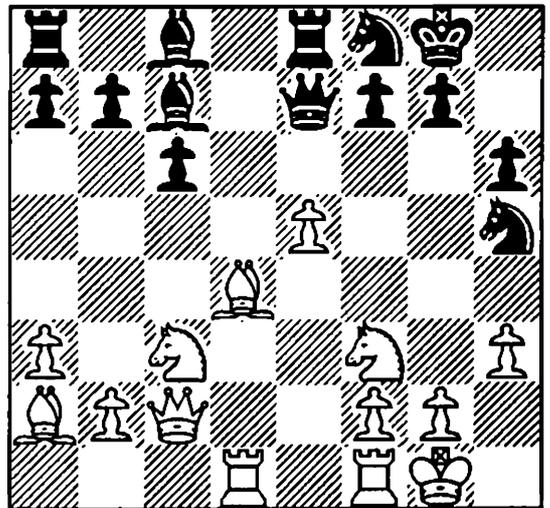
d) 24...♖g7 25 ♗c7+ ♕d8 and now White has many ways to win. Chandler gives the simple 26 ♗xe6+ fxe6 27 ♖b6+ ♖c7 28 axb5 with a crushing advantage. But it is interesting to look at 26 ♖ad1+. Now Black can lose in an amusing king hunt after 26... ♔d7 27 ♖xd7+ ♕xd7 28 ♗e5+ ♕d8 29 ♖d1+ ♗d5 30 ♖xd5+ exd5 31 ♖xd5+ ♕e7 (31...♕xc7 32 ♖c6+ ♕b8 33 ♗d7+ ♕a7 34 ♖b6 and mate next move) 32 ♖d7+ ♕f6 33 ♗d5+ ♕g5 (33...♕xe5 34 f4 mate) 34 ♗xf7+ ♕g4 35 ♔d1+ ♕h4 36 g3+ ♕h3 and White has a choice of mates with the knights: 37 ♗f4 or 37 ♗g5.

Or he can try 26...♗d5 when 27 ♖xe6!! looks crushing. If

27...fxe6 then 28 ♗xe6+ wins the queen after 28...♕d7 29 ♖xd5+ etc., or if 27...♖xc7 then 28 ♖xd5+ ♖d7 (28...♕c8 29 ♖a8 is mate, or 28...♔d7 29 ♖xa6 intending 30 ♖a8+ or 30 ♗e5 wins) 29 ♖a8+ ♕c7 30 ♖a7+ ♕c8 31 ♖xd7 ♔xd7 32 ♖xa6+ ♕d8 33 ♖b6+ ♕c8 34 ♖e5 and 35 ♖c5+ will mate quickly.

Vaganian chose a fifth option: Resigns.

Next up is Kasparov-van der Wiel, Brussels 1987, with White to move.



Black's position looks solid, if a little cramped, and there are no obvious weaknesses. However, there is a weakness: Black's queen! You may have failed to notice that she is a little short of squares. In fact, if you remove the knight on c3 from the board, and play 18 ♔c5! you will find she has run out of safe squares altogether. A tactical genius like Kasparov probably took less than a second to find

18 ♖b5!

This threatens 19 ♙c5 and if 19...♙b6 then 20 ♖d6 attacks both e8 and f7. And 19...b6 20 ♗xc6 or 19...♙f5 20 ♗xf5 attacking h5 also fail. So Black's reply is forced:

18 ... ♖e6
19 ♙xe6! fxe6

The natural 19...♙xe6 still loses to 20 ♙c5. Or 19...cxb5 20 ♙a2 ♙b6 21 ♙xb6 axb6 22 ♖d6 and Black has a wretched position. Now begins a forced sequence.

20 ♖xc7 ♗xc7
21 ♗g6!

Kasparov is not only a brilliant attacker. He is also a strategic player par excellence who knows exactly when he should exchange queens.

21 ... ♗f7
22 ♗xf7+ ♙xf7
23 ♙e3!

The position has simplified. Material is still even and there are opposite-coloured bishops. Yet a comparison of pieces makes it clear Black is losing. Every white piece is developed and on a safe square. In contrast, Black's bishop is a miserable piece, boxed in by its own pawn on e6. Until it is developed, the rook on a8 is also shut out of the game. The rook on e8, although better off than its colleague on a8, is also ineffectually placed. And worst of all, the knight on h5 is threatened by attack with 24 g4, when it has no safe retreat square

(that is why White played 23 ♙e3: he takes away f4 from the knight).

23 ... ♖f8

The obvious move is 23...g5, when after 24 g4 the black knight has two escape routes. In *Informator 43*, Kasparov analyses both alternatives:

(a) 24...♖f4 25 ♙xf4 gxf4 26 ♖d4 and White wins a pawn;

(b) 24...♖g7 25 ♖d2! (planning 26 ♖e4 and 27 ♖d6+) 25...♖d8 26 f4 and White has a winning attack. A plausible continuation is 26...gxf4 27 ♙xf4 ♙g6 28 ♖e4 ♖xd1 29 ♖xd1 b6 30 ♖d8 ♙b7 31 ♖d7 ♙a6 32 ♖d6 and White's pieces dominate the board. So van der Wiel tries a trick. He plans to answer 24 g4 with 24...♙g8! both attacking f3, and preparing 25...♖f4.

24 ♖d4!

Threatening 25 g4 ♙g8 26 ♙g2, winning a piece. White also improves the strategical layout of his pieces by preparing to double rooks along the only open file. There is also a third reason for this move, as soon becomes clear.

24 ... ♙g8
25 ♖fd1 b6

A bid to develop the bishop. It leads to instant defeat, but Black's position was already beyond repair.

26 ♖h4! ♖f5

Of course, 26...g6 27 ♙xh6 is hopeless.

27 ♖d4 **Black resigned**

After 27...♙xe5 28 ♘xc6 ♚b5
29 a4! the rook can only safely
move to f5, but then 30 ♘e7+
wins.

A forceful display by Kas-

parov. It reminds us that a direct
attack on the enemy king is not
the only way to win a miniature:
sometimes sustained pressure is
enough.

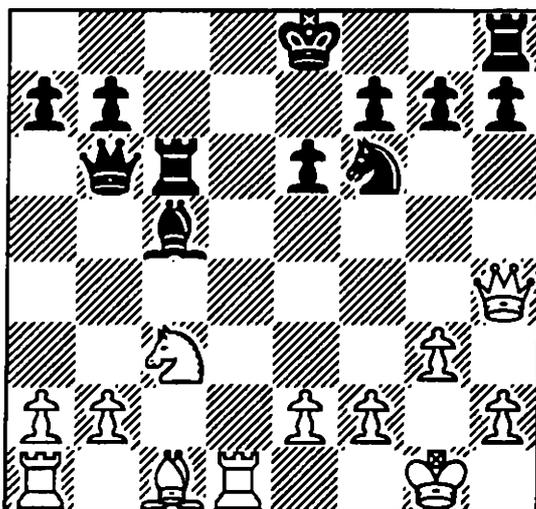
5 You Shouldn't Believe Everything you Read!

In a thought-provoking essay in his book *Playing to Win* (Batsford, 1988), the British grandmaster James Plaskett argues that chess cannot be considered a sport because of 'decisive opening innovations' (or D.O.I.s). By this term he means improvements in theory which are so powerful that they give the opponent no chance whatever to reach an equal game. He gives the following example:

L. Portisch-I. Radulov
 Buenos Aires 1978
Queen's Gambit Declined,
Catalan Variation

1	♘f3	♘f6
2	c4	e6
3	g3	d5
4	♙g2	c5
5	0-0	♘c6
6	d4	♞xc4
7	♞a4	♙d7
8	♞xc4	♞xd4
9	♘xd4	♞c8
10	♘c3	♘xd4
11	♞xd4	♙c5
12	♞h4	♙c6
13	♞d1	♞b6

14 ♙xc6+ ♞xc6



Radulov has played correctly according to established 1978 theory, but here Portisch unleashed a powerful new move: **15 ♙h6!!** Immediately Black was helpless. He struggled on with **15...gxf6** **16 ♞xf6** **0-0**, but after **17 ♘e4** his position was in ruins.

Plaskett asks: 'In what other sport can a game be lost in which one player hasn't the slightest chance? At what point did Radulov become a bad player?'

A simple riposte is that in the art of home preparation, Portisch is a genius while Radulov is only an average grandmaster. Portisch sets the trend while Radulov follows it. In chess, as in modern

life, the key thing is to have the right information at the right time.

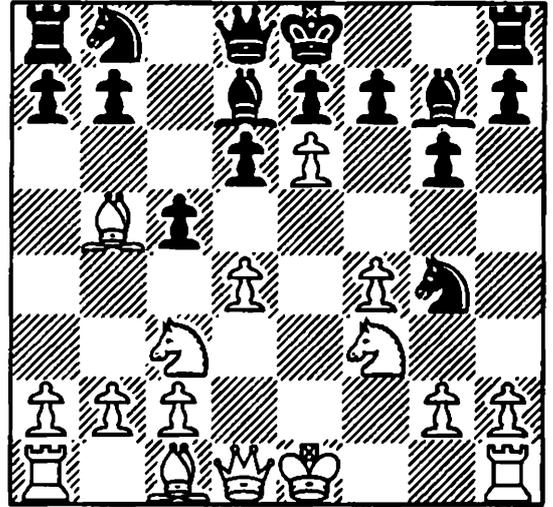
Furthermore, Plaskett's separates decisive novelties from merely very surprising or strong ones in a rather arbitrary manner. If, as he claims, D.O.I.s are so rare that 'it would be quite exceptional if out of the 6000 or so master games played annually there were more than six D.O.I.s' then what are we afraid of? Even a very active grandmaster or master who played a hundred games a year would only expect to meet with one D.O.I. every 10 years. Surely this is hardly something to lose sleep over? A tennis player has to be more afraid that the string on her racket will snap at a decisive point, or an athlete that he will lose a shoe on a long distance run. Furthermore, Portisch's 15 ♔h6 wasn't an act of God but the result of painstaking preparation. He deserved to win.

There is a deep satisfaction in unearthing a new truth about a position, irrespective of the outcome of the game. The following is a good example.

G. Sax-Y. Seirawan
 Brussels 1988
Pirc Defence,
Austrian Attack

1 e4 d6
 2 d4 ♘f6

3 ♖c3 g6
 4 f4 ♗g7
 5 ♗f3 c5
 6 ♔b5+ ♔d7
 7 e5 ♘g4
 8 e6



So far we have been following a very well-known variation of the Austrian Attack. Now 8... ♔xb5 is given as the only playable move in every single theoretical book that predates the present encounter.

The alternative 8... fxe6, if mentioned at all, is decorated with one or two question marks, since 9 ♘g5 is a winning reply: the black knight on g4 is attacked by the queen, and after it retreats 10 ♘xe6 forks the queen on d8 and the bishop on g7. White therefore wins a piece.

For decades this heresy was unchallenged. Until suddenly Seirawan played

8 ... fxe6!!

This must have been a real shock for Sax.

9 ♘g5 ♔xb5

10 ♖xe6 ♔xd4!

The point. Black offers his queen, at the price of a perpetual check. Sax, aware that his opponent must have studied the complexities of 11 ♖xb5 and 11 ♗xg4, decides to force a perpetual check

11 ♖xd8 ♔f2+

12 ♔d2 ♔e3+

And a draw was agreed.

In the old books, 8...fxe6 received only question marks; but when Seirawan played it against Sax it deserved two exclamation marks, since it seemed as if a mortal blow had been struck against a main line Pirc System: White could no longer play for advantage with 6 ♔b5+ if Black can force an immediate draw. However, nowadays 8...fxe6 receives neither a question mark nor an exclamation mark. It marks the birth of a new system, not the death of an old one. It turns out that White can play for advantage with either 10 ♖xb5 ♗a5+ 11 c3 ♗xb5 12 ♖xe6 or 10 ♖xe6 ♔xd4 11 ♗xg4, though Black has interesting counter chances. Therefore, 8...fxe6 is no longer singled out for praise nor condemnation: it is accepted as a part of standard theory.

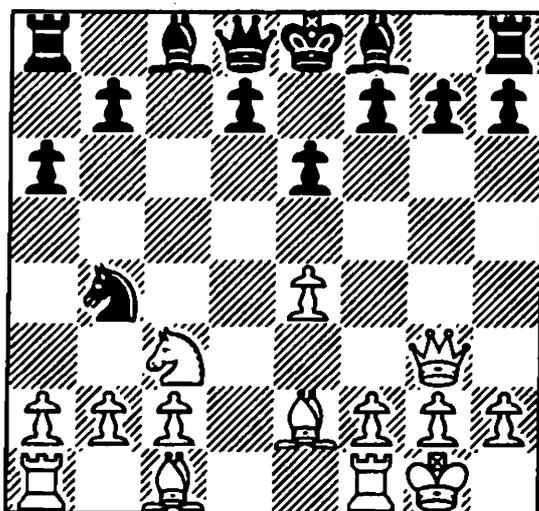
I'm sure Seirawan felt a great deal of satisfaction in playing this new move, which had nothing to do with achieving an easy draw as Black against a strong player.

Players only seem to complain

about theory when they are the victim. Once again we can give an example of Plaskett's:

J. Plaskett-W. Hartston
 England 1986
Sicilian Defence,
Taimanov Variation

1	e4	c5
2	♖f3	e6
3	d4	cxd4
4	♖xd4	♖c6
5	♖c3	a6
6	♔e2	♖ge7
7	0-0	♖xd4
8	♗xd4	♖c6
9	♗d3	♖b4?!
10	♗g3!	



Improving on the conservative 10 ♗d2, which was the choice of both Karpov and Georgiev in games against Taimanov. Or rather than 'improving' one could say that Plaskett makes a pawn sacrifice which sets Black great, perhaps insurmountable, practical problems. These problems proved

too much for Hartston in the game:

10 ... ♖xc2
 11 ♙g5 f6
 12 ♙f4! ♚f7

Plaskett notes that 12...♖xa1 13 ♙h5+ g6 (13...♚e7 14 ♙d6 is mate) 14 ♙xg6+ hxg6 15 ♗xg6+ hxg6 16 e5! wins, since 16...d5 17 ♗xf6+ ♚d7 18 ♗xh8 ♖c2 19 ♗h7+ and 20 ♗xc2 will leave Black two pawns down.

According to Plaskett, at this point in the game, his opponent, the author of *How to Cheat at Chess* (Cadogan, 1994) said 'I know it's bad manners, but I offer a draw.'

13 ♙c7 ♗e8
 14 ♖ad1 b5

Trying to develop his queen-side, but it is too late. While Black's pieces are either scattered or entombed, White has achieved an almost complete mobilisation of his forces. He now uses his e-pawn to ram through Black's defences.

15 e5! ♙b7

White was threatening to win at least the exchange after 16 ♙f3 ♖a7 17 ♙b8.

16 exf6 ♚g8
 17 fxg7 ♙xg7
 18 ♙e5

And Black resigned since if 18...♗g6 then 19 ♗xg6 hxg6 20 ♙xg7 ♚xg7 21 ♖xd7+ wins the bishop on b7 (Plaskett).

A very pretty game, of which Plaskett is justly proud. He comments of his innovation: 'I was

very pleased with my creative achievement in adding something new and valuable to a major opening line.' What?! Isn't 10 ♗g3 a hateful D.O.I., the chess equivalent of an unreturnable ace in tennis? Why, yes, 'probably 10 ♗g3 is a D.O.I.,' says Plaskett. However, he doesn't seem to have much empathy with his opponent, who never really had a chance. I repeat, players only become angry, or disillusioned, with theory when they are the victim. If you live by the sword (10 ♗g3!) you must also be prepared to die by the sword.

Jon Speelman has said that he hates opening theory, and yet the greatest achievement of his career was in no small measure caused by his adoption of a novelty unknown to his opponent.

J. Speelman-N. Short
 Candidates Quarter-Final,
 London 1988, game 3
Queens Gambit Declined

In 1988, Speelman, having qualified for the quarter-final stage of the World Championship, now had to do battle with his fellow Englishman Nigel Short in a six-game match. In such a short match the player who scores the first win has an enormous advantage. Hence it was no surprise that play began cautiously with two draws. This is the third game.

1	d4	♘f6
2	c4	e6
3	♘f3	d5
4	♘c3	♙e7

If White now plays 5 ♙g5, Short would no doubt have responded with the super-solid Tartakower variation (5...0-0 6 e3 h6 7 ♙h4 b6). So it is no surprise that Speelman tries a different system.

5	♙f4	0-0
6	e3	c5
7	dx5	♘c6
8	♚c2	♙xc5
9	a3	♚a5
10	0-0-0!!	

This, however, must have come as a massive shock for Short. The established theory of the year 1988 did not include this very aggressive posture by White. Conventional wisdom was that White should play 10 ♖d1, when after 10...♙e7 White answers 11 ♘d2. White maintains a small advantage, but Black is not facing any huge threat. And no doubt Short and his second John Nunn had prepared an improvement to neutralise White's advantage.

So Speelman got his surprise in first. In fact, 10 0-0-0 had been played a couple of days earlier in the 1988 USSR Championship, but the bulletin of the tournament was not yet available when Short and Speelman sat down to play game three of their match. How did Speelman therefore know of this novelty? Well, it's an amusing story.

But let's start by looking at the original 10 0-0-0 game, M.Gurevich-A.Sokolov, USSR Championship 1988:

10... dxc4?

A feeble response, bringing the white bishop into the game, opening the d-file for White's rook and losing control of e4. But everyone reacts badly to new moves - that is why they are so effective!

11 ♙xc4 ♙e7 12 g4

The signal to attack. Black now panics in seeking immediate queenside counterplay, and is soon losing.

12...b5?

It was better to respond classically to White's wing attack with action in the centre by 12...e5!

13 ♙xb5 ♙b7 14 ♘d2 ♘b4

This sacrifice fails. The best defence against the threat of 15 ♘c4 - winning the queen! - was 14...♘d5, but after 15 ♘c4 ♚d8 16 e4 ♙g5 17 exd5 ♙xf4+ 18 ♚b1 White has a clear advantage (Gurevich).

15 axb4 ♙xb4 16 ♘c4 ♚a1+ 17 ♚d2! ♙xc3+ 18 ♚e2! ♚a2 19 ♖a1

And Black resigned, since the queen is lost.

So what was the process that led Speelman to play this new idea? It happened in two stages:

1. The game is published. Newspaper correspondents dream of such games for their chess columns. Not only is it a sharp and

interesting encounter between two world-class players in a prestigious event, it is also short! It fits nicely at the end of a report.

So it happened that the Gurevich-Sokolov encounter was printed in a Scandinavian newspaper.

2. The game is delivered. The Norwegian girlfriend(!) of Speelman's second, Jon Tisdall, was en route to England for the match and, feeling bored, wanted something to read on the plane. She therefore bought a copy of the newspaper at the airport and showed the chess column to the two Jons when she arrived. So by chance the priceless game with its match-winning novelty came into the hands of the Speelman camp.

Is this an example of chaos theory - a non-participant's boredom at an airport deciding the outcome of a match between two leading grandmasters? What if she had picked up *Vanity Fair* instead? Would Short have won the match and gone on to challenge Kasparov a few years earlier?

Here we must end our musing and return to move ten of the Speelman-Short game.

10 ... ♗e7

The theory of this system has multiplied dramatically since these early games, but no completely convincing antidote to White's attacking scheme has ever been found. It will therefore

be appreciated that Short faced an almost impossible task in 'starting from scratch' against a fully prepared opponent.

11 g4! ♖d8

12 h3

Here 12 ♖b5 may be a more challenging move. It is however beyond the scope of this book to enter the theoretical debate.

12 ... a6

13 ♖d2 e5?

Under pressure, Short goes wrong. He was no doubt confused by all the tactical possibilities and fearful of the threatened 14 ♖b3 and 15 g5 which chase away both queen and knight before capturing on d5. After the game, a long and complex analysis by Speelman and Nunn showed that Black should play 13...b5 here, when the main line runs 14 cxd5 ♖xd5 15 ♖xd5 ♖xd5! 16 ♖b1 ♗b6 17 ♗g2 ♖c5 18 ♗d3, and White only has a slight edge. We cannot blame Short too much for missing this during the game.

14 g5!

After this blow Black's resistance in the centre collapses, and White's pieces take control.

14 ... ♖e8

If 14...exf4 then 15 gxf6 ♗xf6 19 ♖b3 ♗b6 20 ♖xd5 is crushing. Or if 14...♖h5 then simply 15 ♗h2! (Speelman) threatens to capture on d5 as well as 16 ♗e2 embarrassing the knight.

15 ♖b3 ♗b6

16 ♖xd5 ♖xd5

There is no choice but to

accept material losses, since if 16... ♖a7 then 17 ♘xe7+ wins at once.

17 cxd5 exf4
18 dxc6 fxe3
19 fxe3 ♙xg5

Despite the loss of the exchange, Black could still hope to gain some counterplay with his two bishops if he had a sufficient development. But with his queen's rook and bishop still on their starting squares and his knight stranded on the back rank, he cannot offer any real resistance to White's coming attack.

20 ♖b1 bxc6

The white pawn was so dangerous that it had to be eliminated, even at the cost of more time.

21 ♙c4 ♖a7

A heroic defence, but a futile one.

22 ♖hf1

The white pieces have identified the weakest square in Black's position. Now Speelman says that Black should play 22... ♖e7, ruling out White's next move. However, this would merely prolong the game rather than change the result.

22 ... ♙f6
23 ♖e4! ♖f8

It was too late for 23... ♖e7 because of a queen sacrifice: 24 ♖xe7! ♙xe7 25 ♖xf7 ♖h8 (forced) 26 ♖xe7 ♘f6 27 e4! followed by 28 e5 wins.

24 ♖xh7

The decisive breakthrough.

24 ... g6
25 e4! c5
26 e5! ♙g7
27 ♖xg6 Black resigned

This was an example of the devastating effect of a new move in a critical opening variation. Even such a fine player as Short was unable to find the correct strategical path amid the thickets of unfamiliar variations. To catch someone in a prepared variation is one of the joys of chess.

As Polugayevsky says in *Grandmaster Achievement* (Cadogan, 1994) regarding theoretical research: 'I wouldn't exchange for anything those rare happy moments, when a painstakingly prepared trap looms, and you see your unsuspecting opponent advancing confidently towards his doom.' No sympathy for the opponent here - just good old fashioned sadism. We shall see an example of 'Polu' in action at the end of this chapter.

However, not all attempts at innovation are successful. The well-respected Russian chess trainer Vladimir Zak, whose pupils have included Spassky and Korchnoi, admits to having failed on occasion with his preparation. In his work *Improve Your Chess Results* (Batsford, 1985) he describes with great candour how he once recommended a disastrous new move to a girl pupil. In the USSR Junior Championship she dutifully followed his advice:

1 e4 e5
 2 f4 d5
 3 exd5 e4
 4 ♖c3 ♗f6
 5 ♕e2 ♙g4
 6 ♕b5+

This is the new idea that Zak had suggested.

6 ... ♗bd7
 7 h3 a6
 8 ♕a4 b5
 9 ♕a5

Thus far everything had been anticipated by Zak and his pupil in their pre-game analysis. Unfortunately, they had stopped one move too soon:

9 ... ♗xd5!

And now White has the choice between losing her king (10 ♗xd5 ♕h4+) or her queen (10 hxg4 ♙b4). Neither appealed much and after 10 ♙xb5 axb5 11 ♕xb5 ♗xc3 12 dxc3 ♕h4+ she resigned.

The reader has to be cautious of all 'improvements' given in books, no matter how well respected the author. Some years ago I bought a certain book on the French Defence. The author was a famous grandmaster and the introductory essay was by a former World Champion, so I was anticipating a good read. Yet on the very first page I noticed that a terrible blunder was being recommended. I wondered whether anyone had ever lost through following this sloppy analysis and my question was answered when, browsing

through an old copy of the *British Chess Magazine*, I discovered the following game:

S. Makarichev-V. Raicevic
 Hastings 1979/80
French Defence,
Winawer Variation

1 e4 e6
 2 d4 d5
 3 ♗c3 ♙b4
 4 e5 ♗e7
 5 a3 ♙xc3+
 6 bxc3 c5
 7 ♗f3 ♕a5
 8 ♙d2 ♗c6
 9 ♙e2 c4
 10 ♗g5 f6?

This was the move recommended in the aforementioned book. It loses to a straightforward tactical sequence.

10 ♙h5+ ♗g6

More or less forced, since 10...♙d7 looks pretty bad: White could even play the sacrifice 11 ♗xe6!? Now if the knight has to retreat, then all is well. Instead it advanced to h7 and the game was as good as over:

12 ♗xh7! ♙f7
 13 ♗g5+! fxg5
 14 ♕f3+ ♙e8
 15 ♙xg6+

And although Black gamely battled on to move 31, the game could have been stopped here. Who is to blame for Raicevic's defeat? Is it Grandmaster 'X' for his shoddy analysis? And what

about World Champion 'Y' who put his seal of approval on the book? I remember Stean's plaintive cry after he had been defeated when following a recommendation of Karpov's: 'If you can't trust a World Champion, who can you trust?'

We cannot blame the author too much. It is inevitable that mistakes in analysis will be made. Nor does the title of World Champion imbue everything the holder touches with brilliance. However, 10...f6 was clearly a bad moment for both of these players.

But the real blame for his defeat rests with Grandmaster Raičević himself. Anyone, especially a grandmaster, is guilty of gross negligence if he blindly follows the advice of others. A player is allowed to think during a chess game, even in the opening, and a strong player should be able to work out a three-move combination. There is a huge difference between recommending a move which turns out to be a blunder and actually playing it.

It is essential to recheck your home preparation during a game. In fact, if you visit a chess tournament, you will be struck by how slowly grandmasters play in the opening, even when they have played the same moves before, or analysed them in detail at home. Strong players are always sceptical, and like to confirm their earlier conclusions during the game.

I remember watching Polugayevsky play against Flear in a London tournament. Polu played very slowly, analysing after every move, and frequently clutching his head in his hands. Yet everyone in the hall, the spectators, the bulletin officers and even poor Flear himself (who had a resigned expression on his face) was convinced that Polu had worked out the whole game earlier in his famous laboratory. This game is not quite a miniature, but in one sense it is shorter than any other game in the book:

L. Polugayevsky-G. Flear
London 1986
Queen's Gambit Declined,
Semi-Slav Variation

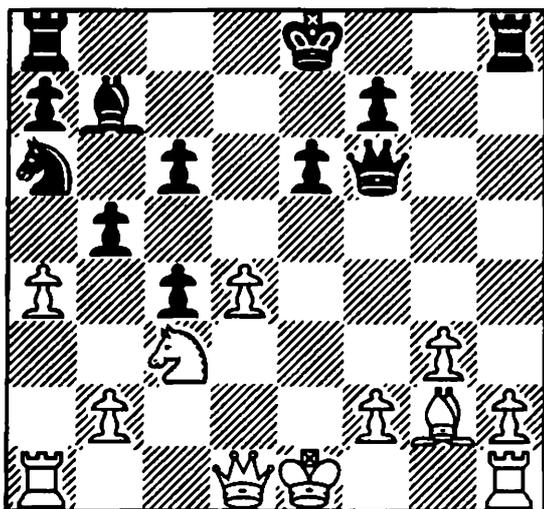
1	d4	d5
2	♘f3	♘f6
3	c4	e6
4	♘c3	c6
5	♙g5	dxç4

Black adopts an incredibly sharp variation against one of the world's leading theoreticians. However, this was neither a courageous nor foolhardy decision on Flear's part: the Slav was a staple part of his repertoire at the time, and he therefore had no choice.

6	e4	b5
7	e5	h6
8	♙h4	g5
9	♘xg5	hxg5
10	♙xg5	♙e7

- 11 **exf6** ♔xf6
- 12 ♔xf6 ♚xf6
- 13 **g3** ♔b7
- 14 ♔g2 ♖a6
- 15 **a4!**

This is Polu's new move, and it may be one of Plaskett's 'D.O.I.s'. Black's reply is more or less forced in view of the threat of 16 axb5.



- 15 ... 0-0-0
- 16 **axb5** cxb5
- 17 ♔xb7+ ♚xb7
- 18 ♖xb5 ♚f5
- 19 ♚a4!

White has calculated correctly that his own king will come to no harm in the centre, while the enemy monarch is subject to a withering attack. It would take great sang froid to come to this conclusion during the game, unless of course, the battle had already been fought and won before the game started...

- 19 ... ♚e4+
- 20 ♚d2 ♚c6
- 21 **b3!** ♚b6

Instead of allowing the opening

of more lines against his king after 21...cxb3, Black tries to counterattack. But White has anticipated this move - perhaps days, weeks or even years before the position was reached on the board. The only move was 21...c3+! according to Polugayevsky, but White would maintain a clear advantage after 22 ♖xc3, etc.

- 22 **bxc4** ♚xd4+
- 23 ♚e2!

Only thus.

- 23 ... ♚e4+
- 24 ♚f3 f5
- 25 ♚hb1 ♚f4+

Black faces disaster on the queenside, so he tries one last attempt at forcing perpetual check. Polu's methodical home analysis has decreed that this will fail.

- 26 **gxf4** ♚c6+
- 27 ♚e2 ♚e4+
- 28 ♚d1! ♚d8+
- 29 ♖d6+ ♚c7
- 30 ♚a5+ ♚xd6
- 31 ♚xd8+ **Black**

resigned

Polu's fine analysis brought a well-deserved victory. Nevertheless, it is heartening to recall that despite this drastic defeat, Flear played excellent chess throughout the tournament and won first place, finishing ahead of several members of the world elite, including Short, Portisch and Spassky. So there is more to chess than pre-game preparation!

6 The Pawn is Mightier than the Sword

Chess is a highly complex game. Players of enormous talent and vast experience can still fail to grasp the true essence of a given position. Therefore the average player needs all the help he can get in trying to find the correct move and plan. One 'strategical signpost' is to ask yourself 'what does the pawn structure suggest is the best plan?'

The answer to this question could be of a highly general nature - for example, if White has a space advantage on the queenside he should play actively there rather than in the centre or on the kingside; or it could be a specific insight - for example, a square in the centre is safe from enemy pawn attack, and therefore it could be a good idea to deploy a knight to this square. And the enemy pawn structure cannot be ignored. If the opponent has a weak pawn or square on the queenside, a natural plan is to try to capture or blockade it. Or if there is a breach in his king's cover, it may be right to prepare a direct attack.

Sometimes a special tactical factor or the coordination of the

pieces will require a plan different to that indicated by the pawn structure. However, in most cases the pawn layout will define the best plan. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to state that only when a player comprehends the relationship between the pawn structure and the pieces can he truly claim to understand the logic of the game.

In the present chapter we are concerned with the exploits of individual pawns rather than with the pawns acting en masse in a pawn structure. Our aim is to show that pawns are a vital requisite in almost any attack.

1 The sudden pawn stab

Under the right circumstances, a pawn can be as dashing and heroic as any other piece. Indeed, the effect is often greater because the opponent doesn't expect such pluck from a mere pawn. Here are some examples of pawns acting like commanders.

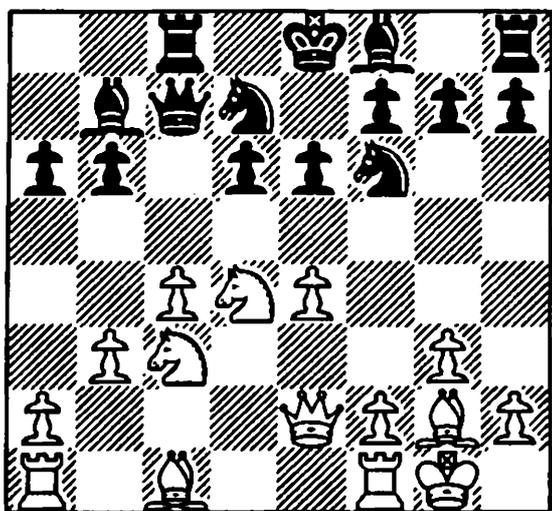
G. Kasparov-V. Salov
 Barcelona 1989
English Opening

1	♘f3	♘f6
2	c4	b6
3	♘c3	c5
4	e4	d6
5	d4	cxd4
6	♘xd4	♙b7
7	♚e2	♘bd7
8	g3	♞c8
9	♙g2	a6
10	0-0	♚c7

By now the reader will no longer be surprised to see world-class grandmasters overlooking standard sacrificial ideas. It seems that even when facing the mighty Kasparov a player can still underestimate the opponent's tactical resources.

Here Black should play 10...e6, 11...♙e7 and 12...0-0, with a safe, if restricted, position.

11 b3 e6



12 ♘d5!

If Black now accepts the offer, his king will have to stay in the centre: 12...exd5 13 exd5+ ♔d8 (worse is 13...♘e5 14 f4 regaining the piece with advantage or 13...♙e7 14 ♘f5 ♘e5 15 ♘xg7+ with two pawns and a strong attack). Although White then has no clear win, he can improve his position with developing moves such as 14 ♞e1 (Kavalek) or 14 ♙b2 (Kasparov). His ideas would include mate to the black king along the e-file or a general pawn advance on the queenside. Meanwhile Black's pieces are bottled up and he would have to solve the problem of how to develop his pieces, in particular the rook on h8.

Against such a fine attacker as Kasparov Black's chances of survival would be very small. Nevertheless, this is how Salov should have played. A piece is a piece, and Kasparov himself only claims that White has a slight advantage after 12...exd5. On the other hand, in the game continuation Black loses a pawn for nothing.

12 ... ♚b8
 13 ♞d1! g6

It is too late for Black to change his mind and take the knight. Here 13...exd5 14 exd5+ ♔d8 15 ♘c6+ ♙xc6 16 dxc6 ♘c5 17 b4! as given by Kasparov, is disastrous for Black. Kavalek takes this analysis one move further: 17...♘e6 18 ♙e3, and White is ready to play 19 c5,

smashing the enemy centre.

14 ♖g5 ♖g7

15 ♖xf6!

If now 15...♖xf6 Black will be deprived of the bishop he needs to guard the many dark-square weaknesses he has inflicted on his position with ...e6 and ...d6. Not surprisingly, there is a tactical refutation: 15...♖xf6 16 ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 17 e5! dxe5 18 ♖xb7 ♜xb7 19 ♜xe5 and now 19...♜e7 loses nicely to 20 ♖c6!! while 19...♜e7 20 ♖xe6! fxe6 21 ♖d6 gives White a winning attack (analysis by Kavalek and Kasparov).

15 ... ♖xf6

16 ♖xb6

Kasparov isn't only brilliant at sacrificing pawns. He also knows when to take them! After 16...♖c7, Black would avoid disaster, but being a pawn down against a World Champion is no fun. Instead, Salov makes an inaccurate move that brings down the fury of a Kasparov attack upon his head.

16 ... ♖d8?

We should be thankful to Salov for this blunder. Without it Kasparov would probably have slowly exploited his pawn advantage in another mundane 30 or so moves. Now, however, the game ceases to be a technical exercise. We are given another wonderful demonstration of Kasparov's attacking flair.

17 e5! ♖xg2

The black king is too exposed

after 17...dxe5 18 ♖c6 ♖xc6 19 ♖xc6+ ♜e7 20 c5! followed by 21 ♜xa6 (Kasparov).

18 exf6 ♖xf6

Hoping for 19 ♜xg2 ♜xb6, when he has escaped.

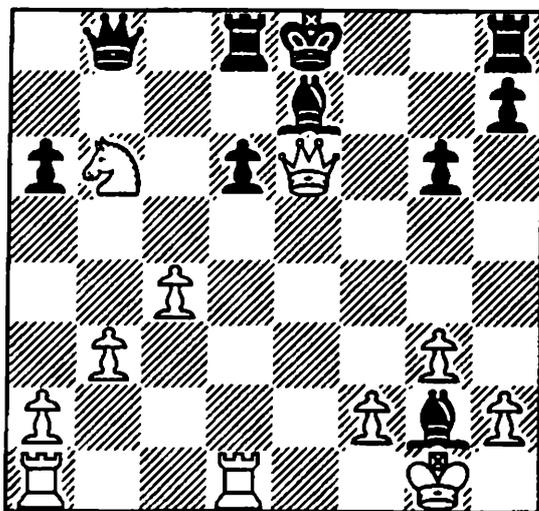
19 ♖xe6!

This second knight offer can't be refused.

19 ... fxe6

20 ♜xe6+ ♖e7

White is now a piece down and his knight is attacked. The obvious 21 ♖e1 is answered by 21...♜b7, and Black defends both his bishops. Has White's attack therefore failed?



21 c5!!

A fantastic move, and the best example of pawn power I have ever seen. Without this little pawn, all the efforts of the queen, rooks, bishops and knights would have failed. The pawn rescues the knight from capture and introduces the threat of 22 ♖e1 ♜b7 23 cxd6. And the pawn has another idea, as is soon revealed.

21 ... ♖b7

Of course 21...dxc5 22 ♔xg2 is hopeless.

22 ♖e1 ♕c7

Again Black seems to have escaped...

23 c6!!

...and again the pawn rises to the occasion! Black is now forced to enter into a fatal pin on the c-file.

23 ... ♗xc6

After 23...♗xc6, White had prepared the killer move 24 ♘d5!!

24 ♖ac1 ♖d7

The only answer to the threat of 25 ♖xc6.

25 ♘xd7 ♕xd7

26 ♕c4!

Salov was hoping for 26 ♖xc6? ♕xe6 27 ♖xe6 ♔d7! forking the two rooks.

26 ... ♗b7

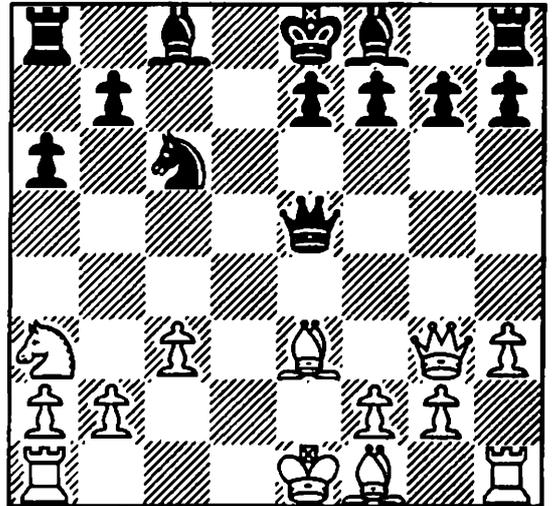
27 ♕c7 ♖f8

28 ♕b8+ ♔f7

29 ♖c7!

And Black resigned, since he loses a bishop after 29...♖xb8 30 ♖xd7.

8 ♕e2 a6
 9 h3 ♘ge5
 10 ♗e3 ♘xf3+
 11 ♕xf3 ♕f5
 12 ♕g3 ♕e5



The story so far. White has played a restrained opening system (2 c3) and adopted one of its most peaceful variations (6 dxc5). As a result, he has allowed his pawn centre to disappear completely without gaining a substantial lead in development or inflicting a serious weakness in Black's position. It is therefore difficult to see how he can ever hope to put any serious pressure on his opponent. A draw seems inevitable. Black, in order to speed up the drawing process, has taken a certain liberty by playing 12...♕e5 instead of continuing his development by 12...e5. However, after the exchange of queens which now seems forced, there is little which can threaten Black.

And yet it is all over in another 15 moves, and not with a friendly

P. Blatny-L. Ljubojevic
 Antwerp 1994
Sicilian Defence,
2 c3 Variation

1 e4 c5
 2 c3 d5
 3 exd5 ♕xd5
 4 d4 ♘c6
 5 ♘f3 ♘f6
 6 dxc5 ♕xc5
 7 ♘a3 ♘g4

handshake. Black will be battered, crushed and broken. And which piece will be Black's chief tormentor? Why, not a major piece, but the pawn on f2! You don't believe me? Then watch what follows:

13 f4!!

An unexpected riposte. It transpires that Black doesn't succeed in exchanging queens, and so we must give his previous move a question mark and instead recommend 12...e5. Then he would have had good chances of completing his development and avoiding danger.

However, we shouldn't be too critical of Black's mistake. It was very easy to miss the strength of a move like 13 f4, especially in the specific psychological circumstances of the game. White's opening play showed no aggressive intentions at all, and he seemed content with a draw against a much higher rated adversary. This may have affected Ljubojevic's sense of danger.

And strategically speaking, it feels 'unnatural' for White to dislocate his kingside pawn structure, especially when there is no e-pawn to support pressure on the centre. Once Black's queen retreats, what has White achieved with 13 f4?

However, this superficial evaluation of the position ignores two important facts. If White wants to win:

1. he must avoid the exchange

of queens; and

2. he must find a way to pressurise Black with his pawns. There are no points so vulnerable in Black's position that they can be carried merely by the action of the pieces. Besides, almost every good plan in chess requires the use of pawns.

Since White is planning to castle queenside, any weakness created in his kingside is negligible. What matters is that he has the f-pawn to use as a battering ram against the enemy kingside which will have to be weakened with an eventual ...e6 or ...g6 if Black is to develop.

13 ... ♖c7

14 ♘c4

Eyeing the hole on b6. White finds a way to further harass Black's queen.

14 ... ♙e6

15 ♙b6 ♖c8

Forced, but the queen immolates the rook on a8.

16 ♖e3!

Now the threat is 17 f5! ♙xf5(?) 18 ♘d6+ and if 16...g6 (to stop 17 f5) then 17 ♙d4! as analysed by Blatny, is unpleasant - both 18 ♙xh8 and 18 ♘b6 are threatened.

16 ... ♙xc4

So Black is forced to make this positional concession.

17 ♙xc4

A great start to the bishop's career. It moves to a magnificent diagonal, bearing down on the weak f7 square, and at the same

time eliminates the enemy piece which seemed destined to be its rival. Now nothing can oppose its power.

17 ... e6

The alternative 17...g6 was better, though after 18 ♔d4 ♘xd4 19 ♚xd4 ♚g8 20 0-0-0 the black rook on g8 remains out of play forever. Nevertheless, this was preferable to the disaster that now occurs.

18 f5!

The first advance of this pawn forced Black into a constricted position. The second advance leads to a decisive opening of lines.

18 ... ♘e7

The attempt to keep things blocked with 18...e5 looks ghastly, for example 19 0-0-0 ♔e7 20 g4 h6 21 h4 and White will play 22 g5 with a decisive attack. The game move is a typical Ljubojevic trick, threatening both c4 and f5. Blatny however stays calm and finds a winning sacrifice.

19 ♔b3! ♘xf5

The demise of White's fearless pawn, but its legacy - the open f-file - will prove costly to Black's king.

20 ♔a4+ ♚e7

21 ♚d3!

White's queen has carried out a tour of the third rank, one square at a time: f3, g3, e3 and now d3. Here White had to avoid a second trick: 21 ♔c5+? ♚f6 and White has only a draw by repetition af-

ter 22 ♔d4+ ♚e7 23 ♔c5+.

Blatny's nonchalant queen move prepares 22 0-0-0.

21 ... ♚b8

The third trick, and this time a cunning one. Black threatens to exchange queens with 22...♚g3+, and if White plays the natural 22 0-0-0?? the queen goes one square fewer on the long diagonal: 22...♚f4+, and Black wins a piece! But Blatny is not about to fall for any traps.

22 ♚d7+ ♚f6

23 0-0! ♚g6

Blatny points out another trap which Black declines to set. If 23...♔d6, White could win a piece after 24 g4, but only draw the game: 24...♔c5+! 25 ♔xc5 ♚g3+ with perpetual check. However, instead of the immediate 24 g4, 24 ♚f3 planning this advance, wins easily.

24 ♔c2 ♚e5

White was planning to answer 24...♚c8 with 25 ♚xf5! exf5 (25...♚xd7 26 ♚d5+ wins a piece) 26 ♔xf5+! and Black can resign.

25 ♚ae1

Now all White's pieces are working together harmoniously.

25 ... ♔c5+

26 ♚h1 ♚h6!

A last trap: 27 ♚xe5?? ♘g3+ 28 ♚h2 ♘xf1+ 29 ♚h1 ♘g3+ draws!

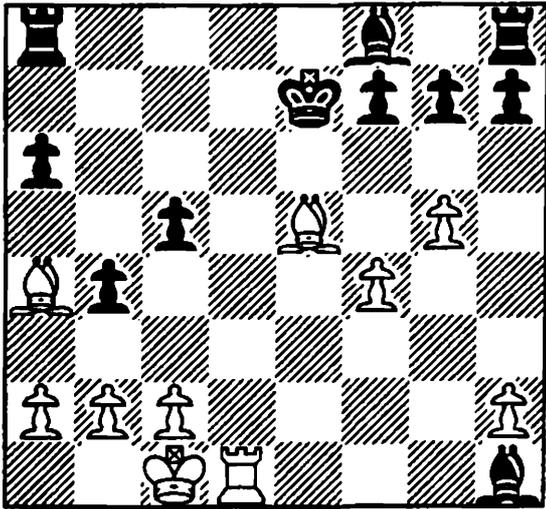
27 ♔xf5! **Black**

resigned

Some players are afraid that the proliferation of chess theory

(on the opening, middlegame and endgame) will one day lead to a draw death in chess. The fact that in 1994 a top-class grandmaster can be annihilated without even moving his rooks surely indicates that we don't have to be afraid of such an outcome.

Let's take a look at the game Sideif-Zade-Gofstein, Aktjubinsk 1985.



Here Black has a whole extra rook, so perhaps White (to move) should play 23 ♖xh1, to regain at least some material? No, this would be a coward's approach! Look at the black king. A very tempting target: it is subject to attack by all of White's pieces and there isn't a defender in sight. However, the attentions of White's pieces are not enough: we need the help of the pawns to punish the black king for loitering in the centre. This is achieved by 23 f5!! which takes away e6 from the black king who suddenly finds himself short of

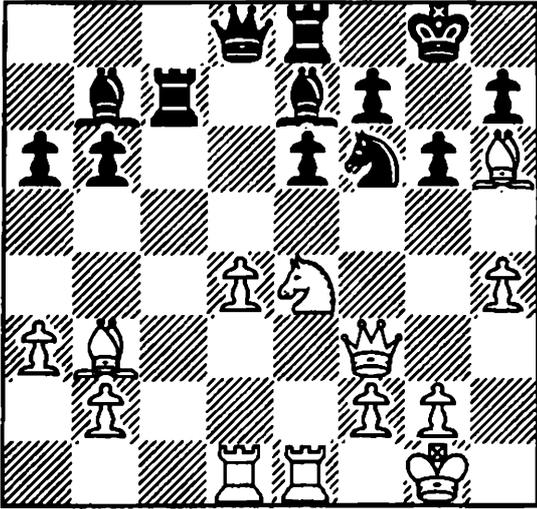
squares. The immediate threat is 24 ♕d6+ ♔d8 25 ♕xf8+ followed by 26 ♕xg7 and 27 ♖xh1 (only now!) winning lots of material. A more subtle threat is 24 ♖d7+ ♔e8 25 f6! with the idea of 26 ♖e7+ and 27 ♖e8 mate. The obvious counter for Black is 23...f6, but then 24 ♖d7+ ♔e8 25 gxf6 gxf6 26 ♕xf6 ♕h6+ 27 ♔b1 ♖g8 28 ♖xh7+ ♔f8 29 ♕e7 is mate (variation by Sideif-Zade). So in the game Black tried to bring up some defenders: 23...♖d8. However, this deprives the black king of the retreat square d8. After 24 ♖e1! (threatening 25 ♕c7+ ♕e4 26 ♖xe4 mate) 24...♕d5 (also hopeless is 24...f6 25 ♕xf6+ ♔f7 26 ♕xd8 threatening 27 ♕b3+) 25 ♕xg7+ **Black resigned**, since 25...♔d6 26 ♕e5+ ♔e7 27 ♕c7+ ♕e6 28 f6 is mate. It is fitting that the pawn should have the last word.

A powerful reminder that it is possible to be mated by a direct attack, even after the exchange of queens.

(see following diagram)

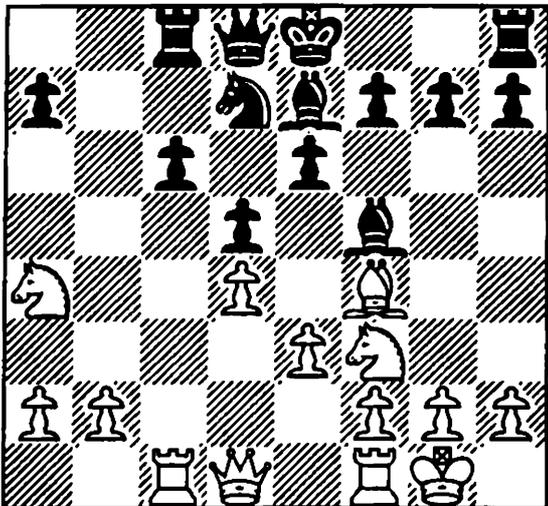
This position arose in Kamsky-Short, Candidates match, Linares 1994, with White to move. Kamsky won with the breakthrough 23 d5! Black has three ways of capturing the pawn, all of which lose:

a) 23...exd5 24 ♖xf6+ ♕xf6 25 ♖xe8+ ♗xe8 26 ♗xf6 and Black is mated on g7;



b) 23...♔xd5 24 ♖xf6+ ♔xf6
25 ♔xd5 exd5 26 ♚xe8+ ♛xe8
27 ♛xf6;

c) 23...♗xd5 24 ♔xd5 ♔xd5
25 ♚xd5! exd5 (again it is mate
in g7 after 25...♛xd5 26 ♖f6+
♔xf6 27 ♛xf6) 26 ♖f6+ ♔h8
(we all know the consequences of
26...♔xf6 by now) 27 ♖xe8
♛xe8 28 ♛f6+! (the f6 square
proves the bane of Black's posi-
tion) 28...♔xf6 29 ♚xe8 mate. In
the game Short declined the offer
after 23...♖xe4, but had to resign
after 24 dxe6! f5 25 ♚xd8 ♚xd8
26 ♚d1.



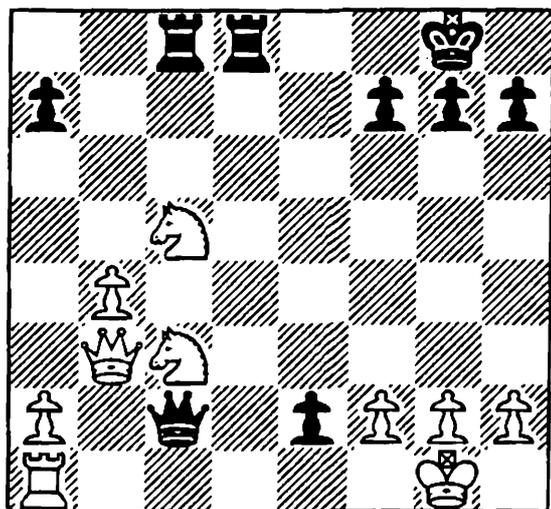
It would be easy for Black to play the routine 12...0-0 when the position would be equal. (Or perhaps White would have small advantage because of the weakness of c6 and the c5 square?) Instead Black began a fierce attack with 12...g5! 13 ♔g3 h5 14 h3 (he must save his bishop, but now the h-file is forcibly opened and Black has a simple plan: mate on h1!) 14...g4 15 hxg4 hxg4 16 ♗e5 ♗xe5 17 ♔xe5 f6 18 ♔g3 ♔f7! (clearing the way for the queen to enter the battle on the kingside) 19 ♚e1 ♚h5 20 ♛d2 (Belyavsky points out the amusing variation 20 ♔f1 ♛a5! 21 ♔e2? ♛b5+ 22 ♔d2 ♛d3 mate! to show that White's king cannot flee the kingside). Now Black found a pretty finish: 20...♔e4! 21 ♔f1 ♔f3!! and White resigned since it is mate after 22 gxf3 gxf3 23 ♔g1 ♛h8 (Seirawan-Belyavsky, Brussels 1988).

A good demonstration of pawn power. And yet none of this would have been possible if Belyavsky had thoughtlessly castled at move 12. We repeat Pillsbury's adage: castle because you want to or because you must, not just because you can.

2 Passed pawns

However much contempt the other pieces may feel towards the foot-sloggers at the start of their career, the laughing stops when a passed pawn reaches the seventh

rank. Such a pawn can destroy whole armies, as the following example shows (Black is to move).



The pawn on e2 is only one square from queening and White's back rank is weak. These two pluses to Black add up to one decisive advantage, which completely outweighs White's material superiority. 25...♖d1+! 26 ♖xd1 ♗xc3! and White resigned. He must play 27 ♗b1, but then 27...exd1(♗)+ 28 ♗xd1 ♗xb4 wins easily (Kr. Georgiev-Gulko, Saint John 1988).

A passed pawn, backed up the concerted fire of the pieces, is a fearsome weapon. The rest of the chapter illustrates this theme.

A. Yusupov-V. Tseshkovsky
USSR Championship 1987
Grünfeld Defence,
Exchange Variation

1 d4 ♘f6
2 c4 g6

3 ♘c3 d5
4 cxd5 ♘xd5
5 e4 ♘xc3
6 bxc3 ♙g7
7 ♙c4 0-0
8 ♘e2 c5
9 0-0 ♘c6
10 ♙e3 ♘a5
11 ♙d3 b6
12 ♖c1 ♗c7
13 ♗d2 ♙b7

Black's behaviour is like that of a bully who helps a child build a sand-castle so that he can have the pleasure of knocking it down. He has allowed White the time and space to construct and fortify a pawn centre, and now wants to dismantle it with pressure from the wings. However, White is not so obliging. Once more the question under discussion is whether a pawn centre is a liability or an advantage. In this particular game the question is answered in favour of the pawn centre.

14 ♙h6

A defender is traded for an attacker. White judges that he is secure enough in the centre to begin active operations against Black's kingside.

14 ... ♖ad8
15 h4 ♗d6?

Yusupov thinks this is a mistake. The black knight on a5 must return to active play: 15...♘c6 16 d5 ♘e5, and White is only a little better.

16 d5!

Now the knight on a5 is shut out of play. White will try to use

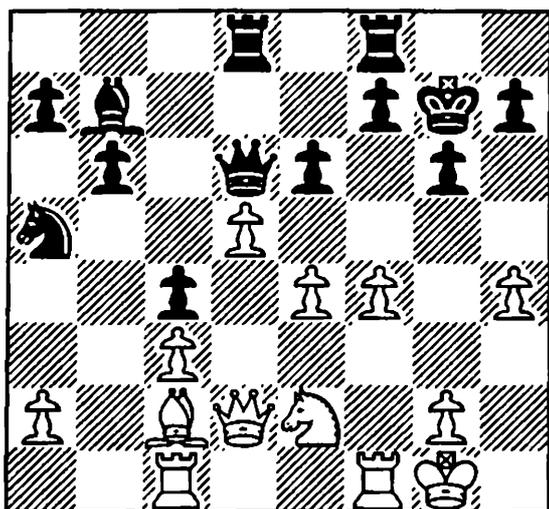
his consequent superiority in firepower to force an advantage on the kingside or in the centre.

16 ... c4
17 ♖c2 e6

If 17...♘c6 then 18 dxc6 ♜xd2 19 ♖xd2 ♜xd2 20 cxb7 ♜xe2 looks risky for Black in view of the dangerous passed pawn. Play could continue 21 ♜fd1 (threat 22 ♔f1 trapping the rook) 21...♖xc3 (21...♖h6 22 ♔f1 ♖xc1 23 ♔xe2 with the idea of 24 ♜d7, 25 ♜c7 and 26 ♜c8 is strong) 22 ♖a4 ♖e5 23 ♜xc4 followed by 24 ♜c8 and White wins.

However, the move played in the game is also incorrect. Black should fight for control of the d4 square with 17...e5! This move would also dissuade White from his space gaining 19th move (see next note).

18 ♖xg7 ♔xg7
19 f4!



19 ... f5

Black discovers that he can win a pawn, but the price he must pay is to endure a vicious attack:

19...exd5 20 e5! ♜e7 and now Yusupov suggests either 21 h5 or 21 f5 without analysis. It's difficult to see how Black can defend against 21 f5. If 21...f6 then 22 ♘d4 intending 23 ♘e6+ looks crushing, or if 21...♜xe5 then 22 f6+ ♔h8 23 ♜h6 ♜g8 24 ♘d4 with the idea 25 ♜f5 gxf5 (25...♜d6 26 ♜xh7+! ♔xh7 27 ♜h5 mate) 26 ♖xf5 ♜xg2+ (if 26...♜g6 then 27 ♖xg6, with mate on g7 or h7) 27 ♔xg2 ♜g8+ 28 ♔h1 and White wins. The idea 25 ♜f5 would be the answer to 24...♘c6 or 24...♜d6. Black can force the exchange of queens with 24...♜h5, but then 25 ♜xh5 gxf5 26 ♜f5 ♜g6 (if 26...♘c6 then 27 ♜xh5 wins) 27 ♜e1 (27 ♜xh5!?) looks good, e.g. 27...♜dg8 28 ♜xh5 ♜xhg2+ 29 ♔h1 threatening mate on h7. Alternatively, Black could try 24...♜e8 intending 25...♜f8. Then 26 ♘f5 ♜f8 (26...gxf5? 27 ♖xf5 mates as above on g7 or h7) 27 ♘g7 ♜xg7! and Black escapes. However, White can improve with 26 ♘f3! (threat 27 ♘g5 and mate on h7) 26...♜f8 27 ♘g5!! (nevertheless!) 27...♜xh6 28 ♘xf7 mate!

The game move also proves inadequate.

20 ♘d4 fxe4

If 20...dxe5, then 21 exf5 weakens Black's kingside. Now Black is hoping for 21 ♘xe6+?? ♜xe6!

21 dxe6 ♘c6

The knight returns to the fray.

But White has gained other advantages: a strong passed pawn and the chance to exploit the weak dark squares around Black's king.

22 f5!

Keeping the initiative rather than being sidetracked by the chance to win material. Yusupov assesses 22 ♙xe4? ♘xd4 23 ♖xd4+ ♖xd4+ 24 cxd4 ♙xe4 25 e7 ♗xd4 26 exf8+ ♕xf8 as unclear. Black would have a bishop and a strong passed pawn for a rook.

22 ... ♘xd4

23 cxd4 ♖e7

Now the d-pawn is taboo: 23... ♖xd4+ 24 ♖xd4+ ♗xd4 25 e7 ♗e8 26 f6+ ♕f7 27 ♙a4 and wins (Yusupov). Against other moves White intends 24 ♖g5 and 25 f6+.

24 ♙a4!

White shows excellent positional judgment. Here the bishop is excellently placed to support the further advance of the e-pawn. For example, if now 24...gxf5 then Yusupov intended 25 ♖g5+! ♖xg5 26 hxg5, and Black cannot prevent 27 e7.

24 ... ♗xf5

25 ♗xf5 gxf5

26 ♖f4!

But not 26 ♖g5+? ♖xg5 27 hxg5 ♕f8.

White finds another way to exploit the weak dark squares in Black's centre.

26 ... ♙d5

If 26... ♗xd4 then 27 ♖e5+

♖f6 28 ♖c7+ wins a piece. But this is not so clear. The way to exploit White's star piece - his e-pawn - is 27 ♖g3+! Now 27... ♕h8 28 ♖e5+ ♖g7 29 ♖xg7+ ♕xg7 30 e7 queens the pawn. Or if 27... ♕f6 28 ♖c3 ♖c5 29 ♗d1 ♕e5 30 ♗xd4 ♖xd4+ 31 ♖xd4+ ♕xd4 32 e7 and again the pawn queens. Or if 27... ♕f8 28 ♖e5! (threatening 29 ♖h8 mate) 28... ♖c5 29 e7+ wins a rook.

27 ♖e5+ ♕g6

Black's dark squares have completely collapsed, as shown by the variation 27... ♕g8 28 ♗c3! and Black is mated by 29 ♗g3+.

28 ♗c3!

A startling entrance.

The reader may have forgotten that this rook was still on the board! It has waited patiently at c1 since move 12, while the glory has gone to the bishop, pawn and queen.

So why after all this neglect is the rook suddenly called upon to finish the game? Well, there is justice in chess. Yusupov has played excellent strategical chess, and Black's position looks as though it is crumbling, so it would be surprising if there wasn't a piece to deliver the coup de grace when Black has succeeded in holding off all the 'star' performers. Tarrasch once said that if a single piece is bad, then the whole game is bad. Perhaps it is equally true that if the game is good, then every piece is good?

Now Black cannot stop the e-

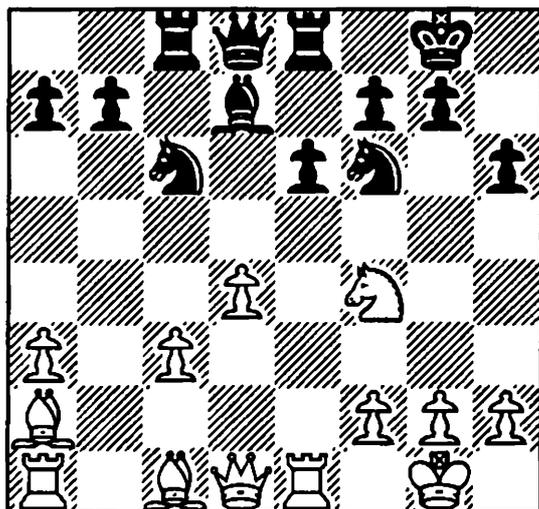
pawn and defend his king.

28 ... f4

29 h5+!

Fittingly, the final blow goes to a pawn. Black resigned, since 29...♔h6 30 ♖xf4+ ♔xh5 (30...♔g7 31 ♜g3+ ♔h8 32 ♗e5+ and mates) 31 ♙d1+ ♔g6 32 ♜g3 mates.

A splendidly controlled game by Yusupov.



K. Panczyk-A.Yusupov
 Warsaw 1985
Nimzo-Indian Defence,
Rubinstein Variation

- | | | |
|----|------|-------|
| 1 | d4 | ♘f6 |
| 2 | c4 | e6 |
| 3 | ♘c3 | ♙b4 |
| 4 | e3 | c5 |
| 5 | ♙d3 | ♘c6 |
| 6 | ♘e2 | cxd4 |
| 7 | exd4 | d5 |
| 8 | 0-0 | dx c4 |
| 9 | ♙xc4 | 0-0 |
| 10 | a3 | ♙xc3 |
| 11 | bxc3 | h6 |
| 12 | ♘f4 | ♙d7 |
| 13 | ♙a2 | ♜c8 |
| 14 | ♜e1 | ♜e8 |

(see following diagram)

Here, according to Yusupov, White should complete his mobilisation with 15 ♗f3 ♗a5 16 ♙b2. Instead he played for an attack by swinging his rook over to the kingside.

- | | | |
|----|-----|------|
| 15 | ♜e3 | e5! |
| 16 | ♘h5 | exd4 |
| 17 | ♜g3 | |

This is White's idea. If now 17...♘xh5, hoping for 18 ♗xh5? ♜e1 mate, Black will be struck down by 18 ♙xf7+!! when after 18...♔xf7? 19 ♗xh5+ he has a dismal choice:

a) 19...♔f8 20 ♙xh6! gxh6 (20...♜e7 21 ♙xg7+! ♜xg7 22 ♗h8+ wins) 21 ♗xh6+ ♔f7 22 ♜g7+ mates;

b) 19...♔g8 20 ♜xg7+! ♔xg7 21 ♙xh6+ ♔h7 22 ♙g5+ ♔g8 23 ♗g6+ ♔h8 24 ♙f6+ ♗xf6 25 ♗xf6+ ♔g8 26 cxd4 and White has a queen and three pawns for a rook and two pieces, plus a strong initiative against Black's denuded king.

So Black would have to answer 18 ♙xf7+ with 18...♔h8, when White has an excellent position after 19 ♙xh5.

But Black has a surprise waiting for White.

17 ... ♙g4!!

This throws a spanner in the works. White has no choice.

- | | | |
|----|-------|-------|
| 18 | ♘xf6+ | ♗xf6 |
| 19 | ♜xg4 | dx c3 |

White now has an extra piece, but on the other hand he has had the initiative wrested from his grasp. His pieces which were poised to attack Black's king find they are clumsily placed for the new situation in which he must try to stop the advance of the c-pawn.

20 ♔e3 c2
21 ♚f1

This loses at once. However, 21 ♚c1 is also bad after 21...♖ed8! and White has no answer to the threats of 22...♖d1+ or 22...♚xa1! 23 ♚xa1 ♖d1+. If instead 21 ♚e1, Yusupov gives 21...♖cd8! 22 ♔b3 ♚b2 23 ♔a4 b5 as good for Black. Even stronger seems to be the move 21...♘b4! (threatening 22...♚xa1, 22...♘xa2 or 22...♘d3) 22 ♖xb4 ♚xa1! 23 ♚xa1 c1(♚)+ 24 ♚xc1 ♖xc1+ 25 ♔xc1 ♖e1 mate.

21 ... ♖xe3!
22 fxe3 ♚xf1+
23 ♖xf1 ♘e5

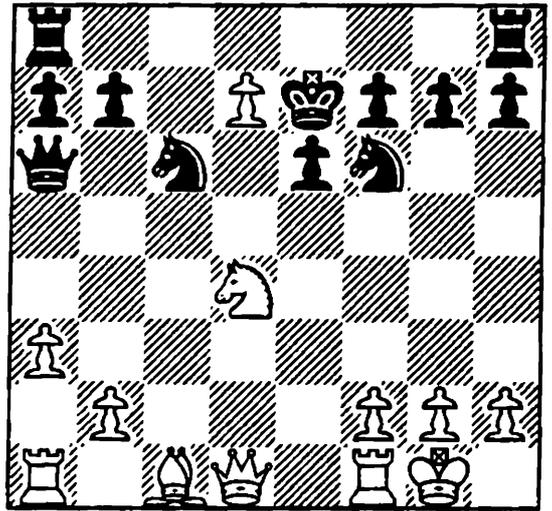
Now White has no answer to the twin threats.

24 ♖gf4 c1(♚)
25 ♖xc1 ♖xc1+
26 ♖f1 ♖xf1+
27 ♚xf1 ♘g4

Winning another pawn. The endgame is hopeless, so Black resigned.

(see following diagram)

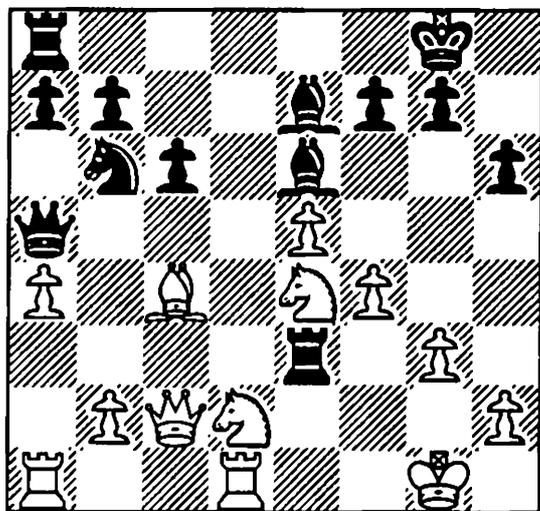
If White (to move) plays slowly then Black will continue 17...♖fd8 and 18...♚f8, capturing the d-pawn at some point with a winning position. So drastic ac-



tion is called for. White played 17 ♘f5+! exf5 18 ♖e1+ ♚d8 (Wolf analyses 18...♚f8 19 ♚d6+ ♚g8 20 ♔h6!! with the threat of 21 ♚xf6 gxf6 22 ♖e8 and mate! Then one variation continues 20...♘xd7 21 ♚g3 g6 22 ♚c3 ♘ce5 23 ♖xe5 ♚f6 24 ♖ae1 ♘xe5 25 ♚xe5 ♚xe5 26 ♖xe5 and despite Black's huge material advantage - the exchange and a pawn - he is helpless. His king on g8 is trapped - if ever ...f6 then ♖e7 keeps the king shut in - which means the rook on h8 is forever out of play. The rook on a8 can only leave the back rank at pain of mate. So whenever White wishes he can put his rook on e7 and then march his king up the board to capture Black's queenside pawns.) 19 ♔f4 ♘e7 (a paradox! The pawn on d7 is very strong: it deprives Black's rooks of c8 and e8, their natural development squares and by pinning down the black king to d8 cuts Black's army in two. Also, its capacity to queen will

prove significant. Nevertheless, the pawn on d7 is also vital for Black's defence! It shelters the black king from the onslaught of White's pieces. If Black tries 19...♖xd7? he must soon resign: 20 ♖d5 ♜e8 - else 21 ♜ad1 follows - 21 ♖xd7+! ♔xd7 22 ♜ad1+ ♕d4 23 ♜xd4+ ♔c6 24 ♜c1+ ♔b5 - 24...♔b6 25 ♙c7+ ♔b5 26 ♜b4 mate - 25 ♜b4+ ♔a5 26 ♙c7+ b6 27 ♜c5+ ♖b5 28 ♜cxb5+ wins a piece. However, Black should play 19...♖b6 according to Wolf when 20 ♖e2 ♖d4 21 ♙g5 is 'unclear'. 20 ♜c1 ♕fd5 21 ♜xe7! ♕xf4 (the penalty for 21...♕xe7 is 22 ♙c7 mate) 22 ♖e1 ♖d6 23 ♜xf7 ♖e6 24 ♖a5+ b6 25 ♖xa7! (exploiting the weakness of Black's back rank; now 25...♜xa7 26 ♜c8 is mate, while 25...♖xf7 26 ♖c7+ ♔e7 27 d8(♖)+ ♔e6 28 ♖d6 - either - is also mate) 25...♖e1+ (an ingenious but flawed defence) 26 ♜xe1 ♜xa7 27 ♜e8+ ♜xe8 28 dxe8(♖)+ ♔xe8 29 ♜xa7 and **Black resigned** (Wolf-Gerbic, correspondence game 1988). A good demonstration of the importance of open lines when attacking with rooks and queen. Finally, a word of warning. The purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate the dynamic use of pawns. However, this doesn't mean that it is always correct to advance pawns. Sometimes the nature of the position requires the pawns to stay back: perhaps they are needed to defend the king. If

you planning a pawn advance make sure it has the back up of the pieces. Otherwise, things can go horribly wrong, as the following example reveals (Black to play).



White's pawn chain on the kingside looks impressive, but its forward march has left many undefended squares around the king and, just as importantly, in the centre. A black rook has sneaked behind the white defences to e3, what could be termed the soft underbelly of White's position. It is Black's move, and he carried out a winning combination:

- 20 ... ♜xe4!
- 21 ♙xe6

If 21 ♖xe4 then 21...♖c5+ wins two pieces for a rook.

- 21 ... ♜e2!

The rook seizes the seventh rank, which is almost devoid of pawn cover...

- 22 ♙g4

... and is promptly expelled by White's bishop. However, there are other weaknesses in White's

position - the diagonals a7-g1 and a8-h1. Black's last move vacated the d5 square for Black's queen.

22 ... ♔d5!

23 ♙xe2

There was no choice, since 23...♔g2 mate was threatened.

23 ... ♙c5+

24 ♔xc5

Another forced move: 24 ♙f1 ♔h1 is mate. But now White has lost his queen for insufficient compensation.

24 ... ♔xc5+

25 ♙f1 ♙d5

Another familiar attacking duo:

queen and knight.

26 ♘c4 g5

The finishing touch. White's centre is broken up.

27 fxg5 hxg5

28 ♖ac1 ♙e3+

29 ♘xe3 ♔xe3

30 ♙c4 ♔xe5

Here White resigned. He is a queen and pawn down for rook and bishop, and 31 ♖d7? would lose to 31...♔f5+ (Tukmakov-Sveshnikov, Sochi 1987).

White's drastic defeat is a useful warning against pushing pawns too far.

7 Rampaging Knights

The knight has a property which is unique among chess pieces. The power of every other piece ends at an obstruction along file, rank or diagonal. The knight's influence, on the other hand, goes right through solid matter. This means that an enemy piece hiding behind an apparently impregnable fortress is vulnerable to its 'X-ray' attack. The most famous example of this is the game Gibaud-Lazard, Paris 1924, which went 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘d2 e5 3 dxe5 ♘g4 4 h3? ♘e3! and White had to resign, since 5 fxe3 allows mate.

The following two games are examples of this power. In the first, the white king finds itself under threat of mate, despite being surrounded by defenders. In the second, the black queen, encased by a wall of pawns, nevertheless finds herself a target to the devious knight.

A. Shirov-J. Polgar
Buenos Aires 1994
Sicilian Defence,
Keres Attack

1 e4 c5

2 ♘f3 e6
3 d4 cxd4
4 ♘xd4 ♘c6
5 ♘c3 d6
6 g4

This prepares to attack the ghost of the black knight on f6. However, Black chooses a different method of deploying the knight.

6 ... a6
7 ♙e3 ♘ge7
8 ♘b3 b5
9 f4 ♙b7
10 ♚f3 g5!

A thematic sacrifice to break up White's kingside pawn phalanx and gain control of e5.

11 fxg5 ♘e5

This square is an excellent outpost for the knight. As a rule, knights function best when they are centralised and free from the danger of attack by pawns. Bishops, on the other hand, in view of their long range influence are often happiest on the wings.

12 ♚g2 b4
13 ♘e2 h5!
14 gxh5?

And now White loses control of another centre square, after which his position begins to

totter. Judith Polgar says that White should play 14 gxf6, when she planned to answer 14...♙xh6, with a possible continuation 15 ♙xh6 ♖xh6 16 0-0-0 ♘7g6. White still has an extra pawn, but Black has good dark-square play and the bastion on e5.

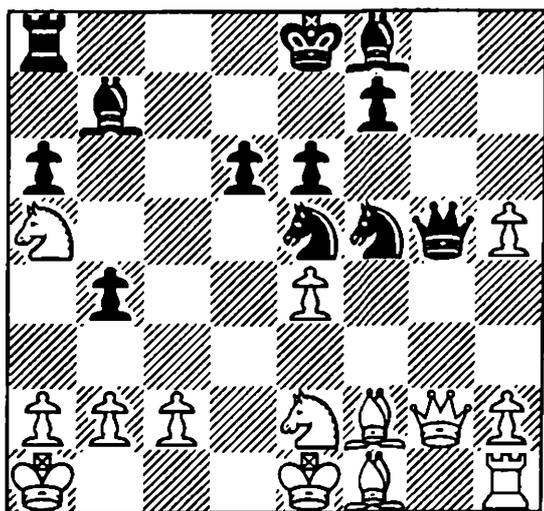
14 ... ♘f5!

A strong entrance. White's control over f5 proves to be an optical illusion. If now 15 exf5 ♙xg2 16 ♙xg2 then 16...♖xh5! (Polgar) and, as Tal would say, White only has moral compensation for his queen.

15 ♙f2 ♖xg5!

So that if 16 ♖xg5 then 16...♘f3+ 17 ♔d1 ♘xg5 and after e4 drops White's whole centre will have disappeared.

16 ♘a5



Shirov thinks he has found the answer to his problems. After 16...♖xg2 17 ♙xg2 Black has two pieces en prise. In fact, no matter how Black plays it seems a loss of a piece is inevitable. Is it time for Polgar to resign?

And yet it is strange. Black hasn't neglected her development. She has fought vigorously for the centre squares, and almost reduced White's centre to ruin. White's pieces are undeveloped or clumsily placed. No bad error is discernible in Black's earlier play. If indeed Black must resign, then the fault is with the logic of chess, not Polgar's play!

But Polgar didn't resign. Instead she found a remarkable move:

16 ... ♘e3!!

'When I played this move I couldn't help smiling at Shirov,' said Polgar after the game. Is this the best example of female sadism in chess?

Of course Polgar is justly proud of this move. Every player dreams of sacrificing their queen. The idea is simple enough: after 17 ♖xg5, 17...♘f3 is a pretty smothered mate. However, a simple move can be beautiful. And how many players would have noticed such a move?

17 ♖g3

Poor Shirov. The only way to save the queen and guard against a fork on c2, without being mated, is by eliminating the intrusive knight. However, not only is 17 ♙xe3 positional suicide on the dark squares, it also loses tactically: after 17...♖xe3 the threat of mate in two, beginning 18...♘f3+, is fatal.

Therefore Shirov has to accept huge material losses. The rest of

the game is futile resistance by White.

17	...	♔xg3
18	♖xg3	♖xc2+
19	♔d1	♖xa1
20	♖xb7	b3
21	axb3	♖xb3
22	♔c2	♖c5
23	♖xc5	dxc5
24	♔e1	♖f3
25	♔c3	♖d4+
26	♔d3	♔d6
27	♔g2	♔e5
28	♔c4	♔e7
29	♖a1	♖c6

White resigned

G. Kasparov-J. Lautier
 Moscow 1994
Sicilian Defence,
Sveshnikov Variation

1	e4	c5
2	♖f3	e6
3	d4	cxd4
4	♖xd4	♖f6
5	♖c3	♖c6
6	♖db5	d6
7	♔f4	e5
8	♔g5	a6
9	♖a3	b5
10	♖d5	♔e7
11	♔xf6	♔xf6
12	c3	0-0
13	♖c2	♖b8
14	h4!	

As one would expect of a World Champion, Kasparov has added his own interpretation to the strategy of an established variation. The usual method is as

follows. First, White consolidates his hold over the d5 square with moves such as ♖d3, ♖ce3 and, after ♔e2 and 0-0, ♖fd1. Then he aims to pressurise Black on the queenside with a4, followed by axb5, leaving Black with a weak pawn on b5. After some clever manoeuvring, White then captures the pawn on b5 or the pawn on d6, or both pawns, when it only remains to exchange off the pieces and queen a pawn to provoke resignation.

If Black were a good player, he would object to such a pessimistic assessment of his chances, and begin a strong counterattack along the f-file. His starting move would be ...♔g5!, and then ...f5, or maybe ...g6 and only then ...f5, so that he can answer exf5 by ...gxf5, maintaining pawn control over e4. He may even allow White to win the b5 pawn, but will be ready with a tactical blow from one of his bishops.

Kasparov has a new idea. He wants to attack Black's king! The move 14 h4 is positionally justified since it takes away the g5 square from Black's bishop, and so makes his game more difficult to unwind. The pawn can also be used as a battering ram against Black's kingside. But where is White's king going to hide?

14 ... ♖e7!

Allowing his kingside to be weakened, but Black has no other constructive plan: he must challenge White's control of d5.

15 ♖xf6+ gxf6

16 ♔d3

Earlier, Kasparov had beaten Kramnik in a brilliant game starting 16 ♖d2. However, his attack in that game wasn't quite sound. Here he plays a new move, something which, if the player wins the game, is usually termed 'an improvement on previous play'. In reality, like almost all so called improvements, it is merely a different move which is as equally playable as the move it replaces. The effect of such a move should not however be underestimated: it gives the opponent a whole new set of variations to examine which greatly increases the chance of him going wrong.

And of course, we do not mean to imply that it is easy to discover moves which are different, but equally playable in long established systems.

16 ... d5

Eminently logical. Black always tries to conquer the d5 square in the Sveshnikov.

17 exd5 ♖xd5

18 ♖e3 ♖e6

19 ♖h5!

Continuing his plan of attack. I am reminded of Bronstein's advice in his book of the 1953 Candidates tournament: 'along with the witty and subtle finesses aimed at provoking a weakening of the king's pawn cover, one should not forget such things as one-move mate threats.'

19 ... e4?

Bronstein's advice proves apposite, since Lautier immediately blunders! Kasparov recommends 19...f5 when after 20 0-0-0 ♖g6 White has nothing better than to allow the exchange of queens, since if the queen retreats his minor pieces will be driven back by e4 and f4. White would have a minimal advantage after the plausible 21 ♖g5 f6 22 ♖xg6+ hxg6 23 ♔c2, says Kasparov.

20 ♔c2 b4?!

The idea of this move is to force 21 c4, so that White can't bother the queen with ♔b3. However the plan of ...f5 and ...♖g6 still looks better, since in the game after...

21 c4 ♔h8

22 0-0-0

...White could castle with impunity on the queenside, without worrying about an attack on his a-pawn.

22 ... f5

23 ♖g5 ♔b6

24 h5 ♔c6?

It was imperative to force the exchange of queens. Kasparov gives the variation 24...♔g8 25 ♖f4 ♖h6 26 ♖c7 ♔b7! 27 ♖e5+ f6 to show White gains nothing concrete by retaining the queens. However, instead of 26 ♖c7 in this sequence, Kasparov claims a clear advantage with 26 g3! Here we see another drawback to Black's 20th move: in all end-games White has a strong protected passed pawn on c4.

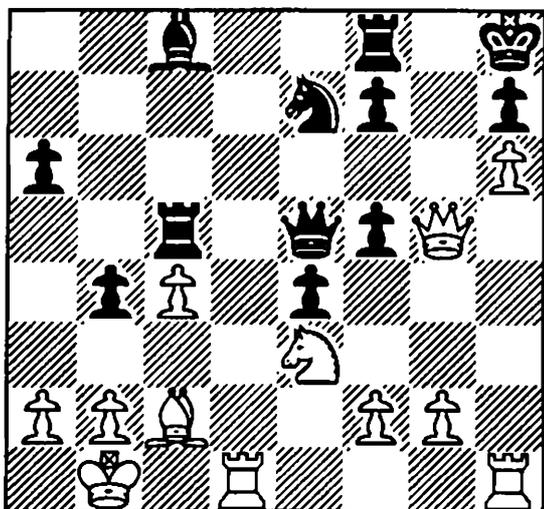
25 ♔b1 ♖c5?

Here was the last chance to play 25...♖g8 or, as Pein suggests, 25...h6 26 ♗f4.

26 h6

Allowing this advance proves fatal to Black.

26 ... ♗e5



Black seems to have everything covered, and is ready to play 27... f4, when he will have a good position after 28 ♗xe5+ ♖xe5.

But look again at that g7 square. We only need to dislodge Black's queen from e5 and it will be mate: there are no other safe squares for an harassed damsel on the a1-h8 diagonal.

And isn't it about time the rook on h1 contributed to the game?

27 ♖h5!!

A most unusual winning move. White attacks a pawn which is defended four times and immediately Black's game is hopeless. The threat is 28 ♘g4 winning the exchange because of an 'X-ray' attack on Black's queen. Black

has no adequate reply. For example, if 27...♘g6 then 28 ♖d8 ♗e6 29 ♘g4 wins or if 27...♘c6 then 28 ♘g4 f×g4 29 ♗g7+! wins the exchange.

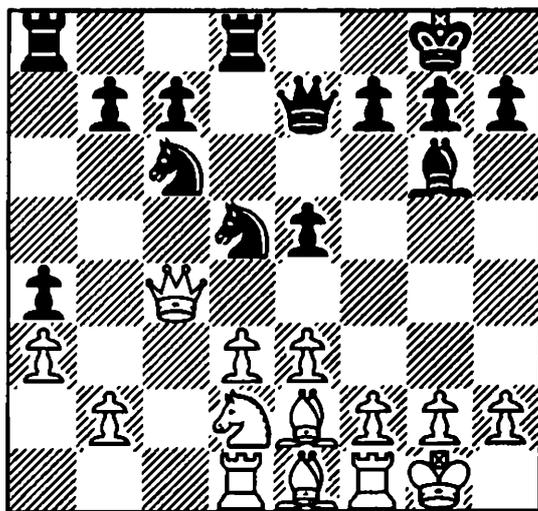
27 ... ♖g8

28 ♘g4! Black

resigned

Kasparov gives two variations in his analysis, the prosaic 28...♗e6 29 ♖d8 ♗g6 30 ♗xe7, and the pretty 28...♖xg5 29 ♘xe5 ♖xh5 30 ♖d8+ ♘g8 31 ♘xf7 mate! Here the knight has the last laugh, and demonstrates the mate of which only it is capable.

Here is another example of Kasparov's attacking technique (Ehlvest-Kasparov, Reykjavik 1988; Black to move).



White's position looks perfectly safe, but this illusion was dispelled by

16 ... ♘d4!!

Such a 'quiet' sacrifice is virtually always more difficult to refuse from a knight than any other piece. This is because in

throwing itself so far forwards the knight looks right into the heart of the enemy camp. Normally it sees at least one piece that doesn't happen to be defended, or whose exchange the opponent can't tolerate. Here it eyes the undefended bishop on e2. If on the other hand the knight on d4 had been a bishop, White could have simply ignored the demonstration with 17 ♖c2.

17 exd4 ♘f4!

Black's sacrifice has opened a breach in White's defences. The bishop on e2 is again embarrassed, since it can only save itself by abandoning the defence of d3.

White's problems are due to the terrible congestion in his position. The knight on d2 cuts off the defence of d3 by the rook on d1, and shuts the bishop on e1 out of the game. In turn, the bishop on e1 prevents the rook on f1 entering the game. It is no wonder that pieces which are tripping over one another can't fight for the centre squares.

18 ♙f3 ♖xd4

Black in contrast has all the space he needs to coordinate his pieces.

19 ♚b5?

Now White's queen becomes short of squares. White had to try 19 ♚c3 but then Kasparov analyses 19... ♖ad8! 20 g3 (he must try to break free from the pressure) 20... ♖xd3 21 ♚b4 ♚xb4 22 axb4 ♖xf3! 23 gxf4 (23 ♘xf3 loses to

23... ♘e2+ and 24... ♖xd1) 23... ♖xf4 as clearly to Black's advantage.

19 ... c6!

And since 20 ♚b6 loses the queen to 20... ♖a6, White has to return the piece, after which his disorganised game is soon overwhelmed.

20 ♙xc6 bxc6

21 ♚xc6 ♚d8

22 ♘f3 ♖d6

23 ♚b5 ♖d5

24 ♚b4 e4!

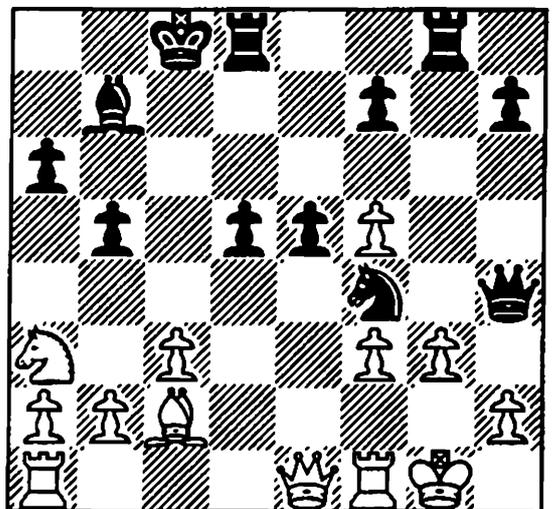
25 ♙c3

A blunder, but if the knight retreats (25 ♘d2) then Kasparov was planning 25... ♚h4! 26 g3 ♚h3 27 gxf4 ♖h5 and mate on h2.

25 ... ♘e2+

White resigned

The knight in combination with the queen is often a lethal attacking force against an exposed king. This is because the queen and knight complement each other powers. Here is a good example:



This is the game Prasad-

Kouatly, Kolhapur 1987. It is Black's move.

He sacrificed two rooks:

21 ... ♖xg3+!

22 hxg3

If 22 ♖xg3 then 22...♘e2+ wins the queen.

22 ... ♖g8

23 g4

White also loses his queen after 23 ♔f2 ♖xg3+ 24 ♔e3 ♘g2+. Also fatal is 23 ♖f2 ♖xg3+ 24 ♔f1 ♖h1 mate.

23 ... ♖xg4+

24 fxg4 ♖xg4+

25 ♔f2 d4!!

A brilliant concluding move. Black cuts off the escape square e3 from White's king and unleashes his bishop on b7. Now there are two threats of mate: 26...♖g2 or the more elegant 26...♘h3!

White has no defence. For example, 26 ♖xe5 ♖h4+! (preventing the escape to e1) 27 ♔g1 ♖g3 mate. The only way to continue is 26 ♖e4! but Kouatly intended 26...♔xe4 27 ♔xe4 ♖h4+ 27 ♔g1 ♘e2+ 28 ♔g2 ♖xe4+ winning lots of material.

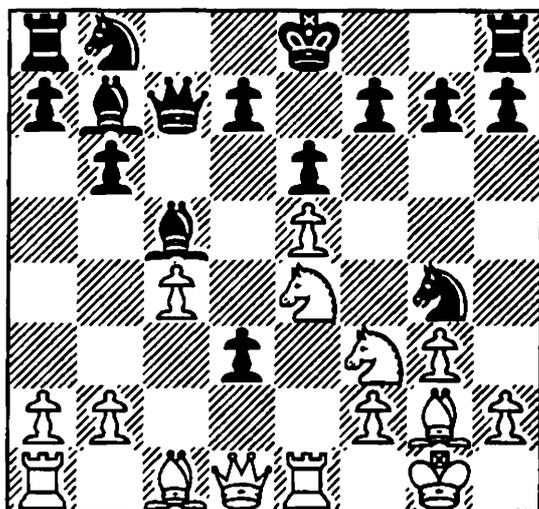
So White resigned, despite having two extra rooks.

(see following diagram)

Here we see Adorjan-Kudrin, New York 1987, with White to move.

At first glance Black appears to be doing well. He has an extra pawn, and if White recaptures it with 12 ♖xd3? then he has to worry about the f2 square collaps-

ing after a subsequent ...♔xe4. However, Black's development has suffered neglect and the g4-knight is precariously placed.



Adorjan sacrificed a second pawn to gain a strong attack.

12 ♘fg5! ♘xe5

13 ♔f4

An unpleasant pin. White threatens to win at once with 14 ♘xc5, and if 13...f6, then Vegh, annotating the game in *Informator* 43, gives the following amusing variation: 14 ♖h5+ ♔e7 15 ♘xf6! gxf6 16 ♖xe5! fxe5 17 ♖f7+ ♔d6 (17...♔d8 18 ♖f6+ ♔c8 19 ♖xh8+ ♖d8 20 ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 21 ♔xb7 wins) 18 ♔xe5+! ♔xe5 19 ♖f4 mate.

13 ... d6

14 ♖h5 ♔f8

The answer to 14...♘c6 or any other developing move was 15 ♘xe6 followed by 16 ♘xg7+, ripping apart Black's kingside. So Black voluntarily gives up any chance of future castling.

Now White has a forced win.

15 ♘xc5 bxc5

Or 15...♙xg2 16 ♖cxe6+! and one knight will be left to capture the queen.

16 ♜xe5!

Eliminating the vital defensive piece.

16 ... dxe5

If 16...♙xg2 then 17 ♜xc5! The black queen must remain defending f7 against mate, so variations such as 17...♙c6 18 ♙xd6+! or 17...♚d7 18 ♜c8+! ♚e7 19 ♚xf7 mate are now possible.

17 ♙xe5! ♚d7

Of course, 17...♚xe5? 18 ♚xf7 is still mate. And if 17...♚e7? then 18 ♙d6! ends the game.

18 ♙xb7 ♚xb7

Black has kept his booty: the exchange and a pawn. However, he now has no pieces developed apart from his queen. Nevertheless, Black's king appears safe from immediate disaster behind his wall of pawns, and only one developing move is required - 19...♖c6 - before Black can claim that White's attack has failed.

But this reasoning proves fallacious. The king is not safe behind the pawns, and Black isn't given even the one move necessary to develop his knight.

19 ♖xe6+!

A real thunderbolt. The e6 square proves weaker than f7. If now 19...fxe6 then 20 ♙d6+ ♚g8 21 ♚e8 is mate.

19 ... ♚g8

20 ♖xg7 ♖c6

This is too late now, since the

kingside defences have collapsed. All that remains is for Adorjan to finish the game in a precise manner.

21 ♖f5! ♖xe5

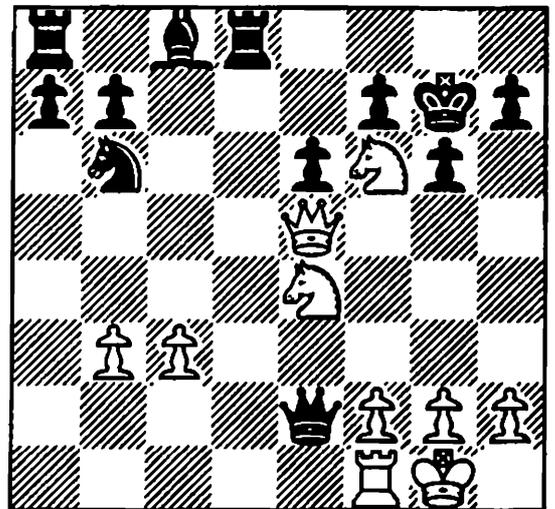
22 ♚g5+ ♖g6

If 22...♚f8 then 23 ♚g7+ ♚e8 24 ♚xe5+ ♚d7 25 ♚e7+ ♚c8 (25...♚c6 26 ♚d6 mate) 26 ♖d6+ ♚b8 27 ♚xb7 mate is one way to win.

23 ♚f6

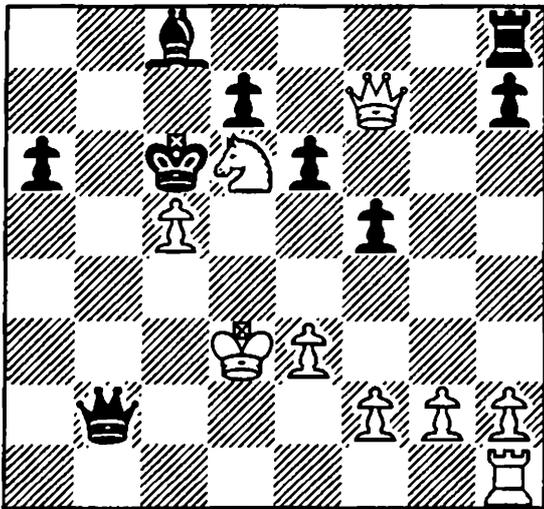
And Black resigned, since 23...♚f8 24 ♚g7+ ♚e8 25 ♖d6+ wins the queen.

Attacking with queen and knight



This is Ljubojevic-Alburt, New York 1985, with White to play. Black has won a rook, but his king is exposed to the awesome attacking power of a queen and knight(s) acting in concert. The game finished 22 ♖d7+ ♚h6 (Or if 22...♚g8 23 ♖df6+ ♚f8 - 23...♚h8 24 ♖h5+ mates, but what about 23...♚g7, returning to the starting position? In that case

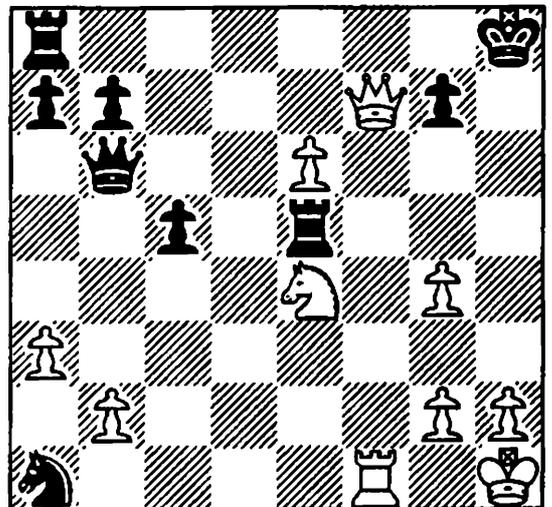
'Ljubo' would have had to think again; see concluding note below - 24 ♖xh7+ ♔g8 25 ♜ef6+ wins the black queen.) 23 ♜g5+ ♔g7 24 ♜f6+ ♔h6 25 ♜e5 ♜f8 (preventing mate in two) 26 f3 ♜e3+ 27 ♔h1 ♜d7 28 ♜g4+ ♔h5 29 ♜g3 mate. Let's return to the diagram position. If you found the mate in four then you are doing better than Ljubojevic: 22 ♜e8+! ♔f8 (forced) 23 ♜c5+! (The move Ljubo probably missed. His attention was on the kingside. Now of course 23...♔xe8 24 ♜f6 is mate.) 23...♔g8 24 ♜ef6+ ♔h8 25 ♜f8 mate.



It is White to play in this bizarre position. Both kings have reached the third rank. If it were Black's move he could force a draw by perpetual check with 26...♜b3+ 27 ♔d4 (or 27 ♔d2) 27...♜b2+ etc. (White would be ill advised to attempt a flight to the kingside: 27 ♔e2 ♜c2+ 28 ♔f3 ♜xc5 29 ♜xc8 - forced - 29...♜xc8 and Black is better).

However, it is White's move, and he played 26 ♜c4! After 26...♜b3+ 27 ♔d4 the white king was suddenly safe from checks. And what's more, there is an immediate threat of 28 ♜a5+. If Black cannot give perpetual check, then the enormous positional defects in his position will prove fatal: his bishop and rook are uselessly placed and his dark squares are severely weak. The game only lasted three more moves: 27...♜b4 28 ♜e7! ♔b5 (Falling for a trap but things were very difficult anyway. The threat was 29 ♜d6+ ♔b7 30 c6+! winning the queen. Also, 28...♔b7 29 c6+! wins.) 29 ♜b1! and Black resigned since 29...♜xb1 30 ♜a3+ wins the queen. (Kopec-de Firmian, USA 1985/86)

This game shows the importance to king safety of having a good, efficient piece deployment. Although both kings are on the fourth rank, it is the player with the disorganised pieces who has to resign.



White (to move) has sacrificed a rook to attack Black's king, but now seems to have run out of ammunition. His knight on e4 and the passed pawn on e6 are both hanging, and the obvious mating attempt 26 ♖f3 fails after 26...♗xe6 27 ♖h3+ ♗h6. The not so obvious drawing attempt 26 ♖f6, hoping for 26...gxf6? 27 ♗xf6+ with at least a draw, or 26...♗xe4 27 ♖h6+! gxh6 28 ♗f6+ with a perpetual, fails to 26...♗d8! (Sakharov) when the weakness of White's back rank costs him the game. So it all seems over for White.

However, Sakharov found the brilliant move 26 ♘g5!! Now if 26...♗xg5 27 ♖f3! and Black no longer has the ♗xe6 defence against 28 ♖h3 mate - his rook

has been enticed away from the vital e5 square. In other words, the coordination has been broken between Black's pieces. Meanwhile, White is threatening 27 ♗f8+ and mate - it is Black's back rank which suddenly proves weak.

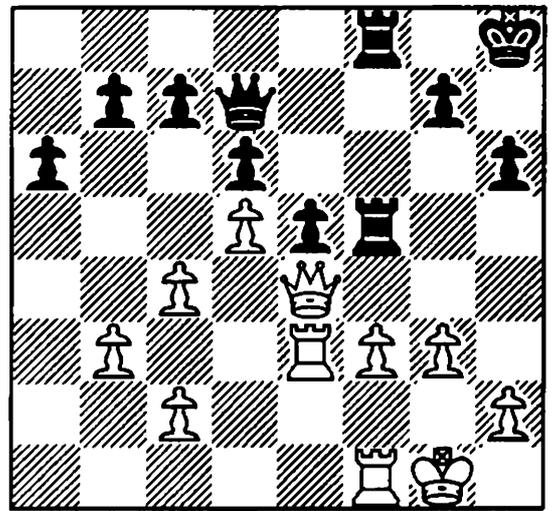
Black had no good reply to 26 ♘g5 and resigned immediately (Sakharov-Rozentalis, correspondence game 1986).

Once again the queen and knight proved a deadly duo. However, we should remember that they only have the capacity to wreak havoc: whether or not they actually do something fatal depends on the opponent going wrong and weakening his game in some way. So the virtuous have nothing to fear.

8 Wielding the Big Stick

When I was young player, eager to improve my chess, I came across a copy of *Rubinstein's Chess Masterpieces* by Kmoch. Since Rubinstein had the reputation of being a brilliant strategical player while I could barely form a two-move plan, I thought a systematic study of all his games would be of great benefit. And so, after reading the harrowing biography which formed the introduction to the book, and afterwards somewhat surprisingly still wanting to be a chess professional, I dutifully began playing through the first game. This was Janowski-Rubinstein, from Karlsbad 1907. An insipid opening was followed by an even less eventful early middlegame, and by move 20 I was feeling thoroughly bored. With another 50 moves in prospect (this was no miniature) I was tempted to throw the book aside. If this was what being a strong positional player meant, I mused, then forget it: I would rather sacrifice pieces. At least I would still be awake at the end of the game. However, looking down the page I noticed that Kmoch had given two exclamation marks to Rubinstein's 29th move. Then, as now, I could never resist seeing what inspired an annotator to be this generous, and so decided to give Rubinstein one more chance to impress me. This was the position after White's 29th move:

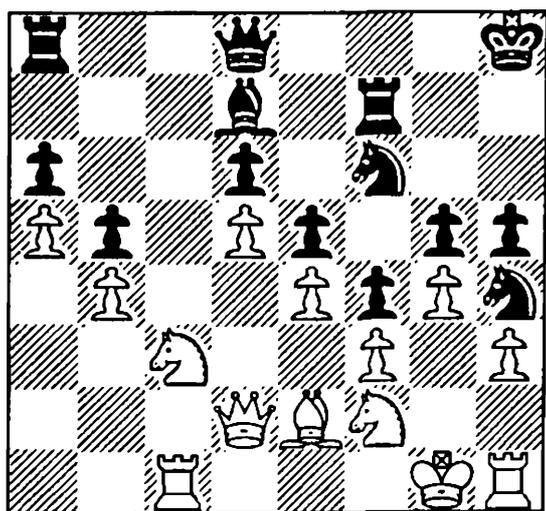
tion marks to Rubinstein's 29th move. Then, as now, I could never resist seeing what inspired an annotator to be this generous, and so decided to give Rubinstein one more chance to impress me. This was the position after White's 29th move:



The move which enthralled Kmoch was the unpretentious **29...♛d8!!** At first sight this seems like more dull drifting, but in fact Rubinstein had hit on an incredible plan: to bring his queen into active play via the a7 square! Play continued **30 ♛g4 ♛b8!** **31 ♖g2 ♛a7!** **32 ♜fe1 ♛c5!** **33 ♛e4 ♛b4!** and Black's queen was excellently placed. Rubinstein subsequently played

...a5 and ...a4 to weaken White's queenside and open the a-file for his rooks. Black then gradually exploited his advantage to force a win on move 78. Without the queen being actively placed on b4 rather than languishing on d7, such an attacking plan would have failed.

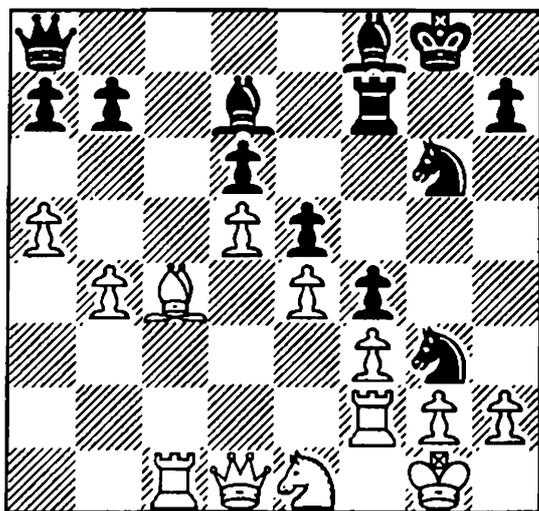
When I saw this manoeuvre I at last understood Rubinstein's positional creativity. Who else would consider the a7 square, one of the most insignificant backwaters of the chessboard, as a jumping off point for the queen? The answer is: anyone who has seen Rubinstein do it first! Inspired by Rubinstein's example, I found a similar manoeuvre in one of my own games:



This position is from Primel-McDonald, France 1990. Black's attack on the kingside is stymied, but he found a way to redeploy his pieces and break through on the queenside: 27...♖b8! 28 ♔f1 ♖a7! 29 ♞cd1 ♜ff8 30 ♞c3

(White has no constructive plan) 30...♞ac8. Over the next few moves, Black wrested control of the c-file from White, whose rook on h1 is hopelessly out of play, and forced the win without much difficulty thanks to his far superior coordination of pieces. Note the enormous power of Black's queen on a7.

And finally, we see Kasparov using the same technique as Rubinstein to win a miniature (Piket-Kasparov, Tilburg 1989; Black to play).



Black has won two pieces for a rook and pawn. This is a significant material gain in a middle-game position, especially when it is the King's Indian Defence and White has lost his dark square bishop...

But how is Black to exploit his advantage? It seems that he must retreat his knight and regroup his pieces. Instead, Kasparov found a way to immediately exploit the weakness of White's dark squares.

25 ... a6!
 26 ♖d3

If 26 fxc3, the black queen shows its versatility by forcing the win on a different side of the board: 26...fxg3 27 ♖b2 ♖d8! 28 ♔f1 ♕h6 29 ♔e2 ♖g5 as given by Nikitin. Black has a winning attack, mainly because he can use the dark squares as he pleases.

26 ... ♖a7!

Our familiar move.

27 b5 axb5

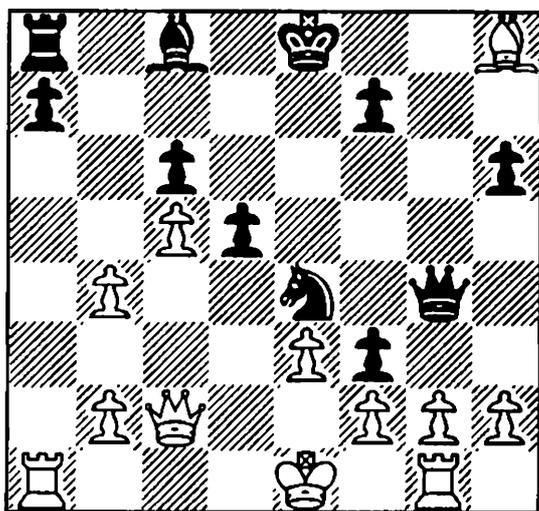
28 ♕xb5 ♘h1!

And White resigned, since further material losses are unavoidable. This comparison of games reminds us that miniatures are governed by the same principles which guide the hand of the player in long, arduous positional battles. The difference is one of time and intensity. Rubinstein took 50 moves to demonstrate the strength of his manoeuvre; Kasparov took two moves. Rubinstein's play was patient and long-term; Kasparov's was brutal and immediate.

Of course, both players were responding to the requirements of the position. Rubinstein could also be violent when violence was required, while Kasparov is perfectly able to nurture a long-term advantage.

As befits a World Champion, Kasparov handles every piece with tremendous skill and imagination. However, he often shows a special virtuosity in his use of the queen, as we see from the

following example (Kasparov-Spassky, Linares 1990; White to move).



White has a big material advantage - the exchange and a pawn. Even against an ex-World Champion this should prove quite sufficient to win. However, things are not at all simple. White's bishop is rather out of play on h8 and is in danger of being shut in by ...f6. Also, White has yet to bring his rooks into active play: this is a serious problem, since there are no open files on the board. And furthermore, Black has a grip on the white squares, and if it were his move, he could play 19...fxg2, gaining a strong passed pawn and threatening 20...♖g5 followed by 21...♕f3+.

However, it is White's move, and he found a six-move queen manoeuvre to neutralise Black's threats and win the game. First, Kasparov played:

19 ♖d1!

This deals with the threat of

19...fxg2, since 20 ♖xg4 ♙xg4 21 ♜xg2 is entirely hopeless for Black. Spassky knows that his only chance is to keep the queens on and make White worry about his king's safety.

19 ... ♘g5

The only way to defend f3, and with the idea of 20...♘h3! 21 ♜f1? fxg2! winning. Of course Kasparov never falls for such traps.

20 ♖d4!

Instead, he finds another way to offer an unacceptable exchange of queens, and therefore gains time for the next stage of his manoeuvre.

20 ... ♘e4

Back again, but he had nothing better.

21 ♖e5+ ♙e6

22 ♖f4!

The queen has now bypassed Black's knight. Once again the exchange of queens is offered, and once again Black is compelled to refuse. This time, however, it costs the f3 pawn.

22 ... ♖g6

Black could attack the white bishop: 22...♖g8. However, 23 ♜xa7! ♜xa7 24 ♖b8+ is then crushing, assuming White answers 24...♙e7 with 25 ♖xa7+ rather than 25 ♖xh8?? allowing 25...♜a1 mate!

23 ♖xf3

With the disappearance of this pawn almost all of Black's attacking chances vanish. His only chance now is to trap and win the

white bishop.

23 ... f6

24 ♖f4!

The final move of White's marvellous sequence with his queen. Now he has ideas of 25 ♜xa7 or 25 ♖c7. At the same time, he clears the way for the f-pawn to evict the enemy knight from its dominant central post.

24 ... ♙f7

25 f3 ♘g5

26 ♙d2!

Preparing to push back the knight even further with 27 h4 (the immediate 26 h4 allows 27 ♘h3!).

If now 26...♜xh8, then 27 ♜xa7+ ♙f8 (27...♙g8 28 ♖b8+ mates) 28 ♖d6+ mates quickly. So there is no constructive plan for Black.

26 ... ♖f5

27 h4 ♖xf4

28 exf4 ♘h7

29 g4 **Black**

resigned

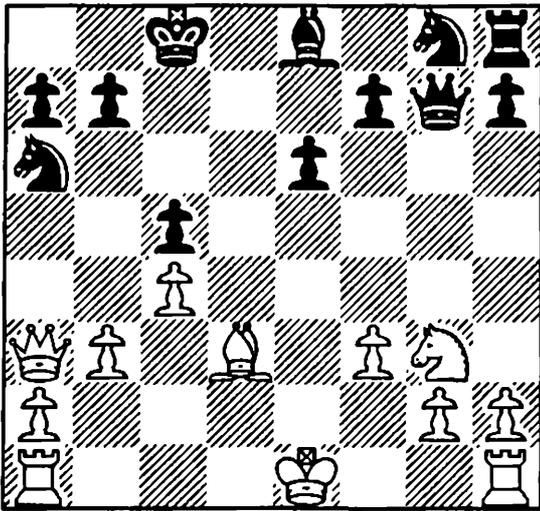
29...♜xh8 30 ♜xa7+ ♙g8 leaves Black hopelessly tied up. White could play slowly with 31 ♜e1 etc., or forcefully with 31 b5! cxb5 32 c6, and the passed pawn will cost Black a piece, if it can be stopped at all.

(see following diagram)

This position arose in Schwartzman-Komarov, Metz 1994, with White to move.

White's situation is similar to that of Kasparov's in the game above. He has won material, a rook for a knight, but has

difficulty in consolidating his position. His rook on a1 is attacked, and the natural 17 0-0 loses a piece to 17...♖d4+. If 17 ♔e2, then the king will be in the centre a long time. And if 17 ♖c1, then 17...♞b4 looks awkward, since the bishop on d3 has nowhere to go: 18 ♕e4 f5 or 18 ♕e2 ♖xa1! with a fork on a1.



White found a solution to his problems by 'falling' for a trap!

17 0-0! ♖d4+

Of course Black has no choice. Even if snatching the piece leads to almost certain defeat, it is better to take the risk than play a balanced middlegame the whole exchange down.

18 ♔h1 ♖xd3

19 ♜ad1 ♖g6

20 ♖a5!

An excellent example of the power of coordination. The queen was a sorry looking sight on a3 when it was unable to interact with the other white pieces. Now however, in unison with the rook on d1 and the knight it becomes a

fearsome piece.

20 ... ♞c7

Forced. 20...♕d7 21 ♜xd7! leads to a quick mate after 21...♔xd7 22 ♜d1+, e.g. 22...♔c6 23 ♖b5+ ♔c7 24 ♜d7+ and mate on b7. Also hopeless is 20...♖f6 21 ♞e4 ♖e7 22 ♞d6+ ♔b8 23 ♞xe8 (Schwartzman).

21 ♖d2!

A majestic change of front. Here Schwartzman points out the variation 21...♖f6 22 ♞e4 ♖e7 23 ♞d6+ ♔b8 24 ♞f5!! and in view of the threat of mate on the back rank Black loses his queen.

21 ... b6

22 ♖d8+ ♔b7

23 ♞e4!

The entrance of the knight overwhelms the defences of the black king. And no wonder: Black is defending without the help of his rook, king's knight or queen. All are watching idly on the kingside.

23 ... ♞h6

This is much too late to change anything.

24 ♞d6+ ♔c6

25 ♖c8! ♜g8

26 ♖b7+ ♔d7

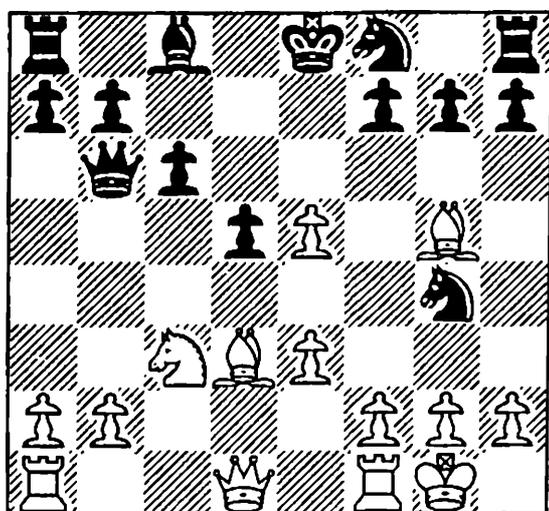
27 ♞f5 mate

The queen's journey to b7 via a5, d2, d8 and c8 is most memorable.

Here we see some further imaginative play from Artur Yusupov (Yusupov-Nogueiras, Montpellier 1985; White to move).

(see following diagram)

Black has neglected his development, but on the other hand two white pawns are under attack. White must therefore play actively to exploit his temporary advantage in firepower. He did so with the incisive move:



12 ♕a4!

This threatens 12 ♖xd5. And if now 12...♗d7 Yusupov analyses two possibilities in *Informator* 40:

a) 13 e6!? ♗xe6 (he must remain defending g4) 14 ♖xd5! ♗xd5 15 ♕xg4 and the two strong bishops give White a clear advantage;

or

b) 13 ♕a3!? (intending mate on e7) 13...f6 14 exf6 gxf6 15 ♗h4 and White has a strong attack because of Black's unsafe king.

Nevertheless, Black should play 12...♗d7. His actual move is fatal.

12 ... ♕xb2?

Snatching the proverbial poisoned pawn. Black is enticed by a

possible double attack of his own: if 13 ♖xd5 then 13...♕xe5, and two white pieces are attacked, to say nothing of the threat of 14...♕xh2 mate!

13 ♖ac1

But White doesn't have to rush things. Now he plans 14 ♖c2 ♕b6 15 ♖xd5, and the black queen is trapped! So Nogueiras prevents this possibility. In doing so, he takes away d7 as a possible flight square for the king. Admittedly, it was difficult to see why this will prove fatal...

13 ... ♗d7

14 ♕d4!!

An insidious move. As Yusupov mentions somewhat gleefully in his analysis, White is threatening to win Black's queen with a trio of knight moves: 15 ♖b5, 15 ♖xd5 or 15 ♖e4, when the penalty for 15...♕xd4 is always the same: 16 ♖d6 mate.

If these threats weren't enough, there is also 15 e6 when the reply 15...♖xe6 loses a piece to 16 ♕xg4, and 15...♗xe6 loses a rook to 16 ♕xg7. And if Black wasn't facing such terrifying alternatives, he would be seriously worried by 15 ♖b1 intending 16 ♖xb7, or 15 ♕c5 or 15 h3...

It is no wonder that Black cannot find a panacea for such a multitude of evils.

14 ... f6

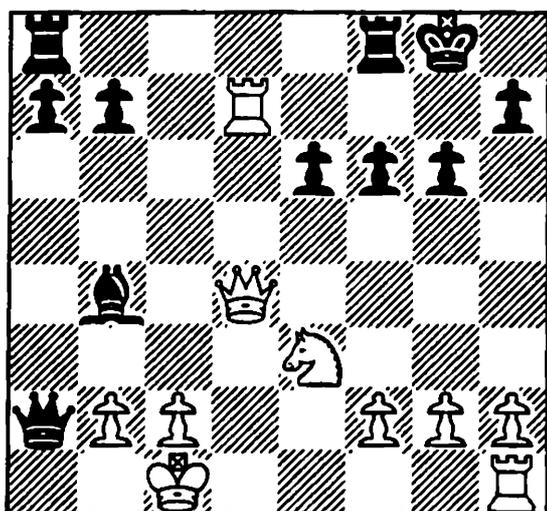
If 14...♕b6 then 15 e6 as analysed above, when 15...♕xd4 is answered by the intermediate 16 exd7+.

15 **exf6** **gxf6**
 16 **♙xf6** **♖g8**
 17 **♘b5!**

The knight still wants to give mate on d6. Actually, Yusupov demonstrated later that 17 ♘e4! ♖a3 18 ♖c3 was more accurate, since Black must resign immediately.

17 ... ♜xb5
 18 ♙xb5 ♘e6
 19 ♜b2 cxb5
 20 ♙h4

Here Black resigned. Resistance is futile.



This is Adams-Levitt, Dublin 1993. It is White to move.

No, there is no misprint in the diagram - the bishop on b4 really is hanging. However, one of the themes of this chapter is to avoid obvious moves, so the reader should think twice before capturing it. Adams thought deeply in the game, and then played

23 **c3!!**

Why did he decline the offer of a piece? 23 ♜xb4 at first glance appears excellent: it rules out the

threat of 22... ♖a1 mate and prepares a mating variation of his own in reply to 23... ♖a1+ 24 ♔d2 ♜xh1: 25 ♜e7, and Black must resign.

However, the wily Levitt had an improvement waiting: 23 ♜xb4? ♖ad8! 24 ♖xd8 ♜a1+ (only now!) 25 ♔d2 ♖xd8+ 26 ♔e2 ♜xh1 and if now 27 ♜e7, then 27... ♖f8 28 ♘g4 ♜c1! stopping 29 ♘h6+. Black would have the edge after 30 ♘xf6+ ♖xf6 31 ♜xf6 ♜xc2+.

Almost the same variation occurs in the game, but with a subtle difference.

23 ... ♜a1+

Forced - he cannot allow White time to play 24 ♘g4 or 24 ♜h4, when the weakness of his king's position and the second rank will prove fatal.

24 ♔c2 ♜xh1
 25 ♜xb4!

Only now. The threat is 26 ♜e7, so Black must challenge the rook.

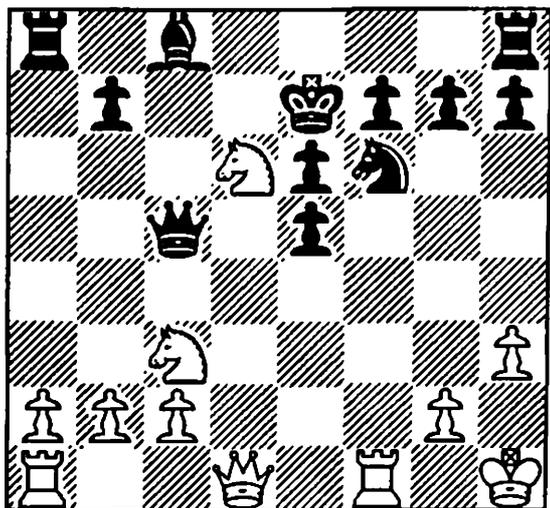
25 ... ♖ad8
 26 ♖xd8 ♖xd8
 27 ♜e7!

Now we have a position virtually identical to that which would have been reached after 23 ♜xb4? The sole difference is that the white c-pawn has advanced one square, and the white king is on c2 rather than e2. And this difference is enough to make Black resign! The point is his queen no longer has the c1 square so that after 27... ♖f8 (otherwise

28 Ng4 and 29 Nxf6+ will mate)
 28 Ng4! there is no defence to
 the threat of 29 Nh6+ winning
 the rook.

An excellent game by Adams,
 who showed complete control of
 the tactics.

The next example (with White
 to move) is taken from Kasparov-
 Anand, Tilburg 1991.



After a wild opening, Anand
 finds himself a pawn up but with
 his king trapped in the centre.
 Nevertheless, he only needs to
 play 18... Rd8 , pinning the knight
 on d6, for all his problems to
 vanish. The drawback to this is
 that it is White's move and Kas-
 parov is a brilliant attacker. Black
 will be denied the time to make
 this one vital move.

18 Rxf6! gxf6

19 Nce4

White has eliminated the
 strong defensive knight and now
 gains time to attack the weak
 points on f6 and f7 by harassing
 Black's queen.

19 ... Qd4

Kasparov gives the variation
 19... Qc7 20 Wh5 Rf8 21 Wh6!
 (unpeeling the pawn defences)
 21... f5 22 Nxf5+! exf5 23 Wf6+
 Ke8 24 Nd6+ Kd7 25 Nb5 and
 wins after 25... Qc6 26 Rd1+ or
 25... Qxc2 26 Wd6+ Ke8 27
 Nc7+ .

20 Wh5 Rf8

21 Rd1!

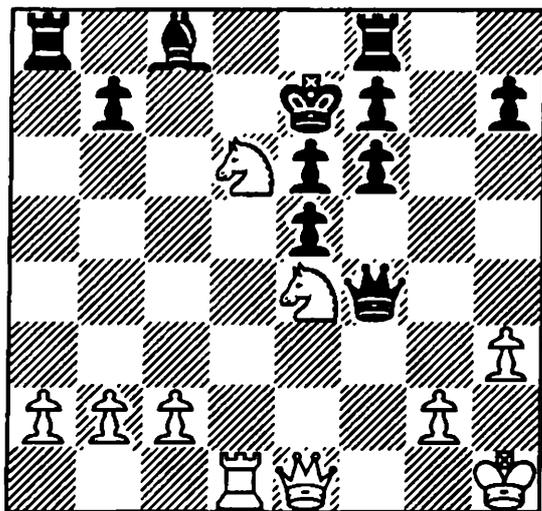
White gains time to cut off the
 possible flight of the black king
 to the queenside by attacking the
 queen and seizing the d-file with
 his rook. Less accurate is 21 Wh4
 Kd7 , and the king runs.

21 ... Ke3

22 Wh4! Wf4!

A little tussle between the
 queens.

23 We1!



However, this outflanks the
 black queen. The threat is now 24
 Wb4 , when Black will be quickly
 mated by a discovered check. Is
 the game over?

23 ... Ra4!

Help comes to the black king
 from an unexpected quarter. In

our section on rook manoeuvres we stress the importance of using the rooks laterally. Here Anand stops 24 ♖b4 and prepares to swing the rook to the centre. However, there are other dark square inroads for the white queen. Meanwhile, Black's own queen has been marginalised and has no influence on events on the queenside.

24 ♖c3

Threatening 24 ♖c7+ ♔d7 25 ♘f5+ and mate next move, which is the answer to 24...♞xe4.

24 ... ♞d4

Black fights a gallant, if hopeless, struggle.

25 ♞xd4 ♖f1+

26 ♔h2 exd4

27 ♖c5!

A quiet but deadly move. The threat is 28 ♘f5+ ♔d7 29 ♖d6+ ♔e8 30 ♘xf6 or 30 ♖e7 mate.

27 ... ♔d7

28 ♘b5! ♖f4+

The queen is fighting a brave but lonely struggle. Once again we see a materially more powerful army overwhelmed by a weaker but more organised and disciplined force. If only the bishop or rook could give her some help!

29 g3 **Black resigned**

The queen is attacked, there are no good checks, and Black is a piece down after 29...♖e5 30 ♖xf8. Another demonstration of the enormous power of the queen and knight(s) when attacking an exposed king. A discussion of this theme will be found in the chapter on knights.

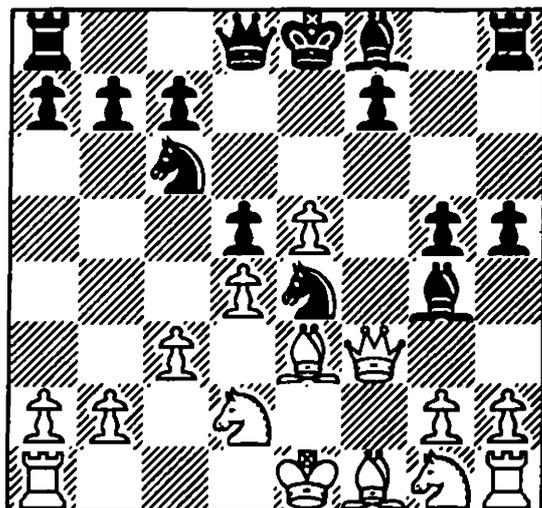
But the most interesting feature of the game is the journey of the white queen: h5-h4-e1-c3-c5! Once again we see the skill with which Kasparov handles the strongest piece.

9 Queen Sacrifices

The scene is New York, the year 1922. The newly-crowned World Chess Champion José Raul Capablanca is giving a simultaneous exhibition against some of the city's finest players and luminaries. Facing Capablanca on one of the boards is the famous composer and chess fanatic Sergei Prokofiev. On another board is Irving Chernev, the prolific chess author and raconteur. And on yet another board is Mr Chase. History has not been kind to Mr Chase. We know almost nothing about him, not even his initials. He is the classic victim, like the Trojan warriors who are only remembered for being slaughtered on the battlefield by Achilles, or the extras in a gangster movie doomed to become corpses even before the opening credits roll... And yet for a brief moment it all looked so different. After nine moves Chase, playing Black, had trapped Capablanca's queen!

J. Capablanca-Chase
Simultaneous display,
New York 1922
King's Gambit Accepted

1	e4	e5
2	f4	exf4
3	♖f3	♘c6
4	c3	♘f6
5	d4	d5
6	e5	♗e4
7	♙xf4	g5
8	♙e3	h5
9	♘d2	♙g4



A most embarrassing situation for a World Champion! Or did he have something up his sleeve? The spectators looked on in

amazement. Chernev, whose adulation of the Cuban reached hero worship, couldn't resist asking:

'Capa, did you really intend to sacrifice your queen?'

Chernev relates in his book *The Chess Companion* that Capablanca merely smiled in reply and said:

'Wait and see!'

It turned out Capa did have something planned, and all Chase's hopes dissolved into dust:

10	♖xe4	♙xf3
11	♗f6+	♚e7
12	♗xf3	♙h6
13	♗xg5	♙g7
14	♙d3	♙xf6
15	0-0!!	♖g8
16	♖xf6	♖f8
17	♖af1	♗d8
18	b4	♖g7
19	h4	♚e8
20	b5	b6
21	♙e2	♗e6
22	♙f3	♗xg5
23	♙xg5	♖h7
24	♙xd5	♖d3
25	♙c6+	

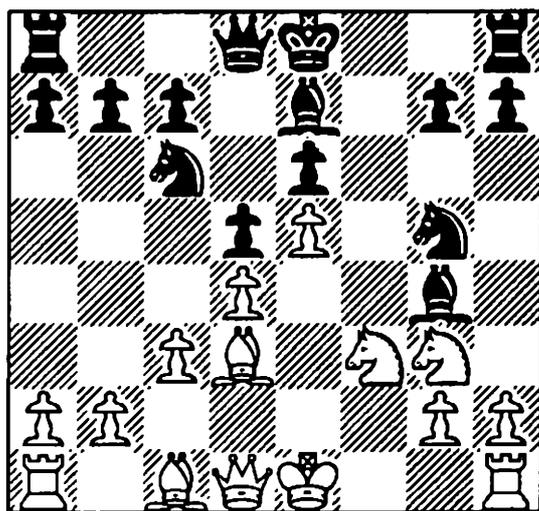
and Black resigned, since 25...♗d8 26 ♖xf7+ mates in two moves.

When I played through the following game, I was reminded of poor Chase. Here however, the victim is a grandmaster, and the black queen is buried on b8 rather than g8.

S. Smagin-D. Sahovic
Biel 1990
Nimzowitsch Defence

1	e4	♗c6
2	d4	d5
3	e5	♙f5
4	c3	e6
5	♗d2	f6
6	f4	fxe5
7	fxe5	♗h6
8	♗df3	♗f7
9	♗e2	♙e7
10	♗g3	♙g4
11	♙d3	♗g5

Black plans to intensify the pressure on f3 with 12...0-0, but this move has a surprising refutation. 11...♙g5 looks better, with the idea of easing his cramped game by exchanges.



12 ♗xg5!!

One of the oldest tricks in the book is the so-called Legall's mate, which was first recorded in the game Legall-St Brie, Paris 1750. This went 1 e4 e5 2 ♙c4 d6 3 ♗f3 ♙g4 4 ♗c3 g6 5 ♗xe5

♙xd1 6 ♙xf7+ ♚e7 7 ♘d5 mate. Through the centuries countless beginners have fallen for this trap in one form or another. This version, however, is sophisticated enough to catch out a grandmaster!

12 ... ♙xd1
13 ♘xe6 ♚b8

If now 13...♚d7, keeping the queen in active play, White wins at once with 14 ♙f5!: the black queen has no retreat squares and will be lost next move to 15 ♘xg7+ (or, after 14...♚f7, 15 ♘g5+). Then White will have a decisive material advantage. Therefore, the queen has to entomb itself on b8 in ghastly fashion. The rook on a8 is similarly buried alive. Hence, White has more than enough positional justification for his sacrifice.

Note that if Black had played 11...♙g5 instead of 11...♘g5, then 12 ♘xg5 ♙xd1 13 ♘xe6 would be far less clear, e.g. 13...♚d7 14 ♙f5 ♘h6 would be possible.

14 ♘xg7+ ♚d8

The king runs away from the mass of white pieces on the kingside. If 14...♚f7 then 15 ♙h6 followed by 16 0-0+ gives White a massive attack.

15 ♙xd1

A moment's respite for Black. But how can he develop his pieces?

15 ... b5

Black plans to escape with his king to b7 and thereby free his

queen and rook on a8 to reenter the game. The problem is that the pawns on b5 and d5 now become targets.

16 ♘e6+ ♚c8
17 ♘f5 ♙f8

Smagin points out that after 17...♚b6 18 ♘f4 ♚d8 19 ♘e3! the d5 pawn drops and Black's pawn centre collapses. This would allow White all sorts of possibilities to improve his piece layout, for example, ♙e4, seizing a key diagonal. Or if 17...♚b7 then 18 ♙xb5 weakens the black king's cover and threatens to win a piece with 19 ♙xc6+.

18 ♚f1 ♚b7
19 ♙h6!!

A tremendous move. When you have made a sacrifice it is always difficult to persuade yourself that the best continuation is to offer the exchange of a piece, since it feels as if all pieces must be kept for the attack. This psychological barrier is even greater when, as in this instance, the enemy piece is undeveloped and blocking a rook from entering the game. But Smagin has correctly grasped that the bishop on f8 is performing a vital defensive duty in guarding c5 and other dark squares. Once it is exchanged, Black's position collapses.

19 ... ♙xh6

In *Informator 50*, Smagin analyses a quite brilliant variation after the alternative 19...♚b6: 20 ♘e3!! ♙xh6 21 ♘xd5+ ♚a5 (21...♚b7 is answered by 22

♖c5+ ♔c8 23 ♜f7! and 24 ♙f5 mate) 22 b4+ ♔a4 (22...♔a6 23 ♖c5 mate!) 23 a3! (threat 24 ♙c2 mate!) 23...♔b3 24 ♖c5+ ♔b2 25 ♜f2+ ♔xa1 26 ♖b3 mate! A lovely variation.

Normally the annotator is supposed to regret that a wonderful variation wasn't played in the actual game. However, there is no guarantee that Smagin would have found this at the time. He may have been intending to answer 19...♔b6 with the simple 20 ♖xf8, winning back some material with a good game.

And had he done so and won in 30 more moves, the whole game, including 12 ♖xg5! would have been lost to us as a miniature.

20 ♖c5+ ♔c8
21 ♖xh6 ♖e7

He stops 22 ♙f5+...

22 ♙e2!

White plans ♙g4+, where he is out of the range of the knight.

22 ... ♖g6
23 ♖f7! **Black**

resigned

Black has had enough. 24 ♙g4 mate is the threat, and if 23...h5 then 24 ♖xh8 is butchery (24...♖xh8 25 ♜f8 mate). A fine game by Smagin.

2 ♖f3 d6
3 d4 cxd4
4 ♖xd4 ♖f6
5 ♖c3 e6
6 g4

The famous Keres Attack. Of the many examples given in this book, all but one are brilliant wins for White! Of course, this is partly explained by the nature of a book on miniatures: we do not see White suffering in a long endgame after his early attack has been beaten off. Nevertheless, the Keres remains one of White's most powerful weapons against the Scheveningen.

6 ... h6

The usual response, preventing 7 g5.

7 h4 ♙e7
8 g5

White insists on this advance, though now he has to recapture on g5 with his bishop. He therefore fails in his original intention of dislodging the enemy knight from f6 but gains attacking chances along the g-file.

8 ... hxg5
9 ♙xg5 ♖c6
10 ♜d2 a6
11 0-0-0 ♙d7
12 f4 ♖xd4?

Since the kingside is inhospitable to Black's king, it was better to prepare to castle queenside with 12...♜c7, according to Vladimirov. Epishin has a much more ambitious plan of attack against White's king.

13 ♜xd4 ♙c6

E. Vladimirov-V. Epishin
USSR 1987
Sicilian Defence,
Keres Attack

1 e4 c5

14 ♖g1 ♔a5
 15 ♕h3 ♗c5
 16 ♗d3 b5
 17 f5! b4!

If Black had responded passively with 17...e5 then the important d5 square would be seriously weakened. Instead, he gambles that his attack on c3 will force White to abandon his aggressive plans. At first sight Black appears to be right: bxc3 is a major immediate threat, whereas White's attacking chances are more nebulous. It seems that White has to move his attacked knight, say 18 ♘e2, when he is losing after 18...♕xe4, since his centre collapses.

If White wants to win, not lose, he must look beyond individual threats and appeal to the higher positional laws that govern chess justice. He has mobilised all his pieces and castled, whereas Black has yet to bring his rooks into play. Furthermore, Black's king has no safe haven. No serious error is discernible in White's previous play. Therefore, why should he have to resign?

Armed with the knowledge that there must be a way to save and win the position, White found a strong continuation.

18 ♕e3! ♗a5
 19 ♗c4! ♕b7
 20 fxe6!

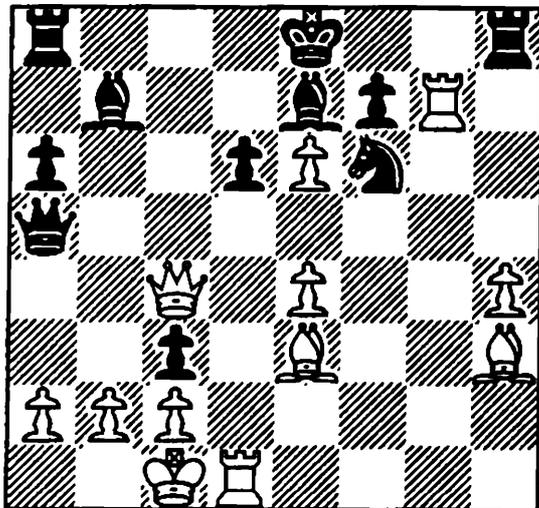
There is no choice, since 20 ♘e2 is answered by 20...♖c8 and 21...♕xe4, with fatal pressure on c2.

20 ... bxc3

The tension now reaches its peak. Can White breakthrough and win, or is he doomed to lose 'on points'?

21 ♖xg7!

Not 21 exf7+ when 21... ♔f8 leaves Black's king secure.



I don't know if Vladimirov would have announced mate in nine moves after 21...♕xe4, but in his analysis he gives the variation 21...♕xe4 22 exf7+ ♔f8 23 ♖g8+ ♖xg8 24 fxg8(♗)+ ♘xg8 25 ♖f1+ ♕f6 26 ♖xf6+ ♘xf6 27 ♕h6+ ♔e7 28 ♗e6+ ♔d8 29 ♗xd6+ ♔e8 30 ♗f8 mate!

In the game, Black chose a different and equally spectacular way to lose.

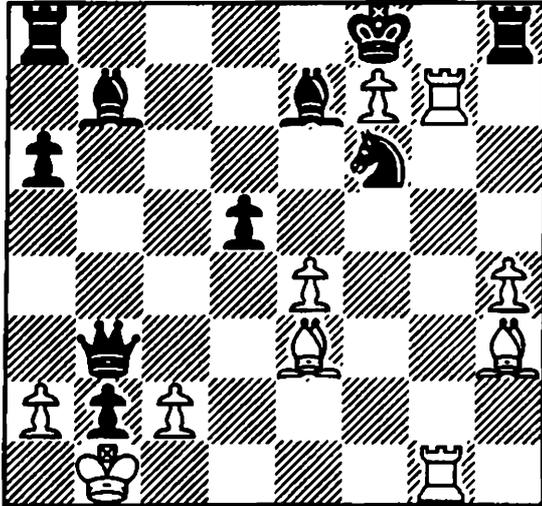
21 ... d5
 22 ♗b3 cxb2+
 23 ♔b1

An enemy pawn is often the best shield for a king, since the opponent cannot even sacrifice his queen to remove it!

23 ... ♗b5
 24 exf7+ ♔f8

25 ♖dg1 ♔xb3

A storm is gathering around Black's king, and so he is delighted to exchange queens. However, White has an unpleasant surprise for him.



And Black resigned, since after 29... ♔f8 30 axb3 ♖g8 (or 30... ♖f7 31 ♗e6 ♖e5 32 ♖g8 mate) 31 ♗e6 ♖f6 White mates in two moves.

A great attacking display by Vladimirov. This is one of the very best modern miniatures.

The following game features a fine queen sacrifice. Or rather it doesn't! Black refuses to accept the offer. Nevertheless, this was a great effort by John Nunn.

26 ♗h6!!

A really beautiful move. White is now a queen and a piece down, with two bishops hanging, and yet he wins in all variations!

Here is the grim list of alternatives for Black:

- a) 26... ♔xh3 27 ♖h7 mate;
- b) 26... ♖xh6 27 ♖g8+ ♔xf7 28 ♖1g7 mate;
- c) 26... ♗d6 27 ♖h7+ ♔e7 28 f8(♔) mate;
- d) 26... ♖h5 27 ♖h7+ ♖g7 28 ♖1xg7 ♖xh7 29 ♖xh7 mate;
- e) 26... ♔xc2+ 27 ♔xc2 maintains all the threats.

In the game, Black tried a sixth alternative but soon had to admit defeat.

- 26 ... ♖g4
- 27 ♖h7+ ♖xh6
- 28 ♖xh8+ ♔xf7
- 29 ♖h7+

J. Nunn-K. Thorsteins
Lugano 1989
*Sicilian Defence,
Keres Attack*

- 1 e4 c5
- 2 ♖f3 e6
- 3 d4 cxd4
- 4 ♖xd4 ♖f6
- 5 ♖c3 d6
- 6 g4 ♗e7
- 7 g5 ♖fd7
- 8 h4 0-0
- 9 ♗e3 ♖c6
- 10 ♗c4 ♖xd4
- 11 ♔xd4 a6

According to Nunn, Black should first chase back White's queen and bishop on c4 before embarking on a queenside expansion: 11... ♖e5 12 ♗e2 ♖c6 13 ♔d2 and only then 13...a6.

- 12 0-0-0 b5
- 13 ♗b3 ♖c5
- 14 f4 ♔a5
- 15 h5 b4

Once again in the Keres Attack

it is a familiar race between Black's attack on the queenside with ...b4 and ...♖a5, and White's onslaught on the kingside. White scores an absolutely crushing win. Is the Sicilian really so unplayable for Black? The answer of course is an emphatic 'no'. However, the Sicilian - at least in its critical lines - is a sophisticated opening system in which Black delays his full development in order to achieve a good strategic layout of his game. When Black develops his pieces he wants to put them straight-away on their best squares. For example, if White now responded passively to the threat of 16...bxc3 with 16 ♖b1? then Black would have an excellent position after 16...♗b7 17 ♖d2 ♖ac8. Black's queenside pieces would be mobilised on optimum squares and White's king would soon find itself in serious danger.

But the drawback to playing the Sicilian as Black is: you must get it right! If you are leaving your king in the centre for a long time, or delaying the development of your queenside, you can't afford to play inaccurate moves or moves which aren't in the spirit of the opening. The examples in this book indicate that even an apparently minor error can have serious consequences when a player has already taken some risks with his king's safety or his development.

There are two sources of con-

solation for the Black Sicilian devotee. First, if he can survive to move 30 without being brilliantly crushed then he has more chances to win than he would have in any other defence to 1 e4. White is often obliged to win in dramatic fashion against a sharp line of the Sicilian, since otherwise he will succumb to Black's counterattack or end up automatically in a bad endgame. Black wins many Sicilian games which are too long or too unspectacular to get published. And secondly, White had to play fantastic chess to win the Sicilian games given in this book. The reader is justified in feeling unlucky if his opponents play with the inspiration shown by Nunn, Sax or any of the other players in this games collection.

16 h6! e5

Now White seems to be totally lost, since if 17 ♖d5 then 17...♗e6 wins a piece, while 17 fxe5 dxe5 18 ♖xe5? ♖xb3+ wins the queen.

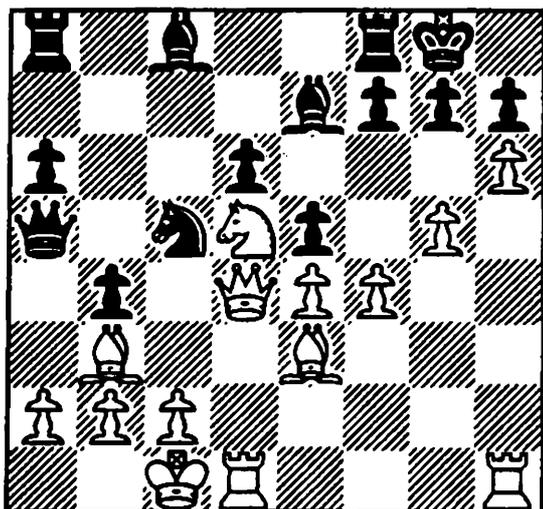
A lesser player would have seen the loss of a piece a couple of moves ago and diverged from the game continuation.

Perhaps he would then be troubled with the vague feeling 'I'm sure I had a good position. Where did I go wrong?' Black wins many games in the Sicilian against irresolute play.

Unfortunately for him, Thorsteins has chosen the wrong player to gamble against in the Sicilian. Nunn is well known as a

killer in this type of position.

17 ♖d5!!



This represents a great feat of analysis, since besides the immediate 17...exd4, White had also to examine the consequences of 17...♖xb3+, as occurs in the game.

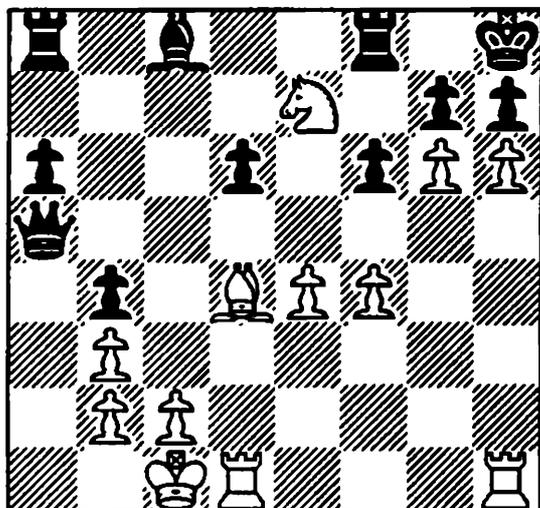
Nunn in fact analyses 17...exd4 as mate in eight (!): 18 ♖xe7+ ♔h8 19 hxg7+ ♔xg7 20 ♙xd4+ f6 21 gxf6+ ♖xf6 22 ♖dg1+ ♔f8 23 ♖g8+ ♔xe7 24 ♖xh7+ ♖f7 25 ♖xf7 mate. White's pieces are working so harmoniously together that they do not need the help of a queen. Meanwhile, look at Black's pieces. There is not a single black piece left on the kingside besides Black's king, not even a pawn.

17 ... ♖xb3+

18 axb3 ♙xg5

Since Black has eliminated the bishop on b3, 18...exd4 can no longer be answered by the mating variation given above. Instead, Nunn planned 19 ♖xe7+ ♔h8 20 ♙xd4! which threatens mate in

two ways on g7. Now 20... ♖g8 allows mate on the h-file after 21 hxg7+ ♖xg7 22 ♖xh7+. So Black must play 20...f6 when the quiet 21 g6!! threatens 22 hxg7+ and mate next move.



Now 21...♖g8 22 hxg7+ ♔xg7 (if 22...♖xg7 23 ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 24 ♙xf6+ mates) 23 ♖xh7+ ♔f8 24 ♖f7+ ♔e8 25 ♖xg8 and here Black has no good defence against the threat of 26 ♖xf6+ and 27 g7.

This variation, and the tactical analysis that precedes it, is given by Nunn in *Informator* 47. Sadly, it all remained analysis, since in the game Black chose to lose in rather prosaic style.

19 dxe5

Now White has a winning attack and a queen.

19 ... ♙xe3+

Or 19...dxe5 20 ♔xe5! ♙xe3+ 21 ♔b1 (Nunn). White has been ready to sacrifice his queen for the last couple of moves, so he isn't going to be niggardly with a mere bishop. Black is defenceless

after 21 ♔b1 because White threatens the king directly (22 ♖xg7 mate) and the queen indirectly (22 ♘f6+ or 22 ♘e7+).

20 ♖xe3 g6
21 ♖g5

Nunn probably dreams about such positions.

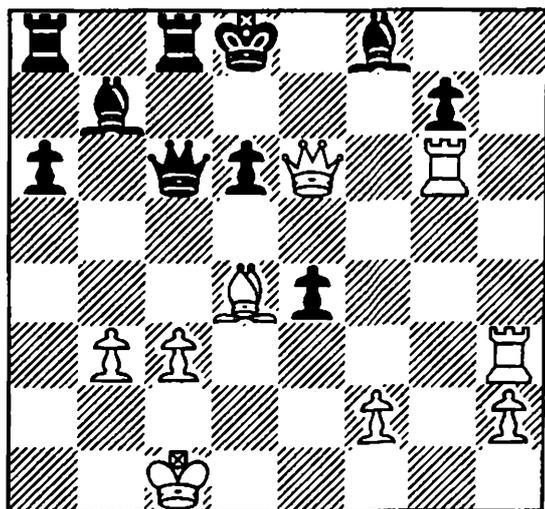
21 ... f6
22 ♘e7+ ♔f7

Black resolutely refuses all offers to lose brilliantly. Here Nunn was planning to answer 22...♔h8 with 23 ♘xg6+ hxg6 24 ♖xg6 ♖a7 25 exf6 and then 26 ♖g7+! with a queen sacrifice after all. And the game would still be short enough to be a miniature...

Instead, Black sacrifices his own queen.

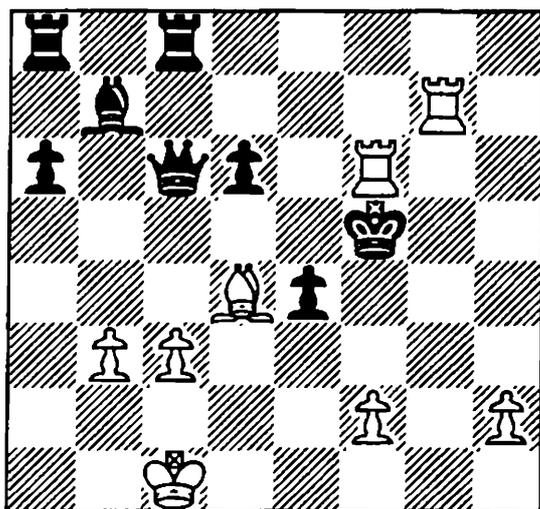
23 e6+ **Black resigned**

A brilliant game by Nunn.



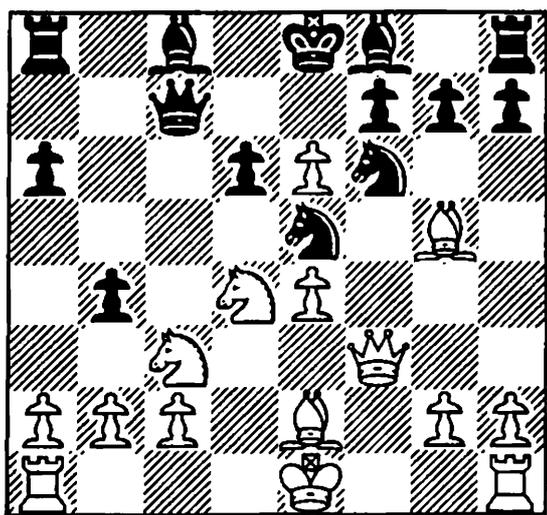
In this extract from Howell-Wahls, Gausdal 1986, it is White to play. Howell has sacrificed a piece to chase his opponent's king out into the centre. His problem now is to prevent the

black king wandering any further: if 28 ♖h8 then 28...♔c7! and the black king will find a paradise on b8, surrounded by its own pieces. If White wants to win, the final reckoning must be in the centre. So he begins 28 ♖f7! This paralyses the enemy king, and threatens both the obvious 29 ♖xf8+ and the quieter but more deadly 29 ♖h8! with a quick mate. Black replied with the forced 28...♘e7, hoping to fight on after 29 ♖h8+ ♔c7 30 ♖xe7+ ♔b8. However, White played the dramatic 29 ♖xe7+!! and after 29...♔xe7 30 ♖xg7+ Black resigned just in time to make it a miniature. After 30...♔f8 31 ♖h8 we have a schoolboy mate, while 31...♔e6 32 ♖h6+ ♔f5 33 ♖f6 is also mate:



This position is an excellent lesson in coordination. All of Black's pieces are uselessly placed because they are on the queenside, while the king is being mated on the kingside. Furthermore, we are reminded of

Bronstein's dictum that a weakness on the dark squares cannot be made irrelevant by spiriting away all the pieces onto the apparent safety of the white squares. White's pieces are exclusively on dark squares, yet they still mate the enemy king on a white square refuge. A dark-square weakness is also a weakness on the white squares.



This is Ljubojevic-Gelfand, Novi Sad 1990, with White to play. Black has just answered 11 fxe6 with 11...♘e5. Now White has both a queen and a knight attacked, so let's call it a draw with

12 ♙xf6!!

Now 12...bxc3 is bad after 13 exf7+ ♘xf7 (13...♙xf7? allows mate in one) 14 ♘e6! according to Gelfand and Kapengut, who analyse 14 ...♙a5 15 ♘xg7+ ♙xg7 16 ♙e7 mate. So Black accepts the bigger present.

12 ... gxf6
 13 ♘d5 ♙a7
 14 ♘xf6+ ♙d8

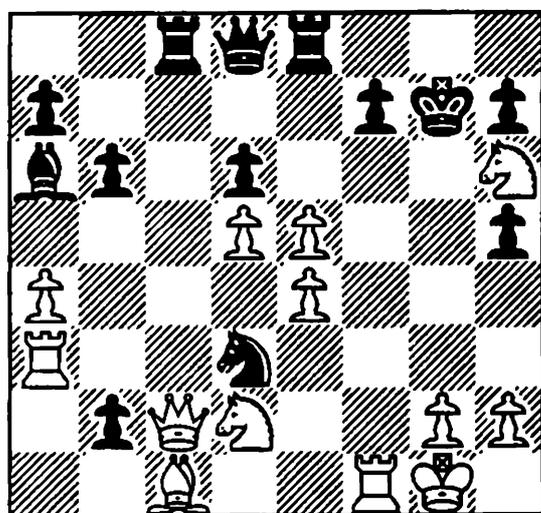
If 14...♙e7? then 15 ♘d5 is double, discovered checkmate!

15 ♘d5+ ♙e8
 16 ♘f6+ ♙d8
 17 ♘d5+

And a draw was agreed. The queen sacrifice turned out to be a peace offering.

When the queen is the servant of the bishop!

My favourite move in this collection is Olafsson's 17 ♙xe6!! against Levitt in Chapter 1. However, the following effort by Podgaets comes a close second (Podgaets-Zaichik, USSR 1986; White to move).



Look at White's bishop on c1. Have you ever seen a more wretched piece? It is attacked twice (three times if you count the 'X-ray' from the rook on c8 through the queen) and is completely boxed in. And yet watch this:

23 ♙xb2!!

What a move! What a position! Now after 23...♘xb2 a miracle

would occur: 24 ♖g3+ ♔xh6 (24...♕f8 25 ♖xf7 mate) 25 ♘c4+!! and the useless bishop strikes the decisive blow against Black's king! It is mate after 25...♗g5 26 ♙xg5+ ♕g7 27 ♙e7+ ♔h8 (27...♕h6 28 ♖f6 mate) 28 ♙f6.

A beautiful variation. Sadly, the bishop's glory remains only in the notes. Black actually answered White's queen offer with

23 ... ♖xc1

eliminating the killer piece. Nevertheless, Black soon had to concede defeat:

24 ♘f5+ ♕g8

25 ♖xd3! **Black**

resigned

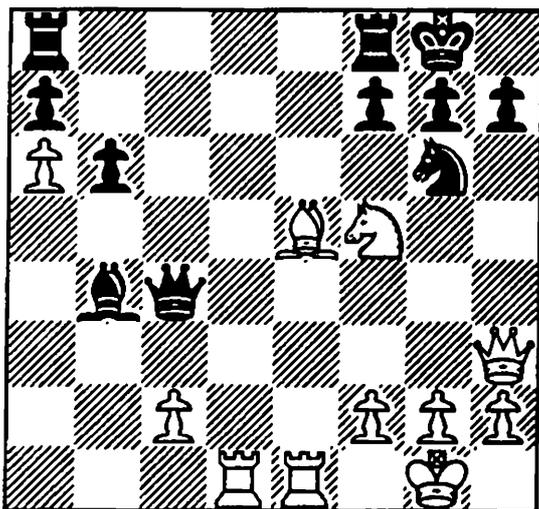
Podgaets gives the variation 25...♖xf1+ 26 ♘xf1 ♙xd3 27 exd6 f6 28 ♗c3! ♙e2 29 ♗g3+ ♙g4 30 h3 to demonstrate the hopelessness of Black's position.

I was enthralled by 23 ♗xb2 and decided to find out how common a theme it was for White or Black to sacrifice his queen in order to open a diagonal for his bishop. The answer, based on recent grandmaster games, is very surprising: it is the most recurrent theme behind all queen sacrifices, apart from mate!

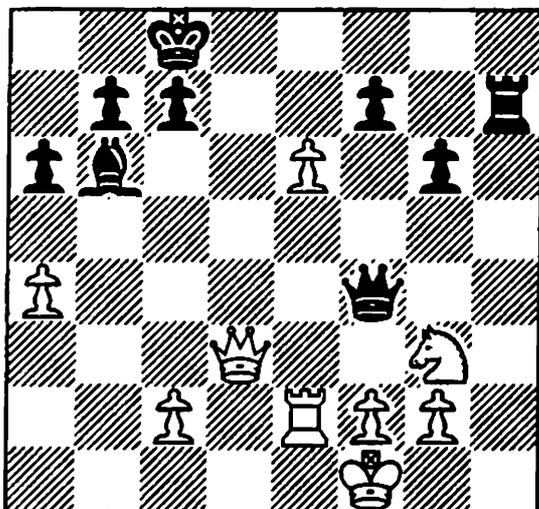
Here for the reader's pleasure are a series of such sacrifices, ranging from the obvious to the truly inspired.

(see following diagram)

This position arose in Kotronias-King, New York 1990.



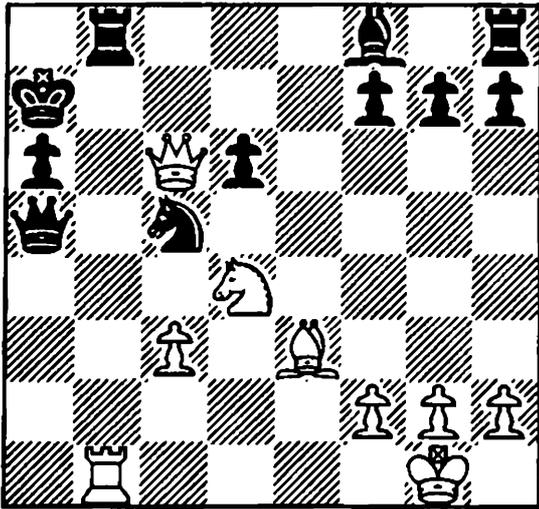
Black has just played 25...♙b4, attacking White's rook. White unexpectedly replied 26 ♗h6! and Black resigned immediately.



Here we see Tiviakov-Forintos, Porto San Giorgio 1994, with Black to play.

Black played 26...♗xg3! White has a choice of captures on g3, but both allow 27...♖h1 mate. The apparent bolt hole on f2 after 27 fxg3 is guarded by the black bishop. So White tried 27 ♖e3 hoping for 27...♙xe3?? 28 fxg3, when the king can slip out to e2 in answer to a check. However,

after 27...♖h1+ 28 ♔e2 ♚g4+ he resigned.

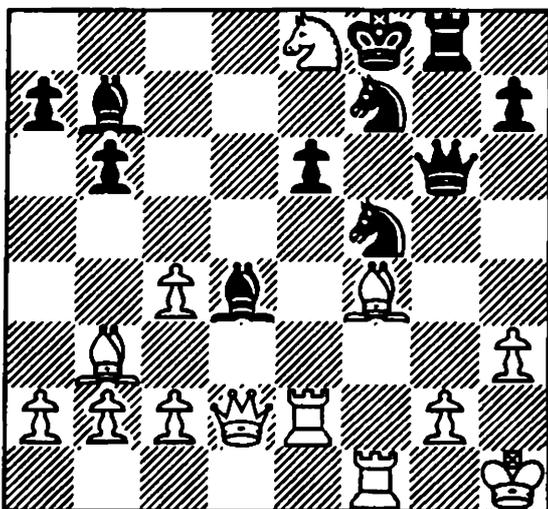


In Golubev-Mantovani, Biel 1992, it is White's move. Golubev has sacrificed a rook, so he had better find something good! He did: 26 ♚xc5+! Once again the key is to open the bishop's diagonal. Now the game should have finished 26...♚xc5 27 ♖c6+ ♔a8 (the queen is of course pinned) 28 ♖xb8 mate. Instead it went 26...♚b6 27 ♖c6+ ♔a8 28 ♖xb6 and Black resigned.

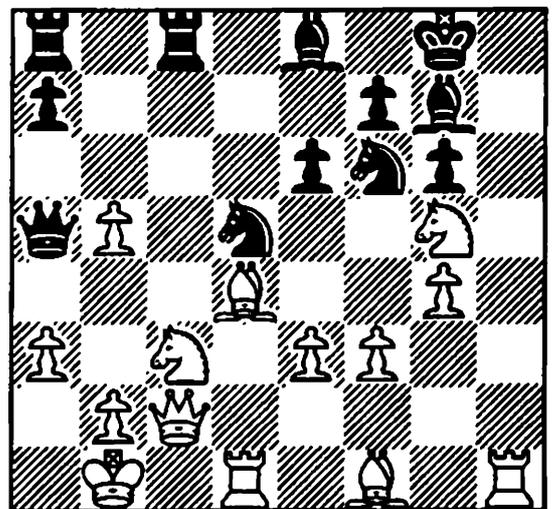
the exchange and a pawn to reach this position in Spangenberg-Ftacnik, Moscow 1994.

His bishops are putting intense pressure on White's kingside, but it is doubtful if Black could breakthrough without the move 24...♚g3!! The threat is 25...♚xh3+ 26 ♔h2 ♖g3 mate. One bishop pins the g2 pawn; the other deprives the white king of g1. If White accepts the queen offer he will temporarily have an extra exchange and queen, but will end up a piece down after 25 ♔xg3 ♖xg3+ 26 ♔h2 ♖xf1+ 27 ♔h1 ♖xd2 (a fine feast for the knight) 28 ♖xd2 ♔xe8 29 ♖xd8 ♖xg2, etc. Also losing is 25 ♚xd4 ♚xh3+ 26 ♔h2 ♔xg2+ or 25 ♚b4+ ♔c5 26 ♚xc5+ bxc5 27 ♔xg3 ♖xg3+ 28 ♔h2 ♖xf1+ 29 ♔g1 ♔xe8 30 ♔xf1 ♔e7, as given by Ftacnik. Again White is a piece down.

White did not try any of these variations. Instead, he quietly resigned.

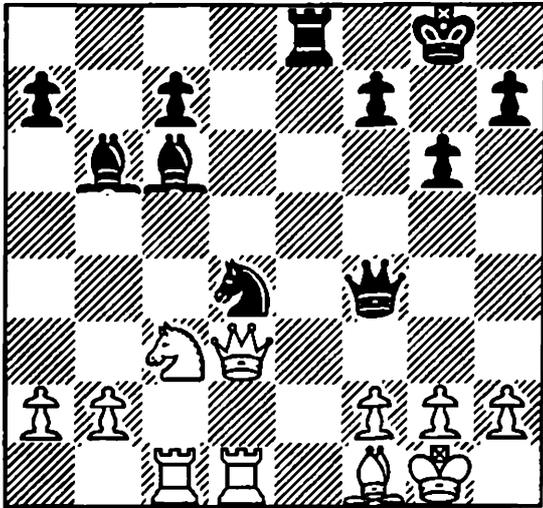


Black (to play) has sacrificed



This is a more complicated

example from Vera-Garcia, Matanzas 1992, with White to play. The most important diagonal is that from a1-h8, since it leads to the heart of Black's king's position. White gained control of it with 21 ♖xd5! Black has to accept the sacrifice (otherwise 22 ♜h2 will give White a winning attack 'for nothing'). There followed 21... ♞xc2 22 ♗xf6+ ♕f8 (22... ♙xf6 23 ♙xf6 will be mate on h8). Now disaster struck on a different diagonal: 23 ♗gh7+ ♕e7 24 ♙c5+! The bishop shows its gratitude to the queen with this unexpected blow. If now 24... ♞xc5 , 25 ♗g8 is mate, so Black resigned.



Another startling example of a queen's service to a bishop occurred in Lybin-Vojna, USSR 1990, this time with Black to play. After 21... ♜xf2+!! the white king was dragged out of his residence: 22 ♜xf2 ♗f5+! 23 ♜d4 (the bishop on b6 forces White to return the queen; White still has an extra exchange, but his king is exposed to a fearful battering by all of Black's pieces) 23... ♗xd4! (Black mustn't part with his bishop: 23... ♙xd4+? 24 ♞xd4! ♗xd4 25 ♗e2! is good for White according to Vojna since the bishop on c6 is attacked) 24 ♕g3 ♞e3+ 25 ♕h4 h5! (taking away g4 from the white king) 26 ♞e1 ♗f5+ 27 ♕g5 ♕g7! 28 ♞cd1 ♙d4! (the decisive entrance, threatening 29... f6+ 30 ♕f4 ♙e5 mate) 29 ♞xd4 f6+ 30 ♕f4 ♞xe1 and White resigned. It is mate in two after 31 ♞d1 : 31... g5+ 32 ♕xf5 ♞e5 mate! So the next time your bishop is feeling miserable or oppressed, ask the queen for help. She will probably reply with a disdainful shake of her head, but if she is in the mood for self-sacrifice then the result will be spectacular!

10 Activating the Rooks

Although routine developing moves are often censored by annotators as 'played merely with the intention of getting a piece off the back rank' there is a virtue in clearing the back rank of pieces. The rooks at least will be grateful!

In preparing this book, I played through hundreds of miniature games and again and again I was struck by the fact that when Black resigned or was mated it was with one rook sitting idly on a8 and - though not quite so often - another rook sitting idly on h8. If either of these rooks had been at the correct point at the correct time, disaster would have been averted. So is failure to utilise the rooks in time the main reason for losing a miniature?

The reader may counter that it is only natural that when a game finishes quickly a player will often have failed to develop his queen's rook. The rooks take a long time to get into a game, and their influence is only felt in the later stages of the middlegame. Therefore, if a player loses quickly, it is normally because of an error which doesn't involve

the rooks at all.

However, leaving aside the question as to whether the loser has deployed his rooks in time, the reader will have noticed that the winner often has a decisive fire-power advantage because he has managed to get one or both of his rooks into the attack very quickly. Although this advantage is often of only a temporary nature, by acting quickly the attacker is able to make a breakthrough sacrifice and still have a sufficiently superior force to end the game. The defender's reinforcements arrive too late, if they have set off at all.

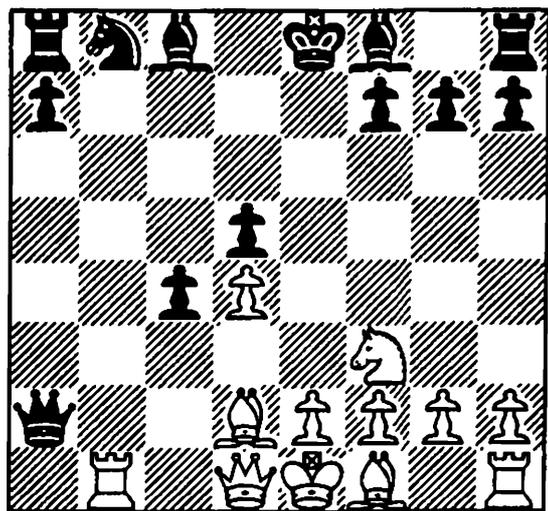
So the moral is: If you want to win a miniature, respect your rooks! Bring them into the game with the utmost speed. At the same time, try to shut out your opponent's rooks until you have made the decisive move.

In Chapter 1 it was stated that most players have a mental block about the sideways motion of the rook: it is far easier to see vertical threats and concepts. Therefore, in this chapter we will concentrate on examples which demonstrate the power of a skillful

horizontal or lateral deployment of the rook.

**M. Petursson-
Th.Thorhallsson**
Iceland 1994
*Queen's Gambit Declined,
Semi-Slav Defence*

1	c4	c6	
2	♘f3	d5	
3	d4	♘f6	
4	♘c3	e6	
5	♙g5	dxc4	
6	a4	b5	
7	axb5	cxb5	
8	♘xb5	♚b6	
9	♘c3	♚xb2	
10	♙d2	♘d5	
11	♘xd5	exd5	
12	♖b1	♚a2	



At first glance, Black's opening play seems foolhardy, even suicidal: 12 moves have been played, and his only developed piece is the queen! Surely the win of a mere pawn cannot be consolation for such a neglect of

development?

But what exactly do we mean by development? If we count it as the number of moves before we can castle, then Black is actually ahead in the diagram position: he is two moves from castling, while White is still three moves away.

Or perhaps we define development as the number of pieces a player has 'in play'? Well, look at Black's bishops. Both are still on the back rank, supposedly undeveloped. Yet both have influence over important diagonals. Are they therefore 'in play' but 'undeveloped'? No, this is nonsense. The bishop on c8 has just as much scope as the bishop on d2. It is equally well developed.

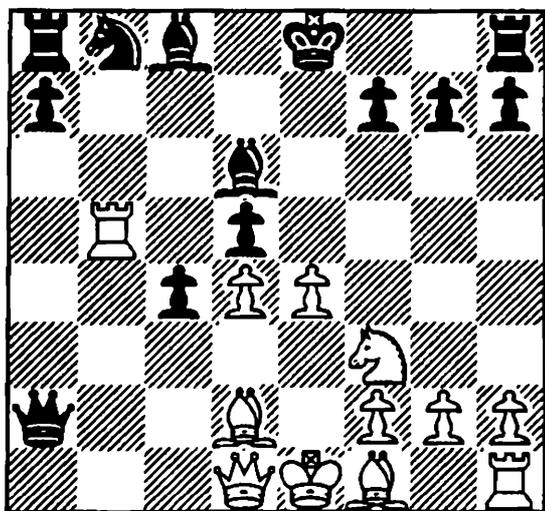
However, we could ask a different question. How well are Black's pieces coordinated? Although the bishop on c8 is as in play as the bishop on d2, the bishop on d2, through moving off the back rank, has given White's rook and queen more power because their action can now be coordinated. The bishop on c8, on the other hand, obstructs the rook on a8 (which of course is also obstructed by the knight on b8). The greatest drawback to the early excursion of Black's queen is that it will take her a long time to return home and coordinate her action with the other black pieces.

13 e4! ♙d6?

Black loses his nerve and develops a piece. Greed is

sometimes a virtue. Here, according to Petursson, Black should carry on grabbing material with 13...dxe4, when the position remains obscure after 14 ♖e5 ♙e6 15 ♜c1 ♚b3! 16 ♚xb3 cxb3 17 ♙b5+ ♗e7 18 0-0.

14 ♜b5!



Here is our example of the rapid entrance of a rook. If Black had been given one 'free' move, e.g. after 14 exd5? then he would have castled with a good position. But now if 14...0-0, then 15 ♜xd5 (or perhaps more accurately 15 ♜a5 ♚b3 16 ♜xd5) and White's strong centre far outweighs Black's passed pawns. The c4 pawn will be weak.

14 ... dxe4

This leads to rapid defeat. There is a paradox that strong players often lose more quickly than weak players (though of course less often!). This is because a strong player will avoid miserable endgames like that described above after 14...0-0 15 ♜a5 ♚b3 16 ♜xd5. He knows

that in such a clear position he faces inevitable defeat against a player with good technique. On the other hand, if he faces a fierce attack in a complex middlegame position he can still hope to draw or even win if his opponent miscalculates a variation or becomes confused by the myriad possibilities. So the strong player risks a sharp defeat. The weaker player in contrast is terrified of the attack or perhaps of the humiliation of a quick loss and chooses the endgame - a slower but surer way to lose.

Another 'rule': If you want better results, be prepared for quick defeats!

15 ♖e5! ♙e6

He had to deal with the threat of 16 ♙xc4 ♚a3 17 ♜a5, winning the queen. Also useless was 15...♙xe5 16 ♜xe5+ ♙e6 (16...♗f8 17 ♙b4+ mates) 17 d5 winning a piece.

16 d5!

The characteristic pawn breakthrough. We repeat: Black mustn't be allowed the luxury of even one quiet move, or he will have time to castle with a good game.

Now the threat is again 17 ♖xc4 and 18 ♜a5 winning the queen.

16 ... ♙xe5

17 dxe6 ♖c6

The bishop was attacked, so Black has to forfeit castling.

18 exf7+ ♗f8

If 18...♗xf7 then 19 ♜c5! threatens the knight on c6 and

also the queen with 20 ♕xc4+. Now Black is completely lost, since his king is exposed to attack and he will have no way to develop his rook on h8. The rest is a massacre.

19 ♖c1 c3
 20 ♕xc3 ♕xc3+
 21 ♖xc3 ♘e7
 22 ♕c4 ♗a4
 23 ♖g5!

The rook has proved a marvelous piece. From its base on b5 it has utilised its control of no less than five squares on the fifth rank to press home White's advantage. On move 14, it threatened the d5 pawn; on moves 15 and 16 it was poised to trap Black's queen with ♖a5; on move 17 it attacked the bishop on e5; at move 18, the idea was ♖c5, winning the knight on c6; and finally it swings to g5 to attack g7 and prepare a winning sacrifice. Without the help of this rook White couldn't possibly have won the game.

23 ... ♘g6
 24 ♖xg6!

A simple combination to force Black's king to leave its shelter.

24 ... hxg6
 25 ♕d5! ♔e7

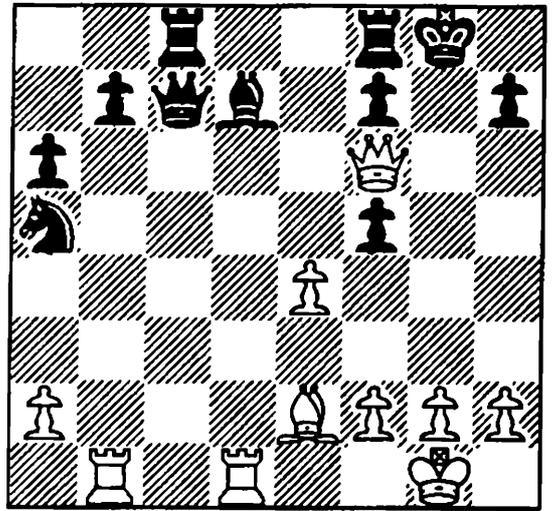
The rook was attacked but the main threat was quieter and deadlier: 26 ♖c5 mate.

26 ♖e5+ ♔d7
 27 0-0!

Finally White castles. Black's king is completely defenceless. Here he tried

27 ... ♖ad8

but resigned without waiting for White's reply. The most subtle winning move is 28 ♖c1! threatening 29 ♖c7 or 29 ♗e6, both mate. The brutal 28 ♗e6+ followed by 29 ♖c1+ and 30 ♖b1+ is also good enough to win.



The diagram position was reached in the game Kasparov-Hjartarson, Tilburg 1989, after 20 moves. In the forceful style characteristic of his play, Kasparov has sacrificed a piece to wreck Black's king's cover. This sacrifice is excellent in that White has at least a draw by perpetual check. However, Black has a whole extra piece, and if White wants more than a draw then he must find a way to bring his reserves into the attack. And quickly, before Black has time to strengthen his defences.

An interesting duel now takes place between White's rooks and Black's kingside pawns. The rooks are trying to penetrate Black's kingside; the pawns are trying to shut them out.

21 ♖d3

The first attempt.

21 ... f4!

Black's f5 pawn rescues the king from the threat of 22 ♖g3+.

22 ♖d5

The second attempt, and unfortunately for Black the laws of chess prevent a pawn moving backwards!

22 ... h6!

So the h-pawn now gallantly sacrifices itself.

23 ♖xh6

Renewing the threat of 24 ♖g5 mate.

23 ... f5!

Yet another pawn steps forward to block the rook. However, the black kingside is now seriously depleted of pawn cover.

24 ♖b6!

There are no pawns left to prevent 25 ♖g5+ with mate after 25...♖h7 26 ♖h6 or 25...♖f7 26 ♖h5! This second mating variation is the first time we have been reminded of White's bishop on e2, which through waiting patiently has acquired a menacing power. If Black now plays 24...♗c6, he will be struck down by the quiet move 25 ♖c4! followed by a lethal discovered check.

In view of this, Black has to give back his extra piece and remain with several pawns missing from his kingside.

24 ... ♖c6

25 ♖xa5 ♖h7

If 25...♖xb6, then 26 ♖c4+

♖f7 27 ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 28 ♖xf5+ looks deadly, while Kasparov prefers the variation 26 ♖g6+ ♖h8 27 ♖a3! and mate on h3.

26 ♖xf4 **Black resigned**

His kingside has been reduced to rubble. Kasparov gives the plausible continuation 26...♖xe4 27 ♖g5+ ♖g7 28 ♖g6, winning the queen. This would have been a fitting conclusion to a game dominated by White's rooks.

V. Akopian-A. Stambulin
 USSR 1991
Grünfeld Defence,
Fianchetto Variation

1	c4	♗f6
2	♗f3	g6
3	g3	♖g7
4	♖g2	0-0
5	0-0	d5
6	cxd5	♗xd5
7	♗c3	♗xc3
8	bxc3	c5
9	♖b1	♗c6
10	♖a4	♗a5
11	♖h4	e6?

This fails to solve Black's problems. Instead, he should develop with 11...♖d7, when Akopian claims a small advantage for White after 12 d4 cxd4 13 cxd4 ♖c6 14 e4 due to his pawn centre.

12 ♗g5! h6

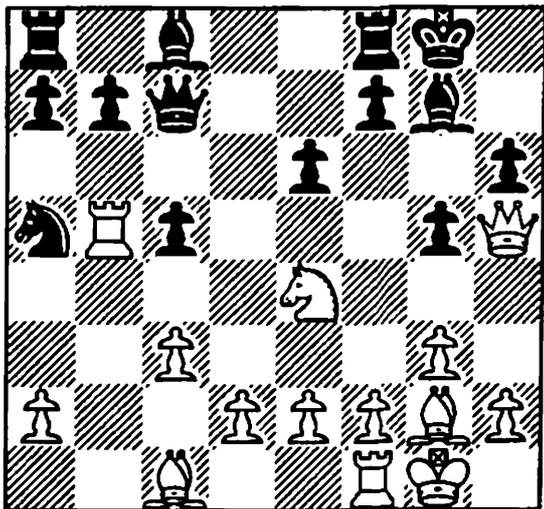
13 ♗e4 g5

Black may have intended 13...♖xh4, but then noticed that

after 14 gxf6 he cannot defend the c5 pawn. The subsequent 14...c4 15 ♔a3 ♖d8 16 ♔e7 ♖d7 17 ♘f6+ ♔xf6 18 ♔xf6 is then bad since Black loses his vital bishop, e.g. a drastic finish would be 18...♖xd2? 19 ♖fd1 ♖xd1 20 ♖xd1 ♘c6 21 ♔xc6 bxc6 22 ♖d8+ and Black is mated.

Alternatively, Black could try 13...♗c7 when 14 ♖b5 looks good, or even better 14 ♘f6+ ♔h8 15 d4 ♗e7 16 ♔g5! (16 ♔xh6 ♔xf6 17 ♔xf8+ ♔xh4 18 ♔xe7 ♔xe7 is unclear) 16...♘c6 17 ♘h7! and White wins after 17...hxf6 18 ♘xf6+ and mate, or 17...f6 18 ♘xf6 threatening a fork on g6. Perhaps 13...f6!? is the best try, although White has a good position.

14 ♗h5 ♗c7
15 ♖b5!



Once again we see a rook on the fifth rank opening up all sorts of attacking chances for the white pieces.

If now 15...c4 then 16 ♔a3 ♖d8 17 ♖xg5!! hxf6 (or 17...f5

18 ♗xh6! fxe4 19 ♔xe4 and Black can't stop 20 ♗h7+ and 21 ♖xg7+) 18 ♘g5 ♖d6 (the only way to prevent 19 ♗h7 mate) 19 ♗h7+ (or 19 ♔xd6 ♗xd6 20 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 21 ♗e8+ ♗f8 22 ♗h5+ ♔h6 23 ♘f7+ ♔g7 - 23...♔h7 24 ♔e4+ - 24 ♘xh6 and wins) 19...♔f8 20 ♘e4! ♔e5 21 f4! and Black's position collapses.

Or if 15...b6 Akopian analyses 16 ♘f6+ ♔xf6 17 ♔xa8 ♔d7 18 ♔e4! when 18...♔xb5? would allow 19 ♗xh6 ♖d8 20 ♗xf6 followed by 21 ♗xg5+ dismantling Black's kingside.

15 ... f5!?

An all or nothing move. Black hopes to save himself by starting complications before the white bishop on c1 and the rook on f1 are ready to join in the attack. At first sight, this looks a very promising strategy. However, even without the immediate aid of his undeveloped pieces White is still more actively placed than his opponent. And as usual, the tactics turn out in favour of the player with the better strategical deployment of pieces.

16 ♖xc5

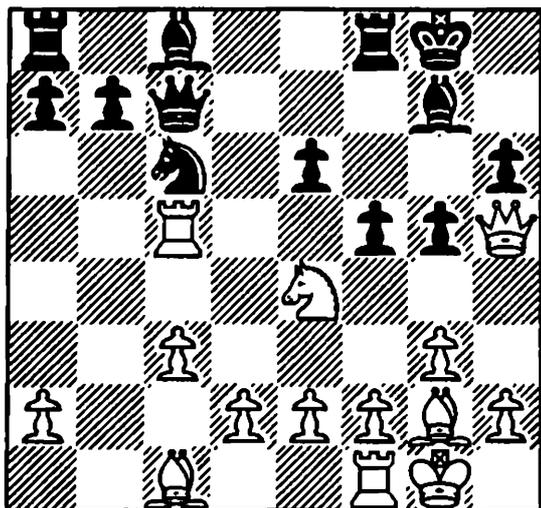
But not 16 ♘xc5? a6!

16 ... ♘c6!

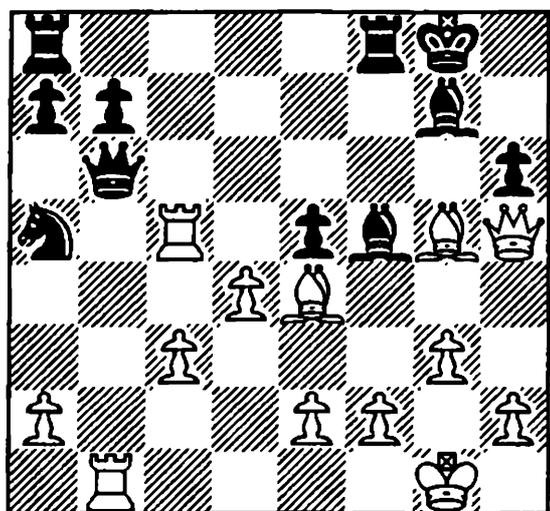
(see following diagram)

This is Black's idea. The white knight on e4 is trapped!

We should also mention the alternative attempt to win material: 16...♗b6. Akopian, who analyses this game in *Informator*



52, now gives the variation 17 d4! fxe4 18 ♙xe4 e5 (to free the bishop on c8 and prevent 19 ♜g6) 19 ♙xg5! ♙f5 (19...hxg5? 20 ♙h7+ and 21 ♙g6+ mates) 20 ♜b1!



The entrance of this 'reserve' rook proves decisive. After 20... ♜a6, 21 ♙d5+ ♙h7 (21... ♙e6 22 ♜xa5!) 22 ♜bb5! (our familiar move!) 22...b6 23 ♜c7 (Akopian) White has a winning attack since Black has no adequate defence against 24 ♜xh6+! or 24 ♜xg7+! and mate

next move in both cases.

17 ♜g6!

Much better than 17 ♜xc6 bxc6 18 ♘c5, with unclear play.

17 ... ♙d7

Delaying the acceptance of the piece for a move. If 17...fxe4 then 18 ♙xe4 ♜f6 19 ♜h7+ ♙f7, as analysed by Akopian, gives White a strong attack.

18 ♙a3! fxe4

It's now or never: White threatened 19 ♜xc6 and 20 ♙xf8, when he is a pawn up for nothing.

19 ♙xe4 ♜f6?

This leads to an abrupt finish. Black had to try 19...♜f5!, when after 20 ♙xf5 exf5 21 d4 Akopian claims that White has a clear advantage. However, this is by no means obvious after, say, 21...♜d8, sidestepping the threat of 22 d5, followed by 22...♘e7 and 23...♙c6, if allowed. The battle would wage on. Now however, it is all over.

20 ♜h7+ ♙f7

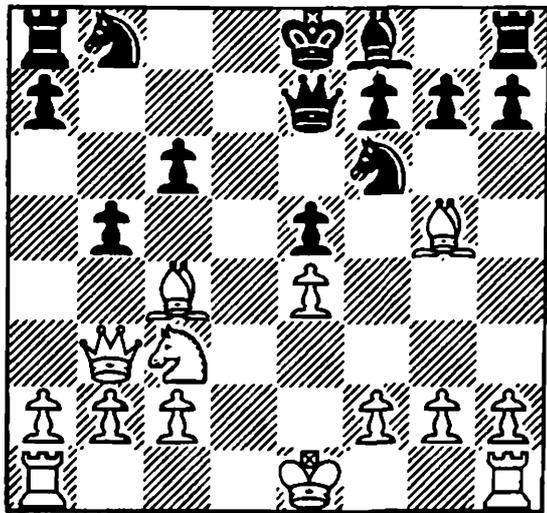
21 ♜xg5!! Black

resigned

The rook clears the way for the bishops and queen to deliver the killer blow. After 21...hxg5 22 ♜h5+ ♙g8 (22...♜g6 23 ♜xg6+ ♙g8 24 ♜h7+ ♙f7 25 ♜h5+ ♙f6 26 ♜g6+ ♙e5 27 f4+ gxf4 28 gxf4 mate) 23 ♙h7+ ♙h8 24 ♙g6+ ♙g8 25 ♜h7 is mate. The finish is also a fine demonstration of the power of the two bishops when raking a weakened enemy kingside.

11 Attacking with the Bishop

The most famous miniature of all time is probably the game Morphy-Duke of Brunswick, played in Paris in 1858. It is a text-book example of the power of the pin: 1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 d6 3 d4 ♙g4 4 dxe5 ♙xf3 5 ♚xf3 dxe5 6 ♙c4 ♘f6 7 ♚b3 ♚e7 8 ♘c3 c6 9 ♙g5 b5



10 ♘xb5! cxb5 11 ♙xb5+ ♘bd7 12 0-0-0 ♖d8 13 ♖xd7! ♖xd7 14 ♖d1 ♚e6 15 ♙xd7+ ♘xd7 16 ♚b8+! ♘xb8 17 ♖d8 mate

When I saw the following game, played 132 years later, I was immediately struck by the similarities with Morphy's masterpiece. Once again a bishop on b5 pins one knight against the

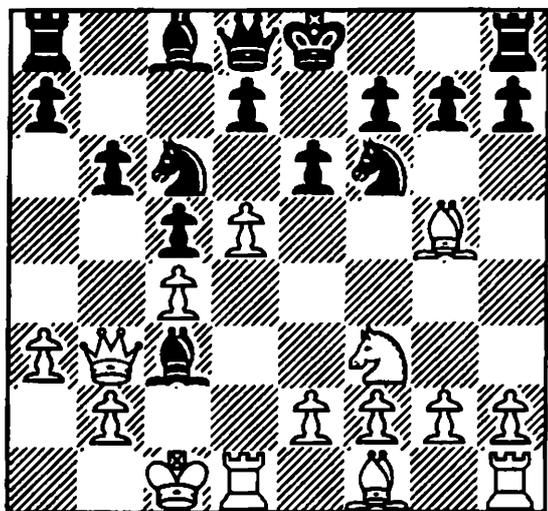
king, while a bishop on g5 pins the other knight against the queen. And the winning breakthrough, although not as spectacular as Morphy's, is achieved identically by a ♖xd7! sacrifice followed by the deployment on d1 of the other rook with gain of time. In both games, the impression is one of great harmony and economy among the white pieces.

Y. Seirawan-J. Timman
 Hilversum 1990
Queen's Indian Defence

1	d4	♘f6
2	c4	e6
3	♘f3	b6
4	♘c3	♙b4
5	♚b3	c5
6	a3	♙a5
7	♙g5	♘c6
8	0-0-0	♙xc3
9	d5!	

Avoiding the obvious 9 ♚xc3, when Black can escape from any problems with 9...♘e4! If Black now grabs a pawn with 9...♙xb2+? then 10 ♚xb2 ♘a5 11 e4 threatening 12 e5 is very strong, e.g. 11...d6 12 dxe6 ♙xe6

13 e5! wins, or 11...h6 12 ♖h4 g5 13 ♘xg5! hxg5 14 ♗xg5 and White will regain the piece, leaving Black's kingside decimated. The key is the enormous power of the bishop on g5.



9 ... exd5?

After the game, Timman demonstrated the correct response for Black: 9...♗e5! 10 dxc6 ♗c7! 11 cxd7+ ♗xd7 12 g3 ♜e7 13 ♗g2 ♞d8, and Black has equalised. The interesting feature here is the bishop manoeuvre to c7, where it keeps the important e5 square defended, thus preventing White exploiting the pin on the d-file with 12 ♘e5.

10 cxd5 ♗e5

11 dxc6 ♜e7

Black could still try 11...♗c7, but after 12 e3 d6 13 ♗c4 or 12...0-0 13 ♗b5 we see why 9...cxd5 was a fundamental mistake: it has removed the c4 and e6 pawns, both of which were a barrier to White's light-squared bishop. This piece also enjoys great freedom in the game con-

tinuation.

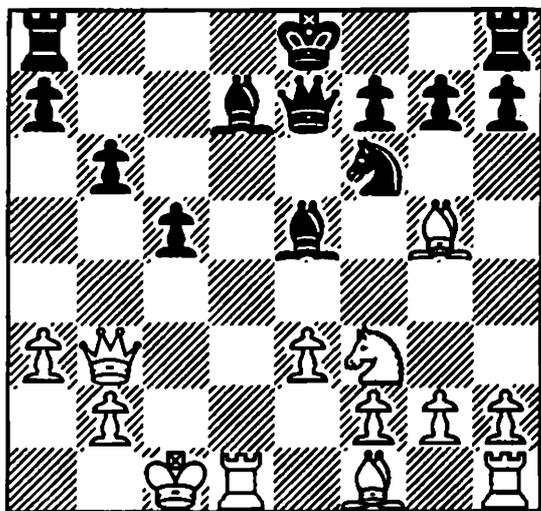
12 cxd7+ ♗xd7

13 e3!

The bishop on f1 now sees no obstacles in its path. Immediately there is a threat of 14 ♞xd7! ♔xd7 (forced) 15 ♘xe5+ ♜xe5 16 ♜xf7+ ♔c6 17 ♗f4! as pointed out by Seirawan in *Informer* 50.

13 ... ♞d8

So Black has to bolster d7. 13...0-0? would lose a piece after 14 ♘xe5 ♜xe5 15 ♗xf6, while 13...0-0-0 14 ♗a6+ ♔b8 15 ♘xe5 also loses a piece because of 15...♜xe5? 16 ♗f4.



14 ♞xd7!

Given a free move and Black would avoid the worst with 14...♗d6. So White seizes the moment to force Black into another pin.

14 ... ♞xd7

Seirawan was planning an amusing king hunt after 14...♔xd7: 15 ♜a4+! ♔e6 (retreating falls into a familiar pin: 15...♔c8 16 ♗a6+ ♔b8 17 ♘xe5 ♜xe5 18

♙f4) 16 ♖c4+ ♔f5 17 ♚c2+
♜g4 18 h3+ ♜h5 19 g4 mate!

15 ♙b5 ♙d6
16 ♚d1

A pretty position. Black is pinned along the d-file and down two diagonals. There is no escape.

16 ... 0-0
17 ♙xd7 ♚xd7
18 ♙f4!

Black has no answer to this new pin. If now 18...♘e8, 19 ♚d5 wins a piece. Timman finds the only way to prolong the game.

18 ... c4
19 ♚c2

Of course he avoids 19 ♚xc4?? ♚c8 when Black has a pin of his own.

19 ... ♘e8
20 ♘g5!

Black was hoping for 20 ♚d2? c3! 21 bxc3? (21 ♚xc3 ♚e6 avoids disaster at the cost of a pawn) 21...♙xa3+. Seirawan finds an efficient kill.

20 ... f5
If 20...g6 21 ♘e4.

21 ♚xc4+ ♔h8
22 ♙xd6 ♘xd6
23 ♚d5 ♚d8
24 ♘e6!

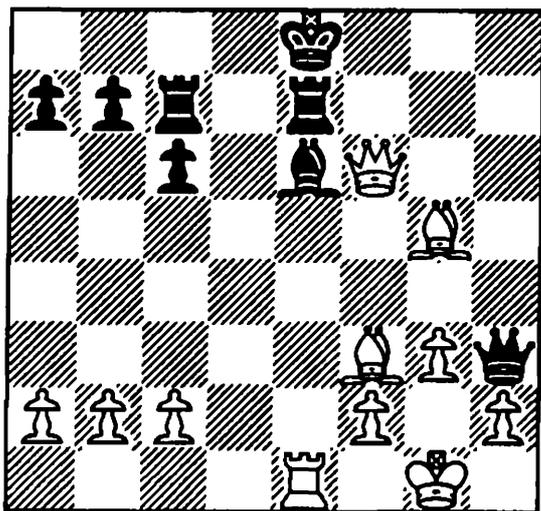
This was White's last chance to blunder: 24 ♚xd6? ♚c8+ 25 ♔b1 ♚xd6 26 ♚xd6 (threatening 27 ♚d8+!) 26...♔g8! and Black has escaped (Seirawan).

24 ... ♚c8+
25 ♔b1 ♚d7
26 ♚xd6!

This time the queen sacrifice is good. Black will end up a piece down after 26...♚xd6 27 ♚xd6: he can't simultaneously evacuate his queen from the back rank and defend against the mate. Therefore, he resigned.

An excellent demonstration of the power of the pin by Seirawan.

Here is another example from the game Shirazi-Kogan, USA 1985 (White to move).

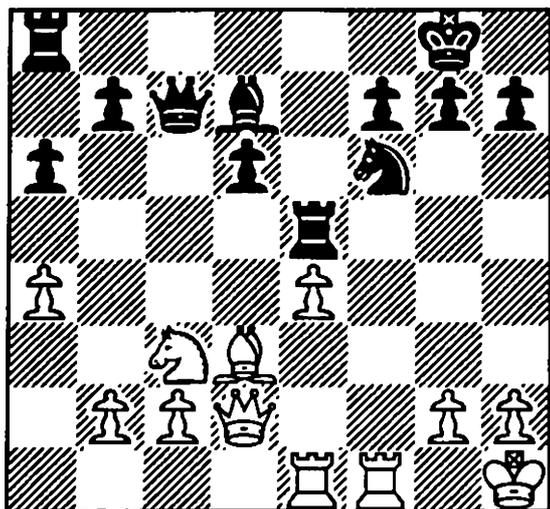


With three pawns for the exchange and a huge attack against Black's exposed king, White is clearly winning. Nevertheless, he found a pretty finish: 28 ♚xe6! ♚xe6 (if 28...♚xe6 then 29 ♙h5+ ♚xh5 - or it is mate in one - 30 ♚xe6+ ♔f8 31 ♙h6+ ♚g7 31 ♚f6+ wins) 29 ♙h5+ ♔d7 30 ♙g4! and Black resigned, since 30...♚xg4 allows mate in two.

A good illustration of the enormous attacking power of the two bishops against an open king. Now we see how the bishop can be used defensively.

L.Yudasin-L. van Wely
 Philadelphia 1994
Sicilian Defence,
Scheveningen Variation

1	e4	c5
2	♘f3	d6
3	d4	cxd4
4	♘xd4	♘f6
5	♘c3	a6
6	a4	e6
7	♙e2	♘c6
8	0-0	♙e7
9	♙e3	0-0
10	♚h1	♗c7
11	♗d2	♙d7
12	f4	♞fe8
13	♙d3	♘g4
14	♙g1	♘xd4
15	♙xd4	♙f6
16	♙xf6	♘xf6
17	♞ae1	e5
18	fxe5	♞xe5



19 ♞xf6!

Shattering Black's kingside. This seems an aggressive continuation but in fact White has no

choice. If he plays slowly Black will put his bishop on c6 and his queen's rook on e8, when he will have strong pressure against e4. The sacrifice is demanded by the position.

19	...	gxf6
20	♘d5	♗d8
21	♗h6	

How is Black to defend against the threat of 22 ♘xf6+ and 23 ♗xh7 mate? If 21...♞e6 then 22 e5! unleashes the bishop on d3, with fatal results: 22...dxe5 23 ♗xh7+ ♚f8 24 ♗h8 mate.

Black only has one move, but it saves the day:

21 ... ♙f5!!

Exploiting the pin on the e-file, defending h7 and preparing to block the g-file with ♙g6. Yes, the bishop is a wonderful piece!

22	♘xf6+	♚h8
23	♞f1	♙g6

Black now looks completely safe. White has achieved all he can with his pieces, and now has to use his pawns. The bishop on g6, although carrying out an excellent defensive function, has no safe retreat square.

24 h4!

With the idea of a general advance of the kingside, involving g4 and h5.

24	...	♞e6
25	♗g5	

If 25 e5, threatening 26 ♙xg6 and mate on h7, Black can answer 25...♗f8! ousting the queen from h6.

Yudasin points out the

interesting possibility of 25 ♖e3!? threatening 26 ♖d4. Then after 25...♞xf6 26 ♖d4 ♔g7 27 g4 White plans to regain the rook with g5, remaining a pawn up with a fierce attack. However, 27...d5! then spoils things: Black stands well after 28 exd5? ♖b6 or 28 g5 (best) 28...dxe4 29 gxf6+ ♔g8.

25 ... ♔g7

This leads to a drawing repetition. The attempt to use the rook on a8 actively backfires: 25...♞c8 26 g4 (but not 26 h5? ♔xh5!) 26...♞c5 27 ♖h6! and the knight on f6 is immune because of mate on f8. So the rook on a8, which seems to be doing nothing, does have an important role in the game, if only to defend the back rank.

If Black tries 25...♖e7, then after 26 g4 (again, not 26 h5 ♔xh5!) the threat of 27 h5 forces Black to acquiesce to a draw with 26...♔g7 27 ♔h5+ ♔h8 28 ♔f6 etc., as occurs in the game.

26 ♔h5+

Here 26 h5, hoping for 26...♞xf6? 27 h6+, rebounds after 26...h6!

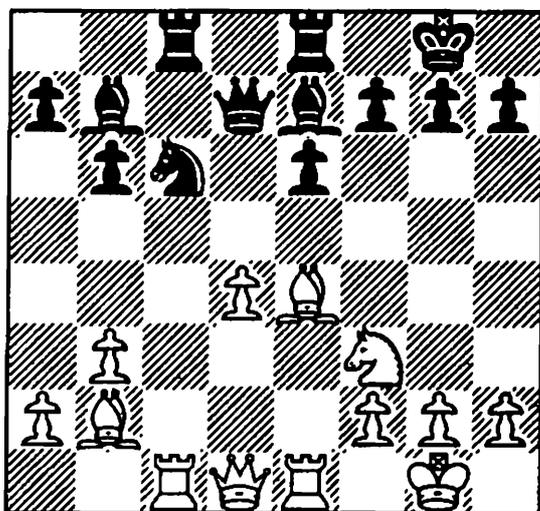
26...♔h8 27 ♔f6 ♔g7 28 ♔h5+ and a draw was agreed.

L. Portisch-N. de Firmian
Reggio Emilia 1989/90
Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 ♔f6
2 c4 e6

3 ♔f3 b6
4 e3 ♔b7
5 ♔d3 c5
6 0-0 ♔e7
7 ♔c3 cxd4
8 exd4 d5
9 b3 0-0
10 ♔b2 ♔c6
11 ♞e1 ♞c8
12 ♞c1 ♞e8
13 cxd5 ♔xd5
14 ♔xd5 ♖xd5
15 ♔e4 ♖d7?

Here de Firmian is unlucky. He chooses the one retreat square for his queen that allows White to unleash a deadly combination. Better was 15...♖d6 or 15...♖d8.



16 ♞xc6! ♔xc6
17 ♔e5!

Without the time gained by attacking Black's queen, White's combination would have failed.

17 ... ♖b7
18 ♔xh7+!

A variation on a common theme. If Black accepts the offer he loses in pretty fashion: 18...♔xh7 19 ♖h5+ ♔g8 20

♖xf7+ ♔h7 21 ♖g6+ (one pleasant feature about the sacrifice is that if White suddenly realises that he has miscalculated then he can always force a draw by perpetual check) 21...♔g8 22 d5!! (the bishop on b2 comes to life. It is a sure sign that a sacrifice is correct when all the other pieces come 'naturally' into the attack. Who would have thought that the bishop on b2 was waiting to deliver the killer blow?) 22...♙xd5 23 ♘d7! e5 (averting mate on g7) 24 ♙xe5 ♙f8 (the only defence against mate) 25 ♘f6+ and 26 ♖h7 mate. This variation is given by Portisch in *Informator* 49.

18 ... ♔f8
19 ♖h5 ♙b4

This looks like the saving move, since f7 is defended and White must waste time defending his rook. Or so it seems...

20 ♙d3!

Another example of bishop power: 20...♙xe1 21 ♙a3+! and mate next move, either on h8 or h7. It is curious that the bishop on b2, which looks like a feeble piece, is once again the star performer. Another amusing possibility given by Portisch is 20...♙xg2 21 ♙a6! and the black queen proves overworked since she must remain guarding f7.

20 ... g6

This prevents the kingside being chopped up after 21 ♖h8+ and 22 ♖xg7, but the king will now be forced to make a long journey.

21 ♖h6+ ♔e7

The kingside offers no shelter: 21...♔g8 22 ♘g4 (stopping 23 ♘f6 mate) 22...♙e7 23 d5! with a mate on g7 or h8.

22 d5!!

So White makes this clearance sacrifice after all.

22 ... ♙xe1

If 22...♙xd5 we have our old friend the double attack by the queen, along rank and diagonal: 23 ♖h4+ winning the errant bishop on b4. So Black must carry out his threat. But now White's dark-squared bishop is freed.

23 ♙a3+ ♔d8
24 ♖h4+ ♔c7
25 dxc6 ♖a8

A pitiful square for the queen, but there is no alternative. If 25...♖b8, then 26 ♙d6+!! ♔xd6 27 ♖d4+ ♔e7 28 ♖d7+ will mate. The b8 square has to be reserved for the king.

26 ♖f6 b5
27 ♙c5!

Cutting off the last escape route. With his king completely exposed and his queen buried on a8, Black's resistance is hopeless.

27 ... ♙cd8
28 ♖xf7+ ♔c8
29 ♙xb5

The complete triumph of the bishops. Now Black must prevent 30 ♙a6+ ♔b8 31 c7 mate.

29 ... a6
30 ♖d7+!

A beautiful finishing touch. Black will be two pieces down

after 30...♖xd7 31 cxd7+ ♕c7 32 dxe8(♚) and 30...♕b8 31 c7+ is also curtains, so Black resigned.

This fine game, which is

probably the most instructive in the whole book, is a fitting place to bring our examination of miniatures to a close.

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