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Pattern Recognition*



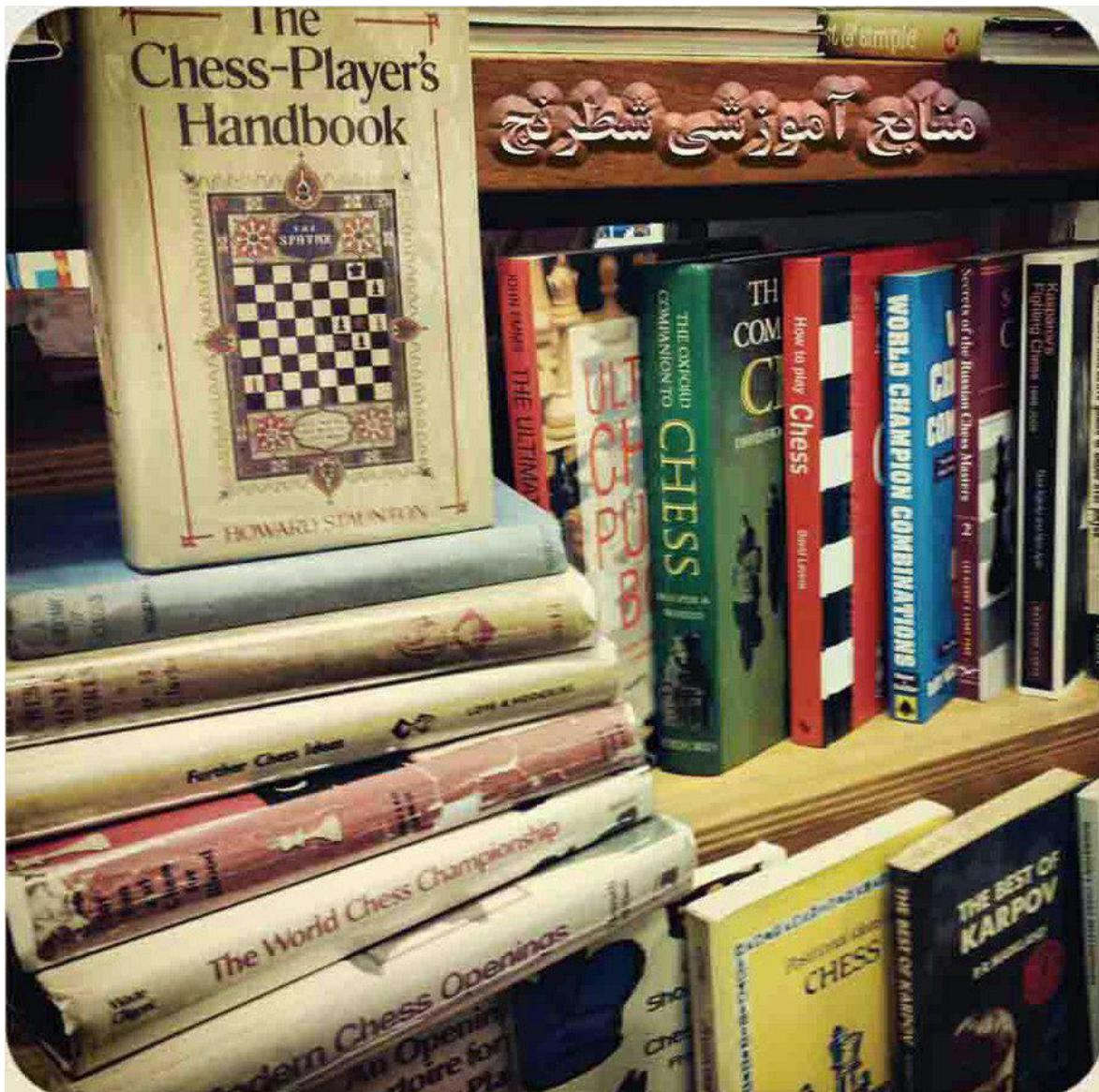
# Train Your Chess Pattern Recognition

**More** Key Moves and Motifs  
in the Middlegame

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ARTHUR VAN DE OUDEWEETERING

## Train Your Chess Pattern Recognition



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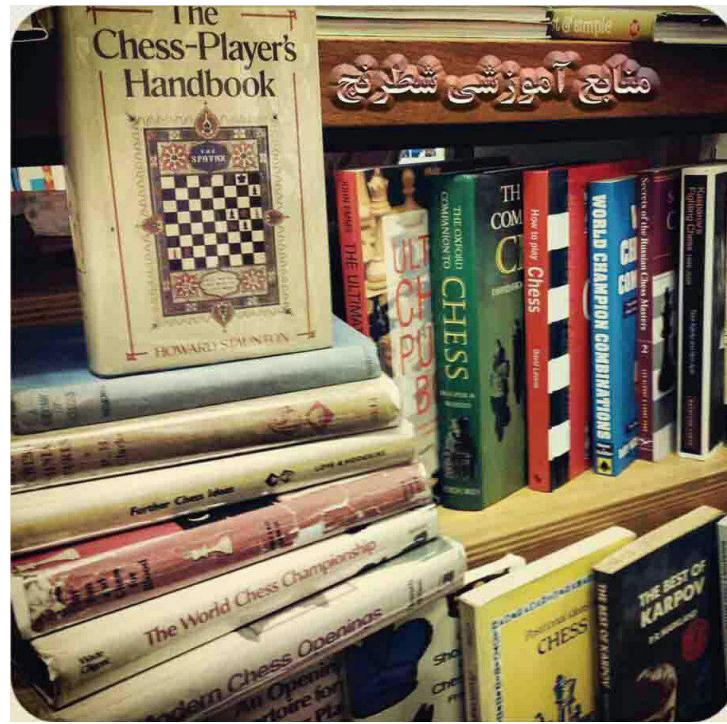
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**Arthur van de Oudeweetering**

# **Train Your Chess Pattern Recognition**

## **More Key Moves & Motifs in the Middlegame**

**New in Chess 2016**

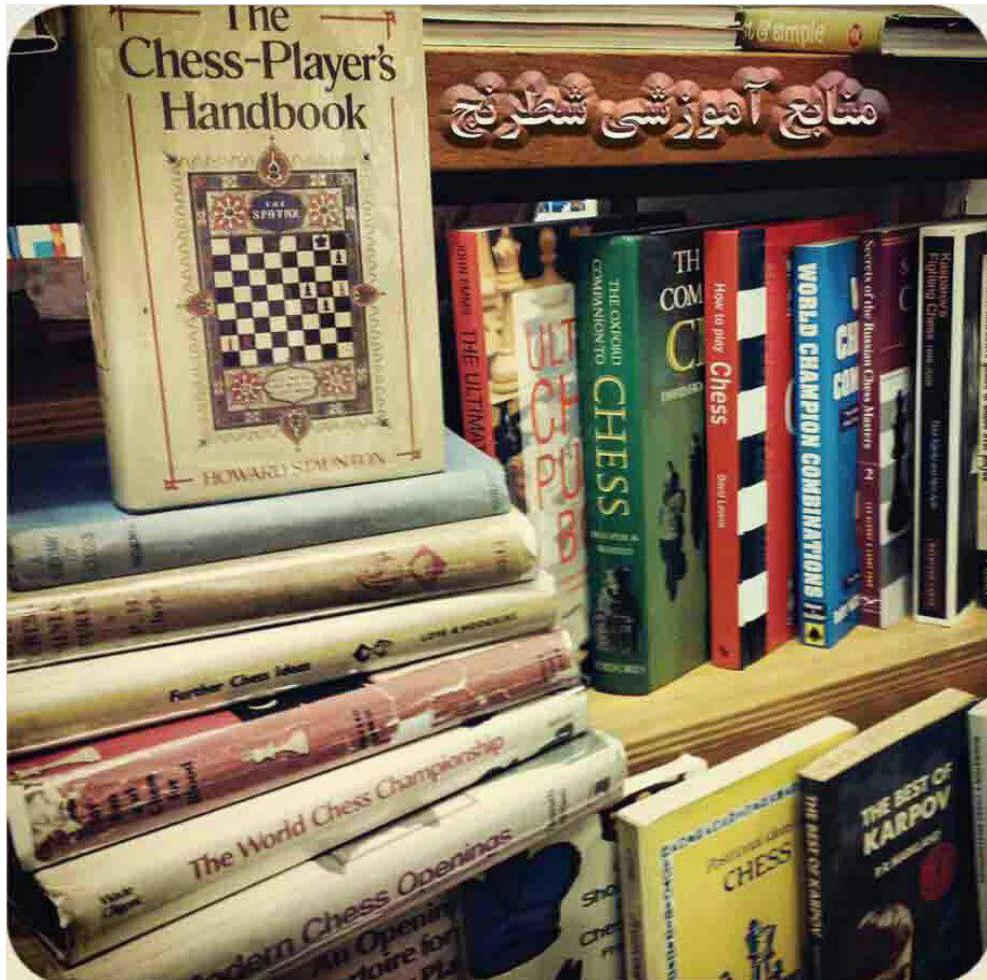


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To my parents, Ferrie and Joke, whose pride was always encouraging to me.  
To my wife and children, Edith, Julie and Ilja, who compassionately contributed in a tumultuous year.



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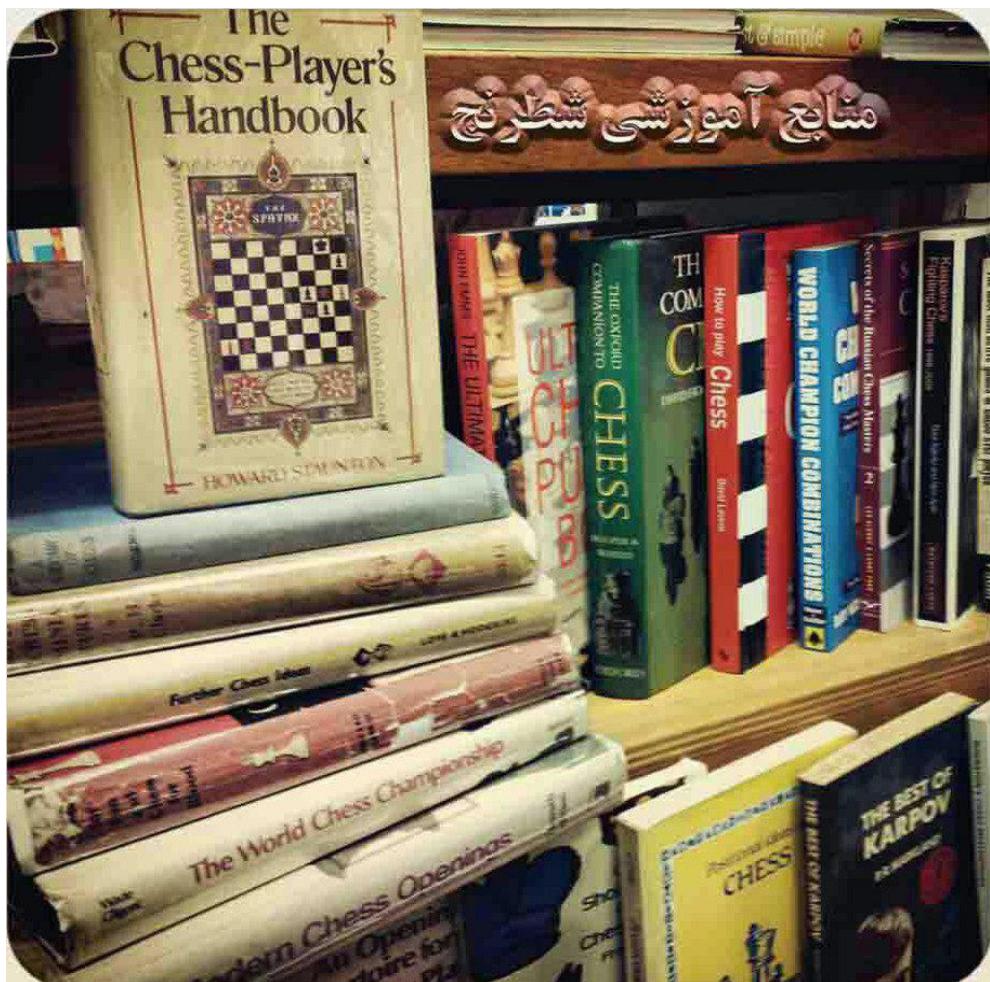
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# Preface

In the epilogue of *Improve Your Chess Pattern Recognition* – which from here on I will refer to as IYCPR – I wrote that the number of patterns had by no means been exhausted after the publication of that book. Firstly, at the time some existing material had to be dropped. In addition, I also wrote that I kept running into ‘fresh’ patterns. The two examples with mysterious rook moves which I gave then have grown into an entire chapter in the present book, partly also because it turned out that there was a great link with Nimzowitsch’ writings. And when a pattern returns over the ages, it truly is a pattern! Little has changed in the past year, and even today I am still bumping into ‘fresh’ patterns. Since I also received many enthusiastic reactions to IYCPR, what would be more logical than a follow-up book?

And this is exactly what happened. You’re looking at it! Right away, here I would like to thank Peter Boel and all the members of the New In Chess team for their invaluable patience and dedication. Numerous chapters have again been derived from my columns in the no longer existing *ChessVibes Training* magazine. The others are new. A couple of these have been published in New In Chess Magazine, but in a different, more compact fashion.

What about the content of *Train Your Chess Pattern Recognition*? To those not familiar with IYCPR I would like to point out that the patterns described in these two books are not tactical, but strategic. They all concern the middlegame, occasionally overlapping into the opening or the endgame. The central pawn sac with ...e7-e6 is an example of the former, while the chapter on major pieces – *Major Pieces in the Twilight Zone?* – could be considered to belong to the latter. Drawing a distinct line between the three stages of the game is not always easy, but neither will it always be relevant. This is precisely why Romanovsky referred to positions with only major pieces as the ‘fourth phase’, because unlike in ‘true’ endgames the king often isn’t able to become active.

In the middlegame, one particular pattern can be a predominant factor, but in our complex game there are bound to be other typical features, and typical counter-reactions, in certain positions. This is a good argument for studying several examples of one pattern and so become acquainted with the typical pros and cons. Therefore, the basic set-up has remained the same: every chapter contains a pattern with an average of seven illustrative game fragments. Occasionally, more examples – sometimes very famous ones – will be referred to. You can easily find these elsewhere, for instance in the online database of New In Chess.

For my selection of patterns I preferred those which were not mainly tied to particular openings. These will be supplied in any good opening book. Nevertheless, you will find some exceptions – particular Arturito’s *Exchange Sac*, which I decided to include anyway because, although it is probably quite limited to variations from the Semi-Slav or the Queen’s Gambit Accepted, it’s a wonderful exchange sac, which keeps you guessing about the compensation for quite a while.

Furthermore, I am quite fond of ‘unknown’ or unexpected patterns, like Anand’s piece sac ♔g5 and f2-f4 against So in Shamkir 2015 – see Chapter 7, *A Little Leap Forward*. Of course this idea had been seen in earlier games, but in completely other settings.

However much fun this may be, in practice you would probably benefit more from studying the more common typical manoeuvres, like swinging rooks or the typical ...b7-b5 break. Many of these you will also find in this book. Nice little booklets could even be written on some of them. For

instance, the early, sometimes sacrificial g2-g4 advance is nowadays widespread in numerous openings, but Alekhine already experimented with it a long time ago against Euwe. Coincidentally, two months back I noticed my team member IM Stefan Kuipers (against Werle, Groningen 2015) had ventured an advance that was quite similar to Alekhine's:



Hector's Gambit: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♜b4 4.♗g2 dxе4 5.a3 ♜e7 6.g4 (Alekhine played 6.♗xe4 ♘c6 7.g4)

Of course, this had been tried out by independent minds like Albin Planinec and Jonny Hector long before. I wouldn't be surprised if somebody had called it Hector's Gambit already. Anyway, there is too much material for this book's format – and also perhaps too much to keep you excited for an entire booklet. However, of course the g2-g4 advance did get a chapter in this book.

*Train Your Pattern Recognition* is divided into six parts. I think that the first four don't need a lot of further explanation, as the chapters speak for themselves. But I would like to give a little more comment on the final two parts.

I am very pleased to have included a part on various material imbalances. I don't know whether we can actually call an imbalance a pattern, but it definitely is a striking feature, which many a chess player will take as a starting point to assess a position. But there are other typical features and general guidelines to be found in such situations. I always love to use these positions in training sessions (but lacked any good books on the subject!), because I think they are helpful for developing a good feeling for the activity and coordination of your pieces – in short, a good sense for the relative value of the pieces.

The final section of this book contains a couple of bad patterns. In the first place, because it is useful to recognize a bad pattern. Some of them may be obvious, but beware: even World Champions have had a terribly bad bishop stuffed away in a miserable corner of the board! Even they realized it too late. And secondly, because many a bad pattern has its good side, as the Dutch soccer hero Johan Cruijff has also pointed out in general terms (his adage 'Every disadvantage has its advantage' is quite famous in the Netherlands). And, as I mentioned before, I simply like to point out surprising, counter-intuitive possibilities. For me they contribute greatly to the charm of our game.

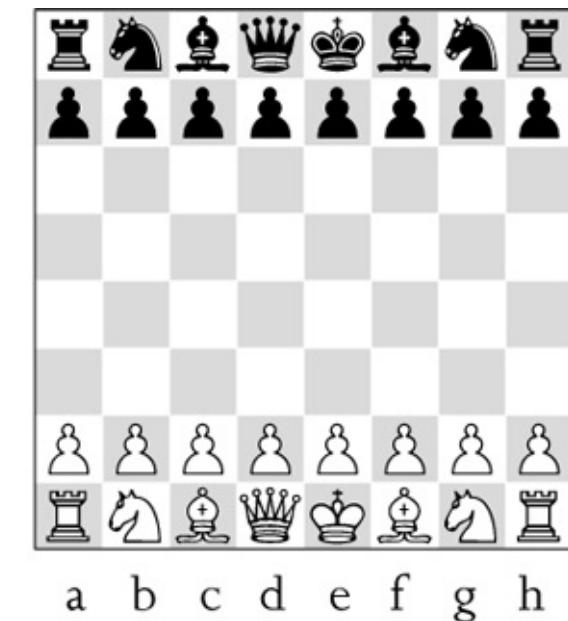
Remember that pattern recognition is only part of the solution, not the solution itself! A lot of work still has to be done once you have spotted a typical idea. You can use the exercises at the end of each

part to check your knowledge. But before you do that, have fun with the chapters, and go ahead and *Train Your Pattern Recognition!*

*Arthur van de Oudeweetering*  
*February 2016*

# Explanation of Symbols

The chessboard with its coordinates:



□	White to move
■	Black to move
♔	King
♕	Queen
♖	Rook
♗	Bishop
♘	Knight
!	good move
!!	excellent move
?	bad move
??	blunder
!?	interesting move
?!	dubious move
±	White stands slightly better
≡	Black stands slightly better
±	White stands better
≡	Black stands better
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
=	balanced position
∞	unclear



# Part I

## Typical Manoeuvres

### 1. Ladies First



14. ♜d2!?

### 2. Réti's Rifle



12. ♜c2 ♝d7 13. ♜a1

### 3. Alekhine's Gun



23... ♜e8 24. ♔d1 ♜e8

### 4. Rocking King's Rooks



11.h5 h6 12. ♜h4

## 5. The Swinging Queen's Rook



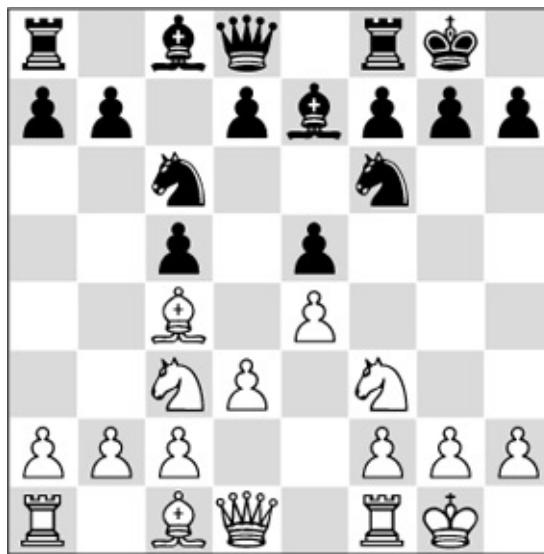
17...a5! 18.♔f3 ♔a6

## 6. Mysterious Rook Moves



10.♖g1!?

## 7. A Little Leap Forward



7.  $\mathbb{Q}g5!?$  h6 8. f4

## 8. The Modern King



13.  $\mathbb{K}e2!$

# Chapter 1

## Ladies First

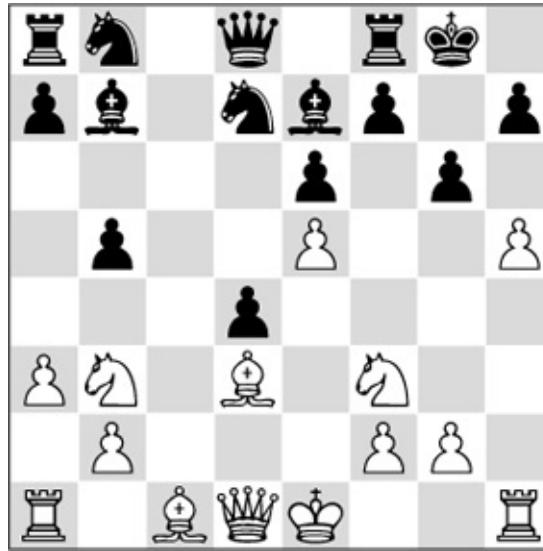
Wasn't it 'minor pieces first'? Then why would you ever move your queen right in the way of an undeveloped bishop on c1? Let's find out where she might be heading.

**David Navara**

**Jan Timman**

Wijk aan Zee 2015

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4+$  4. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$  0-0 5.a3  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  6.e4 d5 7.e5  $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  8. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  c5 9.h4 g6 10.h5 cxd4 11. $\mathbb{Q}b3$  dxc4 12. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  b5 13. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$



14. $\mathbb{Q}d2!?$

Violating the basic rules of development, White sets up a reversed battery with the queen as the foremost piece. However, you will soon get used to this way of blocking the bishop's diagonal.

14. $\mathbb{Q}h6$  would have been the automatic move, developing with tempo. Yet Navara, having opted for a straightforward opening set-up, consistently continues with the caveman approach. Concrete calculations do the talking here.

14... $\mathbb{Q}xe5?$

And with immediate success! The point is that after 14... $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  15. $\mathbb{Q}h6!$  White's attacking potential turns out to be sufficient for a deadly attack. 14... $\mathbb{Q}e8$  runs into 15.hxg6 fxg6 16. $\mathbb{Q}h6$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!$ ; the radical 14...g5 seems to be the only viable alternative, though White's position remains better, for example after 15. $\mathbb{Q}c2$ , preparing the more traditional battery with  $\mathbb{Q}d3$ .

15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  16. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  g5

16... $\mathbb{Q}xb3$  17.hxg6 fxg6 18. $\mathbb{Q}h6$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$ .

17. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  f5 18. $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  19. $\mathbb{Q}f1$  1-0

14. $\mathbb{Q}d2$  may come as quite a surprise, but Timman could have been forewarned by this quite similar example in the same line: 11.cxd5  $\mathbb{Q}c5$  12. $\mathbb{Q}b1$  exd5 13.b4  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  14. $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  15. $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ , and Black was equally helpless in Miroshnichenko-Andreev, Al Ain 2013.

You might reason that the calculating engines of today inspire us to find and play these concrete

moves, and that formerly we could easily miss such moves, just because they did not seem ‘natural’ enough. This might well be true in general, but the following example dates from the 1970s, and here the queen found her way to the kingside in exactly the same manner.

### Dragoljub Velimirovic

### Josip Rukavina

Novi Sad 1975

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♜f6 5.♘c3 e6 6.♘f3 ♜e7 7.cxd5 ♜xd5 8.♗d3 ♜c6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1 ♘d6 11.♘c2 g6 12.♘e4 ♘c7 13.a3 ♜d7



Here probably you would be itching to play the natural ♜h6 right away. Velimirovic decided otherwise:

14.♘d2!?

The queen hastens to participate in the attack. Not so direct an approach as in the Navara game, where the h1-rook was also threatening to join the team, but still pretty straightforward. The c1-bishop can join in later, which is not uncharacteristic for IQP positions.

14... ♜fe8 15.♘h6 ♜f8 16.♘h4

In three moves White has transferred his queen to the kingside. With his next – not illogical – move Black tries to prove that the queen has been exposed too early, but this fails utterly.

16... ♜ce7? 17.♘eg5 h6



18.♘h3?!

Remarkable! Instead White could have struck with a move that was true to his style: 18.♘xf7! ♕xf7 19.♗e5+ ♔g8 20.♗xh6, and White is ready to collect a third pawn on g6 with an ongoing attack. However, White also quickly obtained a winning position after...

18... ♕h7?! 19.♗e5 ♗f5 20.♗xf5 exf5 21.♗g5+ ♔g8 22.♗gxf7

1-0 (35)

**Dragoljub Velimirovic**

**Karoly Honfi**

Majdanpek 1976

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 e6 6.♗f3 ♖e7 7.cxd5 ♘xd5 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.0-0 0-0 10.♗e1 ♘d6 11.a3 ♘d7 12.♗c2 ♗xc3



Is it wise to snatch the pawn on h7 before recapturing on c3? It was probably not a coincidence that one year later Velimirovic found the follow-up after...

13.♖xh7+ ♕h8 14.bxc3 g6

... which is, of course:

15.♗d2!

Again the reversed battery enables the queen to enter with great force.

15... ♘d5

15... ♕xh7 would be met by 16.♗h6+ ♕g8 17.♗g5 ♘xg5 18.♗xg5 e5 19.♗e4 f5 20.♗h4 ♘f7 21.♗h7+ ♘e8, and now 22.♗e1 might be strongest.

16.♗h6 ♘h5 17.♗xh5 gxh5 18.♗e4

And White was just a pawn up.

Talking about the 1970s, there is this famous example, where Black's weak dark squares on the kingside induced the white queen to barge in. It is from the final stage in the match which later turned out to be a battle for the World Championship title due to Bobby Fischer's withdrawal. With four games to go Karpov had a comfortable two-point lead. By then, David Bronstein was the sole helper whom Kortchnoi trusted during the preparation for this particular game.

**Victor Kortchnoi**

**Anatoly Karpov**

Moscow m 1974 (21)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 e6 3.g3 b6 4.♗g2 ♖b7 5.c4 ♖e7 6.♗c3 0-0 7.♗c2 c5 8.d5 exd5 9.♗g5 ♘c6 10.♗xd5 g6



It seems that beforehand Petrosian had advised Karpov not to play this particular line anymore.

**11. ♜d2!**

An exclamation mark from Kortchnoi, who selected this game for his *Best Games with White* volume. He added: ‘A move the true value of which was recognised by many venerable commentators, including the former World Champion Botvinnik, who even expressed the suggestion that I had prepared it at home. But I could not have anticipated all of Karpov’s dubious moves!’ Indeed, Karpov’s light-hearted reply allowed a quick finish.

**11... ♛xd5 12. ♜xd5 ♜b8?**

The young Kasparov happened to be present at this game, and he witnessed the following blow from close by, as he vividly narrated in *My Predecessors Part V*. Neither he nor Kortchnoi gives an alternative for Black, though the elimination of one attacking piece by 12... ♜a5 should keep Black going.

**13. ♜xh7! ♜e8**

**13... ♜xh7 14. ♜h6+ ♜g8 15. ♜xg6+ ♜h8 16. ♜h6+ ♜g8 17. ♜e4.**

**14. ♜h6 ♜e5 15. ♜g5 ♜xg5 16. ♜xg5 ♜xg5 17. ♜xg5 ♜xd5 18. 0-0 ♜xc4 19. f4**

**1-0**

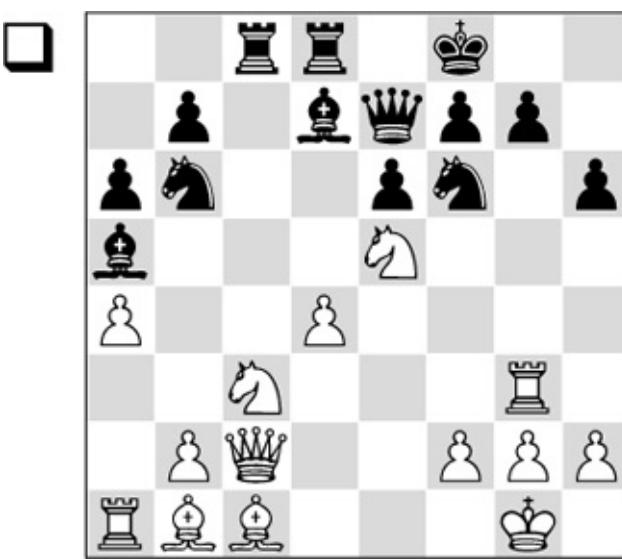
## Aiming at the Pawn

Obviously, ...g7-g6 without a fianchettoed bishop can be a clear incentive for the reversed battery. Occasionally ...h7-h6 may do the same, as witness the following fragment: four years earlier, this time with Kortchnoi in the role of defender.

**Vladimir Tukmakov**

**Viktor Kortchnoi**

Riga ch-URS 1970



**19. ♖d2!?**

Those who have thoroughly studied IYCPR will find the solution without effort: 19. ♖xh6! gxh6 20. ♖d2. Tukmakov feared there would be no follow-up after 20... ♖b4 21. ♖xh6+ ♖e7 22. ♖f3 ♖bd5 23. ♖xd5+ ♖xd5 24. ♖xf7+ ♖d6, but after 25. ♖f5 things look pretty desperate for Black. Still, Tukmakov's actual choice is too much fun to leave out this example.

**19... ♖bd5 20. ♖g6!?**

This yielded the desired spectacular effect after Black's next. Meanwhile the other tactical motif would have been the more correct choice: 20. ♖xg7 ♖xg7 21. ♖xh6+ ♖g8, and now for instance 22. ♖xd5 ♖xc1+ 23. ♖xc1 ♖xd5 24. ♖a3, when after 24... ♖b4 25. ♖f3! ♖e1+ 26. ♖xe1 ♖xe1 27. ♖xf7 the mating attack continues! Of course, this rook sacrifice would have demanded quite some calculation over the board.

**20... ♖e8?**

20... ♖c7 was called for, intending to eliminate White's important centralized knight.



**21. ♖xh6!**

A move we all would love to play!

**21... ♖b4**

21... gxh6 22. ♖xh6+ ♖g8 23. ♖e4+ ♖h8 24. ♖g7+ ♖g8 25. ♖xf6+ ♖f8 26. ♖xd5 exd5 27. ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 28. ♖f5 leaves White two pawns up.

**22. ♖h8+ ♖e7**

And now...

23.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  25.  $bxc3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}a3+$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$

... proved good enough – White proceeded to win.

## No Specific Target

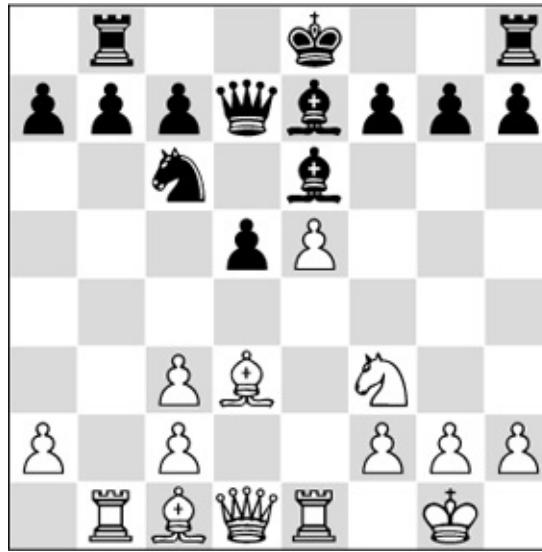
The previous example may have been exceptional. Much more common is the following manoeuvre when Black's kingside pawn structure is not even compromised.

**Ni Hua**

**Bu Xiangzhi**

Xinghua Jiangsu ch-CHN 2011

1.e4 e5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  3.d4  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  d5 5.  $dxe5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  6. 0-0  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  8.  $bxc3$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$



11.  $\mathbb{Q}d2!$ ?

White has more options, the natural-looking 11.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$  being one of them.

11... 0-0 12.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$  f6 13.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$

This is the idea. Here the queen is much more active than on d1, of course.

13...  $\mathbb{Q}f7$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}f4!$   $fxe5$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ !

And White's annoying pressure already yielded him a pawn:

15...  $\mathbb{Q}g4$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}xc7$   $\mathbb{Q}bf8$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  20.  $cxd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf2$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$  h6 22.  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  g5 23.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $gxh4$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$

And White eventually won.

Here is another attempt where the queen is transferred to a kingside with no weaknesses.

**Michael Adams**

**Rustam Kasimdzhanov**

Tripoli Wch 2004

1.e4 c5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  e6 3. d4 cxd4 4.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  a6 5.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  b5 6.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  8. 0-0  $\mathbb{Q}b7$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$



**10.♘d2 ♜e7**

The bishop retreats. Quite an achievement by White's charming little queen move. The natural 10...♝f6? would run into 11.♕g5 0-0 12.e5, for example: 12...♝d5? (or 12...h6 13.♗h4 ♝e8 14.♗xh6) 13.♗xh7+.

In more recent games Black has tried 10...♝e7 a couple of times. Now another surprising idea behind White's 10th comes to the fore: 11.b4!?, trying to make life hard for Black's dark-squared bishop, though Black seems to hold his own after 11...♝d6 (11...♝xb4? is met by 12.♝xb5 axb5 13.♗xb4; 11...♝b6 12.a4 also favours White) 12.♗d1 (12.♗b1 ♞bc6 13.♗xb5 ♜e5 14.♗d4 0-0 15.♗f1 ♜ac8 when Black has compensation for the pawn due to White's shattered pawn structure in Safarli-Korobov, Nakhchivan 2014; 12.a4!? f6 13.♗b2) 12...0-0 (12...♞bc6 13.a4 ♜xb4 14.axb5 axb5 15.♗xb5 ♛b8 16.♗xa8 ♜xa8 17.c3 ♜c5 18.♗g5) 13.♗e2 ♜c8.

**11.b3**

Very logical. As Black has reinforced his defence on the kingside, the bishop tries his luck on the long diagonal. This comes down to more conventional development, which you can compare with opening lines like 1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 ♜b4+ 4.♗bd2 b6 5.a3 ♜xd2+ 6.♗xd2, or 1.d4 d6 2.c4 e5 3.♗c3 exd4 4.♗xd4 ♜c6 5.♗d2, and several others. Meanwhile 11.b4!? could be an option here too, in order to follow up with a2-a4 while also enabling the bishop to go to b2. A more committal move, of course, also not quite according to Michael Adams' style.

**11...♝f6**

11...f6 12.♗b2 ♜h6, blocking the long diagonal, is an interesting alternative.

**12.♜b2 d6 13.a4**

And later Mickey managed to convert his slight pull.

## Summary

When planning your development, don't always hurry to produce the expected standard moves, but try to look for such 'unconventional' possibilities to activate your strongest piece. When you spot a promising destination, or notice a lack of pieces on the opponent's kingside, be sure to check out if it is possible to bring out your queen at once. Sometimes the bishop can wait!

## Chapter 2

### Réti's Rifle

Here is a much more conventional weapon in our strategic arsenal: Réti's Rifle. With this pattern, the lady comes last. And whereas Alekhine put his queen behind his rooks (see the next chapter on Alekhine's Gun), Réti put her behind his beloved fianchettoed bishop. The same principle applies in both cases: the strongest piece should be placed in the rear – which is quite logical with a series of exchanges in sight.

Let us start with an example by the maestro himself.

**Richard Réti  
Frederick Yates**

New York 1924

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d5 2. c4 e6 3. g3  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  5. b3 0-0 6. 0-0  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  8. d3 c6 9.  $\mathbb{Q}bd2$  e5 10. cxd5 cxd5 11.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$



12.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$

Typically the rook makes way for the queen to go to a1.

12...  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$

Applying maximum pressure on the centre, just the way Réti liked it.

13...  $\mathbb{Q}g6$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}fc1$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  h6

This position features in Romanovsky's book on the middlegame. Here is what the renowned Russian instructor (and one of the first USSR champions) had to say about Réti's strategy: '(...) what strikes you immediately is the harmonious action of all White's pieces whose force, according to plan, is directed against the centre (...)'.

Having directed all his pieces to the centre, Réti now decides to advance a pawn there:

17. d4! e4

After 17...exd4 18.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  the placement of all of White's pieces is almost too good to be true.

18.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Romanovsky remarks that this move is possible because 'the b2-bishop is placed in front of the queen. If it were the other way around, 18.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  would be unplayable.'

18...  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  19. dxe5  $\mathbb{Q}h7$  20. f4 exf3 21. exf3  $\mathbb{Q}g5$  22. f4  $\mathbb{Q}h3+$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$  d4

Something had to be done against the threat of f4-f5.

24.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{B}ad8?$

This loses. First 24... $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$  was called for, but Black was in bad shape anyway.

25.  $\mathbb{B}xc6!$   $bxc6$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{Q}f2+$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{B}xd4$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xe8$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  30.  $e6$   $\mathbb{B}d2+$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$

Black resigned.

## No Centre to Target

**Julio Granda Zuniga**

**Alexander Kharitonov**

Benasque 2013

1.c4 c6 2.b3 d5 3.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  5.d3 h6 6.  $\mathbb{Q}bd2$  e6 7.g3  $\mathbb{Q}c5$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$  0-0 9.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}h7$  10.a3 a5



11.  $\mathbb{R}a2!?$

The quickest way to aim the rifle. White hopes that the rook will be of use on the a-file later. Other ways to reach the desired set-up are  $\mathbb{R}c1-c2$  (as in the previous game) and  $\mathbb{R}c2$  followed by  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  and  $\mathbb{Q}b2$ . The idea played in the game is well-known and has been tried in many similar positions arising from the Réti Opening.

11...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$

Unlike in the first example, the rifle is not pointing at a pawn centre here (though it helps to prevent a possible ...e6-e5 later), but rather at the f6-knight and, indirectly, the g7-pawn.

12...  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  13.  $\mathbb{R}b1$

Grouping the major pieces together: White wants to play b3-b4 in order to justify the placing of his rook on a2. The safer 13.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  leads to probable simplifications and is less ambitious. Then the rook from a2 may later go to c2.

13...  $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  14.  $h3$

After the immediate 14.  $b4$   $axb4$  15.  $axb4$   $\mathbb{R}xa2$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}xa2$  Black can profit from the fact that the queen has left the long diagonal and occupy the centre with the advance 16...e5.

14...  $b5$

Now b3-b4 is impossible as Black would simply take on c4, when the rook on b1 is in the line of fire of the h7-bishop.

15.  $\mathbb{R}c1$

Changing plans and turning his attention to the c-file.

15...  $\mathbb{R}c8$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$

Black is just fine and ready to expand his centre with ...e6-e5. In this case the rifle seems to have

missed its target.

**18.d4!?**

Like Réti, opting for a possible  $\mathbb{Q}e5$ . But here Black's pieces are more active.

Instead of the game continuation...

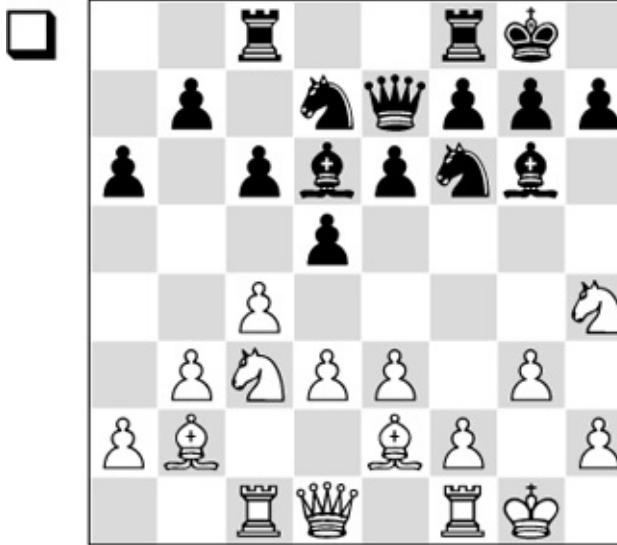
**18... ♜f8**

18... $\mathbb{Q}c7$  (anticipating  $\mathbb{Q}e5$ ) or 18...c5 (dissolving the centre) would have been satisfactory alternatives for Black, who only much later really went astray and lost the game.

That White had faith in his set-up may be clear from the following game two years later, which shows a remarkable resemblance.

**Julio Granda Zuniga  
Cristobal Henriquez Villagra**

Baku 2015



**13. ♜c2 b5 14. ♜xg6 hxg6 15. ♜a1 e5**

And here again Granda put a pawn in the range of his own rifle with

**16.d4**

Black was perfectly fine after...

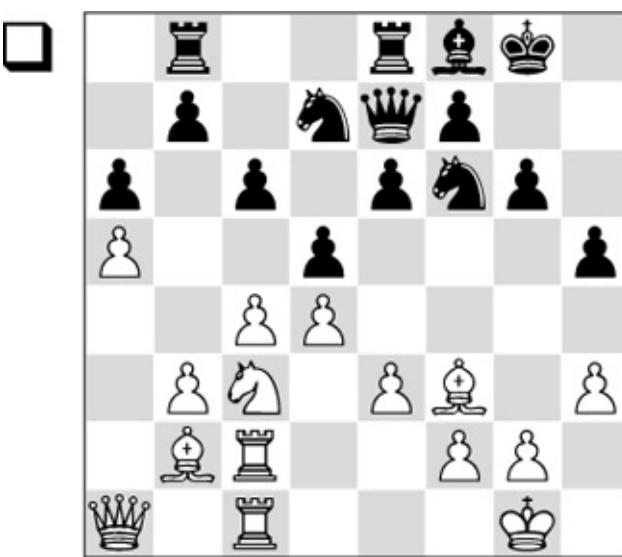
**16... exd4 17.exd4 ♜fe8**

... but in the end Granda prevailed again with his knight from c3 still ending up on e5. The Peruvian showed himself a true follower of Réti!

Actually there is a third Granda example, where he pulled the same trick. But here it seems that Black missed a chance to take advantage from White's offside queen by opening the position in the centre.

**Julio Granda Zuniga  
Krikor Sevag Mekhitarian**

Praia da Pipa 2014



**18.e4**

Now instead of...

**18... dxe4**

... Black could have questioned White's set up with 18...e5!.

The rifle is not restricted to the Réti Opening. In another manoeuvring opening, the Hedgehog, the black queen not uncommonly ends up on a8 to help effect a Réti-like strategy.

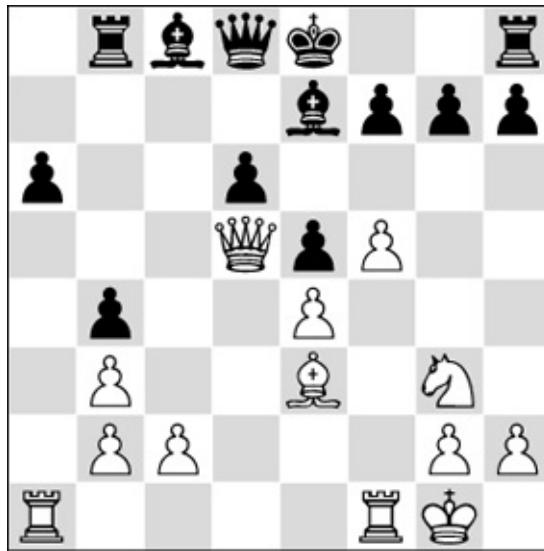
Here we have a more open structure from a completely different opening (the Sicilian), but the same manoeuvre.

**Bruno Parma**

**Vladimir Tukmakov**

Moscow 1971

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗e3 ♗f6 7.♗c4 a6 8.♗b3 ♗a5 9.f4 b5 10.f5 e5 11.♗de2 ♗xb3 12.axb3 b4 13.♗d5 ♗xd5 14.♗xd5 ♕b8 15.0-0 ♗e7 16.♗g3**



**16... ♕b5!**

Again, a rook makes way for the queen to go the corner of the board (though this might not be obvious yet), this time in an active manner, attacking the white queen and fighting for control of the d5-square.

**17.♗c4**

With hindsight, 17.♗c6+! would have cleverly prevented the follow-up in the game.

17...0-0 18.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  19.  $\mathbb{B}e2 f6$

The immediate 19...  $\mathbb{Q}a8$  leaves the kingside unprotected and fails to 20.f6  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ . Compare this to the last two examples. 19...d5 right away does come into consideration, but Tukmakov prefers to increase the pressure against e4 first.

20.c3 bxc3 21.bxc3  $\mathbb{Q}a8$

Of course not 21...  $\mathbb{Q}xb3$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}c4+$ .

22.  $\mathbb{Q}c2 d5$

Choosing the right moment to pull the trigger.

23.c4  $\mathbb{Q}c8$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}a2 dxcc4$  25.bxc4  $\mathbb{Q}b4$

Now White is clearly under pressure. He might have put up tougher resistance, but in the game he was quickly outplayed.

26.  $\mathbb{Q}d7$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  27.  $c5+$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}f7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  30.  $h3$   $\mathbb{Q}b2$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $\mathbb{Q}xh3$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  35.  $c6$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  36.  $d7$   $\mathbb{Q}xc6$  37.  $d3$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  0-1

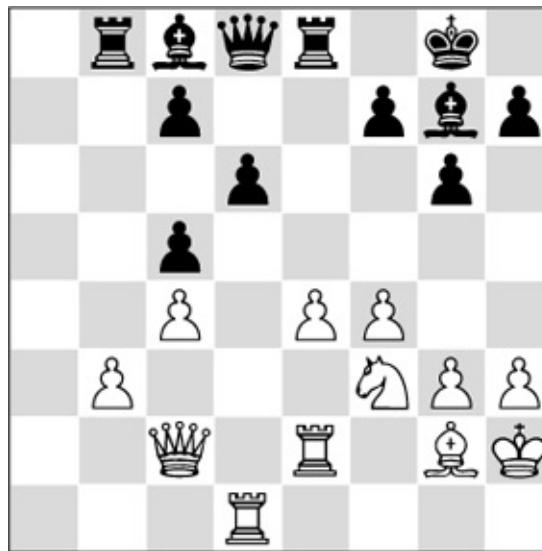
## Harmony

Hikaru Nakamura

Vladimir Kramnik

London 2012

1.e4 e5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3. d4 exd4 4.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$  bxc6 6.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  d6 7. g3  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$  0-0 9.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  10. c4  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}ae1$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  15. b3  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  c5 17. h3 a5 18.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$  a4 19. f4  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  g6 21.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  axb3 22. axb3  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$



Here we have more or less the same manoeuvre as in the Tukmakov game, although the reasoning behind it may be different. Black wants to activate his queen and get it away from possible trouble on the d-file. He also would like to develop his light-squared bishop on b7, but right now this would severely diminish the mobility of the b8-rook. Taking all this into account, Kramnik started with:

23...  $\mathbb{Q}b6!$

Now

24.e5

... trying to exploit the pin, was calmly met by...

24...  $\mathbb{Q}b7$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}dd2$

25.  $\mathbb{Q}ed2$  can also be met by 25...  $\mathbb{Q}a8$ .

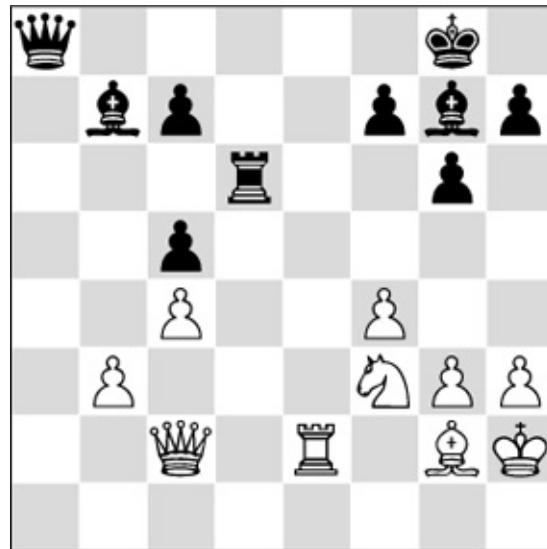
25...  $\mathbb{Q}a8!$

By setting up Réti's Rifle Black has managed to complete his development in the harmonious way he wanted. His radiant pair of bishops, now supported by the queen, puts White's centre under

considerable pressure.

26.exd6 ♜xe2 27.♖xe2 ♜xd6

27...cxd6, restoring the pawn structure and taking control of the e5-square, is a good alternative, but Kramnik does not want to limit the mobility of his rook and prefers active piece play.



28.♕e5 ♜xg2 29.♖xg2 ♜xe5

29...♖e6 could be even stronger as 30.♖e2 runs into 30...♚e8 with a very unpleasant position for White.

30.fxe5 ♖e6 31.♖e2 ♜f3

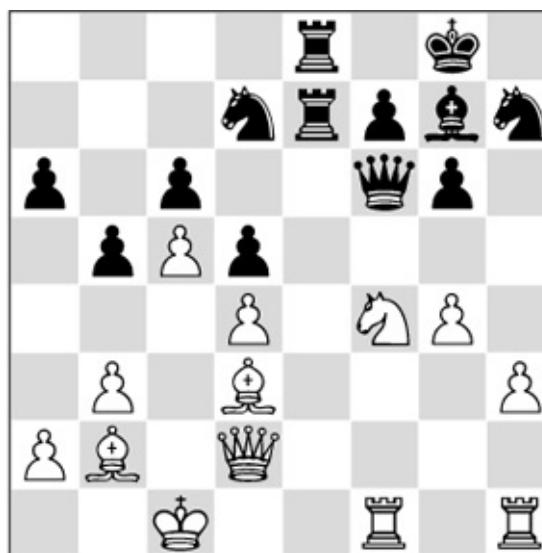
In this major piece ending Black is better due to his active pieces and White's vulnerable pawns and exposed king.

## Moving Backwards

Alexander Rustemov

Evgeny Postny

Germany Bundesliga 2012/13



Up till now we have seen the queen moving sideways to reach the desired corner.

The same thing can of course be achieved by moving the queen backwards. This has more of a surprise factor and, as a result, is an aesthetically more pleasing way to execute the manoeuvre – at

least for me.

25... ♜h4!?

Clearly Black would again like to improve his pieces: his queen is in trouble and the knight on h7 is momentarily displaced.

25... ♜g5 would have run into 26.h4! ♜xg4 27.♕fg1 ♜f3 28.♕h3 ♜e1+ 29.♕xe1 ♜xe1+ 30.♔c2 ♜g4 31.♕xe1 ♜xf4 32.h5; but 25... ♜h6, to eliminate the strong knight, was an alternative.

26. ♜b1

26. ♜xg6!? would have been more challenging: 26...fxg6 27.♕xg6 ♜h6 28.♕xe7+ ♜xe7 29.♕xh6 ♜xh6+ 30.♔d1 with a tense battle.

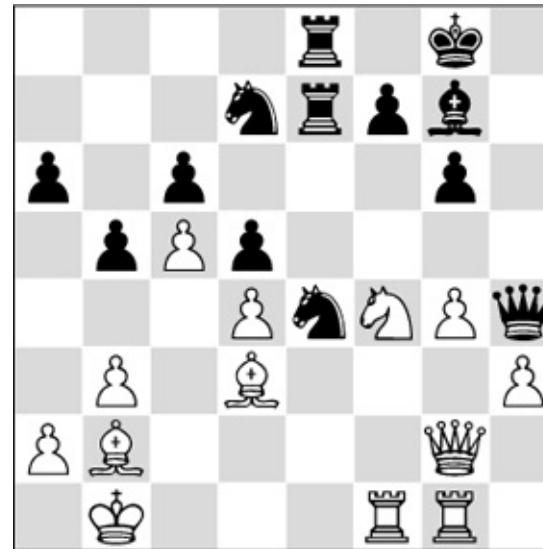
26... ♜g5 27. ♜g2

Now 27. ♜xg6 makes no sense: 27...fxg6 28. ♜xg6 ♜h7.

27... ♜e4

The knight has emerged from h7 and found a wonderful spot. And what about the queen?

28. ♜hg1



28... ♜h8!

Of course, as you had expected. Now Black is clearly better as White has great difficulties defending the d4-pawn.

29. ♜xe4

29. ♜e2 ♜d2+.

29... ♜xe4 30. ♜f3 ♜8e7 31. ♜d1 ♜xc5

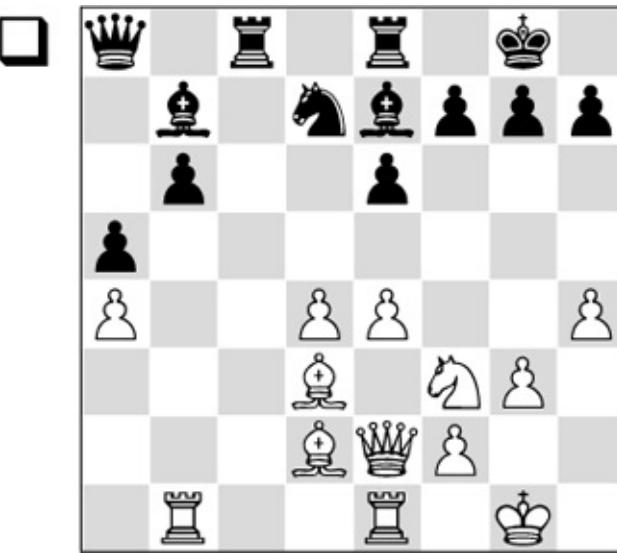
And Black won.

## The Drawback

Igor Lysyj

Mikhail Panarin

Yekaterinburg 2013



Shortly before, Black had moved his queen from c7 to a8 via b8. With the black queen tucked away in the queenside corner, White will be inclined to divert his attention to the kingside. As Black is lacking something in the defence, a kingside attack is likely to be very dangerous.

This is a big drawback of Réti's Rifle in more open positions where the opponent can quickly direct his forces to the other side.

**20.Qg5**

Preparing to transfer the queen to the kingside (g4 or h5), now that the black counterpart has departed from centre stage.

**20...h6**

After 20...Qxg5 21.hxg5 White enjoys a big spatial advantage.

**21.Qh3**

Intending to follow up with Qg4 and Qf4(-h5).

**21...e5**

This allows a tactical trick, though after 21...Qc6 the same move 22.Qxh6 would still have been possible: 22...gxh6 23.d5, and now for example 23...Qxa4 24.dxe6 fxe6 25.Qg4+ Qf8 26.Qf4. This looks dangerous for Black, but naturally should have been preferred to the game continuation.

**22.Qxh6 gxh6 23.Qg4+ Qf8 24.Qxd7 Qb4 25.Qxb4**

Here 25.Qe3! was possible, as after 25...exd4 26.Qf3 Qe7 27.Qf5 Black cannot take twice on e4 because at the end the c8-rook will hang.

**25...axb4 26.Qd6+ Qg7 27.dxe5 Qe6 28.Qxb4 Qxe5**

And here Black should not have hesitated to bring his queen back into the game: 28...Qa5. After the text move and White's

**29.Qxb6**

... he had to defend an unpleasant position, which he did not manage to do in the end.

Let's finish with a tense battle which also sees White attacking fiercely on the kingside as soon as Black has moved his queen to a8. Just to make it absolutely clear: Réti's Rifle can be a strong manoeuvring weapon, but should be handled with care in open positions.

**Alon Greenfeld**

**Tamir Nabaty**

Beer-Sheva 2013

**1.d4 Qf6 2.Qf3 b6 3.c4 Qb7 4.Qc3 e6 5.a3 d5 6.cxd5 Qxd5 7.e3 Qxc3 8.bxc3 Qe7 9.Qb5+ c6 10.Qd3 c5 11.0-0 0-0 12.Qc2 h6 13.e4 cxd4 14.cxd4 Qc6 15.Qe3 Qc8 16.Qe2 Qa5 17.Qfd1 Qc3 18.a4**



**18... ♜a8**

Here White unleashed a familiar idea:

**19.d5!?**

This is in fact a novelty, and seemingly a strong one as, after natural moves, Black is fine.

After 19.♗f4 ♜b3 20.♕ab1 ♜fc8 Black has a pleasant position, while after 19.♕ac1 he may venture the exchange sacrifice 19... ♜xd3 20.♕xd3 ♜xe4.

**19... exd5 20.e5**

See also IYCP Chapter 21: *Passer Pour Mieux Centraliser*.

**20... ♜b3**

Black does not hesitate to bring one of his offside pieces back into play.

**21.♘d4**

White goes all the way!

**21... ♜xd3**

If 21... ♜xa1 then 22.♘f5! and Black will have a hard time, for instance 22... ♜d8 23.♕xh6 ♜c8 24.♘xg7, and the knight will retreat to f5, leaving the black king with little protection.

**22.♕xd3 ♜xa1 23.♘f5 ♜d8**



**24.♘xh6 g6**

The insertion of 21... ♜xd3 proves ineffective. Now, after 24... ♜c8, even 25.e6 fxe6 (25... ♜xe6) 26.♘xg7 is possible, and there seems to be no defence. Of course, over the board this is extremely difficult to foresee.

**25.♘xe7+ ♜xe7 26.♘xf8 ♜xf8 27.♘b2**

Now White should be winning easily, but in the game Black managed to pose some practical problems and got away with a draw.

## Summary

Reti's Rifle is a contemporary and useful weapon when it comes to mobilizing your queen from a distance, putting pressure on the (pawn) centre together with the bishop. Obviously, a corner square is not the most active post for a queen. This may become painfully apparent in more open positions, when at times it may be missed dearly on the other side of the board.

# Chapter 3

## Alekhine's Gun

Put your opponent under crushing pressure: double your rooks on a (half-)open file and put your queen behind them. Sooner or later your opponent is bound to succumb.

Nimzowitsch at least froze when facing the gun against Alekhine in San Remo 1930. A powerful strategic device, with the queen as the ultimate trump.

Let's explore the typical situations.

### Controlling the File

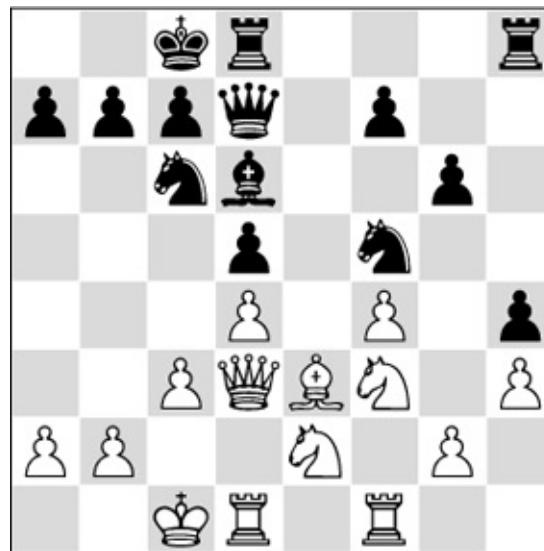
Alekhine's splendid victory ended in a complete zugzwang after a mere 30 moves. In this game he tripled on the c-file and quickly established a winning bind. As a result, later this came to be called 'Alekhine's Gun', although it is unclear when this name was introduced. It must have left a pretty powerful impression in any case as, in the United States, it obtained an almost universal cult status. Both a metal band from Brooklyn and a military mission in Afghanistan bear this name! The above-mentioned game against Nimzowitsch is well known and can be found annotated in, for example, Kasparov's *My Great Predecessors*.

Fortunately, Alekhine played another attractive game with the same motif:

**William Winter**  
**Alexander Alekhine**

Nottingham 1936

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.Qd3 Qc6 5.Qe2 Qd6 6.c3 ♜h4 7.Qd2 ♜g4 8.Qc2 0-0-0 9.Qf1 g6 10.Qe3 ♜ge7 11.0-0-0 ♜f5 12.Qf3 ♜xd3 13.Qxd3 h6 14.f4 ♜g4 15.h3 ♜d7 16.Qhf1 h5 17.Qg1 h4 18.Qe2 ♜f5 19.Qf3



19...f6!

Before transferring his major pieces to the open file, Black prevents Qe5.

20.Qh2 ♜de8 21.Qd2 ♜e6 22.Qg4 ♜he8 23.Qde1 ♜8e7!

The queen should be at the back (as in the game against Nimzowitsch). With the most valuable piece

bringing up the rear, Black is more likely to create a genuine threat of capturing.

24.♘d1 ♘e8

Aiming the gun!

25.♗f3 ♗a5! 26.b3

This doesn't prevent the knight from coming to c4. But Black is also on top after 26.♗xd5 ♗xe2 27.♗xa5 ♗g3 or 26.♗c1 ♗c4.



26... ♗c4! 27.♗c1

27.bxc4 ♗a4+ 28.♗c1 ♗a3+ 29.♗b1 ♗b6+ 30.♗a1 ♗c2.

27... ♗ce3+ 28.♗xe3 ♗xe3+ 29.♗xe3 ♗xe3 30.♗f2 ♗b5

Now the pressure has become unbearable: White loses at least a pawn as Black is threatening mate starting with 31...♗d3+.

31.♗c1 ♗xc3 32.♗xe7 ♗xe7 33.♗e1 ♗d7

And Alekhine soon won:

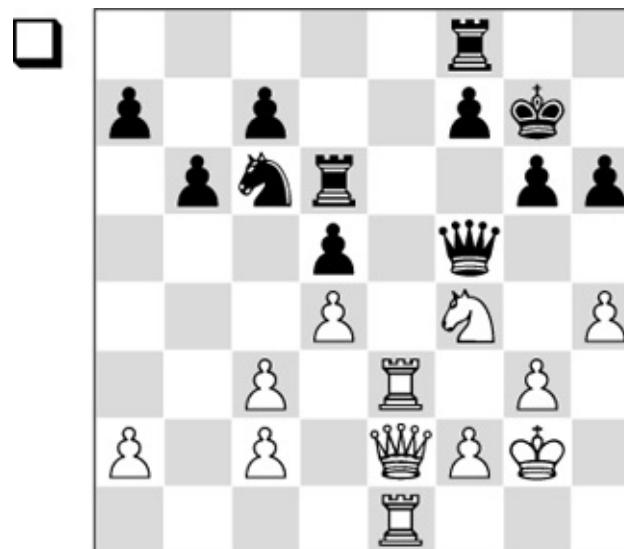
34.f5 ♗e3 35.♗f2 g5 36.♗e1 ♗e4 37.♗xe4 dxе4 38.♗d2 ♗d6 39.♗c2 ♗f4 0-1

## Looking for the Entrance

**Arkadij Naiditsch**

**Piotr Murdzia**

Germany Bundesliga 2010/11



**25. ♜d1!**

Making way for the e1-rook.

**25... ♜f6 26. ♜1e2 ♜d8 27. ♜e1!**

Here we go again – total control! White may now toy with the idea of ♜e8, eliminating one defender of the king.

**27... ♜d7 28.f3 ♜f8**

Black can hardly move, but White still has some manoeuvring to do in order to make use of the open file. With the black rook gone from d8 he now cleverly makes the entrance square e7 available.

**29. ♜d2 ♜f5**

**29... ♜a5 30. ♜e7 ♜d8 31. ♜e6+.**

**30.c4! ♜a5**

**30... dxcc4 31.d5.**

**31. ♜e5 ♜c8 32.cxd5 ♜c4 33. ♜c1 c6 34. ♜e7**

Entering the seventh rank and threatening 35. ♜e6+.

**34... cxd5 35. ♜xd5 ♜f5 36. ♜c7!**

White finishes off in style.

**36... ♜h7 37.g4 ♜f6 38. ♜e8 ♜c6 39.d5 ♜c5 40. ♜a1**

**1-0**

## Versus the Backward Pawn

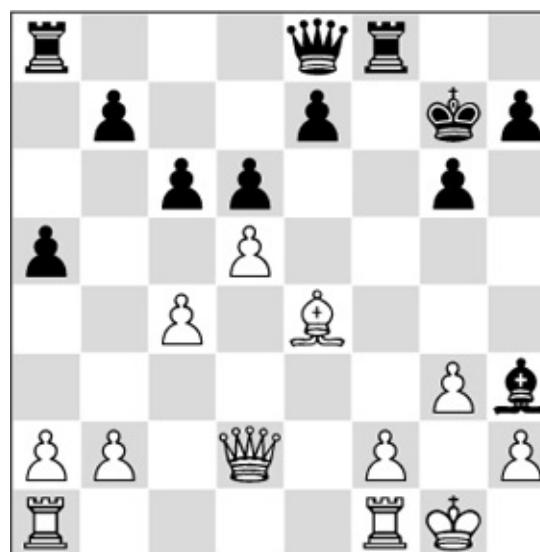
Now let's us look at some slightly different examples. Here White has a concrete material target, the backward pawn on e7.

Play is rather straightforward, while the much stronger black player has little to counter White's tripling on the e-file with. Something probably went wrong in the Dutch grandmaster's Dutch Opening.

**Anton Rosmüller  
Roeland Pruijssers**

Utrecht 2015

**1.d4 f5 2. ♜f3 ♜f6 3.g3 g6 4. ♜g2 ♜g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6 7. ♜c3 ♜e8 8.d5 a5 9. ♜e3 ♜a6 10. ♜d2 c6 11. ♜h6 ♜d7 12. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 13.e4 fxe4 14. ♜g5 ♜c5 15. ♜gxe4 ♜fxe4 16. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 17. ♜xe4 ♜h3**



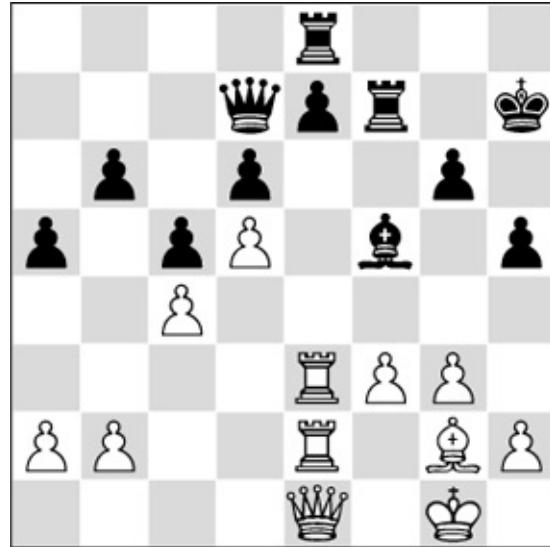
**18. ♜fe1 c5 19. ♜e3 ♜d7 20. ♜ae1 ♜f7 21. ♜g2 ♜f5**

21... ♜xg2 22. ♜xg2 will leave Black completely passive: White can continue with ♜e6 and h2-h4. That is, apart from tripling on the e-file of course!

**22.f3**

Pretty straightforward seems 22.h3, when 22... $\mathbb{Q}xh3$  (22...h5 23. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ ) 23. $\mathbb{Q}xh3$   $\mathbb{Q}xh3$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  gives White a decisive advantage, despite the material equality. White's open e-file and Black's king's position are the predominant factors (see also *Chapter 23* on major pieces), for instance 24... $\mathbb{Q}af8$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  26. $\mathbb{Q}c3+$ .

22...h5 23. $\mathbb{Q}1e2$  b6 24. $\mathbb{Q}c3+$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  25. $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$



**26.g4?**

White rushes things, which could have cost him half a point. 26.h3  $\mathbb{Q}xh3$  27. $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  (27... $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$ ) and only now 28.g4!.

26... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  27. $\mathbb{Q}h4+$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  28. $\mathbb{Q}fxg4$   $\mathbb{Q}h8?$

28... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  29. $\mathbb{Q}h3$  (29. $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}xe2$ ) 29... $\mathbb{Q}f5$  seems to hold, for example: 30. $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$   $\mathbb{Q}xh4$  32. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  34. $\mathbb{Q}e8$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  35. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ .

29. $\mathbb{Q}e1!$

1-0

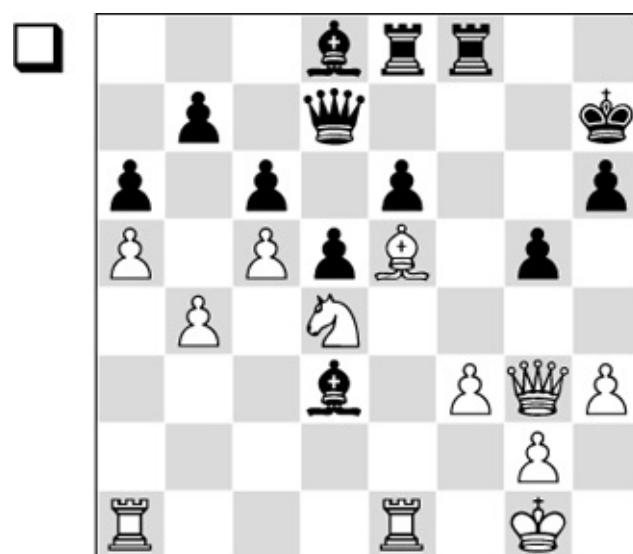
Probably missed by Black.

Instead of protecting the g4-pawn, the queen retreats to build Alekhine's Gun once again. It proved to be the decisive shot.

**Sebastien Mazé**

**Andrei Istratescu**

Saint-Quentin ch-FRA 2015



At the cost of a mere pawn White has established a perfect blockade, enabling him to set up Alekhine's Gun at leisure. The first target is Black's backward pawn on e6.

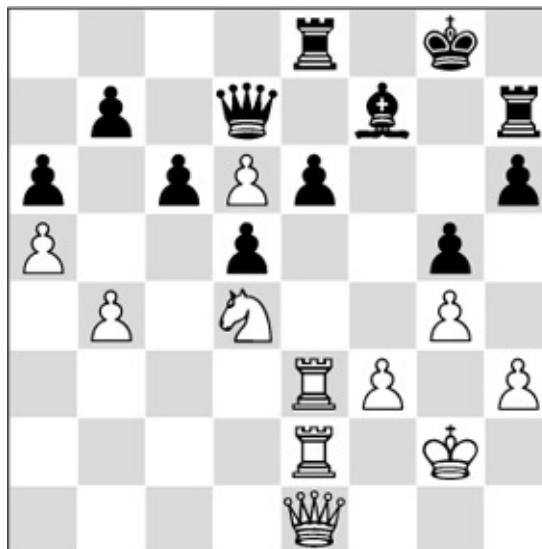
28.  $\mathbb{E}e3$   $\mathbb{A}g6$  29.  $\mathbb{E}ae1$   $\mathbb{F}f7$  30.  $\mathbb{E}1e2$   $\mathbb{A}e7$  31.  $\mathbb{A}e1$   $\mathbb{A}f8$

Again the question is: how to follow up, while Black is stubbornly defending his main weakness?

32.  $\mathbb{g}4!$ ?  $\mathbb{W}g8$  33.  $\mathbb{W}g2$   $\mathbb{F}h7$ ?! 34.  $\mathbb{A}d6$ !

Black's last also enabled 34.  $\mathbb{A}f6$ , but I like the clear strategic idea behind the text move.

34...  $\mathbb{A}xd6$  35.  $\mathbb{C}xd6$   $\mathbb{A}f7$



36.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

And now 36.  $\mathbb{W}g3$  would have been correct, holding on to the d-pawn for a bit and intending to follow up with  $\mathbb{A}d4$ - $b3$ - $c5$ . White has established a typical good knight vs bad bishop position.

The text move yielded White a quick win, but only because Black missed a better defence later on.

36...  $\mathbb{A}xd6$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{F}xe3$  38.  $\mathbb{E}xe3$   $\mathbb{W}f4$ ?

38...  $\mathbb{W}f6$  39.  $\mathbb{E}e5$  (39.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $h5$ !) 39...  $\mathbb{A}g6$  and White's position looks attractive, but Black is holding on.

39.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{W}f8$  40.  $\mathbb{E}e7$   $\mathbb{W}b8$  41.  $\mathbb{W}c3$

Black resigned.

## Against the Isolated Pawn

Anatoly Karpov

Boris Spassky

Montreal 1979

1.  $d4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.  $c4$   $e6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $d5$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{A}e7$  5.  $\mathbb{A}f4$  0-0 6.  $e3$   $c5$  7.  $dxc5$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  8.  $\mathbb{A}c2$   $\mathbb{A}a5$  9.  $a3$   $\mathbb{A}xc5$  10.  $\mathbb{E}d1$   $\mathbb{A}e7$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{A}d7$  12.  $\mathbb{A}e2$   $\mathbb{F}fc8$  13. 0-0  $\mathbb{W}d8$  14.  $cxd5$   $exd5$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $h6$  16.  $\mathbb{A}e5$   $\mathbb{A}e6$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{F}xc6$  18.  $\mathbb{A}f3$   $\mathbb{W}b6$  19.  $\mathbb{A}e5$   $\mathbb{A}e4$  20.  $\mathbb{W}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  21.  $\mathbb{A}xc3$   $\mathbb{F}d8$



The knights have disappeared from the board in this isolated queen's pawn position, which makes it easier for White to besiege the d5-pawn.

**22.  $\mathbb{Q}d3!$**

By now you should know that doubling is not enough!

**22...  $\mathbb{Q}cd6$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}fd1$   $\mathbb{Q}6d7$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}1d2$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$**

And yet again, complete pressure. Except for the e7-bishop, all the black pieces are on the defensive. He can do very little, but how should White further improve his position?

**25...  $\mathbb{Q}b6$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$**

I would say that White has achieved a typical small Karpovian improvement now.

**28...  $a6$  29.  $h3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $a5$  31.  $f4$**

After some further preparation (again, very useful with regard to the forthcoming pawn advance), it's time for action.

**31...  $f6$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$**



**33.  $g4$**

Once the bishop is driven back to f7, e3-e4 becomes a possibility as d7 is no longer sufficiently protected.

**33...  $g5?$**

Spassky loses patience.

**34.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  35.  $f5$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  36.  $e4$**

This is possible as a result of the pin along the d-file, which is typical in such positions. Check, for example, Houska-Dreev, Aix-les-Bains (Ech) 2011, where Black managed the same advance after

outmanoeuvring his opponent.

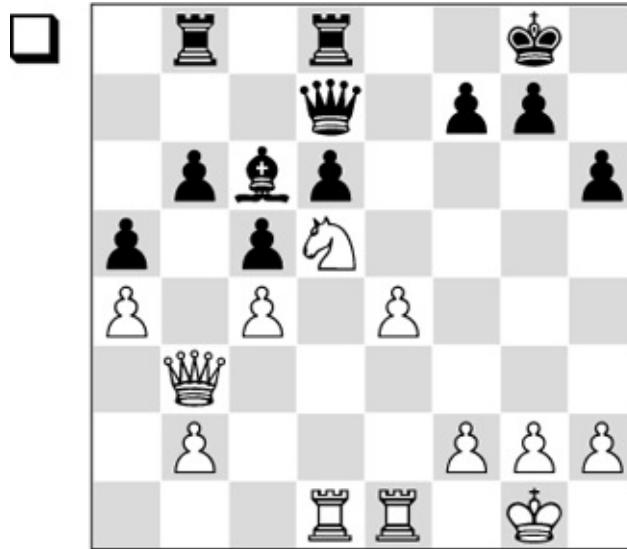
36... ♜g7 37. exd5 ♜c7 38. ♜e2 b5? 39. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 40. d6 ♜c4 41. b3 1-0

## Creating a Second Front

Piotr Bobras

Jaroslaw Paprocki

Warsaw 2008



22. ♜c3!

White wants to keep his knight on the board. He might have been afraid that, after an exchange, he would not have been able to make any further headway after tripling on the d-file. Or as they say: 'One weakness (here, the d6-pawn) is no weakness.'

22... ♜b7

It would have made sense to post the black rooks more actively; for example, by 22... ♜e8, after which the rook can defend the backward d6-pawn sideways from e6.

23. f3 ♜d7 24. ♜e2 ♜bd8 25. ♜d3 ♜f8 26. ♜ed2 ♜c7 27. ♜d1

While Black has persisted in defending passively, White has set up Alekhine's Gun. But how to proceed now?

27... f6 28. h4 ♜e7 29. h5 ♜f8 30. ♜e2!

Having fixed Black's pawn structure on the kingside, White now plans to relocate his knight on f5.

30... ♜f7 31. ♜f2 ♜f8 32. ♜g3 ♜f7 33. ♜f5 ♜e6

Of course, this killer knight (IYCP Chapter 2) is terribly strong, but Black miraculously manages to cover d6 for a fourth time.

34. b3 ♜b8

It almost looks like the zugzwang from Alekhine-Nimzowitsch. But now White activates his queen, which, as you would expect, quickly decides the game.

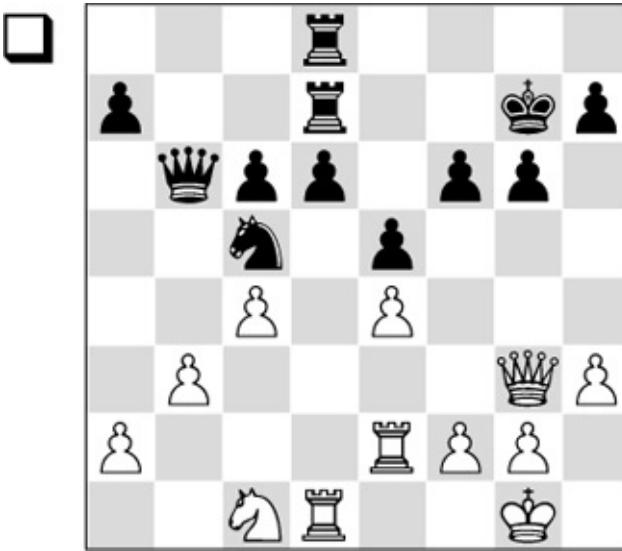
35. ♜h1 ♜f7 36. ♜h3 ♜c7 37. ♜g3 ♜f8 38. ♜g6 1-0

## Only Major Pieces

Sergey Zhigalko

Timofey Iljin

Alushta 2010



**28. ♜d3 ♜xd3**

Though objectively the text move might be OK, I would prefer to keep the knights on the board here and play 28... ♜e6, from where the knight could leap to the strong d4-square, which would also solve all problems with the backward d6-pawn.

**29. ♜xd3**

Now Black has to remain slightly passive. Perhaps he had only reckoned with 29. ♜xd3, after which 29...d5 would immediately solve all his problems.

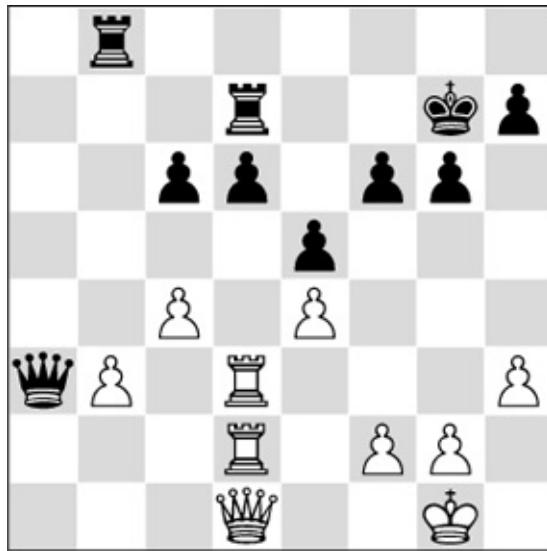
**29...a5**

29...d5 30.cxd5 cxd5 31.exd5 ♜xd5 32.♕xd5 ♜xd5 33.♕xd5 and the black queen would struggle against the white rooks (see Chapter 27). This is certainly not what Black intended with his 28th move.

**30. ♜ed2 ♜c5 31. ♜f3**

Keeping an eye on ...d6-d5 – and starting our familiar regrouping manoeuvre, with the queen modestly at the back.

**31...a4 32. ♜d3 ♜b8 33. ♜1d2 axb3 34.axb3 ♜a3 35. ♜d1**



Just in time and forcing Black back into passivity.

**35... ♜bd8**

And now? Yes, create a second front.

**36.h4 ♜c5 37.h5**

Already the position is very unpleasant for Black. White will soon bring his queen to g4, after which the d3-rook can also join in the attack via the third rank.

Black decides not to wait.

37...d5 38.Qg4

38.exd5 cxd5 39.Qxd5 Qxd5 40.Qxd5 Qxd5 41.Qxd5 must also be good, but it is much more tempting to play for a kingside attack here (see Chapter 23 on the Major Pieces!).

38...d4 39.hxg6 hxg6 40.Qg3 g5 41.Qh3 Qe7 42.Qh5 Qg8 43.Qa2 Qf8 44.b4 d3 45.Qd1 Qxb4?

This loses by force, but Black was in dire straits anyway.

46.Qa8+ Qg7 47.Qxg8+ Qxg8 48.Qh5 Qf8 49.Qh8+ Qf7 50.Qh7+ Qg6 51.Qxf8 Qxh7 52.Qxf6

Black resigned.

## Summary

Alekhine's Gun is the perfect weapon to seize complete control of an (half-)open file. When subsequently no immediate entrance square or capture is possible, some patient manoeuvring or a second front may do the trick.

## Chapter 4

# Rocking King's Rooks

Why castle? The rook is just fine where it is! Well, not always, but often you may find good reasons for leaving your king in the centre and activating your king's rook in the quickest way possible – simply via the h-file! Here, though, we won't consider examples where h2-h4 is just a prelude to castling queenside (leading to a middlegame with opposite-side castling).

### Patiently Postponing Castling

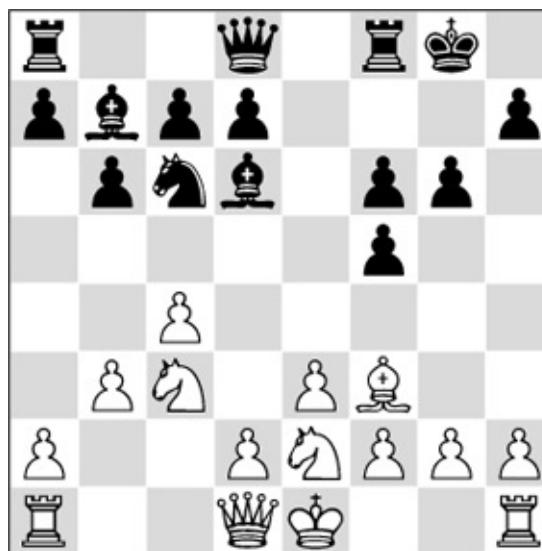
In this first game, Bent Larsen – a renowned adherent of the early advance of the rook's pawn – patiently postpones castling. He first makes several other useful moves before unleashing h2-h4.

**Bent Larsen**

**Juan Bellon Lopez**

Palma de Mallorca 1971

1.b3 b6 2.♗b2 ♗b7 3.e3 f5 4.♗e2 ♘f6 5.♗xf6 exf6 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♗e2 g6 8.c4 ♗d6 9.♗bc3 0-0



**10.a3**

Larsen judges that it's more important to gain space on the queenside than to castle.

10... ♜e8 11.b4 ♜c8 12.d4

Castling was also plausible here.

12... ♘d8 13.c5 ♗f8 14.♗f4 ♗g7 15.h4!

Now Larsen decides to refrain from castling entirely and instead tries to open the h-file for his rook.

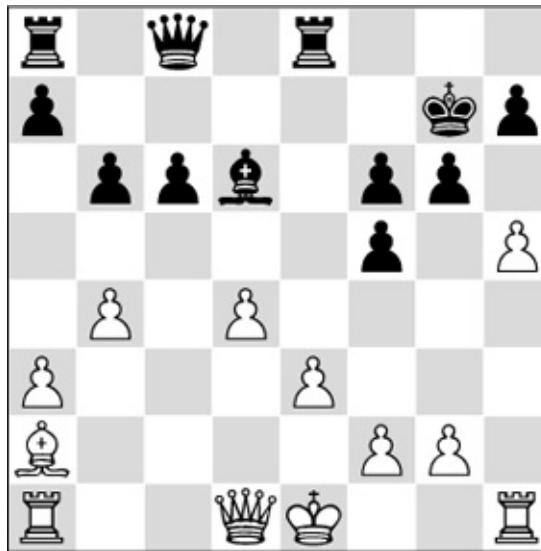
15... ♘e6 16.♗xe6+ ♜xe6 17.♗d5!?

17.d5 ♜e5 18.c6 dxc6 19.dxc6 ♗a6 20.h5.

17... ♜e8 18.h5 ♗xd5

White was threatening 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.♗f4, and ♗xg6 is coming.

19.♗xd5 c6 20.♗a2 d5 21.cxd6 ♗xd6



**22.♘f3**

Larsen deliberately postpones h5xg6, forcing Black to be constantly on his guard against the possibility of h5-h6+ as well.

**22...♞a6**

22...♝d7 23.♜c1 ♜ac8 24.♝h3 ♜h8 25.h6+ ♔f8 26.0-0.

**23.♘xc6 ♜ed8 24.b5 ♘xa3 25.♔e2!**

After the eager 25.♝b7+ ♔e7 26.h6+ ♔h8 27.0-0 (only now!) 27...♜ab8 28.♝c6 White is also much better, but the text move is stronger.

**25...♝b2+ 26.♝f3 g5**

Black is helpless against the attack along the light squares, for instance: 26...♜ab8 27.♝d5 ♜d7 28.h6+ ♔h8 29.♝e6.

**27.g3 ♔h6 28.♝e6 f4 29.gxf4 gxf4 30.♜ag1 fxe3 31.fxe3 ♜ab8 32.♝e4 f5 33.♝h4**

**1-0**

## Punishing Early Castling

The popular belief is that it's wise to safely tuck your king away as quickly as possible. That may be true in many cases, but you have to judge each position on its own merits.

**Julia Novkovic**

**Kubra Ozturk**

Istanbul ol 2012

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4 ♖b4 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♘d3 d6 8.♘g5**

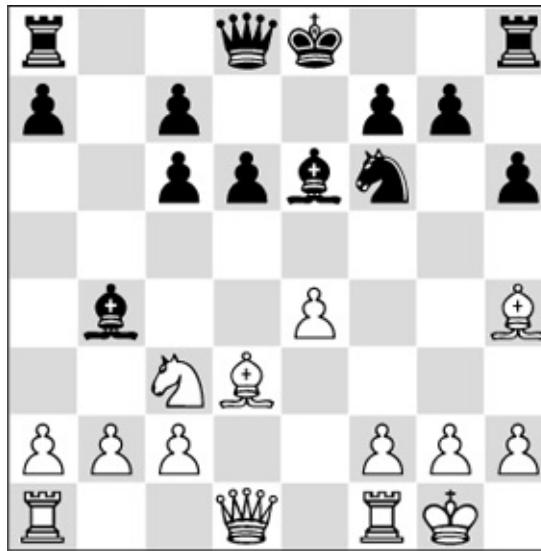
White apparently delays castling so as to sidestep Black replying to the more regular 8.0-0 with 8...♝g4.

**8...h6 9.♘h4 ♖e6**

Also cleverly delaying castling!

**10.0-0**

The natural thing to do, isn't it?



**10...g5 11.Qg3 h5! 12.e5**

12.f3.

**12...h4 13.exf6 hxg3**

More patience was required: 13...Qxc3 14.bxc3 Qxf6!.

**14.Qe4?**

Missing the counterintuitive 14.fxg3!, protecting the f6-pawn.

**14...gxh2+?**

Now the white king is relatively safe on h1, since the h-file is blocked by the black pawn on h2. The concrete 14...gxf2+ 15.Qxf2 d5! was significantly better.

**15.Qh1 d5 16.c3?**

This turns out to be bad. The only move was 16.Qxg5 Qxf6 17.Qxe6 fxe6 18.c4 with some counterchances.

**16...dxe4 17.Qxe4 Qd6 18.Qxc6+ Qf8 19.f4**

19.Qxa8 Qxa8 followed by 20...Qh6.

**19...gxf4 20.Qd4 Qb8 21.Qad1 Qb6 22.Qa4 Qa8 23.Qxf4 Qxb2 24.Qf2 Qxf2 25.Qxf2 Qg8 26.Qb5 Qg6 27.c4 Qh3 28.Qxd6 cxd6 0-1**

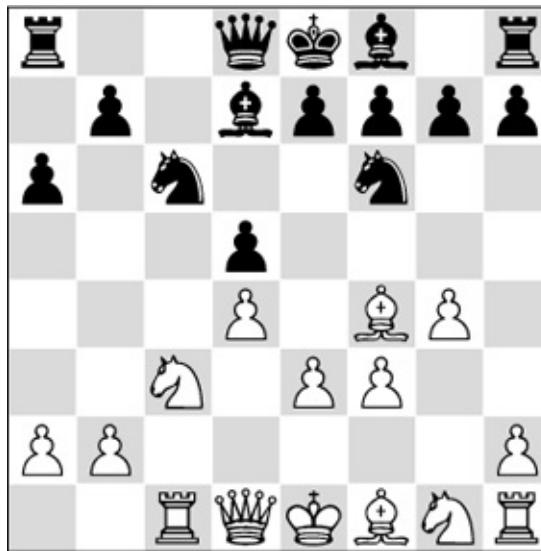
*Fianchettoing* with ...g7-g6 is of course a common incentive for h2-h4 – just think of positions arising from the Dragon, King's Indian or Grünfeld. See also Chapter 17, *Firing at the Fianchetto*. Here's one more unusual top-level example from modern chess:

**Wesley So**

**Le Quang Liem**

Istanbul ol 2012

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qc3 Qf6 4.cxd5 cxd5 5.Qf4 Qc6 6.e3 a6 7.Qc1 Qg4 8.f3 Qd7 9.g4**



**9...g6**

A novelty. The usual move here is 9...e6. One example where White also gains space with h2-h4-h5, leaving his king in the centre, is 10.♗d3 ♕c8 11.h4 ♖a5 12.h5 h6 13.♗ge2 ♖c4 14.♕c2 b5 15.♗f2, N.Nguyen-Naer, Moscow 2010.

**10.h4**

Immediately reacting to Black's last move! This advance always feels very forceful, but naturally it doesn't give any kind of decisive advantage just by itself. In this case it simply turns an Exchange Slav into a tense game.

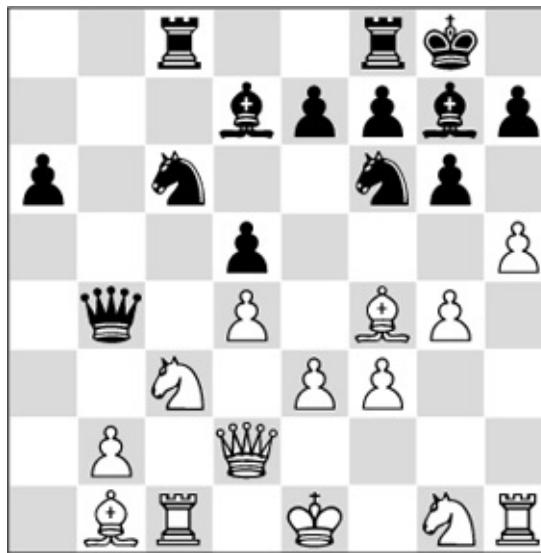
**10...♜g7 11.h5 0-0!?**

Castling into it. Apparently Black didn't want to wait for h5-h6 at some point.

**12.♘d2 ♘a5 13.♗d3**

13.hxg6 can be met by the typical 13...fxg6!.

**13...♝ac8 14.♞b1 b5 15.a3 b4 16.axb4 ♜xb4**



**17.♘h2**

Straightforward chess. 17.h6 ♜h8 18.g5 ♜h5 19.♗xd5 ♜xd2+ 20.♔xd2 ♜xf4 21.♗xf4 e5 gives good counterplay, but 17.♗ge2 might be a better try.

**17...♝a5 18.♞a2 ♜c4 19.♝xc4 ♜xc4 20.♞e5 h6 21.hxg6 fxg6 22.♗c2 g5 23.♗h3 ♜b7 24.♗f2 ♜e8 25.0-0**

Unable to achieve anything along the h-file, White finally returns to traditional means. The game was eventually drawn.

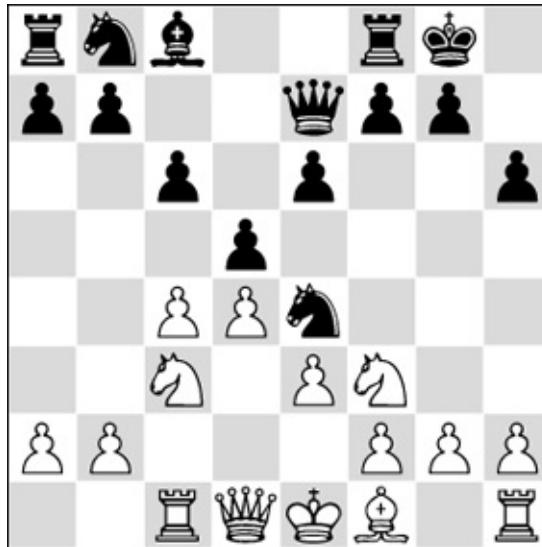
# Pawn Storm after ...h7-h6

**Li Ruofan**

**John Rodgaard**

Istanbul ol 2012

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 Qe7 4.Qf3 Qf6 5.Qg5 0-0 6.e3 h6 7.Qh4 Qe4 8.Qxe7 Qxe7 9.Qc1 c6



**10.h4!?**

This advance seems rather pointless against ...h7-h6, but in combination with White's next move it is likely that soon a file will be opened for the h1-rook. However, it was only in 2011 that 10.h4 saw the light of day! (Aronian-Harikrishna, Ningbo Wch-tt 2011)

**10...Qd7 11.g4 e5**

The classical reaction in the centre. 11...Qxc3 12.Qxc3 c5 is an alternative central reaction, recently preferred by Kravtsiv against Gupta, Abu Dhabi 2015.

**12.cxd5 Qxc3 13.Qxc3 cxd5 14.g5 e4**

14...h5 is a typical way to avoid files on the kingside being opened. In fact, the source game featured this move. After 15.Qb5 Black should have played 15...e4, regaining some space, because after 15...exd4 16.Qxd4 White enjoyed a very pleasant lead in development and his king was out of danger.

14...hxg5 15.hxg5 e4 16.Qe5!?.

**15.Qd2 hxg5**

15...g6!? is an original try by Akopian, with the idea that after 16.gxh6 Qf6 White's attack is slowed down.

**16.Qh5!**

After 16.hxg5 Qxg5 White doesn't have enough attacking pieces and is just a pawn down.

**16...g4 17.Qxd5 Qf6 18.Qg5 Qb4 19.Qb3 Qd6 20.h5**

Continuing the strategy that was initiated on move 10.

**20.Qh7 21.Qc5 Qd8?**

A strangely passive move. The ending after 21...Qxc5 22.dxc5 Qg5 isn't clear at all.

**22.Qc4**

Now White is clearly better.

22...Qe8 23.h6 g6 24.Qd5 Qf6 25.h7+ Qg7 26.Qxe4 Qe6 27.Qxb7 Qxe4 28.Qxe4 Qd5 29.h8Q+ Qxh8 30.Qxh8 Qxh8 31.Qd6 g3 32.Qxd5 gxf2+ 33.Qf1

When your opponent hasn't compromised his pawn structure on the kingside, the h-pawn has to go a long way to open the file.

## Alexey Fedorov Vladimir Ponfilenok

St Petersburg 2012

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Qc3 Qb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Qxc3+ 6.bxc3 Qa5 7.Qd2 Qa4 8.Bb1 c4



**9.h4!?**

Characteristic of Fedorov's aggressive style, as well as a typical reaction to the advance ...c5-c4 in general. The main move here is 9.Qc1.

**9... Qxa3**

Taking up the challenge.

**10.h5 Qe7**

10...h6, to stop the pawn, would leave the g7-pawn a target for the queen and rook: 11.Qg4.

**11.h6**

11.Qg4 can now be met with 11...f5.

**11... Qxh6 12.Qxh6 gxh6 13.Rxh6**

So White has more space and, at the cost of a pawn, is exerting pressure on both wings with his rooks. However, Black's king is no easy target.

**13... a5**

Black mobilizes his own rook and, let's not forget, his passed pawn!

**14.Qh3 a4 15.Qh5**

Putting the bishop on h5 with 15.Qe2 seems more harmonious. It fails, of course, to put direct pressure on the h7-pawn, but it seems more important to gradually increase the pressure (against f7 as well) with all the pieces.

**15... a3 16.Qg5 a2 17.Ra1 Qc6 18.f4**

18.Qxh7 Qd8 19.Qg5 Rxh6 20.Rxh6 Ra3 and the king escapes, while the a2-pawn has become too strong.

**18... Rf8 19. Rxh7 Qd8**

White's initiative is coming to an end and Black is preparing ...Ra3.

**20.Qe2 Ra3 21.Qd2 Ra2**

The straightforward 21...b5 was much stronger: 22.Rh8 b4.

**22.Qh1 Ra3?**

Probably overlooking White's next move.

**23.Rh3!**

A surprising backward move, defending from a distance and also vacating the h7-square and thus threatening 24.♘h7.

23... ♕b6 24.♔c1 ♕a5 25.♘h7

And now it is White who's winning.

25... ♜h8 26.♕xa2!

Not the immediate 26.♘f6+ ♔e7 27.♖xh8 ♖xc3+ 28.♔d1 ♖xd4+ 29.♔e1 with a draw.

26... ♜xa2 27.♘f6+ ♔e7 28.♖xh8 ♖d7 29.f5 ♖c6 30.♘f3 b5 31.♘b1 ♜a4 32.♗xe6 ♗xe6 33.♖h7+ ♘f7 34.♖h5 b4 35.♖xf7 ♖d8 36.♖h8+ ♔c7 37.♖xe6 b3 38.♘h1

1-0

## The Rook Shift

Ding Liren

Oliver Barbosa

Istanbul ol 2012

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 e6 6.e4 ♖b4 7.e5 ♘d5 8.♘d2 a5?

Barbosa was having a good Olympiad in Istanbul, but this seems to be an unfortunate novelty (here 8...b5 has been played many times). FIDE's zero-tolerance policy regarding touching the wrong pawn may have been an issue here -:)

9.♖xc4 ♖e7



Now White has a strong pawn centre and space advantage for free.

10.h4!

Intending 11.♘g5 again.

10...h6 11.h5 ♘a6 12.♘e4 ♘ab4 13.♖h3!

Of course! The fastest way to activate the rook. Pay attention to the important preparatory move 11.h5, which renders ...g7-g6 impossible.

13...b6 14.♖g3

Shifting to the g-file, with very unpleasant pressure against g7. If White had castled, the rook would have had to go to much more trouble to reach this square.

14... ♖f8 15.♘f1 ♕d7 16.♘e2 ♖b7 17.♘d6+!

Giving White a big advantage.

17... ♖xd6 18.♗xd6 ♕xd6 19.♘e5

Ding Liren prefers to activate his pieces instead of winning back the pawn immediately with 19.♖xg7.

19... ♜g8

19...♜h7 preserves the pawn, but it's not the kind of move you like to consider. After 20.♖e1 c5

21.dxc5 bxc5 22.♗xb4! axb4 (22...♗xb4 23.♗xf7) 23.♕d3 Black's position isn't enviable.

20.♗xh6 f6 21.♗xg7! fxе5 22.h6 0-0-0 23.h7 ♗xg7

23...♗ge8 24.♗xe5.

24.♗xg7 exd4 25.♗g8 ♘h2 26.h8♗

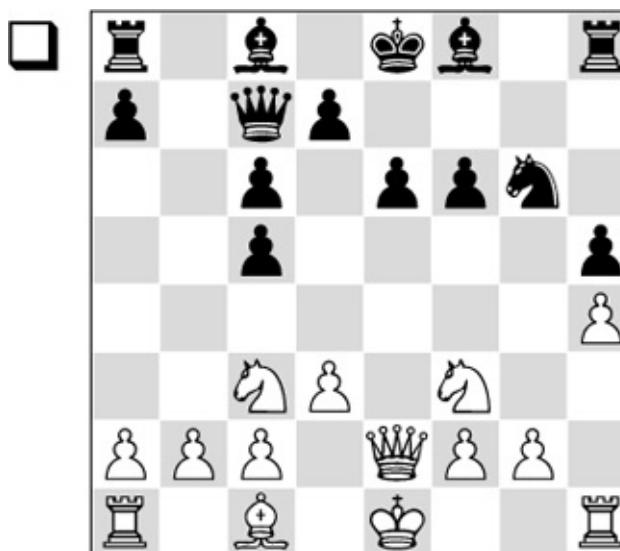
Black resigned in view of 26...♗xh8 27.♗xe6+ ♘b8 28.♗xh8 ♗xh8 29.♗e5+.

## Just a Little Warning

**Evgeny Sveshnikov**

**Anatoly Karpov**

Riga rapid 2015



Of course you should adjust your ambitions according to the position and sometimes you just have to develop your rook the traditional way. In the following rapid game between two respected veterans White does not have a solid pawn centre, but decides to carry through a rook shift anyway.

11.♗h3 d5 12.♗g3

Black has several sound options, and Karpov's strong reply leaves the g3-rook clearly displaced.

12...♘f7 13.d4 ♘d6

White's set-up has failed. Sveshnikov's attempt to muddy the waters with...

14.♗e5+ fxe5 15.♗f3+ ♘g7 16.♗e4

... simply fell short:

16...dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♘f7 18.♗f3 ♘e8 19.dxc5 ♘xc5 20.♗g5 ♘f8 21.0-0-0 ♘e7 22.♗xf8 ♘xf8 23.♗xc6 ♘b8

And Black won.

Well we cannot leave this chapter with this, can we? Let's part with a successful bang:

**Mircea Parligras**

**Matthias Blübaum**

Medias 2015

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♘b4 4.e5 ♗e7 5.a3 ♘xc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.h4 ♘a5 8.♗d2 ♘a4 9.♗f3 b6 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.h5 h6



**12.  $\mathbb{R} h4$   $\mathbb{B} c6$  13.  $\mathbb{R} g4$   $\mathbb{Q} f5$  14.  $\mathbb{R} d3$**

White's every developing move comes with tempo. Now g7 is under attack.

**14...0-0?**

Perhaps it is obvious, but some danger could have been expected with so many white pieces directed at the kingside. 14... $\mathbb{R} a6!$  15. $\mathbb{R} xf5$   $exf5$  16. $\mathbb{R} xg7$   $\mathbb{B} a4!$  would leave the white rook just a lonely attacker, whereas because of the opposite-coloured bishops and White's king position the other white pieces don't coordinate well.

**15.  $\mathbb{B} c1$   $\mathbb{B} h8$  16.  $\mathbb{R} xg7!$   $\mathbb{Q} xg7$**

16... $\mathbb{B} xg7$  17. $\mathbb{R} xh6+$   $\mathbb{Q} xh6$  18. $\mathbb{B} g5+$ .

**17.  $\mathbb{R} xh6$   $\mathbb{B} g8$  18.  $\mathbb{B} g5$   $\mathbb{Q} xh5$  19.  $\mathbb{R} f6+$   $\mathbb{B} g7$  20.  $\mathbb{B} h6+$   $\mathbb{B} g8$  21.  $\mathbb{B} xh5$**

Black resigned.

## Summary

Developing the king's rook along the h-file, leaving the king in the middle, is certainly an attractive way to mobilize your rook. It quickly generates activity, while at the same time space will be gained by the advance of the rook's pawn. These days it even seems to be a bit of a trend to play this way right from the opening. But don't overdo it: something can surely be said for traditional values. A solid pawn centre is one of them.

## Chapter 5

# The Swinging Queen's Rook

Suppose your queen's bishop is doing a good job on its initial square, or your queen is still stuck on the back rank. How would you activate your queen's rook quickly and effectively? Right – let it swing!

## Rook Lift to a Central Open File

**Lenier Dominguez Perez**

**Sergey Karjakin**

Tashkent 2012

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♗f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♗e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.h3 d6 9.c3 ♗b8 10.d4 ♗bd7 11.♗d2 ♗b7 12.♗c2 ♗e8 13.♗f1 ♗f8 14.♗g5 h6 15.♗h4 ♗c8 16.dxe5 dxe5 17.♗3h2



**17...a5!**

When I quickly played through this game for the first time, I was impressed by the sudden activity of the black pieces after just six more moves. To start with, the a8-rook will come into play, and much more easily than it would have been possible via the obvious d8-square.

**18.♗f3 ♗a6 19.♗g4**

It appears that Karjakin wasn't the first to employ this flexible rook development. The game Navara-Avrukh, played two months earlier (Croatia tt 2012), saw 19.♗e3 ♗a8 20.♗ad1 ♗c5 and White was forced to take on f6 to maintain the balance.

**19...♗xg4 20.♗xg4 ♗c5 21.♗f3 ♗a8 22.♗ad1 b4 23.♗d2 ♗d6**



Now Black is exerting strong pressure against the e4-pawn, while the queen's rook is conveniently placed on the only open file. You could even say that Black can boast of a tiny space advantage on the queenside. The only possible drawback of this set-up is that the queen is 'only' active from a distance.

24.  $\mathbb{Q}e3 \mathbb{Q}e6$

24...  $\mathbb{Q}a6!?$

25.  $\mathbb{B}c4 \mathbb{B}xd1$  26.  $\mathbb{B}xd1 bxc3$  27.  $bxc3 f6!$

Burying the bishop on h4, perhaps not to the same degree as in Winter-Capablanca, but in the game it proved to be deep enough to make decisive headway on the other side of the board.

28.  $\mathbb{B}b1 a4$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}h1!?$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}b2 a3$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}d3 \mathbb{Q}c4$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}b3 \mathbb{Q}xb3$  33.  $\mathbb{B}xb3 \mathbb{B}d8$  34.  $\mathbb{B}b1 \mathbb{Q}a4$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}b4 \mathbb{Q}f4$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}g3 c5$   
37.  $\mathbb{Q}d5 \mathbb{Q}xd5$  38.  $exd5 \mathbb{Q}c2$  39.  $\mathbb{B}b7 \mathbb{Q}xa2$  40.  $\mathbb{B}a7 \mathbb{Q}b1+$

0-1

## Switch to the Kingside

**Mikhail Botvinnik**

**Mikhail Tal**

Moscow Wch 1960 (12)

1. c4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. d4 e6 3.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d5 4.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  c5 5. e3  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  6. a3  $\mathbb{Q}d6$  7.  $dxc5 \mathbb{Q}xc5$  8. b4  $\mathbb{Q}d6$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$  0-0 10.  $cxd5 exd5$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}b5 \mathbb{Q}b8$   
12.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$



12... a5

'The prospect of activating the rook in the "usual" way was much too complex. Then the two bishops

would have to be moved, but in general they are quite well placed now. I had decided to let my rook connect along the third rank, because there it would enjoy more space.' (Tal, who spent only three minutes on this move).

13.bxa5 ♜xa5 14.0-0 ♜a6 15.♗e5

15.♘bd4 ♘c4.

15... ♜xe5 16.♗xe5 ♜e8 17.♗d3 ♜e4 18.♗f4

Not 18.♗b4 ♜h6 when the rook transfer has been successful: ...♜h4 is coming.

18... ♜e5 19.♗c1 ♜h6

By completing his rook development, Tal opts for active defence, believing that passive defence with 19...♘f6 would lead to slow but certain defeat against Botvinnik.



20.♗d4

A) 20.♗d4 ♜g5, and with the second rook entering the fray things become complicated:

A1) 21.♘xd5 leads to a draw after 21...♜xg2+ 22.♔xg2 ♜g5+ 23.♔h1 ♜xh2+ 24.♔xh2 ♜h4+;

A2) 21.♗fd1 was given by Tal as the most promising move, for instance 21...♘b3 22.♗xe4 ♘xc1 23.♗f3;

A3) the incredible but concrete 21.h4! is pointed out by the engines: 21...♘b3 (21...♔xh4 22.♗b6!) 22.hxg5 ♘xd4 23.gxh6 ♘xe2+ 24.♘xe2.

B) 20.♘xd5 ♘c6 21.♗f4 ♜h4, and in such a position the rook transfer seems to be fully justified: 22.h3 ♘g5 with a very complicated position (22...g5 23.♗xc6 bxc6 24.♗d8+ ♘g7 25.♗d4 f6 26.♗c4!).

20... ♘c6 21.g3

21.♘f3 ♜f5 22.g4? ♜xf4 23.exf4 ♜xg4 (Tal).

21...g5 22.♗d3 ♜e8 23.♗g4 ♜xg4 24.♗xg4 ♘xd4 25.exd4

The position has calmed down, but the battle between the giants continued, eventually ending in a draw.

## Queenside Activity

**Goh Wei Ming**

**Pentala Harikrishna**

Zaozhuang 2012

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♘f6 4.d3 ♘e7 5.♗b3 d6 6.c3 0-0 7.0-0 h6 8.♗bd2 ♘h7 9.♗c4 ♘g4 10.♗e3 ♘h5 11.g4 ♘g6 12.♗f5 ♘g5 13.♗xg5 ♘xg5 14.♗e3 ♘a5 15.♗c2 d5 16.♗e2 ♘c6 17.f3



**17...a5!?**

Gaining space and preparing Black's remarkable next move. Remarkable, as at the moment the b6-square isn't available for the rook.

A simple soul like me would consider a move like 17... $\mathbb{R}d7$ , connecting the rooks in the old-fashioned way.

**18.a4  $\mathbb{R}a6$  19. $\mathbb{W}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  20. $\mathbb{R}b3$  d4**

Making ... $\mathbb{R}b6$  possible!

**21. $\mathbb{R}c1$**

21.cxd4  $\mathbb{R}xf5$  22.gxf5  $\mathbb{Q}exd4$ .

**21...  $\mathbb{R}b6$**

Mission completed.

No (half-)open file for your rook? Just try to move it in front of your own pawns!

**22. $\mathbb{R}c4$   $\mathbb{R}xf5$  23.exf5  $\mathbb{Q}f4+$  24. $\mathbb{R}xf4$  exf4 25. $\mathbb{R}ae1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$**

The game ended in a draw.

## Similar Rook Transfers

**Evgeny Shaposhnikov**

**Bakhtiyor Nugumanov**

Samara 2012

1.e4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3. $\mathbb{R}c4$  d6 4.d4  $\mathbb{R}g4$  5.h3  $\mathbb{R}xf3$  6. $\mathbb{R}xf3$   $\mathbb{R}f6$  7. $\mathbb{R}b3$  0-0-0 8.d5  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  9. $\mathbb{R}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  10. $\mathbb{R}xc4$   $\mathbb{R}b8$   
11. $\mathbb{R}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  12. $\mathbb{R}e3$   $\mathbb{R}c8$



**13.a4 ♜e7 14. ♜a3**

Of course, similar rook transfers are possible on the fourth rank, and also, mirrored, on the kingside. For example, you could compare this one to the rocking king's rook from the game Ding-Barbosa (Chapter 4), although Black has castled queenside here, while Barbosa's king remained in the centre.

**14... ♜d7 15.a5 ♜e7 16. ♜b3**

The rook has joined the attack and White now has an overwhelming majority of pieces to his disposal on the queenside.

**16... h6 17. ♜b4**

Forcing Black to weaken his pawn structure, which together with Black's cramped position and passive pieces determines his fate.

**17...c5 18.dxc6 ♜xc6 19. ♜d5**



**19...a6 20. ♜c3 ♜b5 21. ♜xb5 axb5 22. ♜c7 ♜de8 23. ♜e2**

This is possible because White wisely didn't waste a tempo on castling earlier.

**23... ♜hf8 24. ♜a1 ♜d8 25. ♜d7**

The exchange of queens has bought Black little relief.

**25... ♜e7 26. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 27. ♜xe7 ♜d7 28. ♜d5 f5 29. ♜a3**

Very aesthetic. Another rook transfer in this game, and on the same square!

**29... fxe4 30. ♜b3 ♜dd8 31. ♜xb5**

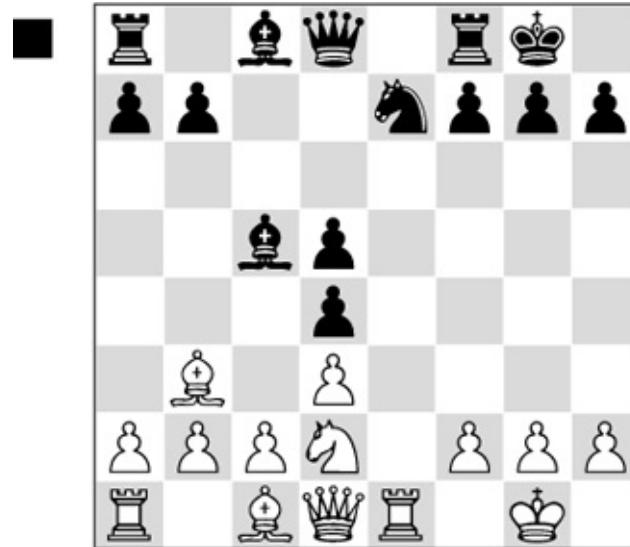
And White won.

# Theoretical Swings

Viswanathan Anand

Vitaly Tsekhovsky

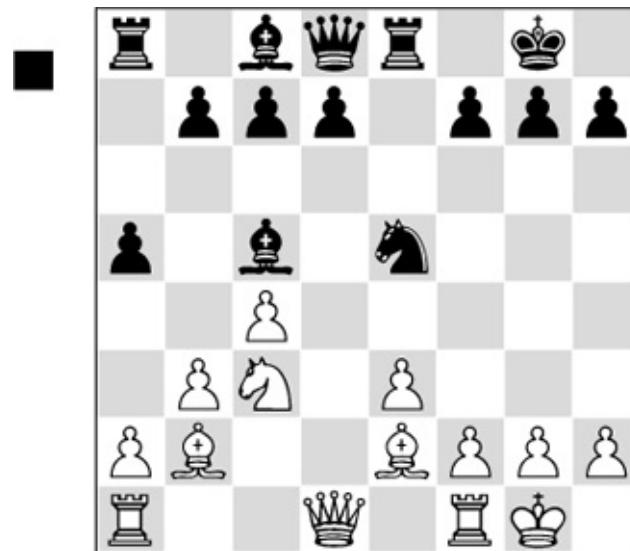
Kolkata 1986



**11...a5**

This position occurred from a Bird Ruy Lopez. This variation in fact frequently witnesses a swinging queen's rook.

Another opening featuring this theme is the Budapest Gambit; for a successful swinging rook, see, for example, Mamedov-Mamedyarov, Moscow Wch blitz 2011:



analysis diagram

11... $\mathbb{Q}a6$  12. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}a7$  13. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$ .

In the Tsekhovsky game, the sixth rank is wide open, which is a clear incentive for the rook to start swinging.

**12.a4  $\mathbb{R}b4$  13. $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ ?**

A greedy expedition.

**13...  $\mathbb{Q}a6!$**

Again clearly the quickest way to activate the rook.

**14. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  15. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  b6**

15... $\mathbb{Q}d6$ , also threatening 16... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ , looks very attractive as well.

16.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$



Black has ample compensation for the pawn, as his rook is very active on the sixth rank.

18.c3

18.h3  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}e2$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$ ; 18.d4  $\mathbb{Q}d6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  and wins.

18...  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}h3$

Black is already winning.

21.g3  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xf1$   $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$  h6 25. d4  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}e3+$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}f2+$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$  f6 31.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$  fxe5 32.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  33. c4 exd4

0-1

## No Guarantees

**Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu**

**Suat Atalik**

Burgas 2012

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d5 4.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  5.e3 0-0 6.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  dx $c4$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  c5 8.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$  cx $d4$  11. ex $d4$  h6 12.a3  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  13.b4  $\mathbb{Q}b6$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  17. b5  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  18. a4  $\mathbb{Q}b8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}ed5$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$



21.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$

In this kind of middlegame position with an isolated d-pawn, the rook transfer to the kingside via the

third rank is not uncommon. See also the second Botvinnik-Tal example. Sometimes you may also encounter a transfer via d1 and d3 to g3 or h3.

21... ♜d6 22. ♜b3 ♜e8 23. ♜f4

23. ♜b1, immediately vacating the third rank for the rook, is met by 23... ♜b6.

23... ♜c7 24. ♜b1 ♜b6 25. ♜e2 ♜xa4 26. ♜a1 ♜b6 27. ♜g3



At the cost of a pawn, Nisipeanu has vacated the third rank and finally brought his rook to the kingside. Black seems to be under slight pressure, but the a1-bishop would have been better off participating in the attack from c1 (again, as in the Botvinnik-Tal game). As a result, the attack doesn't seem to be strong enough in this case.

27... ♜bd5 28. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 29. ♜d2 ♜h8 30. ♜c1 ♜e7 31. ♜h3 f5 32. ♜a2 ♜xe5 33. dx e5 ♜g8

Now White doesn't have enough pieces in the attack, and in a few more moves the rook returns to the centre.

34. ♜b1 ♜ac8 35. ♜d3 ♜c5

White is worse, though in the end he won due to a grave mistake by his opponent.

36. ♜a5 b6 37. ♜a3 ♜f4 38. ♜d6 ♜xd6 39. exd6 ♜xd6 40. ♜xa7 ♜d7 41. ♜a8+ ♜h7 42. ♜f3 ♜xb5 43. h3 e5 44. ♜d1 ♜g6

45. ♜d8 ♜f6??

45... ♜g5 46. ♜g8+ ♜h8 47. ♜a8 ♜xh3+.

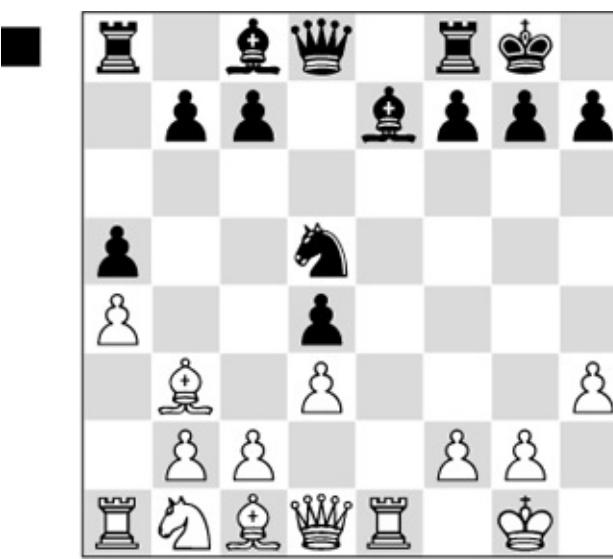
46. ♜g8+ ♜h8 47. ♜a8 ♜c1+ 48. ♜h2 g5 49. ♜c4+ ♜h7 50. ♜d7+ ♜g6 51. ♜e8+

Black resigned.

## An All-Out Attack

**Sergey Karjakin  
Boris Gelfand**

Khanty-Mansiysk 2009



We'll continue with a spectacular successful example. White's last move, 11.Ra1, was intended to prevent the rook swing which would have been possible after 11.Qd2. However, Gelfand couldn't let go of the idea and found...

**11... Ra6!!**

All the same! Gelfand has calculated that his pieces are now quick enough in the attack to compensate for the piece he's going to lose.

**12.Qh5**

After 12.Qxd5 Rxd5 13.Qxe7 Qg6 the main lines are 14.g4 Wh5 15.Qe4 Rxh3 16.g5 f5 (16...Qf5) 17.Qe5 f4 18.Qf1 Wh4 19.Qg2 Qf5 and 14.f3 Qxh3 15.Qe2 Qxf3 16.Qf1 Qxg2 17.Qxg2 Qxg2+ 18.Qxg2 Qd1+, leading to perpetual check.

**12... Qb4**

Gelfand regretted not having played 12...Qb4. After 13.Qe2 Black would have opposed on the open file with 13...Qe6.

**13.Qa3**

After 13.Qd2, 13...Qh6!? is a strong idea: 14.Qxa5 b6 15.Qa8 Qc6, and Black's attack continues with White's queen out of play.

**13... Qg6 14.Qf4 b6**

**14...Qe6!?**

**15.Qf3 Qe6**

Eliminating the strong bishop on b3.

**16.Qxe6 fxe6 17.Qe4 Qd6 18.Qxd6 cxd6 19.Qxd4 Qg5**



With the queen's rook teaming up in the attack, things have become too difficult for White. When you glance at this position you wouldn't think the g6-rook had arrived there from a6!

20.g3 ♕f5 21.g4 h5 22.♕e4 d5 23.♕h2 ♕f3

23...♕g5, and Black's attack will win the game. The text move allows the exchange of queens, but that had no influence on the outcome.

24.♖ee1 hxg4 25.♔e3 gxh3 26.♔xf3 ♖xf3 27.♔g1 ♖xf2+ 28.♔xh3 ♖xg1 29.♔xg1 ♔xc2 30.♔b5 ♖f3+ 31.♔g4 ♖xd3 32.♔d6 ♔e3+ 33.♔f4 ♔c4

0-1

## Approval from the Highest Level

Magnus Carlsen

Viswanathan Anand

Sochi Wch 2014 (2)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3 ♗c5 5.0-0 d6 6.♗e1 0-0 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.h3 ♖e8 9.♗bd2 ♘d7 10.♗c4 ♗b6 11.a4 a5 12.♗xb6 cxb6 13.d4 ♗c7



One more example where the World Champion breathed new life in what seemed to be a static position.

14.♖a3! ♘f8 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.♘h4

Transferring the knight, but also making room for the queen's rook.

16... ♖d8 17.♔h5 f6 18.♘f5 ♗e6

Players and annotators later concluded that it would have been better to keep e6 available for the knight: 18...♗f7 19.♔e2 ♘e6.

19.♕g3

Completing the swing.

19...♘g6 20.h4



Increasing the slight pressure. And as you may still remember, Magnus proceeded to win when Anand slipped up later on:

20... ♜xf5 21. exf5 ♜f4 22. ♜xf4 exf4 23. ♜c3 c5 24. ♜e6 ♜ab8 25. ♜c4 ♜d7 26. ♜h2 ♜f8 27. ♜ce4 ♜b7 28. ♜e2 b5  
29. b3 bxa4 30. bxa4 ♜b4 31. ♜e7 ♜d6 32. ♜f3 ♜xe4 33. ♜xe4 f3+ 34. g3 h5 35. ♜b7

Black resigned.

## Summary

Another quick and attractive way to bring a rook into play (and no need to bother about your own king this time)! Sometimes the rook may even go a surprisingly long way along the third (or sixth) rank. So stay on the look-out for this solution – certainly in situations where no traditional development to an open file is possible or when moving the rook to a central file does not seem very effective.

## Chapter 6

# Mysterious Rook Moves

Sometimes strong grandmasters simply develop the rook right behind their own pawn without any obvious purpose. Of course there must be some underlying idea, so let's explore the deeper secrets of such rook moves.

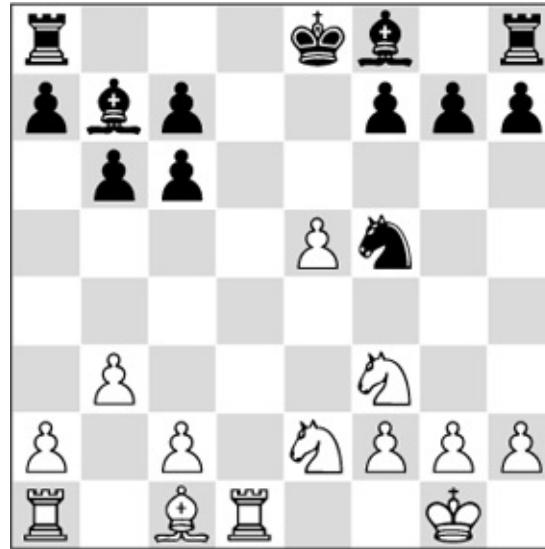
However, first we will start off with two amateurs playing a modern topical opening:

**Garcia**

**Green**

Long Island 2014

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♗xd8+ ♘xd8 9.♘c3 ♘e8 10.♘e2 b6 11.♗d1 ♘b7 12.b3



12... ♗c8

All well and good – however this is not mysterious, but ridiculous.

13.♗b2 ♘e7 14.♗ed4 ♘xd4 15.♗xd4 ♗g8

Well, apparently the guy has not learned to handle his major pieces yet. Luckily for him the queens are already off.

If 15...c5 16.♗f5.

16.♗f5 c5 17.c4 ♘e4 18.♗g3 ♘g6 19.f4 h5 20.f5 h4 21.fxg6 hxg3 22.gxf7+ ♗xf7 23.hxg3 ♘e6 24.♗f2 ♗cd8

Surprisingly, for a moment Black comes to his senses and moves his rook to the open d-file.

25.♗e2 ♗xd1 26.♗xd1 ♗h8 27.♘c3 c6 28.♗d2 ♘e8

The sort of move you would expect by now.

29.♗h1 ♗xe5 30.♗c3+ ♗f5 31.♗f3 ♗g6 32.♗d1 ♗d8 33.♗xd8 ♘xd8

And with the rooks gone off, nothing special happened anymore and a draw was agreed a couple of moves later.

Of course I'm poking a bit of fun here. Actually this was the game Caruana-Giri, London 2014, and probably high-level opening preparation. In short, with 12...♗c8 Black anticipated 13.♗ed4 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4, which could now be met with 13...c5 15.♗b5 a6. And what about 15....♗g8? Well, Black is

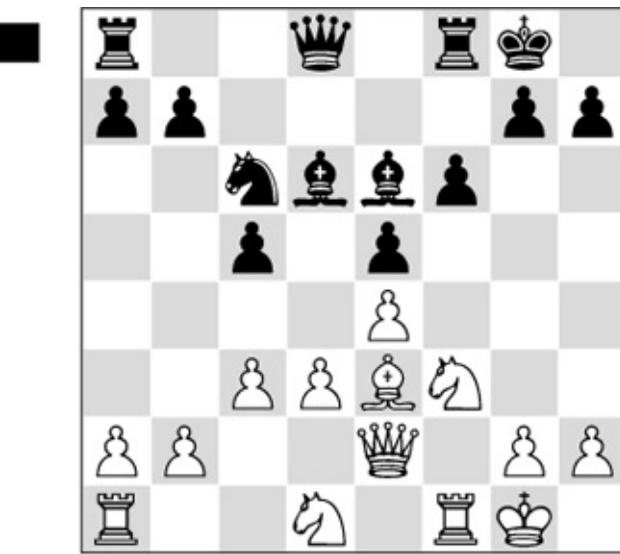
getting ready for  $\mathbb{Q}f5$ , which is likely to come anyway. Probably you can figure out 28... $\mathbb{R}e8$  yourself now: Black is preparing ... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ , when a discovered check will prevent White from winning the pawn at g7 after  $\mathbb{Q}d2-c3+$ .

This kind of shuffling around in the Berlin will not be everybody's cup of tea, but there's more to come! First let's get back to the roots.

## Founding Father

**Henry Blackburne  
Aaron Nimzowitsch**

St. Petersburg 1914



**14...  $\mathbb{R}e8!$**

Already in *Mein System* Nimzowitsch devoted a chapter to 'Mysterious Rook Moves'. The name refers to the form, and not to the goal behind the move. According to Nimzowitsch, the purpose should be to prevent or at least complicate a freeing move by the opponent. Here, clearly White is discouraged to play the advance d3-d4. Besides, the f8-square is vacated for the bishop.

**15.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  17.  $g4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$**

Upon 18.g5 Black has now prepared 18...g6 19.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$  f5!.

**18...a5 19.a3 b5**

19... $\mathbb{Q}b3$  20.g5 fxg5 21. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  c4 was an idea of Lasker's. Once more the useful position of the e8-rook becomes apparent, though it is not feasible at all here (22.d4).

**20.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}ab8$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$  b4 22.  $axb4$   $AXB4$  23. c4?**

Giving up the d4-square too readily.

**23...  $\mathbb{Q}a8$**

23...g6 24.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}d4!$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  exd4 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}h6$  was recommended by Nimzowitsch, who continued too slowly and thus allowed Blackburne to gain the initiative on the kingside:

**24.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}a2$  25.  $g5$  g6? 26.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$  gxf5? 27.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$**

And eventually White won.

## Reconsidering the Opening

Mihai Suba

# Miso Cebalo

Skopje 1984

1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♗g2 e6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.d4 0-0



9.♖b1!?

As Suba recounts in his *Dynamic Chess Strategy*, he thought this move up over the board. Nimzowitsch had already stated that mysterious rook moves should be linked with the opening phase or the period shortly thereafter. Here, one idea is obviously that Black is discouraged to take on c3, opening the b-file for the white rook. Furthermore, 9.e4 could have been met with 9...♝db4 10.d5 ♘d4. Now this is impossible, which makes e2-e4 a threat.

9...cxsd4

Suba gives this move a question mark – a harsh verdict perhaps. His point is that it will automatically lead to a capture on c3, thus justifying White's idea. And of course if the rook move to b1 turned out to be in vain at the end of the story, this would look a little silly on White, and he would be prone to ridicule from other players. Yet Suba was not afraid: 'I like to play provocative moves.'

9...♝f6 has been a main alternative, but other moves have also been tried, the most appropriate one being 9...♝e8, of course :-).

10.♘xd4 ♘xd4 11.♗f6 12.♘c4 ♘xc3 13.bxc3

Indeed, White's pressure on the queenside is clearly more important than his distorted pawn structure, thus making White's 9.♖b1 a quick success.

13...♝a5 14.♗e3 ♘xc3 15.♝a4

And Black did not survive his lag in development.

## Aggressive Prophylaxis:

### Uhlmann's ♖b1 in the Botvinnik

Suba's novelty may have started a theoretical discussion, and the same can certainly be said about a similar discovery by Wolfgang Uhlmann:

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 ♘b7 12.♗g2 ♘b6 13.exf6 0-0-0 14.0-0 c5 15.d5 b4



**16.  $\mathbb{R}b1!$ ?**

An aggressive prophylaxis, as Lars Schandorff fittingly describes this move. Accepting the piece sac just loses:

**16...  $\mathbb{B}xc3$  17.  $\mathbb{B}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$  18.  $\mathbb{R}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  19.  $dxe6$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  20.  $e7$**

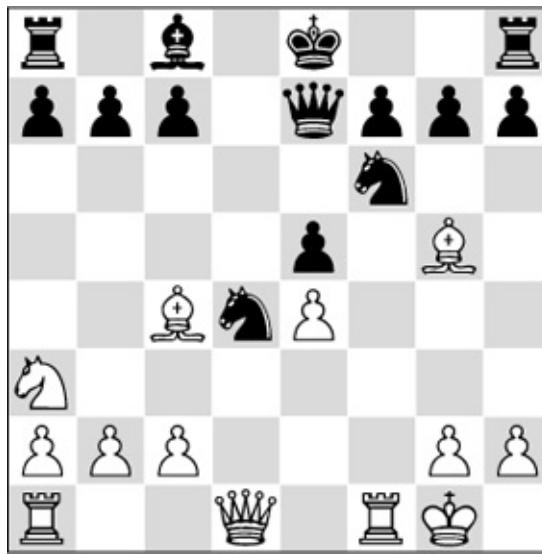
16...  $\mathbb{Q}h6$  has been played by Sveshnikov, who still regards this as a correct and interesting reply, though theory claims White is on top after 17.  $\mathbb{Q}xh6$   $\mathbb{R}xh6$  18.  $b3!$  (more about this typical break in Chapter 12, *Don't Move! (Your Knight)*).

Now 16...  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  has been developed into a complicated Botvinnik Variation main line, where probably many people consider 16.  $\mathbb{R}b1$  rather as the starting point of long variations than as a mysterious rook move. This is not the place to discuss these theoretical lines; several books about the Semi-Slav will give you ample information.

### Anastasia Bodnaruk Alexandra Kosteniuk

Moscow 2010

**1.e4 e5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  4.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5.d4  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  6.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  7.f4 d6 8.  $fxe5$   $dxe5$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$**



White intends to follow up with 11.c3, 12.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  and 13.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$ . By now you will be accustomed to mysterious rook moves, otherwise I assure you that you would have needed an engine to come up with Black's next move.

**10...  $\mathbb{R}g8!?$**

I still find this a truly amazing move. Actually, it was Roman Dzindzichashvili who discovered it when analysing with an engine, as was made public by Sosonko in a New In Chess Yearbook. You would need a pretty deep understanding of the position to come up with this move by yourself. Upon seeing it, your first reaction might be ‘a pointless move if White does not take on f6’. However, the fact is that that would be a substantial accomplishment in itself.

**11. ♜h1 a6**

11... ♜d7 was an improved version of the game after 12. ♜e1 0-0-0 13. ♜h4 ♜c6 14. ♜ae1 ♜e6 15. ♜xf6 gxf6 16. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 17. ♜xf6 ♜g5 18. h4?. Up to here the moves can also be found in Larry Kaufman’s *Repertoire for Black and White*, whose analysis continues with 18. ♜d3. 18... ♜xe4 19. ♜xf7 ♜d2 20. ♜b5 ♜b8 21. ♜e3 ♜dxg2 0-1 as in Hajnal-Brkic, Split 2015.

**12. c3 ♜e6 13. ♜xf6 gxf6 14. ♜e1 ♜d7 15. ♜d1 0-0-0 16. ♜f2 ♜b8 17. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 18. ♜xf6 ♜g5 19. h4 ♜xe4**

Black is marginally better.

Other writers have also touched on the subject. I found some nice examples in *Secrets of Chess Intuition* (Belavsky/Mikhalkishin), for instance the following position:

### David Bronstein

### Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1967

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3. ♜c3 dxe4 4. ♜xe4 ♜d7 5.c3 ♜gf6 6. ♜g3 e6 7. ♜f3 c5 8. ♜d3 cxd4 9. ♜xd4 ♜e7 10.0-0 ♜e5 11. ♜c2 ♜d7 12. ♜e1 ♜c6 13. ♜f3 ♜c7 14. ♜e2 h6 15. ♜d2 g5



**16. ♜ac1**

Intending to meet 16...g4 with 17. ♜d4. Remarkably, here again no reference to Nimzowitsch, though Belavsky and Mikhalkishin mention the prophylactic purpose of the ‘mysterious quiet moves’, as they refer to the rook moves.

**16... ♜d5 17. b4**

Also made possible by the rook on c1.

**17... ♜f4 18. ♜xf4 gxf4 19. ♜f5 ♜f8 20. b5 ♜e7 21. ♜xe7**

21. ♜e5 is interesting, for example: 21...exf5 22. ♜xd7 ♜xd7 (22... ♜xd7 23. ♜cd1+ ♜e8 24. ♜xf5) 23. ♜e5 ♜g8 24. ♜xf5 ♜d8 25. ♜cd1.

**21... ♜xe7 22. ♜e5 ♜d6**

And now instead of the creative but speculative...

**23. ♜xf7**

... 23.♕h5 ♕xe5 24.♕xe5 was simple and strong, keeping the black king in the middle.

A famous example of mysterious prophylaxis is Kasparov's 13.♖c1 in the following position:

### Garry Kasparov Viswanathan Anand

Amsterdam 1996

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 ♜f6 5.♘c3 ♜c6 6.♗g5 e6 7.♘f3 ♜e7 8.c5 h6 9.♗f4 ♜e4 10.♗b5 ♜xc3 11.bxc3 ♜d7 12.0-0 0-0



13.♖c1

... when White was ready to meet Black's intended ...b7-b6 with 14.c4!.

Kasparov was proud of his decision and gave the rook move two exclamation marks in New In Chess 1996/3 – because of the ‘absolute stupidity’, with which he meant the placing of the rook behind two doubled pawns. At the time Kasparov stated that a computer would not even consider such a move as ♜c1. In any case, nowadays this is not longer so.

Remarkably, Curt Hansen has been so brave to attach ‘?!’ to 13.♖c1, commenting for the ChessBase database. Yet, the only suggestion he mentions is 13.♖b1, which does leave room for ...b7-b6. So who is right? In any case I think Kasparov’s imaginative play deserves our admiration. Objectively it is hard to say, as play is hardly forced. If we compare 13.♖b1 to the game continuation, Kasparov did a good job with his mysterious shuffling move, because his original pawn sac later on would have been less strong with the black bishop still on e7.

13... ♜e8

A little mystery in itself, but an exclamation mark from Hansen. Anand wants to regroup with ...♗f6 and ...♝e7, without being disturbed by ♜d6 right away.

14.♖e1 ♜f6 15.♖b1

The rook moves again, which caused Hansen to think that White’s mission was a waste of time. Kasparov doesn’t agree, and in his latest work on his own games (*Kasparov on Kasparov Vol. III*) he even awards the move with an exclamation mark. Fact is that White is not going to play c3-c4 without Black playing ...b7-b6. All parties agree that Kasparov’s subsequent pawn sac yielded him a dangerous attack, which Anand did not manage to parry adequately.

15...b6 16.♗a6 ♜c8 17.♗b5 ♜d7 18.♗a6 ♜c8 19.♗d3

This is the surprising pawn sac with which Kasparov managed to outplay Anand on the kingside.

19...bxc5 20.♗e5 ♜d7 21.♗b7 ♜xe5 22.dxe5 ♜b8 23.♗xb8 ♜xb8 24.♗g4

And Anand was already in dire straits.

## **Summary**

Effective mysterious rook moves are hard to find, you have to be very much aware of your opponent's intentions. If you manage you may create a surprising prophylaxe. But as Nimzowitsch warned: beware that your rook might even have less scope than before you moved it behind the pawn.

# Chapter 7

## A Little Leap Forward

In IYCPR (Chapter 5 – *Sur Place en Prise*) we looked at a knight which held its own on g5 after being attacked by ...h7-h6. The h-file came to rescue after h2-h4. But what if the king's rook has already gone to the f-file? Indeed, f2-f4 is the move to spice things up!

### To Capture a Wild Horse or Not

Anand's crude 10.Qg5 followed by the straightforward piece sac drew a lot of attention at the Gashimov Memorial 2015:

**Viswanathan Anand**

**Wesley So**

Shamkir 2015

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Qf6 5.0-0 Ne7 6.d3 b5 7.Qb3 0-0 8.Qc3 d6 9.a3 Nb8



10.Qg5

A primitive move, which does not even attack f7, right?

10...Nc6

As Anand reveals in New In Chess, he indeed intended to meet 10...h6 with 11.f4. The idea was thought up by his second Gajewski and had been worked out by the two during the tournament. Black has two main options. First of all, he can accept the sacrifice with 11...hxg5, though after 12.fxg5 Qg4 13.h3 White wins back the piece.(13.g6!? d5!). Secondly, 11...exf4 has to be considered, leading to King's Gambit-like lines after 12.Qf3 g5 13.g3!? fxg3 14.h4, as indicated by Anand.

11.Qa2 Nd4 12.Qe2 Nx e2+ 13.Qxe2 h6 14.f4!?

Again this idea! Now So did not resist the temptation and captured the knight.

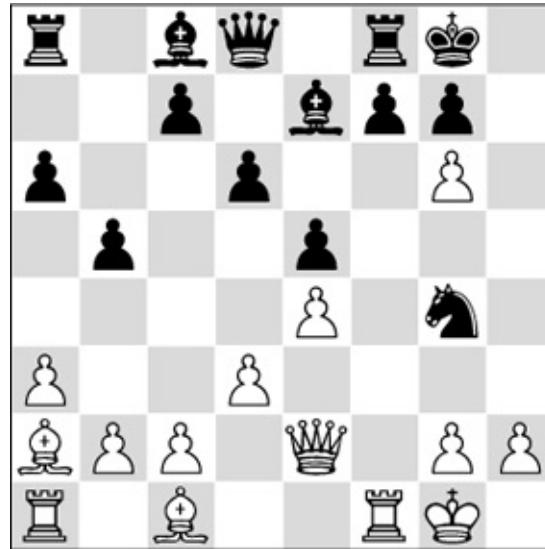
14...hxg5

14...exf4 was again the main alternative. Funnily enough, several commentators did not consider the simple retreat 15.Qf3 (instead only considering moves like 15.Qxf7), but this is exactly what Anand proposes in his annotations, again proceeding with 15...g5 16.g3 fxg3 17.h4. Your engine probably

won't approve, but let's trust Anand and just try to be Morphy for one day!

**15.fxg5 ♗g4 16.g6**

Going for broke! 16.h3 ♘xg5 17.hxg4 is nothing special for White.



**16... ♗g5**

... but what would you play with black? You may have noticed that 16... ♖f6 fails to 17.♘xf6 ♘xf6 18.♗h5; but both 16... ♖h6 and 16... d5 (getting in ... ♖c5 followed by ... ♖h4) give Black just enough counterplay, as Anand concluded after the game. In practice it seems incredibly difficult to me to work your way through the complications, where in general White seems to have sufficient pressure for the piece. So's continuation gives back the piece after...

**17.h3 ♘xc1 18.♖axc1 ♗h6 19.♗h5 ♖e6 20.♗xe6 fxe6 21.g4**

... but despite some simplifications the position remained difficult enough for Black. In the end Anand prevailed.

Not a mainstream pattern, yet there are some remarkable lookalikes. Let's explore these predecessors, touch on some related ideas, and find out where Vishy might have gotten his inspiration from.

### David Baramidze

### Markus Ragger

Austrian Bundesliga 2012/13

**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♗c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♗f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♘e1 b5 7.♘b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♗b7 10.d4 ♕e8**



Of course, the knight sortie to g5 can be seen more often in the Ruy Lopez, take for example this early theoretical position in the Zaitsev. White even gains a tempo here as f7 is not protected. Still, here the follow-up with f2-f4 has not attracted many followers. Instead, on numerous occasions white players have preferred to go for a repetition of moves with ♘g5-f3, taking the opportunity to make a quick draw.

**11.♗g5 ♖f8 12.♗f3 ♖e8 13.♗g5 ♖f8 14.f4 exf4**

Here 14...h6 can simply be answered with 15.♘f3.

**15.♘xf4 ♗a5!**

Different from the Anand-So game. Here Black can drive the bishop away from the a2-g8 diagonal, relieving the pressure against f7.

**16.♘c2 ♗d5 17.♗h5**

17.exd5 ♗xg5 18.♗h5 h6, like for instance in Ljubojevic-Gligoric, Belgrade 1979, would transpose to the game.

**17...h6**

Not 17...♗xg5? 18.♗xg5 ♘f6 19.♗xf6 ♗xf6 20.e5 and White had a big advantage in Megaranto-Irwanto, Penang 2014.

**18.exd5 ♗xg5 19.♗g3 g6 20.♗f3 ♗c4 21.b3 ♗b6 22.c4 bxc4 23.♗c3 ♗f6 24.♗e4 ♗d2 25.♗f1 ♗g7 0-1**

Here is a successful example, which meets all the requirements – rook on f1 and a bishop on the diagonal a2-g8:

### Raymond Keene Klaus Wockenfuss

Bad Lauterberg 1977

**1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 e4 4.♗g5 b5 5.d3 bxc4 6.dxe4 ♗c6 7.e3 ♗b4 8.♗xc4 0-0 9.0-0 ♗xc3**

9...h6 10.f4! was the similar reaction in Jussupow-Rastenis, Vilnius 1978, though here at least Black had the possibility to withdraw the b4-bishop to assist in the defence, while White's bishop from c1 cannot support the attack from a3.

**10.bxc3**



To regain the gambitted pawn Black wanted to get rid of the annoying knight on g5, which protects the e-pawn, but also prevents Black's king's rook to move to e8.

**10...h6 11.f4!**

As you may have expected, White does not oblige!

**11...hxg5**

Otherwise Black will just remain a pawn behind, so this time it is hard to find sensible alternatives. One try may be 11...d5, blocking the scope of the c4-bishop, while activating the c8-bishop. Still, after 12.♗b5 ♗d7 13.exd5 White is on top.

**12.fxg5 ♘h7**

The clever 12...♝g4 would have been much more testing: 13.♗xg4 d5 14.♗h5 (14.♗g3!? dxс4 15.♗a3 ♜e8?! 16.♗ad1 ♜d7 17.♗f4) 14...dxс4 15.♗xf7 ♜xf7 16.g6 ♜f6 17.♗h7+ ♜f8 18.♗a3+ ♜e8 19.♗xg7 (19.♗g8+ ♜d7 20.♗xg7+ ♜e6) 19...♜g4.

**13.g6 ♘g5 14.♗a3**

14.♗d5 (preparing 15.♗a3) is even stronger, for instance: 14...♜b7 15.♗b1 ♜b8 16.♗xb7 ♜xb7 17.♗a3.

**14...♝e5**

14...d6 15.gxf7+ ♜xf7 16.♗xf7+ ♜xf7 17.♗xf7 18.♗d5+ ♜g6 was relatively best.

**15.♗xf8 ♘xc4 16.gxf7+ ♜xf8 17.♗h5 ♜b7 18.♗h8+ ♜e7 19.♗xg7 ♜f8 20.♗f6#**

## Refusing the Sac

When Black refuses to take on g5, White may simply retreat the knight, having achieved f2-f4 at no cost.

Like in these two miniatures, both rapid games featuring an Anti-Sicilian:

**Vladislav Kovalev  
Evgeny Sveshnikov**

Liepaja rapid 2014

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘c4 ♜e7 5.d3 ♘f6 6.0-0 0-0 7.♘g5 h6**



**8.f4 d6**

8...hxg5 (8...exf4!?) 9.fxg5, and Black may again try 9...♝g4 10.g6 d5, but White keeps the initiative after both 11.gxf7+ ♜xf7 12.♗xd5 ♘f6 13.♗xf7+ ♜xf7 14.♗h5+ ♜g8 15.♗g6 and 11.exd5 ♘a5 12.d6 ♜xd6 13.♗xf7+ ♜xf7 14.gxf7+.

**9.♘f3**

9.♘h3 has been played by Naiditsch.

9...exf4 10.♗xf4 ♜e6 11.♗d5 ♘b4 12.♗xb4 cxb4 13.♗xe6 fxe6 14.♗d2 e5 15.♗g3 a5 16.♗h4 ♘xe4? 17.♗xf8+ ♜xf8 18.dxe4 ♜xh4 19.♗xh4 20.♗d5! ♜e8 21.♗f1+ ♜e7 22.♗f7+ ♜d8 23.♗xd6+

Black resigned.

**Peter Svidler**

## Luke McShane

Brussels rapid 2000

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♗c7 5.0-0 e5 6.♘c4 ♗e7 7.d3 0-0 8.♗g5 h6



9.f4 d6

Here Black has gained the move ...♗c7, but this means that 9...hxg5 10.fxg5 ♘g4 utterly fails to 11.♘d5.

10.♘f3 exf4 11.♗xf4 ♗e6 12.♗d2 ♗d7 13.♗ae1 d5? 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗xh6! gxh6 17.♗xh6 f6 18.♗g6+ ♗h8 19.♗h5+ ♗g7 20.♗xd5

1-0

## Another Diagonal for the Bishop

### Mats Sjöberg

### Axel Ornstein

Stockholm 1993

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 c5 5.♗d3 ♘c6 6.♘f3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 d6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♗g5 h6



With White's light-squared bishop on another diagonal, matters may be less clear. This is the reason why this Nimzo-Indian line has not become mainstream theory, despite this quickly scored victory:

10.f4?! hxg5 11.fxg5 ♗e8

11...♘d7! 12.♗h5 f5 13.♗f3 ♗e8 (I.Sokolov), but there's nothing wrong with the text move.

**12. ♜h5 g6 13. ♜h6 e5??**

Rightly anticipating White's ♜f4, but completely forgetting about the pin that has just arisen along the f-file!

13... ♜e7 14. ♜f4 f5 was called for, leaving White's compensation dubious.

**14. ♜xg6**

1-0

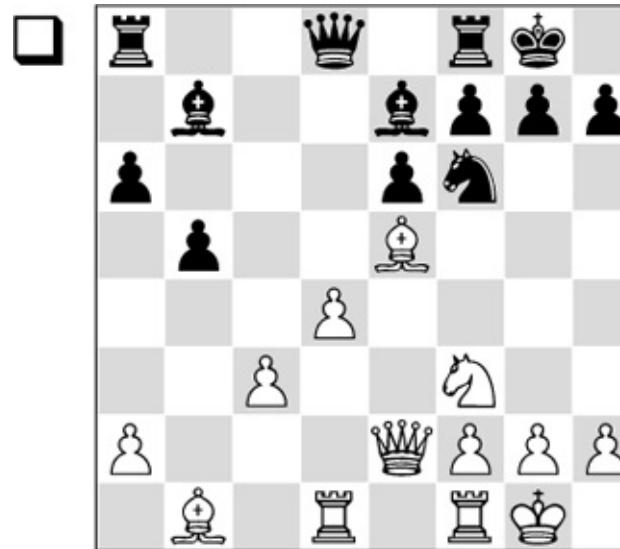
Ouch.

The following example could have been more convincing. However, Leonhardt (maybe not a familiar name from the past, but just look at his third place in Karlsbad 1907, ahead of many established players!) let his opponent escape from a lost position. Not the first time in this match, by the way.

**Paul Leonhardt**

**Jacques Mieses**

London m 1905



**16. ♜g5 h6 17. f4 g6**

Here the capture was acceptable: 17...hxg5 18. fxg5 ♜e4 (not 18... ♜h7 19. ♜xh7+ ♜xh7 20. ♜h5+ ♜g8 21. ♜xg7 ♜xg7 22. ♜h6+ ♜g8 23. ♜d3! and White wins; 18... ♜d7 19. ♜h5 is immediately hopeless) 19. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 20. ♜xe4 ♜xg5.

**18. ♜d3 hxg5?**

After his former preparatory move, Mieses is no longer able to resist the temptation. As usual, the alternative is to ignore the knight and let White worry about a possible later capture. After 18... ♜d7 Mieses might have been afraid of 19. ♜xe6 fxe6 20. ♜g3, but after 20... ♜xe5 21. dxe5 ♜h8 22. ♜xg6 ♜c5+ 23. ♜h1 ♜h4 Black holds. 18... ♜d5 also seems possible: 19. ♜h3 hxg5 20. fxg5 ♜xg2+ 21. ♜xg2 ♜xg2 22. ♜xg2 ♜h5.

**19. fxg5 ♜h5 20. ♜h3 ♜g7 21. ♜f6?**

White had an elegant way to tear up Black's king's position: 21. ♜xg7! (not a forcing move you are likely to look at right away, as the passive knight was not going anywhere anyway) 21... ♜xg7 22. ♜xg6 and as all white pieces participate in the attack, White logically wins.

**21... ♜xf6 22. gxf6 ♜d5 23. fxg7?!**

A second inaccuracy. 23. ♜f2 ♜h5 24. ♜e3 would have kept a winning advantage. Now White has to go to work again.

**23... ♜xg7 24. ♜f2**

24. ♜g4 ♜h8 25. ♜g3 ♜h6 26. ♜f4 f5 27. ♜c7+ ♜f8 28. ♜c2. Unfortunately, he eventually even lost after

the text move.

## In an IQP Position

**Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu**

**Vladimir Chuchelov**

Germany Bundesliga 2003/04

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 ♗xd5 5.d4 e6 6.♗e3 cxd4 7.cxd4 ♘f6 8.♘c3 ♗d6 9.a3 ♗e7 10.♗d3 0-0 11.0-0 b6  
12.♗e2 ♗b7 13.♗ad1 ♗ad8 14.♗b1 ♗fe8



I have always been surprised by how the advance f2-f4 has been called a typical manoeuvre in IQP positions, where very often the attractive miniature Botvinnik-Vidmar, Nottingham 1936, is quoted as evidence. Probably, this was also partly brought about due to the general instructiveness of Botvinnik's games and comments, though Alexander Baburin's bible on the IQP also touches upon the f-pawn's advance. To Baburin's credit, he does not fall back on the Botvinnik-Vidmar game, but only mentions it in the text and gives two more recent examples. Only after Anand's game it dawned upon me that also in these IQP positions the f-pawn's advance is occasionally preceded by the now familiar crude knight leap to g5:

15.♘g5 ♗c7

Here Black chooses to leave the g5-knight in peace. In general this is a reasonable option, which avoids weaknesses on the kingside, but here after a couple of inaccuracies Black will soon regret his decision. A solid option is 15...h6 and if 16.f4 then 16...♗f8, when Black is well prepared for the opening of the e-file after both f4-f5 and d4-d5. 15...♗b8 16.f4 h6 17.♗c2?!, Jonkman-De Gleria, Germany tt 2007/08, could well have been countered by 17...♗xd4! 18.♗xd4 ♗c5 and now after 19.♗fd1 Black can take: 19...hxg5 20.fxg5 ♗g4!.

16.f4 ♗f8 17.f5 exf5 18.♗a2 ♗d7?! 19.♗xf5 h6? 20.♗xf6 gxf6 21.♗ge4 ♗g7 22.♗xh6 f5 23.♗h5 ♗xe4 24.♗xe4 ♗xd4 25.♗f6+

1-0

**Mikhail Botvinnik**  
**Vitaly Chekhover**

Moscow 1935



And what is this? Did Botvinnik just execute the same manoeuvre as Anand? Well, actually not (obviously f7 would have been hanging if White had just played f2-f4): White's last move was  $\mathbb{Q}h3-g5$ !

But does it matter? It's the same knight sac on g5, opening the f-file. Botvinnik went on to win and eventually shared tournament victory with Flohr. In the same (16th) round, Capablanca got further behind in the race for the first place. He barely escaped with a draw when Stahlberg missed a win, having executed the plan with f2-f4 in an IQP position!

**22...hxg5 23.fxg5  $\mathbb{Q}8d7$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$**

**24.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$ ! Botvinnik.**

**24...  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  25.g6+  $\mathbb{Q}g8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  28. $\mathbb{Q}f5$  29. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}h3+$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  32. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  33. $\mathbb{Q}h7+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  34. $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  35. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  36. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  37. $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  38. $\mathbb{Q}f5+$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  39.d5+  $\mathbb{Q}c5$  40. $\mathbb{Q}a3+$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  41. $\mathbb{Q}e4+$   $\mathbb{Q}c3$  42. $\mathbb{Q}b4+$   $\mathbb{Q}b2$  43. $\mathbb{Q}b1\#$**

Another pattern, but for your pleasure and for completeness' sake:

**Gideon Stahlberg  
José Raul Capablanca**  
Moscow 1935



**18.f4  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xe7$**

Even the immediate 19.f5 seems possible! For example: 19... $\mathbb{Q}xh4$  20.fxe6  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  21.exf7+  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$

22.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  23.  $\mathbb{B}de1$  and Black is tied up.

19...  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  20.  $f5$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{B}xf7$  22.  $\mathbb{B}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}ed6$  23.  $g4$

23.  $\mathbb{B}e5!$  was the move. Again Black's pieces are anything but harmoniously placed. White should win!

23...  $\mathbb{B}h8$  24.  $\mathbb{B}e5$   $\mathbb{B}xe5$  25.  $dxe5$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  27.  $exd6$   $\mathbb{B}xd6$

Drawn, though Stahlberg still could have tried 28.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  29.  $\mathbb{B}f8+$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}c2+$   $g6$  31.  $\mathbb{B}f7+$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  32.  $\mathbb{B}xb7$ .

## Summary

What at first sight may seem a naive knight leap forward may turn into a dangerous sac when a light-squared bishop, a rook on the f-file and a pawn on f4 suddenly join the attack. Don't expect a straightforward win, but this idea can be used in various positions.

## Chapter 8

# The Modern King

Once in a while you may come across a game where the king remains in the centre during the middlegame, and castling possibilities are neglected. Let's find out why and when this approach can be justified. And have a peek at the obvious dangers as well.

## Too Many Open Files

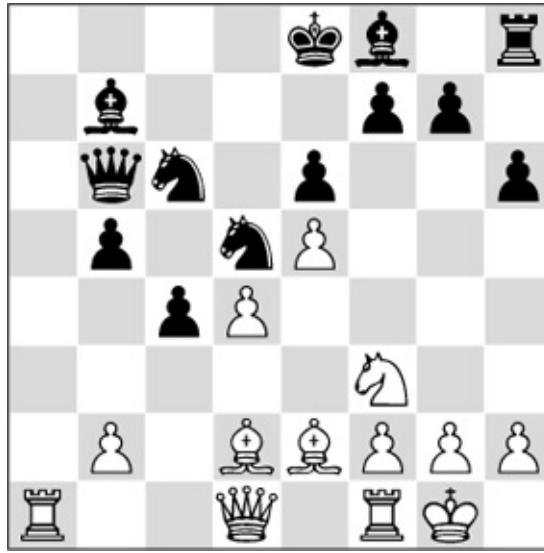
To put things in perspective, we start off with an immediate warning from my own practice.

**Viacheslav Ikonnikov**

**Arthur van de Oudeweetering**

Netherlands tt 2012/13

1.d4 d5 2.Qf3 Qf6 3.c4 c6 4.Qc3 e6 5.Qg5 dxcc4 6.a4 a6 7.e4 b5 8.axb5 cxb5 9.e5 h6 10.Qd2 Qd5 11.Qxb5 axb5  
12.Qxa8 Qb7 13.Qa1 Qc6 14.Qe2 Qb6 15.0-0



Here I decided to take on d4. The correct move was 15...Qe7 with a strange kind of temporary equilibrium. In the long run, though, White's extra exchange may prove decisive.

In the game I put my trust in my intermediate 18th move, which was supposed to gain an important tempo to complete my development. My king was going to find a safe harbour on e7. Against my better judgement I ignored the open files on the queenside. Moreover, my illusion that the king was safe on e7 was probably fed by examples like Uhlmann-Larsen, Las Palmas 1971, where the concept of putting the king on e7 in a relatively open position was the start of a theoretical revolution in the Meran. Such king moves may be commonplace nowadays, but in the game I was dead lost.

15...Qxd4 16.Qxd4 Qxd4 17.b3 Qxe5 18.bxc4 Qd6 19.g3 bxc4 20.Qa7! Qc6 21.Qa6 Qb7 22.Qa4+ Qe7 23.Qa7  
Qxe2

23...Qb8 would probably have prolonged the resistance, but it wouldn't have saved the game.

24.Qxb7+ Qf6 25.Qd7 Qe7 26.Qb4

The only move, however of course not a coincidental opportunity but something planned beforehand by White.

## Upcoming Transition into the Endgame

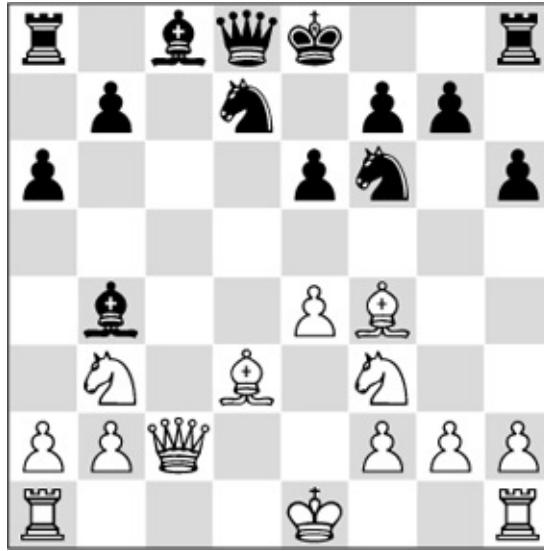
Let's take a look at some more successful king outings and get a feel for when the king can safely advance in the centre.

**Rajaram R. Laxman**

**Amardeep S. Bartakke**

Chennai 2012

1. ♜f3 ♜f6 2.c4 c6 3.d4 d5 4. ♜c2 a6 5. ♜f4 dxcc4 6. ♜xc4 e6 7. ♜c2 ♜bd7 8. ♜bd2 ♜e7 9.e4 c5 10. dxcc5 ♜xc5 11. ♜d3 h6 12. ♜b3 ♜b4+



13. ♜e2!

White has a big lead in development and an advantage in space. His rooks can also now quickly join in on the open files. Moreover, in the game White managed to exchange queens very soon, with subsequent pressure on Black's queenside. And in this emerging endgame White's king is of course excellently placed on e2.

13... ♜e7

Unnecessary preparation. 13...e5!?, shutting out the f4-bishop, was a better move: 14. ♜xe5 (14. ♜xe5? ♜h5) 14... ♜xe5 15. ♜xe5 0-0 with good compensation. When your opponent's king is in the middle, open up the position!

14. ♜ac1

Threatening to take on c8!

14... 0-0 15.a3 ♜d6 16. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 17. ♜c7 ♜xc7

After 17... ♜e7 18. ♜hd1 White exerts some unpleasant pressure, while his king is in no danger and can go back to f1 if necessary.

18. ♜xc7

So White has reached a pleasant ending, where his king is already appropriately placed in the centre.

18... ♜d8?!

Better was 18...b6 to prevent White's next.

19. ♜a5

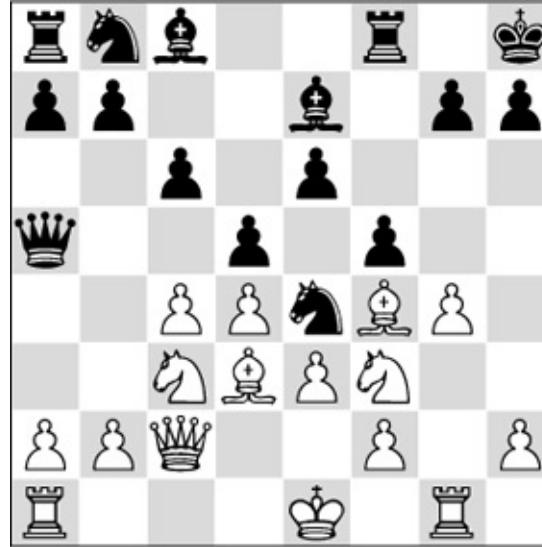
Now White was clearly on top, and he went on to win the ending.

**Maxim Matlakov**

**Dmitry Melnikov**

St Petersburg 2012

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qf3 c6 4.Qc2 f5 5.Qf4 Qf6 6.e3 Qe4 7.Qc3 Qe7 8.Qd3 0-0 9.g4 Qh8 10.Qg1 Qa5



**11.Qe2!**

Avoiding variations like 11.0-0-0 Qa6 12.a3 Qxa3. As the centre is fairly fixed and White also has a lead in development, his king is in no danger on e2. This isn't an uncommon thing in Stonewall structures – see also, for instance, Radjabov-Van Wely, Wijk aan Zee 2012.

**11...Qd7**

With his next two moves White now releases all the tension between the central pawns, ensuring a safer position for his king. A thematic attempt to open up the position with a move like 11...e5 would fail to 12.Qxe5 (12.dxe5 Qa6; 12.Qxe5 fxg4 13.Qxe4 dxe4 14.Qxe4) 12...g5 13.Qg3 f4 14.Qxe4 dxe4 15.Qxe4 fxg3 16.hxg3 with a decisive attack. For White, that is!

**12.gxf5 exf5 13.cxd5 cxd5 14.Qb5!**

White surprisingly strikes on the queenside. As in the previous example, c7 is a useful entrance square.

**14...Qdf6 15.Qc7 Bb8 16.Qa6 Ba8 17.Qc7 Qxc7**

This loses material. The only move was 17...Bb6, but here too White is clearly better.

**18.Qxc7 Bb8 19.Qxd5 Qd6 20.Qxd6 Qxd6 21.Qf4 Qd7 22.Qe5 Qb5 23.Qxb5 Qxb5 24.Qe6**

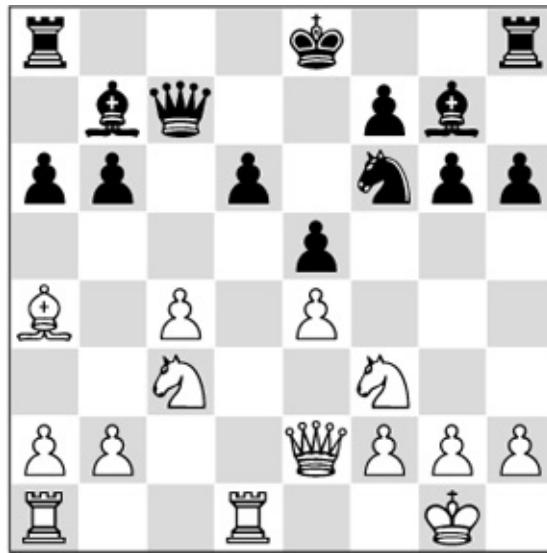
**1-0**

## Avoiding Exchanges

**Dalibor Stojanovic**

**Ding Liren**

Istanbul ol 2012



**16... ♜e7!**

After 16... ♜c6 17. ♜xc6+ ♜xc6 18. ♜d3 White has exchanged his bad bishop and increased his control over the d5-square. He can follow up with ♜e1-c2-e3, establishing a strong knight on d5. In addition, the king defends the backward pawn on d6, his only real weakness.

**17. ♜d5+ ♜xd5 18. cxd5 b5 19. ♜b3 ♜hc8**

Here too, by bringing over his king's rook Black has managed to castle artificially. The king is completely safe on e7 and Black has the better long-term prospects. Once he manages to activate his bishops, for instance with ...h6-h5 and ...♜h6, White will have a difficult time.

**20. ♜e1 ♜b6 21. a4 bxa4 22. ♜xa4 ♜f8 23. ♜c2 a5 24. ♜e3 ♜c5 25. ♜e1 ♜a6 26. ♜c6 ♜b8 27. ♜d3 ♜xd3!?**

Not forced, but allowing White little counterplay. 27... ♜c4 28. ♜xb6 ♜xb6 is also possible, and if 29. ♜xa5 then 29... ♜xe4.

**28. ♜xd3 ♜f6 29. g3 h5 30. ♜db1 ♜b4 31. ♜a4 ♜b3 32. ♜xb3 ♜xb3 33. ♜g2 ♜d8!**

A fine spot awaits the bishop on b6, whereas its counterpart on c6 is only controlling air. Black is now clearly better and managed to convert his advantage.

## Quick Development

**Yuri Vovk**

**Karel Motuz**

Slovakia tt 2012

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 ♜c6 4. ♜f3 ♜f6 5.d5 ♜b8 6. ♜c3 e6 7. ♜xc4 exd5 8. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 9. ♜xd5 ♜b4+**



Turn off the automatic pilot now:

10. ♘e2!?

Here the centre is pretty much open, but White intends to follow up with ♘b3 (with the direct threat ♘xf7+) and ♘d1. As in the second fragment, and also the previously mentioned Uhlmann-Larsen game, the bishop remains in an awkward position on b4; Black will likely need a tempo to relocate it.

10... ♗d6?

Instant success! 10... ♗e7 or 10... ♗e7 11. ♘b3 0-0 were better alternatives.

11. ♘b3 ♗e6 12. ♘xe6 fxe6 13. ♘d1

Very natural, but the computer points out that 13. ♘g5 is good. After 13... ♗a6+ the king takes a further stroll: 14. ♘f3 (or even 14. ♘d1 0-0 15. ♘e3 ♗d6+ 16. ♘c2) 14... 0-0+ 15. ♘g3.

13... ♗a6+ 14. ♘d3

Here too, there was not much wrong with an ending: 14. ♘d3.

14... c5 15. ♘e5

Again very logical, defending against the threat of ...c5-c4. 15. ♘g5 c4 16. ♘d8+ ♘xd8 17. ♘xb4 with the threat of 18. ♘f7+ and moves like ♘f4 and ♘d1 coming up – crazy computer stuff.

15... ♘d7?

Thanks to a little tactic Black could simply have castled: 15... 0-0 16. ♘e3 ♘c6 17. ♘xe6+ ♘h8 and now after 18. ♘xc6 (18. ♘f7+ ♘xf7 19. ♘xf7 runs into 19... ♘xd3+) 18... ♘ae8 19. ♘g4 ♘xc6 20. f3 the position is unclear.

16. ♘c4 0-0-0 17. ♘g5 ♘f6 18. ♘ad1

Now White is simply winning.

18... ♘xd3 19. ♘xd3 ♘xa2 20. ♘xf6 gxf6 21. ♘d7+ ♘b8 22. ♘d6+ ♘c8 23. ♘xe6+ ♘b8 24. ♘d7 ♘a4 25. ♘d6+

1-0

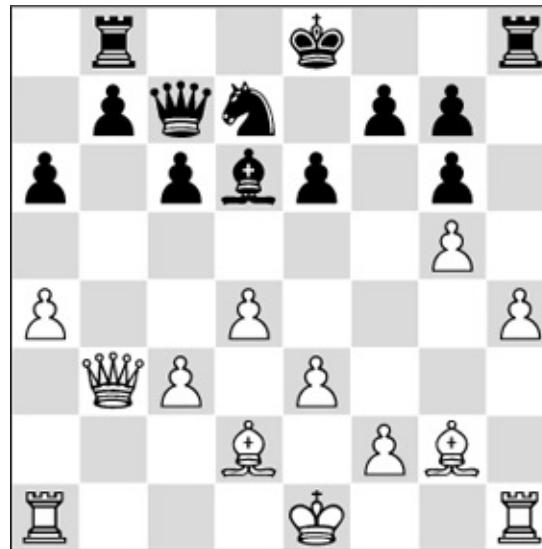
## The Destined King

Maxim Matlakov

Valery Popov

St Petersburg 2012

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♘g4 5. ♘xc4 e6 6.h3 ♘h5 7. ♘c3 a6 8.g4 ♘g6 9. ♘e5 ♘bd7 10. ♘xg6 hxg6 11. ♘f1 c6 12. ♘g2 ♘d6 13. ♘b3 ♘b8 14.g5 ♘d5 15.h4 ♘xc3 16.bxc3 ♘a5 17. ♘d2 ♘c7 18.a4



Here is an example from modern-day chess where White has compromised his pawn structure on both sides. He is practically forced to move his king to e2 if he wants to connect his rooks (see also Mamedyarov-Dominguez, London 2012, for another high-level example).

Black, on the other hand, can't castle queenside anymore, while castling kingside – giving up the pressure on the h-file – doesn't look too attractive either. Here also, a central position for the king seems to be the logical outcome of the opening set-up.

18... ♜e7 19. ♜e2

There's always something compelling about mirroring your opponent's moves. The resulting position with two central kings is hard to play, and a lot of concrete calculation is required. White has slightly more space and the bishop pair, so his chances should be preferable here.

19... e5 20. ♜f3 c5 21. h5 gxh5 22. ♜xh5 ♜hf8 23. ♜f3 b5 24. ♜h7 cxd4 25. cxd4 bxa4 26. ♜xa4 ♜b2 27. ♜a2 ♜fb8  
28. ♜xg7?

In a tense position, where both players have been trying to combine attack and defence, White goes horribly wrong. He should have taken the time to get his king to safety with 28. ♜f1.

28... ♜b8b4 29. ♜xa6 ♜c1 30. ♜xb2 ♜xb2 31. ♜a5

31. ♜d3 ♜b4.

31... ♜c4+ 32. ♜e1 ♜b1+ 33. ♜d1 ♜b3 34. ♜f1 ♜xd1+ 35. ♜e1 ♜b4

0-1

## Hubris

**David Astasio Lopez**

**Alexander Razmyslov**

Burguillos 2012

1. d4 ♜f6 2. ♜f3 c5 3. e3 cxd4 4. exd4 d5 5. ♜d3 ♜g4 6. c3 ♜xf3 7. ♜xf3 e6 8. 0-0 ♜c6 9. ♜e1 ♜b8 10. ♜g5 ♜e7 11. ♜d2 h6 12. ♜f4 ♜d6 13. ♜e3 ♜c7 14. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 15. ♜ae1



In order not to give you the same misplaced sense of safety I had in the first fragment, we'll conclude with another unsuccessful example.

15... ♜e7?!

Black probably wasn't satisfied with a draw and tried to spice things up with an attack on the kingside. At first you might think the king is relatively safe here. The centre is closed and there's no pawn tension. Nevertheless, White lost no time finding the weak spot in Black's set-up.

16. ♜h3

Vacating the f3-square for the knight and adding to the pressure on the e6-pawn.

16... g5

Probably the intended follow-up, but it's not clear where this is heading.

17. ♜f3! ♜d7

17...g4 18.♕h4.

18.♗f5

With a few simple moves White has created a winning position.

18...♝d8

An attempt like 18...♝d8 fails to 19.♝xg5.



19.♝xe6 ♜xe6 20.♝xg5!

This is clearly better than 20.♜xe6 ♜f4, though after 21.♜xh6 White is still better.

20...hxg5 21.♜xh8+ ♜c7

Finally the king is safe, but in the meantime White has gained material. He went on to win smoothly.

22.♝g7 ♜f8 23.♝xg5 ♜f6 24.h4 ♜e7 25.h5 ♜f5 26.♜f3 ♜f7 27.♝f4 ♜c6 28.g4 ♜xf4 29.♜xf4 ♜g7 30.♜xe6+ ♜d6 31.h6

1-0

## Summary

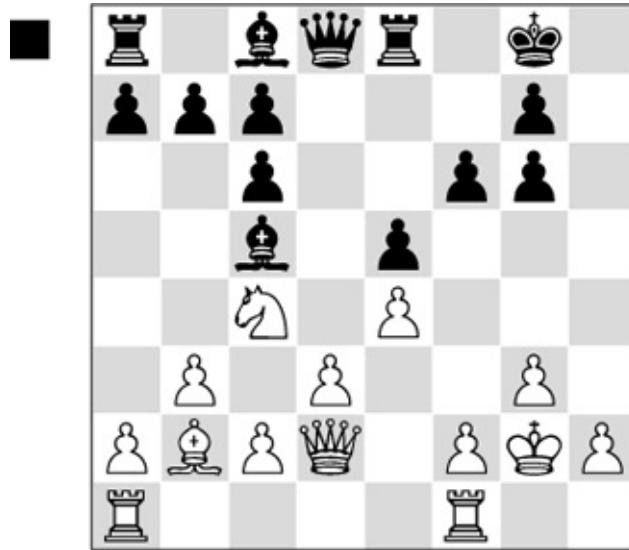
Not always should the king be tucked away by castling – see also Chapter 4 on the Rocking King’s Rooks. Sometimes speedy development is more important, and the safest spot may be in the middle of the board. So be imaginative, but also stay realistic and don’t lose your sense of danger!

# Exercises

At the end of each part we present a number of exercises. Every pattern that has been discussed will recur once in these exercises.

In all six parts you will most likely have to work harder on the later positions than on the first ones. Yet, in most cases discovering the right pattern will be the first step towards finding the correct decision. If you manage that, this book will already have achieved its humble goal.

## Exercise 1

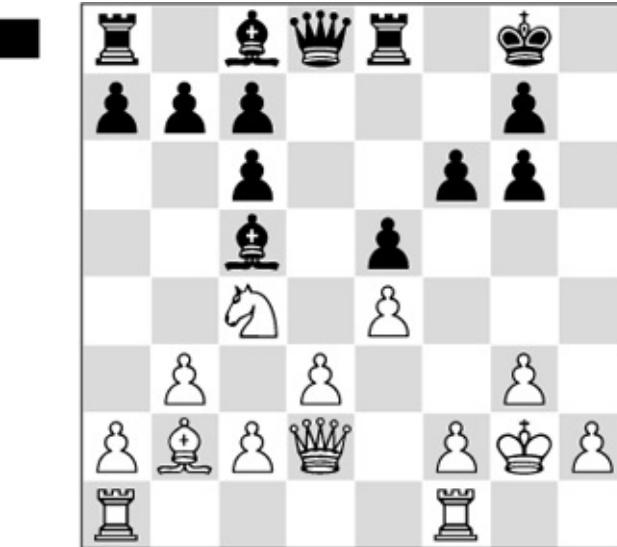


# Exercise 1

Roeland Pruijssers

Eric Hansen

Wijk aan Zee 2015



The missing fianchetto bishop is an invitation: ladies first!

15... ♕d7 16. ♘h1 ♕h3 17.f4

17.b4, to drive the active bishop away, seems better.

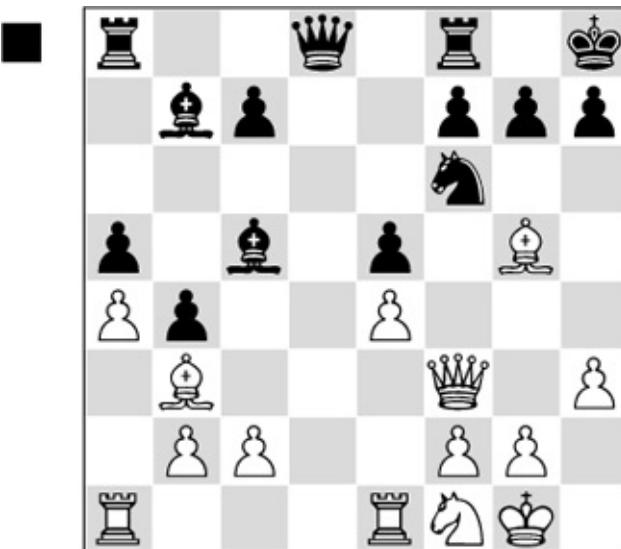
17... exf4 18. ♘xf4 ♖g4 19. ♜ae1 g5 20. ♘d2 ♜ad8

Now Black is clearly pressing – pair of bishops, centralized rooks, and the black queen dominantly present on White's weakened kingside.

White immediately cracked:

21.b4? ♜xe4 22.dxe4 ♜xd2 23.♘xd2 ♖xb4 24.c3 ♖c5 25.e5 ♖e6 26.c4 f5 27.♘f3 g4 28.♗d3 b5 29.♖a3 ♖b6  
30.♗d8+ ♔h7 31.♗e8 ♖h6 32.♖c1 ♖g6 33.♗e7 bxc4 34.h4 gxh3 35.♘f1 ♖g4 36.♗h2 ♖f3 37.♗xh3 ♖h5+ 38.♗g2  
♖d5+ 39.♗e4 ♖xe4#

## Exercise 2

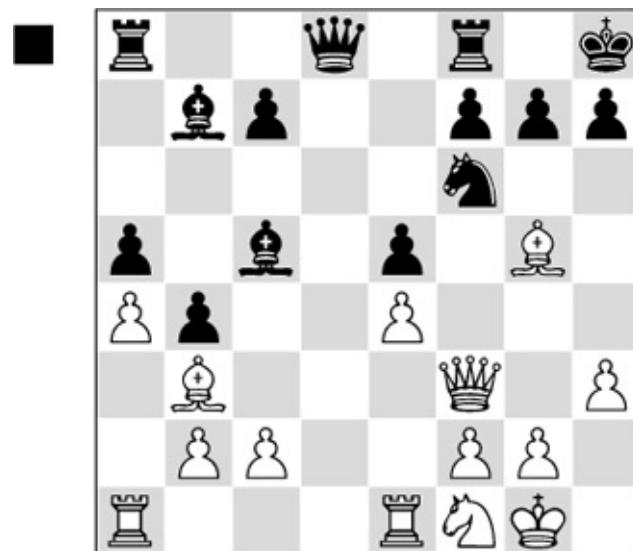


## Exercise 2

Samvel Ter-Sahakyan

Samuel Sevian

Lake Sevan 2015



16... Ra6! 17.Qg3 Ra8!

The most elegant way to escape from under the pressure.

18.Qc4 Qxe4

The young American continues in style, but the simpler 18... Rd6 was also sufficient.

19.Rxe4 Rg6?

19...f5 20.Qxa6 Qxa6 21.Qxf5 Qg6, and Black wins back all the material.

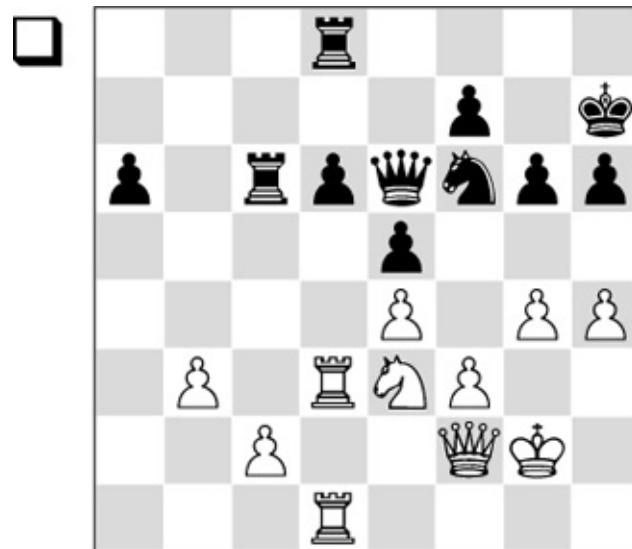
20.Qf5 Qc8 21.Qxe5 Qd6 22.Qb5 c6 23.Qb6 Rxg5

Here material is also equal again, but Black's pieces have lost their coordination. He still managed to draw though.

24.Rd1 Qb8 25.Qe3 Rxg3 26.fxg3 Qf5 27.Rh4 Rxg3 28.Rh5 Qg6 29.Rxa5 Re8 30.Qc5 Qe4 31.Qh1 Qf4 32.Qd3 Qd5 33.Qf1 h6 34.Qd4 Qf5 35.Qg4 Qf2 36.Qd4 Qxc2 37.Qc5 Qf5 38.Qg4 Qf2 39.Qxd5 cxd5 40.Qf3 b3 41.a5 Qxf3 42.gxf3 Re1 43.Rxe1 Qxe1 44.a6 Qf2

½-½ (56)

### Exercise 3



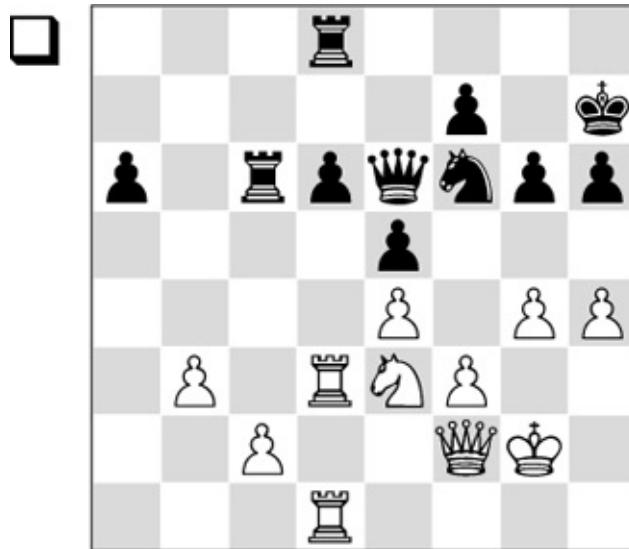
How should White proceed?

### Exercise 3

Loek van Wely

Hou Yifan

Wijk aan Zee 2013



38.  $\mathbb{Q}1d2!$

Making room at the rear.

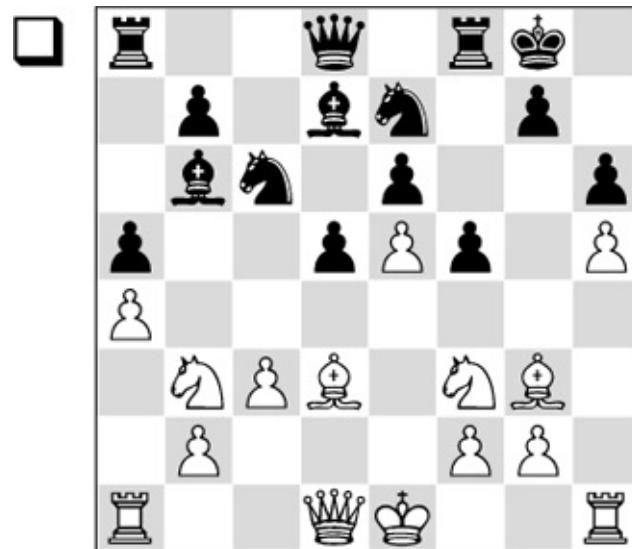
38...  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}c7?$

White is dominating the entire board – space on the kingside, clear targets on the queenside. The text allows him to end the game with a double attack.

42.c4?

White misses his chance and eventually even had to fight for a draw. 42.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$  is practically over as 42...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  fails to 43.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$ .

## Exercise 4

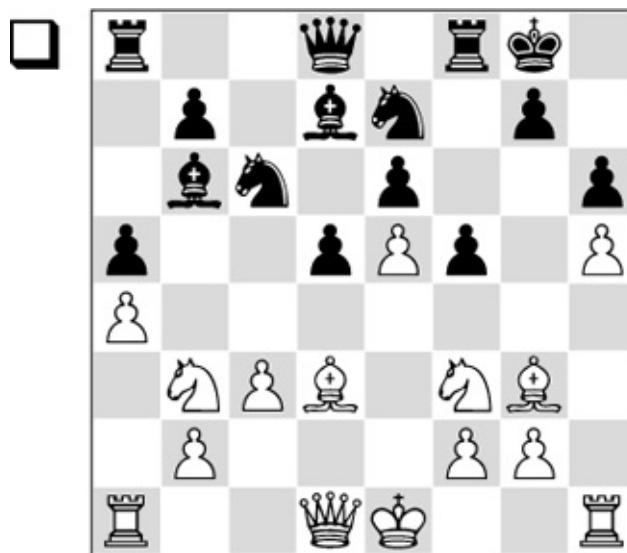


## Exercise 4

Lazaro Bruzon

Francisco Vallejo Pons

Havana 2014



**15. ♜f4!**

The h5-pawn obviously restricts the e7-knight, but if White castles it will become vulnerable. White starts an attack and leaves his king in the middle. He will find good use for the rook!

**15... ♕e8**

An immediate reaction in the centre was to be considered: 15...d4!? 16. ♜bx d4 (16.cxd4 ♜b4) 16... ♜xd4 17.cxd4 ♜d5 18. ♜d2 ♜b6 gives Black some compensation.

**16. ♜c2 ♜d8 17. ♜h3 d4 18. ♜bx d4 19. ♜xd4 ♜c6 20. ♜g3**

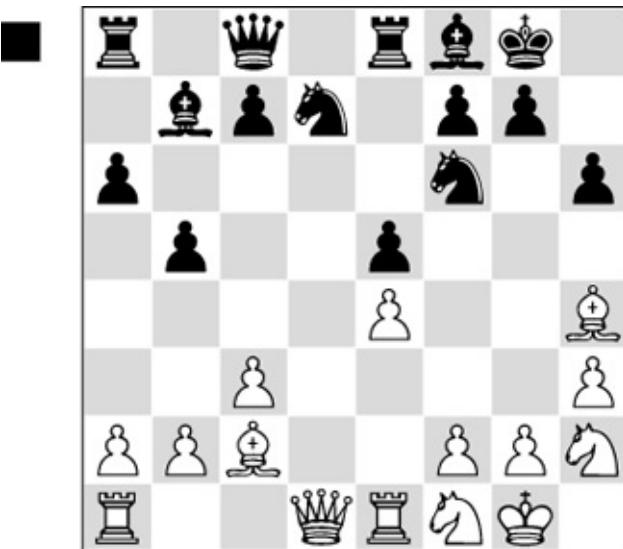
Indeed, White has manoeuvred his rook to g3! Still, here too Black has compensation, until he unwisely recaptured the pawn three moves later.

**20... ♜xd4 21.cxd4 ♜h8 22. ♜f1 ♜e4 23. ♜d2 ♜xh5?**

He probably misjudged the position after move 26, as the following moves are pretty obvious.

**24. ♜h3 ♜g6 25. ♜xe4 fxe4 26. ♜xh6 ♜g8 27. ♜g5 ♜d7 28. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 29. ♜g1 ♜f3 30. ♜a3 ♜ef7 31. ♜g3 ♜xg3 32. ♜xg3 ♜h5 33. ♜c2 ♜f4 34. ♜c8+ ♜h7 35. ♜h3 ♜h4 36. ♜xh4 ♜xh4 37. ♜xe6 e3 38.fxe3**

## Exercise 5



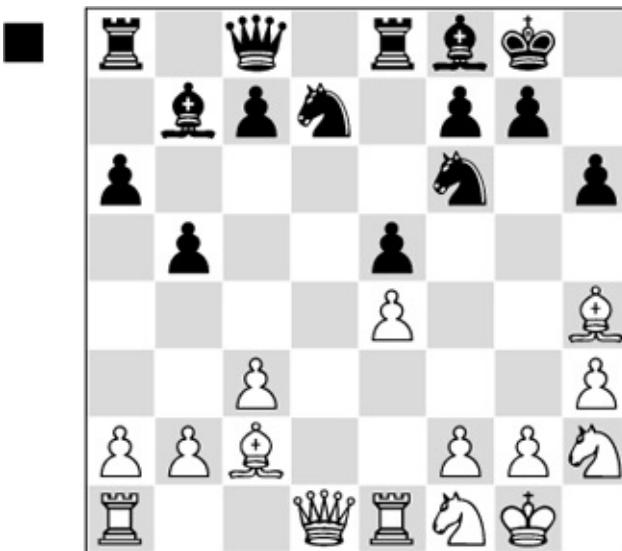
How does Black solve his spatial issues?

## Exercise 5

David Navara

Boris Avrukh

Croatia tt 2012



**17...a5! 18.♔f3 ♔a6**

A swinging queen's rook. Suddenly the rook is participating!

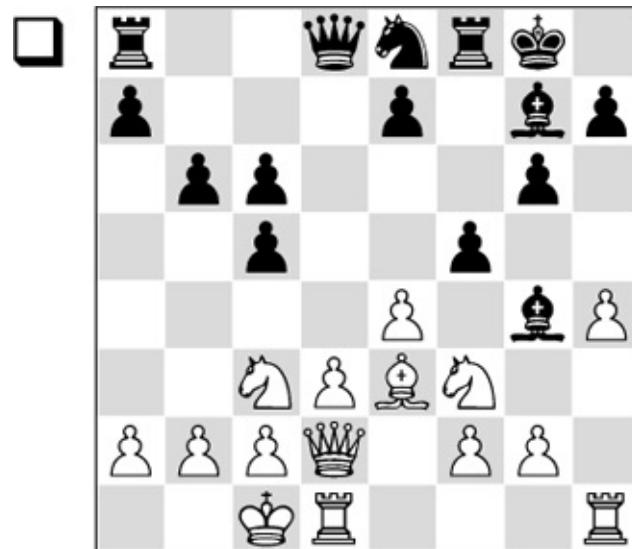
**19.♕e3 ♔a8 20.♖ad1 ♕c5**

Now the f6-knight is protected by the rook. The strong pressure against e4 forces White to exchange his h4-bishop.

**21.♗xf6 ♕xf6 22.♕f5 b4 23.♕g4 ♕fe6**

Black is perfectly fine, defending actively.

## Exercise 6



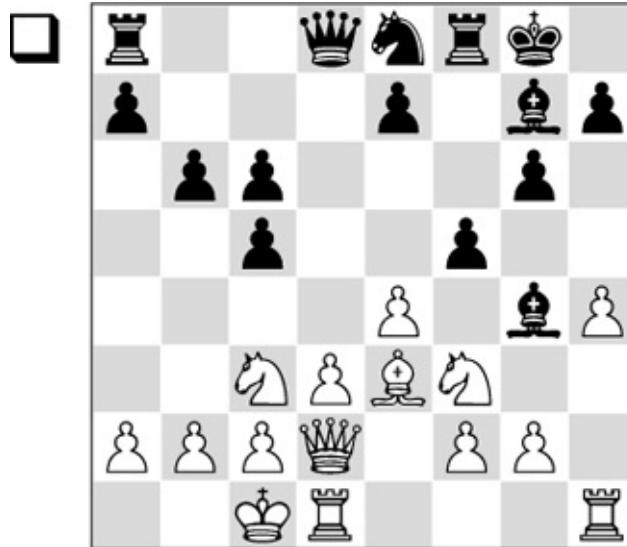
Your move as White?

## Exercise 6

Alexander Motylev

Valery Filippov

Moscow 2006



13.  $\mathbb{R} dg1!?$

Mysterious? Probably Black was not going to take on f3 anyway, so the question is: will the rook be useful here?

13...  $\mathbb{Q} xe4$  14.  $\mathbb{Q} xe4$   $\mathbb{Q} f6$  15.  $h5!?$   $\mathbb{Q} xh5$

Accepting the challenge. 15...  $\mathbb{Q} xe4$  16.  $dxe4$   $\mathbb{Q} xd2+$  17.  $\mathbb{Q} xd2$ , and now 17...  $\mathbb{Q} xh5?$  loses to 18.  $g4$ , with thanks to the rook on g1. Still, this was fully acceptable, despite White's slightly better pawn structure, as Black has several good alternatives at move 17.

16.  $\mathbb{Q} h6$   $\mathbb{Q} c7$  17.  $\mathbb{Q} xg7$   $\mathbb{Q} xg7$  18.  $\mathbb{Q} fg5$

Very quickly Black has landed in severe trouble.

18...  $h5$  19.  $f3$   $\mathbb{Q} f5$  20.  $g4$

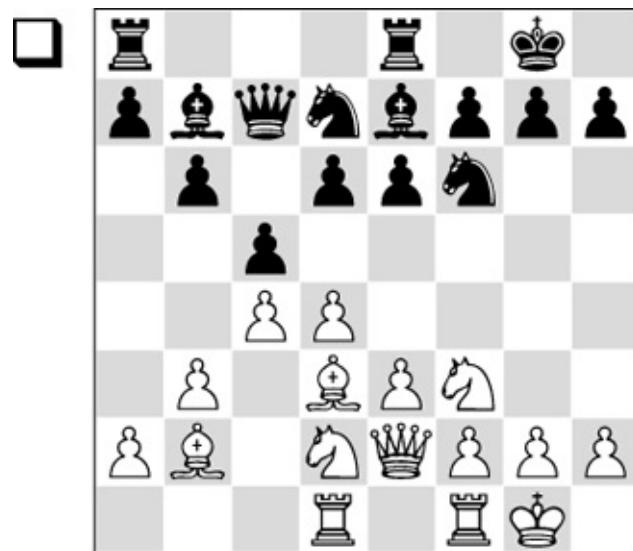
Again the g1-rook is doing its job!

20...  $hxg4$  21.  $fxg4$   $\mathbb{Q} xe4$  22.  $dxe4$   $\mathbb{Q} ad8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q} h2$   $\mathbb{Q} f4+$  24.  $\mathbb{Q} xf4$   $\mathbb{Q} xf4$  25.  $\mathbb{Q} h6$

Even in the endgame Black is lost – all his pieces are uncomfortable right now.

25...  $\mathbb{Q} df8$  26.  $\mathbb{Q} d2$   $\mathbb{Q} f1$  27.  $\mathbb{Q} g3$   $\mathbb{Q} e8$  28.  $\mathbb{Q} gh3$   $\mathbb{Q} g7$  29.  $\mathbb{Q} e6+$   $\mathbb{Q} f7$  30.  $\mathbb{Q} xf8$   $\mathbb{Q} xf8$  31.  $\mathbb{Q} e2$   $\mathbb{Q} a1$  32.  $\mathbb{Q} h8+$   $\mathbb{Q} f7$  33.  $\mathbb{Q} f3+$   $\mathbb{Q} f6$  34.  $g5$   $\mathbb{Q} g7$  35.  $gxg6+$

## Exercise 7



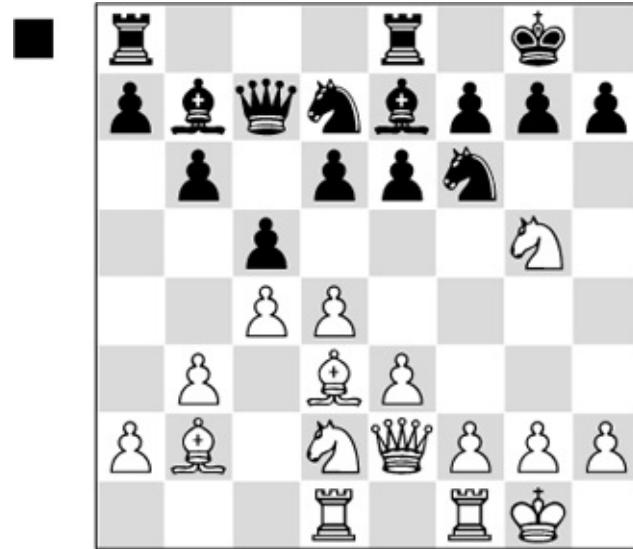
Does 12.♘g5 make sense here?

## Exercise 7

Marc Narciso Dublan

Evgeny Solozhenkin

France tt 2001



Actually, this is quite a common manoeuvre in the Colle to gain space. So the answer is yes, since...

**12... h6**

... can safely be met with

**13.f4**

Black typically countered in the centre, but after...

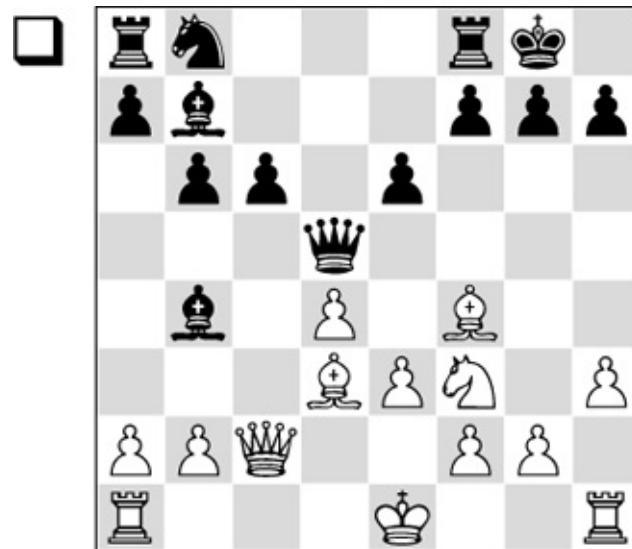
**13... cxd4 14.exd4 e5 15.d5 exf4?! 16.Qge4**

... White exploited his initiative on the kingside:

**16... b5 17.Qh1 bxc4 18.bxc4 Qab8 19.Qd4 Qe5 20.Qxf4 Qxe4 21.Qxe4 Qg5 22.Qxg5 hxg5 23.Qe4 Qa6 24.Qxe5 dxe5 25.Qg4 g6 26.Qe3 Qb2 27.Qxg5 e4 28.Qxe4 Qxe4 29.Qxe4 Qxa2 30.h3 Qxc4 31.d6 Qb5 32.Qd5 Qc2 33.Qc1**

**1-0**

## Exercise 8



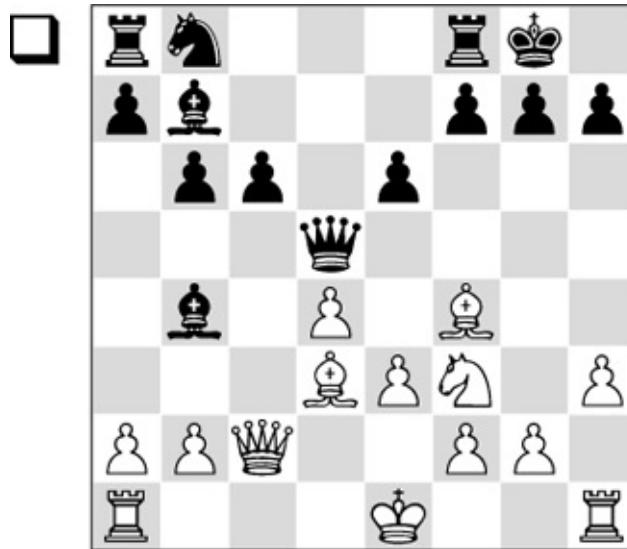
What should White play?

## Exercise 8

Sergey Grigoriants

Levente Vajda

Hungary tt 2015/16



**12. ♕e2!**

12. ♕d2 c5 (12... ♔xg2 13. ♕e2!, and Black's king is walking a tightrope) 13. dxc5? ♕d8.

**12... h6 13. ♕hd1 ♕c8 14. a3 ♖e7 15. ♖h7+ ♕f8 16. ♖e4 ♖h5 17. ♕f1 f5**

Black tries to solve his backward development by force, but this should have backfired. 17... ♕d7 18. ♕e5 ♖xe5 19. ♖xe5.

**18. ♖d3 c5 19. d5! ♖xd5 20. ♖xf5?**

20. ♕e5! was the correct follow-up: 20... ♕c6 21. ♕e2 ♕e8? 22. ♕xd5.

**20... ♖xf3 21. ♖xe6 ♕c6 22. ♖f5?**

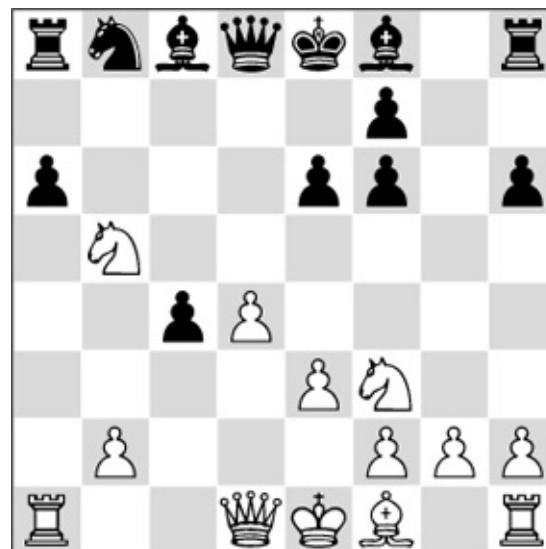
22. ♕c4.

**22... ♕f6**

## Part II

### Sacrificial Patterns

#### 9. Arturito's Exchange Sac



11...axb5!? 12.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xa8 ♖b4+ 13.  $\mathfrak{Q}$ d2 ♖b7

#### 10. Brutal Exchange Sacs



24.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xd6! cxd6 25.  $\mathfrak{Q}$ xa6

## 11. Don't Move (Your Knight)



10.bxc4!? bxc3 11.  $\mathbb{N}$  b1

## 12. Open Up! (the Centre)



9... e6!? 10.dxe6  $\mathbb{Q}$  xe6

## 13. Sacrificium Universalis



8.g4!?

## 14. The Weakest Link



11. ♜xf7!

## 15. The Weakest Link, Round Two



15. ♜xf7! ♕xf7 16. ♜xe6

## Chapter 9

# Arturito's Exchange Sac for... What?

An early exchange sac, without material compensation, where the opponent's position still looks pretty healthy. Long ago Arturo Pomar ventured it once, but in 2015 a QGA line featuring a similar sac suddenly became fashionable.

What then made this exchange sacrifice so attractive?

**Lela Javakhishvili**

**Romain Edouard**

Gibraltar 2015

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 b5 4.a4 c6 5.axb5 cxb5 6.Qc3 a6**

What? This doesn't make sense, does it? 6...Qd7 seems to be the only move, though perhaps not so appealing, as with the long diagonal open Black would rather like to have this bishop on b7. In fact, this was the move which was mostly played here, for instance by Ivan Sokolov. The text move returns the pawn immediately, but if that was the real idea Black could have come up with a more sensible development move...

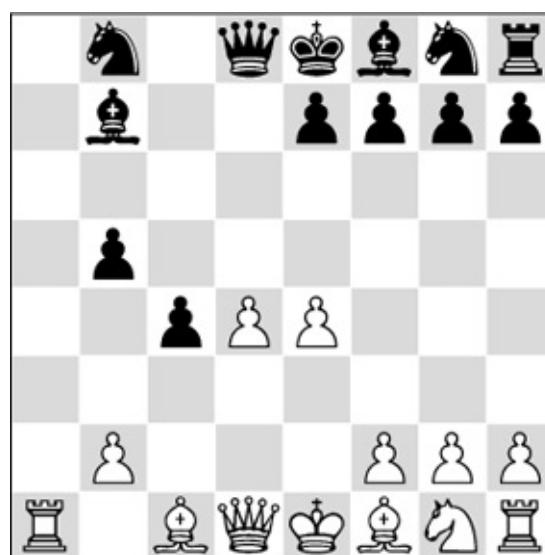
**7.Qxb5 axb5!**

This was Black's idea – retaining the queen's pawn phalanx b5/c4 and speeding up development at the cost of a full exchange. This idea seems to be gradually evolving in the Semi-Slav complex and spreading to various variations.

**8.Qxa8 Qb7 9.Qa1**

Sometimes it may be useful to lure the black queen to b6, but here the immediate retreat to a1 is logical.

Atalik-Pancevski, Kraljevo 2014, saw the immediate return of the exchange with 9.Qxb8 Qxb8 10.f3, and though White scored a nice quick win when Black was too eager to win a piece, this hardly seems to be the most critical approach.



**9...e6!**

A beautifully restrained move! What would be more obvious than grabbing a pawn back with 9...

$\mathbb{Q}xe4$ , just like in the early source game of this line, Ammann-Costa, Switzerland tt 1993? Well, here White can immediately work on Black's queenside pawns: 10.f3 (10.b3  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  11.f3 e5) 10... $\mathbb{Q}d5$  11.b3, without being bothered by ... $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ .

**10.f3**

So White is an exchange up and has been granted time to preserve his strong centre. My initial impression was that this must be somewhat speculative for Black – perhaps biased by my own personal experience against Ikonnikov with this sort of exchange sac; see *The Modern King*, Chapter 8. Still, the pawn on d4 may quickly become a target and White's kingside development is slightly hampered now: the natural square for both the bishop and the knight is e2.

This has even prompted some white players to give up the e-pawn anyway: 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  was actually Edouard's try as White in a later game: 10... $\mathbb{Q}f6$  11. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  (Kasimdzhanov's 11... $\mathbb{Q}b4+!?$  has not been repeated yet) 12.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  and Black looks pretty solid. Perhaps Howell's straightforward break 13.b3 poses Black the most problems.

**10... $\mathbb{Q}c6$**

10...f5 would be the principled way to break open the long diagonal – just like in this Chigorin line: 1.d4 d5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3.c4  $\mathbb{Q}g4$  4.cxd5  $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  5.dxc6  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$  6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  e6 7.e4  $\mathbb{Q}b4$  8.f3 f5. On the other hand, the line of thought could be ‘otherwise I will just be an exchange down’.

Whatever the reason, Black has indeed already played this way in practice, meeting 11.exf5 with a further material sacrifice: 11... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ . Interesting, tempting and wild territory, where Black goes all out for speedy development, for example: 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}ge7$  13.fxe6  $\mathbb{Q}f5$ .

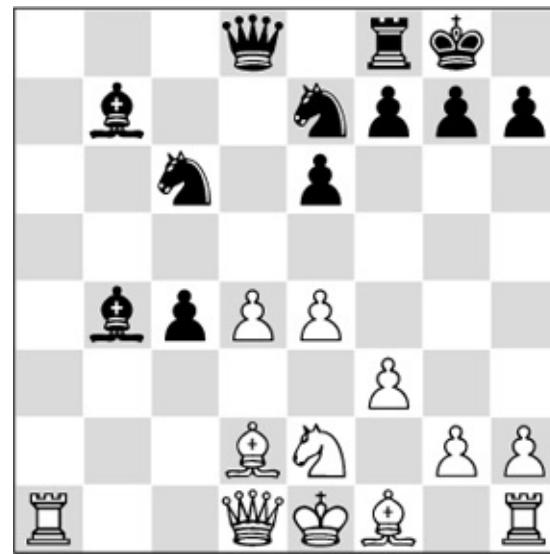
**11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}b4+!?$**

11... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ .

**12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}ge7$  13.b3**

Now that Black has omitted ... $\mathbb{Q}a5$ , White plays this logical, thematic move, breaking up Black's queenside. The downside is that the development of his own kingside keeps lagging behind.

**13...0-0 14.bxc4 bxc4**



**15. $\mathbb{Q}f2!$**

I don't like the look of this. White could have played her king here earlier if she wanted, for instance after 11... $\mathbb{Q}b4+$ . Now the move lends more force to Black's next move.

15. $\mathbb{Q}xb4$   $\mathbb{Q}xb4$  16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  seems to be a natural follow-up for White. After 16... $\mathbb{Q}ec6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  18.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}bc2$  Black's counterplay seems to fall short after 19. $\mathbb{Q}b5$ , though he might hang on after 19... $\mathbb{Q}xa1$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xa1$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  22. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  23. $\mathbb{Q}d1$  e5.

**15...f5**

Now it is a different story. All Black's pieces are developed, whereas White is struggling with his development, and suddenly there is the concrete threat 16...f5xe4. Black's compensation is no longer hard to see. Edouard scored a fine win, obtaining the best game prize:

16.  $\mathbb{Q}f4?$   $\mathbb{W}xd4+$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{W}b2+$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $fxe4$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $exf3$  20.  $gxf3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3+!$  21.  $\mathbb{W}xf3$   $\mathbb{Q}e5+$  22.  $\mathbb{W}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}f5+$  23.  $\mathbb{W}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}d3+$  24.  $\mathbb{W}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  25.  $\mathbb{W}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  27.  $\mathbb{W}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}d2$  28.  $\mathbb{W}xd3$   $\mathbb{W}b6+$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  30.  $\mathbb{W}xd2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$  31.  $\mathbb{W}f1$   $\mathbb{W}f6+$  32.  $\mathbb{W}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}c3$

0-1

## The Source?

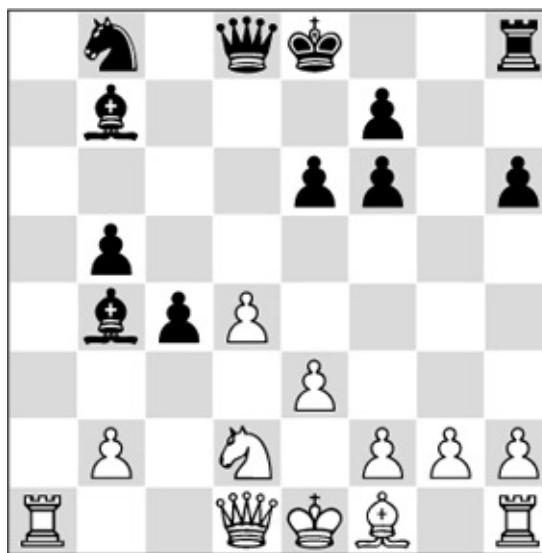
It seems that former child prodigy Arturo Pomar was (one of?) the first to acknowledge Black's compensation in a similar case. Yet, at the time of the following game he had already given up professional chess and taken up a job as a postman.

Drazen Marovic

Arturo Pomar

Olot 1969

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  e6 5.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$  h6 6.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $dxc4$  7. e3 b5 8. a4 a6 9.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $gxf6$  10.  $a xb5$   $cxb5$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $AXB5$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{Q}b4+$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$



Probably some white players have ended up in this position inadvertently, as it can arise by numerous move orders in different variations. Furthermore, the same position sometimes arose with one minor detail. For example, in Van der Werf-Piket, Amsterdam 2000, Black's h-pawn was still on h7, while in Van den Doel-Van der Wiel, Rotterdam 1999, the black queen had already been lured to b6. In all cases, Black has no material compensation, but obviously White will be struggling with his further development. Pomar's next is a natural move.

14...  $\mathbb{Q}g8$

However, 14...e5! would have been much stronger. It's a difficult move to find, because you would expect rapid piece development to be called for. Secondly, this move seems to weaken the light squares, notably f5. As far as I can judge, the credit for this idea goes to Dutch grandmaster Van der Wiel. Black does threaten to take on d4, while after 15.dxe5 fxe5 Black's pawn structure has actually improved and the pressure against the d2-knight has increased. 15.  $\mathbb{W}h5$  seems the most reasonable try for White, and 15...  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  the human response in practice (other moves are possible!): 16.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  (16.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}a5$  – or 16...  $\mathbb{W}xd4$ ! 17.  $\mathbb{W}xb5$   $\mathbb{W}e7$  – and White has to play 17.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$ ), and here even 16...  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  (16...  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  18.  $gxf3$   $\mathbb{Q}b3$ ? 19.  $\mathbb{Q}a7$ ) 17.  $\mathbb{W}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$  18.  $\mathbb{W}xd2$   $\mathbb{W}xd4+$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{W}xb2$  seems

possible.

15.  $\text{Qe}2$   $\text{Bxg}2$  16.  $\text{Qf}1$   $\text{Qxd}2$  17.  $\text{Qxd}2$

Black has won a pawn, but as a result the pressure has decreased and at least White can get on with his development now. This is often a crucial decision: when should you convert your pressure into material (re-)gains?

17...  $\text{Qd}5?$

Unfortunately, 17...  $\text{Qd}6$  runs into 18.  $\text{d}5!$   $\text{Qxh}2$  (18...  $\text{Qxd}5$  19.  $\text{e}4$ ) 19.  $\text{Qxh}2$   $\text{Qxh}2$  20.  $\text{Qf}3$ , but 17...  $\text{f}5$  still gave an unclear position.

18.  $\text{f}3$   $\text{Qg}5$  19.  $\text{h}4$   $\text{Qg}6$  20.  $\text{d}5!?$

20.  $\text{Qa}5!.$

20...  $\text{Qd}7?$

Now White opens the d-file. 20...  $\text{Qxd}5?$  21.  $\text{e}4$   $\text{Qb}7$  22.  $\text{Qd}1$  also wins for White. 20...  $\text{f}5$  was the only move, when 21.  $\text{dxe}6?$  can be met with 21...  $\text{Qxf}3$ .

21.  $\text{dxe}6$   $\text{fxe}6$  22.  $\text{Qd}1$

And Pomar subsequently lost, which probably did not help to popularize the general idea of this exchange sac.

## Grab the Pawn or Not?

Here is another relatively early example, although here Black immediately regains a white pawn on e4. But did he need to?

Vladimir Bagirov

Valery Chekhov

Telavi 1982

1.  $\text{d}4$   $\text{d}5$  2.  $\text{c}4$   $\text{e}6$  3.  $\text{Qc}3$   $\text{c}6$  4.  $\text{Qf}3$   $\text{dxc}4$  5.  $\text{Qg}5$   $\text{Qc}7$  6.  $\text{e}4$   $\text{b}5$  7.  $\text{a}4$   $\text{Qb}4$  8.  $\text{Qd}2$   $\text{a}6$  9.  $\text{axb}5$   $\text{cxb}5$  10.  $\text{Qxb}5$   $\text{axb}5$  11.  $\text{Qxa}8$   $\text{Qb}7$  12.  $\text{Qa}1$



12...  $\text{Qxe}4$

Like in Edouard's game, here it might be worthwhile to leave the e4-pawn in peace and build up the pressure with development: 12...  $\text{Qf}6!?$ , for example 13.  $\text{f}3$  0-0 14.  $\text{Qe}2$   $\text{Qc}6$  15. 0-0  $\text{Qxd}4$ , followed by ...  $\text{Qd}8$ , and it is almost impossible for White to properly disentangle. Just when he seemed to have completed his development in a normal way.

13.  $\text{Qg}4$   $\text{f}5$

13...  $\text{Qb}7$  14.  $\text{Qe}3$   $\text{Qe}7$  and Black's pieces work together excellently, whereas White's pieces are struggling.

14.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$

With the d2-knight unpinned and the g2-pawn protected, White can breathe again. Nevertheless, Black is solid enough to easily hold the draw:

16...  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}h5+$   $g6$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  0-0 19.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}bc6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $b4$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}fe1$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  23.  $g3$   $c3$  24.  $bxcc3$   $bxcc3$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}cb4$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $f4$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $c2$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$

½-½

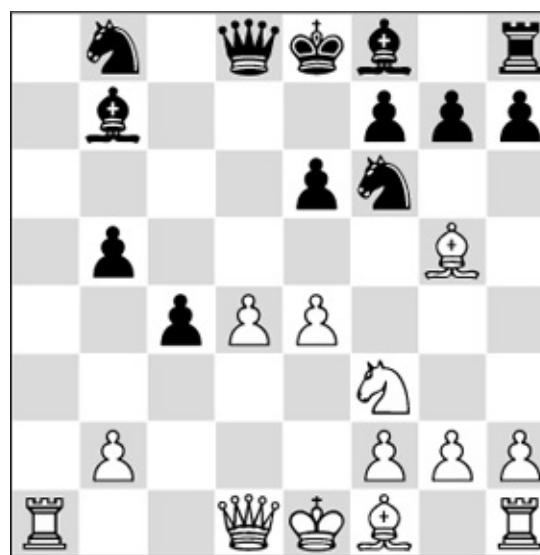
## Avoiding the Deadly Pin

Zoltan Gyimesi

Rainer Buhmann

Austrian Bundesliga 2011/12

1.  $d4$   $d5$  2.  $c4$   $c6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $e6$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $dxc4$  6.  $a4$   $a6$  7.  $e4$   $b5$  8.  $axb5$   $cxb5$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $AXB5$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$



11...  $h6!$

Black would like to take on e4 with the knight, and he correctly judges that White would rather not part with his dark-squared bishop (as he did in the former examples). The annoying check on b4 is very typical for the play after Arturito's exchange sac.

12.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$

White correctly avoids the deadly pin that arises after 12.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}b4+$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ , for example 14.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ , and White can hardly move.

12...  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  14.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}e7$

Here too, Black has sufficient compensation, and he is ready to collect a second pawn. However, he should not hurry with 14...  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$ , when White's lead in development yields him the advantage.

15.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  0-0

Both sides have completed their development. Black has only one pawn for the exchange, but his pieces are much better placed than White's. Besides, White will not be able to make any headway with his pawns. On the other hand, Black does not have any easy targets. We might say there is a dynamic equality. The game ended in a draw after 53 moves.

Boris Gelfand

Etienne Bacrot

Albert m 2002

1.  $d4$   $d5$  2.  $c4$   $c6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $a6$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $dxc4$  6.  $e4$   $b5$  7.  $a4$   $e6$  8.  $axb5$   $cxb5$  9.  $e5$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $AXB5$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$



Here Black has no pawn for the exchange, White still has his dark-squared bishop, and his e-pawn will be no target as it already has reached e5.

**12. Ra7?**

Seemingly active, but actually the loose rook will soon provide Black with an extra tempo.

Better was 12.Ra1 ♖b4 13.♗b1 (13.♗d2 ♖e4!) 13...♖4c6! (vacating b4 for the bishop). 14.♗e3 (14.♗e2 ♖xd4 15.♗xd4 ♖b4+) 14...♖b4+ with more than sufficient compensation.

**12... ♖b4! 13.♗d1**

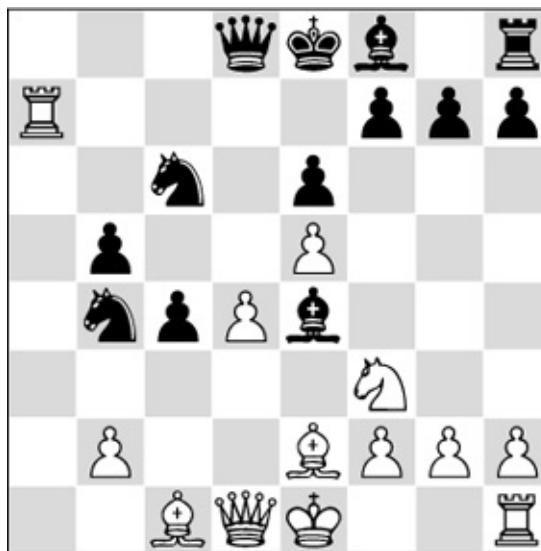
13.♗b1 ♖xf3 14.gxf3 ♖8c6 is awful for White.

**13... ♖e4!**

Black has just played two moves with the pieces that he had already developed to set up this primitive attack, and it turns out to be... utterly effective. A clear case where chess logic falls short in finding the right move. You just have to spot that the threat of 14...♖c2+ cannot be parried.

**14.♗e2 ♖8c6**

Again the rook is under attack after this developing move. But Gelfand finds a way out:



**15. ♖xf7? ♖xf7**

Who would not take the rook? However, with 15...♗d3+!! 16.♗xd3 ♖xd3 Black could have obtained a decisive advantage: 17.♖b7 (if 17.♖f4 then again 17...♗b4!) 17...♗d5.

**16.♗g5+ ♖e8 17.♗xe4 ♖xd4 18.♗c3 ♖c5 19.0-0**

At last the white king has found safety, but by now material is equal. Eventually the game ended in a draw.

Levon Aronian

Luke McShane

Moscow 2012

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 c6 4.♘c3 a6 5.♗g5 dxc4 6.a4 h6 7.♗h4 b5 8.axb5 cxb5 9.♘xb5 axb5 10.♖xa8 ♗b7 11.♖a1



11...g5!?

11...e6 was good enough. White cannot even reach the Pomar position, as 12.♗xf6 can be met with 12...♗b4+ 13.♗d2 ♖xf6, and here again, if 14.e3 then 14...e5 is the key move.

Even 11...e5 is an option, though after 12.e3 ♗b4+ 13.♗e2 Black is not better off than after the text move.

12.♗g3 e6 13.e3 ♗b4+ 14.♗e2

No choice for White, as thanks to ...g7-g5 Black has preserved his f6-knight, which would jump to e4 after 14.♗d2. Still, the king move has also been preferred to the knight's retreat when there was a choice (e.g. Van Wely-Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 2006). Of course White's pieces are in each other's way, but there is still some time left to manoeuvre.

14...♘c6 15.♘e1 ♘a5 16.♗e5 0-0 17.h4 g4 18.♘c2 ♗e7 19.♗e1 ♘b3 20.♖a2 h5

Aronian has normalized his position asliightly, and now tries to get his king's bishop and rook into the game. But this soon backfires.

21.♗e2 ♗d6 22.f3 ♘d5 23.fxg4?

White is far from ready to open up the position – his rooks, for example, still lack scope. That said, it is much easier to handle the active black pieces. White's extra exchange is of no influence.

23...♗xe5 24.dxe5 ♗b6 25.♘f3 ♘xe3 26.♘xe3 ♗xe3+ 27.♗e2 ♗c1+ 28.♗d1 ♗e3+ 29.♗e2 ♗c1+ 30.♗d1 ♗xf3 31.gxf3 ♗e3+ 32.♗e2 ♗c1+ 33.♗d1 ♗e3+ 34.♗e2 ♗f4 35.♗h2 ♗xf3 36.♖f1 ♗e4+ 37.♗f2 ♘d2 38.♖g1 ♗f3+

0-1

## No ...e6-e5 Break

Baadur Jobava

Dmitry Andreikin

Tbilisi 2015

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 a6 5.♗g5 dxc4 6.a4 h6 7.♗xf6 exf6 8.e3 b5 9.axb5 cxb5 10.♘xb5 axb5 11.♖xa8 ♗b7 12.♖a1 ♗b4+ 13.♘d2



Obviously, here Black cannot attack White's pawn centre with ...e6-e5, and consequently the pin on the d2-knight does not seem so serious. Still, curiously, Black still has compensation for the full exchange, mainly due to the pressure on White's undeveloped kingside.

**13... ♗d6 14.f3 0-0 15.♗f2 f5 16.g3**

**16.♘b1? f4 17.e4 ♖c5.**

**16... ♜xd2**

Andreikin decides to immediate liquidate into an equal endgame. He might have proceeded with his development by 16... ♘d7 17.♗g2 ♕e8, when both sides should be careful to hold the balance.

**17.♗xd2 ♖xf3 18.♗xf3 ♗d5+ 19.♗f2 ♗xh1 20.♗a5 ♔c6 21.♗g2 ♗xg2+ 22.♗xg2 ♔xa5 23.♗xa5 ♕b8**

**½-½ (44)**

## Summary

This is a typical instructive exchange sac, where the focus is mainly on development and activity rather than material. As long as the white rooks are inactive, Black can patiently reinforce his position.

## Chapter 10

# Brutal Exchange Sacs

It is time to move on to some cruder exchange sacs: the immediate capture of a minor piece or a pawn which seems properly protected.

In IYCP we already dealt with *The Bishop Snatcher* (Chapter 25) and *King's Rook Grabs Knight* (Chapter 26), so we will leave these out here.

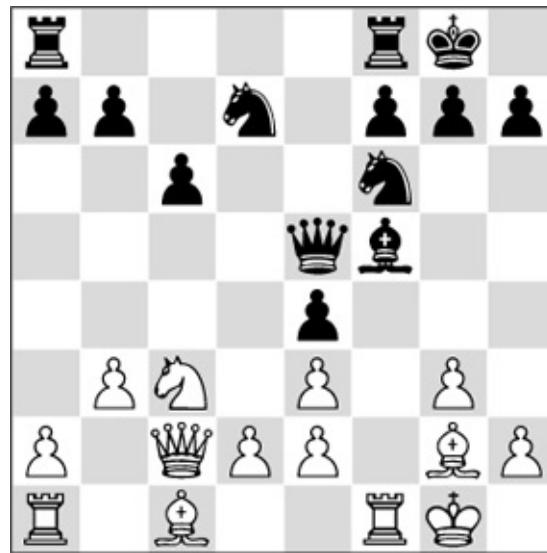
## In Broad Daylight

**Viswanathan Anand**

**Michael Adams**

Shamkir 2015

1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6 3.Qf3 e4 4.Qd4 d5 5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.Qc2 ♔f6 7.Qc3 ♕h5 8.Qe3 ♖c5 9.Qc2 ♖xe3 10.fxe3 ♕e5  
11.Qg2 ♖f5 12.0-0 0-0 13.b3 ♔bd7



14.♖b2 ♕e6

Had Adams suspected what was coming, then he would have played 14...♜g6 or 14...♝fe8.

15.♝xf5! ♕xf5 16.Qxe4

White has gained one pawn and there is a concrete threat of 17.♝xf6+. Still, Black does look pretty solid, doesn't he?

16... ♕g6 17.♝f1 ♜fe8

Adams allows the doubling of his f-pawn, hoping that the exchange of a few minor pieces will relieve him. After 17...♜d5 18.♜h3 ♜ad8 (18...f5 19.♜c3 ♜e7 20.♜a3) 19.♜f5 ♜h5 20.♜a3 the white pieces exert strong pressure, while the black rooks are still inactive.

18.♜xf6 ♔xf6 19.♝xf6+ gxf6 20.e4! ♜ad8 21.♝f4 ♕h5 22.d3



An extremely pleasant position for White! The black rooks have a hard time becoming active, whereas White can aim his forces at the shattered pawns at Black's kingside.

**22... ♜e5 23. ♜h3 ♜g7 24. ♜g2 h5**

Trying to avoid passive defence, but Adams still fails to activate his rooks. Therefore, 24... ♜d4 25. ♜h4 ♜e3 seems more stubborn.

**25. ♜f5 ♜d4 26. ♜xh5 ♜e3**

26... ♜h8 27. ♜f5!, avoiding the exchange of the rooks, leaves White on top.

**27. ♜h4 ♜e5 28. ♜f4 ♜c5 29. ♜b2 ♜d6 30. ♜f1 a5 31. ♜f5 b5**

And eventually Anand converted his advantage.

## Another Strong Piece Disappears

**Artyom Timofeev**

**Pavel Smirnov**

Moscow 2009

**1.e4 c5 2. ♜f3 ♜c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♜xd4 ♜f6 5. ♜c3 e5 6. ♜db5 d6 7. ♜g5 a6 8. ♜a3 b5 9. ♜d5 ♜e7 10. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 11.c4 b4 12. ♜c2 0-0 13. ♜e2 a5 14.0-0 ♜g5 15. ♜d3 ♜e6 16. ♜fd1 ♜xd5 17. cxd5 ♜b8 18. ♜e3 ♜d7**

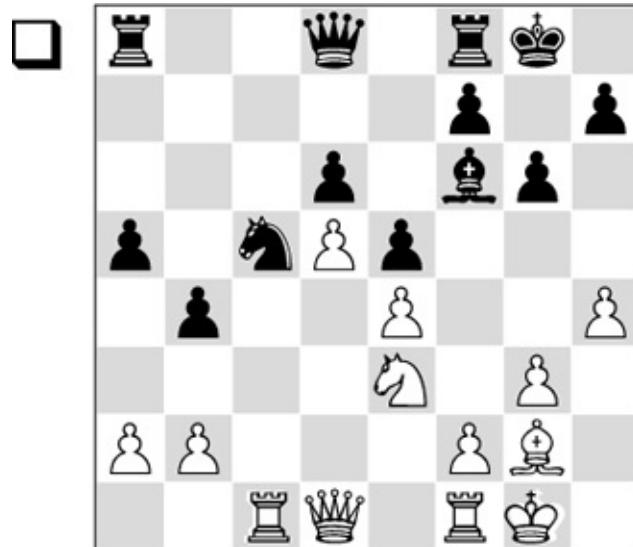


**19. ♜ac1!? ♜c5 20. ♜xc5**

A less obvious sac, though it eliminates the strong knight. There is no pawn as compensation here, only a passed d-pawn. True, the position is closed for the moment – no space or open files for the

black rooks – but to venture this sac you need to have some grandmasterly vision, or at least be familiar with similar examples.

Perhaps Timofeev was inspired by the following game:



Predojevic-Roiz, Moscow 2006

20.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$ ?  $dxc5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$ , featuring the same sac in the same opening.

Still, familiarity with the idea is no guarantee in a real game, as Marin's article in *Informant 116* proves. Shortly after having studied similar exchange sacrifices to the one in this game, he failed to apply the idea in his own game against Ponomariov. What stopped him? It left Marin wondering as well: 'I almost never miss a chance to sacrifice the exchange, even if it is half-correct.' Perhaps every now and then, materialism does prevail.

20...  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$

The immediate 20... $dxc5$  grants the knight a terrific square, of course: 21.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$ .

21.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3!?$

Consistent.

21...  $dxc5$  22.  $d6!$

Taking on c5 would increase Black's activity, whereas now the passed d-pawn limits Black's possibilities.

22...  $\mathbb{Q}b6$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$

Here or on the next move, d6-d7 would have been logical.

24...  $\mathbb{Q}h8$  25.  $h4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $c4$

Now Black creates some counterplay, though eventually it proved insufficient.

27.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}dd8$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $c3$  29.  $bxc3$   $f6$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $bxc3$  31.  $d7$   $a4$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}xa4$   $\mathbb{Q}b2$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  34.  $g3$   $\mathbb{Q}fd8$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  36.  $h5$   $h6$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}e2$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf8$  41.  $d8\mathbb{Q}$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4+$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$

1-0

## Another Obvious One?

**Jan Timman**

**Guillermo Garcia Gonzales**

Wijk aan Zee 1979

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4. e5 c5 5. a3  $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$  6.  $bxc3$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  8. a4 b6 9.  $\mathbb{Q}b5+$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}bc6$  11. 0-0 h6 12.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$  c4 13.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  0-0-0 14.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$



**15. ♜d6**

Timman: ‘Played without thinking. 15. ♜b4 with the threat of a4-a5 would have been better, and would have given White a clear advantage.’

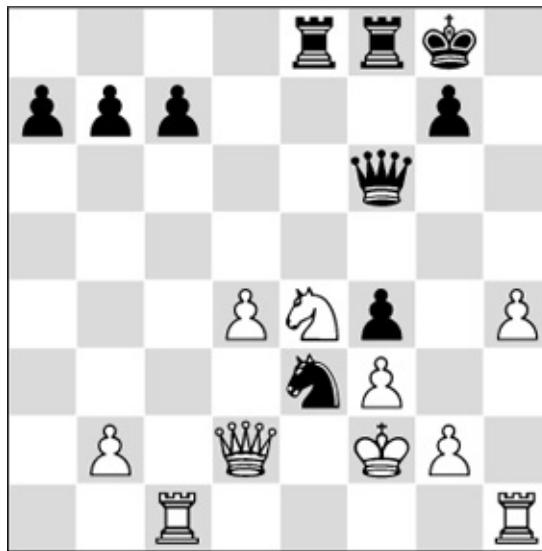
**15... ♜xd6**

‘Without hesitation Garcia seized the opportunity. In this way White loses his most dominant piece and his foremost pawn, and the weakness of his queenside will make itself felt. Black has more than sufficient compensation for the exchange.’

**16. exd6 ♜xd6 17. ♜fe1 f6 18. g3 g5 19. ♜f1 h5 20. ♜e2 ♜d7**

Timman was more afraid of 20... ♜f7, keeping the option of bringing the bishop to g6 later. Being the better player, Timman still gradually got the better of the position, though eventually a long game ended in a draw.

This story, and Marin’s, reminded me of a game of mine against Twan Burg (when he was younger, not the grandmaster he is today), where I also missed an obvious exchange sac, seizing a central knight. Though it all ended well for me, at the time I was annoyed and puzzled about missing the opportunity:



28.... ♜xe4! 29. fxe4 ♜g6! would have been nice, Burg-Van de Oudeweetering, Amsterdam 2005.

## Seizing the Centre

**Oleg Korneev  
Veselin Topalov**

Spain tt 1999

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.f3 e6 7.♗e3 b5 8.♗d2 ♗bd7 9.0-0-0 ♗b7 10.g4 h6 11.♗d3 ♗e5 12.♗he1 ♗c8 13.♗fd7 14.f4 ♗c4 15.♗xc4 ♗xc4 16.f5 e5 17.♗f3 ♗a8 18.b3



**18... ♗xe4**

Topalov wouldn't be Topalov if he hadn't sacrificed the exchange here.

18... ♗xc3 19.♗xc3 ♗xe4 fails to the surprising 20.♗xe5!! (White turns it into a rook sacrifice). Now we also notice Black's king in the middle due to a general lack of development: 20...dxe5 (20...dxe5 21.♗d4) 21.♗xd7 ♗xd7 22.♗d1+ ♗d6 23.♗xe5 ♗c6 24.♗c5.

**19.♗xe4 ♗xe4 20.♗g1?**

After this move Black manages to develop comfortably. There was still a clever way to profit from Black's lack in development: 20.♗d4! ♗xf3 21.♗xe5! could have cast doubt on Black's 18th move, though after 21...♗xe5 22.♗xe5+ ♗d7 23.♗de1 ♗c6 Black is still alive.

**20... ♗e7 21.♗f2 0-0 22.♗e3?**

White should do something about his knight on g1: 22.♗e2, though Black still has the better position.

**22... ♗f6 23.♗h4 ♗c6! 24.♗e2**

Of course, 24.♗xf6 ♗xc2+ 25.♗b2 ♗xf6 is not an option.

**24... ♗c8 25.♗b2 d5**

Having made five consecutive developing moves, Black now starts to mobilize the central pawn majority that resulted from his exchange sac, and soon wins.

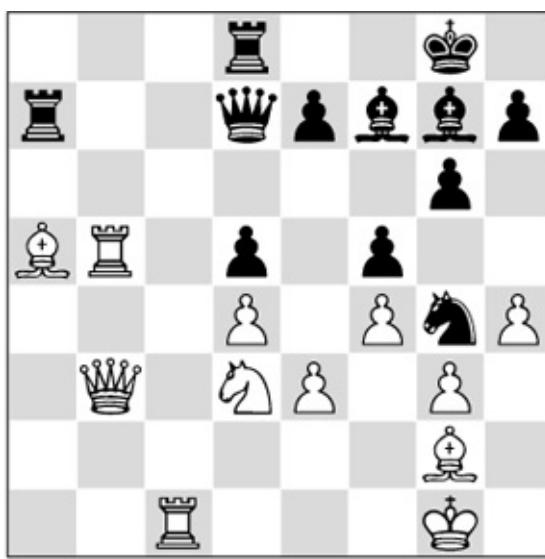
**26.♗xf6 ♗xf6 27.c3 ♗g5 28.♗g3 d4 29.cxd4 exd4 30.♗de1 d3 31.♗xe4 ♗c1+**

**0-1**

## Changing the Dynamics

**Loek van Wely  
Didier Collas**

France tt 2013



With the exception of the g4-knight, Black's pieces are rather passive, whereas White's pieces are busy invading the queenside.

Rather than sit back and watch the white pieces entering his position, Black now grabs his chance to change the dynamics of the position and sacrifices the exchange, gaining a pawn in return while activating his pieces.

**30... ♜xa5**

After 30... ♜da8 31. ♜xd5 White will have a hard time converting the extra pawn, for example after 31... ♛e8. Still, apparently Black was not looking forward to that.

**31. ♜xa5 ♛xe3 32. ♜e5 ♛xe5**

Now White is faced with a choice.

**33. dxe5**

33.fxe5 would leave the f7-bishop behind bars. Perhaps Van Wely was afraid of 33...f4 34.gxf4 ♜xg2, but 35. ♜xg2 ♛g4+ 36. ♛g3 ♛e2+ 37. ♛f2 ♛g4+ 38. ♛h2 ♜e6 39. ♜a3 seems to stop Black's counterplay. Still, there's nothing wrong with the text move.

**33... d4**

33... ♜xg2 34. ♜xg2 d4 was the better move order, though Black only seems to be playing for one result here: a draw.

**34. ♜d3**

The unexpected 34. ♜b6! turns out to be winning: 34... ♜c4 (or 34... ♜xg2 35. ♜a7! ♛e8 36. ♜cc7!) 35. ♜xd8+ ♛xd8 36. ♜a8 ♛xa8 37. ♜xa8, and with the queens off the passed d-pawn alone is not strong enough to organize sufficient counterplay.

**34... ♜xg2 35. ♜xg2 ♜d5+ 36. ♜f2 ♜e4 37. ♜c4+ ♜f8 38. e6 ♜b7 39. ♜b5 ♜a7 40. ♜c7 ♜a2+ 41. ♜e1 ♜a8 42. ♜e5 ♜g8 43. ♜b8+ ♜xb8 44. ♜xb8+ ♜g7 45. ♜e5+ ♜h6 46. ♜xd4 ♜xe6 47. ♜e3 ♜a2**

Now the pawn and the vulnerable white king seem to give Black sufficient compensation, but with some hard work Van Wely eventually managed to win.

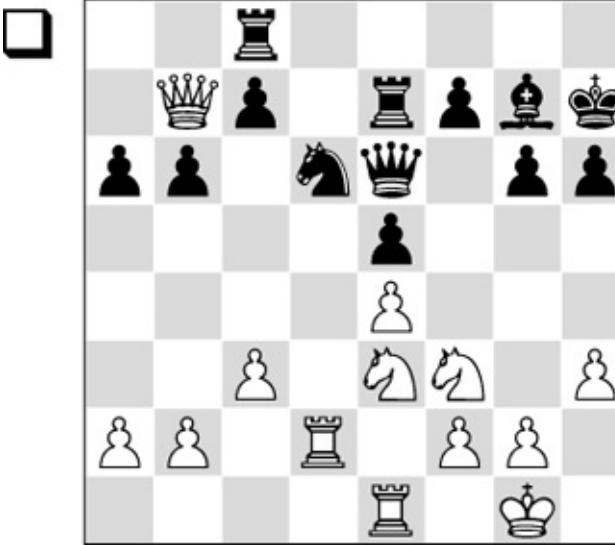
## A Positional Bind

As you may have noticed by now, there are many ways to sacrifice the exchange and many types of compensation for it. We finish with two successful examples by Caruana., which are quite different from one another, though both start with a plain capture.

**Fabiano Caruana**

**Vassily Ivanchuk**

Thessaloniki 2013



Here Caruana had prepared...

**24.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6!$   $\mathbf{cxd6}$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xa6$**

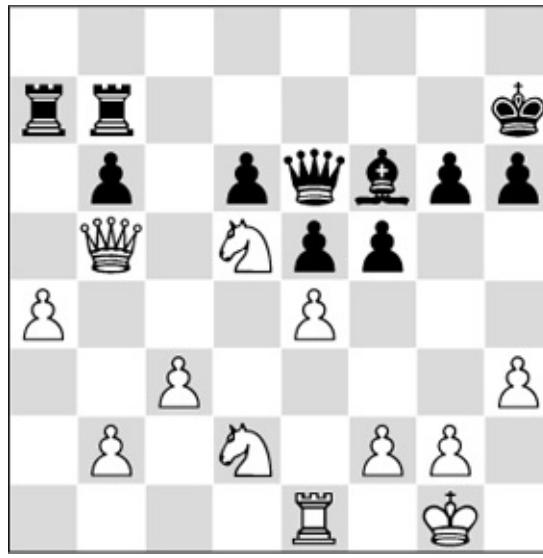
... after which he had gained a pawn and a beautiful stronghold on d5 for the knight in return. The black rooks have no open files to become active, and the b6-pawn is weak. Furthermore, the bishop on g7 is bad. Ample compensation, you would say.

**25...  $\mathbb{R}cc7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{R}a7$  27.  $\mathbb{B}b5$   $\mathbb{R}eb7$  28.  $a4$   $f5$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$**

Maintaining the blockade on the light squares, so Ivanchuk now tries to transfer his bishop to a better position with...

**29...  $\mathbb{B}f6$**

... which allows a tactical manoeuvre. However, moves such as 29...h5 or 29...fxe4 would not have changed the assessment of the position.



**30.  $\mathbb{B}e8$   $\mathbb{B}e7$  31.  $c4$**

31.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$  might have been a more ingenious try to maintain the bind.

**31...  $\mathbb{B}g8$  32.  $\mathbb{B}c6$   $\mathbb{B}d8$  33.  $b3$   $\mathbb{B}d7!?$**

A smart defensive sacrifice.

**34.  $\mathbb{B}xd7$   $\mathbb{R}xd7$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $\mathbb{R}db7$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}c8$   $\mathbb{R}a6$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$**

Forced, otherwise Black would withdraw his bishop to f8 and trap the c8-knight.

**37...  $\mathbb{R}xe7$**

At the cost of another pawn Black has rid himself of his bad bishop, while his rooks have more space. Still, it doesn't prove to be enough, as Caruana solidly converts his advantage.

**38.  $\mathbb{R}e3$   $\mathbb{B}g7$  39.  $\mathbb{R}d3$   $\mathbb{R}b7$  40.  $\mathbb{W}f1$   $\mathbb{R}ab6$  41.  $\mathbb{W}e2$   $\mathbb{B}f6$  42.  $\mathbb{W}d1$   $\mathbb{B}e6$  43.  $\mathbb{W}c2$   $h5$  44.  $f3$   $\mathbb{B}f6$  45.  $\mathbb{W}c3$   $\mathbb{R}a6$  46.  $\mathbb{R}d5$   $\mathbb{B}g5$**

47.a5 ♜f4 48.b4 ♜g3 49.♕b3 ♜xg2 50.b5 ♛a8 51.♗xd6 ♜xf3 52.a6 ♛g7 53.♕c5 fxe4 54.b6 e3 55.♗f6+

1-0

## A Brutal Attack & a Double Sac

Sergey Karjakin  
Fabiano Caruana

Bilbao 2012

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♜c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 b5 6.♗b3 ♜c5 7.c3 d6 8.d4 ♜b6 9.♗e3 0-0 10.♗bd2 ♜b7 11.♗e1 exd4 12.cxd4 ♜b4 13.♗e2 c5 14.a3 ♜c6 15.d5 ♜e7 16.h3 ♛e8 17.♗c2 ♜g6 18.b3 ♜a5 19.♗ab1 ♜c3 20.♗ec1 b4 21.a4 a5 22.♗d3 h6 23.♗d1 ♜a6 24.♗c2 ♛a7 25.♗h2 ♛ae7 26.g4



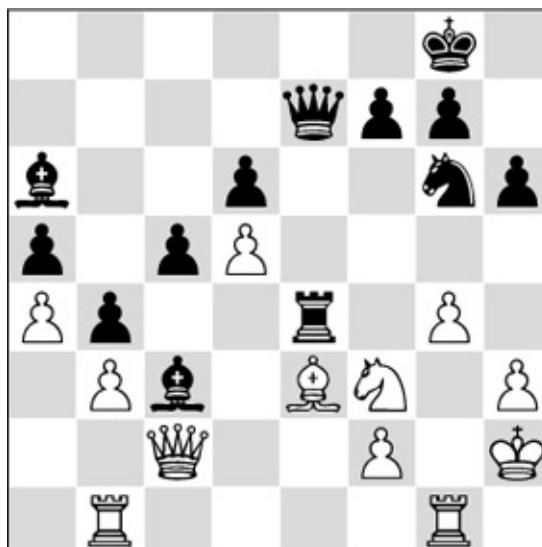
Karjakin had just ventured g2-g4 in an unenviable situation where he had allowed the black bishops to dominate the position. His rooks are an especially sorry sight. Add to this the recent weakening of the kingside, and you know it is time to break things up with an exchange sacrifice.

26... ♜xe4! 27.♗xe4 ♛xe4 28.♗xe4 ♛xe4 29.♗c2 ♗e7!

A very nice concept, preparing a second exchange sacrifice and starting a kingside attack. White can hardly do anything to prevent this.

30.♗g1

Returning the exchange with 30.♗e1 would not bring much comfort as, apart from everything else, White would just be a pawn down.



30... ♜xe3 31.fxe3 ♕xe3

With fewer pieces on the board it is even more apparent that the black bishops are much more powerful than the white rooks.

Do check out two other double exchange sacs in your database: Lilienthal-Ragozin, Moscow 1935, and Watson-Blomqvist, Gibraltar 2015. Also great fun!

32. ♜bf1 ♝e2 33. ♜f5

33. ♜c1 ♜xc1 34. ♜xc1 ♜xf3 is also hopeless.

33... ♜d3

33... ♜h4 34. ♜xh4 ♜e5+.

34. ♜d7 ♜e5+ 35. ♜h1 ♜e4 36. ♜e8+ ♜f8

White resigned.

## Summary

Naturally, not every exchange sac brings such success. It may be a last desperate defensive bid, or it may just lead to a tense struggle (witness, for instance, some of the earlier examples). Anyway, having seen all these examples you will be more likely to spot such opportunities in your own games. Hopefully, it will also contribute to a good feeling for the dynamics in the position and for the relative value of the pieces. I advise you to pay special attention to the activity of the rooks.

# Chapter 11

## Don't Move! (Your Knight)

There are several typical situations where a knight does not move out of the way when it is challenged by a pawn. Instead, development is continued as if nothing happened. The compensation may be bigger than you would think.

### A Crowded Queenside

**Li Chao**

**Rajpara Ankit**

Graz 2014

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.g3 dxс4 6.♗g2 b5 7.0-0 ♘b7 8.♘e5 a6 9.b3



White has just ventured the typical pawn pawn break b2-b3, allowing Black to obtain a protected passed pawn on c3 after...

9...b4

... and if the knight moves then ...c4-c3.

10.bxc4!?

A full piece without apparent compensation! It's a truly brilliant idea though, as it turns out that White can develop a strong initiative. Until today, no one has yet dared to repeat this, mostly preferring the natural 10.♗a4 instead.

10...bxc3 11.♗b1 ♗a7

After the more natural 11...♗c7 White continues with 12.♗b3, when Black faces the same problems, for example: 12...♗a7 13.♗f4, whereas backward development with 12...♗c8 can be answered with the calm 13.c5! ♘e7 14.♘c4 with moves like ♘b6 and ♘f4 looming, while the normal 14...♗bd7 fails to 15.♗f4 ♗d8 16.♗xc6.

11...♗c8 runs into the witty 12.♗b3 ♗a7 13.♗b6!.

12.♘e3 ♘d6

12...♘e7 13.d5 c5 14.♗a4+ ♘bd7 15.dxe6, and White already wins back material.

13.d5 c5 14.♗a4+ ♘bd7



**15.dxe6 fxe6 16.Qxb7**

16.Qxd7 Qxd7 17.Qxd7+ Qxd7 18.Qxb7 is the obvious and safe choice, leaving White slightly better. Li Chao wants to continue in style.

**16... Qxe5 17.Qxc5 Qxb7 18.Qxb7 Qc8 19.Qa7 Qxc5!?**

Returning some material to reduce the pressure.

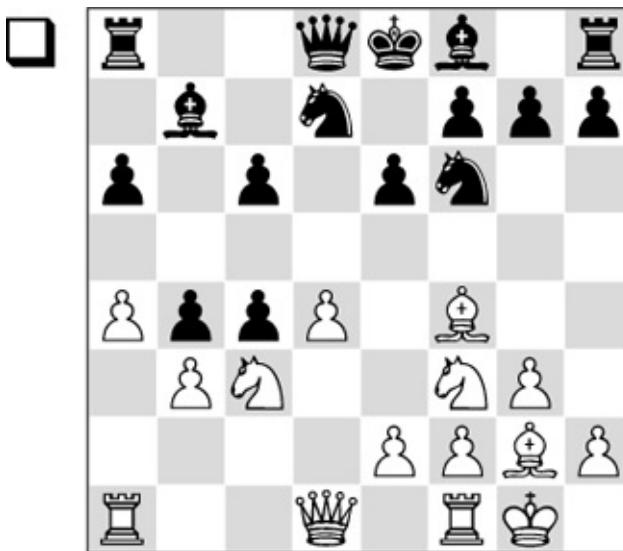
**20.Qa8+ Qe7 21.Qxh8**

Black should be OK here with his active pieces and passed c-pawn. The game ended in a draw after what looks to have been a hectic time scramble.

**21... Qe4 22.Qxh7 Qd2 23.Qd1 Qd4 24.e3 Qf6 25.Qh8 Qf5 26.Qc8 Qe4 27.Qxd2 cxd2 28.Qb4+ Qf7 29.Qxd2 Qe5 30.Qc7+ Qg6 31.Qd1 Qf3+ 32.Qg2 Qe1+ 33.Qf1 Qh1+ 34.Qe2 Qf3+ 35.Qd2 Qc3+ 36.Qc1 Qb2+ 37.Qd2 Qc3+ 38.Qc1 Qb2+ 39.Qd2 Qc3+**

½-½

It turns out that this inspired idea has been tried before, albeit in a much less favourable version. It happened in Rogers-Wallace, Australia 1993:



11.bxc4 bxc3 12.Qb3 Qa7 13.c5, but after 13...a5 White's initiative turned out to be insufficient. Obviously, a2-a4 has been less useful here than Qe5 in the main game.

## Classic Preparation

Li Chao's Qb1 reminded me of a well-known example where an attack on the c3-knight was ignored

in favour of rapid development:

## Alexander Alekhine

### Max Euwe

Netherlands Wch m 1937 (6)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qc3 dxc4 4.e4 e5 5.Qxc4 exd4



6.Qf3!?

'A fantastic move (...) which could have been thought up only by Alekhine' (Kasparov). Now Euwe immediately went wrong with

6...b5?

'A nervous reply' were the polite words of Eliskases in his analysis. Euwe admitted he had overlooked White's reply.

6...dxc3 7.Qxf7+ Qe7 8.Qb3 would lead to an irresistible attack according to Alekhine, and indeed after 8...Qf6 9.e5 the only move is 9...Qe4, preventing the bishop check on g5. After 10.0-0 Qa6 11.Qc4 Black is struggling. Of course, this is pretty complex with limited time over the board. However, one year later a Russian amateur called Goncharov published a widely quoted analysis of the counter-intuitive 8...cxb2! 9.Qxb2 Qb6!, which was presumed to yield Black a big advantage. Yet, after 10.Qa3+ c5 11.Qxg8 Qxg8 12.Qxg8 (12.Qxc5+ Qxc5 13.0-0 Qh5!! 14.Qxg8 Qe6 15.Qh8 Qc6 locking the white queen was one of Goncharov's ideas) 12...Qa5+ 13.Qd2 Qxa3 14.0-0 Qe6 15.Qxh7 Qc6 16.Qf3 Black is far from winning.

According to Eliskases, Euwe could have coped out with 6...Qc5 7.0-0 Qf6.

7.Qxb5 Qa6 8.Qb3! Qe7

8...Qxb5 9.Qxf7+ Qd7 10.Qxd4! with a winning attack.

9.0-0 Qxb5 10.Qb5 Qf6

10...cxb5? 11.Qd5.

11.Qc4 Qbd7 12.Qxd4

... and Alekhine was a pawn up with an overwhelming position, dealing Euwe an important blow on the way to his revenge for the 1935 match.

## King in the Middle

### Vladimir Fedoseev

### Oleg Korneev

Taganrog 2015

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.Qg5 h6 6.Qh4 dxcc4 7.e4 g5 8.Qg3 b5 9.Qe2 Qb7 10.0-0 Qbd7 11.Qe5 Qg7 12.Qxd7 Qxd7 13.Qd6 Qf8 14.Qxf8 Qxf8 15.e5



15...f5

A new try, as 15...Qb6 can be met with 16.Qe4, but after...

16.b3 b4?!

... Korneev was surprised by...

17.Qxc4! bxc3 18.Qh5+ Qf7

18...Qe7 19.Qxh6 is certainly not better.

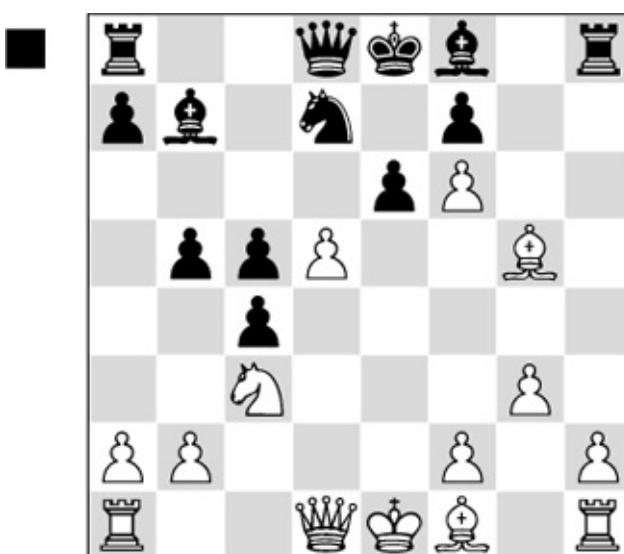
19.Qxe6 Qe7 20.Qc4 Qf8 21.Qxh6+ Qg8

Now the talented young Russian coolly collected another pawn with...

22.Qac1

Winning back the piece with 22.e6 Qh7 23.exd7+ Qh8 24.Qae1 Qae1 would have sufficed as well.  
White won.

In these Semi-Slav lines sometimes ...b5-b4 can also be just a tactical error:



13...b4? 14.Qxc4! (Wells-Durao, London 1986) 14...bxc3 15.dxe6 Qxh1 (15...fxe6 16.f7+) 16.exf7 mate!

Or this position,



where Radjabov-Cheparinov, Sochi 2008, saw 15...b4? 16.♗xc4!, and 16...bxc3 fails to 17.♗d3!, winning the queen.

But let's stick to strategic examples.

**Alexander Moiseenko**

**Evgeny Sharapov**

Alushta 2010

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 dxс4 7.e4 g5 8.♗g3 b5 9.e5 ♘d5 10.♘d2 h5 11.h4 g4 12.♘de4 ♘d7 13.f3 ♘g8 14.fxg4 ♘xg4 15.♗f3 b4



**16.♗xc4!?** bxc3 17.0-0 ♘g7?

Black wrongly opts for passive defence. Allowing your opponent to capture with his queen on f7 after 17...♗b6 is frightening, yet after 18.♗xf7+ ♘d8 White suddenly has to protect a lot of things. Black's rook is playing an active role here.

18.bxc3 is a better choice, though Black can strike with 18...♗xc3! 19.♘d6+ (19.♘xc3? ♘xd4+) 19...♗xd6 20.♗xf7+ ♘d8 21.exd6 ♘xd4+ 22.♗h2 ♘g7, and White's compensation can hardly be adequate.

**18.bxc3**

Now White has got what he wanted: typical long-term compensation due to his space advantage and lead in development. Black's pieces are still tied down.

**18...♗e7?**

A pointless move, so it seems. Black should develop his queenside, though his life is not easy, for example: 18... $\mathbb{Q}a5$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  21. $\mathbb{Q}g5!$ .

19. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}7b6$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $cxd5$  21. $\mathbb{Q}h8+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  22. $\mathbb{Q}f6+$

Black is hopelessly lost.

22... $\mathbb{Q}e7$  23. $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $\mathbb{Q}xg3$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$  25. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  26. $h5$

Black resigned.

## Backward Kingside Development

It is time to look at a different kind of position, though with the same pattern of course!

**Ian Rogers**

**Christopher Ward**

England tt 1997/98

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4. $\mathbb{Q}c2$  d5 5.a3  $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$  6. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  7. $\mathbb{Q}c2$  c5 8. $dxc5$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  9. $cxd5$   $exd5$  10. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  11.b4 0-0 12. $\mathbb{Q}b2$  b6



13.b5  $\mathbb{Q}xc5!$ ?

Again, seeking the attack making use of a lead in development.

14. $bxc6$   $\mathbb{Q}a5+$  15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}ab8$

15... $\mathbb{Q}g3$  16. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}xh1$  18.c7!, and while Black's knight will be lost, the c7-pawn still lives: 18...a5 19.g4!  $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  20. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}fc8$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}a7$  22. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ .

16.c7  $\mathbb{Q}xc7$

16... $\mathbb{Q}b3$ !? maintaining the threat of taking on d2, is hard to believe but still messy: 17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$  (17.0-0-0  $\mathbb{Q}xd2$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$   $\mathbb{Q}xa3$ ; 17. $\mathbb{Q}c1$  c4) 17...c4 18.e3  $\mathbb{Q}e8$ .

17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Now White only needs a few moves to develop his kingside, while Black's initiative is hard to detect.

18...d4

Doubling on the b-file seems logical. For example, 18... $\mathbb{Q}b3$  19.e3  $\mathbb{Q}fb8$  20. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$ ! still leaves White with some development problems, but 19.f3! first seems to do the trick.

19.f3  $\mathbb{Q}g6$



**20.e4?**

Too eager to develop. It seems that first 20.  $\mathbb{R}c1$  was the strongest possibility, activating the rook with tempo: 20...  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  21. e4.

20...  $\mathbb{d}xe3$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{R}xb2!$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$   $\mathbb{R}b8$

Suddenly White is dead lost!

23.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$

23.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  runs into 23...  $\mathbb{R}b3$ .

23...  $\mathbb{Q}a5+$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{R}xb5$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  h6 26.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$

Now Black is even materially fine, while White still has to solve his kingside development. However, Ward did not manage to make the most of his c-pawn, and Rogers escaped with a draw.

26...  $\mathbb{R}b2$  27. h4 c4 28.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$  29.  $\mathbb{R}h3$   $\mathbb{R}e2$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  31.  $\mathbb{R}c1$  h5 32.  $\mathbb{R}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $axb6$  34.  $\mathbb{R}c1$   $\mathbb{R}a2$  35.  $\mathbb{R}c3$  b5 36. g4 hxg4 37. fxg4 f6 38.  $\mathbb{R}h2$   $\mathbb{R}a1+$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{R}g1$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$

½-½

Here is another example where Black manages to attack with only few pieces:

**Nathan Zilberman**

**Dmitry Kaimov**

Cheliabinsk 1975

1. d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. c4 e6 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4. e3 c5 5.  $\mathbb{Q}ge2$  cxd4 6. exd4 0-0 7. a3  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  8. g3 d5 9. c5 b6 10. b4 a5 11.  $\mathbb{R}b1$   $axb4$  12.  $axb4$   $bxc5$  13.  $dxc5$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{R}b8$



White was invited to advance his queenside majority:

15.b5 ♜xc5! 16.bxc6 ♜xb1 17.♘xb1 ♜b6 18.♗e3?!

After 18.♘bc3 ♜xf2+ 19.♔f1 ♜a6 20.♘f3 ♜c5 Black gains a third pawn for the piece. Returning the piece immediately with 18.0-0 ♜xb1 19.♗e3 is not satisfactory either after 19...♜xd1 20.♝xd1 ♜xe3 21.fxe3 ♜a6 22.♘d4 ♜c8, but both moves are stronger than the text.

18... ♜xe3 19.fxe3 ♜g4! 20.0-0

This loses. Already White had to be very resourceful to stay alive: 20.♘f3 ♜xe3 21.♗a4 ♜xb1+ (instead, the engine suggests that not grabbing the piece with 21...♜a6 is winning!) 22.♘f2 ♜b6 23.♗d4, though it is clear that Black stays on top.

20... ♜xe3+ 21.♘h1 ♜a6 22.♗bc3 ♜f2+ 23.♗xf2 ♜g1 ♜xg1+ 25.♗xg1 ♜c8

Here the strongest continuation would have been 25...♜xe2 26.♗xe2 ♜c8 27.♘d4 ♜f8, and now 28.♔f1 is met by 28...e5. In the game the c-pawn even became a danger before a draw was reached.

## Nothing New under the Sun

**Alexey Fedorov**

**Michael Adams**

Pula Ech-tt 1997

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♘f3 g5 4.d4



4...g4 5.♗xf4!?

Similar to the age-old Muzio Gambit: 4.♘c4 g4 5.0-0. As always, the knight does not move an inch, and development is preferred.

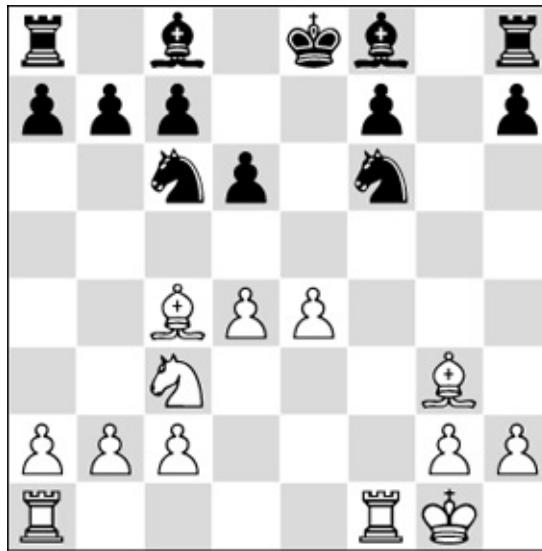
5...gx f3 6.♗xf3 d6 7.♘c3 ♜c6 8.♘c4

8.0-0-0 has been ventured once by Morozevich. I really wonder whether he will be able to breathe new life in this line. 8.♗b5 is the latest try: 8...a6 9.♘xc6+ bxc6 10.0-0 ♜e7?! 11.♗g5 ♜e6, and now 12.♗ae1 would have been simple and strong, although 12.d5 brought White a smooth victory in Zelbel-C.Richter, Germany 2013.

8... ♜h4+

8... ♜xd4 9.♗xf7+ ♜xf7 10.♗h5+ ♜g7 is a valid alternative.

9.♗g3 ♜f6 10.♗xf6 ♜xf6 11.0-0



Amazingly, even with the queens off White's quick development turns out to provide sufficient compensation.

**11...Qxd4**

As the natural 11...Qe7 will be answered with 12.e5, Adams decides to return the piece.

**12.Qxf6 Qe6 13.Qd3 Qg7 14.Qff1 Qc6 15.Qd5 0-0-0 16.c3**

White's position is easy to play – he has a little more space, but the position should be equal. In the end Fedorov still managed to steal this endgame from Adams.

### Summary

An early attack on the knight should not be taken for granted by either side. The march of the attacking pawn has taken some time. As a result, backward development may take its toll and justify a knight sac by the opponent. The long-term compensation is not always obvious, but be patient and, as always, a vulnerable king should trigger you!

## Chapter 12

# Open up! (the Centre)

Undoubling your opponent's weak centre pawns? Probably this is not your first thought – certainly not if you consider that you will be a pawn down afterwards. Still, this is a not uncommon way to activate pieces.

## Crashing Through in the Middle

Daniil Dubov

Laurent Fressinet

Yerevan Ech-tt 2014

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 g6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  d5 4. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  5. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  6.cxd5 c6 7.e4 cxd5 8.exd5 0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$



Fressinet is faced with an unusual approach in a Grünfeld sideline. Now, instead of trying to besiege the d5-pawn (starting with ... $\mathbb{Q}a6$  or ... $\mathbb{Q}d7-b6$ ), he chooses an active solution.

9...e6!?

Of course, Black was a pawn down, but you could hardly credit White's isolated doubled d-pawn with two full points. So we may well call this the real sacrifice.

10.dxe6  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$

10...fxe6!? (stopping the d4-pawn) 11. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  12. $\mathbb{Q}d1$  e5!? is also very interesting, opening up the position for the bishops.

11.d5

Without this advance White cannot develop his kingside.

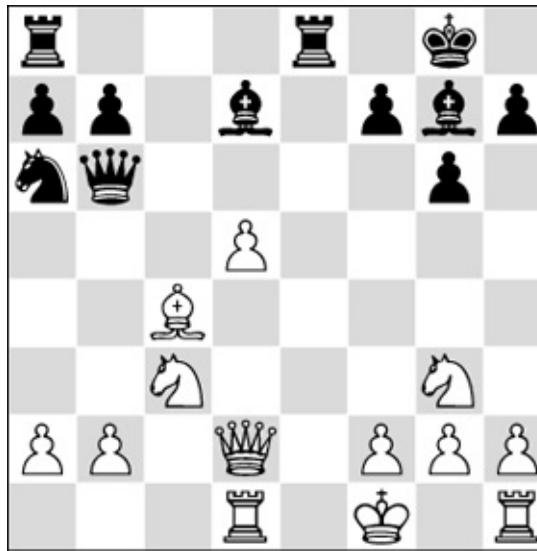
11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  12. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}d4!$

Persistently trying to hamper White's development.

14. $\mathbb{Q}c4$

14. $\mathbb{Q}ge4!?$ .

14... $\mathbb{Q}e8+$  15. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$  16. $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$



Black is doing perfectly fine. White has to be careful – his h1-rook has to be brought into play pretty soon, otherwise he will be one down in the centre.

17.d6  $\mathbb{Q}ac8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  19.h4  $\mathbb{Q}cd8$  20.h5  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  21.hxg6 hxg6 22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c4+$  23. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  24. $\mathbb{Q}ce4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$  26. $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  27. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  28. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  29. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  31. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  32. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  34. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  35. $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  36. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  37. $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  38. $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  39. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  40. $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  41. $\mathbb{Q}f3$

½-½

Perhaps you know this idea from the Panov variation in the Caro Kann, but here is yet another Grünfeld, from the early years.

### Samuel Reshevsky

### Laszlo Szabo

Zurich Candidates' 1953

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 g6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  d5 4. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  5.e3 0-0 6. $\mathbb{Q}b3$  c5 7.cxd5 cxd4 8.exd4



8...e6!?

Yes! Dynamic chess is of all times. ‘This gambit is based on the fact that White has not one kingside piece developed yet. Black seeks to destroy the enemy pawn centre and create threats against the king’, Bronstein wrote in his famous tournament book. In his comments Bronstein also refers to a book on the Grünfeld Defence by Trifunovic from 1951. My dry database tells me that Szabo’s countryman Gedeon Barcza had played this at least twice before and Szabo must have known about this. The move was already played in Grau-Mikenas, Buenos Aires ol 1939.

Najdorf, in his less famous book on the tournament, claims that the customary continuation was 8...

$\mathbb{Q}bd7$ . This seems to be a sound move.

**9.dxe6**

9.d6 is a standard reply, boycotting Black's plans. In the 1970s two other Hungarians (Barczay and Honfi) reacted successfully with 9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$  10. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$ , and the d6-pawn is lost anyway.

**9... $\mathbb{Q}c6$**

9... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  10. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  is the other way to sacrifice a second pawn. Somewhat surprisingly, Black has several reasonable options here. For example, 10... $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  (or 10... $\mathbb{Q}e8$  11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$ ) 11. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$  (11. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  12. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$ ) 11... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  12. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}bxsd7$ .

**10.exf7+  $\mathbb{Q}h8$  11. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  13. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$**



According to Bronstein, this position was in Trifunovic' book, and Najdorf wrote that it had been studied by Hungarian masters. Neither of them gives a verdict here, though Bronstein stated earlier that the sacrifice of two pawns would yield insufficient compensation.

**14. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  15. $\mathbb{Q}c4$**

**15. $\mathbb{Q}d4!?$ .**

**15... $\mathbb{Q}d7$**

Losing time, when Black should be aiming for quick development: 'Szabo's first independent move of the game and it loses immediately.' (Bronstein)

15... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  16. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}ac8$  17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$  (17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$  – Bronstein – 17... $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  gives Black some activity as compensation) 17... $\mathbb{Q}h5$  18.h3  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  is a better continuation according to Najdorf, but it hardly seems to give Black sufficient play for the lost material after 19. $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ .

**16.h3 b5 17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  19. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  a6 20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}ac8$  21. $\mathbb{Q}a3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  22.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$**

The other capture 22... $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  also loses. For example: 23. $\mathbb{Q}xb2$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  24. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}b7$   $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  27. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$ .

**23. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xa6$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  26. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  28. $\mathbb{Q}cd1$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  29.b3  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  30. $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  31. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  32. $\mathbb{Q}d5+$**

1-0

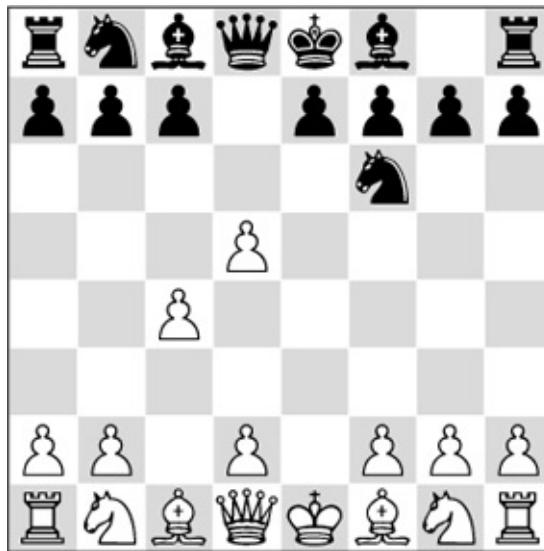
## More Hungarian Preparation

**Björn Thorsteinsson**

**Laszlo Binet Tapaszto**

Tel Aviv ol 1964

**1.e4 d5 2.exd5  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  3.c4**



**3...c5!?**

What's this? 3...c6 is a common move, when play may transpose to the Panov after 4.d4. Or else, 3...e6 aka the Icelandic Gambit, which yet had to be born at the time of this game. Ah, wait a minute! The black player avoids the Panov and prepares the Icelandic Gambit (avant la lettre)!

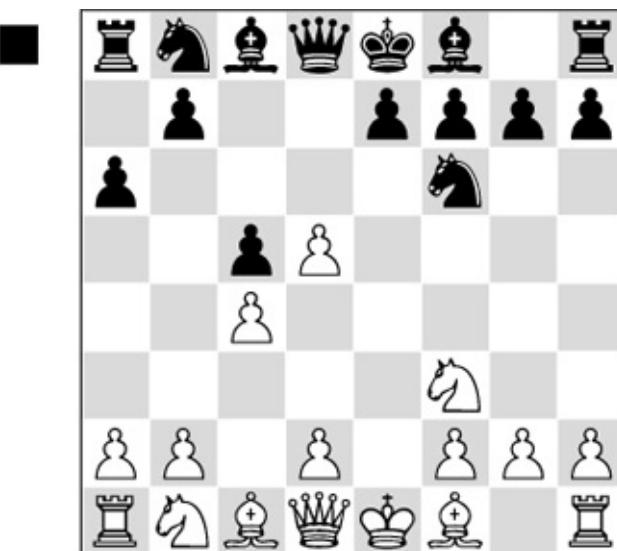
**4.Qf3 e6**

Yes, there we have it – the subject of this chapter. Black strives for quick development, having established some control over the centre first.

**5.dxe6 ♜xe6 6.d4**

This was not an occasional outing in the repertoire of the Venezuelan player. It appears that before the Hungarian revolution in 1956 he was still participating in tournaments with the likes of Szabo and Barcza – as a Hungarian, obviously. At that time his opponents decided to live with a backward d-pawn: 6.d3 ♜c6 7.♗e2 ♛d7 8.0-0 0-0-0 (Black chooses the sharpest option, but this also provides White with a clear goal: the black king! Developing quietly with castling kingside would give Black some positional compensation. However, Binet Tapaszto preferred the more double-edged set-up) 9.a3 (9.♗a4, Erdy-Binet Tapaszto, Budapest 1955) 9...♝d6 10.♗c3 h6 11.b4, Szily-Binet Tapaszto, Budapest 1954, and although Black survived the onslaught, White should be clearly better here – his attack is already starting to run.

OK, funny story, but the opening idea is not to be taken seriously, is it?



analysis diagram

With ...a7-a6 extra, this was Tiviakov-Fier, Izmir 2013, which arose after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 a6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 ♘f6 5.c4. The game continued with 5...e6 (of course) 6.dxe6 ♘xe6 7.b3 ♘c6 8.♗e2 ♗c7 9.♗b2 0-0-0. Again, double-edged to say the least, but again Black triumphed in the end.

6...cx d4 7.♗xd4 ♘c5 8.♗e3 ♘g4?!

Black wants to preserve the bishop, but loses valuable time for development. Two rounds later he improved with 8...♗b6 9.♗xe6 ♗xe6 10.♗e2 ♘xe3 11.♗xe3 ♗xe3+ 12.fxe3, Kupper-Binet Tapaszto, Tel Aviv ol 1964, and now normal development with 12...0-0 to make use of the central open files would have given Black reasonable play.

9.♗e2 ♘xe2 10.♗xe2 0-0 11.♗c2 ♗b6 12.0-0

And White was a full pawn up with no development problems whatsoever.

It would take more than 20 years before the white player's fellow countrymen introduced the genuine (accelerated) Icelandic Gambit.

### Grant Bucher Throstur Thorhallsson

Reykjavik Ech-tt 2015

1.e4 c5 2.f4 d5 3.exd5 ♘f6 4.♗b5+ ♘d7 5.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 6.c4



6...e6

A very similar position, of course, but this is well-established opening theory in a Sicilian sideline. The black player here being one of the inventors of the Icelandic Gambit.

7.♗e2

One alternative is 7.dxe6 ♗xe6+ 8.♗e2 ♘c6 9.♗xe6+ fxe6 10.♘a3 ♘b4 11.♘h3 (protecting the f4-pawn, but this is not a natural developing move) 11...♘d3+ 12.♗e2 0-0-0, and also in the endgame Black's compensation is fine.

7...♗d6 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.d3 ♘c6 10.♗f3 0-0 11.0-0 ♕ae8 12.♗c3 e5!



Here we witness a positional approach: quick development, rooks on central files, and only now does Black want to open up the position.

**13.f5**

13.fxe5 ♜xe5 14.♕xe5 ♜xe5! and White is in big trouble. All Black's pieces are alive and kicking, while White's extra pawn is a measly backward one on d3. With the text move White returns the pawn, but keeps the black pieces out of the door.

**13... ♜xf5**

13... ♜d4 14.♗d1 ♜xf5 has also been tried.

**14.♕g5 ♜g6**

14...e4 is the logical follow-up, with an equal game after 15.dxe4 ♜xe4 16.♗ae1!, Short-Kasparov, Paris (rapid) 1990. The text move keeps the position more unbalanced, but it is hardly any more promising for Black.

**15.♕xf6 ♜xf6 16.♗d5 ♜ff8 17.♗ae1 ♜h5 18.♗e4 ♜f7 19.♗h4 ♜g6 20.♗e4 ♜h5 21.♗h4 ♜g6 22.♗e4 ♜h5 23.♗e3 ♜g6 24.♗e4**

½-½

## Bridges Burnt

**Jan Adamski**

**Andor Lilienthal**

Baku 1964

**1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.cxd5 cxd5 4.exd5 ♜f6 5.♗a4+ ♜bd7 6.♗c3 g6 7.g4 ♜g7 8.g5 ♜h5 9.d4 0-0 10.♗e3 ♜b6 11.♗a5**



**11...e6!**

‘Profiting from White’s backward development’ (Lilienthal). A logical follow-up to Black’s previous play, which was not aimed at winning back the d5-pawn. Later on Black’s set-up also featured in other games, with Kortchnoi’s defeat as White against Salov as a prominent example.

**12.dxe6**

‘?’ – Lilienthal, who prefers 12.♘ge2.

**12...♝xe6 13.♞ge2**

White’s position is not easy to handle. The extra d-pawn is not important yet, and where should he leave his king?

**13...♚c8**

My engine insists on 13...f5, bringing back the knight after 14.gxf6 ♜xf6.

**14.♝g3**

14.♗g2 seems the sounder choice.

**14...♞c4 15.♝xc4 ♜xc4 16.♜c1?**

Essentially leaving the king stuck in the middle. If 16.0-0-0 b6 17.♕a3 a5, followed by ...b6-b5 ‘with an irresistible attack’ (Lilienthal). Still, this would provide a much better hide-out for the white king.

**16...♝g4 17.♝b4 ♜fc8 18.♝xh5 gxh5 19.h3 ♜f3 20.♜g1 ♜xd4! 21.♞xd4 ♜e8+ 22.♛d2 ♜d3#**

**Pinea Rabinovici**

**Erich Eliskases**

Rio de Janeiro 1944

**1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.cxd5 ♜f6 5.♝b5+ ♜bd7 6.♞c3 g6 7.♞f3 ♜g7 8.d6**



**8...0-0!?**

The obvious move would be 8...exd6, which may give White an edge. One example is Alekhine-Feigins, Kemer 1937.

**9.dxe7 ♜xe7+**

And again White's d5-pawn has been traded for Black's e-pawn, albeit in a different fashion. No weaknesses for White here, but Black will be able to occupy the open central files quickly. Bronstein, amongst others, repeated this idea in a slightly different position against Makarichev, Tbilisi 1973. Eliskases, once almost a contender for the world title, now makes it look easy against his weaker opponent.

**10.♗e2 ♘d6 11.0-0 a6 12.♗a4?!**

12.♗xd7 ♗xd7 13.d4.

**12...b5 13.♗c2 ♗b7 14.d4 ♗ae8**

A full pawn up in an IQP position, but already White is having a hard time. His development is simply no match for the immediate threats Black is posing.

14...b4 was even stronger because 15.♘e4 loses after 15...♗xe4 16.♗xe4 ♗fe8.

**15.♗e3?! ♗g4 16.g3? b4 17.♗b1 ♗xf3 18.♘xf3 ♗xe3 19.fxe3 ♗xe3 20.♗f4 ♘xd4**

**0-1**

**Boris Alterman**

**Michael Oratovsky**

Israel 1995

**1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗b4 3.♘d5 ♗e7 4.d4 exd4 5.♘f3**



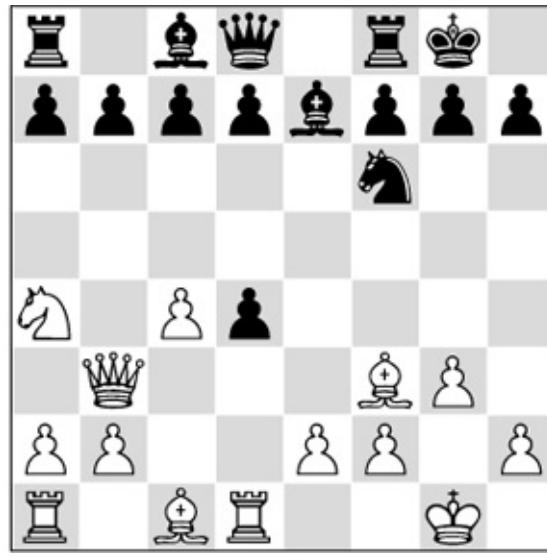
Here Black protected his extra pawn, taking White's strong knight for granted.

**5...c5**

Well, you probably won't hesitate now:

**6.e3 dxе3 7.♗xe3**

Where in the former examples Black left his opponent also with a backward pawn, here on top of that the knight has already been moved forward to the strong square (although it will soon be challenged there). Similar, but with a less centralized knight is:



analysis diagram

Aronian-Giri, Monaco (blindfold) 2011, which saw 11...c5 12.e3 dxе3 13.¤xe3 ♜c7 14.¤c3 a6 with unclear play.

**7...d6 8.¤f4**

8.¤d3 ¤f6 9.¤xe7 ♜xe7 10.0-0 gives White enough compensation, but Black is quite solid.

**8...¤f6 9.¤xe7 ♜xe7+ 10.¤e2 ¤e4**

This looks feeble. Better was 10...¤c6 11.¤xd6 ♜d8, returning the pawn, to answer 12.0-0 with 12...¤e4 only now.

**11.0-0 g5?**

And this is definitely a too optimistic follow-up. White acts appropriately.

**12.¤xg5 ¤xg5 13.¤xd6 ♜e4**

13...¤d8 14.¤e1 ¤e6 15.¤h5 does not leave much room for counterplay either.

**14.¤e1 ¤e6 15.¤g4 ♜d4 16.¤xe6**

16.h4 was also simple enough.

**16...¤xd1 17.¤axd1 ¤xe6 18.f4**

Winning back the piece. White easily won the resulting endgame.

**18...¤c6 19.f5 ¤cd4 20.fxe6 ¤xe6 21.¤xc5**

1-0 (35)

## Summary

This pawn sac is aimed at good old quick development. Instead of trying to regain the material, all attention is focussed on the doubled pawn. This can be a strong alternative. A backward pawn in the opponent's central pawn structure is invariably an asset. There is no need to get carried away looking for a swift attack. Normal developing moves will often supply sufficient compensation.

## Chapter 13

# Sacrificium Universalis: g2-g4!

It does not seem to matter where the kings are, which opening is played – pseudo or real sacrifice: g2-g4 is everywhere.

Moreover, the tendency to play it earlier on in the opening has been steady for quite some time already. However, there are also plenty examples from the old days as well. Here is a small survey.

## Opposite Castling

**Mircea Parligras**

**Felipe El Debs**

Gibraltar 2012

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♜f5 5.♘g3 ♜g6 6.h4 h6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.h5 ♜h7 9.♘d3 ♜xd3 10.♗xd3 e6 11.♘d2 ♘gf6 12.0-0-0 ♜e7 13.♗b1 0-0 14.♘e4 c5



The g2-g4 sac with opposite-side castling isn't confined to the Sicilian. To start with, here is a typical example from the Caro-Kann, which for the last couple of decades has been tried and analysed a lot in very similar positions. The black pawn on h6 makes accepting the sacrifice practically forced, as otherwise g4-g5 will allow White to swiftly open up the kingside and build up an attack.

**15.g4**

15.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 16.g4 is an alternative way to sac the pawn which gained Kamsky a quick win against Seirawan, Saint Louis ch-USA 2012: 16...♗xg4 17.♗e2 ♗h8 18.♗hg1 ♗f6 19.dxc5 ♗c7 20.♗e5 ♗xc5 21.♗xh6! gxh6 22.♗d7, when 22...♗xd7 is met by 23.♗d2 ♗h7 24.♗g4.

**15... ♗xg4 16.♗e2**

The obvious direct move is 16.♗hg1, but this can be met with the typical 16...f5, establishing a blockade on the g-file. The text is a refinement, not only protecting the pawn on f2 but also eyeing the pawn on e6 after the inevitable ...f7-f5.

**16... ♗b6 17.♗dg1**

This follow-up is consistent, although 17.♗e5 has yielded White excellent results.

**17... f5 18.♗h2**

This is the idea; now Black is no longer able to maintain the blockade of the g-file.

18... ♜xh2

18... ♜gf6!?

19. ♜xc5 ♜xc5

19... ♜xc5 20.dxc5 ♜xc5 21. ♜xh2 ♜e4 would have put up much more resistance.

20.dxc5 ♜c7?

And this is definitely too greedy.

21. ♜xe6+ ♜h8 22. ♜xg7!

Not too difficult to spot.

22... ♜xg7 23. ♜xh6+ ♜g8 24. ♜g6+ ♜h8 25. ♜c3+

1-0

25... ♜f6 (or 25... ♜f6) 26. ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 27. ♜xf6+ ♜g7 28. ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 29. ♜xh2 is completely winning.

## Your Own King in the Middle

Alexander Grischuk

Peter Leko

Moscow 2014

1. ♜f3 d5 2.c4 e6 3.d4 ♜f6 4. ♜c3 ♜e7 5. ♜g5 h6 6. ♜h4 0-0 7.e3 b6



Obviously, the h6-pawn in the former example was triggering White to advance his g-pawn. But what if your own king is still lingering in the middle?

8.g4!?

According to Grischuk himself, a second-rate move! But apparently not bad enough to give it a try against Leko.

8... ♜xg4

Grischuk mentions that Black has at least five other moves, which was precisely one of the reasons why he opted for 8.g4. The advance may be obscure, it was not a novelty. 8... ♜bd7 had been tried, amongst others against Shabalov (surprised to see him on the white side?), while 8...dxc4 was ventured in a game P.H.Nielsen-V.Georgiev, Dresden ol 2008, which continued with 9. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 10.h4 ♜b7 11.g5 hxg5 12.hxg5 ♜xg5 13. ♜xc4 c5?! 14.d5.

9. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 10.cxd5 exd5 11. ♜xd5 ♜d6 12. ♜c3 c5

Trying to open up the centre as quickly as possible, in view of White's king position.

The more timid 12... ♜b7 was seen in the stem game Barbero-Vegh, Budapest 1988, when after

13.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  c5 Black still had a sound position.

13.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$

The straightforward 13...  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  seems more natural to me. White may continue with 14.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$  followed by  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  and queenside castling.

14.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$

14. dxc5  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}d4!?$ .

14...  $\mathbb{Q}g4$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  17. dxe5  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{Q}xa8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$

... and here 19...  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  would have given Black good play for the exchange. After a later mistake Leko lost the game.

## Both Sides Having Castled Kingside

Aryan Tari

Zbynek Hracek

Tromsø ol 2014

1.e4 e5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$  a6 4.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  6.d3 d6 7.c4 0-0 8.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$  f5 10.h3  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  f4 12.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$



Here Black has castled kingside as well, but still his solid centre and space advantage on the kingside allows...

12... g5!

Again, the move h2-h3 is not in the defender's favour: it will allow Black to quickly open lines versus White's castled king. The pawn centre is fixed here, which makes it hard for White to initiate counterplay.

The young Norwegian was clearly not yet familiar with the classic response, which you can find in many old games, for instance Ragozin-Panov, Leningrad 1938:



analysis diagram

8...0-0 9.g4! ♖xg4? 10.♕g2, and Black was practically finished already.

**13.♘xg5**

An understandable decision, but the pawn grab costs valuable time, while Black immediately gets a half-open g-file.

**13... ♕e8 14.♗f3 ♘h8**

Black's moves come easy.

**15.♔h1 ♜g8 16.♗g1 ♘h5 17.♖xc6**

17.♘h2 ♜g4 18.f3 ♜xh3 19.gxh3 (19.♖xc6 ♜xg2+ 20.♗xg2 ♜xg2 21.♗xg2 ♜g8+) 19...♘d4, and with all his possible defenders on the queenside White is quite lost on the other wing.

**17... ♜xh3 18.gxh3 ♜xg1+ 19.♘xg1**

19.♖xg1 ♜xh3 20.♘g5 ♜g8.

**19... ♜xf3+ 20.♔h2 ♜g8 21.♗d2 ♘h5 22.♗xg8+ ♜xg8 23.♖xb7 ♜e2**

0-1

**Magnus Carlsen**

**Veselin Topalov**

Saint Louis 2015

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.♘b5+ ♔d7 4.0-0 ♗gf6 5.♗e1 a6 6.♘d3 b5 7.c4

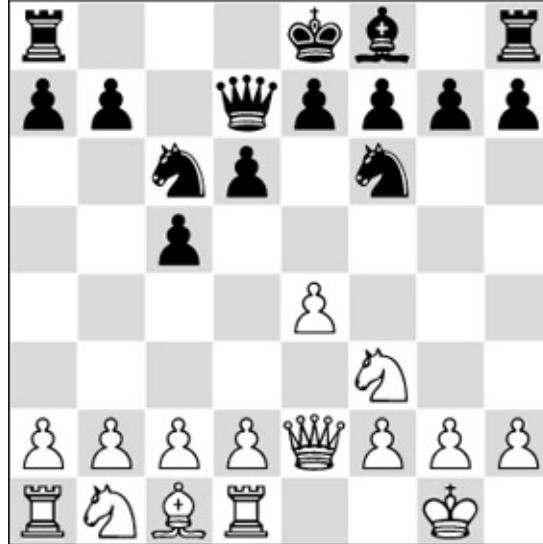


**7...g5!?**

Nowadays such an early outing seems to be acceptable. Even here – when Black has not a solid centre

and is far from a complete development.

In another line of the 3.♗b5+ complex, after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♗b5+ ♖d7 4.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 5.0-0 ♘f6 6.♕e2 ♘c6 7.♖d1,



analysis diagram

various top players have gone for 7....g5!?. This is not some sort of attack, just gaining space and fighting for the centre. Play may continue 8.c3 (8.♘xg5? ♘d4; 8.e5 g4!) 8...g4 9.♗h4 ♗e6 10.d3 d5, and Black is OK.

**8.♘xg5**

8.cxb5 g4 9.e5 dxe5 10.♗g5 was Topalov's suggestion, which was tested twice by Grischuk (remember him from the second example!) shortly after this game in the World Rapid 2015. White tries to open up the centre, but Grischuk was fine after 10...♗g7.

**8...♗e5**

The tactical justification in this particular case.

**9.♕e2 bxc4 10.♘a3**

This looked strange to me. The logical move was 10.d3, when after 10...cxd3 11.♗xd3 White would have a lead in development (Topalov). Indeed, it seems that again White has to hurry to open up the centre, trying to expose the black king. Instead, Magnus was tempted to sacrifice a piece, but never seemed to get sufficient compensation.

**10...♗g8 11.♘xc4?!**

11.d3.

11...♗xc4 12.d4 ♘b6 13.♗h5 ♘xh5 14.♗xh5 ♗g7 15.♘xh7 ♘d7 16.dxc5 dxc5 17.e5 ♘c6 18.f3 ♘g6 19.♘f6+ ♘d8 20.♗xg6 ♗xg6 21.♘e4 ♘b7 22.h4 ♗c8 23.h5 ♗g8 24.♗d2 ♘c4 25.♗c3 ♘h6 26.♗ad1+ ♘e8 27.♗d3 ♘f4 28.♗f2 ♘c6 29.♘h3 ♘g3 30.♗e2 ♘b5 31.♗d1 ♘c6 32.♗f2 ♘xe5 33.♗g4 ♘xc3 34.bxc3 ♗f8 35.♗f2 ♗h8 36.♗e5 ♘xe5 37.♗xe5 ♘e8 38.g4 f6 39.♗e6 ♘b5 40.♗de1 ♗c7

0-1

## No Hooks

**Loek van Wely**

**Robin van Kampen**

Amsterdam ch-NED 2014

**1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.d4 ♘bd7 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗f4 c6 7.♘c2 ♘h5 8.♘d2 ♘hf6 9.e3 ♘d6 10.♘d3**

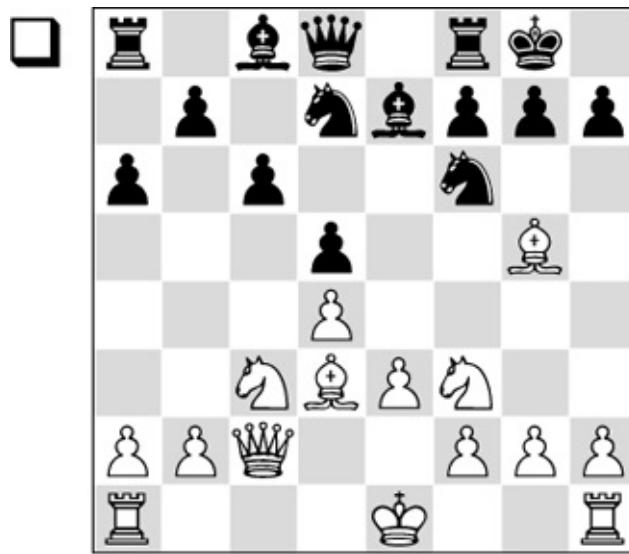
0-0



A position which is more commonly reached with... Black to move! From an Anti-Meran line the position arises after 1.c4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  e6 3.d4 d5 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  c6 5.e3  $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  6. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  7. $\mathbb{Q}c2$  0-0 8.cxd5 exd5 9. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ ; for instance, Mason-Chigorin, Monte Carlo 1902! Van Wely does not linger – he leaves his king in the centre and uses the extra tempo for...

**11.g4!?**

Put the d2-bishop on g5 and this would be a more common move. Let's take an oldie again, nothing new under the sun:



analysis diagram

Riumen-Bohatirchuk, Moscow 1935. Two main rivals of Botvinnik in his own country fighting it out in a historic international tournament: 10.g4 (actually introduced by Botvinnik himself one year earlier) 10... $\mathbb{Q}e8$  11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  12.g5  $\mathbb{Q}e4$  13. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  dx $e4$  14. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}a5+$  15. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  16. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$  with a double-edged position.

**11... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$**

Without ...h7-h6 it is easier for Black to refuse the semi-sacrifice and keep lines closed with 11...g6. After 12.g5 (the restrained 12.h3 is also a typical possibility) 12... $\mathbb{Q}h5$  13.0-0-0  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  14. $\mathbb{Q}hg1$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  Black is OK according to Van Kampen.

**12. $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  13. $\mathbb{Q}g1 f5!?$**

This may seem like the refutation of the capture on h7, but it turns out that the bishop cannot be locked up.

One alternative was 13... $\mathbb{Q}b6$  14. $\mathbb{Q}f5$  (14.h3  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  15.hxg4  $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  16. $\mathbb{Q}f5$  g6) 14... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  15. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$ .

14. $\mathbb{Q}g6$

Now 14. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  runs into 14... $\mathbb{Q}de5$ !.

14... $\mathbb{Q}f6$  15.h3  $\mathbb{Q}h6$ ?

Consistent, but 15... $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  16.hxg4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  was a better choice.

16.0-0-0  $\mathbb{Q}g8$  17. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ !  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  19.dxe5  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  20. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  21. $\mathbb{Q}d2$

21. $\mathbb{Q}g5$ ! with the idea  $\mathbb{Q}h5$  wins by force, but your first idea in this position will be to avoid the exchange of queens. And indeed, the text move proved good enough.

21... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  23.f3  $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  24.e4 d4 25. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}e6$

1-0

## Various Reactions

**Shakhriyar Mamedyarov**

**Ivan Ivanisevic**

Tromsø ol 2014

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d6

As soon as the bishop has left f8, the g7-pawn will not be protected for a moment. Think of the Latvian Gambit in the Anti-Meran: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.e3 e6 5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  6. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  7.g4. Once pioneered by Shirov and Shabalov, now a well-established theoretical variation.



This also makes Nimzo-Indian set-ups a fine territory to venture the g2-g4 advance. In 1997 Zviagintsev came up with 1.c4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4.g4!?. Here we have another try.

6.g4 e5

Like in the Latvian Gambit, Black has several typical ways to react, all attempts to refute White's move as premature. He can react in the centre, capture the pawn or discourage the pawn's advance by ...h7-h6. Thus practice has also seen 6... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  7. $\mathbb{Q}g1$  e5 8.d5  $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$  9. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  10. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  exd4 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  and 6...h6 7.g5 (7.h3) 7...hxg5 8. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$  9. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  10. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  11. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  12.c5.

7.dxe5 dxe5 8.g5  $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$  9.bxc3!  $\mathbb{Q}d7$ ?

A passive move, after which Black's pieces are entangled. Black had to find 9... $\mathbb{Q}h5$  10. $\mathbb{Q}a3$  and now 10... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  to avoid being wrapped up after  $\mathbb{Q}d1$ .

10. $\mathbb{Q}a3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$ ?

And this is utterly careless. This seemingly normal developing move fails after White's obvious next. 10... $\mathbb{Q}a5$  followed by ...c7-c5 was called for.

**11. ♜d1 ♝d7**

Simply forced.

**12. ♖h3**

Now Black is all tied up. His next move doesn't save his game.

**12... ♝xh3 13. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 14. ♜e4 ♜a4 15. ♜e3 ♜d7 16. ♜d4 ♝g2 17. ♜g1 ♜d8 18. ♜f5 ♝e4 19. ♜xg7 ♝g6 20. ♜h3 ♜b6 21. ♜h5**

**1-0 (30)**

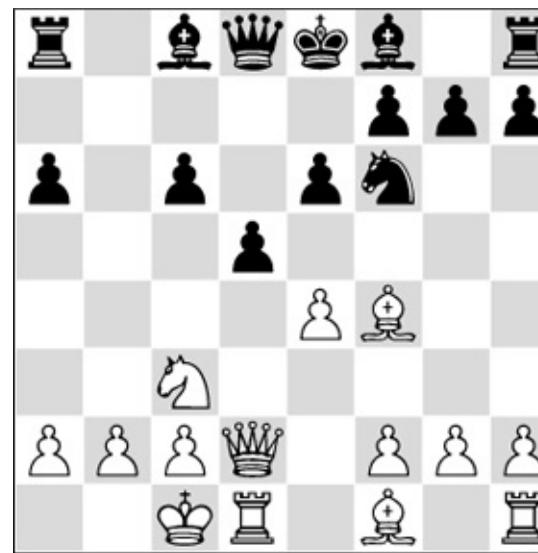
Let's conclude with a Sicilian then. Of course it was Keres who set the tone for an early attack with his 6.g4 against the Scheveningen. Devised behind the board in Salzburg 1943 against Bogoljubow, trying to gain a tempo on 6.g3. In that game it took some time before Keres castled queenside. In the following example Naer has already done that before venturing g2-g4, trying to outbalance Black's strong pawn centre.

**Evgeny Naer**

**Vladimir Potkin**

Moscow ch-URS rapid 2014

**1.e4 c5 2. ♜f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♜xd4 ♜c6 5. ♜c3 a6 6. ♜f4 d6 7. ♜xc6 bxc6 8. ♜d2 d5 9.0-0-0 ♜f6**



Here Black has not castled yet. Also, at the moment the g7-pawn is still protected.

**10.g4!?**

A real sacrifice, but quite logical. Obviously Black's king will have to seek refuge on the kingside.

**10... ♜e7**

Black does not dare to accept the challenge.

There is no clear refutation, but after 10... ♜xg4 11. ♜g1 ♜f6 12. ♜e3 White has obtained an enormous lead in development.

**11.g5 ♜d7 12. ♜g2?**

Missing a good shot: 12.exd5 exd5 13. ♜xd5 cxd5 14. ♜xd5 ♜a7 15. ♜d4 ♜b6 16. ♜xg7 ♜f8 17. ♜h3, and with his king in the middle, Black has a very, very rough time.

**12... ♜b6**

Now White's big opportunity has passed.

**13.h4 0-0 14.exd5 cxd5 15. ♜d4 ♜b7 16. ♜he1?**

Too slow. Opposite-side castling usually favours the side who is the first to attack: 16.h5! ♜xg5? 17. ♜xg5 ♜xg5+ 18.f4 ♜d8 19.h6.

**16... ♜c8**

Suddenly Black takes over the initiative, though White eventually won this rapid game.

## Summary

The position of the king and the counter-possibilities in the centre are dominant factors to take into account when you want to assess g2-g4. Whose king will be better off and who will rule in the centre?

In any case, the opponent faces an instant dilemma: after capturing on g4 the half-open g-file will obviously be of use for you. If he doesn't, you may gain further space or influence in the centre with g4-g5.

# Chapter 14

## The Weakest Link

You may automatically link sacrifices on f7 to the glorious Morphy era, but of course they are still part of contemporary chess. They are often the starting point of a combination or a swift king's attack. After all, in the starting position the king is the pawn's only defender. As this is no book on combinations, we will try and focus on sacrifices with long-term compensation.

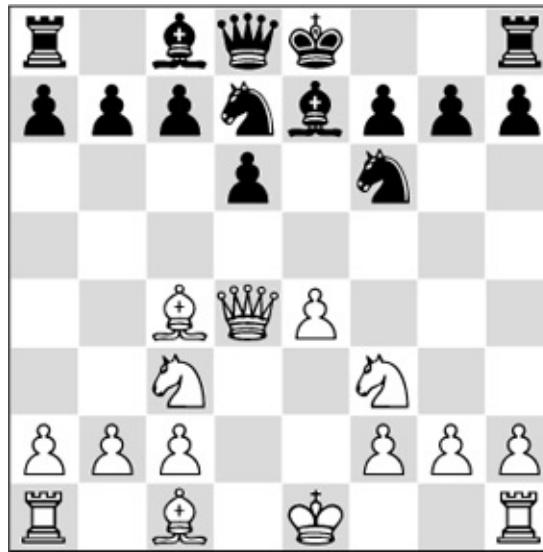
Let's start with a striking top-level example from the Beijing GP 2013:

**Wang Hao**

**Anish Giri**

Beijing 2013

1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♜f6 3.¤c3 e5 4.¤f3 ♜bd7 5.¤c4 exd4 6.¤xd4 ♜e7



7.¤xf7+!?

At first sight, not the sort of move you would expect to see played at the top level, but rather at your regular club evening. Indeed, in the same year several strong grandmasters had opted for other normal developing moves here. Of course, Wang Hao had his own ideas.

7...¤xf7 8.¤g5+ ¤e8

8...¤g6 9.f4 is simply terrible, and 8...¤g8 9.¤c4+ d5 just loses to 10.¤xd5, for instance: 10...¤e5 11.¤xf6+ ¤f8 12.¤gxh7+ ¤xh7 13.¤g8#.

9.¤e6 c5

This may seem to refute White's idea, but things are not so simple. White is about to grab a second pawn on g7, and Black's king will lack protection for some time to come.

10.¤d1 ¤b6 11.¤xg7+ ¤f7 12.¤f5 ¤f8

The natural 12...¤e5 can be met by 13.¤xe7 ¤xe7 14.¤g5, though Black appears to be hanging on after 14...¤e6 15.f4 ¤f7.

13.0-0



**13...d5**

Giri, afterwards: ‘This looks like a move that solves all my problems. I like moves like that, but they only happen in fairy tales.’ Still, if now 13... $\mathbb{Q}e5$  then Black is also in dire straits after 14. $\mathbb{R}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  15. $\mathbb{R}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  16.f4  $\mathbb{Q}g6$ , and now for instance 17. $\mathbb{Q}g3$ .

**14.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8?$**

When Giri wrote in New In Chess: ‘the decision not to exchange queens while having an absolutely defenceless king will keep haunting me for nightmares to come’, I guess he was referring to 15... $\mathbb{Q}e6$ , which the players discussed afterwards. Although White is not forced to go into the endgame with 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$  – he may retreat the queen as well to keep the initiative against the king going –, this move does seem much more logical than the king’s retreat in the game.

After the text move Black’s underdeveloped position was quickly overpowered.

**16.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  17.  $\mathbb{R}ad1!$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  18.f4 a5 19.e5  $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xg8$   $\mathbb{R}a6$  21.  $\mathbb{R}fe1$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  22.e6**

1-0

## The King in the Middle

**Wei Yi**

**Cankut Emiroglu**

Kocaeli Wch jr 2013

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  dxe4 4.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  6.  $\mathbb{Q}eg5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$**



Here we have another 2013 example where the young Chinese player, a familiar name by now, was more or less following in the footsteps of his compatriot.

7.♗xf7!? ♕xf7 8.♗g5+ ♔e8 9.♗c4

White is about to capture a second pawn on e6, and though there is no immediate danger of mate, the black king will be stuck in the middle for a while.

9... ♕d5

'The computer' fearlessly takes on g2 first, and perhaps rightly so: 9...♕xg2 10.♕g1 ♖d5 11.♗xe6, but Black's loss of the right to castle is still troublesome. After, for example, 11...♖xe6 12.♖xe6 (a 'Beastly Bishop', see IPYCP Chapter 10) 12...♔h4 13.♔f3 ♗gf6 14.♔f4 White seems to have sufficient compensation.

10.♗xe6 ♕xe6 11.♗xe6 ♕d6 12.0-0 ♘gf6



White definitely has huge positional compensation. Black has a hard time to disentangle his pieces – remember he has already lost the right to castle.

13.♔f3

The immediate 13.♕e1 may be more to the point, to answer 13...c6 with 14.c4.

13...c6 14.♕e1 ♕a5 15.♗f4 ♕xf4 16.♗xf4 ♕d8 17.♔g3 g6 18.c3

Here White continued very 'solidly', whereas perhaps 18.♕ad1 or 18.c4 would have been more appropriate.

In the game Black eventually managed to evacuate his king safely to b8 after having manoeuvred his queen to d6. But just before the 40th move he collapsed under the constant pressure anyway.

## Speculative?

**S.P. Sethuraman**

**Simone de Filomeno**

Kocaeli Wch jr 2013

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 c6 5.♗g5 h6 6.♗h4 dxс4 7.e4 g5 8.♗g3 b5 9.♗e2 ♕b7 10.♗c2 ♘bd7 11.♗e5 ♕g7 12.♗d1 a6



The second round of the same tournament featured yet another long-term sac on f7.

**13.♕xf7!?**

This is not an uncommon sacrifice in the Moscow Variation. Two well-known examples are Topalov-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2008, and Kramnik-Anand, Belgrade 1997. In this new position White's sacrifice was probably prompted by Black's last slow pawn move ...a7-a6.

**13... ♜xf7 14.e5 ♜d5 15.♕e4 ♜g8**

In similar positions the king often opts for e7, protecting the e6-pawn and making way for the rooks. Here this looks dangerous as White's queen is ready to roll from c2, but there seems to be no refutation: 15...♚e7 16.♗d6 ♜b8 17.0-0 (17.♕g6 can be parried with 17...♜g8) 17...♜g8, and now 18.♗h5 c5 19.♗f7 ♜h7 20.♗g6 ♜g8 leads to a draw.

**16.♗d6 ♜b8**

Of course, White has a tremendous octopus on d6 and Black's king is uncomfortable. So it's worth a try, but in this case it is hard to tell whether this will be sufficient compensation.

**17.h4**

17.♗h5 ♜e7 18.♗f7+ ♜xf7 19.♗xf7 ♜xf7 20.0-0.

**17... ♜f8 18.♗h5 ♜e7**

And a later ♜f7+ once again resulted in a position where Black had three well-coordinated pieces for a queen and could have had the better of it, but the game ended in a draw.

## Theoretical Preparation?

**Marcin Dziuba**

**Gregorz Gajewski**

Poland tt 2013

1.c4 ♜f6 2.g3 c6 3.♗f3 d5 4.♘g2 dxcc4 5.0-0 ♜bd7 6.♗a3 ♜b6 7.♗c2 ♜e6 8.♗g5 ♜g4 9.♗xc4 ♜xe2 10.♗e5 ♜h5 11.♗e1 ♜bd7 12.d4 e6



**13. ♜exf7**

Previously, in this position strong grandmasters had continued with two other imaginative moves: 13. ♜xc6 and 13. ♜f3. Dziuba, however, opted for – or had possibly prepared – this straightforward romantic approach.

**13... ♜xf7 14. ♜b3**

Though White has several options, this one looks the most logical move to strengthen the pressure. Forcing moves, such as 14. ♜xf7 or 14. ♜xe6+, would relieve the tension, while 14. ♜h3 might also have its merits, but would move a perfectly placed bishop.

**14... ♜e7**

14... ♜b6 15. ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 16. ♜xe6+ ♜e7 17. ♜f7+ ♜d8 18. ♜e6+ ♜c8 19. ♜xe7 ♜e8 20. ♜f7, and the strong knight on e6, the pawn and the black king's predicament should give ample compensation for the exchange.

**15. ♜xf7 ♜xf7 16. ♜xe6**



**16... ♜d5**

16... ♜f8 would leave Black's queenside in tatters after 17. ♜xb7, but it seems 16... ♜b6 was also possible: 17. ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 18. ♜f3+ ♜g6 19. ♜h3 ♜a5 (19... ♜f6 20. ♜e6) 20. ♜e4+ ♜f7 21. ♜e6+ ♜f8 22. ♜xd7 ♜d8 23. ♜xb7 ♜b6, though White's position is still to be preferred.

**17. ♜xd5 cxd5 18. ♜xd5 ♜f6 19. ♜b3 ♜g6 20. ♜f4**

A logical developing move.

**20... ♜e8 21. ♜ae1 ♜d7**

Again, Black's worry is not so much the material as the position of his king.

22.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $h6$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}d3+$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  24.  $d5$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$

Here White lost his patience with...

25.  $\mathbb{Q}xh6$

... where 25.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  could have been a worthy alternative. Now the game quickly ended in a perpetual:

25...  $gxh6$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}e6+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}e6+$

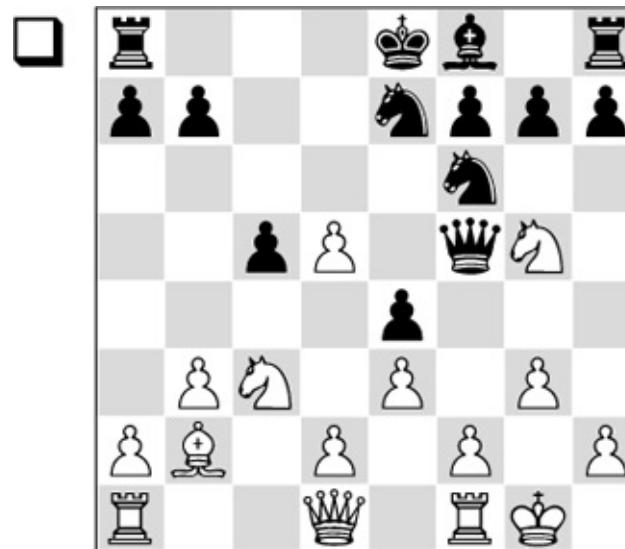
With a draw. Again, the sac on f7 did not yield a clear judgement, but it did give White a clear initiative.

## Our Great Example

Mikhail Tal

Dragoljub Velimirovic

Teslic URS-YUG 1979



Of course, the player who bequeathed to us the most brilliant examples of such sacrifices for the initiative (not only on f7) was Mikhail Tal. Remarkable in this respect is the story about his Candidates' match game against Larsen in 1965, where after 1.e4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.e5  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  2.d4 d6 4.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  dx5 5.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  he considered taking on f7 for 50 minutes, before... refraining from the capture on f7! He had decided to try to calculate the game through to mate, as his intuition had already told him the sacrifice could not be incorrect.

Here is a famous example of a knight sac on f7 by Tal which did work out, though typically Black's position might have been defensible.

15.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7!?$

Evidently this had been foreseen by Tal several moves earlier.

15...  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  16.  $f3$   $\mathbb{Q}exd5$  17.  $fxe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}h5+$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$

The king ventures out into the open. 19...  $\mathbb{Q}g8$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $gxf6$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}d5+$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}g5\#$  is just mate, while after 19...  $\mathbb{Q}g6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}d5+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  White's initiative persists.

20.  $\mathbb{Q}h3+$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  21.  $b4$

First of all White tries to open up the c-file, after which Black will find no shelter there.

21...  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}ac1$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  23.  $f5!$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$

The king's final step to safety, 23...  $\mathbb{Q}b8$ , was cleverly prevented by the following tactic: 24.  $\mathbb{Q}e5+$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$ . Kasparov gives 23...  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  as a possible refutation, but 24.  $\mathbb{Q}f7$  (instead of 24.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$ ) 24...  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}cf1$  seems interesting.

24. ♜ e5+ ♕ d7 25. ♘ f1

With the king out in the open again, Velimirovic stumbled:

25... ♖ e4?

Tal intended to meet the preferable 25...c4 with 26. ♘ f4 and indeed, after 26... ♗ e6 27. ♘ xf6 gxf6 28. ♘ xf6 ♖ d5 29. ♘ f5 ♗ e6 30. ♘ f3, White's initiative continues.

26. ♘ c4 ♖ c6 27. ♘ h3 ♗ e6 28. ♘ xf6 gxf6 29. ♘ e4 ♖ xa2 30. ♘ xc5+

Black resigned.

## Tal again

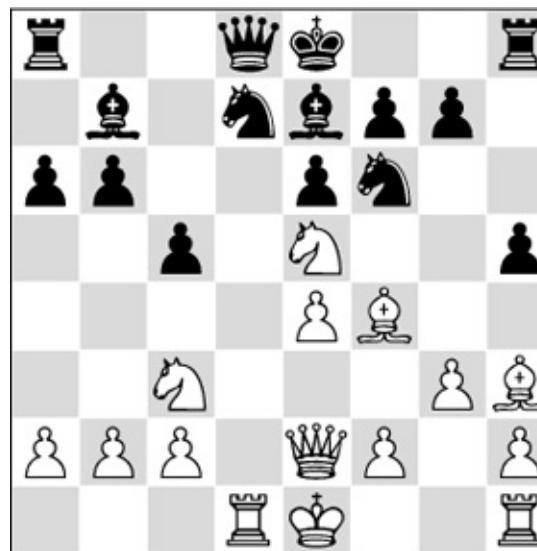
Mikhail Tal

Evgeny Sveshnikov

Moscow ch-URS 1973

1.e4 c5 2. ♘ f3 e6 3.d3 d5 4. ♗ e2 dxe4 5.dxe4 b6 6. ♘ c3 ♗ b7 7. ♘ f4 a6 8. ♘ d1 ♘ d7 9.g3 ♗ e7 10. ♗ h3 h5 11. ♘ e5 ♘ gf6

Tal had avoided young Sveshnikov's eponymous Sicilian variation and by now had already reached an overwhelming position. He struck with...



12. ♘ xf7! ♗ xf7 13. ♗ xe6+ ♗ f8 14.0-0

14.e5! ♘ xh1 15.exf6 is even more devastating, as Tal later indicated.

14... ♖ c8

And now Tal decided to make it a rook sacrifice:

15. ♘ xd7 ♗ xd7 16. ♘ d1 ♗ c6 17. ♘ d5

It seems 17. ♘ f3 was stronger: 17... ♘ f6 18. ♘ d6+ ♗ e8 19. ♘ f5 followed by e4-e5.

17... ♗ b7 18.e5 ♗ e8

18... ♘ d8 19. ♘ d3.

19. ♗ f7+?

'The following variations seemed too prosaic to me' (Tal): 19. ♘ xd7+ ♗ xd7 20.e6 ♗ xd5 21. ♘ xd5 ♘ xd5 22. ♗ e5 ♗ c6 23. ♗ c7 ♗ b5 24.c4 and wins. Thus, contrary to the earlier examples, the sac on f7 seems to be a clear road to victory.

19... ♗ xf7 20.e6+ ♗ f8 21. ♘ xe7 ♘ f6!

Overlooked by Tal, who was lucky enough to reach a draw by perpetual in the end. This put an end to his aspirations in this tournament, where he was already struggling. He had had the inverse experience of his game against Larsen mentioned earlier. In his third round game against Polugaevsky, for instance, he thought for 50 minutes about a piece sac he deemed incorrect, and then suddenly became dissatisfied with his time consumption and played the sac anyway. So Tal was

capable of making the same mistakes as the rest of us. At a higher level, that is!

## Opening Theory

Fabrizio Ranieri

Evgeny Janev

Bratto 2013

1.e4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  e5 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d6 4.d4  $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  5.g4  $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  6. $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}gf6$  7. $\mathbb{Q}c4$  h6 8. $\mathbb{Q}e3$  c6 9.dxe5 dxe5 10. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$



After our historical outing with Tal, let us return to present-day opening theory. The diagram position has been reached numerous times, with an overwhelming score for White after...

11. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$ !

The f7-square tends to be a particular weak spot in e2-e4 openings.

11...  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  12. $\mathbb{Q}c4+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$

12... $\mathbb{Q}e7$  is of course an ugly move in itself, and 13. $\mathbb{Q}h4!$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  14. $\mathbb{Q}g6$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  15.0-0-0 makes clear that it cannot be an improvement over the text.

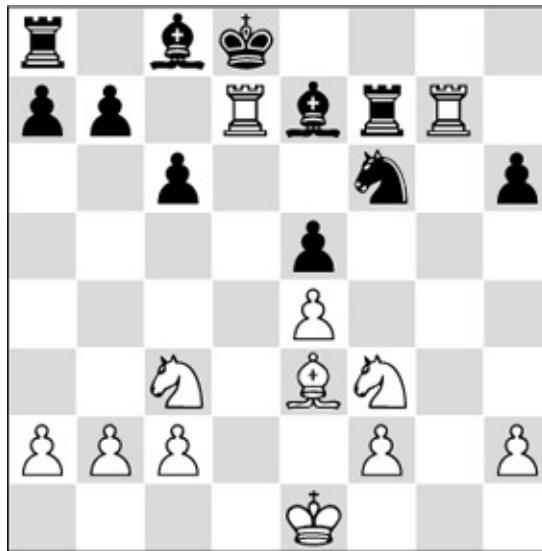
13. $\mathbb{Q}e6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  14. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  15. $\mathbb{Q}f7+$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  16. $\mathbb{Q}d1$

Assessing this position correctly when capturing on f7 should do the trick. Further calculations are not needed.

16...  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$

Or 17. $\mathbb{Q}b3!$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  18. $\mathbb{Q}e6$ , and Black is completely tied up.

17...  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xd7+$



Hold your breath and just look again at this position. Taking on d7 only leads to an exchange of rooks, with White maintaining a strong rook on the seventh rank. Therefore, instead of...

**18... ♜xd7**

... the pleasing move 18... ♛e8! had to be played. True, White remains on top with his extra pawn.

**19. ♕xf7**

Now White has a winning advantage, which he converted against his IM opponent.

## Summary

So keep your eye on the weakest link and try to make an accurate assessment regarding possible long-term compensation. Your opponent's king being stuck in the middle should be a good start. Don't get carried away like Wang Hao did, within a month of his crushing victory over Giri: his ♔xf7 against Naiditsch (Dortmund 2013) proved to be anything but convincing, and soon it was 'goodbye!' to the knight.

## Chapter 15

# The Weakest Link, Round Two

The pawn on f7 can also be ‘voted off’ at less material cost than a full piece sacrifice, e.g. by sacking two minor pieces for a rook. Let’s look at some fresh examples and find ways to assess the resulting positions.

### Opening up Files for the Rook

We start with an example from a recent Russian championship, where Shomoev had a difficult debut. In the second round he was doubtlessly still full of hopes when he began with...

**Anton Shomoev**

**Ernesto Inarkiev**

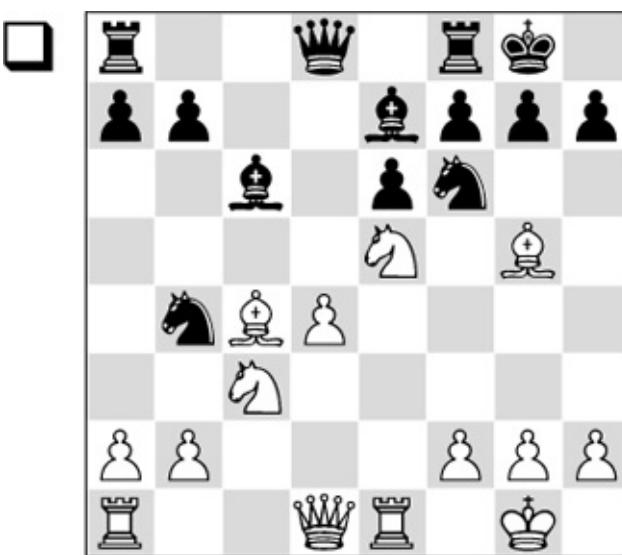
Nizhnij Novgorod ch-RUS 2013

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4.e3 0-0 5. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  c5 6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  cxd4 7.exd4 d5 8.0-0 dx $c4$  9. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  b6 10. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  11. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  13. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  14. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$



15. $\mathbb{Q}xf7!$

Of course, this may be more surprising than some of the piece sacs in the previous chapter, as here the f7-pawn is also protected by the rook. Still, it is a familiar motif in an isolated queen pawn position. One other example:



analysis diagram

15.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  17. a3  $\mathbb{Q}a6$ ?! 18.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  20. d5 and White was on top in Hovhannisyan-Anastasian, Yerevan 2011.

**15... ♕xf7**

After 15...  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  White can play the prosaic 17.  $\mathbb{Q}xc8$   $\mathbb{Q}xc8$  18. d5, and the advance of the d-pawn can hardly be stopped.

**16. ♕xe6**

Naturally, White will win back an exchange and in this case he also can grab a second pawn.

**16... ♜c7**

The centralizing 16...  $\mathbb{Q}bd5$  seems more obvious, but after 17.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  (17...  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$  g6 19.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xh7+$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$ ) 18. d5! White is still better.

**17. d5!**

Not only putting the b4-knight on a sidetrack, but also improving the scope of the d1-rook, which becomes more apparent after White's next move. The rooks need to be active when you sac two minor pieces for a rook. You will find more on this subject in Chapter 32, *Two Minor Pieces or a Rook?*

**17... ♜d7 18. d6!**



**18... ♜xd6**

18...  $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $gxf6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$  threatening  $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ ; 18...  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  20. d7, and the d-pawn is too dangerous.

**19. ♜xf6 gxf6**

19... ♜xf6? 20. ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 21. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 22. ♜e8#.

**20. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 21. ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 22. ♜e6+ ♜f8 23. ♜d1**

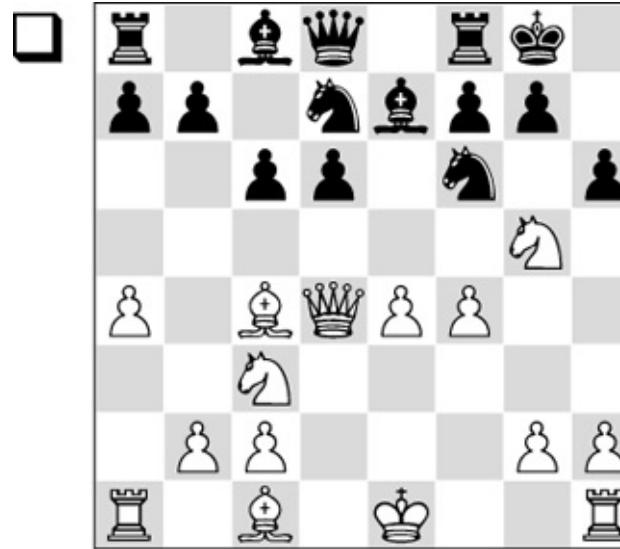
And Black was in big trouble, although he managed to pull off a draw in the end.

## No Activity for the Minor Pieces

**Basheer Al Qudaimi**

**Mohammed Al Sayed**

Doha rapid 2011



**10. ♜xf7**

Although this was a rapid game, Black must have considered this capture and judged it innocuous when making his last move, ...h7-h6.

**10... ♜xf7 11. ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 12.e5!**

Black's minor pieces are pushed back, while files may be opened for the white rooks.

**12... ♜e8**

With 12...d5!? Black could have disentangled his pieces and, after 13.exf6 ♜c5 14. ♜d3 ♜xf6, reached a harmonious position. He is an exchange down, but White's insecure king seems to offer compensation.

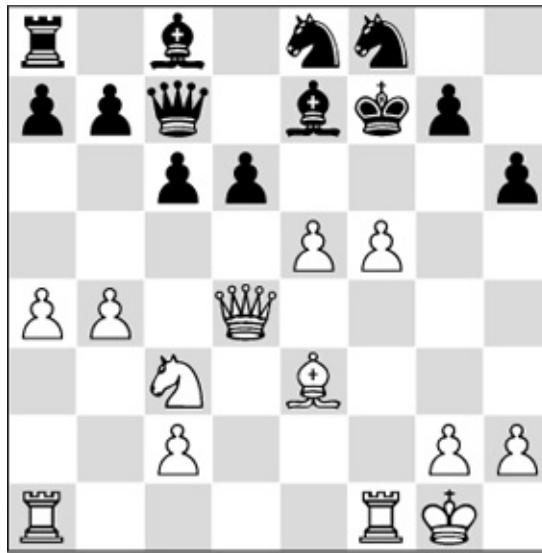
**13. ♜e3 ♜a5**

A dubious move. It would have been more logical to move the king out of the danger zone with 13... ♜g8. The attempt to activate and coordinate the minor pieces with 13... ♜f8 runs into 14.f5!.

**14.b4 ♜c7 15.0-0 ♜f8**

15... ♜g8 was again the better move.

**16.f5!**



Again this move! It prevents Black from developing his bishop to f5 and, as in the first game, improves the scope of the f1-rook.

**16... ♕d8**

16...dxe5 fails to 17.♕c4+ since 17...♔f6 18.♕e4# is mate.

**17. ♜ad1**

Both rooks are ready to roll.

**17... ♕g8**

17...d5 18.♕e4 and f5-f6 is bound to follow, laying bare the black king's position.

**18. ♘c4+ d5**

18...♔h8 19.♕f7, and again f5-f6 is bound to follow.

**19. ♜xd5!**

The decisive blow. Now White ends up with too many pawns for the material deficit.

**19... cxd5 20. ♜xd5 ♔e6**

Or 20...♕c7 21.♕c5+ ♔e6 22.♕xc7 ♔xc4 23.♕xc4.

**21. ♜xd8 ♔xc4 22. ♜xa8 ♘c7 23. ♜xa7 ♘d5 24. ♘d4 ♘xb4 25.f6 gxf6 26.exf6 ♔d6 27. ♜xb7 ♘xc2 28. ♜c1 ♔d5 29. ♜g7+ ♔h8 30. ♜xc2**

1-0

## No Activity for the Rooks

**Igor Kovalenko**

**Denis Kovalev**

Mukachevo 2011



**22. ♜xf7?!**

A dubious decision and also quite a remarkable one for such a highly-rated player. Here White obtains only one pawn next to the rook. But much more significant is that his own rooks will not manage to pose real threats. The d-file remains closed while, as we will see, Black can easily cover the entrance squares on the e-file. Beyond that, Black's king seems safe enough, which is always an important factor to consider when sacrificing on f7.

**22... ♜xf7 23. ♜xf7 ♜xf7 24. ♜e4 ♜xe4!**

White is left with major pieces which cannot exploit their potential to the full. Black, on the other hand, establishes a splendid, untouchable knight on d5.

**25. ♜xe4 ♜d5 26. ♜de1 ♜g7 27. ♜e6 ♜e7!**

Excellent defence. The bishop takes away the g5-square from the white queen, while after...

**28. ♜c2 ♜f6**

... it prevents the e6-rook from attacking the weak spot at g6. White's initiative, such as it was, has come to a standstill.

**29. ♜g2 ♜d8 30. ♜1e4 ♜f7 31. ♜c5 a6 32.a4 ♜d7 33.f3 ♜e7!**

Another regrouping, aiming at the d-pawn.

**34.g4 hxg4 35.fxg4 ♜d5!**

Now that White has weakened his king's position, the knight returns. The white king soon comes under irresistible fire from Black's minor pieces.

**36. ♜g3 ♜d8 37. ♜c1 ♜c7+ 38. ♜6e5 ♜f6**

**0-1**

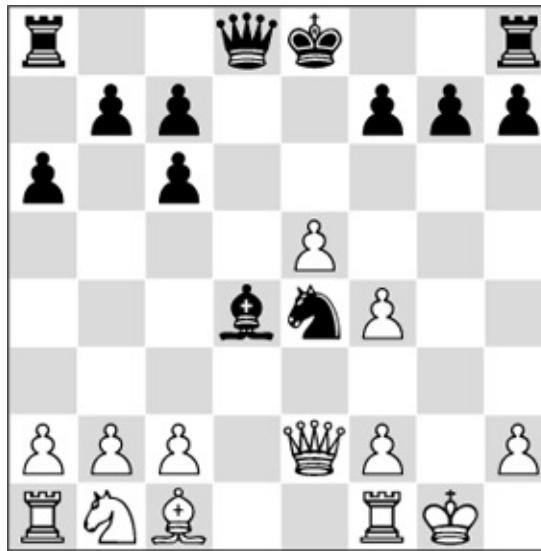
## An Open King's Position

**Ding Yixin**

**Natalia Pogonina**

Ningbo CHN-RUS rapid 2010

**1.e4 e5 2. ♜f3 ♜c6 3. ♜b5 a6 4. ♜a4 ♜f6 5.0-0 ♜e7 6. ♜xc6 dxc6 7.d3 ♜d6 8.d4 ♜g4 9.dxe5 ♜xf3 10.gxf3 ♜xe5 11.f4 ♜d4 12.e5 ♜e4 13. ♜e2**



At this point Black has little choice but to sacrifice the two pieces for the rook, but I presume Black had earlier intended to go in for this variation.

**13... ♕xf2 14. ♔xf2 ♖xf2+ 15. ♔xf2**

After 15. ♔xf2 ♕d1+ 16. ♔f1 ♕xc2 an important pawn is lost.

**15... ♘h4+ 16. ♘g2 0-0-0**

Let's take stock. First of all, White's king is exposed, but Black no longer has any minor pieces to attack with. Contrary to the Kovalenko game, though, the black rooks do have some perspective on open files. White's minor pieces are still undeveloped, giving Black some time to try to open up the position.

**17. ♘c3 f6!**

Black immediately uses the hook on e5 to open files for his rooks.

**18. ♘f2?**

Further development with 18. ♘d2 still seemed feasible.



**18... ♘h5**

In view of White's exposed king it seems logical to keep the queens on, but Black now has to reckon with a queen sortie to a7. The endgame after 18... ♕xf2+ 19. ♔xf2 fxe5 20.fxe5 ♕hf8+ 21. ♔g2 ♕de8 would be perfectly alright for Black, with her active rooks and opportunity to create a passed pawn on the kingside in the long run.

**19. ♘f3**

It appears that Black is alright after 19. ♕a7. This may seem messy (especially in rapid), but Black is

safe and sound after 19...fxe5 20.♔a8+ ♔d7 21.♕xb7 ♕hf8! (yes, activating the rook).

19... ♕g6+ 20.♔g3 ♕xc2+ 21.♔f2 ♕f5

But now Black is on the verge of winning, and indeed Pogonina converted her advantage.

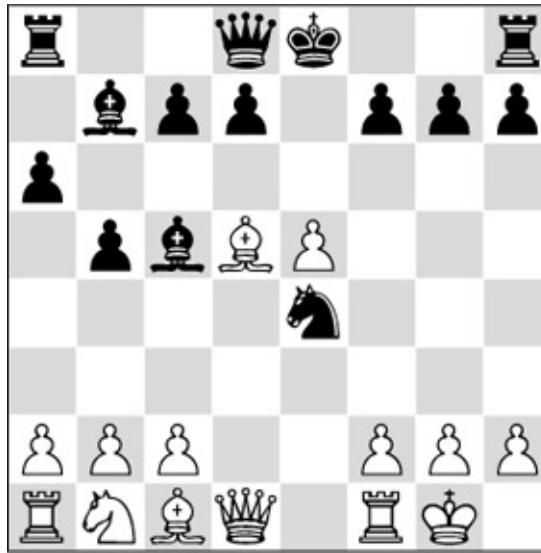
## A Similar Case?

**Slavoljub Marjanovic**

**Tania Sachdev**

Kavala 2010

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♘c5 6.♗xe5 ♘xe5 7.d4 b5 8.dxe5 ♘xe4 9.♗b3 ♘b7 10.♗d5



Here we have a similar case in point, this time even of some theoretical significance, but of course there are slight differences compared to the previous example.

10... ♘xf2 11. ♘xf2 ♘xf2+ 12.♗xf2 ♘h4+ 13.♔f1

Protecting the h-pawn with 13.♔g1 would lead to a rather abrupt finish with 13...♖xd5 14.♗xd5 ♘e1#.

13... ♘xd5 14.♗xd5 0-0

If we take stock again, you'll notice that Black's rooks miss the open d-file compared to the previous game. Because of the 'hook' on e5, Black will soon have the possibility of opening the f-file, though at the moment this is prevented. White's king's position is a bit shaky.

15.♗d2

White has to do something about his development and the protection of his king, albeit at the cost of a pawn. 15.h3 d6 16.exd6 ♘fe8 is another typical way, this time aiming for the e-file. 17.♗d2 ♘f6+ is fine for Black.

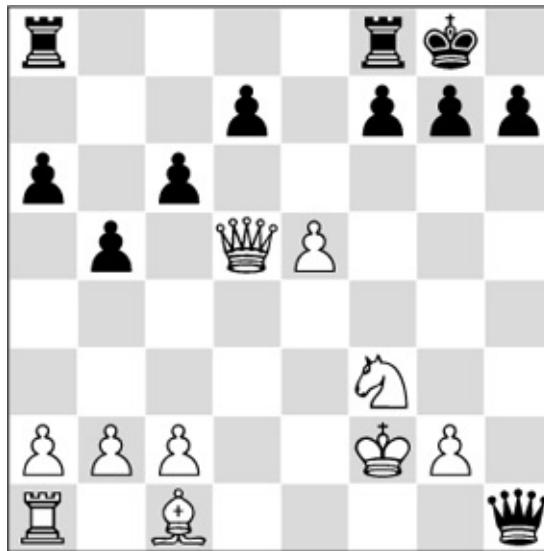
15... ♘xh2

Black would rather be opening up files for his rooks than using a tempo to win this pawn, but there seems to be no suitable way of doing it.

16.♗f3 ♘h1+

16...♖h5 has also been played, keeping the check in reserve.

17.♗f2 c6



**18. ♕xd7**

This is a novelty which seems rather tricky, but White's minor pieces are now in a position to create real danger against the black king.

**18... ♜ad8 19. ♔g4 ♜d1 20. ♔g3**

Treatening 21. ♖h6.

**20... h5?**

20... ♜xc2, to bring the queen back to the defence, was called for.

**21. ♕xh5 ♜fe8 22. ♖d2 ♜xc2**

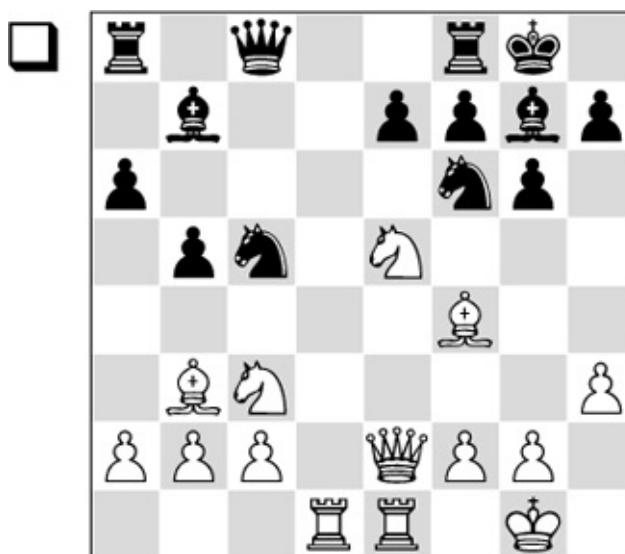
And now 23. ♖h1 would have been simplest, not fearing the exchange of queens.

## Capturing with the Bishop First

**Leinier Dominguez Perez**

**Judit Polgar**

Khanty-Mansiysk rapid playoff 2011



With her last move 15... ♜d8-c8 (instead of the correct 15... ♜e8), Polgar allowed her opponent to capture on f7. This must be done with the bishop first, but that's no problem here. Again, it should be mentioned that this was a rapid game.

**16. ♖xf7+ ♜xf7 17. ♖xf7 ♜xf7 18. ♜xe7+ ♜g8**

White has already gained two pawns next to the rook. He's fully developed, his king is safe and the

rooks already occupy the central files. All they need is a way in.

19.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$

A pleasing move with the double threat of 20.  $\mathbb{Q}d8+$  and 20.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$ , although the centralizing 19.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  seems even stronger, for example: 19...  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  (19...  $\mathbb{Q}cd7$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd7$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ ; 19...  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$ ) 20.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$ .

19...  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xc7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$

It was necessary to remove the knight. After 21...  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  the black pieces don't work well together, but at least there is no rook on the seventh rank yet.

22.  $\mathbb{Q}e7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$

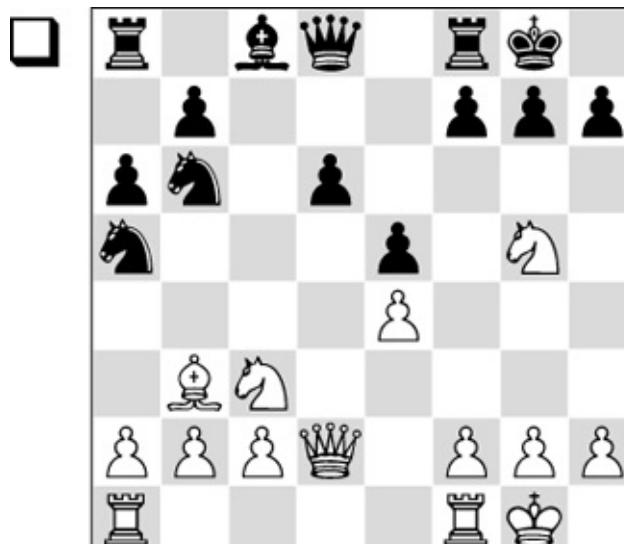
Now White was simply winning and he easily wrapped up the game.

## A Complex Case

**Geetha Narayanan Gopal**

**Ian Nepomniachtchi**

Moscow 2013



Here we have another example which also starts with the bishop capture on f7. Here the result is less clear-cut.

16.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  18.  $f4$

Logically White tries to open up the f-file for his rook. Yet, 18.  $b3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$  also came into consideration.

18...  $\mathbb{Q}g8!$

The king decides to exit anyway.

19.  $f5$

White decides to refrain from opening the f-file because now after 19.  $fxe5$   $\mathbb{Q}ac4$  the knight from a5 is headed for a beautiful central spot on e5. With this extra tempo, Black now miraculously held on, though not without a little help from White.

19...  $\mathbb{Q}ac4$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Losing two tempi with 20...  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}ab1$   $\mathbb{Q}2c4$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  23.  $f6$  seems a dangerous adventure for Black, but the text move also walks a thin line.

21.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$

22.  $\mathbb{Q}fd1!?$

22...  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$

23.  $\mathbb{Q}fd1$   $d5$  24.  $exd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  is surprisingly unclear.

**23... ♜d7**

The threat of 24...♝b5 gives Black time to develop.

**24.c4**

24.b3 would have been preferable, limiting the knight's mobility.

**24... ♕e7 25. ♘f2**

After 25.♘d3 Black has several replies, even, for example, 25...d5.

**25... ♗a4 26. ♘d2 ♜c6 27.b3 ♗c5**

Clearly, Black's minor pieces have made significant progress, which cannot be said of the white rooks. Eventually Nepomniachtchi won.

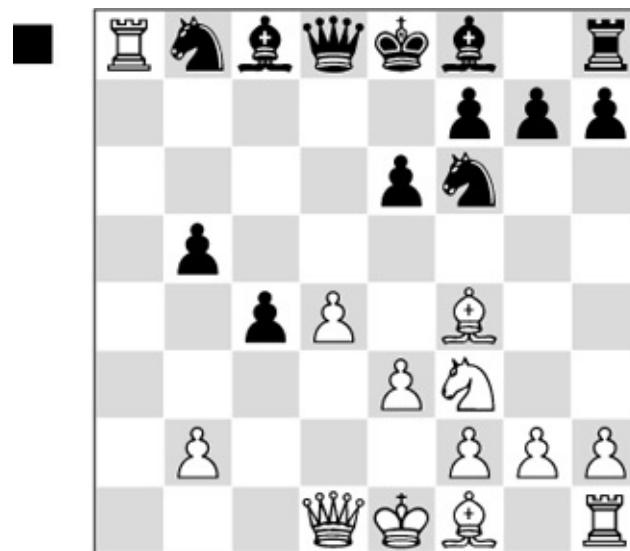
Did you miss a golden oldie this time? Of course, there is at least one on this theme: Tal-Johannessen, Riga 1959.

## Summary

This is a second typical way to make use of the relative weakness of the f7-square. It's not so much a sacrifice, but the safety of the opponent's king and the activity of your own rooks will be the leading factors that determine which side has the better chances.

# Exercises

## Exercise 9



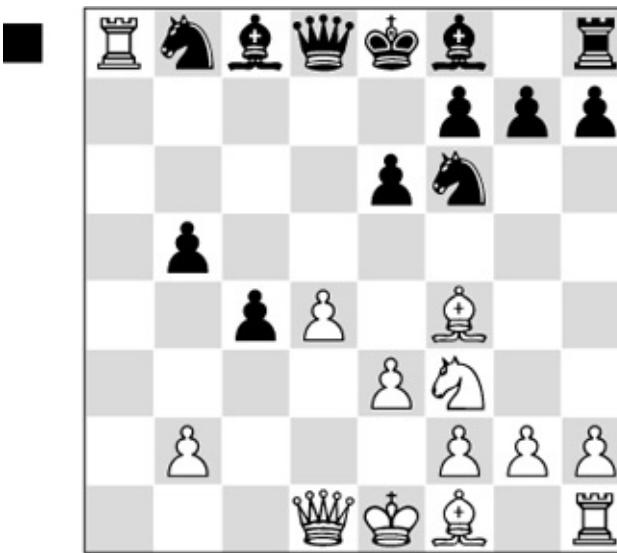
White's dark-squared bishop is untypically on f4. Should this have bothered Black when sacking the exchange?

## Exercise 9

Andrey Rychagov

Ivan Provotorov

Voronezh 2015



Of course, Black should pay close attention to differences compared to the usual position with a bishop on g5 instead of f4. The b8-knight should move soon, while the break ...e6-e5 will be more difficult to realize.

**10... ♜b4+ 11.♕e2**

Well, that should at least give some compensation. The natural 11.♘d2 also seems OK for Black: 11...♗bd7! (not 11...♘e4 12.♗xb8 ♗xd2+ 13.♗e2 ♗a5 14.f3 0-0 15.♗a1, and Black is in trouble) 12.♗c2 ♗b6 13.♗a7 ♗d5 14.f3 0-0 15.♗e2 ♘fd7!, and the pin still hampers White's development on account of the typical break ...e6-e5, for example: 16. 0-0?! e5. Fascinating stuff, as White is fully developed and a full exchange up.

**11... ♜c6**

Or 11...♘a6, when Black intends to catch the rook with ...♗d7-b7.

**12.♗e5**

12.g3?!

**12... ♜e7! 13.♘g5**

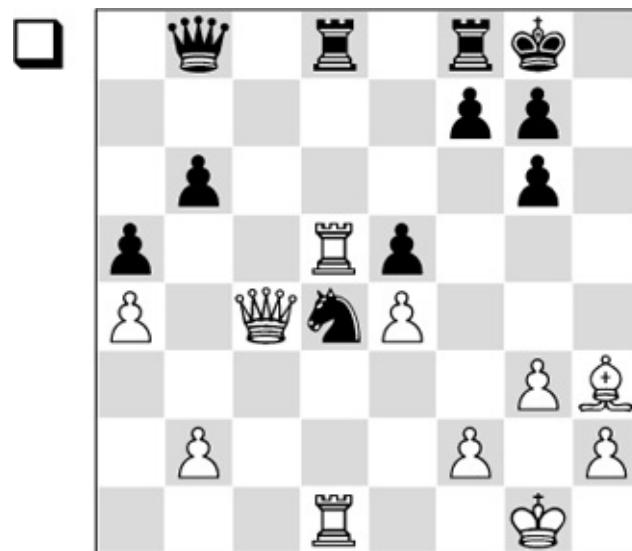
13.f3 ♘fd5 14.♗g3 f6, and the white pieces are in each other's way. 13.♘xc4 ♘fd5 is a bit messy, but 14.♘e5 ♘xf4+ 15.exf4 0-0 looks nice for Black.

**13... 0-0 14.f3 h6 15.♘h4 ♜d5**

...♘f5 is coming next; Black has adequate compensation due to White's usual lack of development and vulnerable king. 15...♘f5 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♘c6.

**16.♗a1 ♜b7 17.♘e1 ♜d6 18.♗f2 ♘f5 19.♘c3 ♗d8 20.♗e1 ♗h5 21.♗a5 ♜xe5 22.dxe5 ♗f4 23.h4 ♜c5 24.♘d2 ♜xe5 25.♗g1 ♘d3 26.♗xd3 ♗xd3 27.♗a3 ♗d7 28.♘c3 ♜c5 29.♘b4 ♗e5 30.♗c3 ♜c5 31.♘b4 ♜c7 32.♘a5 ♜c6 33.♗h3 h5 34.♗h1 ♜c5 35.♘b4 ♜e5 36.e4 ♗d4 37.♗f2 ♗c6 38.♘e1 ♗d1 39.♗e3 ♗b4 40.f4 ♗d4 41.♗h2 ♗d3 42.♗g3 ♜xb2 43.f5**

## Exercise 10

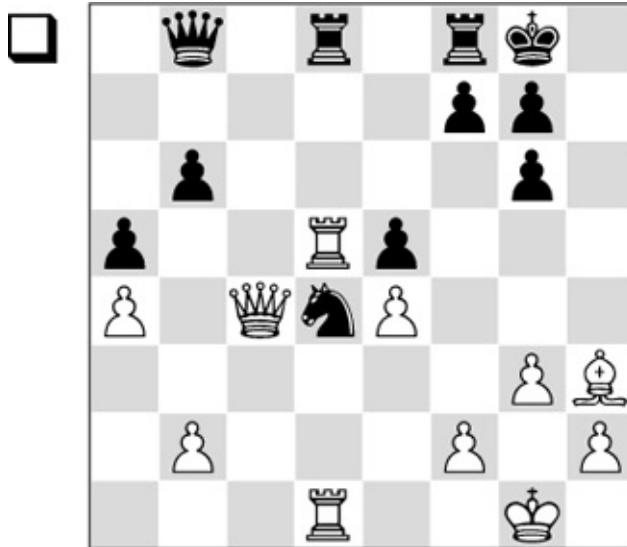


## Exercise 10

Xiu Deshun

Vladimir Fedoseev

China tt 2015



32. ♔d7 ♕b7 33. ♜1xd4

Of course!

33... exd4 34. ♕xd4

The bishop dominates the black rooks. White intends to follow up with a march of the e-pawn.

34... ♛h8? 35.e5 g5 36.h4!

White is already winning. His major pieces will reach the h-file.

36... ♕c7 37.hxg5

37. ♔g2.

37... ♕c1+ 38. ♔g2 ♕c2

On 38... ♕xg5 39.e6 ♕e7 40. ♔h4+ ♕xh4 41.gxh4 fxe6 42. ♔h5+ ♕g8 43. ♔xe6+ ♔f7 44. ♔f5 ♔dd7 45. ♔f3 White just wins.

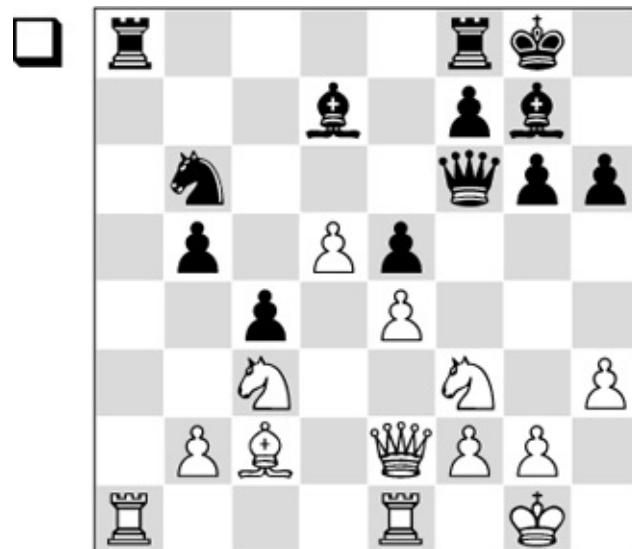
39. ♔f5 ♕xf5 40. ♔xd8 ♔xd8 41. ♕xd8+ ♔h7 42. ♕d4

And White won this queen ending:

42... ♕c2 43. ♔f3 ♕b3+ 44. ♔f4 g6 45. ♔g4 b5 46.axb5 ♕xb5 47. ♔h3

Black resigned.

## Exercise 11



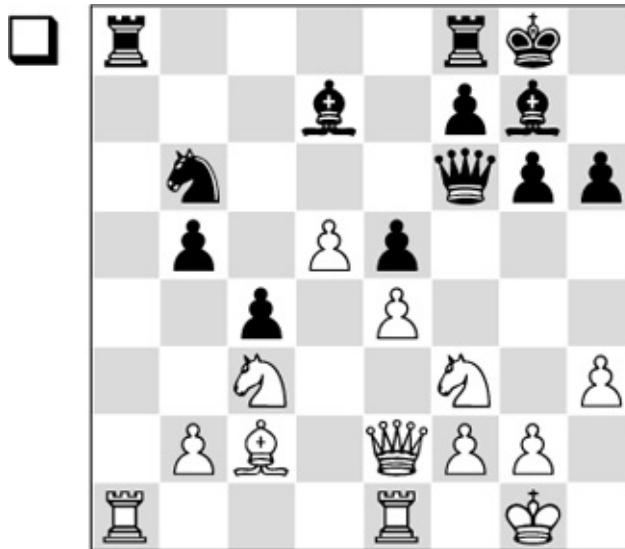
How to stop Black's queenside initiative?

## Exercise 11

Mishra Swayams

Andrey Esipenko

Moscow 2015



**20.b3! b4 21.bxc4**

21.♗a2 ♗d6 22.bxc4 ♗a3 was not White's idea.

**21...bxc3 22.c5 ♗xa1**

22...♗a4 23.♗c4 ♗a6 24.♗xa6 ♗xa6 25.c6.

The immediate 22...♗fc8 seems best, when 23.cxb6 ♗xb6 24.♗ec1 ♗xa1 25.♗xa1 would save Black a tempo on the game.

**23.♗xa1 ♗c8**

Not consistent. However, 23...♗a8 24.♗a7 ♗d8 (24...♗d8 25.c6 ♗xc6 is a better try) 25.♗d3 leaves Black much too passive.

Or 23...♗c8 24.♗e3, and the passed pawns do a good job restricting the activity of the black pieces. White has good compensation.

**24.cxb6 ♗xb6**

And White maintains the balance with 25.♗a6 ♗b2?! 26.♗e1 or 25.♗d3 ♗b5 26.♗e3 ♗xe3 27.fxe3.

## Exercise 12



Would you consider ...e7-e6 instead of the usual ... $\mathbb{Q}b6$ ?

## Exercise 12

Darwin Laylo

Oliver Barbosa

Bangkok 2014

■



9...e6!? 10.0-0

Capturing the second pawn is out of the question: 10.dxe6 ♜c5, for example: 11.exf7+ ♜xf7 12.♗d4 ♜d3+ 13.♔f1 ♛xd4 14.♗xd4 ♜g4 and Black wins.

This alone should be sufficient validation for Black's typical 9th move instead of the standard theoretical continuation 9...♝b6 10.♗b3 ♜f5 (even here 10...e6 could be worth a try).

Instead, 10.d6 would have led to the same pawn structure as in the game after 10...♝b6.

10...♝b6 11.♗a5 ♜bx d5 12.♗xd8 ♜xd8 13.d4 h6 14.a3 b6 15.♗e1 ♜b7 16.♗e3 ♜d7 17.♗ac1 ♜ad8 18.h3 ♜h7 19.♗h2 ♜e7 20.g4 ♜fd5 21.♗ed1 e5 22.dxe5 ♜xe5+ 23.♗g1 ♜xe3 24.♗xd7 ♜xd7 25.fxe3 ♜xg2 26.♗xg2 ♜d2 27.♗f3 ♜xb2 28.a4 ♜b4 29.♗d1 ♜c6 30.♗f2 ♜c4 31.♗c1 ♜b4 32.♗f1 ♜d3 33.♗d1 ♜b2

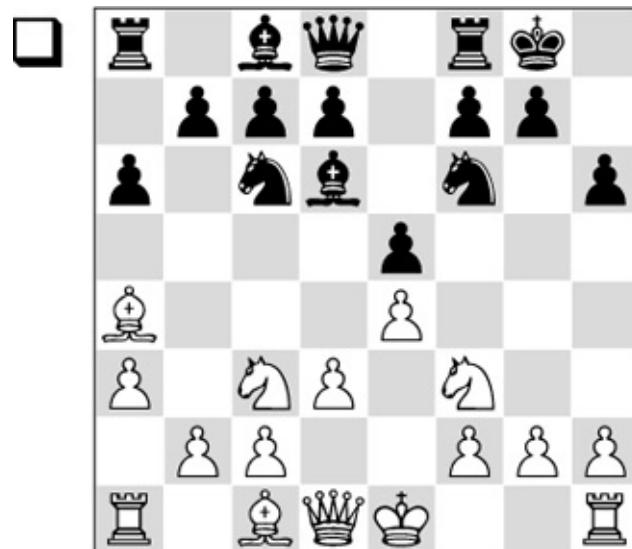
White resigned.

"CHESS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES"

telegram channel address:

<https://telegram.me/ChessWorldChess>

## Exercise 13



Would 8.g4 be an option here?

"CHESS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES"

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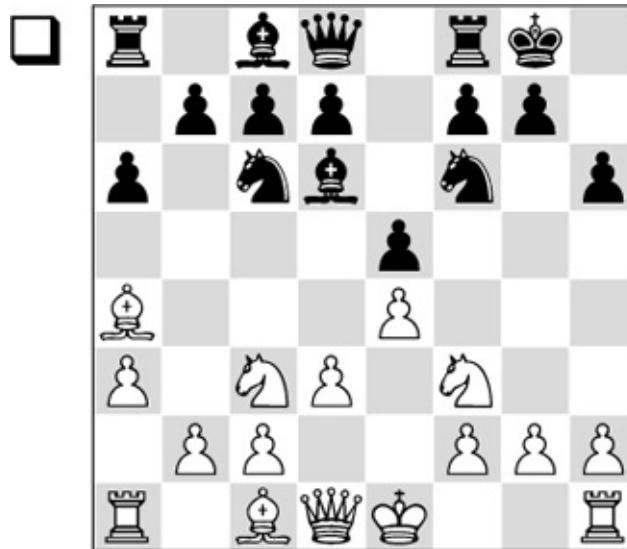
<https://telegram.me/ChessWorldChess>

## Exercise 13

Arkadij Naiditsch

Bayarsaikhan Gundavaa

Zurich 2015



**8.g4**

With the hook on h6, the g-file may soon be opened. Since White has not castled yet, he will soon make use of this.

**8... ♜d4**

8... ♜xg4 9.♕g1 ♜f6 10.♖xh6 only helps to accelerate White's plan.

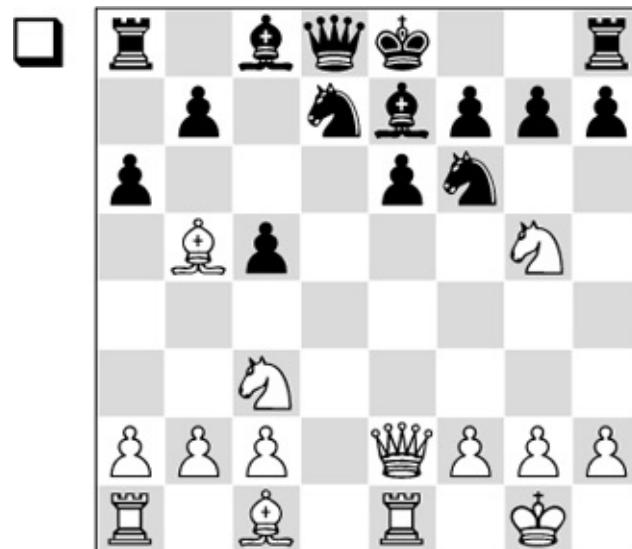
**9.g5 hxg5 10.♕xg5 ♜e7 11.♕g1 d6 12.♗xd4 exd4 13.♗e2 ♜d7**

Now Black goes wrong. 13... ♜g4, preventing White's next, was preferable.

**14.♘h6 ♜f6 15.♗f4 ♜e5 16.♗h5 ♘h7 17.♘xg7 ♜xg7 18.♘xg7+ ♘h8 19.♘c1 ♗f3+ 20.♘e2**

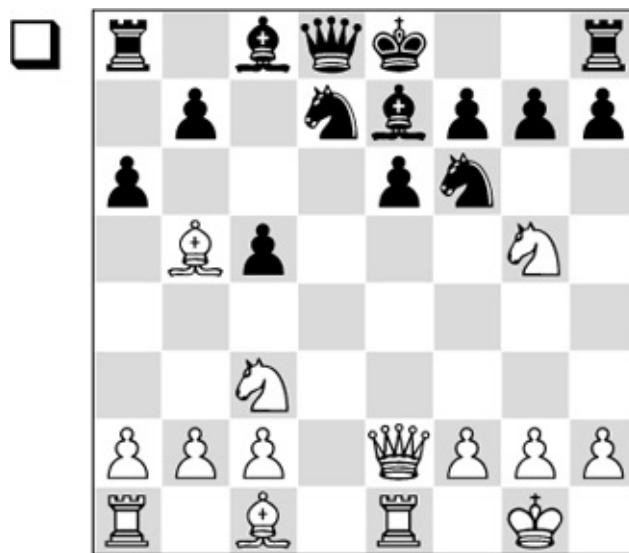
**1-0**

## Exercise 14



Would you go for it?

**Exercise 14**  
**Evgeny Alexeev**  
**Irina Krush**  
Baku 2013



**11.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$**

12...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  (15...  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$ ) 16.  $f3$   $\mathbb{Q}d4+$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$ .

**13.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}d6!$**

Absolutely a killing move, threatening 16.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$ .

**15...  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$**

Anyway!

**16...  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$**

The only move because 16...  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  runs into 17.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$   $gxf6$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}h6\#$ .

**17.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$**

By now Black is a rook up, but her king and queen are too heavily targeted.

**18...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$**

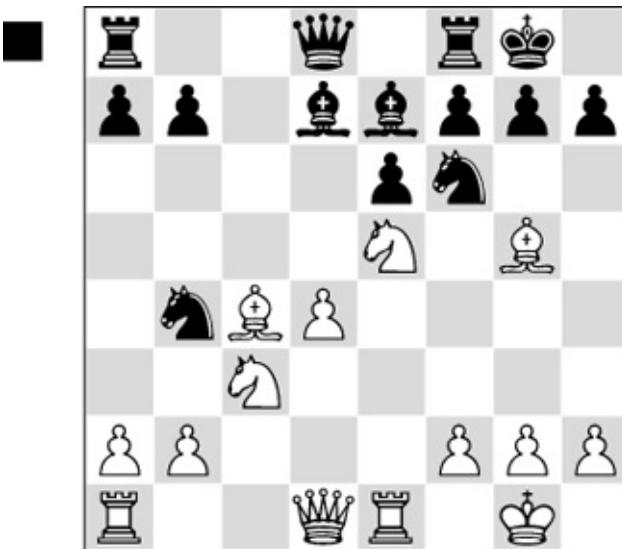
**18...  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$ .**

**19.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$**

This allows a nice mate in four, but Black's position was hopeless anyway.

**22.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5+$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}e8\#$**

## Exercise 15



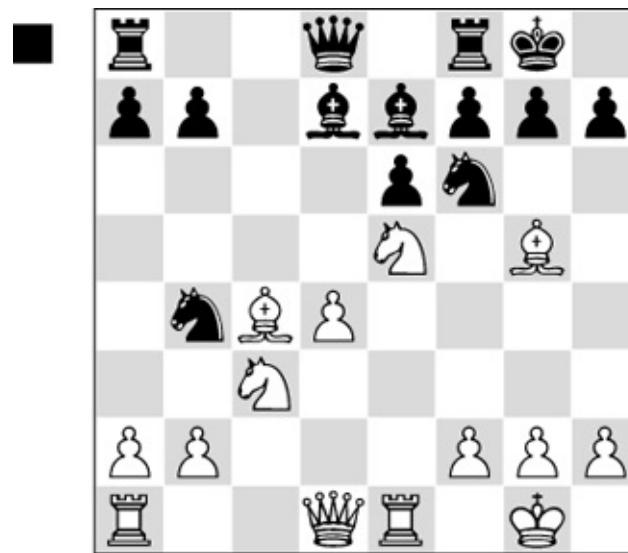
Would you complete the standard manoeuvre ... $\mathbb{Q}$ (d7-) $\mathbb{Q}$ c6?

## Exercise 15

Robert Hovhannisyan

Ashot Anastasian

Yerevan ch-ARM 2011



**14... ♖c6**

This was indeed played in the game. It was safer to opt for a more solid move like 14... ♜c8 Now the typical sac...

**15. ♘xf7 ♜xf7**

(15... ♜xf7 16. ♜xe6+ ♜e8 17.d5)

**16. ♜xe6**

... was possible. Black defended with...

**16... ♜e8**

Unpinning the rook with 16... ♜f8 does not bring relief: 17. ♘xf7 (17.a3 ♜bd5 18. ♜d3) 17... ♜xf7 18. ♜b3+ ♜f8 (18... ♜bd5 19. ♜e5!) 19. ♘xf6 gxf6 20. ♜e3 ♜d5?! 21. ♜h3.

**17.a3**

Not really necessary. 17. ♜e2 ♜c6 (again, the desirable blockading square is not a real option: 17... ♜bd5 18. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 19. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 20. ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 21. ♜f3+) 18. ♜ad1, and with two pawns and a rook for the two pieces and a lot of central pressure, White is clearly better.

**17... ♜a6? 18. ♜e2 ♜c7 19. ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 20.d5**

And soon Black succumbed:

20... ♜d6 21. ♜e4 ♜g8 22. ♜f3 ♜g6 23. ♜xf6 gxf6 24. ♜xf6+ ♜g7 25. ♜e4 ♜xe4 26. ♜xe4 ♜f6 27. ♜g4+ ♜f7 28. ♜h3 ♜h8 29. ♜e1 h6 30. ♜h5+ ♜f8 31. ♜e3

# Part III

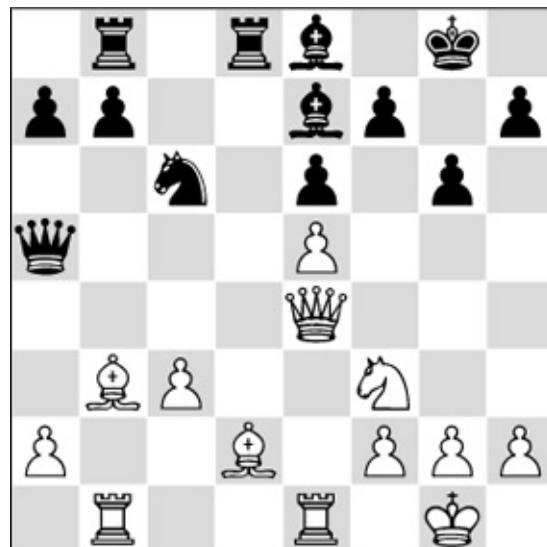
## Breaking Pawn Moves

### 16. The Other Dynamic Pawn Sac



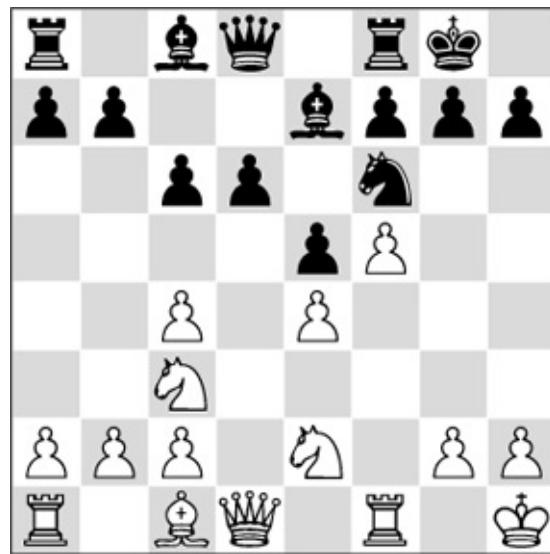
7.d3!?

### 17. Firing at the Fianchetto



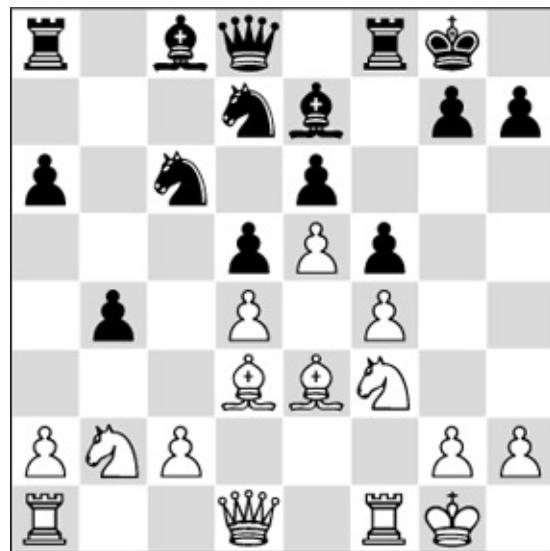
18.h4

## 18. The Regular Guest?



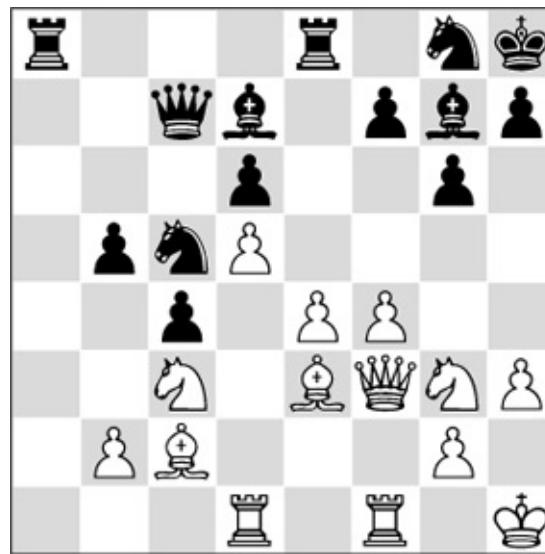
10... b5!? 11.cxb5 d5

## 19. The Fearless Break



16.g4!

## 20. A Versatile Pawn Sac



20.e5 dxe5 21.f5

## 21. The En-Passant Break



17.b4!

## Chapter 16

# The Other Dynamic Pawn Sac

In IYCPR (Chapter 23) we looked at a typical pawn sac which undoubled the opponent's c-pawn – a kind of wing gambit. You may be surprised to find out there is a similar sac, where not just a wing pawn but a central pawn is squandered.

## Sacking the d-Pawn

**Avetik Grigoryan**

**Richard Bitoon**

Quezon City 2014

1.g3 d5 2.♘f3 c6 3.♗g2 ♘f6 4.c4 dxс4 5.0-0 b5 6.a4 ♗b7



**7.d3**

7.b3 is the sacrifice you would expect. This is the typical sac we looked at in IYCPR. In this position too, this move has been played numerous times – unlike the text move, which may come as a slight shock to you. But as we will see, this idea is not unfamiliar either.

7...cxd3 8.♘e5 ♘bd7

If 8...dxe2 then 9.♗xd8+ ♘xd8 10.♗e1 ♘c7 11.♗xe2 preserves a strong initiative, easily compensating the two-pawn deficit.

9.♘xd3 bxa4?! 10.♘c3

White has a lead in development, and obviously not all of the weak black queenside pawns can be defended.

10...e6 11.♗f4 ♗e7 12.♘xa4 0-0 13.♗b3 ♗a6

Black gives back a second pawn, so that his pieces can breathe normally. Apparently, 13...♗c8 14.♗fc1 was too passive for his liking.

14.♗fd1

14.♗xc6 ♗c8 15.♗fc1, and Black's still cramped queen and a7-pawn give White the edge.

14...♗c8 15.♗ac1 ♗b7 16.♗c2 ♗b5



**17.  $\mathbb{H}d2$**

Again the capture on c6 would not be bad. But after the text move Black collapses surprisingly quickly.

**17...  $\mathbb{H}fc8$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}ac5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xc2$  20.  $\mathbb{H}dxc2$   $a5$**

This is understandable, but it loses on the spot.

**21.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$**

Black resigned, as the simple threat of 22.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$  followed by 23.  $\mathbb{H}c7$  poses insurmountable problems.

**Yuri Kryvoruchko**

**Robert Hovhannisyan**

Doha 2014

**1.c4 c6 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d5 3.g3 dxc4 4.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5.0-0 e6 6.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$  b5**



**7.d3**

Again, 7.b3 would be the usual sacrifice, preserving the central pawns for later.

**7...  $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}exd3$**

White is a full pawn down now, but again the c6-pawn is an obvious target, whereas c5 can be a strong square for a white knight.

**8...  $\mathbb{Q}b7$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  10.  $d4$  0-0 11.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  a6 12.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  13.  $\mathbb{H}fd1$   $\mathbb{Q}fd7$**

13...  $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  is a standard reaction: completing development, while returning the extra pawn: 14.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{Q}xc6$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$ .

**14.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}d3!$**

Refusing to exchange Black's superfluous knight (see IPYCP, Chapter 35).

15... ♜d8 16. ♜ac1 ♜a7 17. ♜e4 ♜f6 18. ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 19. ♜c5 ♜a8

After 19... ♜xd4 20. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 21. ♜e5 Black's only active piece will be exchanged.

Alas, the text move runs into a nice refutation.

20. ♜b6 ♜e7



21.d5! cxd5

21...exd5 22. ♜e1.

22. ♜c7 ♜d7 23. ♜xd7 ♜xd7 24. ♜c5 ♜c8 25. ♜xb7 ♜c6 26. ♜xc8+ ♜xc8 27. ♜xa6 ♜a8 28. ♜c7 ♜a5 29. ♜c1 ♜d4  
30. ♜f1 ♜f8 31.a3

1-0

Two rounds later, the same tournament saw this game:

**Johan Christiansen**

**Erwin l'Ami**

Doha 2014

1. ♜f3 ♜f6 2.c4 c6 3.g3 d5 4. ♜g2 dxc4 5.0-0 b5



Here Black has voluntarily played ...b7-b5. The young Norwegian did not hesitate:

6.d3!?

He must have been inspired by Kryvoruchko's game, as in this position players had almost

exclusively opted for other moves: 6.b3, 6.a4.

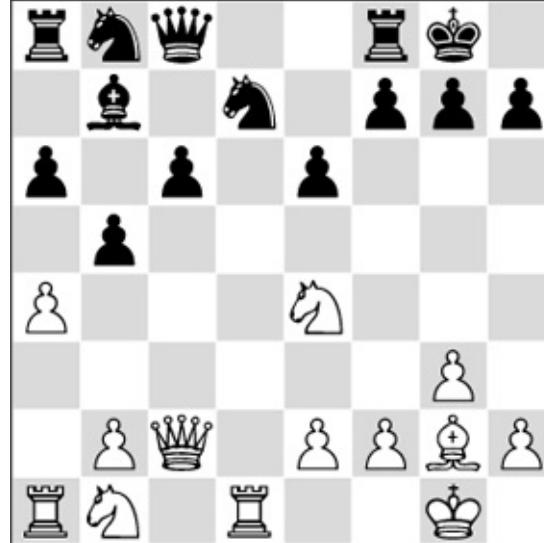
6... $\mathbb{c}xd3$  7. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$

7... $dxe2$  8. $\mathbb{Q}xe2$  would gain Black a second pawn, but White's huge lead in development immediately gives ample compensation.

8. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  e6 9. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  10. $\mathbb{Q}d1$  0-0 11.a4 a6 12. $\mathbb{Q}e3!$ ?

Aiming for the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, thus gaining more control of the dark squares in Black's camp – mainly c5, but also d6, as we will see.

12... $\mathbb{Q}c8$  13. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  14. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  15. $\mathbb{Q}e4!$



In this game too, White leaves his opponent's knights struggling with each other for squares. Moreover, on d6 the knight will make a fine octopus.

15... $\mathbb{Q}c7$  16. $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  17. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  b4 18. $\mathbb{Q}ce4$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  19. $\mathbb{Q}g5$  g6 20. $\mathbb{Q}ge4?$

There was nothing wrong with 20. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  exd5 (20... $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  24. $\mathbb{Q}c4+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  25. $\mathbb{Q}d4$ ) 21. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$ , when White regains his pawn with a superior position.

20... $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Finally. Though he is still fine, White later even lost due to a miscalculation.

## An Experienced Fighter

But we are not dealing with a brand new concept recently created in the Middle East. Here is a Zurich 1953 game which may have slipped your attention.

**Alexander Kotov**

**Max Euwe**

Zurich Candidates' 1953

1.c4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.g3 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}g2$  d5 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}dxc4$  5.0-0 a6 6. $\mathbb{Q}c2$  b5 7. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$



**8.d3**

'An experienced fighter's decision, rather than to spend a lot of effort trying to regain the pawn Kotov would rather try for active piece play' – Bronstein in his tournament book.

Najdorf is more elaborate:

'(...) better development and better piece location. The pressure of the fianchettoed bishop, a knight on d3 and a rook on d1 can compensate for the gift at move four.'

Indeed, the knight on d3 seems typically well placed after the d2-d3 sacrifice, controlling the weak square c5 in front of the backward c-pawn. The d5-knight, Black's only developed piece, can be kicked back by e2-e4. One small detail: the usual alternative 8.b3 can be met with 8...♝d6, when the intermediate 9.bxc4 seems dubious as the rook on a1 will be hanging after 9...♝xe5.

**8...cxd3 9.♝xd3 ♝b7 10.♜d1**

This may be an old game, but this position still occurs in our day, with players like Kuzubov and Kaidanov preferring 10.♝c3 here.

**10...♝c8 11.a4 ♜d7 12.axb5 axb5 13.♜xa8 ♝xa8 14.♝a3 ♝xa3**

This move has been criticized as weakening the dark squares too much, and 14...♝b8 has been suggested as the better alternative. However, after 15.e4 ♜f6 16.♝f4 White has sufficient pressure.

**15.bxa3**



**15...0-0**

15...c5 is a feasible try to make something of the extra pawn. White has no clear way to profit from his lead in development, so it seems.

16.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}7b6$  17.  $e4$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Now Black's extra pawn plays no role, while White has a pleasant initiative thanks to his spatial advantage.

19.  $f3$

Now the natural 19.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$  would already pose Black some immediate problems, with  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  coming up.

19...  $\mathbb{Q}d8$

Now Kotov was unable to create real pressure, and the game petered out to a draw:

20.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xd1$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}d8+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xc8$   $\mathbb{Q}xc8$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}d8$   $c6$  25.  $f4$   $e5$  26.  $f5$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}b7$   $f6$   
29.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  30.  $h3$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}a5$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  32.  $g4$   $\mathbb{Q}db6$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}b4$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}a2$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}a2$

1/2-1/2

## Revisiting Double A

**Laszlo Szabo**

**Nigel Short**

Hastings 1981/82

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $d5$  2.  $g3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $c6$  4.  $c4$   $dxc4$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  6. 0-0  $e5$



The young Nigel has played an ambitious follow-up on the pawn grab. Where years later the usual suspect – 7.b3 – was tried, the experienced Hungarian wants to dare the youngster even more.

7.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $e4$

And successfully!

8.  $d3!$

Now the position will open up more quickly than in the previous examples, and White's big lead in development becomes a dominant factor.

8...  $\mathbb{Q}xa3$  9.  $bxa3$

This doubled a-pawn does not bother White. The bishop pair, the half-open b-file and quick development provide ample compensation. IPYCP, Chapter 19, as an exception, also featured this very same game. Apparently the patterns are somewhat intertwined, see also the following example.

9...  $cxd3$  10.  $exd3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$   $gxf6$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xd1$   $\mathbb{Q}e6?$

Black is struggling, and this natural move fails to consider White's concrete follow-up.

14.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $b6$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}bc1$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  17.  $a4$

Black can hardly move. His next move, the capture of a useless pawn, clearly shows this.

17...  $\mathbb{Q}xa2$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}a3+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}e1+$

19.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}f3!$   $a5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}h5.$

19...  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  20.  $f4$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $a6$  22.  $g4$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4?$

22... $\mathbb{Q}a7$ .

23.  $\mathbb{Q}e7$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  24.f5  $\mathbb{Q}b3$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}ce1$  a5 26.  $\mathbb{Q}1e3$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$

1-0

## Yuri Lapshun Faik Aleskerov

Philadelphia 2010

1.e4 g6 2.d4  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  3.c3 c5 4.dxc5  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  6.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  6.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$  0-0 7.h3  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}xa6$  bxa6 9.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$



Again we see doubled a-pawns, but White is much better developed to cope with Black's activity.

9...d6

Black will not win back his pawn, so he decides to open up to game as soon as possible, before White can consolidate.

10.cxd6 exd6 11.0-0

Not 11.f3 d5 12.exd5  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$ .

11...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$ !

White gives back the pawn, but eliminates Black's bishop pair. With his development completed he may hope to make use of Black's scattered pawn structure.

12...  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}ae8$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}fe1$   $\mathbb{Q}4e5$

White should have an edge now, but it is not easy to exploit Black's weak pawns. The black pieces easily find active places.

18.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  19.b3  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  20.f3 a5 21.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4+$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  f5 26.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$  d5 27.  $\mathbb{Q}xa7$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$  a4 29.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  axb3 31. axb3  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  32. c4  $\mathbb{Q}a2$  33. c5  $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}d2$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}e6+$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  36. c6  $\mathbb{Q}d3+$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  38. c7  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}c6+$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}xa6$   $\mathbb{Q}b2$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$   $\mathbb{Q}xc7$  44. h4 d4 45.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}xb3$  46. h5  $\mathbb{Q}g3$  47.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$  48. h6  $\mathbb{Q}h5$  49.  $\mathbb{Q}f7+$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  50.  $\mathbb{Q}xh7$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$

0-1

## Untripling

### Laszlo Szabo Lajos Portisch

Budapest ch-HUN playoff 1959

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4.e3 c5 5.a3  $\mathbb{Q}xc3+$  6.bxc3 0-0 7.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  b6 9.e4  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}a6!$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}a4?$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  12.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  13.dxc5



Wrong chapter, you say? Here Black can make the pawn sacrifice definite by allowing his opponent to capture the b-pawn and undouble (here, in fact, untriple) his c-pawn. But the following move puts this example in the right place.

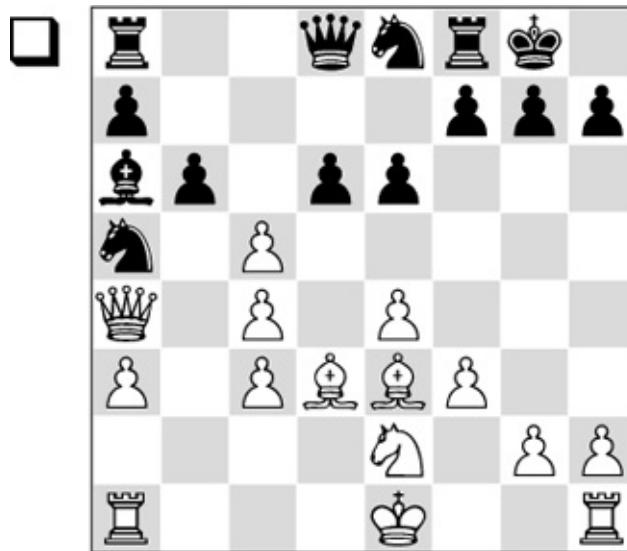
**13...d6!**

Giving White a choice between two ways to accept the sacrifice. But White refuses.

**14.♘g3**

Actually, there is an earlier game which featured the position after Black's 13th. Geller-Simagin, Gorky 1954, saw 14.cxb6 axb6 15.♗c2 ♘xc4 16.♗xc4 ♘xc4 and Black was perfectly fine as White cannot take on b6 in view of 17...♝a6.

Remarkably, Szabo returned to the same solution in a very similar position six years later:



analysis diagram

Szabo-Zuidema, Amsterdam 1965, but here too after 14.cxb6 axb6 15.♗f2 ♛c8 Black was fine (now 16.♗xb6 is countered with 16...♘xc4).

Back to our game. 14.cxd6? ♘xd6 would activate Black's passive knight, while Flesch' suggestion of 14.♘d4!? dx5 15.♘b3 can be met with 15...♝c6, when the c4-pawn will soon miss a defender.

**14...dxc5 15.e5 f5!**



A great follow-up, practically forcing White to capture en passant.

**16.exf6**

16.f4 would again allow the exchange of queens after 16... ♜c6, which clearly favours Black, like in the earlier line after 14. ♜d4.

**16... ♜xf6 17. ♜e4 ♜xe4 18. ♜xe4 ♜b7 19. ♜xb7 ♜xb7 20. ♜ad1 ♜e8! 21. ♜a6**

21. ♜xe8 ♜axe8 22. ♜d7 ♜f7 23. ♜fd1 ♜xd7 24. ♜xd7 ♜d8! 25. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 26. ♜f1 ♜c6 27. ♜e2 ♜e5 28. ♜f4 ♜xc4 29. ♜b8 a5 30. ♜a7 a4 31. ♜d3 ♜e5+ 32. ♜e4 ♜d7+; 21. ♜d7 ♜d8 22. ♜fd1 ♜xd7 23. ♜xd7 ♜xd7 24. ♜xd7 ♜d8 comes down to the same thing.

**21... ♜c6**

And soon Szabo failed to defend his weak queenside pawns.

Portisch won the game and later the championship, and would gradually overtake the number 1 position in Hungary from his opponent.

## Summary

This pawn sac, exchanging a central pawn versus your opponent's foremost doubled pawn, is perhaps counter-intuitive. But as long as your pieces become active or target weak pawns or squares on the half-open c-file this can be a surprising and good alternative for the more common b2-b3 sac.

# Chapter 17

## Firing at the Fianchetto

The march of the rook pawn is a typical reaction to a fianchetto – with or without the rook on its initial square, and no matter whether the opponent’s king has castled or not. Several defensive mechanisms are possible.

Let’s have a look at some typical features.

### The Early Bird...?

**Alexander Morozevich**

**Ruslan Ponomariov**

Riga (rapid) 2013

1.c4 g6 2.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  d5 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$



**5.h4**

No, Black has not castled yet and White has barely started his development. What is more: is White threatening to advance his h-pawn any further? And yet, this move has caused a bit of a rage even in top-level chess!

In defence of this move you could quote Euwe’s comment that one of the most important middlegame issues is the development of the rooks, though in this case I guess you would be inclined to call it the opening phase.

**5...dxc4**

A (standard) counter-reaction in the centre. Propping up the centre with 5...c6 is also a logical reaction, adopted amongst others by Carlsen. After that White would find it harder to justify the advance of the h-pawn. By the way, Ivan Sokolov reacted in the same fashion when Bosboom confronted him with h2-h4 on move 4, back in 1997. But could such a modest move refute the reckless h2-h4 advance?

**6.e4 c5 7.d5**

As a result White has managed to gain some space with his pawn centre, delaying the advance of the

h-pawn.

7...b5 8.h5 0-0

After 8...d5xh5 White can play 9.d5xb5 as the e4-pawn is no longer attacked.

The other obvious try 8...b4 is met by 9.h6!, and after 9...d5xh6 (9...bxc3 10.hxg7 g8 11.d5xc4 d5xe4 12.g7xh7; 9...f8 is relatively best) 10.d5xh6 bxc3 11.bxc3 d5xe4 12.d5xc4 White has excellent compensation.

9.hxg6 fxg6

A characteristic reply and one of Black's main defensive strategies. The h-file remains closed and Black's rook may be able to defend from f7.

9...hxg6 10.d5h6 is a well-known typical plan for the attacker, exchanging the dark-squared bishop and eliminating one defender of the h-file. This would actually transpose to Mamedyarov-Kamsky, Tromsø (World Cup) 2013.

10.e5 g4 11.d6 e6



12. h7!

Thus White proves the point of the early advance of the h-pawn. However, the position remains highly unclear, for instance after the cool-headed...

12...c6!

12...d5xh7 13.d5g5+ g8 14.wxg4 was Vitiugov-Ragger, Tromsø (World Cup) 2013, played just a month earlier. It is a mess, but White seems to obtain good attacking chances for the exchange.

13. h7+ wxg7 14.g5 d7 15.e4 cxe5 16.xe5 xe5 17.xc5

And here White seemed to have sufficient compensation for the exchange. A double-edged fight ended in a draw.

## A Precedent for the Idea

Of course, the idea of an early strike against the fianchetto hook is not new. Here the follow-up was even more brutal.

**Alexey Dreev**

**Alexander Khalifman**

Soviet Union 1984

1.e4 e5 2.c3 c6 3.g3



**3...h5 4.Qf3 h4!?**

The young Khalifman ignores White's attempt to prevent the advance and opts for a long-term exchange sacrifice.

The same approach can be used against the Leningrad Dutch.

**5.Qxh4 Rxh4 6.gxh4 Rxh4**

Black has not managed to get a pawn for the exchange, but he has a tiny lead in development and pressure against f2. And at least he has solved the problem of developing his king's rook :-)

**7.Qg2 Rc5 8.0-0 Qf6 9.Qf3 d6 10.Qg3 Rh7!?**

10...Qxg3 11.hxg3 Qd4 would win a pawn, but lose the initiative.

**11.d3 Qd4 12.Qe3 Rd7**

Black intends to castle and bring his rook to h8. White's plan is more problematic – his rooks have no clear prospects yet.

In the game he even went terribly astray with...

**13.b4 Rb6 14.Qac1?**

and after...

**14...Qh5 15.Qh4 c6!**

... suddenly the white queen was in big trouble – ...Rb6-d8 is coming.

**16.f3 Qf5 17.exf5 Rxe3+ 18.Qh1 Rxc1 19.Rxc1 Rxf5 20.Re1 Qd7 21.Qe2 Rh8**

And Black went on to win.

## A 'Normal' Case

**Josef Augustin**

**John Nunn**

Moscow Ech-tt 1977

**1.e4 e5 2.Qc3 Qf6 3.g3 Rc5 4.Qg2 d6 5.Qge2 Qc6 6.0-0**



Here White has just castled and developed his knight to the more modest square e2. Of course this fully justifies...

**6...h5!**

... although I guess this caught White unawares.

**7.d3**

White had a couple of ways to stop the black h-pawn: 7.h3 to meet 7...h4 with 8.g4, or 7.h4. The latter move would weaken g4 and allow Black comfortable play after 7... $\mathbb{Q}g4$ , while the former would give Black a dangerous attack after 8... $\mathbb{Q}xg4$ .

More about these defensive possibilities later.

**7...h4 8. $\mathbb{Q}g5$  hxg3 9. $\mathbb{Q}xg3$**

Here too 9.hxg3 would surrender the g4-square to Black and allow him easy play after 9... $\mathbb{Q}g4$  followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}d7$ , etc. The text, however, is no improvement.

**9... $\mathbb{Q}d4$  10. $\mathbb{Q}h5$**

Now Nunn opted for the imaginative continuation...

**10... $\mathbb{Q}e6$**

... whereas Black would also be doing well after the forcing 10... $\mathbb{Q}g4$  (10... $\mathbb{Q}f8$  11. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  transposes) 11. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$  (11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$  gxf6 12. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  fxe5) 11... $\mathbb{Q}f8$  12. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  13. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$   $\mathbb{Q}xc2$  14. $\mathbb{Q}f6$  (14. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$ ) 14... $\mathbb{Q}h6$  15. $\mathbb{Q}d5$  c6.

**11. $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  12. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5!$ ?** 13. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$   $\mathbb{Q}f4$



This queen sac was Nunn's idea! Black has only two pieces! (more on this material imbalance in

Chapter 31!) But imagine a black rook on g8, and things start to look pretty scary for White. In the game it worked out, but White could have defended better.

**14.♗g5**

White plays the obvious moves, but he should have challenged Black's minor pieces more quickly: 14.d4 ♜xd4 (14...exd4 15.♗g5 ♜ge6 16.♗xf4 ♜xf4 17.♗d2) 15.♗xc7 ♜ge6 16.♗xd6 ♜g8 17.c3 ♜xg2+ 18.♔h1 ♜b6 19.♗xe5 is one clever attempt.

**14...♜ge6 15.♗xf4 ♜xf4 16.♗h1 ♜e6 17.♗f3 ♜h4**

Even the immediate 17...♗e7 was possible, as 18.♗g4 fails to 18...♜h6 19.♗xe6 ♜ah8.

**18.♗g1 ♜e7 19.♗g2**

Having completed his development, Black can now give up his killer knight to regain material.

**19...♞xg2 20.♗xg2 ♜ah8 21.♗d2?!**

Better is 21.♗g1, though White can hardly move after 21...♜f4 22.♗f1.

**21...♜xh2+ 22.♗g1 ♜h2h4 23.♗e1 ♜g8 24.♗e3 ♜xe3 25.♗xe3 ♜h3 26.♗f1 ♜xg2+ 27.♗e2 c5 28.♗d2 b6 29.♗c3 ♜f4 30.♗a3 a5 31.♗b3 ♜h3 32.f3 ♜g2+ 33.♗e3 ♜g4**

0-1

## No Rook on the h-File

**Ilya Zaragatski**

**Vladislav Kovalev**

Rhodes tt 2013

**1.♘f3 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4 ♜g7 4.♗b2 0-0 5.g3 d6 6.♗g2 e5 7.d3 a5 8.b5 ♜bd7 9.0-0 ♜c5 10.♘fd2**



Here we are a few moves further in the game. Black has already castled, but still decided on...

**10...h5!?**

One of the ideas is to safeguard g4 for the black pieces, just as we saw in the variations in the Nunn game.

Actually, the text move was a new try, where previously 10...♗g4 had been the usual move, for example 11.h3 ♜e6 12.♗c3.

**11.♘c3**

Now 11.h3 ♜e6 would lose a tempo compared to the variation above, while 11...h4 12.g4 ♜xg4 13.hxg4 ♜xg4 is also possible.

**11...h4 12.♘a4 hxg3 13.hxg3 ♜e6 14.c5 ♜g4**

With the h-pawns gone, the knight is a real nuisance here. It can hardly be chased away and Black has an easy follow-up in ...♗g5-h5. Remember this typical idea!

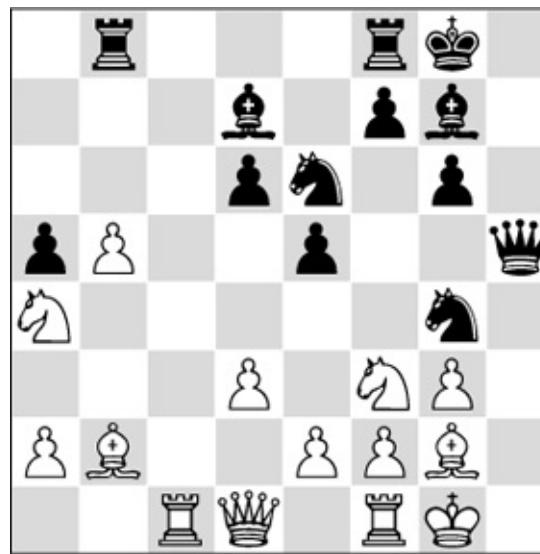
**15.cxd6 cxd6 16. ♕c1 ♖d7 17. ♖xb7**

In effect this only wastes time.

**17... ♜b8 18. ♖g2 ♗g5!**

Black does not bother about the white b-pawn, but immediately brings his queen to the kingside.

**19. ♘f3 ♗h5**



Black is better: he only needs to eliminate the f3-knight to create huge threats against the white king. The pawn on b5 will fall sooner or later anyway.

**20. ♘c3 f5**

20... ♖d4 could be parried with 21. ♜e1, but 20... ♖xb5 was also fully possible.

**21. ♜e1 f4! 22. ♘d5**

This loses right away. Even so, a move such as 22.a4 would have run into 22...fxg3 23.fxg3 e4! (other moves are also good) 24.dxe4 ♜xf3 25.exf3 ♗c5+ 26. ♘h1 ♗f7!, while 22. ♖e4 d5 does not offer much hope either.

**22... fxg3 23.fxg3 ♜xb5**

A simple double attack. White played three more moves before resigning.

**24. ♘e7+ ♗f7 25. ♖a3 ♗xe7 26. ♗a4 ♖h6**

0-1

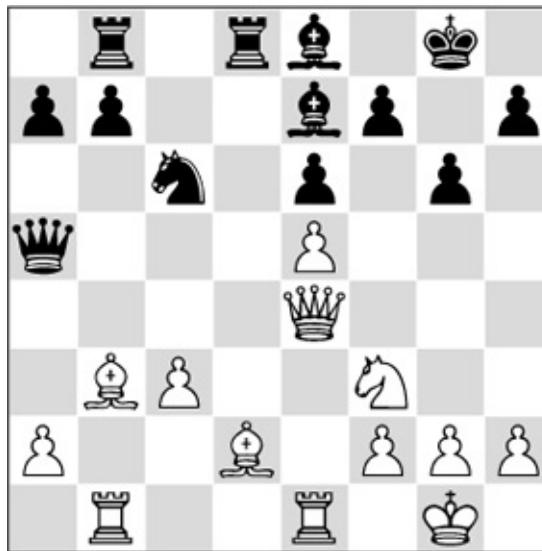
## Weakening the Pawn Structure

**Maxime Vachier-Lagrave**

**Alexander Moiseenko**

Biel 2013

**1.e4 c5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3.c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘d5 5. ♖c4 e6 6.d4 cxd4 7.cxd4 d6 8.0-0 ♖e7 9. ♘e2 0-0 10. ♘c3 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 dxe5 12.dxe5 ♗a5 13. ♖d2 ♖d7 14. ♜ab1 ♜ab8 15. ♖b3 ♜fd8 16. ♘e4 ♖e8 17. ♜fe1 g6**



There's no rook on the h-file, but again White proceeds with...

**18.h4**

If White is allowed to follow up with h4-h5xg6, Black's pawn structure would be more vulnerable, and a piece sac on e6 could be in the offing. Furthermore, if White manages to play ♜g5 and ♜h4 after the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, Black will no longer have the defence ...h7-h5.

The immediate 18.♗g5 was also interesting, for example: 18...♝xg5 19.♝xg5 h6 (not 19...♛xc3 20.♕h4 h5 21.♘e4), and now White can sacrifice on e6 or f7, though it doesn't bring any clear reward: 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♗g4 ♛f7 22.♖xe6 ♘e7 23.♖xf7+ ♛xf7 with a draw after 24.♗f4+ ♛g8 25.♗f6 ♛c5 26.♗e6+.

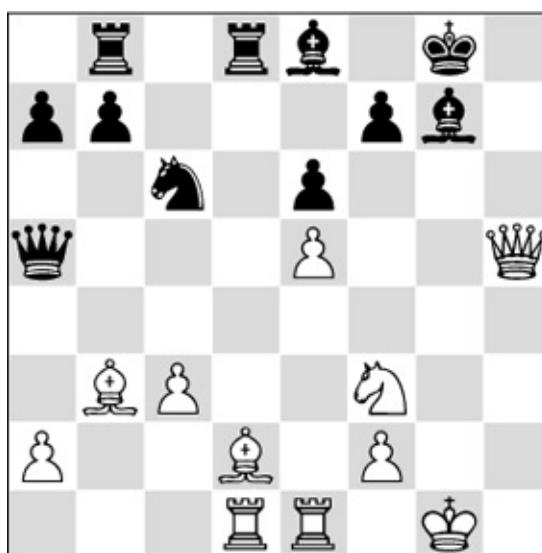
**18...h5**

Black stops h4-h5, but weakens his pawn structure in the process. White uses the new hook to open up the kingside. 18...♛a6!? was the alternative.

**19.♗bd1 ♛f8?!**

19...♛a6!.

**20.g4! hxg4 21.♗xg4 ♛g7 22.h5 gxh5 23.♗xh5**



White has clearly made progress and is ready to transfer his pieces to the kingside. Black's exchange sacrifice seems to be the only reasonable defence.

**23...♗xd2 24.♗xd2 ♜xc3 25.♗e4 ♜e7 26.♗c4**

Instead 26.♗c2 ♜d3 27.♗g5 would probably have won. In the game Black escaped with a draw:

**26...♛a5 27.♗g4 ♜c8 28.♗d6 ♜c3 29.♗xe6 ♜c1+ 30.♗g2 fxe6 31.♗xe6+ ♜f8 32.♗h7 ♜h6 33.♗xh6 ♜xh6**

34. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 35. ♜d4 ♜e7 36. ♜e6+ ♜f7 37. ♜d8+ ♜f8 38. ♜e6+ ♜f7 39. ♜d8+ ♜f8 40. ♜e6+

½-½

## Counteracting with ...h7-h6

Let's have a look at another way of meeting an early h2-h4.

**Stephane Hautot**

**Vladimir Malakhov**

Rhodes tt 2013

1.d4 g6 2.e4 ♜g7 3. ♜c3 d6 4. ♜e3 a6 5. ♜d2 b5



**6.h4**

6.f3 is more usual.

**6...h6**

In this way Black maintains control of the g5-square and gets ready to meet h4-h5 with ...g6-g5. After 6...h5 White would again direct his knight to g5.

**7.h5**

A straightforward approach. After 7.f4, preparing h4-h5, Black could decide to play 7...h5 anyway as he now has a strong square for his own knight on g4. 7.0-0-0 is also a logical continuation, continuing development. With the pawn on h6 it won't be easy for Black to castle kingside.

**7...g5 8. ♜ce2**

The start of some rather cumbersome manoeuvring.

The most consistent move seems to be 8.f4, trying for a further break-up on the kingside, although a regular developing move such as 8.0-0-0 could be just as strong.

**8... ♜d7 9. ♜g3 ♜b6 10.b3 e6**

Controlling f5 and thus restricting the g3-knight.

**11. ♜d3 ♜e7 12. ♜1e2**

Now both sides postpone castling for a little longer and first proceed to determine the pawn structure.

**12...f5 13.exf5 exf5 14.f4 g4 15.c4 bxc4 16.bxc4 d5 17.cxd5 0-0 18.0-0 ♜exd5**



We can now see that in this game White gained nothing from his h-pawn advance. Black successfully countered his h2-h4. In this position Black seems slightly better, though for the moment his c8-bishop has to keep an eye on f5. Eventually Malakhov prevailed.

Let us return to the topical line of the first game and see how Caruana implemented the defence from the former game in an original way.

## A Caro-Grünfeld

**Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu  
Fabiano Caruana**

Bucharest 2013

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 g6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  d5 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  5.h4 c6 6. $\mathbb{Q}g5$  0-0 7. $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$



**8.h5 g5**

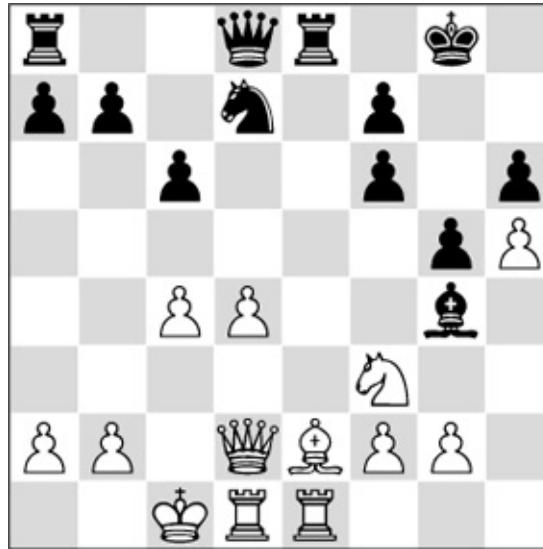
Black refuses to allow the h-file to be opened. Yet, Carlsen in an earlier game had played 8... $\mathbb{Q}f5$  9.e3 e6 10.hxg6  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  and held on to a draw against Grischuk, London Candidates' 2013.

The text move is basically the same defence as in the Malakhov game, but without the preparatory ...h7-h6. As a consequence, White could have continued with 9.h6, as indeed happened in a few games. Nisipeanu, however, opts for direct action in the centre.

9.e4 dxе4 10. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  h6 11. $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$  exf6

Now we have a weird kind of Caro-Kann structure, from the 5...exf6 variation, with Black's g-pawn already advanced.

12.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{E}e8+$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  14. 0-0-0  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  15.  $\mathbb{E}he1$



The pawn on h5 has become a target, but naturally White is not inclined to passively defend it with his rook.

15...  $\mathbb{Q}c7$

After 15...  $\mathbb{Q}xh5$  the rook returns: 16.  $\mathbb{E}h1$ , with sufficient compensation.

16.  $g3$   $b5$

And Black seized the initiative on the queenside, with his own strange kingside structure quite safe. 16...  $\mathbb{Q}xh5$  17.  $\mathbb{E}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  18.  $\mathbb{E}xh6$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  was also reasonable, as the h-file can be neutralised. In the game Caruana ended up victorious:

17.  $cxb5$   $cxb5+$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{E}xe2$  21.  $\mathbb{E}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}xh5$  22.  $f4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe2$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{E}c8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xh6$   $\mathbb{Q}xh6$  26.  $\mathbb{E}h1+$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}c2+$   $f5$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}h6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}xf5+$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}c5+$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5+$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  35.  $\mathbb{E}e1$   $\mathbb{E}c7$  36.  $a3$   $a5$  37.  $g4$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}a2$   $a4$  39.  $d5$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  41.  $bxc3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  42.  $g5$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  43.  $\mathbb{E}b1+$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  44.  $\mathbb{E}b4$   $\mathbb{E}a7$  45.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}c4+$  46.  $\mathbb{Q}a2$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$  47.  $\mathbb{E}b8$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  48.  $f5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  49.  $\mathbb{E}e8$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  50.  $f6$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  51.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{E}a5$  52.  $\mathbb{E}c8+$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  53.  $c4+$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  54.  $\mathbb{E}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  55.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{E}c5$  56.  $\mathbb{E}a7$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$  57.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$

0-1

## Summary

The advance of the h-pawn against a fianchetto position is more than a standard kingside attack with opposite-side castling. Essentially it often involves the activation of the rook behind it, which is possible in various different circumstances and even at a (very) early stage, when other development is still in process. The responding side has to decide whether to allow the advance, to anticipate it or to stop it. All three reactions yield some typical resulting features and possibilities, which you certainly should familiarize yourself with.

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## Chapter 18

# ...b7-b5 – The Regular Guest?

You might be inclined to label this break as common, because it is well-known from several openings, notably the Volga Gambit. That might be so, as there are numerous middlegame positions from other openings where a white pawn on c4 also triggers this typical break.

Let's explore the different ideas behind it:

### Queenside and Centre

Let's start off with a familiar Benoni structure anyway.

**Robert Ruck**

**Arkadij Naiditsch**

Germany Bundesliga 2011/12

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  c5 2. c4  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  g6 4. e3  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  5. d4 d6 6.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  7. 0-0 0-0 8. d5  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  9. e4 a6 10.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}xe2$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$



White has lost a tempo compared to a normal King's Indian position (the e-pawn has used two tempi to get to e4) and Black now starts to attack White's centre in typical fashion:

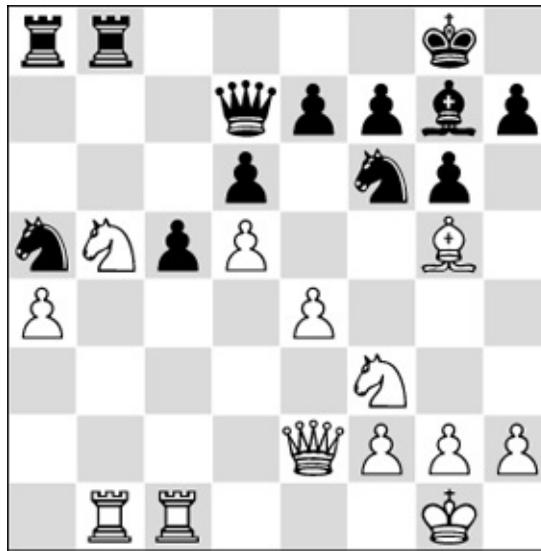
12... b5! 13. cxb5 axb5 14.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$

14.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$ .

14...  $\mathbb{Q}h5$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}ab1$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}fc1$

Black has obtained a position similar to the Volga Gambit, without playing a gambit! Now, first he directs his attention to the queenside.

17...  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}fb8$  19. a4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$



Intending ... $\mathbb{Q}e8-c7$ , putting further pressure on the b-file and the pawn on a4.

**20.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6!?$**

A radical solution.

**20...  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$**

As Black is not a pawn down, the usual target – White's b-pawn – is missing here.

**22.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $e6$**

Black sees no way to further increase the queenside pressure and continues to attack White's centre. We can safely say that ...b7-b5 served both intentions.

**23.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $exd5$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}a6?$**

Better is 25... $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  with the same structure as in the game.

**26.  $\mathbb{Q}xa5$**

Returning the favour. 26.  $\mathbb{Q}bx d6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  would have been fine for White.

**26...  $\mathbb{Q}xa5$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$**

Having traded his a5-knight, Black now has a pleasant position. White eventually succumbed after losing the once so proudly supported d5-pawn!

## Creating a Strong Square

**Hou Yifan**

**Zhao Jun**

Danzhou 2012

1.e4 g6 2.d4  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  c6 4.h3 d5 5.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  6.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $dxe4$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  0-0 9.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{Q}a3$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  16.c4  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}ac8$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  19.a4  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$



**20...b5!**

An active attempt in a difficult position, which does at least gain the d5-square for the black pieces. 20... $\mathbb{A}xd4$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{W}xd4$  22. $\mathbb{A}e5$  followed by  $\mathbb{W}xb7$  gives White extreme activity. Meanwhile, 20...b6 21. $\mathbb{W}e2$   $\mathbb{A}xd4$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{W}xd4$  looks slightly more solid, but after, for instance, 23. $\mathbb{W}f3$  Black's position remains very passive and vulnerable.

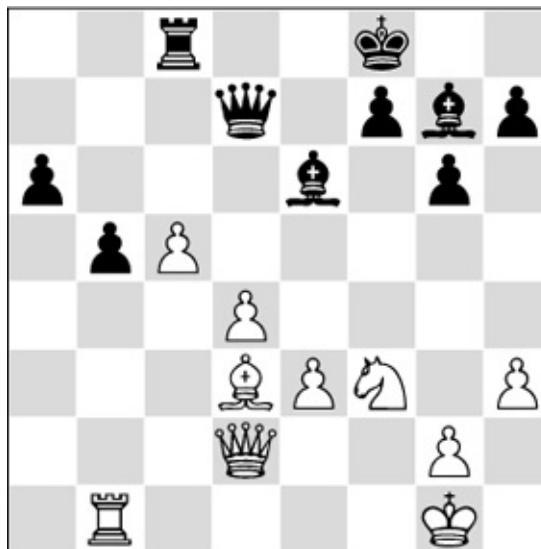
**21.axb5 cxb5 22.c5**

22.cxb5 would instantly show what ...b7-b5 has accomplished: the d5-square is available for the knight. 22... $\mathbb{A}d5$ , and White is in trouble.

**22...a6**

Now 22... $\mathbb{A}d5$  would allow a promising exchange sacrifice: 23. $\mathbb{A}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  24.fxe3, and White's central pawn phalanx, control of the b-file and stronghold on d6 for the dark-squared bishop would be ample compensation.

**23. $\mathbb{A}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xf8$   $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  25.fxe3  $\mathbb{W}xf8$  26. $\mathbb{W}d2$**



Black seems to be OK in this complicated position. With his next move he tries to safeguard d5 again, this time as a stronghold for the bishop.

**26...f5 27. $\mathbb{W}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  28. $\mathbb{W}b4$**

Now Black even gets the better of it. Hou Yifan should have tried 28.e4 fxe4 29. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$ , and although the backward d-pawn combined with the stronghold on d5 might seem unpleasant for White, she also has trumps: further advanced pawns and control of the e-file, while at the moment the black king isn't in the happiest of places.

28... ♜xf3! 29.gxf3 f4!

White's centre is in trouble now, but after...

30.c6+ ♜e7 31.♕xe7+ ♜xe7 32.d5 fxe3 33.♗xe3+ ♜d6 34.♗f1

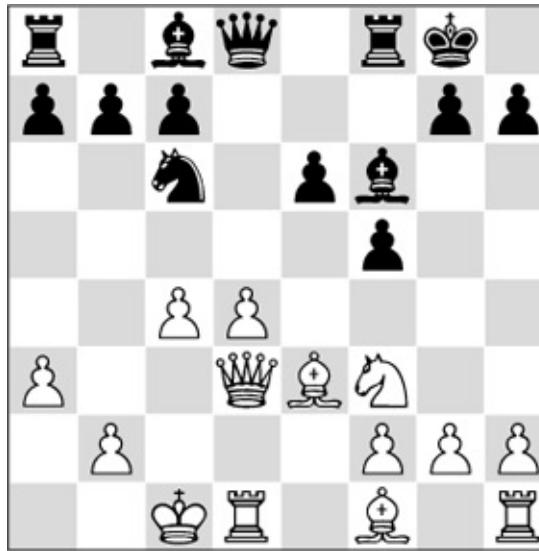
... Hou Yifan still luckily managed to escape with a draw.

## Daniel Taboas Rodriguez

### Pablo Almagro Llamas

Madrid 2012

1.d4 ♜f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.c4 ♜b4+ 4.♘bd2 d5 5.a3 ♜e7 6.♘c2 0-0 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♜c6 9.♘e3 ♜xe4 10.♘xe4 f5 11.♘d3 ♜f6 12.0-0-0



12...b5!?

This is in fact a novelty in this position from a Bogo Indian.

13.d5

As the c6-knight is uncharacteristically attacked after 13.cxb5, you could easily discard ...b7-b5 very quickly. Yet after 13...♘e7 the knight is immediately redirected to the desired d5-square! Though White may not be worse, the black pieces will typically find good squares easily, while ...a7-a6 remains a possibility (opposite-side castling calls for more action on the queenside!).

White instead fails to take up the challenge and opts for a seemingly safe possibility.

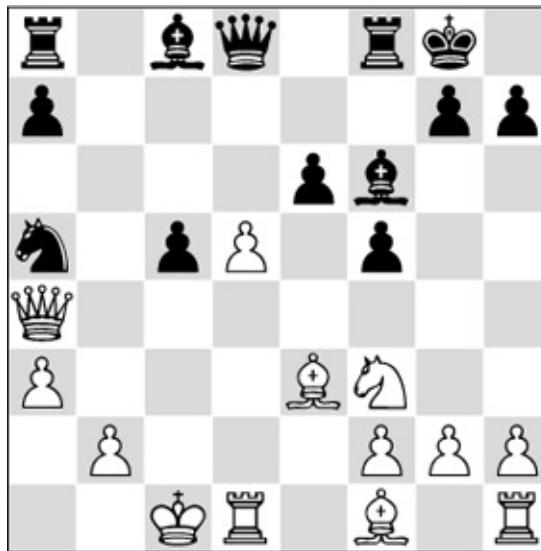
13...bxc4!?

Consistently dismantling White's centre, but good enough for equality was 13...exd5 14.♗xd5+ ♜xd5 15.cxd5 ♘a5.

14.♗xc4 ♜a5 15.♘a4

It was hard to foresee Black's next move. With hindsight you can say that 15.♗b4 c5 16.dxc6 ♜c7 17.♗d6 was an alternative, though one giving no more than equality.

15...c5!



**16. ♜ xc5**

But this is asking for it. Better was 16.dxc6 ♜c7=. 16.dxe6 ♜b6 looks more dangerous for White.

**16... ♜d7**

White is already lost. The open c-file is just too much, and though the engines show us that not all of the following moves were to the point, Black won:

**17. ♜c2 ♜c8 18.b4 ♜e8 19. ♜a6**

19.bxa5 ♜a4 20. ♜c4 ♜xd1 21. ♜xd1 ♜e7.

**19... ♜a4 20. ♜xc8 ♜xc2 21. ♜xe6+ ♜h8 22. ♜xc2 ♜a4+ 23. ♜d3 ♜b3+**

23... ♜e8 24.bxa5 ♜b5+.

**24. ♜e2 ♜c2+ 25. ♜d2**

25. ♜d2.

**25... ♜b3 26. ♜xf8? ♜d4+**

**0-1**

## Undermining a Strong Piece

**Loek van Wely**

**Marat Dzhumaev**

Tromsø ol 2014

**1.d4 d6 2. ♜f3 g6 3.g3 ♜g7 4. ♜g2 ♜f6 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 ♜c6 7. ♜c3 ♜f5 8. ♜e1 ♜d7 9.f4 ♜a5 10. ♜d3 c5 11.dxc5 ♜e6 12. ♜d5 dxc5 13.e4**



**13...b5!?**

Black is not afraid and sacrifices a pawn. Thus the support of White's strongest piece is undermined. Note that b2-b3, trying to maintain the status quo, is not possible.

**14.cxb5 ♜xd5 15.exd5 ♜f5 16.♗e2 c4**

Black has built up some nice pressure versus the white queenside. With his last move the e1-knight is held back on e1, while the b5-pawn becomes an immediate target.

**17.♘e3**

17.d6 seems like a strong move, but 17...exd6 18.♗xa8 ♛xa8 yields Black fine compensation for the exchange due to his strong bishops and the prospects of his pawn centre. The b5-pawn will probably be lost.

A similar exchange sac can be seen in Wang Hao-Bacrot, Shamkir 2014. Check the online NIC-base for that one.

**17... ♜b8 18.♗d1 ♜xb5 19.b3**

Now it seems as if White will win a pawn after all, however Black's activity proves sufficient to maintain material equality in the end.

**19... ♘b8 20.g4 ♜c8 21.bxc4 ♜b2 22.♗d2 ♜xd2 23.♗xd2 ♘b2 24.♗f2 ♘xa2 25.♗xe7 ♜xc4**

The position is equal, which resulted in a draw many moves later.

## Taking over the Centre

**Nigel Short**

**Alexey Alexandrov**

Pula Ech-tt 1997

**1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♜b4 4.♗g5 c5 5.d5 h6 6.♗h4 0-0 7.e3**



**7...b5**

Here Black uses the ...b7-b5 pawn sac not only to further dismantle his opponent's centre, but also to create his own.

**8.dxe6 fxe6 9.cxb5 d5 10.♗d3 a6**

The direct 10...d4 has been played as well and leads to complicated, unclear play after 11.exd4 cxd4 12.a3 ♜a5 13.b4 dxc3 14.bxa5 ♜b7. With the text move Black opts for quick development, preserving his pawn centre.

**11.♘ge2**

After 11.bxa6, 11...d4 is more dangerous as Black develops more quickly in the ensuing variations: 12.a3 (12.exd4 cxd4 13.a3 ♜a5 14.b4 dxc3 15.bxa5 ♛xa5 16.♗e2 ♜bd7 17.0-0 ♜xa6) 12...dxc3

13.axb4 cxb2 14.♗b1 ♗xa6.

11...c4 12.♕c2 axb5 13.0-0

Black has a solid pawn centre and has even regained his pawn. He now sacrifices his pawn on b5 again to speed up development, trusting that the open files on the queenside will give the usual sufficient compensation.

13...♝c6

13...♝b6? 14.♗xf6!; 13...♝a5!?

14.♗xb5 e5?

This seems inconsistent and going too far. Black should first build up the pressure on the queenside before advancing his centre, for instance with ...♝b6, ...♗d7, ...♗c5.

15.b3

Now it's the black centre that falls apart!

15...♞g4 16.h3 ♞h5 17.♗xf6 ♜xf6 18.bxc4 dxc4 19.♘xd8+ ♜xd8 20.♗ec3

White is a pawn up, although in the end Short lost this game dramatically on time while still a pawn up in a won endgame.

You can also find this central attack ...b7-b5 followed by ...d7-d5 in middlegames resulting from a Hedgehog set-up. Here is an example from yet another opening.

**Hikaru Nakamura**

**Magnus Carlsen**

Sandnes 2013

1.e4 e5 2.♗c3 ♜c6 3.♞c4 ♛f6 4.d3 ♜a5 5.♗ge2 ♜e7 6.0-0 d6 7.f4 ♜xc4 8.dxc4 c6 9.♗h1 0-0 10.f5



10...b5

Here too the break serves to create a strong pawn centre. In addition, the position will open up for Black's bishops.

11.cxb5

Of course not 11.b3 b4.

11...d5 12.exd5

12.bxc6 is met by 12...d4, and again the e4-pawn will fall.

12...cxd5 13.♗g5 ♜b7 14.♗g3 h6

The typical follow-up 14...a6!? 15.bxa6 ♜xa6, to activate the a8-rook, was another interesting possibility.

15.♗xf6 ♜xf6 16.♘e2 ♛e7

Again the alternative was 16...a6!?

17.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $e4$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

And Black's centre had enough to offer for the sacrificed pawn:

20.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  21.  $c3$   $d4$  22.  $cxd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xd1$   $d8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $a6$  26.  $a4$   $axb5$  27.  $axb5$   $d3$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}a7$   $d5$   
29.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $e3$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}e8+$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xb5$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}g6+$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}a8+$   $f8$   
37.  $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf8$  38.  $h3$

$\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$

## Extravaganza?

Jusefs Petkevich

Alvis Vitolinsh

Riga 1985

1.  $d4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.  $c4$   $e6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4.  $e3$  0-0 5.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$



5...  $b5!?$

Vitolinsh (read Sosonko's story on him in *Russian Silhouettes!*) was a very interesting player who introduced numerous interesting concepts. You can find some other very early ... $b7$ - $b5$  outings by him in the Nimzo-Indian. This one seems either not to have caught on or to have been forgotten. The ideas remain the same: attacking the centre, quick development and pressure on the queenside.

6.  $cxb5$   $a6$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $axb5$

An earlier game by Vitolinsh saw 8...  $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ . That led to an inferior position, but also to a well-known, beautiful saving combination: 9.  $\mathbb{Q}xc3$   $axb5$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}c6?$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $\mathbb{Q}xh5$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}xb5$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}h6$   $g6$  15.  $d5$   $e5$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $f6$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$   $hxg6$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}d2?$  (first 19.  $\mathbb{Q}h6+!$ )



analysis diagram

19... $\mathbb{Q}d3!!$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{W}e7$  21.e4  $\mathbb{W}g7$  22. $\mathbb{W}h5+$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  23. $\mathbb{Q}d4$  c5 24. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{R}c8$  25.f4  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  26. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}b4+$  27. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{R}xa2$  0-1, Gutman-Vitolins, Riga 1979.

**9.Qxb5 Qe7! 10.Qc3 c5 11.dxc5 Qxc5 12.Rc1**

Or 12.f3  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  d5 14.0-0  $\mathbb{W}b6$  15. $\mathbb{W}c1$   $\mathbb{R}fc8$ .



Black definitely has some play for the pawn here. The bishop on b7 is annoyingly pointing at g2, while Black is also ready to build up a strong centre. The white pieces don't impress ( $\mathbb{Q}g3$ ,  $\mathbb{Q}d2$ ).

**12...Qa6 13.a3 Qe7 14.b4 Qc7 15.Qb3 h5 16.h3 h4 17.Qge2 e5 18.Qg1**

It's somewhat surprising that White gets away with this.

**18...d5 19.Qf3 d4 20.Qb5 dxе3**

**20...Qd5!?**

**21.Qxe3**

And after some further adventures the game ended in a draw.

## Summary

As has become apparent, the ...b7-b5 break can facilitate many goals. It can either help to mobilize the queenside pieces, opening up the b-file for a rook and allowing the bishop to move to the long diagonal. Or it can create a strong square on d5, or prepare for a strong pawn centre. In any case, remember that the sacrifice of a pawn may be well worth any of these goals.



## Chapter 19

# The Fearless Break

The mirrored version of the ...b7-b5 break is ...g7-g5 when there is a white pawn on f4. Although nowadays this resource has become sort of common, it may still strike some of you as a risky break. This is not so strange, as, in contrast to ...b7-b5, it will affect your king's position in many cases.

Let's boost your confidence with some examples!

### Creating a Strong Square on e5

A very common goal of the ...g7-g5 break is to create a strong square on e5, which is often seen in Sicilian positions. The pawn on f4 is forced to give up its control of e5.

The following game features one of the most impressive follow-ups to ...g7-g5 I have ever encountered.

**Alexei Shirov**

**Judit Polgar**

Buenos Aires 1994

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘c6 5.♗c3 d6 6.g4 a6 7.♗e3 ♗ge7 8.♗b3 b5 9.f4

This effectively makes ...g7-g5 an attractive option, since with the white f-pawn out of the way the central e5-square will be left unchallenged to the black pieces. This is easily said, of course, knowing the subject of the chapter.

9... ♗b7 10.♗f3

Nowadays 10.♗e2 or 10.♗d2 is played more successfully, but the theory from this position was developing in 1994. The text move more or less provokes ...g7-g5, since afterwards ...♗e5 can come with tempo as it attacks the white queen.



Black's next was a novelty at the time, but not so obvious as it may seem now. Mind you, Shirov had also had this position on the board before, against Kasparov, and he had replied with 10...♝a5.

10...g5! 11.fxg5 ♗e5

It's as easy as that: an unassailable knight on e5.

12.♘g2 b4 13.♗e2

13.♗a4 can be met with 13...♗d5.

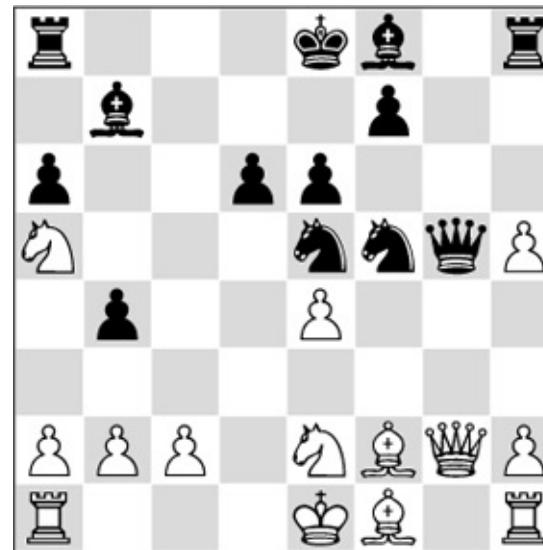
13...h5!!

A very original and imaginative move. It's also impressive and strong as well.

14.gxh5?

14.gxh6 f5 (14...♝xh6 15.♝xh6 ♜xh6 16.0-0-0) 15.gxf5 ♖xf5 16.♝f2 ♖h4 and Black is going strong; 14.0-0-0 (Shirov).

14...♝f5 15.♞f2 ♜xg5 16.♝a5?



White's position isn't enviable, but this allows Black's beautiful and decisive next move.

16...♝e3!! 17.♘g3

17.♗xg5 ♖f3# makes for a fine picture.

17...♜xg3 18.♝xg3 ♜xc2+ 19.♚d1 ♜xa1 20.♝xb7 b3

Black is simply winning now.

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

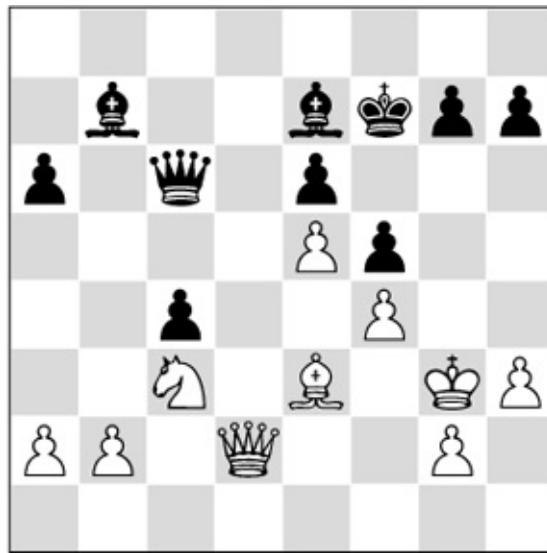
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## Isolating a White Pawn on e5

**Heinz Grabher**

**Ivan Farago**

Liechtenstein 2012



This is a no less familiar goal of ...g7-g5. White ends up with a pawn on e5 which will need constant protection. And of course Black's mighty pair of bishops has its say. This position may be less spectacular than the first one, but nevertheless it's effective and instructive.

**28...h6 29.♔h2 ♖h4 30.♗g1 ♖d8**

30...♝g3 seems viable, but the text move feels more harmonious and flexible.

**31.♘f2 g5!**

After some preparation... here it is!

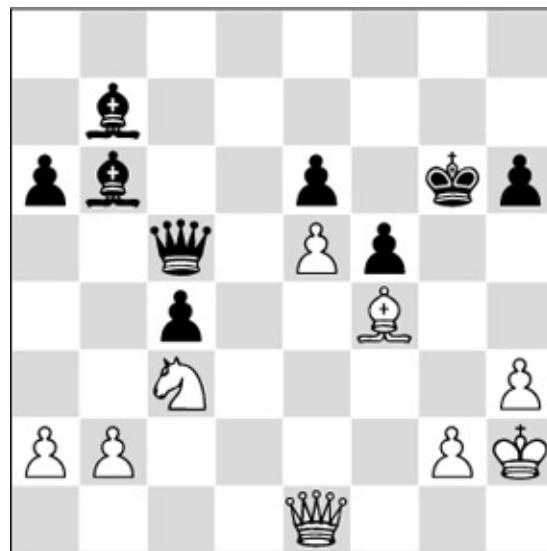
**32.♘e2**

Of course, the natural 32.g3 to preserve the central structure isn't possible here because of the battery on the long diagonal.

**32...♝g6**

King safety is something you have to take into account when playing ...g7-g5. Here the king finds a safe haven on g6.

**33.♘d2 gxf4 34.♖xf4 ♖b6+ 35.♔h2 ♖c5 36.♘e1**



**36...♘f2**

Liquidating into a better endgame. Increasing the pressure with 36...♘d4 was also possible.

**37.♘xf2 ♖xf2 38.♕e2 ♖e4 39.♖d2 ♖d3 40.♕f4+ ♔f7 41.♖c3 ♖e4 42.♕e2 ♖d5**

Protecting the e6-pawn. Now the black king is ready to advance.

**43.g4?!**

Logically White wants to free his king, but this creates yet another weakness to go with the pawn on e5.

43...fxg4

Better was the immediate 43... $\mathbb{Q}f3$  44. $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}e1$  45. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}h4$ .

44.hxg4  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  45. $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}e1$  46. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f2$  47. $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  48. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  49. $\mathbb{Q}g3$  h5 50. $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  51.a4?

51. $\mathbb{Q}a5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  52. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$ .

51... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  52. $\mathbb{Q}b8+$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  53. $\mathbb{Q}xa6+$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  54. $\mathbb{Q}b8$   $\mathbb{Q}a5$  55. $\mathbb{Q}c6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xa4$  56. $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  57. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  58. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}d1$  59. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}e2$  60. $\mathbb{Q}c2$  h4

0-1

## Demolishing the White Centre

Johannes Karthäuser

Anton Brodmann

Oberhof ch-GER U18 2012

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.e5  $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  5.f4 c5 6. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  7. $\mathbb{Q}e3$  a6 8. $\mathbb{Q}d2$  b5 9.a3



This is of course a theoretical position. White's mighty centre will be gone in three moves, starting with...?

9...g5!?

Correct. Still, this hadn't been played until Morozhevich uncorked it against Anand in 2005.

10.fxg5

10. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  cxd4 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  12. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  13. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  with compensation.

10...cxd4 11. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}cxe5$

White's centre is gone. Black still has a solid (though immobile) centre. Of course this is an achievement for Black, but there was a price to pay. The main thing is that his king has no clear refuge. With White's pieces actively posted, a tense battle lies ahead.

12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$

12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  was preferable: 12... $\mathbb{Q}g7$  13.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}b7$  (13...0-0) 14. $\mathbb{Q}ce2$  when the knight is transferred to the kingside. Now 14... $\mathbb{Q}g4?$  (14...0-0 is to be preferred, with a tense game), as amongst others in a blitz game Carlsen-Nakamura, Moscow 2010, should have failed to the spectacularly cool-headed 15.g6! hxg6 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}h4$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xg6!!$   $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$  19. $\mathbb{Q}f1$ .

12... $\mathbb{Q}g7$  13.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}b7$  14. $\mathbb{Q}h5$

This has been seen before, but it doesn't impress. The bishop isn't so much attacking as simply vacating the e2-square for the knights. Which would have been achieved immediately by 12. $\mathbb{Q}d3$ .

14...0-0 15.b3  $\mathbb{Q}c8$  16. $\mathbb{Q}ce2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  17. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  18.h4  $\mathbb{Q}g6$

Considering his safe king and strong pawn centre, clearly Black's set-up has prevailed. After some

ups and downs Black won:

19.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$   $\mathbb{f}xg6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{B}ce8$

20...e5!.

21.  $\mathbb{B}xf8+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf8$  22.  $\mathbb{B}b4$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  23.  $\mathbb{B}e1$  e5 24.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{B}xe7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}a7?$

26.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$ .

26...d4 27.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf2$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xf2$   $\mathbb{B}c7$  29.  $\mathbb{B}e2$  e4 30.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}f4$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}e6+$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  33.  $\mathbb{B}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$  34.  $\mathbb{B}e2$   $\mathbb{B}c3$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}f4$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}g3$  37. h5 d3 38.  $\mathbb{B}e3$  d2

0-1

Here is yet another example from opening theory. This one is even more baffling, as Black hasn't yet done much about his development. Brick by brick Black consistently tries to break down White's broad centre in the spirit of Réti.

**Siu Hung Tung**

**Leinier Dominguez Perez**

San Sebastian 2011

1.e4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.e5  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  3.c4  $\mathbb{Q}b6$  4.d4 d6 5.f4



5...g5!?

Unlike the previous example, this move has been known about for a long time. Albin Planinec, a player with an original and aggressive style, ventured this move in 1970 against Tringov. The entertaining follow-up was: 6.exd6 gxf4 7.dxc7  $\mathbb{Q}xc7$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  e5 9.  $\mathbb{Q}xf4$ !? (9.c5!). When a move like 5...g5 is played many people raise their eyebrows, but when ...b7-b5 is played on the other side, also undermining the broad centre, there are no longer many who blink an eyelid. This is partly justified, because ...g7-g5 is more likely to affect the position of the black king. But perhaps it's also a question of becoming accustomed to it!?

6.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  gxf4 9.  $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  10.0-0?

The much lower rated White player mistakenly hangs on to his pawn centre, justifying Dominguez' provocative set-up. 10.exd6 cxd6 and now 11.0-0 is possible, but you can hardly say that White has refuted Black's ...g7-g5.

10...dxe5 11.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe2$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  14. dxe5  $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  15.  $\mathbb{B}axd1$

White's centre has disintegrated, and with his next move Black fixes the weak pawn on e5. He could also have captured on c4 immediately, but of course Dominguez' technique proved sufficient in this game.

15...e6 16.  $\mathbb{B}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  17.  $\mathbb{B}e4$

17.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7!?$ .

17...  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$

Black is slightly better. White now loses track and quickly ends up losing.

19.  $\mathbb{Q}b5?!$   $a6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xc7+?$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}d5+$   $exd5$  22.  $cxsd5$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  23.  $d6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}ef4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}1f3$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$

27.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$

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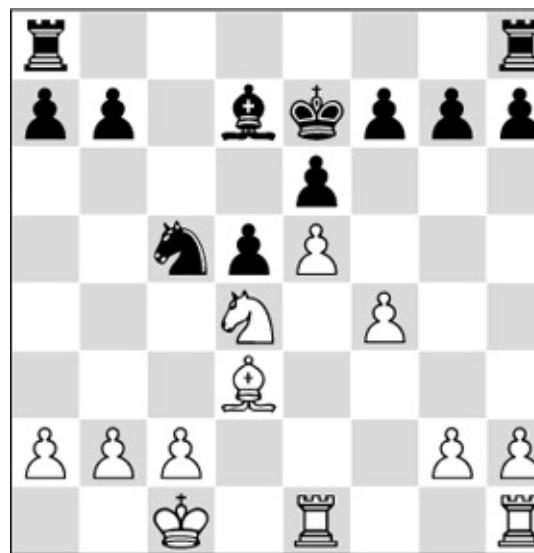
## Creating Space

Jan Timman

Alexander Chernin

Montpellier Candidates' 1985

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.e5  $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  5.f4 c5 6.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $cxd4$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $\mathbb{Q}xb6$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  14. 0-0-0  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}de1$



This position is from the ‘vacuum-cleaner’ line in the Steinitz French. Black has exchanged his way into a seemingly slightly inferior ending – notice his classic bad French bishop. However, Alexander Chernin now came up with a new plan, which injected life into Black’s position and did a great deal to popularise the variation.

17...  $h5$  18.  $g3$   $\mathbb{Q}ag8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}hf1$   $g5$

You saw this coming, I guess.

20.  $f5$

Now White will always need to be careful that the pawn on e5 doesn’t become weak – like in both the former and the second example. Black proceeds to open a file for his rooks on the kingside.

20...  $g4$  21.  $f6+$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $h4$  23.  $b4$   $hxg3$  24.  $hxg3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3+$  25.  $cxd3$   $\mathbb{Q}h2$

Black is comfortable.

26.  $\mathbb{Q}e2?$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $d4!$

The bad bishop was never that bad, but now it really gets some scope. At the same time the pawn on e5 is deprived of support from the d-pawn.

28.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}f3$

Black is winning, but Timman miraculously saves the game.

31.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}d7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe2$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}f8+$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  35.  $f7$   $\mathbb{Q}f2$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}c1+$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}f1+?$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}xc1$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}xc1$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}e8$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}f3$

½-½

**Adrian Mikhalchishin**

**Alexey Dreev**

Pavlodar 1987

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c6 4.♗g2 f5 5.♗f3 ♗f6 6.0-0 ♗d6 7.♗f4 ♗xf4 8.gxf4 0-0 9.♗e5 ♗bd7 10.e3 ♗e4 11.♗d2 ♗xe5 12.dxe5 ♗d7 13.♗e2 ♗xd2 14.♗xd2 ♗e8 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.♗fc1 ♗c6 17.♗c5



There are some strong similarities to the previous example.

Again, a bad bishop for Black – this time from a Stonewall. Here also, Black can get at the f4-pawn with ...g7-g5, while at the same time opening the g-file. An important difference is the presence of queens, which favours the attacker.

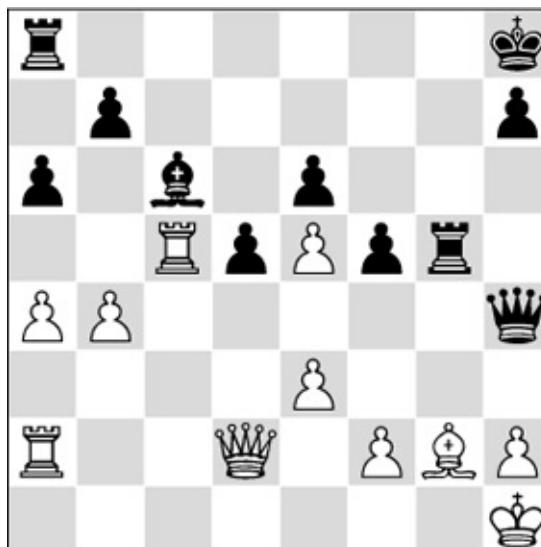
17... ♗h8 18.b4 a6 19.a4 ♗g8

White can't prevent Black from opening the g-file, and his own initiative on the queenside has been held up. With a bad bishop on c6 and all his major pieces on the back rank, Black seems to have the upper hand!

20.♗h1 ♗h4 21.♗a2

Preparing b4-b5, but White's counterplay arrives much too late here. A more stubborn defence was 21.♗cc1 g5 22.fxg5 ♗xg5 23.f4, when Black does not have the same winning combination as in the game.

21...g5 22.fxg5 ♗xg5



23.f4 ♗xg2 24.♗xg2

24.♗xg2 ♗g8+ 25.♗f1 ♗h3+ and Black wins.

24... ♕e1+ 25. ♕g1 ♕xb4

White resigned.

## White can Strike in the Same Way too

Yet another example, with reversed colours and more pieces on the board:

**Wei Yi**

**Vladimir Potkin**

Wijk aan Zee B 2015

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♗e3 a6 8.♗d2 b5 9.♗d3 b4 10.♗a4 c4 11.♗e2 c3 12.♗d1 cxb2 13.♗xb2 ♗e7 14.0-0 0-0 15.♗d3 f5

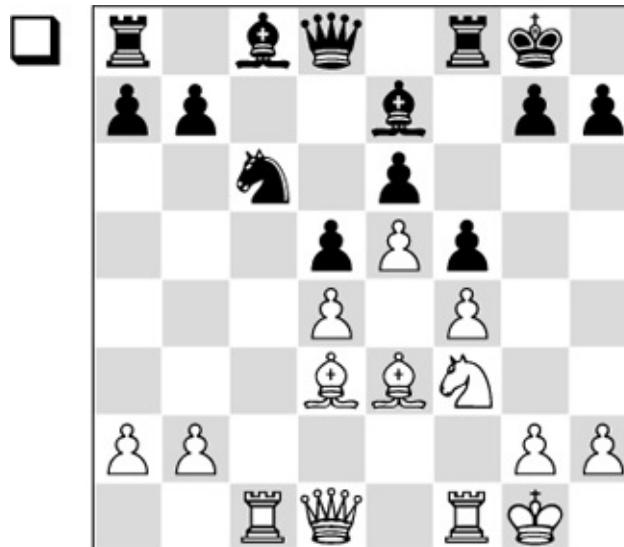


**16.g4!**

Again, Black's broad central pawn structure is undermined, while the g-file against Black's king's position is opened at the same time. The surprising factor here is that the g4-pawn can simply be taken.

This is not a new idea either: this direct attacking move was also to the liking of Efim Geller. Witness his game against Holm, Copenhagen 1960:

(see analysis diagram next column)



analysis diagram

15.g4 ♜d7?! 16.gxf5 exf5 17.a3! ♜e6 18.♖c2, and the rook was transferred to the g-file.

See also *The Second Option*, Chapter 34 in IY CPR.

16...a5

16...fxg4 is of course an alternative. Then, the active 17.♗g5 ♜xg5 18.♕xg4 (with 18.fxg5 ♜xf1+ 19.♔xf1 White can slowly win back the g4-pawn, but Black will have time to build a defence with ...g7-g6 and ...♝e7-f5. The attempt to speed things up with 19.♔xf1 would allow typical French counter-threats like 19...♝f8+ 20.♔g1 ♖xd4 21.♖xd4 ♜f4 22.♔e2 ♖xe5) might seem to be a nice option, connecting the rooks and also threatening to win back the piece by taking on e6 and c6. However, Black can reply 18...♝dxe5 19.dxe5 ♜h6, when White's attack seems too slow.

Instead, the knight should just retreat, not allowing Black to exchange a piece, leaving Black's clutch of pieces as it is. For instance: 17.♝e1 a5 (17...h5?! 18.♔g6 ♜f5 is another typical French idea: an exchange sacrifice for the light squares. For example, you can check the well-known game Martin Gonzales-Dolmatov, Barcelona 1983) 18.♕xg4 ♜f7 19.♗f3, and White will gradually move more pieces to the kingside.

17.gxf5 exf5 18.♔e2

Preventing Black's bishop coming to a6. Black now has too many pieces struggling for the right squares.

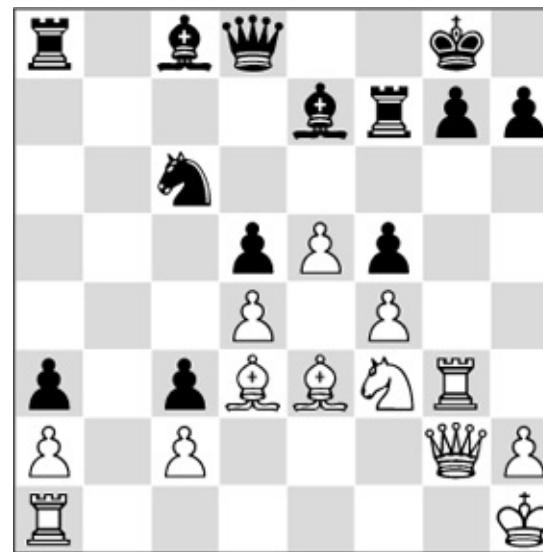
18...♝b6 19.♔h1 a4 20.♖g1 a3 21.♘d1 ♜a4 22.♖g3 ♜f7 23.♕g2

Not exactly what Alekhine has taught us – the queen should be behind both rooks. But for the moment that is just impossible.

23...♞c3?

If you asked me – playing the white colours – which piece I would like to trade in the current position, the e3-bishop would make a good candidate, but the d1-knight would win it by a large margin.

24.♘xc3 bxc3



25.♗b5!

What's this? Switching to the queenside? Well sort of, but in the concrete variations the bishop will be attacking from e8! Very nice indeed.

25...♝b6

25...♝b4 26.♖g1 ♜f8 (26...♜f8 27.♗g5 ♜fa7 28.♗xh7 ♜xh7; 26...g6 27.♖xg6+ hxg6 28.♕xg6+ ♜h8 29.♖xf7) 27.♔e8; 25...♜b7 26.e6.

26.♖g1 ♜f8 27.♖h3

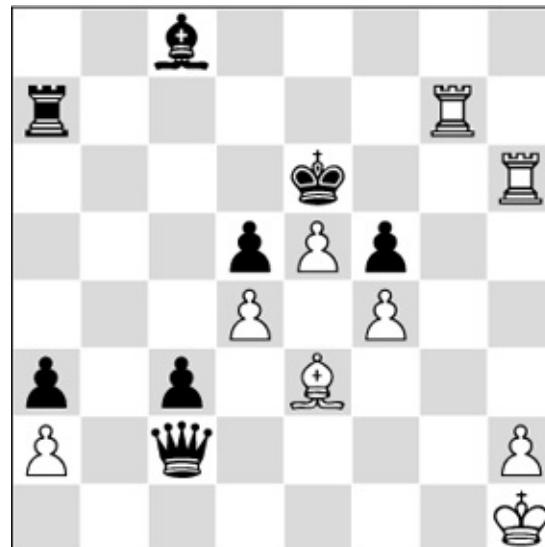
White now has just too many points attacking the black king. Evidently, this give rise to some favourable tactics.

27...g6

27... ♕d8 28. ♔e8 ♜b7 29. ♜xh7 ♔xh7 30. ♜g6+ ♔g8 31. ♜h3.

28. ♜g5 ♖xb5 29. ♜xf7 ♔e7 30. ♜h6+ ♔xh6 31. ♜xh6 ♜a7 32. ♜h3 ♖e2 33. ♜xh7 ♖xc2 34. ♜h8+ ♔f7 35. ♜h7+ ♖e6  
36. ♜xg6+

Potkin resigned. 36... ♜d7 leads to a nice mate after 37. ♜xe7+ ♖xe7 38. ♜g7+ ♔e6 39. ♜h6#.



## Summary

Like ...b7-b5, ...g7-g5 is a versatile break. It can undermine the opponent's pawn centre, while it may also serve to open up the g-file for good use. Just remember to keep a close eye on your (future) own king's position!

## Chapter 20

# A Versatile Pawn Sac

A strong passed d-pawn, a stronghold for a knight on the central square e4 and an open f-file for a king's attack – this may all be accomplished with one and the same pawn sac. Of course, Black can use a typical counter-sacrifice.

## Crashing Through in the Middle

Daniel Semcesen

Vlad-Cristian Jianu

Baia Sprie 2011

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  8. $\mathbb{Q}g3$  a6 9.a4 0-0 10. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  h5 11. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  12. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  13. $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  14.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}b8$  15.f4 c4 16. $\mathbb{Q}h1$  b5 17.axb5 axb5



18.e5!

An energetic move, creating space for the white pieces. In particular, the e4-square is made available for the c3-knight before Black can stir up trouble with ...b5-b4.

A regular reaction would be 18.b4.

18...  $\mathbb{Q}c5?$ !

A seemingly active move, but as the knight retreats three moves later, also a questionable one. The immediate 18...dxe5 would also have been met with 19.f5!.

This second move reveals the real idea behind the pawn sac – for those who have studied Chapter 21, *Passer pour mieux centraliser*, in IYCPN this move will perhaps come less as a surprise. Now the black pawn on e5 is merely hindering the activity of Black's minor pieces, while White has obtained a central passed pawn and is creating play on the kingside as well. The ...h7-h5 advance turns out to be a serious weakening of the pawn structure in front of the black king.

19.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$  dx $e$ 5 20.d6!

This is a strong intermediate move. Black's queen has no suitable square, and the d-pawn becomes truly menacing.

20...  $\mathbb{Q}a5?$

Both 20... $\mathbb{Q}a7$  21. $fxe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  22. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ ; and 20... $\mathbb{Q}c6$  21. $\mathbb{Q}d5$  are also clearly better for White.

21. $f5!$

With the black queen offside, White's initiative is just killing.

21... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  22. $fxg6$   $fxg6$  23. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $e4$  24. $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}xf1+$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$   $\mathbb{Q}hf8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  27. $\mathbb{Q}e7+$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  28. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$

Now the game comes to a very pleasing finish, culminating in mate without queens on the board:



29. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$

29... $gxh5$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xf8+$ .

30. $\mathbb{Q}xg6$   $\mathbb{Q}xc2$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xc2$   $b4$  32. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  33. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  34. $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  35. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  36. $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  37. $\mathbb{Q}f7\#$

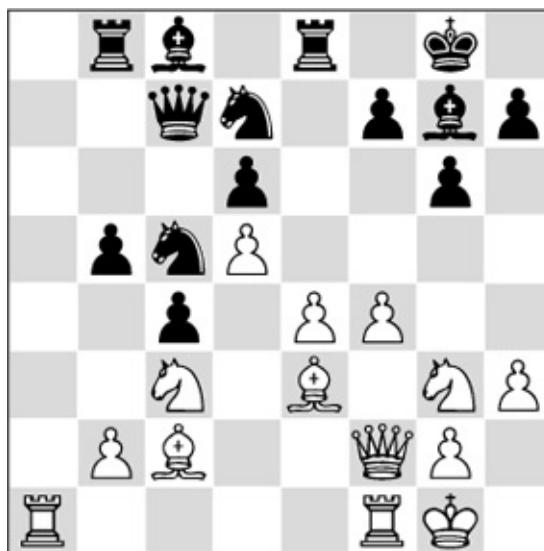
## A Strong Knight on e4

Jonathan Penrose

Mikhail Tal

Leipzig ol 1960

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4  $e6$  3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $c5$  4.d5  $exd5$  5.cxd5  $g6$  6.e4  $d6$  7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  8. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$  0-0 9.0-0 a6 10.a4  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  11.h3  $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  12.f4  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  13. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $c4$  14. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  15. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  16. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $b5$  17.axb5  $\mathbb{Q}b8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $axb5$



The first example has a few classic predecessors. Here is one where Tal was ground down by Penrose in the last round of the Olympiad. The Soviet Union had already decided the fight for first place, Tal had scored 11 out of 14 on board 1 and had just become World Champion earlier that year!

19.e5  $dxe5$  20.f5

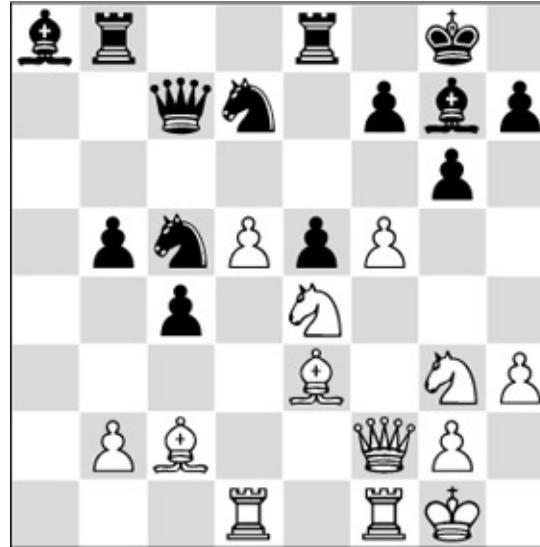
Threatening to take on g6 followed by 22.♘f7+.

20... ♜b7 21.♗ad1

21.fxg6 fxg6 22.♗xg6! hxg6 23.♘f7+ ♕h8 24.♗f5! would have been a nice direct assault, but the game continuation is simple and strong.

21... ♜a8 22.♘ce4

A fearsome knight!



22... ♜a4

After this move, ceding White another tempo, Black no longer stands a chance. 22...♗xe4 23.♗xe4 ♜f8 was necessary, though Black's position is not to be envied.

23.♕xa4 bxa4 24.fxg6 fxg6 25.♗f7+ ♕h8 26.♘c5

Game over.

26... ♜a7 27.♗xd7 ♜xd7 28.♘xd7 ♜xb2 29.♘b6 ♜b3 30.♘xc4 ♜d8 31.d6 ♜c3 32.♘c1 ♜xc1 33.♘xc1 ♜d5 34.♘b6 ♜b3 35.♘e4 h6 36.d7 ♜f8 37.♘c8 ♜e7 38.♘c5 ♜h4 39.g3

1-0

It is well known that Tal did not want to play this round. But in his own words: 'It is just that the English master Penrose played the whole game very well.' Curiously enough, during the preparation the English champion was able to profit from a publication of the game Ojanen-Keres from the same year, which featured the same opening and the same sac. Tal, however, had not been aware of Keres' loss...

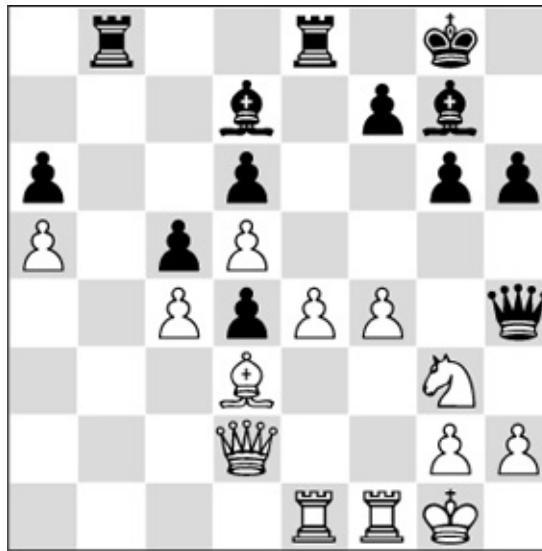
## More Light Squares

**David Berczes**

**Eduard Hagara**

Austria Bundesliga 2010/11

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♜g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘d3 0-0 6.♗ge2 ♘c6 7.0-0 e5 8.d5 ♘d4 9.♗xd4 exd4 10.♗e2 ♜e8 11.f3 c5 12.♘g5 h6 13.♘h4 a6 14.♗c2 b5 15.b3 ♗b6 16.a4 ♜d7 17.a5 ♗c7 18.♘xf6 ♜xf6 19.f4 ♜g7 20.♘g3 bxc4 21.bxc4 ♜ab8 22.♗d2 ♗d8 23.♗ae1 ♗h4



**24.e5 dxe5 25.f5**

With fewer pieces on the board here, this is still a strong sacrifice. This time White seizes control of the light squares, leaving the g7-bishop a miserable piece.

25...gxf5 26.Qxf5 Qxf5 27.Qxf5 Qg5 28.Qc2 Qf8 29.Qf3 Qh8 30.Qg3 Qf6 31.Qe4 Qb4 32.Qf1 Qxc4 33.Qg4 Qg6 34.Qe2?

White has quickly and easily improved his position, and now with 34.Qh4 he could have decided the game.

34...d3 35.Qd1?

35.Qxd3 Qg4 36.Qxg4 Qxg4 37.Qxa6.

35...Qf6 36.Qxd3

White goes from bad to worse and eventually even loses this game. 36.Qg7 was called for.

36...Qf4 37.Qxf4 exf4 38.Qf3 c4 39.Qb1 Qc5+ 40.Qf1 Qe5

0-1

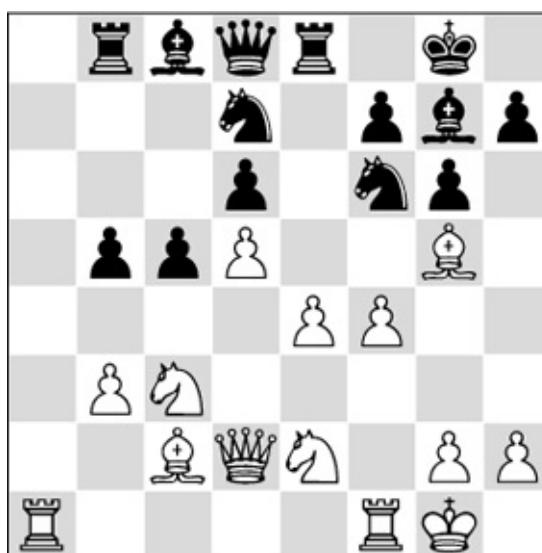
## Counteracting with ...e5-e4

**Alexander Morozevich**

**Veselin Topalov**

Astana Wch blitz 2012

1.d4 Qf6 2.c4 g6 3.Qc3 Qg7 4.Qg5 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.Qd2 c5 7.d5 e6 8.Qd3 exd5 9.cxd5 Qe8 10.Qge2 Qbd7 11.0-0 a6 12.a4 Qe5 13.Qc2 Qb8 14.b3 b5 15.axb5 axb5 16.f4 Qed7



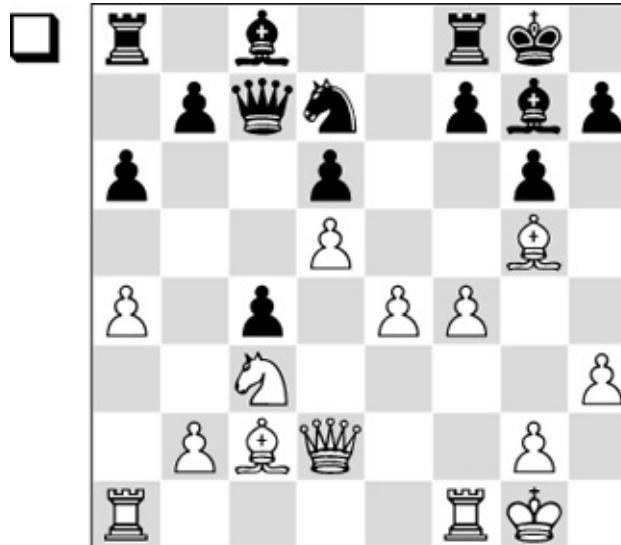
**17.e5 dxe5 18.f5**

Of course, this sacrifice gives the kind of active play which is very suited for blitz chess.

**18...c4 19.b4 e4!**

A typical countermeasure, vacating the e5-square and re-opening the diagonal of the g7-bishop (and characteristic of Topalov's active style). The exclamation mark is not purely for the move's objective value, because Black could also have gone for a cross-pin: 19... $\mathbb{B}b6+$  20. $\mathbb{A}e3?!$   $\mathbb{A}h6!$ .

The same tactic featured, for example, in Shulman-Harika, Reykjavik 2010, which coincidentally also featured our versatile pawn sac:



analysis diagram

19.e5 dxe5 20.f5 b5 21.d6  $\mathbb{B}b6+$  22. $\mathbb{A}e3?!$   $\mathbb{A}h6!$ .

**20.  $\mathbb{W}f4 \mathbb{B}b6+ 21. \mathbb{W}h1 \mathbb{A}b7 22. \mathbb{F}xg6 \mathbb{F}xg6$**

Black has developed harmoniously. There is no blockade on the light squares here, the passed d-pawn presents no immediate danger, and White does not seem to have an imminent king's attack.

**23.  $\mathbb{H}a5 \mathbb{H}f8 24. \mathbb{H}xb5$**

White has won back his pawn, but Black has a fine position. After some more adventures this blitz game ended in a draw.

## Opening the f-File

**Fridrik Olafsson**

**Evgeny Vasiukov**

Moscow 1959

**1.c4 g6 2.  $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{A}g7$  3.d4 d6 4.  $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}f6$  5.e4  $\mathbb{A}g4$  6.  $\mathbb{A}e2 \mathbb{Q}fd7$  7.  $\mathbb{A}e3$  0-0 8.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  9.d5  $\mathbb{A}xf3$  10.  $\mathbb{A}xf3 \mathbb{Q}a5$  11.  $\mathbb{A}e2$  c5 12.  $\mathbb{H}c1$  a6 13.  $\mathbb{A}d2 \mathbb{H}e8$  14.b3  $\mathbb{H}b8$  15.  $\mathbb{A}h1$  b6 16.f4  $\mathbb{H}b7$**



**17.e5 dxe5 18.f5**

No passed d-pawn here. However, the white knight again has the beautiful blockading square e4, and White may start an attack on the kingside.

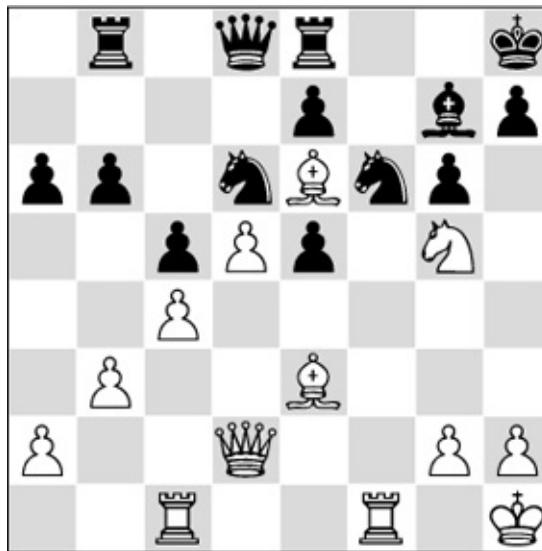
**18... ♜b8**

Starting to regroup the stranded knight to Nimzo's ideal blockading square.

**19.♘e4 ♜b7 20.fxg6 fxg6**

In Chessbase MegaBase, Chekhov suggests 20...hxg6 as an improvement. But if you feed the engine with 21.♗xf7 ♔xf7 22.♗g5+ ♔g8 23.♗e6, a very solid octopus appears, and after 23...♔c8 it soon gives White a clear advantage after 24.♗h6.

**21.♗g4 ♜f6 22.♗e6+ ♔h8 23.♗g5 ♜d6**



Black has averted the direct threats, but he lacks space, and the extra pawn on e5 is of not much use. White already has a huge advantage.

**24.♗e1 ♜f8 25.♗h4 h6 26.♗f3**

26.♗h3 – making room for the octopus – was stronger, bringing about a winning advantage

**26... ♜h5 27.♗g4 ♜f4 28.♗xe5**

And here 28.♗h4! was the better move, leaving Black's doubled e-pawn for what it is.

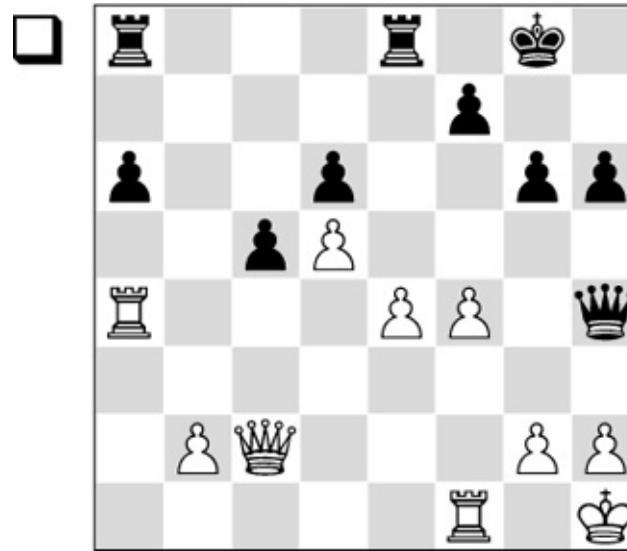
**28... ♗xe5 29.♗xf4 ♗xf4 30.♗xf4 ♗xf4 31.♗xf4**

Though White should still be better here, Black can breathe again and in the end managed a narrow escape to a draw.

**31... ♗f8 32.♗e3 ♗h7 33.♗e1 ♗g7 34.h3 ♗f8 35.♗g4 h5 36.♗d7 ♗f7 37.♗g3 ♗f6 38.♗h2 ♗f8 39.♗e5 ♗f1 40.♗h4 ♗f6**

## The Fourth Phase

**Peter Michalik**  
**Robert Cvek**  
 Presov 2010



Here we have an example where the sac, albeit in a slightly different version, seems to work in a position without minor pieces. Now White launches an attack, trying to compromise the pawn structure on Black's kingside, while the passed d-pawn may also be of good use:

**25.e5!**

Not yet a pawn sac because of the vis-à-vis on the fourth rank.

**25... ♜h5 26.h3**

But now it is!

**26... dx~~e~~5 27.f5**

Back on familiar territory. White has sufficient compensation: he threatens to take on g6 followed by ♜f6. At the same time, both the pawns on a6 and on c5 are weak and Black's pieces are less active than their white counterparts.

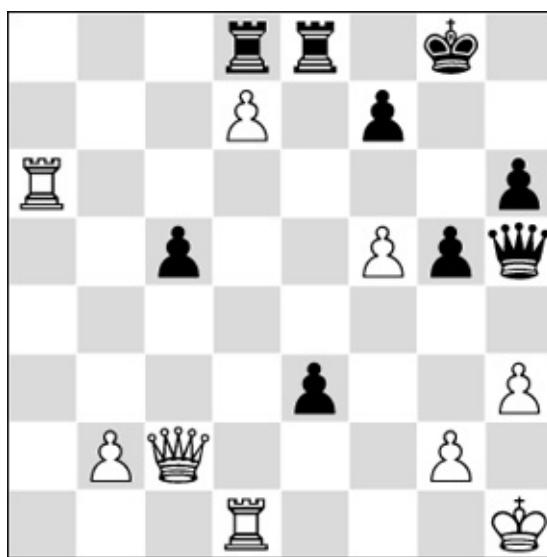
**27... g5 28.d6!?**

The natural 28.♕xc5 would allow the black queen to re-enter the game: 28... ♜e2 29.♖aa1 ♜b5, and White has nothing.

**28... ♜ad8 29.♖xa6 e4 30.♖d1 e3**

30... ♜d7 was a safer choice.

**31.d7**



**31... ♕xd7**

Apparently this is what Black relied upon. It was too late for 31... ♕e5 32. ♜a8 ♕xa8 33. d8♕+ ♕xd8 34. ♕xd8+ ♔g7 35. ♜c3 f6 36. ♜d7+ ♔f8 37. ♜a5 ♕e7 38. ♜xc5 ♕e8 39. ♜xe7 ♕xe7 40. ♜xe7+ ♔xe7 41. ♜g1 or 31... ♕f8 32. ♜dd6 e2 33. ♜e4.

**32. ♜xd7**

Mixing up the move order with 32. ♜g6+!, which would have won.

**32... e2 33. ♜g6+**

½-½

After 33... ♜xg6 34. fxg6 e1♕+ 35. ♔h2 ♕e5+ it is a draw.

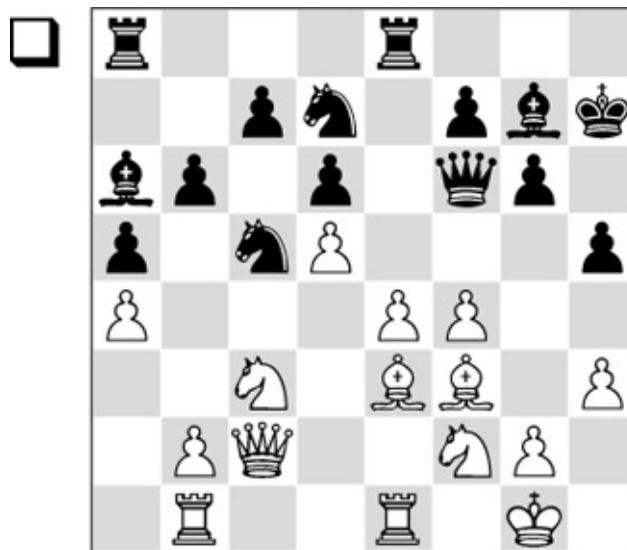
## Another Variety

We will finish with a nicely flowing game. The ideas behind this versatile sac are universal, but the sacrifice itself is most often seen in positions from a King's Indian or Benoni, and sometimes the Pirc. Still, other openings may occasionally lead to the same type of position.

The following position actually arose from a topical Anti-Grünfeld (3.f3).

**Gawain Jones  
Mads Andersen**

Iceland tt 2012



**20.e5 dxе5**

Here too White did not obtain a central passed pawn, but again ...h7-h5 has severely weakened the pawn structure on the kingside.

21.♘ce4

As the black queen is on f6, the white knight can move forward to the strong e4-square free of charge.

21...♝d8 22.f5!

This time not supported by a rook on f1.

22...♞xe4 23.fxg6+!

An accurate intermediate move.

23...fxg6 24.♞xe4



Now Black can't defend against 25.♕xh5 or 25.♘g5+. White wins back his pawn with a persistent attack to boot.

24...♜h6 25.♝xh5 ♜f8 26.♘f2 ♛g7

26...gxh5 27.♗f7+ ♛g7 28.♗g5 is completely winning for White.

27.♗g4 ♜h7 28.♝xh6+ ♜xh6 29.♖bc1 ♜a7

This kind of move won't save Black, but 29...♗xd5 fails to the same combination that finishes off the actual game.

30.♗g3 ♜b7 31.♝e6 ♜xd5 32.♝xd5 ♘xd5 33.♘h4+ ♛g7 34.♘xh7+

1-0

Here White outrated and outplayed his opponent. But maybe you are now also ready to smash a higher-rated adversary someday, just as Penrose and Ojanen once did!

## Summary

This breaking pawn sacrifice has many points. In the first place Black is pushed back while White is ready to start an attack on the kingside. The passed d-pawn may also become an asset, especially when some pieces have been exchanged. Finally, White may create strong squares on e4 and f5, though he should always reckon with the counter-sacrifice ...e5-e4.

## Chapter 21

# The En-Passant Break

At first sight, this pawn move seems rather to avoid a break, as it only allows the opponent to take for one move. And indeed, this en-passant capture would open up the position in your favour. But does your opponent really have a choice?

Alexander Onischuk

Alexander Shabalov

Stillwater ch-USA 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qc3 Qf6 4.Qf3 e6 5.Qg5 dxcc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.Qh4 g5 9.Qxg5 hxg5 10.Qxg5 Qbd7 11.exf6 Qa5  
12.Qe2 Qb7 13.0-0 0-0-0 14.Qc1 c5 15.Qd1 cxd4 16.Qxd4 Qc5



In this position, where the kings have castled to opposite sides, Black's attack clearly seems to come first. Open diagonals and files are available for the bishops and rooks. Furthermore, White has to lose a tempo as his rook is attacked, before he can expose the black king with a2-a4 and b2-b3. But after the next move this assessment suddenly changes.

**17.b4!**

In itself a counterattack can already be a most unexpected reply to a direct attack, and here the surprise effect is even bigger. The counterattacking pawn can be taken in three different ways! However, once we look at the newly arisen position it is not too difficult to figure out that all of these will open up the queenside much in White's favour.

**17... ♕xb4**

- A) Taking en passant with 17...cxb3 opens up both a- and c-file after 18.axb3. The resulting tactics are easy, for example: 18...♗b6 19.♘xb5 ♗b8 20.♗f4+ e5 21.♘xd7;
- B) After 17...♕xb4 you have to spot 18.♘xb5! ♗xb5 19.♘xc4+ ♗c5 (19...♗b8 20.♗b1) 20.♗b1 ♗a5 21.♗e3, and Black will succumb to the various pins: 21...♗c7 22.♗f4 e5 23.♗g4 ♗b8 24.♗e3;
- C) 17...♗c7 is a clever alternative to the text move, collecting less material for the queen, but trying to keep the queenside closed. Unfortunately it falls short: 18.♗f4 ♗c6 19.♗f3 ♗xd4 20.♗xc6 ♗xc6 21.a4 ♗dg8 22.♗g3 ♗e5 23.axb5, for example 23...♗d3 (23...♗xg3? 24.hxg3 ♗f3+ 25.♔f1

$\mathbb{h}1+$  26.  $\mathbb{e}2$   $\mathbb{x}c1$  27.  $\mathbb{x}c1)$  24.  $\mathbb{f}1$   $\mathbb{x}g3$  25.  $h\times g3$   $\mathbb{x}f2$  26.  $\mathbb{xf}2$   $\mathbb{xf}2+$  27.  $\mathbb{xf}2$   $\mathbb{b}7$  28.  $\mathbb{xa}7$ .

18.  $\mathbb{b}1$   $\mathbb{xb}1$  19.  $\mathbb{xb}1$   $\mathbb{xd}4$

Black has two rooks for the queen, but now his queenside quickly crumbles and White's attack comes first.

20.  $\mathbb{xb}5$   $\mathbb{e}5?!$

20...  $\mathbb{c}5$  21.  $\mathbb{xc}4$   $\mathbb{dg}8$  22.  $\mathbb{c}1!$  and Black's king is still in trouble.

21.  $\mathbb{f}4$   $\mathbb{c}6$  22.  $\mathbb{d}6+$   $\mathbb{xd}6$  23.  $\mathbb{xd}6$   $c3$  24.  $\mathbb{f}3$   $\mathbb{b}6$  25.  $\mathbb{b}4$   $\mathbb{d}4$  26.  $\mathbb{xc}3$

1-0

## Anand's Downfall

Not long ago Anand went down in a rapid game, provoking the same break in a related opening:

**Levon Aronian**

**Viswanathan Anand**

Zurich rapid 2015

1.  $d4$   $d5$  2.  $c4$   $c6$  3.  $\mathbb{c}3$   $\mathbb{f}6$  4.  $e3$   $e6$  5.  $\mathbb{f}3$   $\mathbb{bd}7$  6.  $\mathbb{d}3$   $dxc4$  7.  $\mathbb{xc}4$   $b5$  8.  $\mathbb{d}3$   $b7$  9. 0-0  $a6$  10.  $e4$   $c5$  11.  $d5$   $c4$  12.  $\mathbb{c}2$   $\mathbb{c}7$  13.  $dxe6$   $fxe6$  14.  $\mathbb{e}2$   $\mathbb{d}6$  15.  $\mathbb{ed}4$   $\mathbb{c}5$



16.  $b4!?$

The c5-knight is immediately forced to make a choice: open up the queenside by taking en passant or allow a white knight on e6 after capturing on e4?

16...  $\mathbb{c}xb3$

One month later, Mamedyarov opted for the other route and grabbed a pawn: 16...  $\mathbb{cxe}4$  17.  $\mathbb{xe}6$   $\mathbb{d}7$  18.  $\mathbb{fd}4$   $\mathbb{xb}4$ , Blübaum-Mamedyarov, Moscow 2015. For the moment Black's king is stuck in the centre, and although Shak won the game, this will not be everybody's cup of tea. 19.  $\mathbb{xe}4$  seems a good move to start with for White.

17.  $\mathbb{axb}3$

Black had not castled queenside here (and will certainly not be tempted to do so now), but nevertheless there is the renewed threat of b3-b4.

17...  $e5$

With the moves 17...  $b4$  18.  $\mathbb{e}1$  inserted it would definitely be too late for 18...  $e5$ : 19.  $\mathbb{f}5$   $\mathbb{cxe}4$  20.  $\mathbb{xe}4$   $\mathbb{xe}4$  21.  $\mathbb{xe}4$ . Relatively best, but hardly sufficient, was the Kasparovian exchange sac 17... 0-0 18.  $b4$   $\mathbb{cxe}4$  19.  $\mathbb{xe}6$   $\mathbb{e}7$  20.  $\mathbb{xf}8$   $\mathbb{xf}8$ .

18.  $\mathbb{f}5$   $\mathbb{cxe}4$  19.  $\mathbb{xe}4$   $\mathbb{xe}4$



**20. ♜g5!**

And here too Black's position falls apart. His king is still in the centre, while by now the position lies wide open.

**20... ♝c5 21. ♜e6 ♞c6 22. ♜xc5 ♜xc5 23. ♜d6+ ♞e7 24. ♜g5+ ♞e6 25. ♜xb7 ♜xb7 26. b4 h6 27. ♜h4 ♜e4 28. ♜g4+ ♜f7 29. ♜ad1 ♜a7 30. ♜f5+ ♜f6 31. ♜xf6 gxf6 32. ♜d6 ♜e7 33. ♜fd1**

**1-0**

Keeping in mind these ideas will make it easier to detect the same typical move in the following unconventional position. Veteran player Bareev had a long period of coaching behind him before he tried his luck in the Millionaire Open.

**Evgeny Bareev  
Kacper Rozdowski**

Las Vegas 2015

**1. ♜f3 d5 2. g3 g6 3. ♜g2 ♜g7 4. d4 c5 5. dxс5 ♜a6 6. c4 ♜a5+ 7. ♜c3 ♜f6 8. ♜d2 dxс4 9. c6 b5 10. a4 ♜c7**



Bareev showed no signs of rustiness, as witness his following move:

**11. b4!**

Aiming for a quick development and for support of the c6-pawn. Black's king position is not much of an issue here.

**11... cxс3**

11... ♜xb4 12. ♜xb5 ♜xb5 13. axb5, and the c4-pawn will soon be vulnerable, while 13... ♜xb5 runs

into 14.c7 ♜d5 15.♕b1 ♜c6 16.♗xc4 e6 17.♕b8.

Best seems 11...♝b6, but after 12.0-0! (12.axb5? ♜g4) 12...a6 13.♗db1!? 0-0 14.♗f4 White's pressure on the queenside leaves him on top.

**12.♝b2 ♜e6**

12...b4 13.♗b5 ♜xb5 14.♗c4 ♜c7 15.axb5.

**13.axb5 ♜b6 14.♘xb3 ♜xb5 15.♘a4**

And White's well-supported passed c-pawn gave him a clear advantage, which Bareev eventually converted.

As an aficionado of the French Opening, Bareev will have been familiar with the typical break in this structure:

**Anastasia Bodnaruk**

**Alina Kashlinskaya**

Chita ch-URS w 2015

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♜c6 5.♘f3 ♜d7 6.a3 c4 7.g3 ♜a5 8.♘bd2 ♜c6 9.♘g2 ♜d7 10.0-0 ♜e7 11.♘e1 0-0-0**



**12.b4!?**

Forcing Black to take on b3. The difference with 12.b3, you ask? Well, that would allow 12...♝xb3!? 13.♗xb3 ♜a4, for example 14.♗f3 cxb3 15.♗xf7 ♜f5 and Black is fine.

**12...cxb3 13.♘d3 ♜f3 14.♗e1 ♜a4 15.♘b2 b5 16.♘xa4 bxa4 17.♘b2**

Up to now, the manoeuvring has been about preparing and preventing the queenside to open up.

**17...♝e7!?**

A move like 17...♝b8, to get off the c-file, was more to be expected. However, Black soon finds use for the bishop.

**18.c4 ♜b8 19.♗f3 ♜g5 20.cxd5 exd5**

What's next? If the knight moves, its counterpart from a5 will jump to c4.

**21.♘e4!**

Turning things upside down!

**21...dxe4 22.♗xe4 ♜b7 23.d5**

A difficult position for Black, whereas White has an easy plan in d5-d6 and ♜b4.

**23...♝e7?**

A) 23...♜he8 24.♗b4 does not help Black either. After 24...♝fd6 White delays the capture on d6 with 25.♗d3!;

B) 23...♝a8 24.d6 ♜b8 25.♗c4 ♜hc8 26.♗c7;

C) 23...f6 24.d6 fxe5 25.♗b4 ♗fxd6 26.♗xe5;

D) Perhaps it was best to return the piece with 23...♗fd6 24.exd6 (24.♗b4 ♗d2) 24...♗he8, but after 25.♗g4 White's position still looks superior.

24.d6 ♗c8 25.♗c4 ♗b6 26.♗c7 ♗a5 27.♗xd7 ♗xd7 28.♗d4 ♗ac4 29.♗e1 b2 30.♗xb2 ♗xb2 31.♗b1

Black resigned. Neither of the knights can move because of mate on a8.

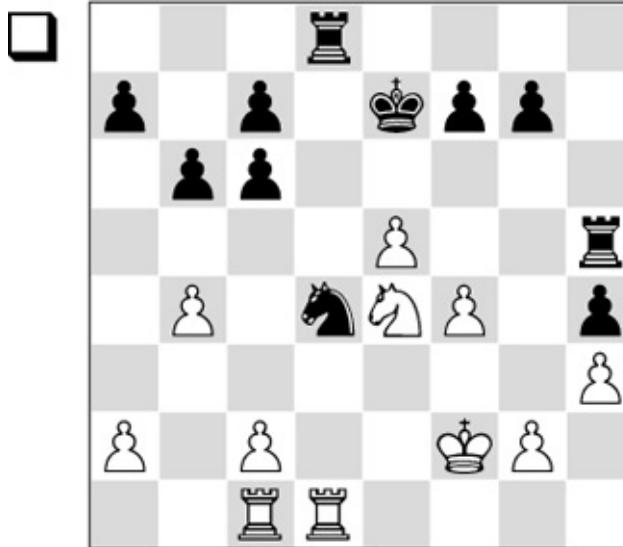
## A Famous Missed Opportunity

Having seen a couple of these examples, you might get the impression that it is easy to spot these en-passant allowing advances. Don't be mistaken! Here are two instances where (even top-level!) grandmasters missed similar tactical possibilities in their calculations:

**Garry Kasparov**

**Vladimir Kramnik**

Wijk aan Zee 2001



A famous missed chance. Kramnik had just played ...♗h5. Both he and Kasparov had overlooked that White could improve his pawn structure considerably with...

**25.g4**

Yes, you can take en-passant with check! 25.♗g5 was the game continuation, which eventually led to a draw.

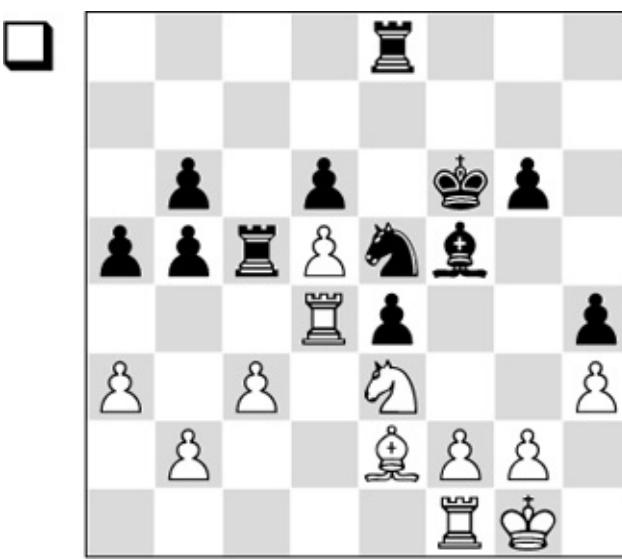
**25...hxg3+? 26.♗xg3!**

And by now you will notice the inevitable trick 27.♗xd4 and 28.♗f5+.

**Gata Kamsky**

**Danyyil Dvirnyy**

Gibraltar 2014



**37.g4 R d7**

37...hxg3 38.fxg3 opens up the position for the f1-rook with devastating effect. Black prefers to shed the e4-pawn.

**38. R xe4 g5?!**

Now the f-line will be opened after all.

**39.f4**

**1-0**

We finish with another characteristic long-term strategic break:

**Judit Polgar**

**Boris Gelfand**

Khanty-Mansiysk 2009

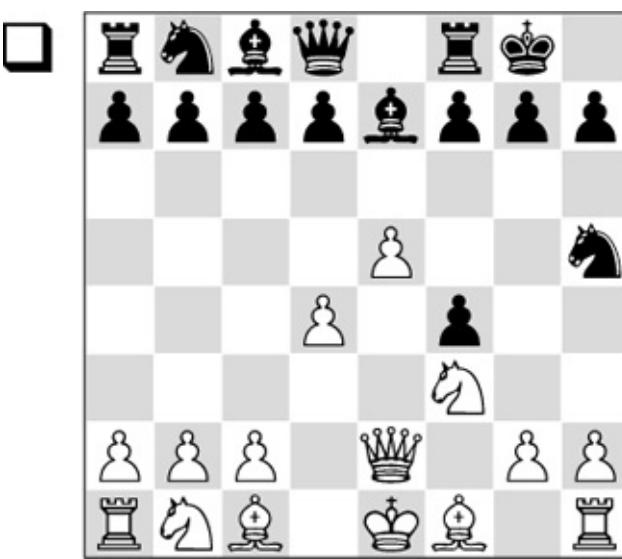
1.e4 e5 2. Nc4 Nf6 3.d3 c6 4. N e2 Ne7 5. Nf3 0-0 6. Nb3 d6 7.0-0 Nbd7 8.c3 a5 9.a4 b5 10. Nc2 Na6 11.axb5 cxb5 12. Nbd2 Nc7 13.d4 a4 14. Nd3 Nfb8 15. Nh4 g6 16.f4 exf4 17. Ndf3 Nh5 18. Nd2 Nb6



Gelfand has defended the gambit pawn in a typical way, thus holding back White's kingside attack. In a no less typical way Polgar breathes life into the attack.

**19.g4!**

Polgar studied Keres in her younger years. See what the latter came up with against Alekhine, Salzburg 1942:



analysis diagram

7.g4!? fxg3 8.♘c3. Objectively this may be questionable, but it's certainly imaginative! Actually, similar ideas in King's Gambit-like positions date even further back – think for instance of Pillsbury. Thus, Judit follows suit.

**19...fxg3**

19...♝f6 20.♛xf4.

**20.♝g5**

Where Keres was still developing his pieces, here White can immediately bring her pieces into the attack. As Black has few defending pieces, this looks pretty scary, though the ensuing complications will prove very difficult for both sides.

**20...♝c4?!**

Black has to choose from several plausible moves here, for instance also 20...gxh2+ 21.♚xh2 ♛xg5 22.♛xg5 f6 or 20...d5.

But the plan chosen should have been preceded by 20...♛xg5 21.♛xg5, which has the obvious disadvantage that Black does not threaten to eliminate an attacker on d2 after 21...♝c4. However, the text move grants White a chance, which, unfortunately, she misses.

**21.♝f5**

21.♛xf7!, meeting 21...♝xd2 with 22.♝f5!.

**21...♛xg5 22.♛xg5 f6 23.♝h4 gxh2+ 24.♛xh2 ♜f8**

24...gxf5 25.♜xf5 ♜g7 and the position is still incredibly difficult, for instance: 26.♜xf6!? ♜xf5 27.exf5 ♜f7! (27...♝xb2 28.♝c2, and with ♜f2 and ♜g1 coming up, being a rook down means nothing!) 28.♛h4 d5!!, and Black will continue to harass the f6-bishop with ...♜b6!.

**25.♝e2 gxf5**

25...♝d2! 26.♜xh5 ♜xf1 was Black's last chance, for example 27.♛g2 ♜d2 28.♜xg6 ♜h8! and Black holds.

**26.♜xh5 fxe4 27.♝f4 f5 28.♛h1 ♜h8 29.♜g1 ♜f7 30.♞xf7 ♜xf7 31.♞h6 ♜f8 32.♞g6**

1-0

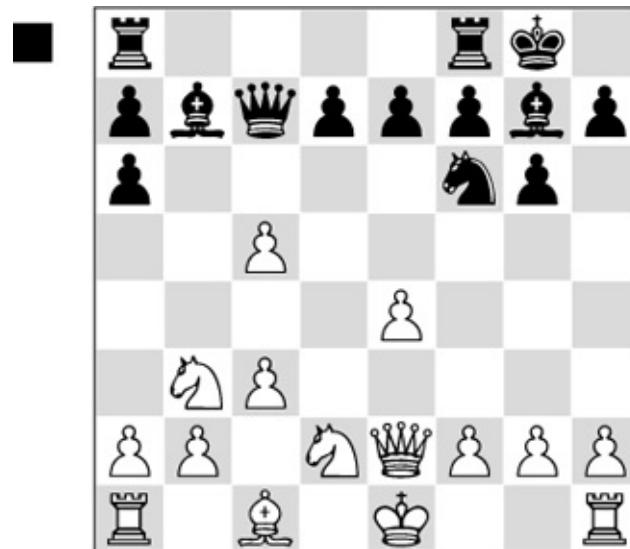
## Summary

This break can be really surprising, as it fails to make direct diagonal contact with your opponent's pawn, which would seem like the most logical try to open up the game. Still, this break often has a very forcing character if with it the pawn attacks an enemy piece.

As unexpected as they may appear, note that some of these breaks are typical for specific positions.

# Exercises

## Exercise 16



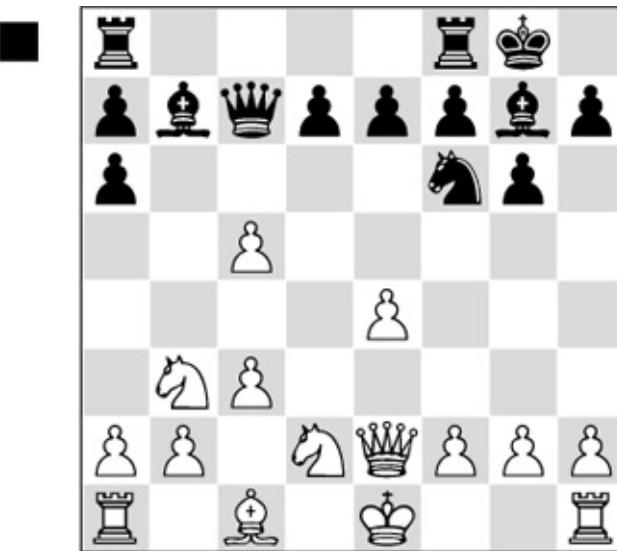
How should Black make use of his lead in development?

## Exercise 16

Anna Zatonskikh

Dronavalli Harika

Beijing blitz 2011



**10...d6!?**

10...d5!? – an en-passant break – is an alternative way here, with which Black could exchange the e4-pawn instead of the c5-pawn: 11.exd5 ♜xd5 12.0-0 a5 with typical compensation: pair of bishops, open files for the rooks and a central pawn.

**11.0-0**

11.cxd6 exd6 12.0-0 ♜fe8, and at least Black wins back the pawn, as 13.f3 d5 14.e5 ♜h5 15.f4 ♜xf4 16.♖xf4 ♜xe5 is not desirable for White, to put it mildly.

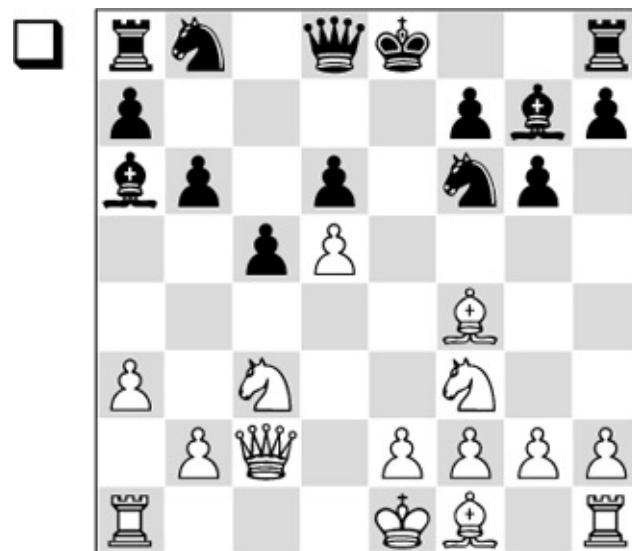
**11...dxc5**

Winning back the pawn, but the position becomes more static. A more dynamic approach was 11...♜d7!? 12.cxd6 exd6, when Black seems to have sufficient compensation for the pawn, as White is still struggling with her development.

**12.f3**

And now 12...a5 seems a valid try, pressing the b3-knight and vacating a6 for the bishop. Black is OK.

## Exercise 17



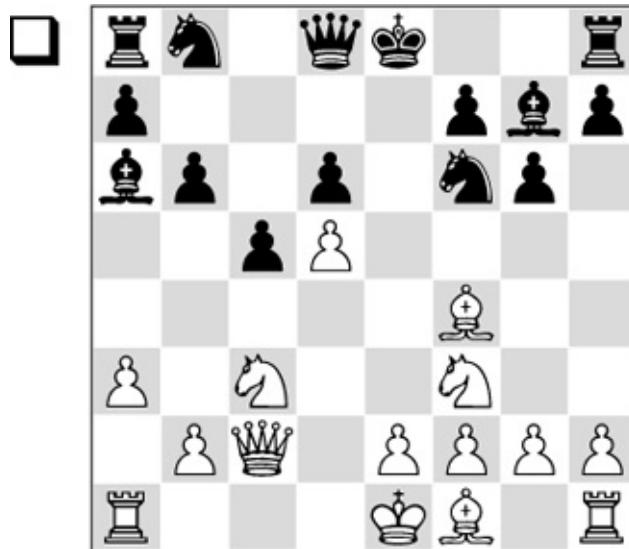
Does 10.h4 make sense when Black replies 10...0-0?

## Exercise 17

Rainer Buhmann

Ruud Janssen

Germany Bundesliga 2015/16



Yes! White just marches with the h-pawn to activate the h1-rook.

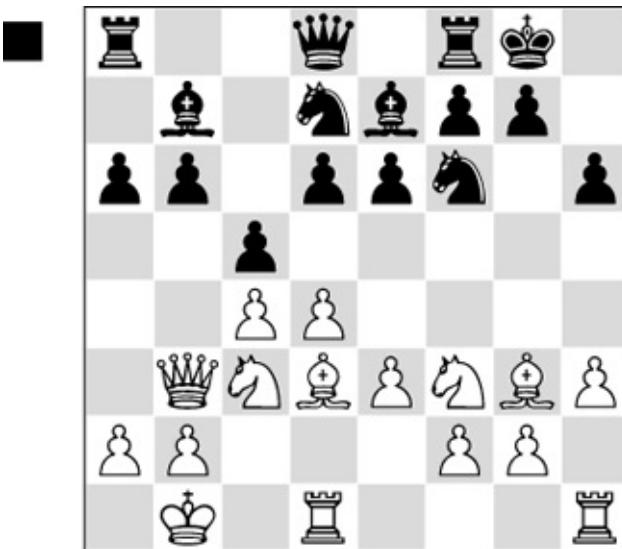
**10.h4 0-0 11.h5 ♜e8**

- A) 11...♝xh5 12.♜xh5 gxh5 13.♝g5 f5 14.♝e6 ♛e7 15.♝xf8 ♛xf8 wins back material and leaves White slightly better;
- B) 11...gxh5 12.♝h4; or 12.e3, yielding a big positional plus;
- C) 11...♛e7 12.hxg6 fxg6!? – a characteristic retort, opening the f-file for Black's own rook and keeping the h-file closed for the opponent's rook. 13.e3 ♛xf1 14.♝xf1 ♜bd7?! 15.♝g5, and White had the initiative in Wagner-Pavlovic, Berlin Wch rapid 2015.

**12.hxg6 hxg6 13.e3 ♜d7 14.♜d1 ♛xf1 15.♛xf1 ♜a6 16.♝g5 ♜c7 17.f3**

White is clearly better, with the rook on h1 well-placed.

## Exercise 18

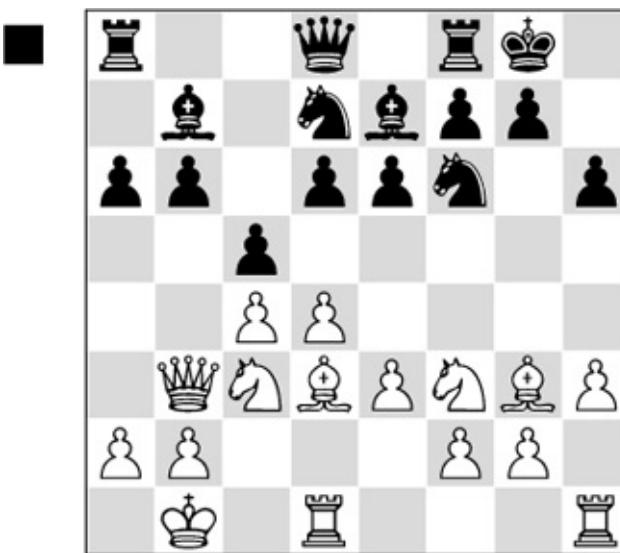


## Exercise 18

Akshat Chandra

Sergey Tiviakov

Chennai 2012



**13...b5 14.cxb5 d5**

Our typical break, followed by the occupation of the centre.

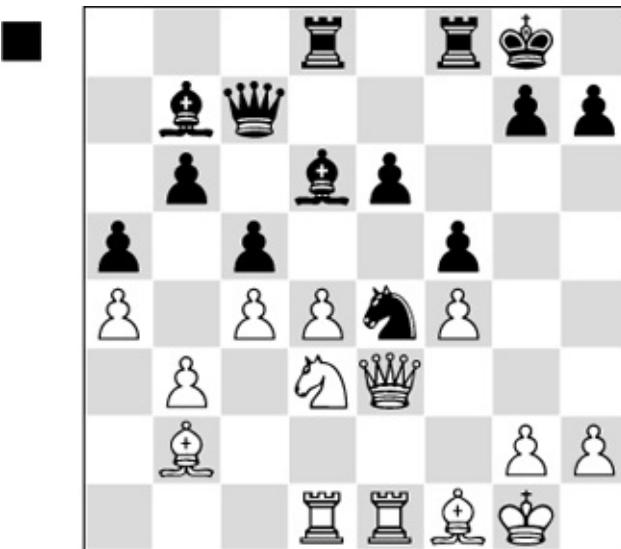
Now the white queen is clearly uncomfortable on b3 in the battle on opposite wings.

**15.bxa6 ♜xa6 16.♕xa6 ♜xa6**

White does control the b8-square, but obviously Black's attack will come first. His pieces move in quickly:

**17.♗b7 ♜b6 18.♗a7 ♗c8 19.♖c1 c4 20.♗a4 ♗b7 21.♗c2 ♜a3 22.♗a4 ♜a6 23.♗a1 ♜b4 24.b3 ♜fa8 25.♖hf1 ♜b6**  
0-1

## Exercise 19

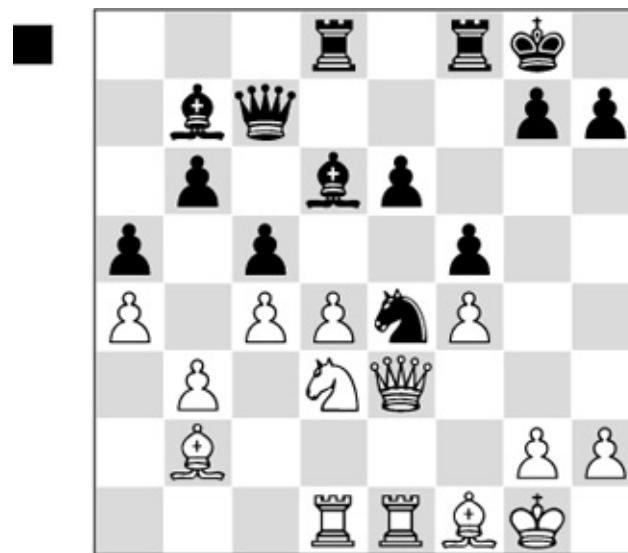


## Exercise 19

Predrag Nikolic

Alexey Dreev

Berlin Wch rapid 2015



**21...g5!**

Undermining White's stronghold on e5, opening up the diagonal for the dark-squared bishop, while the g-file may prove useful as well on occasion. What more do you want from one move?

**22.dxc5**

Not the best reaction.

After 22.g3 gxf4 23.gxf4 Black can occupy the g-file after 23...h6 followed by ... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ , or continue with the clever 23... $\mathbb{Q}g7+$  24. $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}e7!$ .

Best seems the surprising 22.d5 exd5 23.cxd5 gxf4 (23... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  24. $\mathbb{Q}e5$ ) 24. $\mathbb{Q}h3$  with counterplay. Mind you, this was a rapid game. Black too did not opt for the best move now.

**22...bxc5**

22... $\mathbb{Q}xf4!$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  gxf4 24.cxb6  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  with 25... $\mathbb{Q}xb6+$  to follow.

**23. $\mathbb{Q}e5?$**

This is no longer a solid spot for the knight.

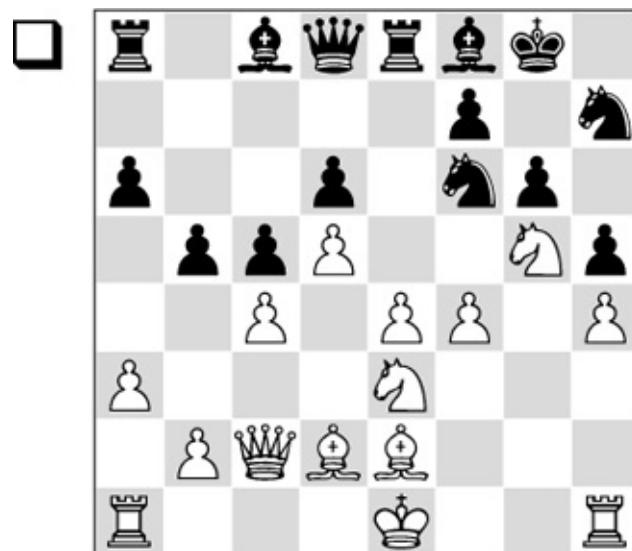
**23... $\mathbb{Q}g7$**

23... $\mathbb{Q}e7!$  was even stronger.

**24. $\mathbb{Q}a1$  gxf4 25. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$**

And here Nikolic failed to find the only defence against the threat 26... $\mathbb{Q}d4!$ : 26. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$   $\mathbb{Q}xd8$  27. $\mathbb{Q}h4$ .

## Exercise 20

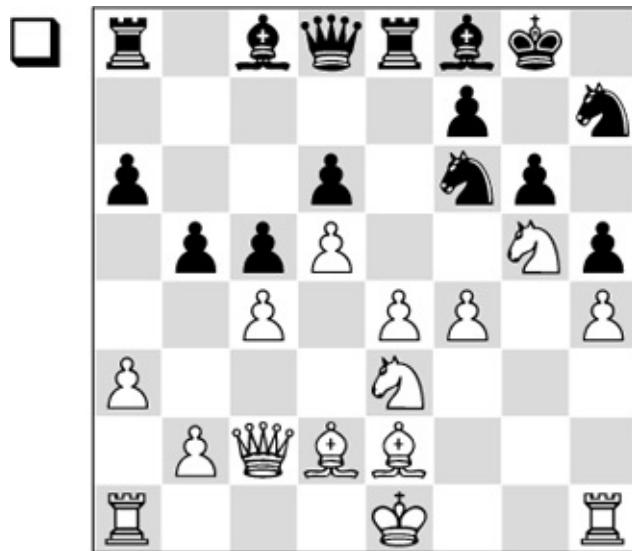


## Exercise 20

Ivan Cheparinov

Daniil Dubov

Turkey tt 2014



**23.e5 dxe5 24.f5 e4 25.fxg6 fxg6 26.cxb5**

26.0-0-0 looks like the normal follow-up. After 26... $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  27.hxg5 Black is practically forced to play 27... $\mathbb{Q}h7$ , leaving White with a clear plus. Now the game becomes tense again, until Black overlooks an immediately decisive blow.

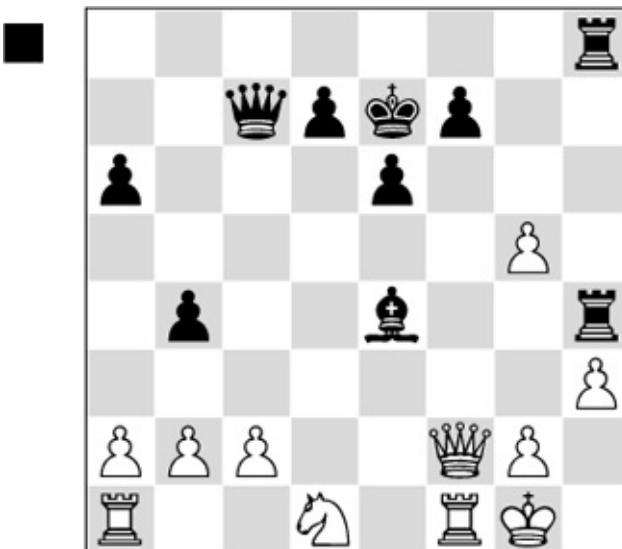
**26...axb5 27. $\mathbb{Q}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  28.hxg5  $\mathbb{Q}g4$  29.0-0-0  $\mathbb{Q}f2$**

**29... $\mathbb{Q}b8!?$ .**

**30. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$   $\mathbb{Q}xe8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}xh1$  32. $\mathbb{Q}xh1$   $\mathbb{Q}a6?$  33. $\mathbb{Q}g4!$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  34. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$**

**1-0**

## Exercise 21



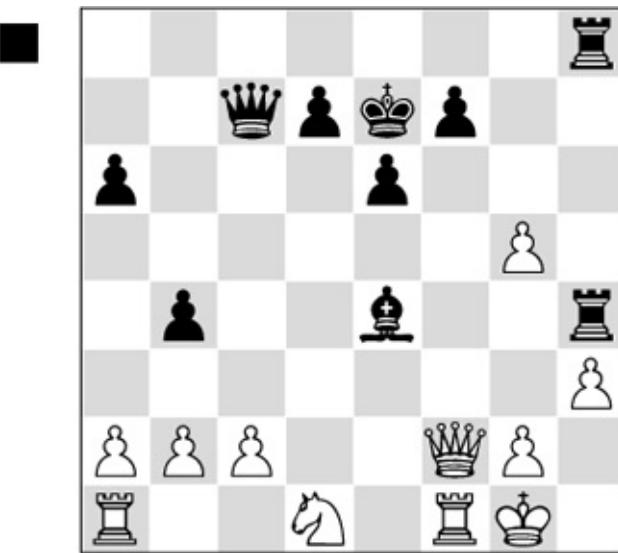
How should Black deal with the attack on the f-pawn?

## Exercise 21

Xie Jun

Judit Polgar

Thessaloniki ol 1988



**22...f5!**

Yes, the pawn can be taken en passant. Which is practically forced, as Black is threatening to capture on h3. A bishop sac on g2 is also looming. 22... $\mathbb{Q}d8$  23. $\mathbb{W}e3$  is less clear (23. $\mathbb{W}xf7?$   $\mathbb{Q}xh3$ ).

**23.gxf6+ ♔f7**

At the cost of another pawn, the king has found a safe place. All Black's other pieces are pointing at the white king. White is utterly helpless.

**24.♔e3**

If 24. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}xh3$  25. $g\mathbb{x}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}xh3$  wins.

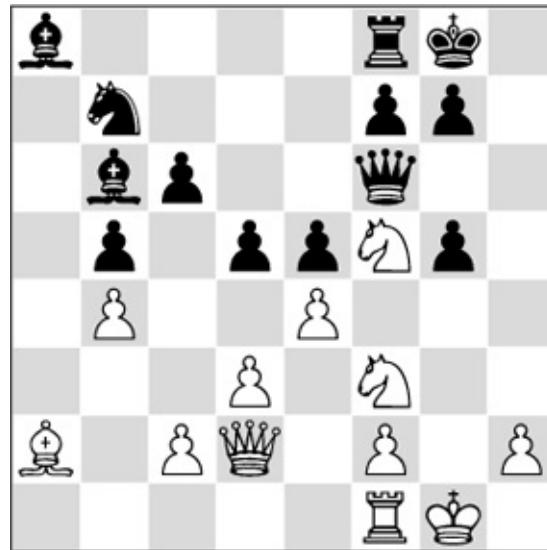
**24...♝xg2 25.♗g5 ♕4h7 26.♗xg2 ♕g8**

And Black won.

## Part IV

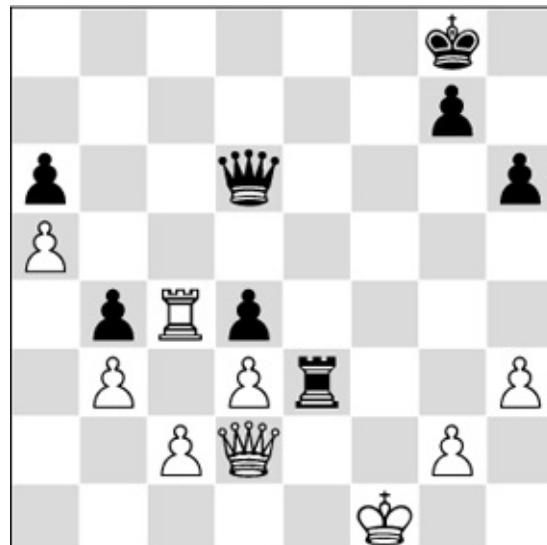
### Material Matters

#### 22. Lost Without a Queen?



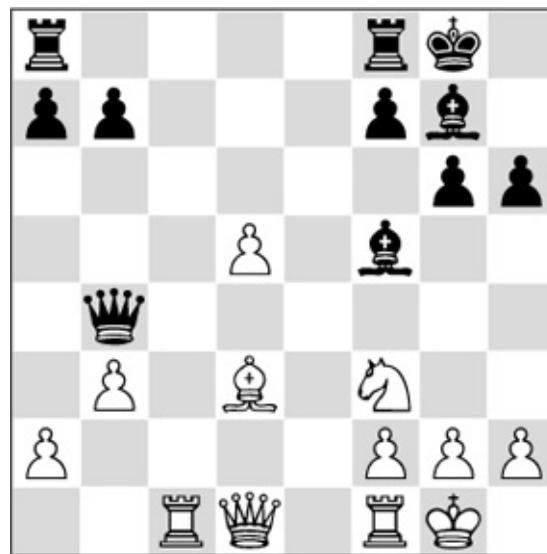
22. ♜ xg5!

#### 23. The Twilight Zone



29... ♜ e8!

## 24. The Pair of Compensators



18... ♗d7!

## 25. The Bishop's Monopoly



24... ♗g6!

"CHESS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES"

telegram channel address:

<https://telegram.me/ChessWorldChess>

## 25. The Lost Knight



Will White save his knight?

"CHESS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES"  
telegram channel address:

<https://telegram.me/ChessWorldChess>

## Chapter 22

# Lost Without a Queen?

You needn't be. In queenless middlegames you can turn to the usual strategic guidelines. Also, in many cases the dull draw you may have feared will be far off.

### Less Attack

After queens are exchanged the chances of setting up an attack on the king evidently decrease. In structures where an attack on the king is a typical resource for one side – as for instance in the King's Indian main line –, exchanging queens is bound to have a great effect on the evaluation. The same goes for typical positions with an isolated d-pawn.

Have a look at this game by Gligoric.

**Svetozar Gligoric**

**Tal Shaked**

Cannes 1998

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  4.e3 c5 5. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  6. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$  cxd4 7.exd4 d5 8.cxd5  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  9.0-0 0-0 10. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  11. $\mathbb{Q}d3$  g6 12. $\mathbb{Q}f3$



12...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

13.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  yields White nothing.

13...  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$

A regular position with an isolated d-pawn has arisen, but with the queens off. As a result, White won't be able to use his space advantage and launch a typical kingside attack. He can only try to liquidate with a timely d4-d5. Black, on the other hand, will try to prevent this and maintain control of the d5-square. He will also generally try to exchange as many pieces as possible, after which the pawn on d4 will be more likely to become a real weakness.

This is all part of the usual strategy, though in this position Black has already made progress by exchanging queens. White is not helpless though, and it still is just a (middle-)game, albeit without queens.

14. ♜g5 ♜e7 15. ♜fd1 ♜d8 16. ♜ac1 ♜d7 17.h4

Also a characteristic move, protecting the bishop on g5 and thus preparing d4-d5. With the queens off, a further advance with h4-h5 won't be too effective.

17... ♜g7 18. ♜e4

It was still a bit early for 18.d5 as after 18...exd5 19. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 20. ♜xd5 ♜xg5 21.hxg5 ♜e6 22. ♜xd8 ♜xd8 23.a3 ♜d2 Black has a pleasant position.

18... ♜b4 19. ♜b3 ♜c6 20. ♜c5

Gligoric, well aware of the dangers, consistently avoids further piece exchanges.

20... h6 21. ♜f4 ♜ac8 22.a3

Perhaps this was a suitable moment to change the character of the play by giving up two pieces for a rook and two pawns (see also Chapter 32): 22. ♜xe6 fxe6 23. ♜xe6+ ♜h7 24. ♜xd8 ♜xd8, though Black's piece play still seems to give him the slightly better chances.

22... ♜bd5 23. ♜e5 ♜g8

Black has regrouped well and now White has difficulties finding a useful move.

24. ♜f4 ♜xf4 25. ♜xf4 ♜d5 26. ♜g3 b6 27. ♜d3 ♜b7 28. ♜e5 ♜g7



29. ♜a4!

Again a well-known manoeuvre, making use of the weak c6-square.

29... ♜d6 30. ♜c6 ♜a6?

Here the 1997 Junior World Champion slips up. He could have reached the desired better endgame with the cunning 30... ♜xc6 31. ♜xc6 ♜f4 32. ♜xf4 ♜xf4 33. ♜xd8 (33. ♜f1 ♜d7) 33... ♜e2+ 34. ♜f1 ♜xc1 35. ♜b7 ♜c2.

31. ♜xd5 exd5?

Another mistake, after which White obtains a typical good knight versus bad bishop and is even a pawn to the good.

31... ♜xc1 32. ♜xc1 exd5 33. ♜c6 ♜c8! 34. ♜xd6 ♜b7 leaves White only slightly better.

32. ♜c6 ♜d7 33. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 34. ♜xa7 ♜xc1?! 35. ♜xc1 ♜e6 36. ♜c6 ♜e2 37.b3

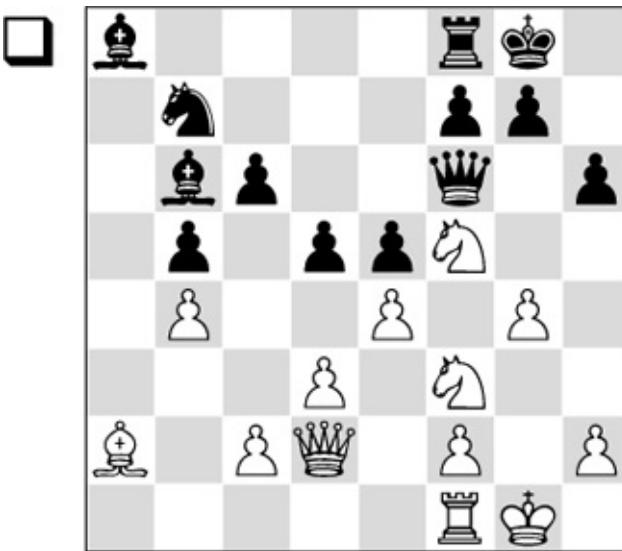
And Gligoric neatly converted his edge:

37... ♜b2 38. ♜c3 ♜e2 39. ♜b4 ♜d1 40. ♜xd5 ♜xb3 41. ♜xb6 ♜a2 42. ♜c6 ♜b5 43.a4 ♜a5 44. ♜c5

1-0

Still, you shouldn't rule out the possibility of an attack on the king in queenless middlegames. In the following game, White even deliberately offers the exchange of queens to finish the game off with a crushing queenless attack:

Dmitry Kaiumov



**21.g5! hxg5 22.♗xg5**

After the exchange of queens the white pieces will easily combine threats against the black king with attacks on the black pawn centre. Black's minor pieces are still bunched up together on the other wing.

**22...dxe4?**

Though Black already has a hard time, it's difficult to believe that this was actually played. The capture greatly helps White to activate his pieces (first and foremost, the a2-bishop) and could even have lost immediately. The alternatives 22...♝xg5+ 23.♗xg5 g6 (23...♞d8 24.h4! leaves Black tied up) 24.♗h6+! ♜g7 25.♗hxf7 ♜xf7 26.♗xf7 ♜xf7 27.exd5; 22...♜d8 23.♗e7+ ♜f8 24.♗xf6 gxgf6 25.♗xc6; and 22...♞d8 23.♗xf6 ♜xf6 24.exd5 all leave White better.

**23.dxe4**

23.♗e7+ ♜h8 24.♗xf7! is a surprising strike which puts an end to everything.

**23...♞d8**

Relatively best was 23...♞d8.

**24.♜d1**

Logically enough, the white rook occupies the open d-file, which is also made possible by 23...dxe4, though 24.♗h5 wins as well.

**24...c5 25.♜d6 ♜xg5+ 26.♝xg5 ♜c7 27.♜g6**

Not something you see every day. With the queens off, the attack rages on.

**27...♝h8 28.♜xg7 ♜e8 29.♝xf7**

1-0

## No More Castling

Early queenless middlegames often arise after an exchange of queens along the d- or e-file, when one side may lose the right to castle. In the long run that won't be a problem, as the king will be only too happy to be near the centre in the endgame.

In the following example Black isn't afraid to exchange queens against his much lower rated opponent. On the contrary, he will be more likely to outplay his opponent in a strategic battle than in a well-known theoretical variation.

**Romario Sanches**

**Yannick Pelletier**

Istanbul ol 2012

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♜f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♗xd8+ ♛xd8



6.♗g5 c6

6...♝e6 is much more popular.

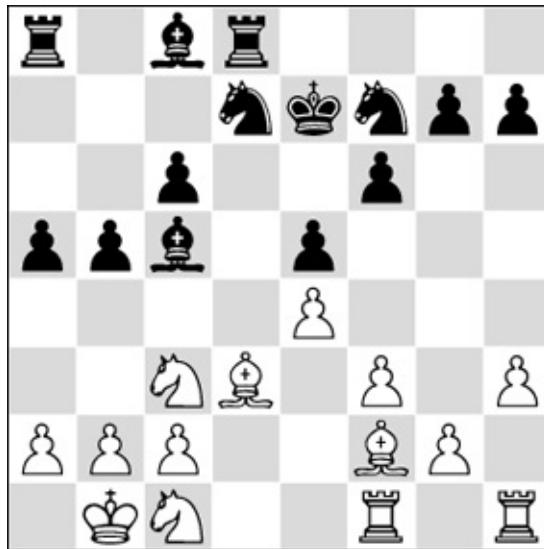
7.0-0-0+ ♜e8 8.♗c4 ♜bd7 9.♗ge2

Rather timid. White should play actively to profit from his lead in development, for instance beginning with 9.♘f3.

9...b5 10.♗d3 ♜g4 11.♗h4 ♜c5 12.♗df1

Not White's intended follow-up, I would guess.

12...f6 13.h3 ♜h6 14.f3 ♜f7 15.♗b1 ♜e7 16.♗f2 ♜d8 17.♗c1 a5



Black is doing fine and is about to obtain a substantial advantage.

18.a4 ♜xf2 19.♗xf2 b4 20.♗d1 ♜b6 21.b3 ♜e6

All Black's pieces have been developed nicely and he has a clear initiative now, planning ...c6-c5-c4. His king is conveniently placed in the centre. He won after 30 more moves.

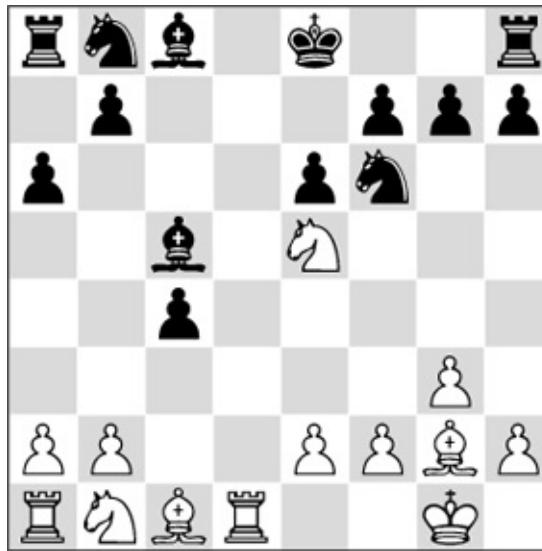
## Lagging Behind in Development

**Carlos Matamoros Franco**

**Pedro Torres Ventosa**

Sevilla 2012

1.c4 c6 2.♗f3 d5 3.g3 ♜f6 4.♗g2 a6 5.0-0 e6 6.d4 dxc4 7.♗e5 c5 8.dxc5 ♜xd1 9.♗xd1 ♜xc5



As in the previous example, Black is behind in development. Here it's a much more serious matter, however, as the position is open and the devastating Catalan bishop hinders Black's further development. In fact, Black has reached a well-known position that could arise from the Catalan, but he is a tempo down.

**10. ♜c3 0-0**

Keeping the king in the centre with 10...♝e7 offers no relief here: 11.♗xc4 ♜c6 12.♗a4 ♛a7 13.♗ab6, and apart from everything else, b2-b3 and ♛a3 will follow, leaving the black king very exposed.

**11. ♜xc4 ♜bd7 12. ♜f4 e5**

With this tactic (capturing on e5 is met by ...♜xf2+ and ...♝g4+) Black attempts to free his queenside.

**13. ♛g5 ♜b8 14. ♜ac1 b5?!**

Creating new weaknesses, but nor did giving up a pawn with 14...h6 15.♜xf6 ♜xf6 16.♗xe5 ♛e6 promise much.

**15. ♜a5 h6 16. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 17. ♜d5!**

17.♗c6 was also tempting.

**17... ♛d4**

This loses right away, but 17...♗xd5 18.♜xc5 ♜f6 19.♗c6 is no picnic either.

**18. ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 19. ♜c6 ♛e6 20. ♜xb8 ♜xb8 21. ♜d2 b4 22.e3**

And Black resigned a couple of moves later.

**Michael Adams**

**Boris Savchenko**

Moscow Wch blitz 2007

**1.e4 c5 2. ♜f3 g6 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 ♜xd5 5.d4 ♜f6 6. ♜b3 ♜xb3 7.axb3**



How would you assess this position? Pretty boring, at first sight? Of course, in several cases a queen exchange may (initially) lead to a dead equal position. But here, after the exchange of White's d-pawn for Black's c-pawn, the position isn't entirely symmetrical. And, most importantly, the half-open a-file adds considerably to the pressure against Black's queenside.

**7... ♜bd7**

Or 7...cxd4 8.♘xd4 and now White typically threatens 9.♘b5, as the c7-square is left unprotected after the exchange of queens: 8...a6 9.♘b5 ♘d8 is a better try) 9.♗c4 ♗c7 10.♗f4, and Black is in big trouble: 10...♘ba6 11.♘b5 ♘xb5 12.♗xb5+ ♘d8?! (losing on the spot) 13.♗xa6! bxa6 14.♗c6 ♘f5 15.♗e2 ♘h6 16.♗xh6, and White duly won in Ekström-Gaprindashvili, Lucerne 1997.

**8.♗a3 a6 9.♗c4**

9.♘b5 ♘d5 10.♗c4 ♘7b6 11.dxc5 axb5 12.♗xa8 ♘xa8 13.♗xd5 looks very convincing.

**9... ♘d5 10.g3!**

Grabbing the long 'Catalan' diagonal.

**10... ♘g7 11.♗g2 e6 12.♗e3**

Not bothering about the pair of bishops, as giving up the strong d5-knight will leave Black's position more vulnerable.

**12... ♗e7 13.♗e2**

Pay attention – both players refrain from castling and instead keep their kings in the centre.

**13... ♗b8 14.♗hd1 ♗d8 15.♗g5+**

Or 15.dxc5! ♘xe3 16.♗xe3 ♘xc5 17.♗xd8 ♘xd8 18.b4, and White is much better.

**15... f6 16.♗d2 b6 17.dxc5 ♘xc5 18.♗d4 ♘b7 19.b4 ♘xb4? 20.♗xb7 ♗xb7 21.♗e3! e5 22.cxb4 exd4 23.bxc5 dxe3 24.♗xd8 ♘xd8 25.cxb6 exf2 26.♗xa6 f5 27.♗a8+ ♘d7 28.♗a7**

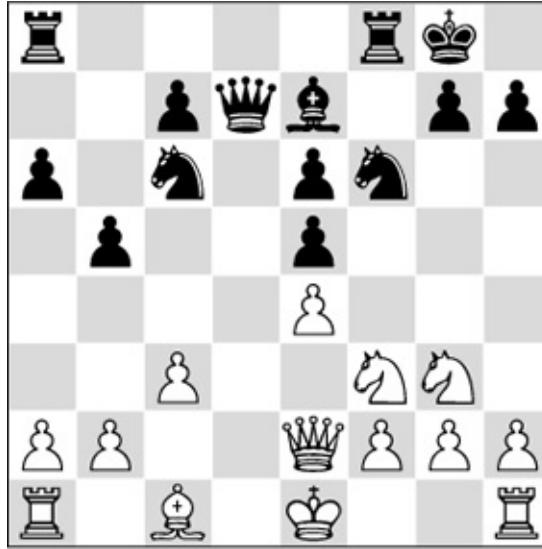
**1-0**

A queenless middlegame which is even fashionable at the top level nowadays is of course the one arising from the Berlin Wall. Apart from being a solid – or some might say boring – opening, it's also an opening that is rich in strategic plans. If it is in your repertoire, you will need to have your endgame skills in order, as transpositions to different types of endgame are possible.

Here is an older top-level game featuring a queenless middlegame from a Ruy Lopez. Perhaps it's not one of Fischer's best known games, but in any case it is one he thought was interesting enough to be worth including in his *My 60 Memorable Games*.

**Robert Fischer  
Vassily Smyslov**  
Havana 1965

1.e4 e5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$  a6 4.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5.d3 d6 6.c3  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}bd2$  0-0 8.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$  b5 9.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$  d5 10.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  dx $e$ 4 11. dx $e$ 4  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   
12.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  fx $e$ 6 13.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$



#### 14.0-0

'During the game I was kicking myself for allowing the subsequent exchange of queens.' (Fischer)

14...  $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  15.a4  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  17. ax $b$ 5 ax $b$ 5 18.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$

Forcing Black's next.

18...  $\mathbb{Q}d6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  21. h3 h6 22.  $\mathbb{Q}fa1$   $\mathbb{Q}db8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}a8$   $\mathbb{Q}d1+$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}xa1$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xa1$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  26. b4!

The key move according to Fischer. Smyslov could have prevented it by playing ...b5-b4 on his last move or before. White controls the a-file, whereas Black's pieces find it hard to become active as they are also tied down to the defence of the e5-pawn. Fischer continued to out-manoeuvre his opponent and won a fine game.

26...  $\mathbb{Q}f7$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  28. g3  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}1d2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  c6 32.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$   
35.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  36. c4! bx $c$ 4 37.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$  c5 41.  $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{Q}xb6$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$  c4 43.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$  c3

1-0

Not convinced yet? Still afraid of supposedly boring queenless middlegames? Have a look at several games of a great attacking player like Kasparov, who didn't hesitate to exchange queens when he spotted an advantage:

#### Garry Kasparov Yasser Seirawan

Thessaloniki 1988

1.d4 d5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  c5 3. c4 dx $c$ 4 4.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  cx $d$ 4



**5. ♕xd4 ♕xd4 6. ♕xd4 ♔d7**

Seirawan had played this before, Kasparov came prepared to the board.

**7. ♘db5**

A novelty at the time, again directing attention to the now unprotected square c7.

**7... ♔a6**

As it turns out, this knight won't have a happy life on this square. The alternative is 7... ♔d8, when Kasparov gives 8. ♘a3 as the strongest option. The black king won't find a safe haven easily.

**8.e4 ♘f6 9.f3 ♘xb5?!**

Quite a decision, but Seirawan was afraid of White's quick development. Though Kasparov will not profit from the pair of bishops, now the pawn on c4 can be captured without loss of time. 9...e5 10. ♘e3 (10. ♘xc4 ♘c8 and Black is suddenly developing comfortably) 10... ♘e6!? is a better attempt to equalize, which has been tried in later games.

**10. ♘xb5 e5 11. ♘e3 ♘b4+ 12. ♘f2 ♘e7 13. ♘xc4 ♘hc8 14. ♘ac1 ♘c5 15. ♘hd1 ♘xe3+ 16. ♘xe3**

White has gathered a few tiny advantages: right now his bishop is better than Black's f6-knight, while the b5-knight is annoyingly eyeing the pawn on a7, making life harder for the black rooks. It may not seem much, but typically in these symmetrical structures these details can make the difference.

Although his position is not pleasant to play, Black should be able to hold objectively. As it was, eventually he succumbed in the endgame.

**16... ♘e8 17. ♘b3 ♘xc1 18. ♘xc1 f6 19.a3 ♘d6 20. ♘d5!?** ♘xb5 21. ♘xb7 ♘bc7 22. ♘xa8 ♘xa8 23. ♘c8 ♘b6 24. ♘g8 ♘f7 25. ♘h8 ♘c5 26. ♘b8 ♘e7 27.b4 ♘c4+?!

27... ♘cd7 28. ♘b7 ♘c4+ 29. ♘d3 ♘xa3 30. ♘xa7 ♘b5 – Kasparov.

**28. ♘e2 ♘d7 29. ♘g8 g5 30.a4 a5 31.bxa5 ♘xa5 32. ♘a8 ♘c6 33.a5 ♘d6 34.g3 h5 35.h4 gxh4 36.gxh4 ♘c5 37.a6 ♘c7 38.a7 ♘b7**

**1-0**

## Summary

As you have seen, the game simply continues after the exchange of queens. A direct attack on the opponent's king is less likely (though not to be ruled out!), but the placement of the king remains a crucial factor. Will it be conveniently safe in the middle or not?

Other strategic factors like open files and strong diagonals may be even more prominent, while an advantage in development may cause as much trouble as with the queens on!

## Chapter 23

# Major Pieces in the Twilight Zone?

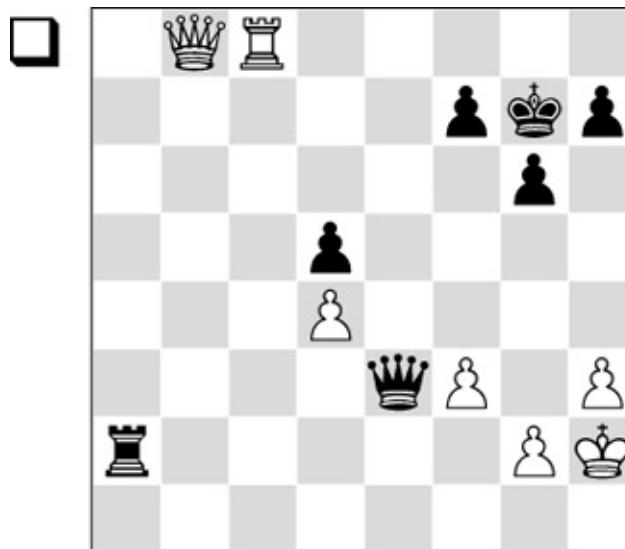
Chess literature claims there is a fourth phase in our game: when only queens and rooks remain. This is not as spooky as it seems. It appears that the term originates with Peter Romanovsky, who examined a lot of major-piece positions in a book he wrote about the middlegame. These positions have characteristics of both the middlegame and the endgame, hence Romanovsky's term.

But here also there are familiar guidelines, with the problem being, as always, how their importance should be weighed in particular positions. In any case, active play is required, keeping an eye on the kings, and it can become extremely difficult. Let's start off with a fascinating old example on the highest level.

**Boris Spassky**

**Mikhail Tal**

Riga ch-URS 1958



It's all about king safety here. The attacker has the advantage.

39.  $\mathbb{Q}g8+$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$

After 39... $\mathbb{Q}h6$  the king is safer, allowing Black to draw after 40. $\mathbb{Q}f8+$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  41. $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$  42. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}d2+$ .

40.  $\mathbb{Q}d6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}f4+$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}d6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$

43.  $\mathbb{Q}d8+$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  44.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$  45.  $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}e2+$  46.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}e1+$  47.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}d2+$  only leads to a draw.

43...  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  44.  $h4$

Taking away another square from the black king. There are many, many possibilities you can calculate, which is exactly what makes these positions so difficult to play. Generally speaking, the white queen will try to end up on h8 to drive the black king still further away.

44...  $\mathbb{Q}e2$

'!', Tal; 44...  $\mathbb{Q}a6!?$ , Kasparov.

45.  $\mathbb{Q}d6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$

Here the game was adjourned, something which nowadays can only be done in ACP Golden Chess Classic tournaments.

Of course, at the time there weren't any strong engines yet, which meant a long and thorough analysis session deep into the night.

46. ♜f4+

46. ♜d8+ ♜e7 47. ♜e8 ♜xd8 48. ♜xd8 ♜d2 49. ♜xd5 ♜e6 50. ♜e5+ ♜d6 51. ♜e4 f5 results in a drawn rook ending.

46... ♜f5 47. ♜h6 ♜e7 48. ♜f8+ ♜f6 49. ♜g7+ ♜e7 50. ♜a8

White has succeeded in penetrating with his queen, pushing the black king slightly more out into the open.

50... ♜d7 51. ♜f8+ ♜f6 52. ♜a6+

As Kasparov points out, 52. ♜d8 ♜c7+ 53. ♜h3 ♜e1 54. ♜d6+ looks tempting, but after 54... ♜f5 55. ♜xd5+ ♜e6 Black equalizes. For instance: 56. ♜d8 ♜h1+ 57. ♜g4 ♜xh4+ 58. ♜xh4 ♜h2+ 59. ♜g4 ♜xg2+ 60. ♜f4 ♜d2+.

52... ♜e6 53. ♜h8+ ♜e7 54. ♜a8 ♜e1 55. ♜g3 h5

Black creates the possibility of fleeing to f5 with his king.

56. ♜f2 ♜e6 57. ♜c8!

A fine move, restricting the black pieces still further.

57... ♜d6 58. ♜f8+

58. g4 hxg4 59. ♜f8+ ♜f6 60. fxg4 wins for White, as was later pointed out. Present-day engines don't need many seconds to see it.

58... ♜f6 59. ♜e8

Again 59.g4!.

59... ♜e6 60. ♜h8+ ♜f5 61. ♜h6 ♜f6 62. ♜h8+

62. ♜d8 ♜c6 63. ♜g5+ ♜g7 64. ♜xd5 fails to 64... ♜c3!, and it's Black who wins.

62... ♜f5 63. ♜d8?

Now it is Black who can start threatening the enemy king. 63. ♜h6 ♜f6 64. ♜g8! would still be a valid try for a win.

63... ♜c6

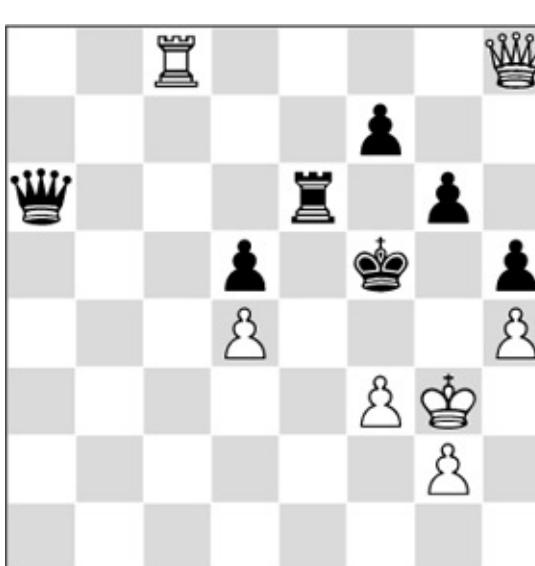
63... ♜b5 looks fine as well, though White is safe after 64. ♜g3.

64. ♜c8

With a draw offer, but now Tal decided to go for the enemy king.

64... ♜a6 65. ♜g3?

65. ♜d8 ♜e2+ 66. ♜g3.



65... ♜d6+ 66. ♜h3 ♜e1

Now the roles are reversed and Black has become the attacker. As a result, and also due to the tense tournament situation, Spassky lost his nerve and now quickly went down after some further

inaccuracies.

67.g3

67.g4+.

67...  $\mathbb{Q}g1$

Tal discarded 67...  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  because of 68.g4+, but 68...  $\mathbb{Q}f4$  leads to mate: 69.  $\mathbb{Q}h6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  70.  $\mathbb{Q}c3+$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  71.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$  (71.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}h1+$ ) 71...  $\mathbb{Q}f1$  – which again proves how difficult these positions can be when actually played over the board.

68.f4  $\mathbb{Q}e1$  69.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$

69.  $\mathbb{Q}e8$   $\mathbb{Q}xe8$  70.  $\mathbb{Q}xe8$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$ .

69...  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  70.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}h1+$  71.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}e4+$  72.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$

Now the king supports the attack, and Black threatens 73...  $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ .

73.  $\mathbb{Q}c8+$   $f5$

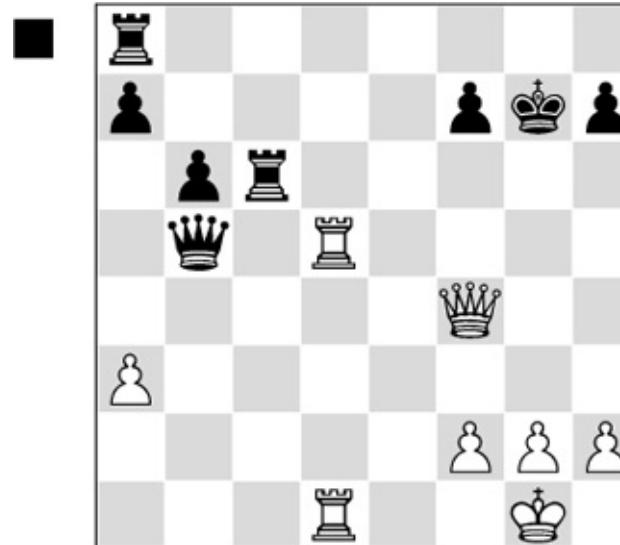
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Now for a more contemporary example:

**Eltaj Safarli**

**Mikhail Gurevich**

Turkey tt 2012



Material is equal, but White must be clearly better as the black king lacks pawn protection. Naturally, White goes for the attack.

32...  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  33.  $h4$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}g5+$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}d7$   $\mathbb{Q}e7?$

35...  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  was necessary, but White remains clearly better after 36.  $\mathbb{Q}xa7$ .

36.  $\mathbb{Q}d4+$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$

36...  $f6$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}gd5$  loses as well.

37.  $\mathbb{Q}d6?$

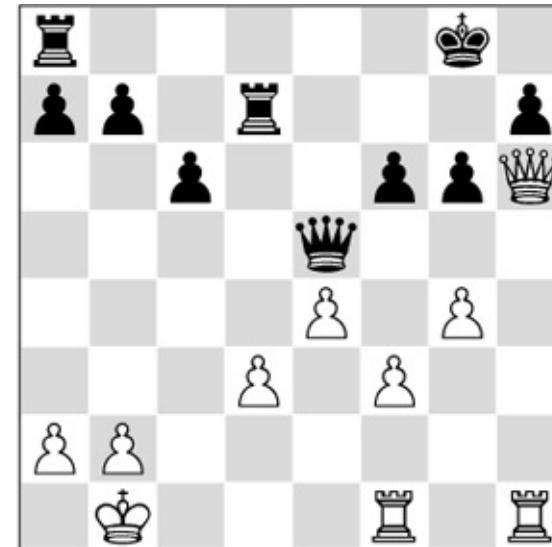
Returning the favour. Both 37.  $\mathbb{Q}h8$  and the surprising 37.  $g4$  win at once.

37...  $\mathbb{Q}e1+$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}gxg6+$   $fxg6$

Black has done relatively well: he has improved his pawn structure as well as the safety of his king. Still, White retained a slight initiative, but in the end Gurevich stubbornly defended to a draw.

**Activity!**

**Sergey Kasparov**



On a superficial first glance White might seem to be better: doesn't he have some sort of attack? However, with h7 safely protected the attack is stopped in its tracks. Black might already be slightly better because his rooks can become very active on the half-open central files. White's rook on f1, on the other hand, isn't worth much, while the backward pawn on d3 is a clear target.

**25... ♕e7 26. ♕e3 ♜ad8 27. ♜d1 c5**

Already a different picture than the one three moves ago. I guess if you had to choose now you'd instantly pick Black.

**28.f4**

White understandably wants to advance his kingside pawns, but the loosening of his pawn centre seems more important here. 28.♕d2 or 28.♕h2 were solid but passive alternatives, while the attempt to activate the rook on the half-open c-file with 28.♕c1 changes little after 28...b6!.

**28... ♜d4 29.g5 f5**

Black is already better. 29...fxg5 30.fxg5 c4 was another logical follow-up.

**30.a3 c4**

30...fxe4.

**31. ♕c1 fxe4 32.dxc4 e3**

This passed pawn and White's passive position decide the game.

**33. ♜de1 ♜d2 34.c5 ♕e4+ 35. ♜a2 ♜8d3 36.f5 ♕d5+ 37. ♜b1 ♜xa3 38. ♕xd2 exd2**

**0-1**

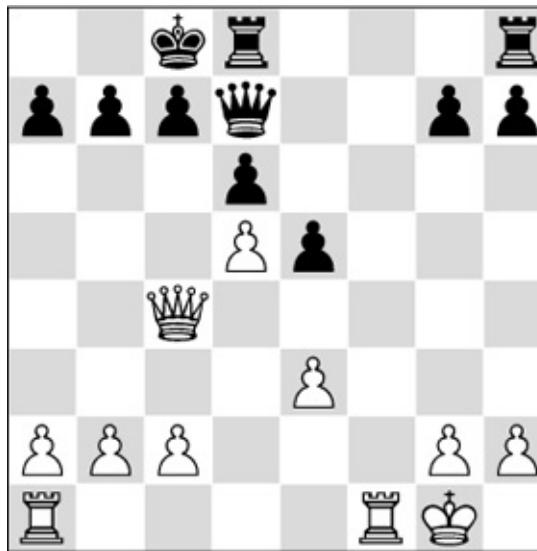
## The Open File

**Kanan Izzat**

**Alexander Bortnik**

Moscow 2012

**1.e4 e5 2. ♜f3 ♜c6 3. ♜b5 f5 4.d3 fxe4 5.dxe4 ♜f6 6.0-0 ♜c5 7. ♜c3 d6 8. ♜d3 ♜d7 9. ♜c4 ♕e7 10. ♜d5 ♜xd5 11.exd5 ♜d4 12. ♜xd7+ ♕xd7 13. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 14. ♜e3 ♜xe3 15.fxe3 0-0-0**



This is a well-known theoretical position from the 4.d3 system against the Ruy Lopez Jänicsh variation.

The same position, with the moves a2-a4 (White) and ...a7-a6 (Black) included, featured in two of Radjabov's games in Morelia/Linares 2008, against Carlsen and Topalov. Radjabov drew twice as Black, but both times he was on the defending side. As in rook endgames, the open file is of the utmost importance and here there are no minor pieces to control the entrance squares. Sometimes White can also turn his attention to the queenside (actually Black's kingside here), but sure enough the f-file is his main trump.

**16. ♖f3 ♖hf8 17. ♖af1 ♖xf3 18. ♖xf3 ♕b8 19. ♖h4**

Mainly threatening 20.♖f7!.

**19... ♖c8 20.b3**

The immediate 20.♕xh7 was also possible. In that case 20...♕a4 can be met by 21.♕xg7 ♕xa2 22.h4 ♕xd5 23.h5 and if 23...e4 24.♖h3 ♕g8 then 25.h6!.

**20... g6 21.c4 a5 22.h3 ♖e8 23.e4 c6**

Black understandably tries to generate some scope for his rook and queen.

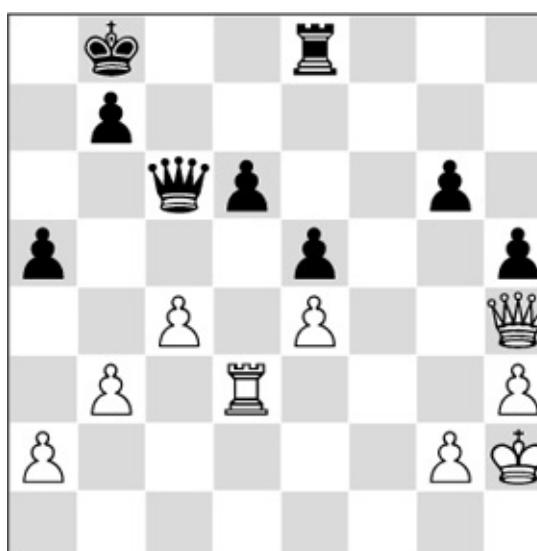
**24.dxc6!**

Avoiding the opening of the c-file.

**24... ♖xc6 25. ♖h2**

25.♖f7 h5 26.♕f6 looks very strong, but White opts for the gradual approach.

**25... h5 26. ♖d3**



White turns his attention from the f-file to Black's weak pawns. In the meantime Black creates some threats and also some weak squares. White managed to win after a few mutual mistakes.

26...b6 27.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$

31.c5 bxc5 32.  $\mathbb{Q}xa5$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}f1!$  is a nice line: 34...  $\mathbb{Q}a7$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}xa7$   $\mathbb{Q}xa7$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$ .

31...  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$  g5 33.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  g4 35. hxg4?

Exposing the white king as well.

35... hxg4 36.  $\mathbb{Q}g6$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}xg4$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  44.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}h4$  45.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  46.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}d1$  47.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4??$  48.  $\mathbb{Q}e7+$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  49.  $\mathbb{Q}e8+$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  50.  $\mathbb{Q}b5+$

1-0

## A Passed Pawn

When one side can create a passed pawn, this will be a great asset. With no more minor pieces on the board there aren't any knights to block it. As a result, the further the passed pawn advances, the more passive the opponent's rooks are likely to become.

**Natalia Pogonina**

**Ding Yixin**

St Petersburg URS-CHN rapid 2012

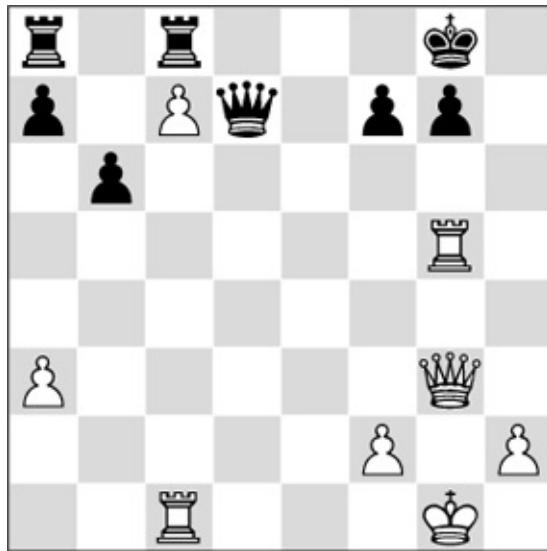


Here we are about to witness an example. Black first simplifies the position, hoping eventually to eliminate the c7-pawn or to profit from White's weakened kingside.

26...e5? 27.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$

Black must have misjudged this position (mind you, it was a rapid game). For the time being, the pawn on c7 is untouchable because of a discovered check on e8 (after an exchange on c7 first). This means that the black rooks remain extremely passive. As regards the g4 'weakness': this pawn is immediately used to start an attack. Due to the 'hook' on h6 White can open a file on the kingside at once with...

30.g5(!) hxg5 31.  $\mathbb{Q}xg5$



**31...g6?!**

After this further weakening Black definitely won't survive. 31... $\mathbb{Q}d4$  was much more solid and would still put up a lot of resistance. After 32.h4 Black can try to activate a rook with 32... $\mathbb{R}e8$  33.h5  $\mathbb{R}ac8$  34.h6 g6; sometimes the black queen finds a defensive post on f6.

**32.h4**

Of course, profiting at once.

**32... $\mathbb{Q}d2$  33. $\mathbb{R}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}d1+$  34. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  35. $\mathbb{R}c3$**

Now little can be done about the threat of h4-h5. Take another look at the helpless black rooks.

**35... $\mathbb{Q}h7$  36.h5  $\mathbb{R}g8$**

Now numerous moves win for White.

**37. $\mathbb{R}c4$   $\mathbb{R}ac8$  38. $\mathbb{R}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$**

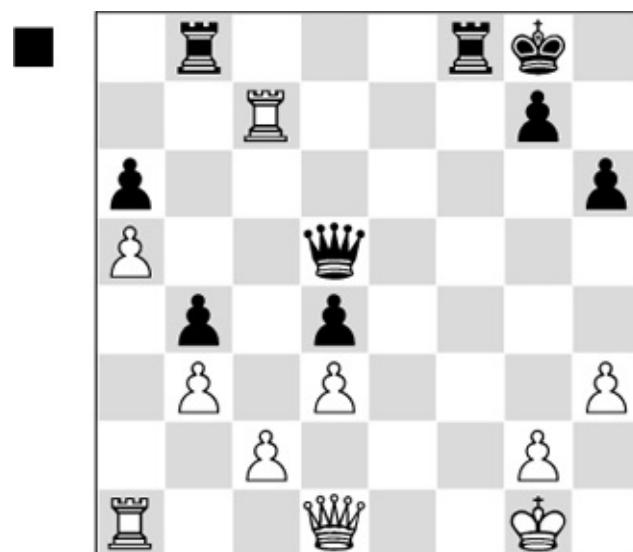
And Black resigned at the same time. 39.hxg6 is simply devastating.

We started with two former World Champions, let's finish with the younger generation. A year later the Polish white player, a former U10 World Youth Champion, was to share first place in the World Youth Championship under 20 (the Russian Antipov took the title), while his Ukrainian opponent is one of the best women players in the world!

**Jan-Krzysztof Duda**

**Anna Muzychuk**

Wijk aan Zee B 2014



Black has just sacrificed a pawn. She has more space and a better coordination of the major pieces, which she hopes to convert into an attack on the king.

25... ♜d6 26. ♜c4

26. ♜a7!? – keeping the rook more active on the 7th rank – looks more natural and strong. Again Black should switch a rook to the kingside, but here the compensation is not that convincing.

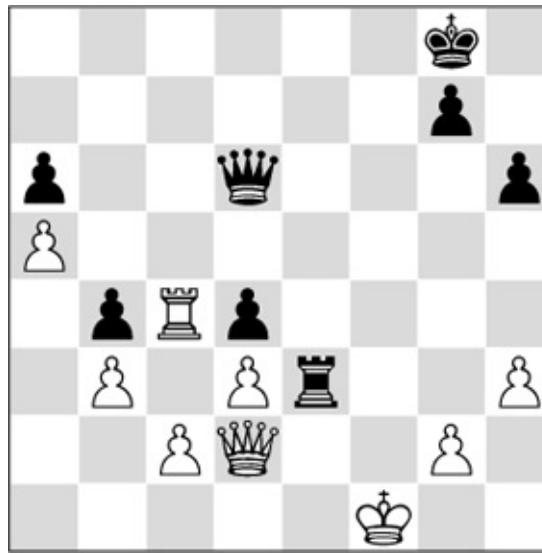
26... ♜be8 27. ♜d2?

Too timid. 27. ♜g4 ♜f4 28. ♜h5 seems tricky, but 28... ♜e5? (28... ♜f7) can be met by 29. ♜c6!, and just when Black's pieces seemed to become a dangerous force, this move unexpectedly seems to put an end to his initiative.

27... ♜e3 28. ♜f1?

This seems most logical, but in fact it leads to a straight loss after Black's surprising 29th move. 28. ♜e1! was called for – 28... ♜g3 and only now 29. ♜f1 ♜xf1+ 30. ♜xf1 ♜h2. Black threatens 31... ♜f3+, but after 31. ♜c8+ ♜h7 32. ♜f8 White seems to hold. And of course not the greedy 28. ♜xb4 ♜g3.

28... ♜xf1+ 29. ♜xf1



29... ♜e8!

A terrific move, preventing White's defence as in the former line. Now 30... ♜h2 is a deadly threat.

30. ♜xb4?

This really takes the queen too far away. 30. ♜xb4 was a better attempt, though after 30... ♜h2 31. ♜xd4 ♜f8+ 32. ♜f2 ♜xf2+ 33. ♜xf2 ♜c7 34. ♜c4 ♜xa5 Black should be able to press and win on the kingside.

30... ♜f4+!

Probably Duda had hoped for 30... ♜h2 31. ♜xd4 ♜f8+ 32. ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 with an improved version of the former variation.

31. ♜g1 ♜e2 32. ♜c8+ ♜h7 33. ♜f8 ♜g3 34. ♜b7 ♜e1+ 35. ♜f1 ♜e3+

White resigned.

## Summary

Hunting for the king and searching for activity are the core business in these major-pieces-only positions. Tense positions may arise, which are surprisingly complex, and where accurate calculation is required. The occupation of open files and the creation of a passed pawn are other dominant factors. There are no minor pieces to cover entry squares or block the passed pawn.

## Chapter 24

# The Pair of Compensators

When you are lucky enough to be in possession not just of two bishops, but the true bishop pair, this can easily make up for a pawn or more. And indeed, this is a common motif. Are you ready for some dynamic chess?

Let's explore this typical compensation for the smallest material deficit:

## No Central Pawns

Igor Kurnosov

Wen Yang

Biel 2012

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 d6 5.c3 ♗d7 6.d4 ♘f6 7.0-0 g6 8.♗xc6 ♗xc6 9.dxe5 ♘xe4 10.♗bd2



10... ♗g7!

10... ♗xd2 11.♗xd2 ♗g7 12.exd6 0-0 13.♗f4 cxd6 is also possible, and has been seen before. 14.♗xd6 ♗b6 is fine for Black. His bishops couldn't be better.

11.♘xe4 ♗xe4 12.exd6 0-0 13.♗e1 ♗c6 14.dxc7 ♗xc7

So White has won a pawn, but he has no clear plan to make headway. Black's bishops exert pressure on the respective wings and control all the central squares, while the black rooks can easily go to the central files. The absence of central pawns extends the range of Black's bishops.

15.♗d4 ♗ad8 16.♗g5 ♗d5 17.♗d2 ♗xd4

One advantage of the bishop pair is... you can exchange one! (17... ♗a5 was also not bad.) Considering this, you would rather think of a strong bishop versus a knight remaining on the board. In this case, however, Black transposes to a position with opposite-coloured bishops, which is also not uncommon. Look at this position from Karpov-Larsen, Tilburg 1980:



analysis diagram

13... $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  14.bxc3 h5 15.h4 g5, and Larsen famously scored a convincing win over his illustrious opponent.

**18.cxd4 f6 19. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  20.f3 g5**

Restricting the activity of White's bishop, but also weakening the kingside.

**21.  $\mathbb{Q}ac1$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  h5 24.h3  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  26.dxc5  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  27.b3  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  28.h4**

After the more logical 28. $\mathbb{Q}e8$ , trying to exploit Black's weakened king position, Black defends with 28... $\mathbb{Q}g6$ .

**28...  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}d1+$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$  33.cxd6 g4 34.fxg4+  $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$  f5 36.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$  f4 37.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$**

½-½

## A Typical French Sacrifice

**Marek Vokac**

**David Navara**

Karlovy Vary ch-CZE 2005



**18...d4**

A well-known way to activate the French bad bishop at the cost of a pawn (although this position arose from a Sicilian). This move drastically changes the dynamics of the position. Instead of having

a solid space advantage and attacking chances, White is faced with a suddenly radiant b7-bishop. His backward extra pawn on d3 isn't of great value.

19.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  f5 23.  $\mathbb{Q}ac1$   $\mathbb{Q}xc1$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xc1$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$

Here comes the second bishop!

25.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}a2$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$

More challenging was 26.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$  (30.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  leaves White's pieces passive, for instance 30...g5!?) 30...  $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$ , and White's queen becomes annoyingly active.

26...  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$

Now Black is fine without any great problems.

29. h3 h6 30.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  32. d4  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  a5 34. bxa5  $\mathbb{Q}xa5$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  37. d5

White gives up his extra pawn to eliminate the bishop pair and avoid sliding into passivity after 37.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}a7$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$ .

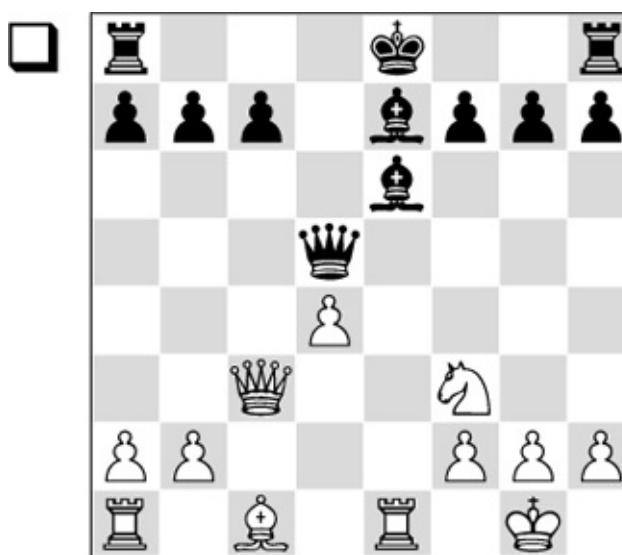
37...  $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$

Black went on to win this endgame.

**Marian Petrov**

**Thomas Michalczak**

Sunny Beach 2012



A theoretical pawn sac from the Petroff. Black has just played ...  $\mathbb{Q}f5-e6$  because 13...c6 would have run into 14.  $\mathbb{Q}h6$ !.

14.  $\mathbb{Q}xc7$

Accepting the challenge, though 14.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  is the more popular move.

14...  $\mathbb{Q}d6$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  0-0 16.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Apparently, a new move, with the idea of exchanging the dark-squared bishops after  $\mathbb{Q}h4-g3$ , thus solving the problem of the undeveloped c1-bishop and eliminating the bishop pair at the same time. In the meantime, however, Black can activate his rooks and get a certain initiative. In general, White's extra pawn is immobile and needs constant defence, while Black's centralized queen and bishops appear to be in control.

16...  $\mathbb{Q}ac8$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}f5?$ !

17...  $\mathbb{Q}g4$ .

18. b3?!

Here White could and should have achieved his aim with 18.  $\mathbb{Q}e7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe7$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xe7$   $\mathbb{Q}fe8$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xe8+$   $\mathbb{Q}xe8$ .

18... ♜c2 19. ♜e3 f6 20. ♜f4 ♜a3



Black has an excellent position. The sole function of the static knight on f3 seems to be the protection of the extra pawn on d4.

21. ♜e2 ♜xe2

21... ♜c6!

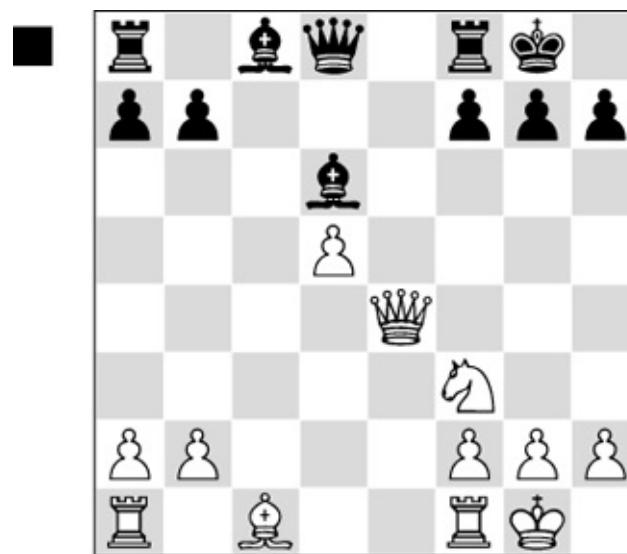
22. ♜xe2 ♜c8 23. ♜d1 ♜e4

Losing track. 23... ♜c2 was the natural follow-up. Eventually Black even spoiled a good endgame just before the time-control.

**Stanislav Cifka**

**Petr Haba**

Austria Bundesliga B 2012/13



A similar position to the last one and also a theoretical opening position (from the Semi-Slav). Black doesn't have a strong centralized queen here, but his position still seems active enough to compensate for the pawn deficit.

14... ♜e8 15. ♜d4

15. ♜d3 allows 15... ♜f6.

15... ♜f5 16. ♜g5 f6

The most direct and popular reply.

A) 16... $\mathbb{Q}d7$  17. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$  b6 18. $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  19. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  20. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$ , and White is on top;

B) 16... $\mathbb{Q}b6$  doesn't offer Black many chances after 17. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$  axb6 18. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ ;

C) 16... $\mathbb{Q}a5$  17. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$  18. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  f6 19. $\mathbb{Q}fe1$  yields White an edge as Black's counterplay has been effectively stopped.

17.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$

Other queen moves have been tried, but in each case White's queen is exposed to the black bishops or rooks. For example, after 18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$  White cannot follow up with the natural  $\mathbb{Q}c1$  or  $\mathbb{Q}e1$  because of ... $\mathbb{Q}f4$  and ... $\mathbb{Q}b4$  respectively.

18...  $\mathbb{Q}b6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$

White has managed to carry out the desired  $\mathbb{Q}g5-h4-g3$  manoeuvre, removing the blockade and eliminating the bishop pair, but he isn't in time to sufficiently protect his d-pawn.

20.b3  $\mathbb{Q}xg3$  21.hxg3  $\mathbb{Q}c5$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5+$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd7$

Black could be a tiny bit better here, but White quickly centralizes, after which the game soon ends in a draw:

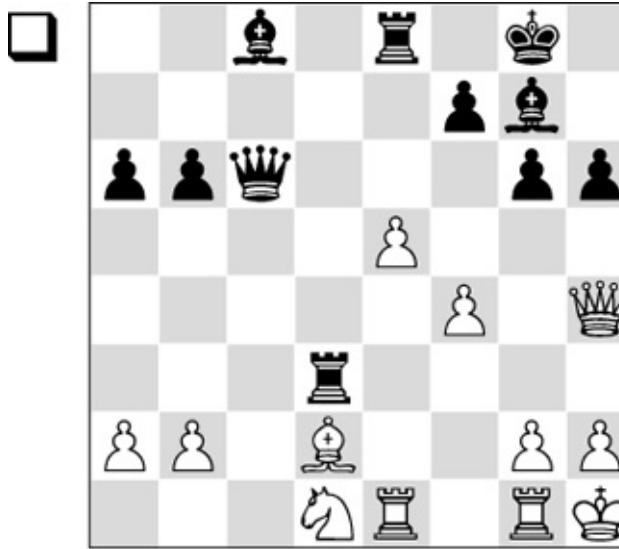
26.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  28.f3  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  29.g4  $\mathbb{Q}c5$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$  a5 31.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$  h6 33.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}e5+$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  h5 35.gxh5  $\mathbb{Q}xh5$  36.a3  $\mathbb{Q}h2$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  39.b4 axb4 40.axb4 b5+ 41.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}h2$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$

½-½

**Pablo Salinas Herrera**

**Diego Flores**

Moron 2012



Here also, Black is a pawn down with the bishop pair as compensation, but at the moment he still has to find suitable squares for them.

33.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$

33.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$ , protecting the queenside and opposing on the long diagonal, seems a good alternative, but White may have been worried by 33... $\mathbb{Q}f8$ .

33...  $\mathbb{Q}b7$

33... $\mathbb{Q}f5$  was the other natural square for the bishop, while White's last also allowed Black to play 33...f6. In both cases Black seems to be fine.

34.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$  h5 36.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$

36.  $\mathbb{Q}h3$  f6, and the bishop on g7 comes to life.

36...  $\mathbb{Q}c2$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}c1?$

Too passive. 37.  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  (37...  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  38.e6) 38.  $\mathbb{Q}a5$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  39.a3 was better.

37...  $\mathbb{Q}f8!$

Here comes the other bishop, just as in the Navara game.

38.a3 a5 39.♗e3 b5 40.♗gf1 b4 41.♗c1 ♗f5

It's now clear that White's minor pieces have been displaced, while Black's are working effectively.

42.♗e3 ♗c8 43.e6 fxe6 44.♗xe6+ ♗xe6 45.♗xe6 ♗c2! 46.♗e4

46.♗xg6+ fails to 46...♔f7 47.♗g5 ♗xf2.

46...♗e7 47.♗xe7 ♗xe7

White is completely lost. Just as in the third example, Black has managed to invade with the rook on c2. Here the cooperation with the bishops simply proves fatal for White.

48.♗d2 b3 49.♗f3 ♗f6 50.♗d1 ♗xf3 51.gxf3 ♗xb2 52.♗xb2 ♗xb2 53.♗d8+ ♗f7 54.a4 ♗c2

0-1

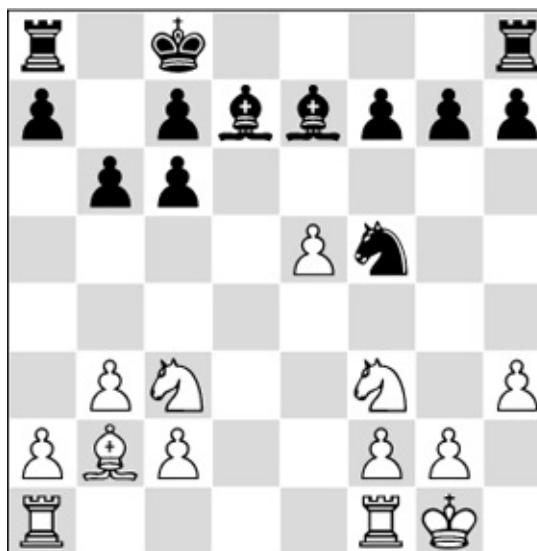
## Compensation for Doubled Pawns

**Mathias Womacka**

**Pentala Harikrishna**

Gibraltar 2004

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♗xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 9.♗c3 ♘d7 10.h3 ♘c8 11.b3 b6 12.♗b2 ♘e7



In the Berlin and Exchange Variations of the Ruy Lopez, White obtains a pawn majority on one side, but at the cost of the bishop pair. It can be very useful to study the particularities of both variations and thus learn how to handle or combat the bishop pair.

Here you will see an example of the devastating power of the bishops when White is too eager to advance his pawns and opens up the position too early.

13.g4

13.♗ad1 is more prudent.

13...♗h4 14.♗xh4 ♗xh4 15.f4

This is careless, though Black's reply was difficult to foresee. Again, a developing move like 15.♗ad1 was better.

15...f5! 16.exf6

If 16.g5 then 16...h6, and Black opens up the kingside.

16...gxf6 17.f5 h5 18.♗g2?

White should have played 18.♗e4 hxg4 19.♗xf6! and things are by no means clear.

18...c5!

Activating the light-squared bishop.

19.♗d5 ♗c6 20.c4 ♗b7 21.♗ae1

Offering the exchange to obtain some play on the dark squares, but Black flatly refuses.

21... ♜ad8 22. ♜e7 ♜xd5!

Now he sacrifices the exchange himself!

23.cxd5 ♜xd5+ 24. ♜h2 hxg4 25. ♜f4 g3+ 26. ♜g1 ♜g5

White resigned. Look how Black's bishops overpower White's rooks!

The idea of all those examples may have inspired Elianov to come up with a cool novelty in the following game:

**Etienne Bacrot**

**Pavel Elianov**

Shamkir 2014

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3. ♜f3 ♜f6 4. ♜c3 e6 5. ♜g5 h6 6. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 7.e3 g6 8. ♜e2 ♜g7 9.0-0 0-0 10.e4



10... ♜d7 11.cxd5 exd5 12.exd5 c5!

Opening up the diagonal of the g7-bishop.

13. ♜e4

It is questionable whether White is helped by the exchange of a pair of knights. The g7-bishop now eyes the pawn on b2.

13... ♜b6 14.dxc5 ♜xc5 15. ♜xc5 ♜xc5 16. ♜c1 ♜b4 17.b3 ♜f5

A familiar picture by now, isn't it? The position is about equal, but it seems that Black's active position is easier to handle than White's shuffling behind his extra pawn.

18. ♜d3 ♜d7 19.h3 ♜ac8 20. ♜d2 ♜d6 21. ♜e2 a6 22. ♜fd1 ♜fe8 23. ♜f1 ♜f5 24.g3 ♜xc1 25. ♜xc1 ♜c8 26. ♜f4 ♜xf4 27.gxf4 ♜f8 28.d6?

White's 26th already was a concession, but now Black also wins back the pawn.

28... ♜d8 29.d7 ♜xd7 30. ♜xd7 ♜xd7

Subsequently Elianov managed to squeeze a win.

## Summary

The bishop pair may easily compensate a pawn. Typical features are an open centre with no central pawns, or an isolated passed central pawn for the opponent. Without a true pawn centre the bishops can show their long-distance power. Manoeuvring the bishops to the most promising diagonals or trying to open these by forcing pawn breaks are characteristic little plans.

## Chapter 25

# The Bishop's Monopoly

Together with queen and rooks, opposite-coloured bishops are frequently a guarantee for a fierce fight for the initiative. The player who is the first to start an attack may gain a big advantage due to his unopposed monopoly on the dark or light squares.

In the textbooks you are likely to find few examples where other pieces – say, knights – are on the board beside the queens, rooks and opposite bishops. An important reason for this is that a knight can control the squares which the bishop cannot cover. In this way, the power of the opposite bishop is diminished considerably. Such a position wouldn't be a good illustration of the attacking potential of an opposite bishop.

### Pawns on the Wrong Colour

Without other minor pieces, pawns have to do the job of covering the colour which is not controlled by the bishop. In the following game, this goes wrong:

**Le Quang Liem**

**Rakhim Pasiev**

Moscow rapid 2013

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  c5 2. c4  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3. e3 e6 4. d4 cxd4 5. exd4 d5 6.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  7. a3 h6 8.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  9.  $\mathbb{B}c1$  dx $c4$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  11. 0-0 0-0  
12.  $\mathbb{Q}a2$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  exd5 14.  $\mathbb{B}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  b6 16.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$



White has several pleasant advantages: better development, better queen, c6-square. Black's next move, however, allows a liquidation into a position with opposite-coloured bishops which is practically lost.

17... f6? 18.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}xc6$  19.  $\mathbb{B}xc6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  20.  $\mathbb{B}xe6$

Thanks to Black's 17th move, all his kingside pawns are on the wrong colour. They should complement his bishop by controlling the light squares, but instead they create an obvious and easy access for the white queen along the b1-h7 diagonal.

20...  $\mathbb{B}c8$

20...f5 seems to be the only logical move to resist, preventing the white battery on the b1-h7 diagonal, but after 21.g3 ♕d7 (21...♝g5 22.♕e5; 21...♝c7 22.♕fe1) 22.♕fe1 ♜c7 23.♕e7 ♔d8 24.♔b5 Black looks pretty helpless.

**21.g3**

White could also play 21.♕f3, after which the queen will come to f5, establishing the desired battery.

**21... ♜b8 22.♕f5**



Again, ruling out Black's defence with ...f6-f5. Clearly the queen would have been the better piece to put on f5. However, White's following regrouping in order to achieve this proves sufficiently strong.

**22... ♜c4 23.♔d3 ♜c7 24.♗e3 ♜d8 25.♕e1 ♜d6 26.♔d3 ♜c7 27.♗f3**

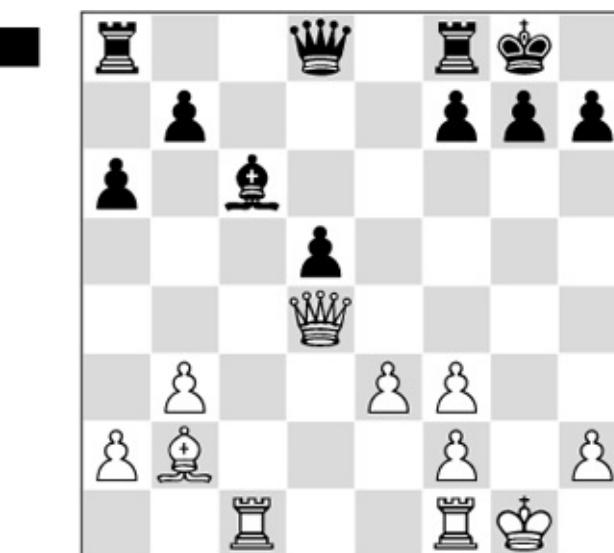
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## Complementing the Bishop

**Mauricio Flores**

**Krikor Sevag Mekhitarian**

Santos 2012



White has just allowed the doubling of his f-pawn so as to exploit the half-open g-file and exert pressure against g7 in cooperation with the pieces on the long diagonal.

More examples in IYCP Chapter 17: *Play Actively, Double Your f-Pawn!*.

**19... ♕g5+ 20. ♔h1 f6!**

In principle, the correct move: blocking the opponent's bishop and complementing Black's own light-squared bishop by controlling the dark squares. The fact that this move is practically forced here may be considered coincidental :-)

**21. ♖g1 ♕f5**

Now you can see the drawbacks of the doubled f-pawns. The foremost pawn is clearly a target and White's king may become vulnerable. Note that here too, as always, the queen is a bad blockader: as soon as the queen moves from d4, Black will take any opportunity to play ...d5-d4, transforming his bad bishop on c6 into a devastating force.

**22. ♖g3 ♕f7 23. ♖cg1**

In view of Black's solid defensive set-up it is questionable whether this decentralizing move is still useful.

**23... ♖e8 24. ♕g2 ♕e5 25. ♖d2 ♕f5 26. ♖d4**

Avoiding a repetition of moves, but after...

**26... h5 27. ♖d1 ♕d7 28. h4**

... a draw was agreed upon.

The position is equal. Both bishops are sufficiently restricted and both sides cannot make any headway.

## Good or Bad Bishop?

**Petr Zvara**

**Aleksander Mista**

Czechia tt 2012/13

**1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♖c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♖xd4 ♖f6 5. ♖c3 e5 6. ♖db5 d6 7. ♖g5 a6 8. ♖a3 b5 9. ♖xf6 gxf6 10. ♖d5 ♖g7 11. c3 ♖e7 12. ♖xe7 ♖xe7 13. ♖c2 ♖b7 14. ♖d3 f5 15. f3 f4 16. 0-0 ♖e6 17. ♖e2 0-0 18. ♖fd1 ♖f6 19. ♖b4 ♖d8 20. ♖c2 ♖b6+ 21. ♖h1 ♖e7**



Sometimes it is not so easy to determine at once which bishop is the better one. Here White decided to go for opposite bishops with...

**22. ♖d5 ♖xd5 23. ♖xd5**

... but after...

**23... ♖h8**

... the half-open g-file is of more use to Black than it was to White in the former example.

**24. ♖ad1 ♖c7!**

Temporarily retreating.

25.b4?!

Too slow; 25.a4.

25...  $\mathbb{R}g8$  26.a4  $\mathbb{B}xa4$  27.  $\mathbb{B}xa4$   $\mathbb{R}g6!$

This is Black's idea. The rooks can be doubled on the g-file, the g6-rook may switch to the h-file and at the same time it is defending the d6-pawn, allowing the bishop to return to the a7-g1 diagonal.

28.c4  $\mathbb{B}b6$  29.c5  $\mathbb{D}xc5$  30.  $\mathbb{B}b2$



30...  $\mathbb{R}ag8$

30... $cxb4$  was also possible: 31.  $\mathbb{W}xe5+$  (31.  $\mathbb{W}xe5$   $\mathbb{W}f6$ ) 31...  $\mathbb{W}xe5$  32.  $\mathbb{W}xe5$   $\mathbb{R}ag8$  33.  $\mathbb{W}d2$   $\mathbb{R}c8$ , and Black is simply a pawn up and clearly better.

31.  $\mathbb{R}1d2?$

31. $bxc5$  was more realistic, when following 31...  $\mathbb{W}xc5$  32.  $\mathbb{W}xe5+$   $\mathbb{W}xe5$  33.  $\mathbb{W}xe5$   $\mathbb{W}e3$ , surprisingly White is only slightly worse after 34.  $\mathbb{W}d7$   $\mathbb{R}xg2$  35.  $\mathbb{W}g4$ . But perhaps he was afraid of 31...  $\mathbb{R}xg2$  32.  $\mathbb{W}xg2$   $\mathbb{R}xg2$  33.  $\mathbb{W}xg2$   $\mathbb{W}xc5$ , when indeed Black is in the lead due to White's vulnerable king position. However, 32.  $\mathbb{W}xe5!$  would then have changed the picture completely

31...  $\mathbb{W}h4$  32.  $\mathbb{W}xe5+$   $f6$  33.  $\mathbb{W}a1$   $cxb4$

The main aim: threatening 34...  $\mathbb{W}xh2+!$ .

34.  $\mathbb{B}d7$   $\mathbb{R}xg2$  35.  $\mathbb{R}xg2$   $\mathbb{R}xg2$

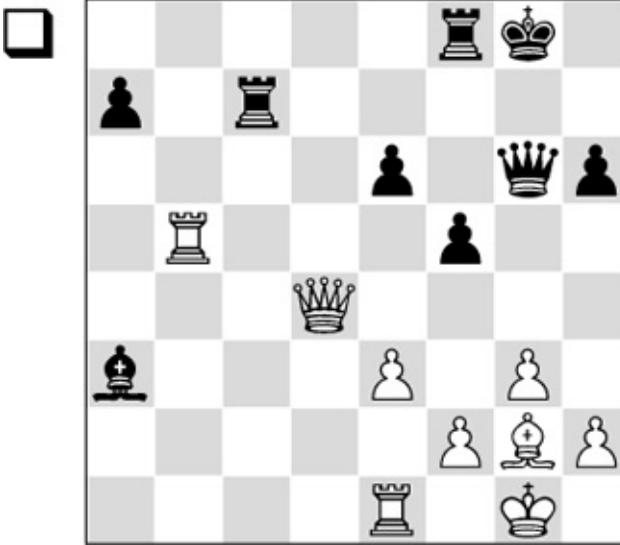
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## An Insecure King

Radoslaw Wojtaszek

Hoang Thanh Trang

Gibraltar 2013

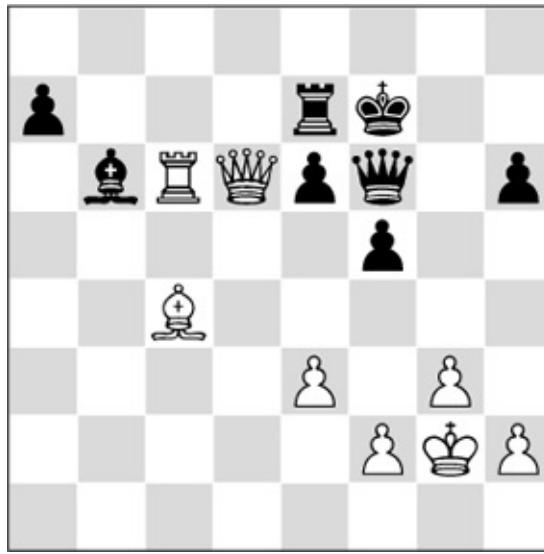


The safety of the king is another important factor which can make an attack with opposite-coloured bishops successful. Here the black king lacks pawn protection (its white counterpart is perfectly safe), but there are sufficient pieces around. White's prime target is the e6-pawn. Had the f-pawn still been on f7, things would have been less serious for Black – however, this game featured the Dutch Defence...

26.  $\mathbb{Q}a5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$

Of course, no exchange of queens.

30...  $\mathbb{Q}b6$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xd8$   $\mathbb{Q}xd8$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}b4!$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$



White has created maximum pressure against e6, while the exchange of one pair of rooks has made the black king more accessible to the enemy pieces.

37...  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}b8$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}c8$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$

Everything is clear now: the black pieces are not active, while all White's pieces take part in the attack against the black king. White's position is absolutely winning. Note that White's kingside pawns are placed ideally. Note also the uselessness of Black's passed a-pawn during the game.

40...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}g8$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}e8$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}a8$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  44.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  45.  $f4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  46.  $\mathbb{Q}e8$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  47.  $\mathbb{Q}h8$

1-0

## Pawns for Activity

Alexander Baburin

# Sergey Fokin

Gorky ch-URS sf 1989

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  d5 4.cxd5  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  5. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  c5 6.e3  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  7. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  8.0-0 cxd4 9.exd4  $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  10.bxc3 0-0 11. $\mathbb{Q}e1$  b6 12.h4  $\mathbb{Q}b7$  13. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}xg5$  14. $\mathbb{Q}xg5$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  15. $\mathbb{Q}g4$  f5 16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}a5$  17. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  18. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  19.h5  $\mathbb{Q}c4$  20. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  21.h6  $\mathbb{Q}f7$  22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  fxe4 24. $\mathbb{Q}e5$  g6



**25.c4!**

When launching an attack against the king, activity can be more valuable than material. This is of course a general piece of advice, but it is useful to keep in mind when attacking with opposite-coloured bishops. Gaining the initiative is of the utmost importance and may give you a decisive advantage over your opponent. Taimanov-Averbakh, Zurich Candidates' 1953, is the well-known textbook example of this. This game is similar.

**25...  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$**

25... $\mathbb{Q}b7$  would have preserved the central pawn on e4 and thus slowed down White's attack. White would then have prepared d4-d5, or even c4-c5, by putting his rooks on the c-or d-files.

**26.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xa2$**

Greedy, but consistent.

**27.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$**

The rook is transferred to the attack.

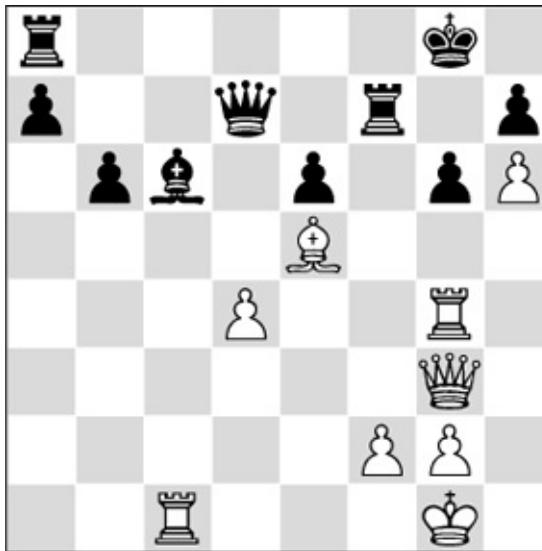
**27...  $\mathbb{Q}d5$**

27... $\mathbb{Q}c8$  was preferable, though White could then try 28. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$  (28.d5  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  29. $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  is not clear) 28...hxg6 29. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}g3!$ , when White's h-pawn, Black's vulnerable king and White's monopoly on the dark squares make up for the rook deficit!: 30... $\mathbb{Q}c6?$  31. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  32. $\mathbb{Q}g8+$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  33. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$ .

**28.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$**

As a result, it is the white rook that occupies the c-file.

**28...  $\mathbb{Q}c6$**



**29.d5!**

A typical sacrifice, preparing a battery with bishop and queen on the long diagonal. True, there was also another winning method: 29... $\mathbb{Q}c3$ !, preparing the capture on g6, which Black can hardly prevent.

**29...  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$**

29... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  30. $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$  or 29... $exd5$  30. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$   $hxg6$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  32. $\mathbb{Q}d6+$  are not possible.

**30.  $\mathbb{Q}b2 \mathbb{Q}c8$**

Black is lost, and he allowed the mate:

**31.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6+ hxg6$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6+ \mathbb{Q}f8$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}a3+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}g8+$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}e7\#$**

## The Centralized Bishop

**Efim Geller**

**Oscar Panno**

Amsterdam Candidates' 1956

1.e4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3. $\mathbb{Q}b5$  a6 4. $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  6. $\mathbb{Q}e1$  b5 7. $\mathbb{Q}b3$  0-0 8.d4 d6 9.c3  $\mathbb{Q}g4$  10. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $exd4$  11.cxd4  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  12. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  13. $\mathbb{Q}c1$  c5 14. $\mathbb{Q}bd2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2$  15. $\mathbb{Q}xd2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3$  16.gxf3 cxd4 17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  19. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  20. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  21. $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}h3$  22. $\mathbb{Q}d5$



**22...  $\mathbb{Q}xg3?$**

An ill-considered transposition to a position with opposite-coloured bishops. The white bishop on d5 is stronger than its counterpart on e7, which struggles to get to f6. 22... $\mathbb{Q}g5$  was called for, and if

23.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6?$   $\mathbb{Q}f4$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}d6+$  Black wins.

23.  $\mathbb{Q}xg3$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$

Black would like to play 23...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$ , but this runs into 24.e5. Also after 23...  $\mathbb{Q}fc8$  24.e5 dxe5 25.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  (25...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}b7$ ) 26.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$  White preserves the initiative.

24.  $\mathbb{B}b4$   $\mathbb{Q}c3$

24...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  still fails to 25.e5.

25.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$

25...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  26. e5 dxe5 27. fxe5  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  is similar to the game.

26.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  29. e5 dxe5 30. fxe5  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$

White is winning: the threat is 32.  $\mathbb{Q}xh6$ .

31...  $\mathbb{Q}c4$

This loses on the spot, but what else? 31...  $\mathbb{Q}g5$  runs into 32.e6; and 31...  $\mathbb{Q}h8$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}dh1$  does not offer a solution either.

32.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$

1-0

The pressure against f7 can be very persistent. Also with the queens off, the rooks and bishop may keep the opponent in a cramped position. And even with the rooks off and queens on the board the pressure can be high. A good example of the latter is Brynell-Carlsen, Gausdal 2005, where White was slowly squeezed.

## Opposite-Side Castling

**Ray Robson**

**Yuri Vovk**

Baku 2015

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4. e5  $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  5. f4 c5 6.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  cxd4 8.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$  0-0 10. 0-0 a6 11.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  b5 13.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{Q}xc6$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3+$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$  b4 19.  $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  f5 21. g4 fxg4 22.  $\mathbb{Q}xg4$



22...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$

A typical French transfer, here especially strong as White has castled queenside.

23.  $\mathbb{Q}f6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  24. exf6  $\mathbb{Q}g6!$

Perhaps White had pinned his hopes on 24... gxf6 25. f5, but Black correctly speeds up things with the text move. In general, this is the right approach with opposite castling.

25.  $\mathbb{Q}fxg7$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$

White's bishop is staring at its own pawn, while Black's has a clear target.

26. ♜ e5 ♜ g5!

Very elegant. 26... ♜ xc2+ 27. ♜ xc2 ♜ xc2 28. ♜ xc2 is good for Black, but less clear.

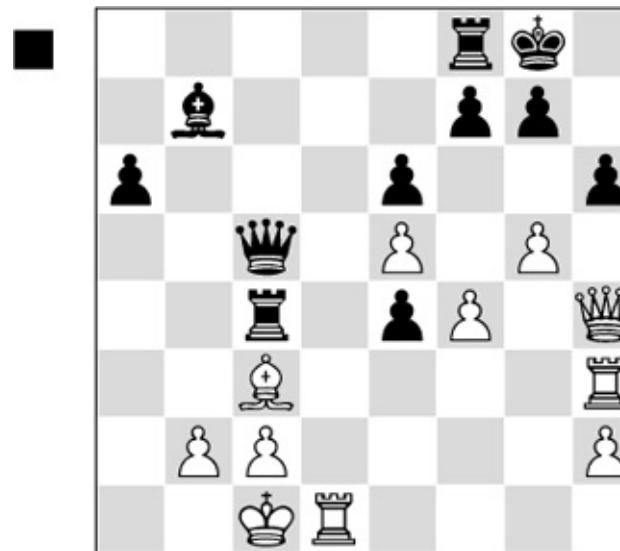
27. ♜ e3

27. fxg5 ♜ xf2 28. c3 ♜ e2 29. ♜ f6 ♜ c2+ 30. ♜ d1 ♜ xb2 and Black is winning.

27... ♜ xc2 28. ♜ d2 ♜ g6 29. ♜ c1 ♜ xc1 30. ♜ xc1 ♜ f5 31. ♜ e2 d4 32. ♜ b3 ♜ b1+ 33. ♜ d2 ♜ c2+ 34. ♜ e1 d3 35. ♜ d1 ♜ d7 36. ♜ xb4 d2+ 37. ♜ e2 ♜ xd1+

0-1

Two months later, Tiviakov, in a similar position from the same opening, manoeuvred his bishop to the b1-h7 diagonal:



analysis diagram

26...e3 27.b4? ♜ e7 28. ♜ xe3 ♜ fc8 29. ♜ g3 hxg5 30. fxg5 ♜ e4!, Jones-Tiviakov, Reykjavik 2015.

## Summary

In positions with major pieces and opposite-coloured bishops, both sides must try to block the diagonal of the enemy bishop. When your bishop gets free range in the attack, the opponent's bishop will be a useless bystander, and your attack is bound to be very strong.

# Chapter 26

## The Lost Knight

Just like a bishop can be locked up on h2 – see *The Lost Bishop*, IYCP Chapter 7 –, the knight is often caught in the corner. As in most cases it has snatched a rook there, a material imbalance results. Then the question is: will the knight escape? Or will it be caught, and at what price?

### Catch Me if You Can

**Ante Brkic**

**Robert Zelcic**

Bad Gleichenberg 2014

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.♘f3 ♜g4 5.c4 cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♘c3 ♜xf3**

In fact, it is here that Black decides that he will be able to catch the white knight that ends up on a8.

**8.♘xd5 ♜xd1 9.♘c7+ ♜d7 10.♘xa8**



Lets's take stock. Materially White is an exchange up, Black has one pawn in return. Before he can catch the stranded knight he will have to move three minor pieces from the back rank. This gives White some time to support or free the a8-knight. Now, first Black has to choose where to leave his bishop from d1.

**10...♝c2**

10...♝a4 11.e6+. Now ♜f4 is a possibility to reckon with: the knight will be able to get out via c7, though Black collects a second pawn for the exchange after 11...♝xe6 12.b3! ♜c6 13.♗b2 b6 (not 13...♝d6? 14.♗xd4 b6 15.♗d1) 14.♗c7+ ♜d7 15.♗b5 e5 16.♗xa7.

**11.♝d2**

11.e6+ ♜xe6 12.♗c7+ (12.♗f4 ♜c6) 12...♝d7 13.♗b5 ♜c6, and Black is doing fine with his strong pawn centre, as has been seen in a couple of games.

**11...♞c6 12.♝c1 d3 13.h4 e6 14.♝h3 ♜ge7 15.♝xd3 ♜xd3 16.♝xd3+ ♜d5**



Black has come far. He has had to return the pawn, but is almost ready to catch the knight.

**17.b4**

White grabs his last chance, profiting from the fact that ...a7-a6 will free the a8-knight.

**17... ♜xb4**

17...b5 18.a4 bxa4 19.b5 ♜xe5 20.♖c7+ ♜d8 had been seen before. It produced a fascinating draw in Naer-Khairullin, Loo 2014, after 21.♖xd5+ exd5 22.♖xa7 ♜c4 23.♘b6 ♜xb6 24.♗a5 ♜c8 25.♗xb6 ♜b4+ 26.♔d1 a3 27.♗a8+ ♜b7 28.♗xh8 ♜c3 29.♗a5 ♜f6 30.♗f8 a2 31.♗xf7+ ♜b8 32.♗f8+ ♜b7 33.♗f7+ ♜b8 34.♗f8+ ♜b7.

**18.♗xb4 ♜xa8 19.♗c3 h5 20.♗b2 ♜c8 21.♗b3 b6 22.♗f1 ♜c7 23.f3**

The white rooks are struggling to use an open file, but Black now commits a rather unfortunate hara-kiri in three.

**23... ♜c8 24.♗f2 ♜h8 25.♗d3 g6?? 26.♗xd5+**

1-0

## Too Much Material

**Ivan Saric**

**Laszlo Gonda**

Croatia tt 2011

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♜c6 3.♗b5 ♜f6 4.0-0 ♜xe4 5.d4 ♜d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♜f5 8.♘xd8+ ♜xd8 9.♗c3 ♜e7 10.♗d4 h6 11.♗d1 ♜e8



As we have seen in Chapter 22, *Lost Without a Queen*, c7 can become a vulnerable square after an early queen exchange. Would that tempt you to play...

**12. ♕db5**

...? Then after...

**12... cxb5 13. ♕xb5 ♖d7 14. ♕xc7+ ♔d8 15. ♕xa8**

... you have to foresee the fate of the a8-knight. First of all, White is not doing so badly materially if the a8-knight is lost: a rook and two pawns versus two minor pieces. Secondly, White's bishop is ready to assist the knight from e3 (or even f4).

So that wasn't such a tough decision on move 12, was it?

**15... ♔c8**

15...b6 16. ♘e3 ♔c8 17. ♘xb6 and the knight lives, for instance 17... ♔c6 18. ♘d8+ ♖b7 19. ♘c7 ♘g6 20. ♘b8+ ♖a6 21. ♘d6 ♘xd6 22. ♘xh8 ♖xh8 23. exd6.

**16. ♖e3 ♖c6**

16... ♖c6, to follow up with ... ♘e6 and ... ♖b8, fails tactically to 17. ♘xa7. It's a bad sign if such normal development moves do not work!

**17. ♘xa7 b5 18. a4 b4**

After 18... ♖xa8 19. axb5 the white pawns will march.

**19. ♖b6 ♘d5**

The knight can be taken, but White has gathered far too much material after 19... ♖xa8 20. ♘d8+ ♖b7 21. ♘e3 ♖f5 22. ♘ad1.

The text move cannot save the game either.

**20. ♘xd5 ♖xd5 21. ♘c7 ♖e4 22. a5 ♖b7 23. ♘d1**

Black resigned.

## Georgios Souleidis

### Jan-Willem de Jong

Netherlands tt 2006/07

**1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘c6 3. ♘c4 ♘f6 4. d3 ♖e7 5. 0-0 0-0 6. ♖b3 d5 7. exd5 ♘xd5 8. ♘e1 ♖g4 9. h3 ♖xf3 10. ♘xf3 ♘d4**

On its way to a1!

**11. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 12. ♘xd5 ♘xc2**



What would you play?

**13. ♘xe5!?**

Ambitious.

A) 13. ♘e2 ♖xa1 14. b3 is the most direct attempt to catch the knight: 14... ♘ad8 15. ♘xb7 (15. ♘c4 a6

16.a4 b5 17.axb5 axb5 18.♗xb5 ♗xb3) 15...♝xd3, and Black is in time to rescue the knight; B) 13.♗d2 ♗xa1 14.♗c1 is the second idea that will spring to mind, but after 14...♝ad8 15.♗c3 c6 16.♗f3 ♘xd3 Black has gathered a second pawn. Subsequently, after the loss of his a1-knight, his position proved to be OK in several games.

13...♞f6 14.♗e2 ♗xa1 15.♗xb7

This was White's idea: he grabs yet another pawn and plays on with an exchange down. The a1-knight is not lost, but it is not an active participant either!

15...♝ab8 16.♗e4 ♗b6 17.♗a3 ♗fb8 18.♗c4 ♗a6 19.b3 ♗xb3?

Impatient. Fearing to lose his knight, Black is eager to gain back material, but he miscalculates.

20.axb3 ♗a1 21.♗c2 ♗xb3 22.♗h2 a5

Black intended 22...♝c3, but this is refuted by 23.♗b2.

23.♗f4 a4 24.♗e5!

The c7-pawn will fall anyway. The white pieces coordinate well, and in this case Black's passed pawn does not provide enough counterweight.

24...♝e1

This makes it easy for White, but 24...♝xe5+ 25.♗xe5 f6 26.♗d7 ♗b5 27.♗xc7 ♗a5 28.♗c5 does not suffice either.

25.♗xf6 gxf6 26.♗e3 a3 27.♗xc7 ♗b8 28.♗a7 ♗e2 29.♗xa3 ♗xf2 30.♗g3 ♗fb2 31.♗a7 h5 32.♗f5 ♗d8 33.♗h6+

1-0

**Andrey Shekachev**

**S.P. Sethuraman**

Paris 2015

1.♘f3 ♗f6 2.g3 d5 3.♗g2 c5 4.0-0 e6 5.c4 d4 6.e3 ♗c6 7.exd4 cxd4 8.d3 ♗e7 9.♗f4 ♗d7 10.♗e1 ♗c5 11.♗a3 f6



12.♗b5

Off he goes! But isn't this too primitive? Black seems well developed.

12...0-0 13.♗c7 e5 14.♗xa8 exf4



**15.a3!**

White manages to stir up counterplay with the advance of the b-pawn, when the e-file will also be of use.

**15... ♜g4**

- A) 15...a5 would give the knight a way out via b6, for example 16.♕xe7 ♔xe7 17.b4 ♖a6 18.c5;
- B) 15...fxg3 16.hxg3 ♜g4 seems to be a logical improvement on the game continuation, but has an unexpected drawback: 17.b4 ♖d7 18.♗a4 ♗xa8 19.♖h2! – this would obviously be impossible with a pawn still on h2!

**16.b4 ♖d7 17.h3**

17.gxf4!?, preparing b4-b5.

**17... ♜h5 18.♗e2?!**

18.g4! ♜g6 19.♖h4 (leaving Black no time to capture on a8) 19... ♖de5 (19... ♗xa8? 20.♖xc6 bxc6 21.♕xe7) 20.♖xg6 hxg6 21.♖d5+ ♜h8 22.b5 ♖a5 23.g5 ♗xa8? 24.♕xe5 fxe5 25.♗g4.

**18... ffg3 19.fxg3 ♖de5 20.g4 ♜g6 21.b5 ♜xd3 22.♗d1 ♖xf3+ 23.♗xf3 ♖e5 24.♗d5+?**

24.♕xe5 fxe5 25.♗xd3 ♗xa8 26.♗e4, and White lives.

**24... ♗h8 25.♗xd8 ♕xd8 26.♗xb7 ♜xc4 27.a4 d3**

Now the a8-knight still lives, but Black's bishops and passed d-pawn rule.

**28.♗g2 d2 29.♗ed1 ♜b3 30.♗f1 ♖c4 31.♗e2 ♜b4 32.♗c6 ♖b2 33.♗c7 ♖xd1 34.♗xd1 ♜xd1+ 35.♗xd1 ♕d3**

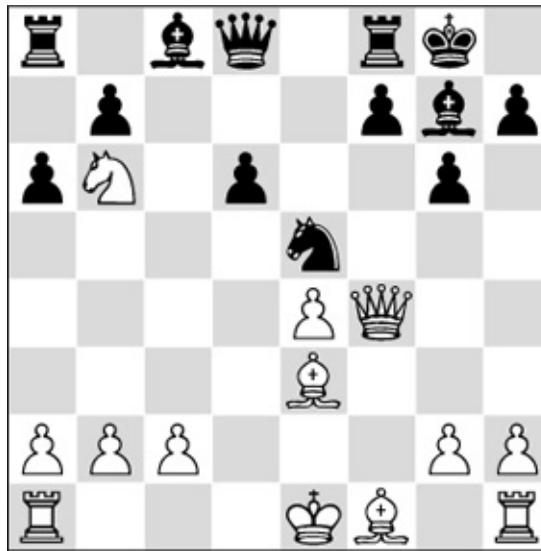
**0-1**

**Judit Polgar**

**Matthew Sadler**

Hastings 1992/93

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.f4 ♘bd7 7.♘f3 e5 8.♘f5 g6 9.♘e3 exf4 10.♘ed5 ♖xd5 11.♘xd5 ♘e5 12.♗xf4 ♜g7 13.♘e3 0-0 14.♘b6**



**14... ♜g4!?**

14... ♜b8 seems acceptable, but Black drops a brick right away.

**15. ♜xa8 ♜h6**

Winning back material. Also, Black eliminates White's dark-squared bishop, which would otherwise help the a8-knight find an easy way out. Very logical, but unfortunately the text move meets with a clever retort. And even more surprisingly, instead Black could have gained superiority on the dark squares by temporarily investing an entire rook!

15... ♜xe3 16. ♜xe3 ♜xb2.

Black is a rook down. Of course, as the knight on a8 is out of play, you could say that for the time being Black is fighting with the exchange down. It appears that due to White's lousy king's position indeed the knight has some trouble coming back into play:

A) 17. ♜b1 ♜a5+ 18. ♜d1 (18. ♜f2 ♜a3 19. ♜g3 b5) 18... ♜xa2 19. ♜xb2 ♜xb2 20. ♜b6 (20. ♜c7 ♜g4+ 21. ♜d2 ♜c8) 20... ♜e6 21. ♜d5 ♜xd5 22. exd5 ♜a1+ seems to peter out to a draw;

B) 17. ♜d1 ♜a5+ 18. ♜f2 ♜a3 19. ♜d5 ♜c5 20. ♜xc5 dxc5 21. ♜g3 ♜d2+ 22. ♜e2, and just when it seems that White has found a good way to regroup, Black has another resource: 22... ♜g4!! 23. ♜xg4 f5. After 24. exf5 ♜xf5+ 25. ♜xf5 ♜d4+ 26. ♜g3 gxf5 White has enough material, but he is again struggling with his king and knight.

**16. ♜b6!**

16. ♜f3 ♜xe3 17. ♜d3 ♜d7 is no option, of course.

**16... ♜e7?**

This turns out to be too slow. White can complete his development, and eventually the a8-knight will come out and even deal the decisive blow.

16... ♜xf4 17. ♜xd8 ♜xd8, and as the a8-knight can jump to freedom, you would think Black is just an exchange down. With the queens exchanged, White does not have to worry about his king. And yet, Black can still stir up some play with his minor pieces, disturbing White's coordination: 18. ♜b6 (18. ♜c7 ♜xh2 19. ♜d3) 18... ♜e6 19. ♜c4 (19. ♜d5 ♜xd5 20. exd5 ♜xh2; 19. g3 ♜e3 20. ♜d5 ♜xd5 21. exd5 ♜f2) 19... ♜xc4 20. ♜xc4 ♜e8 21. ♜d2 ♜xh2. Still, to go for such a line in a practical game would require deep assessment as well as a change of mindset.

After the text move Black's counterplay just falls short.

**17. ♜f3 d5**

17... ♜f5 18. ♜e2 ♜e5 19. ♜f2 ♜xe4 20. ♜c7, and White will castle on the next move.

**18. ♜e2 ♜b4+**

Or 18... ♜d7 19. 0-0-0 ♜xa8 20. exd5, and White is just an exchange and a pawn up.

**19. ♜c3 ♜xe4 20. 0-0-0 ♜xe2 21. ♜ae1 ♜b5 22. ♜d4 ♜d7 23. ♜c7 ♜c6 24. h3 ♜c8 25. ♜f3 ♜f6 26. ♜xd5**

The knight has returned!

Black resigned.

In the former example Black did not only try to catch the knight, but also tried to profit from its absence on the battle scene. The next example finishes more successfully and sees Tal using this approach in a drastic manner.

## Bent Larsen

### Mikhail Tal

Eersel m 1969 (3)

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. c4 g6 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  4. e4 d6 5. d4 0-0 6.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  e5 7. 0-0  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  8. d5  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  f5 11.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  12. f3 f4 13. c5 g5 14.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  16. cxd6 cxd6 17.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$  g4 18.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  gxf3 19. gxf3  $\mathbb{Q}h3$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xa8$



Here you could think something like this: if I'm a rook down on the queenside, he will have a knight less on the kingside. Let's go!

20...  $\mathbb{Q}xe4!?$

This is of course not an atypical way to profit from an offside piece (see also IYCP, Chapter 37), and in this case it also sheds a lot of material! Of course, Tal would never give his attacking h3-bishop for a lousy rook.

21. fxe4

More or less forced. After 21.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  Black wins back the lost material; 21.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}g3+$  22. hxg3 fxg3 even loses in a typical all-out King's Indian attack.

21...  $\mathbb{Q}g5+$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}g2+$

Tal spurns a draw with 22...  $\mathbb{Q}h4+$ . Also, I guess, because he was two points behind in this match.

23.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}h4$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}e3?$

24.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  is met by 24... f3, but 24.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$  seems to beat off Black's attack: 24...  $\mathbb{Q}f3+$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  (25...  $\mathbb{Q}xh2$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xh3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}c8+$ ) 26.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$ .

24...  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$

Not 24... fxe3? 25.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}h5+$ .

25.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$  f3 26.  $\mathbb{Q}xh4$   $\mathbb{Q}xh4+$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$  fxe2 28.  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$



**28...e4!?**

Again Tal refuses to gain back material, but prefers to preserve his h3-bishop for the attack and for the defence of the c8-square.

Nevertheless, here 28... $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  29. $\mathbb{Q}xf1$   $\mathbb{Q}xh2$  30. $\mathbb{Q}c8+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  was an alternative worth considering. To start with, Black has two pawns for the piece (the a8-knight) and threatens mate in one. But of course, the text move would appeal more to the true attacker.

**29.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$  e3 30.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd7$**

After a series of forced moves, Tal is rewarded for his bold play, as Larsen goes astray with his next move.

**34.  $\mathbb{Q}xa7?$**

Freeing the knight, but it will return much too late to protect the white king. 34. $\mathbb{Q}g3+$   $\mathbb{Q}xg3$  35.hxg3 had to be played, though with the knight still stuck on a8, Black's position is to be preferred.

**34...  $\mathbb{Q}e7+$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{Q}f1+$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}e2+$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}c1+$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}e3+$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}c2+$**

White resigned. The knight was not lost, but never made it back from a8.

## Have Patience

**Alexander Grischuk**

**Fabiano Caruana**

Moscow 2012

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 g6 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  d5 4.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$  0-0 6.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$  c5 8.dxc5 d4 9.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$



9...  $\mathbb{Q}c6!?$

Caruana is prepared to give up his a8-rook.

10.  $\mathbb{Q}c7 \mathbb{Q}f5$

A surprising alternative is 10...  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}a5+$  13. b4  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$ , but Caruana had contemplated something more spectacular.

11.  $\mathbb{Q}xa8 e5$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}d2 e4!?$

From now on Black will consistently wait for the perfect moment to take the knight on a8.

13. e3 h6 14.  $\mathbb{Q}h3 \mathbb{Q}xh3$  15. gxh3  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}g2 \mathbb{Q}d3+$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}f1 \mathbb{Q}xc1$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xc1 d3$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}c3 \mathbb{Q}e7$

Black seems to have completed the perfect set-up, but his last move allows the white knight a surprising comeback. 19...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  would have been the correct follow-up, preparing to take the a8-knight with the queen. That would have left Black in the driver's seat.



20.  $\mathbb{Q}c7!$

That's what you might call a narrow escape. Black gains an important central pawn in return for the lost knight.

20...  $\mathbb{Q}xc7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6 \mathbb{Q}xf6$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4 \mathbb{Q}d8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}d5 \mathbb{Q}xc5$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$

The position is equal. Black's next move does not change this verdict.

24...  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  25.  $cxd5 \mathbb{Q}xd5$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}g1 \mathbb{Q}g7$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}b3 \mathbb{Q}e4$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}g4 \mathbb{Q}h1+$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}g1 \mathbb{Q}e4$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}g4 \mathbb{Q}h1+$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}g1 \mathbb{Q}e4$

½-½

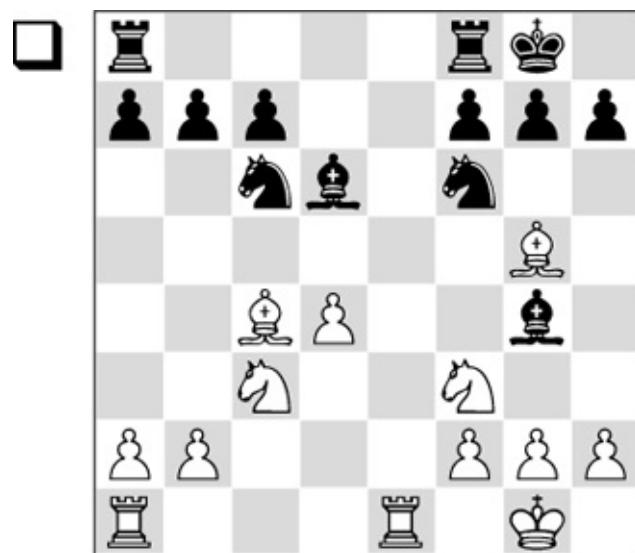
## Summary

When the knight is stuck in the corner after having captured a rook, you will have to keep a close look at the material balance that arises once the knight is caught. The escape route for the knight can be facilitated by a bishop or by a march of the rook's pawn.

Don't forget the other strategy: the opposite side may leave the knight for what it is, forget the material losses for the moment and start an initiative on the other side.

# Exercises

## Exercise 22



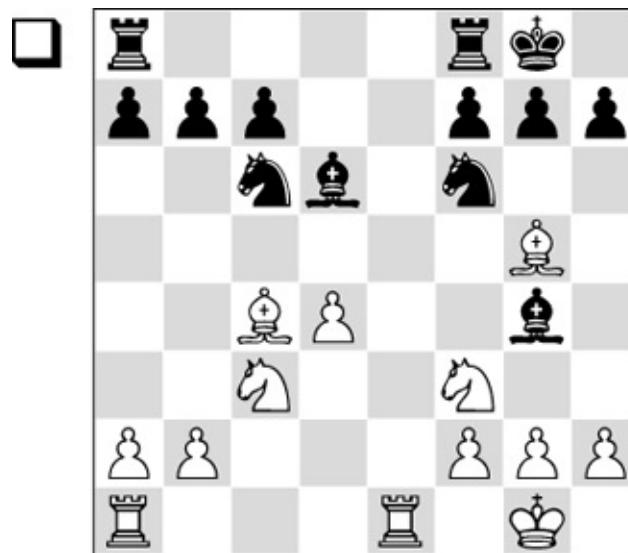
A queenless IQP position. Who is better?

## Exercise 22

Vladimir Malaniuk

Artur Arustamian

Moscow 2011



With...

13. ♕e5

... White maintains an initiative. This endgame from the Queen's Gambit Accepted proves surprisingly uncomfortable for Black. Also without queens White has more than sufficient activity!

13... ♜xe5 14. dx5 ♜d7 15. e6 fxe6 16. ♜xe6!

By tactical means White preserves the pair of bishops.

16... ♜h8 17. ♜e3

17. ♜ee1 ♜de5 18. ♜f1 was played in a game where White had the extra move a2-a3 (Ovseevich-Burgnies, Lille 2011). Here, White's bishops also brought victory in the endgame.

17... h6 18. ♜h4 ♜ae8 19. ♜ae1 ♜xe3 20. ♜xe3 ♜ce5 21. ♜b3 c6



22. ♜g3

A position of devious simplicity. Having examined some lines, you will soon reach the conclusion that Black's pieces are in fact terribly tied up.

22... ♜f1

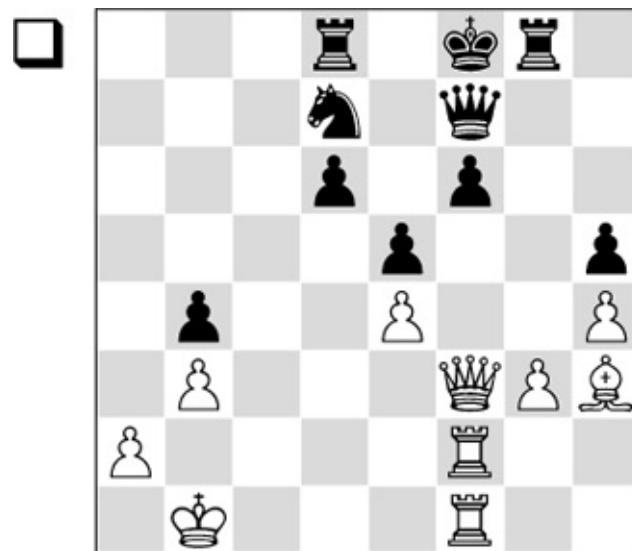
22... ♜g6 23. f3 ♜f5 24. ♜d6 ♜f6 (24... ♜d8 25. g4) 25. ♜e8+ ♜h7 26. ♜g8+ ♜h8 27. ♜a3 ♜gf8 28. ♜b3,

with ♜e7 coming up.

23. ♜e7 ♜g5 24.f3 ♜f5 25.h4 ♜h7 26. ♜e4 ♜hf6 27. ♜d6 ♜g6 28. ♜xb7

And soon Black had had enough.

### Exercise 23

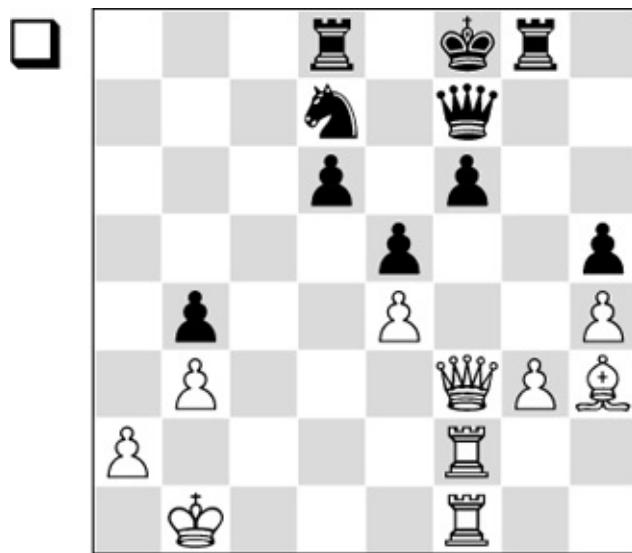


## Exercise 23

Merijn van Delft

Michal Krasenkow

Vlissingen 2015



35. ♜xd7! ♛xd7 36. ♜xf6?

With the king as the major target in the battle of the major pieces, here the vulnerable black king should have prompted White to look for the attack.

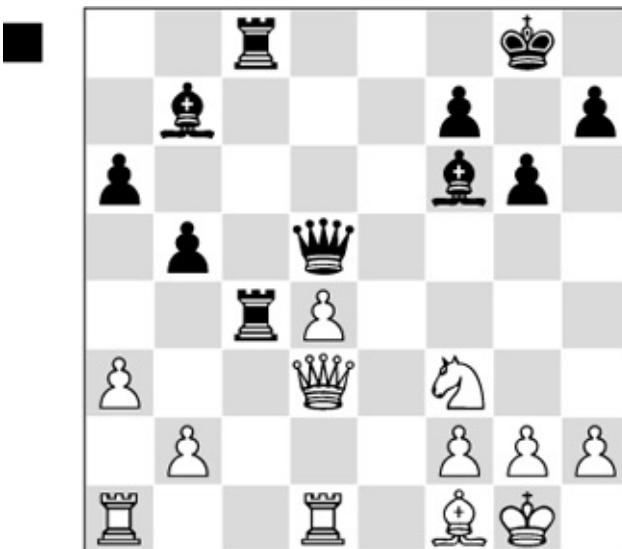
36. ♜e3 was the obvious move, when Black is immediately in big trouble. For example: 36... ♛g6 (36... ♛e7 37. ♜xf6 ♜xf6 38. ♜xf6 ♛xf6 39. ♜h6+, and White's queen is clearly superior) 37. g4!.

36... ♛xf6 37. ♜xf6+ ♛e7

And although White may be slightly better in this rook ending, a large part of his advantage has vanished now.

Eventually, too passive play even granted Krasenkow a lucky victory.

## Exercise 24



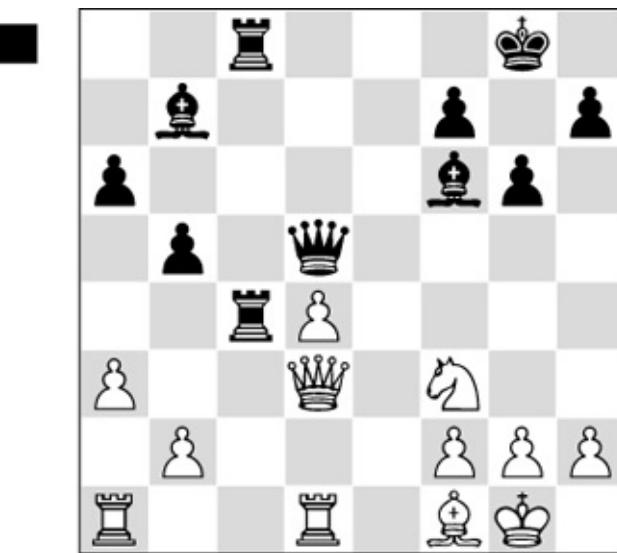
How would you judge the position?

## Exercise 24

Ju Wenjun

Valentina Gunina

Beijing rapid 2014



Black is a pawn down, but all her pieces are better placed – she's the one in the driver's seat!

22... ♕d6

First 22... ♜c2 is even stronger: 23. ♜d2 ♜xd2 24. ♜xd2 ♜d6.

23. ♜e2 ♜d5 24. ♜e5 ♜c2!

24... ♜xe5 25.dxe5 ♜xe5 26. ♜xd5 ♜xe2 and Black is perfectly fine, but the position has been simplified.

25. ♜g4

25. ♜d2 ♜xd2 26. ♜xd2 fails to 26... ♜xg2.

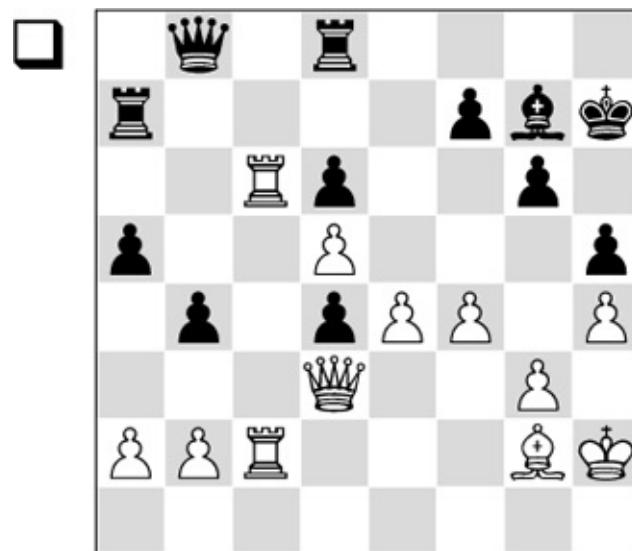
25... ♜8c7 26.a4

26. ♜f3 looks like a sensible trade, but Black remains clearly better after 26... ♜xb2.

26... ♜xb2 27.axb5 axb5 28. ♜ab1 ♜xb1 29. ♜xb1 b4

And already Black was on the verge of winning.

## Exercise 25



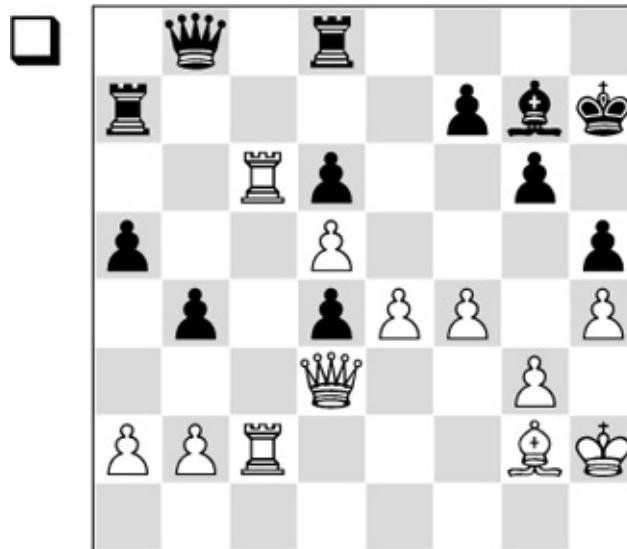
How to increase the white advantage?

## Exercise 25

Robin van Kampen

Viktor Polischuk

Germany Bundesliga 2015/16



**29.e5**

The most energetic way, although the preparatory 29.b3 was also good.

**29...dxe5?**

29...b3 30.axb3 b7 was a better attempt to instigate some counterplay, though after 31.Qd1 Qxb3 32.Qc7 White is clearly better.

**30.f5!**

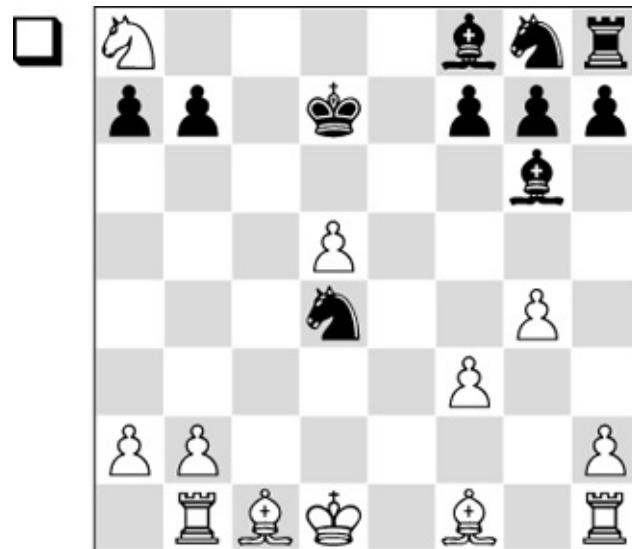
Suddenly White has launched an attack on the black king.

Soon he will obtain access via the light squares.

**30...e4 31.Qxe4 Qe5 32.fxg6+ Qh8 33.Qc8 Qf6 34.Qxd8+ Qxd8 35.Qc8 Qf6 36.Qxd8+**

And Black resigned.

## Exercise 26



White can give back the exchange with 16.♘e3 to avoid a draw by repetition. But then, will his knight survive?

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telegram channel address:

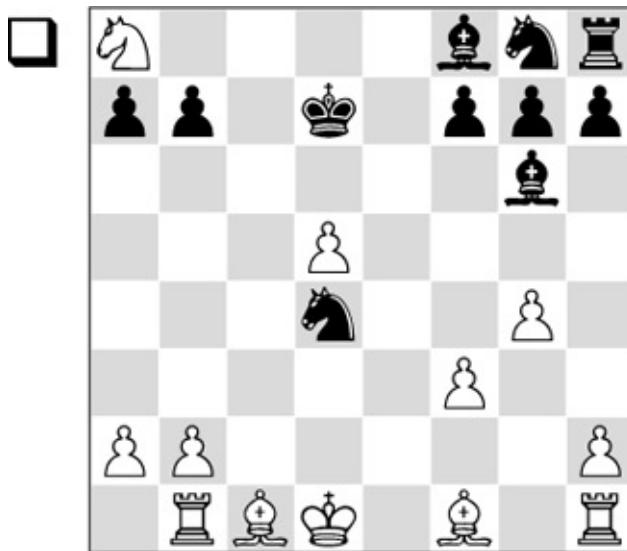
<https://telegram.me/ChessWorldChess>

## Exercise 26

Pieter Nieuwenhuis

Alexander van Beek

Utrecht 2016



**16.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}xb1$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xa2$**

If 17... $b6$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}b5+$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$ , and after 19... $\mathbb{Q}xa2$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xa7$  the knight indeed survives. Moreover, it threatens to deliver mate after 22.  $\mathbb{Q}d7+$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}c7\#$  ! White is winning due to his superior development.

**18.  $\mathbb{Q}b5+$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xa7$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$**

20.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$  was the stronger move: 20... $\mathbb{Q}e7$  (20... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  21.  $b3$ ; 20... $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$ ) 21.  $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$ , and Black is in dire straits.

**20...  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$**

Now obviously the knight will not be lost, with the  $b6$ -square available.

In the game it was Black who got lost in the complications:

21...  $\mathbb{Q}b4$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  24.  $f4$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}c1+$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}d7+$   $\mathbb{Q}a8$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$   
30.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  33.  $f5$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$   $h5$  35.  $h3$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $b6$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}e5+$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}d6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   
39.  $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $hxg4$  40.  $hxg4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}c7+$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$  44.  $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  45.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7$

Black resigned.

## Part V

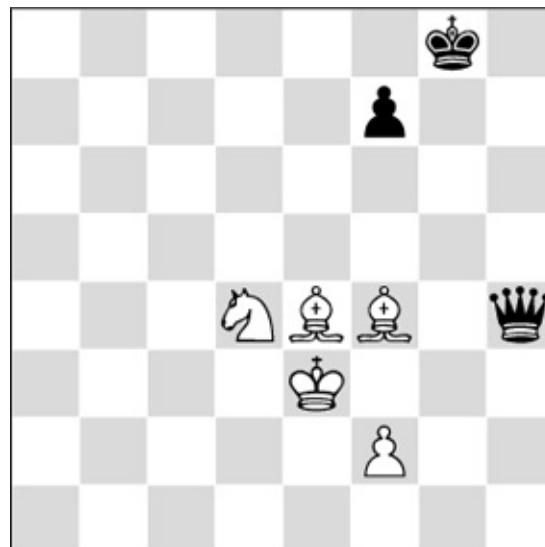
# Play With Your Pieces! Stop the Counting

### 27. Queen or Two Rooks?



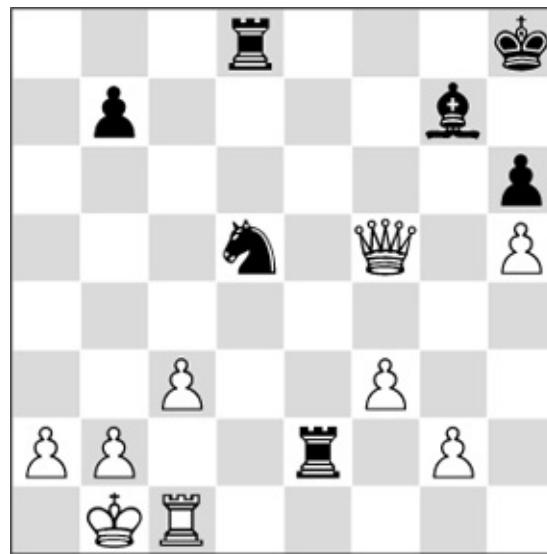
10... ♕b6! 11. ♕xa8 ♖a6

### 28. The Three Musketeers



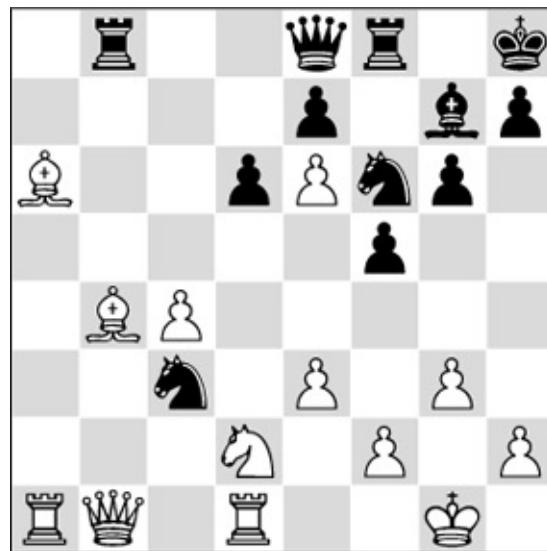
28. ♔f5

## 29. The Lonesome Queen



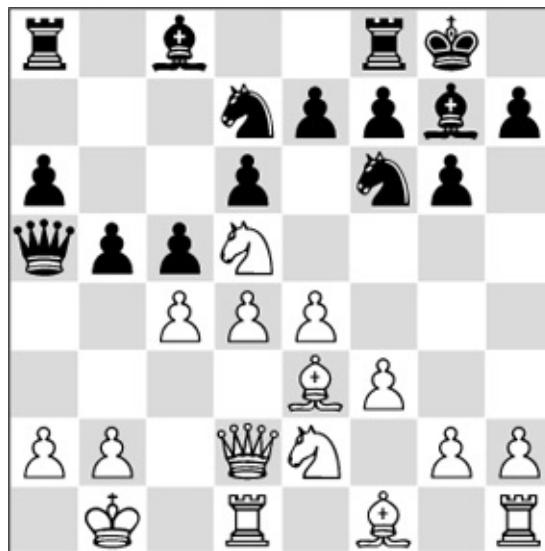
29... ♕e3! 30. ♘b5 ♖dd2

## 30. The People Versus the Queen



26. ♖xc3! ♖xb1 27. ♖dxb1

### 31. When Two is Enough



11... ♜xd5!? 12. ♘xa5 ♜xe3

### 32. Two Minor Pieces or a Rook?



13... ♜xc3?

### 33. Three Pawns for a Piece



12...c6!? 13.exf6 ♗xf6

## Chapter 27

# Queen or Two Rooks: How to Choose?

Two rooks are stronger than a queen. This is the rule I initially learned. And indeed, if you count the absolute value of the pieces you will reach a 10-9 score. Not surprisingly, this small difference leaves room for other conclusions – especially in the middlegame, where lots of other factors – piece play and pawn structure – may have influence on the assessment. So which other factors can make a difference?

### The Rooks Need Time

Rooks generally need some time, or, in particular, (half-)open files to become active, while a queen usually gets into the game more easily. Especially in the opening phase of the game, this may be an important factor to take into account when you have to choose between two rooks or a queen.

**Levan Pantsulaia**

**Luka Paichadze**

Tbilisi ch-GEO 2012

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3 \mathbb{Q}f6$  2. g3 d5 3.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$  e6 4. 0-0  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  5. c4 0-0 6. d4 c6 7.  $\mathbb{Q}c2 \mathbb{Q}bd7$  8. b3 b5 9. cxd5 cxd5 10.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$



10...  $\mathbb{Q}b6!$

Perhaps 10...  $\mathbb{Q}b8$  was the expected move.

11.  $\mathbb{Q}xa8 \mathbb{Q}a6$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}xf8+ \mathbb{Q}xf8$

This game is a good case in point, although here the white queen can't wreak immediate havoc either. A perhaps more obvious example where the queen exerts pressure right from the start is Szuper-Shishkin, Krakow 2012: 1. d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. c4 g6 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  d5 4.  $\mathbb{Q}f4 \mathbb{Q}g7$  5. e3 0-0 6.  $\mathbb{Q}c1 \mathbb{Q}e6$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$  c5 8.  $\mathbb{Q}xb7 \mathbb{Q}b6$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}xa8 \mathbb{Q}a6$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}xf8+ \mathbb{Q}xf8$ , when the black queen was much quicker than White's rooks.

13.  $\mathbb{Q}bd2$  b4 14.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$  h6 15.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$  g5 16.  $\mathbb{Q}ac1$  g4 17.  $\mathbb{Q}h4?$

A strange move, misplacing the knight. However, 17.  $\mathbb{Q}e5 \mathbb{Q}xe5$  18.  $dxe5 \mathbb{Q}d7$  also looks better for Black, as the white e5-pawn is weak and ...  $\mathbb{Q}c5$  is coming.

17...  $\mathbb{Q}h5$  18. e3  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$

Acknowledging the failure of White's strategy.

19... ♜d3 20. ♜ec1 ♜g7 21. ♜f1

This exchange allows the black queen to enter decisively on d3, but it's not easy to suggest something sensible for White.

21... ♜xf1 22. ♜xf1 ♜xh4 23. gxh4 ♜f8 24. ♜e2 ♜b5+

Here comes the queen, while the white rooks are still on the back rank and don't have any scope yet.

25. ♜d1 ♜d3 26. a3 ♜f6 27. ♜e1 ♜g6 28. axb4 ♜e4!

Black finishes off neatly. If 28... ♜xh4 29. ♜c3.

29. ♜xe4 ♜xh4

White resigned.

## Loose Pawns Drop off – Connect Your Rooks

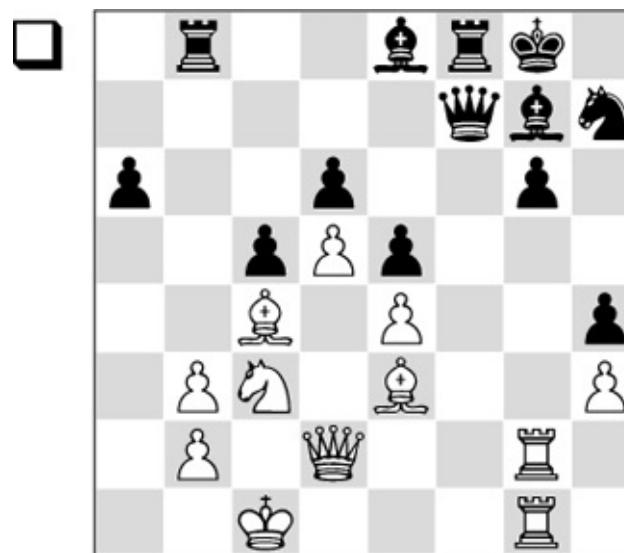
The queen is capable of conveniently moving across the entire board and picking up weak pawns, using checks or minor threats along the way. The rooks need to cooperate rather than act separately – think of doubling on the seventh rank, attacking a pawn twice, or combining them in an attack against the enemy king.

In the following game things go badly for the rooks:

**Zhou Jianchao**

**Ding Liren**

Hefei ch-CHN rapid 2011



24. ♜xg6 ♜xg6 25. ♜xg6 ♜xg6 26. ♜g2

Black has weak pawns on a6 and h4, while the pawn on d6 would also be a nice target. The black rooks have the open f-file, but no easy entrance squares, while the white queen exerts some pressure on the kingside.

26... ♜f6 27. ♜c2??

27. ♜g4 was the more obvious direct move.

27... a5 28. ♜f2 ♜h5

Black could have profited tactically from White's 27th move and activated his stranded knight: 28... ♜g5 29. ♜xh4 ♜f3.

29. ♜xh4 ♜f4?

Now the rooks start to drift and the pawn on d6 is soon lost. Note that this was a rapid game, which accounts for the mistakes. Much better was 29... ♜g6, restricting the queen's activity on the g-file.

30. ♜e7 ♜f3 31. ♜g6 ♜b6

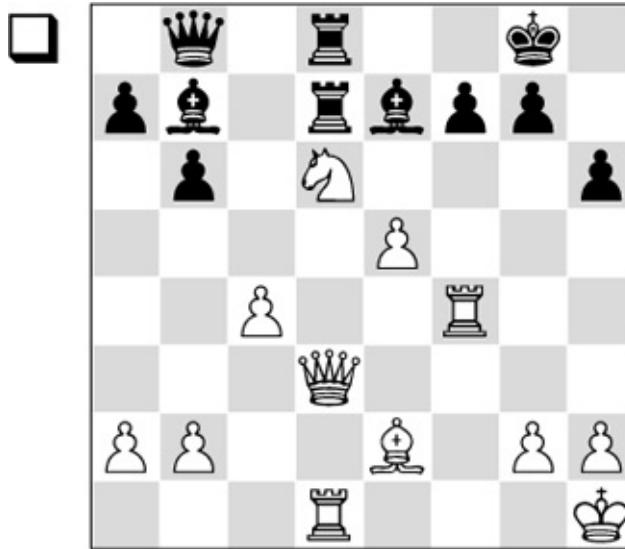
The black rooks clearly don't cooperate.

32. ♜e6+ ♜h8 33. ♜xd6 ♜f8 34. ♜e7 ♜xe4+ 35. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 36. ♜d8 ♜xd6 37. ♜xd6 a4 38. ♜xc5 axb3+ 39. ♜xb3 ♜d4  
40. ♜e7 ♜h7 41. d6 e4 42. ♜e6 ♜d2 43. ♜f5+ ♜g8 44. d7

1-0

## Active Rooks do the Job

Lei Tingjie  
Bich Ngoc Pham  
Zaozhuang 2012



23. ♜xf7!?

White is of course clearly better; here the talented Chinese girl shows good judgement of the resulting position.

23... ♜xd6 24. exd6 ♜xd6 25. ♜xe7 ♜xd3 26. ♜xd3

In contrast to the two earlier examples, a few more pieces have already been exchanged and the rooks are active – ready to double on the seventh rank.

26... ♜c6 27. ♜g3

Forcing Black to weaken his kingside, which renders her king position open and unprotected.

27... g5 28. ♜ge3 ♜f4 29. ♜g1 ♜d4 30. b3 ♜a1+ 31. ♜f1 ♜xa2 32. ♜d3

The black king is cut off on the eighth rank. Soon the mate threats become irresistible.

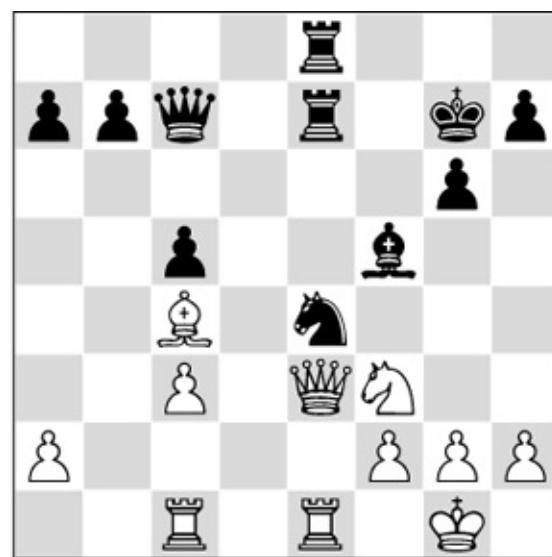
32... ♜f8 33. ♜c7 ♜e8 34. ♜f3+ ♜g8 35. ♜c8 ♜a1 36. ♜xe8+ ♜g7 37. ♜d3 a5 38. ♜e6 a4 39. ♜xb6 ♜e5 40. ♜d7+ ♜f8  
41. ♜a6 ♜e3+ 42. ♜h1 ♜e8 43. ♜da7 ♜e3 44. ♜b7 ♜e8 45. ♜xa4 g4 46. c5 g3 47. c6

1-0

## The Vulnerable King

When the two rooks manage to team up against a weakened king's position, they gain considerably in strength.

Momchil Nikolov  
Nikola Sedlak  
Pleven 2010



**22. ♜b5!**

This seems impossible because of Black's reply, but White has calculated further. Such an element of surprise is often an introduction of the exchange of a queen for two rooks. Sometimes this will have a psychological effect, when initially the other side wrongly thinks that since he has forced the exchange, he should be better. In our first example, Pantsulaia-Paichadze, for instance, White may initially have felt that 10...♜b6 could not be right because he would have the two rooks after taking on a8.

**22... ♛d6?**

Falling for it. 22...♛d7 was called for. Now White is forced to 'give up' his queen.

**23. ♜xe8 ♕xe3 24. ♜xe3 b5 25. ♜ce1 ♜f6 26. h3 ♜c8 27. ♜e7 a6 28. ♜1e5**

The black king no longer enjoys much protection and is under a heavy attack of all the white pieces.

**28... b4 29. g4!**

Not so much threatening the bishop, as it does the king: g4-g5 is mate!

**29... ♜xg4 30. ♜g5!**

This was the real idea behind 29.g4.

**30... ♜e6 31. ♜7xe6+ ♜g7 32. ♜xd6 bxc3 33. ♜d7+**

Now 33...♜f6 is met with 34. ♜de7, and if 33...♜g8 34. ♜ee7. Black resigned.

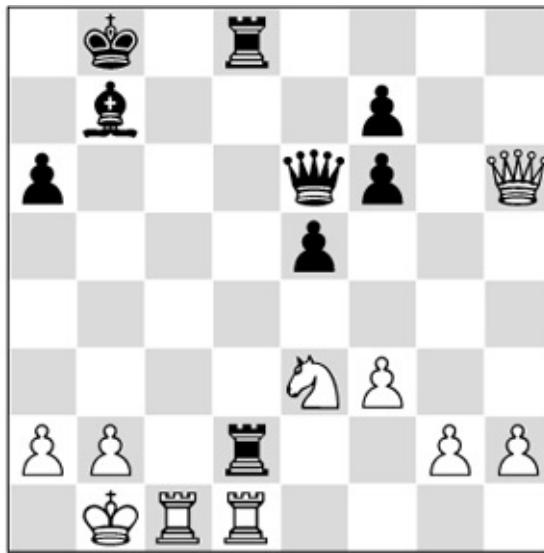
## Cooperation

Both the queen and the rooks gain substantially in strength when their forces are combined with a minor piece or a passed pawn. Here we see superb coordination in an attack on the king between the two rooks and a knight.

**Sergei Movsesian**

**Stelios Halkias**

Gibraltar 2010



**32...f5?**

Black is a pawn down, and it's difficult for him to change the static situation. His best try seems to be 32... $\mathbb{Q}$ xd1 33.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xd1  $\mathbb{Q}$ xd1+ 34.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xd1 e4, when White still has to work very hard for his advantage.

**33.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xd2!**

White justifiably gives up his queen, considering it the easiest way of converting his advantage. The black king will be helpless against the pair of rooks supported by the knight.

**33... $\mathbb{Q}$ xh6**

33... $\mathbb{Q}$ xd2 34.  $\mathbb{Q}$ f8+  $\mathbb{Q}$ a7 35.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c5+  $\mathbb{Q}$ a8 36.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c4  $\mathbb{Q}$ xg2 37.  $\mathbb{Q}$ d1  $\mathbb{Q}$ g8 38.  $\mathbb{Q}$ b6+  $\mathbb{Q}$ b8 39.  $\mathbb{Q}$ d6.

**34.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xd8+  $\mathbb{Q}$ a7 35.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c4 e4**

35... $\mathbb{Q}$ f6 36.  $\mathbb{Q}$ cd1  $\mathbb{Q}$ h4 37.  $\mathbb{Q}$ d6!  $\mathbb{Q}$ c6 38.  $\mathbb{Q}$ f8 is another line that shows how easily the white pieces coordinate. Like in the former example, here too the black king lacks protection.

**36.  $\mathbb{Q}$ d6  $\mathbb{Q}$ a8**

36...exf3 is insufficient: 37.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c7  $\mathbb{Q}$ b6 38.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xb7+  $\mathbb{Q}$ c6 39.  $\mathbb{Q}$ dd7 fxg2 40.  $\mathbb{Q}$ bc7+  $\mathbb{Q}$ d5 (40... $\mathbb{Q}$ b6 41.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c8+  $\mathbb{Q}$ b5 42.  $\mathbb{Q}$ d5+  $\mathbb{Q}$ b4 43.  $\mathbb{Q}$ d4+  $\mathbb{Q}$ b5 44. a4+  $\mathbb{Q}$ a5 45.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c5#) 41.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xf7+  $\mathbb{Q}$ e4 42.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c4+  $\mathbb{Q}$ e3 43.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xh6 g1 $\mathbb{Q}$ + 44.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c1.

**37.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c8+!  $\mathbb{Q}$ b7 38.  $\mathbb{Q}$ d7+  $\mathbb{Q}$ b8 39.  $\mathbb{Q}$ d6  $\mathbb{Q}$ f8 40.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c8+**

Winning straight away, but 40.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c4! would have been a more thematic finish.

**40... $\mathbb{Q}$ xc8 41.  $\mathbb{Q}$ xc8 e3 42.  $\mathbb{Q}$ c2**

1-0

## Know Your Endgames

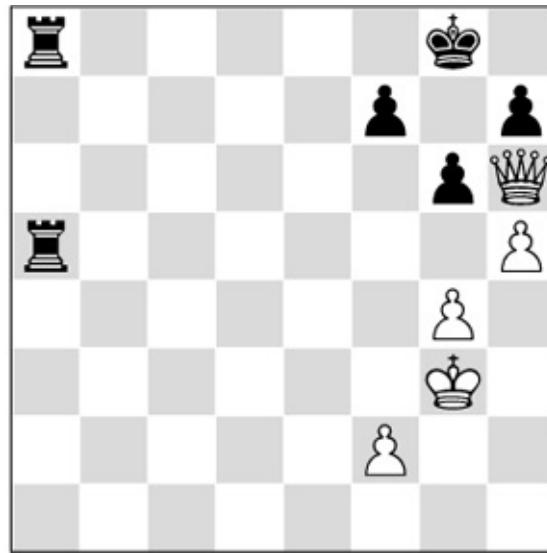
In order to confidently decide on a transposition to the endgame while maintaining the same material imbalance, you will have to know some basic guidelines. When pawns have remained on one wing, the material balance is crucial. With an equal number of pawns, the rooks may attack one twice, and with the counterpart's queen and king defending you may hope to transpose into a won pawn ending. So for the side defending with the queen it will be wise to exchange as many pawns as possible, increasing the chances that the pawn ending may be drawn.

Let's look at a well-known example:

**Peter Leko**

**Vladimir Kramnik**

Brisago Wch m 2004 (1)



**44. ♜f4?**

44.hxg6 hxg6 45.g5 ♜f5 46.f4 ♜a4 47.♕h4, and now the pawn ending is drawn after 47... ♜axf4 48.♕xf4 ♜xf4 49.♕xf4 ♜f8 50.♕e4, though after 47... ♜a3+ the position also seems hopeless for White, as now the pawn ending is lost after 48.♕g4 ♜xf4+ 49.♕xf4 ♜a4+ 50.♕g3 ♜xh4 51.♕xh4 ♜f8 52.♕g4 ♜e7 53.♕f4 ♜d6.

**44... g5!**

Black uses tactical means to achieve his strategic goal, i.e. keeping all three pawns on the board, thus rendering the transposition into a pawn ending that is easily winning.

**45. ♜f6 h6 46.f3**

46. ♜xh6 ♜8a6.

**46... ♜5a6 47. ♜c3 ♜a4**

Black now starts a standard plan: regrouping his rooks to attack the most backward pawn.

**48. ♜c6 ♜8a6 49. ♜e8+ ♜g7 50. ♜b5 ♜4a5 51. ♜b4 ♜d5 52. ♜b3 ♜ad6 53. ♜c4 ♜d3 54. ♜f2 ♜a3 55. ♜c5 ♜a2+ 56. ♜g3 ♜f6 57. ♜b4 ♜aa6 58. ♜g2 ♜f4 59. ♜b2+ ♜af6**

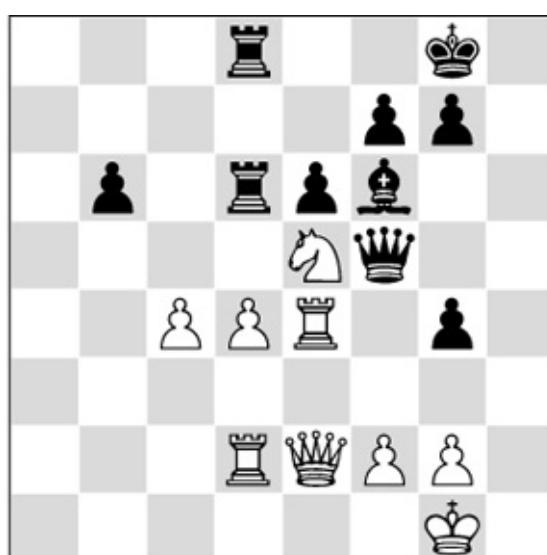
Mission accomplished, and the game is also immediately won.

**60. ♜e5 ♜xf3 61. ♜a1 ♜f1 62. ♜c3 ♜1f2+ 63. ♜g3 ♜2f3+ 64. ♜xf3 ♜xf3+ 65. ♜xf3 ♜f6**

**0-1**

**Anton Korobov  
Bartłomiej Macieja**

Lublin POL-UKR 2012



**40...g3!**

Black prepares the exchange of his queen for the two rooks. Very cleverly, he first weakens the white pawn structure. The immediate 40... $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  41. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  42. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2$  is less clear: 43. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  44. $\mathbb{Q}xf5$ , and White threatens to liquidate the queenside with c4-c5.

**41.fxg3  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}xf5$**

43. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}b1+$  44. $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  is no picnic either.

**43...  $\mathbb{Q}xd2$  44.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  45.  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$**

The loss of the b-pawn is of small significance: Black will definitely win back the c-pawn. White will then be left with a heavily damaged pawn structure on the kingside – as we know, an easy prey for the rooks.

**45...  $\mathbb{Q}c8$  46.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{Q}dd8$  47.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  48.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{Q}fxg4$  49.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}dc8$  50.  $\mathbb{Q}xg4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4+$  51.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}4c6$**

As White is a pawn down, here the transposition into the pawn endgame leaves not a single doubt

52.  $\mathbb{Q}b7$   $\mathbb{Q}g6+$  53.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}h6+$  54.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}c1+$  55.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6+$  56.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}h1$  57.  $\mathbb{Q}b8+$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  58.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  59.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  60.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$  61.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}e1+$  62.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  63.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  64.  $\mathbb{Q}h2+$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  65.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$  66.  $\mathbb{Q}c2+$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$  67.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  68.  $\mathbb{Q}h3+$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  69.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}d2$  70.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  71.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}gd5$  72.  $\mathbb{Q}c2+$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$  73.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$  74.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  75.  $\mathbb{Q}e4+$   $g6$  76.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  77.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}6d5$  78.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d1$  79.  $\mathbb{Q}e8+$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  80.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}h5+$  81.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}f1$  82.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  83.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}ff5$  84.  $\mathbb{Q}e7$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  85.  $\mathbb{Q}d8$   $\mathbb{Q}fg5+$  86.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  87.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}hf5+$  88.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}d1+$  89.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}h5+$  90.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}d3+$  91.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$

Black has cleverly avoided all checks, and with his king well protected he now soon wins the g-pawn and the game.

**92.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}d1+$  93.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}f1$  94.  $\mathbb{Q}c3+$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  95.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}f2$  96.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}gxg2$  97.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}h2+$  98.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}hg2+$  99.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$**

0-1

## Summary

Before liquidating to a  $\mathbb{Q}$  vs  $\mathbb{Q}$  position, carefully consider the activity of both the rooks or the queen. As – fortunately – chess is not a simple game, other factors will also be of typical importance. Keep your eyes open for a vulnerable king or a devastating cooperation with other pieces. Be careful out there!

## Chapter 28

# The Three Musketeers

Generally, three pieces are supposed to at least equal a queen, but chess isn't a one-dimensional game and, as always, other factors may interfere. Other material – a pawn more or less, activity of the pieces, space for the queen, the type of pawn structure; these may all have their say. And so, three times three is not always nine.

Let's start by looking at some examples which confirm the general judgement.

**Gregory Kaidanov**

**Robert Hess**

Saint Louis ch-USA 2012

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.e3 a6 6.b3 Bb4 7.Bd2 0-0 8.Bd3 Bd6 9.0-0 Qbd7 10.Qc2

A very topical line.

The second game of the Gelfand-Anand World Championship match 2012 saw the less common 10.Qc1.

10...e5 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.e4 exd4 13.Qxd5 Qxd5 14.exd5 Qf6 15.Qae1

Remarkably, on the same day but some hours later and on another continent, game 4 of the Gelfand-Anand Wch match saw 15.h3 Qd7 16.Qad1 Qe8. That game ended in a solid draw after Black regained the d-pawn.

The alternatives 15.Qfe1 and 15.Qc4 have been played before, and also allow Black's next move.

15...Qg4 16.Qxd4 Qc8 17.Qb1 Qc5 18.Qg5

Too ambitious.

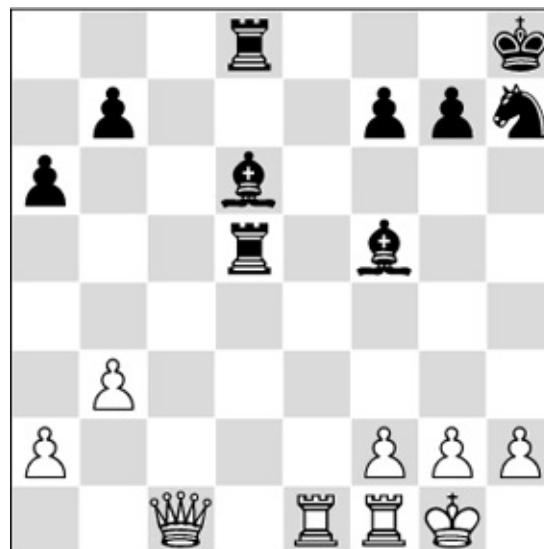
18...Qxd5! 19.Qxh7+ Qh8

White has gained a pawn, but his pieces are either hanging (Qd4, Qg5) or positioned inactively (Qb1, Qf1). This should have been a clear warning sign for White, who perhaps relied on his next move.

20.Qf5 Qxh7

This is not the only move, but it's strong enough.

21.Qxd8 Qxf5 22.Qc1 Qxd8



White still needs some time to activate his major pieces, and Black uses that time to direct his pieces

to White's kingside.

Typically, the minor pieces will try to attack a pawn (not necessarily on the kingside) more than once. A sole queen will be unable to defend such a pawn.

23.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}fe1$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  26.  $h3$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}f4$

Black has done well, and he is ready to attack and weaken White's kingside some more with ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ . The direct threat is 31... $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ .

31.  $\mathbb{Q}a1?$

This is too passive. Better was 31. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ , though Black should be on top after, for instance, 31... $\mathbb{Q}c6$  32.  $f3$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}d2$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}e8+$   $\mathbb{Q}xe8$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}xc7$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xa2$ .

31...  $\mathbb{Q}b6!?$

Both 31... $\mathbb{Q}c6$  and 31... $\mathbb{Q}d6$  are equally good and logical moves that increase the pressure.

32.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}d3$

And White had had enough. After the forced 34.  $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  the f2-pawn is also doomed.

Here is yet another example, this time at club level, where the minor pieces prevailed.

## Pavel Sedy

### Jan Didi

Ostrava 2012

1.e4 c5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  e6 3. d4 cxd4 4.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  a6 5. c4  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  6.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  9. f3 d5 10. exd5 exd5 11.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{Q}xc6$  12. 0-0 0-0 13.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  14. c5 d4!?

Not obligatory, but an interesting idea to take advantage of the loose white pieces and the upcoming pin on the d-file.

15.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  17. a3

17.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}fxd1$  was another possible defence.

17...  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xd1$   $\mathbb{Q}d3!?$

It would have been better to include 19...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$ , which would have rendered White's 22nd move in the game impossible and thus left White's pieces less well coordinated.

20. axb4  $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xf1$   $\mathbb{Q}b5+$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}xb4$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$



White is doing fine. The black queen is slightly offside, but is also tying down White's minor pieces. White can try to disentangle with  $\mathbb{Q}c2$  and, as in the previous example, activate his pieces further, for example with  $\mathbb{Q}d2-e4-d6$ . Black should therefore activate his rook now with 23...  $\mathbb{Q}d8$ , but instead he allows a tactical stroke.

23... h6? 24. c6  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$

The surprising 25...  $\mathbb{E}e1+$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$  (26.  $\mathbb{E}xe1$   $\mathbb{W}xc4+$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $bxc6$ ) 26...  $\mathbb{E}xc1$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{W}xf7$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xb4$   $\mathbb{E}xc6$  still retained some chances for Black.

26.  $cxb7$

Now the game is effectively over.

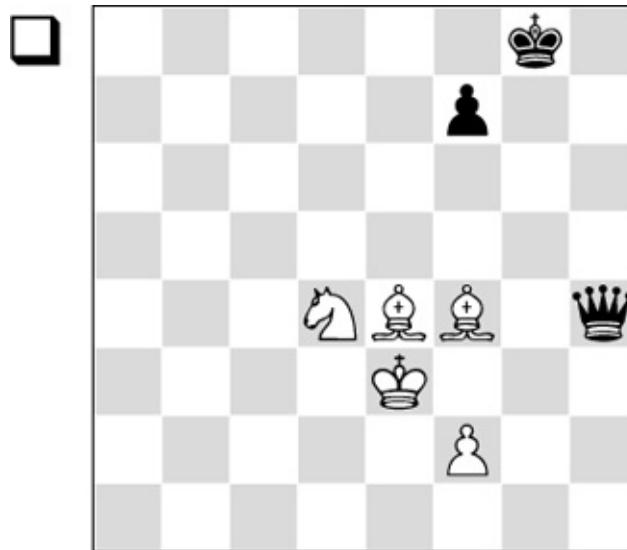
26...  $\mathbb{W}c6$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}a5$   $\mathbb{W}c7$  28.  $b4$   $\mathbb{W}xh2$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{W}f4$  30.  $\mathbb{E}c2$   $\mathbb{W}f6$  31.  $\mathbb{E}e2$   $\mathbb{W}xc6$  32.  $\mathbb{E}xe8+$   $\mathbb{W}xe8$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}a7$

1-0

**Jan Gustafsson**

**Rasmus Svane**

Bonn ch-GER 2011



The pieces are on one wing, and each side has only one pawn. This increases the chances of a perpetual check, but what follows is a clear example of the general plan for the minor pieces:

43.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $\mathbb{W}h3+$  44.  $\mathbb{R}g3$   $\mathbb{W}f1$  45.  $\mathbb{R}d5$   $\mathbb{W}c1+$  46.  $\mathbb{W}e4$   $\mathbb{W}h1+$  47.  $\mathbb{W}f4$   $\mathbb{W}c1+$  48.  $\mathbb{W}g4$   $\mathbb{W}d1+$  49.  $f3$   $\mathbb{W}a1$  50.  $\mathbb{W}g5$   $\mathbb{W}c1+$  51.  $\mathbb{W}f6$   $\mathbb{W}a1+$  52.  $\mathbb{R}e5$   $\mathbb{W}a6+$  53.  $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{W}d3$  54.  $\mathbb{R}xf7+$   $\mathbb{W}f8$  55.  $f4$   $\mathbb{W}h7$  56.  $\mathbb{R}g6$   $\mathbb{W}h4+$  57.  $\mathbb{W}e6$   $\mathbb{W}g4+$  58.  $f5$   $\mathbb{W}h3$  59.  $\mathbb{Q}c8$   $\mathbb{W}g4$  60.  $\mathbb{Q}b6$   $\mathbb{W}g8$  61.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{W}f8$  62.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{W}g8$  63.  $\mathbb{R}f7+$   $\mathbb{W}h7$  64.  $\mathbb{Q}g6$   $\mathbb{W}h3$  65.  $\mathbb{W}f6$   $\mathbb{W}h6$  66.  $\mathbb{W}e7$   $\mathbb{W}g5+$  67.  $f6$   $\mathbb{W}e3$  68.  $\mathbb{W}e8$   $\mathbb{W}e4$  69.  $\mathbb{Q}f8+$   $\mathbb{W}h6$  70.  $\mathbb{Q}d7$   $\mathbb{W}a8+$  71.  $\mathbb{W}e7$   $\mathbb{W}a3+$  72.  $\mathbb{R}d6$   $\mathbb{W}e3+$  73.  $\mathbb{R}e6$   $\mathbb{W}g5$  74.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{W}h7$  75.  $\mathbb{R}c4$   $\mathbb{W}e3$  76.  $f7$   $\mathbb{W}a7+$  77.  $\mathbb{W}e6$   $\mathbb{W}b7$  78.  $\mathbb{R}d3+$

1-0

## Cooperation Between the Pieces and Material Transformations

**Marcin Szymanski**

**Jean Pierre le Roux**

Poland tt 2012

1.  $d4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.  $c4$   $g6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $d5$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$  0-0 6.  $e3$   $c5$  7.  $dxc5$   $\mathbb{W}a5$  8.  $\mathbb{E}c1$   $dxc4$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  10. 0-0  $\mathbb{W}xc5$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{W}h5$  12.  $h3$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{W}d5$  14.  $\mathbb{W}a4$   $\mathbb{E}ad8$  15.  $\mathbb{E}fd1$   $\mathbb{W}h5$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}fd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}xh5$   $\mathbb{Q}xb5$  18.  $\mathbb{W}a5$   $b6$  19.  $\mathbb{W}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  20.  $\mathbb{W}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}xh5$



Here Black's minor pieces have more trouble coordinating well. The bishop on b5 is awkwardly placed, while the c6-knight lacks support – it would be an improvement if the b-pawn was back on b7.

**21.a4**

Straightforward, but 21... $\mathbb{Q}c7$  is the alternative and would have left the h5-knight out of play. If now 21... $\mathbb{B}c8$ , then 22. $\mathbb{W}b3$ .

**21...  $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  22.axb5**

22.exf4  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  23. $\mathbb{B}xd4$   $\mathbb{B}xd4$  24.axb5  $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  25. $\mathbb{W}c7$   $\mathbb{B}b4$  26. $\mathbb{W}xe7$   $\mathbb{B}xb5$  27.b4 a5 doesn't yield White many winning chances, as play will be confined to one wing.

This kind of transformation to another material imbalance is typical and is something you should be well aware of.

After the text move Black manages to coordinate his pieces well and quickly gets the better of things.

**22...  $\mathbb{Q}b4$  23. $\mathbb{W}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}fd3$  24. $\mathbb{W}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  25. $\mathbb{W}xe7$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  26. $\mathbb{W}f6$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$**

26... $\mathbb{Q}xc1$  27. $\mathbb{B}xd6$   $\mathbb{B}c8$  was also possible, but it isn't easy to see how the pair of knights are going to cooperate effectively.

**27. $\mathbb{W}h4$   $\mathbb{B}d5$  28. $\mathbb{B}c4?$ !  $\mathbb{B}xb5$  29. $\mathbb{B}xb4?$   $\mathbb{B}xb4$  30. $\mathbb{W}e7$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$**

White must have missed something, as Black now has several ways to save his pieces. 30... $\mathbb{B}c4$  or 30... $\mathbb{B}e4$  were also good.

**31. $\mathbb{B}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}c3$  32. $\mathbb{W}xa7$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  33. $\mathbb{W}c7$  b5 34. $\mathbb{W}c6$   $\mathbb{B}b1+$  35. $\mathbb{W}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}d2$  36. $\mathbb{B}xb5$   $\mathbb{Q}f1+$  37. $\mathbb{W}g1$   $\mathbb{B}c1$  38. $\mathbb{B}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe3+$  39. $\mathbb{W}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}d1$  40. $\mathbb{W}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  41.g3  $\mathbb{B}c2$  42. $\mathbb{B}xd1$   $\mathbb{B}xf2+$  43. $\mathbb{W}g1$   $\mathbb{B}d2$  44. $\mathbb{W}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}d4+$**

White resigned.

**Vladimir Kramnik**

**Levon Aronian**

Zurich 2012

**1.e4 e5 2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4.d4 exd4 5. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  6. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  7. $\mathbb{Q}d2$  0-0 8.0-0-0  $\mathbb{B}e8$  9.f3 d5 10.exd5  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  11. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  12. $\mathbb{Q}xd8$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1$  13. $\mathbb{Q}xc7$   $\mathbb{Q}xc7$  14. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$  15. $\mathbb{Q}b5$  bxc6 16. $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  17. $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  19. $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{B}xa8$**



Of course, White has two extra pawns here, but Black's minor pieces are already actively placed, and both his bishops are firmly supported.

**20.  $\mathbb{Q}e1 \mathbb{Q}d8$  21.  $\mathbb{B}e4 g5?!$  22.  $c3$**

Preparing b2-b3, slowly driving back and spoiling the coordination of the black pieces.

22.b3 at once can be met by 22...  $\mathbb{Q}c5$ .

**22...  $\mathbb{Q}c5$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$**

Again, not rushing and instead protecting the second rank.

**23...  $h6$  24.  $g3$**

Preparing to attack the weakened kingside as well.

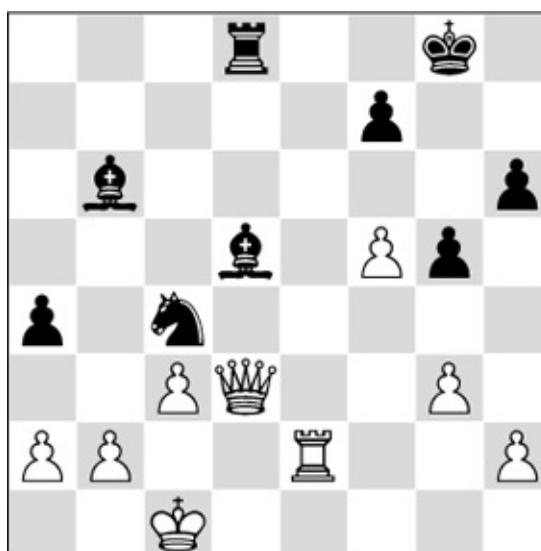
**24...  $a5$**

This leaves the dark-squared bishop without support, but just waiting also doesn't seem to be an option.

**25.  $f4$   $a4$  26.  $f5$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$**

Now the light-squared bishop is no longer supported either. All the black pieces have been undermined and will be unable to withstand the queen and the advancing white queenside.

**27.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$**



**28.  $b3$**

Finally!

**28...  $axb3$  29.  $axb3$   $\mathbb{Q}a5$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}e8+$**

White transforms the material imbalance before Black does so with 30.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}xb3+$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}d4+$  32.  $cxsd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$ .

By giving up material Black has eliminated all the queenside pawns and can now hope for a draw by means of a fortress.

30...  $\mathbb{Q}xe8$  31.  $\mathbb{B}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$

31...  $\mathbb{Q}c8$ , to relocate the stranded knight, seems more logical, though White is still better.

32.  $\mathbb{B}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  33.  $\mathbb{B}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  34.  $b4$

As a result of Black's uncoordinated pieces White now wins material and the game.

34...  $\mathbb{Q}b7$  35.  $c4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  36.  $g4$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  37.  $c5$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  38.  $\mathbb{B}d7$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  39.  $b5$   $\mathbb{Q}a7$  40.  $\mathbb{B}xc7$   $\mathbb{Q}xb5$  41.  $\mathbb{B}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}a7$  42.  $\mathbb{B}d3$

Black resigned.

## Making Room for the Queen

When many pieces have been exchanged and the position is open with play on both wings the queen can be very strong. In the following position the black pieces seem very well placed, however thanks to its mobility the white queen manages to create threats on both wings.

**Michal Krasenkow**

**Francisco Vallejo Pons**

Pamplona 1999



39...  $a5$

39...  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  40.  $\mathbb{B}xa7$ ; 39...  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  40.  $h5$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  41.  $h6$  with the nasty threat of  $h6-h7$  and mate.

40.  $h5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $b5$  42.  $\mathbb{B}xa5$   $\mathbb{Q}f3+$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  44.  $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  45.  $\mathbb{Q}xb5$

White has succeeded in creating a second outside passed pawn. Now the black pieces will have to deal with the a-pawn.

Black could put his knight on c6, holding the pawn on a7, but then he'd also have to reckon with f2-f4-f5, undermining the bishop on d5 and with threats against his king.

45...  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  46.  $\mathbb{Q}e8$

Again switching to the other wing, threatening 47.  $\mathbb{Q}g6+$  and  $h5-h6$ .

46...  $\mathbb{Q}g5+$  47.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  48.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$

Anticipating ...  $\mathbb{Q}h6+$  and protecting the f-pawn.

48...  $\mathbb{Q}e5+$  49.  $f4$   $\mathbb{Q}c3$  50.  $\mathbb{Q}d7!?$

50.  $a4$  is more obvious, maintaining play on both wings, but after the text move the black pieces find it hard enough to cooperate adequately against the mighty queen.

50...  $\mathbb{Q}e1+$

After 50...  $\mathbb{Q}xa2$  the black pieces will lose their coordination, for example: 51.  $h6+$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  52.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}e1+$  53.  $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  54.  $\mathbb{Q}d4+$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  55.  $h7$ .

51. ♜ h3 ♜ xa2? 52. ♜ d1

The bishop on e1 has no suitable square, and a double attack (on both bishops) is unavoidable. Black resigned.

## Theoretical Opening Lines

Let's conclude with a lightweight successful example for the three minor pieces.

**Alojzije Jankovic**

**Dejan Nestorovic**

Sarajevo 2012

1.d4 ♜ f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♜ c3 d5 4. ♜ f3 ♜ g7 5. ♜ a4+ ♜ d7 6. ♜ b3 dxc4 7. ♜ xc4 0-0 8. ♜ f4 ♜ a6 9.e4 c5 10. e5 ♜ e6 11. exf6 ♜ xc4 12. fxg7 ♜ e8?

Better is 12.. ♜ xg7 13. ♜ xc4, for instance Kaidanov-Robson, Saint Louis ch-USA 2012.

13. ♜ xc4

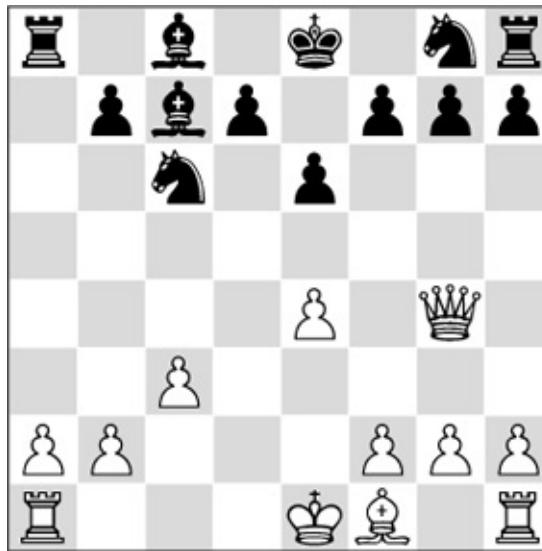


The position arose from a Grünfeld, where our material imbalance isn't an unusual feature, for instance 1. ♜ f3 ♜ f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♜ c3 d5 4. ♜ a4+ ♜ d7 5. ♜ b3 dxc4 6. ♜ xc4 ♜ c6 7. d4 ♜ g7 8.e4 0-0 9. e5 ♜ e6 10. exf6 ♜ xc4 11. fxg7 ♜ xg7 12. ♜ xc4 ♜ xd4 13. ♜ xd4 ♜ xd4 14. ♜ e2, Kramnik-Ivanchuk, Belgrade 1997.

While studying such lines you can develop a feel for the pieces at the same time!

The quickest example I can think of is in the Pirc: 1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♜ f6 3. ♜ c3 g6 4. ♜ c4 ♜ g7 5. ♜ e2 ♜ c6 6.e5 ♜ xd4 7. exf6 ♜ xe2 8. fxg7.

One of the most complex is 1.e4 c5 2. ♜ f3 ♜ c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♜ xd4 e6 5. ♜ c3 ♜ c7 6. ♜ db5 ♜ b8 7. ♜ e3 a6 8. ♜ b6 axb5 9. ♜ xb5 ♜ b4+ 10.c3 ♜ a5 11. ♜ c7+ ♜ xc7 12. ♜ xc7 ♜ xc7 13. ♜ g4,



analysis diagram

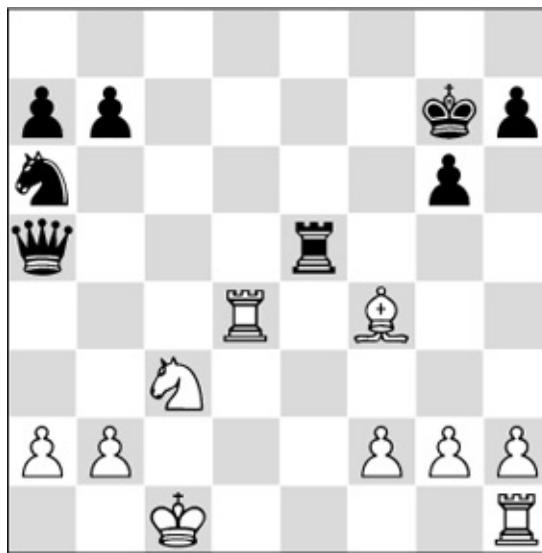
when Black is struggling with his pieces, but White seems essentially to be confined to a rather arduous plan of advancing his queenside pawns. Various strong grandmasters have chosen either side!

**13...cxd4 14.0-0-0 e5?**

This again transposes to another material imbalance, queen against two rooks. But this is not to Black's advantage.

After 14... $\mathbb{Q}a5$  15. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  16. $\mathbb{Q}hd1$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  White is OK, but he will have to work hard to create threats and obtain an advantage.

**15. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}a5$  16. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$   $\mathbb{Q}xe8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$**



**19. $\mathbb{Q}d7+$**

Now Black's king is in dire straits.

**19... $\mathbb{Q}g8$  20. $\mathbb{Q}hd1$**

20. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  at once was much simpler.

**20... $\mathbb{Q}b4$**

20... $\mathbb{Q}e8!$ .

**21. $\mathbb{Q}d8+$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  23. $\mathbb{Q}1d7+$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  24.a3  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  25. $\mathbb{Q}d5+$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  26. $\mathbb{Q}c7+$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  27. $\mathbb{Q}f8+$**

1-0

When the three pieces coordinate – one for all, all for one! –, then they will often be an unstoppable force. Obviously, together they are able to attack more than a queen can defend. Nevertheless, pawn structure and development may be disturbing factors, which at times may render this material imbalance difficult to assess.

Towards the endgame, for example with the rooks exchanged off, the queen will have more space to use her long-range power. As a result, it can be hard to deal with, as any possible target will soon be within its reach.

## Chapter 29

# The Lonesome Queen vs Rook and two Pieces

If three pieces equal a queen, a rook and two pieces should easily be stronger. That's all very well, but here too there may be a lot of other dynamic factors than the material balance that may tip the scale in the other direction.

Above all, you will have to consider the activity of the pieces and the opposing queen.

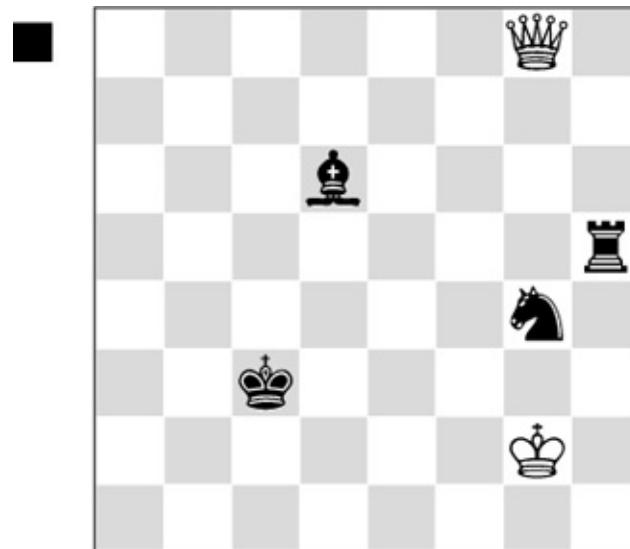
## A Rare Endgame

First let's have a look at this rare endgame. The combined pieces are strong enough to threaten the opponent's king, but not strong enough to deliver a forced mate: it is a tablebase draw. What can we make of this? Probably not much, except for the fact that it proves that there is a concrete limit to the superiority of the side with the pieces.

**Mikheil Mchedlishvili**

**Tornike Sanikidze**

Tbilisi ch-GEO 2015



66... ♜h2+ 67.♔f1 ♜h1+ 68.♗g2 ♜h2+ 69.♗f1 ♗e3+ 70.♗g1 ♜d2 71.♗e6 ♜c5 72.♗e5+ ♜d4 73.♗a5+ ♜d3 74.♗a6+ ♗c4+ 75.♗h1 ♜d1+ 76.♗g2 ♗c3 77.♗c8 ♜g1+ 78.♗f3 ♜f1+ 79.♗g2 ♜f2+ 80.♗h3 ♗d3 81.♗a6 ♜f6 82.♗b5 ♗c3 83.♗g4 ♗e5+ 84.♗g5 ♗f7+ 85.♗g4 ♜g6+ 86.♗f3 ♗e5+ 87.♗e4 ♗c4 88.♗f3 ♗e5 89.♗b7 ♜g3+ 90.♗f2 ♜g7 91.♗c8 ♜d3 92.♗h3+ ♗e4 93.♗h1+ ♜d4 94.♗h4+ ♜d5 95.♗h1+ ♗c5 96.♗h5 ♜a7 97.♗e8 ♜d4+ 98.♗g2 ♜g7+ 99.♗f1 ♜g1+ 100.♗e2 ♜g2+ 101.♗f3 ♜f2+ 102.♗g3 ♗d6 103.♗e7 ♗d5 104.♗d8 ♗c6 105.♗a8+ ♗c7 106.♗a5+ ♗c8 107.♗a8+ ♗c7 108.♗a5+ ♗b6 109.♗xb6+ ♗xb6 110.♗xf2

½-½

## Too Many Pawns?

**Gadir Guseinov**

**David Navara**

Baku 2015

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♜f5 5.♗g3 ♜g6 6.h4 h6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.h5 ♜h7 9.♘d3 ♜xd3 10.♗xd3 e6 11.♘d2 ♗gf6 12.0-0-0 ♜e7 13.♘e4 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 ♘f6 15.♗d3 c5 16.♗b1 cxd4 17.♘xd4 0-0 18.♗xh6 gxh6 19.♗g3+ ♘h8 20.♗xe6 fxe6 21.♘xd8 ♘axd8 22.♗e3 ♘g8 23.♗xa7

Already White has picked up three pawns, but perhaps more importantly, Black's minor pieces are not active. Navara is going to change that soon. What is more, most likely the Czech grandmaster came prepared for this position, which had been seen before. He clearly had faith in Black's dynamic possibilities.

Guseinov, on the other hand, must have considered he was playing only for two results here: draw or win. Which would be an ideal starting point, of course.



23... ♘f6 24.f3

Actually a novelty!

24... ♘e7 25.♗e3 ♜g7 26.♗xe6 ♘d5

Black has shed yet another pawn, but now his pieces are active.

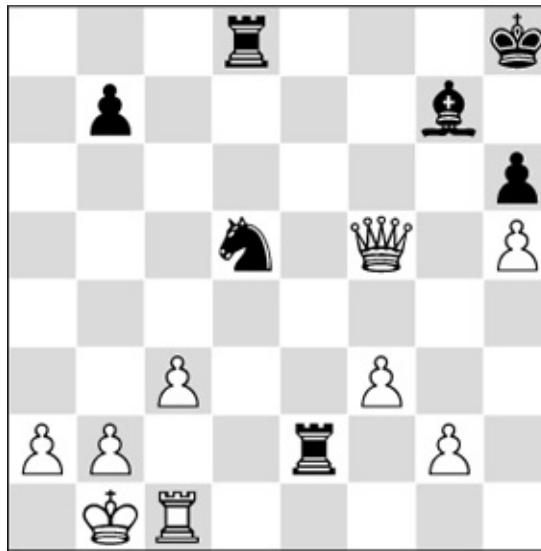
27.c3

Don't be mistaken, and do not underestimate Black's activity! After a normal developing move like 27.♗e1 Black would play 27...♘f6 28.♗g4 ♘b6, and suddenly Black has coordinated his pieces and will be able to start an attack. For example: 29.b3 ♘c3+ (29...♘bd6 also looks strong) 30.♗b2 ♘a6 31.b4 ♘b5+!, and of course the queen is a bad defender against so many pieces.

27... ♘fe8 28.♗f5 ♘e2 29.♗c1

Black's threat was 29...♘xc3. If 29.♗c1 ♘e3 30.♗e4 b6! (30...♗dd2 31.♗xb7).

Navara has come far, but now...



**29... ♜xg2**

This pawn grab is too greedy. Instead, the most active plan was called for here.

With 29... ♜e3! Black could have escorted two rooks to the second rank: 30.♕b5 ♜dd2, threatening 31... ♜d1. With the text move Navara does avoid a draw by perpetual, but otherwise it is hard to say why he did not continue to search for activity.

**30.a3 b5**

Now 30... ♜e3 does not have the desired effect after 31.♕b5 ♜dd2 32.♕e1.

**31.♔f7 ♜f6 32.♔b7 ♜d5 33.f4 ♜h7 34.♔e1**

Whereas Black's knight has retreated, the white rook has found an open file: White has clearly manoeuvred more successfully.

In this situation, the active, versatile queen, which is now both defending and attacking at the same time, ensures White's victory:

**34... ♜dd2 35.♔xb5 ♜d5 36.♔a1 ♜gf2 37.♔e8 ♜xf4 38.♔e4+ ♜h8 39.♔a8+ ♜h7 40.♔e4+ ♜h8 41.♔f5 ♜d8 42.♔b5 ♜d5 43.♔e8+ ♜h7 44.♔c4 ♜xh5 45.♔g8+ ♜g6 46.♔e7 ♜h1+ 47.♔a2 ♜h5 48.♔e6+ ♜f6 49.♔f7+ ♜f5 50.♔xg7 ♜hh2 51.♔b7**

Black resigned.

## The Pieces Creep out

**Zdenko Kozul**

**Dusan Lekic**

Bosnia/Hercegovina tt 2004

**1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.g3 ♜e7 5.♗g2 0-0 6.0-0 dxcc4 7.♘c2 a6 8.a4 ♜d7 9.♘xc4 ♜c6 10.♗f4 ♜d5 11.♗d2 ♜b5 12.axb5 axb5 13.♘xd5 ♜xd5 14.♗xa8 ♜c6 15.♗xf8+ ♜xf8**



Here the position is more closed, and White's pawn structure is not as loose as it was in Navara's position. This makes the black queen less effective.

**16.e3 ♜b3 17.♖c1**

White can take his time and defend his pawns before coming out with his pieces.

**17... ♜a5 18.♘fd2 ♜b4 19.♘c3 c6 20.♗f3 f5 21.h4 g6 22.♗d1 ♜c4**

Helping White to disentangle and coordinate his pieces. But after 22...♝g7 23.♞a2 ♛d6 24.♗f3 White would do the same – only more slowly.

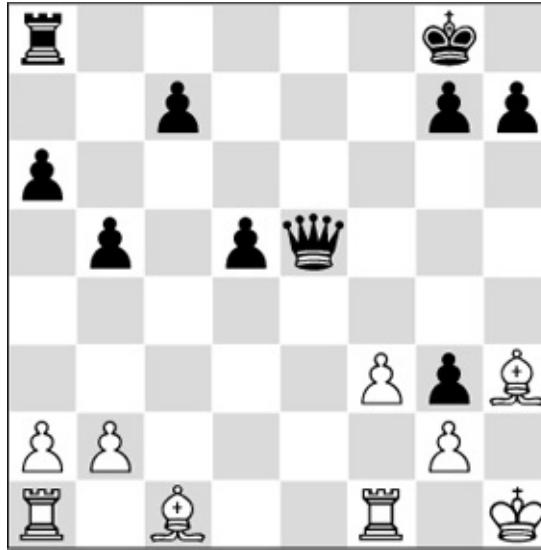
**23.♘xc4 bxc4 24.♗f3 ♜d6 25.e4 e5**

The white pieces gradually grab space, for instance 25...fxe4 26.♘xe4 ♜e7 27.♘g5 or 25...♛b6 26.♕d1.

**26.dxe5 ♜xe5 27.exf5 ♜xc3 28.bxc3 ♜xc3**

Black has created a bunch of passed pawns, but his king is just too unsafe.

This position reminds of the Grande Variante in the Open Ruy Lopez:



analysis diagram

But in this terribly complex position, Black's king seems safer. It used to be essayed at top level by players like Euwe, Botvinnik and Reshevsky on the side with the queen and pawns!

**29.♕e3**

29.♕g2 followed by ♜g5 and ♜d1 is a more straightforward set-up.

**29... ♜f6 30.♖e1 ♜xf5 31.♗h6 ♜f7 32.♗g2**

32.♗e3 would have stopped the c-pawn.

32...c3 33.♕e4 ♘e6 34.♗e3 ♘c4

White has not manoeuvred well, Black's king is out of the woods and the c-pawn is a force to reckon with. Still the position proved difficult enough for Black to go astray just before the time control.

35.♗d3 ♘c5

35...♘a2.

36.♗c2 ♘c4 37.♗g5 h5?

Ouch, there goes the kingside.

38.♗e7+ ♘f8 39.♗h7 b5 40.♗xg6 c2 41.♗h6+ ♘g8 42.♗d7

1-0

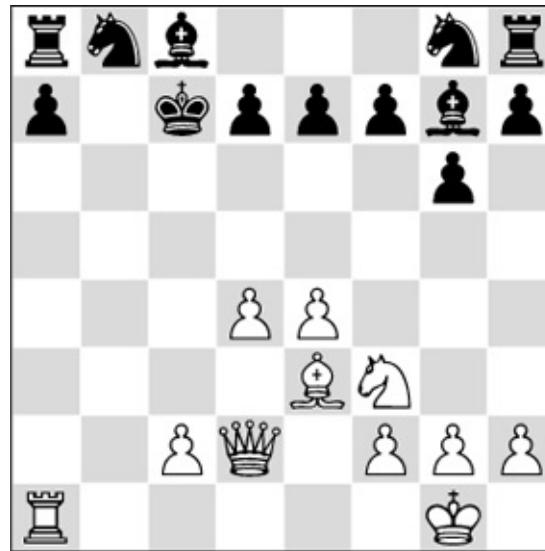
## Undeveloped Pieces

**Daniel Naroditsky**

**Alexander Lenderman**

Wijk aan Zee 2011

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗e3 ♘b6 5.♗d2 ♘xb2 6.♗b1 ♘a3 7.♘f3 b5 8.♗xb5 cxb5 9.♘xb5 ♘xa2 10.♘c7+ ♘d8 11.0-0 ♘xc7 12.♗a1 ♘xa1 13.♗xa1



Black has made a bad choice liquidating into this position. With less space, a vulnerable king and undeveloped pieces for Black, the queen is bound to have its say.

13...♘c6 14.e5

Black's king position screams for 14.d5 ♘xa1 15.dxc6 a5 16.cxd7 ♘xd7 17.♗f4+ ♘c8 18.♗d5, and White seems to have a great attack for the piece.

The preparatory 14.♗a4 seems just as good.

14...♗d8 15.♗c3 e6

Now Black has sort of stopped d4-d5, keeping his king relatively safe, but his backward development is still an issue.

16.♗g5 ♘e8 17.♗e4

It still looks very sad for Black, with a murderous octopus about to be installed on d6. The engine still sees some hope for Black after 17...h6. Lenderman was probably dispirited – his next move loses on the spot.

17...f6? 18.d5! exd5 19.♗d6+ ♘f8 20.♗c5 ♘ce7 21.exf6 ♘xf6 22.♗d4 ♘eg8 23.♗xc8 ♘xc8 24.♗xc8+ ♘f7 25.♗xa7 ♘e7 26.♗a6 ♘b8 27.g3

Black resigned.

# Clumsy Pieces

**Jan-Krzysztof Duda**

**Karen Grigoryan**

Khanty-Mansiysk Wch jr 2015

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗b5 ♘d4 5.♗a4 ♘c5 6.♘xe5 0-0 7.♘d3 ♘b6 8.e5 ♘e8 9.0-0 d5 10.♗h1 c6 11.♗e2 ♗h4 12.♘g3 ♘g4 13.f3 ♘e6 14.c3 ♘f5 15.♘e2 d4 16.♘c2 ♖d8 17.c4 f6 18.b3 fxe5 19.♘a3 ♖f6 20.♗e1 ♗h6 21.♘xe5 d3 22.♘g4 dxe2 23.♗xh6+ ♖xh6 24.♗f2 ♘xf2 25.♗xf2 ♖xd2 26.♗c5 ♘ed6 27.♗a5 ♖xc2 28.♗d8+ ♗f7 29.♗c7+ ♗e8

29...♗g6!? is a peculiar try, the idea being 30.♗e1 (30.♗xd6 is, as always, met by 30...♖d2) 30...♖d2 31.♗g1 ♖d1 32.♗f2 ♖xh2!, and now after 33.♗xe2 ♘f7 Black's pieces suddenly work well together.

29...♗g8 would lead to a draw after 30.♗d8+.

30.♗e1

30.♗b8+ ♘c8 and Black is doing great.

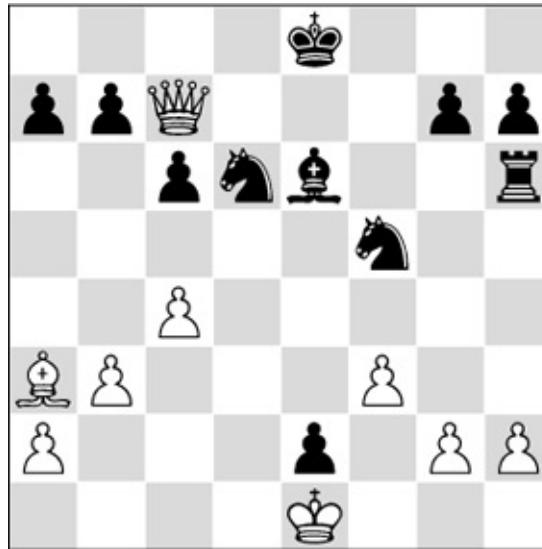
30...♖d2 31.♗g1 ♖d1?

31...♗d7 32.♗b8+ ♘f7, and Black holds his position together.

32.♗f2 ♖xe1

Now 32...♖xh2 33.♗xe2 just wins for White.

33.♗xe1



Black has exchanged an active rook and now his remaining pieces have trouble coordinating. The clumsy knights are the most obvious culprits, while White's queen is of course tremendously active. Black has no counterplay and White now easily annihilates the queenside.

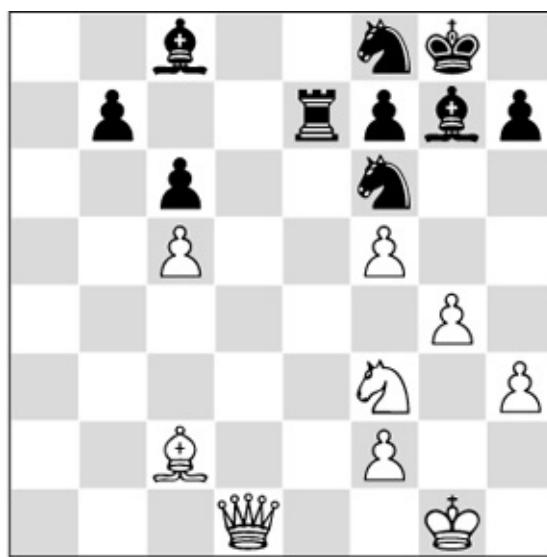
33...♘c8 34.♗xe2 ♘d7 35.♗xb7 ♖xh2 36.♗f2 ♖h6 37.♘c5 ♘fd6 38.♗b8 a6 39.♗a8 ♖f6 40.♗g1 a5 41.♘d4 ♖g6 42.♗xa5 ♘f5 43.♗f2 ♖d6 44.♗e1+ ♘f7 45.♘c5 ♖e6 46.♗d2 ♘e8 47.a4 ♘fd6 48.♘a3

Black had seen enough.

**Goran Cabrilo**

**Bosko Abramovic**

Yugoslavia tt 1996



A first look at this position might suggest that White has done a reasonable good job restricting the black pieces. However, here the white queen has no clear targets (just like in Kozul's game).

**31...h6 32.Qb3 Q8d7 33.Qd6?!**

33.g5 hxg5 34.Qxg5 spoils White's pawn structure, but at least White has created a target on f7. For instance: 34...Qf8 (34...Qe5 35.Qd6 Qf8 36.Qb8 Qe8 37.f4) 35.Qd6 Qe1+ 36.Qg2 Qxf5 37.Qxf7+.

**33...Qe8**

33...Qf8! 34.Qg2 Qe8 35.Qc7 Qe4, and the c5-pawn will be lost while the black pieces come out.

**34.g5 Qf8?**

34...hxg5 35.Qxg5 Qd5 36.Qxd5 cxd5 37.Qxd5 Qf8 38.Qd6 Qf6 39.Qc7, and here the active white queen gives equal play.

**35.Qc7?**

Returning the favour. The obvious 35.Qg3 would suddenly have yielded White a strong attack after 35...hxg5 36.Qxg5 Qd5 37.Qe4+.

**35...Qd5 36.Qxd5 cxd5 37.g6**

Now White desperately tries simplify the position, but this only helps Black.

**37...fxg6 38.c6 bxc6 39.Qxc6 Qg7 40.Qxd5+ Qh8 41.Qh4**

This leads nowhere. 41.fxg6 seems more logical, but after 41...Qf8 Black is still clearly on top (though White is coming close to reaching the first position in this chapter!). After the text move Black won – though if the notation is correct he allowed a perpetual towards the end.

**41...g5 42.Qg6+ Qh7 43.Qf7 Qf6 44.Qe7 Qb7 45.Qh2 Qe4 46.Qe6 Qd8 47.Qg6 h5 48.Qf7 Qd1 49.f3**

49.Qf8+ with a a perpetual.

**49...Qxf5 50.Qe5 Qe1**

0-1

## Space

Towards the end of the game, when more pieces are exchanged, the queen will usually have more space to manoeuvre.

**Alexander Shneider**

**Valery Chekhov**

Telavi 1982

1.d4 Qf6 2.Qf3 e6 3.c4 d5 4.Qc3 c6 5.e3 Qbd7 6.Qc2 Qd6 7.e4 dxe4 8.Qxe4 Qxe4 9.Qxe4 e5 10.dxe5 0-0 11.exd6 Qe8 12.Qxe8+ Qxe8+ 13.Qe3 Qf6 14.0-0-0 Qf5 15.Qd3 Qxd3 16.Qxd3 Qe6 17.b3 a5 18.Qhd1 a4 19.d7 Qd8 20.Qg5 Qxd7 21.Qxd7 Qxd7 22.Qe1 Qg4 23.Qe8+ Qf8 24.Qe7 h6 25.Qxf8+ Qh7



Here the black queen seems to enjoy sufficient freedom, whereas the white pieces still have to find safe, active squares.

**26. ♜c5 f6 27. ♜e3**

After 27. ♜e1 ♛e2 28. ♜c2 ♛f1+ 29. ♜b2 ♛xg2 Black is also active enough.

**27... ♛xg2 28. ♜d4 ♛xh2 29. ♜f7**

Loose Pieces Drop Off (John Nunn). Black does not take the opportunity though, but chooses a logical plan.

**29... ♛e5**

29...c5!? 30. ♜e6 ♛e5 31. ♜xg7+ ♔h8.

**30. ♜xb7 h5**

White's pieces are not well placed to stop Black's passed h-pawn.

**31. ♛d2 h4 32. ♜f3 ♛b2+ 33. ♜d3 ♛b1+ 34. ♜c3 h3 35. ♜h2**

Going on the defensive, which spells the end.

**35... ♛g1 36. ♜f4 ♛a1+ 37. ♜d3 a3 38. ♜e7 ♛xa2 39. ♜e1 ♛xb3+ 40. ♜d4 ♛b2+**

**0-1**

## No Targets for the Queen

**Vassily Ivanchuk  
Baadur Jobava**

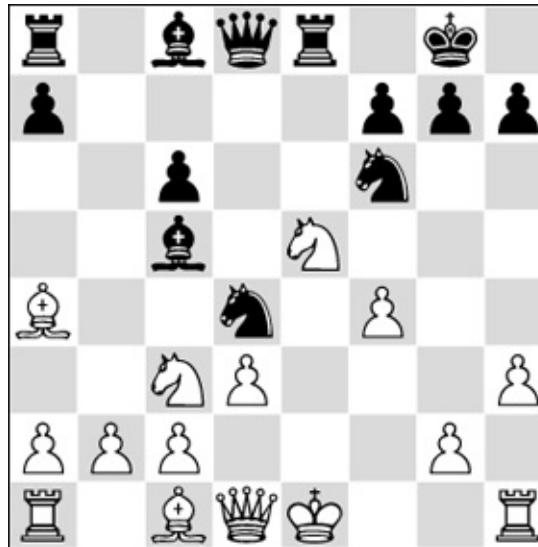
Khanty-Mansiysk ol 2010

**1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 ♛b6 4.a3 e5 5.exd5 ♜f6 6.dxe5 ♜c5 7.exf6 ♜f2+ 8.♔e2 0-0 9.♗d2 ♜e8+ 10.♗d1**



Don't try this at home, but leave it to the Chukys in this world, I would say.  
However, Wei Yi did follow Ivanchuk's example and hid his king in the same way, albeit from a different opening:

Wei Yi-Rodshtain, Tsaghkadzor 2015: 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.♗c3 ♘d4 5.♗a4 c6 6.♗xe5 d5 7.d3 ♗d6 8.f4 ♗c5 9.exd5 0-0 10.dxc6 bxc6 11.h3 ♗e8



analysis diagram

12.♗d2 ♘d7 13.♗d1, and eventually White won after a long complicated game.

**10... ♗e1+**

After 10...♗xg1 11.♗d3 White would develop comfortably, so Jobava decides to win the queen at the cost of a rook and two pieces. He hoped for sufficient play due to White's vulnerable king and undeveloped pieces.

**11.♗xe1 ♗xe1 12.♗xe1 ♗f5 13.♗e2!?**

Another remarkable move. Other bishop moves have obvious drawbacks:

A) 13.♗d3 ♗xd3 14.cxd3 ♘d7;

B) 13.♗c4 cxd5 14.♗xd5 ♘c6 15.♗e2 ♗e8.

But who would have thought about putting his bishop on d1?

**13... ♗d7 14.dxc6 bxc6 15.♗d1 ♗e8+ 16.♗e2 ♗xf6 17.♗bc3**



As you can easily see, it will take some time before White has activated his pieces (remember castling

is no longer legal here).

Still, Black has to come up with some plan, create a target.

**17... ♜c8**

17... ♜d5 is more challenging. After 18.♘f1 (after 18.♗xd5 cxd5 Black has a d-pawn to push forward) Black may continue with 18... ♜c8 after all, when the bishop manoeuvre to a6 is more annoying than in the game.

**18.a4!**

Here comes the queen's rook!

**18... a5**

18... ♜a6 19.a5 ♜c5 20.♕a4.

**19. ♜f1**

The immediate 19.♕a3 was also possible.

**19... ♜a6 20. ♜f2 h5 21. ♜a3 h4 22. g3 h3 23.g4 ♜d8**

Black is running out of realistic ideas. The f6-knight could be more active, but where should it go?

**24. ♜f4 ♜d7 25. ♜b3 ♜d4 26. ♜fe2**

The more natural 26.♕e2 was also winning, according to Ivanchuk.

**26... ♜e8 27. ♜e4 ♜xa4 28. ♜d2 ♜a1**



This leads to an amusing finish. Other moves would probably not have helped.

**29. ♜c3 ♜e5 30. ♜a3 ♜b1 31. ♜d2 ♜c1 32. ♜xa5 ♜g6 33. ♜xa6 ♜f4 34. ♜a8**

**1-0**

## Summary

Material value is one thing, but when assessing these positions it is necessary to consider a few other things. The queen needs space and targets, and the pieces need to be able to find active and safe places. In themselves, these guidelines are nothing special, but you should take these things into account when you go for such unbalanced positions. Simply awarding points to the pieces won't do!

## Chapter 30

# The People Versus the Queen

When can you give up your queen for a rook, piece and sometimes also a pawn, and remain on the safe or even the better side? In which situations is the queen likely to prevail? Materially, counting points, including the pawn this would be equal.

It seems that Spielmann and Levenfish have stated that rook, bishop and pawn are slightly stronger than the queen. Substitute the bishop for a knight, and the queen would be slightly stronger, in their opinion. Golenichev comments: ‘In practice there are countless little details which turn this assessment upside down. Factors like the activity of the pieces, the positions of the kings and the presence of weak or passed pawns will all influence the final assessment of the position.’

I completely agree: the verdict will differ according to the circumstances.

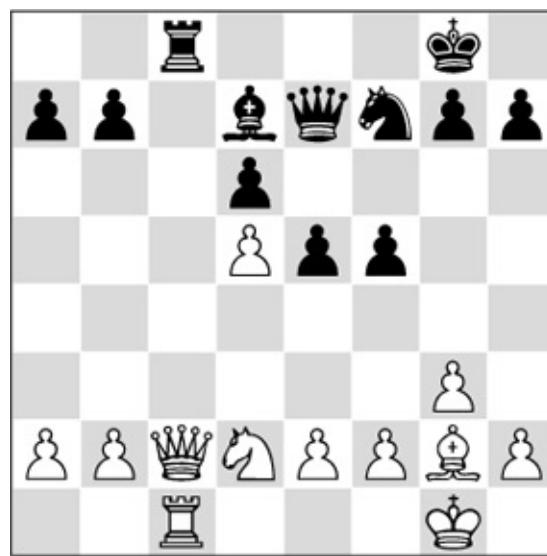
## No Space for the Queen

**Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu**

**Ibrahim Hasan Labib**

Dubai ol 2012

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4+$  4. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  5.g3  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  6. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  7. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  8. $\mathbb{Q}c1$  0-0 9. $\mathbb{Q}g2$  d6 10.d5  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  11. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  12. $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  e5 13.c5 f5 14.cxd6 cxd6 15.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}f7$  16. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  17. $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}fc8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}xc8+$   $\mathbb{Q}xc8$



19. $\mathbb{Q}xc8+$

The only way to keep contesting the c-file, but also a daring decision, it seems. For now, the black queen is inactive within his own pawn structure, and also tied to the defence of the d8-knight. Will White have enough time to coordinate his pieces?

19... $\mathbb{Q}xc8$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xc8+$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  21.e4 fxe4?

Generally speaking, Black is happy to open up the position (more long-range possibilities for the queen) and to create weak pawns in White's structure that can be targeted. Here, though, the capture makes it very easy for White to activate his pieces, while the queen remains passive. A slower plan like 21...g6 (with the idea of ... $\mathbb{Q}g7$  and ... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ ) 22.exf5  $\mathbb{Q}d7!$  23. $\mathbb{Q}a8$  gxf5 or 21...f4 first was more

appropriate.

22.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  g5?

The intermediate move 22...  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  no longer made sense because of 23.  $\mathbb{Q}h3!$ , but the text move restricts the queen's activity and simply squanders one more square than ...g7-g6 would have. White now duly occupies f5 with his bishop.

23.  $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  h5 25. h3  $\mathbb{Q}f7$

So now Black can finally move freely with the queen, but where to?

26. g4 h4 27. b4 b5 28.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  a5?

The white pieces give each other excellent support and are ready to target the black pawns. Black, on the other hand, can hardly move. The text move, however, is the wrong pawn sacrifice to try to create some space for the queen. The passed a-pawn is more than Black can deal with here. 28...a6 29.  $\mathbb{Q}xa6$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}a7$  was a more reasonable try.

29. bxa5  $\mathbb{Q}a7$  30. a6  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$   $\mathbb{Q}d1+$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  33. a7  $\mathbb{Q}xa2$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  d5 35.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}d7$

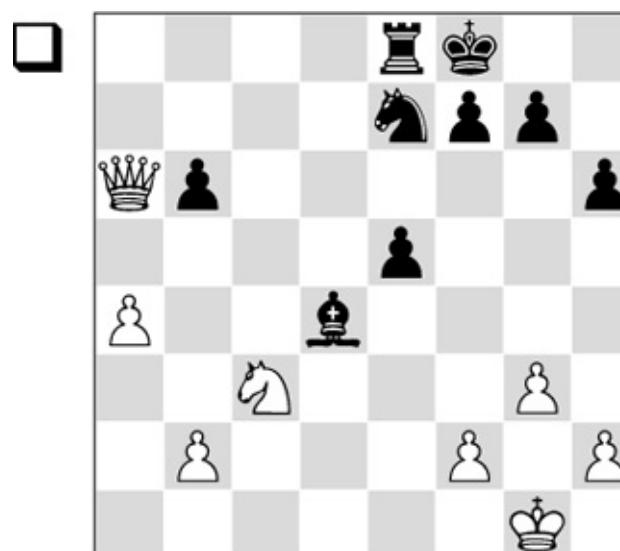
Black resigned.

## A Passed Pawn

Robert Kempinski

Krzysztof Jakubowski

Warsaw ch-POL 2011



A passed pawn is an important asset for either side. Here White can create one on the queenside, after which the black pieces will have to divide their attention between the pawn and the activities of the queen on the other side of the board. The other case, where the side with the pieces creates a passed pawn, is even more obvious. A queen is a notoriously bad blocker, so stopping the pawn becomes troublesome. With this in mind, Labib might have refrained from playing his 28th move in the previous example.

31.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  32. b4!  $\mathbb{Q}xb4$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}b7$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}c7$

35.  $\mathbb{Q}a7$ .

35...  $\mathbb{Q}xc7$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}xb4+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$

Black tries to bring his king over to help stopping the a-pawn, but that leaves his kingside pawns vulnerable.

36...  $\mathbb{Q}g8$  would also lose the e5-pawn and a knight for the a-pawn in the long run. For example: 37.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  g6 39. a5 h5 40.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}b7$   $\mathbb{Q}xa5$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}xc7$  and White wins.

37. ♜c5 ♜d7 38. ♜xe5 f6 39. ♜d4+ ♜c8 40. ♜g4+ ♜d7 41. ♜g2 ♜e8 42. a5 ♜d8 43. ♜b4 ♜d6 44. ♜b6+ ♜e8 45.a6 ♜c8 46. ♜c5 ♜d8 47. ♜h3!

Elegantly introducing the king to deliver the decisive blow on the kingside.

47... ♜e7 48. ♜g4 ♜a7 49.f4 ♜c8 50. ♜h5 ♜d7 51. ♜g6 ♜a7 52.h4 ♜c8 53.g4 ♜a7 54. ♜f8+ ♜c7 55. ♜xg7

1-0

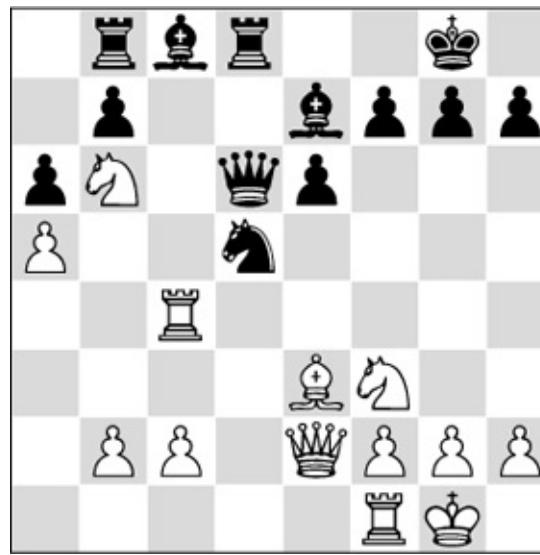
## A Fortress

**Gabriel Gaehwiler**

**Nils Grandelius**

Kemer Wch U-16 2009

1.e4 c5 2. ♜f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♜xd4 ♜f6 5. ♜c3 a6 6. ♜c4 e6 7.a4 ♜e7 8.0-0 0-0 9. ♜e3 ♜xe4 10. ♜xe4 d5 11. ♜d2 dxc4 12. ♜xc4 ♜c7 13. ♜e2 ♜d7 14.a5 ♜f6 15. ♜b6 ♜b8 16. ♜a4 ♜d8 17. ♜f3 ♜d5 18. ♜c4 ♜d6



Giving up the queen for a rook and piece is a common defensive method. If it leaves you with well-supported pieces in a symmetric pawn structure, it may be the proper drawing method. In this case, Black has landed himself in big trouble, but with some help from his opponent he manages to achieve a draw.

19. ♜c5

19. ♜d4 would be even more painful, for example: 19... ♜f4 20. ♜e1 ♜g6 21. ♜c3.

19... ♜xc5 20. ♜xc5 ♜xc5 21. ♜d1 ♜xb6 22. axb6 ♜d7 23. ♜d2

Better is 23. ♜d4, putting the rook first on the d-file.

23... ♜xb6 24. ♜e5 ♜d5 25.c4 ♜a4 26. ♜e1 ♜f6 27. ♜f4 ♜bc8 28.h3 b5

Black is trying to get in as many exchanges as possible, as each one increases his drawing chances.

29. ♜e3 ♜c2 30. ♜c3 ♜g6 31. cxb5 ♜xc3 32. bxc3 axb5 33. ♜b4 ♜d5 34. ♜xb5?

Giving up any ambitions of winning the game. With all the queenside pawns gone White has no plan to make headway.

34... ♜xc3 35. ♜a5 ♜c8 36. ♜xg6 hxg6 37. ♜e5

½-½

## A Battle on Only One Wing

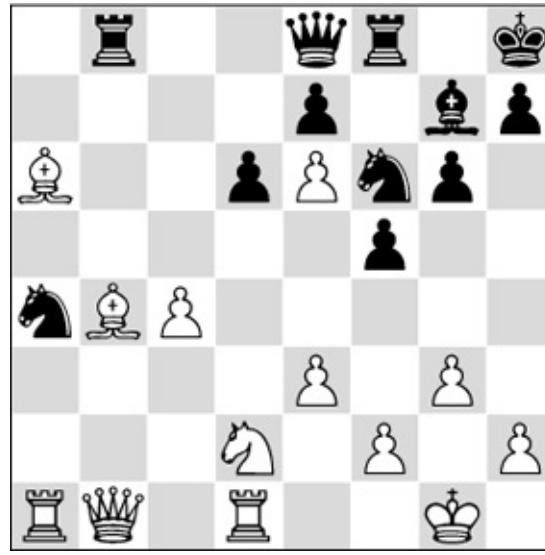
**Levon Aronian**

**Hikaru Nakamura**

Wijk aan Zee 2012

1.d4 f5 2.g3 ♜f6 3. ♜g2 g6 4. ♜f3 ♜g7 5.0-0 0-0 6.c4 d6 7. ♜c3 c6 8. ♜b3 ♜h8 9. ♜d1 ♜a6 10. ♜a3 ♜c7 11. d5 c5 12.b4

cxb4 13. ♜xb4 ♜a6 14. ♜b1 ♜d7 15. ♜b5 ♜c8 16. ♜d2 ♜b6 17.e3 ♜c5 18.a4 ♜a5 19. ♜a3 a6 20. ♜b4 ♜d8 21. ♜d4 ♜xa4 22. ♜e6 ♜xe6 23. dx e6 ♜e8 24. ♜xb7 ♜b8 25. ♜xa6



25... ♜c3

This is how a material imbalance often arises: the move wins the exchange, or...

26. ♜xc3! ♜xb1 27. ♜dx b1 g5 28. ♜b7 ♜g8 29. ♜xg7+ ♜xg7 30. ♜b5 ♜g6 31.c5

Exchanging the last queenside pawn.

31... dxc5 32. ♜xc5 ♜xe6

Aronian about this moment: 'Only when he captured on c5 and took on e6 did I already feel that I had a clear advantage. White has a clear plan while Black is just suffering with his pieces.' It's clear that the queen benefits from a battle on two wings, where its long-range activity can come to the fore. The same thing was observed earlier in Chapter 28, where the queen faces three minor pieces.

33. ♜f3 ♜d6 34. ♜d4 ♜h8 35. ♜c6 ♜d7 36. ♜ac1 f4 37. ♜c8 ♜a7 38. ♜e6 ♜f6 39. exf4 gxf4 40. ♜c7 ♜a4 41. ♜xf4 ♜d6

Here 41... ♜xf4 was given as a better defence: 42.gxf4 ♜xf4 43. ♜1c3 (43. ♜b7 ♜f6 44.h3 ♜e4 45. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 46. ♜7c3 ♜e5 47. ♜g3 h5) 43... ♜e5 44. ♜a6 ♜f6 45. ♜c8+ ♜g7 46. ♜g3+ ♜f7 47. ♜c4+ e6. But the position, while perhaps defendable, remains unattractive for Black.

In the game Aronian slowly improved his position by advancing and closing in on the black king, which eventually proved too much for Nakamura.

42. ♜e6 ♜d1+ 43. ♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 44. ♜g2 ♜f6 45. ♜xe7 ♜e1 46. ♜f7 ♜e4+ 47. f3 ♜d4 48. ♜h3 ♜e5 49. ♜h4 ♜d4 50. ♜g4 ♜e5 51. ♜e6 h6 52. ♜f8+ ♜g8 53. f4 ♜b2 54. ♜h3 ♜a1 55. ♜h5 ♜h7 56. ♜f7+ ♜h8 57. ♜g6 ♜f6 58. ♜f8+ ♜g8 59. ♜f7

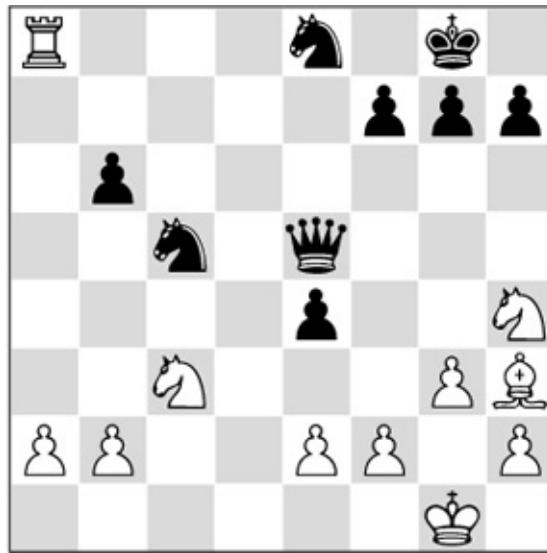
1-0

## A King Attack with the Queen

**Arsen Yegiazarian**

**Arman Pashikian**

Yerevan ch-ARM 2008



With the help of other pieces on the board, the queen is able to set up a normal king attack.

**25...g6 26.Qg2 Qg7 27.Qe3 Qf6 28.Qd8 h5 29.Qd2**

A passive move. 29.Qed5? Qb7 is impossible, but 29.Qc4 Qg5 30.Qe3 is a more solid try.

**29...h4 30.Qc4 Qh5 31.Qg2 hxg3 32.hxg3 Qg4**

Now Black has managed to obtain some play on the kingside.

**33.Qd5**

33.Qd1, also protecting f2, seems to be the better defence: 33...Qe6 34.Qde3 Qxe3 35.Qxe3 Wa5 36.Qf1.

**33...e3! 34.Qcxe3 Qe4**

In contrast to the situation after 33.Qd1, now 35.Qxe4 is of course impossible.

**35.Qd4 Qxf2 36.Qf1 Qh3+ 37.Qxh3 Qxh3 38.Qxb6 Qh2! 39.Qxh2 Qxg3+ 40.Qf1 Qxh2 41.Qc4 f5 42.a4 g5**

Again a passed pawn carries the day.

**43.Qe3 Qe5 44.Qd3 f4 45.Qg4 Qxb2 46.Qd5 Qb1+ 47.Qf2 Qg6 48.a5 Qh5 49.Qd7+ Qg6 50.Qd6+ Qf5 51.Qh6+ Qe5 52.Qb6 Qh2+ 53.Qf1 Qh3+ 54.Qe1 Qc3+ 55.Qf2 Qc5+ 56.Qf3 Qg1 57.Qf7+ Qd4 58.Qd6+ Qc5 59.a6 Qe3+ 60.Qg4 f3 61.a7**

**61.exf3 Qf4+ 62.Qh5 Qxf7+ 63.Qg6 Qxf3+ 64.Qxg5 Qd5.**

**61...Qe4+ 62.Qxg5 fxe2 63.a8Q Qxa8 64.Qe6 Qd5+ 65.Qe5 e1Q**

**0-1**

The side with the pieces can also set up a king attack, when it is a tough task to defend with the queen. See, for example, the rapid game Svidler-Vallejo, Monaco 2007, where White caught his opponent off guard after his queen and knight had moved too far away from the king.

## Opening Theory

**Anton Shomoev**

**Denis Salinnikov**

Saratov 2006

**1.e4 e5 2.Qf3 Qc6 3.Qb5 a6 4.Qa4 Qf6 5.0-0 Qxe4 6.d4 b5 7.Qb3 d5 8.dxe5 Qe6 9.Qe2 Qc5 10.Qe3 0-0 11.Qd1 d4**



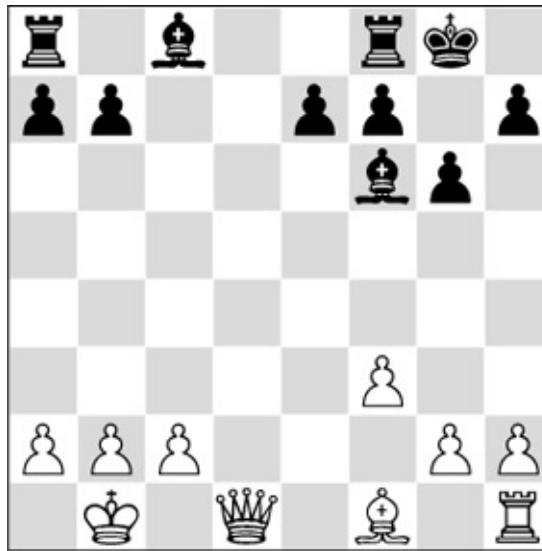
This material imbalance is another strategic feature you can study perfectly together with, or with the help of, opening theory. While examining the theoretical lines you will get a feel for the plans and the coordination of the pieces, and for whether the queen sac will be sufficient or not. The knowledge you acquire might even enable you to find an occasional novelty, like the one in this game.

This material imbalance is also found in numerous other openings. Two examples, a Semi-Slav line and a Dragon line: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♗c2 ♘d6 7.e4 dxe4 8.♘xe4 ♘xe4 9.♗xe4 e5 10.dxe5 0-0 11.exd6 ♕e8 12.♗xe8+ ♕xe8+ 13.♗e3.



analysis diagram

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3 0-0 8.♗d2 ♘c6 9.0-0-0 d5 10.♗b1 ♘xd4 11.e5 ♘f5 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♘xd5 ♗xd5 14.♗xd5 ♘xe3 15.♗d3 ♘xd1 16.♗xd1.



analysis diagram

**12.♘c3 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 dxe3 14.♗xd8 exf2+ 15.♔f1 ♗axd8 16.♘g5**

This variation hadn't been played since Antunes-Flear, Pau 1988, which saw 16.♕e4 ♔e7 17.♗xe6 fxe6 18.♘g5 ♔f5 19.♗e2 ♔e3 20.♘f3. Factors such as the presence of a passed pawn and the insecure position of the white king should convince you that Black has sufficient compensation (and he can improve on Flear's 20...♗d5, for instance with 20...♗b6).

16...♗xb3 17.axb3 h6 18.♘e4 ♗b6 19.♘xf2 ♗de8 20.♗e1 ♘xe5 21.♗h5 g6 22.♗h4 h5 23.♗g3 ♘d7 24.h3 ♘f6  
25.♗f3 ♗g7 26.♘d3 h4 27.c4 bxc4 28.bxc4 ♗a5 29.♗xe8 ♗xe8 30.g4 ♘e4

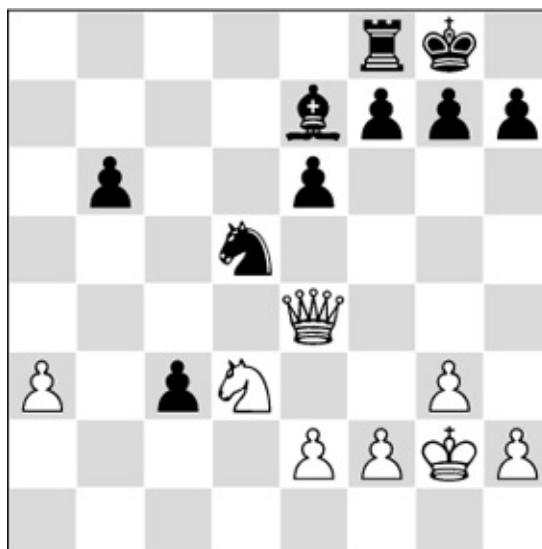
½-½

## Transpositions and Coordination

**Folco Castaldo  
Sarunas Sulskis**

Arvier 2007

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 c5 4.♗g2 ♗b7 5.0-0 e6 6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.d4 cxd4 8.♗xd4 0-0 9.♗d1 d6 10.♗g5 ♘bd7 11.♘b5 d5 12.cxd5 ♗xd5 13.♘e5 ♗c5 14.♗xf6 ♘xf6 15.♗h4 ♗c8 16.b4 ♗xg2 17.♗xg2 ♗e7 18.♗ac1 ♗b7+ 19.♗g1 ♗ac8 20.a3 ♗d5 21.♗xd5 ♗xc1+ 22.♗g2 ♘xd5 23.♗e4 a5 24.♘d3 ♗cc8 25.♘a7 ♗c3 26.♘b5 axb4 27.♘xc3 bxc3



Once again, a passed pawn is involved. Of course, if it was Black's move he would like to support it now with ...♗c8.

**28. ♜c4! b5**

The immediate 28...♜xa3 is met with 29.e4 ♜f6 30.♛xc3 and the proud c-pawn has disappeared, though Black can still try 30...♝c5 31.♝xc5 bxc5.

**29. ♜xb5 ♜xa3 30. ♜b3**

30.e4 ♜f6 31.♝b3 transposes to the game.

**30... ♜e7 31.e4 ♜f6 32.f3**

White is trying to win, as the coordination of the black pieces isn't ideal. The rook can be attacked when moved to c8, and the bishop has neither a stronghold, nor protection from another piece. The f6-knight is now also kept out of play by the white e-pawn.

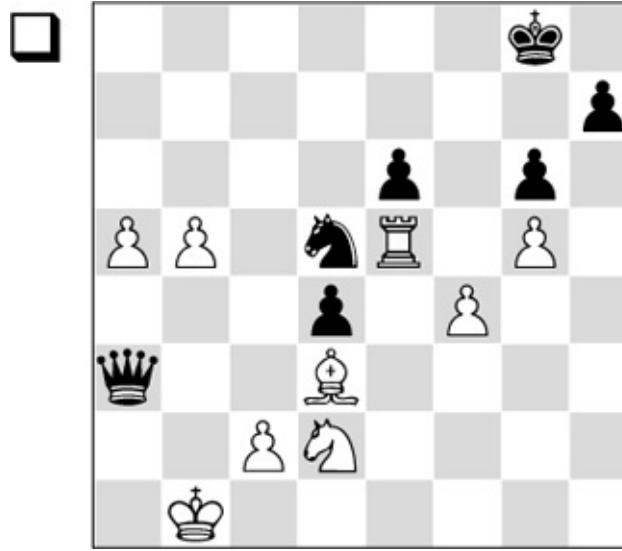
**32... ♜c8 33. ♜b7 ♜d8 34. ♜xe7?**

Too eager, and now Black escapes. Much stronger was 34.♝e5! and White wins the c-pawn. For example: 34...♜e8 35.♛c6; 34...♞d7 35.♝c6 c2 36.♝b2; 34...c2? 35.♛xe7.

**34... ♜xd3 35.e5 ♜d2+ 36. ♜h3 ♜d7 37. ♜b4 ♜d3 38. ♜b5 c2**

The simplest move, transposing back to a position with balanced material.

Transpositions to other material imbalances are also common. Here is a nice one which transposes from this chapter to the next:



analysis diagram

Pruess-Perelshteyn, New England 2007. There followed 46.♜xd5 exd5 47.♝b3 ♜f7 48.a6 ♜e7 49.b6 ♜d7 50.♝b5+ ♜c8 51.♝d3 ♜b8 52.b7 ♜a7 53.f5 gxf5 54.♝xf5 ♜xa6 55.♝xh7, and White held the draw.

This is something you always have to look out for – just as you have to look out for the transposition leading to the initial material imbalance!

**39. ♜xd3 c1♛ 40. ♜xd7 ♜c5 41.f4 h6**

And a draw was agreed on move 59. A narrow escape for Sulskis.

## Summary

The side with a rook, piece and perhaps a pawn will not often prevail over a queen – much more likely the ultimate goal will be a draw. A win is not impossible though, for instance when the battle takes place on one wing. Many examples of fortresses can be found, sometimes straight out of a theoretical opening line. A passed pawn can be an essential asset for either side, diverting either the pieces or the queen.

Finally, do pay attention to transpositions to other material (im-)balances.



## Chapter 31

# When Two is Enough

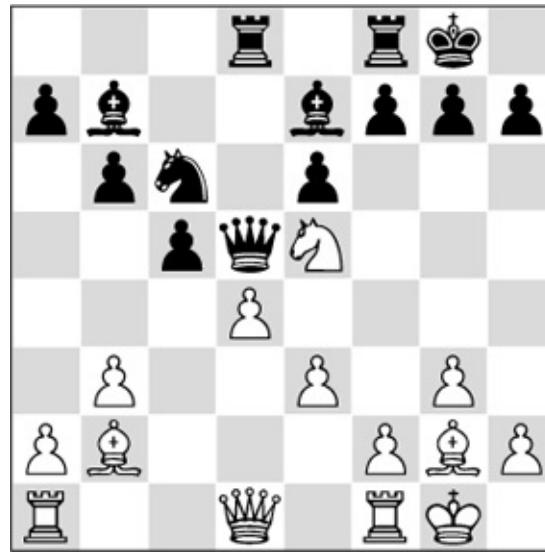
If you want to see some modern romantics at work, this is the chapter for you! Unless you take up one of the openings given below, you're probably not very likely to encounter this material imbalance in your own games. But if you do, perhaps one day you can make yourself immortal at your club. Only two pieces for a queen – what positional assets can make up for this material deficit?

**Vladimir Kramnik**

**Mohamed Ezat**

Antalya Wch-tt 2013

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.  $g3$   $d5$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $e6$  4. 0-0  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  5.  $c4$  0-0 6.  $b3$   $c5$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  8.  $e3$   $b6$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  10.  $cxd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  12.  $d4$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$



13...  $\mathbb{Q}xg2+$

What's this?! There seemed to be no clear follow-up after the upcoming discovered check, which leaves Black with only two pieces for the queen. In the databases you will discover that the sacrifice has been tried some times before, with Nakamura as its most prominent practitioner. After White's 15th move there is no forced continuation, but we just have to take the position as it is and try to make a correct assessment – which is not so easy.

14.  $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5+$

So, Black has sacrificed his queen for only two pieces, with some play on the long diagonal and the light squares. In the event of 15.  $\mathbb{Q}h3$  the white king will be in big trouble after 15...  $\mathbb{Q}f3!$ , but the game continuation does not allow Black much play on the diagonal.

15.  $f3$

This position has been seen before, the first game in my database is Varnusz-Kluger, Budapest 1966, albeit with the king's rook on d8. But that could easily amount to the same when the rooks are doubled on the d-file.

15...  $cxd4$  16.  $exd4$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$

Contrary to some of the other queen sacs mentioned above, this position is more about strategic decisions than tactics and calculations. So I strongly advise you not to let your engine run along here.

It will show only useless numbers most of the time, distracting you from a clear focus on the position. Black has a solid position and will probably win the d4-pawn in the long run. However, after that he will run the risk of both rooks being exchanged, which will leave the white queen a lot of space and possibilities to attack Black's pawns.

**17.  $\mathbb{Q}c1$**

17.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  was the move Ehlvest chose against Nakamura (Saint Louis ch-USA 2009). That game continued with 17...  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  (after the premature 17...  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}fd1$  the rooks are indeed exchanged and white's queen will invade, e.g. 19...  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$ ) 18.  $\mathbb{Q}ac1$   $\mathbb{Q}fd8$ ,



analysis diagram

and here Naka makes some instructive general observations on his blog:

'Here, I have achieved the basic setup which I envisioned when I first decided to sacrifice my queen. When I saw this position in my analysis, I simply did not see how White could progress with sacrificing an exchange somewhere. I figured that I will always have ...  $\mathbb{Q}f6$ , ...  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  ideas or even ...  $g7-g5-g4$  plans, creating discoveries along the long diagonal. Unfortunately for me, Ehlvest remained calm under pressure and found the best "human" move.'

19.  $\mathbb{Q}c4!$  (19.  $\mathbb{Q}fd1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  actually transposes to the abovementioned Varnusz-Kluger game. This is a reasonable option as well, as here too it seems Black can only play for a draw) 19...  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$  and White was better, though Nakamura held on to a draw with relative ease.

Take a note of Ehlvest's strategy here: by returning some material, reaching an other material unbalance, he changes the dynamics of the position. In general, such counter-sacrifices should be taken into account: it is an additional possibility for the side with material up.

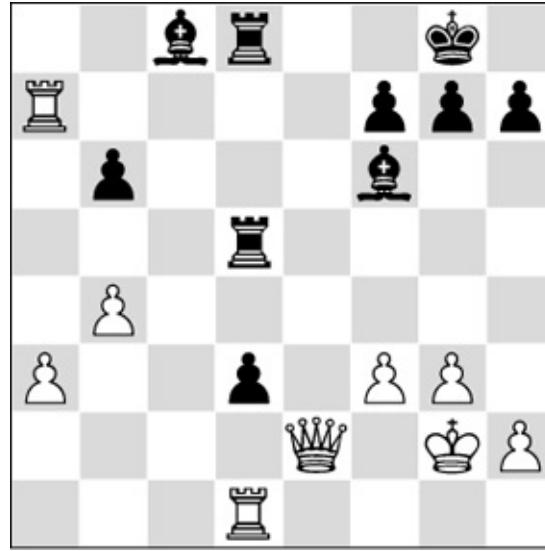
**17...  $\mathbb{Q}d7$**

17...  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  was later played in the game Morozevich-Bologan, Poikovsky 2014. Ezat had aroused renewed interest in this line! After 18.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $b5$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}fc1$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$ , Morozevich did not manage to come up with a convincing plan (though he did win). Opening lines with 22.d5 might have been a good start, though after 22...  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  White will still have to work hard to invade Black's position.

**18.a3  $\mathbb{Q}fd8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  20.  $b4$   $e5$**

20...  $\mathbb{Q}e7$ , and now again 21.d5!?  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$ , when Black should avoid the exchange of rooks, while White can try to create a target or an entrance for the rooks on the queenside.

21.d5 ♜xd5 22.♗fd1 ♜d4 23.♕xd4 exd4 24.♗c7 ♜c8 25.♗xa7 d3



The position has become messy. There is no more talk about a fortress, but now the question is whether Black's newly created passed pawn can counterweigh the material deficits.

26.♗e4?

26.♗f2! d2 27.♗c7 would have left Kramnik on top.

26... ♜e6 27.a4 d2 28.♗e2 ♜d4 29.♗e3 h6 30.a5 bxa5 31.bxa5 ♜d3

Here Ezat missed his moment of fame: 31...♗g5 32.♗c3 (32.f4 ♜f6, again with ♜d3 to follow) 32...♜d3 33.♗c7 ♜d5.

32.♗e2 ♜b3 33.♗a8 ♜xd1 34.♗xd3 ♜xa8 35.♗xd2 ♜d8

Funnily enough, after the (of course ridiculous) continuation 35...♜xa5 the peculiar ending from Polugaevsky-Geller, Skopje 1968, would arise! Polugaevsky managed to win this and called his achievement 'possibly the most meticulous analysis I have ever made in my life' (in his book *Grandmaster Performance*). Mind you, those were the days of the adjourned games!

Like in that ending, here it is difficult for Black to create a safe stronghold for both bishops.

36.♗e3 ♜a4

36...♜d6!?. After the text move Kramnik managed to bail out.

37.a6 ♜c6 38.a7 ♜a8 39.♗f4 ♜g5 40.♗b8 g6 41.♗e5 ♜f8 42.h4 ♜d8 43.h5 gxh5 44.♗xh5

Drawn after another 46 moves.

## Albert Kapengut

## Mark Dvoretsky

Ordzhonikidze 1978

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♘c6 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.e5 ♘d5 8.♘e4 ♘c7 9.f4 ♘b6 10.♘d3 ♘a6 11.a3 f5 12.exf6 ♘xf6 13.♘xf6+ gxf6 14.♗h5+ ♘d8 15.♘d2



White's last move has posed an obvious threat, which... Black ignores!

**15... ♜xd3 16. ♜a5 ♜xc2**

Now the black king seems quite safe with two attackers gone. The black bishops can find fine central positions on c5 and d5, while the white rooks still have to find their way into the game. Can the white queen find any targets? If you want to appreciate Black's sacrifice you should keep away from your engine and try to figure out a plan for White yourself. Not so easy!

**17. ♜f1**

After 17. ♜xb6+ axb6 18.0-0 ♜c5+ 19. ♜h1 ♜e4 Black has centralized his bishops easily.

**17... f5**

17... ♜e4 18.0-0-0.

**18. ♜xb6+ axb6 19. ♜f3**

Not a convincing manoeuvre, perhaps artificial castling was a more effective way to develop: 19. ♜d2 ♜e4 20. ♜ad1.

**19... ♜c7 20. ♜g3 ♜a4 21. ♜f3**

21. ♜f7 ♜d6 (21... ♜xf4? 22. ♜f6) 22. ♜g7 ♜d8 23. g3 is a more active attempt.

**21... ♜c4**

Preventing the double attack on c3.

**22. ♜c1**

22. b3 ♜e4 23. ♜e2 ♜c2 24. ♜a6.

**22... ♜d6 23. ♜e2**

Within a few moves, White has lost the thread.

**23... ♜e4 24. ♜xc2 ♜xf4 25. ♜g7 ♜xh2 26. ♜xe4 fxe4 27. ♜d2 ♜d6 28. ♜d4 c5 29. ♜xe4 ♜c6**

Now the initiative is with Black, who is no longer any material down.

**30. b3 h5 31. ♜h4 b5 32. ♜e2 ♜e5 33. ♜g5 ♜d4 34. ♜h5 a8 35. ♜h3 ♜xa3 36. ♜g8 e5 37. g4 ♜a2+ 38. ♜f3 ♜f2+ 39. ♜g3 b2 40. g5 ♜xb3+ 41. ♜g4 ♜xh3 42. ♜d5 43. g6 e4 44. ♜b8 b4 45. ♜g4 ♜c4 46. ♜f4**

**0-1**

There may also have been a psychological factor. As Dvoretsky recounts, after this game Kapengut was made fun of by his team-mates: how could he not have won being a queen up! He could not convince them that the position was unclear.

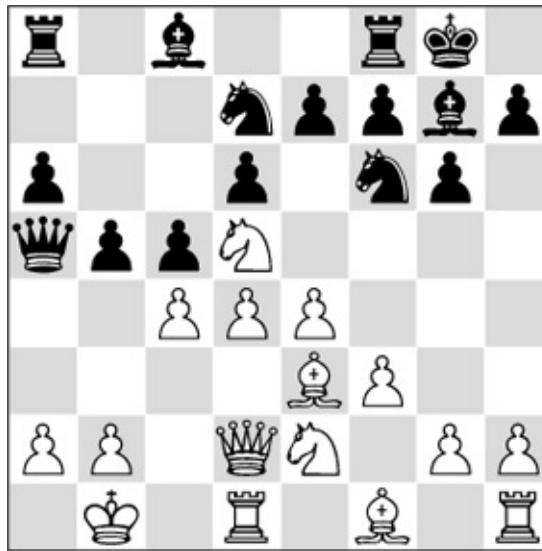
## No Space for the Queen

**Milko Bobotsov**

**Mikhail Tal**

Varna ol 1958

**1. d4 ♜f6 2. c4 g6 3. ♜c3 ♜g7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 0-0 6. ♜ge2 c5 7. ♜e3 ♜bd7 8. ♜d2 a6 9. 0-0-0 ♜a5 10. ♜b1 b5 11. ♜d5**



Obviously, Black's 10th was too careless as after the capture on d2 White has an intermediate check.

**11... ♜xd5!?**

Surely you expected this.

**12. ♘xa5 ♜xe3 13. ♖c1**

Here too White intends to return material. The awkward 13. ♖d3 is the more materialistic move: 13...

♘xc4 14. ♛e1.

**13... ♜xc4 14. ♖xc4**

Here are some sample lines after the queen moves:

A) 14. ♛c7 ♕b8 15. ♘c3 ♕b7 16. ♛c6 cxd4 17. ♘d5? ♘b8, catching the queen;

B) 14. ♛e1 cxd4 15. ♘f4 ♘e3 16. ♘d3 e5 17. ♘d5 ♘xd5 18. exd5 ♘c5 with a strong black pawn centre;

C) 14. ♛c3 ♘db6 with a strong initiative on the queenside.

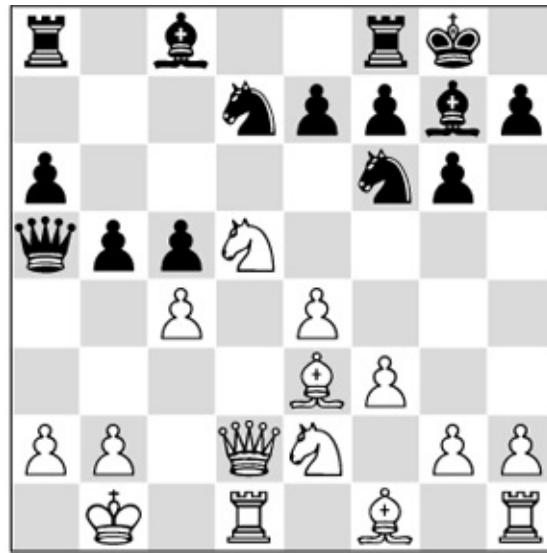
**14... bxc4**

Again a transposition to... a previous chapter! Black has sufficient material now, and also a looming attack on the queenside, while White is still not fully developed. Tal went on to win:

**15. ♜c1 ♕b8 16. ♘xc4 ♘b6 17. ♘b3 ♘xd4 18. ♘d2 ♘g7 19. ♜e2 c4 20. ♘c2 c3 21. ♘d3 cxb2 22. ♜d4 ♘d7 23. ♖d1 ♕fc8 24. ♘b3 ♘a4 25. ♘xa4 ♘xa4 26. ♘b3 ♖c3 27. ♘xa6 ♘xb3 28. axb3 ♖bc8 29. ♘a3 ♖c1+ 30. ♖xc1 ♖xc1+**

**0-1**

Remember Bobotsov was a strong player; the first Bulgarian grandmaster. Tal was the first to play this line, but the idea may have been from Nezhmetdinov:



analysis diagram

12... $\mathbb{Q}$ xd5 13. $\mathbb{Q}$ xa5  $\mathbb{Q}$ xe3 14. $\mathbb{Q}$ c1  $\mathbb{Q}$ xc4 15. $\mathbb{Q}$ xc4 bxc4 16. $\mathbb{Q}$ c3  $\mathbb{Q}$ b8 17. $\mathbb{Q}$ xc4  $\mathbb{Q}$ e5 18. $\mathbb{Q}$ e2  $\mathbb{Q}$ e6, Zamikhovsky-Nezhmetdinov, Kharkov 1956. It is the same variation with the moves d4xc5 d6xc5 inserted. This favours White: his pieces can develop more easily, his queen has targets. Still Nezh scored a draw. Tal was an admirer of Nezhmetdinov – he also lost no less than three times to him – and on occasion asked him to work with him. The following game will convince you that Tal had a point:

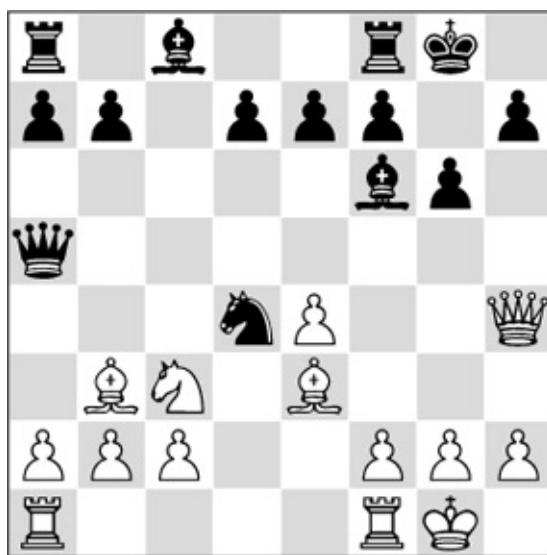
## Passivity

**Rashid Nezhmetdinov**

**Oleg Chernikov**

Rostov-on-Don 1962

1.e4 c5 2. $\mathbb{Q}$ f3  $\mathbb{Q}$ c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. $\mathbb{Q}$ xd4 g6 5. $\mathbb{Q}$ c3  $\mathbb{Q}$ g7 6. $\mathbb{Q}$ e3  $\mathbb{Q}$ f6 7. $\mathbb{Q}$ c4 0-0 8. $\mathbb{Q}$ b3  $\mathbb{Q}$ g4 9. $\mathbb{Q}$ xg4  $\mathbb{Q}$ xd4 10. $\mathbb{Q}$ h4  $\mathbb{Q}$ a5  
11.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}$ f6



Black thought he was cruising for a draw, even when Nezhmetdinov took quite some time on his next move.

**12. $\mathbb{Q}$ xf6!?**

Would you have considered this move before you started to read this chapter? Assuming that you did

not know this game, of course. It should be pretty well-known, but I could not think of another book that has it (except for the small Russian biography of Nezhmetdinov).

If 12.  $\mathbb{Q}h6$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}g3?$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$ .

12...  $\mathbb{Q}e2+$ ! 13.  $\mathbb{Q}xe2$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$

Clearly, White intends 15.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  and 16.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$ , using the strong square on d5 and the absence of Black's dark-squared bishop. Annoying for Black perhaps, but will it be enough? Black comes up with the logical defensive moves now.

14...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$

No hurry! White slowly moves his rook in.

17...  $d6$

Black's problem is that due to his lag in development he lacks active pieces.

18.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$

19...  $\mathbb{Q}e5$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  is also troublesome for Black.

20.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$

20.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6!$   $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}g4+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$ , and both the f1-bishop and the f-pawn are hanging.

20...  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6$   $\mathbb{Q}e2$

21...  $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}g4+$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}h6+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  was Nezhmetdinov's idea.

21...  $\mathbb{Q}c8$  was the best move, when Black can eliminate the terrible bishop with a typical counter sacrifice.

22.  $\mathbb{Q}xh7+!$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}h3$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  24.  $f4$

It seems that Rashid had foreseen this blow when pondering over his 13th move! All White's pieces are participating in the attack. Black's extra material is useless.

24...  $\mathbb{Q}xf1$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xf1$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $b5$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+!$

All in style!

28...  $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}h8+$   $\mathbb{Q}xh8$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}xd8$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4+$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$

1-0

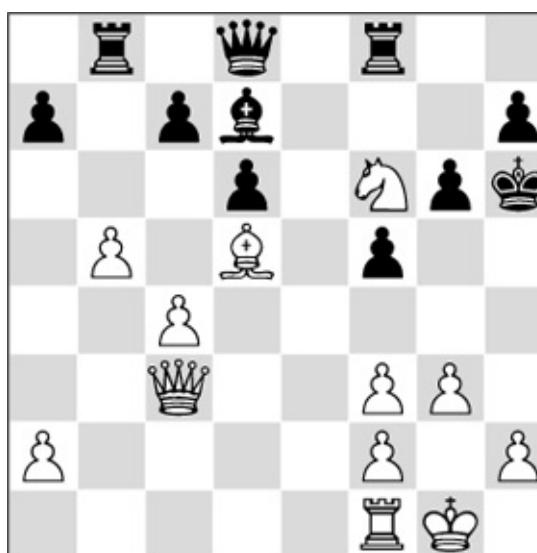
## Perfect Coordination

**Diego Flores**

**Alan Pichot**

Montevideo 2015

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. c4 g6 3. g3  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$  0-0 5.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  d6 6. d4  $\mathbb{Q}c6$  7. 0-0  $\mathbb{Q}f5$  8. b3  $\mathbb{Q}e4$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}b2$  e6 11.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$  f5 13.  $\mathbb{Q}ad1$  e5 14.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  exd4 15.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  17. b4  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}d5+$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  21. b5  $\mathbb{Q}f3+$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}xf3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}c3+$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$



White is an exchange down, but is about to win a second pawn, while the bishop on d5 is a monster.

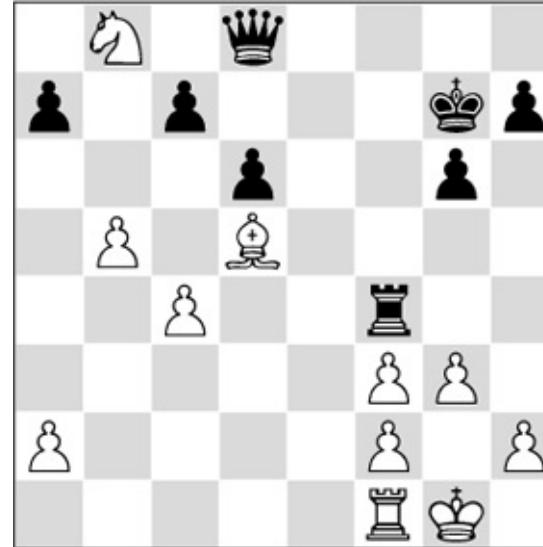
27.♘e3+

27.♗xd7 ♕xd7 28.♕e3+ was the way.

27...f4

27...♔g7 28.♗xd7 ♕xd7 29.♗d4+ ♔h6 30.♕xa7, and White is back on track.

28.♘xf4+ ♔g7 29.♗xd7 ♕xf4 30.♗xb8



Now Black has to choose: which material imbalance should he opt for?

30...♕f8

Black goes for more material. 30...♗xb8 31.gxf4 will be OK for White – he can hardly lose.

31.♗c6 ♘f6

But now Black has no real plan, while White is going for the a7-pawn, which will give him a strong passer.

32.♖e1 ♘b2 33.♖e7+ ♘h8 34.a4 ♘a1+ 35.♗g2 ♘xa4

The white pieces are extremely well positioned, while the white king as a perfect hide-out.

36.♗d4 h6 37.♗e6 ♕f6 38.♗xc7 ♘a5 39.h4 ♘b6 40.♗e4 ♘d4 41.♗d5 ♕f5

41...♕f8 42.♗xg6, threatening mate in two, is not what Black was looking forward to.

42.♗xf5 gxg5 43.♗c7 ♘a1 44.h5 ♘d4 45.♗e7 ♘d3 46.♗xa7

1-0

## The Dark Squares

Igor Stohl

Alexey Fedorov

Czechia tt 2012/13



Black now played the absolutely unforced...

**30... ♕xe5!?** **31. ♔xe5 ♖xe5**

Of course, Black has lovely dark squares for his pieces and he has a central passed pawn, White's activity is limited, but shouldn't he just win?

**32.cxb6 axb6 33. ♜cd1 ♗g7**

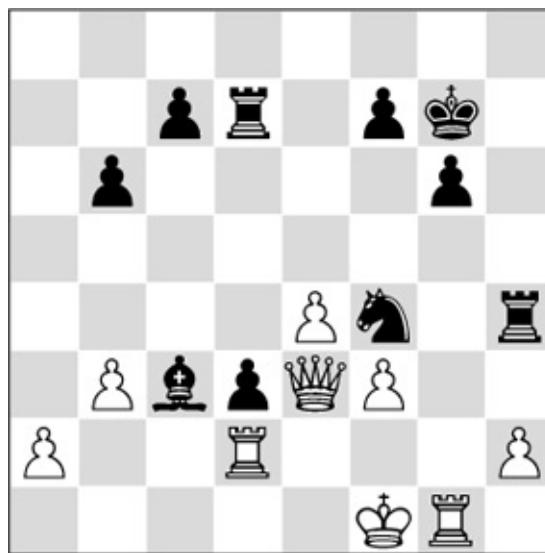
Playing this quiet little king move with a queen down can radiate a sense of unlimited power. In any case, the rook comes to the h-file and in general the black pieces will easily find their way on the dark squares.

**34.h5 ♜h8 35. ♜d2 ♜xh5 36. ♜h1 ♔f4+ 37. ♔f1 d3 38. ♗e3 ♜h4**

38...c5 is a try to break the status quo after 39. ♜g1 (39.a4 is a better move) with 39...b5!, and suddenly Black will create two connected passed pawns; if 40. ♗xc5 ♜c7.

**39. ♜g1 ♖c3**

39... ♗d4 40. ♗e1.



**40. ♜g4?**

40. ♜d1 ♗d4 41. ♗d2 (41. ♗e1? ♜h3! 42. ♜g3 ♜xh2 and White is completely helpless and lost!) 41... ♖xg1 42. ♗xg1 f6, and with rook and knight for the queen, and a passed pawn, Black seems to have enough for equality.

**40... ♖xd2 41. ♗xd2 ♜xh2**

Oops. Now Black is clearly better.

**42. ♗xh2 d2 43. ♗xd2 ♜xd2 44. ♜xf4 ♜xa2 45.e5 ♜b2 46.b4 b5 47. ♜d4 ♗f8 48. ♜d7 ♜xb4 49. ♜xc7 ♜b2 50. ♜b7 b4 51.f4 b3 52. ♗e1 ♗e8 53. ♗d1 ♜f2 54. ♜xb3 ♜xf4 55. ♗d2 ♜h4 56. ♜b6 ♜h5 57. ♜b5 ♗d7 58. ♗e3 f6??**

Probably Fedorov miscalculated, otherwise the wish to exchange White's weak e-pawn would be absurd.

59. ♜f4 ♜f5+ 60. ♜e4 fxe5 61. ♜xe5 ♜f6 62. ♜g5 ♜e6 63. ♜g4

½-½

Fedorov, the man of the King's Gambit, is of course a romantic. It is no coincidence that he has also played this King's Indian line: 1.c4 g6 2.♘c3 ♜g7 3.d4 ♘f6 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♗e3 e5 7.d5 ♘h5 8.♗d2 ♜h4+ 9.g3 ♘xg3 10.♗f2 ♘xf1 11.♗xh4 ♘xe3 12.♗e2 ♘xc4 (Sulskis-Fedorov, Eforie Nord 2010). Here is the source game, where another chess artist introduced the idea.

## Boris Spassky

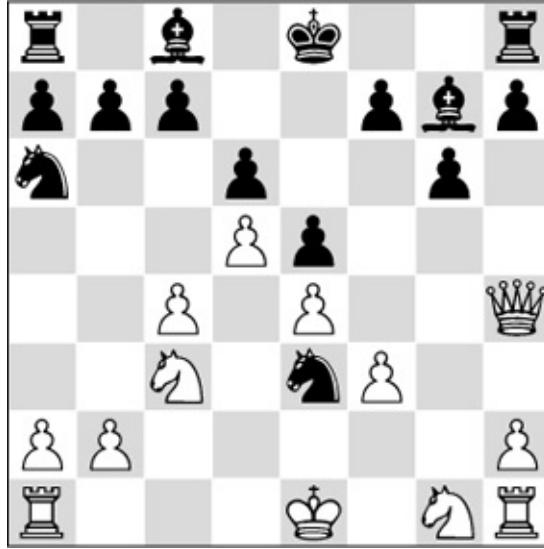
### David Bronstein

Amsterdam Candidates' 1956

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♜g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5

After 5...e5 the same sacrifice may be adopted, as just mentioned: 6.♗e3 e5 7.d5 ♘h5 8.♗d2 ♜h4+ 9.♗f2 ♜f4 10.♗e3 ♜h4+ 11.g3 ♘xg3 12.♗f2 ♘xf1 13.♗xh4 ♘xe3 14.♗e2 ♘xc4 15.♗c1 ♘a6, Karpov-Velimirovic, Skopje 1976 – another romantic.

6.d5 ♜h5 7.♘e3 ♜a6 8.♗d2 ♜h4+ 9.g3 ♜xg3 10.♗f2 ♘xf1 11.♗xh4 ♜xe3



'It is difficult to judge the correctness, but one thing is sure: Black's obligation is much bigger than White's.' (Euwe in the German tournament book) Which is probably an important reason why this line has never become very popular for Black. Still, beside the two pieces, Black will obtain two pawns, while his compact position does not make it easy for the white queen to find targets.

12.♗f2 ♜xc4 13.b3 ♜b6

13... ♘a3 followed by ... ♘b4 was recommended in Bronstein's book *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, but the two knights don't look too impressive.

14.♗ge2 f5 15.♗hg1 0-0 16.♗g2

The position of White's king is one of the factors why Black could possibly claim compensation. In later games White has also tried to leave his king in the centre on e2.

16... ♘d7 17.a4 ♘f6 18.♗g3 ♘b4 19.a5 ♘c8 20.exf5?



Opening up the game too quickly, which serves Black's pieces rather than White's queen.

**20... ♜xf5**

20... ♜e7! was better: 21.fxg6 ♜f5 22.gxh7+? (22.♕e1 ♜e3+ 23.♔h1 ♜d3 24.♕g3 ♜f5 25.♕g2 ♜e3 is a draw by repetition) 22... ♜h8 23.♕f2 ♜d3 and Black wins! Sixty years ago the players did not need an engine to discover these lines.

**21. ♜a4 ♜d3 22. ♜c4 ♜c5?**

It is a pity to move this beautiful octopus, especially when you know that in the near future it will be on a6. 22... ♜d8 would have been a better try, following up with ... ♜e7 and ... c7-c6.

**23. ♜e4 ♜a6 24. ♜xf6+ ♜xf6 25. f4 e4 26. ♜c3**

Now White's initiative clearly comes first, and so Bronstein was not awarded for his bright idea, as he eventually lost the game.

**26... ♜e7 27. ♜e1 ♜af8 28.b4 c6 29. ♜xe4 ♜xe4+ 30. ♜cxe4 ♜xd5 31. ♜e8 ♜ac7 32. ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 33. ♜h1 ♜f5 34. ♜h4 ♜f6 35. ♜f2 ♜b5 36. ♜e2 ♜d5 37.a6 bxa6 38. ♜e8+ ♜g7 39. ♜xc6 ♜h6 40. ♜xa6 ♜xb4 41. ♜b7 ♜d3 42. ♜e7 ♜xf4 43. ♜xh7+ ♜g5 44. ♜e7+ ♜g4 45. ♜e3 ♜g5 46. h4+ ♜g4 47. ♜h2 ♜h5 48. ♜h6**

1-0

'A player who is brave enough to sacrifice his queen for two bishops in top-level competition should... not harbour any hopes of becoming World Champion' – Koltanowski in *Chess Review*. As you, dear reader, will perhaps not harbour any such hopes, just be brave!

## Summary

Two pieces fall short as compensation for a queen, unless there are other clear positional plusses. The pieces may have exceptionally strong squares available, or even control a colour complex. And sometimes the pieces are even able to attack a vulnerable king. When the side with the queen has no clear targets, a fortress may be possible. In general, it is a thin line for the side with the two pieces – but you will have the psychological advantage, and the sympathy for the underdog!

## Chapter 32

# Two Minor Pieces or a Rook?

This is a tough one. The general consensus (Esben Lund gave a nice summary of the historical opinion) is that one pawn for the player with the rook would provide equal chances, whereas two pawns tend to favour the player with the rook.

So far the absolute values. Then two other important factors are often mentioned in connection with this material imbalance. Firstly, the exchange of queens: this favours the side with the rook, which is by now the strongest piece, and the most likely piece to make proper use of any open file. Secondly, obviously the minor pieces may differ. For instance, Nunn and Golenichev claim power for the pair of bishops.

Now let's look at some practical examples.

The first encounter is a 'master against amateur' game:

**Pavel Simacek**

**Lukas Weissmann**

Ostrava 2012

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 e6 4.0-0 ♗ge7 5.♘e1 a6 6.♗f1 d5 7.exd5 ♗xd5 8.a4

8.d4 is more usual.

8... ♗e7 9.♘a3 0-0 10.♘c4 ♗f6 11.c3 ♗c7 12.d3 ♗d7

The alternative 12...b6, putting an end to the possibility of a4-a5 and intending to develop the bishop to b7, looks more logical.

13.a5



Question: Would you now decide to give up two pieces for a rook with ...♘xc3, gaining two pawns in the process? Black decided to give it a try.

13... ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♗xc3 15.♗d2 ♗xa1 16.♔xa1

Let's evaluate Black's decision here. The sacrifice wasn't a good idea. The most important thing to realize is that neither of the rooks has any scope for activity yet, so the sacrifice has clearly been

premature. Besides, in this particular position Black also lacks an active plan and has problems defending the c5-pawn.

16...f6 17.Qe3 Qb4 18.Qc1 Qd5 19.Qb6! Qxb6 20.axb6 Qd8 21.Qa5 Qb5 22.Qxc5 Qc8 23.Qa3 Qe8 24.Qd2 Qd5 25.d4 Qxf1 26.Qxf1

White has regained one pawn and his pieces have some nice squares, while Black's rooks still can't become active. White won effortlessly:

26...Qc6 27.Qe3 Qe4 28.Qc4 Qd8 29.Qd6 Qf4 30.g3 Qd2 31.Qxb7 Qxd4 32.Qa5 Qa4 33.Qxc6 Qxa3 34.Qxa3 Qd7 35.Qa5 Qb5 36.b7 Qf7 37.Qd6

1-0

So the important thing to remember here is that you should only give up two pieces for a rook in the middlegame if your rook(s) will become active afterwards. With more pieces off the board, and the endgame approaching, this will be more likely than it was in this game.

## In the Endgame the Rook Will Gain Strength

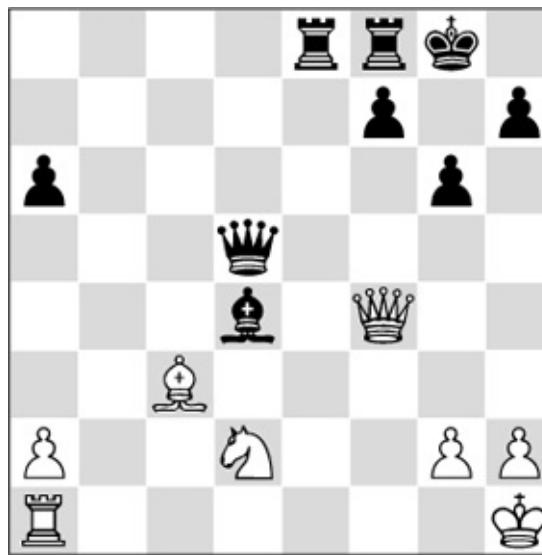
A good way to study this particular material imbalance is by means of your opening repertoire. Here is an example from a theoretical line, where White eventually faces the choice whether to exchange queens or not. Elementary knowledge about our material imbalance would have made this choice easy.

**Jean-Rene Koch**

**Jean-Marc Degraeve**

Narbonne ch-FRA 1997

1.e4 e5 2.Qf3 Qc6 3.Qb5 a6 4.Qa4 Qf6 5.0-0 b5 6.Qb3 Qb7 7.c3 Qxe4 8.d4 Qa5 9.Qc2 exd4 10.b4 Qc4 11.Qxe4 Qxe4 12.Qe1 d5 13.Qxd4 c5 14.bxc5 Qxc5 15.f3 0-0 16.fxe4 dxe4 17.Qxe4 Qd5 18.Qf3 Qe5 19.Qf5 Qae8 20.Qd2 b4 21.Qb2 g6 22.Qf4 bxc3 23.Qc6 24.Qh1 Qxd4 25.Qxd4 Qxd4



Which recapture would you prefer?

26.Qxd4

In Shirov-Tomashevsky, Khanty-Mansiysk (World Cup) 2009, Shirov (who used to play this line with black!) refused to go into an ending and kept his queen on the board for possible harassment of the black king: 26.Qxd4. The position remained somewhat annoying for Black. The text move, on the other hand, helps Black. In the endgame the rooks gain more freedom.

26...Qxd4 27.Qxd4 Qe2

Quite a transformation. The black rooks are very active, while the black king faces no real danger.

28.Qf3 f6 29.a3 g5 30.Qc3 Qc2 31.Qb4 Qfc8! 32.h3 Qc1+!

Another rule of thumb: the exchange of a rook pair favours the side with the two rooks. As play is taking place on both wings, the two minor pieces will have a difficult time against the remaining rook.

33.  $\mathbb{Q}xc1$   $\mathbb{Q}xc1+$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $h5$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $h4+$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}c2$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}c1$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $f5$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}e2?$

Things didn't look that clear-cut, but this lands White into real trouble.

42...  $\mathbb{Q}f1+$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $f4+$  44.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}f2$  45.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  46.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}g3$  47.  $a4$   $\mathbb{Q}c3$  48.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}a3$  49.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}xa4$  50.  $\mathbb{Q}e5+$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  51.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{Q}a5$  52.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}b5$  53.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $a5$  54.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$   $a4$  55.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $a3$  56.  $\mathbb{Q}g7$   $\mathbb{Q}b7+$  57.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$   $a2$  58.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $f3$  59.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$   $\mathbb{Q}a7$  60.  $\mathbb{Q}a1$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$

0-1

The following game is from my own experience with the same opening.

### Michiel van Wissen

### Arthur van de Oudeweetering

Hoogeveen 2004

1.e4 e5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $a6$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5.0-0  $b5$  6.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  7.  $c3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  8.  $d4$   $\mathbb{Q}a5$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $exd4$  10.  $b4$   $\mathbb{Q}c4$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $d5$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $c5$  14.  $bxc5$   $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  15.  $f3$  0-0 16.  $fxe4$   $dxe4$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}ad8$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}e3$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$



A lot could be said about the preceding moves, but everything was theoretically known. If I remember correctly, I'd mainly prepared the Scotch before this game. My opponent had, however, studied my limited opening repertoire and deliberately opted for this ending.

22...  $g6$

22...  $\mathbb{Q}e8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}a3!$  is a well-known trick. In Aagaard-Potapov, Voronezh 2002, Black obtained a less favourable version of the endgame after 23...  $\mathbb{Q}b6$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $g6$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xf5$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xf5$   $gxf5$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$ , although he drew in the end.

23.  $\mathbb{Q}xf5$   $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$

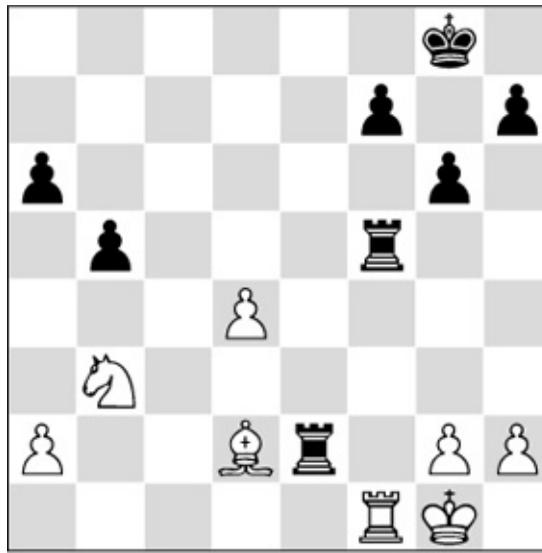
The simple 24...  $\mathbb{Q}b6$ , saddling White with the 'superfluous knight', looks more logical.

24...  $\mathbb{Q}c8$  was played in Goloschapov-Malaniuk, Nova Gorica 2003, and soon led to a draw.

25.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd4+?!$

Too impatient. After White's reply Black has a majority on the queenside. However, this majority isn't mobile, whereas White now has a passed d-pawn.

26.  $cxd4$   $\mathbb{Q}e2$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$



**27... ♜xf1+ 28. ♜xf1**

According to the rule mentioned above, this exchange should favour Black. The logic is that the white rook may cooperate well with the two minor pieces, for instance in an attack. Besides, the remaining black rook might infiltrate the opponent's position more easily. In this case, however, the latter still isn't true. An entry by the rook on the c- or e-file can easily be prevented by the white pieces, which cooperate well with the passed d-pawn.

**28... ♜e8 29. ♜b4 ♜d8**

**29...f6.**

**30. ♜e2 f5 31. ♜d3**

Now the white king has joined the battle while the black rook remains passive in its own camp. White made gradual progress and converted his advantage.

One more nice example from a theoretical line, this time the Dilworth Variation of the Open Spanish, where Black consistently carries out his plan.

## Efim Geller

### Valery Chekhov

Vilnius ch-URS 1980

**1.e4 e5 2. ♜f3 ♜c6 3. ♜b5 a6 4. ♜a4 ♜f6 5.0-0 ♜xe4 6.d4 b5 7. ♜b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♜e6 9.c3 ♜c5 10. ♜bd2 0-0 11. ♜c2 ♜xf2 12. ♜xf2 f6 13.exf6 ♜xf2+ 14. ♜xf2 ♜xf6 15. ♜g1**

15. ♜f1 is considered to be more precise: 15... ♜e5 16. ♜e3 ♜ae8 17. ♜c5 ♜xf3 18.gxf3 ♜f7 19. ♜g3 ♜g4 20. ♜g1 ♜xf3 21. ♜xf3 ♜xf3 22.a4 ♜h3 23.axb5 axb5 24. ♜e2. A nice tactic allows White to improve the position of his knight considerably compared to the main game, but Black should still be OK, Vuckovic-Ernst, Bermuda 2002.

**15... ♜ae8 16. ♜f1 ♜e5 17. ♜e3 ♜xf3+ 18. ♜xf3 ♜xf3 19.gxf3 ♜xf3 20. ♜d1 ♜f7 21. ♜b3 c6 22. ♜g3 ♜h3 23. ♜d4**



**23...g6!**

This is an effective plan, though the direct 23...h5 24.♘xh5 ♕e2 25.♘g3 (25. ♕b1 ♕xb2) 25...♕xb2 was also possible.

**24.♖c2 ♕e6 25.♕d3?!**

The start of a bad plan. Chekhov gives 25.a4! as a better try. White should attempt to exploit his dark-squared grip on the queenside and attack Black's immobile pawn majority on that part of the board.

25...h5 26.♕f1 ♕xf1 27.♕xf1

27.♘xf1 ♕e2.

27...h4 28.♕xf7 ♕xf7

One pair of rooks has now been exchanged, and the remaining rook enters White's position on the second rank.

29.♕f1 ♕e2 30.b4 ♕xa2 31.h3 ♕e6 32.♕e3 a5 33.bxa5 ♕xa5 34.♕f2 ♕d6 35.♕f6 ♕a4 36.♕e2 b4 37.cxb4 ♕xb4 38.♕g4 ♕b3 39.♕f2 c5 40.♕xh4 d4 41.♕g5 c4 42.h4 ♕e5 43.♕h3?

0-1

An attractively smooth game against a very strong white player! And also, this is more proof that the study of the opening, middlegame and endgame can be closely connected.

## An Outside Passed Pawn Will Help the Player with the Rook

Let's conclude with two examples which didn't arise straight out of opening theory. The following fragment not only shows Tal's great ability to calculate, but also his correct assessment of the resulting material imbalance.

**Boris Gulko**

**Mikhail Tal**

Sochi 1970

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 ♜c7 11.♘c1 ♜d7 12.♕b1 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♕ac8 14.♘b5 ♜a5 15.♘b2 ♕fd8 16.♘d2 ♜b6 17.♘a3



**17... ♜xd4! 18. ♜xc6 ♜c5!**

Including 18... ♜xf2+ 19. ♜h1 isn't a good idea, as after 19... ♜xc6 (19... ♜c5 loses immediately after 20. ♜f3) 20. ♜xf2 ♜xe4 21. ♜e1 another material imbalance arises – White is better: for the moment, Black's queen is exposed, and his pawns are vulnerable. White may also start an attack on the kingside.

**19. ♜xb6 ♜xa3 20. ♜xd7 ♜xd7 21. ♜b4**

You might think this is a saving tactical resource, but the resulting position again shows the strength of Black's active rooks: 21. ♜b3 ♜xd2 22. ♜xa3 ♜xe2 23. ♜xa7 ♜b2 24. ♜a3 ♜cc2 leads to a very passive and thus unpleasant double-rook ending for White.

**21... axb6 22. ♜xa3 ♜c4 23. ♜g3**

The knight has few prospects here and Black also gets an outside passed pawn, but after 23. ♜c1 Black gains the e-pawn and also has the better position, as the a2-pawn remains a target.

**23... ♜a4 24. ♜c1 ♜xa2**

Now White's minor pieces will find it hard to deal with the passed b-pawns.

**25. ♜e3 ♜b2 26. ♜c1 b5 27. ♜f1 b4 28. ♜e1 b3 29. ♜c3 h5 30. e5 ♜d5 31. ♜e4 ♜b5 32. e6 ♜b1+ 33. ♜d2 b2 34. ♜d4 ♜d1+**

**0-1**

In the following example Black uses all the knowledge we have acquired. White sacrifices an exchange. By sacrificing back a piece Black liquidates into an endgame which, as we all know now, should favour him.

## Tiger Hillarp Persson Lars Bo Hansen

Denmark tt 2000

**1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3. ♜c3 ♜b4 4. ♜c2 0-0 5.e4 d5 6.e5 ♜e4 7. ♜d3 c5 8.cxd5 exd5 9. ♜ge2 cxd4 10. ♜xd4 ♜d7 11.f4 ♜dc5 12.0-0 ♜xc3 13.bxc3 ♜xd3 14. ♜xd3 ♜d7 15. ♜b1 ♜c8 16. ♜d2 ♜c7 17. ♜fe1 b6 18. ♜xe4 dxe4 19. ♜xe4 ♜fe8 20. ♜e1 ♜c4 21.f5 ♜c5 22.e6 fxe6 23.fxe6**



23... ♜xe6! 24. ♜xe6 ♜xe4 25. ♜xe4

The queen exchange favours Black.

25... ♜a5

Black is about to obtain his desired outside passed pawn. Moreover, because of the pin the e6-knight can only become active after a pair of rooks are exchanged. As we know, this favours Black.

26. ♜g5 ♜xe4 27. ♜xe4 ♜xa2 28. ♜f2 a5

Here too the minor pieces have difficulty dealing with the passed pawn. White brings his king over, but thereby leaves his kingside pawns unprotected.

29. ♜e3 a4 30. c4 a3 31. ♜d3 ♜a1 32. ♜c2

32. ♜c3 a2 doesn't help either. The white pieces can't move. For instance 33. ♜d4 ♜d1, and White will soon run out of moves.

32... a2 33. ♜b2 ♜g1 34. ♜xa2 ♜xg2

White is lost: he is dropping a piece.

35. ♜b3 ♜e2 36. ♜c3 ♜xd2 37. ♜a4 ♜xh2 38. ♜xb6 ♜f7 39. c5 ♜e6

0-1

## Two Bishops or The Pair of Bishops?

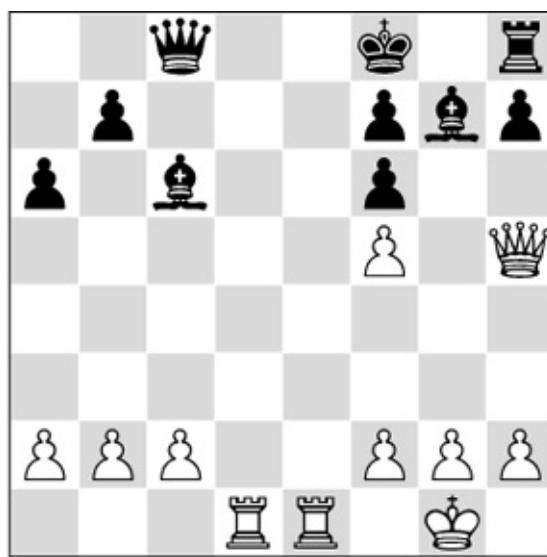
Finally, let's say just a little bit about the pair of bishops. Often this is a force to be reckoned with, though also, when compensating a rook and pawn, other factors like pawn structure, king safety or a passed pawn will play a role.

Two obvious examples:

**Mateusz Bartel**

**Ian Nepomniachtchi**

Jerusalem Ech 2015



Here I would not say that Black has the pair bishops – just ‘two bishops’.

**19.  $\mathbb{B}d4$   $\mathbb{B}c7$  20.  $\mathbb{B}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}h6$  21.  $h4!$**

The cleanest way to win. Now Black’s dark-squared bishop is deprived of the g5-square.

**21...  $\mathbb{B}a5$  22.  $\mathbb{B}d8+$   $\mathbb{B}g7$  23.  $\mathbb{B}g4+$   $\mathbb{Q}g5$  24.  $\mathbb{B}dd1$   $h6$  25.  $a3$   $\mathbb{B}c7$  26.  $\mathbb{B}g3$**

A nice move in a winning position. After the exchange of queens the g5-bishop will still be lost

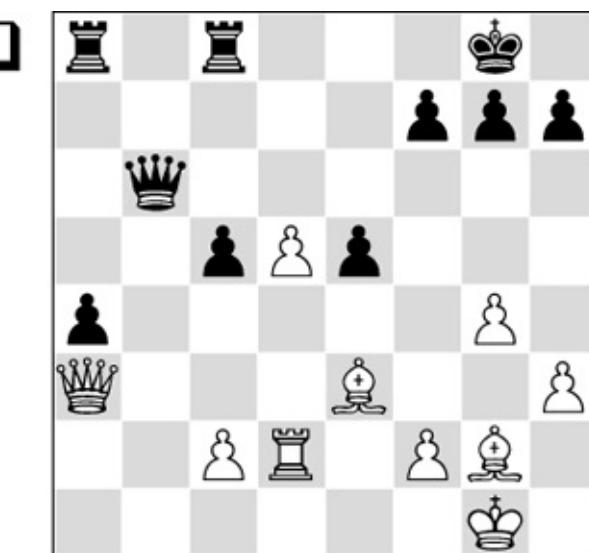
**26...  $\mathbb{B}a5$  27.  $f4$   $\mathbb{B}c5+$  28.  $\mathbb{B}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}xg2$  29.  $fxg5$   $hxg5$  30.  $hxg5$   $\mathbb{B}h1+$  31.  $\mathbb{B}xg2$   $\mathbb{B}c6+$  32.  $\mathbb{B}f3$   $\mathbb{B}xd1$  33.  $gxg6+$   $\mathbb{B}xf6$  34.  $\mathbb{B}h4+$   $\mathbb{B}g7$  35.  $f6+$   $\mathbb{B}g8$  36.  $\mathbb{B}g3+$   $\mathbb{B}f8$  37.  $\mathbb{B}b8+$   $\mathbb{B}e8$  38.  $\mathbb{B}h3$   $\mathbb{B}d2+$  39.  $\mathbb{B}f3$**

**1-0**

**Dariusz Swiercz**

**Martin Krämer**

Germany Bundesliga 2014/15



And here you could say that White indeed has the pair bishops, not just two bishops.

**30.  $d6$   $\mathbb{B}a6$  31.  $\mathbb{B}d5$   $\mathbb{B}d8$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{B}b1+$  33.  $\mathbb{B}h2$   $\mathbb{B}xc2$  34.  $\mathbb{B}b4$   $\mathbb{B}aa8(?)$**

**34...  $a3$  35.  $\mathbb{B}xe5$   $a2$  36.  $d7$ .**

**35.  $\mathbb{B}d2$**

**1-0**

Of course, in the first example Black’s king is terribly bad, while here the central passed pawn is an enormous asset. Statistics will point out a percentage for each combination of minor pieces versus rook and pawn. In a practical game you will have to base your decision on what is actually happening on the board.

## Summary

When you decide to give two pieces for a rook, remember to consider the potential activity of your own rook(-s). The rook is likely to become stronger when the endgame comes nearer: more lines and files can be used. Also, here an (outside) passed pawn can be hard to handle for the two minor pieces. As always, the pair of bishops can be forceful, but always judge the concrete position that is about to arise.

## Chapter 33

# Three Pawns for a Piece?

That should cover the expenses. Of course, in practice things again are not that clear-cut. The resulting pawn structures – e.g. loose pawns or a coherent front – and the activity of the pieces should influence your decision whether to go for this material imbalance or not. Let's consider some of the typical ones.

## Strong Pawn Centre

**S.P. Sethuraman**

**David Klein**

Wijk aan Zee 2011

Getting three pawns in exchange for a minor piece is something which occurs more often than you might think. Numerous openings lead to this material imbalance. Here are two examples that also result in a strong pawn centre for the side that gives up the piece:

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d5 2. d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  3. c4 dxc4 4.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  5. d5  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  6.  $\mathbb{Q}a4+$  c6 7. b4 b5 8.  $\mathbb{Q}xa5$   $\mathbb{Q}xa5$  9. bxa5 b4 10.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$  cxd5 (counting the doubled a-pawns as one pawn here) and 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  4. e5  $\mathbb{Q}fd7$  5. f4 c5 6.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}a5+$  9. c3 cxd4 10. b4  $\mathbb{Q}xb4$  11. cxb4  $\mathbb{Q}xb4+$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ , when White's centre is typically attacked by moves like ...f7-f6 or ...g7-g5 and Black usually reinforces with ...b7-b6 and ... $\mathbb{Q}c5$ , after which  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  gives him a solid block of three central pawns.

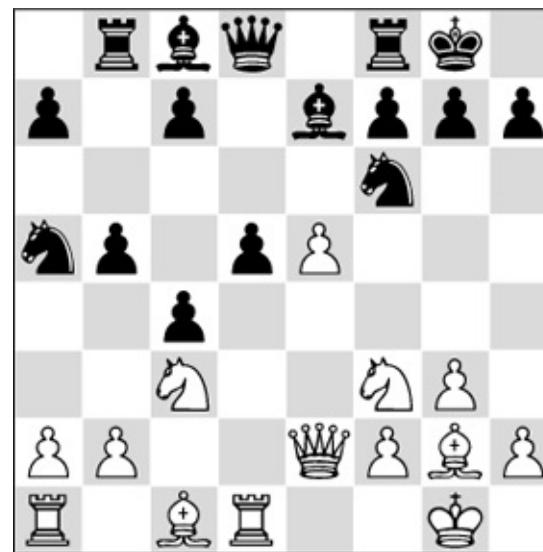
1. d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. c4 e6 3.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d5 4. g3  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$  0-0 6. 0-0 dxc4 7.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  8. e4  $\mathbb{Q}a5$

The immediate 8... $\mathbb{Q}b8$  is far more common.

9.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$

This seems to be a new position. White continues actively, which is typical of this kind of position.

10.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$  b5 11. d5 exd5 12. e5



Having grabbed two pawns, Black now ignores the direct threat. This is frequently seen when a position arises with three pawns for a piece, so don't let it surprise you.

If Black had played ...a7-a6 instead of ... $\mathbb{Q}c6$ -a5 in this particular position, he could have played ...

d5-d4 and reached another well-known position, with a more mobile pawn centre and queen's knight. One high-level example is Caruana-Cheparinov, Villafranca 2010.

**12...c6 13.exf6 ♜xf6**

I suspect White is slightly better here. Black's centre is solid, but static. Still, it's hard to come up with a clear-cut plan for White.

**14.♜e3**

**14.♝f4.**

**14...♝e8 15.♘c2 a6 16.♝e4?**

White miscalculates and now he is just lost. A logical follow-up might seem to be 16.♝d4, but after 16...♝xd4 17.♝xd4 Black's pawn centre is suddenly mobile again, for instance with 17...c5. A less forcing move like 16.♝e1 would have been better.

**16...♝xe4 17.♝g5 ♜xe3! 18.♘xh7+ ♜f8 19.fxe3 ♜xg5 20.♘h8+ ♜e7 21.♘xg7 ♜f6**

With no attack and material down, White is just lost.

**22.♘h6 ♜h8 23.♘f4 ♜e5 24.♘f2 ♜e6 25.♗ab1 b4 26.a3 ♜b3 27.axb4 ♜xb4 28.♗f1 a5 29.♘f3 ♜c5 30.♘c2 ♜h6**

**31.♘e2 ♜b3 32.♗fe1 ♜d3 33.♗f1 ♜d6 34.e4 d4**

**0-1**

## Queenside Avalanche

A piece sac for three pawns may also lead to a rather overwhelming queenside majority, as in the following game:

**Tiberiu-Marian Georgescu**

**Vlad-Ionut Stegariu**

Monteor ch-ROM 2012

**1.c4 ♜f6 2.g3 g6 3.♕c3 ♜g7 4.♗g2 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.♗ge2 e5 7.0-0 c6 8.d3 a6 9.h3 ♜bd7 10.♗e3 b5 11.a3 ♜b7 12.f4 ♜e7 13.f5 ♜e8 14.b4 ♜c7 15.g4 f6 16.a4 ♜h8 17.♗d2**



Black has no prospects on the kingside, so he opts for a seemingly clever breakthrough on the queenside.

**17...a5 18.bxa5 b4 19.♗b5!**

This time the threat isn't ignored, but there was probably a surprise factor here as well, as the b5-square seemed to be properly covered.

**19...cxb5**

Black should probably have resisted the temptation and played 19...♝a6!. Now White's position plays itself very easily.

20.axb5 ♜c5 21.♗fb1 ♗fb8 22.♗xb4

Black lacks space and a decent plan, but he should at least have tried to gain some space on the kingside with 22...♝g8 and ...gx f5.

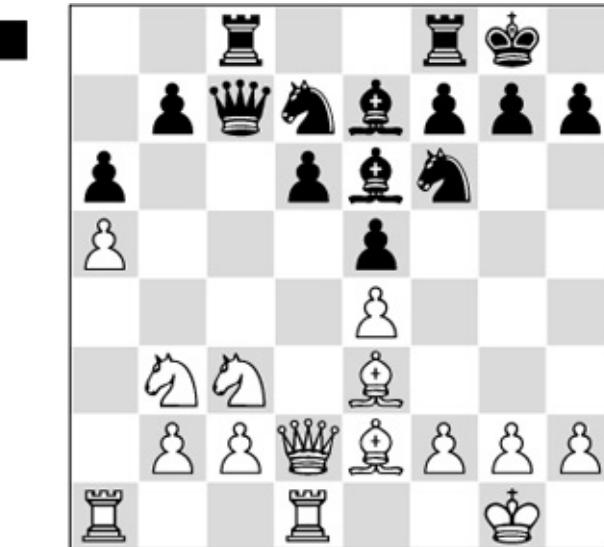
22...♜c8 23.♝c3 ♜d7 24.♗bb1 ♜e8 25.♗h1 ♜f8 26.d4! exd4 27.♗xd4 ♜f7 28.b6

Gaining the d5-square. The queenside pawns might seem ideally blocked by a knight, but the passed pawns are already too far advanced, and White's space advantage is crushing.

28...♝7a6 29.♝d5 ♜g7 30.♗f4 ♜c6 31.♗xd6 ♜xd5 32.exd5

1-0

An amazing piece sac for three pawns with a subsequent slow central avalanche (see IYCP, Chapter 27) was seen in Kuzubov-Nigalidze, Al Ain 2014, in a theoretically very well-known position:



13....♝xe4!?. Black won a fine game and the tournament, but half a year later he was caught red-handed, cheating in a tournament in Dubai.

## Attacking the Kingside

Danny Raznikov

Jan Smeets

Dieren 2012

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 d5 4.♗c3 c6 5.e3 ♜bd7 6.♗c2 ♜d6 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 dx c4 9.♗xc4 e5 10.h3 h6 11.a3 ♜e8 12.♗a2 exd4 13.exd4 ♜b6

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**14. ♜xh6**

A very familiar sacrifice (see also IYCP Chapter 28, *Fishing for the Hook*), not only in this opening line, but also since at least 1876, when Blackburne played it against William Potter in London. Smeets can't have been fully focussed, I guess.

It's an easy sacrifice to decide on, as apart from the attack you immediately gain three pawns. However, when your attack is put on hold, the pawns probably won't play a major role yet. They are not far advanced and have to protect the king as well. In this case, Black will take over the initiative and the activity of his pieces will be of major significance. White, in turn, should try to find a good moment to switch from the attack to strategic play. I will give two related examples from contemporary opening theory:

1. ♜f3 d5 2. d4 ♜f6 3. c4 e6 4. ♜c3 c6 5. e3 ♜bd7 6. ♜c2 ♜d6 7. ♜d3 0-0 8. 0-0 dxc4 9. ♜xc4 b5 10. ♜d3 ♜b7 11. a3 ♜c8 12. ♜g5 c5 13. ♜xh7+ ♜h8 14. f4 g6 15. ♜xg6 fxg6 16. ♜xb5, for instance So-Sevian, St. Louis ch-USA 2015, and 1. e4 c5 2. ♜f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♜xd4 ♜f6 5. ♜c3 ♜c6 6. ♜g5 e6 7. ♜d2 a6 8. 0-0 0 h6 9. ♜e3 ♜d7 10. f3 ♜c7 11. ♜b1 b5 12. ♜dxh5 axb5 13. ♜xb5 ♜b8 14. ♜xd6+ ♜xd6 15. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 16. ♜xd6, Mekhitarian-A.Vovk, Cappelle-la-Grande 2015.

**14... gxh6 15. ♜g6+ ♜h8 16. ♜xh6+**

Reversing the move order with 16. ♜xf7 is also good.

**16... ♜h7**

Forced; if 16... ♜g8 17. ♜xf7+ ♜xf7 18. ♜g5+ ♜g8 19. ♜g6+.

**17. ♜xf7 ♜e7 18. ♜g5 ♜f5 19. ♜xh7 ♜xf7**

**19... ♜xh7 20. ♜f6#.**

**20. ♜g5+ ♜h7 21. ♜xh7 ♜xh7 22. ♜fe1 ♜f8 23. ♜f4**

White has gained back the exchange and should be better, but things aren't entirely clear: although Black's king has no pawn protection, White's attack is over and Black has chances to coordinate his minor pieces.

**23... ♜g7**

This precise position had in fact occurred once before. In Reilly-Booth, Melbourne 1997, Black played 23... ♜d7.

**24. ♜f7**

Here, the developing move 24. ♜ad1 would have been more unpleasant for Black. White, however, continued in a sacrificial mood and although the game remained double-edged, he eventually even lost.

# Dejan Antic

Plovdiv 2012

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. c4 g6 3. g3  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  4.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$  0-0 5. 0-0 c5 6.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  7. d4 cxd4 8.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  9. e3 d6 10.  $\mathbb{Q}de2$   $\mathbb{Q}a5$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  12. h3  $\mathbb{Q}ge5$



White is worse. With his pawns hanging on h3 and c4 he decides to force matters, which gives Black the chance to set up an attack by sacrificing his bishop for three pawns.

13.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}hxg4$   $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}ce5$

Not only aiming at the c4-pawn, but first of all threatening 16...  $\mathbb{Q}f3+$ .

16.  $\mathbb{Q}g3?$

Not the best spot for the knight. 16.  $\mathbb{Q}d4$  is a much better try, after which Black has compensation, but it's less obvious: 16...  $\mathbb{Q}h2+$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}h4$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}ac8$  19. b3  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}xf2+$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xf2$   $\mathbb{Q}gxf2$ .

16...  $\mathbb{Q}h2+$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$  h5 18.  $\mathbb{Q}h1?$

Definitely not the preferred spot for the knight and probably not the intended follow-up to 16.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$ , but White's position is very hard to play, with moves like ...  $\mathbb{Q}xf2$ , ...  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  and ... h5-h4 in the air.

18...  $\mathbb{Q}xc4$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2+$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}xd2$  e6!

A very composed and good move! The intention is to build a centre with ... d6-d5, which would diminish the scope of activity for both the c3-knight and the g2-bishop.

21.  $\mathbb{Q}ed1$

21.  $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  d5 22.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$  (22.  $\mathbb{Q}xa8$   $\mathbb{Q}xh1+$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}g2$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}c6$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$  d4 with a devastating attack) 22...  $\mathbb{Q}ab8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$  h4.

21... d5

Black is clearly better and went on to win. He has mobile pawns and has established a solid pawn centre, while White's extra piece is tucked away on h1.

## Queenless Middlegames/Endgames

### Arthur van de Oudeweetering

### Sybolt Strating

Amstelveen 2006

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  dxe4 4.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}gf6$  6.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  g6 7.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$  h6 9.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  hxg5 10.  $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xg5+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}b6$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}g5+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  16. c3



Here is a position from one of my own games. It arose straight from a sharp theoretical battle in the Caro-Kann.

**16... ♕b5! 17.♕xb5 cxb5**

With the queens off the board, the black king suffers much less from the lack of pawn protection. The white pawns haven't yet advanced very far, but they are in a compact formation. White should develop and gradually push his pawns forward. Black, on the other hand, should try to block the pawns (create strong squares for his pieces) and create weaknesses in his opponent's pawn structure.

**18.f3 ♖d7 19.♔f2**

My opponent and I concluded after the game that the patient (but also rather ugly) 19.a3, to prevent Black's next move, would have been better.

**19... b4! 20.g4**

20.c4 ♔e6 21.♔xe6 ♖xe6 22.b3 b5! is another typical line, where Black successfully creates strong squares for his pieces. That would have been preferable, however, as in the game White just obtained a backward c-pawn, and Black had a strong square on c4.

**20... bxc3 21.bxc3 ♜c8 22.♔d2 ♔e6 23.♔xe6 ♖xe6 24.♔g3?**

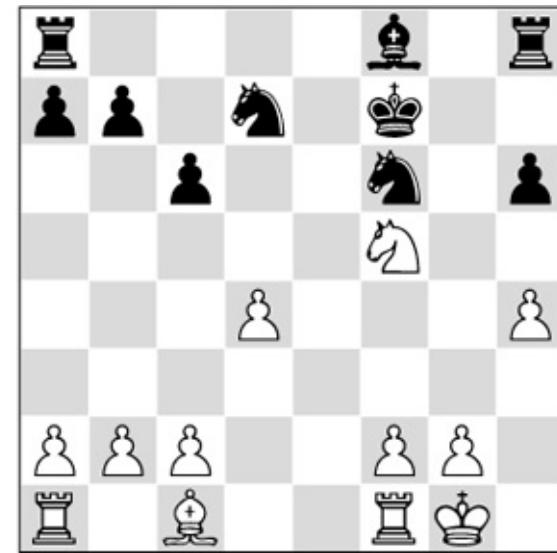
Apparently, I wasn't mentally prepared for the altered course of the game. Black now won easily after...

**24... ♖xg4 25.fxg4 ♔e4+**

**Arthur van de Oudeweetering**

**Menno Okkes**

Amstelveen 1999



Again a queenless middlegame from one of my own games (this time from another complex Caro-Kann line). Here I managed to manoeuvre more successfully.

**18. ♜f4 ♛g6 19. ♜g3 ♜g7 20. ♜fe1 ♜he8 21. c3 h5 22. f3**

White's last two moves are typical: slowly gaining control without compromising the pawn structure. The position strongly recalls the game Keres-Olafsson, Bled 1961. The only difference is that here both sides have one more minor piece. Keres won that game.

**22... c5**

Activating the d7-knight, but with every pawn exchange Black's winning chances diminish, and with the d4-pawn off the board the white pieces also gain more scope.

**23. dxc5 ♜xc5 24. ♜xe8 ♜xe8 25. ♜d1 ♜a4**

If was probably better for Black to offer an exchange of rooks with 25... ♜e7 followed by ... ♜d7.

**26. ♜g5 ♜xb2 27. ♜b1 ♜d3 28. ♜xb7 ♜e1+ 29. ♜h2**

With more pawns off the board and an active rook, the position is easier for White to play. With the time control approaching, Black now goes wrong.

**29... ♜h7? 30. f4! ♜xg5 31. f5+ ♜h7 32. hxg5**

Now White is better.

**32... ♜g8 33. f6 ♜f8 34. ♜xh5 ♜d6+? 35. g3**

35. ♜h3?? ♜f2+ 36. ♜h4 ♜h1#.

**35... ♜e2+ 36. ♜h3 ♜f2+ 37. ♜g2 ♜xa2 38. f7+?**

38. g6.

**38... ♜f8 39. g6 ♜d3+?**

39... ♜g4+ 40. ♜f1 ♜h2+ 41. ♜e1 ♜f3+ 42. ♜d1 ♜d2+ 43. ♜c1 ♜e5 44. ♜xa7 ♜d8.

**40. ♜f1**

**1-0**

We finish with a high-level (rapid) game. An older top-class example of three pawns versus a piece, and one we fondly remember in the Netherlands, is the 26th game of the Euwe-Alekhine match in 1935. That win proved decisive for Euwe's winning of the world title and was dubbed the 'Pearl of Zandvoort'.

## Wang Yue

### Ian Nepomniachtchi

St Petersburg (URS-CHN rapid) 2012

**1. c4 g6 2. g3 ♜g7 3. ♜g2 c5 4. ♜c3 ♜c6 5. ♜f3 e5 6. 0-0 ♜ge7 7. a3 d6 8. b4 e4 9. ♜g5 h6 10. ♜gxe4 f5 11. bxc5 fxe4 12. cxd6 ♜xd6 13. ♜xe4**



White has nice pressure on the queenside ( $\mathbb{Q}g2$ ,  $\mathbb{B}b1$ ) and a potentially very strong pawn centre. So, White has the initiative, which is also pleasant in blitz and rapid games.

**13... ♕e6**

Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, this position had occurred before. For instance, Pavlovic-Rogers, Saint Vincent 2002, continued with 13... $\mathbb{Q}c7$ .

**14. ♜b1 0-0 15.d3 b6 16. ♜b2 ♜xb2 17. ♜xb2 ♜b8 18.c5 ♜d8 19. ♜d2 ♜g7 20. ♜fb1**

By now, White is clearly pressing.

**20... ♜d5 21. ♜c3 ♜ce7 22.e4**

Here comes the centre, though the intermediate 22. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  might have been better.

**22... ♜xc3 23. ♜xc3+ ♜f6 24.e5 ♜e6 25.c6 ♜d5 26.c7 ♜a8**

White must be winning now, but Nepomniachtchi defends stubbornly and in the end maintains the blockade. A very fine performance!

**27.d4**

**27. ♜b4.**

**27... ♜d7 28. ♜c1 ♜c8 29. ♜b4 ♜b5 30. ♜d2 ♜xb2 31. ♜xb2 ♜d5 32. ♜xd5?!**

This looks very dangerous for White, in view of the weak light squares, but by now Black's position was fine anyway.

**32... ♜xd5 33. ♜c3 ♜h3 34. ♜c6 ♜xc6 35. ♜xc6 ♜d7 36. ♜c1 ♜e6 37. ♜c6 ♜f7 38.f4 ♜d7 39. ♜c1 ♜e6 40. ♜f2 ♜d5**

**41. ♜e3 h5 42. ♜c2 ♜c6 43.h3 ♜d7 44.g4 hxg4 45.hxg4 ♜xg4 46. ♜c1 ♜d7 47. ♜c2 ♜f5 48. ♜c1 ♜h8 49.a4 a5 50. ♜f2 ♜xd4 51. ♜c6 ♜c8 52. ♜g3 ♜d5**

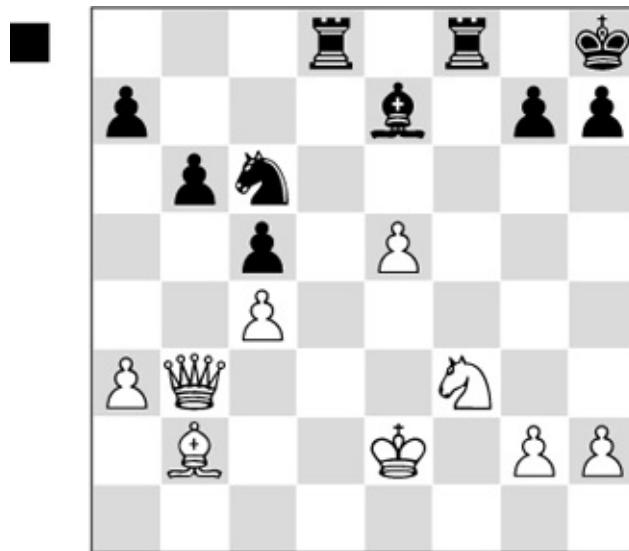
**0-1**

## Summary

Three pawns may equal a piece materially, but they really should be a force, otherwise the piece extra will have its say. Preferably the pawns should form a united front, in the centre or on the wing. Most likely, passed pawns will be created, which should be carefully advanced, limiting the activity of the opponent's pieces at the same time. The side with the extra piece will try to block the pawns and to obtain good squares for his pieces. Mostly he should not exchange too many pawns in order to keep his winning chances alive.

# Exercises

## Exercise 27



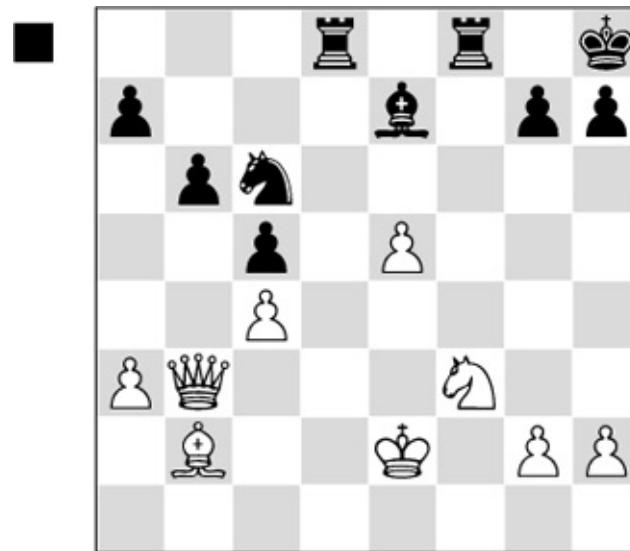
What is Black's simplest plan?

## Exercise 27

Pavel Ponkratov

Yuri Kryvoruchko

Berlin Wch rapid 2015



26... ♜f4 27.♔b5 ♜a5

Targeting the c-pawn twice. The side with the queen has the usual problems defending loose pawns.

28.♔a6

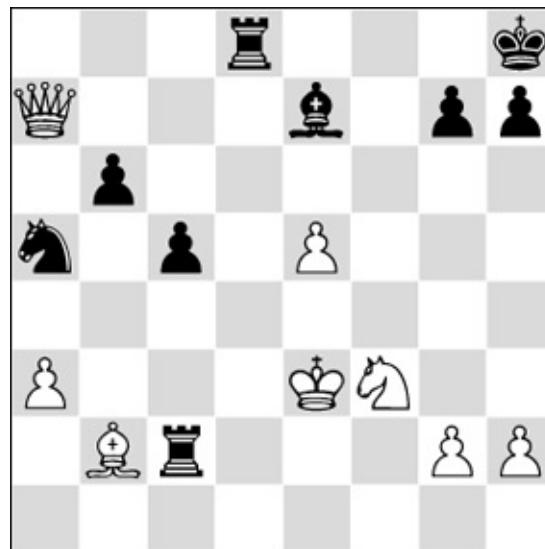
28.♗d2 ♜g4 29.g3 ♜g5.

28... ♜xc4

28... ♜e4+ 29.♔f2 ♜f8! was a chance to harass the white king that was hard to find: 30.♕xa7 ♜h4+ 31.♔g1 ♜xc4.

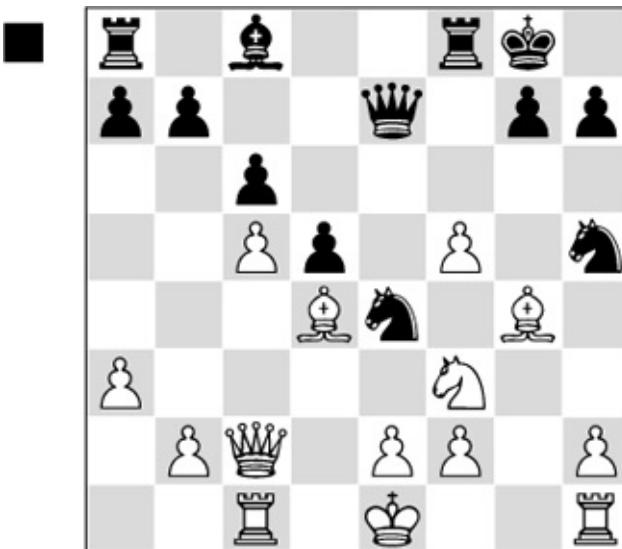
29.♔xa7 ♜c2+ 30.♔e3?

Even for a rapid game, this is an extremely careless move; 30.♔e1.



30... ♜c4+ 31.♔f4 ♜f8+ 32.♔e4 ♜d8 33.♔a1 ♜xg2 34.e6 ♜g4+ 35.♔d5 ♜xf3 36.e7 ♜d3+ 37.♔c6 ♜g6+ 38.♔b5 ♜d6+ 39.♔c6 ♜c8+ 40.♔b7 ♜xe7 41.♔a4 ♜g8

## Exercise 28



17...♝xf5 18.♝xh5. Now choose: grab an extra pawn with 18...♝xf2 or keep an eye on e2 and h5 with 18...♝g3?

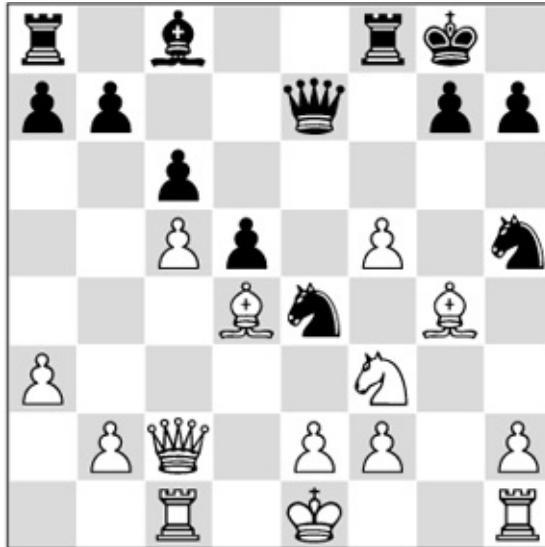
## Exercise 28

Zhao Xue

Valentina Gunina

China tt 2015

Black to move



17... ♜xf5 18. ♜xh5 ♛g3?

18... ♜xf2 19. ♜c3 (19. ♜xf2 ♜xc2 20. ♜xc2, and the third piece is immediately lost after 20... ♜e4 21. ♜d1 ♜f5) 19... ♜xh1 20. ♜d2 and White wins the lost knight, but the stranded h5-bishop goes as well after 20...g6.

19.hxg3!

19. ♜d1 ♜xh1 20. ♜d2 ♜xf2 21. ♜xf2 g6.

19... ♜xc2 20. ♜xc2

Now the h5-bishop is protected and the three pieces are stronger than the queen. White went on to win:

20... ♜e4 21. ♜d2 b6 22. ♜h4 ♜e7 23. ♜c2 ♜e6 24. ♜e5 ♜f5 25. ♜d1 bxc5 26. ♜xc5 ♜b1+ 27. ♜c1 ♜a2 28. ♜xc6 g6  
29. ♜f3 ♜ae8 30. ♜a5 ♜c8 31. ♜c6 ♜c7 32. ♜e5 ♜b7 33. ♜c2 ♜f5 34. ♜b4 ♜xb4 35. ♜c8+ ♜f8 36. ♜xf8+ ♜xf8  
37. ♜xb4 a5 38. ♜b7 ♜c4 39. ♜d2 ♜c5 40. ♜xh7 d4 41. ♜f4 g5 42. ♜c7 ♜b6 43. ♜b7 ♜f6 44. ♜b8 g4 45. ♜e4 ♜e6  
46. ♜g2 ♜e8 47. ♜f4 ♜d8 48. ♜b5 ♜a6 49. a4 ♜e6 50. ♜d5 ♜f6 51. ♜c4 ♜d7 52. ♜d3 ♜f8 53. ♜b7+ ♜c6 54. ♜e4+

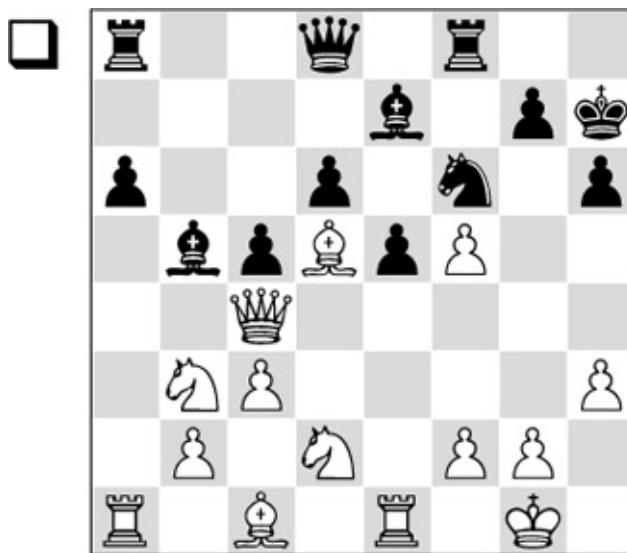
Black resigned.

## Exercise 29



Give back the piece or...?

**Exercise 29**  
**Sergei Movsesian**  
**Alexey Dreev**  
Solin 2006



25.  $\mathbb{W}xb5!$   $axb5$  26.  $\mathbb{B}xa8$   $\mathbb{W}c7$  27.  $\mathbb{B}xf8$   $\mathbb{Q}xf8$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$



You might have been afraid of Black's marching central pawns. However, White easily manages to coordinate his pieces.

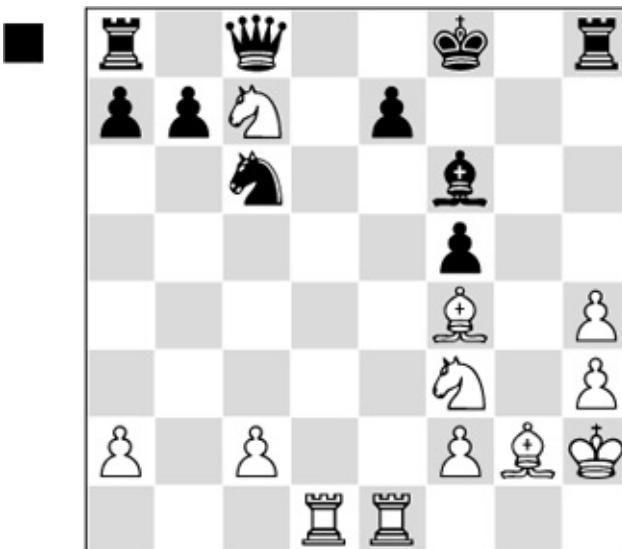
28...  $d5$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $d4$  31.  $cxd4$   $exd4$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$

Already Black's central pawn mass has come to a standstill; the white pieces continue to improve their positions.

32...  $\mathbb{Q}h5$  33.  $\mathbb{B}a1$   $\mathbb{W}b7$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}g6$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}xf4$   $\mathbb{W}b8$  38.  $g3$   $d3$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{W}e5$  40.  $\mathbb{B}a8$   $g5$

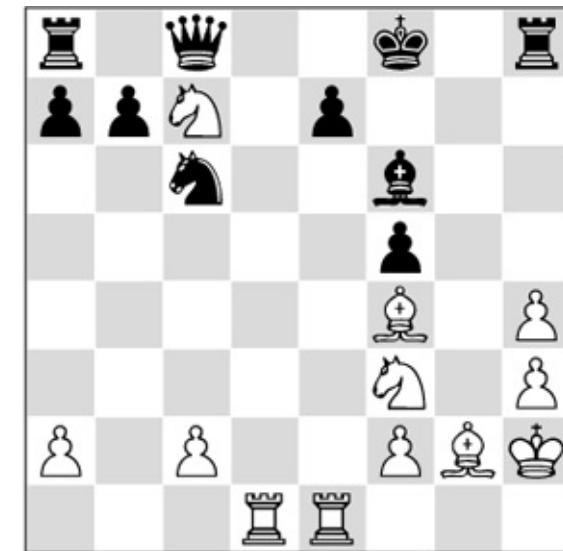
And Black resigned.

## Exercise 30



Two pieces for a queen, but what about the obvious 23...e5?

**Exercise 30**  
**Loek van Wely**  
**David Navara**  
Wijk aan Zee 2016



**23... e5 24. ♜xe5**

24. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 (24... ♛xc7 25. ♜xf5 ♛f7 26. ♜d6) 25. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 26. ♜xe5 transposes to the game.

**24... ♜xe5 25. ♜xe5 ♜xe5 26. ♜xe5**

It appears that Black's passive major pieces and open king position allow White a draw thanks to his supreme activity.

With hindsight, 23... ♜b8 would have offered better prospects, though Black would be far from clearly winning.

**26... ♜h7**

26... ♜h6 27. ♜d5!, quietly closing in on the black king. ♜g1 is to follow. For example 27... ♛d8 (27... ♛d7 28. ♜xa8) 28. ♜g1 ♛xh4 29. ♜g8+ ♔e7 30. ♜g7+ ♔d8 31. ♜xa8 ♛xf2+ 32. ♜g2 ♛e1 33. ♜g8+, again with a perpetual.

**27. ♜xa8?!**

The capture of this passive rook should have been delayed while White still had the initiative. Material values are not a real issue here.

27. ♜d6+ ♔f7 (27... ♛g7 28. ♜e5+ ♔f8) 28. ♜e1 (and not 28. ♜d5+? ♔f6, when 29. ♜e1 is not possible because of 29... ♜xc7).

**27... ♛xa8 28. c4 ♜c8 29. ♜d6+ ♛f7**

29... ♔e8!, and suddenly White has a hard time preventing the black king to escape to the queenside.

**30. ♜d5+ ♛f6 31. ♜e1**

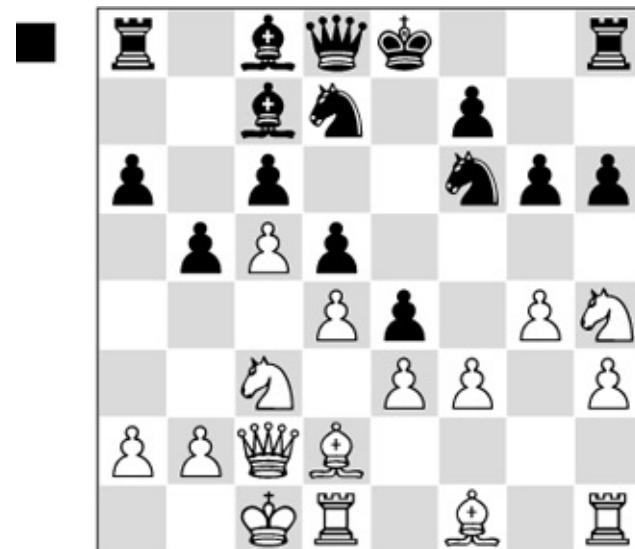
And the game ended peacefully after...

**31... ♛d7 32. ♜e5+ ♛e7 33. ♜f4+ ♛d8**

33... ♛f8 34. ♜e6.

**34. ♜g5+ ♛c7 35. ♜f4+ ♛d8 36. ♜g5+ ♛c7 37. ♜f4+ ♛d8**

## Exercise 31



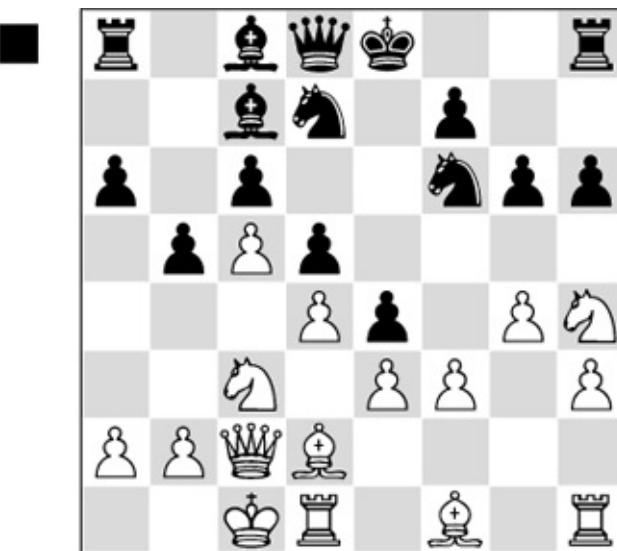
Black continued with 15...a5, justifiably fearing 15...exf3 16.♘xg6 fxg6 17.♗xg6+ ♖f8 18.e4. How can White react?

## Exercise 31

Hikaru Nakamura

Maria Muzychuk

Gibraltar 2016



**15... a5 16.fxe4 b4 17. ♜xd5!**

A clear refutation.

**17... cxd5 18.exd5 ♜g3**

18... ♜xd5 fails to 19. ♜e4+. Even the more brutal 19. ♜xg6 wins: 19... fxg6 20. ♜xg6+ ♜f8 21. ♜c4.

**19. ♜f3**

With three strong central pawns for the piece Nakamura soon prevailed. The engine prefers 19. ♜xg6 (again) 19... fxg6 20. ♜xg6+ ♜f8 21. e4, which indeed looks pretty hopeless for Black.

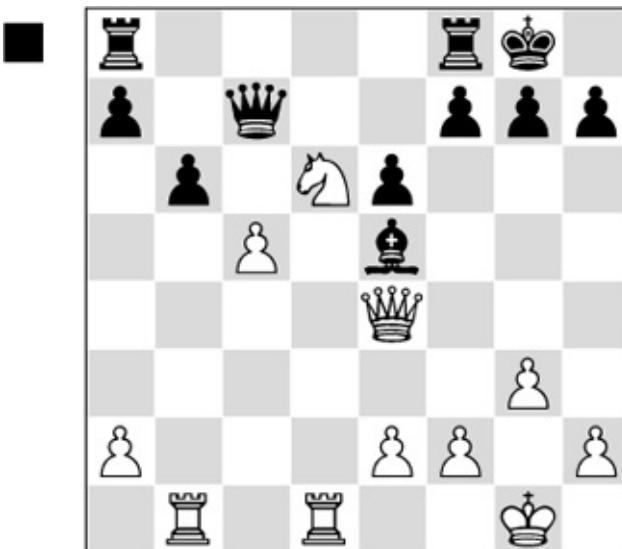
**19... 0-0 20. ♜g1 ♜c7**

20... ♜b8 21. e4 a4 22. ♜c4.

**21. ♜c4 ♜a6 22. d6 ♜xd6 23. ♜xg6+ ♜h8 24. ♜xh6+ ♜h7 25. ♜g5 ♜df6 26. ♜df1**

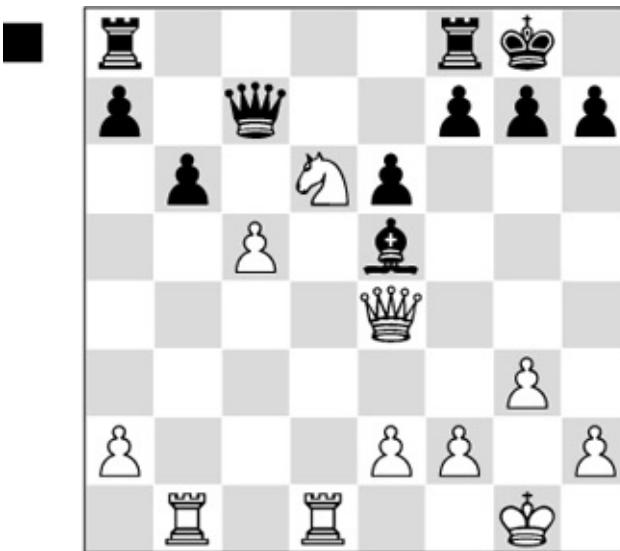
Black resigned.

## Exercise 32



As ... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  runs into  $\mathbb{B}bc1$ , Black seems to be forced to take on d6. Or can you spot a way out?

**Exercise 32**  
**Ildar Khairullin**  
**Igor Lysyj**  
Chita ch-RUS 2015



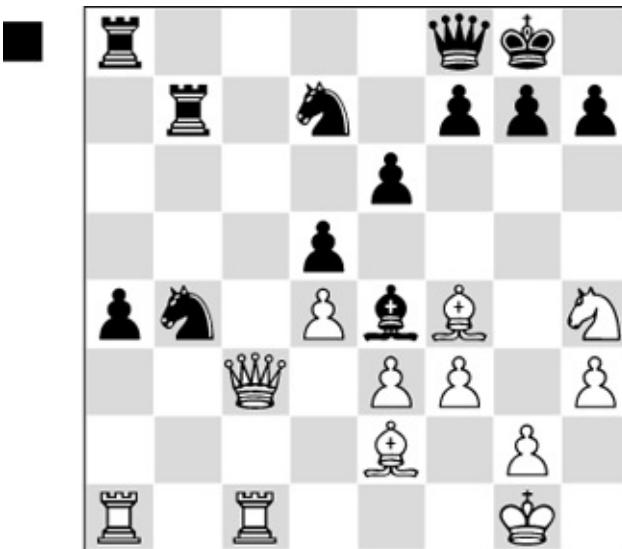
19... ♜xc5! 20. ♜bc1 ♜xd6 21. ♜xc5 ♜xc5



This position had already occurred a couple of times in practice. White did not manage to win a single one of these games, and indeed Black appears to have a safe fortress. Obviously White will not be able to create a passed pawn on the queenside. Without that, making progress on the kingside turns out to be impossible.

22. ♜d3 a5 23. a4 ♜ae8 24. ♜g2 e5 25. ♜e4 ♜e7 26. g4 h6 27. ♜d5 ♜fe8 28. h4 g6 29. e3 ♜e6 30. h5 g5 31. ♜d7 ♜e7  
32. ♜d5 ♜e6 33. ♜f3 ♜g7 34. ♜d7 ♜e7 35. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 36. ♜c6 e4+ 37. ♜e2 ♜e6 38. ♜b7 ♜e7 39. ♜c6 ♜e6 40. ♜b7  
爵 e7 41. ♜c6

### Exercise 33



What should Black play?

### Exercise 33

Ognjen Cvitan

Jure Skoberne

Slovenia tt 2014

■



29... ♜c2!

29... ♜g6 is the obvious move, but after 30.♘xg6 hxg6 31.♗g3 Black's coordination is insufficient to support the extra passed a-pawn. A pretty difficult conclusion to draw, all the more so as 29....♜g6 would be the natural result of a quick elimination process.

Looking a little further, it will help if you start searching for ways to keep the h4-knight off-side.

29... ♜f6 was also feasible, but White is not obliged to take on e4 and it is more logical for Black to focus on the queenside.

30.♝xc2 ♜xc2 31.♗d8 32.♗g3 a3!?

32...g5 33.♘f5 exf5 34.♗xf5 ♜f8 is also good, but after the text move, the rook and passed pawn turn out to be a dangerous couple in exchange for the two pieces, which is not so strange especially if you consider the knight on h4 – another reason not to go for this knight immediately.

33.♗d3 ♜b2 34.♗c3 ♜a5 35.♗c6 ♜a4 36.♗xa4 ♜xa4 37.f4 a2 38.♗e1 ♜a3

White resigned.

## Part VI

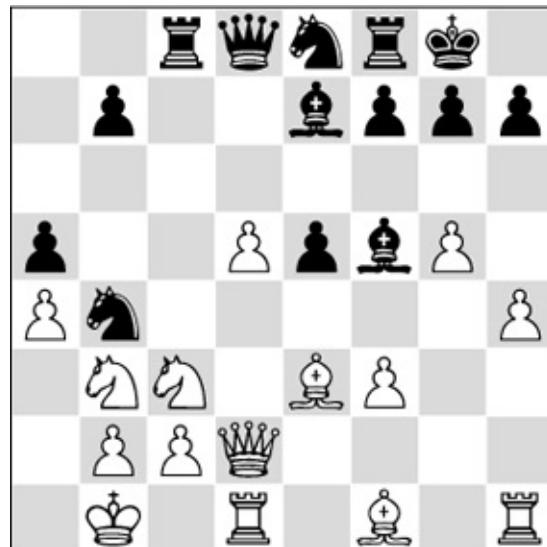
### Bad Patterns

#### 34. A Nightmare Pawn Structure



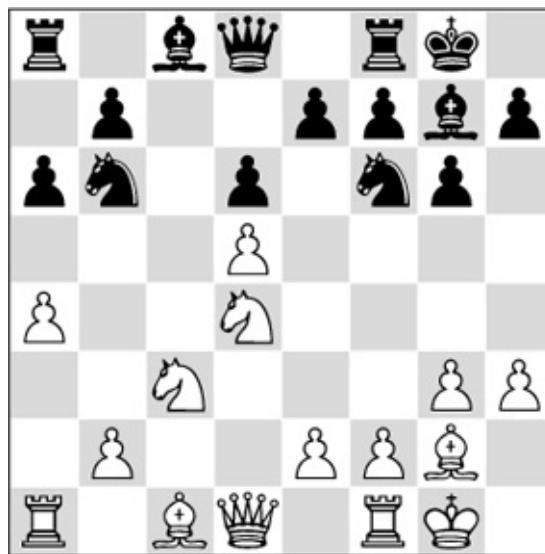
Or an Irish pawn centre?

#### 35. The Worst Knight



17.  $\mathbb{Q}$  a1 – a temporary retreat?

### 36. Another Bad Knight



13.b3!

### 37. Buried Bishops



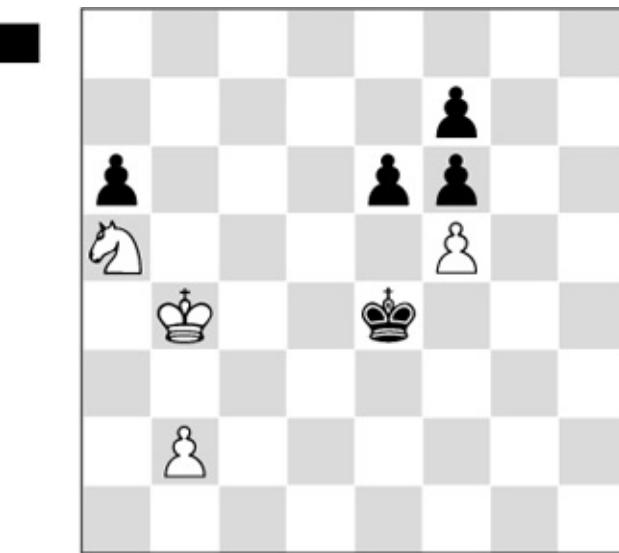
17.c5!

## Chapter 34

# A Nightmare Pawn Structure

Isolated tripled pawns are not the most mobile formation imaginable. However, sometimes their static disadvantage can be outbalanced by other more dynamic factors.

And so, once in a while, the crippled may walk:



50...exf5!! 51.♔c3 ♔e3 52.♔c2 f4 53.♔d1 ♔f2 54.♔c4 f3 0-1, Lysyj-S.Ernst, Plovdiv Ech-tt 2012.

## Tripled, Not Always Crippled

**Lisa Hortensius**

**Anne Haast**

Amsterdam ch-NED W 2015

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♜b4+ 5.c3 ♜c5 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.♗c4 ♜f6 8.0-0 ♘e7 9.♗e3 ♜b6 10.♗d2 ♗g6  
11.♗d3 0-0 12.c4 d6 13.f4 f5 14.e5 ♖d8 15.c5 dxc5 16.♗e2 ♘d5

Why, but that's an ugly one, isn't it? Add the buried b6-bishop and White's kingside majority with a protected passed pawn, and you might easily assume that Black is in big trouble.



One small comfort – one of the tripled pawns may be counted as an extra one (White has just sacrificed one with 15.c5). Also, Black has the concrete threat of 17... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  and 18...c4, but White can parry this conveniently by blocking the c-pawns. It's the same as blocking a single isolated pawn, by the way.

**17.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  18.  $\mathbb{Q}a3$**

18. $\mathbb{Q}d2$  was to be preferred, as 18... $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  (18... $\mathbb{Q}f7$ !?) 19. $\mathbb{Q}ac1?$   $\mathbb{Q}xe3$  20. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2$  21. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  c4 22. $\mathbb{Q}xf7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf7$ ) 19. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd2$ ? (19... $\mathbb{Q}d4$ ) fails to the intermediate check 20. $\mathbb{Q}xe6+$ .

**18...  $\mathbb{Q}f7$  19. b3?!**

Establishing firm control of the blockade square c4. But at the same time this enables Black to mobilize her rooks in a couple of moves. 19. $\mathbb{Q}ac1$  was a better move.

**19... a5 20.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}c2$  a4 22.  $\mathbb{Q}fc1$   $\mathbb{Q}a5$  23. g3  $\mathbb{Q}da8$**

By now you will have noticed that things are not that clear-cut. Black's pieces even seem to be more effective than White's, while the pawns on c6 and c5 provide useful central control. Subsequently, White lost her way in increasing time pressure.

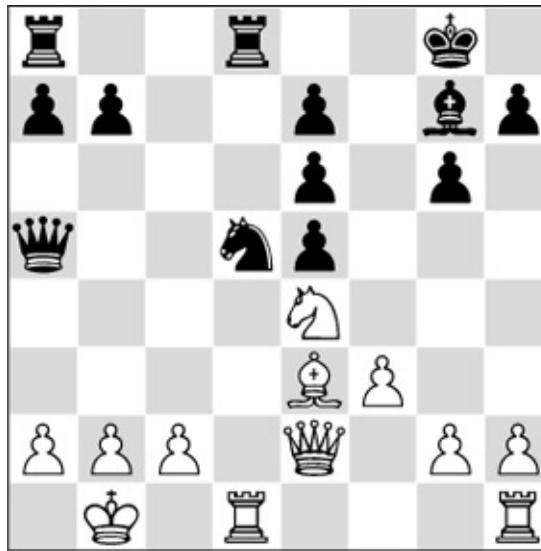
**24.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}5a7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}ab1$  axb3 28. axb3  $\mathbb{Q}a2$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$  h6 31.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}h8$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  g5 34.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$  g4 35.  $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  fxg4 36.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$**

0-1

This is nothing new for experienced Sicilian players. They have learned to look beyond the ugly sight of tripled central pawns, which regularly arise in Dragon-type positions:

**Lazaro Bruzon  
Dmitry Gurevich  
Cali 2001**

**1.e4 c5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d6 3. d4 cxd4 4.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  6. f3  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}xd4$  g6 8.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$  0-0 10.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  fxe6 12. e5 dxe5 13. 0-0-0  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  14.  $\mathbb{Q}b1$   $\mathbb{Q}fd8$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}e4$**



Again White has sacrificed a pawn to disrupt Black's pawn structure, and now the tripled e-pawn is blocked by a strong knight on e4, while Black's g7-bishop is just as buried as its colleague on b6 in the previous example. On the other hand, Black has a strong central knight, while here opposite castling adds to the dynamism of the position.

16... ♜ac8 17. ♜d2 ♜a4 18. ♜c1 b5

Logically Black continues to safeguard his strong knight on d5.

19.h4 ♜c6 20.b3

More straightforward was 20.h5, though Black has sufficient counterplay, for instance after 20... ♜f4!? 21.♕f2 b4.

20... ♜a3 21.c4?!

21.c3.

21... bxc4 22. ♜xc4 ♜f4!? 23. ♜f1

23.♗xf4 ♜xc4 24.♗xc4 (24.♗c1! is better, when after 24... ♜xc1+ 25.♗xc1 ♜h6 26.♗c6 ♜f7 White's exposed king gives sufficient counter-chances) 24...exf4 would obviously improve Black's pawn structure and liberate the g7-bishop at the same time, and 25.♗xe6+? would even be a losing check.

23... ♜a6 24. ♜c2 ♜b8

And Black's initiative provided enough counterweight to his positional deficits:

25. ♜c4 ♜ab6 26. ♜c1 ♜a5 27.g3 ♜d5 28. ♜d2 ♜a3 29. ♜c1 ♜a5 30.h5 ♜b4 31. ♜b2 ♜c6 32. ♜e2 ♜bc8 33.hxg6 hxg6 34. ♜d2 ♜c7 35.a3 ♜c2 36. ♜a2 ♜b7 37. ♜h2 ♜a6 38.a4 ♜d5 39. ♜c3 ♜xc3 40. ♜xc3 ♜xa4+ 41. ♜b1 ♜a3+ 42. ♜c1 ♜c5 43. bxa4 ♜xc3+ 44. ♜d1 ♜c4 45. ♜a2 ♜xf3+ 46. ♜c1 ♜e3+ 47. ♜c2 e4 48. ♜h7+ ♜f8 49. ♜f1+ ♜e8 50. ♜xg7 ♜d3+ 51. ♜c1 ♜xf1+ 52. ♜c2 ♜d3+ 53. ♜c1 e3 54. ♜g8+ ♜d7 55. ♜a8 ♜c3+ 56. ♜d1 ♜b3+

0-1

It even happened that tripled pawns got some stardom as 'the Irish pawn centre' after grandmasterly praise from the late Tony Miles in a tournament report. Of course, here he – in his typical style – was making fun of White's horrid pawn structure.

This is the game which started off Miles' little treatise in the first place:

## Eamon Keogh

### Francisco Sanz Alonso

Amsterdam zt 1978

1.e4 e5 2. ♜c3 ♜f6 3. ♜c4 ♜c6 4.d3 ♜a5 5.f4 ♜xc4 6.dxc4 ♜b4 7. ♜d3

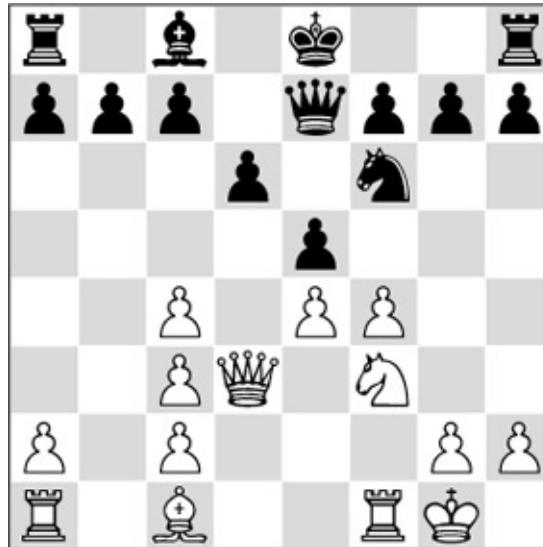
Years later, after 7. ♜f3 Miles successfully sidestepped the battle against the Irish centre with 7... ♜xe4 8.fxe5? ♜xc3 9. ♜d2 ♜xa2 10.c3 ♜xc1 11.cxb4 ♜b3 0-1, Jim Gallagher-Miles, Chicago 1990.

7... d6

It turns out that once I had this position on the board myself. Perhaps I had considered the Irish centre

a suitable weapon for a second must-win game in a knock-out match. And actually, my opponent showed some fear and deviated here with 7...exf4 in Van de Oudeweetering-Ernst, Leeuwarden 2004. It did not save me anyway.

8. ♜f3 ♗e7 9.0-0 ♝xc3 10.bxc3



An exclamation mark from Miles, who argued that ‘the isolated tripled pawns give White two extra open files down which to attack.’ He did not give any further moves, but instead only described the further course of the game.

Let’s continue for a bit.

10... ♛d7

Preventing c4-c5.

11. ♝a3 0-0 12. ♞ae1 ♜e8 13. ♘h1 f6 14. f5 ♖f7 15. g4 b6 16. ♜g1 h6 17. h4 ♜a6 18. g5 hxg5 19. hxg5 ♖xc4 20. ♖e3 ♖f7

Taking over the h-file. By now Black is winning, but missing a tactical blow later he suddenly ended up in a lost position, though eventually he escaped with a draw. Or, as Miles described the battle: ‘While Black is struggling to combat the IPC, White launches a full scale assault on the other side of the board and his opponent was fortunate to survive indeed.’

After such mockery you are likely to think twice about allowing tripled pawns in your own games. So how come in the French Winawer a tripled c-pawn is not laughed upon?

**Ivan Popov**

**Sayantan Das**

Chennai 2015

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♜c3 ♝b4 4.a3 ♝xc3+ 5.bxc3 ♜e7 6. ♜d3 c5 7.exd5 exd5



**8.dxc5**

For a long time, such captures were regarded as a dangerous weapon, for instance due to games of Smyslov and Spassky. As the former explained it: ‘With the pair of bishops, White, naturally, opens up the position. Now his pawns are scattered, but still, he is one up.’

8... ♕d7 9. ♘g4 0-0 10. ♘h4 h6 11. ♖e3 ♘f6 12. ♘f4 ♘e4 13. ♖xe4 dxе4 14. ♘e2 ♘d5 15. ♘g3 ♘xe3 16. ♘xe3 ♘e7 17. 0-0 ♖d7 18. ♖fd1 ♖fe8

18... ♖ac8 19. ♘f4.

19. ♘f4 ♖a4

19... ♖ac8 20. ♖ab1.

20. ♖d6



Here Miles’ jocular praise of open files becomes harsh reality. The c5-pawn makes it hard for Black to oppose with a doubling of rooks on the d-file. Black quickly slipped up under the increasing pressure.

20... ♖ac8 21. ♘d5 ♘g5 22. ♘d4 ♖xc2 23. ♖d7 ♖b3 24.c4 ♖ed8? 25.h4!

25. ♖xb7 ♖xc4!.

25... ♘xh4 26. ♖xb7 ♖a4 27. ♘e5 ♘f8 28. ♘f5 ♖e8 29. ♘h7

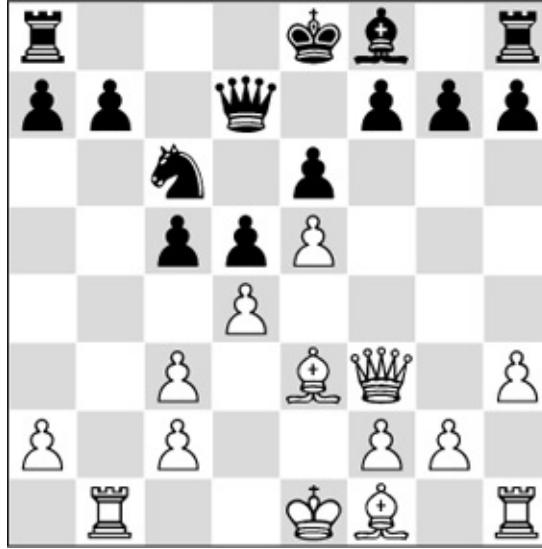
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**Konstantin Chernyshov**

**Andras Flumbort**

Budapest 2014

1.e4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.♗c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♗e4 5.d3 ♗xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g4 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♗xf3 e6 9.d4 c5 10.♗b1 ♗d7 11.♗e3 ♗c6



12.dxc5!

Again this typical French move, though here the position arose from a Caro-Kann. This time White gains strong pressure against the kingside, while the foremost c-pawn will prove a useful aid in the exertion of pressure along the half-open b-file.

12... ♗xe5 13.♗g3 ♗c6 14.♗b5

Despite his solid pawn centre, Black has development problems.

14...g6

14...f6, with the idea to move the king to f7, was the better option. Now White's moves are easy to find.

15.♗d4 ♗g8 16.0-0 ♗g7 17.♗b3!

Already White is practically winning.

17...0-0-0 18.♗fb1 e5 19.♗xc6

This proves good enough, but White had several alternatives too consider:

A) 19.♗a3 exd4 20.♗xc6 ♗xc6 21.♗xa7;

B) 19.♗d3 exd4 20.♗a6 ♗a5 21.♗xb7+ ♗xb7 22.♗a6.

19...♗xc6 20.♗xb7 ♗xb7 21.♗xb7 ♗xb7 22.♗xe5 ♗xe5 23.♗xe5

The remainder of the game is a good further illustration for Chapter 27 on the queen plus (passed) pawn versus two rooks (with a vulnerable king).

23... ♗d7 24.♗d4 ♗c8 25.c4 ♗cd8 26.♗f6 ♗c8 27.♗b2+ ♗c7 28.♗a3 dxc4 29.♗xa7+ ♗d8 30.♗b6+ ♗dc7 31.a4 ♗e8 32.a5 ♗xc5 33.a6 ♗d5 34.a7 ♗dd8 35.g4 ♗a8 36.♗b7 ♗f8 37.♗g2 c3 38.g5 ♗e8 39.h4 ♗g8 40.♗g3 ♗ac8 41.f4 ♗a8 42.h5 gxh5 43.♗h4 ♗ac8 44.♗xh5 ♗a8 45.f5 ♗ad8 46.♗c6 ♗c8 47.♗d7 ♗cd8 48.♗b7 ♗a8 49.g6 hxg6+ 50.fxg6 ♗f8 51.♗h6 ♗ac8 52.♗d5

1-0

It is time to come back down to earth and put things in a little perspective.

Despite the examples above, isolated tripled pawns will often be an easy target, when active counterplay falls short. For example, in this miniature the pawns were very quickly lost:

**Mads Hansen**

**Daniil Lintchevski**

Pardubice 2015

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♗f6 3.♗c3 ♗c6 4.d4 d5 5.exd5 ♗xd5 6.dxc5 ♗xc3 7.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 8.bxc3 f6 9.♗e3 ♗d7 10.♗b1 ♗c8 11.♗b5 e5 12.♗d2 ♗xc5 13.♗e4 ♗e7 14.f4 ♗xb5 15.♗c4 16.♗d2 ♗xc3 17.♗xa7 ♗xc2 18.♗xe5 ♗c1+

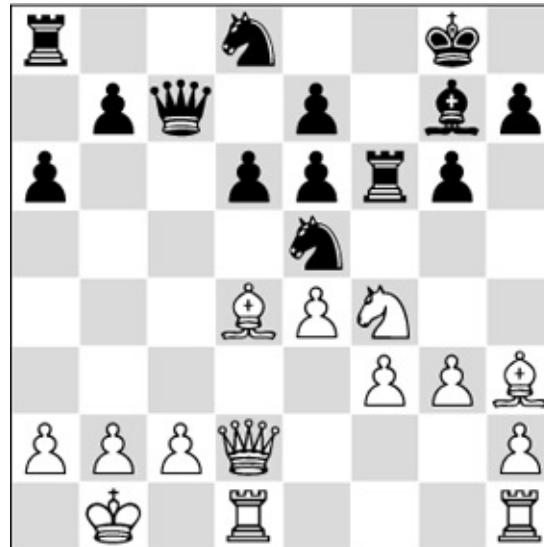
White resigned.

Also the tripled pawns in the Sicilian can be a very painful weakness when dynamic counterplay is lacking:

**Robert Byrne**  
**Johan van der Wiel**

Vienna 1980

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3 ♘c6 8.♗d2 0-0 9.0-0-0 ♗e6 10.♗xe6 fxe6 11.♗b1 a6 12.g3 ♗c7 13.♗h3 ♘d8 14.♗e2 ♘d7 15.♗f4 ♘f6 16.♗d4 ♘e5 17.♗hf1 ♘f7



18.♗xe5 dxе5 19.♗d3 ♗e8 20.♗b4 ♘c8 21.c3 g5 22.♗g4 ♘f7 23.♗h5+ ♗g8 24.♗f2 ♘c6 25.♗c5 ♗d8 26.♗fd2 ♗f8 27.♗b6 ♗d8 28.♗xd8+ ♘xd8 29.♗c5

1-0

Another quick and gruesome downfall to keep you on your guard:

**Vladimir Potkin**  
**Valentina Gunina**

Wijk aan Zee B 2015

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.♘f3 g6 4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4 ♗g7 6.♘xc6 bxc6 7.g3 ♘e7 8.♗g2 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.♗c2 ♗f5 11.e4 ♗e6 12.b3 ♗d7 13.♗b2 ♘ae8



14.c5 dxc5?

Neither 14...d5 15.♗ad1 nor the prospect of two hanging pawns on c6 and d6 will have appealed to

Gunina. But the text move amounts to positional suicide, allowing her no room for counterplay to compensate for the pawn structure.

15.  $\mathbb{Q}fd1$   $\mathbb{B}c8$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  17.  $\mathbb{B}xb2$   $c4$

A Pyrrhic success, this exchange of the foremost tripled pawn. Black's position still ends up in ruins.

18.  $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $cxb3$  19.  $a xb3$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  20.  $\mathbb{B}f6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}xd1$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{B}f8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  24.  $\mathbb{B}f4$   $\mathbb{B}b8$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{B}c8$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{B}xe6$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}d8+$

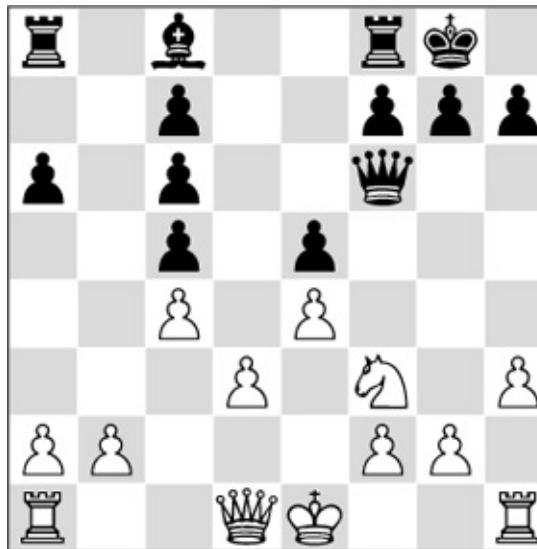
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**David Bronstein**

**Valery Chekhov**

Tallinn 1980

1.e4 e5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$  a6 4.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5. d3 d6 6. c4  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  0-0 8. h3  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}d5$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $bxc6$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}xf6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xf6$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $dxc5$



Here we have a more closed position, where the foremost c-pawn will be the first target. I fondly remember a similar structure from one of my own games: 1.e4 e5 2.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$  f5 4. d3  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  5. 0-0  $fxe4$  6.  $dxe4$   $\mathbb{Q}c5$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$  d6 8.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$  a6 10.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6+$   $bxc6$  11.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$  12.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  13.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $dxc5$ . Bronstein makes it look easy.

14.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  15. g4

First preventing any counterplay with ...f7-f5.

15...  $\mathbb{Q}b8$  16. 0-0-0 f6 17.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  a5 18.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$

Here the knight is a versatile piece compared to the bishop. Going for a4 now!

18...  $\mathbb{Q}e6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}b4$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}fb8$  21. a3  $\mathbb{Q}b3$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$

22...  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  28.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$  also clearly favours White.



**23. ♜a4 ♛f7 24. ♜xc5 ♕c3+ 25. ♜b1**

And that was it! After...

**25... ♕xa3 26. ♜xd4 exd4 27. f4**

... the a3-rook had got stuck.

**27... ♜e7 28. e5 fxe5 29. fxe5 ♖f7 30. ♜f1 ♕ab3 31. ♜f4**

Nice – retaining the proud knight. Capturing would win easily, but Black's rooks are going nowhere.

**31... ♕3b4 32. ♜xd4 ♕d8 33. ♜xd8 ♜xd8 34. ♜c2 ♜e7 35. ♜c3 ♕b8 36. b3**

There goes the a5-pawn. Chekhov called it a day.

## Summary

Tripled pawns are definitely a bad pattern, a static weakness, as the later examples in this chapter clearly show. Yet, it is not difficult to find examples where dynamic factors, open files and diagonals, or the control of central squares make up for the bad structure.

## Chapter 35

# The Worst Knight

Which square would you imagine to be the worst place for a knight? Right – on the edge and on the back rank at the same time: in the corner. A pitiful spot, ready for ridicule.

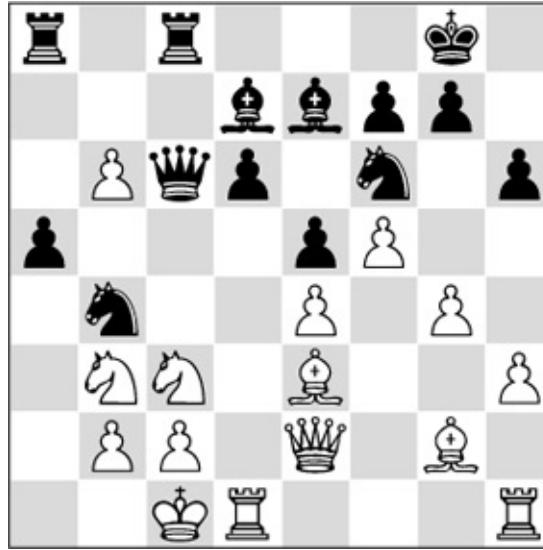
Still, a knight may appear there for different reasons, also in grandmaster games.

**Anton Shomoev**

**Vadim Zviagintsev**

Vladivostok 2012

1.d4 e6 2.e4 c5 3.♘f3 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 d6 6.g4 h6 7.♗e3 ♘f6 8.h3 ♘d7 9.f4 ♘e7 10.♘b3 a5 11.a4 e5 12.f5 ♘b4 13.♗g2 0-0 14.♗e2 ♗c7 15.0-0-0 b5 16.axb5 ♘fc8 17.b6 ♗c6



Black is threatening ...a5-a4, after which the knight retreat to d2 is refuted by ...♗a2+. If White does not want his knight to end up on a1 – and I imagine he would do anything to avoid this – he has to be inventive now.

**18.♘a1**

But Shomoev acquiesces. Protecting c2 with 18.♘d2 makes no sense after 18...a4 19.♘a1 a3. The only reasonable move was 18.♗b1 so as to meet 18...a4 with 19.♘d5 ♘fxd5 20.exd5 ♗xc2+ 21.♗xc2 ♘xc2 22.♘c5, and as by a miracle White does not lose immediately. After 22...♗xe3 23.♘xd7 Black has to find 23...♗e8 24.b7 ♘ad8 25.♗c1 ♘xg2 (25...♗xd7 26.♗c8) and even then White can muddle on with 26.♗c7.

After the text move White kept his c-pawn, but the knight was never to move from a1 again.

**18...a4 19.♘d5 ♘fxd5 20.exd5 ♗b7 21.♗d2 ♘a6**

Other moves, perhaps more forceful ones, are possible, but this is perfectly fine. Black effortlessly parries White's desperate attempt and wraps up the game. White remains effectively a piece down.

**22.g5**

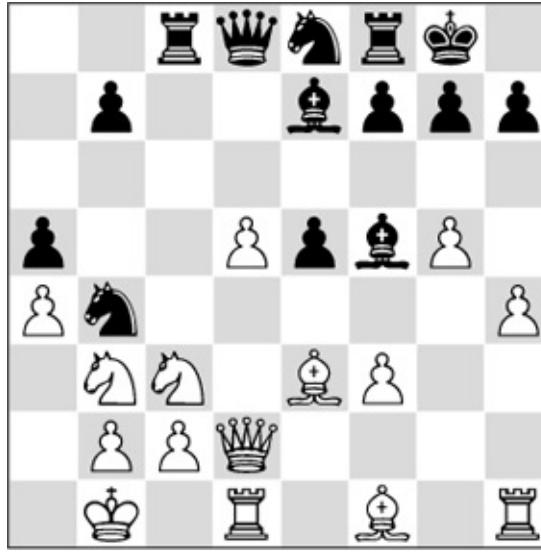
Repatriating the knight with 22.c3 ♘c5 23.♘xc5 ♘xc5 24.♘c2 ♘g5 25.♘e3 ♗xb6 would not leave much hope either.

**22...hxg5 23.h4 g4 24.f6 ♘xf6 25.♗df1 ♘c5 26.♘xc5 ♘xc5 27.♘e4 ♗xb6 28.♗xf6 ♘b8 29.♗g5 ♗xb2+ 30.♗d2 ♗b4+ 31.♗c1 ♗xe4 32.♗hf1 ♗d4**

## Anton Shomoev Zaven Andriasyan

Nizhny Tagil 2014

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.f3 e5 7.♘b3 ♘e7 8.♘e3 0-0 9.♗d2 ♘e6 10.0-0-0 a5 11.a4 ♘c6 12.g4 ♘b4 13.♗b1 ♗c8 14.h4 d5 15.g5 ♘e8 16.exd5 ♘f5



Again it is Shomoev behind the white pieces, and of course with the other game still in his mind here he would not dare play...

**17.♘a1**

... but yes, he showed courage! Naturally, 17.♗d3 ♘xd3 (17...♗xd3 18.cxd3 ♘b4) 18.cxd3 ♘xd5 is not what White is looking for. But 17.♗c1 was an alternative.

**17... ♘d6 18.h5**

White seems to have no obvious plan to liberate his a1-knight in the near future. Exchanging the light-squared bishops with ♘h3 would allow Black to put a knight on c4.

**18... ♗d7 19.h6 g6 20.♗h2 ♗fe8**

Black should seek the initiative on the kingside, where White's knight would be missed. In the game his ...f7-f6 break comes too late.

**21.♘b6 ♘d8 22.♘xd8 ♗xd8 23.♗e3**

With the rook protecting c2 from aside, the a1-knight is mobile again, but you will have to wait a bit for its return.

**23... ♗d7 24.♗b6 ♗c7 25.♗xc7 ♗xc7 26.♘b5 ♗ec8 27.♗e2 f6 28.gxf6 ♗xc3?**

More logical was 28...♗f7, though after 29.♗xe5 ♗xf6 30.♗e2 ♗e7 31.♗xe7 ♗xe7 32.♗d2!, finally the knight will come back into play, while White retains his material plus.

**29.bxc3 ♗xc3 30.♗xe5 ♗f7 31.♗de1 ♘xb5 32.axb5 ♗xf6 33.d6 ♗xf3 34.♗e8 ♗g5 35.♗8e7 ♗f2 36.♗7e2 ♗xe2**

**37.♗xe2 ♘d5 38.♗e5 ♘b6 39.♘b3**

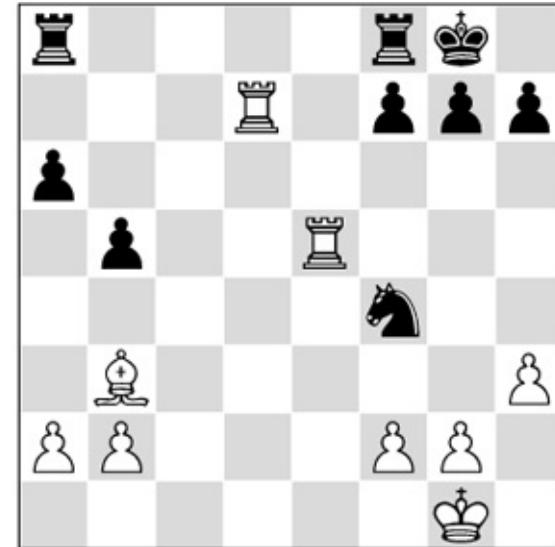
This was the move Black was waiting for. He resigned.

## No Cover-Up

In the endgame there will be fewer pieces to cover up for the (temporary?) passivity of the cornered knight. Still, here too even grandmasters have been lured into playing the knight to its worst possible square.

# Evgeny Romanov

Norway tt 2014



26... ♜g6

A better attempt was 26... ♜e6 27. ♜xe6 fxe6 28. ♜xe6, though, contrary to what you might have heard on occasion, not all rook endings are drawn: 28... ♜f7 (28... ♜ad8 29. ♜xd8 ♜xd8 30. ♜xa6 ♜d1+ 31. ♜h2 ♜d2 32. b4) 29. ♜ee7 ♜xe7 30. ♜xe7 ♜d8, but if he goes down at least he has put up an active defence.

27. ♜f5 ♜h8

With the intention to return one day, at a more suitable moment. White will divert his attention to the queenside, which means that at some moment the pressure against f7 will decrease. Still, as the knight has to travel a long way from h8, Black's counterplay will surely come too late.

28. ♜c5 h6 29. ♜cc7 a5 30. ♜d5 ♜ae8 31. ♜c5 ♜e1+ 32. ♜h2 ♜b8 33. ♜b7 ♜xb7 34. ♜xb7 b4 35. ♜xa5 ♜e2 36. f4 ♜xb2 37. ♜d5

It seems that Black has come far – he can now even move his knight back again –, but White's pieces are all actively placed, with the d5-bishop doing a great multi-tasking job.

37... ♜g6 38. ♜g3 ♜d2 39. ♜a8+ ♜f8 40. ♜d8 ♜b2 41. f5

With the black knight and king sort of stalemated, the black rook will sooner or later be in zugzwang.

41... g6

Black has lost the patience he had when he played 27... ♜h8, realizing that waiting moves won't serve him any better; the pawn on b4 would soon be lost.

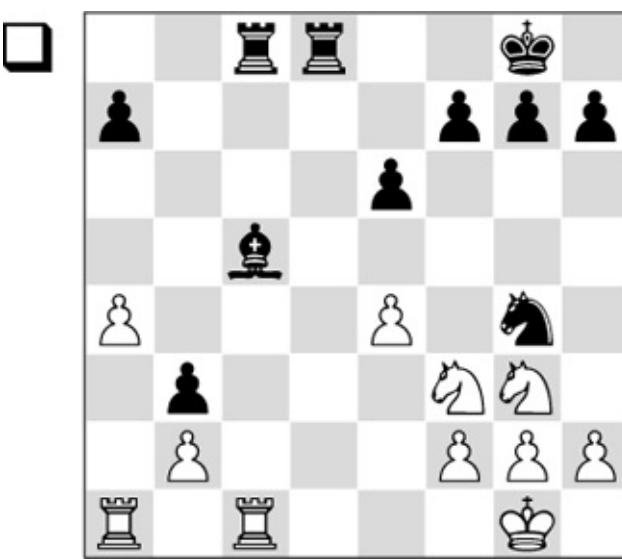
42. fxg6 ♜g7 43. gxf7 ♜d2 44. ♜d6 h5 45. ♜f4 h4 46. ♜e5 ♜f2 47. ♜d4 ♜h7 48. ♜d8 ♜f8 49. ♜c5 ♜b2 50. ♜b5 ♜b1 51. ♜c8 ♜d1 52. ♜b3 ♜d2 53. ♜c2

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**Narayanan Sunilduth Lyra**

**Jorden van Foreest**

Khanty-Mansiysk Wch U20 2015

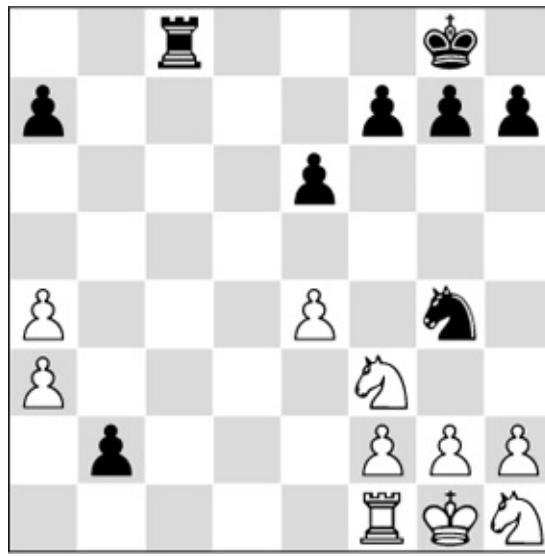


**25. ♜h1**

Understandable, as White can drive away the g4-knight and then return his knight to the middle of somewhere. Moreover, life after the only other sensible move 25. ♜f1 is no picnic for White: 25... ♜xf2 26. ♜xf2 ♜xf2+ 27. ♜xf2 ♜c2+ 28. ♜e2 ♜xb2 29. ♜e3 ♜a2.

**25... ♜b6**

Instead there was a quicker way to initiate play on the queenside. Black could play the terrific 25... ♜a3!. Once you have discovered this move, the ensuing lines are not difficult to calculate, except for 26. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 27.bxa3 b2 28. ♜f1.



analysis diagram

Now Black has to divert the f3-knight to stop White defending with ♜d2 after ... ♜c8-c1. 28... ♜xh2! is the most convincing move, and a lovely way to have ended the game!

**26.h3 ♜f6**

26... ♜xf2 27. ♜xf2 ♜c2 28. ♜f1 ♜xb2 29. g4 ♜c2 30. ♜g2 b2 31. ♜ab1 g5! is a forcing attempt which does seem to give Black good prospects, but understandably Black opts for a clearer line, leaving the bad knight where it is.

**27. ♜xc8 ♜xc8 28.a5 ♜c7 29.e5 ♜d5 30. ♜g3**

A small success for White: the knight has returned. However, Black is still somewhat better, and managed to scrape the win deep into the endgame.

# Just a Transfer Square

Of course, the knight may also retreat more successfully, planning a deliberate transfer.

**Maxime Vachier-Lagrave**

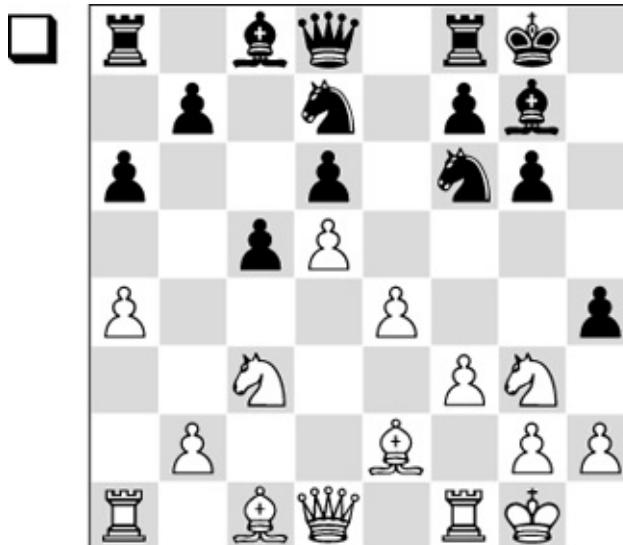
**Hikaru Nakamura**

Saint Louis 2015

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 g6 3. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6. $\mathbb{Q}ge2$  c5 7.d5 e6 8. $\mathbb{Q}g3$  exd5 9.cxd5 a6 10.a4 h5

10... $\mathbb{Q}h5$  11. $\mathbb{Q}xh5$  gxh5 12. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}h4+$  13.g3  $\mathbb{Q}e7$  and Black was fine in the game Giri-Gelfand, Tashkent 2014 – a more recent example of allowing a doubling of the h-pawn, as discussed below.

11. $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  12.0-0 h4



13. $\mathbb{Q}h1$

'What about that knight!', Seirawan exclaimed after the game, talking to Vachier-Lagrave through a live video connection.

MVL's calm retort came instantly: 'Ask Yasser what he thought of my knight on e5.' And indeed, thus is an absolute standard manoeuvre to transfer the knight. Just like Nimzowitsch's famous  $\mathbb{Q}h1$  against Rubinstein in Dresden 1926. Only, once you have retreated the knight, you shouldn't wait too long before bringing it back into play.

Closed positions may be the exception:



analysis diagram

Here Carlsen-Grischuk from the same tournament saw 16.♘a1. Only twelve moves later the knight stepped back to b3.

13... ♘h5 14. ♘e3 f5 15.f4 ♗e8

Allowing the h-pawn to be doubled, a well-known motif in this opening since Spassky-Fischer (see also IYCPR, Chapter 19, for more doubled rook pawns).

16. ♘xh5 gxh5 17.e5 dxe5 18.d6 exf4 19. ♘xf4 ♘f6 20. ♘f2

There it goes.

20... ♘d7 21. ♘d3 h3 22. ♘e5

And a tense battle eventually ended in a draw.

In the Netherlands, the a1-knight in this game has acquired some fame:

### Hans Ree

### Heikki Westerinen

Wijk aan Zee 1970

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♘g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♘e3 ♘c6 7.♘ge2 ♘e8 8.♗d2 ♘b8 9.a3 a6 10.b4 ♘d7 11.♗d1 b5 12.cxb5 axb5 13.d5 ♘ce5 14.♘d4 ♘b6 15.♘xb5 ♘d7 16.♗e2 ♘a8 17.♗a1 e6 18.dxe6 fxe6 19.0-0 c6 20.♘a6 c5 21.bxc5 dxc5 22.♘c2 ♘xa6 23.♗xa6 ♘ec4 24.♘xc5 ♘xc3 25.♗ab1 ♘a5 26.♗a7 ♘g5 27.♗d4 ♘a8 28.♗b7 ♘d6 29.♗c7 ♘b5 30.♗e5 ♘xe5 31.♘xe5 ♘c4 32.♗f4 ♘c3 33.♗b8+ ♘xb8 34.♘xb8 ♘a4



35.♘a1

35.♘b4 ♘xa3 36.♘d3 was to be expected, when 36...♗b5 can be met with 37.♗a1, though your engine will soon point out 36...♔ab1 37.♘f4 ♘d1, when the two knights at the back rank suddenly catch the white rook.

35... ♘d1!

With the sorrow knight on a1 instead of on d3, evidently Black's tactics come much more easily on the kingside.

When some chess players from Wijk aan Zee (where this game was played) founded a chess club soon after, they apparently decided that their chess abilities could best be identified by this pitiful knight. Thus they gave their club the original name, *Rey's Knight* (*Het Paard van Rey*).

A dubious honour for the Dutch grandmaster, perhaps. In his defence you could say that objectively his position was bad already. Also, as you have witnessed, other grandmasters have been forced or tempted to put a knight in the corner too.

36. ♘f4 ♘b6+ 37. ♘h1 ♘f2+ 38. ♘g1 ♘xe4+ 39. ♘h1 ♘f2+ 40. ♘g1 ♘d3+ 41. ♘h1 ♘xf4 42. ♘c1 ♘e3 43. ♘c8+ ♘g7  
44. ♘a8 ♘d1 45.a4 ♘exg2 46.a5 ♘xf3

White resigned.

**Konstantin Maslak**

**Ivan Smikovsky**

Moscow 2006

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♜f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e2 e5 7.♘b3 ♜e7 8.♗g5 ♜e6 9.♗xf6 ♜xf6 10.♗d3 ♜g5  
11.♗d1 ♜c6 12.♗xd6 ♗xd6 13.♗xd6 ♗e7 14.♗d1 ♜b4



**15.♘a1**

Here White's voluntary decision comes from a position of slight luxury. After all, he is a pawn up and could have chosen 15.0-0.

15... ♗hd8 16.a3 ♗xd1+ 17.♗xd1 ♜c6 18.♗e3

Now, when the defensive task of c2 is no longer called for, the logical follow-up would be 18.♘b3, though Black has little to fear after 18...♗xb3.

18... ♗d8 19.♗d3 b5 20.0-0 g6 21.♗e1 ♜a5! 22.♗f1 ♜c4 23.♗xc4 bxc4

White is still a pawn up, but the lingering knight on a1 no longer has a way out.

**24.♗e2**

24.c3 ♗d2 25.♗e2 ♗xe3 26.fxe3 ♗d6 27.♘c2 ♗g4 28.♗e1 ♗d2 29.♘b4 ♗xb2 30.♘xa6 ♗a2 gives Black a fine ending, but at least the knight participates after 31.♘b4.

24...f5 25.b3 ♗xe3 26.fxe3 c3

26...fxe4 was good enough, but Black goes for a long grind.

27.♗d1 ♗xd1 28.♗xd1 a5 29.♗e2 fxe4 30.♗f2 ♗f6 31.♗f1 ♗g5 32.♗f2 h5 33.♗g1 ♗d7 34.♗f2 ♗g4 35.♗g1 h4  
36.♗f2 ♗c6 37.h3+ ♗f5 38.♗f1 g5 39.♗g1 g4 40.♗h2 ♗g5 41.♗g1 ♗d7 42.♗h2 ♗e6

Zugzwang. White can only make further concessions.

43.b4 a4 44.hxg4 ♗xg4 45.b5 ♗c8 46.b6 ♗b7 47.♗g1 ♗g3 48.♗f1 ♗h2 49.♗f2 ♗a6

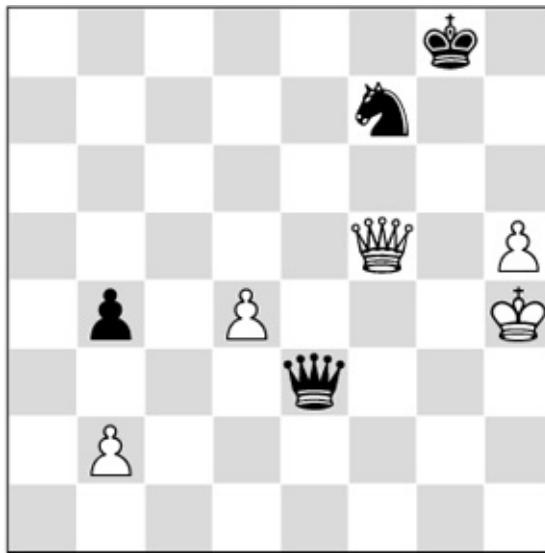
**0-1**

Horrifying. Let's end on a positive note. We make a slight transgression to the endgame, where a corner square is also not the square where you would normally want to leave your knight.

**Vladimir Baklan**

**Igor Khenkin**

Hoogeveen 2004



Somewhat earlier Khenkin had had a pretty long thought. For how on earth will Black win this position? After...

**49... ♜xd4+ 50. ♜g4+ ♜xg4+ 51. ♜xg4**

... clearly the b-pawn will be lost. Still, Khenkin continued like this, having reconciled himself to a draw, or...

**51... ♜e5+ 52. ♜f4 ♜d3+ 53. ♜e3 ♜c1 54. ♜d2 ♜b3+ 55. ♜d3 ♜a1!!**

Wonderful! Here the knight safely defends the b-pawn once it has advanced to b3. White's king can harass the knight only from b1, when it will hop to c2.

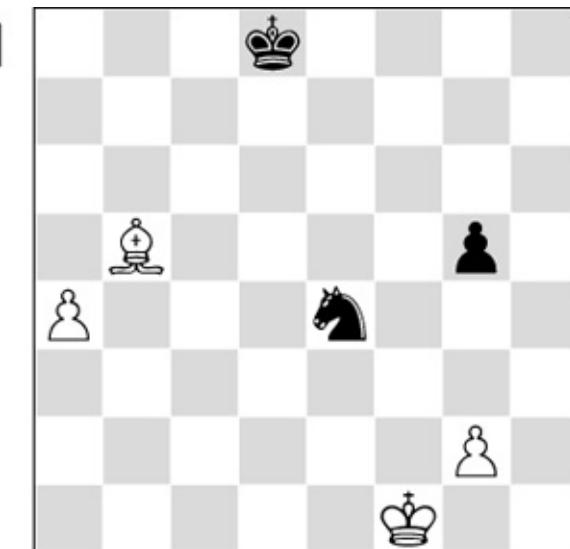
**56. ♜c4**

56.b3 ♜g7 57. ♜c4 ♜c2 58. ♜d3 ♜a3 59. ♜d4 ♜h6.

**56...b3 57. ♜c3 ♜g7 58. ♜d4 ♜h6**

and Black won after ten more moves.

I was playing in the same open and was very impressed that Khenkin found this idea over the board. All the more so because I myself did not spot it, but once it had been executed I immediately remembered a study with the same motif. Years later I encountered this endgame:



Sveshnikov-Am.Rodriguez, Cienfuegos 1979. White played 47. ♜e2 and won. Sveshnikov gave the following line: 47.a5 ♜c7 48. ♜d3 ♜g3+! 49. ♜f2 ♜h1+! 50. ♜f3 g4+ 51. ♜f4 g3, and White cannot make any headway.

## **Summary**

The corner square is definitely not the place to be for a knight. If you try to put up a stubborn defence from there, you will most likely render your position even more hopeless. When you use the corner as a transit square, make sure the knight can return in time, before your opponent opens the position and grabs the initiative. Surprisingly, in the endgame there is a pattern where the knight is very useful on a corner square.

# Chapter 36

## Another Bad Knight

You will regularly encounter a knight on b3, b6, g3 or g6. Of course, on these squares the knight is less active than on the usual central squares c3 (c6) and f3 (f6), but you might think it's not such a big deal. However, surprisingly enough, before you know it the knight may find itself stranded on such a square.

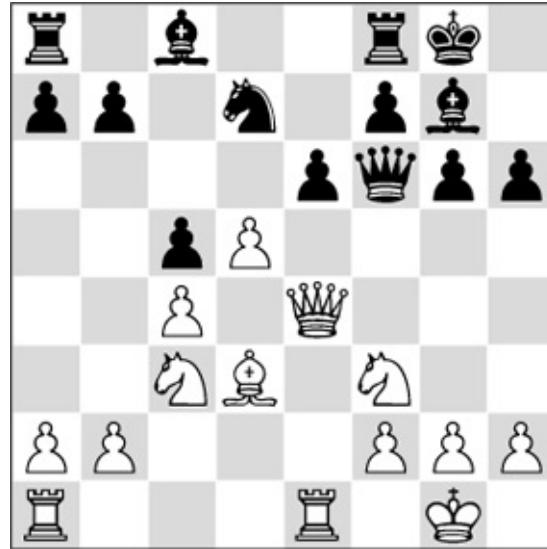
### Restricted by the Pawn Chain

Alex Yermolinsky

Grigory Serper

Chicago 1996

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Qf3 Qf6 4.Qc3 e6 5.Qg5 h6 6.Qxf6 Qxf6 7.Qc2 Qd7 8.e4 dxе4 9.Qxe4 g6 10.Qd3 Qg7 11.0-0 0-0  
12.Qfe1 c5 13.d5



13... Qb6

Intending 14...exd5, but White opts for a different pawn structure.

14.d6 e5 15.Qxe5 Qxe5 16.Qxe5 Qd8 17.Qad1 Qxd6 18.Qb5 Qxe5

18...Qd8 runs into 19.Qxf7 Qxd3 20.Qxd3 Qxf7 21.Qf3+ Qg8 22.Qe8+ Qh7 23.Qf7, and White is on top. 18...Qe6 19.f4 looks awkward for Black, but White cannot crash through here.

19.Qxe5 Qd8 20.b3 Qf5 21.Qe2 Qxd1+ 22.Qxd1 Qd8 23.Qf3



This game is featured in Yermolinsky's book *The Road to Chess Improvement*. At this point he writes: "A knight on b3 (b6) is always bad", as the founding father of chess dogmatism Dr Tarrasch told us a long time ago. Man, was the dude right, or what? In this particular situation no one would disagree. Black's queenside is in deep trouble here.'

It's a bit far-fetched to put the Big Lebowski and Dr Tarrasch on one line, but indeed, all Black's queenside pawns are under attack, and the knight on b6 is a useless bystander, dominated by the b3/c4 pawn chain. Moving it to a better square is the obvious solution, but here it is too late for slow manoeuvring. Serper tries the active way.

23... ♜d2 24. ♜xc5 ♜xa2 25.h4 a5 26. ♜d4 a4 27. ♜xf5  
 27. ♜b5 a3 28. ♜a5 ♜d7 (Yermolinsky) 29.c5 (29. ♜b5 ♜xb5 30.cxb5 ♜f8 31. ♜xb7 ♜e7) 29... ♜d2  
 30.cxb6 ♜xd4 31. ♜xa3 ♜b4 32. ♜xb7 ♜xb6 33. ♜d5.  
 27... axb3 28. ♜b5 ♜xc4 29. ♜d5 b2 30. ♜xc4 ♜a1+ 31. ♜h2 b1 ♜ 32. ♜xb1 ♜xb1 33. ♜xh6+ ♜g7 34. ♜xf7 b5 35. ♜d3  
 ♜b4 36. ♜d6 ♜xh4+ 37. ♜g3 ♜d4 38. ♜e8+ ♜f8 39. ♜xb5

White prevailed after a long endgame.

## Too Many Pieces

**Max Euwe**  
**Gideon Stahlberg**

Zurich Candidates' 1953

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c6 4.d5 cxd5 5.cxd5 d6 6. ♜g2 ♜g7 7. ♜c3 0-0 8. ♜f3 ♜bd7?! 9.0-0 ♜b6



#### 10.a4

Bronstein in his famous Zurich 1953 book also refers to Tarrasch:

'Like Tarrasch in his days, Euwe cannot abide the sight of an enemy knight on b6. But the knight stands so poorly on that square that there was no need to disturb it.'

He then recommends 10.♘d4 followed by b2-b3, 'underscoring the knight's limited mobility'. Najdorf agrees in his book on the tournament, and calls the text a routine move. And indeed, even today, a knight on b6 seems to automatically evoke the march of the a-pawn, which does gain space, but also drives the knight to better places.

**10... ♜g4 11.♘d4 a6 12.h3 ♜c8**

With less space and all pieces still on the board, Black is struggling.

**13.b3!**

Typically restricting the activity of the knight on b6.

**13... ♜d7**

Trying to find counterplay using the c-file. Also, Black no longer has to reckon with ♘d1-b3.

13... ♘bd7 was the alternative, but Black's position remains cramped.

**14.♘e3**

Both Bronstein and Najdorf miss a few little tactics here. First, they give 14.a5 as a logical alternative, driving the knight back to c8. However, the zwischenzug 14...♝c8 would give Black the same possibility as in the game: 15.♗b2 ♞xc3 16.♗xc3 ♘bx d5. 14.♘d3 would have been more flexible, and moreover would have prevented Black's missed possibility on the next move.

**14... ♝c8**

And here they do not consider the double attack 14...♝c8 15.♝c1 ♖xh3, which actually seems to be all right for Black!

**15.♘d2 ♝c5**

The attempt to activate the b6-knight with the same exchange sac as before – 15...♝xc3 16.♝xc3 ♘bx d5 – is considered by Bronstein, but assessed as unsatisfactory due to Black's passivity.

The text had to have been foreseen by Euwe, who now launches a combination which was praised by both commentators. Stahlberg succumbs in the ensuing endgame.

**16.♘c6!?** bxc6 17.♗xc5 dxc5 18. dx c6 ♜e6 19. ♘xd8 ♜xd8 20. ♜ad1! ♜c8 21.a5 ♜a8 22.♘a4! ♜c7

22... ♖xb3 23.♘b6 ♜f8 24.♘xa8 ♖xd1 25. ♜xd1 ♜xa8 26.c7+–.

23. ♜xc5 ♜fd5 24. ♜xa6 ♜xa6 25. ♜xd5 ♜xh3 26. ♜g2 ♜e6 27. ♜b1 ♜c3 28. ♜fd1 ♜b4 29. ♜d4 ♜f5 30. ♜bd1 ♜d6 31. ♜c4 ♜e6 32. ♜d5 ♜xd5 33. ♜xd5 ♜b8 34. b4 ♜xb4 35. ♜xd6 exd6 36. c7 ♜c8 37. ♜xb4 ♜xc7 38. ♜a4 ♜f8 39. ♜g2 ♜e7 40. ♜f3 ♜d7 41. ♜e4 ♜a7 42. ♜d5 h5 43. f4 ♜a6 44. e4 f6 45. ♜a2 g5 46. f5 h4 47. gxh4 gxh4 48. ♜c4 ♜a8 49. a6 ♜c6 50. a7 h3 51. ♜d4 ♜c7 52. ♜d5 ♜d7 53. ♜a3 h2 54. ♜a1 ♜e8 55. ♜h1 ♜e5+ 56. ♜d4 ♜a5 57. ♜xh2 ♜c6 58. ♜h7 ♜a4+ 59. ♜e3 ♜a3+ 60. ♜f4 ♜a1 61. ♜f7 ♜c5 62. ♜xf6 ♜xa7 63. ♜e6 ♜a1 64. f6 ♜c6 65. ♜f5 ♜d7 66. ♜e7+ ♜d8 67. ♜e6

1-0

**Maria Muzychuk**

**Antoaneta Stefanova**

Monaco 2015

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♜g7 3.♘f3 d6 4.♘d3 ♜g4 5.c3 ♜d7 6.♘bd2 ♜b6 7.h3 ♜d7 8.0-0 ♜f6 9. ♜e1 0-0 10.e5 ♜fd5 11. ♜e4 ♜f5 12.a3 c6 13. exd6 exd6 14. ♜g5 ♘d7



Tarrasch's opinion does not stand alone. For instance, if I remember correctly, the famous Ukrainian trainer Grabinsky also warns his students about the possible fate of a knight on b6. Of course, strong players will know when it is possible to transfer this knight in time. However, sometimes they don't manage.

**15.c4**

Restricting the knights and starting to gain more space.

**15... ♜xe4 16. ♜xe4 ♜c7 17. ♜e7 ♜c8 18. ♜e1 ♜e8 19. ♜d2 ♜e6 20. ♜h6 ♜f6**

20...d5 21.c5 ♜d7 looks like a reasonable way to move the knight to the kingside. The immediate 20...♜d7 is less attractive after 21.♗xg7 ♜xg7 22.♗ac1 ♜f6 23.d5.

**21. ♜e2 ♜d7**

Logical, but also occupying a square which would have been nice to reserve for the knight. Such is life in a cramped position.

**22. ♜ae1 ♜e7 23.b3 ♜ae8 24. ♜c2 c5?!**

Allowing White to gain more space, while there is still no proper place for the b6-knight yet.

**25.d5 ♜d4 26. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 27.h4 ♜c8 28. ♜g5 ♜e5 29. ♜f4 ♜e7 30.g3 a6 31. ♜g2**



The former World Champion goes about it calmly. She has gathered several advantages: the pair of bishops, a space advantage, a clear target on d6. Meanwhile, our b6-knight has not really managed to improve its placement. It took many more moves, but White did win.

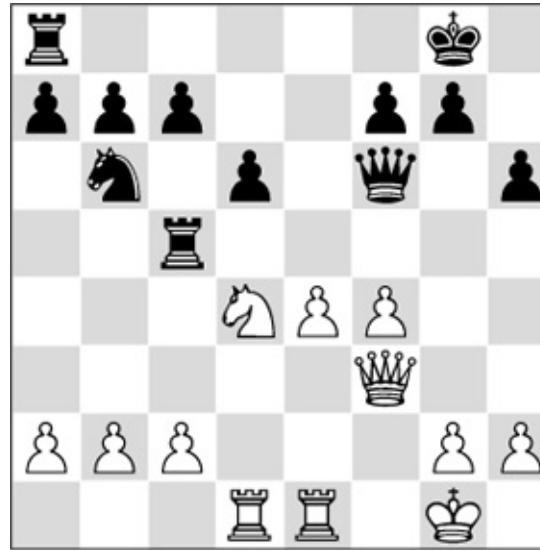
**31... b5 32. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 33. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 34. ♜d3 bxc4 35.bxc4 ♜b7 36. ♜e2 ♜g7 37.h5 ♜b2 38. ♜c2 ♜c3 39.h6+ ♜f8  
40. ♜g4 f5 41. ♜xf5 ♜e1 42. ♜d3 ♜xf2+ 43. ♜h3 ♜e7 44. ♜xd6 ♜e3 45. ♜f4+**

**Siegbert Tarrasch**

**Emanuel Lasker**

Düsseldorf Wch m 1908 (8)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 d6 5.d4 ♗d7 6.♘c3 ♗e7 7.♗e1 exd4 8.♗xd4 ♘xd4 9.♗xd4 ♗xb5 10.♗xb5 0-0  
11.♗g5 h6 12.♗h4 ♗e8 13.♗ad1 ♘d7 14.♗xe7 ♗xe7 15.♗c3 ♗e5 16.♗d4 ♗c5 17.♗b3 ♗b6 18.f4 ♗f6 19.♗f3



Here we see the man who allegedly made the statement about the b6-knight facing such a knight himself. This game is eminently famous, so we will only pick a short fragment which evolves around the b6-knight.

19... ♗e8

19... ♗a4!? was later found to be an interesting alternative, which even prompted Kasparov to give the text move a question mark. For similar knight jumps explore IYCPR Chapter 4, *Dominating from the Edge*. 20.♗b3 ♗b6 would only repeat moves after 21.♗f3, but other replies do not yield White anything either.

20.c3

Protecting the d4-knight, Tarrasch avoids 20.b3 ♗d5, when Black's knight springs to life.

20...a5 21.b3!

Again restricting the knight.

21...a4 22.b4?

An anti-positional move, considering White's pawn structure and the weak square c4. Yet, annotators and engines are mild in their comments on this move, as Black's c4-rook and b6-knight are strangely tied up. 22.c4 would have been the consistent follow-up, with a pleasant edge for White. The b6-knight will have to be transferred from its inactive position sooner or later. Instead, Tarrasch was tempted into muddy waters, trying to catch the c4-rook, and missed a tactical counter-stroke.

22... ♗c4 23.g3 ♗d8 24.♗e3 c5 25.♗b5?! cxb4 26.♗xd6? ♗xd6 27.e5 ♗xf4! 28.gxf4 ♗g6+ 29.♗h1 ♗b1+ 30.♗g2 ♗d2+ 31.♗e2 ♗xa2 32.♗xd2 ♗xd2+ 33.♗g3 a3 34.e6 ♗e1+ 35.♗g4 ♗xe6+ 36.f5 ♗c4+ 37.♗d4 a2 38.♗d1 ♗d5 39.♗a4 ♗xc3 40.♗e8+ ♗h7 41.♗h5 a1♗

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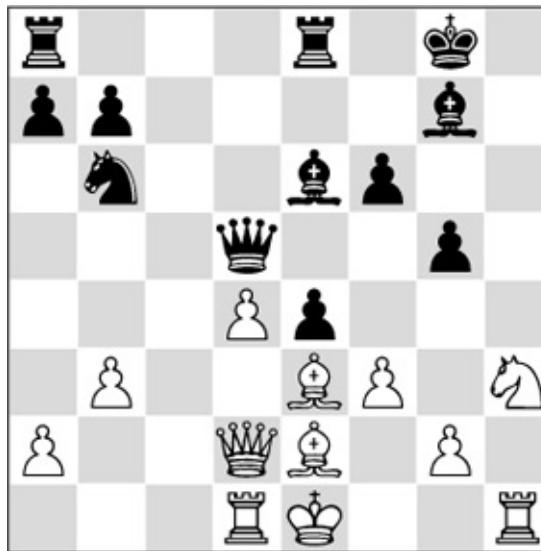
## Off-Side

**Gregory Kaidanov**

**Viktor Kupreichik**

Tilburg 1993

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 d6 3.♘c3 g6 4.e4 ♗g7 5.♗e2 0-0 6.♗g5 c6 7.♗d2 ♗bd7 8.♗d1 d5 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.e5 ♗e4 11.♗xe4 dxе4 12.h4 ♗b6 13.h5 f6 14.♗e3 ♗d5 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.exf6 exf6 17.b3 ♗e6 18.♗h3 g5 19.f3 ♗fe8



By now you will immediately notice the black knight on b6, facing the b3-pawn as always. White now opens up the kingside, profiting from the off-side position of the knight.

**20.f4 g4 21.f5! gxh3**

21... $\mathbb{W}xf5$  22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$  (threatening 23. $\mathbb{Q}h5$ ) 22... $\mathbb{Q}f7$  23. $\mathbb{Q}h4$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xd5$   $\mathbb{W}xd5$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xg4$  and White is still better, though Black has at least exchanged his knight.

21... $\mathbb{Q}xf5$  22. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{W}f7$  23.d5!? (23. $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $\mathbb{Q}e6$ ).

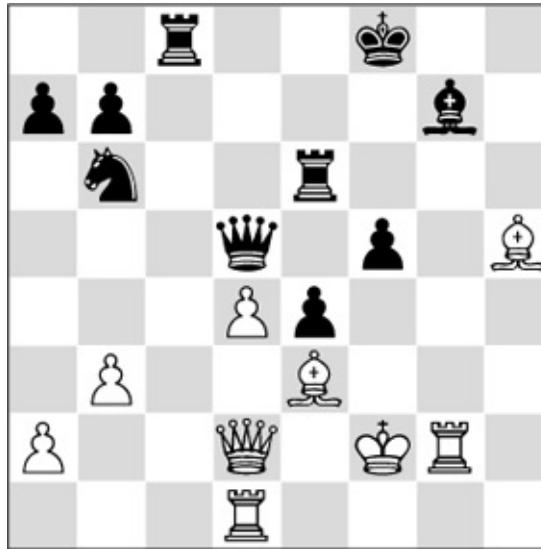
**22.fxe6 hxg2 23.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}xe6$**

23... $\mathbb{Q}xe6$ , vacating the d5-square, is the natural move, but Black must have feared 24. $\mathbb{Q}h5$  (24. $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}d5$ ). However, he has a beautiful retort: 24... $\mathbb{Q}h3!$  25. $\mathbb{Q}xe8$   $\mathbb{Q}d5!$ , when White should think of saving his skin with 26. $\mathbb{Q}d7$ .

**24.  $\mathbb{Q}xg2$   $\mathbb{Q}c8?$**

A defensive move – Black is afraid that White will take the c-file. 24... $\mathbb{Q}f7$  25. $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  was a better solution.

**25.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$  f5 27.  $\mathbb{Q}h5+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$**



**28.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7!$**

White has opened up the kingside; the black knight is still hanging around on b6.

**28...  $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}g1+$   $\mathbb{Q}h7$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}e1?$**

A very nice move! But – 30. $\mathbb{Q}f7!$  would have won almost on the spot.

**30...  $\mathbb{Q}g8$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}h1$   $\mathbb{Q}g3?$**

Now 31... $\mathbb{Q}g7!$  looks equal.

**32.  $\mathbb{Q}f3+$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}h2$   $\mathbb{Q}eg6$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}h8+$   $\mathbb{Q}f7$  35.  $\mathbb{Q}h7+$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$   $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}h5+$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}h6+$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}xg7+$**

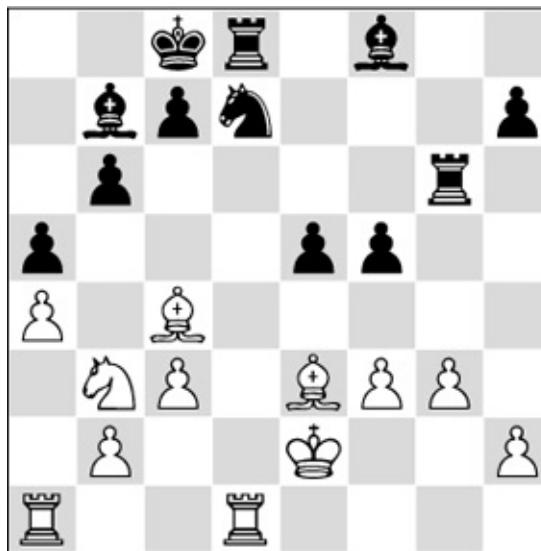
## Exchanging the Other Pieces

Sebastian Bogner

Li Chao

Germany Bundesliga 2014/15

1.  $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.  $c4$   $g6$  3.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $d5$  4.  $cxd5$   $\mathbb{Q}xd5$  5.  $e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  6.  $dxc3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd1+$  7.  $\mathbb{Q}xd1$   $f6$  8.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $e5$  9.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}d7$  10.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $a5$  11.  $a4$   $f5$  12.  $exf5$   $gxf5$  13.  $f3$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  14.  $g3$   $b6$  15.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  16.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  17.  $\mathbb{Q}hd1$  0-0-0



18.  $\mathbb{Q}f2?$

White should have thought about his worst placed piece first: 18.  $\mathbb{Q}d3$   $e4$  19.  $fxe4$   $fxe4$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$ , and suddenly the knight can jump to d4.

18...  $\mathbb{Q}d6$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $f4$  20.  $gxf4$   $exf4$  21.  $\mathbb{Q}d4?$

This leads to a series of exchanges, after which the bad position of the remaining knight on b3 becomes painfully clear.

21...  $c5$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}g7$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$   $hxg6$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $\mathbb{Q}d3+$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}xd3$   $\mathbb{Q}xd3$



27.  $\mathbb{Q}g1$   $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$

First 27...  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  was also possible.

28.  $\mathbb{Q}e1$   $\mathbb{Q}e3+$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}h3$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$   $\mathbb{Q}xh2+$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}g1?!$   $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  32.  $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $c4$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $cxb3$  34.  $\mathbb{Q}b5$   $\mathbb{Q}b1+$

White resigned.

## From the Opening

In many openings a knight appears on b3, b6, g3 or g6. Often this is no big deal; the knight enjoys sufficient freedom, or for the moment the focus is elsewhere in a complex position.

The following Scotch variation is not uncommon, but I have always been put off by the deplorable position of the b6-knight.

**Ian Nepomniachtchi**

**Etienne Bacrot**

Beijing rapid 2014

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘xc6 bxc6 6.e5 ♗e7 7.♗e2 ♘d5 8.c4 ♘b6



My initial reaction was: why would you play this line, when after White's next move your knight is hopelessly cut off from the action?

Things are not that clear-cut though, just like in this Ruy Lopez line, which evoked a similar reaction with me:

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.d3 d6 6.c3 g6 7.♗bd2 ♗g7,



analysis diagram

and now with Black's pawn on g6 White often transfers his knight to g3: 8.♗f1 0-0 9.♗g3. Still, it is a

useful defender, and at times it can be strong in the attack as well. Look how it appears on both h5 and f5 in the following game, when Black took too much risk:

9...b5 10.♗c2 ♗b8 11.0-0 ♗bd7 12.d4 c5 13.a4 ♗b7 14.d5 c4 15.h3 ♗c5 16.♗g5 h6 17.♗e3 ♗fd7 18.♗d2 h5 19.♗g5 ♗f6 20.♗h6 ♗g7 21.♗f6 22.♗h6 ♗e8 23.♗g5 bxa4 24.♗e3 ♗b6 25.♗f3 ♗e7



analysis diagram

26.♗xh5 ♗h8 27.♗g3 ♗xb2 28.♗xa4 ♗xa4 29.♗xa4 a5 30.♗f5 gxf5 31.♗xf5 ♗f8 32.♗h7 ♗d7 33.♗g5+ ♗xh7 34.♗xe7 ♗f6 35.♗g5 ♗g6 36.♗xf6 ♗xf6 37.♗xd6 ♗xc3 38.♗a3 1-0, Khairullin-Alexandrov, St Petersburg 2007.

In our main game things ended less happily for the side with the b6-knight. Instead of the immediate retreat to b6, 8...♗a6 is more flexible and popular.

**9.b3 a5 10.♗a3 ♗e6 11.g3!?**

After 11.♗xf8 ♗xf8 White will have to respond to the advance of Black's a-pawn.

**11...a4 12.♗g2 axb3 13.axb3 ♗xa3 14.♗xa3 ♗xa3 15.♗xa3 0-0 16.0-0 ♗e8 17.f4 f6 18.♗f2 fxe5 19.fxe5 h6 20.♗e1 d5**



**21.cxd5 cxd5**

Undoubling the pawn is the natural thing to do, but 21...♗xd5 would have solved the problem of the knight's passivity. After the text move the black knight never gets the possibility to reach a better square, for instance via d7. Its miserable career ends with getting captured on b6.

**22.♗b5 ♗e7 23.♗c1 ♗g5**

23... ♕xe5 24. ♖xc7 loses material at once.

24. ♜xc7

24. ♜f4! was more accurate, in order to take with the knight on c7.

24... ♕xe5 25. ♜c1 ♕e3?

25... ♜d7! 26. ♖d4 ♜d6 was still quite reasonable.

26. ♕xe3 ♜xe3 27. ♜c6

Winning on the spot.

27... ♜xb3 28. ♜xb6 ♜b1+ 29. ♜f2 ♜b2+ 30. ♜f3 ♜d7 31. ♜b8+ ♜h7 32. ♜f1 ♜b3+ 33. ♜f4 ♜b4+ 34. ♜e5

1-0

## Summary

No, a knight on b6 is not always bad. Yet, sometimes its activity can easily be restricted by a simple pawn move (b2-b3). When the central square d5 is not available either, the knight can typically end up in an off-side position. The opponent can try to build on his spatial advantage, preserving as many pieces on the board as he possibly can. Or he may try to exchange the other pieces, when a remaining passive b6-knight will become a more important factor. Another approach is to ignore the knight and start an initiative on the other side of the board. The side with the knight should be on the look-out for possibilities to redirect his knight. Lingering can be fatal.

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telegram channel address:

<https://telegram.me/ChessWorldChess>

# Chapter 37

## Buried Bishops

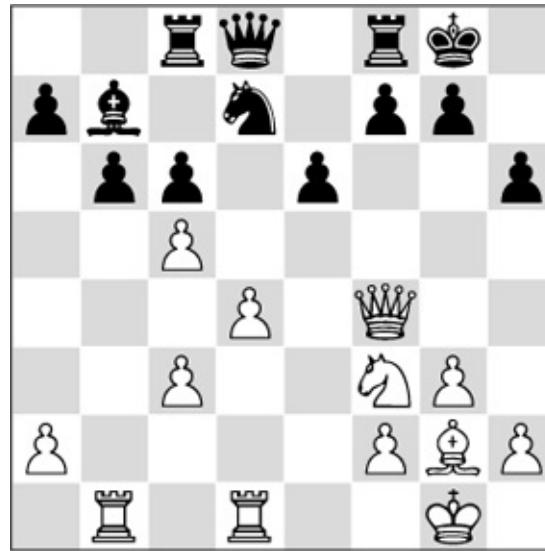
A bishop in the corner of the board with a blockaded pawn two squares further on the long diagonal. This is a dreadful fate for the bishop, obviously to be avoided at all times and at any price. Of course, you won't allow such a thing to happen in your own game. But then how come that even very strong grandmasters have had this happen to them?

**Alexander Onischuk**

**Daniel Naroditsky**

Saint Louis ch-USA 2015

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}b4+$  5. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  6. $\mathbb{Q}g2$  c6 7. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  0-0 8. $\mathbb{Q}g5$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  9.e4 dx $e4$  10. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}b4+$  11. $\mathbb{Q}c3$  h6 12. $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  13. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}xc3$  14.bxc3  $\mathbb{Q}a5$  15.0-0  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  16. $\mathbb{Q}e4$   $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xf4$  b6 18. $\mathbb{Q}fd1$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  19.c5  $\mathbb{Q}c8$  20. $\mathbb{Q}ab1$



20...  $\mathbb{Q}a8$

Of course Naroditsky realized this was not the best spot for the bishop. On the other hand, he may have been hoping to force White to give up the blockade of the c-pawn.

Moreover, active solutions were not appealing, for example: 20... $\mathbb{Q}a6$  21. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  22.dxe5  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  23.cxb6 axb6 24. $\mathbb{Q}d6$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  25. $\mathbb{Q}e3$ .

21. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{Q}xd7$  23.a4!

Onischuk does not oblige, and preserves the pressure, refusing to liquidate into an endgame with a pawn up, which would allow Black to exchange his dark-squared bishop after 23.cxb6 axb6 24. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$  c5.

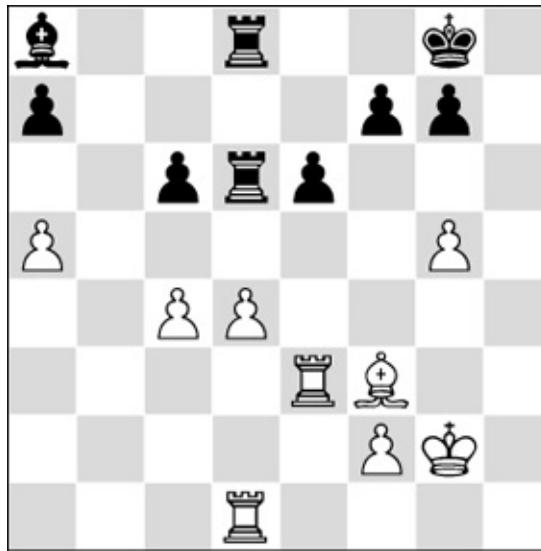
23...  $\mathbb{Q}fd8$  24. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  25. $\mathbb{Q}e5$  bxc5 26. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$

26.dxc5 seems stronger: 26...f6 (26... $\mathbb{Q}b7$  27. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ ) 27. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  28. $\mathbb{Q}d6$ .

26...  $\mathbb{Q}c7$

26... $\mathbb{Q}xc5$  27.dxc5  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  and Black may seem to be hopelessly passive, but White still has to find a way to break through. In the game Black exchanged queens later, apparently in much more favourable circumstances:

27.a5  $\mathbb{Q}b8$  28.c4  $\mathbb{Q}d7$  29.h4  $\mathbb{Q}bc8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  31. $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$  32.g4  $\mathbb{Q}cd7$  33.g5 hxg5 34.hxg5  $\mathbb{Q}c7$  35. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  36. $\mathbb{Q}xd6$   $\mathbb{Q}xd6$



Now Naroditsky was planning to play ...c6-c5 next, when White would protect the d4-pawn. He was contended with his defence, until he was completely surprised by Onischuk's next:

37.c5! ♜xd4 38.♕xd4 ♜xd4 39.♗b3 ♜d8 40.a6!

With virtually a piece up White won the game. A delicious grind, which made Anish Giri tweet: 'I wish I was Onischuk today.'

40... ♜f8 41.♗e4 f5 42.gxf6 gxf6 43.♗h3 ♜g8 44.♗d3 ♜xd3 45.♗xd3 f5 46.f4 ♜g7 47.♗f3 ♜f6 48.♗e3 e5 49.♗c4 e4 50.♗d4

1-0

Onischuk may have been inspired, and Naroditsky could have been warned, by the following classic:

**Anatoly Karpov**

**Joel Lautier**

Biel 1992

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.♘f3 ♘bd7 6.♘c2 ♘d6 7.♘e2 0-0 8.0-0 ♜e8 9.♗d1 ♜e7 10.h3 b6 11.e4 ♘xe4 12.♘xe4 dxе4 13.♘xe4 ♘b7 14.♘f4 ♜ad8 15.♘xd6 ♘xd6 16.♘e5 ♘xe5 17.дxe5 ♘c7 18.♘f3



18... ♘a8

Lautier, too, was of course intending this spot to be a temporary one for the bishop, planning a follow-up with ...c6-c5. Karpov consistently parries this move, also at the cost of a pawn.

19.♗xd8! ♜xd8 20.♗d1 ♜xd1+ 21.♘xd1

Had Black's bishop still been on b7, then a decent move here would have been 21...♗c8.

21... ♕d8 22. ♖f3

Of course! White may lose a pawn, but now the pin remains and White will continue with b4-b5 when possible.

22... ♕d2 23.b3

23.g3 ♕xb2 24.♕d3.

23... ♕xa2 24.b4 ♕a1+ 25.♔h2 ♕a6 26.♗d4 ♕c8 27.c5 bxc5 28.♗xc5 a6 29.♗e7



Here too an endgame has arisen where Black is doomed to complete passivity. Like in the former game, Black ends up in a bishop ending with an extra pawn. Unfortunately, also here his bishop is still on a8 in the final position.

29... g6 30.h4 h5 31.♗g3 ♕b7 32.♗xb7 ♔xb7 33.♗f4 ♕f8 34.♗g5 ♕e7 35.♔e4 ♔a8 36.f3 ♔b7 37.g4 ♔a8 38.gxh5 gxh5 39.f4 ♔b7 40.♔f3 ♔a8 41.♗xh5

1-0

This reminds me of Tarrasch's supposed statement 'If one piece is bad, the whole game is bad.' A series of exchanges, like in the games given above, certainly proves his point. After that, too few active pieces remained to make up for the miserable position of the a8-bishop.

On the other hand, with many pieces still on the board you can sometimes afford to leave one piece out of the action. Like in Caruana-Topalov, Saint Louis 2014, where a white knight remained on a4 for 19 moves, until Black resigned, having lost the battle on the other side of the board:



12... $\mathbb{Q}a5$  13. $\mathbb{Q}e2$  h5 14. $\mathbb{Q}f4$  g5 15. $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$  16. $\mathbb{Q}g3$  h4 17. $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $\mathbb{Q}g8$  18. $\mathbb{Q}ae1$  c5 19.c4 dxc4 20. $\mathbb{Q}xc4$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  21.h3  $\mathbb{Q}d8$  22. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  23. $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  24. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$  fxe6 25. $\mathbb{Q}f3+$   $\mathbb{Q}e8$  26. $\mathbb{Q}xe6$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  27. $\mathbb{Q}h6$   $\mathbb{Q}d4$  28.e6  $\mathbb{Q}xf3+$  29.gxf3  $\mathbb{Q}f8$  30. $\mathbb{Q}h5+$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  31. $\mathbb{Q}xg7$  1-0.

In the European Cup Club 2015, Kramnik showed great form generally; here he proved that a minor piece can be a suitable blockader as well.

### Vladimir Kramnik Ian Nepomniachtchi Skopje 2015

1.d4  $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  g6 3.g3  $\mathbb{Q}g7$  4. $\mathbb{Q}g2$  d5 5.0-0 0-0 6.c3 b6 7.c4 c6 8. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}b7$  9. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  10. $\mathbb{Q}a4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  11.dxe5  $\mathbb{Q}e4$  12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  dxe4 13. $\mathbb{Q}f4$  e3 14. $\mathbb{Q}xe3$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  15. $\mathbb{Q}ad1$   $\mathbb{Q}c7$



16.c5!?  $\mathbb{Q}xb2$  17. $\mathbb{Q}b3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  18.cxb6 axb6 19. $\mathbb{Q}xb6$   $\mathbb{Q}c8$   
 19... $\mathbb{Q}b8!$  20. $\mathbb{Q}b1$  (20. $\mathbb{Q}c5$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$ ) 20...c5 21. $\mathbb{Q}xb7$   $\mathbb{Q}xb7$  22. $\mathbb{Q}xc5$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$ .  
 20. $\mathbb{Q}c1$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  21. $\mathbb{Q}c2$   $\mathbb{Q}a6$  22. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}a4$  23. $\mathbb{Q}xa4$   $\mathbb{Q}xa4$  24. $\mathbb{Q}d1$



24... $\mathbb{Q}a8$

Remarkable! Black anticipates the annoying 25. $\mathbb{Q}d7$  and, above all, threatens to relieve the pressure with the much desired ...c6-c5. A tempting try perhaps, but after White's reply this hope is short-lived, and essentially the bishop gets buried alive.

24... $\mathbb{B}a6$  was a much better option, when after 25. $\mathbb{B}c5$  the bishop can be transferred by 25... $\mathbb{B}c8$ .

25. $\mathbb{B}c5$   $\mathbb{B}b8$  26.a3 e5 27.e3 e4 28. $\mathbb{B}e2$   $\mathbb{B}b7$  29. $\mathbb{B}c4$   $\mathbb{B}xc4$  30. $\mathbb{B}xc4$   $\mathbb{B}g7$  31.a4

And Kramnik sailed to another smooth victory in this tournament:

31... $\mathbb{B}e7$  32. $\mathbb{B}xe7$   $\mathbb{B}xe7$  33.a5 f5 34. $\mathbb{B}d8$   $\mathbb{B}a7$  35.a6  $\mathbb{B}f6$  36. $\mathbb{B}e8$  c5 37. $\mathbb{B}f1$   $\mathbb{B}g7$  38. $\mathbb{B}e2$   $\mathbb{B}c6$  39. $\mathbb{B}c8$   $\mathbb{B}d7$  40. $\mathbb{B}g8+$   $\mathbb{B}h6$  41. $\mathbb{B}b8$   $\mathbb{B}c6$  42. $\mathbb{B}b6$   $\mathbb{B}a8$  43. $\mathbb{B}b5$   $\mathbb{B}c7$  44. $\mathbb{B}d2$   $\mathbb{B}c8$  45. $\mathbb{B}c3$   $\mathbb{B}g5$  46.h3 h5 47. $\mathbb{B}c4$  h4 48. $\mathbb{B}e6$   $\mathbb{B}xg3$  49.fxg3

1-0

It's quite amazing, but we can easily dig up more examples where top-level players were lured into playing their bishop to the safe square a8. Kramnik may have been reminded of his sweet victory over Judit Polgar in Dortmund 1997 – particularly this moment:

### Vladimir Kramnik

### Judit Polgar

Dortmund 1997

1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$  d5 2.d4 e6 3.c4  $\mathbb{B}b4+$  4. $\mathbb{B}d2$   $\mathbb{B}xd2+$  5. $\mathbb{B}bxsd2$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  6.g3 0-0 7. $\mathbb{B}g2$   $\mathbb{B}e7$  8.0-0 b6 9. $\mathbb{B}c1$   $\mathbb{B}b7$  10. $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  11. $\mathbb{Q}xd7$   $\mathbb{B}xd7$  12. $\mathbb{B}c2$   $\mathbb{B}ac8$  13.c5 c6 14. $\mathbb{B}a4$



14... $\mathbb{B}a8?$ !

Black's defence is not easy. This may be the natural way to protect the a7-pawn, but from here obviously the bishop is not likely to emerge quickly. Backward development with 14... $\mathbb{B}a8$  was a tough decision to make, but at least Black then has the plan of ... $\mathbb{B}c7$ , ...b6-b5 and ...a7-a5 to follow up with.

15.e4 dxe4 16. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  17. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $\mathbb{B}fd8$  18. $\mathbb{B}fd1$   $\mathbb{B}c7$  19.b4 g6 20. $\mathbb{B}a3$   $\mathbb{B}e7$  21. $\mathbb{B}f3$

And eventually White won on the kingside, which is another typical way to take profit from the opponent's off-side piece:

21...b5 22.a4 bxa4 23. $\mathbb{B}a1$  a6 24. $\mathbb{B}xa4$   $\mathbb{B}b7$  25. $\mathbb{B}a2$   $\mathbb{B}c7$  26. $\mathbb{B}ad2$   $\mathbb{B}g7$  27. $\mathbb{B}f4$   $\mathbb{B}cd7$  28. $\mathbb{B}e5+$   $\mathbb{B}f6$  29.f4 h5 30. $\mathbb{B}f2$  h4 31. $\mathbb{B}e3$   $\mathbb{B}xg3$  32. $\mathbb{B}xg3$   $\mathbb{B}a8$  33. $\mathbb{B}h2$   $\mathbb{B}xe5$  34. $\mathbb{B}fxe5$   $\mathbb{B}f8$  35. $\mathbb{B}f1$   $\mathbb{B}xd4$  36. $\mathbb{B}h7$   $\mathbb{B}8d7$  37. $\mathbb{B}h8+$   $\mathbb{B}e7$  38. $\mathbb{B}xa8$   $\mathbb{B}xb4$  39. $\mathbb{B}xc6$   $\mathbb{B}b3+$  40. $\mathbb{B}f2$   $\mathbb{B}d2+$  41. $\mathbb{B}e1$

1-0

Another example, where a seasoned ex-World Champion ended up with a buried bishop.

### Valery Salov

### Boris Spassky

France tt 1994

1. $\mathbb{Q}f3$   $\mathbb{Q}f6$  2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4. $\mathbb{B}g2$   $\mathbb{B}e7$  5.0-0 0-0 6.d4  $\mathbb{Q}bd7$  7. $\mathbb{B}c2$  c6 8.b3 b6 9. $\mathbb{B}d1$   $\mathbb{B}b7$  10. $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{B}c8$  11.e4  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  12. $\mathbb{Q}xe4$  dxe4 13. $\mathbb{B}xe4$  b5 14. $\mathbb{B}f4$   $\mathbb{B}xc4$  15. $\mathbb{B}xc4$



15... ♜a5 16. ♜c2 ♜a8

With his last two moves Spassky has prepared the liberating ...c6-c5, aiming to keep his bishop on the long diagonal. Several later attempts saw Black wisely moving the bishop to a6 – though White's position remained preferable.

16...c5 17. ♜g5 ♜xg5 18. ♜xb7 would lose material.

**17.c5!**

You will no longer be surprised to see this move.

17... ♜f6 18. ♜e5 ♜d5 19. ♜c4 ♜d8 20. ♜d6

Black has immediately occupied the strong square on d5, but after the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, White immediately obtains an awesome octopus on d6 (IY CPR, Chapter 1).

20... ♜xd6 21. ♜xd6 ♜b8 22. ♜ab1 ♜c7 23. ♜xb8 ♜xb8 24. ♜b1 ♜d8

Leaving the b-file to White is no fun. However, the more exchanges Black allows, the less moves he will have left.

25. ♜b3 ♜f6 26. ♜b2 ♜e8 27. ♜c4 h6 28. ♜f3 ♜f8 29. ♜g2 ♜f6 30. a4 ♜e8 31. a5 ♜c8 32. h4 ♜c7 33. ♜d6 ♜d7 34. ♜b8 ♜a6 35. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 36. ♜d2 ♜g8 37. ♜f4 ♜e7 38. ♜h5 g6 39. ♜xh6

Again White strikes on the other side.

39... ♜f6

39...gxh5 40. ♜e4 f6 (40...f5 41. ♜g6+ ♜f8 42. ♜g5) 41. ♜xf6+ ♜f7 42. ♜e4.

40. ♜f3 ♜xd4 41. ♜g5 ♜xc5 42. ♜e7 ♜d3 43. ♜xf7+ ♜h8 44. ♜f8+ ♜h7 45. ♜e4

1-0

This same technique of switching to the other side can be used when your opponent's King's Indian bishop does not fulfil its promise.

## Loek van Wely

### Zdenko Kozul

Reykjavik Ech-tt 2015

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3. ♜c3 ♜g7 4.e4 d6 5. ♜f3 0-0 6. ♜e2 e5 7.0-0 ♜bd7 8. ♜e3 ♜e7 9. ♜c2 c6 10. d5 c5 11. ♜g5 h6 12. ♜d2 ♜h5 13. g3 ♜b6 14. ♜ab1 ♜g4 15. ♜h4 ♜h3

Asking too much. Simply exchanging the bishops would have brought some relief in Black's cramped position.

16. ♜xh5 gxh5 17. b3 ♜c8

Relocating the b6-knight. Looks familiar? 17... ♜xf1 18. ♜xf1 would allow a Killer Knight on f5. White will follow up with ♜c2-d1xh5.

18. ♜d1 ♜d7 19. ♜e3 ♜e7 20. ♜ef5 ♜xf5 21. ♜xf5 ♜h7

21... ♜xf5 22. exf5, and Black's bishop is still incarcerated. 22...e4 is the only active attempt, but

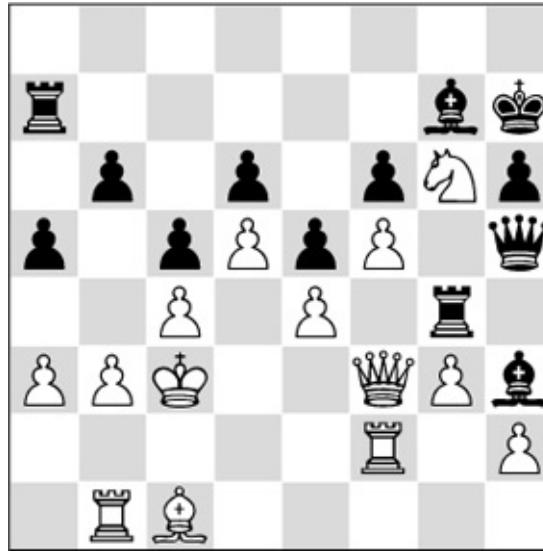
Black's shattered kingside leaves his position hopeless.

22.f4 f6 23.  $\mathbb{f}2$   $\mathbb{a}e8$  24.  $\mathbb{e}1$   $\mathbb{g}8$  25.  $\mathbb{h}4$   $\mathbb{h}8$



It may seem that despite the buried bishop on h8, Black is setting up a kind of attack. The next diagram will give a quite different impression, though.

26.f5  $\mathbb{g}4$  27.  $\mathbb{h}1$   $\mathbb{e}g8$  28.  $\mathbb{d}3$   $\mathbb{g}7$  29.  $\mathbb{e}2$   $\mathbb{f}7$  30.  $\mathbb{e}3$   $\mathbb{g}7$  31.  $\mathbb{f}3$   $\mathbb{h}4$  32.  $\mathbb{x}h4$   $\mathbb{h}5$  33.  $\mathbb{g}6$   $b6$  34.  $\mathbb{f}3$   $a5$  35.  $\mathbb{e}2$   $\mathbb{a}8$  36.  $\mathbb{b}1$   $\mathbb{h}8$  37.  $\mathbb{f}3$   $\mathbb{g}8$  38.  $\mathbb{g}1$   $\mathbb{g}7$  39.  $a3$   $\mathbb{b}8$  40.  $\mathbb{e}2$   $\mathbb{a}8$  41.  $\mathbb{d}1$   $\mathbb{h}8$  42.  $\mathbb{f}3$   $\mathbb{g}7$  43.  $\mathbb{e}1$   $\mathbb{h}8$  44.  $\mathbb{c}3$   $\mathbb{c}8$  45.  $\mathbb{e}2$   $\mathbb{a}8$  46.  $\mathbb{f}2$   $\mathbb{g}7$  47.  $\mathbb{d}2$   $\mathbb{a}7$  48.  $\mathbb{c}1$   $\mathbb{a}8$  49.  $\mathbb{e}1$   $\mathbb{a}7$  50.  $\mathbb{d}2$   $\mathbb{a}8$  51.  $\mathbb{c}2$   $\mathbb{a}7$  52.  $\mathbb{f}2$   $\mathbb{a}8$  53.  $\mathbb{c}3$   $\mathbb{a}7$



Van Wely has manoeuvred patiently. The following break shows that almost all black pieces are ridiculously misplaced.

54.b4 axb4+ 55.axb4  $\mathbb{a}4$  56.bxc5 bxc5 57.  $\mathbb{b}7$   $\mathbb{a}1$  58.  $\mathbb{b}2$   $\mathbb{a}6$  59.  $\mathbb{b}1$   $\mathbb{a}8$  60.  $\mathbb{f}2$   $\mathbb{g}5$  61.  $\mathbb{x}h5$   $\mathbb{x}h5$  62.  $\mathbb{f}7$   $\mathbb{g}8$  63.  $\mathbb{b}7$   $\mathbb{g}2$  64.  $\mathbb{f}8+$   $\mathbb{h}8$  65.  $\mathbb{e}6$   $\mathbb{x}e4+$  66.  $\mathbb{a}1$   $\mathbb{x}h2$  67.  $\mathbb{x}g7$   $\mathbb{d}3$  68.  $\mathbb{g}4$   $\mathbb{a}8+$  69.  $\mathbb{a}7$   $\mathbb{x}a7+$  70.  $\mathbb{x}a7$   $\mathbb{e}2$  71.  $\mathbb{h}5$

1-0

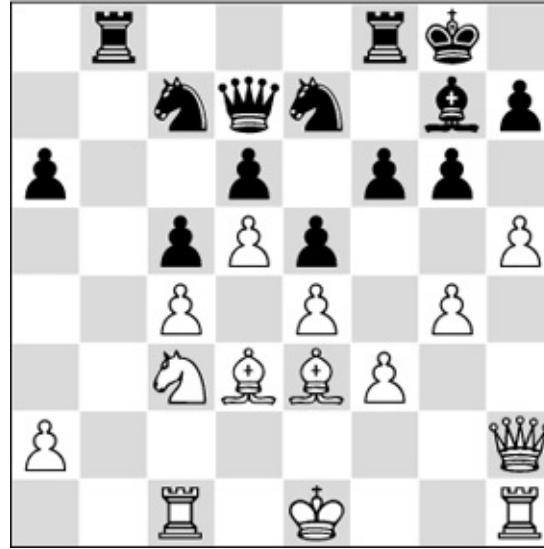
One more older example, with Andersson enjoying the white side.

**Ulf Andersson  
Laszlo Szabo**

Wijk aan Zee 1973

1.  $\mathbb{f}3$   $\mathbb{f}6$  2.  $c4$   $g6$  3.  $c3$   $\mathbb{g}7$  4.  $e4$   $d6$  5.  $d4$  0-0 6.  $\mathbb{e}2$   $\mathbb{g}4$  7.  $\mathbb{e}3$   $\mathbb{f}7$  8.  $\mathbb{c}1$   $c5$  9.  $d5$   $\mathbb{b}6$  10.  $b3$   $\mathbb{a}6$  11.  $h3$   $\mathbb{xf}3$

12. ♜xf3 ♛c7 13. ♜d2 e5 14.g4 ♛c8 15.h4 a6 16. ♜e2 ♜d7 17.h5 b5 18.f3 bxc4 19.bxc4 ♜b8 20. ♜d3 ♛e7 21. ♜h2 f6



22.h6

Burying the bishop first.

22... ♜h8 23. ♜c2

And immediately Andersson diverts his attention to the other side, where the open b-file is thankfully used to exchange some of Black's active pieces.

23... ♜b7 24. ♜b1 ♜fb8 25. ♜f2 ♜f7 26. ♜xb7 ♜xb7 27. ♜b1 ♜c8 28. ♜xb7 ♜xb7 29. ♜b3 ♜xb3 30.axb3 g5

30...f5 31.exf5 gxf5 32.gxf5 ♜f6.

31. ♜a4 ♜g8 32.b4 cxb4 33. ♜b6 ♜e8 34.c5 dxc5 35. ♜xc5 ♜xh6 36. ♜c4 ♜g6 37.d6 ♜xd6 38. ♜xd6 a5 39. ♜c5 ♜g7

It moves again: but where to next?

40. ♜e6 ♜f7 41. ♜e7 ♜h8 42. ♜b7 h5 43. ♜xa5 h4 44. ♜xb4 ♜h6 45. ♜f5 ♜g6 46. ♜c6

1-0

The village of Wijk aan Zee is too small to host a second chess club, otherwise it certainly would have been named after Szabo's bishop on h8. With his knight on a1 Hans Ree just beat him to it.

## Summary

Before retreating your bishop in the corner, check twice that this will indeed be a temporary spot. Your opponent may typically grant you a strong central square, but in the end you will be playing a piece down – your buried bishop. When the position is closed, slowly switching to the other wing is a characteristic strategic method to exploit the cornered bishop.

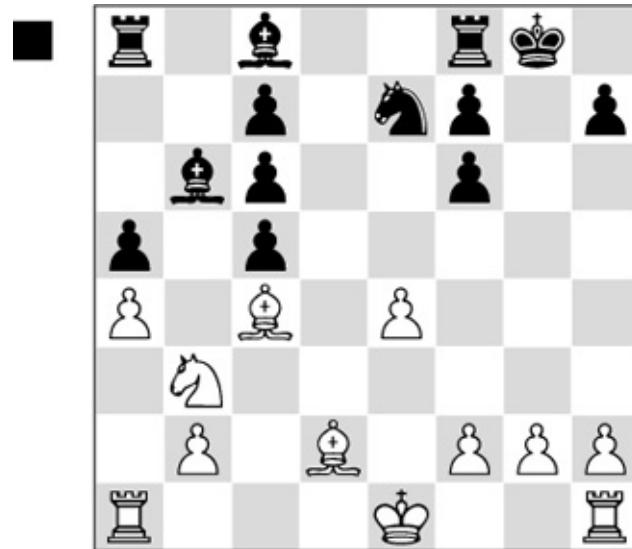
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# Exercises

## Exercise 34



Can you think of a decent plan for Black?

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## Exercise 34

Ruan Lufei

Anna Muzychuk

Ankara 2012

White to move



First, Muzychuk gets rid of the doubled f-pawn, which also helps to create counterplay against the e4-pawn.

14...f5 15.f3 fxe4 16.fxe4 ♜e6

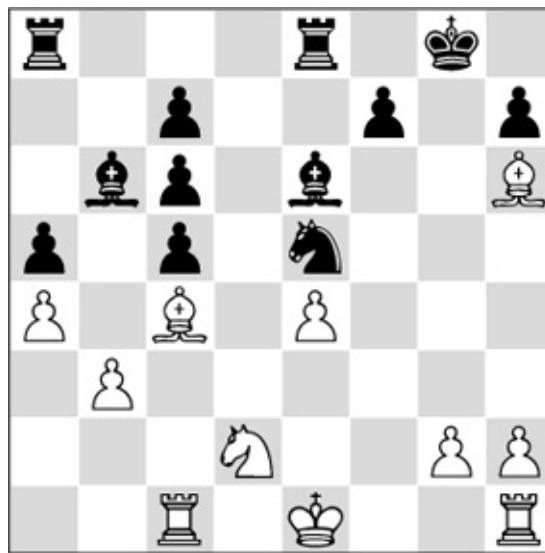
Now she turns her attention to the blockade of the tripled pawn.

17.¤c1 ♜g6 18.♗h6 ♜fe8 19.¤d2 ♜e5

Black is OK, as White cannot give any solid support to both the blockade on c4 and the pawn on e4.

20.b3?!

20.0-0 ♜ad8.



20...♜ad8

An interesting moment. 20...♝xc4 21.bxc4 ♜d3+ 22.♗e2 ♜xc1+ 23.♝xc1 obviously wins the exchange, but now the bishop on b6 is seriously out of play. Still, the engine believes that Black is clearly better. Indeed, White's king is not ideally placed, while Black can also try to get to the c4-pawn. For instance: 23...f5 24.♝c3 (24.♗f3 fxe4+ 25.♗xe4 ♜e6 26.♗f4 ♜d8) 24...fxe4 25.♝g3+ ♜f7 26.♝g7+ ♜f6 27.♗e3 ♜ad8 28.♗xe4+ ♜e6 29.♝xh7 ♜d4 – a very deceptive position indeed!

The game saw White pushing for a long time, but Black held the balance, although, interestingly, the b6-bishop never managed to rejoin the game:

21.  $\mathbb{Q}c3$   $\mathbb{Q}d6$  22.  $\mathbb{Q}g3+$   $\mathbb{Q}g4$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}g6$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}xe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $\mathbb{Q}e7$  26.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $\mathbb{Q}h5$  27.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6+$   $\mathbb{Q}xg6$  28.  $g4$   $\mathbb{Q}g7$  29.  $\mathbb{Q}e2$   $f6$  30.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $d7$  31.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $d4$  32.  $h4$   $h6$  33.  $\mathbb{Q}g2$   $a7$  34.  $g5$   $hxg5$  35.  $hxg5$   $f5$  36.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $fxe4$  37.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$   $b6$  38.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $d6$  39.  $\mathbb{Q}e7+$   $\mathbb{Q}f8$  40.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $d4$  41.  $\mathbb{Q}f1$   $d7$  42.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $g7$  43.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $d6$  44.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $d4$  45.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $f8$  46.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $d6$  47.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $d2$  48.  $\mathbb{Q}e6$   $d6$  49.  $\mathbb{Q}xg6$   $xg6$  50.  $\mathbb{Q}xe4$   $d6$  51.  $\mathbb{Q}f5$   $g7$  52.  $\mathbb{Q}f6$   $a7$  53.  $\mathbb{Q}h5+$   $h7$  54.  $\mathbb{Q}f6+$   $g7$  55.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $b6$  56.  $\mathbb{Q}e5$   $a7$  57.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $b6$  58.  $\mathbb{Q}h5$   $d2$  59.  $\mathbb{Q}xc6$   $h2+$  60.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $g2+$  61.  $\mathbb{Q}f4$   $f2+$  62.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $d2$  63.  $\mathbb{Q}g4$   $g2+$

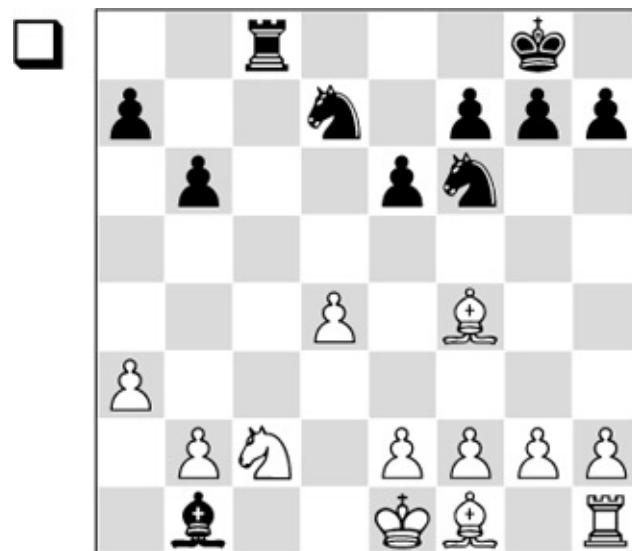
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## Exercise 35



How should White complete his development?

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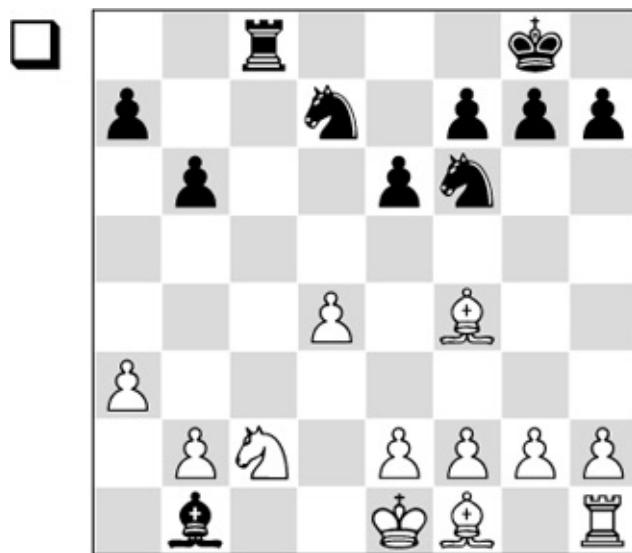
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## Exercise 35

Magnus Carlsen

Michael Adams

Khanty-Mansiysk 2007



**18.  $\mathbb{Q}a1!$**

With the queens off and no clear targets Black, cannot really exploit this knight's off-side position. 18.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$   $\mathbb{Q}e4$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}d1$   $\mathbb{Q}c2$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  (20.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$  g5 21.  $\mathbb{Q}g3$   $\mathbb{Q}b3$ ) 20...  $\mathbb{Q}e5$ ? would give Black a sufficient initiative. The knight would be going astray after 18.  $\mathbb{Q}b4$  a5 19.  $\mathbb{Q}a6$ , allowing the rook to enter with 19...  $\mathbb{Q}c2$  – which is exactly what the knight is preventing from a1.

**18...  $\mathbb{Q}d5$  19.  $\mathbb{Q}d2$   $\mathbb{Q}e5$  20.  $\mathbb{Q}e3$**

Safely holding off the d7-knight, although the engine suggests that even 20.  $dxe5$   $\mathbb{Q}xe5$  21.  $f3$  was possible.

**20...  $exd4$  21.  $exd4$   $\mathbb{Q}b8$  22.  $f3$   $\mathbb{Q}c6$  23.  $\mathbb{Q}c4$   $\mathbb{Q}d8$  24.  $\mathbb{Q}f2$   $\mathbb{Q}f5$  25.  $\mathbb{Q}b3$**

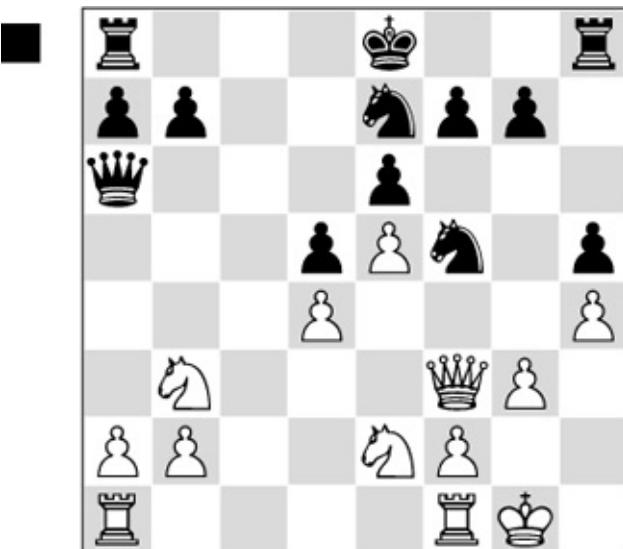
And the young Carlsen had developed harmoniously and kept his extra pawn. He went on to win.

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## Exercise 36



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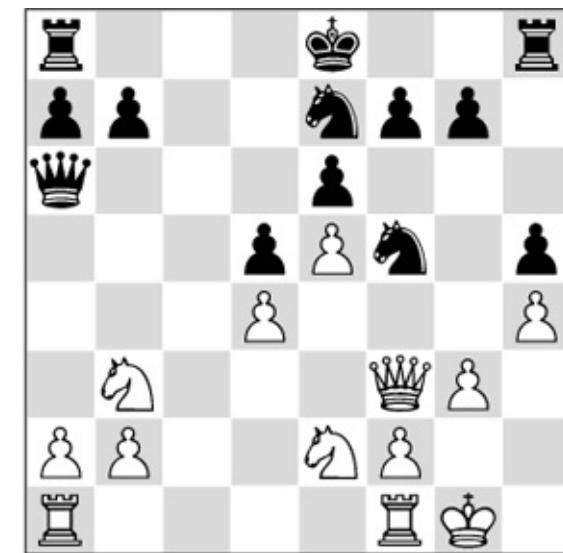
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## Exercise 36

Alexei Shirov

Viswanathan Anand

Leon rapid 2011



**16...b6!**

The typical simple way to ‘eliminate’ the b3-knight. Black’s knight on f5, on the contrary, rules.

**17.♘f4 g6 18.♘h3**

This knight manoeuvre leads nowhere and only makes things worse.

**18...0-0 19.♗f4 ♗e2 20.♗fd1 ♗ac8**

Anand chooses not to complicate in this rapid game and safely occupies the c-file.

**21.♗d2 ♗g4 22.♗xg4 hxg4 23.♕g5 a5 24.f3 ♗c4 25.♗f2 ♗fc8 26.fxg4 ♔h6 27.♗ad1 a4 28.♗a1 ♗xg4+**

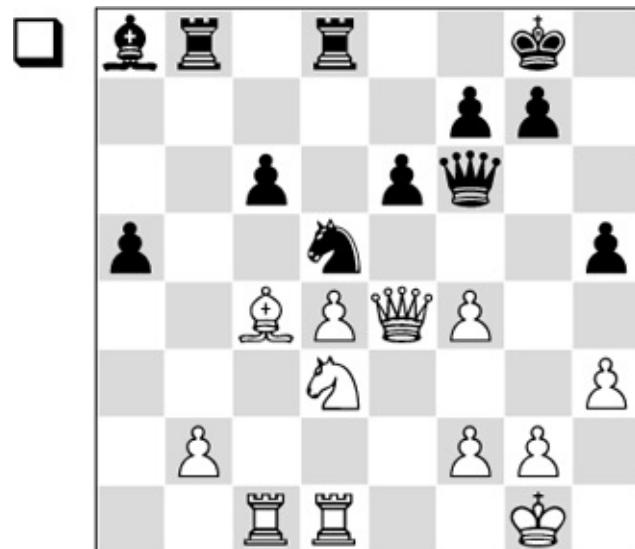
And after Shirov had put his knight on the worst possible square, Black won easily.

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## Exercise 37



White went for the endgame with 30.  $\mathbb{W}e5$   $\mathbb{W}xe5$  31.  $fxe5$ , but there followed 31...  $\mathfrak{Q}c7$ , attacking the d4-pawn. However, White had a strong reply ready.

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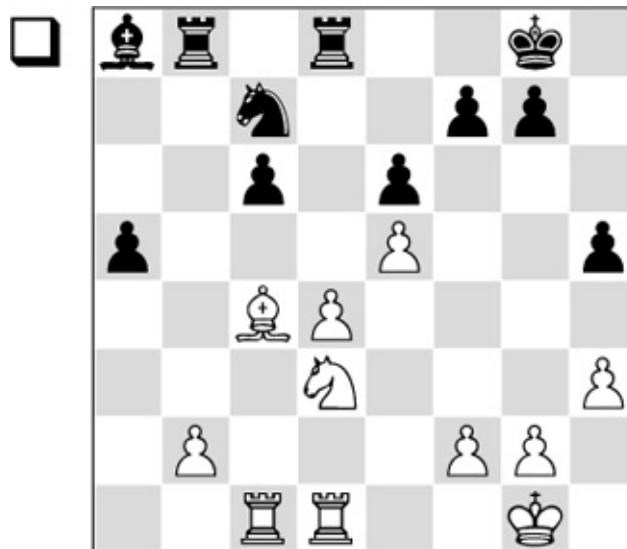
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## Exercise 37

Le Quang Liem

Ivan Salgado Lopez

Gibraltar 2013



**32.b3!**

The typical pawn sac for the absolute blockade.

**32... ♜xd4 33.♕c5 ♜xd1+**

**33... ♜bd8 34.♗xd4 ♜xd4 35.♗a1.**

**34.♗xd1 ♕d5 35.♗a1**

Here White even wins back the pawn, maintaining total positional domination.

**35... ♕e7 36.♗xa5 ♜d8 37.♗d3 h4 38.♗a4 g6 39.♗f1 ♜g7 40.♗a7 ♜f8 41.♗e2 ♕d5 42.♗f3**

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## "CHESS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES"

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Sources of quotation, education and inspiration – or, in short...

## Bibliography

Apart from the usual suspects that I used to select many contemporary games and numerous older ones – Chessbase Megabase 2015, Marc Crowther's still invaluable TWIC's, Informants, New In Chess magazines and occasionally even its (Dutch) predecessor Schaakbulletin – of course I also looked for support in other books.

Remarkably or not, there are many (auto-)biographical works among them:

**David Bronstein, Tom Fürstenberg:** *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Cadogan 1995

**Mikhail Botvinnik:** *Botvinnik's Selected Games* (3 volumes), Fizkultura and sport 1984/1985/1986

**Bobby Fischer:** *My 60 Memorable Games*, Faber&Faber 1972

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**Garry Kasparov:** *Garry Kasparov on Garry Kasparov* (3 volumes), Everyman 2011/2013/2014

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**Viktor Kortchnoi:** *My Best Games Vol. 1*, Olms 2001

**Alexander Kotov:** *Chess Heritage of Alekhine* (2 volumes), Fizkultura and sport 1982

**Bent Larsen:** *Alle Figuren greifen an*, Schachdepot Verlag 2009

**Tony Miles:** *It's Only Me*, Batsford 2003

**Judit Polgar:** Autobiographical series *How I Beat Fischer's Record, From GM to Top Ten, Game of Queens*, Quality Chess 2012/2013/2014

**Lev Polugaevsky:** *Grandmaster Performance*, Pergamon 1984

**Viacheslav Ragozin:** *Izbrannye partii*, Fizkultura and sport 1964

**Mikhail Tal/Alexander Koblenz:** *Mein Weg zum Erfolg* (2 volumes), Sportverlag Berlin 1982/1983

**Vladimir Tukmakov:** *Profession: Chessplayer*, Russell Enterprises 2012

**Alex Yermolinsky:** *The Road to Chess Improvement*, Gambit 1999

Apart from the occasional tournament book – Zurich 1953 by Bronstein (Dover books 1979) and Zurich 1953 by Najdorf (Russell Enterprises 2012), Amsterdam 1956 by Euwe/Muhring (Uitgeverij Variant 1980), a single opening theoretical work (*The Semi Slav* by Schandorff, Quality Chess 2015) – I have referred to (or would like to do so here) several manual-like books:

(*this, of course, apart from the abundant references to my own Improve Your Chess Pattern Recognition, New In Chess 2014*)

**Alexander Baburin:** *Winning Pawn Structures*, Batsford 1998

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**John Emms:** *Simple Chess & More Simple Chess*, Everyman 2001/2004

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**Esben Lund:** *Rooks vs Two Minor Pieces*, Quality Chess 2005

**Mihail Marin:** *Learn from the Legends*, Quality Chess 2004

**Aaron Nimzowitsch:** *Mein System*, Siegfried Engelhart Verlag 1971

**John Nunn:** *Understanding Chess Middlegames*, Gambit 2011

**Peter Romanovsky:** *Soviet Middlegame Technique*, Quality Chess 2013

**Ivan Sokolov:** *The Strategic Nimzo-Indian*, New In Chess 2012

**Mihai Suba:** *Dynamic Chess Strategy*, New In Chess 2010

**John Watson:** *Secrets of Modern Chess Strategy*, Gambit 1998

**John Watson:** *Chess Strategy In Action*, Gambit 2003

My sincere apologies for not mentioning the many other valuable works and inspiring authors that have been, perhaps less directly, involved in the making of this book. Without a doubt they did have their influence, one way or another.

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# About the Author



Arthur van de Oudeweetering (1966) is a Dutch chess player, trainer and columnist from Amsterdam. His youth in the chess-minded city of Apeldoorn brought him a second place in the national youth championship under 16. Later (in 2003) he became an International Master, before shifting his attention to training.

For several years Van de Oudeweetering has trained the Dutch federation's youth selection under 14 (today some of these selected players have become strong grandmasters). He certainly benefited from his acquired experience with compiling training material when he started to write a weekly column on the middlegame for the *ChessVibes Training* magazine, which eventually laid the foundation for his book *Improve Your Chess Pattern Recognition* (2014). Van de Oudeweetering continued to write slightly more narrative, monthly columns for *Chess.com's Master's Bulletin*. When this bulletin came to an end in early 2015, he started to contribute a regular column for New In Chess Magazine, this time again on pattern recognition.

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