

**THE**  
**SICILIAN**  
**DRAGON**

**\* NEW & REVISED \***

THE CLASSIC HOW-TO-WIN GUIDE ON ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING  
AND POWERFUL CHESS OPENINGS PLAYED TODAY!



**EDUARD GUFELD & ERIC SCHILLER**



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# From the Authors

## **Eduard Gufeld**

It gives me great pleasure to collaborate with my old friend, Eric Schiller, on a subject dear to both of our hearts. The Dragon has been my favorite defense against the king pawn game, and I always enjoy a good battle in this opening. The knowledge of professional chessplayers has grown so vast, that the opening is usually presented in a jungle of variations, an unavoidable consequence of our computer age.

After finishing an exhaustive survey of the theory, in *The Complete Dragon*, written with Oleg Stetsko and published by Batsford, I wanted to create a simpler and gentler course of instruction which would enable readers to absorb the crucial middlegame ideas and opening strategy necessary to the understanding and successful use of the opening.

I hope you will enjoy this book. Chess is not just a sport, it is also an art. The brilliant tactics, seen in the examples we discuss, should be appreciated for their purely artistic value, as well as remembered for practical use in tournament play. You must live the Dragon, breathing fire and destroying opponents, but keep your human artistic values alive, too.

## **Eric Schiller**

I worked in many ways with Grandmaster Eduard Gufeld for more than two decades. I have translated some of his many books from Russian to English, and each of us has worked as a journalist, while the other played the role of press chief at major events. It is

a great pleasure that we can finally collaborate on a book together.

We've gathered together many instructive examples of Dragon play, with an eye toward fundamental concepts, rather than the latest theory, which is covered in many other books, including several by each of the authors. I hope we have succeeded in creating a book which will be useful long after the currently fashionable variations fade from view.

In particular, I tried to locate games that are not well represented in the literature, or that were not included in other books because they did not strictly follow the most popular variations. Once or twice, I have even recorded a dissenting view to analysis presented elsewhere by my co-author. After all, each book on an opening has an obligation to correct and bring up to date the existing literature. The emphasis, however, is on understanding essential concepts that can be applied in many Dragon positions.

Unlike Grandmaster Gufeld, I more often find myself in White garb when exploring Dragon territory. This adds a little balance to the equation, and our book shows many good ideas for White, too. After working on this book, I am tempted to use the opening a bit more often as Black, to double the pleasure! I hope you'll have a lot of fun, and success, with your Dragon experience.

# I.

# Introduction

The Sicilian Dragon is one of the most exciting openings in all chess. Games played in this opening rank among the finest ever produced, with brilliant combinations and full frontal assaults, Black is willing to risk everything to go after the opponent. The slightest error by either side can lead to a quick and decisive conclusion to the game.

The take-no-prisoners attitude of the Dragon leads to fierce and uncompromising chess. It is certainly not for the weak of heart! You must be prepared to sacrifice most of your army to hunt down the enemy king. At the same time, your opponent is obliged to do the same, so you must be both goalkeeper and attacker. There are very few openings in all of chess that have such a high mortality rate in both amateur and professional play.

You will have two guides in our journey to the secrets which lie at the heart of the Sicilian Dragon. Grandmaster Eduard Gufeld is one of the most renowned experts in the Dragon, and has played it throughout his career. His many books on the subject have been translated into several languages. He is teamed with National Master Eric Schiller, an authority on chess openings with over 80 chess books published to date. He is the author of *World Champion Openings*, *Standard Chess Openings*, and *Unorthodox Chess Openings*, the trilogy of almost 1700 pages covering the opening strategy in chess. Schiller has played both sides of the Dragon, and has contributed important new ideas to the Yugoslav Attack both over the board and in his two previous books on the subject.

This book discusses all of the important principles of the Dragon, from the opening to the endgame. We are going to take you on a guided tour of Dragon territory. You'll learn all of the key strategic and tactical ideas. Unlike most modern opening books, we aren't going to cover the massive amount of theory by presenting detailed treatments of each variation. You can find

that in Gufeld's *The Complete Sicilian Dragon*. Because theoretical evaluations are constantly re-examined in journals and in chess-board battles, memorizing variations is not enough. You need to understand the ideas behind the opening, and this book is dedicated exclusively to that task.

We have extracted the critical ideas from the labyrinth of variations and will show you what you need to know to attack effectively or defend a precarious positions. Although we are unabashedly in favor of the Black side, White's resources will receive equal attention. There are many dangerous weapons in White's arsenal. You'll need to be ready with appropriate responses.

You will learn how to properly conduct your attack and defend against the enemy onslaught. You will be able to anticipate favorable endgames and avoid dangerous ones. Memorizing variations is only a small part of the task of preparing to play the Dragon in tournaments. Knowledge of the appropriate strategy and tactics is essential if you want to score well in the Dragon. When you have mastered the concepts in this book you will be able to handle either side of the Dragon effectively. With a little practice, you will soon become a "Dragoneer", bravely doing battle on a grand scale each time your opponent walks into the jaws of the beast!

## **Introduction to the Revised Edition**

I am very pleased with the work that grandmaster Gufeld and I did on the first edition of this book. So I have only added a little bit to the second edition. I went through a large number of games played in the 21st century and selected instructive examples of strategies and tactics to add in a new chapter. I have not tried to make claims about the current state of theory in the opening because that is best left to databases and online research. I will say that nothing much has changed in the past decade, and most of the games still use the Yugoslav attack. So that is where you should concentrate your study. Of course, many young stars have taken up the opening and in particular, I should mention the Norwegian superstar Magnus Carlsen, who can be found on both sides of the opening.

The Sicilian Dragon is quite a bit different from most chess openings. Studying it and preparing it for tournament use requires a slightly different set of skills that you may be used to. In most openings you are concerned with examining the many differ-

## FROM THE AUTHORS

ent types of formations the opponents can use against you and studying specific replies to each of those formations. This usually involves quite a lot of memorization.

In the Dragon, it is far more important to understand the different types of attacking methods and tactics that can be used by each side and look for them in all positions. Of course it is possible to analyze each opening variation in great depth and prepare moves in advance, but the problem is that when your opponent deviates from your prepared analysis, you may well panic, because you are not prepared to meet their specific moves. If, however, you are familiar with all of the different strategies and tactics, you should be able to find the necessary moves at the board without too much difficulty.

The so-called “theory” of the opening is constantly changing and professional players spend a great deal of time with large databases trying to keep up with all of the different moves that have been tried. That is hard work and not much fun. For most players, it is better to examine games looking for different attacking methods and positional concepts, and then applying them as needed. That is what this book is all about.

Instead of charts of opening moves to memorize, we present the strategic and tactical ideas that are found in the positions that arise from the Dragon formation. As Black, you will almost always play the same moves in the opening. After establishing the Sicilian opening, you will fianchetto your kingside bishop and the rook on the kingside. Your queenside knight will come out to c6 and the bishop will usually be stationed at d7. To connect your rooks you will move your queen to a5 and then move one of the rooks to c8.

Your attack will take place along the c-file, and you will especially target the knight at c3, regardless of whether White castles on the kingside or the queenside. That knight is an important defender of the center as well as the queenside. The White pawn at e4 often relies on it for protection. Often, you will sacrifice your rook to get rid of it.

Usually, while you are building your attack on the queenside, your opponent will be throwing everything but the kitchen sink at you on the kingside. Each side can use a variety of tactics to support their attack. These are illustrated throughout the book, and it is these tactics that you must rely on to win the game. They are an integral part of the Dragon strategy, and you must learn

them as part of the opening.

We are confident that if you have these devices at your disposal you will be able to confidently carry out your middlegame attack, and score many brilliant victories. Sometimes, however, you'll play a game and overlook a tactical opportunity. In these cases, you must learn from your mistakes and make sure that in future games, you have added these tactics to your arsenal.

You may also wish to keep up with the latest fashions by studying Master level games played in modern tournaments. The chances of getting to the exact same positions as those you study are indeed remote. It is far more likely that you will be able to make use of the same strategic and tactical ideas in your own games. So study all of the concepts in this book and go out and do battle with the mighty Dragon opening as your big weapon.

## 2.

# Overview of the Sicilian Dragon

At the outset of our journey, we'll present a brief introduction to the Sicilian Dragon, followed by a little bit of history. Then we look at important questions of move order that influence the very first moves of the game and then move on to an introduction to the essential concepts of the opening. These include the role of the fianchettoed bishop, the control of d5, and a variety of sacrifices which turn up over and over in the Dragon lore.

In a broader sense, the typical attacking plans used by each side must be clearly understood in order to anticipate enemy moves. We discuss the attacks used by Black depending on whether White castles to the kingside, or to the queenside. As for White, we classify the attacking methods by the opening formation used, concentrating on six key plans. These are the Classical, Levenfish, Fianchetto, Tal, Yugoslav and Bg5 variations.

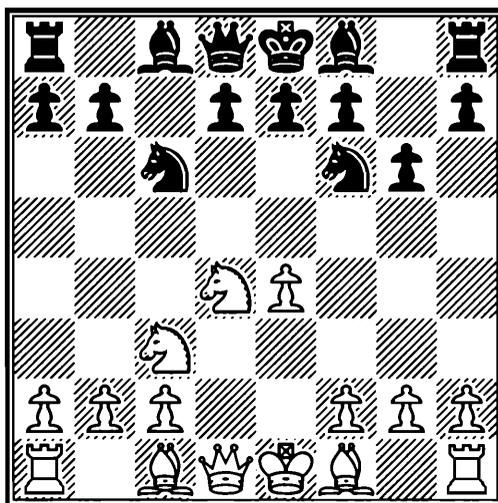
We then narrow our focus to specific tactical devices for each side. For Black, we consider devastation along the diagonal, trapping an invading knight, queenside pawn breaks, the ever-vulnerable b2-square, blocking lines, a variety of sacrifices, and even how to control dark squares once the powerful Dragon bishop has been removed from the board.

The weaponry used by White includes a knight leap to d5, attacks against vulnerable squares on the seventh rank, a deadly knight move, back rank weaknesses and several pawn breaks. Since these tactics can sometimes lie buried beneath the surface, they are often overlooked. Strategic errors are also possible, as the long-term consequences of a move may not be appreciated at first. We will look at typical mistakes which are of a more psychological nature, such as underestimating an enemy attack.

With both sides under attack, it is up to each player to try keep

an eye out for hidden defensive resources. These great escapes are the subject of the next chapter. It is very important to see these tricks not only from the defending side, but to keep them in mind when attacking, too.

Sometimes the outcome of the middlegame battle is a quiet position which heads into an endgame. The evaluation of endgames is very important, even in the wild, tactical jungles of the Dragon. Pawn structure weaknesses created while attacking or defending will play a significant role in the endgame. We'll look at a few instructive examples.



The Sicilian Dragon is a popular variation of the Sicilian Defense (1.e4 c5) where Black fianchettoes the dark-squared bishop at g7, and generally plays on the c-file and long dark square diagonal. It is characterized by sharp, sacrificial play and is one of the most intensively studied chess openings. There is a vast literature on the Dragon Sicilian, also known simply as “The Dragon”, and the opening is rarely out of sight on the chessboards of top competitions.

# 3.

## History of the Dragon

The idea of combining a kingside fianchetto with the basic Sicilian plan is not a new one. Given that the d4-square is going to play a role in all Sicilian pawn structures, it is logical to station the bishop where it can be useful in that battle. With an unobstructed view of the queenside, the bishop can effectively operate from a great distance. It is hardly surprising that experiments in the fianchetto variations of the Sicilian took place quite a long time ago.

### **The Early Experiment**

The Dragon was put to the test at the famous Congresses of the German Chess Federation in the 1880s. It took some time before analysts managed to find the appropriate strategies for each side. Nevertheless, the basic shape of the struggle can be seen in some of these early games.

At the great chess competition in London, 1851, Kennedy vs. Wywill saw the opening 1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 g6, and White played the inferior 5.Nxc6? and eventually went down to defeat. Interestingly, the Sicilian Defense as a whole, which was considered respectable, suffered serious blows in that tournament, and it took a decade to recover. We have it on the authority of Henry Bird that the great classical player Staunton, three weeks before his death, said it was a reliable defense. However, Bird was referring to the Paulsen Sicilians with ...e6, not Dragons, which he ignored completely in his 1878 book.

At London 1862, Paulsen tried 1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 g6!?, a move order we will discuss in the next chapter. Steinitz sidestepped the main lines by playing 3.Nc3 Bg7; 4.Bc4. The great theoretician,

Johan Loewenthal, known for the Sicilian systems involving an early ...e5, suggested that White should play 3.d4, meeting 3... cxd4 with 4.Qxd4.

In *Cook's Synopsis of the Chess Openings* (1876), we see a reference to 1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 g6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Bg7; 5.Be3 Nc6; 6.Nc3 Nf6; 7.Be2 d6; 8.0-0 a6, which is credited to “a game between Mr. Wisker and Mr. Potter”. This is a pure Dragon strategy, using a transpositional move order. We will deal with move orders in the next section.

The Dragon started breathing fire in 1887, at the German Chess Congress. Several players took up the opening as White, including Mackenzie and Hottschal. White generally chose the Classical approach; this was true on the other side of the Atlantic as well.

The popularity of the line at the time can be seen in a comment to the game between Hodges, one of America's leading players, and Stuart at the 1898 Franklin Chess Club vs. Manhattan Chess Club match. Writing in the *American Chess Magazine*, Hodges commented on the position after 1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 d6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; Be2 Nf6; 8.0-0 0-0; 9.Qd2 Bd7 as follows: “It is all book so far. Here 9...Qa5 is often played and the best of players sometimes overlook the threatened loss of the e-pawn, as is well illustrated in a game played in this match.” From this we can conclude that the Dragon was already well established, at least in New York.

By 1900, the tide was turning on the other side of the Atlantic. Mason wrote in the *British Chess Magazine*: “After a long period of neglect, the Sicilian Defence now appears to be undergoing a process of rehabilitation; being frequently adopted in important contests by many of our leading players. Whether the form of it, turning into a King's fianchetto, or the other very different one, in which there is early advance of the King Pawn, is to be preferred—this yet remains a question.”

Well, Mason was right. A century later, nothing has changed and the Dragon remains one of many viable paths in the labyrinth of the Sicilian Defense. At the turn of the last century such stars as Pillsbury, Bird and Burn were seen on the Black side. At the end of the millennium, we find Kasparov, the greatest player in the history of the game, carrying on the tradition.

## HISTORY OF THE DRAGON

### **The Dragon Gets its Name**

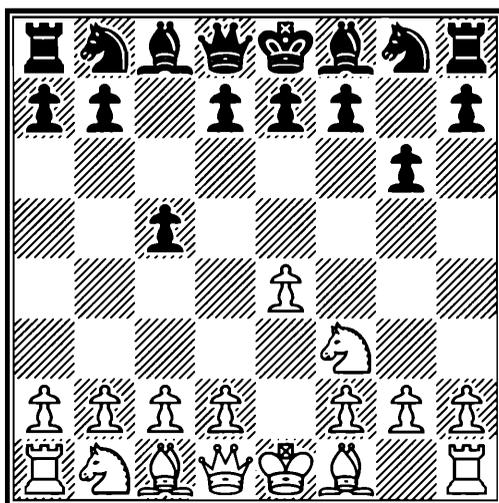
There is a great deal of lore concerning the bestowing of the now familiar name on the variation. Fyodor Dus-Chotimirsky wrote: “I first uttered this name in Kiev, in 1901. I was an enthusiastic astronomer, and while looking at the sky I noticed how the Dragon constellation resembled the pawn structure ...d6, ...e7, ...f7, ...g6, ...h7 seen in the Sicilian Defense. So I decided to call the opening the Dragon Variation. Of course the star system was itself named after a mythical dragon, so the association of the opening with the fire-breathing beast is fully appropriate.”

A number of strong players dabbled in the Dragon early in this century, including Maroczy, who is ironically best known for the Maroczy Bind, where White plays an early c4. Maroczy published analysis of this line, even though he played the Dragon as Black. Other experimenters such as Breyer, Tartakower and Saemisch used the opening on occasion. Most of the early players did not adopt the canonical move order with 2...d6, which leads us to the important matter of transpositions and move orders in the Dragon.

# 4.

## A Question of Move Order

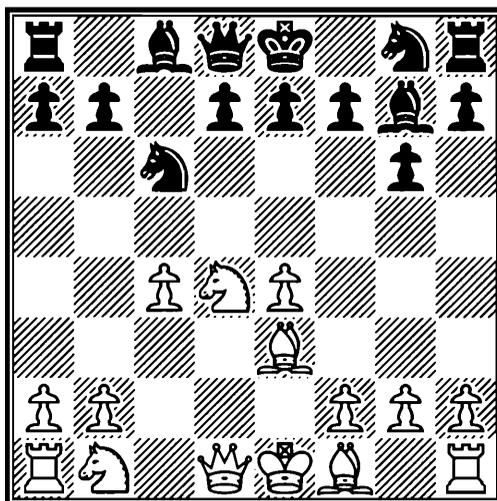
The initial Dragon idea was an immediate fianchetto with **1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 g6.**



This move order is not seen very frequently these days, since White seems to get an advantage with 3.c3, 3.c4 or even the straightforward 3.d4. The system, now known as the Hyperaccelerated Dragon, is popular with some fans of unorthodox openings but it is not the standard mechanism used to reach the main lines of the Dragon.

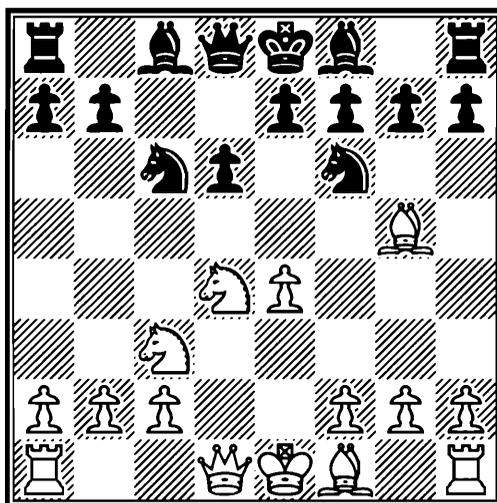
If the older plan with 2...g6 never gained respectability, the use of 2...Nc6 to reach the Dragon also hit a roadblock when it was discovered that White can establish a strong position in the center by playing **1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 g6; 5.c4!?** This formation is known as the Maroczy Bind. Usually, Black plays 5...Bg7 and White responds with 6.Be3.

## A QUESTION OF MOVE ORDER



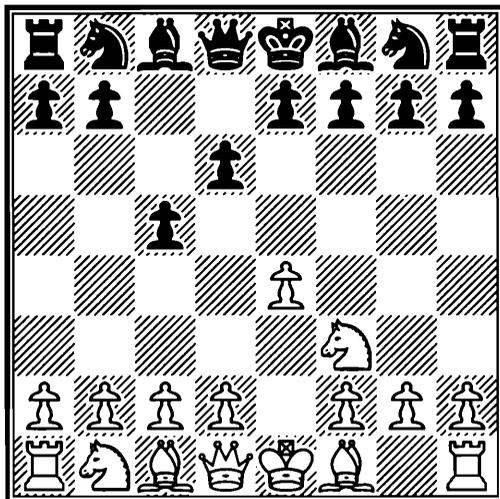
Black's problem in this position is the extreme difficulty of achieving the Sicilian break with d7-d5. White has such dominating control of the d5-square that Black must, more or less, abandon this crucial idea, at least during the opening. In recent years, methods have been found to limit the impact of the Maroczy Bind. Nevertheless, if you want to play the Dragon in its pure form, you don't want to be drawn into these dangerous waters.

On the other hand, one can't wait too long before playing ...g6. Suppose Black decides to get both ...d6 and ...Nc6 in before fianchettoing? After 1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 Nc6? Then the mighty Richter-Rauzer Attack with 6.Bg5! threatens to capture at f6 if Black advances the g-pawn.



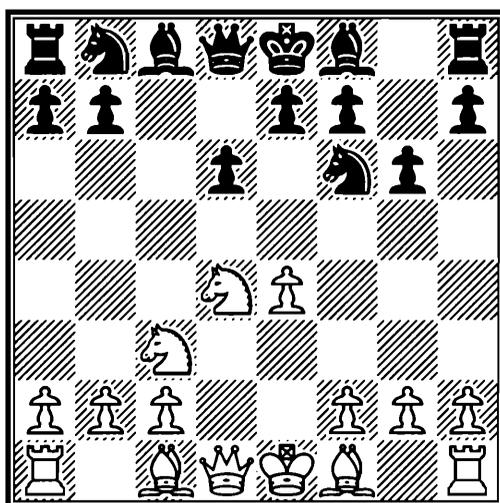
Black usually plays 6...e6 in this position, to protect the knight and avoid any disruption of the pawn structure. That is the Classical Sicilian, and there are no further possibilities to reach the Dragon formation.

Therefore, the modern handling of the Dragon begins. **1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6.**



This move order is also used to reach the other main Sicilian Defenses, such as the Najdorf, Scheveningen, and Classical Sicilians. White can sidestep the main lines now, but usually continues with the traditional and logical move **3.d4**. Black will usually capture this pawn, and White recaptures with the knight: **3...cxd4; 4.Nxd4**.

Now, Black attacks the pawn at e4 by developing the knight with **4...Nf6** and White defends with **5.Nc3**, after which Black can finally prepare the fianchetto with **5...g6**.



Black will now place the bishop at g7, where it can stare down the long diagonal stretching all the way to a1. This is the best move order to use when playing the Dragon.

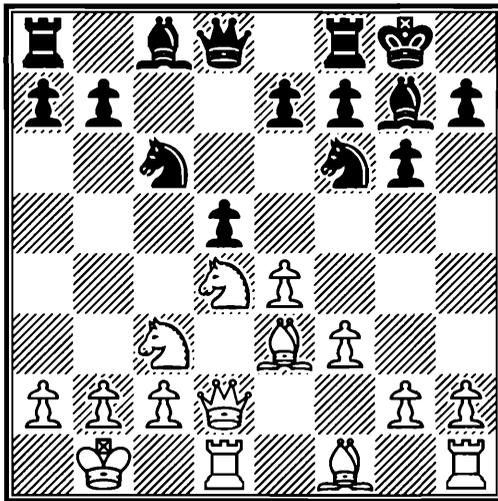
Transpositions continue to play an important role even later in the game.

## A QUESTION OF MOVE ORDER

### Milov vs. Golubev: Biel, 1994

Here is an example of a slight move order transposition luring Black into making a stereotypical move which leads to a serious disadvantage.

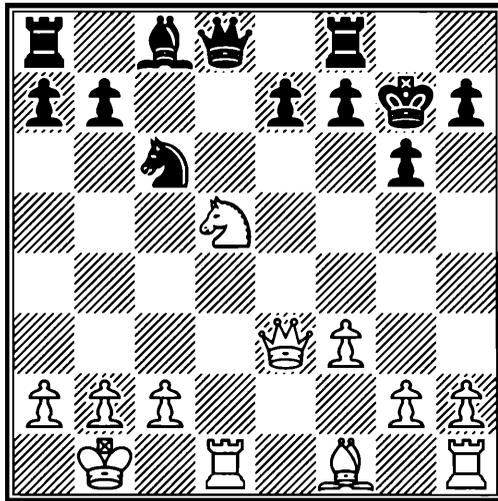
1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.0-0-0 d5; 10.Kb1!? The idea behind White's quiet move is that 10...dxe4?? can be countered with 11.Nxc6.



10...Nxd4. This seems simple enough. Black recaptures and we are back in normal lines. White has a surprise, however. 11.e5!? This intermezzo causes Black some discomfort. 11...Nd7. 11...Nxc2?? simple loses after 12.exf6 Nxe3; 13.fxg7 Nxd1; 14.gxf8Q+ with an extra piece for White. More interesting is 11...Nxf3!?, though 12.gxf3 Nh5; 13.Nxd5 Be6; 14.Bc4 Bxd5; 15.Bxd5 Bxe5; 16.f4 Bf6; 17.Bxb7 was better for White in Szieber-Schneider, Budapest, 1995.

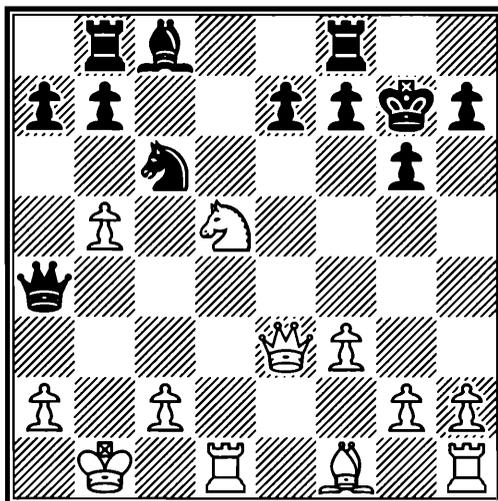
12.Bxd4 Nxe5. 12...e6 was later tried, but White is, in any case, better after 13.f4 f6; 14.exf6 Bxf6. 13.Qe3! Nc6. 13...Qd6?; 14.Bc5! Black has too many problems to solve.

14.Bxg7 Kxg7; 15.Nxd5!



Though White's pieces do not have obvious targets, the position is more dangerous than it looks. 15...Qa5. 15...Be6; 16.Qc3+! f6; 17.Bc4 gives White a strong attack. 16.b4! White launches a surprising attack on the queenside, but since the White king is not in any danger, there is no risk.

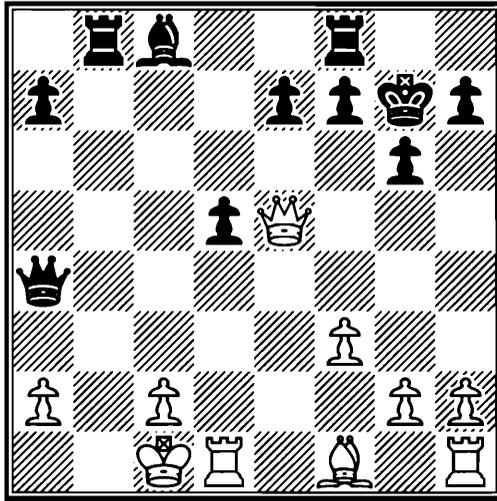
16...Qa4; 17.b5! Rb8.



A desperate attempt to get an attack going, even at the cost of a piece. White should have accepted the offer. 18.bxc6!?. The game continued 18.Qb3!?. Cowardice is rarely rewarded in the Dragon! 18...Qxb3+ and White would have had a small advantage by capturing with the a-pawn.

18...bxc6+; 19.Kc1 cxd5; 20.Qe5+.

## A QUESTION OF MOVE ORDER



**20...Kg8; 21.Qxb8.** There goes the attacker! **21...Bf5.** Does Black turn the tables? **22.Qb3!** Now, all is under control and White should win easily with the extra rook. If **22...Qf4+; 23.Rd2 Rb8; 24.Qxd5 Qb4; 25.Qb3 Qf4; 26.Qc4!** Black has no way in.

# 5.

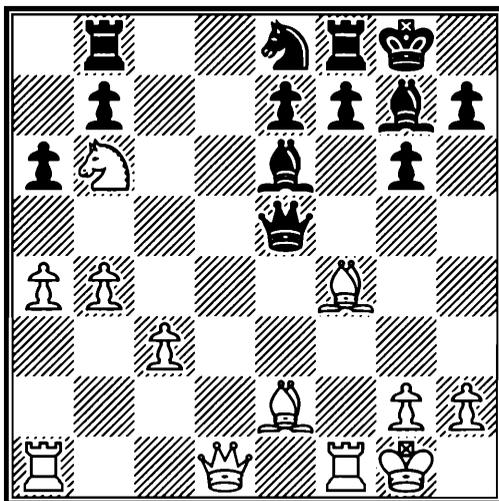
## Essential Concepts

### The Dragon Bishop

The Dragon Bishop is the mighty beast that sits at g7 for most of its life. It serves as a critical defender of the king, but is ready to quickly uncoil and lash out at targets all the way across the board.

The enormous power of the bishop is seen in the following example.

### Halasz vs. Forintos: Hungary, 1979



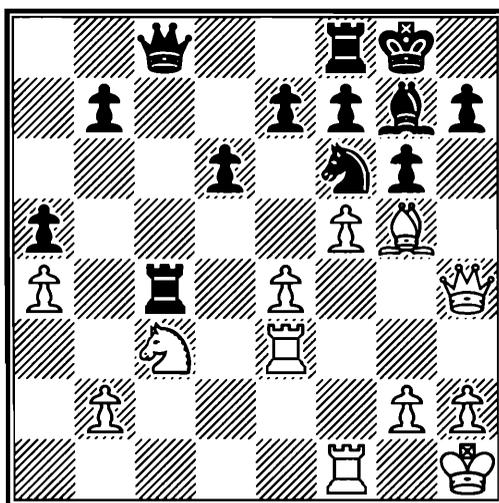
White seems to be on the way to an easy win. The rook at b8 will fall, yet the dark squares hold danger for White, too. The rook on a1 seems to be shielded from the powerful rays of the Dragon bishop, but the illusion is quickly shattered. 18...Qxc3!; 19.Bxb8 Qe3+; 20.Kh1 Bxa1; 21.Nc4 Bxc4; 22.Bxc4 Bf6 and Black went on to win without difficulty.

## Battle for Control of d5

The d5-square is a crucial battleground in every variation of the Sicilian Defense. In the Dragon, Black rarely gets to play ...d5 in the opening, though there are a few notable exceptions. White will try to control d5 for as long as possible. Often d5 will be occupied by a knight, and if pieces are exchanged at d5, a White pawn can be established there for the duration.

Black must constantly look for a way to achieve this critical advance. By challenging the White pawn at e4, Black can undermine White's pawn center.

### Bohosjan vs. Minev: Bulgaria, 1974



With the White king safe at h1, Black's queenside attack is not very significant. Overall, Black has less space to maneuver in the Dragon, and that often leads to superior mobility for White's rooks. Black's rooks can generally be used only on the c-file, unless there are more open lines. White can advance the central pawns to make room for rooks to maneuver on the third rank.

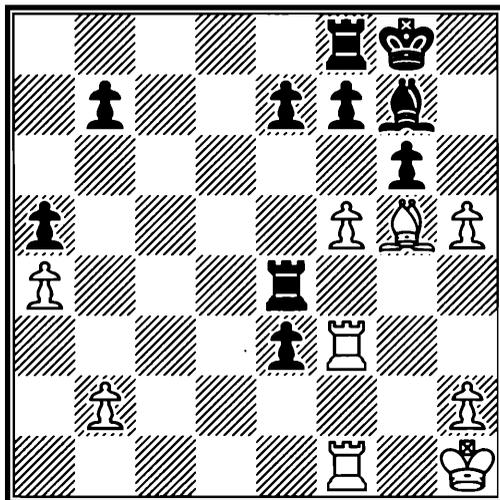
**21...d5!** The Sicilian break takes advantage of the pin on the pawn at e4 which results from White's queen sitting at h4. White does not have enough time to complete the attack.

**22.g4.** This is played to discourage Black from defending with ...h5 when the rook slides to h3. 22.Rh3 threatens Bxf6 followed by Qxh7#. Black can defend, however. 22...h5 gives Black counterplay, because the threat of a capture at e4 is real. 23.fxg6 fxg6 actually eases Black's defense, because the open f-file can be used to exchange rooks. The weakness of the pawn at g6 cannot easily be exploited.

**22...dxe4; 23.Rh3 h5; 24.gxh5 e3!** The queen cannot remain

at h4. **25.Qg3 Qc6+**! Exploiting the open diagonal created by White's advance of the g-pawn. **26.Qf3**. White has nothing better than to bail to an endgame.

**26...Qxf3+; 27.Rhxf3 Ne4; 28.Nxe4 Rxe4.**



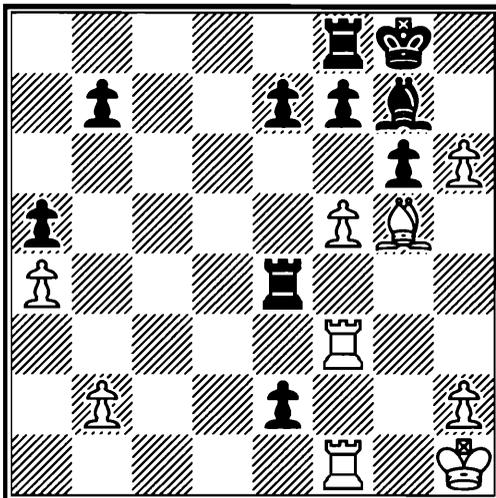
White now makes a terrible mistake, but the position wasn't easy. After all, Black has an extra pawn and all of White's pawns are weak. **29.h6?** Tempting, but not good. **29.Re1!** is more challenging.

For example, **29...gxh5; 30.Rfxe3 Rxe3; 31.Rxe3 e6!**; **32.f6** (**32.fxe6 fxe6; 33.Rxe6 Bxb2**) **32...Bh8; 33.Re5 Rc8; 34.Rxa5 Kh7; 35.Bh4 Kg6; 36.Rg5+ Kh6; 37.Rb5 Rc4** and though it seems the f-pawn must fall sooner or later, White's queenside majority must not be underestimated! **38.Bg5+ Kg6; 39.b4** and Black doesn't rush to grab the f-pawn, because the pawn at h5 remains weak. However, after **39...Rd4!** the threat of **...Rd5** is not immediate, as on **40.a5 Rd5; 41.Rxd5 exd5; 42.b5** White wins!

**29...e2!** is the best move, as in the game. **30.fxg6** (**30.Rf2** is met by **30...gxf5; 31.Rfxe2 Rxe2; 32.Rxe2 e5; 33.h6 Bh8; 34.h4 Kh7** and the Black king gets to h5, since **35.h5 f4** is hopeless) **30...fxg6; 31.Rxf8+ Kxf8; 32.hxg6 Bxb2; 33.Bd2 Kg7; 34.Bxa5 Kxg6; 35.Bd2 Bf6!** The Dragon bishop flies around the board, swooping in from various angles. Now it comes to h4. **36.Kg2 Bh4; 37.Rb1 Rd4!**; **38.Be1**. The a-pawn cannot be defended. **38...Rxa4; 39.Kf3** (**39.Bxh4 Rxh4; 40.Kg3 Re4; 41.Re1 Kf5; 42.Kf3 b5** is a simple win) **39...Bxe1; 40.Rxe1 Ra2** and White wins, because Black can never afford to take the e-pawn, nor can the rook leave the first rank. The king cannot retreat to the second rank since that would allow the Black king to infiltrate.

**29...e2!**

## ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS



Black sacrifices the Dragon bishop, but the advanced pawn is worth even more. **30.Re1 Rd8!**; **31.fxg6 fxg6**; **32.hxg7 Rd1**; **33.Bh6** and Black quickly mated: **33...Rxe1+**; **34.Kg2 Rg1+**; **35.Kxg1 e1Q+**; **36.Kg2 Rg4+**; **37.Kh3 Qh4#**.

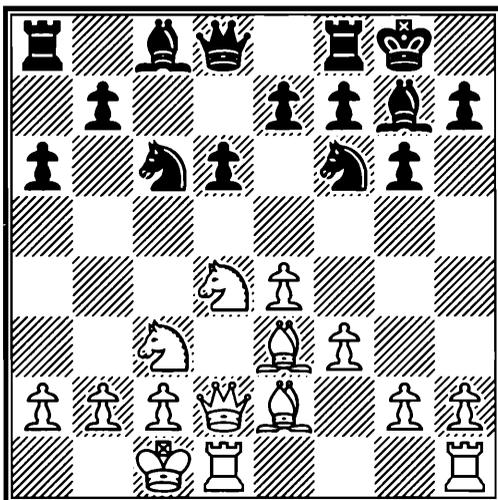
### **Sacrifice at c3**

The most common sacrifice for Black, in the Dragon, is the exchange sacrifice at c3. Black gives up a rook for a White knight, but the knight is the important defender of the central squares d5 and e4. In addition, White's pawn structure is damaged if the rook must be captured by the b-pawn. When White is castled on the queenside, this is particularly strong, but it can be useful even when the White king is safe at g1. In this case, the pawns on the queenside are quite weak, and vulnerable to attack on the c-file (by a rook at c8) and on the long diagonal (by a bishop at g7). The Black queen can have her say from c7 or b6.

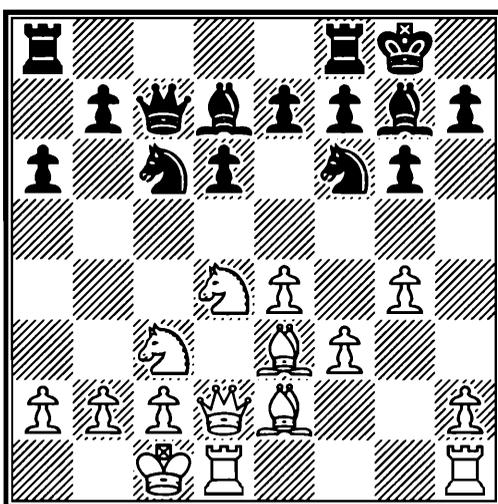
We will see this sacrifice over and over, so this is just a taste. In most openings, you need a specific reason to give up the exchange, but in the Dragon, an exchange sacrifice at c3 should be a candidate move whenever it is legal!

**W. Adams vs. Rauch: American Chess Congress, 1938**

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be2 Bg7; 7.Be3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.0-0-0 a6; 10.f3.



White has mixed systems here, combining the general structure of the Yugoslav Attack with the classical positioning of the bishop at e2. This is not effective, because the bishop serves no useful function. **10...Bd7; 11.g4 Qc7.**



Black calmly develops, appreciating that the pawn storm comes slowly and there is plenty of time to create counterplay on the queenside.

**12.Nb3 Be6.** Since White is going to play Bh6, Black should move the rook from f8, so that the bishop can retreat to h8 after the invasion of h6.

**13.Bh6 b5; 14.h4 Rac8; 15.h5 Bxb3!** 15...Ne5; 16.Bxg7 Kxg7; 17.hxg6 fxg6; 18.Qh6+ Kg8; 19.g5 Nh5; 20.Rxh5 is given by Reinfeld.

**16.hxg6!?** fxg6! Black must make this capture, as trying to

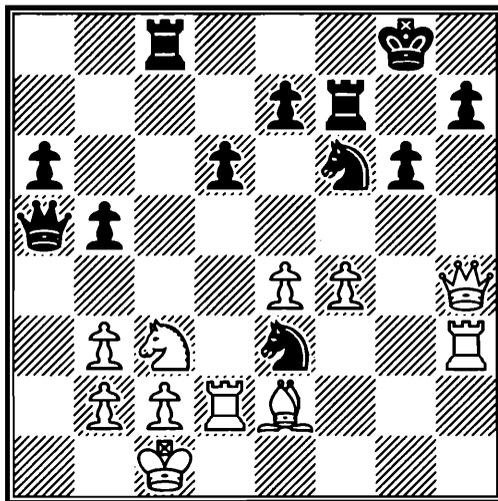
## ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS

hold on to the bishop would meet with disaster. 16...Be6?; 17.Bxg7 Kxg7; 18.Qh6+ Kg8; 19.g5 and Black is in trouble.

**17.Bxg7 Kxg7; 18.Qh6+ Kg8; 19.axb3.** The attempt to storm the kingside with 19.g5 Nh5; 20.f4 (20.axb3 Ne5!) 20...Bc4; 21.Bxh5 does not succeed. 21...gxh5; 22.Rxh5 (22.g6 is nothing, since Black defends along the second rank with 22...e5!) 22...e6; 23.b3! b4 is given by Reinfeld, who claimed that "Black has the situation well in hand." Life is not so simple. 24.g6! has a lot of bite, for example 24...Qg7 (24...bxc3; 25.g7! Qxg7; 26.Rg5) 25.gxh7+ Kh8; 26.Qxg7+ Kxg7; 27.bxc4 bxc3; 28.Rxd6 Rxf4. The back rank mate threat makes this playable. 29.Kd1 Rxe4; 30.h8Q+ Rxh8; 31.Rxh8 Kxh8; 32.Rxc6 a5 is likely to draw.

**19...Ne5.** The knight defends the kingside and Black hopes to be able to advance the b-pawn. White has the initiative, however. **20.Rd2.** 20.g5 Nh5; 21.Rxh5 gxh5 gives White little for the exchange. **20...Rf7; 21.f4?! 21.Qh4!?** Qa5; 22.Kb1 Rxc3! deftly exploits weaknesses along the third rank. 23.bxc3 Qxc3; 24.Rdd1 (24.Qh6 Rf8; 25.Rhd1 Rc8 gives Black a strong attack) 24...Nxf3; 25.Bxf3 Qxf3 and Black has more than enough compensation for the exchange.

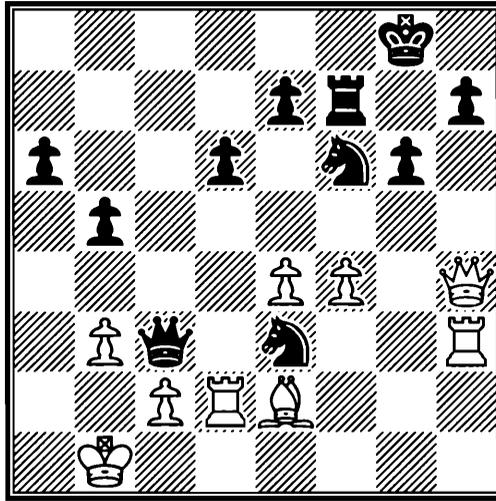
**21...Nexg4; 22.Qh4.** White hopes to tie down Black's forces, but they just keep advancing. **22...Ne3; 23.Rh3 Qa5!**



White is now in severe discomfort.

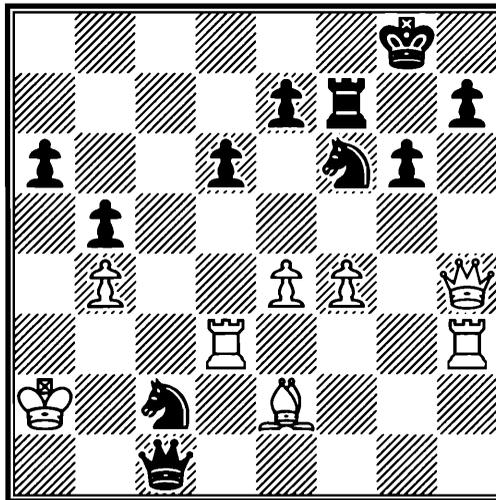
**24.Kb1.** 24.Rxe3 allows the exchange sacrifice 24...Rxc3!, followed by ...Nxe4. 24.Nb1 Ng2!; 25.Qg3 Nxe4; 26.Qxg2 Nxd2; 27.Nxd2 Rxf4 gives Black too much material in this line from Reinfeld. 24.Rd3 Nxc2 is given by Reinfeld but this requires further explanation. 25.Kxc2 b4; 26.Bg4! Nxg4; 27.Qxg4 Rc7; 28.Qe6!

limits the damage, though Black clearly stands better. **24...Rxc3!**  
 The typical sac works quite effectively here. **25.bxc3 Qxc3.**



The weakness of the e4-square is sufficient compensation by itself! **26.Rd3.** 26.Rxe3 Qxe3; 27.Qe1 Nxe4; 28.Rd3 Qxf4; 29.Rf3 Nd2+ wraps things up nicely.

**26...Qxc2+; 27.Ka1 Qc1+; 28.Ka2 Nc2; 29.b4.**

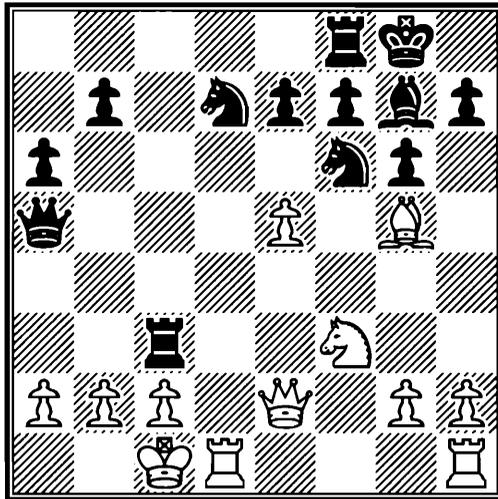


In time pressure, Black misses the simple win, but manages to get the point in the end. **29...Nxb4+?** 29...Qa1+; 30.Kb3 Qb1+; 31.Kc3 Nxe4#.

**30.Kb3 Qb1+; 31.Kc3 Nxe4+; 32.Kd4 Nxd3; 33.Bxd3 Qb4+;**  
**34.Ke3 d5; 35.f5 gxf5; 36.Rg3+ Kh8; 37.Rg2 f4+; 38.Kf3 Nd2+;**  
**39.Kf2 Qd4+; 40.Ke2 f3+. Black won.**

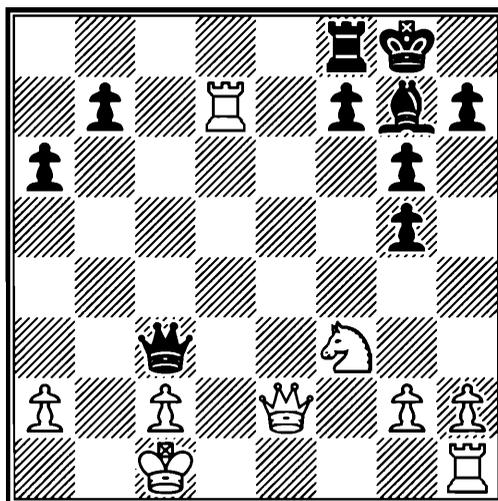
## ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS

### Ermenkov vs. West: Miskolc, 1990



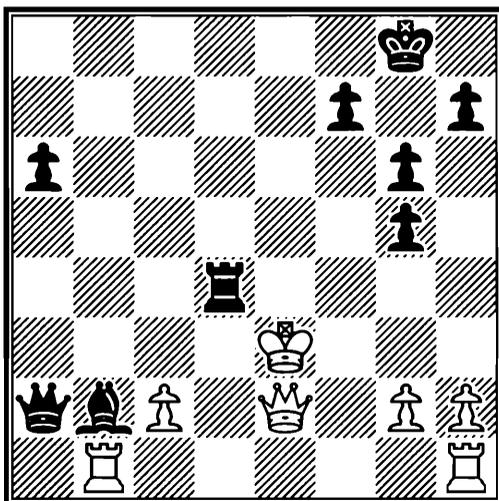
Black has just invested the exchange, and has every reason to be optimistic about the chance for a queenside attack. Although the Dragon bishop seems to be asleep in its cave, it is actually going to play a decisive role in the attack. **15.exf6**. **15.bxc3 Nd5**, followed by ...Rc8 and White is in deep trouble.

**15...exf6; 16.Rxd7**. **16.Bd2??** would lose instantly to **16...Qxa2**; **16.bxc3!?** **Qa3+** (**16...Qxc3**; **17.Qd3!** **Qa1+**; **18.Kd2 Qxa2**; **19.Ra1 Qe6**; **20.Be3** and the pawns are no match for the rook.) **17.Kb1 fxc3** forces White to defend with pinpoint precision. **18.Qc4!** **Nc5**; **19.Qb4!** and Black might be able to get away with capturing on c3, but the endgame following **19...Qxb4+**; **20.cxb4 Ne4** is risky after **21.Rd7 g4**; **22.Nd2 Nc3+**; **23.Kb2** as there is no useful check. **16...fxg5**; **17.bxc3 Qxc3**.

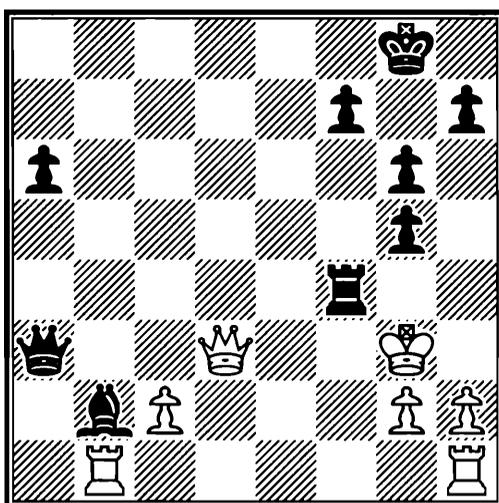


White fails to see the danger, and assumes that a rook on the b-file will provide sufficient defense. **18.Rxb7??** White should have brought the other rook to e1.

18...Qa1+!; 19.Rb1 Bb2+; 20.Kd2 Rd8+; 21.Nd4. 21.Ke3 loses to 21...Bd4+!; 22.Nxd4 Qxd4+; 23.Kf3 Qf4#. 21...Rxd4+; 22.Ke3 Qxa2. Black has a material advantage and a crushing attack.



23.Kf2. 23.g3 Qe6+; 24.Kf2 Qf5+; 25.Kg2 Qd5+; 26.Kg1 Rd2; and Black wins. 23.Rhe1 permits the pretty finish 23...Re4+!!; 24.Kxe4 Qe6+; 25.Kf3 Qf5+; 26.Ke3 Qf4+; 27.Kd3 Qd4#. 23...Rf4+; 24.Kg3 Qa3+; 25.Qd3.



A final brilliant flourish brings the game to an end. 25... Bd4!!; 26.Kh3. 26.h3 Qd6 and White can resign. 26.Qxa3 Bf2+; 27.Kh3 Rh4#.

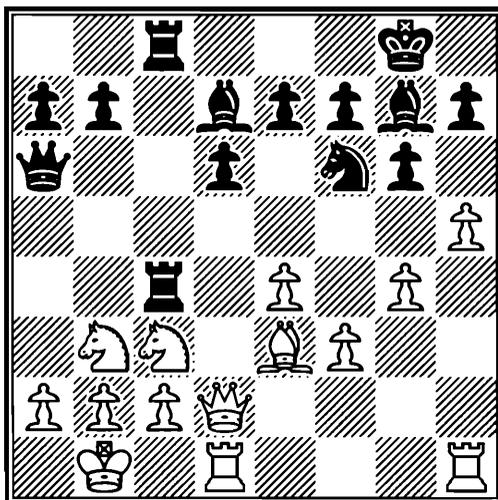
26...g4+; 27.Kh4 Qe7+; 28.Kg3. The sacrifices haven't ended yet! 28...Bf2+!!; 29.Kxf4 Qf6+; 30.Kxg4 h5+ and mate next. Black won.

## ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS

### Sacrifice at g4

When White sets up the Yugoslav Attack pawn formation, with pawns at e4, f3, g4 and h4, Black can sometimes sacrifice a piece at g4 in order to eliminate a storm of White pawns. This strategy is most effective when White's minor pieces are not in a position to take over the offensive burden from the now-departed pawns. Because this is a very important topic, we introduce it here and will return to the subject when we discuss attacking plans for Black.

### McCurdy vs. Keene: Orebro, 1966



Black has plenty of pieces aimed at the queenside, but the Dragon Bishop is still tucked away behind the knight. White's pawnstorm is advanced, so there is no time to spare. Black solves all the problems with a series of sacrifices, first at g4, and then at c3. This demonstrates the immense power of the Dragon queenside attack.

17...Bxg4!!; 18.fxg4 Rxc3!; 19.hxg6. 19.bxc3 Nxe4 and the pieces converge on c3. This is the secret of the bishop sacrifice at g4. The protectors of the pawn at e4 are removed from the board, and the knight takes up a powerful position in the center.

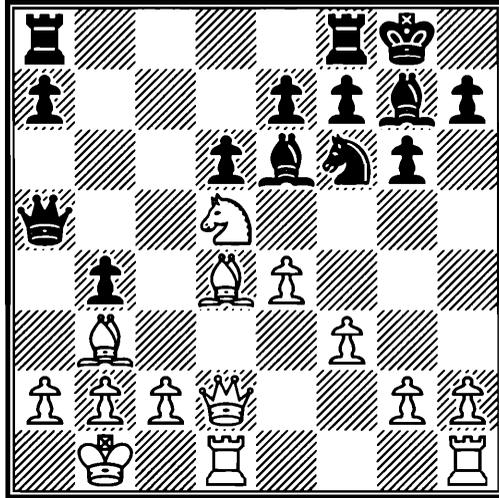
19...Rxc2; 20.gxf7+ Kf8; 21.Qxc2 Rxc2; 22.Kxc2 Qc4+; 23.Kd2 Nxe4+; 24.Ke1 Be5. Black won.

### Fischer's "Sac, Sac, Mate!"

The superstar with the lowest opinion of the Dragon is surely Bobby Fischer, who felt that the Yugoslav Attack was more or less a forced win for White, requiring just a few well timed sacrifices to crack open the Black position and bring victory.

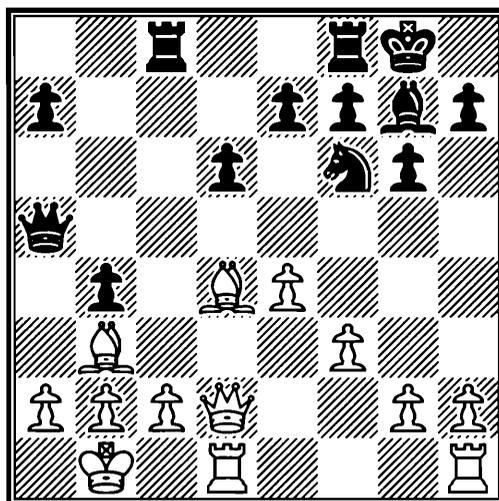
**Fischer vs. Larsen: Portoroz Interzonal, 1958**

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.Bc4 Nxd4; 10.Bxd4 Be6; 11.Bb3 Qa5; 12.0-0-0 b5; 13.Kb1 b4; 14.Nd5!



White takes control of the center. 14...Bxd5; 15.Bxd5. White's play was strengthened the next year, when Larsen dared to repeat the line. 15.exd5! Qb5; 16.Rhe1 a5; 17.Qe2! Qxe2; 18.Rxe2 gave White an endgame advantage in Tal-Larsen, Zürich 1959, and the entire variation for Black commencing with 9...Nxd4 has rarely been heard from since.

15...Rac8? 15...Nxd5; 16.Bxg7 Nc3+; 17.bxc3 Rab8!; 18.cxb4 Qxb4+; 19.Qxb4 Rxb4+; 20.Bb2 Rfb8 was described by Fischer as a forced draw. He would have tried 16.exd5 instead. 16.Bb3!

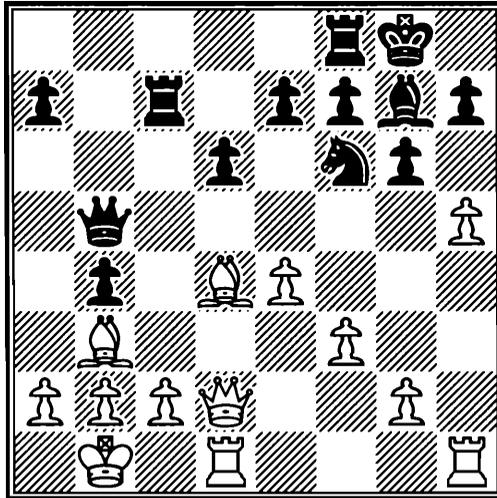


In his classic *My 60 Memorable Games*, Fischer wrote some of the most famous words in the Dragon canon. "Now I felt the game was in the bag if I didn't botch it. I'd won dozens of skittles

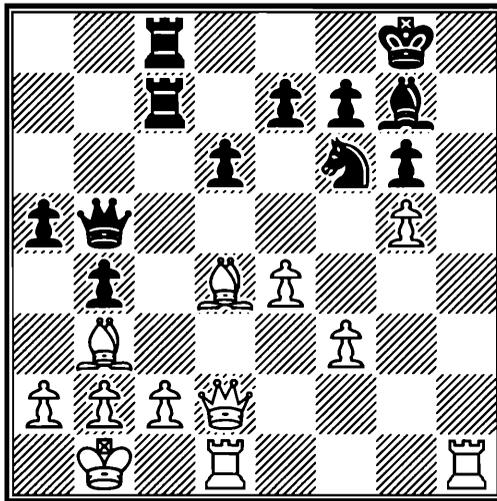
## ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS

games in analogous positions and had it down to a science: pry open the h-file, sac, sac... mate!" Well, as Garry Kasparov says, "Chess is not skittles!" The modern evaluation of this position is somewhat more complicated.

**16...Rc7.** 16...Qb5 drops the a-pawn to 17.Bxa7. **17.h4 Qb5.** 17...h5 would have been demolished by 18.g4! Fischer gives the following analysis. 18...hxg4 (18...Rfc8; 19.Rdg1 hxg4; 20.h5 gxh5; 21.fxg4 Nxe4; 22.Qf4 e5; 23.Qxe4 exd4; 24.gxh5 Kh8; 25.h6 Bf6; 26.Rg7 wins) 19.h5 gxh5 (19...Nhx5; 20.Bxg7 Kxg7; 21.fxg4 Nf6; 22.Qh6+ and mate next move) 20.fxg4 Nxe4 (20...hxg4; 21.Rdg1 e5; 22.Be3 Rd8; 23.Bh6. 20...Nxg4; 21.Rdg1 Bxd4; 22.Rxg4+ hxg4; 23.Qh6) 21.Qe3 Nf6 (21...Bxd4; 22.Qxe4 Bg7; 23.Rxh5) 22.gxh5 e5; 23.h6 and White wins. **18.h5!**



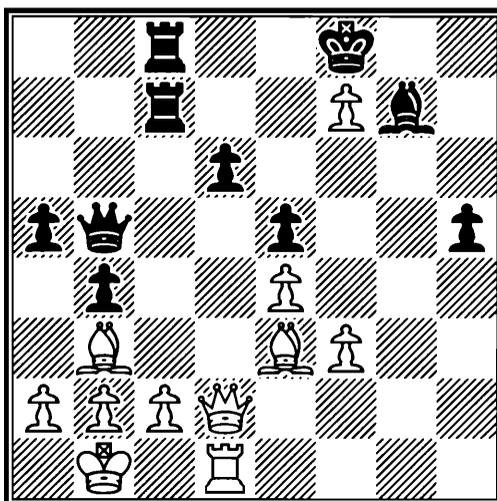
This thrust needs no support. **18...Rfc8.** 18...gxh5 once again loses to 19.g4! Fischer shows the mating pattern: 19...hxg4; 20.fxg4 Nxe4; 21.Qh2 Ng5; 22.Bxg7 Kxg7; 23.Rd5 Rc5; 24.Qh6+ Kg8; 25.Rxg5+ Rxg5; 26.Qxh7#. **19.hxg6 hxg6; 20.g4 a5; 21.g5.**



**21...Nh5.** This invites a typical exchange sacrifice. Vasyukov's suggestion of 21...Ne8 was also refuted by Fischer. 22.Bxg7 Nxg7 (22...Kxg7?; 23.Qh2) 23.Rh6! e6 (23...a4; 24.Qh2 Nh5; 25.Rxg6+) 24.Qh2 Nh5 and now the demolition is completed by 25.Bxe6! fxe6. (25...Qxg5; 26.Rxg6+! Qxg6; 27.Bxc8 Rxc8; 28.Rg1 Qxg1+; 29.Qxg1+ Ng7; 30.Qb6 is an easy win.) 26.Rxg6+ Ng7; 27.Rh1. 21...a4? is too slow. 22.gxf6 axb3; 23.fxg7! bxc2+; 24.Qxc2! e5; 25.Qh2 and the h8-square beckons.

**22.Rxh5! gxh5.** 22...Bxd4; 23.Qxd4 gxh5 doesn't improve things. 24.g6 Qe5; 25.gxf7+ Kh7; 26.Qd3 will win as the f-pawns advance. **23.g6 e5.** The pin at f7 cannot be broken except at a great cost. 23...e6; 24.gxf7+ Kxf7 (24...Rxf7; 25.Bxe6) 25.Bxg7 Kxg7; 26.Rg1+ Kh7; 27.Qg2 Qe5; 28.Qg6+ Kh8; 29.Rg5 Rg7; 30.Rxh5+ Kg8; 31.Bxe6+ Kf8; 32.Rf5+ Ke7; 33.Rf7+ is another of Fischer's convincing variations.

**24.gxf7+ Kf8; 25.Be3.**



## ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS

Such positions are winning for White, because the bishop at b3 defends the queenside and Black's pawns are too weak. The pawn at f7 is a monster. White also has the big threat of Bh6.

**25...d5.** 25...a4 loses to 26.Qxd6+ Re7; 27.Qd8+! Rxd8; 28.Rxd8+ Re8; 29.Bc5+. **26.exd5 Rxf7.** 26...a4 can be ignored. 27.d6! axb3; 28.dxc7 bxa2+; 29.Ka1. Black's attack is over.

**27.d6 Rf6.** 27...Rd7; 28.Bh6 Rcd8; 29.Qg5 wraps things up quickly. **28.Bg5 Qb7.** 28...Qd7 runs into 29.Qd5! **29.Bxf6 Bxf6;** **30.d7 Rd8; 31.Qd6+. Black resigned.** Even though Fischer missed 31.Qh6+ with mate in three, defeat is inevitable.

# 6.

## **Attacking Plans for Black**

Black has many different attacking plans, depending primarily on which side of the board White chooses to castle. As Black, you don't want to commit yourself to a plan too early. Waiting for White to castle is a good idea, so that you can configure your pieces appropriately. Until White declares, just develop the pieces and keep an eye on the center. If White delays castling for too long, you may be able to rip open the position with the Sicilian break ...d5.

### **White Castles Queenside**

When White castles queenside, we have two basic plans of attack. One strategy is to advance the a-pawn to undermine the safety barrier of the White king. The other is a piece attack, using the c-file, a knight at f4, and bishop at e6. In either case, often we will sacrifice the exchange at c3 when we can force Black to recapture with the b-pawn, and even sometimes when the rook can be captured by another piece.

The attack with the a-pawn is especially effective when we have pressure on the a1-h8 diagonal. That is why a sacrifice at g4, opening the line for the Dragon bishop, is seen frequently. Sometimes the bishop enters the game when we move the knight from f6 to d5. If our pawn gets to a3, it can often be used by the queen to create a mating net.

The piece attack can take a variety of forms. Sometimes the b-pawn will come to b5 to support the infiltration of the knight at c4, or to advance to b4, and cause more trouble. If the pawn is

## ATTACKING PLANS FOR BLACK

captured, the b-file is open for a rook. We also see bishop sacrifices at a2, or a demolition of the position via a sacrifice at c2.

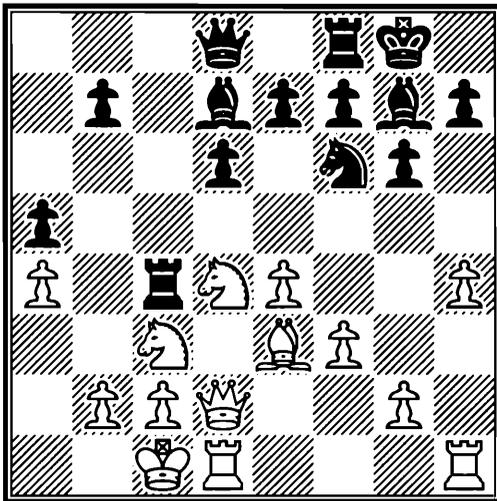
### The Standard Attack

In our first game, Black launches the queenside attack prematurely, but White fails to set up the proper defense and it works anyway.

#### Danelian vs. Neverova: Soviet Union, 1986

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 g6; 5.Nc3 Bg7; 6.Be3 Nf6; 7.Bc4 0-0; 8.Bb3 d6. Black can avoid the Yugoslav Attack by playing 8...a5, since 9.f3 is met by 9...d5!

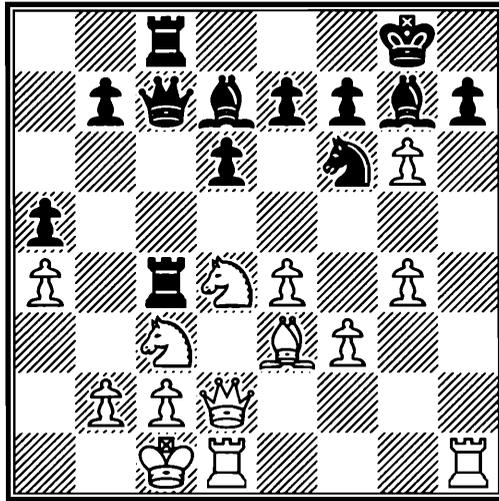
9.f3 Bd7; 10.Qd2 Rc8; 11.0-0-0 a5?! This is a very rare, and weak continuation. Black has lost the option of moving the queen to a5, and b5 is available to White's knights. 12.a4. The further advance of the a-pawn is prevented, but the queenside is weakened. 12...Ne5; 13.h4 Nc4; 14.Bxc4 Rxc4.



White could obtain an advantage here by kicking out the rook with b3, followed by Ncb5. Again, we see the need to keep our lust to attack under control by keeping an eye on strong defensive possibilities. The attack is not a mere horserace!

15.g4?! Qc7; 16.h5. 16.Bh6 allows the tactical trick 16...Nxe4! (16...Rxd4? is recommended by the commentators, but it is not good. 17.Qxd4 Bxh6+; 18.g5 Bg7; 19.gxf6 Bxf6. Since White cannot afford to allow ...Bxc3 and the subsequent loss of the a-pawn, the play is forced. 20.Nd5 Bxd4; 21.Nxc7 Be3+; 22.Kb1. White has a small advantage.) 17.fxe4 Rxd4. White may have nothing better than 18.Qxd4 Bxd4; 19.Nd5 but the situation after 19...Qc5;

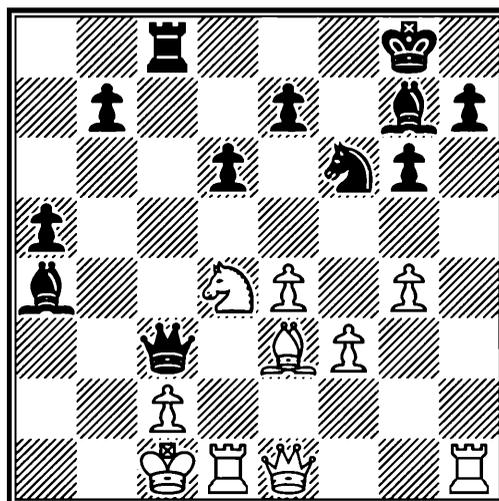
20.Nxe7+ Kh8; 21.Bxf8 Bxa4; 22.Rd2 (22.Rh2 Bxb2+; 23.Kxb2 Qe5+) 22...Be3 is beyond mortal salvation. **16...Rc8; 17.hxg6.**



Black usually captures toward the center, but in this case it is better to use the f-pawn, keeping the h-file closed and a potential passed pawn in the endgame. **17...fxg6!** 17...hxg6; 18.g5! Nh5; 19.Nd5, and here 19...Rxa4; 20.Kb1 Qd8; 21.b3 traps the rook.

**18.Qh2.** 18.Ndb5 is a defensive try. There is still plenty of attacking force left on the kingside. Play might continue 18... Bxb5; 19.axb5 Rxc3; 20.Qxc3 Qxc3; 21.bxc3 Rxc3; 22.Rd3 Rxd3; 23.cxd3 Nd7. White has better chances in this endgame, and Black will remain on the defensive for a long time. **18...Rxc3!; 19.bxc3 Qxc3.** Material is not the primary consideration here. The White king is the immediate target, and a favorable endgame is the goal.

**20.Qf2 Bxa4; 21.Qe1.**



Black uses the clearance combination **21...Nxe4** to force a winning position. 21...Qa3+; 22.Kd2 Nxe4+ would have been

## ATTACKING PLANS FOR BLACK

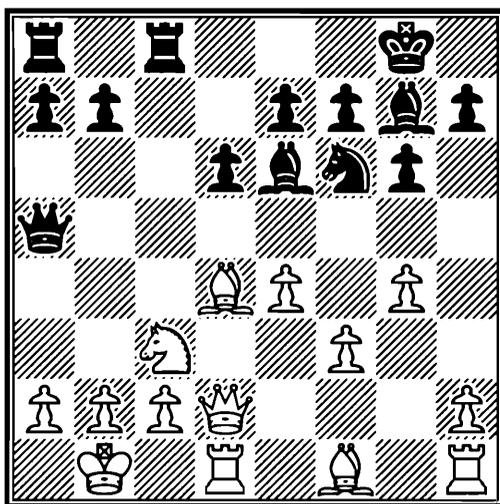
more precise. **22.Qxc3 Nxc3; 23.Rd2 Bd7; 24.Re1 Rc4; 25.Rd3 Nd5; 26.Bf2 Ba4; 27.Rd2 Bh6. White resigned.**

### White Refrains from Bc4

When White adopts a system that keeps the bishop at f1, there is less pressure on Black's f7-square, and the a2-g8 diagonal can be used in conjunction with an attack on the c-file. Black can establish a bishop at e6 after exchanging knights at d4. This is a popular approach, and was seen in the 1995, PCA World Championship match and in many other important encounters.

### Dolgov vs. Lebedev: Russia, 1967

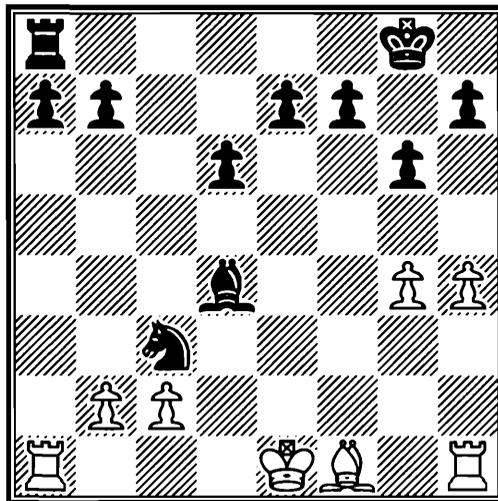
This game was awarded the best game prize for the tournament. Black demonstrates a variety of tactics in a successful queenside attack, which leads to a winning endgame. **1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.g4 Nxd4; 10.Bxd4 Be6; 11.0-0-0 Qa5; 12.Kb1 Rfc8.**



Black's defense is solid, and there is an escape route for the king along the 8th rank. Therefore White should defend the a-pawn by moving it to a3, then aim for Nd5. The kingside attack is premature here, and allows Black to show the proper queenside plan without much interference.

**13.h4?** White fails to sense the danger. Black starts with the sacrifice at c3, even though that square, and e4, seem to be well defended. **13...Rxc3!; 14.Qxc3 Qxa2+; 15.Kc1.** Now it is time to undermine the center. **15...Bxg4!** White should probably ignore the bishop, but is then facing a serious queenside attack without any material to show for the inconvenience. **16.fxg4 Qa1+; 17.Kd2**

**Nxe4+**; **18.Ke1 Nxc3!** This is more efficient than capturing at d1, though that is also good for Black. **19.Rxa1 Bxd4.**



Black enters the endgame with three pawns for the exchange. White tries to create some counterplay. **20.Bg2 Nb5!;** **21.c3?** White is in trouble, but this is suicide. Black gives up the minor pieces for a rook and two pawns.

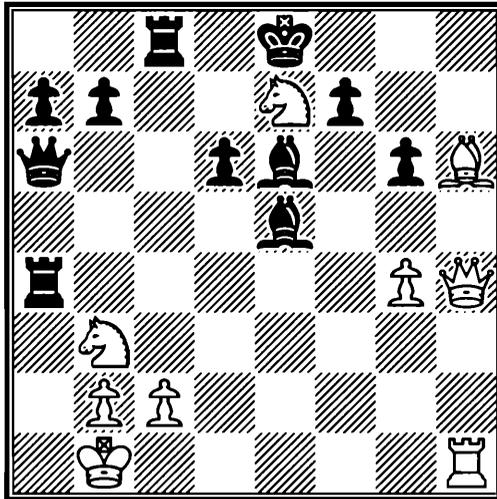
**21...Nxc3; 22.bxc3 Bxc3+; 23.Ke2 Bxa1; 24.Rxa1 a5; 25.Bxb7 Ra7.** The endgame is not difficult for Black to win, with four pawns for the piece. **26.Be4 h6; 27.Ke3 Kg7; 28.Ra2 e6; 29.Kd4 f5; 30.gxf5 gxf5; 31.Bf3 Kf6; 32.h5 a4; 33.Ra3 Ra5; 34.Bc6 e5+; 35.Kd3 Kg5; 36.Bxa4 Rd5+.** White resigned.

## Attack on the a-file

Even with the pawn at a7, Black can use the a-file to attack the enemy king. In the next example, Black has sacrificed a piece, but has all pieces aimed at the enemy king. The vulnerability of White's king could have been exploited had Black found the combinational key.

## ATTACKING PLANS FOR BLACK

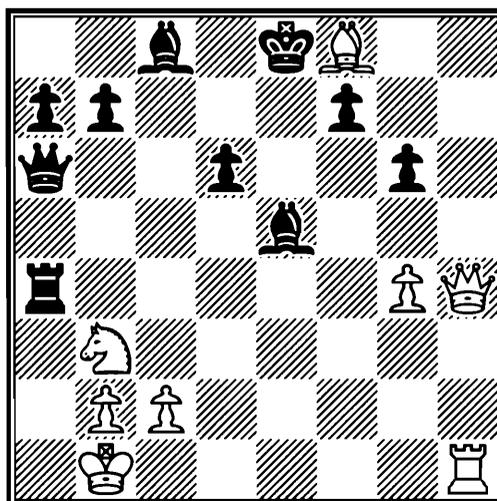
### Zezulkin vs. Kulagin: Czestochowa, 1991



This is a critical position. Both attacks are raging. White is obviously going to capture the rook at c8, since the rook is a powerful attacking force. Then it gets complicated.

**32.Nxc8 Bxc8?** 32...Ra1+!! is the correct move. The rook sacrifice leads to a long king hunt, but it is not hard to work out the details. 33.Nxa1 Qa2+; 34.Kc1 Qxb2+; 35.Kd2 Qd4+; 36.Ke1! Qxa1+; 37.Kf2 Bd4+; 38.Be3 (38.Kg3 Qc3+; 39.Kg2 Qxc2+ is a simple win for Black) 38...Bxe3+; 39.Ke2! (39.Kxe3 Qc3+; 40.Kf2 Qxc2+; 41.Kg3 Qxc8; 42.Qh8+ Kd7; 43.Qxc8+ Kxc8 is hopeless for White) 39...Bxc8; 40.Qh8+ Qxh8; 41.Rxh8+ Kd7; 42.Kxe3 Kc7 and the presence of the pawn at c2 does not significantly prolong the game.

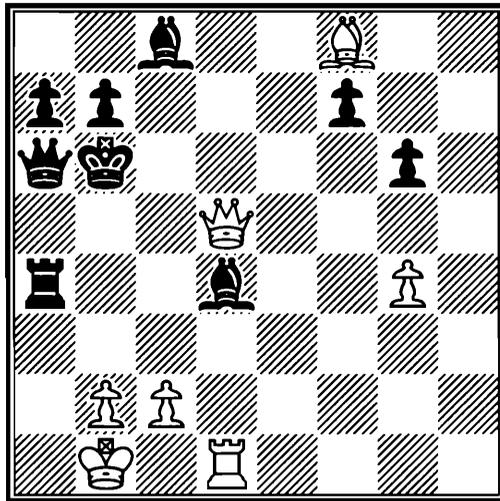
White managed to take advantage of Black's oversight with the amazing move **33.Bf8!!**



A fantastic move. If Black captures the bishop, then the queen travels to d8, and then h8 to deliver checkmate. **33...Kd7**. 33... f6 also loses quickly. 34.Qh7 Kxf8; 35.Qh8+ Ke7; 36.Rh7+ Ke6; 37.Qg8#.

**34.Nc5+! dxc5; 35.Qe7+ Kc6; 36.Qxc5+ Kd7; 37.Rd1+ Bd4**. This is forced, since blocking with the rook loses by force. 37... Rd4?; 38.Rxd4+ Bxd4; 39.Qe7+ Kc6; 40.Qd6+ Kb5; 41.Qd5+ Kb6; 42.Qxd4+ Kc7; 43.Qe5+ Kd7; 44.Qe7+ Kc6; 45.Qd6+ Kb5; 46.Qc5+ etc.

**38.Qe7+ Kc6; 39.Qd6+ Kb5; 40.Qd5+ Kb6; 41.Qd6+ Kb5**. 41... Ka5? walks the plank after 42.b4+ Kb5; 43.Qd5+ Kb6; 44.Qxd4+ Kc7; 45.Qe5+. **42.Qd5+ Kb6**.



**43.Qd8+**. 43.c4 is only slightly worse for White, according to Zezulkin, who missed mate in six: 43...Ra1+; 44.Kc2 Qa4+; 45.Kd3 Qxd1+; 46.Ke4 Qe1+!; 47.Kf3 (47.Kxd4 Rd1#) 47...Qf2+; 48.Ke4 Qe3#. 43...Kb5; 44.Qd5+.

## White Castles Kingside

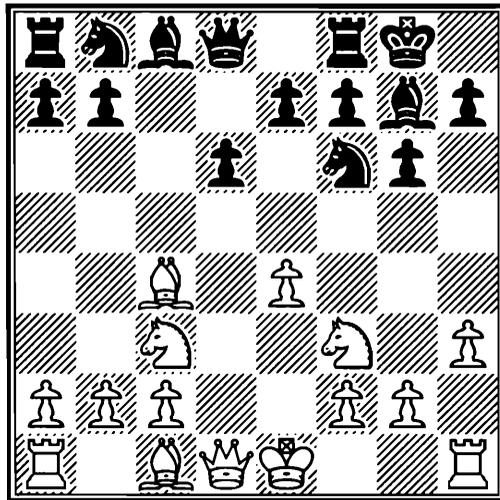
Attacks against the kingside are rarer, but they do occur if the circumstances permit. To carry out this strategy, Black needs the power of a second fianchettoed bishop at b7. Setting this up takes time and concedes space to White, and the relevant positions can rarely be arrived at in the main lines.

### Benjamin vs. Gufeld: New York, 1989

Here's how I defeated the 1997 United States Champion, who had already won the title once when we met in this game.

**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Bc4 Bg7; 7.h3 0-0; 8.Nf3?!**

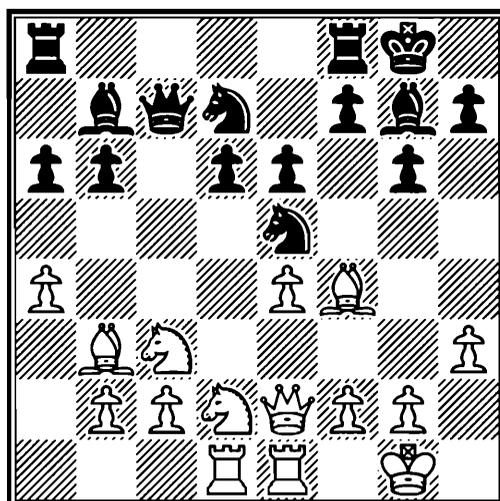
## ATTACKING PLANS FOR BLACK



Benjamin is known for his interest in unusual openings, and here he takes up a very rare move. I decided to do something a bit different myself, placing my knight at d7 instead of the usual c6. It doesn't make much of a difference, because it winds up at e5 anyway.

**8...Nbd7!?**; **9.0-0 a6**; **10.a4 b6**. If the White knight still stood on d4, White might be able to make good use of the c6-square. **11.Qe2 Bb7**; **12.Bf4 Qc7**; **13.Rfe1 e6!** This is known as the hedgehog formation. It is usually seen in the Accelerated Dragon where White has a pawn on c4. The bishop at b7 can help in a kingside attack.

**14.Rad1 Ne5**; **15.Bb3**. **15.Nxe5?! dx5** and the doubled pawns turn out to be quite strong. **15...Nfd7**; **16.Nd2**.

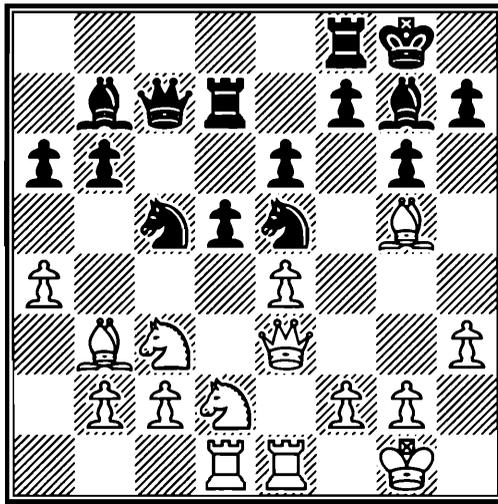


There is a secret hidden in this position. White must keep the bishop at f4, as otherwise White will exchange knights at f3 and bring the other knight to e5. White's move anticipates this plan. The attempt to double rooks illustrates the plan. **16.Rd2?! Nxf3+**;

17.gxf3 Ne5. Black is better, because to get rid of the knight White will either have to give up the essential dark squared bishop, or organize the advance of the f-pawn, which will weaken e4.

16...Nc5; 17.Be3 Rad8; 18.Bg5?! This is a waste of time. 18.f4!? was better, in my opinion, but Eric prefers 18.Bd4!? For example, 18...Nxb3; 19.cxb3!? intending 19...Rc8; 20.Qe3 winning the b-pawn. 18...Rd7; 19.Qe3?! White wants to attack with Bh6, but the attack has no support.

19...d5!



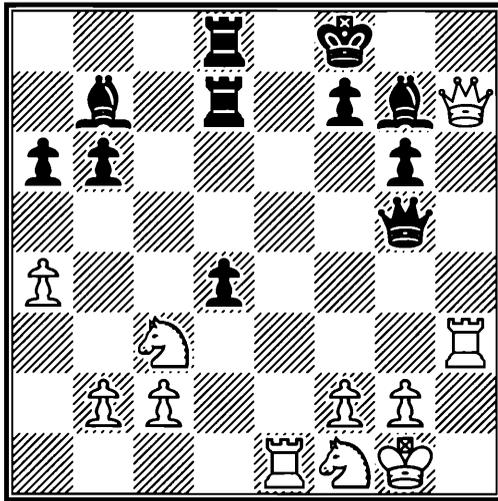
The Sicilian break has added power because of the threat of ...d4. 20.exd5 exd5; 21.Qg3 Ne6!; 22.h4 Nxf5; 23.hxf5 Rfd8; 24.Nf1. If White had anticipated my next move, then 24.Nf3 might have been a wiser choice.

24...Kf8! A surprising move in a tense situation. I invite my opponent to go after the h-pawn, which is now undefended.

25.Qh4 Nc4!; 26.Bxc4 Qxc4; 27.Qxh7? White should have settled for exchanging queens, though my bishop pair will be effective in the endgame. 27.Qxc4 dxc4; 28.Rxd7 Rxd7; 29.Ne3 Rd4; 30.Kf1 Bc6 is very uncomfortable for White.

27...Qg4; 28.Rd3 Qxg5; 29.Rh3 d4!

## ATTACKING PLANS FOR BLACK



The bishops dominate the endgame. Two dragons breathe fire at the enemy horses!

**30.Ne4 Qe5; 31.Nfd2 d3!; 32.Nf3 Qxb2; 33.cxd3 Rxd3; 34.Neg5 Rd1; 35.Rxd1 Rxd1+; 36.Kh2 Qxf2-+; 37.Nxf7. 37.Ne6+ fxe6; 38.Qxg6 loses to 38...Be5+!; 39.Nxe5 Qg1+; 40.Kg3 Qxg2+; 41.Kh4 Qxh3+!; 42.Kxh3 Rh1+; 43.Kg4 Rg1+.**

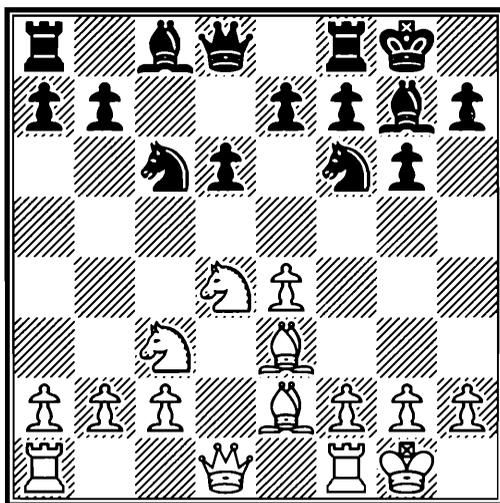
**37...Bxf3!; 38.Rxf3 Qg1+; 39.Kg3 Qe1+; 40.Kg4 Rd4+; 41.Kg5 Qe7+; 42.Kxg6 Qe6+; 43.Kg5 Qg4#.**

# 7.

## Attacking Plans for White

In this section we look at a variety of attacking formations for White, organized according to the opening variation from which they typically arise.

### Classical Themes



In the early days of the Dragon, White reacted by sensibly developing kingside pieces, castling, and then developing the dark-squared bishop. Indeed, as late as 1929 the alternatives to this plan were rarely even mentioned. White's play seems so logical that it was taken for granted that this was the best way to play.

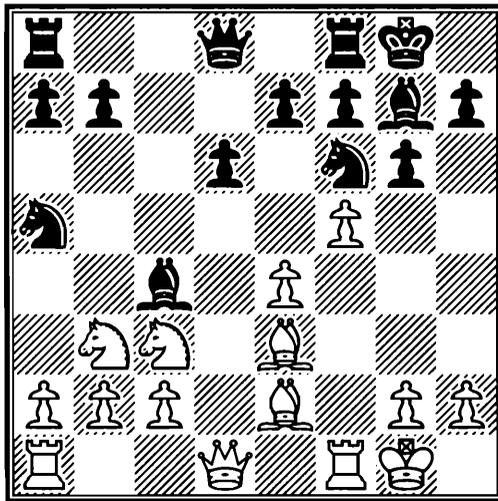
Castling kingside does limit White's attacking possibilities. A kingside pawn storm is obviously not appropriate in this situation, so White uses just the f-pawn, advancing it to f5, where it often attacks a bishop at e6.

## ATTACKING PLANS FOR WHITE

### **Malashkhia vs. Petrosian: Georgian Championship, 1944**

The future World Champion was just a promising junior. He learns an important lesson about White's potential on the f-file in the Classical Dragon. Long before he began his ascent to the title match, such sharp openings as the Dragon ceased to be part of his repertoire.

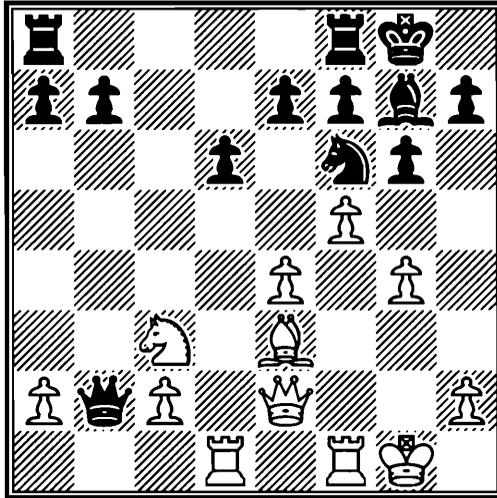
**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 Nf6; 4.Nc3 cxd4; 5.Nxd4 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.Be2 0-0; 8.0-0 Nc6; 9.Nb3 Be6; 10.f4 Na5; 11.f5 Bc4.**



This is one of the more forcing lines in the Classical Dragon. It was not new even when this game was played, and remains in the modern repertoire.

**12.Nxa5 Bxe2; 13.Qxe2. 13.Nxb7 Bxd1; 14.Nxd8 Bxc2; 15.Nc6 Rfe8** was known to be equal on the basis of the game Lasker-Riu-min, Moscow, 1936.

**13...Qxa5; 14.g4 Qb4; 15.Rad1.** In *The Complete Dragon*, a different line is presented, with 15.g5 leading to advantage for White in Estrin-Fridshtein, Soviet Union, 1945. This game shows another path, one which is very instructive for its clear example of White's play on the f-file. **15...Qxb2.**

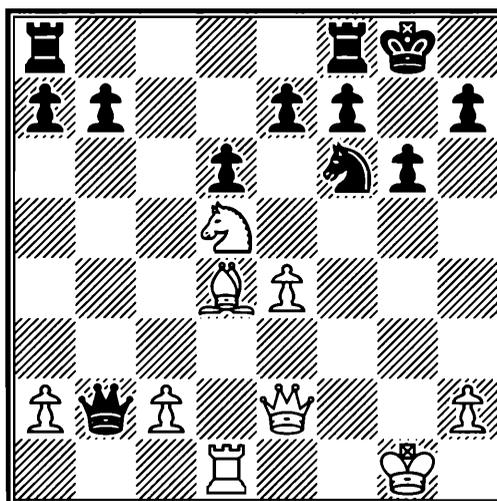


A classic poisoned pawn. **16.Bd4!** This sets up the deadly threat of Nd5 under many circumstances. Black may as well capture on g4, though there was one very strange alternative which is worthy of mention.

**16...Nxc4.** 16...Nd5 looks ridiculous, but it is tactically sound. 17.exd5 Bxd4+; 18.Rxd4 Qxc3; 19.Re4 Qc5+; 20.Rf2 Qxd5; 21.c4 Qc6; 22.Rxe7 and although White will crack open the f-file by capturing on g6, the position may be defensible with vigorous counterplay. 22...Rac8; 23.fxc6 hxc6; 24.Rf4 Rc7 with a solid defense. One can hardly blame the young Petrosian for missing such a bizarre move!

**17.f6!** The knight at g4 is under attack. **17...Bxf6.** 17...Nxf6; 18.Nd5 Qxa2; 19.Nxe7+ Kh8; 20.Rxf6 is strong, since 20...Bxf6?? loses on the spot to 21.Bxf6#.

**18.Rxf6 Nxf6; 19.Nd5.**



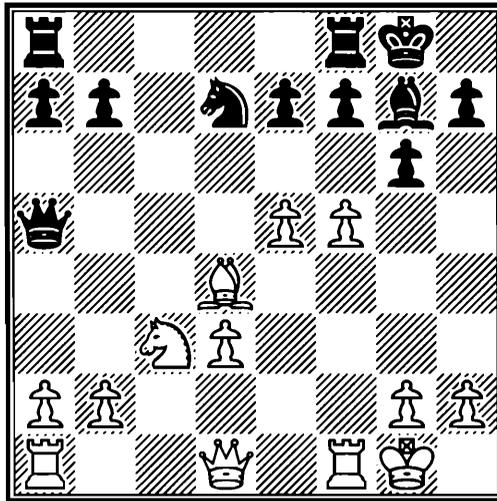
## ATTACKING PLANS FOR WHITE

**Black resigned.** The following variation is convincing. 19... Qxa2; 20.Nxe7+ Kg7; 21.Nd5 Rfe8; 22.Bxf6+ Kf8; 23.Qd2 Rxe4; 24.Nc7! with the threat of Qh6#.

The attack on the f-file is seen here in its purest form in our next game.

### **Rantanen vs. Helmers: Oslo, 1978**

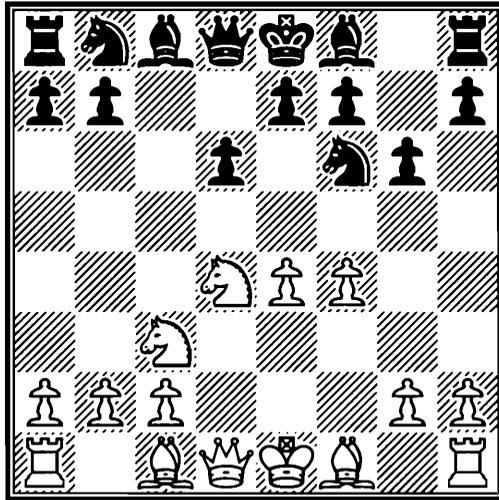
1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 g6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 d6; 6.Be2 Bg7; 7.0-0 0-0; 8.Be3 Nc6; 9.Nb3 Be6; 10.f4 Na5; 11.f5 Bc4; 12.Bd3. This is an interesting alternative to the more common capture at a5. Bxd3; 13.cxd3 d5. The Sicilian break is most appropriate here. 14.Nxa5 Qxa5; 15.e5 d4! Black deflects the bishop to d4. The pawn at e5 is weak. 16.Bxd4 Nd7.



17.f6! exf6; 18.exf6 Bxf6; 19.Rxf6 Nxf6; 20.Qf3 Nd7? Black should have tried 20...Nh5; 21.Nd5 f5, which remains unclear. If 22.Ne7+, then 22...Kf7; 23.Qxb7 Rab8! After the text move, White swarms all over the queenside.

21.Qxb7 Rad8; 22.Nd5 Rfe8; 23.b4 Qa3; 24.Bc3 Qa4; 25.Qc7 Qb5; 26.Ne7+ Kf8; 27.Nc6 Qb6+; 28.Qxb6 Nxb6; 29.Nxd8 Rxd8; 30.Rd1 and White went on to win.

## Levenfishing



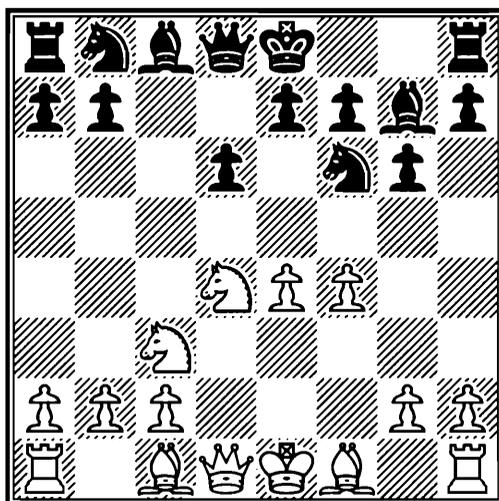
**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.f4.**

The Levenfish Variation has almost disappeared, as Black has found ways to exploit the slight weakening of control of e4, which can no longer be supported by a pawn at f3. Nevertheless, there are many traps, and if Black is not conversant with the theory, disaster can come quickly, in a variety of forms. In most cases you can reply to White's 6th move by playing ...Bg7, but there is one major exception. In the Levenfish Variation, with 6.f4, White threatens to advance the e-pawn, and you must not let that happen.

### **Nyezmetdinov vs. Yermolin:**

#### **Kazan Championship, 1946**

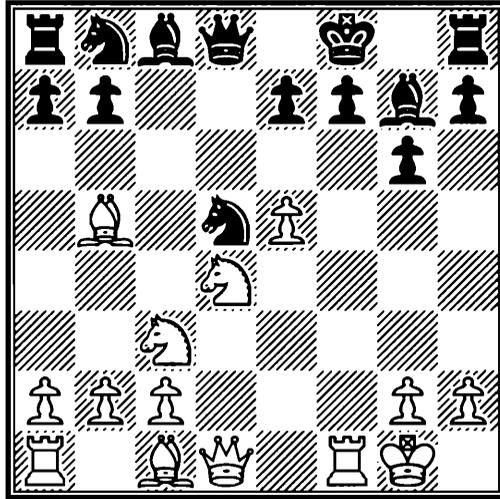
**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.f4 Bg7?**



**7.e5! dxe5; 8.fxe5 Nd5.** It really doesn't matter where the knight goes. **8...Nh5; 9.g4 Bxe5; 10.Bb5+ Bd7; 11.gxh5** and White

## ATTACKING PLANS FOR WHITE

has an extra piece. 8...Nfd7; 9.e6 fxe6; 10.Nxe6; 8...Ng4; 9.Bb5+ Nc6; 10.Nxc6 Qxd1+; 11.Kxd1. **9.Bb5+ Kf8; 10.0-0.**

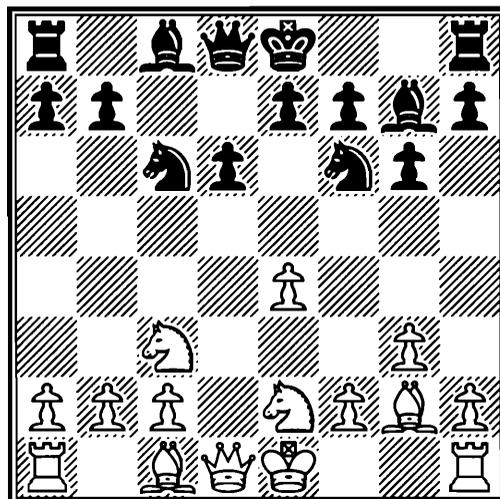


**10...Bxe5.** 10...Ne3?? loses on the spot to 11.Ne6+. **11.Bh6+ Kg8.** 11...Bg7?! also leads to an early exit. 12.Bxg7+ Kxg7; 13.Nxd5 Qxd5; 14.Nf5+.

**12.Nxd5 Qxd5; 13.Nf5! Qc5+.** There is no hope now, 13... Qxd1; 14.Nxe7#; 13...Qxb5; 14.Qd8+. **14.Be3 Qc7; 15.Nh6+.** **White won.** By the way, if White plays 6.Nf3?! you should also refrain from 6...Bg7 because of 7.e5, but 6...Nc6 is adequate, and 6...Qa5!?, as in Karklins–Schiller, New York Open, 1998, is very interesting.

## Fianchetto System

1.e5 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.g3 Nc6; 7.Nde2 Bg7; 8.Bg2.

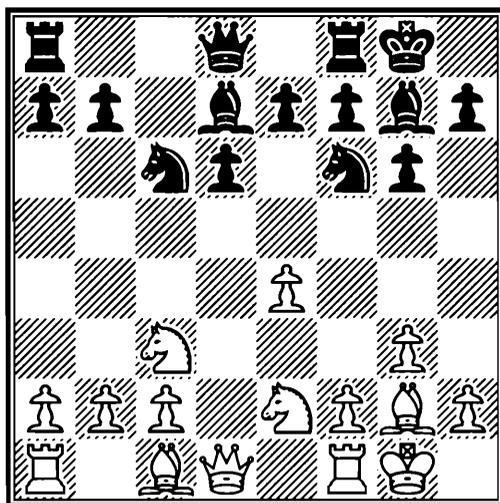


When White fianchettoes a bishop at g2, the play tends to be slower and more positional. The bishop cannot assist in a kingside attack, and White is in any case obligated to bring the king to g1. For some reason, many Dragoners have taken up this system as White, perhaps wanting to avoid having to “play against themselves.”

**Tal vs. Gufeld: Soviet Union, 1974**

This is another of my many encounters with my old friend Mikhail Tal. He had a few nice wins against me, but once in a while I got my point.

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.g3 Nc6; 7.Nde2 Bg7; 8.Bg2 0-0; 9.0-0 Bd7.

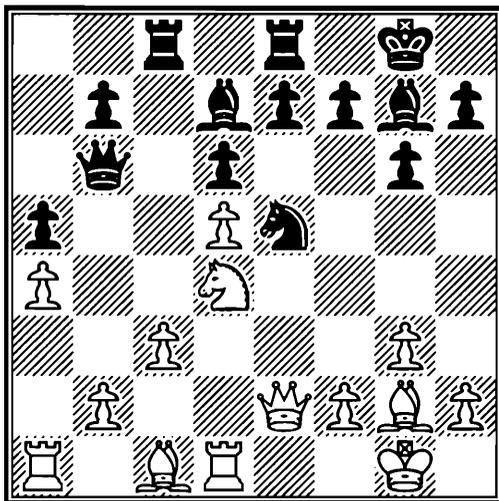


This is the basic formation of the fianchetto variation. White is not ready to undertake active operations, as this game shows.

10.Nd5. 10.h3 a6; 11.Nd5 is a better way of implementing the plan. 11...Nxd5; 12.exd5 Ne5; 13.c3 (13.Nd4 Qb6; 14.c3 Rac8; 15.Kh2 Rfe8; 16.f4 Nc4; 17.b3 Na5; 18.Bd2 e6; 19.dxe6 fxe6; 20.Rc1 Nc6 was no worse for Black in Bronstein-Boleslavsky, Soviet Championship, 1944) 13...Qc8; 14.Kh2 Bb5; 15.a4 Bc4; 16.Be3 b5; 17.axb5 Bxb5; 18.Bd4 Rb8; 19.b3 Bxe2; 20.Qxe2 Rxb3; 21.Rxa6 gave White slightly better prospects in Pripis-Belyavsky, Soviet Union, 1978.

10...Nxd5; 11.exd5 Ne5; 12.Nd4 Qb6; 13.c3 Rac8; 14.Qe2 Rfe8; 15.Rd1 a5; 16.a4.

## ATTACKING PLANS FOR WHITE



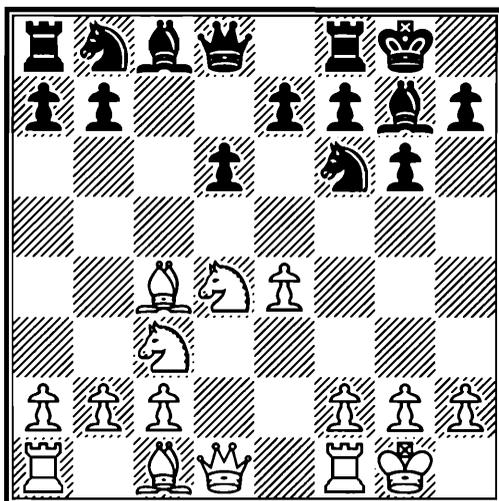
White's opening experiment has not gone well, and Black already enjoys a good game. If I had just played ...Nc4, I would have had excellent winning chances here. Instead, I play a couple of bad moves and find myself in a lost position.

**16...Rc4?**; **17.Be3**. This is possible because I don't have enough pressure at b2. **17...Bxa4?** I could have limited the damage.

**17...Qa6**; **18.Bf1 Qa8!** Unfortunately, this clever plan eluded me at the board. **18.b3!** and White went on to win.

### Tal Attack

**1.e4 c5**; **2.Nf3 d6**; **3.d4 cxd4**; **4.Nxd4 Nf6**; **5.Nc3 g6**; **6.Bc4 Bg7**; **7.0-0 0-0**.

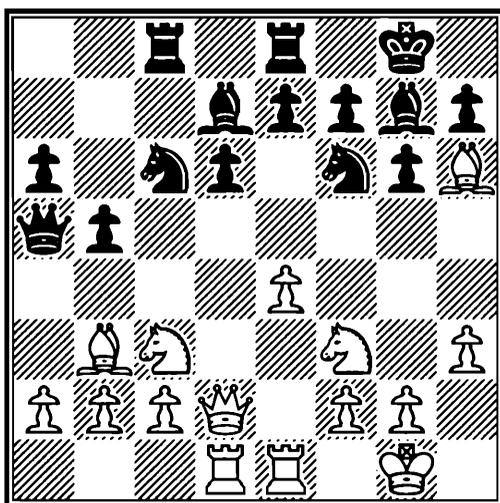


The Tal Attack is characterized by a bishop at c4, as in the main lines of the Yugoslav Attack, but it is combined with kingside castling and an early h3 to keep nasties off of g4. There are various move orders that can be used, including 6.Bc4, 6.Be3, and 6.h3. It is considered part of the Accelerated Dragon in ECO, which as-

signs it a code, B35, which is outside the Dragon range of B70-79. For this reason many students of the Dragon overlook the games when researching the opening in databases or in books.

### **Tal vs. Seibold: Bundesliga, 1991**

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6. Tal also used this approach against the 2...d6 move order. 2...d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Bc4 Bg7; 7.0-0 0-0. 7...Qa5 should lead to our main game. 8.h3 Nc6; 9.Be3 Bd7. (9...Nxe4; 10.Bxf7+ Rxf7; 11.Nxe4 Nxd4; 12.Bxd4 e5; 13.Bc5 was winning for White in Tal-Pekarek, Tbilisi 1986.) 10.Re1 Rc8; 11.Bb3 Qa5; 12.Qd2 Rfe8; 13.Rad1 a6; 14.Nf3 b5; 15.Bh6.



Black should retreat the bishop to h8. Instead, Hansen tried an artificial plan which was shredded by Tal. 15...Nd8. (15...Ne5; 16.Nxe5 dxe5 is better for White, who has a queenside majority.) 16.Nd4 Rc5; 17.a3 Bxh6; 18.Qxh6 Rh5; 19.Qf4 Ne6. This was the point of Black's 15th move, but White is not impressed. 20.Bxe6 Bxe6; 21.g4! The pawn sacrifice is very strong. 21...Rhx3; 22.f3 b4; 23.axb4 Qxb4; 24.Kg2. A fine move which offers the b-pawn as a further sacrifice. 24...Qxb2; 25.Nd5! Bxd5; 26.exd5 Nxd5; 27.Qd2 Rh4; 28.Kg3! The king is part of the attack. 28...Nc3. (28...Rxc3+; 29.Kxc3 is considered winning for White, but after 29...h5+; 30.Kh3 Qb7. Black does have four pawns for the rook, and the game is far from over. 31.Nf5 Nf6 is not giving ground.) 29.Ra1 Ne2+; 30.Nxe2 Qf6; 31.g5. Black resigned, Tal-Hansen, Reykjavik, 1986.

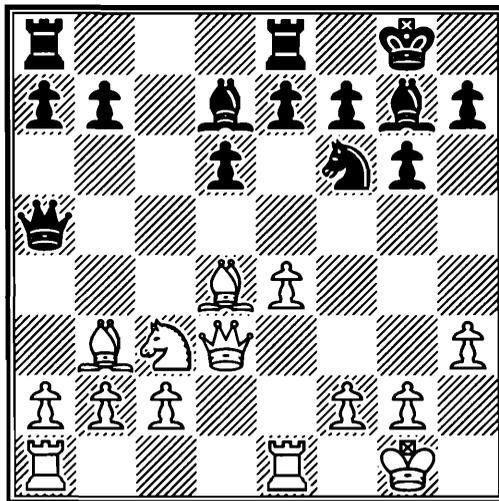
3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 g6; 5.Nc3 Bg7; 6.Be3 Nf6; 7.Bc4 Qa5. 7...0-0; 8.Bb3 Qa5; 9.f3 d5; 10.exd5 Nb4; 11.Qd2 Nbx5; 12.Nxd5 Qxd2+; 13.Kxd2 Nxd5; 14.Bxd5 Rd8; 15.c4 was better for White

## ATTACKING PLANS FOR WHITE

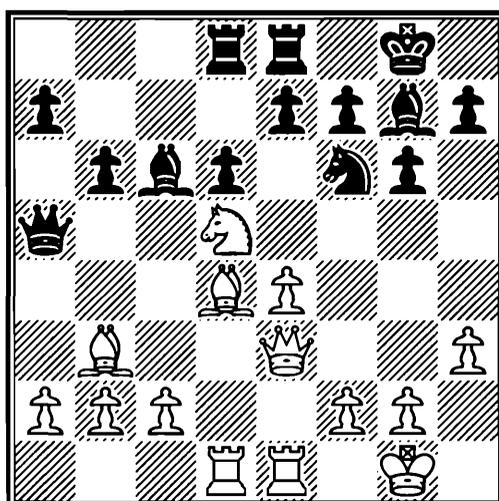
in Tal-Korchnoi, Candidates match, 1968. **8.0-0 0-0**; **9.Bb3 d6**; **10.h3 Bd7**. 10...Nxd4; 11.Bxd4 Be6; 12.f4 a6; 13.Qf3 Qh5; 14.Qf2 Rac8; 15.Rae1 Bc4; 16.e5 dxe5; 17.Rxe5 Qh6; 18.Bxc4 was easily won by White in Tal-Stefanov, Kislovodsk, 1966.

**11.Re1**. 11.f4 also led to a nice Tal win. 11...Rac8; 12.Qf3 Qh5; 13.Qf2 Na5; 14.Nde2 b6; 15.f5 g5; 16.Qg3 h6; 17.Qh2 Nc4; 18.Bd4 Nxb2; 19.Rae1 Nc4; 20.Nd5 Nxd5; 21.g4 Bxd4+; 22.Nxd4 Qh4; 23.exd5 Ne5; 24.Rxe5. Black resigned because Nf3; is coming. 24...Rc3; 25.Nf3 Rxf3; 26.Rxf3 dxe5; 27.Qxe5 Re8; 28.Re3 and the attempt to free the position with 28...h5 fails to 29.Qc7 Bb5; 30.c4 hxg4; 31.cxb5 gxh3; 32.Qg3 and it is all but over.

**11...Rfe8**; **12.Qd3**. 12.Nf3 Rac8 gave Tal good counterplay as Black against Koch at Marseille, 1989. **12...Nxd4**; **13.Bxd4**.



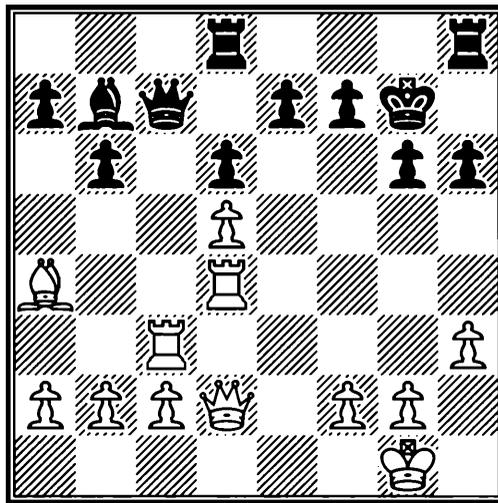
White already has a small advantage, with a secure center and excellent bishops. **13...Bc6**; **14.Rad1 Rad8**; **15.Qe3 b6**; **16.Nd5!**



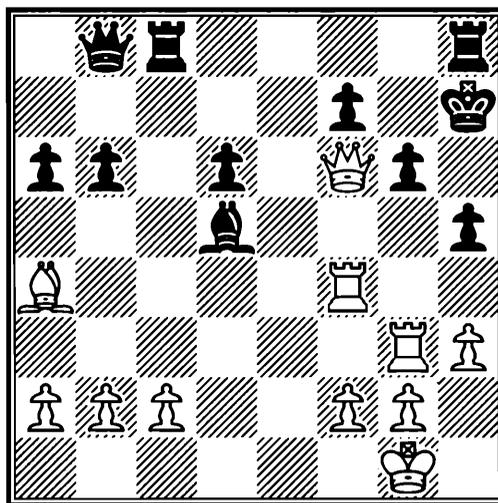
This is the key to White's plan. If White captures, the pawn at d5 is powerful. On the other hand, the knight is very powerful

at d5 as well. Black does face a dilemma. There is a way out, but it requires precise handling. **16...Nxd5**. **16...Bxd5**; **17.exd5 Rc8**; **18.c4** is clearly better for White.

**17.exd5 Bb7**; **18.Bxg7 Kxg7**. The Dragon bishop is gone, and the pawn at b2 breathes a sigh of relief. **19.Rd4 Qc5**; **20.Qd2 h6**; **21.Re3**. White's pieces take up menacing positions. **21...Qc7?** **21...b5!**; **22.a4 a6** is best, but we think that **23.Rh4** preserves White's initiative and a significant advantage, for example **23...g5**; **24.Rg3 f6**; **25.Rb4 bxa4**; **26.Bxa4 Bxd5**; **27.Bxe8 Rxe8**; **28.Rd4 Bb7**; **29.b4 Qc6**; **30.c4**. **22.Ba4 Rh8**; **23.Rc3**.



The infiltration begins. **23...Qb8**; **24.Qe3 a6**; **25.Qxe7 Rc8**; **26.Rg3 h5**; **27.Rf4 Bxd5**; **28.Qf6+ Kh7**.

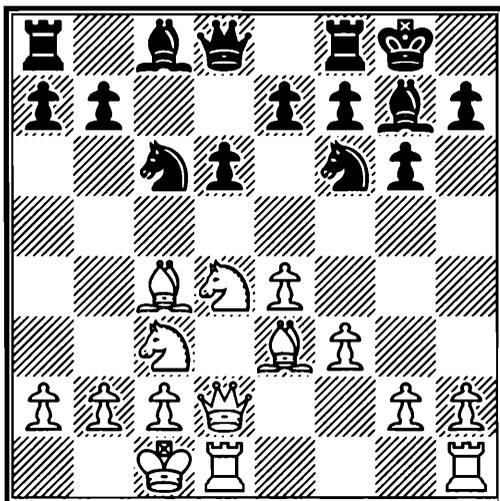


**29.Rf5!** **Black resigned.** The bishop at d5 is under attack, and the threat of **Rxh5+** followed by mate is terminal.

## ATTACKING PLANS FOR WHITE

### Yugoslav Attack

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.Bc4.

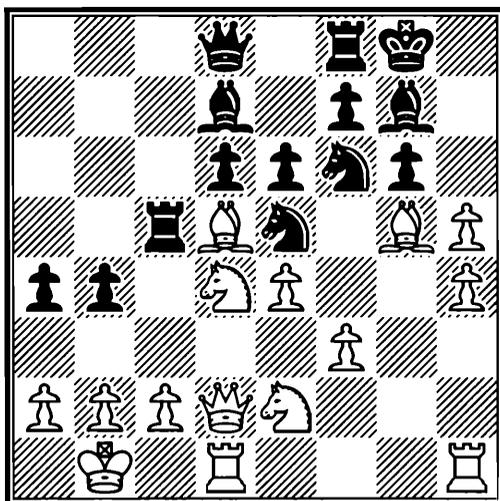


The Yugoslav Attack has occupied center stage in the Dragon drama for most of the period following the Second World War, and it shows no sign of retiring soon. The critical notices have been great, for both sides! This is brutal chess with no prisoners taken. Attacks fly on both wings, and time is of the essence. Yet, as we see throughout this book, both sides must “proceed with all deliberate speed.” Hasty attacks can result in fatalities.

White puts the king on the queenside and throws pawns and pieces at the Black king. Sacrifices are used to open lines, and Black’s king can be quickly buried under an avalanche of advancing White pawns and pieces. At the same time, Black opens up on the queenside, sparing no artillery and usually sacrificing the exchange at c3.

Precise knowledge of opening theory is needed to play either side of this opening at a professional level. You can arm yourself with theoretical weapons by studying *The Complete Dragon*. The strategy and tactics of the line, essential to proper handling of the middlegame positions (for all theory ends somewhere!), is covered throughout this book. Here is just one typical example of the sort of brawl that can be expected.

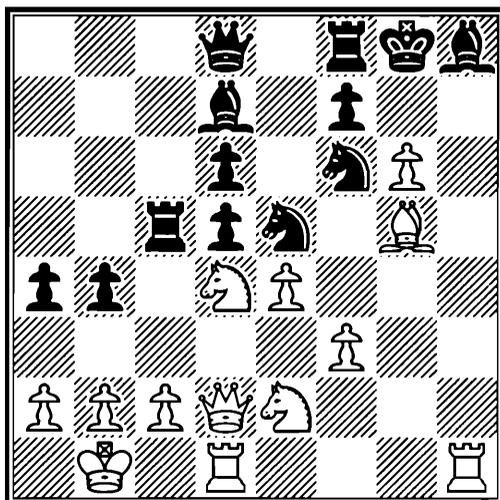
**Sznapik vs. Komljenovic: Biel, 1987**



This is a typical horserace. Black's pawns are advancing quickly. Black's last move, 18...e6?, seems to win a piece, but material is irrelevant, and White wins by force.

**19.h6!! Bh8.** This move is forced. After 19...exd5; 20.hxg7, White simply can't recapture. 20...Kxg7; 21.Bh6+ Kg8; 22.Bxf8 Qxf8 doesn't really give any compensation for the exchange, and White continues the attack with 23.h5! Nxh5. (23...dxe4; 24.hxg6 exf3; 25.gxf7+ Qxf7. Then 26.Qh6! Qg7; 27.Rdg1 Neg4; 28.Qxg7+ Kxg7; 29.Nxf3 is a fairly simple endgame to win.) 24.Qxb4 dxe4; 25.fxe4 is clearly better for White. Alternatively, 20...Re8; 21.Qf4! forces 21...Kxg7; 22.h5 gxh5 and now 23.Rdg1 is a killer.

**20.h7+! Kxh7; 21.h5!** White's attack is relentless. **21...exd5.** 21...Kg8; 22.hxg6 Nxg6; 23.Nf4+- exd5; 24.Qh2 and White wins. **22.hxg6+ Kg8.**



## SECRETS OF THE SICILIAN DRAGON

A simple combination wraps things up. 22...Kxg6; 23.Nf4+ Kxg5 is mated by 24.Nxd5+ Kg6; 25.Qh6#.

**23.Rxh8+!! Kxh8; 24.Bxf6+. Black resigned, because of 24... Qxf6; 25.Qh6+ Kg8; 26.Qh7#.**

# 8.

## Nine Tactical Themes for White

There are many tactical devices that White can use in the pursuit of the enemy king. It is important to be on the lookout for these nasty creatures, as they can make your life miserable as Black. We have chosen nine of them for special treatment. It is probably worth considering the possibility of each one at every turn. Make this a checklist for your middlegame calculations!

We will examine the following topics:

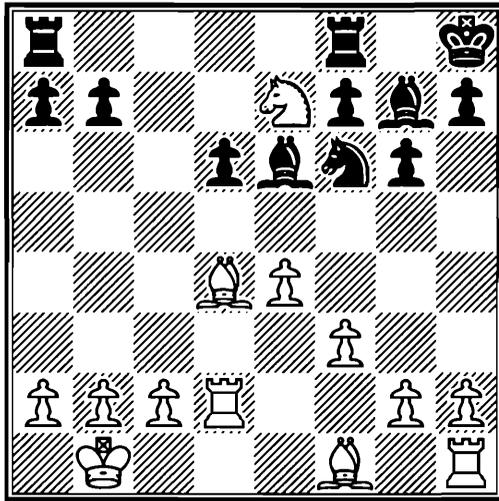
1. The Famous Knight Leap to d5
2. Weakness at f7
3. Rook Sacrifice at h7
4. Deadly Knight
5. Weakness of Black's Back Rank
6. Deflection of King to h8
7. Break at e5
8. Break at f5
9. Sacrifice at f6

### 1. The Famous Knight Leap to d5

Among the painful lessons of a Dragoneer's education is falling victim to a crushing Nd5. In its pristine form, it looks like this.

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.0-0-0 Nxd4; 10.Bxd4 Qa5; 11.Kb1 Be6??

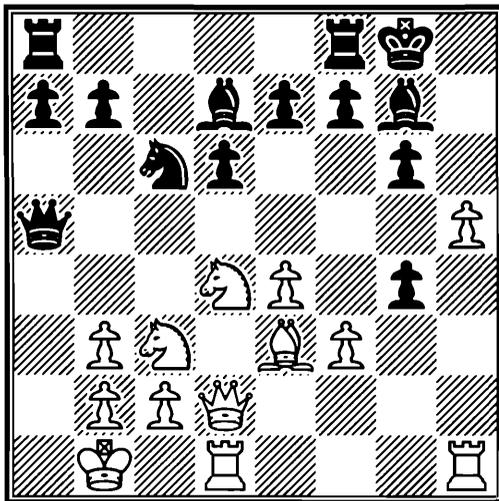
## NINE TACTICAL THEMES FOR WHITE



White wins a pawn with **12.Nd5 Qxd2; 13.Nxe7+ Kh8; 14.Rxd2.**

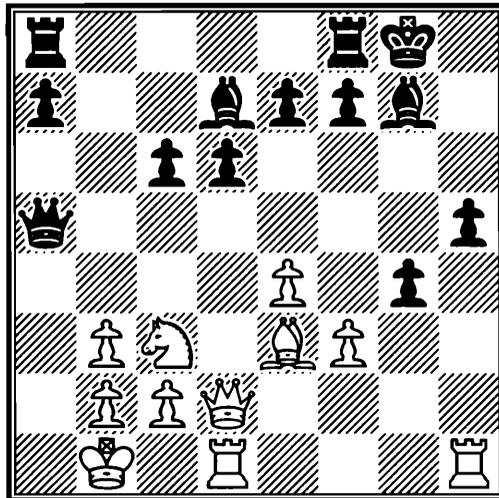
Usually the trick is more subtle in its application, as in the following example.

### **Sherzer vs. Larsen: New York Open, 1988**



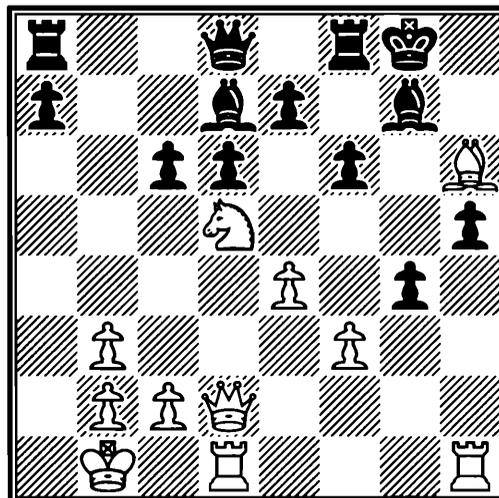
Black is faced with a difficult defense. White is threatening to rip open the kingside with **hxg6**. What can be done about this? There are two candidates. First, Black can capture on **h5**, relying on the queen at **a5** for defense. This is what Larsen chose.

**16...gxh5?** **16...Nxd4** is the correct move, with the plan of luring the White bishop to **d4**, where it can be exchanged, after which the **g**-pawn can advance to **g5**, keeping the kingside closed. **17.Bxd4 Bxd4; 18.Qxd4 g5; 19.Nd5 Rae8; 20.Qe3 f6; 21.f4 e6; 22.Nc3 gxf4; 23.Qxf4 e5; 24.Qh6 Re7; 25.Nd5 Ref7; 26.Rdf1 Qd8;** gives Black just enough time to get the bishop to **d6** and can later deal with the knight once and for all. The position is passive but not dangerous. **17.Nxc6 bxc6.**



Now we see the famous knight leap tactic. **18.Nd5!** Black cannot capture at d2 because of the intermezzo at e7, so the queen must retreat.

**18...Qd8.** **18...Qxd2;** **19.Nxe7+ Kh7;** **20.Rxh5+! Bh6;** **21.Rxh6+!** A triple intermezzo! **21...Kg7;** **22.Bxd2** and White has an extra piece. **19.Bh6.** Now the simple threat is **Qg5.** **19...f6.**



The weakness of the light squares allows White to sac a piece. **20.Rxh5! cxd5.** **20...Be8;** **21.Rh4.** **21.Bxg7 Kf7.** Capturing the bishop leads to a quick checkmate. **21...Kxg7;** **22.Qh6+ Kf7;** **23.Qh7+ Ke6;** **24.exd5#.**

**22.Bxf8 Qxf8;** **23.Qxd5+.** **Black resigned,** because of **23...e6;** **24.Rh7+! Kg8;** **25.Qh5.**

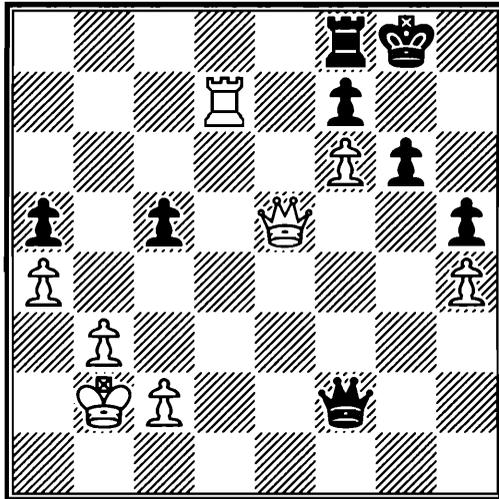
## 2. Weakness at f7

From the outset of the game, Black must take care to protect the vulnerable f7-square, which lies just a heartbeat away from the king. Even when Black has castled, this square can still be a

## NINE TACTICAL THEMES FOR WHITE

focal point for White's operations. The examples in this section should serve as a powerful reminder that the f7-square must always be protected.

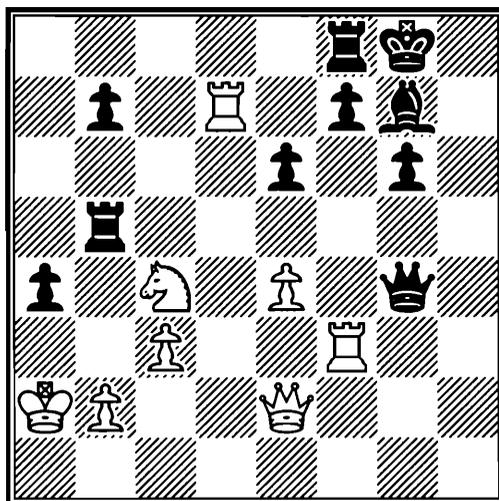
### **Almasi vs. W. Watson: Germany, 1995**



When the Dragon bishop is gone from the board, the fianchetto position is very vulnerable. Even though everything looks fine for Black in this position, White forces resignation with the next move.

**34.Rxf7!! Black resigned**, because of 34...Rxf7; 35.Qe8+ Rf8; 36.Qxg6+ Kh8; 37.Qg7#.

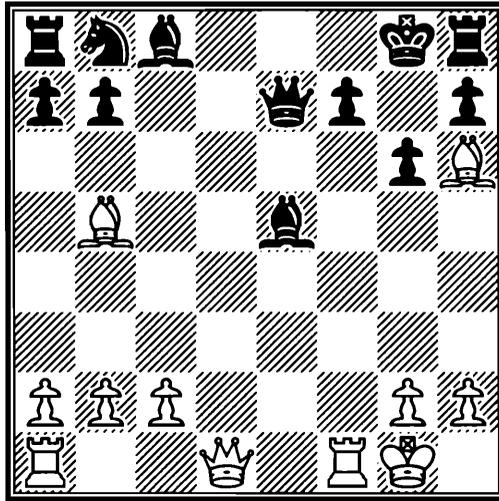
### **Gik vs. Barkhatov: Soviet Union, 1969**



The weakness of f7 can be so critical that even without a light squared bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal, and without a queen, the invasion at f7 can easily prove fatal. White wins by force.

**37.Rxf7!! Rxf7. 37...Qxe2; 38.Rxg7+ Kh8; 39.Rh7+ Kg8; 40.Rdg7#. 38.Rd8+! Black resigned.**

**Shapiro vs. Somov: Leningrad , 1950**



The f7 square is obviously the target. White cashes in right away.

**16.Rxf7!! Kxf7; 16...Qxf7??; 17.Qd8+ Qf8; 18.Qxf8#. 17.Qd5+ Qe6. 17...Be6; 18.Qxe5 Rg8; 19.Bg5 Qxg5 (19...Qb4; 20.Qf6#) 20.Qxg5 wins.**

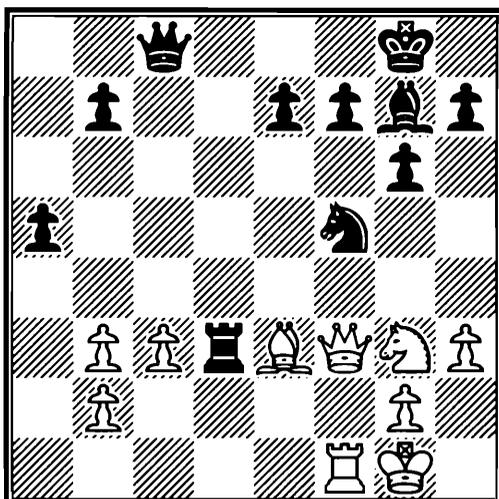
**18.Rf1+ Bf6. 18...Kg8??; 19.Rf8#; 18...Ke7?; 19.Bg5+ Bf6; 20.Bxf6+ Kf7; 21.Bxh8+ is terminal.**

**19.Rxf6+! Kxf6; 20.Qd4+ Ke7. 20...Qe5?; 21.Bg7+ Kxg7; 22.Qxe5+ is resignable. 21.Bg5+ Kf7; 22.Bc4 Re8; 23.Qf6+ Kg8; 24.Bh6. Black resigned** rather than suffer something like **24... Re7; 25.Qf8# mate.**

The assault on f7 is not always deadly, however. It is important to know that there are times when you can get away with letting the enemy capture a pawn there, even with check. In the following example, even the mighty queen is allowed to approach.

## NINE TACTICAL THEMES FOR WHITE

### Ernst vs. Carls: Germany, 1935



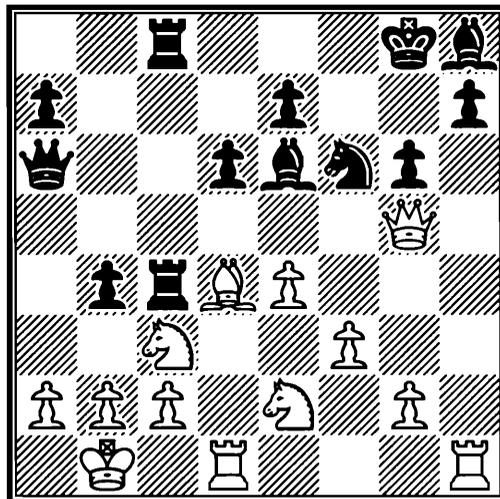
White has put a lot of pressure at g7, but as a rule, Black can survive  $Qxf7+$  if the pawns are still at h7 and g6, and the bishop is safe at g7.

**28...Nxe3!** 28...Rxe3; 29.Nxf5! Qc5; 30.Nh6+! Kh8 (30...Bxh6?; 31.Qxf7+ Kh8; 32.Qe8+ Kg7; 33.Rf7#) 31.Nxf7+ Kg8; 32.Nh6+ Kh8; 33.Nf7+ would only have led to a draw by perpetual check. **29.Qxf7+ Kh8; 30.Rf3 Rd1+; 31.Kh2 Nf5; 32.Nxf5 gxf5; 33.Qxe7 Qb8+; 34.g3 Qc8**, and Black went on to win.

### 3. Rook Sacrifice at h7

Since White needs an open h-file to get at the Black king, you must beware of the rook sacrifice at h7, which can powerfully accelerate the attack. Even when the h7-square seems to be well defended, it can be demolished if White is willing to make the investment.

**Metz vs. Morgado: Postal, 1988**



White is running out of time, as Black is prepared to carve up the queenside. Therefore radical action is needed! **23.Rxh7!!**

Everything is forced now, and Black must lose.

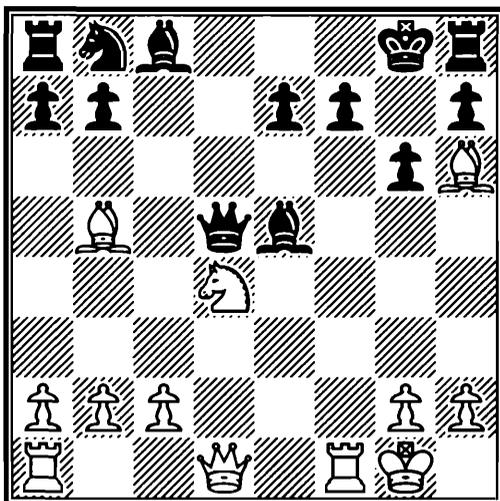
**23...Kxh7; 24.Rh1+ Kg7; 25.Nf4**, and Black cannot defend g6. **25...Bf5. 25...Bf7; 26.Qh6+ Kg8; 27.Qxh8#.** **26.exf5** and it is mate in 5.

**4. Deadly Knight**

The Dragon formation does not lend a lot of support to the e7-square. White can try to attack it on the e-file, but that cannot be accomplished while there is still a White pawn at e4. Using a bishop at g5 is also ineffective, for the most part, because a knight at f6 covers that square. The most effective attacking plan is Nd5, the famous tactic we explored earlier, but there are times when White can get to e7 via f5, despite the pawn at g6. In our example, the undefended queen on the d-file makes it possible.

## NINE TACTICAL THEMES FOR WHITE

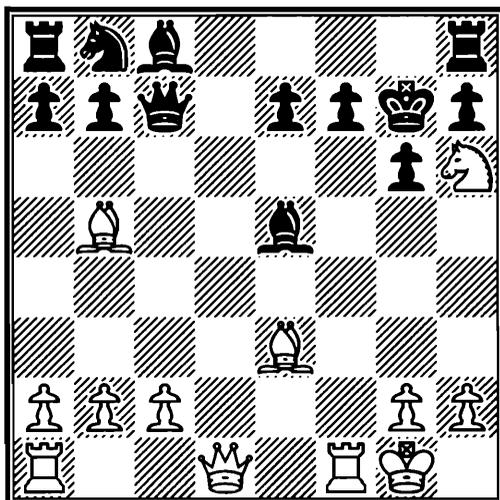
### Crisovan vs. Rey: Switzerland, 1951



Although Black's development is limited, he has every reason to be optimistic. The key f7 square is defended, for the moment, and the knight at d4 is under attack. Of course if the knight could go to f5, there would be much to worry about. Still, the bishop and g-pawn provide sufficient defense. Or do they?

**13.Nf5!** Black can't afford to take the knight, because the queen at d5 is hanging. White also threatens **Nxe7#!**

**13...Qc5+; 14.Be3.** This might have been hard to foresee because the e3 square, now under control by the knight at f5, had no defender when we started. **14...Qc7; 15.Nh6+ Kg7.**

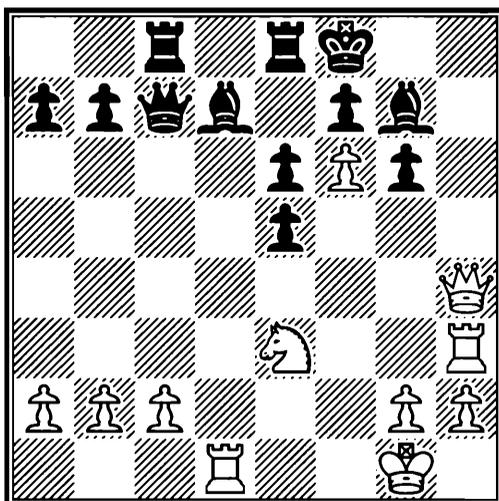


Now the weakness of f7 is exposed in the most brutal fashion. **16.Rxf7#.**

## 5. Weakness of Black's Back Rank

The fianchetto formation does not usually give White opportunities for a back rank mate unless there is a bishop or queen at h6 controlling g7. A very useful, tactical device is illustrated in the following position. White is down a piece, but the game is already decided in his favor.

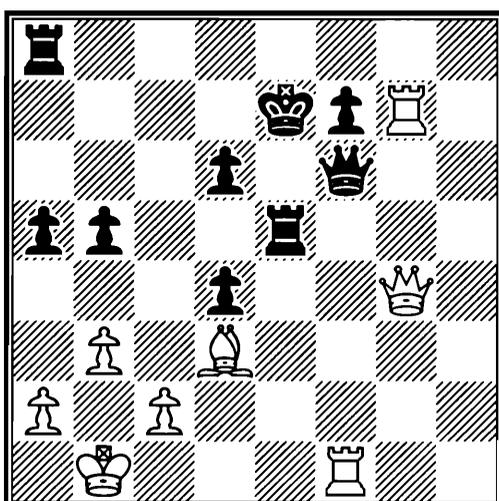
### Richter vs. Engels: Bad Saarow, 1937



A simple queen sacrifice illustrates the theme.

**27.Qh8+! Bxh8; 28.Rxh8#.** In some cases, however, the Black king is flushed from the flank into the center, and then the pawn at d6 can limit Black's escape paths.

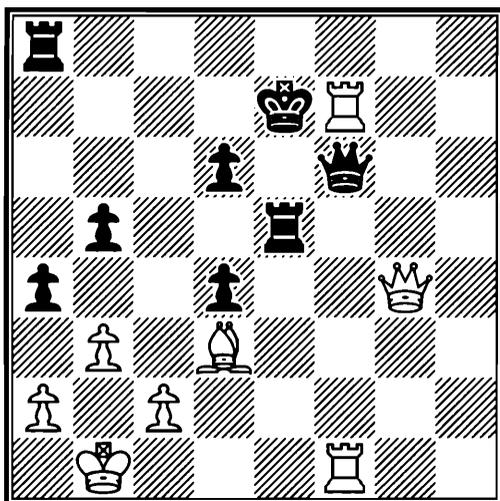
### Blodstein vs. Serper: USSR, 1982



This position shows a number of important attacking themes. **27...a4!** Black has a surprising mating net planned if White

## NINE TACTICAL THEMES FOR WHITE

captures the queen. White avoids the tempting 28.Qxf6 because of 28...Rd1+; 29.Kb2 a3 mate! Instead, he offers a sacrifice of his own! 28.Rxf7+!!

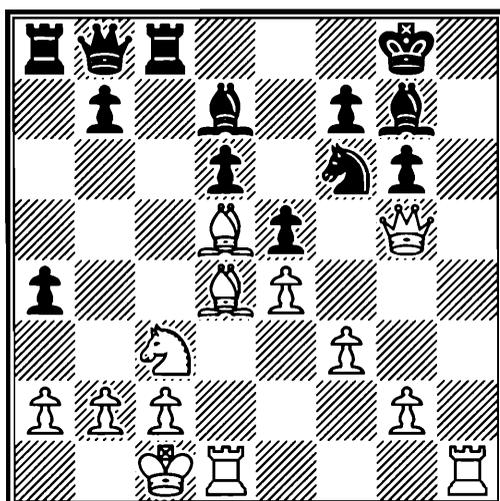


This turns the tables, and shows another important tactic. While the play may be on the kingside, the undefended position of the rook at a8 gives possibilities for forks. Black actually resigned, here, because he saw 28...Qxf7; 29.Rxf7+ Kxf7; 30.Qf3+. White won.

### 6. Deflection of King to h8

Black may have room to flee toward the center, but sometimes the king can be trapped on the kingside by drawing it to h8, even when a sacrifice is necessary to do so. This tactic is an important part of White's attack along the h-file.

#### Hodgson vs. Paunovic: London vs Belgrade, 1976



18.Rh8+!! Kxh8. 18...Bxh8; 19.Qxg6+ Bg7; 20.Qxf7+ Kh7; 21.Rh1+ etc. 19.Bxf7 Rg8; 20.Rh1+. **Black resigned**, faced with mate in 4.

## 7. Break at e5

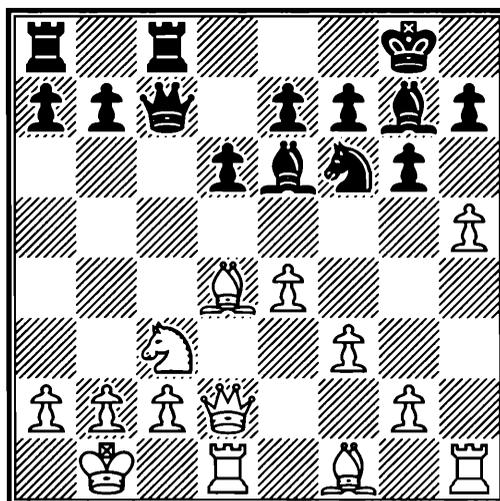
**Evans vs. Zuckerman:**

**United States Championship, 1966**

Advancing the h-pawn to h5 is a standard component of White's strategy in the Yugoslav Attack. This is often implemented as a sacrifice, allowing Black to capture the pawn with a knight at f6. Then White will advance the g-pawn, kicking back the knight, and opening up the h-file. The following short game shows how easy it is for White to build this attack.

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Nc6; 7.f3 Bg7; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.0-0-0 Nxd4; 10.Bxd4 Be6; 11.Kb1! Qc7. 11...Qa5; 12.Nd5 would also lead to an advantage for White.

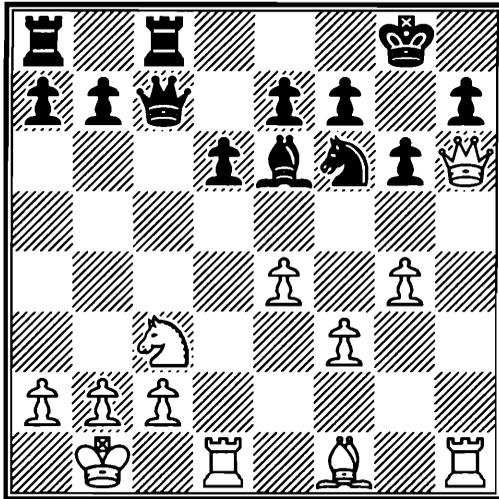
12.h4 Rfc8; 13.h5.



13...Nxxh5?? 13...Qa5! is correct, for example, 14.hxg6 hxg6; 15.a3 Rab8; 16.Qg5 (16.Bxf6 Bxf6; 17.Nd5 Qxd2; 18.Nxf6+ Kg7; is better for Black) 16...Qc7!; 17.e5 Ne4! and Black has a promising game.

14.Bxg7 Kxg7; 15.g4 Nf6; 16.Qh6+ Kg8. The stage is set for a powerful e5-break.

## NINE TACTICAL THEMES FOR WHITE

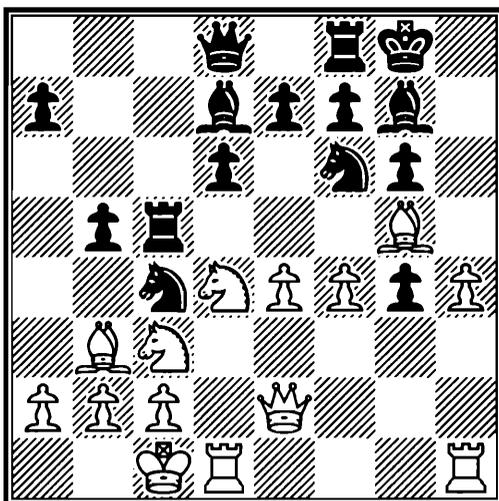


17.e5!! dxe5; 18.g5 Nh5; 19.Bd3!+- e4; 20.Rxh5 gxh5; 21.Nxe4 Qf4; 22.Nf6+ exf6; 23.Bxh7+ Kh8; 24.Bf5+ Kg8; 25.Qh7+ Kf8; 26.Qh8+. White won.

### 8. Break at f5

White uses a break at f5 instead of h5 in this example. It illustrates yet another strategy available to White in the Soltis Variation. One of the important factors is that the rook at c5, beautifully stationed for both attack and defense, loses influence on the 5th rank. It is no longer a defender of the kingside. White's attack comes fast and furious, and Black has no time to breathe.

### Markovic vs. Payen: Singapore, 1990

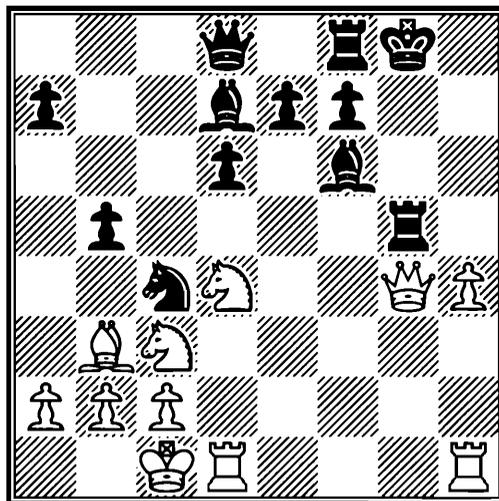


17.f5! gxf5; 18.Bxf6. This was not a new move at the time, as Markovic claimed in *Chess Informant*. It had been played a decade earlier!

18...Bxf6. Ironically, 18...exf6 is the older move, and in Tri-

buiani-Lotti, Postal, 1980. White should have won after 19.Nxf5 Bxf5?; 20.exf5 Rxf5; 21.Bxc4 Rc5. (21...Re5; 22.Qxg4 f5; 23.Qg3! f4; 24.Qxf4 bxc4; 25.h5 and the White attack gets in first.) 22.Nxb5 f5; 23.Rxd6 with an extra piece.

**19.exf5! Rxf5.** The best move. The knight at d4 is taboo. 19... Bxd4??; 20.Qxg4+ Kh7; 21.Qh5+ Kg7; 22.Rhg1+ Kf6; 23.Qg5+ Ke5; 24.Rxd4! with mate in 4. 19...Ne5; 20.Rhg1 should be met vigorously by the standard exchange sacrifice 20...Rxc3!, but if White declines and pursues the attack instead, then Black is still in deep trouble. 21.Rxg4+! Kh8; 22.Rg2 and Black must give up a piece to cover the f3-square and block the diagonal so that the queen does not get to h5. 22...Bxf5; 23.Nxf5 Rf3; 24.Qd2! finds another way in. **20.Qxg4+! Rg5.**



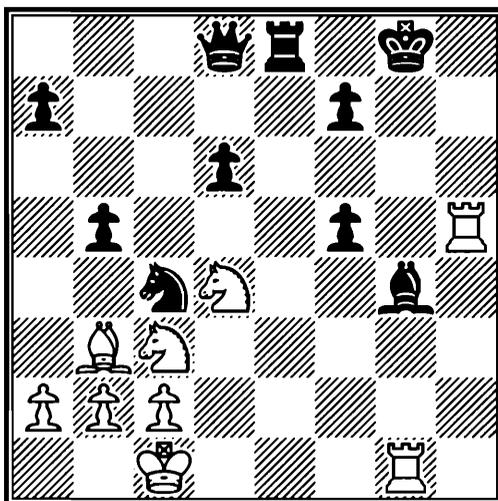
White has enough firepower on the kingside that the queen can be sacrificed to insure that both of the kingside files will be wide open.

**21.hxg5!! Bxg4; 22.gxf6 exf6!** This keeps the game alive. 22... Ne5; 23.Rdg1 Qd7. (23...exf6; 24.Nf5 has a deadly threat of Nh6+ and Nxg4, but if Black defends against this threat with 24...Qd7 then the other knight leaps in to target f6. 25.Nd5+ -) 24.Nd5 Re8 (24...Ng6 loses to 25.fxe7) and the rooks can switch files after Rg5+, for example 25.Rh5! Ng6; 26.Rg5 e6; 27.Nf4 Kf8; 28.R1xg4 and the Black monarch is not long for this world.

Accepting the second offer is a sure recipe for suicide. 22... Bxd1; 23.Nc6 Bf3. (23...exf6; 24.Nxd8 Bf3; 25.Rf1 Ba8; 26.Nxb5 d5; 27.Bxc4 dxc4; 28.Rd1+ -) 24.Nxe7+ Qxe7; 25.Rg1+ Kh7; 26.fxe7 Re8; 27.Nxb5 Ne5; 28.Nxa7 Rxe7; 29.Nc8 Rd7; 30.Nb6 and the endgame is hopeless for Black, according to this analysis by Markovic.

## NINE TACTICAL THEMES FOR WHITE

**23.Rdg1 f5!** This creates a path to g5 for the Black queen.  
**24.Rh5!** The g5-square is denied to her majesty! **24...Re8!**

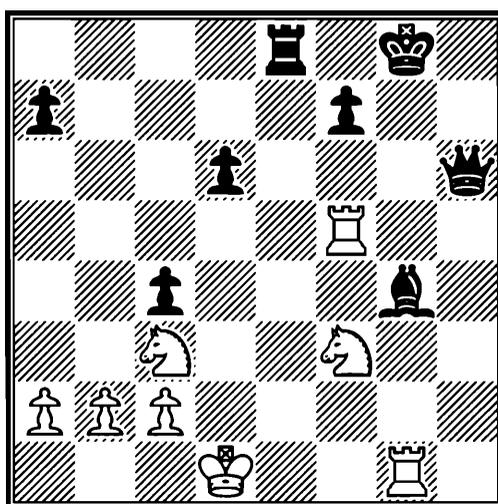


Black activates the rook. Now White will have to watch out for threats of ...Re1+, since capturing at e1 breaks the pin on the g-file, leaving the rook on h5 defenseless.

**25.Bxc4! bxc4; 26.Rxf5!** The rook eats another pawn, thanks to the pin. Now the bishop at g4 is under attack.

**26...Qh4.** 26...Re1+; 27.Rxe1 Bxf5; 28.Nxf5 Qg5+; 29.Ne3 is better for White, but Black has some counterplay after 29...f5, which threatens ...f4 and therefore prevents the knight at c3 from moving to d5. 30.Kd2 f4; 31.Nxc4 f3+; 32.Ne3 Qh4; 33.Rg1+ Kf7; 34.Rg4 Qf2+; 35.Kd3 and Black has exhausted all counterplay.

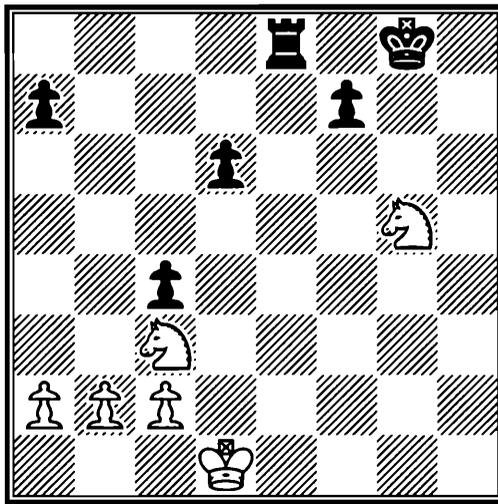
**27.Nf3 Qh6+!** 27...Qh3 lets White concentrate on the attack and pick up some material. 28.Rg5+ Kf8; 29.R5xg4 Qxf3; 30.Rg8+ Ke7; 31.Re1+ and White wins. **28.Kd1.**



Walking into a pin! Not much of a pin, however, when the pinner is pinned himself! The two knights provide enough protection against the queen and rook.

**28...Qg6.** 28...Re1+? seeks to exchange rooks, but it fails. 29.Kxe1 Qe6+; 30.Ne5! and Black has nothing better than 30...Kf8! so that the bishop does not fall with check, but then 31.Rxf7+ Ke8; 32.Rxg4 Qxe5+; 33.Re4 Qxe4+; sends the horse on a feeding frenzy. 34.Nxe4 Kxf7; 35.Nxd6+ Ke6; 36.Nxc4.

**29.Rxg4 Qxg4; 30.Rg5+ Qxg5; 31.Nxg5.**



After all the tactics, we reach an endgame where the material is roughly level. Black's pawns are too weak, however, and this gives White good chances. The f-pawn cannot advance without being vulnerable, and White can easily contain it with a pair of knights and bring the king over to destroy it.

**31...d5?!** 31...Kg7 would have been better. Black should not advance pawns unless the king is able to support them. **32.Nf3 f5.** Black just doesn't get it. **33.Nd4.** White quickly gobbled up three pawns and won the game:

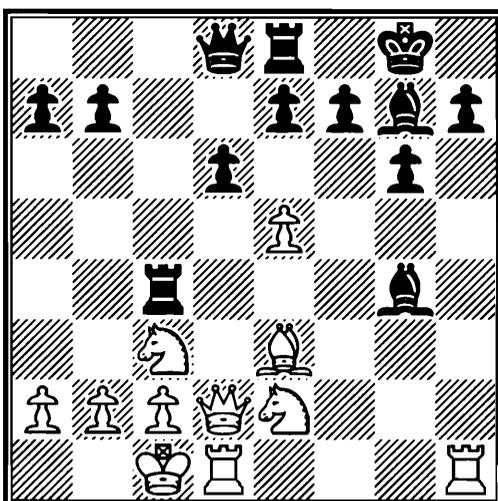
**33...f4; 34.Nxd5 Rd8; 35.Ne7+ Kf7; 36.Nec6 Rd5; 37.Ke2 Ke8; 38.Kf3 Kd7; 39.Kxf4 Kd6; 40.Ke4 Rg5; 41.Nxa7 Ra5; 42.Nab5+.** **Black resigned.** White would play a3, followed by b4 with two connected passed pawns and two knights against rook.

## 9. Sacrifice at f6

Just as Black has a typical sacrifice, White can use a sacrifice at f6 to demolish the most important defender of the Black kingside. This is not all that common, because the rook is a good attacker and is not given up without clear compensation.

## NINE TACTICAL THEMES FOR WHITE

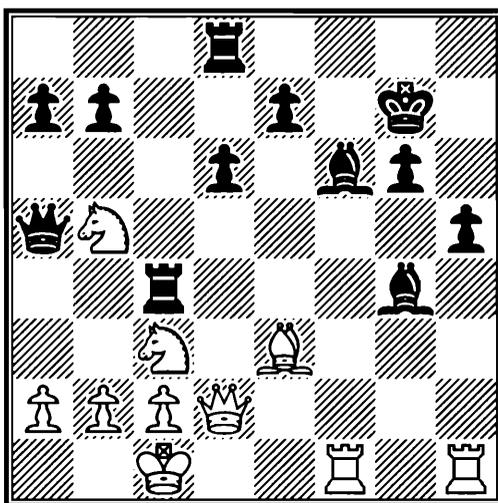
### Heitanen vs. Kauppinen: Postal Game



We have already visited this position in our examination of Martin-Tarjan in the Strategy section. In this game, White tries another attacking plan.

**19.Rdg1** puts the question to the bishop at g4. Black defended it with **19...h5**. White advances the doomed e-pawn to open up the kingside. **20.e6! Qa5**. If **20...Bxe6**, then **21.Bd4** is strong. **21.exf7+ Kxf7**; **22.Rf1+ Bf6**. The bishop is protected by king and pawn, but is not as strong as it looks.

**23.Nd4 Kg7**; **24.Ndb5 Rd8**.



The Dragon bishop looks safe here, but White sweeps it away! **25.Rxf6!? exf6**; **26.Rf1 d5**; **27.Bd4 Rc6**. **27...Rxd4**; **28.Qxd4 Qb6**; **29.Qxb6 axb6**; **30.Nc7 d4**; **31.N3d5** and the knights are better than the bishop and pawns, many of which are weak.

**28.Nxa7 Re6**; **29.Nab5 Bf5**; **30.Rxf5 gxf5**; **31.Qg5+ Kf7**; **32.Qxh5+ Kg7**; **33.Qg5+ Kf7**; **34.Qxf5 Rg8**; **35.Qxd5 Qa6**; **36.Ne4 Qc6**; **37.Ned6+ Ke7**; **38.Nf5+**. White won.

# 9.

## Ten Tactical Themes for Black

We have seen some of the items in White's bag of tricks. Let's take a look at our own collection. There are ten typical tactical devices presented in this chapter. You'll want to look for them at every opportunity.

The following themes will be considered:

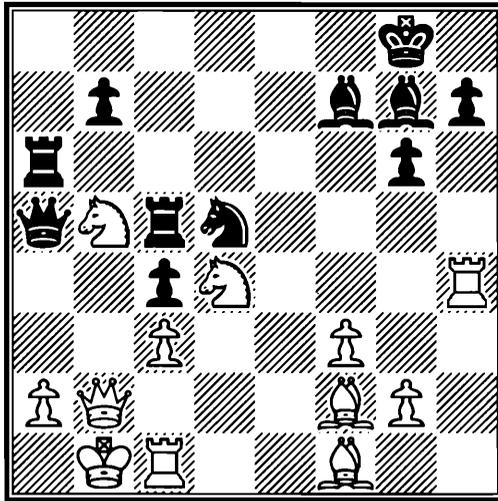
1. Demolishing the Diagonal
2. Sacrifice at g4
3. Trapping a Knight at e7
4. Sicilian Break with ...d5
5. Queenside Break with ...b5
6. Pinned or Overworked Pawn at b2
7. Blocking Lines
8. Sacrificing the Pawn at d6
9. Sacrificing a Knight at c4
10. Controlling Dark Squares without the Dragon Bishop

### **1. Demolishing the Diagonal**

The Dragon bishop breathes fire along the a1-h8 diagonal, and it is easy for White to get burned. The knight, which usually blocks the scope of the bishop, can move to g4 or d5, even if a sacrifice is involved. We saw this tactic in the section on sacrifices at g4, earlier in the book, and will return to that theme in a moment. In our first example, however, Black has already cleared the diagonal.

## 10 TACTICAL THEMES FOR BLACK

### Hellers vs. Ernst: Stockholm, 1993

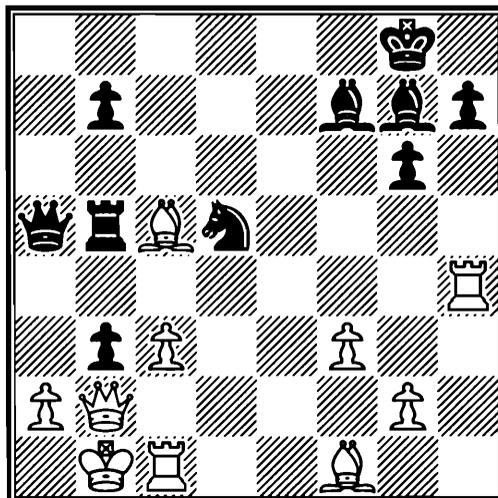


The position is a complete mess, though material is level. White has no attack to speak of, but is trying to defend the queen-side. The dark squares along the a1-h8 diagonal seem to be secure. Three minor pieces cooperate in the defense of the d4-square. Queen, rook, and knight guard c3. The queen and king cover the corner. Notice, however, how much of the burden is borne by the knight at b5. That piece ruins into an immediate pin.

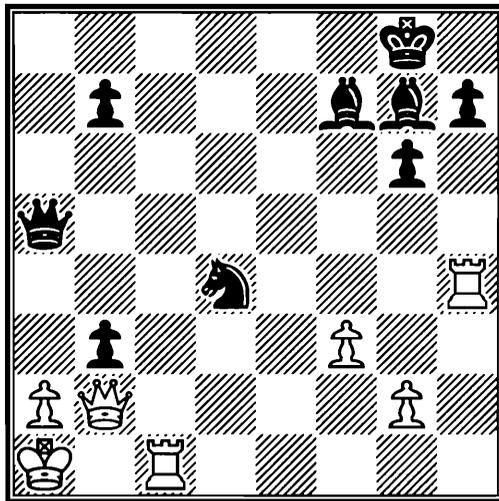
**31...Rb6!** 31...Bxd4? is tempting, but it actually loses to a quiet move, as Ernst points out. 32.Nxd4 Rb6; 33.Nb3 cxb3; 34.a3! The b-file is now closed, and the fall of the e-pawn doesn't matter. 34...Nxc3+; 35.Rxc3 Rxc3; 36.Bxb6! Qf5+; 37.Re4 Rc2; 38.Qd4. Black is just a piece down.

**32.Nb3.** This is the logical defense. White blocks the b-file and attacks the undefended rook at c5.

**32...cxb3; 33.Bxc5 Rxb5.**



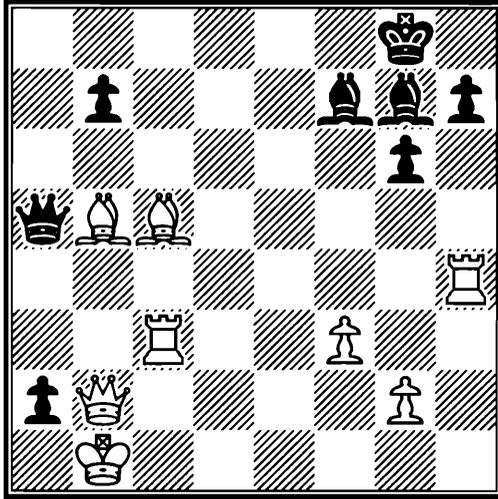
The picture has changed dramatically, suddenly c3 looks very weak. White can win another exchange, but that doesn't address the main problem. **34.Bxb5**. 34.Bb4 bxa2+; 35.Ka1 Rxb4; 36.Rxb4 Nxb4 wins because of the long-distance pin created by the Dragon bishop. **34...Nxc3+; 35.Rxc3**. 35.Ka1 Nxb5; 36.Bd4 Nxd4 is trickier than it looks.



Ernst analyzes 37.Rc8+ Be8!!; 38.Rxe8+ Kf7; 39.Kb1 Kxe8; 40.Re4+ Kf7; 41.axb3 Nb5. The game will now undergo the transition to an endgame, because the sacrifice at e7 fails. 42.b4 (42. Re7+ Kxe7; 43.Qxg7+ Ke6; 44.Qg8+ Kd6; 45.Qf8+ Kc6; 46.Qf6+ Nd6 and there are no more checks.) 42...Bxb2; 43.bxa5 Nc3+; 44.Kxb2 Nxe4; 45.fxe4. Computers don't understand just how simple a win this is for Black. Ernst explains. 45...Ke6; 46.Kc3 Ke5; 47.Kd3 h5; 48.Ke3 g5; 49.g3 (49.Kf3 Kd4; 50.g3 Ke5; 51.Ke3 h4; 52.gxh4 gxh4 is the same) 49...h4; 50.gxh4 gxh4; 51.Kf3 h3; 52.Kg3 Kxe4; 53.Kxh3 Kd4; 54.Kg3 Kc4; 55.Kf3 Kb5; 56.Ke4 Kxa5; 57.Kd3 Kb4. This is a simple endgame, but for those who need help, here is how it ends. 58.Kc2 Ka3; 59.Kb1 Kb3; 60.Ka1 b5; 61.Kb1 b4; 62.Ka1 Kc2 etc.

Back to the game, where Black captures at a2 with check. **35...bxa2+**.

## 10 TACTICAL THEMES FOR BLACK

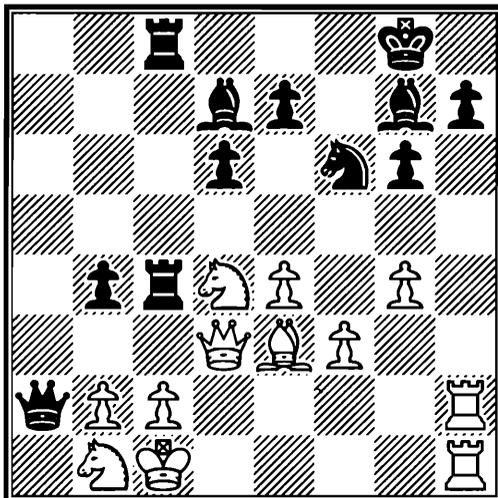


**White resigned.** If the king moves into the corner, it gets mated quickly. Coming out to c2 only delays the inevitable. 36.Kc2 a1Q; 37.Qxa1 Qxa1; 38.Bd4 Bxd4; 39.Rxd4 Qa2+; 40.Kd3 Qxg2 will win in the end because of the passed h-pawn.

## 2. Sacrifice at g4

Because the sacrifice at g4 is such an important tactic, let's look at a few more examples where one of the main motivations of the sacrifice is the activation of the Dragon bishop.

### Nicolau vs. Nowarra: Romania, 1968



Certainly Black has an impressive attack, but the h-file is open for business. Black sacrifices a piece at g4, not to undermine e4, but to undermine the support of the knight at d4 by attacking the bishop at e3.

22...Bxg4!!; 23.fxg4 Nxe3; 24.Bg1. 24.Rh3 Nxe3; 25.Rxe3 Bxd4 wins. 24...Nxh2; 25.Rxh2. Black has a rook and two pawns

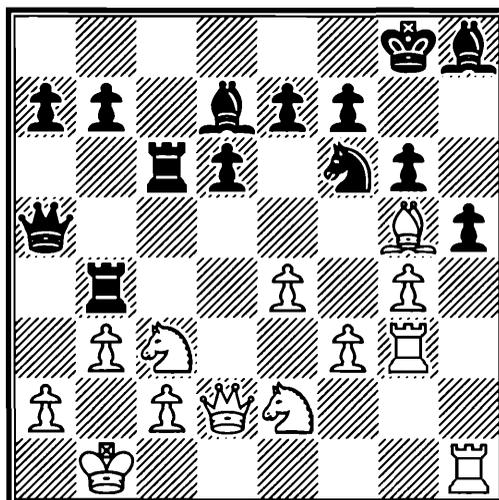
for a pair of knights, but more importantly the attack continues unabated. **25...Be5**. The active bishop not only attacks the rook at h2, it also threatens to join the attack from f4.

**26.Rg2 b3; 27.Qxb3**. 27.c3 Rxc3+!!; 28.bxc3 Qxg2; 29.Ne2 Ra8! The invasion of the rook on the a-file cannot be stopped. If White grabs the rook with 30.Qd5+ Kg7; 31.Qxa8 then, after 31...Qxe2, White's extra piece is useless and must be returned to avoid immediate mate. 32.Nd2 Qe1+; 33.Kb2 Qxd2+; 34.Kxb3 Qxc3+; 35.Ka4 Qa1+ etc.

**27...Bf4+!; 28.Rd2**. 28.Kd1 Qxb1+; 29.Ke2 e5! The pawn at c2 must fall. **28...Qxb3; 29.Nxb3 Rxc2+; 30.Kd1 Bxd2; 31.N1xd2 Rxb2**. Three pieces are no match for two rooks and three pawns. **32.Bd4 Ra2; 33.Ke2 Kf7; 34.Be3 e5. Black won.**

Once the bishop is activated, the dark squares on the queen-side soon fall under his spell.

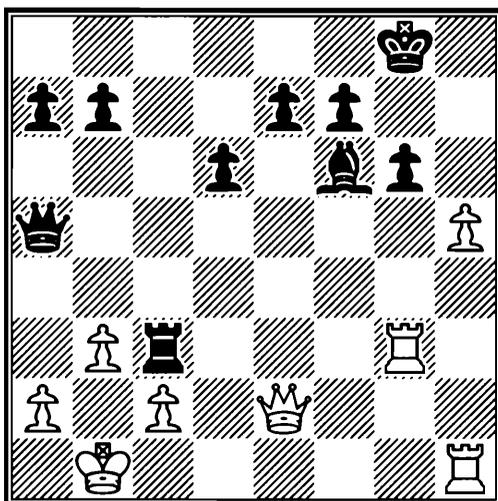
### Gobet vs. Swoboda: Bern, 1981



The attacks are raging on both flanks. Black uses a sacrifice to reduce the amount of material on the board.

**23...Bxg4; 24.Bxf6 Bxf6; 25.fxg4 Rxe4; 26.gxh5 Rxe2; 27.Qxe2 Rxc3**.

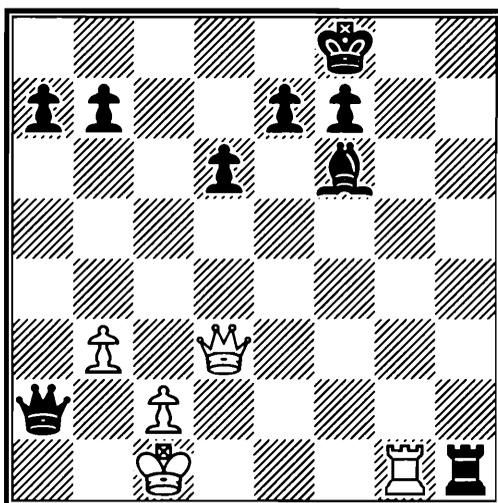
## 10 TACTICAL THEMES FOR BLACK



After all the bloodshed, the position retains a sharp edge. Black continues to bang away at the dark squares on the queenside while White attempts to use the h-file.

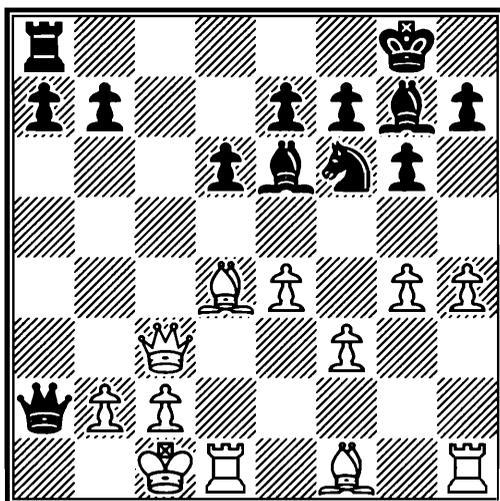
**28.Rg4 Rc5!** Once the h-pawn falls to ...Rhx5, the h-file will be sealed and Black will be able to win either with a queenside attack or simply advance a few of his extra pawns. **29.Qd3.** A desperate try to get to the Black king via a sacrifice on g6.

**29...Rhx5; 30.Rxg6+ Kf8!** 30...fxg6; 31.Qxg6+ Bg7; 32.Qxh5 (32.Rxh5?? Qe1#) 32...Qxh5; 33.Rxh5 is what White was hoping for. **31.Rgg1?** 31.Rxf6 Rxh1+; 32.Rf1 Rxf1+; 33.Qxf1 Qd5 would not be much fun for White, but the move chosen loses instantly. **31...Qxa2+!!; 32.Kc1 Rh1??** An amazing situation.



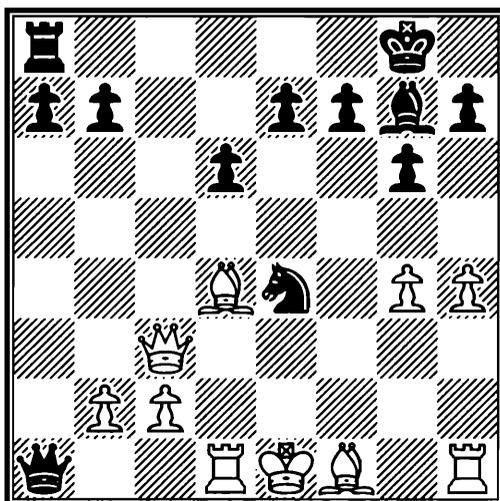
Often the exploitation of the dark square lies deep into the combination, with the queen and knight acting as the principals in the attack. The power of the Dragon bishop does make itself felt, however.

**Althausen vs. Simagin: Moscow, 1940**



It is not easy to see how giving up the bishop will help the attack. After all, the bishop controls important squares on the queenside. Here, however, we see that the attack is actually in the center, not on the queenside! We also add the fact that after White captures, the e-pawn will fall with an attack on the queen. If the White king is at d2, there is a fork. Of course, it is not difficult to see that we can force the White king to d2 by giving check at a1. The rest is just a matter of calculation.

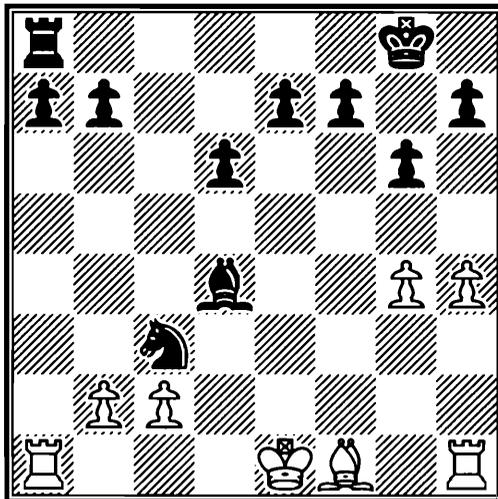
**15...Bxg4!!; 16.fxg4 Qa1+; 17.Kd2 Nxe4+; 18.Ke1.**



We have achieved the goal, but there are still tactics to calculate. If we capture at c3, then our queen at a1 falls. You need to see that the bishop at d4 will then be undefended, and there is still more to find.

## 10 TACTICAL THEMES FOR BLACK

18...Nxc3!; 19.Rxa1 Bxd4.

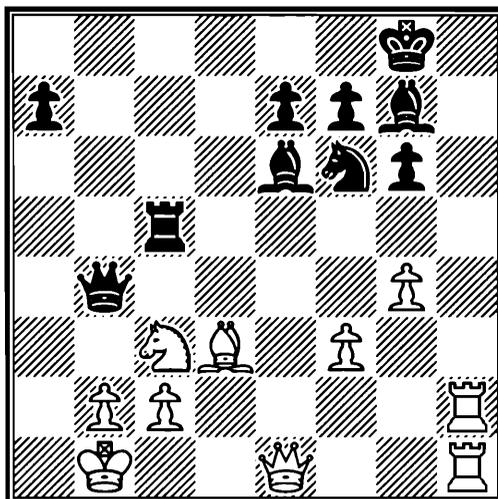


The bishop enters and immediately takes control of the situation. Did you notice that there are still threats on the dark squares? If White takes the knight, then Black recaptures with the bishop, giving check and winning the rook at a1! **20.Bg2 Nb5; 21.c3**. White thinks to drive the bishop back, but instead it wreaks havoc on the long diagonal.

**21...Nxc3!; 22.bxc3 Bxc3+; 23.Kf2 Bxa1; 24.Rxa1**. White has an extra bishop but Black has five extra pawns! **24...a5; 25.Bxb7 Ra7**. White resigned before long. The bishop is no match for four pawns, and White can only eliminate the a-pawn by using the king and rook, and subsequently exchanging rooks. The king would then be too far from the kingside. We don't have the rest of the game. **Black won**.

The sacrificial offering can be a horse instead of a bishop. That opens up the diagonal for the bishop immediately.

### **Shabanov - Kimelfeld: Soviet Union, 1973**



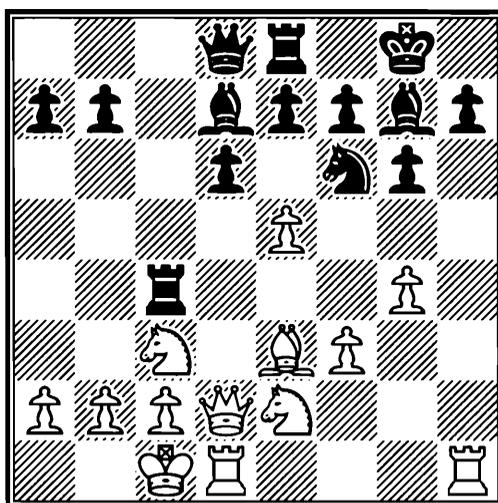
Here we need the power of the Dragon bishop to finish off the enemy king. The knight is sacrificed at g4 just to get the bishop a clear view of the long diagonal. **26...N<sub>x</sub>g4; 27.f<sub>x</sub>g4 R<sub>x</sub>c3!** 27... B<sub>x</sub>c3 is brilliantly refuted by 28.Rh8+!! Kg7; 29.Q<sub>x</sub>c3+!! R<sub>x</sub>c3; 30.g5! with mate in 4.

**28.Kc1 Qa5; 29.g5.** 29.b<sub>x</sub>c3 Qa1+; 30.Kd2 B<sub>x</sub>c3+; 31.Ke2 B<sub>x</sub>e1 is a win for Black. If White checks at a8, Black gives up the queen for the rooks and wins the endgame without difficulty. On the other hand, capturing the bishop at e1 drops a rook to ...Qe5+. **29...Q<sub>x</sub>g5+; 30.Kb1 Qd5; 31.b<sub>x</sub>c3 Qa2+; 32.Kc1 Qa1+.** **Black won.**

### **Martin vs. Tarjan: Torremolinos, 1974**

The sacrifice at g4 is not only a useful tactic, it is sometimes a necessary one, as we see in this game.

**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.h4 Rc8; 11.Bb3 Ne5; 12.0-0-0 Nc4; 13.B<sub>x</sub>c4 R<sub>x</sub>c4; 14.h5 N<sub>x</sub>h5; 15.g4 Nf6; 16.Nde2 Re8; 17.e5.**

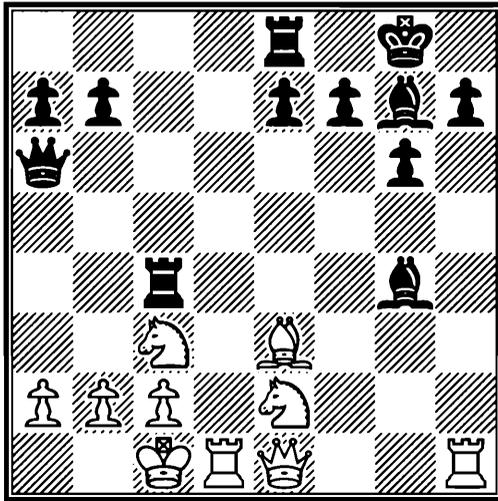


Black has almost no choice but to sacrifice the piece here. **17...N<sub>x</sub>g4.** 17...d<sub>x</sub>e5?; 18.g5 wins a piece.

**18.f<sub>x</sub>g4 B<sub>x</sub>g4; 19.e<sub>x</sub>d6.** 19.Qd3 Qc8; 20.e<sub>x</sub>d6 e<sub>x</sub>d6; 21.Rde1 Bf5; 22.Qd2 b5; 23.Ng3 b4; 24.Qh2 h5; 25.N<sub>x</sub>f5 Q<sub>x</sub>f5; 26.Nd1 Rec8; 27.Re2 Qa5; 28.Kb1 R8c6; 29.Nf2 Ra6; 30.Nd3 Q<sub>x</sub>a2+; 31.Kc1 Qa1+; 32.Kd2 Bc3+. Black won in Bernei-Schneider, Hungary, 1976. After 19.e6 B<sub>x</sub>e6; 20.Bd4 f6; 21.Nf4 Bf7; 22.Qh2 R<sub>x</sub>d4; 23.Q<sub>x</sub>h7+ Kf8; 24.R<sub>x</sub>d4 e5; 25.Nh5, White was winning in Strand-Nichitelea, Postal, 1984. There is another plan here

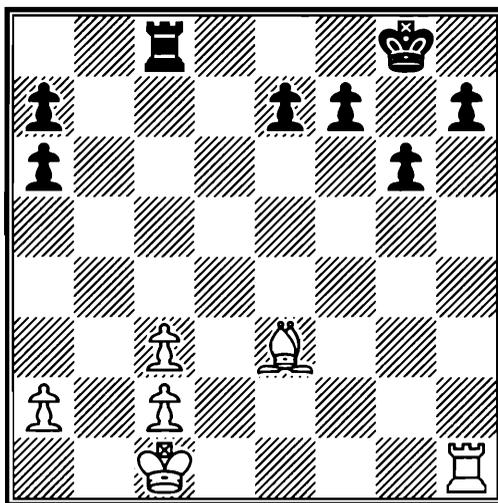
## SECRETS OF THE SICILIAN DRAGON

which is worth looking at. It is discussed in the section on White sacrifices at f6 in the Tactical themes for White chapter. See the game Hietanen-Kauppinen. 19...Qxd6; 20.Qe1 Qa6.



As a result of the sacrifice and exchanges, material is about even, but Black has most of White's forces tied down. The h7-square is not especially vulnerable, and Black can advance the pawn to h5 if needed. Neither side has anything approaching a forced win, so there is plenty of play left in the game.

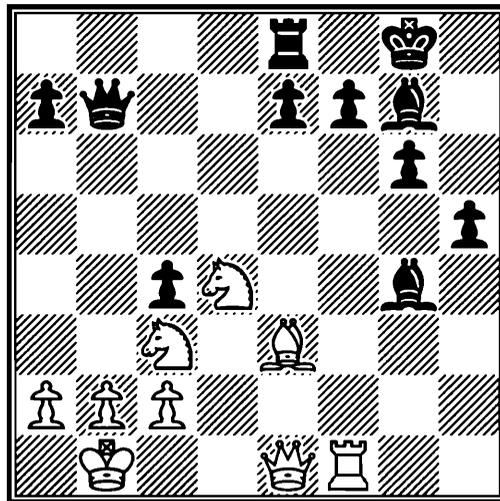
**21.Rd3 b5.** Black could also have exchanged most of the remaining pieces here to head for a piece-down endgame with four connected, passed pawns. 21...Bxe2; 22.Qxe2 Bxc3; 23.Rxc3 Rxc3; 24.Qxa6 bxa6; 25.bxc3 Rc8.



This is an interesting endgame. Black's pawns seem to provide the better chances. For example, 26.Kd2 f5; 27.Bxa7 e5; 28.Rb1 h5; 29.Rb6 Kf7; 30.Rxa6 h4; 31.Bf2 h3; 32.Ra7+ Kg8; 33.Bg3 f4; 34.Bh2 g5; 35.Re7 Rc5; 36.Kd3 g4; 37.Re6 Kg7 (37...g3; 38.Bxg3

fxg3; 39.Rg6+ Kf7; 40.Rxg3) 38.Bg1 Ra5; 39.Ke4 g3; 40.Re7+ Kg6; 41.Re6+ Kg5; 42.Re8 Rxa2!; 43.Kxe5 (43.Rxe5+ Kg4; 44.Re8 h2; 45.Bxh2 gxh2; 46.Rg8+ Kh3; 47.Rh8+ Kg2; 48.Rg8+ Kf1; 49.Rh8 Rxc2; 50.Kxf4 Kg1; 51.Rg8+ Rg2 and Black wins) 43...Kg4; 44.Rf8 h2; 45.Rg8+ Kf3; 46.Bxh2 gxh2; 47.Rh8 Rxc2 and Black wins.

**22.Kb1 Bf5!** Black controls a more important diagonal from this post. **23.Rd4 h5; 24.Rxc4 bxc4; 25.Nd4 Bg4; 26.Rf1 Qb7.**



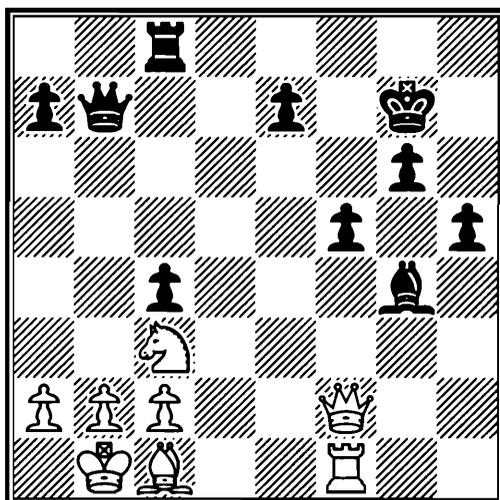
Black continues to focus on the light squares. Black's kingside is well defended, but there isn't much of a queenside attack either. It is too soon to actively advance the kingside pawns because then the king or the pawns themselves might have become weak.

**27.Qf2 f5.** This advance is acceptable, because the weakness of the a2-g8 diagonal is not critical, and the bishop at g4 is now anchored so that the h-pawn can advance.

**28.Bc1 Rd8?** 28...Rb8! is the correct move. The bishop is then tied to c1. More importantly, the rook will not be attacked by an invasion of a knight to e6. **29.Ne6!** Now the dragon bishop departs.

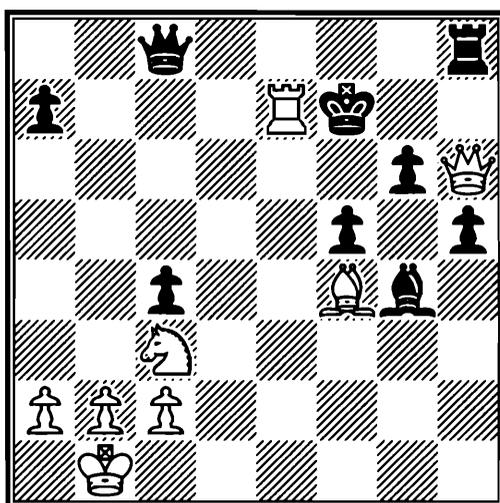
**29...Rc8; 30.Nxg7 Kxg7.**

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Suddenly the dark squares look awfully weak, and White still has a dark-squared bishop! **31.Qf4**. The next wave of the invasion begins.

**31...Kf7; 32.Qh6 Rg8; 33.Bf4 Qc8; 34.Re1 Rh8**. Black is getting killed on the dark squares, which become bloodier after White's next shot. **35.Rxe7+!!**

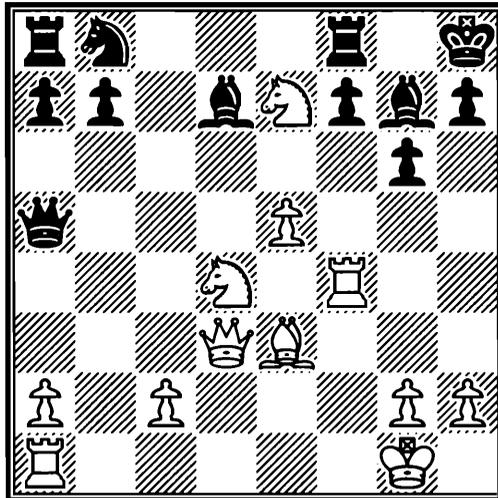


**35...Kxe7; 36.Qg7+ Ke6; 37.Qxg6+ Kd7; 38.Qf7+ Kc6; 39.Qd5+**. Black resigned, since it is checkmate next move.

### 3. Trapping a Knight at e7

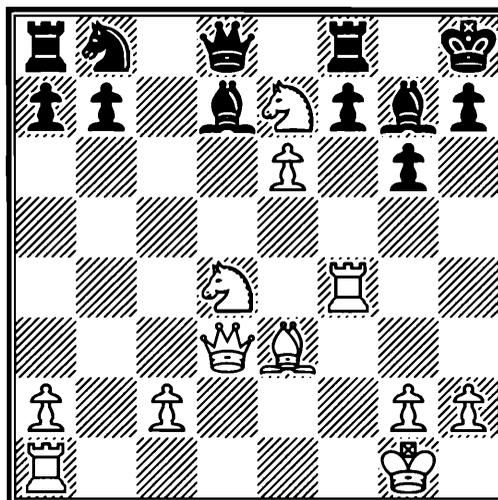
White can sometimes infiltrate a knight to e7, despite all of Black's efforts to prevent it. The knight must take care to leave a path open for retreat, however, as otherwise it can be trapped.

**Belyavsky vs. Kupreichik: Soviet Union, 1973**



The role of the e6-square is very important, because it is the gateway to f7, which is always somewhat vulnerable. In this position, White has prepared the way by getting a knight to e7 and driving the Black king into the corner. Black's lack of development on the queenside, and the open f-file, add to the discomfort. Although the advance of the e-pawn opens up the Dragon bishop, White can count on the solid support of d4 provided by queen, rook and knight to insure that nothing can be accomplished there.

**17.e6!?** Well, White's position is a bit of a mess, so it makes sense to mix things up. **17...Qd8.**



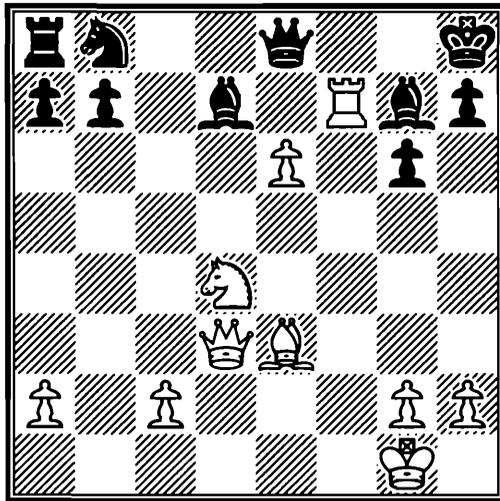
This shows a tactical trick of retreating a queen to d8 to attack a knight at e7, often trapping it. Here the knight cannot safely retreat, even though d5 is available. **17...fxe6** weakens the g6-square, and after **18.Rh4** the threats are simply too much, for example, **18...Rf6; 19.Nxg6+ Kg8; 20.Ne7+ Kf7; 21.Qxh7 Qd8;**

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22.Rh6! Qxe7. (22...Rxb6; 23.Bxb6 Qh8; 24.Qg6+ Kxe7; 25.Bxg7 is devastating.) 23.Rxf6+ Qxf6; 24.Rf1 Qxf1+; 25.Kxf1 Nc6; 26.Bh6 and White will win. 17...Bxe6; 18.Nxe6 fxe6; 19.Rh4 is similarly effective.

**18.Raf1!** 18.Nd5 Bxe6; 19.Nxe6 fxe6; 20.Rxf8+ Qxf8; 21.Rf1 Qc8 leaves White a clear pawn down, and running out of threats. The most interesting try is 22.Rf7 Nc6. (22...exd5; 23.Bd4! and Black can resign.) 23.Ne7 Qe8; 24.Nxg6+! Kg8!; 25.Rxg7+ Kxg7; 26.Nf4 Rd8; 27.Qb3, but Black can afford to play 27...Rd1+; 28.Kf2 e5 since 29.Qxb7+ Kh8; 30.Nd3 Qf8+ forces 31.Kg3 Ne7 and now, for example, 32.Qxa7 Nf5+; 33.Kh3 Qc8. (33...e4; 34.Nf2 Qd8!; 35.g3 Qc8; 36.g4 Nxe3; 37.Qxe3 Rd7; 38.Qxe4 Rc7 is headed toward a draw, but White has the only winning chances.)

34.g4 (34.Qc5 Qxc5; 35.Bxc5 e4; 36.Nf2 Re1; 37.a4 e3; 38.Nd3 Rf1; 39.g4 Rf3+; 40.Kg2 Nh4+; 41.Kg1 e2; 42.Bf2 Rxd3!; 43.cxd3 Nf3+; 44.Kg2 e1Q; 45.Bxe1 Nxe1+; 46.Kg3 Nxd3; 47.a5 Nc5; 48.g5 will draw) 34...h5; 35.gxf5 Qxf5+; 36.Kg3 Qg4+; 37.Kf2 Qg1+; 38.Kf3 Qg4+ draws. **18...Qxe7; 19.Rxf7 Rxf7; 20.Rxf7 Qe8.**



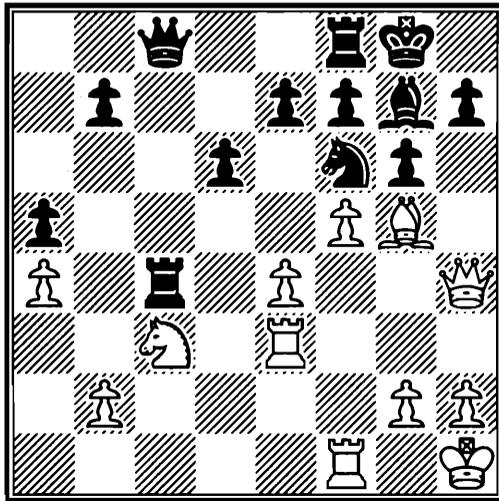
Here we have another instructive position. Black is still suffering from lack of development, so White can afford do be extravagant. The h7 square is the ultimate target, and White needs to open some lines. **21.Nf5!!** The knight is sacrificed not only to weaken the kingside, but also to free d4 for use by the bishop.

**21...gxf5; 22.Bd4! Qxe6; 23.Rf8+ Qg8; 24.Rxg8+ Kxg8.** Black has plenty of material, but the Dragon bishop is about to fall and with it, the remaining defender of the king. **25.Qg3! Kf7; 26.Qxg7+.** **Black resigned,** faced with mate in three.

## 4. Sicilian Break with ...d5

As in all of the Sicilian Defenses, Black can usually liberate the game if the d-pawn can be advanced to d5. Naturally White takes great care in the opening to allow that advance only if a tangible advantage can be gained. As the game goes on, however, a small mistake by White can often give Black the chance to carry out this useful maneuver.

### Bohosjan vs. Minev: Bulgaria, 1974



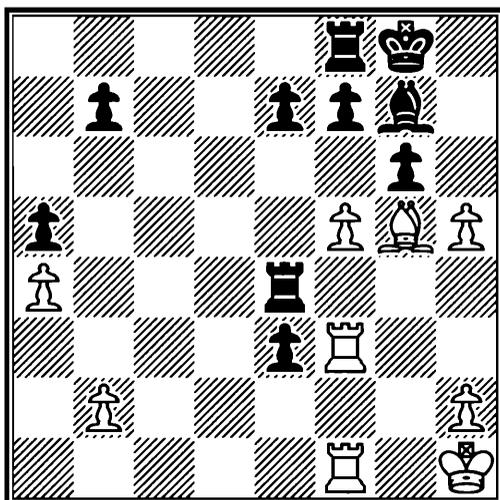
With the White king safe at h1, Black's queenside attack is not very significant. Overall, Black has less space to maneuver in the Dragon, and that often leads to superior mobility for White's rooks. Black's rooks generally can be used only on the c-file, unless there are more open lines. White can advance the central pawns to make room for rooks to maneuver on the third rank.

**21...d5!** The Sicilian break takes advantage of the pin on the pawn at e4 which results from White's queen sitting at h4. White does not have enough time to complete the attack.

**22.g4.** This is played to discourage Black from defending with ...h5 when the rook slides to h3. **22.Rh3** threatens **Bxf6**; followed by **Qxh7#**. Black can defend, however. **22...h5** gives Black counterplay, because the threat of a capture at e4 is real. **23.fxg6** **fxg6** actually eases Black's defense, because the open f-file can be used to exchange rooks. The weakness of the pawn at g6 cannot easily be exploited.

**22...dxe4; 23.Rh3 h5; 24.gxh5 e3!** The queen cannot remain at h4. **25.Qg3 Qc6+!** Exploiting the open diagonal created by White's advance of the g-pawn. **26.Qf3.** White has nothing better than to bail to an endgame. **26...Qxf3+; 27.Rhxf3 Ne4; 28.Nxe4 Rxe4.**

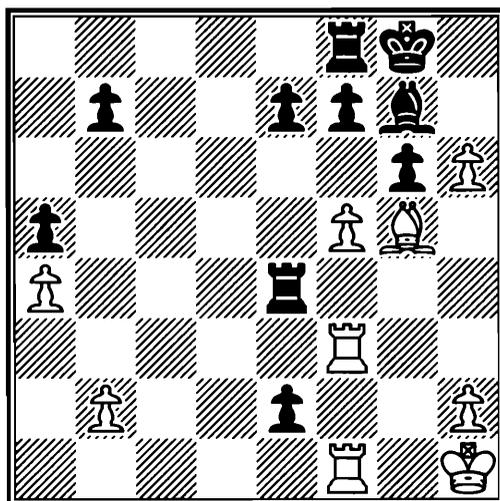
## SECRETS OF THE SICILIAN DRAGON



White now makes a terrible mistake, but the position wasn't easy. After all, Black has an extra pawn and all of White's pawns are weak. **29.h6?** Tempting, but not good. **29.Re1!** is more challenging. **29...e2!** is still best, as in the game. **30.fxc6 fxc6; 31.Rxf8+ Kxf8; 32.hxc6 Bxb2; 33.Bd2 Kg7; 34.Bxa5 Kxc6; 35.Bd2 Bf6!** The Dragon bishop flies around the board, swooping in from various angles. Now it comes to h4. **36.Kg2 Bh4; 37.Rb1 Rd4!; 38.Be1.** The a-pawn cannot be defended.

**38...Rxa4; 39.Kf3 (39.Bxh4 Rxc4; 40.Kg3 Re4; 41.Re1 Kf5; 42.Kf3 b5 is a simple win) 39...Bxe1; 40.Rxe1 Ra2** and White wins, because Black can never afford to take the e-pawn, nor can the rook leave the first rank. The king cannot retreat to the second rank since that would allow the Black king to infiltrate. White can try **30.Rf2**, but Black simply plays **30...gxf5; 31.Rfxe2 Rxe2; 32.Rxe2 e5; 33.h6 Bh8; 34.h4 Kh7** and the Black king gets to h5, since **35.h5 f4** is hopeless.

**29...e2!**

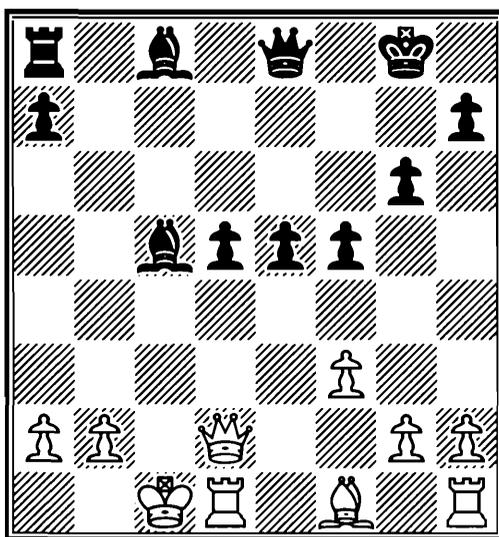


Black sacrifices the Dragon bishop, but the advanced pawn is worth even more.

**30.Re1 Rd8!; 31.fxg6 fxg6; 32.hxg7 Rd1; 33.Bh6** and Black quickly mated: **33...Rxe1+; 34.Kg2 Rg1+; 35.Kxg1 e1Q+ 36.Kg2 Rg4+; 37.Kh3 Qh4#.**

The Sicilian break with ...d5 is a powerful tool, but you have to make sure you can control the square even after you get the pawn there. In some cases, you can set up a sacrifice to gain time and open lines, but this can boomerang.

### **Kveinis vs. Savcenko: Belgorod, 1989**



White seems to be in trouble, despite the extra material. There is no kingside attack at all, and Black is ready to aim his entire army at the White king. The pawn at d5 cannot be captured safely, as after ...Be6, Black has even more open lines to work with. The weakness of the pawn at d5 sets up a combination.

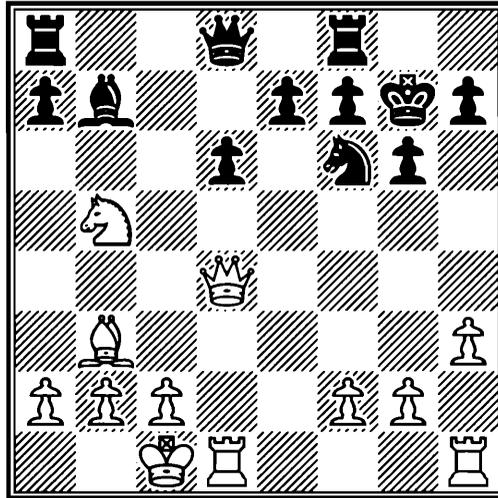
**19.Bb5!! Qxb5.** 19...Qe6 eliminates Black's defense with ...e6, and now **20.Qxd5** is strong, since the queens must come off and White is an exchange up in the endgame.

**20.Qxd5+ Kg7; 21.Qxa8.** Sacrificing a single exchange is one thing, but two is too much. **21...Be6; 22.Kb1 Qa6; 23.b3.** Black had no serious counterplay and went down to defeat.

## **5. Queenside Break with ...b5**

Often Black needs to speed up the pace of play on the queenside, especially when White's attack on the kingside is well under way. One method of opening lines is to advance the b-pawn to b5, even as a sacrifice. It is well illustrated in one of the many Dragon





I might have played more ambitiously with 14...Qa5, but this move is solid enough and the bishop dominates the long diagonal. 15.Rhg1 Qa5; 16.Nc3 Rac8; 17.Kge1 e6; 18.g4 Rfd8; 19.f4 Qc5; 20.Qd3 d5! I have achieved the central thrust, and Tal over-reacts a bit with his next move.

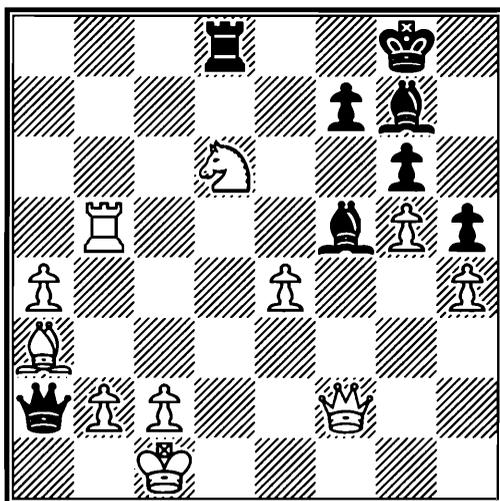
21.f5 exf5; 22.Na4! 22.gxf5 d4; 23.Nb1 would have given Black a strong initiative. 22...Qb4; 23.gxf5 Qf4+. 23...d4 comes into consideration, but there is some risk to Black after a capture on g6. 24.Kb1 Re8; 25.fxg6 hxg6; 26.Nc3. Here I accepted Tal's offer of a draw.

## 6. Pinned or Overworked Pawn at b2

We have frequently seen that critical squares often seem to enjoy more support than they really have. The closer these squares are to the king, the more important they are. When White castles queenside, the pawn at b2 needs constant care. Black should be willing to invest material to weaken it. In our example, Black misses the opportunity.

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### Popovic vs. Sax: Subotica Interzonal, 1987



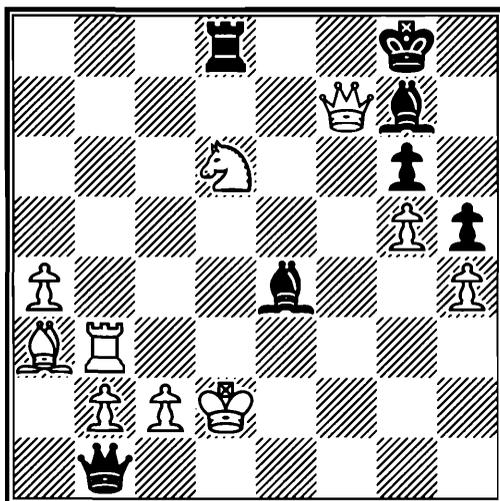
This is a critical position, and Sax failed to find the shot. There is a simple win here, but it involves a move which is hard to see.

**31...Bxe4?** The killer is **31...Bc3!!** Remember this tactic! It doesn't appear often, but when it does, it is easy to overlook, as we see in this game from a qualification stage for the World Championship! **32.bxc3 Qxa3+**; **33.Rb2** (**33.Kb1 Rxd6**; and White has to defend against the threat of **...Rd1#**, so the bishop is preserved, and White's pawns, and king, are far too weak to put up much of a fight) **33...Qxd6-+**.

**32.Rb3.** **32.Qb6** loses to the same trick: **32...Bc3!**; **33.Qxd8+ Kh7** and mate in 6! **32...Qa1+?**

Although it seems important to begin the king hunt, it doesn't go anywhere. Given that the knight at d6 is unable to move, since **...Qa1** is then mate, the bishop could have safely retreated to f5, and Black would win. **32...Bf5**; **33.Qe1 Bf8!** places unbearable pressure at d6. **34.Rb6 Bxd6!** White can't get away with **35.Rxd6 Rc8**; **36.Qd1** because of **26...Bg4!**; **37.Qd3 Qa1+**; **38.Kd2 Qd1+**; **39.Ke3 Qg1+** and the hunt is on! **40.Kd2** (**40.Kf4 Qh2+**; **41.Ke3 Qg3+**; **42.Kd4 Qf4+**; **43.Qe4 Rc4+**; **44.Kxc4 Qxe4+** etc) **40...Qf2+**; **41.Kc1 Qe1+**; **42.Qd1 Bxd1**; **43.Rxd1 Qxh4** with an easy win. The other capture also fails. **35.Bxd6** is clobbered by **35...Qa1+**; **36.Kd2 Qxa4**.

**33.Kd2 Qb1**; **34.Qxf7+**.



Black has so far misjudged the position twice, probably in time pressure. There is a slim chance of survival, provided he does not make a third mistake. Unfortunately, that is exactly what happens!

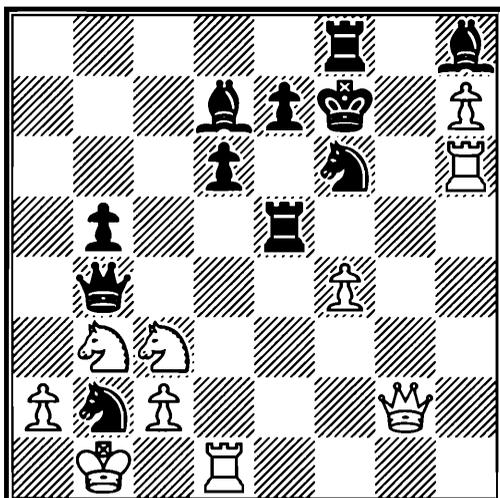
**34...Kh8?** 34...Kh7; 35.Rc3 (35.Qc7 Qg1) 35...Rf8 (35...Qg1; 36.Rc7 Qd4+; 37.Ke2 Bxc2; 38.Qxg7+) 36.Qxf8 Bxf8; 37.Nxe4! (37.Rc7+ Kg8; 38.Nxe4 Bxa3; 39.bxa3 is given in Chess Informant, with an evaluation of the position as unclear. Certainly the position is White's to win) 37...Bxa3; 38.bxa3 and Black is struggling to survive. For example, 38...Qb6; 39.Nf6+ Kg7; 40.Rc7+! Kf8 (40...Qxc7; 41.Ne8+) 41.Nd7+. Or 38...Qf1; 39.Re3 Kg7; 40.Nc5 Qf2+; 41.Kd3 Qf5+; 42.Kc4 Qxc2+; 43.Kb5 Qb2+; 44.Rb3 Qe2+; 45.Kb6 Qd2; 46.Rd3 Qb2+; 47.Kc6 Qf2; 48.a5 Qxh4; 49.a6 and the pawn will make it to the eighth rank quickly. **35.Qc7**. Now the win is simple. **35...Rd7; 36.Qc4 Qh1; 37.Rb8+ Kh7; 38.Qg8#**.

## 7. Blocking Lines

If opening lines is one of the important principles of the Dragon, then the corollary must be that you should keep the lines near your own king closed. Black fails to observe this principle, and finds his winning hopes dashed as a result.

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### Ivanovic vs. Kosanovic: Stara Pazova, 1988



What a mess! White is attacking with queen and rook, but it looks as though the Black king can slip away via e6. Black has less attacking force and the Black king seems to be well defended. Here Black should have taken time out to plant a piece on g4 and seal off the open d-file, but instead grabs the rook.

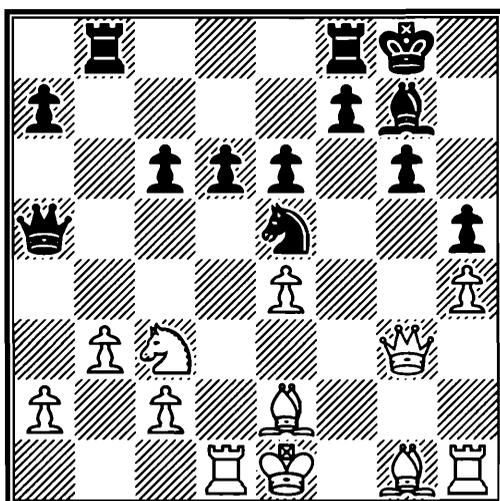
**30...Nxd1??** 30...Bg4; 31.Kxb2 (31.fxe5 Nxd1; 32.Nxd1 dxe5) 31...Rc5! defends against all the threats, as pointed out by Minic and Sindic.

**31.Qg6+ Ke6; 32.Qg8+!** This is what Black missed. White exploits the inability of the Black king to breathe, and earns a draw. **32...Rf7; 33.Qg4+ Rf5; 34.Qe2+ Re5; 35.Qg4+.** Here the game was agreed drawn.

### 8. Sacrificing the Pawn at d6

In the Dragon, as in the Richter-Rauzer Variation of the Classical Variation, the pawn at d6 can be offered to White forces on the d-file. It is usually risky to capture it. Here, the exposed position of the White king makes opening the d-file a very dangerous proposition indeed.

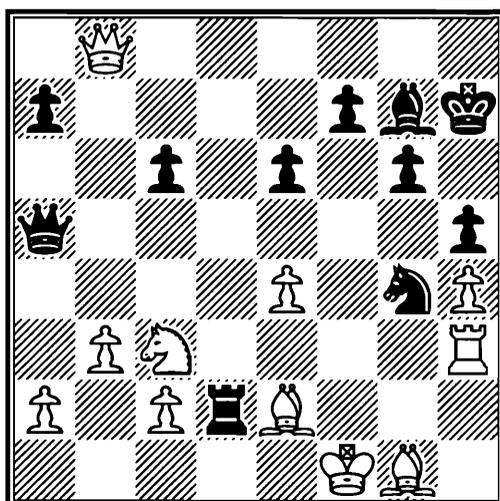
**Psakhis vs. Tolnai: Dortmund, 1989**



**19.Rxd6?** White should settle for the grovelly **Kf1**. **19...Rbd8!** Exchanging a pair of rooks is just fine with Black! **20.Rxd8 Rxd8;** **21.Kf1**. There is nothing better, but this fails to save the position. **21...Rd2;** **22.Rh3 Ng4;** **23.Qb8+.**

**23.Bxg4 hxc4;** **24.Qxc4 Bxc3** wins a piece. **23.Na4** is a paradoxical move. It gets the knight out of immediate danger, but plants it on the rim. Still, it is probably White's best try. **23...Rxc2;** **24.Qb8+ Bf8;** **25.Rd3 Rc1+;** **26.Rd1 Qd2!;** **27.Rxc1 Qxc1+;** **28.Kg2 Qd2!** Black is down a bishop, but has two pawns and an attack. The only worry is the possibility of **Bc5**, but the bishop must remain at home to protect the king, which is practically naked. **29.Kf3** threatens **Qxa7**, after which the e3-square will be sufficiently supported. Black can now draw with **29...Qe1;** **30.Qg3 Qd2.**

**23...Kh7.**



## SECRETS OF THE SICILIAN DRAGON

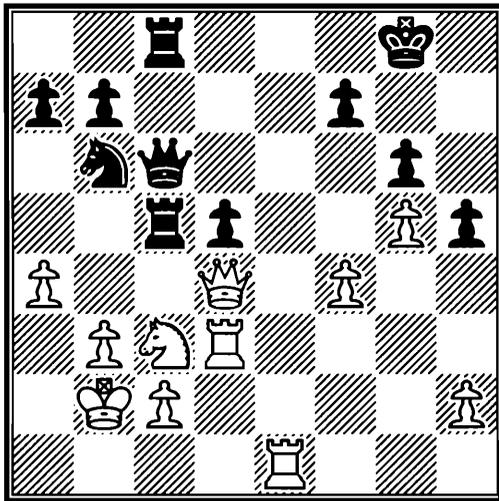
Black's queen holds the position together, so White kicks it away. **24.b4?** 24.Qxa7 Bxc3; 25.Qxf7+ Bg7; 26.Bxg4 hxg4; 27.Rd3 Rxc2 and material is even, but both sides continue to attack. White can advance the pawn to h5, but should first cut off the queen, even if that takes time. 28.Bd4 e5; 29.h5! exd4; 30.Qxg6+ Kg8; 31.Qe6+ Kh8; 32.Qe8+ Kh7; 33.Qg6+ and a draw.

**24...Qa3!** The queen heads for c1. **25.Qxa7 Qc1+; 26.Kg2 Bxc3; 27.Rxc3 Rxe2+; 28.Kg3 Qe1+; 29.Kf3 Qf1+.** Black won.

### 9. Sacrificing a Knight at c4

It is sometimes necessary for White to play b3, weakening the queenside pawns structure a bit. If the a-pawn is also advanced, the position invites the sacrifice of a knight at c4, exposing the enemy king to attack. This can be a useful technique when Black is facing destruction on the kingside, as it often gives rise to possibilities for perpetual checks.

#### Dolmatov vs. Georgiev: Moscow vs. Slavia, 1989



White's queenside is under fire but surprisingly the Black kingside is much weaker than it looks. With 30.f5, White would be able to keep enough of an initiative to maintain an advantage. The next move is a terrible blunder, however, because it turns the initiative over to the enemy.

**30.Rde3??** 30.f5!?! gxf5; 31.g6! is best. Now if Black captures then the infiltration at e7 is crucial. Black can delay the inevitable with 31...Nxa4+; 32.bxa4 Rc4 but not for long.

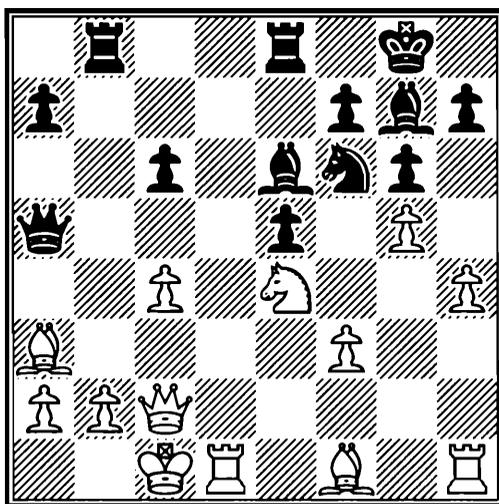
**30...Nc4+!**; **31.bxc4 Rxc4; 32.Qxd5.** 32.Qf6? allows 32...d4; 33.Qxc6 dxc3+; 34.Rxc3 R8xc6; 35.Rxc4 Rxc4 and Black has all

the chances in the endgame. 32...Rxc3; 33.Qxc6 R3xc6; 34.Re8+ Rxe8; 35.Rxe8+ Kg7; 36.Kb3 and the game was soon drawn.

## 10. Controlling Dark Squares without the Dragon Bishop

We are so used to seeing the dark squares fall under the influence of the Dragon bishop that it is easy to forget that the dark squares are weak, whether or not the fire-breathing beast is around. In our example, there are vulnerable dark squares all over the queenside, but the bishop at g7 is not able to use them. However, there are other pieces that take advantage of the situation.

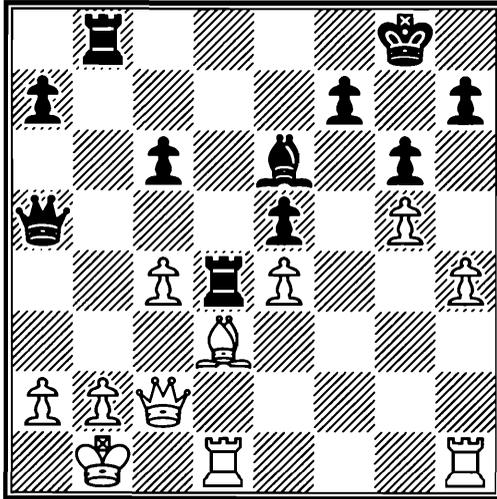
### Oll vs. Gufeld: Tbilisi 1983



This is typical kingside formation. The bishop at g7 has no way to get into the game, especially if Black exchanges at e4. Yet that is exactly what Black does, following up with an exchange of dark-squared bishops which accentuates the weakness of d4.

20...Nxe4!; 21.fxe4 Bf8!; 22.Bxf8 Rxf8; 23.Kb1 Rfd8; 24.Bd3 Rd4.

## SECRETS OF THE SICILIAN DRAGON



Despite the absence of the Dragon bishop, Black controls all the key dark squares. The superiority of his remaining bishop is clear, too. White does not last long.

**25.Qe2 Qb4; 26.b3 a5; 27.Kb2 a4; 28.Qe1 Qd6; 29.Bc2 Bxc4; 30.Qc3 axb3; 31.axb3 Bxb3. White resigned.** An excellent example of a bishopless queenside attack.

# 10.

## Typical Mistakes

What kind of errors typically ruin an otherwise exciting and inspirational Dragon battle? Simple tactical oversights happen from time to time, of course, but in this section we are concerned primarily with deeper issues, many of which are psychological in nature. A few selected topics will suffice to illustrate these dangers.

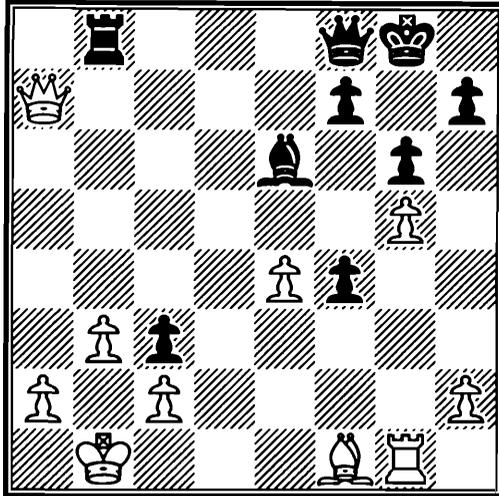
- Underestimating the Enemy Attack
- Giving up the Dragon Bishop
- A Moment's Hesitation

### **Underestimating the Enemy Attack**

Clearly the most dangerous situations arise when you underestimate the power of an enemy attack. This is usually a result of allowing static features of the position to blind you to the tactical or attacking possibilities. In the following example, White's king does not have much defense, but White figures that the pawn at c3 is weak, and that there isn't much of an attack. After all, if the c-pawn falls, then even if Black gets a queen and rook on the a-file and reaches a2, the White king should be safe enough.

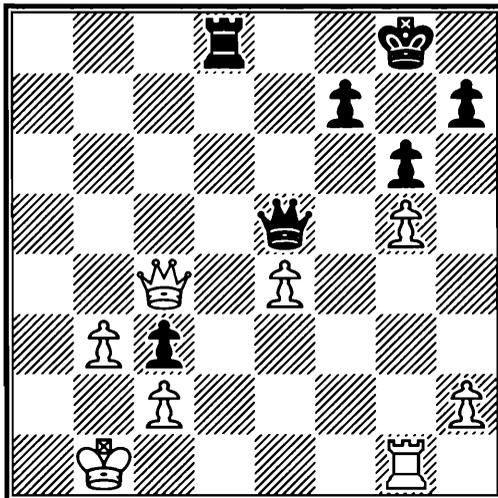
## TYPICAL MISTAKES

### Kaidanov vs. Fedorowicz: USA, 1992



The queen should have retreated to a5, after which the bishop can be developed and the rook can be transferred from g1 to d1.

**27.Qc7?? Rc8; 28.Qxf4 Bxb3!; 29.axb3 Qa3?** Black can't resist the infiltration, but misses the win, later found by Patrick Wolff. **29...Ra8!** threatens the classic combination involving the sacrifice of the rook at a1, after which the queen comes to a3 with check. So, White must retreat the queen. **30.Qc1 Qb4; 31.Bc4 Qa5** and it is all over. **30.Qc1 Qa5; 31.Bb5! Qxb5; 32.Qa3 Qe5; 33.Qa6 Rd8; 34.Qc4.**

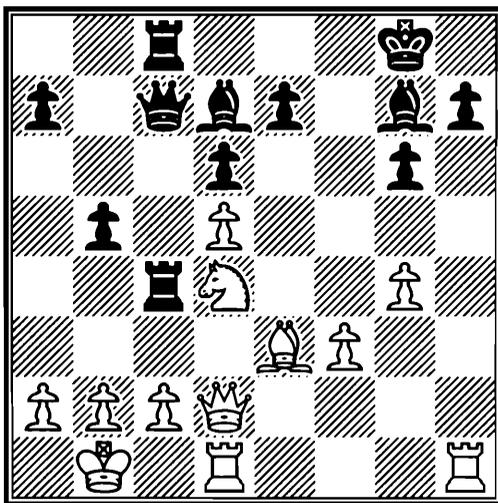


In such positions there is often a temptation to move the king away from potential checks. Still, Black should play the rook to d4, since the pawn at c3 cannot be captured because of ...Re1+.

**34...Kg7?; 35.Rf1.** Now the f-pawn must be defended. **35...Rd7; 36.Qc6 Rd6; 37.Qb7 Qe6; 38.Qc7.** Black has run out of moves and cannot defend the c-pawn. **38...Kg8. 38...Rc6?; 39.Rxf7+! Qxf7; 40.Qxc6 Qf1+; 41.Ka2** cannot be held.

**39.Qxc3 Qxe4; 40.Qc8+ Kg7; 41.Qc7.** The time control reached, Black resigned. Any attempt to defend the f-pawn meets with the sacrifice at f7 seen in the previous note. Both of these players are famous for getting into deep time trouble and my guess is that the entire position was played in a time scramble. Sometimes the disaster comes in stages, instead of in a single stroke.

**Ivanchuk vs. Schneider: Debrecen, 1988**



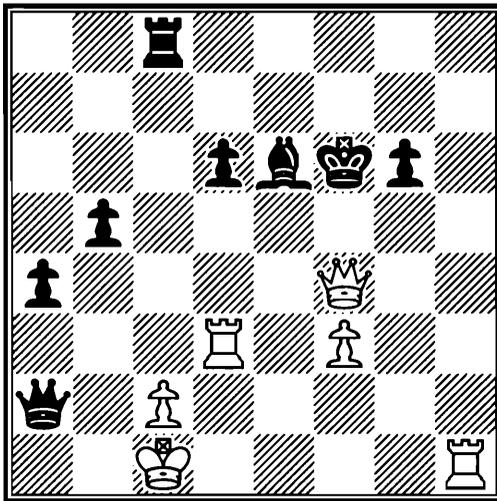
Black must play ...Be5, to guard the h2 square. Schneider underestimates the power of the attack, which does not lead to a quick checkmate but Black must make concessions to survive, and these add up to a winning advantage for White.

**19...a5??; 20.Qh2 h6; 21.b3!** This forces the rook to abandon the c-file, thus reducing the pressure at c2. **21...Rb4.** 21...Rc3? loses to 22.Bxh6 Bxd4; 23.Rxd4 Rxc2; 24.Bd2! Analysis by Ivanchuk. **22.Rd3!** A deep positional move, making the rook available for defense on the third rank.

**22...a4; 23.Qd2! Rc4!?** 23...axb3; 24.Qxb4 wins, because if Black captures either pawn, the king can use it as a protective barrier. 24...Bxd4; 25.Qxb3 and Black has no compensation for the exchange. **24.Bxh6!** Ivanchuk is not distracted by the rook at c4. Capturing it would just open up more lines.

**24...Bxd4; 25.bxc4!** 25.Rxd4? Rxd4; 26.Qxd4 Qxc2+; 27.Ka1 Qc3+ is terminal. **25...Be5; 26.Bf4 Bg7.** 26...bxc4; 27.Bxe5 will be followed by Qh6 and a quick finish. **27.c5! Qxc5; 28.Be3 Qc4; 29.Bd4 e5; 30.dxe6 Bxe6; 31.Bxg7 Qxa2+.** 31...Kxg7 allows White to defend everything with 32.c3! This continuation is forcing. **32.Kc1 Kxg7; 33.Qh6+! Kf7; 34.Qh7+ Kf6; 35.g5+ Kf5; 36.Qh3+ Kxg5; 37.Qh4+ Kf5; 38.Qg4+ Kf6; 39.Qf4+.**

## TYPICAL MISTAKES



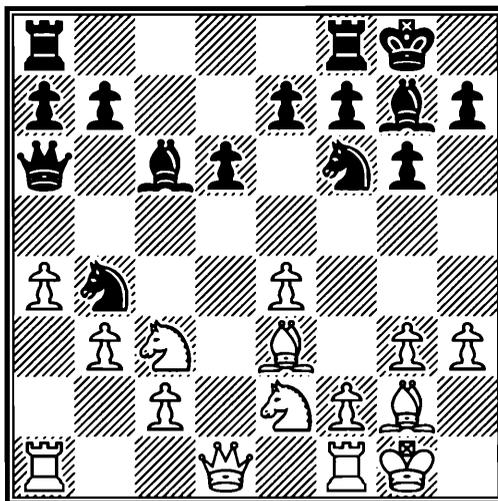
White threatens Qd4+ which will win in a few moves unless Black retreats to e7. **39...Ke7.** 39...Bf5; 40.Qd4+!! Ke6; 41.Re3+ Kd7; 42.Rh7+ Kc6; 43.Rc3+ is a sample continuation from Ivanchuk.

**40.Rh7+ Ke8; 41.Rh8+ Bg8.** Now the rook at d3 shows its strength, enjoying the access to e3 and c3. **42.Re3+ Kd7; 43.Qg4+ Kd8.** 43...Be6; 44.Qxe6+! Qxe6; 45.Rh7+ wins the queen. **44.Re8+! Black resigned.** White sacrifices the rook but will pick up the enemy rook and bishop, and Black quickly runs out of checks when the White king migrates to g2.

### **Giving up the Dragon Bishop**

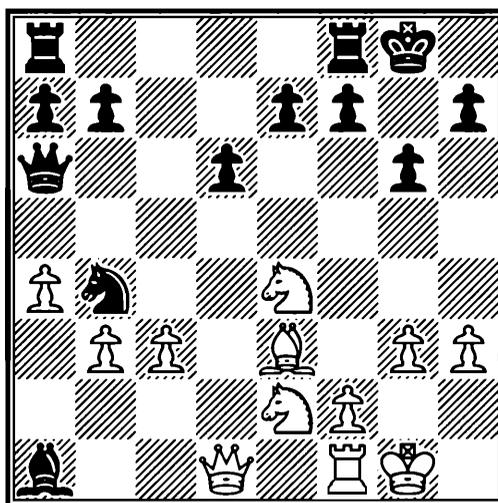
What happens if Black allows White to exchange or otherwise eliminate the Dragon Bishop? The consequences can be serious indeed! Black's instincts should rebel at allowing the mighty piece to be put back in the box. Sometimes, however, we find ourselves tempted by some specific variation, often leading to some minor material gain. Materialism is the enemy of the Dragoner!

**Nunn vs. Mestel: Marbella Zonal, 1982**



Here we see Black trying a plan with a bishop at c6. The attack on the e-pawn is the goal, but here the e4-square is sufficiently defended. True, Black can exploit the pin on the knight at c3, but that involves parting with the dragon bishop. In this case, the results are disastrous.

**15...Nxe4?!; 16.Bxe4 Bxe4; 17.Nxe4 Bxa1; 18.c3!**



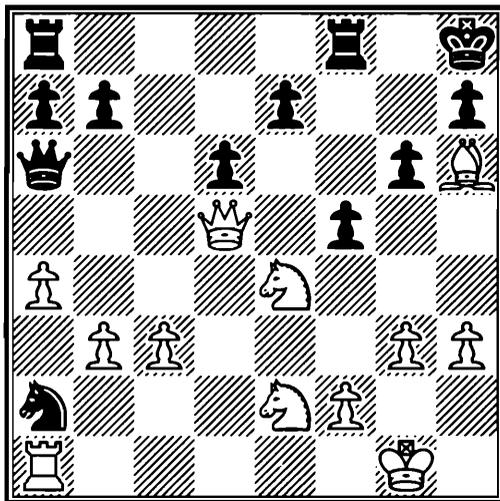
The Black bishop is trapped in the corner, and the dark squares on the kingside are vulnerable. **18...Na2. 18...Nc6; 19.Qc2 Bxc3; 20.N2xc3** is a better defense. Black has a rook and two healthy pawns for the bishop and knight, but the dark squares beckon. **20...Rac8; 21.Bh6 Rfe8; 22.Nd5!** is strong for White, who plans to swing the queen to b2 and may use a sacrifice at f6 to embarrass the enemy king. **22...Qa5!; 23.Rd1.**

The sacrifice is not on, because Black's last move enabled the defensive resource **...Qe5**, after the knight at d5 moves. It is hard

## TYPICAL MISTAKES

to find a good move for Black, but there may be nothing better than 23...f5 which truly loosens the position. 24.Ng5 Qc5 gets the queens off, but at a price. 25.Qxc5 dxc5; 26.Ne6 b6; 27.Ndc7 is strong, though Black can limit the damage with 27...Nd8; 28.Rd7 (28.Nxe8? Nxe6 and the knight is trapped at e8!) 28...Nxe6; 29.Nxe6 a5; 30.Bg5 Kf7; 31.Nc7 Rcd8!; 32.Rd5! Rxd5; 33.Nxd5 Rd8; 34.Nxb6 Rd3; 35.Kg2 Rxb3; 36.Nd7 c4; 37.Ne5+ Ke6; 38.Nxc4 Rb4; 39.Nxa5 Rxa4 and Black may be able to draw.

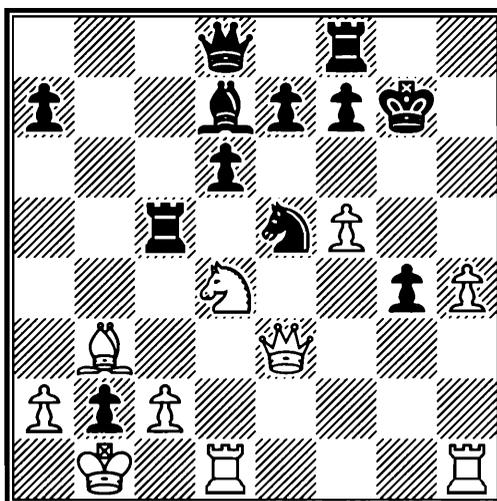
**19.Bh6 f5; 20.Qd5+ Kh8; 21.Rxa1.**



Now the knight at a2 is trapped, so Black has to capture at e2. **21...Qxe2; 22.Qd4+ e5; 23.Qxd6.** Perhaps Black calculated this far, and figured that after capturing at e4, the threat on f2 would be enough, but he found out that was not the case. **23...fxe4.** 23...Rf7; 24.Qxe5+ Kg8 only delays the inevitable. 25.Nf6+ Rxf6; 26.Qxf6 and mate in 3.

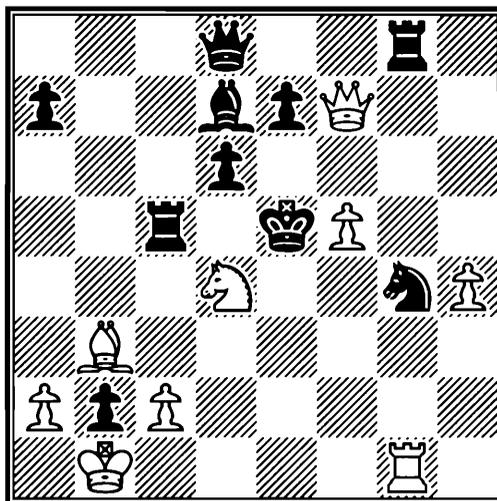
**24.Qxe5+. White won.** In the next position, Black has a pawn at b2 but it serves only to defend the White king. Meanwhile, the kingside is open for action by White.

**Wiese vs. Bojadgieva: Sofia, 1985**



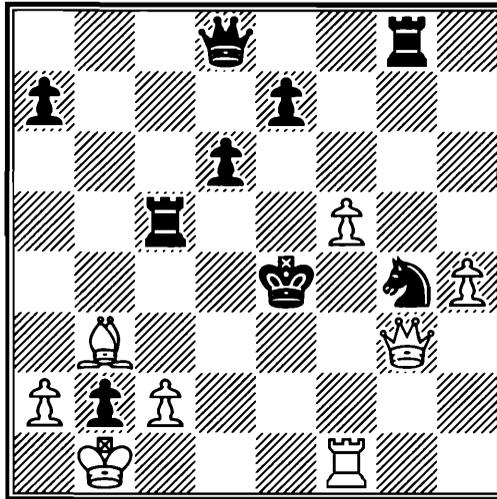
Black has not really made much of a dent in the queenside, but the Dragon bishop, her pride and joy, is nowhere to be seen. White viciously closes in for the kill.

23.Qg5+ Kh7; 24.Qh5+ Kg7; 25.Rhg1 Rg8; 26.Rxg4+. Money is no object! 26...Nxg4; 27.Rg1! Kf6; 28.Qxf7+ Ke5.



Time out to attack some pieces. 29.Ne6! Bxe6; 30.Qxe6+ Kf4; 31.Rf1+ Kg3; 32.Qe1+ Kg2; 33.Rg1+ Kf3; 34.Qg3+ Ke4; 35.Rf1.

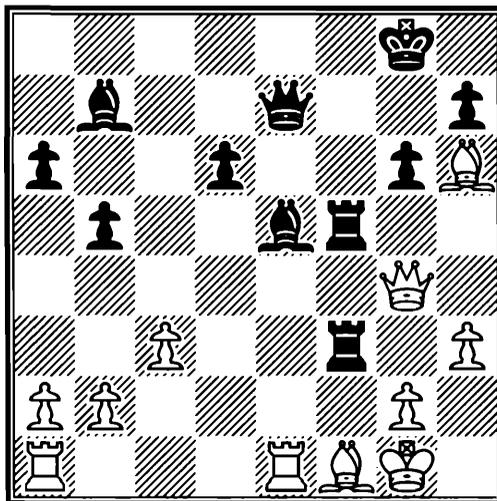
## TYPICAL MISTAKES



Now it is mate in six. Black reduces the period of agony.  
35...Nf2; 36.Re1+ Kd4; 37.Qe3#. White won.

### A Moment's Hesitation

Zagrebelny vs. Serper: Tashkent, 1992



Black has equal material, for the moment, but the rook at f3 is under attack. Black decides to offer it as a sacrifice, but overlooks a counter sacrifice which turns the tables. Black should have maintained the attack by playing 28...Rf2 here.

28...Qf6?? 28...Rf2; 29.Re2 Rxe2; 30.Qxe2 Qh4 has the big threat of ...Qg3. The position is winning for Black, because 31.Qe3 allows the bishop to be trapped: 31...g5; 32.Bd3 Rf4 etc. 29.gxf3 Bxf3; 30.Rxe5! Black loses the Dragon bishop. The White queen is taboo because of a forced variation.

30...Qxe5?! The wrong capture, although it does seem to activate the queen. White is now free to make use of the h4-square.



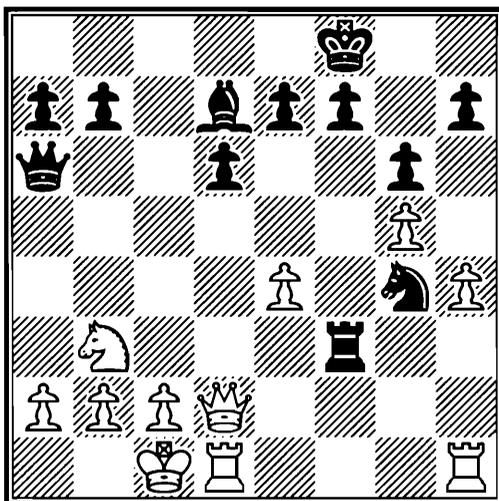
# 11.

## Great Escapes

In this chapter we look at some of the amazing defensive resources available to each side. There is an air of desperation in many Dragon positions. It is often the case that the enemy threats are clear and persuasive, and you know that some sort of miracle is required to save the day. There are many techniques that you should be familiar with, in case you find yourself in such a situation.

We start with an example where the tactical ability of Black's knight is used to salvage a bad position. There are some interesting moments on the way to the key position, so we will start toward the end of the opening. White has not played the most aggressive lines, and the kingside attack seems to be stalled.

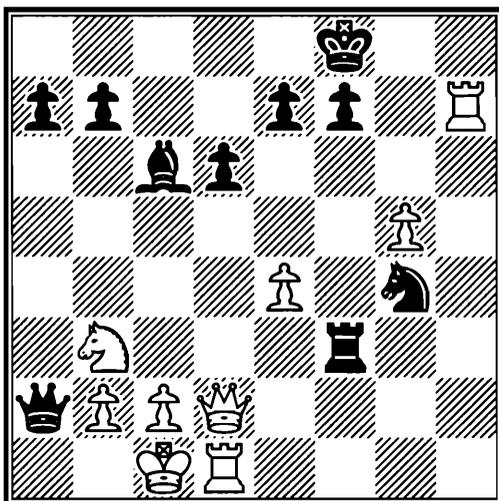
### Short vs. Piket: Wijk aan Zee, 1990



White is not likely to build a strong attack quickly, as this requires both opening the g-file and maneuvering pieces around the pawn at g5, which is just in the way. At first, things proceed natu-



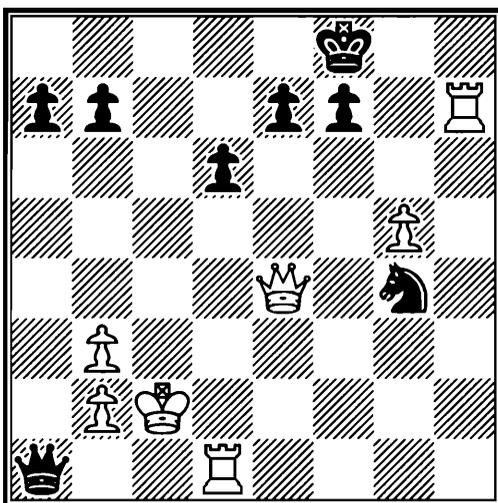
## GREAT ESCAPES



White should feel the win in his bones, but Short finds a way to breathe new life into his opponent's rotting corpse.

**23.Qe2?** 23.g6! fxg6; 24.Qg5 Nf6; 25.Qh6+ Ke8; 26.Rh8+! is the correct move, overlooked by the commentators. (26.Qxg6+ Kd8! Black's king is now relatively safe, and the material balance is not terrible. White blasts open the center. 27.e5! Nxf7; 28.exd6 has been given with the implication that White's attack is sufficient, but the proof is not given. 28...Nf6; 29.Qf7 exd6; 30.Rxd6+ Nd7; 31.Rxd7+ Bxd7; 32.Qxf3 Bc6; 33.Qf6+ Kc8 with an almost certain draw.) 26...Kd7; 27.Qf8 Ke6 with mate in 6: 28.Nd4+ Ke5; 29.Qxe7+ Kf4; 30.Qxf6+ Kxe4; 31.Rh4+ etc.

**23...Rxb3!; 24.cxb3 Qa1+; 25.Kc2 Bxe4+; 26.Qxe4.**



White is up a rook and an exchange for two pawns, but Black is about to take it all back!

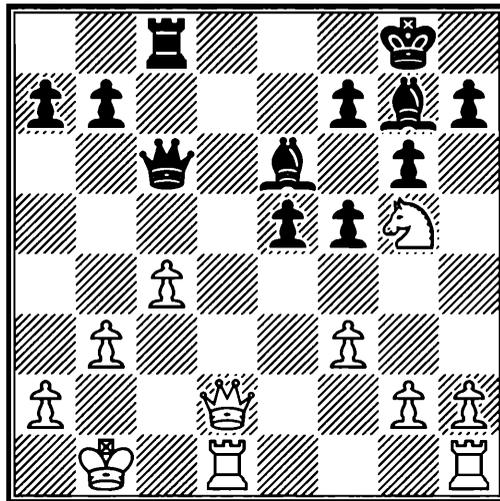
**26...Qxd1+!; 27.Kxd1 Nf2+; 28.Ke2 Nxe4; 29.Rh8+ Kg7; 30.Rb8 b6; 31.Rb7 e5! 31...e6; 32.Rxa7 Kg6; 33.Rb7 Nxf5; 34.Rxb6** could then be met by **34...d5**, though White would pre-

vail after 35.b4 Kf5 (35...Ne4; 36.b5 Kf5; 37.Rc6 Ke5; 38.b6 Nd6; 39.Rc7) 36.b5 Ke4; 37.Rd6.

**32.Rxa7 Nxg5; 33.Rb7 Kf6; 34.b4 Ke6; 35.b5 f5; 36.Rxb6 Kd5; 37.Rb8 Ne6; 38.b6.** Here the game was agreed drawn, as neither side can make progress. For example, 38...Kc6; 39.b4 Nd4+; 40.Kd3 f4; 41.Kd2 d5; 42.b7 Kc7; 43.Rd8! Kxb7; 44.Rxd5 Kc6; 45.Rc5+ Kd6; 46.Kd3.

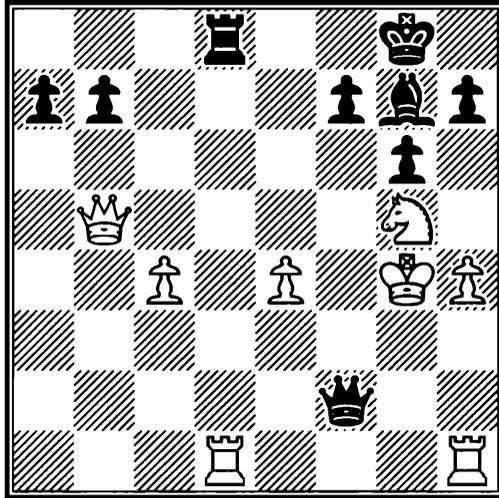
One of the most painful experiences for any chessplayer is throwing away a winning game when brilliant moves have already been played which should by all rights have delivered victory. It is often said that you need to make two mistakes to lose the game. Here, White had underestimated the vulnerability of his king, though the monarch should already have been feeling the heat of the Dragon bishop's breath.

### **Kindermann vs. Georgiev: Dortmund, 1991**

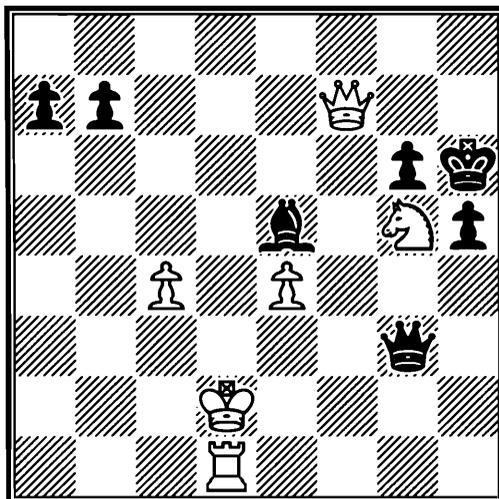


**24...Bxc4!!; 25.Rc1.** White has no choice. 25.bxc4? loses to 25...e4; 26.Qd5 Qb6+; 27.Qb5 Qf6 and the battery is fully energized. 28.fxe4 Qa1+; 29.Kc2 Qxa2+; 30.Kd3 Qxg2; 31.h4 Rd8+! White's extra rook is useless. 32.Ke3 f4+!; 33.Kxf4 Qf2+; 34.Kg4.

## GREAT ESCAPES



It is testimony to the fighting nature of the Dragon that in this position, a rook down, Black has two paths to salvation! The first is 34...h5+; 35.Kh3 Rxd1; 36.Rxd1 Qe3+; 37.Kg2 Qe2+; 38.Kg3! and Black can't take the rook because Qe8+ leads to checkmate. 38...Qg4+; 39.Kf2 Qxh4+; 40.Ke3 Qg3+; 41.Kd2 Be5 is a desperate attempt at a miracle draw. 42.Qe8+ Kg7; 43.Qxf7+ Kh6.

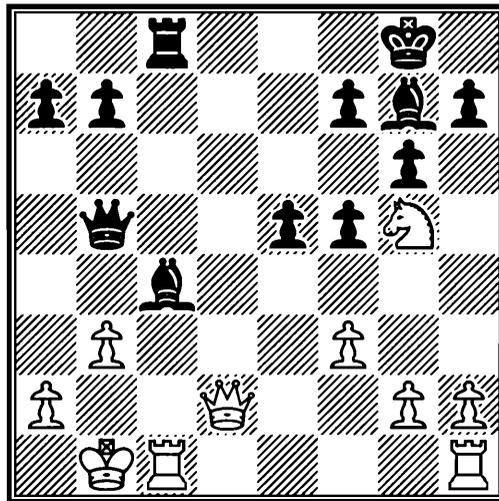


It works! Black is down a whole rook, but if the knight at g5 falls, then the two extra pawns will more than make up for the exchange. 44.Nf3 Bf4+; 45.Ke2 Qg2+; 46.Kd3 Qxf3+; 47.Kc2 Qe2+ wins the rook with check or lets the bishop escape the threats of the White queen. 48.Kc3 Be5+; 49.Kb4 Qxd1 and Black wins. Or 44.Ne6 Qg2+; 45.Ke3 Qh3+ and the White king cannot escape the checks.

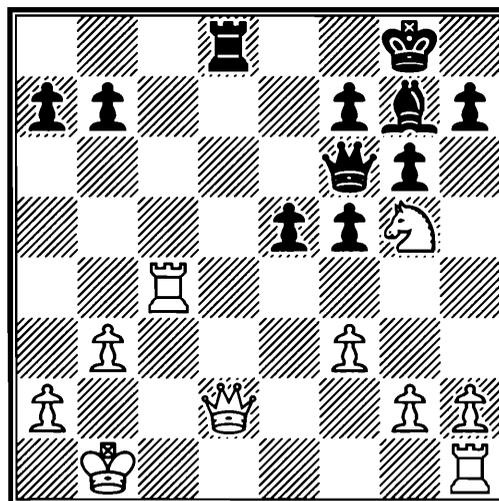
Another resource can be mined with 34...f5+, where 35.Kh3 is an invitation to a draw, but 35.exf5 h5+; 36.Kh3 Qe3+; 37.Kg2 Rxd1; 38.Rxd1 Qe2+; 39.Kh3 Qg4+; 40.Kh2 Qe2+. Now the king cannot go to g3 because of ...Be5+. Note that this is enabled by

the capture at f5. When the pawn was at e4, the bishop would not have been able to go to e5 safely.

**25...Qb5?**



This is an obvious move, setting up a big pin on the b-file. Yet it is the losing move in the critical position. 25...Qf6! was correct, setting up an awesome battery. After 26.Rxc4 Rd8!, White has several seemingly good candidate moves, but none of them work!

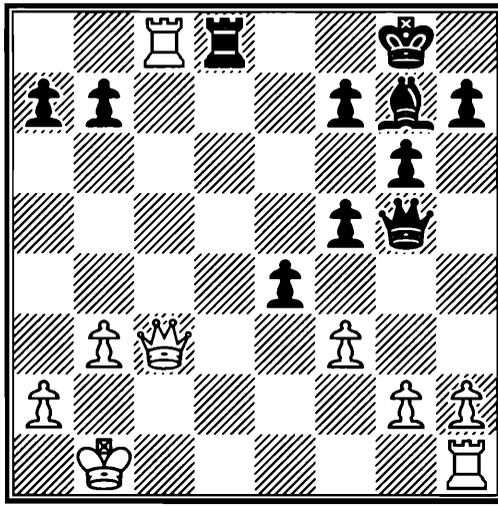


27.Qc1 e4; 28.Kc2 b5; 29.Rc5 Qd4; or 27.Nxh7 is a good desperado move. The knight will be sacrificed anyway, so why not grab a pawn and hit the enemy queen? 27...Kxh7; 28.Qc3. White confronts the battery on the a1-h8 diagonal, but weakens other dark squares, and now Black has a plan of getting a rook to d2 in conjunction with an advance of the e-pawn.

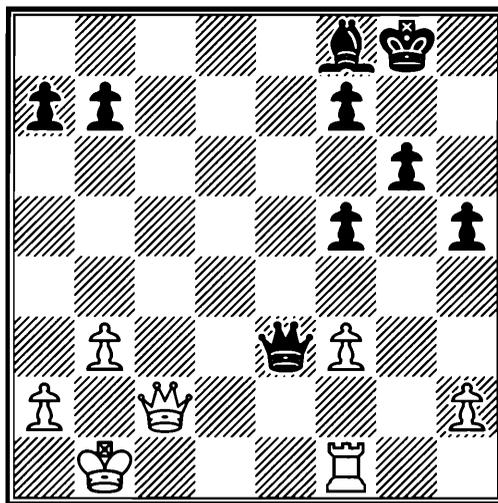
First, though, the queen needs to get out of the way. 28...Qg5!; 29.g3 e4; 30.f4! mixes things up. 30...Bxc3; 31.fxg5 Bd2; 32.Rc7 Kg7; 33.h4 Be3. As the old song goes, “Everybody eats when they

## GREAT ESCAPES

come to my house!” 34.Rxb7 Bf2; 35.Re7 Bxg3; 36.Rxa7 Re8! and Black cannot defend against the advance of the e-pawn from the rear. 37.Rd7 e3; 38.Rd3 f4; 39.Kc2 e2!; 40.Rxg3 fxg3; 41.Re1 f5!; 42.gxf6+ Kxf6 and Black advances the g-pawn. 43.a4 g2; 44.a5 g1Q; 45.Rxg1 e1Q; 46.Rxe1 Rxe1; 47.b4 Ke6; 48.Kc3 Ra1; 49.Kc4 Kd6; 50.Kb5 Kc7 and Black wins. 27.Ne4 fxe4; 28.Qe3 exf3; 29.Qxf3 Qd6 is also very good for Black. 27.Qc3 is, nevertheless, the move which has attracted the most attention, with play continuing 27... Qxg5; 28.Rc8 e4.



29.Qc7? is now usually given. 29...Rxc8; 30.Qxc8+ Bf8 is clearly better for Black, because White cannot keep the kingside intact. 31.Qc2 exf3; 32.gxf3 Qe3; 33.Rf1 h5.



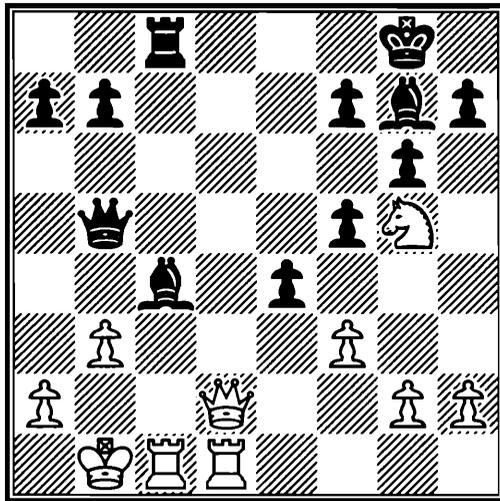
Black is better, because the kingside pawns can advance. The Dragon bishop stands guard for the king, and the queen can return for defense as needed. White has no plan, and is tied down. The attempt to advance the queenside pawns will only make the king more vulnerable. The endgame illustrates the lasting power

of the Dragon bishop. 34.a4 Kg7; 35.Qd1 Ba3; 36.Re1 Qc3 and White is paralyzed.

However, the commentators failed to note the alternative plan 29.Qc1! which exploits the dependency of the rook at d8 on the queen at g5. 29...Qf6. (29...Qxc1+; 30.Rhxc1 Rxc8; 31.Rxc8+ Bf8; 32.Rc7 and White has the better chances in the endgame, as the king is close enough to cope with Black's advanced pawn so the rook is free to roam.) 30.Rxd8+ Qxd8; 31.Rd1 Qb6; 32.fxe4 fxe4; 33.Qc8+ Bf8; 34.Qc4 and it is hard to see how Black can keep queens on, with pressure at f7 mounting. 34...e3; 35.Rd7 Qe6; 36.Qxe6 fxe6; 37.Kc2 and White should clean up.

After that long excursion, let's return to Kindermann-Georgiev and see what actually happened. The game continued.

**26.Rhd1 e4.**



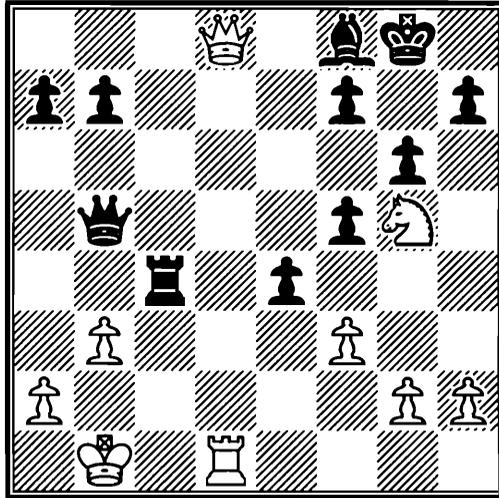
Yet another critical position. To capture at e4 or c4, that is the question. The result of the game hinges on the correct answer.

**27.Rxc4!** 27.fxe4 Qe5 forces 28.Qd8+ Rxd8; 29.Rxd8+ Bf8; 30.Rxc4 Qxh2; 31.exf5 Qxg2 cannot be met by 32.Rcc8 because Black captures the knight with the queen and the king escapes on the dark squares.

The attempt to shut that down with 32.f6 at least has a tactical trick. 32...Qf1+; 33.Kc2 Qf5+. (33...Qxf6??; 34.Rxf8+! Kxf8; 35.Nxh7+ Kg7; 36.Nxf6 Kxf6; 37.Rc7 and White wins.) 34.Kd1 and again there is a trap, since capturing the knight gets mated on the back rank after the rook sacrifice at f8. 34...Qb1+; 35.Rc1 is an invitation to a draw and Black had better take it. After 35...Qf5; 36.Rcc8, Black cannot take the knight or pawn unless it is with check. White must keep the king on the light squares. 36...Qg4+; 37.Kc2 Qf5+ is then a draw.

## GREAT ESCAPES

27...Rxc4; 28.Qd8+ Bf8.



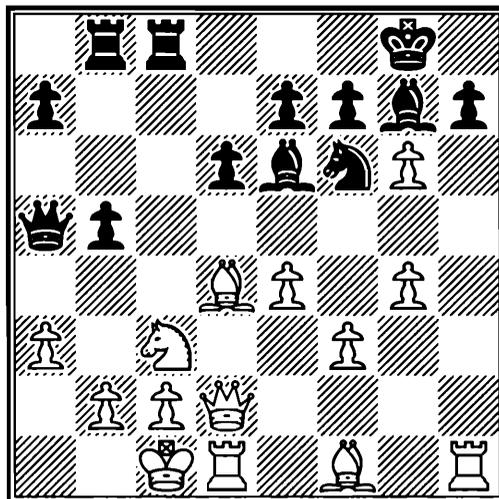
Now for a final flurry of tactics, this time played accurately by both players. **29.Nxf7!!** White can't do better than a draw, and this is the only way to get it.

**29...Kxf7; 30.Rd7+ Kg8; 31.Qe8.** How to defend against the threat of Qf7+? **31...Rc1+!; 32.Kxc1 Qc5+; 33.Kb2 Qf2+; 34.Kc3 Qe3+; 35.Kc2 Qc5+; 36.Kb2 Qf2+; 37.Kc3** and this time the draw comes on the dark squares. All in all, a magnificent battle which illustrates many themes of the Sicilian Dragon.

We see a number of escapes in the next game, from the opening onward. One might well call the attack seen in this game the "Young Person's Attack," since Sofia Polgar and Josh Waitzkin are among the leading practitioners.

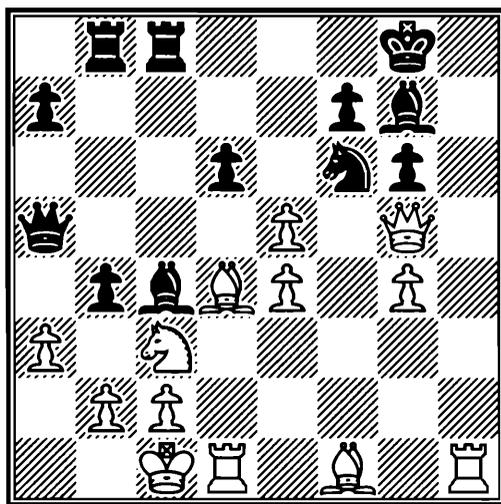
### **Sofia Polgar vs. Vescovi: Mathinos, 1994**

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.g4 Be6; 10.0-0-0 Nxd4; 11.Bxd4 Qa5; 12.a3 Rfc8; 13.h4 Rab8; 14.h5 b5; 15.hxg6.



Black should take the unusual step of recapturing with the f-pawn. **15...hxg6?! 15...b4; 16.Nd5! Bxd5; 17.g5 e5; 18.gxf6 Bxf6; 19.gxh7+ Kh8; 20.Rg1 exd4; 21.Qh6** and here there was no escape, even in the desperate **21...Rxc2+; 22.Kxc2 Qa4+; 23.Kd2**. After **23...Be5; 24.Bb5!!**, Black resigned in Sofia Polgar-Lindemann, Vienna 1991, rather than get mated by **24...Qxb5; 25.Rg8+ Rxc8; 26.hxg8Q+ Kxc8; 27.Rg1+ Bg7; 28.Qxg7#**.

**16.Qg5 Bc4; 17.f4?** Aggressive, but imprecise. **17.Bxc4! Rxc4; 18.Nd5** is just too strong. The Black queen must retreat, and the queenside attack dissipates. **17...e5; 18.fxe5 b4**.

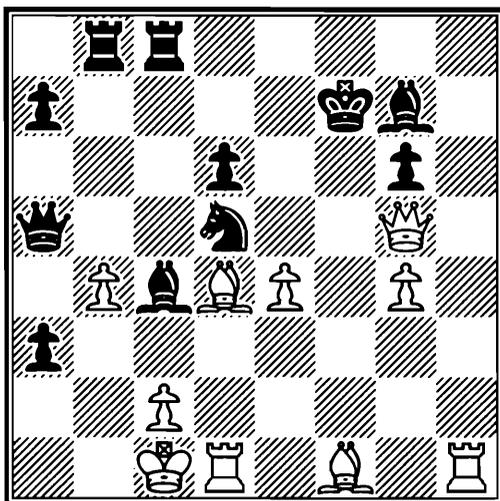


As usual, the fires are burning on both sides of the board. White's knight flees its attacker and leaps into the attack at d5. Of course White had not forgotten her win over Lindemann, in the note to move 15, so the strategy was nothing new.

**19.Nd5 Nxd5. 19...Bxd5; 20.exf6 Rxc2+** falls short, as Vescovi showed. **21.Kxc2 Bxe4+.** (**21...Bb3+; 22.Kxb3 bxa3+; 23.Ka2 Qa4; 24.Bb5!** wins, because if **24...Rxb5**, then White has the queen sacrifice **25.Qxb5!! Qxb5; 26.fxg7 Qc4+; 27.b3 Qc2+; 28.Kxa3** and there are no more checks.) **22.Bd3 Bxd3+; 23.Rxd3 Qxg5; 24.fxg7 f6; 25.Rh8+ Kxg7; 26.Rxb8 Qxg4; 27.Rxb4** and in the end, White should win. **19...Nxe4** loses to **20.Ne7+ Kf8; 21.Nxg6+ fxg6; 22.Qf4+ Kg8; 23.Bxc4+ Rxc4; 24.Qxe4**. This position is hopeless for Black. The exchange sacrifice is not good enough. **24...Rxd4; 25.Rxd4 bxa3; 26.b3 a2; 27.Kb2 a1Q+; 28.Rxa1 Qxe5** loads up the long diagonal but **29.c3 Qh2+; 30.Ka3 Bxd4; 31.cxd4** holds equal material, but just for the moment, because Black cannot defend the weak pawns.

**20.e6 bxa3; 21.exf7+ Kxf7; 22.b4!!**

## GREAT ESCAPES



A most remarkable move. Polgar advances the attacked pawn to b4, where it is attacked by three pieces. The a-pawn is now passed, too. Meanwhile, where is White's attack? **22...a2?** Black fails to appreciate the danger.

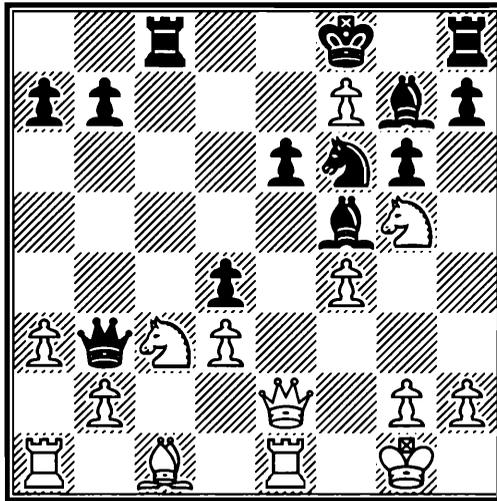
It is understandable that Black concentrated more on attack than on defense, but the need to balance attention on both tasks is well illustrated here. The only move is 22...Rxb4! where Vescovi gives 23.Bxc4 (23.Rh7? Rb1+; 24.Kxb1 Nc3+ wins the queen at g5) 23...Rbxc4; 24.Rdf1+ Ke8; 25.Qxg6+ Kd7; 26.Qxg7+ Ne7. Now, no less than a queen sacrifice is needed to save the game. 27.Qxe7+! Kxe7; 28.Rh7+ Ke8; 29.Rh8+ Kd7; 30.Rf7+ Ke6; 31.Rf6+ with a draw.

**23.bxa5 Bxd4.** 23...Rb1+; 24.Kd2 Rxd1+; 25.Kxd1 Bxd4; 26.Rh7+ Bg7; 27.Bxc4! transposes to the game.

**24.Rh7+ Bg7; 25.Kd2 Rb1; 26.Bxc4 Rxd1+; 27.Kxd1 a1Q+; 28.Ke2! Qd4; 29.Bxd5+ Ke8; 30.Qxg6+ Kd8; 31.Qxd6+ Ke8. Black resigned** without waiting to get mated or lose all his pieces.

Our next game features an unusual pawn structure for any opening, but especially a Dragon. The White pawn got to d3 as the result of an exchange. Gutman, an enterprising player in the opening, tried an experiment, and it didn't turn out well. But his resourcefulness saves the day in the end.

**Kupreichik vs. Gutman: Germany, 1995**

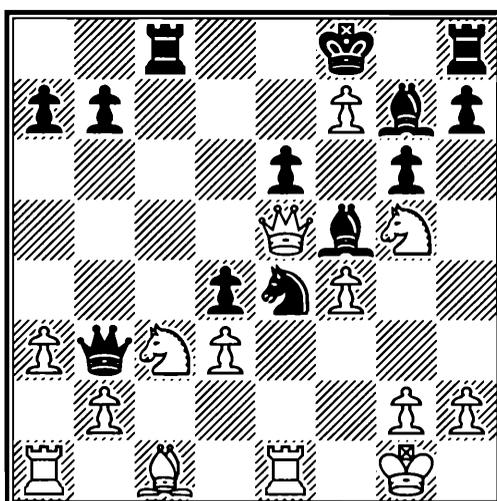


White has a good game here. The Black kingside is a mess, and the e6 square is ready to fall. Black has a little queenside pressure, but isn't threatening anything serious. Or is he?

**20.Qe5?** Kupreichik describes this as a blunder, but that is a bit too self-critical. The move looks good at first glance, but in fact it not only throws away the advantage, it loses the game! **20.Nce4!** is correct. White can play **Bd2** and **Rac1** with an excellent game. Any attempt by Black to gain counterplay will be squashed.

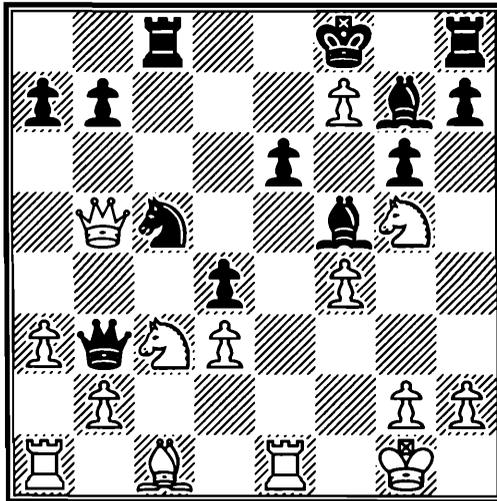
**20...Bg4.** (**20...Bxe4;** **21.Bd2 Bh6;** **22.dxe4 d3;** **23.Qf2 Ng4;** **24.Qg3 Qb6+;** **25.Kf1 Bxg5;** **26.fxg5 h5;** **27.gxh6 Nxh6;** **28.Rac1!** wins. **20...h6;** **21.Nd6 hxg5;** **22.Nxc8 Kxf7;** **23.Nd6+ Ke7;** **24.Nxf5+ gxf5;** **25.fxg5** is one of the wins for White that Kupreichik found. **20...Nxe4;** **21.dxe4 d3;** **22.Qf2 Bg4;** **23.Qxa7** and Black can't do anything with the d-pawn.) **21.Qf2 Nxe4;** **22.Nxe4.** Kupreichik considers the position much better for White, and it does seem that way, but after **22...Bf5**, Black does have counterplay.

**20...Ne4!!**



## SECRETS OF THE SICILIAN DRAGON

White missed this sacrifice. **21.Qb5**. One of many unpleasant choices. 21.Ncxe4 Bxe5; 22.fxe5 h6; 23.Nd6 Rd8; 24.Nf3 Qxd3; and Black is winning. 21.Nxe6+ Bxe6; 22.Qxe4 dxc3; 23.Qxe6 Qxe6; 24.Rxe6 cxb2; 25.Bxb2 Bxb2; 26.Rb1 Kxf7 and Black wins. 21.Qxe4 Bxe4; 22.Ncxe4 h6; 23.Nc5! Rxc5; 24.Nxe6+ Kxf7; 25.Nxc5 Qb5 and Black is clearly better. **21...Nc5!**



What an odd picture! No wonder the Dragon gets confused sometimes. **22.Qxb3 Nxb3** and Black went on to win. **Black won.**

# 12.

## Dragon Endgames

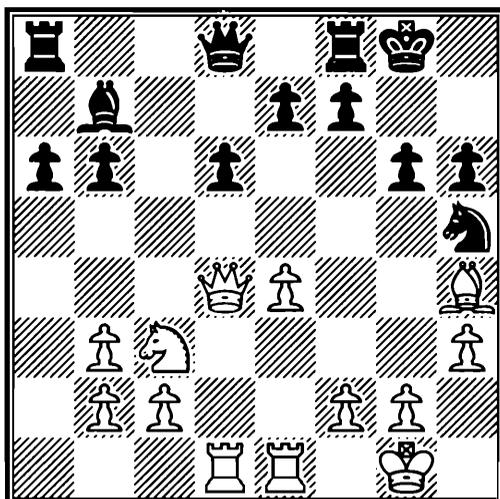
Given all the wild things that can happen in the middlegame, it is hard to generalize about the endgames which are likely to appear after the tactical flurries have concluded. We have selected three endgames which are instructive examples of concepts which play a role in many Dragon endgames.

In the first example, Black has reckoned on one endgame appearing, but White forces quite a different position through precise play. The other two involve rooks and light-squared bishops. You might expect the Dragon bishop to play a more significant role, but on the way to the endgame the dark-squared bishops are usually exchanged at some point. It is important to keep this in mind when contemplating a transition to an endgame. You must always take into consideration the relative merits of the light-squared bishops.

Our first example illustrates the other possibility, where there are bishops of opposite color. This can be a drawish affair if too many pieces have left the board, but can also lead to exciting battles when each bishop targets points in the enemy position which cannot be defended by a bishop.

## DRAGON ENDGAMES

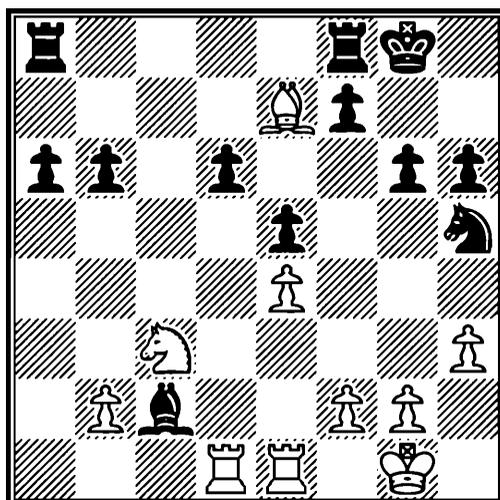
### Ciric vs. Neulinger: Germany, 1991



Black has exchanged bishops at d4, counting on the next move to shut down the diagonal. The strategy is based on tactics which prove to be faulty.

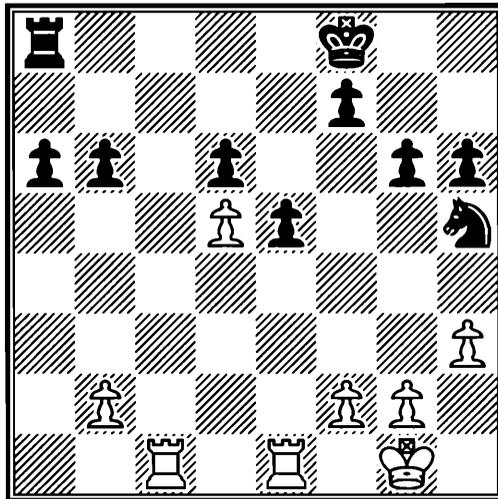
**17...e5; 18.Qd5!!** This must have come as quite a shock! Black had probably only reckoned on the exchange of queens. **18.Bxd8 exd4; 19.Be7 dxc3; 20.Bxf8 Kxf8; 21.bxc3 Ke7** and the minor pieces look much better than the rook.

**18...Bxd5; 19.Bxd8 Bxb3; 20.Be7! Bxc2.**



The elephants are grazing, but Black's minor pieces are off-side. White must recover at least one of the pawns.

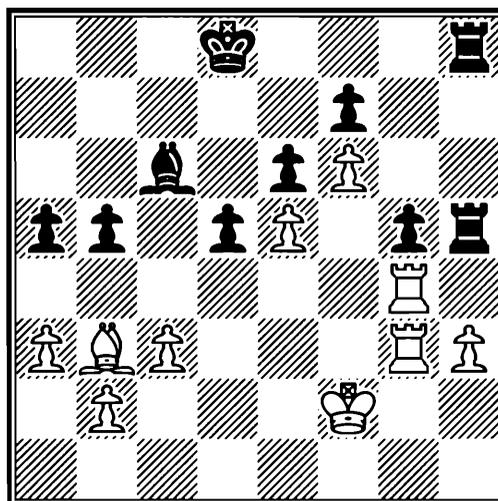
**21.Rc1 Bb3.** **21...Rfe8; 22.Nd5 Rac8; 23.g4 Bb3; 24.Rxc8 Rxc8; 25.gxh5 Bxd5; 26.exd5 Rc5; 27.Rd1** and the Black pawns start to fall. **22.Bxf8 Kxf8; 23.Nd5 Bxd5; 24.exd5.**



This endgame is somewhat better for White, because the c-file cannot be challenged and infiltration of the 6th and 7th rank is inevitable. **24...Nf4**. Black ties down the White rook temporarily, but it is only a matter of time before the knight is kicked out by g3.

**25.Rc6 Ke7; 26.Rc7+ Ke8; 27.Rd1 b5; 28.Kf1 a5; 29.Rb7 b4; 30.g3! Nxh3; 31.f4! exf4; 32.Kg2! Ng5; 33.Re1+ Kf8; 34.gxf4** and White eventually won. In the next position, Black really misses the power of a dark-squared bishop. The bishop he has is of very little use.

**Jansa vs. Petursson: Gausdal, 1988**



Black has a bad bishop, the result of a poorly timed Sicilian break (...d5). White now achieves a winning position by exchanging a pair of rooks and pawns on the kingside, accentuating the power of the superior bishop.

## DRAGON ENDGAMES

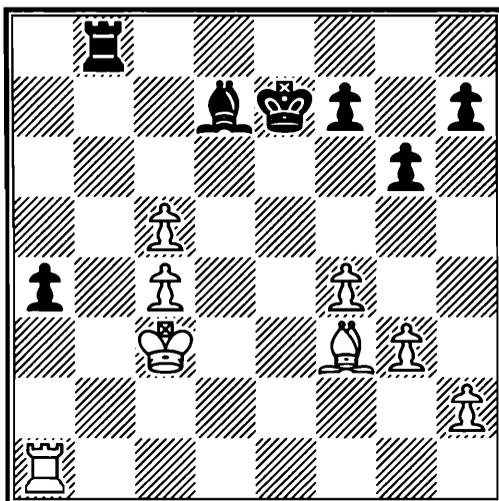
**35.Rxg5 Rxg5; 36.Rxg5 Rxh3; 37.Rg8+ Kc7.** 37...Be8 would also be met by 38.Bd1! (38.Bxd5?? is a tactical blunder because of 38...exd5; 39.e6 Rh6!) 38...Rh2+; 39.Ke3 Rxb2; 40.Bh5 Kd7; 41.Rf8 and White wins—analysis by Jansa.

**38.Bd1 d4.** There is nothing better. 38...Rh2+; 39.Ke3 Rxb2; 40.Bh5+-. **39.cxd4 Rd3; 40.Bh5.** White has effectively won the f-pawn. Black can capture the b-pawn, but it is of no consequence.

**40...Rd2+; 41.Ke3 Rxb2; 42.Bxf7.** Black resigned, since the f-pawn is rushing to the queening square. For example, **42...Rb3+ 43.Kd2 Bd7; 44.Bh5! Rb2+; 45.Kc3 Rf2; 46.f7** etc.

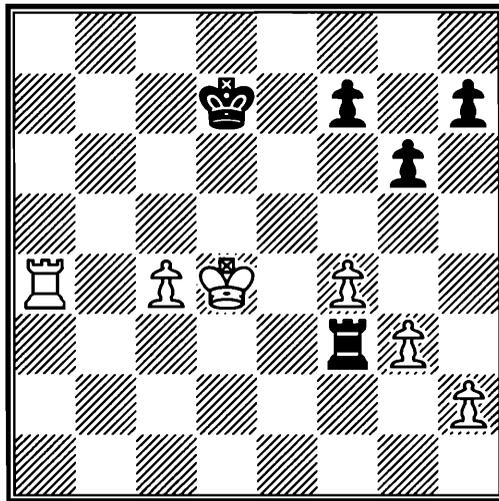
Now we turn to an endgame where White has an extra pawn, but it is weak and doubled. This can come about as a result of an exchange sacrifice on c3.

### **Kasparov vs. Topalov: Amsterdam, 1995**



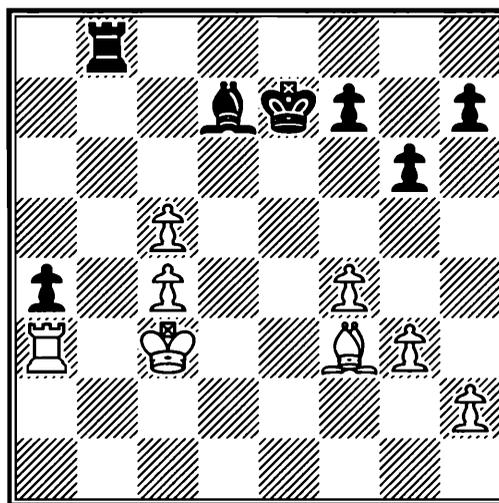
There is no doubt that White has the advantage here, though the extra pawn is not worth much. Kasparov shows his technical prowess by squeezing out a win. First he takes measures to avoid an enemy infiltration at b3, which his commentary indicates is necessary.

**32.Ra3.** 32.Bd5? Rb3+; 33.Kd4 Bf5; 34.c6 a3; 35.Kc5 Bb1! would be unclear, according to Kasparov. White still has an advantage, but what is not clear is whether the position can be won. 32.c6 is the critical alternative, and Kasparov does not discuss it. Let's take a look at the rook endgame after 32...Rb3+; 33.Kd4 Rxf3; 34.cxd7 Kxd7; 35.Rxa4.



Black can hold many pawn down endgames, but not this one. Black's rook is too far offside. Compare this to the note to White's 33rd move.

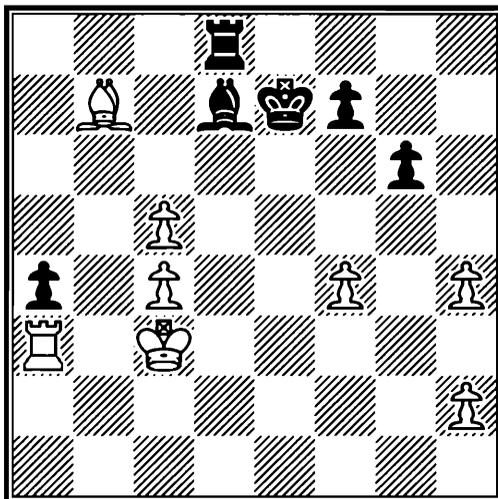
Let's return to the continuation of the game after 32.Ra3.



**32...Rc8; 33.Kd4!** 33.c6 Bxc6; 34.Bxc6 Rxc6; 35.Rxa4. White is also clearly better here, with a solid extra pawn, but it is harder to make progress than in the previous note.

**33...h5; 34.Bb7! Rd8.** 34...Rc7; 35.Ba6 and the bishop will come to b5 with devastating effect. **35.Kc3 h4; 36.gxh4!**

## DRAGON ENDGAMES



This is the most efficient move, even though it weakens the kingside pawns. That is not an important factor, because the game is played on the queenside.

**36...Rh8; 37.Bd5 Rxh4; 38.Kb4 Rxh2. 38...Rxf4; 39.c6 Be6; 40.Kc5** is a win. For example, **40...Bxd5; 41.cxd5 Rh4; 42.d6+ Kd8; 43.Re3!** **39.c6 Be6; 40.Bxe6!** The time has come for the bishops to depart.

**40...fxe6. 40...Kxe6; 41.c5** keeps the enemy king boxed out. **41.Kc5 41.Rd3!** would have been more precise. **41...Kd8; 42.Rxa4. Black resigned**, as this endgame is hopeless.

# 13.

## Don't Believe Everything You Read!

This section is dedicated to the proposition that some chess players will do anything to win a game, including publishing analysis which seems to be little more than a trap for the unwary. Now we are in no position to judge the intentions of the commentators whose analysis is cited below, but as you will see, following their advice might land a player in serious trouble.

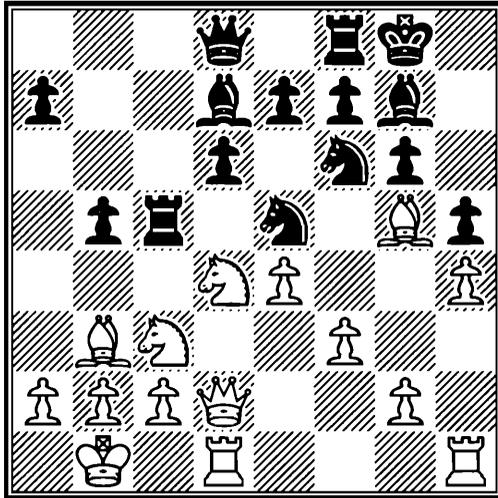
The real point is that some published analysis should never be taken at face value. You need to check the analysis yourself before using it in tournament play. If you just bash out some moves you read in a book or magazine, your opponent might just bash in your skull. You have been warned!

### **Ulybin vs. Tiviakov: Soviet Union, 1987**

This game was published in the prestigious *Chess Informant*, the journal that has supplied chessplayers with professional analysis for over 30 years. The games in this journal are presented with notes, usually by the players. In this case, the notes are by the player of the White pieces, assisted by Volovik. Are most professional players willing to share their secrets? Hardly! Often the analysis seems to be a setup for future opponents. Sometimes, however, a new idea just isn't properly evaluated at the time. Nevertheless, let's look at the dangers of believing what you read.

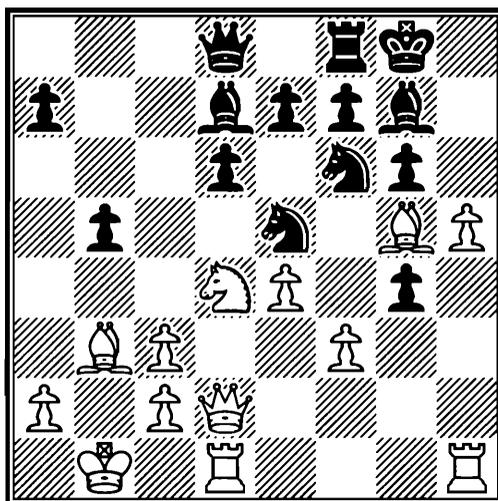
1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.h4 h5; 11.0-0-0 Ne5; 12.Bb3 Rc8; 13.Bg5 Rc5; 14.Kb1 b5.

## DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ



So far, this is well known theory, and the new move is not introduced yet. Nevertheless, the commentators adorned White's next move with an exclamation mark, anointing it as a good move. Indeed, it is, but what follows is misleading. **15.g4! hxg4**. This move is criticized as dubious, based on the continuation of the game. Yet a decade later, it remains a main line!

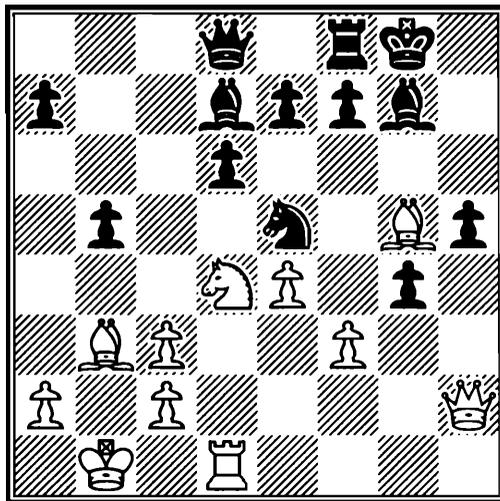
**16.h5 Rxc3!?** Reported as a new move in the journal, but *Chess Informant* counts as new any move which has not appeared in the pages of their publications, even if it was published widely before the game was played. In any case, the sacrifice of the exchange is hardly an unusual idea here! **17.bxc3!**



The weakness of the queenside will not be easy to exploit, and there are some advantages to having a pawn cover b4. The alternative **17.Qxc3 Nxh5; 18.fxg4 Bxg4; 19.Rdg1 Qd7** is the commentators claim, unclear. That opinion stands today.

**17...N<sub>x</sub>h5?** No comment from Ulybin and Volovik here, yet this move is the losing one! 17...N<sub>x</sub>f3! was only discovered years later, but is now considered critical. 18.N<sub>x</sub>f3. White can also play 18.Qe3, which proved successful in Sznapik-From, Copenhagen, 1990. 18...N<sub>x</sub>e4; 19.Qh2 N<sub>x</sub>c3+; 20.Kc1 Qa5; 21.hxg6 N<sub>x</sub>a2+; 22.Bxa2 Qa3+; 23.Kd2 Qc3+; 24.Kc1 Qa3+; 25.Kd2 Qc3+ led to draws in both Lanka-Smirin, Moscow, 1989 and Olesen-Petursson, Philadelphia, 1994. From this it is fair to conclude, as Steve Mayer does, that Petursson knew of no better continuation for Black in this line. That is significant, as Petursson is a major Dragoneer, and was playing a much lower ranked opponent.

**18.R<sub>x</sub>h5.** Again a move passes without comment, but John Nunn later pointed out that there is a stronger plan. 18.Bh6! threatens a sacrifice at h5 followed by Qg5, so Black must guard the dark squares with 18...e6, but on 19.Rd<sub>g</sub>1 White has a crushing attack. **18...g<sub>x</sub>h5; 19.Qh2.**



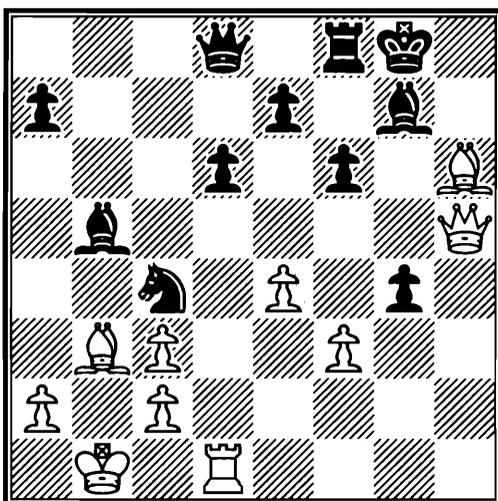
Black must now send the knight to the queenside to block the powerful bishop at b3. **19...N<sub>c</sub>4.** 19...g<sub>x</sub>f3; 20.Q<sub>x</sub>h5 B<sub>g</sub>4; 21.Qh4 f2; 22.Rh1 f1Q+; 23.R<sub>x</sub>f1 and White threatens to bring the rook back to the h-file. Unfortunately, Black can't do anything about it! 19...Qa5; 20.Q<sub>x</sub>h5 Q<sub>x</sub>c3; 21.Rh1 Re8; 22.Qh7+ Kf8; 23.Bh6 and mate in four.

**20.Q<sub>x</sub>h5 f6.** White's next move must have come as quite a shock. With all the attention on the kingside, and the pawn at b5 seemingly guarded, the knight at d4 nevertheless develops an appetite. **21.N<sub>x</sub>b5!!** A splendid move which takes advantage of the possibility of a discovered attack on b5 once the bishop moves from g5. **21...B<sub>x</sub>b5.** There is nothing better. 21...Be6 loses to 22.Bh6; 21...fxg5; 22.B<sub>x</sub>c4+ e6; 23.N<sub>x</sub>d6 Qc7! This saves Black

## DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ

from immediate catastrophe, but after 24.fxg4 Black is two pawns down with plenty of weaknesses and very little counterplay.

**22.Bh6!**



White sensibly acts to get rid of the Dragon bishop. **22...Qd7?!** This move also came in for criticism, though the commentators suggest that there is no good alternative. They mention four other moves. In one case a practical test proved their conclusions correct, and in two other lines they advantage they claim for White is justified. The retreat of the queen to e8 is more complicated than they thought.

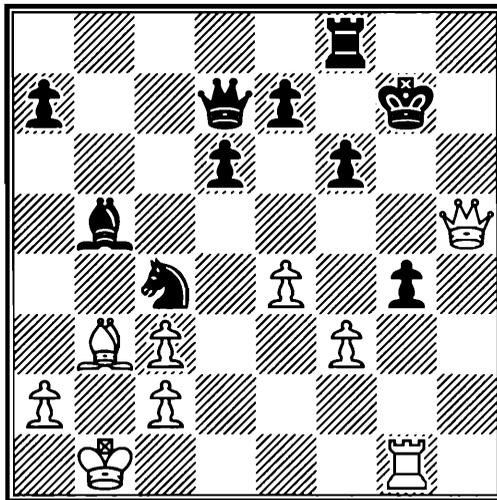
22...Bxh6 is easily refuted by 23.Qxh6 Qe8; 24.Rh1 Kf7; 25.Qh5+ Ke6; 26.Qd5+ etc. 22...e5; 23.Qxg4 Qc7; 24.a4! Ba6; 25.Bxg7 Qxg7; 26.Rxd6 was given by Ulybin and Volovik. It soon received a test, in Gudok-Bobylov, Postal, 1989. 26...Qxg4; 27.fxg4 Kg7; 28.Rxa6 Nd2+; 29.Kb2 Nxe4; 30.Rxa7+ Kg6 was a winning endgame for White. The game concluded 31.Bd5! Rb8+; 32.Rb7 Rxb7+; 33.Bxb7 Nc5; 34.Bc6 Kf7. (34...Kg5; 35.a5 Kxg4; 36.Bb5 f5; 37.a6 Nxa6; 38.Bxa6 Kf4; 39.c4 Ke4; 40.Kc3 f4; 41.Bb7+ Kf5; 42.c5 Ke6; 43.Kd3 etc.) 35.c4 Ke6; 36.Kc3 Kd6; 37.Bb5 Kc7; 38.a5 Kb7; 39.Kb4 e4; 40.Kxc5 and Black resigned, since if the e-pawn advances, then Bc6+, followed by Bf3 stops the pawns dead in their tracks.

22...Qe8! is the toughest nut to crack. 23.Qxg4 Rf7; 24.Rg1 Qf8; 25.Qe6 Kh8! (25...Kh7 This allows White to get an advantage, but it is the only move given by the commentators. 26.Bc1! Here they stop, claiming a clear advantage for White. Now if 26...Ne5, then 27.Qf5+ Kg8; 28.Rh1 Qe8; 29.f4 Nc4; 30.Bxc4 Bxc4; 31.Qh7+ Kf8; 32.Qh8+!! Bxh8; 33.Rxh8+ Kg7; 34.Rxe8 and White has an advantage, although it is offset somewhat by the bishops of

opposite color.) 26.Bxg7+ Rxg7; 27.Rh1+ Rh7; 28.Rxh7+ Kxh7; 29.Bxc4 Bxc4; 30.Qxc4. Admittedly, White has an extra pawn in the queen endgame, but it is weak, as are its colleagues at a2 and f3. Black has good drawing chances. 22...Qc8; 23.Rg1 (23.Qxb5 Bxh6; 24.fxg4 Kg7 is no worse for Black, whichever way White takes the knight) 23...f5.

24.Bxg7 Kxg7; 25.exf5 Rxf5; 26.Rxg4+ Kf6 and now they give a variation with a check at h6, but more accurate is 27.Qh4+! There is no saving Black. If 27...Ke6, then 28.Re4+ and e7 falls. Or 27...Kf7; 28.Qh7+ Ke6; 29.Re4+ Kd5; 30.Qxe7 Kc6; 31.Bxc4 Qb8; 32.Be6! and there is no threat from a discovered check. 32...Bc4+; 33.Kc1 Bxe6; 34.Qxe6 is a winning endgame.

**23.Bxg7 Kxg7; 24.Rg1.**



White has a winning advantage, despite the material deficit. 24...f5. 24...Nd2+; 25.Kb2 Nxf3; 26.Rh1 and mate in 2. 24...Rg8; 25.Rxg4+ Kf8; 26.Qh6+ Kf7; 27.Qh7+ has the same result. 25.exf5 Rxf5. 25...Qxf5; 26.Rxg4+ Kf6; 27.Qh6+ Kf7; 28.Rf4 Qxf4; 29.Qxf4+ Ke8; 30.Qg4 Nd2+; 31.Kb2 Nxb3; 32.Qh5+! and Qxb5.

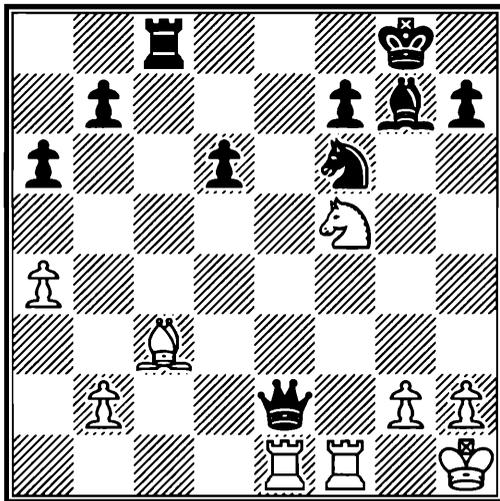
**26.Qxg4+ Kf6; 27.Qg7+ Ke6; 28.Re1+ Kd5.** 28...Re5; 29.Bxc4+ Bxc4; 30.Qg4+ Kf6; 31.Qxd7 Rxe1+; 32.Kb2 d5; 33.Qxa7 Rf1; 34.Qe3 is straightforward. The a-pawn marches. **29.Rxe7 Qd8; 30.Bxc4+ Bxc4; 31.Qd4+ Kc6; 32.Qxc4+** and White forced a winning endgame. 32...Kb6; 33.Qd4+ Rc5; 34.Qb4+ Rb5; 35.Rb7+! Kxb7; 36.Qxb5+ Kc8; 37.Qc6+ Kb8; 38.a4. White went on to win.

Our next example is quite different, concentrating on a position with very few pieces on the board. This is a very difficult

## DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ

position for Black. If it cannot be saved, then a different path must be used in the opening. Can the position be saved? The literature suggests that it cannot, but analysis shows that things are not as bad as they look.

### Smirin vs. Tseitlin: Israel, 1991



The queen must retreat, but where should she go? Instinct suggests the h5-square, to help defend the kingside. Instinct is a powerful force in the Dragon, and here it is correct. Although we are a whole rook ahead, with an extra pawn, absolute precision is needed, as Mark Tseitlin found out.

**25...Qc2.** Let's take a look at five different queen moves. 25... Qg4? loses because of a potential fork at h6. 26.Bxf6 forces the enemy bishop to retreat, as capturing at f6 allows Nh6+. 26... Bf8; 27.Rf3 and there is no defense to the threat of Rg3. 25... Qxe1? is even worse. 26.Rxe1 gives White the potent threat of Nxg7, followed by Rf1. There is only one defense, but it leads to an unfavorable simplification of the position. 26...Re8; 27.Rxe8+ Nxe8; 28.Bxg7 Nxg7; 29.Nxd6.

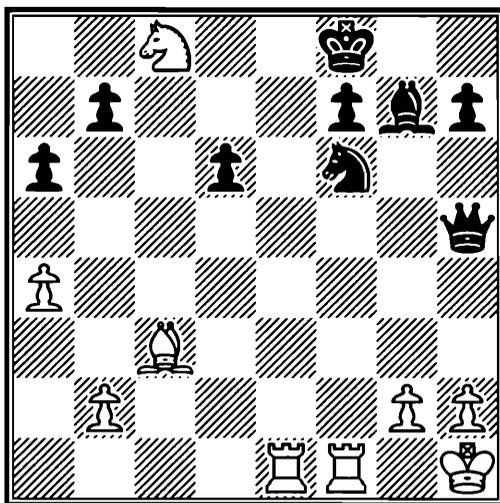
The endgame has even pawns, but Black's are weaker and the queenside pawns are impossible to defend. 29...b6; 30.Nc4 b5; 31.axb5 axb5; 32.Na3 b4; 33.Nc2 b3; 34.Nd4 and the b-pawn falls, with a winning endgame for White.

25...Qc4!?!; 26.Nxd6 Qxa4. (26...Qxf1+?; 27.Rxf1 Rc7; 28.Bxf6 Bxf6; 29.Ne8 and White wins, or 26...Qc6; 27.Nxc8 Qxc8; 28.Bxf6 where Black is still in trouble.) 27.Nxc8 Nd5; 28.Bxg7 Kxg7; 29.Nd6. As Smirin notes, White does have an attack, but is the position really clearly better for White? 29...f6; 30.Re4. Capturing

at b7 seems irrelevant. 30...Qc6; 31.Nf5+ Kf8; 32.Rh4 Qb5; 33.Re1 Qxb2; 34.Rxh7 Qc2 and where is the advantage?

25...Qd3; 26.Ne7+ Kf8; 27.Nxc8 may be sufficient. It is true that Black cannot get away with 27...Ne8; 28.Rf3 and White will double rooks on the e-file next move. 28...Bxc3 now fails to 29.Rxe8+. However, 27...Ne4 is not as bad as the commentary implies. 28.Rf3 Qc2; 29.Rxe4! Bxc3; 30.Ref4 does win for White, but Smirin failed to consider the centralizing 28...Qd5!, and White has no clear way to continue the attack. Since the pawn at f7 is defended, 29.Rxe4 can be met by 29...Bxc3, as 30.Ref4 does not threaten anything and Black can retreat the bishop to e5.

25...Qh5! is the best move, leading of course to 26.Ne7+ Kf8; 27.Nxc8.

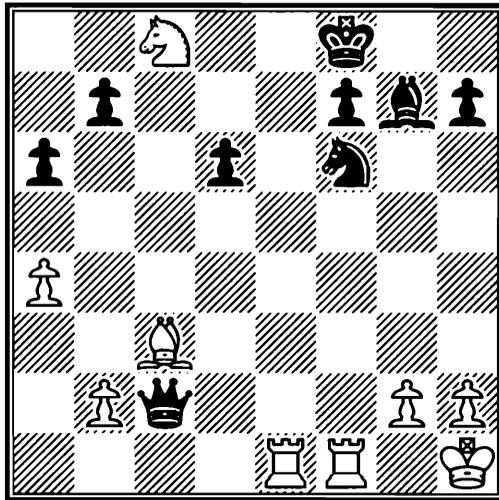


Black has much more counterplay than in the other lines. The main threat is ...Ng4, followed by ...Qxh2#, so why not execute it immediately? 27...Ng4!; 28.Bxg7+. White should definitely exchange, because the bishop at c3 cannot contribute to the defense. 28...Kxg7; 29.h3 Qh4!; 30.Re2 (30.Nxd6? Nf2+; 31.Kg1 Nxh3+; 32.gxh3 Qg3+; 33.Kh1 Qxh3+; 34.Kg1 Qg3+; 35.Kh1 Qxd6 and Black has all the winning chances) 30...Qd8!; 31.Ne7.

It is still necessary to take care to anticipate White's threats. The obvious 31...Ne5? turns out to be a critical error. After 32.Nf5+ Kf8; 33.Rd1 Nc4; 34.b3, Black has nothing better than 34...Qf6, preventing White from capturing the pawn at d6. 35.Rf1! (35.Nxd6?? Nxd6; 36.Rxd6 Qf1+) 35...Ne5; 36.Rd2 and now the pawn falls. 31...Nh6! is correct, defending f5. The position is still rather balanced, though easier to play for White.

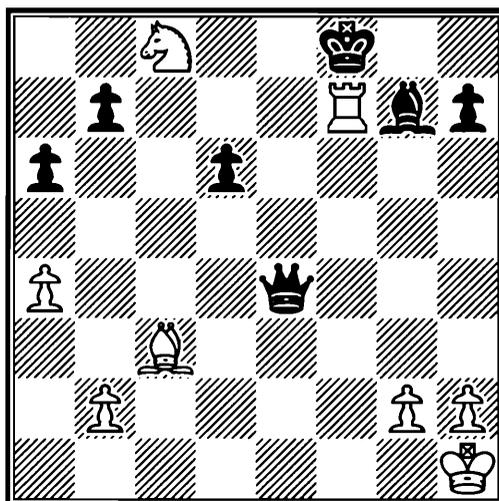
In any case, White chose to move the queen to c2, and White played 26.Ne7+ Kf8; 27.Nxc8.

## DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU READ



Here Black should retreat the knight to e8, since White will not be able to double rooks on the e-file. **27...Ne4?** 27...Ne8; 28.Bxg7+ Nxg7; 29.Nxd6 f5; 30.Rc1 is better for White, whether Black captures a pawn or tries to defend f5. 30...Qxa4; 31.Rfe1 threatens mate at c8, if the invasion of the seventh rank is secured. 31...Nh5; 32.Rc7 Black is powerless against the threat of Re8, for example, 32...Ng7; 33.Rc8+ Ne8; 34.Rcxe8+ Kg7; 35.Nxf5+ and White has too much material.

**28.Rxe4!** This exchange sacrifice leads to a win. **28...Qxe4.** 28...Bxc3 loses to 29.Nxd6. **29.Rxf7+!!**



A brilliant shot which exploits the possibility of a fork at d6, should Black capture the rook. **29...Kg8;** 30.Rxg7+ Kf8; 31.Rf7+ Kg8; 32.Rf1. The task is complete, White has a serious material advantage, and still has threats. Right now, Black must do something about Ne7 with checkmate. **32...Qe6;** 33.Nb6 d5; 34.a5 Qe2; 35.Re1 Qb5; 36.h3 d4; 37.Bxd4 Qxa5; 38.Re7 Qb5; 39.Rg7+ Kf8; 40.Rxh7 and White went on to win.

# 14.

## The Dragon Hall of Fame

There are thousands of players who use the Sicilian Dragon as a significant part of their repertoire, but to make it to the Dragon Hall of Fame, a player must have used the Dragon in a way that brought additional honor and glory to the openings. Some of the inductees have written extensively and persuasively on the opening, while others have played in World Championship matches, bringing added attention and analytical scrutiny to critical lines.

There are no doubt a few others, in addition to those presented here, which deserve nomination to our hall of fame, but the jury is still out. The players on exhibit are all worthy of the highest accolades we have to offer. You have seen examples of their art elsewhere in the book, and here we limit ourselves to just a single game or position.

The players are presented in alphabetical order, as it is difficult to decide whose contributions were more important. Some of the names on this list are familiar to all Dragoneers, but others may come as a surprise.

We've tried to include those players who made significant contributions to the opening theory, as well as defending the Black side in important encounters. Some players, known more for the Accelerated Dragon (1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 g6) than a willingness to battle against the Yugoslav Attack, such as Bent Larsen and John Donaldson are not included. Of course there is room to expand in our Hall of Fame, and some contemporary players are on the verge of election, including Vsevolod Topalov

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and Magnus Carlsen. At some point, we suppose we should acknowledge the great Dragon slayers, such as Anatoly Karpov.

### Mikhail Botvinnik

The great World Champion (1948-57, 58-60, 61-63) was a great connoisseur of all the semi-open games, and is well known for his contributions to the French and Caro-Kann Defenses. He was also a powerful Dragoner, as the following early game demonstrates.

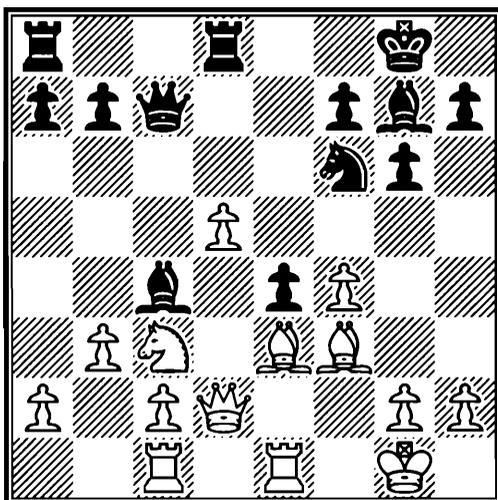
#### Rauzer vs. Botvinnik: Soviet Championship, 1933

This game earned Botvinnik the best game prize in this game from Leningrad. Our notes are based on those by Botvinnik himself, and the great Siegbert Tarrasch, with further illumination from Ftacnik.

**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 d6.** Rauzer later became famous for **6.Bg5**, which prevents the transposition to the Dragon seen in this game. **6.Be2 g6; 7.Be3 Bg7; 8.Nb3 Be6; 9.f4 0-0; 10.0-0 Na5.** An ancient continuation, from Marco-Maroczy, Monte Carlo, 1903.

**11.Nxa5.** **11.Nd4** is preferred by Tarrasch, but there is nothing for Black to fear after **11...Bc4; 12.Bd3 Rc8; 13.Qf3 e5; 14.Nde2 d5!** The Sicilian break achieves equality, at the very least. **11...Qxa5; 12.Bf3 Bc4; 13.Re1 Rfd8; 14.Qd2 Qc7; 15.Rac1 e5; 16.b3.** **16.Nd5?** loses to **16...Nxd5; 17.exd5 exf4!**; **16.Qf2** is Tarrasch's choice. Black can equalize by playing **16...d5.**

**16...d5; 17.exd5 e4.**



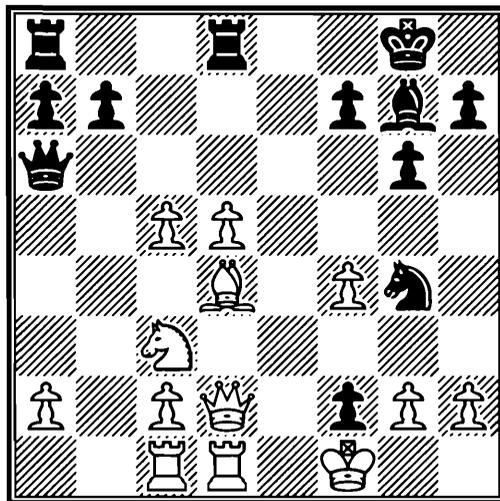
Black stands better. The pawn at e4 cannot be captured safely, and the bishop cannot retreat to e2, so a pair of bishops leave

the board. **18.bxc4**. 18.Be2? Bxd5; 19.Nxd5 Nxd5 is much better for Black. 18.Bxe4 Nxe4; 19.Nxe4 Bxd5; 20.Qd3 Qc6; 21.Bf2 is better for Black after 21...f5 or Botvinnik's 21...Re8. The capture at e4 is interesting. 18.Nxe4 Nxd5 has led to a lot of analysis and discussion. The main line is 19.Kh1 (19.bxc4 Nxe3; 20.Qxe3? Bd4 and Black wins. 19.c3!? has not yet been studied) 19...Nxe3; 20.Qxe3 Bd4; 21.Qd2 Bb2; 22.Qb4 Bd5; 23.Rb1 Qxc2. Tarrasch considers the position clearly better for Black. The bishop pair is surely worth something.

**18...exf3; 19.c5 Qa5**. There is no point in capturing on g2, because the f-pawn can be made more useful by checking at f2, at an appropriate moment. **20.Red1?** 20.Qd3! is best. Botvinnik didn't discover this until the 1960s! 20...b6! is the best defense. 21.gxf3 bxc5. Botvinnik evaluates the chances as about even.

**20...Ng4; 21.Bd4?** This loses on the spot, but White was in trouble anyway. 21.Ne4 Qxd2; 22.Bxd2 Bd4+; 23.Kh1 fxg2+; 24.Kxg2 Rxd5 and Black is better.

**21...f2+!** Black now takes advantage of wisely keeping the pawn at f3! **22.Kf1**. 22.Kh1 is poor, since 22...Rxd5!; 23.Nxd5 f1Q+!; 24.Rxf1 Qxd2 wins. **22...Qa6+**.



White has no defense. **23.Qe2**. 23.Qd3 Bxd4; 24.Qxa6 Nxb2+; 25.Ke2 f1Q+; 26.Rxf1 bxa6 is given by Botvinnik. More complicated is 23.Ne2 Rxd5; 24.c4 Bxd4!; 25.Nxd4! (25.cxd5? allows the cute mate 25...Nxb2#) 25...Rad8; 26.Qc3 R5d7; 27.h3 Nf6. The pawn at f2 is still taboo, because of the fork at e4, and White's pawns are very weak.

**23...Bxd4; 24.Rxd4 Qf6!; 25.Rcd1**. 25.Qd3 Re8; 26.Re4 Rxe4; 27.Nxe4 Qxf4 wins, because of the threat of ...Nxb2+. 25.Qe4 looks

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very unnatural, because Black can gain time by attacking the queen with ...Re8, yet it is what the computer spit out. It soon realized that this would lead to disaster. 25...Re8; 26.Qd3 Re3; 27.Qd2 Qh4. Ugh. 25...Qh4; 26.Qd3 Re8; 27.Re4 f5; 28.Re6 Nxf2+. 28...Rad8! was more efficient, as Tarrasch pointed out. 29.Ke2 Qxf4. **White resigned.** The situation really is hopeless.

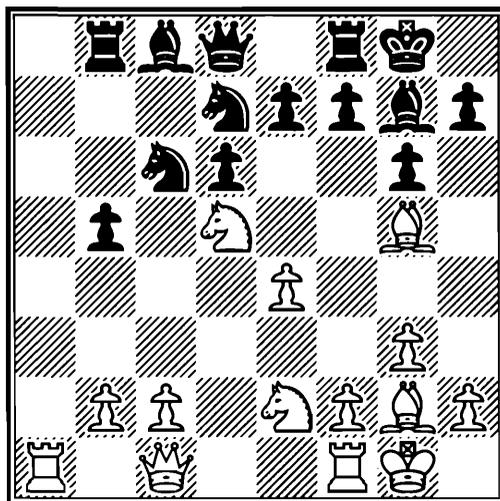
### Thomas Ernst

Thomas Ernst of Sweden is now a Grandmaster, but he is best known to Dragon fans as the architect of many important opening innovations. One thing that sets him apart from his colleagues is his willingness to openly discuss and analyze critical positions, not trying to hide all of his ideas. He continues to contribute fresh new ideas to the opening.

#### A. Ivanov vs. Ernst: Gausdal, 1991

Here is an example of the deep research carried out in Ernst's home laboratory. A new move brings an otherwise reputable line in the fianchetto variation into doubt.

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.g3 Nc6; 7.Nde2 Bg7; 8.Bg2 0-0 9.0-0 Rb8; 10.a4 a6; 11.Nd5 b5; 12.axb5 axb5; 13.Bg5 Nd7; 14.Qc1.

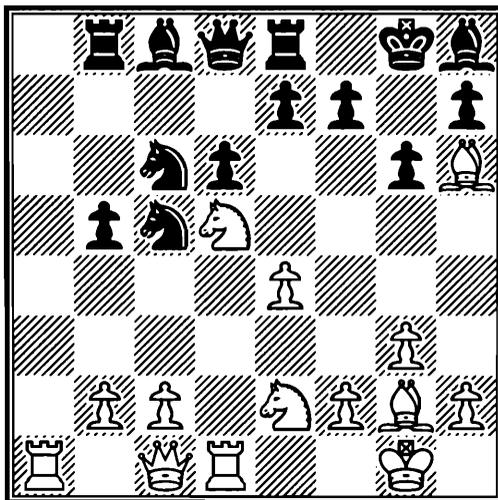


All this was well known at the time. Nunn and Miles, two of the leading representatives of the White and Black side of the Yugoslav Attack, reached a murky situation in a game at Baden-Baden, 1980.

14...Re8! This is a better order of moves. 14...Nc5; 15.b4?! Ne6! was played in the 1980 game. Instead, White could have played

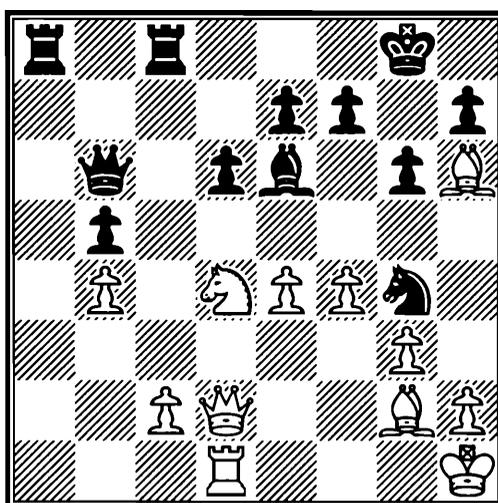
15.Bh6 with a promising game. **15.Rd1.** 15.b4 Bxa1; 16.Qxa1 f6 is fine for Black, since 17.Qc3 fxg5; 18.Qxc6 Ne5; 19.Qc3 e6; 20.Ne3 Bb7 gives White nothing for the exchange.

**15...Nc5; 16.Bh6 Bh8.**



Black has no problem defending the kingside, and White's coming exchange sacrifice has insufficient foundation. **17.b4?! Bxa1; 18.Qxa1 Ne6.** Black's position is rock solid. Even the pawn structure is superior. **19.Ndf4.** 19.f4 f6; 20.Qc3 Bd7; 21.g4 Rc8 was preferable for Black, according to Ernst.

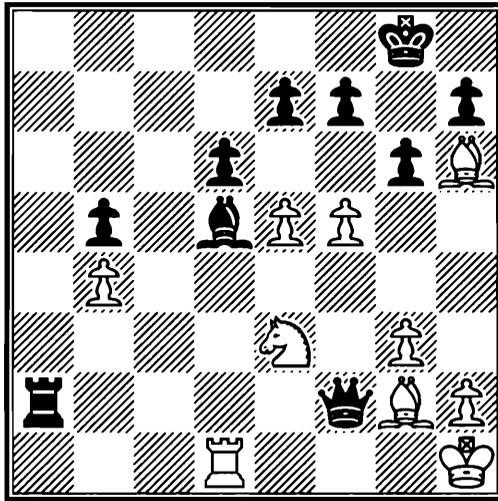
**19...Ne5!** Blocking the diagonal. **20.Nxe6 Bxe6; 21.f4.** White kicks the knight, but the weakness of the a7-g1 diagonal is too high a price. **21...Qb6+; 22.Kh1 Ra8!; 23.Qc3.** 23.Qb2 Ra2; 24.Qc3 Rc8 is even worse. **23...Rec8; 24.Qd2 Ng4; 25.Nd4.**



White tries to cover the f2-square, but Black breaks through anyway. **25...Ra2; 26.f5 Rxc2!; 27.Nxc2 Nf2+; 28.Qxf2.** 28.Kg1 Nxd1+; 29.Qd4 Qxd4+; 30.Nxd4 Bd7 cannot be held by White.

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28...Qxf2; 29.Ne3 Bc4; 30.e5 gxf5. There was a quicker win in the amazing 30...Bd5!



White has three ways of capturing the bishop, but all lead to quick checkmates. 31.exd6 exd6; 32.Rg1 Re2; 33.Nd1. White resigned, or lost on time. In any case, the queen sacrifice 33...Qxg2f forces checkmate.

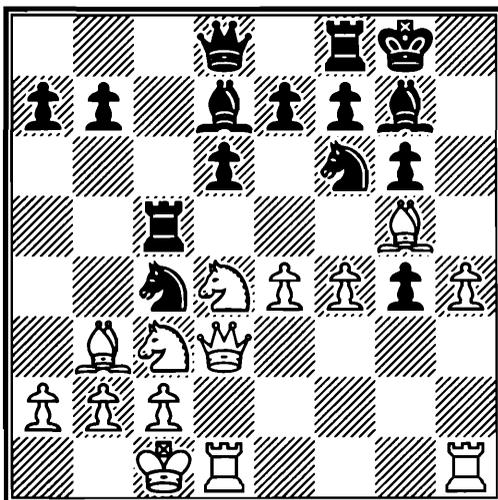
### **Kiril Georgiev**

Bulgarian Grandmaster Kiril Georgiev has carried the torch for the Dragon in the most prestigious international competitions of the late 1980s and early 1990s. He has played a large number of influential games and made great contributions to the Dragon.

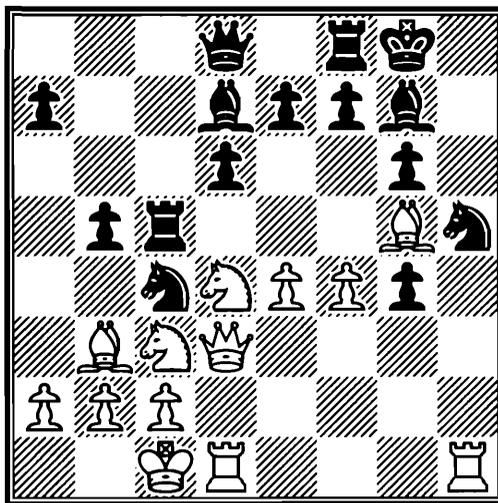
### **W. Watson vs. Georgiev: Amsterdam, 1985**

Here is a real treat. Two bona fide Dragoneers do battle in one of the most heavily analyzed lines of the Yugoslav Attack.

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.0-0-0 Ne5; 11.Bb3 Rc8; 12.h4 h5; 13.Bg5 Rc5; 14.g4 hxg4; 15.f4 Nc4; 16.Qd3.



The normal move is 16.Qe2, but this move has also had plenty of tests, and it remains in the current repertoire. **16...b5; 17.h5.** 17.e5 dxe5; 18.Ndxb5 Nxb2! Black had a strong attack in Atri-Vescovi, Moscow Olympiad, 1994. 17.f5 opens up the e5-square. After 17...Ne5; 18.Qe3 Kh7 Black had the better attack in Mortensen-Hansen, Aarhus, 1986. **17...Rxc5.** Capturing with the knight is also possible. 17...Nxb5.



This position is worth examining, because Black has some amazing tactics.

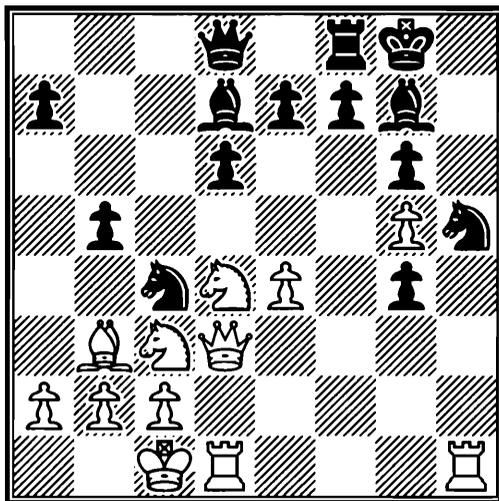
18.Nd5. (18.f5 allows the spectacular 18...Bxd4!!; 19.Qxd4 e5. You should return to the Dragon Endgame chapter and look at Ciric-Neulinger again. Black's plan is remarkably similar, but here the circumstances do not permit the White trick seen in that game. 20.Bxd8 exd4; 21.Be7 dxc3. As the pieces drop from the board, Black's advantage increases. The passed g-pawn is a killer. 22.Bxd6 cxb2+; 23.Kb1 Nxd6; 24.Rxd6 Kg7; 25.Rxd7 Nf6; 26.Rxa7 Nxe4; 27.fxc6 Nd2+; 28.Kxb2 Nxb3; 29.axb3 Kxc6. Black resigned. Ro-

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

driguez-Hernandez, Bayamo, 1984. 18.e5 dxe5; 19.Ndxb5 exf4; 20.Bxc4 Rxc5; 21.Qxd7 wins a piece, but the pawns are too strong. 21...Qxd7; 22.Rxd7 f3; 23.Rf1 Bh6!; 24.Kd1 Ng3; 25.Rg1 Nf5; and Black went on to win in Flores-Henau, Medellin, 1987.)

18...Nxf4! This is presently held to be the best line, though 18...f6 is gaining in popularity. (18...f6; 19.Bh4 e6; 20.Ne3 Nxf4; 21.Qf1 Nxe3; 22.Qxf4 Nxd1; 23.Nxe6 Bxe6; 24.Bxe6+ Rf7; 25.Rxd1 is the main line of the alternative, and Black can either defend with 25...Qc7, as in Zita-Bertolucci, Postal, 1985, or try Markovic's proposed improvement 25...Kh7 which threatens to win the queen by moving the bishop to h6. He considers only Bg5 now, but perhaps 26.Rh1 Rh5; 27.Qg3 is playable since Black's pieces are so inactive.) 19.Bxf4 e5; 20.Bg3 exd4; 21.Bxc4 bxc4; 22.Qd2 Rxd5! Such a strong knight cannot be permitted to live. 23.exd5 Bf5; 24.Qh2 g5; 25.Bxd6 Re8; 26.Rde1 was played in Qi-Speelman, Taxco Interzonal, 1985. Black should play 26...Re4; 27.Rxe4 Bxe4; 28.Re1 f5 with a great game, according to analysis by Sapi and Schneider.

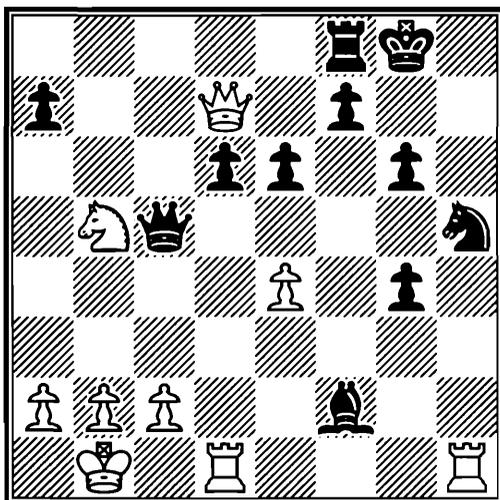
Back in the game, Black has just sacrificed the exchange at g5, as preparation for the capture at h5. **18.fxc5 Nxh5.**



White's attack routes are sealed for the moment, and the Black pieces and pawns can advance toward the enemy king.

**19.Kb1 e6; 20.Bxc4 bxc4; 21.Qxc4 Qxc5; 22.Qc7.** White is infiltrating, but the pawn on the g-file is a monster.

**22...Qc5!; 23.Qxd7 Bxd4; 24.Nb5 Bf2.**



Another use is found for the bishop. It now acts as the escort for the g-pawn. Nothing else matters. **25.Nxd6 g3; 26.Nxf7.** Justified desperation. **26...Rxf7; 27.Qxe6 Kg7; 28.Qg4.** **28.Rd7 Rxd7; 29.Qxd7+ Kh6; 30.Qe8 Bd4!** The bishop does it all, both attack and defense.

**28...Qe5; 29.Rd7 Nf6; 30.Rxf7+ Kxf7; 31.Qf3.** White tries to guard the g2-square, but doesn't have enough force. **31...Qxe4; 32.Qb3+ Qd5; 33.Rh7+ Kg8; 34.Rd7 Qxb3; 35.Rd8+ Kf7; 36.cxb3 g2.** White resigned.

## Eduard Gufeld

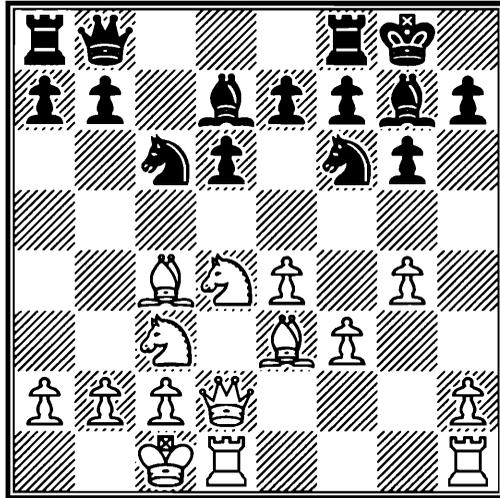
Grandmaster Eduard Gufeld has contributed greatly to the theoretical development of the Dragon, which has been his lifelong companion at the chess board. He has written about the Dragon for over three decades and has also produced some of the most beautiful creations of the opening. Whether playing against low-ranked amateurs or World Champions, Gufeld has never backed away from a brawl.

### Mats vs. Gufeld: Soviet Championship, 1962

There is no shortage of examples of my play in the book, but I have selected this particular game because it illustrates many different important Dragon ideas.

**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.0-0-0 Qb8.** This variation was developed by Leonid Stein, as discussed earlier in the book. I was an enthusiastic early adopter of this idea. **11.g4.**

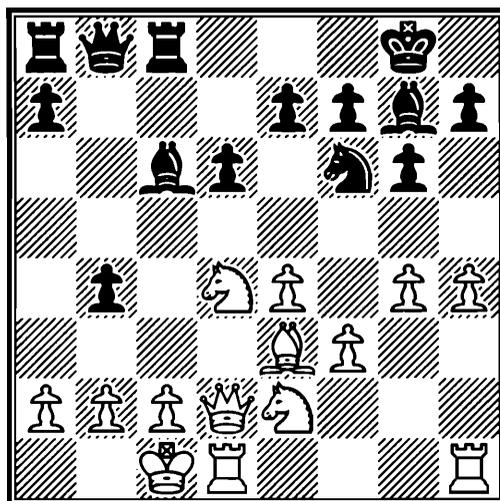
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This is an obvious move, and would be successful if Black didn't have an excellent reply. **11...b5!** It is established theory now that the sacrifice must be declined, and even back in 1962 my opponent had the foresight to play the approved plan.

**12.Bd5!?** **12.Bb3** a5; **13.Nd5** is Suetin-Keene, Hastings, 1967. Black can try either **13...Qb7** or **13...a4** **14.Nxf6+ Bxf6**; **15.Bd5 Rc8** with a complicated position. Instead, Keene sacrificed the exchange, but didn't get enough for it. **12...Rc8**; **13.Bxc6 Bxc6**; **14.h4?** A tempting move, but capturing at c6 was the proper plan.

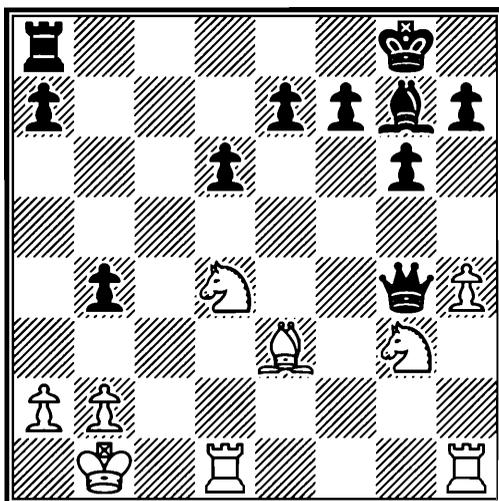
**14...b4!;** **15.Nce2.**



As is so often the case, an apparently strong pawn, this time at e4, turns out to be the main target of Black's attack. **15...Nxe4!;** **16.fxe4.** **16.Nxc6** **Nxd2**; **17.Nxb8** **Nc4** and White's knight is lost. **18.Bd4** **Raxb8**; **19.Bxg7** **Kxg7** leaves White a pawn down.

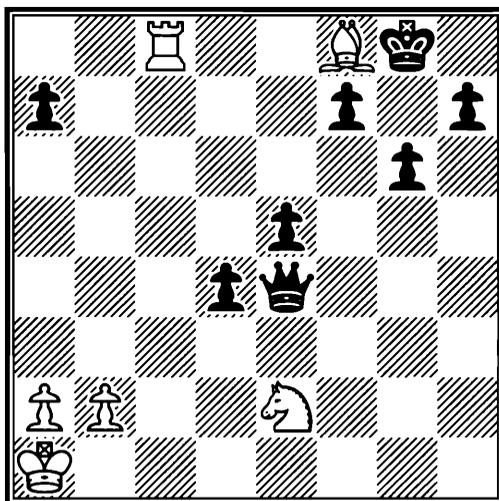
**16...Bxe4**; **17.Ng3** **Bxc2!;** **18.Qxc2.** **18.Nxc2** **b3**; **19.axb3** **Qxb3**; **20.Rdg1** loses to **20...Rc4** because the White king cannot escape the pin.

18...Rxc2+; 19.Kxc2 Qc8+; 20.Kb1 Qxg4.



White does not have nearly enough for the queen. Black's four extra pawns are decisive. **21.Rhg1 Qxh4; 22.Ka1 e6.** The pawns advance and take over the center.

**23.Nde2 d5; 24.Rh1 Qf6; 25.Bd4 e5; 26.Bc5 d4; 27.Bxb4.** This pawn is irrelevant. **27...Qb6; 28.Ba3 Rc8; 29.Ne4 Rc2; 30.Rc1 Qc6!; 31.Rxc2 Qxc2; 32.Rc1 Qxe4; 33.Rc8+ Bf8; 34.Bxf8.**



A glimmer of hope? **34...Qf5.** No. **White resigned.** If the rook leaves the c-file then ...Qf1 mates, while any retreat along the c-file drops the bishop.

## Garry Kasparov

Kasparov claims that thirteen is his lucky number. We choose the 13th game of the 1995 PCA World Championship match between Kasparov, the 13th World Champion, and Viswanathan Anand. The Dragon must have come as quite a surprise to Anand,

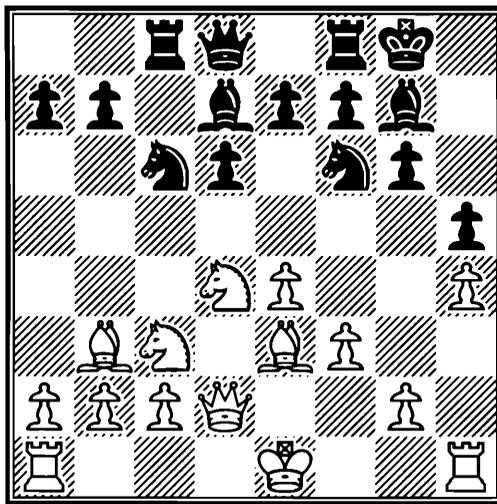
## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

since it had never played any real role in Kasparov's repertoire before this match. The match turned out to be one of the most important in the history of the Dragon, as the two superstars battled with well prepared arsenals.

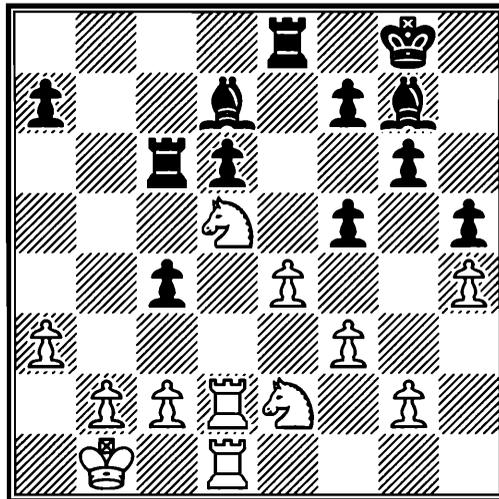
### **Anand vs. Kasparov: PCA World Championship, 1995**

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.Qd2 Nc6; 8.f3 0-0; 9.Bc4. As White, Kasparov chose immediate castling that year. 9...0-0 d5; 10.exd5 (10.Qe1 has become a major alternative, for example, 10...e6; 11.h4 Qc7; 12.exd5 Nxd5; 13.Nxd5 exd5; 14.Qd2 Re8!; 15.h5 Rxe3!; 16.Qxe3 Nxd4; 17.Rxd4 Bf5 with equal chances, Shirov-Topalov, Dos Hermanas, 1996) 10...Nxd5; 11.Nxc6 bxc6; 12.Bd4 Nxc3; 13.Qxc3 Bh6+; 14.Be3 Bxe3+; 15.Qxe3 Qb6; 16.Qxe7 and White went on to win in Kasparov-Topalov, Amsterdam, 1995. 9.g4 Be6; 10.0-0-0 Nxd4; 11.Bxd4 Qa5; 12.Kb1 Rfc8; 13.a3 Rab8; 14.Nd5 Qxd2; 15.Rxd2 Nxd5; 16.Bxg7 Ne3! was agreed drawn in the 15th game of the match. This was an improvement on 16...Kxg7; 17.exd5 Bd7; 18.h4 b5; 19.h5 of Young-Moskow, USA, 1992.

9...Bd7; 10.h4 h5; 11.Bb3 Rc8.

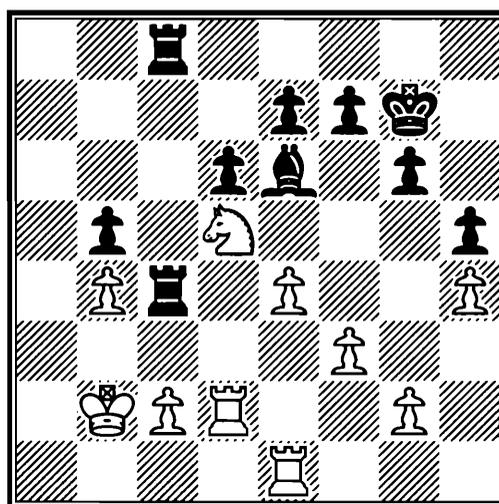


After a debacle in game 11, Anand switches to an unusual line. 12.Nxc6. The normal 12.0-0-0 Ne5 was seen in other games in the match. 13.Bg5 Rc5; 14.Kb1 Re8; 15.Rhe1 Qa5; 16.a3 b5; 17.Bxf6 exf6; 18.Nde2 Rc6; 19.Nd5 Qxd2; 20.Rxd2 Nc4; 21.Bxc4 bxc4; 22.Red1 f5.



This critical position was seen in the 17th game of the match. Anand rejected 23.Ng3 and 23.Nb4, preferring to capture at f5. 23.exf5 Bxf5; 24.Nd4. The centralized knights are so powerful that Black must give up the Dragon bishop, after which White has good prospects of working against the queenside. 24...Bxd4; 25.Rxd4 Re2; 26.R4d2 Rxd2; 27.Rxd2 Kf8 followed, and here Anand should have played 28.Nb4 with an advantage.

Anand also tried 13.Kb1 Nc4; 14.Bxc4 Rxc4; 15.Nde2 b5; 16.Bh6 Qa5; 17.Bxg7 Kxg7; 18.Nf4 Rfc8; 19.Ncd5 Qxd2; 20.Rxd2 Nxd5; 21.Nxd5 Kf8; 22.Re1 Rb8; 23.b3 Rc5; 24.Nf4 Rbc8; 25.Kb2 a5; 26.a3 Kg7; 27.Nd5 Be6; 28.b4 axb4; 29.axb4 Rc4.

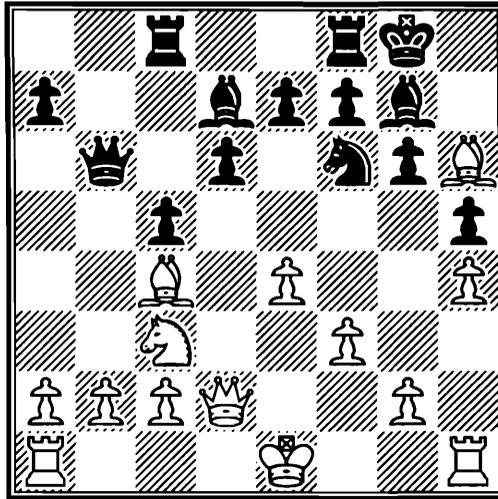


In the 11th game of the match Anand fell into a trap. The position would have been very drawish had he simply captured on e7, but the fork was too tempting. 30.Nb6?? Rxb4+; 31.Ka3 Rxc2!! White resigned, because of 32.Rxc2 Rb3+; 33.Ka2 Re3+; 34.Kb2 Rxe1 with an easy win in the ending.

So, Anand decided to try the capture at c6 in the next game.

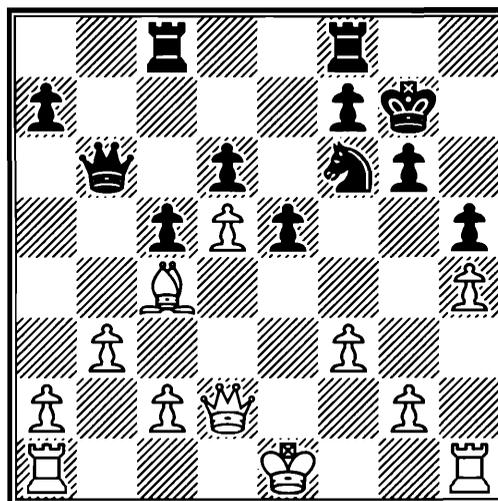
## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

**12...bxc6; 13.Bh6 c5.** The 13th game turned the spotlight on this rare plan. White has to deal with the threatened advance of the c-pawn. **14.Bc4.** **14.Bxg7 Kxg7; 15.Bc4 Qb6** transposes to the game. **14...Qb6!?**



This was a new plan, and Kasparov made a good advertisement for it in this game. **15.Bxg7 Kxg7; 16.b3.** **16.0-0-0!?** was possible. Kasparov gives the following equalizing line. **16...Qb4; 17.b3 Be6; 18.Nd5! Nxd5; 19.exd5 Qxd2+; 20.Rxd2 Bd7; 21.Re1 Rfe8; 22.Rde2 Kf6; 23.c3 a5.**

**16...Be6; 17.Nd5?! 17.Bxe6!?** fxe6; **18.Na4 Qc7!?** This situation is not so clear. The attempt to shut down the center with **19.c4** is not effective, as Black can play **19...d5** with a messy position in which White's king might find the center a bit uncomfortable. **17...Bxd5; 18.exd5 e5!**

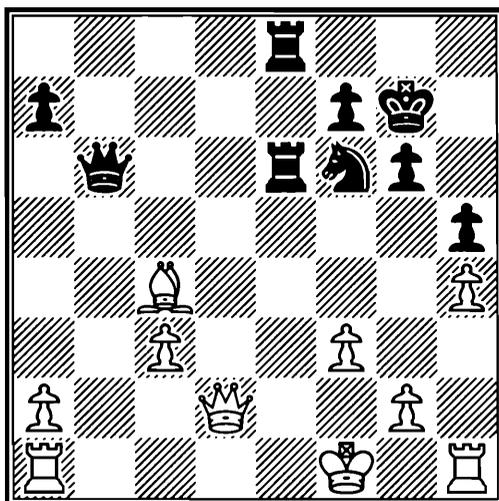


It is clear that Black has the advantage here. The bishop is useless and will become a real liability in any endgame. Kasparov senses that the time is right for an attack, and invites Anand to capture at e6 and open up lines. White should have left the d-

pawn in place. **19.dxe6?! 19.0-0-0** Qb4 is better for Black, but not yet lost. **19...d5!; 20.Be2 20.Bxd5?** loses to **20...Rfd8; 21.c4 fxe6** and the pin wins. **20...c4!** The pawn at e6 is insignificant. It is time to attack!

**21.c3? 21.Rd1!** was the only move. Then the best Black can do is preserve a small advantage with **21...c3!; 22.Qd4 fxe6**. White should definitely keep the queens on here. **21...Rce8!; 22.bxc4. 22.exf7 Rxf7; 23.Kd1** is too slow. **23...Rfe7; 24.Re1 d4!; 25.cxd4 (25.bxc4 d3; 26.Qxd3 Rd8) 25...Nd5; 26.bxc4 Ne3+; 27.Kc1 Nxc4; 28.Qc2 Qxd4; 29.Qxc4 Qxa1+; 30.Kd2 Rd7+** and Black wins.

**22...Rxe6; 23.Kf1. 23.cxd5 Re5; 24.Kf1 Nxd5; 25.Qd4 Qf6; 26.Kf2 Nxc3!** White cannot avoid the loss of a lot of material, for example, **27.Qxc3 Rxe2+; 28.Kxe2 Qxc3. 23...Rfe8; 24.Bd3 dxc4; 25.Bxc4.**



White is a pawn ahead, but the loss of castling privilege is terminal. A simple combination brings the game to a close. **25... Ne4! White resigned.** The threat is **...Ng3+.** **26.fxe4. 26.Qe1 Rd6** sets up the fork at d2. **27.Bd3 Nf6; 28.Qd2 Red8** wins the piece anyway. **26...Rf6+; 27.Ke1 Rxe4+; 28.Be2 Qf2+; 29.Kd1 Rxe2; 30.Qxe2 Rd6+** wins the queen.

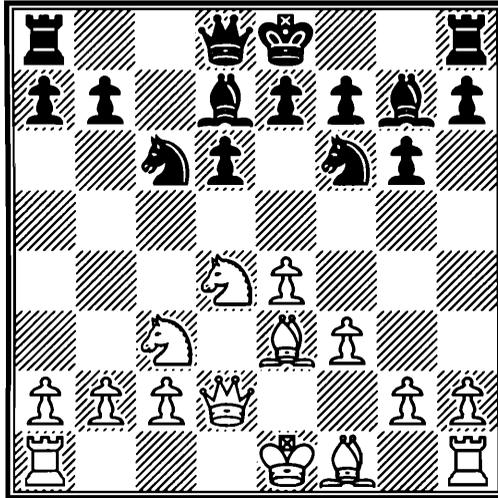
## Sergey Kudrin

American Grandmaster Sergey Kudrin has been a devoted Dragoner throughout his career. He plays it against professional and amateur opposition, and doesn't hesitate to get into a flaming firefight. In this recent game, he explores an unusual move order to confuse his opponent.

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

### Kagan vs. Kudrin: Eastern Open, 1997

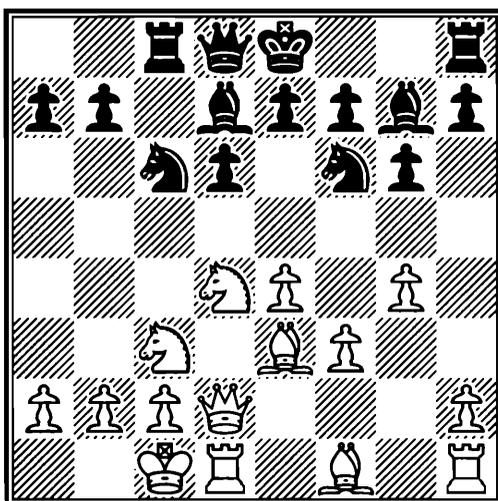
1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 Bd7.



This move is not usually played so early, as it commits Black to a specific post for the bishop. Play does not always transpose to the main lines, however, and often White sits in puzzlement, trying to figure out how to handle the situation.

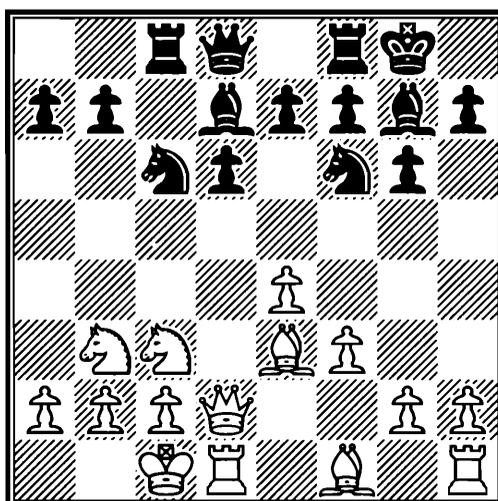
**9.0-0-0.** 9.Bc4 is more common, inviting the main lines of the Yugoslav Attack after 9...0-0; 10.0-0-0. 9...Rc8 is possible here, as in Van Kooten-Perluka, Dutch Junior Championship, 1995, which continued 10.Bb3 Na5; 11.0-0-0 Nxb3+; 12.axb3 0-0; 13.h4 h5 with a dynamically balanced game. **9...Rc8.** This move lends the variation a more original flavor. Black plans to keep the king at e8. The delay in castling can be risky, but Dragoners are a bold lot. **10.Nb3.**

10.g4 is preferred by the theoreticians. Tiviakov has defended the Black side a number of times.



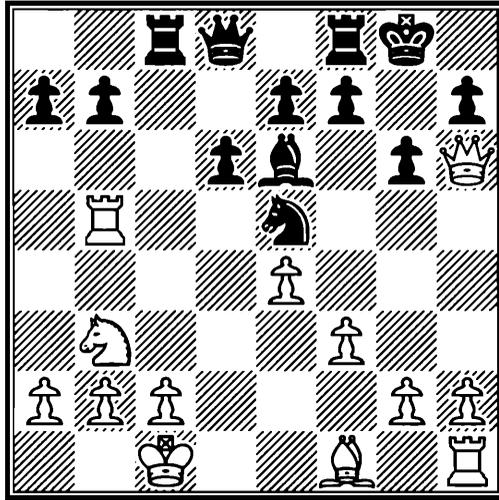
10...Ne5; 11.h4 (11.Kb1 0-0; 12.g5 Nh5; 13.Be2 Nc4; 14.Bxc4 Rxc4; 15.Nde2 Be6; 16.Bd4 Bxd4; 17.Nxd4 Qd7; 18.Nce2 Bh3; 19.Ng3 Ng7 gave Black a solid position in Shabanov-Tiviakov, Russian Championship, 1996) 11...h5; 12.g5 Nh7; 13.Kb1 (13.f4 Ng4; 14.Bh3 Nxe3; 15.Bxd7+ Qxd7; 16.Qxe3 0-0 led to sharp play in Korneyev-Tiviakov, Corsica Rapid, 1997) 13...0-0; 14.f4 Ng4; 15.Bg1 e5. (15...a6; 16.Nde2 b5; 17.Nd5 Bc6; 18.Bg2 Re8; 19.Ne3 Nxe3; 20.Bxe3 Qc7 and the initiative shifted to Black in Myo Naing-Tiviakov, World Cities Championship, 1997.) 16.fxe5 Nxe5; 17.Nd5 Bg4; 18.Be2 Nc4; 19.Qe1 Bxe2; 20.Qxe2 turned out in White's favor in Xie Jun-Tiviakov, Beijing, 1997.

After the retreat of the knight, Black simply castles. **10...0-0.**



The knight is not well placed at b3, and Black can already be satisfied with the position. **11.Bh6 Bxh6; 12.Qxh6 Ne5; 13.Nd5 Nxd5; 14.Rxd5 Be6; 15.Rb5?!**

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The rook gets into trouble on the queenside. **15...Qc7; 16.Qd2 a6; 17.Ra5 Bc4; 18.Ra4 b5!** The a-pawn is sacrificed to bring the rook a long way from home.

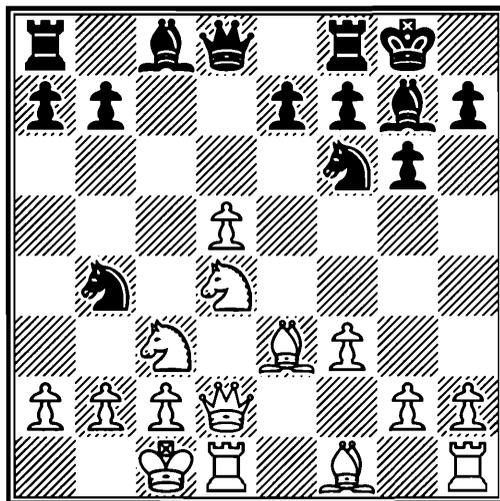
**19.Rxa6 Qb7; 20.Ra3 Bxf1; 21.Na5. 21.Rxf1 Nc4** wins the exchange. **21...Qb6; 22.Rxf1 b4!** This wins, because White must lose a piece. **23.Rb3. 23.Ra4 Qb5; 24.b3 Qxf1+. 23...Qxa5; 24.Kb1 Ra8. White resigned.** A nice example of piece play by Kudrin.

### David Levy

International Master David Levy is one of the most prolific authors of chess books, and his 1972 book *The Sicilian Dragon* is a classic. He is a former Scottish champion and represented his country in two Olympiads before turning his attention to computer chess and, more recently, his Mind Sports Olympiad which includes chess and other games and mental competitions. Sometimes he didn't need a deep knowledge of theory to clobber his opponent. We see a brutal miniature in the following game.

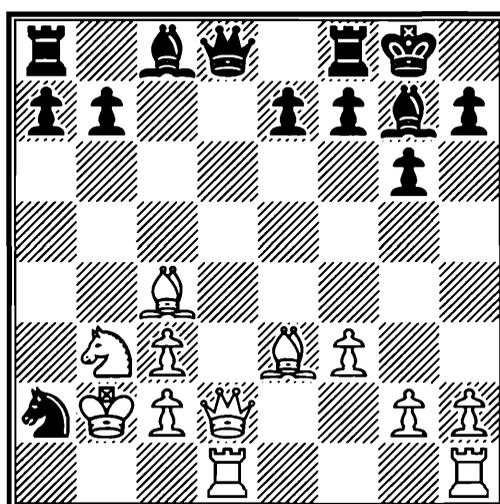
#### Maeder vs. Levy: Haifa, 1970

**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.0-0-0 d5; 10.exd5 Nb4.**



Levy's originality can be seen in this game. His experiment has never drawn much attention. **11.Bc4**. 11.Nb3 Bf5; 12.Ne4 Nxa2+; 13.Kb1 Bxe4; 14.fxe4 Nxe4 puts all of Black's minor pieces in striking position. And strike they do! 15.Qe1 Nac3+!!; 16.bxc3 Nxc3+; 17.Kc1 Nxd1; 18.Qxd1 a5 and the a-pawn will be hard to stop.

**11...Nfxd5; 12.Nb3?** 12.Nxd5 Nxd5; 13.Bh6 is much more precise. This is the line that discourages Black from playing 10...Nb4 these days. **12...Nxc3; 13.bxc3 Nxa2+; 14.Kb2**.



White has miscalculated the tactics, and the position is already beyond salvation. **14...Nxc3!; 15.Qxd8 Nxd1+**. **White resigned**. The double-check keeps White materially ahead.

## Georgy Lisitsin

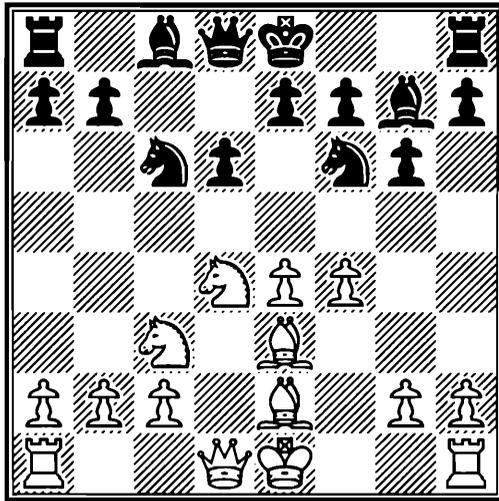
Lisitsin was a regular participant in the Soviet Championships in the years surrounding World War II and played ten times, winning at least a share of the title four times. He is known for his

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gambit against the Dutch Defense, 1.Nf3 f5; 2.e4!? His contributions to the Dragon are also noteworthy.

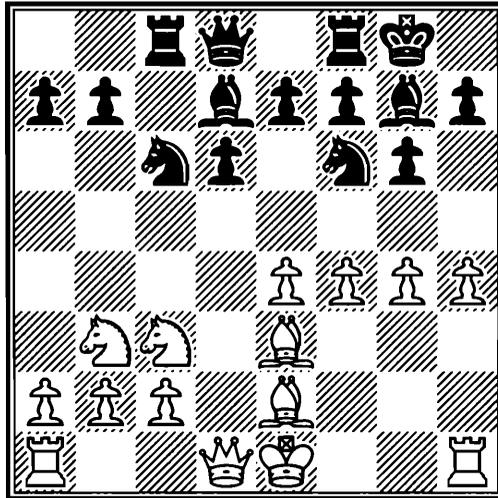
### **Bondarevsky vs. Lisitsin: Tbilisi, 1937**

Our selected game features an odd and very aggressive plan for White. 1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be2 Bg7; 7.Be3 Nc6; 8.f4.



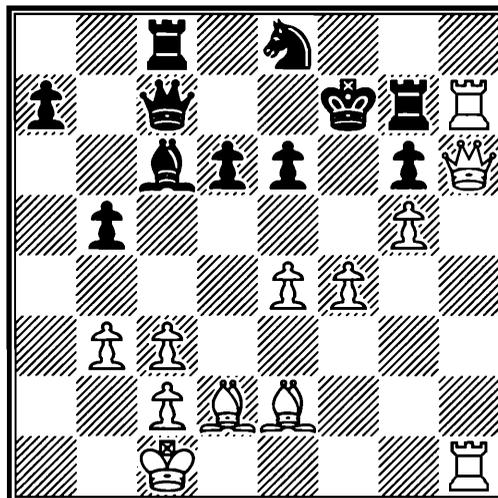
This move is not mentioned in most sources, who assume that Black will castle. In fact, play is almost certain to return to normal classical lines. 8.Nb3 Be6; 9.f4 is another way of implementing this plan. 9...0-0. (9...Rc8; 10.0-0 0-0; 11.Qe1 Nb4; 12.Rc1 a6; 13.Nd4 Bc4 gave Black some counterplay in Loewenfisch-Lisitsin, Tbilisi 1937.) 10.Bf3 Bc4; 11.Qd2 Rc8; 12.Rd1 Qc7; 13.Nd5 Qb8; 14.Nd4 Rfe8; 15.Kf2 Nxd5 was already better for Black in Rauzer-Lisitsin, Leningrad 1933.

**8...Bd7.** The bishop usually comes to e6, as we just saw, but this is a playable alternative. **9.Nb3 Rc8; 10.g4 0-0; 11.h4.**



This crude attack is hardly in keeping with modern principles, but it had a brief flurry of activity when art deco was all the rage.

**11...Na5.** 11...Kh8; 12.g5 Ne8; 13.h5 Bxc3+; 14.bxc3 e6; 15.hxg6 fxg6; 16.Qd3. White has a powerful attack. This obscure game is not well known, and is worth presenting in full. 16...Kg8; 17.0-0-0 Rf7; 18.Rh6 Qc7; 19.Rdh1 Na5; 20.Bd2 Nxb3+?; 21.axb3 b5; 22.Qh3 Rg7; 23.Rxh7 Kf7; 24.Qh6 Bc6.

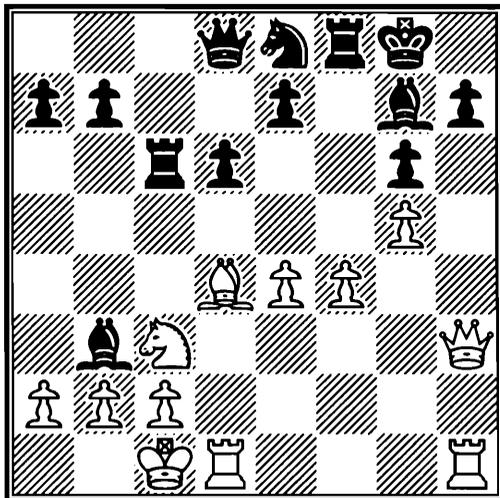


25.Qxg6+!! Kxg6; 26.Bh5+!! Kxh7; 27.Bf7# Fox-Dickerson, Brooklyn, 1904. 11...Nb4; 12.Bf3 Nxc4; 13.Bxc4 Bxc4; 14.Qxc4 Nxc2+; 15.Kf2 Nxa1; 16.Nxa1 h5; 17.Qg5 e6 and Black eventually won in Pachman-Prucha, Prague, 1943.

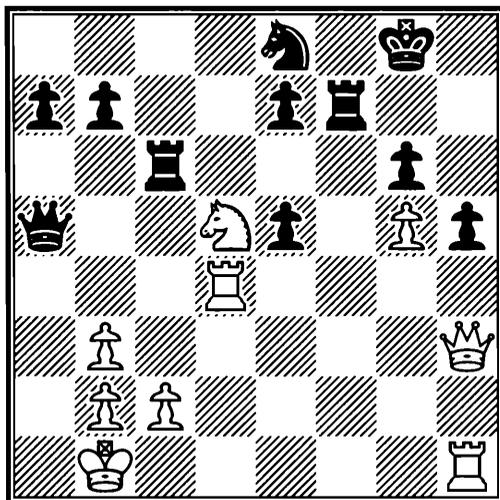
**12.Bd4 Nc4; 13.g5 Ne8?** Objectively, the knight should have gone to h5. 13...Nh5; 14.Bxh5 Bxd4; 15.Nxd4 gxh5; 16.Qxh5 Nxb2 is not at all clear. Black has strong queenside play, and it is hard to see White breaking through on the kingside since the pawns are in the way.

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14.Bxc4 Rxc4; 15.Qd3 Rc6; 16.0-0-0 Be6; 17.h5 Bxb3;  
18.hxg6 fxg6; 19.Qh3.



Black is definitely in trouble on the kingside, but manages to get out of immediate danger. 19...h5!; 20.axb3. 20.gxh6 Bxd4; 21.Rxd4 Bf7 should provide enough defense. 20...Bxd4; 21.Rxd4 Rxf4; 22.Nd5. White tries to bring all of his pieces into the attack. 22...Rf7. The rook would have been better at g4, but this is not bad, either. 23.e5 Qa5!; 24.Kb1 dxe5.



White is on the horns of a dilemma. If the rook leaves the d-file, then the knight falls. If the rook retreats, however, then ...Ra6 is powerful. White tries to keep the initiative. 25.Qd7 Kf8; 26.Rdd1 Ra6; 27.Kc1. Black wins by force.

27...Qa1+; 28.Kd2 Qxb2!; 29.Rhf1 Qd4+; 30.Ke2 Qg4+! Of course White must exchange queens now, but perhaps forgot that the queen at d7 is undefended. 31.Kd3?? 31.Qxg4 hxg4; 32.Rxf7+ Kxf7 is in any case a hopeless endgame. 31...Qxd7. **White resigned.**

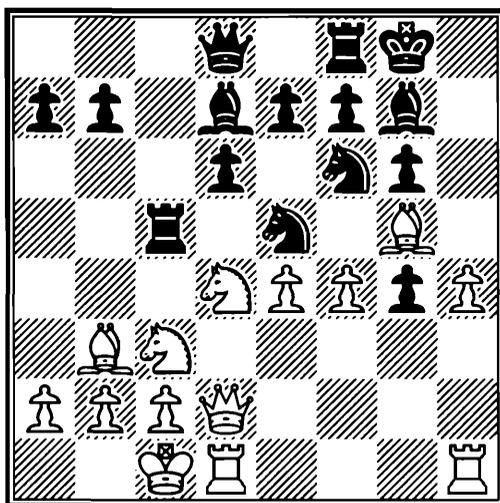
## Jonathan Mestel

Grandmaster Jonathan Mestel was one of the bright stars of the English Chess explosion of the late 1970s and early 1980s. He brought many innovations to his favorite openings, including the Sicilian Dragon. The following game, from the Robert Silk tournament of 1976 in which Mestel tied for first, is a true gem.

### Westerinen vs. Mestel: Esbjerg, 1979

This game was awarded the best game prize for the tournament.

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 Nf6; 4.Nc3 cxd4; 5.Nxd4 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.h4 Rc8; 11.Bb3 h5; 12.0-0-0 Ne5; 13.Bg5 Rc5; 14.g4 hxg4; 15.f4.

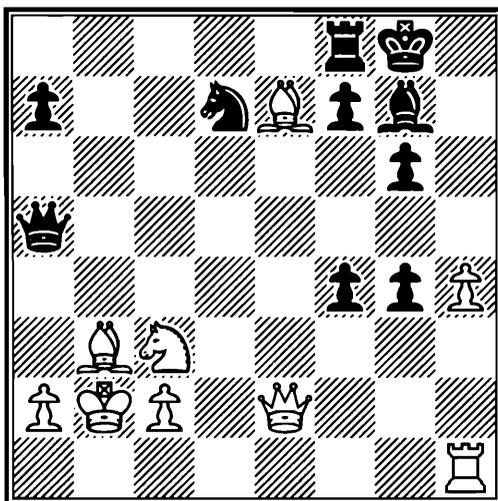


This is one of the most hotly debated lines of the Soltis variation, even after a quarter century of discussion. 15...Nc4; 16.Qe2 b5; 17.e5?! The normal move now is 17.f5.

17...dxe5; 18.Ndxb5? 18.Bxf6! Bxf6; 19.Ndxb5 Nxb2 is correct, getting into a proper brawl, as in Delannoy-Moingt, Belgium, 1993. 18...Nxb2!; 19.Kxb2 Qa5; 20.Rxd7. This obviously would have more effect if there were no knight at f6! 20.Bxf6 is too slow because of 20...Bxb5!; 21.Nxb5 Bxf6 and White is in trouble.

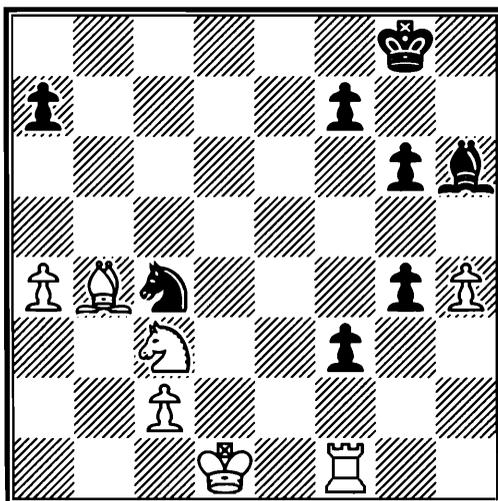
20...Nxd7; 21.Bxe7. White wins the exchange, but that has never been of much concern to Black in the Dragon! 21...Rxc3; 22.Nxc3 exf4.

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Black has a much better game. The Dragon bishop, the pawns and the queen are powerful weapons. **23.Qc4 Nb6; 24.Qb4 Qxb4; 25.Bxb4 Rc8; 26.Rf1 f3.** White has managed to survive to an endgame, but the pawns are just too much. **27.a4** Black now finds a way to sacrifice the exchange again, even in the endgame!

**27...Rc4!; 28.Bxc4 Nxc4+; 29.Kc1 Bh6+; 30.Kd1.**



Black now recoups more material. **30...Ne3+; 31.Ke1 Nxc2+; 32.Kf2 Nxb4.** White could resign here.

**33.Rd1 f5; 34.Rd6 Bf8; 35.Rd8 Kf7; 36.Kg3 Bc5; 37.Nd1 Ke6; 38.Rd2 Nd5; 39.a5 Nf6; 40.Rc2 Nh5+; 41.Kh2 g3+.** White resigned.

### Tony Miles

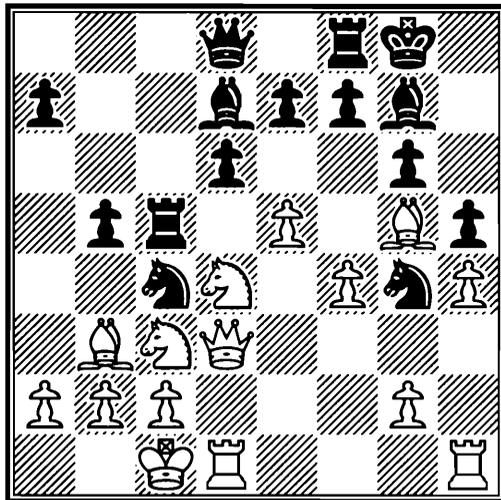
Grandmaster Tony Miles was the first British player to earn the international title, and was one of the top players of the 1980s. He was a formidable opponent, though not very consistent in his later years. Miles enjoyed both main line and offbeat openings,

and was a renowned opening theoretician, though he preferred discussing moves at the board to writing about them. Nevertheless, he was co-author of a very influential book on the Dragon, and was responsible for elevating the Soltis Variation to its current position as one of the most important lines. One of the secrets of success for Miles is his tremendous endgame play, in which he took advantage of the weaknesses left behind after White's attack is spent.

### Ljubojevic vs. Miles: Malta Olympiad, 1980

Miles won the prestigious *Chess Informant* best game prize for this effort.

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.h4 Rc8; 11.Bb3 h5; 12.0-0-0 Ne5; 13.Bg5 Rc5; 14.f4 Nc4; 15.Qd3 b5; 16.e5. 16.Bxf6 Bxf6; 17.e5 Bg7; 18.Ne4 Rc8; 19.e6 Bxe6; 20.Nxe6 Bxb2+! Black had a winning position in Pokojowczyyk-Mestel, also at the Malta Olympiad. Co-author Schiller witnessed these as one of the arbiters of the event. 16...Ng4.



17.Ne4. 17.exd6 Rxc5. If the knight captures the pawn at d6, then Qxc6 exploits the pin on the f-pawn. 18.fxc6 Nf2; 19.Qe2 Nxd1; 20.Rxd1 Nxd6; 21.Ncxb5 Nxb5; 22.Nxb5 Bxb5; 23.Bxf7+! brought White the advantage in Rocha-Langier, Mar del Plata, 1989.

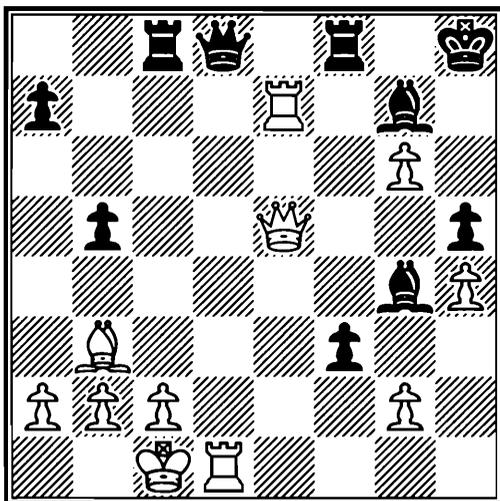
17...Rc8. 17...Rd5; 18.Nxd6 Ngxe5; 19.fxe5 Nxe5; 20.Bxd5 Nxd3+; 21.Rxd3 Qb6 was played in a game between the same two combatants at the 1979 Riga Interzonal. There White allowed Black to equalize after 22.Bx37 Bxd4, but White could

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

play 22.Bxf7+ Rxf7; 23.Nxf7 Kxf7; 24.Re1 with a good attacking position, so Miles decided to vary. 18.exd6 f6; 19.Rhe1. Over a decade later, White tried to improve. 19.Nc3 Nf2; 20.Qxg6 Qe8! White must part with one of the rooks, Golovenchenko-Bashtovoi, USSR, 1981.

19...exd6; 20.Nxd6. Black needs to take care of king safety. The bishop at g5 isn't going anywhere. 20...Kh7; 21.f5 Nxd6; 22.fxg6+ Kh8; 23.Bf4. The bishop managed to escape, but at the cost of a knight. White has some compensation, but not enough. 23...Ne5! The knight must be removed, but each exchange of pieces helps Black. 24.Bxe5 fxe5; 25.Nf3 e4! The beginning of a combination which wins brilliantly.

26.Qxd6 exf3; 27.Re7 Bg4!; 28.Qe5.



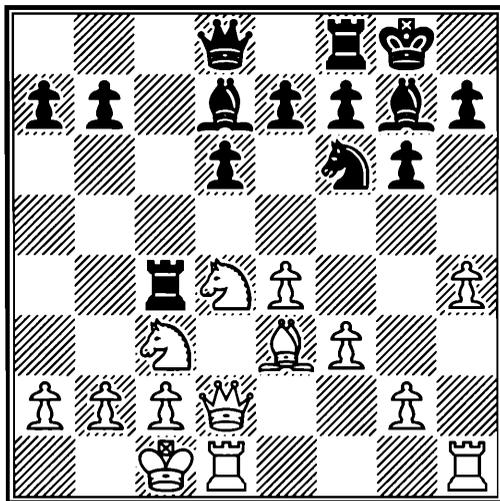
White does not fear an exchange of queens, but that is not what Black has in mind! 28...Qxd1+!!; 29.Kxd1 fxg2+; 30.Kd2 Rfd8+; 31.Bd5 Rxd5+. White resigned. A new Black queen is about to make an appearance.

### Gennady Nesis

It is not surprising that leading correspondence players find the Dragon fertile territory for new ideas. Without the burden of having to memorize all the lines, the opening can be steered toward critical positions which have been well studied at home. Nesis is an excellent example of a player who excels at correspondence play, where his creative talents are unfettered by the practical considerations of tournament play. He tied for second in the 11th World Correspondence Championship in 1989.

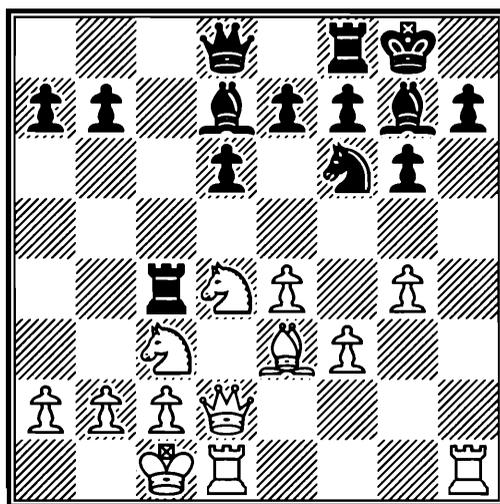
**Wibe vs. Nesis: Postal, 1991**

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.0-0-0 Rc8; 11.Bb3 Ne5; 12.h4. 12.Bh6? is a mistake, falling to the usual exchange sacrifice 12...Bxh6; 13.Qxh6 Rxc3; 14.bxc3 a5; 15.a3 a4; 16.Ba2 Qa5; with more than enough compensation in Gelemerov-Nesis, Postal, 1991. 12...Nc4; 13.Bxc4 Rxc4.



Nesis has made this line his specialty, and it would not be inappropriate to call it the Nesis Variation. Beginning with move ten, Black works directly toward the attack on the c-file. This is a very uncompromising variation.

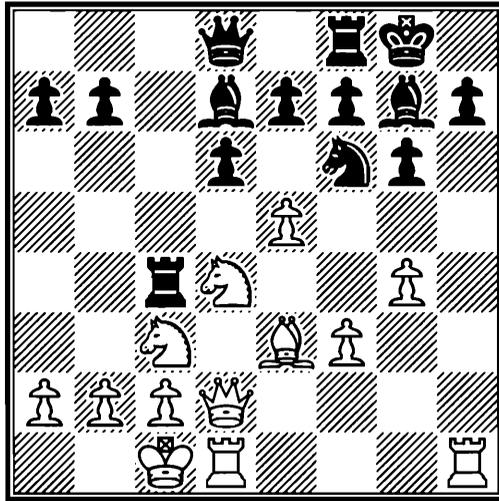
**14.h5.** 14.g4 Qa5; 15.h5 Rfc8; 16.Nb3 Qa6; 17.hxg6 hxg6; 18.Qh2 led to a Nesis win after 18...Rxc3!; 19.bxc3 Qxa2; 20.e5 Nh5; 21.Rd3 Bxe5; 22.Qd2 Bb5; 23.Bd4 Bxd3; 24.Bxe5 Bc4. White resigned, Aronson-Nesis, Postal, 1978. 14...Nxf5; 15.g4 Nf6.



This position presents a typical Dragon problem. Though Black's play offers only one major deviation, Soltis's 12...h5, White

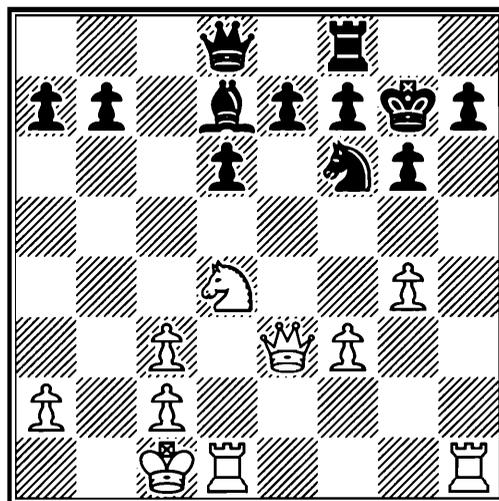
## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

can now choose from among eleven variations. Here are just the main lines of each move. **16.e5.**



You might want to examine each of the alternatives because there are instructive tactics and positional evaluations. Here they are.

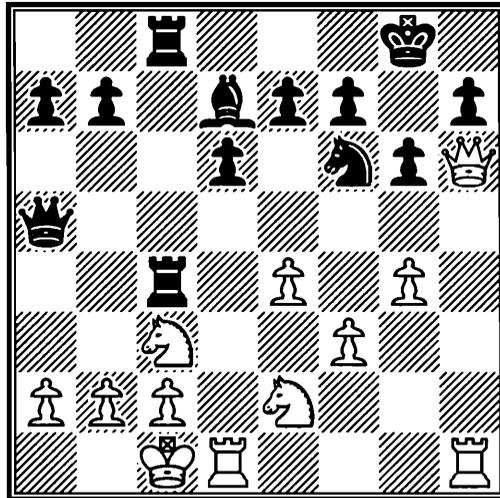
1. 16.Bh6 looks impressive, but Black has a counterstroke. 16...Nxe4!; 17.Qe3 (17.Nxe4 Rxd4; 18.Qh2 Be5; 19.Qh4 Rxd1+; 20.Kxd1 f5; 21.Bxf8 Kxf8; 22.Qxh7 Qb6 leaves White in dire trouble, for example, 23.f4 Bg7; 24.Ng5 Qd4+; 25.Ke1 Qxf4; 26.Qxg6 Qc1+; 27.Kf2 Bd4+; 28.Kg3 Be5+. White resigned, Baikov-Utiacky, Soviet Union, 1967) 17...Rxc3; 18.bxc3 (18.Qxe4 Bxh6+; 19.Rxh6 e5; 20.Rdh1 Rc4; 21.Rxh7 Rxd4; 22.Qe3 Rf4; 23.g5 Qxg5; 24.Rh8+ Kg7; 25.R1h7+ Kf6; 26.Rxf8 Be6 and Black eventually prevailed in Trofimov-Nesis, Postal, 1972) 18...Nf6; 19.Bxg7 Kxg7.



White has tried many plans here. Doubling rooks on the h-file is one of the most popular. 20.Rh2 set Black many problems before a good defenses were found. 20...Rh8; 21.Nb3 h5!?

Bc6 is another good move. 22.g5! Nh5; 23.f4 Re8!; 24.f5 Qb6; 25.Nd4 Qc5; 26.Re1 Bd7!; 27.Qf3 Bc6! led to complicated play in Kasparov-Piket, Tilburg, 1989.) 22.g5 Nh7; 23.f4 Bg4!; 24.Re1. A draw was agreed in Morgado-Nesis, Postal, 1990. Black is certainly no worse.

2. 16.Nde2 Qa5. This is the move Nesis prefers. 16...Re8 is also popular. 17.Bh6 Bxh6; 18.Qxh6 Rfc8.



With the knight at c3 supported by its friend at e2, the exchange sacrifice is no longer possible. By moving the other rook to the c-file, Black ties the knight at e2 to defensive duties, making it harder to attack. 19.Rd3 Be6. (19...R4c5? led to a World Championship debacle in 20.g5 Rxc5; 21.Rd5 Rxd5; 22.Nxd5 Re8; 23.Nef4 Bc6; 24.e5 Bxd5; 25.exf6 exf6; 26.Qxh7+ Kf8; 27.Qh8+ and Black resigned in the Candidates final match Karpov-Kortchnoi, Moscow, 1974. Karpov went on to gain the title when Fischer refused to defend.)

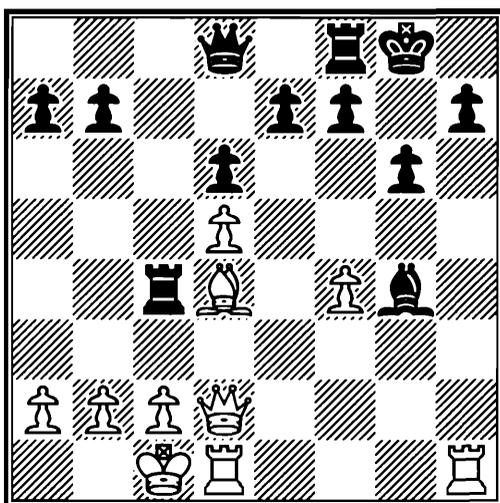
20.g5 Nh5; 21.Ng3 (21.Rxh5 gxh5; 22.Qxh5 R4c5; 23.f4 is an interesting try, but Black has resources too, for example 23...b5; 24.f5 Bxa2; 25.Rh3 Kf8; 26.Qxh7 Ke8; 27.g6 fxc6; 28.Qxc6+ Bf7; 29.Rh8+ Kd7!) 21...Qe5. The return of the queen to the kingside provides all necessary defense, as Nesis has demonstrated in two games. 22.Nxh5 (22.Rxh5 gxh5; 23.Nxh5 was drawn in Bangiyev-Nesis, Postal, 1974-76. The game might have concluded 23...Rxc3!; 24.bxc3 Rxc3; 25.f4 Rxc2+; 26.Kxc2 Qc5+ with a perpetual check) 22...gxh5.

23.Qxh5 Kf8; 24.Qh2 (24.Qh6+ Ke8; 25.Qxh7 Qxc6+; 26.Kb1 Rxc3; 27.Rxc3 Rxc3; 28.bxc3 Qa5; 29.Qh8+ Kd7; 30.Kc1 Bxa2; 31.Kd2 Qg5+ is better for Black) 24...Qxc6+; 25.f4 Qf6; 26.f5 let

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Nesis carry out the usual sacrifice against Nagoronov, in a 1976-78 Postal game. 26...Rxc3; 27.bxc3 Bxa2; 28.Qxh7 Ke8 and Black has sufficient counterplay. When the queens come off, the passed a-pawn is a major factor.

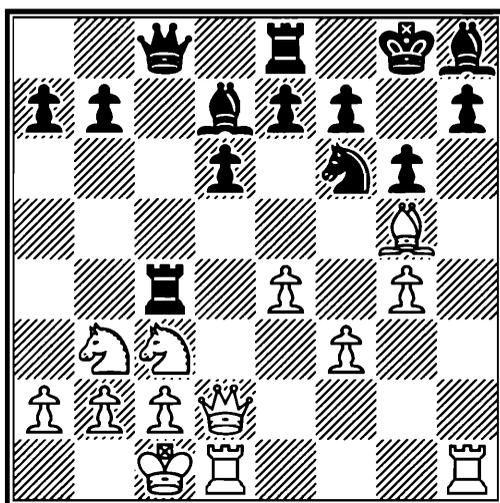
3. 16.Nd5 is often seen. The safe route now is 16...e6, but more fun is to be had with 16...Nxd5; 17.exd5 Be5!? for example, 18.f4? (18.Kb1 is called for here, after 18...Qc7; 19.b3 Rc5; 20.Rh6 turned out badly for Black in Anka-Ballman, Lenk, 1991. 20...Bg7; 21.Rdh1 Rxd5; 22.Rxh7) 18...Bxd4; 19.Bxd4 Bxg4.



The pawns were worth more than the exchange in Gonschier-Mielke, Postal, 1992.

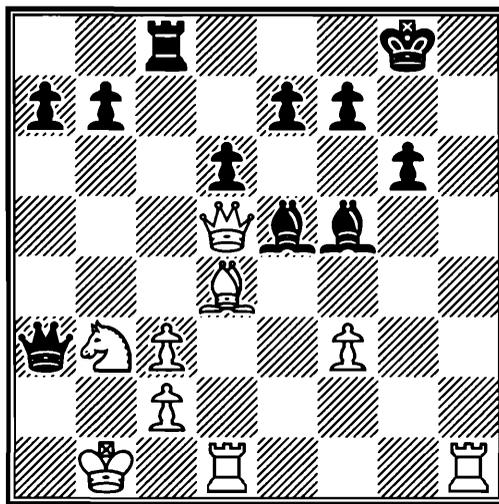
4. 16.b3 Rc5; 17.Ne6 fxe6; 18.Bxc5 dxc5; 19.e5 Nd5; 20.Nxd5 exd5; 21.Qxd5+ e6; 22.Qxd7 Qg5+; 23.Rd2 Qxe5! Black had sufficient counterplay in Altrock-Rigo, Dortmund, 1987.

5. 16.Nb3 Re8; 17.Bh6. White also plays 17.e5 but this move is more interesting. 17...Bh8; 18.Bg5 Qc8!



This is another way of playing on the c-file. 19.Rh4!? Rxc3. (19...Nxc3! is superior, according to Khalifman who suggests 20.fxc3 Bxc3; 21.Re1 h5 with three pawns for the knight.) 20.bxc3 Be6; 21.Rdh1 Bg7; 22.e5! dxe5; 23.Bxf6 Bxf6; 24.Rxh7 Qc4; 25.Kb1! Qf4; 26.Qg2 Bg7; 27.Qh3 f5; 28.Nc5 Bc8; 29.gxf5! and White went on to win in Short-Khalifman, Germany, 1991.

6. 16.Qh2 is handled the usual way. 16...Rxc3!; 17.bxc3 Qa5; 18.Nb3 Qxa2, and even 19.e5!? Nh5; 20.gxh5 Bxe5; 21.Qd2 is not secure. 21...Qa3+; 22.Kb1 Bf5 threatens the knight at b3. 23.Qd5 Rc8; 24.hxg6 hxg6; 25.Bd4.



The Black pieces come crashing in. 25...Rxc3; 26.Na1 Bxc2+; 27.Nxc2 Rb3+; 28.Qxb3 Qxb3+; 29.Kc1 Bf4+ Klovans-Shabalov, Soviet Union, 1983.

7. 16.Kb1 is the kind of safety-first move that often proves very useful later on. By playing it early, Black has to wait longer before White reveals the attacking plan. 16...Re8. A logical replay, so that in the event of Bh6, there is no rook on f8 to worry about. 17.Nd5 (17.b3!? Rc8; 18.Bh6 Bh8; 19.Nce2 Qb6; 20.Be3 Qa6 is Feher-Schneider, which we will examine when we get to the section on Attila Schneider) 17...e6. This defense was developed by one of our other heroes—Sosonko. 18.Nxf6+ Qxf6; 19.Qh2 e5!?!; 20.Qxh7+ Kf8; 21.Nf5 gxf5; 22.gxf5 Bxf5; 23.exf5 e4; 24.c3 exf3; 25.Bh6 Bxh6; 26.Rxh6 Qg7!; 27.Qh8+ Qxh8; 28.Rxh8+ Ke7; 29.Re1+ Kd7; 30.Rhxe8 f2 was equal in Riemersma-Orisi, Dieren, 1989. White might try 21.g5!?

8. 16.Rdg1 e6. (16...b5!?!; 17.Ndxb5 Qa5; 18.Nd4 Rxc3; 19.Qxc3 Qxa2; 20.g5 Rc8 is very messy.) 17.Kb1 Qa5?!; 18.Nb3 Qc7; 19.Bf4 e5; 20.g5 Nh5; 21.Nd5 Qd8; 22.Be3 Be6 allowed White to use the hole at f6 effectively in Vasyukov-Parma, Yugo-

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

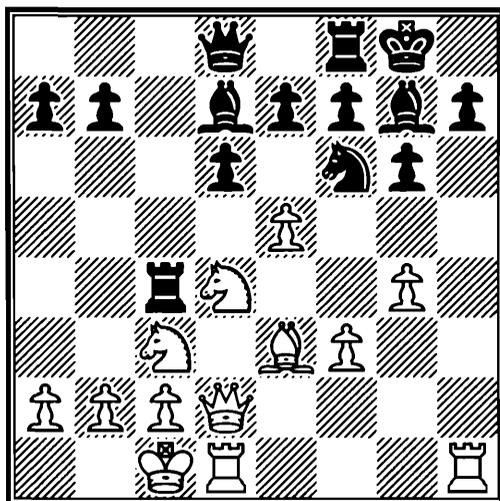
slavia vs. Soviet Union match, 1963. 23.Nf6+! Nxf6; 24.gxf6 Qxf6 (24...Bxf6; 25.Qh2 h5; 26.Qxh5 Re8; 27.Rxg6+! fxg6; 28.Qh7+ Kf8; 29.Bh6+ Bg7; 30.Qxg7#) 25.Bg5! Qxf3; 26.Qh2 Qh5; 27.Qf2 Bh3; 28.Qe3 h6; 29.Nd2. Black resigned. 29...hxg5; 30.Rxh3 would trap the queen.

9. 16.Nf5 Bxf5; 17.exf5 Qa5; 18.Kb1 Rfc8; 19.g5 Nd7; 20.Nd5 Qd8; 21.Qh2 Nf8 provides strong support to the kingside defense, Seger-Quint, Postal, 1987.

10. 16.Rh2 Re8; 17.Nf5 Bxf5; 18.gxf5 Qa5; 19.Kb1 Rec8 20.Bh6 Rxc3; 21.Bxg7 Kxg7; 22.fxg6 fxg6; 23.bxc3 Rxc3; and Black had a strong knight, two extra pawns, and a queenside attack for the rook in Zezyulkin-Lakos, Budapest, 1991.

11. 16.Rh4 e5! leads by force to an advantage for Black. 17.Nb3 Rxc3!; 18.bxc3 Nxe4!; 19.Qh2 Ng5 and Black was better in Farago-Szalanczy, Budapest, 1993.

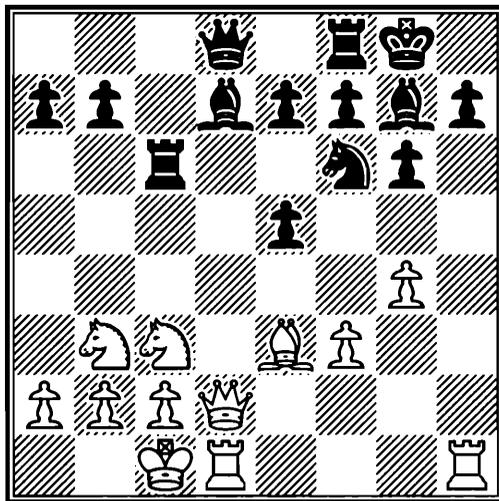
So, we have looked at all eleven alternatives to the advance of the e-pawn to e5, and now return to that move in our main game. When you consider that this is just one of many critical variations in the Dragon, you can see why Dragoners are good students and researchers of chess theory!



16...dxe5. 16...Nxg4 is considered better now. 17.fxg4 Bxg4; 18.Rdg1 dxe5; 19.Rxg4. Black now has another sacrifice ready! 19...Rxd4!; 20.Bxd4 exd4. Black has four pawns for the rook. 21.Ne4 (21.Nd1 Qd5; 22.Qh2 h5 led to a complicated game in Gasanov-Khachian, Soviet Union, 1988) 21...Qd5!

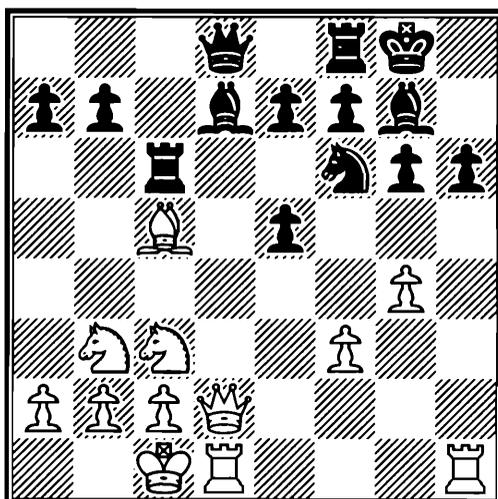
22.Rgh4 (A recent new try is 22.Qh2 h5; 23.Kb1 but after 23...Rc8; 24.Rh4 e5; 25.Qd2 f5; 26.Ng3 e4 White has nothing better than giving up the knight with 27.Nxh5 gxh5; 28.Rxh5, Elliot-Webb, London 1997. Black still has more than enough com-

pensation for the exchange) 22...Qxa2; 23.Qb4 h5; 24.Kd2 Rc8; 25.Rd1 Qe6; 26.Kc1 f5; 27.Nd2 Qd5; 28.Kb1 and now the pawns came tumbling down. 28...e5; 29.Rh2 d3!; 30.c4? Qd7; 31.Rg2 Rc6; 32.Nf3 e4; 33.Nh4 Kh7; 34.Rdg1 Rb6; 35.Qa3 d2; 36.Rd1 Bxb2; 37.Qxb2 Qd3+. White resigned, Hellers-Ernst, Sweden, 1987. **17.Nb3 Rc6.**



Nesis was now confronted with a new move. White had not been able to achieve anything with 18.Nb5 or 18.g5, and 18.Qh2 allows the exchange sacrifice at c3, so the move in the game has become the main line.

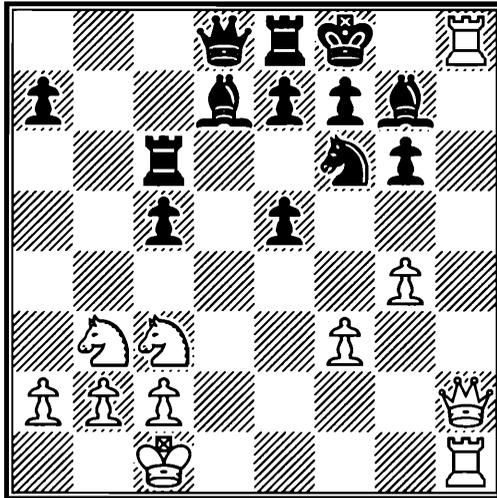
**18.Bc5!?** 18.g5 Rd6; 19.gxf6 Rxd2; 20.Rxd2 exf6; 21.Nc5 Bc6; 22.Rxd8 Rxd8; 23.Rf1 f5 gave Black a good game in Amos-Selick, Canada, 1972. 18.Qh2 Rxc3; 19.bxc3 Qc8!; 20.Bh6 Bxh6+; 21.Qxh6 Bc6 leaves White struggling to keep the weak pawns alive. 18.Nb5 Rc8; 19.Nxa7 Bc6; 20.Nxc8 Qxc8 has not done well, but White has yet to try 21.Qf2. **18...h6!?** Black can also play 18...e6, as in O'Carroll-Szalanczy, Cattolica, 1993.



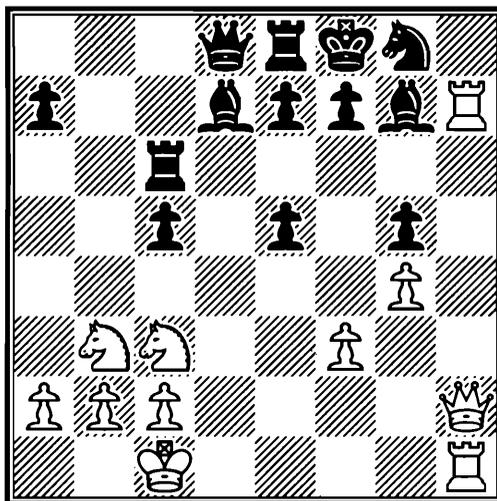
## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

**19.Rxh6!?** **b6!?**. 19...Bxh6 loses to 20.Qxh6, for example, 20...b6 21.Rh1. **20.Rh4?!?** White should have preserved the bishop by retreating to the queenside. 20.Bf2 Rd6; 21.Qg5 Rxd1+; 22.Nxd1 Bxh6; 23.Qxh6 Be6 is terrible for White. 20.Ba3!? is proposed by Nesis, but 20...Be6; 21.Qxd8 Bxh6+!; 22.Kb1 Rxd8; 23.Rxd8+ Kh7; 24.Bxe7 Bxb3; 25.axb3 Re6 is no worse for Black.

**20...bxc5; 21.Qh2 Re8; 22.Rh1 Kf8; 23.Rh8+!**



A clever sacrifice which cannot be accepted. **23...Ng8**. 23...Bxh8?; 24.Qxh8+ Ng8; 25.Rh7 e6; 26.Qg7+ wins. **24.Rh7**. A sacrifice on g7 is coming. Nesis creates an escape route for the king. **24...g5!**



**25.Nxc5**. Hoping to deflect the rook from the defense of the 6th rank, but Black doesn't bite. **25...Bc8!**; **26.Rxg7**. There is nothing better. **26...Kxg7** **27.Qxe5+**. 27.Qh8+ Kf8; 28.Rh7 Rg6 shows Black's defensive plan.

27...Kf8; 28.Rh7. Black is able to parry every threat. 28...Rg6; 29.N3e4 f6; 30.Ne6+. 30.Qe6 Rg7; 31.Nxg5 fxg5; 32.Rxg7 Kxg7; 33.Qe5+ Kf8 and there are no more checks.

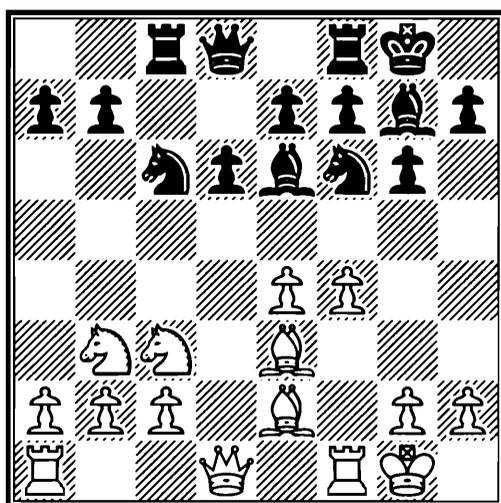
30...Bxe6; 31.Qxe6 Rg7; 32.Nxg5 fxg5. Black resigned having avoided the last trick. 32...Rxf7?? would have blundered into 33.Qf7+! Rxf7; 34.Ne6#.

## Margeir Petursson

Icelandic Grandmaster Margeir Petursson is a noted theoretician who has contributed heavily to the store of knowledge of the Tarrasch Defense, Catalan Opening, King's Indian Attack, and, of course, our favorite Dragon. His games are carefully studied by professionals, as they often feature innovative ideas that can bring success in competition over the board or in correspondence play. Here is a recent game where he blows away the opposition in a forty-year old variation.

### Fuglsang vs. Petursson: Copenhagen, 1997

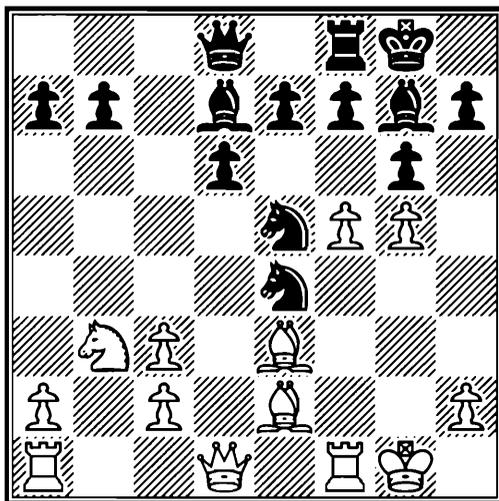
1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.Nc3 g6; 4.d4 cxd4; 5.Nxd4 Bg7; 6.Nb3 Nf6; 7.Be2 0-0; 8.0-0 d6; 9.Be3 Be6; 10.f4 Rc8.



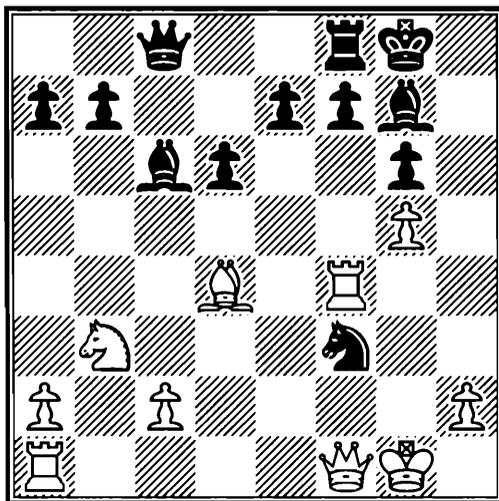
White should move the king to h1 here to avoid future problems. Acting aggressively can prematurely weaken critical squares, as we see in this game.

11.f5 Bd7; 12.g4 Ne5; 13.g5. By now you really should be able to anticipate Black's next move! 13.Bd4 doesn't slow Black down. 13...Rxc3; 14.bxc3 Nxe4; 15.Nd2 Nxd2; 16.Qxd2 Bc6; gave Black more than enough for the exchange in Ravinsky-Simagin, Moscow, 1957. 13...Rxc3; 14.bxc3 Nxe4.

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME



The play is entirely forced, and White can already be said to have a lost position. **15.fxg6 hxg6; 16.Qe1. 16.c4 Bh3; 17.Re1 Nc3; 18.Qd2 Nxe2+; 19.Qxe2 Bg4** and Black will have a choice of rooks after ...Nf3+. **16...Nxc3; 17.Bd4 Nxe2+; 18.Qxe2 Qc8.** The light squares cannot be defended. **19.Rf4 Bc6; 20.Qf1 Nf3+!**



White's pieces are overworked. **21.Kf2. 21.Rxf3 Qg4+; 22.Rg3 Bxd4+; 23.Nxd4 Qxd4+** and the rook at a1 goes with check.

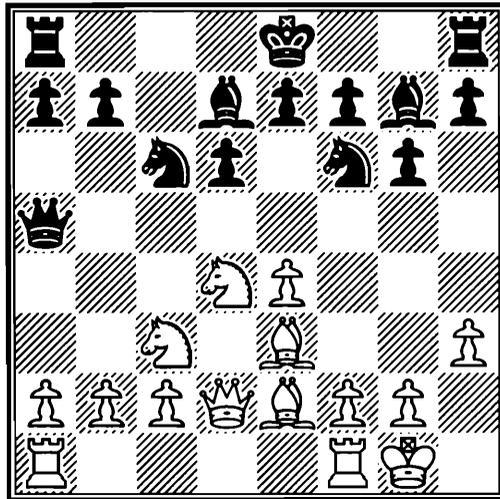
**21...Nxd4; 22.Nxd4 Bd5.** The bishops are hardly pastoral. They are deadly assassins! **23.Qb5 Bxd4+; 24.Rxd4 Qf5+.** **White resigned.**

### Harry Nelson Pillsbury

The great American star Harry Nelson Pillsbury had a short career, but was very influential in the area of opening theory, especially when it came to sharp and aggressive lines. He took to the Dragon and used it to demolish opponents, often quite quickly, as in our game.

**Brody vs. Pillsbury: Paris, 1900**

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 Nc6; 3.Nc3 Nf6; 4.d4 cxd4; 5.Nxd4 d6; 6.Be2 g6; 7.Be3 Bg7; 8.0-0 Bd7; 9.h3 Qa5; 10.Qd2.



An instructive mistake, based on a tactical miscalculation. 10... Nxe4!; 11.Nxc6. 11.Nxe4 Qxd2; 12.Nxd2 Nxd4; 13.Bxd4 Bxd4; 14.c3 Bf6 and White is just a pawn down.

11...Qxc3!; 12.Qxc3. 12.bxc3 Nxd2; 13.Bxd2 Bxc6 is no better. 12...Nxc3; 13.bxc3 Bxc6; 14.Bd4 0-0; 15.f4 Rfc8; 16.Bd3 e5; 17.fxe5 dxe5; 18.Be3 Bd5. White resigned, since the c-pawn is falling.

**Attila Schneider**

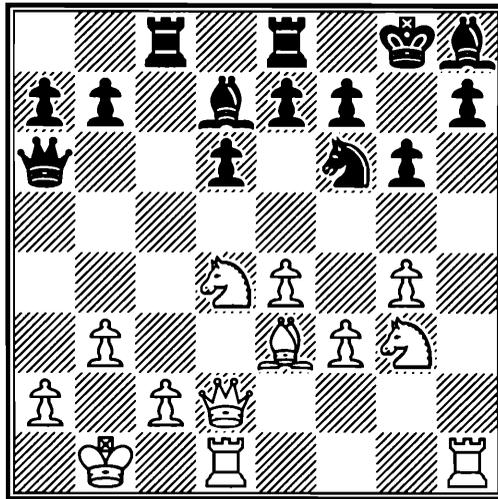
The Hungarian theoretician Attila Schneider (no relation to Lars, the Norwegian GM) has written extensively on the Dragon, with two very influential books in the 1980s covering the entire theory of the opening. He is also an active Dragoneer, and naturally likes to head for complicated positions which he has examined in detail at home.

**Feher vs. Schneider: Hungary, 1995**

The theory of this line is discussed in our Nesis game, earlier in this chapter. The middlegame is far from perfectly played, but is both instructive and entertaining.

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.0-0-0 Ne5; 11.Bb3 Rc8; 12.h4 Nc4; 13.Bxc4 Rxc4; 14.h5 Nxh5; 15.g4 Nf6; 16.Kb1 Re8; 17.b3 Rc8; 18.Bh6 Bh8; 19.Nce2 Qb6; 20.Be3 Qa6. Up to this point, the play has been annotated in Wibe-Nesis. We indicated there that Black has a good game. It gets better. 21.Ng3.

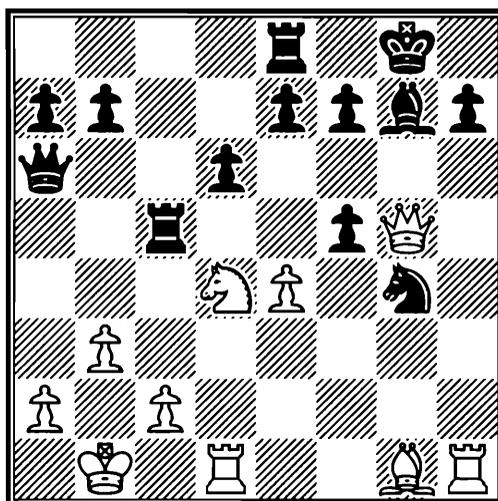
## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME



White's last move defends the pawn at e4, so it would seem that a sacrifice at g4 will not be successful. Nevertheless, the sacrifice is possible here.

**21...Bxg4!?**; **22.fxg4 Nxg4**; **23.Bg1 Rc5**; **24.Ngf5!** Here Black had to defend the knight with the h-pawn. The position then holds sufficient counterplay for Black.

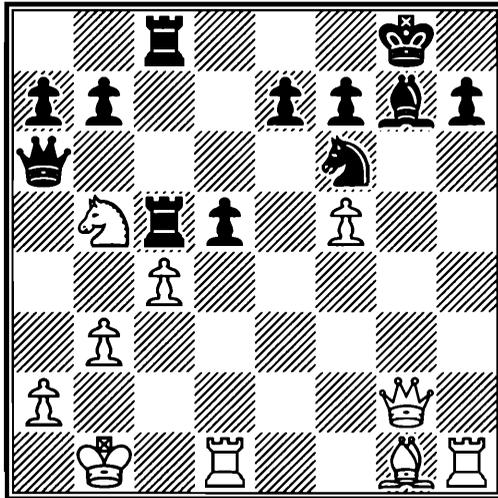
**24...gxf5?**; **25.Qg5+?** White misses the chance for a quick win. **25.Nxf5!** forces the sacrifice of the exchange. **25...Rxf5**; **26.exf5 Bg7**; **27.Bd4 e5**; **28.Rdg1!** There is no way that Black will survive this position. **25...Bg7.**



**26.exf5.** **26.Nxf5??** would be a mistake now. **26...Qxa2+!!**; **27.Kxa2 Ra5+**; **28.Kb1 Ra1#.** **26...Nf6.** Black has enough defense now. **27.c4 Rec8.** It is time to start attacking. The knight threatens to occupy e4 simultaneously unleashing the power of the Dragon bishop.

**28.Qg2 d5!** This is not really a Sicilian break, which usually

confronts a pawn at e4, but it has the devastating effect of putting intolerable pressure on the pawn at c4. **29.Nb5.**



Schneider blasts open the queenside with a startling sacrifice. **29...Rxc4!!; 30.bxc4 Rxc4; 31.Qb2 Qa4; 32.Rd3. 32.Rd4** is a more challenging try, but it too goes down to defeat. **32...Ne4; 33.Be3 Qxb5!; 34.Qxb5 Nc3+; 35.Kc1 Nxb5+; 36.Rxc4 dxc4** gives Black four pawns for the exchange. **32...Rb4; 33.Rb3 Rxb3; 34.axb3 Qe4+; 35.Ka2 Qxh1; 36.Bxa7 Qf1; 37.Na3 Qxf5.** White resigned.

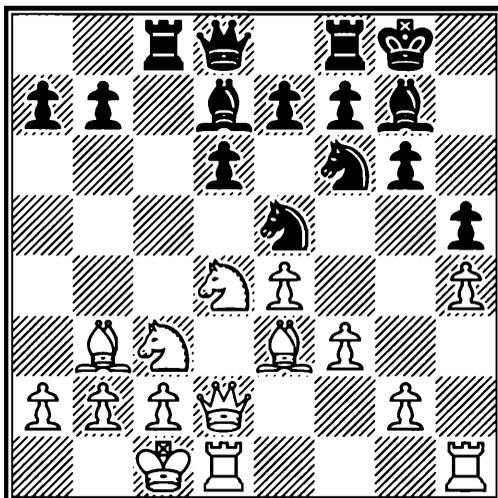
## Andrew Soltis

Grandmaster Andy Soltis, long time chess columnist of the New York Post, is best known for his work on the Yugoslav Variation, where he patented the defense with the advance of the h-pawn to h5, which has been the principal variation for many years. Although he has had only limited tournament experience in the past two decades, his early Dragon efforts still carry a stamp of authority.

### Barczay vs. Soltis: Reggio Emilia, 1971

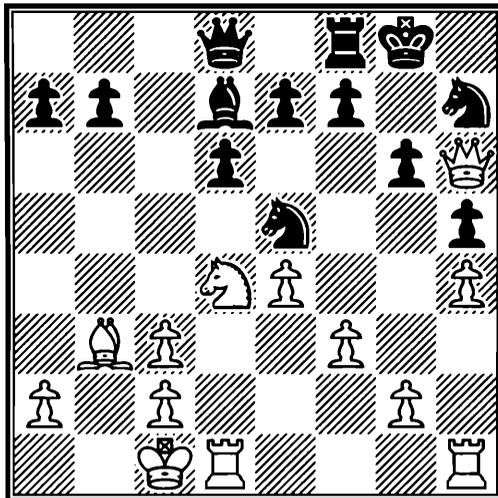
This is the sort of game that brought the Soltis Variation a lot of followers. **1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.Nc3 Nc6; 4.d4 cxd4; 5.Nxd4 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.Qd2 Nf6; 8.f3 0-0; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.Bb3 Rc8; 11.h4 h5; 12.0-0-0 Ne5.**

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME



This is the starting position of the Soltis Variation. White will not be able to advance the h-pawn, unless the g-pawn is willing to be captured, with the resulting weakness of all of White's kingside pawns. White has many plans here, but bringing the bishop to g5 has been popular for quite a while.

**13.Bg5 Nh7.** Usually Black plays 13...Rc5, which can perform many duties along the fifth rank, including assisting the advance of the b-pawn. **14.Bh6 Bxh6; 15.Qxh6 Rxc3; 16.bxc3.**

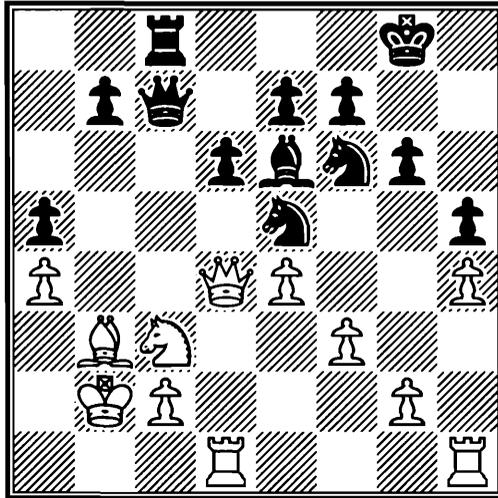


Black has carried out the exchange sacrifice even though the Dragon bishop has departed. On the other hand, White's only serious point of attack is g6, thanks to the pin on the f-pawn.

**16...Qa5; 17.Kb1 Qxc3; 18.Qd2?!** Later in the decade an improvement was played. **18.Ne2 Qc5; 19.g4 Nxf3; 20.Rd5** left Black with a difficult defense in Geller-Kuzmin, Soviet Championship, 1978.

**18...Qc5; 19.Ne2 a5!** Black carries out the a-file attack. **20.Qd4.** White naturally would like to get queens off and limit

the attack. **20...Qc7; 21.Nc3 Nf6; 22.a4 Rc8; 23.Kb2.** White seems to have everything under control. Soltis notices that the bishop at b3 is crucial to the defense of the White queenside, and his own bishop at d7 isn't doing anything useful. **23...Be6!?**

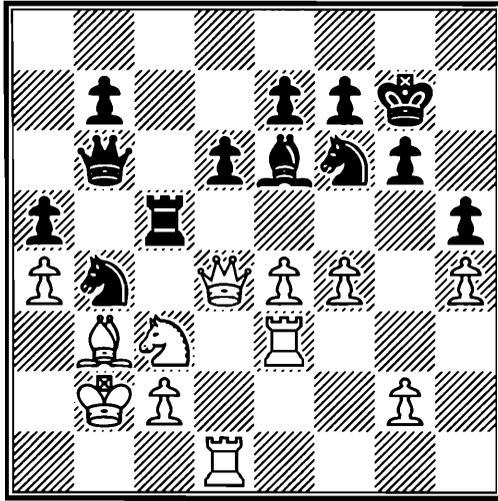


The elimination of the bishop at b3 is worth the weaknesses in the pawn structure. Black can readily exploit the light squares. **24.Rhe1.** 24.Bxe6 fxe6; 25.Rhe1 might have been better. One possibility is 25...Nc4+; 26.Kc1 e5; 27.Qd3 Qc5; 28.Nd5 Kf7! The idea is that 29.Nxf6 allows the intermezzo 29...Qb4!; 30.Qb3 Kxf6! and the knight is powerful in any endgame. If the queens are exchanged at b4, the a-pawn is very weak. 31.Qxb4 axb4; 32.Rd5 Ra8; 33.a5 b6! makes good use of the mating threat on the back rank.

**24...Kg7; 25.f4.** 25.Nd5 Bxd5; 26.exd5 Nc4+; 27.Kc1 is worth pursuing, but 27.Bxc4 Qxc4; 28.Qxc4 Rxc4; 29.Kb3 Rb4+; 30.Ka3 Nd7; 31.Rxe7 Nc5; 32.g3 Rxa4+; 33.Kb2 b5 gives Black excellent counterplay. **25...Nc6; 26.Qd2 Nb4; 27.Re3.** 27.e5 dxe5; 28.fxe5 Ng4; 29.Bxe6 fxe6; 30.Qd4 would have preserved the balance.

**27...Qb6; 28.Qd4 Rc5.**

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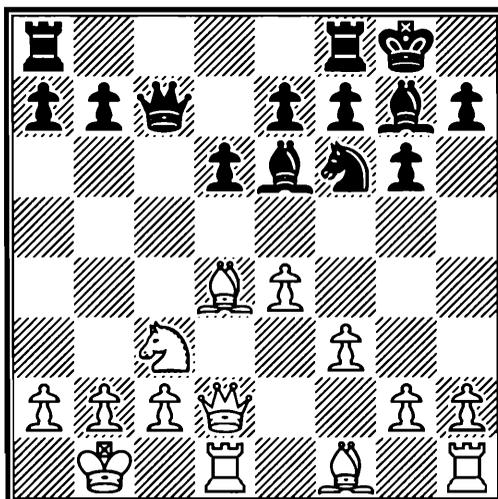
The advance of the e-pawn seems entirely logical here, but Black has a surprising resource. **29.e5 dxe5; 30.fxe5 Ng4! White resigned.** The loss of a piece cannot be avoided. 31.Re2 Nxc2!; 32.Rxc2 Qxb3+; 33.Kc1 Rc4; 34.Qd3 Bf5 and the house falls.

### Gena Sosonko

One generally thinks of a dragon as a beast which emerges from a cave. Gennady Sosonko emerged from Siberia to become one of the best players in the Netherlands in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He and Jan Timman dominated the Dutch chess scene during this period. Many players tried to avoid the deeply theoretical lines of the Yugoslav Attack with Bc4, but Sosonko was able to wipe opponents off the board even in the supposedly quieter variations.

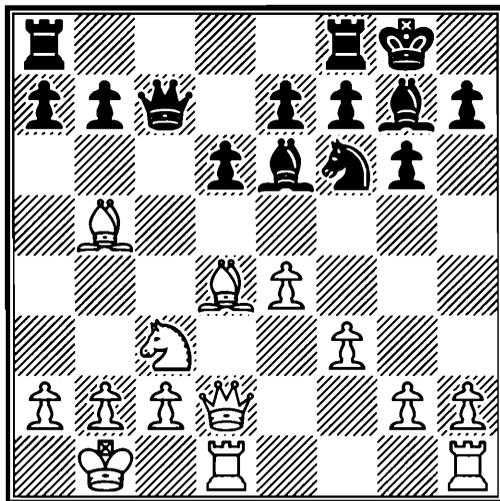
### Ostermeyer vs. Sosonko: Mannheim, 1975

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.0-0-0 Nxd4; 10.Bxd4 Be6; 11.Kb1 Qc7.



This was a popular continuation in the 1970s, when Sosonko was a very active Dragoneer. The line with the capture at d4 is not so common today, but it is still seen. **12.g4**.

White has transposed to the 9.g4 system. 12.Bb5 is an interesting idea, planning to get the bishop to b3 via a4. Co-author Schiller made some valuable contributions to this obscure line. In fact, the variation is so rare it is not included in *The Complete Dragon*, so here is some truly secret opening theory. Much of the analysis was conducted in 1980 with International Master Bernard Zuckerman. Many of the critical games and analysis sessions were held at New York's famous Marshall Chess Club, so perhaps this could be called the Greenwich Village Variation.

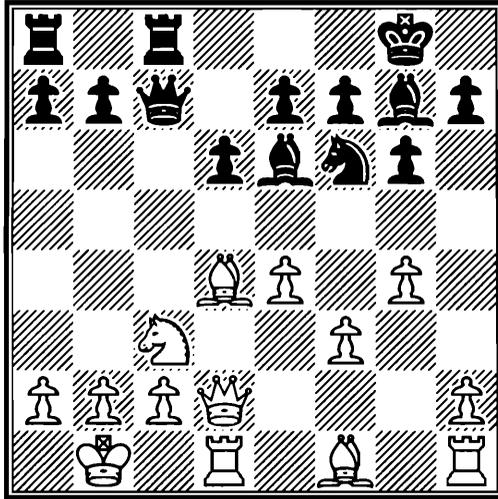


12...a6. (12...Rfc8; 13.Ba4 Qd8; 14.Bb3 Qf8; 15.Rhe1 Nd7; 16.Nd5 Bxd5; 17.Bxd5 was better for White in Schiller-Moskow, New York, 1980. 12...Qa5; 13.Ba4 b5; 14.Bb3 b4; 15.Nd5 is also good for White. 12...Rfd8; 13.Ba4 Bc4; 14.Bb3 Rac8; 15.Bxc4 Qxc4 is a rare case where an exchange at f6 is justified. After 16.Bxf6 Bxf6; 17.Nd5 Kg7; 18.h4 with a strong attack in Kaplan-Sosonko, Hastings, 1975-76.) 13.Ba4. White obtains an advantage, for example, 13...Rfc8; 14.Bb3 Bc4; 15.h4 h5; 16.g4 (16.Na4 b5; 17.Nb6 led to a win for White in Schiller-Ronneberg, Illinois, 1985) 16...b5; 17.Bxf6 Bxf6; 18.Nd5 Bxd5; 19.Bxd5 Rab8; 20.gxh5 gxh5; 21.Rhg1+. White went on to win in Schiller-Goldman, Chicago 1987. Queenside action is also insufficient.

13...b5; 14.Bb3 Bc4. A new move. (14...Bxb3; 15.axb3 is better for White. The alternative 14...b4; 15.Nd5 Bxd5; 16.Bxd5 Rac8; 17.Rc1 a5; 18.c3 Qb8; 19.cxb4 axb4; 20.Bb3 Nd7; 21.Bxg7 Kxg7 is Schiller-Braga, New York, 1980. Here I should have tried h4, as

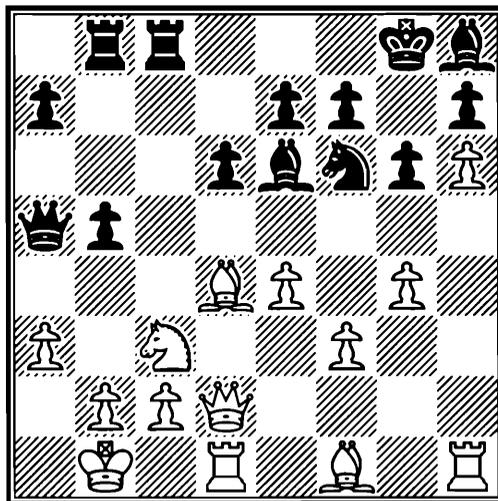
## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

Zuckerman later pointed out. 14...Rab8; 15.h4 brought White a good game in Zuckerman-Braga, New York, 1980.) 15.Bxc4 bxc4; 16.Bxf6 exf6; 17.Qxd6 Qb7; 18.Qd7 Qb8; 19.Rd4 and White had a clear advantage in Nijboer-Roobol, Netherlands Team Championship, 1997. 12...Rfc8.



Black's queen does not sit well at c7. 13.h4 Qa5; 14.a3 Rab8. Black is a tempo down on one of the main lines of the g4 attack, because the queen stopped at c7 on the way to a5. That is not good. White has used the extra tempo to move the king to b1, as in J. Polgar-Anand, Dortmund, 1997.

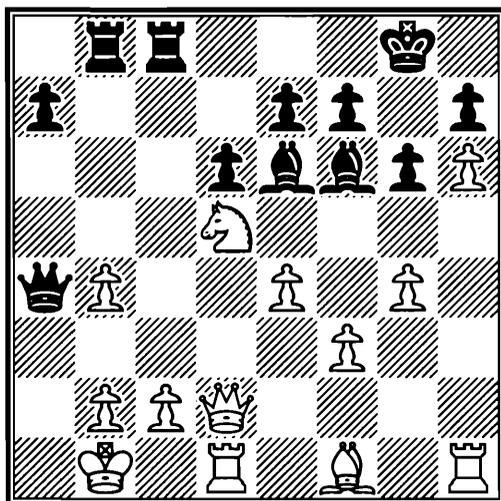
15.h5 b5; 16.h6!?. It is a rare thing indeed when White voluntarily blocks the h-file, but here there are tactical points. Unfortunately for White, there are tactical pitfalls as well. 16...Bh8.



With the king at b1, Black has no time for the advance of the b-pawn. 17.Bxf6. 17.Nd5 Qxd2; 18.Nxe7+ Kf8; 19.Rxd2 Kxe7; 20.g5 Nd7; 21.Bxa7 yields two pawns for the piece, but it is not

sufficient. 17.g5!? b4; 18.Nb5! Rxb5; 19.Bxb5 Qxb5; 20.gxf6 bxa3; 21.fxe7 is bold, but can Black really justify the material investment with the Dragon bishop ready to make a quick exit from the game?

17...Bxf6; 18.Nd5 b4!; 19.axb4 Qa4.



Black's attack is growing, and White should be concerned with defensive measures such as 20.c3. **20.b5?** This file will not remain closed!

**20...Bxd5; 21.exd5 a6.** White either resigned or lost on time. Black wins by capturing at a5 and maneuvering a rook to a8, for example, 22.Re1 axb5; 23.Re4 b4; 24.Qd3 Ra8; 25.Kc1 Bxb2+!

## Sergei Tiviakov

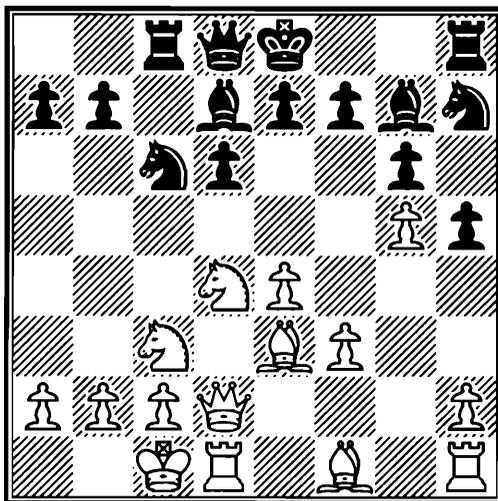
Grandmaster Sergei Tiviakov is one of the strongest active players to regularly use the Dragon. He is the author of the ECO monographs on the Yugoslav Attack, and has added modern computer resources to the study of the critical tactical lines. He continues to forge new paths in even the most studied variations.

### Anand vs. Tiviakov: Moscow (GMA), 1989

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0.

8...Bd7; 9.0-0-0 Rc8; 10.g4 h5; 11.g5 Nh7 was a tremendous weapon for Tiviakov in 1997, as you can see.

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME



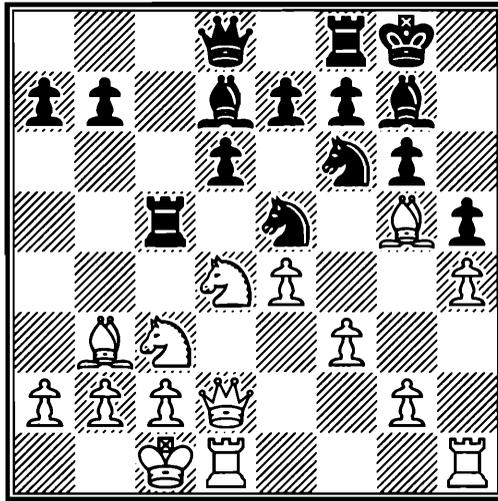
12.h4 (12.Kb1 0-0; 13.Nxc6 bxc6; 14.Bc4 Be6; 15.Bb3 c5; 16.Bxe6 fxe6; 17.f4 Qa5; 18.e5 dxe5; 19.fxe5 Bxe5 gave Black a strong position in De la Riva-Tiviakov, Corsica Rapid, Bastia, 1997) 12...Ne5; 13.Kb1 (13.f4 Ng4; 14.Bh3 Nxe3; 15.Bxd7+ Qxd7; 16.Qxe3 0-0; 17.e5 Rfe8; 18.exd6 exd6; 19.Qh3 Qxh3; 20.Rxh3 Rc4 was eventually won by Black in Korneyev-Tiviakov, from the same rapid event) 13...0-0; 14.f4 Ng4; 15.Bg1 a6 worked out well in Myo Naing-Tiviakov, World Cities Championship, 1997.

Tiviakov is now experimenting with 8...Be6, for example, 9.0-0-0 Rc8; 10.Kb1 Qa5; 11.Nxe6 fxe6; 12.Bc4 Kf7; 13.Bb3 b5; 14.Ne2 Qxd2; 15.Rxd2 a5 though White's position looked okay in Nisipeanu-Tiviakov, Groningen (GM Open), 1997.

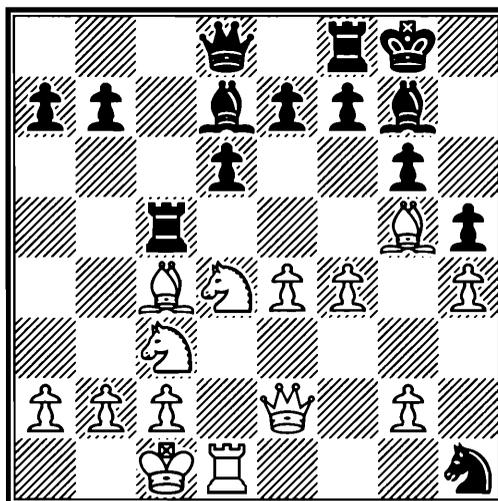
After 8...Bd7, White has a choice. The game continued with **9.Bc4**. Tiviakov is a leading authority on the line with immediate castling, and is the author of the ECO monograph on the subject. Still, sometimes opponents come prepared with challenging lines. 9.0-0-0 d5; 10.exd5 Nxd5; 11.Nxc6 bxc6; 12.Bd4 Nxc3! This caught Tiviakov by surprise. 13.Qxc3 (13.Bxc3 Qxd2+; 14.Kxd2 Rd8+; 15.Bd3 Bf5; 16.Bxg7 Bxd3; 17.cxd3 Kxg7 would likely wind up a draw, though White has a slightly better structure) 13...Bh6+!; 14.Be3 Bxe3+; 15.Qxe3 Qb6!; 16.Qxb6 axb6; was eventually drawn in Tiviakov-Alterman, Soviet Union 1990.

**9...Bd7; 10.h4.** 10.0-0-0 was used in a more recent meeting with Alterman. 10...Ne5; 11.Bb3 Rc8; 12.Kb1 Nc4; 13.Bxc4 Rxc4; 14.g4 Qc7; 15.g5 Nh5; 16.Nd5 Qd8; 17.Ne2 led to an eventual win for White in Tiviakov-Alterman, Beijing, 1997.

**10...h5; 11.0-0-0 Ne5; 12.Bb3 Rc8; 13.Bg5 Rc5.**



This is one of the most important lines in the Soltis Variation. White can advance the g-pawn or f-pawn to get things moving on the kingside, or place caution first and shift the king to b1. Tiviakov has been a major player in the analytical debate. In the late 1980s, the advance of the f-pawn was the hot topic. 14.f4 Nc4; 15.Qd3 Ng4! (15...b5; 16.e5 Ng4; 17.exd6, check reference to Ernst-Hellers.) 16.Bxc4 Nf2; 17.Qe2 Nxh1.



**18.Bb3!?** This was credited as a novelty, but Anand had played it before! The inferior 18.Nd5 had also been seen previously. **18... Qb6.** 18...a5! led to a win for Black in Adams-Tiviakov, Oakham, 1990. 19.f5 a4; 20.Bd5! Black could try 20...a3, which looks promising. 20...Qe8; 21.g4? (21.a3! is best. Tiviakov gives 21... Bxd4; 22.Rxd4 e6; 23.fxe6 fxe6; 24.Ba2 Rxc5!; 25.hxc5 Qe7 with an unclear position) 21...hxc4; 22.Qe3?! e6!; 23.f6 Bh8!; 24.Bb3? e5!; 25.Nf5 gxf5; 26.Rxd6 Rc6. White resigned.

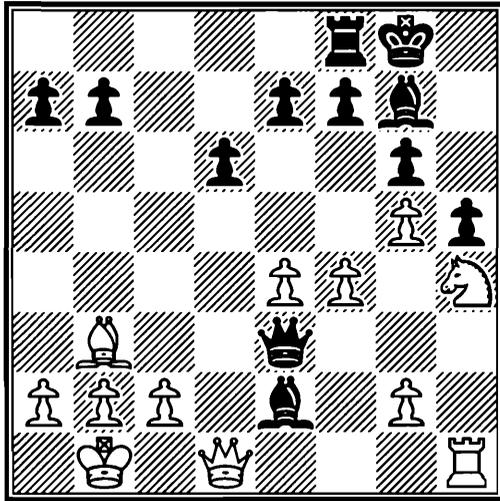
**19.Nf3.** 19.Nd5? allows the powerful exchange sacrifice 19... Rxd5; 20.exd5 Bxd4; 21.Rxh1 f6; 22.Bh6 Rf7. Black's superior

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bishops constitute a major advantage. 19.f5 was another novelty that Tiviakov had to face. 19...Bxd4; 20.Rxd4 Rxf5; 21.exf5 Qxd4; 22.fxc6 Qg1+; 23.Nd1 Bg4; 24.gxf7+ Kg7; 25.Qd2 Qxd1+. (25...Rxf7!?!; 26.Bxf7 Kxf7; 27.Be3 Qxd1+; 28.Qxd1 Bxd1; 29.Kxd1 a6 would have equalized.) 26.Qxd1 Bxd1; 27.Kxd1 Rxf7; 28.Bxf7 Kxf7 should have been drawable, but Tiviakov eventually lost in Klovans-Tiviakov, Groningen, 1991.

**19...Rxc5; 20.hxc5.** 20.Nxc5 Bg4!?!; 21.Nf3 Bxc3; 22.bxc3 Qf2! saves the knight, and White suffers from a bad pawn structure. **20...Bxc3; 21.Rxh1.** Black now uses a series of intermezzos before doing anything about the hanging bishop at c3.

**21...Bb5!; 22.Qd1 Qe3+!; 23.Kb1 Bg7.** 23...Be2? would have been one intermezzo too many after 24.Qg1! Bd2; 25.Nxd2 Qxd2; 26.Qf2! **24.Nh4 Be2.**

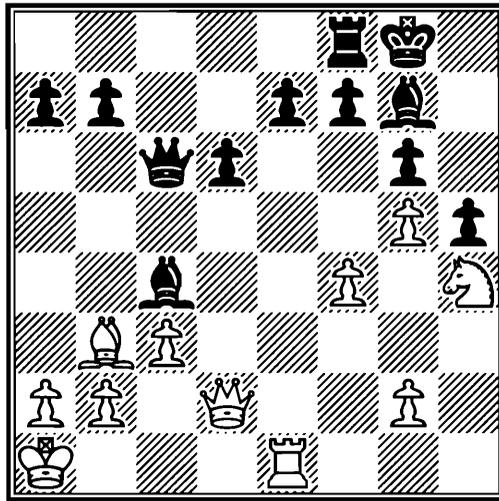


It is a sign of the depth of theory in the Dragon that even this position was not new. 24...Qxe4? loses to 25.Re1. **25.Qe1.** 25.Qc1!? Qxc1+; 26.Kxc1 Kh7; 27.f5 gxf5; 28.exf5 was drawn in Anand-Georgiev, Reggio, Emilia 1988-89.

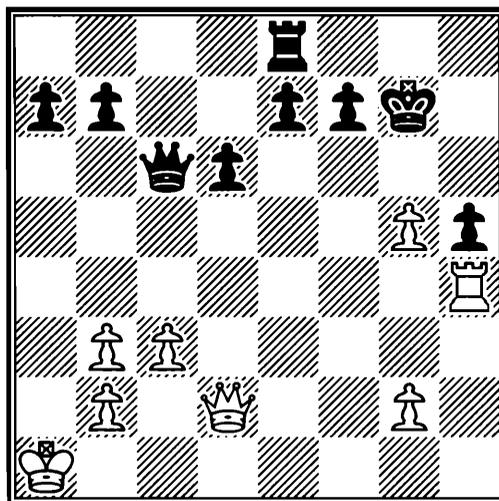
**25...Qd4.** 25...Qxe4 lets White exploit the pin on the f-pawn with 26.Nxc6 Re8; 27.Nh4!

**26.c3 Bd3+!; 27.Ka1!?** 27.Bc2 Bxc2+; 28.Kxc2 Qa4+; 29.Kb1 b5 could be unpleasant for White.

**27...Qxe4; 28.Qd2 Bc4!; 29.Re1 Qc6.**



White's position is not good. The capture at e7 was best. **30.f5?! This frees the e5-square. 30...Be5; 31.fxg6 Bxb3; 32.axb3 Bg3!; 33.g7! Re8; 34.Rh1 Bxh4; 35.Rxh4 Kxg7.**



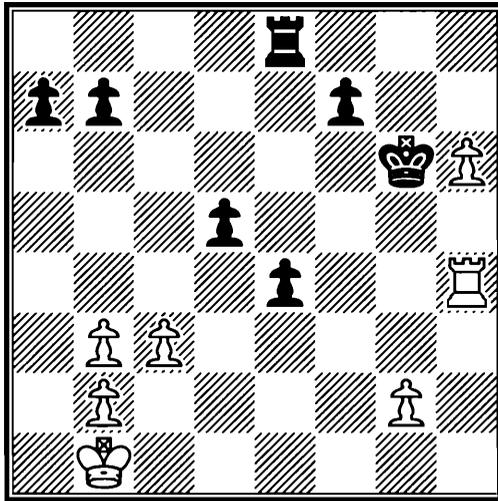
The play gets messy now. White can't resist the check at d4, but Anand should have been satisfied with eating the h-pawn, with equal chances in the endgame. Maybe more, since White's king is safer.

**36.Qd4+?** 36.Rxh5! Rh8; 37.Rxh8 Kxh8; 38.g6 fxg6; 39.Qh6+ Kg8; 40.Qxg6+. White is in no danger of losing. **36...e5; 37.Qf2?** White should have played the queen to the d1-h5 diagonal, to go after the pawn at h5 with an attack on the h-file. 37.Qd1 would have been met by 37...d5; 38.Qxh5 Qg6! Black has a powerful passed e-pawn.

**37...d5!** The same concept of vertical defense comes into play here. **38.Qf3.** 38.Rxh5?? drops the rook to 38...Qa6+; 39.Kb1 Qg6+. **38...e4; 39.Qxh5.** White finally gets things organized on the h-file, but it is too late.

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

39...Qa6+!; 40.Kb1 Qg6; 41.Qh6+ Qxh6; 42.gxh6+ Kg6.



Time control has been reached, and the rest is technical.

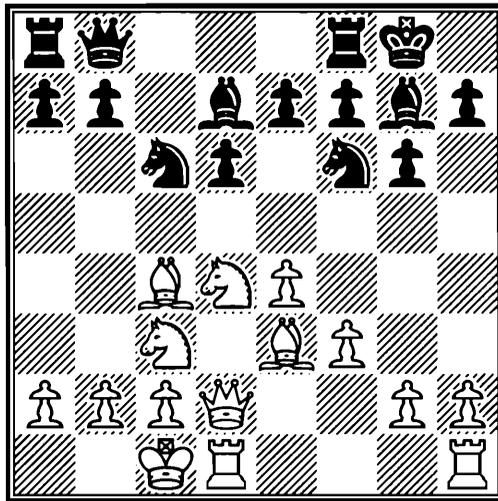
43.Kc2 f5!; 44.Rh3 Rh8; 45.Rg3+ Kxh6; 46.Kd2 Rh7; 47.Ke3 Rg7; 48.Rh3+ Kg5; 49.Rh8 f4+; 50.Kf2 Kg4; 51.Rd8 e3+; 52.Kf1 f3; 53.Re8 fxg2+; 54.Kxg2 Kf4+; 55.Kf1 Kf3; 56.Rf8+ Ke4; 57.Re8+ Kd3; 58.Re5 d4. White resigned.

### **Dragoljub Velimirovic**

The Yugoslav Grandmaster is well known for his uncompromising attacking strategies as White in the Sicilian, and the Velimirovic Attack in the Scheveningen Variation is his patent. He comes from a great chess tradition, since his mother was the very first Woman Champion of Yugoslavia. Velimirovic won his national championship in 1970 and again in 1975. In this game, he shows his skill in one of the more interesting side lines of the Yugoslav Attack.

### **Planinc vs. Velimirovic: Yugoslav Championship, 1975**

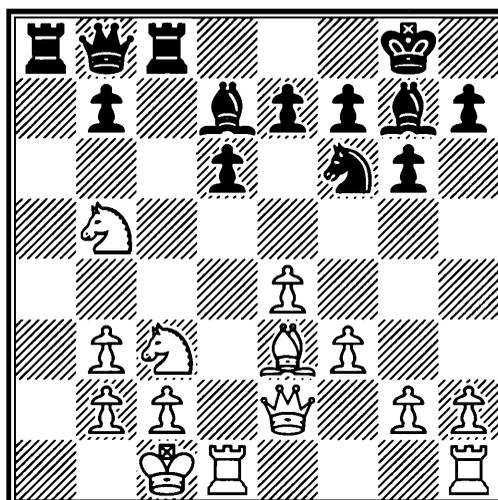
1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 Nf6; 4.Nc3 cxd4; 5.Nxd4 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 Nc6; 8.Qd2 0-0; 9.Bc4 Bd7; 10.0-0-0 Qb8.



This fascinating move is credited to Leonid Stein, whose premature death kept him from being among the greatest players of his time, and a great Dragoner. Modern theory holds that it is somewhat suspect, but many players prefer to play 10.h4, rather than 10.0-0-0, and reach the main lines by transposition. Black's plan is to bring the rook to c8 and blast open the queenside.

**11.Bb3.** 11.h4 is a more vigorous reply. Black has to try the wild 11...b5!?!; 12.Bd5 Rc8 but 13.Bxc6 Bxc6; 14.h5 was better for White in Wahls-Ristic, Dortmund, 1989.

**11...a5; 12.Ndb5 a4!; 13.Bxa4.** White must accept the offer, and this is the best way to do it, so 13.Nxa4 Na5; 14.Qe2 Nxb3+; 15.axb3 d5! Black had a strong attack in Savon-Stein, Soviet Championship, 1962. **13...Rc8; 14.Qe2?** 14.Kb1 Na5; 15.Bb3 Nc4; 16.Qe2 Nxe3; 17.Qxe3 Rc5; 18.Nd4 Qa7; 19.a3 Ra5; 20.Qd2 was played in Karpov-Velimirovic, Portoroz, 1975. Igor Zaitsev, Karpov's second, found the correct defense: 20...e5!; 21.Nde2 d5! Black has strong counterplay. **14...Na5; 15.Bb3 Nxb3+; 16.axb3.**

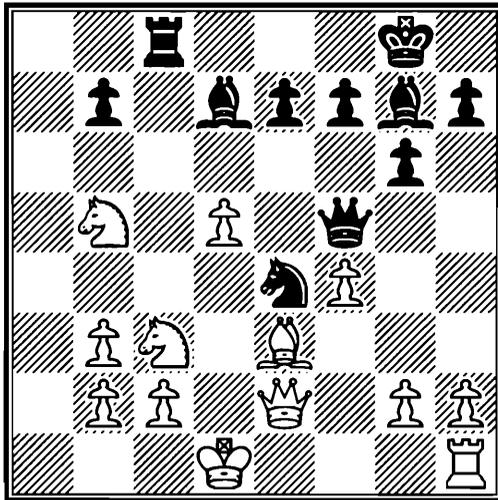


## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

The thematic, liberating advance of the d-pawn is available. **16...d5!; 17.exd5 Qe5; 18.f4.** Velimirovic boldly ignores the threat to the queen and launches a terrifying attack.

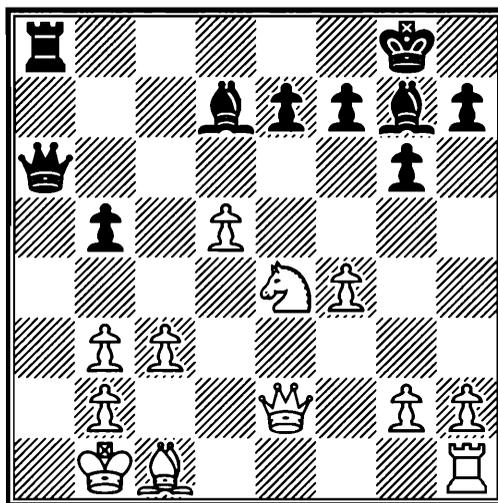
**18...Ra1+!; 19.Kd2 Ne4+!; 20.Ke1.** **20.Nxe4 Rxc2+** and now **21.Kxc2** gets mated: **21...Qxb2+; 22.Kd3 Bxb5#.**

**20...Rxd1+!; 21.Kxd1 Qf5.**



White has two extra pawns, but they are not very significant. **22.Kc1 Ra8; 23.Kb1 Nxc3+; 24.Nxc3 Qf6.** Black threatens ...b5 and ...Qa6. There is another, deeper plan.

**25.Bc1.** **25.Bc5** is a blunder which allows the corner mate. **25... Qxc3!!; 26.bxc3 Bxc3** and **...Ra1#.** **25...b5!; 26.Ne4 Qa6; 27.c3.**



The stage is set for the move that won this game the brilliancy prize. **27...Bxc3!!; 28.Nxc3.** **28.bxc3 Qa1+; 29.Kc2 Ra2+; 30.Kd3 Qb1+; 31.Ke3 Rxe2+; 32.Kxe2 Qxe4+** wins.

**28...Bf5+; 29.Ne4 Qa2+; 30.Kc2 Rc8+; 31.Kd2 Qxb3; 32.Qd3 Qb4+; 33.Ke3 Rc4,** and Black regained the piece. After the des-

perado. 34.Nf6+ exf6; 35.Qa3. Black went back to work with 35... Re4+; 36.Kf2 Qd4+; 37.Kg3 Qxd5; 38.Qf3 Qe6; 39.Rd1 Kg7. Black slowly went on to win.

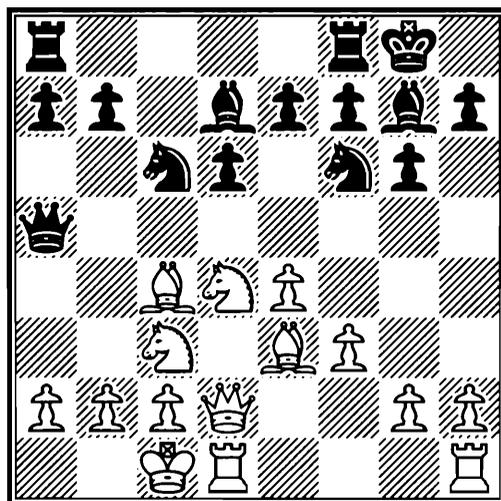
40.Rd3 Rc4; 41.Re3 Be4; 42.Qe2 Qf5; 43.Rc3 Ra4; 44.Qd2 Ra7; 45.Qe3 Rd7; 46.Rc5 Qe6; 47.Kf2 Qd6; 48.b4 Bb7; 49.h3 Qd1. White resigned.

## Chris Ward

Young British Grandmaster Chris Ward had already had a significant impact on the theory of the Dragon. He has rehabilitated the old main line of the Yugoslav Attack where Black places a queen on a5. This line, considered dead and buried at the end of the 1980s, is once again being played at the highest levels of chess. Ward is the author of *Winning with the Dragon*, and has lived up to the responsibilities of having to prove Black's winning chances at the board time and time again.

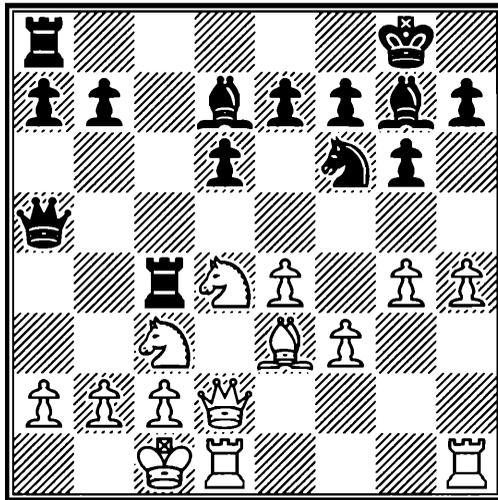
### Cullip vs. Ward: Shackleford, 1991

1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Bc4 Nc6; 9.Qd2 Bd7; 10.0-0-0 Qa5.



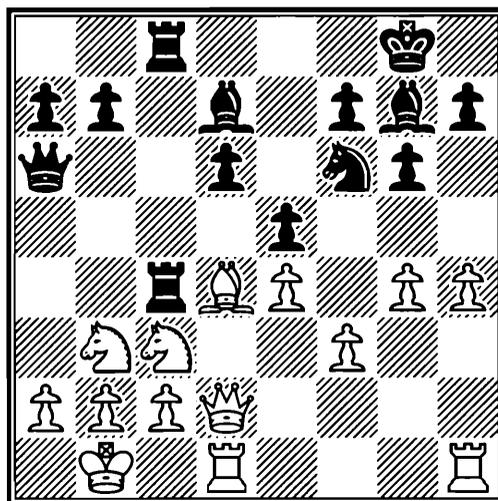
Chris Ward has been responsible for reviving this old continuation in the 1990s. 11.h4 Ne5; 12.Bb3 Rfc8; 13.g4. This is the safer way to prepare the advance of the h-pawn. 13.Bh6 Bxh6; 14.Qxh6 Rxc3 is known to give Black good chances. 13.h5 Nxh5; 14.Bh6 Bxh6; 15.Qxh6 Rxc3; 16.bxc3 Nf6 is presently held to provide about equal chances. 13...Nc4; 14.Bxc4 Rxc4.

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

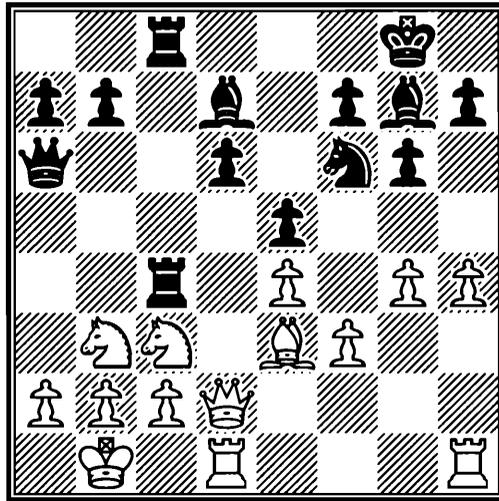


White should play aggressively here, advancing the h-pawn, though retreating the knight to b3 first may transpose. **15.Nb3.** 15.h5 Rxc3. (15...Rac8; 16.Nb3 Qa6; 17.hxg6 is Timoschenko-Veselovsky, Soviet Union, 1980. Now Black can try Tolnai's suggestion 17...Rxc3!; 18.bxc3 Qxa2; 19.e5 dxe5; 20.Bg5 Be8 but his evaluation of unclear may be a bit optimistic. 21.Bxf6 Bxf6; 22.g5 Bg7 would not seem to give Black enough for the exchange whichever way White captures at h7.) 16.Qxc3 Qxa2; 17.hxg6 hxg6; 18.Qa3 shuts down the attack and gives White the advantage, Bryson-O'Connell, Debrecen, 1992.

**15...Qa6.** 15...Qc7; 16.Bd4 Be6; 17.h5 a5; 18.a4 Rb4; 19.hxg6 hxg6; 20.Rh4 is an important line which led to a draw in Woodward, London, 1994, but White has an improvement. 20...b5!; 21.Nxb5 Qc4; 22.Nc3 Rab8; 23.Rdh1 Qc8; 24.e5! Qc6; 25.exf6 exf6; 26.Rh7 and White wins. **16.Bd4.** Ward gives the move order 17.Kb1 Rac8; 17.Bd4 in his book. **16...Rac8; 17.Kb1 e5!**

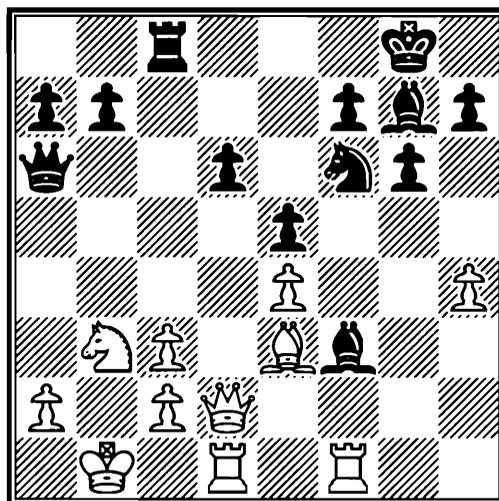


This is one of those rare cases where blocking the a1-h8 diagonal works well. Black takes the initiative, and never lets go.  
**18.Be3.**



The stage is set for the classic sacrifice at g4. **18...Bxg4!**; **19.Rhf1.** 19.fxg4 Rxc3; 20.bxc3 Nxe4; 21.Qd3 Nxc3+; 22.Kc1 Qa3+; 23.Kd2 e4. Ward comments that even if the White king survives Black will grab more pawns. That is clearly true, and after 24.Qf1 Nxd1; 25.Qxd1 Qxa2, White has no real attacking chances. The endgame following 26.h5 Qb2; 27.hxg6 hxg6; 28.Bxa7 Qc3+; 29.Ke2 Qxc2+; 30.Qxc2 Rxc2+; 31.Nd2 d5 holds no losing chances for Black, barring a terrible blunder, and White will have great difficulty fighting against the pawns.

**19...Rxc3!; 20.bxc3 Bxf3.**



White is already lost. **21.Qxd6.** 21.Rxf3 Nxe4; 22.Qe1 Nxc3+; 23.Kc1 Ne2+. White resigned in Arbakov-Bykhovskiy, Vilnius, 1967. Ward gives the key line 24.Kd2 e4; 25.Rf2 Rxc2+; 26.Kxc2 Qxa2#.

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME

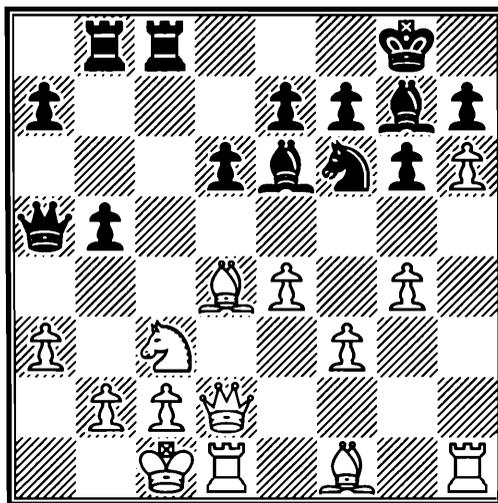
**21...Bxd1; 22.Qxa6 bxa6; 23.Rxd1 Nxe4; 24.Rd7 Nxc3+. White resigned.** The kingside pawns are all Black needs to win.

### William Watson

Grandmaster William Watson gave up full time chess for other activities, but not before making his mark in the literature of the Dragon with a series of well-analyzed games where his play was of the highest brilliance. He has also acted as a second for his leading British compatriots in World Championship challenges, and this has given him an even greater depth of knowledge of the intricate paths of the Dragon.

### Plaskett vs. Watson: Brighton, 1983

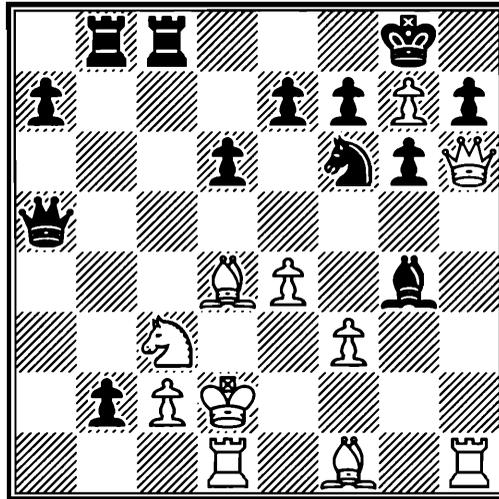
**1.e4 c5; 2.Nf3 d6; 3.d4 cxd4; 4.Nxd4 Nf6; 5.Nc3 g6; 6.Be3 Bg7; 7.f3 0-0; 8.Qd2 Nc6; 9.g4 Be6; 10.0-0-0 Nxd4; 11.Bxd4 Qa5; 12.a3 Rfc8; 13.h4 Rab8; 14.h5 b5; 15.h6.**



Here is another example of White choosing to seal the h-file. The upside is that Black has little room to maneuver and the pawn can be annoying in the endgame, especially if White is able to get a knight to d5. Black prevents that with the next move.

**15...b4!; 16.hxg7.** White can try 16.Nd6, but after 16...Bxd5; 17.exd5 Bf8! Black has avoided any serious problem. 16.Nb5 is best, as in Shirov-Golubev, Soviet Union, 1985.

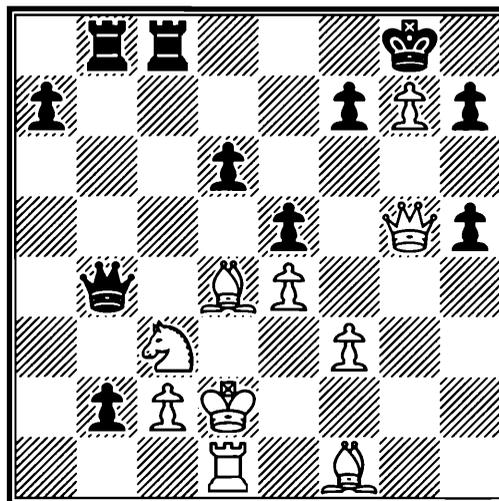
**16...bxa3; 17.Qh6 axb2+; 18.Kd2 Bxg4!**



**19.Bxf6.** Capturing the bishop at g4 is no good because Black plays ...e5 and one of the minor pieces must fall.

**19...Bh5; 20.Bd4.** White should have tried the exchange sacrifice at h5 immediately. **20.Rxh5 gxh5; 21.Bh3!?** Rc5; **22.Bf5.** Black returns the exchange with **22...Rxf5!; 23.exf5 exf6** and Black threatens to promote the b-pawn, so White has to play **24.Rb1.** Then Black plays **24...Rc8; 25.Qxf6 Qb4** with a strong attack. White is paralyzed, and the pawns are weak.

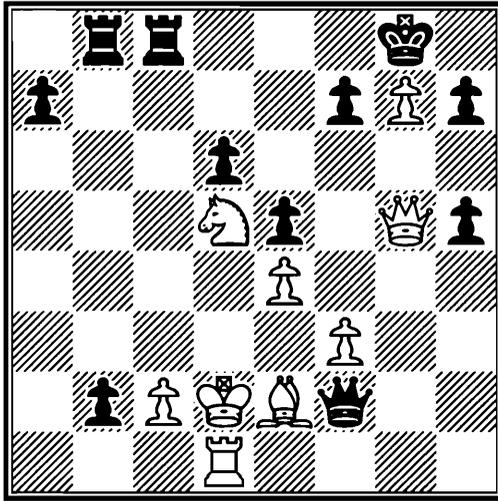
**20...e5; 21.Rxh5 gxh5.** For the exchange, White has an impressive attack. **22.Qg5 Qb4.**



Black breaks the pin on the e-file. **23.Bd3.** It was hardly worth trying **23.Bxe5 dxe5; 24.Qxe5** because of **24...Qxc3+!!; 25.Qxc3 Rxc3** and the b-pawn will advance.

**23...Qxd4; 24.Nd5 Qf2+; 25.Be2.**

## THE DRAGON HALL OF FAME



It is only fitting that we conclude our game collection with a fantastic finish, so here it is!

**25...Rxc2+; 26.Kxc2 Qxe2+; 27.Kc3 Qxf3+; 28.Kc4 Qb3#.**

# 15.

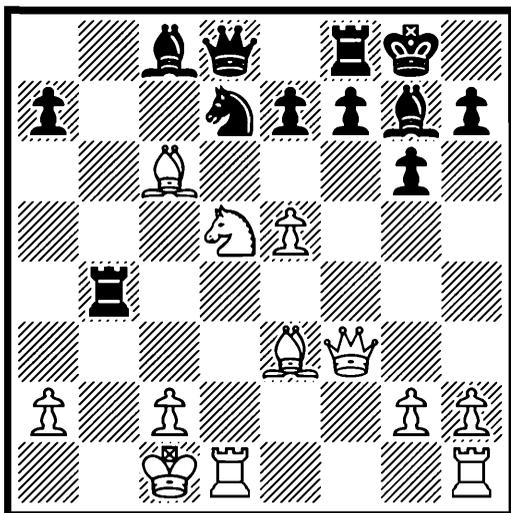
## Supplement to 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

In this section you will find challenges that have confronted Dragoneers in the 21st century. Try to meet them yourself before looking at the game continuations.

### SITUATION #1

White's king has only two pathetic pawn defenders, but Black's rook is under attack. Combine the correct strategy with the correct tactics and show how Black can win.

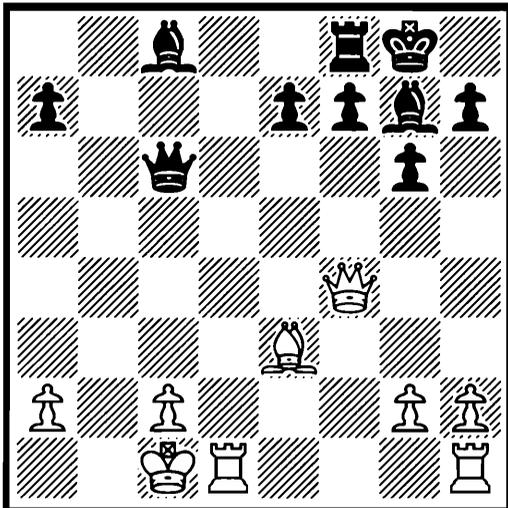
**Szafranski vs. Elio: ICCF, Email, 2000**



15... Nxe5! Black ignores the threat against his rook (with a discovered attack against his queen) to fork the enemy queen and bishop. 16. Nxb4 Qa5. The queen will now have access to a3. 17. Qf4 Nxc6 18. Nxc6. White has an extra rook but the king is left without defenders. 18... Qa3+ 19. Kd2 Qc3+ 20. Kc1 Qxc6.

## SUPPLEMENT TO 2ND EDITION

Now Black has a bishop and pawn for the rook and a tremendous attack on the dark squares.

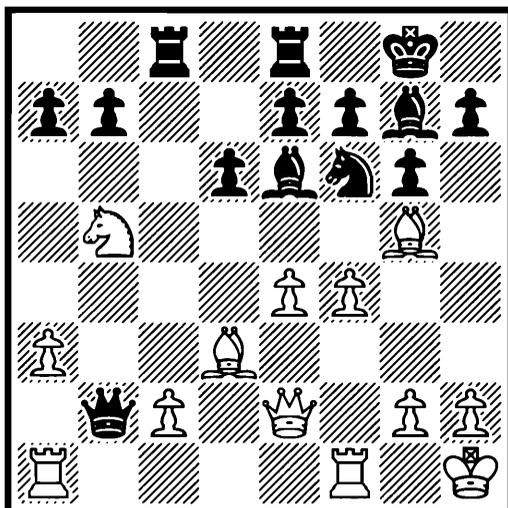


21. **Bd4 Bf5**. The new target is c2! 22. **Rd2 Qa4** 23. **g4 Qa3+** 24. **Kb1 Qb4+** 25. **Kc1 e5** 26. **Qg3 exd4**. White resigned, as Black's bishops are too powerful.

### SITUATION #2

The key aspect of this position is that White's bishop is overworked. Exploit it.

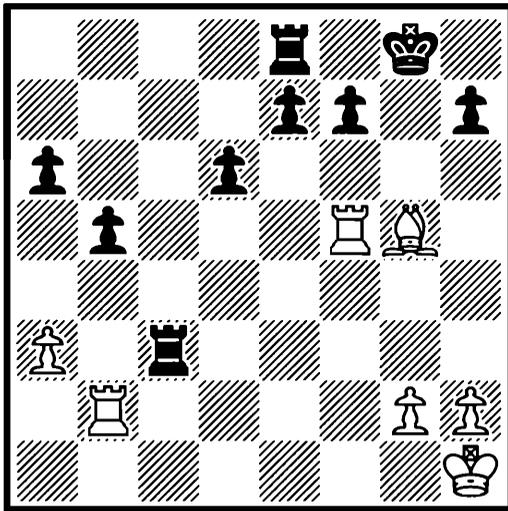
### Willmoth vs. Snape: Smith & Williamson Championship, Scarborough, England, 2001



16... **Nxe4!**? The **Bd3** must guard c2, e4 and b5 so if White wants to capture the knight, the queen will have to do it. 16... **Ba2** is a reasonable alternative. 17. **Nxa7 Rc5** 18. **Nb5 h6** 19. **Bh4 Rh5** 20. **Bxf6 Bxf6** 21. **Nc7** but Black's advantage is minimal.

17. **Qxe4 Bf5** 18. **Qe2 Bxd3**. The mighty bishop is removed

from the battle. 19. **Qxd3 a6**. The knight has no retreat path. 20. **Rab1 Qxc2**. Black has three pawns for the knight and has invaded the seventh rank. 21. **Qxc2 Rxc2** 22. **Na7**. Sad, but where else can it go? 22... **Bb2** 23. **f5 b5** 24. **Nc6**. This leads to an exchange, but Black's pawns provide a big endgame advantage. 24... **Rxc6** 25. **Rxb2 gxf5** 26. **Rxf5 Rc3**. The bishop is no match for the pawns and Black went on to win.

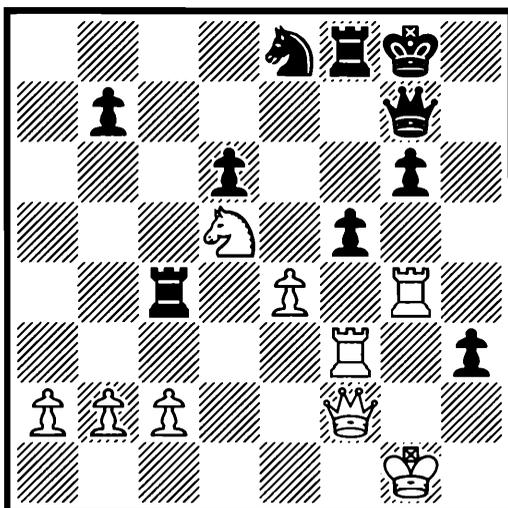


27. **Rf3 Rec8** 28. **Rbf2 f6** 29. **Bd2 Rc2** 30. **g3 R8c4** 31. **Bb4 Rc1+** 32. **Rf1 Kf7** 33. **Kg2 Rxf1** 34. **Kxf1 d5** 35. **Rc3 d4** 36. **Rxc4 bxc4** 37. **Ke2 f5** 38. **h3 h5** 39. **Kf3 e5** 40. **g4 hxg4+** 41. **hxg4 fxg4+** 42. **Kxg4 Ke6** 43. **a4 Kd5** 44. **Kf3 e4+** 45. **Ke2 c3** 46. **Be7 Kc4** 47. **a5 Kb3** 48. **Kd1 Kb2**.

### SITUATION #3

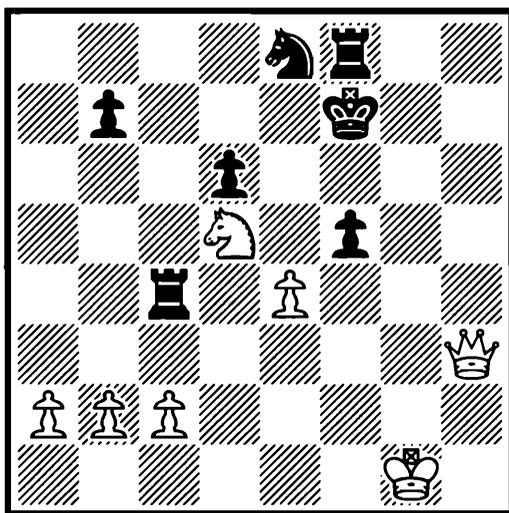
The start of this combination is easy. Use precise technique and force Black's resignation.

### Radulski vs. Slaby: Brno Tournament, Brno, Czech Republic, 2005



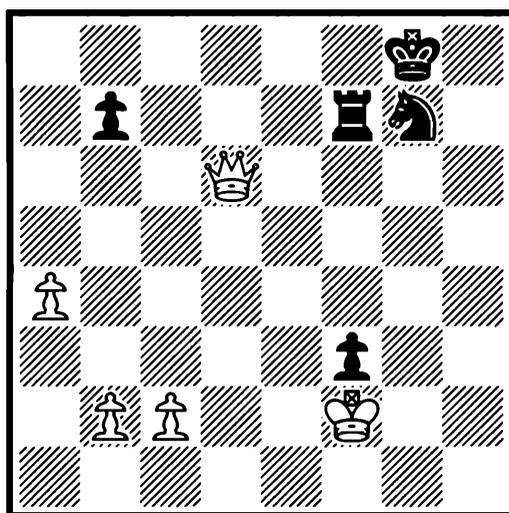
## SUPPLEMENT TO 2ND EDITION

**26. R<sub>x</sub>g6.** The little pawn is the main defender of the all-important g-file. **26... Q<sub>x</sub>g6+ 27. R<sub>g</sub>3.** The pin wins the queen for a rook, but since White has already sacrificed a rook that will not be an automatic win. **27... Q<sub>x</sub>g3+ 28. Q<sub>x</sub>g3+ Kf7 29. Q<sub>x</sub>h3.** The pawn is not important, but access to the h-file is.



**29... N<sub>g</sub>7 30. Q<sub>h</sub>6 R<sub>x</sub>e4 31. Q<sub>f</sub>6+ K<sub>g</sub>8 32. N<sub>e</sub>7+.** Black is forced to sacrifice his rook for this monster. **32... R<sub>x</sub>e7. 32... K<sub>h</sub>7 33. Q<sub>g</sub>6+ K<sub>h</sub>8 34. Q<sub>h</sub>6#.**

**33. Q<sub>x</sub>e7 R<sub>f</sub>7 34. Q<sub>x</sub>d6 f4 35. a4 f3 36. K<sub>f</sub>2.** Black gave up.

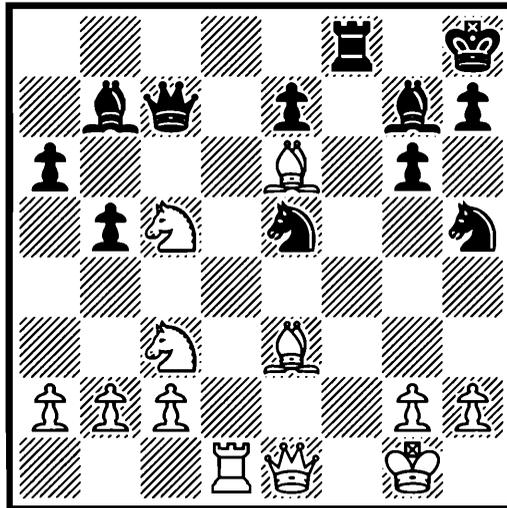


**SITUATION #4**

Looking at the position, you can see that White's king does not have much protection. Go in for the kill.

**Svidler vs. Carlsen:**

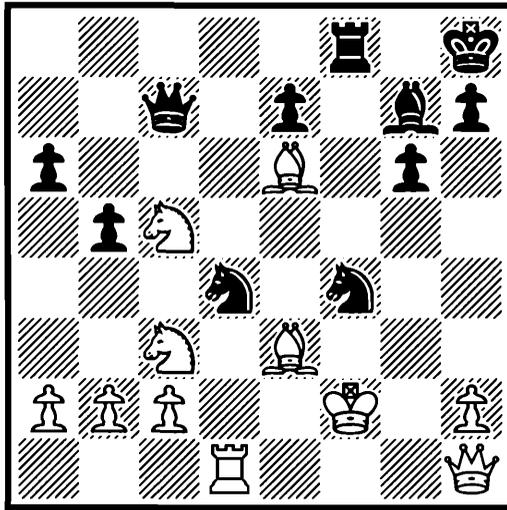
**Amber Tournament (Blindfold), Nice, 2010**



22... Bxg2!! Remove the defender! 23. Kxg2 Nf3 24. Qh1 Nf4+? 24... Nh4+ would have been more accurate. 25. Kg1 Qe5 26. N3e4 Nf4 27. Bg4 Qh5 28. Qg2 Nhxg2 29. Bxh5 Nxe3 30. Re1 Nxc2 and Black wins.

25. Kf2? White could have just grabbed the knight. 25... Nd4.

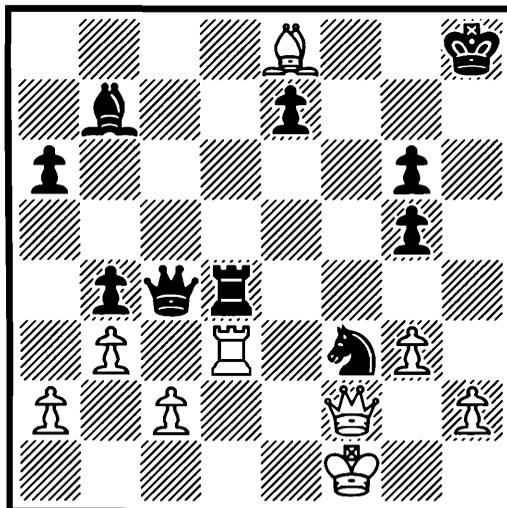
Carlsen commented: "The blindfold game today started in an amusing way. Since we usually change colors every day I had somehow assumed that I would be White in the blindfold game, without checking the pairings properly. As a result, I was really surprised when 1.e4 appeared on the screen, as I had intended to play 1.d4 myself. I then sat there for a couple of minutes, as I had not yet prepared anything with Black. An interesting position arose in which both sides had chances. After he missed a key blow, 22...Bxg2, the position certainly turned in my favor. I subsequently missed a couple of good continuations, but what I did was enough to make him resign after 25 moves in a position we both thought was dead lost for White. However, as we both realized later, his resignation was clearly premature. In the final position White could have fought on with 26. Nd7, a move both of us missed. Still, Black would have been clearly better, but there was still everything to fight for."



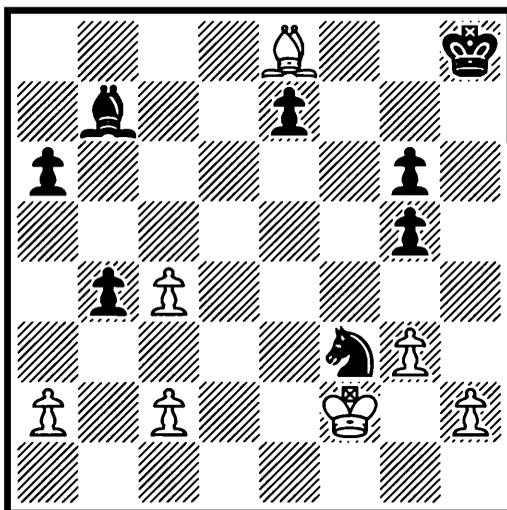
**SITUATION #5**

Black has more than enough attacking force to bring this game to a conclusion. Find the most effective path.

**Djurhuus vs. Carlsen: Norwegian Championship, Molde, Norway, 2004**



30... Rxd3! A queen sacrifice is called for. 31. bxc4 Rd1+ 32. Ke2 Rd2+. Black recovers the queen. 33. Ke3 Rxf2 34. Kxf2. Black has an extra knight.

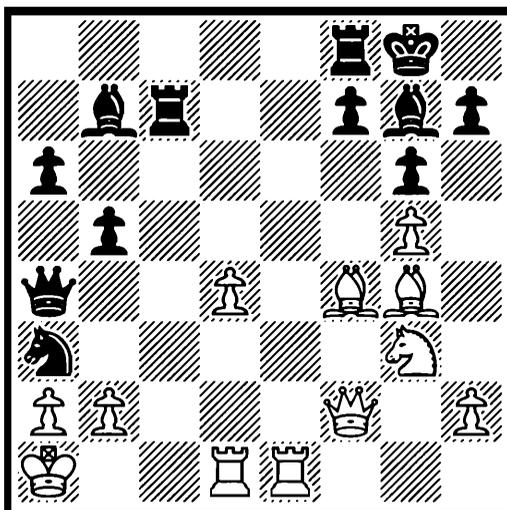


34... Kg7 35. c5 Nd4 36. Ke3 e5 37. Kd3 Bd5. White resigned.

### SITUATION #6

Black obviously has a good attack, but what is the most precise way to finish it off?

### Petrisor vs. Kanarek: European under-16 Championship, Montenegro, 2008



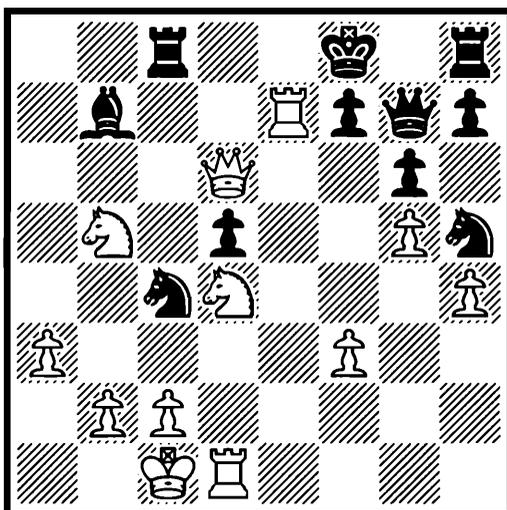
32... Rc2 The invasion of the seventh rank is key. 33. Qf1? White fails to appreciate the danger at b2. 33... Bd5. 33...Rxb2! Would have been even better.

34. Rd3 Nc4 35. Bd1 Nxb2 36. a3 Qc4. White resigned because mate is coming at a2.

**SITUATION #7**

What move forces Black's resignation?

**Delchev vs. Nataf: Serbia and Montenegro Team Cup, Montenegro, 2005**

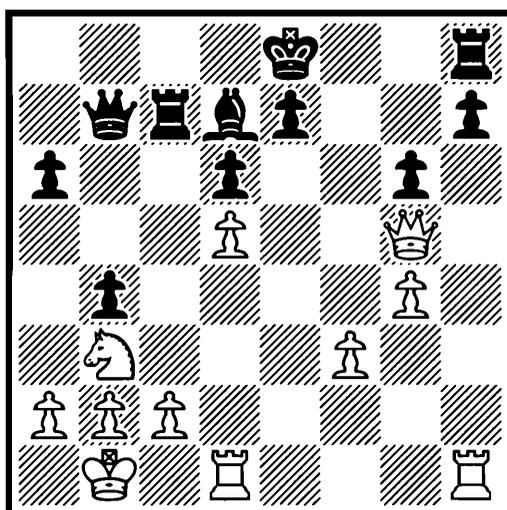


25. Re8+! 25... Kxe8 26. Re1+ Ne5 27. Rxe5+ etc.

**SITUATION #8**

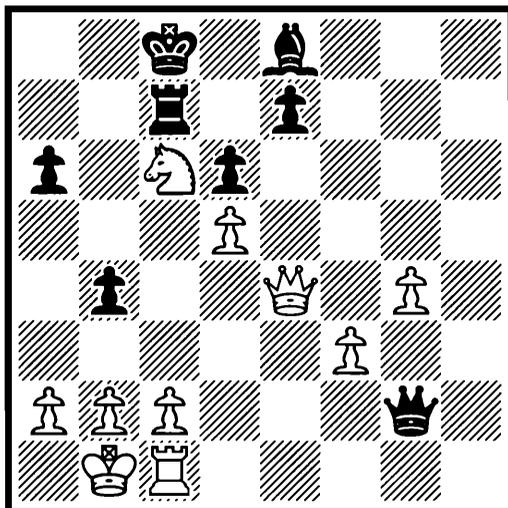
White can destroy what is left of Black's defenses. How?

**Tiviakov vs. Khanh: 34th Olympiad, Istanbul, 2000**



25. Rxh7! The real target is g6 but the defender at h7 must be removed. 25... Rxh7 26. Qxg6+ Rf7 27. Rh1. White takes advantage of the open h-file. 27... Kd8 28. Qxf7 Be8 29. Qf5 Qb6 30. Qe4 Qf2 31. Nd4. The knight heads for e6. 31... Kc8. 31... Qg2 32. Ne6+.

32. Nc6 Qg2. 32... Rxc6 33. dxc6 Qg2 34. Re1.  
 33. Rc1. White plans to open up the c-file later.

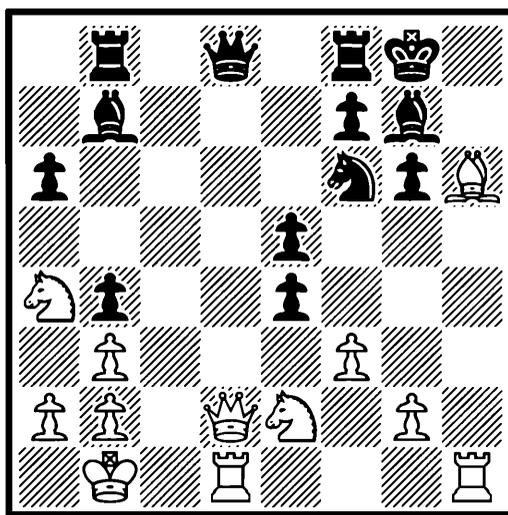


33... e5 34. Nxb4 Kb7 35. Nd3 Bb5 36. c4! White is three pawns ahead and this seals the deal. 36... Rxc4 37. Rxc4 Qf1+ 38. Kc2 Bxc4 39. Qxc4 Qe2+ 40. Kc1. Black resigned.

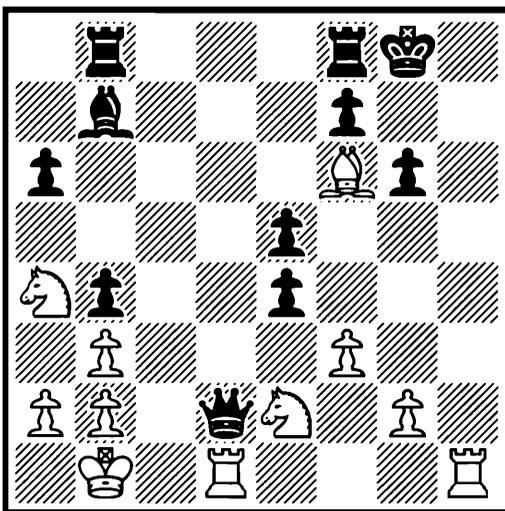
**SITUATION #9**

Black would like to trade queens and go into the endgame a pawn up. That's not going to happen. Why not?

**Carlsson vs. Campos-Moreno: Soller, Spain, 2006**



21. Bxg7 Qxd2. 21... Kxg7 22. Qh6+ Kg8 23. Qh8#. 22. Bxf6!! sets up a deadly mate threat.

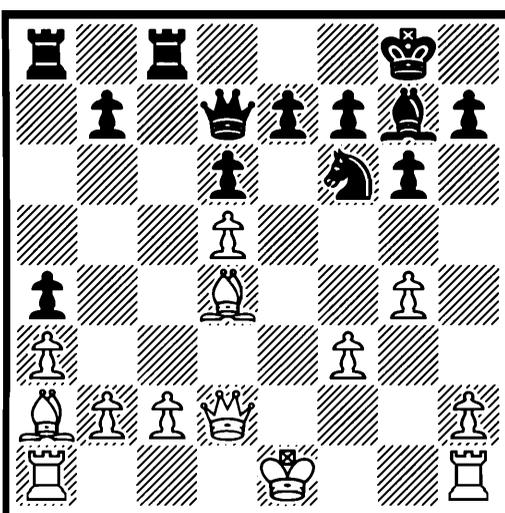


22... Qxd1+ 23. Rxd1. Black resigned. White will play Rh1 and Rh8#.

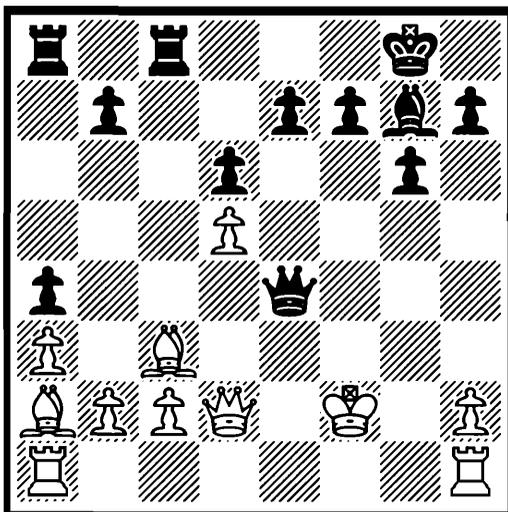
**SITUATION #10**

It is not likely that you can calculate the correct continuation precisely. However, can you find a bold plan that led Black to victory in this game?

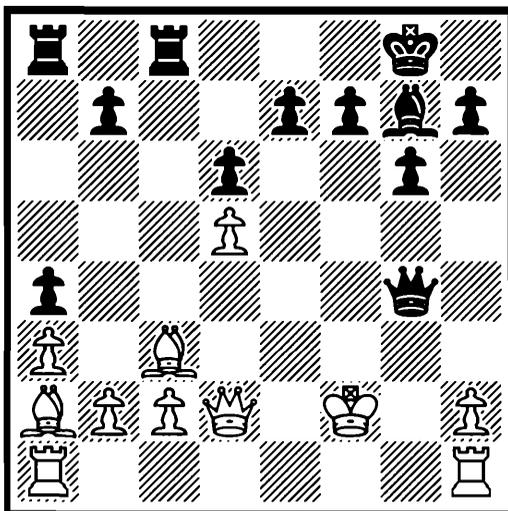
**Stocek vs. Mrva: Slovakian Teams, Slovakia, 2002**



16... Ne4!? 17. fxe4 Qxg4 18. Bc3 Qxe4+ 19. Kf2.



19... Qh4+. 19... Rxc3! 20. bxc3 Rc8. 20. Kg2 Qg4+ 21. Kf2.



21... Bxc3. 21... Rxc3! 22. bxc3 Rc8.

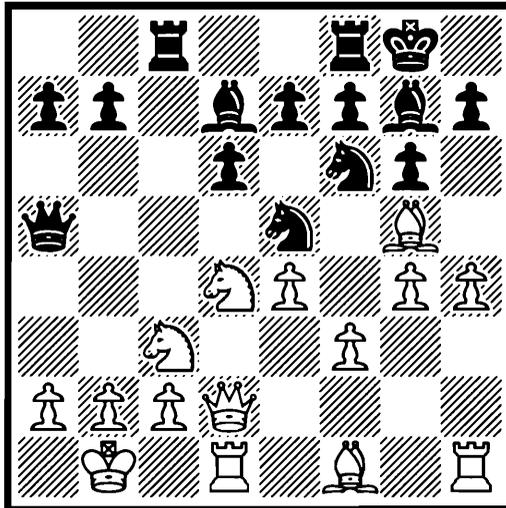
22. bxc3 e5 23. dxe6 fxe6 24. Qd4 Rf8+ 25. Ke3? Qg5+ 26. Ke2 Qg2+ 27. Kd3 Rf3+ 28. Kc4 Rf4 29. Qxf4 Qd5+ 30. Kb4 Qc5#.

**SITUATION #11**

Use a typical tactic to destroy White's position.

**Cubas vs. Walsh:**

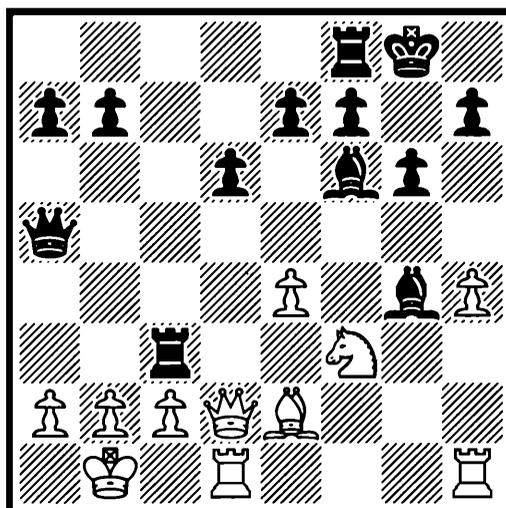
**Torneo Continental Americano, Buenos Aires, 2003**



13... Nxf3!! White is going to lose most of the kingside pawns and Black will have a strong queenside attack as well. 14. Nxf3 Bxg4 15. Be2 Rxc3! The typical exchange sacrifice is particularly strong, because White's central pawn is undefended and is threatened by Black's knight. Therefore, White is going to have to give up his dark-squared bishop for that knight and let Black's dark-squared bishop joined the attack.

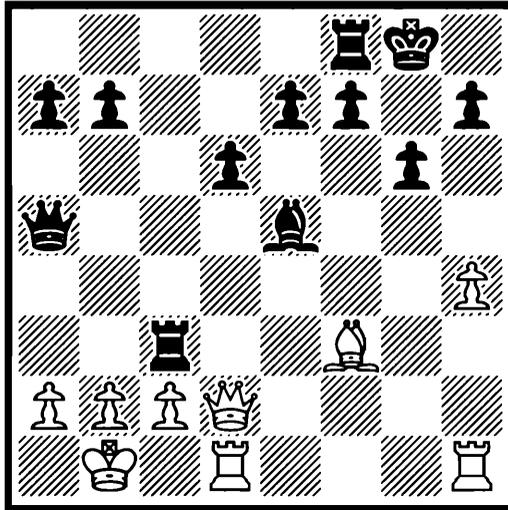
16. Bxf6. 16. Qxc3 Qxc3 17. bxc3 Nxe4 18. Bxe7 Nxc3+ 19. Kc1 Re8 and Black comes out ahead.

16... Bxf6.



17. e5. There is nothing better. 17. bxc3?? Be6! and checkmate will soon follow.

17... Bxf3 18. Bxf3 Bxe5!



19. bxc3 Qb6+ 20. Kc1 Rc8. The attack is relentless. 21. Qg5 Rxc3 22. Rd3 Rc4! Sometimes you need to retreat even when you are attacking. An exchange of rooks would not help the attack. 23. Rd2? 23. Rb3 would have put up more resistance. 23... Qf2 24. Qg2 Rxc2+ 25. Kb1 Qxg2 26. Bxg2 Rxg2 and Black should win.

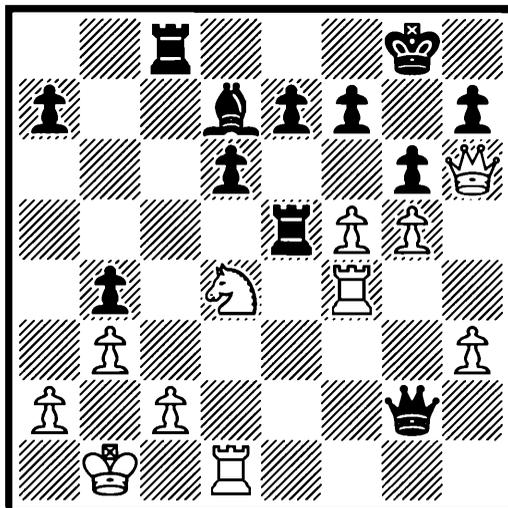
23... Bf4. A simultaneous fork and pin. 24. Qg1 Qb4! Piling pressure on the pinned rook. 25. Rhh2 Qc3. White resigned.

### SITUATION #12

White hopes to have time for Rh4, but you can exploit the b1-h7 diagonal and get in first. How?

### Stripunsky vs. Nakamura:

US Championships, Stillwater, USA, 2007



## SUPPLEMENT TO 2ND EDITION

**24... Rxc2!?** This works because the bishop is prepared to join the attack quickly. **25. Nxc2 Bxf5 26. Rc4.** **26. Rxf5 Rxf5 27. Qh4** was a better defense, but Black would still have three pawns for the knight, and more winning chances.

**26... d5!?** The idea behind this move is that the rook must stay on the file to guard the knight and cannot move into an attacking position on the kingside, so White will not have any serious threats.

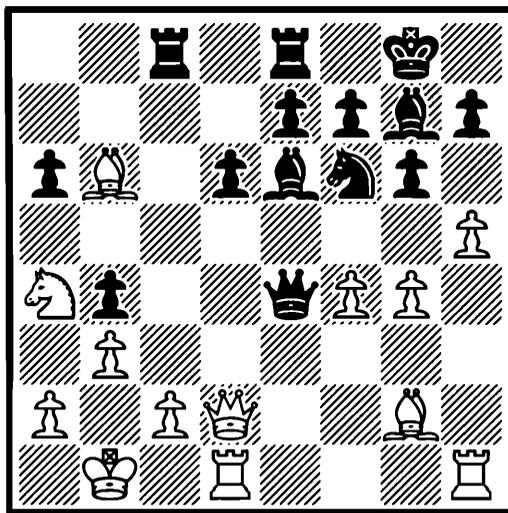
**27. Rc7 Re3 28. Ka1?** Allows the queen to get trapped. **28. Qh4** is better. Then **28... Re4! 29. Qh6 Re2! 30. Rc1 Qg3**, but the queen will be trapped soon.

**28... Qh2.** Black wins.

### SITUATION #13

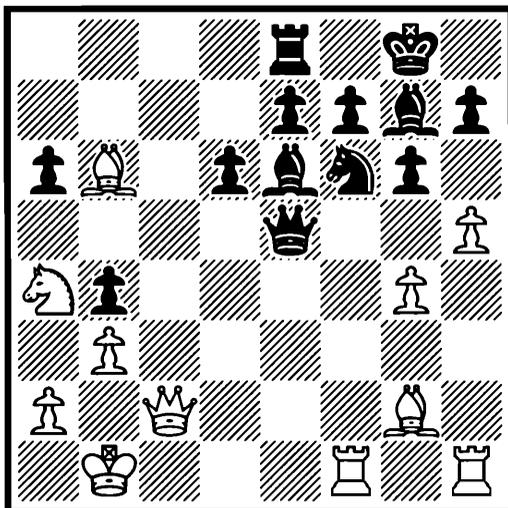
You need a true sacrifice for Black here, not just a tactical calculation. But even so, with perfect defense, White will come out on top. What is your best try?

### Pina vs. Silva: Lisbon, Portugal, 2001



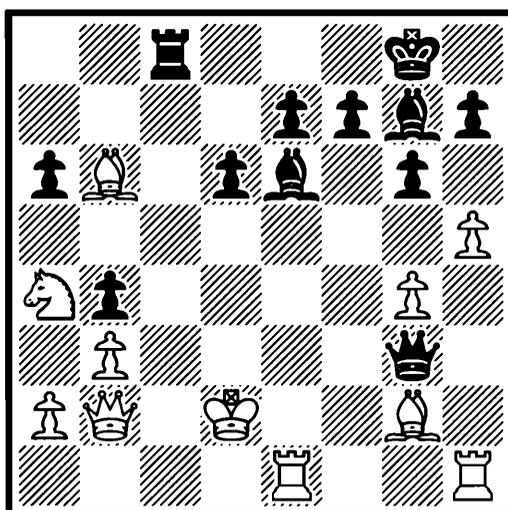
**19... Rxc2!?** This sacrifice can be justified by the weakness of White's kingside pawns. **20. Qxc2 Qxf4!?** Black has three pawns for a rook and is likely to pick up at least one more. **21. Rdf1.** **21. Rd4!?** **21... Qe5 22. Nb2! Rc8 23. Nc4 Bxc4 24. Rxc4 Rxc4 25. Qxc4 Nd7** with a strong attack that forces White to yield material. **26. Qd4 Qxd4 27. Bxd4 Bxd4** with three pawns for the exchange

**21... Qe5.**



**22. Re1?** This does not work because Black will simply block with the knight and bring more attackers into play. **22. h6! Bh8**  
**23. Qb2 Nxc4 24. Qxe5 Bxe5.** Black has four pawns for the rook and active minor pieces.

**22... Ne4 23. Qb2.** Offering an exchange of queens, but Black has other plans. **23... Nd2+ 24. Kc1 Rc8+ 25. Kxd2 Qg3!**  
 The queen will operate from the kingside.



**26. Qxc7+.** There is nothing better. White will have material compensation but the naked king is in a hopeless position. **26... Kxc7 27. Bd4+?**

**27. Bb7** would have been better, trying to chase the rook off the attacking file.

**27... Kg8 28. Bb7 Rc7.** The rook stays on the file. **29. hxg6 Qf4+?** Things were going so well, but Black tosses the game away with an ill-advised check.

**29... fxg6! 30. Rxe6 Rxb7** is passive, but Black would have retained a strong advantage.

## SUPPLEMENT TO 2ND EDITION

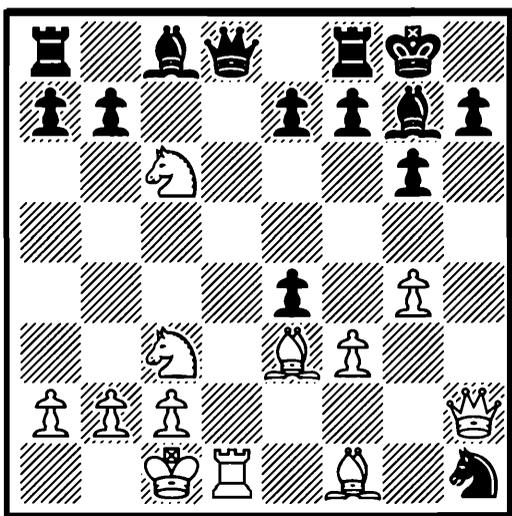
30. **Be3**. Black resigned because h7 and a6 are falling and White's rook, two minor pieces, and pawn at h7 will be too much for the queen.

### SITUATION #14

Bold play is most likely to bring home the point for Black.

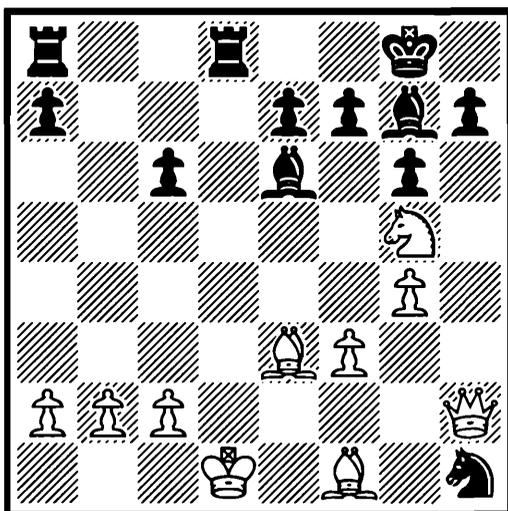
**Bjerke vs. Mikkelsen:**

**Arctic Chess Challenge, Tromso, Norway, 2009**



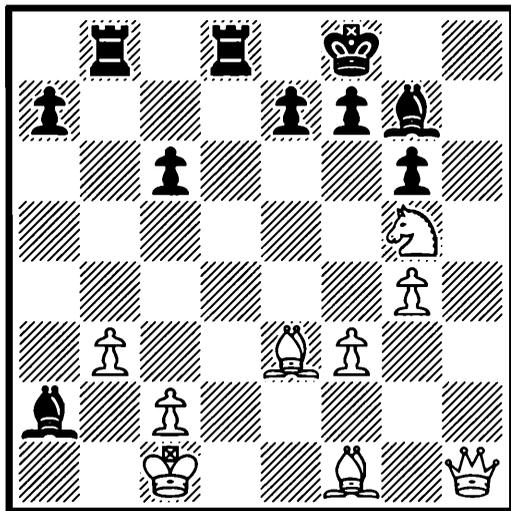
14... **Qxd1+!**? Black will get plenty of material for the queen.

15. **Kxd1 bxc6** 16. **Nxe4**. Black has two rooks and one pawn in return for the queen. 16... **Be6!**? Taking aim at the weak pawn at a2. 17. **Ng5 Rfd8+**. This frees an escape square for the king, so that **Qxh7+** will not be terminal.



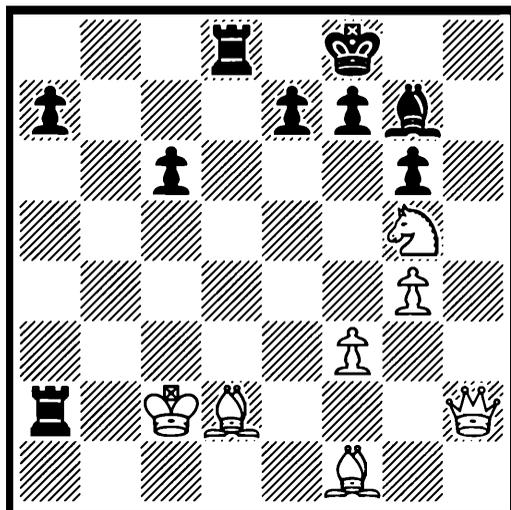
18. **Kc1 Bxa2** 19. **Qxh7+ Kf8** 20. **Qxh1**. This picks off the knight, but on the other hand, the queen is exiled to a useless position. 20. **Ne4!**? deserved consideration.

20... Rab8 21. b3. This appears to trap the bishop, but Black is prepared to sacrifice it.



21... Bxb3! 22. cxb3 Rxb3. The White king is left without any defense. 23. Bd2 Ra3 24. Qh2? This is not the best defense. 24. Ne4 would have put up more resistance. 24... Ra1+ 25. Kc2 Ra2+ 26. Kb3 Rb2+! 27. Kc4 Rd4+ 28. Kc5 Rc2+ with a strong attack, for example 29. Bc3 f5! 30. gxf5 gxf5 31. Qh3 fxe4 32. Qc8+ Kf7 33. Qf5+ Bf6 34. Bc4+ Rxc4+! 35. Kxc4 Rxc3+ 36. Kb4 exf3. Black should still have enough to win.

24... Ra1+ 25. Kc2 Ra2+.



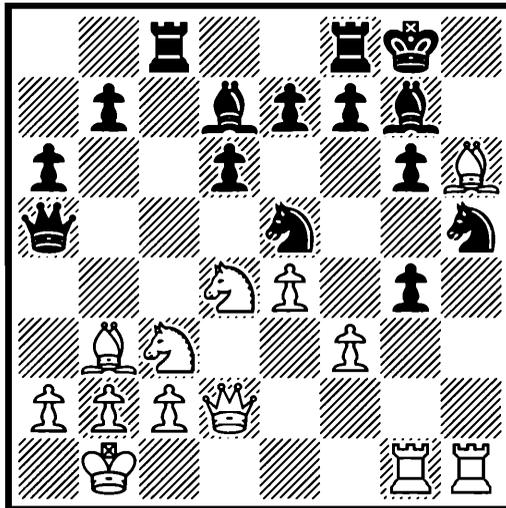
26. Kb3? 26. Kd1 Ra1+ 27. Kc2 would have been wiser. 26... Rb2+ 27. Ka3 Rdx2. Black is winning. 28. Qc7 Ra2+ 29. Kb3 Rdb2+ 30. Kc4 Ra4+ 31. Kd3 Ra3+ 32. Kc4 Rc3#.

**SITUATION #15**

Evaluate the exchange sacrifice at c3.

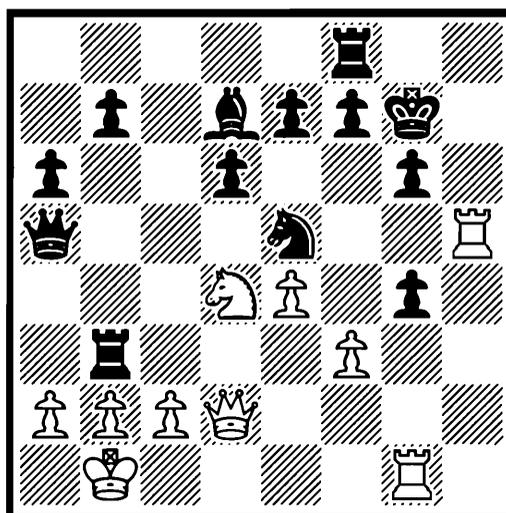
**Anand vs. Carlsen:**

**Chess Classic Mainz, Mainz, Germany, 2008**



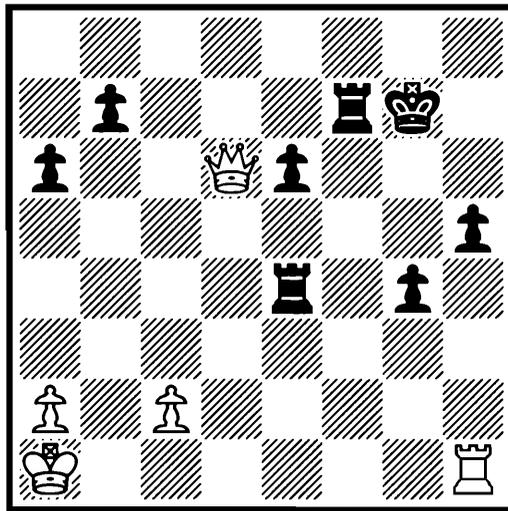
17... **Rxc3?** A bold move, but one that should not and does not succeed. 17... **Bf6** 18. **Bxf8 Kxf8** 19. **fxg4 Bxg4** looks odd, but the computers say it would have kept the game level, for example 20. **Qe3 Bg7** 21. **Nd5 e6** 22. **Nf4 Ke8** 23. **Nxh5 gxh5** 24. **c3 Qd8** 25. **Nc2**.

**18. Bxg7 Kxg7 19. Rxh5! Rxb3.**



20. **Qxa5?** 20. **Qh6+ Kf6** 21. **axb3**.

20... **Rxb2+!** 21. **Ka1 gxh5** 22. **f4! Be6** 23. **Nxe6+ fxe6** 24. **fxe5 Rb5**. The rooks are powerful. 25. **Qc7 Rxe5** 26. **Qxe7+ Rf7** 27. **Qxd6 Rxe4** 28. **Rh1**. The Black pawns are too weak and get picked off by the queen.



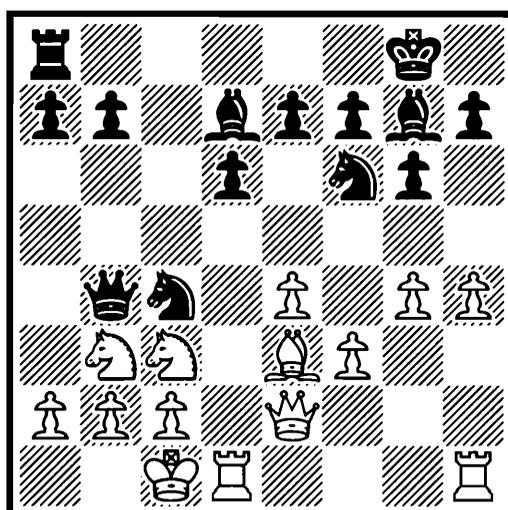
28... Rf5 29. Qe7+ Kg6 30. Qe8+ Kg7 31. Rd1 Rd5 32. Rxd5  
 exd5 33. Qxh5 b5. There is just no way for Black to defend the  
 pawns. 34. Qg5+ Kh7 35. Qxd5 Ra4 36. Qg5 Rc4 37. Kb2 Rb4+  
 38. Kc1 Ra4 39. a3 Rc4 40. Kd2 Rd4+ 41. Ke1 Ra4 42. Kf1 Rc4  
 43. Kg1 Rc6 44. Qd5 Rg6 45. a4 bxa4 46. Qd7+ Kh6 47. Qxa4  
 Kg5 48. c4 Kf5? 49. c5 Ke5 50. Qd7.

Black resigned since the pawn cannot be stopped.

### SITUATION #16

White's king doesn't seem to have much to worry about, but  
 Black can crash through the gate. How?

### Yaranga vs. Moret: Rapid, Aubervilliers, France, 2002



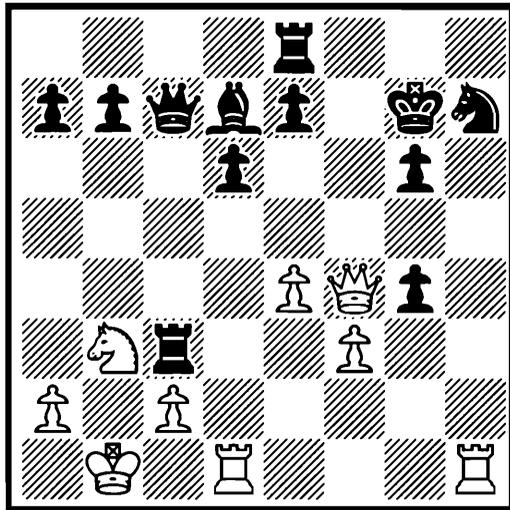
16... Nxb2! This undermines the defense of the main  
 guardian at c3. 17. Kxb2 Nxe4! Unleashing the power of the  
 Dragon bishop. 18. Bd4. 18... fxe4 loses to 18... Qxc3+.

18... Nxc3 19. Qxe7. Desperation. 19... Nxd1+. White  
 resigned as the Bd4 will fall.

**SITUATION #17**

White wins with a standard trick.

**Majdan vs. Pham: Yinzhou Cup (Women World Teams),  
Ningbo, China, 2009**

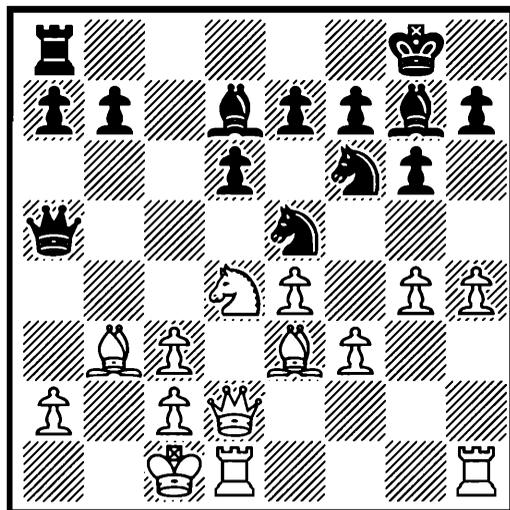


26. Rxh7+!! Kxh7 27. Qf7+.

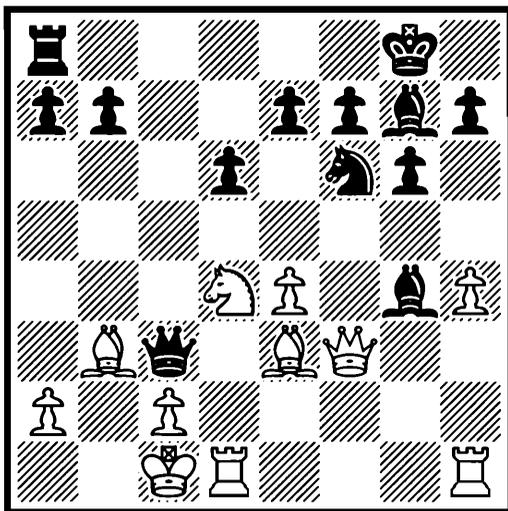
**SITUATION #18**

Concentrate on the c3-square to find Black's win.

**Resika vs. Kahn:  
First Saturday, Budapest, Hungary, 2001**



14... Nxf3 15. Qg2. 15. Nxf3 Nxe4. And it is all over.  
15... Qxc3 16. Qxf3 Bxg4.



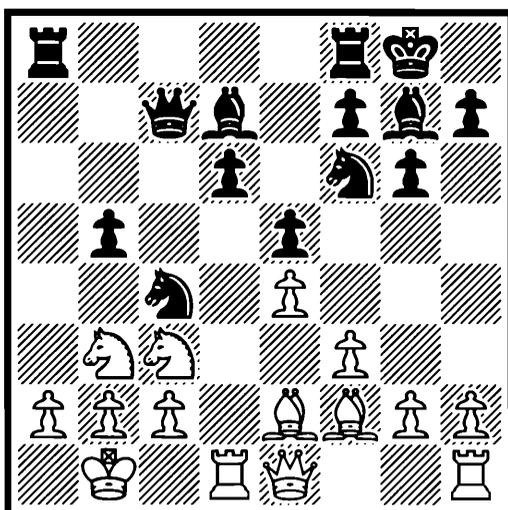
17. Qf2 Qa1+. Black wins as a fork is coming at e4.

**SITUATION #19**

Even though Black's Bg7 can't help, the win is there. Find it!

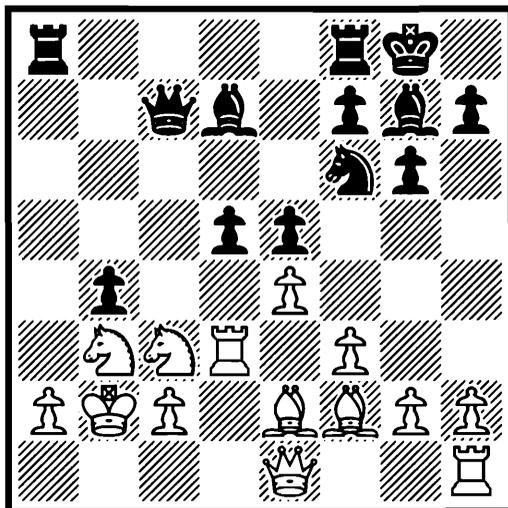
**Fan vs. Xiangzhi:**

**Torch Real Estate Cup, Xiapu, China, 2005**



17... Nxb2 This destroys White's defensive barrier and allows Black to carry out a strong queenside attack. 18. Kxb2 b4 19. Rd3. 19. Nb5 is met by 19... Bxb5 20. Bxb5 (20. Kb1! Rfc8 is very strong for Black, but not immediately decisive.) 20... Rxa2+!! 21. Kxa2 Qxc2+ 22. Ka1 Ra8+.

19... d5! The classic Sicilian break keeps up the attack.

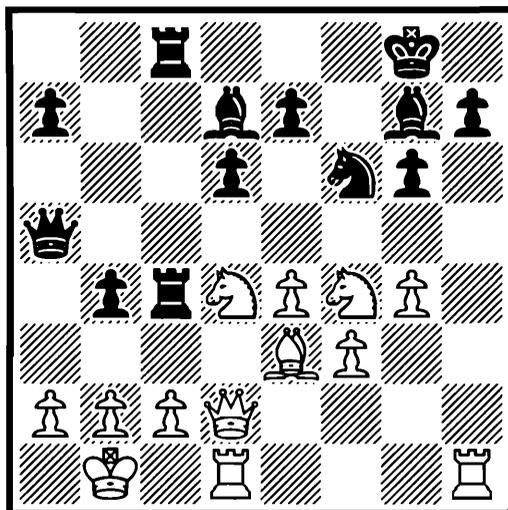


20. exd5 e4! 21. d6 The best available move. 21... Qc6 22. Nd4 Qc4! 23. Na4. If the rook moves, Black captures the knight with check. 23... exd3 24. Bxd3 Qd5. White resigned.

**SITUATION #20**

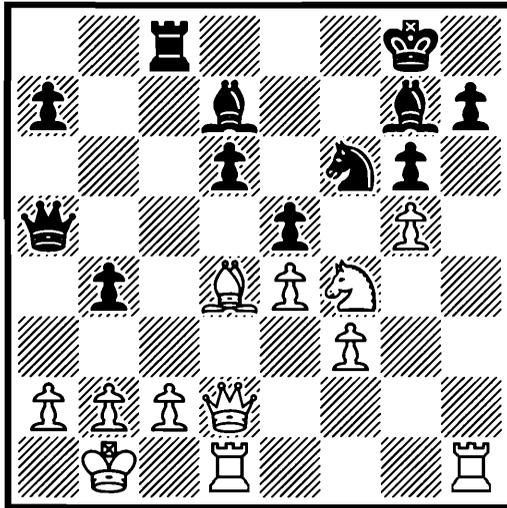
Obviously, a fork at e5 will play a role in this game, but what is the most accurate plan?

**Kudrin vs. Aramil: Chicago Open, Chicago, USA 2002**



19... Rxd4? A tempting but incorrect sacrifice. 19... e5! is correct, even though White has 20. Nb3 Qb5 21. Nd5 with equal chances.

20. Bxd4 e5 21. g5! Counterattack!

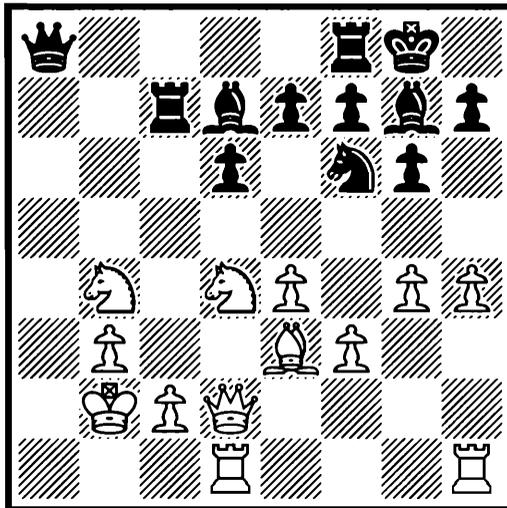


21... Ne8 22. Qh2. Is there really a threat? 22... exf4 23. Qxh7+ Kf7 24. Bxg7 Nxg7 25. Rxd6! The addition of the rook makes White's attack unstoppable. 25... Be6 26. Rxe6. Black resigned.

**SITUATION #21**

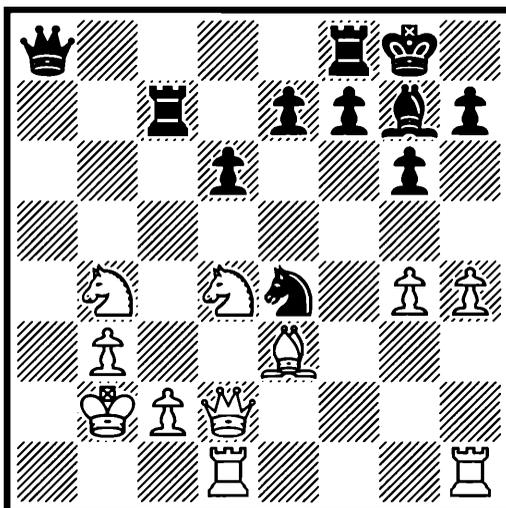
Use a familiar theme to bring home the bacon!

**Sareen vs. Gopalakrishna: Goodricke Open, Calcutta, India, 2000**

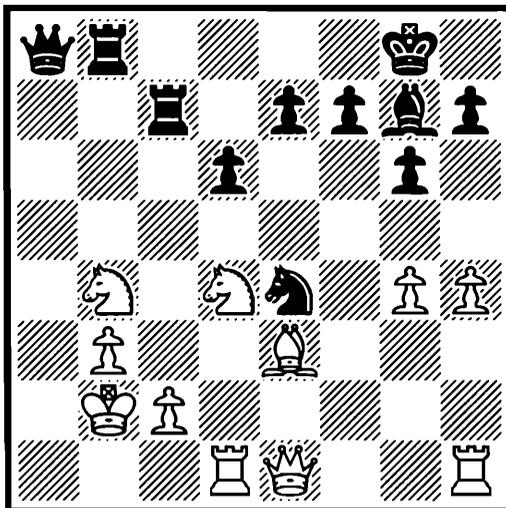


21... Bxg4. Undermining the defense of e4 is very effective. 22. fxg4 Nxe4.

SUPPLEMENT TO 2ND EDITION

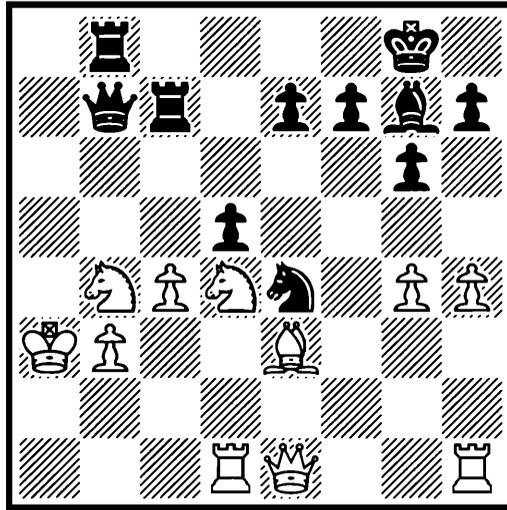


23. Qe1. 23. Qg2 Qb7 24. Rd3 Rfc8 with a strong attack.  
23... Rb8.



24. c4? As is often the case in this opening, it is better for White to concentrate on attack rather than defense. 24. h5 Qb7  
25. hxg6 hxg6 26. Bh6 Be5! 27. Rh3 though Black is still better.

24... Qb7 25. Ka3. 25. h5!? Qxb4 26. Qxb4 Rxb4 27. hxg6  
hxg6 28. Kc2 was the better plan, though Black is still doing well.  
25... Qa7+ 26. Kb2 Qb7 27. Ka3 d5.

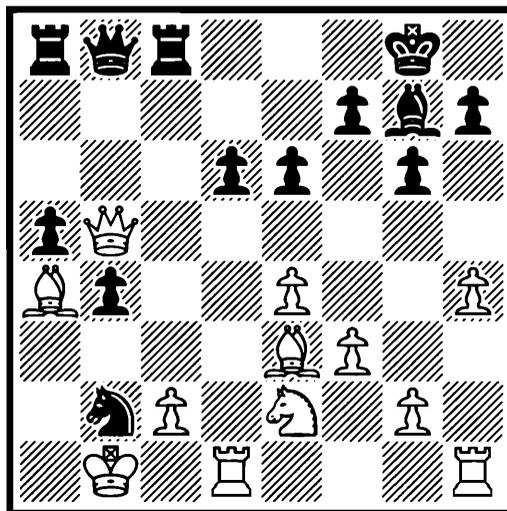


28. Nbc2? 28. Kb2 dxc4 29. Bf4 e5 was a lesser evil. 28... Rxc4 29. Rd3. White resigned, not waiting for Black to take the knight at c2.

**SITUATION #22**

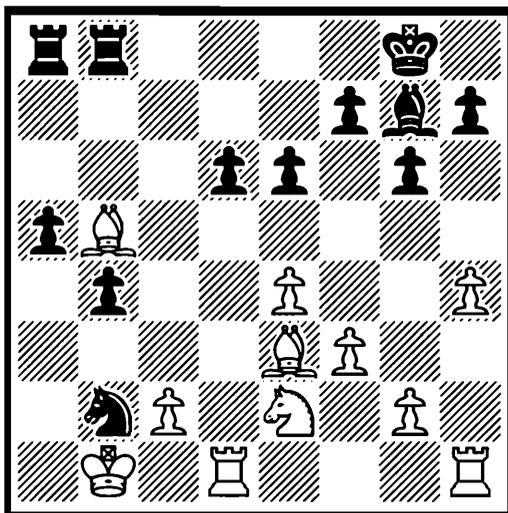
White has offered an exchange of queens. Can you still attack if you accept? What should your strategy be?

**Popovic vs. Blesic: Yugoslav Youth Championship, Obrenovac, Yugoslavia, 2002**

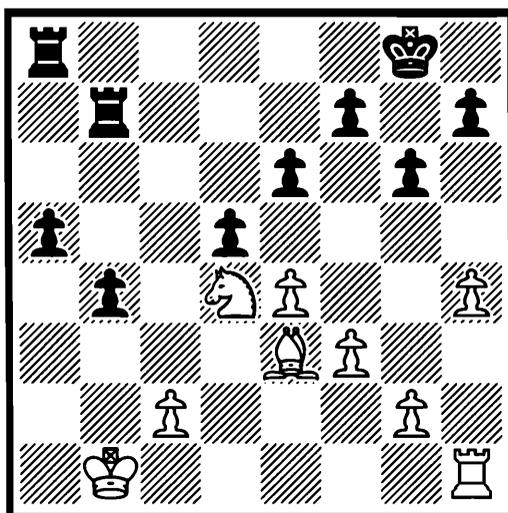


21... Qxb5. The White king is so exposed the Black doesn't need the queen to carry out the attack. 22. Bxb5 Rcb8.

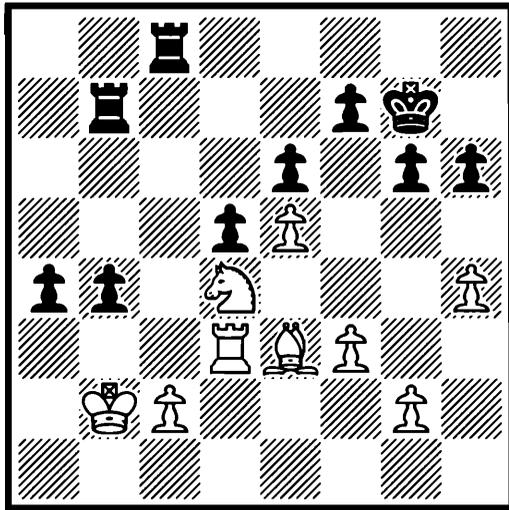
SUPPLEMENT TO 2ND EDITION



**23. Rd4?** Moving the bishop to d7 or c6 would have allowed Black to win the exchange at d1. **23... Rxb5 24. Kxb2 d5.** There is no rush to take the pinned rook. **25. Kb1 Bxd4 26. Nxd4 Rb7.** White has bishop and knight for rook and two pawns, which is not enough.



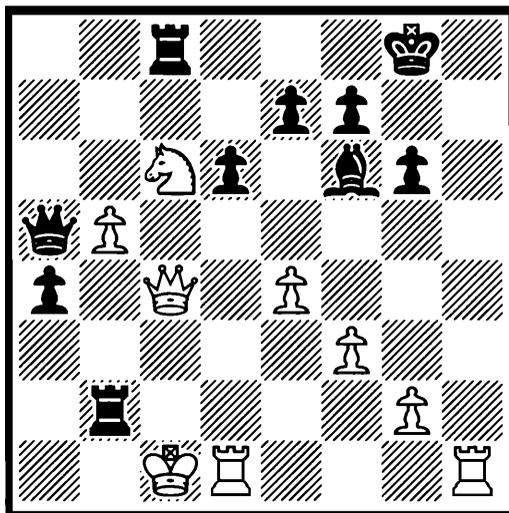
**27. e5 a4 28. Bc1 Ra6 29. Rd1 Kg7 30. Rd3 h6 31. Bd2 Ra8 32. Kb2 Rc8 33. Be3.** White either resigned or lost on time.



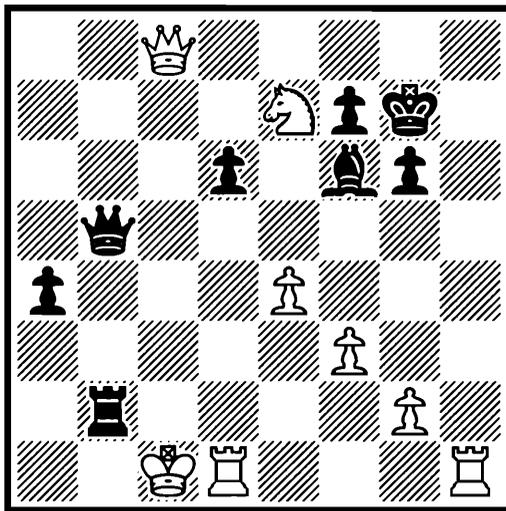
**SITUATION #23**

White threatens  $Nxe7+$  and  $Qxc8$ . What should Black do?

**Szabo vs. Tancsa: IM Cup, Paks, Hungary, 2001**



27...  $Qxb5!$  Black does not care about material, the attack is all that matters. 28.  $Nxe7+$   $Kg7$  29.  $Qxc8$ .

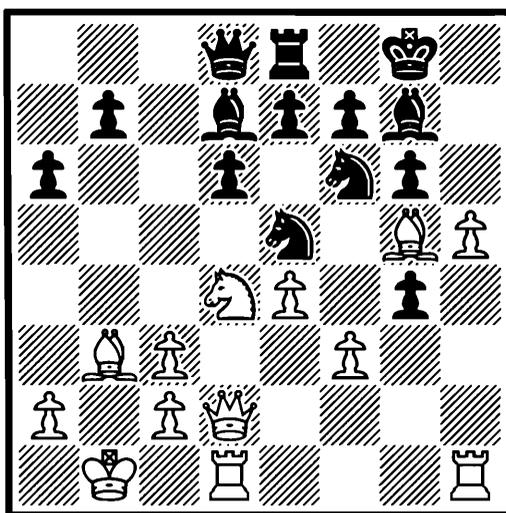


29... Bg5+ 30. Rd2 Rb1+. White resigned.

**SITUATION #24**

White has pressure at g6, but Black can use a standard plan and get to c3.

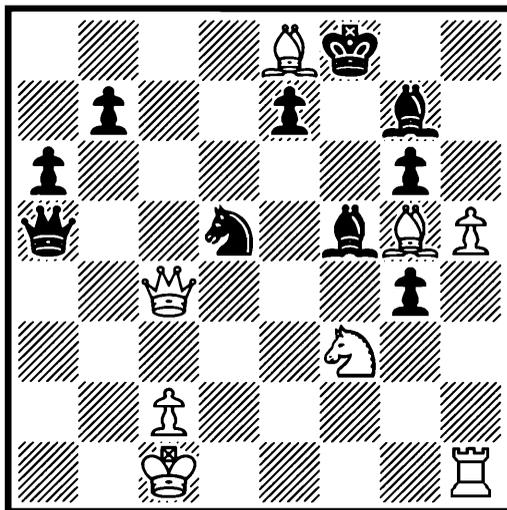
**Jovanovic vs. Feletar: Slavonija, Croatia, 2001**



17... Nxf3! 18. Nxf3 Nxe4. The knight and bishop converge on c3. 19. Bxf7+!



## SUPPLEMENT TO 2ND EDITION



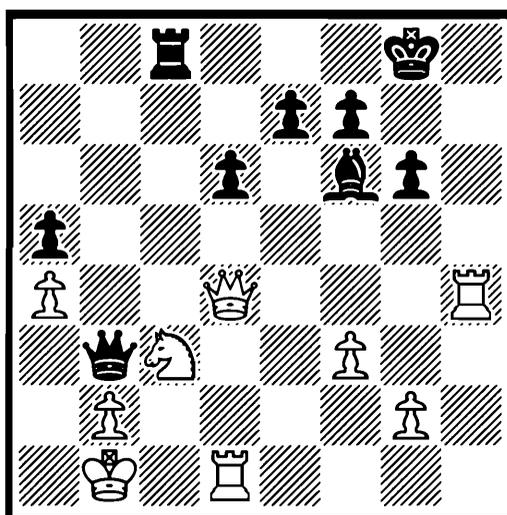
**27. Bxg6.** 27. Ba4 will not save the game. 27... gxf3 28. h6 Bf6 (28... Bh8!?) 29. Bxf6 Nxf6 30. h7 Nxh7 31. Rxh7 Qe1+ 32. Kb2 Qe5+ 33. Ka2 Be6.

27... Qa1+ 28. Kd2 Bc3+ 29. Ke2 gxf3+ 30. Kf2 Qxh1. Now Black has the upper hand in material. 31. Bh6+ Bg7 32. Bxg7+ Kxg7 33. Qxd5. White resigned since ...Qg2+ will win.

### **SITUATION #25**

Don't let this happen to you! White finishes with a neat combination.

### **Fercec vs. Markovic: 21st Open, Bled, Slovakia, 2000**

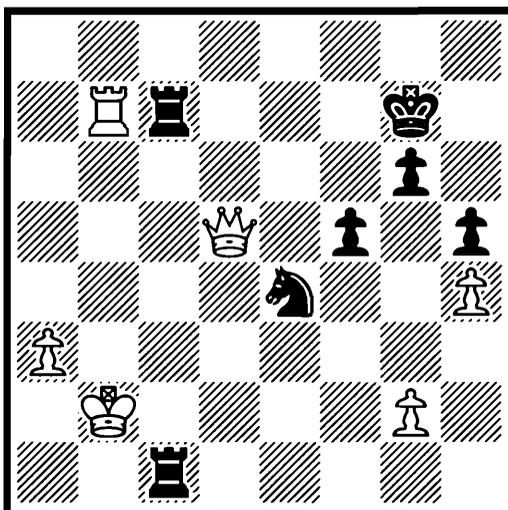


**28. Qxf6!** exf6 29. Rdh1 f5 30. Rh8+. Black resigned. 30... Kg7 31. R1h7+ Kf6 32. Rxc8. The queen is no match for the rooks and knight.

**SITUATION #26**

There is an instant win for Black here. Find it!

**Kleijn vs. Reinderman: Groningen Chess Festival, Groningen, Holland, 2009**

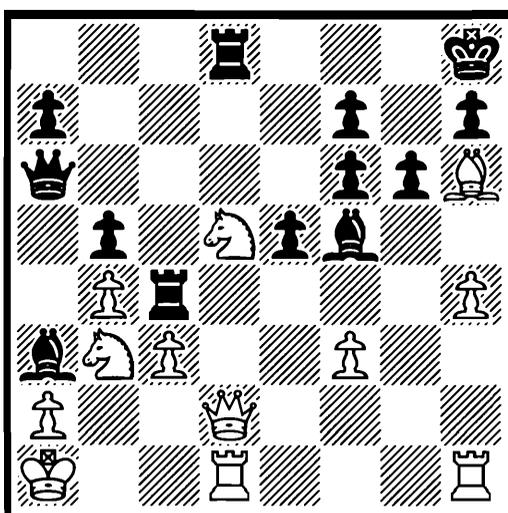


53... Rb1+. 54. Kxb1 Nc3+; 54. Ka2 Nc3#.

**SITUATION #27**

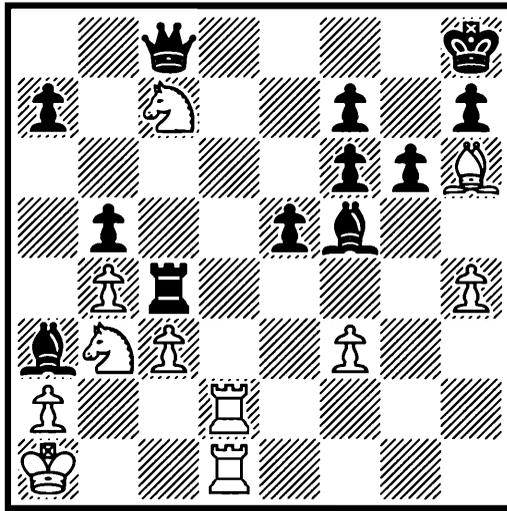
Black seems to have a good attack going, but with one strong move, White turns the tables. What is it?

**Mista vs. Cernousek: Brno Chess Festival, Brno, Czech Republic, 2006**

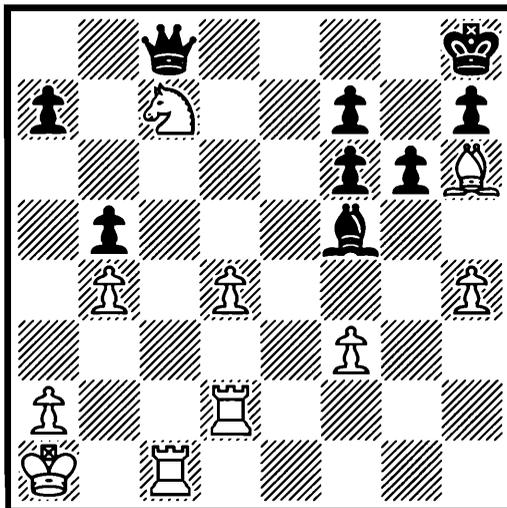


31. Nc7! Rxd2 32. Rxd2. The queen sacrifice is fully justified.  
32... Qc8 33. Rhd1.

## SUPPLEMENT TO 2ND EDITION



**33... Rd4?** Black is busted in any case. **34. Nxd4 Bc1 35. Rxc1 exd4 36. cxd4.** Black has to worry about the inevitable back rank mate.

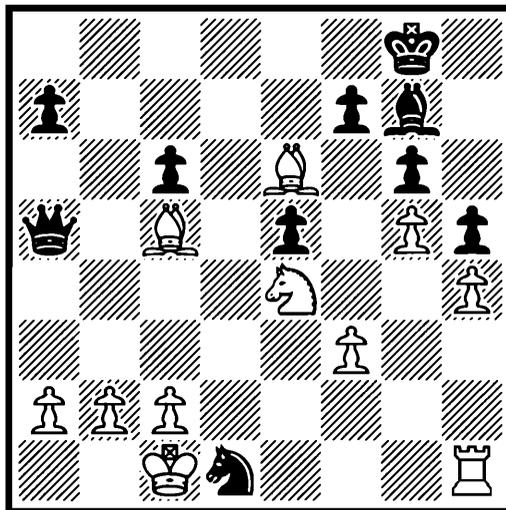


**36... Qd7 37. d5 Qe7 38. Ne6 Qe8 39. Nd4 Qe5 40. f4.** Black resigned. **40... Qe8 41. Nxf5 gxf5 42. Rdc2** followed by **Rc8.**

**SITUATION #28**

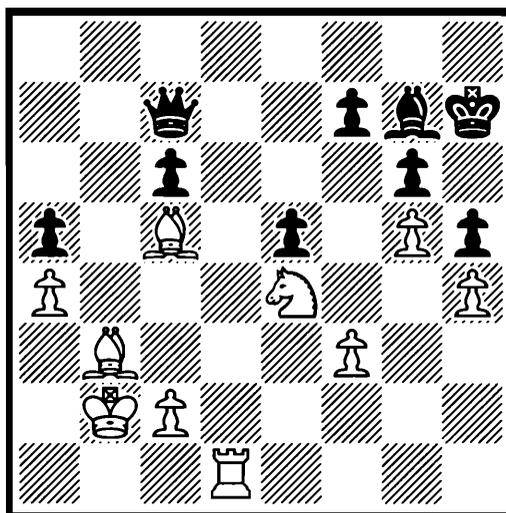
Quite a messy position, but White wins with accurate play.

**Carlsen vs. Praszak: 6th European Individual Championship, Warsaw, Poland, 2005**



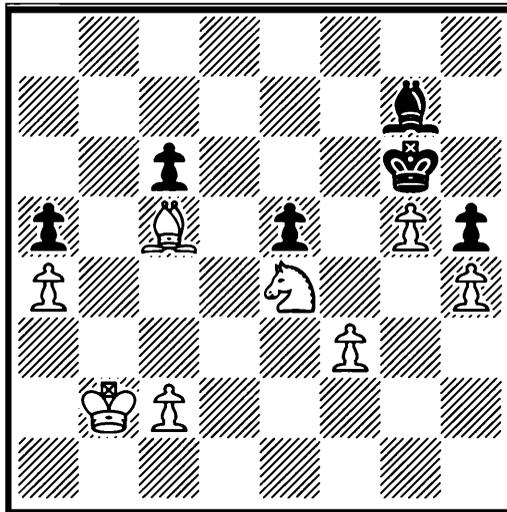
**25. Bb3!** This retreat allows White to maintain a material advantage. 25. Rxd1 fxe6 is less clear. White has only rook and knight for the queen, but controls many key squares and the Dragon bishop is out of play.

**25... Nxb2.** Desperado since the knight is trapped. **26. Kxb2 Qc7** **27. Rd1 a5** **28. a4 Kh7.** Black has no constructive plan.



**29. Rd6 Qc8** giving up a pawn to activate the queen. **29... Kh8** **30. Kb1 Bf8** **31. Rf6! Bxc5** **32. Nxc5.**

**30. Bxf7.** The problem is, g6 will also fall. **30... Qf5** **31. Bxg6+ Qxg6.** There is no choice, but the endgame is hopeless. **32. Rxg6 Kxg6.**

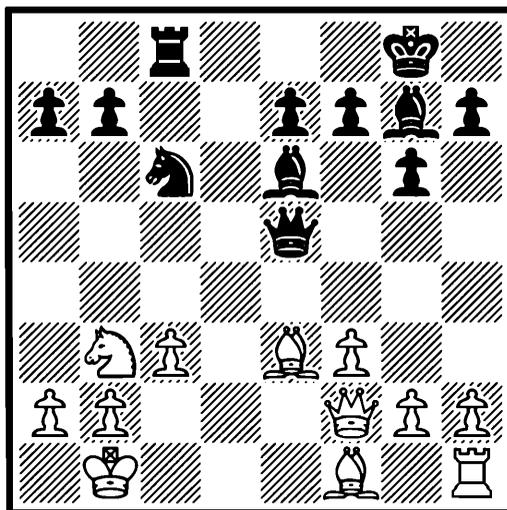


33. Kb3 Kf5 34. Ng3+. White is a piece ahead.

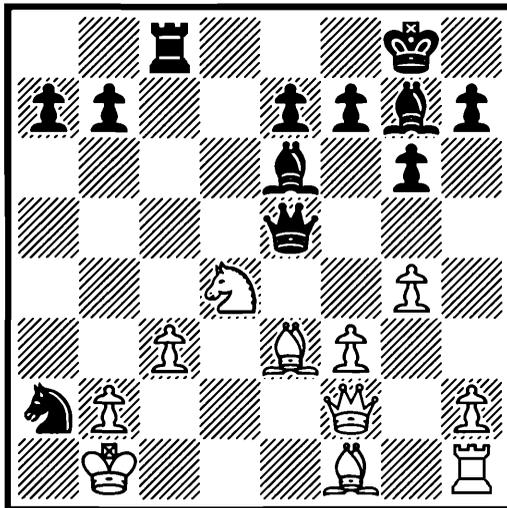
**SITUATION #29**

Ride your horse to victory!

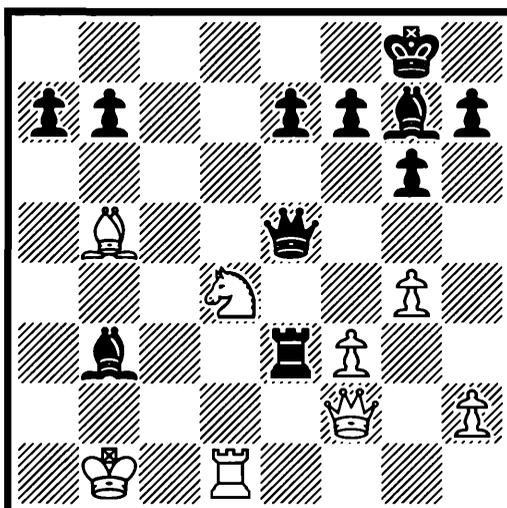
**Tagnon vs. Shahade: Mindsports, Beijing, China, 2008**



17... Nb4 18. g4. The gift cannot be accepted. 18. cxb4 Qf5+ 19. Ka1 Rc2. 18... Nxa2!! Another offer that must be refused. 19. Nd4. 19. Kxa2 Qa5+ 20. Kb1 Bxb3.



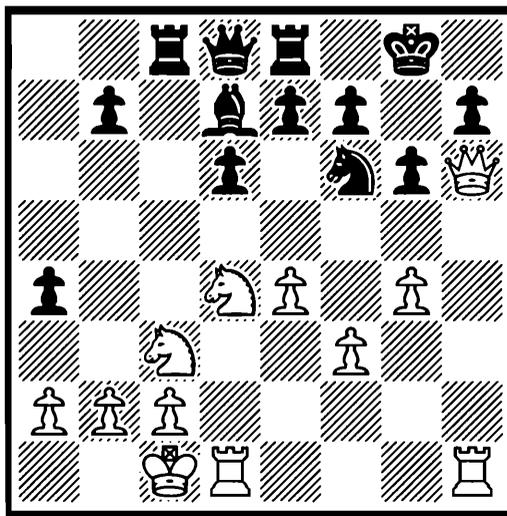
19... Nxc3+. This time the knight must be captured as there is no place for the king to escape to safety. 20. bxc3 Rxc3 21. Bb5 Rxe3! 22. Rd1 Bb3. White resigned.



**SITUATION #30**

We conclude with an online thematic tournament, where I played seven games as White and seven games as Black in the Dragon and won all of them. The situation on the central files is not all that uncommon, and it leads to a tactic that has been seen many times.

**Schiller vs. “meathammer”: Thematic Tournament: Sicilian: Dragon Variation, Chess.com, 2010**



19. e5! The d-file is ripped open. 19... dxe5 20. Nf5. Threatening mate at g7 so the knight must be captured. 20... Bxf5 21. Rxd8 Rcx d8 22. gxf5. Black resigned. In addition to the material deficit, Ne4 will remove Black’s defender of h7.



# 16.

## The Literature of the Dragon

Our book provides you with a great deal of background information on the Sicilian Dragon, but there is much more to explore. Here are some texts which will help deepen your understanding of critical lines.

*The Soltis Variation of the Yugoslav Attack* by Steve Mayer. Hypermodern, 1995.

*Sicilian Defense B75-76* by Vladimir Tiviakov. Chess Informant, 1995.

*Sicilian Dragon: The Complete Black Repertoire* by Goran Kosanovic. Yugoslavia, 1994.

*The Complete Dragon* by Eduard Gufeld and Oleg Stetsko. Batsford, 1997.

*The Sicilian Dragon* by David Levy. Batsford, 1972.

*Winning with the Dragon* by Chris Ward. Batsford, 1994.



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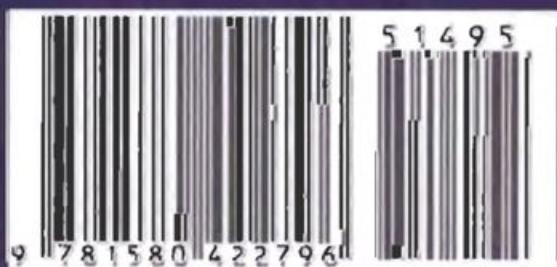
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