Boris Zlotnik

Zlotnik's Treasure Trove

Enjoyable Chess Training for Amateurs (1600-2200)

New In Chess 2023

Contents

Preface

Play is the only occupation worthy of man. – Plato

This book is basically aimed at players rated between 1600 and 2200. Amateur players of this level can be seen in open tournaments everywhere. Among these players one can find successful lawyers, doctors, school teachers and university professors, businessmen, etc. Among them there are also, naturally, young players of a very high intellectual standard. For example, a few years ago while playing in a rapid tournament in the Arturo Soria shopping centre in Madrid, I got to know a girl whose rating was 1800 and whose IQ was 149. It has to be said that the passion for chess felt by amateur players often exceeds that of professionals. It is interesting to recall, in this respect, the response given by the Deputy Prime Minister of Mr. Gorbachov's last government, the academic and famous economist Leonid Abalkin. When a journalist from Soviet TV asked him 'how is it possible that you, who occupy such an important post, have time for chess?', this was his reply: 'It's true that I'm very busy all day long. However, after midnight it's my chess time. It's the same as when you are keen on a woman; you will always find the time to see her. In other words, for me chess is that woman.'

The chess world is very varied and interesting because of the people represented in it. Although quite a lot is known about famous professional players, both men and women, information about amateur players hardly appears at all in chess magazines and books. It is for precisely this reason that I decided to begin this book with a chapter comparing these two categories of chess lovers and even include games played by amateurs in every chapter. Now I am going to comment briefly on the content of the remaining seven chapters of this book.

The essence of the second chapter is a model for choosing chess moves, which is based, on the one hand, on the usual division of chess content into two parts: tactics and positional play, and on the other hand, on the speed of thinking: fast and slow. It was a pleasure for me to encounter the book by Daniel Kahneman, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics, despite his being a psychologist, because of his contribution to the topic of decision-making in the financial sector. The title of his book, translated into several languages, is very striking: *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. I believe that in this there is a certain coincidence between Kahneman's model and that

of the theoretical basis of my own doctoral thesis from 37 years ago – and this is not accidental: human thought works in the same way in various spheres, including chess. I must say that the book in general, as well as certain specific references that the Nobel prize winner makes to our game, deserves the attention of any chess player.

In the third chapter, on concrete, tactical play, my idea above all was to draw attention to playing blindfold, in other words without looking at the board. In tactics there are two major groups of situations: the search for candidate moves and the calculation of variations. And I think that any player knows even from his own experience that looking for moves ('what to do?') is often more complicated than calculating lines ('how to do it?'). Blindfold play helps to improve the way you visualise the board and, consequently, helps you to see more candidate moves. Nowadays there are many good articles and books on the technique of calculation, for example those by GM Jacob Aagaard. However, when applying that advice in practice you have to be very careful.

For the theme of the fourth chapter, on positional play, it is worth recalling the famous French mathematician Henri Poincaré, who claimed not to have an exceptional memory, nor to be a particularly good calculator, and therefore probably a bad chess player (!?). Poincaré attributed his scientific successes to his innate 'filter', which allowed him to search only where there was something worthy of investigation. It can be supposed that a player's 'positional sense' is of a similar nature to the aforementioned filter. And in order to improve that filter we must study not only the games of great players but also various positional themes in relation to what has taken place in our own games. And in this chapter, among other things, one of the themes of positional play is discussed: exchanging bishop for knight.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the topic of creativity. And it seems that this is precisely where the attraction of chess lies: 'It is not everyone who can write a play, or build a bridge, or even make a good joke. But in chess everyone can, everyone must, be intellectually productive and so can share in this select delight' (GM Siegbert Tarrasch). I believe that one of the criteria for a good game of chess at amateur level should be the presence of at least one 'homegrown' idea of your very own. In order to broaden the traditional view of creativity in chess, I have decided to include some exercises of a generic nature, although using chess material.

I believe that a player's resilience, which is the theme of the sixth chapter, is so important that it merits more space than is usually devoted to it in magazines and books about our game. In this chapter I present several typical situations where the weaker side saved a position which

was objectively lost. The history of chess gives us various examples of the importance of willpower in decisive moments. We need only recall the final games of the matches Kasparov-Karpov (Seville 1987) and Kramnik-Leko (Brissago 2004), when White needed to win the last game in order to retain the title of World Champion. There are many examples in present-day high-level competition, in particular in the games of the current World Champion Magnus Carlsen, or of those who have attempted to wrest the title from him. For example, the winner of the Moscow 2016 Candidates Tournament, GM Sergey Karjakin, clearly demonstrated the importance of this factor, both in that tournament and in his subsequent match against Carlsen. Karjakin had already shown his extreme resilience in the final game of the 2015 World Cup competition against GM Peter Svidler, which was a qualifying match for both of them for the Moscow tournament. In this match, Sergey, on more than one occasion, picked himself up after a defeat and responded with a victory. It is striking that GM Fabiano Caruana, winner of the following Candidates Tournament (Berlin 2018), played for a win in the final game, even though a draw already guaranteed him first place. There are some players who have a special gift for saving difficult or even lost positions, for example GM Valentina Gunina. The problem is that there is not, as far as I am aware, any verified method for improving a player's resilience. Extreme measures, such as, for example, bathing in the icy waters of the North Sea, as did GM Alexander Motylev, who got off to a bad start but eventually won the Wijk aan Zee 'B' tournament in 2006, could equally well give negative results.

There are many amateur players who fear their opponent's preparation in the opening. Certainly, the databases and modern analysis engines can frighten anyone. However, the reality is not so negative, as I have tried to show in the seventh chapter. In the first place, the topic of opening preparation has a history as long as that of chess itself; in other words, it is not a new topic. Besides, the human memory has its limits and no player is able to memorise everything. In the end, at least at amateur level, the opening – even though it does of course influence matters – in no way determines the result.

Endings are the subject of the eighth chapter. I think a beginner needs to have a kind of 'safety belt', made up of knowing a certain minimum number of positions and learning the typical methods that correspond to them. And as an example of this, I show 12 positions on the theme of rook and pawn against rook. Fortunately, nowadays there are a number of good books on the endgame: in particular GM Jésus De La Villa Garcia's '*100 Endgames You Must Know*', which, even though it goes beyond the minimum

knowledge required by an amateur, allows everyone to choose what suits his needs.

The final chapter presents the solutions to the many exercises which are interspersed throughout the book.

I share the following opinion with the sixth World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik: 'It is not possible to teach someone to play chess well, but this is something which can be achieved through one's own efforts'. This book is a book of reflections on chess, rather than an attempt to teach how to play well, and its aim is to demonstrate the richness and at the same time the difficulty of chess and the possible ways to get better at this game.

CHAPTER 2

Factors which determine success in chess

*Tactics requires a keen eye and strategy requires thought. – Max Euwe*

2.1 A model for choosing a chess move

Chess is a model of a military battle and it is therefore interesting to compare the thinking of a military commander with that of a chess player. As the eminent Russian psychologist Boris M. Teplov wrote: 'The ability to grasp what is really important, as well as a constant evaluation of the material, are the most important factors which allow the unification of analysis and synthesis, the authentic balance between the aspects of intellectual activity, those aspects that distinguish the intellectual activity of a good commander' (from the book *The Mentality of the Military Leader*). In this sentence, attention is drawn to the speed of thought in each case: grasp, which implies a rapid process, and permanent evaluation, which means thinking and reflecting throughout the whole battle. That same paper comes to a striking conclusion: 'An authentic military genius is at one and the same time a genius of the whole and of the details.' Translating this into chess terms, we can see the similarity to strategy and tactics. In order to clarify the content of the chess struggle, more than 35 years ago this writer worked out a model for move selection which also makes it possible to define the qualities that this struggle demands of the player. Undoubtedly, chess is a creative and artistic process and therefore any kind of model is relative. But at the same time, this game is an intellectual sport and it will be of use to any player to have an idea of the qualities and abilities which should be developed and how these qualities relate to each other and interact, and how the process can be visualised and represented.

The skills of calculating variations and evaluating positions are considered to be essential for success in chess. Nowadays, terms like combinative vision, positional sense, and mastery in combinative and positional play, etc., are often used in chess literature. Players and psychologists who are involved with our game are in the habit of using labels such as: quick grasp of the position, intuitive sense of the situation (Alekhine); conventional principles which the chess player employs consciously or unconsciously when selecting moves (Réti); positional sense (I. Diakov, N. Petrovsky & P. Rudik); the ability to see the main idea in any position and to understand the links between its important elements (V. Pushkin).

To get to the heart of the matter, let us consider the model based on the differentiation between two aspects of chess: combinative play and positional play; in other words, tactics and strategy. As can be appreciated from the diagram below, combinative play leads to a result based on combinative vision, which is related to the calculation of variations. Positional play implies the choice of a plan at a specific moment, and sometimes it coincides with the evaluation of a given position, that is to say that it is based on positional sense as much as on the calculation of variations. As both aspects interact in practical play, it is important to specify on the one hand what they have in common, and on the other hand what it is that makes them different.

As can be seen in the diagram, both combinative play and positional play have at least one element in common: the calculation of variations, which nevertheless has a different nuance according to how it is carried out in each case. In addition, they share in a hidden manner a common part of combinative vision and positional sense. At the heart of both lies the ability to grasp intuitively the situation on the board: in other words, a rapid understanding of the main idea of the position, without calculating any variations. It was exactly this quality that chess players and psychologists have described as the essential characteristic of the chess player. It is interesting to compare what Napoleon said about his military genius: 'With one quick glance I could understand all the difficulties of the matter, and at the same time the resources needed to overcome these difficulties; that was the root of my superiority over the others', with the opinion of Capablanca: 'In an instant I can guess what is hidden behind
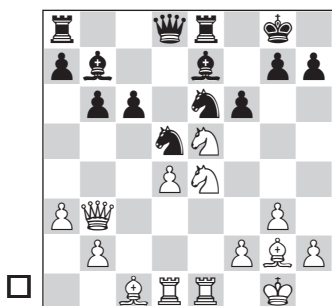

25
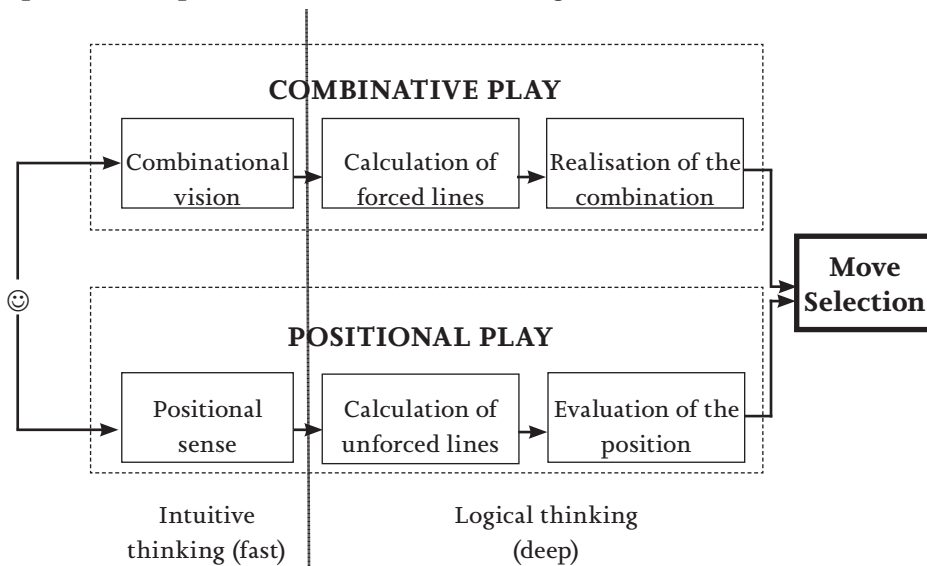
the positions and what can happen or what is going to happen. Other masters have to carry out analyses in order to obtain some results, while for me a few moments suffice.'

Two examples illustrate combinative vision and positional sense respectively.

Game 1
Garry Kasparov
Vladimirov
Tallinn 1981

In this position, play continued:
1.♘xc6! ♗xc6 2.♘c3 ♘ec7 3.♗f4!
And White wins at least a pawn. It is worth noting that the decisive blow occurred in a five-minute blitz game. As a witness to this game, I can assure you that the future World Champion took no more than a few seconds to calculate this brilliant idea, which was not so obvious either.

Solutions discovered by positional sense do not usually provide a win of material, instead they lead to changes in the situation which determine the later development of the game. To a certain extent, positional sense can be considered as the main safety belt

that accompanies the chess player throughout the whole game and at every moment indicates the essence of the position, for example when you should attack and when defend, which pieces to exchange, etc.

The following rapid game in the positional style of the current World Champion is very significant. Despite the short time and the large number of moves played, Carlsen did not make any significant errors.

Game 2   Tarrasch Defence
Magnus Carlsen   2847
Daniil Dubov   2710
chess24.com rapid 2021 (11)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.dxc5!?
A recent fashionable move; the main line starts with 6.g3.
6...d4 7.♘a4 ♗xc5 8.♘xc5 ♕a5+ 9.♗d2 ♕xc5 10.e3 ♘f6
10...dxe3!? 11.♗xe3 ♕b4+ 12.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 13.♗xd2 ♘f6.
11.exd4 ♘xd4 12.♘xd4 ♕xd4
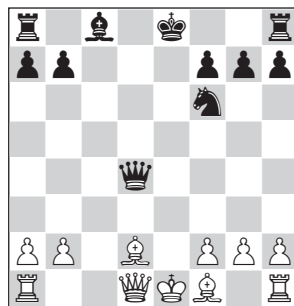
From this point on, most of Carlsen's moves correspond with the engine's first or second line. These moves are indicated with an exclamation mark.

13.♗b5+! ♘d7 14.♕e2+! ♕e4 15.♗xd7+! ♔xd7 16.♗e3!

The exchange of queens reduces White's winning chances after 16.♕xe4 ♘xe4 17.♗e3 ♖hd8 18.♔e2 ♘d6 19.♖hd1 ♔e6.

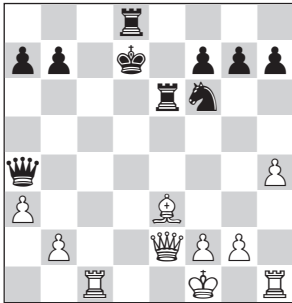**16...♕b4+ 17.♔f1!**

Not fearing the loss of castling rights.

17...♖ad8 18.♖c1

18.g3!?.

18...♖he8 19.h4!

19.a3!?.

19...♖e6 20.a3! ♕a4

Obviously, White's advantage is very small and in order to turn it into a win it is necessary to make many good moves.

21.♕d1+! ♕xd1+ 22.♖xd1+ ♔e8 23.♖xd8+! ♔xd8 24.♗xa7! b6 25.♗b8! ♖c6 26.g3! ♖c2?

26...♘g4!.

27.♗e5! ♔d7 28.♔g2! ♘e4 29.♖d1+! ♔e6 30.♗d4! b5 31.♔f3! f5 32.♖d3! g6 33.♔g2! h6?

33...♘d6!.

34.♖b3! ♘d6 35.♗e3! h5 36.♗f4 ♘c4 37.♖xb5! ♘xb2 38.♖b6+! ♔f7 39.♗e3?!

39.♖b7+! ♔e6 40.♖c7.

39...♘d1?

It was necessary to play 39...♘c4! 40.♖b3 ♘xe3+ (40...♖a2!? 41.♗c5 ♔e6 42.♖d3 ♖c2) 41.♖xe3 ♖a2.

40.♗d4! ♖d2 41.♖b4! ♔e6 42.a4! ♔d5 43.♗b6! ♘c3 44.a5 ♖a2 45.♖d4+! ♔e6 46.♖c4! ♘d5 47.♖c6+ ♔f7 48.♔f3 ♖a3+ 49.♔e2! ♖a2+ 50.♔e1 ♖a1+?!

50...f4!?.

51.♔d2 ♖a2+ 52.♔c1! ♘b4 53.♖d6! ♖a4 54.♔b2 ♘a6 55.♔b3! ♖b4+ 56.♔a3 ♖b1 57.♗d4! ♘b4 58.♖f6+ ♔e7
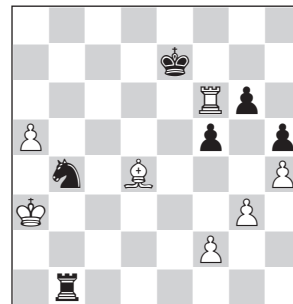
59.♖xg6!

This involves a well-calculated sacrifice!

59...♘c2+ 60.♔a2! ♖b5 61.♗b6! ♘b4+ 62.♔b3! ♘c6+ 63.♔c4! ♖xb6 64.axb6 ♘e5+ 65.♔c3

Black resigned.

However, an intuitive grasp of the position is usually only the beginning of the thought process and not its end, and therefore it is no guarantee of a correct

decision. One can suppose that mistaken intuitive decisions occur basically for two main reasons: when the chess player's prior experience does not provide him with a corresponding image of the position, because it is new to him, or when the position on the chessboard has differences that he does not distinguish from the image he has stored in his mind. This is demonstrated in the following two errors, made by world champions.

Game 3
Readers of Pionerskaya Pravda
Mikhail Tal
cr 1970
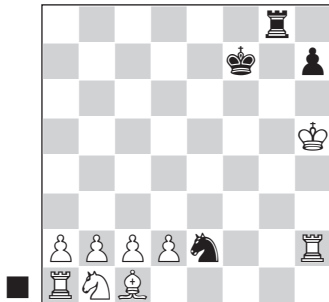
Tal played this correspondence game against the readers of the junior newspaper *Pionerskaya Pravda* and he decided to give his young opponents a wild and exciting game. Here is what he said about this position: 'I cannot remember such a strange position in a game, ending with the white queenside totally unmoved and the kingside completely devastated.' It seems

that for precisely that reason, the wizard of combinations found nothing better than giving perpetual check, as he could not find the mate that was later pointed out by a Moscovite schoolboy.

26...♘g3+??
There was a win with 26...♘f4+! 27.♔h6 (27.♔h4 h5! loses more quickly) 27...♖g6+ 28.♔xh7 ♖g7+ 29.♔h6 (29.♔h8 ♘g6#) 29...♔g8! followed by mate on g6.

27.♔h4
27.♔h6?? ♖g6+ (27...♘f5+?? 28.♔xh7 (or 28.♔h5) 28...♖g7+) 28.♔xh7 ♘e4 with forced mate.

27...♘f5+
27...h5?? 28.♖f2+.

28.♔h5 ♘g3+
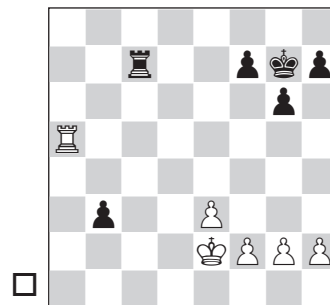Draw.

Game 4
Magnus Carlsen   2872
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave   2780
London Rapid 2019 (6)

35.♖b5?
This move, made in accordance with a famous rule about placing the rook behind the passed pawn, is in fact a serious mistake here.

It looks as though the World Champion, who among other things is a great endgame player, has not realised that the position of the passed pawn on the second rank changes everything. White could maintain equality with the less obvious 35.e4!, despite the fact that this allows Black to place his rook behind the passed pawn, which in most such positions constitutes a decisive advantage: 35...♖b7 36.♖a1 ♔f6 37.♔d3 ♔e5 38.♖b1 ♖b6 (or 38...b2 39.♔c3 ♔xe4 40.♖e1+ ♔f5 41.♖b1) 39.♖b2 g5 40.♔c3 ♔xe4 41.♖e2+ ♔f4 42.♖b2 f5 43.♖xb3.

35...♖c2+ 36.♔f3 b2 37.♖b6

If 37.e4 ♔f6.

37...h5 38.h3 ♔f8

And after bringing up his king to the b2-pawn and beating off White's counterplay, Black won.

2.2 The qualities of the chess player

Since in chess literature there are no standard definitions of the specific qualities of a chess player, we shall try to suggest some here. Combinative vision is the quality which allows a player to find tactical ideas, as a rule connected to a sacrifice, in other words a sequence which can alter the usual correlation of the value of the pieces. Positional sense is the quality which allows a player to discover the main strategic idea of the position, which indicates the best position for one's pieces, taking into account the opponent's actions and thus creating the preconditions for an appropriate positional evaluation and, consequently, the choice of a plan.
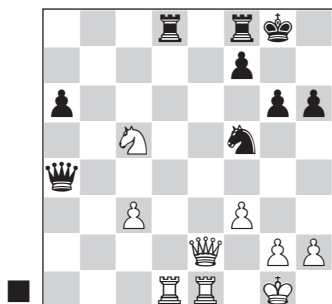
In this paragraph, we shall limit ourselves to discussing only rapid thinking, leaving other elements of the model for a later analysis. In conclusion we should say that in today's chess, the value of fast chess, which basically has two forms, blitz (usually 3 to 5 minutes, with an increment of between 2 and 5 seconds) and rapid (usually between 15 and 30 minutes, often with the same increment as blitz), is growing in popularity. Nowadays, numerous championships for both these types of play are organised, including even world championships, with a separate Elo rating for each type. Fast chess has also entered the domain of classical slow chess as the usual way of deciding the winner when matches end in a draw. It was in exactly this way, in the form of rapid games, that two matches for the title of World Champion were decided in 2016 and 2018, after the classical matches had been drawn.

From my observations over many years I have come to the conclusion that it is in fast chess that the difference between titled and amateur players is most evident. Naturally, apart from a quicker and deeper grasp of the position, there are other factors: above all the expert's larger mental 'database', which includes not only greater knowledge of openings, endings and typical middlegame positions, but also a greater command of various

chess-psychology situations arising from the struggle over the board. Of course, titled players – even the strongest, as they too are mortal – also make serious mistakes. as for example in the following game.

Game 5	
Hikaru Nakamura	2772
Levon Aronian	2813

Saint Louis 2013 (1)

Now, after 30...♕c6 the opponents would surely have agreed a draw. However, the game continued with...

30...♕b5?? 31.♕xb5 axb5 32.♘d7, winning the exchange in view of 31...♖fe8 32.♘f6+.

Aronian: 'They teach beginners these things: if you see a forced variation, check that you're not missing something on the first move. I myself used to recommend this to my friends. I am ashamed of my move.' It is to be supposed that Aronian's mistake was the result of the relaxation that human beings often experience when 'the result is obvious'.

It is curious to recall another case with this brilliant player four years later, when both of the players suffered from chess blindness.

Game 6 Italian Game	
Sergey Karjakin	2785
Levon Aronian	2780

Wijk aan Zee 2017 (7)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d3 0-0 6.h3 d5 7.exd5 ♘xd5 8.♖e1 ♗e6 9.c3 ♗b6 10.♗b3 f6??
There were two better alternatives here:

A) 10...♖e8!? 11.♘a3 (11.♘xe5 ♘xc3! 12.bxc3 ♗xb3 13.axb3 ♘xe5 with equality) 11...♗c5 12.♘c4 f6 13.d4 exd4 14.cxd4 ♗f8 with chances for both sides, Ding Liren-Dominguez Perez, PRO League rapid 2020;

B) 10...♕d7!? 11.♘a3 (11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.♖xe5 ♖ae8 with good compensation for the pawn) 11...♖ad8 12.♘c4 f6 13.d4 exd4 14.♘xb6 cxb6 15.♘xd4 ♗f7 with equality, Alekseenko-Anand, Douglas 2019.
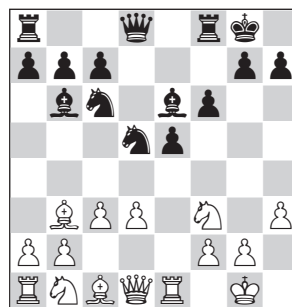
11.d4??
By means of an ugly but very strong move, 11.c4!!, White could have won a piece:

A) 11...♗xf2+ 12.♔xf2 ♘db4 13.d4 ♗f5 14.d5 ♘d3+ (14...♘a5 15.♔g1 ♘xb3 16.axb3 ♘c2 17.♘h4!) 15.♔g1 ♘xe1 16.♕xe1;

B) 11...♘db4 12.c5 ♗f7 13.cxb6. The players discovered this only after the game ended! Explaining his error, GM Karjakin said that he simply couldn't believe that one of the best players in the world could lose a piece as early as move 11! **11...♗f7 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗xd5 ♗xd5 14.♘xe5 fxe5 15.♗e3 ♗c6** And the activity of the black pieces compensates for the weakness of the e5-pawn.

Nevertheless, tactical errors of this kind are much more common in the games of amateur players.

Game 7   Italian Game
Amateur 1
Amateur 2
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗e7 4.d4 exd4 5.c3 dxc3?!
The rare 5...♘a5 is a superior option.
6.♕d5
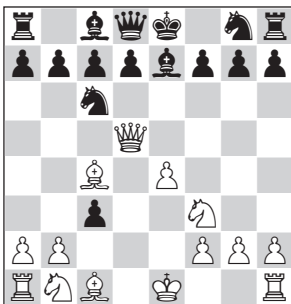
I witnessed a game in the Spanish Women's Championship in 1994

where the player with Black resigned in this position. It is notable that in the Mega Database there are quite a lot of games where Black did the same, or else lost quickly after 6...♘f6??, 6...d6?? and 6...♘e5??. Nevertheless, the position is definitely playable for Black:
6...♘h6! 7.♗xh6 0-0!
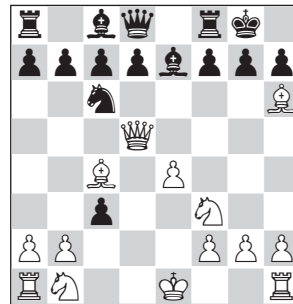
8.♗xg7!
The obvious retreat 8.♗c1?! runs into the hidden 8...♘b4! 9.♕h5 (9.♕d1? loses to 9...c2!) 9...d5! 10.exd5 (not 10.♗xd5? cxb2) and now:

A) 10...♘c2+?! 11.♔d1 ♘xa1 12.♘xc3 with sufficient compensation is known since Maric-Janosevic, Zagreb ch-YUG 1953;

B) 10...cxb2!? 11.♗xb2 b5;

C) 10...b5! 11.♘xc3 (11.♗xb5 ♘c2+ 12.♔f1 c6!∓) 11...bxc4! 12.0-0 ♗f6 and the possibility of ...♘d3, giving Black the advantage.
8...♔xg7 9.♘xc3 d6
And Black has reached a somewhat acceptable position.

Occasions when an amateur player defeats an IM or a GM are not

common and they happen usually for one of two main reasons: either the titled player blunders in an advantageous position or the amateur catches the titled player in an opening which he has prepared in advance. The latter happens also at less elevated levels. Let us look at two examples of these two situations.

Game 8
Sergio Estremera Panos   2365
Jasel Lopez   2179
Groningen 2013 (4)
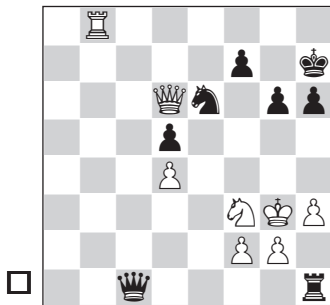
39.♕e5??
Until this moment, the experienced IM with White had been playing the game well. However, his last move is a fatal blunder. Black, who seems dead, finds an unexpected resource. Instead, White was winning with 39.♖b7! ♔g8 (or 39...♘g5 40.♕xd5) 40.♕b8+ ♔g7 41.♕e5+ ♔g8 42.♖b8+.
39...♘g7! 40.♘h4
40.♖b7 ♘f5+ 41.♔g4 h5#.
40...♖e1 41.♕xd5 ♘h5+
White resigned.

Game 9   Sicilian Defence
Deva Estevez Sacristan   1665
Ignacio Montes Gutierrez   2233
Santisimo Cristo de Candas 2017 (3)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗e3
A prepared line which served as a surprise.
6...♘g4 7.♗b5!?
The key move of the prepared variation: White allows the exchange of his e3-bishop for an enemy knight in the hope of attacking along the f-file. It should be said that theory does not approve of White's plan and instead prefers 7.♗g5, with the idea of 7...♕b6 8.♗b5 ♗d7 9.0-0.
7...♘xe3 8.fxe3
It was already too late to deviate with 8.♘xc6 ♘xd1 (8...♘xg2+!? 9.♔f1 bxc6 10.♗xc6+ ♗d7 11.♗xa8 ♘f4 12.♕f3 g5) 9.♘xd8+ ♔xd8 10.♖xd1 e6 as Black would have the bishop pair in the ending.
8...♗d7 9.0-0
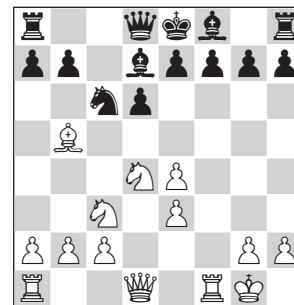
9...♘e5?!
You can tell that Black is not familiar with the position. The main line is 9...e6! 10.♗xc6 bxc6

11.e5!? (11.♕f3 ♕f6!) 11...♗e7!? with favourable statistics for Black.

10.♘f3! ♘g4

White retains the initiative in the event of 10...f6 11.♘xe5 dxe5 (11...fxe5? 12.♕d5) 12.♕h5+ g6 13.♕e2.

11.♘g5 ♘f6?!

The correct move was 11...♘e5, but the rating difference of almost 600 points probably forced Black to avoid the repetition of moves possible in the event of 12.♘f3.

12.e5!

A very good pawn sacrifice based on Black lag in development.

12...♗xb5

Also unsatisfactory was 12...dxe5 13.♗xd7+ (13.♘xf7!? ♔xf7 14.♗xd7) 13...♕xd7 14.♕xd7+ ♘xd7 15.♘b5! (15.♘xf7!? ♖g8 16.♘g5) 15...♖c8 16.♘xa7 ♖xc2 17.♖fc1 ♖xc1+ 18.♖xc1 e6 19.♖c8+ ♔e7 20.♖c7.

13.♘xb5 h6

White would have had a decisive advantage in the event of 13...♕b6 14.exf6 ♕xb5 15.♘xf7! ♔xf7 16.fxg7+ ♔xg7 17.♕g4+ ♔h6 18.♖f5 Jirovsky-Kolesar, Czechia 2001; or 13...dxe5 14.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 15.♘c7+ ♔d7 16.♘xf7 ♔xc7 17.♘xh8.
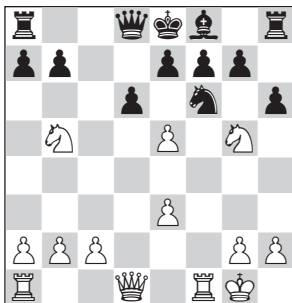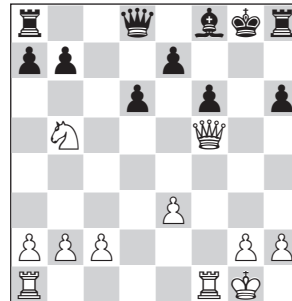
14.♘xf7! ♔xf7 15.exf6

15.♕d5+! would have been more accurate.

15...gxf6 16.♕h5+ ♔g8 17.♕d5+! ♔h7 18.♕f5+

18.♕xb7! ♖b8 19.♕e4+ ♔g8 20.♘xa7.

18...♔g8 19.♕e6+ ♔h7

20.♕f5+ ♔g8

21.♘d4

The simplest was 21.♕d5+ ♔h7 22.♕xb7 ♖b8 23.♕e4+ ♔g8 24.♘xa7, gaining material while maintaining the attack.

21...♖h7 22.♘e6

22.♖f3! was better.

22...♕d7?

Black could have put up greater resistance with 22...♕b6! 23.b3 ♕xe3+ 24.♔h1 ♕e5, although after 25.♕g6+ ♔h8 26.♖ae1 ♕c3 27.h3 h5 28.♘f4 the white attack is very strong.

23.♖f3 ♔h8 24.♖af1 h5 25.♖h3 ♗h6 26.♖xh5 ♖g8 27.♕h3 ♖g6 28.♘f4

Black resigned.

CHAPTER 5

Creativity in chess

Creativity is seeing what everyone else has seen, and thinking what no one else has thought. – Albert Einstein

5.1 Its main features

Alongside this opinion from the brilliant physicist, it is interesting to quote a brilliant painter and a very well-known chess player and creator of several magnificent studies:

Learn the rules like a professional so that you can break them like an artist. – Pablo Picasso

Those of us for whom chess is a hobby, as well as those of us for whom chess is our profession, we are all fascinated by one and same thing: the triumph of a profound and brilliant idea over dull reasoning and the triumph of the individual over the trivial. – Richard Réti

From the many definitions of the term creativity which exist, we can draw two main conclusions:

1) Creativity results in something new, something hitherto unknown;

2) Everyone has this aptitude, but in a different form and to a different extent.

When we apply the term creativity to our game, we can say that the very nature of chess, where exceptions are frequent and seem more abundant than in other human activities, provides a natural training ground for this aspect. In accord with the conclusions already drawn, we can suppose that every player, regardless of level, can be creative, to a greater or lesser extent. It is likely that these two conclusions explain why our game is so attractive and so valuable didactically. There is no doubt that creativity is closely linked to beauty, which in chess is based on the contradiction between the usual and the unexpected.

An endgame study, with its hidden secret, is the greatest expression of beauty in chess. The ability to surprise has several aspects. I should think that at the time many lovers of chess were hugely impressed by the following famous study by Réti.
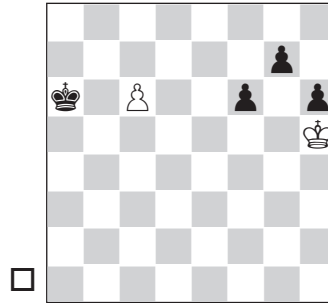
Game 59
Richard Réti
Endgame study 1922
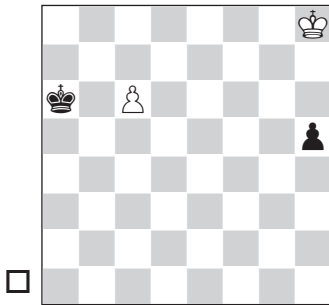
Here the white king follows the spectacular route ♔h8-g7-f6-e5, proving that in chess it is possible to kill two birds with one stone.

It is interesting that, six years later, Réti modified it to give us an even greater surprise:

Game 60
Richard Réti
Endgame study 1928

Common sense protests at the stated task: 'White to play and draw'. Nonetheless, by using the same method as in the previous study, where there was just one black pawn on h5, the white king performs a miracle. Clearly the paradox of salvation lies in the peculiar geometry of the chessboard, where for the king the diagonal path is equal to a straight line!
1.♔g6 ♔b6 2.♔xg7 h5 3.♔xf6 h4 4.♔e5 h3
Or 4...♔xc6 5.♔f4.
5.♔d6 h2 6.c7 h1♕ 7.c8♕
With a draw.

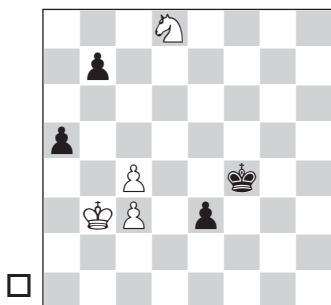## 5.2 Artistic ideas and practical play

It must be said that even at the highest level, human perception does not always grasp the difference between space in everyday life and space on the chessboard and in particular the variety of routes available to the king.

Game 61
David Bronstein
Mikhail Botvinnik
Moscow Wch m 1951 (6)

57.♔c2??

A fatal mistake which loses the game in a simple position. Clearly Bronstein was only counting on the obvious move of the black king to the f3-square, closest to his passed pawn, without realising that there is another route to the f2-square. Instead, there was a draw available with 57.♘e6+ ♔f3 58.♘d4+ ♔f2 59.♔a4 e2 60.♘c2 e1♕ 61.♘xe1 ♔xe1 62.♔xa5 ♔d2.

57...♔g3!

White resigned. 57...♔f3? would have allowed a draw. How?

  A) Not 58.♘e6? e2 59.♘d4+ ♔f2 60.♘xe2 ♔xe2 61.c5 (or 61.♔b3 b6) 61...a4 62.c4 a3 63.♔c3 a2 64.♔b2 ♔d3 65.♔xa2 ♔xc4;

  B) Correct is 58.♘f7! e2 59.♘e5+ ♔f2 60.♘d3+ ♔f1 61.♔b3.

Game 62
Richard Réti
Endgame study 1929
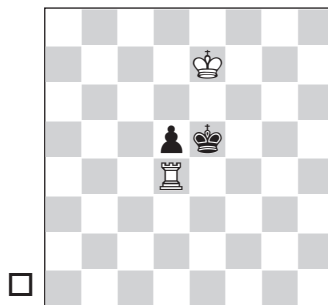
If in the two previous studies, the paradoxical beauty had its roots in the geometry of the chessboard, in this case the idea is different. To win, White must lose time (!), which is not at all obvious. Suffice it to say that when Réti published this study, the famous GM Rudolf Spielmann declared that no master would be able to find this solution over the board during a game. And, as we shall soon see, an example from modern chess confirms that he was quite right.

1.♖d2!!

1.♖d3!! was also winning. However, the obvious 1.♖d1? d4 2.♔d7 ♔d5! 3.♔c7 ♔c5 4.♔b7 (or 4.♖d2 ♔c4 5.♔c6 d3) 4...♔c4 5.♖c1+ ♔b3 only leads to a draw.

1...d4 2.♖d1 ♔d5 3.♔d7

The key idea!

White must keep the opposition. The white monarch waits to see which way the enemy king goes, after which it will head for the opposite side of the pawn.

3...♔c4

If 3...♔e4 then 4.♔c6! ♔e3 5.♔c5 d3 6.♔c4 d2 7.♔c3, and wins.

4.♔e6 ♔c3 5.♔e5 d3 6.♔e4 d2 7.♔e3
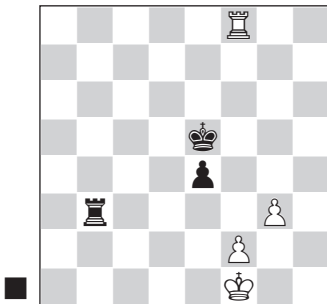
And White wins.

Game 63

Alireza Firouzja 2770

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov 2765

Terme Catez EU-chT 2021 (9)

48...♔d4?

The great player of the black pieces was unable to detect the idea of the opposition here. There was a draw available with 48...♖f3!! 49.♖xf3 (or 49.♖h8 ♖f7 50.♔g2 ♖f3 51.♖e8+ ♔d4 52.♔f1 ♔d5) 49...exf3 50.♔e1 ♔e4 51.♔d2 ♔d4! 52.♔c2 ♔c4! 53.g4 (or 53.♔b2 ♔d3) 53...♔d4! 54.♔d2 ♔e4! 55.g5 ♔f5 56.♔e3 ♔xg5 57.♔xf3 ♔f5.
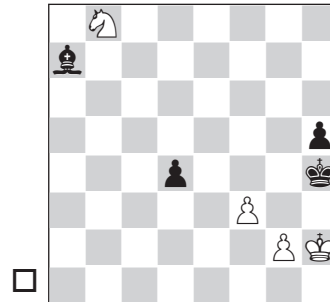
49.♔g2 ♖b7 50.♔h3 ♔e5 51.g4 ♔d5

Black resigned.
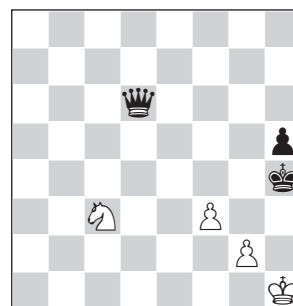
Game 64

Alexey Troitzky

Endgame study 1910

This study shows us a different kind of surprise. It features a final position where the side with a queen and a pawn is unable to win against only a knight and two pawns, and furthermore, it is his move!

1.♘c6!!

Not 1.♘d7? d3 2.♘f6 ♗b8+! (not 2...d2? 3.g3+ ♔g5 4.♘e4+) 3.♔g1 d2, and Black wins.

1...d3 2.♘xa7 d2 3.♘b5 d1♕ 4.♘c3 ♕d6+ 5.♔h1

And after the inevitable ♘e4 White creates an impregnable fortress.

And, as in the previous cases, it is possible to find several examples

where over the board even very strong players overlook the fact that they have an impregnable fortress.
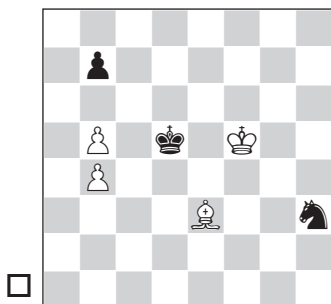
Game 65
Anish Giri   2783
Samuel Shankland   2725
Wijk aan Zee 2019 (11)

45.b6!?

A little trick: in the event of 45.♗c5 b6! the draw is obvious. The move played in the game makes no difference, but here to everyone's surprise Black resigned, in a theoretically (!) drawn position. The right way would have been to move his king towards the c8-square, which saves the game, no matter how many pawns White has, for example: 45...♔d6 46.♔g4 ♔d7 47.♔xh3 ♔c8 and White cannot dislodge the black king from his fortress.

5.3 Rashid Nezhmetdinov

Fortunately, there have always been (and still are to this day) players who seek to do more than just gain points. We know perfectly well that there are not many of them and, bear this in mind (!), they are not the strongest (!), but they are the players who enhance our game with their brilliance. Amongst past, although not too distant past, players with an original style, the name Rashid Nezhmetdinov stands out, a player little known in the West, as he almost never played outside the former USSR. Players with an original style are often also original in their daily life. And Nezhmetdinov was exactly that: several times chess champion of Russia and, furthermore, runner-up in the Russian draughts championship (!); he was a teacher of mathematics and the possessor of a photographic memory, capable of reproducing in detail a page he had just read. He was also recognised as a trainer emeritus of the USSR. Rashid was the inventor of the sacrifice of two minor pieces for the queen. For example, in the famous game Bobotsov-Tal, 1958, which we will look at further on, the future World Champion took as a model a game played by Nezhmetdinov two years earlier. In the impressive game Nezhmetdinov-Chernikov, 1962, Rashid demonstrated this type of sacrifice in the Accelerated Dragon Variation of the Sicilian Defence. It is notable that the personal score between Tal and Nezhmetdinov was 3-1 in favour of Rashid, but even more striking was that his three wins were all awarded the brilliancy prize! I can personally

testify to the respect in which Tal held Nezhmetdinov. It is worth mentioning that the Soviet artist Galina Satonina dedicated a tryptich of paintings to the following game, one of the most brilliant in the history of chess.

Game 66   Old Indian Defence
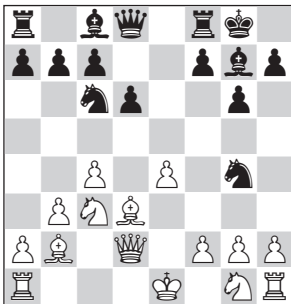**Lev Polugaevsky**
Rashid Nezhmetdinov
Sochi 1958

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 d6 3.♞c3 e5 4.e4
The usual move here is 4.♞f3. Nevertheless, the text move has its supporters, since it leads to a sort of a Maroczy structure, although with a black pawn on c7 instead of e7.
The main snag with this move-order is that it loses time, as Black's response demonstrates.
4...exd4 5.♕xd4 ♞c6 6.♕d2 g6 7.b3 ♝g7 8.♝b2 0-0 9.♝d3 ♞g4

This move underlines Black's lead in development and indicates that the dark squares constitute the area of Black's domain.
10.♞ge2?!
An inaccuracy that allows Black to seize the initiative. Instead, White could have kept the balance with 10.♞f3 ♞ge5 (or 10...♝h6 11.♕d1

♞ge5 12.♝e2) 11.♝e2 ♞xf3+ 12.♝xf3 ♞d4 13.♝d1 f5 14.0-0.
10...♕h4!?
This early queen sortie matches Nezhmetdinov's dynamic style of play. Nevertheless it was more precise to play 10...♞ce5! 11.♝c2 ♕h4 (11...♝h6!? 12.f4 ♕h4+ 13.♞g3 f5!) 12.♕f4 (12.♞f4? ♝h6) 12...f5 13.♕g3 ♕xg3 14.hxg3 fxe4 15.♞xe4 ♝f5 (15...b5!?) 16.0-0 ♜ae8, with the better game for Black.
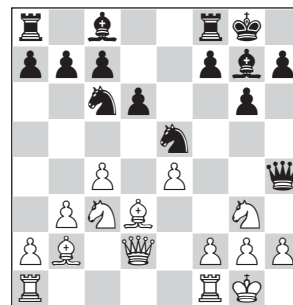**11.♞g3?**
The correct continuation was 11.g3! ♕h6 12.♕xh6 ♞xh6 13.♞f4 ♝g4 14.h3 ♝f3 15.0-0 ♞e5 16.♝c2, with equal play.
11...♞ge5
Black would have had a dangerous initiative after 11...f5! 12.exf5 ♞b4.
**12.0-0**

12...f5
In the event of 12...♞g4!? 13.h3 ♞xf2 14.♕xf2 (14.♜xf2!? ♕xg3 15.♞e2 ♕h4 16.♝xg7 ♚xg7 17.♞f4) 14...♝d4, Polugaevsky was

planning to sacrifice his queen for two minor pieces, in the style of Nezhmetdinov: 15.♕xd4! ♘xd4 16.♘d5 ♕xg3 17.♗xd4, which would have been a good practical decision even though the engine considers that the compensation is insufficient after 17...f5! 18.♖f3 ♕h4 19.♘xc7 fxe4 20.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 21.♗e2 ♖b8 22.♗xa7 ♕g3 23.♗xb8 ♗xh3 24.♗f1 e3 and Black's advantage is clear.

13.f3 ♗h6 14.♕d1 f4

A good alternative would have been 14...♗e3+!? 15.♔h1 f4.

15.♘ge2 g5 16.♘d5 g4
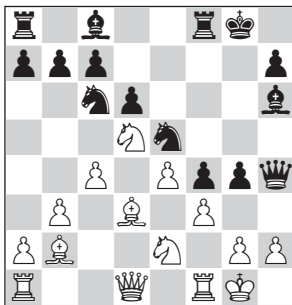
17.g3!

The best defence, as 17.♘xc7?? g3 18.h3 ♗xh3! loses; and 17.♘exf4? ♗xf4 18.♘xf4 gxf3 19.g3 ♕g4 leads to a clear advantage to Black.

17...fxg3!?

Here, Nezhmetdinov rejected 17...♕h3, and it seems that he was right in view of 18.♘exf4 ♗xf4 19.♘xf4 ♖xf4 20.♗xe5! (20. gxf4? g3 21.hxg3 ♕xg3+ 22.♔h1 ♕h4+ 23.♔g1 ♗h3! with a decisive advantage to Black) 20...♘xe5 21.gxf4 g3 22.♕d2 ♘xd3 23.f5!, with an unclear position.

18.hxg3 ♕h3 19.f4!
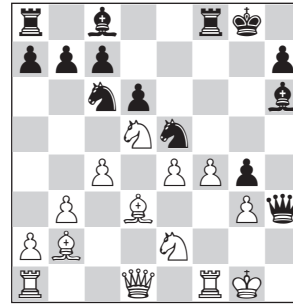
19...♗e6!!

After the obvious 19...♘f3+? 20.♔f2 ♕h2+ 21.♔e3, the white king would have escaped. The text move is an example of the intuitive sacrifice – although, evidently, Nezhmetdinov calculated many variations at this point.

20.♗c2?!

20.♘xc7? was losing, e.g. 20...♖xf4! 21.gxf4 g3 22.♘xg3 ♕xg3+ 23.♔h1 ♕h4+ 24.♔g1 ♗h3 25.♕c2 ♗xf4 26.♘d5 ♘xd3 or 26...♖f8!?. Nevertheless, with 20.♗xe5! ♘xe5 21.♔f2! ♕h2+ 22.♔e3 White could have kept a defensible position.

20...♖f7?!

It would not be at all easy to calculate the following variation leading to a big advantage to Black: 20...♗xd5! 21.♕xd5+ (or 21.cxd5 ♖xf4! 22.♘xf4 ♕xg3+ 23.♔h1 ♗xf4 24.♖xf4 ♕xf4 25.dxc6 ♕h6+ 26.♔g2 ♕h3+ 27.♔g1 ♘f3+ 28.♔f2 bxc6) 21...♖f7 22.♕e6 ♘d8! 23.♕d5 c6 24.♕xd6 ♘f3+ 25.♔f2 ♕h2+ 26.♔e3 ♗f8!.

21.♔f2

It was more precise to play 21.♗xe5! ♘xe5 22.♔f2.

21...♕h2+ 22.♔e3 ♗xd5 23.cxd5 ♘b4 24.♖h1?

At first sight, White is winning a piece, but Nezhmetdinov had his next move in mind when he played 19...♗e6‼. Instead, 24.a3! was correct.
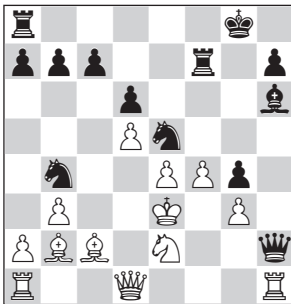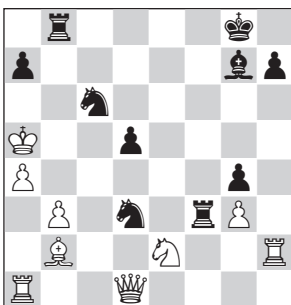

24...♖xf4‼ 25.♖xh2

After a long reflection, Polugaevsky came to the conclusion that his position was already lost and that the game would soon be known to the entire chess world. 25.♘xf4 ♘xc2+ lost immediately.

25...♖f3+ 26.♔d4 ♗g7! 27.a4

Defending against the threat of mate with 27...b5, followed by 28...♘c4 or 28...♘ec6.

27...c5+ 28.dxc6 bxc6 29.♗d3 ♘exd3+ 30.♔c4 d5+ 31.exd5 cxd5+ 32.♔b5 ♖b8+ 33.♔a5 ♘c6+

White resigned. After 34.♔a6, Black can mate with three different moves.
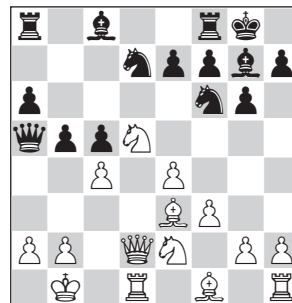
Game 67   King's Indian Defence
Milko Bobotsov
Mikhail Tal
Varna tt 1958

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♘ge2 c5 7.♗e3 ♘bd7 8.♕d2 a6 9.0-0-0

It should be said that this game resulted from a wager in which Tal upheld the soundness of the queen sacrifice made by Nezhmetdinov in the following game, while his opponent held the contrary opinion: 9.dxc5 dxc5 10.0-0-0 ♕a5 11.♔b1 b5 12.♘d5

12...♘xd5‼ 13.♕xa5 ♘xe3 14.♖c1 ♘xc4 15.♖xc4! bxc4 16.♘c3 ♖b8 with a double-edged game, Zamikhovsky-Nezhmetdinov, Kharkov 1956.
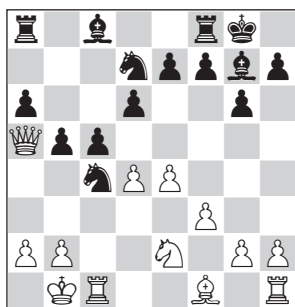
9...♕a5 10.♔b1 b5 11.♘d5 ♘xd5‼ 12.♕xa5 ♘xe3 13.♖c1

In the event of 13.♖d3!? ♘xc4 14.♕e1 cxd4! 15.♘xd4 ♘c5 Black also has very good compensation for the queen.

A painting by Galina Satonina

13...♘xc4

The same queen sacrifice, but without including the exchange of pawns on c5.

14.♖xc4?!

The presence of pawns on d4 and c5 changes the situation and for this reason it was better to play 14.♕e1!, e.g. 14...cxd4 15.♘f4 ♘e3 (15...♘de5!?) 16.♖c7 e5 17.♘d3 ♘f6 18.g4 d5 19.g5, preventing the direct attack against his king.

14...bxc4 15.♘c1?

White could have weakened Black's attack by returning the material:

15.♘f4! ♗xd4 16.♗xc4 ♖b8 17.b3 ♘b6 18.♖c1 ♗e3 19.♘d5! ♘xd5 (19...♗xc1? 20.♘xe7+ ♔g7 21.♕c3+ f6 22.♔xc1) 20.♗xd5 ♗xc1 21.♔xc1.
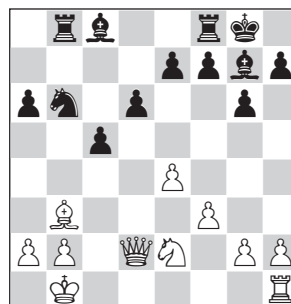
15...♖b8 16.♗xc4 ♘b6

It was more precise to play 16...♗xd4! 17.b3 ♘b6 18.♗xa6 ♖a8 19.♕xb6 ♗xa6 20.♖d1 ♗f6 21.♖d2 ♖fb8 22.♕c6 c4.

17.♗b3?!

17.♗xa6! ♗xd4 18.♘b3 presented greater resistance.

17...♗xd4 18.♕d2 ♗g7! 19.♘e2

19...c4

Now the black attack is decisive.

20.♗c2 c3 21.♕d3 cxb2 22.♘d4
♗d7 23.♖d1 ♖fc8 24.♗b3 ♘a4
25.♗xa4 ♗xa4 26.♘b3 ♖c3 27.♕xa6

♗xb3 28.axb3 ♖bc8 29.♕a3 ♖c1+
30.♖xc1 ♖xc1+

White resigned.

5.4 Two games by Konstantin Chernyshov

Another representative of the creative style, which is rather uncommon nowadays, is the Russian GM Konstantin Chernyshov. In his private life he is also quite an original character. For example, he wrote stories for his children and gave them as gifts to his friends, he gave free chess lessons in his native city of Voronezh and joined the Communist party, which in today's Russia is not well viewed. Although he has not played much recently, devoting more time to his work as a trainer, he continues to compete. And when he does, he gives his all in each game, saying that for him chess is a form of artistic self-expression. He gets very angry about rigged games!

Let us look at two of his games, where he won in a rather unusual way against top-rank GMs. It is curious that before starting the second game he had placed a typical Soviet-style red flag at the side of the board.

Game 68   Richter-Veresov Opening
Konstantin Chernyshov   2536
Alexander Beliavsky   2638
Ohrid 2001 (4)
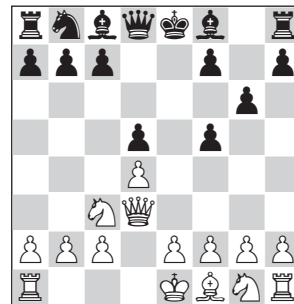
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘c3!?
A rather uncommon opening against a player with much greater opening knowledge than Chernyshov.
2...d5 3.♗g5 g6 4.♗xf6 exf6 5.♕d3!?
At first glance this move is just based on a cheap trick: if 5...♗f5? 6.♕b5+.
5...f5
Of course, there were several alternatives:
  A) 5...♗g7 6.e4 dxe4 7.♕xe4+
♔f8!? (or 7...♕e7 8.♕xe7+ ♔xe7
9.0-0-0 with equality) 8.0-0-0 ♘c6
with double-edged play;
  B) 5...c6!? 6.e4 ♗h6 7.exd5 0-0!?,
with good compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

What move to make now? It would be unlikely that Chernyshov's next move would occur to me, especially when playing against the great Alexander Beliavsky, four-time Champion of the USSR.
6.♕g3!? ♗g7
It was worth considering 6...♗d6
7.♕e3+ ♗e7 8.♕e5 0-0 9.♕xd5
(9.♘xd5? ♗h4!) 9...♘d7 10.e3
c6, with compensation for the sacrificed pawn; and 6...♗e6!? 7.♘b5
♘a6 8.♕e5 (8.e3!?) 8...♖g8 9.♕f4 c6

115

10.♘c3 ♛b6 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 with a slight advantage to Black thanks to the bishop pair.

7.♘b5!?

As Chernyshov himself commented, after this move Beliavsky's face was a picture. It seems as if the white pieces are being moved by a beginner...

7...♘a6

8.♛a3

Incredible! Three of White's first eight moves have been with the queen. The desire to punish White's play is obvious, but the question is, how?

8...c5

Black had several options, but Beliavsky chooses the more aggressive, probably with the intention of punishing his opponent for such extravagant play. Preferable was 8...♛e7!? 9.♛xe7+ ♚xe7 10.0-0-0 c6 11.♘c3 f4; or 8...f4!?; or 8...♝f8!?, a move recommended by Chernyshov.

9.dxc5 0-0 10.e3 ♛e7 11.♘d6!

Without developing any pieces or castling, Chernyshov continues his unusual play. Nevertheless, the knight on d6 supported by the c5-pawn is very strong and Black has to continue the tactical struggle, which, however, leads to an ending which is advantageous for White.

11...♘xc5

11...d4?! fails to equalise due to 12.♝xa6 bxa6 13.0-0-0 dxe3 14.♛xe3.

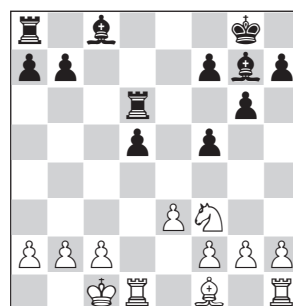**12.♛xc5 ♜d8**

Of course, 12...♝e5?? loses to 13.♘e4!.

13.0-0-0

13.♘xb7? ♛xb7 would have led to an overwhelming advantage to Black.

13...♛xd6?!

13...♜xd6? 14.♜xd5 is inadvisable, since it would lose a pawn without compensation, e.g. 14...♝f8 15.♜xd6 ♛xd6 16.♛xd6 ♝xd6 17.♘f3; according to the engine, Black could fight for the initiative with 13...♛f6! 14.c3 ♜xd6, e.g. 15.♜xd5 ♜xd5 (15...♜c6!?) 16.♛xd5 ♝e6!?.

14.♛xd6 ♜xd6 15.♘f3

The situation has stabilised and White has some positional advantage in view of the damage to the opponent's pawn structure. Black's next move is the best attempt at counterplay.

15...b5! 16.♘d4

In the event of 16.♗xb5? ♖b6
17.♖xd5 ♗e6, the advantage would
have passed to Black.

**16...b4 17.♗e2 ♗e6 18.♖d3 a5
19.♖hd1 a4 20.♗f3 ♖a5?!**

It was better to play 20...♖c8!?
21.a3 ♖b6 22.axb4 ♖xb4 23.♖a3 f4,
when Black would still have some
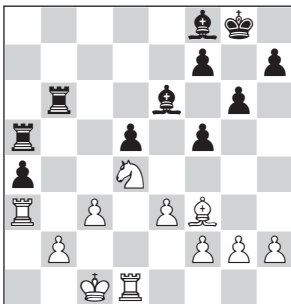counterplay.

21.a3!

Forcing the exchange on a3, which
creates another accessible weakness
on a4.

21...bxa3 22.♖xa3 ♖b6?!

It was more tenacious to play
22...♖da6 23.c3 ♗f8 24.♖a2 ♗d7.

23.c3 ♗f8

Or 23...♖aa6 24.♗e2 ♖a8 25.b4.

24.b4!

After this advance, it is difficult to
salvage the black position.

24...♖a8 25.♔d2

25.♘xe6? would be a mistake;
for example, 25...fxe6!? 26.♖xd5
(26.♔d2!) 26...♖c8! 27.♖d7 ♖xb4,
with equality.

**25...f4 26.♖da1 fxe3+ 27.fxe3 ♗d7
28.♗xd5**

A pawn up and with a powerful
bishop on d5, White leaves Black
with a hopeless task.

**28...♖e8 29.♖f1 ♖e7 30.♔d3 ♗g7
31.e4 ♗e8 32.♖a2 ♖c7 33.♖b1
♗f8 34.b5 a3 35.c4 ♗c5 36.♘c2
♖a7 37.♖ba1 ♔g7 38.♖xa3! ♗xa3
39.♖xa3 ♖c7 40.♘d4 ♖b8 41.♖a6
♔f8 42.b6 ♖c5 43.♔c3**

Black resigned.

Game 69   Trompowsky Opening

Konstantin Chernyshov   2531
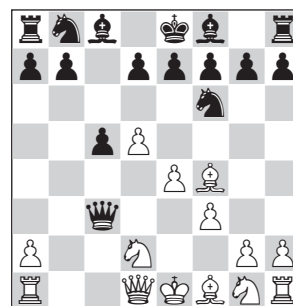**Alexander Grischuk**   2724

Sochi 2005 (4)

**1.d4 ♘f6 2.♗g5 ♘e4 3.♗f4 c5 4.f3
♕a5+ 5.c3 ♘f6 6.d5**

The previously popular 6.♘d2 cxd4
7.♘b3 lost some of its attraction due
to 7...♕b6 8.♕xd4 ♘c6!.

6...♕b6 7.e4!?

The quiet retreat of the bishop
from g5, 7.♗c1, which is the most
played move in the Mega Database
as well as the one preferred by
the engine, is not for players like
Chernyshov.

7...♕xb2 8.♘d2 ♕xc3

9.♗c7!

This original move, which aims to
hunt down the enemy queen, was
probably overlooked by Grischuk.

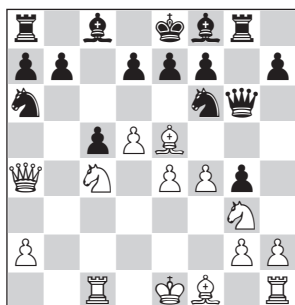**9...g6 10.♖c1 ♕e3+ 11.♘e2 ♘a6?**

11...d6 12.♘c4 ♕h6 13.e5 ♘a6 14.♗a5 dxe5 leads to a position where White has an initiative for the sacrificed pawn.

12.♘c4 ♕h6 13.♗f4 ♕g7

It is not very usual to see a position with a 'fianchettoed queen' in the games of the world's best players.

14.♕a4 g5 15.♗e5 g4 16.f4 ♕g6 17.♘g3 ♖g8

18.♘e3

The engine gives White a decisive advantage here, which means that in only ten moves of his own, the creative player has managed to obtain a completely winning position against a player who has been one of the best in the world this century.

18...♘b4 19.a3 ♘c6!?

A decision in the style of the game Averbakh-Spassky, Leningrad 1956, analysed in Chapter 6, but it does not work here.

20.dxc6 dxc6 21.♗e2

There was an easier win with 21.♗xf6! ♕xf6 22.e5 ♕g6 (22...♕e6 23.♖d1) 23.♘d5.

21...♘d7 22.0-0 ♘xe5 23.fxe5 ♗h6 24.♕b3 ♗e6 25.♕c3 b6 26.♖cd1 ♗xe3+ 27.♕xe3 ♕g5 28.♕c3

And White realised his advantage:

28...♖d8 29.♘f5 h5 30.a4 h4 31.a5 ♖xd1 32.♖xd1 ♗xf5 33.♕d3 ♔f8 34.exf5 ♕f4 35.♕d8+ ♔g7 36.♕xe7 ♕xf5 37.♖xh4 ♖e8 38.♖f1 ♕xe5 39.♕xg4+ ♔f8 40.♗c4 ♖e7 41.♖f4 ♕e1+ 42.♗f1 ♕e5 43.g3 ♖e6 44.♕h4 b5 45.♕d8+ ♔g7 46.♕d7 ♖f6 47.♖g4+ ♔h6 48.♕d2+ ♔h7 49.♗d3+ ♔h8 50.♖e4 ♕d5 51.♕c3 ♕d6 52.♖f4 ♔g7 53.♔f2 c4 54.♗e4 c5 55.♔e3 ♕d4+ 56.♕xd4 cxd4+ 57.♔xd4 ♖a6 58.♗d5 f6 59.♖g4+ ♔h8 60.♔c5 ♖xa5 61.♔b4 ♖a1 62.♔xb5 c3 63.♖c4 ♖c1 64.♔b4 ♖c2 65.h4 a5+ 66.♔b3

Black resigned.

5.5 Two modern games

In modern chess, various opening novelties are born with the participation of the computer; even so, its involvement is not always decisive, leaving room for human creativity.

The next two games, the most memorable from 2018 and 2019 respectively, are good examples of this. In the first one the player with White hardly knew more than the first 14 moves, while in the second, in the words of the winner himself, he had prepared in great detail and in great depth.

Game 70   Petroff Defence
David Paravyan   2630
Saveliy Golubov   2470
St Petersburg 2018 (6)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.d4 d5 6.♗d3 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 c6 9.♕b3!?
9.♘c3 is the main line.

9...dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♘d7 11.♖e1 ♘df6 12.♘bd2!?
According to Paravyan, he did not deploy this knight on its more usual square, as he did not like 12.♘c3 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 b5 14.♗d3 ♗e6; he was unconvinced by the typical sacrifice 15.♖xe6!? and it seems that he was right, as the engine gives equality.

12...♘xd2 13.♗xd2 ♕b6

14.♕d3!
Everything indicates that from now on all was improvised at the board. In the event of 14.♕c2 ♗g4 15.♘e5 ♕xd4 16.♗c3 ♕f4 17.g3 ♕f5 18.♗d3 ♕h5 19.♘c4 ♖fd8, Stockfish gives full equality.

14...♕xb2!?
Accepting the challenge.
The balance could have been maintained with 14...♗g4, e.g.

15.♘e5 ♖ad8 16.♗c3 ♗c8 17.a4 ♘d5 (17...a5?! 18.♕d2) 18.a5 ♕c7 19.a6 b6.

15.♖ab1 ♕a3 16.♕c2 ♘d5?
This obvious move is a decisive mistake, as David's brilliant play demonstrates. The correct move was the rather dubious-looking 16...b5 17.♗b3 ♕a6 18.♘e5 ♗e6!, an idea known from the game Polgar-Kramnik, Dos Hermanas 1997, which practically equalises the position after 19.♗xe6 fxe6 20.♕xc6 ♕xc6 21.♘xc6 ♖fc8.
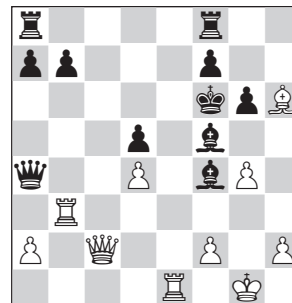
17.♖b3!
According to Paravyan, it was at this point that he foresaw his 23rd move.

17...♕a4 18.♗xd5! cxd5 19.♘g5 g6 20.♘xh7 ♗f5
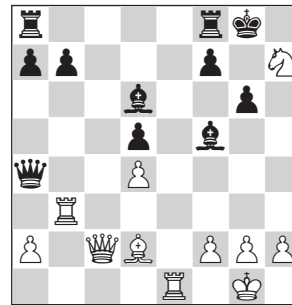
21.♘f6+ ♔g7 22.♗h6+! ♔xf6 23.g4!! ♗f4!

24.♕c7!!

Inferior, although also leading to a probably decisive advantage, was 24.g5+ ♗xg5 25.♕c7! ♗xh6 (25...♖fe8? 26.♕d6+ ♖e6 27.♖xe6+ fxe6 28.♕e5+ ♔f7 29.♖xb7+) 26.♕e5+ ♔g5 27.♖g3+ ♔h4 28.♕f6+ ♔h5 29.♖e5 ♕d1+ 30.♔g2 ♕g4 31.♖xg4 ♔xg4 32.♖xf5 gxf5 33.♕xh6 f4 34.♕f6.

24...♗xh6

24...♖fe8 loses in the same way as in the previous note: 25.g5+ ♗xg5 26.♕d6+; if 24...♗xc7 25.g5#.

25.♕e5+ ♔g5 26.h4+ ♔xh4

Or 26...♔xg4 27.♖g3+ ♔h5 28.♕e2+ ♔xh4 29.♔g2.

27.♖h3+! ♔g5 28.♕e7+

Black resigned.

Game 71   Queen's Gambit Declined
Daniil Dubov   2690
Anish Giri   2787

Moscow 2019 (1)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♗g5 dxc4!?

Obviously, Black has many options here, but this is the only move which can cast doubt on White's fourth move.
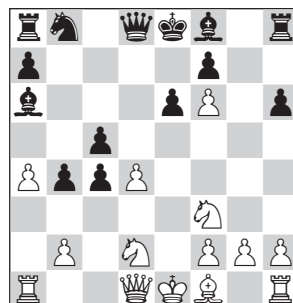
5.e4 b5 6.a4 c6 7.♘c3 b4

The main alternative is 7...♕b6!?, e.g. 8.♗e2 ♘bd7 9.d5!? exd5 10.exd5 b4 11.dxc6 ♕xc6 12.♘b5 ♗c5 13.0-0 ♗b7 14.♘bd4, with good compensation for the sacrificed pawn, Mamedyarov-Kasimdzhanov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2019.

8.♘b1 ♗a6

Defending his extra pawn.

9.e5 h6 10.♗xf6

According to the engine, Black has the better game in the event of 10.♗h4 g5 11.exf6 gxh4 12.♘bd2 c3.

10...gxf6 11.exf6 c5 12.♘bd2

12...c3?!

According to Dubov: 'The first mistake of the game. I knew that 12...♘c6! is the move and it's OK for Black, but he is down to only moves in most of the lines that follow: 13.♗xc4 ♗xc4 14.♘xc4 ♕xf6 15.♕e2 ♘xd4 16.♘xd4 cxd4! 17.♘e5 d3! 18.♕e4 ♖c8 19.♘xd3 ♗d6, with equality.'

13.bxc3 bxc3 14.♘e4 cxd4
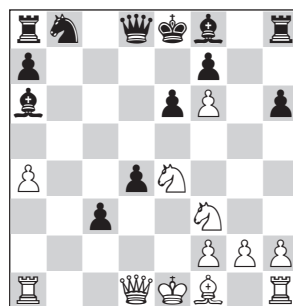
15.♗b5+!

Dubov's note to this move is very instructive: 'My general approach for these crazy kind of positions is quite simple: as I know I'm not

capable of calculating everything, I'm trying to play the move I like during the first seconds of thought.' I should add that I, and surely many other trainers, give the same advice to pupils. The problem is that our intuitive grasp deceives us much less than complicated calculation, which is very difficult for our human brain.
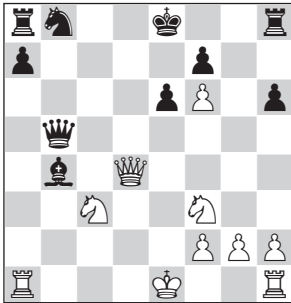
15...♗xb5 16.axb5 ♕d5?

16...d3! was necessary.

17.♕xd4 ♕xb5 18.♘xc3?

The engine considers that after 18.♘e5! ♘d7 19.♖a5! ♕b1+ 20.♔e2 ♕b2+ 21.♔f3 ♘xe5+ 22.♕xe5 White's advantage is around +5.00, i.e. decisive.
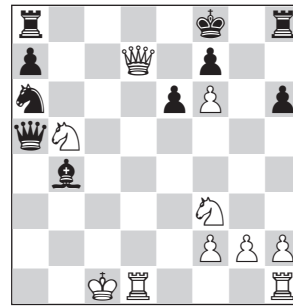
18...♗b4!

19.0-0-0!?

A spectacular move, although it is unclear who is better here.

19...♕a5?

Mistakes in positions like this are inevitable, and this one gives fresh impetus to White's attack. After 19...♕b6! 20.♔c2 ♕xd4 21.♖xd4 ♗xc3 22.♔xc3 ♘d7 23.♖a1 ♘xf6 24.♖da4 0-0 25.♖xa7 (25.♔d2!?) 25...♖ad8 Black would have had a very slight advantage.

20.♘b5! ♘a6 21.♕d7+ ♔f8

22.♔b1!

Another instructive comment by Dubov: 'In this crazy position where both kings are vulnerable I deduced that the h8-rook cannot come into play, so I need to protect my king first and then go on the attack and win.'

22...♗a3?

22...♗c5! would have been more tenacious.

23.♖d3!

The key idea! Black can give numerous checks but is unable to prevent the transfer of the white king to the kingside, which will decide the battle.

23...♕b4+ 24.♔c2 ♕a4+

Black loses a piece after 24...♕b2+ 25.♔d1 ♕xf6 (25...♔g8 26.♘xa3) 26.♘xa3.

25.♔d2 ♗b4+ 26.♔e2 ♔g8 27.♘e5 ♕c2+ 28.♔f3 ♖f8 29.♖hd1 h5!

With the idea of ...♖h6.

30.♕d4! ♖h7

If 30...♗c5 then 31.♕h4 wins.

31.♕f4 ♗c5 32.♘d4 ♕a2 33.♖1d2 ♕d5+ 34.♔e2 ♗b4 35.♘dc6 ♕c5 36.♘e7+ ♔h8

And Black resigned simultaneously.