ATTACKING Manual 2

The old masters dealt only with the static features of positional rules. But these are insufficient to explain the basics of chess. The problem is that chess, like other sciences, has undergone a dynamic revolution, but chess literature does not yet reflect this. In this major work Aagaard explains the rules of attack (the exploitation of a dynamic advantage), balanced between understandable examples, and deep analysis. Seven years in the making, this book deals with weak kings, sacrifices, intuitive sacrifices, king hunts, and enduring initiative.

The Attacking Manual Volume 2 covers all of attacking technique. That is, what to do once the attack is up and running. In lively no-nonsense language, Aagaard explains how the best chess players in the world attack.

Jacob Aagaard from Glasgow, Scotland is one of the foremost chess writers of his generation and a trainer of successful pupils of all ages, from amateurs to grandmasters. In his spare time he won the 2007 British Championship and gained the grandmaster title.

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Attacking Manual 2

By

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? a weak move
?? a blunder
! a good move
!! an excellent move
!? a move worth considering
?! a move of doubtful value
# mate
(n) n\textsuperscript{th} match game

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Foreword by the author

When I decided to write this double-volume book on attack back in 2002, I had very clear ideas for Volume One, such as specific phrases, positions, structures, while all I had for Volume Two was a clear notion of what it should cover, in abstract. Where Volume One was about the laws of dynamics, the font of all attacks, and to some limited extent an original work, Volume Two was always meant to be a perfection of existing work on the attack.

Over the years I have read dozens of books on attacking chess, and they were all about knocking the king's position open, once the attack had been established. Some authors even disguised their puzzle books as books on attack — or was it their publishers? Although some books on the middlegame would mention parts of the positional basis for the attack, I was unable to refer my students to any book as the work on attacking chess. Simply put, none of them explained well how the attack came to be, but concerned themselves mainly with the sacrifice. This is what I tried to do in Volume One, and with some success, I think.

This volume is intended to cover all of attacking technique, by which I mean what to do once the attack is up and running. Obviously this cannot be done in 464 pages, but a decent attempt can be made, and I think I have managed to do so. In this book I will discuss such concrete items as Destroying the defensive structure (page 253), The pin (page 148), Overloading (page 78), as well as more abstract concepts such as Creative play (page 355) and Intuitive sacrifices (page 391). Hopefully what I have found worthwhile to say about these concepts will be useful for the reader.

Although I am a writer by nature, and place a high value on aesthetics, I am deeply aware that most readers will have picked up this book with the hope of improving their chess. My experiences and conversations with some of the best players in the World have strengthened my belief that it is very useful to solve exercises regularly if you want to improve your play. Although a well-written book can affect your play positively, it will do so much more if you are involved, rather than just reading it. For this reason I have included a diagram preview in this book. I invite you to use up to 10 minutes on each position before reading the subsequent chapter. For Chapters 1, 3, 4 & 5 I have selected 8 positions I find interesting, while Chapter 2 has 26 positions, as it is a rather big chapter. I know that not everyone will want to spend this amount of time on these exercises, but for those who have the discipline, the option is there. It is for the same reason that I have included 50 exercises towards the end of this book and 24 exercises at the end of Chapter 1.

This double-volume work has been seven years in the making; with the publication of the revised and expanded Volume One and this volume, I have fulfilled a major personal ambition. Quality Chess was founded to support the publication of The Berlin Wall, Questions of Modern Chess Theory and this work. Seven years after the first thoughts and conversations about these works, I am proud to say that it was all worth it, and that all four books were worth fighting for.

Jacob Aagaard
Glasgow, 22nd December 2009
Chapter 1

Understanding Mating Attacks

This is the three piece rule in practice. The bishop has sacrificed itself, the knight is assisting the queen, in this case by defending her, and big momma creates general devastation.
On this page you find 8 diagrams with critical moments from the coming chapter. I recommend that you take up to 10 minutes to think about each of them. The solutions are found on the following pages in the annotations to the games.

Positions with a circled P can be played against a computer.

Win in the face of disaster (see page 15)

White to win (see page 25)

Calculate all the way (see page 33)

Black to win in one move (see page 17)

White to calculate very well (see page 26-27)

Accurate attack (see page 36)
Covered in this chapter

- Typical Mates & Focal Points
- Three Piece Attacks
- Insurance Policies
- Transformations

In this chapter we will discuss the basic mechanics of mating attacks. We will do so by looking at some basic themes and then elaborating on them, to see how they work in practice. A good place to start is with the ordinary.

Typical Mates & Focal Points

I am not sure if the notion of focal points has been used before in chess literature, but the place where I first encountered it and where it continues to meet new readers, was in Vladimir Vukovic's famous book *Art of Attack in Chess*, which is considered by many to be the best book ever written about attacking chess. The book is an impressive looking brick, written in 1965, which alternates between giving bloated theoretical descriptions in the tradition of Kmoch's *Pawn Power in Chess* (a book which by itself has decreased the numbers of chess players in the world!) and some sophisticated description of actual positions.

Vukovic's definition of a focal point goes as follows:

"If the attacker threatens mate or actually mates on these squares, they are mating focal-points, but if he only harasses the king from them or uses them as points from which to break into the castled position, they are called strategic or auxiliary focal-points. It may be that there is more than one mating focal-point, and in that case we speak of compound focal-points. If there are many focal-points (both mating and strategic) on squares of the same colour, we speak of a network of weak squares."

I personally find this paragraph of definitions rather amusing, as it is complex and not particularly helpful for the practical player, if anyone at all. The reason why I am starting with this quote is that I had written a few pages that were going down the road of trying to define what attacking chess is, rather than showing it, before I realised that I was stuck and not able to deliver my ideas in a format that satisfied me.

Despite the fact that the theoretical basis for the idea of focal points stands on this rather shaky foundation, which despite being technically correct is of very little use, it has had a great impact on how people talk about chess even today, more than forty years after the book was written. I think this is mainly because Vukovic manages to elucidate various aspects of attacking chess with great vitality and care, and leaves the reader with real insights. But we do not need to know a lot of definitions to understand that, though it is usually easier to attack the opponent at h7 than g7 (mainly because of the easy access from the starting position for the king's bishop and knight), an attack on g7 is in general stronger because the king will have a greater chance of escaping if it is attacked on h7 than on g7. We do not need to know a complex terminology to understand such insights, and luckily you do not need to do so to follow Vukovic's book.

Another chapter in Vukovic's book gives some generic mating positions that may seem more suitable for a beginner's book than a sophisticated book on middlegame strategy, but they do have the purpose to build a foundation for the rest of the book. An example is the following configuration:
Only two chapters after presenting this simple position, Vukovic goes deep into the Greek gift sacrifice with $\text{axh7}^+$, $\text{Qg5}^+$ and $\text{Wh5}$, in scenarios that are far from clear. He has his own points to make about this and I strongly recommend that you read his book to find out what they are, as it is always useful to see a topic discussed from various points of view.

Not surprisingly it is my intention in this book to present my understanding of the various techniques and aspects of attacking chess. I am a strong believer that thinking in concepts can improve your chess and that to consider certain patterns or standard reactions can greatly improve your playing strength. If you are familiar with a lot of thematic ideas, you will definitely find them more easily at the board. For instance, if you know that an attack on the flank is best met by a strike in the centre, you will investigate this option with a good deal more confidence than if you had never encountered the concept.

In the first volume of this book I presented my seven global ideas, of which I am certain that we should have an intimate knowledge, if we want to be good attackers. They were deliberately made so simple as to make them seem almost comical, and for this reason I gave examples of very strong players violating them again and again. Obviously those strong players had other ideas and somehow they did not work out, but we should also not overestimate the human ability or underestimate just how difficult chess is. We need all the help we can get to play this game just on a decent level. Developing a strong intuition for the attack by learning and mastering those seven principles will definitely do this.

It is with this foundation that we progress to this, the second volume. Here we will look at some of the typical scenarios that we encounter again and again when conducting a direct attack on the opponent's king. The first discussion will be of a typical mating pattern, one also found in Vukovic's book. However, just like Vukovic, I am not simply wishing to give a mate in one exercise, but to take this typical pattern and study it thoroughly, from the perspective of both the attacker and the defender.

The first pattern is defined by a pawn on f6 teaming up with a queen on h6 to attack the enemy king:

This is the archetypal position. Let us now familiarise ourselves with some typical variations on the position, which we will be discussing in more detail over the next few pages (for ease of reading I will always take White as the attacking side, but the principles will of course be just as relevant on the opposite side of the pitch).
White has just played the knight to g5 and Black will have to give up his rook in order to avoid mate.

![Chessboard](image1.png)

White has the chance to decide the game with 1.\texttt{\textsc{w}}xh7+, winning a rook due to the hanging queen on d8.

![Chessboard](image2.png)

Black cannot defend f7 in this position, but even if he was able to do so, White would have the deciding tactic 1.\texttt{\textsc{e}}e8!, diverting/pinning the rook on g8 and thus taking control over the g7-square.

![Chessboard](image3.png)

Black has managed to control the vital g7-square, but if White is to move, he would have 1.\texttt{\textsc{w}}xh7+ \texttt{\textsc{g}}xh7 2.\texttt{\textsc{h}}h4 mate. However, Black to play would be able to defend with 1...g5! followed by 2...\texttt{\textsc{g}}g6!, repulsing the queen.

The final position shows a combination that arises rather infrequently. Here White can decide the game with 1.\texttt{\textsc{w}}xh7+ \texttt{\textsc{g}}xh7 2.\texttt{\textsc{h}}xg6 mate.

In what follows I will give thirteen relevant practical examples from games played by good players. During my research, I found it striking that serious mistakes were committed more often than not. If I had to guess, I would attribute the mistakes to the players' insufficient familiarity with the relevant patterns, not forgetting the simple fact that chess is just difficult!

David Berczes – Simon Widmer

Biel 2005

The first example starts at a point where the player leading the black pieces is on the way to inflicting a big upset against an opponent rated more than 300 points higher, when the following accident happens:
25...\textit{Wxf5?}

If Black had taken with the pawn on f5 he would not only have prevented anything bad from happening, but would also have been able to use the open g-file for aggressive measures.

26.\textit{Qh3! Wh5}

Black must have believed that he had everything under control at this point. Great must his disappointment have been, upon seeing White's next move.

27.\textit{Qg5!}

There is no good way for Black to defend f7. Taking the queen allows a smothered mate:

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{smothered_mate.png}
\caption{Smothered mate}
\end{figure}

1–0

This pattern is more often seen in positions where Black gets his queen to f8 to expel the white queen from h6, as we saw above, and as is the case in the following example.

\textbf{Hansjuerg Kaenel – Meinrad Schauwecker}

\textit{Swiss Championship 2001}

Objectively, White is probably doing rather well in this position. Black has no easy targets to attack around the white king, even if it does look rather vulnerable. The best way to continue would probably be to get the bishop to c6 and start undermining the black queenside with the idea of eventually attacking his kingside from the flank.

In the game White chose another strategy, which can at best be called suicidal. He decided to exchange probably his best piece, the knight on d4, for what is surely an ineffective piece of wood on f3, albeit theoretically of higher value, and in the process promote the pawn on g4 from being in the way of the knight to being a cold-hearted killer on f3.

You can argue that this was the basis of a miscalculation, but Kaenel is not a weak player and would not have made this type of error if he had possessed a deep understanding of the relevant themes.

28.\textit{Qxf3? gxh3 29.Qh1}

White seems to be under the illusion that his king can be defended. But even if he had not been losing to the trick played in the game, it would still be an error of judgement to enter such a volatile position willingly, considering that his position was so promising beforehand.

29...\textit{Wxe6?}

Black commits an inaccuracy. Instead 29...\textit{Wh5!} 30.\textit{Qg1 Wh3} would transpose to the game, without allowing the possibility mentioned in the following note.

30.\textit{Qg1?}

This loses in the way we have already seen in the previous example, this time with the queen on the more typical f1-square. Instead it was possible for White to defend his king...
by advancing the g-pawn, something that we will see is a quite common defensive possibility from this generic position.

The line I have analysed includes a few nice tactics and eventually leads to a draw: 30.g4! \(\text{\texttt{f3}}\) 31.\(\text{\texttt{g1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{g6}}\) 32.\(\text{\texttt{d2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{h2}}\) 33.\(\text{\texttt{d7}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xg4}}\) 34.\(\text{\texttt{e4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{xh6}}\) 35.\(\text{\texttt{xg1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{g6}}\) 36.\(\text{\texttt{h2}}\) \(\text{\texttt{d6}}\) 37.\(\text{\texttt{h3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{h6}}\) 38.\(\text{\texttt{g3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{d6}}\) with an odd repetition of moves.

\[30...\text{\texttt{h3}}\] \[31.\text{\texttt{f1 \texttt{g4}}!}\]

White must have been horrified to see this move. Though he had probably seen a similar theme before, somehow it had slipped his mind. He tried to give up a rook, but the material deficit was much too great for him to obtain any hope of survival.

\[32.\text{\texttt{g2 \texttt{fxg2! \texttt{xg2}}} 33.\text{\texttt{f1 \texttt{g4}}} 34.\text{\texttt{e4 \texttt{xh2}}} 35.\text{\texttt{a1 \texttt{xf2}}} 36.\text{\texttt{h3 \texttt{c8}}} 37.\text{\texttt{h4 \texttt{h2}}} 38.\text{\texttt{g5 \texttt{g7}}} \]

\[0-1\]

At times a knight jump to g4 can seem so convincing that it disarms us of our confidence, which I imagine is one of the ingredients in the following disaster, the other being possibly time trouble.

36.\(\text{\texttt{We6?! \texttt{g4}}} 37.\text{\texttt{xg4 \texttt{wxe4}}} 0-1\]

One thing that surprised me when I was researching our archetypal position was that the number of positions featuring the above pattern, involving a knight moving to g5 (or g4), is very low. In the vast majority of games, rooks were the main helpers in the attack, either against h7 or by pinning the g8-rook.
1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.cd4 e5 5.b5 d6 6.a3 c6 7.cd5 cd7 8.cd5 e7 9.c4 cd4 10.exd4 0-0 11.cd5 e7 12.a3 cd2 13.0-0 f5 14.cd3 axb5 15.axb5 f4 16.xb5 f3 17.g3 cd2 f3 18.g3 db8 19.a4

20.axb5 19 ... ab5!?

It is probable that White should have played 21.ad1! at this point. Our basic principle of including all the pieces in the attack or in the defence is just as valid in this book as it was in the first volume. A possible continuation could be 21...e4 22.g1 when 22...ab5! is likely to be the best move, although I have my doubts as to whether the final evaluation will be to Black's satisfaction after 23.g1, preparing g3-g4.

Also 22...ab5 23.ac3 feels like a slight but secure edge for White. Black can still create an attack though, with the following rather nutty continuation: 23...e3?! 24.fxe3 f2 25.g2 wd7 26.g4 ah4 27.h3 h5 and although I do not believe in Black's position, the game still appears to be lively.

21...ah3?

This is too optimistic. After this White could certainly have made more out of his b-pawns, as we shall see in the analysis.

21...ab5 would have been a good move. Black is likely to follow up with ...e8-f5-d3 to dominate the light squares. It is possible that White would be able to demonstrate an advantage with accurate play, but this would by no means be easy.

22.g1 ag2
Chapter 1 - Understanding Mating Attacks

23.\(\text{a4}\)?

This oversight (which Black, in turn, reciprocates) is an indication that the players had not seen the following tactical motif before.

Instead White could have achieved a decisive advantage with both 23.\(\text{xf1}\) and the following beautiful line, in which White combines the domination of the black rook by pinning it down, and preventing the ...\(\text{exh2}\) combination by being ready to give up the queen on h5:

23.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{f5}\) 24.\(\text{c8}\) \(\text{f8}\) (24...\(\text{f8}\) 25.\(\text{c7}\) \(\text{f5}\) 26.\(\text{xe7}\) and White wins) 25.\(\text{e6}\) \(\text{h8}\) 26.\(\text{e8}\) \(\text{g8}\) 27.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{h5}\) 28.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 29.\(\text{b7}\)

The white pawn reaches the eighth rank and decides the game, as Black no longer has the firepower to create meaningful threats against the white king.

This variation is of course not forced, for example it was possible to play 25...\(\text{f7}\), but White retains a winning advantage all the same with 26.\(\text{e8}\), continuing to harass the black pieces.

23...\(\text{g5}\)?

Black is seeking a standard combination and on the way misses out on 23...\(\text{g2}\)!

24.\(\text{xf1}\)!

This mistake tells a story of a bad day, where even the most basic tactic is missed. There was no reason for things going this wrong.

24.\(\text{xe4}\)!

This would have kept White in the game.

24...\(\text{xf4}\)

24...\(\text{h5}\) 25.\(\text{h4}\) would give White the necessary time to eliminate the other pawn and thus protect the king from g2.

25.\(\text{b6}\)

Both players have their assets at this point. Black is hoping to deliver mate and White has a good extra pawn on b6.

25...\(\text{h5}\) 26.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{d8}\)

In the view of a computer this position is about equal at first glance, but either you can assist it, or allow it to think long enough to come up with this beautiful win:

27.\(\text{b7}\) \(\text{c7}\)

28.\(\text{g5}\)!!

This is a sensational move to put it mildly.

28...\(\text{xf5}\)

28...\(\text{exg5}\) 29.\(\text{b5}\) is not much different.

29.\(\text{c4}\)

From here the queen is performing three functions.
1) It is ready to go to h4 to defend the king.
2) It is attacking the bishop on c7.
3) It is not on f1, which means it is no longer blocking in the rook on g1, which will shortly enter the game with decisive effect.
A possible line could be:
29...\texttt{Wh6} 30.\texttt{h4} \texttt{Bb8} 31.\texttt{C8\#} \texttt{f7} 32.\texttt{D7\#} \texttt{f8} 33.\texttt{D8\#} \texttt{f7}

34.\texttt{a1!}  
And White wins.

Let us return to the game.

29.\texttt{Wh1?}  
29.\texttt{Cc3!} with the idea of eliminating the annoying f-pawn would have won the game more or less instantly. It is interesting that the defenders often seem more happy to endure a strong attack, than to stop it in its infancy by returning a bit of material.

The following game looks more like a comedy of errors than a serious game. We have all been there and you should not be mistaken, Robert Bator is a solid and knowledgeable international master, though on this day he was far from his best. But, even though the game is not a great one, it does hold some interesting variations to our theme.

29...\texttt{Wh3} 30.\texttt{Eg1} \texttt{Af5?}  
Rather mechanically played, just as in the previous game Trejo – Fraschini. This move should have cost Black the game, but instead claimed an almost instant victory.

After the correct 30...\texttt{g5!} the threat of mate would have been quite serious, and White would have to come up with 31.\texttt{We6!} to keep the position unclear. The black attack would in other words be strong enough to claim a free queen, but this is only enough to equalise the material count.

31.\texttt{Cc4?}  
This is at least as bad as the previous two mistakes in the game.

With 31.\texttt{Cc6!} White could have achieved an easily winning position. The rook cannot come
to h5 without exchanging the queens and the normal combination with ...\xh2 does not work as White has \h3 to shield the king. After 31...\xf6 White would have plenty of freedom to play 32.g4! when the game is effectively over because of 32...\xg4 33.\xg4 \xg4 34.\g1. Even if Black was able to prevent the a-pawn from promoting, he would not be able to save the rook on f5.

31...\h5 32.\h4 \xh4 33.gxh4

33...\d6

Ouch, what a cold shower this must have been. White completely missed that when the g-pawn moves, this attack becomes possible. Mate is near, so he resigned.

0-1

The following game differs slightly from the one just covered as Black has no other way to play for an advantage than to accept the challenge. Again we shall see our basic themes in a dynamic setting.

White has given up a few pawns, but in return he has a rook on the seventh rank and a real attack on the black king. Black correctly evaluates that the only way to fight for an advantage is to accept the offered piece and try to ride out the storm.

\h2

It is important to get off the first rank, as we shall see, but even on h2 the king is not ideally placed.

26...\xg7 27.f6\h8 28.\c7!

White is harassing the black queen, fighting for the h6-square.

28...\d2!

The white queen cannot be allowed to get to the h6-square, as the attack would become very dangerous. The following line illustrates the point: 28...\d3? 29.\h6 \g8 30.\xf7 g5 31.\g7! should give White very realistic chances of winning the game. The threat is 32.f7 with a mating sequence, and the only move that blocks this idea, 31...\g6, does not seem too comforting.

29.\d1! \c3

Preventing 30.\h6 by attacking the all-important f-pawn.
30. $\text{f1}$!
Renewing the threat of $\text{h6}$.

30...$\text{a7}$?
This looks quite logical; Black does not want to give up the f-pawn and assumes that he's got the g7-square covered...

30...h5? would bring the weakness forward and allow White to break through with 31.$\text{h5}$! forcing the following line: 31...$\text{d3}$ 32.$\text{e4}$! when Black has to give up his queen, but cannot take both rooks. True, after 32...$\text{xc4}$ 33.$\text{xc4}$ $\text{e7}$ he does have some fighting chances, but it would be an uphill struggle. He should, however, certainly avoid 33...gx$\text{f5}$? when White mates with 34.$\text{f4}$ $\text{h7}$ 35.$\text{g5}$ $\text{g8}$ 36.$\text{hxh5}$.

The winning line started with 30...$\text{g8}$!, not fearing the fresh air after 31.$\text{xf7}$, because of 31...$\text{e5}$† 32.$\text{h4}$ $\text{h5}$ when the attack has been repulsed, however unlikely it might seem.

31.$\text{h6}$ $\text{g8}$ 32.$\text{e8}$!
Black for some reason was not aware of this simple move.

32...$\text{e5}$†
Sadly the only option.

33.$\text{exe5}$

White is winning and Black finally ceased his resistance on move 61.
1–0

To understand all the tricks in these situations is just as important for the defender as it is for the attacker, sometimes even more so. Here is a good example:

Vladimir Talla – Jiri Kociscak
Banska Stiavnica 2006

Even though White would still have a perpetual check after 33.g$\text{f4}$ $\text{e1}$!, there is no reason to allow such tactics. White defended against the attack and quickly won due to his three extra pawns.

33.$\text{b1}$! $\text{d1}$ 34.$\text{b4}$!
White has prevented Black from challenging the control over g2. Now all that remains is to advance the a-pawn towards the eighth rank and claim the victory.

34...$\text{f8}$ 35.c$\text{5}$ $\text{h8}$ 36.a$\text{4}$ $\text{h5}$ 37.a$\text{5}$ $\text{d8}$d$\text{7}$ 38.a$\text{6}$ h$\text{4}$ 39.g$\text{4}$ $\text{xe1}$ 40.$\text{xe1}$ $\text{g7}$ 41.$\text{f1}$

1–0

The following example combines the idea of getting the knight to g5 with an attack on both the seventh and the eighth ranks.
20...e6?

It is maybe a bit hard to imagine, but after this move Black is already in a lot of trouble. White's exploitation of his opponent's mistake is worthy of great praise.

The reason why this is a bad move and why I think very few grandmasters would have made this mistake, is that the dark squares are now so weak that they resemble Swiss cheese.

I can understand why many players would think that the move secures the bishop's position in the centre, and if there is no fault to be found with it, go ahead and play it. But chess has two dimensions, one short and one long term. So even if, in the short term, there is no fault to be found with the move, the grandmaster would be a bit reluctant weakening the dark squares around his king unnecessarily.

20...dxe5 21.fxe5 wb6 with chances both ways - though admittedly with a bit more action on the kingside than Black would ideally want - was the best way forward. I think White should play 22.fh2 with ideas such as wh6, Zdf1 and h4-h5 in some combination, while Black will either try to play ...a5 and ...b4 to obtain counterplay, or ...f6 to improve his defensive capabilities.

21.f5!

21...dxe5?!

21...exf5 would remove the protection from the bishop and leave Black in a crisis after 22.xf5.!

The most tenacious move was 21...gxf5 even though White will keep a solid edge with 22.exd6, when the d-pawn is likely to be a strong asset in what is to come.

22.f6

Establishing our theme, the exploitation of the dark squares around the king.

22...sh8 23.sh6 zg8

The first crisis has been averted.

24.xf3!

The threat of zg5 creates the second crisis for Black.

24...wb6† 25.sh2! xf3

The second crisis has been averted, but a third one emerges from the horizon.
26...g5
The most beautiful line arises after 26...c7, when we return to basics:

27.\texttt{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textit{\textbf{e}6!}}}}}}
The deep point behind White's preceding few moves. Black is unable to defend the f7-pawn without giving up his queen. In the game he tried to do without the f-pawn, but was soon mated.

26...g5
The most beautiful line arises after 26...c7, when we return to basics:

27.\texttt{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{\textit{\textbf{e}6!}}}}}}
This wonderful move not only diverts the black pieces, it also clears the third rank for the b3-rook, which is ready to deliver mate only three moves from now.

27...\texttt{\textit{\textit{\textbf{a}8}}}
Black cannot take the bishop, as his entire defence is based on tying down the white queen to the defence of g2. One typical line is 27...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}a6}} 28.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}6}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}8}} 29.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}h7\dagger}} and Black is mated.

28.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}8}}
28.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}3}} was even stronger, the computer informs us, but the text move was sufficient and Gligoric did not need any assistance to finish the job.

28...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}8}} 29.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}1}} d3 30.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}d}3} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}2}} 31.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}b}3}
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}4}} 32.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}8}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}b}1\dagger} 33.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}b}1} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}1}} 34.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}5}}
25...hxg6 26.\texttt{xe5}

The position is probably pretty balanced here, but with a subtle trick Danielsen still managed to outplay his opponent in the time scramble.

\texttt{26...fe7} 27.\texttt{h5} 28.\texttt{xh6} 29.\texttt{xh6} 30.\texttt{g5} 31.\texttt{d5} 32.\texttt{f4} 33.\texttt{e6}

In my early twenties I remember watching the following game live and being quite excited with the nice little combination I had found. Together with others I was debating Danielsen’s chances of passing the magical 2500 and claiming the grandmaster title after he had won this game. The protagonist was thinking and thinking, but after a long time he played something else.

\textbf{Henrik Danielsen – Carsten Hoi}

Randers 1996

\texttt{25.fxg6}

After the game I immediately ran to Henrik and asked: “Did you not see it?” and burst out the following moves: 25.\texttt{exf6} 26.\texttt{exf6}

“Of course I did,” Henrik said, “but I also saw that after 26...\texttt{xg6}! I would struggle even to be okay.” I was stunned by this move, which I still find greatly impressive to this day.
There is only one final pattern that remains for us to look at. I was a bit surprised that it has occurred so rarely in practical play, but as I love it, I bent the pattern a bit to include two really beautiful examples, that unfortunately did not have a pawn on f6.

But first, let us see the standard pattern in action.

**Flavio De Mayolas – Alejandro Bernier**

Ushuaia 2004

![Chessboard diagram](image)

White can win this position in several ways, but chose the mate in three.

31.\( \text{Wh6} \) \( \text{Ag8} \) 32.\( \text{Whxh7} \) 33.\( \text{hxg6} \) mate.

1–0

As said, I cheated with the next two examples, as there are no pawns on f6, but the positions are so inspiring that I hope the reader will forgive me.

Despite the absence of this important pawn, the next two positions are closely associated with our theme. In the end I found them to be simply irresistible, and I hope the reader will feel the same way.

**Manfred Hein – Heinz Thiele**

Bavaria 1996

White broke through with the following beautiful sacrifice.

![Chessboard diagram](image)

25.\( \text{Whxh7} \) 26.\( \text{hxg6} \) 27.\( \text{Ag5} \) 28.\( \text{fxf5} \) 29.\( \text{hxg5} \) 30.\( \text{b1h4} \) is the end. Black has no defence against 31.\( \text{Ag4} \) mate on the next move.

27.\( \text{h6} \) 28.\( \text{hxg5} \) 29.\( \text{b1h5} \) 30.\( \text{Ag4} \) 31.\( \text{Ag2} \) 32.\( \text{Wh7} \) 33.\( \text{hxg6} \) mate.

1–0

Black resigned. He is mated by one of White's knights on the next move.

1–0
I found the final example of this section in the database while doing a random search on the queen sacrifice. I was and continue to be utterly amazed that it is not a complete classic and that, having pawed my way through almost every classic book on combinations, I had never seen it before.

**Bakalec – Viktor Shishkov**

Dnipropetrovsk 1966

26. \texttt{gxh7}†!!

This is of course not surprising to us, but I have a feeling that it was a great shock for poor Shishkov.

Given the chance, Black would play 26...\texttt{c6} and be absolutely fine, so the queen sacrifice really is the only way to play for a win.

26...\texttt{xh7} 27.\texttt{hxg6}† \texttt{g7}

27...\texttt{g8} 28.\texttt{gxg7} mate is a beautiful image as well.

28.\texttt{gxg7}† \texttt{g5}

In this position there are no fewer than four winning moves, but the choice is an illusion. They are all based on the ability to promote to a knight. With a clear sense of aesthetics, Bakalec choose the most direct route to victory.

29.\texttt{fxg8=\texttt{h}†}!!

Black resigned, as he is about to lose everything.

1–0

**Three Piece Attacks**

I am not sure where this idea was first put forward, but I like Colin Crouch’s description of it in *Attacking Technique*. As he gives no source it is not impossible that he came up with it himself, but on the other hand it was not as common to give your sources at the time the book was written. Anyway, what he says is:

“To conduct a successful kingside attack, you must be prepared to sacrifice, while being careful to ensure that you have enough material in reserve to force checkmate. In general, a successful kingside attack will need at least three pieces participating; one to be sacrificed and two to give checkmate.”

At first when you look at successful attacking games you will get the feeling that this is not as common a phenomenon as Crouch suggests in his book, but once you dig deeper, you will see that it is actually quite common that there are three pieces that have this sharing of workload; one to sacrifice himself to open up to the king, one to assist and one to deliver
checkmate. The simplest example is the Greek gift sacrifice, which we have already briefly looked at in its generic form. Here it is with a bit more background, still very simple...

13.\textit{xh7} 14.\textit{g5} 14...\textit{g6} is not offering any resistance due to 15.\textit{h5} mate.

15.\textit{h5}

This is the three piece rule in practice. The bishop has sacrificed itself, the knight is assisting the queen, in this case by defending her, and big momma creates general devastation.

15...\textit{e8} 16.\textit{xf7} 17.\textit{h5} 18.\textit{h7} 19.\textit{h8} 20.\textit{xg7} mate.

Let's advance quickly from this clean version to a more complex example, a brilliant miniature by Murray Chandler. First we encounter the basic version of the Greek gift sacrifice, but as Black is not allowing himself to be mated without a fight, the attack goes through stages. Eventually a third piece comes to support the attack with decisive effect, which seems to vindicate the three piece rule.

Murray Chandler – Dimitrios Anagnostopoulos

London 1989

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.\textit{c3} \textit{f6} 4.\textit{g5} \textit{e7} 5.e5 \textit{fd7} 6.\textit{xe7} \textit{xe7} 7.\textit{f4} 0–0 8.\textit{f3} c5 9.\textit{d2} \textit{c6} 10.0–0–0 a6 11.\textit{xc5} \textit{xc5} 12.\textit{d3} b5?

It is surprising that this position has arisen quite a number of times. The Greek gift sacrifice is the overwhelmingly most popular move, but with many other moves played, it only makes up about half of the games. Of the three grandmasters that have had this position, only one played the sacrifice, which proves just how hard it is to find the point as expressed on move 17 and 18. Mecking played 13.g4 in 1975, when his rating was at its peak at 2610 (and that was a lot of money back then...), while Ivanchuk, the occasional World Number One, played 13.h4 against Tukmakov in 2006, albeit in a rapid game.

As chess databases were still in their infancy in 1989 it is unlikely that Chandler had prepared the sacrifice at home, which only goes to testify to the extensive strength he had in the late 1980s. These days he is of course mainly known as the money-man in Gambit chess publications, although he continues to participate in and win tournaments.
Chapter 1 - Understanding Mating Attacks

13.\textit{\textbf{g}}xh7\textbf{!} \textit{\textbf{h}}xh7 14.\textit{\textbf{d}}g5\textbf{!} \textit{\textbf{g}}g8 15.\textit{\textbf{d}}d3

The opening moves are not too hard to find. I gave this exercise to a group of juniors levelling from 2100 to grandmaster, but none of them managed to find a way forward after Black's best reply.

15...\textit{\textbf{e}}e8\textbf{!}

The only junior that decided that the sacrifice was indeed correct had overlooked this tenacious defence, which leaves the d8-square vacant for the fleeing king.

In most games Black has preferred the lesser option of:

15...\textit{\textbf{d}}d8\textbf{!} 16.\textit{\textbf{h}}h7\textbf{!} \textit{\textbf{f}}f8 17.\textit{\textbf{h}}h8\textbf{!} \textit{\textbf{e}}e7 18.\textit{\textbf{g}}xg7

Now Black has to defend the f7-pawn with:

18...\textit{\textbf{f}}f8

The following tactic has not been missed by any of the white players fortunate enough to obtain this position, and has in most cases led to immediate resignation.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw (0,0) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (1,0) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (2,0) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (3,0) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (4,0) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (5,0) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (6,0) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (7,0) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (0,1) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (1,1) circle (0.5cm);
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\draw (3,1) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (4,1) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (5,1) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (6,1) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (7,1) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (0,2) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (1,2) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (2,2) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (3,2) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (4,2) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (5,2) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (6,2) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (7,2) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (0,3) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (1,3) circle (0.5cm);
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\draw (6,3) circle (0.5cm);
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\draw (0,4) circle (0.5cm);
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\draw (4,4) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (5,4) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (6,4) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (7,4) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (0,5) circle (0.5cm);
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\draw (3,5) circle (0.5cm);
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\draw (7,5) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (0,6) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (1,6) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (2,6) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (3,6) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (4,6) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (5,6) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (6,6) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (7,6) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (0,7) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (1,7) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (2,7) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (3,7) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (4,7) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (5,7) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (6,7) circle (0.5cm);
\draw (7,7) circle (0.5cm);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

19.\textit{\textbf{c}}xe6! \textit{\textbf{c}}xe6 20.\textit{\textbf{x}}xd5 \textit{\textbf{e}}e3\textbf{!}

20...\textit{\textbf{x}}xd5 21.\textit{\textbf{f}}f8\textbf{!}

21.\textit{\textbf{g}}b1 \textit{\textbf{b}}b4 22.\textit{\textbf{x}}xd7\textbf{!}

This is the main line and also what happened in Stellwagen – Ma Yu, Groningen 1999. Now Black gave up his rook on f8 due to 22...\textit{\textbf{x}}xd7 23.\textit{\textbf{f}}f6 mate, but found no peace.

16.\textit{\textbf{h}}h7\textbf{!} \textit{\textbf{f}}f8

This is the position that could have been the challenge for Mecking and Ivanchuk. The standard method with checking on h8 does not do the job, so it can be easy to give up on this entire tactical idea without inspecting the other options more closely. There are no clear reasons why there should be a special solution in this position at first glance.

However, upon closer inspection this opinion changes. The centre is pretty solid and the black pieces are not that well placed. The queen can only enter the game via e3 and the queenside is simply out of play. Maybe this is what made Chandler think a bit deeper. Or perhaps he took a gamble, reasoning that when you have the chance to deliver such a strong blow to the opponent’s position, it is worth the risk considering that the rewards for finding a strong follow-up would be high.

After 17.\textit{\textbf{h}}h8\textbf{!} \textit{\textbf{e}}e7 18.\textit{\textbf{h}}h4 both 18...\textit{\textbf{f}}f8 and 18...\textit{\textbf{f}}6 lead to a very murky position, where it is had to say if the position is just balanced, or if it is better for one of the players. I honestly do not know. The problem for White is that the manoeuvre ...\textit{\textbf{c}}6-e7-g6 defends the king brilliantly.

After the check White can also take the pawn with 18.\textit{\textbf{x}}xg7, but in this case Black will not transpose to the previous note with 18...\textit{\textbf{f}}f8,
but reply 18...<b>d8</b>!, when either 19.<b>dxe7</b> <b>c7</b> 20.<b>d6</b> <b>c7</b> or 19.<b>xf7</b> <b>e7</b> would result in unclear consequences. White surely has compensation for the piece, but Black has managed to stabilise his defences and should be entering the middlegame with equal chances.

All in all, these lines only extend the admiration I have for Chandler's following moves.

17.<b>h5</b>!!

This quiet move is rather surprising, but at the same time not that uncommon in the games with the Greek gift sacrifice. The point here is to attack the f7-point, obviously, and thereby force Black to place his pieces awkwardly.

17...<b>d8</b>

There are no fully satisfactory moves, but the text has the advantage of not being easy to refute.

17...g6 is another candidate, but the stiff cold wind storming through the cracks in the black structure is worrying. It is not a great surprise that, after the basic moves 18.<b>h8</b> <b>c7</b> 19.<b>h4</b> <b>f8</b>, White has a few different ways to win the game. One of them is by extending the three-piece rule to a four-piece coordination whereby the c3-knight and the d1-rook sacrifice themselves to pave the way for the knight on g5 and the queen and their bloody ambition.

20.<b>ce4</b> dxe4 21.<b>x</b>d7! <b>x</b>d7 22.<b>h8</b> <b>e7</b> 23.<b>f6</b> <b>f8</b> 24.<b>x</b>f7 mate.

18.<b>h7</b>!!

Even this move can be very hard to see. The point is revealed on the very next move.

18.<b>h8</b>?? <b>e7</b> 19.<b>x</b>g7 was played in K. Ramirez - Nur Shazwani, Turin Olympiad (w) 2006. Here the accurate reply would have been 19...<b>b4</b>! 20.<b>ce4</b> <b>e3</b>?? 21.<b>b1</b> <b>x</b>f4 22.<b>d6</b> <b>x</b>g5 23.<b>x</b>e8 <b>x</b>g7 24.<b>xg7</b> <b>e6</b> with a complex endgame that I have a feeling might be a tad better for Black.

18...<b>g8</b>

18...<b>e7</b> does not work on account of 19.<b>g5</b>!.

It seems as if White has somehow executed the whole Greek gift idea the wrong way – the knight is supposed to assist the queen, not the other way around! But just as we thought that the knight was a supporting actor, we find out that he is a simple extra that can be disposed of. Oh, the queen’s favour is hard earned, but easily lost.

19.<b>d3</b>!

Onto the scene comes a powerful new assistant. From h3 the rook will support the
queen fully and together the two will dance off into the sunset (burning down the villages).

19...\textit{e}7

Black has no defence. 19...\textit{e}4 can be met with the simple 20.\textit{e}2, and 19...\textit{f}2 loses to the pretty 20.\textit{f}3 \textit{x}g2 21.\textit{h}3 \textit{x}h1\texttt{#} 22.\textit{d}1, when it will be White's turn to deliver checks in just a moment; and his checks will hurt.

20.\textit{h}3 \textit{f}6 21.\textit{xf}6\texttt{#} 22.\textit{xf}6 1–0

The three piece phenomenon can also happen in what might seem to be a more warped but essentially identical scenario. In the following position Morozevich was clearly in time trouble and missed a tactic he would have found in a few seconds if he had not been in the timeframe of urgency.

\textbf{Alexander Morozevich – Levon Aronian}

\textit{Moricia/Linares 2007}

42.\textit{f}8\texttt{#}!! Not the only way, but still... 42...\textit{xf}8 43.\textit{g}3 mate.

It should be said that White can also win with 38.\textit{h}4? \textit{xe}3 39.\textit{d}8\texttt{#} \textit{e}8 40.\textit{xe}8\texttt{#} \textit{g}7 41.\textit{f}6\texttt{#} \textit{xf}6 42.\textit{h}8\texttt{#} \textit{e}7 43.\textit{c}6\texttt{#} as found by Keti Arakhamia-Grant.

In the game White played worse.

38.\textit{f}3? \textit{f}1

I have no idea if Aronian saw the aforementioned combination and gambled that Morozevich would miss it once again.

Objectively better, but as we can see, practically much worse, would have been: 38...\textit{e}8 39.\textit{fx}g6 \textit{e}1\texttt{#}, where Black might hope to survive the ending. But here White has a great win in 40.\textit{f}2 \textit{fx}g6 41.\textit{e}2\texttt{#}, which
Morozevich undoubtedly would have found, considering that the key move occurs on move 41, after the time control. The forced line continues: 41...\texttt{e}e3\dagger (41...\texttt{a}a8 42.\texttt{h}h2 leaves Black wanting, e.g. 42...\texttt{d}d2 43.\texttt{c}c6! and the rook is lost.) 42.\texttt{h}h2 \texttt{b}b4 43.\texttt{f}f4 \texttt{e}e7 44.\texttt{x}xb6 and Black’s last drawing trump, the connected passed pawns, are no longer so connected.

39.\texttt{x}xg6?
White could still win as in the note above, but he was clearly out of time.

39...\texttt{x}xf3\dagger 40.\texttt{x}x\texttt{f}3 \texttt{e}e1\dagger 41.\texttt{f}f4 \texttt{h}xg6 42.\texttt{x}xd5 \texttt{f}f2\dagger 43.\texttt{f}f3
Morozevich had had enough and offered a draw.

$\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}$

Understanding the three piece principle on an intuitive level will no doubt be beneficial for any attacker. There is clearly a difference between seeing the pieces simply as pieces, and being able to see them as a team, where there are clear roles to be played: in this narrative, as a piece to be sacrificed, a piece to support and a piece to deliver mate.

Insurance Policies

Another important idea, of great practical value for the attacker, is that of the insurance policy. The idea is simple: once we start an attack, it is useful not to burn all of the bridges and instead retain an opportunity to bail out, typically by forcing a draw by perpetual check or some other form of repetition. It is much easier to ‘risk’ a sacrifice when you know you will have at least a draw.

The first example of this is taken from a recent blitz game.

![Chess Board](image)

**Magnus Carlsen – Sergei Movsesian**

Moscow (Blitz) 2008

16.\texttt{x}xh7\dagger!
I am sure that when Carlsen played this, he was certain that he could always bail out with a draw in the event that his opponent managed to parry the threats.

16.\texttt{g}g5 \texttt{g}6 17.\texttt{x}xh7 might look attractive, with the idea to play \texttt{h}h5\dagger and \texttt{xc}c5. But Black can respond with a desperado sacrifice and claim back the pawn with 17...\texttt{xf}2\dagger!, after which the position is close to even.

16...\texttt{x}xh7 17.\texttt{g}g5\dagger \texttt{g}g6
17...\texttt{g}g8 18.\texttt{h}h5 simply does not work.

18.\texttt{f}f4 \texttt{f}5
This is the only move that offers any defence. Black has to take control of the e4-square.

18...\texttt{f}f6 is not an alternative. It is not clear which way is the strongest for White to continue, but either knight check on e4 would pick up the bishop on c5 and leave White obviously winning.

19.\texttt{g}g3 \texttt{f}f6
19...\texttt{h}h6 is not much different from the game. After 20.\texttt{h}h3\dagger \texttt{g}g6 21.\texttt{d}d1 \texttt{e}e7
the simplest move is 22.\textit{Be}5!, when White is winning. The threats are 23.g4, which will lead straight to mate, and 23.\textit{Bxc}5 \textit{Bxc}5 24.\textit{Bh}7+ \textit{Bf}6 25.\textit{Bce}4†, winning the queen. There is no way that Black can defend this queen.

20.\textit{Bh}7+ \textit{Bf}7 21.\textit{Bg}5+ \textit{Bf}6

Carlsen has used the option of repeating the position once automatically, but then started to think. Now that we are here, it is obvious that White has a very promising attack and it is not necessary to agree to a draw just yet. However, it was useful to have this option at the time where the investment had to be made.

In the game the prodigy won the game with awesome precision, remembering that this was a blitz game.

22.\textit{Bad}1! \textit{Bc}8
22...\textit{Bc}7 23.\textit{Bb}4 \textit{Bg}6 24.\textit{Bd}3 and 25.\textit{Bg}3 wins rather easily. The black king simply cannot find any shelter.

23.\textit{Be}5! \textit{Bb}4 24.\textit{Bde}1 \textit{Ba}7 25.\textit{Be}3

With the double threat of \textit{Bxe}6 and \textit{Bxe}6†, which Black cannot meet in any dignified way.

25...\textit{Bg}6 26.\textit{Bxb}6 \textit{Bb}7 27.\textit{Be}3 \textit{Bd}6 28.\textit{Bxe}6 \textit{Bxe}5 29.\textit{Bxf}8† \textit{Bxf}8 30.\textit{fxe}5 \textit{Be}6 31.\textit{Be}2 \textit{Bb}4 32.\textit{Bf}4† \textit{Bf}7 33.\textit{h}4 \textit{Bxb}2 34.\textit{Bd}1 \textit{Bb}3 35.\textit{Bd}3 \textit{Bc}4 36.\textit{Bd}6 \textit{Be}7 37.\textit{Bh}2 a5 38.\textit{Bg}3 \textit{Bg}8 39.\textit{Bd}8† 1–0

I do not want to go too deeply into this phenomenon, as I think the principle is easy to understand; obviously we are more likely to risk the sacrifice, when we know that we can always bail out with a perpetual check or a repetition. At the same time we should not focus too much on this option, as this can distract us from finding the best moves at the board. One example is the game Surovsky – Predojevic, featured on page 323 in Chapter 4. Everything was proceeding as planned until the moment where the possibility of forcing a repetition apparently blurred the Israeli grandmaster's evaluation of the position, and made him miss no fewer than three wins!

Transformation

An advantage in a chess position can be either dynamic or static in character. An attack on the opponent's king will usually fall under the first category, whilst an advantage in material or pawn structure would be the opposite. Chess is a game of transactions, and sometimes it is necessary to trade one type of advantage for another. When the defending side goes to great lengths to stave off the checkmating threats, the attacker may have the opportunity to 'cash in' his initiative to obtain a different type of advantage, most commonly one of material.

I have chosen two games to showcase this idea. In the first White sacrifices a pawn for an initiative and continuous pressure on the light squares, but at one point chooses to go for an endgame instead of continuing the attack.

In the second game White has an overwhelming attack, but great defence means that all he can get out of it is a positional advantage in the endgame.
Oswaldo Zambrana – Guillermo Soppe

Havana 2005

1.e4 d6 2.e5 d5 3.f3 d6 4.d4 g4
5.e2 e6 6.0-0 d7 7.b3 0-0 8.c4 d6
9.b2 d8d7 10.dd2 f5 11.exd6 cxd6
12.e1 a5 13.d1 a4 14.g3 g6 15.a3
c7 16.h4 c6 17.g5 axb3 18.axb3 d7
19.d3 g6 20.g5 d7 21.d1 c8
22.b4 axa1 23.xa1 h6 24.h5

After a fairly uneventful opening White is offering his opponent a bribe in return for seriously weakening the light squares around his king.

24...hxg5?
Black takes an unnecessary risk, probably overestimating the value of the pawn. After 24...c2! 25.h2 hxg5 the position is more or less equal.

25.hxg6 fxg6 26.d3 f8 27.wb1
27.e4 c7 28.c3 was potentially more accurate, but besides this small detail, the game is performed perfectly by White.

27...h7?! 
Holding on to the ransom, but it was better to accept that taking the pawn had been a mistake and let it go. 27...d5!? 28.c5 cbd7 29.xg6 xg6 30.xg6 c6 was only a little bit better for White.

28.e4 e7 29.c3 c8
29...a8!? was perhaps better, but White has a firm grip on the position in any case.

30.xe3!
The rook will be very active on the third rank. The threat of g3 encourages Black to seek an immediate confrontation.

With the moves 30.b5 d7 31.a5 c8 White could drive his opponent backwards, but his pieces would not be aiming at the biggest weaknesses in the black position: the pawn on g6.

30...d5 31.xe7 xe7 32.c5 cbd7
This loses by force, but also after 32...a8!? 33.b5 c7 34.d6 White’s advantage would be crushing.

33.xd5!
Though it may look as if Black has blundered away his extra pawn, the likelihood is that he returned it deliberately, thinking it would provide the best chance to save the game.

33...f7
Black has a shattered position, but also a few ideas on how to fight. For instance, the pawns on d4 and e5 might become vulnerable. White obviously has a promising attack against g6 and the black king, but instead of betting on mate, he cashes in and transitions to a favourable ending.

34...e6!!

34.c3 e5 was Black's idea. Also here White is better, but Black cannot think about that - he has to remaining busy making tenacious moves.

34...dxe6 35.xg6+ g8 36.xf7+ xlf7 37.xf5+ xf6 38.xf6 gxf6 39.d5

This is the point; White ends with an extra pawn.

39...e8

More resistance was offered by 39...d7 40.dxe6+ xe6, when Black would be a few moves up on the pawn ending. However, White can instead win the queen ending after 41.wh7+ e8 42.xb7 e1+ 43.xh2 xf2 44.xe4+ d8 45.b4, when the connected pawns should decide.

40.h5!

40.dxe6+ was possible, but White has accurately evaluated the pawn ending, which is quite impressive.

40.e7 41.xe8+ xe8 42.dxe6 e7 43.b4 xe6 44.b5!

Only this wins.

44..d5 45.c6 bxc6 46.bxc6 xc6

47.h2

The king will seal the deal.

47..d5 48.g3 e6

48.f5 loses only to 49.h4 f4 50.f3! (after 50.h5? f3! 51.g4 d4 52.xh6 d3 53.g5 xe2 54.g6 xf2 55.g7 xe2 56.g8=∞ x f2
Black makes a draw) 50...d4 51.h5 e3 52.xh6 f2 53.g5.

49.g4!

Threatening to go to h5.
49...f7 50.\(\text{f5}\)!

But going to f5 when the chance is given. After 50.\(\text{h5}\)? \(\text{g7}\)! Black draws.

50...h5

The difference is found after 50...\(\text{g7}\) 51.\(\text{e6}\), when White is in line to win the f-pawn.

51.g3! \(\text{g7}\) 52.\(\text{e6}\) \(\text{g6}\) 53.f4

Black resigned. After 53...\(\text{g7}\) 54.f5 he loses the f-pawn.

1-0

One of the heroes of this book is the Israeli tornado Emil Sutovsky, whose creativity and determination is second to none in the chess world. These attributes have helped him to create some fabulous masterpieces, as well as possibly being a restraining force in his career. He can pull a rabbit out of a hat and annihilate world-class grandmasters with illuminating sacrifices, but at the same time he can lose close to dead endings and other positions where dynamics are not very relevant.

In the following game he starts off creating a brilliant attack, probably based on very good opening preparation, where he was able to react with great intensity in the face of a novelty. After fantastic play he ended in a situation where there was no clear-cut way to end the game, but where the threat against the king could be exploited to win material.

**Emil Sutovsky – Joe Gallagher**

Bled (ol) 2002

1.e4 c5 2.\(\text{d4}\) d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{d4}\) 5.\(\text{d3}\) a6 6.\(\text{d4}\) e6 7.\(\text{b3}\) b5 8.0-0 \(\text{e7}\) 9.\(\text{w3}\) \(\text{c7}\) 10.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{c6}\) 11.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xc6}\) 12.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{b7}\)

13.\(\text{xf6}\)

True to his style, Sutovsky aims at an immediate confrontation.

13...gx\(\text{xf6}\)

13...\(\text{xf6}\)? is met with a typical refutation: 14.\(\text{d5}\)! \(\text{c8}\) 15.e5! and Black is simply busted. When you play positions like this, where you spend a lot of time on getting your structure right with pawn moves, you need to be very careful against a fully developed opponent; it only takes one false step to the side for the steamroller to hit you head-on.

The only way to continue the game with Black here is to give up a pawn with 15...\(\text{xd5}\) 16.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{d8}\) and hope for a bit of luck to come his way later in the game.

14.\(\text{xe3}\)

Sutovsky is basing his entire strategy around the \(\text{d5}\) punch. Though I like this active move quite a lot, I am not entirely convinced that White is actually better here. His attack has potential, but this alone is not enough to
win; we must also respect Black’s defensive resources.

14...\(\text{c5}\) 15.\(\text{xe1}\) \(\text{f8}\)!
This move is slightly artificial and ends up not reducing the pressure down the e-file sufficiently.

15...0-0 would also be bad. The structure on the kingside is weakened and by cutting off the black queen with 16.\(\text{d5}\), White achieves a winning attack: 16...\(\text{exd5}\) 17.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{d8}\) 18.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{h8}\) 19.\(\text{g3}\) and Black is mated.

However, after 15...\(\text{e5}\)! Black would have been reasonably safe. After 16.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{b8}\) 17.\(\text{xb7}\) \(\text{xb7}\) it was very difficult for White to break through in Golubev – Averjanov, Kharlov 2006. But Golubev is a great expert on these positions and was able to exploit the chances he was given later on.

16...\(\text{exd5}\)
Because of the lack of coordination between the black pieces, the price he paid for setting up his pleasant pawn structure, he is now suffering huge problems down the e-file.

17.\(\text{exd5}\)

The pressure is intensified.

18...\(\text{c7}\)
18...\(\text{c4}\) was possible, but after 19.\(\text{xe7}\) \(\text{xe2}\) 20.\(\text{xe2}\) 21.\(\text{xe2}\) b4 22.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 23.\(\text{xd6}\) the endgame should be a win without any great difficulties.

19.\(\text{e4}\)!
The knight is the least active piece, so he joins the attack rapidly.

19...\textit{d}8!

The only defence.

After 19...\textit{x}d5 White wins with a simple double threat: 20.\textit{h}5! and the check on \textit{h}6 will be deadly, unless Black just lets go of the bishop.

19...\textit{d}7 looked like a decent defence, but Sutovsky gives 20.\textit{f}3! as a fantastic refutation. The threat is 21.\textit{x}f6, when the recapture would be met by 22.\textit{e}x8\# and 23.\textit{g}3\#, winning. In the event of 20...\textit{f}5 he has the appealing 21.\textit{f}4!, which wins after 21...\textit{h}6 22.\textit{x}f6! \textit{xf6} 23.\textit{e}x8\# \textit{g}7 24.\textit{h}8 \textit{g}5 25.\textit{d}4\# \textit{f}6, and now for example 26.\textit{h}7\#.

20.\textit{x}d6 \textit{e}7!

Again the toughest defence. Black cannot afford to let go of the e-file. After 20...\textit{e}3 21.\textit{e}3 the threat of a check on \textit{h}6 is devastating, so Black is forced into 21...\textit{h}5 22.\textit{f}5! when White is threatening checks on both \textit{a}3 and \textit{e}8. Black may be able to resist for a while, but ultimately his position is lost.

21.\textit{e}x7!

21.\textit{f}5?! would have been faulty, as after 21...\textit{e}5! Black manages to close the e-file again. Following 22.\textit{e}x5 \textit{e}5 23.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}8! White still has sufficient compensation for the piece to make a draw, and also create some problems for Black, but it seems that with accurate play a draw is all there is. (23...\textit{f}6? is the computer's move, but 24.\textit{h}6\# \textit{e}8 25.\textit{g}7\# \textit{d}7 26.\textit{h}3\# \textit{e}7 27.\textit{d}6\# leads to a winning attack.)

21...\textit{e}7

21...\textit{e}x7? 22.\textit{d}2 is just over.

22.\textit{f}5

The knight occupies the ideal square, but without allowing Black to close the e-file. But these are of course very general considerations.

This is the position that is most important for our theme. After an initial mistake on move 15 Gallagher has defended with the utmost tenacity. White has not managed to break through along the e-file and deliver a fatal blow, as could have been hoped, but his position is still very promising. It is clear that this is the moment where White should prove his advantage and Sutovsky manages to do this with absolute accuracy. Without being stuck in the idea that the attack has to culminate in mate he finds a way to transform his advantage from a dynamic one - a dangerous attack, to a static advantage - an extra pawn in the endgame.

However, this is not the end of the story. Even attacking players have to play the ending at times and they should be able to do so expertly if they wish to be successful. The reason for this is two-fold. First of all, some attacks do fail, and you will have to suffer some poor endings from time to time. Secondly, if you do not have the opportunity of transformation as a part of your thinking, you will find many advantages hard to convert.
There is also another aspect: the practical angle involving the calculation of variations.

Black's next reply is the only one that makes sense.

22...\(\text{	extsc{ex}}\text{d5}\)

This prepares to play ...\(\text{	extsc{e}}\text{e6}\) and consolidate the king's position.

23.\(\text{\textsc{w}}\text{g4}!!\)

 Hats off! Sutovsky spotted that 23.\(\text{\textsc{w}}\text{xe7}†?\) would be faulty. Black can play 23...\(\text{\textsc{w}}\text{xe7}\) 24.\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{xe7} \text{\textsc{x}}\text{a2}\\!\\!\) with the point 25.\(\text{b3} \text{\textsc{b1}\\! and all of a sudden Black is in the clear.}\)

The move he played in the game sets up a more favourable scenario where he is able to take with the rook on e7 instead of the knight.

23.\(\text{\textsc{g}}\text{g8}\\!\\!\) 24.\(\text{\textsc{a}}\text{xe7} \text{\textsc{x}}\text{g4}\)

24...\(\text{\textsc{w}}\text{d8}\\!\\!\) loses both to the prosaic 25.\(\text{\textsc{w}}\text{b4}\\!\\!\) and the amusing 25.\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e8}†\\!\\!, leading to an easily winning ending.

24...\(\text{\textsc{w}}\text{xe7}†?\) is not a useful desperado. After 25.\(\text{\textsc{w}}\text{xg8}†\\!\\!\) White wins.

24...\(\text{\textsc{w}}\text{xh2}†\\!\\!\) might look like a better desperado, but after 25.\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{hx2} \text{\textsc{x}}\text{g4}\\!\\!\) White has time for 26.\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{d7}\\!\) forcing Black into a lost ending after 26...\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e6}\\!\\!\) 27.\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{d8}†\\!\\!\) \(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e8}\\!\\!\) 28.\(\text{\textsc{a}}\text{a8}\\!\\!\) \(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e4}\\!\\!\) 29.\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{d6}, exchanging all the pieces.

25.\(\text{\textsc{a}}\text{xc7} \text{\textsc{e}}\text{e6}\)

25...\(\text{\textsc{x}}\text{g2}†?\\!\\!\) is a very poor intermediate move. After 26.\(\text{\textsc{f}}\text{f1} \text{\textsc{e}}\text{e8}\\!\\!\) 27.\(\text{\textsc{c}}\text{e5}, the bishop is unexpectedly trapped in the middle of the board. The knight's domination of the important squares b7, e4 and f3 is remarkable.

26.\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e3}\\)

So here we are. The transformation has ended and we have an ending where White has an extra pawn and should be able to convert it with normal play. However, Black still has a few active moves remaining before he must yield to the inevitable doom.

In this phase of the game we see why Sutovsky is not a new Tal or Kasparov. An endgame a pawn up like this should be won on almost all accounts, and if this somehow does not happen, it should be because of great resistance and only one mistake.

Unfortunately Sutovsky missed several points in this game, but also, what I consider far more important, missed a number of points in
his annotations in *Chess Informant*, especially regarding the evaluation of the endgame. But we will get to that.

26...\( \text{a}4 \)!

Black needs to stay active, because if nothing happens the game will resemble being down 1–0 to Italy in football.

27.a3 \( \text{f}5 \)!

This basically forces White to allow his pawns to be split. 27...b4 28.axb4 \( \text{a}1 \)† 29.\( \text{a}1 \) \( \text{a}2 \) 30.c3 \( \text{x}b2 \) was probably weaker, as White keeps his pawns on the kingside together.

28.g3

I think this is the strongest move, although 28.\( \text{f}1 \)† was possible. The concern is that after 28...\( \text{f}4 \) 29.\( \text{x}h2 \) 30.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{h}4 \) 31.\( \text{x}a6 \) \( \text{d}4 \) I cannot see a sound way to avoid 32.g3 \( \text{f}4 \) 33.\( \text{g}xf4 \) \( \text{x}f4 \) where Black has succeeded in creating a passed pawn and hangs in there with some drawing chances.

28...\( \text{f}4 \) 29.\( \text{g}xf4 \)

After 29.\( \text{g}2 \), Black plays 29...\( \text{f}3 \) 30.\( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{b}4 \)†, leading to an exchange of pawns and some weak light squares around the white king.

29.\( \text{x}f4 \) 30.\( \text{a}7 \)

So far Sutovsky has played the game perfectly, and he is shortly rewarded with a chance to finish the game with a knockout blow.

30.\( \text{f}6 \)!!

30.\( \text{a}4 \) was objectively better, but after 31.\( \text{g}2 \)-g3 and \( \text{f}2 \)-f4, maybe with 31.c3 first, White should win the game without too many difficulties. The rook is simply too passive on a4 and it is impossible for Black to create counterplay.

Ironically, the technically inferior game continuation may have been the best practical try.

31.\( \text{g}2 \)!

This misses a great chance. Gallagher cleverly protected his pawn with the trick 31.\( \text{a}6 \)?? \( \text{g}6 \)† 32.\( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{g}7 \)!! when White has to give up the exchange in order not to lose a piece.

Sutovsky clearly spotted this, but with the short time control used in the Bled Olympiad he is forgiven for not finding 31.\( \text{a}8 \)†, when after either king move, the pawn can be taken. If the king goes to e7 White can put his king on h1, as ...\( \text{d}5 \)?? will allow \( \text{x}d5 \) with check.

And after 31...\( \text{g}7 \) 32.\( \text{a}6 \) \( \text{g}6 \)† 33.\( \text{g}2 \) there is really no way for Black to get out of the pin on the sixth rank and exploit the fragile position of the knight.

31...\( \text{g}6 \)† 32.\( \text{f}3 \)

The game continues. White is a pawn up with excellent winning chances, however, Black is grateful for being able to activate the rook.

32.\( \text{h}6 \) 33.\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \)† 34.\( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \)† 35.\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \)† 36.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 37.\( \text{b}4 \)

Sutovsky is pleased with this move and I must admit that it looks natural.

37...\( \text{c}8 \) 38.\( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{d}8 \)

Another way to provide resistance was 38...\( \text{x}h4 \) 39.\( \text{a}6 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 40.\( \text{b}6 \) \( \text{h}5 \). There are fewer pawns on the board than before, and the h-pawn might prove to be an asset.
40.\textit{\textbf{xf4?!}}

Surovsky is very pleased with this active solution to his problems, but I fear that this comes from a mindset that is totally focussed on dynamics.

I was discussing his playing style with a well-known chess author who characterised him as an artist, not a ‘player’, which is maybe a slightly unfair portrayal of the former European Champion, but at the same time one that contains a grain of truth.

40.\textit{\textbf{h2}} was the best move, but White will still have to play well to win after 40...\textit{\textbf{g6}} 41.\textit{\textbf{xa6 xh4\textup{\textdagger}}} 42.\textit{\textbf{g3 \textit{\textbf{h3\textup{\textdagger}}}}} 43.\textit{\textbf{g2}}, when the position is getting simplified quite a bit.

40...\textit{\textbf{xf6\textup{\textdagger}}} 41.\textit{\textbf{e5?!}}

Surovsky is marching forward, relying on the king’s activity to provide him with victory, and it was successful in the game. It would be a bit harsh to criticise such a decision based purely on the evaluation of the play in the game. We all make mistakes, especially when we are playing with an incremental time control. But the problem is that Surovsky did not indicate in his annotations that things were going wrong around here. I fear that he maybe did not sense it.

White could play 41.\textit{\textbf{g3 xg6\textup{\textdagger}}} 42.\textit{\textbf{h2\textup{\textdagger}}}, when possibly the position is still winning.

41...\textit{\textbf{xf2}} 42.\textit{\textbf{xa6}}

After this natural move White manages to regroup the knight to \textit{\textbf{f4}} and destabilise the black position, which has recently been doing better based on the powerful bishop on \textit{\textbf{e6}}.

42...\textit{\textbf{f3\textup{\textdagger}}}!

The correct idea was to activate the king. After 42...\textit{\textbf{c7\textup{\textdagger}}} it is very likely that we will end in a rook or pawn endgame with three pawns against two, but in both cases the position turns out to be drawn with best play. As this is not a book on the endgame, I will not delve into the analysis here, but only say that I feel pretty confident that this position is no longer winning for White.

43.\textit{\textbf{g2\textup{\textdagger}}}!

Surovsky considers the position winning after this move, but I am not entirely convinced that this is so.

43...\textit{\textbf{f5\textup{\textdagger}}} 44.\textit{\textbf{e4 f2\textup{\textdagger}}?!}

I have a strong feeling that 44...\textit{\textbf{h5}} would have offered a better defence.

45.\textit{\textbf{f4 c8}}

45...\textit{\textbf{xc2}} is probably no longer sufficient to hold after 46.\textit{\textbf{xe6\textup{\textdagger}}} \textit{\textbf{fxe6}} 47.\textit{\textbf{e5\textup{\textdagger}}}! White will
aim to keep his two connected pawns on the queenside while also keeping the black king passive. However, this was still the best chance. In the game White won easily.

46.\texttt{Ba7} \texttt{Bxc2?!}  
46...\texttt{Kh2} 47.\texttt{Bxf7} \texttt{Bxh4} 48.\texttt{Bxe5} also looks lost, but not lost by force.

47.\texttt{Bxf7} \texttt{h5} 48.\texttt{Bh7} \texttt{Bg4} 49.\texttt{Bxh5} \texttt{Bc3} 50.\texttt{Bf6} \texttt{Bf3} 51.\texttt{Bd4} \texttt{Bxa3} 52.\texttt{h5} \texttt{Bbe6} 53.\texttt{Bxe5}

1–0

So, despite all, Sutovsky managed to secure the point in the endgame, even though he did not exploit all of his chances to the full.

Another scenario we have to consider is the one where we have an option to either continue the attack or to go into a favourable ending. There is a tendency for us to follow the evaluations of Fritz and think that going for the ending when there was a lovely mating line is somehow faulty. It might be so from an aesthetic viewpoint, but from a competitive one, the question is one of risk. When you have a winning position, you need to find the safest way to securing your win. Even though one particular continuation may be objectively strongest, it does not mean that this is the best winning line for you.

My first chess trainer Henrik Mørrensen was of the opinion that you only had a winning position if you knew how to win it. If it required Karpov-like technique, the position was winning for Karpov, but only advantageous for me.

Technically this is probably a bit dubious, but practically it does make a lot of sense. I can get quite depressed by thinking about the amount of times I have seen friends complain about having had a winning position, but then missed something Fritz found, but they would never ever find. Why shred your own self-confidence just because there are machines that can play certain positions faultlessly? I would instead recommend reserving your self-criticism to the moments when you actually know better, and leave the ‘shoulds’ at the door...

I will not show any in-depth examples here, as I think the principle should be quite easy to understand. I will briefly mention that one excellent example of this theme can be found in the game Conquest – Arkell on page 155 in Chapter 2. In that game Conquest built up a devastating attack and could have forced mate in a few moves, but rather than risk anything he found a way to obtain an easily winning endgame, which he duly converted to become British Champion. It may not have been the flashiest finish, but it was a sure-fire way of getting the job done.

Greek gift exercises

As an end to this chapter I want to offer you 24 exercises, which all have one thing in common, a relationship with the following position:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw (4,4) circle (0.5);\node (k) at (4,4) {$\text{White}$};
\draw (2,2) circle (0.5);\node (b) at (2,2) {$\text{Black}$};
\draw (5,5) circle (0.5);\node (f) at (5,5) {f};
\draw (7,7) circle (0.5);\node (g) at (7,7) {g};
\draw (6,6) circle (0.5);\node (h) at (6,6) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

In 22 of them White is winning, while in two Black is able to defend (so \textbf{White to win}, \textbf{Black to draw}). These are marked with Black to play. The positions are sequenced in order of escalating difficulty, from the simple to the reasonable into the complicated calculation exercises. I would recommend that you do not beat yourself up if you give up on any of the exercises after trying to work them out for ten minutes, but to headbutt a shovel if you get one wrong after using \textit{less} than ten minutes.
1. Mchedlishvili - Amna Mohammad

Sharjah 2003

12. \( \text{hxh7} \) \( \text{gxh7} \) 13. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{g8} \)

The only real difference from Ovsejevitsch - Koefi'ner on page 26 is the option of playing 13...\( \text{g6} \), but here White wins immediately with 14.\( \text{d3} \) (14.\( \text{d3} \) and 14.\( \text{h4} \) also win, but in more subtle ways and with more effort. We don't like effort!) 14...\( f6 \) 15.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 16.\( \text{xe6} \) mate.

14.\( \text{h5} \) \( \text{e8} \)

14...\( \text{g5} \) is the only move to avoid immediate mate, but not a real defence of course.

15.\( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{h8} \) 16.\( \text{h5} \) \( \text{g8} \) 17.\( \text{h7} \) \( \text{f8} \) 18.\( \text{h8} \) \( \text{e7} \) 19.\( \text{xe6} \) mate.

1-0

2. Ovidiu - A. Hoffman

Dos Hermanas (Internet Blitz) 2003

We enter a few moves after the Greek gift sacrifice to look at an important little idea.

21.\( \text{b4!} \)

This nice little move keeps the king trapped on the kingside. 21.\( \text{h7? f8} \) 22.\( \text{b4? e8} \) would allow the black king to escape, when he would be winning.

21...\( \text{g3??} \)

Was this Hoffman's way of demonstrating his sense of humour? It was only an internet blitz game after all... 21...\( \text{h6} \) 22.\( \text{e8} \) is no better.

22.\( \text{h7} \) mate.

1-0

3. Tseitlin - Dizdarevic

Belgrade 1999

Again we enter a few moves after the queen has made it to h7, just to see another potential follow-up.

36.\( \text{xe6?? fxe6} \) 37.\( \text{g7?? e8} \) gives no advantage. The problem is that the rook cannot join in. The game should probably end with perpetual check.

36...\( \text{g7} \) 37.\( \text{xe6??} \)

White wins on material.

1-0

4. Ivanovic - Radulski

Pancevo 2003

The knight on h5 is a bit loose. White exploits this with a temporary sacrifice.

16.\( \text{f7?? xf7} \) 17.\( \text{h5?? g8} \)

Black cannot avoid mate without losing material.

18.\( \text{h7?? f8} \) 19.\( \text{xf7} \)

White wins on points.

19...\( \text{xf7} \) 20.\( \text{h6?? g8} \) 21.\( \text{g7?? xg7} \) 22.\( \text{g7?? xg7} \) 23.f4 \( \text{f6} \) 24.\( \text{e3} \)

1-0

5. Oleksienko - Chatalbashev

Calvi 2005

25.\( \text{f6??} \)

White opens up for the queen.
25...\textit{exf6} 26.\textit{\texttt{W}}xg6 \textit{\texttt{E}}d6
26...\textit{fxg5} 27.\textit{\texttt{E}}f7 is an important point.
26...\textit{\texttt{E}}e7 is also quite bad. After 27.\textit{\texttt{E}}xf6
Black is mated.

27.\textit{\texttt{E}}f7+ \textit{\texttt{E}}h8 28.\textit{\texttt{W}}xh5+ \textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}g8 29.\textit{\texttt{W}}h7+ \textit{\texttt{E}}f8
30.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}b4
There are many ways the bishop can enter the attack, all of which end with Black's resignation.

30...\textit{\texttt{W}}d8 31.h5
1-0

6
\textit{Campos Moreno - Garbisu de Goni}

Aviles 1992

14.\textit{\texttt{E}}xh7†!
The first move is not too hard, but there is an important point later, which you have to find in order to justify the sacrifice.

14...\textit{\texttt{W}}xh7 15.\textit{\texttt{W}}h4† \textit{\texttt{E}}g8 16.\textit{\texttt{W}}g5 \textit{\texttt{E}}e8
17.\textit{\texttt{E}}h7† \textit{\texttt{E}}f8 18.\textit{\texttt{W}}h8† \textit{\texttt{E}}e7 19.\textit{\texttt{W}}xg7 \textit{\texttt{E}}f8
This is the move that seems to resemble a defence, but actually it is losing rather quickly to the main point of this version of the Greek gift.

19...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}d8 is a bit more tenacious, but White has several tempting continuations. I like the look of 20.\textit{\texttt{E}}xf7† \textit{\texttt{E}}c7 21.\textit{\texttt{G}}d6† \textit{\texttt{G}}d7 22.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{W}}}xe8† \textit{\texttt{W}}xe8 23.\textit{\texttt{E}}d1 \textit{\texttt{E}}c8 24.\textit{\texttt{E}}ac1 as it brings all the pieces into play, as well as leaving White with extra material. Now a move like 24...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}d8 would lose immediately to 25.h4!, when the h-pawn is too strong.

19...\textit{\texttt{E}}d5 allows White to continue his attack with the most logical moves: 20.\textit{\texttt{W}}xf7† \textit{\texttt{G}}d8 21.\textit{\texttt{E}}d1 The threat is \textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}xe6†. 21...\textit{\texttt{G}}d7 22.\textit{\texttt{E}}ac1 White is fully mobilised and Black is unable to finish his development. The win is not far away.
For example, 22...\textit{\texttt{E}}b6 can be met with 23.\textit{\texttt{W}}xd5! \textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}xd5 24.e6 \textit{\texttt{E}}e7 25.\textit{\texttt{G}}g8† \textit{\texttt{E}}e8
26.e7† \textit{\texttt{E}}xe7 27.\textit{\texttt{G}}g7† \textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}d8 28.\textit{\texttt{E}}f7† \textit{\texttt{E}}e7
29.\textit{\texttt{E}}e1† \textit{\texttt{E}}e6 30.\textit{\texttt{G}}g5† and so on.

20.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}xe6!
This was the important moment we were heading for. I guess it is not so fantastic once we are up close and personal, but from afar it is not so easy to see.

20...\textit{\texttt{E}}d7 21.\textit{\texttt{E}}xf8 \textit{\texttt{E}}f8
21...\textit{\texttt{E}}f8 22.\textit{\texttt{G}}g5† \textit{\texttt{E}}e8 23.\textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}e1 gives White a winning position as well.

22.\textit{\texttt{E}}fd1 \textit{\texttt{E}}d8 23.\textit{\texttt{W}}f6† \textit{\texttt{E}}e8 24.\textit{\texttt{W}}xd8†
The endgame should win trivially.

24...\textit{\texttt{W}}xd8 25.\textit{\texttt{W}}xd8† \textit{\texttt{E}}xd8 26.f4 \textit{\texttt{E}}g6
27.g3 \textit{\texttt{G}}d7 28.\textit{\texttt{E}}f2 \textit{\texttt{E}}e7 29.\textit{\texttt{E}}c1 \textit{\texttt{G}}e6 30.h4 \textit{\texttt{G}}e6 31.h5 \textit{\texttt{E}}f8 32.g4 \textit{\texttt{E}}h7 33.\textit{\texttt{E}}e1 \textit{\texttt{G}}d5
34.a3 \textit{\texttt{G}}e7 35.\textit{\texttt{G}}g3
1-0

7
\textit{Smyslov - Timman}

Moscow (blitz) 1993

White did not attack beautifully, but a big blunder by his opponent brought him back in business.

24.\textit{\texttt{E}}xf6!
Eliminating the defender.

24...\textit{\texttt{E}}xf6 25.\textit{\texttt{W}}xh7† \textit{\texttt{E}}f8 26.\textit{\texttt{E}}e1!
The point - not too hard I guess.

26...\textit{\texttt{G}}e6 27.\textit{\texttt{E}}xe6!
Black resigned. 27...\textit{\texttt{\texttt{G}}}xe6 28.\textit{\texttt{W}}f7 mate.
1-0
8
Komarov – Kallai
France 2005

In this position we shall see the attack on h7 used as a way to win material.

12. Qxd5!

12. Qg5? would not lead to anything after 12... Qh4!.

12... Qxd5 13. Qg5
White wins because of the double attack on h7 and c5 (with Qe4).

13... Qd8 14. Whxh7+ Qh8 15. Qe4 Qe5
16. Qxc5 Qf5 17. Whh8+ Qe7 18. Whh4+ f6
19. Qd2 Qxb2 20. Wh3 Qf8 21.e4 Qdb4
22. exf5 1–0

9
Kramnik – Short
Dortmund 1995

22. Qxe6! Qxe6 23. Whg6
Black is lost. There is no adequate defence against Whh7+ and Qf4-g6.

23... Qxe5 24. Whh7+ Qf8 25. Qf4
1–0

10
Kengis – Efimov
Jyvaskyla 1991

16. Qg5!
16.e6? is the trap. Black escapes with 16... g6!! and although his position is unpleasant, it is not clearly worse.

16... Qf5
The only move that offers resistance. 16... h6 also allows White to demonstrate his idea with 17.e6!.

17.e6!

Now the double attack is real.

17... Qg6! 18. Wf4!
The dreadful 18.exf7?? would even lose after 18... Whxf7!.

18... Qd6 19. Qxd6 Whxd6 20. exf7+ Whf7
21. Whh7+ Qf8 22. Qc2
White has won a pawn and wrapped up the game easily.

22... Wh8 23. Whh3 Whf4 24. Wha3+ Qe7 25. Qf3
Whf6 26. Qae1 Qe6 27. Wh4 Whf5 28. Qxf3 Whf6
29. Whf5 Whxf5 30. Qxf5 Qd5 31. Qe1 Qe8
32. h4 Whf7 33. Qxe7 Qxe7 34. Qxa7 Qd5
35. Whb8+ Qe8 36. Qxb7 Qe1+ 37. Wh2 Qc2
38. Wh4 1–0

11
Soloviov – Lugovoi
St Petersburg 2005

19. Whh6
This initial sacrifice is not too difficult to find, but it is the follow-up that might be a little puzzling.

19... Whf6 20. Whh7+ Qf8 21. Wh5
The approach of the bishop justifies the attack.

21... Qd8
21... Qd7!? was maybe a better defence, although White is still on top after 22. Whf7 Whxf7 23. Whxf7 Qe8? 24. Whf1 Qf6 25. Qh6
Whxh6 26. Qxh6+ Qe8 27. Whh8+ Whf7 28.e5

22. Whf7!
The point behind the combination. Black has to give up his rook and White will be able to dominate the f-file.
22...e5
22...exf7 23.exf7 dxf7 24.Qxf1+ Qe8
25.Qxg7 Qd7 is clearly not a defense. The most elegant winning line goes: 26.Qg4+ Qe8 27.Qg8+ Qd7 28.Qf8 Qe8 29.Qh5! Qa5 30.Qg6! and Black is soon to be mated.

23.dxe6 Qxf7 24.Qxf7 Qd4+ 25.Qh1 Qf6
26.Qd5
This is good enough to seal the deal, but 26.e5! was even stronger: 26...dxe5 27.Qe4 Qg7 28.e7! 30...e8 31.Qg6 Qf8 was maybe a bit more tenacious, but the extra pawn should decide.

23.dxe6 Qxf7 24.Qxf7 Qd4+ 25.Qh1 Qf6
26.Qd5
This is good enough to seal the deal, but 26.e5! was even stronger: 26...dxe5 27.Qe4 Qg7 28.e7!

26...Qxd5 27.exd5 Qe7 28.Qh6+ Qd8
29.Qf5 Qe5 30.Qf1 Qxe6 31.dxe6 Qxe6 32.Qd4 Qe7 33.Qe6+ Qd7 34.Qf7 Qe8
35.Qf8+ 1-0

12
Sherbakov – A. Sokolov

Novgorod 1997

There are times when landing on h7 is only the beginning of the attack. It is important to remember to include some of the other pieces in the action, as can be seen from this example.

23.Wh4! f5g5 24.Qxg5 Qf7 25.Qe3!
It is too early to give the check on h7. First the rook is heading for B. White did not play 25.Qe4 because of 25...Qd5 I am sure. It is quite surprising that White retains an advantage with 26.Qe3!.

25...Qxd4 26.Qh7+ Qf8 27.Wh8+ Qg8
28.Qf3+ Qe8 29.Qxg8+ Qd7 30.Qf7
White wins as Black cannot defend the g6-pawn.

30...Qd5

31.Qxg6 Qf4 32.Qxf4!
32.Qb3! b5 33.Qe4 was stronger. The black king remains exposed.

32...Qxf4 33.Qd1+ Qc7 34.Qf7 Qxf7 35.Qxf7 Qf8 36.Qg5 Qf6 37.Qf3 Qg5!!
38.Qf1!!
38.g4! Qh3+ 39.Qg2 Qf8 40.Qg3 would have increased White’s advantage.

38...g4 39.Qh4 Qxe5 40.Qd4 Qh5?
This just loses. 40...Qh5 41.Qxg4 Qb5 42.b4 a5 would still have offered counter chances.

41.Qxf4 Qxb4 42.h3! Qh5 43.Qxg4 Qb5 44.Qb4 Qc5 45.g4 b5 46.Qd4 Qc1+ 47.Qg2
c5 48.Qd2 b4 49.g5 Qxa3 50.Qxa3 Qc6 51.Qg6 Qb1 52.h4
1-0

13
Stefansson – Bj. Thorfinnsson

Icelandic Championship, Reykjavik 2008

The position looks dire for Black and in the game he found nothing, but this does not mean that nothing can be found.

18...Qe8?
After this White sails straight through. The only move was 18...Qxf2?! , where after 19.Qh1!! g6 Black is a pawn up for little. If White takes the bishop, be it with the rook or the king, Black will quickly be able to play ...Qd4+ to exchange the queens and ensure himself a pleasant endgame, where the e5-pawn is a bit lonely.

19.Qh7+ Qf8 20.Qh8+ Qe7 21.Qxg7 Qxe5
21...Qf8 22.Qh7 is no picnic either.
Chapter 1 - Understanding Mating Attacks

15

14. \( \text{Qc7}!! \text{Da6} \)

Pure resignation.

14...\( \text{Exc7} \) 15.\( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{hxg5} \) 16.\( \text{hxg5}! \) is the initial point of the combination.

14...\( \text{hxg5} \) offered the most resistance, but \( \text{White} \) has a decisive attack: 15.\( \text{hxg5} \) (15.\( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{gxf6} \) is not clear) 15...\( \text{De4} \) 16.\( \text{Dxe8} \) \( \text{Dxe8} \) 17.\( \text{Qe2} \) The queen is transferred to h5 where it will decide the game. The bishop will come to d3 later, for example after 17...d5 18.\( \text{Dh5} \) \( \text{Df8} \) 19.\( \text{Qd3} \) when \( \text{White} \) is winning. \( \text{Black} \) cannot prevent \( \text{Qxe4} \) and \( \text{Qf6} \) in any sensible way: 19...\( \text{e5} \) 20.\( \text{Df3} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) 21.\( \text{Dxe4} \) \( \text{dxc4} \) 22.\( \text{Df5} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 23.\( \text{Dh8}! \) and \( \text{Black} \) is lost.

15.\( \text{Dxe8} \) \( \text{Dxe8} \) 16.\( \text{Dh7} \) \( \text{Df8} \) 17.\( \text{Dh8} \) \( \text{D_e7} \) 18.\( \text{Qh7}! \)

A nice little finesse to finish the game.

18...\( \text{Dd6} \) 19.\( \text{Dxg7} \)

1-0

16

Calderon Fernandez - Ronco

Berazategui 2008

14. \( \text{Dg5}! \)

The bishop is not sacrificed on h7 in this version, but on e2. \( \text{White} \) is exploiting the fact that the bishop on g4 is exposed.

20...\( \text{Dxe2} \)

20...\( \text{Dc4} \) could be tried to confuse matters, but after 21.\( \text{Dxg4} \) \( \text{Dxg5} \) 22.\( \text{Dxc8} \) \( \text{White} \) has a winning position.

21.\( \text{Dxf6} \) \( \text{Dxf6} \)
Or 21...d3 22.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{d}3! and White ends with an extra piece.

22.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{h}7\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf d}}8 23.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf d}}7!}

The point. The black king is cut off on the eighth rank and White is threatening \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf h}8 mate.

23...\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}8 24.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{a}7 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}7}

There is nothing better, although this is not sufficient by any standards either.

25.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{e}7\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}7 26.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}1 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf d}}3 27.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{g}7 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf g}}6 28.e4 c3 29.e5 c2 30.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}6\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}8 31.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}7 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{f}7 32.e6 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf c}}7 33.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf h}}6\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}7 34.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{f}7\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf d}}7 35.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}6\uparrow 1-0

17
Mamedyarov - Heberla

Istanbul 2005

There are two big weaknesses in the position: the e6-square and the h7-square. The reason why it is exactly these squares that are weak is that the knight on e4 can go to d6, g5 and f6, two of which allow it to attack h7, and one of them also e6, and at the same time the queen on h3 is shooting in both directions. You could also say that the light squares in general are weak, but g6 seems to be firmly under Black's control, and f7 is under reasonable care as well.

The way to strike at the weaknesses, e6 and h7, is to use a technique I included already in Volume One, to attack the strongest point in the black position: g6.

27.g6!!

This is of course also a simple clearance sacrifice. There are many ways to describe good moves...

27...\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{g}6

The only move. 27...h6 loses a piece to 28.b3\uparrow followed by \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}6\uparrow.

28.b3 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}7 29.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf g}}5

The point behind the sacrifice. White gets to h7.

29...\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}6 30.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{h}7\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}8 31.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}4 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}6

Black is also lost after 31...\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}7 32.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf d}}3! \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}4 33.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf h}}4 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf d}}7 (or 33...\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf a}}8 34.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{d}6 winning)
34.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}3 There is no good defence against g2-g3.

32.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf d}}3 d5
32...\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}4 33.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}3 does not solve any problems.

33.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}3\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}8 34.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf g}}5 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}7 35.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}5
35.\\textit{\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}7 was also sufficient to win, but Mamedyarov decides to rely on the initiative.

35...\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}6 36.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf g}}8\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf d}}7 37.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{d}5\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf c}}7 38.\\textit{\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}3 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf d}}8 39.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{f}6 gxf6 40.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf e}}4 f5 41.\\textit{\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf c}}3\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf b}}8 42.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf c}}6 1-0

18
Short - Velikov

Solingen 1987

23.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{h}6\uparrow!

White of course has a winning attack after 23.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf b}}3, but as this is an exercise I relied on your sense of adventure.

23...\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{c}4 24.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{g}7\uparrow!

This is a very beautiful way to finish the game, but White was also winning after 24.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf h}}5\uparrow g6 with either the cautious 25.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf h}}6 or the more brutal 25.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{g}6\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{g}6 26.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{g}6\uparrow \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf g}}7 27.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf g}}1 \textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf f}}7 28.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf g}}5, winning.

24...\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf x}}\text{g}7 25.\\textit{\textup{\textipa{\bf g}}5!
Chapter 1 - Understanding Mating Attacks

25...g4? would be a grave mistake. Black has several good moves, such as 25...g7 (probably best) and 25...g4?!; which keep the game very much alive.

25...e8 26...g1!

With decisive threats.

26...d4

26...g4 is no longer valuable, as there is no back rank mate. White wins after 27.xg4 fxg4 28...e4.

27.h7† f8 28...e6† xxe6

28...f7 lasts the longest. Amusingly White only mates directly with 29.d8†! xxd8 30.xg7† e6 31.xf6† d7 32.d6 mate.

29.d6†

Black is mated on the very next move.

1–0

19

Sturua - Housein

Komotini 1993

Once again White wins by getting his queen to h7 in a sequence that is probably not too difficult. However, evaluating the position as overwhelming at the very end of the line will cause some readers a bit of trouble, which is why I have graded the exercise in the way I have.

20...xd6!...xd6 21...g5 g6

21...f6 is not a better defence. After 22.exh7† f8 White has time to stop and reassess the situation. After 23.c3 Black cannot keep his bits together. The following is not necessarily the most overwhelming winning line, but it is very simple: 23...d4 24...e6†...e6 25.xg7† xg7 26.h8† and White is two pawns up.

22.h4 xd8?! This is basically resignation. Black had to find 22...h5 without fearing the sacrifice 23.xh5, as he would have 23...d4! 24.g4 h8! as a legitimate defence (but not 24...g7? 25.c3). After 25.xh8† xh8 White can either play 26.c3† and take the pawn on e6 with check, having two bishops and two pawns against rook and knight, or play 26...xe6 fx6 27...xe6, when Black is forced to play 27...f7 (27...f8?! 28.ad1 g8 29.ad7 looks way too dangerous) 28.ad1 g8.

After the further 29.c3 White’s advantage is overwhelming, but the knot has not yet been tied. White will play 30.d6 and the win should be within reach.

23...xd7† f8 24.c3 d4 25...e6† xe6

1–0

20

Teske - Galdunts

Baden-Baden 2002

23...xd1†?

23...c3†! is the only move. After 24.bxc3...xd1† 25.c2 f5†! (25...fx2† 26.yd1 d8† also draws, as do a few other moves.) 26.xd1 b1† with perpetual check.

24.xa2...d5

24...f5 looks like a better defence, but after 25.exf7† f8 White has 26...h7† e7 27.f8=†! This is a powerful clearance sacrifice. After 27...xf8 28.xg7† e8 29.c3 e4 30.e2! White has a winning attack with ideas such as...xd1, g5 and h5†.

25.exf7† xf7 26...h7† f8 27...h8† e7 27...g8 fails to 28...h7†.

28.xa8†!
The beginning of the time trouble chaos we have in front of us. 28.\textit{Be}4\dagger was more accurate.

\textbf{28...c3\dagger 29.\textit{B}xf7 \textit{We}6\dagger 30.b3?}

This is a horrible mistake. Instead after 30.\textit{Cc}4 White has a winning attack. The main line (not that we should require precise variations to assure us about the potency of the attack) goes as follows: 30...\textit{Exg}4 31.\textit{Wa}7\dagger \textit{F}f6 32.\textit{Wb}6\dagger \textit{We}7 33.\textit{Wxc}5\dagger \textit{F}f6 34.\textit{We}5\dagger \textit{G}g6 35.\textit{Wxc}3 and White is winning on all accounts.

\textbf{30...\textit{Exg}4 31.\textit{Cc}4 \textit{Fd}7}

31...\textit{Wf}5! was stronger. After 32.\textit{Wb}7\dagger \textit{F}d7 33.\textit{Wh}1 (33.\textit{Wc}6 \textit{F}d2\dagger 34.\textit{Wa}3 \textit{Cc}2) 33...a4 Black has a winning attack, while the white queen has been forced into an embarrassing position.

\textbf{32.\textit{Wf}4\dagger \textit{Ff}8 33.\textit{De}5?}

It is hard to believe in these moves, unless you know Henrik that is...

33...\textit{Wd}4?

The only move was not bad: 33...\textit{Dd}2\dagger 34.\textit{Wa}3 \textit{Ea}1 mate.

\textbf{34.\textit{Dg}6 mate.}

1–0

21

\textbf{Sermek – Dive}

\textit{Auckland 2000}

23.\textit{Dxg}6!! \textit{d}5

Black accepts the loss of a pawn and indirectly the game, but accepting the offer held little hope.

After 23...\textit{fxg}6 24.\textit{Exg}6 it is hard to find a move for Black.

24...\textit{d}5

24...\textit{Wh}8 looks like a possible defence, but White can decide the game to his advantage in many different ways. My favourite is 25.\textit{Ec}6 \textit{Dbd}7 26.\textit{We}4\dagger, when it is suddenly impossible to defend the f7-square.

Here White has a slow, but unstoppable winning plan: he will simply walk the h-pawn all the way to h7.

25.h4!

25.c5 can be played first, but why bother?

25...\textit{Dxc}4 26.h5 \textit{Dxd}2

After 26...\textit{Dd}6 White has to take a moment to prevent ...\textit{Wf}5 with 27.\textit{Ec}6, when it is time to resign.

27.h6

Black has to part with his queen to continue the game.

24.c5 \textit{Dc}4 25.\textit{De}5 \textit{Dxe}5 26.\textit{Dxe}5 \textit{Dd}4 27.\textit{Dxe}4 \textit{Dxe}4 28.\textit{Dxe}4 \textit{g}6 29.\textit{Wh}4 \textit{Dg}7 30.e6 \textit{Ff}6 31.\textit{Wh}7\dagger

1–0

22

\textbf{Gulko – Popovic}

\textit{Clichy 1986}

With the bishop on f8 and with the knight on f3 and bishop on h3, it is reasonable to look for an attack on the light squares. But with the pawn in the way on g5 this is not so easy to arrange... or is it?

25.g6!! \textit{f}6

Sidestepping the main line, but immediate mate is only avoided at great cost to the black king's safety. The point behind Gulko's brilliant sacrifice is 25...\textit{hxg}6 26.\textit{Dg}5 \textit{Dd}7 27.\textit{Wh}4 \textit{Df}6 28.\textit{Dg}4!! Only in this way! Black has no answer to 29.\textit{Ec}5, after which the control of the h7-square goes.

26.\textit{gxh}7\dagger \textit{Dxh}7
26...\textit{\&}h8 brings no relief. White gets a strong attack after 27.\textit{\&}h4!, with possible lines such as 27...\textit{\&}xh7 28.\textit{\&}g6+ \textit{\&}g8 29.\textit{\&}f5! when the white attack is crashing through.

27.\textit{\&}e4

This is strong enough to win the game, but I am a sucker for 27.\textit{\&}xe6! \textit{\&}xe6 28.\textit{\&}f5+ \textit{\&}g8 29.\textit{\&}h3 with devastation on the light squares.

27...\textit{\&}d7 28.\textit{\&}eg5+ \textit{\&}xg5 29.\textit{\&}xg5+ \textit{\&}g8 30.\textit{\&}h4 g6 31.\textit{\&}e5 \textit{\&}g7 32.\textit{\&}xe6+ \textit{\&}xe6 33.\textit{\&}h7+ 1-0

23

Parker - Gaujens

e-mail 2001

Black was probably thinking that everything was okay and that White would not do anything bad to his king. He was partly right, but the trouble his queen is in is quite another matter!

21.\textit{\&}h6+ \textit{\&}e7

21...\textit{\&}g8 would allow White to organise mate with 22.\textit{\&}h7!.

22.\textit{\&}h4!

Black resigned. Suddenly it is clear that after the forced removal of the king, for example with 22...\textit{\&}f8, White will play 23.\textit{\&}c1 and the queen is trapped: 23...\textit{\&}e4 24.\textit{\&}xc4 dxe4 25.\textit{\&}d4 1-0

24

Kiriakov - Tiviakov

Port Erin 1999

This position is maybe not so difficult in itself, but it takes a lot of brainpower to calculate it all the way to the end. I am not sure if this is what Kiriakov did, or if he just saw enough to decide that it was worth the risk.

14.\textit{\&}d5!! exd5 15.\textit{\&}xf6 \textit{\&}xf6 16.\textit{\&}xh7+ \textit{\&}f8 17.cxd5

With the idea of playing 18.d6. Black has only one reasonable reply.

17...d6

17...\textit{\&}e5!? 18.f4 \textit{\&}d6 is no better. The bishop is sadly missed on the kingside and White wins after 19.\textit{\&}h5 g6 20.\textit{\&}h7 with mate on f7.

18.\textit{\&}h5!

After a normal move such as 18.f4!? White would certainly have a very strong attack as justification for the investment, but the move played in the game is simply stronger.

18...\textit{\&}xg5 19.\textit{\&}h8+ \textit{\&}e7 20.\textit{\&}xg7 \textit{\&}f8

Black has no choice but to return the bishop.

21.\textit{\&}xg5+ \textit{\&}e8 22.\textit{\&}c1?

This does not throw all of the advantage away, but it is by no means as clear-cut as the position after 22.\textit{\&}d4!. The only defence imaginable for Black leads to a rather solemn position after the following forced sequence: 22...\textit{\&}c7 23.\textit{\&}f5 \textit{\&}d7 24.\textit{\&}e4 \textit{\&}e5 25.\textit{\&}f4 \textit{\&}xd5 26.\textit{\&}xe5 (26.\textit{\&}d4?! \textit{\&}f3+! with complications) 26...\textit{\&}xe4 27.\textit{\&}xe4 \textit{\&}c8 28.e6

In the final position Black still has an exchange for the three pawns, but this is more or less the only positive thing that can be said about the black position. White is dominating him completely and the difference between the safety of the respective kings is exceptional.

22...\textit{\&}d8 23.\textit{\&}f5

23.\textit{\&}h6 was probably stronger.

23...\textit{\&}e7?
After this Black is wrapped up and put in the oven like a turkey at Christmas. The only chance was to bring the knight into the game immediately with 23...\texttt{Qd7}. Here the only thing I have managed to find for White is 24.\texttt{exe6}+ \texttt{exe7} 25.\texttt{c7}, but Black is not in deep trouble anymore: 25...\texttt{exe6} 26.dxe6 \texttt{Qc5} If White chooses to play 27.b4 there is 27...\texttt{d8}!, which I suspect is the move Tiviakov missed. After 28.e7+ \texttt{xc7} 29.exf8=\texttt{xf8} 30.bxc5 dxc5 White is a pawn up, but it is much easier to advance the black pawns, so in the final position I doubt that White is winning.

24.\texttt{xc4}!
Kiriakov does not miss such a chance twice.

24...\texttt{Qd7} 25.\texttt{c7}!
Now even this extra option exists.

25...\texttt{c8} 26.\texttt{fc1} \texttt{d8} 27.\texttt{g4}
The threat is 28.\texttt{c2}.

27...\texttt{e8} 28.\texttt{c6} \texttt{g8} 29.h3 \texttt{b5} 30.\texttt{f4}
\texttt{b8} 31.\texttt{xd7} \texttt{xd7} 32.\texttt{f6}+ \texttt{e8} 33.\texttt{xd6}
\texttt{d8} 34.\texttt{xd7}
1–0
It is at moments like this that the attacking player meets his destiny. When there is no turning back, the path leading further into the mess is often the one that must be followed.
On this page you find 26 diagrams with critical moments from the coming chapter. I recommend that you take up to 10 minutes to think about each of them. The solutions are found on the following pages in the annotations to the games.

Positions with a circled P can be played against a computer.

When I was young... (see page 69)

Everything is ready for the kill (see page 80)

Initiate the attack (see page 63)

A sudden chance (see page 72)

Get the party started! (see page 83)

A surprising idea (see page 67)

Refined attacking technique (see page 75)

A deep problem (see page 88)
A World Champion attack
(see page 92-93)

Where to strike?
(see page 113)

A brilliant opportunity
(see page 117)

How to continue
(see page 119)

Mate is near
(see page 122)

Improve on Kasparov
(see page 126)

Black to win
(see page 128)

A nice winning move
(see page 138)

White wins in style
(see page 143)
White is ready, are you?
(see page 149)

Find the winning sequence
(see page 159)

Attack and defence in one
(see page 172)

Accurate attack!
(see page 153)

Find the deep winning move
(see page 167)

Typical attacking chaos
(see page 176)

Only nine moves in...
(see page 157)

Decision time
(see page 168)

Win extremely elegantly
(see page 177)
Covered in this chapter

• The Assault Ratio
• Deflection
• Overloading
• Tempo-gainers
• Piece Sacrifices for time
• Transition squares
• Lines of Communication
• Vacating Squares
• Outposts
• Launching
• The pin
• Improving the Circumstances
• Prophylaxis
• The f5/f4-squares

In this chapter we will talk about various techniques and situations that are often seen. While in the last chapter we talked a lot about the act of mating itself, we will in this chapter discuss the last piece of action that precedes the mating combination. As in the previous chapter, it shall be my objective to keep it simple, but not be afraid of complexity.

The first item on our list is, not surprisingly, the most basic.

The Assault Ratio

Probably the most basic prerequisite for a successful attack is a superiority at the scene of the crime. If the police do not show up in greater numbers than the villains, there will be little chance of making an arrest. The Dutch like to talk about twenty points to the king, leading to mate. This is of course a simplification of what is going on, but not a stupid one.

When we are attacking, we are looking for superiority on, taken to an extreme, only one square; the one on which we shall deliver the mate. Most often we need to be in charge of more than one square in order to make it that far, and in most cases, of a larger part of the board. This could be the centre, the kingside or the queenside, but also a smaller territory. The important part is that the enemy king is there!

So, in order to attack, it is a top priority for us to seek exactly such a superiority.

When I talk about the assault ratio, I am talking about the difference between the number of pieces involved in the attack and the number of pieces involved in the defence. This simple idea is closely related to the basic rule of the attack as given in Volume One, always bring as many pieces into the attack as possible.

Our first game in this chapter provides an excellent illustration of this theme.

Surya Shekhar Ganguly – A. Samhouri

Cebu City (Asian Ch.) 2007

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 dxe4 4.d3 c6 5.dxe5 d5 6.c3 b4

7.0-0!

This pawn sacrifice looks very dangerous. The problem for Black is that he cannot accept it without falling dangerously behind in development, and without accepting it, he will find his centre under mounting pressure.
7...\texttt{\textbackslash xc3} 8.bxc3 \texttt{\textbackslash xc3}

This is probably a questionable decision, but otherwise White will play 9.c4 and enjoy the two bishops and a slight lead in development, as well as real pressure on the black centre.

9.\texttt{\textbackslash we1 d4}

9...\texttt{\textbackslash e4} is probably best met by regaining the pawn, even if it is very appealing to play 10.\texttt{\textbackslash a3} or 10.\texttt{\textbackslash b1}!, making it harder for Black to develop his queenside bishop.

10.\texttt{\textbackslash d2} \texttt{\textbackslash b4} 11.\texttt{\textbackslash e4}!?

11.\texttt{\textbackslash xc3} with a slight edge was maybe the objectively best way to continue, but it is hard to offer anything but praise towards an inspired exchange sacrifice that goes on to win the game only eight moves later.

11...\texttt{\textbackslash bxa2}?

Already this is the decisive mistake!

Correct was 11...\texttt{\textbackslash xe4} 12.\texttt{\textbackslash xe4} \texttt{\textbackslash e6}, when Black should be ready to give back the pawn after 13.c3

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
\end{center}

13...\texttt{\textbackslash e6}!, followed by 14...\texttt{\textbackslash d5}, and Black is verging on equalising.

However, he should not fall for the trap and take on c3 with 13...\texttt{\textbackslash dxc3}, when White does not recapture. His previous play has shown that he obviously does not care for material.

Surely Ganguly would have played: 14.\texttt{\textbackslash g5} \texttt{\textbackslash d7} 15.\texttt{\textbackslash ad1} \texttt{\textbackslash e6} 16.\texttt{\textbackslash xc6}! winning.

12.\texttt{\textbackslash xxa2}!

This was of course the idea. White now has developed all his pieces, and the only remaining developed black piece is the knight on a2, which in a strange way is occupying a square just as far from the centre as when it started out.

Having said that, there are things to rejoice for with Black as well. He has won the exchange and two pawns, and he has no obvious weaknesses in his position, aside from the king being stuck in the centre. However, with vigilant play Ganguly proved that he had sufficient compensation.

12...\texttt{\textbackslash xxa2} 13.\texttt{\textbackslash g5} \texttt{\textbackslash d7}

If nothing happened over the next move or so, White would not be able to justify his material investment. But he can make things happen, and that makes for all the difference.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
\end{center}

14.e6!

This attacking idea (opening up the lines towards the black king) would have been far less effective if Black still had a strong knight on c3, hitting on the powerful bishop on e4.

14...\texttt{\textbackslash fxe6}!
Not such a strange move to play, but none the less there were two moves that might seem playable/natural at first sight, but would lose rapidly:

14...\(\text{Wxe6?}\) would be awkward after the prosaic, but very effective, capture, 15.\(\text{Qxd4}\).

More complicated is 14...\(\text{d6}\), when White needs to play accurately in order to prove his advantage.

The win comes after 15.\(\text{exf7+}\)\(\text{Qxf7}\) 16.\(\text{d5\#!}\) \(\text{Qe6}\). Taking the bishop loses the queen, but might also offer a bit of resistance.

17.\(\text{Wxe6\#!}\) followed by 18.\(\text{Qe5\#}\) and White has regained some material. And the attack rages on, despite the exchange of queens.

15.\(\text{Qe5}\) \(\text{Wb5}\)

15...\(\text{Wd6}\!) would have offered a bit more resistance, as the queen’s more central location would enable her to exert a greater influence on the game. However, it does not appear that Black can hold the position.

16.\(\text{Qxh7}\) looks promising, but Black has a defence: 16...\(\text{Qxh7}\) 17.\(\text{Wf4}\) \(\text{Qh6}\!). The rook is not worth more than the bishop, as it can find no way to influence the important squares around the black king. For this reason it is happy to bleed for king and country. 18.\(\text{Qxh6}\) \(\text{gxh6}\) 19.\(\text{g6\#}\) \(\text{Qe7}\) and with his heavy material investment, it is not so surprising that White has no more than a perpetual check.

16.\(\text{f4\#!}\), with the idea to bring the queen to h4, is the critical move.

a) 16...\(\text{d3}\!) is a great defensive possibility. With this pawn move he manages to get the knight back into the game, eliminating the poisonous bishop.

The two most obvious lines, 17.\(\text{Qxd3}\) \(\text{Qb4}\) and 17.\(\text{cxd3}\) \(\text{Qc5\#!}\) 18.\(\text{Wh1}\) \(\text{Qc3}\), both appear to be to Black’s advantage.

However, White has a beautiful winning line in 17.\(\text{Qh4\#!}\) when after the principled moves: 17...\(\text{Wd4\#!}\) 18.\(\text{Wh1}\) \(\text{Qxe4}\) 19.\(\text{Wh5}\) \(\text{g6}\) 20.\(\text{Wh6}\) \(\text{Qe2}\) 21.\(\text{g1}\)

Black cannot prevent the white queen from entering on \(\text{g7}\), creating a mating net for the
black king. This is an excellent example of the attack ratio being in White’s favour. Black
is dominating most of the board, but the
e7-square, the focal square, is beyond his
abilities to control.
h) 16...c3 loses to a slower attack: 17.d3 0–0
18.h4 (18.xh7? is significantly poorer
here. The main idea 18...xh7 19.h4 g8
20.e7 at this moment fails to 20...xe5!, and
our most important attacker has gone to
the grave without the possibility of being avenged.)
18...f5 19.e7 d5 20.g4 We could stop
here, but I want to prove that White is indeed
winning. 20...b5 21.gxf5 exf5 (21...b7
22.f3) 22.f3 c4 23.h5 d7 24.h3
h6 25.xe4 xe4 26.f6 e6 27.xd7 xd7 28.xg7 White is clearly winning.
c) 16...0–0 looks dangerous, and it is not
surprising that White can break through the
king’s flimsy defences using brute force. The
winning line is: 17.xh7! xh7 18.h4 g8
19.g6! (there is no reason to go
materialistic now. 19.e7 c3?! gives Black
a few saving chances.) 19...c5 The only move.
(Black can find no salvation after 19...d7
20.h8! f7 21.e5+ or 19...f5 20.g4 f7
21.h5! f6 22.h8+! g8 23.xf6 xf6 24.f7+ xh8 25.f3 and mate is near.)
in long lines after 22.xg7, but it is probably
much simpler this time to cash in with
20.e7†, winning the queen under more
favourable circumstances.

16.f4!
Opening up for the white queen to enter the
attack on h4. The assault ratio is now immense,
and it is not a surprise that Black is busted.
In the game he went down rapidly, with a big
bang, but by this time there are probably no
significant improvements for him.

16...g6
Black is also lost after 16...0–0 17.h4 f5
18.g4, winning the rook, or simply 16...c3
17.d3, when there is no defence against
18.h4, with a winning attack.

17.h4
White is attacking with four pieces, while
none of Black’s pieces are defending effectively.
The result is obvious.

17...0–0 18.xg6!
After this final sacrifice there will be nothing
between the killer queen and her prey.

18...hxg6 19.xg6

20.h8+ f7 21.xe5† e6 now leads to
great complications, all winning for White

1–0
The final position of this game is a clear presentation of the idea I want to bring across. The three white pieces attacking the black king are far more important than the entire black queenside, which incidentally is worth 23 pawns more than White's, in case you are counting.

I know this concept is neither deep nor hard to understand. Chess is actually not that difficult to understand – it is just very hard to play. Think of the difference between looking at a combination for which you already know the solution, and one for which you do not. It is a completely different experience.

When we are talking about the assault ratio overpowering the defence, it does not necessarily mean that the attacking pieces are worth more than the defending ones. In this classic example we see a scenario where the attacking pieces are worth less than the defenders, according to our traditional understanding of the pieces' value, but are still able to carry the day thanks to their superior positioning.

**Gusev – Yuri Averbakh**

Moscow 1951

24...fxe5!!

One of the true masterstrokes of the 20th century. White has already given up the exchange, and now he sacrifices his queen for a mere knight.

24...fxe5 25.f1 c8

A simple waiting move. Black also had another defensive strategy, trying to block the e-pawn with the rook. This also fails: 25...c7 26.d1! (but not 26.c7 f7!, and it looks as though Black might escape) 26...c7 27.b3

If the black queen were able to get to g4, the counterattack would save the day. Alas, this is not possible, so White can win comfortably, either by exchanging rooks, or without.

27...b5 28.d5 a5 29.b3 b4 30.c4 d8

And here White wins with both 31.c5, with similar ideas as in the game, and with 31.f7 e8 32.xe7 xe7, where the queen is the only black piece that can move, and as soon as it does, the e-pawn will race to the finish line.
26.\texttt{xd}1 \texttt{xc}4 27.\texttt{xb}3 \texttt{b}5 28.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{bxc}4 29.\texttt{b}3

White creates a passed pawn and wins slowly, but steadily.

29...\texttt{a}5 30.\texttt{bxc}4 \texttt{a}4 31.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{a}3 32.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{e}7 33.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{g}5 34.\texttt{f}5 \texttt{g}4 35.\texttt{c}5 \texttt{d}8 36.\texttt{c}6 \texttt{e}7

6.e3 is more popular, but I am very sympathetic to the ambition of avoiding the doubled pawn.

6...\texttt{xc}4 7.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{h}6 8.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{c}6 9.e3

This position does not look too dangerous for Black, and should not be. However, his play from here on works out poorly for him. He hopes that he can win a lot of material and at the same time weather the storm on the kingside. At times, this is of course a successful strategy, even in cases such as these where a bishop and rook are out of play.

9...\texttt{xc}3?!?

Black is relying on tactics, but as described, these do not work out well for him. However, this is only based on absolutely excellent play by White.

It seems more natural to develop the \texttt{c}8-bishop first. After 9...\texttt{b}6 10.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{b}7 11.0-0 a draw was agreed in Marin – Andersson, Szirak 1987. I am not entirely sure that Black just equalises, but it would not be completely unfair if he did.

10.\texttt{xc}3 \texttt{g}5 11.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{e}4

Black's primary idea is of course to follow up with \ldots\texttt{a}5\textsubscript{f}, if allowed, but he may also

\begin{center}
\textbf{Nikola Sedlak – Milos Perunovic}
\end{center}

\textit{Vrsac 2008}

1.d4 \texttt{f}6 2.c4 \texttt{e}6 3.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{b}4 4.\texttt{f}3 0–0

4...\texttt{b}6 and 4...\texttt{c}5 are generally considered more promising according to theory, but one must assume that Perunovic had his own opinion about this evaluation.

5.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{c}5 6.\texttt{c}1
be glad to eliminate the bishop on g3. The downside is that, in order to break the pin, he has been forced to weaken his kingside.

12.\text{Ba3!} \text{We7}

This is an improvement on a previous game, probably analysed at home by both players. The difference is that Black follows the suggestions of the chess engines, while White is going deeper and looks at the assault ratio, and thus manages to look beyond the horizon of the silicon beast (by the way, if you are 6 feet tall, the horizon at a beach is only 3 miles away).

12...\text{Wf6} 13.\text{d3} \text{Wxg3} 14.hxg3 \text{b6} 15.\text{b5} \text{Ab7} 16.\text{d6} led to an advantage for White in Moiseenko – Riazantsev, Geneva 2004.

13.\text{d3!! Wb4†}

Black is going down the principled road. It is hard to condemn this, as it gave him the chance of winning an important game in the penultimate round. Such an approach carries obvious risks, although this is a normal part of the game.

13...\text{Wxg3} 14.hxg3 \text{Ag7} was objectively stronger, but White is obviously better thanks to his better development and open h-file.

14.\text{f1 Wxb2}

In for a penny, in for a pound...

In the event of 14...\text{Qxd4} 15.\text{Qxe4}, Black must either go backwards with his knight or play 15...\text{Wxb2}, transposing to the next note.

15.\text{Qxe4}

The same of course goes for White.

15...\text{Wxa3}

There is no time to flick in important exchanges in this position.

For example: 15...\text{Qxd4} is met with the powerful 16.\text{d6!}, when Black most likely will lose his self-respect, as well as some material.

16.\text{h4}

Activating the rook on h1 and putting pressure on the weaknesses around the black king.

16...\text{Qxd4}

A natural move. Black decides to exchange a piece from the queenside with a piece that is likely to head for the kingside. At first I was thinking that this might be a loss of time, as the knight is the least important of the white pieces, and the tempo might have been more important, but analysis of the position suggests that this is not the case.
The two main lines go as follows:

16...f5 17...x6 bxc6 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.e5 g4 20.h8+ f7 21.h7+ e8 22.xe6! dxe6 23.d6 winning.

16...d5
This is a tougher nut to crack, but if you hit hard enough and long enough, it does:

17.c2
I am less than sure if the bishop is best placed here or on b1.

17...xd4 18.exd4 f5 19.hxg5 f4 20.h4 h5 21.g1!
This move is important in many lines. The king needs to be able to go to h2 in the case of a subsequent check.

21...g7 22.h3 xxa2 23.g6!

17...g5

![Diagram](image)

Black is busted. White is ready to play 24.xh5, and the attempt to prevent the intrusion of the white pieces falls short in a number of ways, for example:

23.h8 24.B3 f8 25.c7
And White wins swiftly.

17.hxg5!!

It is more important to play with the greatest possible vigour on the kingside, than to count material in the centre. White opens up for the rook on h1 as well as introducing the pawn itself as an additional attacking unit. In fact, it turns out that this very pawn is destined to deliver the final check of the game to force Black's resignation!

17...f5
The knight moves to the kingside, but it cannot help there and White's attack crashes through, meeting little resistance.

17.c6 18.xh6

This was the recommendation of Golubev in *Chess Today*, naming it as wild complications à la Tal. Actually it was rather obvious to me the first time I saw the position that White is winning, although I was not too sure about how to prove it. The reason for my certainty is that the ratio of the attackers to the defenders is simply ridiculous. The black queen will have to do all the defending on her own, with no help from the remaining four pieces. The fact that White is a rook down is of little significance.

18.c3
18.d5 19.cxd5 exd5 20.wa1! also leads to a decisive attack.

19.g1!!
Again this move is important. One of the differences that is to White's advantage in the position, is that of king safety. White only needs to step once to the right, and he is safe, Black will need a different dimension to feel any safety.

19...d5
Black has to try to get the pieces into play. Obviously he could try other moves here, but I do not want to overload on random moves and refutations.

20.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}h7}^+ \\
A typical tempo-gainer. Even on h7 the bishop is dangerous, and what is more important, it is dangerous without losing any time.

20...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}g7} 21.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}h5} \text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}e1}^+ 22.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{G}}h2} \text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{D}}e5} \\
22...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{F}}h8} is met with the simple 23.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{D}}d6}! improving the worst placed piece, cutting off the king and preparing 24.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}g6}^+. 23...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{D}}e5} 24.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{F}}e7} does not improve things for Black.

![Chess Diagram](attachment:image1.png)

23.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{A}}xe5}^+ \text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}xe5}^+ 24.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{F}}f4} \text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}xe3} 25.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{A}}f6} \\
Black is mated. Soon comes a check on h6 with the queen.

17...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{D}}d5}

![Chess Diagram](attachment:image2.png)

This was the other suggested improvement from Golubev, but with this one, he also suggested the correct way of dealing with it; although he stopped a bit early in his main line.

18.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{H}}h7}^+! \\
The point of this move is of course to win time, but it is also to win the time without having a black pawn on e4, as would happen after other sacrifices of the bishop.

18...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}xh7} 19.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{D}}xh6}^+ \text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}g7} \\
The king has to go here, in order to answer 20.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{A}}e5}^+ with 20...\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{F}}f6}, based on the point 21.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}xg6}^+ \text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}xh6}!. So White does not have time to involve the bishop at this moment, but must include the queen in the attack, with check, and taking a piece, but it is still a waste, as she was set to be excellent at h5.

20.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}xd4}^+ \text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{F}}6} \\
At this point White can force a draw with the rook sacrifice 21.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}xg6}^+, but this is not what he is looking for.

21.\text{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}g1}!!

![Chess Diagram](attachment:image3.png)

This is the truly great move, once again. The king is seeking safety on h2, after which White can take more time in order to finish the attack off perfectly. The important point for our theme is probably that as long as Black cannot bring in a lot of defenders quickly, White will have a positive assault ratio.

At this point I have chosen to look at no fewer than four alternatives. I would like you to pay attention to the fact that, in all of these lines, the main reason for Black’s demise is that
the number of attackers always exceeds the number of defenders.

a) 21...\texttt{b4} is one of the computer's many suggestions. There are a number of ways to beat it, but the main line is quite appealing, so I have chosen to mention it all the same. 22.\texttt{d3}! White attacks the weakest spot in the black position, the g6-square. Black is swiftly run over. 22...f5 23.\texttt{d4} \texttt{f7} 24.\texttt{g6} \texttt{e8} 25.g7 The g-pawn is clearly worth more than the knight White ignored on d4 on move 17. 25...\texttt{g8} 26.\texttt{h8} \texttt{f7} 27.\texttt{h4}! Only this move wins, but it leads straight to the shaking of hands. Black has no answer to the crushing threat of \texttt{f6}.

b) 21.\texttt{d7} 22.\texttt{g4}!

This aggressive move is both threatening a combination with 23.\texttt{gxf6} \texttt{hx6} 24.\texttt{f4}\texttt{4}, with mate on the next move, and simply to increase the strength of the attack with \texttt{h5}. Black has nothing that looks even remotely like a satisfactory defence.

For example: 22...\texttt{f7} 23.\texttt{gxf6} \texttt{e8} does not work on account of 24.\texttt{c7}! and the black king will not be able to run away.

c) 21...\texttt{xa2} 22.\texttt{d6}!

22.\texttt{h2} \texttt{xc4} 23.\texttt{d1} looks like an even better version of the following line d). The difference is, of course, the disappearance of the white a-pawn. Although this does not matter much in a materialistic sense, it is rare that the disappearance of even a single pawn will not have some extra significance somewhere. Compared with the end of the long line, after 35.\texttt{d8}, you will see that White is very happy to answer 35...\texttt{a6} with 36.\texttt{a4}\texttt{4}, something that is more credible there, as it does not blunder the queen. Although this line is still very tempting, White has a simpler solution in 22.\texttt{d6}!, introducing the bishop into the attack. 22...\texttt{f7}

22...\texttt{d7} 23.\texttt{g4} \texttt{f7} 24.\texttt{h2} \texttt{c2} 25.\texttt{f4} and Black does not have any good defence against 26.\texttt{gxf6}.

23.\texttt{h4} \texttt{b1} 24.\texttt{h2} \texttt{f5} 25.\texttt{h8}! \texttt{g6} 26.\texttt{gxf6} \texttt{xf6} 27.\texttt{e5} White wins.

d) 21...\texttt{c1} 22.\texttt{h2} \texttt{c4} 23.\texttt{d1} \texttt{e4} 24.\texttt{h5} \texttt{f5} 25.\texttt{h4} \texttt{fxg5} 26.g4 This was Golubev's (and Fritz's) line. He stops here with the sign for a clear advantage, which seems somewhat premature to me, even if this is indeed what my engine also tells me. If we push it a little bit further the moves we end up with are: 26...\texttt{e5} 27.\texttt{g1} \texttt{f3} 28.\texttt{h8} \texttt{f6} 29.\texttt{h7} \texttt{a1} 30.\texttt{g2} \texttt{e5} 31.\texttt{g5} \texttt{d6} 32.\texttt{d5} \texttt{c6} 33.\texttt{c7} \texttt{b5} 34.\texttt{e8} \texttt{b6} 35.\texttt{d8}

\textbf{Diagram}

23...\texttt{c1} 24.\texttt{d5}! \texttt{b6} 25.\texttt{e5} Black is mated.
18.\textit{Exf5}
18.\textit{Exe5} was also strong, but it is good to begin by removing Black's sole defensive piece.

18...\textit{Exf5} 19.\textit{Exe5}!
The bishop joins in the attack from an ideal square. Black is just lost.

19...\textit{f6}
19...\textit{Exe8} is no better. After 20.\textit{Exf6} \textit{Exe6} 21.\textit{Exh6} \textit{Exf6} 22.\textit{gxh6} mate is inevitable.

20.\textit{Ed6}
Or 20.\textit{gxh6}.

20.\textit{Ec3} 21.\textit{Exh6} \textit{Ed7}
More resistance was offered by 21...\textit{fxg5}, but White wins with checks all the way: 22.\textit{Ef5}t \textit{Ee7} 23.\textit{Exf8}t \textit{Exf8} 24.\textit{Exf5}t \textit{Exe8} 25.\textit{Exg5} \textit{Ec1}t 26.\textit{Ee2} \textit{Exc4}t 27.\textit{Exf3} \textit{Exf7}t 28.\textit{Exg3} \textit{d6} 29.\textit{Exf6} \textit{Ec4} 30.\textit{Eg7}

\textbf{Deflection}

One of the ways to build up a superiority in the attack is to eliminate some of the defenders, for example with deflection. Essentially the idea of deflection is that you in some way force one or more of the opponent's pieces to leave the scene of the action, either by offering some kind of a sacrifice, or by threatening to deliver some kind of damage. It is basically the carrot and the stick, or, at times, the carrot as a stick.

The classical type of deflection is where a defender is eliminated from a key square by a piece sacrifice. The following example is probably about as standard as you can get.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\caption{Bundesliga 2006}
\end{figure}

David Navara – Robert Rabiega

Black eliminated his star opponent through a series of fantastic deflections.

28...\textit{Ed4}!!
28...\textit{Ed6}t 29.\textit{Ed1} \textit{Ed4} is also excellent, although it may give White a few additional options compared with the game continuation.

29.\textit{Exb4}
White is toast after both 29.\textit{d}2 \textit{h}6! and 29.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}2!, so he has to accept the bait.

29...\textit{h}6\textdagger 30.\textit{b}1 \textit{e}1\textdagger 31.\textit{x}e1
31.\textit{c}1 \textit{f}5 looks quite strong as well.

31...\textit{x}e1\textdagger 32.\textit{c}2

Black's combination would have been flawed, had he not had a second deflector.

32...\textit{f}5!

Removing the queen from the defence, after which mate is near.

33.\textit{x}f5 \textit{d}2\textdagger
0-1

One common type of deflection is seen when the opponent possesses one especially well-placed piece. Before we can be successful in our mischief, we will have to remove such influential players from the centre of action.

\textbf{Niels Christian Schiodt – Jacob Aagaard}

\textit{Copenhagen 1990}

1.\textit{d}4 \textit{f}6 2.\textit{c}4 \textit{e}6 3.\textit{d}c3 \textit{b}4 4.\textit{c}c2 0-0
5.\textit{g}5
5.\textit{a}3 is of course the main line.

5...\textit{c}5 6.d5 \textit{b}5 7.dxe6?!
Along with the following move, this is probably the main cause of White's subsequent problems in this game.

7.e4?!; with a complex game, was far more energetic.

7...\textit{fxe}6 8.e4?!
8.cxb5 \textit{a}6 9.e3 looks more prudent. White is not ready for heavy action in the centre.

8...\textit{h}6?!
There was no good reason to flick this in, objectively, but it was not played without an idea. I wanted the bishop to not be able to return to the assistance of the queenside. 8...\textit{c}c6! was the best move. See the note to Black's next move.

9.\textit{h}4?!
Taking on \textit{f}6 was more prudent, but White is still playing for an advantage.

9...\textit{a}5?!
Here I missed a very strong option. Even if 9...\textit{c}c6! 10.cxb5 \textit{d}4 11.\textit{d}3 \textit{a}5 might look very strong to the eyes of a seasoned Grandmaster, for him to pass judgement on the play of an immature adolescent would be grossly unfair.
10.e5
10...xf6 e5 11.cxb5 a6 gave Black good attacking chances in Zak – Averbakh, Moscow 1947, and is probably no better.

10...\textit{De}4!
A very energetic response. White actually anticipated this and had a brilliant idea of his own ready. Seldom does one see so much creativity in the lower ranks at a tournament.

In a later game Black played differently: 10...g4 11.cxb5 \textit{De}5 12.g3 e5 13.0-0-0 was wildly unclear in Zylla – Schwerel, corr. 2001. Interestingly a lot of these moves are also the choice of my computer engine, which prefers White to some extent.

11...\textit{De}4?
This incredible idea is unfortunately also the decisive mistake.

11.g2 was the only move. Here there are many interesting continuations to investigate. It could be 11...b7 12.cxb5 a6, it could be 11...\textit{D}xc3 12.bxc3 \textit{D}a3 or even 11...\textit{D}xc3 12.bxc3 \textit{D}c6?! I have not found any obvious advantage to either player in these lines. My instinct tells me that the second of these lines is probably the best, but it is hard to know without investing a day or two of your life.

11...\textit{D}xc3† 12.g1
White’s creative play has created a scenario of utter chaos. Black is hanging everywhere and is faced with the threat of \textit{f}1-d3, indicating a slight problem with his reckless fight for the initiative.

This is the critical moment, where it becomes clear that the white queen is immensely influential for both attacking and defensive duties.

It is at moments like this that the attacking player meets his destiny. When there is no turning back, the path leading further into the mess is often the one that must be followed.

12...b7!!
I was very pleased with this move at the time, and would still be proud to find such an idea today. The bishop is developed in an energetic way, simply to deflect the powerful queen from her centralised spot.

12...\textit{D}xb2? would lose the battle for the initiative. White would first gain a tempo by threatening mate with 13.g3, when after 13...\textit{f}5 he would start harvesting the black pieces on the back rank. After 14.xa8 \textit{a}4† 15.c2 \textit{xc}4 16.g3† (an important prophylactic measure) 16...\textit{xa}1 17.b8 Black does not have enough for the piece.
13.\textit{\$xb7}
White has played his hand and is out of good cards. For example: 13.\textit{\$e2 $xf4}! with a devastating attack.

13...\textit{\$e1}!

This move might be a bit surprising to some. The idea is simple – d2 is the weakest square in the white position and it proves incredibly difficult to defend. The queen is badly placed on b7, whereas it had previously been the most influential piece on the board on e4.

In the game White failed to defend in the most resolute way, although his position was already beyond salvation.

14.\textit{\$c2}?!  
The most energetic defence included a temporary knight sacrifice with:
14.\textit{\$f3! $xf3}
Obviously Black removes the defender of d2. A move can hardly be called a sacrifice when it threatens mate! However, White has a very clever riposte.
15.\textit{\$e2}!
White has a strong double threat in $xf3 and $xe1. One might even say that the black rook has been deflected from its powerful position on the eighth rank.

Black can only reply in one way not to lose the initiative.
15...\textit{\$xf2}† 16.\textit{\$xf2 $d2}† 17.\textit{\$f3 $xf2}† 18.\textit{\$e4}
Here there are several wins, but I have some affection for the one we found in our analysis back in 1990. Not only because it is amazingly elegant, but also because it makes use of the knight.
18...\textit{\$c6} 19.\textit{\$xa8}† \textit{\$h7} 20.\textit{\$d1 $d4}†
The threat is ...$f5†, ...$f2† and ...$c2 mate. White has no response but to give up the rook for the bishop, which looks like a fair trade.
21.\textit{\$xe1 $c2}!!

Again, not the only winning move, but by far the most amazing one. The only move not to be immediately mated is a defensive deflection with 22.\textit{\$f8}...

14...\textit{\$d2}† 15.\textit{\$b3 $c6}
The dual threats of...\(\text{\textit{Qa}}5\) and...\(\text{\textit{Qd}}4\), are absolutely decisive.

16.\(\text{\textit{Wxe}}6\) \(\text{\textit{dxc}}6\) 17.\(a3\) \(\text{\textit{bxc}}4\)

0–1

To this day, I remain very proud of this game. It was only to be a few months before Niels Christian would find bloody vengeance at the same venue, and if I remember correctly, even at the same table...

Of course it is not only pieces, but also pawns that can be deflected. The following example provides a good illustration.

\textbf{Alexander van Beek – Jon Speelman}

\textit{Gibraltar 2007}

1.e4 c6 2.d4 \(d5\) 3.\(\text{\textit{Qd}}2\) \(\text{\textit{dxe}}4\) 4.\(\text{\textit{Qxe}}4\) \(\text{\textit{gf}}5\)

5.\(\text{\textit{Qg}}3\) \(\text{\textit{Qg}}6\) 6.h4 \(h6\) 7.\(\text{\textit{Qf}}3\) \(\text{\textit{Qd}}7\) 8.h5 \(\text{\textit{Qh}}7\)

9.\(\text{\textit{Qxd}}3\) \(\text{\textit{Qxd}}3\) 10.\(\text{\textit{Wxd}}3\) \(e6\) 11.\(\text{\textit{Qf}}4\) \(\text{\textit{Qa}}5\)

12.\(\text{\textit{Qd}}2\) \(\text{\textit{Qb}}4\) 13.c3 \(\text{\textit{Qe}}7\) 14.c4 \(\text{\textit{Wa}}6\) 15.0–0

\(\text{\textit{Qgf}}6\) 16.\(\text{\textit{Wfe}}1\) 0–0 17.\(\text{\textit{Qf}}5\) \(\text{\textit{Qfe}}8\)

18.\(\text{\textit{Wxe}}6\)!

With this move White captures an important pawn, but of course also loses a rook. The reason for the sacrifice is to deflect the pawn on f7, so that it no longer defends the g6-square.

It should be said that two grandmasters have missed the golden opportunity to play this sacrifice, but as they both won after taking the bishop on e7, it is difficult to be too hard on them. Ironically, this is the only game in my database in which Black survived!

18...\(\text{\textit{fxc}}6\) 19.\(\text{\textit{Wxg}}7\)!

This is an old fashioned destruction of the king's shelter.

19.\(\text{\textit{Qf}}8!\)

Speelman is an experienced cat and rightly decides to do whatever he can to fight for the key squares. Thus we see the defenders rallying around their monarch.

19...\(\text{\textit{Qxg}}7\) lost to a beautiful bishop sacrifice in Decoster – Tiggelman, Belgium 2005:

20.\(\text{\textit{Wxh}}6\)\! 21.\(\text{\textit{Qh}}8\) 21.\(\text{\textit{Qg}}7\)\! A lovely ‘magnet sacrifice’. White could also have won by bringing his knight into the attack, but the game continuation led to mate in just a few more moves.

20.\(\text{\textit{Wxe}}8\) \(\text{\textit{Qxe}}8\) 21.\(\text{\textit{Wg}}6\)\! \(\text{\textit{Qg}}7\)

Objectively this is a slight mistake.
White is winning in all cases, but the most resilient line seems to have been: 21...\(\text{d}h8\)! 22.\(\text{x}h6\) \(\text{x}h6\) 23.\(\text{w}h6\) \(\text{h}h7\) 24.\(\text{g}5\) (24.\(\text{d}f4\)!? might be stronger) 24...\(\text{e}7\) 25.\(\text{x}h7\) \(\text{x}h7\) 26.\(\text{w}xe6\) \(\text{f}8\) 27.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{g}8\) 28.\(b3\) and White is winning, but some fighting remains.

22.\(\text{x}h6\) \(\text{e}7\) 23.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}8\) 24.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}8\)

25.\(\text{g}6\)
White probably had the feeling of losing control and thus accepted the repetition.

Instead he could have won with the not so straightforward 25.\(\text{h}4\)! \(\text{w}xe4\) 26.\(h6\). For example: 26...\(\text{f}8\) 27.\(\text{c}5\) and Black is dead. But although this is rather simple for a machine, it is actually a very complicated win for a human being to find. There are simply too many options for both players.

25...\(\text{b}8\) 26.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}8\) 27.\(\text{g}6\) \(\text{f}8\)
\(\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\)

In the next game we shall see how a grandmaster with a rating of 2650 can be toppled by a deflection. After what looks to be an inconspicuous opening, White is just one move away from full development, but Black finds a stunning sacrifice that forces his opponent to forget all about castling.

14...\(\text{a}4\)!!
After 30 seconds this is the 22nd best move according to Fritz. After 60 it is on top, guaranteeing only equality, apparently. The reality, however, is that it is completely winning.

15.\(\text{d}xa4\)
There is nothing else.

15.\(\text{d}ed1\) does not hold the position together. After 15...\(\text{b}4\) 16.\(\text{f}3\) (16.\(\text{f}3\) is met with 16...\(\text{h}5\)! 17.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{xb}2\) and Black wins) 16...\(\text{b}7\) and \(b2\) falls, as after 17.\(\text{b}1\) Black can play 17...\(\text{d}xe4\)!! 18.\(\text{d}xe4\) \(\text{b}5\) with a decisive attack.

15...\(\text{d}xe4\) 16.\(\text{d}c2\)
16.\(\text{d}d1\) \(\text{a}5\)!! 17.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{b}4\) is likely to transpose with best play.

16...\(\text{a}5\)!! 17.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{b}4\)!
Chapter 2 - Typical Piece Play

18. \( \text{c4} \)

This is the only move that gives a fighting chance.

Of course White cannot retreat his knight to 
\( \text{c3} \), as the bishop on f4 would hang.

Also hopeless would be 18. \( \text{b6} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 19. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 20. \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 21. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{c7} \) followed by ... \( \text{f8} \) and ... \( \text{d4} \), when Black's initiative should decide the game.

18. \( \text{xa4} \) 19. \( \text{xe4} \)

19. \( \text{xa4} \) \( \text{xa4} \) 20. \( \text{a3} \) was possible, but even though the rook is potentially trapped, Black is doing very well.

19. \( \text{f5} \)

Black continues to mobilise his pieces.

20. \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{e8} \) 21. \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 22. \( \text{xb2} \)

22. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 23. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d4} \) also wins for Black.

22. \( \text{xb2} \) 23. \( \text{e3} \)

Now Pederson puts the icing on the cake with a final tactical flurry.

23... \( \text{xe2} \) 24. \( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{c4} \) 25. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{c3} \) 26. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 27. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xe3} \) 28. \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{f5} \) 0–1

A tremendous achievement by Pedersen. Black left the World Champion's second without a chance, after no obviously bad moves had been played.

Nielsen is of course a fantastic player in his own right, who has a perfect understanding of deflection. In the following game White plays good attacking chess from the beginning. When Black takes a few liberties, as well as a pawn on b2, Nielsen uses deflection as the basis of a fantastic winning attack.

**Peter Heine Nielsen - George Michelakis**

Copenhagen 2003

1. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 2. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 3. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{g7} \) 4. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d6} \) 5. \( \text{f3} \) 0–0 6. \( \text{h3} \)?

A modern line which has been made popular by Krasenkow.

6... \( \text{a6} \) 7. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{e8} \) 8. \( \text{g4} \)!

White gains space on the kingside, as well as increasing his control over the light squares.

8... \( \text{c5} \)

This is slightly unusual, but not bad.
8...e5 9.d5 ćc5 10.ćd2 a5 11.ćf3, a main line, is also possible here. White might be able to claim a slight edge here.

9.ćg2 h5!?
A very principled move that tries to exploit the fact that White has weakened his kingside with g4.

Less ambitious is 9...cxd4 10.ćxd4 ćc5 when White is probably a bit better.

10.ćxf6
An amazing game was played from this position. 10.gxh5 ćxh5 11.ćd2 ćc7 12.ćh6 cxd4 13.ćxd4 e5 14.ćxg7 ćxg7 15.ćf5† ćxf5 16.ćxh5 ćxh5 17.ćxg7 ćxg7 18.ćxe4 d5 19.cxd5 ćb5 20.ćg1 ćd6 21.ćb3 ćb4 22.ćc2 ćd4 23.će3 ćh8 24.ćf5 f5 25.ćd1 ćxh3 26.ćf3 ćh2 27.ćf1 ćxc2 28.ćxd4 exd4 29.ćxd4† ćg8 30.ćxf4 ćxc3 31.ćh6 će7 32.ćg7 ćxf3† 33.ćg2 će2† 34.ćxh1 ćf7 35.ćh7† 1-0 Krasenkow – Bobras, Glogow 2001.

10...exf6 11.gxh5 f5!
This is the only move; Black needs to create counterplay.

12.ćxg6

Black is trying to make the position as messy as possible.

Simpler and probably also better was 12...fxg6 when after 13.0-0 fxe4 14.će1 ćf5 15.ćxe4 ćxe4 16.ćg5 će7 17.ćxe4 ćxd4 18.ćg4 ćg7 Black does not appear to be at a serious disadvantage.

13.ćg5 fxg6
During the game Michelakis seriously considered playing: 13...f5?! with the idea of 14.ćh5 ćf6 15.ćd5 cxd4! (but not 15...ćxg6? 16.ćxg6!)

Now White should try to attack with the h-pawn. The computer line, which was also found by the players, goes 16.h4! ćc5 17.ćf3 ćf8 18.ćh5 and White should win, e.g. 18...ćd3† 19.ćf1 će5 20.ćd2 ćc6 21.ćxa8 when he emerges with an extra rook.

14.ćxe4
Forced as 14.0-0 c3! gives Black good play.

14...ćd4 15.0-0 će5?
Black loses his way completely. Here it was necessary to create coordination and to complete the development of the forces.

Better was 15...ćc7 16.ćd2 ćf5 though White has the advantage after 17.ćae1 ćd7 18.ćg3!, when it appears that the weakness of
the light squares around the black king is more significant than that of the dark squares around the white king. For that reason Black should prefer 18...\( \text{c7} \) with a slight disadvantage.

16. \( \text{\texttt{d2}} \text{\texttt{xb2}} \)!

Black's position already appears to be very dangerous, and it is hard to believe that pawn-grabbing is the way to improve it. Still it is hard to find a good continuation.

The players looked at 16...\( \text{\texttt{f4}} \) 17.\( \text{\texttt{ae1}} \text{\texttt{f5}} \) after the game, but here White has the computer moves 18.\( \text{\texttt{f7}} \)?, 18.\( \text{\texttt{xd6}} \)? and 18.\( \text{\texttt{e6}} \)? \( \text{\texttt{xe6}} \) 19.\( \text{\texttt{xd6}} \) with a clear edge.

17.\( \text{\texttt{ae1}} \text{\texttt{b4}} \)

18.\( \text{\texttt{a3}} \)!

A deflection that removes the bishop from the defence.

Not completely clear is 18.\( \text{\texttt{h7}} \)?! \( \text{\texttt{hxh7}} \) 19.\( \text{\texttt{g5}} \)\( \text{\texttt{g8}} \) 20.\( \text{\texttt{xe5}} \text{\texttt{xe5}} \) when Black continues to resist.

18...\( \text{\texttt{xa3}} \)

Objectively better was 18...\( \text{\texttt{c6}} \) 19.\( \text{\texttt{xc5}} \text{\texttt{xc5}} \) 20.\( \text{\texttt{d5}} \)\( \text{\texttt{g7}} \) 21.\( \text{\texttt{xb2}} \text{\texttt{d4}} \) 22.\( \text{\texttt{e6}} \)\( \text{\texttt{xe6}} \) 23.\( \text{\texttt{xb7}} \)\( \text{\texttt{f7}} \) 24.\( \text{\texttt{xc6}} \) and White is a pawn up for nothing.

19.\( \text{\texttt{h7}} \)!

The key to the combination initiated on the last move. It is interesting to note the interconnectedness between these two moves, played in opposite corners of the board!

19...\( \text{\texttt{f4}} \)

19...\( \text{\texttt{d4}} \)? 20.\( \text{\texttt{h6}} \text{\texttt{f5}} \) 21.\( \text{\texttt{xf8}} \text{\texttt{xf8}} \) 22.\( \text{\texttt{g3}} \text{\texttt{c2}} \) 23.\( \text{\texttt{c7}} \text{\texttt{h8}} \) 24.\( \text{\texttt{e3}} \) and White wins, although some play remains.

20.\( \text{\texttt{ef6}} \)!!

The number of developed pieces decide the game.

20...\( \text{\texttt{xf6}} \) 21.\( \text{\texttt{xf6}} \)\( \text{\texttt{xf6}} \) 22.\( \text{\texttt{e8}} \)\( \text{\texttt{f7}} \)

Black also loses after 22...\( \text{\texttt{g7}} \) 23.\( \text{\texttt{e1e7}} \text{\texttt{h6}} \) 25.\( \text{\texttt{h4}} \) and the king cannot be protected.

23.\( \text{\texttt{e1e1}} \text{\texttt{b2}} \)

White has a menacing attack after 23...\( \text{\texttt{g5}} \)
24.\( \text{\texttt{e2}} \text{\texttt{g6}} \) 25.\( \text{\texttt{g8}} \)\( \text{\texttt{h6}} \) 26.\( \text{\texttt{e8}} \text{\texttt{b2}} \) 27.\( \text{\texttt{e4}} \) where the computer gives 27...\( \text{\texttt{f5}} \)
28.\( \text{\texttt{x8a8}} \text{\texttt{d3}} \) 29.\( \text{\texttt{xf5}} \text{\texttt{xf5}} \) 30.\( \text{\texttt{h8}} \)\( \text{\texttt{xh8}} \)
31.\( \text{\texttt{h8}} \)\( \text{\texttt{g6}} \) 32.\( \text{\texttt{e8}} \)\( \text{\texttt{f7}} \) 33.\( \text{\texttt{e6}} \) and wins.

24.\( \text{\texttt{h6}} \)!

1-0

Black is mated.
Overloading

One of the most common situations where deflection is useful is when a piece is overloaded. Actually, deflection will always be exploiting some kind of overloading. In the two Nielsen games above, the defending pieces could be said to be overloaded: the knight in charge of both the pawn on e4 and the square on a4, and the bishop in charge of the kingside and the a3-square. However, we tend to talk about overloading only in the scenarios where both squares tend to be important. It is a theoretical difference of little importance to the practical player, besides not worth getting confused over it when reading chess books...

In the following game we will see many situations where the white queen is overloaded, and will have to relinquish one of her responsibilities. The same also happens to other pieces, but the queen is frequently in this situation in this game. The game is not in itself so complex, but deep analysis of it brought about a lot of interesting moments, relevant to our topic, so I decided to go a bit deeper than usual in the annotations.

Valeriane Gaprindashvili – Rasul Ibraghimov

Urumia 2008

1.d4 ♙f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 b5!? 6.♗g2

Various gambits involving a quick e2-e4 have been tried successfully over the last few years. After this quiet developing move Black is in time to finish his Benoni structure.

6...d6 7.e4 ♙bd7 8.f4?

The beginning of a very ambitious, but also very risky strategy. White abandons development in favour of a quick central advance.

I would personally be overjoyed if someone were to play like this against me. White's last move not only looks objectively unjustified, it also leads to a position that is subjectively far more difficult to play with White.

8...g6 9.♗e2 ♙g7!

Black should in return not be afraid of investing material in his attack. With this move he offers both a pawn and a piece to White, in return for the opening of files for his pieces.

10.e5

White follows up on his plan and wins a piece by this quick launch in the centre.

10.♗xb5 0-0 11.♕c3 ♙e8 12.♕e2 ♙b8 13.♕d3 was successful for White in Milovanovic – Movre, corr. 1980, but Black could have played much better at this point.
13...c4!! A beautiful magnet sacrifice.
White is lost after 14.\(\text{Wxc4} \text{dxc5}\), when the queen is trapped; it will be forced to go to d4 and then ...\(\text{Bfxe4}\) comes, winning material.
Also 14.\(\text{Wc2}\) does not save the position. After 14...\(\text{dxc5}\) 15.0-0 \(\text{Wb6}\) White is caught in the crossfire of the black pieces, and all of this only for a pawn. 16.\(\text{Wxe3}\) is met with 16...\(\text{dxc4}\), while 16.\(\text{Wxh1}\) can be punished with 16...\(\text{dxe4!!}\)
17.\(\text{Wxe4}\) \(\text{dxf5}\) and Black will regain his material with a huge positional advantage to boot.

10...\(\text{dxe5!}\)
This is the better option, for reasons explained in the next note.

10...0-0? was played in the stem game. After 11.\(\text{exf6}\) \(\text{Wxe8}\) 12.\(\text{fxg7}\) \(\text{Bxe2}\) 13.\(\text{dxe2}\) \(\text{Wxe7}\) 14.\(\text{Wf2}\) \(\text{dxf6}\) 15.\(\text{Wxe1}\) \(\text{ab7}\) 16.\(\text{Wxa3}\)! White had slightly better chances, even though to call the position a mess would be more appropriate, Plaskett - Groszpeter, Thessaloniki 1981.

11.\(\text{fxe5}\) 0-0 12.\(\text{exf6}\)
Jim Plaskett estimated that White would be a little better in his annotations in Chess Informant 33, because now the bishop on c1 is in the game. Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. I believe that White is lost at this moment, simply because the d-file is open...

12...\(\text{Wxf6}\) 13.\(\text{Wxb5}\) \(\text{Wb8}\)!

The rook is immune, as the queen would soon be lost to a discovered check with the bishop. White is probably already lost, but the proof of the pudding is always in the eating.

14.\(\text{Wd3??}\)
The queen is unprotected at this spot and this simple fact quickly leads to the demise of the white army through a not too difficult combination.

14.\(\text{Wc4}\)
This move was maybe the better defence, although this does not mean that it can hold. Moves like 14...\(\text{Wb6}\) and 14...\(\text{dxc4}\) are very attractive, but I decided to bring the queen into action quickly in my analysis and found a nice way to decide the game.

14...\(\text{Wxb2}\) 15.\(\text{Wxe2}\) \(\text{Wxa5??}\)!
b2 is a weak spot in the white position and the bishop wants to emerge on a6. This manoeuvre enables both.

15.\(\text{Wd8+}\) 16.\(\text{Wd2}\)
It was already possible to put the bishop on a6, but it seems even better to keep the queens on the board.

17.\(\text{Wbc3}\) \(\text{Wc6}\) 18.\(\text{Wb3}\)
White has no chance of saving the game after 18.\(\text{Wc3}\) \(\text{Wxe2}\) 19.\(\text{Wxe2}\) \(\text{Wxa6}\) 20.\(\text{Wb3}\) \(\text{Bxb2}\) either.

18...\(\text{Wxb2}\)
different points. Not surprisingly White will find himself overloaded on the undefended square in each line.

a) 19...d1

This is refuted with a brilliant jump.

19...e4!!

White is suffering from the problem of not being able to take more than one piece at a time. Maybe his best chance is casting and being material down, but safe, as the alternative leads to even greater problems:

20.xa6

20.xg4? xC3 is trivial, of course. The bishop on d2 is as overloaded as can be.

20...xC3 21.d3 xD2 22.xd2 e3!!

The bishop joins the attack from a surprising angle. This is of course less surprising if you combine two ideas from the first volume, the idea of attacking the opponent where he is weakest (d2 and e2) and using all of your pieces. A bit general in tone indeed, but still useful in a practical setting.

21.c2

The toughest defence.

21.c2 xD2 22.xd2 xD2 and Black wins back his material with interest.

21...xD2 22.xd2

22.xd2? loses in one go to 22..e5! and White is not able to defend both e2 and e3.

22...a1 23.e2 e5 24.f4

b) 19.c1

White is defending the c3-knight, but this leaves d2 vulnerable, and Black is able to exploit this overloading with a nice bit of deflection:

19...xe2 20.xe2 h6!!
White seems to have defended everything, but in such desperate defensive situations, it is common for the pieces to be overloaded. Here it is the queen that has to defend both e3 and g4, as well as the rook on d2, which has to defend both the first and second ranks. Not surprisingly, both lines of defence are susceptible to deflections.

24...\(\text{Qg4}!!\)

The knight is surrendered in order to pave the road for the remaining pieces.

White has successfully defended everything, but all his pieces are as passive as can be. This is an example of the oscillation between evolution and revolution described in the first volume. At first there was the initial development of the pieces, then a pawn sacrifice, then a further build-up, then a piece sacrifice, then a further build-up, and then a second piece sacrifice.

At this point, because of the total domination of the white pieces, Black is not in a complete hurry, but can make a slight improvement before he strikes.

28...\(\text{Cc2}!!\)

This little move takes away the c4-square from the white queen, which will not be able to defend the king for long. White has only one chance.

29.d6!

It turns out that the rook on e8 is both doing active and passive duties and can be nudged. In turn Black will find his queen deflected. However, Black still wins in the end.

29...\(\text{h5!} 30.\text{d7} \text{hxg4} 31.\text{dxe8=Q} \text{Qxe8} 32.\text{Ed2} \text{Exd2} 33.\text{Edxd2} \text{Qe4} 34.\text{Qg1} c4\)

b1) 25.\(\text{Qxg4} \text{Cc3}!! 26.\text{Qe1} \text{Qb1}!!\)

Basic deflection.

27.\(\text{Qd1} \text{Qb2}\)

The point. Black is the king of the second rank now.

28.\(\text{Qf1}\)

b2) If you think the previous line was nice, then you will be amazed by what happens if White declines the sacrifice:
25.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash b}3}

Here, again, Black only wins after a nice quiet move:

25...\texttt{\textbackslash b}2!!

A point is that after 26.\texttt{\textbackslash x}b2 \texttt{\textbackslash x}d5\texttt{\textbackslash t}! there is a mate on the next move; for example:

27.\texttt{\textbackslash x}g4 \texttt{\textbackslash w}h5 mate!

As White also cannot exchange the queens without shedding material, the critical line goes:

26.\texttt{\textbackslash h}d1

26...\texttt{\textbackslash w}xe2\texttt{\textbackslash t}!!

This brilliant combination only works in this move order!

After 26...\texttt{\textbackslash d}xh2\texttt{\textbackslash t}? 27.\texttt{\textbackslash d}f2 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xe2\texttt{\textbackslash t} 28.\texttt{\textbackslash g}1! White is almost better!

27.\texttt{\textbackslash x}e2 \texttt{\textbackslash d}xh2\texttt{\textbackslash t} 28.\texttt{\textbackslash f}2 \texttt{\textbackslash x}e2\texttt{\textbackslash t} 29.\texttt{\textbackslash g}1 \texttt{\textbackslash x}g2\texttt{\textbackslash t} 30.\texttt{\textbackslash h}1 \texttt{\textbackslash g}f2!!

And in view of the coming ...\texttt{\textbackslash f}3, Black wins.

14...\texttt{\textbackslash d}e8\texttt{\textbackslash t} 15.\texttt{\textbackslash d}e2 \texttt{\textbackslash a}4 16.\texttt{\textbackslash b}c3

The knight on \texttt{c}3 is responsible both for the well-being of the pawn on \texttt{d}5 and the safety of the white king, through its protection of the knight on \texttt{e}2. Not surprisingly Black was able to make the most of his lead in development with a sacrifice aimed at exploiting this overloading of the knight.

16...\texttt{\textbackslash d}x\texttt{\textbackslash d}5!!

The main point with this strike is to open the diagonal for \texttt{...\textbackslash x}c3 without wasting any time.

17.\texttt{\textbackslash d}e4

The toughest defence was 17.\texttt{\textbackslash x}d5, when play continues 17...\texttt{\textbackslash x}c3\texttt{\textbackslash t} 18.bxc3 \texttt{\textbackslash x}e2\texttt{\textbackslash t} (18...\texttt{\textbackslash x}e2? is poorer, as after 19.\texttt{\textbackslash x}f7\texttt{\textbackslash t} \texttt{\textbackslash x}f7 20.\texttt{\textbackslash w}xd8 \texttt{\textbackslash b}xd8 21.\texttt{\textbackslash f}2 White has genuine saving chances) 19.\texttt{\textbackslash f}1 \texttt{\textbackslash e}5\texttt{\textbackslash t}. Only this double attack wins the game, but it is enough. White can still take on \texttt{f}7 and exchange queens, and probably he should, but the attack is far stronger, as the black pieces are far better coordinated.

17...\texttt{\textbackslash b}4?!

I would personally have been very reluctant to exchange the queens in this position. White is in too much trouble, and a queen
exchange must have come as an emotional relief, irrespective of the fact that his position remains objectively difficult.

17...f5 was stronger. For example: 18.0-0 fxe4 19.xxe4 xf6 and Black wins.

Also 17...xe2! is very attractive. If the king takes, Black will take on b2 with the bishop, and after 18.xxe2

18...d4! the white king is trapped in the centre and White is utterly defenceless against 19...f5, so he even loses his extra piece.

18.xd8 bxd8 19.f1
19.g5 f6 does not improve matters.

19...d1† 20.f2 xh1 21.xh1 f5 22.h3 d3†!
A good little in-between move.

23.e3 xe2 24.xe2 fxe4 25.b1?!
A bit of extra defence was possible after 25.3c3, although White should be lost after 25...c4!, preparing to take on b2 with the bishop. However, there are not many pawns left on the board, so White has some genuine chances of holding, even if they are few and far between.

25...c4!
Preventing b2-b3.

26.g2 d4 27.d1 f8

0–1

It looks a little early to resign, so perhaps White lost on time? In any case, it is not so easy for him to find a useful move. If he puts his bishop on f4, Black can deflect it with a pawn sacrifice.

Tempo-gainers

The attack is all about the position of the pieces. Often we will see positions where material is exchanged for quick development or just a rearranging of the pieces. This can be through ignoring the actions of the opponent or a variety of other methods. One of these is to chase the opponent's pieces, at times at the cost of material, with the purpose of temporarily gaining better coordination of the pieces, so a golden moment can arise.

The following game illustrates tempo-gaining perfectly. After Black plays a risky move at move twenty, White chases the queen, offering a pawn on the way. Black decides the bounty is worth the risk, but misjudges the situation and is quickly sent on the run. White then wins several tempos against the black queen to activate the rooks, leading to a tasty concluding combination.
Dimitri Reinderman – Paul van der Sterren

Dutch Championship, Rotterdam 1999

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4 Qf6 5.Qc3 e6 6.Qf3 Qb4 7.d3 dxc4 8.Qxc4 0-0 9.0-0 b6 10.Qg5 Qb7 11.Qe5 Qbd7 12.Qe2 Qxc3 13.Qxc3 Qc7 14.Qxd7 Qxd7 15.Qac1 h6

The merits of this pawn move can be disputed. I do not see a great reason to hurry with it, but it is probably fine.

The main move seems to be 15...Qfe8, when both 16.Qd3 and the slightly odd, but strangely appealing 16.Qb3 both give White a plus score.

16.Qh4 Qac8 17.Qb3!

The bishop used to go to d3 as a matter of reflex. After seeing an inspirational game I recommended the alternative retreat to b3 in my first book, The Panov-Botvinnik Attack, which is now no longer in print. Some time later Dimitri sent this game to me, thanking me for the idea.

17...Qfe8 18.a4

This is a standard plan in positions with this pawn structure, although it has been played more frequently with the bishop on d3 instead of b3. Here probably 18.Qfe1 was more prudent, but what next? Most likely there is no advantage.

18...Qd6 19.Qfe1 Qa3

This is Karpov's standard plan. The advance of the a-pawn has caused the white queenside pieces to lose some stability.

20.Qd1 e5!

This move is quite double edged, but it would be unfair to attribute Black's later troubles exclusively to this move. However, it does put him under some extra obligations, which he did not take seriously enough during the game.

21.Qa1!

An optimistic move, which was mainly successful because Black took the bait. White would also have done well by playing a simple waiting move, such as 21.h3, simply improving his position.

21...Qb2?

This is the start of all the worries Black has later on. The queen is thrown around the board like a fox running from the dogs, before White is able to turn his attention to the black king and start a devastating attack.
There was no shame in returning the queen to the centre with 21...\(\text{d}6\), when White could send an invitation to repeat moves by returning the rook to c1. However, after the more aggressive 22.\(\text{Wh}5\) Black should react carefully with 22...\(\text{d}5\), blocking the diagonal leading towards the sensitive f7-point. (Instead the reckless 22...\(\text{g}6\)? 23.\(\text{Wh}x6\) \(\text{xc}3\) 24.\(\text{xf}7\#\) leads to a devastating attack and is thus to be avoided.) It seems that the position after 23.\(\text{dxe}5\) \(\text{c}6\) 24.\(\text{xf}5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 26.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{xc}3\) might still offer White a slight edge, with the bishop being stronger than the knight and the pawn on e5 looking massive, but my initial analysis suggests that Black can hold his own.

It turns out that this passive move is the final straw. It was already necessary for Black to find a more creative solution in order to stand a chance of saving the game.

After 23...\(\text{xc}4\)! White can try something inventive, but perhaps the simple capture of the exchange is best. However, after 24.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{xc}4\) 25.\(\text{dxe}5\) \(\text{c}5\) Black has reasonable counterplay on the light squares and a lot of play remains in the position.

24.\(\text{e}7\) \(\text{xd}4\)

It would be unfair to label this move as a mistake. It is possible that there is already little that can be done to save the black position. Here are some options that show the state of affairs.

24...\(\text{f}6\) 25.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{c}6\) Probably this trick was the best option, but White's attack is still menacing: 26.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xf}6\) 27.\(\text{dxe}5\) and now either 27...\(\text{e}7\) 28.\(\text{e}6\) with a very strong attack, or 27...\(\text{g}5?!\) 28.\(\text{xg}5\) \(\text{hxg}5\) 29.\(\text{e}6\), winning.

24...\(\text{exd}4\) 25.\(\text{xf}8\) \(\text{xf}8\) 26.\(\text{e}7\) looks horrible and should never last, while 24...\(\text{c}6\) 25.d5 is awful as well.

25.\(\text{bd}1\)

The first of three new tempo-gainers with the rooks. The first two are threatening the queen.

25...\(\text{c}3\) 26.\(\text{c}3\)

This also defends the bishop, of course.

26...\(\text{c}7\) 27.\(\text{g}3\)

This one is also threatening \(\text{Wh}x6\) as well as the more devious \(\text{g}6!\).

27...\(\text{h}8\)

White has finally optimised all his pieces, and for this reason it is not surprising that there is a winning combination.
Piece Sacrifices for Time

Deflection is often an exploitation of overloading. If this involves a piece sacrifice, this is simply a piece sacrifice for time. If the opponent had one more move, he would be able to return the deflected queen, rook, bishop or knight.

When we are attacking it is quite common to find that one or more of our pieces are contributing nothing to our goals, but can be used to distract our opponent, force him to lose coordination of the pieces, or in another way inconvenience him. To be a successful attacking player, it is important to develop a good feeling for the application of this technique.

While we will talk about pawn sacrifices in general in the next chapter dedicated to pawn play, it should be said that there is, in principle, no big difference between piece and pawn sacrifices for time. Only that a piece is most often a bigger investment, and also can most often come with a more convincing argument for the necessity of accepting the sacrifice; for example by taking a protected pawn, or similar.

Our first example of a piece sacrifice for the sake of time features a classic combination in a complex setting. I found this position when analysing an opening line and taking it a bit too far. White wins with a beautiful long tactical sequence involving two rook sacrifices.

1...\texttt{\textit{hxh8+t!!}}

A known theme, but here in a slightly advanced version. The rook has to be taken by the bishop, as there is a knight fork looming on f7 as well.

2...\texttt{\textit{gxh8}} 2.\texttt{\textit{Wh3}}

The point of the sacrifice. The bishop is inconveniently placed on h8 and the check on h7 is very threatening.

2...\texttt{\textit{g7}}

2...\texttt{\textit{c7}} is technically speaking a better defence, but still awful. After 3.\texttt{\textit{a3}} White wins the queen, which closes the discussion.

3.\texttt{\textit{a3!}}

It is important to win a tempo by taking control over the a3-f8 diagonal now. The queen check in itself is not dangerous.

3...\texttt{\textit{c5!}}

Seeing this potentially rather obvious defensive move (after all, White just parted with a rook for a simple tempo) is for some reason what is hardest for most players. Only once
we start to look at the position one move ahead seriously, do we realise that the tactical sequence has not yet reached its conclusion.

3...\texttt{Wxa3} is of course possible, but once again, White will win with the queen for only two pieces.

4.\texttt{dxc5 \texttt{We7}}

5.\texttt{\texttt{Wxe6}!!}

This is an absolutely fantastic sacrifice. White wants to get the queen close to the black king, but the check on h7 would not achieve this without this blow to the black pawn structure.

5.c6? \texttt{\texttt{Wxg5} 6.cxb7 \texttt{Qxb7} is not really clear.}

Only 5.\texttt{\texttt{Wc1}!! bxc5 6.Wh7\texttt{Qf8} 7.We4 \texttt{Qxe4} 8.Wh6 \texttt{Qf8} 9.Wxg7 gives White an advantage as well, but it still fails to decide the game directly.}

5...\texttt{fxe6}

Or 5...\texttt{\texttt{Wxg5} 6.Qe8\texttt{Qf8} 7.c6 and White wins.}

6.Wh7\texttt{Qf8} 7.Wxg6

Black is completely lost. There is no defence against the advance of the c-pawn, exposing the crater on f7.

7...\texttt{Qc4} There is nothing else.

8.c6!

8.\texttt{\texttt{Wxe6}!! Qg8 9.c6 \texttt{Qxa3} 10.Qxg7! also wins, but in a very quirky way it must be said.}

8...\texttt{\texttt{Qxa3} 9.cxb7} 9.Qh7\texttt{??}

9...\texttt{\texttt{Wxb7}}

10.Qh7\texttt{!!}

Even this move can be hard to spot.

10.\texttt{\texttt{Wxe6}?? Qg8 is probably only a draw.}

10...\texttt{Qg8} 10...\texttt{\texttt{Qc7} 11.Wxg7\texttt{Qd6} 12.Wxb7 wins.}

11.Qf6\texttt{Qf8} 12.We8 mate!

This was all fiction, of course, but delightful fiction!

The next example shows a normal fighting game, nothing too fancy. Both players want to win, White is putting his faith in earthly possessions, while Black builds his treasures on heavenly inspiration. I might be biased towards aggressive chess, but anyone would acknowledge that this is a great achievement by the Greek grandmaster.
The game starts with a slight provocation from White; he castles queenside, into the half-open b-file. The open file is enough for Black to become active, but alone it would not have been enough to win the game. However, Black invites his opponent to indulge his passion for material things and a rough fight ensues. White might start off better, but is unable to cope with the practical problems over the board.

Andrei Orlov - Stelios Halkias

European Championship, Dresden 2007


9.\textit{We2}\textsuperscript{+}

I am quite suspicious about the validity of this move. The main plan involves casting queenside, while the b-file is open. I do not think this is appropriate.

The usual 9.0–0 looks more sensible.

9.\textit{Le7} 10.\textit{Ge5} 0–0 11.0–0–0 \textit{Lc6} 12.\textit{He1} h6 13.\textit{Lh4} \textit{d6}

13...c5 immediately would be met with either 14.\textit{f5} or 14.\textit{c4}!?

14.\textit{Lg3}

14.\textit{Lf5}\textsuperscript{?} no longer works, in view of 14...\textit{f4+}.

14...\textit{b6} 15.\textit{Lb5}

White is already wanting for sensible moves. After 15.\textit{Lf5} Black can reply 15...\textit{xf5} 16.\textit{xc7} d4!, when for example 17.\textit{xc7} \textit{cc8} wins material, based on 18.\textit{xc6} \textit{a6} and the rook on e1 is hanging.

15...\textit{c5}?!N

15...\textit{Lc8} 16.\textit{dd4} \textit{Lbb8} 17.c3 was seen in De la Villa Garcia - Su. Polgar, Salamanca 1989. Here Black could have obtained the advantage with 17...\textit{d7}!, as the knight is exposed on d4.

16.c4!

This move is absolutely essential. After 16.\textit{Lc7}\textsuperscript{?} c4! White needs to attempt the desperate looking 17.\textit{g6}!, as after 17.\textit{xe8}? \textit{xe8} 18.\textit{f5} c3! Black wins.

16...\textit{Lbb8}?!?

This is a wonderfully creative idea. Black sacrifices not only a piece, but an entire rook, just to get close to the opponent's king.

16...\textit{e8}! would have given chances for both sides, although only one player has a king.
that is in danger. This would be the standard approach to this position, but Halkias does not think that he has any use for two rooks, when he has only one open file under his control.

17.\text{\textnormal{c7}}!

The most principled move. After 17.\text{\textnormal{xb8}} \text{\textnormal{xb8}} 18.b3 Black would have the move ...a6 at some moment and would generally enjoy good compensation for the exchange. There are two downsides to the queen being pushed to a6. One is the absence of this pawn push, the other is the fork on c7.

17...\text{\textnormal{a6}} 18.\text{\textnormal{xb8}} \text{\textnormal{xb8}} 19.\text{\textnormal{c7}}?!

I am a bit sceptical about the value of this move. White is a rook up, but Black gains enough time to wreak havoc near the white king. And as there are no real targets in the black position, it is difficult to use the rook positively.

19.b3! was the better option, I believe. I am not entirely sure that Black can prove adequate compensation for the exchange. At the moment the knight on b5 is difficult to dislodge. The threats of \text{\textnormal{c7}} and \text{\textnormal{f5}} would make the situation a bit inconvenient for Black.

20...\text{\textnormal{a1}} 21.\text{\textnormal{exe6}}

White has won a rook, however not without some concessions. The rook is active on b8, the opposite-coloured bishops favour the attacker (not just traditionally, but specifically in the present position), and the white king is exposed both from the side and on the diagonals from f6 and g5. But then again, a rook is not a small piece!

Although the position appears extremely unbalanced, analysis actually shows that accurate play should lead to roughly equal chances for both sides.

21...\text{\textnormal{e4}}!

The knight takes an offensive pose, and on the way indirectly attacks the knight on e6.

22.\text{\textnormal{c2}}?!

It turns out that White's only way of staying fully in the game was 22.\text{\textnormal{xd5}} \text{\textnormal{xe6}} 23.\text{\textnormal{h5}}, where the rook is ready to give itself up for the bishop, the knight on e4 is hanging and the white king has the d1-square at his disposal. Both the check on g5 and 23...g6 lead to exchanges and a drawish position.

After the slow 22.\text{\textnormal{c2}}, Black's attack gains momentum.
22...fxe6!

Although we are happy to sacrifice material, we do so only out of need, not out of some aesthetic principles. The attacking player still has to live in a material world, or he will go to bed hungry.

22...fxe6?! is weaker. White is able to save the game with a long tactical sequence, balancing on the edge. 23...fxe6! dxe4 24.f4 $\text{g}x\text{b}2\dagger 25.d2 $\text{e}5 26.$\text{xe}4 $\text{xf}4\dagger 27.$\text{xf}4 $\text{xb}1$

24...$\text{xe}4$?

White could have offered greater resistance with 24.$\text{e}2$, but Black's advantage is still mounting after 24...$\text{xb}2$ 25.$\text{xb}2$ (25.$\text{xe}4$? leads to mate after 25...$\text{xe}2$ 26.$\text{xe}2$ $\text{xa}3\dagger$) 25...$\text{xb}2\dagger$ 26.$\text{xb}2$ $\text{c}3$ 27.$\text{dx}e6$ $\text{xb}1$ 28.$\text{ed}8\dagger$ $\text{h}7$ 29.$\text{xb}1$ $\text{a}3\dagger$ 30.$\text{d}1$ $\text{a}4\dagger$ 31.$\text{c}1$ $\text{c}4\dagger$, although it will not be so easy to win this ending.

24...$\text{xb}2$ 25.$\text{d}3$ $\text{xf}2$

23.cxd5 $\text{g}6!$

23...$\text{g}5\dagger$ 24.$\text{e}3$ would be far less effective.

Black is winning. Occupying the second rank is far more important than a little rook...

26.$\text{d}2$ $\text{g}5$ 27.$\text{f}4$

I am not really sure what the idea behind this move was supposed to be. Maybe to give a final check?

White's last hope was 27.$\text{xe}6$ with the threat of $\text{e}8\dagger$. Here it is important for Black to hold his horses and simply protect against this check with 27...$\text{f}8\dagger$, when he is absolutely winning. He needs to take with the rook on d2, as after 27...$\text{xd}2\dagger$ 28.$\text{d}1$ the white king is strangely safe.

27...$\text{xf}4$ 28.$\text{h}7$ $\text{f}7$ 29.$\text{g}6$ $\text{f}8$ 30.$\text{dx}e6$ $\text{c}3\dagger$

0–1
There will hardly be a game in this book where we will not encounter a piece sacrifice for time, at least in a line; so I will not delve more deeply into the subject. It is obvious that although the theme is a common one, the possible variations are more than we can ever learn. New tactical ideas are found continuously and the ambitious player has more and more to learn. Especially with the rise of computers, our understanding of tactics has expanded rapidly.

**Transition squares**

When I was a very young boy and played my first international tournament, I was deeply impressed by one of the rising Danish stars, Henrik Danielsen, who in this tournament made an IM norm and six years later made it all the way to the coveted GM title. His only loss in this tournament made a deep impact on me, or at least the explanation he offered of why he lost the game. We join his suffering at the moment where he made what he considered the decisive mistake back then. Although the increase in playing strengths of the computers and the author reveals that this is maybe inaccurate, the general explanation of why the next move is a mistake is just as valid today as it was twenty years ago.

**Jusefs Petkevich – Henrik Danielsen**

Lyngby 1990

![Chess Diagram](image)

25...\(\text{Ec}4?\)

This is the key mistake. The reason why this move is bad, is because White gets a transition square on c4 for his knight. Suddenly there is easy access to the brilliant square on f6! This does not come through cleanly in the game, as both players were still a bit away from their prime, but still shines through in the annotations.

The correct move was 25...h5, after which Black is still somewhat worse, but still in the game.

26.\(\text{Exc}4!\)

White immediately claims the square, even at the cost of giving his opponent a passed pawn.

26...dxc4

White's plan is clear. He should focus all his efforts into a kingside attack, utilising the key e4-square in order to facilitate a knight invasion on f6.

27.\(\text{Ed}1?!\)

White could either have started the transition of the knight with the powerful 27.\(\text{Dg}5\) or prepared it with 27.\(\text{h}6!\) \(\text{Ec}8\) 28.\(\text{Ec}1\), when after 28...\(\text{b}6\):
White should not be decoyed and think that one piece can sort it all out, by playing 29...\( \text{g}5 \)?, when 29...\( \text{d}4 \)! would bring Black back in the game on an even footing. Instead he should utilise the tremendous power of the knight.

After 29...\( \text{g}5 \)! \( \text{f}8 \) 30...\( \text{c}4 \) the threat of \( \text{g}5 \) is far stronger. Black can still defend himself with 30...\( \text{d}4 \), when White has a very strong computer move in 31...\( \text{f}4 \)!. Black is threatened with the subtle \( \text{d}6 \) followed by \( \text{e}3 \), winning a piece. And after 31...\( \text{f}5 \) White has 32...\( \text{g}7 \) 33...\( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 34...\( \text{f}6 \)! and the knight is fabulous on \( \text{d}6 \). Black has no defence against 35...\( \text{h}6 \), winning the house.

Notice how all of this was made possible because the knight was able to access the \( \text{e}4 \)-square. Without it Black would still have encountered some problems on the dark squares, but White would not have enough firepower at his disposal to make it count.

27...\( \text{w}c8 \)
27...\( \text{w}c6 \)! was probably even tougher.

28...\( \text{g}5 \)!

Once again White could have played more accurately. Better was 28...\( \text{c}1 \)! and Black finds it hard to deal with \( \text{f}3-g5-e4-d6/f6 \). But in what follows both players seem to be oblivious to the importance of the bishop on \( b2 \). White does little to preserve its strength, happy for it to go to the kingside via \( c1 \), while Black is too focused on defence to appreciate the potential disruption the c-pawn can cause in the white camp.

28...\( \text{w}e8 \)
28...\( \text{c}3 \) 29...\( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{c}7 \)? would have given Black reasonable fighting chances. Compare this with the later lines where the bishop is still active on \( b2 \).

29...\( \text{w}h6 \)
29...\( \text{d}4 \)? to change tack was probably a sound option, but the game is not anywhere near decided. Again 29...\( \text{c}3 \)! is the way for Black to fight on. 30...\( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{b}2 \) 31...\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{b}1=\text{w} \) 32...\( \text{x}b1 \) \( \text{e}5 \) and White is somewhat better, but nothing more.

29...\( \text{e}7 \)?
This was the last chance to play 29...\( \text{c}3 \)!
30...\( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{c}2 \), where Black remains active.

After 31...\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 32...\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 33...\( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{xd}2 \) 34...\( \text{xd}2 \) \( \text{c}3 \) 35...\( \text{xc}2 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) Black has reasonable drawing chances.

30...\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 31...\( \text{e}4 \)
Black is busted. The knight is supreme here.

31...\( \text{e}d8 \)
Black could also have fought for the \( f6 \)-square, valiantly perhaps, but not successfully.
After 31...\(\text{Qd}5\):

White can of course give the check on f6, but I prefer to prove the strength of the long diagonal with 32.\(\text{Qxd}5\)! exd5 33.\(\text{Qf}6\)\(\text{Qh}8\) 34.e6! c3 35.e7! \(\text{xex}7\) 36.\(\text{Qxc}3\) and Black is mated with \(\text{Qe}8\) in many lines.

32.\(\text{Qd}6\) \(\text{Qb}5\) 33.\(\text{Qg}5\)
White wins all the same, but here he misses a nice little tactic in 33.\(\text{Qf}6\)\(\text{Qh}8\) 34.\(\text{Qh}5\)!

33...\(\text{Qd}7\) 34.\(\text{Qf}6\)\(\text{Qg}7\) 35.\(\text{Qxd}7\)
35.\(\text{Qg}4\)! would have decided the game instantly, but one feels the rising of the flag and the shaking of the hand in every move White makes in this phase.

35...\(\text{Qxd}7\) 36.\(\text{Qd}1\) c3 37.\(\text{Qc}1\) c2 38.\(\text{Qd}2\) \(\text{Qc}6\) 39.\(\text{Qe}7\) \(\text{Qxe}5\) 40.\(\text{Qd}8\) \(\text{Qe}4\) 41.\(\text{Qf}8\)\(\text{Qf}6\) 42.\(\text{Qg}5\)\(\text{Qf}5\) 43.\(\text{Qc}5\) \(\text{Qe}1\) 44.\(\text{Qh}2\) \(\text{Qc}3\) 45.f3 \(\text{Qxh}4\) 46.\(\text{Qxh}4\) c1=\(\text{Q}\) 47.g4\(\text{Qf}4\) 48.\(\text{Qg}3\)\(\text{Qxf}3\) 49.\(\text{Qf}2\)
1–0

Ever since seeing this game I have been aware of the power of transition squares. This awareness is important if you want to develop a good intuition for the attack. In the following game a very strong attacking player tempted his opponent with a piece. Uncertain of the consequences, Black decided to accept the offer, something he would live to regret.

26...\(\text{Qe}6\)!
Putting annoying pressure on d4, simply ignoring the threat to the knight. White was duly provoked and decided to accept the offer.

27.exd5?
27.\(\text{Qc}5\) was better. The position is messy, but probably in balance.

27...\(\text{Qxd}5\) 28.\(\text{Qg}1\) \(\text{Qxc}4\)!
Deflection!

29.\(\text{Qxc}4\)!
29.\(\text{Qxe}7\) was more resistant, but after 29...\(\text{Qg}5\) White will have to part with his queen, and you would expect Black to be successful after 30.\(\text{Qxg}5\) \(\text{Qxg}5\) 31.\(\text{Qxf}8\) \(\text{Qc}2\) although the a-pawn creates some uncertainty.

29...\(\text{Qg}5\)!
A brilliant transition square. The knight will come to $h3$ or $f3$ with devastating effect.

30. $\text{xf}d1$ $\text{fxg3}$

0–1

In the next game we shall witness a brilliant attack on the kingside, which relied upon a transition square on the opposite side of the board. Former World Champion Alexander Khalifman leaves his opponent with no chance. It is not easy to guess how much of his play was opening preparation and how much was genuine over-the-board inspiration, but the moves are illustrative of how a vicious attack can be initiated with a great swing across the fourth, using an unlikely square as a transition point for the queen.

11. $\text{ xc4}$!

White’s advantage should mainly consist of a lead in development. Therefore this is better than 11. $\text{c2}$ b5! with both sides having chances.

11... $\text{e4}$ 12. $\text{xc4}$ $\text{e4}$ 13. $\text{g5}$!

This move ensures White the initiative. There is no pleasant way for Black to meet it.

13... $\text{f6}$ 14. $\text{d3}$ $\text{e8}$

A typical move, although ideas with 9... $\text{h5}$ are not as stupid as they might appear at first glance.

10.0–0 $\text{c4}$
This is the great moment of the game/games. White has accumulated a slight lead in development, but cannot at this moment easily find targets. His most active pieces are pointing at the kingside, but at the moment they are not sufficiently supported to create real damage. All this is changed with the next power move.

15.\texttt{Wa4!!}

Quick development is the only way for White to prove an advantage. The queen uses the \texttt{a4}-square to bounce off, like a billiard ball, to reach the highly desirable \texttt{h4}-square, from where she can attack the weakest square in the black position: \texttt{h7}.

In view of the threat to the rook on \texttt{e8}, Black only has one reasonable move.

15...\texttt{Ad7}

The problem is that after this move it is next to impossible to get the rest of the pieces into the game; at least within a reasonable timeframe. This, and the prominent placement of the white queen, prove to be the decisive factors.

16.\texttt{Wh4 Axc5}

The alternative is:
16...\texttt{a6} 17.\texttt{Aae1 Axc1} 18.\texttt{Axe1 b5}

This is best met with:
19.\texttt{Ae4}!

The rook plays an important role on the fourth rank.
19...\texttt{Ab7}
19...\texttt{Axc5} 20.\texttt{Axc5 Afb8}?! survived for Black in Santoro – Kujala, Finland 1991, but I do not trust the black position.
20.\texttt{Af4 Afg7} 21.\texttt{Ad4}!

An improvement over 21.\texttt{Wh6t Afg8} 22.\texttt{Wh4 Afg7} 23.\texttt{Wh6t Afg8} 24.\texttt{Wh4 ½−½} P. Cramling – Wedberg, Stockholm 1990.
21...\texttt{h5}

White was threatening \texttt{Af5t} winning.

22.\texttt{Axc6!! Axc6} 23.\texttt{Af6t Axc6} 24.\texttt{Af5 Afg7}
25.\texttt{Afg5t Afd8} 26.\texttt{Axf6 Afd7} 27.\texttt{Af5 Afe1t}
28.\texttt{Af2 Aed5t} 29.\texttt{f4 Axd5} 30.\texttt{Ah6 1−0} J. Horvath – C. Horvath, Bischwiller 1993.

17.\texttt{Axd5}

A very sad novelty.

Previously
17...\texttt{Af6}

had been played, but White gets a great attack after:
18.\texttt{f4t Afg7}

This is in principle the best defence.
18...\texttt{Ac3} was torn apart with 19.\texttt{Axb7t Afd7} 20.\texttt{f5} in Luch – Bednarek, Warsaw 2005.
18...\texttt{Ab6t}?! is the computer’s favourite, but a human can see that it is not the queen
that lacks options, but the queenside. Still it is not so easy to advance the f-pawn after 19.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{xf}4\) though White should remain better. 20.\(\text{wh}6!\) looks best, freeing the f-pawn. 20..\(\text{xb}2\) 21.f5 and one should not be too optimistic about Black’s prospects.

19.f5 h6

This position has arisen a few times. The winning line for White is not surprisingly associated with a direct sacrifice:

There is no good defence to 27.\(\text{e}8!\), winning.

18.\(\text{ae}1!\)

Bringing in the rook must be good. 18.f4 has been suggested, but does not convince.

18...\(\text{xe}1\)

The main alternative was:

18...\(\text{e}5\)

This is maybe better, but if White first develops fully, then strikes, Black will find his position very difficult:

19.\(\text{xe}5\) dxe5 20.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{d}7\) 21.\(\text{c}4\)

f7 is the weakness.

21...\(\text{c}8\) 22.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{g}7\) 23.f4!

Black is in trouble, for example:

23...h6 24.\(\text{hx}6!\) \(\text{hx}6\) 25.\(\text{fx}7!\) \(\text{g}7\)

26.\(\text{xd}8\) \(\text{xd}8\) 27.fxe5

Sometimes the attacker must settle for a transition to a favourable endgame. The pawns are likely to claim a victim and White will end material up rather than material down.

19.\(\text{xe}1\) \(\text{d}7\)

White is fully developed and should strike at the weaknesses.

20.\(\text{f}4\)

The game is actually already decided. Black never made it out of the opening and now has to weaken his position badly.
20.\textit{g3}! h6 21.\textit{e4} was another damaging (for Black) approach to the position.

\textbf{20...f5 21.\textit{e6}}

Khalifman is a great technician and naturally moves towards a lasting rather than a dynamic advantage. Others might have played the position differently.

\textbf{21...\textit{dxe6}}

21...\textit{e7} is slightly more accurate, but also after 22.\textit{e3} \textit{dxe6} 23.\textit{dxe6} \textit{c6} 24.\textit{wxd4} Black would be facing an uphill struggle for a draw.

\textbf{22.\textit{dxe6} \textit{wxe7}}

The different move order gives White additional opportunities.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw [help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\foreach \x in {0,...,8} {
    \node at (\x,0) {\texttt{a}};
    \node at (\x,8) {\texttt{h}};
    \node at (0,\x) {\texttt{a}};
    \node at (8,\x) {\texttt{h}};
}
\draw [very thick] (1,1) -- (1,7) -- (7,7) -- (7,1) -- (1,1);
\foreach \x in {0,2,4,6} {
    \draw [very thick] (0,\x) -- (8,\x);
    \draw [very thick] (\x,0) -- (\x,8);
}
\node at (1,1) {\texttt{White}};
\node at (7,7) {\texttt{Black}};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{23.\textit{xf5}!}

The clearest.

23.\textit{w3}! \textit{f8} 24.\textit{e3} \textit{c8} 25.\textit{wxa7} winning a pawn also existed.

\textbf{23...\textit{xf5}}

23...\textit{f8} 24.\textit{c4}! and White keeps his newly acquired extra pawn.

\textbf{24.\textit{w3}! \textit{f8}}

24...\textit{g7} loses elegantly to 25.\textit{wxd7 w3}! 26.\textit{wxe8}! \textit{f7} 27.\textit{wxa8}!.

\textbf{25.\textit{w3} \textit{g8} 26.\textit{w3} \textit{f8} 27.\textit{w3} \textit{g8} 28.\textit{wxd7 wxd7} 29.\textit{e3}}

The endgame after 29.\textit{w3}+ \textit{h8} 30.\textit{w4} (threatening \textit{w7}) 30...\textit{e8} 31.\textit{w6}+ \textit{g8} 32.\textit{w5}+ \textit{h8} 33.\textit{wxe8}+ \textit{wxe8} 34.\textit{wxf5} should win as well, but any grandmaster will prefer the winning rook endgame over the winning queen ending.

\textbf{29...f4}

The only move.

\textbf{30.\textit{xc4} \textit{f7} 31.\textit{xc7}+}

31.\textit{e6}! was also strong.

\textbf{31...\textit{xf7} 32.\textit{e4}}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw [help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\foreach \x in {0,...,8} {
    \node at (\x,0) {\texttt{a}};
    \node at (\x,8) {\texttt{h}};
    \node at (0,\x) {\texttt{a}};
    \node at (8,\x) {\texttt{h}};
}
\draw [very thick] (1,1) -- (1,7) -- (7,7) -- (7,1) -- (1,1);
\foreach \x in {0,2,4,6} {
    \draw [very thick] (0,\x) -- (8,\x);
    \draw [very thick] (\x,0) -- (\x,8);
}
\node at (1,1) {\texttt{White}};
\node at (7,7) {\texttt{Black}};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{32...\textit{xc8} 33.\textit{xc8} \textit{e6} 34.\textit{e4}+ \textit{d5} 35.\textit{xe2} \textit{d4}}

35...\textit{e1}+ 36.\textit{h2} \textit{d4} was a different approach, but after 37.\textit{e7} White will win.

\textbf{36.\textit{xe2}}

Pushing the king back.

\textbf{36...\textit{e5} 37.\textit{f1}!}

The king belongs in the centre.

\textbf{37...\textit{d5} 38.\textit{e2} \textit{d4} 39.\textit{d3} \textit{d5} 40.\textit{f4} \textit{f8} 41.\textit{h2} \textit{h5} 42.\textit{f5} \textit{e5} 43.\textit{f6} \textit{d5} 1-0
Black correctly decided that further resistance would be futile.

This was an impressive game on many levels, but none of this would ever have happened had it not been for the powerful queen transfer to h4 on move 15. The ability to assess which pieces should be contributing more, and from which squares they could do so, is an important part of being a good attacker, if not the most important part. This is why I put the attention on the pieces as the first subject in Volume One.

In the final game of this segment we shall see another player making use of the a4- and h4-squares as transition squares to assault the black king.

Zoltan Almasi – Joerg Hickl

German Bundesliga 2003

1.e4 g6 2.d4 \(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)g7 3.d3 d6 4.f4 \(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)f6

A friend of mine was talking to a top grandmaster about the difficulty he was experiencing in getting an opening advantage. The super-GM replied: “Well, you cannot play against the Pirc every day.” I, too, tend to get optimistic when I am left with peace and quiet to use my extra tempo in the opening to establish a strong presence in the centre. However, objectively I am not sure the Pirc is worse than any other opening.

5.\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)f3 0–0

I suspect that this probably gives better equalising chances than 5...c5.

6.\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)d3 \(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)a6??

6...\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)c6 intending ...e5 is the main line, but most of the real aficionados play the opening this way.

7.0–0 c5 8.d5 \(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)b8?!

I am a bit sceptical about this line. It is probably better to play 8...\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)g4 and only later work towards playing ...\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)b8 and ...b5.

9.f5!

This is the critical test.

9...\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)c7 10.a4 a6?!

10...gx\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)f5? here or on the next move is the only way for Black to fight for equality in this line. It is better here than on the next move, as the pawn structure is impure after the dance with the a-pawns.

11.a5 \(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)b5?

This is designed to put pressure on e4, but it does not work. The white centre is too solid to be undermined in this way; it needs to be attacked head-on.

12.fxg6 hxg6

12...fxg6 leaves the e6-square vulnerable. White exploited this ideally in the following example: 13.\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)xb5 axb5 14.\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)xb5 \(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)xe4 15.\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)c1 \(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)f6 16.\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)g5 when Black was busted, Smerdon – Reilly, Queenstown 2006.

13.\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)e1!

The queen supports the e-pawn and is on the way to h4. Black is in trouble on the kingside.

13...\(\text{\textit{\textbullet}}\)xc3 14.bxc3
14... $\text{Q}h7$

Black tries to counter the queen emerging on $h4$. This move looks odd, but it is very difficult to see how Black can easily improve his position.

One other game went:
14... $\text{W}c7$ 15.c4!

White has complete control over the centre and great attacking prospects. It is not a surprise that Black found it hard to pick a move here.

15... $\text{Q}g4$

The long diagonal is not a problem. If Black takes a pawn, he will pay for it in valuable time, used against his king:
15... $\text{D}xe4$ 16. $\text{B}a3$! $\text{Q}f6$ 17.$\text{Q}g5$ gives White a great attack.

And 15...$\text{D}xd5$?! is simply bad. White surprises with 16.c5!! dxe5 17.cxd5 e4 18.$\text{Q}g5$ and Black is lost. The combination of $\text{W}h4$ and $\text{Q}f4$ (in the event that Black captures on a1) is too much to meet.

16.$\text{W}h4$!

The attack supersedes everything.
16...$\text{Q}f6$

17. $\text{D}xa1$? 17.$\text{Q}g5$
18.$\text{Q}g5$ $\text{D}xg5$ 18.$\text{D}xg5$!

This is slightly more precise, keeping the bishop on $c1$ flexible.
18...$\text{D}e5$ 19.$\text{D}f4$ b6 20.$\text{D}e2$ $\text{bxa5}$ 21.$\text{D}a3$ $\text{ah}4$

This is the great moment in the game (which, by the way, will not last too long anyway...). White has set up a strong attacking position, all his pieces but one are involved in the attack, or at least poised to do so. As I never get tired of repeating, your chances of a successful attack increase dramatically when you use all of your pieces.

In this position Zoltan Almasi finds a way to do exactly this; in only three moves from now, the least becomes the first, with the rook going from being out of play on a1, to being the predominant attacking piece.

In what follows I will get a bit bogged down in the various lines, as I really want to prove the strength of the white attack. In most of the examples in this book, I have conducted a far more extensive analysis than that which appears in the finished version. Despite knowing that I would never have enough space to include the full analysis, I wanted to be sure that what I am saying is not founded upon a mere hunch or intuition, but on undisputed fact. It is absolutely possible to advocate techniques that appear convincing, but do not work, simply...
because they are built on faulty information. For this reason I have taken unprejudiced analysis more and more seriously the last few years. At the same time, my playing strength has increased greatly...

15.e5!!
In principle this is a pawn sacrifice, although in practice this is not so important, as taking the e-pawn is unattractive for Black. What is remarkable about this move, is that this traditional break in the centre is nothing of the sort, but a clearance sacrifice of the pawn, making it possible for the rook on a1 to support the armed forces and lead the white men into battle.

15...e6
Black is trying to counter the white centre as well as taking control over the h4-square.

There are not really any other playable moves. After 15...dxe5 16.Qxe5 Qxd5 17.Qf4 Black is under a set of threats, such as Na4 and Qxg6.

16.Ba4!!
The rook continues the journey. I apologise for my possibly excessive enthusiasm; I have inherited it from Avrukh (who annotated the game for ChessBase), but fully share his feeling of awe about Almasi's play.

16..dxe5
Before we get into the 'proof' part of the game, let us talk about the strategy one last time. White is transferring the rook to the kingside in order to have a majority of forces there. If we look at this in terms of the assault ratio, the rook shifts the balance heavily into White's favour. Just compare this piece with its counterpart on b8, which is doing nothing to aid the defence.

Only deep analysis can prove that this theoretical point is accurate, so here we go!

The other option here is:
16...cxd5 17.dh4 Qxe5!

16...e6

I think this is the toughest defence, although even this is not sufficient.
17...dxe5 transposes to the next note.

18.Bh6!!
We will see this move in many positions. One of the main reasons is that the g6-pawn is the only strong point in the black position, once it goes, the rest of the position goes. The theory behind this idea was covered in Chapter 6 of Volume One.

18.Bxh7? is less successful here. The problem is that the bishop is no longer on g7. 18...Bxh7 19.Qg5+ Bh7 20.Qh4 Bh8 21.Bxh7 Qg8 22.Qh7 The attack does not work. After 22...Qe7!! Black is able to repulse the attack.

18.Qf6
White was threatening simply to capture the bishop now. If 18...g7 then 19.xh7 works.

19.g3

More pressure is put on g6. Black is not able to finish his development as he has to pay attention to ideas such as g6†.

19...e7 20.h4

Another piece is attacking g6. White does not have to hide his intentions or be flexible about them, as he has won enough time in exchange for his two pawns.

20.c5

Irritating the queen is the best Black can do. Giving up the bishop with 20...xh4 will allow White to cut through on the dark squares. The following line is a good illustration of this: 21.xh4 c4 22.xg6 fxg6 23.xg6† g7 24.xf8† xf8 25.xd6 xa8 26.xh6 f7 27.xf8 Black cannot recapture as h8† wins, while after a developing move such as 27...f5 White can destroy the defences with the following fantastic move: 28.xf5!! The main line is: 28...xg7 29.xd5† f7 30.h8† g7 31.xf7† xf7 32.xa8 and White wins.

21.xg6!

The pieces are all in place now, so it is time for this sacrifice. The move order is not hugely important, but sacrificing the knight here eliminates some ideas with...g5.

21...fxg6 22.f4!

The g6-pawn is lost, but there is no reason to take it immediately. First White uses the inactive bishop to eliminate one of the most important defenders. Black's two best options both lead to joyless endings.

a) 22...g7 23.xd6 Simplest. 23...xf1† 24.xf1 g7 25.xg6 f5 26.xg7† xg7 27.xb8 xg3 28.xg3 xc2 29.d6 c4 30.xf2 White should win this ending. He has blocked the opponent's pawns successfully and has two mobile passed pawns of his own. On top of this he has the two bishops...

b) 22...xf4 23.xf4 b8 White is fully built up and ready to strike. 24.xg7† g7 25.xg7† xg7 26.xf8† Winning back the piece. 26...xf8 27.xd6† e7 28.xb8 e1† 29.xf1 e3† 30.xh1 c6 31.e4 dxc4 32.xc7 and 33.xc5 with a winning endgame.

17.f4

The rook has joined the attack to lead from the front line.

17.f6

Black is trying to control the g5-square while at the same time disturbing the rook.

The only alternative is to allow White to sacrifice on h7, but ignore it and play in the centre. However, this is also not sufficient: 17...exd5 18.xh7† e4

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The rook has joined the attack to lead from the front line.

17.f6

Black is trying to control the g5-square while at the same time disturbing the rook.

The only alternative is to allow White to sacrifice on h7, but ignore it and play in the centre. However, this is also not sufficient: 17...exd5 18.xh7† e4
```
18...\textit{exd}5

Other moves were:

\begin{itemize}
\item 18...\textit{exd}5 is futile. After 19.c4! followed by 20.\textit{b}2 White will quickly exploit the long diagonal to dominate the enemy position.
\end{itemize}
19...\texttt{\texttt{We8}}

This is cut straight to pieces with:
20.\texttt{\texttt{Exf6! Qxf6}} \texttt{21.\texttt{Wh4}}

Threatening mate in 2.

21...\texttt{\texttt{Wg7}}

22.\texttt{\texttt{Wg5!!}}

Putting the bishop on f4 is also possible, but this is a killer.

22...\texttt{\texttt{Wxe5}} \texttt{23.\texttt{Bxf6+ We6}} \texttt{24.\texttt{Wh7+ Wg8}}

25.\texttt{\texttt{Wxf6 Wxh7}}

Black has two rooks for the queen, but not for long.

26.\texttt{\texttt{Wxg6+ Wg8}} \texttt{27.\texttt{Bd3}}

White is threatening mate in three moves.

27...\texttt{\texttt{We8}}

This is the only move, but White has many ways to cut the cake, including 28.h4 and 28.\texttt{\texttt{Wh7+!!}}.

20.\texttt{\texttt{Wxh7!}}

This time the exchange sacrifice is pure deflection, taking the king away from f7.

20...\texttt{\texttt{Wxh7}}

20...\texttt{\texttt{Wxe5}} also does not work. After 21.\texttt{\texttt{Wxe5 Wxh7}} White can choose between mating the king and simply taking the rook on b8.

21.\texttt{\texttt{Bxf7}}

1–0

In this miserable position Black resigned. If he does not capture the knight, White will play \texttt{\texttt{Wg3}} and take on g6 with the queen. And if he does remove the troublesome steeed, the material is equal, but White is coming with \texttt{\texttt{Wxg7+}}, \texttt{\texttt{We5}} and \texttt{\texttt{Wg3}} anyway...

**Lines of Communication**

Thinking back to our description of the assault ratio, it is clear that it is important to keep our pieces in contact with the scene of action, and at the same time to cut off the opponent's pieces.

Here we shall first look at three examples where the attacker should fight to keep his pieces at their peak performance. After this, we shall look at four great examples of keeping the opponent's pieces out of play by disrupting their lines of communication.

In our first example, we shall see a critical moment from an important game in the Russian Championship, in which the subsequent champion, Alexander Morozevich, misplays a promising position. In his notes he indicated that he had missed the route for the a8-rook to enter the game. It seems that he somehow had not added enough importance to this.

We will start at the critical moment, but follow the rest of the game to the end, even if it has little to do with our subject.
22...\textit{g7}?

This looks like a normal move, but Morozevich misevaluates the position. It is clear that he believed he would have strong long-term compensation. As it turns out this is far from clear. Instead he should have exploited his slight lead in development to start a direct attack.

Best was therefore 22...f4!, with the idea of creating further weaknesses in the white camp. The following line, inspired by my computer, illustrates that ...\textit{g7} and ...\textit{h8} is not the optimal way to take over the h-file: 23.a5e5 fxg3 24.fxg3 \textit{h6} 25.f4

25...\textit{a7}!! With ...\textit{h7} and ...\textit{b7} on the way, Black has a strong attack.

Morozevich said in his annotations that it was this last move he had missed, the ability to activate his worst placed piece effortlessly to a brilliant square.

23.\textit{g5}!!

After this slip the position is just unclear. Tomashevsky also did not sense that f4 was the important square in the position.

I think that 23.f4! was stronger. If White were able to use the g5- and e5-squares as he pleases, he would be doing very well. Therefore it is likely that he can follow up with \textit{d2} and \textit{e5f}, \textit{xe5} and \textit{ae1} or \textit{g5}, with a strong position.

23...\textit{c7} 24.\textit{h4}!

Making Black aware that \textit{g6} is a weakness too.

24.\textit{f7} 25.\textit{e2} \textit{d7}

25...\textit{b7}?? 26.\textit{e6} would of course be a catastrophe, so Black needs to take control over e6 before entering the promised diagonal.

26.f4 \textit{h8} 27.\textit{f2}

Not obvious by any means.

27...\textit{b7} 28.a1b1 \textit{h5} 29.\textit{d3}?

This retreat seems strange and terribly time consuming. Suddenly Black has time to get all the pieces to the right squares. It seems likely that time trouble was becoming a factor around here.

White misses his chance to fight for the initiative with 29.b4!, based on 29...\textit{axb4} 30.a\textit{xb4} \textit{cxb4} 31.\textit{c5}!, when Black has to move backwards and give up the d-pawn. The position is simply wildly unclear.
29...\textit{c}6 30.\textit{g}1?
Was White dreaming of playing \textit{g}4? Well, he was soon to realise who is attacking here... 30.\textit{h}4! was tougher.

30...\textit{f}8!
The rook is headed for e3.

31.\textit{h}4
A pitiful return.

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31...\textit{e}xe5!
This sacrifice is designed to take over the dark squares completely. White is busted.

32.fx\textit{e}5 \textit{f}4 33.\textit{g}4
33.\textit{g}e1 f\textit{x}g3\textdagger 34.\textit{g}1 might look like a defence until 34...\textit{h}4! winning the knight is spotted. For example: 35.\textit{g}x\textit{g}6! \textit{f}2! 36.\textit{w}e6 \textit{h}2 37.\textit{w}e4 \textit{w}f7 with a winning rook ending on the horizon.

33...\textit{e}8 34.\textit{w}d2
34.\textit{w}d1 \textit{e}3 and White is dominated.

34...\textit{e}e3 35.\textit{b}4 \textit{w}e7 36.bxc5 \textit{w}xg5? The tactical solution. Also after the simple 36...\textit{x}x\textit{e}5 White is completely dominated.

37.\textit{h}1
37.\textit{f}f5\textdagger \textit{gx}f5 38.gxf5 \textit{w}f3 leads nowhere.

37...\textit{x}x\textit{h}1
Even better would have been 37...\textit{c}7!, when after 38.\textit{h}2 \textit{w}xg4 Black wins everything.

38.\textit{x}x\textit{h}1 \textit{a}xc5 39.\textit{d}1 \textit{w}e7 40.a4
White could have resisted a bit longer with 40.\textit{g}g2, though after 40...\textit{g}3 41.\textit{w}e1 \textit{g}5! his outlook is grim.

40...\textit{g}3 41.\textit{g}g2 \textit{b}4 42.\textit{h}h2 \textit{w}e5 43.c5 f3 44.\textit{h}h4 \textit{f}4
0–1

The next game revolves all around the clearance of the diagonal b1-h7. In the game Ivanchuk clearly wanted to open up for the bishop, but he did not find the most energetic way to do so, and for this reason he missed the win twice, on moves 27 and 28. The win on move 27 is simply fantastic, but I am surprised that a player of Ivanchuk's calibre makes a meal of the option on move 28.

\textbf{Vassily Ivanchuk – Lazaro Bruzon Bautista}

\underline{Skanderborg 2005}

1.e4 e5 2.\textit{d}f3 \textit{d}c6 3.\textit{b}b5 a6 4.a4 \textit{d}f6 5.0–0 \textit{d}e7 6.\textit{e}e1 \textit{b}5 7.\textit{b}b3 d6 8.c3 0–0 9.h3 \textit{a}a5 10.\textit{c}c2 c5 11.d4 \textit{w}e7 12.\textit{b}d2 cxd4 13.cxd4 \textit{d}c6 14.\textit{b}b3 a5 15.\textit{d}e3 \textit{a}4 16.\textit{b}d2 \textit{d}7 17.\textit{c}c1 \textit{w}b7 18.\textit{d}f1 \textit{f}c8 19.\textit{d}g3 \textit{d}d8

\begin{center}
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\hline 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8 & \\
\hline a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
Only three games have been played from this position, all between grandmasters.

20...b1
This natural move is of course the one to play. I personally played 20...h1?! in a very important game here, and duly lost (Aagaard - Haslinger, Great Yarmouth 2007).

When I say the game was between grandmasters, it might not technically have been the case. The game was played in round 8 out of 11; I had passed the 2500 mark in round three, and thus secured the title, while my opponent had made his rating only the day before. But like me, he took no chances and secured a few more rating points before dropping pieces...

20...h6
Many moves are playable here.

The other game continued with:
20...b6 21.dxe5 hxe5?! 22.Wxd6 hxf3† 23.gxf3 hxe3 24.fxe3 Whh3

The opening is very interesting and White might have a chance for a slight edge with something like Wg3-e2-d4, due to his central control. The next few moves were maybe not the best, but the end was exquisite.
25.Bcd1 Bc8 26.Wf4 We7 27.e5 Ac4 28.Ac4 Ac6 29.Bf2 Ac6 30.Ac1 Bb4 31.Bg6 hxg6 32.Axh2† 33.g3! Whf5 34.Af2 Whd7

Black resigned in Sutovsky - Werle, Dresden 2007. He is losing the exchange, since any rook move would lose the queen to a knight check on f6.

21.We2 Whb6 22.dxe5 Wxe3?! This exchange is completely unnecessary. I see nothing wrong with 22...Wxe5 when Black is close to equality.

23.Axe6!!
Ivanchuk does not miss a chance like this. The exchange is sacrificed as a simple efficiency scheme. The rook is not hanging on c1 anymore and White can start an attack on the kingside.

23...Wxb6
23...Wxe6 would lead to similar lines as in the game, but with the black queen out of play.

24.exf6
This pawn is highly annoying for Black, but at the moment he has even more pressing problems.

24...Af4?!
This gives White the chance to earn another tempo for getting his pieces close to the king. Looking hard I have found that the black position is on the verge of being indefensible,
but that he would have had a real practical chance of saving the game after:

24...\text{\texttt{c1}}

White has no good alternative to taking the pawn.

25.f\text{\texttt{xg7}}

Here I am unsure about which is the best option for Black. Maybe it is 25...\text{\texttt{xg7}} and maybe it is:

25...\text{\texttt{e4}}

As I find the latter to be much the more interesting, I have chosen to analyse that one.

26.d\text{\texttt{d3}}!

This is the move I trust. The queen is banished to the outskirts of the board.

White can also try a more strange approach with 26...\text{\texttt{d1!}}, but after 26...\text{\texttt{xb2}} 27.e5 d5 28.h\text{\texttt{h5 e6!}} I have a feeling Black is alright.

26...\text{\texttt{xa2}} 27.e5!

With the idea \text{\texttt{e4}}, so the black response is pretty obvious.

27.d5 28.h\text{\texttt{h5 e6!}}

The only chance.

28..\text{\texttt{c6?}} 29..\text{\texttt{d4}} is strangely completely over already. White will play \text{\texttt{xe6}} followed by \text{\texttt{g4}}, and there is nothing Black can do about it.

29..\text{\texttt{xb5}}

This attack on the queenside turns out to be the strongest continuation.

29..\text{\texttt{f6?}} would spoil most of the advantage.

29..\text{\texttt{xg7}} (29..\text{\texttt{xf6?}} 30..\text{\texttt{exe6 e6!}} 31..\text{\texttt{xc1??}} \text{\texttt{xc1}} 32..\text{\texttt{h2}} and there is no defence against \text{\texttt{e3}} with the idea of \text{\texttt{xc6+}})

30..\text{\texttt{xd7 xb2}} 31..\text{\texttt{xb2 xb2}} 32..\text{\texttt{b5 a5}} 33..\text{\texttt{xa4 xa4}} 34..\text{\texttt{b6 cc4}} 35..\text{\texttt{xa4 xa4}} 36..\text{\texttt{d1 a5}} Black is a pawn down, but the e-pawn is a bit tender. Probably the endgame is defensible.

29..\text{\texttt{xb5}} 30..\text{\texttt{xb5 c4}}

30..\text{\texttt{ac6}} 31..\text{\texttt{f6+ xg7}} 32..\text{\texttt{d3}} leads to a deadly attack.

31..\text{\texttt{d7!}}

This looks all gone to me, but some work remains.

31...\text{\texttt{c7}}

After 31..\text{\texttt{xb2}} 32.e6 Black is quickly mated: 32..\text{\texttt{exe6}} 33..\text{\texttt{exe6 exe6}} 34..\text{\texttt{exe6+ h7}} 35..\text{\texttt{f7+ g8}} 36..\text{\texttt{f5 mate!}}

32..\text{\texttt{xd5}}

Black is facing 33.e6, which is anything but reassuring.

32..\text{\texttt{xb2}}

32..\text{\texttt{g6}} 33..\text{\texttt{d4 xb2}} 34..\text{\texttt{f5 h7}} 35..\text{\texttt{f6+ xf6}} 36..\text{\texttt{exe6}} 37..\text{\texttt{exe7 f7}} 38..\text{\texttt{xf7 g8}} 39..\text{\texttt{xe7}} and Black cannot find any endgames leading to the end he wishes for.

33..\text{\texttt{b5 b6}}

33...\text{\texttt{b6}} 34..\text{\texttt{xa4}} is no better.

34..\text{\texttt{f6+ xg7}} 35..\text{\texttt{d3}}

Finally the weaknesses around the king come to light.
35...\texttt{Ax}d8

The only move, the rook was hanging and there was a knight check coming up on d7.

36.\texttt{Ad}7+ d\texttt{f}8 37.\texttt{e}h4

One out of several winning lines – the king is too open.

37...\texttt{e}a5

Forced in view of various threats. White now wins with a lot of checks.

38.\texttt{Ax}h6+ \texttt{e}e7 39.\texttt{d}f5+ \texttt{e}e6 40.\texttt{d}e4+ \texttt{d}d7 41.\texttt{c}c5+

And next comes 42.\texttt{Ax}a6. White has more material and a powerful attack going.

25...\texttt{e}h5 \texttt{f}e5 26.f\texttt{x}g7

26.\texttt{d}xe5 d\texttt{e}5 27.f\texttt{x}g7 was also very strong, but the game continuation is not bad.

26...\texttt{e}a6!?

26...\texttt{e}xg7 27.e5!

27.\texttt{e}h4?!

This move appears rather unnatural to me. Instead White could have won by a brilliant combination, based on disrupting the black pieces and opening lines towards the king in the most ingenious way.

The first move is nothing special, it is just a threat to the h6-pawn:

27.\texttt{e}e3!

28.g8=\texttt{w}!! \texttt{x}xg8 29.\texttt{f}f6+ \texttt{x}xf6 30.e5+ \texttt{e}e6 31.exf6 with a winning attack.

28.e5!! \texttt{d}d5

This move, attempting to get closer with the queen, seems like a good try, but White has a devious win. However, also after the two other moves Black will have to give in.

28...dxe5 29.\texttt{e}xe5 and 30.\texttt{g}g3 is quite simple.

And after 28...\texttt{f}f8 White has a beautiful win with: 29.\texttt{g}g7 \texttt{x}xg7 30.\texttt{d}d3 \texttt{h}h8 31.e6!

A beautiful magnetic sacrifice. 31...\texttt{x}xe6
32. \( \text{d}4 \) White will play 33. \( \text{dxe6} \) and 34. \( \text{f6} \), if allowed, so Black is forced to try 32... \( \text{e8} \), but here White is completely dominating and can decide the game without fanfare with simple moves such as 33. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{g8} \) 34. \( \text{f3} \). 29. \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 30. \( \text{exe6} \) \( \text{h5} \) 31. \( \text{e4} \)

There are other moves, but this is very attractive.

31. \( \text{g6} \)

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

32. \( \text{b7} \)!

The black pieces are duly punished for their lack of coordination. White wins.

27... \( \text{c5} \)!

This is probably best answered with a little sneaky move.

28. \( \text{d2} \)!

Now Black has no choice but giving up his strong bishop with:

28... \( \text{h2} \)!

28... \( \text{f4} \) This loses in fabulous fashion to the following long and attractive combination: 29. \( \text{exe6} \) \( \text{g7} \) 30. \( \text{g5} \)!

Threatening e4-e5. 30... \( \text{e5} \) 31. \( \text{f5} \)!! \( \text{xf5} \) 32. \( \text{f5} \)!

\[ \text{Diagram} \]

A great sacrifice. 32... \( \text{exe1} \) 33. \( \text{h2} \) \( \text{f8} \) The only move (33... \( \text{e5} \) 34. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{xf2} \) 35. \( \text{f6} \) and mate emerges). 34. \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{e7} \) 35. \( \text{f6} \) \( \text{d8} \) 36. \( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{c7} \) Black is two exchanges up, but the white pieces are simply vastly superior to the black ones. The \( \text{f} \)-pawn is a star and the black king is in deep trouble. White should win. 37. \( \text{g8} \) \( \text{f8} \) 38. \( \text{g4} \) This is probably an appropriate place to stop. The analysis may already have deviated from the path of perfection, as all long lines inevitable do.

29. \( \text{xh2} \) \( \text{h5} \) 30. \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 31. \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{h4} \)!

Black cannot allow the white queen to make it to \( \text{d4} \), from where she would rule the waves.

32. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 33. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 34. \( \text{f4} \)

White’s advantage is large, but by no means decisive.

Both of the other queen moves lead to bad positions, but they are not completely lost as far as I can see:

I think the best way forward for Black is to seek simplifications:
27...\(\text{bxc4}\)!

This is the other option. I think the right way to play for an edge is:

28.\(\text{e3 bxb4}\)

28...\(\text{d4} 29.\text{xh6 cxc7} 30.\text{g5}\) transposes to the previous note.

29.\(\text{f3 cxc7} 30.\text{e5}\)!

Opening up for the bishop, once again.

30...\(\text{e6} 31.\text{e4}\)!

Here it is probably best to play 31...\(d5\) 32.\(\text{d3}\); with a very strong attack, but the direct lines do have some attraction:

31...\(\text{a3?!} 32.\text{f4}\)!

Using the indirect attack on the black queen to get closer.

32.\(\text{c8} 33.\text{xg7 g7} 34.\text{f6}\)† \(\text{g8}\)

35.\(\text{xh6! axb2} 36.\text{h7}\)† \(\text{h8}\) 37.\(\text{exd6} \text{xd6}\)

38.\(\text{exe6}\)!

White wins.

28.\(\text{f5?!}\)

This awful move turns a winning position into a lost one in a single fell swoop! It was important to keep the initiative and to dislodge the bishop from e5 at all costs.

This could have been achieved with:

28.f4!

Here Black can either give a check on d4, or give up the bishop in some way. But even this ends horribly. Let us have a look at both options, which are both truly spectacular.

a) 28...\(\text{xb2} 29.\text{fxe5 xe2} 30.\text{xe2 dxe5} 31.\text{d2!}\)

Eyeing the eighth rank, with gain of tempo.

31...\(\text{e6} 32.\text{f5}\)!

This is the flashy move, but the simple 32.a3 is sufficient as well.

32...\(\text{xf5} 33.\text{exf5 b4} 34.\text{d7?!}\)

Again a bit showy, but the finish is truly exceptional.

34...\(\text{b3}\)
35...e4!! bxa2
35...b2 36.b7 a3 37.d5 and White wins.
36.d5!

The queen is unimportant. The attacking ratio is overwhelming.
36...a1=Q 37.Qh2

Black is mated no matter what, but let us see the main threat in action:
37...e4 38.Qxf7† Qh7

39.Qg8=Q+ Qxg8 40.Qg6† Qh8 41.Qh7 mate.

b) 28...d4† 29.Qh2 Qxb2 There are no better squares, but this one looks pretty solid anyway. 30.Qd1!!

This amazing move was most likely what Ivanchuk missed. It is counterintuitive to go to d1 instead of d3, but the latter is easily repulsed by ...Qc3. So, for this reason it is better to seek the comfort of the d1-square until it is possible to play e4-e5, and only then go to d3, when the mating threat cannot be arrested in the same way.

Black now has a lot of options, all of them insufficient:

b1) 30...Qxg7 31.e5 Qf8 32.Qf5+ Qxf5 33.Qxf5 Qh8 34.exd6 and the attack will soon make it through.

b2) 30...Qc3

This move seems logical. The idea is to prevent Qd3. But White has other ideas.
31.Qf5 Qxf5 32.exf5

Surprisingly Black does not seem to be able to save this position. The white pieces are too close to the king. One line could be:
32...b4 33.Qe2 aa8 34.f6! Qxf6 35.Qe4 Qxg7 36.Qe3 Qd4 37.Qh7† Qf8

38.Qd3!

38.Qg3 would allow counterplay with 38...Qc1, when Black survives with a perpetual: 39.Qxg7 Qg1† 40.Qg3 Qe1†

But after this move, White’s attack is winning. This is Black walking the plank:
38...Qa1 39.Qg3 f4 40.Qg8† Qe7 41.Qe4+ Qd7 42.Qb7+ Qe6 43.f5† Qe5 44.Qe4 mate!

b3) 30...Qd8

This is one of many rook moves, all refuted in the same way:
31.e5! dxe5 32.Qd3 e4?? 33.Qxe4! Qxg7
Black wins, as the queen is trapped on the first rank.

31.\textbf{xf1} \textbf{xc1} 32.\textbf{d3} b4 33.\textbf{b5} b3 34.axb3 axb3 35.a4 \textbf{xfl}\# 36.\textbf{xfl} \textbf{b8} 0–1

Our final example shows a rising star from Italy paving the way to success in the B-group of the Dutch chess classic. In this game White is fighting hard to get to the h7-square and at one point the bishop on d3 finds three (!) pieces between itself and this magic square. Nevertheless, it still exerts a deadly effect.

Our focus in this game is the fight for this diagonal. The black novelty (not through preparation, I expect) on move 19 was designed to take control of the f5-square, by removing the e-pawn, but White saw further and followed up on his attack down the diagonal, with the brilliant justification hidden in the notes to the 21st move.

\textbf{Fabiano Caruana} – \textbf{Krishnan Sasikiran}

\textbf{Wijk aan Zee 2009}

1.e4 c5 2.\textbf{d3} d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\textbf{xd4} \textbf{gf6} 5.\textbf{c3} a6 6.\textbf{ae2} e6 7.0–0 \textbf{wc7} 8.f4 \textbf{e7} 9.\textbf{e3} \textbf{e6} 10.\textbf{h1} 0–0 11.\textbf{e1} \textbf{xd4} 12.\textbf{xd4} b5 13.a3 \textbf{b7} 14.\textbf{g3} \textbf{ad8} 15.\textbf{ac1} \textbf{d7} 16.\textbf{d3} \textbf{be8}
17...d8 18.h3

Threatening hx6 followed by e4-e5.

18...g6 19.exf1 d5?

The first new move of the game, and a bad one.

Only six weeks before the game Black had played better with 19...xf8. After 20.f5 he reacted with 20...exf5 21.exf5 g5! (21...xf3 22.fxg6 hxg6 23.xf6 xfx6 24.xd7 would win for White) 22.ee3 gg7. This eventually led to a draw in Fedorchuk - Jaracz, Dresden 2008, but maybe White is a bit better after 23.xe8+ xe8 24.ee2 ee7 25.de3, when the better pawn structure might tell eventually.

20.f5!

A very thematic break. Black was trying to take control over the f5-square with his last move, so this is perhaps the last chance White is given to play this move.

20...dxe4

20...exf5 21.exf5 g5 does not work here. After 22.xh6! it is time to resign.

21.fxg6!

It is not hard to guess what Sasikiran missed; see the next note. However, Caruana does not miss such chances.

21...fxg6

This is forced. The h-file has to be kept closed, due to some Wh8 mate issues, while after 21...exf3? White is able to show the first point of his combination: 22.xh7t!! with mate in two moves.

22.xf6 xd4 23.xf7

The intrusion on the seventh rank must have been very uncomfortable for the Indian Grandmaster.

23.xh4 24.ee2 cc6

24..b4 25.axb4 xb4 would only act as a distraction. The direct win here is: 26.xb5! axb5 Black has to take the knight, as it cannot be allowed to land on d6. 27.xb7 and there is no good way to react to 28.g3.

25.g3!

The bishop is simply lost.

25...e3+ 26.g1 a5

Black is trying to create counterplay, but there is none to be found. 26...Wg5 loses to 27.a7 followed by 28.xf7.
27. gxh4 b4 28. axb4
28. ... exd5 with the point 28... bxc3 29. We5 was also winning.

28... axb4 29. d1
Black has a bit of play for the piece, but it is temporary and the young maestro converts his advantage without difficulty.

29... d5 30. exd5 c5
30... h1† 31. h2 c4 32. d3 c5 33. g1 and wins.

31. d3 b3 32. g3 bxc2 33. xxc2 g4 34. f2 f2 35. d2 d5 36. f2 d3
Now a final sacrifice seals Black's fate.

White would of course love to play 18. gxh5, but Black would be able to play 18... d5! with some defensive possibilities. To avoid this White played a fantastic combination:

18. d6!!
Other moves also win, but none as convincingly. Black cannot improve his position and might as well take the rook.

18... cxd6 19. gxh5 gxh5 20. xg7† h8 21. xg6† f6 22. xg6† h8 23. f6 f6 24. xh5† f5 25. g5† h4 26. xh4† d4 27. c3 mate!

Having looked at some examples of how the lines of communication work for the aggressor (and only twice on the b1-h7 diagonal), we shall now move on to obstruction of the defender's lines of communication.

In the first example we shall see a blocking of the diagonal from c8 to h3 with a stunning rook sacrifice.

A wonderful achievement!
In the next example White is ready to attack the king, as all of Black’s pieces are situated far away on the queenside. However, it is first necessary to cut off the influential enemy queen by disrupting the lines of communication.

Karen Asrian – Tigran Kotanjian

Armenian Championship 2007

19.e6!!

A beautiful and classic move, which unleashes the bishop on c3 while also eliminating the queen’s influence on the kingside.

19...f6

Giving up the d-pawn equals pure resignation, but no defence existed:

19...dxe6 loses to 20.fxg7 fxg7 21.fxg5 hxh5 22.xh5 gxg7:

23...xg3! when the superior firepower will tell.

19...c2 is a bit more complicated: 20.xg7 xg7 21.xg5 f5 22.xg3 xce1 (22...xb5 23.e7† xh7 24.xh4 with mate) 23.xe1 xeb5 24.e7† xh7 25.xh4 xxf7 26.xf7 xxc4 27.xxe7 and White wins.

The most difficult line is probably:

19...xc3 20.bxc3 xce4 21.xg5 f5

The only move. Together the knight on c2 and the pawn on f5 prevent the rook from swinging easily to the kingside.

22.xh5 hxg5 23.xg5† xh8 24.xf6† xg8 25.xg6† xh8

The problem here is that a3 does not make sense, but White can end the show with the beautiful:

26.xe2!!

This move is winning. After:

26...xa1 27.xe3

Black is getting mated.

20.exd7 e5 21.xed1 xxb7 22.ad6 xec2 23.xe6† xh8 24.a5 xec7 25.xe5 xfe5 26.xe5 xec5 27.xe5† xg8 28.xe6† xh7 29.xe8 1-0

The following game features a brilliant piece of disruption of the lines of communication. With his powerful 28th move White circumvents the enemy defences completely.
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Gudmundur Sigurjonsson – Leif Ogaard

Føbjerg 1978

1.e4 c5 2.d3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 d6
5.d3 a6 6.\textit{e}2 c7 7.0–0 \textit{d}6 8.\textit{d}1 c7 9.f4 \textit{d}6 10.\textit{e}3 0–0 11.\textit{e}1 \textit{d}7 12.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}8?! 

This move is rather odd. The king is not necessarily safer on h8 than g8.

The main line starts with 12...\textit{xd}4 13.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}6 with chances for both sides.

13.a3 b5 14.\textit{d}3 \textit{ab}8 15.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 16.\textit{d}4 e5?! 

This standard idea has never really appealed to me, and here it also looks poor. The black knight is in trouble on h5 quite soon.

17.fxe5 \textit{h}5 18.\textit{h}3 dxe5

19.\textit{f}5!!

A sign of things to come. This powerful move activates the rook instead of just taking the knight with the queen. Black surely overlooked this possibility.

19...exd4

Sadly forced in view of 19...\textit{d}4 20.\textit{xe}5! and White ends up with an extra pawn.

20.\textit{xh}5 \textit{h}6 21.\textit{d}5!

White should not get confused and lose his patience.

21.e5?! allows 21...\textit{f}5!, with a decent position. Black only needs to avoid 21...\textit{g}5?, which was recommended by one commentator but loses to 22.\textit{f}5 \textit{g}6 23.\textit{xg}5!.

21...\textit{xd}5

The only move.

21...\textit{b}7 loses to a great piece of disruption. 22.\textit{xh}6! \textit{gxh}6 23.\textit{h}6 \textit{g}8 24.\textit{d}6! \textit{f}6 25.e5 and Black cannot open the seventh rank and successfully defend both g7 and h7.

22.\textit{exd}5 \textit{f}4

Defending against a quick \textit{h}6. 22...\textit{d}6 was probably a bit safer, but after 23.\textit{f}1 White still enjoys an edge.

23.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}3 24.\textit{g}4!

24.\textit{d}7? g6 25.\textit{h}3 would win a pawn, but after 25...\textit{e}5 26.\textit{xh}6! \textit{g}7 27.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}8 Black enjoys fine compensation on the h-file. This, combined with the opposite-coloured bishops, leads me to evaluate the position as about equal.

24...\textit{b}6

24...\textit{g}8? was recommended somewhere, but White can use the shaky protection of the h6-pawn with 25.\textit{h}3! \textit{g}5 26.\textit{e}4!, when the h7-square is really tender. After 26...f5 27.\textit{e}6! \textit{h}8 28.d6 White’s advantage is overwhelming, despite the material equality.

25.\textit{h}6 \textit{g}8

25...\textit{g}6? was recommended as the way forward, but White can both take on f7 and play the stunning 26.\textit{d}1!!, with an indirect threat to the rook on g6, and 27.\textit{f}3 trapping the queen, is coming as well.
Chapter 2 - Typical Piece Play

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The best move was 25...\(\text{\&f6}\)!, White is still better after 26.\(\text{\&f2}\) or 26.g3, but his advantage may not be enough to decide the game.

26.\(\text{\&f2}\)!

26.\(\text{\&f2}\)! with the additional idea of 27.\(\text{\&c2}\) would have been very strong here. In this case I feel that White would be able to pose insurmountable problems to his opponent. After the game continuation Black was given a moment to find some sort of coordination of his forces, an opportunity which, unfortunately, he squandered.

![Chess Diagram](image)

26...\(\text{\&d6}\)!

White immediately exploits his opponent's lack of coordination to threaten 28.\(\text{\&f5}\)!

27...\(\text{\&c5}\)!

This move fails immediately to a fantastic disruption of the lines of communication.

27...\(\text{\&g5}\) was objectively better, but also not pleasant for Black. After 28.\(\text{\&e4}\) g6 29.b4! White is in complete control. All the black pieces are badly placed, pinned or pinned down. The extent of his lack of communication becomes apparent in details such as 29...\(\text{\&c7}\)? 30.\(\text{\&xf7}\)! and White wins everything.

![Chess Diagram](image)

28.d6!!

I was only twelve the first time I saw this game, and it still resounds in my memory. The term for this kind of double disruption of the lines of communication is a 'Novotny'.

28...\(\text{\&xd6}\)

No matter which piece Black takes with on d6, he loses some level of control. Here, taking with the rook, removes the protection of the rook on f8 provided by the black bishop.

![Chess Diagram](image)

Taking with the bishop would mean losing control over the sixth rank. White can exploit this immediately: 28...\(\text{\&xd6}\) 29.\(\text{\&f5}\) g6 30.\(\text{\&xg6}\)! with mate to come.
28...\textit{W}g5 also does not save the position. White can use the eighth rank issues with 29.\textit{W}xf7!.

29.\textit{W}\textit{f}5

The text move is of course sufficient to decide the game, but there was another win, based on the back rank being weakened by the absent influence of the black bishop: 29.\textit{W}xf7! \textit{W}xf7 30.\textit{W}c8† and Black will lose a piece after 30...\textit{W}d8 31.\textit{W}xd8† \textit{W}f8 32.\textit{W}d5†.

29...\textit{W}xd3

Black decides to end the game in disgrace. A true gentleman would have taken the ridicule of being mated and played 29...g6, when White wins best with:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node at (0,0) {\textit{W}xd3 \textit{W}xf6 \textit{W}g6 \textit{W}xf6 \textit{W}f6 \textit{W}d5 \textit{W}d5 \textit{W}f7 \textit{W}f7 mate!};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

30.\textit{W}xg6†!! \textit{W}xg6 31.\textit{W}xf7† \textit{W}g7 32.\textit{W}f7 mate!

30.\textit{W}xd3 \textit{W}xf6 31.\textit{W}xf6 \textit{W}xf6 32.\textit{W}g3† \textit{W}h8 33.\textit{W}c7

1-0

White plans to ransack the queenside, so Black defends his pawns by putting them back in the box.

In the final game where we shall look at this theme, it is especially the 16th move we should pay attention to. The point of this move is to lock the white queen out of the game. After this, White wastes time taking Black's bishop on g7, giving Black enough time to unleash a surprising break that activates his own pieces and eliminates the fabulous defender on e2.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node at (0,0) {Ashot Nadanian - Melikset Khachian};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Amenian Championship 1997

1.\textit{d}4 \textit{d}f6 2.\textit{c}4 \textit{g}6 3.\textit{W}c3 \textit{d}5 4.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{W}d5 5.\textit{W}a4!?\textit{a}1

This imaginative idea, transferred from other openings, was a brainchild of the highly imaginative white player. This chess artist has rightfully earned the praise bestowed on him from top author Tibor Karolyi in the recently published book, \textit{Genius in the Background}.

5...\textit{W}g7

5...\textit{W}f6 6.\textit{W}c3 \textit{W}d5 could be a logical solution to the misery chess can be at times.

6.\textit{c}4 \textit{W}b6 7.\textit{W}e3 0-0 8.\textit{W}f3 \textit{W}c6 9.\textit{W}e2 \textit{f}5!?\textit{a}1

At the time this was a new move.

10.\textit{exf}5 \textit{gxf}5 11.\textit{W}b3†

11.\textit{W}xb6 axb6 12.\textit{W}c4† may have given better chances to play for an advantage, according to Nadanian.

11...\textit{W}h8 12.\textit{W}d1 \textit{f}4! 13.\textit{W}c1 \textit{g}4 14.\textit{W}c5?!\textit{a}1

Later on Nadanian decided that 14.\textit{W}xb6 axb6 15.\textit{d}5! \textit{W}e5 16.\textit{a}3 was the correct way to continue. Maybe White is slightly better, although I am not completely convinced.

14...\textit{W}xf3 15.\textit{W}xf3 \textit{W}xd4 16.\textit{W}xb7
16...c6!!
This is a brilliant move, ignoring the threat of $\text{De6}$ and shutting off the white queen from the centre and the kingside.

17.$\text{De6}$
White takes up the challenge.

17...$\text{wd5}$!
This square is now conveniently available.

18.$\text{Dxg7}$?
This looks absolutely logical; Black's strong bishop is eliminated. However, the problem is that time is much more important here.

18.$\text{xf8}$? $\text{wxg2}$? 19.$\text{xf1}$ $\text{xe4!}$ 20.$\text{xd4}$ $\text{xd4}$ with the threats of 21...f3 and 21...$\text{wb1}$ was also poor.

Later that year Nadarian tried to improve upon this game, but found nothing more than a defensible position after 18.$\text{xd4}$! $\text{xd4}$ 19.$\text{xf3}$ $\text{xe4}$ 20.$\text{xf1}$, with even chances. Nadarian – Yegiazarian, Kyiv 1997, eventually ended in a draw.

18...f3!!
This is really the star move of the game. Black opens up for the rook on f8 and creates real damage to the white defensive structure.

The key point is of course that White cannot stand losing the bishop in the defence.

Instead 18...$\text{wxg2}$? would be an error. White keeps his bishop and the rook is still out of play on f8, so it is no surprise that White can escape with a draw: 19.$\text{xd4}$! $\text{xdh1}+$ 20.$\text{xf1}$!

There is a perpetual check after 20...$\text{xe7}$
21.$\text{xe7}$ $\text{xf7}$ 22.$\text{g5}$ $\text{h8}$ 23.$\text{d8}$.!

19.$\text{gxf3}$?
White had to give up the exchange to stay in the game, although even then his position would remain difficult: 19.$\text{xd4}$ $\text{fxg2}$! 20.$\text{g1}$ $\text{xd4}$ 21.$\text{xe7}$ $\text{xe4!}$ Black defends c6 with gain of tempo and thus keeps the white queen out of the game. After 22.$\text{g3}$ $\text{ad8}$ White's position would be highly vulnerable.

19...$\text{xf3}+$ 20.$\text{xf3}$
Forced. 20.$\text{xf1}$ $\text{dd2}+$ is just over.

20...$\text{xf3}$

21.0–0
It seems very uncomfortable to castle into an open file, but 21.$\text{xf1}$ also had a serious drawback. Here the problem is the open d-file, which is exploited as follows: 21...$\text{xd8}$! 22.$\text{d2}$ $\text{e4}+$ 23.$\text{e3}~\text{xd1}+$ 24.$\text{xd1}$ $\text{e3}+$ 25.$\text{xe1}$ $\text{d8}$ and White is mated.
21...\( \text{g}4 \) 22.\( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{f}3 \)
Black repeated the position once as he was running short of time.

23.\( \text{g}1 \)

23...\( \text{f}6! \)
The rook will come to \( g6 \) unhindered.

24.\( \text{g}5 \)
24...\( \text{h}5 \) is no better. White wins with 24...\( \text{h}xh5 \) 25.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}3 \), blocking the king in. There is now no defence, so we will enjoy Nadanian’s non-computer variation: 26.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 27.\( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{e}3 \) 28.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 29.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d}2 \) and Black wins.

24...\( \text{g}4 \) 25.\( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{f}3 \)
Just another repetition. The rook should take the bishop, not the queen.

26.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 27.\( \text{e}7 \)
27.\( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{g}7 \) and 28...\( \text{h}6 \) is an easy win.

The same is the case for 27.\( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{x}h5 \) 28.\( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{h}6 \).

27...\( \text{g}4 \) 28.\( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{x}g5 \)
Black ends with an extra piece.

29.\( \text{d}8 \) 30.\( \text{x}d8 \) 31.\( \text{e}7 \)

\( \text{h}6 \) 32.\( \text{f}8 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 33.\( \text{f}6 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 34.\( \text{f}8 \) \( \text{h}5 \)

0–1

After these varied examples of how the lines of communication are important in the attack, we move to a closely related, but still quite distinct topic.

Vacating Squares

One of the techniques we can use in the attack is to vacate squares for our pieces. This can be done in several ways, but the most common is the pawn sacrifice. A very generic, although maybe not too exciting example, is the following:

Dimitar Donchev – Damir Kljako

Trnava 1982

White’s next move was 17.\text{exf}5, capturing an enemy pawn. This was good enough to win the game, but he could have settled matters even faster by sacrificing three pieces, simply to get to the \( h7 \)-square.

17.\text{e}5!! is the most beautiful winning move. Only 17...\text{dxe}5 makes sense, but White mates after 18.\text{dxe}4!! \text{fxe}4 19.\text{xf}6.
This example might seem a bit simplistic and you could easily get the sensation that such tricks are only useful among lesser mortals, if you have not seen them in use among the best players of the world. So, in the next example we shall see Ivanchuk use this technique repeatedly in his stunning victory against the player who is number one on the rating list as I am writing these lines.

Vassily Ivanchuk – Veselin Topalov

Novgorod 1996

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 g6
5.c3 a6 6.g5 c6 7.0-0 g7 8.d2 0-0
9.d1 c7 10.a4 d6 11.g3 e8 12.c3 h6
13.g4 f8 14.g5 d7 15.g2 xd4
16.d4 b5 17.axb5 axb5 18.a7 d8
19.b4 e5 20.e3 exf4 21.exf4 c5 22.d5
g4 23.d2 c6

White has some initiative from a Sicilian Najdorf, but his rook on the seventh rank looks as if it is going to be repulsed, unless he can find a way to act immediately.

24.g6!!

A clearance sacrifice. White wants to put his bishop on g5.

24...dxa7?

This is the losing mistake, but it is easy to see how Topalov, already rated 2750 and third in the world, could get lost in the tangled lines:

24...fxg6 is a logical reaction, but after 25.g5 Black is lost. The bishop cannot go to e7. White will take with the knight and play f4-h4, winning a piece because of the pin. And after 25...e8 White has: 26.c7 a6 27.c3!!

The threat of xf8 forces Black to play 27..e5, and White is winning in one move with 28.a1, trapping the queen. A very pretty line indeed, even if the fireworks were all in White's hands...

24...hxg6 is not surprisingly met with 25.exf7!, when Black should consider giving up the queen. The reason for this is that he cannot accept such a rook on the seventh rank. And after 25..e6 White plays 26.g5 e7 27.cxe7+ cxe7
28.\textit{\texttt{xe7! $\texttt{xe7!}$}} 29.\textit{\texttt{c3+ $\texttt{g8}$}} (or 29...\textit{\texttt{h7}} 30.\textit{\texttt{xf4}}) 30.\textit{\texttt{h6}} and Black will have to shed material as if it is going out of style.

The only move that offered a chance of defending the position was the slightly humiliating 24...\textit{\texttt{f6}}, which blocks the $e$-line and prevents $g5$, but also allows White to create real weaknesses around the black king. After 25.\textit{\texttt{gxh7+ $\texttt{h7}$}} 26.\textit{\texttt{a3}} White will transfer the queen to $h4$ and the rook to $g3$ (maybe $h3$ as well, to win some squares), and the attack will be very dangerous, but we are not talking about a forced win yet.

25.\textit{\texttt{gxh7+ $\texttt{h8}$}} 26.\textit{\texttt{g5!}}

A good intermediate move. The bishop is simply more active on $g5$.

26...\textit{\texttt{d7}} 27.\textit{\texttt{fxe8=$\texttt{Q}$}}

We have reached the next great moment in the game. The only piece not actively attacking is the bishop on $g2$, so Ivanchuk uses another clearance sacrifice to bring it into play.

29.e5!!

A great move, vacating the $e4$-square and preparing to vacate the $d5$-square for the bishop.

29...\textit{\texttt{h6}}

Black has no defence, but tries to find one by creating a breathing space for the king. However, this move also weakens the $g6$-square. The other lines are all based on the bishop coming to $d5$ as well. For instance, 29...\textit{\texttt{c8}} 30.\textit{\texttt{c7!!}} wins at once, and 29...\textit{\texttt{dxe5}} 30.\textit{\texttt{c7!!}} is the same story.

29...\textit{\texttt{c6}} is slightly more resilient, but still insufficient to save the game. 30.\textit{\texttt{b6 $\texttt{c7}$}} 31.\textit{\texttt{d5! $\texttt{xd5}$}} 32.\textit{\texttt{xd5 $\texttt{d7}$}} 33.\textit{\texttt{e7!!}} is winning. After 33...\textit{\texttt{xe7}} 34.\textit{\texttt{f7+ $\texttt{h8}$}} 35.\textit{\texttt{xex7}} there are many ways to go. One of them is: 35...\textit{\texttt{b7+}} 36.\textit{\texttt{f3 $\texttt{g8}$}} 37.\textit{\texttt{g1}} and 38.\textit{\texttt{g6+}} is a winning threat.

At the time you saw this under-promotion at the top level in several games, as a kind of joke, probably.

27...\textit{\texttt{exf8}}

27...\textit{\texttt{fxe8}} is no better. White can still advance the e-pawn, but also 28.\textit{\texttt{f6!}} is good enough to win, as pointed out by Ivanchuk.

28.\textit{\texttt{f2 $\texttt{g8}$}}
30.\(\text{Db6}\)
Ivanchuk proceeds with his plan and it works quite well. However, White can win in many ways at this point. The computer of course prefers the most surreal, which is: 30.\(\text{Ec7}\)!

\[
\text{\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
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The idea is 30...\(\text{Ec7}\) 31.\(\text{Wf7}\) \(\text{eh8}\) 32.\(\text{Ec4}\)!
and there is no real defence against mate on h7 or g7: 32...\(\text{Ec6}\) 33.\(\text{Wg6}\) \(\text{fg8}\) 34.\(\text{Wf7}\)!
Ridiculous, and wonderful at the same time...

30...\(\text{Wc7}\) 31.\(\text{Ed5}\)!
31.\(\text{Exh6}\) \(\text{gxh6}\) 32.\(\text{Ed5}\) was another win, but
it is good to hold on to your plans, especially when they are thematically consistent!

31...\(\text{Wh7}\)
31...\(\text{Wh8}\) 32.\(\text{Wxf8}\) \(\text{Exf8}\) 33.\(\text{Exf8}\) \(\text{Wh7}\)
34.\(\text{Ec4}\) \(g6\) 35.\(\text{Ed6}\) and White wins.

32.\(\text{Ec4}\) \(\text{Eg8}\) 33.\(\text{Ed5}\) \(\text{Ed7}\)

34.\(\text{Ec7}\)!
Disruption of the lines of communication.
Black resigned in view of 34...\(\text{Exe7}\) 35.\(\text{Wf7}\) \(\text{eh8}\) 36.\(\text{Wg6}\), mating.
1–0

In the next example we shall see another knight vacating squares, this time opening up a diagonal for the queen and at the same time keeping the opponent's king in the danger zone, and then vacating the next square for the heavy pieces, once the king cannot escape.

Coincidently, this was one of the games that brought Caruana his last GM-norm.

Zlatko Ilincic – Fabiano Caruana

\[
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\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
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Budapest 2007

Black has a strong advantage on the kingside because of his high attack ratio. However, he also needs to break through. A very young Caruana did this in splendid style.

38...\(\text{Kh2}\)!
Keeping the king at the scene of the crime.
We will return to this theme later on.

39.\(\text{Eg2}\) \(\text{Eg4}\)!
This move is absolutely fine, as we shall see, but 39...\(\text{Exg1}\) was perhaps a bit more direct, based on the same points as in the game.
40. \textit{\texttt{Be3?!}}

White misses his chance to offer the best possible resistance. 40.\textit{\texttt{Bxh1}} would lose to a slightly longer and less interesting line: 40...\textit{\texttt{Bb3}}† 41.\textit{\texttt{Bg2}} \textit{\texttt{Bh2}}† 42.\textit{\texttt{Bf1}} \textit{\texttt{Bh1}} 43.\textit{\texttt{Bg2}}

43...\textit{\texttt{Bxg1}}! 44.\textit{\texttt{Bxh1}}?! \textit{\texttt{Bxe2}} White ends with a piece too little.

Objectively it would have been better to play 44.\textit{\texttt{Bxg1}} \textit{\texttt{Bh3}}† 45.\textit{\texttt{Bf3}} \textit{\texttt{Bxg1}}, but Black’s attack should be enough to decide the game in any case.

After this, let us return to the game for the absolute highlight and the moment that shows our theme in its clearest light.

40...\textit{\texttt{Ef1}}!!

This may not be the only route to victory, but it is surely the prettiest!

41. \textit{\texttt{Bxf1}}

41.\textit{\texttt{Bc2}} is beautifully eliminated by: 41...\textit{\texttt{Bxg1}}† 42.\textit{\texttt{Bxg1}} \textit{\texttt{Bh1}}†! 43.\textit{\texttt{Bg2}} (43.\textit{\texttt{Bxh1}} \textit{\texttt{Bh3}}† transposes) 43...\textit{\texttt{Bh3}}† 44.\textit{\texttt{Bf3}} \textit{\texttt{Bh5}}† 45.\textit{\texttt{Bg2}}

45...\textit{\texttt{Bg1}}†!! 46.\textit{\texttt{Bxg1}} \textit{\texttt{Bh2}}† 47.\textit{\texttt{Bxf1}} \textit{\texttt{Bh1}}#

41...\textit{\texttt{Bxg1}}†! 42.\textit{\texttt{Bxg1}} \textit{\texttt{Bh3}}

White resigned, as mate in two follows. 0–1

The technique of vacating a square is a part of every strong chess player’s arsenal, as well as some weaker ones too. The following example is one of the few of my own games that I have included in this book. It was played when I was very young and rated about 2250. The opponent was one of my best friends and the general level of our play was nowhere near the rest of the games in this book. Nevertheless, I still find the example encouraging, because it shows that you can still use such ideas when your overall game is far beneath the level of a Grandmaster.

\textit{\texttt{Jacob Aagaard – Peter Roder}}

\textit{Lyngby 1991}

1. \textit{\texttt{Bf3}} c5 2.\textit{\texttt{c4}} g6 3.\textit{\texttt{g3}} \textit{\texttt{g7}} 4.\textit{\texttt{g2}} \textit{\texttt{c6}} 5.\textit{\texttt{c3}} d6 6.0–0 e6 7.e3 \textit{\texttt{g4}} 8.d4 0–0 9.d5 exd5 10.exd5 \textit{\texttt{a5}} 11.e4 b6 12.\textit{\texttt{Bf6}} f6 13.h3 \textit{\texttt{d7}} 14.\textit{\texttt{Bf1}} a6 15.a4 \textit{\texttt{c7}} 16.\textit{\texttt{Bf4}} g5 17.\textit{\texttt{Be3}} g4
Black has not played the opening brilliantly, but then again, we were only kids. We have arrived at the moment of interest to us.

18.e5!!
I am still bitter that this game was not awarded the prize for the best game of the day. Basically the judges did not think that this move deserved any merit. To me it is still one of the best ideas I had in the 1990s.

18.hxg4 hxg4 19.\(\text{e}2\) would lead to an edge for White, but this double pawn sacrifice seems as brilliant to me now as it did when I was 18.

18...fxe5
18...gxf3? loses straight off to 19.exd6 \(\text{xd}6\) 20.\(\text{f}4\).

19.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{c}8\)
19...gxf3 would have allowed White to take over the light squares completely. After 20.\(\text{e}6\) \(\text{xe}6\) 21.\(\text{fxe}6\) White dominates, e.g. 21...\(\text{ad}8\) 22.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 23.\(\text{xd}5\) \(\text{c}6\) 24.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{xd}5\) 25.\(\text{xd}5\) with a serious advantage.

20.\(\text{e}1\)!
20.hxg4 \(\text{xg}4\) 21.\(\text{e}2\) was another option, but I like what I did in the game.

20...h6 21.\(\text{ge}4\) \(\text{b}7\)

Looking at the knight on e4 and how it has forced Black to retreat his knight to b7, it can easily be established that the white strategy has been a success.

22.b4 gxh3?!
This gives White free hands on the queenside, but 22...cxb4 23.\(\text{xb}5\) \(\text{d}8\) 24.\(\text{c}7\) was also very dangerous for Black. One plausible line could be: 24...\(\text{b}8\) 25.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{a}8\) 26.\(\text{c}7\) \(\text{xa}4\) 27.\(\text{e}6\) \(\text{xe}6\) 28.dxe6! with an advantage for White.

23.bxc5 bxc5 24.\(\text{ab}1\) \(\text{g}4\)! 25.\(\text{b}3\) h2†

Peter was not liking the look of a pin emerging on the queenside.

One line was: 25...\(\text{b}8\) 26.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{e}8\) (26...\(\text{h}5\) 27.\(\text{h}2\) \(\text{f}3\) 28.\(\text{g}1\) and the knight on b7 is really poor) 27.\(\text{h}2\) \(\text{f}5\) 28.\(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{d}4\) 29.\(\text{xd}6\) \(\text{xb}3\) 30.\(\text{xc}8\) \(\text{xb}7\) 31.\(\text{d}6\) \(\text{b}4\) 32.\(\text{ce}4\) and White dominates.

26.\(\text{xe}2\) \(\text{b}8\) 27.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{f}5\) 28.\(\text{f}1\)!

Nowadays I would probably prefer to cover the square with the knight: 28.\(\text{g}1\)! \(\text{h}5\) 29.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{f}5\) 30.\(\text{ce}4\) with a big advantage for White.

28...\(\text{h}5†\) 29.\(\text{g}1\) \(\text{f}3\) 30.\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{xe}2\) 31.\(\text{xe}2\)
31...\(\text{f3}\)

After 31...\(\text{f5}\) 32.\(\text{wb5}\)! Black is also in big trouble. There seems to be no way to prevent both of White's main ideas, namely \(\text{a4-a5-a6}\) or \(\text{a6-a6}\). Since the game I analysed the following line which is very funky, as well as winning for White: 32...\(\text{g4}\) 33.\(\text{a5}\) \(\text{b4}\) 34.\(\text{b1}\) \(\text{f3}\) 35.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{g4}\) 36.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{d3}\) 37.\(\text{a6}\) \(\text{d4}\) 38.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{c4}\) 39.\(\text{fxc4}\) The king is safe enough, and White should win material soon.

32.\(\text{g1}\) \(\text{a5}\) 33.\(\text{xb8}\) \(\text{xb8}\) 34.\(\text{xb8}\) \(\text{h7}\) 35.\(\text{xd6}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 36.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 37.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{c4}\)!

37...\(\text{b3}\) was better, but after 38.\(\text{b5}\) White is still on the winning track.

38.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{a8}\) 39.\(\text{c1}\) \(\text{g6}\) 40.\(\text{xg7}\) \(\text{xg7}\) 41.\(\text{ex5}\) \(\text{a6}\) 42.\(\text{b5}\) \(\text{h5}\) 43.\(\text{d1}\) c3 44.\(\text{d7}\) \(\text{g6}\) 45.\(\text{b6}\) \(\text{xb6}\) 46.\(\text{xb6}\)

1-0

I want to finish the discussion of this theme by showing a game where the opposite is the case, where we don't want a square vacated. Kasparov was explaining in an interview how he had played badly in this game. Out of sheer curiosity I analysed the game, and came to the surprising conclusion that the great man had missed far more chances than he had thought.

From his perspective the great error was on move 32, where he missed a not very difficult winning line, apparently tempted by putting the knight on the highly attractive e6-square. But what he did not realise was the number of chances he missed further on. Most notably, on the 34th move, he probably more or less automatically took the pawn on c7, missing a brilliant winning idea.

Garry Kasparov – Veselin Topalov
Linares 2004

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{B}3\) \(\text{c6}\) 3.\(\text{b5}\) a6 4.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{f6}\) 5.0-0 \(\text{e7}\) 6.\(\text{e1}\) b5 7.\(\text{b3}\) 0-0 8.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{b7}\) 9.d3 \(\text{d6}\) 10.\(\text{bd2}\) \(\text{d7}\) 11.c3 \(\text{c5}\) 12.axb5 \(\text{axb5}\) 13.\(\text{xa8}\) \(\text{xa8}\) 14.\(\text{ec2}\) \(\text{b4}\) 15.d4 \(\text{bxc3}\) 16.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 17.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{f6}\) 18.d5 \(\text{eb8}\) 19.h4 \(\text{e5}\) 20.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{c8}\) 21.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{h6}\) 22.\(\text{h5}\) \(\text{e7}\) 23.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{a2}\) 24.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{g6}\) 25.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{bd7}\) 26.\(\text{xb6}\) \(\text{xb6}\) 27.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{c7}\) 28.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{xg5}\) 29.\(\text{xg5}\) \(\text{f3}\)

This move violates the most basic of positional principles: don't move the pawns on the side of the board where you are weaker. Moreover, in the present position it can be refuted by tactical means.

After 29...\(\text{a6}\) it would have taken a bit more for White to find a way through to the black king.
30.exf5 gxh5 31.g3!
31.g6 only leads to a perpetual check. White needs to be careful when he is giving up the rook.

31...f6
31.h4 32.g4 f6 33.g4! wins in the same way as the next note.

32.g6t?
Shortly after the game Kasparov was greatly disappointed that he did not see the direct win with 32.g4! (32...f7 33.h5 34.h5 gives White a crushing attack) 33.exf5 34.hxg4 35.hxg4 36.hf6 37.hg7 38.f7 and Black is gone.

Kasparov’s disappointment is easy to understand. Although the line is relatively long, it is not especially complicated or difficult to calculate, and should be within reach for a player rated 2831...

32.f7 33.g7t
There is nothing wrong with this move, but it is played without a clear follow-up in mind. For this reason it was worth considering simply taking the rook on f8, and only then continuing the attack:

33.h5?! 34.h5
Objectively Black should bail out with 33...e8, when White can either salvage the knight and be an exchange up in an ending, or play 34.c1 when he will be an exchange up in the middlegame. In either case I feel confident in Kasparov’s conversion technique.

34.c1!

White does not need to be in a hurry. His pieces are active and Black has no sudden counterplay on the way.

34...e8
This is the most tenacious. White is entering on the kingside and Black’s best shot is to run for cover. However, it is not enough.

35.h6 c7 36.d3!
Threatening h7 in some scenarios, but mainly defending the bishop and preparing f1 in anticipation of a check on the first rank.

36.xf5 37.h8+
If this check had been delivered on the previous move then ...e8 would have defended conveniently. But in the present position White simply wins.

33.e8
We have arrived at the critical moment in the game, seen with our eyes, that is!
34.\textit{D}xc7\textdagger?

Kasparov misses a very strong possibility, which could still have won the game. I am certain that he decided to take the pawn on c7 before going deep in the position, but this proved to be a mistake. Usually you will take the pawn in such a scenario without really thinking, but there are moments when having the pawn is not an advantage for our opponent, but a liability. This is one of them.

The correct move was 34.\textit{D}xc5! dxc5 35.d6! cxd6 36.\textit{D}a4\textdagger Dd7 37.\textit{D}xd7\textdagger Dxd7 38.\textit{D}xd6\textdagger Df7 39.Dg8\textdagger Da8 40.Dxe5\textdagger Dd8 41.f6 and White has a winning initiative.

The reason it is wrong to take on c7 is explained after 35...\textit{D}d5.

36...\textit{D}d8 the pawn on c7 is a great liability, which can be exploited by 37.dxc7 mate!

34.\textit{D}d8 35.De6\textdagger De8 36.Dc7\textdagger?

Despite his many mistakes, White still had a very promising position, even at this point. The method is the same as on move 34, but not anywhere near as transparent:

36.\textit{D}xc5! dxc5 37.d6

This is not as dangerous as before, but it turns out that Black is still in trouble. White has several promising avenues, for example:

37...\textit{D}d5!

This is now the best defensive move. At this point the check on a4 is nothing, as the king is quite safe on d8, but White has other tricks up his sleeve.

The alternatives are severely weaker:

37...\textit{D}d7 38.\textit{D}b3 \textit{D}a6 39.\textit{D}e6 \textit{D}d8 40.\textit{D}xd7 \textit{D}xd7 41.\textit{D}d5 \textit{D}c8 42.f6! \textit{D}xf6 43.Dg8\textdagger Da8 44.\textit{D}xf8\textdagger Dxf8 45.\textit{D}xc5\textdagger Dd7 46.\textit{D}c7\textdagger De6 47.\textit{D}e7\textdagger winning.

37...\textit{D}d8 38.d7! \textit{D}xd7 39.\textit{D}b3 \textit{D}a6 40.\textit{D}a4!! \textit{D}xa4 41.\textit{D}d6 and White will play both \textit{D}xf8\textdagger and \textit{D}xf6, winning, as after 41...\textit{D}e8?! he mates with 42.\textit{D}b8\textdagger Dc8 43.\textit{D}c7 mate.

38.\textit{D}d3!

This is a key move, but by no means easy to understand – actually, it might be humanly impossible to do so from two moves away.

38...\textit{D}d7

Other defensive tries exist, but it seems they all have similar value.
39.\textit{f}f8\textit{!}

The key point is that the X-ray to the queen on d5 is very effective.

39...\textit{f}f8 40.\textit{b}b5\textit{!} \textit{g}7 41.\textit{a}a4!

Planning the obvious \textit{c}c4. Black cannot do anything to prevent it.

41...\textit{x}xg8

41...\textit{x}xd6 42.\textit{c}c4 \textit{d}d5 43.\textit{g}g6 and White wins.

42.\textit{c}c4 \textit{x}xf5 43.\textit{h}h7\textit{!}

Chasing the king away before taking the queen.

43...\textit{g}g6 44.\textit{x}xd5 \textit{x}xd5 45.\textit{xc}c5 \textit{a}a6

Black has reasonable drawing chances, but the advantage is definitely with White.

36...\textit{d}d8 37.\textit{e}e6\textit{!} \textit{e}e8 38.\textit{d}c7\textit{!}

½–½

Kasparov was, in his own words, never a maximalist. He did at many times prefer draws over risky decisions. When you have the best opening repertoire in the world and such a sensational understanding of chess as Kasparov did, taking risks means something completely different than it means for a normal Grandmaster. In this position Kasparov must have been aware that there were many options that still deserved attention, including 38.\textit{xc}c5\textit{!}, but decided that he had messed up his position and that the momentum was against him.

I have myself taken draws in much better positions, when I felt that things were going very wrong, and find that this sensibility can at times be the difference between success and failure in a tournament.

Having dealt with the clearance of lines, it is logical to continue with squares. If we look at the general rules of the attack, as discussed in Volume One, we know that we want to take our worst placed pieces and put them on the best possible squares. But how do we decide which squares are the best?

Outposts

One of these instances is a piece that are placed solidly on a square, from where it can exert great control over vital squares in the opponent’s camp. In the first example we shall see the power of the knight on e4, which is a part of all manoeuvres, as a shadow, affecting all decisions.

\textbf{Boris Gelfand – Miguel Illescas Cordoba}

\textit{Madrid 1996}

1.d4 \textit{f}f6 2.\textit{g}g3 e6 3.\textit{c}c4 \textit{b}b4\textit{!} 4.\textit{bd}d2 \textit{b}6 5.a3 \textit{xd}2 6.\textit{xd}d2 \textit{b}b7 7.e3 0–0 8.\textit{e}e2 \textit{d}d6 9.0–0 \textit{bd}7 10.b4 \textit{de}e4

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,0) grid (8,8);
  \foreach \a in {1,...,8} {
    \foreach \b in {1,...,8} {
      \draw [fill=white] (\a,\b) circle (0.2);
    }
  }
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,0) -- (8,0);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,1) -- (8,1);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,2) -- (8,2);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,3) -- (8,3);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,4) -- (8,4);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,5) -- (8,5);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,6) -- (8,6);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,7) -- (8,7);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,8) -- (8,8);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (0,0) -- (0,8);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (1,0) -- (1,8);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (2,0) -- (2,8);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (3,0) -- (3,8);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (4,0) -- (4,8);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (5,0) -- (5,8);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (6,0) -- (6,8);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (7,0) -- (7,8);
  \draw [line width=0.5mm] (8,0) -- (8,8);
  \node at (0.5,0.5) {a}; \node at (1.5,0.5) {b}; \node at (2.5,0.5) {c}; \node at (3.5,0.5) {d}; \node at (4.5,0.5) {e}; \node at (5.5,0.5) {f}; \node at (6.5,0.5) {g}; \node at (7.5,0.5) {h};
  \node at (0.5,1) {1}; \node at (1.5,1) {2}; \node at (2.5,1) {3}; \node at (3.5,1) {4}; \node at (4.5,1) {5}; \node at (5.5,1) {6}; \node at (6.5,1) {7}; \node at (7.5,1) {8};
  \node at (0.5,8) {h}; \node at (1.5,8) {g}; \node at (2.5,8) {f}; \node at (3.5,8) {e}; \node at (4.5,8) {d}; \node at (5.5,8) {c}; \node at (6.5,8) {b}; \node at (7.5,8) {a};
  \node at (3,6) {\textit{a}1} ; \node at (4,6) {\textit{d}2} ; \node at (5,6) {\textit{b}3} ; \node at (6,6) {\textit{e}4} ; \node at (7,6) {\textit{c}5} ; \node at (3,7) {\textit{f}6} ; \node at (4,7) {\textit{d}8} ; \node at (5,7) {\textit{c}7} ; \node at (6,7) {\textit{b}6} ; \node at (7,7) {\textit{a}5} ; \node at (3,8) {\textit{g}f} ; \node at (4,8) {\textit{h}8} ; \node at (5,8) {\textit{e}3} ; \node at (6,8) {\textit{c}2} ; \node at (7,8) {\textit{a}1} ; \node at (0,3) {\textit{d}2} ; \node at (0,6) {\textit{a}2} ; \node at (0,8) {\textit{b}2} ; \node at (1,3) {\textit{d}3} ; \node at (1,6) {\textit{a}3} ; \node at (1,8) {\textit{b}3} ; \node at (2,3) {\textit{d}4} ; \node at (2,6) {\textit{a}4} ; \node at (2,8) {\textit{b}4} ; \node at (3,3) {\textit{d}5} ; \node at (3,6) {\textit{a}5} ; \node at (3,8) {\textit{b}5} ; \node at (4,3) {\textit{d}6} ; \node at (4,6) {\textit{a}6} ; \node at (4,8) {\textit{b}6} ; \node at (5,3) {\textit{d}7} ; \node at (5,6) {\textit{a}7} ; \node at (5,8) {\textit{b}7} ; \node at (6,3) {\textit{d}8} ; \node at (6,6) {\textit{a}8} ; \node at (6,8) {\textit{b}8} ; \node at (7,3) {\textit{d}f} ; \node at (7,6) {\textit{e}8} ; \node at (7,8) {\textit{f}8} ; \node at (8,3) {\textit{d}e} ; \node at (8,6) {\textit{e}e} ; \node at (8,8) {\textit{ee}};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

The knight is established on e4, but not without concessions. White has the two bishops and a bit more space. Chances are that White can be a bit better in such positions, but it would never be drastic.

11.\textit{d}d3

11.\textit{e}e2 was Gelfand's choice in later games. Maybe because of the indirect protection the queen offers g2 and h2?

11...\textit{f}f5 12.\textit{b}b2 \textit{f}f6 13.d5 \textit{g}g6!

13...e5? had been played in an old game.
After 14.\texttt{Qh4!} \texttt{g6 15.f3 Qg5} 16.f4 Qe4 17.Qf3\# Black was under a lot of pressure down the long diagonal, Miles – Mascarinas, Lugano 1986.

14.dxe6?!  
14.g3! is probably an improvement. Opening the long diagonal turns out to be risky.

14...\texttt{Qf8!} 

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

15.c5?!  
With this move Gelfand tries to muddy the waters, perhaps already aware that things are less perfect than he had wished for.

15.Qe1 Qxc6 16.f3 Qg5! gave Black a tremendous attack in Twardon – Nikolenko, Katowice 1993.

15...Qxc6?!  
Black misses the chance to gain an opening advantage. After 15...hx e5! 16.bxe5 Qxc5 17.Qxf5 Qfxe6 the black pieces are excellently placed and White is in for a very rocky ride.

16.cxd6 cxd6!  
It is important for Black to maintain control over the e5-square.

17.Qad1

Another possible continuation was 17.Qfd1, e.g. 17...Qg5 18.Qb3!? Qh8 19.Qe5 dx e5! 20.Qxd8\# Qxd8 21.Qd1 Qd2! 22.e4 Qxe4 23.Qxe5 Qxg2 24.Qg3 Qxe6 with a dangerous attack.

However, White can improve on the above variation with 18.Qxg5 Qxg5 19.g3 and, with a piece exchanged, the attack is less dangerous.

For this reason, Black should probably meet 17.Qfd1 with 17...Qe7 to maintain the tension, when the chances should be about equal.

17...Qh8  
17...a5?! also made perfect sense. The position is roughly even here, maybe even potentially a bit better for White, but the knight on e4 is treacherous and in an instant it is all over.

18.Qe1?!  
18.h4? was one of many playable moves, but for some reason I like it best. The dream is of course h4–h5–h6, winning.

After the move played, the game is suddenly all over. The power of the outpost is tremendous right to the end.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

18...Qg5! 19.Qh1 Qh3!  
0–1

It is not often that Boris Gelfand is defeated in less than 20 moves with the white pieces.
Chapter 2 - Typical Piece Play

Ivan Sokolov – Levon Aronian

Turin (ol) 2006

At the Wijk aan Zee tournament in January 2006, Aronian won the final round game against Sokolov straight from the opening using an idea of his compatriot Sargissian. In the present game he did something similar, using only 10 minutes on the clock! In a way the result can probably be attributed to his social and networking skills, as once again the analysis was shown to him by another player. (Aronian told me that it was a different Armenian player, although I have since forgotten the name.)

A funny story is connected to the game. In the evening the Scottish team had a meeting in the ground floor flat I shared with Jonathan Rowson, right on the corner with large windows from the ground to the ceiling. At some point someone asked if anyone had seen Aronian’s game, and it was replicated on the analysis board. The position lingered during the discussions of next day’s team composition when suddenly a big smiling face was noticed to be staring through the window. We all looked up, saw Aronian, who then recognised the board position and ran away with his hands over his head in triumph.

1.d4 .df6 2.c4 e6 3..c3 6b4 4..c2 d5 5..xd5 exd5 6.g5 e5 7.dxc5 h6 8.h4 g5 9.g3 6e4

Black has made a lot of concessions in order to establish the knight on this square; he has given up a pawn (but is hoping to get it back), and has taken on an isolated pawn, as well as weakened his kingside.

Because it is very hard to challenge the knight on e4, this line is in general considered to be fully playable and 5.a3!?, leading to very sharp play, is back in town.

10...6f6!

At the time this was a novelty, one Aronian had prepared all the way to the end.

In the only previous grandmaster game in this line, Black played 10...6xc3† 11.bxc3 6xb8 12.e3 6a5 13.d3 6xc3† 14.xc3 6xc3. Though this might not be much for White, it is very likely that Sokolov was hoping for this kind of position. He really loves playing endgames with a very tiny advantage and no risk, and has often beaten good opposition in

10...6xb8!!

White has struggled for some time to find an advantage in this line. As said, most players now try 5.a3, which can be even more complicated.

Those who have stuck to 5...xd5 have not had much success obtaining an opening advantage in recent times. For example: 10.e3 6a5 11.6e2 6f5 12..e5 0–0 13.6d4 6xc3 14.xf5 6e4† 15.6d1 6c6 16.6d6 6xc5 17.6xc5 6xc5 18.6h6† 6h8 19.h4 g4 20.f3 d4 21.6f5 dxe3 22.6f6† ½–½ Bareev – Carlsen, Khanty Mansyisk 2005. This game is very likely to be 100% the work of GM Nielsen from Denmark, who is the second to the two most talented chess players of our time, Anand and Carlsen.
them. Anyway, this was all played in the game Kobalia – Balogh, Warsaw 2005.

11...g3
The only move; the alternatives fall like dust to the ground:

11...a4+?! is bad because f2 stays undefended. Still it takes a bit of analysis. 11...d7!
12.xb4 xf2+ 13.xd1 xf1+ 14.c2 xa1
15.xd5 (15.xe4 dxe4 16.xe4+ e6! and Black has a very strong attack along with his material superiority.) 15..e5 16.xc7+ f8 17.d4 g8!

![Analysis Diagram](image)

The black king has made it to safety and now it is Black's turn to shoot at the white king.

11...0-0-0? is a foolhardy suggestion from Fritz 9.

14.b4?
The losing blunder. White was still not objectively lost, but in practice he faced an almost impossible task to navigate the jungle of variations over the board.

14.e4? xe4 15.f3 0-0-0! gives Black a crushing initiative.

14.c3?
This move looks natural, but here, because White is not threatening e5, Black gets enough time to develop his initiative.

14...0-0-0
At this point, a recent game continued with:

15.d6
15.d3 is no better. 15...d4! 16.d6 (16.e5 dxe3 17.xe3 xxd2 18.xf6 xb2 and Black has a winning attack, e.g. 19.xh8 d5+ 20.xd1 xe3+ and so on.) 16..dxe3 17.xe3 xe8 18.b4 xxd6 19.cxd6 b6 and
there is no defence against the devastating
20...\texttt{E}xe3!.
15...\texttt{g}4 16.f3 d4! 17.e4 \texttt{E}c8 18.e2

18...\texttt{x}f3! 19.gxf3
19.e5 is refuted by 19...\texttt{E}xe5! 20.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{w}xe5
21.gxf3 d3 22.bxc3 dxe2 and White soon
loses either his extra rook or the queen.
19...\texttt{W}xf3! 20.e5?!
This only makes things worse, although there
was no easy solution. For example, 20.bxc3
\texttt{E}xc3! 21.\texttt{Ex}c3 dxc3 22.\texttt{W}f2 \texttt{E}xe4! 23.\texttt{E}c2
\texttt{W}xh1† 24.\texttt{W}f1 \texttt{W}xf1† 25.\texttt{W}xf1 \texttt{E}de8 26.\texttt{E}a2
and now either 26...f5 or 26...\texttt{E}8e6? with a
clear superiority.
20...d3 21.bxc3 dxe2 22.\texttt{W}xe2 \texttt{Ex}c3† 23.\texttt{W}d1
\texttt{W}xh1 24.\texttt{W}c1 \texttt{E}xe5 0–1
This was the equally one-sided encounter
Vavrak – V. Popov, Budva 2009.

The best move is:
14.\texttt{W}f1!
It seems that this is the only way in which
White can save the game. The main point
is that he is threatening \texttt{e}e5 and therefore
forcing Black to take immediate counter-
measures.
14.\texttt{W}e1!
I see no other satisfactory way of preventing
\texttt{e}e5.
15.\texttt{W}xa5 \texttt{W}xb2 16.\texttt{W}a4†!
Maybe Sokolov missed this defence?
16...\texttt{d}d7 17.\texttt{e}e5! \texttt{c}c3

18.\texttt{W}d1!!
Or maybe this?
18.\texttt{W}b4? looks dangerous. After 18.\texttt{W}xa1†
19.\texttt{W}d2 d4?? White looks to be in deep
trouble. 20.\texttt{W}xd4 \texttt{c}e4† 21.\texttt{W}d3 \texttt{W}c1! There
is no longer a defence:

22.\texttt{W}xe4?! But still this is a bit masochistic!
22...\texttt{W}f5†!! 23.\texttt{W}e5 \texttt{W}f4† 24.\texttt{W}f6 \texttt{E}e4†
25.\texttt{W}g7 \texttt{Sh}7† 26.\texttt{W}g8 0–0–0 mate.
18...\texttt{W}xd1 19.\texttt{W}xb2
19.\texttt{W}xd1? d4! 20.\texttt{W}xd4 \texttt{W}c2 gives Black the
initiative because of 21.\texttt{W}xh8 \texttt{a}a4 22.\texttt{a}a1
0–0–0 with mate in three moves.
19...\texttt{W}xb2
The endgame looks rather equal. It would be
interesting to see this line tested in practice.

14...\texttt{E}e4 15.\texttt{W}c1
We have come to the moment where the
strength of the knight on e4 can be exploited
fully by an energetic piece sacrifice.
White cannot defend the c5-pawn and Black now penetrates on the queenside, where there are no pieces left to defend the poor white king.

16...\texttt{E:a2}

Trying to retain control over some dark squares, but it is all too late.

16...\texttt{E:xc5} 17.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{W}a1 E:c6}!

This is objectively the strongest. Another way to win was 17...\texttt{E:c3}† 18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{W}xc3 E:xc3} and now either 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{W}a1 E:xa3} or 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{W}d1 E:xg3}! forces a decisive gain of material.

18.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{W}e5}† \texttt{\textcolor{red}{d}d8} 19.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{W}xb8}† \texttt{\textcolor{red}{d}d7}

26...\texttt{E:xc3}! 27.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{b}xc3 \textcolor{red}{E}c4}!!

This is the point. It is virtually impossible for White to prevent a knight from invading on c4 with devastating effect.

That being said, the alternative 27...\texttt{E:c6}?! was also very dangerous for White.

28.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{E}d4}?

This move signals resignation.

Best was 28.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d}xe5}! when Black plays: 28...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{W}b5}† 29.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{a}a1 \textcolor{red}{W}xe5} 30.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{b}b1 \textcolor{red}{W}a4}. White can try 31.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d}xc4 \textcolor{red}{E}xc4} 32.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{b}b3}, but after 32...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d}d2} 33.\texttt{c4 \textcolor{red}{d}xb3}† 34.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{b}xb3 \textcolor{red}{E}c6} 35.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c}e1 \textcolor{red}{E}c8} 36.\texttt{\textcolor{red}{b}b2 \textcolor{red}{E}b8}!
she will have to fight an ending a pawn down with very few chances of survival.

28...\(\textbf{W}b5\)† 29.\(\textbf{Q}c1\) \(\textbf{d}xe2\) 30.\(\textbf{Q}xe5\) \(\text{dxe5}\) 0–1

Outposts can be occupied by other pieces than knights, of course. In the following game White gives up his knight in order to create a brilliant outpost for his bishop on g6. I also considered including a further game where the outpost square was occupied by a rook, but I think that the present game will be enough to prove the point.

Emil Sutovsky – Lorin D’Costa

Reykjavik 2006

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.\(\textbf{Q}c3\) \(\text{dxe4}\) 4.\(\text{Q}xe4\) \(\text{d}7\)

The Fort Knox variation has proven to be far easier to penetrate than the famous American fort...

5.\(\text{Q}f3\) \(\text{c}6\) 6.\(\text{Q}d3\) \(\text{Q}d7\) 7.\(\text{w}e2\) \(\text{Q}e7\)

7...\(\text{Q}g6\) is the main line, but Black is not scoring greatly there either.

8.0–0 \(\text{Q}g6\) 9.\(\text{Q}e5\) \(\text{xf3}\)

The threat of \(\text{Q}e5\) is too much to handle.

10.\(\text{Q}xf3\)

10...\(\text{c}6\)†!

This standard move is the beginning of the end for Black. After this I cannot find a pleasant way to play.

After 10...h6! White has a standard edge, two bishops and all, but it is nothing spectacular.

11.\(\text{Q}e1\) \(\text{a}5\)?

The queen is ready to swing to the kingside in the case of an emergency, but the problem is that it is not participating in the defence of the centre.

11...0–0 was possible here, but after 12.\(\text{W}h3\) Black’s position is already a bit uncomfortable. However, it is not critical by any means yet.

12.c3 h6?

12...0–0! was absolutely necessary. After this White should probably play 13.\(\text{Q}f4\), when his position is fantastic, while he should not be led astray by 13.\(\text{W}h3\) h6 14.\(\text{Q}xe6\)† (14.\(\text{Q}f3\) is still a bit better for White) 14...\(\text{fxe6}\) 15.\(\text{W}xe6\)† \(\text{Q}h8\)!. Here the bishop is immune, and after 16.\(\text{Q}xh6\) \(\text{gxh6}\) 17.\(\text{W}xe7\) Black is probably not really any worse.

13.\(\text{Q}xe6\)!

Not a very difficult sacrifice to predict, talking about Sutovsky. I am absolutely certain
that he was hoping and praying for a chance to play this move as far back as move 9. The main point of it is that White is able to establish the bishop on g6 as an avant-garde outpost.

13...fxe6 14.a×e6 ♕d8

Black is forced to retreat the queen. The alternatives show how bad things are:

14...♕f7 15.♕f4! White continues developing unhurriedly, as Black cannot take the rook in the face of ♕g6 when his king is trapped in the centre. 15...♔he8 16.♔ae1 ♖b6 (16...♕f8 fails after 17.♕xe5 and 18.♕c4†) 17.♗g3! ♖bd5 (17...g5 might look like an active defence, but after 18.♗h4! the black position collapses) 18.♗g6† ♙g8 19.♗xh6! and Black is dead.

14...♕d8 is the only line to make it to an ending, but it is a hopeless one: 15.♕e2 (15.♕d2?!?) 15...♔c8 (15...♕f8 16.♕g6 and it is hard to find a defence against ♕e8†. For example: 16...♗c7 17.♕f4† ♖b6 18.a4 and 19.b4, winning.) 16.♕g6 ♕f8 17.♕e5 ♖a6! 18.♖xa6 bx6 19.♖xe8 ♕xe8 20.♖a5 White should win, but I guess a little confusion persists.

15.♗g6† ♕f8

This is a critical moment. White is a good deal better no matter what Black does.

16.♕e2!

Preventing ...♕g8 and thus ...♖f8, making it impossible to get rid of the bishop on g6.

Also 16.♗f5?! with the same idea was playable, but the text is simple and strong.

16...♖d5

This loses without resistance, but the position is hopeless.

16...♗b6 is coolly met with 17.c4 ♕c7, when a little moment arises.

What we generally want to do in such a position as this is to include the rook on a1 in the attack. It is tempting to do so with 18.g3 or 18.♗f4?!, both of them good moves, but stronger is 18.♗d2!, realising that e7 is the target. After 18...♗d8 19.♗e1 ♖d7 20.♗b4! ♖c8 Black has managed to protect the e7-square, but it is not only in the endgame that it is deadly to have two weaknesses. White can settle for a slow win, but he can also kill his opponent quickly with 21.♖xf6† gx6 22.♗e6.

17.c4 ♕c7 18.♗f4! ♖f6

18...♗xe6 19.♖xe6 is of course out of the question.

19.♗e1 ♖b4 20.♖c7 ♕d7

20...♖xc7 21.♗e8† is mate.
Understandably, Black had had enough.

### Launching

Closely connected to outposts, we have the idea of launching, which was probably first used in chess by Mikhail Tal in his book with Damsky, *Attack with Mikhail Tal*.

The idea comes from ice hockey, where it is used to describe a situation where the puck is shot into the enemy territory, without full support of the team or a clear recipient, with the hope that a random chance will occur later.

In chess it is used for a similar situation, where a piece is thrown forward as an avant-garde, trying to occupy a small piece of enemy territory, until the rest of the forces can join in.

Obviously, the idea is far more complicated in ice hockey, art or warfare, where the idea is used as well, as chess is bound by other rules than those of the physical sports, but it is still a useful tool.

14...d5

15...dxe5!

Although highly successful in this game, I am not sure this is the best move. I think future games will investigate 15.e5!, where White has a good chance of getting an edge. 15...dxe4 16.xd4 e6 17.e3 leads to an endgame with a pawn majority on the queenside and the bishop pair. The advantage is not overwhelming, but it is definitely real.
15...\textit{h}3??

A terrible howler! The correct sequence was:
15...\textit{x}f2\textdagger! 16.\textit{xf}2 \textit{h}2\textdagger! 17.\textit{e}3! e5!

The great point. Black is taking squares from the white king and limiting the power of the bishop on b2, whilst threatening \ldots \textit{xf}5.
17...\textit{xf}5?? is met with 18.\textit{xf}6\textdagger; and now both 18...0-0 19.\textit{xd}8 and 18...\textit{xf}6 19.\textit{d}6\textdagger! are without real hope.
At this point I have spent some time on the two most forceful moves:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  \node at (0.5,0.5) {a}
ode at (1,0.5) {b}
ode at (1.5,0.5) {c}
ode at (2,0.5) {d}
ode at (2.5,0.5) {e}
ode at (3,0.5) {f}
ode at (3.5,0.5) {g}
ode at (4,0.5) {h}
ode at (0,1.5) {1}
ode at (0,2.5) {2}
ode at (0,3.5) {3}
ode at (0,4.5) {4}
ode at (0,5.5) {5}
ode at (0,6.5) {6}
ode at (0,7.5) {7}
ode at (0,8.5) {8}
  \draw[thick] (0.5,0.5) -- (0.5,8.5) (1,0.5) -- (4,0.5) (1,1.5) -- (4,1.5) (1,2.5) -- (4,2.5) (1,3.5) -- (4,3.5) (1,4.5) -- (4,4.5) (1,5.5) -- (4,5.5) (1,6.5) -- (4,6.5) (1,7.5) -- (4,7.5) (1,8.5) -- (4,8.5);
  \filldraw[black] (1,8) circle (0.1) (1,7) circle (0.1) (1,6) circle (0.1) (1,5) circle (0.1) (1,4) circle (0.1) (1,3) circle (0.1) (1,2) circle (0.1) (1,1) circle (0.1);
  \draw[thick,red] (1,8) -- (2,7) -- (3,6) -- (4,5) -- (3,4) -- (2,3) -- (1,2) -- (2,1) -- (3,2) -- (4,1) -- (3,0) -- (2,1) -- (1,0);
  \draw[thick,red] (1,8) -- (2,7) -- (3,6) -- (4,5) -- (3,4) -- (2,3) -- (1,2) -- (2,1) -- (3,2) -- (4,1) -- (3,0) -- (2,1) -- (1,0);
  \node at (0.5,0.5) {a}
ode at (1,0.5) {b}
ode at (1.5,0.5) {c}
ode at (2,0.5) {d}
ode at (2.5,0.5) {e}
ode at (3,0.5) {f}
ode at (3.5,0.5) {g}
ode at (4,0.5) {h}
ode at (0,1.5) {1}
ode at (0,2.5) {2}
ode at (0,3.5) {3}
ode at (0,4.5) {4}
ode at (0,5.5) {5}
ode at (0,6.5) {6}
ode at (0,7.5) {7}
ode at (0,8.5) {8}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

a) 18.\textit{g}7\textdagger!! \textit{f}8 19.\textit{e}6\textdagger! \textit{xe}6! 20.\textit{xd}8\textdagger \textit{g}7 looks very dangerous for White. After some moments the engines say the position is equal, but I think this is the best White can hope for. Those interested in this line can of course go deeper, but my feeling after shuffling the pieces around a bit is that Black has the better practical chances.

b) 18.\textit{h}1 The following line is not necessarily accurate, it is what I found to be the safest line for Black, offering a decent game – but I could be wrong, of course. 18...\textit{g}2 19.\textit{g}7\textdagger! \textit{f}8 20.\textit{d}6\textdagger! \textit{xe}7 21.\textit{xe}5 \textit{e}4\textdagger! 22.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}3\textdagger! 23.\textit{g}1 \textit{c}6 24.\textit{xe}6 \textit{f}3! 25.\textit{c}5 \textit{d}1\textdagger! 26.\textit{xd}1 \textit{xd}1\textdagger! 27.\textit{h}2 \textit{e}2\textdagger! 28.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}5\textdagger! 29.\textit{g}2 \textit{e}2\textdagger! 30.\textit{f}2 \textit{xe}5 31.\textit{e}1 \textit{g}5 and Black's problems appear to be minor.

16.\textit{g}7\textdagger!! \textit{e}7

And, all of a sudden, the game is simply over.

17.\textit{d}4!!

A surprising and delicious double threat. Both c5 and f6 are under attack.

That Kruppa was having a lousy day is described by 17.\textit{xf}6\textdagger! \textit{xf}6 18.\textit{h}5\textdagger!, which also wins.

17...\textit{e}4

Desperation, but Black did apparently not want to resign, or get mated after 17...\textit{xd}4 18.\textit{a}3\textdagger. 18.\textit{xe}4 \textit{c}6 19.\textit{h}4\textdagger!

White easily prevents his opponent's vain attempt at counterplay.

19...\textit{h}4 20.\textit{f}5\textdagger

1-0

The following famous miniature shows the idea of launching brilliantly, but I feel that I need to put in a disclaimer immediately. I do not necessarily mean that Ac's consciously thought of what he was doing as launching, when he played his ninth move; chances are that he just saw that it was less obvious to deal with the knight charge than could be thought at first. However, given the rather passive white choice, I think we can rule out a case of opening preparation.
Loek van Wely – Peter Acs
Hoogeveen 2002

1.d4 ♛f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♛b4 4.e3 0–0 5.♗d3 d5 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♕g2 ♛e8 8.0–0 ♛d6
This line cannot be dangerous for Black. The bishop on c1 takes too long to get into the game and the black pieces all have good squares at their disposal.

9.a3
9.f3 is the most popular move, played by Gelfand a few times, but it seems to me that White’s position is too passive to cause Black real concern.

9...♗g4!?

This move is an example of launching – the knight attacks almost on its own, as in a game between two novices. But actually it is a great trap, where the knight is far stronger in paving the way than can usually be expected.

A famous game went: 9...c6 10.♗c2 ♛xh2†? 11.♕xh2 ♖g4† 12.♖g3 ♕g5 13.f4 ♕h5 14.♖d2 ♕h2† 15.♖f3 ♕h4 16.♕xh4 ♕h8 17.♖g3 ♖h2† 18.♖f2 ♖g4† 19.♖f3 ♖h2† ½–½ Kasparov – Deep Junior, New York 2003.

10.h3?
I think it takes a certain kind of player to play this kind of move. At some level it takes a kind of either arrogance or naivety, on the other hand it takes a certain amount of daring as well.

When Van Wely played it, I am sure he understood the dangers he was facing, but thought that the black attack would not be as strong as it is, and thus wanted to punish Acs for his “beginner move”.

I think most grandmasters would have played 10.♗f4!, as in Obukhov – Ilkonnikov, Chelyabinsk 1989. Not just because it is a better move (Obukhov was a bit better in that game, which was eventually drawn) but also because they would intuitively stray from the dangers of accepting the challenge.

Van Wely is truly stout-hearted and was clearly trying to call his opponent’s bluff; the only problem was that his opponent wasn’t bluffing.

10...♖h2!!
We could call this launching, but that would perhaps be a stretch. The idea is simple, Black wants to sacrifice the knight in order to start an attack on the kingside.

11.♗e1 ♕f3†
The point behind the previous move, of course.

12...gxf3 Wg5† 13.h1

A later game went 13.Qg3 hxg3 14.Qf1 Axdh3† 15.Qe2 Qxf2!. White could already have resigned here, but instead opted for 16.Qh1 Qxe3 17.Qxh7† Qf8 18.Qe4 dxe4 19.f4 Qxh4 before throwing in the towel. 0–1, Tkeshebashvili – Xu Yuhua, Elista 2004.

13...Wg4

Black is keeping his options open.

14.Qf4

This loses to a fantastic variation, but the position was not defensible.

A bit more complicated, but ending with the same result is the following line:
14.Qg1 Qxh3 15.f4 Qg4 16.Qa4

White could also try 16.Qb3 Qf3 17.Qg3 Qxf4 18.Qe2 Qd6, but there is no hope here. One line goes: 19.Qd2 Qe6! 20.Qxb7 Qh6 21.Qc8† Qf8 22.Qf1 Qg4 and Black wins.

16.Qe6 17.Qg3 Qh6 18.Qxd5

White also loses after: 18.Qe8† Qf8 19.Qxd5 Qc6 20.Qe4 Qh2† 21.Qf1 Qe8! and Black wins the queen, as after 22.Qxe8 Qf3 he is mated.

Here Black wins with a great piece of deflection:

18...b5!!

White cannot take this with the bishop, because of 19...Qf3, mating. The alternative is not much better though...

19.Qxb5 c6

White is losing his mating threat. Black wins in a few moves.

20.Qb7 Qh2† 21.Qf1 Qh3†! 22.Qg1 Qf3

With mate to follow.

14...Qxh3 15.Qxd5

The fact that this wins another pawn is incidental. What matters is that White is trying to bring another piece to within touching distance of the kingside. Now Black must look for a way to introduce more pieces into the attack.
Aafter this small masterpiece, we now return to the real world of an ordinary crush. White begins with a seemingly innocuous opening, but after a small slip from his opponent on move 10, he springs into action. A pawn sacrifice is offered, through the launching of a knight into the enemy camp.

Hector Delgado – Maikel Gongora Reyes

Cuban Championship 2008

1.e4 e5 2.d4 c6 3.d5 c6 4.d4 exd4 5.e5 d5! 6.b5 d7

The more common 6...e4! is generally regarded as strongest, but this alternative is not without followers.

7.0–0 d6 8.xc6 bxc6 9.exd4! d8

9...xex5 looks tempting, based on 10.xf4!? c5, but White can get a serious initiative, as can be seen from the following few moves: 11.xex5 cxd4 12.xg7 Ag8 13.xe5! The bishop needs to keep an eye on the kingside. 13...c5 14.xc1 b6 15.b4! and Black did not manage to withstand the attack in Pap – Krstic, Pula 2003.

10.xc3 c5?

This is too soon, however, after 10...0–0 11.wf3 White has a pleasant position. The black knight makes an odd impression, having spent four tempos moving from g8 to b8. White will probably play b3, wb2, wae1 and start an offensive against the black king.

The point of White's last move was to discourage the advance of the enemy c-pawn. After the text move, we have reached the point at which the game becomes relevant for this section. If White withdraws the knight, Black will develop his pieces and easily get a decent position. However, White can use the knight as an avant-garde soldier and would force Black to deal with it, and thus not have time to develop.

11.xdb5! c6

The only move, due to various tactics.

12.xd6+ xdx6 13.exd6 wdx6!

This looks very risky, but also after 13...0–0 14.xf4 Black's position is quite depressing. Thus it is understandable that he prefers a dangerous continuation offering some chances for the opponent to go wrong, rather than crawling into his own grave for safety.

14.wel+ wxe6 15.wd4!

The first tempo-gainer provided by the pawn sacrifice.
15...\(\text{We7}\)

15...\(\text{We8}\) looks strange, but makes some sense. The idea is to protect c5 and not allow \(\text{g5}\) to come with tempo. However, after 16.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{We7}\) 17.\(\text{Wh5}\) \(\text{d7}\) 18.\(\text{c4}\) White's attack is overwhelming and I think Black cannot save the game.

\[8\]

16.\(\text{g5!}\)

A beautifully stylish piece sacrifice, White commits himself to a sacrificial path, in order to develop all of his pieces with tempo.

16...\(\text{f6}\)

It is of course possible to play 16...\(\text{c7}\) and after 17.\(\text{xc5}\) then 17...0-0, but White will have a clear extra pawn and should win uneventfully.

17.\(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 18.\(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{f6}\)

18...\(\text{d7}\)

This is the other option. Here White has to look deeply to find the only path to victory:

19.\(\text{g4!} \text{fxg5}\)

It could look as if White has no strong follow-up. The black king escapes to b6 in the most natural lines, such as 20.\(\text{ae1}\) \(\text{c7}\) 21.\(\text{e7}\) \(\text{b6}\), and the position is highly unclear. However, White had seen further and won the game quickly after inserting an important intermediate move.

\[8\]

20.\(\text{b4!!}\) \(\text{b6}\)

20...\(\text{b5}\) 21.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{a6}\) does leave a hole on b6 for the king, but after 22.\(\text{ae1}\) \(\text{c7}\) 23.\(\text{e7}\) \(\text{b6}\) 24.\(\text{d4}\) it is no longer as attractive...

21.\(\text{ae1}\) \(\text{d8}\) 22.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{c7}\) 23.\(\text{e7}\) \(\text{xd6}\) 24.\(\text{e6}\) mate!

1-0 This lovely finish was seen in the game Maciejewski – Sydor, Polish Championship 1973.

\[8\]

19.\(\text{xf6}\)!!

There were other ways to keep a strong initiative, such as 19.\(\text{e3}\), but no other move keeps the momentum going in the same way as this.

19...\(\text{xf6}\) 20.\(\text{h5}\) \(\text{e7}\)

The king has no better squares: 20...\(\text{g8}\) 21.\(\text{xf6}\) and 20...\(\text{f8}\) 21.\(\text{h6}\) \(\text{e8}\) 22.\(\text{xf6}\) are both hopeless.
Chapter 2 - Typical Piece Play

21.\textit{Be}1\textit{g}4\textit{f} 22.\textit{W}g4\textit{f}

The simple 22.\textit{xf}6 was winning as well.

22...\textit{c}7 23.\textit{xf}4\textit{f} 24.\textit{g}7\textit{f} 25.\textit{d}7

24...\textit{a}6 25.\textit{xh}8 was played in a rapid game according to Golubev, but as I have not been able to find any record of it, I prefer not to give the reference.

25.\textit{xd}7\textit{f} 26.\textit{a}6 26.\textit{e}3

There is nothing wrong with this simple move, but it is true that 26.\textit{e}6 \textit{ac}8 27.\textit{c}7! is a very fine winning option, as given by Golubev.

![Diagram](attachment:image.png)

26...\textit{d}4

26...\textit{b}8 27.\textit{h}3 followed by 28.\textit{d}6 wins rather trivially.

27.\textit{a}3\textit{f} 1-0

In the next example White uses the concept of launching to prepare a brutal undermining of the pawn structure around the black king. The idea is absolutely fantastic, even if the follow-up was not entirely accurate. I have chosen to look closely at only the middle part of the game, where there are a lot of instructive moments, while the opening and the end are more or less brushed over.

Raffaele Di Paolo – Tim Jaksland

Genova 2003

1.e4 \textit{d}5 2.\textit{exd}5 \textit{c}6 3.c4 \textit{c}6 4.d3 cxd5

5.cxd5 \textit{dx}d5 6.\textit{f}3 \textit{e} e6 7.\textit{c}4 \textit{c}7 8.0-0 0-0 9.\textit{d}4

This position has always seemed a bit passive for Black for my tastes. Though his position is quite solid, I think he may still be struggling to demonstrate equality.

9...\textit{xc}3 10.\textit{bxc}3 \textit{c}6 11.\textit{e}2

11.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}6 12.\textit{c}1 \textit{b}7 13.\textit{h}4! is a very dangerous gambit, which has led to many quick wins.

11...\textit{b}6 12.\textit{f}4 \textit{d}6 13.\textit{e}4 \textit{xf}4 14.\textit{d}3 \textit{g}6

14...\textit{f}5? does not weaken the pawn structure around the king, although it does leave the e6-pawn exposed.

15.\textit{xf}4 \textit{b}7 16.\textit{f}1 \textit{g}7

Black is not happy with the prospect of the queen going to h6, long term.

![Diagram](attachment:image.png)

17.\textit{g}5!?

17.\textit{h}4 was more thematic, but White is clearly launching some of his pieces forward, before the rest can catch up.
17...\textit{e}5!
Black should of course not forgo this opportunity to strike against the white centre.

18.\textit{g}3 \textit{exd}4 19.\textit{e}6!!

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

This is a sensational move, which was doubtlessly the intention behind White's 17th move. All the white pieces (apart from the rook on a1) are targeting Black's "strong" g6-square in some way, with the intention of getting to his weakest square, h7, with deadly effect.

Black has not done anything greatly wrong, apart from arguably a slightly passive choice of opening, so there is no reason why this move should be decisive in any way. However, it does pose him some immense practical problems to solve. He did so brilliantly in the game, but not without a huge cost on the clock.

19...\textit{e}8!
To challenge the rook on e6 is forced, or White will be allowed to carry out his arsenal of threats; \textit{Wh}4, \textit{Qxh}7 and \textit{Exg}6\textit{f}, all of them leaving devastation in their wake.

Black's flawed options were:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[a)] 19...\textit{b}8? loses at once to 20.\textit{Wh}4! and 21.\textit{Qxf}7 with a winning attack.
\item[b)] 19...\textit{d}5? looks natural, but Black should not give White the chance to keep the rook positioned on e6 for even a move.

The natural 20.\textit{Eae}1! leaves Black under heavy pressure. For example, after a move such as 20...\textit{dxc}3 White wins with this thematic combination:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21.\textit{Qxh}7! \textit{db}4 22.\textit{Exg}6\textit{f} \textit{fxg}6 23.\textit{Ee}7\textit{f} \textit{gh}8 24.\textit{Qxf}6!! Black is either mated or loses his queen.
\item[c)] 19...\textit{c}8? 20.\textit{Wh}4! \textit{gh}8

Moving the h-pawn exposed the g6-square: 20...\textit{h}5 21.\textit{Ee}4! f3 22.\textit{Ee}7\textit{f} \textit{gh}6 23.\textit{h}4! and Black is lost.
21.\textit{Eae}1! \textit{Wh}7
Black is also lost after 21...\textit{fxe}6 22.\textit{Qxe}6\textit{f} \textit{gh}8 23.\textit{Ec}4 when there is no defence to be found against 24.\textit{Wh}6.
\end{enumerate}
A fantastic move. The rook is not hanging because of $\text{bxe6}$, but $f7$ is under a lot of pressure now.

22...$\text{xf8}$

22...$\text{d8}$ is easily dealt with. After 23.$\text{xf7}$ Black's position falls apart: 23...$\text{xf7}$ 24.$\text{xf7} \text{h6}$ 25.$\text{xe3}$ and so on...

After the text White can play either 23.$\text{f4}$, which should win, or the beautifully consequent:

23.$\text{xf5}$! $\text{d5}$

23...gxf5 is met with 24.$\text{e6}$! and 25.$\text{g5}$ mate!

24.$\text{e6} \text{d8}$ 25.$\text{xf7} \text{e7}$ 26.g4!!

With the strong threat of 27.$\text{h6}$ and 28.g5 mate.

26...h6 27.$\text{g6}$! $\text{g6}$ 28.$\text{f5}$ $\text{xf7}$

29.$\text{h5}$ $\text{g8}$ 30.$\text{g6}$! $\text{g7}$ 31.$\text{e6}$

Black is mated.

20.$\text{ae1}$?!

This move seems very thematic, but we cannot play by autopilot, just because we know and understand the basic ideas of attacking play. Including the last piece in the attack immediately is fine in terms of general principles, but the downside might be a loss of momentum. If we continue to avoid talking actual moves, we can say that it is possible for Black to improve his position more with the next move, than it is for White. On the last move the rook was immune, this is no longer the case, so we should not give Black the chance to take it.

Instead, it is the knight we need to sacrifice:

20.$\text{f7}$! $\text{xf7}$

21.$\text{d6}$!

An important move in the combination. Without this move White would not have enough time to create problems for Black.

21.$\text{g6}$! only leads to equality, which feels rather inadequate.

21...$\text{e7}$ 22.$\text{g6}$

This was the idea all along, but we also want to hold on to the rook.

22...$\text{f8}$

The endgame arising after 22...hxg6?!

23.$\text{g6}$! $\text{f8}$ 24.$\text{f6}$ $\text{xf6}$ 25.$\text{xf6}$ $\text{g8}$ 26.cxd4 is rather dangerous for Black.

The three connected pawns, combined with the vulnerability of the king, give him a lot of things to be concerned about.

23.$\text{xe8}$ $\text{xe8}$ 24.h3

White has an edge due to Black's exposed king. In absolute terms, it is hard to determine how great White's advantage really is, but from a practical perspective the position is very dangerous for Black. Not only does he have to worry about his king, but he must also be careful not to allow White to enter a favourable endgame. It might look as if White has sacrificed something at this point, but material is actually close to equal. If White can pick up
just one more pawn, he will probably enjoy the advantage in an endgame with rook and two pawns versus bishop and knight. (The foremost guide to these types of positions remains Esben Lund's *Rook vs. Two Minor Pieces*.)

20...fxe6!

Black does not waste a moment. 20...Exe6 21.Exe6 dxc3 was another possibility. It seems that this line also leads to equality. After 22.Wh4 Wg8 White is one tempo too slow to create a strong attack on the dark squares. Both 23.De4 and 23.Wf4 lead to a perpetual check. The last piece is simply missed. And 23.Ed6? Wg8 loses momentum, after which material starts to become an issue again.

21.Dxh7 Df7!

An important move, Black is defending the g6-square, which is his only strong square on the kingside, or his figleaf if you like.

21...Wg8? would lose by force. After 22.Wxg6 Wf4 23.De5 Wf8 it might look as if Black has everything covered, but the tiny move 24.g3! makes the whole thing come down. After 24...De7 trying to stay afloat, White wins brilliantly with 25.Wxe6! Wxg5 26.Wh3! Wxg7 27.Wh7+ Wf6 28.Wxc7 mate!

22.Exe6

22...Wd5!

This time this active move is to be commended.

Black cannot play:

22...Wd7?

White will continue with:

23.Eg5!

The tempting 23.Exg6?! only leads to a draw after 23...Wxg6 24.Wxg6+ Wh8 25.Wf6 We1† 26.Wf1 Wxf1† 27.Wxf1 Wxg2† 28.Wg1! Wh3 29.Wh5! Wd7! 30.Wf6! Wg3. Quite an attractive line, except for the final repetition of moves which is not so desirable for White.

23...Wd5

The only move, but the queen is not allowed to linger on this central square.

24.Ec4!

White of course needs to look out for ...Wxg2† with simplification, beyond continuing with his own attack.

24...Exa2

The attempt 24...Exc5 25.Wh4 Wh8 is met with another one of those small pretty moves:

![Diagram](image.jpg)

26.Wh7!! Exh7 27.Wxf7† Black has to give up the queen, and after 27...Wxc7 28.Wxc7† Wh6 29.Wf6 Wxg4 30.Wh4† Wh7 31.Wxe4 I am fairly sure that this endgame is winning for White. He will win the d-pawn and try to create a passed pawn on the kingside.
Chapter 2 - Typical Piece Play

25. \( \texttt{h3!} \)

With the queen banished from the scene of the battle, White has time enough for this important prophylactic move (against back rank mate, in case you are dozing off!).

25... \( \texttt{Wd2} \)

This is but one of the attempts to fight. 25... \( \texttt{axc4} \) is the best move, but 26. \( \texttt{Wh4}! \) forces Black to give up the queen and enter a dreadful endgame.

26. \( \texttt{We5} \texttt{\texttt{+}} \texttt{h6} 27. \texttt{df7} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{+}} \texttt{h7}}

24. \( \texttt{Wh3?!} \)

White takes up the challenge and is eventually rewarded for it.

However, 24. \( \texttt{Wh4!} \) with the above mentioned perpetual was objectively better.

24... \( \texttt{Exg6} 25. \texttt{Af6} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{+}} \texttt{g7} 26. \texttt{Exd5} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{E}}e1} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{+}} \texttt{xd5}} \)

There is nothing wrong with this move. However, also tempting was 27... \( \texttt{a6}!\) 28. \( \texttt{Wd7} \texttt{\texttt{+}} \texttt{h8}! 29. \texttt{h3} \texttt{xf1} 30. \texttt{Eh2} \texttt{gg8} \) with a strong attack against the white king.

28. \( \texttt{Wd7} \texttt{\texttt{+}} \texttt{f7} 29. \texttt{Exd4} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{+}} \texttt{g8} 30. \texttt{h4}} \)

30. \( \texttt{f4}?! \) might have been better, but I am sure that the game was descending into mayhem due to time trouble at this point.

30. \( \texttt{Ec8?!} \)

Black would have been close to winning after 30... \( \texttt{Ec8}! \). For example: 31. \( \texttt{h5} \texttt{Ec5} \) followed by ... \( \texttt{Ec4} \) or ... \( \texttt{Exh5} \). So 31. \( \texttt{f3} \) with a poor position would be necessary.

31. \( \texttt{Ee5} 32. \texttt{Wd2}! \)

Suddenly it is not easy to defend the knight on e5. Black, running out of time, must have been badly surprised by this move.

32. \( \texttt{Ee4?!} \)
With no time on the clock it is possible to miss 32...\texttt{xc8}, which however still allows White to draw by perpetual check with \texttt{33.\texttt{g5}}. 

\textbf{33.f3}

Black overstepped the time limit, but his position is also lost, for the first time in the game...

\textbf{1–0}

The final game I want to look at in this section includes a theme I have seen so often that I had originally intended to make it into an independent section. At the last moment I decided that it was nothing else but the most spectacular form of launching, a form that is also very powerful in the defence.

I am talking about the scenario in which the queen is sent deep into the opponent's camp. Because of the extreme power of this piece, it is almost unbearably for the victim to allow the queen such access to the inner circles of his position.

This topic reminds me of an experience with a student of mine, who was struggling for a long time; he had huge problems with White, losing many games to the manoeuvre \ldots \texttt{d8-b6xb2}. Eventually we figured out that he should not learn to control this menace, but instead play the English and keep his bishop on \texttt{c1} until the beginning of the middlegame!

A good example of the queen launched into the opponent's position in a defensive role is Hector – Mortensen from the introduction of Volume One. A good example of the queen parachuted behind the opponent's lines in aggression is the following game, where the queen arrives on \texttt{b2}, setting up a lot of threats, which are then carried out when the knights join in in the attack.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Krishnan Sasikiran – Veselin Topalov}
\textbf{Sofia 2007}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
1.d4 \texttt{d6} 2.\texttt{f3} \texttt{g6} 3.c4 \texttt{g7} 4.\texttt{c3} 0–0 5.e4 \texttt{d6} 6.\texttt{xe2} e5 7.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{g4} 8.\texttt{g5} \texttt{f6} 9.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g5} 10.\texttt{g3} \texttt{h6} 11.d5 \texttt{d7} 12.h3
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Somehow I do not think that it is too controversial to state that this is not the refutation of the King's Indian.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
12...\texttt{f5} 13.\texttt{exf5} \texttt{d5} 14.\texttt{d2}
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

At the time this was a novelty, albeit not a very impressive one.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
14.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xf5} 15.\texttt{exg5} (15.\texttt{exg5} \texttt{e4}?! gives lots of compensation) 15...\texttt{h6} 16.h4 \texttt{d5} 17.\texttt{exg3} \texttt{a5} 18.g4 \texttt{e7} 19.0–0–0 was definitely playable for White in Aakesson – Natarch, Stockholm 2001, but one senses that Black has many chances to improve his play.
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
14...\texttt{xf5} 15.0–0 \texttt{e4}
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Black has already achieved everything he can hope to do in the King's Indian.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
16.\texttt{b3} \texttt{b6} 17.\texttt{d4} \texttt{f6} 18.\texttt{c6}
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Maybe this is a loss of time? It is not evident to me that the knight is any stronger on \texttt{c6}.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{c}
18...\texttt{a5}
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
19.f4?
Evidently not happy with his position, Sasikiran lashes out. Unfortunately for him, his position is simply not strong enough to justify the loosening of his kingside along with the increased dynamic potential of the e4-pawn, which is now passed.

The correct continuation for White should be 19...d2 d7 20.eae1 when he is fully mobilised and ready to take action in the centre. Probably Sasikiran refused such options on the basis that after 20...f5 Black has pleasant equality. However, it soon becomes apparent that this was by far the lesser evil.

19...d7!
The main aim of this move is to exploit the newly created weaknesses on e3 and g3 with ...f5.

20.b5?
White is not ready to take it to the streets. After this further neglect of his development he becomes the victim of some cruel police brutality.

20...d2 was better, but White is already struggling to cover his weaknesses on the dark squares.

20...xc6 21.dxc6 xb2!

Taking a pawn is neither here nor there. The real strength of the text is the tremendous power of the queen, which exerts a great influence along the second rank as well as targeting the rook on a1, which explains White’s next move.

22.b1
22.xc7 f5 most likely transposes.

22.d5† h8 23.fxg5 f5 leaves White with hanging pieces everywhere.

22...xa2 23.xc7 f5! 24.e2 e3 25.e1
d5† h8 26.d3 exf2† 27.xf2 d4
d4† xd4 29.xa2 a7 also is no good.

25...d4
After this White could already almost have resigned, as he cannot protect the e2-square. It is rare that one can survive after losing control over a square so deep into the heart of one’s camp.

26.xa8
Or 26.h5 e2 27.xe2 xc2† 28.h2 xf4
29.xf4 xc4 and the threat of mate secures Black’s extra piece.
Though the material is more or less equal, the game is over.

29.\texttt{Rx}b6 f3 30.\texttt{R}d5+ \texttt{e}e6? \\
Fancy. 30...\texttt{h}h8 was also good enough.

31.\texttt{R}xe6+ \texttt{h}h8 32.\texttt{R}g4 \texttt{e}e5+ 33.\texttt{h}h1 \texttt{f}2 \\
Torture? Black could have finished the game immediately with 33...\texttt{f}xg2\texttt{#} 34.\texttt{R}xg2 \texttt{f}f1\texttt{#} 35.\texttt{R}xf1 \texttt{h}h2 mate, but perhaps Topalov wanted to make a kind of psychological statement.

0–1

The Pin

One topic that is often seen in many tactical skirmishes, but with lower level intensity than in the most classical examples, is the pin. Because we are talking about tactical middlegames, it is to be expected that there will be a wide range of situations where pieces of higher value are shielded by pieces of lower level.

Even though the pin is one of the first things a chess player will learn about the game, it is still important at the top level. To drive this point home I have focussed on some complicated and quite aesthetically striking examples.

In the first of these we see a pin on a bishop, which is shielding a pinned pawn behind him.

Helgi Olafsson – Jonathan Levitt

Reykjavik 1990

1.e4 \texttt{d}f6 2.\texttt{c}c3 \texttt{e}6 3.\texttt{c}f3 c5 4.g3 \texttt{b}6 5.\texttt{g}g2 \texttt{b}b7 6.0–0 \texttt{e}c7 7.d4 \texttt{e}e4 \\
This opening is a kind of hybrid between the Queen's Indian and the Hedgehog. This approach seems slightly risky, although White fails to demonstrate an opening advantage in the present game.

The most reliable continuation looks to be 7...\texttt{c}xd4, leading to a standard Hedgehog.

8.\texttt{d}xe4 \texttt{d}xe4 9.\texttt{f}f4 \\
9.d5?! appears more critical to me.

9...0–0 10.dxc5 bxc5 11.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{b}b6 12.\texttt{f}d1 \\
White has not played the opening with great conviction. Had Black played 12...\texttt{d}c6 he would have equalised easily, but instead he made an overcautious move and allowed White to gain a slight initiative. Then, instead of slowly freeing his position with defensive moves, Black adopted an ambitious approach, which only aggravated his problems.

12...\texttt{d}d8? 13.\texttt{w}e3! \\
The bishop is ideally placed and thus duly challenged.

13...\texttt{w}b7?!

This move is also a bit artificial, but it was already not easy to find a fully satisfactory continuation.

13...\texttt{b}b7 was the better move, but Olafsson had prepared the energetic retort 14.\texttt{d}d3!, causing Black real problems.

For example:

a) 14...\texttt{xb}2?! 15.\texttt{e}e5 \texttt{b}b6 16.\texttt{f}f4 with a very strong initiative for White, based on the
line 16...d6 17...\texttt{g5}!! with a winning attack, as Black has to look out for \texttt{h}b3 as well as the threats on the kingside.

b) For this reason Black is better off playing 14...d5, but after 15...\texttt{b}b3 \texttt{a}6 White has a convenient choice between 16...\texttt{c}c1 and 16...\texttt{e}e5, in both cases with a preferable position. The rook might appear oddly placed on b3, but Black is suffering from a lot of coordination problems.

14...\texttt{d}6!!

This is the first masterstroke of the game. White sacrifices a pawn in order to prevent Black from advancing his d-pawn, the only thing he needs to do in order to complete his development. Black cannot get his pieces out, so he takes the pawn offered on b2 - not so much out of greed, but simply due to the absence of appealing alternatives.

14...\texttt{x}xd6 15...\texttt{x}xd6 \texttt{x}xb2 16...\texttt{a}d1

White is fully developed, but Black still cannot get his pieces out. A bad omen. How badly the following moves went was probably no surprise to Levitt, although he might have been surprised by the moves themselves.

16...\texttt{b}b7?!

It is no disgrace to lose the way Black did in the game; however this does not change that it was better to play 16...\texttt{c}c6. Having said that, White has a clear advantage after 17...\texttt{e}e5! \texttt{x}g2 18...\texttt{x}g2 \texttt{b}b7\texttt{f} 19...\texttt{g}1, the exchange of the bishops has brought Black a bit of relief and a chance to survive long term.

Black is caught in a number of pins, it turns out. Both the rook on d8 and the queen on b7 are exposed, and so is the pawn on b7, making even the bishop on e4 a pinned piece, and not only the pawn on d7 and (in time) the knight appearing on c6. White is able to use this with a fantastic and deep combination.

17...\texttt{x}xe6!! \texttt{fxe}6 18...\texttt{g}5

The bishop is pinned. After 18...\texttt{x}g2, White will win with 19...\texttt{x}xe6\texttt{f}!!], followed by mate in a few moves.

18...\texttt{h}6!

The only move. It might look natural to play 18...\texttt{c}c6, but White is then allowed to take on e4 with the queen, keeping the knight on g5, forcing immediate and decisive weakening around the black king. The winning line goes: 19...\texttt{x}xe4 \texttt{g}6 20...\texttt{h}h4 \texttt{h}5 21...\texttt{e}e4! The bishop needs to attack the king. 21...\texttt{g}7 22...\texttt{f}4! \texttt{f}8 23...\texttt{d}6 Black is done. The double threat of \texttt{xd}7\texttt{f} and \texttt{xc}6 will lead to decisive material gains.
19. \(\text{Qxe4} \text{ Qc6} 20. \text{Qxc5} \text{ Qc7}\)

Objectively it was better to play 20...\(\text{Qb6}\), although White is much better after 21.\(\text{Qxd7! Qxe3}\) 22.\(\text{fxe3 Qac8}\) (22...\(\text{Qdc8}\)? 23.\(\text{Qd6}\)) 23.\(\text{Qxc6 Qxc6}\) 24.\(\text{Qf6}\)\(\text{Qf7}\) 25.\(\text{Qxd8 Qxf6}\).

This endgame with two extra pawns should of course be winning, but a slim practical chance remains. The e2-pawn's only value seems to be that it will take an extra move to capture it in a later pawn race.

21.\(\text{Qxd7! Qac8}\)

Black is lost and no moves can change this. However, this does not mean that it does not make sense to look at one of them. 21...\(\text{e5}\) Here the focal points are \(h7, f7\) and \(c6\), the squares dominated by the light-squared bishop.

Not surprisingly White wins by putting the queen in the direction of these squares.

22.\(\text{Qxd3! Qac8}\) 23.\(\text{Qf5!! Qd4}\) 24.\(\text{Qxd4 exd4}\) 25.\(\text{Qd5\# Qh8}\) 26.\(\text{Qxe4 Qg8}\) 27.\(\text{Qh7\# Qf7}\) 28.\(\text{Qd5\# Qe7}\) 29.\(\text{Qxg7\# Qd6}\) 30.\(\text{Qe5\# Qxd7}\) 31.\(\text{Qe6}\) mate!

22.\(\text{Qxe6\# Qh8}\) 23.\(\text{Qe4! Qe7}\)

23...\(\text{Qe5}\) also does not offer much resistance: 24.\(\text{Qxe5! Qxd1\# 25. Qg2}\), and wins.

24.\(\text{Qd6}\)

Other moves were also winning, but this move has a nice tactical point.

24...\(\text{Qxc4}\) 25.\(\text{Qxe7}\)

25...\(\text{Qc1\#}\)

The point is that after 25...\(\text{Qe8}\) White mates in four: 26.\(\text{Qxh6\# Qg8}\) 27.\(\text{Qf6\# Qxf6}\) 28.\(\text{Qh8\# Qxh8}\) 29.\(\text{Qh7}\) mate!

26.\(\text{Qg2}\) 27.\(\text{Qf7}\) 28.\(\text{Qxe4}\) 28.\(\text{Qg6}\)

Black resigned. After 28...\(\text{Qc3}\) White wins elegantly with: 29.\(\text{Qf6! Qc7}\) 30.\(\text{Qg7}\) 1-0

In the next example we shall see how a pin can, paradoxically, be even more valuable than the pinned piece itself.

With a fantastic knight sacrifice Black takes the initiative early on and establishes a pin on an enemy knight. Even though the most Black can look forward to, in principle, is to restore material equality, the pin is so powerful that it could practically have decided the game by itself.

The problems with supporting the pinned piece are overwhelming White, and it is only because Black releases his opponent too early from the pin that the game does not become a miniature and is decided by mistakes in the middlegame, rather than in the opening.
Zonín Franco Ocampaús - Alfonso Romero Holmes

Leon 1990

1.e4 e5 2.â3 d6 3.d4

For a time this move was thought to give White a slight edge, but comparing it with similar variations, I cannot see why this would be a logical conclusion.

3...exd4 4.âxd4 âc6 5.âd2 âf6 6.g3

White has a potentially slight advantage because of the control over the d5-square, but he is lacking in development and Black is able to reach out for the initiative.

6...âe6

7.e4

This protects the pawn on c4, but also gives Black an additional target in the centre.


7...âe7 8.b3?

Played with the ambition of following up with âg2, âge2, 0-0 and so on. 8.âf3 was not necessarily comfortable, but it would avoid the coming very unpleasant combination. If Black was to do nothing he would quickly have to fight for equality. White would install a knight on d5 and if this was captured, he would recapture with the c-pawn, creating permanent weaknesses down the c-file.

However, it is Black to play and he can upset this long-term plan with a brilliant combination.

8...âxc4!!

This sacrifice is based on the pin from b4 to e1. The knight can return to c3, but it is still in trouble. This move has been played a number of times since this original game, making it "theory". This should not detract from the great performance of Romero Holmes, who discovered this idea at the board, in this game.

9.âxe4 d5 10.âg2

White has to do something to catch up in development.

Another attempt is:
10.âc3 d4 11.âge2!

The best chance, although even here White is in trouble. Black can play 11...0-0? to keep the tension, or look for a better endgame:
11...dâx3 12.âxc3 âb4

Or 12...âxd2† 13.âxd2 âd4 with a clear edge, Iskusnyh - Belikov, Moscow 1996.
11...\texttt{\texttt{xd5}} 12.\texttt{\texttt{f3}} \texttt{\texttt{f6}}!  
Using the pin to gain time.  
13.\texttt{b2}  
13.\texttt{\texttt{e3}}\texttt{f8}! led to a quick win in Paraki – Chatalbashev, Balatonlelle 2003.  
13...0-0-0  
White is lost; the bishops are too strong.  
14.\texttt{\texttt{e2}} \texttt{\texttt{xf3}} 15.\texttt{\texttt{dx}}\texttt{xf3} \texttt{\texttt{xd}}\texttt{d2} 16.\texttt{\texttt{xd}}\texttt{d2} \texttt{\texttt{d8}}\texttt{f}  
17.\texttt{\texttt{c2}} \texttt{\texttt{g6}}\texttt{f} 18.\texttt{\texttt{c1}} \texttt{\texttt{c5}} 19.\texttt{\texttt{d1}} \texttt{\texttt{e4}}  
20.\texttt{\texttt{e1}} 0-1  
This was Benko – Psakhis, Aruba 1992. White resigned without waiting for one of his opponent's many good moves.

So far we have been following Zupe – Szabo, Budapest 1994. Black played the tempting 14...\texttt{\texttt{c2}}\texttt{f}, but did not get a clear advantage.

Simpler is thus:
14...0-0-0-0! 15.\texttt{\texttt{d1}} \texttt{\texttt{c2}}\texttt{f} 16.\texttt{\texttt{f1}} \texttt{\texttt{c6}}  
Black has several convincing plans, such as ...\texttt{\texttt{d7}} and ...\texttt{\texttt{d8}}\texttt{h8}, or ...\texttt{\texttt{f5}} and ...\texttt{\texttt{g5}}, with a big space advantage.

Another possibility is:
10.\texttt{\texttt{cx}}\texttt{d5}  
This opens the diagonal from \texttt{d5} to \texttt{h1} and causes further problems for White. Black won after brilliant play in the following game:
10...\texttt{\texttt{b4}} 11.\texttt{\texttt{c3}}  
11.\texttt{\texttt{dxe}}\texttt{6} loses in one go:

Unfortunately it was probably better to play 10...\texttt{\texttt{dxe}}\texttt{4}! 11.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c3}}}\texttt{\texttt{d4}} 0-0 with a very convincing advantage. Whether or not the queens are exchanged, White is struggling to finish his development and will find it difficult to relieve the pressure once the knight arrives on \texttt{d4} and the \texttt{f}-pawn advances. Against a competent attacker White's position is virtually hopeless.

11.\texttt{\texttt{c3}} \texttt{\texttt{d4}} 12.\texttt{\texttt{b2}}?  
White had a chance to keep his position together at this point.
One game continued 12.\textit{\texttt{g}c2! \texttt{f}6 13.\textit{f}4 0–0–0! 14.\textit{xf}6 \texttt{g}x\texttt{f}6:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{pgfinterruptpicture}
\node at (0,0){\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}};
\end{pgfinterruptpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Here White could have played 15.\textit{d}d2! dxc3 16.\textit{xc}3 \textit{d}d4! 17.\textit{f}f1!, and I have not been able to find an advantage worth talking about.

Instead the game was brilliantly played by Black. 15.\textit{xc}6? bxc6 16.\textit{d}d2 dxc3 17.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3+ 18.\textit{xc}3 \textit{h}h3! 19.\textit{d}d1 \textit{g}g2 20.\textit{f}f1 \textit{f}f3 21.\textit{e}e3 h5 22.h3 \textit{h}e8 23.\textit{g}g4 h4 24.\textit{e}e1 c5 25.\textit{f}f1 \textit{d}d2 26.\textit{e}e1 c6 27.\textit{e}e1 \textit{e}e6 28.\textit{g}g5 f5 29.\textit{a}a1 f4 30.\textit{g}g4 \textit{e}ed6 0–1 Divč – Hampl, New Zealand 1998.

12.\textit{\texttt{ff}6 13.\textit{\texttt{ge}2 0–0–0 14.\textit{\texttt{w}c}1

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{pgfinterruptpicture}
\node at (0,0){\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard.png}};
\end{pgfinterruptpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

14...dxc3?

14...\textit{e}e5! was the winner. Now 15.0–0 runs into 15...\textit{d}d3!, when 16.\textit{e}e4 fails to

16...\textit{xc}1 17.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xc}2†, capturing the knight with an all-important check.

For this reason White's best try looks to be 15.\texttt{ff}1!, after which 15...\textit{d}d3? 16.\textit{e}e4! really is a good move. But Black does not have to allow this murky option. Instead, after the simple 15...dxc3 16.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3 17.\textit{xc}3 \textit{d}d3 18.\textit{xc}2 \textit{xf}2 he wins effortlessly.

15.\textit{xc}3 \textit{w}e5

15...\textit{he}8?! was a valid alternative.

16.\textit{xc}6 bxc6

Black's advantage is slipping. After 16...\textit{xc}3† 17.\textit{xc}3 \textit{xc}3† 18.\textit{xc}3 bxc6 19.0–0 it would be gone entirely.

17.\textit{xb}4 \textit{h}h3!

Black has to keep the white king in the centre.

17...\textit{g}g4? 18.0–0! would hand over the initiative to White.

18.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}f5!

Obviously Black must keep the queens on.

19.g4?! I do not really like this sharp option; the winning chances are all with Black.
19...\texttt{xd1}! was better, leading to equal chances after 19...\texttt{xd1}+ 20.\texttt{~xd1} \texttt{~b1}+ 21.\texttt{~c1} \texttt{~d3}+ 22.\texttt{~d2} \texttt{~e8} 23.\texttt{~e1} \texttt{~xe2} 24.\texttt{~xe2} \texttt{~g4} 25.\texttt{c3}.

19...\texttt{xd4} 20.f3

20.\texttt{g3} would be even worse. After the forcing option 20...\texttt{th8}+ 21.\texttt{~f1} \texttt{~h3}+ 22.\texttt{~g1} \texttt{~g4} White is threatened by mate and has to play 23.f3 \texttt{~g5} 24.\texttt{f2} to avoid immediate collapse.

However, Black has the brilliant deflection 24...a5!!, reminding the bishop that it is overloaded, having to look after both c5 and d2. White has some ways to keep the water from boiling over, but a lot of sweating and possibly some burn marks will be inevitable...

20...\texttt{xd3}!

Black wins the queen, although for three pieces, this is still worth it.

21.\texttt{~xg4} \texttt{~e4}! 22.\texttt{~xd3}

After 22.0-0 \texttt{xc3} 23.\texttt{~xc3} \texttt{~xg4}+ 24.\texttt{~h1} \texttt{f5} I would prefer Black, simply because the white king is so open, but three pieces is a lot for the queen, even when they are as uncoordinated as they are here.

22...\texttt{~xd3} 23.\texttt{~d1}

This loses the g-pawn for no obvious reason. But dig a little deeper and you will see that also after 23.\texttt{f2} \texttt{h5}! White is left without an obvious answer.

23...\texttt{wh3} 24.\texttt{g3}?

24.\texttt{~d2}?! with the plan of shuttling the king to the queenside seems to have been the last bid for equality.

24...\texttt{~xg4} 25.0-0 \texttt{h5}!

White is still suffering from pins, almost twenty moves after the first one was in the air.

26.\texttt{~h1}?  

This loses by force. 26.\texttt{~f2} \texttt{h4} 27.\texttt{~e2} was better, but White is in trouble.

26...\texttt{~h4} 27.\texttt{~f5} \texttt{~e4}+ 28.\texttt{~g1} \texttt{~h5} 29.\texttt{~d2} \texttt{~g5}+ 30.\texttt{~f2} \texttt{~g2} mate.

0-1

The following example shows how a player tied down in pins from all angles (d1 to d8, b5 to e8 and g5 to e7/d8) can easily see his position fall apart, despite desperately trying to keep everything covered and having no ambitions of his own. The game unfortunately drifted into an endgame, rather than finishing with mate around move 25, but for the white player this was all right, as it secured him the British Championship trophy. Incidentally,
he was the first English player to do so for about a decade – first the Indians took it, and when the establishment of a credible Commonwealth Championship made the participation of players from former colonies obsolete, the Scots took it four years in a row; three times by Jonathan Rowson and once by myself. The 2008 championship had no strong non-English participation, but with the skill Conquest shows here, he could have won any year...

**Stuart Conquest – Keith Arkell**

British Ch. play-off (2nd rapid game) 2008

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.$d2 dxe4 4.$xe4 $d7

Arkell has played like this a million times, almost. It is not by chance that Conquest decides to play something apparently “without teeth”.

5.$f3 $g6 6.$g3 c5 7.$e2

Played so as not to block the queen.

7...cxd4 8.$xd4 e6 9.0–0

9...$e7 appears far safer to me. It is hard to see how the white advantage could persist, but there is all to play for, of course.

10.$h4 0–0

10...b6!? looks very sensible here. I can see no reason for the king to reveal its intentions at a time when White is massing his army for an attack.

11.$d3

This is a loss of tempo, of course.

11...$e7

But so is this. It seems that Black is already under real pressure.

12.$g5

12...g6?

Already this appears to be the decisive mistake. There was no need to commit the kingside pawns at this stage. Arkell was avoiding disasters like 12...h6? 13.$xh6 with this move, but in turn weakening other squares.

12...$e8! to prepare either pawn move was the correct answer, where Black might still equalise.

13.$ad1 $e8?!
After this the win is forced, although the alternatives were also less than attractive for Black.

The only move was 13...\( \text{d}d5 \), when White has many tempting options. My choice would be 14.\( \text{f}e1 \), bringing in the last piece. I cannot see how Black can get his bits out, so White should be winning. For example: 14...b6 15.\( \text{xe7} \)\( \text{xe7} \) 16.\( \text{g5} \) h5 (16...\( \text{f6} \) 17.\( \text{h7} \)) 17.\( \text{xh5}! \) g\( xh5 \) 18.\( \text{xh5} \) \( \text{f6} \) 19.\( \text{h6} \) and Black is mated after \( \text{h7} \), \( \text{e}4 \)† and \( \text{d}3 \) – or something else...

The knight returns to the scene of action with the intention of landing on \( f6 \) or \( d6 \) in some combination. Arkell decides to put it all to the test:

16...f6

### Diagram

![Chess Diagram]

17.\( \text{xd7}!! \)

This tempting sacrifice removes the possibility for Black to resist on the dark squares. After this it is not important if the attack is immediately successful, as the compensation is major and pervasive.

17...\( \text{xd7} \)

17...\( \text{xd7} \) 18.\( \text{xf6} \) also leaves Black mortally weak on the dark squares. In this way he at least gets the bishop out.

18.\( \text{xf6} \)†!

18.\( \text{xf6} \)† would allow Black to fight back with 18...\( \text{c}6 \)†, when there is no clear path to follow.

18...\( \text{xf6} \) 19.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{c}7 \) 20.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 21.\( \text{f6} \) \( \text{c}7 \) 22.\( \text{e}5 \)!

Aiming straight at the king.

22...\( \text{c}6 \)

22...\( \text{f8} \) was the objectively best defence, but after 23.\( \text{g4} \)† (23.\( \text{xg6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) is only a draw)
23...h5 24.g5 e8 25.e5 and 26.f6+, White is winning.

23.xg6!

"OK, if it is not prevented, I guess I will have to..."

23...d5 24.g5 f7

25.e5

From here on it was possible that there were better ways to win the game, but the road chosen by Stuart was wise, as it was firmly within his control.

Watching the game live I was wondering what would happen after 25.h8!, when my idea was 25...f8 26.e5 d7 27.f6+ g8 28.f7! with mate to come. It seems that this is exactly what would happen!

25...d8 26.h6

Forcing a winning endgame.

26.h5 e7 27.xe7+ xxe7 28.c4! was more direct.

26.e7 27.xh7+ e8 28.xe7 xe7 29.h8+ f8 30.xf8+ xf8

The rest is rather trivial. The well-known drawing factor in endgames with opposite-coloured bishops only exists if White is silly enough to put his pawns on the kingside exclusively on the dark squares.

31.b3 b5 32.e1 c8 33.e2 f7 34.f3 a5 35.f2 a4 36.h4 g6 37.g4 f8 38.e3 c8 39.e2 f8 40.f4 h6 41.g3 axb3 42.axb3 a8 43.h5 a2 44.h2 e4 45.g5 h7 46.d2 a7

1-0

Of course not all pins can be trusted. In the following small piece of art Black ignores a pin, sacrifices his queen, and mates the opponent in the middle of the board.

Martin Ahn – Tamas Ruck

Belgian League 2006

1.e4 e5 2.f3 c6 3.d4 exd4 4.xd4 c5 5.h3 b6 6.c3 d6 7.g5 h6 8.h4 d6 9.a4?

9.e2 and 9.d3 are superior alternatives, although the text had been played in several earlier games.

9..xh4!!

A big improvement over previous games. Even some strong GM’s have reacted by moving the a-pawn.
10...\textbf{fxd8}?! 

White can of course decline the sacrifice with 10.\textbf{Wh5}, but Black is a pawn up and should be doing well after: 10...\textbf{g6}?! 11.\textbf{xd8} \textbf{gxh5} 12.\textbf{xe4} \textbf{xd8} 13.a5 \textbf{axa5} 14.\textbf{xa5} \textbf{e8} with a clear advantage.

10...\textbf{xf2}?! 11.\textbf{e2} \textbf{g4}?! 12.\textbf{d3} \textbf{e5}?! 

This was of course the point. This game has a 19th century romanticism about it.

13.\textbf{xe4} \textbf{f5}?! 14.\textbf{d5} \textbf{xd8}

The white king is trapped in a mating net. Black will play 15...\textbf{c6}?! and 16...0-0 on almost everything, threatening mate in many ways.

15.\textbf{xg4}

After 15.\textbf{d4} c6?! 16.\textbf{e6} castling still works, but also possible is 16...\textbf{xd4}?! winning, as 17.\textbf{xd4} f4 is mate.

15...\textbf{c6}?! 

Black will of course not get distracted by trivial things such as hanging queens...

16.\textbf{e6} 0-0?!

16...\textbf{fxg4} also wins, but in an ending...

17.\textbf{d5}

17.\textbf{xf5} \textbf{e8} mate!

17...\textbf{fxg4}

Forced by circumstances, Black has to take the queen back.

18.\textbf{d3}

18...\textbf{g6}

This is easily good enough to win, but 18...\textbf{e6} 19.\textbf{xd6} \textbf{e8} 20.\textbf{e6} \textbf{xd5} with mate being just around the corner was a more obvious option.

19.\textbf{hfl} \textbf{g7} 20.\textbf{d4} \textbf{e8} 21.\textbf{e7} \textbf{h4} 22.\textbf{e6} \textbf{e7} 23.\textbf{hfl} \textbf{e8} 24.\textbf{e4} \textbf{e6} 25.\textbf{d3} \textbf{e5}?! 26.\textbf{e3} \textbf{e2}

0-1

Finally, let us look at two complicated examples:

In the first of the two, Black has sacrificed a piece for a very powerful attack, but ran out of time before he could work out how to use it decisively and thus had to settle for a perpetual check.
Ildar Khairullin – Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

Moscow 2008

The game concluded: 33...\textit{a3}† 34.\textit{d}2 \textit{a7}? (34...\textit{b4}† was still winning as we shall see below.) 35.\textit{xd}5 \textit{a5}† 36.\textit{c}1 \textit{a1}† 37.\textit{d}2 \textit{a5}† 38.\textit{c}1 \textit{a3}† 39.\textit{d}2 \textit{f2–f2}

The win was quite elaborate, simple in its mechanics, but not easy to find by any means. The winning method is based on Alekhine's rule of putting the rook before the queen when doubling pieces down a file. However, it is not that easy to get the rook in front of the queen. The initial moves are:

33...\textit{a2}† 34.\textit{d}2 \textit{b}3!!

Besides being ready for frontline duty, the rook is also threatening to take the bishop on d3 and thus collapse the white defence.

35.\textit{xd}5

35.\textit{c}1 frees up d1 for the king, but Black can use more direct methods against this move: 35...\textit{xd}3† 36.\textit{xd}3 \textit{f}4 The queen is now out of good squares, and 37...\textit{c}3† wins.

35.\textit{b}1!? is another attempt to muddy the waters, but Black wins after 35...\textit{xb}1 36.\textit{xb}3 \textit{b}2† without too much drama. The white king is too exposed. So, the only move offering a real test is to eliminate the dangerous bishop on d5.

35...\textit{xd}5 36.\textit{f}1

There are other moves, but none suffice.

36...\textit{f}4!

Taking control over e2 with tempo.

37.\textit{c}4

We have arrived at a beautiful moment, where a winning sequence, relevant to many lines if we mapped out everything from move 33, is the fastest and most elegant way to win, although far from the only one.

37...\textit{c}3† 38.\textit{c}1 \textit{a}1† 39.\textit{d}2
39...\texttt{a5}! 40.\texttt{c1} \texttt{a3}!! 41.\texttt{d2} \texttt{b4}!

The pieces are now ideally placed, with tempo, and mate awaits on the next move:

42.\texttt{c1} \texttt{b1} mate!

In our last example dealing with pins, I want to look at a recent encounter between the two grandmasters Sokolov and Golod. The game is based on pins every step of the way, in the actual moves played, as well as in the strong options missed. That the players found it difficult to deal with this theme is apparent from the moves played, but do not be fooled, these are sensational players playing a very difficult game and taking great risks. Chess can be very difficult if you stray from safety, as with this game.

\textbf{Ivan Sokolov – Vitali Golod}

Gibraltar 2009

1.d4 \texttt{f6} 2.c4 \texttt{e6} 3.\texttt{f3} d5 4.\texttt{c3} dxc4 5.e3 a6 6.a4 \texttt{b4} 7.\texttt{xc4} b6 8.0–0 \texttt{b7} 9.\texttt{b3} \texttt{e7}

10.e4!

This pawn sacrifice looks very tempting and it was indeed a correct judgement by Sokolov to think that White needed to react in the centre. However, his follow-up was not the best.

10...\texttt{xe4} 11.\texttt{e1}!

Black is now pinned on the e-file, with the rook shooting at both the queen on e7 and the king on e8. It is only through a great achievement by Golod and mistakes from Sokolov that Black is able to survive this treacherous position.

11...\texttt{c6}!

Black has to defend himself actively.

11...\texttt{xc3}?! 12.bxc3 \texttt{d7} 13.\texttt{d3} \texttt{d6} 14.\texttt{g5} gives White a dangerous initiative for the pawn.

12.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{a5} 13.\texttt{c2}!

White finds no advantage in the sharp line

13.\texttt{a2} \texttt{xc3} 14.\texttt{g5} \texttt{d6} 15.\texttt{xe6}! 0–0!

16.\texttt{f4} \texttt{d8} 17.\texttt{f5} \texttt{b4} 18.\texttt{d5}! \texttt{xd5} 19.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{xa2} 20.\texttt{xd8} \texttt{b3} 21.\texttt{f1} \texttt{xd8} 22.\texttt{xb4}.

13...\texttt{xc4}

14.d5!

White is seeking to use the pin down the e-file as aggressively as possible.

It would be too soon to play 14.\texttt{g5}?! as Black can block the bishop and complete
his development quickly with: 14...f6! 15.d5 0-0-0 16.exf4 fxg5 17.dxe6 with a crazy and unclear position.

14...\(\text{\#	ext{c}5}\)?

This should have lost by force as can be seen in the notes to White's next move.

14...\(\text{\#	ext{a}5}\)!

Black had to play this to get the knight out of harm's way. The position remains very sharp, but it seems that White has the better chances after energetic play:

15.e5\(\text{\#	ext{b}5}\) 16.g3 \(\text{\#	ext{d}6}\)

Here White has a lot of options, the position is really very rich and it is hard for the author to give any clear conclusion. The white position feels better developed and more coordinated. But then, he has also given up a pawn.

My suggestion for an active continuation is:

17.e4 \(\text{\#	ext{e}7}\) 18.d1!

Black needs to castle kingside, as active play with 18...0-0-0?! would lead to trouble: 19.e2! e5 20.b4 \(\text{\#	ext{x}d}5\) 21.g5 \(\text{\#	ext{x}d}5\) 22.c3 and bxa5 with a very strong attack.

18...0-0 19.e2 c5

So this is thus necessary. White appears to have a lot of pressure still, but there is also the issue of a sacrificed pawn, so we should not completely write Black off just yet.

15.dxe6?

With this one unenergetic move White loses all his initiative. It is possible that Sokolov was too focused on the obvious pin from e4 to c8 and the dangers the white pieces are able to pose the black king, and thus completely missed the idea of pinning the knight on c4 and using the exposed nature of the bishop on b4. This theme is actually just as important for what is right and true in this position as the pressure down the e-file, as we shall see.

The winning continuation was thus: 15.eb3! \(\text{\#	ext{b}5}\) 16.axb5 axb5 17.e8\(\text{\#	ext{a}8}\) 18.e8\(\text{\#	ext{a}8}\)
15...0-0??
Black misses the chance to take over the initiative with 15...0-0-0!!.

17.\textit{a}2?
Sokolov misses a golden opportunity to punish his opponent's error.

17.e7!! z7
Black's only attempt, I think, is to close the diagonal from b3 to g8.  
17...\textit{e}e8 loses to the double pin on the knight on c4, from b3 to g8 and from h4 to b4. 18.\textit{w}b3! c5 19.axb5 axb5 20.\textit{x}xa8 \textit{x}xa8  
21.\textit{e}c3 \textit{w}xe7 22.\textit{d}xh6 \textit{d}d5 23.\textit{x}xc4 \textit{w}f7  
24.\textit{w}xb4 \textit{e}c4 25.\textit{c}c3 and although some fighting remains, the outlook for Black is very bleak indeed.  
Here the most convincing move is:  
18.\textit{w}c2!  
But it has to be said that 18.\textit{c}d3!? is also good enough.  
18...\textit{d}d6  
Otherwise the knight is just lost.  
19.\textit{c}e3 \textit{w}a5 20.\textit{g}g5  
A convenient double threat.  
20...\textit{e}xc3 21.\textit{x}hx8!  
Threatening to play \textit{h}h8 with mate in a few moves.  
21...g6 22.\textit{w}xf7 \textit{e}xf7 23.\textit{d}d4!!

16.\textit{h}4! f5
16...h6 would not work out. White wins with both 17.\textit{x}h6! and 17.\textit{e}e4! \textit{xe}4 (17...\textit{c}6  
18.\textit{c}c5 when the h6-pawn is pinned. Next 19.\textit{e}xc4 will win everything.) 18.\textit{w}xe4 White  
wins a piece because of the pin along the 4th rank, and because 18...b5 is met with 19.axb5,  
when the pin on the a6-pawn plays in as well.  

A truly wonderful move, winning so many tempos it is ridiculous.  
23.\textit{x}xd4 24.e8=\textit{w} \textit{exe}8 25.\textit{w}xe8=\textit{w}g7  
26.\textit{w}xf7=\textit{w}h6  
Here again White needs to be careful. The best move seems to be:  
27.\textit{w}h8!  

It is not easy to find a decent continuation for White. I am struggling to understand why  
a sensational grandmaster like Golod did not play this move - all my students choose it.  
After the text, Black's king has gone to a place where there are no pieces to defend it  
and where he will have to weaken his position immediately.
An important move.
27...\(\text{Qe6?} \text{xf2}! \text{28.}\text{Qf1} \text{Qxg2}! \) would allow a boardwide perpetual check.
27...\(\text{Qh5} \text{28.}\text{Qe6!} \)

This time there is no perpetual check. The king will go all the way to a2, and when Black takes on a4 with check, the queen can come back to a3 and stop the harassment.

17...\(\text{Qe4} \text{18.}\text{Qxe4?!} \)

True to his nature, Sokolov chooses what seems to be the sharpest continuation.

The objectively best move is probably 18...\(\text{wxe2} \) after which White might still have a slight edge.

Another interesting continuation is 18...\(\text{wb3?!} \) when Black can only survive with one move: 18...\(\text{Qa5!!} \text{19.}\text{Qxb4} \text{Qxb4} \text{20.}\text{Qxb4} \text{Qb3?!} \), when the position is very unclear. White should probably play 21...\(\text{a3}, \) when Black can restore material equality, but in no way order. The bishop is very strong on e4, but the position is extremely double-edged, so I don’t want to give any evaluations.

18...\(\text{fxe4} \text{19.}\text{Qxe4} \text{Qad8?} \)

This move opens up for the advance e6-e7, but is depending on a back rank mating threat. However, this is protected by X-ray from a1.

19...\(\text{Qae8!} \) was the correct move. 20.b3 is the most testing response, but even this does not lead to an advantage (20...\(\text{Qxb4} \text{leads to straight equality instead}), as 20...\(\text{Qd2}!! \) uses the pin on the knight on f3 to create mayhem. After 21...\(\text{Qxb4} \text{Qxf3}! \text{22.gxf3} \text{Qd5}! \) Black is most likely better, if anything.

We have come to the last moment in the game where White could have won, however, he did not spot the sensational winning blow.

20...\(\text{Qg5?} \)

This is a rather poor mistake that suggests that Sokolov had completely missed the reply.

Had he wanted to develop safely, he could have played 20...\(\text{Qe3}, \) when Black almost equals with 20...\(\text{Qxe3} \text{21.fxe3} \text{Qf3}! \text{22.wxf3} \text{Qf8} \text{23.}\text{Qe2} \text{a5}, \) and White’s advantage has been kept to a minimum.

However, the winning move involved using the bishop more aggressively:

20...\(\text{Qh6}!! \)

This is a fantastic solution to the problem of what to do with the bishop. The reason for the bishop needing to go here is not so much about attacking g7, which is hardly relevant in the further play, but simply a matter of finding a good square for the bishop. On e3 it can be exchanged, and on g5, as we shall see later, it is hanging in the air.

20...\(\text{gxh6} \)

This allows White to reveal his point. Now that the first rank is protected, he can give up his pawn in order to win the two black minor pieces.

20...\(\text{Qxf8} \text{loses quickly to 21.}\text{Qg5} \text{g6} \text{22.}\text{Qf4} \text{Qf8} \text{23.e7?!} \) and White wins a piece at least.

20...\(\text{Qd2} \) Once again this is objectively best, although here it is not as convincing as in other lines. 21...\(\text{Qxb4} \) This looks hopeless, but
there are still some practical details to sort out. 21...\texttt{Qfxf3} \texttt{Qxf3} 22.\texttt{gxf3} \texttt{Qxf3} 23.\texttt{Wxc5} \texttt{bxc5} 24.\texttt{e3} The endgame should in principle be winning, but a strong hand is needed to prove it. If the knight was at c3 already, everything would be easy.

21.e7! \texttt{Qd2}!!

Black has to complicate matters.

22.\texttt{We6}+ \texttt{g7} 23.\texttt{exf8=Q+} \texttt{Qxf8}

Black has escaped so far without material losses, but his pieces are so badly placed that he cannot keep the position together.

24.\texttt{Qd1} \texttt{Qf6} 25.\texttt{Qd7}+ \texttt{Qf7} 26.\texttt{Qg4}+ \texttt{Qh8} 27.\texttt{Qe6}!

White should avoid tricks like 27.b3 \texttt{Qe5}, when the game continues.

27...\texttt{Qd6} 28.b4!

There is no way for Black to hang on to the bishop any longer. For example:

28...\texttt{Qxb4} 29.\texttt{Qd5}!

20...\texttt{Qd2}!!

Black uses the pin on the knight on f3 sensationally to solve the problems with his minor pieces. You could also call this move deflection, as it works in just this way on both the knight and the bishop.

21.\texttt{Qxd2}

White cannot take on b4 in this line, as the bishop would be hanging with check on g5.

21...\texttt{Qxd2} 22.\texttt{Qf1}??

A horrendous blunder. It seems that after the rollercoaster ride the game has been so far, and the apparent blunder on move 20, that White was unable to adjust to a more unambitious pose, and was hoping that Black would be unable to solve his problems connected with the coordination of his pieces.

The correct continuation was 22.\texttt{Qxd2}, when after 22...\texttt{Wxf2}+ 23.\texttt{Qh1} \texttt{Qxd2} 24.h3 the position appears to be pretty balanced.

22...\texttt{Qxb2} 23.\texttt{Qc1}

It was upon this move that Sokolov had pinned his hopes, but it was all wishful thinking. Black has no fewer than three ways to win the game here. At the board he chose the most convincing.
23...\texttt{\textbackslash bxf2}!
A typical combination which Sokolov has also executed.

24.\texttt{\textbackslash d}d3
The point was of course that after 24.\texttt{\textbackslash b}xf2 Black wins with 24...\texttt{\textbackslash w}xc1\texttt{+} 25.\texttt{\textbackslash f}f1 \texttt{\textbackslash a}e5\texttt{+}. Even this final finesse is of course based on the pin of the knight, which cannot go to e1, and a pin on the rook on the first rank, which cannot go to f2. Pins are all around us.

24...\texttt{\textbackslash a}2xf3\texttt{+}
And in view of the imminent mate, White resigned.
0–1

Improving the Circumstances

In the next two sections we shall deal with the opponent with a bit more respect. First we shall look at scenarios where we can make a subtle change in the position before carrying out our idea. This can at times be difficult and it should thus not be a surprise that two of the players missed the best move at the critical moments, and that the most impressive game chosen here was a correspondence encounter.

Evgeny Alekseev – Peter Svidler
Russian Championship, Moscow 2008

\begin{center}
egin{tikzpicture}

\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);

\node at (0.5,0.5) {1}; \node at (1.5,0.5) {2}; \node at (2.5,0.5) {3}; \node at (3.5,0.5) {4}; \node at (4.5,0.5) {5}; \node at (5.5,0.5) {6}; \node at (6.5,0.5) {7}; \node at (7.5,0.5) {8};

\node at (0.5,1) {a}; \node at (1.5,1) {b}; \node at (2.5,1) {c}; \node at (3.5,1) {d}; \node at (4.5,1) {e}; \node at (5.5,1) {f}; \node at (6.5,1) {g}; \node at (7.5,1) {h};

\node at (0.5,0.5) {1} coordinate (1);

\node at (1.5,0.5) {e4} coordinate (e4);
\node at (2.5,0.5) {c6} coordinate (c6);
\node at (3.5,0.5) {d5} coordinate (d5);
\node at (4.5,0.5) {e5} coordinate (e5);
\node at (5.5,0.5) {\textbackslash f}5 coordinate (f5);
\node at (6.5,0.5) {\textbackslash f}3 coordinate (f3);
\node at (7.5,0.5) {e6} coordinate (e6);
\node at (0.5,1) {e2} coordinate (e2);
\node at (1.5,1) {d7} coordinate (d7);
\node at (2.5,1) {6.0–0} coordinate (6.0-0);
\node at (3.5,1) {\textbackslash g}6 coordinate (g6);
\node at (4.5,1) {h3} coordinate (h3);
\node at (5.5,1) {\textbackslash h}6 coordinate (h6);
\node at (6.5,1) {c4} coordinate (c4);
\node at (7.5,1) {\textbackslash f}5 coordinate (f5);
\node at (0.5,2) {d6} coordinate (d6);
\node at (1.5,2) {b2} coordinate (b2);
\node at (2.5,2) {0–0} coordinate (0-0);
\node at (3.5,2) {d3} coordinate (d3);
\node at (4.5,2) {f6} coordinate (f6);
\node at (5.5,2) {\textbackslash e}2 coordinate (e2);
\node at (6.5,2) {\textbackslash x}e5 coordinate (x_e5);
\node at (7.5,2) {dxe5} coordinate (dxe5);
\node at (0.5,3) {c5} coordinate (c5);
\node at (1.5,3) {\textbackslash f}4 coordinate (f4);
\node at (2.5,3) {\textbackslash x}d3 coordinate (xd3);
\node at (3.5,3) {15.\textbackslash x}d3 coordinate (xd3);
\node at (4.5,3) {h5} coordinate (h5);
\node at (5.5,3) {16.\textbackslash d}h coordinate (dh);
\node at (6.5,3) {\textbackslash x}f3 coordinate (xf3);
\node at (7.5,3) {17.\textbackslash w}xf3 coordinate (wxf3);
\node at (0.5,4) {f7} coordinate (f7);
\node at (1.5,4) {18.\textbackslash c}x coordinate (cx);
\node at (2.5,4) {d5 coordinate (d5)};
\node at (3.5,4) {\textbackslash x}d coordinate (xd);
\node at (4.5,4) {e2 coordinate (e2)};
\node at (5.5,4) {w coordinate (w)};
\node at (6.5,4) {g6 coordinate (g6)};
\node at (7.5,4) {22.g3 coordinate (g3)};
\node at (0.5,5) {23.\textbackslash e}3 coordinate (e3);
\node at (1.5,5) {\textbackslash x}h1 coordinate (xh1);
\node at (2.5,5) {\textbackslash h}6 coordinate (h6);
\node at (3.5,5) {24.\textbackslash c}1 coordinate (c1);
\node at (4.5,5) {d4 coordinate (d4)};
\node at (5.5,5) {25.\textbackslash g}2 coordinate (g2);
\node at (6.5,5) {\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (7.5,5) {26.\textbackslash w}e2 coordinate (we2);
\node at (0.5,6) {26...\textbackslash f}c8 coordinate (fc8);
\node at (1.5,6) {27.fxe3 coordinate (fxe3)};
\node at (2.5,6) {\textbackslash x}d3 coordinate (xd3);
\node at (3.5,6) {28.\textbackslash g}1 coordinate (g1);
\node at (4.5,6) {29.\textbackslash w}xd3 coordinate (wdx3);
\node at (5.5,6) {\textbackslash e}xe3 coordinate (exe3);
\node at (6.5,6) {30.\textbackslash w}d3 coordinate (wdx3);
\node at (7.5,6) {\textbackslash f}c8 coordinate (fcc8);
\node at (0.5,7) {31.e4 coordinate (e4)};
\node at (1.5,7) {\textbackslash d}2 coordinate (d2);
\node at (2.5,7) {32.\textbackslash x}g3 coordinate (xg3);
\node at (3.5,7) {\textbackslash x}g3 coordinate (xg3);
\node at (4.5,7) {33.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (5.5,7) {34.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (6.5,7) {35.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (7.5,7) {36.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (0.5,8) {37.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (1.5,8) {38.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (2.5,8) {39.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (3.5,8) {40.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (4.5,8) {41.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (5.5,8) {42.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (6.5,8) {43.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\node at (7.5,8) {44.\textbackslash x}c3 coordinate (xc3);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

This moment is very important, although not for the outcome of the game. Black took on c3 in the game, overlooking his opponent’s counterplay. As White only has one way to continue the game (\texttt{\textbackslash d}2) Black could have improved his position first.

28...\texttt{\textbackslash d}xe3?
One student of mine suggested 28...\texttt{\textbackslash x}c3, having evaluated the line 29.\texttt{\textbackslash d}2 \texttt{\textbackslash c}2 30.\texttt{\textbackslash d}3 \texttt{\textbackslash f}c8 31.e4 \texttt{\textbackslash x}g3 32.\texttt{\textbackslash x}g3 \texttt{\textbackslash x}c3 33.\texttt{\textbackslash x}c3 \texttt{\textbackslash x}c3 as winning for Black. White can probably avoid destruction in other ways, but in fact he has no reason to avoid this position, as 34.\texttt{\textbackslash x}c1\texttt{!} wins in one go.

The correct move was 28...\texttt{\textbackslash f}7!!

27.fxe3 \texttt{\textbackslash x}d3 28.\texttt{\textbackslash g}1
White cannot take the rook on d3, as 29.\texttt{\textbackslash x}d3 \texttt{\textbackslash e}xe3 would win the game.
Instead he would have to play 29...d2, when after 29...dxe3 30.exf7+ xf7 31.xe3 dxe3 Black has a rather clear advantage. White can try stuff like 32.xf3+, and fight on, but the position is unpleasant. An important point is that in this line White cannot play 32.xc2??, as Black can either move his h-pawn or play 32...c4!, in all cases using the slightly different position of the king to create a path for it towards safety.

I have to say that 28...xf7! is one of those unique decisions that few can find or understand. It is simply too deep.

29.xf8+ xf8 30.xe3 dxe3

31.e1?

White could have created a lot of counterplay with 31.c2!!, when Black's best reply to the threat of e8# followed by f1t, or the other way around, is 31...d8. Here White can play things like 32.c5t with equality.

31...h6 32.e8t f7 33.g4?

This seems a bit aimless. The last chance was 33.f1t f5 34.g4 fxf1t 35.xf1, although the endgame after 35...d2 looks a good deal better for Black.

33..e4! 34.c4 d5

0–1

The next position is also quite difficult. The point is that the initial idea, no matter how spectacular, does not work, and Black for this reason has to find a way to improve it.

Viesturs Meijers - Jonathan Grant

EU Championship, Liverpool 2006

27..e3? 28.d1!

This came as a cold shower for Jonathan, who had overlooked this particular method in which the queen protects g2.

28...h4?

Having realised that 28..g3 29.xd5! rescues White, Jonathan loses his focus and collapses.

After 28...h5! Black is still in the game. For example: 29.g1 h3 30.g2 a2! with a messy position.

29.xd5

White is better and managed to make the most of his advantage in what followed.

29..f4 30.xb7 xc3 31.ae1 xa2 32.e8+ h7 33.b8+ d4 34.h8+ g6 35.g1+ f5 36.b7 e4+ 37.xe4+ e4 38.e8+ f4 39.g4+ f5 40.xg7 f6 41.g1 xb3 42.g4+ g7 43.xh6+
Chapter 2 - Typical Piece Play

28. \( \text{c1} \) \( g5 \) forces White to play 29. \( \text{d1} \), which is met with the same medicine as if played a move earlier: 29...d4!! 30. \( \text{cxd4} \) \( \text{e4} \)!! and the threat of ...\( \text{g3} \) is absolutely destructive. White has to give up the queen.

Also, the \( \text{g}1 \) ideas no longer work. Because the rook is no longer at e8, Black can take on \( f2 \) and play ...\( \text{g8}-\text{e7} \) in reply to the rook sacrifices, not allowing the queen to come to \( g1 \) with check. Thereafter ...\( \text{g6} \) will put more pressure on \( h2 \) than can be handled.

The following example could just as easily have been placed in the next section on prophylaxis, as White's main achievement in this game is to anticipate the opponent's attack and conduct his aggression in a way that limits it.

The most important moment for our theme is at move 19, although the decision on move 26 is also deeply impressive, and would be extremely hard to find in an over-the-board game.

Luiz Roberto Da Costa Junior – Dirk Jungmichel

Correspondence 2002

1.e4 \( \text{d5} \) 2. \( \text{exd5} \) \( \text{Wxd5} \) 3. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 5. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 6. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{f5} \) 7. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{e6} \) 8. \( \text{We2} \) \( \text{b4} \) 9.0-0-0 \( \text{bd7} \) 10. \( \text{dh4} \) \( \text{g4} \) 11. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 12. \( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{h5} \) 13. \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 14. \( \text{b3} \) 0-0?

This looks rather foolhardy. The king had no reason to commit to the kingside so early on in the game.

15. \( \text{gxg6} \) \( \text{hxg6} \) 16. \( \text{h4} \)!

White wastes no time in commencing his assault.

16...\( \text{wa3} \)!! 17. \( \text{b1} \) a5 18. \( \text{h5} \!) \( \text{a4} \)

Black has to look for counterplay. After both 18...gxh5 19. \( \text{g5} \! \) and 18...\( \text{g5} \) 19. \( \text{h6} \!), White's attack is very dangerous.
We have reached the first critical moment. White wants to sacrifice the bishop, but after 19.\(\text{ex}e6\)!! Black can get real counterplay with 19...\(\text{xa}6\)! 20.\(\text{a}1\) \(\text{b}6\) when the game is very unclear.

19.\(\text{c}4\)!! \(\text{b}5\) 20.\(\text{exe}6\)!!

Now when Black can no longer attack with the rook manoeuvre to \(\text{b}6\), this sacrifice becomes very strong. Black has obtained an extra tempo to advance the \(\text{b}\)-pawn, but it is still a few moves away from creating real problems.

20...\(\text{f}e8\)!!

The only move. White is lost after 20...\(\text{ae}8\)? 21.\(\text{wh}2\)! with the idea 21...\(\text{xe}6\) 22.h6! and the attack down the h-file is simply too strong. Also, after 21...\(\text{gxh}5\) White wins with 22.\(\text{xd}7\) \(\text{xd}7\) 23.\(\text{hx}5\) \(\text{f}6\) 24.\(\text{g}6\)! followed by 25.\(\text{h}7\) and 26.\(\text{h}5\).

21.\(\text{xf}7\)!!

White had his eyes on this sacrifice from way back, but also 21.\(\text{wh}2\)!! \(\text{xe}6\) 22.\(\text{hxg}6\) \(\text{f}8\)
23.g5 looks very dangerous for Black.

21...\(\text{xf}7\) 22.\(\text{hxg}6\)!! \(\text{xg}6\) 23.\(\text{d}3\)!! \(\text{f}7\) 24.g5 \(\text{b}4\) 25.\(\text{c}4\)!!

White should not be blind to Black’s counterplay.

After 25.\(\text{gx}f6?\) \(\text{b}3\)! White has to play 26.\(\text{f}4\), which leads to unclear play.

25...\(\text{e}6\)!!

Black is lost after this inaccuracy.

Better was:
25...\(\text{d}5\)!!

This leads to a poor ending, but it was still worth a try:
26.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{c}5\) 27.\(\text{g}6\)!!
27.\(\text{xb}4\) \(\text{ac}8\) 28.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{g}6\) does not look clear at all.
27...\(\text{g}8\) 28.\(\text{c}1\)!! \(\text{xc}3\) 29.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{xf}3\)!!
29...\(\text{b}3\) 30.\(\text{h}8\)!!
30.\(\text{df}1\) \(\text{g}4\) 31.\(\text{fg}1\) \(\text{f}3\) 32.\(\text{h}2\) \(\text{f}8\)
32...\(\text{e}6\) loses the queen to 33.\(\text{g}1\) \(\text{g}6\) 34.\(\text{h}8\)!! \(\text{f}7\) 35.\(\text{f}1\).
33.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{b}3\) 34.\(\text{axb}3\) \(\text{axb}3\) 35.\(\text{xb}3\)!! \(\text{xb}3\)!!
36.\(\text{xb}3\)

White is of course much better, but the \(\text{g}6\)-pawn is a lost cause, so the technical task of winning this position would still require a lot of effort.

26.\(\text{de}1!!\)
I always love these kinds of deep decisions. The point is that when the rook on e1 goes to b1 in the line played in the game, everything is fine, but if the rook goes from d1 to b1, with another rook left on e1, Black has the ...\textit{e}8 move from the coming note.

After 26.\textit{e}he1?! bxc3 White should avoid 27.\textit{g}xe6?! entirely in this line. After 27...\textit{g}6! 28.\textit{c}1 \textit{b}4† 29.\textit{a}a1 \textit{b}8! 30.\textit{a}a3 \textit{wxa}3 31.\textit{b}1 as said, Black has the powerful blow:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

31...\textit{e}8!! winning.

Instead 27.\textit{c}1 is possible, leading to complications, and perhaps some advantage. But we are looking for something clearer.

It should maybe be added that 26.\textit{g}6† \textit{e}7 27.\textit{he}1 \textit{xe}1 28.\textit{xe}1† \textit{d}8 29.\textit{xc}6 \textit{b}8 30.\textit{c}4 \textit{e}8 is better for White, although not entirely clear as well.

26...bxc3

Black is done no matter what.

26...\textit{ae}8 27.\textit{g}6† makes no sense.

26...f8 27.cxb4 with the threat 28.\textit{e}3 is also not great. White is able to paralyse Black completely after 27...d5 28.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6 29.\textit{xc}6 \textit{e}c7 30.\textit{c}3!. The queen and knights are not playing. White can plan ideas such as \textit{h}1-\textit{e}1-\textit{e}5 after which \textit{x}d5 is in the air, or f4-f5-f6, opening up the kingside.

27.\textit{xe}6† \textit{g}6 28.\textit{c}1 \textit{b}4† 29.\textit{a}a1 \textit{b}8

29...\textit{e}8 does not work at this point. The rook on e1 is protected and White can play 30.a3! winning conveniently.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

30.\textit{a}a3! \textit{wxa}3 31.\textit{b}1 \textit{xb}1†

31...\textit{e}8 does not help in view of 32.\textit{h}3! \textit{xg}5 33.\textit{hg}1† with a mating attack.

32.\textit{xb}1 \textit{f}8

32...\textit{xg}5 33.f4†! leads to mate rather quickly.

33.\textit{e}3!

Black resigned, which would have been a bit early, had it not been a correspondence game. White wins after 33...d6d7 34.f4! \textit{f}7 35.f5! in an attack.

1-0

After three such difficult examples, I want to emphasise that this theme does have genuine relevance for real life chess. In the next example Judit Polgar had spotted a promising looking combination, but one which only worked after first implementing a small change to the position. I suppose you can call it a trap, as Black could have defended better, but at times we have to take the chances that are presented to us, and not the chances we would have wished to get.
It is natural to consider taking the pawn on e6 – it is a check after all. However, Polgar found a way to create real issues for Black by advancing her h-pawn first.

23.h5!
Aiming at destroying the pawn structure around the king: the immediate rook sacrifice has no point to it.

23...gxh5?
Black does not spot the deeper change in the position that occurs as a result of this move.

23...Af7! was absolutely necessary. 24.Axf7 (24.Axe6 Axf8 is also fine) 24...Axf7 25.Ab1
Probably this is what Bareev feared. 25...Axd2
26.Axb7+ Axf8! Black is threatening to take on g5 with a check and the white knight cannot enter the game in a positive way. Basically, White does not have more than one of many ways to reach a draw here.

24.Axe6+ Axf8
The difference from before is that the g-pawn can advance to g6. For this reason White has a winning combination.


26...Ae8
26...Af7 is met with 27.Ab1!. Maybe this was what Bareev missed on move 23?

27.g6
Further demolishing the pawn structure.

27...hxg6 28.Axg6+ Ah8 29.Ah1
The rook enters the game with decisive effect.

29...Af4 30.Axh5+ Axf8 31.Ag1+ Af8
32.Ah8+ Axf7 33.Agf7+ 1-0

Prophylaxis

Closely associated with improving the circumstances in the attack is the idea of prophylaxis. Usually this is used as a positional idea, often to describe details in manoeuvring, but it is just as important in dynamic chess.

The basic idea is that while you are advancing your own goals, you need to pay attention to the opponent's threats and ideas. Not too deep an idea, really, but then all sports are dominated by those excelling at the basics...

The first example speaks for itself, so I will just roll with it.
The sacrifice on h6 is indeed the correct idea, but first White has to prevent Black from delivering the mating combination.

Lupulescu, who was not sloppy, and not distracted by computer interference, worked this out all by himself and played:

29...Exf6!!

A fantastic move, preventing the sacrifice on f2, but without wasting time on things like h2-h3. Black has no decent way to react.

1–0

Here Black resigned, having satisfied himself that none of the possible replies contained any hope whatsoever.

Let's see what caused him to arrive at this decision.

29...gxh6

This is the only remotely critical move. Black cannot take with the rook due to the back rank mate, and he cannot reinforce the eighth rank in any way that does not spoil his own plans.

For example: 29...£a3 allows White to play 30.Exh6! gxh6 31.Ee5† £g8 32.Ed5†, winning everything.

30.Exh6 £f7

This is forced. Here White has a smorgasbord of ideas. I personally like:

31.Exh7! £xh7 32.Ef8 mate!

It was also possible to play 31.d5 immediately, of course, but it is less fancy.

The next example also speaks for itself; before continuing with his attack, Black prevents White's intended counterplay. Prophylaxis is a bit like that, self explanatory, once you do it, but it is a bit like most mundane acts of life, unsexy, and thus something we tend to forget to do.

My move, 29.Exh6?, looks absolutely winning at first glance. It is only when you include the opponent's ideas that you lose the interest in it, because Black has a very convincing mating idea in 29...£xf2†!!.

Golubev, the Chess Today annotator, was obviously impressed with the white move in the game, but he must have been so computer-driven, that he did not stop to mention the rook sacrifice on h6, because the computer was uninterested in it.

He notes that White can play 29.Ef7, and after 29...g6 30.Ed8 £a3 31.Ef6† £g7 32.Ef8† £f8† 33.Exa6 he should have reasonable chances of winning the endgame, although this might prove very difficult in practice.
This is not really about calculation or tactics, but about feeling for tactics. If White has no counterplay, Black will be able to create havoc quite quickly. And White’s only counterplay starts with a check on c6.

Thus the best move is:

62...\texttt{\textregistered}a7!!
Once the king is safe it is time to attack.

63.\texttt{\textregistered}g6?!

The only chance to resist was to give up the bishop with 63.\texttt{\textregistered}c2 \texttt{\textregistered}e5 64.\texttt{\textregistered}c1, but this does not give a real chance of saving the game. Black of course just takes the piece.

63...\texttt{\textregistered}d4 64.b4 axb4 65.\texttt{\textregistered}b3 \texttt{\textregistered}c3\texttt{\textregistered} 66.\texttt{\textregistered}a2 b3\texttt{\textregistered} 67.\texttt{\textregistered}a3 \texttt{\textregistered}b4 mate!
0–1

Having started this section with clear and easy to understand examples, I will immediately move on to something absolutely ridiculous in its difficulty. However, the basic idea is the same.
31.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qe4!!}}}}} with the simple idea of \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Exf7†}}}}}. After the retreat 31...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qg7}}}}} White needs to avoid 32.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Exf7†}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qxf7}}}}} 33.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qxf7}}}}}, when Black can equalise with 33...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qc3†}}}}} 34.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc2}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Exc4}}}}} 35.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Wh7}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qxd5†}}}}} 36.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qd2}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Exf7}}}}}, and White can draw by repetition, but not cause any damage.

Instead White can play 32.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Wh3!!}}}}}.

This prepares \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Exf7}}}}} by including the follow-up \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Wxc8}}}}} in the equation. Black has no valid response, as \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qe6}}}}} has also become a reality. The seemingly prophylactic 32...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qe8}}}}} would put the rook on a bad square, leaving 33.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Exf7†}}}}} as a simple winning move.

If we look back at these three examples, we can see that in the first and the third, White's best move was an active piece of prophylaxis. The best moves not only prevented the opponent's counterplay, but also advanced the attack. Such multipurpose moves are quite often the order of the day when it comes to the theme of prophylaxis in the attack. In most attacking situations, we simply do not have the time to deal cautiously with our opponent's ambitions. Instead we have to combine attack and defence in the most energetic way possible, otherwise we risk losing the momentum.

Markus Ragger's subtle king retreat was not in itself a part of the attack, but there is an explanation for this exception. The reason why there was time in that example is that the position was a bit low on dynamics. The pawns were blocked and White had no targets of his own.

In the next two examples it is the defence which we will frustrate with our prophylactic brilliance. The principle is the same, although doing this often slows down the pace a little bit in the attack, so it is important to evaluate correctly whether or not we can spare the time for it.

\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{orange}{\texttt{Levente Vajda – Kiril Georgiev}}}}

\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Herceg 2008}}}}

1.e4 e5 2.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qf3}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qc6}}}}} 3.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qb5}}}}} a6 4.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qxc6}}}}} dxc6 5.0-0 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qe7}}}}} 6.d3

This is hardly the opening choice you would usually connect with a quick furious defeat of a European Champion, but this is exactly what we have coming our way.

6...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qf6}}}}} 7.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qbd2}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qe7}}}}} 8.d4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qg6}}}}} 9.dxe5 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}}}} 10.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qxe5}}}}} 11.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Wh5}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qd6}}}}} 11...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qf6}}}}} was once played in a game by the 1...e5-specialist Ivan Sokolov against Csaba Balogh. In general the move should transpose after 12.e5, although White in that game chose a different and less challenging approach.

12.e5 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qe7}}}}} 13.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qe4}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Wd5}}}}} 14.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qe1}}}}} g6?

14...h6! was the improvement played about a month later in in Kobalia – Lastin, Novokuzevtsk 2008. Black seems to equalise in that line.

15.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Wh6}}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qb5}}}}}

This move appears to be more or less forced.

After 15...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qe6}}}}} 16.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{Qg5}}}}} White's initiative on the dark squares is too menacing.
16.  

This move is not spectacular in itself, but the point of it is. 16.  is utterly harmless. After 16.  17.  0–0–0 Black is as safe as can be. However, if White does not have a move on developing the bishop, things look different.

16...  

Subjectively this is the losing move, although the position is more or less unplayable by now.

16...  17.  is better. After 18.  it is tempting to play 18...  to force White to sacrifice a piece, or to go into an equal ending. However, the piece sacrifice is very strong! 19.  20.  21.  A nice example of deflection in action. 21...  22.  The pawn is used as a lever to open up the black position. There is no defence, e.g. 22...  23.  24.  25.  with mate.

For this reason Black needs to play 18...  !, although even here his position after 19.  20.  21.  really stinks.

17.  

This was the wonderful idea behind the previous move. This check is far stronger now Black cannot find the time for long castling.

17...  18.  19.  20.  

Black has managed to keep his extra piece, but White can soon force the black queen away from f5, after which there is no defence against  , mating.

21.  22.  

Renewing the threat of g2–g4.

22...  23.  !

There is no way to avoid  , winning the queen. The previous few moves had the effect of taking the g4-square from the black queen. Also, if the rook was not on d4, Black would have ...  and ...  , refuting the attack by protecting both e7 and d7, and thus eliminating the threat of .

23...  24.  25.  26.  27.  28.  

The queen has done her job and comes to the centre to decide the game.

28...  29.  30.  31.  32.  

After this brilliant, but maybe not very complicated game, it is time for something painstakingly hard to swallow, but just like the best vitamin pill, it will do you a world
of good. The special moment to pay attention to is at move 23 for Black, but the game is very interesting in itself, so we will go into detail with the moves leading up to this point as well.

Michael Brooks – Gregory Kaidanov

New York 1990

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3...b5 a6 4...a4 d6 5.0-0 c7 6.e1 b5 7...b3 0-0 8.d4 dxd4 9.dxd4 exd4 10.e5 d6 11...xd4 c5 12...e4 d7 13.c4 bxc4 14...c2 g6 15...h6 d8 16...c3 d6 17...xc4 a6 18...d3 h4!?

I think it is fair to say that this is a case of launching with a rook. On its own the rook is not able to create any serious threats, beyond the one to the bishop on h6, but it is able to force White into some concessions on the kingside, which will open the way (almost literally) for the queen’s deadly entrance.

Probably it is better to finish the development rather than this optimistic launch. After 18...b7 it is hard to say who is better.

19...e3!

White should not fall for 19...d2? g5!, when he loses a piece.

19...d5 20.exd6...xd6

21.h3?!

This invites Black to venture a dangerous piece sacrifice.

It was far better to play
21.g3

when the critical line suggests that White is better.

21...b7!

Kaidanov is right to think that this is the best move.

22.g5!

After the alternatives Black has good play. Both 22.gxh4...h2† 23...f1...xh4 24...xc5!...e5 and 22...f4...c8!! 23.gxh4...xf4 24...xe8†...e8 offer Black good compensation for the exchange.

22...xg5 23...xd6...xh2!

24...e4!

Often we see this phenomenon; it is important for the defender to block the diagonal/line, but to do so in a way that forces the opponent to exchange a piece immediately (or at least have this as an important factor in many of the variations), simply to ease the pressure.

24...e4? was Kaidanov’s main line, but this move falls short to 24...h6† 25...xc7 (25...f6?? would lose the game very very quickly. The knight has an essential job in blocking the long diagonal.) 25...h1† 26...g2...xe4† 27...xe4...h3† 28...f3
29...\textit{d}5!! 30.\textit{f}3 \textit{xe}4 31.\textit{x}e4 \textit{xa}1 and Black is winning in every sense of the word. White's best option is a rook ending with two pawns less.

I am almost sure that this sharp move is the better option here, but it is a difficult question, as the final positions in the two lines are very alike. In this line White is deprived of a vital pawn supporting the kingside, while in the alternative line, Black has the d4-square for the knight.

24...\textit{xe}4 is, as said, the possibly slightly worse possibility. After 25.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 26.\textit{xe}4 \textit{h}6 27.\textit{ae}1 \textit{h}1† 28.\textit{g}2 \textit{h}3† 29.\textit{f}3 \textit{xe}1 30.\textit{xe}1 \textit{d}6 it is possible that White has some ways to play for a win.

25.\textit{f}h2!

25.\textit{f}h4? fails to a nice shot:

I think that the strong knight and the exposed white king should give Black roughly even chances in a practical game, but this is of course always up to discussion. It is annoying for White than he cannot exchange queens - although the black king might also become a target for attack at some point.

Kaidanov hardly hesitated for long before taking this invitation. What exactly White had missed in what follows is not easy to see.

22.\textit{gxh}3 \textit{hxh}3

White is under a lot of attack; there are no defenders on the kingside, and both the rook and bishop are very threatening.
Kaidanov suggested that White should play 23.\text{xf1}, but Black has a powerful blow in 23...\text{xe}3!. This is based on 24.\text{xe}3 \text{h}2!!, with a winning advantage. White can of course take back with the rook, but the check on h1 will restore the material balance, after which Black will have excellent prospects of winning the game.

23.\text{Wh}1?

This loses by force, but who can blame Brooks for missing the brilliant next move by Kaidanov?

The only move was:

23.\text{de}4!

Now after:

23...\text{Wh}4 24.\text{xf1} \text{ae}6!

Black's attack continues to be very dangerous. All three heavy pieces are creating mayhem. For example, White would lose after 25.\text{xd}6? \text{h}5!!., when the king is trapped. Thus it is necessary to play:

25.\text{de}2

But Black's attack is very powerful.

25...\text{h}5! 26.\text{d}1 \text{de}4

Black's position here is probably simply better. The perils White is faced with is well explained by the following by no means forced line:

27.\text{d}2 \text{g}3! 28.\text{xf}g3?! \text{g}4!! 29.\text{c}1 \text{xe}3

Black has a more or less lethal attack, or a winning endgame after:

30.\text{d}1

Black's attack continues to be very dangerous. All three heavy pieces are creating mayhem. For example, White would lose after 25.\text{xd}6? \text{h}5!!., when the king is trapped. Thus it is necessary to play:

25.\text{de}2

But Black's attack is very powerful.

25...\text{h}5! 26.\text{d}1 \text{de}4

Black's position here is probably simply better. The perils White is faced with is well explained by the following by no means forced line:

27.\text{d}2 \text{g}3! 28.\text{xf}g3?! \text{g}4!! 29.\text{c}1 \text{xe}3...
24.\textit{\textbf{c}}4
24.\textit{\textbf{e}}e4 \textbf{\textit{x}}xc4 25.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}xe4 \textbf{\textit{f}}h4 also wins.

24...\textbf{\textit{x}}xe3 25.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}xe3 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{g}}}g5 26.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{g}}}g3 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{x}}}xg3
27.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}e4 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{h}}}h4 28.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{f}}}xg3

28...\textbf{\textit{\textbf{f}}}h1
But not 28...\textbf{\textit{\textbf{h}}}h3?? 29.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}xf7++, and White is back in business.

29.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{f}}}f}2 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{w}}}h2 30.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}f3 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{x}}}xa1 31.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}f2 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e6
32.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}b}3 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d4 33.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c3 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{x}}}xg3 3

0-1

The f5/f4-squares

The final small topic I want to include in this chapter is the f5- and f4-squares, which quite often turn out to be pivotal for the attack. I could have chosen many others, as it is only an example of the versatility of possible topics; e.g. one I considered was \textbf{\textit{\textbf{e}}}xh6...\textbf{\textit{\textbf{h}}}xh3 – but I decided that this would be overkill and possibly propel the book into the >1 kg category!

The idea of the f4/f5-squares is that a knight at times can be placed on these squares, and from here exerts exceptional pressure on the opponent's position. The game I have chosen to show this was played in a local tournament in Scotland and the victim was a pupil of mine. In it White sacrifices a pawn for a chance to put his knight on f5, from where it has the chance to sacrifice itself on g7 and start a crushing attack. Although the players in this game are amateurs, the standard of play is quite high.

Andrew Burnett – Chris McDonald

Edinburgh 2005

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c3 dxe4 4.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}xe4 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c6
Chris really liked this passive system and it served him well. At one point he had won six games in a row. However, after this game he felt that it was time to move on and play something a bit more versatile.

5.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{f}}}f3 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c6 6.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d3 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{d}}}d7 7.0-0 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{g}}}gf6 8.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{g}}}g3
Usually Chris's opponents would play 8.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{g}}}g5 here and soon all the minor pieces would come off. Even though Chris is a junior, it is in the ending he excels.

8...\textbf{\textit{\textbf{e}}}e7 9.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c4 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{b}}}b6!
This feels awkward, as the bishop will have spent three moves to go to b7 instead of one.

It is almost certainly better to play 9...\textbf{\textit{\textbf{a}}}xh3 10.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{a}}}xh3 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{c}}}c6 and be passive, but solid. These kind of positions are always better for White, but it also takes some effort to break through the black defences.

10.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{b}}}b3 \textbf{\textit{\textbf{b}}}b7 11.\textbf{\textit{\textbf{b}}}b2
11...c5?
This is a definite mistake. Black has spent too much time on his bishop to be prepared for this kind of direct confrontation in the centre.

Correct was 11...0-0 when Black is not doing too badly, after all.

12.d5!
A pawn sacrifice designed to open up for the bishop on b2 and to give White, at least temporary, access to the f5-square.

12...exd5 13.df5 0-0 14.e1 e8 15.cxd5

This is the decisive mistake, although it is not really a move one can criticise too severely from a practical perspective.

It was necessary to play something along the lines of 15...f8, when White is dominating after 16.exe8 fxe8 17.b5.

16.b5 e6
The intermediate move 16...a6 does not solve all of Black's problems. White wins with: 17.xf6! xf6 18.e8+ xe8 19.xd5 axb5 20.e1 d8 21.d6 and there is no adequate defence to 22.xf7.

Finally Black has managed to challenge the knight on f5. Chris was hoping that he would be able to repulse the attack and defend his extra point (the younger generation can be so materialistic!).

17.xg7!! xg7 18.xe6

Eliminating a central defender.

18...fxe6 19.g5

Also very strong was 19.xd7 f8 20.g2 with an attack, but White is playing all the right moves, so there is no reason for tinkering.

19...f8
Black has to protect the e6-square.

19...g8 20.e6 c8 21.d2 would be very hard for Black to meet. 21...f7 22.g5+ g8 23.c4+ g7 24.f7! is but one way for White to win in an attack. Black has no response to all the threats.

20.h5 e5

21.f7†
This check is very tempting, but also a bit too rash.

21.xe5! was even more deadly, but the text move is certainly good enough.
21...\texttt{h8}?! 

21...\texttt{h6} would have offered a good deal better resistance, but White is still winning with the simple 22.\texttt{Af3}, with threats such as \texttt{c1} and simply \texttt{ex5} with a continuing attack.

22.\texttt{ex5} \texttt{h6} 23.\texttt{c4}

Black resigned. Mate is imminent.

1–0

With these themes covered I hope to have dealt with the most important categories of piece play. Obviously, it is not possible to cover every theme, or you would be covering about half the themes in chess; but none the less, I hope the ground we have covered in this chapter will help the readers improve their own piece play.
Chapter 3

Typical Pawn Play

...those who think that the small and powerless cannot change anything have never spent a night in a tent with a mosquito. (Dalai Lama)
On this page you find 8 diagrams with critical moments from the coming chapter. I recommend that you take up to 10 minutes to think about each of them. The solutions are found on the following pages in the annotations to the games.

Positions with a circled P can be played against a computer.

A clever move (see page 192)

Can White attack? (see page 212)

White can calculate very far (see page 184)

Is White running out of steam? (see page 200)

Which move wins for Black? (see page 216)

How to use the momentum? (see page 191)

White to calculate very well (see page 207)

A positional decision (see page 224)
Covered in this Chapter

- Pawn breaks
- Pawns as valuable as pieces
- Pawn storms
- Pawn sacrifices
- Provoking weaknesses

After looking at various aspects of piece play, let us now turn our attention to the pawns. I will presume that the reader has a certain prerequisite knowledge about pawn play; for example, I will not go too deeply into pawn storms, but will simply show some examples I find interesting for various reasons.

Pawn Breaks

A pawn break is usually used to define the situation where two or more opposing pawns collide and the position opens up as a result. This can happen in a lot of different scenarios, of which I have chosen just a few illustrative and entertaining examples.

In the first example we shall look at a blocked centre, where pawn breaks (always supporting and supported by the pieces) can be an important part of an attack against the king.

In the following game we shall see how the kingside is opened by successive pawn breaks, eventually opening up for the white pieces and their assault on the black king.

It should be said that although the pawn breaks are the dominant positional theme of this game, and not a very complex one, even these highly distinguished grandmasters seem to be struggling a bit with it, both positionally and tactically.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{c6}\) 4.e5 \(\text{\text{h}}\text{h}6\) 5.f4 \(\text{c5}\) 6.\(\text{\text{f3}}\) \(\text{\text{f6}}\) 7.\(\text{\text{e3}}\) \(\text{cxd4}\) 8.\(\text{\text{xd4}}\) \(\text{\text{c6}}\) 9.\(\text{\text{xd2}}\) 0-0 10.0-0-0 \(\text{a6}\) 11.\(\text{\text{b1}}\)!

The most popular move these days is probably 11.\(\text{\text{f2}}\).

11...\(\text{\text{xd4}}\) 12.\(\text{\text{xd4}}\) \(\text{b5}\) 13.\(\text{\text{e3}}\)

13...\(\text{\text{xd4}}\)

Though not main line territory, this position has still been played a number of times, including by Nepomniachtchi. But the following game shows that Black does not equalise without trouble. 13...\(\text{\text{b6}}\) 14.\(\text{\text{xc5}}\) \(\text{\text{xc5}}\) 15.\(\text{\text{d3}}\) \(\text{b4}\) 16.\(\text{\text{c2}}\) \(\text{a5}\) 17.\(\text{\text{d4}}\) \(\text{a6}\) 18.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{\text{xd3}}\) 19.\(\text{\text{f6}}\) \(\text{\text{xf6}}\) 20.\(\text{cxd3}\) \(\text{\text{\text{e7}}?!}\) 21.\(\text{\text{exf6}}\) \(\text{\text{\text{h8}}}\) 22.\(\text{\text{\text{\text{f3}}} and White was doing well in Timoshenko - Korchnoi, Panormo 2001.\n
14.\(\text{\text{xd4}}\)!

A novelty. 14.\(\text{\text{xd4}}\) \(\text{\text{b7}}\) 15.\(\text{\text{d3}}\) \(\text{\text{e7}}\) 16.\(\text{\text{he1}}\) \(\text{b4}\) 17.\(\text{\text{e2}}\) \(\text{a5} was played in Dolmatov - Korchnoi, Las Vegas 1999.\n
14...\(\text{\text{\text{e7}}?!}\)

The queen looks misplaced here in what follows. It was probably better to try:
14...\texttt{b6} 15.\texttt{d3} \texttt{b4}

Not 15...\texttt{c5}? 16.\texttt{xh7}!! \texttt{xh7} 17.\texttt{h3}+ \texttt{g8} 18.\texttt{f5} f6 19.\texttt{h4} with a strong attack, or 18...\texttt{exf5} 19.\texttt{xd5} winning.

At this point White might play positionally with 16.\texttt{e2} or take a big risk with:

16.\texttt{h3}!! f5 17.\texttt{e2} \texttt{b8}

The rook is trapped on d4, but White has his resources as well and does not have to sound the retreat just yet.

18.\texttt{g4} \texttt{c6} 19.\texttt{gxh5} \texttt{xd4} 20.\texttt{fxe6} \texttt{g6} 21.\texttt{e3} \texttt{xc6} 22.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{a7}!

With the idea ...\texttt{xf7}. Black seems to be fully in the game, though the position is first and foremost hard to evaluate.

15.\texttt{d3} \texttt{b4}?

15...\texttt{b7} was recommended by Maxim Notkin in \textit{Chess Today}, mainly because 16.\texttt{xh7}!! does not work now that d5 is protected. But Inarkiev would probably have been satisfied playing 16.\texttt{h3} when 16...\texttt{g6} is unpleasant, but best, as 16...\texttt{h6}! 17.\texttt{g4} is simply too dangerous. Having said that, it is still unfortunate for Black that White is allowed to transfer the knight to d6.

17.\texttt{a6}

This looks tempting. If Black is able to exchange this powerful bishop White's attacking chances on the kingside would decrease greatly, leaving Black with enough time to create sufficient counterplay on the queenside. But White can make use of the bishop before this happens with a classic sacrifice.

18.\texttt{xh7}!! \texttt{xh7} 19.\texttt{h3}+ \texttt{g8} 20.\texttt{f5}

This attack is successful for two reasons:

- The first is that the knight on d6 does a wonderful job of preventing the black king from escaping via f7.
- Secondly, the fact that the black queen is undefended on e7 will force Black to weaken his king's position in a few moves time.

20...\texttt{exf5} 21.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g6} 22.\texttt{h8}+ \texttt{g7} 23.\texttt{h6}+ \texttt{f6} 24.\texttt{h4}+ \texttt{g5}

Just as promised.

25.\texttt{h6}+ \texttt{g6}

25...\texttt{g7} loses immediately: 26.\texttt{h7}+ \texttt{f6} 27.\texttt{h6}+ \texttt{g6} 28.\texttt{g7} mate.

26.\texttt{d4}+ \texttt{e5} 27.\texttt{b6}!

This transfer to the other wing is simply sensational.

27...\texttt{g7} 28.\texttt{fxg6} \texttt{f6}

Seemingly the only defence against \texttt{f5}+. For example, after 28...\texttt{fxg6} White wins quickly with 29.\texttt{f5}+ and mate is near. But here White can win with a beautiful combination.
... logically to continue this position for White is to seek a pawn break. All his hopes must be based on an attack on the kingside and it is thus natural that the break should come there, meaning with g2-g4. The plan is then to open more files with the break f4-f5, so that the e-pawn becomes a powerful force and Black loses further control over his light squares, mainly f5 and d5. One should not underestimate the domino effect this will have on the light squares in the black position, which at the moment are only indirectly protected by the bishop on c8, but otherwise left to their own devices.

For some reason Inarkiev was apparently unhappy about this move after the game, thinking that 18.h3 might have been better. Dvoretsky indicated that 18...c1!? with a complete change of strategy was also worth a thought.

I think that both approaches are too elaborate/artificial. There is no reason why White should not play the natural moves.

18.g4! For some reason Inarkiev was apparently unhappy about this move after the game, thinking that 18.h3 might have been better. Dvoretsky indicated that 18...c1!? with a complete change of strategy was also worth a thought.

I think that both approaches are too elaborate/artificial. There is no reason why White should not play the natural moves.

18...fxg4 19...e2?

I am not wildly impressed with this move, though it certainly does make some sense from a logical standpoint. But then Mark Dvoretsky, Inarkiev's trainer, says that grandmasters might play bad moves, but they never play moves without ideas. Inarkiev wants to transfer the bishop to g4 from where it not only puts pressure on e6, but also supports the break f4-f5. This strategy was more successful in the game than it should have been due to sub-optimal defence.

The bishop is already well placed at d3 so it makes sense to bring the final piece into play with:

19...g1

Now Black is forced to spend time eliminating the d3-bishop before he is mated.

19...a6!

19...c5? Black usually does not want to exchange knight for bishop anyway in this line, but here he is not even given the chance: 20...e7+! e7 21.xg4 h8 Otherwise h3+ and h4 will decide the game. 22.f5! exf5 23.h4+ g8 24.xh8+ xh8 25.h3+ g8 26.h4 and Black is once again busted.

20.xg4 20...e7+! does not work this time around because of 20...e7 21.xg4 c5! (21...g8 22.d1! Protecting the first rank, after which Black is faced with deadly ideas such as d1 and g3, or h3 and h4,
against which there is no adequate defence.) 22.\( \text{x}e5 \text{f}6 \) and the white pieces are no longer managing to present a coherent threat against the black king.

20...\( \text{xd}3 \) 21.\( \text{xd}3 \) \( \text{a}4 \)

White has a significant advantage. Whether it is enough to win is not clear, but it does put Black under a lot of pressure.

22.\( \text{wh}3 \)

22.\( \text{g}1?? \) is also strong, but I prefer the text.

White is threatening \( \text{dg}3 \), followed by \( \text{h}4 \), in order to meet the possible response \( ...\text{g}6 \) with \( \text{xg}6+ \), winning. It might be that Black has nothing better than:

22...\( \text{xf}4?? \)

But after:

23.\( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 24.\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{xd}6 \) 25.\( \text{h}4 \)

Black cannot sufficiently defend his kingside.

His only play is:

25...\( \text{f}8 \) 26.\( \text{xh}7 \) \( \text{f}1?? \)

Escaping to an endgame, where White has all the chances. Black would probably only draw about 15% of the times this endgame was played between these two players.

I am sure that 19.\( \text{g}1 \) is the best move, but I think it is worth mentioning why 19.\( \text{h}3 \) is incorrect. Black will have to answer with 19...\( \text{g}3 \), and has seemingly lost some time. But probably more important is that White has lost the access to the h3-square. So, even though White remains better, as indeed he does in the game, it is not the best way to continue the game.

19...\( \text{c}5 \) 20.\( \text{xg}4 \) \( \text{b}7 \)

Black is desperate to get rid of the white knight, but the loss of time still counts.

21.\( \text{xb}7 \)

It was also possible to play 21.\( \text{xc}8?? \) \( \text{xc}8 \) 22.\( f5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 23.\( \text{f}3 \) but White only keeps a slight edge all the same.

21...\( \text{xb}7?? \)

From here on Black fails to understand a specific detail about the position: the bishop needed to be on \( c8 \) in order to cancel out its opposite number on \( g4 \). By failing to recognise this, his position goes from slightly worse to lost in just a few moves. For this reason the better move was 21...\( \text{xb}7! \) with just a slight disadvantage.

22.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{f}7 \)

This looks too artificial. 22...\( \text{a}4?? \) with the idea 23.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{e}8! \) was possibly better.

23.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{e}8? \)

By this point 23...\( \text{e}8 \) was absolutely necessary, but Black has not properly evaluated the dangers he is facing.
24.f5!

Finally it is time for this long anticipated break. Black has not prepared well for it and is quickly overrun.

24...\textcolor{red}{\textit{c5}} 25.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}d1?!}

White misses an immediate win, although his chosen move does not change the general evaluation of the position.

It is hard to guess what part of 25.fxe6 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xd}4} (25...\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}7} 26.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}5} g6 27.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xg}6} is also plain sailing) 26.exf7\textcolor{red}{\textit{f7}} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}f1} \textcolor{red}{\textit{g}8} 28.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}f3} White missed.

25...\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}7} 26.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}6}

As Black has not stopped the pawn, White decides that it can open an even more important file than at first expected.

26...\textcolor{red}{\textit{xc}2} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textit{a}1} \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}8}

27...\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}6} 28.\textcolor{red}{\textit{df}1}! and there is no good defence against the further advance of the pawn, e.g. 28...\textcolor{red}{a6} 29.\textcolor{red}{f}7\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}7} 30.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}f}7 \textcolor{red}{\textit{x}f}7 31.\textcolor{red}{\textit{wh}7} when the black king will be helpless.

28.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}5} \textcolor{red}{\textit{d}8}

After 28...g6 29.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xg}6} hxg6 30.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}6} \textcolor{red}{\textit{h}7} 31.f7\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}7} White wins.

29.\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}4} \textcolor{red}{\textit{f}8} 30.f7\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}7} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf}7}

30...\textcolor{red}{\textit{h}8} 31.\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}6} wins.

31.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xf}7} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf}7} 32.\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}5} h6 33.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}8} \textcolor{red}{\textit{a}6}

34.\textcolor{red}{\textit{xg}7} \textcolor{red}{\textit{g}7} 35.\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}1}\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}7} 1-0

In the next game the pawn breaks on moves 15 and 16 have two functions. The main one is to create an avenue for the knight on c3, while the second is to open lines for the heavy pieces.

Curiously White seems to lose sight of the second of these, with the result that Black, with his position on the verge of collapse, is gifted an unexpected lifeline. Fortunately for the attacker, Black misses the opportunity and a devastating king hunt ensues.

\textbf{Mikulas Manik – Ilija Balinov}

\textit{Olomouc 1997}

1.e4 c5 2.\textcolor{red}{\textit{f}3} d6 3.d4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{f}6} 4.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}3} cxd4

5.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}d}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}6} 6.\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}5} \textcolor{red}{\textit{d}7} 7.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}2} \textcolor{red}{\textit{x}d}4

8.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}d}4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{a}5} 9.f4 h6 10.\textcolor{red}{\textit{x}f}6 gxf6 11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{c}4}

12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{b}3} \textcolor{red}{\textit{c}5} 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}3} e6 14.0-0-0 h5

Black has played the opening in a somewhat blase fashion, spending time on everything but development and king safety, seemingly relying on the solidity of his centre. Perhaps he was anticipating a standard light-squared attack based on f4-f5. If that was the case, White's next move must have come as a rude awakening.
15.e5! f5
Black is avoiding the $\text{e}4$ jump. This fails badly in the game, but it is the position, rather than this isolated move, which is to blame.

16.g4?
White is insisting on breaking up the black pawn formation. He could have played $16.\text{exd6}$ and been much better as well, of course, but the direct approach seems to be more to his taste.

16...b4
$16...\text{xc6}$ does not improve matters. White can move the rook or rack away with $17.\text{gx}f5 \text{xb}1 18.\text{fxe}6$ with a winning attack. The black king is simply too weak on the light squares.

17.\text{xa}4!
If the knight is to be sacrificed, it needs to be on a square where it does not seriously compromise the king's safety.

17...\text{a}5?
This turns out to be the decisive mistake. $17...\text{b}5$ was better, but the prosaic $18.\text{xb}5 \text{xb}5 19.\text{gx}f5$ would leave Black without any counterplay against the misplaced knight on a4, so Balinov must have found it rather dispiriting to think of moves like these. On the other hand, the knight is still poorly placed and Black is in possession of the two bishops, which would give him some practical chances to make a draw.

18.\text{gx}f5
White could protect the knight by taking on d6, but his eyes are set on the black king.

18...\text{xa}4

19.\text{ex}d6?
A mistake that is quite difficult to understand as well as explain. Clearly White was attracted to the threat of $20.\text{d}7\#$ and might have thought that this threat alone would force Black to play as he did in the game.

However, the pawn on d6 is giving White the opposite effect of what he was looking for when he tried to blow up the centre with $15.e5$.

The winning line included attacking the king while it is still stuck on a light square, and by ensuring that the position stays open, $19.\text{fxe}6!$ was the move. Possibly White simply missed the defence in the game, but otherwise he could also have underestimated the power of the pawn on the seventh rank in lines such as $19...\text{xb}3 20.\text{xb}3 \text{c}7 (20...\text{c}5 21.\text{exf}7\# \text{d}7 22.\text{h}g1$ and $23.\text{g}8$ leaves Black absolutely paralysed) $21.\text{ex}d6 \text{xd}6 22.\text{ex}f7\#$
\[ \text{Chapter 3 - Typical Pawn Play} \]

\[ \text{19...} \text{c7?} \]

A rather serious mistake. The king should under no circumstances seek safety on a light square. You could actually say that nothing is easier for White to play than the coming combination. Black was given the chance to stay in the game, but only if he handled his king better.

The correct move was 19...d8!, when after 20.d7 c6! or 20.fxe6 fxe6 21.xe1 xb3 22.xb3 f5 23.xe6 c6 would leave Black with decent chances of a successful defence. White is probably a little better in the latter of these two lines, but the black king is sort of safe for the moment, leaving him with enough time to get the rook into the game (and maybe even dream of making use of the bishop after that).

19...c6? might look as if it has similar qualities, but White has a tactical option in 20.d4!, with a winning attack. The main point is that 20...xa7 loses brutally to 21.xa4 xa4 22.d7+ d8 23.f6+ c7 24.xe7+ xe7 25.d8= w mate.

\[ \text{20.fxe6+ fxe6} \]

\[ \text{21.xe6+!} \]

21.xe1 would have given a dangerous attack, but this is absolutely decisive.

\[ \text{21...xex6} 22.d7! \]

The pawn is advanced, both as a passed pawn, and as a potentially superfluous pawn, which is in the way.

\[ \text{22.xc2+} \]

This and the next move are necessary, as after 22...d8 23.xg6+ Black is quickly mated.

\[ \text{23.b1 xb2+} \]

Everything else allows check, check and mate.

\[ \text{24.xb2 g7+ 25.b1 xd1} \]

The best chance was 25...f5 though after 26.xe1 f6 27.xf5+ xf5 28.d8= w White should win the endgame comfortably.

\[ \text{26.e1+!} \]

White ignores the bishop on d1. The target is the king and the king alone.

It might look tempting to play 26.g6+ f6 27.e1+, in order to take the bishop with check after 27...xd7 28.xd1+. But the problem with this line of action, is that the endgame after 28...c8 29.xf6 d8 looks very hard to win indeed. One of the points is
that the potential pawn ending here is a draw by a single tempo.

26...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{6}}}}

26...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{f6}}}} loses as well. A very nice line including a sensational triangulation by the queen was pointed out to me by IM Silas Lund, to whom I showed this game as a calculation exercise some years ago. 27.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c4}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{g6}}}}} 28.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e6}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h7}}}} (28...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h5}}}} 29.\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf1}}}} followed by \texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}}}} decides.) 29.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e4}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g8}}}} 30.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c4}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h7}}}} 31.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d3}}}} and White wins decisive material.

27.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d6}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f5}}}} 28.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e6}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf4}}}} 29.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e4}}}}

Although this is mate by force, I favour the more economical 29.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e4}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f3}}}} 30.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g4}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f2}}}} 31.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g3}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f1}}}} 32.\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c1}}}} mate.

29...\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g5}}}} 30.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g1}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h5}}}} 31.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g6}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h4}}}} 32.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g3}}}}

1-0

As the final example of this section I have chosen a game where White challenges Black on what is supposedly his strongest point (d5) and follows the pawn break up with a piece sacrifice or two in almost every line. Again the main purpose of the pawn break is to open files to the opponent's king. This is not always the case, but it is so very often.

\textbf{Adrian Flitney – Robert Mitchell}

Canberra 2008

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd5}}}} 3.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c3}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d6}}}}

This line has become increasingly popular in the last few years, but it is probably no better than 3...\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xa5}}}} or even 3...\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e5}}}}...

4.d4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f6}}}}

Tiviakov plays 4...c6, which shows that he just wants to avoid positions where computers can kill him.

5.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d3}}}} \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g4}}}} 6.h3 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf3}}}} 7.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf3}}}} \textit{\texttt{c6}}

8.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f4}}}}!?

If this move was good, it would be fantastic. However, I am not at all sure about the pawn sacrifice.

8.\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c3}}}}! is the better move. White holds on to the two bishops and prepares to advance his kingside pawns. This offers him a good advantage and in general makes the variation highly dubious for Black. One example of this went: 8...\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{bd7}}}} 9.0-0-0 c6 10.\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b1}}}} \texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c7}}}} 11.g4 \texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}}}} 12.\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c1}}}} \texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc3}}}} 13.\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc3}}}} \texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d6}}}} 14.\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f3}}}} \texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f6}}}} 15.g5 \texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g8}}}} 16.c4 \texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d7}}}} 17.d5! and Black did not even last another ten moves in Fressinet – Feygin, Emsdetten 2008.

8...\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d8}}}}?

This move is a disaster. With the queen out early, it is natural for Black to look for solidity, but this is overdoing it. The only way he can play such a position is to be ready to accept pawn sacrifices such as these.

8...\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xd4}}}}! was in every way the principled move. Not only because it is taking a central pawn directly, but also because it seriously disrupts White's further development. The strongest continuation is probably 9.\texttt{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d3}}}}, in order to castle queenside. But although it is
clear that after 9...\(\text{b}d7\) 10.0–0–0 White has compensation for the pawn, we should not forget that Black is very solid. I would take on his position before I would take on the great responsibility of proving compensation here.

9.0–0–0 e6

White has achieved everything he could possibly dream of from the opening. It would be natural to continue with 10.g4 or something similar, with a clear advantage, but the astronomical lead in development inspires Flitney to seek an immediate confrontation with his opponent.

10.d5!!

Here it is: the all-important pawn break. By advancing the pawn to d5, Black's seemingly strongest square, White forces open the position with decisive effect.

10...\(\text{cxd5}!!\)

Black has to take the pawn, but the manner in which he takes it is very important. Often it makes sense to be resolute at moments such as these (and indeed move 8) and play the critical move, even though you might think that many factors of the game are playing against you. Here Black is down on development and king safety, but he also has an extra pawn. Although the position looks tough, it feels right to play according to the plan devised, which here is about solidity and staying out of trouble.

10...\(\text{bxd5}\) would be met with 11.\(\text{b}5\)!!, when the following line gives White excellent winning chances. 11...\(\text{d}7\) 12.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{cxd5}\) 13.\(c4\) \(\text{c}c8\) 14.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{e}c5\) 15.\(\text{x}d5\)!! \(\text{cxd5}\) 16.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{e}7\) 17.\(\text{d}6\) 0–0 18.\(\text{x}e7\) \(\text{a}5\) 19.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{x}b5\) 20.\(\text{x}b5\) \(\text{c}8\) 21.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{c}7\) 22.a3 and the extra pawn should count.

The only move was:

10...\(\text{exd5}\)!

Best, yes, but still leading to a sad position:

11.\(\text{b}5\)!!

Only this active move keeps up the pressure. Black now struggles in vain to get the pieces out.

11...\(\text{e}7\)!

11...\(\text{x}b5?\) should be checked, of course, but after 12.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{x}d5\) 13.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{c}8\) 14.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{e}7\) 15.\(\text{x}e7\)!! it is obvious that the attack is decisive with 16.\(\text{d}6\) coming next.

12.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{x}d5\) 13.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{b}6\) 14.\(\text{g}3\)!!

Maybe there is something else here, but I do not see it.

14...0–0 15.\(\text{e}5\)

15.\(\text{h}6\) is also very strong.

15...\(\text{g}6\) 16.\(\text{d}4\) c5 17.\(\text{c}3\)

White has a tremendous advantage, although Black is not entirely lost yet.
11.\textit{\texttt{x}b}8 \textit{\texttt{xb}}8

It was also possible to take with the queen, however, White can crack open the centre with active play after this as well: 11...\textit{\texttt{xb}}8 12.\textit{\texttt{b}5\texttt{+}} \textit{\texttt{d}8} 13.\textit{\texttt{c}4!!}

White not only intends to sacrifice a piece, he is not shy about it at all and takes no steps to hide his intentions.

Black has no better defence than: 13...\textit{\texttt{d}6} 14.\textit{\texttt{xd}}5 \textit{\texttt{exd}}5 15.\textit{\texttt{xd}}5 \textit{\texttt{xd}}5 16.\textit{\texttt{xd}}5 \textit{\texttt{e}8!!}, when he has a chance to offer resistance in the ensuing rook endgame, even though White of course should win with his extra pawn.

12.\textit{\texttt{b}5\texttt{+}} \textit{\texttt{e}7} 13.\textit{\texttt{he}1 a}6?

Surprisingly Black still had a chance to put up a lot of resistance with 13...\textit{\texttt{d}6!!}, which seemed a strange, but somehow logical move to me. I gave my computer a few hours to think about the position, calling it work, and multitasked by reading a trash novel outside in the sunshine. When I came back, the computer had to my deep regret not found anything substantial for White.

There was a line with 14.g4 that looked messy, and White should be doing very well in the endgame, but still...

Also, the beast claimed that White was absolutely winning after 14.\textit{\texttt{f}4\texttt{+}} \textit{\texttt{e}5}, but all it could suggest were various versions of checks, never actually getting beyond the perpetual. Eventually I realised I had to think for myself, so I apologise if what I came up with is not up to much.

As far as I could see, the best move in this position is the paradoxical:

15.\textit{\texttt{d}7!!}

The idea is to play \textit{\texttt{a}4\texttt{+}}, without losing the bishop on \textit{\texttt{b}5}. Apparently the bishop is immune on \textit{\texttt{d}7}, at least sort of. 15...\textit{\texttt{xd}7} is poor. White is able to dismantle the pawn chain in the centre, which is protecting the black king despite his advanced position by simply taking the pawns. 16.\textit{\texttt{xf}7} One of the points is that 16...\textit{\texttt{e}7} is met with:

17.\textit{\texttt{xe}6!!} with mate in a few moves.

So Black has to try something else, which could be 16...\textit{\texttt{f}6}, but White still wins with the brutal 17.\textit{\texttt{xe}6}. Suddenly the king's position on the fifth rank is a graver issue than it looked only three moves ago. Black loses in all lines,
including this one: 17...\(
-6 18.\(\text{xf6}\) gxf6
19.\(\text{xd5}\) d6 20.\(\text{e6!}\) and 21.\(\text{e4}\), winning
the bishop with a decisive attack.

14.\(\text{xd5}\)†
A not very difficult breakthrough. By this
stage Black was sick of life and found a way to
end it quickly.

14...\(\text{xd5}\) 15.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{a5}\) 16.\(\text{d7}\) \(\text{e8}\)
17.\(\text{xf7}\) mate!
1-0

With this I want to end this section on pawn
breaks. These four scenarios in no way cover all
that could be said about the subject of pawn
breaks, but I hope they have inspired the reader
and offered him a few new insights.

Pawns as valuable as pieces

A pawn is usually considered the smallest unit
of value in chess. Yes, you can split him into
hundredths if you are a computer, but we are
still talking about wood!

During the course of a successful attack it is
quite feasible to encounter situations where a
pawn is so well placed it is worth as much as
any other piece, simply because of the threats
to the opponent's king. If we have a queen on
h6 ready to deliver mate on g7, then all we
need is a single supporting unit. In such a
scenario, a pawn on f6 can fulfil that purpose
just as effectively as a knight, bishop, rook, or
even a second queen!

Though it would have been possible to give
some games to illustrate this theme alone, it
turned out that the examples I found most
interesting were for some reason all connected
with the possibility of promotion as well.
Perhaps it is not too surprising that the two
themes go hand in hand, since pawns that are
involved in an attack are almost by definition
quite far advanced, thus increasing the
likelihood of promotion.

The first example is rather an unusual case,
which shows very nicely how threats on one
side of the board can allow a pawn to run
rampant.

Wolfram Schoen – Petr Makovsky
Correspondence 2005

The threat to g7 is of course severe, but it is
hardly lethal. The main reason for this is that
the black queen is a well-positioned defender at
d8. This is Black's only good piece, the others
are close to worthless. White cannot break
through directly, but the a-pawn can cause a
major distraction.

35.a5!!
The main point behind this move is that
35...\(\text{xa5}\) 36.\(\text{e5!}\) is immediately winning.
So, the a-pawn is not only a distraction, it is
also a winner.

35...\(\text{xf6}\) 36.\(\text{e8}\) \(\text{e7}\) 37.a6!

Black resigned a bit prematurely. The end of
the game could have been 37...\(\text{a8}\) 38.a7 \(\text{f7}\)
(38...\(\text{xa7}\) 39.\(\text{e8}\)†) 39.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{xa4}\) 40.\(\text{xa8}\) and
White will queen the pawn and win
eventually.
1-0
The next game is taken from the highest level, the World Championship. In this there is no direct threat to the black king. What we are looking for is how passed pawns can be used as a counterpoint to active piece play, or even pieces themselves. The game is very complicated and, I think, speaks for itself in this way. The critical moment arrives at around move 21, where the full cost of White’s risky strategy comes to light; the responsibility to play with absolute accuracy, put on both players.

Vladimir Kramnik – Alexander Morozevich

World Championship, Mexico 2007

Vladimir Kramnik’s first victory in Mexico came in a very complicated game against Alexander Morozevich, where Kramnik showed that he wanted to win, but also that he was not enjoying the top form that was required to win such a strong event. In the end he finished second to Anand and a year later lost the “return-match” which his manager had secured.

1.e3 d6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.d4 dxc4 5.g2 a6 6.De5 b4† 7.c3 Dd5 8.0–0!!

A very complicated theoretical novelty. White offers three pawns in return for the initiative. As Kramnik clearly had analysed this in great detail at home, Morozevich did not accept the invitation.

8...0–0

One critical line continues 8...Dxc3 9.bxc3 Dxc3 10.Db1 (10.Da3?! is strongly met by 10...Dxd4!) 10...Dxd4 11.Da4† b5 12.Dc2 Dxe5 13.Df4 Df6 14.Dxa8. It is not easy to determine which is more important: Black’s three extra pawns, or White’s extra exchange and lead in development.

9.Dc2

9.Dd2 is probably weaker, as Black can play 9...Db6! with pressure against d4.

9...b5

9...Db6?! 10.Dd1 is another option.

10.Dxd5?!

White does not want the bishop to take up an active post on b7 and later recapture on d5. Instead he fixes the black central pawns – with a view to demolishing them!

10...exd5 11.b3 c6

11...f6? would have been premature because of 12.bxc4!.

12.e4 f6

This is taking the bull by the horns. Black wins a piece, but the position is by no means certain to be favourable for him.

I spent some time analysing 12...dxe4??, which seems perfectly reasonable for Black. I think that in general this opening variation should not be bad for Black, but it is complicated and suits Kramnik well.

13.exd5 fxe5 14.bxc4!

White’s strategy of disintegrating the black centre seems to have been successful.
14...exd4

A typical line, showcasing the potential of the white position, goes like this: 14...e4 15...xe4 \( \text{h}3 \) 16...f1 \( g4 \) 17...e3! and White is ruling the waves of the stormy centre. One possible continuation could be 17...\( \text{d}7! \) 18...xh7+ \( \text{h}8 \) 19...x6 \( \text{f}6 \) 20...d3 \( \text{f3} \) 21...d5 and White has very strong compensation for the piece. He would love Black to take on \( \text{d}1 \), so that he could fully control the light squares in the centre, but Black will seek counterplay on the kingside instead.

14...\( \text{h}8! ? \) is another interesting possibility. The idea is that after 15...xe5 bxc4 16...xc4 a5 Black's position looks entirely playable, although I would not wish to venture a definite assessment without the benefit of extensive analysis.

15...x6 \( \text{e}6! \)

Played to avoid a potential check on \( \text{b}3 \). Trying to do without this move is worse, for instance:
15...a7 16.cxb5!

Stronger than 16...\( \text{b}3 \), which loses some flexibility.
16...a7?!?

This is a natural move, but probably a mistake.
16...\( \text{e}3? \) fails to:

17...b6!! is the main reason why White's previous move was the most accurate. After 17...\( \text{xb}6 \) 18...b1 White regains his piece with the advantage. Black will have a hard time dealing with the c6-pawn.

Instead Black should prefer 16...\( \text{e}6! \), transposing to the note to his 16th move below.

17...a4!

White has excellent compensation for the piece. The two extra pawns on the queenside are easily worth a piece, as the knight on b8 is glued to the back rank for what could be a very long time.

16...\( \text{cxb5} \)

16...\( \text{d}3?? \)

I am not sure about this. The obvious idea is to free the d4-square for the queen, but it
also allows White to get a pawn to the seventh rank.

16...\(\text{c7?}\) would fail to 17.e4 \(\text{c4}\) 18.\(\text{xf4!}\), when White is better in what are admittedly hair-raising complications. The main problem is that Black cannot maintain the blockade of the c-pawn without paying a price.

Strongest would have been:

16...\(\text{xa7!}\)

White cannot play \(\text{a4}\), as the rook is still pinned on \(\text{a1}\). The critical line seems to be:

17.\(\text{xb1 d3}\)

17...\(\text{a5?!}\) 18.e4 \(\text{h8}\) 19.a4 gives unclear play.

18.\(\text{b2 d2}\) 19.\(\text{xd2 xd2}\) 20.b6 \(\text{a7}\) 21.c7!

The compensation does not seem to be certain after 21.\(\text{bd1 xc6}\) 22.\(\text{x}d2 \text{d7}\).

21...\(\text{g5}\) 22.\(\text{c2 a5}\) 23.\(\text{f1}\)

The position remains rather unclear. White will for certain win back a piece, but at the moment there seems to be no reason to give up a great pawn on the seventh rank for the knight.

My feeling is that Black is likely to be objectively fine here, but the position is simply too complicated to determine a final evaluation with any hint of certainty.

17.\(\text{c7! d4?}\)

After this horrible blunder Black is plain lost. I have personally not been able to find a refutation of:

17...\(\text{d6!}\)

The position is tremendously complicated. I think I at least have found an interesting way for White to play for an edge, but I doubt that it is objectively better for White.

18.\(\text{a4!}\)

Instead 18.\(\text{b2 d7!}\) does not seem as clear as it appeared to be the first ten minutes I was analysing it!

After this a brilliant line could occur after:

18...\(\text{d2?!}\) 19.b6 \(\text{d7}\)

19...\(\text{xb6}\) 20.\(\text{xa8}\) leads to another highly complicated position that appears better for White.

20.b7

It is not often that one encounters connected passed pawns, on the seventh rank, on an almost full board of pieces.

20...\(\text{b6}\) 21.\(\text{c2 e8}\) 22.\(\text{xd2 xd2}\) 23.\(\text{ab1 c4}\) 24.\(\text{h3!}\) 25.\(\text{xc4f h8}\) 26.b8=\(\text{h}\) 27.\(\text{xb8=xb8}\) 28.\(\text{d4!!}\) 29.\(\text{xd2 xf1}\) 30.\(\text{xf1}\)

White has won a pawn and has good winning chances.

However, 18...\(\text{d7!}\) looks better, after which the position is a real mess!

18.\(\text{a4!}\)

After 17...\(\text{d6}\) this was not necessarily the best move, but now it is just winning.

18...\(\text{d7}\)

18...\(\text{xa1}\) 19.\(\text{xb4}\) is hopeless.

19.\(\text{e3!}\)

This move is the big difference from the analogous position after 17...\(\text{d6}\). White gains control over the vital \(\text{b6}\)-square with an extra tempo.

19.\(\text{xa8}\) is weaker.

19...\(\text{d6}\) 20.\(\text{xa8}\)
An interesting move was:

21.\texttt{\textit{e}4}?

Returning the blunder. After this Black has the chance to gain strong counterplay.

Black is forced into:

21.\texttt{\textit{e}5} 22.\texttt{\textit{b}6} \texttt{\textit{d}5} 23.\texttt{\textit{x}b}4!

23.\texttt{\textit{b}3} is insufficient to win. Black needs to reply 23...\texttt{\textit{f}3} 24.\texttt{\textit{h}1} \texttt{\textit{c}8}! when the position appears to be about level in some odd fashion. The queens will come off and Black wins back the exchange. After this the tremendous pawns should only give White a draw.

23...\texttt{\textit{f}3} 24.\texttt{\textit{h}1} \texttt{\textit{h}4} 25.\texttt{\textit{f}3}! \texttt{\textit{x}f}3 26.\texttt{\textit{x}f}2 \texttt{\textit{d}2}

Here there is possibly more than one route to victory, but to me the most convincing way is:

27.\texttt{\textit{x}d}2! \texttt{\textit{x}d}2\texttt{\textit{f}2} 28.\texttt{\textit{g}2}!

28.\texttt{\textit{g}1}? \texttt{\textit{f}3} 29.\texttt{\textit{x}f}3 \texttt{\textit{x}f}3 30.\texttt{\textit{c}8=} \texttt{\textit{f}8} \texttt{\textit{c}8} 31.\texttt{\textit{x}c}8\texttt{\textit{f}3} 32.\texttt{\textit{c}4} \texttt{\textit{f}8} 33.\texttt{\textit{c}8}\texttt{\textit{f}7} is not elementary to win.

28...\texttt{\textit{e}4} 29.\texttt{\textit{h}3}! \texttt{\textit{x}h}3 30.\texttt{\textit{c}4}

And it is all over.

However, the most pragmatic continuation might have been 21.\texttt{\textit{a}6}??, when Black cannot avoid the exchange of queens. After this it seems unlikely that Black can keep control of the white pawns. Clearly Kramnik was not convinced about this, but aided by the computer, afterwards, it is quite clear that this would have won the game without too many complications.

21...\texttt{\textit{f}8}??

Returning the compliment. Black was given a once-in-a-game opportunity to play: 21...\texttt{\textit{d}5}! The point is that 22.\texttt{\textit{b}4}? loses to 22...\texttt{\textit{f}3}!! (followed by ...\texttt{\textit{d}5}). Therefore the critical line seems to be 22.\texttt{\textit{a}c}1! \texttt{\textit{c}5} 23.\texttt{\textit{x}a}6 (23.\texttt{\textit{x}a}6??) 23...\texttt{\textit{b}6} 24.\texttt{\textit{x}c}5 \texttt{\textit{x}c}5 25.\texttt{\textit{e}3} \texttt{\textit{x}c}7 (25...\texttt{\textit{d}5} 26.\texttt{\textit{b}6} \texttt{\textit{h}3} 27.\texttt{\textit{c}6}! is better for White) 26.\texttt{\textit{b}6} \texttt{\textit{a}6} 27.\texttt{\textit{c}7} \texttt{\textit{a}2} with a draw on the way.

22.\texttt{\textit{b}6}

Now White is just winning.

22...\texttt{\textit{e}5}

22...\texttt{\textit{x}b}6 23.\texttt{\textit{c}6} and White wins a piece.

23.\texttt{\textit{x}e}5 \texttt{\textit{f}3} 24.\texttt{\textit{d}1} \texttt{\textit{e}4}

25.\texttt{\textit{b}7} \texttt{\textit{f}8}

After 25...\texttt{\textit{x}b}7 26.\texttt{\textit{c}3} \texttt{\textit{h}3} 27.\texttt{\textit{f}3} White is two pawns up, and not bad ones either...

26.\texttt{\textit{c}8=} \texttt{\textit{d}5} 27.\texttt{\textit{f}3}

1-0
The next game is a perfect example of the power of pawns. After a fairly eventless first 15 moves, Serper takes an aggressive stance against a slightly provocative move. Black has delayed castling with the intention to take control over some central squares, d4 and f4, but Serper sacrifices a piece to take away the transit square e6 from Black, and to create threats against the opponent's king while it is still stuck in the centre.

This game has deservedly been presented in quite a number of books by now, but usually the accompanying annotations seem to be more or less a reproduction of Serper's original notes from 1993. I don't think the game is as flawless as presented in his annotations, but it is still arguably one of the best games of all time.

From our perspective it is the perfect example of pawns being as strong as pieces: in the course of events White sacrifices all of his seven pieces, only to promote a pawn and win the game. There are plenty of threats to the black king, so after having strayed slightly from the realm of pure attacking chess with the previous game, we are well within the theme of this book again.

Grigory Serper – Ioannis Nikolaidis

St Petersburg 1993

1.e4 g6 2.e4 d6 3.d4 Pe7 4.dc3 dc6 5.de2

This line is not very dangerous for Black.

5...bd7 6.dg3 c6 7.de2 a6 8.ge3 h5 9.f3 b5 10.c5 dc5 11.dxc5 wc7 12.0–0 h4 13.dh1 dh5 14.wd2

14.f4!? might be better, but I don't think White has an advantage in any case.

14...e5

I do not really like this move. Black has been playing with the pieces so far, but now decides to put a pawn on the square that could have been used as a transit square for the pieces.

After 14...de5!? 15.dh2 he6 it is not easy for White to make any favourable advances. Advancing the f-pawn is the only active idea I can see for him, but this might create weaknesses and is not clear how White will try to crack the opponent's defences.

15.dh2 dh8?!?

The knight is heading for d4. 15...d4 is better according to Serper, but I don't see anything inherently wrong with what was played in the game. I have seen a good number of lectures where this moment has been given as an exercise to the audience, as if White's decision here is absolutely obvious and correct, when the most it can be called is highly creative. Serper clearly did not want to allow the knight to arrive on d4 and thus decided that the sacrifice was justified. However, as we shall see, the position that arises is far from clear.

16.a4!?

Although I like Serper's decision just as much as the next guy, I think that the objectively best
move here would have been 16.b4! with 17.a4 coming after. Even here, I am not sure if White is better, but this is his best chance to prove something.

16...b4 17.\(\mathcal{d}d5\)?

17...cxd5 18.exd5 f5?
This move, aimed against the admittedly dangerous idea of \(\mathcal{d}e4-d6\), is simply disastrous, but I have not seen it criticised anywhere. The king is subsequently badly weakened and the move achieves very little.

Black would have been better off playing either 18...\(\mathcal{f}6\)? or throwing in the move 18...h3!, when White will have to compromise his kingside in some way before the battle begins. Had he done so, the outcome might have been any of the three possible results.

19.d6! \(\mathcal{c}6\)?!
This move looks good, but cannot be excused; Black should have considered himself warned by White’s 17th move, that he is as happy with pawns as he is with pieces.

19...\(\mathcal{d}7\)? would merely provoke 20.c6!, when after 20...\(\mathcal{xc}6\) 21.\(\mathcal{f}c1\) and \(\mathcal{e}7\) White has an absolutely crushing attack.

The best move seems to have been: 19...\(\mathcal{a}5\)!, although White is much better after 20.\(\mathcal{c}4\) with the following possible line: 20...f4 21.\(\mathcal{d}5\) \(\mathcal{a}7\) 22.\(\mathcal{d}2\) \(\mathcal{e}6\) 23.\(\mathcal{c}6\) d7 24.\(\mathcal{b}6\) \(\mathcal{x}b6\) 25.\(\mathcal{c}xb6\) \(\mathcal{a}8\) 26.\(\mathcal{x}b4\) with sensational compensation for the piece, but with an undecided game still ahead. Probably Black should play 26...e4?! with a great mess.

20.\(\mathcal{b}5\)!! \(\mathcal{a}xb5\) 21.\(\mathcal{x}b5\) \(\mathcal{w}xb5\)
After 21...\(\mathcal{w}b7\) 22.c6 Black has to give up his queen for insufficient compensation (three uncoordinated pieces is not enough). 22...\(\mathcal{b}8\) can be strongly met by 23.\(\mathcal{d}5\), when the threat is c6-c7. And after 23...\(\mathcal{x}a1\) 24.\(\mathcal{x}a1\) \(\mathcal{d}6\) 25.\(\mathcal{x}e5\) f7 26.\(\mathcal{a}7\) \(\mathcal{g}8\) 27.c7 the queen is trapped.

22.\(\mathcal{x}a8\) \(\mathcal{c}6\)
There are no better squares. After 22...\(\mathcal{w}b7\) 23.f1 the rook comes to a7 with even stronger effect.

23.\(\mathcal{f}a1\) f4
23...\(\mathcal{f}6\) can be met with 24.\(\mathcal{c}3\), when the threats to b4 and e5 are decisive.

24.\(\mathcal{b}1\) \(\mathcal{d}7\)
After 24...\(\mathcal{f}xe3\) White can almost play whatever he chooses, but Serper had prepared the highly attractive 25.\(\mathcal{d}5\)!!.
Black can resign.

25...\(\text{ex}c8\)\! 26...\(\text{dx}e5\) \(\text{fx}e3\)

Black has to walk the plank. After 26...\(\text{h}f6\)

27...\(\text{e}6\)! 28...\(\text{e}4\)! White has an absolutely decisive attack. For example: 28...\(\text{fx}e3\) 29...\(\text{g}3\)

\(\text{ex}e8\), leading to mate, or 28...\(\text{e}8\)

29...\(\text{ex}e8\)! followed by 30...\(c6\). Because the black king is trapped on the eighth rank, there is no way he can deal with these two pawns.

27...\(\text{e}6\)!?

27...\(\text{d}3\)! and 28...\(\text{a}8\) was very simple, but White had seen a further appetising sacrifice.

27...\(\text{f}8\) 28...\(\text{xd}7\) \(\text{xf}2\) 29...\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{e}8\)

Another attempt was 29...\(\text{a}6\)! 30...\(\text{xf}2\)

\(\text{xc}2\)! 31...\(\text{xe}2\) \(\text{f}4\)!, but after 32...\(\text{f}1\)

\(\text{xc}6\) the pawns cannot be stopped. After 33...\(\text{g}8\)

34...\(\text{e}7\)! and 33...\(\text{e}8\) 34...\(\text{e}7\) \(\text{d}8\)

35...\(\text{a}7\)! the pawns are simply too strong.

30...\(\text{f}7\)!!

Obviously Serper had seen this move on move 27.

A funny though not very important line is the following, which I suspect Serper looked at during the game: 30...\(\text{xe}8\) 31...\(\text{e}7\)

\(\text{f}8\)! 32...\(\text{c}6\) \(\text{g}3\)! 33...\(\text{xf}2\) (33...\(\text{hx}g3\) \(\text{hx}g3\))

33...\(\text{f}5\) Serper incorrectly stated that White is winning here, but White can still hold the position with 34...\(\text{ex}d6\)! (The point is of course that after 34...\(\text{ex}d6\) 35...\(\text{d}7\) 36...\(\text{c}7\)

the pawns are good enough to queen, although after 36...\(\text{ex}d6\) 37...\(\text{c}8\) \(\text{e}d\)

38...\(\text{f}5\) White has enough counterplay to make a draw.) 35...\(\text{d}7\)

36...\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{g}7\) 37...\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 38...\(\text{d}5\) with enough counterplay to hold the balance.

30...\(\text{xf}7\) 31...\(\text{c}8\) 32...\(\text{d}7\) \(\text{f}7\)

33...\(\text{dx}e8\) 34...\(\text{b}7\) \(\text{e}7\)!

A time trouble mistake. Both players had apparently found it necessary to pour their time into the problems on the previous moves.

34...\(\text{f}6\)! was the only move. White should be winning all the same, but Black can still offer some resistance. The main point is that 35...\(\text{c}6\) can be met with 35...\(\text{g}3\) 36...\(\text{xf}2\)

(again 36...\(\text{hx}g3\) \(\text{hx}g3\) 37...\(\text{e}7\) \(\text{h}8\) 38...\(\text{f}6\) \(\text{e}7\)

39...\(\text{c}8\) \(\text{d}8\) White has to give perpetual check) 36...\(\text{f}5\) 37...\(\text{d}7\) \(\text{h}8\) 38...\(\text{c}7\)

\(\text{e}7\) Black has managed to stop the c-pawn for the moment, although he is still suffering from the presence of this powerful passer.
35.c6!

Finally the position is clarifying, but after having sacrificed six pieces, it is time to let go of the queen as well, making it a full set.

35...e4 36.c7 e3 37.♗d5 ♕f6 38.♗d6† ♕f7 39.♗d5† ♕f6 40.♗d6† ♕f7 41.♗xe7† ♕xe7 42.c8=♗ ♕h6 43.♗c5† ♕e8 44.♗b5† ♕d8 45.♗b6† ♕d7 46.♗xg6 e2† 47.♖xf2 ♕e3† 48.♕e1 1-0

One kind of logic would dictate that this game had to be the last one in the book, simply because it is impossible to top it in terms of glamour. However, I have always been the crash and burn type of guy, so as I intend to proceed for another few hundred pages, I have decided that the next game should illustrate a more sedate pace of play.

In the following example, Macieja shows that in closed positions his reach is far beyond that of his opponent and wins a beautiful strategic game. What is most impressive is that no piece has left the board at the time when the white position is beyond repair.

What I want you to look out for is the way that Black nurtures the strong pawns, and then lets his pieces serve the pawns, rather than the usual way around.

Bogdan Grabarczyk – Bartłomiej Macieja

Polish Championship, Opole 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♖a4 ♗f6 5.0-0 ♖c5

This is rarely played without ...b5, but Macieja probably wanted to avoid any heavy theory.

6.c3 0-0 7.d4 ♗b6 8.♕g5 h6 9.♖h4 d6 10.♖d3!!

10.♖xc6 bxc6 11.♗b2 ♗e7 12.♖e1 as in Sokolov – Winants, Brussels 1988, with a slight edge for White, seems quite prudent as well.

10...♗e7!

11.♗b2?

After the greedy/optimistic 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.♖xe5 Black has 12...♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♗g5 14.♗g3 ♗xe4 where he is already a little better.

It was absolutely necessary to take up the challenge with 11.♖xf6 gxf6 12.♗bd2, when White has ideas such as ♕h4 and f2-f4 to attack the black weaknesses as a counterweight to the black bishops.

11...♗g6 12.♖g3

The bishop on g3 is certainly not better than either of the black knights!

12...♖h5

To the best of my understanding Black is already doing quite well.

13.♖c4

It is already too late to seek peace through exchanges with 13.dxe5, as after the direct line: 13...♕xg3 14.hxg3 ♖xe5 15.♖xe5 dxe5
16.\textit{W}xd8 \textit{W}xd8 17.\textit{D}c4 \textit{D}e6 18.\textit{D}xb6 cxb6
White will either lose the a-pawn or have to accept a rook coming in on the second rank.
The attempt to give up a pawn with 19.\textit{A}fd1 fails to 19...\textit{A}xd1\texttt{f} 20.\textit{A}xd1 \textit{Ax}a2 21.\textit{D}d7 b5
22.\textit{D}d1 \textit{D}e6! 23.\textit{D}xb7 \textit{D}d8 and Black comes to
d2 anyway, when he is very probably winning.

13...\textit{A}a7 14.\textit{A}b3 b5 15.\textit{D}e3 \textit{D}hf4 16.\textit{D}d2
\textit{D}b7

17.d5?
A grave positional mistake, which was probably meant to relieve tension of a primarily
psychological nature. 17.\textit{D}c2! was stronger, maintaining the central tension. Now the
previously blocked bishop on a7 comes alive, while the bishop on b3 is out of play.

17...\textit{D}f6
All the black pieces are in play, except the
rooks, which so far have no significant role. It is interesting to see that it is exactly these heavy
pieces that decide the game when they finally get into action.

18.\textit{D}h1 \textit{D}c8 19.\textit{G}g1?
A very passive move, that makes it very easy
for Black to build up his position. Probably
White was afraid that he was about to be
sacrificed upon.

White had to go for counterplay with
something like 19.a4, when he should be
ready for 19...h5 20.axb5 axb5 21.h4? with a
somewhat dubious, but not yet clearly worse
position.

It should be noted that, after 19.a4, the more
concrete 19...\textit{D}xg2? would be a mistake. Better
one bird in the hand than ten on the roof, as
they say in Denmark. But this particular bird
only leads to a draw after: 20.\textit{D}xg2! \textit{D}h3\texttt{f} 21.\textit{D}xh3 \textit{D}xh3 22.\textit{D}g2 \textit{D}h5\texttt{f} 23.\textit{D}h4 \textit{D}xh4
24.\textit{D}d1!! and Black has nothing better than
perpetual check. I would not be surprised to
learn that White saw this line but missed the
final saving resource.

19...h5 20.f3 \textit{D}g5 21.\textit{D}ad1 h4 22.\textit{G}f2

22...\textit{D}f6!!
This is, in my opinion, the deepest move of the game. Black is preparing ...\( \text{g7} \) and ...\( \text{h8} \) in anticipation of action on the h-file.

23.h3?

This is the decisive mistake; it is remarkable that it has occurred without a single piece having left the board! White cannot allow such weakening moves and should probably have played 23.a4 or similar, simply to see if Black can break through on his own.

23...\( \text{g5} \)

Black immediately reshuffles to exploit the weaknesses.

24.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 25.\( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 26.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{g3} \)

Normally double pawns are not to be desired, but here the circumstances are anything but normal.

28.\( \text{d4} \)

White cannot prevent the sacrifice on h3, so instead he simply prepares for the impact as best he can.

28...\( \text{h4} \) 29.\( \text{fe1} \)

Creating ‘luft’ for the king.

This is the logical follow-up. Note that a grandmaster will not find it necessary to calculate all the way to the end in order to sacrifice a piece like this. He simply sees that he has threats and options, and that the opponent will not be able to refute the attack. He will also rely on a general understanding of the position and what should be the consequences of such an evaluation.

30.\( \text{gxh3} \) \( \text{h3} \) 31.\( \text{g1} \) \( \text{f7} \)

Here come the rooks.

32.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{h8} \) 33.\( \text{xf3} \)

White is lost no matter what he does:

33.\( \text{d2} \)

Now Black will force his opponent to take on h3:

33...\( \text{h6} \) 34.\( \text{xh3} \) \( \text{xh3} \)

We can now imagine lines like the following:

35.\( \text{f1} \)

35.\( \text{xg2} \) \( \text{hah8} \) 36.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{h1} \) 37.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{h2} \) 38.\( \text{xh1} \) \( \text{xg2} \) 39.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 40.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{f2} \)

The pawns are too strong and the bishop on b3 is not a factor. For example: 41.\( \text{d1} \) \( g2 \) 42.\( \text{g1} \) \( \text{f1} \) 43.\( \text{xg2} \) \( \text{xd1} \) 44.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{f1} \) and Black wins another pawn.

35...\( \text{ah8} \) 36.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{h2} \) 37.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 38.\( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{h2} \) 39.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 40.\( \text{f1} \) \( g2 \) 41.\( \text{g1} \) \( f2 \) 42.\( \text{c2} \)

42...\( \text{g5} \)!
Black wins. His next moves are ...\textit{\texttt{xd}}\textsubscript{4}, ...\textit{g}\textsubscript{4} and ...\textit{f}\textsubscript{3}, supporting the g-pawn, followed by ...\texttt{e}f\texttt{1} winning.

33...\texttt{Exh}3 34.\texttt{Eh}1 \texttt{Eh}2 35.\texttt{Ee}2 \texttt{Ah}8 36.\texttt{Ee}1 36.\texttt{Exh}2 \texttt{Exh}2 37.\texttt{Ed}3 \texttt{Exb}2 is equally hopeless.

36...\texttt{Eh}1\textsuperscript{\textdagger}

36...\texttt{g}5! was even stronger. White cannot improve his position.

37.\texttt{Eg}2 \texttt{Exd}1\textsuperscript{\textdagger} 38.\texttt{Exd}1

A blunder. Necessary was 38.\texttt{Exd}1 though Black would still win after 38...\texttt{Eh}2 39.\texttt{Ee}1 \texttt{Eh}1\textsuperscript{\textdagger} 40.\texttt{Ed}2 \texttt{g}5! 41.a3 \texttt{Exd}4 42.cxd4 \texttt{g}4!

38...\texttt{Eh}1\textsuperscript{\textdagger} 39.\texttt{Eg}2 \texttt{Exd}4 40.cxd4 \texttt{Eh}2 0–1

Our last two games in this section are good at illustrating the statement of the Dalai Lama, that those who think that the small and powerless cannot change anything have never spent a night in a tent with a mosquito.

In the first of these games we are talking about the g-pawn, which on the 18th move plays such a fantastic role, but also about the e5-pawn, which however short lived, has great impact on the course of the game. First it harasses the enemy knight, then forces the black queen to move to an unwelcoming square, right in the firing line of the bishop on b2.

\textit{Gabriel Sargissian – Arsen Yegiazarian}

\textit{Yerevan 2004}

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\texttt{Ef}3 \texttt{Ef}6 4.e3 e6 5.\texttt{Ec}3 \texttt{bd}7 6.\texttt{Ec}2 \texttt{Ec}7

This slightly passive move gives White slightly freer play and good chances of achieving a slight edge.

7.b3 0–0 8.\texttt{Ed}3 \texttt{b}6 9.0–0 \texttt{Eh}7 10.\texttt{Eg}2 \texttt{Ec}7 11.\texttt{Ee}5

White is about to play f4 and \texttt{Ed}d1 with a small space advantage for White. Surprisingly already at this point Black commits a decisive mistake.

11...\texttt{Ee}5?

Black is entering a skirmish for which he is badly prepared.

12.dxe5 dxc4

Yegiazarian rids himself of a tactical weakness before White can exploit it, but suffers other problems as well.

12...\texttt{Eg}4 at once is also a bad idea. After 13.\texttt{Exh}7\textsuperscript{\textdagger} \texttt{Eh}8 14.h3 White wins a pawn because of: 14...\texttt{Exe}5 15.cxd5 \texttt{Exd}5
Chapter 3 - Typical Pawn Play

16.\( \text{axd5} \) The extra pawn should be enough for victory in the long term.

13.\( \text{bxc4} \) \( \text{dxc4} \) 14.\( \text{axh7+} \) \( \text{gxh7} \) 15.\( \text{dxe5} \)

Forced, as Black loses the exchange in the following long forced line: 15.\( \text{dxe5} \) 16.\( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{gxh7} \)
17.\( \text{h3+} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 18.\( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 19.\( \text{dxe5} \)
\( \text{dxe5} \) 20.\( \text{dxe5+} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 21.\( \text{dxe5} \) and 22.\( \text{dxe5} \).

16.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{xh7} \) 17.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{xe5} \)

Black has no choice but to accept the pawn. After 17.\( \text{ad8} \) 18.\( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 19.\( \text{h5+} \) \( \text{dxe5} \) 20.\( \text{dxe5} \) White will consolidate with an extra pawn, as well as bring the knight to \( f4 \) and \( g6 \) with a decisive advantage.

18.\( \text{g5!!} \)

After this the pawn is a fantastic asset. It is immune because of the f2-f4 advance and is on its way to \( g6 \) to help the queen to deliver a deadly attack to \( h7 \) and \( g7 \).

18.\( \text{h8} \)

Black defends against the aforementioned threat, but this move has other drawbacks. The same can be said of 18.\( \text{g6} \), when White can exploit the weakness of the \( f6 \)-square immediately. 19.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 20.\( \text{d6} \) \( \text{d6} \) 21.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{d7} \) 22.\( \text{xf6} \) Next comes 23.e4 and White has a fantastic attack.

19.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 20.\( \text{e5}! \)

Winning an important tempo.

20.\( \text{d7} \)

20.\( \text{xf5?} \) would lose immediately to
21.\( \text{h5+} \) and 22.\( \text{e7} \).

21.\( \text{c7}! \)

Winning the exchange in the simplest way. 21.\( \text{c6} \) is weaker. After 21.\( \text{c6} \) 22.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 23.\( \text{xf6} \) Black can play 23.\( \text{g6} \)!

24.\( \text{xh8} \) \( \text{h8} \), when there is a bit of counterplay remaining before the full point can be converted.

21.\( \text{g6} \)

Black had no choice. After something like 21.\( \text{ad8} \) White wins with a direct attack:
22.\( \text{c8} \) 23.\( \text{h5+} \) \( \text{g8} \) 24.\( \text{a6} \) and so on.

22.\( \text{ad1} \) \( \text{c8} \) 23.\( \text{xa8} \) \( \text{xa8} \)

24.\( \text{d3} \)

From here on Sargissian's play is a bit shaky, but still good enough to win the game. It would have been better to finish off the attack quickly with 24.e4!.

24.\( \text{d8} \) 25.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{g8} \) 26.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d8} \) 27.\( \text{c2} \)
\( \text{h8} \) 28.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{h5} \) 29.\( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 30.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h8} \)
In the next game, the last of the present section, we return to one of the basic principles of attacking chess: that only the pieces present at the scene of the attack can exert any influence over it. This is of course a basic truth, so simple that absolutely anyone can understand it, and yet not everyone plays as if they had this knowledge.

Actually, I think that knowing and abiding by the most important twenty positional principles, being able to calculate well and having decent openings, can bring you to 2600. Beyond that, perhaps something extra is needed.

In the last game of this section we shall see how two pawns on the fifth are able to control the centre, before helping to block the sixth rank at the critical moment, thus making White's attack decisive.
is passive and slow, which — calculation aside — makes it too risky, even without looking at the fact that Black's kingside is not protected enough.

Having said that, it should be pointed out that 18...\texttt{xf7} 19.e5 is also very dangerous for Black.

19.e5 \texttt{xb5}

Black is only one move away from eliminating the main threats to his kingside, making it possible that he will win with his extra exchange in the long run. Thus the moment has arisen where White must act decisively.

\texttt{21.Wf1!}

The main point of this move is to remove the danger to the pawn on e5.

\texttt{21...f5 22.We1!}

Having removed the threat of ...\texttt{fxe5}, White hurries to relocate the queen to g3.

\texttt{22...Wb6}

\texttt{22...xf1 23.Wg3} will transpose to the game.

Also insufficient is 22...\texttt{Qc4} 23.Wg3 \texttt{Dxe5} 24.Dxg6 Qg4 25.fxg4 Wd6 (or 25...f4 26.Wc3 e5 27.dxe6 and White wins). In this position White brings home the victory with a nice combination: 26.Dxe7+! Qxe7 27.gxf5+ Qh8 28.f6 Qf7 29.Wh4 Qg8 30.Wf3 with a winning attack.

\texttt{23.Wg3 xf1}

White has sacrificed two rooks in order to attack the black king. His three pieces are well placed, but it is only because of his two fantastic pawns in the centre that he can actually take this attack to a successful conclusion.

\texttt{24.d6!!}

The only winning move. After 24.De6 Qf7 White has nothing more than a repetition, and after 24.Dxg6 Qh7 25.f8\texttt{#} \texttt{xh6 26.Wh4+ Qg7 27.Wh7+ Qf8} White impressively has sacrificed everything but the queen, but he will unfortunately have to give perpetual check now, otherwise he will lose the game.

When I originally annotated this game for my book for Everyman on the Grünfeld (before putting it aside for the present book, written
six years later) I believed that White would also win after 24.e6?, but this time around I managed to find the way for Black to draw: 24...\&xg2\#! 25.\&xg2 \&b2\# 26.\&h3 \&h8! 27.\&xg6 \&f6 28.\&h5 \&g8 29.\&g5 \&g7 30.\&h6 \&f6 and White cannot find a way forward.

24...\&xg2\# 25.\&xg2 \&b2\# 26.\&h3 \&xe5 27.\&xg6\# \&h8 28.\&f7!? 28.d7! is objectively stronger, but also rather mysterious. The move played in the game is good enough.

28...\&g8 29.\&h5! Black resigned, thinking this was the end. He could have offered a good deal more resistance with 29...\&g73! 30.hxg3 \&xd6, although after 31.\&g6\# \&g8 32.\&f4 \&d8 33.\&h4! White has a winning attack anyway.

1-0

Pawn storms

An important part of pawn play is of course to be able to use them aggressively. This can be either in groups or on their own, as cannon fodder or as star attackers. And then of course, pawns can aspire to personal greatness...

In this section we will look at all of these scenarios, but mainly games in which one or more pawns are used as the frontal force in an attack on the opponent's fortress. Usually the term pawn storm is only used in scenarios involving three or more pawns, but because it is just as important to look at the damage a single foot soldier can create, I have granted myself a bit of poetic licence.

In the first game Jonny Hector makes brilliant use of his g-pawn, throwing it forward; first to harass the white knight on f3, and later to support his own knight in its endeavour to sacrifice itself at the same spot.
Typical Pawn Play

Black has sacrificed a pawn for rapid development. The concept seems a bit risky, but once initiated it has to be followed up by appropriate measures. Black has developed all his pieces, but lacks any clear targets in the opponent’s camp. For this reason he will have to create weaknesses, either with pawn sacrifices or by breaking up White’s structure with pawns.

12...g5!

This is the only move. Usually this definition covers moves that do not lose instantly, but here it is used to describe a move that is essential for keeping Black’s momentum, and thus the possibility of having adequate compensation for the pawn.

13.\text{\textit{\textbullet}}e2 g4 14.\textit{\textbullet}h4 \textit{\textbullet}b8

14...\textit{\textbullet}e6!? looks like an interesting idea. The concept is to keep the knight out of play permanently.

15.\textit{\textbullet}d2

I don’t like this move much. The bishop looks much better on b2.

15.0–0! is the best move, for sure. White was maybe wanting to keep his options open, but this is a mirage. The king is hardly going to head for the queenside! If Black tries to play energetically, as in the game, he would end with a bad position. 15...\textit{\textbullet}c8 16.b4 \textit{\textbullet}d4?! (16...\textit{\textbullet}d6, with only a modest advantage for White, is more prudent.) 17.exd4 \textit{\textbullet}xd4 18.\textit{\textbullet}f4+ \textit{\textbullet}a8 19.\textit{\textbullet}f5 \textit{\textbullet}xf5 20.\textit{\textbullet}xf5 \textit{\textbullet}xc3 21.\textit{\textbullet}a2 White has a huge advantage due to his two bishops and the split black pawns.

15...\textit{\textbullet}c8 16.\textit{\textbullet}d1 \textit{\textbullet}e5

White has played rather passively and has certainly lost all traces of his opening advantage.

17.\textit{\textbullet}f5

A simpler would be 17.0–0, when Black for example could play 17...\textit{\textbullet}g6 18.\textit{\textbullet}f5 \textit{\textbullet}c5 19.\textit{\textbullet}d3 h5. Black has initiated a pawn storm on the kingside, which seems to be just as likely to succeed as the conversion of White’s extra pawn.

17...\textit{\textbullet}e6

18.\textit{\textbullet}d4?

This is the first serious mistake, initiating a wrong path. There were some decent alternatives:

18.e4 \textit{\textbullet}c6 19.\textit{\textbullet}g7 \textit{\textbullet}e7 20.\textit{\textbullet}g5 \textit{\textbullet}hg8 21.\textit{\textbullet}f5 \textit{\textbullet}e6 should lead to good play for Black, but White retains his extra pawn for the time.
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being. On balance I prefer Black, but consider this a subjective evaluation.

18.\(\text{g7}?\) is an odd-looking move that also would keep the game rather unclear.

18...\(\text{xd4}\) 19.\(\text{exd4}\) \(\text{f3}!\) 20.\(\text{f1}\)?

It was preferable to play 20.\(\text{gxf3}\) even though White will end up with a rather shattered pawn structure and a king unable to find permanent safety. Here the eternal truth about opposite bishops being very effective when attacking comes into play. The outlook is grim for White for sure, but the game continuation is even worse.

20...\(\text{xe2}\)!!

It seems that White had been relying exclusively on 20...\(\text{xd4}??\) 21.\(\text{f4}!\), but Black could also take on \(\text{d2}\) with good play, so the general concept was rather poor.

21.\(\text{xe2}\)

White has no choice but to go on a long journey, as after 21.\(\text{xe2}\)? \(\text{xc2}\) 22.\(\text{xb3}\) \(\text{b5}\) Black simply wins a piece.

21...\(\text{xd4}\)\(\text{f4}\) 22.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{f5}\) 23.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{xc2}\) 24.\(\text{f4}\)!!

Again forced – all other moves lose material instantly.

26.\(\text{e5}\)!!

Objectively it was better not to go forward, but the position after 26.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{e8}\) 27.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{b3}!\) was also pretty dire. The main line (which is not forced, although improvements upon it will be hard to find) proceeds as follows:

28.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{c4}!\) 29.\(\text{g5}\) (29.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{a6}!\) with the threat of ...\(\text{c4}\) is harsh.) 29...\(\text{h5}\) 30.\(\text{e4}\)

30...\(\text{g7}\)! The way Black utilises the minor pieces makes a nice impression. 31.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{e6}\) 32.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{g5}\) 33.\(\text{xe8}\) \(\text{xe8}\) 34.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{g8}\) 35.\(\text{e1}\) \(\text{e6}\)!! Black has a technically winning ending, but also a real job ahead of him to convert it.

26...\(\text{d7}\) 27.\(\text{d6}\) \(\text{b3}!\)

Controlling important squares around the white king.
28.\textit{\texttt{g5 \texttt{b6}}}

Black could also have won immediately with 28...f6 29.\textit{\texttt{h6 \texttt{c5\dagger}}} 30.\textit{\texttt{e7 c8\dagger}} 31.\textit{\texttt{xf6 c6\dagger}}, when White will either lose his bishop or be mated.

29.\textit{\texttt{e7 g8!}}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[very thick] (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\draw[thin] (0.5,0.5) -- (7.5,7.5) (0.5,7.5) -- (7.5,0.5);
\draw[thin,red] (1,1) -- (7,7) (1,7) -- (7,1);
\draw[thin,green] (2,2) -- (6,6) (2,6) -- (6,2);
\draw[thin,blue] (3,3) -- (5,5) (3,5) -- (5,3);
\draw[thin,orange] (4,4) -- (4,4);
\node at (0.5,0.5) {1}; \node at (0.5,1.5) {2}; \node at (0.5,2.5) {3}; \node at (0.5,3.5) {4}; \node at (0.5,4.5) {5}; \node at (0.5,5.5) {6}; \node at (0.5,6.5) {7}; \node at (0.5,7.5) {8};
\node at (1.5,0.5) {a}; \node at (2.5,0.5) {b}; \node at (3.5,0.5) {c}; \node at (4.5,0.5) {d}; \node at (5.5,0.5) {e}; \node at (6.5,0.5) {f}; \node at (7.5,0.5) {g}; \node at (8.5,0.5) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

30.\textit{\texttt{e3}}

30.\textit{\texttt{f4}} loses in several ways as well, for example: 30...\textit{\texttt{ce8\dagger}} 31.\textit{\texttt{f6 g6\dagger}} 32.\textit{\texttt{f5 e6\dagger}} 33.\textit{\texttt{e4 g8\dagger}} 34.\textit{\texttt{d3 f5\dagger}} 35.\textit{\texttt{d4 c6}} 36.\textit{\texttt{b3 f6}} and there is no defence to 37...\textit{\texttt{d8\dagger}} and 38...\textit{\texttt{xxc3}}. If the knight is moved, Black can play ...\textit{\texttt{xe4\dagger}} and take the bishop, also with check.

30...\textit{\texttt{c4}} 31.\textit{\texttt{d4 g6!}}

After this decisive move it is all over.

32.\textit{\texttt{f4 e6\dagger}} 33.\textit{\texttt{xf7 d6\dagger}} 34.\textit{\texttt{xd6 xd6\dagger}} 35.\textit{\texttt{c7 x6\dagger}} 36.\textit{\texttt{d7 f8 g3 f7\dagger}} 37.\textit{\texttt{d8 g6 39.e1 e6}}

0–1

Also in the second game of this section, an enthusiastic g-pawn is the star. And again it is being used recklessly in the pursuit of compensation on the back of a dubious gambit. This time it is the Blackmar-Diemer Gambit, which is commonly used by weaker club players, but very rarely by titled players. Here, however, a true specialist shows that the gambit, although dubious in character, is not entirely harmless.

\textbf{Peter Leisebein – Bernhard Fels}

\begin{center}
Correspondence 2004
\end{center}

1.\textit{\texttt{d4 xf6 2.f3 d5 3.e4 dxe4 4.d3}}

This looks to be the optimal move order should one wish to essay the Blackmar-Diemar Gambit. Lines such as 1.\textit{\texttt{d4 d5 2.e4 dxe4 3.f3 e5!}} are no joy for White.

4...\textit{\texttt{exf3 5.xf3 g4}}

Leisebein played what looks to have been a themed tournament in 1994, winning many games after 5...\textit{\texttt{f5 6.e5 e6 7.g4}}, with both the white and black pieces.

6.\textit{\texttt{h3 xf3 7.xf3 c6}}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[very thick] (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\draw[thin] (0.5,0.5) -- (7.5,7.5) (0.5,7.5) -- (7.5,0.5);
\draw[thin,red] (1,1) -- (7,7) (1,7) -- (7,1);
\draw[thin,green] (2,2) -- (6,6) (2,6) -- (6,2);
\draw[thin,blue] (3,3) -- (5,5) (3,5) -- (5,3);
\draw[thin,orange] (4,4) -- (4,4);
\node at (0.5,0.5) {1}; \node at (0.5,1.5) {2}; \node at (0.5,2.5) {3}; \node at (0.5,3.5) {4}; \node at (0.5,4.5) {5}; \node at (0.5,5.5) {6}; \node at (0.5,6.5) {7}; \node at (0.5,7.5) {8};
\node at (1.5,0.5) {a}; \node at (2.5,0.5) {b}; \node at (3.5,0.5) {c}; \node at (4.5,0.5) {d}; \node at (5.5,0.5) {e}; \node at (6.5,0.5) {f}; \node at (7.5,0.5) {g}; \node at (8.5,0.5) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

White has sacrificed a pawn and obtained a small lead in development in return. However, Black has no obvious weaknesses so he will find it difficult to break through after 8.\textit{\texttt{e3}} and 9.0–0–0, although this is of course the most natural way to continue.

Leisebein tries a different strategy in this game. By advancing the g-pawn rapidly he
manages to move the knight away from f6 and find ways to attack f7 and h7. Usually such a strategy would be too simplistic, but in this game it is carried out with such vigour, that only one careless move was needed for it to be successful.

8.g4!? e6

8...\texttt{Wxd4} certainly looks like the critical test. I am not convinced that White has enough for the two pawns, but there will not be a boring moment in the game for sure.

9.g5 \texttt{Qd5} 10.Qd3 \texttt{Qe7}!

Black needs to complete his development quickly in order not to be overrun.

10...\texttt{Qxc3} 11.bxc3 \texttt{Qd6} 12.Qb1! gives White away to bring the rook into play quickly. Black might still be okay, but White has earned more from this exchange than Black has, Rooms - Waterschoot, e-mail 2001.

10...Qb4 11.0-0! \texttt{Wxd4†} 12.Qe3 \texttt{Wd7} 13.Qad1 gave White a lot of compensation in Bocanegra Moreno - Chatterjee, e-mail 2001. The position remains unclear, but it is easier to play White. One of the ideas could be 13...\texttt{Wf7} 14.g6!? with the idea 14...hxg6? 15.Qxg6 fxg6 16.Qe4. Even after the superior 14...f6! 15.Qh5 h6 16.a3 Qxd3 17.Qxd3 intending \texttt{Qfd1}, White has great compensation and Black finds it hard to develop his pieces.

In the above variation 14.Qe4!? also looks good. The knight finds it hard to get into play.

11.0-0 0-0

11...Qf8?! has also been played against Leischbein, but also with a fatal outcome.

12.Qe4 Qb4?

12...\texttt{Qd7} 13.c4 \texttt{Qb4} 14.Qb1 was played in Bocanegra Moreno - May, e-mail 2002.

Here I think Black should investigate 14...c5!? closely, when I suspect that there is insufficient compensation for the pawn. White does not have enough pieces in the attack for my liking.

The move played in the game allows a thematic and crushing blow.

13.Qf6†!! \texttt{gxf6}

Black would not fare any better with the alternative:

13...\texttt{Qxf6} 14.Qh7†!

A new sacrifice which seems to provide White with a decisive attack!

14...\texttt{Qxh7} 15.Qh5† Qg8 16.gxf6 Qd5

It is even worse to play 16...\texttt{Wxd4†} 17.Qf2 Qd5, when the rook is better on f2 than f1, with 18.Qg5 gxf6 19.Qg2 leading to an easily winning attack.

17.Qg5 gxf6

There is no defence. For example: 17...Qd7 18.Qxg7 Qxg7 19.Qh6† Qg8 20.Qf4 and wins.


19.Qf4! Followed by 20.Qg4 or 20.Qh4 with a winning attack. The only move to cut across this plan is:

19...\texttt{Qe3}
But this is refuted by:

20.\( \text{f2} \)!

The other rook is on its way to the g-file and Black is without any defence.

14.\( \text{\textbf{x}h7\#} \) \( \text{g7} \)

14...\( \text{\textbf{x}h7} \)

This is also losing.

15.\( \text{\textbf{w}h5\#} \)

Neither king move helps Black:

15...\( \text{\textbf{g}8} \)

15...\( \text{\textbf{g}7} \) loses to 16.\( \text{\textbf{w}h6\#} \) \( \text{\textbf{g}8} \) 17.\( \text{\textbf{x}f6} \) (17.\( \text{\textbf{g}6} \) was recommended by Roberto Alvarez, but Black can give an immediate perpetual check beginning with 17...\( \text{\textbf{w}xd4\#} \)) 17...\( \text{\textbf{x}f6} \) 18.\( \text{\textbf{x}f6} \). The rook will quickly drop back to f2 and decide the game with a check on the g-file.

16.\( \text{\textbf{g}6}! \) \( \text{\textbf{x}d4\#} \)

This check is the only way to annoy White, even though this is also not enough.

Instead 16...\( \text{\textbf{f}xg6} \) loses quickly to 17.\( \text{\textbf{w}xg6\#} \) \( \text{\textbf{h}8} \) 18.\( \text{\textbf{w}h5\#} \) \( \text{\textbf{g}8} \) 19.\( \text{\textbf{f}2!} \) with a rook check following quickly on g1.

17.\( \text{\textbf{f}2!} \)

The only move, but absolutely winning.

17...\( \text{\textbf{f}xg6} \) 18.\( \text{\textbf{w}xg6\#} \) \( \text{\textbf{h}8} \) 19.\( \text{\textbf{h}5\#} \)

The h6-square is needed for the bishop.

19...\( \text{\textbf{g}8} \) 20.\( \text{\textbf{h}6} \)

The threats of \( \text{\textbf{w}g6\#} \) and also c3, with the simply idea to get out of the pin on the a7-g1 diagonal, decide the game instantly. The extra two knights are not worth anything.

15.\( \text{\textbf{w}h5 \text{fxg5}} \)

15...\( \text{\textbf{w}xd4\#} \) would also allow White to win, but only after an elegant piece of triangulation.

16.\( \text{\textbf{h}2!!} \) This is preparing \( \text{\textbf{w}h6\#} \), and after 16...\( \text{\textbf{d}6\#} \) White can play 17.\( \text{\textbf{g}2!} \), when the bishop is no longer protecting the vital dark squares around the black king. Black is mated in not too many moves, starting with the queen check on h6.

16.\( \text{\textbf{c}3 \text{\textbf{d}5}} \)

16...\( \text{\textbf{d}7} \) 17.\( \text{\textbf{h}4! \text{\textbf{f}6}} \) 18.\( \text{\textbf{\textbf{x}f6 \text{\textbf{x}f6}}} \)

The difference with the actual game seems to be the knight at b4 instead of b8.

19.\( \text{\textbf{\textbf{x}g5 \text{\textbf{g}5}}} \)

19...\( \text{\textbf{\textbf{x}d4\#}} \) 20.\( \text{\textbf{c}x\textbf{d}4 \text{\textbf{w}xd4\#}} \) is also useless here. After 21.\( \text{\textbf{f}1 \text{\textbf{f}6}} \) 22.\( \text{\textbf{h}6\#} \) \( \text{\textbf{h}8} \) 23.\( \text{\textbf{c}3} \) White wins.
20. hxg5 f6 21. e3!

This is winning for White. The three pieces he has in play are all attacking the black king, while the black pieces are all out of play in one way or another. If Black saves the knight with

21... d5

White wins with this brilliant combination:

22. Wh6+! f7

23. f5!!

The mating image after

23... exf5 24. Wh7 mate!

is pure bliss.

17. h4! d6

17... d4 loses brutally to 18. xf4! gx4 19. xf4 when there is no defence to 20. Wh6+.

18. xf6! xf6 19. hxg5

19. xg5?! was also winning.

19... xd4+?!

Black has to lose the bishop one way or the other. The threat of Wh6+ and subsequently g6+, with mate to follow, is too much.

19... xg5 20. xg5 f6 also does not save the game. White has many easy ways to win, the most impressive being 21. f5! exf5 22. h6+ h8 23. f4+ g7 24. f2 and 25. g1+.

20. cxd4 xd4+ 21. g2

21. f1 f5 22. e3! also wins, as the bishop is indirectly defended: 22... xe3 23. h6+ f7 24. f6+ e7 25. c1 If Black keeps his hands off the bishop, White has won an important tempo for the attack and will deliver mate shortly.

21... f6

21... f5! was worth a try, but White is easily winning after:

22. Wh6+ f7 23. g6+ c7 24. g7+ d6 25. xf8+

White has an extra piece, so Black decided the game was over.

1-0

This was an attacking masterpiece, nothing less. The g-pawn proved its power in so many ways that it is easy to justify it as a pawn storm, even if it was all by itself in the hostility.

The next game also comes from a gambit, but this time a decent one - at least if one is to believe the conclusions of IM Sabino Brunello, author of *Attacking the Spanish*. Black sacrifices
the e-pawn, in a similar style to the Marshall Attack. White decides to take this pawn in the most ambitious way possible, but at the same time loses both time and coordination. Soon his knight is jumping for its life, under attack by the speedily advancing f-pawn. The final result is major damage to the white king’s position and an unavoidable disaster on f1, supported by the once f7-pawn, now firmly established on g2.

Bjorn Brinck-Claussen – Ole Bogh Larsen

Denmark 2007


11.exd5 e4

The point. Compared to one dubious sideline in the Marshall gambit, the knight is not hanging on c6.

12.Dg5?

This move looks entirely logical and was also the reply in the first few games in 2007 where it was played. Later on players decided to play the more testing 11.d4 or 12.Bxe4, the latter being Michael Adams’ choice against Magnus Carlsen. Whether White has an edge or not is uncertain. Chess is complicated and even though a chess opening grows up quicker these days, this one is still only at the adolescent stage, with many changes still to take place.

12...Dxd5 13.Bxe4 f5

This is the reason why White’s 12th move was poor. The f-pawn will create great damage all by itself, allowing the pieces to follow up with evil intent.

14.Dg3

There is nowhere else to go. 14.b4 fxe4 15.bxa5 Dc5 is not an alternative.

14...f4 15.Be4

15.Bh5?! looks rather desperate, but maybe this is what White should try. One of the
key ideas behind the move is to maintain the possibility of \( e4 \), to attempt to exchange some pieces, or maybe bring the bishop back to aid the defence.

15...\( f3 \) 16.d4 \( \text{fxg2} \)
Black's attack is already well underway; White will have to show some respect at the very least.

17.a4?
This is not very respectful! 17.\( \text{gxg2} \) is the main move, but 17...g6! is known to be very difficult for White (for full details, please refer to Sabino Brunello's book *Attacking the Spanish*).

17...\( \text{hxh3} \)
One can hardly refuse such a gift.

18.axb5
At least White is being consistent. It is hard to suggest a better move at this stage, even if you are German and your name is Hr. Doctor von Fritz the 12th of Hamburg...

19.\( \text{xa5} \)
White decides to test his opponent, which turns out to be the objectively best strategy. His position was in ruins anyway, so he may as well take some material. A plausible alternative line might be: 19.\( \text{h2} \) \( \text{xf2}! \) 20.\( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{xf2} \) 21.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{d6} \) and there is no defence against 22...\( \text{xf1} \), with the ideas ...\( \text{xf3} \), \( g1=\text{w} + \) and ...\( \text{xf1} \) or simply 23.\( \text{xf1} \) to promote the pawn. There are some variations, but the black position should be convincing enough without them.

19...\( \text{xf2} \)!
A miscalculation. The concept is correct, but the move order should have been: 19...\( \text{xf2} + \) 20.\( \text{xf2} \) 21.\( \text{xf2} \), winning as in the game.

18...\( \text{h4}!! \)
Obviously Black would be doing quite well just recapturing, but the game cannot be said to be about the knight on a5, so he quite convincingly decides to let it fall.

20.\( \text{xf2} \)!
White misses his chance to come back into the game. After 20.\( \text{d3} \) the outcome is still not decided. The main reason for this is that, thanks to Black's incorrect capture on f2, the h4-square is blocked and the queen is thus still looking for a way to join the attack. And as long as this proves difficult, it will also be hard to bring in the other rook. The black position is to be preferred, but my analysis has not shown a route to a clear edge here. It might exist, but in a practical game any result would have been possible.
Chapter 3 - Typical Pawn Play

20...\texttt{\texttt{x}f2} \texttt{\texttt{h}h4} \texttt{\texttt{g} gl 21.@xf2!f4t 22.@gl}

White resigned. The main threat is ...\texttt{\texttt{x}f1}+, ...	exttt{\texttt{x}f1} and on \texttt{\texttt{x}f1}, then ...\texttt{\texttt{g}3t}, winning everything.

0–1

In the next game White comes out of the opening with some problems, but after a few hesitant moves by his opponent, he manages to take over the initiative. The thing we want to look out for in this game is how White is able to use the seemingly insignificant weakness of a doubled pawn to open lines, and later on advance his g-pawn with great effect. As you will see, this pawn storm starts at move 8 and finishes at move 32...

\textbf{Magnus Carlsen – Peter Heine Nielsen}

Copenhagen 2004

This game marked a shift in Scandinavian chess. At this moment Peter Heine Nielsen had just ascended to the top of the Nordic rankings, and symbolically he won this event jointly with Curt Hansen, by winning their individual game in the last round.

However, it was the 13-year-old Magnus Carlsen who made the headlines. He had just completed his GM title and continued his impressive form in this event, including saving a draw against yours truly...

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.f3 \texttt{\texttt{f}f6} 4.c3 dxc4 5.a4 \texttt{\texttt{x}f6} 6.\texttt{h}h4!

This line should not be too dangerous. White is looking for the advantage of the two bishops, and at the same time creating a doubled pawn on the kingside, which can later be used as a hook, enabling him to open lines. This might be to facilitate an attack, as in the present game, or simply to open the position up for his bishop pair.

6...\texttt{\texttt{g}4!}

Probably the best move is 6...\texttt{\texttt{d}d7}, but Black should not regret the result of the opening in the present game either.

7.h3 \texttt{\texttt{h}h5} 8.g4 \texttt{\texttt{g}6} 9.\texttt{x}g6 h\texttt{x}g6 10.e3 e6 11.\texttt{x}c4 \texttt{\texttt{b}4} 12.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{\texttt{bd}7}

White has the two bishops but Black is very solid.

13.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{\texttt{d}5} 14.e4 \texttt{\texttt{b}5} 15.\texttt{b}3 a5 16.\texttt{e}e2

16...c5!

This was his improvement. A previous game continued: 16...e5 17.dxe5 \texttt{\texttt{xe}5} 18.0–0–0 \texttt{\texttt{d}d3}+ 19.\texttt{b}b1 \texttt{\texttt{c}c} 20.\texttt{b}b5! \texttt{\texttt{xb}3} 21.\texttt{x}b4 \texttt{\texttt{xb}4} 22.\texttt{x}d8+ \texttt{\texttt{d}d} 8, Carlsen – Andriasian, Budva 2003. Black actually won this game, but here he might well have lost if Magnus had played 23.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}+! \texttt{\texttt{c}c} 24.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}+ with material gains to follow.

17.d5 c4!

This is the point of Black's play. White has already married himself to the idea of castling on the queenside, or at least keeping his king in the centre. White's position is wide open and the king is far from safe at the moment.

18.\texttt{x}c4 \texttt{\texttt{xc}4} 19.\texttt{x}c4 0–0
Black has sacrificed a pawn to draw the queen into the open and to eliminate the strong light-squared bishop. Now he offers a second sacrifice in order to maintain the speed of his development. White has two strategies with which he can react to this. One is to believe that the extra material will at least make up for the dynamic advantages given to the opponent, while the other is to try to catch up in development. To know which one of these he should choose is one of the big challenges White is facing at this moment. The other is, of course, deciding how to implement the chosen strategy.

There are of course a lot of ways to approach this process. One could imagine that Carlsen simply tried to calculate his way through the maze, unsuccessfully.

20.0-0-0?!  

After this White is struggling, as he just cannot catch up in development in time.

The way to keep the balance was to take the second pawn. 20.dxe6! The main line here is the following: 20...c5 21.d5 d3+ 22.e2 fxe6 23.xe6+ h7 24.d5 xg2 25.xd8 axd8 26.hf1 xc3 27.xc3 xe4 28.xf8 x3+ 29.bxc3 xf8 30.d1 f4 and the rook endgame should be a draw, although White is a bit better placed.

20...c8 21.e2  

21...exd5  

This is not a bad move, but there was a stronger continuation in 21...c5!. My analysis runs as follows: 22.b1! xc3 23.xc3 c4 24.d4 exd5 25.xb5 x4 26.xb7! (White must avoid 26.xd5 x4 27.exd5 x8. The idea is that after 28.xe3 Black has 28...b4! followed by ...c5+, 26...xg5 (also interesting is 26...dxe4? 27.xg7 xg5 28.xf8 xxf8 29.xf5 x4 30.xa5) 27.h4 h5 28.xd5 x4 29.exd5 x8.  

22.b1! xc3  

Peter is not a natural born attacker, although he has a great feeling for the initiative in general. He does have a lust for simplification in him, which might have come from analysing the Petroff and Marshall on behalf of Anand for too long.

Perhaps it made more sense to play 22...dxe4 23.xe4 x4?!, when the position would have been rather unclear, and roughly dynamically balanced.

23.xc3 c5 24.xd5 e8 25.f3 b6 26.e3 xa4  

26...xa4 27.d4! would be inconvenient. Black would struggle a bit to handle the bishop
in the endgame, while in the middlegame he has to look out for his king’s position.

27.\(\text{d}4\)

27...\(\text{e}4??\)

This is quite an interesting blunder. It is not so much about missing a move, as missing the importance of challenging the white position in the centre, but instead relying on the counterattack on the c-file. Obviously it is quite difficult to understand this during the game, but easy to see this afterwards, especially when you are armed with a computer program. However, this does not change the value of the lessons that can be learned from the game, nor does it in any way put Peter Heine Nielsen down. Even such strong grandmasters as he, currently rated close to 2700, do not understand everything. Those commentators who say that you should attribute all mistakes by grandmasters to blunders or time trouble, are in my experience, not grandmasters themselves.

The correct way for Black to play was 27...\(\text{d}8!\) 28.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{e}6\), when White cannot keep his strong position in the centre. The combination 29.\(\text{x}g7\) \(\text{x}d5\) 30.\(\text{x}d5\) \(\text{x}g7\) 31.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{g}8\) 32.\(\text{x}a4\) does not lead to an advantage. After 32...\(\text{x}h3\) Black does not appear to be any worse.

28.\(\text{h}4!\)

White has been granted the time and freedom to exploit the weakening of the black position using the hook on \(g6\). Quickly the pawn will advance to \(h5\), after which the h-file will be opened.

28...\(\text{c}6\) 29.\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{gxh5}\)

Black could have tried:

29...\(\text{e}8?\)

Here it looks very tempting to play:

a) 30.\(\text{h}6?\)

The hope is that Black will not be able to prevent \(\text{f}3-f4-f6-g7\), forcing mate. However, Black has a miraculous way to save the game:

30...\(\text{gxh6}\) 31.\(\text{gxh6}\) \(\text{h}7\) 32.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{c}7\) 33.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{e}7\) 34.\(\text{d}6\) \(\text{e}6\) 35.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{c}3!\) 36.\(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{b}4!\) 37.\(\text{cxb4}\) \(\text{b}3\)

Black escapes with perpetual check.

However, White can play much better. The following line is absolutely destructive:

b) 30.\(\text{hxg6}\) \(\text{fxg6}\) 31.\(\text{e}5!\) \(\text{c}5\)

31...\(\text{c}2\) with the threat of ...\(\text{x}b2\) also does not work. White plays 32.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{c}1\) 33.\(\text{xc1}\) \(\text{xc1}\) 34.\(\text{a}2\) \(\text{c}4\) 35.\(\text{d}8!\) \(\text{h}7\)

36.\(\text{xc4}\) \(\text{xc4}\) 37.\(\text{d}7\) and Black has no chance to save the endgame.

32.\(\text{d}6\) \(\text{e}8\) 33.\(\text{g}7!\) \(\text{xg7}\) 34.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{e}7\) 35.\(\text{xg6!}\) \(\text{xg6}\) 36.\(\text{f}5\)

With mate in a few moves.
After 5.\textit{c}4 \textit{e}6 it is currently the opinion of chess theory that the bishop is poorly placed on \textit{c}4.

5...\textit{d}d4 6.0-0 \textit{a}6
6...\textit{x}xb5 is the safer line, but Van Wely does not usually strive for safety...

7.\textit{d}d3 \textit{b}5 8.\textit{x}xd4 \textit{x}xd4?!
This leaves the bishop somewhat exposed on \textit{d}4.

8...\textit{c}xd4 looks more natural to me. The pawn might be doubled, but it increases Black's spatial control and is not at all a weakness.

After 9.\textit{e}e2 \textit{b}b7 10.c3 \textit{d}xc3 11.dxc3, Wippermann - Ivanisevic, Dos Hermanas 2003, White's position looks pleasant, but 11...\textit{f}6!? 12.e5 \textit{d}d5 should leave Black active enough to fight for equality.

9.\textit{h}h1 \textit{b}b7

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
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10.e5!
A new move, but hardly a surprising one. A previous game, Wippermann - Bogorads, Duesseldorf 1997, had continued 10.\textit{e}e2 \textit{g}7 11.c3 \textit{d}5 when Black has nothing to fear.

10...\textit{a}7?!
Black's position is already awkward.

10...\textit{d}6 was suggested by one commentator, but after 11.\textit{e}e4 White is better. One reason is that it will be hard for Black to find a way home for his dark-squared bishop after the exchange on \textit{e}4. For this reason he decides to protect the \textit{b}7-bishop in advance, to anticipate an exchange.

10...\textit{h}h6!? 11.\textit{e}e4 \textit{d}5 12.\textit{f}f3 \textit{x}xc3 13.dxc3 \textit{f}5 could be healthier, but I would prefer the bishops.

11.\textit{e}e4!
This was of course the idea. 11.\textit{e}e2?? \textit{a}8! was an important point behind Black's last move. As Mark Dvoretsky often says: "A grandmaster might play a bad move, but he never plays without an idea."

11...\textit{xc}3 12.\textit{xb}7 \textit{xb}2
This looks suicidal, but was of course Black's main idea. His position is very dangerous all the same.

13.\textit{xb}2 \textit{xb}7 14.f5!
Forward!

14...\textit{h}h6
Forced. 14...\textit{c}7 15.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}6 looks like a possible defence, but it meets with an elegant refutation:

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
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16...fxg6! \( \text{wxf3} \) 17.g7!! and White is winning. I know, not very sportsmanlike, is it?

15.\( \text{w} \)

15...\( \text{w} \)b6?

The final mistake. The only thing that remains after this is to admire Gawain's brutality.

The computer points out that the only playable move is 15...\( \text{w} \)c7!. Now White can play 16.\( \text{w} \)f4?! with some pressure, or go for it, as in the game, with 16.e6 \( \text{f} \)6 17.fxg6 hxg6 18.\( \text{w} \)xf6!! exf6 19.\( \text{w} \)xf6. Here the big difference is 19...\( \text{w} \)xh2+!, leading to the exchange of queens and an endgame after 20.\( \text{w} \)xh2 \( \text{g} \)4 21.\( \text{w} \)g3 \( \text{x} \)xf6 22.\( \text{x} \)xf6. White seems destined to end a pawn up, but there could still be some conversion problems.

15...\( \text{w} \)b6 loses quickly to 16.e6 \( \text{f} \)6 17.\( \text{w} \)h3! with the point of 17...\( \text{w} \)xf5 18.\( \text{w} \)xf5 and 17...\( \text{w} \)g8 18.\( \text{x} \)xg6.

16.e6

A move all grandmasters would make quickly, and I assume Gawain did too.

16...\( \text{w} \)f6 17.fxg6 hxg6

Black must recapture, as g7 and \( \text{w} \)h5 were threatened.
Chapter 3 - Typical Pawn Play

25.\textit{Wxf8†}!!
A sweet finish.
1-0

This was a superb game with many ingredients: a fantastic novelty, sharp and energetic play in the opening and early middlegame, no reluctance in sacrificing a piece at the right moment and finally, a small powerhouse of deadly tactics.

In the next game we shall see how a normal-looking position, harmless in its very nature, can quickly turn into the scene for a sharp battle, when a slight inaccuracy brings on a powerful pawn storm.

This game shows the basic idea that pawn storms on the flank are possible once the centre has been stabilised. Had there been a Best Game prize at the 2007 World Cup, it would probably have gone to this one – it is positively awesome!

\textbf{Alexander Onischuk – Alexei Shirov}

World Cup, Khanty-Mansiysk (3.2) 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\textit{Qc3} c6
An invitation to the Noteboom. One problem with this is that 4.e4!, the Marshall Gambit, is possible. Many top players allow this, because it at least brings the position out of balance, but it is generally thought to be more dangerous for Black.

4.\textit{Qf3} dxc4
The Noteboom is a reality.

5.e3 b5 6.a4 \textit{b4} 7.\textit{Qd2} a5 8.axb5 \textit{Qxc3} 9.\textit{Qxc3} cxb5
This is the standard position of the Noteboom variation.

10.b3 \textit{b7} 11.bxc4 \textit{b4} 12.\textit{Qb2} \textit{Qf6} 13.\textit{Qd3}

0–0 14.0–0 \textit{Qbd7} 15.\textit{Qe1}
The most popular, but judging from this game there is no advantage to be found for White.

15...\textit{Qe4} 16.\textit{Qc2} f5 17.c5 \textit{Qc7}
The other main line goes 17...\textit{Qc6} 18.\textit{Qc4} \textit{Qe7} 19.\textit{Qb3}, when the following game turned out well for the second player: 19...\textit{Qa7} 20.\textit{Qa4} \textit{Qxa4} 21.\textit{Qxa4} \textit{Qxa8} 22.\textit{Qea1} \textit{Qe8} 23.\textit{Qc4} \textit{Qdf6} 24.\textit{Qe5} \textit{Qd5} and Black landed on c3 with an edge in Azmaiparashvili – Galkin, Saint Vincent 2000.

18.\textit{Qb5}
is not completely lost yet. The mere fact that this is a mistake seems like a great surprise, but serious analysis of the game shows that even such an innocent-looking move can be disastrous. The problem is that Black can use the pawn move to create a hook and open lines towards the white king.

20.\(\text{\textit{g}}e5\) was apparently the only move. Onischuk was obviously uncomfortable about 20...\(\text{\textit{g}}g4!\). He might have seen that 21.f3! (21.\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{gx}4 \text{xg}4 22.\text{\textit{f}}f1 \text{xf}6!\) would give Black a winning attack. White cannot defend h2 without seriously weakening g2 and the light squares.) 21...\(\text{\textit{x}}\text{xe}5\) 22.fx\(\text{xe}4 \text{\textit{g}}g4\) 23.e5 would then be forced, and that Black would have 23...\(\text{\textit{xf}}6!\), with serious threats like ...\(\text{\textit{xe}}5\) followed by ...\(\text{\textit{g}}6\) with a horrible mess. This would not necessarily be bad for White though. 24.h3 is one interesting move, but 24.\(\text{\textit{c}}c4!\) is best, after which White would hold the balance.

20...\(\text{\textit{g}}5!\)
Shirov is not slow to exploit the weakness.

21.\(\text{\textit{d}}e5\) \(\text{\textit{g}}4\) 22.hx\(\text{g}4?\)
This leads straight to destruction. Because the h-pawn was moved, this is very damaging.

White cannot seal the kingside with 22.h4, as he will not have time for g2-g3. Instead Black strikes quickly with 22...\(\text{\textit{g}}3!\) and obtains a strong attack. For example: 23.\(\text{\textit{f}}f3\) 24.\(\text{\textit{xf}}2\) \(\text{\textit{g}}g7\) 25.\(\text{\textit{xf}}2 \text{\textit{h}}6\) and White is lost: 26.\(\text{\textit{e}}1 \text{\textit{xh}}4\) 27.\(\text{\textit{c}}2 \text{\textit{g}}4!\) 28.\(\text{\textit{f}}1 \text{\textit{h}}1\) 29.\(\text{\textit{c}}e2 \text{\textit{dg}}2\) 30.\(\text{\textit{d}}d1\) \(\text{\textit{b}}3\) and White loses decisive material.

22.f3! was the last try, though the position after 22...gx\(\text{f}3\) 23.gx\(\text{f}3 \text{\textit{g}}5\) 24.\(\text{\textit{h}}h1 \text{\textit{h}}8\) 25.\(\text{\textit{g}}g1\) \(\text{\textit{g}}8\) looks rather precarious for White. But he can still fight on with 26.\(\text{\textit{c}}c4!\), trying to rid himself of the d5-bishop.

22...\(\text{\textit{fxg}}4\)

23.\(\text{\textit{d}}d3\)
23.f3
This is no longer good enough.

23...\(\text{\textit{g}}g3\)
White now has many moves, but no solutions.

24.\(\text{\textit{d}}d1\)
24.\(\text{\textit{d}}d3 \text{\textit{g}}g7\) 25.e4 \(\text{\textit{gx}}3\) 26.exd5 \(\text{\textit{f}}2\) 27.\(\text{\textit{xf}}2 \text{\textit{x}}e4\) and ...\(\text{\textit{h}}6\), mating.
24.\(\text{\textit{f}}2\) \(\text{\textit{f}}e4!\) 25.\(\text{\textit{c}}e2 \text{\textit{b}}3!\) 26.\(\text{\textit{d}}1 \text{\textit{gx}}3\) 27.\(\text{\textit{gx}}3 \text{\textit{g}}7\) 24.\(\text{\textit{d}}2 \text{\textit{g}}7\) 25.\(\text{\textit{gx}}4 \text{\textit{x}}g4\) 26.e4 \(\text{\textit{f}}6\) 27.exd5 \(\text{\textit{x}}h6\) 28.\(\text{\textit{hx}}6 \text{\textit{h}}x6\) 29.\(\text{\textit{f}}xg4 \text{\textit{x}}f8\) and White is mated.

24...\(\text{\textit{g}}7\) 25.e4 \(\text{\textit{gx}}3\) 26.exd5 \(\text{\textit{g}}4!\) 27.\(\text{\textit{fx}}3 \text{\textit{h}}6\)
With mate to follow.
23.\textit{\&}f1 also does not cut it. After 23...\textit{\&}g7 the threat of ...\textit{\&}g3 will make this look similar to the game. And 24.\textit{\&}e1 is met with 24...\textit{\&}g5!, with a check on f3 approaching.

23.\textit{\&}xg4 \textit{\&}g7 24.f3 \textit{\&}xg4 25.fxe4 looks possible, but after the simple capture on e4 Black is poised for the kill. However, he should not get too clever with 25...\textit{\&}g6?, as after 26.exd5 \textit{\&}h5 27.\textit{\&}xg4\! \! 28.dxe6 matters are less clear than they should have been.

23...\textit{\&}g7

It is hard to mate your opponent without your strongest piece.

24.\textit{\&}f4 \textit{\&}h6

The ideal square for the queen.

25.\textit{\&}f1 g3

Actually Black was in no hurry. It was possible to build up the attack with ...\textit{\&}f7 or ...\textit{\&}h8. The white king can run nowhere.

26.\textit{\&}h3 gxf2\! 27.\textit{\&}xf2

This is a sad necessity. 27.\textit{\&}xf2 \textit{\&}g3 28.\textit{\&}d1 \textit{\&}fe4 will soon lead to mate. White only has 29.\textit{\&}g4\! \! 30.\textit{\&}h3, but then 30...\textit{\&}xe3 wins everything.

27...\textit{\&}xf2 28.\textit{\&}xf2

28...\textit{\&}xg2!

Shirov causes further destruction and decides the game.

29.\textit{\&}xg2 \textit{\&}a7!

The remaining piece is brought into the game.

30.\textit{\&}h1 \textit{\&}g6\! 31.\textit{\&}f1 \textit{\&}g4 32.\textit{\&}e8?!

Because of this funny move it was better to give the check on g5 according to the computer. But who cares how many pawns you are up, when you cannot carry them home on your longboat?

32...\textit{\&}b1\! 33.\textit{\&}g2 \textit{\&}xf2\! 34.\textit{\&}xf2 \textit{\&}xh1\! 35.\textit{\&}xh1 \textit{\&}xf2\! 36.\textit{\&}g2 \textit{\&}d1 37.\textit{\&}c1 b3 38.e4 b2 39.\textit{\&}xb2 \textit{\&}xb2 40.\textit{\&}b5 a4 41.d5 exd5 42.exd5 a3

0–1

Classically, when we talk about pawn storms, we tend to think about positions in which one player is advancing on the queenside and the other on the kingside. If the players have castled on opposite sides then a straightforward race will ensue.

In certain openings, most notably the King's Indian Defence, one frequently sees opposing pawn storms in positions with same-sided castling. In these positions White will be advancing strategically on the queenside, grabbing space and singling out pawns for slaughter, while Black is preparing his assault on the kingside, throwing everything at the opponent's king with the hope of mating him before the limitations of his queenside start to tell. This typical scenario has been played out again and again, always with new finesses and ideas, but deep down, the same old battle between good and evil – with the interests of the players deciding who is who.

There have been many great games played in the King's Indian, and none more so than our next example. After a positional blunder on
move 17 Black tries hard to create an attack on the kingside. Although it is not too dangerous to start out with, it quickly becomes very present and eventually puts too many demands on the defender’s abilities.

**Evgeny Gleizerov – Igor Alexandre Nataf**

Stockholm 1998

The King’s Indian is one opening where the two players can agree to start pawn avalanches on their respective sides of the board. White will roll his pawns forward on the queenside, creating weaknesses and entry points for his pieces. Black on the other hand will advance on the kingside, with the less than subtle hope of mating the enemy king.

It might seem to some that the black attack should in principle be stronger, for the simple reason that he is fighting for a greater reward. However, White has a space advantage from the opening and thus he has the means to make faster inroads into the opponent’s position.

All in all, it seems that the experience of the last 56 years, since this variation was first played, has shown the black attack to be more or less exactly enough to guarantee equal chances; although draws are still few and far between.


Black needs to open the queenside in this way, as after 15...g5?! 16.bxa5! he would find no easy way of regaining his pawn, because of Lb3 and Lxg5.

16.axb4 g5

Black begins his advance on the kingside. For the moment he keeps the option of ...Dxe7-g6-f4 alive, but soon he decides to just roll with the pawns.

17.Lxc6!

White’s strategy is based on creating weaknesses on the queenside; in this position, the d6-pawn has been identified as the mark. Aside from attacking the pawn, he may also look to seize control of the d5-square.

17...Lxc6?

Nataf is attracted by the d4-square, but he should not have allowed White to control the centre so easily. It made more sense to play 17...bxc6 18.b5! f4, with play on the kingside. White will gain control over the d5-square and be able to put pressure on the d6-pawn eventually, but Black has rid himself of the weak b7-pawn, gained the c5-square and won a tempo on the kingside. It seems that the position is simply unclear.

18.Lb5!

White takes control over d4 and attacks d6 at the same time. At the moment there is no doubt that Black is second in the race.

18...f4

It was also possible to play less optimistically with 18...fxe4?! 19.fxe4 g4 in order to seek play in the centre. However, White would be able to put immediate pressure on d6 with 20.Ld3!, when after 20...Lb5 21.g3! Nataf correctly considered White’s position to be preferable.
19. \( \text{Wd3!} \)

White does not waste his time, but immediately attacks the d6-pawn, suggesting to Black that he should place his knight passively on e8. It also removes a later counterstroke with ...\( \text{Qd4} \), as the queen is no longer awkwardly placed on c2. Nataf decides to face the challenge in the only way he knows how, by advancing recklessly!

19...g4?!

Black is giving up the weak pawn, rather than defending it. After 19...\( \text{Qe8} \) 20.c5 Black is passive, the knight is coming to c4-d6/b6 with a slight pull.

20.\( \text{Qxd6!} \)

This is one of the times when White definitely needs to accept the offer. His play is based on attacking this pawn, and when not defended, he needs to take it to continue his play sensibly.

20...\( \text{Qxe6} \)!

This was the lesser option, even though it looks as if White is forcing the exchange of queens. Nataf indicated the correct idea in his notes, even if modern science has been able to tweak his analysis a bit.

21.\( \text{Qc7? Wh5!} \) gives Black a horrendous attack.

21...\( \text{Wg6?!} \)

Not the only move, but perhaps the best. I have analysed:

22.\( \text{Wd3} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) 23.\( \text{Qc2} \) \( \text{Qxg4} \) 24.\( \text{Qxg4} \) \( \text{Qxg4} \)

25.\( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qe3} \) 26.\( \text{Qxe3} \) \( \text{fxe3} \) 27.\( \text{c5} \) \( \text{Qd4} \)

Black has compensation. Maybe White is better after:

29.\( \text{Qd6} \) \( \text{Qxd6} \) 30.\( \text{cxd6} \) \( \text{Whd6} \)

And maybe he is not. I cannot decide.

20...g3!

21.h3

Nataf indicated that White was better off removing the bishop from c8 before it got a chance to take on h3, rather than actually encouraging it. Objectively this is not yet strictly necessary, but from a practical point of view it makes perfect sense.

Nataf's line goes: 21.\( \text{Qxc8?!} \) \( \text{Wxc8} \) 22.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{Qd8} \)

23.\( \text{Qc3} \) and White's advantage is supposed to be overpowering. I am not fully convinced about this, as Black can upset matters with 23...\( \text{Qd4} \) 24.\( \text{Qd3} \) \( \text{Qb5?!} \), but the position after 25.\( \text{Wxc5!} \) \( \text{Qd5} \) 26.\( \text{Wxg7!} \) \( \text{Qxg7} \) 27.\( \text{cxd5} \) does look to be a lot of fun to play!

21...\( \text{Qe6} \)

The bishop is preserved.
22.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{d}1}

Not only involving the rook, but also clearing f1 for the minor pieces.

22.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{d}}\textbf{x}b7?} would have been premature. After 22...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{c}7 23.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{d}6 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{b}}\textbf{d}8 24.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{c}}\textbf{5} \textbf{\textcolor{red}{e}}\textbf{e}8} Black has a two-pawn disadvantage, but he has the much easier position, and maybe even an objective advantage.

22.c5!? was, however, worth considering.

22...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{d}}\textbf{d}4 23.\textbf{\textcolor{red}{f}}\textbf{f}5?}

Gleizerov has no feeling for the avalanche that is soon to fall upon him. With this move he tries to eliminate one of the black pieces, preferably the strong knight on d4 and not the inactive bishop on g7. But actually Black was not yet able to create credible threats.

Sure, 23.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{d}}\textbf{x}b7! \textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{c}8 24.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{d}6 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{d}7 25.c5 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{x}}\textbf{h}3} looks dangerous at the board, but after 26.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{c}4 Black does not have a convincing follow-up. The white king is in danger, but Black is also in danger of losing his entire pawn chain!

23...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{d}7!}

Nataf overestimates this decision, but the move is still fantastic, and should objectively simply win back the invested pawn. However, White is playing to win...

24.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{x}g7?}

This is a luxury move. If White had time to play like this, he would follow up with \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{b}}\textbf{b}2 and put real pressure on the dark squares. As it is, after the text move White is struggling to stay in the game.

The simplest way to continue would have been to develop normally and return the pawn with 24.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{b}}\textbf{b}2, when after 24...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{x}f5 25.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{e}}\textbf{x}f5 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{e}7} the position would be roughly balanced (and not favourable to Black as suggested by Nataf).

White could also have chosen to eliminate the powerful knight on d4 with 24.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{d}4 exd4 25.\textbf{\textcolor{red}{b}}\textbf{b}2, when Black has the choice between either 25...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{b}}\textbf{b}6 with an even game, or the more ambitious 25...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{h}4!?!}

The main point here is that White cannot play 26.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{x}d4?! \textbf{\textcolor{red}{x}}\textbf{h}3! 27.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{x}g7! \textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{g}7! 28.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{f}1 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{e}}\textbf{e}6! 29.\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{g}1 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{h}6! 30.\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{d}4 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{g}}\textbf{g}8 31.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{d}2 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{h}}\textbf{h}6 32.\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{f}1 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{h}1! 33.\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{g}1 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{h}2. The threat of ...\textbf{\textcolor{red}{h}}\textbf{h}3! is extremely powerful. White cannot survive, even if he manages to exchange the queens.

He would thus have to resort to 26.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{f}}\textbf{f}1, when after 26...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{d}8 27.\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{a}}\textbf{x}d4 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{e}}\textbf{e}5 28.\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{c}3 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{x}}\textbf{d}4 29.\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{x}d4 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{x}}\textbf{c}4 30.\textbf{\textcolor{red}{w}}\textbf{e}5 \textbf{\textcolor{red}{e}}\textbf{e}3 the position is completely unclear.
24...\(\mathcal{g}xh3!!\)

This was the idea of the previous move and for this reason it makes no sense to look at other moves. I am not sure if Gleizerov missed a detail or two, or overlooked this ingenious concept altogether.

25.\(g\times h3\!\)!

White has to accept the challenge. After 25.\(\mathcal{g}f1 \mathcal{h}h4\) 26.\(\mathcal{g}g1 \mathcal{g}a6!\) White will not be able to meet the threats to his king easily.

25...\(g2\!\)!!

The kingside pawn storm reaches its conclusion with this pawn sacrifice. Black has achieved his objective; the g-file will soon be wide open and the white king is in grave danger.

26.\(\mathcal{g}xg2\!\)!

Again the best defence. The g-pawn is such a force, that White would not be able to bring in the defenders if he allowed the pawn to stay. At times you can hide the king behind a far advanced enemy pawn, but in this position he is too weak on the h-file for this technique to work.

Here is the proof: 26.\(\mathcal{g}g1 \mathcal{h}h4\) 27.\(\mathcal{f}f1 \mathcal{g}xg1 = \mathcal{g}xg2\!\) 28.\(\mathcal{x}xf1 \mathcal{e}g8\) 29.\(\mathcal{b}b2 \mathcal{g}xg7\!\) 30.\(\mathcal{h}h1 \mathcal{d}d3\) 31.\(\mathcal{x}xf3 \mathcal{e}g3\) 32.\(\mathcal{f}f2 \mathcal{x}hx3\!\) 33.\(\mathcal{x}hx3 \mathcal{g}xh3\!\) 34.\(\mathcal{w}w2 \mathcal{f}f3\!\) and Black wins back his material plus a pawn in interest, without losing the initiative.

26.\(\mathcal{g}g8\!\)!

26...\(\mathcal{g}g5\!\) would be the wrong way around. The problem is that White will quickly win an important tempo with \(\mathcal{g}g1\!), making his defence successful. Thus after 27.\(\mathcal{h}h1\!\) his position would actually be winning.

After the far superior game continuation, White is in great danger and it is very hard to find the correct defence.

27.\(\mathcal{f}b2\!\)!

The idea behind this move is to defend \(g1\) from \(d4\), but as we shall see this idea contains a flaw. However, there were many ways to lose, and only one way to stay in the game:

27.\(\mathcal{b}b3\?\) is a similar idea, but also does not defend the critical squares on the kingside, primarily \(g1\). 27...\(\mathcal{x}xg7\!\) 28.\(\mathcal{f}f1 \mathcal{h}h4!\) 29.\(\mathcal{d}x\!d4 \mathcal{w}g3\) 30.\(\mathcal{c}c3 \mathcal{g}ag8!!\) White is finished. The bishop on \(e2\) is stalemated and there is no defence, for instance: 31.\(\mathcal{b}b5 \mathcal{w}g1\!\) 32.\(\mathcal{g}xg1 \mathcal{g}g1\!\) 33.\(\mathcal{f}f2 \mathcal{g}g2\) mate!

27.\(\mathcal{g}g1\?) also does not achieve the objective of defending \(g1\). By definition a piece cannot defend the square on which it is standing. The attack soon crashes through after 27...\(\mathcal{x}xg7\!\) 28.\(\mathcal{f}f1 \mathcal{x}xg1\!\) 29.\(\mathcal{g}xg1 \mathcal{h}h4!\). White would like to escape via \(e1\), so Black prevents this immediately. After 30.\(\mathcal{f}f1 \mathcal{g}g8\) 31.\(\mathcal{b}b2\) we would end with the same combination as in the game.

The only move that achieves the objective of defending the vital organs on the kingside is the paradoxical:

27.\(\mathcal{h}h1\!\)!

This was suggested by Jaan Ehlvest. Play continues as follows:

27...\(\mathcal{x}xg7\!\) 28.\(\mathcal{f}f1 \mathcal{h}h4\)

Diagram: (showing the game continuation)
29.\texttt{\textsc{b}2}

White is set for a rough defence, but he has a fighting chance. The rook may look ugly on h1, but at least White is not being mated.
29.\texttt{\textsc{b}3} is poor. After 29.\texttt{\textsc{g}3} 30.\texttt{\textsc{x}d}4 \texttt{\textsc{f}ag}8!! White is mated in the usual way.
29.\texttt{\textsc{g}3} 30.\texttt{\textsc{x}d}4

White gives up the rook, but saves his king.
30.\texttt{\textsc{g}2+} 31.\texttt{\textsc{c}1} \texttt{\textsc{x}h}1\texttt{\textsc{f}1} 32.\texttt{\textsc{fl}} \texttt{ex}d4 33.\texttt{\textsc{xd}4}

Now Black can consider either 33.\texttt{\textsc{e}e}8 or 33.\texttt{\textsc{g}1!!} in order to free the e5-square for the knight. Materially the position is balanced, but White's pieces are not working great, so the advantage should be with Black.

27.\texttt{\textsc{x}g}7\texttt{\textsc{f}1} 28.\texttt{\textsc{fl}}

White seems to be ready to meet 28.\texttt{\textsc{g}5} with 29.\texttt{\textsc{xd}4}, and the gl-square is defended. But Nataf had seen further and finishes his attack with a fantastic combination.

\begin{center}
\texttt{\textsc{g}2!!}

This is basic deflection of the queen – the knight is not important, but the d4-square most definitely is.
\end{center}

29.\texttt{\textsc{xc}2}

29.\texttt{\textsc{xe}5} was of course possible, but White will not get enough material for the queen, so the final result would be the same.

29.\texttt{\textsc{g}5}

Mate is imminent, and so White resigned.
0–1

The other typical picture, regarding mutual pawn storms, occurs when the players have castled on opposite sides. In this scenario both players are playing for mate and the game can easily become very sharp.

The opening most famous for these types of mutual attacks is the Sicilian Defence. In several Sicilian variations it is quite common for White to endeavour to castle on the queenside, with the intention of mounting an attack on the opposite flank, but at the same time taking some risks as regards the safety of his own monarch.

In the following game this scenario is played out in typically cut-throat fashion, with both kings in serious danger and wild tactical blows being the dish of the day for the majority of the game. In the end Black fails to find a study-like draw, somewhat ruining the game, knocking it down in rank from immortal to simply fantastic...

\textbf{Bartosz Socko – Vassilios Kotronias}

\begin{center}
Batumi 2002
\end{center}

1.e4 c5 2.\texttt{\textsc{f}3} \texttt{\textsc{c}c}\texttt{6} 3.d4 \texttt{exd}4 4.\texttt{\textsc{xd}4} \texttt{\textsc{f}6} 5.\texttt{\textsc{c}3} d6 6.\texttt{\textsc{g}5} e6 7.\texttt{\textsc{d}2} \texttt{\textsc{e}7} 8.0–0 0–0 9.f3
This variation was popularised mainly by Viorel Bologan and has subsequently become one of the absolute main lines of the Sicilian. Unlike in the lines with $9.f4$, White supports the centre, starting a kingside expansion, and unlike in the lines with $9.Qb3$, the knight stays active in the centre.

The question is if the plan is especially dangerous for Black. I have a feeling that it is not, but it is certainly not without venom.

9...a6

Black is anticipating his own run on the queenside.

10.h4 Qxd4 11.Qxd4 b5 12.Qb1 Qc7 13.g4 Qd8 14.h5 b4?  

Kotronias is always exceptionally well-prepared in the opening. This was the idea he had with him for this game. The move is quite logical, as the pawn is immune in view of ...d5.

15.Qe2 Qb8 16.Qd2

16.h6?! was also interesting, but it is not completely clear if the black king's position has been weakened, or if the lines on the kingside have just been closed.

16...h6

This move makes perfect sense, but the follow-up is not consistent. The basic rule is that we should never move pawns on the side of the board where we are weaker. It helps the opponent to open lines, as indeed is the case in this game.

17.Qh4

If White plays 17.Qe3?!, then Black can fight for the dark squares with 17...Qh7?!, with unclear play.

17...e5?

This does not deal with White's basic threat.

Black would also not do well after 17...Qa5?!, as White would repulse the queen with 18.Qd4! Qd7 19.Qb3, when after 19...Qc7 20.g5 Black is under great attack.

The correct move was the unnatural 17...Qb7?!, which blocks the b-file, making the black attack harder to carry out. But at the same time this move prepares ...d5, as well as overprotecting the eighth rank, which is greatly important. 18.g5 is now less dangerous. After 18...hxg5 19.Qxg5 Black can play 19...Qxe4!, based on 20.Qxe7 Qd7, where we see the importance of the b8-rook defending e8. White can of course give up the queen, with an interesting position ahead, or he can play 20.Qg1 Qf6 where Black is no worse.
23.\texttt{g3}

The critical continuation was: 18.g5! hxg5

19.\texttt{xg5}? (After 19.\texttt{xg5}? d5! Black is fine.) Perhaps Socko did not rate this as highly as the game continuation; or maybe he even overlooked the possibility of recapturing with the queen? The critical continuation is 19...\texttt{d5} when White must decide where to retreat the queen:

20.\texttt{f3} \texttt{xh4} 21.\texttt{xh4} \texttt{e7}? is rather unclear. White must watch out for ideas involving ...\texttt{c3}, intending to meet \texttt{xc3} and \texttt{b3} with ...d5, threatening ...\texttt{a3} mating. (Note that the immediate 21...\texttt{c3}† is less good, as after 22.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{xc3} 23.\texttt{b3} \texttt{a5}! 24.\texttt{h6}! White breaks through first.)

20.\texttt{c1}? may be best; the queen helps to safeguard against mating threats, while still remaining in touch with the kingside. 20...\texttt{xh4} 21.\texttt{xh4} \texttt{c3}† 22.\texttt{xc3} (Instead 22.\texttt{bxc3} \texttt{bxc3}† 23.\texttt{a1} \texttt{e6} looks dangerous; the computer confirms that Black has at least a draw here.) 22...\texttt{xc3} 23.\texttt{b3} White keeps slightly better chances, although the position remains somewhat double-edged.

18.\texttt{e6} 19.\texttt{d3}

After 19.\texttt{f5} Black strikes in the centre with 19...d5!, with equal chances.

19...\texttt{d5}

It was worth considering trying to control g5 with 19...\texttt{h7}?, when the position remains balanced.

20.\texttt{g5}!

White opens the g-file.

20...\texttt{hxg5} 21.\texttt{xg5}

21.\texttt{xg5}? no longer works. After 21...\texttt{xe4}! 22.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{d7} 23.\texttt{xd7} Black should give up the knight in the best way: 23...\texttt{c3}† 24.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{bxc3}† 25.\texttt{a1} \texttt{xd7} Black is at least no worse here.

White has been the first to open a file against the enemy king. This should have persuaded Black to concentrate his attention on the centre, rather than continuing the race. Kotronias elects to put his foot down on the accelerator in an effort to make up ground, but a wiser policy may have been to abandon the car altogether...

21...\texttt{a5}?

21...\texttt{dxe4} with close to equality was needed.

22.\texttt{edg1}

22.\texttt{h6}? was also strong, but the text move is very natural.
22...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b3}}?

This is a thematic advance, creating real threats to the white king, but it still costs a move...

22...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a4}}? 23.h6 g6 24.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f5}}! would not be greatly different from the note to move 24.

The correct move was the subtle 22...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b7}}!, which defends a lot of key squares on the seventh rank. It should be noted that the combination that is possible in the note to White's 24th move in the game (after 24.h6!) would not work, as the queen would already be defended.

Instead after 23.h6 g6 I have analysed a lot, and come to the conclusion that White is better, but not decisively so. Black is under some pressure, but he seems to have sufficient defensive resources.

23.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{axb3}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a4}}

This is the most instructive moment in this game, even if it is not the most glamorous. Black has been a bit slow in his attack on the queenside and White has a chance to come first, but it is not absolutely clear how he should follow through.

White's play in the game was good, but it turns out there was an even more principled and clearer way to proceed.

24.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f5}}?

White prepares the opening of the g-file and gets a pawn to f5. This will make Black think twice about answering h5-h6 with ...g7-g6.

24.bxa4? would unsurprisingly be poor; White should not open the queenside. 24...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{dxe4}} equalises, based on the fact that 25.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xh6??}} exd3! is losing.

24.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h6}}?! would also not be great.

The seemingly interesting 24...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f8}} loses to the fantastic 25.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xg7??}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xg7}} 26.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f5??}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{f8}} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g7??}}, and there is no defence to \textcolor{red}{\textbf{wh6-h8}}.

Instead Black should play: 24...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb3}}! 25.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f5}} (After 25.cxb3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{f8}}! is now a good defence.

26.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xg7??}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xg7}} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f5??}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{f8}} 28.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g7??}} is no longer truly dangerous, as after 28...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb3}} 29.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{wh6}} Black can start a mating attack with 29...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb2??}}! 25...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb2??}}! Now White has to play 26.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc2}}, and after 26...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc2??}} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc2}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xf5}} 28.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb6??}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{h8}} 29.exf5 he is still a little better, but it is safe to say he has not made the most of his advantages.

The strongest continuation was:

24.h6!

This was the most incisive move. The point is that after:

24...g6
25.\textit{\texttt{d5}}!

Black is weakened and cannot eliminate this knight. He can of course try 25...\textit{\texttt{h7}}, but here White can play 26.\textit{\texttt{dxe7 \texttt{wxe7 27.b4}, and the black attack on the queenside has come to a halt while the pin on the kingside is extremely awkward.}}

25...\textit{\texttt{axb3}}

Here White can either play 26.\textit{\texttt{wc3!}}, which should win, and the more complex, but also completely satisfying:

26.\textit{\texttt{h7+ \texttt{g8 27.dxe7 \texttt{wxe7 28.wc3!}}}}

With a winning attack. Black cannot defend the e5-pawn, for example:

26...\textit{\texttt{d4}}

29.\textit{\texttt{wc5!!}}

It would be time to resign.

24...\textit{\texttt{dxe5}}!

Black has to eliminate the dangerous knight immediately.

After 24...\textit{\texttt{dxe4? White wins with 25.\texttt{x6! \texttt{x6 26.w6 \texttt{xf6 27.wf6 \texttt{g6 28.wxg6!!}}}} gxf6 29.g7, with mate to come.}}

24...\textit{\texttt{axb3}} also does not work. White seizes the chance to play 25.\textit{\texttt{dxe7! bxc2+ 26.dxc2 \texttt{wa7. Now he can win an important tempo in his attack with 27.hb3!!}, when the threats to the black king seem very grave.}}

25.\textit{\texttt{exf5 axb3}}

26.\textit{\texttt{h6!}}

The tempting 26.\textit{\texttt{h6?}} would be a mistake. Black cannot defend the g7-square, but he does not even need to, as his king will be entirely safe on h8. Thus he can simply play 26...\textit{\texttt{bxc2+ 27.dxc2 \texttt{wa7}}, when the position remains entirely unclear, if not just simply good for Black.}

26...\textit{\texttt{wa7}}

It is natural to keep the pawn on b3, of course, but it also made sense to open the files to the white king, especially the b2-square.

Black is also unable to save the game with:

26...\textit{\texttt{bxc2+ 27.dxc2 \texttt{wa7}}}!

Black is threatening to sacrifice the rook on b2 with a mating attack. But White has a fantastic combination to decide the game.
Chapter 3 - Typical Pawn Play

28.\texttt{a}4!! $\texttt{xa}4$

The counterattack does not work at the moment. After 28...$\texttt{xb}2$ 29.$\texttt{xb}2$ $\texttt{b}8$ 30.$\texttt{b}5$ $\texttt{c}5$ White can play 31.$\texttt{xf}6$ $\texttt{xf}6$ 32.$\texttt{hxg}7$, with the idea to meet 32...$\texttt{xg}7$ with 33.$\texttt{g}7\texttt{c}1$, and to meet the tricky 32...$\texttt{h}4$ with 33.$\texttt{c}1$, when Black does not have time to take the bishop.

29.$\texttt{hxg}7$ $\texttt{xb}2$ 30.$\texttt{b}2$ $\texttt{c}4$

The only move for some reason.

31.$\texttt{b}8\texttt{g}7$ 32.$\texttt{xd}8$ $\texttt{d}8$ 33.$\texttt{xe}5$

White has a winning attack. His king is stripped bare, but the well-placed queen prevents Black from delivering a perpetual check.

32.\texttt{b}3!! The only way to play for an advantage. King retreats would lead to a perpetual check. 32...$\texttt{a}2$ 33.$\texttt{d}1$ $\texttt{xb}3$ 34.$\texttt{e}1$ $\texttt{a}1$ 35.$\texttt{e}2$ $\texttt{a}2$ 36.$\texttt{h}8$ $\texttt{g}7$ 37.$\texttt{a}8$ $\texttt{xd}2$ 38.$\texttt{xd}2$ $\texttt{g}4$ 39.$\texttt{g}4$ $\texttt{g}1$ 40.$\texttt{g}5$ $\texttt{xf}5$ 41.$\texttt{xe}7$ $\texttt{e}4$ with likely equality. It is White who needs to take most care of his king in this position, but he has an extra piece with which to do so.

28...$\texttt{a}1$ 29.$\texttt{c}2$ $\texttt{dc}8$ 30.$\texttt{c}4$ $\texttt{xc}4$! 31.$\texttt{bxc}4$

The position is utterly complicated. For example, I analysed this ridiculous line: 31.$\texttt{d}3$ $\texttt{d}4$ 32.$\texttt{e}3$ $\texttt{xf}6$ 33.$\texttt{h}7$ $\texttt{h}8$ 34.$\texttt{ax}1$ $\texttt{g}5$ 35.$\texttt{f}4$ $\texttt{ax}1$ 36.$\texttt{g}2$ $\texttt{xf}4$ 37.$\texttt{f}3$ $\texttt{xh}1$ 38.$\texttt{wh}1$ $\texttt{f}6$ and the likely outcome here is probably a draw, although there is no reason for this to happen straight away.
31...\textit{W}a4\texttt{t} 32.b3\texttt{f} \textit{W}a2\texttt{f} 33.\textit{B}d1 \textit{W}xb3\texttt{f} 34.\textit{B}e1

\textbf{34...\textit{B}a1??}

Obviously there is only so much that can be described through positional ideas and standard scenarios. Chess is ultimately a game of specifics.

At this point Black missed a world-class drawing combination after the natural moves: 34...\textit{A}xf6! 35.hxg7 \textit{B}a1\texttt{f} 36.\textit{B}f2

Black might only have noticed that 36...\textit{B}b6\texttt{f} 37.\textit{B}e2 is winning for White. The first astonishing move is:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

36...\textit{A}h4\texttt{f}!!

This temporarily closes the h-file, preparing ...\textit{B}a2, winning the queen. White has to accept the sacrifice.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

37.\textit{B}xh4 \textit{W}b6\texttt{f}

Black looks to be in the driving seat at this point, but White can continue his attack with a stunning queen sacrifice.

38.\textit{W}d4!!

Black has only one reply, as the rook on a1 is currently hanging.

38...\textit{B}a2\texttt{f}! 39.\textit{B}g3

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

There are no alternatives to this move, but it is still a queen sacrifice.

39...\textit{W}xd4!

This is absolutely forced. 39...exd4? 40.\textit{B}h3! leads quickly to mate.

40.\textit{W}xd4 exd4 41.cxd5

Socko indicated this position in his annotations to the game, stating that White was clearly better. This is not entirely correct. After the rather natural continuation:

41...\textit{B}xg7 42.\textit{B}f4\texttt{f} 43.\textit{B}f6 43.\textit{A}d1

Black can play:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

43...d3!
The result will be a rook endgame, where the d-pawn is unable to provide White with substantial winning chances. Actually, I think the position is simply drawn.

35.\(\text{f2}\) \(\text{f}xg1\)

35...\(\text{c}5\)

35...\(\text{c}5\)

36.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{f}xg1\)

37.\(\text{g}xg1\) \(\text{gxf6}\)
is also hopeless, both in a general sense, and more specifically because of:

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|} 
\hline
& a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\hline
1 & & & & & & & & \\
2 & & & & & & & & \\
3 & & & & & & & & \\
4 & & & & & & & & \\
5 & & & & & & & & \\
6 & & & & & & & & \\
7 & & & & & & & & \\
8 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

38.\(\text{h3}\)\(\text{h}xg1\) 39.\(\text{g}2\) 40,\(\text{h}7\) when the h-pawn is ready to score a touchdown.

36.\(\text{Axg1}\) \(\text{Ab}6\) 37.\(\text{Af1}\) \(\text{Axf6}\) 38.\(\text{hxg7}\)

White is simply winning. Soon we are in the endgame.

38...\(\text{Ab1}\) 39.\(\text{Ag2}\) \(\text{Axf5}\) 40.\(\text{Ah6}\) \(\text{Axg7}\)

41.\(\text{Ah2}\) \(\text{Ah7}\) 42.\(\text{Axh7}\) 43.\(\text{cxd5}\) \(\text{Af8}\)

44.\(\text{Ag4}\) \(\text{Ec7}\) 45.\(\text{Ag1}\) \(\text{F5}\) 46.\(\text{Ag2}\) \(\text{E4}\) 47.\(\text{fxe4}\)

48.\(\text{Af2}\) \(\text{Ec5}\) 49.\(\text{Ae2}\) \(\text{E3}\) 50.\(\text{Ad3}\)

1-0

Pawn Sacrifices

A book on attacking play would not be worth a lot without a multitude of piece sacrifices, and so far we have seen our share. But probably even more predominant is the pawn sacrifice. Just in the previous section we saw a lot of gambits, where one player is trying to use open files and a lead in development advantage in a way that more than compensates for the material investment. But we have also seen other pawn

sacrifices, for example as a deflection or simply as a clearance sacrifice, where a square is made available for a knight or another piece.

It is for this reason that I am not going to allow the following section to expand wildly. I have chosen two beautiful games where a pawn sacrifice is used to open the file leading straight down to the opponent's king. In the first example this is part of a decisive combination, while in the second example it is a debatable decision, taken exclusively to sharpen the battle and make a decisive result more probable.

But let us start with the following game between two of the best players from the last two decades.

Veselin Topalov – Vassily Ivanchuk

Linares 1999

1.\(\text{Af3}\) \(\text{c}5\) 2.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{Ec6}\) 3.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{cxd4}\) 4.\(\text{Edxd4}\) \(\text{Ee6}\) 5.\(\text{g3}\)

6.\(\text{Ab4}\) 6.\(\text{Ec3}\) \(\text{Aa5}\) 7.\(\text{Db5}\) \(\text{d}5\) 8.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{xc}3\)

9.\(\text{bxc3}\)

This looks terribly awkward, but 9.\(\text{Dxc3}\) \(\text{Dd4}\) 10.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{Dxb4}\) 11.\(\text{axb4}\) \(\text{Axa1}\) 12.\(\text{Db5}\) \(\text{Af6}\)!

13.\(\text{Ec7}\) \(\text{Ec7}\) 14.\(\text{Axal}\) \(\text{Ad7}\) was a bit better for Black in Lerner - Huzman, Kujbysev 1986, so White should probably look for an improvement even earlier.

Maybe 8.\(\text{Af4}\) is an idea?
9...\(\text{c6}\) 10.\(\text{g2}\)

Other moves have been tried here, but the position in general does not look easy to play for White. He has the two bishops, but the bishops are not as impressive as they normally are.

It actually looks as though Topalov was caught in a sideline of which he had little knowledge, which turned out to be quite dangerous for White, and he reacted less than ideally.

10...0–0 11.\(\text{w}3\) dxc4 12.\(\text{xc}4\)

White has defended himself against the pin ...\(\text{ad}8\) with tactics (15.\(\text{xb}7\)), but his lack of development is still an issue. Black on the other hand only needs to activate the rooks, which he may well be able to do with gain of tempo.

It feels like the moment has arrived where Black can look to crack open the white position with a potent move, as all the white pieces are too tightly tied up to their respective duties.

14...\(\text{e}4!!\)

This is the nudge that makes the white position go POP! like a bottle of champagne.

15.\(\text{xe}4\)

White has no choice but to accept this pawn sacrifice. The alternatives are all rather horrible. 15.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{d}4!\) is, if possible, worse than the game; and 15.e3 loses to 15...\(\text{g}4\) 16.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{ad}8\)! 17.\(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{a}4\) 18.\(\text{xd}8\) \(\text{xd}8\) when the white queen is awkwardly placed indeed.

15...\(\text{xe}4\) 16.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{ad}8\) 17.\(\text{c}2\)

White is losing material after 17.e3 \(\text{fe}8\) 18.0–0 \(\text{h}3\).

17...\(\text{d}4\) 18.\(\text{w}2\)
As earlier, White is only one move away from castling, which would restore some sort of balance to the position. In Volume One I spent a lot of time describing the theoretical dimensions of such positions, trying to make it as simple as possible. In this position I would refer to momentum (Chapter 2) and revolution/evolution (Chapter 7) as the two most important basic ideas. On the one hand it is important for Black to keep the momentum going, as White is only one move away from sorting out his problems. At the same time he has not managed to include all of his own pieces in the attack.

Ivanchuk finds a brilliant way to damage White's defensive possibilities, including in his attacking plans the completion of his development.

18...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}xe2 \)}}!!

A brilliant sacrifice. White has no choice but to take the knight, after which he will find his king trapped in the centre.

19.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}xe2 \)}}

One of the points behind Ivanchuk's combination is that 19.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}b4 \)}} loses to 19...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}xc3 \)}}!!, winning a piece, or mating.

19...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{R}f8\)}}!!

This quiet move is the strongest. White has no easy way to improve his position, so Black brings the rook into the game, setting up all kinds of ideas.

20.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{W}b4 \)}}

White is defenceless. The following lines show the force of the black attack in all its glory:

20.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}e3 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}c4\)}} 21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}f3 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}xe4 \)}} gives a winning attack on the light squares.

20.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}c1 \)}} loses to an elegant line: 20...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{W}h5\)}}!!

21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}f1 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}h3\)}} 22.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}g1 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}f3\)}}!! 23.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{W}e2 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}xe4\)}} and White is mated on the back rank.

20.f3 also loses on the light squares: 20...f5!

21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}g5 \)}} (21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}xb7 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}c4\)}} 22.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}f2 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{W}b6\)}}!! also leads to mate)

21...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}xe4\)}}!! Controlling the light squares is more important than anything else. White only has the e2-square for his king, in respect to dark squares, and this is not safe either. 22.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}xd8 \)}}

exf3!! 23.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}f2 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}c5\)}} 24.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}xf3 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}f5\)}} 25.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}g2 \)}}

\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}d5\)}} 26.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}g1 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}f3 \)}} White is mated shortly.

20...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{W}h5\)}}!! 21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}f3 \)}}

White has chosen a slightly less flashy way to go down, but down he goes all the same.

22.g4

22.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}c5 \)}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\( \text{Q}d5\)}}! would also lead to the end.
22...\textit{h}3!

The cleanest solution by a mile and a half. Black is also winning after 22...\textit{xg}4 23.\textit{e}3?!; he just needs to expel the white queen from her prominent position with 23...a5!, when a likely line of destruction might be: 24.\textit{xb}7 \textit{gx}f3\texttt{t} 25.\texttt{x}f3 \textit{g}4 26.\textit{ad}1 \textit{rf}8 27.\textit{hf}1 \texttt{x}f3\texttt{t} 28.\textit{xf}3 \textit{wh}2\texttt{t} 29.\textit{fl}2 \textit{fe}8\texttt{t} and White is losing decisive material.

23.\textit{gx}f5 \texttt{xf}5 24.\texttt{c}4\texttt{t} \textit{wh}8 25.\texttt{e}1

25...\texttt{xe}4\texttt{t}!

White resigned, as he will soon be mated.
0–1

The second game of this section is between two less famous players, but it is by no means less interesting. After giving up the g-pawn with an optimistic sacrifice, White tries to build a strong attack on the kingside. Black has enough defensive resources, but chess is hard and somewhere he goes astray...

\textit{Jan Werle – Raj Tischbierek}

\textit{Bundesliga 2008}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chessboard.png}
\end{figure}

1.d4 \texttt{Qf}6 2.c4 e6 3.\texttt{Qc}3 \texttt{b}4 4.e3 0–0 5.\texttt{ad}3 \texttt{d}5 6.a3 \texttt{xc}3\texttt{t} 7.bxc3 c5 8.cxd5 \textit{xd}5 8...\textit{xd}5 is the main option.
11...g4?!
Wele resorts to drastic measures in order to open the g-file. Combined with a bishop on b2 this will give White a lot of play for the pawn.

11...\texttt{wxg4} 12.hgl \texttt{wh5} 13.g5 \texttt{wh3} 14.g3
White should not look to regain his pawn. After 14.dxc5 \texttt{d7} 15.g3 \texttt{wh5} 16.b2 \texttt{bd7} 17.cxb6 axb6 Black is leading in development and has a better structure. White is still sort of OK, but he is definitely drifting.

14...\texttt{wh5} 15.g5 \texttt{wh3} 16.b2
White was simply asserting himself, not looking for a draw. Often when you play ambitious chess like this, it is good to gain as much extra time on the clock as you can.

16...\texttt{bd7} 17.d5!
Having already committed fully to the attack, there is no point in holding back. This move opens up for the bishop.

17...exd5!
17...g6?! would be worse. After 18.f1 \texttt{wh6} 19.dxe6 fxe6 20.g3 intending \texttt{h3}, White has a strong attack. For example: 20...\texttt{h5} 21.g1 \texttt{g7} 22.g5 \texttt{f5} 23.g4 with splendid compensation for the pawn. It does not seem that the white pieces can easily be challenged in the near future, although a clear-cut win is also not coming up immediately.

18.g5 \texttt{wh6} 19.cxd5 g6?
The right move was:
19...\texttt{e8}!
Here White has good moves in 20.a4 and 20.h4, as well as the option I have decided to investigate here:

20..\texttt{c1}
It is worth mentioning that 20.d3 is met strongly with: 20...\texttt{e5}! 21.xe5 \texttt{exe5} 22.xh7+ \texttt{xh7} 23.xe5 \texttt{g4} Black would have excellent play for the exchange. Suddenly it is White's king that is under attack.

20...g6 21.a4 \texttt{e5}!

22.xe5 \texttt{xexe5} 23.xc6 \texttt{g7} 24.xa8 \texttt{xg5} 25.xf5 \texttt{xg5} 26.xa7 \texttt{xd5}
Black has good compensation for the exchange. The immediate threat is ...\texttt{xexe3}!

20.d3 \texttt{e8}
Sadly this awkward manoeuvre looks forced. The move Black really wanted to play was:

20...\texttt{e8}!
The idea would be:

21.a3 \texttt{e5}!
Unfortunately this runs into a bit of stormy weather after:

22.xe5 \texttt{xg5} 23.g4!
I don't really see a defence in this position. One line I have looked at goes like this:

23...\texttt{f8} 24.xf6
24.xc8 is also good.
24...\(\text{Wx}f5\) 25.0-0-0 \(\text{Ad}d8\) 26.d6 \(\text{Ab}7\) 27.\(\text{Bx}h7\)\(^+\) \(\text{Se}e8\) 28.\(\text{Df}6\)\(^+\) \(\text{Sf}8\)

And now the flashy:

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29.\(\text{Dg}8\) \(\text{D}e8\) 30.d7\(^+\), winning everything.

21.0-0-0
21.\(\text{Ag}3\)\(?\) also leads to a promising position.

21...\(\text{Ag}7\) 22.\(\text{Wc}3\)

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22...\(\text{Ac}4\)?

Black is trying to open up files to the white king. Unfortunately it is not enough, as there is no subsequent support offered by the black pieces.

22...\(\text{De}5\)? 23.\(\text{Dxe}5\) \(\text{Dxf}5\) might look like an option, but White can come up with an elaborate version of the combination played in the game. 24.\(\text{Dd}7\)! 25.\(\text{Df}6\) and there is no defence against 26.\(\text{Dh}5\)!

22...\(\text{f}6\)!

This was the necessary evil.

23.\(\text{D}e6\)\(^+\) \(\text{Dh}8\)
23...\(\text{Dxe}6\)? loses in the following long line:
24.\(\text{Dxe}6\) \(\text{Dh}7\) 25.\(\text{Dg}3\) \(\text{Dxf}3\) 26.\(\text{D}x\text{d}7\) \(\text{Dx}h2\)
27.\(\text{Dc}7\) \(\text{D}h1\)\(^+\) 28.\(\text{Dc}2\) \(\text{Dc}4\)\(^+\) 29.\(\text{D}d2\) \(\text{Df}1\)
30.\(\text{Dg}4!\) \(\text{Dx}f2\)\(^+\) 31.\(\text{Dc}1\) \(\text{Df}5\) 32.\(\text{Df}4\) \(\text{Dg}1\)\(^+\)
33.\(\text{Dd}1\) and the extra rook will count.

24.\(\text{Dg}3\) \(\text{Ab}8\) 25.\(\text{Ah}3\) \(\text{Dh}5\) 26.\(\text{Dg}1\)

White has a big attack but no direct win.
Black can still go for some counterplay with:

26...\(\text{b}5\)

But after:
27.\(\text{Dg}5\)

The position is terribly unpleasant.

23.\(\text{D}x\text{d}7\) \(\text{D}x\text{d}7\)

You will probably find the following position in many puzzle books in the years to come.

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24.\(\text{Wf}6!!\)

A stunning winner. Black has no defence against 25.\(\text{Dh}5\), besides desperately giving up material in the way he did in the game.

24...\(\text{c}3\) 25.\(\text{Dxc}3\) \(\text{Dxc}8\) 26.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{Dxc}3\) 27.\(\text{Wxc}3\) \(\text{Dh}3\) 28.\(\text{De}5\) \(\text{f}5\) 29.\(\text{Dc}6\) \(\text{Dh}4\) 30.\(\text{D}e7\)\(^+\) \(\text{Sf}8\)

1-0
Provoking weaknesses

I want to finish this chapter on various aspects of pawn play by briefly having a look at the creation of weaknesses in the pawn structure around the king. It is a topic in play at all times throughout this book, so I do not want to dwell too much on it here. I just want to show two interesting games.

In the first game there is a bit of pawn play going on, both in the sense that the black kingside pawn structure is irritated and eventually torn apart, but in this case by an avalanche of protruding pawns.

Jacob Aagaard – James Cobb

Hampstead 1998

1.e4 e5 2..df3 dc6 3.db5 a6 4.d4 dc6 5.0-0 db7 6.db3 dc6 7.db3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.a3

Suetin’s line, which is by no means as good as 9.h3.

9...d6 10.d4 dxb3 11.xb3 exd4 12.cxd4
d5 13.e5 de4 14.0-0 dx3 15.xc3 dxc3 16.ed4

Black has not played the opening fabulously and is on his way into trouble.

16.g5!

Planning to exchange the bishops and make use of the c5-square. The pawns on c7 and d5 could easily become weak later in the game.

16...b4?

Making sure that White has a problem of his own on a3.

17.wd3 bxa3 18.bxa3 db8 19.ac1 dd8?

19...a5 20.exd5 ce7 21.xc5 db7

22.xc3! would have led to a great advantage for White, but Black can still hang on.

This is the first important moment for our theme. At this point I played a reasonable positional decision, missing a fantastic way to create weaknesses on the kingside, which should be where I seek my fortunes, now that Black has posted all of his pieces on the opposite flank.

20.xc7?

This is not a bad move, but far stronger was the brilliant:

20.e6!!

This was the winning move. The point is that the f-pawn is sucked away from the kingside, where it was protecting the important g6-square. Also, White gets a great outpost on e5 for the knight, something that should not be underestimated.

20...fxe6
This is essentially forced. 20...\texttt{exe6} 21.\texttt{e5} leads to a won position after the exchange of bishops and 22.\texttt{c6}, forking the queen and rook.

\texttt{21.e5 d6 22.xe7 xe7}

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23.\texttt{e3}!!

This silent move is the killer. White has made some improvements and now takes the time out to bring the rook into the attack. This is reminiscent of the Revolution/Evolution chapter in Volume One. I am not entirely sure what Black should play here, so I am just following the computer's recommendation:

\texttt{23.e6}

23...\texttt{c5}?! is worth a thought, but it is clear that Black is a good deal worse then.

\texttt{24.e3}!

Provoking the decisive weakening of the g6-square. There is little Black can do.

\texttt{24.h6}

After 24...\texttt{g6} then 25.\texttt{xg6}! is a bit too obvious. Mate or something similar follows.

\texttt{25.e3}!

On the next move 26.\texttt{g6} will win the queen for insufficient compensation.

\texttt{20..xe7 21.g3}!!

Maybe 21.\texttt{b1} or 21.\texttt{c6}! \texttt{e6} 22.\texttt{a5} was better, but I was not looking for a positional treatment.

Black wants to prevent \texttt{c6}, but I think he should have allowed it.

\texttt{22.e5 d7}

This is the second critical moment of the game. Here I decided to try to provoke weaknesses on the kingside, leading to very interesting play.

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23.\texttt{g5}! \texttt{eg6}!

Black correctly decides not to allow any weaknesses. 23...\texttt{g6} was maybe not as bad as we thought after the game, but White is still better.

\texttt{24.f4}!!

This is objectively an exchange sacrifice, although I have to admit that at the time "blunder" would probably have been a more accurate description.

\texttt{24..h6 25.e3}!

However, this really was a sacrifice. I had now spotted that the f-pawn would be forked, as well as the option to play 25.\texttt{e6}, with about equal chances, but I decided to go for the initiative instead.

\texttt{25..e6 26.f5! xxc5 27.dxc5}

Black is under a lot of pressure. The white e-pawn will march forward and create a lot of weaknesses around the black king.
27...\texttt{e}4! 
It would be possible to lose the game already here. After 27...\texttt{c}6? White has the option to play: 28.e6! \texttt{f}x6 29.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{e}8 and now the intermediate move 30.f6!, winning because of 30...\texttt{g}x6 31.\texttt{x}c6 and 32.\texttt{g}6\dagger, when Black is defenceless.

28.e6 \texttt{c}6? 
Black misses the best defence. It was correct to return the exchange with 28...\texttt{f}x6 29.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{a}4! 30.\texttt{x}g4 \texttt{x}g4 31.fxe6 \texttt{c}4\dagger, when White's advantage is kept to a minimum, even though he remains better after 32.\texttt{e}3.

29.\texttt{x}f7\dagger \texttt{f}8 30.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{x}c5\dagger 
This is the moment in the game of which I am especially proud.

31.\texttt{e}3!! 
This is pure calculation. It turns out that keeping the queen protected makes a bigger difference than any irrational fear of a pin. White is threatening \texttt{d}7\dagger and \texttt{x}g4, so Black has to move the queen anyway.

After 31.g2? Black holds on with: 31...\texttt{d}4 32.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{e}4 33.\texttt{x}c7 \texttt{x}e5\dagger and the ensuing rook ending appears to be tenable for Black after a further few, but not very exciting, punches.

31...\texttt{c}1\dagger 
Black has no choice. After 31...\texttt{d}4 32.\texttt{x}g4 \texttt{x}g4 33.\texttt{x}d5 he loses very quickly.

32.g2 \texttt{b}2\dagger 
32...\texttt{e}4 loses directly to 33.\texttt{g}6\dagger.

33.\texttt{h}3 \texttt{d}4 
We have come to the concluding phase of the game.

34.\texttt{g}6\dagger \texttt{x}f7 35.\texttt{e}7\dagger \texttt{f}6 
On 35...\texttt{g}8 I had planned the following elaborate winning line:

36.\texttt{x}a6! \texttt{h}4\dagger 37.gxh4 \texttt{x}a3\dagger 38.\texttt{x}a3 \texttt{xa}3\dagger 39.\texttt{g}4 \texttt{a}8 40.f6! \texttt{g}x6 41.\texttt{h}5 and mate is near.

36.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{e}4 37.\texttt{x}e4 \texttt{dxe}4 38.\texttt{x}e4
Despite Black being an exchange up, he is without a defence.

38...\(\text{Wb5}\)

Only marginally better would have been 38...\(\text{Wxa3}\) 39.\(\text{Wxe6}\) \(\text{g5}\), reaching a position where all but one knight move decides the game quickly. My preferred win is probably 40.\(\text{Qxf8}\) \(\text{Wd6}\) 41.\(\text{Qh7}\). There is something pretty about misplacing the knight in this way. 41...\(\text{Qh5}\) 42.\(\text{g4}\) mate.

39.\(\text{Wxe7}\) \(\text{Qxf5}\) 40.\(\text{Qh4}\) mate!

1–0

The next game was played in a handicap match. In the first game Rybka started without the h2-pawn, in the second without the g2-pawn; and as this is game three, we start without the f2-pawn...

What I want you to look out for is how White manages to force Black to weaken his kingside by threatening various simple tactics, as for example to take on h7 on move 18. After the pawns have been moved forward, they become targets. In several variations there are sacrifices on f6 or e6 that would not have worked had the pawn stood on h7. Later on the deficiency of having advanced the f-pawn becomes quite clear as well.

Rybka 2.3.1LK - Jaan Ehlvest

Handicap Match, Internet 2007

1.\(\text{Qf3}\) \(d5\) 2.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{Qf6}\) 3.\(\text{c4}\) \(e6\) 4.\(\text{Qc3}\) \(e7\) 5.e3 0–0 6.\(\text{Qd3}\) \(c5\) 7.0–0 \(\text{Qc6}\) 8.\(\text{dxe5}\) \(\text{Qxe5}\) 9.\(\text{d2}\)

So far Black has every right to feel happy with the outcome of the opening; somehow he has won a pawn...

9...\(\text{a6}\)

9...\(\text{d4}\) 10.\(\text{exd4}\) \(Qxd4\) 11.\(\text{Qh1}\) \(\text{Qf5}\) is better for Black as well, but it is clear that White already has some compensation for the pawn. The opening has therefore been a success for White.

10.\(\text{Wxe2}\) \(\text{Qa7}\) 11.\(\text{Qad1}\) \(\text{Wc7}\) 12.\(\text{Qh1}\)

Around here Ehlvest initiates a rather odd-looking manoeuvre. The knight never looks settled on e5; it is simply not well enough supported.

12...\(\text{dxc4}\) 13.\(\text{Qxc4}\) \(\text{Qg4}\) 14.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{Qe5}\) 15.\(\text{Qb3}\) \(b5\)

Black is still better. White now activates its pieces with brilliant play.

16.\(\text{Qe4}\) \(\text{b7}\) 17.\(\text{Qc3}\)
Chapter 3 - Typical Pawn Play

Up to this point Black has not spoiled his advantage too much. He still has an extra pawn. However, his kingside is coming under increased pressure and he is slipping behind in development. After his next move the game turns completely; White is able to launch an attack on the kingside, provoking various weaknesses and eventually striking hard... make that very hard.

17...\textit{\textbf{a}b8?}

A great move according to the computer, but 17...\textit{\textbf{a}d8!} is surely better. For example, after 18.\textit{\textbf{d}xe5?! \textit{\textbf{d}xe5} 19.\textit{\textbf{d}xe5} Black would have 19...\textit{\textbf{d}xe4 with a winning position, as White has no compensation for the missing pawn.}

18.\textit{\textbf{f}g5!}

The beginning of a great attack. For now the knight is left isolated on e5, while White is creating weaknesses on the kingside.

18...\textit{\textbf{h}6}

This is entirely logical, although I am not sure that Black should have volunteered a weakness so easily. However, the alternatives are poor as well.

18...\textit{\textbf{b}4 19.\textit{\textbf{w}h5} \textit{\textbf{h}6} transposes, and 18...\textit{\textbf{a}d8 is already worse for Black after such a move as 19.\textit{\textbf{d}xe4 and White is winning.}

19.\textit{\textbf{w}h5!} \textit{\textbf{b}4}

19...\textit{\textbf{h}xg5??} is obviously no good after 20.\textit{\textbf{d}xe5, when White wins.}

20.\textit{\textbf{f}el!}

The bishop is relocating to a fabulous spot on h4.

17...\textit{\textbf{b}8?}

Black is already struggling and after this further non-developing move, his position does not seem to be saveable. However, the alternatives show that you really are in trouble when you are facing an army with a few extra cannons:

20...\textit{\textbf{d}d8 does not offer real relief after 21.\textit{\textbf{h}h4 \textit{\textbf{a}xd1} 22.\textit{\textbf{a}xd1 when White has a very strong attack. The following line looks plausible: 22...\textit{\textbf{a}d7 23.\textit{\textbf{c}c2 \textit{\textbf{a}d8} 24.\textit{\textbf{f}f6! \textit{\textbf{g}x6} 25.\textit{\textbf{w}h6} \textit{\textbf{f}xg5} 26.\textit{\textbf{h}h7! \textit{\textbf{a}h8} 27.\textit{\textbf{x}g5 and White is winning.}

20...\textit{\textbf{g}6}

This seems to resemble a defensive move; that is, until one notices that the knight is actually not defending any squares from g6, except of course the not very vulnerable h8-square. White once again blows the kingside open with a check on f6 (although a rook sac on f7 is also a thought):
21.\texttt{Qf6}!!\texttt{gx}f6 22.\texttt{Qxe}6!

White is seeking to further undermine the black king's position.

22...\texttt{hx}f7

22...\texttt{Qc}e5 loses to 23.\texttt{Qxb}4 \texttt{Wxb}4 24.\texttt{Qx}h6 \texttt{fx}e6 25.\texttt{Qxe}6\texttt{h}7 26.\texttt{Qd}8\texttt{f}8 27.\texttt{Qxf}7\texttt{h}6 28.\texttt{Qg}6!!.

23.\texttt{Qxf}8\texttt{Qxf}8 24.\texttt{Qh}4 \texttt{Qe}5

And now the fantastic finish:

25.\texttt{Qd}6!! \texttt{Qxd}6

25...\texttt{Qg}6 does not work. White can use the many weaknesses and pins to play 26.\texttt{Qg}5!!, winning. For example: 26...\texttt{Wf}8 27.\texttt{Qd}7 and White will at least be an exchange up in a few moments.

26.\texttt{Qxf}6 \texttt{Wc}7 27.\texttt{Qg}7!

Black is mated.

The best defensive option I have been able to identify is:

20...\texttt{Qd}8! 21.\texttt{Qh}4 \texttt{Wc}7!

This is the point behind the previous move. 21...\texttt{Qg}6? loses badly to 22.\texttt{Qxf}7! \texttt{Qx}h4 23.\texttt{Qx}d8 \texttt{Qxd}8 24.\texttt{Qx}h6\texttt{gx}h6 25.\texttt{Qx}h6 with \texttt{Qf}6\texttt{t} and \texttt{Qxe}6\texttt{t} threatened.

After the main line, for once there is no direct win, so White has to retract the bishop.

22.\texttt{Qg}3 \texttt{Wc}7!

22...\texttt{Wb}6? loses to 23.\texttt{Qf}6\texttt{h}8 24.\texttt{Qxe}5 and \texttt{Qg}4\texttt{xh}6, with a winning attack.

23.\texttt{Qc}2 \texttt{Wc}7!

This is extremely odd and computer-like, but it seems to be the only move.

23...\texttt{f}6 24.\texttt{Qxf}6\texttt{t} lead to a winning attack.

24.\texttt{Qd}2 \texttt{f}5

Black has managed to avoid being directly mated, but after

25.\texttt{Qd}6 \texttt{Wc}7 26.\texttt{Qxe}6 \texttt{Qxe}6 27.\texttt{Qxe}5

His prospects are pretty grim nonetheless.

21.\texttt{Qh}4!

Forcing Black to make with further concessions.

21...\texttt{f}6

Forced, but of course not good enough.

21...\texttt{Wc}7 22.\texttt{Qf}6\texttt{t} and 21...\texttt{Qa}7 22.\texttt{Qf}6?! lead to a winning attack for White. In the second case the finish could look like this:

22...\texttt{Wc}7 23.\texttt{Qxe}6! \texttt{fx}e6 24.\texttt{Qx}h6 and after White takes the queen, the attack will be unstoppable.
22...\text{gx}f6

Not the move Black wants to make, but 22...\text{gx}f6 is refuted by 23.\text{e}4 \text{f}7 (23...\text{fx}f1+ 24.\text{xf}1 \text{d}7 25.\text{c}5 and Black loses as he cannot prevent \text{e}8\text{f}+) 24.\text{xf}6\text{g}6 25.\text{exe}6 \text{g}6 26.\text{exe}6\text{d}7 27.\text{exe}6 28.\text{xf}6 with a rook and two pawns for the two knights, which is more than enough compensation, and enough to secure the full point.

23.\text{e}4 \text{f}7

23...\text{d}7 loses to 24.\text{exe}6+ \text{xe}6 25.\text{g}6+ \text{h}8 26.\text{xe}7 \text{d}7 27.\text{exe}6 28.\text{xf}6 with mate to follow.

24.\text{xf}6+

24.\text{g}7 is not that clear.

24...\text{g}7

25.\text{e}2!

The threats against the queen now force her away.

25...\text{c}7 26.\text{c}2!

Another piece is brought into the attack.

26...\text{h}8

26...\text{a}7 with the idea of bringing in additional defenders is defused with 27.\text{g}5! \text{g}6 (27...\text{hx}g5 28.\text{h}5 \text{h}8 29.\text{e}8\text{f}+ with mate.) 28.\text{h}6\text{f}! \text{h}8 29.\text{f}4! and Black needs to resign — quickly!

27.\text{h}5 \text{f}7 28.\text{g}4!

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram.png}
\end{center}

Black resigned. 29.\text{f}6\text{f}+ will be awesome.

1-0
There was a sense of determination in the play that allowed the attackers to open these dangerous files and commit bloody murder.
On this page you find 8 diagrams with critical moments from the coming chapter. I recommend that you take up to 10 minutes to think about each of them. The solutions are found on the following pages in the annotations to the games.

Positions with a circled P can be played against a computer.

How to win? (see page 263)
White to play and win (see page 271)

White can calculate and win (see page 257)
How to recapture? (see page 266)
The only move! (see page 302)

Black has a winner! (see page 259)
What do you do with the rook? (see page 268)
Find the only defence (see page 314)
In this chapter we are going to look at a number of attacking strategies that somehow did not quite fit into the categories explored in the previous chapters. They are all in one way or another dealing with king safety, right from crossing the moat and annihilating the fortress with a ram, to more sophisticated strategies, involving trapping the king in a corner and gunning him down, or cutting off the defenders, so that the king can slowly be “hunted down like a duck”.

Destroying the defensive structure

This is certainly one of the aspects most often associated with attacking chess. In order to get to the opponent’s king, we are Rocking the Ramparts, or Storming the Barricades, which are the names of two small books by Larry Christensen, which basically describe attacking chess as the destruction of the defensive structure.

The use of piece sacrifices to open up files or diagonals for the pieces is seen in many attacking games, and is thus a very important technique; but at the same time it is also a symptom of other things happening, and thus in itself not a subject I want to put great emphasis on in this work. Others, such as Christensen, have done this to excess.

The first example involves a basic sacrifice, wherefrom the black king becomes exposed. It should be said that White has a few good moves in the initial position, but wins most easily by playing as energetically as possible. The great moment in the white play is, in my opinion, move 30, where he energetically includes the a1-rook into the attack at the appropriate moment.

Stefan Djuric – Slobodan Kovacevic

Malaga 2007

27.Qxh6†!

This sacrifice is meant to weaken the black king, not immediately topple it. After 27.Qc3 e5! White is better, but the attack has been stopped, at least temporarily. 28.Qxh6?? Whxh6! was certainly something to avoid, although 27.Qad1 was a strong alternative to the game continuation.

27...gxh6 28.Wg4† Wh8!

The best defence. 28...Qg7 29.Qxh6 is simply mate and 28...Qh7 is met very strongly with 29.Qc3!. White wins because of the strong threat 30.Qe4† and 31.Wg6#.

The only defence thus seems to be 29...f6, but White wins by including all the pieces in the attack. 30.Qad1 Ze7 31.Qxd7 Qxd7 32.Qxe6 and so on.
29...c3+ f6 30...ad1!

Don't forget about the guy in the corner.

30...wc7

30...ec7 can be overcome in many ways. The simplest is 31...ed7! ed7 32...exc6 when the attack is overwhelming.

31...exd6

Simple measures. Every piece attacks more and more.

31...e5

After 31...exd6 32...wc6 Black is lost.

32...exc6 exc5 33.gd6 wh7

33...g7 34.ed7 and wins.

34.ed7

1-0

The next game relies on standard ideas, but is attractive nonetheless. White sacrifices a knight to remove the only obstacle to complete control over the dark squares. However, this combination does have a small twist, as it does not work in its purest form. But Surtees finds a way to overcome the obstacles and rightly earned the best game prize of the 2008 'English Championship'.

Michael Surtees – Jovanka Houska

Liverpool 2008

1.e4 c6 2.d5

Surtees is well known on the British congress scene. He has his own very innovative opinions about the opening, including amongst others a dislike for knights on the "normal" central squares, c3, f3, c6 and f6. Although this new school of thought is unlikely to find many followers, it does not lead to disaster if followed up by good moves.

2...d5 3.e5 c5 4.ab4?

An unorthodox gambit, with similarities to the French Defence.

4...cxb4 5.d4 Ac6 6.a3

6...e6

I do not like this new move much. Another game, Bertholee – Peelen, Amstelveen 1994, continued 6...f6 7.cf4 fxe5 (7...eh6!? looks logical) 8.wh5f+ g6! 9.xg6 gxf6 10.ch4. White went on to win, but the result would in all likelihood have been very different had Black played 10...hxg6! 11.xh8 Acx4 with a decisive initiative.

Of course the position would have been less clear after 8.dxe5, but such is life.

7.axb4 Axb4+ 8.c3 Ac5 9.Cf3

The knight is coming into its own. Black cannot prevent it from arriving on h5, and even though it is all by itself, it is not so easy to defend against its intrusion.

9...fge7

9...f5 can for example be met with 10.Cf5?! g6 11.cf4 and although Black leads in development, White has enough compensation.

One thing is to get the pieces out, another is to put them on pleasant squares! Black has failed on this second criteria.
10. \( \text{c}h5 \) 0-0 11. \( \text{f}g5 \) \( \text{c}7? \)

This reaction is too passive. I think it was necessary to fight for the dark squares and to create a hole for the black king with 11...\( \text{h}6! \).

Here White can either play 12. \( \text{d}d2? \) with decent compensation for the pawn, or he could go all-in with 12. \( \text{x}h6! \) \( \text{gxh6} \) 13. \( \text{f}c1 \) \( \text{f}h7 \) 14. \( \text{d}d3\dagger \), when Black's best response looks to be 14...\( \text{f}5! \) 15. \( \text{e}x\text{f6}\dagger \) \( \text{g}6 \), when I am a bit unsure about the extent of White's compensation.

12. \( \text{a}xa5!! \)

White has to eliminate this bishop at some point. It is not really a case of "the sooner the better", but at the same time he should also not postpone it for too long.

The best move order is to sacrifice the rook on the 14th move, but as long as it does not come after then, White's attack is deadly. An example of what not to do would be: 12. \( \text{x}g7!! \) \( \text{gxg7} \) 13. \( \text{f}f6\dagger \) \( \text{g}8 \) So far so good, but now...

14. \( \text{g}4\dagger \) \( \text{g}6 \) 15. \( \text{h}5? \) \( \text{xd}4! \) 16. \( \text{d}d3? \) \( \text{x}c5\dagger \) 17. \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{h}2! \) and Black wins. Including the exchange sacrifice will improve White's position at any point, but at no point more than in the beginning of the combination.

12...\( \text{x}a5 \)

12...\( \text{x}a5 \) is clearly no better than the game.

13. \( \text{x}g7!! \)

Now this works beautifully.

13...\( \text{f}5 \)

Black cannot take the knight. After 13...\( \text{e}xg7 \) 14. \( \text{f}f6\dagger \) \( \text{g}8 \) 15. \( \text{g}4\dagger \) \( \text{g}6 \) 16. \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 17. \( \text{d}d3 \) Black is mated.

14. \( \text{h}5 \)

White could also play 14. \( \text{e}x\text{f6?!} \) \( \text{g}6 \) 15. \( \text{d}d3 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 16.0-0 with a terrific attack.

14...\( \text{g}6 \) 15. \( \text{f}f6\dagger \) \( \text{h}8 \)

15...\( \text{e}x\text{f6} \) was necessary, but obviously this would suck.

16. \( \text{b}xh7! \)

The final blow.
16...\textit{Wh}c7

Black is done. After 16...\textit{Wh}xh7 17.\textit{Wh}h5+ \textit{Wh}g7 18.\textit{Wh}h6+ \textit{Wh}f7 19.\textit{Wh}h7+ \textit{Wh}e8 20.\textit{Wxg}6+ \textit{Wh}f7 21.\textit{Wh}e2! there is no defence against \textit{Wh}h3.

17.\textit{Oh}x\textit{f}8 \textit{Of}x\textit{f}8 18.\textit{Wh}f6+ \textit{Wh}g8 19.\textit{g}4 f4 20.\textit{Oh}d3 b5 21.\textit{g}5 b4 22.\textit{Wh}h5 \textit{Oh}e7 23.\textit{g}6 1-0

The following game is also quite classical in nature, but with minor twists on the old themes. We see this often in chess; most of the tactical themes have been uncovered, but they have a tendency to arise again and again, in a new variation, often with changing evaluations!

In this game we have the famous bishop sacrifice on h6 and g7, based on a very long variation, where at seemingly random places, White has to give checks to force the black king between two squares, which are temporarily tactically inconvenient.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Stewart Haslinger – Stanislav Savchenko}
\end{center}

Palma de Mallorca 2008

1.e4 c5 2.\textit{Oh}f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\textit{Oh}xd4 \textit{Oh}c6 5.\textit{Oh}c3 a6 6.\textit{Oh}e3 \textit{Oh}f6 7.f4 \textit{Oh}b4 8.\textit{Oh}d3 e5 9.\textit{f}xe5 \textit{Oh}xe5 10.0-0 d6 11.\textit{Oh}h3 \textit{Oh}xc3 12.bxc3 \textit{Oh}f6 13.\textit{f}d2!!

13.\textit{f}f2 was played by White in Radjabov – Anand, Bilbao 2008. The game eventually ended in a draw, but at this point I probably fear more for Black than for White.

13...0-0 14.\textit{f}ab1

14.\textit{f}f2 immediately looks more logical, but the text move is not bad.

14...\textit{Oh}e7 15.\textit{f}f2 b5?!

Black is relying on tactics, as so often in the Sicilian. But here they are not in his favour. 15...\textit{Oh}g6 was more prudent. White retains a small plus, with underlining under small.

\begin{center}
\textbf{16.a4?}
\end{center}

This looks thematic, but is actually just a silly sacrifice of the a-pawn. 16.\textit{f}xh6! was very strong, just as strong as in the game, but without giving away the a-pawn needlessly.

16...\textit{b}xa4 17.\textit{f}xh6! \textit{Oh}g4?

Black is walking the plank. Calculating all these dizzying lines brought him straight into time trouble with only two minutes (+30 seconds increment) for the rest of the game.

The correct move was 17...\textit{g}xh6!, when after 18.\textit{w}xh6 \textit{w}xh6 19.\textit{e}xh6 \textit{Oh}f8 20.\textit{Oh}xh6 \textit{Oh}e7 21.\textit{f}d7 Black is worse, but has reasonable drawing chances due to the passed a-pawn and the strong knight on e5.

18.\textit{b}xa4 \textit{b}xa4 19.\textit{f}d2

\begin{center}
\textbf{18.hxg4 \textit{Oh}xg4}
\end{center}
19.\(\text{De6!}\)
Deflecting the queen.

19...\(\text{We7?!}\)
Black had to look for a last try in 19...\(\text{We6!}\), though admittedly after 20.\(\text{Wh4!}\) he would have no choice but to continue 20...\(\text{Wxh6}\), when White will play 21.\(\text{De7}\) and 22.\(\text{Dg6}\) with a good chance of winning the endgame.

But even this gloomy forecast is better than 20...\(\text{Dxh6?!}\) 21.\(\text{De7}\) \(\text{Dh8}\) 22.\(\text{e5}\)!, when Black can choose between 22...\(\text{dxex5}\) 23.\(\text{We4}\) and 22...\(\text{Dxe8}\) 23.\(\text{Df6}\!), neither of which will last.

20.\(\text{Wh4! gxh6}\)
This goes down fast, but the position could no longer be saved. The big main line was:
20...\(\text{Wxc6}\)

Haslinger would surely not have hesitated at this point.

21.\(\text{Dxg7! Dxg7}\) 22.\(\text{Dg5\# Dh8}\)
Here there is an important point. Black will lose the key resource ...\(\text{Dc5-e3-h6}\), if White is ready to reply to ...\(\text{Dc3}\) with mate in one. For this reason it is important to give the check before advancing the c-pawn.

23.\(\text{Wh5\# Dh8}\)
23...\(\text{Dg7}\) 24.\(\text{e5}\) \(\text{f5}\) 25.\(\text{exf6\#}\) cuts straight through.

24.\(\text{e5 Dc5}\)
24...\(\text{f5}\) 25.\(\text{Dg6\# Dh8}\) 26.\(\text{Df3}\) also wins easily for White. The main point is that after 26...\(\text{Dc5}\) White will play 27.\(\text{Df1 Dh2\#}\)

28.\(\text{De2}\) and a rook check on the h-file is on its way.

25.\(\text{Dh1 f5}\)
Here Black is ready to defend against 26.\(\text{Db4}\) with 26...\(\text{Dxa7}\), so once again White has to improve the circumstances, this time by forcing the black king back to \(\text{h8}\). This is true poetry.

26.\(\text{Dg6\# Dh8}\) 27.\(\text{Db4}\)
The threat of \(\text{Dxg4}\) is too hard to face. Black has to try:
27...\(\text{Dxa7}\) 28.\(\text{Dxg4 Dh7}\)

But here White has a classic combination, finishing the game in his favour.

29.\(\text{Dxh7\# Dh7}\) 30.\(\text{Df3}\)
Black cannot avoid mate.

21.\(\text{Dc7\# Dh8}\)
22.e5
White could also have won prosaically, with 22.\&xc8 \&xc8 23.\&f4 \&g8 24.\&e2 and Black will lose the knight.

22...\&d7
Or 22...dxe5 23.\&xc8 \&xc8 24.\&b4 \&g8 25.\&xg4! and Black is lost.

23.\&f6
Black resigned, seemingly a bit premature. White would have won more quickly with 23.\&b4 or 23.\&f4, but even with 23.\&f6, White is winning: 23...\&c5+ 24.\&h1 \&e3 25.\&b4 \&c1+ 26.\&f1 and 27.\&xg4 will decide the game.

1-0

The next game is very interesting. Black neglects all structural considerations in the opening, with the single purpose of starting an attack on the kingside. White misplays the defence somewhat and quickly finds himself under a strong attack. The phase of the game between moves 15 to 20 deserves especially close attention. This short sequence of moves contains many interesting moments, where we can see the game of attack and defence at its fullest.

The play from move 20 onwards is rather shocking, but I think quite instructive nonetheless. In this connection I should mention that although the players are juniors, they are not some kids fiddling around aimlessly, but in fact they are already at grandmaster level.

Oleg Yaksin – Roman Nychepurenko

World Junior, Gaziantep 2008

1.e4 c5 2.\&f3 \&f6 3.\&c3 \&c6 4.\&b5 d6 5.e5 dxe5 6.\&xe5 \&c7 7.\&xc6 bxc6 8.\&e2 \&f5 9.0-0 \&d8 10.\&e1 e6 11.\&f3 \&d6 12.g3 h5!!
as after 16...\texttt{\textbackslash x} t 17.\texttt{\textbackslash w} xe2 Black is able to start an accelerated attack against White's weakness, the pawn on h2, with 17...\texttt{\textbackslash h} h3!

16.\texttt{\textbackslash g}4?
After 16.f3 c4 Black would have full compensation for his sacrificed pawn, but hardly anything beyond that.

\texttt{\textbackslash e} d g 8!! 17.\texttt{\textbackslash f} f5?
White is going further and further down the rabbit hole. It was better to retreat quickly with

17.\texttt{\textbackslash f} f3!
Admittedly even here Black still has quite a dangerous initiative. The main line continues:

17...\texttt{\textbackslash d} d 4
17...\texttt{\textbackslash x} h2? 18.\texttt{\textbackslash x} e5! leads to complications that favour White, if anyone.

18.\texttt{\textbackslash e} e 3!
The only move.

18...\texttt{\textbackslash w} f 4!
Black is not taking this kind of pay-off.

19.\texttt{\textbackslash g} 2 \texttt{\textbackslash x} h 2!
Not too difficult a move, even though it is both a rook and a queen sacrifice in one. It does not take long to see that neither can be accepted.

20.\texttt{\textbackslash g} f 3
Again the only move.

20...\texttt{\textbackslash x} g 2\texttt{\textbackslash t} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash g} g 2
21.\texttt{\textbackslash w} x g 2 \texttt{\textbackslash g} 4 White is in trouble, but with the only move, 22.\texttt{\textbackslash f} f 3 he stays in the game. Black should probably play 22...\texttt{\textbackslash w} x f 3! 23.\texttt{\textbackslash x} f 3 \texttt{\textbackslash x} c 2. In this rather unorthodox endgame the exchange is rather irrelevant, but the dangers to the white king and White's lack of development matter quite a bit; although obviously these factors have diminished significantly now the queens have come off.

21...\texttt{\textbackslash h} 6! 22.\texttt{\textbackslash f} f 5!
The best defence. Other moves are inferior. Take the following line, for instance: 22.\texttt{\textbackslash a} a 3 \texttt{\textbackslash h} 7! 23.\texttt{\textbackslash f} f 1 \texttt{\textbackslash h} 2! 24.\texttt{\textbackslash x} a 7? \texttt{\textbackslash d} d 6 25.\texttt{\textbackslash d} d 3 \texttt{\textbackslash g} 4 and Black wins.

22...\texttt{\textbackslash x} c 3 23.\texttt{\textbackslash e} e 4 \texttt{\textbackslash h} 8 24.\texttt{\textbackslash h} 4
White must seek his salvation in this ending.

24...\texttt{\textbackslash x} h 4 25.\texttt{\textbackslash x} h 4 \texttt{\textbackslash d} d 4 26.\texttt{\textbackslash c} c 3 \texttt{\textbackslash e} 5 27.\texttt{\textbackslash g} g 3 \texttt{\textbackslash d} d 8
Black dominates, but still has to prove that he can win the game.

17...\texttt{\textbackslash x} g 3!
This was of course what Black was intending all along. The bishop on f5 did not have a specific function anymore anyway.

18.\texttt{\textbackslash x} g 3 \texttt{\textbackslash x} g 3\texttt{\textbackslash t} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash h} h 1 \texttt{\textbackslash x} h 2\texttt{\textbackslash t}
19...\texttt{\textbackslash g} 1\texttt{\textbackslash t} was also mate in a few moves.

20.\texttt{\textbackslash x} h 2
20...\texttt{B}g8??

This is a horrific mistake. Both the cool 20...\texttt{W}f4!, and the check, check, check approach of 20...\texttt{B}g4+ 21.\texttt{Sh}1 \texttt{Sh}4+ 22.\texttt{S}g2 \texttt{Sh}2+ 23.\texttt{S}f1 \texttt{Sh}4+ were leading straight to mate.

21.\texttt{Sh}1 \texttt{W}g3

21...\texttt{Sh}8+ 22.\texttt{S}g2 \texttt{Wh}2+ 23.\texttt{S}f3 \texttt{B}g8 looks dangerous, but White can keep an even keel. After 24.\texttt{S}g4! Black has no win. For example: 24...\texttt{f}5 25.\texttt{S}g1 \texttt{fxg}4+ 26.\texttt{S}e3 \texttt{w}e5+ 27.\texttt{S}f2 and all Black has is a perpetual check.

22.\texttt{S}g4!

Did Black somehow overlook this, or maybe that the bishop can go to h5 as well?

22...\texttt{E}xg4 23.\texttt{W}xg4 \texttt{W}xg4

Black has thrown away his advantage, but he still has the easier position in practice. White has to find the only way to a draw at this point.

24.\texttt{E}e3??

This only entices the f-pawn forwards. The only defence was based on combining a fight against the advance of the f-pawn and the development of the queenside.

After 24.\texttt{S}f1! \texttt{f}5 25.d3 e5 26.\texttt{S}d2 Black should think about taking that perpetual check. After 26...\texttt{f}4? it is too late, and 27.\texttt{S}f2! offers White a chance to convert his three pieces for the queen into a full point.

24...\texttt{f}5

Black is back on track and the end station is just around the bend.

25.b3 \texttt{f}4 26.\texttt{S}a3 \texttt{W}h5+

0–1

In a big tournament like the Aeroflot Open there have been played greater chess games than in ten years of Linares tournaments, simply because many more games are played! This is attractive for chess trainers like myself, as I know that the likelihood of my harder working students having studied Board 13 of an open tournament is low; even though one of them was there!

The following game was indeed played on Board 13, and would not catch the attention of commentators usually, but I have an obsession with searching for unknown games and like to include them in any writing or training that I do.

The interesting moments in this game are after move 30, where White is breaking through on the kingside, but for some reason fails to kick down the door, wearing nothing but flip-flops.
Vladimir Akopian – Jianchao Zhou

Moscow 2008

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.c3

Akopian very rarely plays big main lines. I can only recall seeing him playing the open Sicilian against Vladimir Kramnik, but then that is certainly the right time to try it out. Akopian famously won that game.

3...e6 4.e2 g6

4...hxc4 5.a4+ is not really a trap, rather a remedy to the problem of how to get the pieces to the right squares.

5.0–0 g7 6.e1 0–0 7.f3 d6 8.h3 e5

Black has achieved a good version of the closed Ruy Lopez, but many things can still happen. Akopian is hoping that his greater practical strength is more important than a theoretical advantage.

9.a3 e8 10.d3 h6 11.e4 b6

This looks a bit passive. 11...b5 12.e3 b8 looks more logical to me.

12.a4

The knight is now solidly placed on c4.

12...d5 13.exd5 exd5

14.a5?

This looks rather provocative.

14...b8

14.b5 15.e3 (15.e3 b4 is good for Black, though complicated) 15...a6 was more reasonable. True, c5 might become weak one day, but after the text move the a-file falls under White’s command.

15.axb6 axb6 16.g3

I am not too sure about this. It is definitely ambitious, but the next few moves indicate that it may have been too risky.

16.e5 17.g2 c7

17...b5 again feels more logical.

18.fd2 ed8!

Black is putting pressure on d3 and h3.

19.e2 ed7 20.h4 de7 21.e4

21...h7?

Both players ignore the option of 21...xd3 22.xd3 xd3, though there is no obvious compensation for the pawn. After 23.a6 b5 24.xc5 bxc4 25.xd3 cxd3 White has to take with the rook on c6, when Black looks a bit better. It is very likely that the players missed that 26.xc6? could be met strongly with 26...c8!, winning.
22...\textit{a6}

By attacking \textit{b6} White manages to take over the initiative.

22...\textit{e7} 23.\textit{h5} \textit{d5}

This seems rather pointless. 23...g5 24.g4 \textit{e6} 25.\textit{g3} would give White good play on the light squares, but Black would not have to weaken his king's position.

24.\textit{hxg6}† \textit{xg6} 25.\textit{xf4} \textit{dxe7}?! 

What Black is trying to do with all these knight moves is beyond me, but his position is already not that easy to play anymore.

25...f5 26.\textit{ed6} \textit{de7} 27.\textit{b5} \textit{d7} would leave Black only a bit worse, if at all. But we have seen that Black is all up for a wait and see (the knife approaching) policy.

25...\textit{cb4}? 26.\textit{xb4} \textit{xb4}

This sacrifice, played with the idea of 27.\textit{a3} \textit{c2}, does not work out.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

27.\textit{fl6}† \textit{h8}

27...\textit{xf6} 28.\textit{xf6} \textit{xa6} 29.\textit{xf6} gives a decisive attack. The ideas are \textit{e4}, \textit{g2} and \textit{h1}. Next comes a combination that will blow you away:

28.\textit{xc5}!! \textit{xa6} 29.\textit{f4} \textit{c8} 30.\textit{xc6}! \textit{xc6} 31.\textit{xc6}† \textit{xc6} 32.\textit{f7} \textit{g8} 33.\textit{f4}

There is no defence against \textit{h6}†.

26.\textit{g4}!

Securing the knight on \textit{e4}, but also using the pawn to attack the black king in some lines.

26...\textit{f4}?! 

The bishop on \textit{c1} was not that active and White wanted something to do with the rook on \textit{e1} as well. The text is a gift-wrapped invitation for him to solve those problems.

27.\textit{xf4} \textit{exf4} 28.\textit{ea1} \textit{c8}

Black has to keep the rook off the seventh.

29.\textit{g5}?! 

Quite a bad mistake it turns out. The pawn is too strong close to the king. Necessary was 29...\textit{hxg5} 30.\textit{xa6} \textit{g8} when the counterplay against \textit{d3} gives Black a few chances.

30.\textit{h3}! 

The bishop that was shooting into nowhere is transferred to attacking the king.

30...\textit{b5}

Finally Black plays this move, but now it is too late.
31.\text{n}5!!

After normal play with 31.\text{Q}cd2 White is much better, but the move in the game should win.

31...bxc4

Black is choosing between many bad lines. 31...\text{h}8 32.\text{Q}xg6 is clearly too dangerous, and 31...\text{g}8 is refuted with 32.\text{Q}xg6 fxg6 33.\text{Q}c6! \text{xd}7 and now for example 34.\text{Q}e5!! \text{xe}5 35.\text{Q}xg6+ \text{f}8 36.\text{Q}xh5 with a decisive attack.

Finally there is 31...\text{xf}5, which after 32.\text{Q}f6+ \text{xf}6 33.\text{W}xh5+ \text{g}8 34.\text{gx}f6 leads to mate on the dark squares.

32.\text{W}xh5+ \text{g}8

33.\text{Q}xg6??

This is simply a horrible decision. I think that White somehow got stuck on the 36th move in the following winning line:

33.\text{Q}xg6!!

White destroys his opponent's last defenders of the light squares.

33...\text{fxg}6 34.\text{Q}e6+ \text{f}8 35.\text{W}xg6

Here there are several lines, but the most important seems to be:

35.\text{Q}d7 36.\text{Q}a5!!

Not the only winning move, but I always favour the ones involving the mobilisation of previously inactive pieces into the attack.

36...\text{W}xa5 37.\text{Q}f6

White will either be allowed to take on d7 and b8, winning, or deliver mate with:

37...\text{Q}e7 38.\text{Q}h7 mate!

33...\text{fxg}6 34.\text{Q}xg6 \text{f}7

Akopian now tries various things, but to his horror he will have to recognise that there is no win anymore.

35.\text{Q}e1 \text{Q}e7 36.\text{Q}f6+ \text{f}8 37.\text{Q}h7+ \text{g}8 38.\text{Q}f6+ \text{f}8 39.\text{Q}h7+ \text{g}8 40.\text{Q}xg7+ \text{W}xg7 41.\text{Q}f6+ \text{f}8 42.\text{Q}h7+ \text{g}8 43.\text{Q}f6+ \text{f}8 44.\text{Q}e6 cxd3 45.\text{Q}h7+\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}

A great disappointment for Akopian, no doubt, but a very interesting game nonetheless.
Line clearance

The destruction of the king's defensive structure often relies upon the opening of files, ranks and diagonals. Three of our seven pieces (excluding the king and pawns) are heavy artillery that thrive on open files, and the bishops (together with the queen), work along the diagonals. In this section we shall mainly talk about files for the rooks and the queen, but this is dictated mainly by the games I found interesting. The general ideas are overlapping anyway.

A recurring theme in this passage is the 'assistance' the defending player offers towards the opening of files. I call him the defending player, because he usually becomes so from the critical moment onwards. I am not sure why this happens in so many games; is it an underestimation of the dangers associated with opening files? I remember once I lost a game to grandmaster Rozentalis when I was basically still a boy, and I just could not for the life of me believe that I had lost it because I had given him an open b-file and castled long, but alas, it appears that this was indeed the main reason...

In no game is this willingness to open files leading to one's own king more prevalent than in the next encounter. Black plays this odd-looking ...\(\text{Qg}4\), which would be silly, if only White would ignore it. However, it is so tempting to attack it with the h-pawn; and once this is done, and the knight does not move, it is very tempting to actually take it. Misery this way lies.

Hendrik van Dijk – Wladyslaw Krol

e-mail 2002

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}6\) 3.\(\text{b}5\) a6 4.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 5.0–0 \(\text{Qg}4\)?

There are a number of players out there who prefer to combine an original approach to chess with their own opening ideas. Elsewhere in this chapter you can meet Surtees and his peculiar thinking about knights, the Kroell/Herbold gambit, and in this game the Krol variation. Objectively this move is very poor, but it takes a stern foundation to be able to refute it in practice, even in correspondence games.

6.h3

I am not especially keen on this move, but as long as White leaves the knight alone there is nothing objectively wrong with it. However, in this game White wanted to prove that the move was silly, but he did so in the wrong way. Had he just ignored the knight, the lunge would not have made a lot of sense. By chasing it, White justifies Black’s play.

6.c3! b5 7.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{Qa}5\) 8.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{d}6\) 9.d4 \(\text{Qf}6\) 10.h3 h5 11.a4 b4 12.d5 \(\text{d}8\) says it all. White 'somehow' came out on top in Bruckner – Krol, e-mail 2001.

6...h5 7.c3 \(\text{c}5\) 8.d4 \(\text{a}7\) 9.hxg4?! 9.\(\text{b}3\) d6 would not change too much compared to the game – unless White decided not to take the piece this time around.

9...hxg4 10.\(\text{Qg}5\)
White could also have attempted 10...gx5?, with the idea 10...f6 11.exf5! exf5 12.dxe5 fxg5 13.hxg4, when White is a bit better. It is not a refutation, but it is a good position.

10...d6

11.hb3!

I actually think that White still has an advantage after 11.hf6 12.ha3 hg6 13.hd1!? (I prefer this over 13.hxf7† hg7 14.xf7 hxg7 15.d5, which eventually resulted in a draw in Mauro – Krol, e-mail 2004). My point is that after 13...wh5 14.hf1 I am not convinced that Black has enough compensation for the piece.

11...wh6!

When you have invested a piece, you stop caring about such small things as pawns.

12.hxf7?

The last chance to keep the balance was 12.hxf7† he7 13.hd3! whh6 14.hh3 wh7 15.hg3, when the position is an absolute mess.

12...wh5 13.hxg5?!

A novelty, actually, but hardly what you would call an improvement. White's minor pieces are performing an important task, keeping the enemy forces occupied. Now that Black gets full control over his own ranks, he is in time to castle long and exploit the h-file with maximum aggression.

Krol actually had the same position in an earlier encounter, in which he also did well out of the opening, although he later went on to lose. That game continued: 13.hg5 g6 14.hg8 exd4 (The even stronger 14...whh8! 15.hh7 hxh7 16.hxh7 wxh7 looks very dangerous for White. In a few moves Black will be actively attacking down the h-file.) 15.hb3 hd8 16.hh7 df7 17.e5 dxes 18.exd4 exd4 19.dxf7 hxf7 20.hg8 wb3 21.hxb3 h5 with chances for both sides in M. Martin – Krol, e-mail 2001.

13...hxg5 14.hxg5 hxg5 15.hd2

Also after 15.ha4 hd7 16.hd2 0–0–0 the black attack would be out of control.

15...wh6!

15...wh5!? was worth a thought, but the queen is actually very well placed on f6, controlling the centre and preparing the attack on the kingside.

16.hd5

I do not see any chances to alter the direction of the game anymore. If White plays 16.ha3,
Black replies 16...exd4! (16...\(\text{xd7}\) 17.\(\text{xc2}\) 0–0–0 would seem natural, but after 18.\(\text{fd1}\) \(\text{h8}\) 19.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{h4}\) 20.\(\text{f1}\) the white king is surprisingly safe).

White has to do something; anything; but alas, nothing can be found.

I tried 17.e5?!, but here the human intuition knocks out the computer, with 17...\(\text{xe5!}\) 18.cxd4 \(\text{f3}\)†! 19.gxf3 gxf3. White is a rook up and the computer is initially optimistic, thinking Black must hurry to make a draw. But over time it dawns on the poor thing that Black is simply winning. For example, 20.\(\text{c2}\) \(\text{d4!}\) 21.\(\text{fd1}\) \(\text{h3!}\) and there is no defence against ...\(\text{h4}\) and ...\(\text{g2}\).

16...\(\text{d7}\) 17.\(\text{e2}\)

The white position is also beyond salvation after 17.\(\text{xc6}\) \(\text{xc6}\) 18.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{h4}\), when he has no defensive resources.

17...0–0–0 18.\(\text{xc6}\)

White is trying to protect his centre, by removing this attacker, but loses vital time on the kingside. However, no alternatives can be suggested.

18...\(\text{h4!}\)

A beautiful move, but not too surprising for us. Black rushes to the open file, before White is able to provide any safety for the king. The knight and bishop do nothing for this attack, so they are abandoned.

19.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{h3}\) 20.\(\text{xd7}\)† \(\text{xd7}\) 21.\(\text{d1}\) \(\text{h8}\) 22.\(\text{f4}\) exd4!

There are other ways to win, but involving the bishop seems natural.

23.\(\text{g2}\)

This drops two rooks, but the natural way of the brute force line was no better: 23.cxd4 \(\text{xd4}\)†! 24.\(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{xg3}\)† 25.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{f1}\)† 26.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{h1}\)† 27.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{f1}+\) 28.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{f2}\)† 29.\(\text{h1}\) \(\text{g3}\) and White is mated.

23...\(\text{xc3}\)† 24.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{xb2}\)

0–1

I twice had the pleasure of playing against the late Simon Webb of Chess for Tigers fame. I am very proud to say that I won both encounters, although it was by no means plain sailing on either occasion. His book was one of my first chess books and it still resonates in my mind. One of the things I recall from this book is the advice to go for very complicated positions when you are facing tougher opposition. I think this is sound advice most of the time, as it will make it possible to land a big blow in the case of a small mistake from the opponent.

This is not what happened in the following game, where neither of the players can be characterised as especially strong. What did happen was that a player far away from any title aspirations played one or two dubious moves (but only because there was a fantastic refutation – 14.\(\text{c1}\)!), but then got a chance to sacrifice to open up lines. In this instance he only had to play a few moves at grandmaster level to flatten his opponent, and this was exactly what he did.
Ahmed Albanna – Asaad Albonni

Asian Cities Championship, Tehran 2007

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 wxd5 4.d4 d6
5.df3 dg4 6.e2 0–0–0??!

I have to admit that I am not terribly concerned about the theoretical correctness of this move. I like the attitude, but one fears that it might be a little too optimistic!

7.de3 e6 8.dbd2
This looks odd. Usually White hopes to put this knight on c3, but I assume that he wanted to reinforce his centre.

8...cxd4 9.cxd4 dd6
Black is not pretending; he is going straight for the white king.

10.0–0
In view of the previous comment, one has to wonder if it was necessary to castle just yet. But as it turns out, there is no objective tactical downside to committing the king.

10...df6 11.a3 db8
Black is not feeling in a hurry.

12.b4 wh5?!

13.h3
This was all part of Black's idea. He wants to sacrifice a piece in order to dominate the h2-square as well as open up for the d8-rook. However, the problem with this idea (and specifically his next move) is that White does not have to accept the sacrifice, but can transfer his, as yet, inactive rook on a1 to the fifth rank, where it will dominate the game.

13...dc7?
Black was thus forced to break from the plan and play 13...xf3 14.xf3 wb5, when he can hang on, but certainly will not be happy with the course the game has taken.

14.hxg4?
White is not believing in the power of the attack, which is not only a bad misjudgement leading to his rapid demise, but also missing the chance to more or less win the game.

14.e1! was the correct move, after which Black might already be lost.
Black has to give up all hopes of a respectable position and take on f3, as 14...hxh3 is met with 15...exf5!, when Black is struggling.

The only ambitious move, 14...e5?! fails to 15.d5!! exd5 16.exd5 exf3 17.e4 g6 18.bxc6 (18...wxf4 19.c4!) 19.xh6 axb6 20.wxg6 and Black is busted.

It was of course not necessary to see all of this to play 14...c1, and after 14...e5 simple play with 15...c5 is also very uncomfortable for Black.

14...dxg4 15.xe1?

White is hoping that the f1-square will be enough to weather the storm. Analysis shows that the only way to continue was 15.g3, to which Black would reply 15...xg3! with a strong attack. For example: 16.xg2 xg6! and White must be feeling very uncomfortable. However, the outcome is by no means decided and the game marches on.

14...dxg4 15.xe1?

White is hoping that the f1-square will be enough to weather the storm. Analysis shows that the only way to continue was 15.g3, to which Black would reply 15...xg3! with a strong attack. For example: 16.xg2 xg6! and White must be feeling very uncomfortable. However, the outcome is by no means decided and the game marches on.

17...wd8!!

Quite logically, Black includes the final piece in the attack. With the threat of ...exd2, White might as well take the rook on d4.

18.exd4 exd4 19.xe2

The most natural move. The queen is relatively safe here and d1 is conveniently freed for the king.

A nice line runs like this: 19.e4 whh2† 20.xf1 whh1† 21.xe2 xg2 22.xd4 wxf2† 23.xd3 wgg3† and Black wins the queen. Even though White will have three pieces in return, he is lost. The four passed pawns decide everything.

19...b6!

19...wh2† is less convincing.

The king is surely going to run, but with the great presence of pieces on the kingside, it is not in Black's interest to force the white
king to run. Instead it is time to zoom in on another weakness on the dark squares.

20.\texttt{\textbar f}3

Black is planning ideas such as 20.\texttt{\textbar c}3 \texttt{\textbar f}4, so White needs to be careful.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20...\texttt{\textbar x}f2!!

A necessary masterstroke.

20...\texttt{\textbar e}4? looks strong, but there is a trap:

21.\texttt{\textbar d}2!! \texttt{\textbar x}f2\texttt{\textbar f}1 \texttt{\textbar x}c4 23.\texttt{\textbar d}6\texttt{\textbar c}8

24.\texttt{\textbar e}d1 and it has all gone pear-shaped!

21.\texttt{\textbar x}f2

Another point of the knight sacrifice is 21.\texttt{\textbar x}d4 \texttt{\textbar d}4 22.\texttt{\textbar f}1 \texttt{\textbar x}c4 23.\texttt{\textbar d}6\texttt{\textbar c}8

24.\texttt{\textbar e}d1 and it has all gone pear-shaped!

21...\texttt{\textbar x}c4 22.\texttt{\textbar e}3 \texttt{\textbar h}6 23.\texttt{\textbar e}c1

White seems to be holding his bits together, but the pin along the diagonal is too much, and it is thus not a surprise that a piece of deflection makes the position come down like a house of cards.

\begin{center}
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\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

23...\texttt{\textbar c}1!!

Black wins.

16.\texttt{\textbar h}2\texttt{\textbar f}1 17.\texttt{\textbar f}1 \texttt{\textbar x}e3\texttt{\textbar f}1

This is the most natural continuation, but not the only one. Another winning line was 17...\texttt{\textbar e}5?! 18.\texttt{\textbar g}1 \texttt{\textbar x}e3 19.\texttt{\textbar x}e3 \texttt{\textbar x}e2\texttt{\textbar f}1 with decisive material gains.

18.\texttt{\textbar x}e3 \texttt{\textbar f}5 19.\texttt{\textbar b}3

19.\texttt{\textbar c}4 \texttt{\textbar e}5! with the threat of ...\texttt{\textbar x}a1 and...

\texttt{\textbar h}1\texttt{\textbar f}1 gives a winning attack. The same can be said of 19.\texttt{\textbar x}h2 \texttt{\textbar x}h2 20.\texttt{\textbar a}d1, when Black wins with 20...\texttt{\textbar x}d2! 21.\texttt{\textbar a}d2 \texttt{\textbar g}3\texttt{\textbar f}1 22.\texttt{\textbar f}2 \texttt{\textbar f}4\texttt{\textbar f}1 23.\texttt{\textbar f}3 \texttt{\textbar f}5 with mate to come.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

19...\texttt{\textbar x}d2!

The final fireworks. The knight is deflected from f3.

20.\texttt{\textbar x}d2 \texttt{\textbar g}3\texttt{\textbar f}1 21.\texttt{\textbar f}2 \texttt{\textbar h}4 22.\texttt{\textbar c}4

White resigned, as after 22...\texttt{\textbar e}4\texttt{\textbar f}1 23.\texttt{\textbar f}3

\texttt{\textbar g}5 it is mate.

0-1

Although this game was a bit off perfect, and the players are not so famous, I still think it was a great moment for our game. Granted, almost every tournament will contain one of these magical moments; which I suppose is one of the reasons why we all continue to play this game.
Finally we shall look at one example in a bit more depth. It involves a theoretical variation that has been played in several games. We will go as far as the critical position before examining the course of some different encounters, as well as some of my own untested analysis.

Let us shoot off the first fourteen moves to start with:

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 Qf6
5.Qc3 Qc6 6.Qc4 e6 7.Qe3 Qe7 8.Qe2
9.0-0-0 0-0 10.Qb3 Qc7 11.Qg4 Qxd4
12.Qxd4 Qd7 13.g5 Qc5 14.Qg1 b5

A natural reaction is of course to take the pawn, which leads to some of the most remarkable attacking sequences imaginable. We shall return to this moment later on, but for now, indulge me please.

15...dxe5 16.Qh4 Qxb3+
16...g6?

It is necessary to eliminate the bishop on b3 immediately, not because the bishop is worth much, but because White cannot be allowed to win a tempo with:
17.Qxc5!

It does not matter much which piece Black retakes with; the consequences are the same:
17...Qxc5 18.Qe4 Qe7 19.Qf6+ Qxf6 20.gxf6

The main threat here is 21.Qe3!, when the penetration of the queen to h6 is decisive. If Black tries to anticipate this by attacking the f6-pawn with 20...Qd8, then White strikes hard and fast with 21.Qh5, leading directly to mate.

17.axb3 g6 18.Qf3

Winning an important tempo for the transfer to the kingside.

18...Qb7 19.Qh3 h5

Black is hoping to keep the h-file closed. If White was to accept the pawn by taking
en passant, Black should coolly play ...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h}7}, without first taking the exchange. With a secure king and a heavy pawn phalanx in the centre, Black would have the advantage.

So, instead White chooses the direct approach.

\textbf{20.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash e}xh5! gxh5 21.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xh5}}} \\
This is the first major moment for Black in our investigation of this line. White is trying to open up files on the kingside to get to the exposed and lonely king. Black will have to clear the seventh rank somehow, otherwise everything will be over very quickly.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}[thick, scale=0.5, every node/.style={scale=0.5}]
\draw[ultra thick, gray] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\foreach \x in {0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8} {
  \draw[dashed] (\x,0) -- (\x,8);
  \draw[dashed] (0,\x) -- (8,\x);
}
\draw[ultra thick, red] (0,0) -- (7,7);
\draw[ultra thick, blue] (0,0) -- (7,7);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

At least six games have been played from this position, although astonishingly none of the examples I located involved the best defensive move. We will examine four continuations, beginning with the weakest.

\textbf{a) 21...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash d}8}?! 22.g6 f5 23.g7 \text{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xg7 24.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash x}xg7} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash h}6}+ 1-0} Garakov – Pilavov, Lugansk 2007.}

\textbf{b) 21...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash f}3}?!} This only invites the queen to go to a potentially even better square. After 22.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash wh6 \texttt{\textbackslash a}3 23.g6 f5 24.g7}} 1-0 Black decided to call it a day in Smith – Thompson, corr. 1998.

\textbf{c) 21...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash b}4}?! 22.g6 f5 23.g7 \text{\texttt{\textbackslash f}c8}} \\
This has happened in two games. Black is basing his defence on the line: 24.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h}8+ \texttt{\textbackslash f}7} 25.g8=\text{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xg8} 26.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h}7+ \texttt{\textbackslash f}6}! when it does not appear that there is any more than perpetual check Unfortunately for him, on both occasions White found the winning idea.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}[thick, scale=0.5, every node/.style={scale=0.5}]
\draw[ultra thick, gray] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\foreach \x in {0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8} {
  \draw[dashed] (\x,0) -- (\x,8);
  \draw[dashed] (0,\x) -- (8,\x);
}
\draw[ultra thick, red] (0,0) -- (7,7);
\draw[ultra thick, blue] (0,0) -- (7,7);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

24.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash g}6}!! \\
This fabulous move wins directly. The point is of course that when we get to \texttt{\textbackslash h}7+ in the natural checking sequence, Black will no longer be able to make it to f6 with the king. As all Black can do is wait, White indeed has the time to make this subtle yet decisive quiet move.

\textbf{24...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash c}6}} \\
24...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c3} led to a quick finish in one game: 25.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h}8+ \texttt{\textbackslash f}7} 26.g8=\text{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xg8} 27.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h}7+ \texttt{\textbackslash f}6}! 1-0 Martin Gonzalez – Gomez, St Cugat 1994.

\textbf{25.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h}8+ \texttt{\textbackslash f}7} 26.g8=\text{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xg8} 27.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h}7+ \texttt{\textbackslash f}8}} 28.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash f}e8} 29.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash x}g8} 30.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash x}h6} 1-0 \\

\textbf{d) 21...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash d}6}?!} \\
Finally there is this move, which looks quite natural. The purpose of the odd positioning of the bishop is to protect the queen.
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22.g6 f5

22...f6? is even easier to kill, now that the vital f6-square is occupied: 23.g7 £fc8 24.£h8† £f7 25.g8=£££ +£xg8 26.£h7† 1–0 Csof – Szilardfy, Budapest 2004.

Instead Black had better keep the f6-square free for his king.

23.g7 £fb8

Once again, White can win with 24.£g6!!, but in the game he did not see this idea and thus found nothing more than perpetual check.

24.£h8† £f7 25.g8=£££ +£xg8 26.£h7† £f6 27.£h6† £f7

½–½


Having gone through these games it is natural to get to the conclusion that the best defence is to try to exchange the bishop on c3. The reason for this shows up after our main try:

21...£c5!

The main point behind this move is that the e3-bishop is vital for the white attack in many lines. For example, should he continue with brute force with 22.g6, then Black will reply 22...£xe3† 23.£xe3 f5, when after 24.g7 £xg7†, the white attack comes to nothing. With the bishop gone there is a limit to the amount of damage the white queen can do on her own, and White has to be careful not to drift into problems.

And if White decides to exchange on c5, thereby cutting the queen off from the defence, Black again can use the absence of the white bishop to escape on the dark square: 22.£xc5 £xc5 23.g6 £g7† and White needs to take perpetual check immediately.

For this reason I began working on the assumption that 22.£d2!? was the most dangerous reply.

In this position there are many moves that draw for Black, but as you will soon see, it is because he has the ability to waste a move before playing the only defensive plan, which is not entirely illogical considering that White has just given up a tempo.

Let us first look at what happens if Black does not realise about this defence:

22...£fd8?!

After 22...£xf2? 23.g6 White wins in the familiar way, while after 23...f5 24.g7 £xg1 25.£h8† £f7 26.gxf8=£££ £xf8 27.£h7† the queen is lost.

23.g6 f5 24.g7

Here the first line I looked at (certified as a guaranteed draw by the computer engines – unfortunately I forgot to read the small print...): 24...£f3? 25.£xf3! £d7

After 25...b4 26.£h5! bxc3 27.£xc3 White has an easily winning attack. But please note that 27.bxc3? would throw away the attack to 27...£d7!, when 28.£g6? no longer is enough, based on the lucky shot 28...£xd2† 29.£e2 £a3†, with mate in 7. Had it not been for this check, White would still win.

26.£b1

This might look awkward, but it does the job. White's king stays safe for long enough.
Chapter 4 - King Safety

26...\(\text{d}5\) 27.\(\text{wh}5\) \(\text{xf}2\)

28.\(\text{g}5!!\)
An absolutely astonishing winning move. Black can now defend better than the line I have indicated, but he cannot save the position. The main point is:

28...\(\text{h}1\) 29.\(\text{wh}8\)\(\text{f}7\) 30.\(\text{g}8\)\(\text{g}8\) 31.\(\text{e}6\)\(\text{f}8\) 32.\(\text{e}7\) mate!

But Black could have defended quite easily, either on move 22 or 24, with a simple move, taking sufficient control over the vital g7-square.

Having thought for some time about the various aspects of this line, I realised that the key battle hinged around the g7-square. The idea of preparing for the opening of the lines and the consequences from this, with moves like \(\text{h}4\) for White and ...\(\text{d}4\) and ...\(\text{e}4\) for Black, made a strong impact and I decided to investigate this concept a bit further. It soon transpired that White is winning all the same with a fabulous sequence of moves, starting with a beautiful and subtle nudge forward from the queen.

22.\(\text{h}6!!\) \(\text{xe}3\)†
It makes little more sense to play 22...\(\text{d}4\), when the win is trivial: 23.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{exd}4\) 24.\(\text{g}6\) \(\text{f}5\) 25.\(\text{g}7\) \(\text{ef}8\) 26.\(\text{g}6\)!! \(\text{e}5\)!! 27.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{xe}7\) 28.\(\text{g}6\) \(\text{c}7\) 29.\(\text{e}2\) and White wins in the long run.

23.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{fc}8\)
The rook may as well take up residence here, just in case the c-file is opened. 23.\(\text{fe}8\) 24.\(\text{g}6\) \(\text{f}5\) 25.\(\text{g}7\) \(\text{e}4\) 26.\(\text{g}6\) \(\text{e}5\) gives us another interesting image. After 27.\(\text{f}6\)! White wins all the same. The queen and knight are too strong for Black to control. The main threat is \(\text{d}3\)-e2-f4\(\text{xe}6\), which it is very hard to defend against.

24.\(\text{g}3!!\)
Black has prepared against our normal idea. After 24.\(\text{g}6\)? Black plays 24...\(\text{f}6!!\) 25.\(\text{g}7\) \(\text{e}4\)!
and the attack loses most of its venom. The main issue is of course that the h7-square is defended so the standard combination does not work.

24...\textit{g2}!?  
Black employs delaying tactics, and they almost work.

24...e4 preparing ...\textit{e5} fails to 25.g6 f5 26.g7 and 27.\textit{g6}, just as in the other lines.

After 24...\textit{e4} 25.\textit{h3} it is the h8-square which is under fire. Following 25...\textit{h7} 26.\textit{xh7}+ \textit{f8} 27.g6 White's attack appears to be irresistible.

25.\textit{xg2} \textit{b7}  
Black is hoping to gain an important tempo to get some much needed counterplay, but White wins by closing the lines Black is aiming to use, and then using the standard combination to decide the game.

26.g6 \textit{f5}

27.\textit{e4}!!  
The main threat is \textit{f6}+, which cannot be prevented. After 27...\textit{e7} it comes anyway, with decisive effect.

27...\textit{fxe4} 28.g7 \textit{ab8} 29.\textit{g6}!!

By now it should come as no surprise to see that, once again, this move is the match winner. It is important to note that although 29.\textit{h8}+ \textit{f7} 30.g8=\textit{w} \textit{xg8} 31.\textit{h7}+ \textit{f6} 32.\textit{f2}+ looks attractive, there is no win after 32...\textit{g5}.

However, before you start basing your opening repertoire around this fabulous attack, I should point out to you that the whole line is as dodgy as anything.

Instead of accepting the pawn on e5, Black can play much better. He can start by eliminating the bishop with 15...\textit{xb3}+ 16.\textit{axb3}, followed by 16...\textit{d5}!. The point is that Black does want to win the e5-pawn, but only if he can take it with the queen, which will be able to quickly get to the kingside. One game continued: 17.\textit{h4} \textit{xe5} 18.\textit{d3}
Now after 18...\texttt{Wf5?!} the endgame was a bit better for White in Gdanski – Seeman, Stockholm 1998, and it was entirely his own fault that he lost. However, had Black here replied 18...g6?! I would think that White’s compensation is entirely imaginary. For example: 19.\texttt{d4 Wxg5?!} and Black is well on his way to a full point.

I have of course only scratched the surface of the subject of line clearance as an attacking tool in this section, but I hope that you have found the examples interesting and that they have given you a hint of a deeper insight into the theme. In particular, I would advise you to look at how the games were lost in this section. There was a sense of determination in the play that allowed the attackers to open these dangerous files and commit bloody murder.

In the last example we saw how, once initiated, the attack could only be resisted for a while, not actually stopped. The power of controlling an open file leading towards your opponent’s king should not be underestimated.

\textbf{Cutting off the defences}

Moving away from the theme of creating avenues of attack on the enemy king, let us talk about how the other defenders can be pushed around. Often we see defenders that are performing an important duty, but are standing on shaky ground.

The first example illustrates this simply. White has played a good attack and seems close to winning. However, instead of cutting off the bishop on a2 from the defence of the vital f7-pawn, he tried to activate the rook on h1. This shows how a good-looking move can be wrong, for the simple reason that it does not address the specific demands of the position.

\textbf{Parimarjan Negi – Manuel Bosboom}

\textbf{Wijk aan Zee 2007}

White played 33.\texttt{fhe1?!} and was lost after 33...\texttt{Wg8!}, resigning on move 50. Instead he should have played 33.\texttt{f4! Wd5}, when 34.b3! wins easily, and 34.c4 \texttt{x}xc4 35.\texttt{x}xc4 \texttt{Wxc4}+ 36.\texttt{b1} does the same, but only after a few extra moves.

Maybe White was hoping he could take on f7 and place the other rook on e7, winning the queen; but he was just not in time.

The next is a re-enactment of a known play, of which maybe the most famous performance was Fischer – Benko, New York 1963. By putting a piece on f6 White prevents Black from advancing his f-pawn, making it impossible for the black pieces to get to the kingside.
If Black gets the chance he will try to open lines for his pieces to defend the king. White prevents this in thematic style.

18.\textit{f6}!! h6

There is nothing better.

18...\textit{gxh6} 19.\textit{f3} gives White a winning attack. Details are not really necessary.

18...\textit{h8} is a bit more complicated, but still not too difficult to refute. After 19.\textit{h4} \textit{xh6} 20.\textit{exh6} g5?? White has a knockout punch in 21.\textit{f3}!.

Finally it should be noted that 18...\textit{e8}, with the idea to defend g7 with the bishop in some lines, fails to 19.\textit{xg7}!.

19.\textit{f3} \textit{h7}

Clearing g8 for the rook.

20.\textit{f1}?!?

For once this natural move is a mistake. Instead White could have decided the game with 20.\textit{wh4}!!.

With the attack still strong on h6, Black has no choice but to play 20...\textit{e8}. Now all White needs is to get out of the X-ray to obtain a winning position. This can be achieved with 21.\textit{e4}!! \textit{g8} (21...\textit{g6} 22.\textit{f1}! and the kingside cannot be defended for long) 22.\textit{xg7}!! \textit{xg7} 23.\textit{xf7}! and Black is mated in a few moves.

20...\textit{xf6} 21.\textit{xf6} \textit{e8} 22.\textit{f3}!

This is the strongest move; White is increasing the power and range of the attacking pieces. 22.\textit{xh6}?! \textit{gxh6} 23.\textit{f6} was another possibility, after which Black would have to give up his queen. The game continuation is even better though...

22...\textit{a5}!?

Black is hoping for some sort of counterplay.

23.\textit{h3} \textit{a1} 24.\textit{f1}

White does not want to allow Black to get the queen to c1.

24...\textit{b2}

Black has avoided immediate dismissal, but his position is still passive and under attack. It is not a great surprise that an accident happened.

24...\textit{a5}?! 25.\textit{g5}! is also not going to work.
Chapter 4 - King Safety

25.\text{gf3}

25.\text{gf4}! was apparently a bit stronger. After the natural-looking 25.\text{g8} (in order to avoid \text{\textasciitilde}xe6), White plays 26.\text{wc4}+ \text{wh8} 27.\text{we3} \text{wh7} 28.\text{f6} and Black is mated.

25.\text{\textasciitilde}c6 26.\text{d3}+ \text{\textasciitilde}g8 27.\text{g3} \text{wa3}?! The last chance of resistance is also brushed aside. After 27...\text{\textasciitilde}b5 28.c4 \text{\textasciitilde}ad8 29.c3 \text{\textasciitilde}c6 30.\text{\textasciitilde}e3 \text{\textasciitilde}h8 31.\text{\textasciitilde}g4! White is planning \text{\textasciitilde}g3 and Black will lose f7 or g7.

28.\text{c3}! \text{\textasciitilde}h7 29.\text{\textasciitilde}f6! \text{\textasciitilde}a1+ 30.\text{\textasciitilde}f2 \text{\textasciitilde}g8 31.\text{\textasciitilde}h3

Mate is imminent, so Black threw in the towel.

1–0

Obviously all grandmasters have seen this motif before, and would, like me, be able to identify Fischer – Benko immediately, although they might struggle on naming the place and year. This does not make the theme old hat by any means! In the following example White wins with a variation of this theme, giving up the bishop on f6 as well.

The fact that it is a bishop being sacrificed in these two examples is mere coincidence, but the fact that the key attacking move of both games occurs on the f6-square is not. When a defender wants to get his pieces to the kingside, there are very few things that feel as debilitating as doubled pawns on f7 and f6 (rotate the squares to the three other corners according to your pleasure). In many such cases the defenders simply cannot get to the scene of action in time.

In this game the losing mistake seems to occur on move 15. There is little point in putting the queen on d7, as far as I can see (although I am sure that Tiviakov had a reason that would seem valid to most, once expressed, for doing so). Black is clearly under attack on the kingside and it is important to bring in the defenders; including the knight loitering on a6.

\textbf{Chanda Sandipan – Sergei Tiviakov}

Ottawa 2007

1.d4 \text{\textasciitilde}f6 2.c4 e6 3.d3 b6 4.g3 \text{\textasciitilde}b7 5.\text{\textasciitilde}g2 \text{\textasciitilde}c7 6–0-0 0–0 7.d5??

7...\text{\textasciitilde}xd5 8.\text{\textasciitilde}h4! Polugaevsky's novelty. After 8.\text{\textasciitilde}d4 Black has 8...\text{\textasciitilde}c6! with a good position.
8...c6 9.cxd5 \textit{\text{c}6} 10.\textit{\text{c}f5} \textit{\text{c}7}!

This has been the medicine since the 1970s.

11.e4 d5 12.\textit{\text{c}c3} \textit{\text{f}6} 13.exd5 cxd5 14.\textit{\text{f}4} \textit{\text{ba6}} 15.\textit{\text{e}1}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}[scale=0.5]
\draw[black, thick] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[black, thick] (0,0) -- (8,8);
\draw[black, thick] (0,8) -- (8,0);
\node at (1,1) {a}; \node at (1,8) {b}; \node at (8,8) {c}; \node at (8,1) {d}; \node at (8,8) {e}; \node at (8,8) {f}; \node at (8,1) {g}; \node at (8,8) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

15...\textit{\text{d}7}?

A simple mistake. I am really surprised that such a great player as Tiviakov can play such a dangerous-looking move. As is so often the case, a better idea would have been to bring an inactive piece into play.

Without going into details, I can say that after 15...\textit{\text{c}5}! I do not believe that White has an opening advantage.

16.\textit{\text{h}3} \textit{\text{e}6}

One famous encounter went 16...\textit{\text{h}8} 17.\textit{\text{e}4} \textit{\text{xb}2} 18.\textit{\text{g}5} \textit{\text{c}6} 19.\textit{\text{e}7} \textit{\text{f}6} 20.\textit{\text{h}xh7}! \textit{\text{d}4} 21.\textit{\text{h}5} \textit{\text{g}6} 22.\textit{\text{h}4} \textit{\text{xa}1} 23.\textit{\text{f}6}! 1–0 Kasparov – Marjanovic, La Valeta 1980.

17.\textit{\text{e}4}!

This is the real problem with the queen being on d7. If it was not for this, White would not have a route for the knight to get to the kingside.

17...\textit{\text{xb}2}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}[scale=0.5]
\draw[black, thick] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[black, thick] (0,0) -- (8,8);
\draw[black, thick] (0,8) -- (8,0);
\node at (1,1) {a}; \node at (1,8) {b}; \node at (8,8) {c}; \node at (8,1) {d}; \node at (8,8) {e}; \node at (8,8) {f}; \node at (8,1) {g}; \node at (8,8) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

18.\textit{\text{b}1}!

A novelty, but a rather obvious one. One previous game continued with 18.\textit{\text{g}5} \textit{\text{xa}1} 19.\textit{\text{xa}1} Paalman – Erwich, Dieren 2001. Now Black will have a good position after 19...\textit{\text{ae}8}! with the idea of ...\textit{\text{d}4}. This is probably what Tiviakov wanted. However, the basic problem of Black's play is that he was relying on an improvement, more than sound play. 20.\textit{\text{xg}7} is the big trick. 20...\textit{\text{d}4} is good, but 20...\textit{\text{xa}5}! just wins.

18...\textit{\text{c}8}

18...\textit{\text{c}6} loses by force to 19.\textit{\text{g}5}!, winning a tempo: 19...\textit{\text{f}6}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}[scale=0.5]
\draw[black, thick] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[black, thick] (0,0) -- (8,8);
\draw[black, thick] (0,8) -- (8,0);
\node at (1,1) {a}; \node at (1,8) {b}; \node at (8,8) {c}; \node at (8,1) {d}; \node at (8,8) {e}; \node at (8,8) {f}; \node at (8,1) {g}; \node at (8,8) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20.\textit{\text{xe}6}! \textit{\text{xe}6} (20...\textit{\text{xa}5} 21.\textit{\text{d}6}) 21.\textit{\text{h}6}! \textit{\text{h}8} 22.\textit{\text{xe}6} \textit{\text{e}8} (22...\textit{\text{axh}6} 23.\textit{\text{xd}7} \textit{\text{xd}7} 24.\textit{\text{h}xh7} and wins.) 23.\textit{\text{g}f7}! \textit{\text{xf}7} 24.\textit{\text{xf}7}! \textit{\text{g}8} 25.\textit{\text{xd}5} \textit{\text{xd}5} 26.\textit{\text{xd}5} and White wins.
19. \( \text{g}_5 \) \( \text{f}_6 \)

19...\( \text{c}_3 \) is met strongly with 20. \( \text{d}_3 \text{?!?} \), when after 20...\( \text{d}_xg_5 \), White can both recapture with a strong attack (probably strongest), or just win the queen with 21. \( \text{h}_6 \text{?!?} \) gxh6 22. \( \text{x}_d_7 \) \( \text{x}_e_1 \) 23. \( \text{x}_c_8 \) \( \text{x}_f_2 \text{?!?} \) 24. \( \text{x}_f_2 \) \( \text{c}_5 \) 25. \( \text{x}_d_5 \) \( \text{x}_e_4 \text{?!?} \) 26. \( \text{g}_2 \) \( \text{x}_c_8 \) 27. \( \text{b}_2 \), with a clear advantage for White.

20. \( \text{h}_5 \) \( \text{x}_g_5 \)

20...\( \text{x}_g_5 \) loses the exchange to 21. \( \text{x}_g_5 \) \( \text{c}_6 \) 22. \( \text{x}_f_6 \) \( \text{x}_f_6 \) 23. \( \text{c}_7 \text{?!?} \), when White is just winning.

21. \( \text{x}_g_5 \) \( \text{e}_8 \)

No other moves appear possible. 21...\( \text{b}_7 \) leads to mate after 22. \( \text{e}_7 \text{?!?} \) \( \text{h}_8 \) 23. \( \text{f}_5 \text{?!?} \), for example: 23...\( \text{g}_6 \) 24. \( \text{f}_6 \text{?!?} \) \( \text{g}_7 \) 25. \( \text{h}_6 \) \( \text{g}_8 \) 26. \( \text{x}_g_6 \text{?!?} \)?

22. \( \text{f}_6 \text{?!?} \)

A fantastic move. Black is feeling the absence of the dark-squared bishop as well as the lacking development with full force.

22...\( \text{g}_x f_6 \)

Forced. Other options were:

22...\( \text{c}_7 \) 23. \( \text{g}_7 \text{?!?} \) \( \text{x}_g_7 \) 24. \( \text{h}_6 \text{?!?} \) (24. \( \text{g}_5 \text{?!?} \) \( \text{c}_6 \text{?!?} \) allows Black to fight.) 24...\( \text{c}_6 \) 25. \( \text{e}_5 \) and White wins.

22...\( \text{g}_6 \) 23. \( \text{h}_6 \) \( \text{c}_5 \text{?!?} \) looks very shaky, and White has many tempting options. The most impressive includes bringing in the least active piece: 24. \( \text{b}_4 \text{?!?} \) \( \text{c}_4 \) 25. \( \text{x}_e 4 \) \( \text{x}_e 4 \) 26. \( \text{d}_4 \text{?!?} \) \( \text{b}_7 \) 27. \( \text{d}_6 \) and Black needs to resign badly.

23. \( \text{h}_6 \)

The point. White is aiming to transfer a rook to g4 or h4. It will take some time, but Black cannot get his pieces to the kingside to help.

23...\( \text{c}_5 \text{?!?} \)

There are no other moves. 23...\( \text{h}_8 \) 24. \( \text{c}_6 \text{?!?} \) leads straight to mate.

24. \( \text{b}_d 1 \)

Bringing the last piece into the attack.

24...\( \text{b}_7 \)

Nothing can prevent what is coming. This is the most fantastic thing about this brilliant game.

25. \( \text{d}_4 \) \( \text{e}_4 \)

26. \( \text{x}_e 4 \) \( \text{x}_e 4 \) 27. \( \text{x}_f 6 \) \( \text{c}_7 \)

After 27...\( \text{h}_6 \) White mates with: 28. \( \text{x}_h 6 \text{?!?} \) \( \text{h}_7 \) 29. \( \text{f}_5 \text{mate} \).

28. \( \text{h}_6 \text{?!?} \) \( \text{f}_8 \) 29. \( \text{h}_8 \text{?!?} \) \( \text{e}_7 \) 30. \( \text{f}_5 \text{mate} \)!

1-0
The final example of this section is also the most attractive. White manages to set up his rook on the kingside, assisted by the h-pawn. It seems that this did not strike Stellwagen as being overly dangerous and did not prompt him into immediate action.

White's wonderful winning strategy essentially involves cutting the board in two. The queenside is more or less closed and it is very difficult for Black to create any play there, so once the centre is stabilised and the black pieces are trapped on the wrong side of the f7-c6-d5 pawn chain, it is impossible for Black to offer any real resistance.

Friso Nijboer - Daniel Stellwagen

Leuwarden 2002

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.©c3 ©f6 4.e5 ©fd7 5.f4

Theoretical annex:

19.©d4!! ©xa4

I am going to provide a lot of analysis to prove that Nijboer's piece sacrifice was justified, but first I want to give the theoretical explanation. What White did first was to eliminate all counterplay in the centre with ...d5-d4. Now that the centre is stable, it is obvious that only White can easily send pieces to the kingside, and that Black is in for a rough time.

Other moves at this point would not fare better: 19...©h8 20.f5! exf5 21.e6 and 19...©f8 20.f5 ©xa4 21.f6 g6 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.©f4 in both cases gives White a winning attack.

20.f5 ©f8

This attempt to run away is unsuccessful. However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, so let us have a look at what happens after the other defensive tries.

20...exf5 loses to the beautiful 21.©h6 ©f8 22.e6 f6 23.e7!, and g7 falls.

20...©h8 21.f6 ©f8 22.©g5 ©g8 23.©d3 quite obviously will lead to mate or similar quite quickly.

20...©f8 was perhaps the most natural defensive try, but even here White's attack cannot be stopped. The winning line goes: 21.f6 g6 22.hxg6 fxg6 23.©f4! ©xf6 This is sadly forced. (23...©f7 24.©d3 and 25.©h1 does not inspire confidence) 24.exf6 ©d7 25.©d3 ©f7 26.©h1 Black is powerless to prevent the following combination: 27.©xg6 hxg6 28.©xg6+ ©xg6 29.f7+ ©xf7 30.©h8 mate.

21.h6

Maybe it was easier to play 21.fxe6 fxe6 (21...©c5 22.©xc5 ©xc5 23.©g5 and White wins) 22.©f4+ ©g8 23.©h6 ©f8 24.©d3 and Black is mated; but there is nothing faulty about the line chosen in the game.
21...g6

22.fxg6!?

Another pretty winning line was: 22.fxe6 \( \text{\mathit{d}c5} \) 23.\( \text{\mathit{x}c5} \) \( \text{\mathit{x}c5} \) 24.\( \text{\mathit{f4}} \) \( \text{\mathit{e}8} \) 25.\( \text{\mathit{x}g6} \)!! \( \text{\mathit{hxg6}} \) 26.\( \text{\mathit{h7}} \) \( \text{\mathit{g7}} \) 27.\( \text{\mathit{f6}} \)\( \text{\mathit{h}7} \) 28.\( \text{\mathit{b5}} \) and Black is mated.

22...fxg6

22...hxg6 23.\( \text{\mathit{f4}} \) and 24.\( \text{\mathit{d}3} \) also wins without great problems.

23.\( \text{\mathit{d}3} \) b3

Also hopeless for Black was 23...\( \text{\mathit{dc8}} \) 24.\( \text{\mathit{x}g6} \) \( \text{\mathit{hxg6}} \) 25.\( \text{\mathit{x}g6} \).

24.\( \text{\mathit{f4}} \)\( \text{\mathit{f}8} \) 25.a\( \text{\mathit{xb3}} \) \( \text{\mathit{c}6} \)

26.\( \text{\mathit{x}g6} \)

Even stronger was 26.\( \text{\mathit{x}g6} \)! \( \text{\mathit{hxg6}} \) 27.\( \text{\mathit{h7}} \) and White is winning on every account known to man.

26...\( \text{\mathit{d}f8} \) 27.\( \text{\mathit{g}7} \)

White has a winning attack all the same, but chooses to convert the attack into a winning endgame at the first possibility.

27...\( \text{\mathit{d}7} \) 28.\( \text{\mathit{x}f1} \) \( \text{\mathit{e}8} \) 29.\( \text{\mathit{g}5} \) \( \text{\mathit{d}8} \) 30.\( \text{\mathit{xe7}} \) \( \text{\mathit{xe7}} \) 31.\( \text{\mathit{xf8}} \)\( \text{\mathit{d}7} \) 32.\( \text{\mathit{xa8}} \) \( \text{\mathit{xa8}} \) 33.\( \text{\mathit{g}8} \) \( \text{\mathit{c}8} \) 34.\( \text{\mathit{xe7}} \) \( \text{\mathit{e}8} \) 35.\( \text{\mathit{xe8}} \)\( \text{\mathit{xe8}} \) 36.\( \text{\mathit{d}3} \) \( \text{\mathit{c}6} \) 37.\( \text{\mathit{g}4} \) \( \text{\mathit{g}8} \) 38.\( \text{\mathit{h}7} \) \( \text{\mathit{h}8} \) 39.\( \text{\mathit{g}5} \) \( \text{\mathit{e}7} \) 40.\( \text{\mathit{g}6} \) \( \text{\mathit{f}8} \) 41.\( \text{\mathit{c}5} \)\( \text{\mathit{g}7} \) 42.\( \text{\mathit{c}7} \)

1–0

Weak kings

What we are essentially aiming for when we try to cut off the opponent’s pieces from the defence is a situation where our own forces are in the majority and will be able to attack the king with a greater chance of success. Other factors can increase our chance of success with equal probability. An important one of these is a scenario where our opponent’s kingside is weakened. This could have happened in many possible ways (one of them being when we rock the ramparts and sacrifice something to weaken the king), but is essentially always a concern.

In this section we shall look at three examples where the king’s fortress has fractured in some way (worse for every game) and the attacker uses this to create dangerous threats.

In the first example Black has played ...g6 at one point. White has then softened the kingside a bit by exchanging the f7-pawn for his h-pawn. Once the pieces are in place, this gives him a chance to blow the horn and start the attack.
Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu – Michael Adams

Sofia 2007

Please note that an important ingredient for White's success in this game is the fact that three of the black pieces are currently positioned on the a-file, inactive and not easily brought back to defend the kingside.

41. \( \text{Nf5!} \text{ Wh8} \)

41...gx\( f5? \) would have been refuted by 42. \( \text{Wh5!} \) with the threat of \( g6 \), winning. For instance, after 42...\( \text{h8} \) 43.\( \text{h3} \) White has a decisive attack.

41...\( \text{d8} \) is strongly met by 42.\( \text{Wh2!} \) with the threat of \( \text{h3} \), which is not easy to meet in a satisfactory way, although Black is not fully lost yet.

42. \( \text{Wh2} \text{ h6} \)

This loses by force, but the choice is not inspiring.

42...\( \text{h5} \) seems to be the only move, but after 43.\( \text{xe7} \text{+ Wh7} \) 44.\( \text{f3} \) followed by \( \text{f6} \), the black position looks strategically lost in the long term.

42...\( \text{d8} \)
Finally, Black has no defence against Wh6, winning.

43.\texttt{Qg4! xg5}

Black is also lost after 43...gx5 44.exf5 hxg5 45.Qxg5 Qxg5 46.f6!.

44.Qxg5!! Qxg5

The great point of this awesome combination arises after 44...Qxg5 45.Qf6+ Qxf6 46.Qxg6+ Qg7 47.Qe7† winning the queen and the whole kingdom.

45.Qh6† Qh7 46.Qf7† Qg8 47.Qh6† Qh7 48.Qf7† Qg8 49.Qxg5 Qxg5 50.Qxg5

Everything wins around here. For instance, 50.Qxg5!? is good enough.

50...f8 51.g2 a8 52.h1 f6 53.h6†

Adams resigned. After 53...f8, 54.f5 wins at once.

1–0

In the next example Black has a slight pawn majority in the centre. This has come at a cost; the kingside is somewhat weakened. I am not sure in which way this exchange of advantages should be evaluated, but what I do know is that it puts certain responsibilities on both players, to at all times be aware of both the weaknesses and the strengths of their positions, and to lay strategies that take this into consideration at all times. The tendency seems to be that the person with the weak king finds this harder to handle, but this is based on my general powers of observation, rather than any deep statistical analysis.

\textbf{Alexander Krapivin – Valerij Popov}

\textit{Vladimir 2008}

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5

Despite not being theoretically dangerous for Black, this move has a big score.

3...c5 4.c3 Wh6 5.Qf3 Qc6 6.a3 Qh6 7.b4 cxd4 8.cxd4 f5 9.Qe3 f6 10.exf6 gxf6 11.Qd3 Qxe3 12.Qxe3 Qh6 13.Qe2 Qd7

14.0–0

I think it is more natural to play 14.Qc3, or at least to do it on the next move. In the game Black gets to challenge the b-pawn and prevent the Qa4 jump. This position looks a little better for White as far as I am concerned.

One internet game was enough to persuade me that this position really is a bit tricky for Black. I give it here without annotations. 14...Qe7 15.0–0 0–0 16.Qe1 (16.Qh1 has been played by Morozevich against Bareev
in a rapid game.) 16...\texttt{a}c8 17.\texttt{g}g3† \texttt{h}h8 18.\texttt{g}h4 \texttt{g}g7 19.\texttt{g}g4† \texttt{h}h8 20.\texttt{h}h5 \texttt{g}g7 21.\texttt{g}g4† \texttt{h}h8 22.\texttt{d}d1 \texttt{d}d6 23.\texttt{h}h3 \texttt{g}g7 24.\texttt{f}f2 \texttt{f}5 25.\texttt{e}ae1 \texttt{c}c3 26.\texttt{g}xg4 \texttt{f}xg4 27.\texttt{f}f3 28.\texttt{d}xh6 \texttt{d}xh6 29.\texttt{e}e5 \texttt{f}f5 30.\texttt{x}xe5 \texttt{e}xe5 31.\texttt{g}xg7† \texttt{f}f6 32.\texttt{g}g1 \texttt{e}e6 33.\texttt{c}c1 \texttt{c}c8 34.\texttt{c}xc8 \texttt{c}xc8 35.\texttt{e}e1 1–0 Jonkmanm - P.H. Nielsen, FIDE.com 2002.

14...0–0 15.\texttt{h}h1?!
15.\texttt{c}c3! must be the principled move.

15...a5!
Black gets on with his own play now White has played the position a bit slowly.

16.b5 \texttt{d}d7 17.\texttt{c}c3 a4
This is pretty standard. 17...\texttt{d}d6?? is interesting too. The idea is to play ...b7-b6 later, and use the time to centralise the queen. Obviously Black is planning to make the a3-pawn a target in the game.

18.e4

Correct was therefore 18...\texttt{f}c8!, with the point 19.\texttt{e}e1 \texttt{c}c7, when the knight is under real pressure.

19.\texttt{e}e1 \texttt{f}c8?
This move is strongly recommended by the computer programs, at least for a while. It does indeed look as if White will have problems keeping his bits together, and might have to enter an unpleasant ending. However, in the game he finds an ingenious solution to the problem.

19...\texttt{f}7?! is not to be recommended. White should play 20.exd5 exd5 21.\texttt{g}g1! with the idea of \texttt{g}ge2. White will then have managed to support the knight on c3 and be able to put pressure on a4 and f6. Black is probably able to keep the balance, but only just.

19...\texttt{a}c8! was apparently the best move. White would have to play 20.\texttt{d}xd5 again, which seemingly wins a pawn. However, after 20...\texttt{e}xe1 21.\texttt{x}xe1+ \texttt{f}f7 22.\texttt{x}xe1 \texttt{c}xe7 Black is on his way to playing ...\texttt{c}c3. Black is likely at one time to win back the pawn, maybe the one on a3. White will find the struggle against the two black bishops difficult, but he should have reasonable chances to make a draw nonetheless.
20.\textit{Qxd5!}

White rids himself of the unwanted knight before attacking on the kingside. The main point is that Black has no other active counterplay than coming in to c3 anyway, and thus White would have won a pawn compared to the immediate lunge to h4. Having said that, it is not clear to me that the extra pawn is so important.

For this reason I have concluded that 20.\textit{Wh4!} also was very strong, and very logical indeed. The main point is the following line:

20...\textit{Wxc3} 21.\textit{Whxh6} \textit{Wxd3} 22.\textit{Wxf6} \textit{Wg6} 23.\textit{Wg5}

White wins after these moves: 23...\textit{Wf8} 24.\textit{Wh7}! \textit{Wd2} 25.\textit{Wb1} \textit{Wc3} 26.\textit{Wxe1} \textit{Wd2} 27.\textit{Wc2} and Black cannot keep control of the h6-square.

Thus his relatively best continuation would be 20...\textit{Wxc3} 21.\textit{Wxh6} \textit{Wd8}, although even here he is stuck with the uncomfortable task of defending a weakened king's position passively.

20...\textit{exd5}

20...\textit{Wxe1} cannot be played here. White plays 21.\textit{Wxf6†} \textit{Wxf6} 22.\textit{Wxe1}, winning, based on 22...\textit{Wxf6} 23.\textit{Wxe5†} when the bishop on d7 is lost.

21.\textit{Wh4} \textit{Wxb5}

Black had a very uncomfortable choice to make, and it does not seem that this was the right one. The following lines show some of the horrors Black would have to witness with his mind's eye before committing himself to a path to follow.

21...\textit{Wg7} 22.\textit{e5} is too dangerous. The double threats of \textit{exf6} and \textit{Wxh7†} are too much to face. For example: 22...\textit{Wf5} 23.\textit{Wxf5} \textit{Wxf5} 24.\textit{Wf3} \textit{Wh6} 25.\textit{Wxf6} \textit{Wf8}

Golubev gave this line in \textit{Chess Today}. Here it is possible to improve on his analysis with a blunt instrument: 26.\textit{g4!} Black has no way to defend himself against \textit{g4-g5-g6} and \textit{Wg1}. The black kingside is going to be blown open and fall apart badly.

21...\textit{Wc3} loses in exactly the same way as it would if there was a pawn on e6. The line can be found in the notes to move 20.

The relatively best line of defence is therefore the depressing 21...\textit{dxe4} 22.\textit{Wxe4} \textit{Wf5}, when White plays 23.\textit{Wxh6} \textit{Wxe4} 24.\textit{Wxf6} \textit{Wxf3} 25.\textit{Wxe7}. At this point Black has nothing better than 25...\textit{Wxg2†} 26.\textit{Wxg2} \textit{Wc7}, after which he will have to defend an endgame with a pawn less.

22.\textit{Wxh6} \textit{Wxd3}

Black is walking the plank, hoping he will somehow be okay. There were alternatives, but they were both pitiful.
After either 22...\textasciitilde \textasciitilde a6 23.\texttt{AXB5} \texttt{AXB5} 24.e5! or 22...\texttt{g6} 23.\texttt{AXB5} \texttt{AXB5} 24.e5! Black would be in big trouble.

After the game continuation, the white queen has finally arrived at the desired h6-square, from where it attacks all the weak squares in the black position. It is not a great surprise that White has a winning combination at this moment.

23.\texttt{g5!! \texttt{xe4}}

Accepting the sacrifice with 23...\texttt{fXg5} leads to a quick demise after 24.\texttt{e6\uparrow \texttt{h8} 25.\texttt{f7\uparrow}} and mate is near.

24.\texttt{xf6}

There are simply too many threats. Black is lost.

24...\texttt{d2}

24...\texttt{f8} was another possible move, but would also not save the game. After 25.\texttt{e6\uparrow \texttt{h8} 26.\texttt{xf8\uparrow \texttt{xf8} 27.\texttt{xe7 e2} White can play 28.\texttt{e5\uparrow \texttt{g8} 29.\texttt{xe4 and be a piece up.}}

25.\texttt{e6\uparrow \texttt{h8} 26.\texttt{f7\uparrow \texttt{g7}}

Or 26...\texttt{g8} 27.\texttt{h6\uparrow \texttt{g7} 28.\texttt{f6 mate.}}

27.\texttt{f6\uparrow \texttt{f8} 28.\texttt{h8\uparrow \texttt{g8} 29.\texttt{e5\uparrow} 1-0}

The final example of this section is deeply complicated and thus includes many themes in one. However, the defining moment of the game is move 16, when White for some reason decides to take on e3 with the f-pawn. I am always wary of making empty generalisations, but the simple idea of not weakening your kingside in the pursuit of minor positional gains seems like a good rule of thumb.

Deep Sengupta – Maxim Rodshtein

World Junior, Gaziantep 2008

1.e4 c6 2.c4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.cxd5 \texttt{xf6} 5.\texttt{a4\uparrow \texttt{bd7} 6.\texttt{c3 g6} 7.\texttt{f3 \texttt{g7} 8.\texttt{c4 0-0} 9.d3 a6 10.\texttt{a3 b6} 11.0-0 \texttt{b7} 12.\texttt{e1 \texttt{e8} 13.\texttt{g5}}

I once reached this position myself, playing Black against a Caro-Kann expert. I had no knowledge about the theory and had to work everything out for myself. I thought for some twenty minutes and quickly realised that I did not want to push the b-pawn too soon.

First of all I did not want to weaken any squares, even though I saw no concrete way in which the newly created holes could be exploited by the enemy pieces.

Secondly, I wanted to play the move at a moment where it was really strong, rather than
just pushing a bishop to the side. Finally, I felt that the bishop on c4 would be better placed on b3.

For these reasons it was not difficult to decide that the right move was to target this bishop.

13...Ec8!

My opponent told me after the game that the main line included the moves 13...b5 14.Qb3 Qb6, when for example White could play 15.d6 e6 16.Qge4. This line looked amazing to me. Why would Black ever do something like this voluntarily? Great was my surprise when I saw that one of my heroes, Cuban grandmaster Leinier Dominguez had taken this position on, not once, but twice, against grandmaster colleagues. Quite fairly he went down quickly in both games and later stayed away from such miserable positions.

14.Qe3

I was not the first to put the rook on c8. In more or less the only interesting previous game play had continued: 14.d6 e6 15.Qf4 b5 16.Qb3 Qc5 and Black was at least no worse. He eventually won in Kadijolka - Erenburg, Warsaw 2005, although this may also have had something to do with him being rated 264 Elo points higher than his opponent.

14...Qg4?  

This is quite an attractive move in several ways. Black wants to take on e3, to play ...Qge5 or ...Qc7. All of them good ideas. Unfortunately the knight is a bit loose on g4, giving White the chance to play a fantastic combination. Luckily he did not find it, or we would not have come across such rather interesting moments later on.

The correct approach was the simple one. I played 14...Qe5!, when Black is already better. After 15.ad1 h6 16.Qge4 Qxe4 17.Qxe4 Qxc4 18.dxc4 Qxc4

White has to be careful. In my game he immediately blundered a pawn with 19.Qd3, when after 19...Qxd5 I had some advantage in K. Rasmussen - Aagaard, Aalborg 2006. However, I found the ending terribly hard to win, and eventually had to show just a bit of respect in order not to lose it.

A later game saw 19.f3 f5 20.Qf2 Qd6! with a slight but distinct advantage for Black in Antal - Kacheishvili, Lubbock 2009. Looking at that game I wonder if my opponent was not struck by sheer dumb luck, blundering that pawn...

15.Qb4?

White is making some indirect threats, but they are not going to stop Black from carrying out the very direct threats he has.

The surprising combination starts with: 15.Qxa6! Best play goes like this: 15..Qa8
16. \( \textit{Wh}^4 \) \( \textit{Exa}^6 \) (16...\( \textit{Dxe}^3 \) 17.\( \textit{Dxb}^7 \) \( \textit{Dc}^2 \)
18.\( \textit{Wh}^4 \) would simply lose) 17.\( \textit{Wxg}^4 \) \( \textit{De}^5 \)
18.\( \textit{Wh}^3 \) h6 19.\( \textit{Dge}^4 \) \( \textit{Dxd}^3 \) 20.\( \textit{Dxb}^6 ! \) \( \textit{Dxe}^1 \)
21.\( \textit{Dxe}^1 \) White has two pawns and an initiative for the exchange. Had he seen this possibility, he would clearly have jumped at it. The objective evaluation is probably a slight advantage to White, and it is Black who will have to come up with all the good moves for the next phase of the game.

15...\( \textit{Dxe}^3 \) 16.\( \textit{fxe}^3 \)?
After this positional mistake White will struggle with his weak kingside for the rest of the game, as it slowly descends into chaos. The correct move was for this reason 16.\( \textit{Dxe}^3 ! \).

16...\( \textit{De}^5 \) 17.\( \textit{Dad}^1 \)
After 17.a4 e6 18.\( \textit{Dxf}^7 \) then 18...\( \textit{Wh}^4 \)?! still looks very interesting, but simpler is 18...\( \textit{Dxc}^4 \!), when White will end up worse no matter what he chooses to do.

17...e6!!
Attacking the knight on g5 and the pawn on d5 at the same time. But of course the idea is a bit deeper than it first looks.

18.\( \textit{Dxf}^7 \)
This sacrifice is forced. If the knight retreats White's position will instantly become unplayable.

18...\( \textit{Wh}^4 \)!
This was the really clever point behind the last move. Suddenly we can see what a tremendous weakening the 16th move was. The f2-pawn was needed to hold the dark squares together on the kingside. In line after line there is a sacrifice on g3, a check on h2 or simply a queen loitering around on g3, all things that could have been avoided had White not recaptured with the pawn.

19.\( \textit{Dxe}^5 \)
The only move.

19.\( \textit{Dd}^6 \)? might look attractive, but it gives Black another piece to use with devastating effect on the kingside. Three pieces against none quickly decides the outcome: 19...\( \textit{Dg}^4 \) 20.\( \textit{h}^3 \) \( \textit{f}^2 \) 21.\( \textit{h}^1 \)

21...\( \textit{Wg}^3 \)! The three piece rule in action. The knight is given away to open up the h-file. 22.\( \textit{hxg}^4 \) \( \textit{a}^5 \) 23.\( \textit{g}^1 \) \( \textit{f}^8 \) White can delay the mate, but not save the game.

19.\( \textit{Wxb}^6 \) is also not good enough as 19...\( \textit{Eb}^8 \)!
seems to win a piece for Black. If White tries to save his knight, his king comes under fire: 20.\( \textit{Dd}^6 \) \( \textit{Dg}^4 \) 21.\( \textit{h}^3 \) \( \textit{Dxd}^5 \) 22.\( \textit{Dxd}^5 \) \( \textit{xb}^6 \)
23.\( \textit{Dxb}^6 \) \( \textit{D}^2 \) 24.\( \textit{h}^1 \) \( \textit{g}^3 \) 25.\( \textit{hxg}^4 \) \( \textit{e}^5 \) 26.\( \textit{g}^1 \) \( \textit{xd}^6 \) and Black wins.

19...\( \textit{Dxe}^5 \) 20.\( \textit{g}^3 \)
White would probably have preferred not to allow this sacrifice, but he really does not have the option. After 20.h3 Black takes over the dark squares with lethal effect: 20...\text{\textit{g}3} 21.d4 \text{\textit{d}6} 22.\text{\textit{x}b}6 \text{\textit{f}8}! and the game is over.

\textbf{20...\text{\textit{x}g}3 21.\text{\textit{e}2}}

White cannot accept the bishop sacrifice. The critical question in these kinds of scenarios is always whether or not Black can get another piece into the attack in time. He can, but only in a specific way: 21.hxg3 \text{\textit{x}g}3\texttt{f2} 22.\text{\textit{h}1} \text{\textit{f}8} 23.\text{\textit{f}1} \text{\textit{f}3}! The key move. Black is threatening to mate, so the rook needs to be eliminated. The next rook can then enter the attack without being challenged from f1, as White has lost his control there. The moves would be: 24.\text{\textit{x}f}3 \text{\textit{x}f}3\texttt{f2} 25.\text{\textit{h}2} \text{\textit{f}8} And now for example: 26.\text{\textit{d}6} \text{\textit{f}5} 27.\text{\textit{x}e}6\texttt{f}7 28.\text{\textit{d}7}\texttt{f}7 29.\text{\textit{h}6} Black wins, as 29...\text{\textit{h}5}\texttt{f}7 is massive.

21...\text{\textit{e}5}?!\texttt{f}7

This is a logical move and it does not spoil all of Black's advantage. However, at the same time it is not the most energetic move available. Black missed a beautiful active move, leading to a wonderful winning line:

21...\text{\textit{f}8}!!

White has no defence that I could find. He has to accept the bishop this time for starters.

22.hxg3

22.\text{\textit{g}2}\texttt{f2}\texttt{f2} 23.\text{\textit{h}1} does not give any chance for survival. Black wins after 23...\text{\textit{e}1}!

22...\text{\textit{x}g}3\texttt{f2} 23.\text{\textit{g}2} \text{\textit{x}e}3\texttt{f2} 24.\text{\textit{h}1} \text{\textit{f}3} 25.\text{\textit{d}g}1 \text{\textit{e}5} 26.\text{\textit{x}d}5 \text{\textit{x}c}4 27.\text{\textit{x}c}4 27.\text{\textit{d}xc}4 loses trivially to 27...\text{\textit{h}3}\texttt{f2} 28.\text{\textit{h}2} \text{\textit{e}4}\texttt{f2} 29.\text{\textit{g}g}2 \text{\textit{x}d}5!.

Victory is now sealed. White has to take the queen and after this ...\text{\textit{xd}5}\texttt{f2} awaits down the line, leading to an easily winning rook ending.

22.d4?

This exposes the bishop on c4, which proves to be vital in the coming play. White had no choice but to enter a jungle of almost random complications.

After 22.\text{\textit{x}b}6 \text{\textit{b}8} 23.\text{\textit{a}5}!
White amazingly stays in the game. The best line seems to be: 23...\( \text{g4} \) 24.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{xc3} \) 25.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{f3} \) 26.bxc3 \( \text{xe3} \) 27.h2 \( \text{b8} \) 28.\( \text{c2} \) exd5 29.\( \text{b3} \) Black is obviously better due to the exposed white king, but it is not enough to decide the game. White is planning to play 30.\( \text{d4} \) and keep the black bishop out of the game for as long as possible. The main issue seems to be the pin in which he currently finds himself.

22...\( \text{b5} \)

Played to protect the bishops that will soon be hiding behind the b-pawn. But the bishop on c4 is misplaced, so I am not convinced this was the best move.

I would have preferred 22...\( \text{b8} \)!

I believe that White's best move here is 23.\( \text{b3} \), in order to get the bishop out of harm's way. Black can play 23...\( \text{b5} \), should he want to, but he has the flexibility to do other things as well.

Having said that, I must admit that it was only after lengthy analysis that I was able to confirm that Black is better after:

23.\( \text{xb6?!} \)

The next two moves are obvious.

23...\( \text{xc4} \) 24.\( \text{xb7} \)

Now Black has a brilliant combination.

24...\( \text{xc3} \) 25.bxc3 \( \text{g4} \) 26.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{h2}! \)

White is an exchange up, but his king is in deep trouble. A good practical player would probably end his calculation somewhere around here, but with the assistance of a computer we can get a more accurate picture of the position. This is useful because it will develop our intuition and make it easier to make the right decisions in our future games.

27.\( \text{c1} \)

This is the big moment for Black to decide. He has two logical moves, but only one of them wins.

27...\( \text{b8}! \)

27...\( \text{g3}?! \) 28.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{b8} \) Superficially it looks like there is no good way to stop 29...\( \text{b2} \), when Black will end up with an extra rook. However, the final verdict is still off in the distance. And surprisingly, after 29.\( \text{d7} \) \( \text{b2} \) 30.\( \text{c1} \) \( \text{xe2} \) White can play
31.\textit{\textbf{Af}}! when the game is likely to end in a draw after 31...\textit{\textbf{Ec}}2\textit{\textbf{t}} 32.\textit{\textbf{Gb}}1! \textit{\textbf{E}f}2 33.\textit{\textbf{Af}}2 \textit{\textbf{Exf}}2 34.\textit{\textbf{Ec}}8\textit{\textbf{t}} \textit{\textbf{Gg}}7 35.\textit{\textbf{Eh}}7\textit{\textbf{t}} \textit{\textbf{Hh}}6 36.\textit{\textbf{Ab}}8\textit{\textbf{t}} \textit{\textbf{Hh}}5 37.\textit{\textbf{Hxf}}2. The queen ending favours Black only slightly.

28.\textit{\textbf{Xxa}}6!
28.\textit{\textbf{Dd}}7? \textit{\textbf{Gg}}1\textit{\textbf{t}}! 29.\textit{\textbf{Dd}}2 \textit{\textbf{Gb}}2\textit{\textbf{t}} 30.\textit{\textbf{Cc}}1 \textit{\textbf{Gb}}1\textit{\textbf{t}}, winning, is the brilliant point behind playing the rook to b8 directly.

28...\textit{\textbf{Eg}}3\textit{\textbf{t}} 29.\textit{\textbf{Dd}}2 \textit{\textbf{Gb}}2\textit{\textbf{t}} 30.\textit{\textbf{Cc}}1 \textit{\textbf{Xxe}}2

Black has good chances to win the endgame, even though the position remains somewhat messy.

23.\textit{\textbf{Hb}}3 \textit{\textbf{Gb}}8 24.\textit{\textbf{Ag}}2

White could have tried 24.e4?!, with the idea that after 24...exd5 25.\textit{\textbf{Xxd}}5 \textit{\textbf{Hh}}8 he can play 26.\textit{\textbf{Cc}}1 seeking refuge in the horrific endgame arising after 26...\textit{\textbf{Exe}}4 27.\textit{\textbf{Fxh}}4 \textit{\textbf{Exh}}4, where the bishops should be superior. Despite this rather bleak outlook, there is something to be said for changing the character of the game.

24...\textit{\textbf{Ff}}8?
This complicates the winning procedure. A faster route was:
24...exd5 25.\textit{\textbf{Af}}1!
Oddly this looks like the only chance.
25.\textit{\textbf{Xxd}}5? \textit{\textbf{Hh}}8 and 26...\textit{\textbf{Fcd}}8 will catch the knight in a nasty pin.
25.\textit{\textbf{Xxd}}5\textit{\textbf{t}} \textit{\textbf{Xxd}}5 26.\textit{\textbf{Xxd}}5 \textit{\textbf{Xh}}2\textit{\textbf{t}}! will expose the rook on d1 and thus also the white king.

25.e4 is strongly met with 25...\textit{\textbf{Gh}}8! when White can already regret his last move. 26.e5 \textit{\textbf{Xxe}}5 is also not managing to close the lines. On the contrary:

25...\textit{\textbf{Xxe}}3
Black is simply winning, because of an important detail:
26.\textit{\textbf{Xxd}}5

This obvious move can be met with a speculative exchange sacrifice on b3, which is surprisingly strong, as well as the absolutely devastating combination:
26...\textit{\textbf{Xxb}}2\textit{\textbf{t}}! 27.\textit{\textbf{Xh}}2 \textit{\textbf{Gg}}3\textit{\textbf{t}} 28.\textit{\textbf{Ag}}2 \textit{\textbf{Xg}}2\textit{\textbf{t}} 29.\textit{\textbf{Xg}}2

Here Black can win back the piece with a clear edge, but the direct approach is much stronger. After:
29...\textit{\textbf{Cc}}2\textit{\textbf{t}}!!

White is lost. If he accepts the sacrifice his king is caught in the crossfire, and if he steps out onto the board, he is quickly mated.

25.e4! \textit{\textbf{Hb}}3?
It looks natural to get the rook to h3, but this is too slow for the reason that after a later ...\textit{\textbf{Xxb}}2\textit{\textbf{t}}, White can give up the exchange and be in time to deliver an unending avalanche of checks.

25...\textit{\textbf{Ff}}4! was the correct winning move.
After flicking in the logical moves 26.d6 $\text{h}8$ we see that the plan is to play ...$\text{g}4$, in order to exchange the only defender of the white position. After this White is in big trouble. Another idea is to play ...$\text{c}5$ and bring this inactive rook into the attack. Although the position is non-forcing in character, it seems clear that Black is on the way to the full point.

26.d6?

White misses his big chance for a comeback in what may well have been mutual time trouble. Instead of shutting out the bishop, he should have prepared to execute a perpetual check.

This was possible in the following very difficult line:

26.dxe6 $\text{h}3$

Here White can play the calm and clearest:

27.$\text{f}1$!

The best Black has is to seek a perpetual immediately.

The tempting move 27.$\text{c}7$† also works, but the amount of detail you have to take in is mind-boggling. 27...$\text{g}7$ 28.d5! The key move. The d4-square is vacated for the queen, and at the same time the pawn is pondering making it all the way to d6. Black does not seem to have anything better than to go for it with 28...$\text{xh}2$†, when White is keen to play 29.$\text{xh}2$! $\text{xh}2$ 30.$\text{d}4$† with a perpetual check on e3 and d4. The point being that after 30...$\text{h}6$ 31.$\text{e}3$† $\text{g}5$?? Black has weakened his king fatally, and White can win with 32.$\text{f}3$! $\text{h}3$ 33.$\text{f}8$†! $\text{h}5$ 34.e8=$\text{f}8$†, and so on. To see all of this you need maybe an hour and to be very good at calculation. In the game it seems that the players were down to a few minutes of nerve rattling.

27...$\text{xh}2$† 28.$\text{xh}2$ $\text{g}3$† 29.$\text{g}2$ $\text{e}3$† 30.$\text{f}2$ $\text{e}1$†

With perpetual check.

26...$\text{c}8$! 27.$\text{xe}6$† $\text{h}8$?

The level of play is falling apart towards the end. If Black had played 27...$\text{g}7$ instead, White would have nothing better than to play 28.$\text{c}5$ $\text{f}4$ 29.$\text{e}5$†, as in the game. Here, however, taking the material would be more justified, as the black king is close to the white pawns, and the counterplay we could have seen in the game is thus not possible.

28.$\text{c}5$ $\text{f}6$ 29.$\text{e}5$† $\text{xe}5$

At this moment White resigned, as we shall see, rather prematurely.

0–1

Let us try to continue the line to work out what a likely outcome could have been:
After 30.dxe5 Black plays: 30...a7† 31.h1
Af1† which looks absolutely winning. However, upon closer inspection matters are not that clear after 32.xg1†. Clearly White missed this move. Here the complications would continue: 32...xg1 33.xf1 xf1 34.xg2 xc1 35.xd5! White wants to put the knight on d5 so the g1-bishop would be unable to deal with the white pawns. The following line is by no means conclusive, but shows that the game did not have to end just yet: 35...c8 36.e6 b6 37.e7 g1† 38.xf3
g4† 39.xf4 d7 40.e6 c5 41.e5 g5† 42.xf5 c8 43.d5

White is threatening xe6 and xe4-f6. Black seems to have nothing better than 43...d7† 44.e6 c8 45.d5, when the game would end in a draw.

**Drawing the king into the open**

So far we have discussed scenarios where the king is in relative safety and various strategies that can be used to eliminate this safety, in order to get a private tour round the king’s chambers. There is another strategy which is also important to consider; a sort of, *if you can’t change yourself, change the world* approach (The The, in case you are wondering). In other words, if we cannot get to the king, maybe we can get the king to come to us...

Drawing the king into the open seems to happen more often when he is still in the centre – think xf7 ideas. However, I don’t think it makes sense to start theorising about this. The method is essentially the same regardless of whether the king is on its original square or has reached the so called “safety” of the corner, as we shall see from the first example.

**Alexander Morozevich – Gata Kamsky**

Tal Memorial, Moscow 2008

In the game Black played 27...xg2??, after which the position was unclear. He won on move 69 all the same, but at some point along the way he was clearly worse.

But at this point Kamsky, who is a “stodgy technician”, not known for his flashy tactics, missed a sensational combination based on a double magnet sacrifice, drawing the king up to the middle of the board.

The first move of the combination is:

27...xg2!!

White has no choice but to dance.

28.xg2 xf3† 29.xf3 d5† 30.xd4

Also 30.ex4 f5 is very promising for Black.

30.xe2 is met by simple moves: 30...g2† 31.xd3 xg5 32.xe2 xh3† and 33.xc8† with a winning attack.
30...\textit{$\text{a}\text{g}5$}! 31.\textit{$\text{a}\text{g}3$}  \\
31.\textit{$\text{a}\text{x}g5$} $\text{a}\text{h}3$ is not difficult.

31...\textit{$\text{a}\text{h}4$}!! 32.\textit{$\text{a}\text{x}h4$} $\text{g}2$  \\
This is a stepping stone position. Even if you got here in your calculations, you would struggle to see anything with any clarity at all, I would fathom.

The three main lines are all long and winding, as well as conclusive.

a) 33.\textit{$\text{a}\text{e}2$} is met by drawing the king further up the board. 33...\textit{$\text{a}\text{g}5$}! 34.\textit{$\text{a}\text{h}5$} $\text{a}\text{h}3$! 35.\textit{$\text{a}\text{x}g5$} $\text{f}6$! It is key to activate the rook. 36.\textit{$\text{a}\text{x}f6$} Now it turns out, surprisingly, that the queen on a7 is hanging! Surely this was not the key idea one would be looking at when pondering 27...\textit{$\text{a}\text{x}g2$}! some 15 moves earlier... 36...\textit{$\text{a}\text{h}6$}! 37.\textit{$\text{a}\text{f}4$} $\text{a}\text{x}f6$! 38.\textit{$\text{a}\text{e}5$} $\text{f}5$! 39.\textit{$\text{a}\text{d}6$} $\text{d}5$! 40.\textit{$\text{a}\text{c}7$} $\text{f}7$! 41.\textit{$\text{a}\text{b}6$} $\text{d}8$! 42.\textit{$\text{a}\text{a}6$} $\text{a}\text{x}a7$! 43.\textit{$\text{a}\text{x}a7$} $\text{a}5$! and Black wins.

b) 33.\textit{$\text{a}\text{c}6$} is the most resilient, but I don't believe in White's chances. 33...\textit{$\text{a}\text{g}5$}! 34.\textit{$\text{a}\text{h}5$} $\text{a}\text{x}h2$! 35.\textit{$\text{a}\text{g}4$} (35.\textit{$\text{a}\text{x}g5$} $\text{a}\text{h}8$! leads to a mating attack) 35...\textit{$\text{a}\text{h}4$}! 36.\textit{$\text{a}\text{f}3$} $\text{a}\text{x}e1$ 37.\textit{$\text{a}\text{c}5$} $\text{a}\text{e}8$! Threatening ...\textit{$\text{a}\text{h}1$}. 38.\textit{$\text{a}\text{g}2$} $\text{a}\text{e}3$! White is completely tied up and will find no way to deal with the imminent advance of the g- and h-pawns.

c) 33.\textit{$\text{a}\text{e}3$} Although this has the most clear-cut refutation, it somehow feels like a real defensive move. It is one of the first moves a human would look at anyway. Black wins after 33...\textit{$\text{a}\text{h}5$}!! 34.\textit{$\text{a}\text{x}h5$} There is no alternative to taking the pawn. 34...\textit{$\text{a}6$}

35.\textit{$\text{a}\text{h}4$} $\text{a}7$!  \\
White will be mated in a limited number of moves.

The next game was played between two amateurs, but besides the horrendous 12th move by White, you could have mistaken the game for one played between two grandmasters.

\textbf{Anasrullah - Ruiyuan Yu}  \\
\underline{Singapore Masters 2008}

1.\textit{$\text{c}4$} c6 2.\textit{$\text{d}4$} d5 3.\textit{$\text{a}\text{exd}5$} cxd5 4.\textit{$\text{a}\text{c}4$} $\text{c}6$ 5.\textit{$\text{a}\text{c}3$} $\text{a}6$ 6.\textit{$\text{a}\text{g}5$} e6 7.\textit{$\text{a}\text{exd}5$} exd5 8.\textit{$\text{a}\text{xf6}$} $\text{xf6}$ 9.\textit{$\text{a}\text{xd}5$} $\text{d}6$ 10.\textit{$\text{a}\text{c}3$} $\text{a}\text{xd}4$ 11.\textit{$\text{a}\text{g}2$} $\text{c}6$
White's opening play has been a bit too simple, and it was here time to exchange the queens and admit that equality is all there is to hope for.

12. \( \text{b5} \)??
This is a horrible blunder. White must have completely overlooked his opponent's strong reply.

12... \( \text{e5} \)!
The knight can do nothing but return to c3, allowing Black to take over the initiative completely.

13. \( \text{bc3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 14. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{d8} \)!
Black could actually have won the game quite quickly with 14... \( \text{b4} \)!, when there is no defence against 15... \( \text{d8} \), but that would have made the game uninteresting for us.

15. \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{d4} \) 16. \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{d5} \) 17. \( \text{f4} \)!
It is quite understandable that White would take up this challenge, as the alternative 17. \( \text{g1} \) is quite depressing. Black might play 17... \( \text{b4} \) and 18...0-0, with a winning attack.

We have finally reached the position that makes this game interesting for us, and especially relevant for the present topic. If Black now had played 17... \( \text{e6} \) (which looks sort of forced)...
in the centre, it is important not to force the opponent's king to run to safety.

19.\textit{\textemdash}d5 \textit{\textemdash}b4\textsuperscript{+} 20.\textit{\textemdash}d1 0–0

Black has given up a rook, but the white king is in the centre and cannot run.

21.a3 \textit{\textemdash}a5

I seriously hope that he had not planned to give a silly check on e4 (although this leads to a clear edge), but wanted to play 24...\textit{\textemdash}b4\textsuperscript{+} with the threat of ...\textit{\textemdash}d2\textsuperscript{+} and ...\textit{\textemdash}b3. One of the points is 25.axb4 \textit{\textemdash}xb4\textsuperscript{+}, with mate, another is 25.\textit{\textemdash}c4 \textit{\textemdash}a5\textsuperscript{+} and the queen has no good squares. The checks on d2 and b3 are deadly.

24...\textit{\textemdash}d3\textsuperscript{+} 25.\textit{\textemdash}c1 \textit{\textemdash}d1 mate!

As we have seen so far, the king can be drawn far into the board, forward, sideways, or as in the next example, both. It is simple logic that the less protection the king has, the more endangered he is. But there are other factors as well. In the first two examples, the attacker was greatly helped by having a material superiority at the scene of the action. In the next game there is less material on the board generally, and no clear superiority, so great moves are needed in order to pin down the king.

\textit{\textemdash}c-mail 2000

1.d\textsuperscript{4} d\textsuperscript{5} 2.c\textsuperscript{4} e\textsuperscript{6} 3.\textit{\textemdash}c3 c\textsuperscript{5}

The Tarrasch Defence is considered slightly risky, but has a tendency to return to top level play from time to time, whenever a super-GM has found a new idea. Overall it seems a bit too aggressive to take the isolated pawn this early
in the game, especially when White can put the bishop on g2 and apply some pressure on d5, while simultaneously protecting his king.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.Qf3 Qc6 6.g3 Qf6 7.g2 Qc7 8.0-0 0-0 9.Qg5 cxd4 10.Qxd4 h6 11.Qe3 Qe8

This is an absolutely main line position in this opening. I do not want to fake any specialist knowledge, but will only say that something appears to go wrong for White between here and move 17.

12.Qa4 Qd7 13.Qad1 Qb4 14.Qb3 a5 15.a4 Qc8 16.Qd2 Qc5 17.Qc2

17...Qxe3!

This position has been reached about five times in practical play. This is the only time this thematic sacrifice has been played, which I find puzzling. Surely this is the dream you have when you play the Tarrasch?

One game continued: 17...Qxc2 18.Qxc5 Exc5 19.Wxc2 Wb6 20.Wd1 Qc6 21.Wd3 Hoang Thanh Trang – Blauert, Budapest 1999. Maybe this position is not bad for Black, but it lacks the dynamic potential of the game continuation.

18.Qxe3?!

White decides to shed material rather than allowing his structure to be messed up. After the natural moves 18.fxe3 We8! 19.Qh1 Qxe3 20.Qxe3 Qxe3 White is struggling despite the extra material. The threat of ...d4 is very serious. This forces him to play 21.Wd1, when after 21...Qc4 it is very likely that he has to give back the exchange in order not to lose the game very quickly. However, the position after 22.Qxd5 Qbxd5 23.Qxd5 Qxd5 24.Qxd5 Qe6 25.Qxa5 Qxe2 is still a bit iffy.

18...d4 19.Qc4 dxc3 20.bxc3 Qc6 21.Qb7 Qc7 22.Qa6 Qf8

A bit mysterious. I am not entirely sure why this deep-looking move was chosen over 22...Qf7. I could guess it is because of a white Qd5 at some point - but really, I would be speculating.

23.Qb6

After 23.Qxd7 Qxd7 24.Qxc6 Qb8 White has three very poorly-looking pawns for the piece.

23...Qe6

23...Qf5?!

24.Qb5

24.Qc4?! was maybe better, but White is still struggling.

24...Qb7 25.Qxc6 Qxb6 26.Qxa5 Qc4
27...\hhatb5?

It was probably better to "win" the queen with 27...\hhatbd1!! \hhatxc6 28...\hhatd8 \hhatd8 29...\hhatxe8 \hhatxe8 30...\hhatd8 \hhatf8 31...\hhatfxf8. This endgame is of course better for Black, but converting the advantage to a win will not be easy. I personally think that White has reasonable drawing chances here.

27...\hhatb3 28.c4

White must react quickly. A move like 28...\hhatb1 would allow 28...\hhatd4! 29...\hhatd4 \hhatd6:}

The threat of 30...\hhatb7, trapping the queen, is very serious indeed. Fritz 11 insists that the resulting position is acceptable for White, after something like 30...\hhatxb3 \hhatb7 31...\hhatxb6 \hhatxb6 32...\hhatd5, but the extra piece will eventually count and White will find it very difficult to defend his king in the long run.

28...\hhatd4 29...\hhatd3?!

This appears to be an inaccuracy. White should have played 29...\hhatd7:

30...\hhatd2!!?

It was also very strong to play 30...\hhatd6, with the point of 31...\hhatd2 \hhatd4!, when the threat of ...\hhatc8-h3 is rather painful.

31...\hhatf2?

31...\hhatxc5 \hhatb3 32...\hhatg2 \hhatd4 33...\hhatd3 \hhatxc5 is given as winning for Black by Nadanian. Even though a bit of play still remains after White's only move, 34...\hhatf3, it is a fair assessment. Black will play 34...\hhatg5, and it is doubtful that White can resist the attack.

31...\hhatxf2 32...\hhatxf2 \hhatf6 33...\hhatd1

White has to run with the king. After the passive 33...\hhatg1?, Black has a winning attack: 33...\hhatd3 34...\hhatd3 35...\hhatd2 \hhatd4 36...\hhatd3 \hhatb2! and the white king is trapped in a mating net.

33...\hhatd3 34...\hhatd2 \hhatd2
35. \( \text{e}3 \)!

After this move Black is definitely winning, although White's other options were also less than appealing.

35. \( \text{d}8 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 36. \( \text{c}5 \)? is indicated by Nadanian as the best defence. His suggestion is to play 36... \( \text{f}1 \) with a continuing attack.

White also seems to be beyond salvation after 35. \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 36. \( \text{d}8 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 37. \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{c}2 \)+
38. \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{b}2 \)+ 39. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}2 \)+ 40. \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{c}2 \+)
41. \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{b}2 \)+ 42. \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{f}3 \), with a winning attack. White can of course try other moves at various points in these lines, and one of them might just lead to a tenable position, in spite of appearances. However, this is not vital for our investigation and we shall thus move on swiftly.

35... \( \text{e}6 \)!!

35... \( \text{b}3 \)? 36. \( \text{d}4 \)! would bring White straight back in the game. The king is surprisingly safe in the middle of the board in this particular position. At least for the moment, which is enough to look for simplifications.

36. \( \text{f}2 \)

36. \( \text{d}4 \) loses instantly to 36... \( \text{b}2 \)+ 37. \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{a}3 \)+
38. \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{c}3 \)+ 39. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{g}5 \)+ 40. \( \text{d}5 \)
\( \text{e}7 \)+ and the queen is lost.

36... \( \text{d}3 \) 37. \( \text{e}5 \)!

The only move.

37... \( \text{f}6 \)!!

The check is not spectacular in itself, but it includes a piece sacrifice on the next move that is anything but obvious.

37... \( \text{e}5 \)? would be greedy and silly. After 38. \( \text{d}8 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 39. \( \text{d}3 \)+ \( \text{g}6 \) Black is better, but he will need to struggle to grind out a win.

38. \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{a}1 \)!!

The point behind the previous move. Black does indeed win the white rook, but only after having forced a serious compromising of the opponent's defensive shield.

39. \( \text{d}8 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 40. \( \text{d}3 \)+ \( \text{g}6 \)

The point of the combination is clear. The white rook is still hanging, but beyond this the threat of \( \text{f}1 \) mate is forcing him to weaken his kingside and especially the second rank.

41. \( \text{e}4 \)

41. \( \text{e}3 \)

This is also not good enough. Black wins with:

41... \( \text{b}2 \)+ 42. \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{f}2 \)! 43. \( \text{e}7 \)

43. \( \text{c}5 \) is objectively best. However, Black should win the endgame after 43... \( \text{x}h2 \)+
44. \( \text{g}4 \) \( h5+ \) 45. \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{xf}2+ \) 46. \( \text{e}4 \) \( f5+ \) and 47... \( \text{d}2 \), winning the queen.

43... \( \text{xh}2+ \) 44. \( \text{g}4 \)

And here a very important point. Black should not rush with 44... \( h5+ \) 45. \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}2?? \), as the tables would turn after 46. \( \text{xe}6 \). Instead he should play calmly:

44... \( \text{f}2!! \)

Preparing ...\( h5+ \) and ...\( \text{f}6 \) mate. There is no defence.

41... \( \text{b}2+ \) 42. \( \text{h}3 \)

42. \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{f}2!! \) leads to mate or similar very quickly as well.

42... \( \text{f}2!! \)

Even stronger than 42... \( \text{x}e5 \) with only fairly decent winning chances after 43. \( \text{e}2 \).

43. \( \text{g}5 \)

Desperation, which is a rare thing in correspondence chess. White is also lost after 43. \( \text{e}7 \) \( \text{xh}2+ \) 44. \( \text{g}4 \) \( h5+ \). Now this move order is the optimal winning line, as the diagonal from \( d3 \) to \( g6 \) is blocked. 45. \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}2 \) White is unable to assist his poorly placed king.

43... \( \text{gx}f5 \) 44. \( \text{ex}f5 \) \( \text{xh}2+ \) 45. \( \text{g}4 \) \( h5+ \) 46. \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}2+ \)

White resigned. After 47. \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e}1+ \) it is curtains.

0–1

Kings on the run

I do not want to appear simplistic, but I do want to be clear. Of course it is generally a good thing to draw the opponent’s king out into the open. But at the same time, success in chess cannot be achieved by relying on generalities, or on specifics, but rather a combination of the two. There are those who rely primarily on general concepts, while there are others who find no use for them and rely almost solely on opening preparation and calculation. As with everything in life, you are better equipped if you find a balance between the various skills and techniques available. At the same time there is no such thing as a completely universal player, so it is up to each individual to find the balance that best suits their own character.

Having been a bit over-simplistic in the previous section, indicating that all you need is to draw the opponent’s king into the open and “Bob’s your uncle”, I want to show two games that give quite a different impression.

In the first game Black quickly builds up a winning attack on the kingside, but tempted by an “obvious” check, he allows the opponent’s king to run away from the danger zone, making the outcome of the game fairly random.
Chapter 4 - King Safety

Thomas Ernst – Jonny Hector

Linkoping 1984

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d6 3.d4 c6 4.c3 f5 5.d4 exd4 6.cxd4 dxc6

This move looks rather passive. The optimistic idea is of course to play Wh5† or Dxe4 at some point, but Black has aggressive options. A quarter of a century later chess theory had moved on and I had the chance to improve on White’s play.


Here I showed my inability to play at 10 a.m. on a Sunday. I tried to put pressure on the kingside and later on blundered my h-pawn, at the same time opening up for him to attack me down the h-file.

Instead after the simple 16.Dxc7 Black would have had a hard time proving that the extra pawn and better bishop did not give White a significant advantage.

7...Dg5!

This looks very dangerous.

8.Dxc5 Df6!

This is the clever point. Black is not looking for immediate satisfaction, but is sacrificing a piece for long-term positional compensation. White has to make some sort of concession in view of the threat to the g-pawn, and none of them appear pleasant at all. The king can go to f1, for example, but then White will be playing without the rook on h1 for a long time, while the king can hardly feel comfortable on the f-file. Based on these considerations, it is not difficult to understand Ernst's choice.

9.0-0

It is possible that Hector was inspired by his compatriot GM Wedberg, who had this position twice in 1983, first as White, then as Black.

In both of these games White played 9.Dg1 Wd4 10.Df1 Dg4. Black had sufficient compensation in Lobron – Wedberg, Dormund 1983, for example, which later ended in a draw.

9...Dh3 10.g3 0-0-0! 11.De1

Five games from a theme correspondence tournament reached this very same position. Unfortunately they were all of questionable quality, but I doubt it is a coincidence that Black won them all.
11...\( \widetilde{\text{b}} \widetilde{\text{f}} \widetilde{\text{b}} \text{5} \) 12.\( \widetilde{\text{a}} \widetilde{\text{a}} \text{3} \)

It is also not easy to see how White should improve his position after 12.\( \widetilde{\text{e}} \text{e} \text{2} \) \( \widetilde{\text{g}} \text{4} \) 13.\( \widetilde{\text{c}} \text{c} \text{4} \) \( \widetilde{\text{h}} \text{f} \text{8} \).

12.f3 is another poor move. After 12...\( \widetilde{\text{d}} \text{d} \text{3} \) White would greatly regret the weakening of his kingside.

12...\( \widetilde{\text{g}} \text{4} \)!

The bishop looks very well placed on h3, but it will be even stronger on f3.

13.\( \widetilde{\text{a}} \text{a} \text{4} \)!

It was possible to put the queen at b3, when the same draw as in the game should be available. However, it is not possible to find a defence after 13.\( \widetilde{\text{c}} \text{c} \text{2} \) \( \widetilde{\text{d}} \text{d} \text{2} \) 14.\( \widetilde{\text{x}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{2} \) \( \widetilde{\text{f}} \text{3} \), with 15...\( \widetilde{\text{h}} \text{3} \) on the way.

13...\( \widetilde{\text{d}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{2} \)!!

There are several plusses to this move. It eliminates a knight that protects f3, gains a tempo and vacates a good square for the passive rook on h8.

14.\( \widetilde{\text{x}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{2} \) \( \widetilde{\text{d}} \text{d} \text{8} \)

This is the first big moment in the game. Black has just sacrificed the exchange, upping the investment to a full rook, in order to gain a tempo. His intention is to play ...\( \widetilde{\text{f}} \text{3} \), threatening ...\( \widetilde{\text{h}} \text{3} \), and to be able to play ...\( \widetilde{\text{d}} \text{d} \text{3} \) in reply to \( \widetilde{\text{a}} \text{a} \text{4} \)–\( \text{c} \text{4} \). White clearly has to pull out all the stops in order to meet this challenge.

15.f4?

This is a rather ingenious defence, but it is still a mistake; and a rather overoptimistic one, if I am allowed to say so.

The saving move was:

15.\( \widetilde{\text{g}} \text{5} \)!!

The idea is not so much to draw the queen to a dark square, which is unlikely to happen, but rather to eliminate the knight and gain counterplay against the black king.

The main line involves the most natural moves:

15...\( \widetilde{\text{f}} \text{3} \)

If Black loses the momentum with 15...\( \widetilde{\text{x}} \text{x} \text{g} \text{5} \), White will be first. After 16.\( \widetilde{\text{x}} \text{a} \text{7} \) it is hard to find a way for Black to play. The knight will make it to e3 fast and White is absolutely able to give back the exchange on d1 at the right moment. Although not entirely clear, this line does seem to be very dubious at best.

16.\( \widetilde{\text{c}} \text{c} \text{4} \) \( \widetilde{\text{d}} \text{d} \text{3} \) 17.\( \widetilde{\text{x}} \text{x} \text{f} \text{6} \)

The threat of \( \widetilde{\text{g}} \text{8} \) is apparent. Black has to take time out before continuing his attack. But he cannot dither for too long, as now the knight has been eliminated, White has a real
option in the knight manoeuvre $\text{Na3-c2-e3}$. Black can give up the rook for the knight, of course, but White has $\text{Wh1}$, which will stop the mate and leave him in an ending with an extra exchange.

For this reason the correct move is:

\[ 17 \ldots b5! \]

Creating "luft" for the black king. White in turn has only one serious reply.

\[ 18.\text{Nxb5! Wh3!} \]

Once he has avoided being mated, Black continues his plan.

\[ 18 \ldots \text{Nxb5??} \] would be too ambitious. After
\[ 19.\text{Wg8+ Nb7 20.c6+} \] the black king is drawn into the dirt of the battle.

\[ 19.\text{Nxd6!} \]

After this final stroke, it all ends peacefully with a perpetual.

\[ 15 \ldots \text{Nxd2} \]

Black had a remarkable alternative win at this point:

\[ 15 \ldots \text{exf3} \]

Nothing could appear to be more logical. White was probably hoping to keep everything together with:

\[ 16.\text{We3} \]

In this position Black has several strong moves, such as for example sacrificing the f-pawn to gain a tempo in the attack. However, the direct winning line includes two beautiful moves:

\[ 16 \ldots \text{Nxd2!!} \]

White has only one possible reply to this:

\[ 17.\text{Wh2} \]

\[ 17.\text{Nxd2} \] is refuted by \[ 17 \ldots f2+ 18.\text{Wh1 Wh3!} \] and mate is very close.

This is the position that makes this line truly remarkable. Black seems to have come to a halt in his attack. The direct approach does not work, but once you ask the pieces where they really want to be, and what they can do in terms of contribution, you will see that the bishop is poorly placed on g4.

Thus, the winning move is:

\[ 17 \ldots \text{Wh5!!} \]

\[ a b c d e f g h \]

Black is threatening $\ldots \text{Wh3}$, with mate, as well as $\ldots \text{Ng4}$ or $\ldots \text{Nxf2}$. The only way to meet all of these dangers is to play:

\[ 18.\text{We4} \]

The queen is ready to answer any of the immediate black threats. She can return to $f1$ to protect $g2$, and she is ready to give an
annoying check on g8 if Black attacks f2. So, basically she is ideally placed, which is also the problem. Black can decide the game to his advantage with:

18...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash bxg7+}}

The white queen is deflected and one of Black's threats will come to life, ending the game abruptly.

19.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash bxe5?}}

This can be tried, but Black can use the powerful f3-pawn to launch a mating attack:

19...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash bxe5}} 20.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash bxh2}} 21.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash bh1}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash d1}}

Mate will follow in a few moves.

16.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash d4}}

White was relying on this tempo to decide the game in his favour. If the black rook retreats White will take on e5 with the pawn and quickly bring the queen back to c2, securing the king's position. If he can accomplish this then he will easily go on to "live off the interest" from the won material.

16...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash axh2+!!}}

Hector is not one for losing the initiative just by sitting on his hands. With this move he knocks just about every tooth out of the mouth of the defence. White has only one chance left: to seek active counterplay.

17.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash xea7!}}

17.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash bxh2}} loses without much of a fight after 17...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash exf4}}, although the next few moves might not seem obvious. Ultimately there are just too many enemy pieces around the white king for him to ride out the storm.

For those who like to calculate everything to the end (an illness I recommend seeking training for), the following line should suffice.

17...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h5+}} 18.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash g1}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash f3}} 19.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash xe5}} Vacating the c4-square. 19...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h1+}} 20.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash e2}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash h2+}} 21.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash e3}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash d5+}} 22.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash d4}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash f2+}} 23.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash c4}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash b5+}} 24.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash xb6}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash xh6+}} and Black wins.

17...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h5}} 18.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash xea5}}

White can chase the black king across the board with:

18.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash a8+}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash d7}} 19.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash xe5+}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash e7}}

But he quickly runs out of checks. On the other hand, the black checks also do not draw blood immediately.

20.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash h8}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash h1+}} 21.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash e2}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash h2+}} 22.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash e3}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash xg3+}} 23.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash e4}}

Here Black has to play:

23...\text{\texttt{\textbackslash xe1}}

But here the point of the line - or position if you like - is revealed. White cannot get to the black king, which is now supported by the f6-knight.

24.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash xg7+}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash e6}} 25.\text{\texttt{\textbackslash f7+}} \text{\texttt{\textbackslash f5}}

The king is safe and Black wins with his extra piece.

So, for this reason Ernst's move is the strongest. The threat of mate in one is better than a few spite checks followed by the threat of a few more.
18...Kh1†?
I am sure Hector saw many of the above lines, but somewhere along the way he failed to make the same conclusions. It soon transpires that the following sequence of black checks is not too dangerous, while the position of the black king on the queenside remains an ongoing concern.

Appreciating these factors enables us to find the winning move: 18...d8!! Black is simply running away. His king will soon reach a safe haven, while his opposite number will not have the same luxury. The main line goes: 19.wb8† Ac8 20.ad1† Ad5 21.af7† Ac7 22.Axe4† Axf7 The black king is safe, and his position is easily winning.

19.£e2 Wh2† 20.£e3 Ad5†
The second big moment of the game, for White. The king has to go forward, but where to?

21.£d4?
This is a rather simple mistake in some ways. It should have been possible for a strong player like Thomas Ernst to see the refutation of this move.

It was necessary to take the pawn with 21.£xe4!.

Black is in danger of running out of bullets after 21...£g2† 22.£d4 £d2† 23.£c4. For example: 23...£b6† 24.£b3! and the only option is a worse endgame, as the position after 24...£e6† 25.£a3 £h2 26.£eb1 £d5 27.£a5! is very safe for White. The extra exchange will have to count for something eventually.

So for this reason Black has to look at a perpetual check with 21...£f6† 22.£d3 £f5† 23.£c4 £e6† 24.£d3 and so on.

21...£f2† 22.£c4
It seems that both players had been aiming for this position for some time, and partially for this reason were blind to the superior options existing for both sides along the way. I am sure that the next move came as a great surprise to Ernst.

22...£b6†!
This is a natural attacking move, but it is still quite pretty. The attack against the white king must continue, no matter the cost! At this point this means throwing a knight onto the fire.

23.cxb6 £e6† 24.£b4 £xb2† 25.£a4
Hector had not seen further than this position, feeling confident that there would be a way to win the game. As it turns out, there are no fewer than three ways to achieve this goal; but the rolls of the previous moves
must have tired Hector, who was at this point still far from the strength of the dangerous grandmaster he would later become.

Hector told me that he had refrained from 25...\texttt{cxb6} on account of 26.\texttt{\texttt{xc6}}, which does indeed seem a little murky.

But after the game they discovered that Black has a fabulous winning move in 26...\texttt{c7}!!. Black is winning quickly in all lines. The main point of this move is to take the b6-square away from the white king. The most elegant winning line is perhaps 27.\texttt{\texttt{xe4}} 28.\texttt{\texttt{d7}} 28.\texttt{\texttt{b8}} \texttt{\texttt{xc6}} 29.\texttt{\texttt{b4}} \texttt{\texttt{c5}} with mate on the next move.

It should be noted that in more modern times the computer quickly points out that White is also lost after 25...\texttt{b5} 26.\texttt{\texttt{a3}} \texttt{\texttt{c5}} 27.\texttt{\texttt{a4}} \texttt{\texttt{xb6}}. The main threat is ...\texttt{b5} again, aiming at winning the queen, either directly, or with ...\texttt{a3} on the rebound. If White avoids both of these with 28.\texttt{\texttt{a8}} \texttt{\texttt{c7}} 29.\texttt{a3}, he unfortunately runs into 29...\texttt{b5} mate.

26.\texttt{\texttt{b4}} \texttt{\texttt{c5}}?
26...\texttt{\texttt{cxb6}}! was still winning beautifully:

a) 27.\texttt{\texttt{a8}} \texttt{\texttt{c7}} 28.\texttt{\texttt{a3}} \texttt{\texttt{xe1}} 29.\texttt{\texttt{xe1}} \texttt{\texttt{d2}} and Black wins because of the double threat of ...\texttt{d6} as well as just taking the rook.

b) 27.\texttt{\texttt{xb6}} drops the queen to 27...\texttt{\texttt{b2}} 28.\texttt{\texttt{c5}} \texttt{\texttt{f2}}.

c) The main line is a stunner if ever there was one: 27.\texttt{\texttt{c4}} \texttt{\texttt{xc4}} 28.\texttt{\texttt{xc4}} \texttt{\texttt{b5}} 29.\texttt{\texttt{b4}} \texttt{\texttt{b2}} 30.\texttt{\texttt{c5}} \texttt{\texttt{xc3}} 31.\texttt{\texttt{d6}} \texttt{\texttt{h6}} 32.\texttt{\texttt{e7}} \texttt{\texttt{e6}} 33.\texttt{\texttt{xc6}} \texttt{\texttt{f6}} mate!

27.\texttt{\texttt{xc5}} \texttt{\texttt{xc3}} 28.\texttt{\texttt{b5}}
To his horror Hector must have realised that the win had escaped him and that there is nothing left here but a perpetual check.

28...\texttt{\texttt{b2}} 29.\texttt{\texttt{c5}} \texttt{\texttt{c3}} 30.\texttt{\texttt{b5}} \texttt{\texttt{d7}} 31.\texttt{\texttt{d7}} \texttt{\texttt{c6}} 32.\texttt{\texttt{a4}} \texttt{\texttt{c4}} 33.\texttt{\texttt{a3}} \texttt{\texttt{c3}} ½–½

It was a fantastic fight, despite the peaceful ending.

The next game is similar to some extent. Once again the king should not have been drawn
into the board, but kept at the kingside. But this time there was only a draw for Black, by perpetual check, and the walk is carried out superbly, cashing in the full point.

**Alexander Shashin – Viktor Korchnoi**

Soviet Union 1973

1.d4 2.e4 e6 3.2c3 2b4 4.e3 0–0 5.2d3
c5 6.2f3 d5 7.0–0 2c6 8.a3 cxd4 9.exd4
2xc3 10.bxc3 dxc4 11.2xc4 2a5

Black has not done too badly from the opening. There are plusses and minuses to both players' position. From a default setting I would prefer White, but this is the case in almost all positions arising after move 12, provided neither player has done anything strange.

12.2b2 e5

Personally I would maybe prefer the calmer 12...b6, with the idea to get the bishop to either b7 or a6, but there is apparently nothing wrong with the text move either.

13.2e1 2g4 14.h3 2xf3 15.2xf3 2ad8

16.2ad1

White is rather actively placed. It seems that the most convincing way to equalise is either to take on d4 twice, which does however look a bit risky, or to play:

16...2d6!

It is an important point that 16...2d7? is poor. If Black continues in the same way with 17.d5 e4 18.2g3 2fd8, then White can play 19.2b3!, with the idea to back up the centre with 20.c4, with a crushing advantage, as after 19...2xd5 20.c4 Black loses a piece.

17.d5 e4 18.2g3 2fd8 19.2a2 2xd5 20.2xd5
2xd5 21.2xd5 2xd5 22.2xe4 2d1† 23.2h2 f6

It is unlikely that White has any real advantage.

16...2d7

It was of course possible to play 16...exd4 17.cxd4 2xd4 and then give up the b7-pawn shortly after, but Korchnoi is not looking for a stale position, followed by a draw. Instead he is looking for a way to make the fight interesting.

17.2e2 2fd8

Black once again elects to keep the tension. 17...exd4 18.cxd4 2xd4! was also possible. White can play a number of things here, but Korchnoi was probably right to think that 19.2e7! 2xe7 20.2xd4 with obvious and just about sufficient compensation for the pawn was the strongest.

18.2ae1?

White continues to mobilise his forces. Actually it was possible to play for a more static advantage with 18.dxe5 2xe5 19.2f5!, when Black is a tad worse in the endgame arising after 19...2c4 20.2xa5 2xa5 21.c4.

18...exd4!

This is the correct move order for the plan Korchnoi is following.
After 18...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{wbd6}}? 19.\texttt{wxe3!} Black's position would fall apart. The main issue is that the threat of mate on the back rank has appeared, seemingly from nowhere.

19.\texttt{cxd4 wxb6}

The d-pawn is put under further pressure. Obviously it is not possible to take the pawn immediately. 19...\texttt{exd4??} is punished by 20.\texttt{exd4 exd4}, when the rook has been distracted from its coverage of the f7-square and Black will pay dearly after 21.\texttt{exe8!!} with mate to follow.

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20.\texttt{wxc3! exd4}

Black is fully set on this challenge, so it would be rather pointless to shy away from it at this point. 20...\texttt{exd4} would be wrong. After 21.\texttt{wxe3 exd4} 22.\texttt{wxd4} Black once again suffers from the vulnerable back rank.

21.\texttt{exe7}

The obvious idea, attacking the f7-pawn.

21...\texttt{exe7!!}

Korchnoi chooses the sharpest move at every turn in this magnificent game. Here it was possible to settle for quieter play after:

21...\texttt{wxf7}

I have been unable to find anything better than:

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22.\texttt{xd7 exd7 23.wc8!! xd8}

23...\texttt{d8} 24.\texttt{c5!!} would be better for White, once he regains the pawn by taking on a7. The two bishops are far stronger than the knights.

24.\texttt{wc4 xd7}

It is possible that White can strengthen his play in this position, which is why I prefer the decision made by Korchnoi in the game. After all, the bishops are very impressive. However, should White decide to try his luck immediately, it would only lead to equality after:

25.\texttt{xd4 wxd4 26.wc8!! xd8 27.wxb7 xd7}

By this stage Black should not have anything to fear.

22.\texttt{exe7 xe7!!}

Clearly the plan behind the last move. Any passive options would leave Black terribly tied down, and in spite of being a pawn up, probably edging on lost.

23.\texttt{xf7!!}

White also should have no reverse gear. If he does not take the pawn, how can he make use of his great bishops?

23...\texttt{d1!!}

Black could lose the momentum easily. After something like 23...\texttt{wxf8} 24.\texttt{wxb3!!} his prospects would quickly deteriorate.
24. \texttt{\textit{h2}}

24. ... \texttt{d6}?

This was the only serious mistake in this otherwise excellently played game. It was almost certainly brought on by Black's desire to play for a win. It is very likely that Korchnoi, only a year away from a de facto world championship match, saw that a draw would arise after 24. ... \texttt{g4}! 25. \texttt{hxg4} \texttt{d6}+, when White has nothing better than 26. \texttt{g3}! \texttt{hxg3} 27. \texttt{d7}+ \texttt{f8} 28. \texttt{g7}+ \texttt{e8} 29. \texttt{xd6} \texttt{f1}+:

25. \texttt{g3}

What seemingly enticed Korchnoi to choose his unfortunate move order is that 25. \texttt{g3}? ends badly. After the obvious sequence 25. ... \texttt{d} 26. \texttt{xf6}+ \texttt{h8} 27. \texttt{xd6} \texttt{f1}+ 28. \texttt{g1}, Black has an improvement on the previous line, where White had been able to flick in a timely \texttt{xg7}+. In the present position the simple 28. ... \texttt{xd6} 29. \texttt{xf1} \texttt{d2} decides the game immediately.

25. ... \texttt{g4}+ 26. \texttt{g2}

Surely Korchnoi was not seriously believing his opponent would play 26. \texttt{hxg4}??, when he would answer 26. ... \texttt{h6}+ 27. \texttt{g2} \texttt{h1} mate. But maybe he was hoping just a little bit?

26. ... \texttt{h4}+

This was part of the plan. White has no choice but to run across the board with his king.

27. \texttt{gxh4} \texttt{h6}+ 28. \texttt{b3} \texttt{xf2}+ 29. \texttt{e4}

29. ... \texttt{g4}?? \texttt{g1}+ 30. \texttt{h5} \texttt{g6}+ would unnecessarily turn the tables.

29. ... \texttt{e2}+?

The following move might appear to offer more resistance:

29. ... \texttt{e1}+

But even here White wins in glamorous style.
30. \( \text{d5!!} \)

This is perhaps not the most difficult winning move, but it is very attractive nonetheless.

30... \( \text{e3} \)

Accepting the rook with 30...\( \text{xf7} \), leaves Black struggling after 31.\( \text{d6} \), triangulating the black rook into a worse square. (Instead 31.\( \text{c5} \) would look foolish after 31...\( \text{e5} \), blocking the diagonal down to \( g7 \).) Play continues 31...\( \text{ed1} \) 32.\( \text{c5} \) and after a few meaningless checks with the pawns, Black will soon lose the queen and/or be mated on \( g7 \).

31. \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{e4} \)

Otherwise the king will simply walk away.

32.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{e1} \)

32...\( \text{b6} \) 33.\( \text{d7} \) \( \text{d1} \) looks very promising, but White has enough extra material to play:

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34. \( \text{d4!!} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 35.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 36.\( \text{c8} \), when the forthcoming discovered check decides the issue.

33. \( \text{c7} \)

33.\( \text{e7} \) also wins, but Korchnoi's line is very pretty.

33...\( \text{b6} \) 34.\( \text{b8} \) \( \text{d8} \) 35.\( \text{c8} \)

Black is lost. A final revenge check:

35...\( \text{d6} \)

ends in a kind of self-mate after:

36.\( \text{c7} \) \( \text{f8} \) 37.\( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{c8} \)

38.\( \text{f7} \) mate!

30. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{f1} \)

No better is 30...\( \text{f2} \) 31.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{h6} \) 32.\( \text{g6} \) \( \text{e5} \) 33.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{g1} \) because of the winning sacrifice 34.\( \text{g5} \), e.g. 34...\( \text{xb2} \) 35.\( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{f8} \) 36.\( \text{g8} \) mate!

31.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{h6} \) 32.\( \text{g6} \) \( \text{e5} \) 33.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{g1} \) 34.\( \text{g2} \) 34.\( \text{g5} \) is also terminal. After 34...\( \text{c2} \) White pulls the trigger with 35.\( \text{f5} \) \( \text{h8} \) 36.\( \text{xg7} \) mate.

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34.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{xb2} \)

34...\( \text{xb5} \) 35.\( \text{h5} \) \( \text{e8} \) would avoid immediate mate, but White is winning on points, and Black is unable to move at all. A particularly elegant winning line goes like this:

36.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{xg5} \) 37.\( \text{h5} \) \( \text{h5} \) 38.\( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{b4} \) 39.\( \text{h6} \) and mate is happening here and now.
35.\texttt{\textbackslash b}x\texttt{g}7\texttt{\textdagger}
\texttt{1-0}

**Cutting off the escape route**

As we have seen, although in general it is a good idea to draw the king into the board, there are notable exceptions. The reason is simply that we want the king to be in the line of fire, and not to dance away over the fields, covered by the mist.

The opposite practice from this is to cut off the king's escape route, making it difficult or even impossible for the monarch to escape from the siege. We have looked a bit at this topic in the previous games, indirectly, in the form of the preferable ways of conducting the attack that were eschewed by the players.

For this section I have chosen two short games that I think say it all, and one combination that warms the heart. The first of these sees a grandmaster being careless against a slightly gullible amateur, who apparently confused the title grandmaster with the word flawless...

I hope this short game convincingly illustrates my point, namely that you need to keep the opponent's king where the attack is. Black plays the opening poorly and quickly White has a decisive attack, but misplays it in an instructive fashion.

**Vladislav Nevednichy – Dinu Simi Suciu**

Bucharest 2008

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White has not played the opening too aggressively and Black has several ways to equalise. Getting rid of his only activated piece is not one of them.

11...\texttt{\textdagger}b\texttt{d}4?

In B. Ivanovic – Marinkovic, Bar 2007, Black held quite easily with 11...\texttt{\textdagger}c\texttt{7}, but I think it is even easier to play 11...cxd4\texttt{?}, based on the line 12.\texttt{\textdagger}h\texttt{5} \texttt{\textdagger}c\texttt{7} 13.\texttt{\textdagger}xf7 \texttt{\textdagger}f\texttt{6}!. The game quite amusingly ends in a draw by perpetual check after 14.\texttt{\textdagger}d\texttt{6}\texttt{\textdagger}d\texttt{8} 15.\texttt{\textdagger}f\texttt{7}\texttt{\textdagger}e\texttt{8}.

12.\texttt{\textdagger}x\texttt{b}4 cxb4 13.\texttt{\textdagger}h\texttt{5}

The attack is gaining another sort of momentum now. There is almost no one around to defend the black king.

13...g6

The only move, which is seriously bad news. 13...\texttt{\textdagger}c\texttt{7} 14.\texttt{\textdagger}xf7\texttt{!} is absolutely over this time.

14.\texttt{\textdagger}x\texttt{g}6!

Not a difficult sacrifice for a grandmaster.

14...\texttt{\textdagger}x\texttt{g}6 15.\texttt{\textdagger}x\texttt{g}6\texttt{\textdagger}e\texttt{7}

The grandmaster probably though that the game could be finished quickly and forgot to check the details. The rating gap of 400 points between the two players seems most likely to have been the reason for this mistake.
It is obvious that the black king is highly exposed in the centre. However, White is only playing with two of his four remaining pieces, and needs to summon reinforcements in order to win the game. His position is so great that there are several ways to achieve this.

16.\h8\#?

This is not one of them. The black king is allowed to take another step towards the safety of the queenside.

Instead, White could have won the game quickly with 16.d5\!, or the simple-looking, but very deep solution: 16.\f6!! The plan is straightforward: White is going to put the rook on f7. Play might continue 16...\e8 17.\f5 \h5 18.\g3, when Black will lose a rook and be an exchange down. The clever point is that if the white king was on c1, Black would have 18...\g8\!, holding the position. This subtlety is beautiful, but White can really play in so many different ways (if he uses all the pieces) that he could also have won without such ingenious solutions.

16...\d6 17.\f4

1-0

Black resigned, but actually his position is fine! Play should have continued: 17...\c7! 18.\f7\#
17...\(d2\)†! 18.\(d1\) \(g4\)† 19.\(f3\) \(xf3\)

This particular sequence is maybe not too difficult to calculate, but the follow-up is beautiful.

20.\(e2\)

No other moves would have worked either. The following move is just a masterstroke, setting up two different mating patterns simultaneously.

17.\(f6\)!

This thematic sacrifice is more or less forced, as Black was threatening to play \(...f6\). However, it is still a forceful attacking move. White is preventing Black from defending her weaknesses along the seventh rank, while threatening to inflict various disasters along the way.

17...\(\text{exf6}\)!

17...\(\text{gxf6}\) would have been met by 18.\(e4\), and rook moves by a subsequent 19.\(\text{h6}\), just as in the game.

18.\(e4\) \(\text{gxf6}\)

Shen Yang probably thought that she was forced to play this move, realising that there is no defence after 18...\(\text{g6}\) 19.\(f3\) \(\text{f8}\) 20.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{h5}\)

21.\(\text{h5}\)†, and Black will be mated.
After the text move the black king is heavily exposed, but he is also only one or two steps away from a safe haven in the centre. Thus it is essential for White to keep the enemy monarch trapped in the danger zone, and for this reason Cramling played a standard attacking idea.

![Chessboard](image1)

19.  
The black king is now trapped on the kingside, where there is no help to be found...

19...c5

Calculation will show that this is the only move, as it fights for the f3-square, but this, too, is not enough. 19...f5 20.  leads straight to mate.

20.  21.  22.  23.  

White needs to bring in extra firepower in order to decide the game in her favour. Cramling most likely did not take long to make sure that she was indeed winning.


Black resigned, as mate is imminent after the second rook arrives on the g-file.

1-0

But instead of 18...gxf6? Black had a highly original solution that would have solved all of her problems. Although probably counterintuitive to most players, the move is entirely logical. We know that the difficulty for Black in the game came from a combination of two problems. One was  with mate, and the other was the fact that when she took the bishop on f6, the king was trapped on the kingside.

The solution is therefore to prepare the two ideas of taking the bishop and running with the king, as well as avoiding the destructive check on h7.

![Chessboard](image2)

This could have been achieved with: 18...!! White is now faced with the prospect of losing her bishop for very little. After 19.  White retains compensation for the pawn, but Black is by no means about to be steamrollered. The game goes on and the burden of proof is still on White to prove compensation for the pawn.
The king stuck in the centre

So far in this chapter most of the examples we have been dealing with have included positions where the defender has castled. This is about to change as we will now address the topic of direct attacks in the centre. Although the defender does manage to castle in one of these examples (Pedersen – Nielsen), in general the battle is started, fought and ended with the king in the centre. As he is exposed to an attack in all of these examples, I have decided to refer to this as the king being stuck in the centre, even though you cannot really say that he is cut off from running as in the previous section; it is just difficult to run fast when you are as fat a prize as the king is!

The first position illustrates beautifully how exposed the king can be in the centre, even in a relatively unchallenged position. Actually, we start with White being winning, then misplaying the position and losing awfully. However, if we go deeper into the position we find the most amazing details and revelations. This game is in some ways the single most astonishing example contained in this book. Not so much because of the fairly intuitive solution, but because of the move that does not win.

Georgios Souleidis – Zbynek Hracek

Germany 2008

To me, and I would suggest to most human players, it looks as though White is winning fairly comfortably after:
19.\( \text{e}4 \)

But actually, this turns out to be a losing mistake.
19...\( \text{d}6 \)!! 20.\( \text{xd}6 \)

20.\( \text{b}3 \) is refuted by 20...\( \text{g}4 \)!!., when after 21.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{b}5 \)!! White is under pressure that cannot be withstood.
20...\( \text{e}8 \)

In the Quality Chess office it was universally agreed that the correct evaluation of this variation would require calculating abilities of at least World Championship proportions, and quite possibly beyond. Black has sacrificed a piece and all he seemingly has for it is the threat revealed after, for example, 21.\( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 22.\( \text{hxg}6 \) \( \text{g}4 \)!! Black exploits the position of the enemy king and the weakness of the e1-square.

This was quite elementary, but one would think it should not be too difficult for White to defend against such a crude threat.

21.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{a}4 \)!! 22.\( \text{c}5 \)

This is the most natural move, but it does not save the position.

One of the many astonishing variations goes:
22.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 23.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{d}4 \) and to my great surprise, I have to conclude that Black is simply winning. The main line runs 24.\( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{g}4 \)!! 25.\( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{e}2 \) 26.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{xf}2 \), when White is losing everything.
22...\texttt{A}xe5!
Not a great surprise, but strong all the same.
23.\texttt{A}xe5 \texttt{c}5
Despite the extra rook, it turns out that White is defenceless!

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}[scale=0.5]
\node at (0,0) {\texttt{a}};
\node at (1,0) {\texttt{b}};
\node at (2,0) {\texttt{c}};
\node at (3,0) {\texttt{d}};
\node at (4,0) {\texttt{e}};
\node at (5,0) {\texttt{f}};
\node at (6,0) {\texttt{g}};
\node at (7,0) {\texttt{h}};
\end{scope}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

24.\texttt{A}c1
Once again, this looks most logical, but it does not save the game.
Objectively better might be 24.\texttt{A}g3, but the simple solution is 24...\texttt{W}xc2\texttt{t} 25.\texttt{A}e1 \texttt{e}4\texttt{t} followed by ...\texttt{W}h1\texttt{t}, and Black wins material while retaining some initiative.
24...\texttt{W}d4\texttt{t}
The king is decisively trapped in the centre. The last few moves are only garnish...
25.\texttt{A}d3 \texttt{A}xd3 26.cxd3 \texttt{W}xd3\texttt{t} 27.\texttt{A}e1 \texttt{e}8 mate.

However, there is a final twist in the tale: it transpires that White had a chance to save his skin by playing the stunning 21.\texttt{A}f8!! The sole purpose of this move is to win a tempo by forcing the rook to abandon the e-file. After 21...\texttt{A}xf8 22.h5 \texttt{W}a4 23.\texttt{B}b3 \texttt{A}f5 Black maintains the initiative, but he cannot feel absolute certainty about the outcome.

In any case, in the game White played the objectively correct move, although based on the subsequent course of events it seems doubtful that the decision was based on the calculation of the above variations.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\begin{scope}[scale=0.5]
\node at (0,0) {\texttt{a}};
\node at (1,0) {\texttt{b}};
\node at (2,0) {\texttt{c}};
\node at (3,0) {\texttt{d}};
\node at (4,0) {\texttt{e}};
\node at (5,0) {\texttt{f}};
\node at (6,0) {\texttt{g}};
\node at (7,0) {\texttt{h}};
\end{scope}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

19.h5! \texttt{W}b6

At this point it becomes clear why White did not play 19.\texttt{A}f4: he did not see the idea at all. At this point, 20.\texttt{A}f4! would quite possibly have forced immediate resignation, as there is no credible defence against 21.\texttt{A}e5.

Also winning is the natural, but slightly more complicated 20.\texttt{A}h1 \texttt{A}g4\texttt{t} 21.\texttt{B}c1 \texttt{A}xh5 22.\texttt{A}f5! \texttt{gx}f5 23.\texttt{W}xh5 and mate is near.

Unfortunately for White, it seems he was having an off day and he lost the momentum.

20.c3??

Only if Black takes on d4 does this passive move make sense. Black now has many good options and is already at least equal. That he won quickly only underlines the troubled form White was experiencing on the day.

20...\texttt{A}fb8 21.hxg6 \texttt{W}xg6 22.\texttt{W}xg6?!

After this White is suddenly struggling in the endgame. If he had played normally with 22.\texttt{B}b3 Black would probably have had to keep the balance with 22...\texttt{A}f8 or another cautious move, bringing about an equal ending. He should be careful about hoping for too much, as after 22...\texttt{c}4 White can play 23.\texttt{A}d4! \texttt{W}h7 24.\texttt{W}xh7\texttt{t} \texttt{A}xh7 25.g6\texttt{t}! and maybe gain the initiative, although the position has drawish tendencies in this line too.
22...fxg6 23.\textit{b}3 \textit{c}4
23...\textit{b}5! was probably stronger. Black does not have to show his hand just yet.

24.\textit{c}5 \textit{xc}5 25.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xb}2 26.\textit{c}1 \textit{ab}8
27.\textit{xa}7??
Another sign that Souleidis was disguised as an idiot on this day and did not play up to his usual high level. One can imagine all sorts of explanations for his poor form, but seeing that this game was played on a Saturday, there could have been some non-chess-related reasons...

27.\textit{d}1 with the idea \textit{d}2 would still have kept the draw.

27...\textit{b}b7 28.\textit{d}4 \textit{a}4
White resigned. He will lose a rook.
0–1

In the next game White takes early, and probably not fully justified, risks in order to keep the opponent's king in the centre. With maybe a bit of luck, he is successful; and although the king does not look especially exposed, there are still continuous tactical opportunities that present themselves to White, until he finally decides on one he likes.

Simon Williams is a very hard-hitting player who took too long becoming a grandmaster. Maybe the end of this game explains why this was?

Simon Williams - Merab Gagunashvili

Hastings 2006

This game was played on New Year's Eve, which might account for the affluence of fireworks...

1.\textit{d}4 \textit{d}6 2.\textit{e}4 \textit{df}6 3.\textit{c}3 \textit{g}6 4.\textit{e}3 \textit{c}6 5.\textit{h}3 \textit{g}7 6.\textit{g}4 \textit{wa}5 7.\textit{wd}2 \textit{e}5 8.\textit{ge}2 \textit{b}5 9.\textit{dx}5 \textit{dx}5

10.\textit{c}5??
The battle for the dark squares begins. It seems to me that the strategy chosen by White in this game is too optimistic, but it is interesting nonetheless.

10...\textit{bd}7 11.\textit{b}4 \textit{wd}8 12.0–0–0?!
Very energetic, but not without flaws. The objectively best move seems to be 12.\textit{d}1!?, but then the white king will certainly not be as comfortable in the centre as it is on the queenside in the game.

12...\textit{f}8?
This is a big mistake; Black has clearly been rattled by his opponent's creative handling of the position. The much more principled move 12...a5!, would have seriously questioned White's strategy. The main problem for White is that he cannot play 13.a3?? axb4 14.axb4? because of 14...\textit{a}1? 15.\textit{b}2 \textit{xd}1 16.\textit{xd}1 \textit{xc}5 with a positional disaster.

So instead White has to play 13.f4 or 13.g5, preparing to recapture on b4 with the bishop, after which his fractured queenside structure might later become a problem.

13.\textit{xf}8 \textit{xf}8 14.\textit{wd}6 \textit{b}7 15.\textit{g}3 \textit{wb}8
16.\textit{wd}2 \textit{wc}7 17.\textit{g}5 \textit{dg}8 18.\textit{h}4 \textit{we}7 19.\textit{h}5
At this point it was interesting to steer the game into truly muddy territory with
19. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}xb5!!} exb5 20. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}xb5} \texttt{e}6 21. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{d}}6, when White has sensational compensation for the piece, but no direct knock-out punch. I am pretty sure that the position is simply winning, but this is much more difficult to assess over-the-board, and it takes a rare type of player to take this kind of decision, and subsequently follow it up with the needed series of accurate manoeuvring moves.

19... \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{f}}d8 20. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}xg6} hxg6 21. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{e}}3 a5 22. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}3}!

Not a bad move, although it seems to me that keeping the pressure was more prudent. After 22.a3! White holds on to a clear advantage. However, it is not in the style of Simon Williams to slowly squeeze the life out of an opponent. He is the master of the direct attack more than any other contemporary English player.

22... \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{g}}8?

This proves to be insufficient for several reasons. The only defensive try was the following:

22... \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{e}}8!

Here it is natural for White to show his hand with this imaginative sequence:

23. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}xd7}+ \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{x}}d7 24. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{x}}xd7 \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{c}}xd7 25. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}8 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}8

26. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}5}!

This sacrifice has several functions, but first and foremost it is a clearance sacrifice of the diagonal between e5 and h2.

26... \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}x5} 27. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{c}}c5+ \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}7 28. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}e5+} \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}8

28... \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}6 29. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}2! illustrates one of the points behind the sacrifice.

29. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}7 \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{e}}6! 30. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}e6}

30. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}7+? \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}7 31. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}2 is also dangerous for Black it seems, but the main line is a simple advantage.

30... \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}e6} 31. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}xb7 axb4 32. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}e2 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}4 33. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}d4 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}7 34. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}e6}+ \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}7 35. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}d4

This endgame appears to be quite dangerous for Black, but because of the limited amount of material on the board, he possesses reasonable drawing chances. Obviously, there is plenty to play for, and the result would depend entirely on the level of play presented by the two players from here on.

23. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}xd7}!!

This is the beginning of a beautiful and very human combination, which should have won the game in style. However, the machine points out that there was a shorter route to victory: White could have played 23. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{e}}6!!.

The weakness of the f7-square is absolutely decisive. The main point is that 23... \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}e6} is answered with 24. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}7! and Black is losing the battle for his own private sphere on the seventh rank. For this reason you can imagine lines such as 23... \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}7 24. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}f7}! axb4 25. \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}g6}! and the black king is stripped bare.

23... \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}d7} 24. \texttt{\textcolor{blue}{c}}5+ \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}7

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[very thick] (1,1) -- (7,7);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}
White is keeping Black under pressure, but he is struggling to make use of his knights. The next ingenious move solves this issue instantly.

25.\textbf{\textit{f5}}!!

A thematic, but still rather beautiful knight sacrifice. White could maintain the pressure with 25.a3, but the text move is much stronger.

25...\textbf{\textit{axb4}}!

This proposed exchange sacrifice is the only way to keep the game going.

After 25...\textbf{\textit{gxf5}} 26.\textbf{\textit{exf5}} \textbf{\textit{axb4}} White can play 27.\textbf{\textit{e4}} and there is no defence against f5-f6, winning.

26.\textbf{\textit{h8}}!!

This is the real sacrifice (of both knights, not just one!). White could take on e7, of course, when he might be slightly better, but he would lose all of his dynamic potential, the true justification for his ruined queenside structure.

26...\textbf{\textit{gx f5}}

Black has to accept both the knights now, and if he takes the other knight first, he has no defence.

27.\textbf{\textit{exf5}} \textbf{\textit{bxc3}} 28.\textbf{\textit{f6}} \textbf{\textit{ae8}}

The only move. Black does not have time to threaten mate. After 28...\textbf{\textit{axa2}} 29.\textbf{\textit{fxe7}} \textbf{\textit{g7}} White can win with either 30.\textbf{\textit{fxg8}} or 30.\textbf{\textit{e8=Q}}t, both leading to mate in a number of moves.

29.\textbf{\textit{xc3}}!

This move is not about a pawn, although it is highly convenient to get rid of the enemy foot soldier that could support a mating attack. The real purpose is to get the queen to h3 or h4, from where she will be able to deliver mate quite quickly. Black only has one way of dealing with this, which is to get the queen to the kingside as quickly as possible, so that she can interfere with the opponent’s plot.

29...e4! 30.\textbf{\textit{h3}} \textbf{\textit{f4}} 31.\textbf{\textit{b1}} \textbf{\textit{xf5}} 32.\textbf{\textit{h7}}!

A very human move. The threat is \textbf{\textit{hxg8}}t followed by \textbf{\textit{hxh6}}t, so the black king needs an air hole immediately.

It turns out that there was a second, although rather cryptic way to win the game: 32.\textbf{\textit{fxe7}} \textbf{\textit{exe7}} 33.\textbf{\textit{h5}}! and Black loses immediately, based on 34.\textbf{\textit{a3}}t, which traps the king in the centre.

32...\textbf{\textit{a8}} 33.\textbf{\textit{exg8}}t \textbf{\textit{hxg8}}
Simon was in time trouble at this point, and here he missed the chance to crown his play, making it a true masterpiece.

34.fxe7??

White is still winning after this poor move, but it is shocking that a player of Simon's ability missed 34...fxg8 35.fxe7, when Black can simply resign.

34...fxe7 35...f4 36...f4+

Again White is feeling the pinch of the clock. He has a winning attack after 36...f4! e8 37...d4+ f5 38...g1, when Black has to give up the queen.

36...e6 37...e4+

The wins are getting more elaborate. Here it was possible to play 37...d6+ f5 38...c5+! f6 39...d6+ g7

40...d3!!, when the combined threat of a mating attack and the possibility to win the queen wins. This is near impossible to see when there are only seconds left on the clock, so Simon definitely made the right decision by continuing the checks.

37...f6 38...f4+ e6 39...d6+ f5 40...c5+ f6

But one would have hoped that at this point he stopped, took a break, and was able to notice that 41...d6+ g7 42...d3! wins. With the extra time added at this point, this should have been possible.

41...d4+ f5 42...d3+ f6 43...f3+ e6 44...h3+ f6 45...f3+ e6 46...e4+

At this point White still has a winning continuation within reach, but it has become apparent that Williams has lost the motivation to find it, or maybe the belief that it is actually still there. Of course, there are also many moves that give a threefold repetition.

White was still winning after 46...e3+ f5 47...f4! e8 48...c5+ f6 49...g1 and Black has to part with his queen, because of 49...f8

50...d4+ e6 51...f5+ f6 52...f1+ and he is mated. But although all of this is easy to understand, it is very hard to see, especially after an exhausting five hour fight.

½—½
Breakthrough in the centre

We have just seen two games in which the attacker managed to trap the opponent’s king in the centre and thus was able to build up a strong attack that eventually crashed through. In both examples there was a sense of urgency when it came to restricting the movements of the monarch, but subsequently there was enough time to bring up the reinforcements in preparation for the final kill.

In this section this is not the case, with the possible exception of the last game (Ziska – Herbold). In all the cases we have here, the opponent’s king is not trapped in a permanent mess, but is just lingering in the centre a moment or two too much. This is when we have to strike!

The first game illustrates this better than any. Given the chance because of a bad move order, White quickly clears the path down to the king in the centre and breaks through with tremendous force.

**Mikhail Garakov – Dmitry Chuprikov**

Russian Higher League, Novokuznetsk 2008

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Qc3 Qf6 4.e5 Qfd7 5.f4 c5 6.Qf3 Qc6 7.Qe3 a6 8.Qd2 b5 9.a3 g5

When Morozevich played this move against Anand, in a rapid game in 2005, the future World Champion reacted feebly and was soon worse. I remember analysing the variation for half a day and working out that the correct decision against this indiscretion should be to play for a dynamic advantage, as it seemed inconceivable that Black would be able to defend all his newly created weaknesses in the short term. I did not get a chance to try out my discoveries in practice, although it was not long before others started playing in a similar spirit to that which I had intended. This game is one such example.

10.fxg5 cxd4 11.Qxd4 Qxe5 12.Qf3 h6

I do not intend to conduct a theoretical review, so will simply say that this move looks rather optimistic. It is risky to make an additional, non-essential pawn move in such a position.

13.0–0–0 Qxf3?

This move is definitely suspect. Although it might not be immediately apparent, this opens not only the g-file for the rook, but also the short diagonal to h3 for the bishop on f1.

13...hxg5! was the correct way to continue.

![Chess board diagram]

The main point is that 14.Qxg5 Qb8! gives an interesting middlegame with chances for both sides, and 14.Qxg5?! is lame, as Black is...
at least equal, if not simply a bit better after 14...\(\text{Qxf3}\) 15.gxf3 \(\text{Wxg5}\)! 16.\(\text{Wxg5}\) \(\text{h6}\), when his central structure is safe from piece sacrifices.

**14.gxf3 hxg5**

Black has played his hand. He is clearly hoping that White will play 15.\(\text{Qxg5}\)?, when the raw 15...\(\text{Wxg5}\)! secures Black an advantage with his better structure. However, Black has not developed and if only White was able to open the position quickly, he would be able to use his lead in development positively.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c}
\text{a} & \text{b} & \text{c} & \text{d} & \text{e} & \text{f} & \text{g} & \text{h} \\
\hline
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 & 8
\end{array}
\]

15.\(\text{Qxd5}!!\)

This move in itself is not too surprising, but the elegant follow-up is beautiful. The challenge for White is to make the most out of all of his pieces. Some of them have no short term abilities and are thus sacrificed in order to let those that have to enter the action faster.

**15...exd5**

Even if Black was willing to give up a pawn, he cannot decline the sacrifice. There are simply too many threats now the knight has arrived on d5.

16.\(\text{Wxd5} \text{b8}\)

The first part of the combination has not been too surprising, but surely Black had not seen the next move coming!

17.\(\text{h3}!!\)

The bishop attacks the knight on d7, only so that the rook on h1 can enter the game as quickly as possible, without allowing his opponent to get coordinated.

**17...\(\text{Wxh3}\)**

Obviously Black can consider declining the sacrifice, but it turns out that his prospects are no better in that case:

17...\(\text{c7}\) 18.\(\text{he1} \text{f8}\)

18...0-0 19.\(\text{g1}\) does not improve anything. Soon lines will open on the kingside and Black will find himself without hope or protection.

Here White can exploit the multitude of pins to decide the game with a brilliant combination:

19.\(\text{c5}!!\)
The first point behind this sacrifice is 19...\texttt{Bxc5} 20.\texttt{Bxe5!} and Black will lose a lot of material instantly. So Black must take with the bishop.

**19...Bxc5**

Here White can win back all his material while opening up the various files with simple play:

\texttt{20.\texttt{Bxd7 Bxd7 21.Bxc5+ Bg8 22.Bxd7}}

Here Black can either settle for 22...\texttt{Bf6} 23.\texttt{Bd5} and lose slowly, or he can try:

\texttt{22...Bxd7 23.Bxg5+ Bf8}

when White once again will play:

\texttt{24.Be5}

and win back the rook, while keeping two extra pawns plus an attack.

**18.Bhe1 Bc7**

More resistance might be offered by:

\texttt{18...Bc7}

But White should be winning all the same.

**19.Bc5!**

This time the bishop is protected because of 19...\texttt{Bxc5} 20.\texttt{Bxd8} mate! So instead Black has to play to defend the king.

**19...Bb6**

Winning the queen is perhaps not enough to win the game, so White continues with his attack.


This time White wins the queen under more favourable circumstances.

23...\texttt{Bxc5} 24.\texttt{Bxg8+ Bh7} 25.Bxh8+ Bf6 26.Bxd8 Bd4

Otherwise the bishop is lost on c8. Black now wants to play ...\texttt{Bh8} to keep all his bits, but after:

\texttt{27.Bg4! Be3+ 28.Bb1 Bb7 29.Bg7 Bc6 30.Be7 Bc5 31.Be6}

Black will eventually have to suffer decisive material concessions.

**19.Bc5 Bh6 20.Bxe7 Bxe7**

Now White can win in a variety of ways, but the brute force approach is always attractive.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}


\texttt{1-0}

An impressive game indeed.

In the next game White gets the chance to open the centre, after Black makes a few moves that utterly lack any sense of danger. Unfortunately, for the first player, he then completely loses his way and fails to make the most of his chances.

**Emil Sutovsky – Borki Predojevic**

Subotica 2008

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

17...\texttt{b}1?!

This is a new move. Previously a number of games had been played in which White gave a check with 17...h5, but after 17...g7 Black does not seem to have any problems. At times 18.g4 with an impending draw has been played, while also 18.e5 has been tried. But here Black replies 18...\texttt{d}d8! as in, for example, G. Garcia – Smirin, New York 1997. At best White is able to keep the balance here, I should think.

I do not think that Sutovsky’s novelty is any real improvement, but it does make the game more of a game, if you know what I mean.

17...\texttt{c}5 18...\texttt{d}3 h5

18...\texttt{g}h8?? looks interesting.

19...\texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}e5?!

The queen might look ideally placed here, but in reality it is in danger. Once the knight sacrifices itself on f5, she will become hunted prey. But more importantly, White is not disturbed in his current set-up.

I think that Black should have good chances to equalise with:

19...\texttt{c}4!

Here my idea is that if White avoids the ending with:

20...\texttt{d}2

Then Black has a very dangerous idea.

20...\texttt{b}4?! 21...\texttt{e}2 \texttt{x}e4 22...\texttt{x}e4 \texttt{w}xe4

It is not so easy to prove compensation for White. Best is probably 23...\texttt{h}e1 when the compensation is an enduring initiative, where the black king will never be truly safe, but on the other hand White’s missing pawn is not a trivial matter. If White instead plays:

23...\texttt{f}4

I think Black can gain the advantage:

20...\texttt{d}e2!

The knight was nothing more than a target on c3, but on d4 it will threaten the real weaknesses in the black position: the e6-pawn.

20...\texttt{c}4 21...\texttt{d}4 \texttt{h}e8 22...\texttt{h}e1 \texttt{d}d8?

This is too optimistic. Black is hoping to transfer the bishop either to a5, where it will irritate the rook on e1, or (more probably) to b6, where it will challenge the knight on d4.
and thus indirectly assist with the attack on c2. However, it is a rather reckless move, leaving the d6-pawn without proper protection and inviting White to execute a standard sacrifice. But even after normal moves Black is in trouble. White has various ideas, \( \text{We}3-\text{h}6 \) being one of them.

One strong attacking idea can be seen after, for instance, 22...b4, and now 23.g4! h4 24.g5!, intending \( \text{g}4 \), after which it will be impossible for Black to defend e6. He will probably have to give up the exchange and try to grovel, but the outlook is not uplifting.

23.\( \text{Af}5! \)

This sacrifice was of course White's intention all along.

23...\( \text{exf}5 \)

Black decides to accept the challenge, as the other options are all poor.

23...\( \text{c}7 \) is of course possible, but White will crash through on the kingside with simple moves: 24.\( \text{Axh}5! \) \( \text{Af}8 \) 25.\( \text{We}3! \) and mate will happen quickly; the king is simply too unprotected.

Black can also try a counterattack, but the knight is too destructive on d6. 23...\( \text{Exc}2 \) 24.\( \text{Axd}6! \) \( \text{Ag}6 

24...\( \text{g}8 \) is obviously safer, but after 25.\( \text{Wb}3 \) White is well on his way to a full point. After the text move White can win with 25.\( \text{Wb}3 \), but there is a beautiful forced line:

25.\( \text{Axh}5! \) \( \text{Axh}5 \) 26.\( \text{Wh}3! \) \( \text{Ag}6 \) 27.\( \text{Wg}4! \) \( \text{Ah}7 

After 27...\( \text{g}5 \) 28.\( \text{Xe}6 \) Black will suffer heavy material losses. The check on g8 is tough to meet, and several of the pieces are hanging.

28.\( \text{Cc}4!! \)

The threat of introducing the rook on d7 is decisive.

28...\( \text{Ac}1?? \)

This looks like the best diversion, however, it is not enough.

29.\( \text{Xc}1 \) \( \text{Xc}4 \) 30.\( \text{Xc}4 \) bxc4 31.\( \text{Cc}3! \)

White wins.

24.\( \text{exf}5 \) \( \text{xf}3 \)

Black had of course seen this, but somehow he must have misevaluated the position.

25.\( \text{xf}3 \)

25.\( \text{Xe}5? \) \( \text{Xd}1 \) is not in the cards. It is pure luck that White can still draw after 26.\( \text{Dd}5! \) \( \text{Ag}7 \) 27.\( \text{Xe}8 \) \( \text{Xc}2? \) 28.\( \text{Aa}1 \) \( \text{xf}5! \) through perpetual check.

25...\( \text{Xh}2 \)

The queen is banished to outer Siberia, from where she can do nothing but cling on for dear life.
Now something rather remarkable happened. Surovsky, one of the great modern day masters of the attack, failed to find the winning continuation.

If Black tries 26...\$e7 then simply 27.\$d7 would win back the piece, without Black feeling any sense of relief.

And running with the king also does not work: 26...\$g7 27.\$d7+ \$h6 28.\$e6! \$f4 29.\$e8 I think with the heavy artillery placed like this on the seventh and eighth ranks, any titled player would decide to venture it, even if he was unable to see everything clearly beyond here. The force directed against the king is simply too great. I do not see much point in giving any further analysis. After a few checks Black will get mated, and this can happen in any number of ways.

There was a third winning line, which is probably somewhere between the two others in type, by being slightly non-forcing, while not being completely computerised in nature. However, I would not be disappointed if I or any (or all) of my students did not find it in a practical game. It is rather elegant:

26.\$e2 \$g7
26...\$a5 loses rather quickly to 27.\$e6+ \$g7 28.\$d7+ \$g8 29.\$e7 and Black is mated.
27.\$e8 \$g3 28.\$xd6!
Black is under a heavy attack. The main line is rather impressive:

28...\$4c7
Before the final attack can be initiated the queen has to be nudged, so she cannot defend both g6 and attack e1 at the same time.

29...g4 30.xd7+ h6 31.h8+ g5 32.xg8+!

The black king is drawn into the middle of the board and mated. There are many possible ways this can happen, for example:

32...h6 33.h7+ g5 34.g3! xf5 35.g7+ g6 36.d5+ f5 37.xf5+! xf5 38.e5+

And so on.

26...e5 27.hel wh2 28.xh1 e5 29.xel wh2

White can still win the game, but Sutovsky was not himself on this day...

30.h1?

½-½

In the next two games we shall see a common scenario, which could just as easily have been placed in the previous chapter. Black plays the opening a bit carelessly and White is allowed to blow his centre to smithereens for a low material investment. In both cases the enduring initiative is too much to handle; the king is simply not safe enough.

Zaven Andriasian – Maxim Rodshtein

World Junior Championship, Yerevan 2006

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Qd2 c5 4.exd5 xd5 5.Qg3 cxd4 6.Qc4 wd6 7.0-0 Qf6 8.Qh3 Qc6 9.Qxd4 Qxd4 10.Qxd4 a6 11.xe1 xd7

Though this is popular, 11...e7 is still the main line.

12.Qg5!

This seems to be a serious challenge to this set-up. Previously 12.c3 was played, but this looks less appealing.

12...e7?

This is a standard move in this variation, but when White's moves are non-standard that may not be such a good thing. It was already necessary for Black to tread carefully, as you can see from the following lines.

12...Qe7 13.Qf5! looks dangerous.

In my original annotations to this game I noted 12...Qc5!? as an interesting move, but as we shall see, it is only interesting for White...

By the way, it is not difficult to imagine where Andriasian got his inspiration. A few months earlier a countryman of his played a game with the following moves: 12...0-0-0 13.g3? Qb8? 14.Qb3! c8 15.Qf3 Qc6 16.Qxc6+ Qxc6 17.Qf6 gxf6 18.Qxf6 Bd8 19.Qf1. In Asrivan – Wang Hao, Taiyuan 2006, Black had very little to show for his pawn.

The critical continuation looks to be:

13...e4 14.Qf3 (14.Qxa6 Qc5 15.Qc3 Qe4! with unclear play might be the future) 14...e5! In this messy position the players agreed a draw in Asrivan – Anastasian, Yerevan 2007.
White mobilises his last piece, while preventing his opponent from doing the same with the rook on a8.

19...\textit{e7}?!

19...\textit{e8}? 20.\textit{g4}! \textit{h6} 21.\textit{d3} should be basic stuff; the trick is to flick in the queen check.

A better try was 19...h5?! although White is still a lot better after 20.\textit{e3}! (this is the correct rook, as the other one is heading for d7). 20.\textit{e8} (20...\textit{h6}? loses to 21.\textit{d7} \textit{g6} 22.\textit{f6}! and Black has no acceptable way to meet the threat of \textit{g3}.) 21.\textit{e8} \textit{e8} 22.\textit{d7}! \textit{e7} 23.\textit{e6} \textit{g8} 24.\textit{xh7}

Without a doubt Black is suffering, but he can still fight on for a while.

20.\textit{d7}?

White decides to try to win with the pawns instead of with the pieces. The endgame after 20.\textit{xe7} \textit{xe7} 21.\textit{d7} \textit{h8} 22.\textit{e6} \textit{xd7} 23.\textit{xd7}! \textit{g8} 24.h4 should be a relatively trivial win for White. If Black's vulnerable king was his only problem then he might be alright, but combined with the numerous pawn weaknesses it is too much for the defence to bear.

20...\textit{h8}

Black has managed to defend for the time being, and White still needs to prove his
advantage. In such situations it is important to remember that one does not always have to rush.

For the record, White's eventual plan will be to advance the c-pawn, which should be enough to break the defence.

21.g3!
White takes a brief "time out" to safeguard his king against back rank tricks.

The computer comes up with a strange solution here, claiming that White is better after 21.g4?!, based on: 21...g8?! 22.g5! fxg5 23.e4! (but not 23.e5? f6! and Black wins a piece) 23...h8 24.c5! Black is completely dominated and will lose the bishop quite soon.

However, it is hard to believe that such a sophisticated bind should be followed up by bulldozing the pawns forward like a caveman. Black can try 21...h6!? and possibly benefit from the inclusion of this pair of pawn moves.

21...ab8 22.h4 h5
Black's pieces are more or less completely tied up with defensive duties, so he can only sit and wait.

23.c4! b6 24.b4
It is obvious that White has overwhelming compensation and should win with correct play, but still this is not a good argument for collapsing the way Black did in the game.

24...b8??
A simple blunder. It is usually a good strategy in such "hopeless" positions where you cannot find a way to defend, at least to force the opponent to prove the win instead.

Here Black could have played 24...g8? with the idea 25.e5 bxc5 26.bxc5 b1t 27.h2 b5. Black may still be in trouble, but at least he is still fighting for the time being.

25.exf7
Clearing the table.

25...xf7 26.xf7 xf7 27.xc8 xb4 28.xa6
There is no perpetual, so the queen ending should be an easy win with two extra pawns.

28...x1t 29.g2 e4t 30.h2 d4 31.g1 h6 32.a4 g7 33.b3 g6 34.a3 g7 35.g2 d6 36.b5 h6 37.a4 d4 38.d5 c3 39.d6 1-0

The next example bears some obvious similarities to the previous one.
Michael Adams – Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu

Sofia 2007

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3...d2 c5 4.exd5 Wxd5
5...g3 cxd4 6...c4 Wd6 7.0–0 Wf6 8.b3 d6 9.bxd4 Wxd4 10...xd4 a6 11...e1
d7 12...g5 Wc5?

A strange mistake from Nisipeanu. White wins by force, which quite possibly means from home as well. Anyway, it seems suicidal to rely on a computer evaluation (0.00 – and I am only guessing this is what Nisipeanu did), especially in a position like this, where the computer will probably be happy to ‘settle’ for a perpetual to compensate for the missing piece.

13...xe6!
Adams might have become a bit more careful with age, but he does not let chances like this get away.

13...fxe6 14...xf6 gxf6 15...xe6 Wxe6
16...xe6† Wc7

There is also no joy for Black after:
16...Wf7 17.d7† Wc7

No better is 17...Wg6 18...e1.
18...e1
White’s pressure should decide the game.
For example:

18...Wxe8
18...Wc8 and Black will never be able to move again.

19.b4!!
Momentum, my dear Watson!
19...Wxb4
19...Wad8 20...xe8†!
20...We4 Wc5
20...Wd6 21...f5 leaves Black unable to defend his rear.
21...e6† Wf8 22...g4
Black is dead lost.

17...Wc3
Taking the pawn would lose by force:

17...\(\text{\#x2013;x}b4\) 18.\(\text{\#b}1\) \(\text{\#c}4\)
18...\(\text{\#c}5\) 19.\(\text{\#x}b7\) is maybe not a hundred percent clear, but Black is very close to having to resign.

19.\(\text{\#h}5\)!
19.\(\text{\#d}6\) is also sufficient.

19...\(\text{\#f}8\) 20.\(\text{\#h}6\) \(\text{\#f}7\) 21.\(\text{\#x}e7\) \(\text{\#xe}7\)
22.\(\text{\#x}b7\) \(\text{\#e}6\) 23.\(\text{\#b}6\) \(\text{\#d}5\) 24.\(\text{\#xf}6\)

The black king cannot hide.

18.\(\text{\#e}3\) \(\text{\#c}7\)

After 18...\(\text{\#c}6\) 19.\(\text{\#e}2\) White ends up a pawn to the good.

19.\(\text{\#h}5\) \(\text{\#f}8\) 20.\(\text{\#e}1\) \(\text{\#e}8\) 21.\(\text{\#h}6\) \(\text{\#f}7\)
22.\(\text{\#h}5\) \(\text{\#f}8\) 23.\(\text{\#h}6\) \(\text{\#f}7\) 24.\(\text{\#c}3\)

1-0

Black is left in a bind. His extra piece is nothing but a liability, and his three heavy pieces cannot get into play. Adams now takes a lot of moves to win the game, but this is just an example of how a great player secures the full point in such positions, by eliminating all possible counterplay.

24...\(\text{\#h}g8\)

24...\(\text{\#d}6\) loses the queen for two rooks under unpleasant circumstances to 25.\(\text{\#h}5\) \(\text{\#f}8\) 26.\(\text{\#g}3\) \(\text{\#d}8\) (26...\(\text{\#d}2\) 27.\(\text{\#d}1\) \(\text{\#d}6\)! is tricky, but after 28.\(\text{\#xe}8\)! White should win the rook ending) 27.\(\text{\#g}4\) \(\text{\#e}8\) and now either 28.\(\text{\#xe}7\) or 28.\(\text{\#g}7\) 29.\(\text{\#d}3\) \(\text{\#c}7\) 30.\(\text{\#d}3\) with a continued bind is a serious option. White can take his time and choose his moment to “cash in” his advantage.

25.\(\text{\#x}h7\) \(\text{\#g}7\) 26.\(\text{\#h}5\) \(\text{\#f}8\) 27.\(\text{\#g}3\) \(\text{\#d}7\)
28.\(\text{\#e}6\) \(\text{\#g}5\) 29.\(\text{\#h}8\) \(\text{\#f}7\) 30.\(\text{\#h}7\) \(\text{\#g}7\)

31.\(\text{\#h}5\) \(\text{\#g}6\) 32.\(\text{\#c}4\)

Already here 32.f4! just wins. Later on White will have to look out for ...\(\text{\#c}5\)! so he prepares it carefully.

32...\(\text{\#g}7\) 33.\(\text{\#d}5\) \(\text{\#c}7\) 34.\(\text{\#e}4\) \(\text{\#f}7\) 35.\(\text{\#c}5\)
36.\(\text{\#f}5\) \(\text{\#g}7\) 37.\(\text{\#e}4\) \(\text{\#f}7\) 38.\(\text{\#f}5\) \(\text{\#g}7\)
39.\(\text{\#h}5\)

Black resigned. Next comes \(\text{\#g}2\) and \(\text{\#f}4\), followed by \(\text{\#xe}8!\) and \(\text{\#xe}7\), winning the ending.

1-0

The following game is different from the previous, in the sense that the breakthrough in the centre does not win by force. The correct defence would have been to reject the material and run for dear life, but instead Black decided to be a real gentleman and scoff the poisonous treat.

Rafael Leitao – Luiz Loureiro

Sao Paulo 1999

1.e4 c5 2.\(\text{\#f}3\) e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.\(\text{\#xd}4\) a6
5.\(\text{\#d}3\) b5?

This is generally a mistake when White has not yet placed the knight on c3. The difference is that when Black is forced to advance the b-pawn, there is no threat or annoyance to the white knight, which instead races to the comfy spot on c4.

6.0-0 \(\text{\#b}7\) 7.a4! b4 8.\(\text{\#d}2\) \(\text{\#c}7\) 9.\(\text{\#c}4\) \(\text{\#f}6\)
White’s opening advantage is great, but as it arose from one inaccuracy, it is not surprising that it can vanish with one as well.

10.e5!?!  
As it turns out, White is reacting too soon. Had he first played 10.Qe1!, the threat of e4-e5 would be far stronger than the immediate execution. For example: 10...Qc6 11.Qxc6 Qxc6 12.e5 Qd5 13.Qg4 and Black is positionally busted.

10...d5!  
This is the only move. Standard moves lead to an unplayable position. White was simply winning after 10...Qd5? 11.Qg4 Qc6 12.Qf3 g6 13.Qg3 h6 14.a5 Qe7 15.Qd2 in J. Polgar - Kamsky, Monte Carlo (rapid) 1994.

11.exf6!  
Although I am not sure whether or not this is objectively stronger than the alternative, it is definitely the most challenging move to face over the board.

After the natural 11.exd6 Qxd6 12.Qxd6† Qxd6 13.Qe1 White has a slight edge, but Black can at least be said to have escaped the opening in one piece.

11...Qxc4

12.Qf5!!  
This was the idea behind White's last move. The black king is edging on being stuck in the centre.

12...Qc6?  
This does nothing to solve the number one problem in the position, namely that of king safety.

The same can be said about 12...Qxf6?, when White crashes through with 13.Qe1!, with points such as 13...Qe7 14.Qxe6! Qg8 15.Qe4, when Black might not get immediately mated, but is left with a ruined position and nowhere to put his king.

The only playable option was the lifeboat approach with 12...Qd7!, with the idea of 13.Qxe6 0-0-0! (13...fxe6 14.Qxg7 Qxg7 15.Qh5† leads to a deadly attack. Trust me on this one!). However, after 14.Qh3 I fear that the black position is not very good, although it of course has some dynamic potential. In any case, it was certainly preferable to the game...

13.Qxe6!  
White must not hesitate. It would be horrific to play 13.Qe1?! 0-0-0 when Black wins.

13...fxe6 14.Qxe6!
This would not be the first move I would instinctively look at, but once you have examined the alternative it becomes obvious that this is the right choice.

After the inferior 14...e5! Black manages to keep the centre closed. The position is still very unclear after 15...h5†, and maybe even better for White, but why would one even go down this road?

14...e5

Black's position is lost, although it requires a bit more analysis before we can see this as a definite. The alternatives were:

14...d6 would be refuted by 15.fxg7 hxg7 16...h1 Wxg7 17...h6! and Black cannot defend himself against h.d7† and h.h5† anymore.

14...gxh6 15...h5† d8 16.d1† is easy to understand. White wins after 16...d6 17.f4 e5 18...xe5 fxe5 19.xd6† xd6 20.d1 and the king is hunted down.

14...d8 manages to repulse the bishop, but after 15...d5 Black is nowhere nearer solving his problems with his king.

It was also strong to give the check on h5, but this elegant move is even more deadly.

15...gxh6

This loses easily, but there was nothing else.

After 15...d6 16.e1 f8 17.h5 h6 18.d1 White is ready to strike.

One beautiful line starts with 15...h6, when White wins in style with 16.f7†! xh7 17...h5† xd7 18.e1† e7 19.xe7† xc7 (19...xd1 20.xd1 and it is impossible for Black to save the knight, as well as most of his pawns.) 20.d4 d8 21.xe7† xe7 22.e1† f8 23.xc4 and Black is lost.

16.xf6 g7 17.h5† g6

17...f8 18.f5! f7 19.d1 is just over. It is impossible for Black to avoid a mass exchange on f7 followed by a rook check on d7 and a lost ending... and that is the best-case scenario.

18.xg7 xg7 19.e1

The black king has remained rooted in the centre and the game is heading towards its inevitable conclusion.
In the next game Black takes two pawns in 19th century fashion, but is then gunned down in a Morphy-esque style. He manages to escape with the king and castle, but this is not enough to help him. However, he had a secret weapon: a healthy slice of luck, which may have been connected to the fact that the game was played in a blindfold tournament...

Steffen Pedersen – Peter Heine Nielsen

Faaborg (blindfold) 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.f3 d5 4.c3 dxc4 5.e4

This is a modern gambit. White is seeking to exploit a slight advantage in development to establish a space advantage and use it to build up an attack on the kingside. 6.g5 is the main move, transposing to thousands of previously played games. Peter Heine Nielsen has great experience in this line, including a few draws with Kasparov in a rapid match once.

6...dx4

Often a gambit is best answered by accepting the offer, but not caring too greatly about holding on to the material.

7.0–0

7...bxc3

This is a rather risky approach. Black decides to take a second pawn and in return will have all sorts of problems, such as the king stuck in the centre and coming under attack from the great firepower of the two white bishops.

The calmer approach is 7...bxc3 8.bxc3 8.e7, when after 9.e5 White has some compensation for the pawn. One example came from a recent candidates match involving a world champion; Kasimdzhanov – Gelfand, Elista (1) 2007, was eventually drawn.

On the other hand, the completely passive approach cannot be recommended. After 7...f6 8.a4+ dxc6 9.dxe5 dxe7 10.dxe6 bxc6 11.xc6+ d7 12.f3 White was a bit better in Gustafsson – Aronian, Internet 2004.

8.bxc3 9.b3 d5 10.a3

This is the first of the two critical moments in the game. The next one comes at move 19. At this point Black needs to play very accurately to survive the immediate attack.

One option could be 10...f6! with the idea of ...e7. The position would remain pretty unclear, but the black king would be safe, at least for now.
This horrible move leads to serious difficulties. The pressure down the e-file will become intense and there will be no stopping it. Obviously Black was relying on his next move, but as we shall see this was a deeply flawed idea.

Black is supporting the d5-spot. This is not good enough, but neither are the alternatives.

This does not make a lot of sense, even if similar devices have been seen in analogous positions; mainly the Italian game. (12...c6 loses a piece to 13...xd5!) White will have to play energetically in order to breach the defences, with 13...b5! b6 14...b3, which leaves Black utterly paralysed. There is no defence, neither in the long term, nor the short term.

11...d6 was as close to the only move as you can get. Still White has a winning attack after 12...d1, based on 12...d5 13...xe6!!, when Black is forced to play 13...xe6 14...xe6+ d7 15...b5+ c8, and after 16...e7 his position is unbearable.

The depressing 13...e5 14...xe5...e6 was the best option, objectively, but after 15...b5† Black's position is clearly unplayable. So, from a practical point of view, Black is playing his only chance.

14...xd5 0–0

Black has apparently managed to escape from the attack in the centre, but it is all an illusion. The queen has nowhere to hide, so the subsequent d1 is a big embarrassment. For this reason White has a nice winning combination.
15...\texttt{xf7}!!

Black is immediately caught in a web of pins.

15...\texttt{xf7}

Forced. After 15...\texttt{h8} 16.\texttt{ad1} Black loses material.

16.\texttt{ad1} \texttt{f8}

16...\texttt{e8} 17.\texttt{g5} with the threat \texttt{xf7} and \texttt{xe7} is also soul destroying. Black can try 17...\texttt{g4}, but White wins with 18.\texttt{d4} \texttt{h5} 19.\texttt{de4}, the point being that the e7-knight will perish after 19...\texttt{h8} 20.\texttt{xf7+} \texttt{xf7} 21.\texttt{a3}.

17.\texttt{g5} \texttt{g4} 18.\texttt{f3}!

The advantage of this move over 18.\texttt{d4}? is that in the line 18...\texttt{h5} 19.\texttt{e6} \texttt{c8} 20.\texttt{d8+}, White needs an escape square for the king on f2.

18...\texttt{h5}

![Chess Board Diagram]

19.\texttt{d7}??

A horrible move. White was ready to reap the fruits of his labour with 19.\texttt{e6!}, when the black queen does not have a decent square. White is just winning.

19...\texttt{c6} 20.\texttt{xc7}?

White is collapsing. After the forced 20.\texttt{xf7} \texttt{xf7} 21.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{c5}† 22.\texttt{h1} \texttt{e8} Black is better, but White still has some drawing chances.

20...\texttt{c5}† 21.\texttt{h1} \texttt{g5} 22.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{xc7} 23.\texttt{xa8}† \texttt{d8} 0–1

The next game also includes a miracle. The French grandmaster Christian Bauer is sometimes a bit too inventive for his own good, writing books about ...b6 and such like, which might be limiting his great talent; or perhaps be the source of it – who knows? However, the price of playing less than mainstream openings is that you are playing poor variations a bit too often; which means that you have bad positions a bit too often as well.

The upside is of course that by getting used to playing difficult positions, one can become highly skilled in the art of defence. Just one imprecise move from the attacker, and all his advantage is gone.

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave – Christian Bauer

Pau 2008

1.\texttt{e4} \texttt{c5} 2.\texttt{f3} \texttt{b6}?!?

The late Tony Miles called this the Hansen variation after the then relatively unknown, but now quite famous chess reviewer, FM Carsten Hansen. The move is pretty poor, as Black is putting the b-pawn on b6 prematurely. This costs him a lot of flexibility, both in terms of committing the queen's bishop to b7, and also concerning the question of whether the b-pawn should advance one or two squares.

3.\texttt{d4} \texttt{cxd4} 4.\texttt{cxd4} \texttt{b7} 5.\texttt{c3} \texttt{a6}

That this move is more or less forced shows how clumsy this variation is. But Bauer is a great fan of all openings that contradict the classical principles of chess theory.
6.\textit{g5}!

I prefer this aggressive move, although I played differently when I had the position as a very young man. After 6.\textit{c4} e6 7.\textit{e2} \textit{c7} 8.0-0 \textit{c5} 9.\textit{d1} h5 10.\textit{e3} \textit{f6} 11.\textit{d5}?! axb5 12.\textit{xb5} \textit{e5}?! (correct was 12...\textit{c6}! 13.\textit{d5}! with a great mess, which might actually be in White's favour; although I do not want to say so with any certainty) 13.\textit{xc5} bxc5 14.\textit{d6} White was winning in Aagaard - Ca. Hansen, Aarhus 1990, although for various reasons I later chickened out and offered a draw.

6...\textit{c7} 7.\textit{f3}

The absolute model game in this variation went like this: 7.\textit{d5}! \textit{xd5} 8.exd5 White is probably already winning. Black can take the pawn, but with all the pieces in play, White is a huge favourite. 8...\textit{e5} 9.\textit{dxe6} fxe6 10.\textit{f3} \textit{a7} 11.0-0-0 g6 12.\textit{e3}! \textit{f7} 13.\textit{c4}! \textit{e7}

So far we have been following Shaw - Sasikiran, Gibraltar 2005. Here 14.\textit{f4}! was winning. Next comes \textit{e1} and all the pieces are attacking. Later on White was winning all the same, but missed that a knight on g8 was hiding behind the king on g7, and thus was defending e7. Before that Sasikiran had decided to resign on the next move, no matter what, but somehow changed his mind when he was given a free extra piece.

7...\textit{e6} 8.0-0-0

White has developed, but Black has managed to get his bits out and is reasonable safe at the moment. With normal play on the queenside he would be more or less OK, but instead he plays a terrible move.

8...\textit{c5}?

After 8...\textit{c6} 9.\textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} White's advantage is not great. There are no targets, nor have his pieces any great tasks to perform.

9.\textit{f4}!

The last move seriously weakened the g7-square, so White quickly prepares to attack it. Not a deep strategy, but it does not have to be deep to work.

9...\textit{d8}

9...\textit{d6} looks desirable, but the weakness of the dark squares is too great. White can play
10.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{Q}b3}}\) to eliminate the bishop on c5, or the attractive 10.\(\text{\texttt{Qg3}}\) g6 11.\(\text{\texttt{Bf3!}}\), when Black is in great trouble, based on 11...e5 12.\(\text{\texttt{Qxe5!}}\) when Black has to play 12...\(\text{\texttt{Qxf2}},\) where both 13.\(\text{\texttt{Qxf2}}\) and 13.\(\text{\texttt{Qd3}}\) look deeply unpleasant for Black.

10.\(\text{\texttt{Qg3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{Qf6}}\) 11.\(\text{\texttt{Qc7!}}\)

Black is suffering greatly on the dark squares.

11...\(\text{\texttt{Qc8}}\)

11...\(\text{\texttt{Qh5?!}}\) 12.\(\text{\texttt{Qe5}}\) would be catastrophic.

12.\(\text{\texttt{Qe5}}\)

12.\(\text{\texttt{Qxg7}}\) was also possible, but White decides to hold on to the dark-squared bishop out of purely aggressive intentions.

12...\(\text{\texttt{Qxe4?!}}\)

It is generally a bad idea to open the position when you are behind in development, and this position is no exception. 12...\(\text{\texttt{Qe8?!}}\) was actually a better move, albeit a deeply depressing one to play. At the same time, it is not actually clear how White should turn his obvious advantage into something tangible.

13.\(\text{\texttt{Qxg7}}\) \(\text{\texttt{Qf8}}\) 14.\(\text{\texttt{Qxe4}}\) \(\text{\texttt{Qxe4}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{Qd3!}}\)

White is bringing his remaining pieces into play and exchanging Black's most active piece at the same time.

15...\(\text{\texttt{Qg6}}\)

This might look like a loss of time, but White comes racing out of the pit-stop after 15...\(\text{\texttt{Qxd3}}\) 16.\(\text{\texttt{Qxd3}}\) as well. For example: 16...\(\text{\texttt{Qc6}}\) 17.\(\text{\texttt{Qxc6}}\) \(\text{\texttt{Qxc6}}\) 18.\(\text{\texttt{Qhd1}}\) and Black's position is strategically hopeless, if not straight out lost.

16.\(\text{\texttt{Qf4!}}\)

It is always an advantage to bring in more pieces, even if they are too small to be referred by this term in general language. The prospect of \(f4-f5\) is deeply disturbing for Black.

16...\(\text{\texttt{Qd6}}\)

16...\(\text{\texttt{Qc6}}\) 17.\(\text{\texttt{Qxc6}}\) \(\text{\texttt{Qxc6}}\) 18.\(\text{\texttt{Qf5!}}\) exf5 is a try to keep some key squares defended, but it has a downside as well. (18...\(\text{\texttt{Qxf5}}\) 19.\(\text{\texttt{Qxf5}}\) exf5 20.\(\text{\texttt{Qf6}}\) leaves the black king trapped in the centre. It might take a bit of time to hunt him down, but he has nowhere to run to.) 19.\(\text{\texttt{Qhe1}}\) \(\text{\texttt{Qd8}}\) 20.\(\text{\texttt{Qe2!}}\) The bishop is threatening to reappear on the long diagonal with great force. For instance, if 20...\(\text{\texttt{Qxg2}}\) White plays 21.\(\text{\texttt{Qd4!}}\), and Black is left entirely without defenders of the king.

17.\(\text{\texttt{Qxe6!!}}\)

This classic sacrifice is the best move in the position, and a clear sign that this knight should have been eliminated much earlier.
17. \texttt{axg6} would have given an edge without any great complications, which might have been better in a practical sense; but Vachier-Lagrave naturally wants to punish his opponent for his provocative play.

17...\texttt{exe6}

This is forced. Black cannot allow his position to become completely unhinged.

After 17...\texttt{fxe6} White breaks up the centre with simple moves: 18.\texttt{axd6} h\texttt{xg6} 19.\texttt{axd6} \texttt{axd6} 20.\texttt{xd6} There is no way that Black can keep his bits together. For example: 20...\texttt{c6} 21.\texttt{e1} \texttt{d8} 22.\texttt{xd8}t! and Black loses everything.

18.\texttt{xd6}?

This throws most of the advantage overboard. From a theoretical point of view, this is a case of Evolution/Revolution/Evolution (see Chapter 7 of Volume One). After having reached a position with a great attack, White decided it was time to strike (17.\texttt{exe6}!), but this does not mean that he has to show his hand on the next move. Again and again it turns out that the best strategy is to include all of the pieces, to return to the evolutionary mode, even after performing a revolution such as a piece sacrifice.

White could have crowned his earlier play with 18.\texttt{e1}!!, when there is no good defence.

The main difference, as we shall see, is that there are no longer any threats of mate on the first rank. The most convincing line is: 18...\texttt{xd3} 19.\texttt{xd6} \texttt{xd6} 20.\texttt{exe6}t \texttt{fxe6} 21.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{xf4}t 22.\texttt{d1} and it is impossible to find a move for Black, even though he theoretically has a material advantage.

This would have been the logical and principled conclusion that would have rewarded White's hitherto excellent play.

This clever move keeps Black in the game, and may have been overlooked by Vachier-Lagrave. The resulting ending is a bit better for White, because Black has a lot of weaknesses, but in the game Bauer managed to hold it, despite a few hairy moments along the way! The remainder of the game is not so relevant for our subject, so I will only give the moves without comments.

```
23.\texttt{g4} \texttt{f1}t 24.\texttt{d1} \texttt{xd1}t 25.\texttt{xd1} \texttt{a7} 26.\texttt{d6} \texttt{d7} 27.\texttt{exe6}t \texttt{e7} 28.\texttt{c8}t \texttt{f7} 29.a4 \texttt{d7} 30.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{g7} 31.\texttt{c4}t \texttt{e6} 32.b4 \texttt{e5} 33.a5 b\texttt{xa5} 34.\texttt{xa5} \texttt{e7} 35.a6 \texttt{b6}t 36.\texttt{c1} \texttt{b2}t 37.\texttt{d1} \texttt{d6}t 38.\texttt{e2} \texttt{e4} 39.\texttt{c8} \texttt{e6}t 40.\texttt{d1} \texttt{d6} 41.c4 \texttt{c5}t 42.\texttt{c2} \texttt{h6} 43.\texttt{b7} \texttt{b6} 44.\texttt{a8}
```
The next game is an example of how a strategy on the flank can be met with a breakthrough in the centre. White goes for material gains, forcing him to proceed with great care afterwards, something he fails to accomplish. The punishment is swift, and straight down the centre.

Peter Wells – Yoshiharu Habu

Hoogeveen 2005

Habu is one of the most successful Shogi players of all time, with only very limited experience as a chess player. Still he is dangerous even for a seasoned grandmaster. In an interview with Joel Lautier, Habu said about chess: “I find that the most difficult aspect is to adapt oneself all the time to the changing rhythm of a chess game. A position may demand either fast and energetic action, or much quieter positional play, or something else still. Having to switch from fast play to a slower one and vice versa is the most unsettling for me. In Shogi, the rhythm of a game is much more stable.”

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.d3 d6 4.dc3 e6 5.e3 Qbd7 6.d3 dxec4 7.Qxc4 b5 8.Qe2 b4

The big main line 8...a6 9.e4 b4 10.e5 bxc3 11.exf6 Qxf6 12.bxc3 Qd6 is known not to give Black serious headaches, but also to be a bit boring.

9.Qa4 Qd6

I do not think the bishop is generally well placed on d6 in these lines. The main move is 9...Qb7.

10.e4?

It is hard to guess whether this was home preparation or over-the-board inspiration, but what is certain is that it is ambitious.

In a previous game White played using the same types of ideas, but without being so confrontational.


10...Qxe4!

Black has no choice but to accept the challenge, otherwise his position would simply be worse already.

11.Qc2 h5?!

This is the sharp attempt. The alternative is 11...Qa5. After 12.Qxe4 Qxa4 13.b3 Qa5 14.Qxc6 Qd5 15.Qxd5 exd5 we have reached a tranquil position in which White may or may not be able to exploit the weaknesses created by the advanced black b-pawn.

12.Qg5?!

White keeps changing gears upwards. He now wins the exchange, but his queen goes on something of a journey.

12...Qxg5 13.Qxc6
Chapter 4 - King Safety

Black is fully developed, while White still has to think about getting the queen back to safety. I think that this should compensate for the exchange.

15.\textit{c6 d6} 

This is probably the critical position for this new idea. The computer wants to play 16.g3, which I guess is some deep tactical idea based on trapping the knight in the centre, of which I remain sceptical. However, it is certainly a whole lot better for White than what happened in the game.

16.f3? 

My suggestion would be 16.0-0, when after 16...\textit{d7} 17.a6 c7 18.h3 the position seems to be more or less balanced. White is an exchange up, but Black is controlling a lot of central squares and it is not really a position for rooks.

16...\textit{d7}?

Black misses the chance to deliver the combination already here with the brilliant: 16...\textit{xh2!!} 17.xh2 xd4 18.xe4 g1	extdagger, when both 19.f1 \textit{xe4}! and 19.d2 \textit{xh2} leave White under a horrific attack.

17.a6 \textit{xa4} 18.xa4?

Wells must have thought that everything was coming together, but he was in for a nasty surprise. Better was 18.fxe4, when after 18...\textit{exe4} 19.g3 \textit{d7} 20.0-0 White is safe for the moment. Black is probably a bit better, as the white kingside is weakened, but it does not feel too serious yet.

After the text move we have reached the great moment of the game. White has seriously weakened his dark squares and neglected his development; actually, only the queen is in play at the moment, and even she is presently in a remote part of the board. Black has completed his development, so it is not a great surprise that he is able to start a direct attack. He does so by means of a clearance sacrifice that simultaneously opens the way for the queen to \textit{d4}, eliminates a defensive pawn and causes White to suffer greatly on the dark squares.

18...\textit{xh2!!} 

This brutal move puts a rather blunt question: should White accept the challenge, or try to cling on in some way?

19.xh2 

Quite understandably, Wells decides to see the proof rather than playing an obviously poor position.
After 19.\texttt{b3} Black can play 19...\texttt{g3}+ 20.\texttt{g1} \texttt{f2}, which should win, based on 21.\texttt{g1} \texttt{d2}!! 22.\texttt{fxg4} \texttt{fxg4} with a decisive attack.

19.\texttt{e3} also looks poor. After 19...\texttt{g3}+ 20.\texttt{d1} \texttt{f2} 21.\texttt{fxc4} \texttt{x e3} 22.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{exe4} Black obviously has a strong attack. Although some accurate moves are needed, it would not be an exaggeration to call the game decided at this point.

19...\texttt{xd4} 20.\texttt{fxe4} \texttt{exe4}

White is a rook and a bishop up and has the move, yet still his position is lost. The queen is offside and the remaining pieces are either in their starting positions or under serious threat. Maybe Wells had believed it would be possible to run away and only lose one of the pieces on the way?

21.\texttt{h1}

The alternatives also lose by force. For example: 21.\texttt{wb5} \texttt{c8}! Now ...\texttt{xc1}+ is a serious threat. 22.\texttt{c4} \texttt{h8}! White has not managed to improve his position and will soon lose great amounts of material, for example after 23.\texttt{h1} \texttt{f2}+ 24.\texttt{d1} \texttt{ed8}+ 25.\texttt{d3} \texttt{xg2} followed by 26...\texttt{f2}+.

21...\texttt{f2}+ 22.\texttt{d1} \texttt{d8}+ 23.\texttt{c2} \texttt{xe2}+ 24.\texttt{b1}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\caption{Chess board position after moves 24...\texttt{d3}+!!}
\end{figure}

The king is not allowed to find shelter.

25.\texttt{bx e3} \texttt{bxc3}

The double threat of ...\texttt{d3}+ and ...\texttt{b8}+ is fatal.

26.\texttt{a3} \texttt{b8}+ 27.\texttt{b3} \texttt{d3}+ 28.\texttt{c1} \texttt{d2}+ 0–1

The final game of this section was played by two amateurs in a correspondence game. The opening might be described as erratic or plain foolish, depending on how polite one is feeling. But more importantly, the subsequent play is of a very high standard, making it a fitting finale to this section.

Again the question is about keeping the centre open or closed. White makes the wrong judgement and finds his position increasingly difficult to handle.

\textbf{Stephan Ziska – Manfred Herbold}

\texttt{e-mail 2001}

\texttt{1.e4 e6 2.d4 b5?}

This could with good reason be called the Kroell/Herbold gambit, as these two players have been instrumental in popularising it.
Well, at least they have tried, but so far not many have taken on this poisonous opening.

Almost all of the “theory” connected with this variation can be credited (if that is the right word) to Rainer Schlenker, who has written extensively about the opening in his self-published magazine Randspringer, which means knight on the rim (don’t take me there...). He has named it the Franco-Polish Gambit, but I am not a great fan of this kind of mismatch of existing names, I rather prefer to honour those with enough courage to actually give the pawn up on move two...

3.\( \text{AXB}5 \)

Although it must be right to accept the pawn, White can also ignore it. After 3.\( \text{Df3}?! \text{XB7} \text{Dd5} \text{e5} \text{Dxc5} \text{De5} 6.0-0 \text{a6} 7.a4 \text{b4} 8.\text{Dbd2} \text{Bh4} \) White had a very pleasant game in Fuerlinger – Kroell, Austria 2001.

3...\( \text{Bb7} \)

This is the point of the gambit. Black is attacking from move three.

4.\( \text{Bc3} \)

There is nothing wrong with this move, but I suspect that Black’s whole opening is probably struggling against the following line:

4.\( \text{Bf2} \text{f5} 5.\text{Dd2} \text{Bf6} 6.\text{Dd3} \text{Bc5} 7.\text{Dxc5} \text{Bxc5} 8.\text{Dg3} 0-0 9.0-0 \text{White} \) is quite safe. Here are two examples showing how one of the pioneers of this opening has struggled:

9...\( \text{Bh5?!} \) 10.\( \text{Bb3} \text{Dd6} \) 11.\( \text{e5} \text{Bc7} 12.\text{Dd4} \text{g6} \) 13.\( \text{f4} \text{g6} \) gave Black positional problems on top of his other headaches in Voss – Herbold, Germany 2002.

9...\( \text{fxe4} 10.\text{Dxe4} \text{Dxe4} 11.\text{Dxe4} \text{Dxe4} 12.\text{Bxe4} \text{Dc6} \) 13.\( \text{c3} \text{g6} \) gave Black limited play for the pawn in Kotan – Herbold, Litomysl 2005.

5.\( \text{Bf3?} \)

White intends to reinforce his centre and hold on to the pawn.

Inferior is 5.\( \text{Bf2} \), which after 5...\( \text{f5} 6.\text{exf5} \text{Dxc2} 7.\text{Bf6} \text{Bc5} 8.\text{Dg3} 0-0 9.0-0 \text{White} \) is quite safe. Here are two examples showing how one of the pioneers of this opening has struggled:

7...\( \text{Bh4} \text{f5} 8.\text{Df2} \text{Bf5} 9.0-0 \text{Dh6} \) gave Black positional problems on top of his other headaches in Voss – Herbold, Germany 2002.

9...\( \text{fxe4} 10.\text{Dxe4} \text{Bxe4} \) 11.\( \text{xex4} \text{Bxe4} 12.\text{Bxe4} \text{Dc6} 13.\text{c3} \) gave Black limited play for the pawn in Kotan – Herbold, Litomysl 2005.
Attacking Manual 2

Black has to worry about $\texttt{g}g5$ in many positions and decides to cut it out immediately.

9.\texttt{b}b5

White reveals the intention behind his previous move. He wants to attack the dark-squared bishop and at the same time threaten to take on c7. Although playable, it is rather artificial.

9...f5

Black is playing his only try.

10.exf5??

This is an incredible positional blunder. To open up the position is in the interest of one player only. If White had played 10.e5 he would have continued to enjoy a rather significant advantage. Now the game becomes rather unclear and the main defensive burden lies with White.

10...\texttt{xf}5 11.c3

The dangers facing White can be illustrated by the following beautiful line, in which White goes astray in search of riches, while Black is bringing out his pieces and attacking the centre and subsequently the white kingside.

11.\texttt{x}c7? \texttt{xd}4! 12.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{bc}6 13.a3 $\texttt{a}5$

14.\texttt{x}a8 \texttt{xe}2 15.\texttt{xe}2 \texttt{d}d4 16.\texttt{d}d3

16...\texttt{xf}3! 17.\texttt{xf}3 $\texttt{xf}3$ 18.\texttt{e}e3 \texttt{wh}3+ 19.\texttt{gg}1

$\texttt{gg}3+$ 20.\texttt{hx}g3 $\texttt{f}3$ mate!

11...\texttt{a}5 12.\texttt{a}3

White is continuing to play with this knight; not an ideal scenario, although it is not easy for him to get the rest of the pieces into play either.

12...\texttt{b}6 13.\texttt{c}c4 \texttt{c}6 14.\texttt{f}e1 \texttt{wh}5 15.\texttt{f}f4 $\texttt{g}5$!

Black decides that he has enough pieces in play and thus the time has come to search for a confrontation.

16.\texttt{d}d2?

Black has played a highly questionable opening, but he has since managed to take over the initiative and create very real chances against the white king. Nevertheless it was still possible for White to defend.

16.\texttt{g}3? was one option. Black has plenty of attacking ideas, but no clear breakthrough that I can see.

Another possibility was:

16.\texttt{xb}6!

Eliminating the assassin on b6 looks safest to me. According to my analysis the following line leads to approximate equality:

16...\texttt{xb}6 17.\texttt{xc}7 \texttt{e}e3+ 18.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{xg}2!

19.\texttt{xg}2 \texttt{xd}4 20.\texttt{cx}d4 $\texttt{xf}3$
Chapter 4 - King Safety

21.\texttt{df}2! (but not 21.\texttt{gg}1? \texttt{gg}4\texttt{+} 22.\texttt{gg}3 \texttt{we}4!! and White loses the battle for his kingside) 21...\texttt{exe}3\texttt{+} 22.\texttt{xf}1 \texttt{xf}3 23.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{exe}1\texttt{+} 24.\texttt{gg}2! \texttt{xxh}1 25.\texttt{xxh}1 \texttt{we}8 26.\texttt{gg}4 \texttt{wc}8 27.\texttt{fl} \texttt{xc}7 28.\texttt{xa}8 \texttt{wc}4 The queen is about equal to the three pieces, when you factor in the pawns.

After the previous passive move from White, the one thing Black needs to do in order to create a deadly attack is to open lines for his pieces. On this occasion he should forget about using a key and instead simply kick the door off its hinges.

16...\texttt{exd}4!! 17.\texttt{cxd}4

17.\texttt{xb}6 \texttt{xf}3! is similar to the game, except that Black has an extra knight in the attack. Needless to say, he wins easily.

17...\texttt{xd}4 18.\texttt{xb}6

18.\texttt{df}2 \texttt{a}6! also maintains Black's initiative. Possible continuations include 19.h4 \texttt{g}4! and 19.b3 \texttt{d}5!, both with a devastating attack. Maybe there is a way for White to hang on, but his position is very fragile indeed. One nice tactical line goes: 19.\texttt{bb}4 \texttt{xc}4 20.\texttt{xc}4 \texttt{xf}3! When the white position is blown apart.

If White was still dreaming of a moment's rest, he was in for a rude awakening. Black is not going to lose sight of his target anytime soon.

18...\texttt{xf}3!! 19.\texttt{xf}3

19.\texttt{xa}8 loses elegantly to 19...\texttt{exe}2\texttt{+} 20.\texttt{gg}1 \texttt{d}3 when the check on \texttt{f}1 is lethal, but not nearly as damaging as the one on \texttt{e}2. The main justification of Black's play is that after 21.\texttt{xf}2 \texttt{exe}2\texttt{+} 22.\texttt{fl} he has the cool 22...\texttt{gg}4\texttt{+}, when there is no defence against ...\texttt{df}4\texttt{+} and ...\texttt{wx}g2 mate.

19...\texttt{xf}3 20.\texttt{dd}1

It is not hard to see that 20.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{xxh}3\texttt{+} 21.\texttt{ff}2 \texttt{xf}3\texttt{+} and 22...\texttt{af}8 gives a winning attack.

20...\texttt{xd}2\texttt{+} 21.\texttt{fe}1

White might have had more chances finding drawing chances after 21.\texttt{gg}1 \texttt{ff}1\texttt{+} 22.\texttt{xf}1 \texttt{xf}1, although the ending after 23.\texttt{xa}8 \texttt{de}3! 24.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{ex}g2 25.\texttt{ex}g2 \texttt{gg}4\texttt{+} 26.\texttt{f}2
Two thematic sacrifices

The last two games in this chapter revolve around a typical sacrifice in the centre, where a knight is given up on d5, with the intention of opening lines.

In the first case Black has already castled, and the line opened is from f4 to c7, with the main point that the white e-pawn can advance and weaken the black kingside.

Andrei Volokitin – Sergei Rublevsky

Budva 2004

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.exd4 a6 5.e2 d6 6.d3 d6 7.0-0 e7 8.f4 0-0 9.a4 e7 10.h1 b6

This leads to a very harmonious set-up for Black, with all the pieces pointing towards the e4-pawn. As the positional outlook for White is anything but overwhelming, many White players have relied on the slight lead in development and stronger presence on the kingside to carry them through. In this game this strategy is successful, but overall I think that this system is like so many other openings: potentially dangerous for both players, but ultimately balanced once all the options have been explored.
11.e5 dxe5 12.fxe5 ∆fd7
The pawn is not really hanging. The black pieces would be caught in the crossfire from the white power-bishops.

13.∆f4 ∆b7 14.∆d3 ∆c5 15.∆g4 ∆c6?
This natural developing move was played with the idea that 16.∆h6? ∆xe5 17.∆f3 can be met with 17...f5!, after which White has very little to show for his pawn. Unfortunately it fails to a thematic knight sacrifice.

Later on Rublevsky and others played 15...∆d8!, a move I think is absolutely sufficient for Black. I have played it twice and won both games effortlessly.

16.∆d5!!
Very thematic. The knight, which had no real way of entering the game, is sacrificed in order to give White access to the f5-square and to advance the e-pawn with gain of tempo, so that it can be used to soften up the black kingside. Black will now have to walk a defensive tightrope.

16...exd5
Black has no real choice but to accept the sacrifice. After something like 16...∆d8 White will play 17.∆h6 and win material for no compensation whatsoever.

17.e6 ∆c8!
The only move, although even this is ultimately insufficient.

After 17...∆d8 White will play 18.∆h6.
Now Black loses quickly after 18...g6? 19.exf7+ ∆xf7 20.∆xe6+, with a winning attack. This line is not possible in the game, as the queens are in direct contact.
The only upside to placing the queen on d8 is that it becomes possible to bring in the bishop with 18...∆f6, but this is also not enough to save the game. White wins with a beautiful double bishop sacrifice:

19.∆xg7+ ∆xg7 20.∆xh7+! ∆xh7 21.∆f5+ ∆g8 22.exf7+ ∆xf7 23.∆xf7+ ∆h8 24.∆f5 and Black loses the queen. He can struggle on for a while, but the result is in no real doubt.

18.∆h6 g6
Again Black has no choice. After 18...∆xe6 White will draw the king out into the open before landing the lethal blows: 19.∆xh7+ ∆xh7 20.∆xe6 Black has no choice and ends up a piece down after 20...g6 21.∆xf8 ∆xe6 22.∆xe6 fxe6 23.∆xe7 ∆xc7 24.∆f7+ etc.

19.∆xf8 ∆xf8 20.exf7+
White is already winning. The pawn on the seventh rank plus a rook is easily as valuable as bishop and knight; and the attack is nowhere near the end.
20...\textit{h}h8

This offers most resistance. It was also possible to play 20...\textit{g}g7, when White's strongest continuation would be 21.\textit{f}f4 and 22.\textit{ae}1. If the rook gets to e8 then Black will be toast.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[black, very thick] (0,0) -- (7,0);
\draw[black, very thick] (0,1) -- (0,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (1,0) -- (1,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (2,0) -- (2,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (3,0) -- (3,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (4,0) -- (4,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (5,0) -- (5,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (6,0) -- (6,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (7,0) -- (7,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (0,0) -- (0,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (1,0) -- (1,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (2,0) -- (2,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (3,0) -- (3,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (4,0) -- (4,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (5,0) -- (5,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (6,0) -- (6,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (7,0) -- (7,7);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21.\textit{f}f5!

In attacking play it is important not to lose the momentum, as discussed in Chapter 2 of Volume One.

21...\textit{c}c7 22.\textit{x}xg6!

The time is ripe for the destruction of the king's position. Black cannot accept the bishop sacrifice without being mated quickly.

22...\textit{e}e5 23.\textit{g}g3!

This was the real point behind the last move. Black can accept the bishop sacrifice, but after 23...hxg6 24.b4! White will win back the piece without in any way slowing down the attack.

23...\textit{g}g7

There is nothing better.

24.\textit{d}xh7

Quite a brutal end to the game. I have some affection for always including all the pieces, when possible, and indeed the computer prefers 24.\textit{ae}1! as well. However, we are debating which way to win the game, which is essentially pointless, except that I think it is a good idea to reinforce good habits at every turn.

24...\textit{x}xh7 25.\textit{h}h3+ \textit{h}h6

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[black, very thick] (0,0) -- (7,0);
\draw[black, very thick] (0,1) -- (0,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (1,0) -- (1,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (2,0) -- (2,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (3,0) -- (3,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (4,0) -- (4,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (5,0) -- (5,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (6,0) -- (6,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (7,0) -- (7,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (0,0) -- (0,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (1,0) -- (1,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (2,0) -- (2,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (3,0) -- (3,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (4,0) -- (4,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (5,0) -- (5,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (6,0) -- (6,7);
\draw[black, very thick] (7,0) -- (7,7);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

26.\textit{f}f6

26.\textit{f}8= also looked simple, but Volokitin has seen a nice human way to end the show.

26...\textit{x}xf7 27.\textit{a}a1 \textit{g}g8 28.\textit{h}h5 \textit{g}g8 29.\textit{g}g6+ \textit{g}g7 30.\textit{f}f5 \textit{a}a6 31.\textit{e}e6

Black is mated in a maximum of three more moves.

1–0

In the next game White also goes for the \textit{d}d5 sacrifice in order to open up the position. The difference from the previous game is that White is not in a position to follow up with immediate threats, and must instead play more patiently. The sacrifice is still interesting, and merrily changes the character of the position. It might be that the position is more difficult for Black in practice, although one should not put too much emphasis on the result of a rapid game. In the course of events both players commit mistakes and in a game with a normal time control, who knows, maybe Black would have found the way to win?
1.e4 c5 2.d4 d5 3.b5 e6 4.0-0 dxe4
5.dxe4 c6 6.dxc6 bxc6 7.d4
White has relinquished the bishop pair but will rely on his lead in development to create problems for the opponent.

7...cxd4 8.exd4 c7 9.dxc6 c6
This looks a bit risky to me. I do not see the reason for not recapturing with one of the pawns. In practice all three moves have been played equally often, with about level results. But I am not sure that statistics are a good substitute for chess understanding.

10.e1 e7
After 10...e7 White can consider putting the queen on g4, or sacrificing a piece with 11.d5! as happened in Ivkov - So. Polgar, Vienna 1993.

Black decided to decline the sacrifice and ended up in a horrible position instantly.

However, after 11.exd5! 12.exd5+ d8 13.h5 White's initiative, although sufficiently strong to justify the material investment, might not be enough for an advantage. Black might play 13...c4! when no clear path to an advantage is immediately apparent.

11.d5!?
This is our thematic sacrifice. White sacrifices the knight in return for the opening of the e-file and a direct attack on the black king. However, it is far from easy to break through to the king, and the absence of minor pieces in what follows somewhat limits White's attacking possibilities.

I personally think normal play with 11.g4! would have been objectively stronger. There is no easy way for Black to defend the g7-pawn; he might even have to do so with a king move. Furthermore, he suffers from a significant lag in development and will find it really difficult to coordinate his pieces and make any use of his two bishops.

He certainly would not want to play 11...g6?, when his position would start sharing characteristics with a famous Swiss dairy product.

11...exd5
Black has no real choice but to accept the sacrifice. After 11...e8 he would be in the same position as Sofia Polgar found herself in the note to Black's 10th move above.

12.exd5 d6 13.g5!
Provoking a weakening in the pawn structure, which could prove to be useful in many positions. Without it the sacrifice would be wholly incorrect, as Black would simply be able to castle out of trouble.

13.f6 14.f4 xf4 15.d6 d8!
This would certainly not have been a pleasant move to make, but Kasimdzhanov's worries about playing it might have been banished by the fact that the move is completely and utterly forced.

For instance, both 15...0-0? 16.d5+ h8 17.dxe7 e8 18.f7 and 15...f8 16.xe7 f5 17.e2 would lose instantly.
16.\textit{\textbf{Bx}c7?}

Sadvakasov decides to use the pawn on d6 as a supporting actor, rather than advancing it to frontline duty and possible stardom with 16.dxe7\#. This would actually have been the best move objectively, although it is not clear if it can suffice for an advantage. After 16...\textit{\textbf{e}8}

17.\textit{\textbf{h}5\#} g6 18.\textit{\textbf{a}5} \textit{\textbf{f}7} 19.\textit{\textbf{d}5\#} \textit{\textbf{c}e8} White has the option of taking a draw with 20.\textit{\textbf{a}5}, which might very well be the best move.

However, it is always more interesting to think about winning, so we should look at what happens after: 20.\textit{\textbf{e}3}?! Here it is very difficult for Black to get his pieces into the game. His forces seem completely paralysed. But at the same time it is not easy to see how White is going to get to the black king. The pawn is more of a hindrance than an asset for the attack, which is probably the reason behind White’s decision to take with the rook.

We have reached the critical moment of the game. White has sacrificed a piece and in return has the powerful pawn on d6. He plans to keep the black king incarcerated, tortured and eventually dead. However, White is still not fully mobilised; any actual threats are still some moves away, which should give Black good reason for optimism.

Unfortunately for Black his next move is hopeless in every sense of the word. His only chance to ride the storm would be to challenge the d6-pawn and slowly mobilise his forces.

16...\textit{\textbf{b}5}??

Quite an incredible move for a future world champion. This move sets up a direct invasion by the white queen, and more importantly, does nothing to solve the problems of the weak dark squares. The correct plan involves attacking the d6-pawn and bringing the pieces into play.

The first move is:

16...\textit{\textbf{a}5}!

White’s main concern must be to support the pawn on d6. I have not been able to find a better way of doing this than:

17.\textit{\textbf{c}4} 

Now Black must also remain focused on his objective.

17...\textit{\textbf{a}6}!

It would be a horrible mistake to open the c-file while giving White extra time with 17...\textit{\textbf{xc}4}. The winning line might look something like: 18.\textit{\textbf{c}1} \textit{\textbf{f}4} 19.\textit{\textbf{g}3}! \textit{\textbf{b}4} 20.\textit{\textbf{a}3}! Black has to vacate the fourth rank and his problems begin to escalate. For example: 20...\textit{\textbf{b}5} 21.\textit{\textbf{c}e1} b6 22.\textit{\textbf{e}4} \textit{\textbf{a}7} 23.\textit{\textbf{a}4}! \textit{\textbf{b}4} 24.\textit{\textbf{xd}7\#}! \textit{\textbf{xd}7} 25.\textit{\textbf{xc}8\#} \textit{\textbf{xc}8} 26.\textit{\textbf{a}8} mate.

After the text move the c-pawn will reach c5, but this does not have to be the end of the story.
18...c5 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{c6}}} \)!

This amounts to a refutation of the white strategy born on move 16, when he elected to capture on \( e7 \) with the rook instead of the pawn. Black simply intends \( ...b6 \) followed by \( ...\text{\textit{\textbf{b7}}} \), after which he should win with his extra piece.

Please note, however, that the immediate 18...b6? would be a mistake in view of 19.c6! dxc6 20.e2 (Smirin) when White has some initiative and the rook on a6 looks ridiculous.

I have done some further analysis on this line and can confirm that White has the better chances, although only slightly so.

After the superior text move, a sample continuation is:

19.eb3 a4!

Otherwise White gets time to play \( \text{\textit{\textbf{eac1}}} \), threatening to give up a rook on \( e8 \) followed by mate on \( a8 \).

20.e7 exc5 21.xg7 xxd6 22.xh8+ xxc7 23.e1+ e5 24.e1 c6!

White is heading for a very dodgy-looking endgame.

17.eb5!

This important tempo creates all sorts of problems for Black.

17...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{b8}}} \)

17...\( \text{\textit{\textbf{a7}}} \) loses as well, e.g. 18.ea1 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{c4}}} \) 19.e2 a5 20.e3 with immediate mate.

18.ea1 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{c4}}} \)

Forced. White was threatening 19.e8\( \text{\textit{\textbf{f}}} \) with mate to follow in a few moves.

19.eh5!

White is trying to provoke another pawn weakness and keep the momentum going.

19...e8

The queen is anything but impressive here, but what else is there? The alternative 19...g6 20.e3 d4 feels a bit like sticking a finger in a dyke; you will get your hands wet, but you won't get the desired result. The white pieces flood in after 21.e1, when either 21...e7 22.xd7\( \text{\textit{\textbf{f}}} \) or 21...x b2 22.c3 e8 23.e1 with all kinds of sacrifices leads straight to mate.

20.e5 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{c4}}} \)

20...e7 loses in many ways, for example to 21.e3 b4 22.e5 with a deadly check coming on a5.

21.e3 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{e6}}} \)

This justification is fully justified: 21...g8 22.e3 and Black is mated.

22.xc6

How can this be a mistake? Well, obviously it does not jeopardise the result, but still 1
wonder why Sadvakasov did not play 22.\textit{a}a3, when mate is very near, and the queen is running nowhere.

\begin{verbatim}
22...dxe6 23.\textit{a}a7 \textit{b}b7 24.\textit{xa}6 \textit{e}e8 25.\textit{c}6\textit{b}4 26.h4 e5 27.a4 bxa3 28.bxa3 \textit{e}e6 29.c4
\end{verbatim}

1–0
Chapter 5

Intuitive Sacrifices and Enduring Initiative

What every attacking player dreams of is a game where his attack just goes on and on, from the beginning of the game, till the moment where he is able to tip his opponent's cold mutilated body into the ground.
On this page you find 8 diagrams with critical moments from the coming chapter. I recommend that you take up to 10 minutes to think about each of them. The solutions are found on the following pages in the annotations to the games.

Positions with a circled P can be played against a computer.

**Diagram preview**

[Diagram image]

The bishop is threatened  
(see page 361)

A one mover  
(see page 382)

Strongest move?  
(see page 357)

The most energetic attacking move  
(see page 363)

How to continue the attack?  
(see page 400)

A beautiful win  
(see page 358)

White has a deep combination  
(see page 372)

White wins, but how?  
(see page 410)
Covered in this chapter

- Creative play
- A sudden chance
- Aggressive opening play
- Intuitive sacrifices
- Enduring initiative

So far in the approximately 675 pages leading up to this point in the two books, I have covered attacking chess as a principled reaction to mainly positional conditions. In this chapter I will talk a bit about style, which is of course also an important chapter in the story; whereas Peter Leko will look for a way to benefit from the two bishops or the opponent’s doubled pawns. Emil Surovsky will sacrifice both bishops only to ensure an open file and that the doubled pawn becomes tripled and crippled. It is thus not surprising that I have included three of Emil’s games in this chapter, but none of Leko’s.

Creative play

In the 1920s Capablanca famously commented about the level of the players being too high and chess thus nearing a draw-death. He might as well have been talking about some editions of the Chess Classics in Dortmund, where risk-averse technicians are paired up, and to everyone’s continuous surprise and disappointment, rarely end up with decisive results.

Now, I personally enjoy immensely the games where players such as Kramnik and Leko win. Chess technique has an odd poetic character to it; remember, “poetry makes nothing happen” – W.H. Auden. However, the tournament director who chooses to fill his tournament up only with technicians is not doing our game any service, just as I believe the director who fills it up only with dynamic players also fails the audience. The best combination is a wide range of players with contrasting styles. When you have two highly skilled opposing forces pulling the game in different directions, you are bound to get interesting games.

The creative players often take risks that the technicians would avoid. For example, in the next game, White might have a slight edge because of the black doubled pawn, but it is very hard to exert any pressure against either one, while the d5-pawn controls the important c4- and e4-squares.

This was a must-win situation for Topalov against the tournament leader in the last round. He has done what he (and other strong players) often do in must-win situations, which is to play quietly and allow the opponent to feel under continuous pressure. Having provided the opponent with a doubled pawn, you could say that White has made improvements, but in reality the game is still close to a draw. As is in his nature, Topalov thus decides to make things a bit more complicated.

Veselin Topalov – Krishnan Sasikiran

Sofia 2007
32.\text{\textit{\texttt{gxh5}} \texttt{gxh5}}
32...\text{\textit{\texttt{gxh5}}} 33.\text{\textit{\texttt{gxf4}}} \texttt{g5} 34.\text{\textit{\texttt{g3}}} would hurt.

33.\text{\textit{\texttt{g8}}} \texttt{f5}
Otherwise 34.\text{\textit{\texttt{h8}}} would hurt. Come to think of it, it is potentially rather painful to be Black in this position!

34.\text{\textit{\texttt{g3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{g7}}}!
It might appear tempting to play 34...\text{\textit{\texttt{xe3}}} 35.\text{\textit{\texttt{h2}}} \texttt{xd3}, but White goes for the bigger fish with: 36.\text{\textit{\texttt{h8}}} 37.\text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} 38.\text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{g7}}} 39.\text{\textit{\texttt{xe8}}} 40.\text{\textit{\texttt{xf8}}}+ and we reach an endgame similar to that which occurs in the game.

35.\text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}}
White is doing his best to keep the game alive. 35.\text{\textit{\texttt{f2}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{g6}}} 36.\text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} 37.\text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{h4}}} leads to a draw by perpetual, as 38.\text{\textit{\texttt{e2}}}! \text{\textit{\texttt{g5}}} is even very dangerous for White.

35.\text{\textit{\texttt{g6}}} 36.\text{\textit{\texttt{axg6}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{axg6}}} 37.\text{\textit{\texttt{hxh5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xe3}}}+ 38.\text{\textit{\texttt{h2}}}

38...\text{\textit{\texttt{e7}}}?
The turning point. Eager to end the pressure, Sasikiran allows the exchange of queens. Instead after 38...\text{\textit{\texttt{xd4}}} White has no way to make progress, and it seems he would have had to settle for a draw.

39.\text{\textit{\texttt{f4}}}+ \text{\textit{\texttt{f6}}} 40.\text{\textit{\texttt{g4}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{f7}}} 41.\text{\textit{\texttt{d8}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{e7}}} 42.\text{\textit{\texttt{g8}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{f7}}} 43.\text{\textit{\texttt{d8}}} 44.\text{\textit{\texttt{xe7}}}+ 44.\text{\textit{\texttt{xb6}}} was also good, but Topalov has correctly evaluated the game continuation to be winning for him.

44...\text{\textit{\texttt{xe7}}} 45.\text{\textit{\texttt{g3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{e6}}}!
Black was already losing, but exchanging these knights is hardly the way to cause problems for White.

46.\text{\textit{\texttt{xe6}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xe6}}} 47.\text{\textit{\texttt{f4}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{c8}}} 48.\text{\textit{\texttt{f5}}}+ \text{\textit{\texttt{f7}}} 49.\text{\textit{\texttt{h5}}}
By putting the pawns on the same colour as the bishop White keeps total control.

49...\text{\textit{\texttt{d7}}} 50.\text{\textit{\texttt{h6}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{g8}}} 51.\text{\textit{\texttt{f4}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{c8}}} 52.\text{\textit{\texttt{g5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{f7}}}

This might look like a defence, but White does not need three pawns – he just needs to get in with the king.

53.\text{\textit{\texttt{h7}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{g7}}} 54.\text{\textit{\texttt{h8}}}+ \text{\textit{\texttt{f6}}} 55.\text{\textit{\texttt{xe8}}} \texttt{xb5} 56.\text{\textit{\texttt{e7}}}
56.\text{\textit{\texttt{xb5}}} also works.

56...\text{\textit{\texttt{d3}}} 57.\text{\textit{\texttt{f6}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{g6}}} 58.\text{\textit{\texttt{xf7}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xf7}}} 59.\text{\textit{\texttt{xf7}}}
1-0
I do not know the tournament situation before the next game, nor do I consider it especially important as things develop. White plays an unusual sixth move and quickly the position becomes complicated. He continues to play creatively whenever possible. The game reaches its crisis point as early as move 8! White eschews an exchange of queens in favour of a much more creative and ambitious continuation. Objectively it was a flawed decision, but in the game Black failed to find the antidote and fell into trouble.

This is exactly what a creative style is: you do not necessarily make more points than with a technical style, but you do have more decisive games. When you play technical chess, the chances for there to be problems that you cannot solve within the given time frame are relatively small, although this of course does not mean that we do not fail to do so again and again. However, when you play creatively, the chances for there to be problems that you cannot solve are great. This is why you will find some games between the best technicians where there is an absence of mistakes, while if you look at the games between the best creative players, they are full of mistakes.

Let us proceed to the game in hand. White’s creative play is rewarded when Black misses a winning continuation as early as on move eight, and instead gets properly steamrollered.

Vitaly Tseshkovsky – Andrei Istratescu
Niksic 1997

1.e4 c5 2.c3 d5 3.exd5 wxd5 4.d4 Oc6 5.Qf3 Qg4 6.Qbd2 Qf6 7.Qc4 Qxf3 8.wa4?

The underlying idea behind this move is fantastic, but there is a small problem to take into account. 8.wxf3 was necessary, with even chances.

8...wg5?

After this White’s idea works like a dream. However, it might not have turned out this way. At this point Black missed the chance to win the game in more or less one go with the fantastic 8...Qd1!!.

9.Qxf3!

This was his idea. White is sacrificing a rook for a quick initiative, sparked by the weaknesses on the light squares, which came about from the exchange of Black’s light-squared bishop.

9...Qxg2 10.Qe2! Qxh1?

This was not the smartest choice. But even after the relatively best 10...Qg4, Black’s problems would persist after 11.Qg1 Qd7 12.dxc5, with a very strong attack.

11.d5
The main point here is not so much that White reduces his deficit to only an exchange, but that the pressure on the a4-e8 diagonal intensifies greatly.

11...\texttt{c8}

This is a very natural way to play, but no defence is sufficient. The two other main lines are as follows:

11...0-0-0 12.dxc6 \texttt{d6} 13.cxb7† \texttt{xb7} 14.b4! with an immense attack. For example 14...\texttt{xb4} 15.c3†! The best practical chance would be 14...\texttt{d4}, when analysis reveals that White only wins with the following stunning lines:

15.\texttt{a6†!!} A beautiful deflection. 15...\texttt{xa6} (15...\texttt{c7} 16.\texttt{a5† d7} 17.\texttt{b5† e6} 18.\texttt{b2 g2} 19.\texttt{c8†} also leads to a winning attack) 16.\texttt{d7† b6} 17.\texttt{xc5† a5} 18.\texttt{d8†!} Black is lost after 18...\texttt{a4} 19.\texttt{d4†!}, or 18...\texttt{xb6} 19.\texttt{xb6 \texttt{xc3†} 20.\texttt{e3 d1} 21.\texttt{d4†!} and wins.

11...\texttt{xd5} 12.\texttt{xd5} does not give more relief. Black can try many things, but none of them work. One line I like is: 12...\texttt{d8} (12...\texttt{c8} 13.\texttt{b3 d8} 14.\texttt{e5} gives a deadly attack. My main line shows mate with the black king on a1 on move 27.) 13.\texttt{xc6† bxc6} 14.\texttt{xc6† d7} 15.\texttt{e2} 16.\texttt{g2} 17.\texttt{xe5} 18.\texttt{xe5†} 19.\texttt{xe5†} 1-0

A sudden chance

There are a few players who manage to be creative in almost all of their games without it seriously weakening their playing strength.
Mikhail Tal was one such player; today Emil Sutovsky is the first one I can think of. Quite a few of the world's top players have strong creative tendencies, but still have aspects of the technician in their style. For example, out of the 18 players portrayed in the recent book on top chess, *Champions of the New Millennium*, I would say that at least 12 fit this description.

The same is true for the participants in our next game as well. Although they both love to attack, they are not desperate to do so. They build up their positions with natural moves, keeping their options open. Both have decent technique and can play excellently in less complicated positions.

In the following game White is faced with an uncommon idea early on in a classical opening. His immediate reaction is to seek predominance on the kingside and hope to create some attacking chances with the strong pawn on e5. His 18th move further underscores his intentions, but it is only after the meagre reply that the attack gathers real momentum. Only a few moves later a chance arises to rip the black kingside apart at the cost of a piece, and White does not hesitate.

**Jan Smeets - Nigel Short**

*London 2008*

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 d6 5.0-0 c5 6.d3 d6 7.b3 b5 8.c3 c6 9.b3 c5 10.d4 d5 11.e5 g6 12.d2 exd4 13.cxd4 e8??

This rare move is a favourite of Mecking. Short had the white pieces against him in it and apparently thought it was worth a try. 13...d6 14.d5 dxe5 is the Graf variation, which is still very much a topical line.

**14.dxc5?**

This was a novelty, and very much a stylistic decision. With this move White relinquishes control over some potentially important squares in the centre and on the queenside, but at the same time he builds the foundation for an attack on the kingside with the pawn on e5, which will restrict the defenders and assist the white pieces.

14.d5 dxe5 15.d1 b6 16.df1 dac4 17.dg3 d6 was played in the aforementioned game Short – Mecking, Bajnas 2008, and gave Black a reasonable position.

**14...dxe5**

These days computers are happy to suggest moves like 14...b7? without really making any more sense than when they gobbled all material irrespective of the consequences.

15.e5!

The point behind the last move. Both the knight on d7 and the bishop on e7 have to find different ways of getting into play than had been originally intended.

**15...d8**

It might have been better to retain the pressure against the e-pawn for a little longer. If you are interested in playing this variation with Black, you might wish to consider 15...d6!? 16.b3 b5 17.b2 d8, with the idea of ...e6-d4, when the black pieces are fairly active.
16.\( \text{wa}\)e2 \( \text{va}\)b7 17.\( \text{va}\)e4  
Now White is able to shift his pieces rapidly towards the kingside, without having to worry about the safety of the e5-pawn.

17...\( \text{va}\)e6 18.\( \text{va}\)h4?!  
Smeets continues to build up on the kingside. I am sure he considered 18.\( \text{va}\)d1 \( \text{va}\)b8 19.\( \text{va}\)g5, but probably intuitively felt that he needed the other rook on d1 for the attack to be really dangerous, as it does not seem that Black has done anything seriously wrong. And the reality is that Black can equalise with 19...\( \text{va}\)xe4! 20.\( \text{va}\)xe4 \( \text{va}\)g5 21.\( \text{va}\)g5 \( \text{va}\)g6, when White is not really able to create threats on the light squares.

The best move was 18...\( \text{va}\)d5! to follow up with 19...\( \text{va}\)ad8, when I cannot see Black being any worse.

After the text move White has a free hand to commence operations on the kingside.

19.\( \text{va}\)e5  
Black has to give up the bishop, leaving White with an edge.

19...\( \text{va}\)xg5 20.\( \text{va}\)xg5 \( \text{va}\)xg5?!

This is imprecise as well. White is allowed to develop the bishop quickly and create threats on the kingside. 20...\( \text{va}\)g6 was necessary, when the d4-square gives Black some counter chances. A plausible line could be 21.\( \text{va}\)xe6 \( \text{va}\)xe6 22.f4 \( \text{va}\)c6 23.\( \text{va}\)e3 \( \text{va}\)d8 24.\( \text{va}\)ad1 \( \text{va}\)d4 25.\( \text{va}\)xd4 \( \text{va}\)xd4 26.\( \text{va}\)f2, when White has a bit of pressure because of the weakened kingside, but it is not a lot.

21.\( \text{va}\)xg5 h6?!  
Short decides to force the matter, but with his pieces in disarray, this does not really seem justified. It was necessary to play 21...\( \text{va}\)c4, although the position after 22.\( \text{va}\)d3 \( \text{va}\)g6 23.\( \text{va}\)f6 looks very dangerous for Black.

Now Smeets played a very tempting sacrifice.
22.\text{d}3!!
Everything that follows is forced.

22...hxg5 23.\text{h}7+  24.\text{h}8+  25.\text{g}7  
There is nothing else; 25...d8, for instance, does not work in view of 26.f5! when the king is unsuccessful in running away.

Also after 25...c6 26.xg5+ 27.ad1 White is able to include more pieces into the attack, and at the same time dominate his opponent in such a way that he cannot do the same.

26.f6+  

We have reached a key position. Did Smeets work this position out in advance, or did he merely see that he had at least a perpetual check with 27.h6\text{?} here? Either way, the decision was fully justified. You cannot always anticipate or evaluate every possible outcome of a sacrifice. At times you will have to follow your instincts for the position (but please, don't Star Wars me...).

27.e6!
Played with the threat of 28.e7\text{?} and 29.g6\text{!}, making the black position crumble into dust.

27...\text{c}6
Black is busted. Another line goes:

27...\text{e}7
This would have forced White to find a spectacular refutation.

28.h6+ 29.ad1 \text{c}6
It looks as if Black has managed to control all the entry points in his position and for this reason keep the balance somehow. The key to White's success is to find the best way to include all his pieces in the attack. If we look at the position, we can see the bishop is the only piece that is not really performing. This can be rectified in the following remarkable way:

30.b4\text{!!}  cxb4 31.exf7+ 32.b3!\text{!!}

The point behind 30.b4. The c-pawn can no longer block the bishop, thus enabling it to deflect the knight on a5.

32.xb3 33.xc6 34.xd8\text{!!}  xxd8 35.f6\text{!!}  g8 36.xd8\text{??}  h7 37.e8

Black is about to be well and truly blown out of the water.

28.hxg5
Also very strong was 28.ad1\text{!!}  e8 29.ad5!, when Black has no reasonable defence against h6\text{??} and xg5, winning.

28...\text{d}8
Black's position cannot be defended. Another winning line for White goes like this:
28...\textit{Ag7} 29 \textit{Dad1} \textit{Dg8}!! 30.\textit{Dd7} \textit{Dxd7} 31.\textit{exd7} \textit{Dxe1} 32.\textit{Dh2} \textit{Dxe7} 33.\textit{Dd6!} \textit{Dg8} 34.\textit{De4} \textit{Dd8} 35.\textit{Dc7} \textit{De7} 36.\textit{Dxb7} \textit{Dxb7} 37.\textit{d8=D}! and the material superiority carries the day.

\textbf{Vassily Ivanchuk – Curt Hansen} \\
\textit{Skanderborg 2003}


Having looked a bit at the theory, I am not entirely sure that this is a tenable line. It would be better to play 10...e5, which is known to give White no more than a small edge.

11.Dg3

White moves the knight so that Black cannot exchange on d4 and put the bishop on c6. It seems to me that Black is a bit too cramped at this point, even though there are some chances for counterplay on the queenside.

11...Dw5 12.Db1

This careful move avoids any tricks like ...Dxe4 and similar.

Obviously Ivanchuk is not in the habit of falling for simple tricks and traps (although for an exception, check out the game McNab – Ivanchuk, Gothenburg 2005!), and would not consider playing 12.e5?! dxe5! 13.Dxf6 Dxf6 14.Dxd7, when after 14...exf4 he would be under a strong attack in an unclear position.

12...Dfd8 13.Dd3 Da8

This looks very natural, but I find it very hard for Black to come with a follow-up hereafter.

I tend to prefer 13...Dab8! with the idea of ...b5, which would create a real inconvenience for White. (I should say that I don't like 13...b5 much, as it looks like White will have the advantage if he just takes the pawn.) However, after 14.g4!, which I have analysed in some detail, I do not have much confidence in the black position.
14.\textsuperscript{c}\textsuperscript{h}g\textsuperscript{l}!!

Ivanchuk supports the pawn. It was also interesting to play 14.g4?!, but because Black has played ...h6, the pawn push will be much stronger when it arrives at g5, so it is less attractive to sacrifice the pawn in order to open the g-file, than it would be under different circumstances.

14...e5

It is easy to see what Black wanted with this move. He wanted to take on f4, so that there would not be a pawn ready to reload on g5. However, it turns out that White's attack is strong enough after the doubling of rooks on the g-file. But what else should Black play?

After 14...\textsuperscript{d}b4 White must play 15.a3, to which Black replies 15...\textsuperscript{d}xd3, which looks solid enough at first glance. However, Hansen had no doubt seen that White can play 16.\textsuperscript{d}d5!, which does look rather uncomfortable: 16...\textsuperscript{d}xd2 17.\textsuperscript{f}xe7\textsuperscript{f}f8 18.\textsuperscript{d}xd2 \textsuperscript{d}xe7 19.\textsuperscript{d}xd3 It is not clear to me how Black should continue in this position. The threats of e4-e5, \textsuperscript{f}gd1 and so on look hard to handle.

15.g4 \textsuperscript{e}xf4?!

Black continues with his plan, which is understandable, but hardly the objectively best way to continue the game.

After 15...\textsuperscript{d}b4 White would play 16.\textsuperscript{e}xf6 \textsuperscript{e}xf6 17.g5 with some advantage. Black can here play normal moves with 17...hxg5 and retreat the bishop, or try 17...\textsuperscript{e}xc3?! 18.\textsuperscript{e}xc3 \textsuperscript{f}xa2 19.\textsuperscript{f}c1, when he can either withdraw the queen or play 19...\textsuperscript{x}xd3 20.\textsuperscript{e}xd3 hxg5 21.fxg5 \textsuperscript{e}e7 with a somewhat inferior, but most likely playable position.

16.g5

White's plan is not too subtle.

16...hxg5

Black has no choice. After 16...\textsuperscript{e}g4 17.gxh6 \textsuperscript{e}xh6 18.\textsuperscript{e}xh6 \textsuperscript{d}c5 White can continue with 19.\textsuperscript{e}xf4, when the threat of \textsuperscript{d}d5 is too strong. And after 19...\textsuperscript{e}xc3 White can play 20.\textsuperscript{g}g5 g6 21.\textsuperscript{e}xg4! Black is struggling to face 22.\textsuperscript{f}f6, so the only chance is a counter-attack, but this fails too: 21...\textsuperscript{g}g6 22.bxc3! and White should win, based on the line 22...\textsuperscript{h}b6 23.\textsuperscript{f}c1 \textsuperscript{e}xg4 24.\textsuperscript{f}f5! when there are simply too many problems to handle.

17.\textsuperscript{e}xg5 \textsuperscript{e}e5

17...\textsuperscript{e}c7 18.\textsuperscript{e}xf4 with ideas such as \textsuperscript{f}gd1, not to mention \textsuperscript{e}xg7 directly, cannot be survived.

This is the critical moment in the game, seen from our perspective. White has carried out the
natural plan and gained some momentum on the kingside. If Black only had enough time, he would be able to play ...g6 and survive the pressure down the g-file. It is thus important for White to act with as much urgency as possible, based on Steinitz’s old dictum of the attacker needing to act, lest the advantage be lost.

18.\textit{Edg1}!

White has many other inspiring ideas, but Black is not without defensive prospects either, as the following fun line shows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item 18.\textit{Exe5 dxe5 19.\textit{Wg2} \textit{f8}! 20.\textit{Ed1} f3!
  \end{itemize}

Without this move Black would probably be in trouble, but he has it!

21.\textit{Wxf3}!

The queen is needed on the third rank, to be able to take on d3 at the right moment.

21.\textit{Wg3}? turns out to be a serious mistake.

21...f2 22.\textit{Wxf2} \textit{Exc3} 23.\textit{Exg7} \textit{e6}!

(23...\textit{Ec6}? looks acceptable, but White even manages to put Black under pressure here: 24.\textit{Ec4}! \textit{Ee6} 25.\textit{Exf6} \textit{Exf6} 26.\textit{Wxf6} And now the only move to save the day is:

\begin{itemize}
  \item 26.\textit{Wxa2}†! leading to a drawn endgame.
\end{itemize}

24.\textit{bxc3} (24.b3 \textit{Exb3}! 24...\textit{Wxa2}†! 25.\textit{Ec1} \textit{Exd3}! and White is dead lost.

21...\textit{Exc3} 22.\textit{Exg7} \textit{e6}!

22...\textit{Ec6}? would be a fatal error in view of

23.\textit{Wh5}!.

23.bxc3

23.b3? \textit{Exb3}! 24.axb3 \textit{Exd3} would give Black a devastating attack.

23...\textit{Wa3}! 24.\textit{Exf6} \textit{xa2}†

With perpetual check.

18.\textit{Wg2}!!

This also looks very dangerous and Black only hangs on by the skin of his teeth.

18...\textit{Exc3}!

18...\textit{Efg4}? 19.\textit{Exe5}! wins material.

18...\textit{Wf8} 19.\textit{Exg1} g6 is refuted by 20.\textit{Exe5} dxc5 21.\textit{Exg6} fxg6 22.\textit{Exg6} \textit{Wg4} 23.\textit{Exe7}† \textit{Exe7} 24.\textit{Ed5}† with a deadly attack.

19.\textit{Exe5} dxe5 20.\textit{Exg1} \textit{Ed4}!!

This is the only move. Black was in a desperate situation, and can only be saved by a desperate-looking solution.

21.\textit{Exg4} \textit{Exh4} 22.\textit{Exh4}


22...g6 23.bxc3

White has won a rook, but Black has two kinds of counterplay.

23...\textit{Ec6}

24.\textit{Ec1}!

Getting the king away from the checks is the only way to play for a win.

24.c4?! b5! gives Black strong counterplay, and although 24.\textit{Wg5} looks active, it allows
Black to draw with either 24...\textipa{\text{\text{\textipa{x}d}d3} and 25...\textipa{\text{\textipa{d}x}a2}†, or with 24...\textipa{\text{\textipa{b}6}f 25.\textipa{\text{\textipa{d}a}1} \textipa{\text{\textipa{f}a}5} 26.\textipa{c}c4 \textipa{\textipa{d}x}d3! 27.exd3 \textipa{\textipa{c}3}†, leading to perpetual check.
24.\textipa{\text{\textipa{h}h}6} \textipa{\text{\textipa{d}x}a2}† 25.\textipa{\text{\textipa{d}c}1} \textipa{\textipa{d}x}d3 also leads to a perpetual.
24...\textipa{\text{\textipa{x}c}3} 25.\textipa{\text{\textipa{d}d}1}
It looks as if White is just a rook up, but a closer look will reveal that things are not so simple after:
25...\textipa{\text{\textipa{d}g}7}! 26.\textipa{\text{\textipa{f}f}1} \textipa{\text{\textipa{f}6}!
Black intends to play ...g5, leaving the rook in a very uncomfortable position on the h-file. White might be better, or possibly even winning, but I have not been able to find a clear way for him to deal with the enduring threats to his king, the potentially passed a-pawn, as well as the threats to the rook.

18...\textipa{\text{\textipa{d}x}f3}
Black decides to take up the challenge. The alternatives are just as complicated, but ultimately not better at all:

18...g6 19.\textipa{\text{\textipa{d}f}4}
This gives White a monstrous attack. Black can attempt some counterplay with:
19...\textipa{\text{\textipa{x}c}3}
19...\textipa{\text{\textipa{b}6} issues a threat to the knight on c3, but this is hardly the most important of the white pieces. White's attack gains momentum after 20.\textipa{\text{\textipa{f}5}g2}, with a rather more serious threat to f6. After the natural 20...\textipa{\text{\textipa{g}7} White plays 21.\textipa{\text{\textipa{x}d}5} \textipa{\text{\textipa{x}d}5} 22.exd5 \textipa{\textipa{d}x}h4 23.\textipa{\textipa{d}x}h4 with a murderous attack. There is basically no defence against the various sacrifices on g6, one simple illustration being 23...\textipa{\textipa{d}x}d3 24.\textipa{\text{\textipa{x}g}6}†, followed by mate in a few moves.
20.\textipa{\textipa{d}xe}5 \textipa{\textipa{d}xe}5 21.\textipa{\text{\textipa{x}g}6}† \textipa{\textipa{x}g}6 22.\textipa{\text{\textipa{x}g}6}† \textipa{\text{\textipa{d}f}7} 23.\textipa{\text{\textipa{x}f}6}† \textipa{\text{\textipa{e}8}
Black looks to be only a move away from salvation, but there is no time.
24.\textipa{\textipa{h}6} \textipa{\textipa{h}3}
It looks as though Black is defending, but there is a final sting in the tail.

25.\textipa{\textipa{f}7}!!
Black has nothing better than:
25...\textipa{\textipa{x}f}7 26.\textipa{\textipa{h}7}† \textipa{\textipa{f}8} 27.\textipa{\textipa{x}e}7† \textipa{\textipa{e}8} 28.\textipa{\textipa{g}5}
The black king is too exposed. The concrete line of evidence is:
28...\textipa{\textipa{e}5} 29.\textipa{\textipa{b}5}† \textipa{\textipa{d}7} 29...\textipa{\textipa{d}7} 30.\textipa{\textipa{g}8}† \textipa{\textipa{f}8} 31.\textipa{\textipa{e}6}† with mate on the next move.
30.\textipa{\textipa{x}d}7† \textipa{\textipa{x}d}7 31.\textipa{\textipa{h}5}† \textipa{\textipa{f}8} 32.\textipa{\textipa{h}6}† \textipa{\textipa{e}7} 33.\textipa{\textipa{g}5}† \textipa{\textipa{f}7} 34.\textipa{\textipa{g}7}†
Followed up by 35.\textipa{\textipa{g}8}† and 36.\textipa{\textipa{g}7}†, winning the queen.

18...\textipa{\text{\textipa{x}c}3}!!
This looks like a good defensive try. The knight at least won't come to d5 in these lines. However, White has a very strong option:
19.\textipa{\textipa{d}xe}5 \textipa{\textipa{d}xe}5

\begin{align*}
\text{Diagram 1} & \\
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20.\textit{Wg2!!}

If allowed, White would like to take on g7 with the queen — and there does not seem to be much Black can do to prevent this.

20...	extit{Wh8}

20...	extit{Wh4} 21.\textit{Wxg4} \textit{Wf8} is the computer's favourite. But after 22.\textit{Wh4!} Black cannot avoid ending up in a position material down and without compensation.

21.\textit{Wxe5}! \textit{Wxe5} 22.\textit{Wxg7+} \textit{Wxe8} 23.\textit{Wxh8+} \textit{Wf8} 24.\textit{Wxf6} \textit{Wc5} 25.\textit{Wd4}!

Next comes 26.\textit{Wxc3}, with an extra pawn and total domination.

19.\textit{Wxg7+} \textit{Wf8} 20.\textit{Wxf4} \textit{Wxg1}

20...\textit{Wh5} also exists, but so does 21.e5!, or the simpler 21.\textit{Wxf6} \textit{Wxg1} 22.\textit{Wg5}!, when the attack is unstoppable.

21.\textit{Wxf6} \textit{Wxf6} 22.\textit{Wxf6}

This is the position for which White has been aiming. He has sacrificed a rook (or exchange you might say, as he can always take on g1), but has achieved total domination on the kingside. It seems unbelievable that White does not win this game, but against the toughest opposition, this is not always easy — even for a world-class player such as Ivanchuk.

22...\textit{We6}

The only way to defend f7. 22...\textit{Wh5} is met strongly with either 23.e5 with the plan 24.\textit{Wh7}, or with 23.\textit{Wg5}!, based on 23...\textit{Wh7} 24.\textit{Wxd5}, with mate in two coming.

23.\textit{Wh7} \textit{We8} 24.\textit{Wb5+}

This was of course an important point. The black king is not allowed to leave that easily.

24...\textit{We6}

It is obvious that White has a strong initiative, but it is not easy to pinpoint the strongest continuation.

25.\textit{Wh5}!

The main point behind this move is to allow the c3-knight to join the attack. This is achieved by forcing the queen away from a5, and thus thwarting the indirect attack on the king via e1.

25...d5?!}

Black has to try to muddy the waters. Trivial play with 25...\textit{Wb6} leads straight down death row after 26.\textit{Wd5}! \textit{Wxd5} 27.\textit{Exd5} \textit{Whd7} 28.\textit{Wxc6+} \textit{Bxc6} 29.\textit{Wxf7+} \textit{We8} 30.\textit{Wf1} and besides being a pawn up and controlling the seventh rank, White is also likely to queen his h-pawn or win the knight on g1.

26.\textit{Exd5}

This is a very natural continuation, based on brute force play. However, it was better to keep the tension and play the subtle 26.b3!!, when Black is simply lost. White is no longer in danger of being mated on the back rank, and Black cannot improve his position in any way. An example of this is: 26...\textit{a6} 27.\textit{Exd5}! and Black can play either 27...\textit{Exd5} 28.\textit{Exd5} \textit{a5} 29.\textit{Exc6} \textit{Bxc6} 30.\textit{a5} with mate in three moves, or 27...\textit{Exd5} 28.\textit{Exd5} \textit{axb5} 29.\textit{Exc6} \textit{Bxc6} 30.\textit{dxe6}+ \textit{Exe6} 31.\textit{Wxf7+}, when Black may as well resign, as after 31...\textit{Exe7} 32.\textit{Wd5}+ \textit{Wc7} 33.\textit{Wd8}+ he is both being mated and losing his queen.
Black has a lot of legal moves after 26.b3!, but none of them lead to anywhere significantly better than here. However, White is still winning after the text move, but at some point he will have to solve the problems with his king. What goes wrong for Ivanchuk in the game (besides, I assume, that he was running short of time as usual), is that he does not trust his initiative enough at any point, to take the time out (a single move) to provide safety for his own king.

26...\( \text{B}x\text{d}5 \) 27.\( \text{B}x\text{d}5 \) \( \text{B}x\text{d}5 \) 28.\( \text{B}e5\text{f} \) 29.\( \text{B}h8\text{f} \) 30.\( \text{B}x\text{d}5\text{f} \) 30.\( \text{B}d6\text{f} 

I assume that Ivanchuk was down to his usual one or two minutes at this point, and thus was unable to keep his cool, with a tempting check existing.

31.\( \text{B}h6\text{f} \)?

White was still obviously winning after 31.c4!. The black king is in trouble, White has a pawn for the exchange, and might even take it back at a convenient moment. Black can give a few checks, e.g. 31...\( \text{B}e1\text{f} \) 32.\( \text{B}c2 \) \( \text{B}e2\text{f} \), but after 33.\( \text{B}b3 \) the king simply dances away.

31...\( \text{B}c5 \) 32.\( \text{B}x\text{c}6 \)

The consequences of the queen ending after 32.\( \text{B}e3\text{f} \) 32.\( \text{B}x\text{d}5 \) 33.\( \text{B}x\text{c}6\text{f} \) 34.\( \text{B}xg1 \) are not clear by any means either. White has winning chances, but they are quite slim. The extra pawn is only providing a symbolic advantage, as it is the power of passed pawns that usually decides the outcome in queen endings.

32...\( \text{B}e1\text{f} \) 33.\( \text{B}c1 \) \( \text{B}x\text{c}1\text{f} \) 34.\( \text{B}x\text{c}1 \) \( \text{B}x\text{c}6 \) 35.\( \text{B}d4 \text{f} 

White could have obtained better winning chances with: 35.\( \text{B}e3\text{f} \) 36.\( \text{B}f1 \) \( \text{B}d4 \) 37.\( \text{B}d1 \)

Although Black has become very active, the pawn deficit combined with White's outside passed h-pawn still renders his position unenviable. White will follow up with \( \text{B}e2 \) and gradually creep forwards.

35...\( \text{B}f3 \) 36.\( \text{B}h3 \) \( \text{B}d4 \) 37.\( \text{B}d1\text{f} 

This throws away the last chance to win the game as far as I can see. 37.\( \text{B}g2\text{f} \) was the best attempt, keeping the enemy king shut out. Black will not be able to penetrate the white position, but he would still keep him tied down for the time being, making it hard for White to improve his position. I would think that Black can hold this endgame, but he still has to prove it with an accurate defence.

37...\( \text{B}e3 \text{f} 

Black now has enough compensation in the form of the f-pawn combined with his active king.
38.\textit{Ad3} f5 39.b4 f4 40.a4 \textit{Ah4} 41.\textit{Ae1} \textit{Ag2}?! 

This move was probably played in time trouble. It looks a bit artificial to me, but might still be good enough to hold the game. Black was able to force a draw with:

41...\textit{Af3}† 42.\textit{Af1} \textit{Ad2}† 

The only way for White to avoid a perpetual check would be:

43.\textit{Ag2} f3† 44.\textit{Ag1} 

Unfortunately after:

44...\textit{Ae4} 45.h4 f2† 46.\textit{Ag2} \textit{Ac2} 

White should consider giving a perpetual himself. He can try to play for a win with a piece sacrifice:

47.\textit{Af2}? \textit{Af2} 48.c4 

But the position is still drawn:

48...\textit{Ag4}!

This is the key move.

48...\textit{Ae4} is insufficient. For example: 49.b5 cxb5 50.cxb5 \textit{Ae6} (50...\textit{Ad3}?! 51.a5 \textit{Ad6} 52.b6 and the a- or h-pawn queens) 51.h5 \textit{Ac3} 52.h6 \textit{Ae4} 53.h7 \textit{Af7} 54.\textit{Ag3} and White wins.

49.b5

49.\textit{Ag3} and other moves seem to transpose.

49...cxb5 50.cxb5 \textit{Ae3} 51.a5 \textit{Ae4} 52.b6 axb6 53.a6 \textit{Af3}† 

This is the reason for putting the knight on \textit{g4} instead of \textit{e4} five moves ago.

54.\textit{Ah3} \textit{Ad5} 55.a7 \textit{Ac7} 56.\textit{Ag4} \textit{Ae5} 57.\textit{Ag5} \textit{Ae6} 58.\textit{Ag6} b5 59.h5 b4 60.h6 b3 

The final ending will be one of queen and knight versus queen, where Black objectively has no real winning chances, and in practice only the vague hope that his opponent may stumble into a knight fork.

42.\textit{Af1} \textit{Af3} 43.c3 \textit{Ag3} 

43...\textit{Af3}† was a more precise way to keep the balance.

44.a5 f3 45.\textit{Ag1} a6?! 

This leads to some difficulties for Black. He would have been able to draw quite safely with 45...\textit{Ah4}! 46.c4 \textit{Af5}, when I cannot see an edge for White anywhere. The best try is 47.b5?! cxb5 48.cxb5 \textit{Ad6} 49.b6 axb6 50.a6, but the position after 50...\textit{Ac8} should be a simple draw.

46.c4 \textit{Ac3} 

47.\textit{Ac5}?! 

Ivanchuk misses the chance to create some last-minute problems for Black with 47.h4!. Here it is necessary for Black to play 47...\textit{Af2}! (47...\textit{Ah4}? loses after 48.\textit{Af2} \textit{Ac4} 49.\textit{Af3} \textit{Ag5} 50.\textit{Af4} \textit{Ag6} 51.\textit{Af4} \textit{Ad3} 52.\textit{Ad5} and wins.) 48.\textit{Af2} \textit{Ah4}. I think that White unfortunately cannot win this ending, but surely it is worth a try anyway. 49.\textit{Af4} \textit{Ac4} 50.\textit{Af2}? \textit{Ag4} 51.\textit{Af2} \textit{Ac5} 52.\textit{Af5} 53.\textit{Af3} \textit{Ad5} 54.\textit{Af6} \textit{Af5}† 55.\textit{Ac3} I suspect that this position should be a draw with best play, although it would take quite an extensive analysis to make absolutely certain of this. In any case, it was certainly the best practical try.

47...\textit{Ad5} 

Black now confidently makes the draw.

48.h4 \textit{Af2}† 49.\textit{Af2} \textit{Ah4} 50.\textit{Ad3} \textit{Ag3} 51.\textit{Af1} \textit{Af3} 52.\textit{Af5}† 53.\textit{Af4} 54.\textit{Af6} \textit{Ad3} 54.\textit{Af1} \textit{Ac4} 55.\textit{Af2} \textit{Ab5} 56.\textit{Ab8}

\(1/2-1/2\)
The next game is the only game I have been coerced into including in the book. When I originally started putting these two books together in 2002 I asked Jonny Hector to contribute a few games, which he willingly did. The winner of the next game was a bit disappointed that I had not asked him as well, as we are after all from the same country (originally, and at the time). His comment was something like, “My game with Georgiev is as good as those”, referring to a number of games I intended to include in the first volume at the time. I had to agree with him, and from that moment there was not really any turning back. I sincerely hope that you will not read anything into the fact that the game appears almost towards the end of our road in these two volumes. It is pure class.

In the game White plays an interesting positional gambit, which has become increasingly popular over the last few years. At an early moment Black gives White a sudden chance to play a tempting sacrifice, thinking that he has sufficient defensive resources when in fact he needed to play more cautiously.

Peter Heine Nielsen – Kiril Georgiev

Istanbul Olympiad 2000

1.d4 d6 2.d3 d5 3.c4 c6 4.e3 e5 5.g5 h6 6.h4 dxс4 7.e4 g5 8.g3 b5

This game was played a few years before this variation became really trendy. At this point the pawn sacrifice was considered slightly risky and also a bit unnecessary. Since then it has become apparent that nothing serious comes from 6.exf6 and that White will have to take risks to prove an advantage in this opening.

9.e2 b7 10.h4 g4 11.e5 h5 12.0–0

The theory of this variation was not well developed at the time of the game, but Georgiev had still devoted some time to this position at home and was clearly very confident at the board that he had found the right remedy.

12...fd7?

It was actually because of this game that this move was only repeated sporadically in the years to follow. Basically this new move was refuted quickly at the first outing and never returned to the analysis labs of the grandmasters of our day.

Later the right method of playing the position was shown in a crucial first round game at the 2007 World Championship tournament in Mexico. 12...bd7 13.c2 dxe5 14.xe5 g7 15.ad1 0–0 16.g3 d7 17.f3 c5!! This novelty was a discovery of Peter Heine Nielsen as well. He has worked steadily with Anand since 2002 and has become an important part of the World Champion’s recipe for success. After the further continuation 18.dxc5 e7 19.h1 a6 20.a4 c6 21.d5? exd5 22.exd5 g5!! 23.f4 g7 White was in big trouble and did not manage to hold, Aronian – Anand, Mexico City 2007.

13.xf7!

With Black having seriously neglected his development, it should not be too great a surprise to us that the solution to the position is to draw the king into the open and
permanently fracture the black pawn structure. You could easily call this a positional sacrifice, as the follow-up is not immediate and the dangers to the black king are long term rather than short term. However, this would confuse matters somewhat, as this sacrifice is not about weak squares, but about the brute force of the king hunt – even in the absence of a concrete checkmating line.

One of the points behind Black's last move is that after 13.f3?! \( \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xe5} 14.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xe5} \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{d7!} \) Black is better. The key point is that 15.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xe6} is met with 15...g3!, when mate is a reality (in one game Black got the chance to play this, but instead took on h4 with the queen and eventually lost...).

However, it should be noted that it was not necessary to play the f6-knight to d7 first in order to get this trick to work. It works just as well with 12...\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{bd7}, which eliminates more or less the only reason I have been able to think of for not developing the queenside.

13...\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xf7} 14.f3

Lines are opened that will never close again.

14...\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{g8}

Georgiev was still playing fast, clearly not uncomfortable with the turn of events. It should be mentioned that computers in 2000 were not that dependable, and that the main help they provided was to point out more or less immediate tactics. This has of course changed, and today they are a far more integral part of opening analysis. This does not remove the human element in any way, as the difference between the players will inevitably be what they can add to the analysis of the opening, rather than the work of their computer engines, as all the best players are using the same engines anyway. However, it does mean that the opening has become increasingly important in games played at 2700 level, where everyone is checking all the fashionable systems with the same computers all the time.

Actually, a friend of mine who works with one of the top dogs, said that the low level in the fourth hour of Wijk aan Zee and similar tournaments was mainly due to fatigue; not from the games themselves, but from the many hours of revising their analysis before the games. This means that although I might on occasion play better than, say, Aronian, from move 20 to 40, I would simply never get the same positions against his opponents.

After this digression, let's get back to the position. A previous game was probably the basis for Georgiev's preparation (not for Nielsen, he had not seen 12...\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{d7} before). Bosboom – Yuneev, Wijk aan Zee 2000, continued: 14...\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xf3} 15.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xf3} \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{g8} 16.e5 \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{e8} (16...\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{h7!} would offer more resistance, but the task of defending such a position is not easy for humans) 17.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{e4} \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{e7} 18.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{f4} \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{h6} 19.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{f3} \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{a6} 20.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xf1} \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{ac5} Desperation. 21.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xc5} \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xc5}+ 22.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{f2} \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xf2+} 23.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xf2} \text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{exe5} 24.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{c5} 1–0.

15.\text{\textipa{\textbar}} \text{xf4} e5

This seems to have been the end of Georgiev's preparation. Probably he felt that the extra piece was worth the risk.
This is the moment from where I have initiated the core of my analysis of this game. In some places I have analysed the variations in considerable detail, as I wanted to show that White's initiative had already reached decisive proportions rather than merely providing 'good compensation'. Such is the power of the enduring initiative, that even with an extra piece in a position where the opponent has yet to cross the middle of the board, I have not been able to find a satisfactory defence.

16.g5!
I like this move quite a lot, on purely positional grounds. 16.dxe5 or 16.gxh5 also made sense – a pawn is after all a pawn – but the g-pawn on g5 (and later g6) will be a tremendous force.

16...exd4
16...wb6 was maybe a better try. I have to admit that I have not analysed it beyond the following (critical?) line, that shows the potential of the white attack. 17.d2 exd4 18.d4! wc7 19.exd4 ag7 20.ngx7 dxg7 21.d5! dx5 22.nd4† ag8

17.dh5
This is a critical moment in the game. Black is under a serious attack and has to decide on his defensive strategy. Besides the scheme chosen in the game, we will look at three additional ones.

17...dh7
The key idea behind this move is to bring the rook out of the corner, so that instead of being in the way, it can help defend the near surroundings of the black king. The attempt to keep the centre closed with 17...d3 does not achieve much. White has other ways to get the queen into play than from d4. The simplest continuation is probably 18.e5, when the pawn soon will be on e6; the bishop on f6 and the h-pawn will advance to h6.

Black can also try to take as much material as possible, but this strategy also does not work: 17...dxc3 18.d7† fg7 19.d4† df6 20.wxg3 White has enough time. His pieces are very active, so the main thing will be to avoid exchanges of the heavy artillery, which is able to cause so much damage.

Here there are two lines that are interesting to investigate:

23.dxc4!! bxc4 24.wxg7 25.wd4† ag8 26.wb8† axf8 27.wxh8† xc7 28.wxg7† ad8 29.wd8† ad7 30.wd1† and Black is mated. Clearly Black has options along the way (as does White), but I think the dangers of his position are already quite apparent from this short piece of analysis.

a) 20...fxg7 21.wxg7† ag8 22.wxg6† df7 (22...gh7 23.wxg3) 23.wf3† xe8 24.be6† xe7 25.wg6† ef7 26.wxg6† ef7 27.wxg6 and Black is busted.
b) 20...\texttt{c5}† is well met with 21.\texttt{xf2}, when after 21...\texttt{d6} (21...\texttt{xf7} 22.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{bd7} 23.\texttt{ad1} and White's attack is overwhelming) White will have to find a fantastic rook sacrifice. 22.\texttt{ad1}!! \texttt{xf2}† 23.\texttt{xf2}! (23.\texttt{xf2}? \texttt{b4}! and Black is back in business) 23...\texttt{xd1}† 24.\texttt{xf1} \texttt{xf1}† This is a sad necessity. 25.\texttt{xf1} \texttt{bd7} 26.\texttt{e6} White will win back the two pieces and continue to attack the frail-looking black king. Black has no chance in hell of surviving this position.

17...\texttt{c5} looks more appealing. The main idea is to take on c3 with check, of course, but at the same time also simply to free up squares for the defence, such as f8 for the knight. The bishop is not much good on f8, where it is mainly in the way, while here on c5 it creates the impression of counterplay.

Unfortunately, however, it is only an impression! White has to play the highest paced move, which is giving up the knight in the most cost effective way, before rolling in with the ranks:

a) 19...\texttt{e7} 20.\texttt{f7}† \texttt{g7} (20...\texttt{xf7} 21.\texttt{xf7} \texttt{xf7} 22.\texttt{g6}† and \texttt{f1} leads to a deadly attack)

b) 19...\texttt{h7}

This is met with a direct attack:

20.\texttt{e6}† \texttt{h8} 21.\texttt{e5}† \texttt{xe5} 22.\texttt{xe5}† \texttt{g7} 22...\texttt{g8} 23.\texttt{g4} d3† 24.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{b6} looks like a tricky option, but White wins with 25.\texttt{h8}† \texttt{g7} 26.\texttt{xb6} \texttt{axb6} 27.\texttt{af1}, when there is no way to save the rook. For example: 27...\texttt{hxh4} 28.\texttt{f7}† \texttt{g6} 29.\texttt{f5}† \texttt{xc5} 30.\texttt{g3} and White wins.

23.\texttt{h6} d3† 24.\texttt{h1} \texttt{w7} 25.\texttt{c3} \texttt{xe4}

It looks as if White has blown too much of his firepower in the attempt to get to the black king, but the reality is that the black pieces on the queenside are so bereft of even medium-term prospects that White can build up the winning attack easily.

26.\texttt{h6}† \texttt{g8}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\node at (1.5,1.5) {a}; \node at (1.5,3.5) {b}; \node at (1.5,5.5) {c}; \node at (1.5,7.5) {d}; \node at (3.5,1.5) {e}; \node at (3.5,3.5) {f}; \node at (3.5,5.5) {g}; \node at (3.5,7.5) {h};
\node[draw,shape=circle,fill=black] at (1,1) {1}; \node[draw,shape=circle,fill=black] at (1,2) {2}; \node[draw,shape=circle,fill=black] at (1,3) {3}; \node[draw,shape=circle,fill=black] at (1,4) {4}; \node[draw,shape=circle,fill=black] at (1,5) {5}; \node[draw,shape=circle,fill=black] at (1,6) {6}; \node[draw,shape=circle,fill=black] at (1,7) {7}; \node[draw,shape=circle,fill=black] at (1,8) {8};
\node{a}; \node{b}; \node{c}; \node{d}; \node{e}; \node{f}; \node{g}; \node{h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

27.\texttt{f7}!!

I find this combination to be very beautiful.

27...\texttt{xf7} 28.\texttt{e1}!

Now the queen is effectively trapped, as moving to d5 or g4 would allow a quick mate.

28...\texttt{d4} 29.\texttt{e6}† \texttt{g8}

29...\texttt{xf6} 30.\texttt{xf6}† does not offer a real chance for a different outcome, although it is better in principle. I just like the final pattern.

30.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xc3} 31.\texttt{e8}† \texttt{h7} 32.\texttt{h6} mate!
Chapter 5 - Intuitive Sacrifices and Enduring Initiative

18. \( \text{g6} \) \( \text{e7} \)

Black needs to bring in extra resources – this is really the main theme of the game.

If he tries to hold on to the rook with 18...\( \text{g7} \), White here has a beautiful winning line with 19.\( \text{h5} \) \( \text{e7} \) 20.\( \text{f3} \), when the quick arrival of extra firepower dooms the black position. The dangers are shown clearly in the following line: 20...\( \text{dxc}3 \) (not the best move, but it is important in understanding the way the threats unfold) 21.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{e6} \) 22.\( \text{f7} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 23.\( \text{xf7} \) \( \text{c5} \) 24.\( \text{h1} \) \( \text{f8} \) 25.\( \text{e5} \)!! \( \text{xe5} \) 26.\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 27.\( \text{f7} \) with mate in three moves.

19.\( \text{d6} \)!! \( \text{g7} \)

Let us quickly see the consequences of accepting the offered bishop: 19...\( \text{xd6} \) 20.\( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{h7} \) 21.\( \text{h5} \) \( \text{g8} \) 22.\( \text{f7} \) \( \text{h8} \) 23.\( \text{g6} \) \( \text{g7} \) 24.\( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{c6} \) 25.\( \text{e5} \) and the queen cannot be saved, as after 25...\( \text{xf8} \) 26.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 27.\( \text{xf7} \) it is impossible to defend against both 28.\( \text{h5} \)!! and the imminent promotion to a new queen.

20.\( \text{xh7} \)!! \( \text{xh7} \) 21.\( \text{g4} \)

White had another strong option at this point. He could have played 21.\( \text{xd4} \)!! with the idea 21...\( \text{e5} \) 22.\( \text{xf8} \)!! \( \text{xf8} \) 23.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 24.\( \text{xb5} \) and although Black is a piece up, he is materially down. White has four pawns for the piece, besides the complete domination of the board, of course.

21...\( \text{g6} \)

21...\( \text{xd6} \) 22.\( \text{e6} \)!! \( \text{h8} \) 23.\( \text{f7} \) just wins.

22.\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{e5} \)

The win is rather trivial after 22...\( \text{xf8} \) 23.\( \text{xf8} \)!! \( \text{xf8} \) 24.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 25.\( \text{f6} \) with a crushing attack.

22...\( \text{dxc}3 \)

This is of course also possible, but if White keeps the momentum going, the attack cannot be stopped.

23.\( \text{ad1} \)!! \( \text{e5} \)

23...\( \text{xb2} \) loses to a beautiful long and forced variation: 24.\( \text{g6} \) \( \text{e8} \)

25.\( \text{c7} \)!! \( \text{xc7} \) 26.\( \text{g6} \)!! \( \text{h8} \) 27.\( \text{h5} \)!! \( \text{h7} \) 28.\( \text{g8} \)!! \( \text{g8} \) 29.\( \text{e8} \)!! \( \text{e7} \) 30.\( \text{f7} \)!! \( \text{g6} \) 31.\( \text{e7} \)!! with mate to follow on the next move.

24.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{bd7} \)

White also emerges victorious after 24...\( \text{d3} \) 25.\( \text{bxc3} \), with ideas such as 25...\( \text{a6} \) 26.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 27.\( \text{d7} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 28.\( \text{g6} \) when Black will be mated.

25.\( \text{b4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 26.\( \text{xd7} \)

White wins in various lines, the most critical being:

26...\( \text{c8} \) 27.\( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{h5} \) 28.\( \text{f6} \)!!

Mate will soon be delivered.
23...\[h3 \quad \text{Qbd7}
23...dxc3 is strongly met with 24.h5 \[e8 25.bxc3. There is no immediate win, but it is merely a matter of time. The two advanced pawns create an unstoppable force, not to mention all the other advantages in the position.

24.\[e7
24.h5 \[xg5 25.\[e6† was also good enough to win.

24...\[e8
Black can also not find any relief after 24...dxc3 25.h5 \[e8 26.\[e6† \[g7 27.\[h6† \[g8 28.\[f6 \[xf6 29.gxf6, when White is simply too close with too much.

25.h5 \[g7
25...\[h7 is refuted with 26.\[e6† \[h8 27.\[f6† \[xf6 28.\[xf6† \[g7 29.\[e2 and the material superiority is decisive.

Even the most creative players are not able to create an erratic position early on in every single game. Sometimes one just has to play a normal position and look for chances to do something unusual in the middlegame. In some cases, opponents will specifically try to steer the game away from the most complicated positions in order to reduce the likelihood of a disaster.

Take the example of Emil Sutovsky, who I have already mentioned as being one of the most ingenious and original Grandmasters in the world today. I have noticed that there is a tendency for players to reply to 1.e4 with 1...e5 when they face him, even though he has played some very nice games as White in the Ruy Lopez.

In the following game it seems to me that Black's strategy is successful, but then she completely misplays her hand, opening a file on the kingside with an ill-advised tactic. Sutovsky acts with great vigour and grabs the sudden chance that has been handed to him.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

26.\[f6 \[xf6 27.gxf6 \[f7 28.\[f5!
White keeps coming -- Georgiev is given no respite.

28...\[h7
28...dxc3 29.\[xe5 \[xe5 30.\[g3† also does not leave Black with any chances of saving the game.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

29.\[g3 \quad \text{dxc3 30.\[xe5 cxb2 31.\[f1 \[xe5 32.\[xe5 \[c8 33.\[xb2 \[e6 34.\[e5 b4 35.\[f3 c3 36.\[g3 c2 37.\[f4 c1=\[f† 38.\[xc1 \[xh5 39.\[g5 \[h4 40.g3 \[h3 41.\[g7† \[h8 42.\[g5 1–0}

\text{Emil Sutovsky – Antoaneta Stefanova}

Hoogeveen 2005

1.e4 e5 2.\[f3 \[c6 3.\[b5 a6 4.\[a4 \[f6 5.0–0 \[e7 6.\[e1 b5 7.\[b3 d6 8.c3 0–0 9.h3 \[a5 10.\[c2 c5 11.d4 \[c7 12.d5

12.\[bd2 is more common, but there is nothing wrong with this sideline.

12...\[d7 13.b3 \[fe8
14.\textit{h}2!?

A new move that takes the game out of theoretical lanes altogether, which seems to have been the intention all along. The next five to six moves look fine, but there are questions to be raised after that.

14...g6 15.g4 h5 16.g5 \textit{h}7 17.\textit{g}1 c4
18.b4 \textit{b}7 19.\textit{bd}2 \textit{c}8
19...a5!? looks more natural, but Stefanova is initiating a plan.

20.\textit{g}3

This is the move she wanted to provoke.

20...\textit{h}4??

This is a positional mistake of unbelievable dimensions; especially as it is played by a women's World Champion. There is no way that Black should ever open up the files on the kingside for White, in this way, or any other (apart from in a few really exceptional circumstances). From this point on I consider the black position to be strategically lost, simply because a line has opened.

20...a5! was the correct move. It is not easy for White to open files on the kingside; he would have to try and arrange a knight sacrifice on h5, which is far from easy in this position.

21.\textit{d}xh4 \textit{x}g5

Maybe Stefanova was contemplating 21...\textit{x}g5, but realised that she would be in big trouble after 22.\textit{f}5!, with the point that 22...gxh5 can be met by the calm 23.exf5, when there is no defence. For example: 23...\textit{f}8 24.\textit{e}4! \textit{f}6 25.h4 \textit{d}7 26.\textit{g}4 and Black is mated.

22.\textit{d}f3 \textit{f}6

22...\textit{f}4 looks natural, but after 23.\textit{x}f4 exf4 24.\textit{g}1 followed up by \textit{d}4 and either \textit{x}g6! or \textit{g}2, Black is in dire straits.

23.\textit{g}1

23.\textit{f}5?!

23...\textit{d}8

23...a5 24.\textit{h}6 would force Black to play 24...\textit{d}8! and thus transpose to the game.

24.\textit{h}6!

This helps to put extra pressure on the black kingside.

24...a5

This is rather optimistic, to say the least. It was probably better to play 24...\textit{f}8, when the position is poor, but not lost by force as in the game. However, I still consider the position...
indefensible in the long term, and feel pretty confident that a move like 25.Qf5 would bring Black great grief.

We have reached the big moment in the game. White has put up an impressive show of force on the kingside, but still has to prove his advantage. To do so he will have to sacrifice something, somehow, as well as include the rook on a1 in the attack.

25.Qxg6†!!

Sutovsky, true to form, chooses the direct way. Not that it is needed, but I found a different way to approach the position:

25...Qg2!!

The idea is to include the second rook in the attack before sacrificing on g6. My main line goes:

25...axb4 26.Qg1! Qh8

27.Qxg6! Qg8 28.Qg7! Qf8

This seems to be the only way to challenge the intruder.

If Black plays something like 28...We8, White can play 29.cxb4 and slowly improve his position afterwards.

White now has a nice little combination.

29.Qg6†!

The main purpose of this move is to block the g-file.

29...fxg6 30.Qxh7† Qxh7 31.Qxf8 Eaxf8 32.cxb4

This ending is winning for White, and maybe even a bit clearer than in the game.

25...fxg6 26.Qxg6† Qh8 27.Qf7

The main point of the combination is revealed. White wants to give a knight check on g6.

27...Qg8 28.Qg1 We7

This is the only way to stay alive.

29.Qg6† Qxg6 30.Qxg6 E8

Black could have exchanged on b4 first, had she wanted to.

31.Qh4

The next knight is also headed for g6. 31.bxa5?! also looks very strong. The knight will be truly offside on a5 after recapturing.

31...Qe8 32.Qg4

32.bxa5?! Qxa5 33.f4 is a cool idea suggested by the box. White has a big advantage here as well.

32...axb4 33.cxb4 Qf7

This is the only move that prevents Qf5 from coming with immediate deadly effect.

34.Qxf8

White has to take the exchange now, as ...Qg8 was threatened.
Another line was 40...\textit{d}d8, when you could imagine moves such as 41.\textit{a}a7 \textit{d}f6 42.\textit{g}g6 \textit{e}e8 43.\textit{a}a3 as an example. The main theme of the position is that Black is virtually paralysed. White will advance the \textit{h}-pawn and find various ways to create threats, while Black is shuffling around on the back rank. Although there is no direct way to win the position, the enduring initiative will give White every chance of winning the game.

41.\textit{a}a7 \textit{x}f5 42.\textit{w}xf5

White is dominating completely. The game never got exciting again.

42...\textit{h}f7 43.\textit{g}g2 \textit{g}g7† 44.\textit{h}f1 \textit{x}f8 45.\textit{d}d1 \textit{g}g6 46.\textit{c}e8† \textit{d}d8 47.\textit{x}f7 \textit{w}xf7 48.\textit{x}d8† \textit{h}h7 49.\textit{g}g4 \textit{f}f4 50.\textit{f}f5 \textit{h}h6 51.\textit{x}d6 1–0

**Aggressive opening play**

Obviously the opening has a lot to do with how the rest of the game is going to work out, in terms of whether it is going to be complicated, or more technical in nature. It is not often that Kramnik gets into wild dogfights in the Catalan, nor that Topalov ends up in trivial positions in the Sicilian, although both do happen. It always takes two to tango.
In the first game of this section, White is looking for a bigger advantage than he would be able to find in the main lines, leading him quickly into very dangerous territory. Besides being an example of how even top players can mix up their preparation, this game shows how an early initiative can be sustained over a number of moves.

Sergei Tiviakov – Baskaran Adhiban
Bhubaneswar 2009

1.e4 e5 2.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}f3 \texttt{\textsuperscript{d}c6} 3.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}b5} a6 4.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}a}4 d6 5.c3 f5 6.exf5 \texttt{\textsuperscript{d}xf5} 7.0-0 \texttt{\textsuperscript{d}d3} 8.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}e}1 \texttt{\textsuperscript{d}e}7 9.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}e}3

9.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}c}2 is the main line, but it is not really clear if there is any advantage for White here either.

9...e4 10.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}e}1 \texttt{\textsuperscript{g}5}

This is the critical moment of the game. White has a few tempting options and chooses the one that appears to be the sharpest and most principled. However, this allows Black to give up material in order to facilitate the swift mobilisation of his forces. The way the white pieces end up bundled together on the queenside, there is little for him to do with his extra material.

11.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}xd}3?

This is a serious mistake. What is especially surprising is that Tiviakov actually had this position once before, and chose a better move then. 11.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}h}3 b5 12.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}xd}3 exd3 13.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}b}3 \texttt{\textsuperscript{d}e}5 14.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}d}5 \texttt{\textsuperscript{d}f}6 15.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}xa}8 \texttt{\textsuperscript{w}xa}8 16.a4 \texttt{\textsuperscript{d}d}5 17.axb5 axb5 18.c4 bxc4 19.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}c}3 \texttt{\textsuperscript{w}b}7 Black had enough compensation for the exchange, although Tiviakov did eventually manage to outplay his opponent in Tiviakov – Jepson, Helsingor 2008.

11.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}g}3 has also been played in roughly half a hundred games.

11...\texttt{\textsuperscript{x}e}3 12.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}b}4 \texttt{\textsuperscript{x}f}2†!

Although known, this is a nice blow.

13.\texttt{\textsuperscript{x}f}2 \texttt{\textsuperscript{w}h}4† 14.\texttt{\textsuperscript{g}g}1 \texttt{\textsuperscript{h}6}!

Black develops, but keeps the f-file open.

15.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}xc}6?

White takes the bait and is now simply lost. The initiative is too strong.

A very famous game went: 15.\texttt{\textsuperscript{w}f}1 \texttt{\textsuperscript{g}4} 16.\texttt{\textsuperscript{w}f}4 \texttt{\textsuperscript{g}8} 17.\texttt{\textsuperscript{g}g}3 \texttt{\textsuperscript{f}f}†! 18.\texttt{\textsuperscript{w}xf}1 \texttt{\textsuperscript{x}xb}† 19.\texttt{\textsuperscript{w}xh}2 \texttt{\textsuperscript{w}xh}2 0–1 Adams – Piket, Wijk aan Zee 1991.

15.\texttt{\textsuperscript{w}e}20–0 16.\texttt{\textsuperscript{b}b}3† \texttt{\textsuperscript{g}8} 17.\texttt{\textsuperscript{x}c}6\texttt{\textsuperscript{g}4} 18.\texttt{\textsuperscript{h}h}3 \texttt{\textsuperscript{d}f}2 19.\texttt{\textsuperscript{e}e}6 (19.\texttt{\textsuperscript{d}d}4 loses to a direct attack.)
First the defender needs to be eliminated, after which the king will be defenceless. 19...\(\text{Qxh3}\) 20.\(\text{gxh3}\) \(\text{Whg3}\) 21.\(\text{Wg2}\) \(\text{We1}\) 22.\(\text{Qh2}\) \(\text{Ef2}\) White is lost, as his numerous pieces cannot get to the kingside to protect the king fast enough.) 19...\(\text{bxc6}\) 20.\(\text{We3}\) Black won after a few imprecise moves in Olsson – Soderberg, Sweden 1962, but could have sealed the deal immediately with 20...\(\text{Qd1!}\) 21.\(\text{Wxe2}\) \(\text{Ef2}\) 22.\(\text{Wxd1}\) \(\text{Wh3}\) and mate.

15.d4 0–0 16.\(\text{We2}\) was played in Zapata – Arensebia Rodriguez, Cienfuegos 1996. Here 16...\(\text{Qg4!}\) 17.\(\text{Qh3}\) \(\text{Wh3}\) would transpose to the game Klavins – Mikenas, Riga 1959, in which Black enjoyed a powerful initiative and won convincingly in a further eleven moves.

The only way for White to stay in the game was 15.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{Wh3}\) 16.\(\text{Wf1!}\), when the exchange of queens would help a great deal with relieving the pressure. But after 16...\(\text{Wxf1}\) 17.\(\text{Qxf1}\) 0–0 18.\(\text{Qg1}\) \(\text{Qe5}\) Black's position was still very pleasant, and he went on to win in Bangiev – Zhuravliov, Liepāja 1971.

15...0–0 16.\(\text{h3}\)

Other moves also fail to save the game:

16.\(\text{Qe7}\) 17.\(\text{We2}\) was tried in Pinto Paiva – Barata, Salvador 1973. Black continued forcefully with 17...\(\text{Qg4}\) 18.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{Qf2}\) 19.\(\text{d7}\) (19.\(\text{Qa3}\) \(\text{Qxh3}\) 19...\(\text{Qe7}\) 20.\(\text{Qg4}\) \(\text{Qd3}\) 21.\(\text{Qa3}\). From this point the remaining moves, and the apparent agreement of a draw were quite odd. Black can win in several ways, one being 21...\(\text{Wxf2}\) 22.\(\text{Wxe3}\) \(\text{Wh6}\) 23.\(\text{Qe2}\) \(\text{Wh4}\) 24.\(\text{Qxd3}\) \(\text{Wh6}\), with mate in not too many moves.

16.\(\text{We2}\) \(\text{Qg4}\) 17.\(\text{h3}\) \(\text{Qf2}\)! is not different from above.

This leaves us only 16.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{Wh3}\) 17.\(\text{We2}\), when after 17...\(\text{bxc6}\) 18.\(\text{Qxc6}\) \(\text{Qg4}\) 19.\(\text{Qg2}\) \(\text{Wh5}\) White is utterly defenceless. For example, 20.\(\text{Qa3}\) \(\text{Qe3}\) or 20.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qxe8}\) are both simply winning for Black.

16...\(\text{Wh8}\)!

The main threat is ...\(\text{Qxh3}\) with immediate mate.

20.\(\text{Qd7}\) \(\text{Qg3}\) 21.\(\text{Qe1}\) \(\text{Qf7}\)!

21...\(\text{Qxe3}\) was very simple, but the text move is decisive as well. The knight is headed for e5 and subsequently d3 or f3.

22.\(\text{Qd4}\) \(\text{Qxe3}\) 23.\(\text{Qxf2}\) \(\text{Qe1}\) 24.\(\text{Qf1}\) e3!

Cutting off the queenside for good.

25.\(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Qf2}\)

0–1

The player who wants to be creative in the opening in order to bring the game out of balance would be ill-advised to rely on the opponent offering him chances like those seen in the previous couple of games.
In the next game we shall see how one of the best players in the world chooses to muddy things up and perhaps got a bit too creative in the opening, simply to take the initiative no matter the cost. Although this strategy is very risky, it pays off and White gets a winning attack. But the story does not end there...

**Teimour Radjabov – Jan Smeets**

Wijk aan Zee 2009

1.df3 d5 2.g3 c6 3.gg2 df6 4.c4 dxc4 5.0-0!

I firmly believe that this is the correct decision. If Black is taking time out to win a pawn, it is logical for White to develop quickly.

5...dbd7 6.c2 d6 7.a4 a5 8.aa3 ee6

Black is hanging on to the c4-pawn, without which he would have lost some footing in the centre for not very much. However, in order to do so, he has to play some awkward-looking moves. At this point he has still not thought about developing the kingside. Therefore, despite the fact that White does not have a single piece aimed at the black king at this point, he will still keep the option of a kingside attack in the back of his mind for the time being.

9.eg5!?  
The sharpest try, which is exactly Radjabov's style.

9...gg4  
Black, too, continues in the sharpest fashion, this time by attacking the e-pawn.

10.dxc4!  
Radjabov takes the opportunity to open some lines, seeing that the potential threat to the rook on f1 is only illusory.

10...axe2 11.de5! eh5!  
It is imperative that Black defends f7. The exchange is not anywhere near enough for the total loss of structure around the king.

After the greedy 11...xf1? a possible continuation might be 12.xf1 dd4 13.exf7 eg8 14.d3 dbd5 15.e2. At this point it is clear to me that White has enough compensation for the exchange, but let us look at some possible moves before we make our minds up. 15...h6 16.de6† dd7 17.h3† xf6 18.e3 wb6 19.f4† xf4 20.e5 mate.

12.b4!?  
I do not want to focus too much on the absolute correctness of Radjabov's play in this game, as the process would be
Chapter 5 - Intuitive Sacrifices and Enduring Initiative

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time-consuming and would not add much to
our understanding of the strategy chosen by
him. Do not misunderstand – I do believe
that accurate information does help you
to improve your understanding of chess
greatly; but also you have to recognise that
you cannot analyse everything to the end
and that there are other lessons to be learned.

12...Qbd7

White's idea can be illustrated by the
following line: 12...axb4 13.a5 Qbd7 14.d4
h6 15.Qe4 Qxe4 16.Qxe4 Qf6 17.Qb1, when
Black still has not finished his development.
White is only a move or two away from having
dangerous threats, such as Qxb4, a6, Qxc6,
Qb3 and d5, to name a few.

13.Qb2 axb4 14.a5 Ra6

Black chooses to block the a-pawn, in an
try to support the c6-pawn. 14...Qxa5?
15.Rxa5 Qxa5 16.Ra1 would fare badly.

15.Rfe1

White brings another piece into the attack.

15...Qxe5 16.Rxe5 c6

16...h6 could be met with the enterprising
17.Qe6!? Qxe6 18.Rxh5 Qxh5 19.Qg6+ Qd7
20.Qxh5 with compensation, although it
would be hard to give a definitive evaluation.

17.Rf1

17.Qa1!! was also interesting, with the
obvious intention of sacrificing on e6. The
computer wants to play 17...Qd7?!, but this
does not look entirely reassuring. The position
really is a big mess.

17.Qg6 18.Rb3 Qd6?

The first clear mistake of the game. Previous
moves have been debatable, but only open
to criticism after extensive analysis. Here,
however, Black obviously should not have
egged White on with the sacrifice.

Correct was 18...Qe7!, when it seems that
Black is no worse, at least. One line I have
investigated goes: 19.Qxa6 bxa6 20.Qae1 0–0
21.Qxe6? Qxe6 22.Qxe6+ Qxh8 23.Qxe7 Qe8
24.Qxd8 Qxd8 White seems to be worse in
this ending, but probably it can be drawn.
However, there is also the possibility to sacrifice
early on e6; however, it is clear that Black is
better prepared for this with the bishop on c7.

19.Qxe6! Taking with the rook was also very interesting,
but the text is the most logical move.

19...Qxe6 20.Qxe6+ Qd7

The king has to step out into the open. After
20...Qf8 Black is in big trouble: 21.Qxa6 bxa6
22.Qf3! Qg8 23.Qxc6 Qf8 24.Qxa6 and it
does not look as though Black can survive.

21.Qxd6+!

The king is drawn further out into the open.

21...Qxd6 22.Qxb4+ c5

Again Black has to play the move that looks
most dangerous for his king. After 22...Qc7
the king is not headed for safety, but for a
tomb. White plays 23.Qe5+ Qc8 24.Qh3+
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\[ \text{\textbf{23. }\text{\textit{wb7}}} \]

Optically, I am not sure things could get much worse for the black king.

\[ \text{\textbf{23... }\text{\textit{e6}}} \textbf{24. }\text{\textit{b5}} \textbf{\textit{c7}} \textbf{25. }\text{\textit{b6}}\textbf{+ }\text{\textit{e7}} \]

White also wins with: 26.\textbf{e5}!, with the point of 26...\textbf{d7} 27.\textbf{xf6+} \textbf{gxf6} 28.\textbf{e1+} \textbf{f8} 29.\textbf{xd7} \textbf{xd7} 30.\textbf{xf6+} \textbf{g8} 31.\textbf{e7} and it is all over.

\[ \text{\textbf{26. }\text{\textit{e1}}\textbf{+}} \]

This is a natural move, but it also made sense to keep the king in the centre.

\[ \text{\textbf{26... }\text{\textit{f8}}} \]

At first glance it looks as though Black can escape with 26...\textbf{f7} 27.\textbf{e6+} \textbf{f8} 28.\textbf{e5} \textbf{f7}, but then when we add in 29.a6! it is time to get worried. The threat is simply \textbf{a7}, \textbf{c6} and \textbf{a8=\text{\textit{w}}}! It does not appear that Black can prevent it. For example: 29...\textbf{a8} 30.\textbf{c6} \textbf{xa6} 31.\textbf{d6+} \textbf{g8} 32.\textbf{e8+}, with mate to follow.

\[ \text{\textbf{27. }\text{\textit{e5!}} \textbf{c8}} \]

27...\textbf{d7} 28.\textbf{xf6} would transpose to the note to move 26.

\[ \text{\textbf{28. }\text{\textit{d6}}\textbf{+}} \]

What is this all about? This check only serves to chase the black king away from the scene of action (a common mistake, as can be seen in the section on cutting off the escape route in Chapter 4, beginning on page 311).

The winning move was 28.\textbf{b7}!. The main threat is \textbf{d6}+ followed by \textbf{c4+}, winning.

If Black tries to prevent this with 28...\textbf{f7}, White can win with 29.\textbf{d6+} \textbf{g8} 30.\textbf{e7} \textbf{e4} 31.\textbf{xf7} \textbf{xd6}.

\[ \text{\textbf{32. }\text{\textit{c4}}} \textbf{xb7} \textbf{33. }\textbf{f6}\textbf{+}, \text{with mate on the next move.} \]

28...\textbf{g8} 29.\textbf{e7} \textbf{h6}

Black is just in time to bring the king to safety and thus make use of the rook, which is currently incarcerated on \textbf{h8}.

[Diagram]
30. \text{e}4+ \text{h}7 31. \text{b}7 \text{f}8! \\
Accurate defence. 31...\text{h}5? 32. \text{e}5 \text{f}8 might look satisfactory, but after 33.\text{f}7 \text{xf}7 34.\text{xf}7 \text{g}8 there is a small problem: 35.\text{e}4 mate!

32. \text{d}7 \text{b}8! \\
The point behind the previous move.

33. \text{xf}8 \\
White is forced to enter a very dubious-looking endgame. After 33.\text{xb}8? \text{xd}7 his position would fall apart.

33...\text{xb}7 34. \text{xb}7 \text{xf}8 35.\text{d}3?! \\
It was more accurate push the pawn quickly. After 35.a6! \text{e}4 36.\text{e}7 White wins a tempo by threatening to take the bishop. After 36...\text{d}8 37.a7 \text{f}3 38.d3 his chances of achieving a draw would be better than in the game.

35...\text{g}4? \\
Both players were running short of time at this point. Black's best option was 35...\text{h}5!, when after 36.a6! (36.\text{g}2? \text{g}4! would be detrimental to White) 36...\text{f}3 37.\text{e}7 Black is in time to play 37...\text{b}8!, with the idea 38.\text{e}1 \text{b}4 39.\text{a}1 \text{e}8 40.a7 \text{c}7, when White's position looks a bit dubious. I think the game might still be drawn, but it is White who has to prove it.

36.a6! \\
Now the passed pawn becomes a major force to be reckoned with.

36...\text{e}5?! \\
Actually this should have been the losing move. It was necessary to play 36...\text{a}8, when after 37.a7 \text{f}6 38.g4 \text{e}8 39.\text{c}7 \text{a}4 40.f4 \text{e}8 41.\text{e}7 \text{c}6 42.\text{f}2 White has excellent winning chances.

37.\text{d}5 \text{a}8 38.a7 \text{e}8 39.\text{e}7 \\
Here something astonishing happened. While making this move, Radjabov (with six seconds left on the clock) knocked the bishop off the board. Smeets (with just two seconds remaining) quickly slapped the clock back, leaving the duty of putting the bishop back on the board to Radjabov. He did not manage to do so before overstepping the time limit and a hefty debate ensued, mainly between Radjabov and the arbiters (while Smeets quickly stepped away from the board).

At some point, the arbiters suggested that the players should agree a draw, as Radjabov had overstepped the time limit, but Smeets had a lost position (soon to be two pawns down for nothing). I find this action of the arbiters outrageous. It might very well be Smeets' or Radjabov's right to make such a proposal, but the decision to invent such a solution, instead of following the laws of the game, is simply preposterous. The case is not an easy one to judge, as Smeets probably should have stopped the clock and asked for extra time. He would then not have won on time, but gained another two worthless minutes.

However, this does not excuse the arbiters' decision. At the press conference they agreed that Smeets would have been declared the winner, had they been forced to make a decision. Then there would have been a protest. However “fair” their solution might
have been, this is the route the arbiters should have chosen, as it is in accordance with the laws of the game.

For what it’s worth, from a chess perspective the final position is all over. After 39...\text{c}6 40.\text{e}xe5 \text{xd}5 41.\text{xd}5 \text{xa}7 42.\text{xc}5 White would have won trivially.

\[\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}\]

The following game is a good illustration of how to conduct an initiative early on in the game. Dreev, who is usually a cautious player, sacrifices a pawn early on in return for development. Black’s position is at first sight solid, but a strong positional piece sacrifice shows that it is all gloss and no substance.

\textbf{Alexei Dreev – Artashes Minasian}

\textit{Warsaw 2005}

1.d4 d6 2.e4 \text{d}f6 3.\text{c}c3 g6 4.\text{g}5!?

This line is not too well known, but is quite dangerous for Black.

4...\text{g}7 5.f4 c6 6.\text{b}3 \text{wb}6?!

This pawn-snapping is quite risky and does not work out well in this game. It is played sometimes when the bishop is on e3. As we shall see this makes more sense, as in this game White is indirectly hitting on e7. 6...\text{g}4 seems to be the best line for Black here.

7.\text{d}2! \text{xb}2 8.\text{b}1 \text{a}3 9.\text{d}3!

It is quite instructive to observe the way that Dreev is in no hurry to prove his compensation, but is instead happy to complete the mobilisation of his pieces before striking. Black has no chance to equal White’s development, and currently he cannot castle because the e4-e5 push will expose c7. For this reason Black returns with his queen to the defence, a rather time consuming manoeuvre all in all, for just a pawn.

9...\text{a}5 10.0-0 \text{c}7 11.e5!

White is as well developed as he can get, so now there is no time to lose!

11...\text{d}5 12.\text{e}4

12.\text{be}1 \text{e}6! does not look like progress to me.

12...\text{f}5?

Black hopes to liquidate the white attack by eliminating his strong central pressure. Instead he will soon be left defending a horrible position with a little material as his sole consolation.

12...\text{f}6 would also allow White to create a strong attack with 13.\text{xf}6! exf6 14.\text{xd}6+ \text{f}8 15.\text{f}!? and the black position is no fun. All those pieces in the top left corner of the board seem surprisingly close to the box, don’t they? A possible line is 15...\text{d}7 16.\text{c}4 \text{e}7 17.\text{g}5!! and the white attack crashes through.

The best try was 12...0-0 13.\text{c}4 \text{f}6! when Black is somewhat worse after White’s main options, but still in the game. (But weaker is 13...\text{b}6?! 14.exd6 exd6 15.\text{f}6+ when White dominates the dark squares around the black king. The b-pawn seems a little unimportant in the big picture now, doesn’t it?)

13.\text{xe}7!!
This wonderful sacrifice is completely logical. By eliminating the key to control over the dark squares White is taking his lead in development to another level, that of domination and continued attack.

13...\(\text{Dxe7}\)

13...dxe5 14.d6\(\uparrow\) \(\text{Dxe7}\) 15.fx e5 is similar to the game, except for the fact that White has no f-pawn, which may actually improve his chances.

13...fxe4 14.dxe6 gives White a very strong attack. His plan is simply to continue with f4-f5 and c2-c4. I can see no convincing way for Black to achieve any of the following objectives:

- a) Coordinate his pieces into something resembling a cohesive unit.
- b) Evacuate his king to a safe hideaway.
- c) Prevent his opponent from opening the centre.

Extensive analysis suggests that White is clearly better, which should hopefully come as no surprise to the reader.

14.dxe6\(\uparrow\) \(\text{f8}\) 15.g5 b6

16.xb7 was threatened.

16.b4

The weakest square in Black's position is f7 and White is putting maximum pressure on it.

16...h6 17.b3 d5 18.g7 \(\text{e6}\)

Returning the material does not ease the problems, but also after a move like 18...h7 White has a winning attack: 19.xc8 \(\text{xf7}\) 20.c4 d7 21.xd6 \(\text{g8}\) 22.a3 d7 23.g4 and the end will be similar to that seen in the game.

19.xh8 xh8 20.c4 e7

21.g4!

White is still very eager to open the position.

21...d7 22.a3 c5

This equals resignation. But also after 22...fxg4 23.f5 \(\text{xf5}\) 24.g5 \(\text{xf5}\) 25.dxf5 \(\text{e5}\) everything wins, e.g. 26.e3 \(\text{g7}\) 27.e4 \(\text{c8}\) 28.xe7\(\uparrow\) \(\text{xe7}\) 29.g6.

23.d5 xd5 24.cxd5 xd5 25.bd1 1-0

It is of course easier to be creative in the opening when you are White. Only a handful of openings allow Black to take big risks early on in the game, without just being objectively bad. One type of exception is when a player finds a new idea in an opening previously considered risky. The following is a great example of this.

Kiril Georgiev – Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu

Fenug 2006

1.d4 \(\text{d6}\) 2.d3 \(\text{e6}\) 3.c4 \(\text{c5}\) 4.d5 b5

Nisipeanu revived the Blumenfeld Gambit based on an idea of his friend and occasional trainer Valentin Stoica, who discovered that after 5.g5 Black could play 5...xd5 6.cxd5 d6
7.e4 a6 8.a4 \( \mathcal{Q}e7 \)!, with decent counterplay. I am very grateful for this, as I used precisely this idea to win my last game as an International Master.

White is right to prompt Black to show his hand. The knight is too dangerous to be allowed to remain on g4.

One possible deviation given by Nisipeanu was 15.e4 d4 16.\( \mathcal{Q}f1 \) c4?! 17.bxc4 \( \mathcal{Q}b4 \), with an initiative for the two pawns.

5.dxe6 fxe6 6.cxb5 d5

It has long been established that Black has a certain degree of compensation for the pawn here. However, there have still not been enough practical encounters between strong players to determine accurately whether it is enough. This has mainly been down to the popularity of 5.\( \mathcal{Q}g5 \), which has also deterred strong players from playing this gambit with Black.

7.g3 a6 8.bxa6 \( \mathcal{Q}d6 \) 9.\( \mathcal{Q}g2 \) 0-0 10.0-0 \( \mathcal{Q}c6 \)
11.b3 \( \mathcal{Q}xa6 \) 12.\( \mathcal{Q}b2 \) \( \mathcal{W}e8 \)!

Black's chances are on the kingside, so the queen belongs on g6 or h5.

13.\( \mathcal{Q}bd2 \) \( \mathcal{W}d8 \)
13...\( \mathcal{W}h5 \) also made sense, but the Romanian Grandmaster prefers to develop his last piece.

14.\( \mathcal{W}e1 \) \( \mathcal{Q}g4 \)!

Nisipeanu subsequently thought that he should have played 14...\( \mathcal{Q}c7 \)! 15.\( \mathcal{Q}c1 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b6 \), with compensation.

15.h3!

15...\( \mathcal{Q}xf2 \)!

This was obviously the idea, but still it is worth going into the reasoning behind this sacrifice. Having already bet everything on his quick development, it is important to create a target, even if it necessitates a further material investment.

After 15...\( \mathcal{Q}ge5 \) 16.\( \mathcal{Q}xe5 \) \( \mathcal{Q}xe5 \) 17.\( \mathcal{f}4 \) \( \mathcal{Q}c6 \)
18.e4 White has caught up in the centre and will enter the middlegame on even terms, positionally, and with an extra pawn for the long term.

16.\( \mathcal{Q}xf2 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d4 \)!

With his active playing style it is second nature for Nisipeanu to sacrifice pieces without feeling the urge to justify them immediately. If the attack is to succeed, it is necessary to include all the pieces, so Black takes the opportunity to involve the knight.

17.g4

Preventing ...\( \mathcal{Q}f5 \).
17...h5
Just in case, Black regains control over f5, which could become relevant at some future moment.

18.g5 \textit{f7} 19.e3?
This is a mistake for many reasons. First of all it eschews the chance to get the king out of harm’s way. Secondly, the pawn should stay on e2 to reinforce the knight on f3. Together these factors allow Black to take over the initiative with a powerful move.

Nisipeanu gave a line in \textit{Chess Informant} that I found a little odd. He claimed that White is slightly better after 19.\textit{gxf3} \textit{xf4} 21.\textit{f1} \textit{xe5} 22.\textit{xe5} \textit{c8} 23.\textit{xd6} \textit{xd6} 24.\textit{c2}. Frankly I do not really understand this line, but Nisipeanu is an occasional 2700+ player, so I suppose it is my duty to quote him.

20...ih2!!
This idea is by no means new to us. Black wants to keep the white king trapped in the line of fire.

21.\textit{xf1}
21.\textit{f1} demands a resolute response. The key idea is that the black attack is repulsed after 21...\textit{c7}? 22.\textit{xe2} \textit{f2} 23.\textit{f6}!!.

For this reason Black needs to keep the enemy bishop out of the game with 21...\textit{d4}!!

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[very thick] (0,0) -- (1,0);
\draw[very thick] (0,1) -- (1,1);
\draw[very thick] (0,2) -- (1,2);
\draw[very thick] (0,3) -- (1,3);
\draw[very thick] (0,4) -- (1,4);
\draw[very thick] (0,5) -- (1,5);
\draw[very thick] (0,6) -- (1,6);
\draw[very thick] (0,7) -- (1,7);
\draw[very thick] (0,8) -- (1,8);
\draw[very thick] (1,0) -- (1,8);
\draw[very thick] (2,0) -- (2,8);
\draw[very thick] (3,0) -- (3,8);
\draw[very thick] (4,0) -- (4,8);
\draw[very thick] (5,0) -- (5,8);
\draw[very thick] (6,0) -- (6,8);
\draw[very thick] (7,0) -- (7,8);
\draw[very thick] (8,0) -- (8,8);
\draw[very thick] (0,1) -- (8,1);
\draw[very thick] (0,2) -- (8,2);
\draw[very thick] (0,3) -- (8,3);
\draw[very thick] (0,4) -- (8,4);
\draw[very thick] (0,5) -- (8,5);
\draw[very thick] (0,6) -- (8,6);
\draw[very thick] (0,7) -- (8,7);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

22.\textit{f4} 23.\textit{xe6} \textit{f6}, when the black attack is irresistible. The computer suggests 24.\textit{c1}, but here Black has moves such as 24...\textit{b7} or 24...\textit{e5}!!, where there is no easy defence to 25...\textit{c4}, as after 25.\textit{c2} Black plays 25...\textit{xf3}!! 26.\textit{xf3} \textit{f4} mate!

White’s best defence was probably 21.\textit{f6}, when after 21...\textit{c7} 22.\textit{xe2} \textit{f2} 23.\textit{xe5} Black can continue the attack with 23...\textit{xf6}!!, 24.\textit{f6} \textit{f6}. I am not sure how White should give up the queen, but it is clear that this does not mark the end of his problems. The king cannot easily find shelter, and the rooks cannot easily find a place in the sun to shine.

21...\textit{c7}!

The white king cannot be allowed to make it to h1, even if it costs further material to prevent him from doing so.

22.\textit{xa6}

White has no choice but to run.

22...\textit{g3}!! 23.\textit{e2} \textit{g2}!! 24.\textit{d3} \textit{c4}!!

This key move had to be anticipated some
time ago. If Black had played 24...\texttt{Exf3}? his attack would have been repulsed with 25...\texttt{Cc2}.

25.\texttt{Cc3} \texttt{Exf3}

26.\texttt{Cd4}

Other moves also do not save the game:

26...\texttt{Exb4} \texttt{Eb8}+ 27.\texttt{Ca4} \texttt{Exb2} 28...\texttt{Exf3} does not work. The white king is in too much trouble, and Black wins however he likes. For example with 28...\texttt{Exb3} 29.axb3 \texttt{Exb3}+ 30.\texttt{Ca5} \texttt{Cc7} mate.

26...\texttt{Re2} looks best, but Black has a very strong reaction in 26...\texttt{Exe3}+

27.\texttt{Cd2} \texttt{Wg5}!! based on 28...\texttt{We1} \texttt{Wg3}+, or 28...\texttt{Exe3} d4 followed by 29...\texttt{dxex3} and 30...\texttt{Ed2}, with a decisive attack.

26...\texttt{Exf2} 27.\texttt{Eb6}

27...\texttt{ab1} would have lost to 27...\texttt{Eh8} with the unstoppable threat of ...\texttt{Ed6}.

27...\texttt{Ee5}+

The game is practically over, but White is playing on out of some sort of inertia.

28.\texttt{Eb4} \texttt{Eb8} 29.\texttt{Eh7} \texttt{Exb2}

30.\texttt{Exe6}+

White is losing material no matter what, e.g.

30...\texttt{Ed1} \texttt{Eh7}.

30...\texttt{Eh8} 31.\texttt{Ee5} \texttt{Ea1} 32.\texttt{Exd5} \texttt{Wg5} 33.\texttt{Ea1} c3 34.b4 \texttt{Exh4} 35.e4 c2 36...\texttt{Ec1} \texttt{Wg5}+ 37.\texttt{Eh3} \texttt{Exc1} 0–1

Even if the opening goes quickly into the endgame it is sometimes possible to play creatively and attack. Queens are not the only pieces that can create damage. So far in this book I have not paid a lot of attention to endings, even though there can be attacks on the king there as well, of course. The next game is an excellent example, which I hope will go some way towards rectifying the balance.
Wesley So – Ni Hua

Dresden Olympiad 2008

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.d5 d6 4.0-0 xex4 5.d4 d6 6.xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 f6 8.xd8t

The Berlin Defence has gone from obscurity in the 1990s – back when Michael Adams said that you should win this ending with White, if you played well, and where the only good players playing it were Almasi and Miles – to being one of the most important openings of the day: a principal weapon of Kramnik, Ivanchuk, Topalov and many others.

I have always thought that the way for White to prove an advantage should be through active play in the centre, making use of his lead in development and the fact that the black king cannot easily get out of the way. Sure, there are no longer queens on the board, but there are other ways to use your lead in development than to mate the opponent. With only the knight out, and that to a slightly unhappy square, Black is struggling to find peace with his pieces. However, long term he is set to do excellently. The doubled pawn can help to control some important queenside and central squares, while the unopposed light-squared bishop enjoys great potential. For this reason White needs to play actively.

9.xc3 xe8 10.h3 b6??

This sideline has become increasingly popular over recent years.

11.xe4!

Astonishingly this active move was a novelty. Usually Black is ready to challenge the knight in the centre early on, but here this is not the case and the knight can dream of lunging forward quickly.

11...xe6?!

I do not like this move much. It seems to me that the bishop will be a target on e6. My preference would be 11...e7!, with the idea to meet 12.g4 with 12...xh4, when I doubt Black is any worse.

12.g4! xe7 13.xe1

We are very early in the game, but already it feels as if Black is going to have an uphill struggle.

13...h6

This is a standard reaction in the Berlin, but I get the feeling that Black is too passive here, especially when you take White’s aggressive stance into consideration.
Another move could be 13...h5, when 14.\text{\textnot}d4 \text{\textnot}d5 15.\text{\textnot}f4 looks better for White. There is also 13...c5, when White will be a tad better after 14.\text{\textnot}g5 \text{\textnot}d5 15.\text{\textnot}c3. However, in the light of analysis both of these look better than the move chosen by Ni Hua.

14.\text{\textnot}d4 \text{\textnot}d5 15.\text{\textnot}f4 \text{\textnot}d7
15...\text{\textnot}g6 16.\text{\textnot}g3 h5 17.c6! is also poor for Black.

16.\text{\textnot}ad1 \text{\textnot}c8
It is not easy to recommend moves for Black at this point. After 16...\text{\textnot}e8 White can reply 17.\text{\textnot}c3!, when it is clear that the forthcoming exchange of the d5-bishop will leave Black with a lot of holes in his position.

17.\text{\textnot}g3?!
It was already possible to play 17.e6! at this point, but the option has not gone away because of this cautious move.

17...\text{\textnot}b7

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\foreach \x in {0,...,8} 
\foreach \y in {0,...,8} 
\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.05);
\draw (0,0) circle (0.5);
\draw (8,8) circle (0.5);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textit{18.e6!}
In general, if White is able to push the pawn to e6, he has a big positional advantage in the Berlin. One of the reasons is that it often leads to an opening of the centre, which benefits the player leading in development.

18...\text{\textnot}d8
White's idea was 18...\text{\textnot}xe6 19.\text{\textnot}c3, when he will win back the pawn with a big edge. However, I am not sure White's superiority is any bigger than the one Black had to endure in the game.

19.\text{\textnot}c3 f6!?
19...\text{\textnot}xe6 would have offered more defensive prospects, but the position occurring after 20.\text{\textnot}xe6 \text{\textnot}d7 is a poor one for him. White can play 21.\text{\textnot}xd5 \text{\textnot}cxd5 22.c4! with strong pressure, or maybe even 21.\text{\textnot}f4, intending to play 22.\text{\textnot}e5 and win a pawn.

After the move played White cannot improve his position any further, and thus the time has arisen for decisive action.

20.\text{\textnot}xd5! \text{\textnot}cxd5
20...\text{\textnot}xd5 21.c4 \text{\textnot}e5 22.\text{\textnot}f5 also leads to a rapid defeat.

21.\text{\textnot}b5 \text{\textnot}e8 22.c4!
White continues to play with great energy. Black is given no time to complete his development.

22...a6
22...\text{\textnot}xe4 23.\text{\textnot}d7 would be devastating.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\foreach \x in {0,...,8} 
\foreach \y in {0,...,8} 
\filldraw[black] (\x,\y) circle (0.05);
\draw (0,0) circle (0.5);
\draw (8,8) circle (0.5);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

23.\text{\textnot}xc7! \text{\textnot}xc7
Black is completely lost after 23...dxc4 24.\textbackslash e\textsubscript{d}7 \textsubscript{c}6, at which point 25.\textsubscript{a}c1 b5 26.b3 looks simplest.

24.cxd5 \textsubscript{c}8
24...\textsubscript{c}8 25.d6 \textsubscript{c}6 26.e7 also offers Black no hope whatsoever.

25.\textsubscript{a}xc7!
So chooses the ending that will be easiest to convert. The rest can pass without comment.

25...\textsubscript{a}xc7 26.\textsubscript{a}c1+ \textsubscript{d}8 27.\textsubscript{a}xc8+ \textsubscript{a}xc8
28.e7 \textsubscript{a}xe7 29.\textsubscript{x}xe7 \textsubscript{a}d8 30.\textsubscript{a}xg7 \textsubscript{a}xd5
31.\textsubscript{a}g6 \textsubscript{a}d2 32.\textsubscript{a}xb6 \textsubscript{a}xb2 33.\textsubscript{a}xf6 \textsubscript{d}7
34.a4 \textsubscript{e}7 35.g5 \textsubscript{b}4 36.\textsubscript{g}2 a5 37.\textsubscript{g}3 \textsubscript{a}a4 38.\textsubscript{a}xb6 \textsubscript{a}a1 39.\textsubscript{a}a6 a4 40.\textsubscript{g}4 a3
41.f4 a2 42.\textsubscript{f}5
1-0

Intuitive Sacrifices

Broadly speaking, we have seen two types of creative play so far. There have been certain cases in which concrete positional factors demanded a non-standard approach, and others where the creativity was initiated by ambition and passion only. As mentioned earlier, no player is a stronger representative of the latter type of creative play than Emil Surovsky, and it is thus right that we shall look at two typical examples from his practice, to show how dangerous this playing style can be, even for strong grandmasters.

In the first game Surovsky sacrifices a rook as early as move twelve, posing his opponent complex problems only a few minutes into the game. The sacrifice is not necessarily great, but the advantage of the game tilting out of control are quickly seen; Black finds it very hard to react correctly to the sudden challenges and is lost before he has time to buy a cup of coffee.

Emil Surovsky – Aloyzas Kveinys

Reykjavik 2006

Emil Surovsky is probably the strongest advocate of “serve and volley chess”. His chess is at times remarkable and at times he falls flat on his face when his high level of ambition is faced with an insurmountable obstacle.

In this game he feels provoked to sacrifice a rook as early as move 12 and enter wild complications. However, at the critical moment in the game he fails to pause and see the need to bring the last pieces into the attack.

1.e4 c5 2.\textsubscript{d}f3 e6 3.\textsubscript{c}c3 a6 4.d4 cxd4
5.\textsubscript{a}xd4 \textsubscript{w}c7 6.\textsubscript{a}d3 \textsubscript{d}f6 7.\textsubscript{w}e2 d6 8.f4 g6
9.0-0 \textsubscript{g}g7 10.e5?

Surovsky rarely declines such invitations.

10...dxe5 11.fxe5
11.\textsubscript{d}d5?! is an interesting move, which surely will be debated in the years to come.

11...\textsubscript{f}d7

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  % Chessboard representation
  % Pawns
  % Knights
  % Bishops
  % Rooks
  % Queen
  % King
  % Diagram labels
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

12.\textsubscript{a}xf7?!
Having advanced the pawn this sacrifice is more or less forced. The computer tells me that I can give up the e-pawn for a few tempos, but I don't trust it the way I trust Emil the hatchet man.
12...\texttt{xf7} 13.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{xe6}?

The knight is immune because of the bishop check on c4, but Black could play 13...\texttt{b6} with the idea of taking on e6 with the queen. This would involve an exchange of the queen in return for three pieces, all with different abilities. It is likely that the position is still in balance, though it is a very dynamic balance...

14.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{xf6}

14...\texttt{f6} 15.\texttt{g5} followed by 16.\texttt{f4} will give White a terrific initiative, which will be virtually impossible for Black to resist.

14...\texttt{xe6} 15.\texttt{f4} also brings severe problems for Black. The best option could be to give up the queen, but for this the king is far worse placed on e6 than it would have been on g8 after 13...\texttt{b6}. Having said this, this might very well have been the least of the evils.

15.\texttt{c4} \texttt{c6}

There are other moves, but none that satisfy.

16.\texttt{c7}?

Sutovsky repeats the position once, as we all learned to do in our childhood.

16...\texttt{g7} 17.\texttt{e6}+ \texttt{f7}

We can easily say that we have reached the critical position in the game. White has no fewer than two winning moves.

A tragic end, but as they say: live by the sword, die by the sword.

In the next game Sutovsky comes up with another early sacrifice, again on move 12. This time it looks obvious that it cannot be right, as it includes a substantial loss of time. However, correctness is something we determine in analysis with the help of computers. At the board this is only one factor among many. And in this particular encounter Black never managed to solve his problems.
Chapter 5 - Intuitive Sacrifices and Enduring Initiative

Emil Sutovsky - Sergei Volkov

Isle of Man 2000

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Qc3 Qf6 4.Qg5 dxe4
5.Qxe4 Qe7 6.Qxf6 gxf6 7.Qf3 b6 8.Qc4
Qb7 9.Qe2 c6 10.0-0 Qc7 11.Qg3

Sutovsky has an interesting idea up his sleeve, but as we shall see, it is maybe not entirely correct.

11...Qd7

12.Qf5?!  
This was the point. By sacrificing a piece “for nothing”, Sutovsky is forcing Black to leave his king in the centre for the time being, making it possible to put pressure down the e-file and make use of the pin on the c7-bishop.

12...exf5 13.Qxe1?!  
To me it is quite clear that White should not have enough compensation for the piece, but beyond that I don’t want to make too many general comments (although I do want to note that two moves to give up the knight seems a bit luxurious). It just seems that White should play with much more haste at this moment to justify his sacrifice. This rook move does seem a little sluggish, allowing Black to coordinate himself a bit.

13.Qh4!

This looks like a better move. The defensive set-up Black could have used in the game (see the note to move 14 below) is not possible now, and he will have to choose between a great number of moves. I have chosen to include two of these here.

13...Qf4!

This seems to be the strongest. The idea is quite compelling. 13...Qf4 would allow White to play 14.Qxf7! Qxf7 15.Qh5+ Qg8! (15...Qf8? 16.Qxe1 offers quite interesting play for White, as far as I can see. Black has to play 16...Qe5, when White will play 17.Qf5 Qg6 18.Qh6+ Qe8 19.Qg7 Qf8 20.Qxh7 Qd8 21.Qxg6 with a strong attack.) 16.Qf5 with adequate compensation for the piece – and a draw in hand as well, as far as I can tell.

14.Qxe1 0-0-0!

The piece is returned. The reason is simple: the white pieces are not that greatly placed.

14...Qe5 15.dxe5 Qxh4 16.Qad1 gives White good compensation for the piece, and probably about even chances.

15.Qd3 Qxd4 16.c3 Qg4 17.Qxg4 fxg4 18.Qxe7 Qxe8

White is a bit worse in this ending.

13...Qf8!

The knight is ideally suited to defend the kingside.
14.\textit{h4} g6?

14...\textit{c8}?! would of course be desirable, but it suffers from a tactical flaw. The problem is seen after 15.\textit{Wh5} g6 and now 16.\textit{xf7}! \textit{xg6} 17.\textit{xg6} hxg6 18.\textit{xh8} f8. In the resulting position White has a few ways to create pressure, for instance by doubling the rooks on the e-file, or advancing the h-pawn. Black might hold on to equality, but it will not be a pleasant experience.

The problem with Sutovsky's whole set-up is 14...f4!

\begin{center}
\textbf{Diagram 1}
\end{center}

15.\textit{f5} g6, when I just cannot find compensation for White. If we need a verbal reason why this is the best approach, it would be that White can no longer attack down the f-file, as he manages to do so successfully in the game.

15.\textit{xf5} h5?

Sutovsky gives 15...\textit{c8}! 16.\textit{xg7} \textit{e6} 17.\textit{ad1}! g8! as the correct way to play the position. I think he is right. White has compensation, but it is not clear if it is enough.

16.\textit{c3}! b8!

White would be happy to see 16...0-0 17.\textit{xf7} b4 18.\textit{xg6}, when Black would be destined to suffer in spite of his extra exchange.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Diagram 2}
\end{center}

17.\textit{xe7} \textit{xg6} 18.\textit{xf6} g6

18...\textit{h7} 19.\textit{e5} g7 20.\textit{ae1} g6 21.\textit{g5} transposes.

19.\textit{e5}! \textit{h7}!

The following variation is quite interesting and clearly shows the potency of the white attack.

19...\textit{g8} 20.\textit{ae1}!

\begin{center}
\textbf{Diagram 3}
\end{center}

20...\textit{xe5}?! This is too greedy – Black would be better off hanging on to the knight, which is a useful defender.

20...\textit{g7} 21.\textit{g5} would instead transpose to the game.

21.\textit{xe5} f7

This sees to be necessary.

22.\textit{h6} d7

22...\textit{d8} loses amazingly to 23.\textit{h8}! g8 24.\textit{xh5}, when possible lines include 24...\textit{g7} 25.\textit{xf7}! or 24...\textit{d7} 25.c3!, after which there is nothing Black can do about \textit{h6}! and \textit{g5}, winning back the rook with a won game.

23.\textit{g5}!

23.c3? \textit{g4} would bring Black back into the game.

23...\textit{xd4} 24.c3! \textit{xc4}

There is no choice. The check on d1 is only a spite check.

25.\textit{xd7}+ \textit{e7} 26.\textit{e5}+ \textit{d7}
Chapter 5 - Intuitive Sacrifices and Enduring Initiative

27. Rf5!!

To me this is the most amazing move. The rook will take on f7 if allowed, and cause major devastation. So, for this reason, Black will have to defend f7 with the king.

27... Qe7

But here White can play:

28.b3!

There is no way to defend f7 that does not cost the queen.

20. Kg5 Kg7 21. Ke1 c5?!

It is also worth paying attention to the following move:

21... Qd7??

This was the recommendation Sutovsky gave in his annotations, thinking that the move would force White to look for a draw quite soon. Having spent some time on the position, I found a way to play for an advantage.

22. h4!!

This move has several functions, one being to create luft for the king. Because of a tactical nuance it is very important that the h-pawn is advanced two squares, as the white king will need the h3-square in one of the lines. Black now has a number of possibilities:

22... b5?!

This is not the best move, but I will take it as the main line as it leads to some lovely variations.

22... c5 23. dxc5 bxc5 does not work, as White has the powerful 24. Re5!! The threat is Rf5 with a devastating attack. Black can try 24... Wd1† 25. Kh2 Wd8, but White wins after 26. Rxg6! Wxf6 27. Rxf6 Rg2†, and now, conveniently, 28. Kh3.

For this reason, I think the best defence would have to be 22... Qe8!! eliminating the second rook before it causes any damage. The main line could be: 23. Rxe8† Wxe8 24. Wd6† Wf7 25. Wb8† We8 26. Wxa7 f6 27. Kg3 b5 28. Kd3 Ke8 29. Wc5† Ke7 30. Kc3 with continuous pressure against the black king. White already has three pawns for the piece, and he is much better placed. Having said that, the advantage is by no means decisive.

23. Kb3 a5 24. Ke3!!

Here Black can try various moves:

24... c5

This is probably the weakest of the three, as it allows White to win in style.

24... a4 25. Ke6 We7 26. Rg6 secures White a clear advantage. Black is best off in a dodgy endgame after 26... Wxf6 27. Rxf6 Ke7 28. Kc8†, where at least he has the exchange. If he instead tries 26... Rg6, he will lose to 27. Wh7† Kg8 28. Wh6† Kg7 29. Kg3, winning lots of material.

24. Ke8 looks logical, but Black does not survive. White plays 25. Kg3 Wh7 26. f4!, with a very strong attack, e.g. 26... Ke1† 27. Kh2 Ke4 28. f5 and White will win back the piece with lots of threats.
23.f4!  
The pin on the g-file turns out to be deadly. There is no way for Black to rescue the knight.

23...\textbf{Wxf4}  
23...\textbf{Wd8} 24.\textbf{Bxg6} is a worse variation of the game, as White is allowed to keep the f4-pawn.

23...\textbf{Wd7} was the critical line, although White still wins after 24.f5 \textbf{Wd2} 25.\textbf{Bf1}! \textbf{Bc3}† (25...\textbf{Bxg5}?! can be tried, but there is not enough compensation to justify the queen sac.) 26.\textbf{Bf2}! (26.\textbf{Bh1}?? \textbf{Bxg5}! would now be entirely justifiable.) 26...\textbf{Wc1}† 27.\textbf{Bf1} White will take on g6 with the pawn, with a winning position.

24.\textbf{Bxg6}! \textbf{Wxf6} 25.\textbf{Bxf6} \textbf{Bxg2}† 26.\textbf{Bf1} \textbf{Ag7} 27.\textbf{Be5}  
White's advantage is considerable. The endgame is somewhat outside the scope of our topic, so I will give the rest of the moves without comments. Suffice to say that on this occasion the technical phase brought no real obstacles to Sutovsky.

27...\textbf{Bd8} 28.\textbf{Bf2} \textbf{Bc8} 29.\textbf{Bxe5} \textbf{Bg4} 30.\textbf{Bd5} \textbf{Be8} 31.\textbf{Bd3} \textbf{Be4} 32.\textbf{Bd5} \textbf{Be5} 33.\textbf{Bc4} \textbf{h4} 34.\textbf{Bb3} a5 35.\textbf{Bb8}† \textbf{Bc7} 36.\textbf{Bb7}† \textbf{Bd6} 37.\textbf{Bxf7} \textbf{Bc2}† 38.\textbf{Bf2} \textbf{Bxf7}† 39.\textbf{Bxf7} \textbf{Bd3} 40.\textbf{Bf6}† \textbf{Bc5} 41.\textbf{Bc6} \textbf{Bg5} 42.\textbf{Bh6} \textbf{Be5} 43.\textbf{Bf6} \textbf{Bg5} 44.\textbf{Bh6} \textbf{Be5} 45.\textbf{Bc3} \textbf{Bxc4} 46.\textbf{Bxh4} \textbf{Bxa2} 47.\textbf{Ba4} \textbf{Bc4} 48.\textbf{Bxa5}† \textbf{Bb5} 49.\textbf{Bf4} \textbf{Bb4} 50.\textbf{Bc8} \textbf{Be8} 51.\textbf{Bg3} \textbf{Bg6} 52.\textbf{Bg8} \textbf{Bf7} 53.\textbf{Bf7} \textbf{Be8} 54.\textbf{Bf4}† \textbf{Bc3} 55.\textbf{Bc4} \textbf{Bxe4} 56.\textbf{Bxe4} \textbf{Bh5} 57.\textbf{Bf4} \textbf{Bxb2} 58.\textbf{Bg5} \textbf{Bc2} 59.\textbf{Bf5} \textbf{Bc3} 60.\textbf{Bg4} \textbf{Bc4} 61.\textbf{Bd4} 62.\textbf{Bh6} \textbf{Bg8} 63.\textbf{Bc6} \textbf{Bh7} 64.\textbf{Bf5} \textbf{Bg8} 65.\textbf{Bf6} 1-0

Another player who has made a name for himself as a dangerous attacking player is the young English grandmaster Gawain Jones. His carefree manner, both at and off the board, often gives the impression that he does not care much about the way the game is going. I don’t buy it. Despite being a romantic and a playful character, he is just as eager to win as everyone else, and is willing to take whatever risk is necessary to prove it.

In the next game he plays one of the most respectable gambits available for Black, gets a good position out of the opening and then seeks to make something out of it with an unclear sacrifice on the kingside.
1.d4 ½f6 2.c4 c5 3.½f3 cxd4 4.½xd4 ½e5
5.½b5 d5!
This gambit has been enjoying a healthy reputation for quite some time now, and also gives Black fairly easy equality in this game.

6.cxd5 ½c5 7.½d5c3
7.d6 0–0! is well-known. The attack after 8.½c7 ½e4 is very strong.

7...0–0 8.e3 e4

Black does not really care that he has lost a pawn. He can easily find good squares for all his pieces, while the white forces are oddly placed. In this game Bischoff allows his opponent to take the pawn back, which makes you wonder what he was hoping for with White in the first place.

9.½e2 ½e7 10.a3 ½d8 11.½d2
White gives back the pawn. Another possible continuation is 11.b4 ½d6 12.½b2 a5! 13.bxa5 ½e5 14.½a4 ½a6! and Black had a strong initiative in Timman – Topalov, Wijk aan Zee 1996.

11...½xd5 12.½xd5
12.½xe4 would be very risky: 12...½b6 (12...½xe3? has also been played.) 13.½c3 ½xe3 14.½xe3 ½xe3 15.½f1 ½c6 16.½a4? (16.½b3 with the idea of 16...½e5 17.½d1 was absolutely forced, but it still looks scary to me.) 16...½e5 17.½d1 ½e6 18.½e1? (18.½c2 ½ac8 with a strong attack.) 18...½d4 19.½f3 ½f4 20.½c2 ½xf3 21.½e4 ½f6 22.½xe6 fxe6 23.gxf3 ½xf3† 24.½e1 ½f2† 0–1 Postny – Smirin, Israel 1999.

12...½xd5
The question is not whether or not Black has equalised, but if he is already better.

13.½c2 ½f5 14.b4 ½b6 15.½b2 ½c6 16.0–0 ½c7 17.½fd1 ½c8 18.½b3 ½e6
18...½cd8 19.½c2 ½xh2† looks tempting, but after 20.½xh2 ½d6† 21.½g1 ½xd2 22.½c3! White will get significant counterplay and the chances are probably about even.

19.½a4

19...b5?
Black initiates a direct attack, true to his style.

19...½xh2† 20.½xh2 ½d6† 21.½g1 ½xd2 is not good, based on 22.b5 ½e7 23.½xe4 and White has the two bishops for nothing.
20.\textit{\texttt{Ax}}b5  
20.\textit{\texttt{Bf}}a6?? \textit{\texttt{Bb}}8! would be embarrassing.

20...\textit{\texttt{Ax}}h2†  
This was of course the idea.

21.\textit{\texttt{Bx}}h2 \textit{\texttt{Wh}}4† 22.\textit{\texttt{Bg}}1 \textit{\texttt{Bh}}5 23.f4  
Safer was 23.f3!, with the point that the sensitive e5-pawn would be less exposed. It is doubtful that Black has anything better than 23...\textit{\texttt{Bh}}1† 24.\textit{\texttt{Bf}}2 \textit{\texttt{Bh}}4† with a draw. White should not get too ambitious, as demonstrated by the line 25.\textit{\texttt{Be}}2?! \textit{\texttt{Bg}}5 26.\textit{\texttt{Ae}}1! (26.\textit{\texttt{Xe}}4 \textit{\texttt{Xg}}2† 27.\textit{\texttt{Bf}}2 \textit{\texttt{Bh}}3! is quite an instructive winning line, based on 28.\textit{\texttt{Xc}}6 \textit{\texttt{Xh}}2! and it is all over.) 26...\textit{\texttt{Bd}}7! Objectively White might be okay here, but practically it is a true nightmare for a human player.

23...\textit{\texttt{Wh}}2† 24.\textit{\texttt{Bf}}2 \textit{\texttt{Bh}}3!  
Black is not looking for a draw with 24...\textit{\texttt{Bh}}4†, and his ambition is rewarded immediately!

and now for example 29...\textit{\texttt{Bh}}3† 30.\textit{\texttt{Be}}1 \textit{\texttt{Bh}}5 31.\textit{\texttt{Bb}}3 \textit{\texttt{Cc}}2† 32.\textit{\texttt{Ad}}4! (32.\textit{\texttt{Xc}}2 \textit{\texttt{Xd}}5#) 32...\textit{\texttt{Xd}}5† 33.\textit{\texttt{Xd}}5 and Black has to take excessive risk to gain more than a perpetual check from his attack.

After the cool king move Black can force a repetition with 26...\textit{\texttt{Bh}}1† 27.\textit{\texttt{Bf}}2 \textit{\texttt{Bh}}2, and should probably do so, as it would be too risky to venture:

26...\textit{\texttt{Bf}}3?! 27.\textit{\texttt{Gxh}}3 \textit{\texttt{Xh}}3† 28.\textit{\texttt{Be}}1 \textit{\texttt{Xe}}4 29.\textit{\texttt{Bb}}3  
White seems to have the advantage (probably thinking, “I knew that rook would come in handy one day!”).

29...\textit{\texttt{Bg}}3† 30.\textit{\texttt{Ac}}2 \textit{\texttt{Bf}}2† 31.\textit{\texttt{Bc}}2 \textit{\texttt{Bd}}8† 32.\textit{\texttt{Cc}}1 \textit{\texttt{Xe}}2 33.\textit{\texttt{Xd}}8† \textit{\texttt{Xd}}8 34.\textit{\texttt{Ad}}4 a5 35.b5  
White is better.

25.\textit{\texttt{Bf}}3† 26.\textit{\texttt{Be}}1 \textit{\texttt{Xg}}2 27.\textit{\texttt{Ad}}2

27...\textit{\texttt{Bg}}1??  
This seems to be the natural square to go to, but actually there was a hidden advantage in playing 27...\textit{\texttt{Bh}}1!? as after 28.\textit{\texttt{Bf}}a6 Black wins instantly with 28...\textit{\texttt{Bh}}4† 29.\textit{\texttt{Ad}}1 \textit{\texttt{Bb}}3†.

From the sideline I was wondering if Black should not play differently with 27...\textit{\texttt{Ax}}f1†! 28.\textit{\texttt{Ad}}1 \textit{\texttt{Bg}}3† 29.\textit{\texttt{Be}}2 \textit{\texttt{Xe}}3† 30.\textit{\texttt{Be}}2 \textit{\texttt{Bg}}3 when Black wins a rook, and soon thereafter probably the game as well.
28...\texttt{Aa6!}

Losing in one go, which was written in wrinkles in Bischoff's head. 28.\texttt{Aa6!} would give some chances, though not many, to save the game.

28...\texttt{Aa3} 29.\texttt{Aa6} \texttt{Axe3\#} 30.\texttt{Ae2} \texttt{Axf1\#}
31.\texttt{Ad2} \texttt{Axd8\#}
0–1

Enduring initiative

What every attacking player dreams of is a game where his attack just goes on and on, from the beginning of the game, till the moment where he is able to tip his opponent's cold mutilated body into the ground. Often it does not work out that way, but sometimes it does.

The last four games in this chapter are all examples of an enduring initiative. In the first game Black does not have to sacrifice anything; all he has to do is to employ the dangerous and romantic King's Indian Defence, and the risk of running out of steam that this entails.

Aaron Summerscale - Gawain Jones

British Championship, Torquay 2009

1.\texttt{Af3} \texttt{Af6} 2.\texttt{c4} \texttt{g6} 3.\texttt{Af3} \texttt{Af7} 4.\texttt{d4} 0–0 5.\texttt{e4} \texttt{d6} 6.\texttt{Af2} \texttt{e5} 7.0–0 \texttt{Ad6} 8.\texttt{d5} \texttt{Af7} 9.\texttt{Ae1} \texttt{Ad7} 10.\texttt{Af3} \texttt{f5} 11.\texttt{Ab2} \texttt{g5} 12.\texttt{Af2} g5 13.\texttt{Aa3!}

Although the theory does not promise a clear path to an advantage for White, I still feel that this line is a strong practical test of the King's Indian. Here the most popular options include 13...\texttt{a5} and 13...\texttt{Af6}. The move played by Jones in the game is somewhat dubious, however, as so often with the lines chosen by him, it has a surprise effect, and once again it helps him to take the position off the beaten track.

13...\texttt{h6} 14.\texttt{a5} \texttt{hXg6} 15.\texttt{Aa1!}

Freeing the g1-square for the bishop, but this is a bit early to do this kind of preventive measure. It was better to play 15.\texttt{Ad3!}, with the idea of \texttt{Af1}, \texttt{Af2} and \texttt{h3}, fighting for the g4-square.

15...\texttt{Af5} 16.\texttt{c5} \texttt{Af5}

17.\texttt{Aa3!}

This way of bringing the rook into the game is a great combination of defending the kingside via the third rank, and getting the rook to c3, in front of the queen, which will be on c2 in many lines.

Other superficially promising moves fare worse once checked in analysis:

17.\texttt{Ae5}? \texttt{Wh5} 18.\texttt{Af1} fails to 18...\texttt{Wh4!} followed by ..\texttt{Ah5}, and it is hard for White to find a proper defence.
17.\( \text{xd}3 \) also becomes perilous for White quickly after 17...\( \text{Wh}5 \) 18.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{g}6 \)! Black is about to play ...\( g4 \), which will be very dangerous, and 19.\( h3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) looks very risky for White. For example: 20.\( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{g}3 \)† 21.\( \text{xg}3 \) \( \text{fxg}3 \), with ideas such as 22.\( \text{we}1 \) \( \text{hxh}3 \) 23.\( \text{wxg}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \)!, when White will find himself under a lot of pressure.

17...\( \text{Wh}5 \) 18.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{Wh}4 \)
Threatening ...\( \text{h}5 \), thus forcing White to clear \( e2 \) for the knight.

19.\( \text{b}5 \)
I have to admit that I do not fully understand this decision. I am guessing that Summerscale wanted to prevent Black from playing ...\( \text{d}7 \), but the more natural looking 19.\( \text{c}4 \) does this job just as well. If 19...\( \text{d}7 \)?, then White can play 20.\( \text{c}6 \) with a strong initiative on the queenside. So, maybe the reason is that he wanted to keep the c-file open?

19...\( \text{h}5 \) 20.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{g}3 \)† 21.\( \text{xg}3 \) \( \text{fxg}3 \)
22.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \)
22...\( \text{gxh}2 \) 23.\( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{h}5 \) was also reasonable. I know that most often it is a good idea to hide your king behind an enemy's pawn, but at the same time, Black also has a passed pawn on the second rank...

23.\( \text{c}6 \)??
This is a very odd decision. White should aim to open the queenside for his pieces. For this reason, the natural decision is 23.\( \text{cxd}6 \) \( \text{cxd}6 \) 24.\( \text{e}3 \)!, when the chances probably are with White, if anyone.

23...\( \text{d}4 \) 24.\( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xf}4 \) 25.\( \text{e}1 \)
This move is essential. Black cannot sacrifice the rook on \( h2 \) as long as there is pressure against \( g3 \).

25...\( \text{bxc}6 \) 26.\( \text{c}4 \)
A grandmasterly decision. If White allowed the a8-rook to get into the game via the b-file, he would have been in great problems. 26.\( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{b}8 \) threatens ...\( \text{a}6 \), with the neat point 27.\( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{xb}4 \)! based on 28.\( \text{xb}4 \) \( \text{hxh}2 \)† with immediate mate.

26...\( \text{c}5 \) 27.\( \text{b}3 \)
Taking control over the b-file. However, White does not have true counterplay on the queenside, with only the rook.

27...\( \text{d}7 \)!!
Jones is a very optimistic player and here decided to allow the white rook to penetrate the queenside. However, as is so often the case when attacking, the question is how to get more pieces to the scene of action: in this case,
the h-file. Thus Black makes way for the rook to start the journey.

28.\textit{We}3

Desperation. This loses by force, but there was no defence.

28.\textit{b}7 is met strongly with 28...\textit{f}8!, when the white rook cannot create real damage. Amusingly, Fritz 11 still thinks that White is better here, but feed it a few more moves, and it starts to understand that all is lost, e.g. 29.\textit{Ex}a7 \textit{f}6!

29.\textit{x}h2 \textit{W}h4 30.\textit{W}g1

This defends against the immediate mate, but there is no way to defend against the inclusion of the rook, however long it takes.

30...\textit{f}8 31.\textit{b}7

31.\textit{f}4 does not improve things. After 31...\textit{ex}f4! Black is on his way with ...\textit{d}4, punishing White badly.

31...\textit{f}4!

The rook belongs in front of the queen.

32.\textit{A}xc7

32.\textit{b}8\textbf{?} \textit{f}8 would do nothing to change the result.

32...\textit{W}h6!

In the following game Black plays a debateable, albeit at the same time absolutely standard, third move. White reacts in the most aggressive way and quickly builds up an initiative, based on a big lead in development. At move 13 he decides to sacrifice a knight, which later leads to further shedding of material. The air soon becomes thick with sawdust from the many pieces brutally cut down, and the visibility for the players is greatly reduced.
Igor Alexandre Nataf – Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Besancon 2006

1.e4 c5 2.\(\text{\#f3}\) d6 3.d4 \(\text{\#f6}\)

This move order is supposed to discourage various sidelines that I guess you normally would like to play against, so I have never understood it that much.

4.dxc5 \(\text{\#a5}^t\)

One very interesting game went 4...\(\text{\#xe4}\) 5.cxd6 \(\text{\#c6}\), which is considered to be the main line, but 6.dxe7 \(\text{\#xd1}^t\) 7.\(\text{\#xd1} \text{\#xe7}\) (7...\(\text{\#xf2}^t\)!! is not entirely clear, as can be shown in the four games I have in my database) 8.\(\text{\#e3} \text{\#f5}\) 9.\(\text{\#d3} 0-0-0 10.\text{\#e2} \text{\#xe8}\) 11.\(\text{\#b2} \text{\#d6}\) 12.\(\text{\#xf5}^t \text{\#xf5}\) 13.\(\text{\#d1}\) did not give Black enough compensation for the pawn in Zhang Pengxiang – Zvjaginsev, Ergun 2006.

5.\(\text{\#c3}\) \(\text{\#xe4}\)

5...\(\text{\#xc5}\) looks like a bad version of the open Sicilian for Black, but this might actually not be the worst move here. White should perhaps continue cautiously with 6.\(\text{\#e2}\), or aggressively with 6.\(\text{\#b5}^t \text{\#d7}\) 7.\(\text{\#e3} \text{\#h5}\) 8.\(\text{\#e2}\), with the promise of an initiative.

6.cxd6! \(\text{\#xc3}\) 7.bxc3

7...\(\text{\#xc3}^t\)

Vachier-Lagrave decides to take a pawn for the inconvenience of bringing the queen out early. This is probably a good idea, as she has been dragged out of bed anyway. However, this has only been played in two games as far as I can see.

The main line here seems to be 7...\(\text{\#xd6}\) 8.\(\text{\#d3} \text{\#c7}\) 9.0-0 \(\text{\#c6}\) 10.\(\text{\#e1} 0-0 11.\text{\#b1}\), where it is obvious to me that White has a strong attacking position. A very recent game between two Chinese superstars continued 11...\(\text{\#c7}\) 12.\(\text{\#e4} \text{\#g4}\) 13.\(\text{\#d3} \text{\#h8}\) 14.\(\text{\#d4}\), by which time the black position had already become untenable in Ni Hua – Hou Yifan, Xinghua Jiangsu 2009.

8.\(\text{\#d2} \text{\#c5}\)

The other game in this line continued with 8...\(\text{\#f6}\), but here rather than playing 9.\(\text{\#d3}\) or similar, White went astray with 9.dxe7 \(\text{\#xc7}\) 10.\(\text{\#e2}\), when any chances of achieving an advantage through his slight lead in development has been wasted, Figlio – Sidenko, e-mail 1999.

9.\(\text{\#b1}\)

To me it looks more natural to play 9.\(\text{\#d3}\) first, but there is nothing concretely wrong with this move order.

9...\(\text{\#xd6}\) 10.\(\text{\#d3} e6\)

Black has little choice in the matter concerning how to develop the pieces. 10...g6 unfortunately is not an option because of 11.\(\text{\#c3}\).

11.0-0 \(\text{\#e7}\) 12.\(\text{\#g5}\)

This powerful move puts Black in an awkward situation. It is not possible to castle without making some sort of concession.

12...h6?!
It was of course possible to play 12...\textit{\&}xg5 13.\textit{\&}xg5 \textit{\&}c7, but the position after for example 14.\textit{\&}g4 is quite uncomfortable. It is easy to lose your head (along with the game) and be mated with 14...0-0? 15.\textit{\&}xh7\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{}}}} h7 16.\textit{\&}f6 gxf6 17.\textit{\&}b3.

Best might be 12...\textit{\&}k6, but after 13.\textit{\&}lh5 g6 14.\textit{\&}h6 \textit{\&}f8 15.\textit{\&}h3 it is not easy to see how Black is supposed to bring his king to safety.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}[scale=0.6]
  \draw (-0.5,0) rectangle (8.5,8);
  \draw[very thick] (0,0) -- (0,8);
  \draw[very thick] (1,0) -- (1,8);
  \draw[very thick] (2,0) -- (2,8);
  \draw[very thick] (3,0) -- (3,8);
  \draw[very thick] (4,0) -- (4,8);
  \draw[very thick] (5,0) -- (5,8);
  \draw[very thick] (6,0) -- (6,8);
  \draw[very thick] (7,0) -- (7,8);

  \draw[very thick] (0,0) -- (8,0);
  \draw[very thick] (0,1) -- (8,1);
  \draw[very thick] (0,2) -- (8,2);
  \draw[very thick] (0,3) -- (8,3);
  \draw[very thick] (0,4) -- (8,4);
  \draw[very thick] (0,5) -- (8,5);
  \draw[very thick] (0,6) -- (8,6);
  \draw[very thick] (0,7) -- (8,7);

  \node at (0.5,0.5) {a}; \node at (1.5,0.5) {b}; \node at (2.5,0.5) {c}; \node at (3.5,0.5) {d}; \node at (4.5,0.5) {e}; \node at (5.5,0.5) {f}; \node at (6.5,0.5) {g}; \node at (7.5,0.5) {h};

  \node at (0.5,7.5) {1}; \node at (1.5,7.5) {2}; \node at (2.5,7.5) {3}; \node at (3.5,7.5) {4}; \node at (4.5,7.5) {5}; \node at (5.5,7.5) {6}; \node at (6.5,7.5) {7}; \node at (7.5,7.5) {8};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

13.\textit{\&}xf7!?

Nataf simply could not resist the temptation to sacrifice the piece, especially as he would have noticed that it included a queen sacrifice further on. However, the best move was 13.\textit{\&}c4!, intending to follow up with \textit{\&}g4 and \&c3, when Black is hanging on for dear life.

13...\textit{\&}xf7

The following moves play White's idea out in full.

14.\textit{\&}h5\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{}}}} h8 15.\textit{\&}f3\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{}}}} g8 16.\textit{\&}g6 \textit{\&}f6

17.\textit{\&}xb7 \textit{\&}c6

17...\textit{\&}a6? to avoid the queen sacrifice would be greatly inferior. White can play elegantly with 18.\textit{\&}f7! \textit{\&}b8 19.\textit{\&}d1, with the idea that 19...\textit{\&}d5 is met with 20.\textit{\&}xf6! gxf6 21.\textit{\&}e4 \textit{\&}d7 22.\textit{\&}c3 and it is impossible for Black to hold on for long.

18.\textit{\&}f7\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{}}}}

White has no other options (not that he wanted any, I am sure).

For example, he would be greatly worse after 18.\textit{\&}f4? \textit{\&}d5 19.\textit{\&}e4 \textit{\&}d4! 20.\textit{\&}xd5 \textit{\&}xf3\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{}}}} 21.\textit{\&}xf3 \textit{\&}xb7 22.\textit{\&}xb7 \textit{\&}d8, when there is not really any compensation for the exchange in the ending.

18...\textit{\&}f8

White's attack might superficially seem as if it has come to a standstill, but there is one way to keep the pressure on.

19.\textit{\&}xc6!!

Even though this is forced and anticipated from far away, I cannot deny it the full praise of two exclamation marks.

19...\textit{\&}xc6 20.\textit{\&}b4\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{}}}} e7 21.\textit{\&}xe7 a5!

Black cannot avoid the variations occurring in the game, but this way he gets an extra move with the a-pawn before play commences. This is probably the only reason why he is not automatically lost in the endgame that arises in these variations.

22.\textit{\&}a3 \textit{\&}a4 23.\textit{\&}g6 \textit{\&}g8 24.\textit{\&}d1!

The principle of playing with all the pieces holds true, even (or perhaps especially) when a queen down!
Instead after 24.\textit{b}2 \textit{a}6 25.\textit{x}g7\textdagger \textit{f}8 White does not seem to have anything more than a perpetual check.

24...\textit{a}6

This looks best. Black could play 24...\textit{b}7?!, when after 25.\textit{d}d7 \textit{h}h7 26.\textit{x}h7\textdagger \textit{h}8 27.\textit{b}2 \textit{w}xa2 28.\textit{x}g7\textdagger \textit{h}xh7 29.\textit{x}b7 the position is rather unclear, but probably quite dangerous for Black. The king could easily get into real trouble. The main reason why I would not play like this with Black is that there is no sense of urgency in the white position; he dominates his opponent fully, and can take his time to build up real threats against the king.

25.\textit{d}d7 \textit{h}h7!

Black would not fare well in the ending after 25...\textit{w}xa3 26.\textit{x}g7\textdagger \textit{f}8 27.\textit{d}f7\textdagger \textit{e}8 28.\textit{f}3\textdagger, when the extra pawns decide.

26.\textit{x}h7\textdagger \textit{h}8

26...\textit{x}h7? would lead straight to mate after a few checks.

27.\textit{b}2 \textit{w}xa2 28.\textit{x}g7\textdagger \textit{h}xh7

Compared with the position after 24...\textit{b}7? above, the difference is that instead of being to move, Black has held on to his bishop. This seems to prompt White to feel a sense of urgency, which turns out to be unjustified.

29.\textit{c}3\textdagger?

In \textit{Chess Today} Mikhail Golubev points out that White should have played for an advantage with the calm:

29.h3!

White intends to prepare g2-g4, and at the same time gives the king an air hole. However, Golubev's analysis, starting with 29...\textit{g}6?! 30.\textit{f}7! does suggest that the position is gloomier for Black than it is in reality.

The best defence is:

29...\textit{c}4 30.\textit{c}7!

This turns out to be the only way to play for an advantage.

30.\textit{d}4\textdagger might look tempting, but the position after: 30...\textit{g}6 31.g4 \textit{g}5! 32.\textit{h}2

32...\textit{f}8!! 33.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}3\textdagger! 34.\textit{x}f3 \textit{h}4 is not better for White by any means. Probably the chances are about even.

30...\textit{g}6!

Giving up the queen, but saving the king.

30...\textit{w}c2? would only lead to more problems.

After 31.\textit{b}2\textdagger \textit{g}6 32.\textit{g}7\textdagger \textit{f}5 33.\textit{g}f7\textdagger! Black has nothing better than 33...\textit{g}5 34.\textit{c}5\textdagger e5 which would reach the same ending with a pawn less than in the main line.

31.\textit{x}c4 \textit{x}c4 32.\textit{c}7! \textit{h}5!

White is obviously better in this ending, but is it possible to win it? I seriously doubt it, although of course it would be worth a try.
So, the conclusion is that 13.\textit{Q}xf7, although very tempting, was technically not the best way forward...

29...\textit{g}g8?

This time it is Black's turn to misplay the position. Having looked for some time at the position after: 29...\textit{g}g6! 30.h3 \textit{f}f8! 31.\textit{g}g7\textit{h}5

I have simply failed to find any compensation for the queen at all. It is understandable that Vachier–Lagrange was nervous about putting his king in harm's way like this, but it would have been better had he taken the game, as it turns out.

30.\textit{g}g7\textit{h}5

Natalia decides that the draw is good enough. 30.h3! was still interesting, but it would no longer have the same potential as on move 29.

30...\textit{f}f8 31.\textit{g}g7\textit{h}5 32.\textit{g}g8

$\frac{1}{2}$-$\frac{1}{2}$

The last two games of this chapter are sort of connected as they share two common elements: Alexei Shirov and exchange sacrifices!

Often a way to ensure an enduring initiative is to create weaknesses in the opponent's kingside in return for an exchange. In the next game this happens directly from the opening, where Black chooses to play a line that obliges him to accept the rook on a1 and live a life of danger. With an open king's position the responsibility placed on Black's shoulders is too heavy and quickly wears him down.

\textbf{Veselin Topalov – Alexei Shirov}

Wijk aan Zee 2007

1.d4 \textit{f}f6 2.c4 \textit{g}6 3.\textit{c}c3 \textit{d}5 4.cxd5 \textit{Q}xd5 5.e4 \textit{Q}xc3 6.bxc3 \textit{g}g7 7.\textit{Q}c4 \textit{c}5 8.\textit{Q}e2 \textit{Q}c6 9.\textit{Q}e3 0–0 10.0–0 \textit{g}g4 11.f3 \textit{a}a5 12.\textit{d}d3 cxd4 13.cxd4 \textit{e}e6 14.d5 \textit{x}xal 15.\textit{w}xa1 \textit{f}6 16.\textit{w}d4

16.\textit{h}h6 \textit{e}e8 17.\textit{h}h1 \textit{e}e8 18.\textit{f}f4 \textit{d}d7 19.e5 was popular a few years ago, but it was quickly discovered that the line led to a draw by force if Black so pleased.

16...\textit{f}f7

16...\textit{d}d7 is the main line.

17.\textit{h}h6 \textit{e}e8 18.\textit{b}b5 \textit{c}5

Otherwise White regains the exchange and Black will have slightly worse pieces.

19.\textit{f}f2 \textit{e}e7 20.\textit{f}f4 e\textit{x}f4

Probably the best move.

20...\textit{e}c8 21.\textit{f}xe5 \textit{e}xe5 22.\textit{Q}g3 \textit{Q}c4 23.\textit{w}xf6 \textit{w}xf6 24.\textit{Q}xf6 was seen in Van Wely – Sutovsky, Dortmund 2005. It might come as a surprise
to some that White has a clear advantage. The two bishops are simply too strong, and White won on move 71.

20...b6 21.axb6 axb6 was played in Ferreira – Luyks, Portugal 1992. White should have continued: 22.fxe5! Bxe5 (22...fxe5 is met with 23.Qc1! to put pressure on e5) 23.Qg3 f5 24.Qf4 Bxe4 25.Qxe4 fxe4 26.Qd1 and White is better (Krasenkow). Hardly a forced variation, but a good indicator of how strong the white compensation is, even without queens.

21.Qxf4 d6 22.h1 Qxd5 23.exd5 Qxb5 24.Qxf6 Qe8

25.Qd4!

This was the first new move of the game. In the previous game Najer – Krasenkow, Saint Vincent 2005, White tried 25.Qf4, but with a series of accurate moves Black repelled the opponent's initiative and took control of the game after 25...Bf7 26.Qc3 Qd8 27.Qc1 b5 28.Qg3 Qc8 29.Qe1 Qe7 30.Qf1 Qd6. Black won on move 47.

25...Qd8

The point behind Topalov's novelty is 25...Bf7 26.Qxf7 Bxf7 27.Qd2! Qc4 28.Qc3 with strong compensation for the exchange.

26.h3 Bf7 27.Bxf7 Bxf7 28.h3!

Preventing Black from taking on d5 and keeping the knight out of the game, all with a gain of tempo.

28...b6 29.Qg3

The knight is on its way to e4 and f6.

29...Qb7?

The decisive mistake. It was necessary to play 29...Be8 when after 30.Qd4 Black should maybe try 30...g5! (30...Qe1?? 31.Qh2 Qb7, which is the computer's favourite, does not work. After 32.Qe4 Qe7 33.Qf6? Qf7 34.Qg4 White has many threats, among them 34...Qg8 35.Qd2! winning at least a pawn.) 31.Qxg5 Qg7 32.Qh4 Qg6 33.Qh5 Qe5 White has compensation, but nothing substantial.

30.Qe4 Qc7

30...Qc5 31.Qf6? Qh8 32.Qe5! followed by Qg4 and Qg5 decides immediately.

31.Qf6? Qf7 32.Qxh7!

There were other tempting options, but none of them involved taking anything.

32...Qg8

32...Qxd5 loses the rook after 33.Qg7+ Qe6 34.Qh8+ Qd6 35.Qf4+ Qe5 36.Qxe7+ Qxe7 37.Qxg6+.
33. \( \text{Qf6} \)\+ \( \text{Qf7} \)

34. \( \text{Qg4} \)

The simplest. After 34. \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 35. \( \text{Qg3} \) \( \text{Qc5} \) White has an attack, but the tempting 36. \( \text{Qh4} \) is met with 36... \( \text{Qh8} \) when White has some pressure after 37. \( \text{Qd4} \), but maybe not more than enough for a draw after 37... \( \text{Qd7} \) e.g. 38. \( \text{Qxd7} \) \( \text{Qxg5} \) 39. \( \text{Qxh8} \) \( \text{Qc1} \) 40. \( \text{Qh2} \) \( \text{Qf4} \) with perpetual.

34... \( \text{Qg8} \)

34... \( \text{Qe8} \) 35. \( \text{Qd2} \) followed by \( \text{Qg5} \) and White will probably emerge with an extra pawn.

35. \( \text{Qd2} \)

The following queen manoeuvres are rather amazing.

35... \( \text{Qe8} \) 36. \( \text{Qf4} \) \( \text{Qd6} \) 37. \( \text{Qf2} \) \( \text{Qc5} \) 38. \( \text{Qg3} \)!

38. \( \text{Qf1} \) was stronger. There is no defence to \( \text{Qf6} \) that does not involve removing the rook from the vital e-file, when \( \text{Qf6} \) becomes tempting.

38... \( \text{Qd4} \)?

38... \( \text{Qe7} \) was best. After 39. \( \text{Qf4} \) the dance takes another round with the chance to play \( \text{Qf1} \) once again.

39. \( \text{Qh2} \! \)

Preventing all checks.

39... \( \text{Qd8} \)

Black was lost all the same. White is threatening \( \text{Qh4} \) followed by \( \text{Qf6} \).

40. \( \text{Qd6} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) 41. \( \text{Qe3} \)

1–0

In our final game we shall see Shirov on the “right” side of a typical exchange sacrifice, which he follows up with some unhurried moves. Slowly the attack builds up and eventually Black succumbs to the pressure on the weakened kingside.

Alexei Shirov – Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

Moscow 2008

1. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{c5} \) 2. \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 3. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) 4. \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) 5. \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{a6} \) 6. \( \text{Qe3} \)

6. \( \text{Qxc6} \) bxc6 7. \( \text{Qd3} \) has been the overwhelmingly popular choice lately.

6... \( \text{Qf6} \)

The critical line still seems to be 6... \( \text{Qc7} \) 7. \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 8.0–0–0, when after 8... \( \text{Qb4} \) 9. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{Qc5} \) 10. \( \text{Qb3} \) b5 White has no easy path to an advantage as recent games have shown.
7.f4 d6 8.\textit{e}5
This has only been played a handful of times, but looks quite reasonable.

8...\textit{c}7 9.0-0-0 leads to variations that are very dangerous for Black and where he has an awful score. 9...\textit{d}7 10.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}8 11.\textit{b}1 b5 12.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}4 13.g4 \textit{c}6 14.g5 \textit{d}7 15.\textit{f}2 g6 16.\textit{h}f1 \textit{g}7 17.f5 is a possible example. White had a strong attack in Kramnik – Topalov, Monaco (blindfold) 2003.

9.\textit{x}c6 \textit{b}xc6 10.fxe5 \textit{dxe5} 11.\textit{c}4
11.\textit{g}3 \textit{a}5 12.\textit{c}4 \textit{b}8 has been played in one previous game. This position is considered by transposition in the note to White's 12th move below.

11...\textit{a}5
11...\textit{b}4?! looks better to me. In the game White could have created real problems on the next move, but maybe Mamedyarov had it all under control?

12.0-0
12.\textit{g}3!?
This looked like an interesting and critical option.

12...\textit{b}8
12...\textit{x}e3?? 13.\textit{f}3 would give Black big problems.

13.\textit{d}5!?
This leads to very sharp play.
13.\textit{b}3 \textit{x}e4 14.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}6 15.0-0 with compensation for the pawn is also interesting. Black cannot easily defend c6 and develop his pieces.

On the other hand, after 13.0-0-0! \textit{xb}2 14.\textit{d}5 cxd5 15.\textit{xe}5\textit{f} White was struggling for compensation and eventually went down in Von Buelow – Agdestein, Germany 2001.

The critical line goes:
13...\textit{xb}2 14.\textit{xe}5\textit{f} \textit{d}8 15.\textit{g}5 cxd5 16.0-0-0! \textit{b}6
16...\textit{a}3? 17.\textit{xd}5\textit{f} \textit{d}7 18.\textit{b}1! and White wins material.
17.\textit{xd}5\textit{f} 18.\textit{xf}6\textit{f} \textit{xf}6 19.\textit{xd}7\textit{f} 20.\textit{xf}5\textit{f} \textit{e}6 21.\textit{xb}2 \textit{d}6 22.\textit{d}1 \textit{xf}5 23.\textit{ex}f5
White has managed to put his opponent under pressure, but it is likely that he can hold with accurate defence.

12...\textit{c}5
12...\textit{e}7 looks more natural to me, but Mamedyarov is looking for more active solutions. We can see already here that he is not thinking a lot about defending his kingside; later this will tell.

13.\textit{f}2!
13.\textit{h}1 was played in a game between two amateurs. Now instead of taking on e3 Black should play 13...0-0, when 14.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}7 is not a danger for him.

13...\textit{xe}3
Black has nothing better than to take on e3. After 13...\textit{e}3 White can fight for the dark squares with strong moves such as 14.a3! \textit{c}7 15.\textit{b}6 \textit{b}8 16.\textit{a}4 0-0 17.b4 and Black's position looks paralysed.

14.\textit{xe}3 0-0 15.h3 \textit{e}8 16.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}6
17. \textit{Da}4!

The knight is far better on c5. 17.\textit{Ead}1 \textit{Ead}8 looks fairly safe for Black. In the game he soon feels a bit of pressure on e6 and a6.

17...\textit{Ead}8 18.\textit{Ac}5 \textit{Wb}6

18...\textit{Ed}4?! was quite interesting. After 19.c3 \textit{Wxc}5 20.\textit{cx}d4 \textit{Ex}d4 21.\textit{Wd}3 \textit{Wb}6 22.\textit{Ex}c6 \textit{Ex}c6 Black has decent compensation for the exchange, although White probably has the better chances all the same.

19.\textit{Ef}3!

Forcing Black to take on b3, but soon Black will have to give up any influence over the a7-g1 diagonal.

19...\textit{Ex}b3 20.\textit{ax}b3 a5

The exchange sacrifice with 20...\textit{Ed}4?! 21.c3 \textit{Wxc}5 was still an option.

After 22.\textit{cx}d4 \textit{cx}d4 23.\textit{Ed}3 \textit{Ex}e4 24.\textit{Aa}4 \textit{Ed}8 25.\textit{Axa}6 f5 White's advantage is not great, but with a move like 26.b4! he will still cause his opponent a lot of problems.

21.\textit{Ed}3 \textit{Ec}7

21...\textit{Ex}e3†?! would be bad. After 22.\textit{Ee}c3 \textit{Ea}8 23.\textit{Ee}e1 White will bring the king in to defend the e-pawn, then place one rook on a4 and the other on a1. It is hard to imagine that Black will not lose a pawn in such a scenario. A bit of counterplay is possible with a quick ...\textit{Ex}f6-h5-f4 to exchange the strong white knight, but I cannot imagine that it is enough.

22.\textit{Ea}f1 \textit{Ed}4?

This is simply careless. It does not make sense to allow White sacrifice the exchange on f6 (or actually force him to do so), when a perfectly solid alternative existed. After 22...\textit{Ee}6! Black is so marginally worse that it should not worry him one bit.

23.\textit{Exf}6! \textit{gx}f6 24.\textit{Ef}2!!

It is quite apparent that Mamedyarov allowed the sacrifice because he had underestimated this strong move. Obviously the knight is a far greater force on f6 than the rook.

24...h5
24...\(\text{b}6\) was not really better. After the programmed moves: 25.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}d6\) 26.\(\text{b}3!\) (26.\(\text{h}f6\) \(\text{h}8\) 27.\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{f}5\) 28.\(\text{e}xf5\) \(\text{x}h6\) 29.\(\text{w}xe5\) \(\text{h}hf6\) 30.\(\text{w}e8\) \(\text{g}7\) 31.\(\text{e}g3\) \(\text{g}6\) 32.\(\text{f}xg6\) \(\text{g}d1\) 33.\(\text{w}h2\) \(\text{hxg6}\) is about equal despite the material difference.) 26...\(\text{h}8\) 27.\(\text{h}h2!\) The attack continues, while Black has no prospects for counterplay.

25.\(\text{w}h6\) \(\text{xe}6!\)
25...\(\text{w}b6\) 26.\(\text{h}h2\) \(\text{d}8\) would be an attempt to defend \(f6\) and have time to play ...\(\text{g}7\) and ...\(\text{h}8\).

But White can win with the brilliant 27.\(\text{g}4!!\) followed by 28.\(\text{f}5\), no matter if Black takes the knight or not.

The best defensive try was:
25...\(\text{d}7!\)

Even here though, after 26.\(\text{w}xh5\) \(\text{g}7\) 27.\(\text{b}3\) White retains an initiative. 27.\(\text{h}2!\)

Also looks quite reasonable, although he should definitely avoid 27.\(\text{g}4??\) \(\text{h}8\) when Black wins.

26.\(\text{w}xh5\) \(\text{f}8\) 27.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{d}7\)
27...\(\text{d}d6\) would pay more attention to the defence of the \(f6\)-pawn, but there are other targets in the black position. After 28.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{e}7\) 29.\(\text{h}6\) \(\text{w}e8:\)

White can improve his position with 30.\(\text{h}2!\) and it is hard to see what Black is going to do. White will play 31.\(\text{w}g4\), consider advancing the \(h\)-pawn and in general stay flexible.

28.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{e}7\) 29.\(\text{h}2!\)
This is perhaps the single most instructive move in the game. The king is placed in safety at a moment where Black has little chance to improve his position. These kind of moves are often missed by up-and-coming players.

29.\(\text{h}6??\) would be premature. After 29...\(\text{d}8!\) the black king is running away.

29...\(\text{b}6\)
29...\(\text{w}b8\) 30.\(\text{w}h4\) \(\text{d}d6\) looks solid, but White can unlock the black defence by bringing in another resource. 31.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{w}b6\) (31...\(\text{c}5\) 32.\(\text{e}e3\) is a clear point. The knight on \(d5\) is worth at least a rook.) 32.\(\text{h}6\) \(\text{d}2\) 33.\(\text{w}h5\) and \(f7\) is falling.

30.\(\text{w}8\)
30...\textit{\texttt{Qx}b3}

This loses quickly, although the black position is beyond salvation in any case.

One exemplary line is: 30...\textit{\texttt{Qd}2} (probably the best defence) 31.\textit{\texttt{Qxf}6} \textit{\texttt{Qxb}3} 32.\textit{\texttt{Qg}7} \textit{\texttt{Qxf}6} 33.\textit{\texttt{Qxf}6+} \textit{\texttt{Qe}8} 34.\textit{\texttt{Qxc}6+} \textit{\texttt{Qd}8} 35.\textit{\texttt{Qa}8+} \textit{\texttt{Qe}7} 36.\textit{\texttt{Qxa}5} \textit{\texttt{Qxb}2} 37.\textit{\texttt{Qxe}5+} \textit{\texttt{Qd}7} 38.\textit{\texttt{Qe}3} White is technically winning, but Black could continue to fight.

31.\textit{\texttt{Qxf}6} \textit{\texttt{Qd}8} 32.\textit{\texttt{Qg}7} \textit{\texttt{Qxb}2} 33.\textit{\texttt{Qg}8+} \textit{\texttt{Qd}6}

Black resigned. After 34.\textit{\texttt{Qd}1+} his days are numbered.

1–0
The time is ripe for the destruction of the king's position. White is fully mobilised. There has never been such a glorious moment as now!
Just as in Volume One, we will finish this book with 50 exercises. However, unlike in Volume One, I feel a good deal more confident about the quality of my analysis, and feel no need to call the solutions "possible". This is not because of the level of work put into the book, but because of the nature of the positions I have selected. The 50 positions are all taken from a highly critical moment of a game, where one attacking move is clearly best. This can be from the inception of the attack, it can be a combination to prove the strength of the attack, or it can be mating a king running across the board.

These positions can in most cases be solved with brute force calculation, and I would recommend this to be your main method. However, I hope that the techniques and themes we have gone through in the previous 400 pages will assist you in thinking about the right moves.

The initial positions are maybe not too difficult, and all readers should have a fair shot at them. However, as we progress to the later examples, the exercises increase in difficulty, culminating with some highly advanced and beautiful motifs.

I would recommend that you try to analyse a good deal deeper than just getting the first move. In most of the positions it will be fairly easy to see what the main point of the exercise is, not only from the moves, but also from the annotations. It is your job to track these down. It is less important to see every sideline the annotator has found it amusing to mention. In a practical game these are often irrelevant; however, the main point never is.

The side to move is signalled with a small arrow, and the positions you can play against a computer with benefit have been identified with a circled P.
Solutions

1  
Orlov – Karpman  

Minsk 1990

Black wins with a direct attack.

29...\texttt{Exg2}!! 30.\texttt{Cxg2}

30.\texttt{Exg2} is technically better, but still not good enough. 30...\texttt{Eh6}! 31.\texttt{Eg1 \texttt{Eh1}† 32.\texttt{Eg1 Exg5} 33.\texttt{Exh1 \texttt{Eh4}† 34.\texttt{Cc1 d3 35.\texttt{Exd3 Exc4} leads to a winning endgame for Black, although a bit of technique will still be needed.

30...\texttt{Eg6}†?

This is a curious mistake. 30...\texttt{Ee4}†! would have led straight to mate, but was mysteriously overlooked by the players, and even in the notes of the loser in Informant 49!

31.\texttt{Bf1 \texttt{Bh3}† 32.\texttt{Be1 Ee4}† 33.\texttt{Bd2 Ee3}† 34.\texttt{Cc2 \texttt{Exd1} 35.\texttt{Exd1 Exf2} 36.\texttt{Exd4 Exf1}†

Black has some chances in the endgame, and eventually won on move 55 after further mistakes.

0–1

2  
Movsesian – Predojevic

Sarajevo 2007

27.\texttt{Bxg7}

Always remember to attack with all the pieces.

27...\texttt{Bg5}

27...\texttt{fxe5} 28.\texttt{Dxg7}†! and 27...\texttt{Bxe5} 28.\texttt{Bxe5} both lead to mate, while 27...\texttt{Dd7} is best met with 28.\texttt{Ee6}! \texttt{Bxe6} 29.\texttt{Dxg7} when Black will lose material.

28.\texttt{Bg3}! \texttt{Exf4} 29.\texttt{Bxg7}† \texttt{Dh8} 30.\texttt{Exf4 \texttt{Cc4} leads to a winning endgame for Black, although a bit of technique will still be needed.

31.\texttt{Ee7 fxe5} 32.\texttt{Bxe4}

White won in 46 moves.

1–0

3  
Metz – Prusikin

Schwabish Gmuend 2006

White wins with a classic attack. Notice how the unprotected status of the c6-knight and the a8-rook helps the attack.

16.\texttt{e5}!! \texttt{d5}!

Black has to take the principled path. Instead both 16...\texttt{Dxe5} 17.\texttt{Bxe5}! and 16...\texttt{g6} 17.\texttt{exd6 \texttt{Exd6} 18.\texttt{Exd6 \texttt{Exd6} 19.\texttt{Exg6} are hopeless. The same is the case for the lines where something is dropped in the e4-a8 diagonal.

17.\texttt{Bxh7}†! \texttt{Bxh7} 18.\texttt{Dg5}† \texttt{Exg5}

This is almost equivalent to resigning. 18...\texttt{Dg6}! would at least have forced White to justify his sacrifice. He has at least two strong continuations here:
a) 19...f5 20.exf6+ Qxf6 21.Qh7+ Qf7 22.Qxe7 Qh8 23.Qf4 White is a pawn up for no real compensation.

b) 19.h4! is even stronger. 19...fxe5 20.h5+ Qh6 21.Qxf7+ Qh7 22.Qxe5 Here White has either won a pawn and obtained a position with knight against dubious bishop, or after 22...Qxe5 23.Qxe5 Qxe5 24.Qxe5 Qxf2 he has the following nice winner: 25.h6! gxh6 26.Qh6+ Qxh6 27.Qg1+ Qg6 28.Qf5+ Qf6 29.Qh4+ After the rook is picked up, it will be time to start a mating attack against the undressed king.

19.Qxg5 Qdxe5 20.Qd4 Qxd4 21.Qxd4 f6 22.Qd2 a5 23.f4 Qf7 24.Qh5+ Qg8 25.Qe1 Qd8 26.Qd3 e5 27.f5 e4 28.Qh3 Qe5 29.Qg6 Qa7 30.Qh7 Qd6 31.g4 Qf8 32.Qe3 Qf7 33.Qh3 Qf8 34.Qh8 Qe7 35.Qg8 d4 36.Qxg7 e3 37.Qe1 Qd7 38.Qh8 Qe8 39.Qxf7+ Qxf7 40.Qg7 Qc7 41.g5 1-0

16...gxh6
16...Qg8 also loses after 17.Qxe7 Qh5 18.Qxg7+ Qxg7 19.Qf7+ Qg8 20.Qh6 Qc5 (after 20...Qe8 21.Qg7+ White will be able to remove the pawns from the queenside and then take the queen, continuing with a mating attack) 21.Qg7+ Qh8 22.Qd7+ Qg8 23.Qf7 mate.

17.Qh6+ Qg8 18.Qxe7

White is winning. The black king is caught in a mating net.

18...Qe6

After 18...Qf5 19.Qg7 White will eventually take the a-pawn with check, then the rook on a8, the queen and finally the bishop, with mate.

19.Qg7+ Qf8 20.Qd7+ Qg8 21.Qd8+ 1-0

5

Morozevich - Vachier-Lagrave

Biel 2009

This is from a fairly recent game that decided the outcome of the classical Biel Festival.

26.Qxa8?
White is still much better after this move, but surely it is a bad mistake to overlook 26...\texttt{xf8}!!\texttt{f}, which is absolutely decisive, because it removes the protection of the e6-square. After 26...\texttt{xf8} White wins with 27.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{g8} 28.\texttt{exe5} and later \texttt{e6f}, while after 26...\texttt{xf8} 27.\texttt{exe5} \texttt{c8} he can win in a number of ways. A very clear one is 28.\texttt{xc8}, when there is no defence at all. Black must play 28...\texttt{xc8}, when there follows 29.\texttt{xc5}. The immediate threat is \texttt{e7f}, and after 29...\texttt{xc6} 30.\texttt{xc6}, it is going to be a back rank mate, while after 29...\texttt{c8} 30.\texttt{e7f} \texttt{f8} 31.\texttt{f3f} \texttt{g8} 32.\texttt{c7} (or something similar), Black is mated on the seventh rank.

26...\texttt{xc8} 27.\texttt{h5}?

White should have played 27.\texttt{e1}! at this point, when his advantage would still have given him great winning chances. 27...\texttt{xc6} 28.\texttt{xc6} leaves Black forced to play 28...\texttt{h5}, although this is hardly enough to save the game. Instead after 28...\texttt{d4} White can play 29.\texttt{d1!} \texttt{xb2} 30.\texttt{f5f}, when the black king is absolutely trapped on g8. White intends \texttt{f5-d3-c4f}, winning, and there seems to be no way to prevent this.

27...\texttt{h7}

It is always amazing when a move like this is the best option.

28.\texttt{e1}?

White misses the best option once again. 28.\texttt{d2!} \texttt{xc6} 29.\texttt{gxh7f} \texttt{e7} 30.\texttt{xc6} leads to a winning endgame. Good technique would still be required, but Morozevich has plenty of that.

28...\texttt{xc6}

White is still better, but more mistakes followed and eventually he lost on move 76. 0–1

20.\texttt{f5f}!

The rules of attacking chess are simple, although they can become complex to execute once they start to overlap. Here they do not. You should bring in your pieces before you start your attack. You want to keep the opponent guessing. 20.\texttt{xf5f} \texttt{e7} 21.\texttt{g1} \texttt{h8}! would favour Black.

20...\texttt{exe4} 21.\texttt{exe4} \texttt{f7} 22.\texttt{xc6f}!

Now there is no defence.

22...\texttt{xc6} 23.\texttt{e3f} \texttt{f6} 24.\texttt{xc6f} \texttt{e6} 25.\texttt{h4f} \texttt{e5} 26.\texttt{xe7f} \texttt{f5} 27.\texttt{d7f} \texttt{g6} 28.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 29.\texttt{g4f} \texttt{h7} 30.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{e6} 31.\texttt{d1} \texttt{a6} 32.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e8} 33.\texttt{g4} \texttt{xe6} 34.\texttt{d3f} \texttt{h8} 35.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{c5} 36.\texttt{d3} \texttt{c4} 37.\texttt{h3f} \texttt{g8} 38.\texttt{e3} \texttt{c6} 39.\texttt{g4} \texttt{e6} 40.\texttt{d7} \texttt{e4} 41.\texttt{f5} \texttt{f7} 42.\texttt{d8f} 1–0

7

Liss - Tsesarsky

Kfar Saba 1997

Once again we are dealing with the Greek gift sacrifice. I do not expect the reader to find these positions difficult, but I do expect him to solve them competently. If not, maybe it is a good idea to work a bit more on elementary tactics.

20.e5! dxe5

20...\texttt{e7} loses rather trivially after 21.cxd6 \texttt{xd6} 22.\texttt{h7f} \texttt{hxh7} 23.\texttt{g5f} \texttt{g8} (23...\texttt{g6} 24.\texttt{d3f}) 24.\texttt{h5} \texttt{e8} 25.\texttt{xd6} and so on.

21.\texttt{exe5} \texttt{xe5}
This allows White to carry out his idea. 21...\textit{xf}3 loses trivially to 22.e\textit{x}f3. After 22...\textit{xe}5 23...\textit{f}4 24...h1 Black will have to shed material to either \textit{x}h7 or \textit{x}a8.

Another line, which might have been harder to play, was:

21...\textit{e}7 22...g5! \textit{x}g5
22...g6 23...h7 \textit{h}7 24...g5 \textit{f}8 25...g6 \textit{f}6 26...g6 \textit{h}8 27...g5 \textit{f}6 28...h6 and White wins.

23...g5 \textit{d}7

Teresarsky only considered 23...\textit{c}6 which does not help on the kingside.

22...\textit{xe}7! \textit{h}7 23...g5 \textit{g}6
Black can also attempt 23...\textit{g}8 24...h5 \textit{e}4?, but after the intended 25...e4 f6 (25...e8 loses trivially to 26...g5 \textit{f}6 27...h7 \textit{h}8 28...h8 \textit{e}7 29...e6 gxf6 30...e7 \textit{f}8 31...e6. Although this is a lot of moves, it is not really difficult stuff. Even without the knight punch at the end it is clear that Black is in trouble.) White has a nice way to break through. The knight simply cannot be restricted. 26...g5! fxg5 27...f8 \textit{f}8 28...f3 and a simple win on points awaits.

24...\textit{xe}6!
24...\textit{c}2 also wins, but the text move is cleanest.

24...\textit{xe}6 25...g4 \textit{h}7 26...\textit{f}8 \textit{h}2 27...\textit{f}1 \textit{e}5 28...d8
1–0

Velimirovic – Pavlovic

Panormo 1998

The time is ripe for the destruction of the king's position. White is fully mobilised. There has never been such a glorious moment as now!

13...\textit{x}f7!! \textit{xf}7
13...b4? 14...h5 g6 15...g6 hxg6 wins for White after 16...xh8!, with the point: 16...e7 17...h7 \textit{e}8 18...g6 \textit{d}8 19...g5 and mate is near.

13...\textit{x}e5 14...\textit{f}4 is also hopeless.

14...\textit{h}5 \textit{g}6?
This does not offer a lot of resistance. However, even the following more stubborn defence falls short in the end.

14...\textit{g}8 15...\textit{f}3 \textit{g}6
15...\textit{xe}5 16...\textit{xf}8 \textit{f}8 17...\textit{c}5 and Black is mated.
16.\(\text{Ng4!}\)

The accurate move. 16.\(\text{Nxg6 }\text{hxg6}\) 17.\(\text{Ne4!}\) leads to a clear advantage only.

16...\(\text{dxg5}\)

16...\(\text{hxg6}\) 17.\(\text{dxe5}\) and White wins.

17.\(\text{Nxe6}\)\(\text{xf7}\)

15.\(\text{Nxe6}\)\(\text{hxg6}\) 16.\(\text{Bxh8}\) \(\text{Nxe5}\)

The e-pawn was controlling some important squares, so Black needed to eliminate it. 16...\(\text{Nd8}\) was no better. 17.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{Nc6}\) (17...\(\text{Nc6}\) 18.\(\text{f2}\) and 19.\(\text{c5}\) when White wins.) 18.\(\text{h6}\) \(\text{b6}\) 19.\(\text{h7}\) \(\text{h5}\) 20.\(\text{h7}\) \(\text{d8}\) and White is winning.

17.\(\text{Nh7}\)\(\text{g7}\) 18.\(\text{Nh6}\) \(\text{b6}\)\(\uparrow\)

18...\(\text{f6}\) 19.\(\text{f1}\)\(\text{xf6}\) forces Black to give up his extra knight. 19...\(\text{f3}\) 20.\(\text{gxf3}\) \(\text{b6}\) 21.\(\text{g2}\) White has a winning attack. The main line goes: 21...\(\text{Nh6}\) 22.\(\text{Nh4}\) \(\text{Nh4}\) 23.\(\text{f6}\) \(\text{f6}\) 24.\(\text{h4}\)\(\text{Nh5}\) 25.\(\text{Nh5}\) \(\text{b3}\) 26.\(\text{Nh7}\) \(\text{Nh7}\) 27.\(\text{Nh7}\) \(\text{b2}\) 28.\(\text{Nh7}\) \(\text{Nd4}\) 29.\(\text{Nh8}\) and the endgame is winning easily.

19.\(\text{Nh1}\) \(\text{Nh2}\)\(\text{f2}\) 20.\(\text{Nh2}\) \(\text{Nd4}\) 21.\(\text{Nh1}\) \(\text{f3}\) 22.\(\text{Nh2}\)

1-0

S. Brunello – Mogranzini

Bratto 2007

26.\(\text{Nh6!}\)

Black takes the d2-square away from White, leading to a collapse of his position. 26...\(\text{Nh6}\) 27.\(\text{Nh6}\) Black could still play 27...\(\text{Nh6}\)\(\text{f2}\)\(\text{f2}\), but after 28.\(\text{Nxd6}\) 29.\(\text{Nxd2}\) \(\text{Nxd3}\) 30.\(\text{Nxd3}\) \(\text{Nxd3}\) 31.\(\text{Nc1}\) White is likely to save the game by creating a passed pawn on the queenside.

27.\(\text{e5}\)

27.\(\text{Nh6}\) loses to 27...\(\text{Nh6}\) 28.\(\text{Nh6}\) 29.\(\text{Nh6}\) 30.\(\text{Nh6}\) 31.\(\text{Nh6}\) and the check on \(\text{f2}\) will hurt.

27...\(\text{Nh6}\) 28.\(\text{Nh6}\) \(\text{Nh6}\) 29.\(\text{Nh6}\) \(\text{Nh6}\) 30.\(\text{Nh6}\) \(\text{Nh6}\)

30...\(\text{Nh6}\) 31.\(\text{Nh6}\) is another win.

31.\(\text{bxc4}\) \(\text{Nh4}\)\(\text{h1}\) 32.\(\text{Nh2}\) \(\text{Nh2}\)
Rowson – Granda Zuniga

Pallau 2008

White wins with a nice combination:

25.\texttt{dxf7!!} \texttt{xf7} 26.\texttt{eb6}

Astonishingly Granda had simply overlooked this natural follow-up. Maybe his sense of danger let him down?

26...\texttt{eg8?!}

Black fails to offer the sternest resistance. The main point of the exercise was to see that 26...\texttt{ed3} is met with:

27.\texttt{ec1}! intending the manoeuvre \texttt{e3-f3}, with a winning attack. There are details, and there can be struggles, but White should win:

a) 27...\texttt{ec5} 28.\texttt{ee3} \texttt{xe3} 29.\texttt{fxe3\dagger} \texttt{eg8} 30.\texttt{ed3} \texttt{eh7} 31.\texttt{eg5} \texttt{eg7} 32.\texttt{eg6} \texttt{ef8} 33.\texttt{ef6} with a winning attack.

b) 27...\texttt{ef8} 28.\texttt{eb7\dagger} \texttt{eg7} 29.\texttt{eb4} \texttt{es4} 30.\texttt{es3} \texttt{es4} 31.\texttt{esg6\dagger} \texttt{ef8} 32.\texttt{gs}\texttt{e5} 33.\texttt{ees6\dagger} \texttt{eg7} 34.\texttt{gf4} and White wins.

27.\texttt{ec3} \texttt{es8} 28.\texttt{eb4!}

The final finesse. Black resigned in view of 28...\texttt{ed7} 29.\texttt{ec8\dagger}.

1–0

Nunn – Smeets

Amsterdam 2006

In his notes in \textit{New in Chess}, Nunn remarked how the attack worked “just like in the old days”.

26.\texttt{es6\dagger!!} \texttt{gxes} 27.\texttt{exh6 f5}

Other moves are no better:

27...\texttt{fxe5} 28.\texttt{eg4} does not improve the defence.

27...\texttt{es7} 28.\texttt{exes} \texttt{exes}\texttt{\dagger} 29.\texttt{exes} \texttt{ef5} looks clever, but even cleverer is 30.\texttt{esg6\dagger}, and White wins.

27...\texttt{ed8} looks to be a more tenacious defence. However, White wins in style with 28.\texttt{esg4} \texttt{es7} 29.\texttt{eh4} \texttt{ef8} 30.\texttt{eh5} \texttt{ef4} 31.\texttt{esg6\dagger} \texttt{exg6} 32.\texttt{esg6\dagger} and 33.\texttt{esf7}.

28.\texttt{eh4!}

28...\texttt{eb5}

Black is desperately trying to conjure a defence, but there is nothing to be found.
28...\(\text{Qc}\text{f}8\) loses to 29.\(\text{Bxe}\text{c}5!\) \(\text{Qxc}\text{c}5\) 30.\(\text{Qx}\text{g}\text{6}\) \(\text{Qx}\text{g}\text{6}\) 31.\(\text{Qx}\text{g}\text{6}\) \(\text{Qh}\text{h}\text{8}\) 32.\(\text{Qf}\text{6}\) \(\text{Qh}\text{h}\text{7}\) 33.\(\text{Qxf}\text{7}\) \(\text{Qh}\text{h}\text{6}\) 34.\(\text{Qf}\text{6}\) \(\text{Qh}\text{h}\text{7}\) 35.\(\text{Qh}\text{4}\) \(\text{Qg}\text{6}\) 36.\(\text{Bc}\text{3}\), with a winning attack.

28...\(\text{Qc}\text{6}\) 29.\(\text{Qx}\text{f}\text{5}\) \(\text{ad}\text{8}\) also does not work. After 30.\(\text{Qg}\text{4}\) \(\text{Qxb}\text{3}\) 31.\(\text{axb}\text{3}\) \(\text{Qad}\text{8}\), White has time to play 32.\(\text{Qg}\text{5}\), when the threat of \(\text{Qh}\text{5}\), \(\text{Qh}\text{h}\text{7}\)\(\text{t}\) and \(\text{Qh}\text{h}\text{8}\)\(\text{t}\) is devastating.

29.\(\text{Qx}\text{f}\text{5}\) \(\text{ad}\text{8}\)

29...\(\text{Qxc}\text{4}\) 30.\(\text{Qxc}\text{4}\) \(\text{Bxe}\text{5}\) loses to bringing in the last piece in the attack: 31.\(\text{Qe}\text{4}\) \(\text{Qad}\text{8}\) 32.\(\text{Qh}\text{4}\) \(\text{Qd}\text{1}\)\(\text{t}\) 33.\(\text{Qf}\text{1}\)

30.\(\text{Qg}\text{4}\) \(\text{c}\text{4}\) 31.\(\text{Qc}\text{2}\) \(\text{ad}\text{5}\)

31...\(\text{Qd}\text{3}\) would block the bishop, but after 32.\(\text{h}\text{4}\) White is winning anyway.

32.\(\text{Qh}\text{4}\)!

Black resigned because of 32...\(\text{Qx}\text{h}\text{4}\) 33.\(\text{Qe}\text{7}\)\(\text{t}\).

1-0

12
Speelman – Howell

Coventry 2007

Black has a promising position after normal moves such as 22...\(\text{Qae}\text{8}\), but in order to win directly, he needs to strike before the king finds any form of safety.

22...\(\text{Qd}\text{3}\)\(\text{t}\)!! 23.\(\text{ex}\text{d}\text{3}\) \(\text{Wg}\text{1}\)\(\text{t}\) 24.\(\text{Qd}\text{2}\) \(\text{Bxf}\text{2}\)\(\text{t}\) 25.\(\text{Qe}\text{2}\)

White could also try 25.\(\text{Qxf}\text{2}\), but the outcome is the same: 25...\(\text{Qxf}\text{2}\)\(\text{t}\) 26.\(\text{Qe}\text{2}\) \(\text{ex}\text{d}\text{3}\)!

27.\(\text{Qc}\text{3}\) (27.\(\text{Qe}\text{1}\) \(\text{Qe}\text{8}\) does not improve things one bit) 27...\(\text{d}\text{xe}\text{2}\) Black's attack is absolutely decisive, and his positional dominance is beyond reproach as well. After 28.\(\text{Qb}\text{3}\) \(\text{Qx}\text{g}\text{3}\)\(\text{t}\) 29.\(\text{Qc}\text{3}\) White might avoid immediate mate, but the four (!) passed pawns will decide the issue.

25...\(\text{Qxe}\text{2}\)\(\text{t}\) 26.\(\text{Qxe}\text{2}\)

26...\(\text{Wg}\text{2}\)\(\text{t}\)!!
The wrong check. Black could hold on to the momentum by playing 26...\(\text{ex}\text{d}\text{3}\)\(\text{t}\) 27.\(\text{Qd}\text{2}\) \(\text{Wg}\text{2}\)\(\text{t}\), with the main point being that 28.\(\text{Qc}\text{3}\) loses to 28...\(\text{d}\text{2}\)!, which cannot be taken. And after 29.\(\text{Qd}\text{1}\) \(\text{Qe}\text{4}\) White loses everything.

27.\(\text{Qd}\text{1}\) \(\text{ex}\text{d}\text{3}\)
The attack is still very dangerous, of course.

28.\(\text{We}\text{1}\) \(\text{Qf}\text{8}\) 29.\(\text{Qf}\text{4}\) \(\text{Qe}\text{8}\)

Repeating the position to gain time on the clock, one suspects.

30.\(\text{Qe}\text{3}\) \(\text{Qf}\text{8}\) 31.\(\text{Qf}\text{4}\) \(\text{Qe}\text{4}\)! 32.\(\text{Qc}\text{3}\) \(\text{Qe}\text{8}\)

Black is losing the plot. After 32...\(\text{g}\text{5}\)! White is just lost. The bishop is the last line of defence.

33.\(\text{Qc}\text{1}\)!

Suddenly matters are less clear.

33...\(\text{Qg}\text{6}\) 34.\(\text{Qd}\text{1}\)?

This looks normal. Unfortunately it throws the advantage back to Black. Instead 34.\(\text{Qc}\text{3}\)! would have been fine. I cannot see anything better for Black than to play for a draw with 34...\(\text{Qf}\text{3}\) 35.\(\text{Qd}\text{2}\) \(\text{Qg}\text{2}\)\(\text{t}\) and a repetition.

34...\(\text{Qe}\text{2}\) 35.\(\text{Qd}\text{2}\) \(\text{Qf}\text{2}\) 36.\(\text{b}\text{3}\)
36...\texttt{ae}1 \texttt{af}1 does not help much as far as I can see.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\filldraw (0,0) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (1,0) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (2,0) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (3,0) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (4,0) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (5,0) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (6,0) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (7,0) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (0,1) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (1,1) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (2,1) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (3,1) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (4,1) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (5,1) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (6,1) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (7,1) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (0,2) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (1,2) circle (.1cm);
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\filldraw (3,2) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (4,2) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (5,2) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (6,2) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (7,2) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (0,3) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (1,3) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (2,3) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (3,3) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (4,3) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (5,3) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (6,3) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (7,3) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (0,4) circle (.1cm);
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\filldraw (4,4) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (5,4) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (6,4) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (7,4) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (0,5) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (1,5) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (2,5) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (3,5) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (4,5) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (5,5) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (6,5) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (7,5) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (0,6) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (1,6) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (2,6) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (3,6) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (4,6) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (5,6) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (6,6) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (7,6) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (0,7) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (1,7) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (2,7) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (3,7) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (4,7) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (5,7) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (6,7) circle (.1cm);
\filldraw (7,7) circle (.1cm);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

36...\texttt{ae}4?
This throws most of the advantage away, it would seem.

36...\texttt{eh}1 37.\texttt{ae}1 \texttt{eh}1! with ideas such as ...\texttt{eg}1 and ...\texttt{eh}2! would still be winning.

37.\texttt{xg}4?
37.\texttt{ae}1! is probably OK for White, the point being that 37...\texttt{ax}a2 is met with 38.\texttt{xa}2 \texttt{xa}2 39.\texttt{xg}4!! when he is on his way to a perpetual check.

Another possible response is: 37...\texttt{eh}1! (or 37...\texttt{e}2, when 38.c5! dxc5 39.b4! offers White decent counterplay) 38.c5! dxc5 39.\texttt{d}2! \texttt{xg}3 40.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{g}1 41.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{x}d5 42.\texttt{f}4 with very unclear play.

37...\texttt{eh}1!
The end is trivial.

38.\texttt{b}2 \texttt{xd}2\texttt{t} 39.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{f}5!
Preventing all counterplay, and thus ending the game.

40.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{xa}1
0–1

13
\textbf{Armitage – Davies}

Correspondence 1963

White has a superiority on the kingside, especially if he acts quickly, striking before Black manages to finish his development.

14.d5! \texttt{bd}7
14...exd5 15.\texttt{xh}7\texttt{t} \texttt{xh}7 16.\texttt{g}5\texttt{t} wins straightforwardly.

15.\texttt{xh}7\texttt{t}!!
15.\texttt{ad}1 was also good for White, of course, but the text is absolutely demolishing the black position.

15...\texttt{h}7 16.\texttt{h}4\texttt{t} \texttt{g}8
16...\texttt{g}6 is not so easy to refute. The winning line is 17.\texttt{g}3\texttt{t} \texttt{h}6 (17...\texttt{h}7 18.\texttt{g}5\texttt{t} \texttt{g}8 19.\texttt{h}4 transposes to the game) 18.\texttt{h}3\texttt{t} and now either 18...\texttt{h}5 19.\texttt{g}4 g6 20.gxh5 gxh5 21.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{g}8\texttt{t} 22.\texttt{g}3, when White wins trivially, or 18...\texttt{g}6 19.\texttt{xf}6!! with the idea of 19...\texttt{g}6 20.\texttt{h}4\texttt{t} \texttt{g}7 21.\texttt{f}5\texttt{t}!, when the rook will quickly come up to finish the job.

17.\texttt{g}5\texttt{t} \texttt{xd}2
Alternatives were no better. For instance, after a move like 17...e5, with the idea to
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prevent $\textbf{axf6}$, White can play $18.\textbf{axf6} \textbf{axf6} \ 19.\textbf{dxe4} \textbf{e8} 20.\textbf{f1}$, with a winning attack.

18.\textbf{xf3}

Black has no defense against the attack down the $h$-file. He tries to run, but is contained in the kill zone.

18...\textbf{e8} 19.\textbf{h3} \textbf{f8} 20.\textbf{d6} \textbf{e7} 21.\textbf{h8+} \textbf{g8} 22.\textbf{xg7+} \textbf{e8} 23.\textbf{xg8+} \textbf{f8} 24.\textbf{xf8+} \textbf{d7} 25.\textbf{dxe7} 1-0

14

\textbf{Kasimdzhanov - Gelfand}

Elista (9) 2007

40.\textbf{a1}?

Missing the better move order with 40.\textbf{e6}! \textbf{f7} (40...\textbf{g7}? is met with a simple rook check in this line.) 41.\textbf{a1}! \textbf{d8} 42.\textbf{h4} with a strong, probably winning, attack. The rook is of no use on $a8$.

40...\textbf{g7} 41.\textbf{e6} \textbf{f8}

Now Black was allowed to defend the pawn with the rook. The position is about equal and Kasimdzhanov is characteristically running out of time. For that reason he embarks on an all-or-nothing suicidal attack.

42.\textbf{a4} \textbf{f7} 43.\textbf{c3} \textbf{f5} 44.\textbf{f3}?! \textbf{xa4}!

The pawn is good to have for later!

45.\textbf{g5} \textbf{f8} 46.\textbf{e1}

46.\textbf{xf6} \textbf{xf6} 47.\textbf{e6+} \textbf{f7} 48.\textbf{g5+} \textbf{g7}
is a draw, but that is of no use.

46...\textbf{d4}!

Taking control. White’s pieces are starting to hang.

47.\textbf{e7+}

47.\textbf{e6+} would give enough compensation after either recapture, but it is hard to see White winning.

47...\textbf{g8} 48.\textbf{d3}? 48.\textbf{f3} is the only move, but it will not win.

48...\textbf{f5}! 49.\textbf{e2} \textbf{a1+}!

Winning the game by taking $e5$ from the queen. After 49...\textbf{fxg5} 50.\textbf{e6+} \textbf{h8} all White has is perpetual check anyhow.

50.\textbf{h2} \textbf{fxg5} 51.\textbf{e6+} \textbf{h8} 52.\textbf{b7} \textbf{d4} 0-1

15

\textbf{Morozevich - Avrukh}

Turin (O1) 2006

22...\textbf{b7}?

Black’s position still looks promising after this move, but there was a clearer way to win the game. 22...\textbf{b4}! was the winner, as $c3$ simply becomes too weak. After 23.\textbf{xc6} \textbf{b7} the rook is trapped. White can play 24.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{exd5} 25.\textbf{d6}, but then Black can win a rook with 25...\textbf{e1+}.

23.\textbf{e1} \textbf{b4} 24.\textbf{e4} \textbf{c5} 25.\textbf{a3}! \textbf{xc4} 25...\textbf{b2} 26.\textbf{f4} also offers White decent counterplay.

26.\textbf{xc4} \textbf{d6}
27.\textit{\texttt{d}f4?}

Morozevich misses a wonderful drawing line: 27.\textit{\texttt{d}f4!} \textit{\texttt{e}xc4}$^+ 28.\textit{\texttt{g}x\texttt{e}c4} \textit{\texttt{d}h8} 29.\textit{\texttt{c}c1} \textit{\texttt{w}xh4} 30.\textit{\texttt{d}b5}!! \textit{\texttt{w}x\texttt{f}2} 31.\textit{\texttt{d}d6}$^+ \textit{\texttt{w}e7} 32.\textit{\texttt{g}3} \textit{\texttt{w}g1}$^+ 33.\textit{\texttt{d}b2} \textit{\texttt{w}d4}$^+ 34.\textit{\texttt{b}b1} \textit{\texttt{e}e4} 35.\textit{\texttt{c}c8}$^+$ (Avrukh).

27 ... \textit{\texttt{d}d5?}

Black went on to win on move 51, but in this position he could have decided the game much faster with 27 ... \textit{\texttt{d}d5!} 28.\textit{\texttt{w}xh6} \textit{\texttt{c}4} followed by 29 ... \textit{\texttt{d}a4}, winning. 0–1

16

\textbf{Papp – Rogic}

Pula 2008

The key to this example comes on the second move.

47 ... \textit{\texttt{e}x\texttt{b}2} 48.\textit{\texttt{e}x\texttt{b}2} \textit{\texttt{w}x\texttt{c}3}!!

Black is making it a real exchange sacrifice. 48 ... \textit{\texttt{w}x\texttt{c}3}? 49.\textit{\texttt{e}x\texttt{b}3}! would lead to a draw immediately. Now Black has a very dangerous attack.

49.\textit{\texttt{b}a2}

Other moves are not much different. 49.\textit{\texttt{c}c2} \textit{\texttt{w}f3} White has no good moves: 50.\textit{\texttt{c}c1} \textit{\texttt{w}h1}$^+$ 51.\textit{\texttt{d}e2} \textit{\texttt{w}x\texttt{e}4}$^+ 52.\textit{\texttt{d}d1} \textit{\texttt{w}xg4}$^+$ and the pawns will win.

49 ... \textit{\texttt{f}f3}! 50.\textit{\texttt{e}e2} \textit{\texttt{w}h1}$^+$ 51.\textit{\texttt{d}d2} \textit{\texttt{w}b1} 52.\textit{\texttt{c}c2} \textit{\texttt{w}x\texttt{b}4}$^+!$

Slightly inaccurate, but Black still keeps a large edge with this move. A faster win was 52 ... c3$^+! 53.\textit{\texttt{x}xc3} \textit{\texttt{w}x\texttt{b}4}, when the pawn ending without a white pawn on b4 is far more attractive than the version with it there...

53.\textit{\texttt{d}d1} \textit{\texttt{b}b3} 54.\textit{\texttt{e}e1} \textit{\texttt{b}b6} 55.\textit{\texttt{f}f1} \textit{\texttt{c}c5} 56.\textit{\texttt{g}g2} c3 57.\textit{\texttt{a}a2} \textit{\texttt{b}b4} 58.\textit{\texttt{h}h2} \textit{\texttt{b}b1} 59.\textit{\texttt{g}g2} \textit{\texttt{b}b3} 60.\textit{\texttt{a}a6} b4 61.\textit{\texttt{e}e6} \textit{\texttt{c}c5} 62.\textit{\texttt{e}e5} \textit{\texttt{d}xc5} 63.\textit{\texttt{d}d6} c2 64.\textit{\texttt{e}e3}$^+ \textit{\texttt{b}b2} 65.\textit{\texttt{c}c5} 0–1

17

\textbf{Sutovsky – Vavrak}

European Championship, Plovdiv 2008

20.\textit{\texttt{e}e7}$^+$!

This is the start of a well known attacking motif; not a standard Greek sacrifice, but a classic double bishop sacrifice with a twist. 20.\textit{\texttt{b}b1} \textit{\texttt{e}x\texttt{d}3}! is less clear.

20 ... \textit{\texttt{e}x\texttt{h}7} 21.\textit{\texttt{h}h5}$^+$ \textit{\texttt{g}g8} 22.\textit{\texttt{e}e5}

22 ... \textit{\texttt{w}x\texttt{b}5}?! 22 ... d4 is easily eliminated. The simplest line is probably 23.\textit{\texttt{a}a1} \textit{\texttt{a}e7} 24.\textit{\texttt{x}x\texttt{g}7} \textit{\texttt{a}x\texttt{g}7} 25.\textit{\texttt{e}e7} and wins, though there are many other good options.

22 ... \textit{\texttt{e}e2} is best met with: 23.\textit{\texttt{c}c7}! (23.\textit{\texttt{f}f1} \textit{\texttt{f}f2} 24.\textit{\texttt{c}c7} gives similar lines.) 23 ... \textit{\texttt{a}a7} 24.\textit{\texttt{f}f1} \textit{\texttt{f}f2} 25.\textit{\texttt{x}x\texttt{g}7} \textit{\texttt{a}x\texttt{g}7} 26.\textit{\texttt{f}f1} \textit{\texttt{c}c2} 27.\textit{\texttt{e}e8}$^+!$ Now we see why it was so important to flick in \textit{\texttt{c}c7}. The knight was on its way to the kingside. 27 ... \textit{\texttt{g}g8} 28.\textit{\texttt{f}f6}$^+$ and White wins.
22...\textit{W}d2 23.\textit{C}c7 f6 24.\textit{X}xa8 \textit{W}d3 is a computer suggestion, where it is not 100\% certain about the outcome. Let us count the rooks and see if we can assist a little bit. Or give it time enough to find 25.\textit{W}f3 \textit{E}c2 26.\textit{X}xf6! with a winning attack.

23.\textit{X}xg7!

The simplest point of the combination.

23...f5

23...\textit{X}xg7 24.\textit{W}g5+ \textit{W}h8 25.\textit{F}f3 is classic.

24.\textit{E}e5 \textit{F}d8 25.\textit{F}f3 \textit{F}f8 26.\textit{F}g3 1-0

18

\textit{Vaghar - Ojagverdiyev}

Baku 2008

16.\textit{F}xf6! gxf6 17.\textit{E}d1!!

White has a winning attack based on normal moves such as 17.\textit{W}g5, as the black queen is too far away. But instead Aroshidze came up with a stunning blow.

17.\textit{F}f8!!

A fairly standard anti-Dragon trick, but usually it occurs with the h-file open! I have never seen it performed like this.

17.\textit{F}g5!! gives a strong attack, but the text move is immediately decisive.

17...\textit{F}xf8

17...\textit{F}f6 is met with 18.\textit{W}h6 \textit{E}e6 19.\textit{F}xg6+! with mate in a few moves.

17...\textit{F}xf8 18.\textit{F}xh7 \textit{F}g7 is no better on account of 19.\textit{F}xg6 \textit{E}e7 20.\textit{F}xg7 \textit{F}xg7 21.\textit{W}h6 with the same result.

18.\textit{W}h6 \textit{E}f7

The king can run, but not hide: 18...\textit{F}f7 19.\textit{W}xh7+ \textit{E}e8 20.\textit{F}xg6+ \textit{F}d8 21.\textit{F}d6+ \textit{F}e8 22.\textit{F}xh8 \textit{F}xh8 23.\textit{F}g7 with mate on the horizon.

19.\textit{F}xg6+ \textit{F}g7

19...hxg6 20.\textit{F}xh8 is mate.

20.\textit{W}xh7+ \textit{F}f8
21. \( \text{Bgh}1! \)

The point of the combination. With his pieces still stuck on the queenside Black cannot defend his kingside. This last “quiet” move is what some inexperienced players will find a stumbling block. However, if you have seen it often enough, it will become second nature to you to remember that combinations do not have to end with a bang.

21... \( \text{Exf}5?! \) 22. \( \text{Exf}5 \) \( \text{Wd}4 \)† 23. \( \text{Bb}1 \) \( \text{Wxf}5 \)

Black resigned before White delivered one of his many deadly blows, such as 24. \( \text{Bg}5 \).

1–0

Kotur - Predein

Kurgan 1994

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18. \( \text{gxf}3! \)

18. \( \text{Bxf}3 \) \( b5 \) would give Black excellent counterplay.

18... \( \text{Bf}2? \)

Black falls for the trap White has put down. 18... \( \text{Be}5 \) was necessary. However, White has great chances of creating an initiative in the centre in this position, as the useful \( f3-f4 \) is lurking in the background.

19. \( \text{b5}†!! \)

This high-octane move is the catalyst that unleashes the attacking wave. 19. \( \text{Exf}2?! \) \( \text{Be}5 \) might give White a lot of compensation after 20. \( \text{Bxg}5 \) \( \text{Bxg}5 \) 21. \( \text{Bh}8† \) \( \text{Bd}7 \) 22. \( \text{Ba}4† \), but although this is dangerous for Black, it is hardly necessary, nor as strong as the game continuation.

19... \( \text{axb}5 \)

Black is forced to accept the sacrifice. 19... \( \text{Bd}7 \) 20. \( \text{Bxd}7† \) \( \text{Bxd}7 \) 21. \( \text{Bgh}1† \) would threaten an invasion along the g-file and \( \text{Exf}2 \) at the same time.

20. \( \text{Bxb}5 \) \( \text{Cc}5 \) 21. \( \text{Bxd}6† \) \( \text{Bxd}6 \) 22. \( \text{Bxd}6 \)

White has sacrificed a piece, but his attack is absolutely devastating.

22... \( \text{Bd}7 \)

22... \( \text{Kf}6 \) loses to 23. \( \text{Bxf}2 \) \( \text{Bxf}2 \) 24. \( \text{Bxf}6 \), when there is no defence. Either 24... \( \text{Bg}1† \) 25. \( \text{Bxg}1 \) \( \text{Bxg}1† \) 26. \( \text{Bd}1 \), or 24... \( \text{Bd}7 \) 25. \( \text{Bxd}7 \) \( \text{Bxd}7 \) 26. \( \text{Bh}7† \), with mate in seven.

23. \( \text{Bxd}6! \)

White is not slowing down the attack.

23... \( \text{Bxd}7 \) 24. \( \text{Bxf}7† \) \( \text{Cc}6 \) 25. \( \text{Bxf}2 \)

White could enter a winning endgame after 25. \( \text{Bxe}6† \) \( \text{Bd}6 \) 26. \( \text{Bc}4† \) \( \text{Bc}5 \) 27. \( \text{Bxc}5† \) \( \text{Bxc}5 \)
28.\texttt{\textbackslash axf2}\texttt{\textdagger} as well, but wanted to win with a direct attack.

25...\texttt{\textbackslash g5}\texttt{\textdagger}
25...\texttt{\textbackslash we5} 26.\texttt{\textbackslash ah7} and 25...\texttt{\textbackslash axf2} 26.\texttt{\textbackslash we6}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash db5} 27.\texttt{\textbackslash bh5}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash ec5} 28.\texttt{\textbackslash a4}\texttt{\textdagger} also win for White.

26.\texttt{\textbackslash f4} \texttt{\textbackslash g6} 27.\texttt{\textbackslash we7} \texttt{\textbackslash xe4}
White now wins with checks all the way.

28.\texttt{\textbackslash ec5}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash d7} 29.\texttt{\textbackslash d1}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash e8} 30.\texttt{\textbackslash h5}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash e7} 31.\texttt{\textbackslash h4}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash f8} 32.\texttt{\textbackslash h6}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash e8} 33.\texttt{\textbackslash f6} \texttt{\textbackslash h7} 34.\texttt{\textbackslash xe6}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash f8} 35.\texttt{\textbackslash d6}\texttt{\textdagger}
1-0

21
A. Sznapik – O. Foisor

Polanica Zdroj 1982

White has a large majority of pieces on the kingside, and would like to use it efficiently against the black king. Of course there is no forced win here, but there is a clear plan of attack: open a file for the rook on f1!

17.\texttt{\textbackslash d5}\texttt{\textdagger}
A surprising knight sacrifice. There are no other ways for the knight to join the attack. The main idea of the sacrifice is of course to weaken Black's control over f5, and thereby gain access to the black castle.

17...\texttt{\textbackslash d8}
Black decides to decline the gift. Actually there are no good ways to accept it.

17...\texttt{\textbackslash exd5} is most forcefully met with the simple 18.\texttt{\textbackslash exd5} \texttt{\textbackslash xd5} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash xf5} and White regains his piece without slowing down the speeder. Black is simply run over.

17...\texttt{\textbackslash xd5}\texttt{\textdagger} is the most complicated line. After 18.\texttt{\textbackslash exd5} Black can try 18...\texttt{\textbackslash e5}, but this is well met by 19.\texttt{\textbackslash xf5} \texttt{\textbackslash exd4} 20.\texttt{\textbackslash wh4} when the weakness of the light squares around the black king starts to tell. White wins as follows: 20...\texttt{\textbackslash fc8} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash eg5}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash f8} (21...\texttt{\textbackslash h8} 22.\texttt{\textbackslash f1} followed by \texttt{\textbackslash xf6}! wins.) 22.\texttt{\textbackslash h6}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash e8} 23.\texttt{\textbackslash ec1}! The remaining piece is brought into the attack. 23...\texttt{\textbackslash d8}

24.\texttt{\textbackslash xf6}\texttt{\textdagger} The final blow is delivered. 24...\texttt{\textbackslash xf6} 25.\texttt{\textbackslash eg8}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash d7} 26.\texttt{\textbackslash f5} mate!

18.\texttt{\textbackslash ecx7}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash ecx7} 19.\texttt{\textbackslash h4} \texttt{\textbackslash e5} 20.\texttt{\textbackslash xf5}
White does not have to give up the strong bishop. He wins just as easily after 20.\texttt{\textbackslash ec3}\texttt{\textdagger}, because after 20...\texttt{\textbackslash f4} he can play 21.\texttt{\textbackslash xf4}! \texttt{\textbackslash exf4} 22.\texttt{\textbackslash eg5}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash h8} 23.\texttt{\textbackslash edx4} and it is all over.

20...\texttt{\textbackslash exd4} 21.\texttt{\textbackslash edx6} \texttt{\textbackslash ec5} 22.\texttt{\textbackslash edx5}
Black resigned. After 22...\texttt{\textbackslash we6} 23.\texttt{\textbackslash e5} \texttt{\textbackslash edx8} 24.\texttt{\textbackslash edx5} \texttt{\textbackslash ed8} 25.\texttt{\textbackslash edx7}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash f8} 26.\texttt{\textbackslash h6}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash e7} 27.\texttt{\textbackslash edx6}\texttt{\textdagger} \texttt{\textbackslash d7} 28.\texttt{\textbackslash f5}\texttt{\textdagger} White wins.
1-0

22
C. Hansen – Hilla:pp-Perssson

Copenhagen 2004

22...\texttt{\textbackslash axa}\texttt{\textdagger}!!
Rather than exchanging the rook for its inactive white counterpart on c2, Black eliminates the annoying bishop and wins some momentum for his attack.

After 22...\texttt{\textbackslash edx3} 23.\texttt{\textbackslash edx3} \texttt{\textbackslash ecx2} 24.\texttt{\textbackslash ecx2} Black
has lost all of the momentum in his position, and the two sides have approximately equal chances.

22...\textit{a}xc2 23.\textit{a}xc2 b6 was also possible, but after 24.e6!? White is able to stir things up and keep even chances.

23.\textit{w}xa3 \textit{d}xd3 24.\textit{w}xd3

White wants to put the rook on the third rank to cover the kingside, but at the same time it also becomes a target.

24.\textit{w}xd3 was perhaps better, but Black keeps a very dangerous attack with various moves, for example: 24...\textit{c}xe5 25.\textit{c}c3 \textit{g}g7! as suggested by Postny. The computer's first choice as a line of defence is 26.\textit{d}d4, but here Black wins elegantly with: 26...f3 27.g3 \textit{d}d7! 28.g4 \textit{g}g7 29.\textit{h}h2 \textit{h}h6 and finally he will play bishop or knight takes g4.

24...\textit{d}xe5 25.\textit{b}b3 f3!

This hurts.

26.\textit{d}d4

26.\textit{g}g3 fxg2 27.\textit{e}e2 was another defensive try, but with normal play Black achieves a huge advantage: 27...\textit{f}f5 28.\textit{g}g3+ \textit{h}h8 29.\textit{c}c3 \textit{f}f6 and the attack is too strong.

26...\textit{g}g6?

Black throws away most of his advantage. 26...\textit{h}h3! was absolutely devastating. The reason is that after 27.\textit{x}f3 Black has

27...\textit{f}f5 28.\textit{h}h3\textit{x}g2!! 29.\textit{g}g5+ \textit{f}f7 30.\textit{x}f3 \textit{x}f3 31.\textit{h}h1 \textit{h}h6 with an easy win.

27.g3 \textit{h}h3?!

27...b6!? may still have offered Black slightly better chances.

28.\textit{a}xb7 \textit{g}g2?

Black is overplaying his position. He should not have allowed White to enter the seventh rank. 28...\textit{d}d7 would have kept the balance, but it seems Black has become too emotionally attached to the idea of attacking.

29.\textit{g}g7 \textit{e}e8

29...\textit{f}f6 30.\textit{e}e6+ \textit{e}e6 31.\textit{b}bxe6 \textit{a}a8 32.\textit{b}b2 would not offer Black many chances in the endgame either.

30.\textit{f}f5! \textit{h}h8?!

There was no defence, but this is helpmate. After 30...h5 White can keep control with the simple 31.\textit{c}c1, when there is nothing better than to give up the second exchange. Black has a few chances, but they appear theoretical more than anything.

31.\textit{b}b8!

1-0

23 Sebag – Karjakin

Cap d'Agde 2006

White has succeeded in getting her opponent's king into the open, but this is only half the victory; the second component is a successful hunt.

27.\textit{x}b7†?
Maybe this is the most intuitive decision, but intuition is of limited usefulness in tactical situations where a concrete solution is required.

27.\(\text{d}7\)\text{†}!

This was the winning move. The lines are rather nice:

27...\(\text{c}4\)

27...\(\text{e}4\) 28.\(\text{x}e6\)\text{†} \(\text{d}3\) 29.\(\text{h}3\)\text{†} would transpose.

28.\(\text{xe6}\)\text{†} \(\text{d}3\) 29.\(\text{b}3\)\text{†} \(\text{x}d4\)

29...\(\text{e}2\) 30.\(\text{f}3\)\text{†} \(\text{e}1\) 31.\(\text{d}3\) with mate on f1 or d2.

30.\(\text{d}1\)\text{†} \(\text{e}4\)

30...\(\text{c}5\) 31.\(\text{b}4\)\text{†} and 30...\(\text{c}4\) 31.\(\text{b}3\)\text{†}, both win. Most notably because of 31...\(\text{c}5\) 32.\(\text{d}6\) mate.

This is the key position. Maybe Sebag saw all of this, but missed the beautiful winner:

```
31.\(\text{f}3\)\text{†}!! \(\text{xf}4\) 32.\(\text{d}4\)\text{†} \(\text{g}5\) 33.\(\text{e}3\)\text{†}!
White intends 34.\(\text{g}4\)\text{†}, winning.
```

27.\(\text{c}4\) 28.\(\text{b}3\)\text{†} \(\text{c}3\) 29.\(\text{c}6\)\text{†} \(\text{b}2\)

The black king is unexpectedly safe down here.

30.\(\text{xe6}\)?

White could still (and should) ensure a draw with 30.\(\text{c}1\)\text{†} \(\text{xb}3\) 31.\(\text{d}1\)\text{†} \(\text{c}4\) 32.\(\text{e}2\)\text{†} \(\text{d}5\) 33.\(\text{f}3\)\text{†} \(\text{xd}4\) 34.\(\text{d}1\)\text{†} \(\text{c}4\) 35.\(\text{e}2\)\text{†} and so on.

30...\(\text{f}5\)! 31.\(\text{xf}5\)?

The endgame after 31.\(\text{e}2\)\text{†} \(\text{c}2\)! 32.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{b}1\)\text{†} 33.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{xf}1\)\text{†} 34.\(\text{xf}1\) \(\text{xb}3\) also looks bad, but White had to give it a go.

```
31...\(\text{gx}f5\) 32.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{d}8\) 33.\(\text{d}6\) \(\text{xb}3\) 34.\(\text{a}5\) \(\text{a}4\)
```

0–1

24

Nisipeanu – Ruck

Sibenik 2006

Nisipeanu is a fantastic attacking player, but this time he got it wrong the first time around.

28.\(\text{g}7\)\text{†}?

Missing the direct winning line: 28.\(\text{x}d4!\) \(\text{xd}4\) 29.\(\text{f}6\) \(\text{g}4\), when after the precise 30.\(\text{e}1\)! Black can resign.

Another possibility is 29...\(\text{c}8\) 30.\(\text{e}1\)\text{†} \(\text{d}7\) 31.\(\text{f}7\)\text{†} \(\text{c}6\) 32.\(\text{e}8\)\text{†} followed by 33.\(\text{f}7\), which also wins.

28...\(\text{c}7\) 29.\(\text{x}d4\) \(\text{x}f5\)?

The final blunder in this game. Correct was 29...\(\text{c}5\)!, preserving hopes for survival.

30.\(\text{e}1\)\text{†} \(\text{d}7\) 31.\(\text{d}1\)\text{†}

Black loses his knight, so it is over.

```
31...\(\text{h}5\) 32.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{e}8\) 33.\(\text{d}1\)\text{†}
```

1–0

25

Sebag – Kosteniuk

Cap d’Agde 2006

White achieved a winning position after:

22.\(\text{h}6\) \(\text{g}6\) 23.\(\text{h}4\)!!

Black cannot accept a check on e7, so she had to accept the sacrifice.
23...gxf5 24.exf5
White's attack is absolutely devastating.

24...f6
A sad move to play, but the alternative 24...gxf5 does not hold either. White is winning after 25.exf5!, with the point: 25...gxf5 26.gxf5+ and mate in four.

White won easily.

26..c7 27.Bc1 d4 28.Bh5 c4 29.dxc4 Bc6 30.Bb5 Bb8 31.Bg4+ Bg6 32.Bxd4 Bh8 33.Bf3 Bhg8 34.Bd2 Be8 35.Bc3 Bg5 36.d5 Bg7 37.Bh4 Bg6 38.Bc2 Bf6 39.Bg4+ Bh8 40.Bg5 Bg7 41.Bxg7+ Bxg7 42.Ba1 Bd6 43.Ba6 Bc5 44.Ba7+
1-0

26
Fedorchuk - Guilleux

Paris 2008

White wins through a wonderful attack.

16.Ba4+ Bf8 17.Be6++!
This is not an uncommon theme, but it is surprising that the attack is as strong as it is here.

17...fxe6 18.Bxf6 gxf6

19...Ba5 20.Bh5 h6 21.Bg6! leads to mate, for example after 21...Bxa4 22.fxe6.

18.Bxc2
After 18.Bd2 the bishop simply returns to f5.

Black wins with an exceptional combination that combines high paced play with using all the pieces.

17...Bxc2!!
The bishop is under attack, but instead of wasting time retreating, it sacrifices itself to remove the c-pawn, which could have blocked the diagonal from g7 to b2.

The game actually went: 17...Bf5? 18.g4? Bxc2 Black won on move 30, but this might not have happened had White found: 19.Bxc2!Bg7 20.Bc3!, when after 20...Bxf4 21.Bxg7 0-0-0 the position is murky.

17...Bg7 18.c3! 0-0 19.Bd6 is also not fantastic for Black, although he is a bit better.

18.Bxc2
1-0

27
Butnorius - Felgaer

Gibraltar 2008

Black wins with an exceptional combination that combines high paced play with using all the pieces.
18...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g7!!}}

This is the real point, reaching back to the principle of evolution/revolution from Volume One. Black should get the pieces he can into the attack before executing it. That he had to sacrifice first not to lose momentum does not change this fact.

18...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b4?}} would be wrong because of:

19.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c1!}} (19.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b1? g7 20.e2 d5}}) 19...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g7}}
20.e2 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}} 21.axd5! \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xb2†}} 22.d1 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{c3}}
23.e4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{c2†}} 24.xc2 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc2†}} 25.xc2 exd5
26.xb5 and the endgame is promising White excellent chances.

19.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b1 b4†}} 20.d2 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d5}}
Black wins.

\textbf{28}

\textbf{Muir – Ragger}

\textit{European Team Championship, Crecce 2007}

Black is trying to establish an attack on the kingside. This aggressive approach is fully justified by the offside position of the queen on a6.

19...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c5!!}} 20.dxc5
White has to accept the offer as after 20.a7 Black will play 20...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b7}} trapping the queen and winning the game.

20.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xc5†}} 21.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h1}}

21.g2 loses the queen to 21...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b6}} 22.xa5 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xb2†}}, but after 23.xb2 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xa5}} 24.xh8 White has a lot of material for it.

However, the black attack has not ended yet: 24...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d2†}} 25.h3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{f3}} 26.xf3
\textcolor{red}{\texttt{hxh2†}} 27.xg4 f5† 28.g5 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{e7†}}
29.f6 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{h3}} 30.xe7 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xe7}} and there is no defence against ...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g4†}} followed by ...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g6}}
mate.

21...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d4??}}

A horrible blunder. I am not at all sure what Black thought he was doing. The winning line was:

21...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f2†}} 22.xf2
After 22.g2 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b6!}} 23.xa5 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{fxf3†}} 24.xf3
\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b3†}} Black wins on points.

22.xd1† 23.g2 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf2}} 24.xf2
24.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e2}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{g1†}} 25.h3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{f5†}} 26.h4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{g2}}
and the white king is trapped in a mating net.

24...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{xf3†}} 25.e1
I guess it is around here that Ragger got stuck. The win is fantastic:

25...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d8!}} 26.c3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{h1†}} 27.f2
27.f1 \texttt{d3} is basic.

27...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{hxh2†}} 28.e3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{fg3†}} 29.xe4 f5†
30.e5 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{g7†}} 31.xe6 0–0!

White cannot avoid mate in a few moves.
22.\textbf{Be}2 h5 23.\textbf{Qc}3

23.h4!? would have ended the black attack, I think.

23...\textbf{Qf}2\textsuperscript{+} 24.\textbf{Qg}2 h4 25.\textbf{Qxe}4 h3\textsuperscript{+} 26.\textbf{Qg}1
\textbf{Qxe}4 27.\textbf{Bxf}2 \textbf{Bb}3 28.\textbf{Qc}4??

White collapses at a time when he had so many wins it is grotesque. For example: 28.\textbf{Qxa}5, or 28.\textbf{Qc}8\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qe}7 29.\textbf{Qc}7\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qe}8 30.\textbf{Qx}f7\textsuperscript{+}.

28...\textbf{Wxc}4 29.\textbf{Qxc}4 \textbf{Qxf}3

How quickly the tables can turn.

0–1

29

Onischuk – Van Wely

Biel 2007

White wins with a nice tactic.

25.bxc4!!

A beautiful, though not too surprising piece sacrifice.

25...\textbf{Qxa}4

25...\textbf{Qb}8 loses trivially to 26.\textbf{Qe}7\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qa}8 27.\textbf{Qb}6\textsuperscript{+}.

26.\textbf{Bb}2 \textbf{Qd}6

26...\textbf{Qa}8 27.\textbf{Bb}7 followed by 28.\textbf{Be}c7 and White wins.

26...\textbf{Qd}7 27.\textbf{Qxd}5 and the b2-square cannot be defended.

26...\textbf{Qb}5 27.\textbf{Qe}7\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qa}8 28.\textbf{Qxb}5! also wins straightforwardly.

27.\textbf{Qxd}5 \textbf{Qxd}5 28.\textbf{Qb}7\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qa}8 29.\textbf{Qb}6 1–0

30

Ni Hua – Zvjaginsev

China – Russia, Taiyuan 2007

28.\textbf{Qxg}7?

Up to this point White has played a great attacking game, and could now have crowned his masterpiece with the following sequence: 28.\textbf{Qe}1\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qf}5 29.\textbf{Qb}1\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qg}4

He must have missed the following crushing blow in his calculations:

30.\textbf{Qe}5!!

The point is that after:

30...\textbf{fxe}5

he can kill the game with:

31.\textbf{Qg}6\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qh}3 32.\textbf{Qf}5 mate.

28...\textbf{Qe}4 29.\textbf{Qe}1?

29.f3 \textbf{Qxf}4?! 30.gxf4 \textbf{Qg}8 leads to a draw, but by now White should be beyond dreaming about more.

29...\textbf{Qxd}4 30.\textbf{Qh}2 \textbf{Qd}7!

Black manages to simplify the position, after which his material advantage is enough to decide the game.

31.\textbf{Qh}6 \textbf{Qh}7 32.\textbf{Qxc}6\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qxc}6 33.\textbf{Qxh}7 \textbf{Qf}3 34.\textbf{Qc}2 \textbf{Qd}8 35.\textbf{Qc}4\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qe}7 36.\textbf{Qc}5\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qf}7 37.\textbf{Qd}6 \textbf{Qd}7 38.a5 \textbf{Qe}6 39.\textbf{Qf}8 \textbf{Qd}1 40.\textbf{Qe}7\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qf}5 41.\textbf{Qh}7\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qe}5 42.\textbf{Qc}7\textsuperscript{+} \textbf{Qd}4
43.\textit{d6} \textit{c4} 44.\textit{b4} \textit{d3} 45.\textit{b3} \textit{c2}
46.\textit{c4} \textit{d3} 47.\textit{e6} \textit{f1} 48.\textit{h3} \textit{xf2}
49.\textit{c5} \textit{e1} 50.\textit{b4} \textit{d1}
0–1

31 \textit{Senador - Paragua}

Tagayray City 2004

White's attack looks strong, but Black has many defensive resources, so it is highly important that White plays the attack with as much urgency as possible. The winning line is thus highly surprising.

31.\textit{e1}?!?

This is too slow. Black is not going to sit back and watch while White takes on g6 and e5.

The only way to win was:

31.\textit{xg6} + \textit{h8}

32.\textit{f4}!!

Only this highly forcing move is good enough. The threat of \textit{h5}+ gives White the necessary extra time. There are now a number of variations to look at.

32.\textit{xd3} \textit{g8} is rather unclear, but ultimately quite balanced I suspect.

32...\textit{c6l}?

32...\textit{xf4} This is clearly critical, but it is not good. 33.\textit{xd3} \textit{g2} This is the only attempt. 34.\textit{h5}!! Strongest. 34...\textit{g7}
35.\textit{g4} + \textit{h7} 36.\textit{xf4} White will either give deadly checks, or win the endgame.

32...\textit{e8} does prevent the check on \textit{h5}, but not 33.\textit{xe5} + \textit{xe5} 34.\textit{f6}, winning.

However, the main line move is met strongly with:

33.\textit{h6} + \textit{g8} 34.\textit{xe6} + \textit{h7} 35.\textit{f5} + \textit{g8}
36.\textit{g6} + \textit{g7} 37.\textit{h6}

Black is forced to enter a dubious endgame. 37...\textit{xg2} + 38.\textit{xg2} + \textit{xg2} 39.\textit{h7} + \textit{g7} 40.\textit{g2} \textit{c5} 41.\textit{e1}!!

Black has some counterplay with the d-pawn, but he is a pawn and an exchange down, so it is hard to believe that it is enough.

31...\textit{h7} 32.\textit{e7}??

After 32.\textit{h4} \textit{c6} 33.\textit{d2} + \textit{g8} 34.\textit{g5}
\textit{g7} 35.\textit{xd6} \textit{c5} Black has the advantage.

32...\textit{xe6} 33.\textit{e3} \textit{f6} 34.\textit{h3} + \textit{g5}
35.\textit{xe6} \textit{e8}!

This is the winning move. After the computer's favourite 35...\textit{e5} White can hold the balance in the following long line: 36.\textit{e1}
\textit{e8} 37.\textit{xe5} + \textit{xe5} 38.\textit{f4}!! + \textit{xf4} 39.\textit{f6} + \textit{e4} 40.\textit{h4} + \textit{d5} 41.\textit{d7} + \textit{xd7} 42.\textit{c4} + \textit{c5}
43.\textit{xe5} + \textit{d5} 44.\textit{e3} + \textit{c6} 45.\textit{xd3} and White wins back the piece, as after 45...\textit{c6}?
46.\textit{e4} + White wins the a8-rook.

36.\textit{f4} + \textit{xf4} 37.\textit{f1} + \textit{g5} 38.\textit{xf6}

White had a better chance to survive after 38.\textit{g3} + \textit{h6} 39.\textit{xf6} + \textit{xe6} 40.\textit{g5} + \textit{c6} 41.\textit{h6} + \textit{c5} 42.\textit{h7} + \textit{h4} 43.\textit{h6} + \textit{g3}
44.\textit{xe6}, but Black stays on top with 44...\textit{g8}.

For example, 45.\textit{f1} \textit{d7} 46.\textit{c1} \textit{c6}.

38...\textit{xe6} 39.\textit{xe6} d2 40.\textit{d3} \textit{c5}

The end of the time trouble, and the game.

41.\textit{e5} + \textit{f6}
0–1
32

Kr. Georgiev – Gochev

Bulgaria 1983

1...\texttt{Be8}?

Georgiev was impressed with this drawing combination, but in reality the position should be winning for Black.

The winner was:

1...\texttt{Bf2}!!

With the threats of ...\texttt{Rc1}!! and ...\texttt{Re5}.

2.\texttt{b4}!

The only attempt.

2.\texttt{a5}! \texttt{Rxa6} 3.\texttt{c4} \texttt{Re5}! 4.\texttt{cxb5} \texttt{Rxb5} 5.\texttt{Rh6}! \texttt{Rxa5} and Black is winning.

2.\texttt{h3} \texttt{Rg3} is also inadequate, as is 2.\texttt{Rg1} \texttt{Rxg1}!.

2...\texttt{cxb4} 3.\texttt{c4}!?

3.\texttt{Rg7} \texttt{Re8} wins.

3...\texttt{Ra5}!

There are other moves, but this one is clear.

Black is threatening ...\texttt{Rc1} and ...\texttt{Re5}.

4.\texttt{Rf6}?! \texttt{Rxf6} 5.\texttt{Rc7} \texttt{Re5} 6.\texttt{Rd8} \texttt{Rx6} 7.axb5 \texttt{Rxb5} 8.\texttt{Ra8}! \texttt{Rb6} 9.\texttt{Rd8}! \texttt{Rc7} 10.\texttt{c5}! \texttt{Rb7} 11.\texttt{Rd5}+ \texttt{Rc6}

Black wins.

1...\texttt{Be2}?! also looks dangerous, but the following long forced line is less clear: 2.a5?! \texttt{Rxa6} 3.\texttt{Rd7} \texttt{Rc5} 4.\texttt{Rxc6} \texttt{Rxc5} 5.b4?! \texttt{cxb4} 6.\texttt{Ra1}+! \texttt{Rxal} 7.\texttt{Rc7}+ \texttt{Ra6} 8.\texttt{Rc6}+ \texttt{Rxa7} 9.\texttt{Rc7}+ \texttt{Rxa8} 10.\texttt{Rc6}+ \texttt{Re8} 11.\texttt{Rd6}+ \texttt{Rc8} 12.\texttt{Rxf8}+ \texttt{Rxh8} 13.\texttt{Rh3} \texttt{Rxh8} 14.\texttt{Rxe8} \texttt{Rd1}+ 15.\texttt{Rh2} \texttt{Rxc2} Black is likely to win this ending, but it is less conclusive than the above line.

3.\texttt{Rg1} \texttt{Rxh8}! 4.\texttt{Rb1} \texttt{Be8}? 5.\texttt{Rg1}

\texttt{\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}}

33

Grüenfeld – Sigurjósson

Lucerne 1979

White won with a beautiful combination, opening lines on the kingside.

21.\texttt{Bhg5}!!

21.\texttt{Rxf7}? \texttt{Rf5} 22.\texttt{Bhg5} \texttt{Rxe5}! 23.\texttt{Rxe5} \texttt{Rxe5} offers neither player an advantage.

21.\texttt{Rg5}?! \texttt{hxg5} 22.\texttt{Rxf5} \texttt{Rf5} 23.\texttt{Rxf5} \texttt{exf5} 24.e6 might look dangerous, but Black survives. (24.\texttt{Rxf7}+ \texttt{Rg8} 25.\texttt{Rxd8} only leads to unclear play.) 24...\texttt{Rxe6} (24...\texttt{fxe6}? would lose devastatingly to a multitude of checks. 25.\texttt{Rh4}+ \texttt{Rg8} 26.\texttt{Rh7}+ \texttt{Rh8} 27.\texttt{Rhxh6}+ \texttt{Rf7} 28.\texttt{Rxg7}+ \texttt{Rxg7} 29.\texttt{Rxe5} \texttt{Rc4} 30.\texttt{Rb3}+ \texttt{Rc3} 31.\texttt{Rxb4} 32.a4?! \texttt{Rxe4} 33.\texttt{Rxe6} \texttt{Rxh6} 34.\texttt{Rxb7}+ \texttt{Rxa5} 35.\texttt{Rb5}+ \texttt{Rc5} mate!)

25.\texttt{Rh4}+ \texttt{Rg8} 26.\texttt{Rh7}+ \texttt{Rxh7} 27.\texttt{Rxb7} \texttt{Rh6} 28.\texttt{Rxe7} \texttt{Re6} with unclear play. Notice that 28.\texttt{Rxd7}? does not work, as after 28...\texttt{Rxh7} 29.\texttt{Rhxh6}+ \texttt{Rf6} 30.\texttt{Rxh6}+ \texttt{Rxd7} 31.\texttt{Rf1} \texttt{Rxh8} the queen is trapped.

21...\texttt{hxg5}

21...\texttt{Rf5} 22.\texttt{Rxf5}+ \texttt{Rg8} 23.\texttt{Rhf6}+ \texttt{Rf8} 24.\texttt{Rg5} and White is in the process of mating.

22.\texttt{Rxf7}!

It is important to follow up the initial sacrifice correctly. Next comes \texttt{Rxg5}.
22. \( \text{Axg5?} \) transposes to 21. \( \text{Axg5} \) above.

22... \( \text{Bxg8} \)

22... \( \text{Bf5} \) 23. \( \text{Bxf5} \) \( \text{Bxf5} \) 24. \( \text{Axg5} \) is also winning.

23. \( \text{Bxg6} \)

Mate on h7 is a reality.

23... \( \text{Bxd3} \) 24. \( \text{Bxg5} \)

1-0

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**Spraggett – Vallejo Pons**

*Calvia 2006*

23. \( \text{Be6!} \) \( \text{Bxe6} \)

Also after both 23... \( \text{Bxa5} \) 24. \( \text{Bxf8} \) \( \text{Bxf8} \) 25. \( \text{Be3} \), and 23... \( \text{Bxe6} \) 24. \( \text{dxe6} \) \( \text{Bxe6} \) 25. \( \text{Bh3} \), Black's position would be utterly hopeless.

24. \( \text{dxe6} \) \( \text{Bxe6} \) 25. \( \text{Bh3}! \)

The bishop emerges with the sole idea of removing the queen from the defence.

25... \( \text{Bd7} \)

The only move that does not lose a piece directly.

26. \( \text{Bxa8} \) \( \text{c7} \) 27. \( \text{Bc7} \) \( \text{c6} \)

27... \( \text{Bc8} \) transposes.

28. \( \text{Ba6} \) \( \text{c7} \)

28... \( \text{Bc5} \) 29. \( \text{Bxe6} \) \( \text{Bxe6} \) 30. \( \text{c4!} \) leads to a mating attack. White is threatening both \( \text{Bb5} \) and \( \text{Bd5} \), and after 30... \( \text{Bxc3} \) it is mate in five beginning with 31. \( \text{Bb4} \).

29. \( \text{Bc5} \)

29. \( \text{Bd4?} \) was also powerful, but after 29... \( \text{Bc6} \) 30. \( \text{Bc5} \) \( \text{Bb6} \) 31. \( \text{Bxb6} \) \( \text{Bxb6} \) 32. \( \text{Bxd6} \) \( \text{c7} \) 33. \( \text{Bxe6} \) \( \text{g5} \) Black still has a few chances to save the endgame because of the strong pawn on b4.

29... \( \text{Bc6} \)

29... \( \text{Bc8} \) 30. \( \text{Bd4!} \) is simply winning. After something like 30... \( \text{Bxf6} \) 31. \( \text{Bc7} \) 32. \( \text{Bb4} \) White will win the queen, at the very least.

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**Hector – Rausis**

*Hamburg 2000*

20. \( \text{Bxd5!} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 21. \( \text{Bc2} \)

This is the point. Once the queen penetrates the black position, the attack becomes irresistible. 21. \( \text{Bc2} \) would fail to achieve anything. After 21... \( \text{Bd8} \) 22. \( \text{Bc7} \) \( \text{c8} \) White has no compensation.

21... \( \text{Bd8} \) 22. \( \text{Bc7} \) \( \text{c8} \) 23. \( \text{Bd6} \) \( \text{Bd8} \)
23...\textit{We}6 24.\textit{e}5 leaves White with a winning attack, with or without taking on f7 first.

24.\textit{Ex}f7

It might take a seasoned attacker to see that this is a winning attack.

24...\textit{Ex}f6 25.\textit{e}5 \textit{d}7! 26.\textit{g}6!

After 26.\textit{e}7\textit{f}8 27.\textit{e}1 \textit{e}8 28.\textit{e}6 \textit{e}8 Black is holding on with the edge of his nails.

26...\textit{We}6

26...\textit{We}8 loses to a nice queen manoeuvre. 27.\textit{W}g3 \textit{e}4 28.\textit{b}b3 \textit{f}7 29.\textit{d}d1 \textit{b}6 30.\textit{x}d5 with a winning attack. For example: 30...\textit{b}b7 31.\textit{d}d3! \textit{f}6 32.\textit{e}e5 \textit{e}e8 33.\textit{f}f3\textit{f} 34.\textit{a}a6 34.\textit{a}a5! \textit{xa}5 (34...\textit{b}xa5 35.\textit{c}c6#) 35.\textit{a}3\textit{a}3 \textit{b}b5 36.\textit{d}d4\textit{c} 37.\textit{b}b3\textit{xd}4 38.\textit{d}d3 mate.

27.\textit{e}5 \textit{b}6 28.\textit{h}h3

28...\textit{Ex}g7?!

28...\textit{d}4 29.\textit{Ex}d4 \textit{g}4 30.\textit{c}c3\textit{f} 1-0

36

\textbf{Beliavsky – Nisipeanu}

European Championship, Warsaw 2005

Beliavsky embarks on a mission on the g-file, something that will eventually become his downfall. White’s real advantage lies with the two connected pawns in the centre. Right now 22.e6 does not work because the bishop can take it, but White could have improved his position.

22.\textit{X}g5?  

The right move was:

22.\textit{f}4!

Protecting the passed pawn.

22...\textit{h}h3

After all other moves White simply plays his pieces in and consolidates.

22...\textit{g}6 is met strongly with 23.\textit{X}g5 \textit{h}xg5 24.e6! (Perhaps Beliavsky overlooked this opportunity?) 24...\textit{xe}6 25.\textit{g}5 and White crashes through with the rooks on the g-file. 23.\textit{f}f1!!

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.7\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

This move indirectly protects the e5-pawn, as after 23...\textit{xf}4 24.\textit{xf}4, the h4-knight is hanging. The advance of the e-pawn would now be a real threat; and with this kind of central control an exchange does not matter much – Black will soon suffer far greater material losses.

22...\textit{hx}g5 23.\textit{g}5?!  

Again White could have won time by giving the e-pawn away to the bishop rather than the knight. 23.e6! \textit{xe}6 24.\textit{g}5 and White retains a strong attack. Instead the advantage slowly changed hands, and Nisipeanu won not only the game, but also the tournament and the title of European Champion.

37

\textbf{Van Delft – Slobodjan}

German Bundesliga 2007

The main challenge in this position is not to find the obvious first move, but to find out what to do against White’s main reply.
17...\textit{g}4?

Slobodjan did not work out the details correctly and thus decided to enter wild complications.

17...\textit{E}ae8!

Followed by 18...\textit{g}4 this would be easily devastating if Black is only ready to meet:

18.\textit{f}3

It is possible to play 18...\textit{g}4 all the same, but after the queen exchange Black is not reaping the fruits of his great advantage in coordination and development. The right move is therefore:

18...\textit{W}d8!

Black is about to play ...\textit{g}4. Now there are two lines of which I would like to make you aware:

19.\textit{c}f5

19.\textit{c}c2 \textit{e}2 20.\textit{W}d3 \textit{f}6 gives Black a ferocious attack.

19...\textit{f}6! 20.\textit{c}c3 \textit{e}5!

There are other strong moves, but this is very convincing.

21.\textit{d}xe5 \textit{E}xa4

White is essentially helpless against the threat of ...\textit{c}6. He can put a rook on the d-file, but ...\textit{E}xe5 will be enough to win the game.

18.\textit{f}3 \textit{E}ae8

Black has other options, but none that is really convincing. 18...\textit{x}h5 is met with 19.\textit{f}5! \textit{x}f5 20.\textit{x}h5 \textit{e}2?! 21.\textit{xc}2 \textit{x}h5 with about even chances.

18...\textit{w}e6!? also does not win. 19.fgx4 \textit{e}2† 20.\textit{f}1! (20.\textit{h}3 \textit{f}6 21.\textit{f}5 \textit{we}4 22.\textit{e}3 \textit{f}3 would give Black a strong attack. 23.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}4!! is one point to look out for.) 20...\textit{e}8 Black has enough compensation here, but probably nothing more. After 21.\textit{g}1 he has many options, all leading to interesting play, but I am unsure if any are objectively better than 21...\textit{h}2 22.\textit{g}2 \textit{h}1† 23.\textit{g}1 \textit{h}2 with a draw by perpetual check.

19.fgx4 \textit{e}2† 20.\textit{h}3 \textit{f}2 21.\textit{f}1?

This goes into a bad endgame without a fight and for this reason makes little sense. The correct defence was passive, but holding on to the extra piece.

After 21.\textit{x}xc6 \textit{b}xc6 (and after 21...\textit{xd}2 22.\textit{xd}5! White has a material superiority and has managed to get rid of the disturbing knight) 22.\textit{c}1 Black has nothing better than 22...\textit{e}e3?! 23.\textit{xe}3 \textit{xe}3 24.\textit{f}5 \textit{xc}3 25.\textit{g}1 \textit{f}4† 26.\textit{h}4, reaching a position in which he does not seem to have more than a perpetual check.

21...\textit{xd}2 22.\textit{wx}f2 \textit{xf}2 23.\textit{xe}1 \textit{xe}1 24.\textit{xe}1 \textit{f}8 25.\textit{b}3? This drops a pawn as well.

25.\textit{xc}3 26.\textit{f}5 \textit{e}2 27.\textit{xe}2 \textit{xc}2 28.d5 \textit{cd}4 0–1

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38 Bromberger – Urban

Warsaw 2008

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7.dxe6!!

This is a very strong attacking move. The basic point is that the black king is drawn into the centre.

7...\textit{dxc}3

Black decides to take up the challenge, not so much out of belief in his own position, one would assume, than based on the absence of alternatives.

7...\textit{xe}6 8.\textit{xd}4 is just a pawn up for White.

8.exf7† \textit{xf}7

8...\textit{e}7 9.0–0 is no better.

9.\textit{g}6†!
The move that forces the black king to stay in the centre.

9...\[e7 10.\[e2↑ \[e6

This is the best attempt. 10...\[d7 looks very dubious, and it is no surprise that it loses to 11.\[f4! \[c6 12.\[c4↑, when the attack is winning. One line is: 12...\[c5 13.b4 \[d5 14.\[e5↑ \[b6 15.bxc5↑ \[a7 16.\[b4 \[bd7 17.0–0, when White has won the piece back and the attack continues.

11.\[g5?

This move is the most natural-looking move of the game, but it is also a mistake. The slightly more complex 11.\[f5! \[d5 12.\[d4 was the winning line. The main point is of course that White wins after 12...\[xd4 13.\[xe6↑ \[d8 14.\[e3, when there is a lethal check on b6 coming up.

11...\[d5?

Black replies in kind and White is able to continue with his attack. 11...\[b6! 12.\[e3 \[b5 13.\[d3 would have kept the game unclear. Black is struggling with the basic safety of his king, while White, of course, has given up a piece.

12.\[f7 cxb2 13.\[xh2 \[a5↑!!

Black misses the last chance to make the game interesting. He should have played 13...\[xg5:

Now White cannot play 14.\[xe6?, as now Black gives the check: 14...\[a5↑ 15.\[f1 \[d6!!, and quite surprisingly, the game is rather unclear still. It seems that White ought to be able to hunt down the black king, but actually doing it is another matter.

However, the natural 14.\[xe6↑ \[d8 15.\[d1↑ \[fd7 16.0–0, with a long-term attack against the fragile black king, should be enough to clinch the victory.

14.\[f1 \[xg5 15.\[xe6?!

The simple win was 15.\[xe6↑ \[d8 16.\[e5! trapping the black king in the centre. After for example: 16...\[c5 White wins with 17.\[d1↑ \[fd7 18.\[xb8.

15...\[e8

15...\[c6 16.\[d1! would leave Black with no defence: 16...\[e8 17.\[d7↑ \[f7 18.h4! and there is no answer to 19.\[e6↑, 20.h5↑ and 21.\[c1, check or not.

16.h4 \[c5 17.\[h3 \[e7?!

17...\[c6 was the best defence. White would play 18.\[e1, when the smart money is still on White, although no direct win is present.

18.\[c3!

1–0
24.\( \text{g7!!} \)

This is the only way to play for the full point, I think. After the exchange on e6 the only thing White has going for him is the control of the f-file, and this is hardly enough for a win.

24...\( \text{hxg4} \)

Black has to take up the challenge, or the e-pawn falls.

25.\( \text{f6!} \)

After 25.\( \text{h6} \) \( \text{g8} \) White has nothing better than 26.\( \text{hxg7+} \) with perpetual check, as 26.\( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{f5} \) 27.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{e2} \) does not seem to lead to an advantage at all.

25...\( \text{exf6!} \)

This looks like the best shot.

The other option was to protect the bishop and hope for the best.

25...\( \text{g8} \)

At this point White can play either 26.\( \text{xe7} \) or nudge the h-pawn forward, both lead to winning positions. The second option is our main line.

26.h3! \( \text{h5} \) 27.g4 \( \text{hxg4} \) 28.hxg4

Threatening the devastating 29.\( \text{h6} \), forcing Black to play:

28.\( \text{h5} \)

When the simplest way to win is to play:

29.\( \text{xe7!} \)

Forcing Black into a pawn ending after:

29...\( \text{hxg4} \) 30.\( \text{hxg4} \) \( \text{hxg4} \) 31.\( \text{hxg7!} \) \( \text{g7} \) 32.\( \text{g2} \) \( \text{h7} \) 33.\( \text{g7} \) \( \text{xg7} \)

White will win this easily with his strong passed pawn and active king.

26.\( \text{xd7} \) \( \text{xd7} \) 27.\( \text{exf6} \)

27.\( \text{a4} \)

This is rather desperate. The chances of building a fortress like this are minimal.

27...\( \text{f8} \) with the idea to cut off the white king also does not build a fortress. White can play 28.\( \text{fxg7+} \) \( \text{g7} \) 29.\( \text{e7} \) \( \text{f7} \) 30.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{g8} \) 31.b3!, and get a passed pawn on the queenside.

27...\( \text{f8} \)

This looks relatively best, but appears to be hopeless as well. White plays:

28.\( \text{f7} \) \( \text{e8!} \)

The only square; the rook needs to be protected in case White plays \( \text{e8} \) at some point.

29.\( \text{f6} \) \( \text{g7} \) 30.\( \text{d6} \) \( \text{g4!!} \)

30...\( \text{e5} \) 31.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{g5} \) 32.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g6} \) 33.\( \text{d7} \) and the eradication of the queenside pawns spells the end.

31.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{e2} \) 32.\( \text{e6} \) \( \text{f8} \) 33.\( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 34.\( \text{xd5} \)

The e4-pawn will fall as well. It seems impossible for Black to block the pawns, so he will lose decisive amounts of material.

28.\( \text{fxg7+} \) \( \text{g7} \) 29.\( \text{e2!} \)

Making the win easier. Black was hoping to block the king off in the f-file.

29...\( \text{h6} \) 30.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{e6} \) 31.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{e8} \) 32.\( \text{d2} \)
An:acking Manual 2

Black is in zugzwang. 1–0

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40 Kunin – Prosviriakov

Moscow 2006

Black's kingside is fragile and unprotected. All of the white pieces are aiming at it, except for the rook. So, the rook is sacrificed in order to deflect the few existing defenders.

28.\text{\texttt{Pe}}d6!! \texttt{Qxd6}

Black might as well accept the rook, as after 28...\texttt{Wc}7 White has a glorious choice between 29.\texttt{Wg}4??, with a huge attack, or 29.\texttt{Wh}xh6!!, when 29...f5 30.\texttt{Eg}6! is decisive, and 29...f6 loses to 30.\texttt{Exg}7! \texttt{Qxd6} 31.\texttt{Exf}6\texttt{xf}6 32.\texttt{e}x\texttt{f}6 with a winning attack.

29.\texttt{Qf}6\texttt{f}! \texttt{Qh}8

29...\texttt{gxf}6? loses to an old favourite: 30.\texttt{Wg}4\texttt{f} Qh8 31.\texttt{Wf}5, with mate to follow.

after 30.\texttt{Wh}xh6? by playing 30...\texttt{g}6!. After 31.\texttt{Wg}5 \texttt{Qg}7 White only has a perpetual check: 32.\texttt{Wf}5\texttt{f} \texttt{Qg}8 33.\texttt{Wg}6\texttt{f} \texttt{Qg}7 34.\texttt{Wh}6\texttt{f} \texttt{Qxh}6 35.\texttt{Wf}2 \texttt{Qg}7 36.\texttt{Wf}5\texttt{f} \texttt{Qg}8 37.\texttt{Wf}6\texttt{f} etc.

30...\texttt{Qxe}5 31.\texttt{Wh}xh6!

Despite the big material deficit, White cannot be stopped.

31...\texttt{g}6

31...\texttt{Wf}x\texttt{f}6 32.\texttt{Wg}7\texttt{f} and 33.\texttt{Wh}7 mate.

32.\texttt{Qxe}5 \texttt{Qe}6 33.\texttt{Wg}7\texttt{f}!

33.\texttt{Wd}4?? with the idea \texttt{Wh}4 was also good enough to win, but this is very clear.

33...\texttt{Exg}7 34.\texttt{Qe}8\texttt{f} \texttt{Qh}6 35.\texttt{Wg}7\texttt{f} \texttt{Qg}5 36.\texttt{Wh}4\texttt{f} \texttt{Qg}4 37.\texttt{Wd}4\texttt{f}

Black is mated in a few moves. 1–0

41 Fridman – Strohhäcker

Germany 2009

White wins with a fantastic combination on the queenside.

15.\texttt{Qxc}6! \texttt{bxc}6

15...\texttt{Qxb}5 16.\texttt{Qb}6 appears to be hopeless.

16.\texttt{Qd}7!!

This is a truly remarkable move. By winning time, it drags the king to a desolate place. White can then move in for the kill.

16...\texttt{Qxa}7

16...\texttt{Qe}7 17.\texttt{Qb}3\texttt{f} \texttt{Qxa}7 18.\texttt{d}5\texttt{f} \texttt{Qa}8 19.\texttt{Qxc}6 \texttt{Qxc}6 20.\texttt{Qe}4 \texttt{Qf}6 21.\texttt{Qb}6 and Black can close up.

17.\texttt{Qa}4 \texttt{Qb}8 18.\texttt{Qxa}6
18...\textit{c7}

There are other lines to choose from, but unfortunately for Black there are no other results:

18...\textit{c7} 19.d5! \textit{c7} 20.dxc6 \textit{xc6} 21.\textit{c1} \textit{d6} 22.\textit{b5} and the attack is too strong.

Nor much better is 18...\textit{d7} 19.\textit{xc6} \textit{e7} 20.\textit{e4} \textit{b7} 21.\textit{c1} \textit{d7} 22.\textit{a6} \textit{b5} 23.\textit{xb7} \textit{xb7} 24.\textit{a5}! and once again the result is only a matter of time.

19.\textit{c1} \textit{e7} 20.\textit{e4} \textit{d7} 21.\textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} 22.\textit{xc6} \textit{e7} 23.\textit{c7}!

White wins back the rook. It is all over.

23...\textit{e8} 24.\textit{xe5} \textit{e7} 25.\textit{xc6} f6 26.\textit{g8} 1-0

42

Gelfand – Alekseev

Dagomys 2008

White has a few interesting ideas, but they all pale in comparison to the following brutal approach.

26.\textit{xc6}!! \textit{xc6} 27.\textit{c1}!

The idea is of course to make use of both rooks quickly. 27.\textit{xa6}!? \textit{b7} makes no sense.

27...\textit{b8}

27...\textit{b7} loses quickly to 28.\textit{xc6}! \textit{xc6} 29.\textit{xa6} \textit{b6} 30.\textit{xb6} \textit{d7} 31.\textit{b7} \textit{d8} 32.\textit{b6} and mate is near.

28.\textit{xc6}!!

Black's light squares are blown to pieces by the second rook sacrifice on c6.

28...\textit{xc6} 29.\textit{xa6} \textit{d8}

The king has no chance of finding safety on the queenside: 29...\textit{b8} 30.\textit{b6} \textit{a8} 31.\textit{xc6} \textit{b8} 32.\textit{b6} \textit{a8} White can win in several ways, but the nicest is the one with all the clearance sacrifices. 33.\textit{xe5}! \textit{xe5} 34.\textit{c7}!! \textit{xc7} 35.e5 and mate on the next move.

30.\textit{b6}!!

The most accurate move.

30...\textit{d7}

30...\textit{e8} 31.\textit{xc6} \textit{f8} 32.dxe5 leaves Black busted, the main point being that 32...\textit{xe5} is answered with 33.\textit{c5}!, with mate in two coming.

31.\textit{b7} \textit{d8} 32.\textit{b6}!

This is absolutely crushing. Note that 32.\textit{xc6}?! f6 would give Black some chances to defend.
32...f5 33.♗e8† ♖e7 34.♗d7† ♕f8 35.♗xe6 ♕e7
35...♖g6 is easiest met with 36.♖xg6 ♘xg6 37.exf5, winning material.

36.♖xh6† ♕g7 37.♕c8
1–0

43
Shen Yang – Nemcova

Women's World Team Ch., Ekaterinburg 2007

White played 34.a3? and offered a draw. Instead there was a very beautiful and difficult win:

34.♕e5! ♗g8

The only move. 34...♗g8 35.♗f6 ♘f8 36.♖xh6 is absolutely crushing.

35.♗b2!!

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.c3 ♗f6 5.d3 a6 6.♗b3 ♗a7 7.h3 d5 8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.0–0 0–0 10.♗e1 ♗e8?

This natural move is failing immediately. The pin down the e-file becomes a tremendous liability.

The right move here is 10...♗e6!, as can be confirmed by having been Black's choice in the rapid game Vallejo Pons – Topalov, Dos Hermanas 2008. The game ended a draw. Clearly the Spanish grandmaster was nowhere close to falling for 11.♕xe5? ♗xe5 12.♕xe5 ♘xf2† and White comes under a horrible attack, where the weakened dark squares around the king will tell.

11.d4!

White strikes immediately against this tactical target.

11...e4 12.♗g5 ♘f5

Black's position looks good, superficially, but at times harmony can be removed by a strike to the heart.

13.♗xf7!
Black is pushed into further pins, from h5 to d5 and b3 to f7.

13...\texttt{Qxf7}?

It is natural to accept this sacrifice, but it was better to try to hang on with 13...\texttt{Qd7}! 14.\texttt{Wh5} \texttt{Da5} 15.\texttt{Qe5}. Black has to engage in a dubious exchange sacrifice, with not enough compensation.

14.\texttt{Wh5\#} g6 15.\texttt{Wxh7\#} \texttt{Qe6}

Black has run out of options. 15...\texttt{Qf6} 16.\texttt{Wh4\#} \texttt{Qe6} 17.\texttt{Qg5} and 18.e4 wins the house.

16.g4 \texttt{Qf6} 17.\texttt{Qd2}

White is in no hurry regaining the sacrificed piece. The black king looks very sickly indeed...

17...\texttt{Qe7} 18.\texttt{Wh6} \texttt{Qh8} 19.\texttt{Wf4} \texttt{Qxh3} 20.\texttt{gxh5\#} \texttt{Qxe4} 21.\texttt{Wg3} was even stronger, but probably did not feel quite as safe.

20.\texttt{Wf5\#} 21.\texttt{Qxe4} \texttt{Qg6\#} 22.\texttt{Wg5\#} \texttt{Qg7} 23.\texttt{Qd6\#} \texttt{Qd6} 24.\texttt{Qe8\#} \texttt{Qxe8} 25.\texttt{Qxe8} \texttt{Qh7} 26.\texttt{Qg8} \texttt{Qxd4} 27.\texttt{Qd8\#} 1-0

A. Sokolov – Kharitonov

Russia 1990

17.h5!

White ignores Black’s counterplay in the centre, and rightly so.

17...\texttt{Qxd4}!

Black has to up the ante. Slow defence does not work.

After 17...\texttt{Qc7}? White can play: 18.hxg6 \texttt{Qxg6} 19.\texttt{Wh5} \texttt{Qxg5} 20.\texttt{Qxg5} and 21.\texttt{Qe3} with a winning attack.

18.hxg6! \texttt{Qxg6}?

18...\texttt{Qxc2} 19.\texttt{Wh5} would lead to mate, but Black could have tried:

18...hgx6!

The idea is to build a fortress after: 19.\texttt{Wh4} \texttt{Qxg5} 20.\texttt{Qxg5} \texttt{Qxg5}! 21.\texttt{Qxg5} \texttt{Qxc2}

The critical line goes like this:

22.\texttt{Wf6!}

This is oddly the best move.

Taking the look with 22...\texttt{Qxa1?} would leave the b7-bishop undefended. After 23.\texttt{Qe3} \texttt{Qc5} 24.\texttt{Qh3} \texttt{Qh5} 25.\texttt{Qxh5} gxh5 26.\texttt{Qg5\#} \texttt{Qh7} 27.\texttt{Qe7\#}, White wins.

23.\texttt{Qxc5}

White has nothing better than to force the forcing sequence.

23...\texttt{Qxa1} 24.\texttt{Qe3} \texttt{Qc5} 25.\texttt{Qh3} 25.g4? \texttt{Qb5} would turn the tables, badly.

25...\texttt{Qh5} 26.\texttt{Qxh5} gxh5 27.\texttt{Qg5\#} \texttt{Qh8} 28.\texttt{Qxh5\#} \texttt{Qg7} 29.\texttt{Qd1} \texttt{Qd5} 30.\texttt{Qxa1} \texttt{Qg6}

Can Black hold this ending? I don’t know, it seems as if there is a genuine chance, but it is not an easy job.

19.\texttt{Qxh7!}

A nice shot. 19.\texttt{Qxg6} hxg6 20.cxd4 \texttt{Qxd4} would endanger White a great deal. Equality does not seem to be on the cards even.

19...\texttt{Qxc2} 20.\texttt{Qxg6\#} \texttt{Qh8}
20...\textbf{g7} fails after 21.\textbf{h6} and 22.\textbf{g5}, winning.

21.\textbf{g5}!

The absence of defenders around the black king decides the game.

21...\textbf{xg5} 22.\textbf{gxg5} \textbf{d7}

22...\textbf{e7} 23.\textbf{xex6} also does not fare well.

23.\textbf{xex6} \textbf{c6} 24.\textbf{wh5}† \textbf{g8} 25.\textbf{d1}!

The rook comes into the game and ends it at the same time.

25...\textbf{g7} 26.\textbf{dd6}† \textbf{xd6} 27.\textbf{xd6} \textbf{f6} 28.\textbf{d8}†

Black resigned. There is no good recapture on \textbf{b8}.

1–0

\textbf{46}

Sutovsky – Hector

York 1999

Our two heroes battle it out in a splendid miniature. The position looks like a normal quiet position in the exchange Ruy Lopez, but Sutovsky was able to exploit the absence of defenders around the black king to the maximum with a brutal attack.

14.\textbf{xa4}!!

The main threat is \textbf{xb6} with a devastation of the king's defensive wall. Surprisingly there is no defence.

14...\textbf{g4}

Other lines are not really better:

14...c5 loses a pawn to 15.\textbf{xb6}†, as after 15...\textbf{b7} 16.\textbf{d5}† \textbf{xb6} 17.\textbf{xc5} Black is clearly defenceless.

14...\textbf{e7} also does not work. The idea of \ldots c5 is sound, but after:

Finally there is 14...\textbf{g4}, which loses to 15.\textbf{xb6}† \textbf{cxb6} 16.\textbf{wxb6} \textbf{xe3} 17.\textbf{a5}! \textbf{de8} 18.fxe3 with a winning attack. For example: 18...\textbf{xe4} 19.\textbf{xa6}† \textbf{c7} 20.\textbf{b7}† \textbf{d8} 21.\textbf{xc6}† \textbf{xc6} 22.\textbf{xc6} \textbf{xc6} 23.\textbf{a8}† \textbf{e7} 24.\textbf{wh8} and White wins on points.

15.\textbf{xb6}† \textbf{cxb6} 16.\textbf{wxb6} \textbf{xd1} 17.\textbf{xd1}

The extra rook does not help Black. 17...\textbf{a5}!! was also good enough to win: 17...\textbf{c7} 18.\textbf{b7}† \textbf{d7} 19.\textbf{xd1}† \textbf{e6} 20.\textbf{xc6}† \textbf{d6} 21.\textbf{xd6}† \textbf{xd6} 22.\textbf{c4}, and so on.

17...\textbf{g4}

17...\textbf{d7} 18.\textbf{f4} is just as devastating.

18.\textbf{xa6}† \textbf{d7} 19.\textbf{f4} \textbf{e7} 20.\textbf{xd6}† \textbf{xd6} 21.\textbf{b7}† \textbf{e6}

21...\textbf{e8} 22.\textbf{c8}† \textbf{e7} 23.\textbf{c7}†, and White wins.

22.\textbf{c5}† \textbf{e5} 23.\textbf{e7}† \textbf{e6} 24.\textbf{c7}†

1–0
Chapter 6 - Solutions

Sulashvili - Guseinov

Baku 2008

This is not an easy exercise, but luckily Black has not one, but two ways to win. Finding either one could be considered an accomplishment.

26...\begin{equation} \text{Bh6!} \end{equation}

26...\begin{equation} \text{Bg6?! does not work, on account of 27...\text{exe3! Dexe3 28.Ed2 Dxc4 29.Dxc6 and Black does not have 29...Dxd2 due to 30.Df8 mate.} \end{equation}

However, the second way to win the position was:

26...\begin{equation} \text{Bf2?? 27.Dh1 Gg6 28.Df1} \end{equation}

28.Dg1 loses elegantly to 28...\begin{equation} \text{Dg3!! 29.h3 Bh6 30.Df1 Df6 31.Wc2 (31.Dxc6 Dxe3 is trivial) 31...Dg4!! 32.fxg4 Dd5 and mate is near.} \end{equation}

28.Dxe5!

28...\begin{equation} \text{Bf8?! actually also wins, but the reasoning is too surreal to interest anyone other than computer freaks.} \end{equation}

On the other hand 28...\begin{equation} \text{Df6 29.Wxc6 Dxe3 does not win. White has: 30.Dc4!? Df8 31.Dxe6 Dxc6 32.Bo1 Df6 33.Bo4 De4 34.h3 and Black has no attack, only a perpetual check.) 33.Wc5 Df8 34.Df7?? Dxf7 35.Wxc7+ with perpetual.} \end{equation}

29.Dxe5 Dxe7!!

Black wins, as there is no defence against ...Df7-f5-g3++.

27.Dxd5

The principled line. 27.h3 is well met with 27...\begin{equation} \text{Bg6!, with the ideas ...Wxh3 or ...Bxg2.} \end{equation}

28.Df1 does not work on account of 28...\begin{equation} \text{Df2} \end{equation}

29.Dh1 Df6 30.Dxc6 Dxe3 and mate is near.

27...\begin{equation} \text{Wxh2} \end{equation} 28.Df1 Bh5!!

This is a fantastic point to the attack. White cannot take on c6 because of ...Dc4++, so he has to give up the queen quickly.

29.Dxe6 Bh6 30.Dxe6+

The most beautiful point is seen after 30.Dxe6 Bh1++; 31.Bo2 Bxg2++; 32.Dd3 Bc2 mate!

Also 30.Dc2 e2++ is obviously hopeless.

30...\begin{equation} \text{Dxe6 31.Dxe6 Bh1} \end{equation} 32.Bo2 Bxg2++; 33.Dd3 Bg6+

Picking up the knight, and with it the full point.

34.Dc3 De6 35.d5 De5++; 36.Dc2 Ba6 0–1
Nijboer – Dao Thien Hai

Wijk aan Zee 1997

White has a winning attack, but it is not so easy to bring in the pieces. 26...\textit{e}f3 was played in the game. After 26...\textit{e}e8 it was hugely complicated. White is probably still doing well, but has to play a lot of great moves to prove it. In time trouble Nijboer did not manage to do this (even though he did manage to sacrifice his queen) and the game eventually ended in a draw on move 96.

26.\textit{e}f5!!

This was the right move. Clearly Black cannot allow the rook to emerge on h5, so he has no choice but to open up for the bishop on d3 with:

26...\textit{x}f5 27.\textit{x}f5 \textit{d}d5\textdagger!

White wins trivially after: 27...\textit{x}f6 28.\textit{x}g6 \textit{x}g6 29.\textit{c}c4\textdagger \textit{f}7 30.\textit{x}f7 \textit{x}f7 31.\textit{f}xf6 \textit{d}d5\textdagger 32.\textit{g}1 \textit{x}f6 33.\textit{f}4\textdagger and 34.\textit{e}7\textdagger.

28.\textit{g}1!!

This finesse is very important. The point is that 28...\textit{f}4 can be met with 29.\textit{x}g6\textdagger, winning.

28.\textit{e}4? was given by Thomas Ernst with the nice winning line 28...\textit{d}d6 29.\textit{x}g6 \textit{x}g6 30.\textit{x}g6\textdagger \textit{x}g6 31.\textit{f}7\textdagger. However, Black might be able to defend the ending after 28...\textit{f}4!, when I have not been able to find anything better than: 29.\textit{x}g6 \textit{xe}4\textdagger 30.\textit{xe}4 \textit{h}h6 31.\textit{g}xh7\textdagger \textit{h}xh7 32.\textit{h}h4 \textit{g}g6 33.\textit{x}h6\textdagger \textit{g}5 34.\textit{h}4\textdagger \textit{g}4 35.\textit{x}f8 \textit{xf}8 36.\textit{d}d4 \textit{d}d8 37.c3 \textit{d}d6, when the ending looks suspiciously close to a draw to my eyes.

28...\textit{f}4

White also wins after 28...\textit{fe}8 29.\textit{x}g6 \textit{x}g6 30.\textit{f}1 \textit{f}7 31.\textit{c}4\textdagger, and the queen is lost.

29.\textit{e}4

Now White is returning to something close to Ernst's line, as Black can no longer give up the queen.

29...\textit{d}d6 30.\textit{h}h1!

Black is lost. He has to play:

30...\textit{g}6

to stay in the game for even a few seconds, and here White can play:

31.\textit{x}g6 \textit{x}g6 32.\textit{g}g6\textdagger \textit{x}g6 33.\textit{f}7\textdagger!

We are back in exactly the same position as given by Ernst. White wins. If you solved this, I am deeply impressed.

Brynell – Bj. Thorfinnsson

Copenhagen 2008

This exercise should be incredibly testing even for GMs.

20...\textit{x}d2!!

20...\textit{f}4 is actually also enough to win, but it is such a computer move, that I choose to ignore it! Suffice to say that after 21.\textit{g}xf4 \textit{exf}4 22.\textit{xf}4 \textit{x}h4 Black is winning.
21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}d2} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}f3} 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}c3}!

The best and only defence. 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}xf3}? would be playing in help-mate style.

22...\textit{g5}?

This appears decisive, but there is an escape. There was a beautiful winning line:
22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xh4\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}} 23.gxh4 \textit{b4}!!

This is the winning concept (it was also possible to play 22...b4 transposing).
Instead 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}f3\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}} 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}f1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xh4 does not work. Besides a draw by capturing on c6, White has 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xe5\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}! redirecting the queen to g3.
24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xc6\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}

White has to walk the plank. After 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}d3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}f3\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}} 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xf1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xh4 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}e3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}g2\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}, or
24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}g3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}f3, there is no hope at all.
24...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}d7 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}a8\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}e7 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xa6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}h3\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}!

White is mated.

23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}ed1?

White misses his chance to save the game. After 23.h3!! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xh3\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}} 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xh3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xh4 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}c6\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}} the position is wildly unclear. And 25.g4? leaves White facing grave difficulties after 25...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}g5\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}} 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}g2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xg4\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}} 27.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}h1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}e6 with a winning attack for Black.

23...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xh4?

23...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}f6! would have won easily. Now 24.h3 fails due to 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xh4\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}} 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xh4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xd1.

24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xc6\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}f7 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xc7\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}g8 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}d8 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}h3\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}
27.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}h1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}d4 28.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}g4?!

A horrific end. After 28.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}xf8\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}xf8
29.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}d8\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}} White gives perpetual check.

28...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}g2\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}!

White must have missed this.

29.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}g1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}xg4 30.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}xf8\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}xf8 31.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}d6\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}f7
32.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}d5\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text堌}}}e6
0–1

50

\textit{Cheparinov - Gashimov}

Sochi 2008

The move played in the game, 37...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text⏜}}}xf6?, led straight to the draw that both players probably thought was inevitable: 38.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}xf4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}xf4 39.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}e2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}xh4 40.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}e6\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}g7 41.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}d7\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}g6 42.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}e8\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}g7 43.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}d7\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}g6 44.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}e8\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}g7 45.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}d7\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}g6

But Black missed the chance to create a rare beauty:

37.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}b1\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}} 38.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}h2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\text сочета}}}h3!!
39...\textit{h}7 40.f3

The best chance.

40...\textit{x}g6!

One should not forget about the possibility to win a whole rook, just because there is a check!

41.e3!

The best defence. White protects g1 and threatens perpetual check at the same time.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{||c||c||c||c||c||c||c||c||c||}
\hline
& & & & & & & & \\
8 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
7 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
6 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
5 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
4 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
3 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
2 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
1 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

41...\textit{c}2†!!

The only winning move.

42.xh3

42.h1 would put up more stubborn resistance. It turns out that the c-file is a great asset for Black: 42...c8! 43.g2 g4 44.fxg4 hxg4 45.e2 h7 and next 46.e6 will come and decide everything. Notice that the h-pawn is useless, because as soon as it moves, the knight is back in the game.

42...g4†! 43.fxg4 hxg4† 44.xg4

It is a pleasure to end this book with one of my favourite words.

44...\textit{f}5 mate!
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