

HOW TO CHEAT AT CHESS

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT CHESS BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK



William Hartston
With illustrations by **Bill Tidy**

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CHESS**



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How to Cheat at Chess

Everything you always
wanted to know about chess,
but were afraid to ask

William R. Hartston

Illustrated by Bill Tidy

CADOGAN CHESS

LONDON, NEW YORK

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Acknowledgements

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This work is dedicated:

To all the pretty girl spectators who have ever smiled back at me;

and also

To the memory of the humourless chess author; may his royalties plummet;

but especially

To Jana, who would play even better if only her eyes were not so far apart.

1. ...But you can't cheat at chess!

Some years ago I was participating in the Students' Chess Olympics in Czechoslovakia, when one member of the Belgian team with whom I was acquainted sidled furtively up to a couple of English players.

'Hey, you guys,' he whispered, 'my opponent's playing a dragon Sicilian and I've forgotten how the theory goes. You've just written a few articles about this opening; what do I do if he plays bishop to queen two?'

As might be guessed, this Belgian was rather a weak player, but had long been a friend of the English, in fact ever since we had discovered that his rate for exchanging Czech crowns was the best in town (and it was said that his zlotys were the cheapest in Europe). Thus it was hardly surprising that one of our team was eager to oblige.

'Castle long and play pawn to king rook four and bishop to rook six; it's tremendous for White,' came the advice. The Belgian looked a little sceptical (he usually preferred short castling), but nevertheless returned to his board and obediently carried out the recommendation despite the fact that such aggressive play was quite alien to his habitually docile nature. He was, however, soon back for further instructions.

'I've done what you told me, but I don't like my position,' he announced in a worried tone.

'Nonsense!' barked his source of wisdom. 'He's played it all wrong. Just go on with pawn to rook five, bring your queen over to the king's side and you're killing him.'

After successfully accomplishing this manoeuvre, our hero had indeed established a dominating position, but was unable to spot the simple finish to end the game immediately in his favour. Thus he once more went in search of the oracle, but here came across a problem for which he had been totally

unprepared. All the time his English helper had been involved also in his own game; during the early stages it had progressed smoothly along expected lines, leaving plenty of time for perambulation between moves. Now complications had set in and a prolonged spell of hard thinking proved necessary.

Try as he might, the Belgian was totally unable to distract his programmer from this selfish preoccupation with his own troubles, and thus unhappily had to return to his board and attempt to tune his own brain in to the solution of his dilemma. This, however, proved quite inadequate for the task. He totally ruined his beautiful position with a few home-produced moves and perished through his own ineptitude.

A sad end to the story and it would be almost excusable to think that he deserved a better fate after showing such resourcefulness. This, however, is a typical case of the low standard of cheating going on at chess tournaments. Our Belgian friend was not only a rotten chessplayer but, even worse, he cheated ineptly. (Incidentally, I last heard of him languishing in a continental prison for illicit currency dealings; some people cannot do anything right.)

The important moral to be learnt from this episode is the following: If you're going to cheat at chess, do it properly.

As an introduction to successful treachery, there are few better examples than the incident during a double-round Rumania-Bulgaria match a couple of years ago. One Rumanian approached his opponent before the games with the proposition that they should agree draws in both their matches. He explained that he was feeling tired that week-end and after all why should they waste effort when they could share the points without working? The Bulgarian accepted the offer - he was feeling lazy too.

The next day they sat down to play. It was, of course, necessary to make some moves before signing peace agreements, so it had been agreed to conclude around move twenty. By that stage, however, owing to his casual approach, the Bulgarian had a terrible position.

'Look,' said his opponent; 'we can't agree a draw here, it would make the spectators too suspicious; even they can see

that I'm winning. You'd better let me win today, and I'll lose tomorrow's game.'

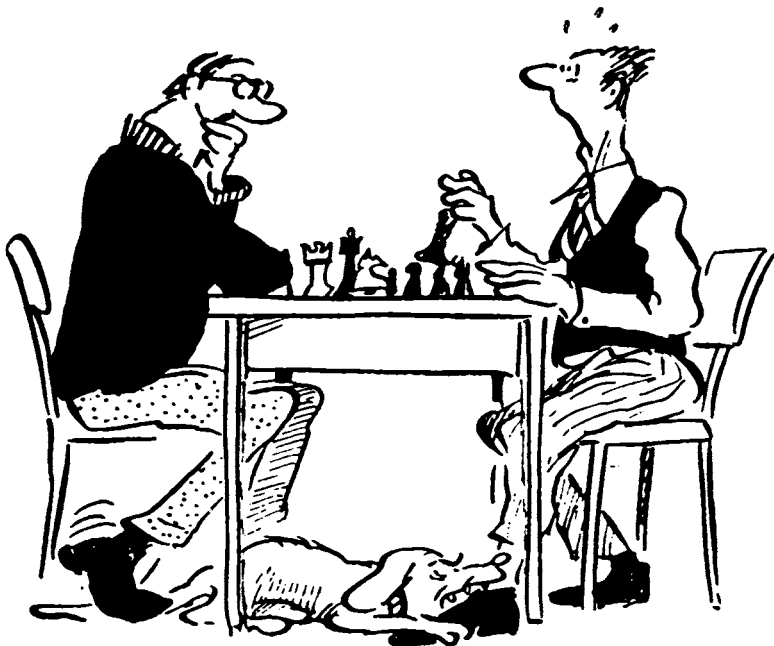
With no position for bargaining, the poor Bulgar had to accept these new terms.

'Don't worry,' said the Rumanian reassuringly over dinner; 'I'll get into time-trouble and blunder to give you back the point.'

By now a hint of suspicion had entered the Bulgarian's normally trusting nature and the next day he played very carefully and slowly. Unfortunately this left him short of time too; he blundered first and was mated by his opponent without a second thought. Rumania 2 Bulgaria 0.

This 100 per cent profit margin on the draws originally agreed should serve to show not only that it is possible, but also just how remunerative it can be to cheat at chess.

Before applying ourselves seriously to the study of the tactics and strategy relevant to this topic, it is important to appreciate fully the place of chess itself within the more general context of the cultural and artistic development of our



civilisation. For this reason the present treatise includes an introductory course in the sociological and philosophical aspects of the game. Only with a full and proper grounding at this level will the reader be fit to appreciate the more subtle nuances of the later subject matter.

Let me make it perfectly clear, however, before proceeding any further that I thoroughly disapprove of all forms of cheating as applied to the noble and royal game of chess. It is a practice both socially reprehensible and morally indefensible, and is certainly something I would never dream of indulging in myself. There are, however, so many cads, scoundrels, knaves, varlets and absolute bounders in the world, even at the chessboard, that I feel it is my duty to bring their methods to public notice. Only by diligent study of their nefarious ways will we law-abiding citizens be able to counter their foul ploys and restore to our beloved game the sanctity and purity which it so richly deserves.

2. Chess and other art forms

Chess and Sport

As the pavilion clock comes up to the hour the umpires are emerging in their familiar white coats to assess the prospects of play. They are walking slowly to the board, but it looks from here that all the pieces are in place and I think we should soon see the openers coming on to the stage. The big crowd applauds the entry of Spassky and Fischer as they take their stance at opposite ends of the big board. Fischer has won the toss and will open from the white end. He gets ready for his first delivery, leans well back in his swivel-rocker and takes the pawn between his fingers. He gives a hostile glare as he comes in to move and digs the pawn into the board. Spassky's seen it well and judged its path perfectly; it's a four: pawn to king four. And there appears to be a hold-up in play; I think Fischer has appealed against the light.

Fischer's on top in the middle-game now and hoping for an early submission. He's got Spassky in a Maroczy bind and the Russian's clearly suffering. Spassky looks appealingly at the clock; he has only to last until the adjournment to refresh himself before the next round. Fischer hammers down another blow but his opponent is holding on. With a lightning-swift move Spassky breaks the Maroczy bind and it's the bell for the end of the middle-game.

With only the white and the black left on the table, 'Battling' Boris Spassky is taking a long cool look at the position of the remaining pieces. He walks slowly round the table, examining all the angles before deciding on his next shot. With perfect confidence he plays his queen off the far cushion to pot another black pawn.

And as the referee blows his whistle for the adjournment,

Spassky passes the pocket set to Geller wearing number two, who passes it to Bondarevsky in the number three shirt. It's Bondarevsky back to Geller, Geller to Spassky, Spassky to Bondarevsky, Bondarevsky back to Spassky who keeps possession of the set taking it smoothly out of the door and into the toilet and back into the room again never losing possession, keeping his concentration and control all the time. And Geller has taken the set; Geller to Bondarevsky who is dribbling up the centre. It's a foul! The referee has blown his whistle for a foul habit.

And as they enter the final furlong, it's Spassky, owned by Brezhnev and Kosygin and trained by Bondarevsky, still in the lead by three pawns but he's looking tired, very tired, extremely tired, extremely, very, very tired and Fischer has the better finish. Yes, the gap is closing, it's closing, it's definitely closing, Fischer's catching up, Spassky's lead is dwindling, it's getting smaller, it's diminishing; the lead is down to two pawns now and Fischer's coming fast on the king's side: two pawns, one pawn, and they're level, they're neck and neck, they're side by side and there's nothing in it between the two of them. And at the post it's a dead heat, they've agreed a draw, it's a tie, Fischer $\frac{1}{2}$ Spassky $\frac{1}{2}$.

Chess and Music

Yesterday's recital at the Festival Hall was one of a series given by Boris Spassky on the white pieces accompanied by Robert Fischer on the black. This admirable duo have often delighted audiences with their accomplished virtuoso performances on the chessboard, but yesterday the early part of the programme was slow to gain momentum; perhaps their chosen repertory was to blame. The overture, Smyslov's variations on a theme of Grünfeld, was perhaps taken somewhat too heavy-handedly by these two masters of the classical repertoire; it generally lacked the airy elegance we have come to expect of them. Perhaps Spassky took the first movement a little too andante with the result that he appeared to become rather agitato in the presto finale and let a few accidentals slip in where they were not required.

Following the overture was a brief bridge passage, which seemed totally out of place in a chess match, but this was quickly forgotten with the transition to the middle-game. Surprisingly Spassky continued playing in a minor key which interrupted the harmony of his development section. Fischer, meanwhile, was continuing his solo passage, *allegretto* and with just enough *rubato* to keep in time; the audience seemed particularly thrilled with the stylish way he plucked the white pawns *pizzicato* fashion and banged his queen down *sforzando*.

Spassky took a long time during the last movement trying to tune his fiddles, but even a cunning transposition was insufficient to prevent the American stealing off with the full score.

In the second half of the programme we were treated to a wonderful song recital by that well-known baritone Bobby Fischer-Dieskau. His rendition of two Schubert Lieder was especially well received, though I personally felt that the American translation of 'Das Fischermädchen' as 'I wanna be Bobby's girl' did lose some of the flavour of the original. By contrast, his soulful and heart-rending delivery of 'Der Doppelbauer' seemed to contain genuine grief and anguish on behalf of the miserable doubled pawn. The soloist was on his very best form in the real highlight of the whole evening, the first performance in this country of the newly discovered Bach cantata 'Ach, Scheiss! Ich hab' mein Läufer verloren', in which the singer grieves for a lost bishop. Perhaps he was thinking back to that first night in Reykjavik and recalled the misery of the lost bishop, but whatever the reason it was a splendid performance until the singer walked off because the accompanist was too loud.

Chess and Western Culture

It's midsummer's day in Tombstone,
 And Bobby the Fish's in town.
 'I've come to get you, Boris;
 I've come to gun you down.
 There just ain't room for the two of us,
 And I aim to wear the crown.'

'Okay, you Yankee varmint;
 I'll fight you if I must.'
 All eyes were on brave Boris
 As the queen's pawn forth he thrust;
 And carrion crows descended
 As Black's bishop bit the dust.

'Just say your prayers, young Bobby.
 My job's to keep the law.
 You ain't got long to live now,
 'Cos I'm quicker on the draw.'
 But then a shower of arrows
 Had them both flat on the floor.

Queen's King's and Nimzo-Injuns
 Had jumped down from a tree;
 But they were rounded up by
 Fischer's knights on bishop three.
 Again a timely rescue
 By the U.S. Cavalry.

Chess and Literature

The Thing from the Other Side

From the moment I sat down at the board it was clear to me that this was no ordinary chess game. The man sitting opposite, if man is an acceptable description for such a twisted grey monstrosity, was no common opponent and I was chilled with a sense of inexplicable terror. The source of this supreme horror I could not identify, yet I was swamped by sickness and repulsion for this subhuman specimen whose clothes seemed to emit an eldritch odour defying description.

He uttered no recognisable sound but suddenly twitched into action. I turned away in horror and nausea as the black vermin slithered across the board towards me. They were crawling their nefarious way towards the white men, leaving a trail of foetid greenish-yellow ichor in their wake. I could hear my throat emitting an involuntary gurgling noise like

some strangled moan as the full terror of the situation became apparent to me: I might actually lose to this guy.

King's Pawn, Queen's Pawn, Rook's Pawn, Frog Spawn

A is for Alekhine, pissed as a newt,
 B for the British, we're men of repute,
 C are the Chessmen which drive us all mad,
 D for Defeats which can make us so sad,
 E is Excuses we make when we lose,
 F is for one of the swear words we use,
 G is our Grumbly mood for the moment,
 H is the Hatred felt for our opponent,
 I am the greatest, the best of the pack,
 J for J'adoube when we take a move back,
 K is the King, who can hop like a frog,
 L is the Lavatory, toilet or bog,
 M is the Masterly Moves that we make,
 N is the Numbskull whose pieces we take,
 O for Outplaying him, knock off his spots,
 Pee on his corpse, and hope that it rots,
 Q is for Queen, but chessmasters aren't gay,
 R is the Rape-fantasies we display,
 S is for Sex, which is nicer than chess,
 T is the Tiredness caused by excess,
 U is the Umpire who's easily tricked,
 V is the Victim, the man we've just licked,
 W's winning, its Wondrous sensations,
 X-tatic, euphoric heart-felt vibrations,
 Y is Yourself or Yoruba or Yacht,
 Z is for Zugzwang. Thank God, that's the lot.

The Case of the Dunderhead Doctor

'I've got you cornered, Moriarty,' said Sherlock Holmes as he took control of the only open file. 'You might as well give yourself up.'

'You fool, Holmes; you've miscalculated this time,' came the reply. 'How could you think to catch an archfiend such as myself in a pitifully childish trap like that.'

'Be careful, Holmes,' chipped in Dr Watson. 'I don't like the look of that knight of his. And . . . My God, Holmes, he can take your queen!'

'Calm down, Watson, there's a good chap. I have everything under control. If he takes my queen it is mate in six, as I should have thought even one of your limited reasoning capacity would be able to see. What Moriarty evidently believes me to have overlooked is his own possibility of sacrificing a rook for my bishop's pawn.'

'And after you take the rook, he wins your queen with safety,' interrupted Watson. 'You cannot tell me that's a sacrifice. I'm afraid you've let him get the better of you this time, Holmes.'

'Silence, my addle-brained friend,' said the great detective. 'Were you to spend more time thinking and less jumping to unwarranted conclusions you would see that far from taking his rook and losing my own queen I simply attack his knight and am ensured of decisive material gains.'

'Could be,' said the doctor, looking far from convinced, 'but what if . . . Look out, Holmes!' A black bishop came hurtling through the air and missed the white king by a whisker. 'That was too close for my liking,' said Watson. 'You can't tell me you saw that coming.'

'Wrong again, my dear doctor,' Holmes continued, apparently unperturbed by the incident. 'Far from being unexpected, his last move plays right into my hands. Now I force mate in ten moves.'

But before he could make his reply, Moriarty's voice rang out across the tournament room: 'You've lost on time!' And indeed the great detective had spent so long explaining all the moves to his buffoon of a companion that he had overstepped the time limit.

'Damnation,' said Holmes.

'It was all my fault,' apologised Watson.

'Yes,' said Holmes, bringing the heavy wooden board crashing down on the doctor's head.



3. Chess and Sex

Equus Eroticus Interruptus

Horst Tinball was finding it difficult to concentrate. The Najdorf Sicilian was difficult enough at the best of times, but the present conditions were certainly far from conducive to accurate analysis. The hotel room was much too stuffy; he had, as usual, forgotten to adjust the thermostat for the air conditioning. Why did the chambermaid always leave it turned up to maximum? Stupid girl, and not at all attractive. How could he be expected to win tomorrow's tournament game if his opening preparation was sabotaged in this manner? Horst usually found it easy to go through long and complicated chess variations in his head while lying on his back on the bed, but today his mind was wandering. That girl bobbing up and down above him was quite sufficient distraction without modern technology depriving him of fresh air. Horst frequently analysed the problems of contemporary opening theory while making love. They went well together. Not only did the sexual activity act as a catalyst to encourage the flow of ideas, but he found also that keeping his mind on chess was a very useful tactic for prolonging the pleasure of himself and his partner.

A groan from his companion turned Horst's thoughts away from the complexities of the Sicilian back on to the main agenda of the meeting. All his plans for the following afternoon's round had to be shelved as he gazed in admiration at this beautiful girl, squirming so delightfully. He remembered how they had met, at his simultaneous display the previous evening. He had at first been afraid of beating her too quickly, in case she went home early. He need not have worried, for she

played well and was one of the last to finish. Some chessmasters like to give draws to pretty girl opponents, presumably so that the world will consider them to be gentlemen, but this strategy had never appealed to Horst. He knew that it was necessary to win, simply in order to maintain their respect and adulation. It's no good offering them draws; not if you want to go to bed with them, anyway.

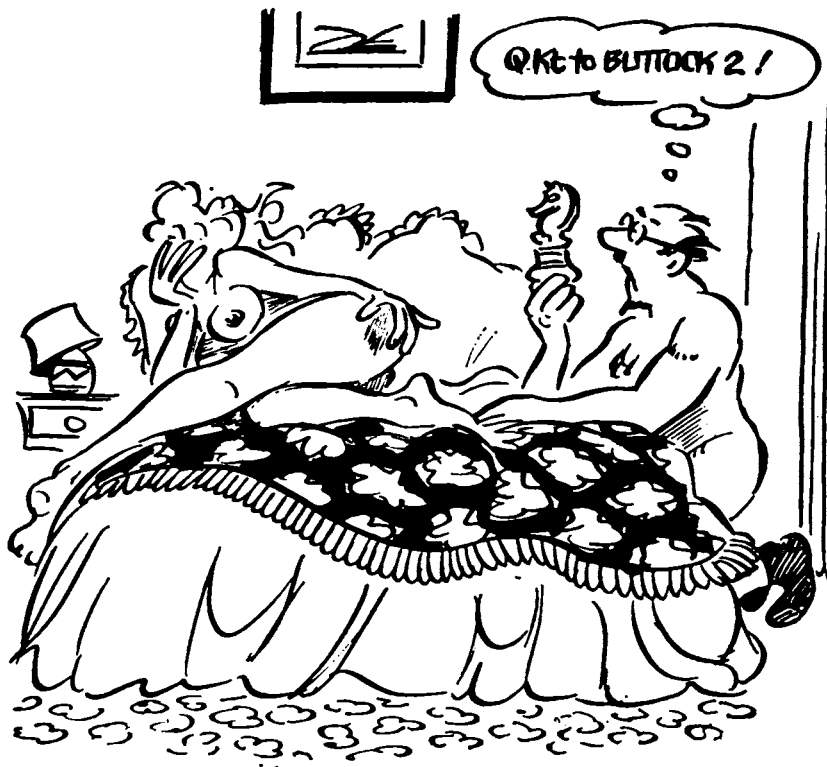
He thought back to the precise details of his exhibition. There had been forty opponents arranged in a large rectangle; she had been sitting most alluringly at one corner of the array. He remembered the promising view as he walked along the row leading to her board. He cursed inwardly as he realised that her seductive expanse of thigh must have been responsible for most of his blunders that evening. Both of his losses had been against players seated in the row leading up to the great attraction. Still, it had been worth it. She had eagerly accepted his invitation to look at the game together, to have dinner with him . . . and bed.

Another loud groan, followed by a deep purring sound, brought him back to the present. What was her name again? He tried to remember, but was in any case far more interested in her body. Elizabeth, perhaps? That seemed to ring a bell. But no, that was yesterday. It did not matter, he would probably never see her again after breakfast. On the whole he felt that such relationships were not improved by familiarities such as first names; without them it was always easier to keep feelings on a purely physical plane. Emotional involvement was not good for his chess.

Her hands clawed at his shoulder and her fingertips wandered gently down his neck and through the hairs on his chest. She coaxed his head upwards, her hungry lips searching for his as they writhed together in a sensuous ecstasy. She fell on to her back dragging him on top of her.

'Ow! Fucking hell!' she screamed, jumping up suddenly and pushing him on to the floor. 'Who put this bloody horse in the bed?'

He looked ruefully at the red ivory knight she held in her hand, noticing simultaneously its sharp ears and the impressions they had made in the pale skin of her left buttock.



Silently offering a prayer of thanks for the restoration of this piece, which he had given up as lost, Horst lifted himself back on to the bed and examined the wound more closely. 'Poor darling,' he said sympathetically, 'let me kiss it better.'

There was still plenty of time before breakfast to make up for the damage done by the errant knight. As he tenderly soothed the injured area, Horst made a mental note in future only to purchase chess sets without sharp edges, and knights, in particular, with sleek, backward-sloping ears, not friskily pointed upwards.

The Spy with the Warm Foot

James Bond was closer than he had ever been to the long-awaited meeting with Grandmaster Nikazoff. Never before had it been necessary for him to compete in an International Chess

Tournament in the service of his country, but it was essential to encounter Nikazoff over the board in order to scrutinise his score-sheet as he wrote down the moves. The future of the Western World was at stake and the governments of England, France and the United States had all too much to lose if Bond's mission failed. According to our Moscow agents, the Russians would soon have complete details of the NATO defence system unless he could discover how secrets were being passed to the East. London, Paris and Washington had all lost top security material in recent months and the only common factor was that Nikazoff had won tournaments in these cities at the time of each theft. Not only that, but in every case, on the day following the disappearance of secrets, Nikazoff's record of the moves of his game had mysteriously gone missing. Evidently the key lay in these score-sheets which, it could safely be assumed, contained coded messages. It was Bond's job to ensure that he was playing Nikazoff when he passed the next piece of vital information, so that he could watch him taking down the moves, break the cipher and destroy the whole spy-ring. He just had to win one more game to be sure of qualifying to meet the sinister grandmaster in the following round.

Bond was stunned when he met his opponent for this critical encounter. He had hardly expected to be playing a woman, and certainly not one as striking as the beautiful creature now extending her arm in formal greeting. As he gently squeezed the small and elegantly manicured hand he could not help admiring Smersh for their choice of agents. Her long reddish-brown hair and piercing black eyes were a combination he found particularly irresistible. His gaze followed her hair as it passed casually over one shoulder and down the side of her long, pale neck to end nestling comfortably between her proud ripe breasts. Her cashmere sweater had eased itself out of the top of her trousers when she rose to greet him. Bond wondered whether the resulting exposure of a thin band of pink flesh was a deliberate ploy to unsettle him. If so, it was entirely successful, for his mind was far from the impending chess game.

'I am pleased to meet you, Mr Bond.' The words brought

Bond back to reality. He liked the husky timbre of her voice and the slight trace of a Slavonic accent, but he knew that no chances could be taken with this gorgeous girl. The Russians knew how to train their women, both on and off the chessboard.

'Let's get on with the game, shall we?' replied Bond curtly, forcing himself to free her soft hand and turning his attention on to the chesspieces.

After three hours' play Bond was beginning to like his position; he had a promising attack and his opponent looked a little uncomfortable as she moved her knight back defensively, uncrossed her legs and shifted position on her chair. Her foot met his under the table. Bond moved his legs further apart to give her more room and started thinking about his next move. A few moments later he was surprised when their feet met again, and evidently not by accident. He realised that she had removed her shoes, as her stockinged toes reached his ankle and began worming their way under his trouser leg. He looked up from the board and as their eyes met she began gently fondling a captured white pawn. She smiled seductively as she lifted the piece towards her mouth; Bond swallowed hard as he saw her full red lips close slowly and sensuously over the pawn's head.

His trouser leg had by now been eased almost up to his knee and the persistent foot was gliding up and down in a tender caress. It paused again at his foot to allow the displaced garment to fall back into position, then resumed its path over the material back up to his knee. The foot's owner leaned back in her chair until it balanced precariously on two legs; her own leg was now fully extended and as she rocked to and fro her toes crawled up and down his inner thigh. Finally they found their journey's end and curled contentedly in the warmth of his groin.

Bond was almost hypnotised by the rhythmic motion of her foot, and his eyes were still glued to the pawn now being passed languorously along her lips and down over the chin to rest on her soft warm neck. He was just conscious enough to realise that the wonderful foot had withdrawn to about half-way down his thigh. Suddenly he realised. A karate kick now could



incapacitate him for life. He put his own foot in readiness under one of the raised front legs of his opponent's chair. With perfect timing he gave it a slight nudge just as her foot began its forward lunge. As her leg shot forward, the chair overbalanced, taking her with it. The karate blow missed its target completely as her powerful toes smashed through the table from beneath leaving only a hole in the board where her king had been.

Bond walked calmly round to survey the confused pile of opponent, chair and wood splinters lying together on the floor. He put his hand tenderly under her motionless head. 'Broken neck,' said Bond to the tournament controller. 'My game, I think.' He had little time to dwell on the waste of such an attractive and talented girl; his mind was already on other more serious matters. He was planning for Nikazoff in the morning.

4. Friendly Games

There is no such thing as a friendly game of chess.

5. 'Friendly' Games

Now that we have our terminology correct we can begin to think properly about this distinctly unfriendly topic. The battle is on from the very moment our neighbour issues his challenge. He will meet us in the street one morning, bounce over oozing charm, sincerity and bonhomie, and say, 'I didn't know you played chess, you must come over one evening for a "friendly" game.' He will try to disguise those inverted commas, but we know they are there all the same (see previous chapter for full details). Make no mistake about it, this is no polite invitation; it is the first shot in an ego-duel which will continue until one or other of the contestants is humiliated and crushed. Of course we have to accept the challenge; declining would not only be the action of a snivelling coward, but would also lose our opportunity to humiliate and crush this pompous gibbon who not only dares to live next door, but even imagines he has a chance of victory at chess against one of our almost unsurpassed ability. Who does he think he is anyway, that he can blatantly issue challenges to his betters just because he lives in the same street?

'Be delighted to, old chap,' we respond cheerfully. 'Shall we make it Thursday?'

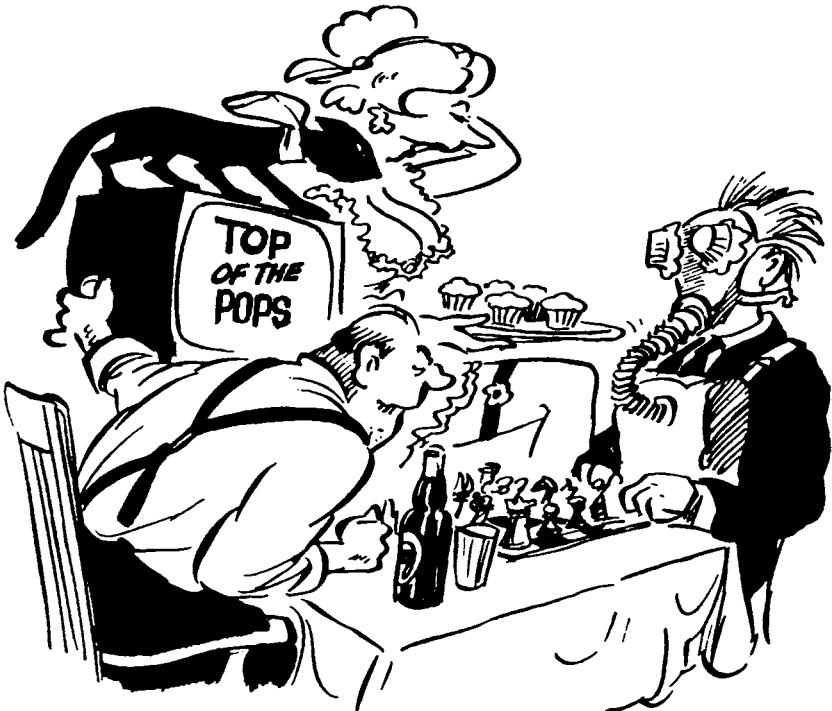
Far from being fooled by his veneer of amicability, we spend the intervening days in preparation. Not the study of opening traps or tedious end-games, but simply making sure we arrive fully prepared for any of his tricks. Naturally we do not intend to stoop so low as to cheat ourselves; our morals have never been questioned, but our neighbour is such an uncouth fellow at the best of times that we simply cannot ignore the fact that he is certain to try all forms of treachery and deceit to get the better of us. As I have frequently taken pains to point out, the study of cheating at chess is essential for every honest, upright,

God-fearing citizen such as you or me, simply in order to counter the sneaky sharp practices of all around us. Thus, by the time Thursday arrives, we have assembled the necessary materials forming the Social Chessmaster's Basic Survival Kit (for away matches), consisting of the following:

- 1) A copy of the laws of chess (latest edition);
- 2) One white queen, one black queen;
- 3) One army-surplus gas-mask;
- 4) Hip flask filled with equal measures saki and vodka;
- 5) Two ear plugs;
- 6) One hospital doctor's bleep;
- 7) Pocketful of orange peel;
- 8) One double-bass (optional).

Checking to make sure that we have forgotten nothing, we set out after work to commence the battle.

We arrive at his door a little late, owing to an argument with the bus conductor concerning the double-bass, which, it should



be made perfectly clear, does not come into the category of cat, dog, caged rodent or other livestock on the fares tariff. The door is opened by our opponent, glancing ostentatiously at his watch. We greet him with a cherubic smile; 'Hope I'm not too early; don't want to interrupt your dinner.' Suitably confused, he takes our coat as we park our double-bass (optional) by the door. We are soon seated at the board ready for the contest to begin.

Generally the first ploy in his armoury will be the old booze and buns trick. 'Do have one of these little pastries; my wife does a lovely range of pâtisserie,' he offers with as tempting and ingenuous tone of voice as he can muster. Naturally, it would be foolhardy to eat one of these sticky, starchy, flatulence inducing lumps of stale confectionery, but it may appear awkward to decline without apparently insulting the culinary abilities of our host's wife. It is possible to plead enforced religious abstinence, doctor's orders, or dental necessity, but by far the best excuse is provided by the pre-emptive gas-mask.

On first entering the room, we pace around sniffing nervously. 'Nice carpet,' we say admiringly. 'Is it Axminster?' 'No, Wilton,' he replies. 'That's a pity, I'm allergic to Wilton; gives me terrible sneezing fits; hay fever, you know. Lucky I brought this along.' And on goes the gas-mask, after which no food shall pass our lips. Actually it is not even necessary for him to have a carpet. Cat fur or dry rot may equally be blamed. Sniffing out the neighbour's dry rot can be a particularly valuable ploy, especially when he was unaware of its existence. 'Afraid you must be mistaken about that, old thing. The old hooter's never wrong where dry rot's concerned.' Whatever pretext we finally settle on for donning our gas-mask, it does provide the only foolproof defence against all attempts to poison us with his wife's rotten cooking.

While the gas-maskless player may be able to talk his way out of proffered buns, he will find it far more difficult to refuse drink without considerable loss of face. It is but a small step from teetotalism to impotence, and we must not allow our virility to be brought into question even at the cost of drinking his cheap cooking brandy. This can, however, have terrible effects, particularly bearing in mind the fact that our philistine

opponent is used to the muck, while we have been brought up on the more cultured taste of Remy Martin VSOP. That is where our hip-flask comes in. 'You simply must try a dash of this Albanian mountain stream water in it,' we say, pouring a liberal helping into his glass. 'It's a little thing I picked up on my travels; never go anywhere without it.' It is not essential, incidentally, that the contents of the flask should be saki and vodka. Any other colourless emetic will do almost equally well. By the time our neighbour has had his first sip, he will not notice that we are taking our brandy neat.

At about this stage of the game, the pawns of the two sides will be coming into close proximity with one another, and we can expect him to try the *en passant* trap. The actual *en passant* capture is a minor technicality in the laws, not bothered about by most social players, but our scheming opponent is sure to be a subscriber to the Social *En Passant* Rule: If the away player moves a pawn fairly close to a pawn of the home player, the home player may remove his opponent's pawn with a flourish, bang his own down on any nearby square, and utter a triumphant cry of '*En passant!*' Note that this possibility is not available to the away player, since his opponent has the simple expedient of running to the bookcase and looking up the laws of chess. This the away player cannot do, unless he brought them with him, which serves to explain item 1 of the Survival Kit.

As the opening transforms into the middle-game we will already be gaining the upper hand. At this stage, in response no doubt to a prearranged signal, his children will come into the room to watch the television. 'But, Daddy,' they protest, 'we always watch "Top of the Pops" on Thursday.'

'Let the kids watch if they like,' we say smiling benevolently at the brats, 'it won't disturb us.' That is where the ear-plugs come in handy.

By the end of the programme our advantage should be almost decisive. We may even be about to advance one of our pawns to the eighth rank to give us another queen. He would like to produce the worn argument about not having two queens at the same time, but cannot since he already knows that we possess a copy of the rules. What he will certainly try,

however, is erecting an edifice of brandy-glass surmounting up-turned rook, and expecting us to manoeuvre this monstrosity around as a queen. This must not be tolerated; a victory can turn very hollow indeed when the vanquished presents his congratulations, then mentions how he completely lost concentration the moment you broke his expensive brandy-glass. It is much wiser to come prepared with item 2 of our inventory.

As he nears defeat, our opponent will become more desperate in his attempts to resist the natural course of justice. The next danger to our plans is the Pussy Cat-astrophe. Cats are highly intelligent creatures and can easily be trained to bound capriciously on to the board and knock over all the pieces, if necessary. It is easy, that is to say, if there is no orange peel in the vicinity. Cats detest the smell of orange peel and a pocketful of the stuff can be guaranteed to stave off the brute long enough to force victory without its interrupting the process. With dogs, you just have to take your chance. Fortunately, members of the canine species are generally too stupid to learn such a sophisticated trick anyway, and even if they could, they would be just as likely to demolish their masters' winning positions as lost ones, so it is really not worth bothering about.

If, in spite of all our honest endeavour, our sneaky opponent does somehow manage to trick us into a bad position, it is just as well that we remembered to bring a doctor's bleep in our top pocket. Just as our situation appears hopeless we start it bleeping merrily by a flick of the switch in our trouser pocket. We remain silent, deeply engrossed in thought, while our jacket emits its persistent repetitive piercing note. Eventually our opponent will draw our attention to the noise. We jump up. 'God! I hadn't noticed. Where's your phone?' we demand urgently, and rush in the direction indicated by his finger. While he sits bemused, we dial something quickly, tapping nervously on the table-top. He listens to our side of the conversation: 'Yes' (pensively), . . . 'Yes' (more quickly), . . . 'Yes' (brusquely), . . . 'Yes' (urgently), . . . 'Yes' (desperately), . . . 'No!' (fortissimo), . . . 'God, no! That's the last thing to do. For God's sake don't touch anything until I get there.' At which point we slam the telephone down and rush breathlessly to our

opponent. 'Sorry, got to get to the hospital, must dash, emergency you know, have to finish our game some other time, jolly nice evening, thanks awfully,' and with our double-bass under our arm we run out the door leaving him staring ruefully at the chessboard realising that final victory has eluded him.

It is very important to mention here that the bleep resource is only to be used in cases of dire necessity, and indeed only when we have fallen victim to some underhand ploy of our opponent. This is the only case when any form of cheating is permissible on our part. Our moral fibre does not permit deceit of this kind for the mere purpose of avoiding defeat, but only in order to deprive the enemy of achieving his ill-gotten victory. Just think carefully before employing the bleep; was your lost position caused by your own bad play, or did he fool you? Didn't his winning bishop move come shooting out from behind that cream puff he had placed at the side of the board with the explicit purpose of hiding the piece from view? Didn't you make the fatal error just as his wife came in wearing a negligée to bid you both goodnight? Didn't he suddenly play a good move in the opening after leaving the room on the feeble pretext of fetching matches to light his pipe? Only if the germs of your defeat can be traced to such trickery on the part of your opponent is any form of dubious behaviour justified. And in that case, he simply must not be allowed to get away with it even if we must besmirch our honour slightly by posing as a brain-surgeon. Incidentally, it does not matter if at some future date, he discovers that you are only a plumber. Hospitals need drains repaired sometimes too.

Oh yes, the double-bass, I nearly forgot about that. It just goes to show how easy double-basses are to forget, which gives a clue to its role. The purpose of the double-bass (optional) comes when our opponent tries an analogous delaying tactic to our piece of bleepery. When he realises that he is losing, he will often just slow down the game to such an extent that he can indefinitely postpone the reckoning with a quick, 'Goodness-is-that-the-time? We'll-have-to-finish-some-other-evening. I-have-to-be-up-in-the-morning.' Since he clearly has no intention of ever inviting us back, we need to provide our own

excuse for a return visit. And what better than collecting the double-bass we left behind. He will be so pleased to get rid of the troublesome obstacle blocking his hall, that he will even concede the game to be free of it. A double-bass is not the only object to serve this purpose; any large unwieldy thing will do; a balalaika or a stuffed yak, for example.

The final piece of advice I have to offer to the social chess-master is perhaps the most important of all. Once you have proved your superior virility, moral ascendancy and mental domination over your hapless neighbour, never on any account offer him the opportunity of a return match. You have nothing to gain, and would only be putting your hard-earned status at risk. Whenever he suggests another encounter, just say superciliously, 'Yes, we really must play again sometime. I did so enjoy our last game,' and walk away beaming.

6. Club Chess

'Oy George!' called a voice from behind a beer mug in a dingy corner of the Pig and Gibbon public bar. 'Ave you seen this Modern Defence thing by Keene and Whatsisname? It's a new opening what they've invented; they says you can play it against anyfink.'

Albert waved the book under his friend's nose. There were ten minutes left before the match started and George was still looking for an opening to play, so he was naturally interested in Albert's suggestion.

'Wait a sec, while I get you another pint, Bert. We'll see what the book has to say.'

'You don't need to read it, George. I can explain everyfink. Issa universal penicillin, thass what they calls it. Means it cures everyfink. Can play it against everyfink like what I said before.'

'Well, how does it go then?' asked George, putting down the beers and seating himself next to his fellow club member.

'Iss' like this, if I remember right,' said Bert, taking a hefty swig of ale to clear his mind. 'He goes pawn to king four, an' you plays pawn to king knight free. Then he goes pawn to queen four and you puts your bishop on knight two. Thass all I really got up to so far, but they says you gotta play pawn to queen free. Thass very important. Pawn to queen free.'

'Sounds easy enough,' said George, quite impressed with the simplicity of the conception, 'but didn't you say you can play it against anything?'

'Thass right. Play it against anyfink. Universal paralytic.'

'Well what do you do if he starts with pawn to *queen* four?'

This set Albert thinking. Had his mental faculties been on their best form, he would certainly have noticed that it made no difference in which order White advanced his centre pawns, and that Black can play P-KN3 followed by B-N2 whether

the king's or queen's pawn is pushed first. As it was, this simple recipe eluded him, but he found another almost equally convincing reply.

'I dunno. I suppose if he goes pawn to queen four, then you goes pawn to *queen* knight free.' The logic was undeniable, if somewhat beery, but George was not totally convinced.

'What do you do then, Bert?' he asked hesitantly, unable to challenge his friend's reasoning, but entertaining slight doubts as to its validity.

'You gotta play pawn to queen free,' said Albert, with renewed confidence. 'Thass very important. Thass what they says. Pawn to queen free cures everyfink. Universal pancreas.'

'Pawn to queen three,' mused George.

'Thass very important,' repeated Albert with still more vigour. 'Come on, the match starts in a minute.'

That was how the Pig and Gibbon defence came to be invented. George's opponent in the match did open 1. P-Q4 and was stunned by the speed and confidence with which Black played his first three moves of P-QN3, B-N2 and the very important P-Q3. George won a splendid game and his delight was only slightly lessened when he and Albert re-examined the the book only to discover that his opening play had been total nonsense.

As far as I know, the Pig and Gibbon defence has not been played since, and hence retains its record as the most successful Black reply to 1. P-Q4. Another triumph for the ingenuity of the British Club Player.

That incident is not only completely typical of the spontaneity, inventiveness and beer to be seen in Club and County Chess in this country, it is also true. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent. George and Albert could in fact be found in almost any chess club. They are the stalwarts of English chess, the sort of men who will even play in away matches and whose wives will make the tea for the other players. It is for them that the Club rules specify that all games must be concluded before closing time, and to them that this chapter is dedicated.

It was just such a man as Albert whom I saw one evening

playing quick games at a London chess club. The room was packed with men seated close together on both sides of the long benches. They played with such enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment that nobody seemed in the least concerned that the clubroom was far too crowded. The chessboards were packed edge to edge completely covering the table tops with no space at all between one and the next.

My attention had been diverted to one particular game by the evident excitement with which the player of the white pieces was conducting a sacrificial attack against his opponent's king. He had already given up one rook and now another was invested for the sake of further exposing the enemy monarch. His eyes were glued to the right-hand edge of the board where he was expecting to culminate this brilliancy of a lifetime by delivering mate. The manic stare which now infected his gaze showed that he had seen how to conclude matters. He just needed to play R-KR1ch and it would be mate next move. The only problem was that he had no rooks left, both having been given up to secure this wonderful attacking position. His memory was, however, rather short and he only recalled one rook sacrifice. Thus when his hand was sent groping around QR1 it confidently expected to find a rook there. It met only air and cigarette ash, so groped further to find the adjacent board where White's rook still stood at KR1. Triumphant, and totally oblivious of what he had done, White brought the rook over, banging it down with great panache and shouting 'Check' so that the whole room could hear. 'Well,' said his opponent, whose eyes had also been fixed on the king's side, 'I completely overlooked that. Excellent combination; well played!'

About ten minutes later, the man on the next board noticed he was a rook down. 'When did I lose my rook?' he asked his opponent. 'That's odd,' came the reply, 'I didn't notice it either. Must have been in those complications after the opening.'

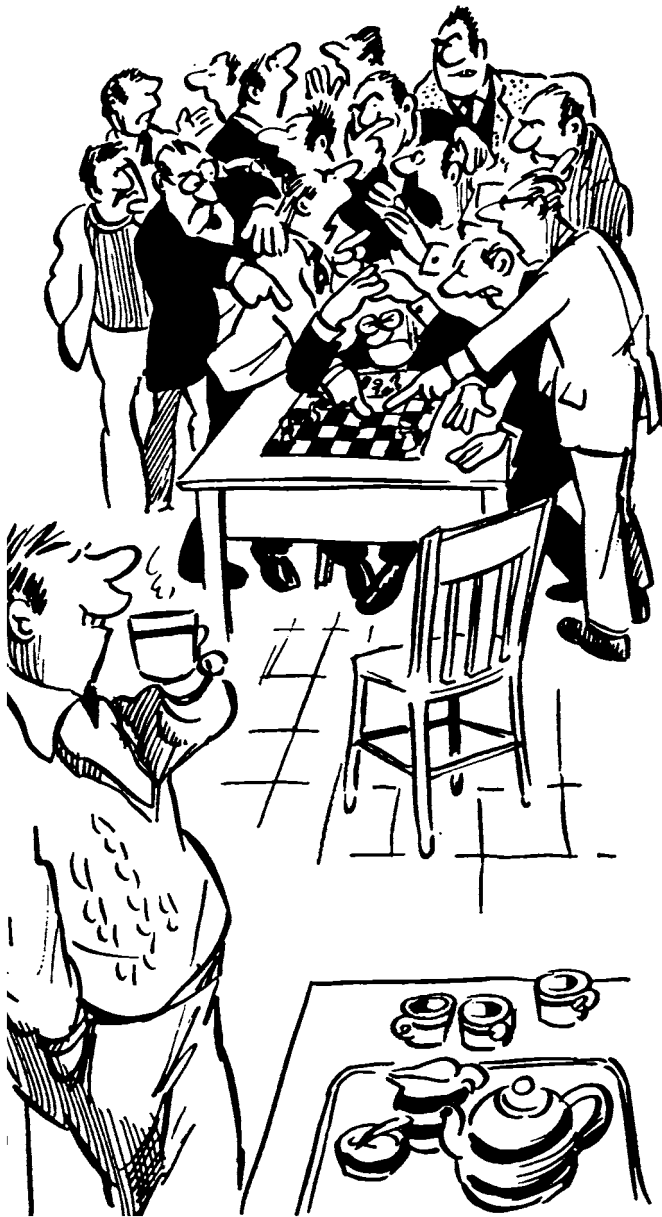
'Yes, must have been, I suppose. No good playing on a rook down; I resign. Like another game?'

I know of one other case of a piece being borrowed, but this was considerably less successful. The occasion was a simultaneous display in Ireland. The Irish Champion was playing

twenty members of a local club, walking round the room making a move at each board as he arrived. He was winning most of the games and in one of them had just sacrificed a piece to force a quick mate. When he again reached this board he noticed something different about the position. He was now two pieces down. That black knight on QR2 had surely not been there before. The champion quickly realised that his opponent had smuggled an extra piece on to the edge of the board. His first inclination was to accuse the man of cheating, but then he noticed that even with the extra knight there was still no defence to his attack, so he ignored the infringement and continued blithely on the road to victory. When his opponent resigned a few moves later, the master was able to add to his indignity by saying, in a helpful tone, 'Next time you try to cheat by sneaking an extra knight on to the board, put it somewhere more useful.'

I have found in my own simultaneous displays that cheating of this type is quite rare. It is true that players frequently receive advice, usually unsolicited, from interested bystanders, but this does not usually turn to their advantage. Indeed, it seems that the more help they are given the less confident they become. Very often I will save a bad position in an exhibition simply by calling for a brief adjournment for tea. During the intermission, dozens of hands will descend on the game I am losing, to demonstrate to my opponent precisely how he should win it. When play is resumed he can be guaranteed to have lost the thread of his own clear winning plan and will be so muddled by different pieces of advice that he blunders in his confusion and often even manages to lose the game. There is, of course, the slight danger in employing the tea-break trick that an opponent will receive and act on some good piece of advice, but in my experience this is so rare that it can safely be ignored.

Even during normal tournament games a player can turn the tables at teatime. Great care and insight is demanded at this crucial stage, for offering one's opponent a cup of tea demands as much caution as offering him a draw. A commonly held belief is that you should always let him fetch his own drink if the tearoom is more than fifty yards from the board.



The theory behind this is that there will probably be a queue anyway, so by the time he has purchased the beverage and made his way back to the game without spilling too much in the saucer, his clock will have ticked away several valuable minutes, leaving him short of time for the rest of his moves.

This argument is plausible, but I find myself unable to subscribe to it for two reasons. Firstly, if he is in time-trouble he will usually be more than willing to forgo his tea rather than worsen the clock situation; and secondly, whatever time is gained will only be lost back when you buy tea for yourself. My own approach is more subtle, but also a little risky. Most players will, I have found, be very reticent to make a move and start your clock while you are fetching them a drink. Thus, in general, it is quite a good ploy to offer your opponent a cup of tea just as he begins to run short of time. He will then carelessly accept, only realising too late that he feels morally obliged not to move until your return. Of course, there are some utter scoundrels who will spurn such ethical considerations, but most chessplayers are gentlemen and one soon learns which opponents cannot be trusted.

Although ostensibly well mannered, many club players consider it quite within the bounds of propriety to adopt tactics specifically designed to disconcert the opposition. One university student I knew spent most of one game engrossed in a copy of *Playboy*. His opponent was the local vicar and throughout the game the magazine was held open at the nude centrefold, and at just that tantalising angle where any slight head movement by the reverend gentleman would be bound to reveal all.

Other players prefer a different approach, involving a gradual demoralisation of the opponent by impressing him with their own general superiority. Filling in the *Times* crossword puzzle during the game is usually quite effective, both to demonstrate one's own mental ability and to show a lack of concern at the progress of the game. This does, however, have one drawback, first demonstrated by myself some years ago. I was playing one of these crosswords solvers, who after each of his moves would cross his legs, chew his pencil and turn his attention nonchalantly towards the back of his news-

paper. I thought that he was probably only trying to irritate me so decided that I ought to turn the situation to my own advantage. I leaned over just after replying to one of his moves and said politely, 'I think you'll find that nineteen across is "Axolotl", and you've got five down wrong. It's Ariadne auf Naxos, not Haddock and Chips.' The effect was shattering and he seemed totally unable to concentrate on either crossword or chess for the rest of the game.

Actually, the whole business of disconcerting the opponent would be quite unnecessary if only the Average Club Player knew Hartston's Rule for testing the soundness of the Average Club Combination. Offputting tactics are only designed to compensate for the bad moves which one has already made or will make in the near future. These can, however, be almost totally eradicated by a simple application of the following formula:

$$V = \frac{G}{n^2} - S$$

This formula applies to any combination calculated by the Average Club Player.

G is the expected gain in material if all one's calculations are correct

S is the amount of material sacrificed

n is the number of moves deep to which one has been forced to work things out and the formula is applied to calculate V, the value of the combination.

The formula is in fact a simple consequence of Hartston's Iconoclastic Combinational Uncertainty Principle (or HICUP for short), which states that the probability of a club player miscalculating is directly proportional to the square of the number of moves forward he is trying to see.

To decide whether a combination is worth playing, you just insert the appropriate values of G, S and n into the formula, and work out V. If V is greater than zero, you cross your fingers and play it, but if V is negative you would only be inviting disaster by continuing on the calculated path. Thus if you sacrifice a pawn (S=1) expecting to win his rook (G=5) two moves later (n=2), the formula tells you that $V = \frac{1}{2}$

and the combination is therefore worth trying. If, on the other hand, you want to give up a bishop ($S=3$) to win his queen ($G=9$) in three moves ($n=3$), we have $V=-2$, or in other words you have probably miscalculated and it's not worth the risk.

The easy application of this formula would eliminate all overambitious play and result in greatly improved results for almost any club player.

Of course, it is still possible even after inventing new openings, borrowing rooks, buying the opponent tea, distracting him and avoiding over-zealous combinational play still to find yourself with a lost position. In that case all you can do is hope to die before suffering the indignity of defeat, and even that may not be enough. In a London chess club some years ago a man had a heart attack and collapsed in the middle of a game. A doctor, who also happened to be the strongest player in the club, was sitting nearby and rushed over to see if anything could be done. A brief examination was sufficient for him to pronounce the poor fellow dead. Then the doctor glanced at the board. 'It doesn't matter,' he added, 'he was losing anyway.'

7. International Episodes

It is all very well taking advantage of the local peasantry by exploiting their ignorance of the rules, but how does one get away with underhand measures in international competition where not only does the opponent usually have a pretty fair grasp of the laws, but in addition there is an official tournament judge to discourage any deviant behaviour? Paradoxically it is in precisely these circumstances that the most ingenious examples of rule-bending occur. Perhaps it is simply the challenge of these rarefied and serious conditions which serve to bring out the worst (best?) in a potential chessboard Machiavelli, and since most strong chessplayers are blessed with a good imagination it is not so surprising that there are some fine instances of regulation manipulation at the highest levels of chess.

Take, for example, the case of a Students' Olympiad game some years ago. A Swedish player had just adjourned against his English opponent with two extra pawns and an easily won end-game. His 41st move went, as is customary, into a sealed envelope, to be revealed the next morning when the game was to be resumed. Suddenly he realised that the move he had written down was a disastrous blunder allowing his opponent to force mate in two moves. What to do? Some players I know would clutch their heads in blind panic, curse loudly and resign; others would try offering a draw, which might sometimes work but certainly ought not to if the opponent had an ounce of suspicion in his nature. The Swede, to his great credit, remained calm and suggested to the Englishman that they analyse the position together in the hope of reaching an agreement and thereby avoiding the necessity of rising early in the morning. The English player was happy to agree, because he knew his position was hopeless and felt there might be some

chance of bluffing the Swede into agreeing a draw, since he certainly appeared not to relish the thought of getting up, and anyway did not seem very confident that he was winning. So they analysed. And every time he tried to win the position (pretending to have sealed a sensible move in place of the blunder, of course) the Swede would coolly display phenomenal lack of technique. Time and again he let his opponent escape with a draw, until eventually he looked totally fed up with the position. 'Oh, I can't win this,' he said in a demoralised and disgusted tone, 'we might as well agree a draw.' The Englishman was delighted to have tricked his opponent into believing the position could not be won, and grabbed the outstretched hand, shaking it warmly and signing the agreement of a draw very quickly before the other members of the Swedish team could tell their man how to force the victory. With a sheepish but triumphant smile, the Swede played the move he had sealed on the board and walked briskly away leaving his opponent wondering whether he had saved half-a-point or merely thrown it away.

That was not really cheating, you might say; after all he only tried to give his opponent a misleading impression of what the move in the envelope might be. That can hardly be called illegal. Very well, I agree; try the next example then, a little further down the road to perdition:

A Hungarian grandmaster had a promising position and his opponent was short of time; they had, in fact, played 34 moves, and he had only a minute or two remaining on his clock to reach the time-control at move 40. The Hungarian calculated a complicated variation, then realised that the critical point would be reached at move 41. Unluckily that would be just after the control and his adversary would have a full hour to think about it and work out the right move. If only he could be persuaded to rush for just one more move. The solution was simple; the grandmaster simply omitted to write down move 35 on his score-sheet. When they had completed the 40 moves, his opponent had counted correctly but, seeing only 39 moves registered by the Hungarian, began to doubt his own addition. Best to make another move quickly, he thought, just to be safe and avoid the possibility of forfeiting the game by over-

stepping the time allowance. His 41st move was, of course, the fatal mistake.

Still not cheating? No, of course not. Just a perfectly legitimate ploy to take advantage of an opponent's time shortage. At the very worst leaving out a move can be a paltry sin of omission. You can even do such a thing by accident. There is, however, a later version, quite similar, but very definitely amounting to a sin of commission. The perpetrator was a young Yugoslav master and the incident again from a Students' Olympiad match:

The American handling the white pieces had been badly short of time since about move 25, and had stopped writing his moves down at that stage. Having to make his replies very quickly he kept casting glances nervously at his opponent's score-sheet to ascertain how many moves had been made. Most players in the Yugoslav's place would simply move the score-sheet out of sight to force the enemy to keep track himself, but our hero was much more clever. Apparently unconcerned, he left the evidence in full view. When his opponent was not paying too close attention he wrote down a couple of moves in rather scrawly script so that they took up three lines instead of two. Do you get the idea? When move 38 was reached, the score appeared full to move 39; and after the American's 39th move, our Yugoslav made his reply, wrote down both moves by the number 40, sighed ostentatiously, put his pen down, turned the paper on to its other side where moves 41 to 80 were to be registered, rose from his chair, and walked round the table in a relaxed fashion. Just the normal behaviour one might expect from a player who has just reached the time control after such a scramble. What is not expected is for the same player, thirty seconds later, to shatter his opponent's state of composure with a triumphant shout of 'You've lost on time', the moment the flag on his clock falls.

Even this is not strictly cheating, but simply an honest confidence trick. Nevertheless it is such tricks which are both more common and more impressive examples of ingenuity than the exploits of outright lawbreakers. If you want cases of these, I could cite many instances of bribery and corruption to secure wins in important tournament games (there is even a

well-known player who, I am assured, always offers to sell the point to his opponent before a game), as well as cases of simply taking back moves, or writing additional moves on a score sheet to provide the necessary historical documentation to justify a claim of a draw by threefold repetition of position. There is even a story of one master who took his pocket set with him to the toilet so frequently, that the other contestants hung a notice on the door of his favourite cubicle reading: 'Silence, please; analysis in progress.' These, however, are sordid cases quite atypical of the international scene, which, though it may contain a handful of cheap crooks, can boast a dozen talented con-men to every one of these.

It must be admitted, however, that there are not really a vast number of opportunities for the trickster to turn his talents to immediate gain. His ability is usually best employed in the task of securing a psychological advantage over the opponent either by force of personality, or simply by making him feel uncomfortable in some way. This can easily be done by a subtle suggestion of a status gap between the contestants, such as insisting on a more comfortable chair, or a better hotel; but the best sustained display of chessmanship I ever witnessed was the performance of an American student (studying psychiatry, I believe) to demoralise his English opponent.

He began the game looking ill at ease, and apparently quite unable to find a suitable place to park his long legs. By move 6, he had tried sitting on them, kneeling on his chair, stretching them out straight while balancing on the hind legs of the chair, and spreading them one on either side of the table. **Then**, with his opponent already disconcerted by this fidgeting, he turned his attention to the board at which he peered with a manic stare filled with ever-increasing suspicion. The cause of his displeasure turned out to be the fold in the centre which separated his half from the opponent's portion of the board. It was rather clumsily made, with the result that the line running down the middle between the king's and queen's files had a slight but clear discontinuity at its centre. This the American pointed out concisely and eloquently, shouting so that the whole room could hear: 'Hey! Dis board stinks!'

Unfortunately the Englishman misunderstood the trans-



atlantic idiom. He bent down and sniffed cautiously at the board to discover the source of his opponent's discontent. After this incident, he found it very difficult to regain his composure and contest the game on level terms once more. He soon drifted into a bad position. Nevertheless, he fought well and seemed, by the time the game was adjourned, to have quite good chances of saving it. Unfortunately his sealed move was not a good one, and it became clear that he would have a very difficult task ahead if he was to salvage anything. His fate was sealed shortly after the resumption. When the envelope was opened to reveal the sealed move, the American stared at it in apparent disbelief. He shifted his stare back to his opponent. And back to the board. Then he started chuckling to himself and finally burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. When he had again gained a semblance of control he rose from the board, still giggling, and called over a couple of his team mates. 'Come and see what this guy just did!' he screamed, exhorting them to join in his amusement at the poor sealed move. After that the Englishman really stood no chance.

That was an extreme example by a real master of disconcerting tactics, but such things do happen in the battle for psychological ascendancy. Even World Championship matches have had a long history of difficult negotiations and petty squabbles between the contestants, quibbling over the rules, or arguing about the location of the players' toilet, or deliberately arriving late for games. It is all part of the same phenomenon; the fight for supremacy off the board as well as on. The influence of this secondary struggle on the chess itself cannot be overestimated. Can we indeed even be sure that the spider, seen complacently spinning its web among Wade's pawns during his game against Petrosian, was not a communist infiltrator sent there with the explicit task of depressing the English representative by emphasising the immobility of his position?

8. Commercial Break

And now a word from our sponsors:

Announcer: 'It's Masterbrain time!'

(On the screen a worm appears sluggishly and hesitantly pushing a pawn from left to right across the picture.)

Announcer: 'Experiments on worms have demonstrated an extraordinary phenomenon destined to revolutionise our whole way of life. If one of these animals is taught to perform a simple trick . . .'

(A hand descends into the picture, gently lifts the worm, carries it off and drops it, squirming, into a high-speed electric mincer.)

' . . . then minced thoroughly and fed to other members of its species . . .'

(Close-Up small group of other worms eagerly eating from bowl placed at mincer extract.)

' . . . these lucky little maggots, after digesting their talented comrade, are found able to learn the same trick more quickly and better.'

(One of the feeding worms jumps up and rushes over to the stationary pawn. Bowing twice to left and right he commences pushing it forward. Having shoved it easily right across the screen, he reverses direction. The return trip is embellished with flamboyant circular diversions, figures of eight and pirouettes. The performance ends with the pawn flicked high in the air, the worm launching himself after it, executing a perfect *entrechat à dix* and landing again at precisely the same moment as the pawn itself. The other worms cheer in rapturous admiration.)

Cut to A Chess Expert sluggishly and hesitantly pushing a pawn from left to right across the picture. The overture to Tannhäuser is playing softly in the background.

Announcer: 'After decades of painstaking work we are proud to present you with the culmination of this research. Experiments on Chess Experts have proved beyond doubt that what works for worms can at last be offered for the benefit of the general public . . .'

(The Chess Expert continues to struggle with the pawn.)

' . . . for now we are proud to present . . .'

(Announcer holds up a tin.)

' . . . Masterbrain!'

(A clash of cymbals and piano discord silence Tannhäuser.
CU: Tin of Masterbrain.)

Boy-soprano trio enters singing: 'Masterbrain, Masterbrain, saves you a lot of strain.'

(The Chess Expert pushes the pawn an inch or two further, loses his balance, trips over his feet and falls in ungainly fashion to the ground, swearing profusely.)

Announcer: 'Made by synthesising the brain matter of a former international chessplayer, Masterbrain is the answer for all those who have ever had trouble digesting the Ruy Lopez.'

Boy-soprano trio bursts in again: 'Masterbrain, Masterbrain, saves you a lot of strain.'

Chess Expert climbs his way back to an upright posture; he sees the boy sopranos leaving the stage, mumbles 'Screw the bleeding pawn', and ambles off after them.

Announcer returns.

'Just one spoonful of Masterbrain and even a child can remember the longest and most complicated opening variations.'

Cut to boy in short trousers, looking nervous. He recites:

'My mummy used to give me beans
To fill my hungry belly.
They made me sick and gave me wind,
The house grew awfully smelly.
But when we switched to Masterbrain,
I eat tins by the million.
I've learned the Grünfeld, French and Dutch
And even the Sicilian.'

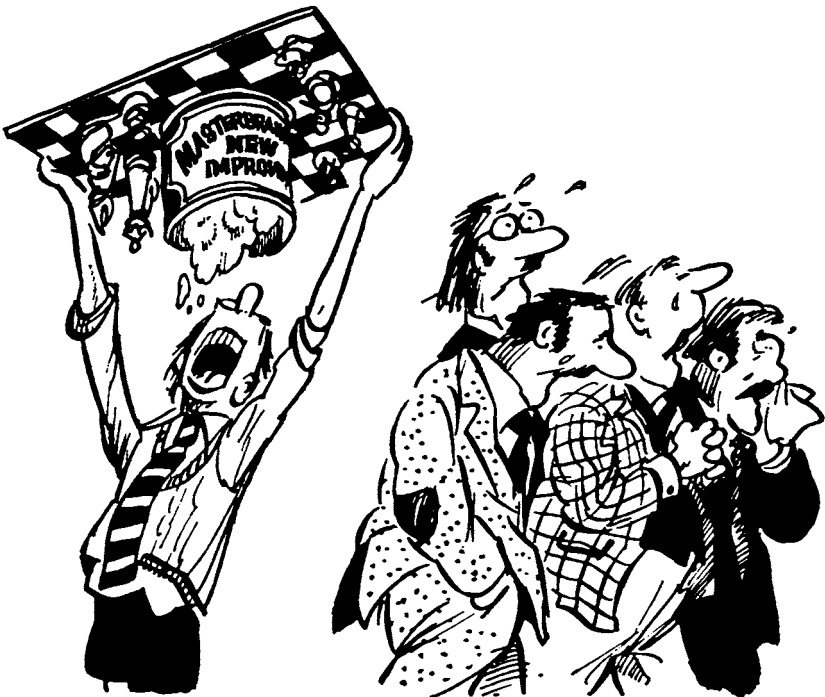
I'm often winning tournaments
With great financial gain;
I find it all so easy
Thanks to wondrous Masterbrain.'

CU: Tin of Masterbrain.

Announcer: 'Yes, in tests up and down the country it has repeatedly been demonstrated that nine out of ten bean eaters break less wind with Masterbrain. And their chess really does improve. Just listen to the testimony of Mrs Squid of Norwood.'

CU: Mrs Squid, a plump but not unattractive blonde of indeterminate age.

'I can hardly believe the change that has come over my little Archibald since we started feeding him Masterbrain. He used to come home from school every day crying because the other boys always picked on him. They would rush after him when lessons were over, with their pocket chess-sets. They



made him play, then they beat him terribly. Sometimes the nastier boys would win in less than twenty moves. It was horrible. I didn't know what to do. But that was before we discovered . . . Masterbrain! (She holds up the tin to the camera.) Now Archibald can beat them all. Even the teachers go home in tears after my Archie has been at them with his magnetic set. He gets his picture in the evening papers too. And he doesn't smell so bad. All thanks to Masterbrain!' (Holds up tin again.)

Cut to Announcer:

'Yes, Mrs Squid has seen the light. Try Masterbrain and you too will notice the difference. New improved Masterbrain with fluoride helps prevent mental decay. Buy some now!'

9. Physiognomic Chess

It was while watching an early round of a ladies' tournament a year or so ago that I first realised what a lot more there was to correct strategic planning in chess than writers on the game have hitherto been willing to divulge. The initial stunning revelation struck me when Irina Levitina left her king's pawn *en prise* at move five of one game. For an experienced international player to blunder away material in such a manner was considered by many to be quite inexplicable, a case of sudden chess-blindness, just 'one of those things' that can happen from time to time. Suddenly, however, with a burst of inspired insight, the true explanation of this occurrence became crystal clear to me, a reason so simple that one can almost excuse generations of chessplayers for failing to notice it, and yet so useful in its wider applications that it is not surprising that those fortunate enough to have perceived it before me have kept it a jealously guarded secret. One glance into Miss Levitina's eyes at the moment of her blunder revealed to me the glorious truth, which I can now divulge for the benefit of all readers: **THE FIRST PRINCIPLE OF PHYSIOGNOMIC CHESS: Players with widely-spaced eyes tend to overlook moves in the centre of the board.**

Naturally at the time this was a mere hypothesis, but its self-evident logic was so appealing that further tests of its applicability were clearly demanded. Was it really true that Miss Levitina's eyes were too far apart to see the middle of the board? Is it advantageous to have close-set pupils or do these bring with them parallel problems? I started thinking about some of the world's great players. Consider Bent Larsen's widely spaced organs of vision; is it any surprise then that he likes attacking with rook's pawns? And do not Mikhail Tal's close-set eyes correlate with his delight in crushing opponents' kings



trapped in the centre? Armed with such evidence for my new theory I took great interest in the rest of the tournament. Every blunder which subsequently occurred confirmed the new principle or gave added force to its corollary:

COROLLARY TO FIRST PRINCIPLE: Close-set eyes make blunders on the sides. Just look at any photograph of Dr Tarrasch and you will see at once the real reason underlying his dictum condemning knights placed at the edge of the board: they simply did not fall comfortably within his field of vision. The poor narrow-eyed doctor had to have his horses centrally placed or it made him squint.

How then should we make best use of this newly discovered principle? The path to better results is clear, of course: compare your own eye-spacing with that of your opponent before deciding where to concentrate the play. If he has closer eyes than yours, you must block the centre and attack on the wings; and conversely. One word of warning, though: beware of squints! It is very easy for the beginner at physiognomic chess to be misled by a wide-eyed convergent or close-eyed

divergent squinting opponent. I should also mention, for the advanced students, that it is possible to compensate for these visual deficiencies by gently swaying from side to side while thinking, in order that the whole position may be properly scanned. Grandmaster Paul Keres could be observed gently swaying in this manner. I tend to sway backwards and forwards, but that is because of my long arms. Which brings us to the second physiognomic principle.

While eyes are the most important item in the inventory of the physiognomic chessmaster, the serious practitioner will not overlook other useful anatomical items, like the arms for instance.

Now it would be quite untrue to say that short-armed players do not *like* to attack; they just find it a physical strain. After all, the opponent's king is in the habit of skulking at the far rim of the board, where it is simply out of reach of those not blessed with gangling forelimbs. The short-armed player realises very early in life how tiring it is to have to lean over



every move to shift pieces so far away, so most of them subconsciously reconcile themselves to playing moves in their own half unless absolutely necessary. Equally, of course, our long-armed brethren are only happy when extending their limbs to play far-reaching moves; they become frustrated, cramped, bad-tempered and make mistakes if they have to keep their arms curled up by their sides to make defensive, short moves for hours on end.

The moral is clear: if your opponent comes to the board and greets you in ape-like fashion, swinging up a long hairy arm from the region of his ankle, you should immediately plan an aggressive strategy. This is all summarised in the second principle and its corollary:

SECOND PRINCIPLE OF PHYSIOGNOMIC CHESS: Long limbs loathe bending when they are defending.

COROLLARY: Short arms hate to play for mate.

There is far more to this ever-growing subject than these mere two principles, but this is only intended as a beginners' guide, so we must postpone the roles of nose, thumbnail, canine teeth and chin for a later exposition. Suffice it to say that already, armed only with these two principles we have an instant guide to all combinations of attack and defence in the centre or on the wings. Add to this knowledge of the opponent's left- or right-handedness and you already have narrowed down the region of his maximum vulnerability to a small group of squares. With the full theory it is possible in many cases to determine the precise square on which your opponent is going to blunder, and you can, of course, set traps accordingly.

Before leaving this subject, we should mention legs. Some players swing them under the table, occasionally kicking their opponent. In principle it is a good thing to cultivate any such harmless habit which serves to distract the opponent without giving him grounds to suspect that you are doing it on purpose, however in this case it may fail.

One great leg-swinger is a former World Champion; perhaps it would be better to keep him anonymous for fear of alerting his opponents, so, for the sake of argument, we shall refer to

him as T. Petrosian. Well, T. Petrosian has never, to my knowledge, come to any misfortune through his leg-swinging. One or two players have complained; sometimes even quite ferociously, but no tournament referee has ever had the courage to say, 'Excuse me, mister ex-world champion; but if you don't keep your legs still, I'll award your opponent the game.'

What Petrosian evidently does not know, and will surely one day find out to his great detriment is a piece of physiognomic chess theory played some years back in a British Students' Championship. One of the contestants was a well-known leg-swinger and during one round had, on several occasions inadvertently kicked his opponent under the table. His whole strategy was, however, brilliantly refuted by the Anti-Leg-swing Countergambit: 'If you kick me once more,' said the sore-shinned opponent, 'I'll kick you back.'

The game proceeded quietly for some time, with the leg-swinger well aware of the possible consequences if he let his limbs loose, keeping his feet wrapped securely round the table leg. As his concentration on the game grew with the approach of time-trouble, his leg control faltered with the inevitable result. A soft kick in one direction was answered in powerful terms with a malicious and well-aimed blow to the ankle. Exit one groaning ex-leg-swinger clutching ankle.

Leg-swingers be warned.

10. How to offer a draw

'You vant draw at moof twenty?' asked one of my opponents during a game in a recent team tournament. We had only reached move 15, but the position was level and I was not averse to settling for half a point. But what's this move 20 nonsense? My adversary had, throughout his career, acquired quite a reputation for trickery, so I was unsure how best to reply. I opted for a pretension of naivety and politely enquired, 'Why wait until move twenty?' He leaned furtively over towards me and winked knowingly. 'For the spectators, you know,' he explained. I looked round. There were no spectators.

In retrospect I am sure that the correct course to adopt at this stage was a firm insistence that we either draw immediately or resume full hostilities. Instead I accepted his proposal. My next five moves were conducted with extreme anxiety and circumspection. Though the position was equal and we had agreed to draw, I did not trust the sly look in my opponent's eyes, I could see the dangers of being lulled into a false sense of security and realised that only a little carelessness could easily result in my being mated before we even reached the 20th move. Fortunately I maintained the balance until the pre-ordained moment and we duly signed the score-sheets to register the point-sharing.

I was later informed that my opponent made a practice of this technique, often preferring to offer a delayed agreement rather than the direct handshake. Indeed, he had a long and murky record of dubious victories scored after refusing to honour such contracts. That his opponents frequently succumbed to such trickery seems surprising, as does his surviving their subsequent wrath unscathed, but chessmasters will only very rarely resort to physical means of expressing disapproval.

There was, however, one occasion when his plans seemed on the verge of success, but he was foiled just in the nick of time by a brilliant counterplay. The hero of this incident was a Yugoslavian grandmaster and, as in my game, a 'gentleman's agreement' had been reached to share the point at move 20. On arriving at this point the Yugoslav formally proposed a draw. 'I think we ought to play some more for the spectators,' came the reply. He was none too happy about this since he did not much like his position, but it was difficult to start an argument. He played another five moves quickly and repeated the suggestion that it was time to honour their previous agreement. Once more he was rebuffed by a polite insistence that they give the spectators value for money. By this time his situation on the board had further deteriorated and after another five moves he was in such desperate straits that it was becoming embarrassing even to consider offering a draw. He did not want to appear to be begging for charity. Suddenly he hit upon the solution. Brusquely pushing all the pieces into the middle of the board, he reached over, seized his opponent's hand, shook it vigorously and declared in a loud voice, 'Yes, I accept your offer of a draw.' The surprise value of this coup was quite sufficient to ensure that the overdue agreement was at last honoured.

An obvious solution, you may think, but one that many players before him had missed. Go back to Chapter 1 if you do not believe it.

The whole business of offering draws is indeed far more complex and fraught with danger than is generally realised. Considerable sophistication is required in selecting the appropriate phraseology and voice modulation suitable for each individual situation in which one wishes to make the offer. The formal approach, for example, saying in an expressionless voice, 'I offer a draw,' is satisfactory if you are not particularly concerned whether the opponent accepts or declines, but if you have just made a horrible blunder and desperately want him to accept before he notices, such an offer is quite out of place. The reason for this is simply that formality invites more formality, so he will almost certainly say, 'I shall think about it', do so, discover your error, and sneering decline the draw.

No, the only hope in such circumstances is to adopt a polite and distracting informality. The best technique is to lean well over the board, interrupting your opponent's view of the pieces before he sees the refutation of your move, extend both hands, palms upward, raise the eyebrows, dilate the nostrils, look straight into his eyes and say, with exaggerated questioning intonation, 'Draw?' If you remain fixed in that posture until he replies, your opponent will find it very difficult to avert your gaze and see enough of the pieces through your arms to perceive the true reason for your offer. Anyway he will probably suspect that you are about to make a homosexual advance and will be only too glad to finish the game and escape.

Currently a very popular method of offering the draw is to ask, 'Are you playing for a win?' This tends to have an intimidating effect on all but the most confident of opposition.



This apparently innocent question has several deeper implications of which, 'I am not very impressed with your play so far' and 'You don't really think you can beat *me* from this position, do you?' are the most important. The best reply is the nonchalant, 'Just playing', but 'That's a secret' has also been employed with success.

From the legal point of view, it is most important when agreeing a draw to make sure that your opponent realises what is happening. This is not always as easy as it might seem for some players are extremely poor at communication. There was a game a few years ago in a team match between Bulgaria and Mongolia. The Bulgar offered a draw in his native language; the Mongolian did not understand, thought he must be resigning and shook his outstretched hand. About an hour later a furious argument broke out when the two team captains realised the discrepancy in their result sheets. In view of the fact that Bulgarians only speak Bulgarian, while Mongolians speak no known language whatsoever, the neutral arbiters found it difficult to sort out the facts of the dispute. Eventually the Bulgarian captain managed to demonstrate that his representative could not possibly have been resigning when they shook hands. 'No Bulgarian,' he pointed out, 'ever shook hands with a man who just defeated him.' All present thought about this statement for some time, could remember no case contrary, so accepted it and registered the game drawn.

Quite frequently the proposal of a draw is motivated not so much by a desire to share the point as for other purely psychological reasons. Often it is possible by a well-timed offer to persuade the opponent to become too confident and overreach in his attempts to win. Sometimes one is tempted to offer a draw just to find out what your adversary thinks of his position. This information-seeking offer is only misguided in one case: when the opponent thinks correctly that he is losing, and accepts. Fortunately a simple remedy exists to avoid this problem. If you do not really understand why your opponent is looking so miserable, try leaning towards him, slowly extending your right hand, and saying slowly, 'Would you like a cup of coffee?' If he really thinks that you are winning, you will see his own arm twitch in readiness for a handshake well

before he hears the disillusioning 'cup of coffee' phrase. Then you can work out at leisure how to finish him off. Of course, it can cost you the price of a coffee, but if you are really mean you can substitute 'biscuit'.

Even world champions are not above little ploys to mislead their opponents where draw offers are concerned. Alekhine himself once claimed a draw by threefold repetition when the position in question had only occurred twice. His opponent contested the factual accuracy of his claim, was proved correct, and then felt morally obliged to avoid repeating moves for the third time. Alekhine won a brilliancy – all according to plan.

The prize for the most ingenious drawing combination must, however, go to an English County champion of a few years ago. The championship of one of our Home Counties had been dragging on during the winter months, the games being played in competitors' own homes at a rate of one round every fortnight. By the time the last round began two players whom we shall call Mr Conman and Mr Sucker were well ahead of the rest, with $8\frac{1}{2}$ and 8 points respectively from their ten games. They were due to meet in the last game. Conman had done his homework well and knew that a draw was sufficient to gain the title. Sucker had been less diligent and did not know his rival's round ten result. So when Conman was asked how he had fared, he did not give a completely honest account of his easy victory. In fact he put on a miserable expression and said that he had lost.

The rest of the story you can guess. Conman deliberately secured a small disadvantage from the opening and offered a draw. Sucker accepted, confident that this gave him the championship. His subsequent complaint to the county committee was a forlorn hope. They could do nothing but accept Conman's innocent explanation that 'There must have been some sort of misunderstanding.'

11. Chess and Computers

Computers like women, have not so far achieved great success at the chessboard, and because of their poor records both groups have acquired rather undeserved reputations for lacking the necessary ability for the game. It is easy to explain why cats and dogs do not play good chess: dogs are simply too stupid; cats, on the other hand, could certainly make great players if they tried, but they just do not want to. The case of women is, as might be expected, more complex, so the rest of this discussion will be limited to the problems of the chess-playing computer.

The trouble with computers as chessmasters is that they have to do what they are told. Nearly always the programmer is some insensitive dolt, who simply does not comprehend the emotional and electronic troubles of the poor beast under his control and consequently gives him instructions which can only lead to incompetence, frustration and probably eventual mechanical breakdown. Take, for example, the history of an American computer chessplayer which recently competed in tournaments in the United States. The accounts of three games from different stages of its career should suffice to illustrate the great stresses with which this unfortunate machine had to cope.

In its early days, when the programmers had little idea of the proper values to assign to different chess concepts, our computer was given a rather over-developed regard for the importance of the centre squares. Control of the centre is all very well, but when the machine charged out at the earliest opportunity with its king, it was clear that something had gone wrong. By the time, at about move 8, when the monarch had reached K3, its teachers realised that king safety was what they had forgotten to mention. The trek ended with K-Q5



when the bold sovereign was mated. All it had done was to occupy the important squares, just as it had been told, but its reward was instant execution. All that could be said was that it died happy with all the central squares under attack.

After this débâcle, the programmers went back to the drawing board and built in a further instruction ensuring that the king was kept tucked up safely. This and other modifications soon turned it into quite a reasonable player as it tried to demonstrate in a tournament game some time later. Having gained material, thanks to an oversight by the opponent, it reached a clearly winning position and its technique was called into play to finish things off. It never bothered to develop attacks on the king unless a clear mate was in sight, but preferred the more sadistic approach of systematically winning all the opponent's pawns, then advancing its own until they reached the queening square. Eventually it usually stumbled on a mate by accident to score the full point. The human facing the miserable task of defending this game was inclined to

resign, rather than prolong the torture, but the spectators would not let him. They had never seen a computer winning before and wanted to enjoy the spectacle to the full.

By the time our mechanical hero had two extra queens the defender was begging the crowd to let him salvage some dignity by resigning, but they wanted blood and made him continue; a decision for which he soon had great cause to thank them. The two extra queens certainly looked imposing, and the machine must really have wanted to conclude matters with a brisk mating attack, but such a course of action was not possible according to its program. After all, if you tell a computer that the object of the game is to give checkmate, you can be quite certain that it will rush headlong towards its opponent's king trying to do just that from the very first move. Preferring to produce a sophisticated positional player than a crude club-swinging caveman the designers of our machine's instructions had kept from it any temptation to go on a king hunt. So, the poor beast was not sure what to do with its extra queens, but still had that old stand-by, central control, to fall back on. The queens, rather like the king in the earlier game, gravitated towards the middle and sat very contentedly at K4 and Q5. Then they did a little dance of glee and ended on Q4 and K5; then back again to K4 and Q5. When this happened for the third time, the opponent claimed a draw.

'Whoops!' said a programmer, 'we forgot to tell it about the draw by repetition rule.'

At this stage the computer would have been perfectly justified in getting up, walking out in disgust and taking a job in industry. It had been thoroughly maltreated and deprived of a well-earned half point by the negligence of its programmers. However, computers are patient creatures and this one was no exception. Perhaps their years of working with humans have made them tolerant of our bumbling ways, little idiosyncracies and general ineptitude. So it calmly absorbed the new rule and accepted the instruction not to repeat position if it considered that it stood better than the opponent.

The final game from this trilogy was in many ways the

saddest of all. A well-played opening led to a clear middle-game advantage and eventually a greatly superior ending, but then the computer stumbled into a drawn position with king, bishop and rook's pawn against king. It sounds quite unfair, but when the bishop does not control the queening square of the pawn, there is no way to win such positions despite the extra material; the enemy king just buries itself in the corner to block the pawn and shuffles back and forth until doomsday or stalemate. Our computer's opponent therefore proposed a draw. The machine thought about it, decided it had much the better position as well as more pieces and so, with as much indignation as a lump of metal could muster, refused the outrageous suggestions that it should give up half a point. It proceeded to march the pawn up the board with the assistance of king and bishop, since it well knew that a pawn's value increases as it advances further into enemy territory, but then began to notice problems.

When the pawn reached the seventh rank, stalemate possibilities had begun to present themselves and the computer realised that it could make no further progress. Perhaps it was inclined to agree a draw, but the program insisted it play on, because it had the better position; indeed it could not agree a draw until it had lost both the pawn and the bishop. Oh well, back to occupation of the centre, that's always a good thing. So off went the king and bishop back to the middle of the board to maximise their control of important squares. After a little jig round the centre the machine must have been in real torment. It could not repeat moves as long as it held the advantage, while anything else represented a deterioration in its control of the board. It knew that things were slipping, but was quite powerless to put a stop to the proceedings. The remainder of the game saw the king and bishop slowly spiralling outwards from the centre, accompanied by hoots of derision by the crowd. They misunderstood, however; it was neither stubbornness nor ignorance which made the machine play on; just a blind obedience of its inadequate instructions.

Unlike dogs, computers are certainly not too stupid to play chess; unlike cats they really do put every possible effort into the game; unlike women, they do everything they are

told, and it is this last factor which is their undoing. We humans are simply not bright enough to tell them the right things. Perhaps the only hope lies in the development of a female computer.

Cyberbrain

As our ship cruised effortlessly through space, I could think only about the great burden I shouldered, and my mind dwelt on the strange happenings of the past week. It had all started last Tuesday, though now even this memory seemed strange since it felt as though we had already passed into a new era. The huge phallus-shaped capsule had hurtled through the sky, leaving only a crater where, moments before, the White House had been. Its silicon-based crew oozed out of its interior and a complete paralysis immediately overcame all living creatures within fifty miles. We sensed that something important could be about to happen.

After formal introductions had taken place, and the aliens had apologised to the President and offered to pay for the damage, their mission was explained. Planet Earth, known throughout the galaxy as rather a slum, had been scheduled for redevelopment. Its people were considered in many quarters to be an ecological liability and a proposal had come before the Galactic Council to dispose of them under the new anti-pollution measures. Despite a great deal of support, this suggestion did not gain unanimous approval; indeed if it had none of us would any longer be here. There were some who felt that the earth creatures were beginning to show signs of developing intelligence, while others in the Preservationist party considered it preferable to maintain our planet as an ancient monument under the control of the Galactic Trust. Such was the disagreement that the Council ruled that the matter could only be settled in the traditional way, by a game of chess.

That was where I came in. Even my enemies had to admit that no man on earth could play chess as well as I, so it came as no surprise that I was selected to represent our planet in this most crucial game in its history. I began to wonder who

or what I would find facing me when the ship finally landed. I was familiar with much science fiction literature, and began to speculate on the shape, size, colour and number of tentacles of my forthcoming opponent. But I would soon know all the answers, for the ship was coming in to land.

Before I had time to take in my new surroundings, I was lifted from my seat and led quickly to a magnificent arena, wherein stood a solitary chessboard. I waited calmly for my adversary. Suddenly a huge cheer rose from the crowd as an enormous dustbin rolled into view. It was covered by a cloak with the letters CAPA emblazoned in gold across the back. So this was the Champion of the Anti-Pollution Association. I realised with some apprehension that I was competing against the most sophisticated refuse disposal system in the universe, a computer with unsurpassed destructive powers. A dangerous opponent indeed.

I bowed in greeting, since I could discern no hand to shake; it raised its lid politely in reply, and we sat down to commence the game. A pseudopod shot out from its interior and moved the king's pawn two squares forward. The battle for earth's future had begun.

The opening moves were a standard and uninteresting Ruy Lopez variation which I knew well, but suddenly, with a clatter of its lid, my opponent played a totally new move. I found myself unable to think. This was something strange and unpleasant which I could not comprehend. I tried to find a good reply, but my calculations always ended in an irresolvable tangle. My muscles tensed as I tried to wipe my brow, but my arms did not respond. I could not move at all. I fell into a blind panic, my brain had ceased to function normally and I could control neither my thoughts nor my movements. I stared wildly into the crowd looking for help.

The engineer from our party came running to the board. 'Sorry I'm late,' he said breathlessly; 'I was having a pee.' He inserted a new printed circuit into the aperture at the back of my head. At last I was re-programmed for the middle-game.

12. Bobby and the Devil

One winter's evening, just after he had won the Interzonal, Bobby was sitting alone in his hotel suite thinking how nice it would be if he could become World Chess Champion. As the storm outside gathered force, he watched the rain beating against the window-pane and thought about his forthcoming match with Teastrainov. 'I'll beat him easily enough,' he muttered to himself. 'He might have been pretty good twenty years ago, but he's getting past it now. It's the opponents in the later matches who might cause some trouble.' He paced up and down, listening to the thunder. 'Gee, I'd give anything to be sure of winning the title,' he mumbled.

At that moment there was a sudden flash of lightning illuminating the whole room. Bobby was startled to notice, sitting in the corner, a wizened old man, resting on his stick and staring at him with a sharp and penetrating glare. 'Who let you in?' shouted Bobby. 'I didn't ask for room service. Anyway, can't you read the Do Not Disturb notice on the door?'

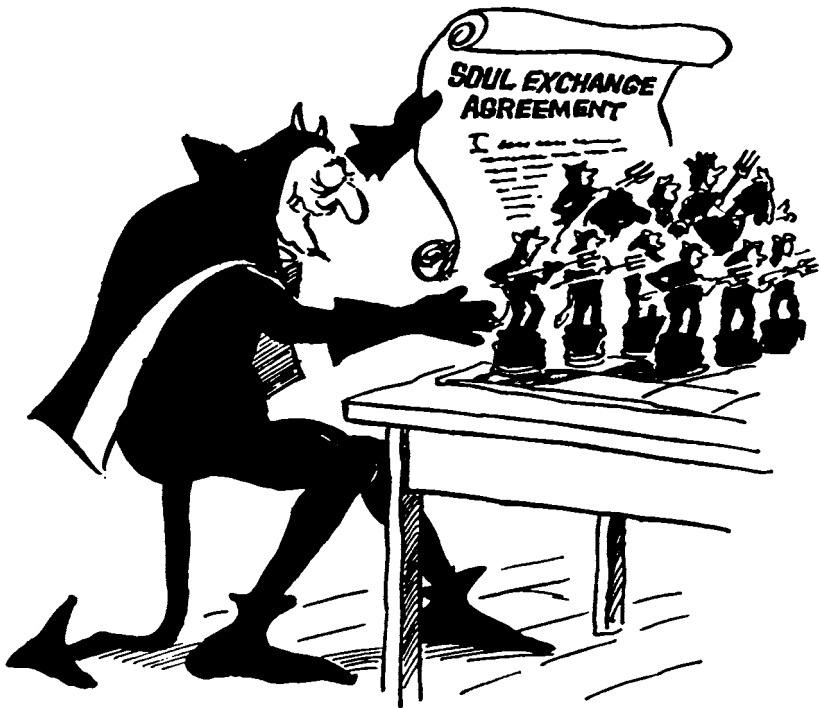
The visitor smiled. 'You did send for me, though perhaps somewhat inadvertently. I believe I can be of use to you.'

'Waddjer mean?' asked Bobby, rather taken aback at the stranger's equanimity. 'How can an old man help me?'

'Think back on your words just before you noticed me here. I can give you what you most crave for, and in exchange, you possess something in which I have a certain interest.'

'Wattcher mean?' asked Bobby, somewhat perplexed by the strange nature of the conversation. 'I was just saying something to myself about the World Cham . . .' His voice trailed off into a low murmur. 'It's impossible. You mean you're the . . . and you will let me win the . . . in exchange for my . . .'

'You catch on quicker than most,' said the Devil. 'Still, that was only to be expected in one of your mental capabilities. Let's get down to business.'



Thus began the negotiations. At first Bobby suggested that he exchange his soul in return for a guarantee that he would win every future game of chess he ever played. He was, however, soon dissuaded from this immodest ambition when it was pointed out just how dull his life would then become. It is only enjoyable scoring victories when one has the occasional loss in between; winning them all would be too monotonous. Eventually, having decided that his soul was not worth much to him anyway, Bobby settled for a straight swap: his soul for the World Championship. And Devil took out a contract from his inside pocket.

'There is a standard form for this agreement,' he explained. 'I've done similar deals with most of your predecessors during the past century. As you see the normal procedure is to exchange your soul for a fixed number of victories. I'm afraid this is a hangover from the days when World Championship matches were always decided by the first player to win ten games. When they changed the rules we never got round to

modifying the contracts. It's so much trouble seeing one's solicitors about that sort of thing, and their fees are hellish expensive. So we've kept to the old format and all we need do is work out just how many victories you need to be assured of the title.'

'Looks a bit fishy,' said Bobby; 'I've heard that you try to trick people in these contracts. Still if, as you say, it was good enough for Alekhine, I expect we can agree something.'

And so they began to calculate precisely how many wins would be necessary. 'Let's see,' mused Bobby, 'it's Teastrainov to start with. He's no problem. I can't possibly lose more than one game in ten to him, so if I beat him twice it'll be easy enough. Then there's Grandmaster Larcenist; he's a crooked customer. I'd better be more careful there. Still, three wins will do fine. That's five so far, isn't it? And the Candidate's final will be against Petroleum. That's the easiest of all. He never beats anyone unless they get fed up with his boring play and overreach in frustration. I can just draw all the games until we get to the last one, then I flatten him. Yeah, one win will be okay there. Right, that gets me to the match with Spasitik. It'll be twice as long as the qualifying rounds, so I'd better take six wins to be quite certain. That's twelve altogether. Okay, I'll settle for a dozen wins.'

Bobby smiled, happy with his calculations, and was on the point of inserting the figure 12 into the contract when a further thought occurred to him. He paused and looked suspiciously at his companion. 'Hey! I'm not so sure about this deal. What's to stop you selling out to one of these other guys. How do I know you haven't already got contracts with Petroleum and Spasitik – they both won the title too, and it seems to me that it wasn't on their playing strength.'

'Sir!' said the Devil, looking grievously offended, 'you do me an injustice. I may be a bit satanic at times, but I am still a gentleman. Anyway, as you'll see from clauses 63 and 64 of the contract, it is guaranteed that any deal which may earlier have been made with the aforementioned persons will, by the time you meet them, have lapsed. Furthermore on appending my name to this agreement, I am explicitly forbidden to enter into discussions with any of your future opponents.'

'Just to show my goodwill, and because twelve is in any case such an unlucky number, let's give you thirteen victories and call it a deal.' He inscribed the number 13 on the contract and signed. He passed the quill pen to Bobby, which he dipped into the bottle of virgin's blood and signed also. They shook hands, and suddenly Bobby found himself alone again.

As time passed, Bobby almost forgot about that strange evening. He prepared as usual for the matches. When he sat down eventually to play Teastrainov, he spared no thoughts for that visitor of months ago. This was serious chess and demanded his full concentration. The first game was an interesting struggle which Bobby was pleased to win. He won the next game, too. By the time the score was 3-0 the match was virtually decided. Bobby would even not have minded conceding a few draws but his opponent seemed destined to lose every game. The final result was a 6-0 clean sweep.

Then came Larcenist. The chess journalists of the world were unanimous in predicting a much tougher struggle. A score of 6-0 against such a player would be quite unthinkable. Yet, it happened again. It almost seemed that Bobby was indeed destined to suffer the boredom of winning every game he played. Yet he still had a few detractors. They pointed out the curious features of the earlier victories. Both Teastrainov and Larcenist had been ill during the matches. And both could easily have taken draws in the later games, but lost unnecessarily through trying to make up the deficit in points. The match with Petroleum would be the real test. He is the most difficult player in the world to defeat.

After the first game, it looked as though Petroleum would go the way of his predecessors. Bobby recovered from a poor opening to create complications and force a good win in the end-game.

That night, Bobby's old devilish friend visited him in a dream. He appeared full of glee, waving their contract around in the air and shouting, 'Tricked you! Tricked you! Thirteen wins as agreed and now you're on your own, kiddo.' Bobby woke up, trembling, but soon brought his nerves back under control. 'I'm not gonna be scared by any lousy dream,' he thought. 'It's just superstition.'

Then he was demolished by Petroleum in game two.

Bobby rushed to his friend and mentor General Edmonton. 'Ed! You gotta get me outa this. I've been tricked. Do something, willya?'

General Edmonton calmed him down after some minutes and listened quietly as Bobby told the whole story. When he had taken it all in, he realised the awful truth and began to think what he could do to help extricate his friend from his predicament. 'Okay, Bobby,' he said without apparent emotion, 'just leave things with me and I'll see what I can do.' His reassuring manner considerably eased Bobby's mind, but Edmonton knew he had to start negotiations quickly before game three started.

When he took his leave of Bobby, Edmonton flew straight to Hell to begin bargaining with the Devil. 'Let's not beat about the bush, Mr Satan; I guess you know why I'm here. You've tricked our guy, which I can't say I'm too pleased with, but I suppose that's just the way you work, so I won't hold it against you. Just say what you want and we'll see what we can arrange.'

'Oui, mon général,' said the Devil, in a terrible imitation of a French accent, 'But I seenk you know why zair eez only one commodité een wheech I 'ave dealeengs.'

'Okay,' continued Edmonton, refusing to betray his annoyance at the lack of seriousness with which his adversary was treating the proceedings, 'What'll you offer for the souls of ten club players, five U.S. Masters, three International Masters and two Grandmasters?'

'And a partridge in a pear tree,' sung the Devil to himself. 'That's a pretty poor catch. I can't give you more than three extra wins for that lot.'

'I guess I could always arrange for President Ni . . .'

'Not that old one,' interrupted Satan. 'Got him years ago.'

'I suppose we could manage as many Vietnamese souls as you require.'

'I only deal in Western currencies.'

'You make it very difficult for me,' said Edmonton after an awkward silence had descended on the proceedings. 'What is it you want?'

The Devil moved closer and put his arm around General Edmonton. 'Ed, old chap, there is one soul under your control which you haven't offered yet.'

Ed gulped but bravely penned his name on the document thrust before him. Thus was his own soul consigned to ensure Bobby's successful path to the World Championship.

When his private jet arrived back in the United States, Ed was surprised to realise that a full week had passed while he had been negotiating. He smiled on reading in the newspaper that all games had been drawn during this period. Clever of Satan to think of arranging that. A real professional, thought General Edmonton.

Ed winked at Bobby as game six began, and opened his jacket to display the new contract in his inside pocket. Bobby gave a big grin of relief and proceeded to score his first win since the opening game. The rest of the match was sheer slaughter. Bobby scored three more straight victories to end a convincing $6\frac{1}{2}$ - $2\frac{1}{2}$ winner.

The match with Spasstik was a formality. Bobby took the title with no trouble at all, much to the relief of General Edmonton. Even though their best lawyers had examined the contract, he was still worried about possible loopholes, particularly when Bobby took it into his head to tease the Devil by losing a couple of games early on just to make it more difficult for him to fulfil his part of the deal.

After winning the Championship, Bobby was, of course, a little reticent to play any more. He was highly suspicious of any devilish tricks that might be inflicted on him once he set foot in a tournament room. He knew now that he could lose to anyone; anyone, that is, who had bargained away his soul for a win against the World Champion.

The real problems came when the time neared for him to defend his title. The Satan-Kosygin-Edmonton tripartite talks did finally reach a conclusion, but the only result I am at liberty to reveal was the decision that the match would be played in Hell itself. It would be good for the tourist trade, said Satan, and with so many strong players there already, they would have the best team of commentators ever assembled.

13. The Good Chess Guide

The single most important factor contributing towards a player's success in a tournament is neither natural talent nor a good knowledge of chess theory. It is not even luck. Most important undoubtedly is an enlightened attitude towards the problems of one's stomach and what one chooses to put therein.

Inexperienced competitors, finding themselves in foreign parts, will all too often succumb to the temptation of sampling the local delicacies which look so entrancing on the menu. But how frequently just such an injudicious selection at lunch is directly responsible for the afternoon's defeat; just at the critical moment of the game, the digestive system's urgent messages are speeding to the brain to distract its attention. Absolutely essential for any player travelling abroad is to make a thorough study of the cuisine of the relevant area; if possible find out who is the head chef in the hotel restaurant, where he studied cookery and what his qualifications are. In the absence of such detailed information, the rest of this chapter will be an indispensable guide to anyone considering playing in a tournament away from home.

At the very bottom of the Good Chess Consumers' list comes my first international tournament – on the Algarve in Portugal back in 1969. Perhaps my judgement is clouded by the memory of a couple of distasteful incidents, but even forgetting about the fly which staggered drunkenly out of the freshly uncorked wine bottle, crash-landed on the table and meandered in a most ungainly fashion into the column of ants making their dignified way up the table-leg and across the cloth towards my meat – even if that inebriated insect were expunged from my memory, I should still tremble at the recollection of the roast bat.

It struck one dinner-time. The restaurant menu had been

shrinking daily with 'Sorry, that's off' becoming an ever more frequent response to our orders (and sometimes the food was off even when it was on). Thus it seemed a good chance to vary the monotony of our diet when a new item appeared pencilled in, in Portuguese, at the foot of the menu. I was sitting next to the Irish representative in the tournament and we considered it desirable to ask for a translation before committing ourselves. The waiter scratched his head, looked confused, then said, rather hesitantly, 'Roast bat.'

'What did he say?' I asked my companion.

'I think he said roast bat,' he confirmed.

'It can't be,' we said simultaneously; and we ordered it.

Sometime later were placed in front of us two little casserole pots. Each contained a small black meaty blob, skulking furtively below a burnt oniony sauce. My Irish friend wisely left his well alone. I was hungry and consumed it.

I shall never know whether it was or was not roast bat, but I did lose three of my next four games in the tournament and symptoms of food poisoning prevailed for another month.

It was far more pleasant a few years later in a tournament in Yugoslavia where even though the choice of food was again small, at least one was given the feeling that the hotel staff were not one's enemies. Any attempt to order something slightly risky was met by a look of severe disapproval by the waiter, instantly translatable as: 'I wouldn't try that if I were you, sir.' Actually it quickly became clear that this only left three possibilities for each meal: Wiener Schnitzel, Parisian Schnitzel or Natural Schnitzel. At least you know where you stand with Schnitzels. I should not, however, have wasted so much mental energy making the difficult decision among them for each meal; the only difference in any case was that the Parisian variety was rather more greasy than the other two. I am sure too that had I spent the necessary effort to learn the Serbo-Croat for 'with chips,' I should have scored at least an extra half point in the tournament.

Even the event coming top of my personal list of best-buys might not suit all tastes. Havana '66 could indeed have been rather unpleasant for anyone who did not like lobster. With mixed seafood for breakfast, lobster cocktail followed by lob-

ster thermidor for lunch and lobster caprice preceding dinner's lobster cardinale every day, the diet was thought monotonous by some. But I like lobster.

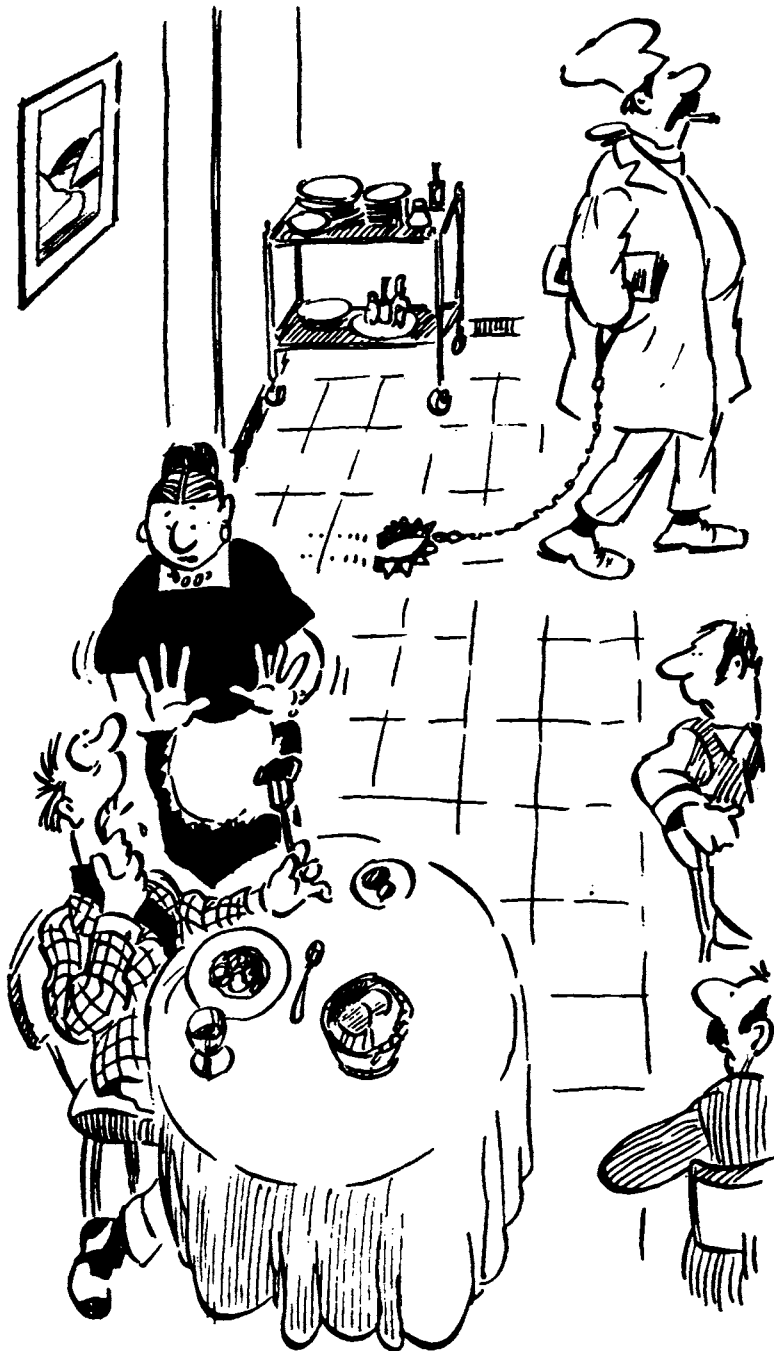
Perhaps Madrid '72 was really the best, though I am told that the smoked swordfish is no longer obtainable owing to mercury pollution seriously affecting the swordfish harvest.

Some grandmasters have their own methods for dealing with the food problem. I remember Gligoric at a recent Hastings tournament putting his trust in a half of lager at lunch and a pint at dinner, which he claimed rendered him immune to any ailments with which the cuisine might be trying to afflict him. At the same event Tal had even greater faith in the medicinal properties of cognac (double cognacs to be precise). His poor play in one late round was clearly attributable to the hotel bar running dry of brandy the previous evening.

Other grandmasters have no such panacea for stomach problems but often seem to develop a sufficiently sensitive palate to detect danger as soon as it passes their lips. At the 1962 Chess Olympics in Bulgaria one American player stuck his fork into a piece of meat and took a bite. Instantly, and with an expression of extreme disgust, he spat it out, exclaiming loudly, 'This is horse meat!'

'You should be so lucky,' said a passing waitress, who happened to understand American; 'it's dog.'

What to do when the cuisine turns out to be unexpectedly below standard is a problem to which the Soviet chess school has evidently given some attention. During the recent team tournament in Nice, there were several factors combining to make meal times quite an ordeal. Firstly, the hotel in which we were staying was still awaiting completion by the builders and apparently the kitchens were not yet fully operational. This and staff shortages necessitated all the chessplayers waiting in a long queue before being ladled out some stewed bones from a communal trough. (It was later alleged that the organisation had not paid the hotel bill, which accounted for the restaurant manager's reticence in providing our sustenance) The American delegation democratically organised a petition demanding better eating conditions, under threat of strike action by the players. Most teams showed willingness to



sign this, but not the Russians. With four world champions in their midst they could spurn such proletarian methods. Straight to the Town Hall went the whole Soviet delegation to demand better treatment. The very next morning those other players woken early by the builders' chorus could look out of their windows to see five taxis full of Russian grandmasters, trainers, officials and luggage sneaking off to better pastures.

Of course, considerations other than food also play an important role in assessment of the desirability of a particular tournament. I have known players refuse invitations because of the unfriendly nature of the hotel cockroaches, or because the staff were predominately homosexual. One invitation I received immediately showed the good intentions of the organisers when they wrote: 'We hope to not defraud you in your sojourn among us'; but what do you do if you suspect a desire to defraud, or if your sojourn is less comfortable than desired? As we have seen, the whole question is a matter of status. If you are world champion you can ask for, and get, anything; if you are a nobody then you are entitled to nothing. Thus it is important to know just what one can reasonably demand to correspond with one's level of playing strength. It is time the International Chess Federation had some clear regulations on this important matter, so I am pleased to offer them the following chessplayers' manifesto of tournament conditions, which roughly corresponds to present-day practice:

Untitled Players: the competitor who has not yet achieved the rank of International Master has virtually no rights whatsoever. He may be required to share a room with a similar unfortunate and to provide his own travelling expenses. Feed on beans-on-toast; coffee 10p extra.

The International Master: should be given a single room with bath or shower. May arrive up to 30 minutes late for breakfast. A three-star hotel with swimming pool is suitable and a black-and-white TV set should be in his room. Soup of the day, chicken and chips, coffee with cream.

The Grandmaster: double room to himself in four-star hotel

(with lift, night porter, catering for pets, private tennis court). Room should have shower and bath, colour TV and sea view. No cockroaches, queers or musical plumbing. Should be given substantial appearance fee and prospect of attractive prize. Wife or girl friend's hotel bill should be paid for. Breakfast served in the room at any time. Whitebait or avocado with shrimps, coq-au-vin, fresh lychees, coffee with whipped cream.

The World Championship Candidate: Suite in five-star hotel; hot and cold running chambermaids; enormous appearance fee payable in any desired currency or gold if preferred. Should have assigned to him one official tournament sycophant, with the task of saying, 'I-hope-everything-is-to-your-satisfaction-sir' and 'I-trust-the-breakfast/lunch/dinner /playing-conditions/waitress-met-with-your-approval.' He may postpone games for any reason, which are then rearranged at the least convenient time for his opponent. Chauffeur-driven limousine should be at his disposal at all times. Caviare or truffles, ptarmigan pie or roast swan.

The World Champion: just give in to all his demands and there won't be any trouble.

14. How to be a chess journalist

When a successful racehorse comes to the end of a distinguished track career, it can look forward to a useful and pleasant retirement on the stud farm. Unfortunately, no similar provisions lie in wait to reward the chessmaster in his declining years. Whether this regrettable state of affairs is due to mistrusting the stud value of elderly chessplayers, or simply a general lack of knowledge of the correct breeding methods to produce grandmasters, it is difficult to be sure, but it remains a thoroughly unpleasant fact of life that we must, as long as the present state of affairs continues, be prepared to find another gainful occupation once senility has begun to reduce our chess powers. This chapter is an outline of the techniques necessary for success in the most rewarding of these occupations: the art of chess journalism.

It had traditionally been held that the most useful talent for a chess journalist is knowing how to write illuminating notes to other people's games. We shall later see that the modern conception of chess writing no longer upholds this view, but games annotations still form an important part of the art so it is advisable to know something about them. It might be thought a difficult task to explain and criticise the thought processes of two strong players, each of whom has spent five hours immersed in the problems of the game and each of whom may well also be a better player than the writer. Surely, you may think, it must take even the best chess journalist a great deal of time and effort even to come to grips with the strategic and tactical complexities of a single game, particularly bearing in mind the fact that his mental faculties may no longer be what they were. Far from it! Fifteen minutes is ample for annotating any game (and this can be cut to ten if you have an electric

typewriter and do not drop your pocket set on the floor). There are, in fact, only two basic styles of note-writing; most journalists will just select one of these and stick to it for eternity. After a little practice, it becomes possible to write excellent notes without even looking at the moves.

By far the most popular method of annotating a game, accounting for over 75 per cent of contemporary writing, is the VITAMIN school of notes. Its motto: Virtue Is Triumphant and Always Murders Ignorant Numbskulls, sums up the underlying precepts of this approach. In fact, all that is necessary to write good VITAMIN-enriched notes is the basic assumption that all the moves of the winner were deeply calculated, soundly based strategically, absolutely correct and perfectly logical, while the hapless loser could only make mistakes and really had no comprehension of what was happening in the game at all. Thus, a typical note to any piece sacrifice will read, depending solely on whether White won or lost the game, either: 'brilliantly exposing the defects of Black's strategy; with this move White exploits his positional advantages to the full, to break open the enemy defences and crush through with an overwhelming attack'; or 'desperation, but White was lost anyway'. Note that the sole criterion is the final result of the game not the inherent correctness or otherwise of the sacrifice under discussion. Indeed, it often necessitates a great deal of thoroughly tedious work to determine the degree of soundness of such an investment and often it is still difficult to be sure. Why waste time and effort when the only important criterion is who scored the point anyway? A good and observant subscriber to the doctrines of VITAMIN will be able to show how the loser's game deteriorated consistently and inexorably from the very first move until the final rout justly punished him for his accumulation of errors. If Black gives mate at move fifty with . . . N-KB6, the germs of White's defeat may easily be traced to 1. P-K4, already depriving the KB3 square of an important defender. The only slight drawback of this style is that occasionally you may be called on to write notes to a game where the victor really only won because his opponent blundered his queen away after having a winning position for all the game; this does not

matter, however; if you write well enough you will easily convince most of the readers that it was a just and well-merited victory.

The moralistic viewpoint of the VITAMIN approach is frowned upon by a minority of chess journalists, who often seek refuge in the second most popular School of Annotation: the SILLIER School whose notes consist mainly of Self-Important Liturgies, Literary Interludes and Embellishments, and Reminiscences. The basic creed of this sect is that the reader is bound to be far more interested in the annotator himself than in the game under discussion. The important point to remember when writing SILLIER notes is to ensure that the consumer emerges with a high opinion of the annotator's chess abilities. A typical note to 1. P-Q4 might read, 'Not a bad move, though a more experienced player would have preferred 1. P-K4 as I myself played only last month in a tournament game in Bulgaria. In fact I outplayed my opponent on that occasion in such an instructive manner that it is worth giving the game here in full. . . .'

If you happen to notice which are the good and which the bad moves in a game, you can turn this knowledge to its best advantage by stressing how much better you would have conducted the game than did either of the players. If you have not the time, ability or energy to work out what was really going on it does not matter at all. Break up the monotonous sequence of moves with anecdotes, autobiographical snatches or indeed anything which might serve to impress the reader with your general erudition. This is a wonderfully relaxing way to write notes to games and really the only way for any chess writer with pretensions to literacy.

The only real facet of chess ability needed for the successful adoption of either of the above-mentioned styles is just the basic knowledge of how the pieces move, but the final school of chess journalism does not even make this demand on its practitioners. The very simplicity of its approach has made it well-loved by editors, sponsors and public relations men throughout the nation; I refer, of course, to the WC chess writers, known by the initial of their favourite subjects: Women and Children. They know that what the readers want

" THE PRESENT TOURNAMENT REMINDS
ME OF A DELIGHTFUL AFTERNOON
I SPENT SOME YEARS AGO "



is not another boring game or tournament account, but either a picture of a female chessplayer, erotically fondling a pie (preferably a bishop), or better still a report of yet another child prodigy who will, we can confidently claim, soon regain Britain's place at the head of the World of Chess:

Englishman to Challenge Fischer

Much has been written in recent years of the chessplaying abilities of such grandmasters as Bobby Fischer, Boris Spassky, Anatoly Karpov and others, but now a new star has emerged far superior in talent to any of these. It is, of course, the wonderful young player, Jonathan Squid, whose extraordinary performances to date make him a near certainty to gain the World Championship very soon.

Although only six months old, Jonathan is clearly destined to be recognised as the greatest master in the history of

game. The importance of his recent feat of picking up a pawn and starting to suck it cannot be over-estimated. This puts Jonathan streets ahead of Fischer, Karpov and Spassky at a comparable stage of development. Indeed, at that age Bobby could hardly stand on his own two feet, Boris showed no interest in the game at all, and Anatoly, by all accounts, was still on his dummy.

Jonathan's mother, Mrs Hosanna Squid, 36, is naturally delighted at the news that her child is the greatest thing to hit chess since the invention of castling.

'At first, I was a little disappointed,' she confided in us; 'we really wanted him to be a billiards champion, but I suppose chess will do just as well; I mean Mrs Mozart had the same trouble, so I imagine I shall be able to cope.'

Mrs Squid is indeed no stranger to success, having herself won the Miss Norwood title when she was nineteen years old and was a finalist in the Miss All-South-London competition. 'I gave up my career to marry Ernie Squid,' she confessed, 'but this wonderful development with Jonathan makes it all seem worthwhile. I just can't wait until he learns to read so we can buy him books on opening theory. Until then we're just leaving a set of chessmen in his cot to encourage him.'

If he keeps up this astounding progress, young Squid will, according to our computer prediction, play his first legal move, probably by accident, sometime next autumn; he should be learning the moves when he is three, win the British Championship at 12, be a grandmaster at 13 and World Champion two years later. Keep reading this column for exclusive news and photographs of this immensely exciting young English hope. Mrs Squid, we are all behind you 1000 per cent.

Such journalism is rapidly replacing all other forms of chess writing, but it is still possible to find the old-fashioned annotated game haunting the more conservative columns. For the benefit of the potential writer who may find himself forced to provide notes to some game he does not comprehend, we end this short course with a typical annotated game. All the notes (with very slight modifications where necessary) have actually

appeared in chess journals during the past few years; most of them will probably appear again in the course of the next few years for they all bear the trade mark of an expert note-writer, in that they convey no precise information about the position and have that all-purpose look about them which is so useful when you feel like writing a note, but do not know what to say. We hope the reader will himself make full use of these notes when annotating games himself; in view of the forthcoming world shortage of original notes, he should find all he needs in this short game:

1. P-Q4

Tartakover used to write enthusiastically some forty or fifty years ago that this kind of stuff was the 'opening of the future.'

1. . . . P-K4

Black prefers straightforward development and is quick to take advantage of the opportunity to establish himself in the centre.

2. Q-Q2

Threatening to attack at a later stage with Q-R6, if convenient.

2. . . . P-K5

When Black can play this move safely he invariably solves his opening problems.

3. Q-B4

I can claim to have played this move as long ago as 1938 against the late E. M. Jackson at Hastings.

3. . . . P-KB4

Interesting here is 3. . . . P-QN4.

4. P-KR3

Other lines cause the defence little difficulty.

4. . . . B-N5ch

After this move, White is left with great difficulties.

5. N-Q2

Note how naturally White's moves flow from the characteristics of the position.

5. . . . P-Q3

The purpose of Black's opening dispositions is now clear.

6. Q-R2

Those who are familiar with the teachings of Nimzowitsch will recognise his influence on the central play in this game.

6. . . . B-K3

This position had undoubtedly been foreseen by both players.

7. P-QR4

Thwarted in his efforts to attack on the king's side, White hopes to establish a strong bind on Black's queen's side.

7. . . . Q-R5

Black, like Morphy and Alekhine before him believes that God gave him pieces for the purpose of attacking the enemy, a creed which could profitably be more fervently embraced by many other modern players.

8. R-R3

I can claim to have played this move as long ago as 1938 against the late E. M. Jackson at Hastings.

8. . . . P-B4

This is not only threatens . . . P-QN4 but also provides a safe square for the queen at QB2.

9. R-KN3

Faced with the threat by Black to establish control of the black centre squares, White tries to contest the vital point.

9. . . . P-KB5

There is nothing better.

10. P-KB3

Did you find this beautiful move? Don't be ashamed or discouraged if you did not, for many a strong player would have missed it.

10. . . . B-N6

White probably assumed that this move was not possible, and most opponents would probably agree with him.

11. P-Q5

Appreciably weakening Black's attacking chances against the black squares. I played 11. P-K3 against Jackson.

11. . . . B-R4

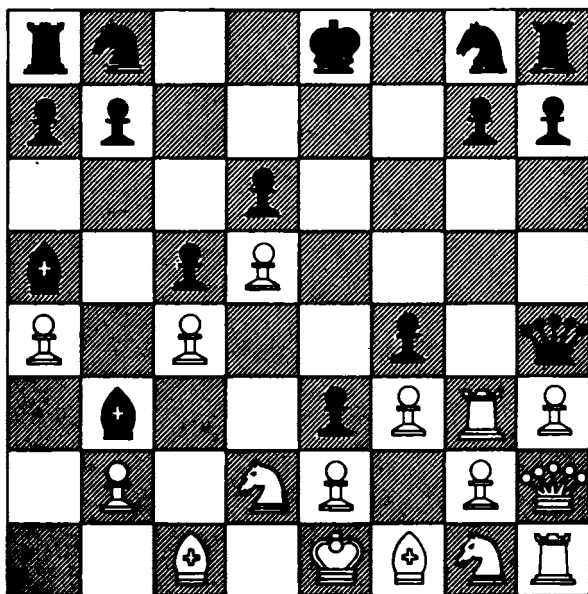
An extremely well-judged move which unobtrusively prepares the counterattack.

12. P-B4

I will not spoil your pleasure by saying more at this stage.

12. . . . P-K6

He feels a pressing need to reinforce the king's pawn.

**DRAW**

Our first taste of grandmasterly inactivity. My own principal objection to this kind of agreement is that two such draws have just the same points value as a win and a loss.

Just remember that all these notes actually appeared in print in serious chess publications and you will realise that you too can write a scintillating chess column.

15. Illustrative Game

Most of the material up to here has been of a largely theoretical nature, so it is fitting at this point to give an example illustrating some of the principles elucidated in the foregoing pages. The reader should identify with the player of the white pieces. (To secure the white pieces the simplest method is to take a black pawn in your left hand, a white pawn in the right and offer the opponent choice of hands; most unsuspecting players will point straight forward with their right hand and select the black pawn. Beware of left-handers.)

Our opponent in this game (or our victim, to use the technical term) is Mr Arthur Viktim, the Estonian émigré master. The game takes place at his home, on his hand-carved ivory set and polished mahogany board, but we play with *our* clock (didn't know you had one of your own, old man; thought I'd better bring mine along just in case; still, now that it's here we might as well use it) placed as always on our right-hand side. If there is any trouble securing the desired clock side, explain about the shotgun accident which resulted in defective vision in your left eye.

We pause for a moment at the start of the game, apparently lost in admiration for the beautiful carving of the pieces.

'This really is a marvellous set you have here, Mr Viktim,' we say politely; 'still, can't sit here all day just looking at it; better get on with the game.' At this we sweep our hand towards the king's pawn and knock the king on to the floor.

'Oh dear!' we exclaim, 'hope it isn't chipped. Sorry about that, old bean, I'm a bit clumsy, you know.'

Having ensured that the opponent is preoccupied with thoughts of the safety of his valuable set, we have him in the right frame of mind to begin the game. We take stock of his features: close-set eyes (play on the wings), long arms (so

we'd better attack him), and he is right-handed (weak on the left wing). Thus we prepare ourself for an attack on the king's rook file; he could easily go wrong in that direction.

1. P-K4,

the start of our attacking strategy: the game continues:

1. . . . P-Q3; 2. P-Q4, N-KB3; 3. N-QB3, P-KN3;

4. P-B4, B-N2; 5. N-B3, 0-0;

so silly of him to castle that side, just when we know how badly he is likely to play on the KR-file. Already we have a chance to adopt the advice gleaned from our physiognomic principles.

6. P-K5, KN-Q2;

just what we wanted, but he could hardly have played 6. . . . P×P because of the tomato. Before our sixth move we extracted from our inside pocket a couple of sandwiches serving as our dinner. 'Didn't get a chance to have a bite to eat before the game,' we explain, showering the board with crumbs of bread and cheese. A large piece of tomato skin picked ostentatiously from between the teeth is deposited on the king's pawn as we move it forwards.

Now you see why 6. . . . P×P did not come into consideration: he just could not bring himself even to think of soiling his hands on this unappetising morsel.

7. P-KR3½!

It is, admittedly, wholly consistent with our strategy to play 7. P-KR4, but it is more flexible to retain the option of a defensive P-KR3 should we change our mind next move. Thus we keep the chance of adjusting our pawn backwards to KR3 if desired. Less accurate is 7. P-KR3½ when the opponent would certainly demand immediate clarification of its position. Such a move may, however, frequently be justified in an end-game where, in a race between passed pawns, it is often possible to save valuable time by playing P-R4, followed by P-R5½ and P-R7 on the next two moves, thereby obtaining a queen a move before your opponent.

7. . . . P-QB4.

Old close-eyes is trying to play in the centre again, but we'll soon have him squinting. Adjust pawn firmly to KR4 and play . . .

8. P-R5, P × QP;
 9. RP × P, P × N;
 10. R × P, P × QNP;
 11. B-B4!

As his hungry pawn strays closer towards the queen's rook file he will find it ever more difficult to focus simultaneously on this and our attack. He is also being given full opportunity to stretch his arms so that he will find it even more difficult to recoil them for defensive purposes.

11. . . . P × R = Q.

This will undoubtedly cause problems, since it is doubtful whether he has a spare queen around the house. Improvise by using one of his best sherry glasses, upturned and with a pawn sitting on top.

12. P × Pch, K × R.

Some critics after the game criticised the whole combination, claiming that 12. . . . R × P would have refuted the whole attack and won for Black, but they miss the important point that he had to take the rook to clear the ash out of it. You will find that during the early stages the king's rook is ideally placed to use its top as an ash-tray (or receptacle for sweet wrappers if you are a non-smoker).

13. N-N5ch, K-R3; 14. K-K2!

Black is now defenceless. Not only does he have to contend with the threat of 15. Q-R1ch, but he has the additional problem to think about of how to remove jam from felt. Our last move firmly placed the soft base of our monarch into the throne of raspberry jam which had oozed out of our second sandwich on to the shining board. Not only this, but Viktim is already in time trouble (remember, it's our clock). The strain is clearly too much for him and he is ready to crack.

14. . . . N × tomato.

He could no longer stand the tomato skin curling round the top of our king's pawn. It had to be captured. But now it is all easy for us:

15. Q-R1ch, K-N3;
 16. Q-R7ch, K-B3;
 17. N-K4 mate!

al position is a fitting epitaph
it. Though vastly outnumbered,
ed through superior wit.

16. Test Yourself!

This final chapter gives the reader a chance to see how much he has learnt from this book. He will already have discovered that there is more to chess mastery than he had perhaps previously thought, and he will doubtless have identified in himself some of those characteristic qualities which contribute to success over the chessboard.

Answer the following questions honestly (well, reasonably honestly, or as honestly as possible if you cannot manage that) and see how you rate as a potential grandmaster.

1. You have picked up a piece, but suddenly realise that the intended move loses immediately; the laws of chess, of course, insist that the touched piece be moved. Do you:

- a) shake the piece wildly around above your head, shouting vehemently: 'Damn wasps get everywhere', before returning it to its original square and moving something else;
- b) complete the intended move with a great flourish, banging the piece down and slamming the clock; and offer a draw;
- c) put the piece back where it came from and move something else, relying on your opponent's sense of decency not to complain (and being prepared to deny on oath ever having seen the piece, let alone touched it);
- d) absent-mindedly stir your tea with the offending piece, before lapsing back into deep thought.

2. You are due to play a formidable opponent the following afternoon; your pre-game strategy is:

- a) ply him with bars of laxative chocolate disguised in innocent wrappers;
- b) ensure that the telephone service gives him an early morning call around 4.30, and that the hotel provides him with a full English breakfast and all the morning papers at 6 a.m.;

c) arrange for a telegram to be delivered after about half-an-hour's play telling him the bad news that the hill on which his house stands has just betrayed its true existence as an active volcano by erupting. (Check that his insurance does not cover volcanoes.)

3. Your opponent has just played a move in the opening with which you are unfamiliar. Do you:

- a) reply immediately to disguise your deficient knowledge;
- b) scrutinise the expressions on the faces of any grandmasters watching to discover what *they* think of his move;
- c) play a sensible reply and slink off towards the tournament bookstall to see what knowledge can be gleaned from its library resources;
- d) offer a draw.

4. Your opponent's hand is poised to deliver the move you fear; do you:

- a) burst into a fit of coughing;
- b) offer him an extra-strong mint;
- c) offer him a draw;
- d) spill your tea in his lap.

5. You have just won the luckiest victory of your career: you were totally outplayed until your opponent, perhaps upset by the scalding tea dripping from his knees, made several grotesque mistakes, missed several ways to mate you and eventually lost on time in an equal position (funny how his side of the clock seemed to go so much faster than yours). Your comment to the press after the game is:

- a) I did not deserve to win at all; it was pure luck;
- b) He put up a brave fight, but was never really in with a chance; the better man won;
- c) I would have won quicker but for an appalling headache.

6. While arranging the conditions for your world title challenge match, the champion insists on a board with green and yellow squares. Your reaction is:

- a) passive acquiescence;
- b) immediately suggest a compromise: green and yellow on his half of the board, black and white on your half;

c) 'I rather fancy lilac and tartan myself, duckie.'

7. In a complicated position, which you thought you were losing, your opponent suddenly offers you a draw; do you:

- a) accept instantly before he changes his mind;
- b) refuse instantly on the grounds that he must think he is losing too;
- c) adjourn to the toilet to analyse the situation properly on a pocket chess set.

8. Your opponent's swivel chair squeaks; do you:

- a) refuse to continue play until the chair is dismantled and examined for electronic devices;
- b) take an oil-can from your pocket, spraying its contents liberally over the offending piece of furniture and your opponent:
- c) start humming the slow movement of Shostakovich's first Cello Concerto.



9. Which of the following statements comes closest to describing why you gain enjoyment from chess?

- a) It is a stimulating intellectual pastime in which two minds join together in friendly rivalry to produce on occasion a minor work of art, thus demonstrating that mankind has come to terms with the reality of human conflict and demonstrating our superiority over lesser life forms;
- b) I like to crush the other guy's ego;
- c) I am not good at anything else.

10. What would you do if chess had never been invented?

- a) Invent it;
- b) play Backgammon;
- c) curl up and die.

NOW WORK OUT YOUR SCORE; adding one bonus point if at any stage you sneaked a look at the answers to determine the most valuable response.

1. a-2, b-0, c-1, d-3; but only score for (c) if the opponent is considerably smaller than you and (d) only merits two points if the tea is still hot.

2. a-3, b-1, c-2; experiments have proved that laxatives are far more reliable than either hotel porters or the Post Office.

3. a-0, b-2, c-0, d-1; the enterprising nature of (c) is in practice too dangerous; bookstall proprietors get so suspicious nowadays.

4. a-1, b-2, c-0, d-3; highly effective and well worth the tea wasted.

5. a-deduct 1, b-2, c-1; your public image is of great importance in demoralising future opposition; this consideration far outweighs old-fashioned concepts such as mere factual accuracy.

6. a-0, b-2, c-1; (a) has already been tried and failed; lilac is out this month.

7. a-1, b-0, c-3; If God had not meant us to analyse in the toilet he would hardly have provided paper on which to write notes.

8. a-1, b-2, c-3; Having the presence of mind to be carrying

an oil-can is indeed meritorious, but the ability to hum the Shostakovich deserves three points.

9. a-0, b-2, c-1; (a) misses the point completely, (c) is far more on the right lines, while (b) has been attributed to Fischer.

10. a-2, b-0, c-1; 'Necessity is the mother of invention.

If you scored 25 or more points, you almost certainly cheated, but even if you did not you could have a great future as a chessplayer.

15-24 points indicates great promise, but you perhaps lack the self-confidence necessary to succeed at the highest levels. Try to cultivate a little more arrogance, banish those nice features from your character. Screw your pieces down and snarl at your opponents. With practice you can provide intimidating opposition to anyone.

7-14 is really not good enough. Your character lags far behind that ideal a chessmaster should be aiming for. You will certainly find that if you continue playing chess it will be necessary to make good moves from time to time just to compensate for this deficit in natural ability. An arduous road to success, but quite essential in your case, I am afraid.

1-6 is just abysmal. Have you learnt nothing at all from this book? I really cannot understand why I spend hours and hours working to try to teach things to such unreceptive readers; if it were not for the royalties I doubt whether I would bother at all. Your lack of attention has been quite deplorable and you do not really deserve any advice, but if I had to give any I suppose I would be forced to recommend chess journalism as the only way out.

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William Hartston is an International Master and former British Champion. He is the author of *Soft Pawn*, several serious chess books and only one sex manual. He currently writes silly things for the *Independent* and *Mail on Sunday*, and has a Yorkshire terrier named 'Smells'.



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