

Improve Your Practical Play in the Middlegame

Alexey Dreev

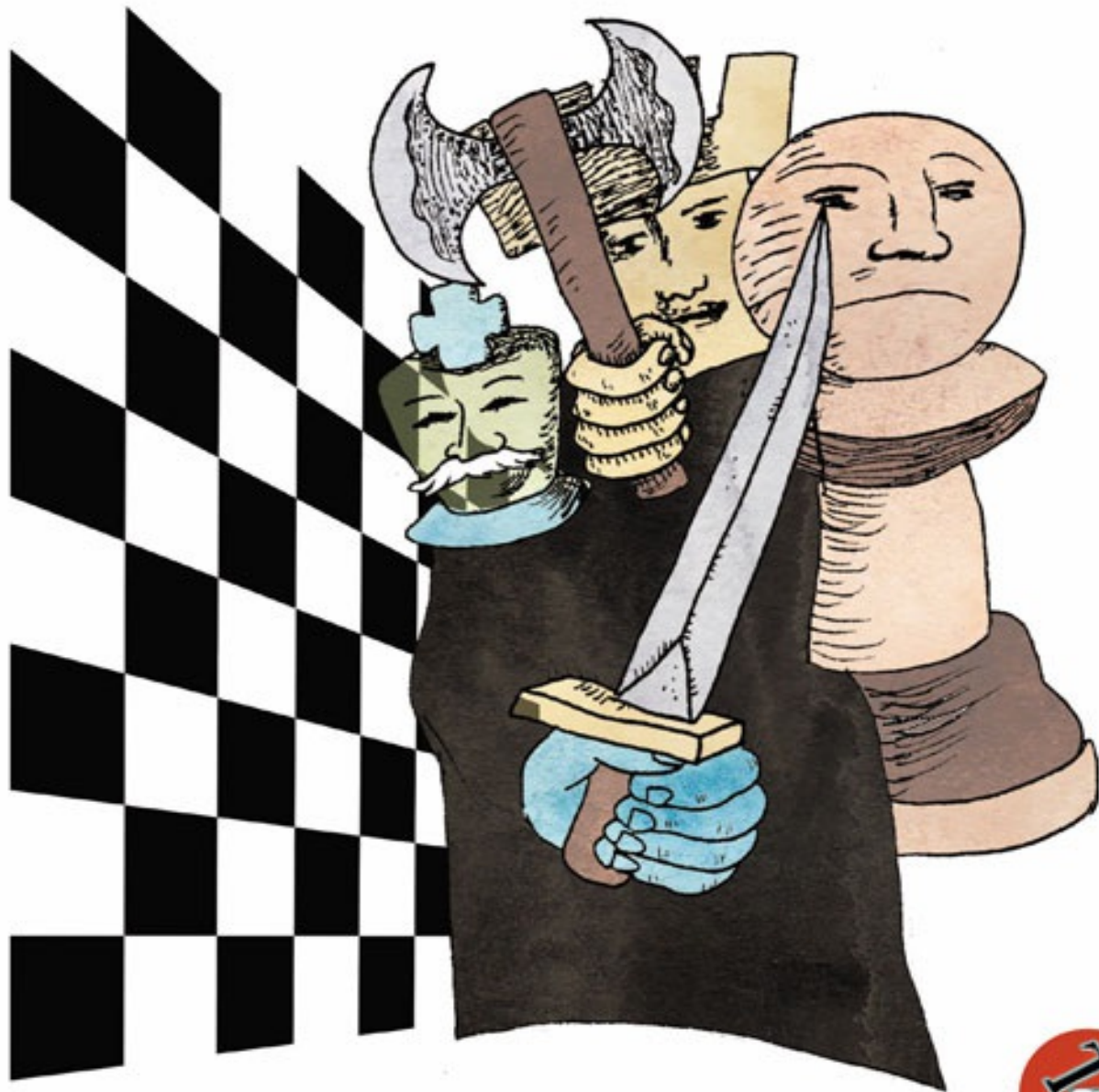


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Key to Symbols used!

!	a good move
?	a weak move
!!	an excellent move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
□	only move
=	equality
∞	unclear position
±	White stands slightly better
∓	Black stands slightly better
±	White has a serious advantage
∓	Black has a serious advantage
+-	White has a decisive advantage
-+	Black has a decisive advantage
→	with an attack↑with an initiative
↔	with counterplay
Δ	with the idea of
∩	better is
≤	worse is
N	novelty
+	check
#	mate

Introduction

This book is devoted to typical methods of play in the middlegame. This topic, of course, is not new. Many books have been written on it at different times by authors old and modern. Unfortunately, the content of such books is not always error-free, as I have experienced many times. Therefore the emphasis in my book is on the quality of the examples; all of them have been checked and are deeply analyzed.

When writing a book, many authors try to make an impression by choosing the most striking games and fragments. The reader may therefore get the impression that a game of chess consists only of beautiful moves, combinations, spectacular sacrifices and non-standard solutions. Of course, it does not. There is a lot of beauty in chess, but usually most games consist of work in progress. There are lots of examples of such working games in this book, but beauty is also present

Of course, the format of the book does not permit coverage of all the methods of play in the middlegame. However, the book has enough material to get acquainted with the most important ones, and, with the help of exercises, to understand the meaning of these methods and learn how to use them in practice.

I hope that after reading this book the reader will increase his or her knowledge of the typical and not-so-typical methods of play in the middlegame, become familiar with ideas of non-standard solutions to practical problems arising during the game and be able to apply this knowledge in his or her own games.

Chapter 1

Moves Back

For many players a move back is a difficult decision. Why? How often do you meet people who can easily admit their mistakes and are ready to correct them? In the modern world it is considered that a person should be purposeful, go forward and achieve their goal, but sometimes it turns out to be a waste of time, and we should stop or select a different reference point and goal, in other words start over.

Similarly in chess. Very often, in selecting a specific game plan, we persistently follow this set plan and miss the moment when the situation on the board changes. That is when we need to stop and sometimes radically change our plan of action – to accept a ‘non-standard’ solution, not play by routine.

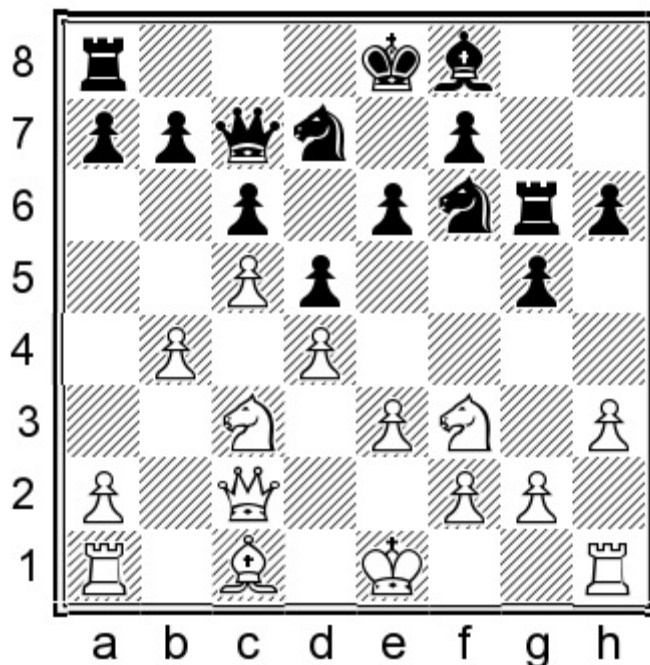
‘Moves back’ belong to such ‘non-standard’ solutions. ‘Moves back’ can be attacking, defensive, and just good. As my coaching and playing practice shows, such moves often fail to appear on our radar. Our task is to explore the situations where these moves are not very obvious, to get used to these moves and, ultimately, learn to use them in practice.

Let’s consider a few examples to begin with. At the end of this chapter you will find some exercises.

Example 1

From Eljanov-Sandipan
Plovdiv 2010

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♙g4 5.♚b3 ♚b6 6.♞c3 e6 7.♞h4 ♙h5 8.h3 g5 9.♞f3 h6 10.c5 ♚c7 11.♙d3 ♜g8 12.♚c2 ♞bd7 13.b4 ♙g6 14.♙xg6 ♜xg6



Position after: 14... ♜xg6

15.♜b1!

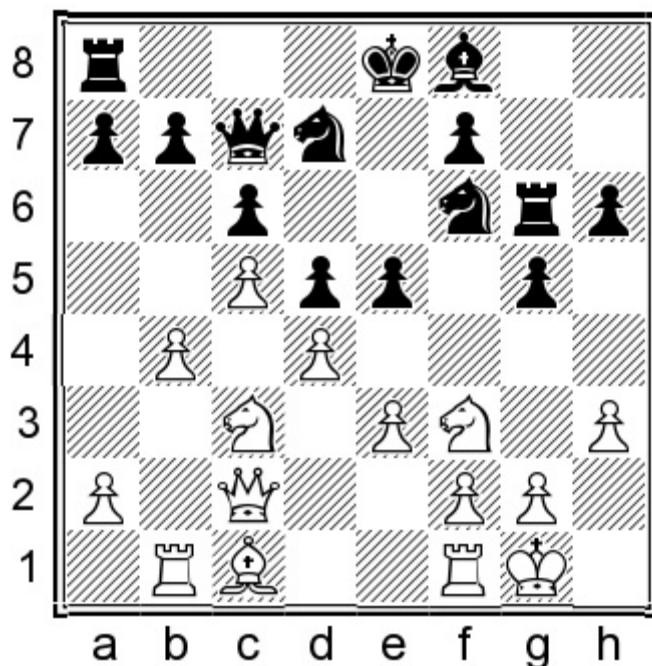
This move is primarily designed to prevent Black's activity on the queenside rather than prepare White's own. Castling makes no sense for White, as his king feels quite safe in the centre. When I was working on this variation, which is in my opening repertoire, I was wondering how to play this type of position. It quickly became obvious that activity on the queenside is premature. Black can meet the b4-b5 break with ...b7-b6 and it turns out that White is not ready to open the position. Much more promising is to try to exploit the movement of the black g-pawn which has led to a weakening of the black kingside. But how to do it?

In practice 15.♔b2 has been played here, but that is not the best place for the bishop. 15...h5 16.♘e2 g4 17.♘e5 ♘xe5 18.dxe5 ♘d7 19.hxg4 ♖xg4 20.♘f4 ♘xe5 21.♗xh5 ½-½ Eljanov, P (2761) – Sandipan, C (2641) Plovdiv 2010.

15...♗e7

Certainly not mandatory, but a highly probable move, and the first computer line. It should be noted that White can use the same plan with other continuations, for example after 15...♗g8.

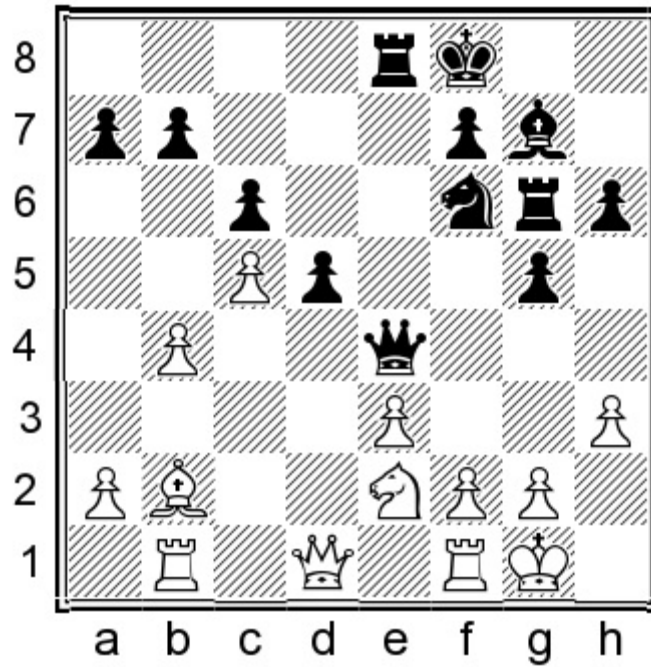
Let's consider the immediate 15...e5 which looks natural but isn't fully prepared yet. 16.0-0!



Position after: 16.0-0!

White needs to castle to fully consolidate his forces. At the same time, he invites his opponent to 'come closer', not fearing the further advance of the black pawns. Black's activity is premature. Let's check.

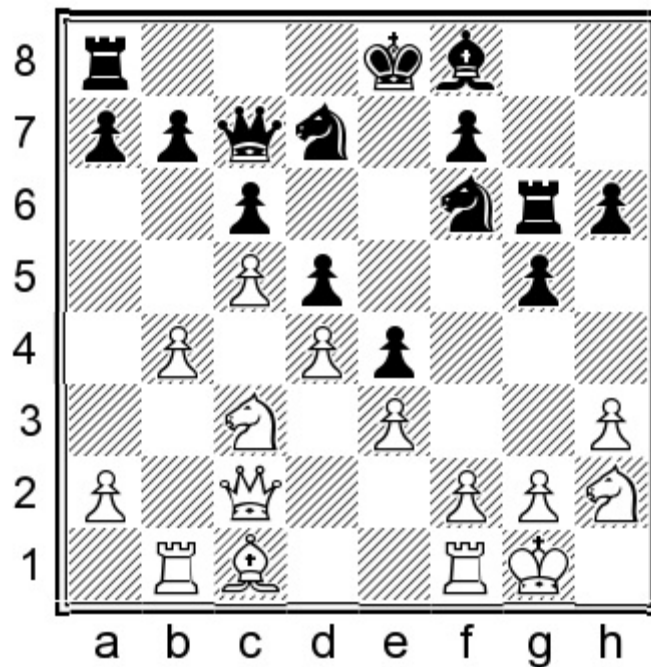
A) 16...♗g7 17.dxe5!? Straightforward, but clarifies the game. (The unhurried strategy of using the weak point f5 also deserves attention: 17.♘e2!? e4 18.♘h2 h5 19.♘g3±) 17...♘xe5 18.♘xe5 ♗xe5 19.♔b2 ♖f8 20.♘e2 ♗e4 21.♗d1 (21.♖fc1!±) 21...♗e8 (21...g4 22.♘f4±)



Position after: 21...Re8

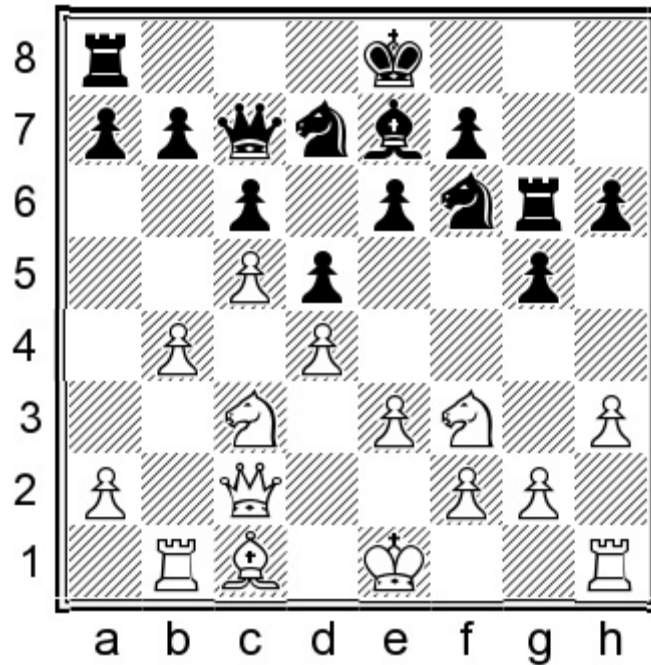
22.g4! Provides a powerful outpost on f5 for the white knight. A possible continuation is 22...Nd7 23.Ng3 Qe6 24.Qd4 Qe5 25.Nf5±

B) 16...e4 17.Nh2!



Position after: 17.Nh2!

17...g4 (17...h5 18.f3±) 18.hxg4 Nxg4 19.Nxg4 Bxg4 20.b5! Now the power of the move 15.Bb1 becomes obvious. Black does not have time to develop an initiative on the kingside. (20.f3?! Bxh4!∞) 20...Nf6 21.bxc6 bxc6 22.Qb3 Bxh4 23.g3 Qc8 24.Qb7!± Just in time!



Position after: 15...♙e7

16.♘g1!!

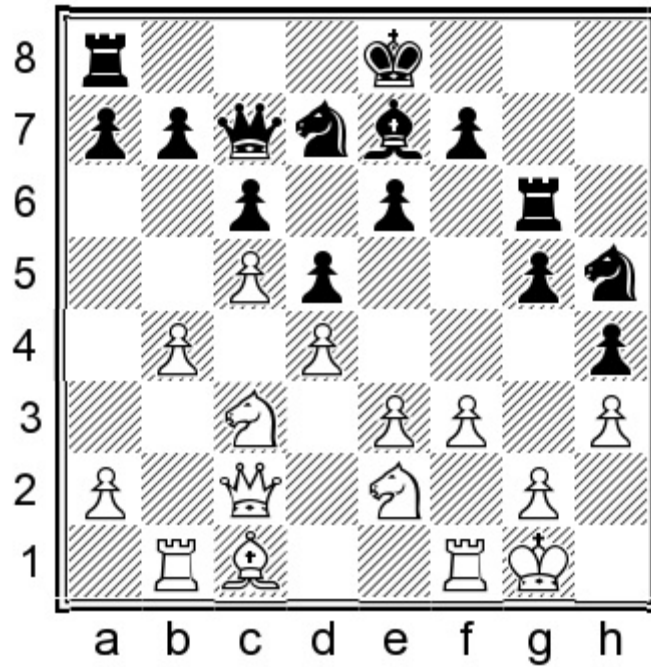
In my opinion a strong and deep manoeuvre. The point is to capture the centre with pawns and neutralize potential counterplay.

16...h5

Black can't be active in the centre to free up space for his pieces because after 16...e5?! the white knight immediately goes to the excellent outpost on f5: 17.♘ge2±.

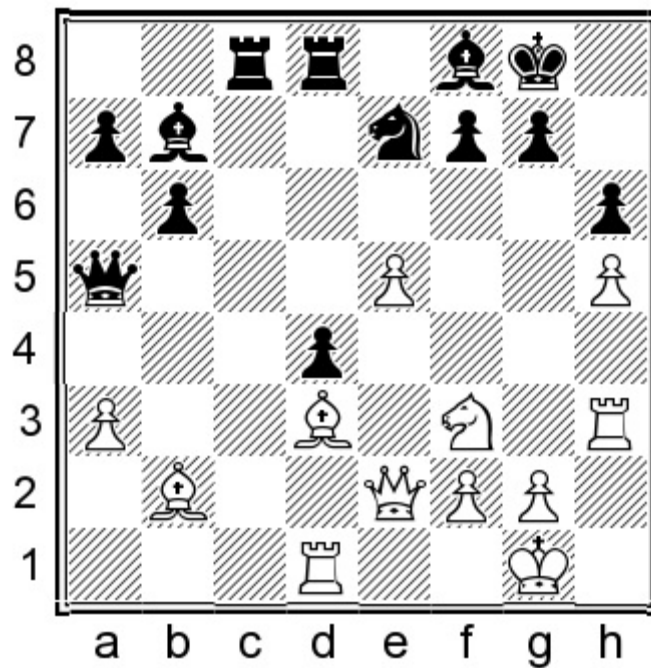
17.♘ge2 h4 18.f3 ♘h5 19.0-0±

Then e3-e4, followed by either an immediate f3-f4, or e4-e5 to open lines on the kingside. It is not difficult to see that for this plan White needs the support of his pieces. That is why he didn't hurry with the development of the bishop to b2.



Position after: 19.0-0±

Example 2
From Bareev-Hracek
Pardubice 1994



White to move

Studying the game Bareev – Hracek, where Evgeniy played the simple but strong 21.♘xd4, 1-0 (32), I was interested whether in this position White could wait with the capture on d4 and go 21.♞g3.

I found here a fantastic idea of protection.

21. ♖g3

Black has to take care not to lose immediately. 22. ♘xd4 is threatened and it seems that the position is already hopeless...

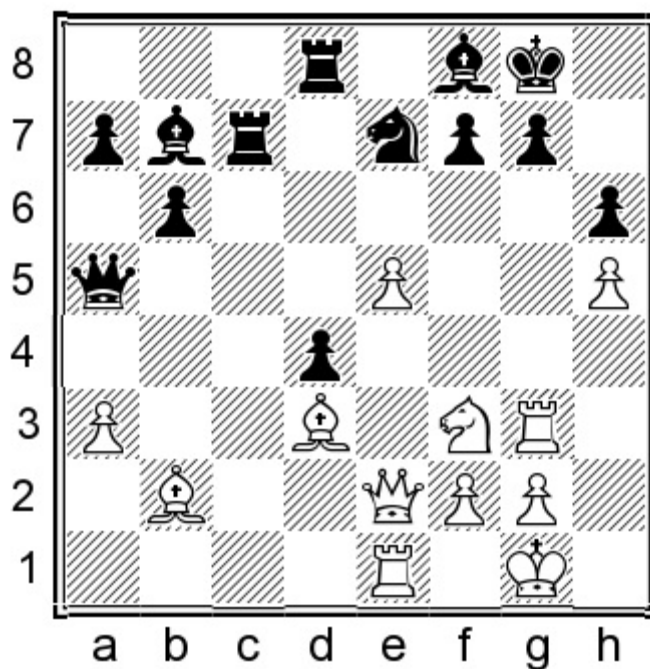
21... ♜c5!

The moves are quite complicated, but the idea is simple: to prevent the capture ♘xd4 at any cost.

22. ♖e1!

It seems that Black has merely postponed defeat for a moment, but after a fantastic ‘move back’, he still has a chance for salvation! Most often it is very difficult to find such moves.

22... ♜c7!!



Position after: 22... ♜c7!!

The idea behind this move is seen in the next variation.

23. ♘xd4

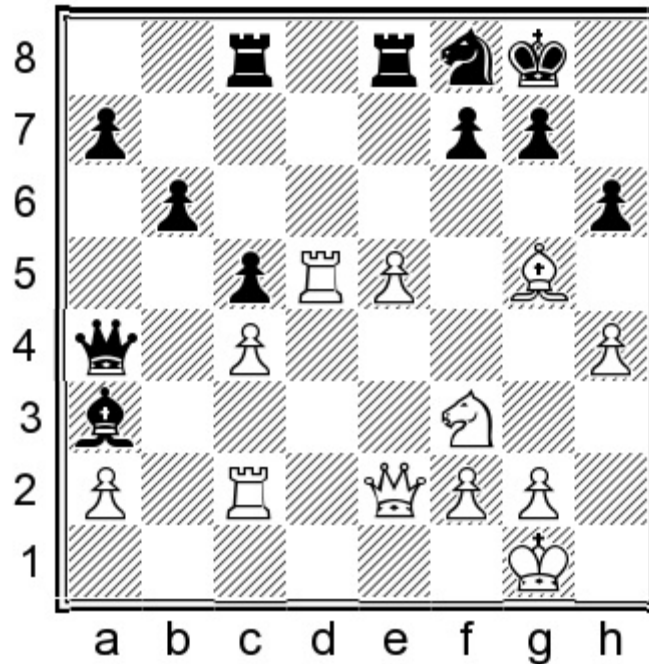
After 23. ♕h2 White keeps the advantage, but it is not winning, and besides, he needs to find this move.

23... ♘d5! 24. ♗e4 ♘f6!

White's advantage has disappeared.

Example 3

From Carlsen-Mamedyarov



White to move

21.♔e3 ♖g6?!

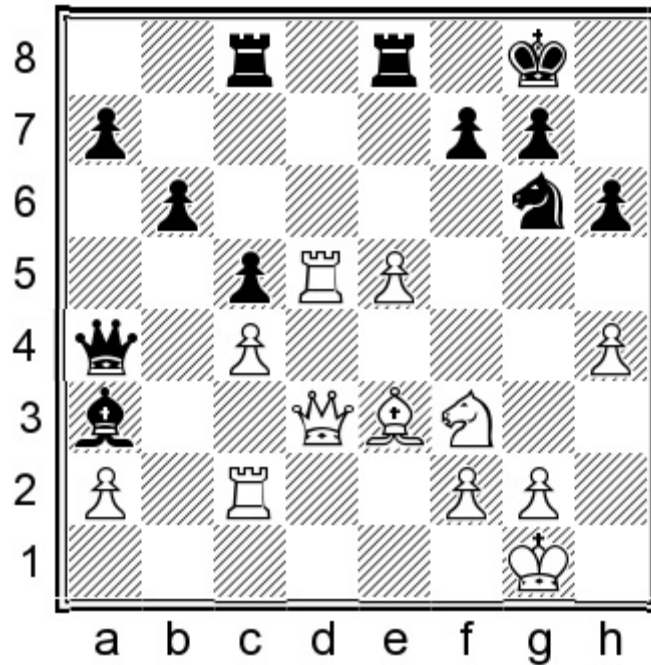
A positional mistake. Despite White's space advantage, Black's position is not worse.

He has different plans available: ...a6 & ...b5 or play a rook to the d-file. As long as the knight on f3 hasn't moved to a more active square on e4 or f5, Black is all right, and it is not so easy to activate the knight, e.g. ♖d2 is not yet possible due to ...♙xc2.

A) It was better to play 21...♞cd8!? 22.♞cd2 (22.♙d3 ♞d7∞) 22...♞d7!? 23.h5 ♞xd5 24.♞xd5 (24.cxd5 ♔c1 25.♞d3 ♙e4 26.d6 ♔b2 27.♖d2 ♙c6 28.f4 c4 29.d7 cxd3 30.dxe8=♙ dxe2 31.♙xc6 e1=♙+ 32.♖f1 ♙d1=) 24...♖e6=

B) Also possible was 21...♖e6 22.h5 ♞cd8 23.g3 a6 24.♔g2 b5=.

22.♙d3



Position after: 22. ♖d3

White wants to push h5. If ... ♖e7 then ♜d7, while if ... ♗f8 then ♘h4 and ♘f5. Here it was necessary to make a 'move back'!

22... ♗f8!

Yes, Black has lost time, but surprisingly his position has not become worse. Black had not only to make a 'move back', but to admit his mistake, a doubly difficult task where Black unfortunately failed.

Instead, Black continued with the wrong plan: 22... ♜e6? 23.h5 ♗e7

A) 24. ♜d8+ ♜xd8 25. ♖xd8+ ♗h7 26. ♜d2 ♘c1 (26... ♖xc4 27. ♘xh6+-) 27. ♜d7 ♘xe3 28. fxe3 ♗c6 29. ♖f8+- won even more quickly.

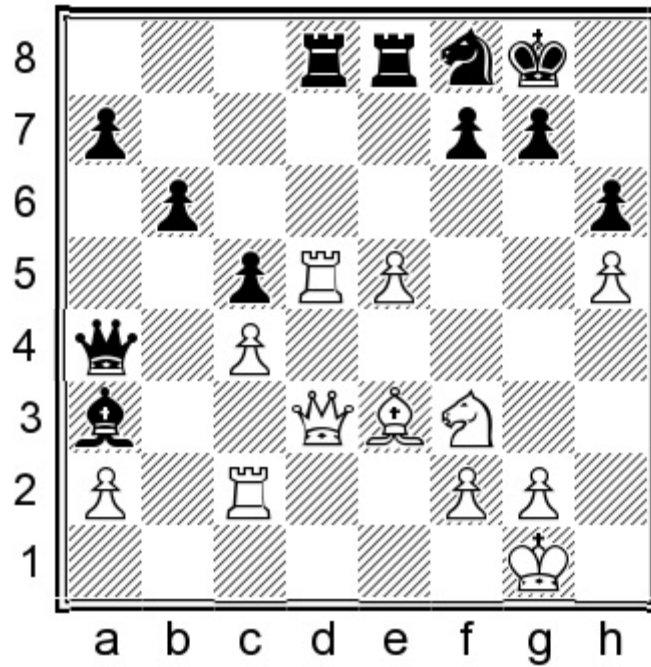
B) 24. ♜d6 was sufficient for a stable advantage, which Carlsen converted to victory: 24... ♗b4 25. ♜c1± 1-0 (47) Carlsen, M (2881) – Mamedyarov, S (2760) Shamkir 2014.

23.h5

23. ♗d2 ♗g6! =

23... ♜cd8! =

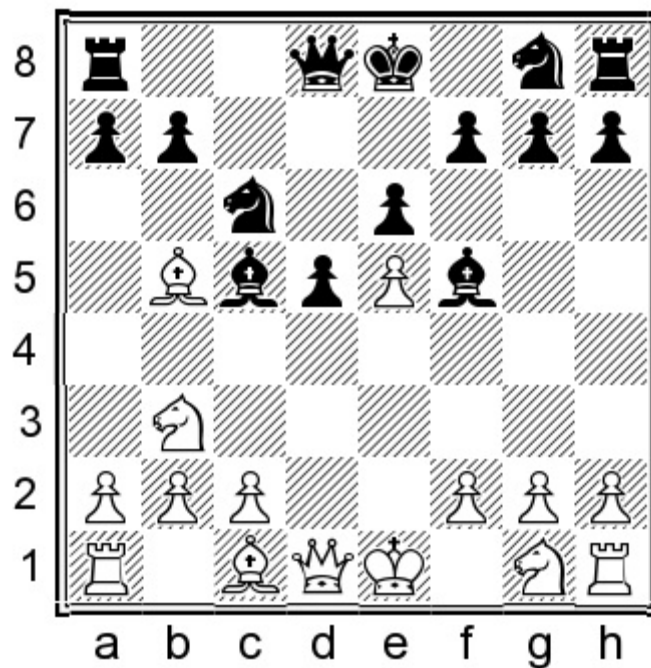
After 23... ♜cd8



Position after: 23...♖cd8

if White captures twice on d8, then the c2-rook will be hanging. If 24.♘h4?? then Black wins after 24...♖xd5 25.cxd5 ♖xh4+.

Example 4
From Perunovic-Dreev
Yerevan 2014



White to move

8.a4!N

An interesting novelty which my opponent had prepared for this game. This move was a surprise which set me thinking. It seemed that a 'move back' here would be appropriate. First, I did not want to give up my bishop for free. Secondly, I was hoping that I would be able to finish development with ...♖e7-g6, since 8.a4 is not the most important for White in terms of development. But as the further course of the game showed, this move was extremely dangerous for Black, as my opponent predicted.

8...♙f8

It was better leave the bishop and play 8...♗b6!, e.g. 9.♗xc5 ♗xc5 10.c3 ♗b6 (≤ 10...a6 11.♙e3 ♗e7 12.♙xc6+ bxc6 13.a5±) 11.♙e3 ♗c7 12.f4 a6 13.♙xc6+ ♗xc6 14.♗f3 ♗e7 15.♗d4 ♗c7= In principle, Black's position is quite reasonable. White quickly played...

9.a5! a6 10.♙a4 ♗c7

And now it is not so easy to develop my pieces, for example 10...♗ge7 11.♗e2 ♙g6 12.♙e3 ♗f5 13.♙b6 ♗b8 14.0-0 ♙e7 15.♗ed4±.

11.♗e2

11.♗f3!? was interesting: 11...♙e4 12.0-0 Δ 12...♙xf3 13.♗xf3 ♗xe5 14.♙f4 ♗e4 15.♗c3±.

11...♗xe5

A serious inaccuracy. I had to play 11...♗ge7, but then after 12.♙e3!! White is better. (12.0-0 0-0-0!! 13.♙e3 d4! 14.♗bxd4 ♗xe5∞) 12...♗xe5 13.♗d2 ♗g6 14.f4 ♗c7 15.♙b6 ♗c8 16.♗bd4 ♙e4 17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.♗d4 ♗e7 19.♗c3±

12.♗bd4

Black has problems with the development of his pieces in all variations.

12...♗c8

12...♗ge7!? 13.0-0 ♗d6 14.♗e1 e5 15.♗xf5 ♗xf5 16.♗f4 ♗fe7 17.♗d3 ♗g6 18.♙e3 ♙e7 19.♙c5 ♗c7 20.♙b6 (20.♙xe7 ♗xe7 21.♗h5 ♗hd8!!=) 20...♗d6 21.♗c5 0-0 22.♗xb7 ♗e6 23.♗c5 ♙xc5 24.♙xc5 ♗fc8 25.♙b6±

13.0-0 ♙c5 14.♙e3 ♗d6 15.b4! ♙xd4

15...♙xb4 16.♙xc6+ bxc6 17.♗xf5 exf5 18.♗d4±

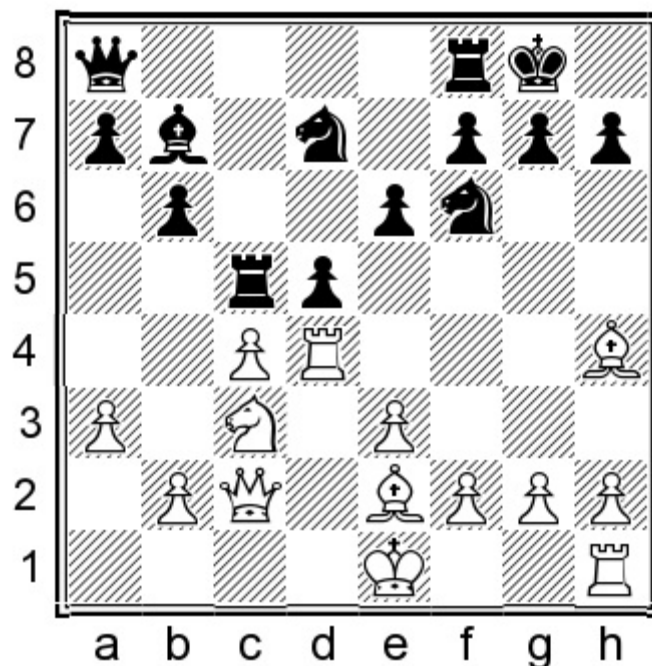
16.♗xd4 ♗ge7 17.♗xf5 ♗xf5 18.♙c5 ♗c7 19.c4! dxc4 20.♗g4±

Thus we can conclude that a 'move back' is not always a good one.

Example 5

From Dreev-Jakovenko

Moscow 2007



White to move

This position arose from a 4.♘c2 Nimzo. Black had played very quickly and had hardly used any time, unlike me, but the next move forced my opponent to think and be ahead of me on the clock.

16.♙d1!

This preventive ‘move back’ is not obvious! The point is that it is now impossible to play 16...dxc4? due to 17.♖xd7. At the time 16. ♙d1 was a novelty that I found at the board. It allows White to fight for the advantage without risk or sacrifice. White’s two bishops will start to have an effect as soon as he finishes development.

Previously only 16.b4 had been seen: 16...♖cc8 (16...♖c7!?) 17.0-0 dxc4! White needs to sacrifice a pawn. Of course he has compensation, but his position is not very comfortable; he has to be careful to keep this compensation. (17...e5 18.♖d2 d4 19.exd4 ♙xg2 20.♖fd1 exd4 21.♖xd4± 1-0 (9) Bareev, E Efimenko, Z Turin 2006) 18.f3 ♘e5 19.♙xf6 gxf6 20.♘b5 ♙b8 21.♘d6 ♖cd8= 0-1 Kasimdzhanov, R (2690) – Grischuk, A (2715) Moscow 2007.

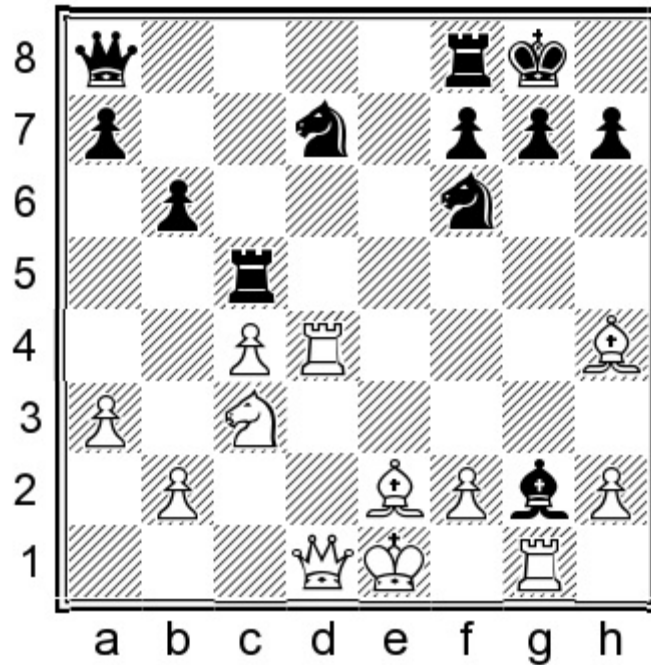
16.♙d1! e5

The first move to take into account, and it was played in the game.

A) Maybe the best here is 16...♙a6, but after 17.cxd5 ♙xe2 18.♙xe2 ♘xd5 19.♘xd5 ♖xd5 20.♖xd5 exd5 21.♙d4± the position with an isolated pawn is very unpleasant.

B) 16...♖fc8 17.0-0 e5 18.♖d2 d4 19.exd4 exd4 20.♖xd4 ♙xg2 21.♖e1± is also good for White.

17.♖d2 d4 18.exd4 exd4 19.♖xd4 ♙xg2 20.♖g1



Position after: 20. ♖g1

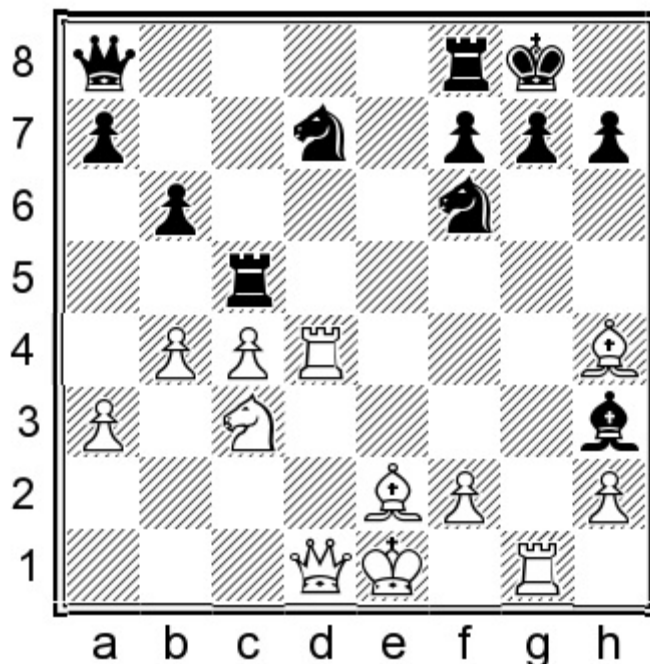
20...♙h3?

Here I missed a beautiful win.

Some time later I read a comment to this game by a famous grandmaster. He said that after 20...♖e8 Black kept equal chances, for example: 20...♖e8! 21. ♖xd7 ♘xd7 22. ♗xd7 ♙f3 23. ♙f6 g6 24. ♖g3 ♙xe2 25. ♘xe2 ♗c6 26. ♗xc6 ♖xc6 27. ♙c3 ♖ce6 28. ♖e3 ♖xe3 29. fxe3 ♖xe3∞. I agree with this, but White has an amazing move here. It has nothing to do with our topic, but proves that the ‘move back’ was correct and gave White the advantage. 21. ♔d2!! The king calmly goes to the safe square c1, while keeping all the advantages of the position – two bishops and an open g-file.

21.b4!

In the game I played 21. ♖d6 ♖c6 22. ♗d4 ♖xd6 23. ♗xd6 ♙e6 24. ♗d4 ♔h8 25. f3± 1-0 (45) Dreev, A (2607) – Jakovenko, D (2710) Moscow 2007.



Position after: 21.b4!

21...♖e5

A) 21...♖c6 22.♔d3 ♘e6 23.♙xf6 ♗xf6 24.♙f3±

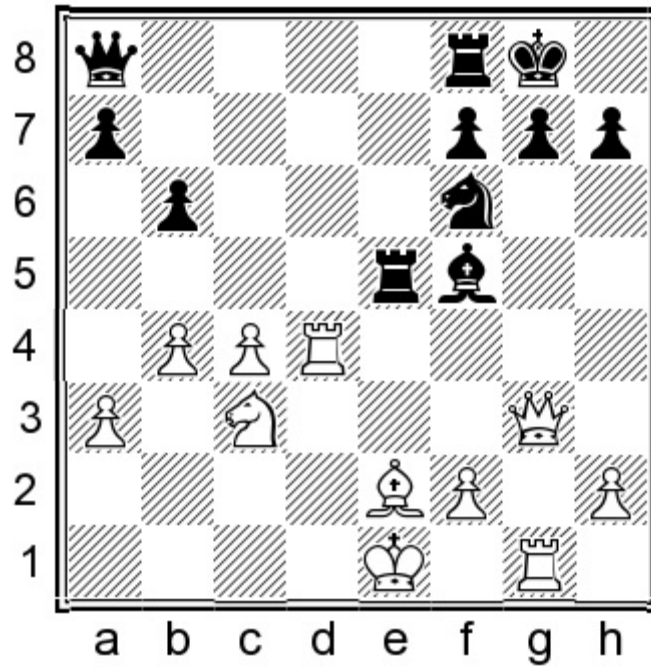
B) 21...♖cc8 22.♔d3 ♘e6 23.♙f3 ♗b8 24.♙g3 ♗e5 25.♔e3 ♗xf3+ 26.♔xf3 ♗a8 27.♔xf6! gxf6 28.♙h4+-

22.♙xf6!

I calculated all the above variations, but didn't find this move. The point of the whole variation is to use the advantage of the two white bishops – and here it is suddenly necessary to give up the bishop pair! This move absolutely did not cross my mind.

The false way is 22.♔d3?! ♙f5 23.♙xf6? (23.♔g3 ♗h5 24.♔g2 ♗xg2 25.♖xg2±) 23...♙xd3 24.♖xg7+ ♗h8 25.♖xd7 ♖e6 26.♙d4 f6±.

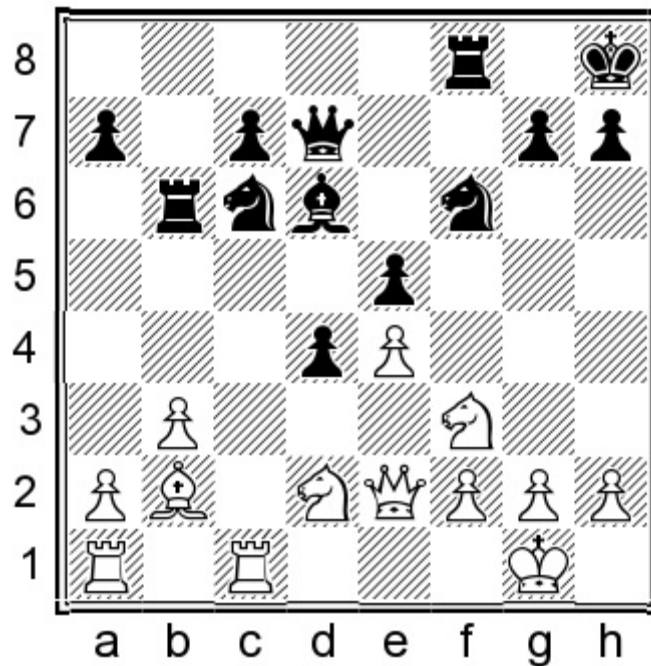
22...♗xf6 23.♔d3 ♙f5 24.♔g3+-



Position after: 24. ♖g3+-

With a double attack.

Example 6
From Dreev-Edouard
Aix-les-Bains 2011



White to move

I had already had this exact position against Edouard a few months earlier.

16.♘c4

In the first game I continued with 16.♘e1 and after 16...♙b4 17.♘c4 ♕xe1 18.♘xb6 ♕xf2+ 19.♚xf2 cxb6 (19...axb6 20.♚c2+-) 20.♚f5 ♚d6 21.♙a3 ♚xa3 22.♖xc6+- White achieved a winning position.

However, in the second game, when we again got this position, I refused to play 16.♘e1 because of 16...♘g4!, and in both cases 17.f3 ♘e3 or 17.♘d3 ♘b4! This leads to a knight exchange that is beneficial to Black, not White. It is better for White to avoid the exchange in order to exert maximum pressure on Black's position.

Ideally, you need to put one knight on c4, the other on d3, and both rooks on the c-file. Then it becomes difficult for Black to hold the position. The knight exchange simplifies the position, and the position becomes unclear. That is why in the second game I first played ♘c4.

16.♘c4 ♖bb8

And only now

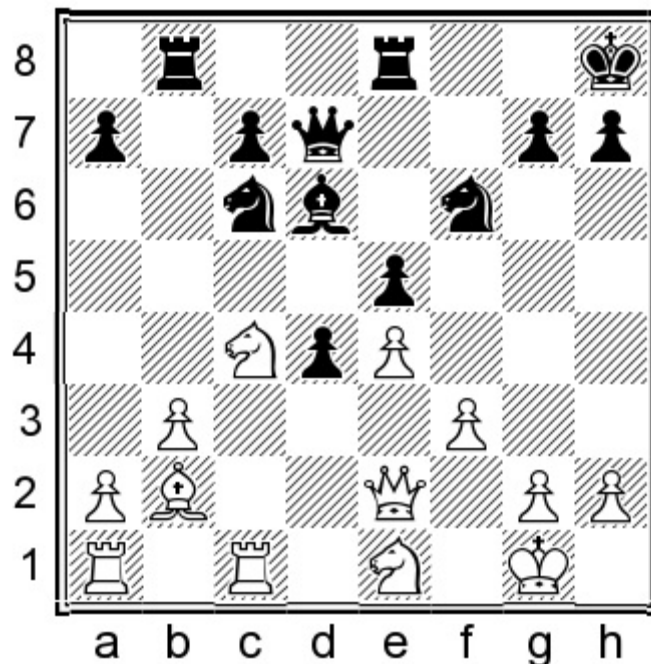
17.♘e1!

As we can see, the immediate 'move back' is not always good; you must consider the plans of your opponent.

17...♖fe8

It seems that Black should keep the rook on the half open file, but actually it doesn't matter. Black's basic idea is the knight exchange 18.♘d3 ♘b4!

18.f3!

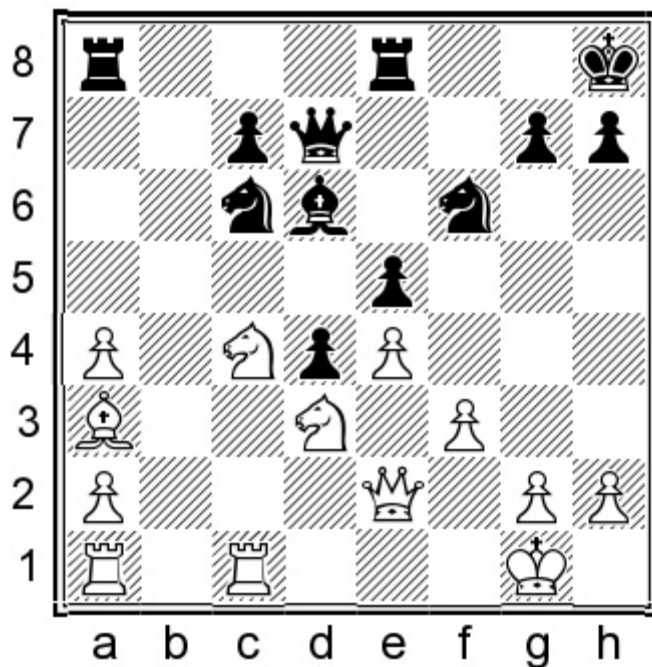


Position after: 18.f3!

The important move. White not only strengthens the e4-pawn and frees his queen from its protection, but also prepares the f2-square for his knight.

18...h6

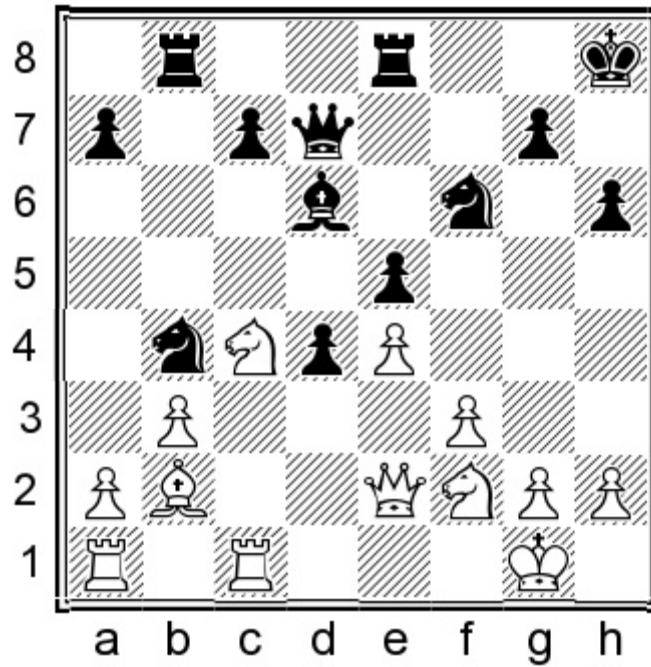
The idea of opening the a-file for play on the queenside runs into a delicate tactical refutation: 18...a5 19.♘d3 a4?! 20.bxa4 ♖a8 21.♙a3!±



Position after: 21.♙a3!±

Δ 21...♙xa3 (21...♖xa4? 22.♙xd6 cxd6 23.♘b6+-) 22.♘xa3 ♖xa4 23.♘c5+-.

19.♘d3 ♘b4 20.♘f2



Position after: 20. ♖f2

White has used the f2-square to avoid the knight exchange.

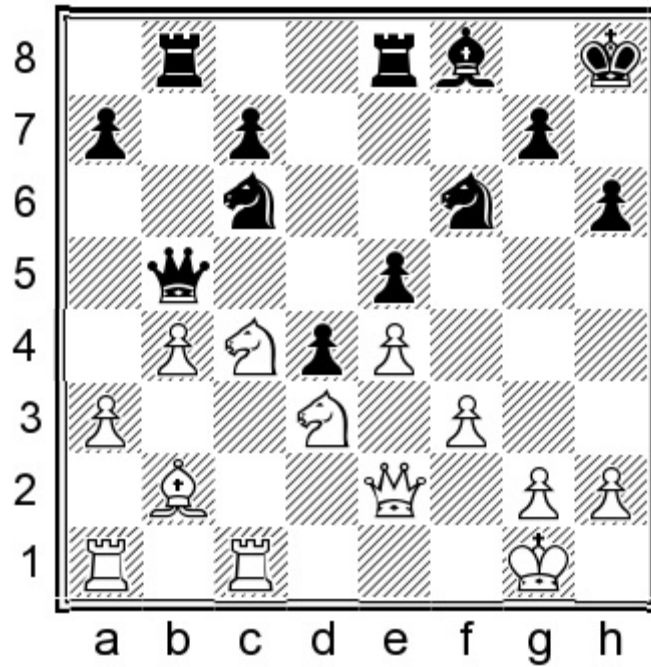
20... ♜b5

Wait-and-see strategy leads nowhere: 20... ♘c6 21. ♚c2 ♘b4 22. ♚d1 a5 23. a3 ♘c6 24. ♘d3± with a big advantage.

21. a3 ♘c6 22. b4 ♙f8

22... a5? is impossible: 23. a4! ♜xb4 24. ♙a3+-.

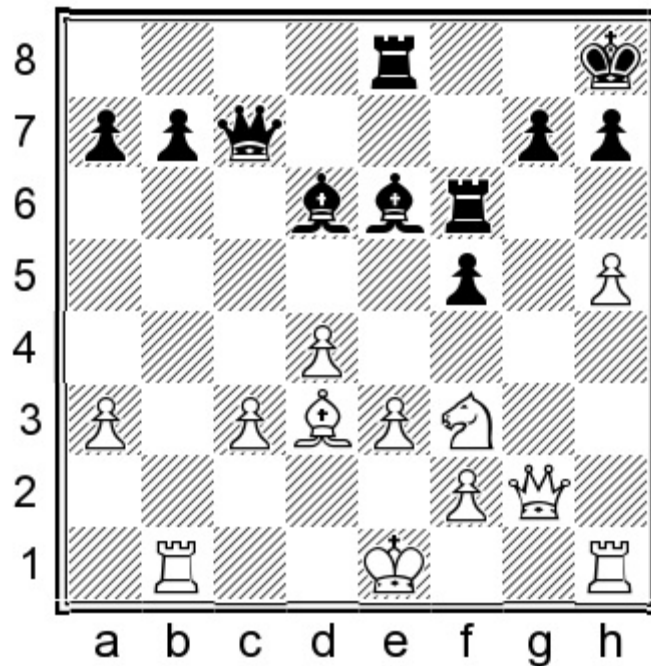
23. ♘d3±



Position after: 23. ♖d3±

With the advance of the b-pawn White achieved his goal and has a clear advantage. 1-0 (48) Dreev, A (2703) – Edouard, R (2602) Mulhouse 2011.

Example 7
From Dreev-Shcherbakov
Elista 1995



White to move

21. c4 f4!

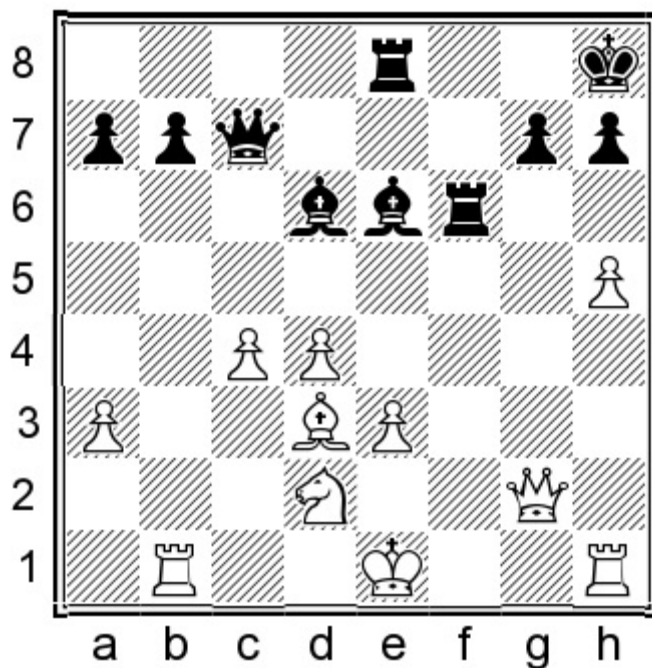
In the game Black played the weaker 21...♙xc4 22.♙xc4 ♖xc4 23.♗xb7 ♖c1+ 24.♕e2 ♖c4+= with approximate equality.

22.♘d2

22.e4? ♙xc4+

22...fxe3 23.fxe3

In order to find the strongest move, you need to see the idea with the temporary sacrifice of the exchange. It is important not to make a mistake.



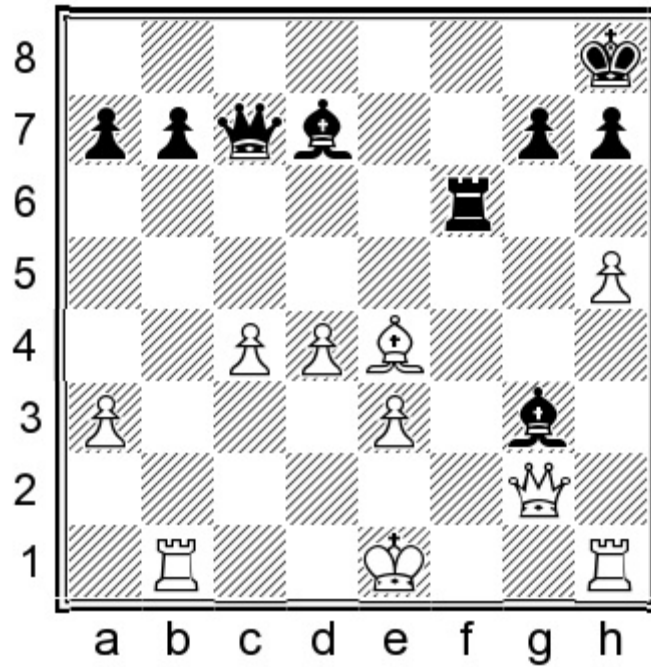
Position after: 23.fxe3

23...♙c8!!

Almost forced.

A) If Black just protects the pawn with 23...b6, then after 24.♘e4! (24.♖e4? ♗h6+) 24...♙xc4 25.♘xf6 ♗xe3+ 26.♕f2 ♗xd3 27.♖a8+ ♖b8 28.♖xb8+ ♙xb8 29.♘e4∞ the position is complicated but White is all right.

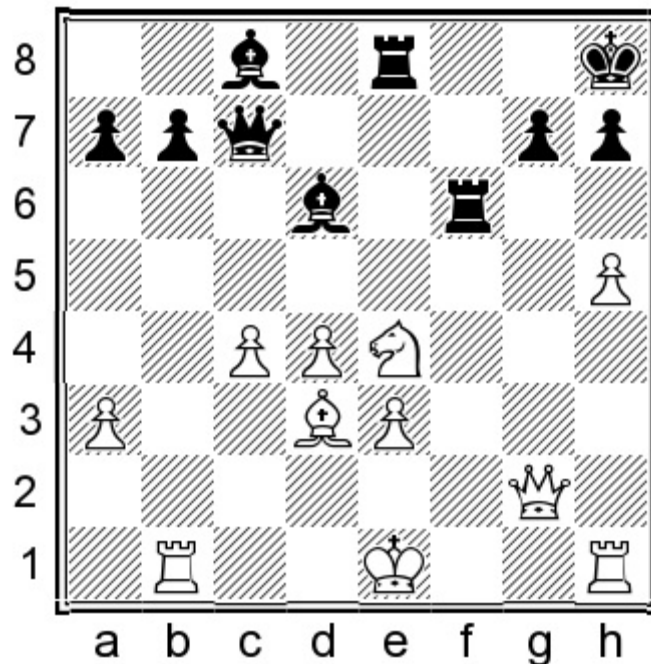
B) The attempt to carry out the same idea by 23...♙d7 24.♘e4 ♗xe4 25.♙xe4 ♙g3+



Position after: 25...♙g3+

unexpectedly encounters an absolutely fantastic response: 26.♔d2!! ♜f2+ 27.♚xf2 ♙xf2 28.♞xb7 ♚a5+ 29.♕c2! ♙c8 30.♞f7 ♚xa3 31.♞a1 ♚b4 32.♞xf2 ♚xc4+ 33.♔d2 ♚b4+, and, despite White not having sufficient compensation for the queen, he manages to develop a very strong initiative which is enough to equalize.

24.♘e4



Position after: 24.♘e4

24...♖xe4! 25.♘xe4

25.♙xe4 ♙g3+ 26.♔d1 ♖f2-+

25...♙f5 26.♘d5

26.♘xb7 ♘a5+-+

26...♙xd3 27.♖xb7 ♘c8 28.h6!

Despite desperate resistance White's position is bad.

A) 28.c5 ♙c4! 29.♗e4 ♖e6 30.♗f3 ♖xe3+ 31.♗xe3 ♘xb7-+

B) 28.♖xa7? ♘g4-+

28...gxf6 29.♖xa7 ♙xc4

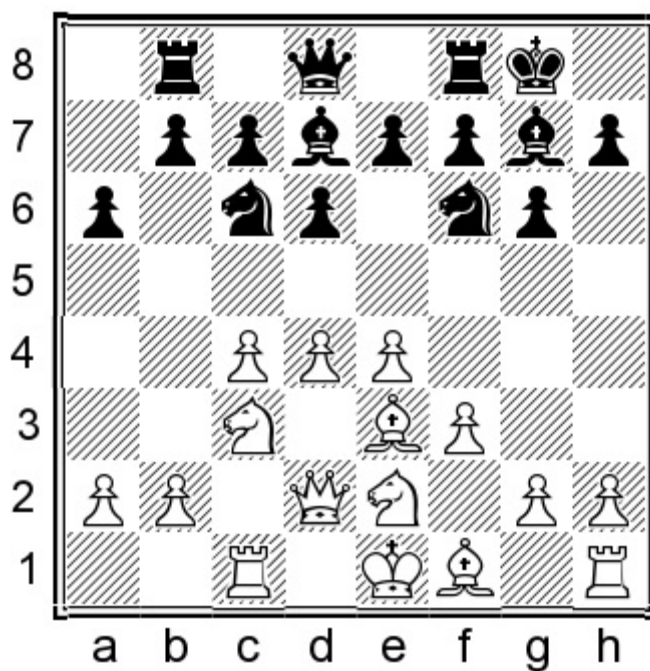
29...♗g4 30.♖h2! ♗g1+ 31.♔d2 ♙xc4 32.♗g2 ♘xg2+ 33.♖xg2 ♙d5 34.♖gg7 ♙e4 35.♖gd7 h5 36.d5∞

30.♖a8 ♙xd5 31.♖xc8+ ♔g7 32.♖g1+ ♔f7-+

Example 8

From Dreev-Kokarev

India 2010



White to move

With the previous moves ...a7-a6 and ...♖a8-b8 Black has prepared the advance ...b7-b5. White must either prevent this or prepare to meet it.

10.♠d1!

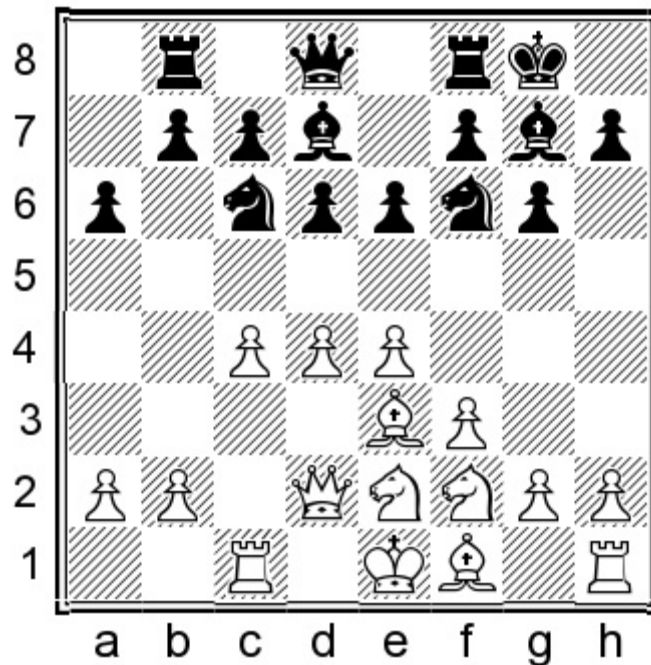
Quite an unexpected move. Its purpose is to prevent the advance ...b7-b5. This position is theoretical. The move 10.♠d1 is well-known, but this option appeared only recently. It is not enough to prevent the move ...b5, you also need to understand where the knight will go. It goes to f2, where it stands very well, better than on c3.

10...e6

A) If now 10...b5 after 11.c5 e6 12.♠f2! dxc5 we have the opportunity to take on c5 with the rook. (12...♞e8 13.♙g5±) 13.♞xc5 ♞e8 14.♙g5!±

B) 10...e5 11.d5 ♞e7 12.♠f2 ♞e8 13.g3 c5 14.b4 b6 15.♙g2 f5 16.0-0 ♖h8 17.♞b1 (17.f4!?) 17...♠g8 18.♞b3 ♠gf6 19.bxc5 bxc5 20.♞fb1 ♞a8 21.♙g5± 1-0 (49) Dreev, A (2690) – Ye Jiangchuan (2681) Taiyuan 2004.

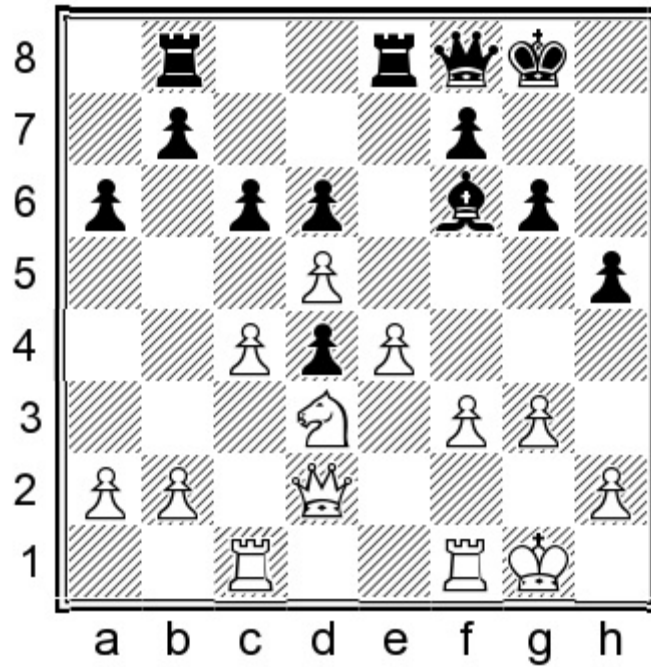
11.♠f2



Position after: 11.♠f2

We need the knight on the kingside, for example, to support the movement of the kingside pawns. Here is how my game with Kokarev proceeded.

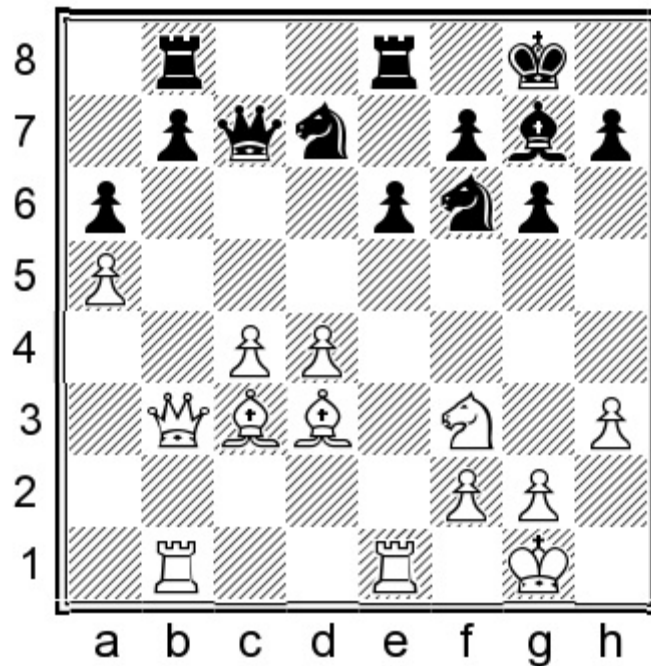
11...♞e8 12.♙g5 ♞e7 13.g3 e5 14.d5 ♠d4 15.♠xd4 exd4 16.♙g2 ♞f8 17.0-0 h6 18.♙xf6 ♙xf6 19.♙h3 ♙xh3 20.♠xh3 c6 21.♠f4 h5 22.♠d3±



Position after: 22. ♖d3±

½-½ (38) Dreev, A (2655) – Kokarev, D (2612) India 2010.

Example 9
From Dreev-Kornev
Tomsk 2006



White to move

It is obvious that the White's position is good, but we need to find ways to enhance it. The b7-pawn is weak, thus it is necessary to strengthen the pressure against it. This explains White's next manoeuvre.

23. ♔f1!

White wants to play g2 and ♔g2.

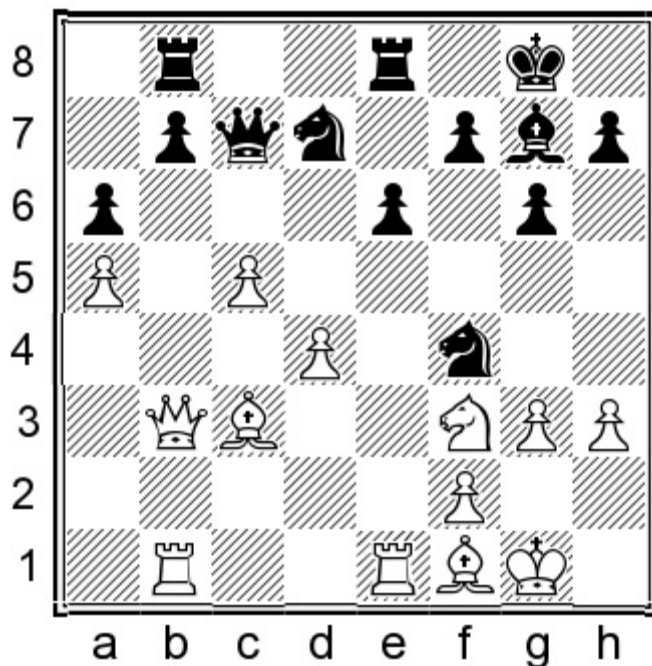
23... ♖h5 24.c5!

Black's only counterplay consists in pushing ...e5, thus White plays c5 first, so that if Black goes ...e5 White will be able to target the f7-pawn.

24... ♖f4

24... e5?! 25. ♖g5 ♜f8 26. ♖xf7 ♜xf7 27. ♔c4+-

25.g3



Position after: 25.g3

25... ♖h5

♞ 25... ♖d5 26. ♔d2±

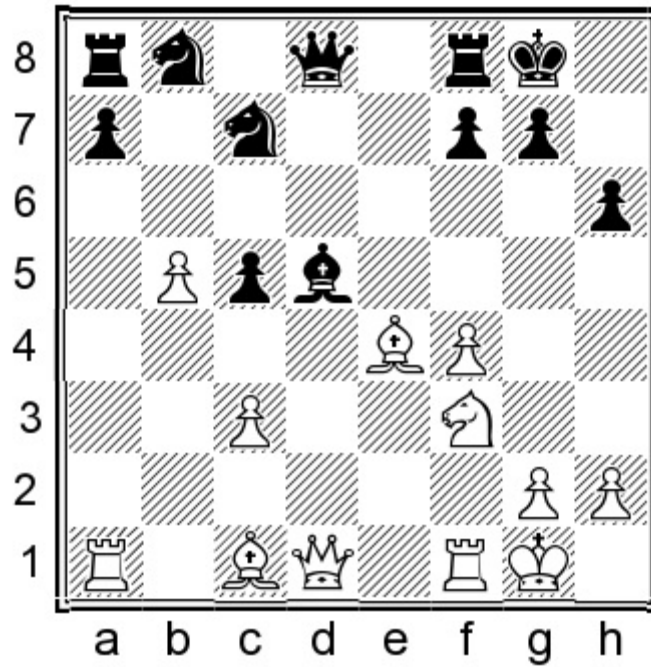
26. ♔d2 ♜h6 27. ♔g2+-

White will calmly play ♔c3 and ♖d2, with a winning position. 1-0 (39) Dreev, A (2666) – Kornev, A (2568) Tomsk 2006.

Example 10

From Mamedyarov-Hou Yifan

Sharjah 2017



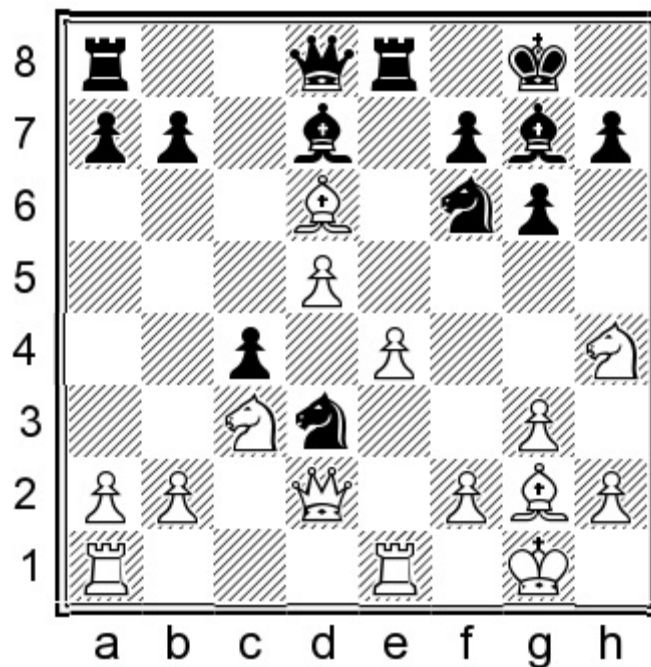
White to move

Using the standard manoeuvre ♖b1/ ♙c2 White underlines the weakness of the black king.

17. ♖b1! ♜d7 18. c4 ♖b7 19. ♝a3 ♞e6 20. ♙c2 ♞f6 21. ♖b2 ♞e4 22. ♞d3 ♙c7 23. f5+-

1-0 (32) Mamedyarov, S (2766) – Hou Yifan (2651) Sharjah 2017.

Example 11
From Navara-Morozevich
Biel 2017



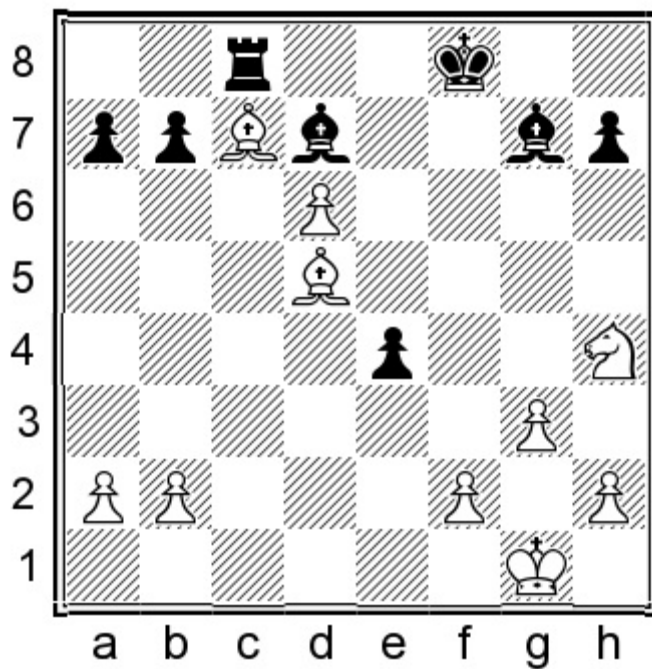
C) 17... ♖xe4 18. ♖xe4 ♙f5 19. ♖xf5 gxf5 20. ♙xc4 ♗xe4 21. ♗xe4 fxe4 22. ♙f4 ♖f6 23. d6 ♖d4 24. ♖e2! ♗

18. ♖xg5

A) 18. ♖f3? ♙g4+

B) 18. ♖g2?! ♖xe4 19. ♖xe4 ♙f5

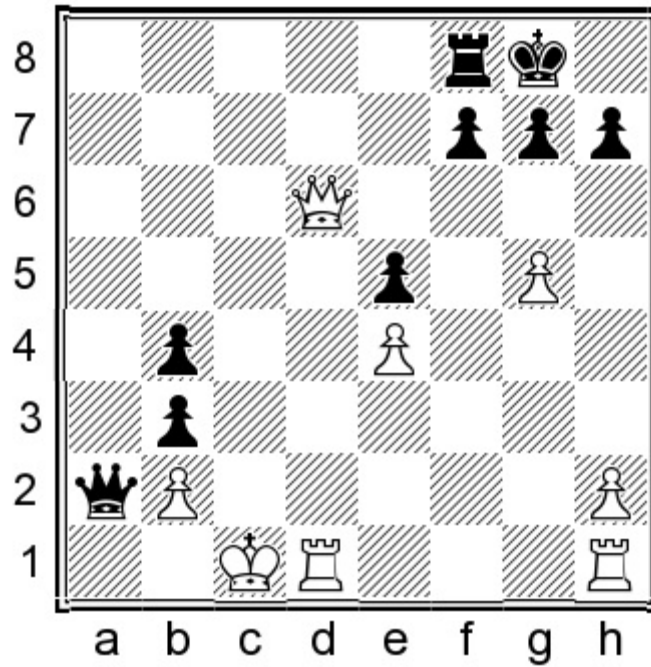
18... ♖xe4 19. ♖xd8 ♗axd8 20. ♖xe4 f5 21. ♙c7 ♗c8 22. d6 ♗xe4 23. ♗xe4 fxe4 24. ♙xc4+ ♖f8 25. ♙d5



Position after: 25. ♙d5

Example 12

From analysis of the Sicilian Najdorf



Black to move

White has a considerable material advantage. However, the position of the white king is worrying. How can Black use it? Incredibly, here a quiet ‘move back’ is the strongest.

28...♙a8!!

After the natural 28...♞c8+ 29.♔d2 ♚xb2+ 30.♕e3+- Black’s attack has petered out and he is just down material.

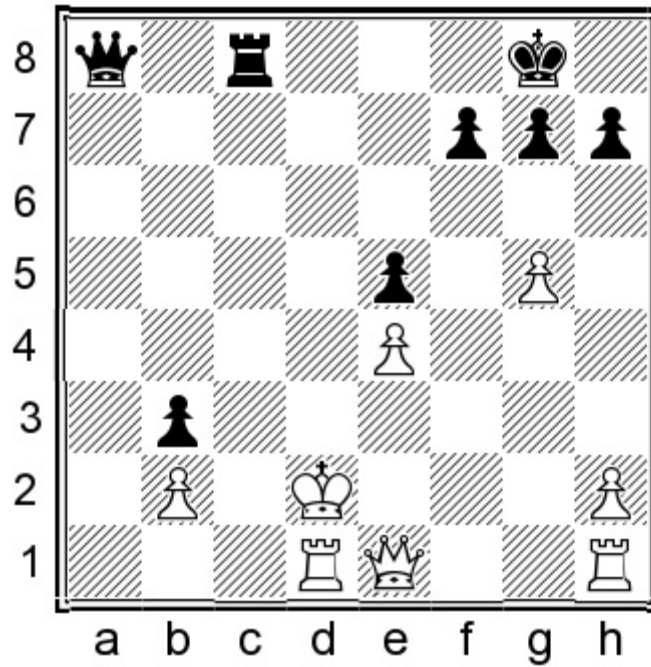
28...♙a8!! 29.♚xb4

29.♚xe5 ♞e8 30.♚d5 ♞c8+ 31.♔d2 ♞d8 32.♕e3 ♞xd5 33.exd5 It seems that the passed pawn ensures White an advantage, but because the white king is so open the position is approximately equal. 33...♙a7+ 34.♔e4 ♚f2=

29...♞b8! 30.♚e1!

30.♚e7 ♞c8+ 31.♔d2 ♚xe4 32.♞c1 ♚d4+=

30...♞c8+ 31.♔d2



Position after: 31.♔d2

31...f5!!

An incredible move! Other moves lose. The idea is not only to create a window for the king, but also to prevent ♟e3. 32...♞c2 is threatened, and if...

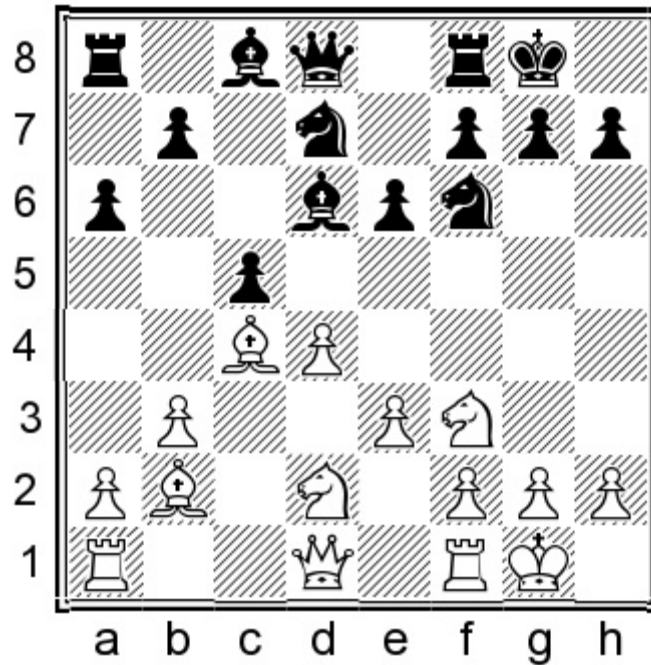
32.gxf6

...the sixth rank begins to play a major role:

32...♞a5+ 33.♔e2 ♞a6+ 34.♔f3 ♞xf6+=

With perpetual check.

Example 13
From Dreev-Fressinet
ICC 2004



White to move

White has an advantage in development, but if Black develops his light-squared bishop the position will be equal. What does White need to do?

11. ♖e2!

A typical move for such structures. White frees the c4-square for the knight and thereby continues to fight for the advantage.

11...b6

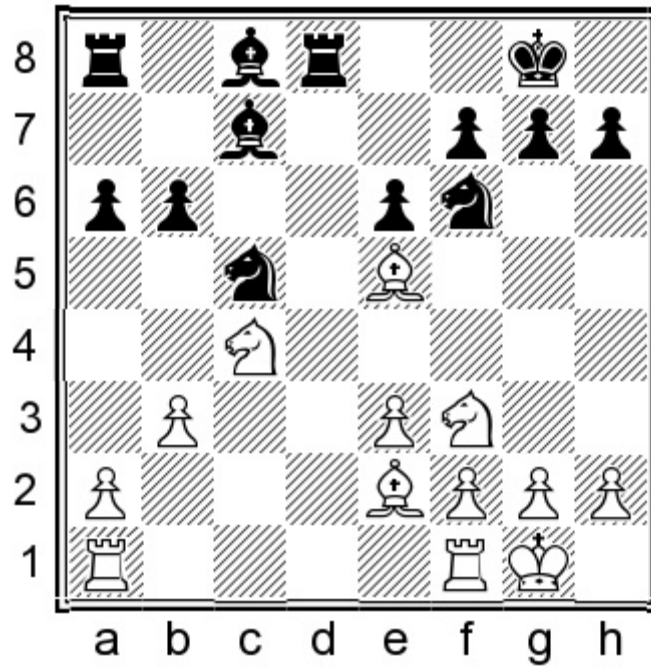
It was also preparation to meet the move ...b5, which is now met (11...b5) with 12.a4 ♜b8 13.axb5 axb5 14.dxc5 ♙xc5 15.♙d3±.

12. ♘c4 ♙c7?

The cause of his future problems. Black underestimates the following exchanging operation and finds himself in trouble.

12...♙e7 was necessary, when White is only slightly better: 13.dxc5!? (13.♘fe5!? ♙b7 14.♙f3±) 13...♙xc5 14.♘fe5 ♙b7 15.♘xd7 ♘xd7 16.♙f3±.

13.dxc5! ♘xc5 14.♙xd8 ♜xd8?! 15.♙e5!±

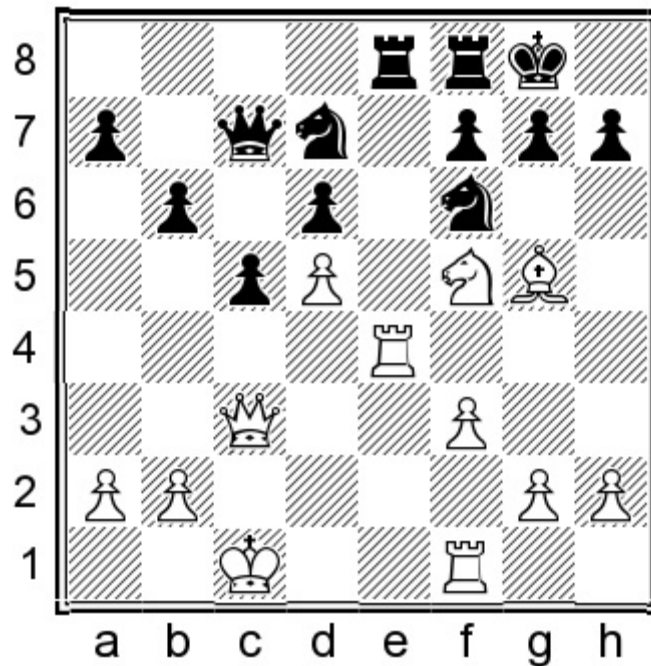


Position after: 15. ♕e5!±

15... ♕xe5 16. ♖fxe5 ♜d5 17. ♜c6! ♝d7 18. ♕f3! ♞c7 19. ♜b4!+-

1-0 (23) Dreev, A (2698) – Fressinet, L (2640) Internet 2004.

Example 14
From Dreev-Moussard
Bastia 2017



Black to move

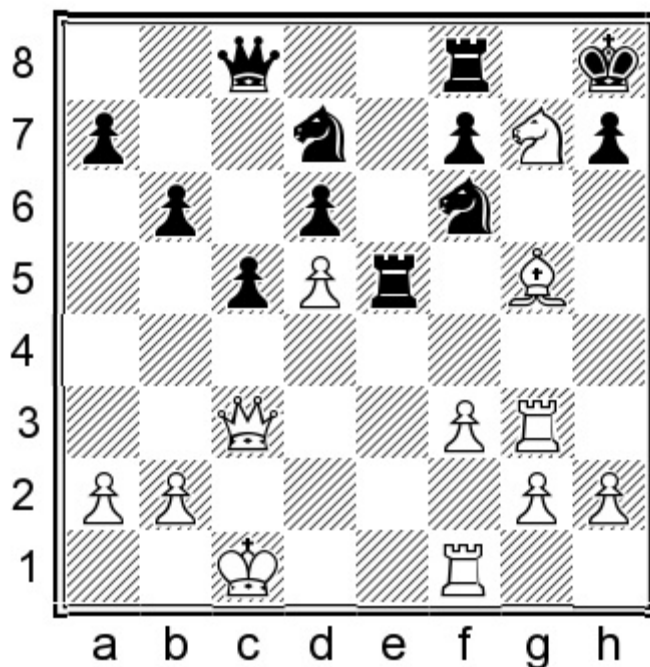
A complicated position. The most reliable here was...

18...♚d8!

A) In the game Black played 18...b5? 19.♗xg7! ♖xe4 (19...♔xg7?! 20.♙xf6+ ♖xf6 21.♞g4++-) 20.♗xe8?! (20.fxe4! ♞xe4 21.♗f5 would have won instantly.) 20...♗xc3 21.♗xc7 ♖xa2+ 22.♔b1 ♗b4 23.♙e7± 1-0 (48) Dreev, A (2652) – Moussard, J (2567) Bastia 2017.

B) Weaker was 18...♚b8 19.♞g4 ♞e5 20.♗e7+ ♔h8 21.♗c6±.

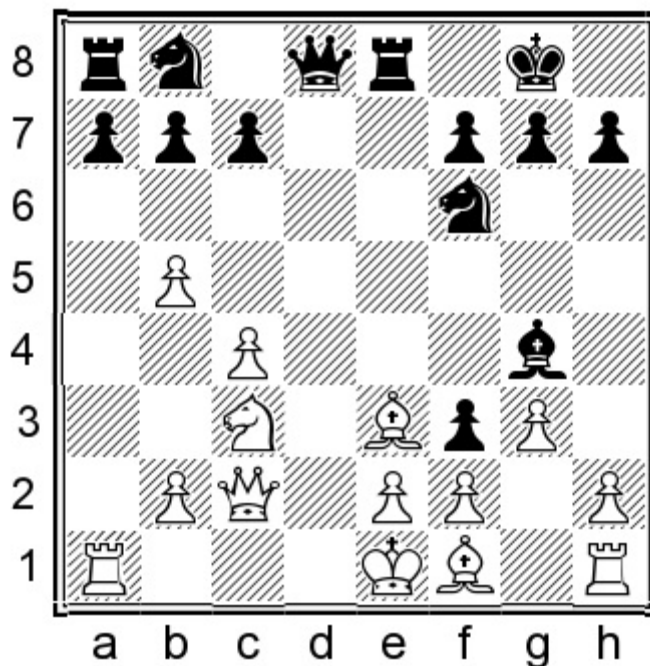
18...♚d8! 19.♞g4 ♞e5 20.♗xg7 ♚c8! 21.♞g3 ♔h8∞



Position after: 21...♔h8∞

With an unclear position.

Example 15
From Basso-Dzagnidze
Doha 2015



White to move

Due to the pressure on the a-file and better development, White's position looks promising. However, he needs to weaken Black's initiative.

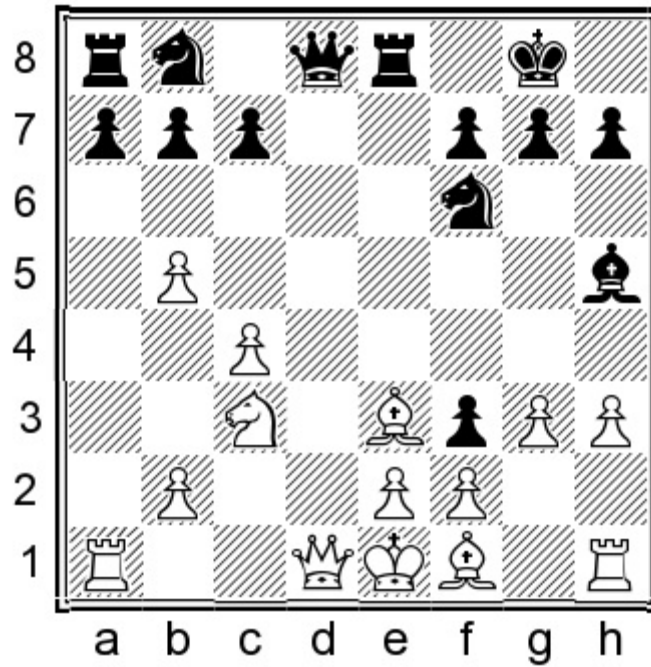
12.h3!

In the game White immediately played 12.♔d1 ♚xd1+?! (After the correct 12...fxe2! 13.♙xe2 ♚c8! 14.♘d5 ♙xe2 15.♘xf6+ gxf6 16.♚xe2 ♚f5 17.0-0 ♘d7 the position is unclear.) 13.♙xd1 ♘bd7 14.h3 fxe2+ 15.♙xe2± 1-0 (31) Basso, P (2438) – Dzagnidze, N (2559) Doha 2015.

12.h3! ♙h5

And now the 'move back'.

13.♚d1!



Position after: 13. ♖d1!

13... ♗xd1+

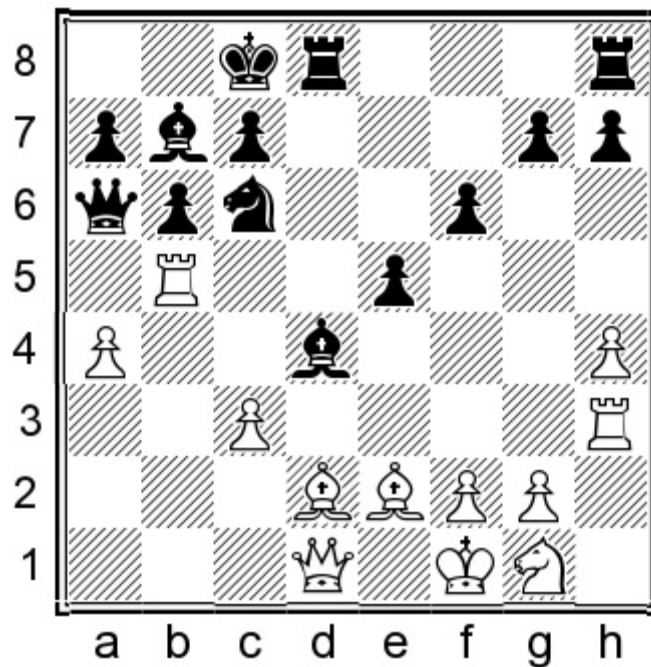
After 13... fxe2 14. ♕xe2 Black is unable to keep queens on the board.

14. ♖xd1 fxe2+ 15. ♕xe2 ♕xe2+ 16. ♖xe2 ♖bd7 17. ♖hc1!?!±

Example 16

From Aronian-Ding Liren

Berlin 2018



Black to move

The game reached such a wild position as a result of a non-standard opening and mutual mistakes. It is obvious that Black will most likely lose the bishop on d4, and he certainly would be glad to get real compensation for it. But we must be objective and understand that finding the right move here, of course, is not easy.

18...♙a8!!

The only correct move, leading to an approximately equal, though non-standard, position. The idea of this unexpected retreat is to free the b7- square for the queen.

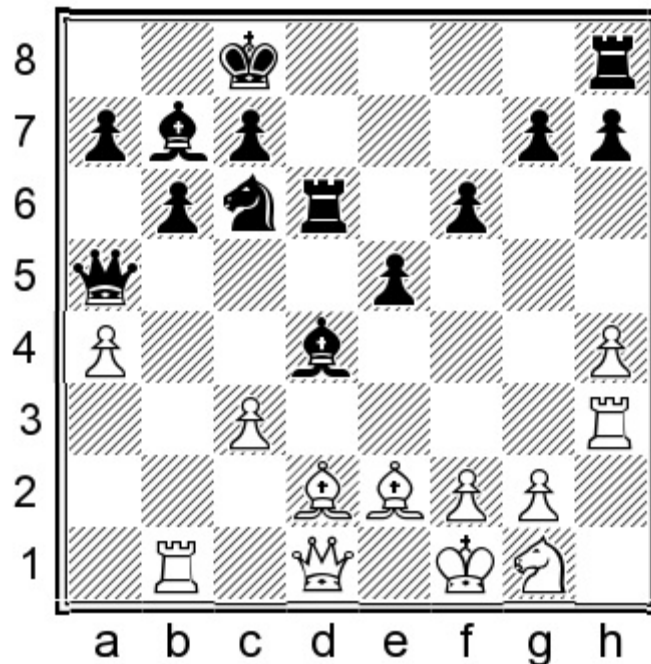
A) 18...♙b8?! 19.♞b2 ♙xc3 20.♞xc3 ♞a5 21.♞c1!±

B) 18...♙xc3? 19.♞xc3 ♘d4 20.♞bc5!±

C) 18...♞d6?

C1) 19.♞b2! ♞a5 20.cxd4 ♞d5 Probably White did not notice an important nuance, viz. now the dark-squared bishop is protected, and White can simply play 21.dxe5! ♘xe5 22.♘f3 ♞e8 23.♙g1±, when Black does not have full compensation for the piece.

C2) 19.♞b1 ♞a5



Position after: 19...♞a5

C2.1) It was possible to fight for the advantage in the following way: 20.cxd4 ♞d5 21.♞b5 (21.♘f3?! ♘xd4) 21...♞a2 22.♞c3 ♘xd4 23.♙c4 ♘b3 24.♞xb3 ♞xd2 25.♙e2 ♞hd8 26.♞b4∞.

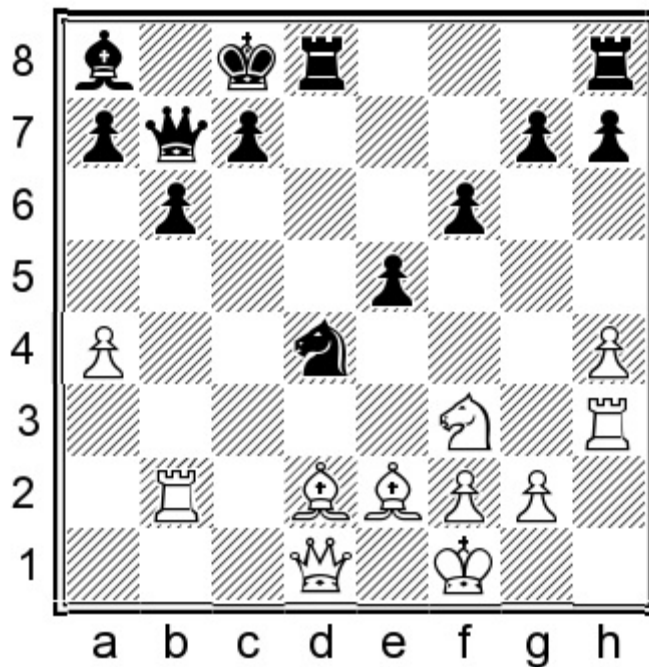
C2.2) 20.♞b5 ♞a6 (Now even 20...♙xc3! made sense: 21.♞d3□) 21.♞b1? (It is not too late to return to the correct continuation: 21.♞b2!) 21...♞a5 22.♞b5 ½-½ (22) Aronian, L (2794) – Ding Liren (2769) Berlin 2018.

D) 18...♙xf2 19.♔xf2 ♖xd2 20.♗xd2 ♜xa4 21.♞g3 g6 22.♗h6±

18...♙a8!! 19.♞b2

19.♘f3 leads to the same position: 19...♗b7 20.cxd4 ♘xd4 21.♞b2.

19...♗b7 20.cxd4 ♘xd4 21.♘f3



Position after: 21.♘f3

21...♘xe2

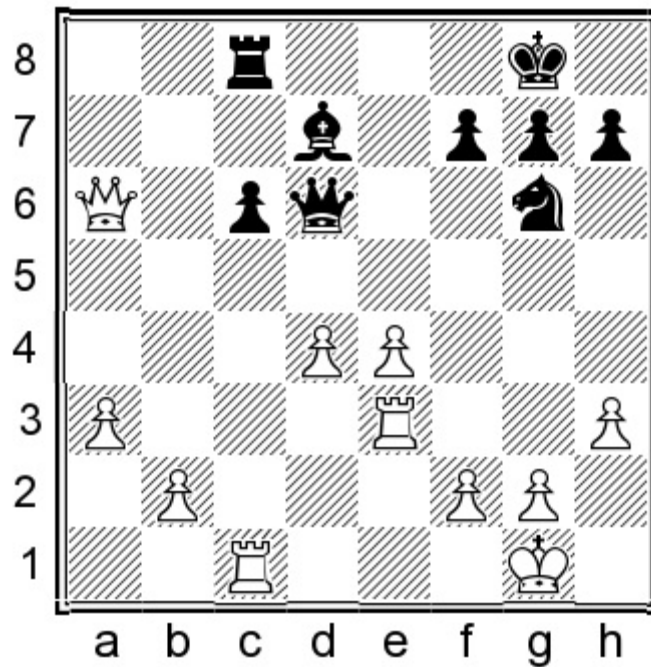
21...♞d7!? 22.♙c4 ♗c6 23.♙a6+ ♔b8∞

22.♗xe2 ♗e4∞

Chapter 1 Exercises

1

Dreev, A. – Puranik, A.



Black to move

Your task: calculate and evaluate the move 30... ♖xd4.

Show/Hide Solution

1

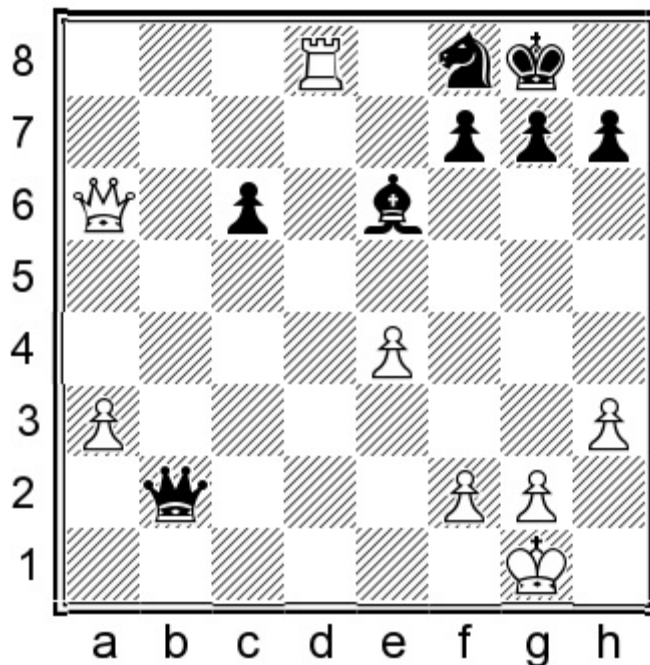
30... ♖xd4?

A mistake. It was better to play 30... ♘f4 31. ♖f1 ♖xd4 32. ♖d1 ♖a7∞.

30... ♖xd4? 31. ♖d3 ♖xb2 32. ♖cd1 ♘e6 33. ♖d8+!

I played 33.f4?! in the game: 33... ♖f8∞ 1-0 (41) Dreev, A (2638) – Pavlovic, M (2488) Kragujevac 2015.

33...♖xd8 34.♖xd8+ ♜f8



Position after: 34...♜f8

35.♖d3!+-

The unexpected 'move back', which escaped my field of vision. White wins thanks to the double threat of 36.♖xf8+ followed by ♖d8# and 36.♖d6.

There is nothing after 35.♖a8 ♖c1+ 36.♙h2 ♖f4+=.

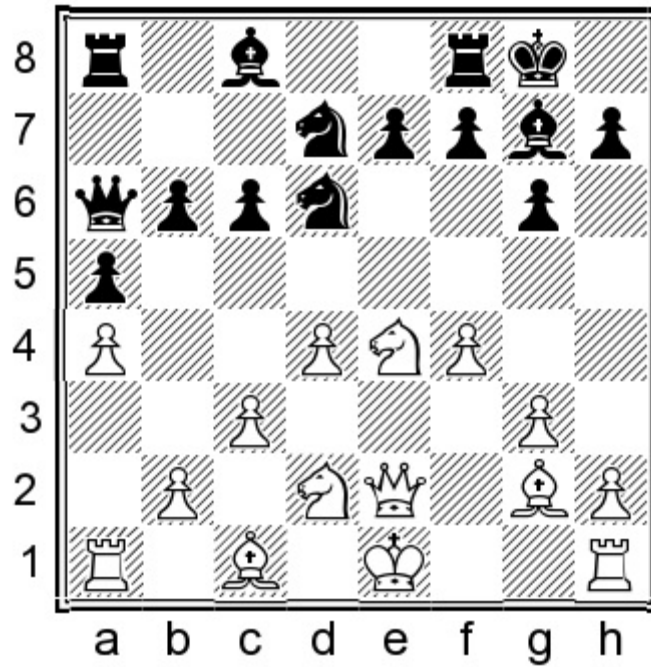
Δ 35...♖c1+ 36.♙h2 ♖f4+ 37.♖g3

Black can't exchange queens as the endgame is lost through the power of the passed a-pawn.

37...♖xe4 38.♖d6+-

2

Kamsky, G. – Dreev, A.



Black to move

Find the strongest move for Black.

Show/Hide Solution

2

15...♙a7!♞

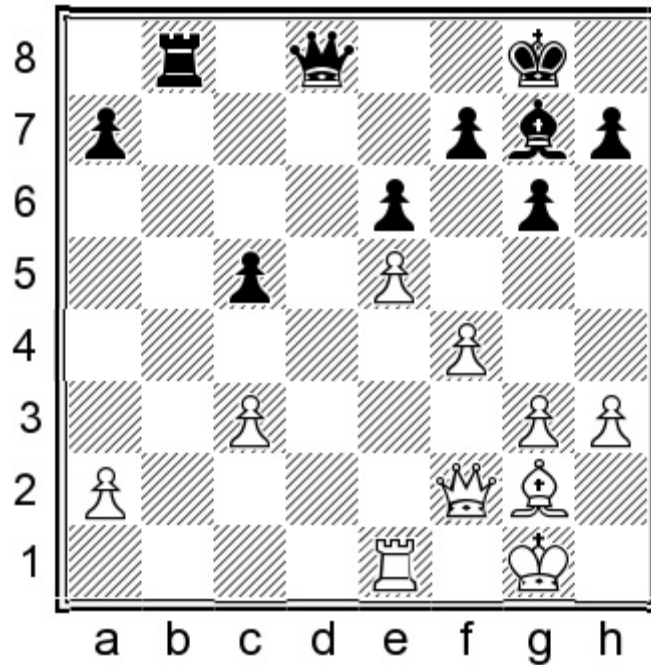
The purpose of this move is not only to keep the queens on, but also to prevent White from castling short.

The game continuation was 15...♞f5 16.♙xa6 ♘xa6 17.♚f2= 0-1 (46) Kamsky, G (2676) – Dreev, A (2652) Bastia 2017.

15...♙a7!♞ Δ 16.0-0? ♘a6-+

3

Dreev, A. – Pavlovic, M.



White to move

Black controls the b- and d-files and the possible transfer of his bishop to the a7-g1 diagonal would further improve his position. How can White prevent Black from enhancing his initiative?

Show/Hide Solution

3

27. ♔f1!

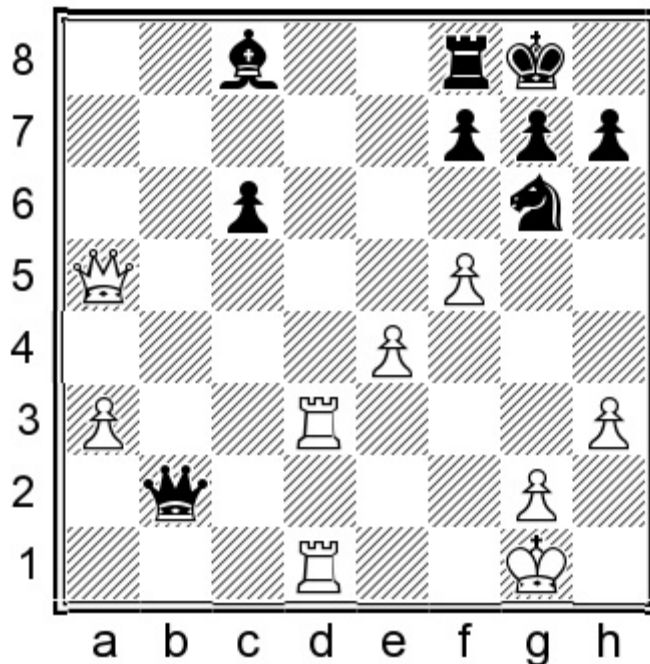
Not the only solution, but the most reliable one. The bishop goes to c4 and holds white's position. After that the position is roughly equal.

Instead, White decided to limit the black bishop by 27.c4, but created some weaknesses in his position. 27.c4 ♕f8 28. ♕e4 ♖a5 29. ♖c1 ♗d8 30. ♖c2 ♗d4 31. ♗e2 ♗b4 32. ♔g2 ♕e7= Black is better: 0-1 (67) Dreev, A (2652) – Puranik, A (2509) Bastia 2017.

27. ♔f1! ♗d5 28. ♗g2=

4

Dreev, A. – Pavlovic, M.



Black to move

A non-standard material balance has appeared on the board. White does not just threaten $f \times g6$, but also $\text{♖}d3-d8$. What should Black do?

Show/Hide Solution

4

35...♘f4!

The right move. In the game Black played the clearly inferior 35...♙e5 1-0 (41) Dreev, A (2638) – Pavlovic, M (2488) Kragujevac 2015.

35...♘f4! 36.♖3d2

Now follows a nice ‘move back’.

36...♙b8!!

36...♙b3? 37.♖d8+–

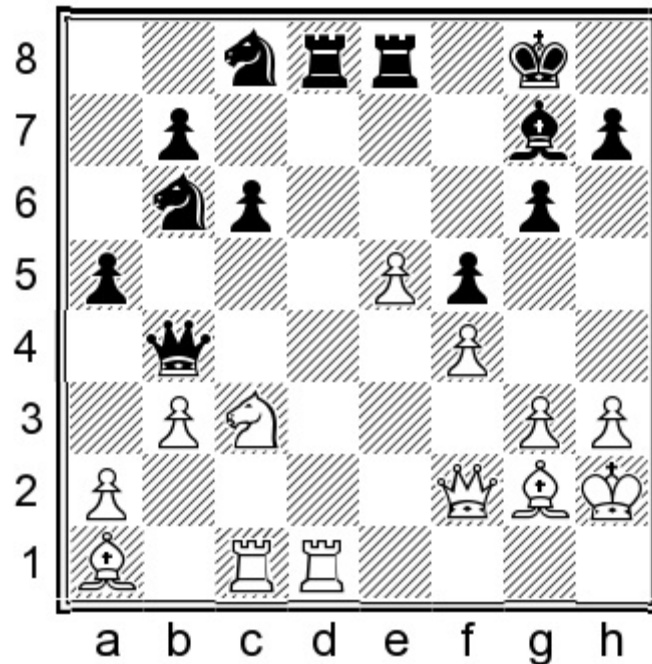
37.♖d8

37.♔h1 h5 38.♖d8 ♖xd8 39.♖xd8+ ♔h7 40.♙d2 h4 41.♙d1 ♙c7 42.♖e8 ♘a6 43.♙g4 ♘e2 44.♙xh4+ ♘h5 with an unclear position.

37...♘xh3+! 38.gxh3 ♙g3+ 39.♔f1 ♙f3+–

5

Moroni, L. – Plat, V.



White to move

White's position is clearly better due to the two bishops and passed pawn on e5. Find the clearest way to win – with an unexpected 'move back' as usual!

Show/Hide Solution

5

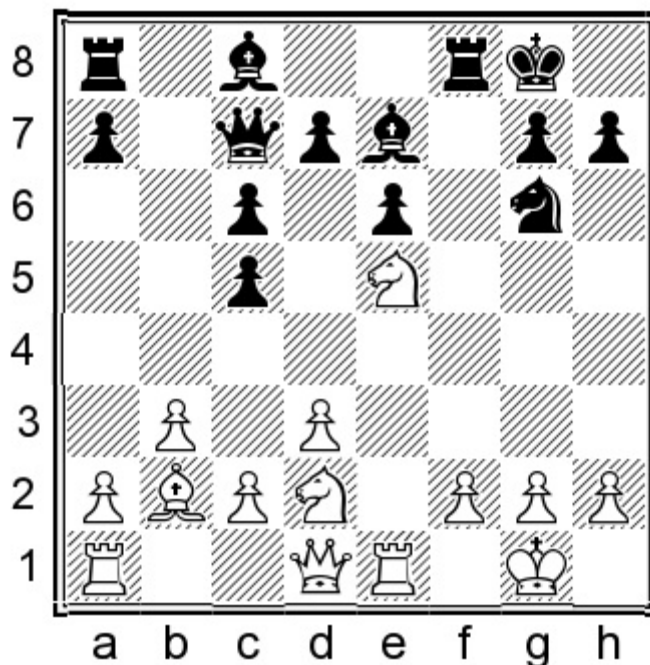
25. ♖b1!

With this unexpected 'move back' White wants to play ♙c3 and win the a5-pawn. If Black tries to keep his pawn he will lose his queen: 26. ♙c3 ♜b5 27. ♙f1.

25. ♙d2± Of course even after this routine move White has a big advantage: ½-½ (64) Moroni, L (2506) – Plat, V (2551) Hersonissos 2017.

25. ♖b1! Now if... 25... ♞d5 26. ♙d4 ♜b6 27. ♜d2 ♞ce7 28. ♞a3+– ...the white knight heads for d6 with decisive effect.

6



Black to move

Should Black exchange knights or not?

Show/Hide Solution

6

12...♞h8!

It is important to keep the knight for two reasons:

- 1) White lacks good squares for two knights;
- 2) With the help of the knight Black can gradually increase pressure on the kingside.

However, it is very important that White can't prevent the strengthening of the black position with ...d7-d6 and ...e6-e5. That is why it is necessary to retreat so far.

A) 12...♞h4 13.g3! ♞f5 14.f4 d6 15.♞ef3∞

B) 12...♞xe5 13.♙xe5 d6 14.♙g3 e5 15.c3∞

C) 12...♞f4 13.g3! ♞h3+ Δ 14.♙g2 ♞xf2? 15.♚e2 d6 16.♞f1+–

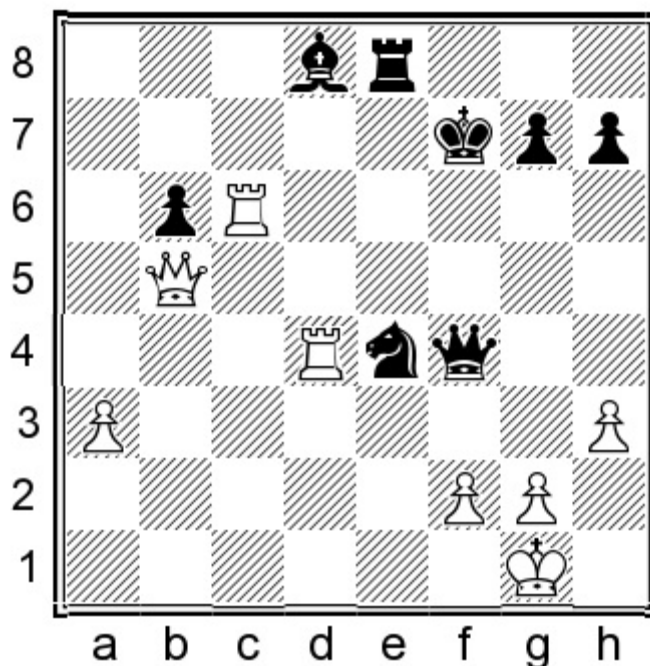
The game continued...

12...♞h8! 13.g3 d6 14.♞g4 e5 15.♞e4 ♚d7 16.f3 ♚f5 17.♙g2 ♞g6+

0-1 (43) Bisguier, A (2370) – Gulko, B (2565) Los Angeles 1991.

7

Dreev, A. – Seirawan, Y.



White to move

This and the following exercise are taken from analysis of the game Dreev-Seirawan. It is interesting to see the difference of choices in almost identical positions. How to protect the f2-pawn?

Show/Hide Solution

7

29.♖c2!

29.♗e2?! ♔f6∞

29.♖c2! ♔f6 30.g3! ♗e5

30...♗f3? 31.♖d3+– The black queen is trapped!

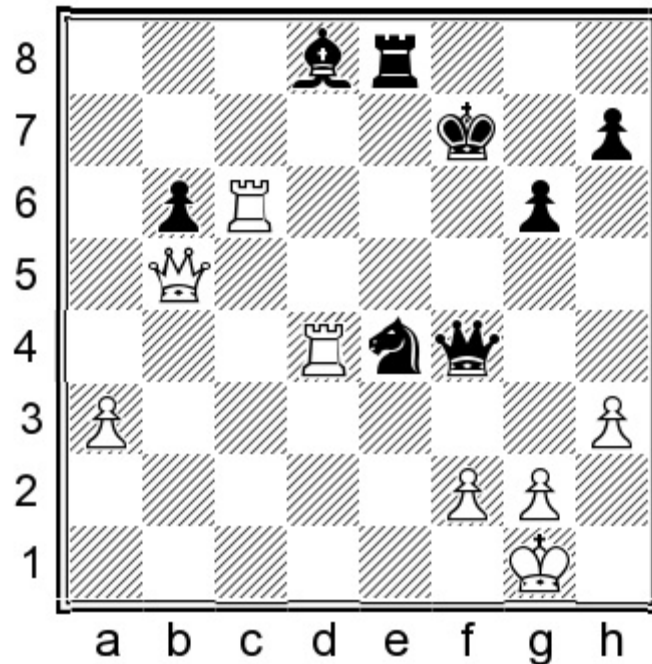
31.♖d5! ♗e6 32.♖e2! ♗c8

32...♗xh3 33.♗c4 ♗e6 34.f3+–

33.♗xb6±

8

Dreev, A. – Seirawan, Y.



White to move

Here the black pawn is on g6. How do you protect the f2-pawn?

Show/Hide Solution

8

32. ♖e2!!

32. ♖c2? ♕f6! 33. g3 ♖f3 This move is possible now! 34. ♖d3 ♖f5= The pawn on g6 protects the queen on f5.

32. ♖e2!! ♕f6 33. ♖d7+ ♔f8

A) 33... ♕e7 34. ♖xb6±

B) 33... ♔g8 34. ♖cc7+–

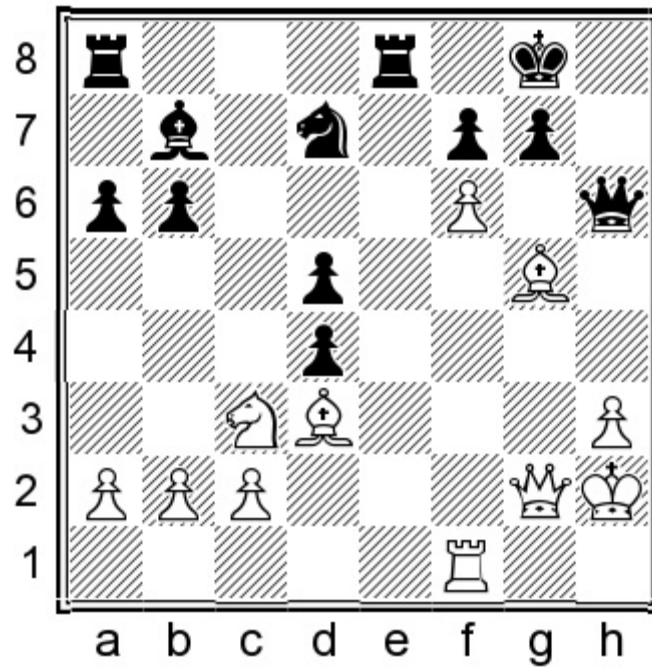
34. ♖f3!

Black can't exchange queens because his bishop on f6 would be unprotected. Thus White gets a decisive advantage.

34... ♖e5 35. g3±

9

Bacrot, E. – Tomczak, J.



Black to move

Move back (22... ♔h8) or move forward (22... ♔h5)?

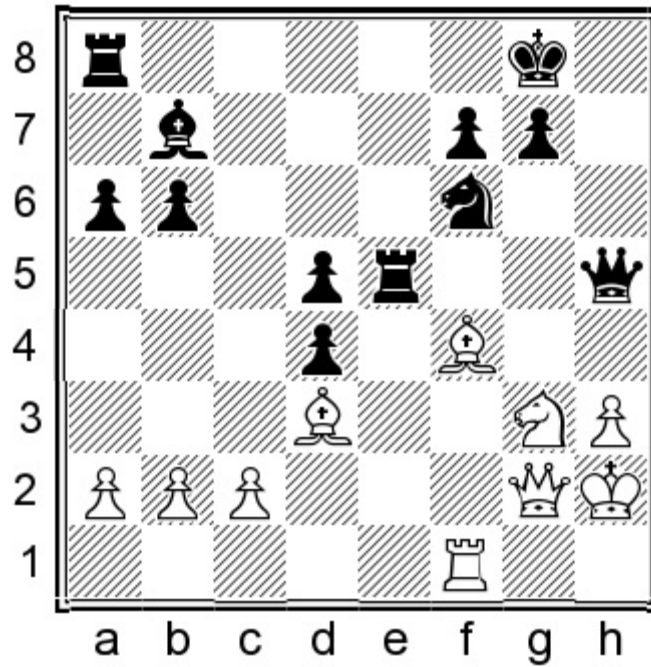
Show/Hide Solution

9

22... ♔h5!

22... ♔h8? A case where a visually deep ‘move back’ turns out to be a fatal mistake. 23. ♖f4+– 1-0 (39)
Bacrot, E (2723) – Tomczak, J (2583) Baden Baden 2017.

22... ♔h5! 23. ♗e2 ♜e5 24. ♘f4 ♗xf6 25. ♗g3



Position after: 25. ♖g3

25... ♜h8!

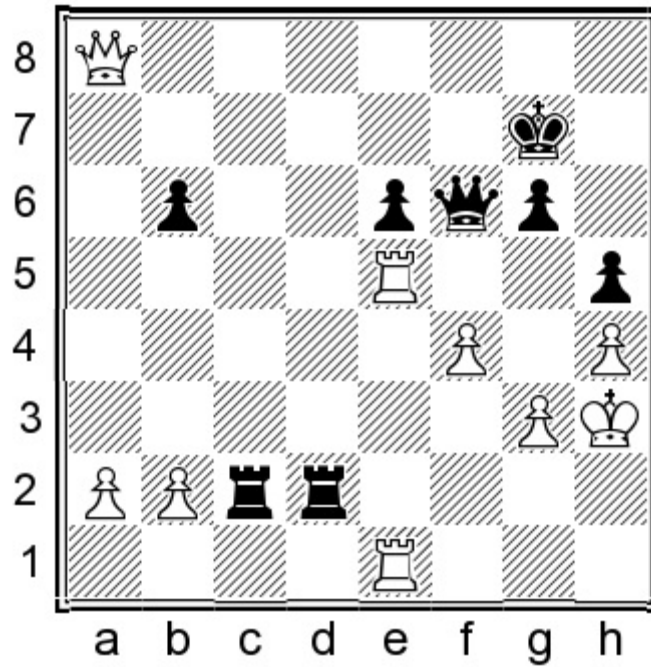
Now the ‘move back’ is the strongest!

In case of 25... ♜h4?! 26. ♙xe5 ♜g4+ 27. ♖h1 ♜xe5 28. ♜f5 White wins an important tempo and his position is not worse.

26. ♙xe5 ♜g4+ 27. ♖g1 ♜xe5 28. ♜f5 ♜e8! 29. ♖h2 ♙c8 30. ♜d6 ♙xh3 31. ♜xh3 ♜g4+ 32. ♖g2 ♜e3+ 33. ♖g3 ♜xh3+ 34. ♖xh3 ♜e6 ♯

10

Gelfand, B. – Artemiev, V.



White to move

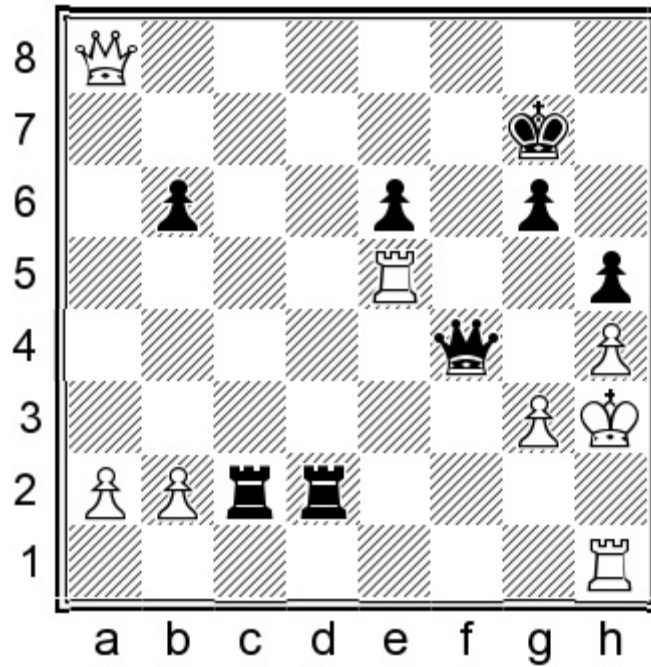
How should White defend against mate on h2?

Show/Hide Solution

10

43. ♖h1!

This long 'move back' is the only move to save White. In the game, White played the careless 43. ♖h1?!, apparently believing that his king was safe, but now trouble came from the other side with the knockout blow 43... ♗xf4!



Position after: 43... ♕xf4!

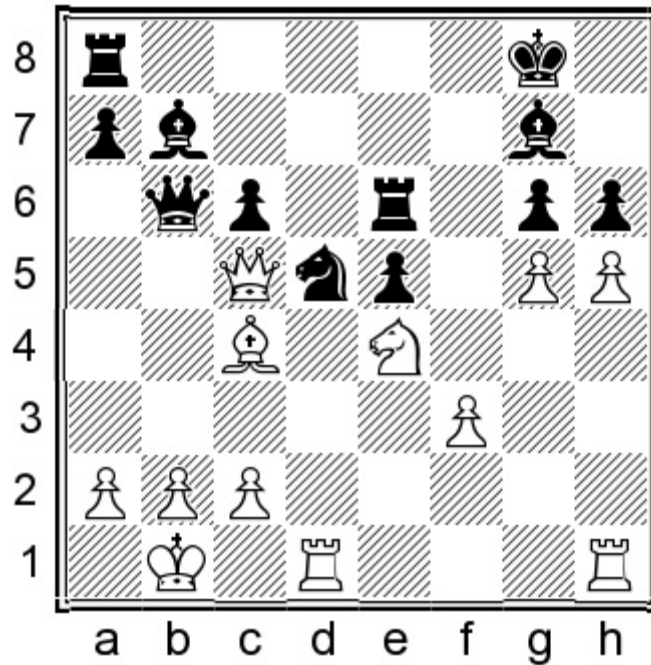
44. ♖b7+ (44. gxf4 ♘d3+-+) 44... ♔h6 45. ♖e4 ♕f1+! with checkmate to follow. 0-1 (45) Gelfand, B (2697) – Artemiev, V (2691) Moscow 2017.

After 43. ♕h1! chances are approximately equal, for example:

43. ♕h1! ♖xb2 44. ♘d1 ♘dc2 45. ♘c1=

11

Carlsen, M. – Jones, G.



Black to move

Which move back should Black play to limit White's compensation and keep a nice edge?

Show/Hide Solution

11

23...♙f8!

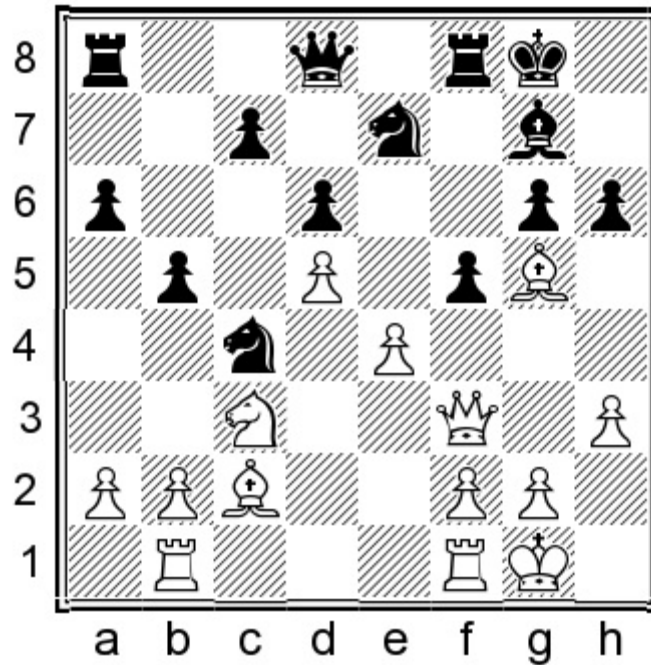
The right move to force the exchange of queens, after which two results are possible (draw or Black win). In the game the careless 23...hxg5? allowed White to avoid the exchange of queens with 24.♚a3!, with a strong attack that compensates for the missing piece. 1-0 (42) Carlsen, M (2834) – Jones, G (2640) Wijk aan Zee 2018.

After 23...♙f8! play might continue...

23...♙f8! 24.♚g1 ♚xg1 25.♖dxg1 ♙e7!? 26.gxh6 g5±

12

Nepomniachtchi, I. – Aronian, L.



White to move
Find the best move!

Show/Hide Solution

12

1. ♖c1!

You need to keep the bishop! In the game White played 1. ♖xe7? ♜xe7 2. exf5 ♘d2 and although he won, compensation for the sacrificed exchange was clearly insufficient: 3. ♞g4 ♘xf1 (Another attractive opportunity is 3... ♖xc3 4. bxc3 ♞g5. Black postpones the capture of the rook and neutralizes White's activity by exchanges.) 4. ♜xf1 gxf5 5. ♖xf5 ♞e5 6. ♖e6+ ♜h8 7. g3 ♞e3 8. ♖f5 ♞d2? (8... ♞g5! would lead to the exchange of queens and a technically winning position, although not without practical chances for White.) 9. ♘e2∞ Nepomniachtchi, I – Aronian, L chess.com 2017.

1. ♖c1! f4 2. ♘e2 g5

Bad is 2... ♘e5?! 3. ♞b3 f3 4. ♘d4±.

3. h4 ♞e8! 4. ♞h3∞

Chapter 2

Defence

Defence in the middlegame is not a new term. There are lots of examples and many books written on the subject. Defence can be active or passive. Most often it features as part of long-term planning in games.

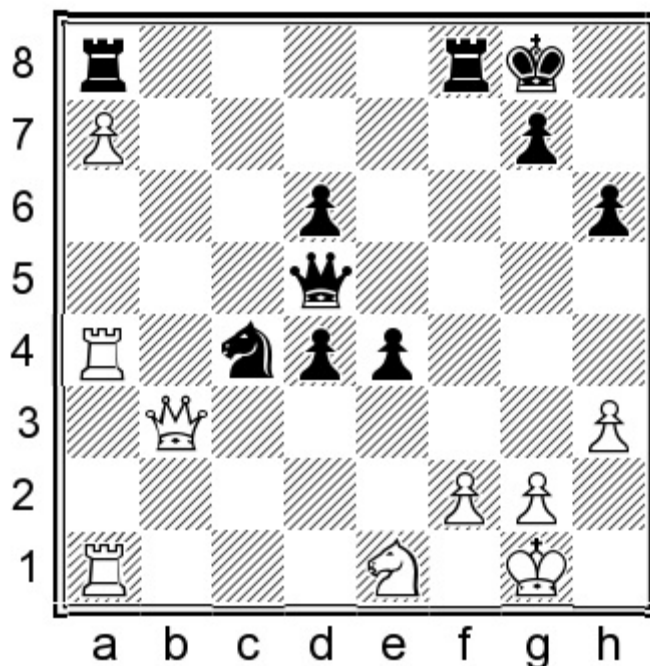
The task of this book is not to cover all aspects and methods of defence; they are all well-known and nothing new could be added. Rather we are talking about unusual situations and continuations, so our examples will show types of defensive moves which were extremely hard to find. Some moves were difficult from a psychological point of view; for others creative thinking was required to perceive the possible interaction of the pieces in an unusual way. More often we use the term 'silent move', but I would rather call them 'non-standard' or 'unconventional' moves.

Also in this chapter there are several examples of hard-to-find moves in an attack. In a game, when we are attacking, we most often consider moves with definite threats, or calculate forced variations, and so miss the moment when such an 'unconventional' move can lead to victory.

I really hope that after reading this chapter the reader will have more 'snapshots' of creative thinking which will help in finding original attacking or defensive resources in his or her own practice.

Example 1

From Triapishko-Moroni
Montevideo 2017

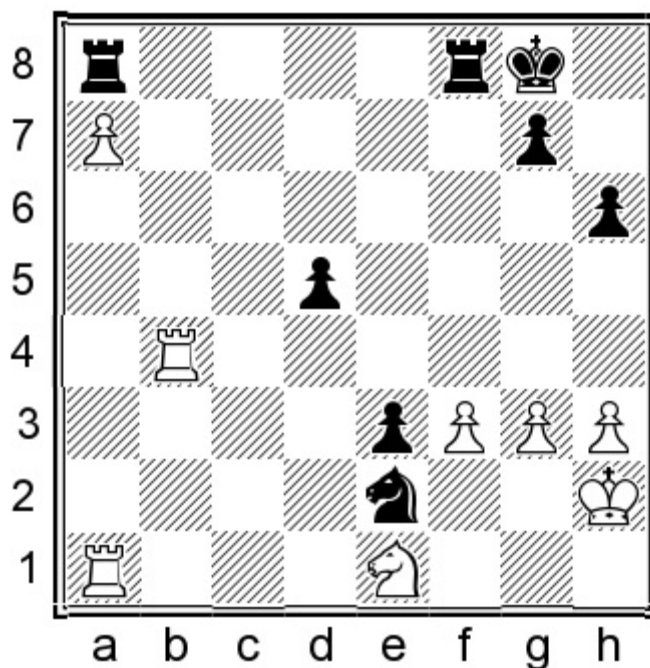


Black to move

36...♖fc8!

In the game Black used the tactical trick 36...♖e3?! 37.♗xd5+ ♖xd5 38.♖xd4 ♖c3, but after 39.♖b4! was faced with a critical situation (≤ 39.♖xd6 ♖f7 40.♖da6 ♖b5 41.♖e6± ½-½ (120) Trjapishko, A (2500) –

Moroni, L (2499) Montevideo 2017), for example: 39...♖e2+ (39...♖f7 40.♖b8+ ♖f8 41.♖b2 ♖f7 42.♖c1 ♗a4 43.♖b8+ ♖f8 44.♖xa8 ♖xa8 45.♖c7+-) 40.♔h2 d5 41.f3! e3 42.g3



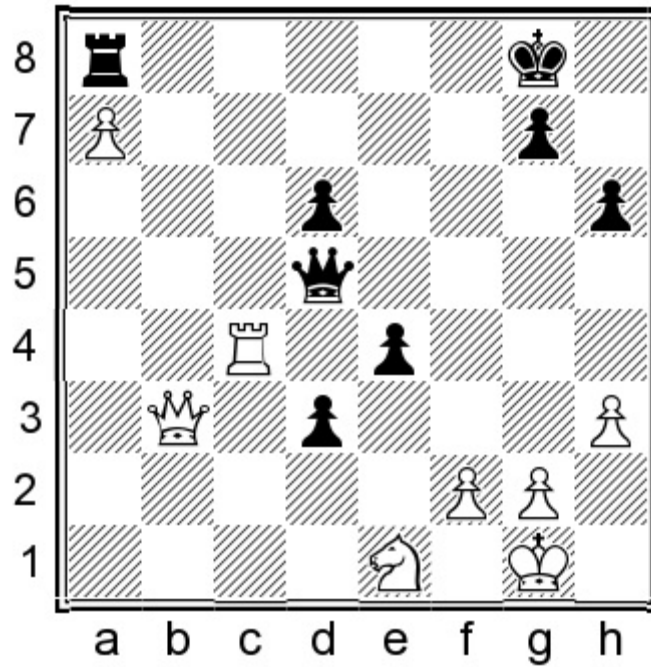
Position after: 42.g3

42...♖f7 (42...d4 43.f4 ♖f7 44.♖b8+ ♖f8 45.♖b2 ♗c3 46.♔g2 ♖f7 47.♖b8+ ♖f8 48.♖xa8 ♖xa8 49.♔f3 ♔f7 50.♖a6 ♗b5 51.♖a5 ♗c3 52.♗d3±) 43.♖b8+ ♖f8 44.♖xa8 ♖xa8 45.♗c2 d4 46.♔g2±.

36...♖fc8! 37.♖c1

37.f3!? exf3 38.♗xf3 d3! 39.♖c1 d2 40.♗xd2 ♖xd2 41.♖axc4 (41.♖cxc4 ♖e1+ 42.♔h2 ♖e5+ 43.♖f4+ d5 44.♖g3 ♖c7=) 41...♖xc4 42.♖xc4+ d5 43.♖c8+ ♖xc8 44.♖xc8+ ♔h7 45.a8=♖ ♖e1+ 46.♔h2 ♖e5+=

37...d3 38.♖axc4 ♖xc4 39.♖xc4



Position after: 39. ♖xc4

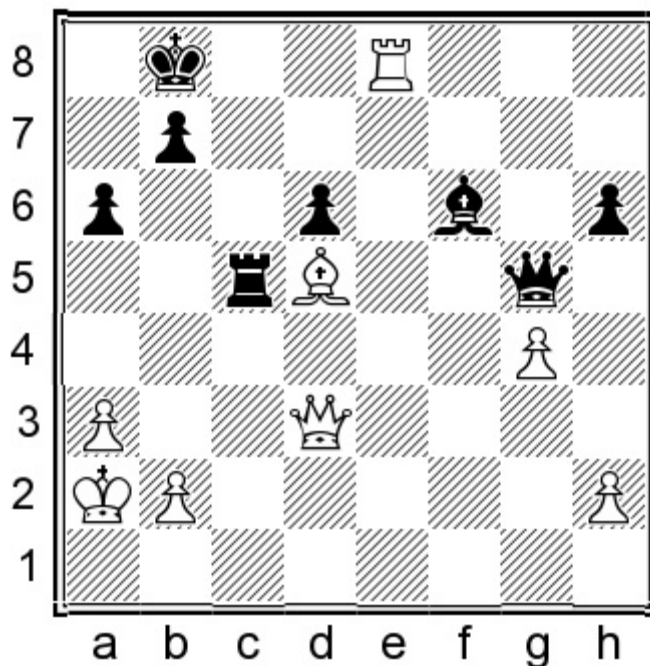
39... ♔h7 □

The point! The king hides from the check on c8.

39...d2?? 40. ♖c8+ ♔h7 41. ♗xd5 dxe1=♗+ 42. ♔h2 ♖xc8 43. ♗f5++-

40. ♘xd3 exd3 41. ♖c3 ♗xb3 42. ♖xb3 ♖xa7 43. ♖xd3=

Example 2
From Bologan-Malakhov
Sibenik 2009



Black to move

Black has lots of possible, obvious moves, but there are so many of them...

34...♔c7!

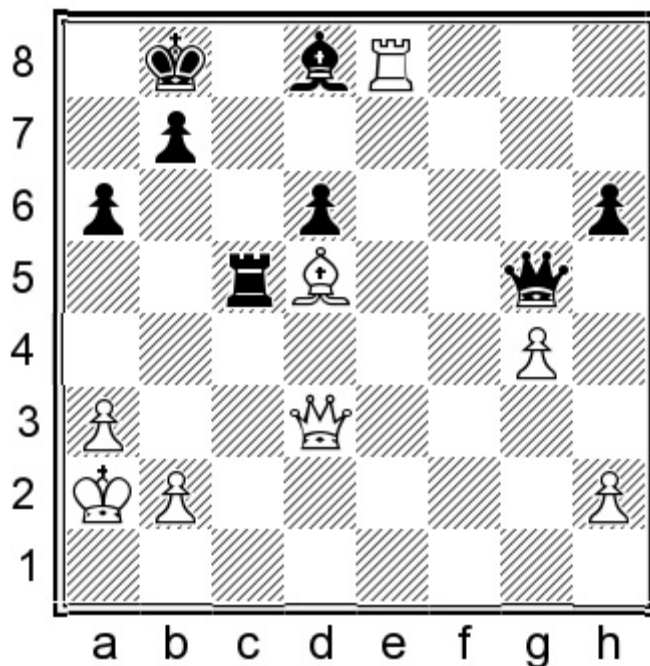
A) The game continued with 34...♔a7? when White won easily after the knockout move 35.♖a8+!! ♔b6 36.♙xb7!+- 1-0 (40) Bologan, V (2688) – Malakhov, V (2715) Sibenik 2009.

B) 34...♖c8?! 35.♗e6! (35.♜b3, with the same ideas, is a little bit weaker because of 35...b5 36.♖xc8+ ♔xc8 37.♜c2+ ♔d8 38.♙e6 ♜c5 39.♜h7 ♜c6 40.♜xh6 ♔e7 41.♙b3 ♜e4±) 35...♙e5 36.♜b3 ♜g7 37.♗g6 Black loses a pawn and his situation is critical.

C) 34...♙d8

Neither the worst nor the strongest continuation.

Black has a difficult position, but keeps the balance.



Position after: 34...♔d8

C1) 35.♕f3 ♖f6! 36.a4 ♖f7+ 37.♗b3 ♗xb3+ 38.♔xb3 ♖c8 39.♖e6 ♕g5 40.♖xd6 ♖e8 Black can realistically hope for a draw.

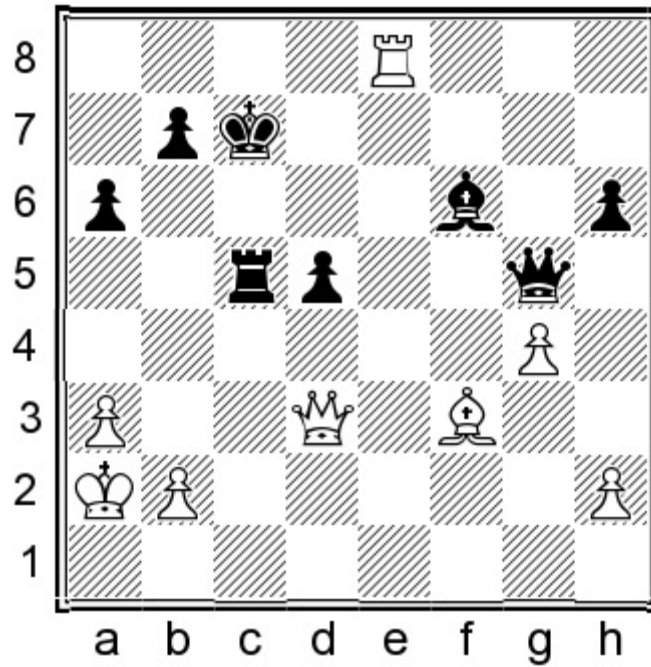
C2) 35.♕e6 ♔c7 36.h3!?! (36.♕f5 ♖f4! 37.♖e6 d5 38.♗b3 ♖c6 39.♗xd5 ♖xe6 40.♗xe6 ♖d6 Despite White's extra pawn, with bishops of opposite colours Black should achieve a draw.) 36...♗e5 37.♕f7 ♖g5±

C3) 35.♕b3 ♖f6 36.♖e6 (36.h4 ♔a7 37.h5 ♖e5 38.♖g8 ♖g5 39.♖g6 ♖xg6 40.hxg6 ♖e5=) 36...♗f4 37.♗xd6+ (37.♖xd6 ♕c7⇒) 37...♗xd6 38.♖xd6 ♕g5 39.h4 ♕xh4 40.♖xh6 ♕g5 41.♖h8+ ♔a7 42.♖h7±

34...♔c7! 35.♕f3

35.♗h7+ ♕g7 36.♕b3 ♖f6 37.♖e2 ♔b8=

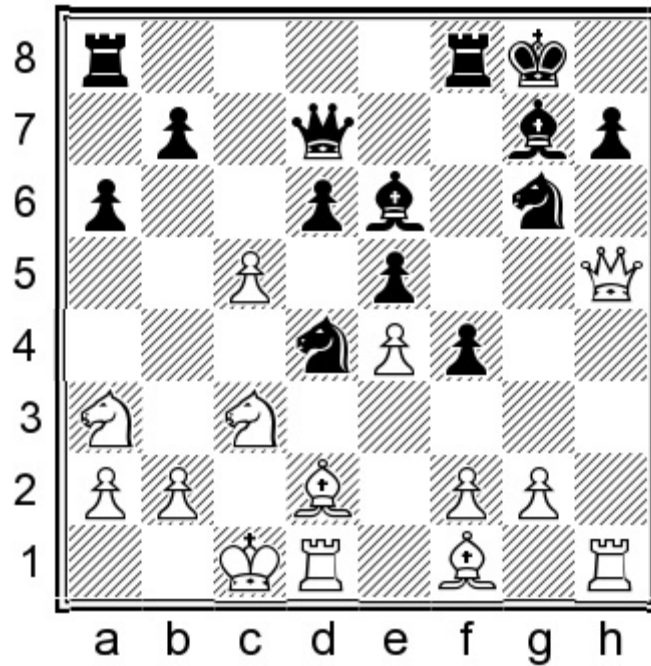
35...d5! =



Position after: 35...d5! =

Now the influence of White's bishop is much less, so Black has no problems.

Example 3
From Triapishko-Tekeyev
Moscow 2017



Black to move

Black's position looks dangerous, however, after the non-obvious...

17...♖fc8!

White suddenly has problems.

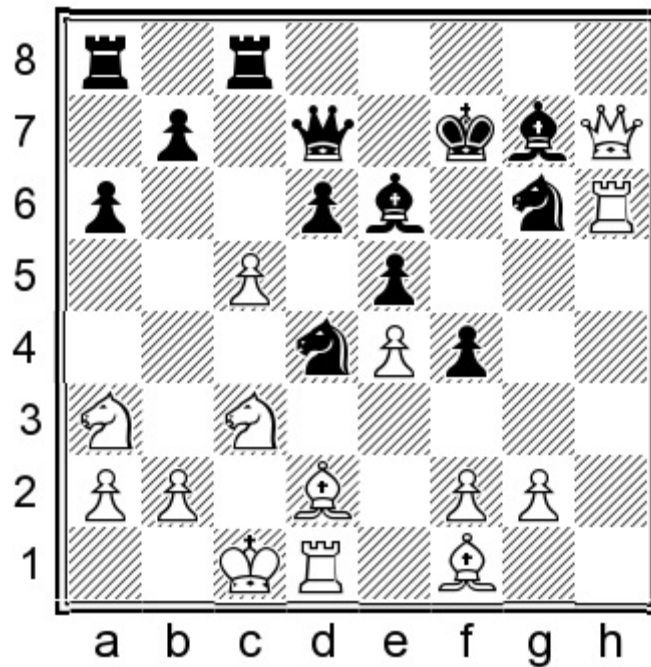
A) ≤ 17...♖ac8 18.♚xh7+ ♔f7 19.♖h6 ♘e7 20.♖xe6 ♘xe6 21.♚h5+ ♔g8 22.cxd6 ♚xd6 23.♙e1 ♘d4 24.♙c4+ ♖xc4 25.♘xc4 ♚c5 26.♘d2 b5 27.♔b1 b4 28.♘b3 ♘xb3 29.♘a4 ♚c4 30.axb3 ♚xe4+ 31.♔a2 a5∞

B) The game continued 17...dxc5? 18.♚xh7+ ♔f7 19.♖h6! ♘e7 20.♘c4! ♚c7 21.♖xe6 ♘xe6 22.♘d5+- 1-0 (36) Trjapishko, A (2490) – Tekeyev, Z (2383) Sochi 2017.

17...♖fc8! 18.g3

Probably best, but not brilliant for White!

18.♚xh7+? ♔f7 19.♖h6

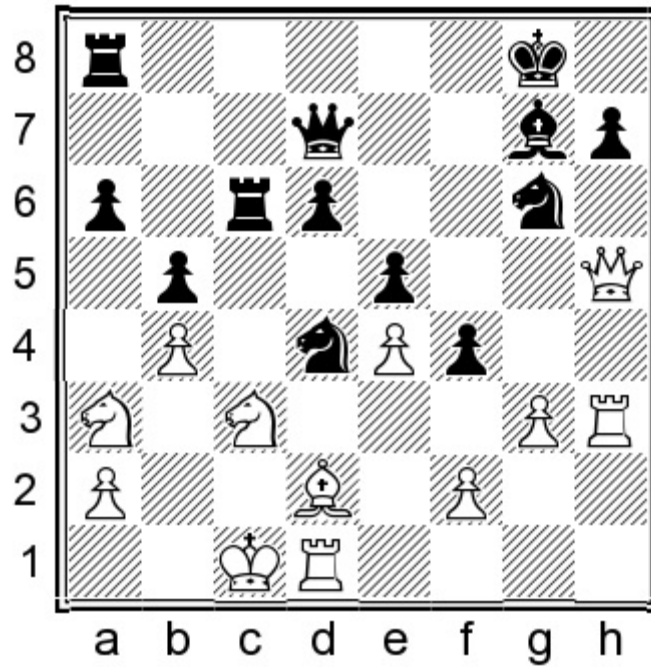


Position after: 19.♖h6

The knight gets the f8-square; that is why it was important to go to c8 with the f8-rook. 19...♘f8!-+

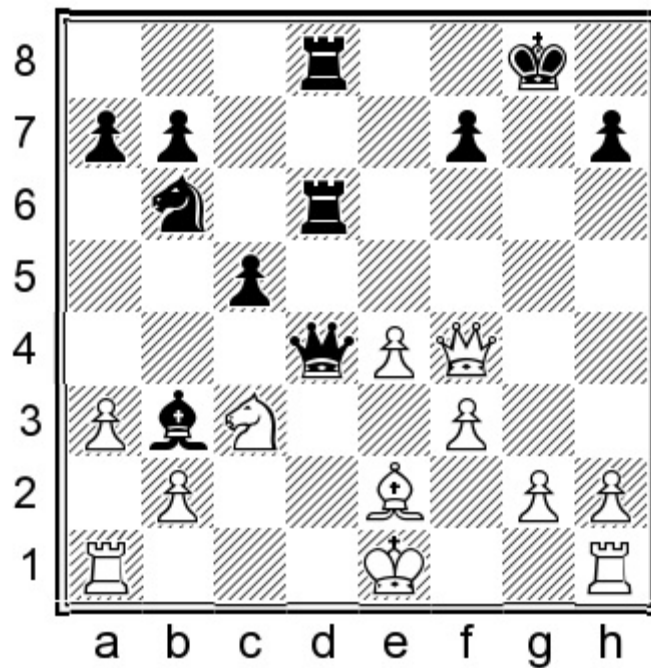
18...♖xc5 19.♙h3 ♙xh3 20.♖xh3 b5 21.b4 ♖c6+

Black has a big advantage.



Position after: 21...♖c6

Example 4
From Laznicka-Harikrishna
Riyadh 2017



White to move

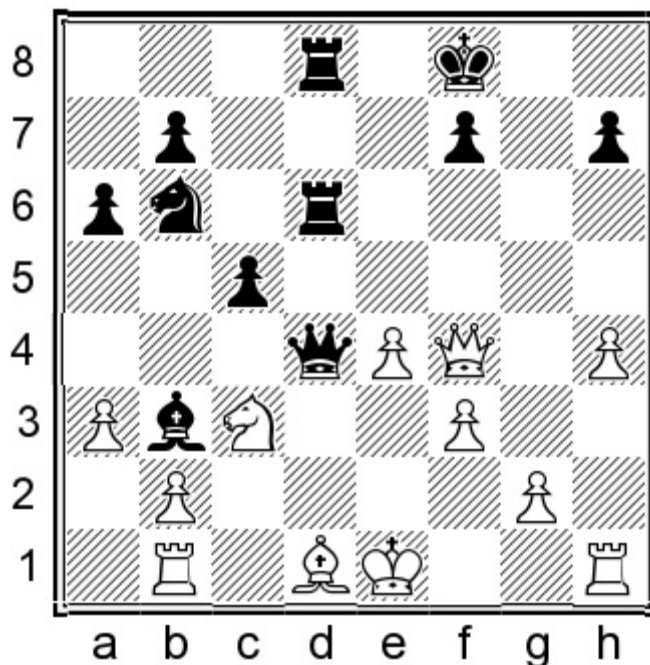
Black has obvious compensation for the pawn, since the white king has not castled. The important b2-pawn may become an object of attention for Black.

23. ♖b1!!

This looks slow at first, but in fact, by protecting the b2-pawn, White has time to prepare an important exchange of bishops. Also the move ♘c3-b5 has become a possibility.

A) The attempt to solve the problems of the position by the immediate offer to exchange bishops, as in the game, would not have succeeded: 23. ♕d1?! ♕c4! (The game continued 23... ♖f6?! 24. ♖c1∞ ½-½ (73) Laznicka, V (2647) – Harikrishna, P (2744) Riyadh 2017) 24. ♕e2 ♕xe2 25. ♘xe2 ♗xb2 26. ♖f2 ♖d2 27. ♖he1 ♘c4±

B) 23. h4?! a6 24. ♖b1 Now this move does not make sense, as after the possible 24... ♖f8!? 25. ♕d1?



Position after: 25. ♕d1?

...is already bad due to 25... ♘d5! 26. ♘xd5 ♕xd5 27. ♕e2 ♕a2-+.

23. ♖b1!! ♖f8

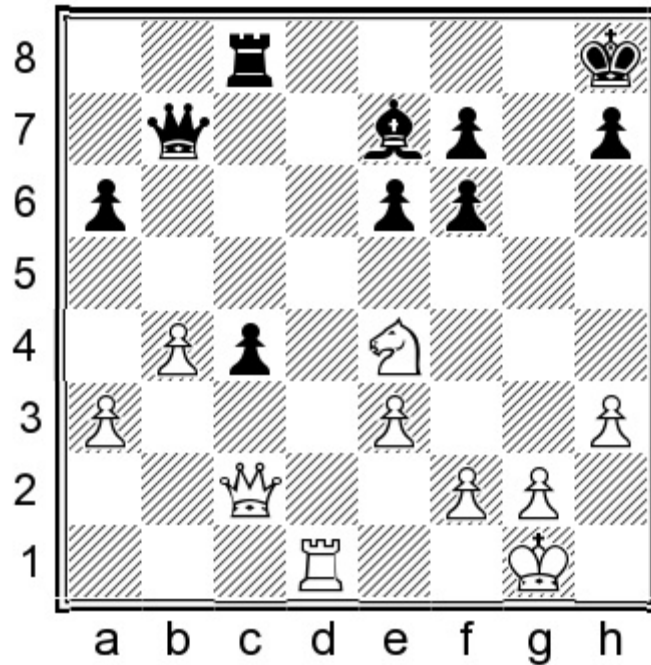
23... a6 24. ♕d1 ♕c4 25. ♕e2 ♕xe2 26. ♘xe2 ♗d2+ 27. ♗xd2 ♖xd2 28. ♘f4∞

24. ♘b5 ♗d2+ 25. ♗xd2 ♖xd2 26. ♘c3=

Example 5

From Mamedyarov-Caruana

Wijk aan Zee 2018



Black to move

White's main threat is to attack c4 by ♖d1-d4. However, Black could defuse this manoeuvre with a subtle prophylactic move:

28...h6!!

In the game White managed to realise his plans and achieved an advantage after 28...♙c6 29.♖d4 a5 30.♘d2 ♜g8 31.g3 axb4 32.♞xc4 b3 33.♘xb3+- 1-0 (43) Mamedyarov, S (2804) – Caruana, F (2811) Wijk aan Zee 2018.

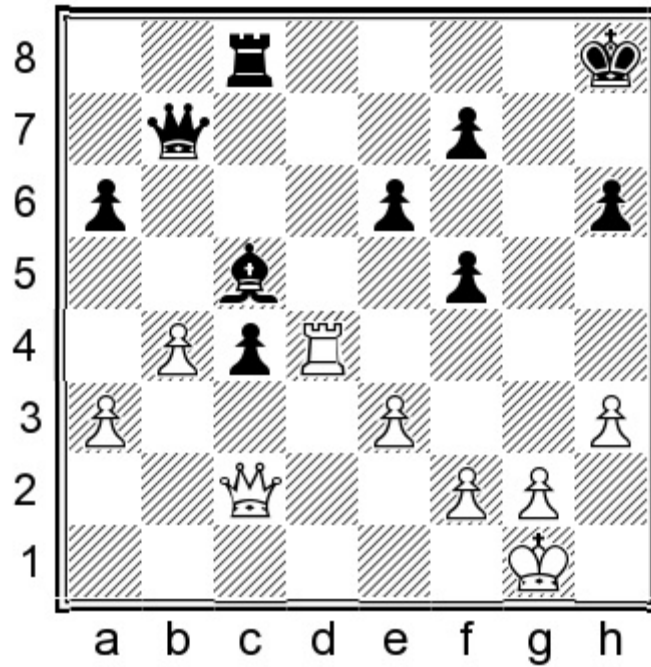
28...h6!! 29.♞d4 f5! =

Now it turns out that White has no resources which would lead to the win of a pawn if the black pawn was on h7.

30.♘c5

30.♙c3 ♖h7 =

30...♙xc5



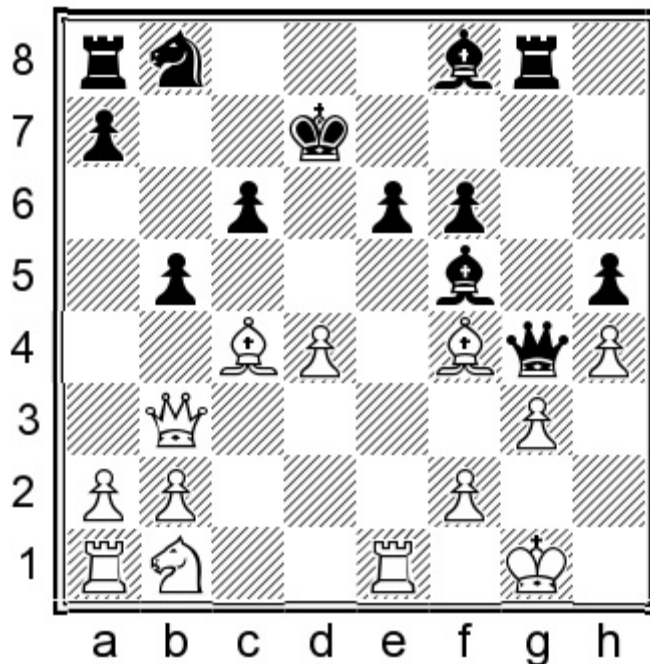
Position after: 30...♙xc5

Δ 31.♖xc4?? ♜g8! 32.♚c3+

With the pawn on h6 the black king has a shelter on h7, allowing the black rook to work on the g-file. That is why the first mysterious move with the pawn was so important!

32...♔h7-+

Example 6
From Firouzja-Bluebaum
Moscow 2017



Black to move

The position of the black king in the centre does not inspire confidence, however, the game is not yet lost. It is necessary to dislodge the queen from the b3-square.

18...a5!

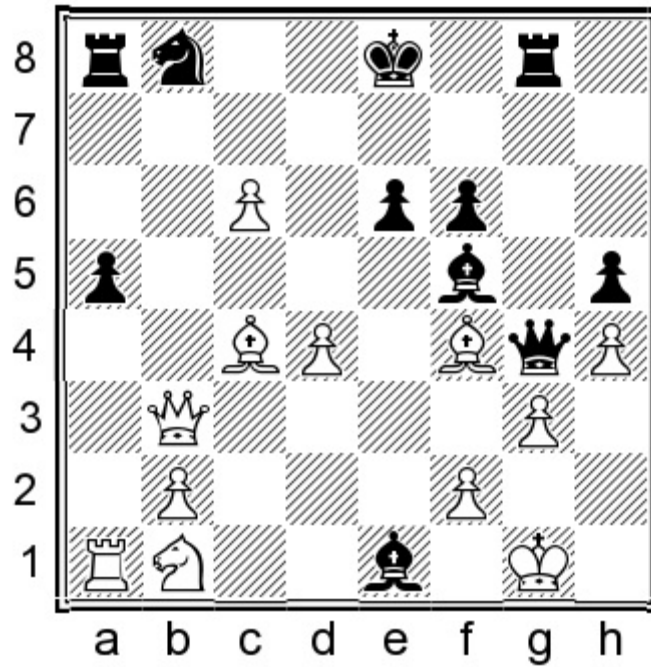
With this unexpected move Black gains an advantage.

The game continued with 18...♙b4?! 19.♙xe6+!? (19.♚xb4!? ♚xf4 20.♙f1±) 19...♙xe6 20.♞xe6 ♚xe6 21.♚xb4± 1-0 (42) Firouzja, A (2465) – Bluebaum, M (2632) Moscow 2017.

18...a5! 19.a4

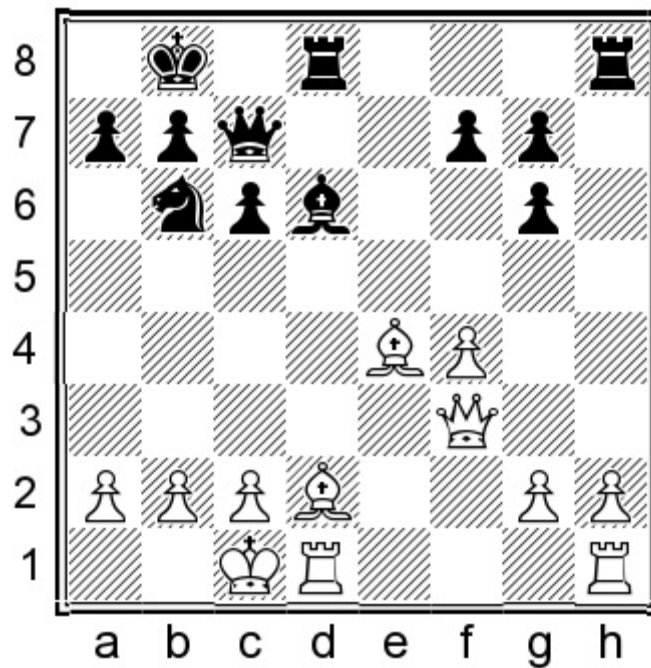
19.♙xb8 ♙b4!± (19...♞xb8 20.♙d3±)

19...♙b4 20.axb5 ♙xe1 21.bxc6+ ♔e8±



Position after: 21...♔e8

Example 7
 From Breckenridge-Dreev
 chess.com 2018



Black to move

Here Black had a choice between two moves: 20...♖a4 or 20...♖c4. From a practical point of view it seemed to me that the move in the game was the stronger.

20...♖a4!?

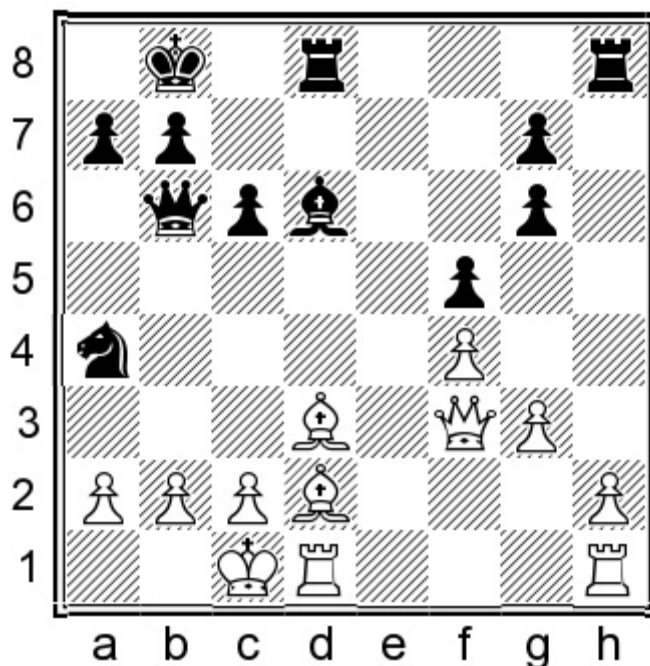
20...♖c4 was actually stronger, when after 21.g3 ♗xd2 22.♖xd2 ♕a5 23.c3 ♕xa2 24.♖hd1 ♘c7 Black is better. But will it be possible to benefit from an extra pawn with opposite-coloured bishops?

Now, to keep the balance, White should think unconventionally and instead of strengthening the f4 pawn make a move in front of his king.

20...♖a4!? 21.c4!!

It turns out that the most important thing for White is to lengthen the b1-h7 diagonal for his bishop.

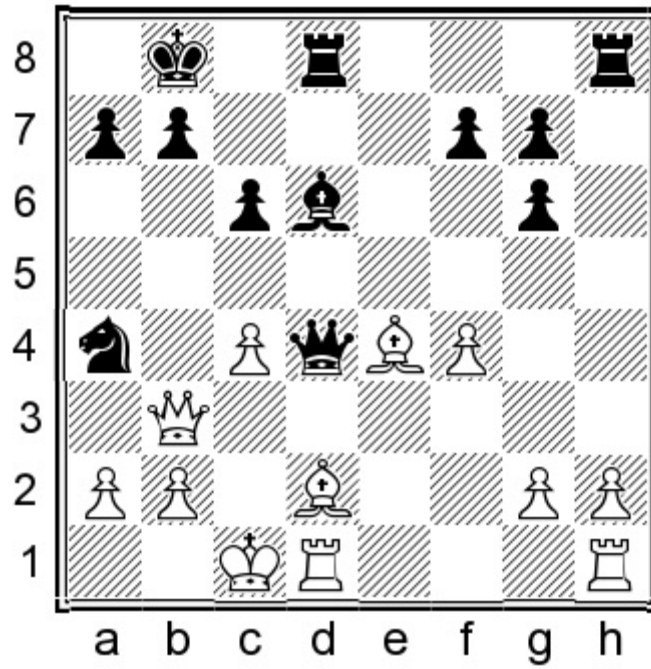
The game continued with 21.g3 f5! 22.♗d3 ♕b6



Position after: 22...♕b6

23.♗c3 (23.b3 ♕d4+) 23...♗xc3+ 0-1 (37) Breckenridge, S (2312) – Dreev, A (2653) chess.com 2018.

21...♕b6 22.♕b3 ♕d4



Position after: 22...♙d4

23.♙xa4

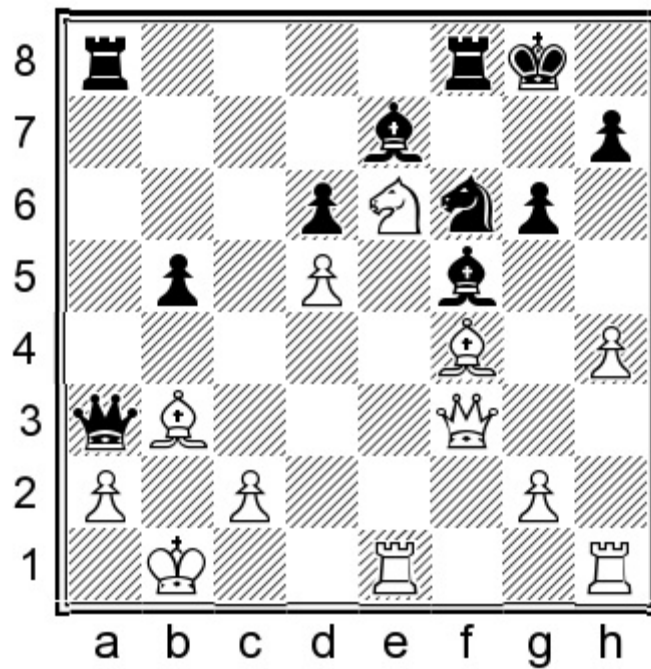
23.♙xc6?? ♘c5-+

23...♙xe4 24.g3 ♙c5 25.♙c2=

Example 8

From Salvador-Gabetto

Gorgonzola 2004



Black to move

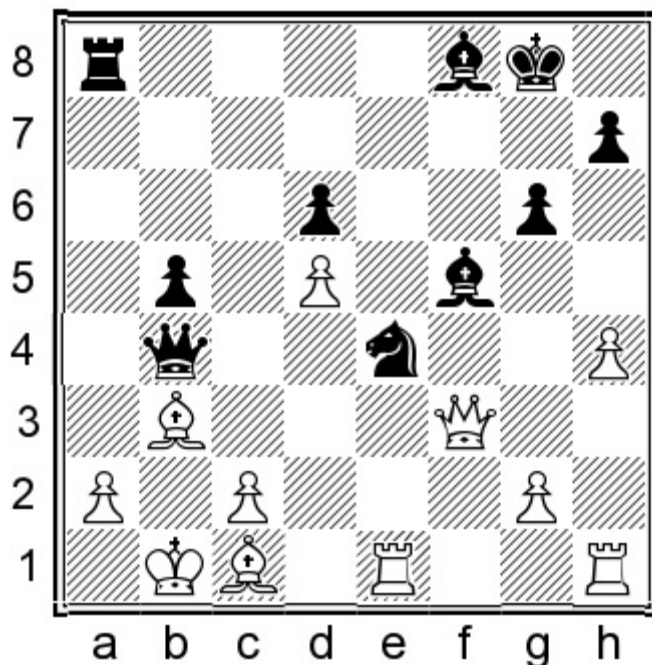
The f8-rook is hanging, so it is not surprising that Black's thoughts were probably about where to put the rook or whether to exchange the knight on e6. However, these moves lose. Black can survive thanks to an unexpected 'quiet' move.

24...♖b4!!=

It is extremely important that Black prepare a counterattack with the help of ...♗f6-e4 and at the same time prevent the manoeuvre ♗e6-d4. Sacrificing the exchange is a small price to pay to make this possible.

The game continued with 24...♖fc8 25.♗d4! ♕xf8 26.♖c1 ♖c5 27.♗xf5 gxf5 28.♖xf5 and White won easily. 1-0 (32) Salvador, R (2315) – Gabetto, F (2128) Gorgonzola 2004.

24...♖b4!!= 25.♗xf8 ♕xf8 26.♖c1 ♗e4



Position after: 26...♗e4

27.♖xe4 ♗e4 27...♕xe4 28.♖f6 ♕xc2+!?

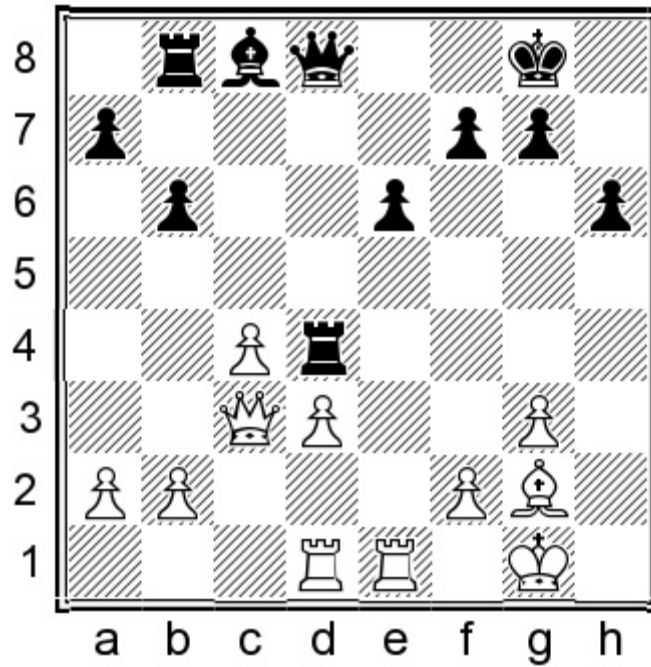
28...♕g7!? 29.♖e6+ ♗h8 30.♖b2 ♖f8=

29.♗xc2 ♖e4+ 30.♗d1 ♖d3+ 31.♖d2 ♖b1+ 32.♖c1 ♖d3+=

Example 9

From Lombaers-Cheparinov

Gibraltar 2018



White to move

Here White played the attractive move...

20.♔d5

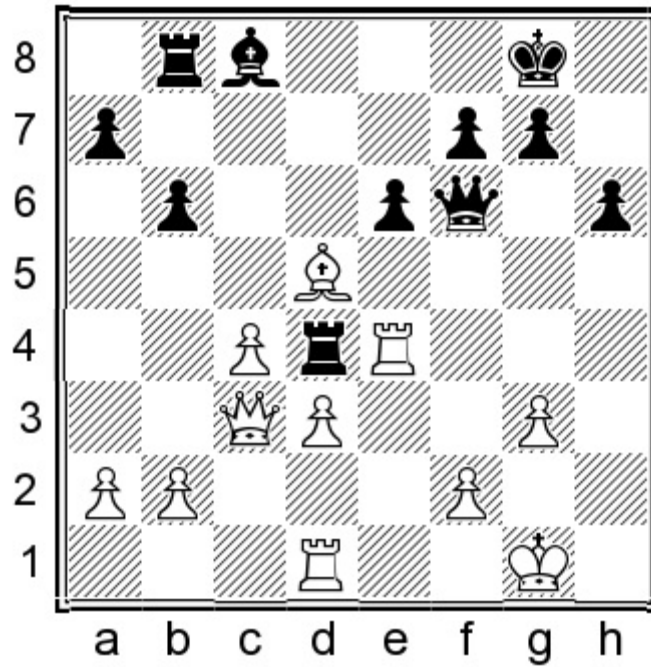
However, the simple 20.♖e4 was stronger, removing the blockade of the d-pawn.

20.♔d5 ♜f6!

20...♜g4?! 21.♔f3 ♜g5 22.d4 ♔b7 23.d5↑ 1-0 (55) Lombaers, P (2345) – Cheparinov, I (2699) Gibraltar 2018.

21.♔g2

We can assume that Black's last move was not a simple defensive resource for fear of getting a worse endgame after 21.♖e4...

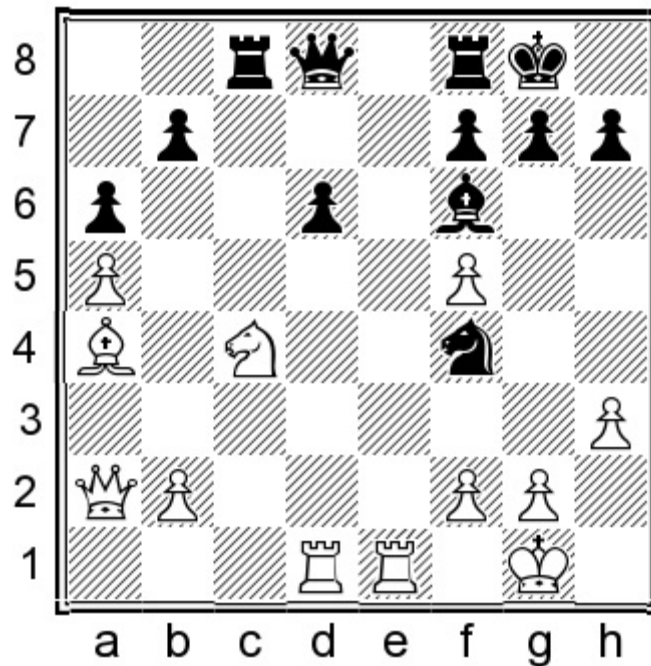


Position after: 21. Re4?

...for he has a nasty surprise: 21...exd5! (21...Rxe4? 22. Wxf6 gxf6 23. Qxe4±) 22. Rxd4 Wf3! and White is helpless against ...Qh3!

21...Qb7 22. Qxb7 Rxb7 23. Re4 Rbd7

Example 10
From Dreev-Petrosian
Riyadh 2017



Black to move

Black has obvious problems related to the protection of the d6-pawn and the unstable position of his knight, but nevertheless, according to the unwritten laws of chess, his position should not be bad.

23...♙h4!!

Black solves all his problems by counterattacking. This unexpected move frees the way to g5 for the queen. Now White must react very carefully.

Instead, the game continued with 23...♛c7? 24.♘b6 ♝cd8 25.g3! ♞xh3+ 26.♔g2 ♛c5 27.♔xh3 ♛xf2 28.♛d5 h5 29.♞d7+– 1-0 (42) Dreev, A (2653) – Petrosian, T (2601) Riyadh 2017.

23...♙h4!! 24.♔f1!

The position is quite complicated, but roughly equal. For example:

A) 24.♞xd6?? ♛g5–+

B) 24.g3?! ♛g5 25.♝e3 ♞xh3+→

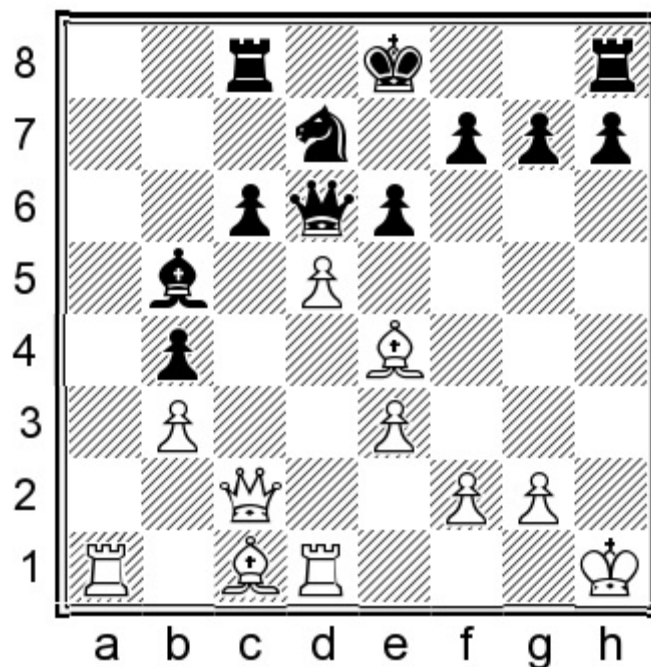
24...♛g5 25.♞e3 ♝c5 26.b4 ♝c3 27.♛d2 ♝a3 28.♛c2 ♝xe3 29.fx3 ♞h5 30.♔g1 ♙xe1 31.♝xe1

With approximate equality.

Example 11

From Andriasian-Dreev

Rogaska Slatina 2011



Black to move

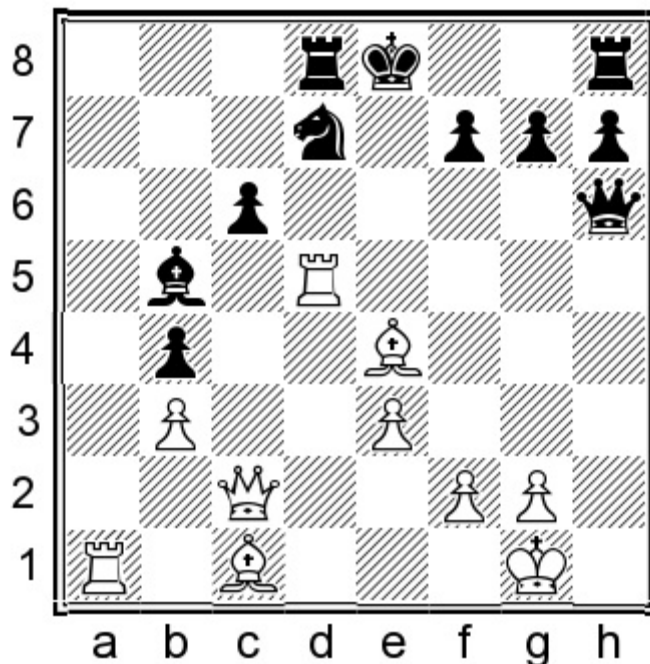
After the obvious d4-d5 breakthrough in the centre, Black's position looks extremely dangerous. His king has

not yet castled, and the white bishops are going to show their strength very soon.

21...exd5 22.♞xd5 cxd5!

In the game Black missed this opportunity.

22...♜h6+? 23.♔g1 ♞d8

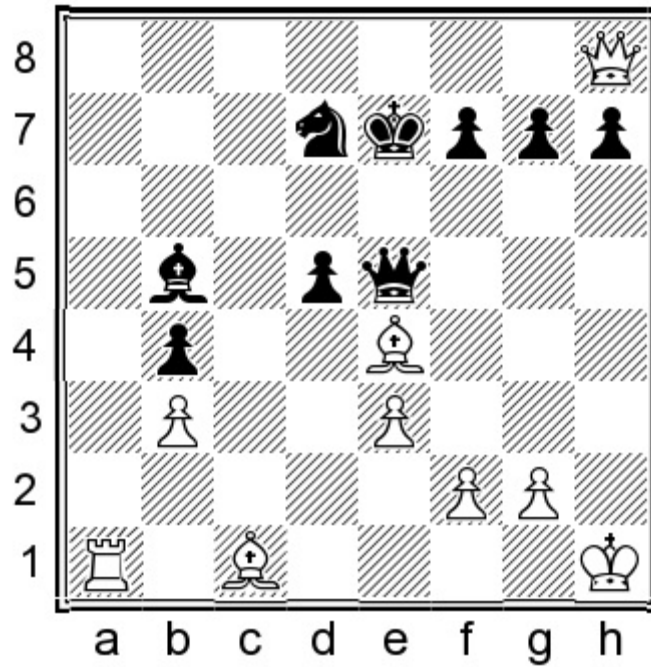


Position after: 23...♞d8

A) 24.♞d2? 0-0 25.♕b2 ♘f6 26.♞xd8 ♞xd8 27.♜d2 ♞e8 28.♕f3 White has the better chances, but Black eventually managed to hold the draw: ½-½ (57) Andriasian, Z (2615) – Dreev, A (2711) Slovenia 2011.

B) However after the destructive 24.♞xd7!! ♞xd7 25.♕f5! ♞d8 26.♜e4+ ♔f8 27.♜xb4+ ♔g8 28.♕b2 ♜g5 29.♜c5 h6 30.f4 ♜h4 31.♜e5 Black is lost.

23.♜xc8+ ♔e7 24.♜xh8 ♜e5!!

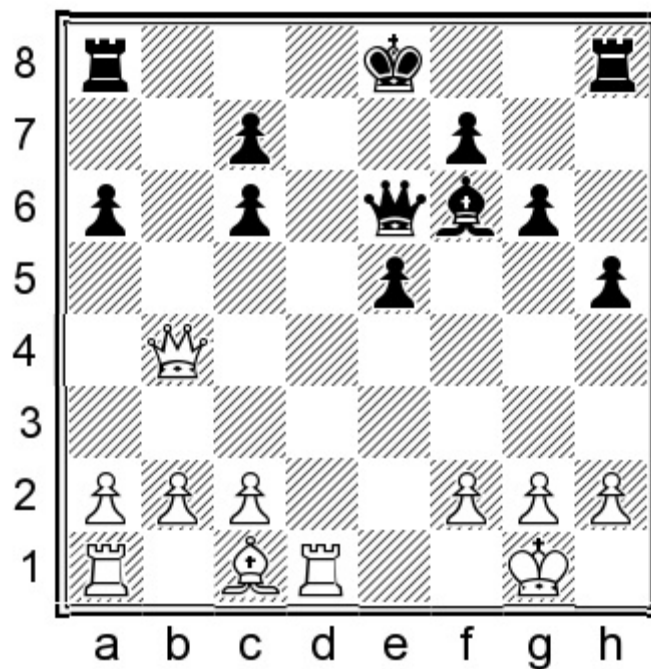


Position after: 24... ♖e5!!

With this strong quiet move Black achieves a draw. Because the white rook is under attack, there is no protection from perpetual check.

25. ♖a8 ♜h5+ 26. ♔g1 ♜d1+ 27. ♔h2 ♜h5+ 28. ♔g3 ♜g5+ 29. ♔h2 ♜h5+=

Example 12
From Adhiban-Short
Riyadh 2017



Black to move

Black cannot castle, not only because White controls the f8-square, but also because the black king has already moved! However, it's obvious that the black king cannot stay in the centre for long. The problem can be solved as follows:

19...♖g4!

The rook on d1 is hanging, and the exchange of queens benefits Black.

The game continued with the senseless 19...h4? and after the obvious 20.h3 ♖h5?! 21.♗b7 ♜c8 22.♗xa6 ♔f8 (The king has left the centre, but at too high a price.) 23.a4 ♔g7 24.a5+– the passed pawn decided the outcome of this game in White's favour. 1-0 (41) Adhiban, B (2655) – Short, N (2678) Riyadh 2017.

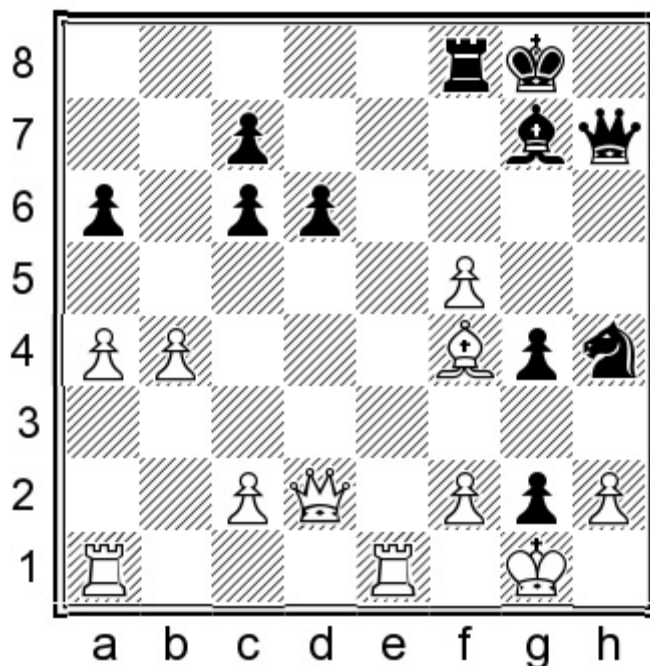
19...♖g4! 20.♗e1 ♔f8

And Black has an obvious advantage.

Example 13

From Grischuk-Mamedyarov

Hersonissos 2017

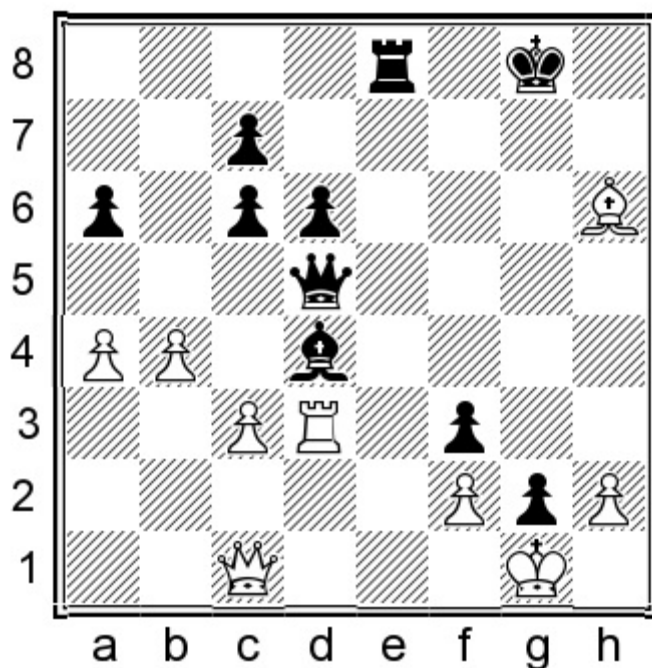


White to move

This position arose in an important match between the favourites in the European Team Championship. For a long time it was believed that if White is worse here, then it's not by much. This opinion is confirmed even by good computers (you can check for yourself). However, in reality Black is winning, but we can only guess if he could have found a way to victory after...

28.♗d3!

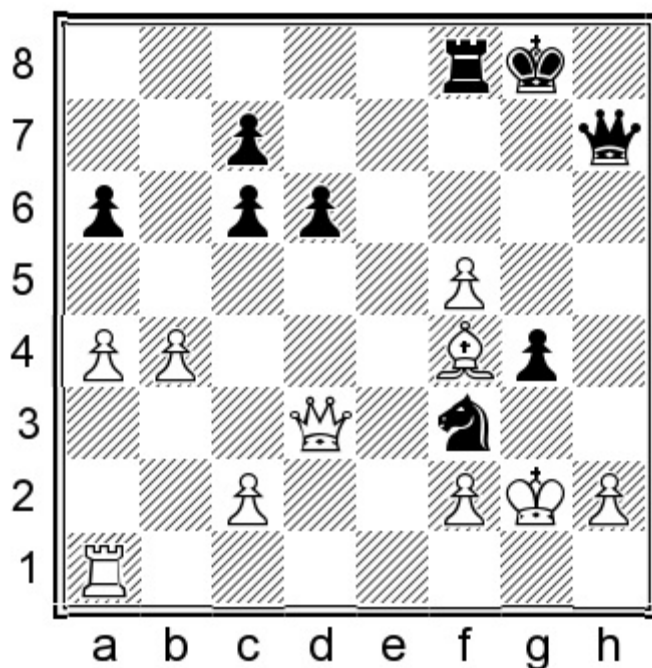
In the game, White did not show proper resistance by playing 28.♖a3?! when Black achieved a convincing victory: 28...♙xf5 29.♗g5 ♘f3+ 30.♖xf3 gxf3 31.♗h6 ♚d5 32.♙c1 ♗c3 33.♖e3 ♗d4 34.♗d3 ♖e8 35.c3



Position after: 35.c3

35...♗xf2+! 36.♔xf2 ♖e2+ 0-1 (36) Grischuk, A (2785) – Mamedyarov, S (2791) Hersonissos 2017.

28.♙d3! ♘f3+ 29.♔xg2 ♗xa1 30.♖xa1



Position after: 30.♖xa1

30...♖f6!!

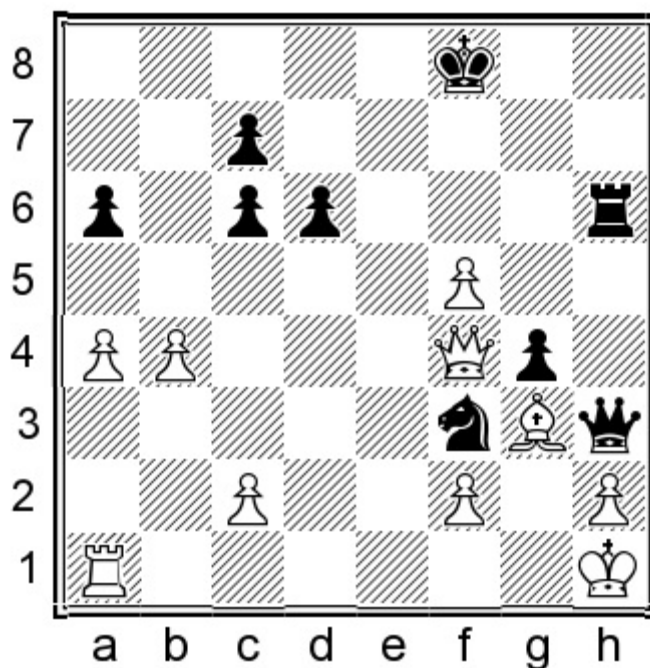
Only this! Other moves do not win, e.g. 30...♖h3+? 31.♔h1 ♜f6 32.♗xa6=.

31.♙g3

A) 31.♗xa6 does not help now because of 31...♗xf5! 32.♙g3 ♗e4 33.♔f1 ♘d4-+.

B) 31.♗e4 transposes to our main line after 31...♗h3+ 32.♔h1 ♔f8!! 33.♙g3 ♜h6 34.♗f4.

31...♗h3+ 32.♔h1 ♜h6 33.♗c4+ ♔f8! 34.♗f4



Position after: 34.♗f4

It seems that White is OK here, but there follows an absolutely ‘inhuman’ move!

34...♜h7!!

Threatening the manoeuvre ...♜h7-e7-e1 with inescapable mate.

35.f6 ♜h5!

Now the manoeuvre ...♜h5-e5-e1 is threatened.

36.f7 ♜h6!-+

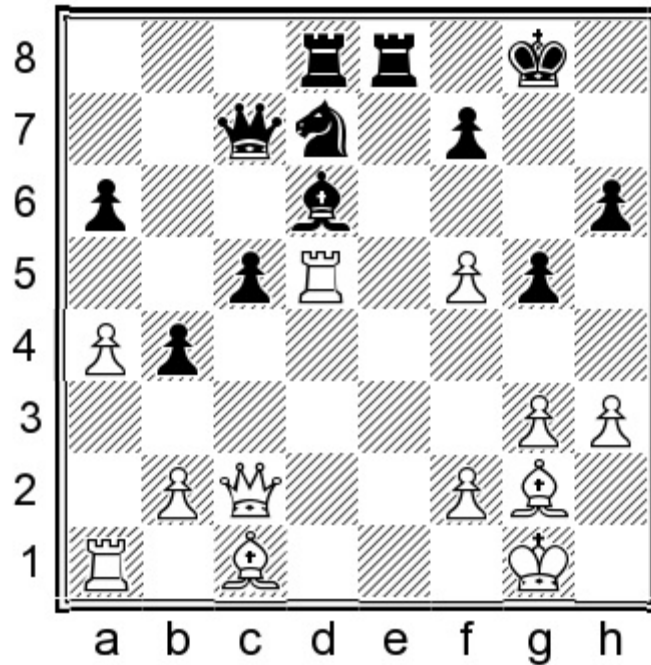
White does not have a satisfactory defence to the transfer of the rook to e1, so his position is lost.

36...♜e5? 37.♗f6 ♘e1 38.♗d8+ ♔xf7 39.♗xc7+ ♜e7 40.♗xe7+ ♔xe7 41.♜xe1+ with a likely draw.

Example 14

From Esipenko-Mamedyarov

Moscow 2017



White to move

White's position looks very dangerous. In addition to the invasion on the first rank, White needs to reckon with Black's positional idea of promoting the c-pawn. The tempo ...♘d7-f6 looks good too.

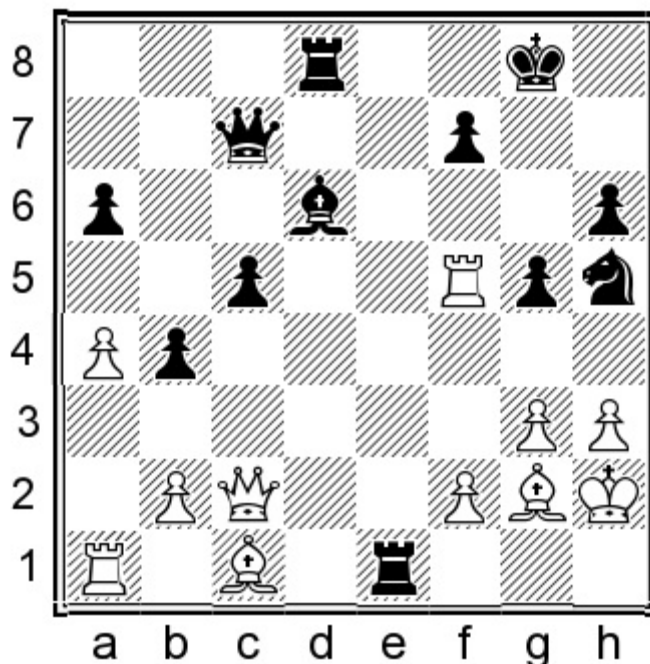
In addition, White is far behind in development, so, in general, he has enough problems. It looks like these could all be solved with the simple developing move 23.♙e3, were it not for the shot 23...♙xg3!.

It seems that White thought along these lines during the game and chose to sacrifice a pawn, freeing the f5-square for the rook. He was hoping for compensation, but was immediately punished for his imprudence.

23.♙e3!

“So easy!?”, you might say. Yes, if you know how to distinguish false fears from reality. Were it not for the false fears, White would hardly have passed over this move in favour of the suicidal 23.f6.

23.f6? ♜xf6 24.♞f5 ♞e1+ 25.♚h2 ♜h5!



Position after: 25... Nf5!

Black is attacking the most important point in White's position.

A) Perhaps White was hoping for 26. Qf3 to work. Black now has a lot of good moves, but the sacrifice of a pawn immediately answers all the questions. 26... b3! 27. Qxb3 Nf5 28. fxg3 Qxg3+ 29. Kg2 Qh4 30. Qh5 (30. Qf4 Rf2+-) 30... c4+-

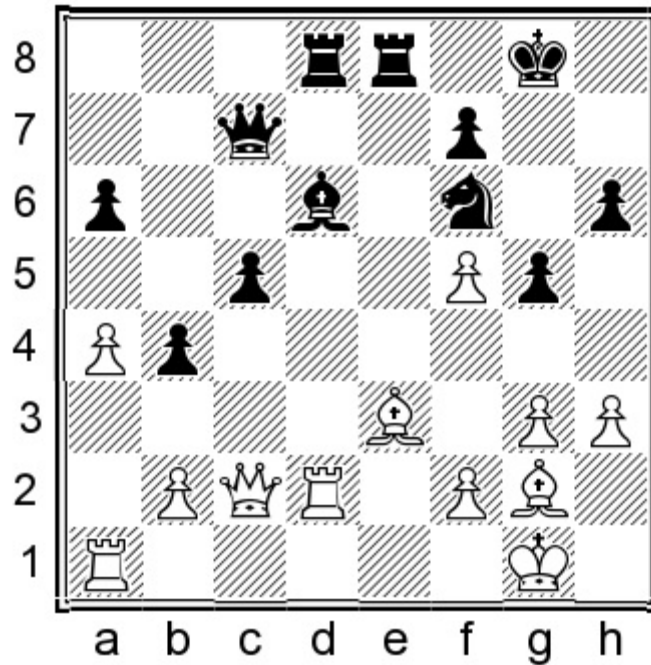
B) 26. Qb3 Ng7!? 27. Rf6 c4 28. Qf3 h5 29. Rh6 h4 30. Qg4 hxg3+ 31. fxg3 Qc5 32. h4 Qxg3+ 33. Qxg3 Qg1+ 34. Kh3 Rf3 35. Qf3 Rxf3 36. Qxf3 g4+ 37. Qxg4 Qh1+ 38. Kg3 Rg1+ 0-1 (38) Esipenko, A (2564) – Mamedyarov, S (2799) Moscow 2017.

23. Qe3! Nf6

It turns out that Black cannot get any real benefit from the weakness of the g3-square, for example:

23... Qxg3?! 24. Rad1!± and having connected rooks on the d-file White even takes over the initiative!

24. Rad2



Position after: 24. ♖d2

The position is approximately balanced. The doubled pawns are compensated for by the two bishops. Attempts to use the weakness of the g3-square do not change the overall evaluation, for example:

24... ♗xg3

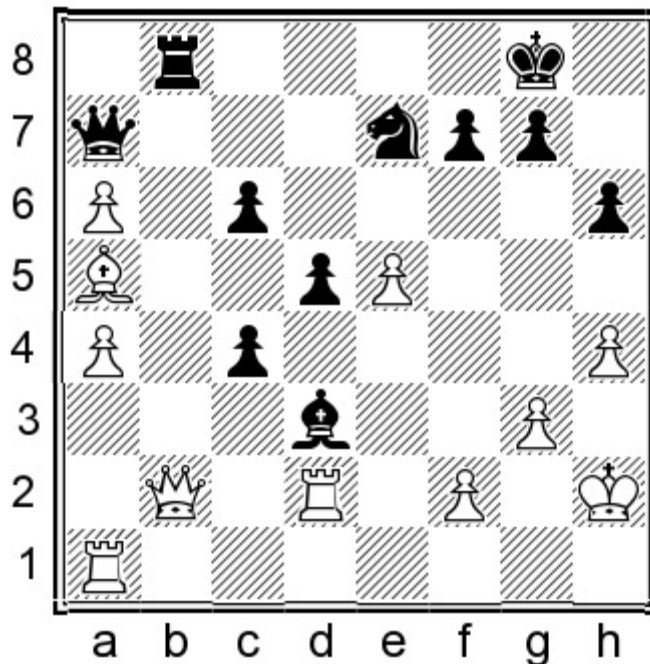
It is also possible to sacrifice the exchange. Black will undoubtedly have compensation, but not the advantage. 24... ♖xe3 25. fxe3 ♗xg3 26. ♖xd8+ ♔xd8 27. ♗xc5 ♕d2 28. ♗d4 ♖f2+ 29. ♔h1 ♗c7 30. ♗xf6 ♖g3 31. ♔g1 ♖xe3+ 32. ♔h1 ♖g3=

25. ♖xd8 ♗h2+ 26. ♔h1 ♖xd8 27. ♗xc5=

Example 15

From Fedoseev-Dreev

Moscow 2016



White to move

Black has a noticeable compensation for the quality: his pawns are strong, the white king feels uncomfortable because of the weakness of the white squares.

For example, the maneuver ♗f5-d4-f3 is quite real. The white pieces are separated, the queen is attacked and it seems that White has no time to deal with all these problems.

However, the position is not worse. Why?

37.♗b4!

Only by this seemingly strange move of the bishop under the pin white can be saved. Let us see why.

The game continued 37.♗a3? ♗f5! and white queen is out of work. (37...♖b3? 38.♗d6 \checkmark) 38.♖b2?!“ This is a mistake, but the position is already difficult. 38...♖b3! 39.♗a2 \square (39.♖xb3 ♗xf2+ With checkmate.)

39...♗d4+ 0-1 (47) Fedoseev, V (2667) – Dreev, A (2652) Moscow 2016.

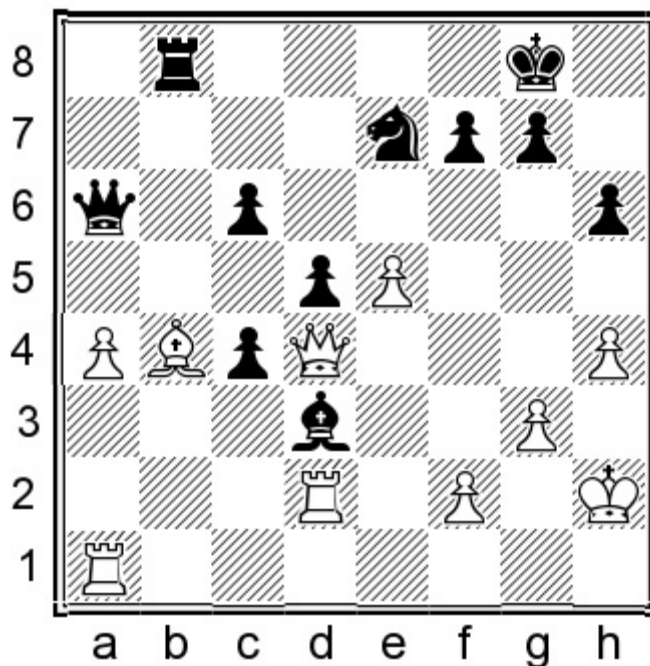
37.♗b4! ♗xa6

It is necessary to take the pass pawn, otherwise it can declare itself.

A) 37...c5? 38.♗xc5 ♖xb2 39.♗xa7 ♖xd2 40.♗e3+–

B) 37...♗f5? 38.♗c5! ♖xb2 (38...♗a8 39.a7!+–) 39.♗xa7 ♖xd2 40.♗b6+– And a new white queen will inevitably appear on the board.

38.♗d4!!



Position after: 38. ♕d4!!

This is a brilliant move, allowing the white queen to enter the fight in a tactical way.

38. ♕c3 ♖f5–+ And there is not satisfactory protection from the movement of the pawn “d”.

38... ♗f5

38... ♖xb4 This move leads to an unclear position, but it is dangerous for black from a practical point of view.

39. ♖xd3 ♖xa4 40. ♖xa4 ♕xa4 41. ♖f3 ♕a8! 42. h5∞

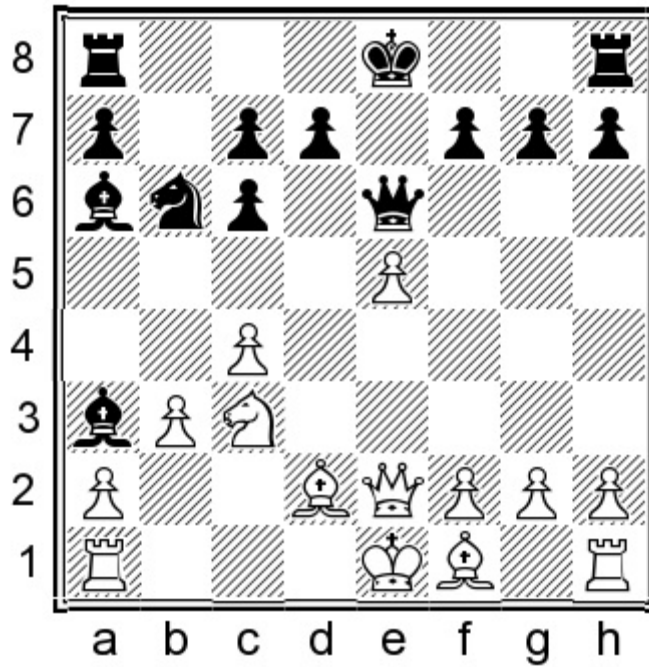
39. ♕f4 ♕a7

39... ♔e4?! 40. f3

40. ♔d6∞

Thanks to complex acrobatic stunts, white pieces broke free. Both sides have their own trump cards; the chances of the sides are equal.

Example 16
From Papp-Batsiashvili
Gibraltar 2018



White to move

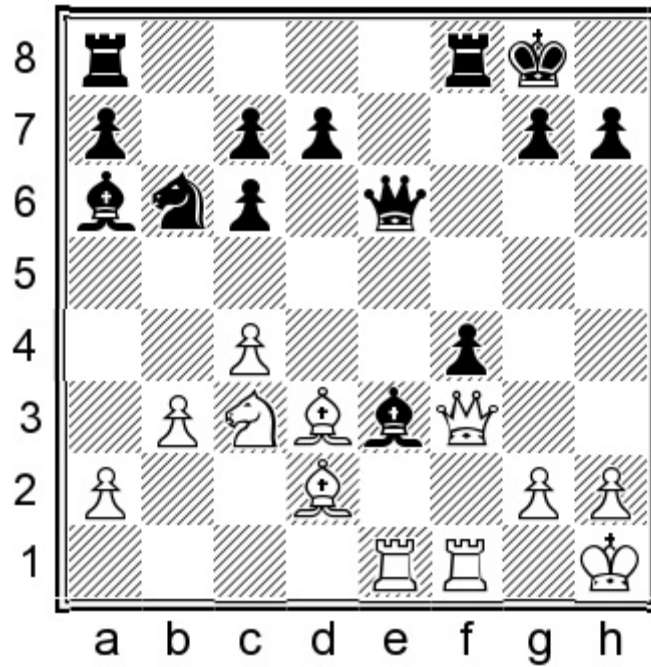
White's opening play has been unsuccessful, but he does not feel the danger and continues with the optimistic development of his pieces.

Look where it got him.

12. ♖e4?

Of course, White really wants to develop the kingside and castle as quickly as possible, but it was better to wait a little.

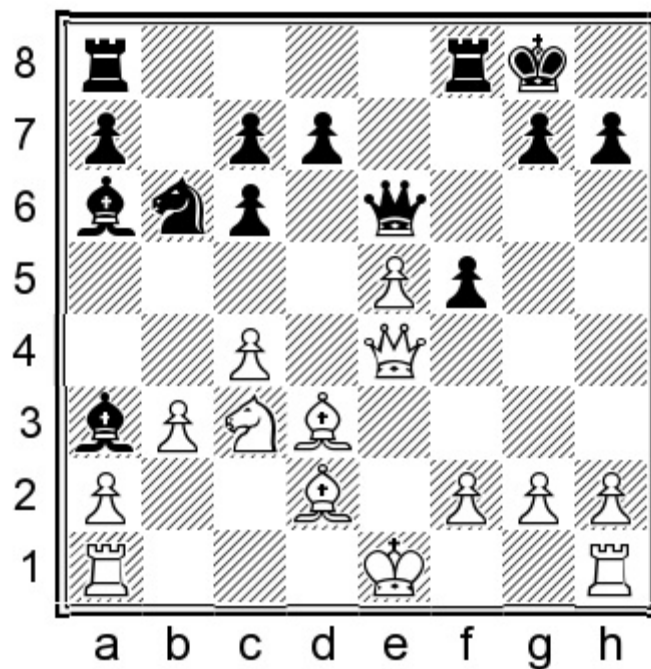
12.f4! 0-0 13. ♖f3 Now Black can win a pawn, but White has time to castle, when the unsuccessful arrangement of the black pieces on the queenside will be well worth the pawn. 13...f6 (13...d6 14. ♕e2 dxe5 15.f5) 14. ♕d3 fxe5 15.0-0 exf4 16. ♖ae1 ♕c5+ 17. ♖h1 ♕e3



Position after: 17...♙e3

With the help of this bishop manoeuvre, Black has extinguished White's dangerous initiative, but the game did not stray beyond the bounds of equality. 18.♚h5 ♚h6 19.♚xh6 gxh6 20.♙xe3 fxe3 21.♞xe3 ♞xf1+ 22.♙xf1 ♞f8 23.♙e2 d6 24.♙f3 ♙b7 25.♞e7 ♞f7 26.♞e8+ ♞f8 27.♞e7=

12.♚e4? 0-0 13.♙d3 f5!



Position after: 13...f5!

14.exf6 ♚xe4+ 15.♙xe4

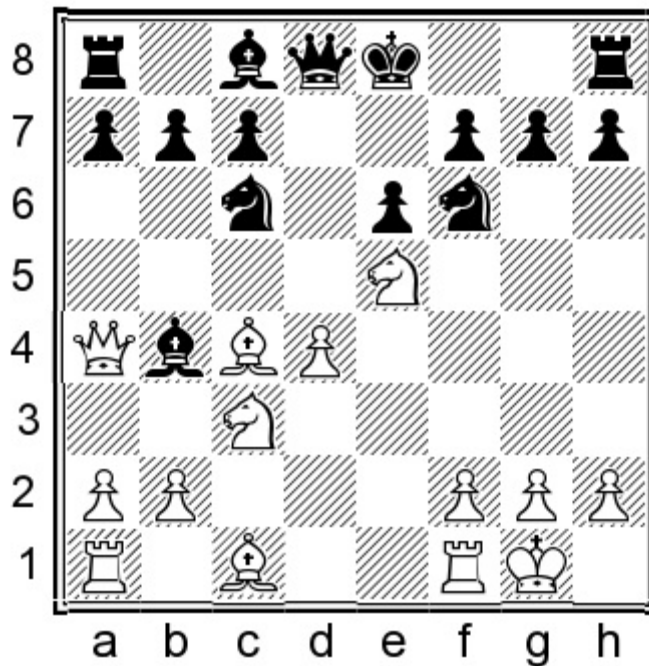
15. ♖xe4 d5 16. ♗g3 ♜ae8+ ♣

15...d5 16.cxd5?

A sign of panic. There are some chances to defend after 16. ♕f3! ♜ae8+ 17. ♖d1 ♜xf6 18. ♜e1 ♜ef8! The exchange is beneficial to White, since his king is in potential danger, so Black should keep the pieces on. 19. ♜b1! h6! ♣

16... ♕b2 17. ♜d1 ♕xc3 18. ♕xc3 ♜fe8+ ♣

Example 17
From Halkias-Fressinet
Rijeka 2010



Black to move

The position on the board arose from the complexities of the Vienna variation. Using the following original, strong trick, Black successfully solves the problem of protecting the bishop on b4 – and his opening problems too.

9... ♜b8!

This X-ray beam saves the dark-squared bishop's life. After the natural, but inferior, 9... ♕e7 Black does not achieve full equality, for example 10. ♗xc6 (10.d5!? exd5 11. ♗xc6 bxc6 12. ♗xd5!±) 10... bxc6 11. ♜xc6+ ♕d7 12. ♜f3± 0-1 (23) Gustafsson, J (2572) – Aronian, L (2648) playchess.com 2004.

9... ♜b8! 10. ♗xc6

A) There is nothing good for White after 10. ♕b5 0-0 Δ 11. ♕xc6 bxc6 12. ♗xc6 ♕d7 ♣.

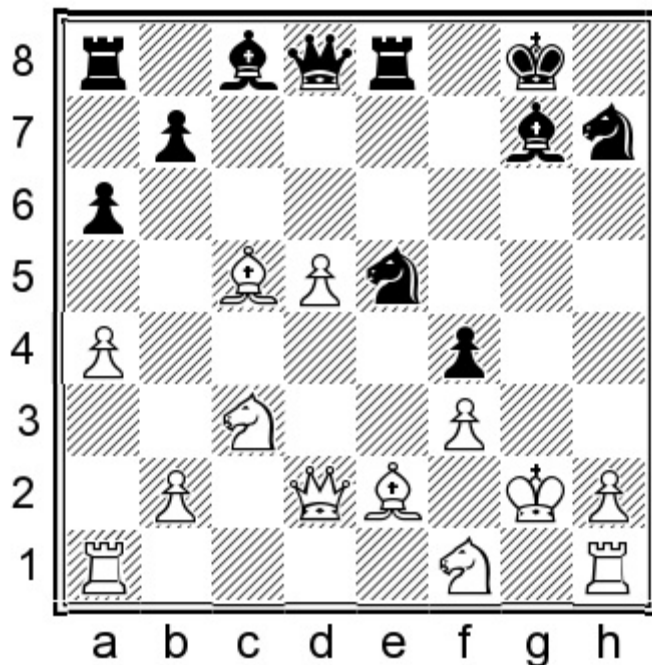
B) 10.d5!? seems like it brings an advantage, but it's an illusion: 10...exd5 11.♘xd5 ♘xd5 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♙xc6+ ♕d7 14.♚xd5 0-0 15.♙f4 ♕d6 16.♙xd6 cxd6 17.♙xd6 ♖xb2 18.♗ad1 ♚c8=.

10...bxc6 11.♙xc6+ ♚d7 12.♙xd7+ ♕xd7=

Example 18

From Dreev-Topalov

New Delhi 2000



White to move

It is obvious that Black has developed a strong initiative, but if the white king manages to find a safe spot, the initiative will be insufficient to compensate for the missing pawns. The safe spot is found after...

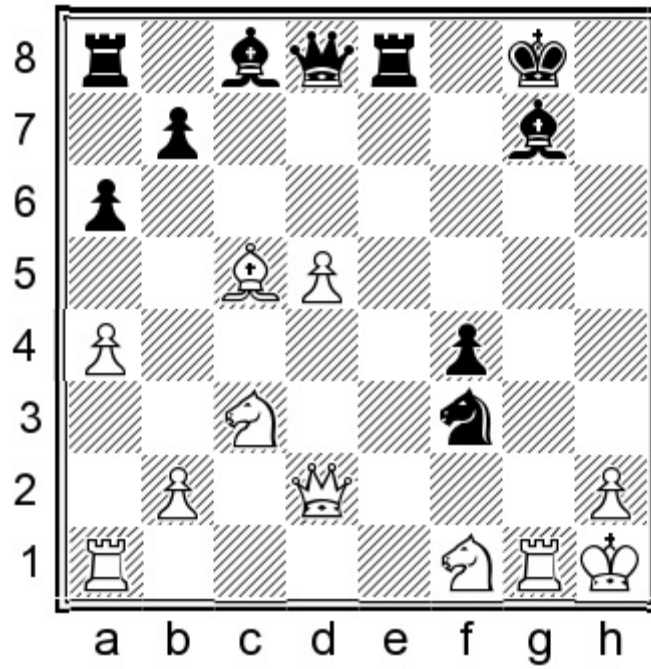
21.♗g1!

The game continued with 21.♙xf4 ♘g6 1-0 (46) Dreev, A (2676) – Topalov, V (2707) World Cup 2000.

21.♗g1! ♘g5 22.♔h1+–

The tactical reasoning behind White's plan is the following variation:

22...♘exf3 23.♙xf3 ♘xf3



Position after: 23... ♖xf3

24. ♖xg7+! ♜xg7 25. ♚g2+ ♜g5 26. h4 ♜h3

26... ♜h8 27. ♜d4++-

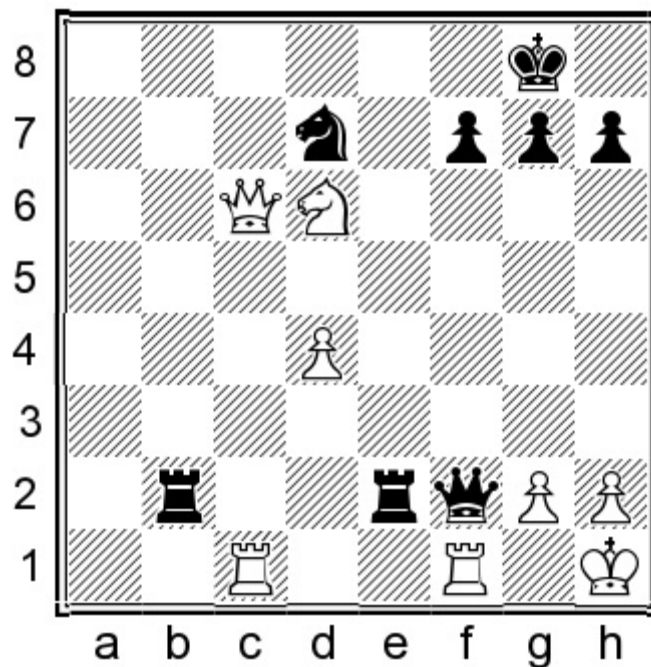
27. ♚xg5+ ♜xg5 28. hxg5 ♜g6 29. ♜d2

It is time for Black to resign.

Chapter 2 Exercises

1

Polgar, J. – Granda Zuniga, J.



Black to move

Can Black stay in the game?

Show/Hide Solution

1

Black needs to remember that besides the second rank there is the first.

However, in a situation where everything is hanging this is not always easy.

34...♖bc2!!

A) The game continued with 34...♖xg2+? 35.♖xg2 ♖xg2 36.♖c8+ ♘f8 37.♖xf7 ♖xh2+ 38.♔g1 and Black is a piece down. 1-0 (41) Polgar, J (2550) – Granda Zuniga, J (2615) Madrid 1992.

B) 34...♖ec2 also works.

34...♖bc2!! 35.♚a8+

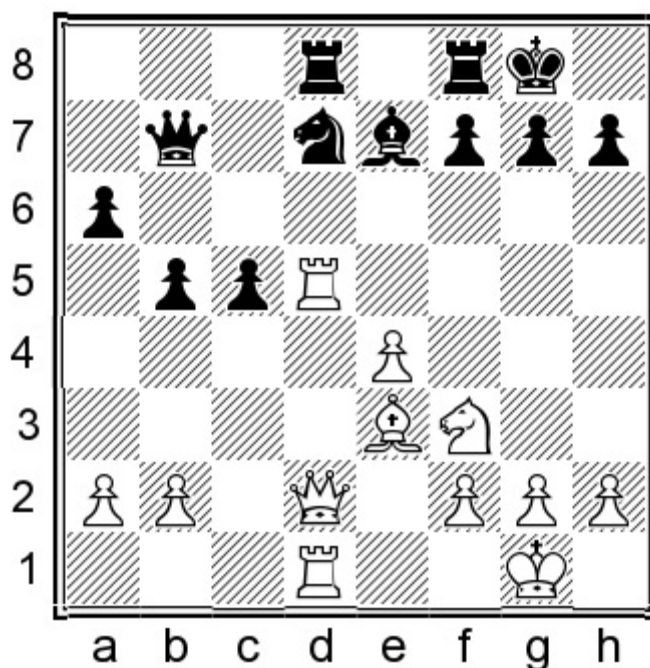
35.♖xf2? ♖xc6 and White loses at least a piece.

35...♘f8

And Black is clearly better, since his queen is untouchable.

2

Salov, V. – Ivanchuk, V.



Black to move

Find Black's equaliser!

Show/Hide Solution

2

This position arose from a variation of the Queen's Gambit Accepted which enjoyed some recent popularity. A brilliant defensive move by Black in fact closed this variation.

18...♚a8!

Now it is impossible to take on d7.

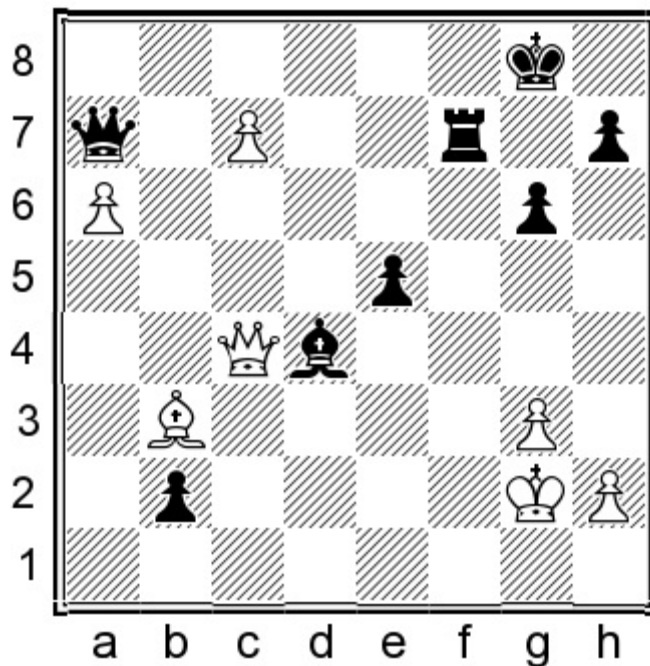
In passing, note that 18...♖b8?? with the same intention fails to 19.♙f4 ♜a8 20.♙c7!+-.

18...♜a8! 19.♜c2 ♘f6 20.♙xd8 ♙xd8

And the opponents agreed to a draw: ½-½ Salov,V (2645)-Ivanchuk,V (2665) Linares 1990.

3

Pantsulaia, L. – Dreev, A.



Black to move

Black seems to be dead lost. Find how to save the game!

Show/Hide Solution

3

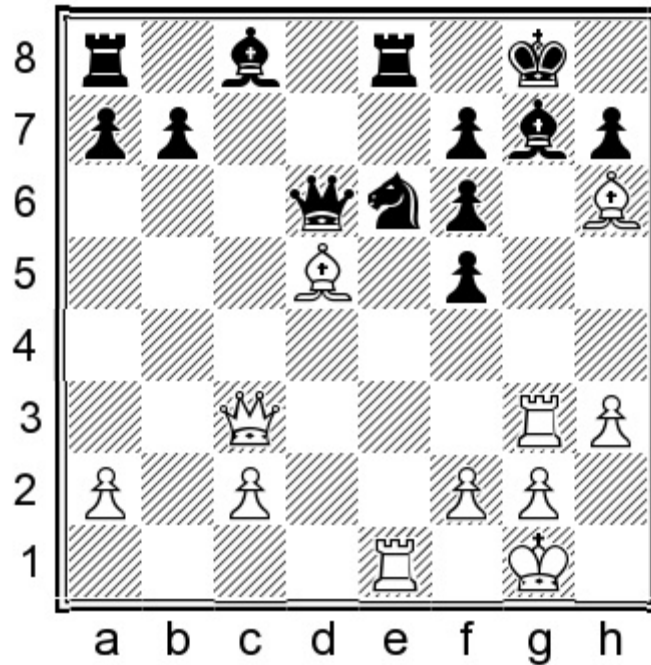
It seems that the position is lost, but salvation was found!

41...♜a8+ 42.♙h3 ♜f3!! 43.c8=♜+ ♙g7 44.♜xf7+ ♜xf7 45.♙xf7 b1=♜ 46.♙c4 ♜f5+

½-½ Pantsulaia,L (2613)-Dreev,A (2662) Gjakova 2016.

4

Panchenko, A. – Gofshtein, L.



Black to move

White has created some threats, one of which is 23. ♖xf6. How to defend?

Show/Hide Solution

4

22... ♖e7!!

A fine – practically invisible – defensive move. To find the way to win White needs to feel what has changed in the position after Black's last move and find another weakness besides the g7-square.

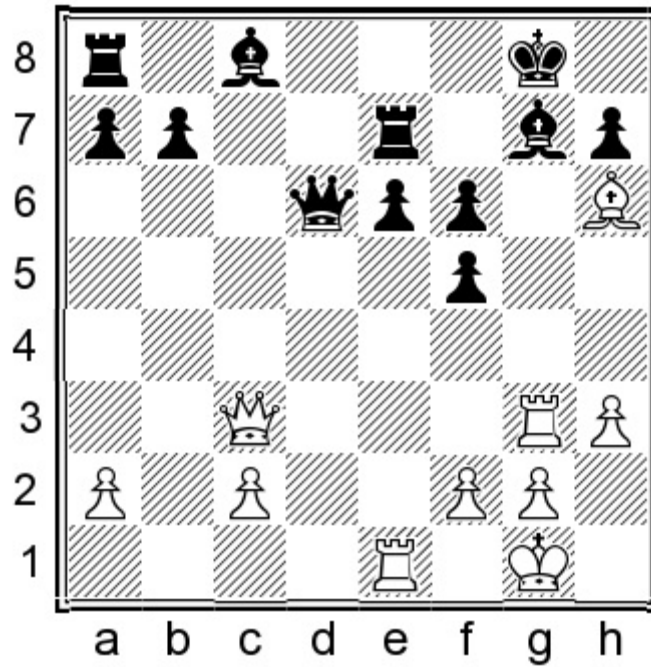
A) The game continued with 22...f4? 23. ♖xf6 fxg3 24. ♖xe6 gxf2+ 25. ♔f1 ♕f8 26. ♖xe8 ♕e6 27. ♖g7# 1-0 Panchenko, A – Gofshtein, L Leningrad 1976.

B) 22... ♔h8? 23. ♖xe6+-

22... ♖e7!! 23. ♕xe6

23. ♖xf6? ♖xg3! 24. ♖xe7 ♖g6+

23... fxe6



Position after: 23...fxe6

And now White achieves a decisive advantage with the extremely difficult...

24.♖ee3!!

24.♙xf6? ♗xg3 25.♙xe7 ♗g6 26.♙d8+ ♔f7 27.♙c7+=

24...e5

24...f4 25.♖d3 fxg3 26.♖xd6 gxf2+ 27.♔f1! ♕xh6 28.♙xf6 ♕f8 29.♖d8 ♖f7 30.♙g5+ ♔h8 31.♙c5+-

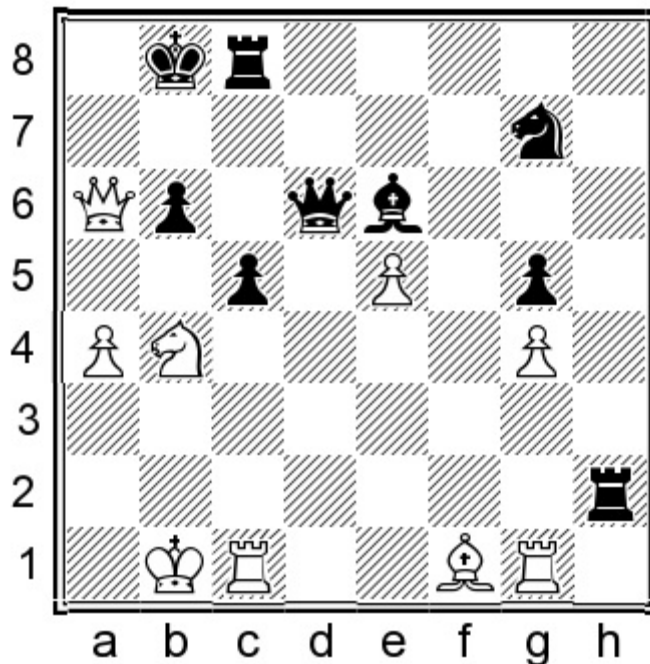
25.♖d3 ♗b6 26.♙a3!! ♖f7 27.♖xg7+ ♖xg7 28.♖g3 ♗c7

28...♖xg3 29.♙f8#

29.♖xg7+ ♗xg7 30.♕xg7 ♔xg7 31.♙e7+ ♔g6 32.♙e8+-

5

Morozevich, A. – Inarkiev, E.



Black to move

Black seems much worse. What move saves the game?

Show/Hide Solution

5

35...♖b2+!!

Black solves all his problems with this unexpected tactical trick. Instead, he played 35...♔d8? 36.♖g2! after which he was basically lost.

Now White must think about saving himself.

35...♖b2+!! 36.♔a1

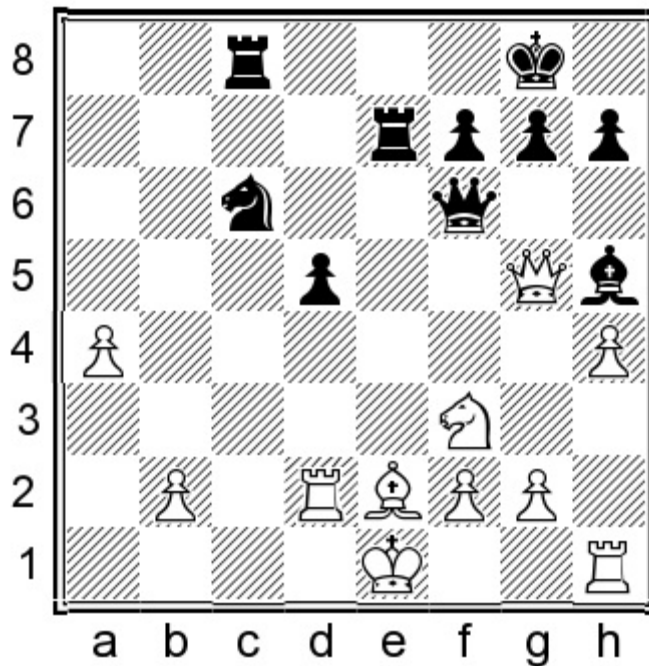
36.♔xb2? ♔d4+-+

36...♔d8! 37.♔g2 ♖xg2 38.♖gd1! ♖d2

38...♔c7? 39.♖d6+-

39.♖xd2 ♔xd2 40.♖xb6+ ♔a8 41.♖a6+=

6



Black to move

White seems to have an edge. What move changes things?

Show/Hide Solution

6

33...♘d4!!

If it wasn't for this brilliant unexpected shot, White's position after the queen exchange would have been clearly preferable. Now he is defenceless.

34.♔d1

A) 34.♖xd4 ♜xe2+ 35.♔xe2 ♝xd4 36.♖c1 ♝xb2+ 37.♔d1 ♜e8--+

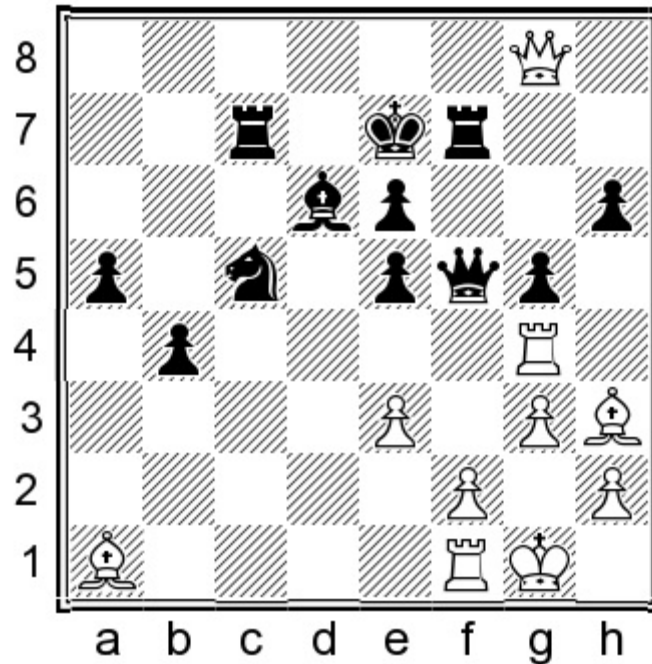
B) 34.♘xd4 ♜c1+ 35.♞d1 ♜xd1+ 36.♔xd1 ♝xd4+-+

C) 34.♝xf6 ♜c1+ 35.♞d1 ♜xe2+ 36.♔f1 ♜xd1+-+

34...♝c6 35.♞c4 ♞xf3+ 36.gxf3 ♝xc4--+

0-1 Belous,V (2581)-Dreev,A (2651) chess.com 2017.

7



White to move

White has two options in this incredibly complicated position: 34. ♖xb4 or 34. ♖f4. Try to assess both options and go for the better one!

Show/Hide Solution

7

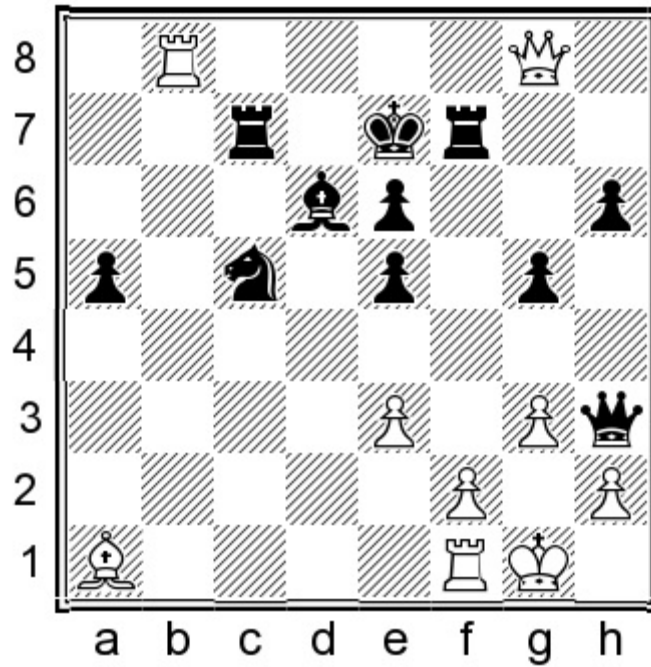
As the result of a rough time in the opening and middlegame White has ended up in a difficult situation. Black's extra, passed pawns allow him no time to dwell on the past. In order to survive, White must act coolly and decisively.

34. ♖f4?

Tempting, but not good!

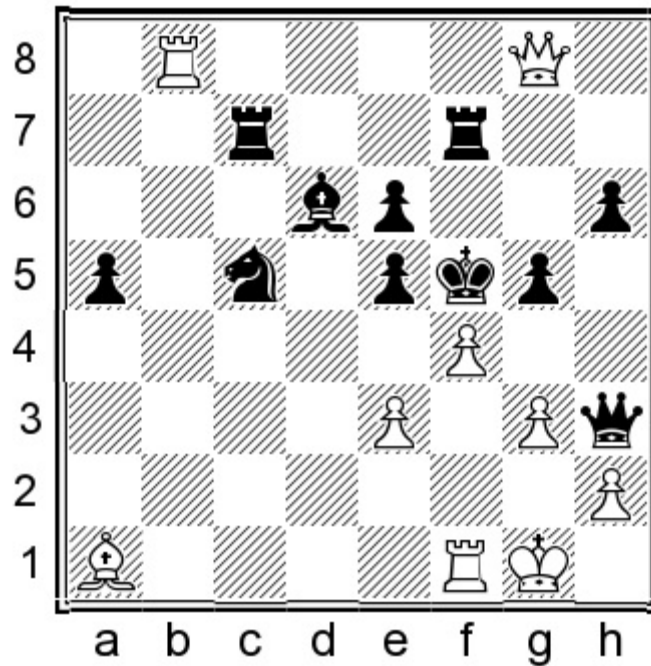
34. ♖xb4!! This may seem more like attacking than defending, but it would be more appropriate to call this move 'active protection'. 34... ♚xh3 This move could whip up a storm which ends peacefully with perfect play by Black.

It's not the best move, but I'm promoting it due to the beauty of the coming lines! (34... ♖f8! 35. ♚g7+ ♚f7 36. ♚xf7+ ♖xf7 37. ♖b5 a4 38. ♖a5 ♖ White can hope on fate being kind to him.) 35. ♖b8



Position after: 35. ♖b8

35... ♔f6 (Or 35... ♜d7 36. ♞e8+ ♔f6 37. f4 ♜g7! 38. fxe5+ ♔g6 39. ♞h8 ♜df7!? 40. ♞xf7 ♜xf7 41. ♞g8+ ♔f5 42. exd6 ♔g4 43. ♞d4+ ♔h5 44. ♞d1+ ♞g4 45. ♞xg4+ ♔xg4 46. ♔g2 ♔f5 47. ♞a8 ♜b7 with an equal endgame.) 36. f4 ♔f5!! =

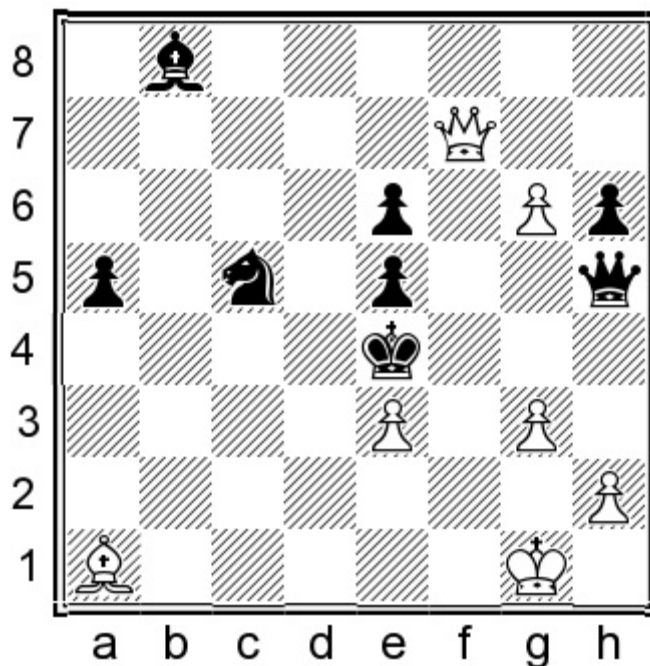


Position after: 36... ♔f5!! =

Who will help us except ourselves?

The black king clearly understands this. There are a lot of options and they all lead to a draw or equality.

Let's consider the main one: 37.fxg5+ (37.fxe5+ is perhaps safer: 37...♔g4 38.♖bb1!? ♖f3!? 39.exd6 ♖xg3+ 40.hxg3 ♗xg3+=) 37...♕e4 38.♖xf7 ♖xf7 39.♗xf7 ♗xb8 40.g6 ♗h5!



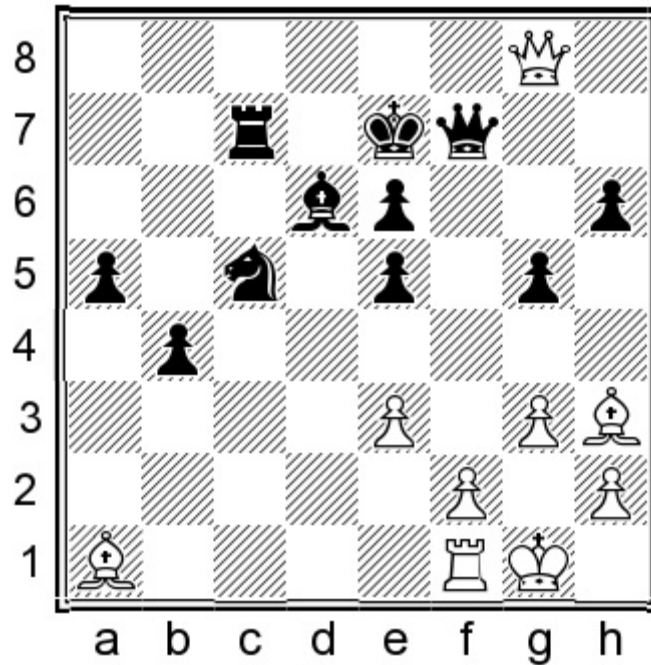
Position after: 40... ♗h5!

41.♗f1!! Only this amazing move back saves White. 41...♗xg6 42.♗g2+ (42.♗c4+ ♔f3) 42...♔xe3 (42...♔d3 43.♗f1+ ♔d2 44.♗f2+ ♔c1 45.♗f1+=) 43.♗f2+ ♔d3 44.♗f1+ ♔c2 45.♗e2+ ♔b3 46.♗b5+=

34.♖f4? ♗h7?!

A beautiful move would have deprived White of any hope: 34...♖f8!! 35.♗g7+ ♔e8 36.♗xh6 ♖h7-+
However, don't be too demanding; both players were obviously short of time, and the position hardly looks standard.

35.♖xf7+ ♗xf7



Position after: 35... ♖xf7

36. ♖a8!?

36. ♖h8!? ♖f8 37. ♖h7+ ♔e8 38. ♖c2 and although objectively Black's position is winning, practical chances of saving the game for White remain.

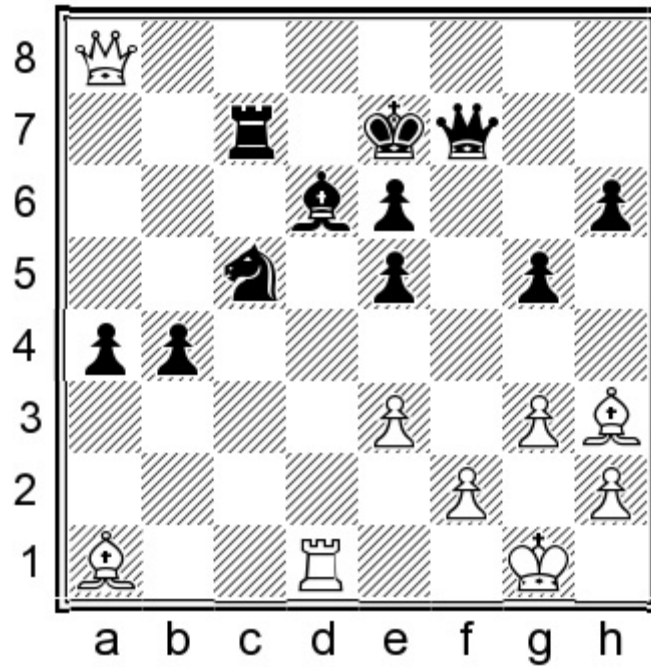
The text move is weaker, but as often happens in real life, the strongest moves do not always lead to the desired result.

36...a4?!

Who would have thought that this logical and natural move could seriously complicate Black's realisation of his advantage?

Black had to be generous, and, for the price of one extra pawn, exchange queens, turning the game into a technically winning endgame. 36... ♖e8! 37. ♖xa5 ♖a4 38. ♖xa4 (38. ♖b6 ♖b7-+) 38... ♗xa4 39. ♖b1 b3 40. ♙g2 ♖c2 41. ♙e4 ♖a2-+

37. ♖d1!



Position after: 37. ♖d1!

37... ♛h5?!

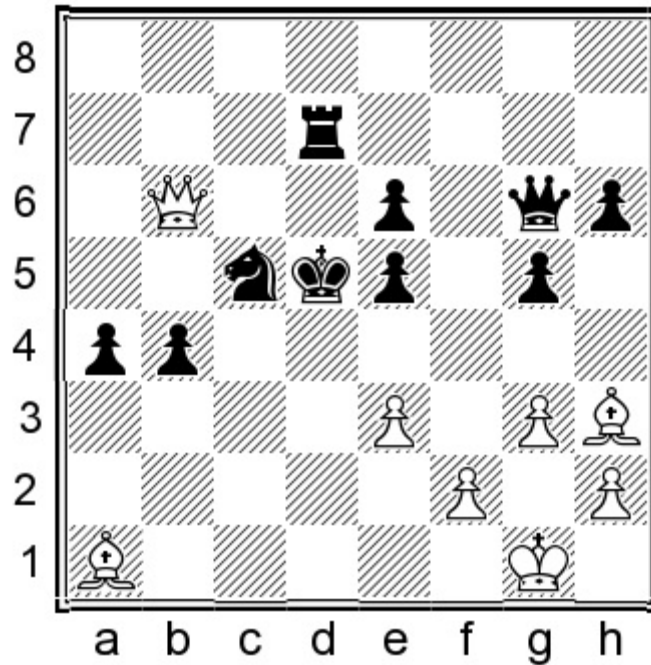
A mistake.

Technically, Black's position is still winning, but there is no certainty that it would be so easy to prove it in a real game.

Let's see what could happen after the other possibilities.

A) 37... ♛g6!? Here White keeps chances of salvation after 38. ♖xd6

A1) 38... ♔xd6 39. ♛d8+ ♖d7 (39... ♗d7? 40. ♕xe5+=) 40. ♛b6+ ♔d5



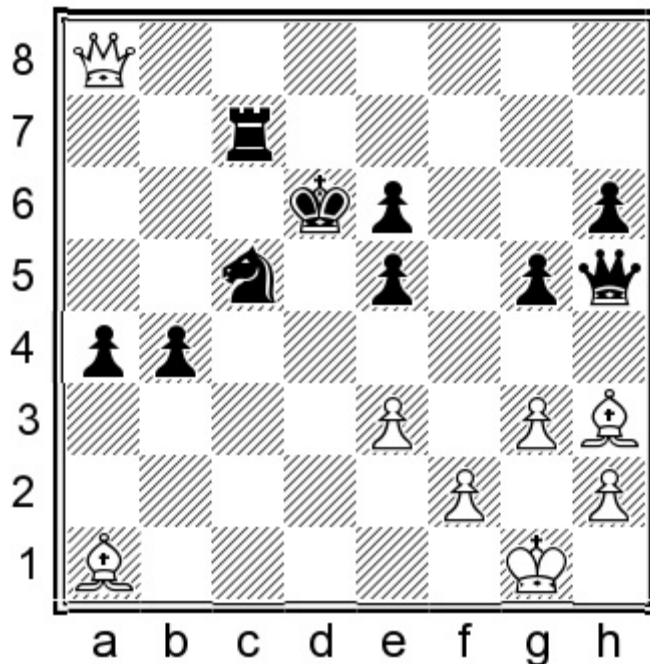
Position after: 40...♔d5

41.e4+! ♕c4 42.♙f1+ ♕b3 43.♚xc5 ♚xe4 44.♚c1 a3 (44...♚c2?? 45.♙c4+! ♚xc4 46.♚b2#) 45.♙b5 ♖d8!
46.f3! ♜c8 47.♚xc8 ♚e1+ 48.♔g2 ♕a2! 49.♚c2+ ♕xa1 50.♕h3! a2 51.♙c4 ♚b1 52.♚e2=

A2) 38...♚b1+ 39.♙f1 ♕xd6 40.♚d8+ ♖d7 41.♚f8+ ♕c6 (41...♕d5 42.e4+! isn't easy for Black.) 42.♚a8+
♕b6 43.♚b8+ ♜b7 44.♚xe5 ♚f5 45.♙d4+ ♖xd4 46.♚xd4+ ♚c5 47.♚d7 a3 48.♚xe6+ ♜d6 49.♙e2 ♕a5
50.♙d1 ♜b5 51.♙b3±

B) Probably stronger is 37...♖d7!? 38.♙f1 ♚h5 39.f3 (39.♖d2 ♚e8! 40.♚c6 ♜b3 41.♖d1 ♙c5 42.♚b1 ♖d5
43.♚xe8+ ♕xe8 44.♙b5+ ♕e7 45.♙xa4 ♜d2-+ 46.♖c1 b3 47.♕g2 ♙d6-+) 39...♚g6 (39...♚e8? 40.♚c6=)
40.♙b5 (40.e4 ♚e8 41.♚c6 ♜b3-+) 40...♚c2 41.♖f1 ♖d8 42.♚a7+ ♜d7! 43.♙xa4 ♚c5 44.♚b7 ♚xe3+
45.♕g2 ♚e2+ 46.♖f2 ♚d3 Black is winning, but practical chances for White remain.

38.♖xd6 ♕xd6

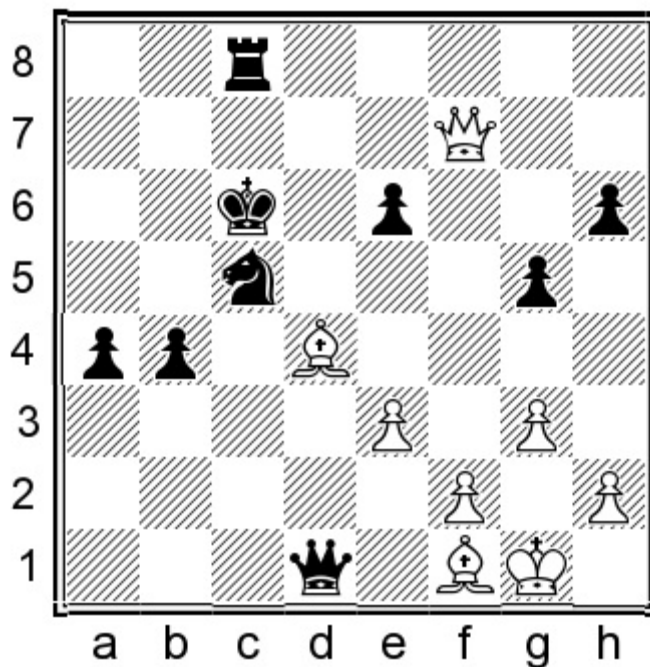


Position after: 38...♔xd6

39.♚f8+?

Another slip. The key point for White in deciding which check to choose had to be the d1-square. It was important to take control of it to block the way for the black queen. 39.♚d8+! ♔c6 (39...♖d7 40.♚b6+ ♔d5 41.♙xe6+ ♗xe6 42.e4+ ♔xe4 43.♚e3+ ♔d5 44.♚xe5+=; 39...♗d7? 40.♙xe5+=) 40.♙f1 White has full compensation since he has active pieces, the black queen cannot go to d1, and the black king's position is wide open.

39...♔d7 40.♙f1 ♚d1!-+ 41.♙xe5 ♖c8 42.♚f7+ ♔c6 43.♙d4



Position after: 43.♔d4

White's last chance – and it worked.

43...a3?

After the preventive 43...♖c1! Black is winning: 44.♔xc5 ♖xc5 45.♖xe6+ ♔c7–+.

44.♔xc5! ♔xc5 45.♖xe6=

Now White easily saves the game with the help of checks.

45...♞a8 46.♖c4+ ♔b6 47.♖xb4+ ♔c7 48.♖c5+ ♔b7

48...♔d7 49.♖b5+ Black cannot move away from the rook, and is therefore forced to accept a draw:

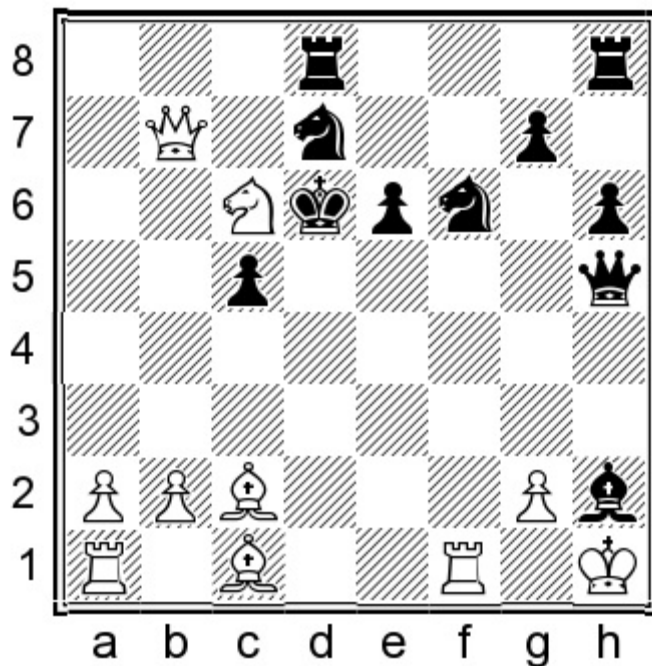
49...♔c7= (49...♔e6? 50.♖c6+; 49...♔e7? 50.♖b7+; 49...♔d6? 50.♖b6+ ♔e5 51.♖c7+ ♔f6 52.♖c6+).

49.♖b5+ ♔c7 50.♖c5+ ♔b7 51.♖b5+

½-½ Dreev, A (2662) – Deac, B (2501) Gjakova 2016.

8

A variation of the Meran



White to move

White is in danger – find the path to a good position!

Show/Hide Solution

This position could have arisen from Dreev – Filipenko in a variation of the Meran system. It seems that White is in a bad way here, however, an expected idea saves the day...

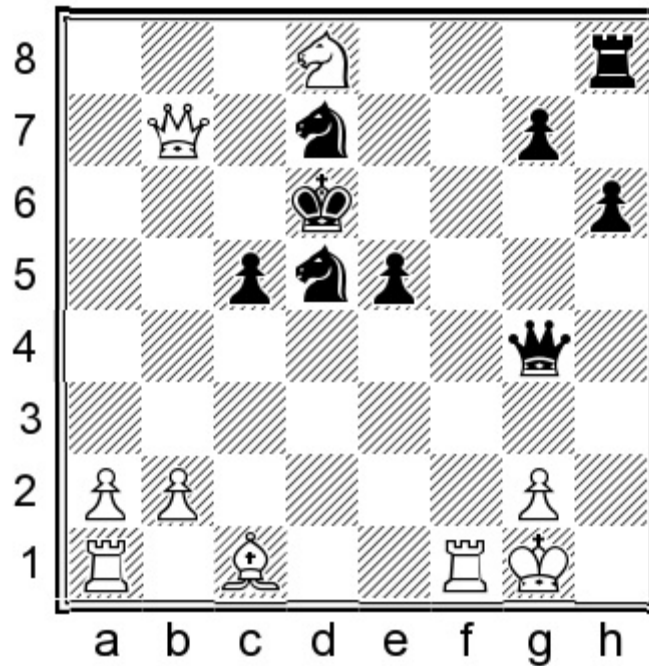
27.♙d1! ♖h4 28.♙g4!!

White can even fight for an advantage if Black does not find an extremely difficult move.

28...♙e5+

A) 28...♘xg4 29.♞d1#!

B) 28...♚xg4 29.♔xh2 ♘d5 Δ 30.♔g1 e5 (30...♞hf8 31.♞xf8 ♞xf8? 32.♚xd7+!+-) 31.♘xd8



Position after: 31. ♘xd8

31...♞xd8 (31...♚d4+? 32.♙e3! Wow! 32...♚xe3+ 33.♔h2 ♞xd8 34.♞ad1+-) 32.♙d2±

29.♙h3 ♞b8! 30.♞d1+ ♙d4 31.♘xb8 ♞xb8∞

Chapter 3

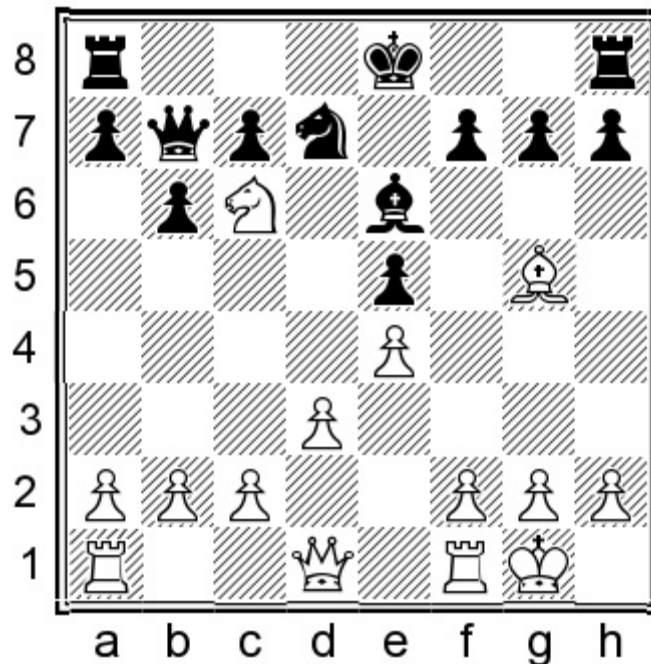
The Comparison

The comparison is one of the most important elements in chess. We will discuss, for example, comparisons of two similar continuations, which rook should occupy an open line, the choice of retreat square for a piece, whether or not to include an intermediate check etc.

If you compare chess and life, you'll be familiar with the feeling of uncertainty when faced with the choice between two options that seem similar. If you've ever used the subway in an unfamiliar city, and wondered which train to take when two were in the station at the same time without being sure of which direction each was going in, you'll get the idea/the picture/you'll know what I'm talking about.

You probably have the impression that choosing between similar continuations (unless there is something obvious) will be very difficult, but it's not. It's a skill you can train, as with all chess skills. First, you should be attentive to the little things; from them you can judge the more important ones. Reading this chapter will help you to succeed in this area.

Example 1
From Nisipeanu-Bacrot
Baden Baden 2017



White to move

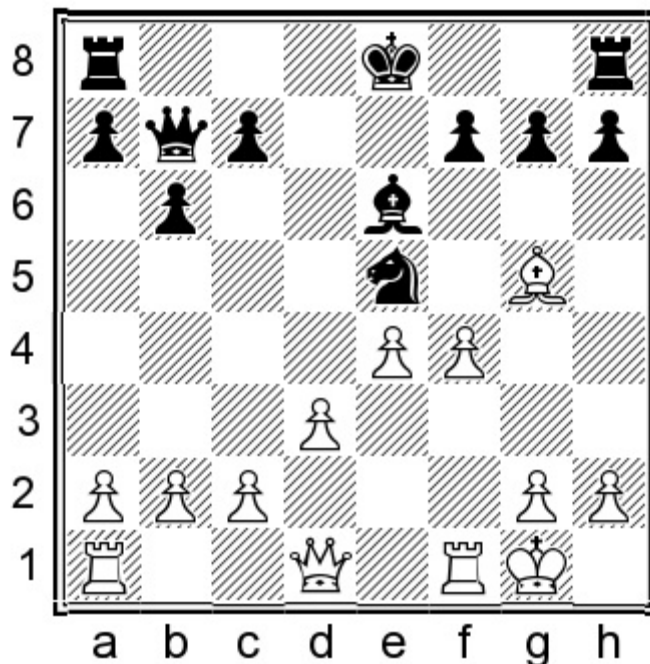
13. ♖xe5!?

A very interesting, though controversial, knight sacrifice which places the burden of choice on Black. There is approximate equality after banal continuations such as...

A) 13. ♖b4 c5 14. ♖d5 ♙xd5 15. exd5 ♚xd5=

B) Or 13.d4 ♖xc6 14.d5 ♙xd5 15.exd5 ♖d6=.

13.♗xe5!? ♗xe5 14.f4



Position after: 14.f4

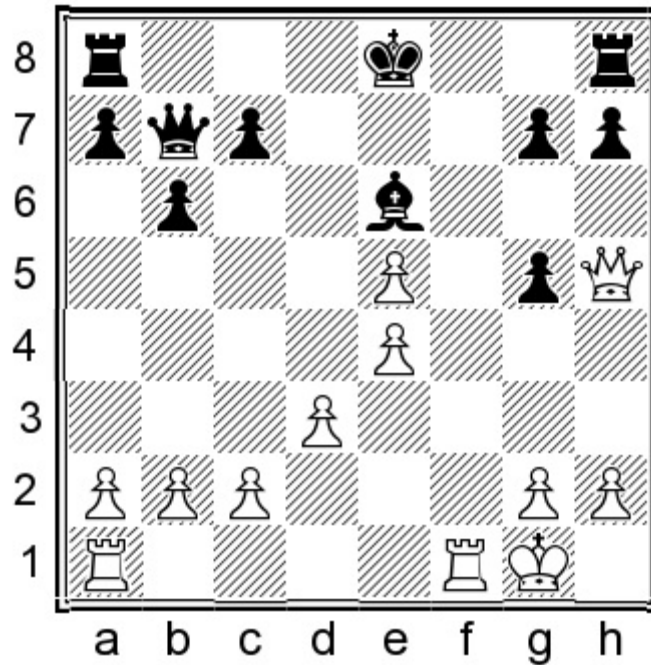
There is a large choice of moves. It is easy to see that they lead to very different positions.

Here I would like to draw your attention to an observation which cannot be called a rule, but which, I think, is quite useful from a practical point of view. I deliberately did not dwell on it in the introduction to the chapter so I could demonstrate it with a specific example.

It is that *chessplayers of a high level understand that it is not necessary to make only the strongest moves.* Sometimes it's more important to give your opponent the problem of choice; even if he doesn't make a mistake, he will probably invest a lot of time, strength and energy in choosing, which may affect the future course of the game. We are not talking about bluffing when our move can be refuted, even in a complicated way. I do not recommend bluffing in equal positions. A bluff is justified, in my opinion, only in bad positions. So, let us go back to the position which has arisen and try to imagine ourselves in Black's shoes.

14...h6!?

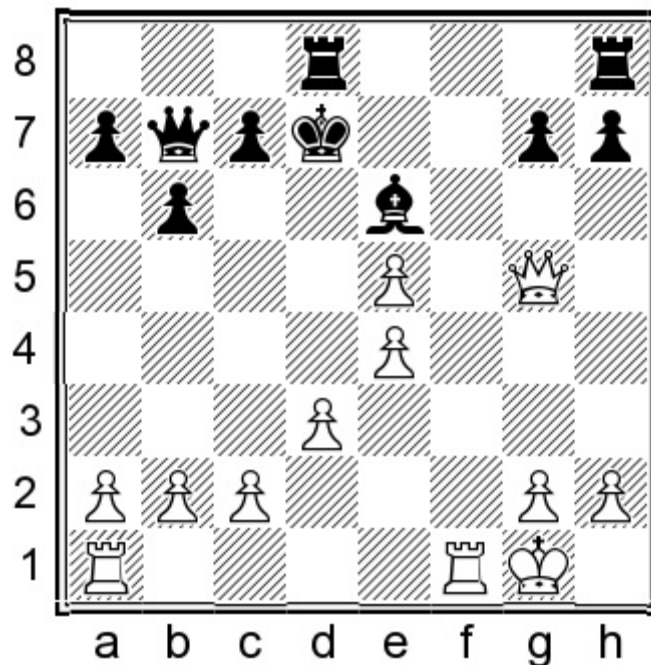
A) 14...f6 15.fxe5 fxg5 16.♖h5+



Position after: 16. ♕h5+

A1) 16...g6 17. ♖xg5 c5 Black tries to prevent the advance d3-d4 and at the same time expands the scope of his strongest piece. However, White has sufficient compensation: 18. ♖f6 ♔d7 19. c3! ♜ae8 20. ♞fe1! ♞ with a further d3-d4.

A2) 16...♔d7 17. ♖xg5 ♞ad8

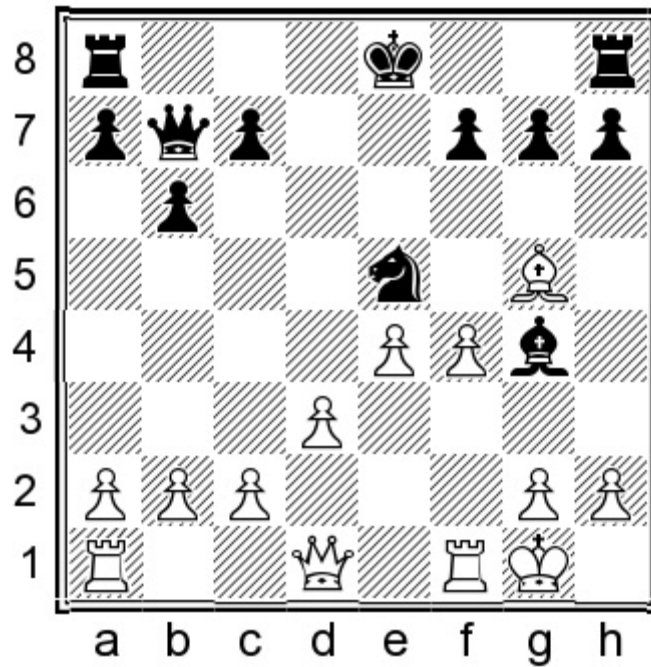


Position after: 17... ♞ad8

18. ♖e3!! A complicated move. White refuses the fourth pawn and, instead of taking on g7, ensures the advance of pawns in the centre, which is much more important. (18. ♖xg7+?! ♔c8 19. ♖h6 ♞c6⌘)

18...♞e8 (18...♟c8 19.d4 c6 20.c4! ♟xc4 21.♞fc1 ♟f7 22.d5±; 18...c5 19.b4!? cxb4 20.d4) 19.d4 c6 20.b3 ♟c8 21.c4 ♟g8 (21...♟f7 22.♞f4 ♟g6 23.d5) 22.a4 ♞c7 The position does not look simple. A possible continuation is 23.b4! ♟xc4 24.♞fc1 b5 25.axb5 cxb5 26.♞a6!?

B) 14...♟g4

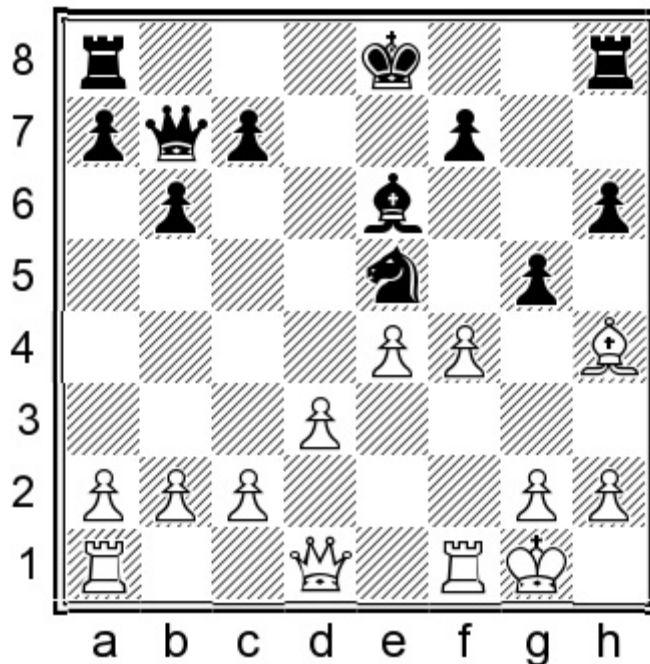


Position after: 14...♟g4

15.♞e1! The queen aims for g3. (15.♞d2? ♟d7 16.f5 f6 17.♟f4 ♟h5) 15...♟d7 16.♞g3 ♟h5 17.♞h3 f6 18.♞xh5+ g6 19.♞g4 fxg5 20.♞e6+ ♟d8 21.fxg5

C) 14...♟c6?! does not look attractive: 15.f5 ♟d7 16.♞h5 with an attack.

15.♟h4 g5



Position after: 15...g5

Obviously that was Black's idea when he chose 14... h6.

16.♖e1!

A brilliant and correct decision! The white bishop performs miracles of mobility.

A hard fight for a draw awaits White in the event of the natural 16.f5?! gxh4 17.fxe6 ♖c6 18.d4 0-0-0 19.exf7 ♖c4 20.f8=♗ ♖hx8 21.♖xf8 ♖xf8 22.dxe5 h3 23.♗g4+ ♔b7 24.♗xh3 ♖xc2.

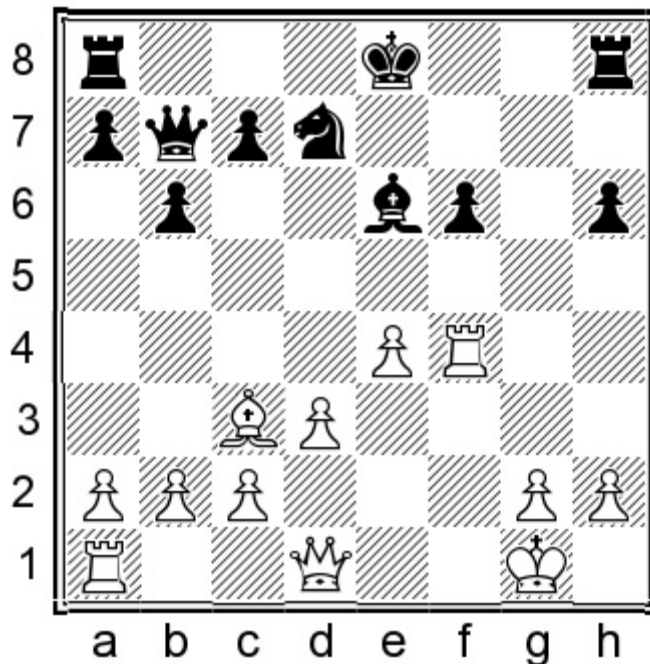
16...gxf4 17.♖c3 f6 18.♖xf4!?

18.♗h5+ could lead to approximate equality: 18...♔d7 (18...♖f7 19.♗f5 ♖g6! 20.♖xf6 ♖g8 21.d4) 19.d4 ♖xe4 20.dxe5 ♖hg8 21.♗f3=.

18...0-0-0?!

Black cannot withstand the tension of the struggle. His last move, although natural, gives the advantage to White.

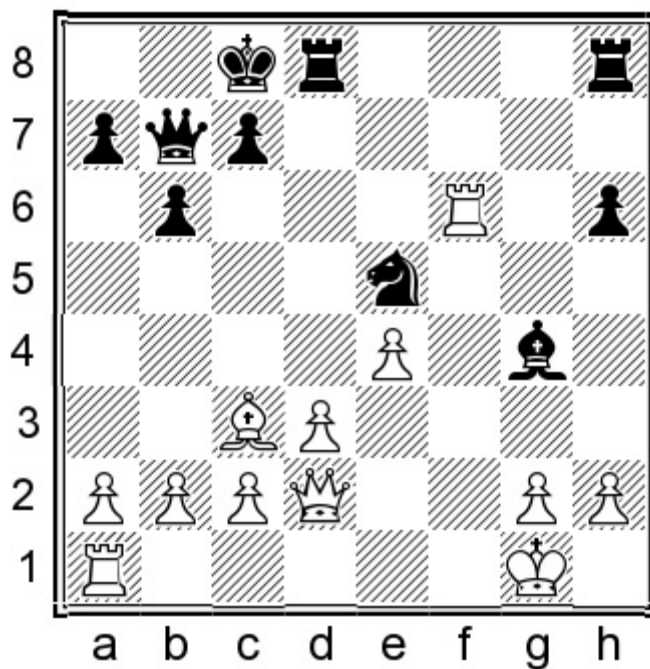
18...♔d7! was correct.



Position after: 18...♘d7!

This could lead to a repetition as well as to an unclear position, for example: 19.d4 (19.♚h5+ ♔f7 20.♚h3 ♚c6 21.♞af1 ♘e6 22.♚h5+ ♔f7 23.♚h3 ♘e6 24.♚h5+=) 19...0-0-0 20.d5 ♔f7 (20...♔g8 21.♔xf6 ♘xf6 22.♞xf6 ♔h7 23.♚g4+ ♖b8 24.♞xh6∞) 21.♔xf6 ♘xf6 22.♞xf6∞.

19.♞xf6 ♔g4 20.♚d2



Position after: 20.♚d2

20...♘d7?!

Another mistake.

It was important to keep the d7-square for the retreat of the bishop. After 20...♘c6! 21.♞xh6 (21.♞g6 ♞hg8 22.♚xh6 ♙d7 23.♞f1 b5±) 21...♞xh6 22.♚xh6 b5 White is better, but the main struggle after the release of the black queen is still to come.

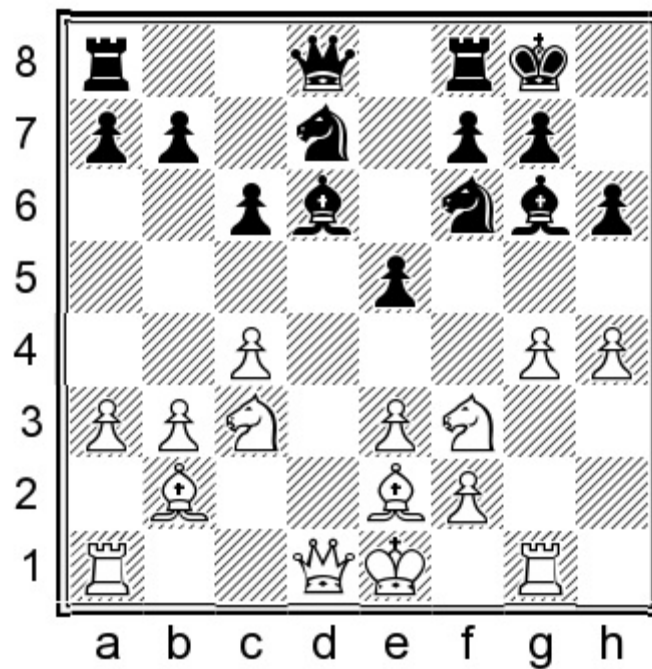
21.♞g6!

Now White wins a lot of useful tempos and achieves a decisive advantage due to attacks on the black bishop. 1-0 (33) Nisipeanu, L (2672) – Bacrot, E (2723) Baden Baden 2017.

Example 2

From Hou Yifan-Muzychuk

Gibraltar 2017



Black to move

14...♘c5

White clearly can't delay activity on the kingside and will play g4-g5, on which her previous play was obviously focused. But sometimes, even if you really want to play a move, it makes sense to wait a bit. It was necessary to compare an immediate g5 and a preliminary b4, then g5.

The game continued:

15.g5

Better is 15.b4 ♘e6 16.g5 hxg5 17.hxg5 ♘h7 18.♘h4 ♘hxg5 19.♘xg6 fxg6 20.c5 ♙c7 21.♚b3 with the initiative.

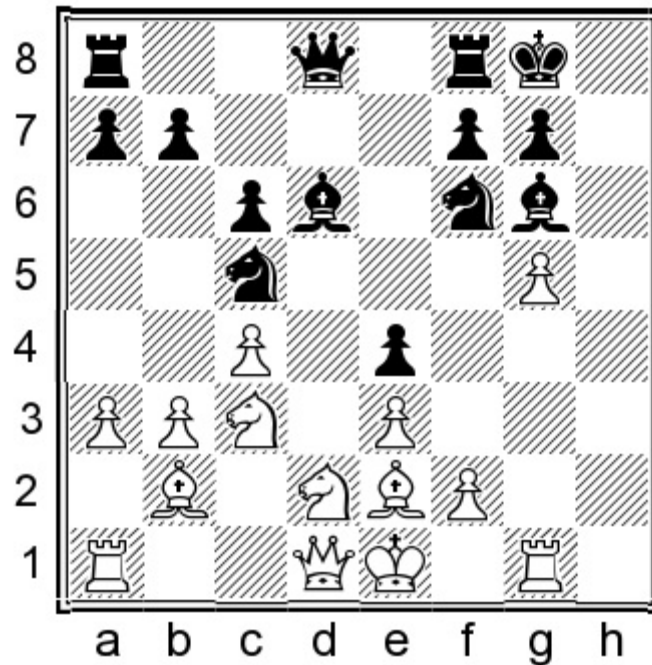
15...e4!

The timely counter-strike.

16. ♖d2

16. ♖d4? is a bad move which blots out the dark-squared bishop: 16...hxg5 17.hxg5 ♘h7 18.b4 ♖d3+ 19.♙xd3 exd3 20.♚g4 a5 21.b5 ♜e8.

16...hxg5 17.hxg5



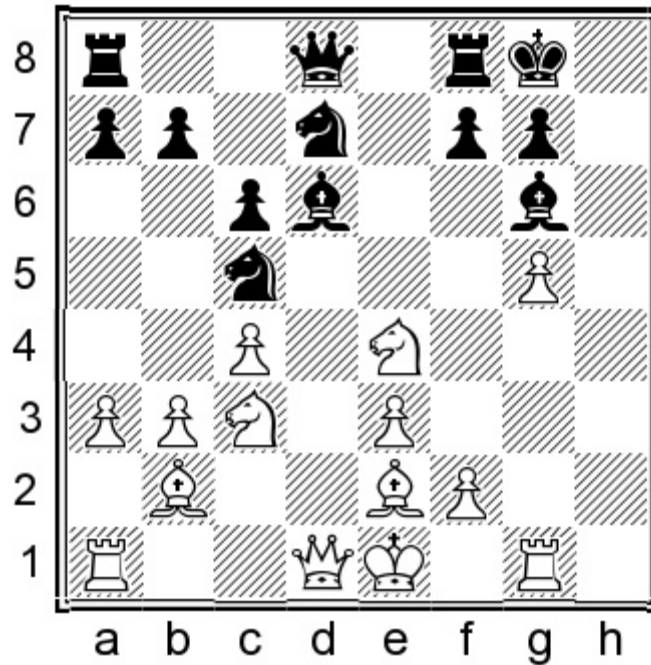
Position after: 17.hxg5

17... ♘h7?

And again the comparison! With the knight on d4 this move would have led to a white advantage, but now it is just bad because of the coming tactical strike.

A) The passive 17... ♖e8 not only loses the initiative but hands it to White after 18.b4 ♖d3+ 19.♙xd3 exd3 20.c5 ♙e7 21.♚g4.

B) The right choice is 17... ♖fd7! 18.♖dxe4



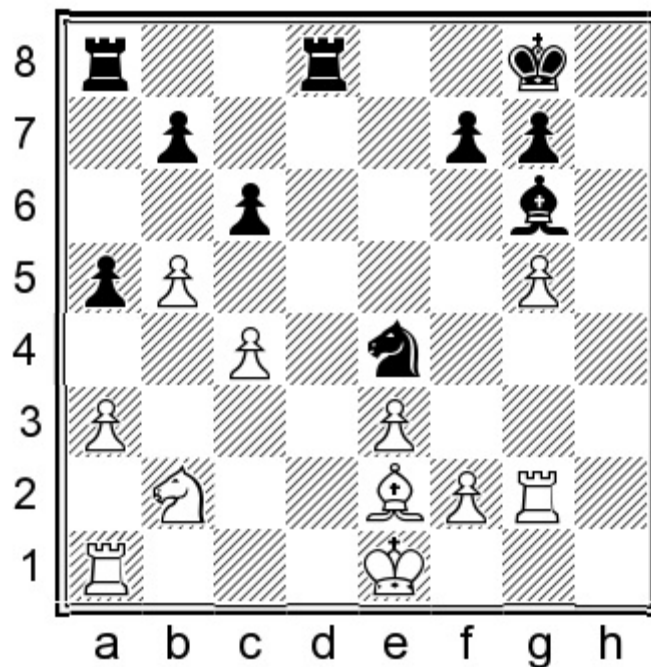
Position after: 18. ♖dxe4

B1) 18... ♗e5 This unsophisticated move also provides Black's compensation for the pawn. 19. ♘xc5 ♘xc5 20. b4 ♘e4 21. ♖xd8 ♜fxd8 22. ♘a4 ♗xb2 23. ♘xb2 a5 24. b5 ♘c5 (24... ♜ac8!?)

B2) Here I think Black should ask White to declare his intentions with 18... ♗h2!?

B2.1) The most natural response is inaccurate: 19. ♜h1 ♗e5. White cannot derive any benefit from the rook on the open file, but the pawn on g5 has clearly been left without protection. After the almost forced moves 20. ♘xc5 ♘xc5 21. b4 ♘e4 22. ♖xd8 ♜fxd8 23. ♘a4 ♗xb2 24. ♘xb2 ♘xg5 it falls.

B2.2) 19. ♘xc5 ♘xc5 20. ♜g2 ♗e5 21. b4 ♘e4 22. ♖xd8 ♜fxd8 23. ♘a4 ♗xb2 24. ♘xb2 a5 25. b5

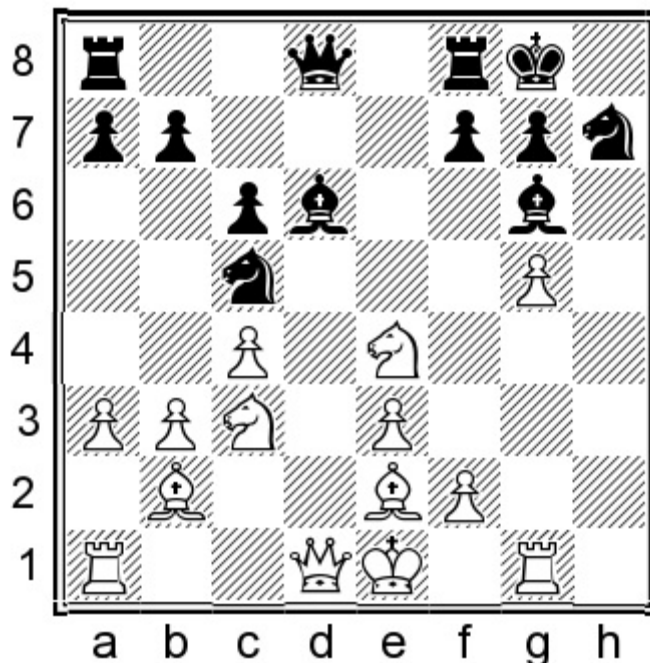


Position after: 25.b5

As can be seen from the previous variation, Black can get this position with the white rook on g1 or g2.

In this case, there is no obvious difference, so the method of comparison does not work here. Apparently in such cases it is necessary to trust your intuition, but, unfortunately, our intuition may fail us. However, whether the rook is on g1 or g2, Black has clear compensation for the pawn due to the activity of her pieces: 25...♞c5.

18.♞dx4!



Position after: 18.♞dx4!

18...♞xe4 19.♞xe4 ♕e7

A) 19...♕xe4 20.♞d4+-

B) 19...♕h2 20.♞g4 ♕xe4 21.♞xd8 ♞axd8 22.♞xe4 ♞xg5 23.♞e7±

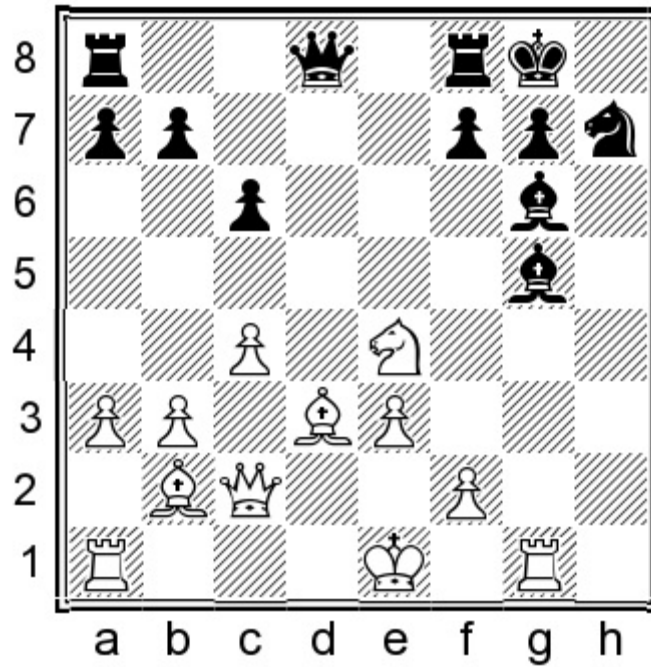
20.♕d3

20.♞c2!?

20...♕xg5

20...♞xg5 21.♞xg5 ♕xg5 22.♕xg6 fxg6 23.♞xd8 ♕xd8 24.♞xg6±

21.♞c2!+-



Position after: 21. ♖c2!+-

White's position is winning. Out of respect for the Women's World Champion we will follow the game till the end.

21... ♜e7

21... ♙xe4 22. ♙xe4 f5 23. ♙d3+- (23. ♙xf5?? ♜a5+-+)

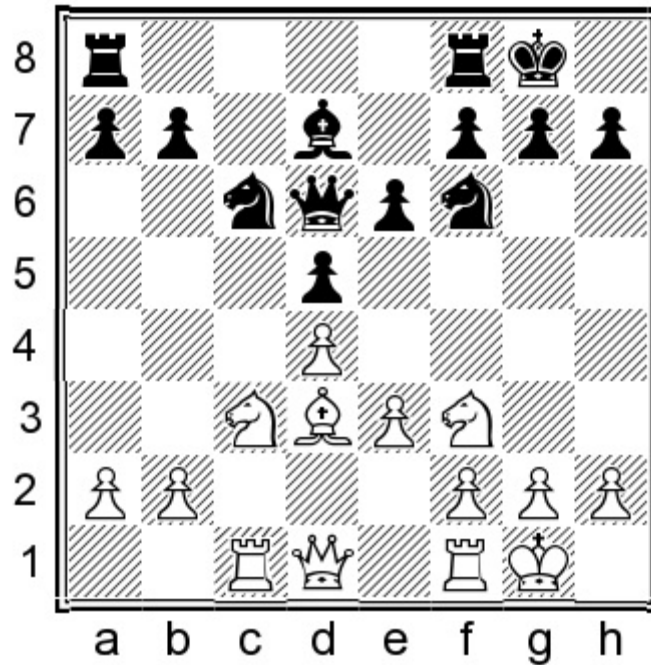
22. ♘xg5 ♘xg5 23. ♙xg6 ♘f3+ 24. ♔e2 ♘xg1+ 25. ♖xg1 fxg6 26. ♜xg6 ♜f7 27. ♖h1 ♜e8 28. ♜h7+ ♔f8
29. ♖h4 ♜c8 30. ♖e4

1-0 Hou Yifan (2651) – Muzychuk, M (2546) Gibraltar 2017.

Example 3

From Nguyen-Dreev

Jakarta 2013



Black to move

It is obvious that Black needs to put a rook on the open file, but which one? Playing intuitively can lead to a mistake.

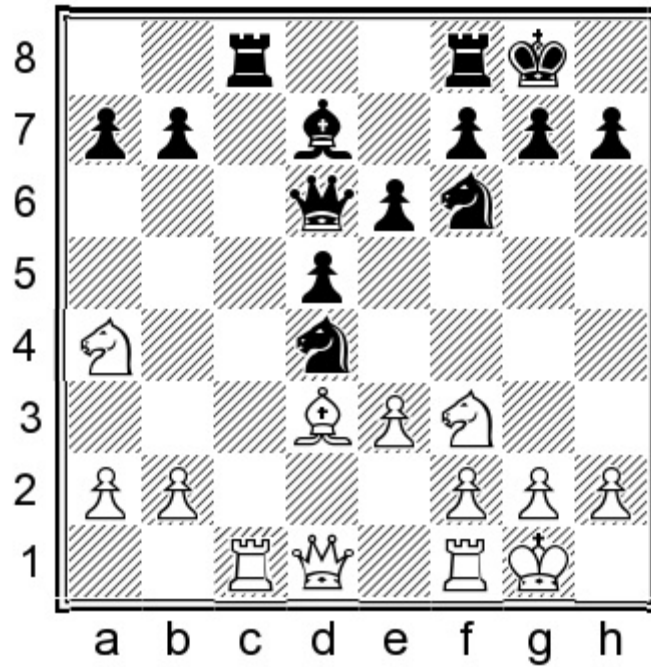
To help us there is the standard question which can be applied to many positions: “What does my opponent want to do?”. Here he wants to play ♞c3-a4-c5 , which will make his position more active. If Black tries to prevent this plan by $\dots\text{b7-b6}$, he will weaken the a6-square. Taking all of these considerations into account it was necessary to play...

11...♖ac8!

Of course, not the mistake $11...\text{♖fc8?}$. Black always has to reckon with the manoeuvre ♞c3-a4-c5 (see later why). $12.\text{a3!?}$ (In case of the immediate $12.\text{♞a4}$ Black has the answer $12...\text{♞b4=}$.) $12...\text{h6!?}$ $13.\text{♞a4}\uparrow$

11...♖ac8! 12.♙d2

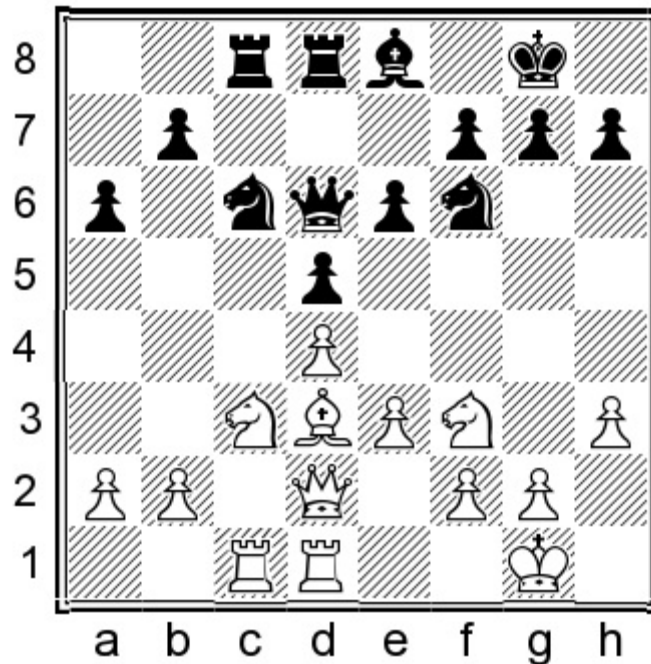
After this move White can forget about ♞a4 as it is now impossible: $12.\text{♞a4?!}$ ♞xd4!



Position after: 12... Nxd4!

Now it is clear why the a8-rook went to c8: White does not have the intermediate check 13. Rxc8+. 13. Qxh7+ (13. exd4 Rxc1 14. Wxc1 Qxa4+) 13... Qxh7 14. Wxd4 Qxa4 15. Wxa4 a6=

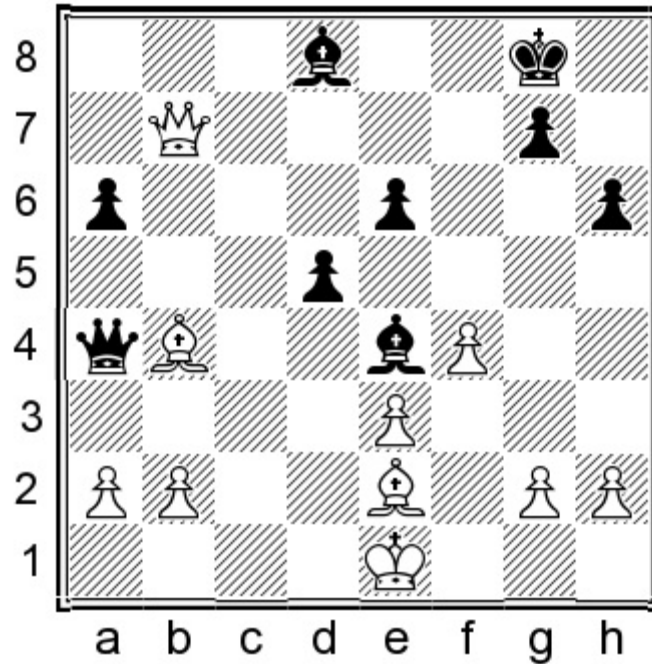
12... Rfd8 13. Rfd1 Qe8 14. h3 a6=



Position after: 14... a6=

The position is equal. 0-1 (81) Nguyen, D (2486) – Dreev, A (2679) Indonesia 2013. Note 15. Qa4 is still impossible because of 15... Nxd4.

Example 4
From Wang-Malakhov
China 2016



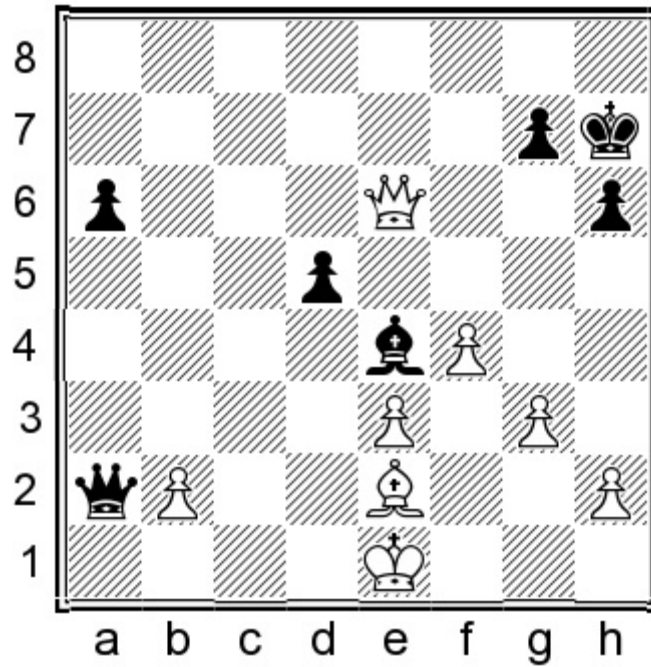
Black to move

It is obvious that Black should put the bishop on f6, but does he need to give a preliminary check on h4 or not?!

27...♖h4+!

It turns out that it is important to entice the white pawn from g2, so that after...

28.g3 ♖f6 29.♗e7 ♖xe7 30.♙xe7 ♚xa2 31.♙xe6+ ♔h7



Position after: 31...♔h7

32.♙xa6

32.♙e5 ♜b1+ 33.♔f2 ♜h1 34.f5 ♜xh2+=

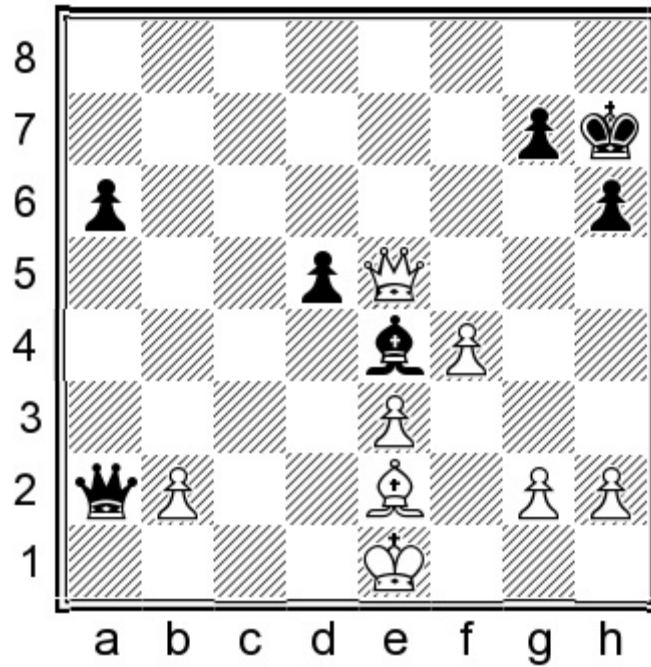
32...♜b1+ 33.♔f2

33.♔d1 ♜xb2 34.♙e2 ♜a1 35.♔f2 ♜c3=

33...♜h1! =

...the queen attacks the h2-pawn with check!

In the game Black proceeded without it and this is what happened: 27...♔f6 28.♔e7! ♔xe7 29.♙xe7 ♜xa2 30.♙xe6+ ♔h8 31.♙e8+ ♔h7 32.♙e5!

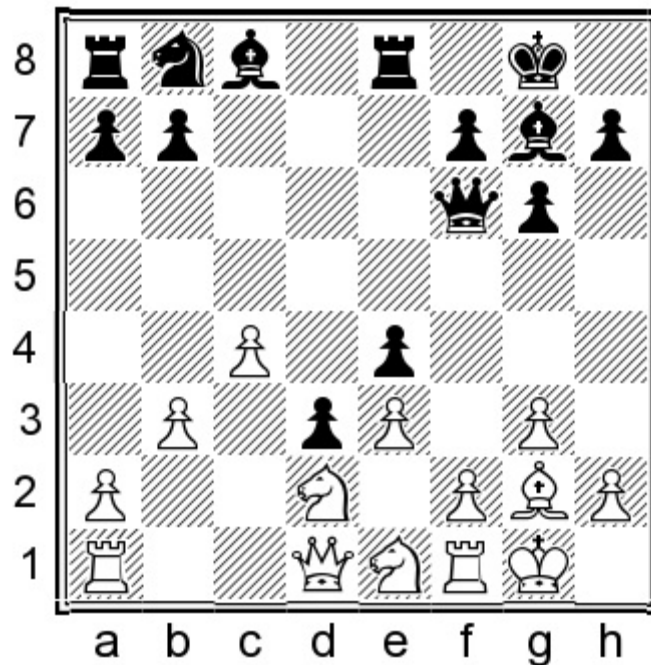


Position after: 32. ♔e5!

Now the transfer of the queen to h1 does not give Black anything.

32... ♚b1+ (The game continued with 32... ♙xg2 33. ♙d3+ ♙e4 34. ♙xe4+ dx4 35. ♚xe4+± and White remains with an extra pawn. ½-½ (70) Wang Hao (2732) – Malakhov, V (2695) China 2016) 33. ♔f2 ♚h1 34. ♙f3±

Example 5
From Melkumyan-Hebden
London 2017



White to move

The a1-rook is hanging. Obviously the choice is limited to two moves. From the point of view of ‘chess laws’ the move ♖c1 looks more logical, in order, for example, to support a future c4-c5.

However, for White it is much more important to cut the Gordian knot on the e4-square, and so he needs to determine the position of the rook based only on this.

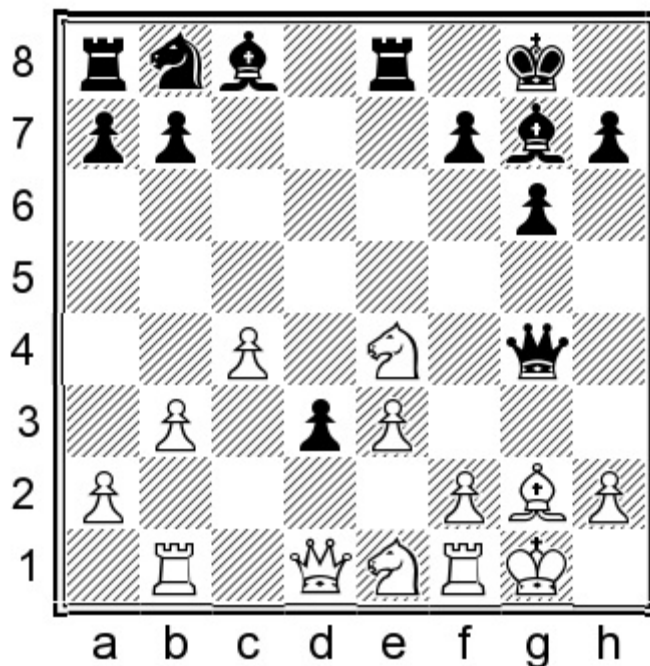
15.♖b1!!

15.♖c1 ♕f5! (15...♙f5? 16.g4±) 16.g4?! No use here. (16.f3 ♖c5±) 16...♗xg4 17.♘xe4? (♙ 17.♗xg4 ♙xg4 18.♙xe4 ♘c6±) 17...♖xe4 18.f3 ♖d7! 19.fxe4 d2–+ and the rook finds itself forked.

15.♖b1!! ♕f5 16.g4!

The game continued with 16.f3?! exf3± 1-0 (37) Melkumyan, H (2633) – Hebden, M (2445) London 2017.

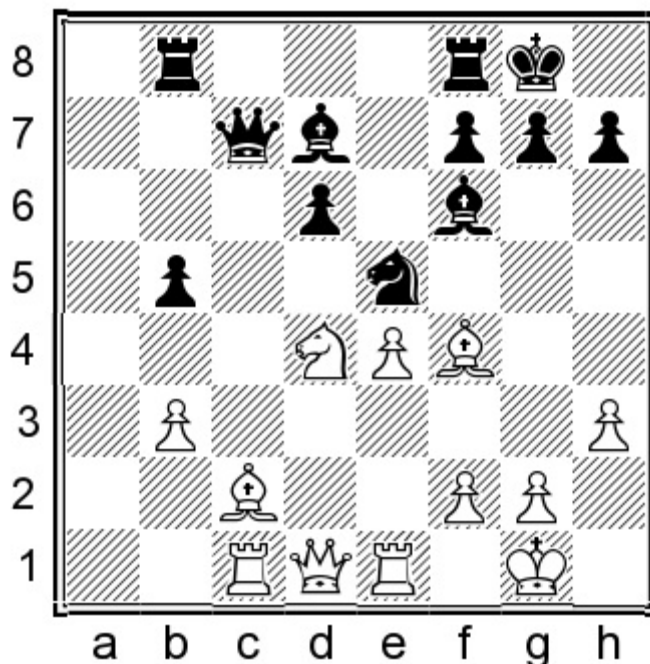
16...♗xg4 17.♘xe4



Position after: 17.♘xe4

White’s position is preferable since with the rook on b1 17...♖xe4 is bad because of 18.f3.

Example 6
From Yip-Assaubayeva
Saint Louis 2017



Black to move

It would be nice for the black rooks to show what they can do, and the best place to do so is on the c-file, but which rook to move there!?

To answer this question we must first consider White's most active responses. Of course, the move ♞f5 comes to mind first. This move is dangerous for Black. After the exchange of the bishop for the knight White seriously activates his bishop by transferring it to d5. In such cases, the doubled pawns are not enough compensation for White's activity.

22...♖bc8!

In the game Black chose the f8-rook and after 22...♖fc8 23.♞f5! (23.♙e3 ♚a5 24.f4 ♝c6∞ 0-1 (46) Yip, C (2261) – Assaubayeva, B (2386) Saint Louis 2017) 23...♙xf5 24.exf5 ♚b6 25.♙e4 ♖xc1 26.♚xc1 ♚d4 27.♚d1± had a hard struggle for half a point.

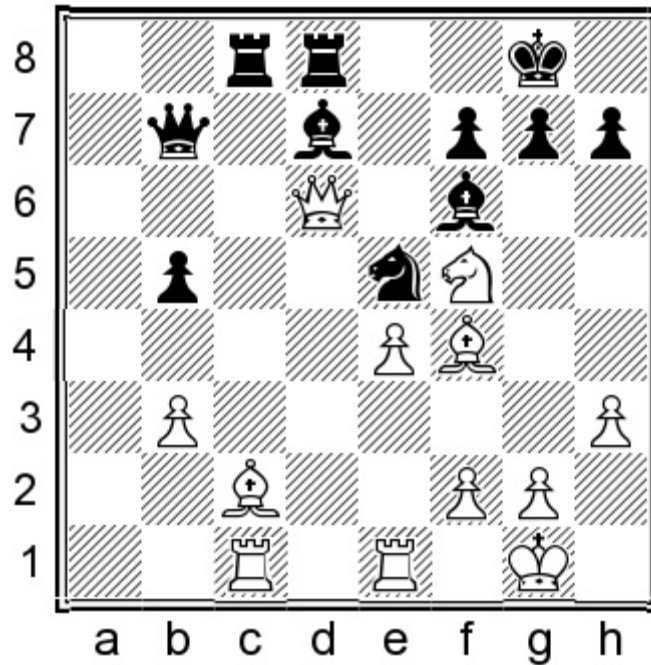
22...♖bc8! 23.♞f5

23.♚e2 ♝g6 24.♙e3 ♚b7 25.♖ed1 ♖fe8∞

23...♖fd8!

This is the thing! Black does not have to take the knight and can think about it when the time comes. The capture on d6 is not dangerous, for example:

24.♚xd6 ♚b7!



Position after: 24... ♖b7!

25. ♗e7+

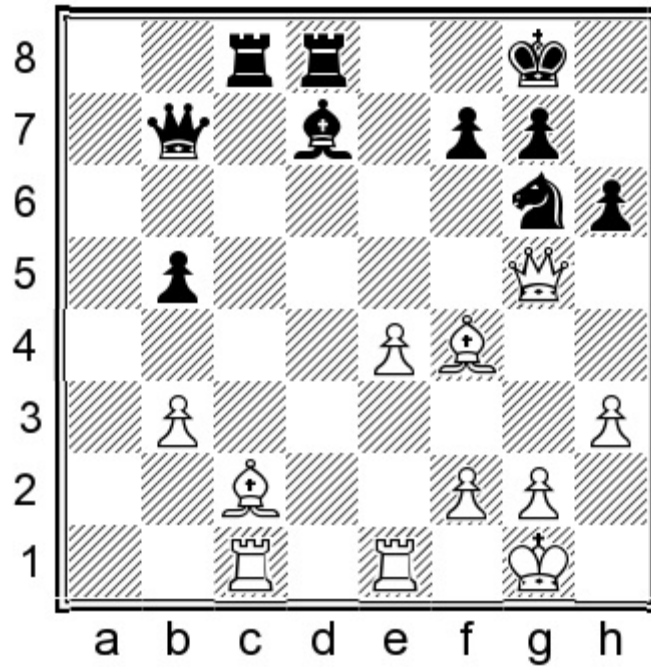
A) 25. ♖a3 b4 26. ♖a2 ♗e6 Because of the extremely bad position of the white queen, Black has full compensation for the pawn, e.g. 27. ♖b1 (27. ♗e3 ♗c6) 27...g6 28. ♗e3 ♗c6 29. ♗d5 ♗xd5 30. exd5 ♗d4 31. ♗e4 (31. d6 ♖d5!?) 31...♞c3 32. d6 ♖b5.

B) 25. ♖b4 ♗c6! (But not 25... ♗xf5? 26. exf5 ♞d4 because of 27. ♗e4!±.)

25... ♗xe7 26. ♖xe7

26. ♖xe5? ♗a3

26... ♗g6 27. ♖g5 h6



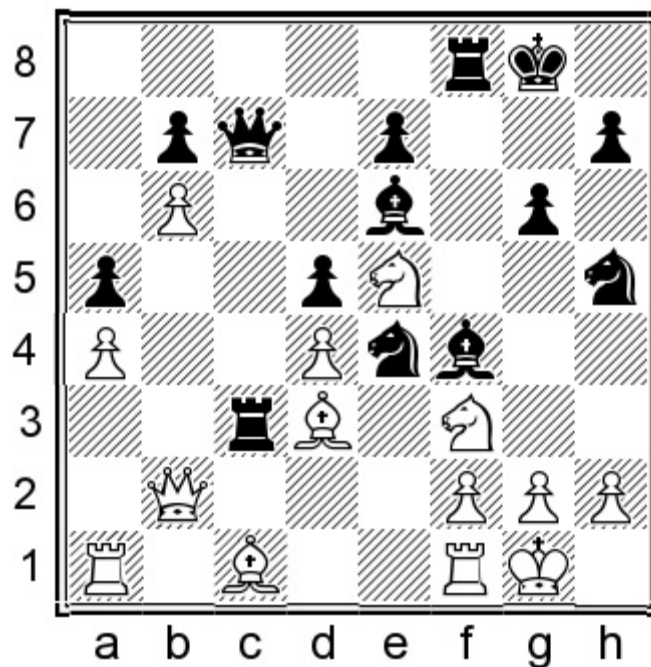
Position after: 27...h6

It is useful to create a luft before taking on f4.

28. ♖g3 ♗xf4 29. ♖xf4 ♘e6

Clearly with full compensation for the pawn: the white pawn on b3 is weak, and the black heavy pieces are clearly more active.

Example 7
From Dautov-Markgraf
Schwäbisch Hall 2017



Black to move

20...♚c8?

It is psychologically difficult to leave the rook, which Black recently supported with ...♚c7, undefended.

20...♚d6 is correct. It turns out that the rook on c3 is not hanging; it is a psychological illusion. 21.♙xe4 (21.♙xf4? ♜xf4 22.♙xe4 dxe4 23.♚xc3?? ♜e2+-+) 21...♞xc1 22.♙d3 ♞xa1 23.♞xa1 ♜f6∞

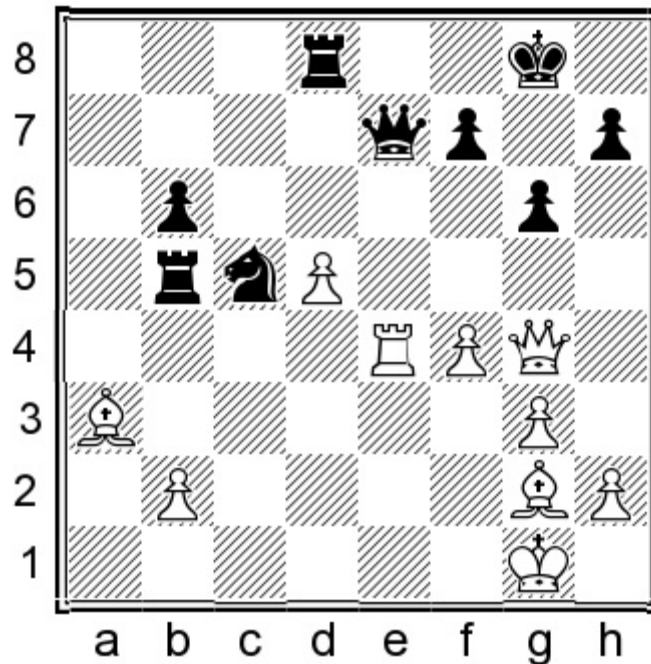
20...♚c8? 21.♙e3!

After this move, with the simple idea of playing either rook to c1 and grabbing the file, Black's position becomes critical.

21...♙xe5 22.♜xe5 ♜f4 23.♙xe4 dxe4 24.♙xf4 ♞xf4 25.♞ac1+-

½-½ (54) Dautov, R (2596) – Markgraf, A (2513) Schwäbisch Hall 2017.

Example 8
From Dreev-Movsesian
Riyadh 2017



Black to move

Where to retreat the queen? Black has a material advantage, but if he shilly-shallies, the passed pawn and two bishops may prove sufficient compensation. Probably that is why Black chose the most active retreat of the queen:

36...♚f6?!

Correct is 36...♚c7! and now, after the best reply 37.♞c4 (37.♞e5 is impossible due to 37...♜d3+-; 37.♞e3

♖b3 37...♖b3 38.♔d1 ♖e3 Black is clearly better.

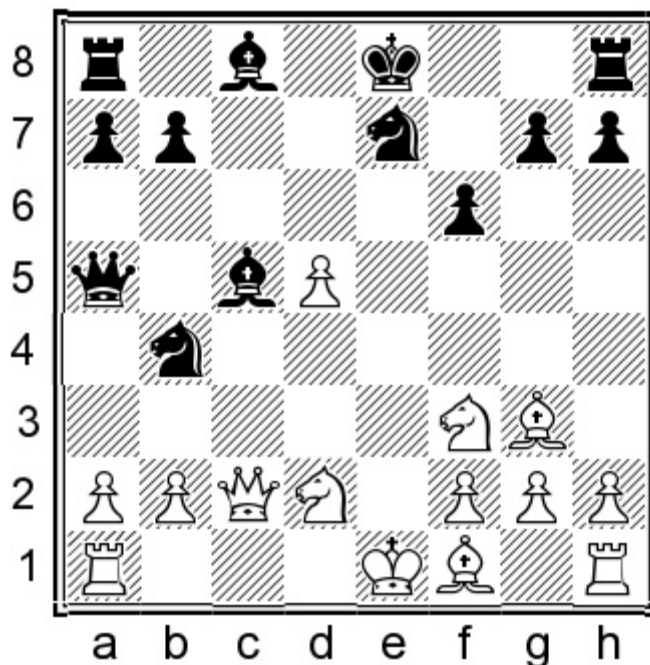
36...♗f6?! 37.♖e5! ♖a5

And now it turned out that Black could not use his most important resource: 37...♘d3? 38.♗e2! ♘xe5 39.fxe5 with advantage to White.

38.♗e2

White has established cooperation between his pieces and has full compensation for the exchange: 1-0 (54) Dreev, A (2653) – Movsesian, S (2647) Riyadh 2017.

Example 9
From Dreev-Grischuk
Ubeda 1999

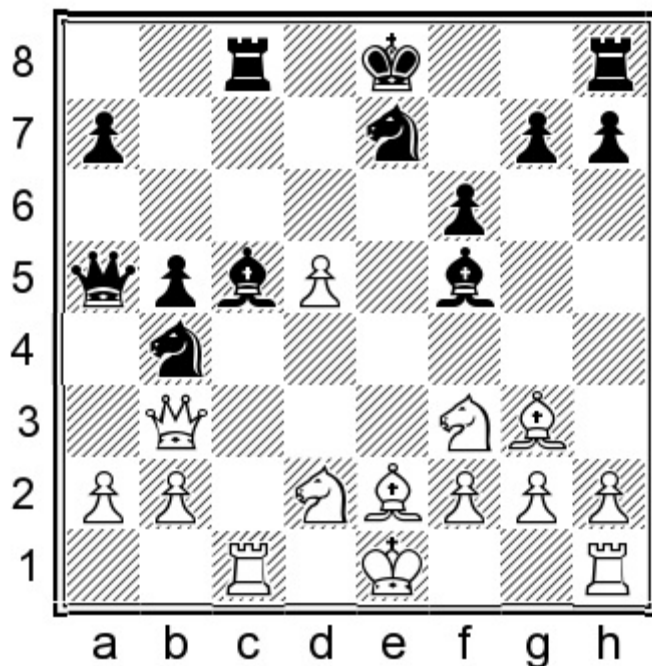


White to move

It is clear that White has a choice between retreating the queen to b3 or c4. Other moves are unattractive at least because of ...♗c8-f5. For this reason, as I remember, I rejected 13.♗b3.

13.♗c4

13.♗b3! ♗f5 14.♖c1 ♖c8 It is obvious that White has to develop and castle, otherwise it will soon be over. The comparison comes to our aid here. 15.♗c4! White provokes Black to play actively. (15.♗e2 would be followed by the prosaic 15...♗xa2 16.0-0 ♗xb3 17.♘xb3 ♗b6± and there is nothing substantial in the position.) 15...b5 and only now 16.♗e2.



Position after: 16. ♕e2

The difference is obvious: White does not care about the queen taking on a2 because the b5-pawn is under attack now, and if Black protects it with 16...a6 then White has several ways to achieve the advantage, for example 17.0-0 (17.d6!? ♖ed5 18.0-0 ♙xa2 19.♘h4!±) 17...♗bxd5 (17...♙xa2? 18.♙xc5+–) 18.♕d3 ♕xd3 19.♙xd3 0-0 20.♘e4±

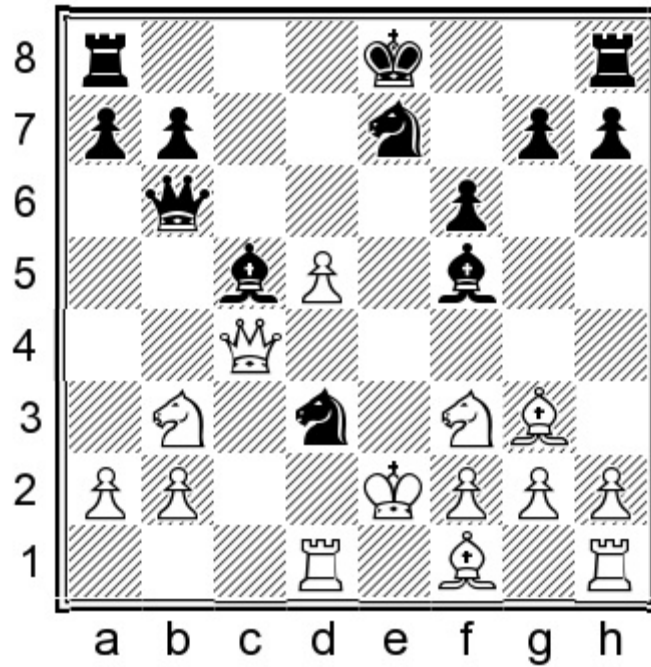
13. ♙c4 ♕f5!

13...♕d7? 14.♕e2 ♖c8 15.0-0 ♕xf2+ 16.♙xf2 ♖xc4 17.♘xc4 ♙d8 18.♘d6+ ♔f8 19.♘e5+– 1-0 (31) Dreev, A (2645) – Grischuk, A (2490) Ubeda 1999.

14. ♘b3

Probably the reason why Black didn't play 13...♘f5, but this leads to a very unclear game. There is no need to fear the exchange of queens: 14.♙b5+ ♙xb5 15.♕xb5+ ♕d7 16.♕xd7+ ♔xd7 White cannot exploit the fact that the black king is still in the centre. 17.♘e4 ♖ac8 18.0-0 ♘f5=

14...♘d3+ 15.♔e2 ♙b6 16.♙d1



Position after: 16. ♖d1

16... ♗xf2!

16... ♗xf2?! 17. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 18. ♗xc5 ♗xh1 19. ♗c7 b6 20. ♗a6±

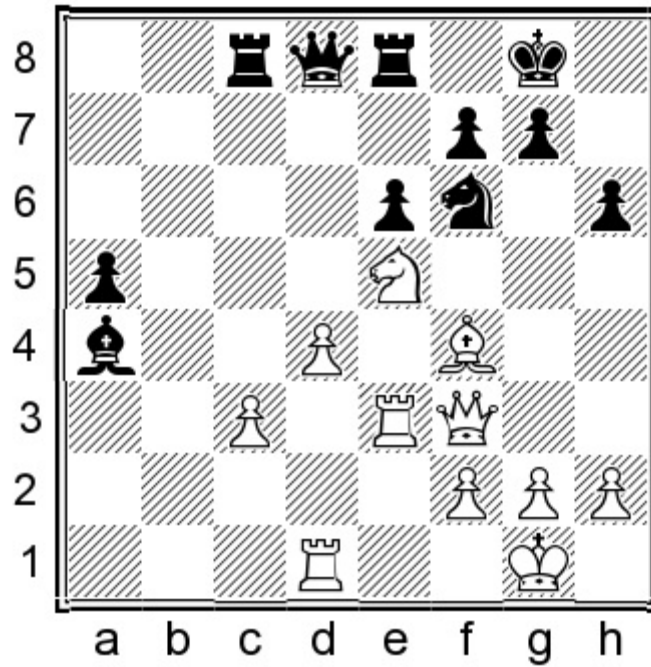
17. ♖xd3 ♗xd3+ 18. ♖xd3 ♗xg3 19. hxg3 0-0-0!

The outcome of the fight is unclear.

Example 10

From Carlsen-Nepomniachtchi

London 2017



White to move

As you can see Black has just attacked the white rook and White has to choose a place for its retreat. Of course, you always want to answer a blow with a blow and the game continued with...

27. ♖a1

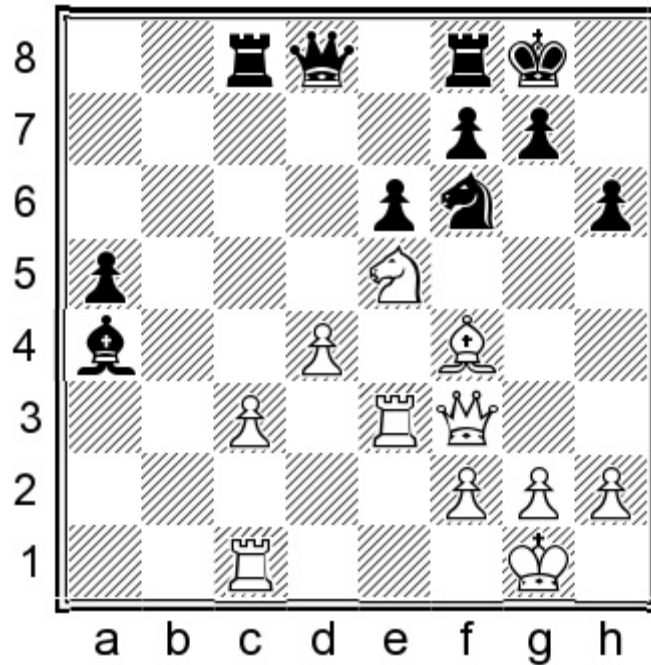
...which allows the black bishop to join in the protection of its king.

27. ♖c1! limits Black's bishop and supports the advance of the c-pawn.

A) 27... ♗d7 28. ♕g3 (28. ♕xh6 ♗xe5 29. dxe5 ♕h4! 30. ♕xg7 ♖xg7 31. ♖e4 ♕c6 32. ♖g4+ ♖f8 33. ♖xh4 ♕xf3 34. gxf3 ♖c5 35. f4 ♖c4±) 28... ♗xe5 29. ♖xe5±

B) 27... ♕e7 28. c4 ♗d5 29. ♖a3↑

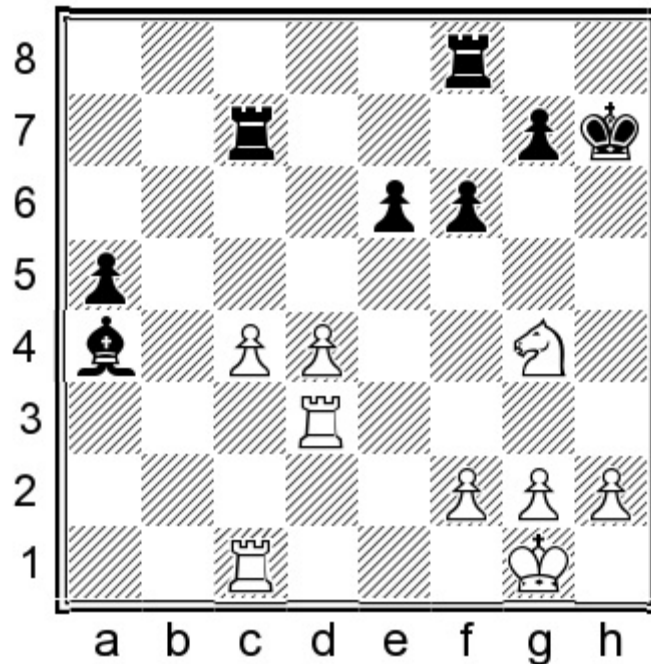
C) 27... ♖f8!



Position after: 27...Rf8!

Only this modest move allows Black to hold on, if not on the edge of the abyss, then not far from it. I do not think there are many players in the world who could do it! However, ‘people must know the truth’; such moves exist, and this book is dedicated in general to the ability to find moves like this and make them.

28. Rd3! Preparing c3-c4. (Immediate activity with 28.c4 leads to unclear consequences: 28...Qxd4 29. Qxh6 Bc5 30. Rce1 Qc2∞) 28... Qd5 29.c4 Qxf4 30. Qxf4 f6 31. Qg4 Qc7 32. Qxh6+ Qh7 33. Qxc7 Bxc7 34. Qg4±

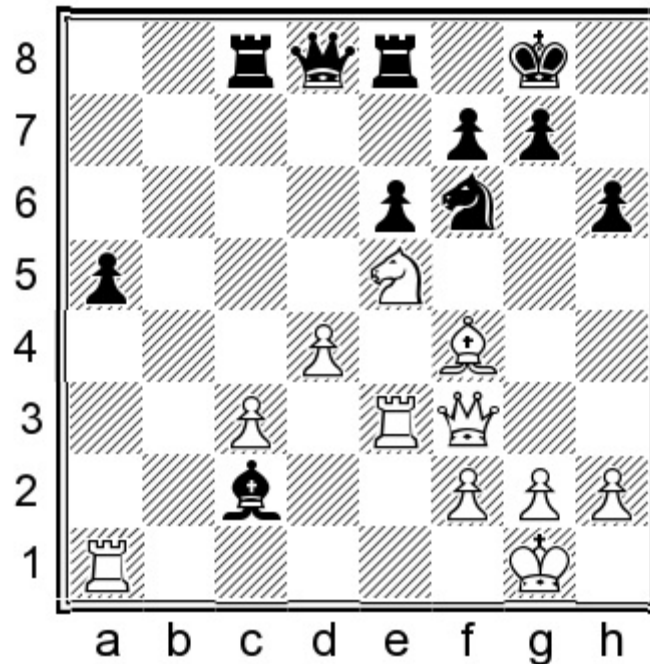


Position after: 34. Qg4±

After some extremely accurate moves Black is a pawn down, but, more importantly, he has extinguished

White's attacking possibilities and has good drawing chances in the endgame.

27. ♖a1 ♔c2



Position after: 27... ♔c2

The position is level. There followed...

28. h3 ♔f5!?

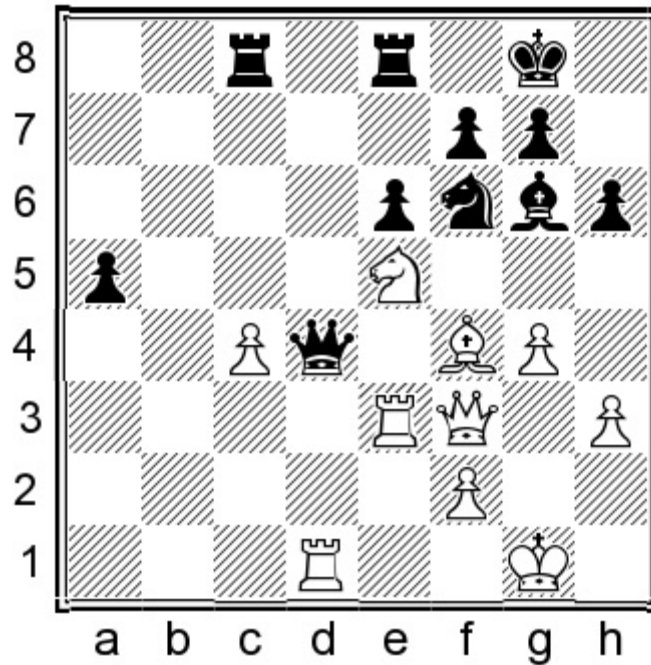
This continuation is a little risky. Black provokes White to move the g-pawn, which can lead to either a weakening of the position of the white king or to a strong attack on the black king.

28... ♘d5 29. ♔xh6 ♔g6 (29... ♚e7!?) 30. c4 ♘xe3 31. ♔xe3 ♖a8∞ was interesting.

29. g4 ♔h7?!

This allows a tactic that could have led to a solid advantage for White.

Not everything that glitters is gold! The ugly but reliable 29... ♔g6! (White can exchange the knight for the bishop and also double Black's pawns) allowed Black to face the future reasonably confidently. Why did Black not play like this? One possible reason is a false idea of beauty, peculiar to some people. 30. c4 (30. g5 ♘d5 31. gxh6 ♚f6=) 30... ♚xd4 31. ♖d1



Position after: 31.♖d1

A) 31...♜c5 32.♙xh6 ♜h7 33.♞xg6 fxg6 34.♞d7 ♞e7 35.♞e5 ♞xd7 36.♞xc5 ♞xc5 37.♞e3 ♞c6 38.♞e4 ♞a6 39.♙c1 a4 40.♙a3 ♞g5 41.♞e3 ♞f7 42.♚g2 ♚h7∞ and Black should hold.

B) In fairness it should however be noted that while the ‘move back’ is best from a practical point of view, it is not the only move in this position: 31...♞a7! 32.♙xh6 ♞a8! 33.♞f4 ♞cd8 34.♞a1 ♞h7∞.

30.c4

Even stronger was 30.g5! ♞d5 (30...hxg5 31.♙xg5 ♙f5 32.♞g3±) 31.♞xf7 ♞b6 32.♞d6 ♞xe3 33.♞xe3 hxg5 34.♙e5 ♞b2 35.♞c1 ♞f8 36.♞xc8 ♞xc8 37.♞xg5 ♞b7 38.c4±.

30...♞d7 31.♞c6?

31.c5±

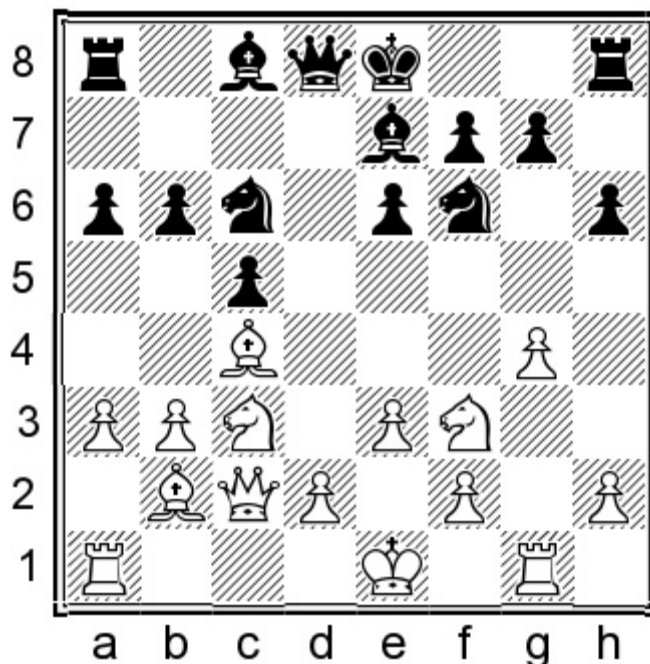
31...♞f6 32.♞xa5 ♞b6=

The position is equal, but the World Champion blundered everything in the following moves:

33.c5?! ♞xc5 34.dxc5?! ♞xa1+ 35.♚h2 ♞xa5 36.♞c6?? ♞a4!-+

0-1 (40) Carlsen, M (2837) – Nepomniachtchi, I (2729) London 2017.

Example 11
From Wei Yi-So
Wijk aan Zee 2018



Black to move

White's plan is obvious – to advance g4-g5 immediately or after the preparatory h2-h4. It is quite difficult to prevent this plan, so we need to start counterplay. The real choice consists of the developing 11...♙b7 and then ...b6-b5 or the immediate 11...b6-b5 and then ...♙b7. It seems there is no difference, but, as you might guess, there is!

11...b5

Much stronger is 11...♙b7!

A) If 12.h4 there is an unexpected move: 12...♞d4! 13.exd4 ♙xf3.

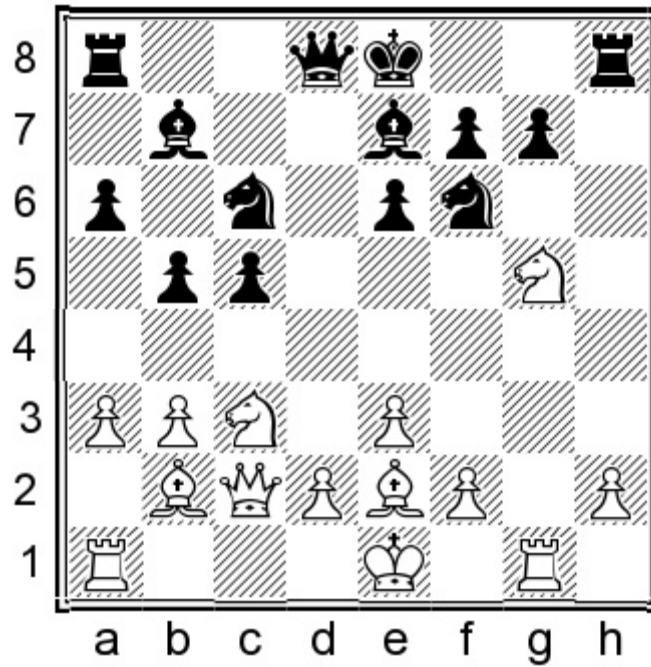
B) White can retreat the bishop in advance to protect the knight on f3 with 12.♙e2, but the attack ...♞c6-d4 occurs again: 12.♙e2 ♜c8 13.h4?! ♞d4!

C) It should be added that the immediate 12.g5 does not bring White any joy: 12...hxg5 13.♞xg5 ♞e5 or 13...♞h6. Black has the better game in both cases.

11...b5 12.♙e2 ♙b7 13.h4↑

With a quite promising position for White.

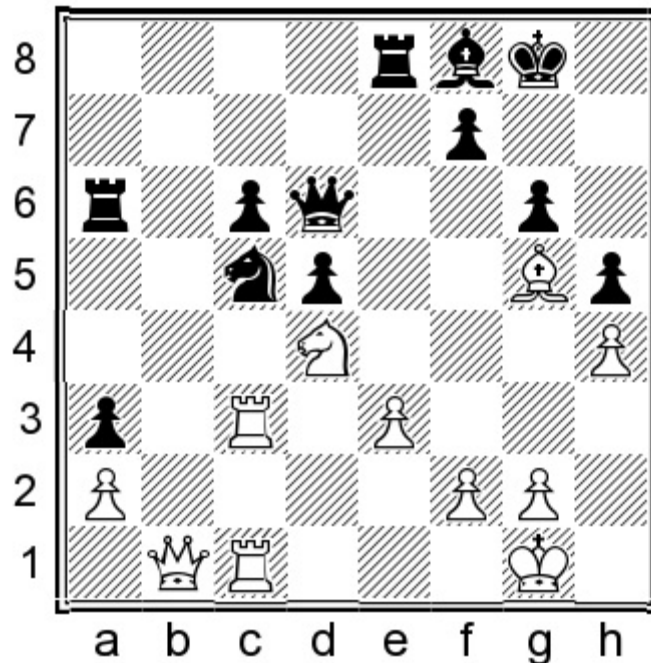
Instead White went for the too straightforward 13.g5?! hxg5 14.♞xg5



Position after: 14. ♘g5

when Black could get better chances after an excellent defensive move. 14... ♖h6! 15. ♗ce4 ♕a5! Marking the weakness of the b3-pawn, preventing White from developing the initiative. (In the game Black missed that opportunity and played 15... ♗xe4?! 16. ♗xe4± 0-1 (41) Wei Yi (2743) – So, W (2792) Wijk aan Zee 2018.)

Example 12
From Sokolov-Bok
Amsterdam 2017



Black to move

31...♖b8!

A) In the game Black played 31...♗e4?! and after 32.♖xc6 ♖xc6 33.♗xc6! White had a reasonable position. (But not 33.♖xc6?! as White played in the game: 33...♖b8! 34.♚c1 ♚d7 35.♙f4 ♖b2+ and White is worse. ½-½ (40) Sokolov, I (2625) – Bok, B (2600) Amsterdam 2017.)

B) There is nothing after the immediate 31...♗e6 32.♖xc6 ♖xc6 33.♖xc6 ♖b8 34.♚c1=.

31...♖b8! 32.♚a1 ♗e6!

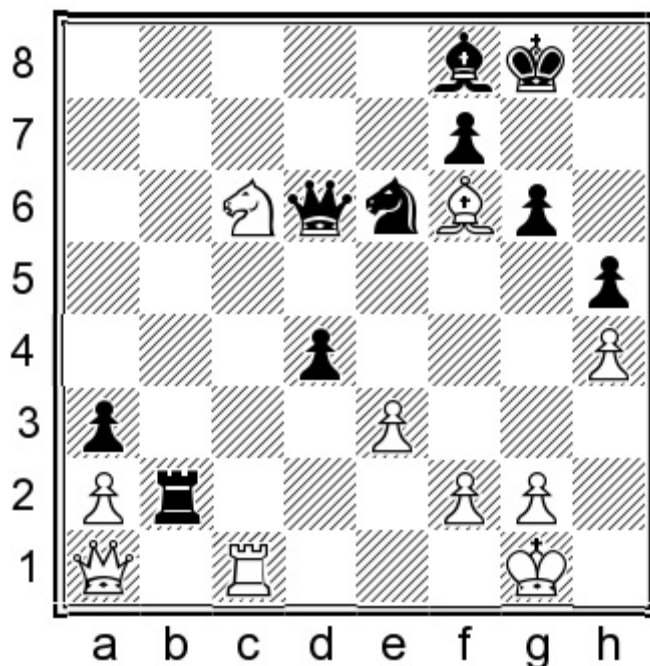
Now, after inclusion of the moves 31...♖b8 32.♚a1, this move greatly gains in power.

33.♖xc6

33.♙f6 ♖b2+–

33...♖xc6 34.♖xc6

Even worse is 34.♗xc6 ♖b2 35.♙f6 d4!!



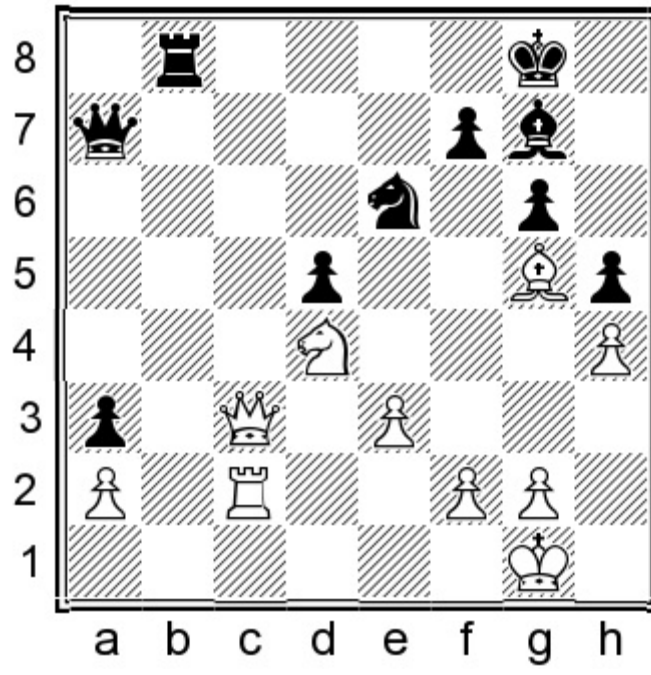
Position after: 35...d4!!

With the help of this brilliant resource Black exploits the bad position of the white queen to the maximum.

White is not able to solve all the problems, for example 36.♙xd4 (36.♗xd4 ♗c5 37.♙g5 ♗e4 38.♖f1 ♚d5 39.♗b3 ♚c4 Total domination. The weakness of the a2-pawn ruins White. 40.♚c1 ♗c3+; 36.exd4 ♚f4+–) 36...♗xd4 37.♗xd4 ♚f6 38.♖c2 (38.♗f3 ♚e6+–) 38...♖xc2 39.♗xc2 ♚b2!+–.

34...♚d7 35.♖c2 ♙g7 36.♚c3 ♚a7

Black is close to victory.

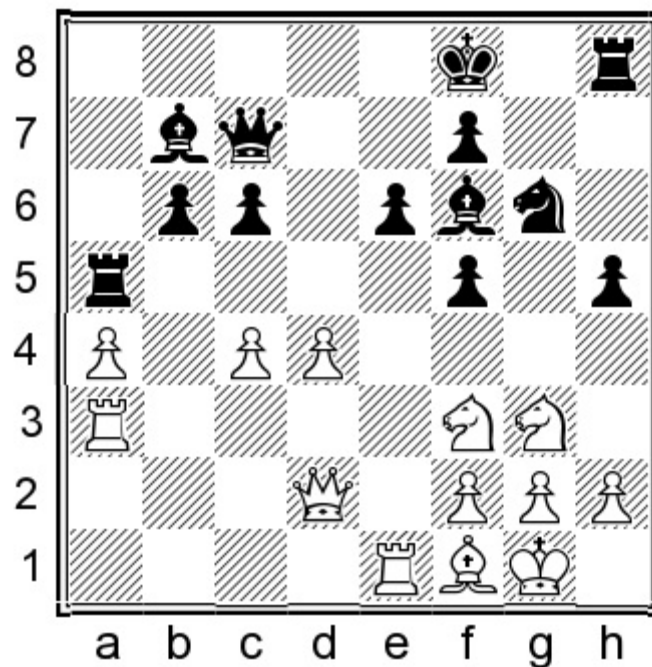


Position after: 36... ♔a7

Chapter 3 Exercises

1

Anand, V. – Dreev, A.



Black to move

What is better, 20...h4 21. ♖e2 ♔g7 or the immediate 20...♔g7?

Show/Hide Solution

1

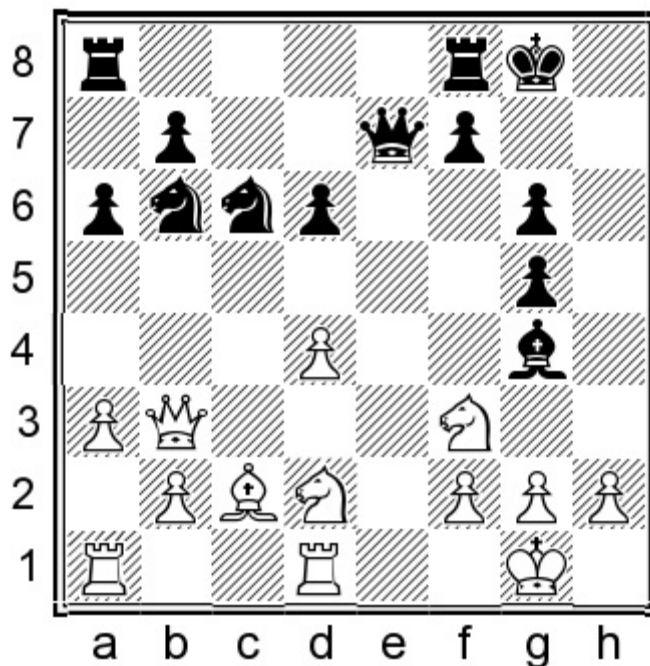
20...h4!

In case of 20...♔g7 White has a good answer in 21.h4!. By sacrificing the pawn White prevents the programmed ...h5-h4 and after 21...♖xh4 22.♖xh4 ♔xh4 23.♕e2 Black's position is better, but White has counter-chances. (In the game White played poorly with 21.♞b1? and after 21...h4 22.♖e2 h3 23.g3 c5 24.d5 exd5 25.cxd5 c4 26.♖c3 ♞c5 27.♞a2 ♖e7! Black's position was winning, although he failed to convert it. ½-½ (53) Anand, V (2635) – Dreev, A (2625) Madras 1991)

20...h4! 21.♖e2 ♔g7 22.♗c3 ♚d8 23.♛e3 c5 24.d5 exd5 25.cxd5 ♜f4

2

Tiviakov, S. – Dzhumaev, M.



Black to move

How to protect the knight: 19...♛c7 or 19...♛d8?

Show/Hide Solution

2

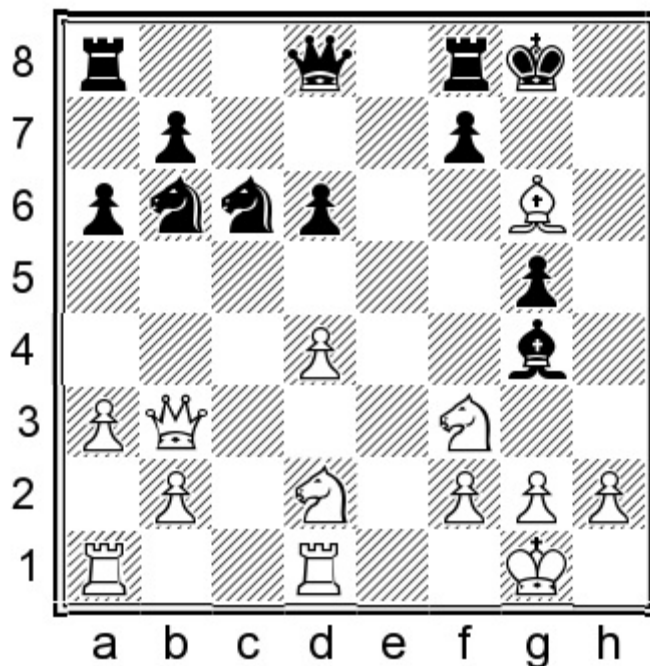
19...♛d8!

This is the right choice!

A) The other defence of the knight is significantly weaker, at least in view of 19...♛c7? 20.♙xg6 ♘a5 21.♛c2+.

B) Or 19...♙xf3 20.♗xf3 g4 21.♗e1+– and Black loses the g6-pawn.

19...♛d8! 20.♙xg6



Position after: 20. ♖xg6

It was correct to first play...

20... ♘a5!

In the game, Black played 20... ♘e6?! immediately, and after White's brilliant response, his position became hopeless. 21. ♕e3! ♖f6 (21... ♘d5 22. ♕xg5!+-) 22. ♘e4!?!+-.

21. ♕a2

And only now...

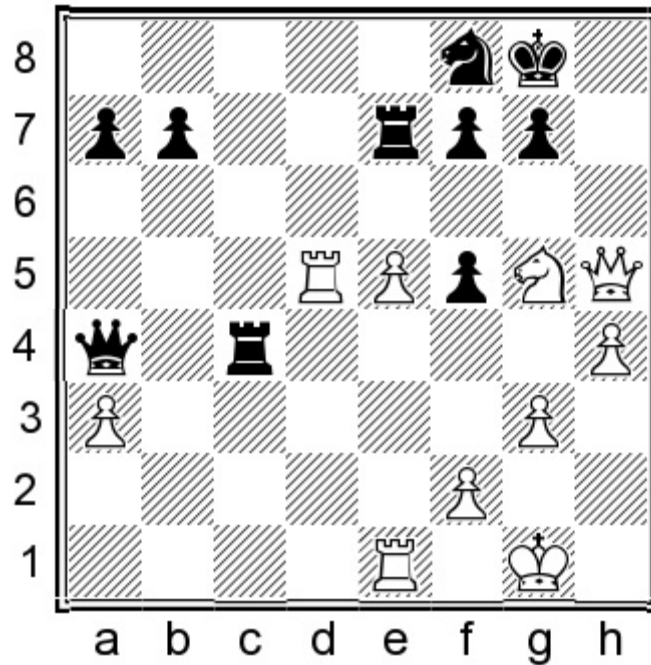
21... ♘e6

...and Black kept chances to defend.

22. ♕b1 g4! 23. ♘f5 ♖f6 24. ♘xe6 fxe6 25. ♘e4 ♖f4 26. ♘fg5 d5 27. ♘xe6 ♕xe4

3

Nakamura, H. – Gunina, V.



Black to move

Should Black defend this dangerous-looking position with 31...g6 32. ♖h6 ♜d4 or with 31...♜d4?

Show/Hide Solution

3

Black's position looks dangerous, but it is not bad at all! If Black exchanges White's active rook, she can look to the future with optimism.

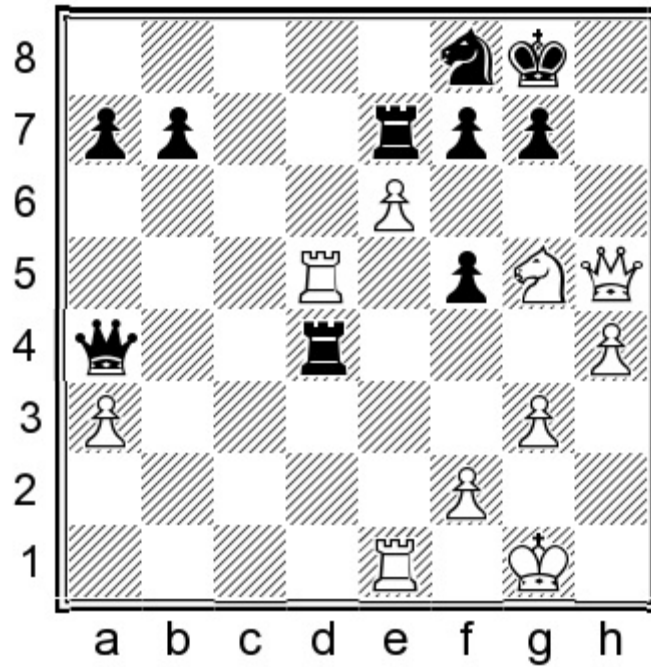
Exactly with this idea Black played...

31...♜d4?

It would seem that everything is in order. However, White has a beautiful tactic.

The idea of exchanging rooks is correct, but it was necessary to begin with a preliminary move: 31...g6! 32. ♖h6 and only now 32...♜d4!, when White no longer has tactical opportunities, and the position is approximately equal.

31...♜d4? 32.e6!



Position after: 32.e6!

32...f6

A) 32...g6 33.♞xd4 (33.exf7+?? ♔g7-+) 33...♞xd4 34.exf7+ ♔g7 35.♞d1±

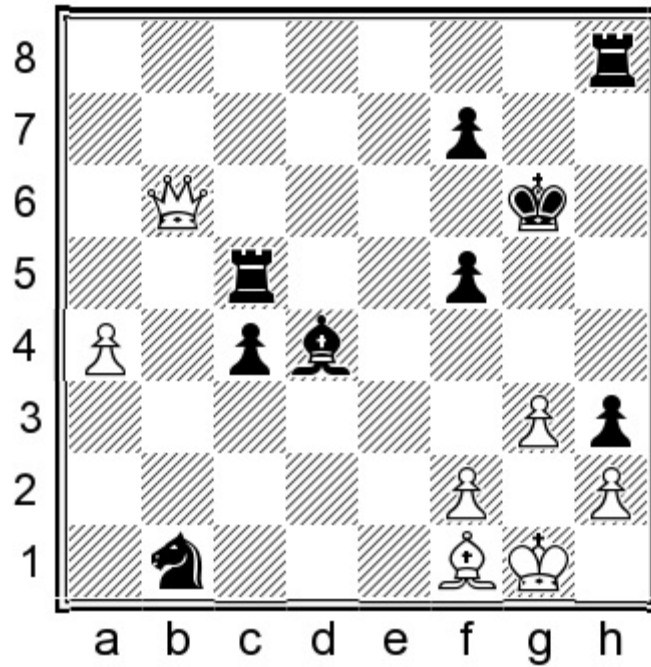
B) 32...fxe6 33.♞xf5 exf5 34.♞xe7 ♞d1+ 35.♞xd1 ♞xd1+ 36.♔g2 ♞d7 37.♞e8 g6 38.♞a8 ♔g7 39.♞xa7±

33.♞f7+! ♞xf7 34.exf7+ ♔h8 35.♞e8±

1-0 (135) Nakamura, H (2781) – Gunina, V (2502) Gibraltar 2018.

4

Anand, V. – Dreev, A.



Black to move
Where to retreat the king?

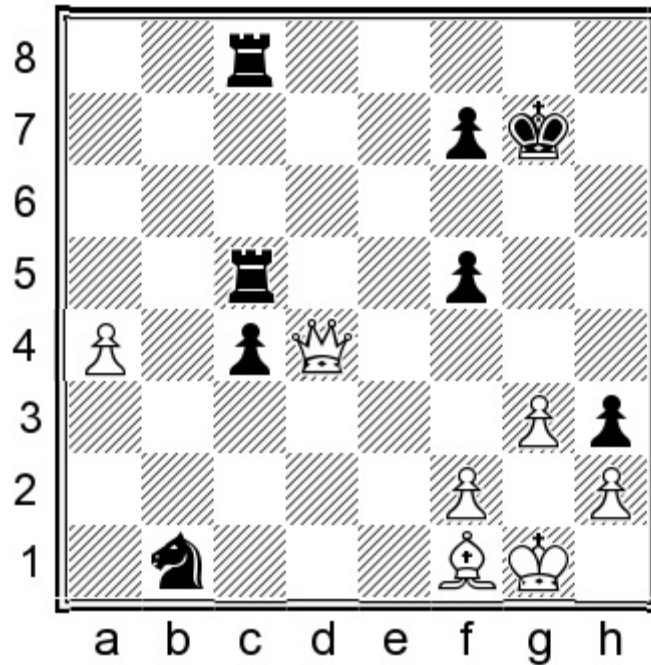
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4

34...♔h7!

This 'unnatural' option leads to victory.

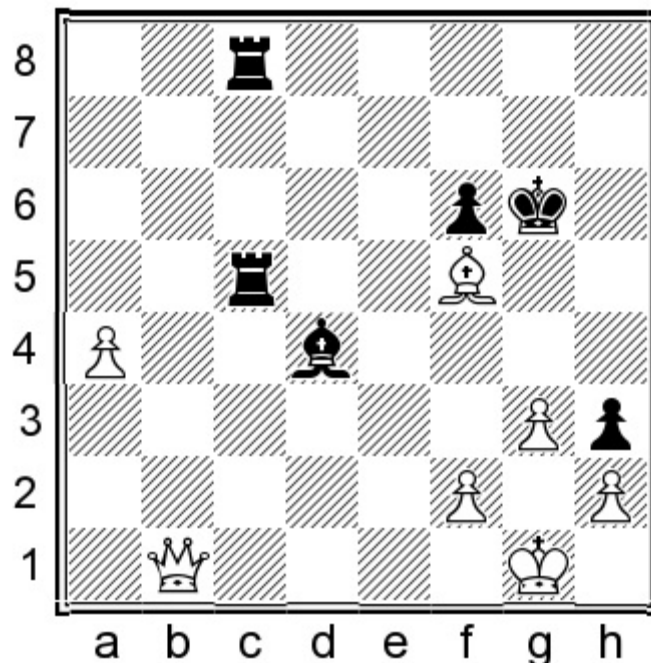
A) It seems that the right move is 34...♔g7?!, but there is the unexpected 35.♕d6!!= and White has good chances. (35.♕xb1? c3 36.♖d3 c2 37.♖xc2 ♜hc8+) 35...♜hc8 36.♕xd4+



Position after: 36. ♖xd4+

36...♔g6 (36...♔g8 37.♕xh3 c3 38.♕xf5 c2 39.♕xc2 ♖xc2 40.a5=) 37.♕xh3 (But not 37.♖b2?? c3 38.♖xb1 c2 39.♖c1 ♖d5 40.♕e2 ♖d4! 41.♔f1 ♖b4+) 37...c3 38.♖d6+ f6 39.♖e6 ♖8c7 40.♖g8+ ♖g7 41.♖e8+ ♖f7 42.♖g8+=

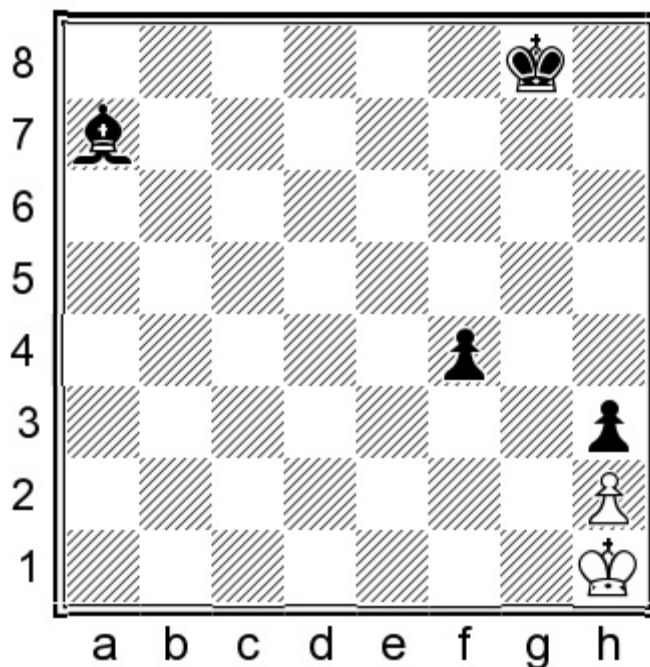
B) In the game Black chose the 'natural' 34...f6 35.♖xb1 c3 36.♕d3 c2? (⊖ 36...♖hc8 37.♕c2= The position is complicated, but approximately equal. The open king does not allow Black to realise the advantages of his position.) 37.♕xc2 ♖hc8? (37...♔g7=) 38.♕xf5+!



Position after: 38. ♕xf5+!

In time trouble, Black overlooked this simple tactical trick. 38...♖xf5

B1) 39.g4 Well, who wouldn't have played that?! 39...♖c1+ 40.♗xc1 ♖xf2 41.♔h1 ♕e5 42.♗g1 ♖g2 43.a5 The easy drawing method. 43...♖xg1+ 44.♔xg1 ♔g7 45.a6 ♕b8 46.♔h1 ♔g8 47.♔g1 ♔f8 48.♔h1 ♔e8 49.g5 f5 50.g6 f4 51.g7 ♔f7 52.g8=♗+ ♔xg8 53.a7 ♕xa7

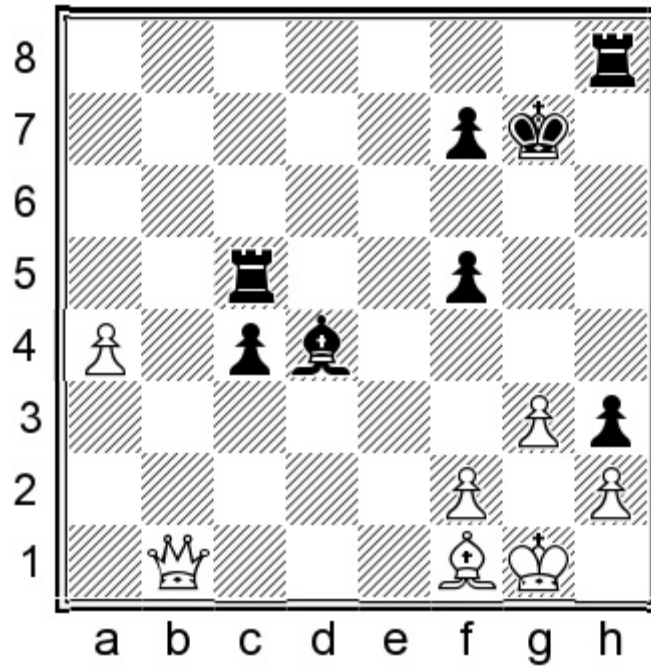


Position after: 53...♕xa7

½-½ Anand, V (2635) – Dreev, A (2625) Madras 1991

B2) However, it was even stronger to play 39.♔f1!, although even here Black can easily get a draw: 39...♖c1+ (39...♔g5? 40.f4+-) 40.♗xc1 ♖xf2+ 41.♔e1 ♖xh2 42.♗f4 ♕e5 43.♗g4+ ♔f7 44.a5 ♖h1+ 45.♔f2 h2 46.♔g2 ♖a1=

34...♔h7! 35.♗xb1 ♔g7



Position after: 35...♔g7

Black has lost a tempo, but now there is nothing to prevent him from using the power of his passed pawn and bad position of the white king, for example:

36.♜b4!

The best practical chance. White prevents the advance of the c-pawn, but it doesn't help either.

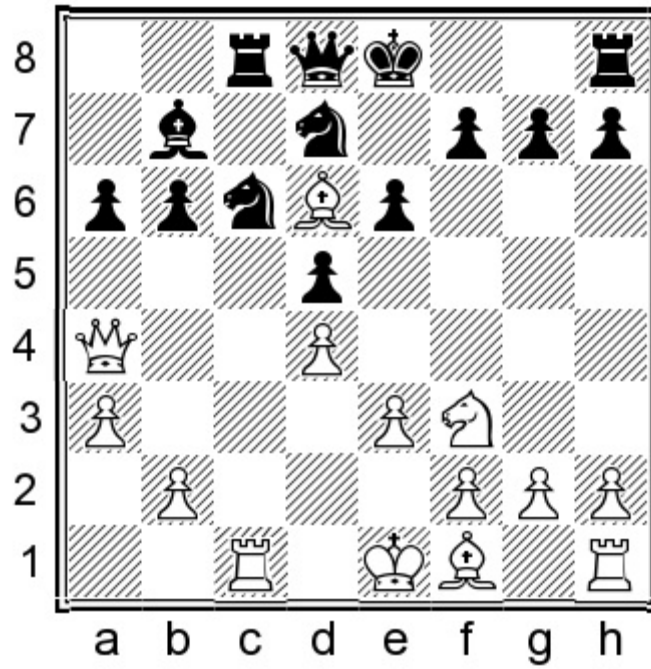
36...♞hc8

36...♞e8!?-+

37.♙xh3 ♞d8 38.♜b1 ♞dd5 39.♙g2 ♞d6 40.♙h3 c3 41.♙xf5 ♞f6 42.g4 c2-+

5

Dreev, A. – Seirawan, Y.

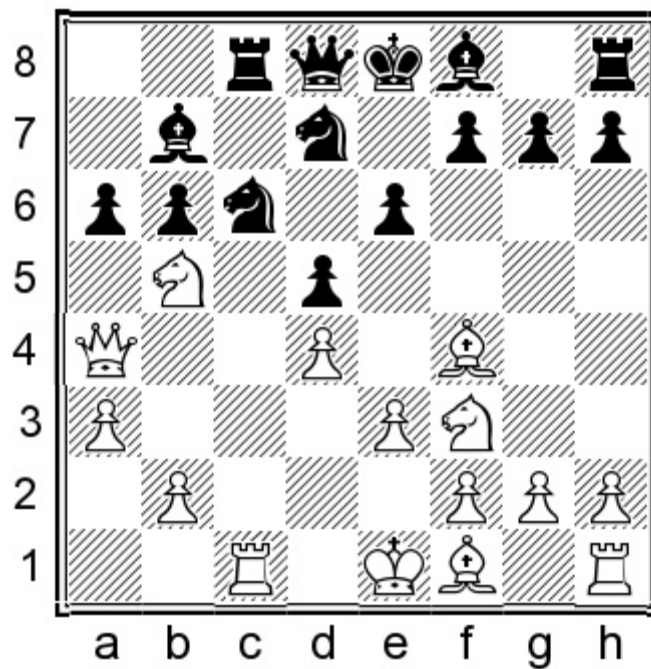


Black to move

Assess the consequences of the move 13... ♖xd4. Is it better to play 13... ♖a5?

Show/Hide Solution

5



White to move

12. ♖d6+

The game continued with 12. ♖c7+!? ♜xc7 13. ♙xa6 ♙xa6 14. ♙xc7 ♚xc7 15. ♜xc6 ♚b7 16. ♗e5↑ 1-0 (29)
Dreev, A (2650) – Seirawan, Y (2585) Wijk aan Zee 1995.

12. ♖d6+ ♙xd6 13. ♙xd6

Reaching the position in the exercise.

13... ♗xd4?!

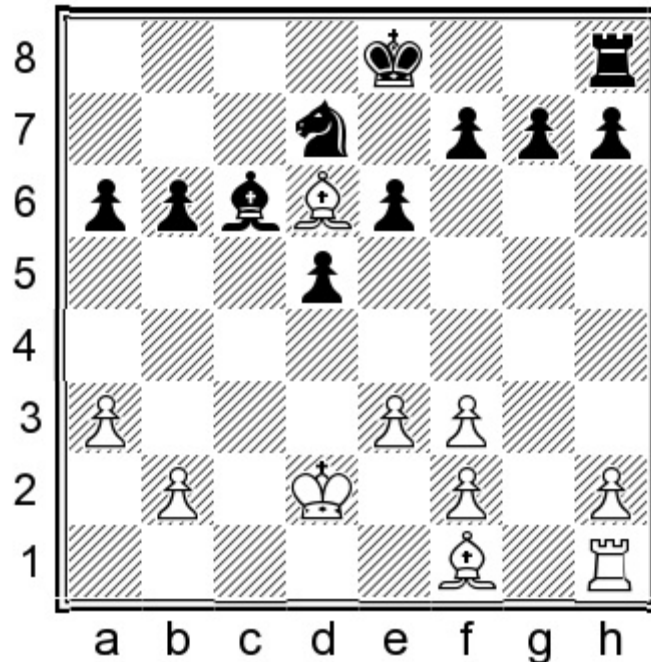
13... ♗a5! Despite the absence of the dark-squared bishop, Black has time to create enough counterplay for equality, thanks to the threat of ... ♗a5-c4.

14. ♜xc8 ♗xf3+ 15. gxf3 ♚xc8 16. ♔d2 ♚c6

The exchange of the queens is necessary for Black because his king is in danger.

16... b5 17. ♚g4±

17. ♚xc6 ♙xc6



Position after: 17... ♙xc6

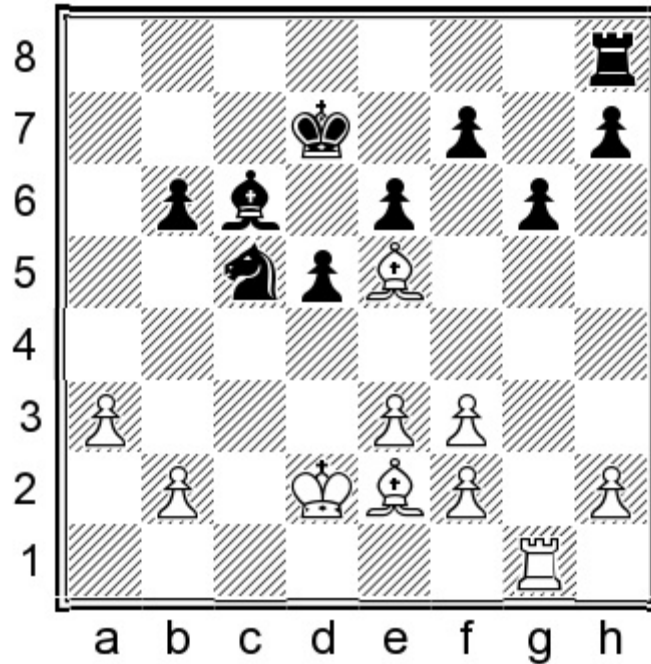
It may seem that Black is OK, and indeed after the capture on a6 he is.

However, White can include the move 18. ♜g1 and then take on a6. In this case, the comparison is clearly in White's favour. We'll explain why.

18. ♜g1

18.♙xa6 only leads to equality: 18...♘c5 19.♙e2 (19.♙xc5 bxc5 20.♖c1 c4 21.b3 ♔e7 22.bxc4 ♜a8=) 19...♗d7 20.♙e5 f6 21.♙c3 e5=.

18...g6 19.♙xa6 ♘c5 20.♙e2 ♗d7 21.♙e5!



Position after: 21.♙e5!

The point of the move 18.♖g1 is now clear - Black does not have the answer ...f7-f6.

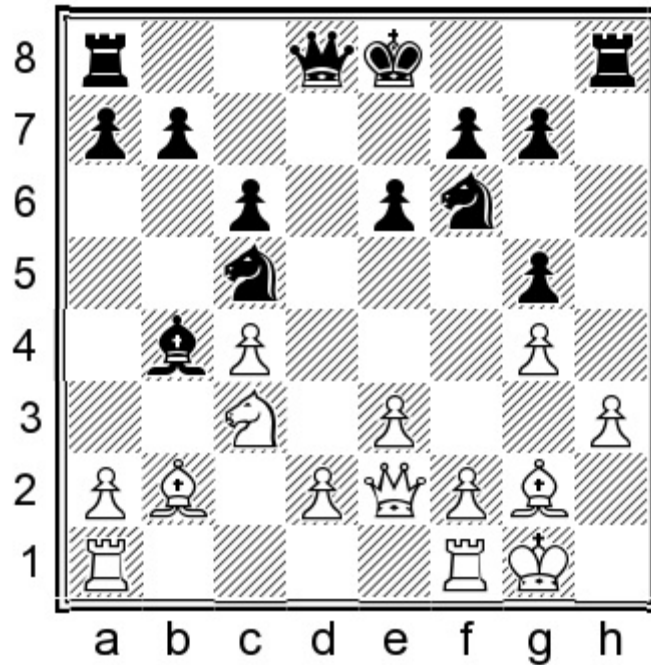
21...♜c8 22.♖g4!

And here is the second important benefit from the inclusion of the move 18.♖g1 – the rook enters the game via the fourth rank and goes to the important b4-square, forcing Black to defend. The advantage of the two bishops and the opportunity to create a passed pawn provide White with the clearly better chances.

Thus by comparing we can say that 13...♘xd4 leads to an advantage for White.

6

Svidler, P. – Dreev, A.



Black to move

Obviously Black's whole aim is to prevent d2-d4 and not allow White to strengthen the centre. It is necessary to plug the d3-square, but with the knight or the queen?

Show/Hide Solution

6

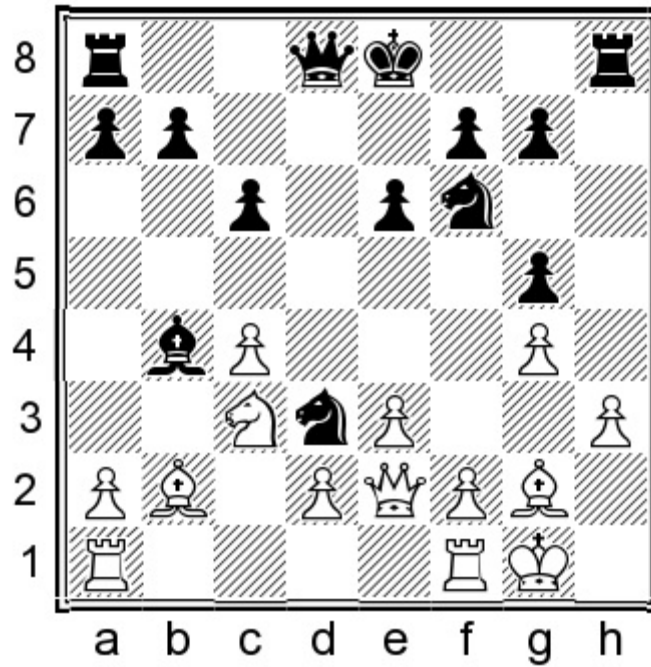
White has the two bishops that may give him a certain advantage in the future. However Black finds quite an unexpected option to change the picture of the struggle.

12...dxc4! 13.bxc4 ♘c5 14.0-0

The position in our exercise.

14...♙d3!

The game continued 14...♘d3?



Position after: 14... ♖d3?

...and here White missed the not only spectacular, but also effective 15. ♘d5!! (The game continued 15. ♖ab1 ♘xb2 16. ♖xb2 ♙xc3= 0-1 (63) Svidler, P (2765) – Dreev, A (2653) Riyadh 2017) 15... ♘xb2 (15...exd5 16. ♙xd3±) 16. ♘xb4 ♙d6 17. d4 ♙xb4 18. ♖fb1±. White has an obvious advantage due to the pressure on the b-file combined with the activity of the light-squared bishop.

15. ♙xd3 ♘xd3 16. ♖ab1 0-0-0 17. ♙a1 ♙a5!?∞

Chapter 4

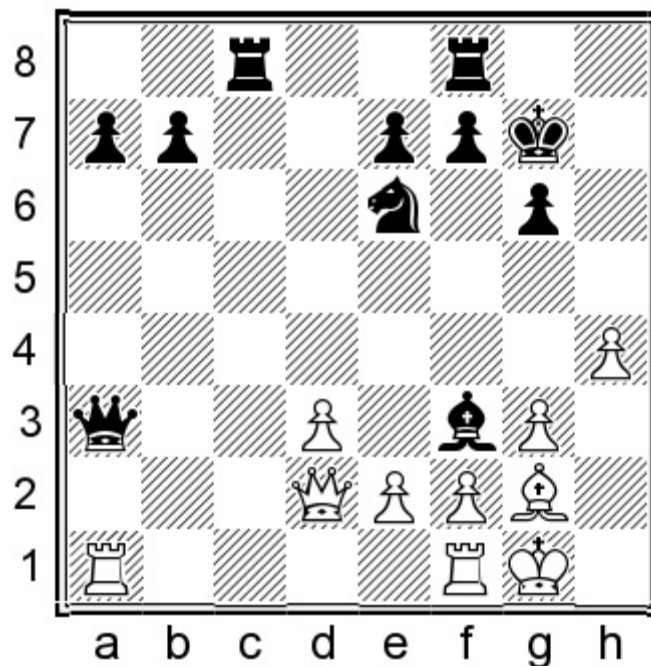
Pawn Sacrifice

A pawn sacrifice in the middlegame is certainly a well-known element in the game of chess, but it seems to me that not every strong chess player is fully acquainted with the concept and its use. Most often we encounter a pawn sacrifice during an attack, when it is obvious and gives a certain result, for example opening up the position of the king, creating specific threats and so on.

In this chapter we will talk about the sacrifice of a pawn in defence and in the struggle for the initiative. In defence, the sacrifice of a pawn is most often encountered in order to reach a known drawn ending. A pawn sacrifice in the struggle for the initiative is less common, since the compensation for the sacrificed pawn is not always obvious, and, in such cases, there is the fear of ultimately remaining material down and losing the game. That is why the sacrifice of a pawn for the initiative is rather an intuitive decision, and not based on concrete calculation.

Let us look at examples of such sacrifices in practical games. This will help the reader to look for non-standard solutions in difficult situations, either for defensive purposes or when trying to seize the initiative.

Example 1
From Adhiban-Karjakin
Wijk aan Zee 2018



Black to move

20...♞c3!

An accurate evaluation of the position.

By sacrificing a pawn Black forces the transition to a theoretically drawn rook endgame.

In the case of the more optimistic 20...♞c5? 21.♙xf3 b5 22.♞b2+ ♔g8 23.e3! the black passed pawns would

be a target for the white rooks. Combined with the possible advance of the white pawns, the black position could become very vulnerable.

20...♚c3! 21.♚xc3+ ♞xc3 22.♙xf3 ♜d4! 23.♞xa7 ♜xf3+ 24.exf3 ♞xd3 25.♞xb7 ♞xf3 26.♞xe7 ♞a8=

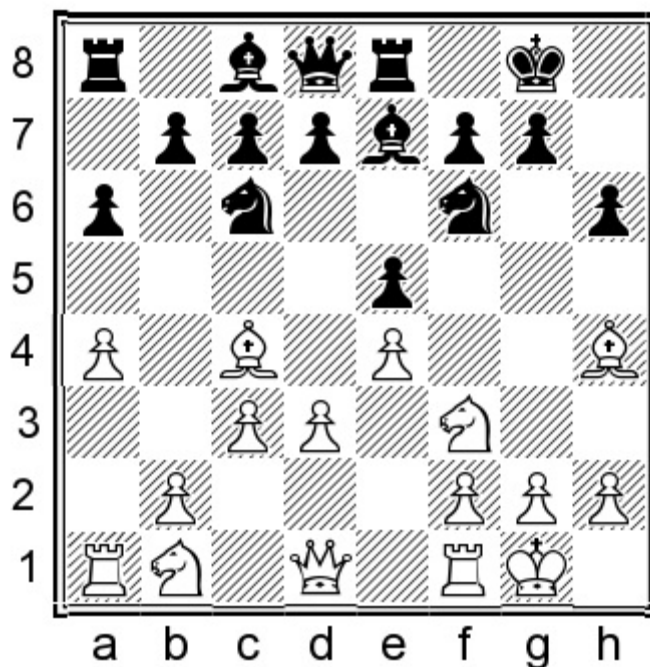
½-½ (43) Adhiban, B (2655) – Karjakin, S (2753) Wijk aan Zee 2018.

Example 2

From Mamedov-Petrosyan

Moscow 2018

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6 4.d3 ♙c5 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 ♞e8 7.♙g5 h6 8.♙h4 a6 9.♙c4 ♙e7 10.a4



Position after: 10.a4

10...d5!N

A brilliant pawn sacrifice and an excellent novelty! Apparently White was expecting normal development of the kind usual for this variation and comfortable for him, e.g. 10...d6 11.♘a3 ♘h5 12.♙xe7 (12.♙g3!?)

12...♚xe7 13.♘c2 ♘f4 14.♘e3 ♞f6 15.g3 ♘h3+ 16.♙g2 ♘e7 17.♘g1 ♘xg1 18.♙xg1 ♙h3 19.♞e1 c6 20.a5±

½-½ (64) Kharchenko, B (2461) – Goganov, A (2639) Moscow 2017.

11.exd5

11.♙xf6 dxc4 12.♙xe7 ♞xe7 13.dxc4 ♙g4 14.♘bd2 ♞d7 15.♞c2 ♞f6 Black controls the d-file, and his knight is thinking about switching to f4. White does not have enough compensation for the extra pawn.

11...♘xd5 12.♙g3 ♙g4

A) Objectively it was somewhat stronger to play 12...♙f5!? Δ 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.♙xe5 ♘b6 15.♘d2 ♘xc4

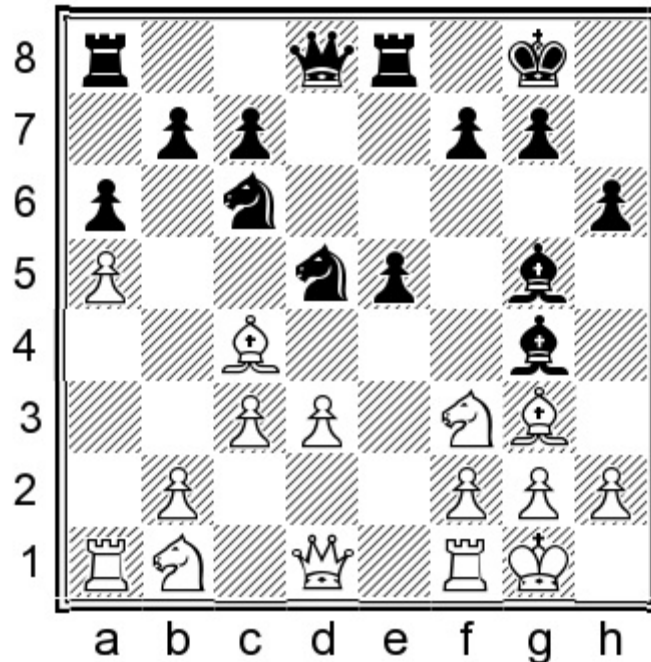
16.dxc4 c5.

B) After the non-standard 12...♙g5!? the position is about equal: 13.♘bd2 ♕xd2 14.♘xd2 (14.♖xd2 ♕g4) 14...♘b6.

13.a5?!

Black faces small, but solvable, problems after 13.h3!? ♕f5 (13...♕h5 14.♘bd2 Δ 14...♘b6 15.♕b3 ♖xd3 16.♘xe5 ♖f5 17.♘ef3±) 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.♕xe5 ♘b6 16.♕b3 ♕xd3 17.♕xc7 ♖xc7 18.♖xd3 ♜ad8 19.♖c2 ♕c5.

13...♙g5!

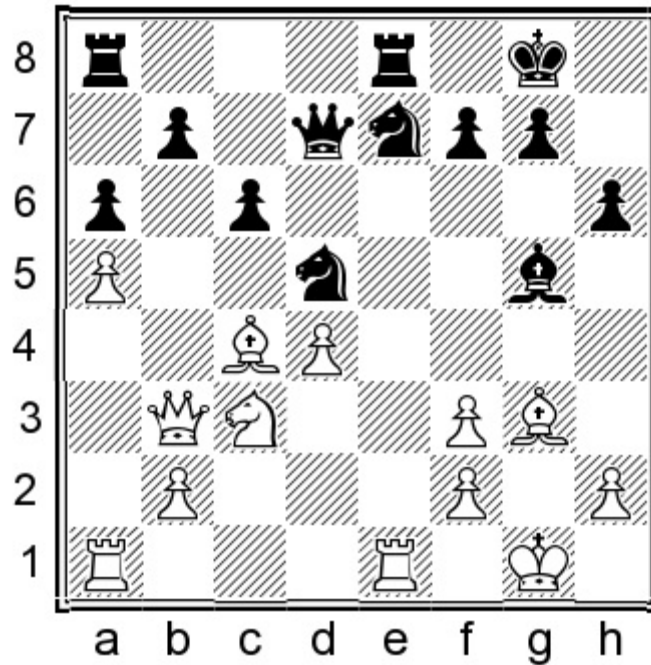


Position after: 13...♙g5!

Now it is difficult for White to get rid of the pin, as the knight on b1 does not have the d2-square. That is why White played...

14.♖b3 ♕xf3 15.gxf3 ♘ce7 16.♞e1?!

Here White had to feel the danger and try to complete development as quickly as possible with the seemingly strange move 16.d4! exd4 17.cxd4 ♖d7 18.♘c3 c6 19.♞fe1



Position after: 19. ♖fe1

White has created some pressure in the centre preventing Black from starting any serious action on the kingside, e.g. 19...♖ad8 20.♖ad1 ♘f5 21.♗e4∞.

16...♔d7?!

It was much stronger to play 16...c6! 17.♖xe5 (17.d4 ♘g6 18.dxe5 h5♣) 17...♔d7♣.

17.♖xe5?

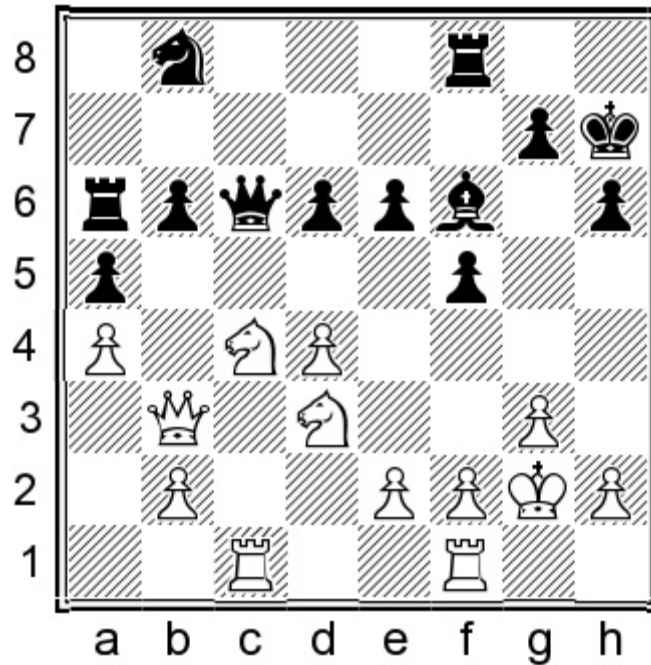
The decisive mistake. Again White did not take the chance to use an excellent positional resource, leading to equality.

17.d4! = transposes to the variation above after 16.d4!.

17...c6 18.♘a3 ♘g6 19.♙xd5 ♖xe5 20.♙e4 ♘f4+

0-1 (34) Mamedov, R (2709) – Petrosyan, M (2569) Moscow 2018.

Example 3
From Gelfand-Bellin
Gibraltar 2018



White to move

21.d5!!

In the game White chose the prosaic retreat of the king and the position became equal: 21.♔g1 ♕xd4 22.♖xa5 ♖d7 23.♗c4 d5= 1-0 (40) Gelfand, B (2697) – Bellin, R (2343) Gibraltar 2018.

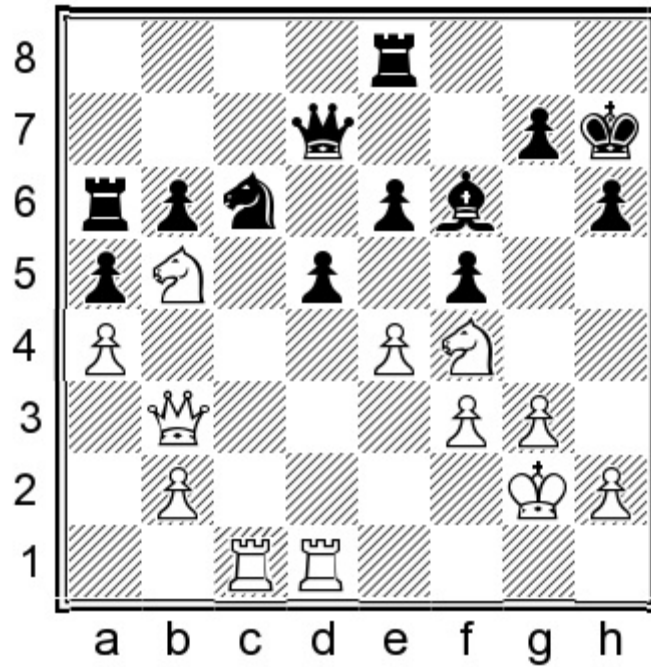
21.d5!! ♖xd5+ 22.f3

It turns out that despite the extra pawn, Black has a lot of problems: his pieces are disunited, and the central pawns are vulnerable, for example, ♖d3-f4 is now threatened. Only by accurate moves can Black avoid a very bad position, but he will not be able to equalise completely.

22...♕g5!

A) ≤ 22...e5 23.♗f2! With the idea 24.♖fd1. 23...♖e6 24.e4!± It is obvious that White will win back the pawn, while Black will remain with a bad bishop and other problems.

B) Let's see what Black can expect in the event of the seemingly 'more reliable' 22...♖c6: 23.♗a3! ♖d7 24.♗b5 ♗c6 25.♗f4 ♖e8 26.♖fd1 d5 27.e4+–.



Position after: 27.e4+-

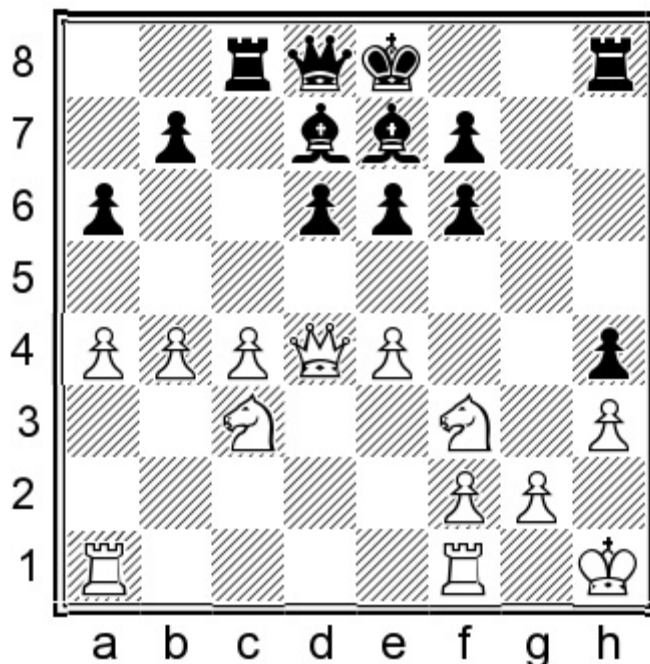
Black is facing serious problems and the a6-rook is out of play. 27...fxe4 28.fxe4 d4 29.♖c4 ♘b4 30.♗e2 ♙e5 31.♗h5 ♙xf4 32.gxf4 ♘c6 33.♘c7+-

23.♞c3 ♘c6 24.♗b5 ♞a7 25.♗xd5 exd5 26.♘xd6

26.♘xb6? ♘e7 and the knight on b6 is trapped.

26...♘d4 27.f4!±

Example 4
From Ivanchuk-Kasparov
Linares 1991



Black to move

This is a case where the knights are stronger than the bishops due to the specific nature of the pawn structure. Black's problem is the absence of counterplay. As the further course of the game showed, White achieved a convincing victory.

But this is the beauty of chess, that sometimes there are incredible defensive resources in a position which are hidden at first glance.

15...♚c7

In the game Black played 15...a5, by means of which he gets a transfer point for his heavy pieces, the c5-square, but this did not bring relief. 16.b5 ♚c7 17.♘d2 ♚c5 18.♚d3 ♜g8 19.♞ae1± White has many ways to enhance his position, e.g. by advancing the f-pawn. It is difficult to recommend anything for Black. 1-0 (38) Ivanchuk, V (2695) – Kasparov, G (2800) Linares 1991.

15...♚c7 16.♘d2 d5!!

Only here and now, otherwise it will be too late!

17.exd5 ♚e5!

I admit that these moves do not lead to complete equality, but thanks to the pawn sacrifice, Black no longer feels besieged and doomed to a long defence. His bishops are gradually awakening from hibernation, and this gives him solid compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

18.♚xe5

18.♚d3 ♙xb4 19.♞ac1 ♜f8∞

18...fxe5 19.♖ab1 f5!

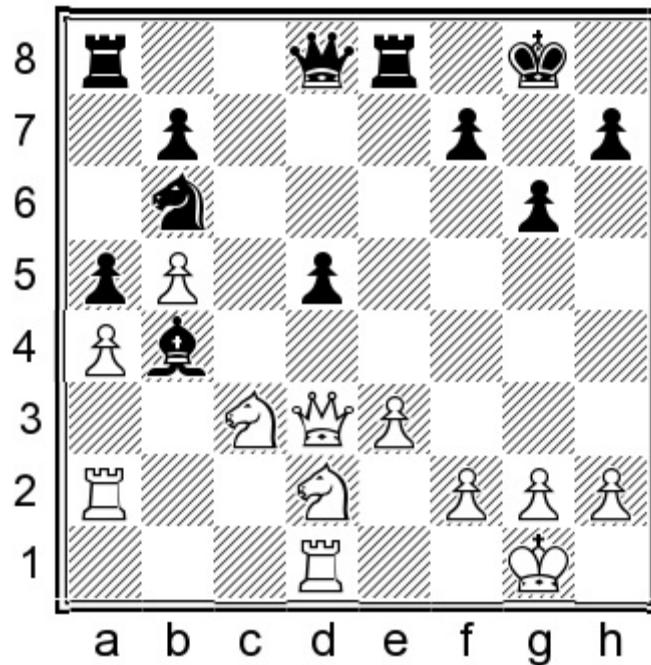
Another important move! Black limits the knights and prepares to connect his rooks with ...♔f7, when his king will clearly be better placed than its counterpart and his pieces will gain in activity.

Black can expect compensation.

Example 5

From Giorgadze-Panchenko

Aktyubinsk 1985



Black to move

22...d4!

With this positional pawn sacrifice Black activates his pieces to the maximum. He is in possession of all the open lines, while the white knights feel very uncomfortable. The game continued with 22...♕f6 23.♘e2= and White consolidated the position. 0-1 (53) Giorgadze, G (2500) – Panchenko, A (2435) Aktjubinsk 1985.

Now, even if White makes all the strongest moves, his position will be bad, for example:

22...d4! 23.exd4 ♖c8 24.♘e2 ♕e7 25.♘g3 ♘d5 26.♘de4 ♔g7 27.♗b3 ♕d8 28.♖e2 b6!?

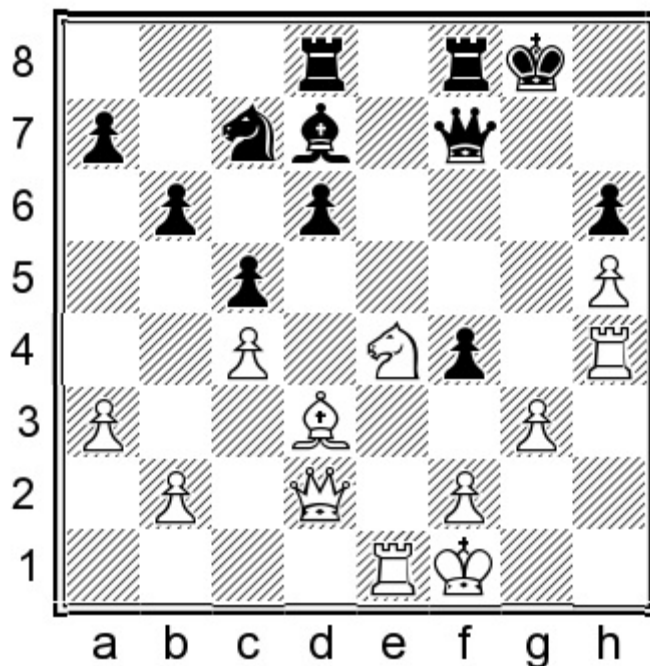
Black prevents the possibility of White ‘unloading’ with ♘e4-c5.

29.♗f3 ♕d7–+

Example 6

From Dreev-Zhang

Shanghai 2001



Black to move

Black's position looks critical. However, with the help of a positional pawn sacrifice, he would still have been able to fight.

26...♙g7!

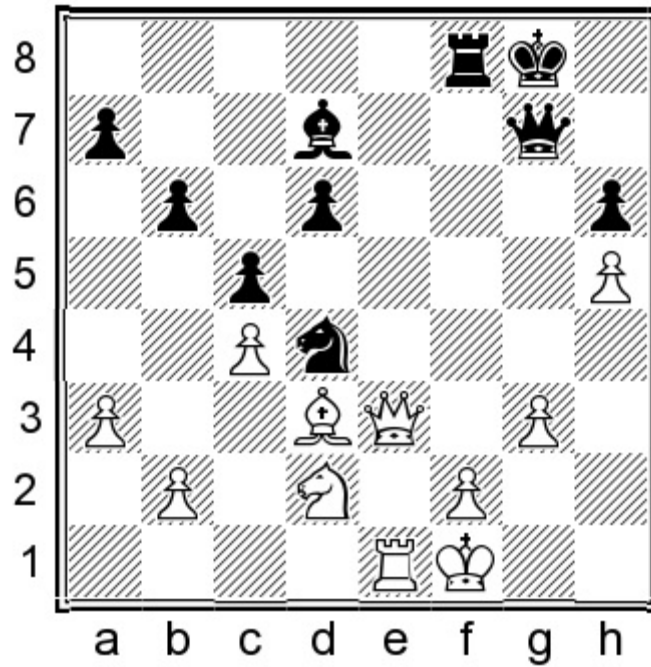
A) In the game Black bet on a queen sacrifice, but the 'compensation' was a mirage: 26...d5? 27.♖xf4 ♙xf4 (27...♙xh5 28.♖h4+-; 27...♙g7 28.cxd5 ♘xd5 29.♙c4+-) 28.gxf4 dxe4 29.♖xe4 ♙f5 30.♖e3+- 1-0 (47) Dreev, A (2690) – Zhang, Z (2632) Shanghai 2001.

B) The position is also lost after other moves, e.g. 26...♘e6 27.♖g4+ ♘g7 28.♖g6+-, or 26...fxg3 27.♖e3!+-.

26...♙g7! 27.♖xf4 ♘e6! 28.♖xf8+ ♖xf8

The knight comes to d4, creating threats against the white king. Here White already needs to find the only way to an advantage.

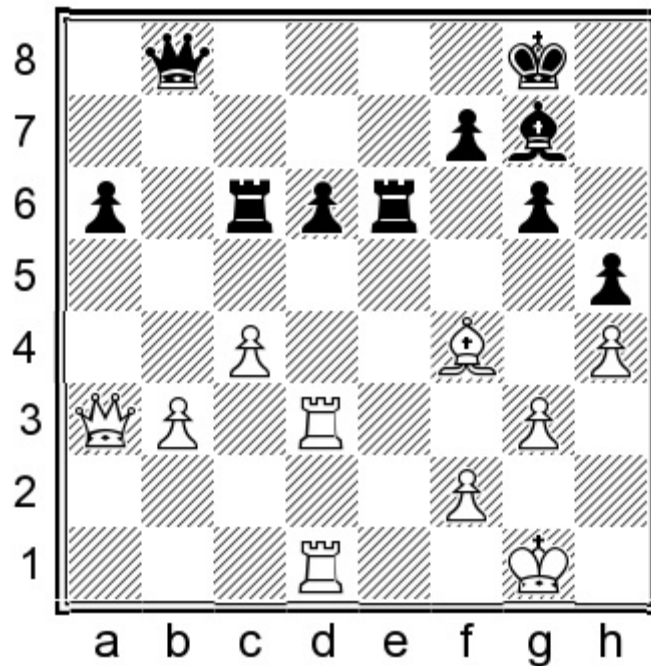
29.♙e3! ♘d4 30.♘d2!±



Position after: 30. Nf2!±

With the help of this knight retreat White defends the important f3-square and creates space for his other pieces to become active.

Example 7
From Karjakin-Dubov
Moscow 2018



Black to move

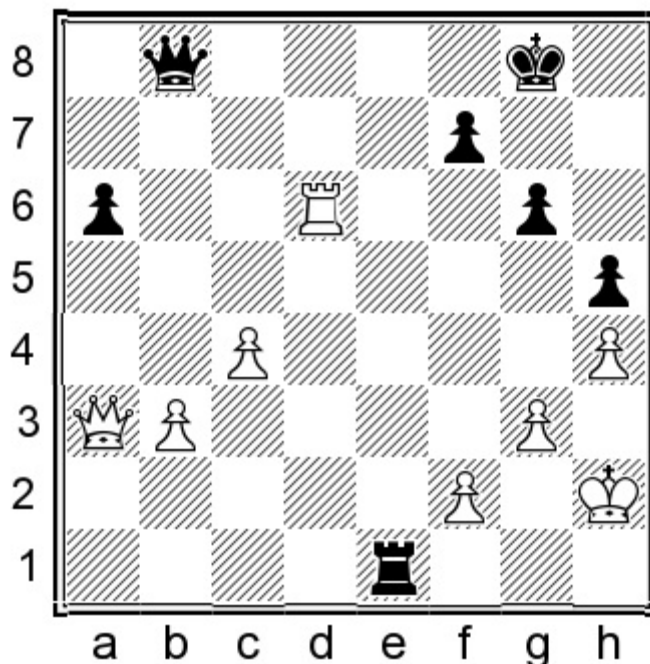
30... Qe5!

30...♔f8 31.♖a5± After these moves White has a serious positional advantage due to the pressure on his opponent's weak pawns which restricts Black's pieces.

30...♔e5! 31.♔xe5

Certainly the most principled continuation, but it was necessary to think seriously about the retreat of the bishop. In this case, Black would have solved the problem of defending the d6-pawn, but White's position would have remained preferable due to Black's poor pawn structure. 31.♔e3!±

31...♖xe5 32.♖xd6 ♖xd6 33.♖xd6 ♖e1+ 34.♔h2



Position after: 34.♔h2

Black has full compensation for the pawn, but it is necessary to show some accuracy.

34.♔g2? ♖e8=

34...♖e2?

34...♖f1! 35.♔g2 (35.♖f6?? ♖a8+-) 35...♖b1 36.♖c5 (36.♖xa6?? ♖b7+-) 36...♖b7+ After these moves Black is still a pawn down, but he turns the game into a theoretically drawn ending. (36...♖xb3?? 37.♖d4+-) 37.♖c6 ♖xc6+ 38.♖xc6 ♖xb3 39.♖xa6 ♖c3 40.♖c6 ♔f8 41.♖c7 ♔g7= Despite the extra pawn, the position is drawn.

35.♔g2?

35.♖f6!+-

35...♖a8+!

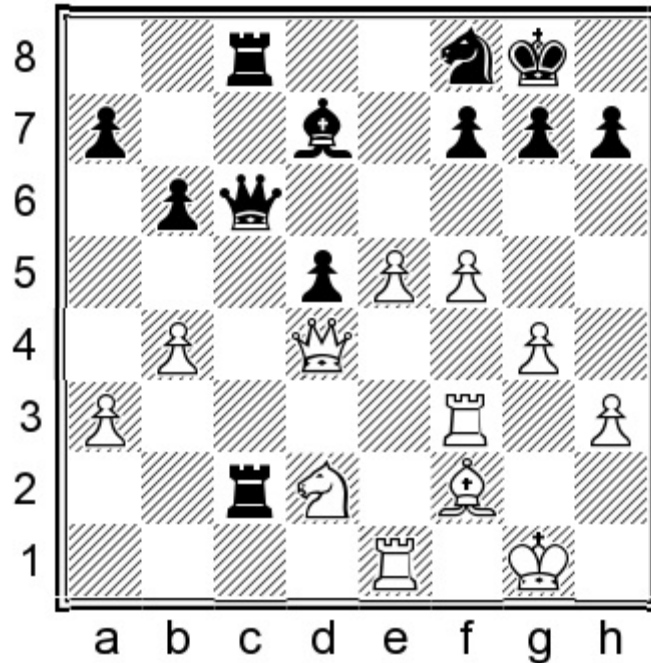
≤ 35...♙e8 36.b4 ♚e4+ 37.♚f3 ♚xc4 38.♝c6 ♚b5 39.♝c7 ♚e8 40.♞a7↑

36.♞d5 ♚e8=

Example 8

From Dreev-Khademalsharieh

Guilan 2016



White to move

In positions of this type, where White has a clear advantage, it is difficult to understand when it is necessary to initiate concrete action.

In this game I felt that with a calm game it would be difficult to realise a positional advantage, so I decided to sacrifice a pawn. It was more of an intuitive decision; I did not calculate everything till the end. As it turned out, it was the right decision from an analytical point of view.

30.e6!

I could have continued enjoying the beauty of the position, but it seemed to me that it was necessary to act right now, otherwise Black would have been able to establish a defence. 30.♙f4 ♝c1 31.♞b3 ♝xe1+ 32.♞xe1 ♙c2 33.♞d4 ♚b1 34.♝f1 ♚c1!?!± (Here 34...♙d3!?!± 35.e6 does not win, because of 35...♞e8.)

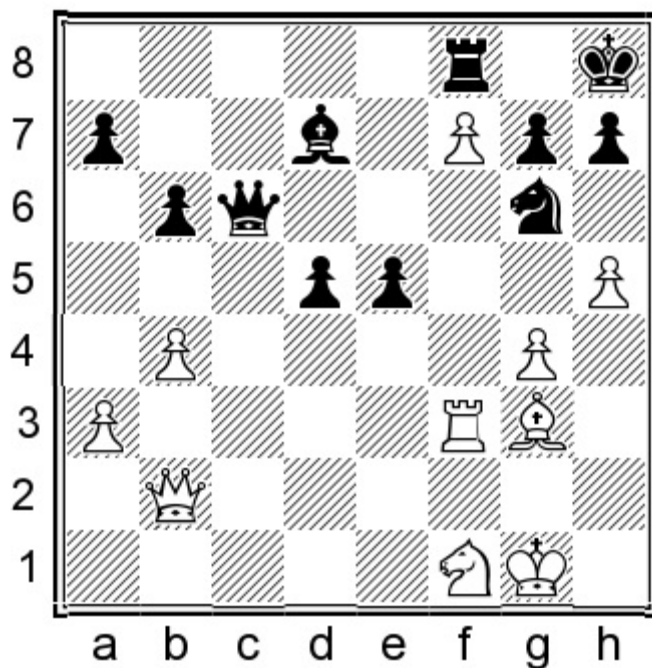
30.e6! fxe6 31.f6 ♞g6

31...♝c3? 32.f7+ ♜h8 33.♞g3+-

32.f7+ ♜f8?

The most natural move turns out to be a mistake. The right move is 32...♜h8! 33.h4 ♝f8 (33...e5? 34.♝xe5)

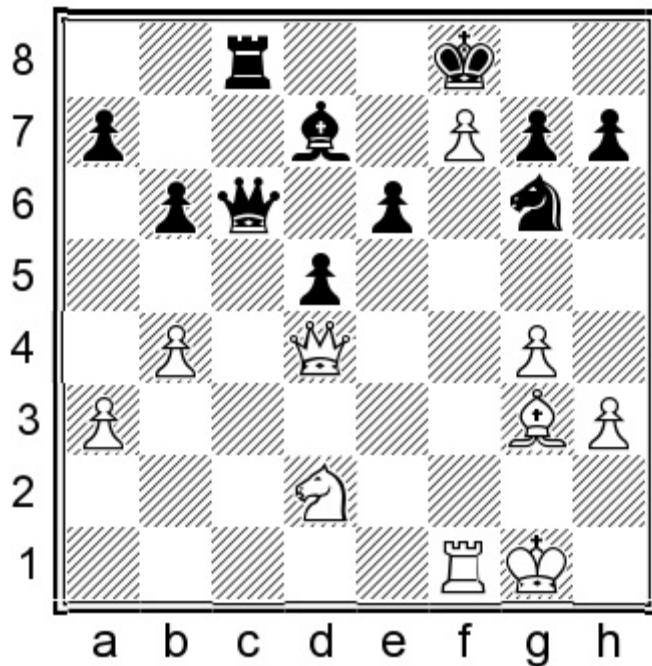
34.♔g3 ♖c1 35.♗xc1 ♚xc1+ 36.♘f1! The threat is ♔g3-d6. (36.♕h2? e5--+) 36...♚c6 37.h5 e5 38.♚b2!



Position after: 38.♚b2!

38...♔xg4 (38...d4 39.hxg6± Δ 39...♚xf3 40.♚h2 h6 41.♚xh6+! with checkmate.) 39.♖c3 ♚f6 40.hxg6±.

33.♔g3 ♖c1 34.♗xc1 ♚xc1+ 35.♗f1 ♚c6



Position after: 35...♚c6

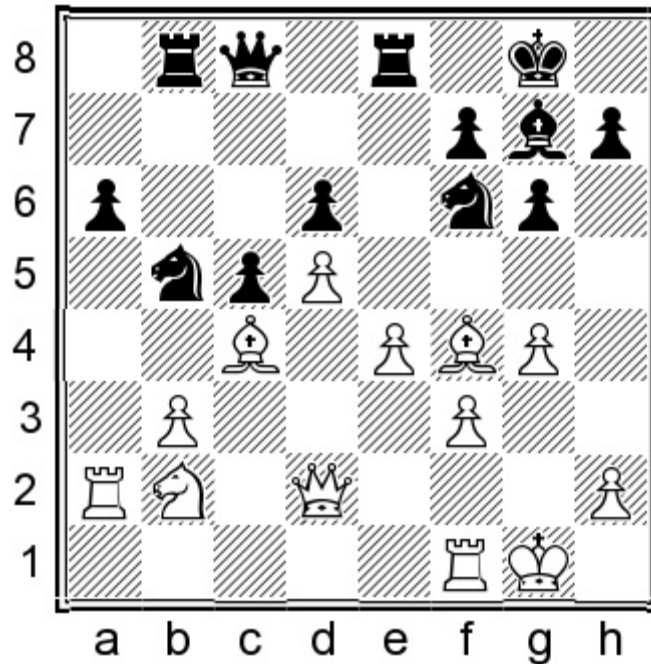
36.♘f3

There is a beautiful move which would have won immediately: 36.♖c4! ♜xc4 37.♙d6+ ♗e7 38.♜f2!+-.

36...♜c3 37.♙d6+ ♗xf7 38.♗e5+ ♗g8 39.♜xc3 ♝xc3 40.♗xd7 ♝xh3 41.b5+-

1-0 (50) Dreev, A (2664) – Khademalsharieh, S (2445) Iran 2016.

Example 9
From Caruana-Grischuk
Berlin 2018



Black to move

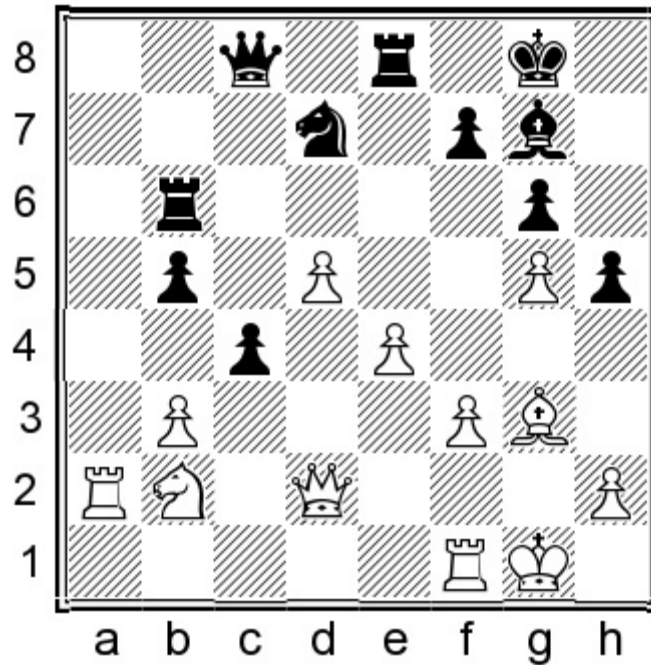
27...♗d7!?

An important and timely regrouping of pieces. If Black delays, then the position will stabilise and the pawn weaknesses will start to be felt. This regrouping is related to the sacrifice of the d6-pawn, and Black will still have to prove that he has sufficient compensation for it.

However it was even stronger to play the preliminary 27...h5!

A) 28.h3?! hxg4 29.hxg4 ♗xe4 30.fxe4 ♗c3 31.♝xa6 ♝xe4 32.♜g2 ♝xb3! 33.♝c6 ♜e8 34.♙xb3 ♗e2+ 35.♗h1 ♗xf4 36.♝xf4 ♝xf4 37.♗d3 ♝f6 38.g5 ♝f5 39.♙d1 (39.♝xd6?? ♜b8) 39...♙f8±

B) 28.g5 and only now to sacrifice a pawn: 28...♗d7 29.♙xb5 (29.♗g2 ♙c3!?∞) 29...axb5 30.♙xd6 ♝b6 31.♙g3 (31.♙f4 c4∞) 31...c4



Position after: 31...c4

There's no need for deep calculation to understand that the inclusion of the moves '27...h5 28.g5' is clearly in Black's favour, as it adds to his attacking resources. The ideas of transferring the queen to h3 or the advance of the h-pawn appear. Black has full compensation for the sacrificed pawn, for example 32.bxc4 bxc4 33.♖e2 c3 34.♗d1 (34.♗d3 ♜b5 35.♞c2 ♗b6 36.♔g2 h4) 34...♗c5↑.

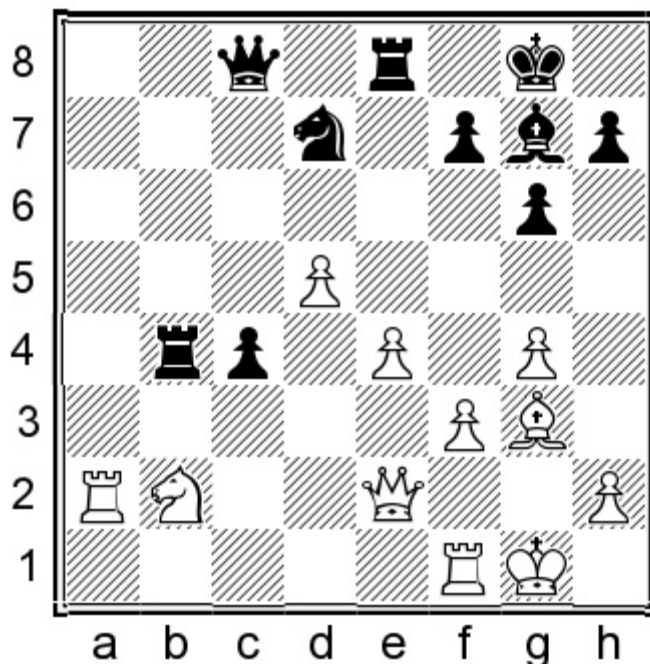
27...♗d7!? 28.♙xb5

28.♔g2 ♙c3 29.♞c1 ♙d4

28...axb5 29.♙xd6 ♜b6 30.♙g3 c4! 31.bxc4 bxc4 32.♞e2 ♜b4

White did not tempt fate and forced a repetition of moves.

32...c3!? 33.♗d3 ♞c4 34.♞c2±



Position after: 32...Rb4

33.♙d6

Indeed, understanding the position is not so simple. One thing is clear: it was possible to continue playing, perhaps with more risk for Black than White.

One inaccurate move and compensation for the pawn may disappear.

A) 33.♘d1

A1) 33...♗c5 34.♔g2 ♘d3 (34...f5? is very premature due to 35.♖a7! Δ♗c7 35...♗d3 36.d6±) 35.♗e3 (35.♗f2!?) and White has a comfortable plus.) 35...♙c5 36.d6 ♖b3 37.♗d5±

A2) 33...c3! 34.♗c2 f5 35.gxf5 gxf5 36.♙e1 fxe4 37.♙xc3 ♖c4∞

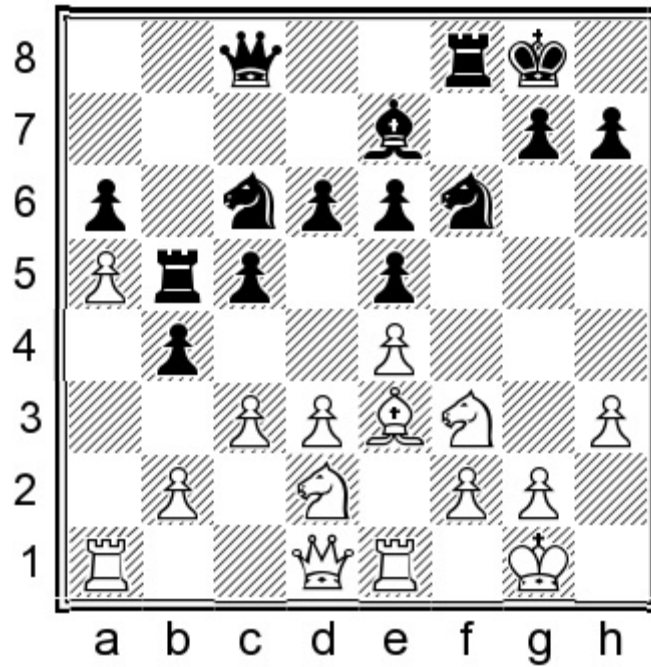
B) 33.♖c1 c3! 34.♗d3 ♖d4 35.♗f4 ♗c5 36.♙b5 ♖d2! 37.♖xd2 cxd2 38.♖f1 (38.♖d1 ♗xe4 39.fxe4 ♖xe4∞) 38...h5! 39.gxh5 g5 40.♗d3 ♙d4+ 41.♔g2 ♗xe4 42.fxe4 ♖xe4∞

C) Probably the most practical is to make a prophylactic move: 33.♔g2!?! ♗e5 34.♗d1± and the game transposes to the variation above.

33...Rb6 34.♙g3 Rb4 35.♙d6 Rb6 36.♙g3

½-½ (36) Caruana, F (2784) – Grischuk, A (2767) Berlin 2018.

Example 10
From So-Aronian
Berlin 2018



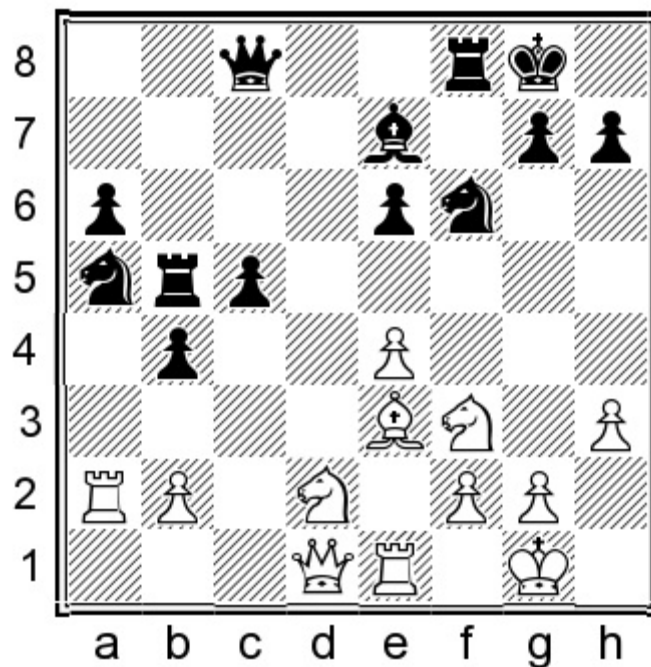
White to move

18.d4!

A brilliant solution! White does not even try to protect the a5-pawn and, by sacrificing it, achieves an advantageous change in the pawn structure and takes the initiative.

18.♘c4 h6=

18.d4! exd4 19.cxd4 ♖xa5 20.dxc5 dxc5 21.♖a2!



Position after: 21.♖a2!

This delicate quiet move underlines Black's pawn weaknesses. It's not a foregone conclusion that White will double on the a-file, but he gets ready for it just in case. The compensation for the pawn lies in the potential weaknesses on 'a6', 'c5' and 'e6', the unfortunate positions of the knight on a5 and rook on b5, the ability to capture the c4-square by the knight, and the unsafe position of the black king, due to the lack of the f-pawn.

21...♖b7

A) Probably the right plan is to transfer the knight from f6 to c6 to achieve cooperation of the pieces, but such a manoeuvre is not at all obvious. 21...♞d7 22.♖e2 ♞b8 23.♞e5 ♞bc6 24.♞ec4 ♞xc4 25.♞xc4

B) Black is not ready for activity on the queenside: 21...c4?! 22.♖a1±.

22.b3!±

Fixing the black queenside.

22...♔h8?!

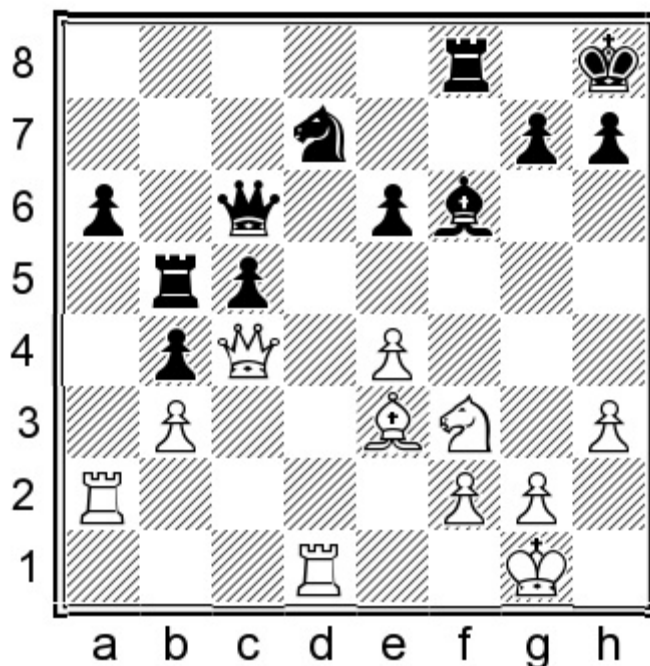
Black does not find the plan to strengthen the position and makes a move from general considerations, but these considerations are wrong. The king might have stood better on g8 than on h8, so by moving it Black lost important time at the very least.

Once again, the only right move was 22...♞d7 23.♖e2!? (23.♖a1!? ♖c7 24.♖c1 ♙f6 25.♙d4).

23.♖c2 ♞d7

Now it's too late.

24.♖ea1 ♙d8 25.♞c4 ♞xc4 26.♖xc4 ♙f6 27.♖d1 ♖c6



Position after: 27... ♖c6

28. ♖ad2

Of course it is difficult to resist such an active move, but technically more accurate was 28. ♕f4! e5 29. ♕e3 ♜b6 30. ♖e2±.

28... ♜b6 29. ♖c2 ♖c7?!

Only 29... ♖c8 allowed Black to maintain a defence, however in this case White also has good compensation for the pawn, for example: 30. ♖c1 ♕e7 31. h4!±.

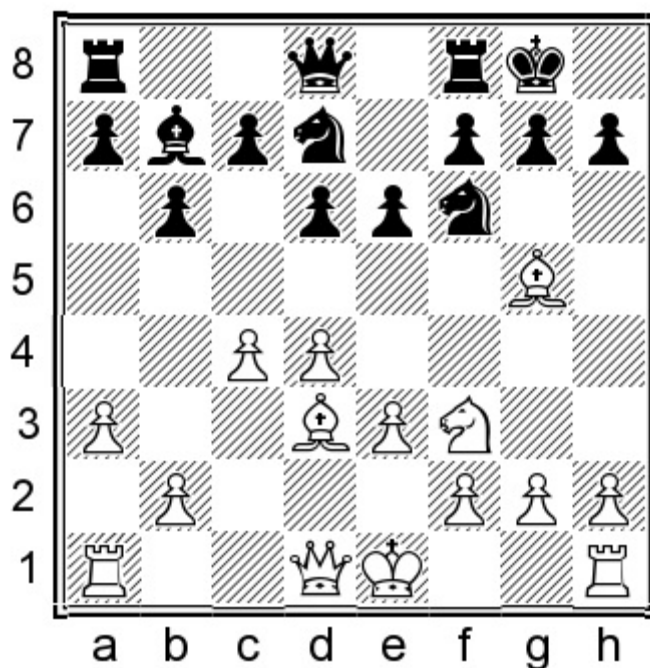
30. e5 ♕e7 31. ♜d4!±

1-0 (78) So, W (2799) – Aronian, L (2794) Berlin 2018.

Example 11

From Dreev-Ghaem Maghami

Philadelphia 2015



White to move

White, of course, really wants to take control of the e4-square.

The most harmonious method of doing so is to retreat the knight, but the g2-pawn is hanging. To tell the truth, it seemed to me that Black would be afraid to take the pawn, because it would result in the opening of the g-file. White could castle long, and his pieces would be aimed at the enemy king.

10. ♜d2!?

Imagine my surprise when Black, without hesitation, took the pawn. 10. 0-0 h6 11. ♕h4 g5!? 12. ♕g3 ♜e4=

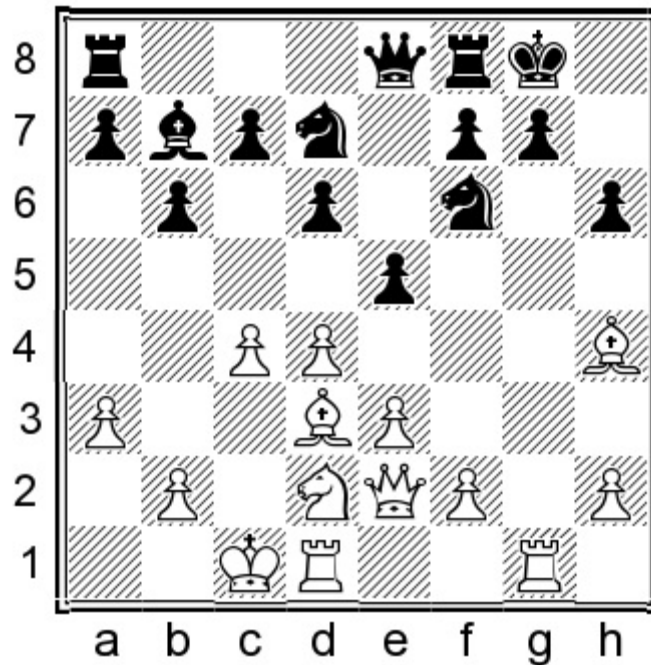
deprives White of the advantage of the two bishops.

10. ♖d2!? h6

10... ♗xg2 11. ♖g1 ♗b7 12. ♗h6±

11. ♗h4 ♗xg2 12. ♖g1 ♗b7 13. ♖e4!

Of course, I saw this move. I would have been satisfied with the exchange 13... ♗xe4 14. ♗xe4 because then the white bishop could cut through Black's position from the c6-square, but I refrained because I did not really understand what I would do after a simple retreat of the king. I thought that the initiative would develop by itself, so I played 13. ♗e2: 13... ♗e8 14. 0-0 e5

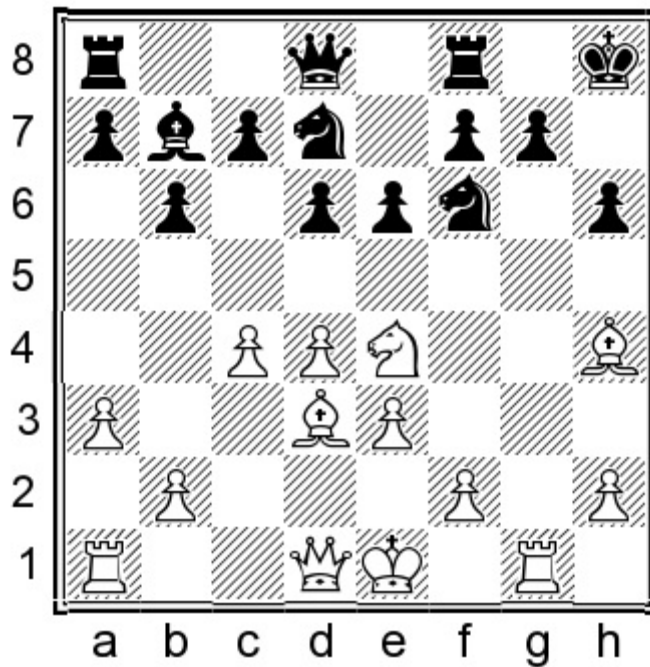


Position after: 14...e5

A) 15. ♗f5! This, the correct move, would make White's position much more promising than in the game, but would not lead to a clear advantage. 15...g6! (15...exd4 This natural move would have been refuted by 16. ♗xd7! ♖xd7 17. ♗g4 g6 18. exd4!±.) 16. ♗f1! ♖g7 17. ♗h3 e4 with a complicated game, for example 18. ♖df1 Preparing f2-f3. (18. ♖b1 ♖h8!?∞; 18. f3 exf3 19. ♖df1 b5 20. e4 bxc4 21. ♖xf3 ♗c8!?∞) 18...b5! A typical positional pawn sacrifice. Black is trying to gain space for his pieces, and at the same time look towards the white king. 19. f3 (19. cxb5 a6∞) 19...bxc4 20. fxe4 c3! Opening up the white king. 21. bxc3 ♖b8∞

B) 15. f3?! This natural move turned out to be a mistake. 15... ♖h8 16. ♗g2 ♖g8 17. ♗h3 ♖h7!? 18. f4 e4 19. ♗c2 ♖df6± White's attack has stalled and Black is ready to play ...b6-b5, so here I was glad to accept the offer of a draw. ½-½ Dreev, A (2643) – Ghaem Maghami, E (2550) Philadelphia 2015.

13... ♖h8



Position after: 13... ♔h8

Here White had a great tactical resource, which would have allowed him to win the pawn back and maintain, if not a great advantage, at least a very comfortable position.

14. ♖f3 ♜e8 15. ♚g2!

I underestimated this move.

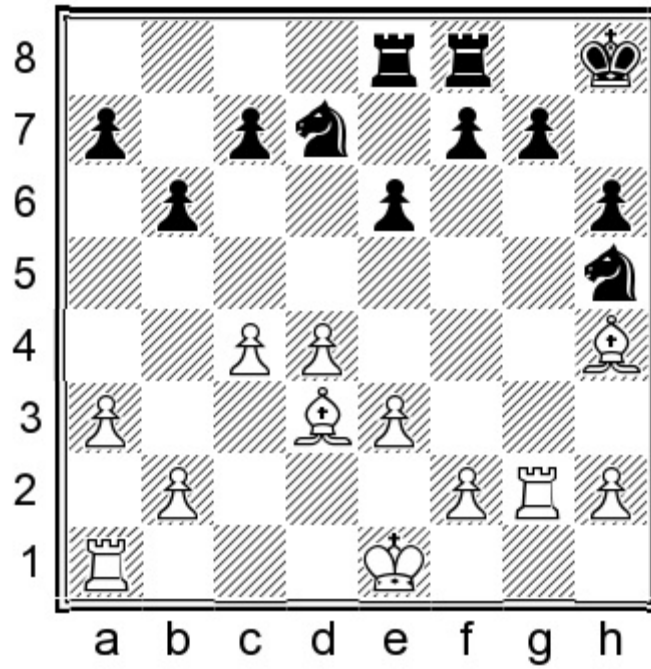
15... ♘h5

15... ♖g8 16. ♘xd6±

16. ♘xd6!

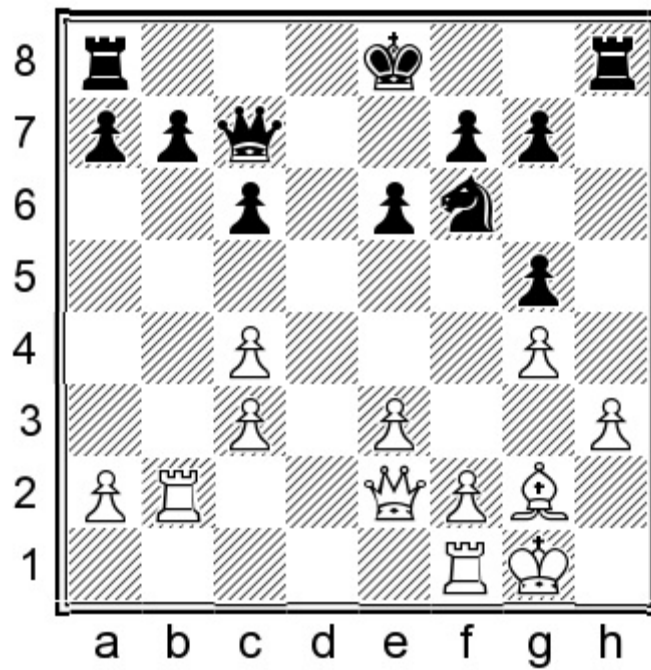
Now that the white queen is protected, a small tactical trick becomes possible, winning the pawn back.

16... ♙xg2 17. ♘xe8 ♜axe8 18. ♖xg2±



Position after: 18. ♖xg2±

Example 12
From Svidler-Dreev
Riyadh 2017



White to move

18.f4

After this logical and at first glance very strong move it may seem that the initiative is with White.

However, this is not the case. After Black's quite unexpected reply, White needs to think about equalising.

18...♘d7!

By sacrificing the g5-pawn, Black activates his pieces to the max, and, more importantly, he does not allow the enemy pieces to develop. The potential weaknesses of White's pawns could soon become a serious problem.

18...gxf4 is weaker, e.g. 19.exf4 0-0 20.g5 ♘d7 21.♙e4!? ♘c5 22.♙b1 ♖ad8 23.h4↑.

19.fxg5 ♘e5!

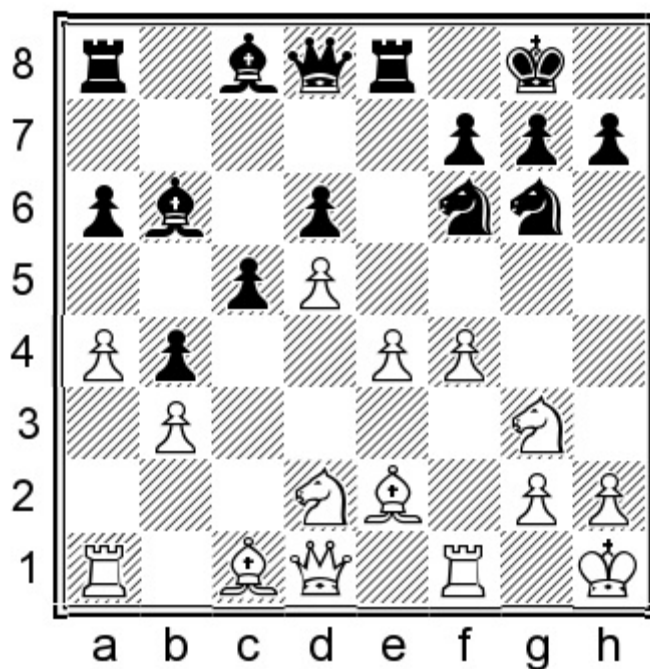
White's position gives cause for concern. The game continued

20.c5 ♖d8 21.♗fb1 ♚e7 22.♗xb7 ♚xc5 23.♚f2 0-0 24.♚f4 ♚xc3 25.♗xa7 ♖d2 26.♗f1 ♚c5 27.♗b7 ♗xa2 28.h4 ♘g6 29.♚g3 ♖e2

Example 13

From Shankland-Lenderman

Saint Louis 2016



Black to move

17...c4!

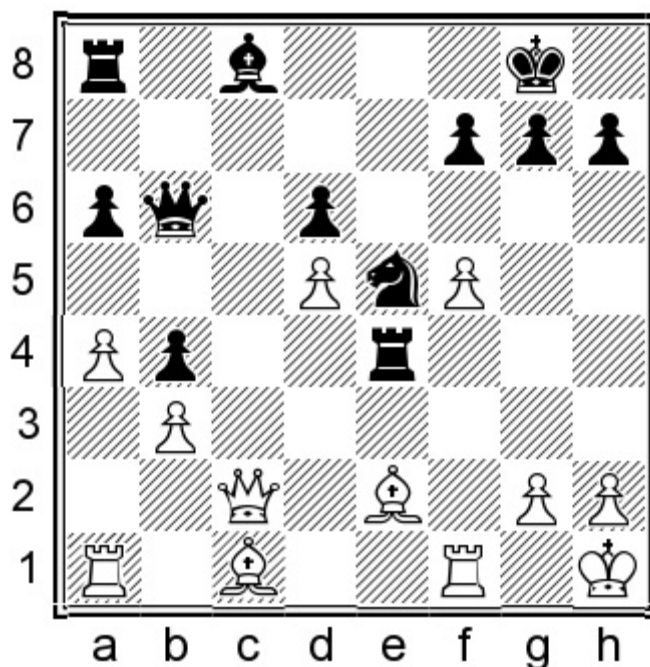
In this case, the pawn sacrifice, though it does not save Black from all his problems, is nevertheless the only real solution.

If Black was greedy and did not give up a pawn, White would gradually strengthen the position: after putting the bishop on b2 and occupying the c4-square with a knight, he could start active operations, both in the centre and on the kingside. Black, in this case, would not have any counterplay.

Moreover, it is very difficult when the ‘victim’ suddenly finds himself in doubt in a practical game, and White immediately committed an inaccuracy.

18.bxc4?!

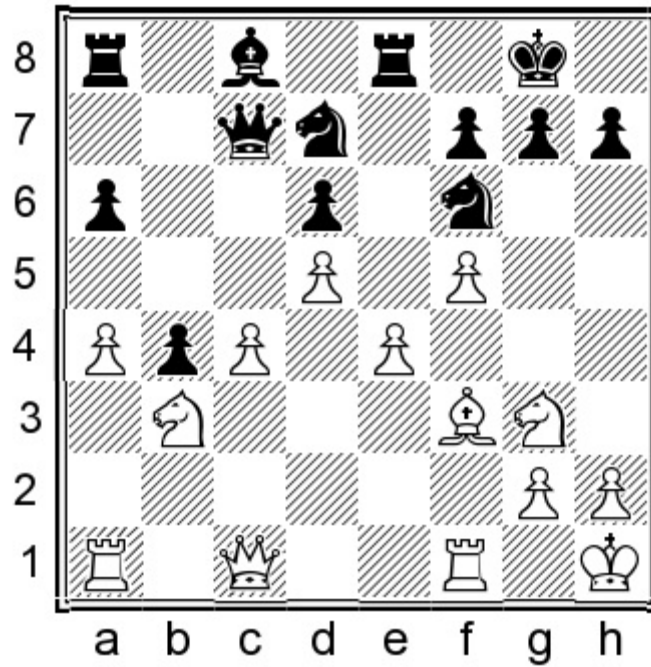
18.♘xc4! led to an advantage, albeit it not decisive: 18...♗xe4 19.♗xe4 ♖xe4 20.f5! ♗e5 (20...♗f8?! 21.♗d3 ♖e8 22.♗xb6 ♜xb6 23.f6!+-) 21.♗xb6 ♜xb6 22.♞c2!



Position after: 22.♞c2!

The black rook falls into the net. 22...♞d4 23.♗b2 ♞e3 24.♗xe5! A difficult move, not easy to see from afar. 24...♖xe5 25.♞c6! White wins a pawn, but the fight is not over yet. 25...♞a7 26.♞xd6 ♞e7 27.♞xe7 ♖xe7± White has a clear advantage in the ending, however, Black retains practical chances of saving the game.

18...♗e3!? 19.f5 ♗e5 20.♗b3 ♗xc1 21.♞xc1 ♗ed7 22.♗f3 ♞c7

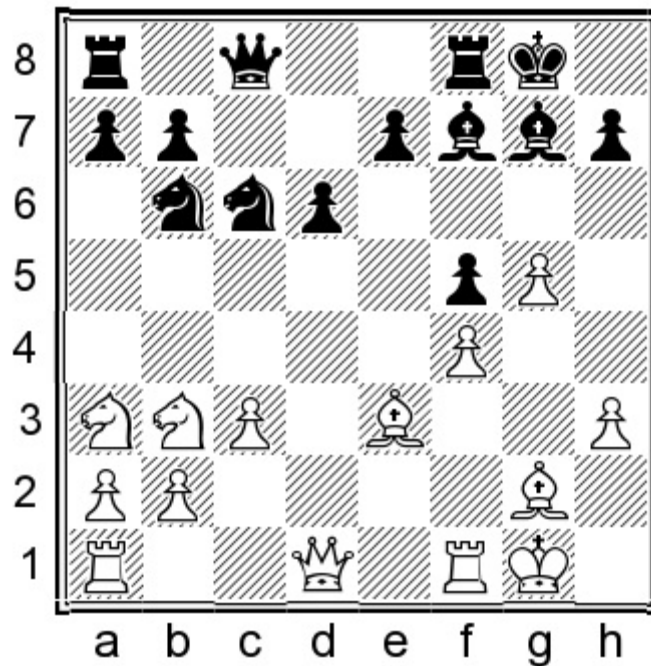


Position after: 22...♙c7

The white pawns are blocked, there is the prospect of a black knight getting to e5, and Black has a passed pawn – all these allow Black to expect full compensation. ½-½ (50) Shankland, S (2656) – Lenderman, A (2618) Saint Louis 2016.

22...a5!♞ was possible as well.

Example 14
From Arbakov-Lerner
Beltsy 1977



Black to move

It is obvious that Black would like to finish the development of the queenside and aim for play in the centre. The question is how to do this as quickly as possible, as the advance of the e-pawn would hang the pawn on d6.

16...e5!

Absolutely correct, and well played! Black is not afraid to lose a pawn.

17.♖d2

A) 17.♖xd6? ♜d8 18.♖c5 e4!⊖ After this the white pieces, especially the white queen, suddenly fall upon hard times. For example, he lands in a bad position after 19.♞ad1 ♞xd1 20.♞xd1 ♘a4 21.♖b5 ♘xb2-+.

B) White cannot take control of the d5-square after 17.♙xb6 axb6 18.♘b5 (18.♙d5 ♘e7⊖) 18...♞d8 19.♙d5 ♖d7⊖ The white knights are too far from the d5-square. (19...♘e7? 20.♙xf7+ ♔xf7 21.♘xd6++-)

17...♖e6

Also possible was 17...♞d8!?

18.♞ad1 ♞ad8∞

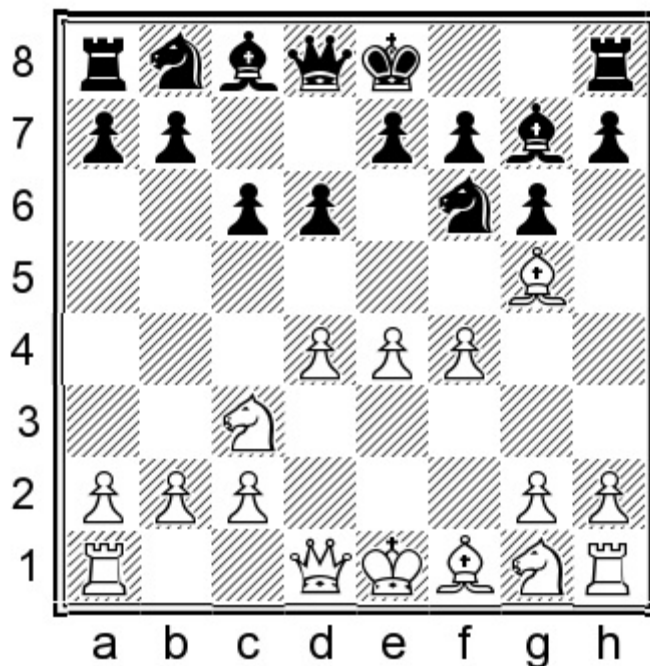
Black has quickly brought his forces into the battle and created the necessary tension in the centre.

Example 15

From Dreev-Minasian

Warsaw 2005

1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 g6 4.♙g5 ♙g7 5.f4 c6



Position after: 5...c6

This position had already been encountered many times in my practice.

Considering the attack by the queen ...♙d8-b6, I always played 6.♙d2, but this time I decided not to move the queen and continue the development of the kingside instead. However, this idea is connected with a pawn sacrifice.

6.♘f3

6.♙d2 leads to big theory after 6...b5 7.♙d3 0-0 8.♘f3 ♙g4 and so on.

6...♙b6?!

Black is principled.

A) Probably it is necessary to seek an acceptable game in the following variation: 6...d5!? 7.e5 (7.♙d3!?) 7...♘e4.

B) 6...♙g4? 7.h3+-

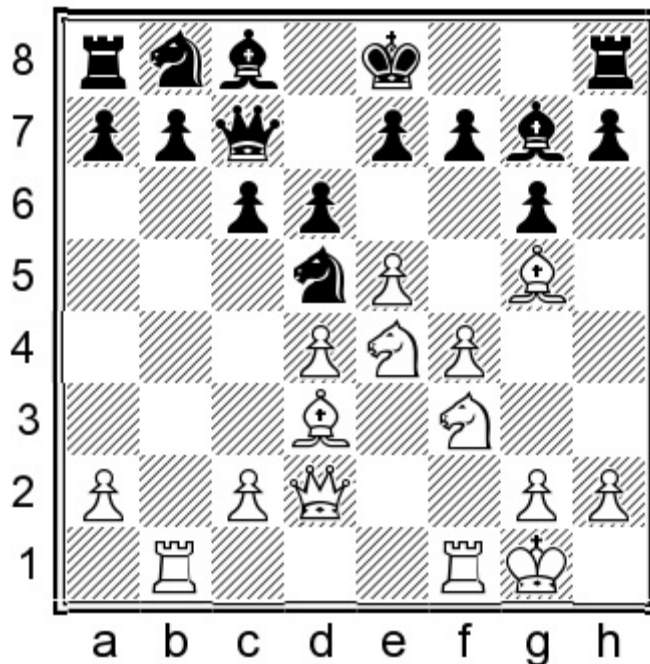
C) 6...0-0 7.♙d3 ♙b6 8.♙d2↑

7.♙d2!

Of course White does not include the protection of the b2-pawn in his plans.

7.a3?! ♘h5!?!∞ (7...d5!?! 8.e5 ♘e4∞; 7...♙xb2?? 8.♘a4+-)

7...♙xb2 8.♙b1 ♙a3 9.♙d3!



Position after: 12. ♖e4

Rearranging pieces for the attack.

12...f5

This is a natural attempt by Black to ‘close down’ against numerous threats. However even here White finds ways through to the black king’s fortress. Once again the X-ray on the e7-pawn will help.

A) 12...f6 13. ♕xf6! ♕xf6 14. exf6 ♖xf6 15. ♖xf6+ exf6 16. f5 g5 17. ♖xg5+–

B) 12...0-0 13. c4 ♖b6 14. exd6 exd6 15. ♖f6+ ♕xf6 16. ♕xf6 ♖8d7 17. ♕e7 ♜e8 18. ♜be1+–

13. ♕xe7! ♖xe7

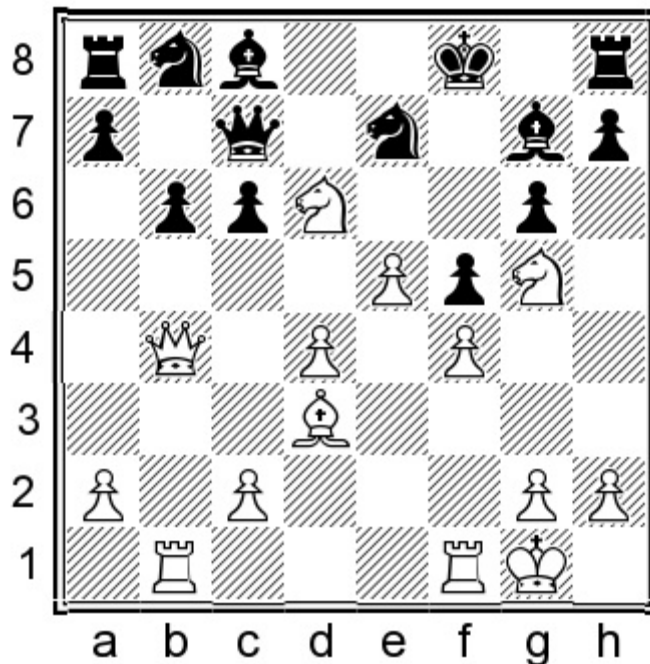
13...fxe4 14. ♕xd6+–

14. ♖xd6+ ♜f8 15. ♖g5 b6

A) 15...h6? 16. ♜xb7!+–

B) 15...b5 16. c4+–

16. ♜b4



Position after: 16. ♖b4

White's most powerful piece joins in the attack.

16...h6

16... ♗d5 17. ♖a3 ♖e7 18. c4 ♗c7 19. g4 h6 20. ♗f3 fxg4 21. ♗h4+-

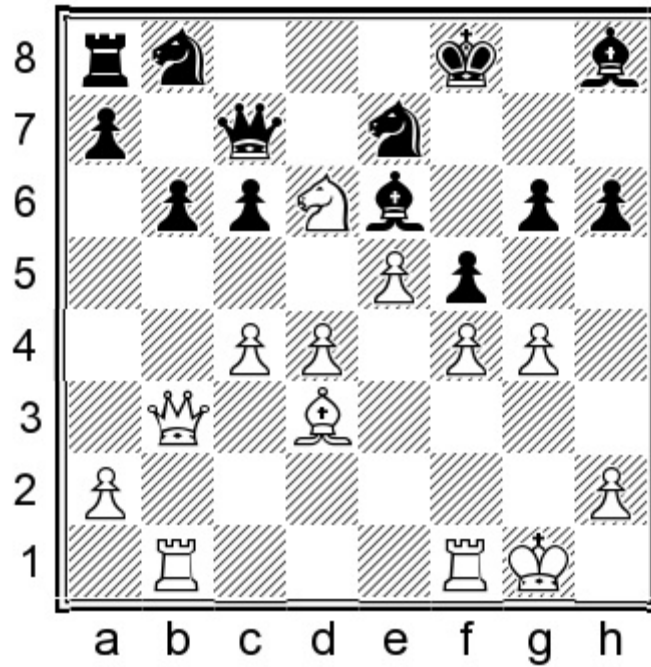
17. ♖b3 ♗d5 18. ♗gf7 ♕e6

Black tries to buy White off by giving up the exchange.

A) After 18... ♖h7 the easiest way is to play 19. ♗xc8 ♖xc8 (19... ♖xf7 20. ♗d6+- leads to the same position) 20. ♗d6 ♖d7 (20... ♖e6 21. g4+-) 21. c4 ♗e7 22. c5 ♕h8 23. g4+- and the black pieces are totally helpless against White's attack.

B) 18... ♖g8 19. ♗xc8 ♖xc8 20. ♗d6 ♖d7 21. g4+-

19. ♗xh8 ♕xh8 20. c4 ♗e7 21. g4!+-



Position after: 21.g4!+-

There is no reason to wait if you can act immediately.

21...♞d7

21...fxg4 22.♙xg6 ♞xg6 23.f5+-

22.♚a3! c5

A) 22...fxg4 23.f5+-

B) 22...♔g8 23.♞xf5 ♞xf5 24.gxf5 ♙xf5 25.♙xf5 gxf5 26.♚e7 ♜f8 27.♔h1+-

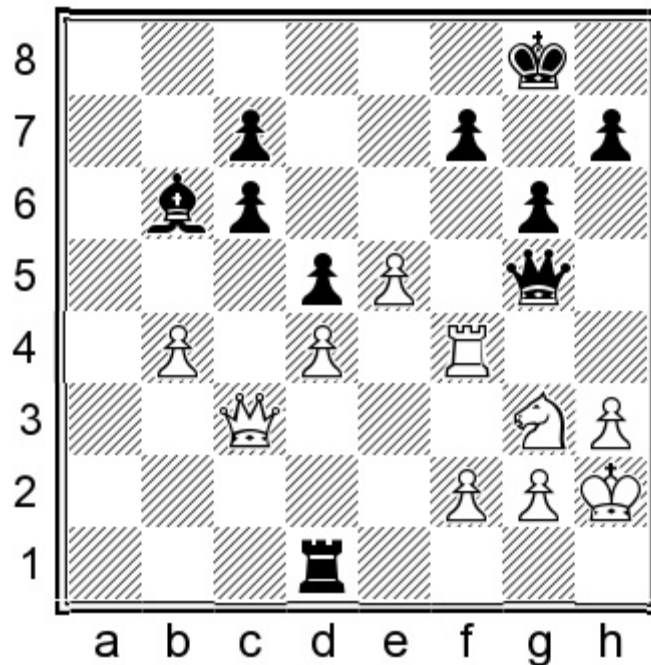
23.d5 ♞xd5 24.cxd5 ♙xd5 25.♞bd1

1-0 Dreev, A (2705) – Minasian, A (2597) Warsaw 2005.

Chapter 4 Exercises

1

Mamedov, R. – Lopez Martinez, J.



White to move

How could White punish Black's last move 30... ♖e7-g5?

Show/Hide Solution

1

31.e6!!

An unexpected pawn sacrifice leading to victory. The game continued 31. ♖g4? ♖c1 32. ♖f3 ♖xd4 33. ♗e2 ♖b2 34. ♗xd4? (Again, the sacrifice of the pawn was the only correct decision, this time providing White with salvation: 34.e6! fxe6 35. ♖f6 ♖xe2 36. ♖d8+ ♔f7 37. ♖d7+ ♔f6 38. ♖d8+ ♔e5 39. ♖g5+ ♔d6 40. ♖d8+=) 34... ♗xd4+ and White slowly lost. 0-1 (46) Mamedov, R (2709) – Lopez Martinez, J (2584) Batumi 2018.

31.e6!! fxe6

31...xf4 32.e7+- and queens.

32.f3!

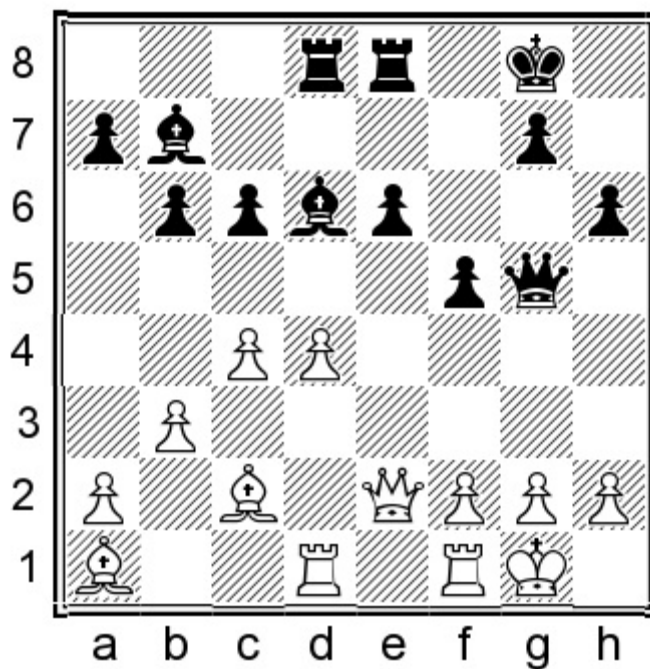
Black's position is hopeless, because his pieces cannot come to the aid of their king, for example...

32...h6 33.f6 a1 34.g4 a8 35.xe6+ h8 36.e5 g7 37.e2+-

The knight goes to e6 and Black is defenceless.

2

Esipenko, A. – Goryachkina, A.



White to move

Does the sacrifice of a pawn with 24.c5 lead to an advantage?

Show/Hide Solution

2

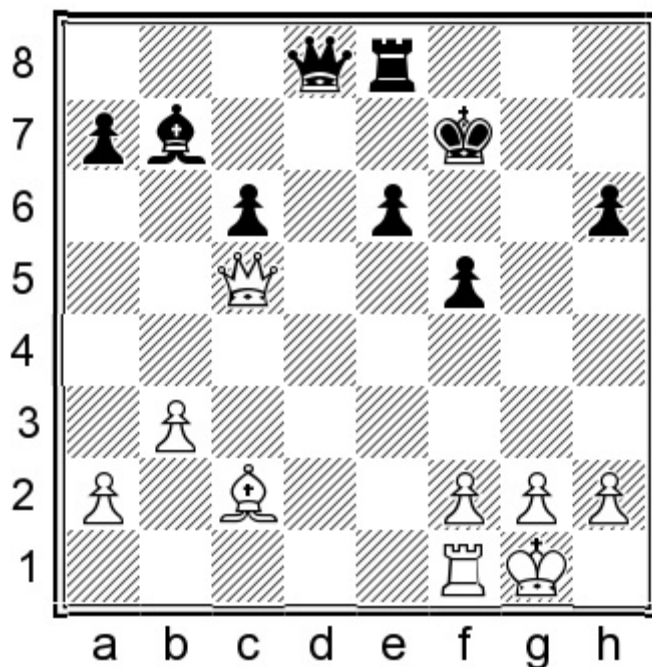
24.c5

No, it does not. The position is approximately equal, just like after any other normal move.

A) 24. ♖f3 ♕a8!?=

B) 24. g3 c5 25. dxc5 ♕xc5 26. ♕c3 a5 27. ♖e5 ♖e7 28. ♗xd8 ♗xd8 29. ♖e1 ♕c8=

24. c5 bxc5 25. dxc5 ♕xc5 26. ♗xd8 ♖xd8 27. ♕xg7 ♔xg7 28. ♖e5+ ♔f7 29. ♖xc5



Position after: 29. ♖xc5

29... ♖d5!

The only way! The counter-sacrifice of a pawn, though temporary, leads to equality.

Black ends up in a bad position after 29... ♖b6 30. ♖e5 c5 31. ♖f4 ♗g8 32. g3±.

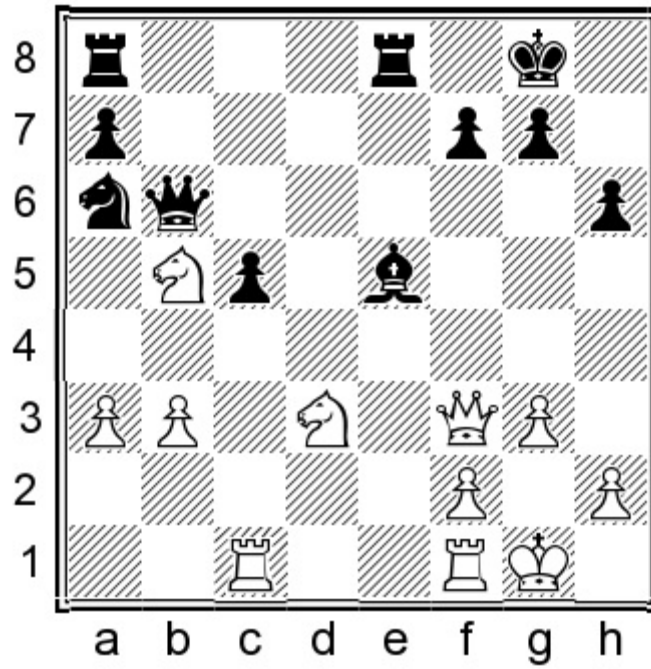
30. b4

30. ♖xa7 c5 31. f3 ♗a8 32. ♖b6 ♗xa2 33. ♗d1 ♗a1 34. ♗xa1 ♖d4+=

30... ♖xc5 31. bxc5 ♕a6=

3

Navara, D. – Karjakin, S.

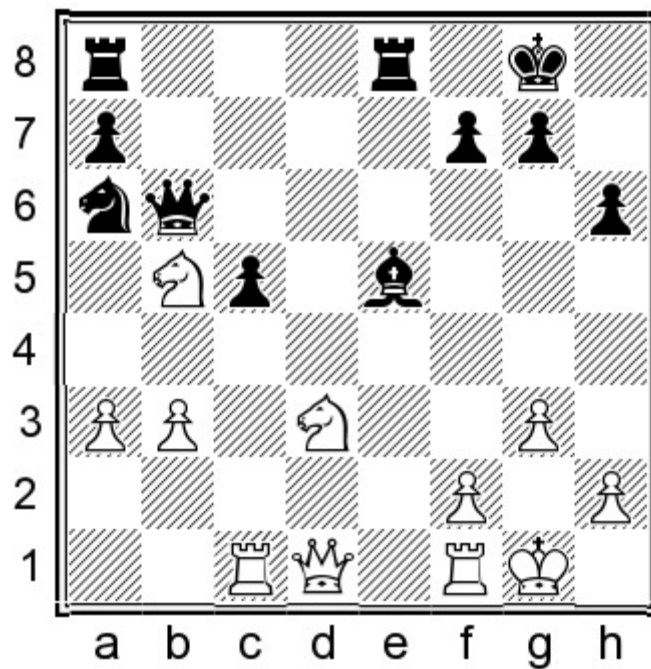


Black to move

Should Black play 24... ♖xg3?

Show/Hide Solution

3



White to move

24. ♖f3!

This move does not lead to an advantage, but White sets an excellent positional trap connected with the sacrifice of a pawn. We have now reached the position in our exercise.

24... ♜xg3?

At first, this seems like a good move, but in fact Black falls into the trap.

24... ♜ad8 led to approximate equality.

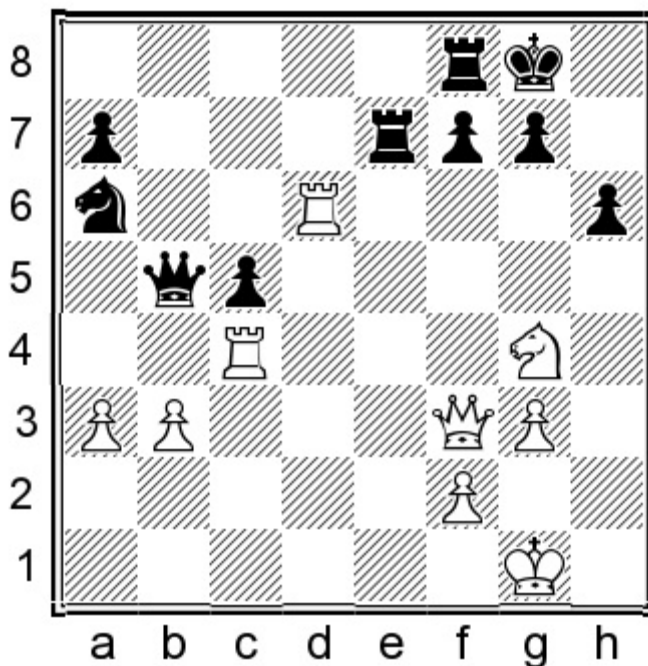
25. hxg3!

Probably Black was hoping for 25. fxg3 c4+ when he has no problems.

25... ♖xb5 26. ♘e5! ♜f8 27. ♜fd1! ♜ac8 28. ♜c4 ♜c7?

The only move is 28... ♘c7 when White has an obvious but not decisive advantage. 29. a4! (≤ 29. ♜d7 ♘e6 30. ♜xf7 ♜e8 31. ♜xf8+ ♜xf8 32. ♜e4±) 29... ♜a6 30. ♘d7 ♜fd8 31. ♘xc5±.

29. ♜d6 ♜e7 30. ♘g4+–



Position after: 30. ♘g4+–

30... f5 31. ♜d5+

It was even stronger to play 31. ♘h6+! gxh6 32. ♜g6+ ♜g7 33. ♜xh6+–.

31... ♘h7 32. ♘h6 ♘c7 33. ♜d2 ♜e6?

Losing at once.

33...♚xb3 34.♖h4 ♖e4 35.♗g5 ♖xh4 36.♗xh4 ♜e8 37.♜xf5+ ♔g8 38.♜e7+ ♔f7 39.♞d7 ♜f6 40.♞xa7 ♗b1+ 41.♔g2 ♗e4+ 42.♗xe4 ♜xe4 43.f3 Objectively the endgame is lost, but there were still some practical chances for Black to save it.

34.♖h4

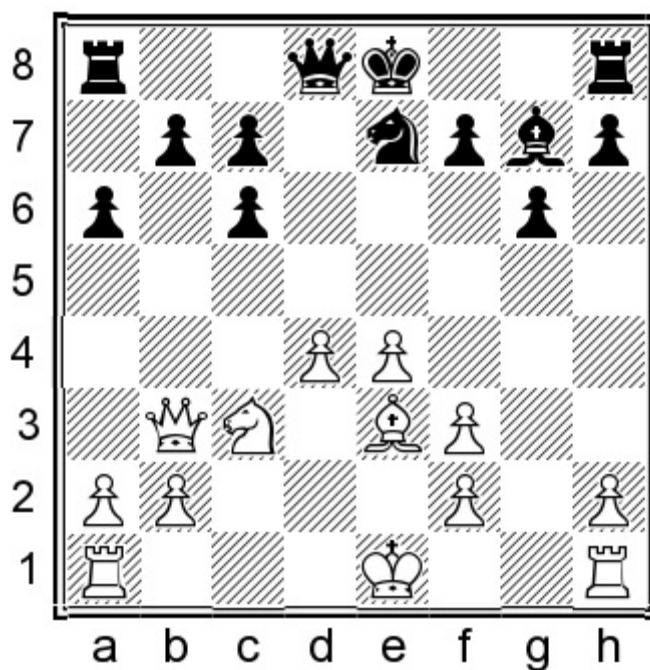
It's all over now.

34...♚xb3 35.♗g5 ♗b2 36.♜g4+ ♔g8 37.♜h6+ ♔h7 38.♜f7+ ♔g8 39.♞h8+! ♔xf7 40.♞d7+

1-0 Navara, D (2737) – Karjakin, S (2773) Saint Louis 2017.

4

Karjakin, S. – Mamedyarov, S.



Black to move

Should Black take on d4?

Show/Hide Solution

4

11...♙xd4!

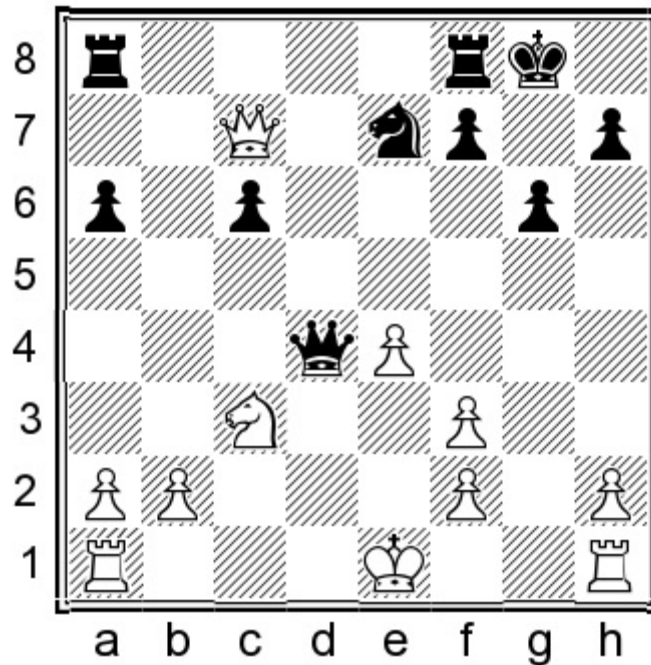
Yes! This is actually not taking a pawn, but sacrificing one!

The simple protection of the pawn is unacceptable here, of course, for example 11...♖b8?! 12.0-0-0, and thanks to the powerful pawn centre White has a large positional advantage.

11...♙xd4! 12.♙xd4

After 12.♖d1 c5 Black will get the same kind of compensation: 13.♙xb7 0-0 14.♘e2 ♖b8 15.♙xa6 ♖b6!
16.♙c4 ♘c6 17.♘xd4 cxd4 18.♙xd4 ♘xd4 19.♖xd4 ♙f6

12...♙xd4 13.♙xb7 0-0 14.♙xc7



Position after: 14. ♙xc7

So Black has sacrificed a pawn. What opportunities has he for compensation, and ideally to assume the initiative?

14...♘d5!

The strongest move in my opinion. Now White faces some problems. 14...♖ab8 was played in the game, achieving comfortable equality: 15.0-0 ♖xb2 16.♙xe7 ♙xc3 17.♔g2= 0-1 (71) Karjakin, S (2763) – Mamedyarov, S (2809) Berlin 2018.

15.♘xd5

15.exd5 ♙d3! 16.♘e2 (It is not too obvious, at least in a practical game, that White loses after 16.♘d1? ♖fe8+ 17.♘e3 ♖ab8!! 18.b3 ♖xe3+! 19.fxex3 ♙xe3+ 20.♔f1 ♙xf3+ 21.♔g1 ♖b4!–+.) 16...♖ae8 17.0-0 ♖xe2 18.♙f4 ♙xd5

15...cxd5 16.♙c3 ♙xc3+ 17.bxc3 ♖ae8

Of course, everyone knows that it is impossible to win the rook endgame, but White still has some work to do.

Too many pawns are exchanged in case of 17...dxe4 18.fxe4 ♖ae8 19.f3 f5 20.0-0-0 fxe4 21.fxe4 ♗xe4 22.♗d2=.

Chapter 5

Danger and initiative

We cannot cover all the elements of the middlegame in one book, but this chapter includes the most significant ones which have not been considered in the first four chapters. Most of the examples will feature the important element we know as sense of danger. In my opinion this is rather a psychological factor; it should be developed, but not excessively. So that the sense of danger does not interfere with creativity, there must be a reasonable balance.

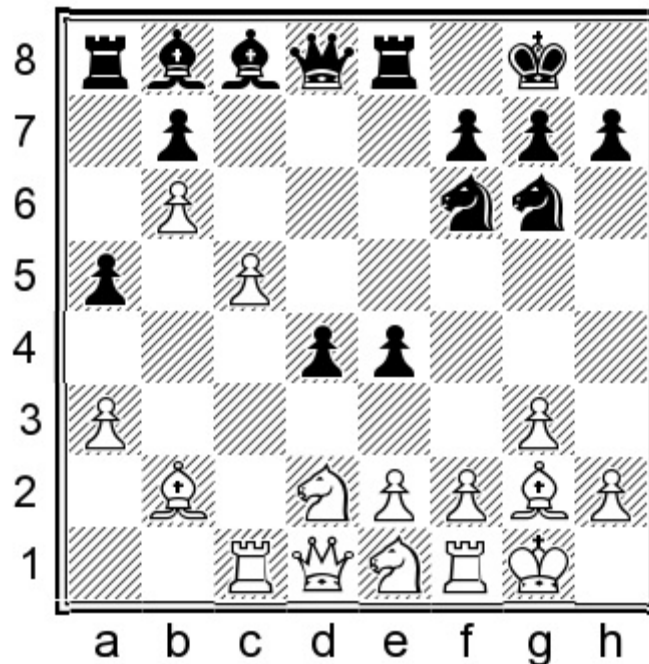
A few examples will be devoted to the exchange and the exchange sacrifice, and there will also be examples on calculation. Calculation is a necessary part of the game which it is important to train, however, it is sufficiently studied and covered in chess literature, so I did not deal with it separately.

There will also be an example of an interesting topic, ‘take-take’, i.e. when you should take into consideration automatic recaptures after the capture of one of your own pieces or pawns. This is also rather a psychological element.

The theme of invisible moves will also be considered – moves that are not conspicuous or tempo moves.

The Sense of Danger

Example 1
From Fedoseev-Saric
chess.com 2018



Black to move

19...♔d5!?

This is a difficult position for Black in general; amongst other things it is hard for him to deal with the intense attack on the d4-pawn. With his last move Black announced, although not very obviously, the intention of

transferring his queen to h5, from where, with the support of the light pieces, it can cause serious trouble for the white king.

20. ♖b3?!

White ignores Black's idea and continues to play according to the plan outlined above – attack on the d4-pawn.

First he had to take care of safety and play 20.f3!. It is easy to see that after this precise answer Black can abandon dreams of activity on the kingside. After a possible exchange of knights on the e4-square, not only does Black's attacking potential decrease, but also the e1-knight gets the possibility to enter the game. 20...e3 (20... ♖h5 21. ♗xe4+-) 21. ♗e4 ♕e5 22. ♗xf6+ ♕xf6 23.f4 ♖h5 24. ♕xd4 ♜d8 25. ♗f3 ♕e6 26. ♖a4+-.

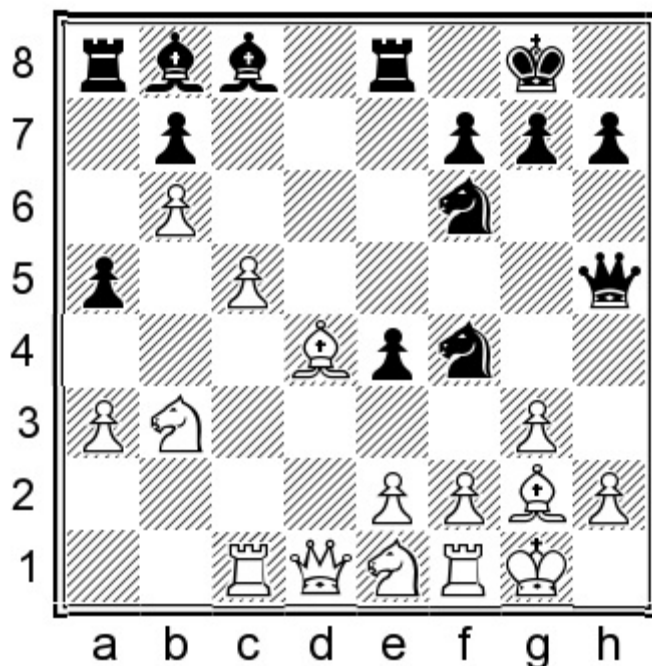
20... ♖h5

White's position is not yet lost, but as a result of disregarding his opponent's threats, he quickly ends up in a hopeless situation.

21. ♕xd4?!

21.f3!?∞

21... ♗f4!



Position after: 21... ♗f4!

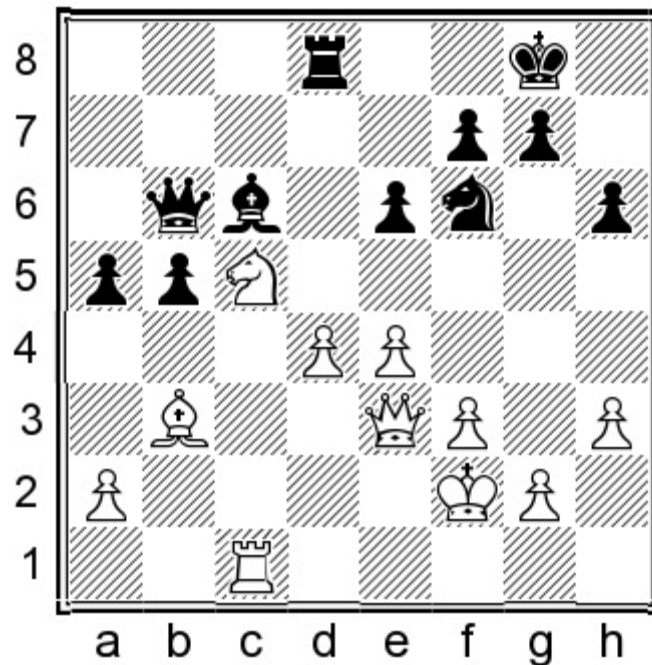
22.f3 exf3 23. ♕xf3 ♗g4 24.h4 ♖g6 25. ♖c2 ♕f5 26.e4 ♗e3 27. ♕xe3 ♖xg3+ 28. ♔h1 ♖xh4+ 29. ♖h2 ♗h3+-

Black is winning, although White eventually won: 1-0 (42) Fedoseev, V (2724) – Saric, I (2664) chess.com 2018.

Example 2

From Mamedyarov-Ding Liren

Berlin 2018



White to move

The position in the diagram is approximate equal. White clearly wants to become active on the kingside or in the centre, but he should not forget that Black's counterplay on the queenside can lead to the creation of a passed pawn.

28.g4

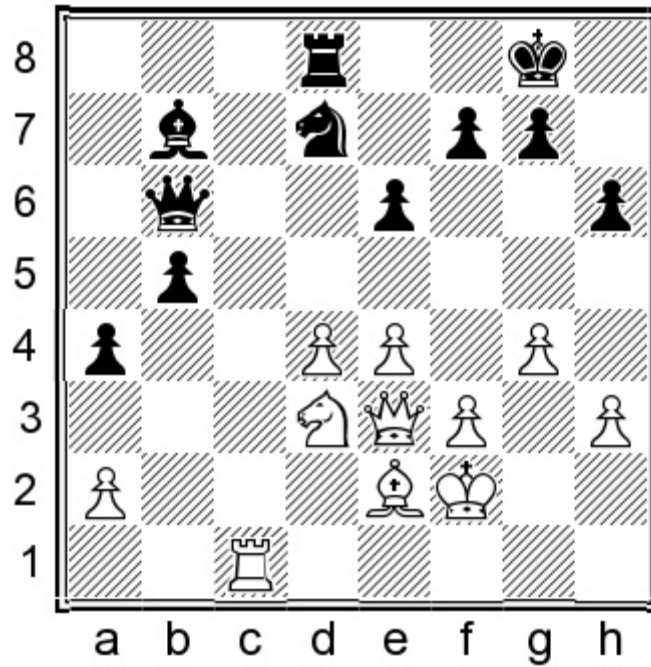
This move is not a serious mistake yet, but it already says that White underestimates the danger to his position. Activity on the kingside is clearly not appropriate.

A) 28.♘e6!? This sacrifice does not lead to an advantage, but it makes White's play straightforward and creates some practical problems for Black. Play could continue 28...fxe6 29.♙xe6+ ♔f8 30.d5 ♚xe3+ 31.♕xe3 ♙xd5 (31...♙d7 32.♙xd7 ♘xd7 33.♖c7∞) And the game continues, e.g. 32.♖d1!? (32.exd5 ♘xd5+=) 32...♙xe6 33.♖xd8+ ♕e7 34.♖a8 a4 35.♖a7+ ♕d6 36.♖a6+ ♕d7 37.a3∞.

B) 28.a3!?!∞ This move could also be a good positional solution.

28.g4 a4 29.♙c2?!

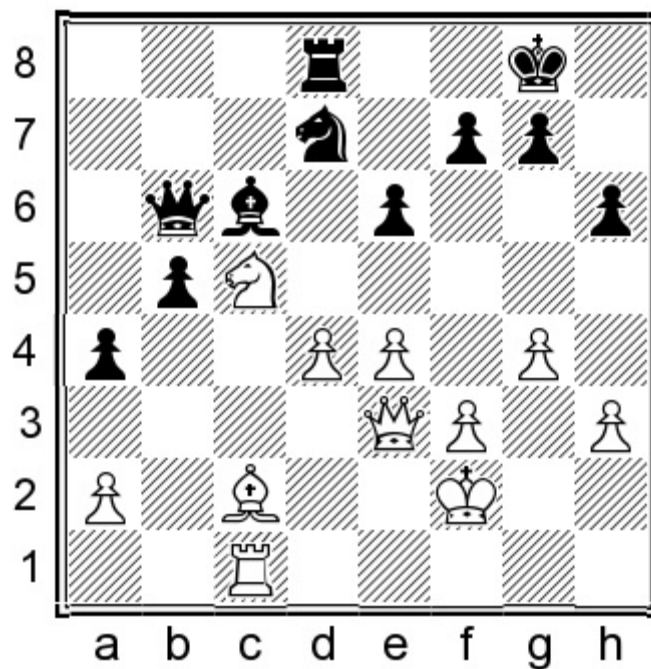
White does not feel the danger and puts the bishop in its most active position, hoping to use it in the attack on the black king, but the right move is 29.♙d1, e.g. 29...♘d7 30.♘d3 ♙b7 31.♙e2



Position after: 31. ♖e2

The best place for the bishop in this case. The position is balanced, and in the event of the most ambitious move, 31...b4!?, White can extinguish Black's initiative in the following way: 32. ♖b1 b3 33. axb3 a3 34. ♖a1 ♖a8 35. b4 ♖c6 36. d5=.

29... ♘d7



Position after: 29... ♘d7

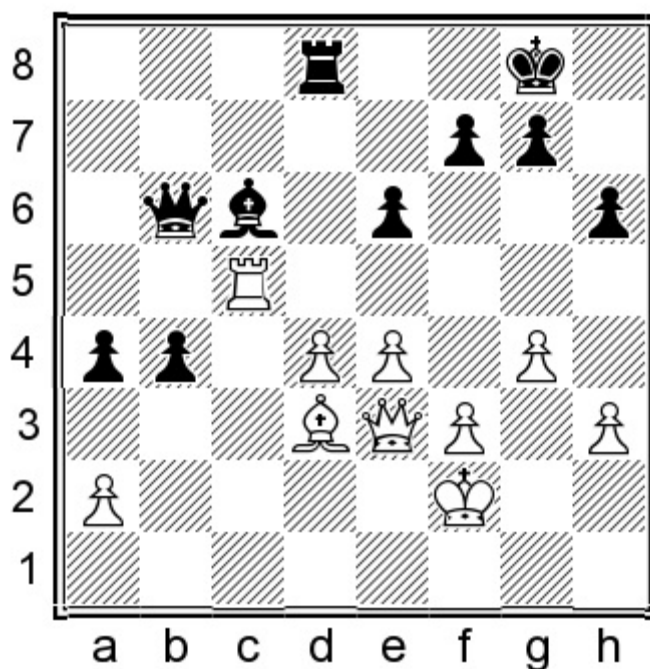
30. ♖d3?!

It was necessary to keep the knights. In this case it would be difficult for Black to create a passed pawn.
30.♘d3!

A) 30...♙b7 31.♙b1 ♖c8 (31...♗d6 32.e5 ♜e7 33.♞c7=) 32.♞xc8+ ♙xc8 33.d5 exd5 34.exd5=

B) 30...♙a8! 31.♙b1 ♗d6 32.e5 ♜e7 33.♔g3 ♘b6 34.♘f4 ♗d7 35.♞c5 ♗xd4 36.♗xd4 ♞xd4 37.♞xb5 ♘d7
38.♘d3 g5 And White should keep the balance, albeit not without some difficulties.

30...♘xc5 31.♞xc5 b4



Position after: 31...b4

32.♙c4?

This is a visually active continuation, but it does not take Black's play into consideration. The bishop had to control the b1-square, when it was still possible to hold on.

32.h4 ♙e8 (32...b3 33.axb3 axb3 34.♙b1♯) 33.♙b1♯ White is worse, but has more chances of drawing than losing.

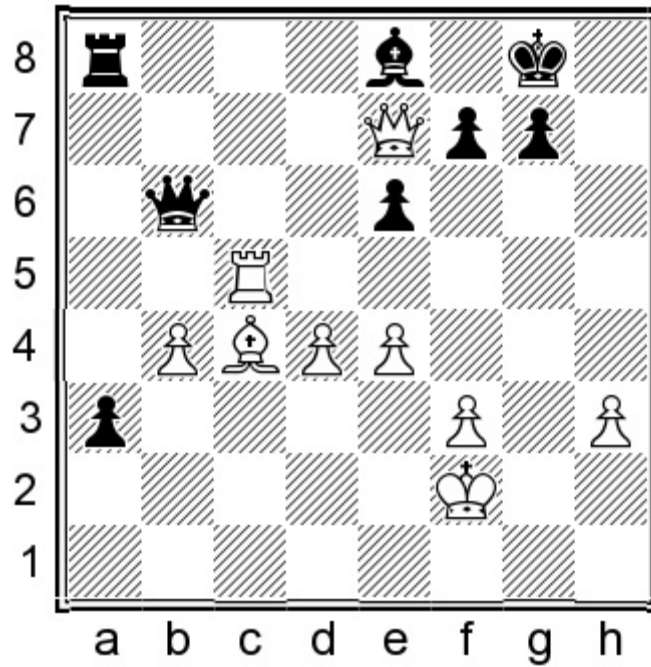
32...♙d7

32...♙e8!? 33.d5 b3 34.axb3 a3!-+

33.g5?!

A continuation of the previous 'active' line, but it is already hard to give White good advice.

33...hxg5 34.♗xg5 ♙e8-+ 35.♗e7 b3 36.axb3 a3 37.b4 ♞a8!



Position after: 37...♖a8!

The passed pawn decides the outcome of the game.

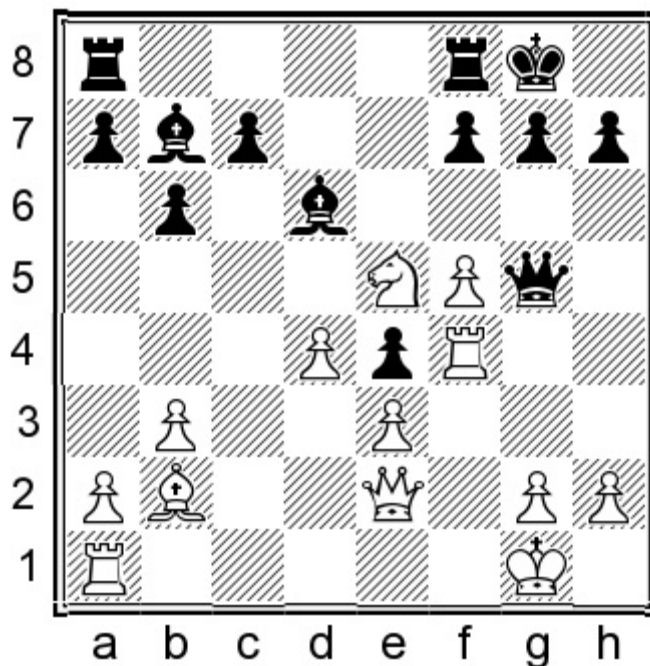
38.d5

This is a good practical chance, but Black reacts as accurately as possible.

38...a2 39.dxe6 a1=♚ 40.exf7+ ♗xf7 41.♗xf7+ ♜h7 42.♚h4+ ♜h6 43.♖h5 ♜a7+

0-1

Example 3
From Malakhov-Predojevic
Mali Losinj 2017



Black to move

In a situation where the opponent undertakes a direct attack, it is necessary to be especially vigilant.

However, often in such cases, the ‘sense of danger’ does not work even for experienced players (as in excuses such as “I blundered”). But it seems to me that it is the absence of a properly developed sense of danger which leads to such ‘blunders’.

17...f6?!

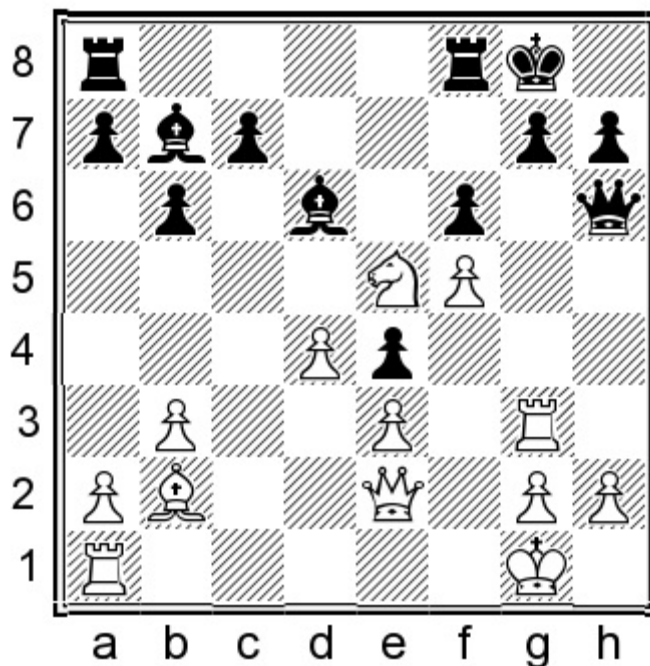
A) 17...♖ae8!? This is the most ‘human’ move. Black is getting ready to disturb the white knight not only by the move ...f7-f6, but also by ...c7-c5. 18.f6 (18.♖af1 f6 19.♚c4+ ♔h8 20.♗f7+ ♖xf7 21.♚xf7 ♖f8 22.♚c4 ♚h5=) 18...g6 19.h4 ♚h6 20.h5 c5!∞.

B) 17...a5!? was possible as well.

17...f6?! 18.♖g4 ♚h6?

It was possible to buy White off with 18...♚xf5! 19.♚c4+ ♔h8 20.♗g6+ ♚xg6 21.♖xg6 hxg6. Of course White is better, but there is still a lot of play.

19.♖g3!!



Position after: 19. ♖g3!!

20. ♖h3 ♜g5 21. ♖h5 is threatened, trapping the black queen, therefore Black must accept the sacrifice of the knight.

19...fxe5 20.dxe5+-

Now, thanks to the weakness of the g7-square, White has a decisive attack.

20...♗c5 21.f6 ♗d5

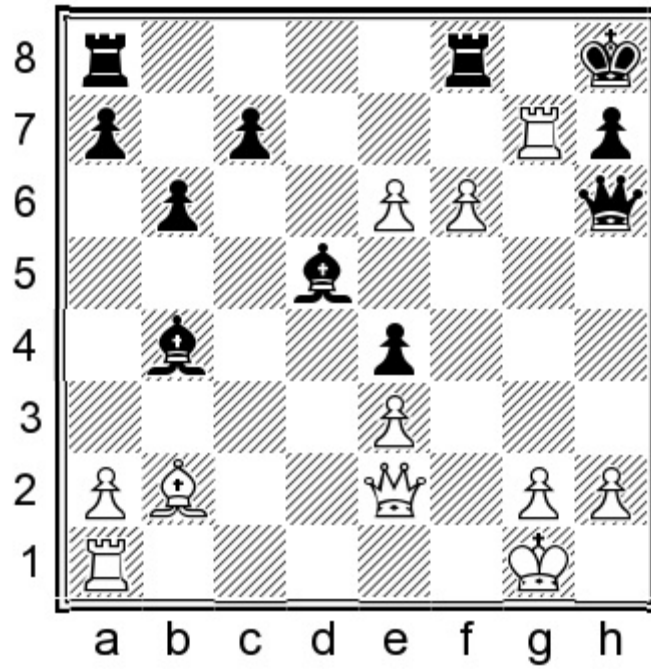
21...♖f7 22.b4! ♗f8 23.♜c4+-

22.b4!

White distracts the attention of the black bishop from the e3-pawn and attracts it to the unprotected b4-square.

It's too early to play 22. ♖xg7+? ♜h8 23.e6? ♗xe6 24.f7 ♜xg7-+.

22...♗xb4 23.♖xg7+ ♜h8 24.e6!+-



Position after: 24.e6!+-

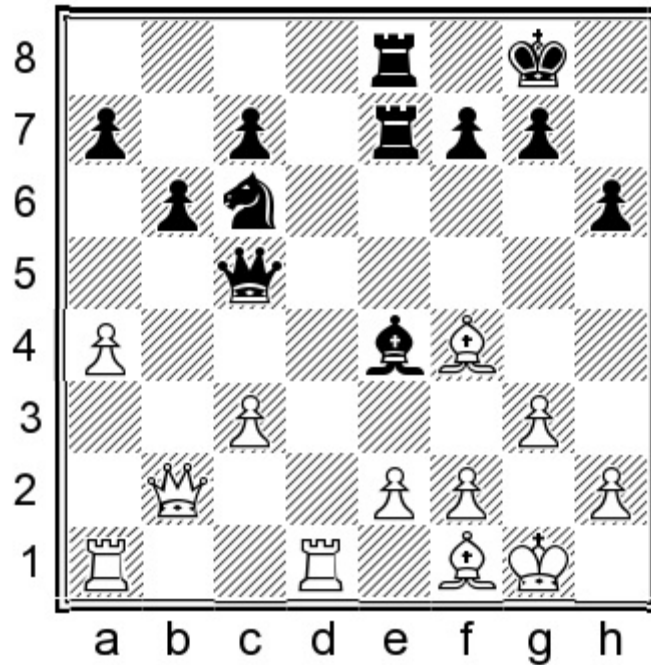
24...♙d6

24...♙xe6 25.f7 ♖xg7 26.♙xg7+ ♔xg7 27.♖b2+!+- This is why White gave up the b-pawn!

25.♖g3! ♗xf6 26.♗h5!

1-0

Example 4
From Vachier-Lagrave-Caruana
Baden Baden 2018



White to move

The sense of danger often lets down even so-called ‘elite’ players. With his last move 18...♖a8-e8 Black fully mobilised his forces, and is ready for action. White, on the other hand, is busy with his own plans.

19.♖ac1?

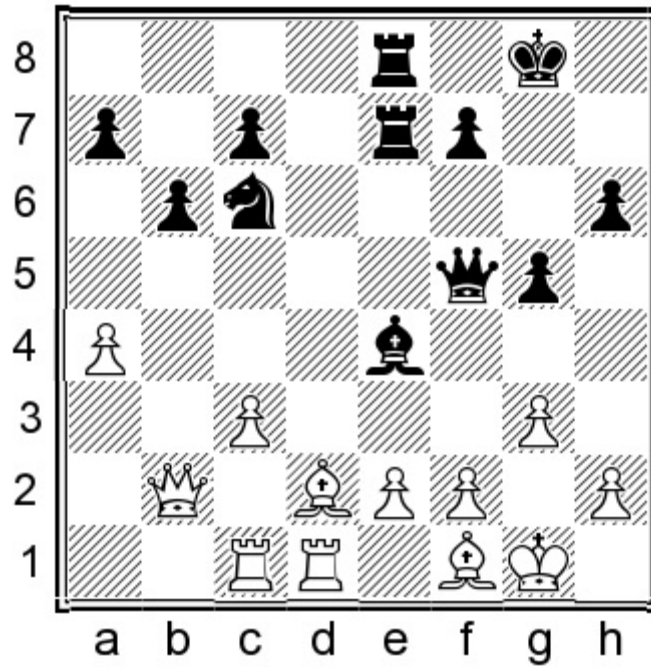
It was necessary to exchange the queens as a matter of urgency.

19.♚b5! ♚xb5 (Perhaps White did not like the loss of the c3-pawn, but after 19...♚xc3 20.♖ac1 ♚f6 21.f3 ♘d4 22.♚c4 c5 23.♖xd4± it is only Black who is in the risk zone.) 20.axb5 ♘a5 21.h4∞ The endgame is approximately equal. (21.♖a3!?!∞)

19.♖ac1? g5! 20.♙d2?!

Amazing calmness! White continues to believe in the power of his two bishops, but this was the last chance to play the better 20.♙e3 ♚f5 21.♙d4!. It is important to exchange the black knight to reduce Black’s attack. 21...♘e5 22.♙xe5 ♖xe5 23.♖d4 ♖8e6!?!干

20...♚f5!干



Position after: 20... ♕f5!±

Black has transferred his queen to the kingside and is threatening ... ♖c6-e5-f3.

In no time, White's position has become hopeless.

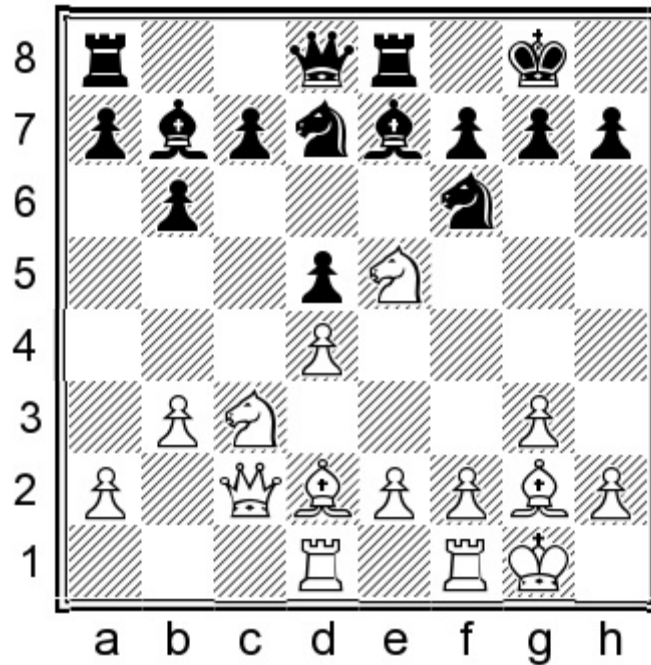
21.f3 ♕c5+ 22.♖h1 ♘d5 23.♙e1 ♘c4 24.e4 ♙xf1 25.♙f2 ♕c4 26.♗xf1 ♕xa4 27.c4 ♘e5 28.♙d4 g4 29.fxg4 ♕d7 30.♕c3 c5 31.♙xe5 ♗xe5 32.♕f3 ♗xe4 33.♗cd1 ♕e6 34.g5 hxg5 35.♗d5 g4 36.♕c3 ♗e5

0-1

The Exchange Sacrifice

Example 5

From opening analysis



Black to move

Analysing one of the currently popular variations of the Queen's Indian Defence, I checked various continuations for Black when suddenly I came across (I'm not afraid to use this word) a diamond.

13...c5!?N

This is the novelty. It doesn't seem very good...

Previously in this position 13...c6 14.e4 ♘f8 with a complicated game was played. White has some initiative, but to turn it into an advantage is not easy. However, attempts to do so continue. 15.♖fe1 ♘e6 16.♙c1 ♜c8 17.a3=.

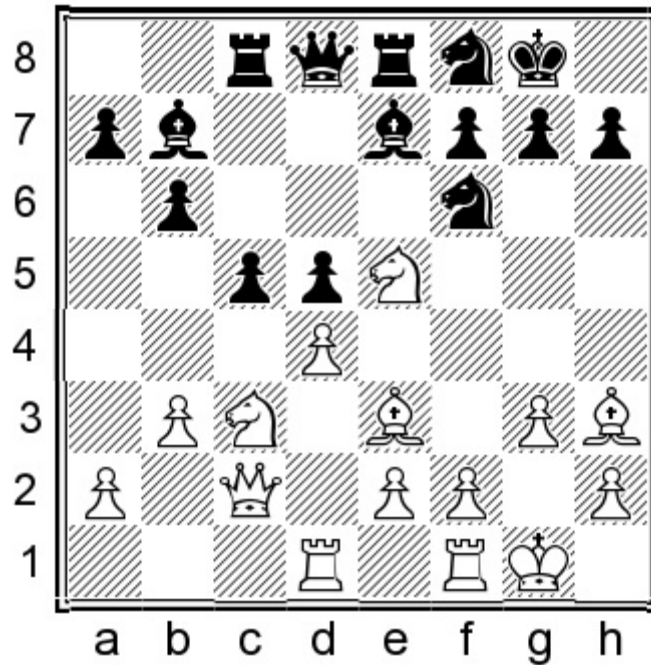
13...c5!?N 14.♙e3 ♜c8

This is a logical and necessary move, but it meets with an extremely unpleasant reply for Black.

15.♙h3

White creates a pin, and unlike his opponent, Black has obvious problems in finding useful moves. In such cases, 'normal' people break off their analysis and refuse to play 13...c5. But it's not so simple!

15...♘f8!!



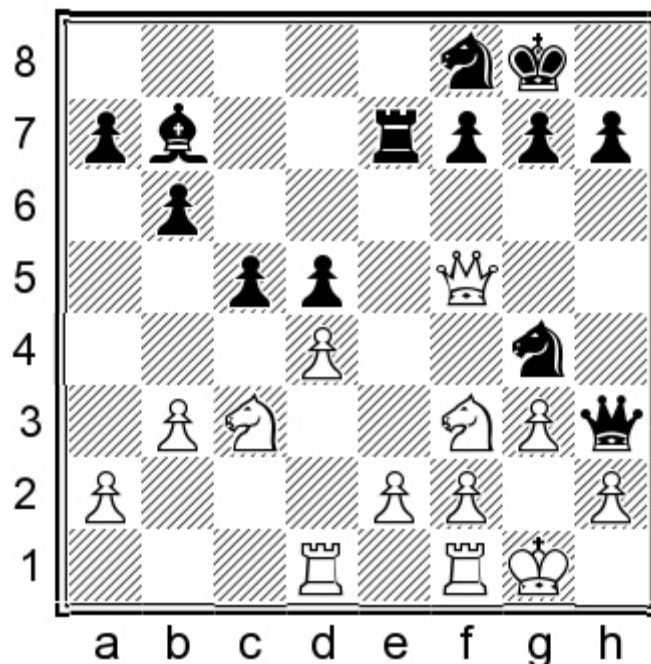
Position after: 15... ♖f8!!

Incredibly, Black sacrifices the exchange without visible compensation. Yet, at the same time, there *is* compensation! I was looking for at least some advantage for White, but it seems that it simply doesn't exist. Let's check.

16. ♙xc8 ♜xc8 17. ♚g2

The absence of the light-squared bishop makes itself felt.

It is very dangerous for White to let the black queen in on h3. Here is what it could lead to: 17. ♘f3 ♜h3 18. ♙g5? (White could be saved only by humility: 18. ♘g5 ♜h5 19. ♘f3.) 18... ♖g4 19. ♙xe7 ♜xe7 20. ♜f5



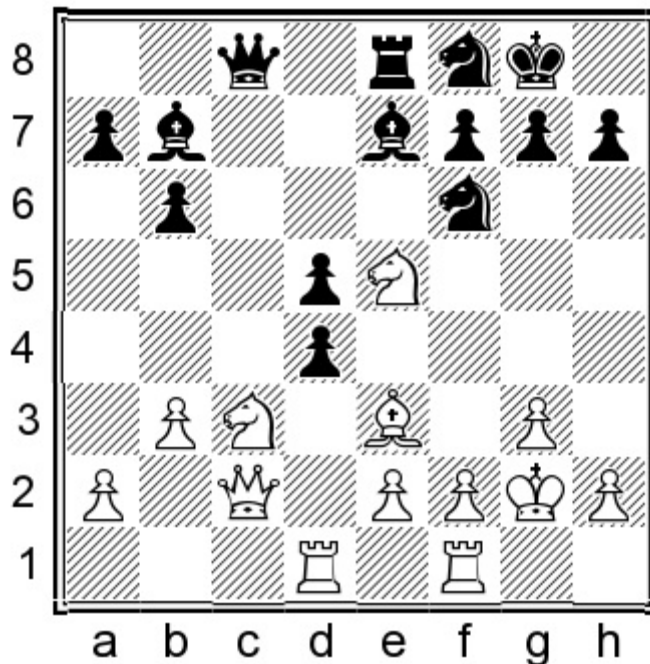
Position after: 20. ♖f5

20... ♗e6!! 21. ♗xd5 (21. dxc5 g6 22. ♖d3 ♗g5-+)

A) Black ends up in a lost position after 21... ♖e8? 22. ♖fe1 cxd4 (22... ♗xd4 23. ♖xd4 cxd4 24. ♖d7+-) 23. e4+-.

B) 21... ♔f8!! This is the only move! 22. dxc5 (22. ♗xe7 ♕xf3-+) 22... g6 23. ♖e4 bxc5!-+ 24. ♖fe1 ♔g7! And there is no acceptable defence against ... ♗e6-g5.

17...cxd4!?



Position after: 17...cxd4!?

This is the most concrete continuation, but I must say that, without forcing events, Black can also expect compensation.

17... ♗e6 18. ♗f3 h6

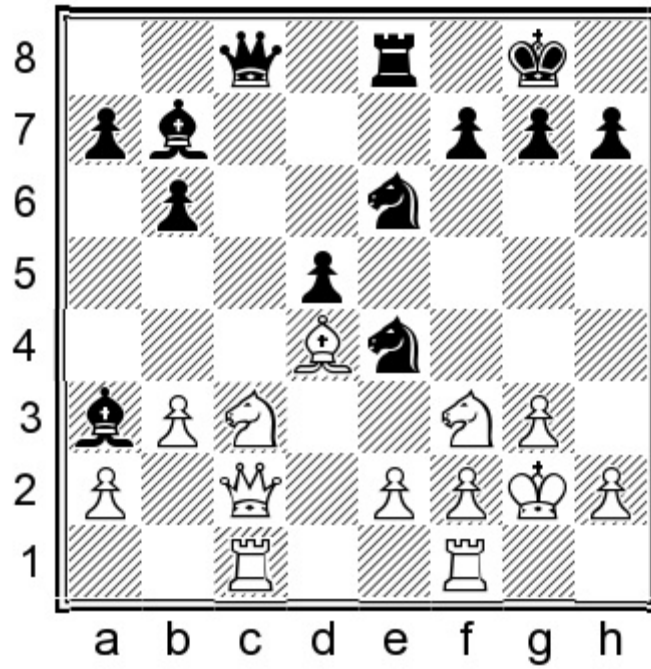
18. ♕xd4 ♗e6 19. ♗f3

19. ♖b2 ♕b4 20. ♗b1 ♗g5!?

19... ♗e4!

White's light pieces are hanging, and after

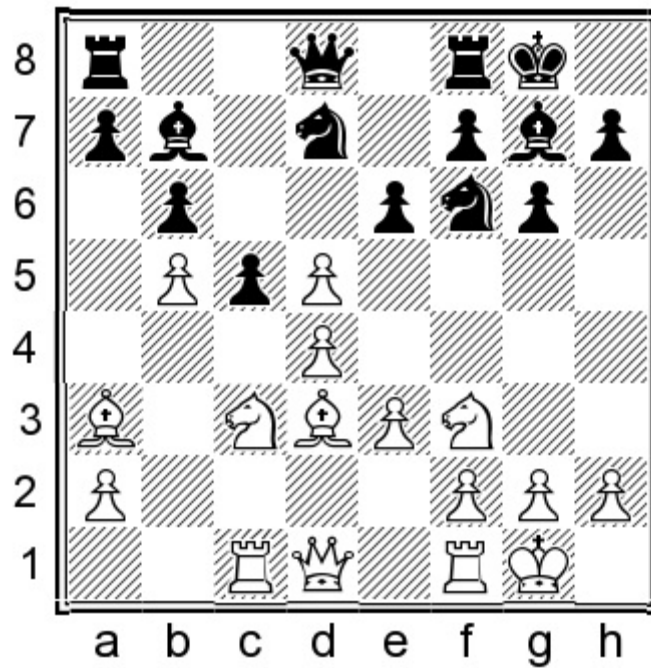
20. ♖c1 ♕a3=



Position after: 20...♙a3=

Black wins back the exchange, when his position is not worse.

Example 6
From Baikov-Zvjaginsev
Moscow 1989



Black to move

12...exd5!?

I have known Vadim for a long time, so I'll venture to assume that he had already envisaged the sacrifice of the exchange here. 12...♖xd5 would have led to a simpler and approximately equal game.

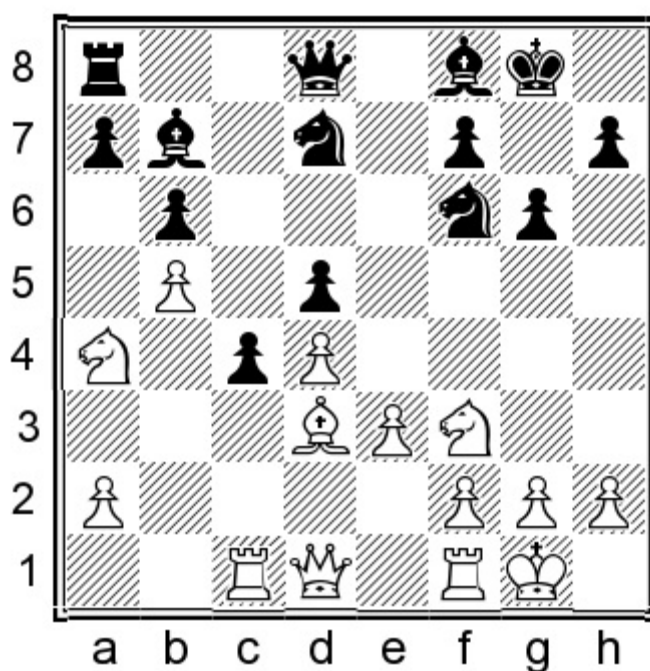
12...exd5!? 13.♘a4

How to protect the pawn c5 now!?

13...c4!!

It seems that Black is sacrificing the exchange without any reason, but in fact he has full compensation, though it is not obvious at first glance.

14.♙xf8 ♗xf8



Position after: 14...♗xf8

The dark-squared bishop breaks into the open.

15.♙b1

We can understand White's desire to protect the a2-pawn in advance, which is why he chose this retreat of the bishop. It is obvious that Black expects to advance his queenside pawns, one of which has captured the outpost on c4 as a result of the sacrifice.

Nevertheless, it was necessary to think about saving valuable space for the rook, but even here Black has excellent compensation, for example 15.♙c2!? a6 16.♘c3 ♗b4 (Immediately winning the pawn back is probably possible, but looks less promising: 16...axb5 17.♘xb5 ♖xa2 18.♖a1 ♖a5 19.♚b1∞.) 17.♙a4 axb5 (17...♚e7!?) 18.♘xb5 ♙c6 19.♖b1 ♚e7 20.♘c3 ♘e4∞.

15...a6 16.♘c3 axb5

Correct was 16...♔a3! 17.♖c2 ♘e4 18.bxa6 ♘xc3 19.♖xc3 ♖xa6 20.e4! b5 21.e5 b4 22.♖e3 ♘f8 23.h4!? ♘e6∞.

17.♘xb5 ♖a5 18.a4 ♔a6?!

This is an inaccuracy, which White did not exploit. The right move was 18...♔c6, still with compensation.

19.♔c2

White could protect the a4-pawn: 19.♘c3! ♔a3 20.♖c2 ♖e7 21.♖a2 ♔b4 22.♖c2±.

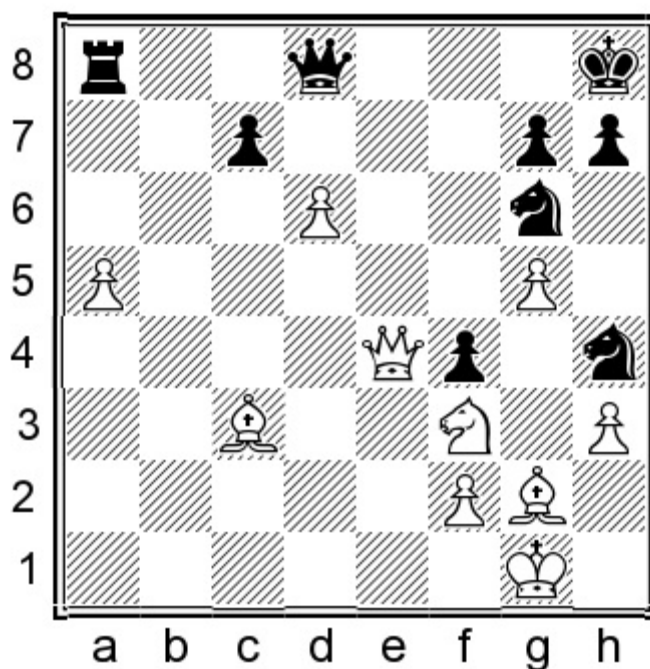
19...♔xb5 20.axb5 ♖xb5 21.♖b1 ♖a5

The Exchange

Example 7

From Dreev-Fedoseev

Dubai 2014



Black to move

Black's position is obviously critical. He needs to decide which pieces to exchange. Actually, Black is objectively lost, but in chess when things are going wrong it is important to challenge your opponent as much as possible!

48...♘xg2!

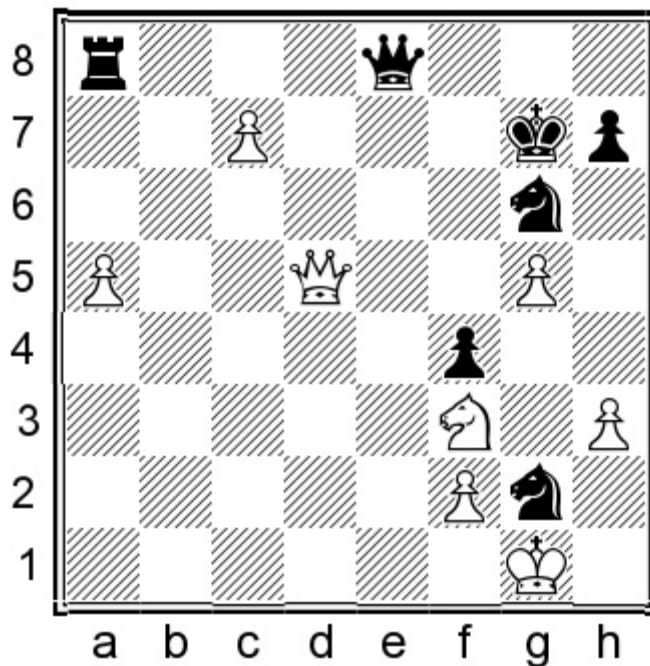
Now, in order to win, White needs to create a real study.

In the game Black chose a more dynamic move, but with a much lower coefficient of resistance: 48...♘xf3+ 49.♔xf3 ♖xg5+ 50.♖h2 (50.♔g4!?!+-) 50...♖g8 51.a6 ♖c5 And now White was easily winning by

exchanging Black's most active pieces. 52.♖d4!+- Now Black has to give up his rook for the white passed pawn. (52.♗d4? ♜xd6 53.a7 c6∞ 0-1 (61) Dreev, A (2667) – Fedoseev, V (2662) Dubai 2014)

48...♗xg2! 49.♗xg7+!!

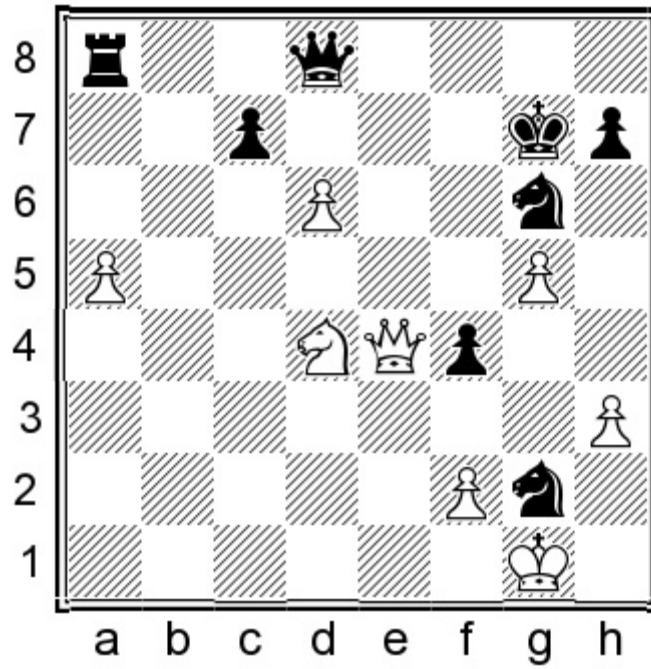
49.dxc7 After this seemingly strong and natural move the exchange of queens saves Black: 49...♖e8!
 (49...♜c8? 50.♔xg2+-) 50.♗xg7+ This only leads to perpetual check now. (50.♜b7 ♜c8!=; 50.♜xe8+ ♜xe8
 51.♔xg2 ♜c8=) 50...♔xg7 51.♖d4+ ♔g8 52.♖d5+ ♔g7



Position after: 52...♔g7

53.♗d4? (53.♖d4+=) 53...♗2h4 54.♗e6+ ♔f7 55.♗xf4+ ♔f8 56.♗e6+ ♔e7-+

49...♔xg7 50.♗d4!



Position after: 50. ♖d4!

50...♗f7

50...♗f8 51.♙e5+ ♗f7 52.♙d5+ ♗e8 53.d7+! ♗xd7 54.♗c6+–

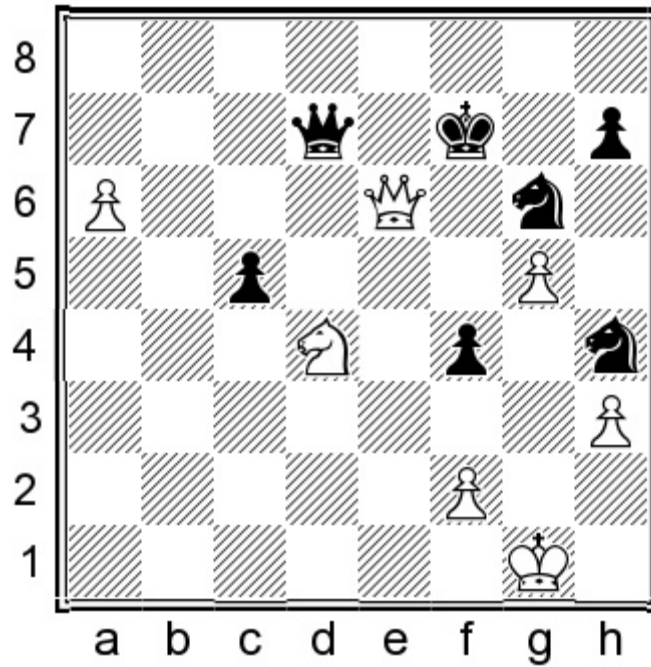
51.♙d5+ ♗e8 52.d7+! ♗xd7 53.♙xa8+ ♗f7 54.♙e4!! ♗2h4

54...c5 55.♙f5+ ♗xf5 56.♗xf5 ♗e5 57.a6 ♗c6 58.♗xg2 ♗e6 59.♗h4+–

55.a6 c5

55...♗a4 56.♙d5+–

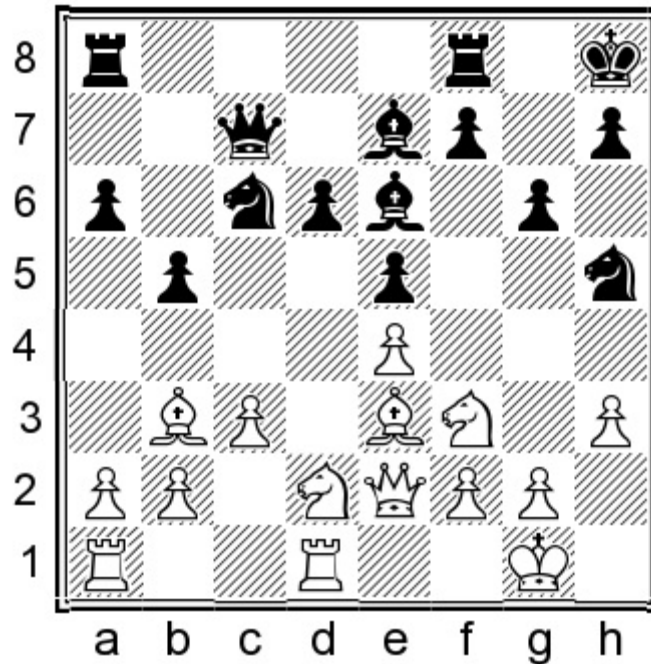
56.♙e6+!!+–



Position after: 56. ♖e6+!!+-

The a-pawn decides the outcome of the game.

Example 8
From Tiviakov-Nikolic
Netherlands 2018



White to move

White's position is clearly better: the d5 square can become a real weakness, and the position on the queenside is also a concern for Black in view of the breakthrough a2-a4. 18. ♔h6 was possible now, followed

by 19.♞f1, bringing the knight closer to the important d5 square.

18.♞ac1 was also interesting, with the idea of playing c3-c4. However, the strongest move in this position is the preliminary exchange of bishops.

18.♞xe6!

In the game White immediately played 18.a4?! ♞xb3 ♞b7 and Black easily achieved equality, since White's activity was premature. 20.♞fd2 ♞fd8 21.axb5 axb5 22.♞d3 ♞g8 23.♞xa8 ♞xa8 24.♞a1 ♞a4 25.♞c1 ♞a8= ½-½ (60) Tiviakov, S (2591) – Nikolic, P (2598) Netherlands 2018.

18.♞xe6! fxe6

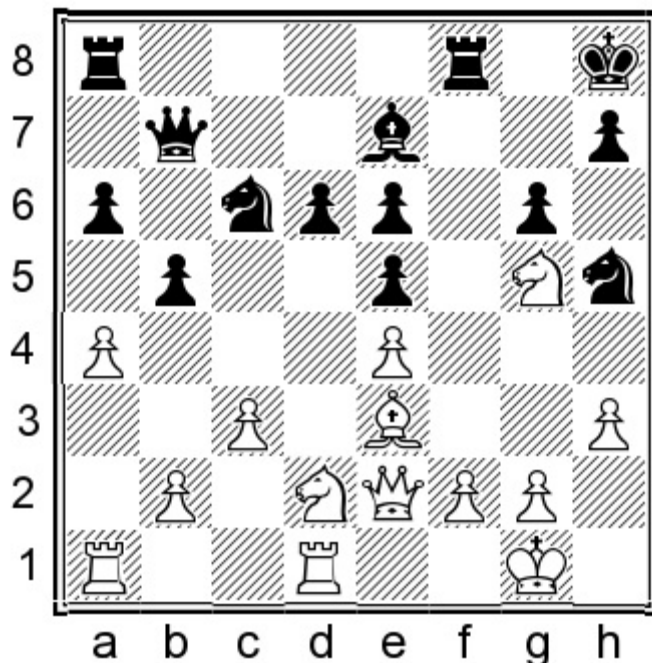
Black has got rid of his worries about the d5-square, but his e6-pawn is a potential weakness. Soon another weakness – the b5-pawn – will be added to concerns about that one. Thus White immediately occupies the a-file.

19.a4 ♞ab8!

This move seems strongest.

A) 19...b4? 20.♞ac1 ♞b7 21.♞c4+–

B) 19...♞b7 20.♞g5!



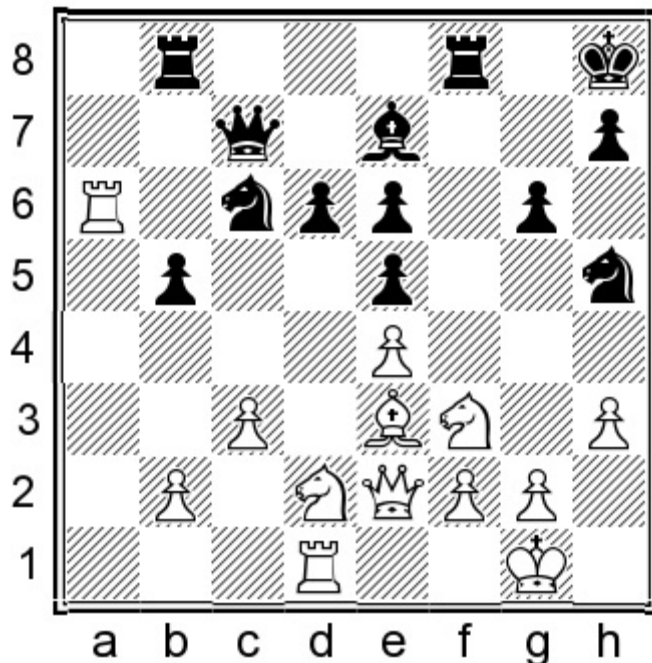
Position after: 20.♞g5!

Targeting the e6-pawn!

B1) 20...♞xg5 21.♞xg5 This exchange is a bad news for the d6-pawn. 21...♞f4 22.♞e3!? With material equality and the absence of obvious threats, Black's position is absolutely hopeless due to the weakness of the d6-pawn. For example: 22...♞g7 23.♞f3 h6 24.♞xf4 exf4 25.♞d2 ♞ad8 26.axb5 axb5 27.♞d4+–.

B2) 20...♖g7 21.axb5 ♜xb5 (21...axb5 22.♞xa8 ♞xa8 23.♗f7+ ♔g8 24.♗h6+ ♔h8 25.♗f3!?±) 22.♗f7+!
 ♔g8 23.♗h6+ The knight is very well located here. 23...♔h8 24.♞c4± Δ 24...d5 25.♞xb5 axb5 26.♞xa8
 ♞xa8 27.exd5 exd5 28.♗f3+–

20.axb5 axb5 21.♞a6!



Position after: 21.♞a6!

Black has no prospects in this position. He cannot show any real activity and is forced to wait for what White decides to do with him. A possible continuation is...

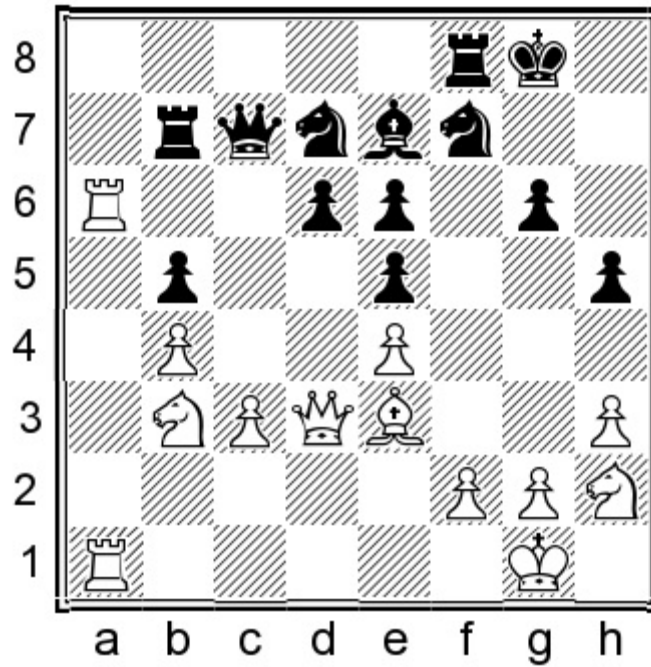
21...♔g8

21...♗f4 has no sense because of 22.♞f1 followed by g2-g3.

22.♞da1 ♞b7 23.♗h2 ♗f6 24.♗g4 ♗d7 25.b4

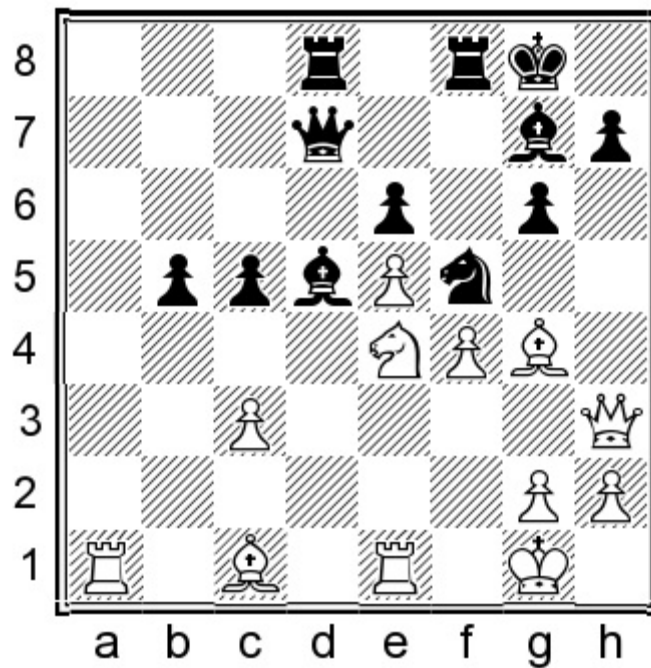
25.♗h6+ ♔g7 26.b4 ♗f6 27.♗g4±

25...h5 26.♗h2 ♗d8 27.♞d3 ♗f7 28.♗b3±



Position after: 28. ♖b3±

Example 9
From Vitiugov-Caruana
Baden Baden 2018



Black to move

Black certainly does not want to part with such a beautiful bishop on d5. At first glance there cannot be much sense in such an exchange. However, only this exchange leads to an advantage for Black!

25...♙xe4!

In the game Black played 25...♚e7?

A) 26.♙f3! This move leads to a complicated position with roughly equal chances. 26...b4 (26...♘h4 27.♙g4 ♘h4 28.♙h1 b3 29.♙e3∞.

B) After the inaccurate response 26.♘g5? h6+ Black again got an advantage: 0-1 (40) Vitiugov, N (2735) – Caruana, F (2784) Baden Baden 2018.

25...♙xe4! 26.♖xe4 h5!

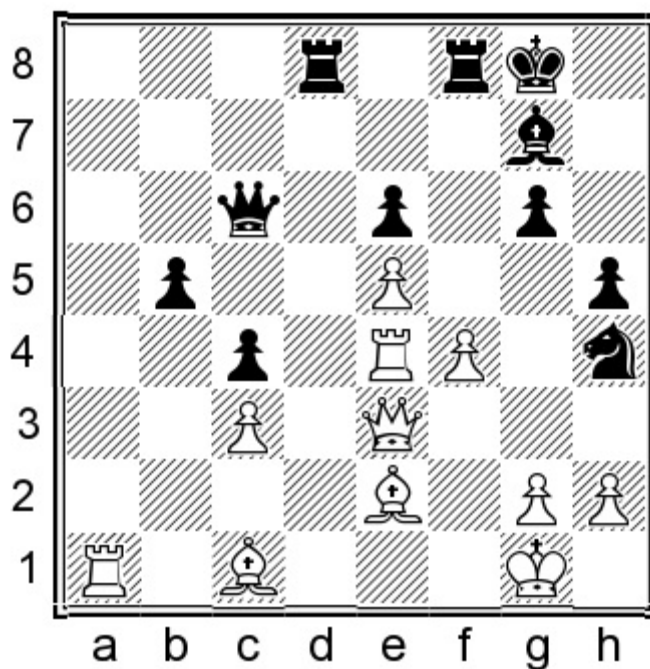
It turns out that all retreats of the bishop, as well as the exchange on f5, lead to difficult positions for White.

Let's check.

27.♙xf5

Relatively best.

A) 27.♙e2 ♚c6 Black exploits the extremely bad position of the white rook on e4. 28.♚f3 (28.♙f3 ♖d3 29.♖e3 ♚d7+) 28...♘h4 29.♚e3 c4!

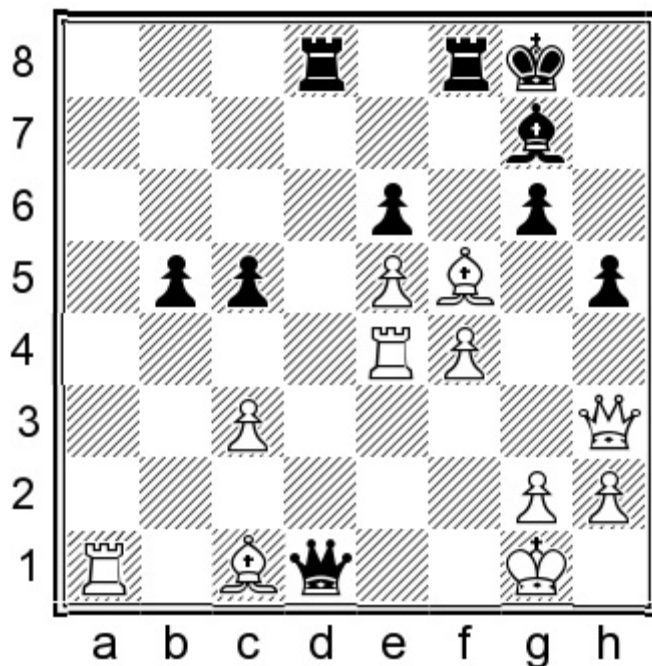


Position after: 29...c4!

The white pieces are helpless. 30.g3 (30.♙f1 ♖d1+) 30...♘f5 31.♚f3 ♖a8 32.♖b1 ♖a2 33.♙f1 ♖d8+

B) 27.♙f3 ♚d3+

27...♚d1+!



Position after: 27...♔d1+!

An important intermediate move.

27...♖xf5 28.♗e1=

28.♔f2 ♖xf5 29.♗e1 ♔b3

Here the black queen looks very threatening.

30.♗f3

It is impossible to remove the king from the danger zone immediately: 30.♔g1?! ♖d1 31.♗g3 g5-+ .

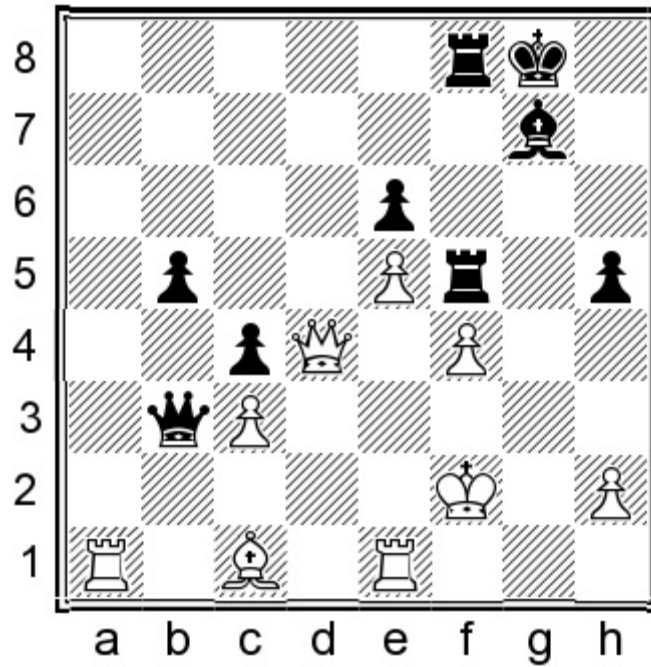
30...♖df8! 31.♗d3

Only with this move can White protect the e5-pawn.

31...c4

Of course not 31...♙xe5?? 32.♖xe5 ♖xe5 33.♗xg6+ ♔h8 34.♖a7+-.

32.♗d4 g5 33.g3 gxf4 34.gxf4



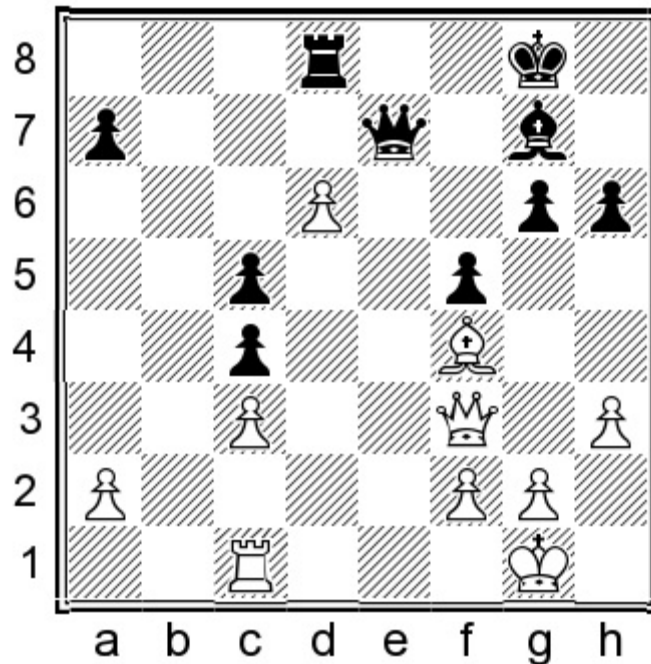
Position after: 34.gxf4

34...♖g5! 35.♔d2 ♚c2 36.♖ac1 ♚f5

With a large and probably decisive advantage for Black.

0-1

Example 10
From Akobian-Xiong
Saint Louis 2018



Black to move

White has a strong passed pawn and better pawn structure.

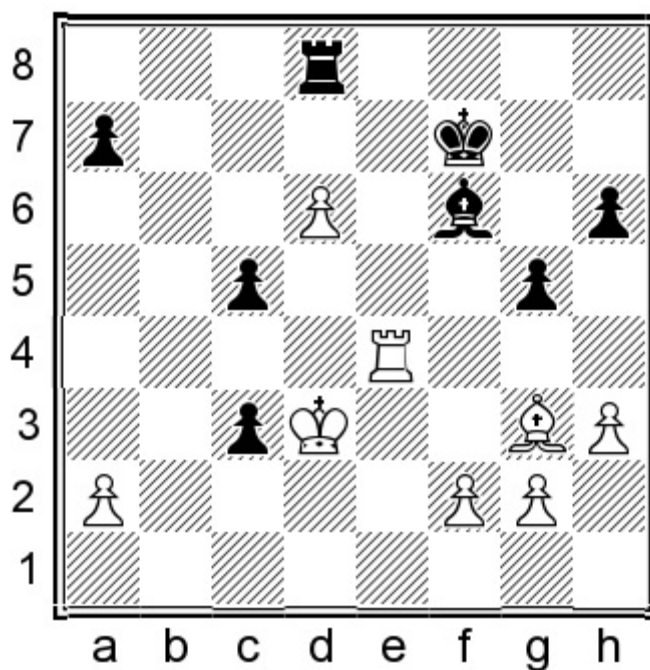
Can the queen's retreat solve all of Black's problems?

22...♙e6?!

This is a thoughtless move. The problems could be solved by exchanging the queens.

22...♙e4! 23.♙xe4 fxe4 Due to the the white rook being chained to the protection of the c3-pawn (which became more noticeable after the exchange of queens), White cannot exploit the benefits of his pawn structure.

For example 24.♞e1 (24.♔f1 ♔f7 25.♔e2 ♔e6 26.♔e3 ♔d5 27.g4 g5 28.♙g3 ♞d7= White cannot strengthen his position – the c3-pawn fetters his actions.) 24...♙xc3 25.♞xe4 ♙d4 26.♔f1 g5 27.♙g3 c3 28.♔e2 ♙f6 29.♔d3 ♔f7



Position after: 29...♔f7

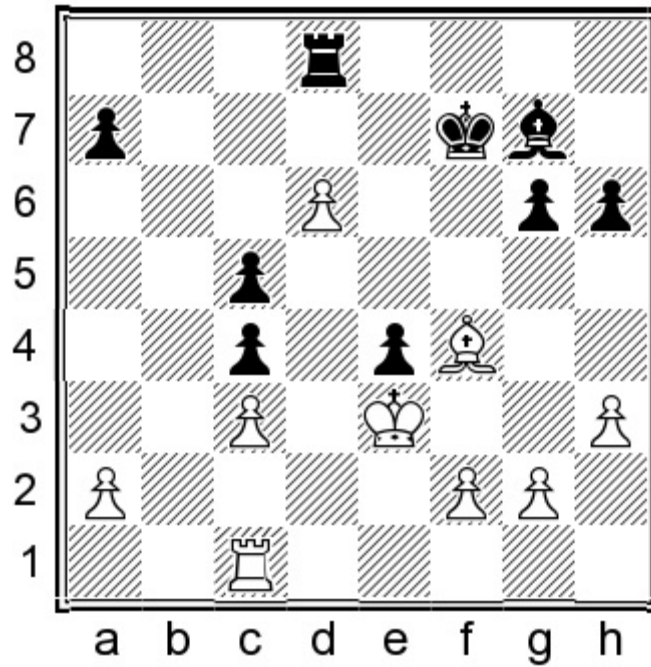
It is enough for Black to adopt a wait-and-see strategy.

White's active attempts may face counterplay. 30.♞a4 ♞b8!? 31.♞xa7+ ♔e6 32.d7 c4+ 33.♔c2 ♞b2+ 34.♔c1 ♙e7 35.♞c7 ♞d2=

22...♙e6?! 23.h4?!

23.♔f1!± This is not just a useful move, but a preventive one.

Now Black cannot reach an equal endgame anymore. 23...♙e4 24.♙xe4 fxe4 25.♔e2 ♔f7 26.♔e3

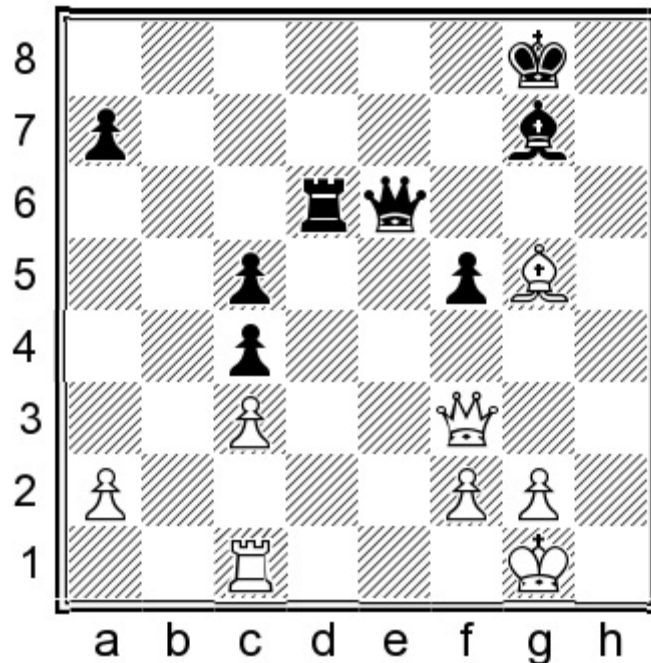


Position after: 26. ♔e3

The black king did not manage to come to the aid of his pawn. 26...g5 27. ♖h2 The rook has to protect the pawn, but such a construction will not last long.

For example 27... ♜e8 28.g4 a6 29. ♙g3 ♙f6 30.a4 a5 31.d7 ♞d8 32. ♞d1 ♙xc3 33. ♞d5 ♔e6 34. ♞xc5 ♞xd7 35. ♞xc4+-.

23...g5 24.hxg5 hxg5 25. ♙xg5 ♞xd6



Position after: 25... ♞xd6

26. ♖a8+

A) 26. ♕e3!?±

B) 26. ♖b1!? ♖b6 27. ♖d1 ♖d6 28. ♖xd6 ♗xd6 29. ♗xf5 ♕xc3 30. ♗g4 ♗d4 31. ♕f4+ ♔h8±

26... ♔h7 27. ♗xa7 ♖d3=

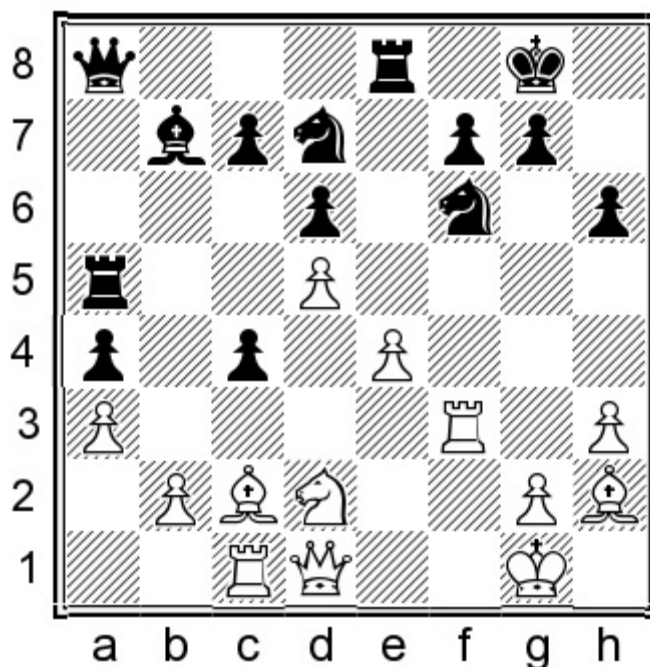
½-½ (48) Akobian, V (2647) – Xiong, J (2665) Saint Louis 2018.

Take-take

Example 11

From Dreev-Zajic

Sibenik 2016



White to move

Black took a pawn (on c4) with his last move and to tell the truth I did not find anything better than to answer the same way – to take. Let us see where it led.

21. ♖xc4?!

White had a great opportunity to strengthen his position. I only had to forget about the c4-pawn! 21. ♕f4! The dark-squared bishop confidently enters the game. Black will only feel the effects when White plays ♖f3-g3. The c4-pawn is not going anywhere. Let's check.

A) 21... ♖e5? 22. ♕xe5±

B) 21... ♖e7?! 22. ♖g3 ♔h8 23. ♖xc4 ♖c5 24. ♖d2 ♖e5 25. ♕e3 ♖a5 26. ♕d4±

C) 21... ♔h8 22. ♖xc4 (22. ♕e3!?±) 22... ♖c5 23. ♖d2 ♖e5 24. ♖f2± The threat of ♕xh6 diverts Black from counterplay.

D) 21...♖a6 22.♜c3! (22.♜g3 is not so clear: 22...c6! 23.♙xh6 g6∞.) 22...♜b5 (22...♘c5 23.♚f3±) 23.♜g3!
 Now from this side. 23...♗f8 24.♙xa4 ♜xb2 25.♙xd7 ♘xd7 26.♚g4+-.

E) 21...♙a6! To find this inventive idea associated with the sacrifice of the rook over the board is not so easy. 22.♙xa4 (There is no point in 22.♜g3 ♗f8 23.♙xa4 ♜xa4 24.♚xa4 ♘c5 25.♚a5 ♘cxe4∞. The white rook comes under attack here.) 22...♜xa4 23.♚xa4 ♘c5 24.♚a5 ♘cxe4 25.♘xe4 ♘xe4 26.♙e3!± After this powerful manoeuvre with White's bishop Black still needs to work hard.

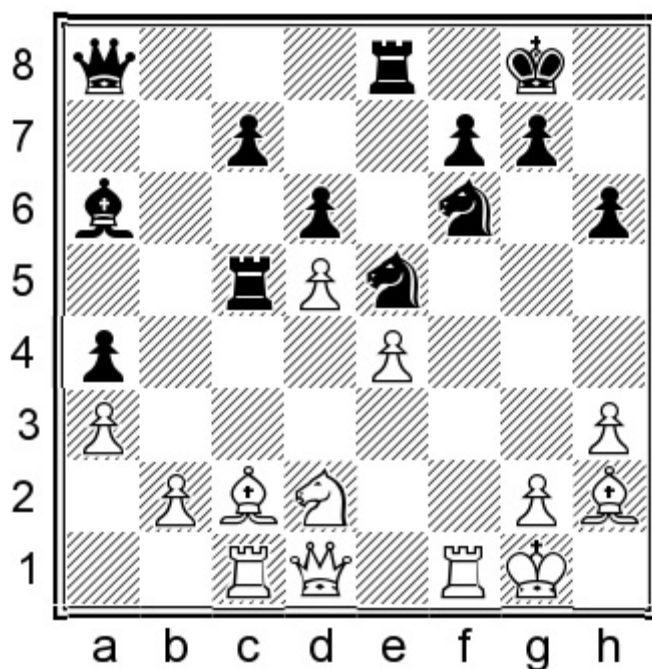
21.♘xc4?! ♜c5 22.♘d2 ♘e5

I feared this move. For some reason I cherished the naive hope that my opponent would not play like this because of the possibility of sacrificing the rook on f6. Usually everything you are afraid of happens.

23.♜f1?!

Looking deeper into the position we see that after 23.♜xf6 gxf6 24.♙f4 (24.♚h5? ♘d3-+) 24...c6! the attention of many black pieces converges on the d5-pawn, which White must think about saving. In fairness, we note that it is still there. 25.♘f3! cxd5 26.♘xe5 ♜xe5 (26...fxe5? 27.♚g4+-) 27.♙xe5 fxe5 28.♚g4+ ♗f8 29.♚d7 ♚c8 30.♚xd6+ ♗g8 31.♚xh6 ♜xc2 32.♜xc2 ♚xc2 33.♚g5+= with perpetual check.

23...♙a6



Position after: 23...♙a6

½-½ (23) Dreev, A (2660) – Zajic, M (2486) Sibenik 2016. Here my opponent offered me a draw and I agreed with a degree of relief. The sacrifice on f6 is now even less attractive, and I also had no inspiration to play for a win the next way.

24.♙xe5

White can even end up in a worse position after 24.♞e1 ♜d3 25.♙xd3 ♞xc1 26.♞xc1 ♚a7+! (26...♙xd3 27.♞xc7=) 27.♜h1 ♙xd3 28.e5 dxe5 29.♞xe5 ♞d8!??.

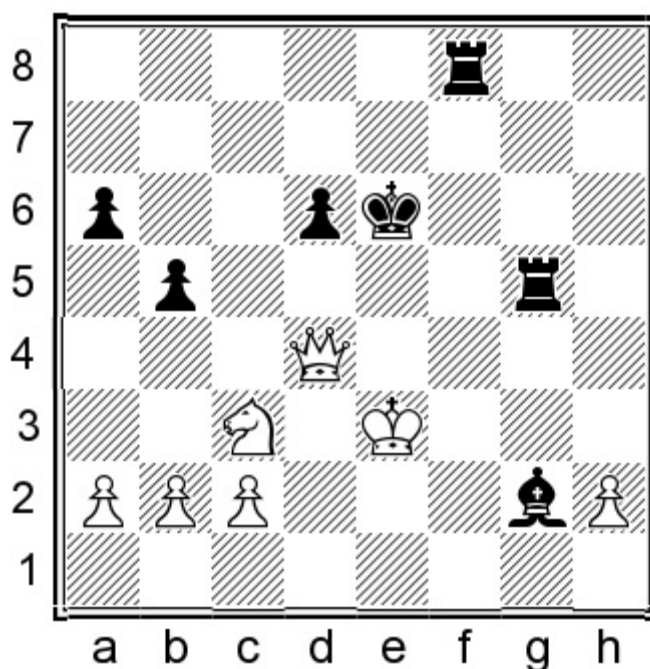
24...♞xe5 25.♞e1

25.♞xf6 gxf6 26.♜f3 ♞h5 27.♜d4 ♞g5±

25...♞b7∞

Invisible move

Example 12
From Navara-Mamedov
Shamkir 2018



White to move

To get an advantage White needs to regroup his pieces and bring the knight into the game. But he must also take care of his king.

33.♞h4!

It is important to take control of the f2-square.

A) In the game White did not believe that such a task was feasible and played 33.♞b6 which led to a quick draw: 33...♞c5 34.♜e2 ♞f3+ 35.♜d2 ♞f2 36.♜e3 ♞f3+ 37.♜d2 ♞f2 38.♜e3 ♞f3+ 39.♜d2 ♞f2 ½-½ (39) Navara, D (2745) – Mamedov, R (2704) Shamkir 2018.

B) 33.♜e2?? ♞f3+ 34.♜d2 ♞d5–+

33.♞h4! ♞gf5

The strongest retreat of the rook.

33...♖e5+ 34.♔d2 ♕c6 35.♘e2± (35.b3!?)

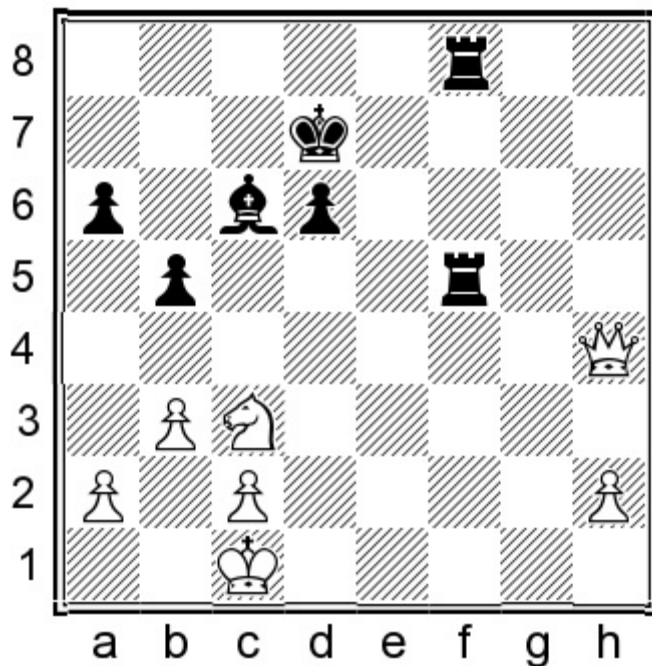
34.b3!!

This is the subtle invisible move. The meaning of this move is to provide a safe place for the king on b2.

A) 34.♘e2 ♜f3+ 35.♔d2 ♜f2 36.♔c1 ♜f1+= (36...♖xe2? 37.♚g4++-)

B) 34.♔d2 b4! After the distracting sacrifice of the pawn Black reaches equality. 35.♚xb4 ♜f2+ 36.♔c1 ♜f1+=

34...♔d7 35.♔d2 ♕c6 36.♔c1±



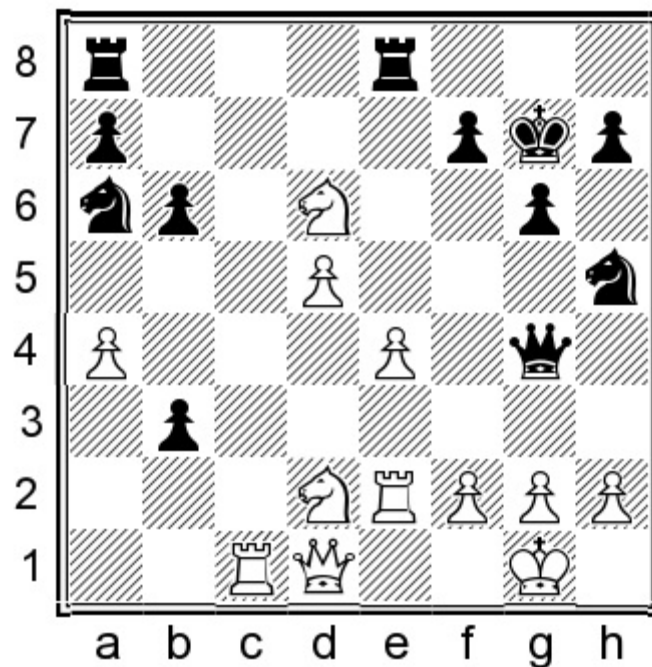
Position after: 36.♔c1±

The position has stabilised. The white king is in safety and White can now move the knight to d4.

Chapter 5 Exercises

1

Nakamura, H. – Nepomniachtchi, I.



Black to move

Black is in danger: how would you defend?

Show/Hide Solution

1

20...♖ed8?

It seems to me that, to some extent, Black's sense of danger did not work here, and he missed a beautiful equaliser.

If Black had fully realised that 20...♖ed8 is almost capitulation, then probably he would have calculated to the end the consequences of the move 20...♘f4! which is the only right move.

20...♘f4! 21.f3 ♖g5 22.♘xe8+ ♜xe8 23.♘xb3 ♘xe2+ 24.♚xe2 ♚xd5! Everything is hanging, but Black is OK. 25.♞c8 ♞e7 26.♚b2+ ♚e5=.

20...♞ed8? 21.h3!

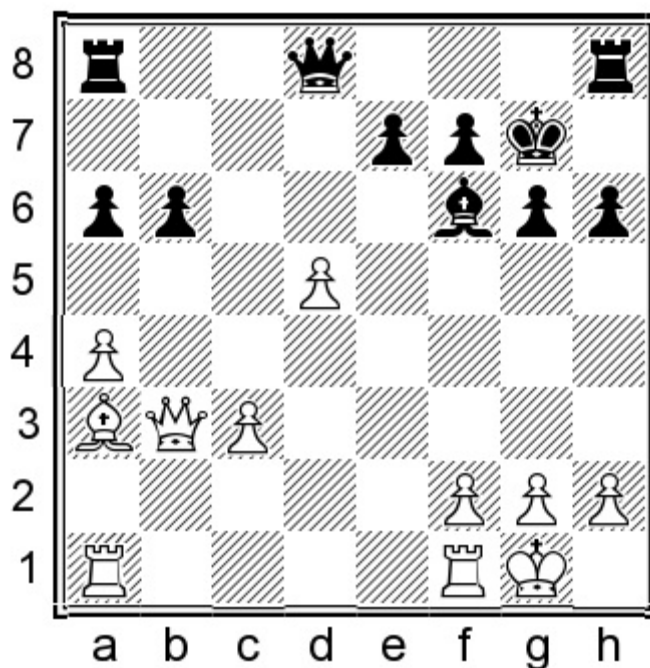
Chasing away the active queen with tempo.

21...♚g5 22.♘f3 ♚f4 23.e5 ♘c5 24.♞c4 ♚h6 25.♞h4!+-

1-0 (38) Nakamura, H (2787) – Nepomniachtchi, I (2751) Moscow 2018.

2

Tiviakov, S. – Van der Weide, K.



White to move

Black is about to play ...b5 when the position would become very dry. Can you come up with an interesting sacrifice for White?

Show/Hide Solution

2

22.c4!?

Objectively, after the sacrifice of the exchange, White's position may be doubtful. In such situations, everyone makes his or her own practical decision; there can be no general rules.

Nevertheless, such an exchange sacrifice is not a bluff; White has a serious initiative for it which is not so easy for Black to fight against in a practical game. It seems to me that, in this case, White took a reasonable risk and it was justified, but whether it is always possible to play like this in such cases is difficult to say. My task with this example is simply to show the limits of permissible risk when you are playing for a win.

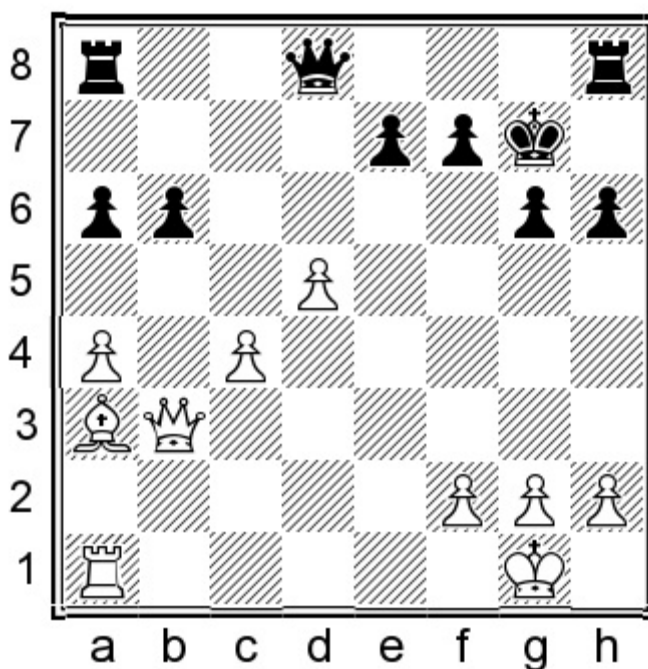
If you do not sacrifice, the position becomes 'empty', for example 22.♖ad1 b5 23.c4 (23.axb5 axb5 24.d6 exd6 25.♙xd6 ♖c8=) 23...bxc4 24.♗xc4 ♖c8 (24...♗a5=) 25.♗e4 ♖e8=.

22.c4!? ♙xa1

22...b5!?

23.c5 bxa4 24.♗c4 ♙xa1 25.♖xa1=

23.♖xa1



Position after: 23.♖xa1

23...♖e8

A useful move. Black defends the pawn and in the case of a check by the bishop it is no longer necessary to block with the pawn. It is time for White to show his trumps.

A) 23...b5 transposes to 22...b5.

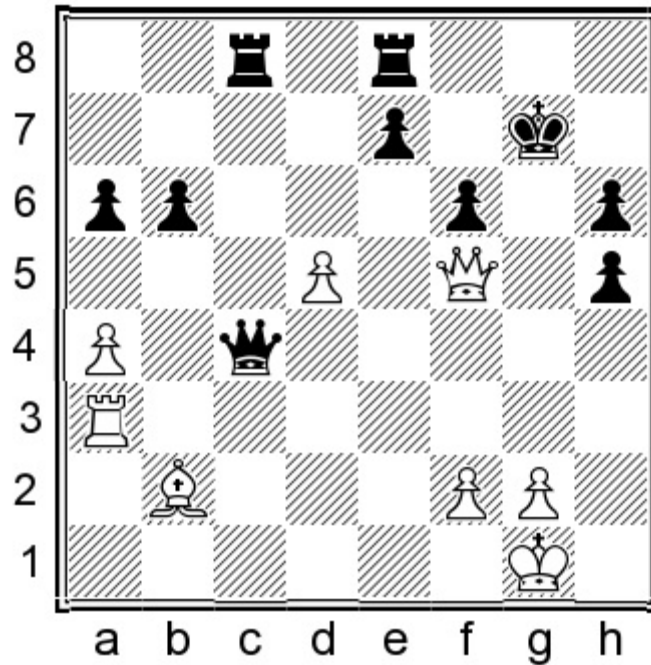
B) 23...♖c8 24.♙b2+ f6 25.♖e1 ♖e8 26.h4=

24.♖e1!?

24.h4!?

By using the h-pawn White is trying to open up the black king. A possibility is 24...♖c8 (24...h5 25.♙b2+ ♔h7 26.♗f3 f6 27.♗e3=; 24...e6 25.d6=) 25.h5 ♖c7 26.♙b2+ f6 27.♗d3 gxh5 28.♗f5 ♗xc4 29.♖a3

The position has become sharper, but is still balanced.



Position after: 29. Ra3

29...h4 30. Rf3 Qc2 31. Qxf6+ exf6 32. Wxf6+ Kg8 33. Wf7+ Kh8 34. Wf6+=

24...e5!?

Black's position is objectively no worse after different moves, but it becomes more and more difficult to play. Therefore Black should have thought about making the position more concrete.

A) 24...Rc8 25.h4=

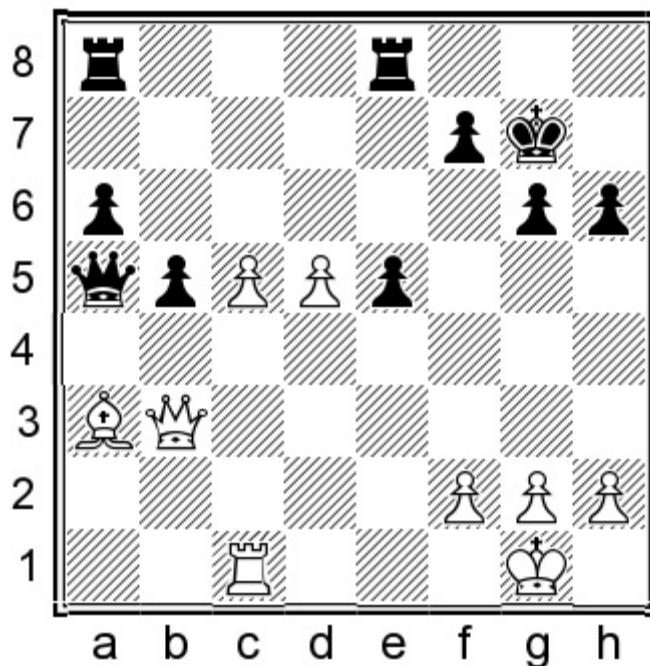
B) 24...b5!? 25.c5 bxa4 26. Wc4!? (26. Wc3+ Kh7 27. Wf3 Kg8 28.h4 Rb8 29. We4) 26...Rb8 The plan with ...Rb8-b3 appears. 27.h4 Rb3 28. Wd4+ Kg8 29. Wxa4 Rxa3 30. Wxa3 Wxd5 31.h5 gxh5 32. Wxa6 Wxc5 33. Wxh6=

25.a5 b5

A) 25...bxa5 26.c5=

B) 25...Rb8!? 26.d6!?=

26.c5 Wxa5 27.Rc1



Position after: 27. ♖c1

27... ♚c7?

Black cannot withstand the tension of the struggle and makes an irreparable mistake.

The position was still difficult and rather unclear, but objectively approximately equal. For example...

A) 27... ♜ed8 28.d6 ♚d2 29. ♖d1±

B) 27... ♚d2 28.d6 ♜ed8 29.h4 ♜ac8 30. ♖d1 ♚e2 31. ♚d5=

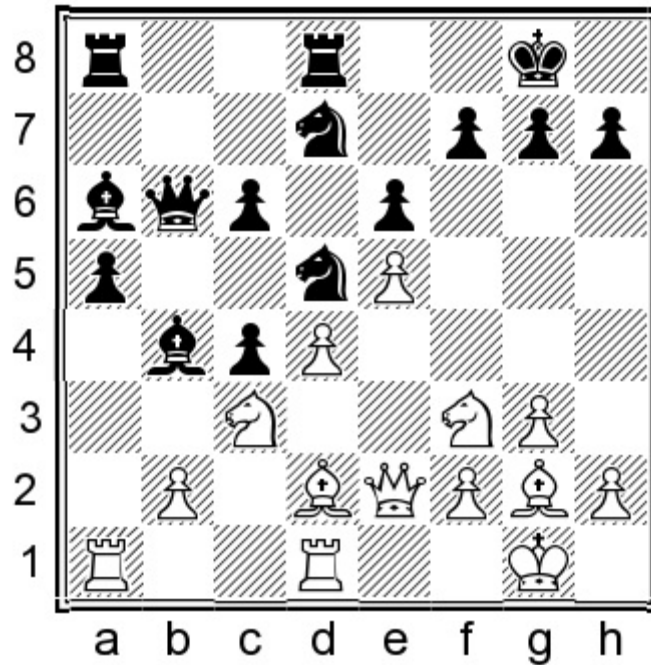
C) 27... b4!? 28. ♙b2 (28. ♙xb4 ♜eb8 29. ♙xa5 ♜xb3 30.d6 ♜d3 31. ♙c7 ♙f6 32.c6 ♜c8 33.f4 exf4 34. ♖a1 ♙e6 35. ♜e1+ ♙f6) 28... ♜ac8 29. ♚e3∞

28.c6 ♜ed8 29. ♚d3+–

And the white pawns are ready to advance further. 1-0 (42) Tiviakov, S (2601) – Van Der Weide, K (2471) Dieren 2004.

3

Dreev, A. – Motylev, A.



White to move

Evaluate the consequences of the active move 16. ♘g5.

Show/Hide Solution

3

16. ♘g5

Here White could play 16. ♙e4!? with compensation for the pawn. However he chose the most active continuation.

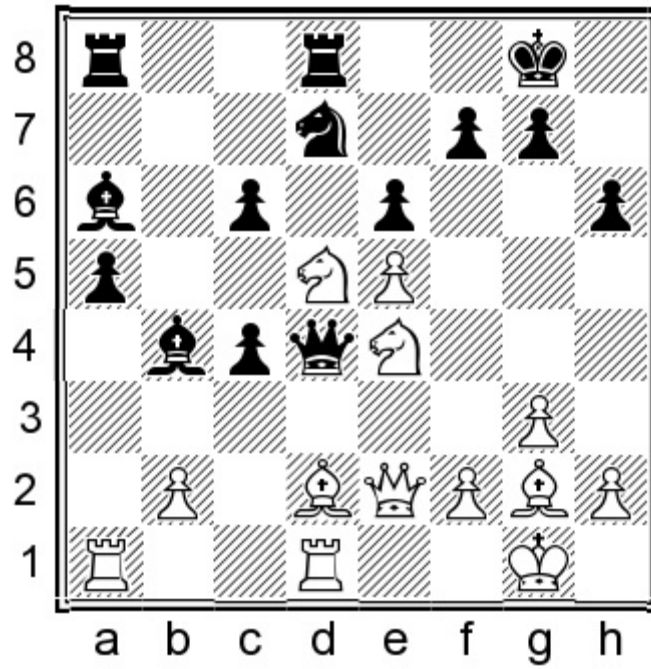
16. ♘g5 h6

The position will be equal if both opponents play correctly. Instead, 16... ♘f8 gives the initiative to White.
17. ♘ge4! ?↑ (17. ♙h5! ?↔)

17. ♘ge4 ♙xd4!

This is the move of a man with a strong spirit. White now needs to gather his thoughts, because he considered this move to be impossible.

18. ♘xd5

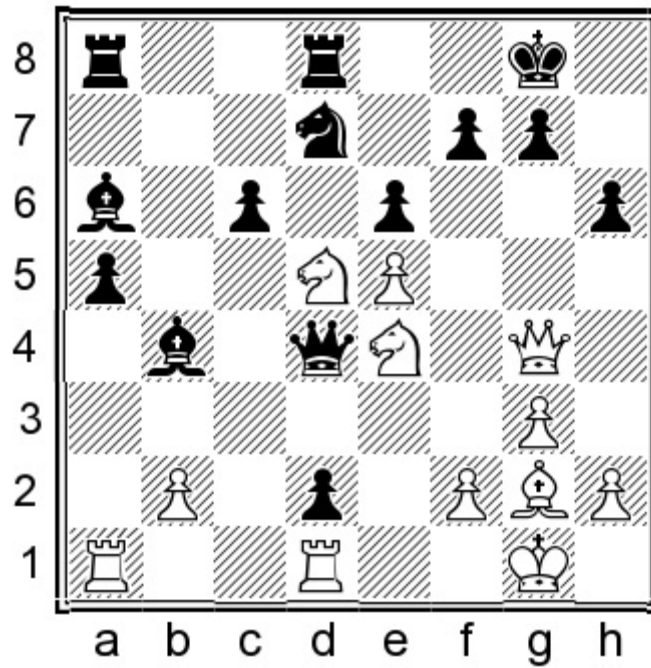


Position after: 18. ♘xd5

18...c3

Black's most important resource.

19. ♖g4 19...cxd2



Position after: 19...cxd2

19... ♗xe5?? 20. ♗ef6+-

20. ♖xd2!

20. ♖ef6+? leads to a hopeless position: 20... ♖xf6 21. ♗xd4 ♖xd5 22. ♖xd2 c5!–+. Here we clearly see how it is important not to break off forced options, but to calculate them to the end, taking into account all the opponent's tempo moves.

20... ♗xe5

The most ambitious continuation.

A) 20... ♗xd2? 21. ♖ef6+ ♖xf6 22. ♗xd4 ♖xd5 23. ♗xd2±

B) 20... ♗xd5 21. ♖xd5 cxd5 22. ♖f6+

B1) 22... ♖f8 I think the most reasonable thing here is to force a draw by 23. ♖h7+ (23. ♗xd5 is already impossible here because of 23... ♖xe5±.) 23... ♖g8 24. ♖f6+=.

B2) A possible continuation, though a bit risky for Black, is 22... ♖h8!? 23. ♗xd5 (23. ♗h5!?∞) 23... ♖a7 (23... ♖xe5 24. ♗e4 gxf6 25. ♗xa8 ♖d2∞) 24. ♖xd7 ♖axd7 25. ♗e4 ♖d2 26. ♗f3 ♖g8∞

21. ♖xb4 axb4

It seems that White has no compensation for the two pawns, but...

22. ♗d1! ♗c7

During the game both opponents thought that this move was the only one, however Black had the alternative 22... ♖a7!?

A) 23. ♖c1 ♗c8 24. ♖c5 ♗c7 25. ♖b3 (25. ♖c4? ♖f8±) 25... ♖a6 26. ♖c5 ♖a7=

B) 23. ♗f1 ♗xe4 24. ♖xa6 ♖c7± Black's position does not look very attractive in view of the pin on the d-file. However, whether White has a way to win the knight is unclear.

23. ♗f1!

Without this move, White is simply two pawns down. To tell the truth, it seemed to me that I was winning. But Black still has salvation.

23... ♗xf1 24. ♖xd7 ♖xa1!

The only move.

A) 24... ♗xd7? 25. ♗xd7+–

B) 24... ♗e2? 25. ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 26. ♖xa8 ♗xa8 27. ♗xe2+–

25. ♖xd8+ ♖h7 26. ♗xa1 ♗xd8 27. ♗xf1 ♗d4! 28. ♗e1

28. ♗e2 f5! =

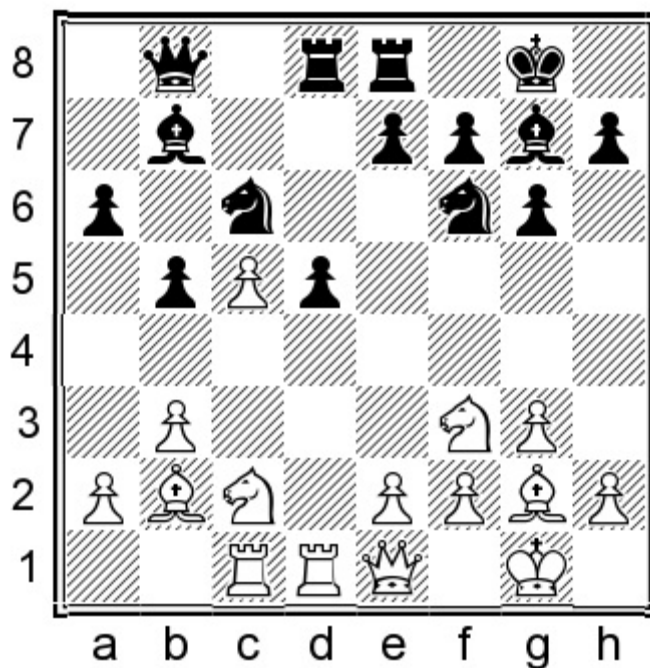
28... ♗xb2 29. ♖c5 ♗d4 30. ♗c1

White has managed to block the passed pawns, but it is very difficult to strengthen the position.

30...e5 31.♖c2+ g6 32.♗f1 ♘g7 33.♙e2 ♚g4+! 34.♙e1 ♜d4 35.♞b3 ♞d5 36.♙e2 e4 37.♞c5 ♞h5+! 38.♙e1 ♞e5 39.♙d2 ♞g5+ 40.♙e1 ♞e5 41.♖c1 ♞d4 42.h4 ♙h7 43.♞b3 ♞d3 44.♞c5 ♞d4 45.♞b3 ♞d3 46.♞c5 ♞d4 47.♞b3 ½-½

4

Hou Yifan – Vachier-Lagrave, M.

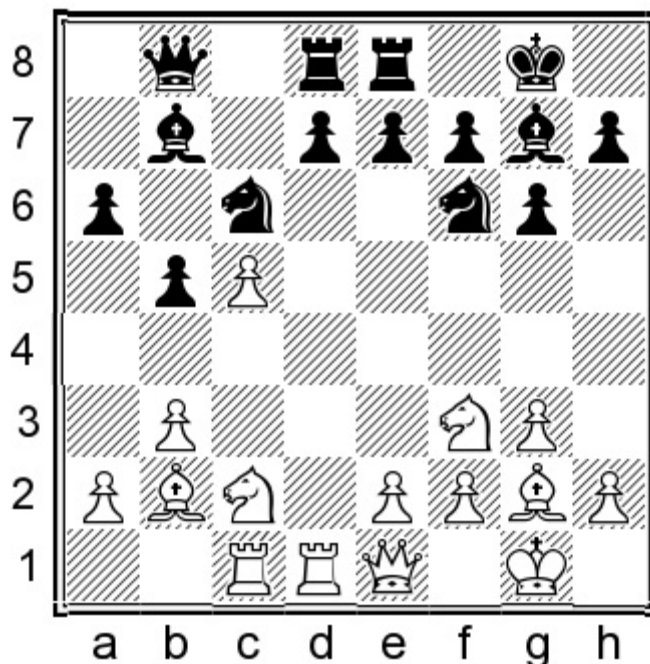


White to move

Black has just played 16...d7-d5. What should White play?

Show/Hide Solution

4



Black to move

Obviously, to reduce the pressure, Black needs to advance the d-pawn, but one or two squares?

It seems that after taking on d6 it doesn't matter, but why not give White a choice by playing 16...d5?

16...d5?!

Reaching the position of our exercise.

Black could exchange the c5-pawn to free up space for his pieces in a simple way with 16...d6. However, he chose a more ambitious continuation, which gives the choice to White.

16...d5?!

White believed her opponent. In the game she played 17.cxd6?! ♖xd6 18.♖xd6 ♘xd6 and the position became equal: 0-1 (46) Hou Yifan (2654) – Vachier-Lagrave, M (2789) Baden Baden 2018. Instead of the prosaic exchange on d6, leading to an equal ending, it was much stronger to play...

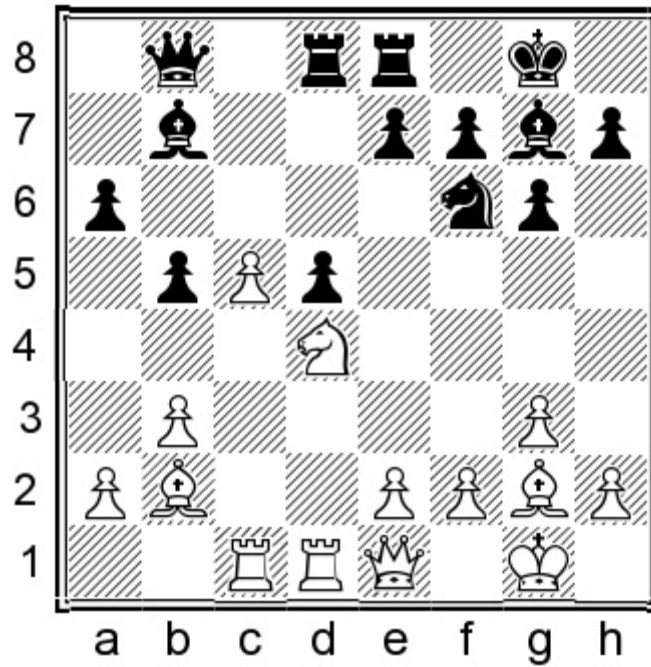
17.♗fd4!

If White could exchange the knight blockading the c5 pawn, her initiative would become very dangerous. Black probably expected to be able to stabilise the situation on the queenside and then use the pawn advantage in the centre, but this is not likely. For example

17...♗xd4

17...e5?! 18.♗xc6 ♗xc6 In this case it is very strong to play 19.♙a5!+- with a further ♗c2-b4.

18.♗xd4



Position after: 18. dxd4

18... Rxc8

18...e5 19.c6 Rxc8 20.cxb7 Rxc1 21.Rxc1 exd4 22. Qxd4 Wxb7 23. Wd1±

19. Qh3!?

It was also good to play 19.b4!? e5 20. Qb3 d4 21.c6 Qa8 22. Qa5±. The strong passed pawn gives White the advantage.

19... Rxc7

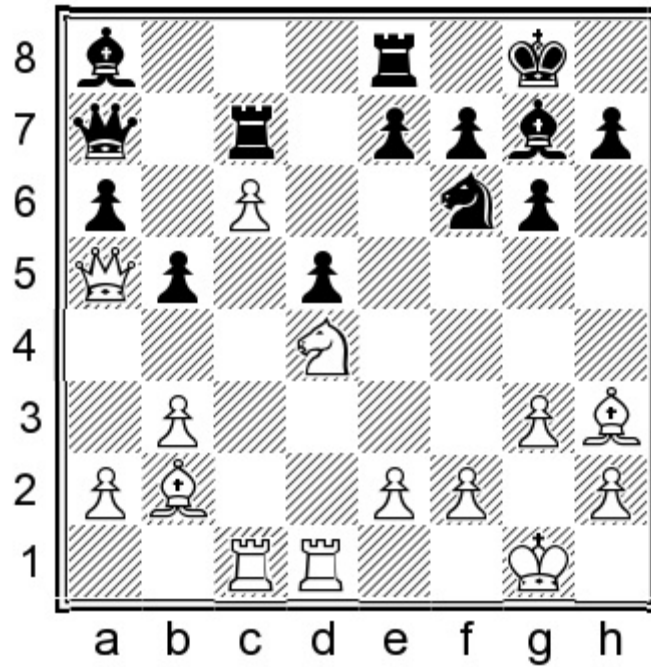
Black does not want to give up the plan to capture the centre by ...e7-e5.

19...e6 20.b4 Qe4 21.e3±

20.c6 Qa8

20... Qc8 21. Qg2 e5 22. Qf3 d4 23. Rxc5±

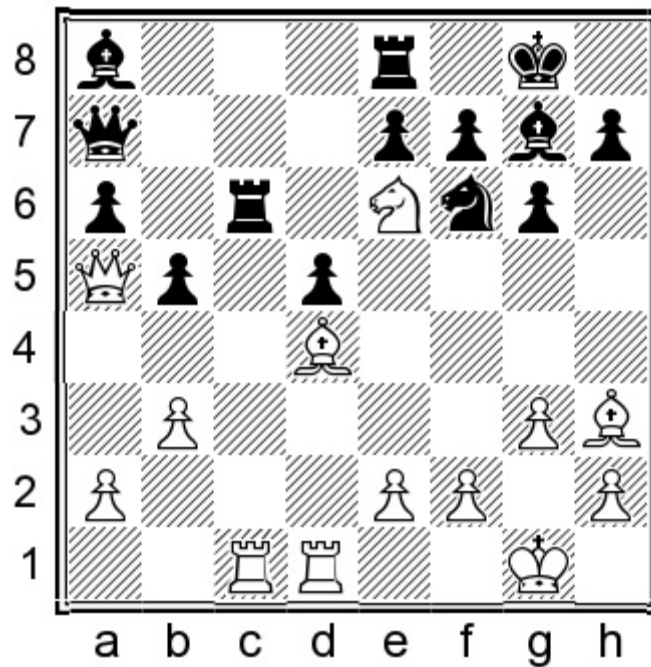
21. W a5 W a7



Position after: 21... ♔a7

22.a4!

22. ♘e6 This is undoubtedly a very tempting continuation, however, with accurate play, Black keeps the balance: 22... ♖xc6 (22... fxe6? 23. ♙xe6+ ♜h8 24. ♙d4 ♚b8 25. ♙e5+-) 23. ♙d4



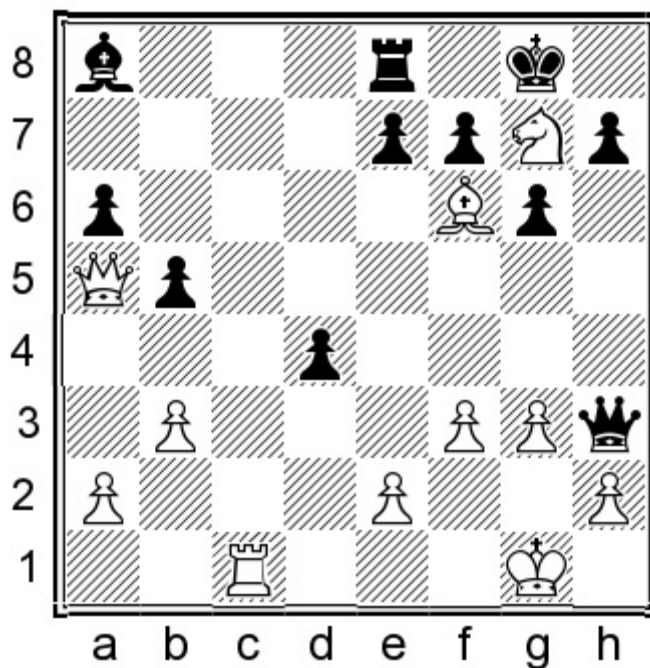
Position after: 23. ♙d4

A) 23... ♚b7? 24. ♘d8!+-

B) 23... ♚b8? 24. ♘xg7 ♜xg7 25. ♙d7 ♖xc1 26. ♖xc1 ♜f8 (26... ♚d8 27. ♚c7 ♚xc7 28. ♖xc7 ♜d8 29. ♙c8 a5

30.♙a6+-; 26...♞d8 27.♞c7+-) 27.♞xa6+-

C) 23...♞d7! 24.♘xg7 ♞xh3 25.♙xf6 (25.♘xe8? ♘g4) 25...♞xc1 26.♞xc1 d4 27.f3

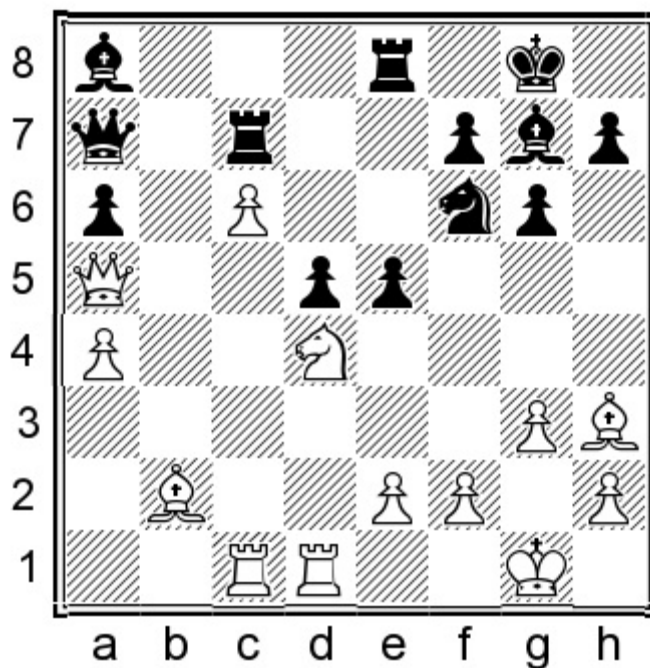


Position after: 27.f3

27...♞h6!! 28.♞d1 ♞e3+ 29.♚f1 ♙xf3 30.♞d2 ♞c8 31.♞xe3 dxe3 32.♙xe7 ♙g4 33.♙f6 ♙h3+ 34.♚e1 h6=

White cannot strengthen the position; we have a positional draw on the board.

22...bxa4 23.bxa4 e5



Position after: 23...e5

24. ♖b5! axb5 25. ♔xa7 ♜xa7 26. axb5 ♜c7 27. e3!

Despite the extra piece Black's position is extremely dangerous. White's plan is to double rooks on c-file with the threat of b5-b6. It is difficult for Black to prevent this plan.

Chapter 6

A Mixture of Subjects

There are seven games in this chapter which illustrate many of the topics examined in the previous chapters. These games are complex and are annotated in great detail. In order to get the maximum benefit from them, I recommend you to analyse them very carefully, paying special attention to the variations, the analysis of which reveals the depth and beauty of the game of chess.

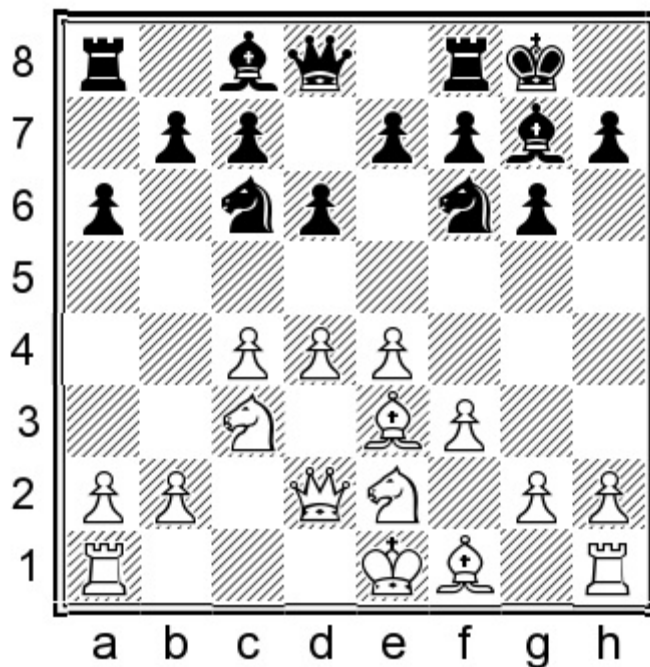
I hope that you will get aesthetic pleasure from studying these games and try to learn the necessary techniques. Actually, that is the subject of our book.

Duda, Jan Krzysztof (2666)

Demchenko, Anton (2589)

Gjakova 2016

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♙g7 4.e4 0-0 5.f3 d6 6.♙e3 ♗c6 7.♚d2 a6 8.♗ge2



Position after: 8...♗d7

8...♙d7

8...♖b8 is more popular, and after 9.♖c1 ♙d7 10.♗d1!? we come to the position discussed earlier in the previous chapter.

9.♙h6!?

Of active moves such as 9.h4, 9.♙h6 and 9.g4, the last is the most common here. Note that the main move is 9.♗c1.

9...b5

9...♙xh6 has also been played: 10.♚xh6 e5 11.0-0-0 b5 12.h4! bxc4 (12...exd4!?) 13.h5 ♖e7 14.g4!→ with an attack, Gupta – Smirin, New Delhi 2012.

10.h4

White could take the pawn, but of course it is too early to talk about a decisive advantage: 10.♙xg7 ♔xg7 11.cxb5!? axb5 12.♗xb5 ♘a5 (12...♚b8 13.♗ec3 ♗b4 14.♗a3±) 13.♗a3 e5∞.

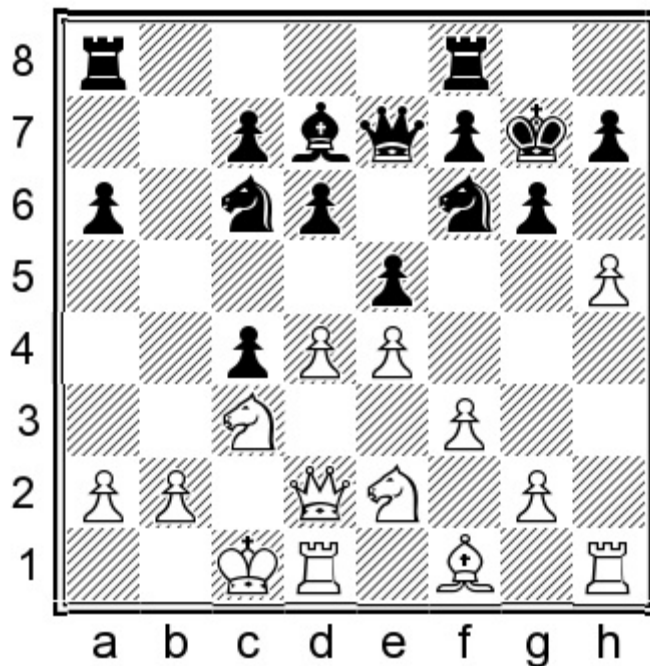
10...e5

10...♙xh6 11.♚xh6 e5 (11...bxc4?! 12.h5↑) 12.0-0-0↑

11.♙xg7

If 11.h5 ♙xh6 12.♚xh6 ♗xd4 13.♗xd4 exd4 14.♗d5 c6 Black is OK.

11...♔xg7 12.h5 bxc4 13.0-0-0 ♖e7



Position after: 13...♖e7

14.g4

14.♗d5!? is also interesting.

14...♞ab8 15.g5!?

Clearly the most active continuation, but White could follow a positional path with 15.d5!?, e.g. 15...♗a5 16.♗b1 ♞b5 17.♗a3 ♞c5 18.♗c3±.

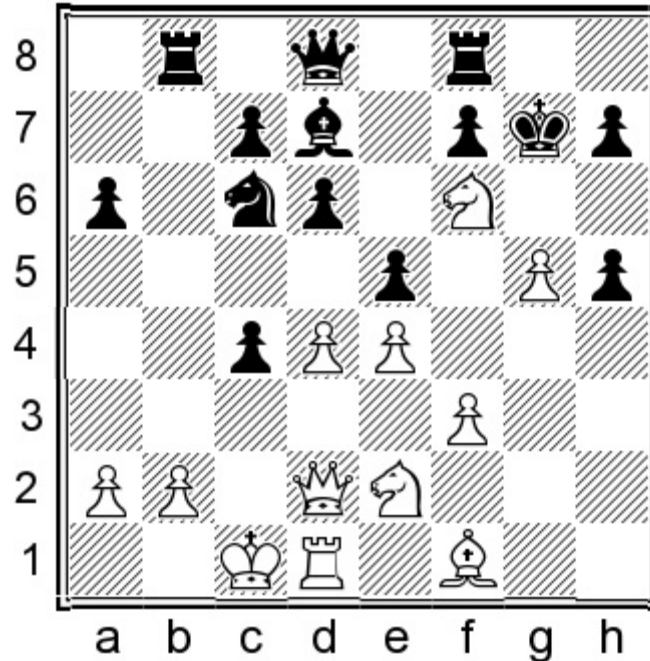
15...♖xh5 16.♗d5 ♔d8 17.♝xh5!?

17.♗f6!?

17...gxh5

We saw that White had many other possibilities, however, having reached this position, it now becomes very interesting from the point of view of our topic.

18.♗f6

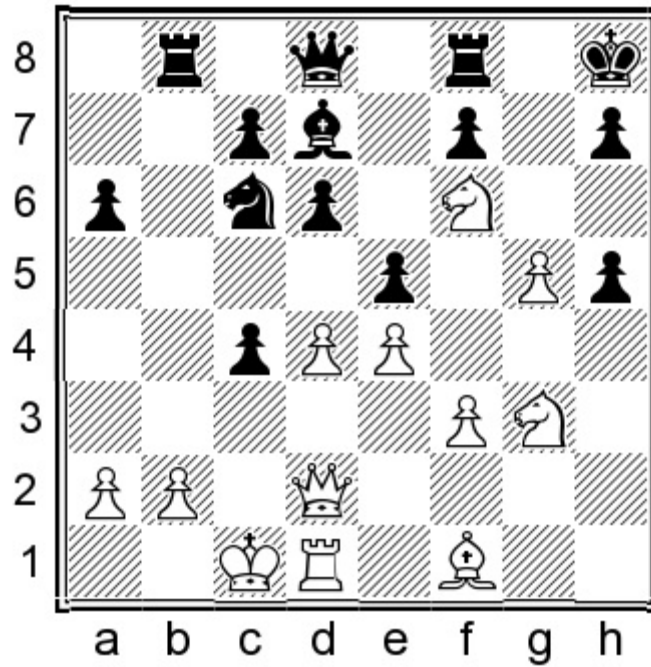


Position after: 18.♗f6

18...♔h8?!

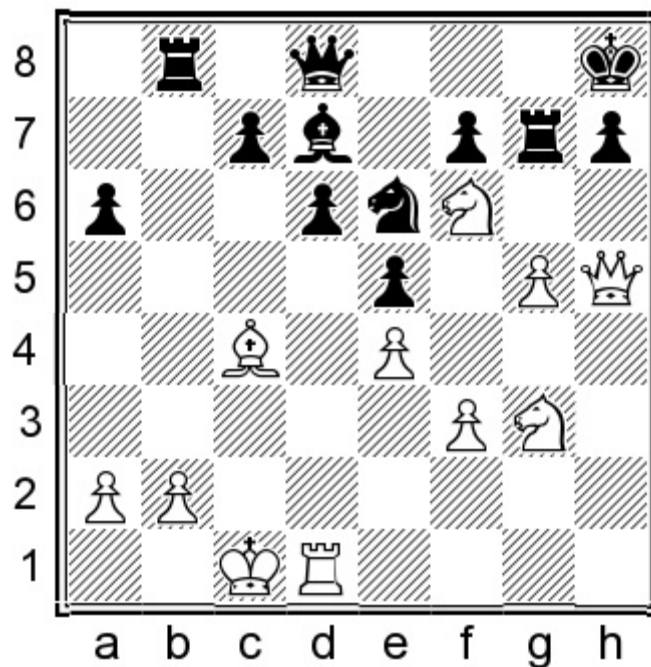
18...♔h8!! Black tries to hide his king in a ruined palace. I doubt if this sort of move comes to mind first, but it is the strongest! 19.♗g3 Looks promising. With the help of the manoeuvre ♔d2-h2-h5 White wants to checkmate the poor king which has been abandoned by its army to its fate.

However, salvation comes just in time. (19.dxe5 ♗xe5 20.♔c3 ♗d3+ 21.♝xd3 cxd3 22.♗f4 ♔b5!?) There is nothing decisive for White and Black is fine. 22.♗xd7 ♖f6+ is worse.)



Position after: 19. d3

- A) 19...Rg8 20. d4gxh5 c3 21. Wxc3 Rxc5 22.dxe5 dxe5 23.f4 Rg4! 24.fxg5 Rxc5 25.Rd2!?!↑
- B) 19...c3!? 20. Wh2 (20.bxc3 Rg8!∞) 20...Rxb2 21. Wxh5 Wxf6 22.gxf6 d4 23.Rc4 Rxc2+ 24.Qb1 Rb2+ 25.Qc1 Rxc2+=
- C) 19...d4 Probably there is another means of defence, but Black needs plenty of composure. 20. Wh2 Rg8! 21. Wxh5 Rg7 22.Rxc4 d6

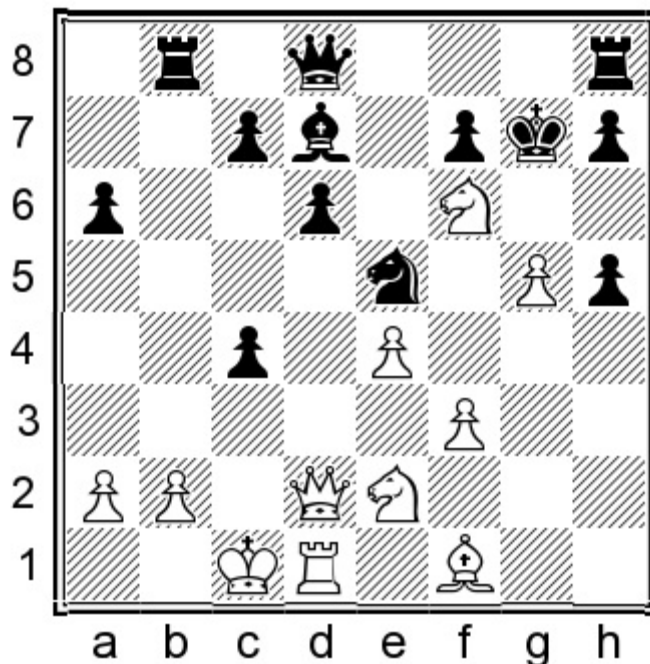


Position after: 22... d6

23.♖h1 (23.♗f5 ♗f4 24.♞h6 ♜xf5 25.exf5 ♞c8!! Only this resource, so hard to see in advance, saves Black!
 26.♗xh7 ♞xf5 27.♗f6+ ♞h7 28.♗xh7 ♞xh7 29.♞f6+ ♔g8 30.b3!?) 23...♗f8 (23...♗xg5? 24.♞xg5+–)
 24.♜xf7 c6!?

It will probably end in a draw, for example 25.♗xd7 (25.♔b1 ♞b6 26.b3 ♞e3 27.g6 ♞d3+ 28.♔a1 ♞c3+=)
 25...♞xd7 26.g6 ♞b7 27.b3 ♞b4 28.♗f5 ♞c3+ 29.♔b1 ♞d3+=.

19.dxe5 ♗xe5



Position after: 19... ♗xe5

20.♗d4?!

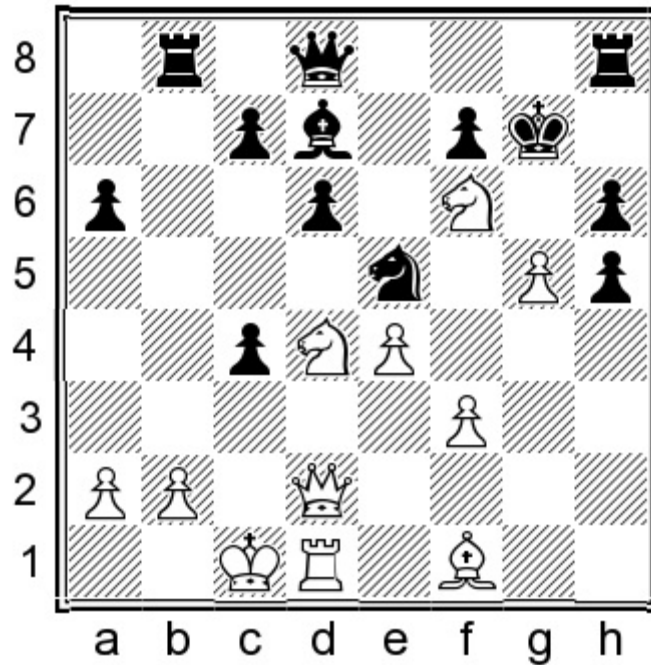
A) White's position looks beautiful after the tempting 20.♗g3 ♜a4! 21.f4! ♜xd1 22.♔xd1 ♗d3 23.♗f5+ ♔f8 24.♜xd3 cxd3, but there is no clear win. 25.♞xd3 h4 26.♞c3 ♞b5 27.♗d7+ ♔e8 28.♗f6+ ♔f8=

B) White gets a clear advantage, but not absolute victory, after 20.♞c3! ♔f8 21.f4 ♜a4 22.♞d2 ♗d3+ 23.♔b1 h6 24.♗d7+ ♜xd7 25.♞xh8+ ♔e7 26.♞f6+ ♔e8 27.♞xh6 ♞e7 28.♞h8+ ♞f8 29.♞d4±.

20...c5?!

A logical reaction from a human point of view. Black tries to repel the white attackers, but passes up another opportunity.

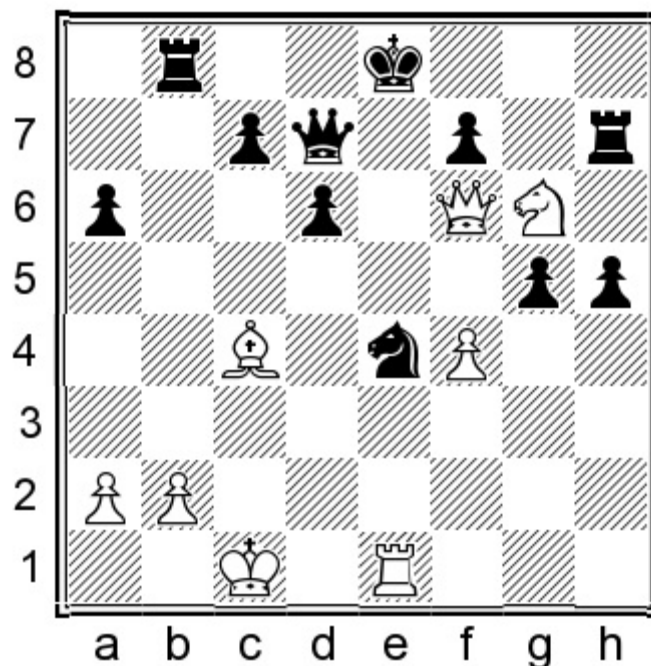
20...h6!!



Position after: 20...h6!!

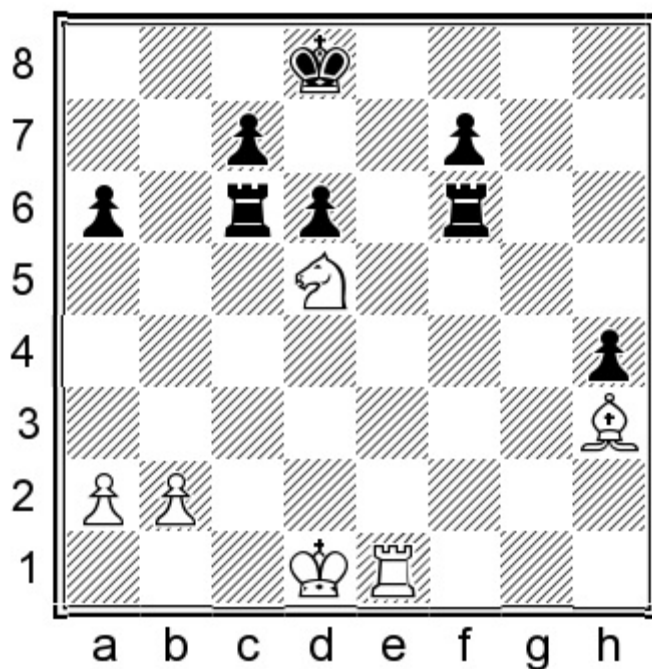
A magnificent defensive resource! Black should fight at any price against the f6-knight, which is restricting all his pieces.

21.f4 looks principled (21.♖xd7 ♜xd7 22.f4 A check on f5 would just be answered by ...♔f8. 22...♘g4!? 23.♞c3 ♕g8±), e.g. 21...♘g4 22.♘xd7 ♞xd7 23.♞c3 ♕g8! Only here! (23...♔h7? 24.♙xc4 hxg5 25.♞h1! ♕g6 26.♘f3±) 24.♙xc4 hxg5 25.♘f5 ♞h7 Is that all? Has Black repelled the attack? No, it's just the beginning. 26.♞h1! ♘f2 27.♞f6 ♘xe4 28.♘e7+ ♕f8 29.♘g6+ ♕e8! (Now Black does not want a draw; he wants more: 29...♕g8 30.♘e7+=) 30.♞e1



Position after: 30.♞e1

30...♔e6!! The only move, but very beautiful, is it not? 31.♙xe6 ♖xf6 32.♙f5+ ♔d8 33.♘e7 ♜b6 34.fxg5
 White is hanging on to the edge of the abyss by a miracle! 34...h4 35.gxf6 ♜h6 White will face a difficult
 defence, but with correct play there are still some chances of survival, for example 36.♙h3! It is important to
 stop the advance of the h-pawn. 36...♜xf6 37.♘d5 ♜c6+ 38.♔d1

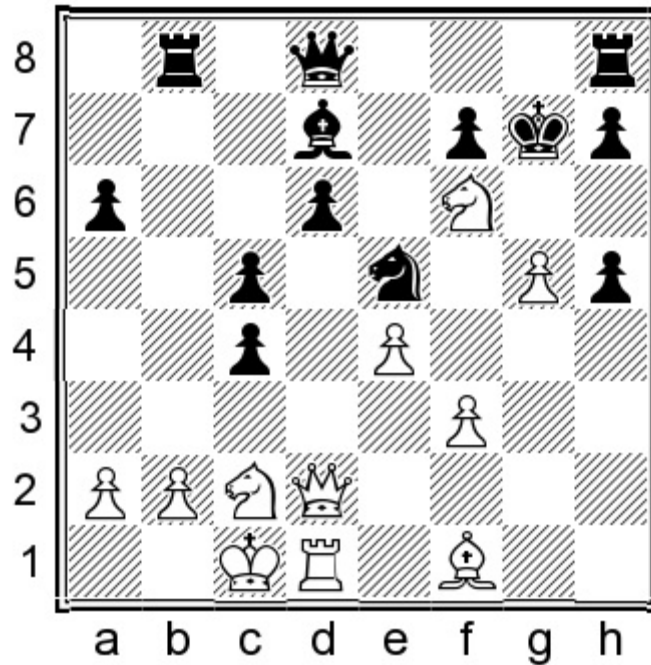


Position after: 38.♔d1

38...♜f3 (38...♜f2 39.♜g1! f5 40.♜g8+ ♔d7 41.♙g2! with good chances to survive.) What now? 39.♘b4!! A
 tremendous defensive resource!

Like parachutists in the air who drifted away from each other, the white pieces suddenly, miraculously, come
 together again. 39...♜b6 40.♙g2= Black will have to give up the exchange.

21.♘c2



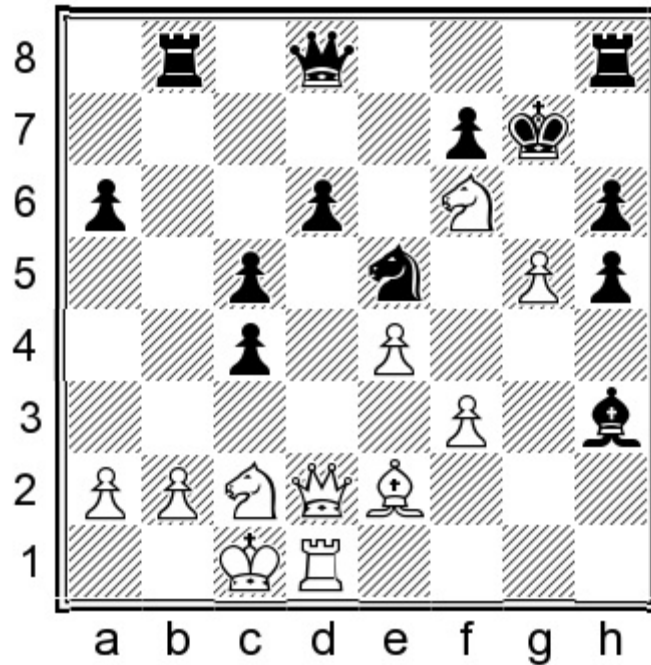
Position after: 21. ♖c2

21... ♗a4

A) Now 21...h6 isn't any good: 22. ♘h5+ ♔g6 23. ♚xd6+ ♔xh5 24. ♚xe5 ♚xg5+ 25. ♚xg5+ ♔xg5 26. ♜xd7+.

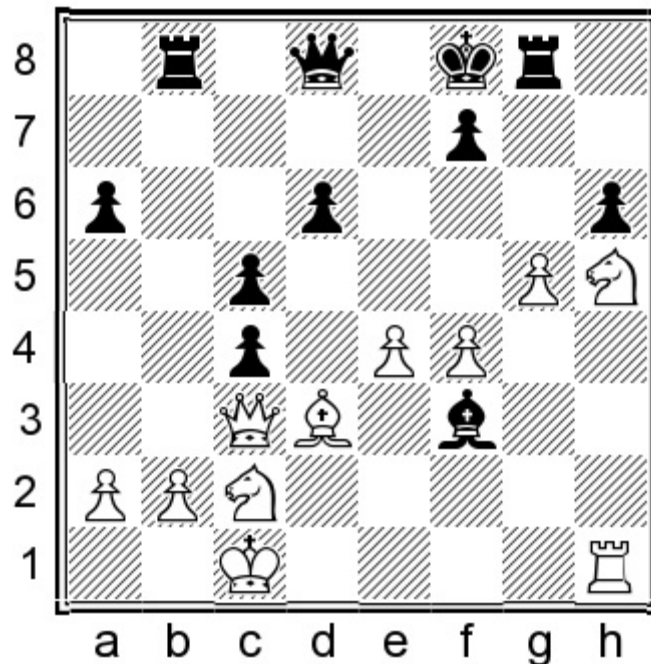
B) However, strangely enough the defensive resources are not yet exhausted!

More resistant here is 21... ♗h3!! Then White must act with filigree precision to realise his advantage. 22. ♗e2! (22.f4 ♗g4!∞ 23. ♜e1 ♘g6 24. ♗xc4 h6 25. ♚c3 ♔f8 26. ♜h1! hxg5 27. ♘xg4 gxf4 28. ♘e1 ♜b4 29. ♗d5 ♚e7 30. ♘f3 ♜xe4 31. ♗xe4 ♚xe4 32. ♘f6 ♚e3+ 33. ♚xe3 fxe3± only leads to a slightly better endgame.) 22...h6!



Position after: 22...h6!

23. ♖xh5+ ♔f8 24. f4 ♜d3+ 25. ♙xd3 ♜g4! (25...cxd3? 26. ♖c3 ♜g8 27. ♖xd3 ♜e6 28. ♜f6 hxg5 29. ♜xg8 ♔xg8 30. f5+-) 26. ♖c3! (≤ 26. ♜e2 ♜xh5 27. ♖c3 ♜xe2 28. ♖xh8+ ♔e7 29. ♖f6+ ♔e8 30. ♖xd6 ♖xf6 31. ♖xf6 hxg5 32. fxg5±) 26...♜g8 27. ♖h1 ♜f3



Position after: 27...♜f3

Where to go with the rook? (27...♜xh5 28. ♜xc4 ♜g6 29. ♜d5!+- Δ 29...hxg5 30. f5)

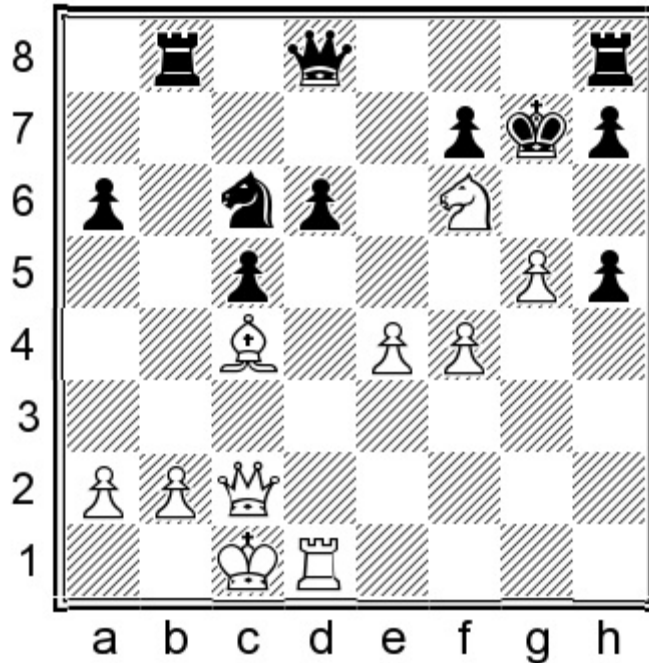
B1) 28. ♖h3 ♜xh5 29. ♜xc4 ♜g6 30. gxh6 (30. ♜d5? hxg5 31. f5 g4! That's why White needs to retreat the rook to h2!) 30...♜xe4 31. h7 ♜xh7 32. ♖xh7 d5 White is better, but the whole fight is still ahead!

B2) 28.♖h2!! ♕xh5 29.♕xc4 ♖g6 30.♕d5!! ♔e7 31.gxh6 ♕h7 32.b3!?!+-

22.f4

Even stronger was 22.♔c3!+-, preparing f3-f4.

22...♕xc2 23.♔xc2 ♖c6 24.♕xc4



Position after: 24.♕xc4

24...♖d4?

Oh, these active moves... the only practical chance was 24...h4! However, after the accurate 25.♔e2! (Black's idea was that after 25.♔h2? h5! deprives White of the h5-square and play on the h-file. 26.♔xh4 ♖d4∞) 25...h5□ 26.♖xh5+ ♔f8 27.g6 fxg6 28.♔g4 ♖b4 29.♕d5 ♖xh5 30.♔xg6 ♖xd5 31.♖xd5+- White's attack is irresistible.

25.♔h2!+- ♔b6 26.♖xh5+ ♔f8 27.♖f6 ♔b7

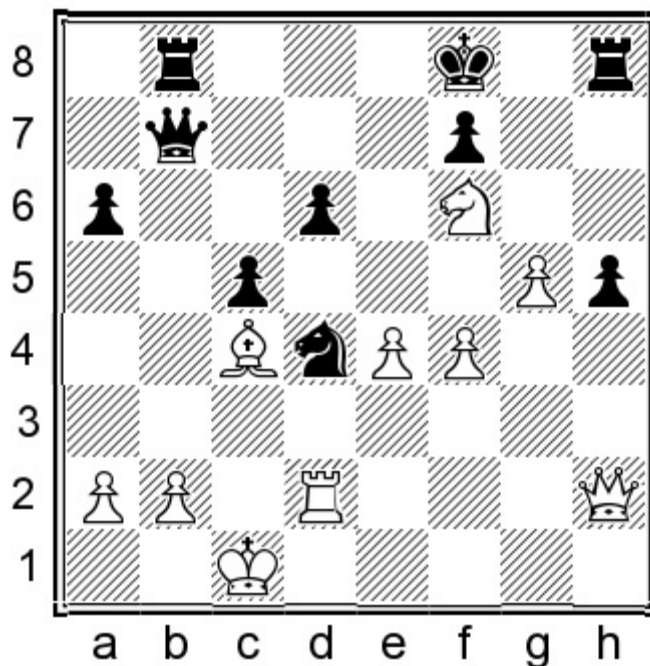
The black queen is forced to dodge the fork.

28.♖d2?!

The logical move. White protects the b2-pawn, freeing his queen for action. However, he has not taken into account a great defensive resource, after which Black, though not saved, at least does not lose immediately.

White wins easily after 28.♔h6+! ♔e7 and only now 29.♖d2+- . Black is defenceless. (29.b3!?!+-)

28...h5!



Position after: 28...h5!

So that the white queen doesn't reach the important h6-square.

29.f5?

A hard-to-find move wins here: 29.♖h3!. In a real game such a winning move is very difficult to spot. No wonder that White missed this opportunity.

He's still winning, though. 29...♗d8 (29...♔g7 30.f5 ♖e7 31.♙d5+- Δ 31...h4 32.♘h5+ ♔f8 33.f6 ♖e5 34.♗d7+-) 30.♘d5! ♗d7 31.f5 ♖a4 32.♗f1!+- and White wins with the advance g5-g6.

29...♔e7?

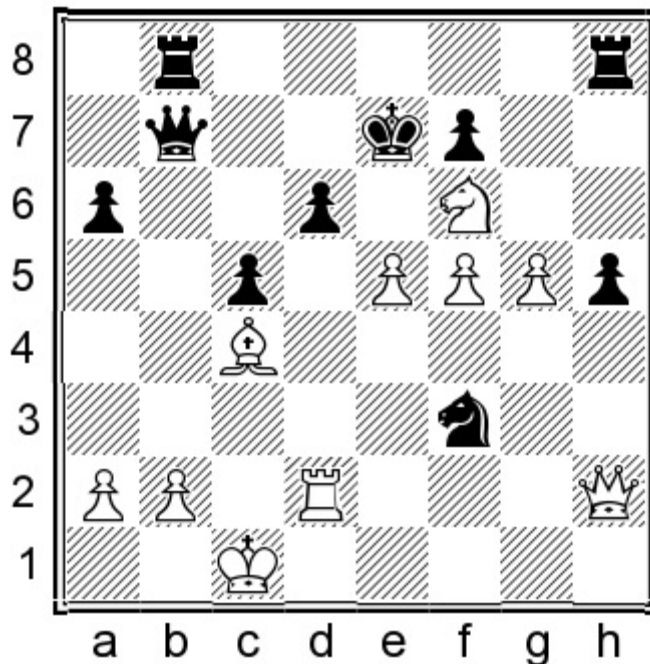
Black gets real chances to survive after 29...♗e7!, as the advance g5-g6 now runs into difficulties.

30.e5?

A) 30.♘d5+ ♔d7 31.g6 fxg6 32.fxg6 ♔c6 33.♗g3 h4 34.♗a3+- White's position is completely won, albeit it might not look obvious.

B) So it is much easier to play the 'human' way: 30.g6 fxg6 31.fxg6 ♔xf6 32.♗xd6+ ♔g7 33.♗e5+ ♔h6 34.♗h2+-

30...♘f3!



Position after: 30... Nf3!

Black uses the chance he has been given and the fight flares up anew.

31. exd6+ ♔d8 32. ♖f4 ♘xd2 33. ♗xd2 ♜f8?

An inappropriate pseudo-defensive move. Maybe Black wanted to prevent the advance of the white g-pawn, however White is not short of attacking ideas. It was better to defend by active moves.

A) 33...h4 34.g6 fxg6 35.fxg6 ♖h1+ 36.♔c2 ♜b4!∞

B) Or 33...♖h1+ 34.♔c2 ♜b4∞.

34. ♖e2!

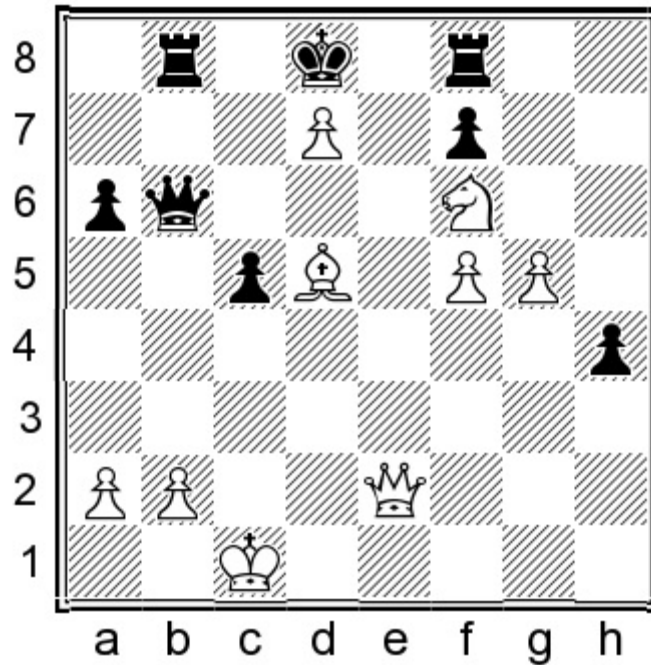
Again White's position is winning thanks to the threats on the e-file.

34...h4 35. ♔d5! ♖a7 36.d7?

Hasty, and a serious mistake. White could have won easily by regrouping his pieces.

36. ♔c6! c4 37. ♘d5!+-

36... ♖b6=



Position after: 36... ♖b6=

White still has enough activity as compensation for the two exchanges, but no more than that.

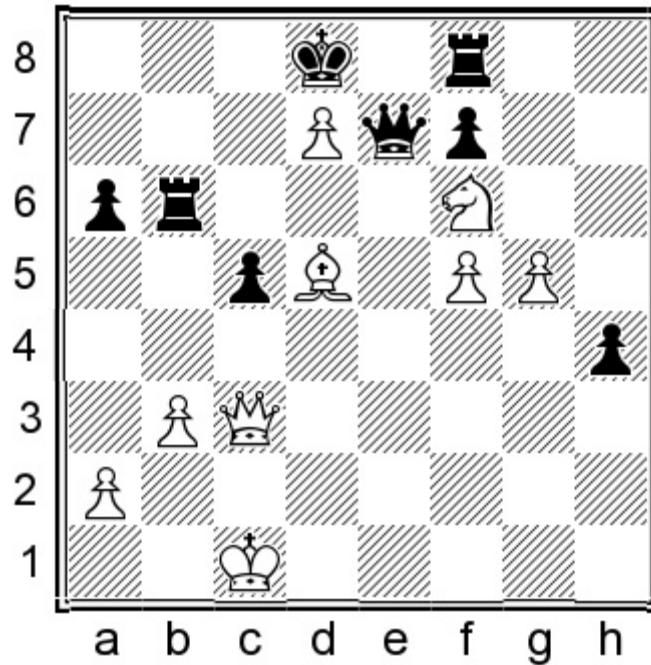
37.b3 ♖d6 38.♖e3?!

A) There would be crazy complications after 38.♙xf7!? h3 39.♘d5 ♔xd7 40.♙e6+ ♔d8 41.g6 ♜b7 42.♖e1∞.

B) An equal position would arise after the more reserved 38.♖e1 h3 39.♙f3! Freeing the d5-square for the knight. (But not 39.♖a5+?? ♜b6.) 39...h2 40.♖a5+ ♖c7 (40...♜b6 41.♘d5) 41.♖e1!? ♖f4+ 42.♔b2 ♖d4+ 43.♔c2 ♖d6 44.♖a5+ ♖b6 45.♖e1=

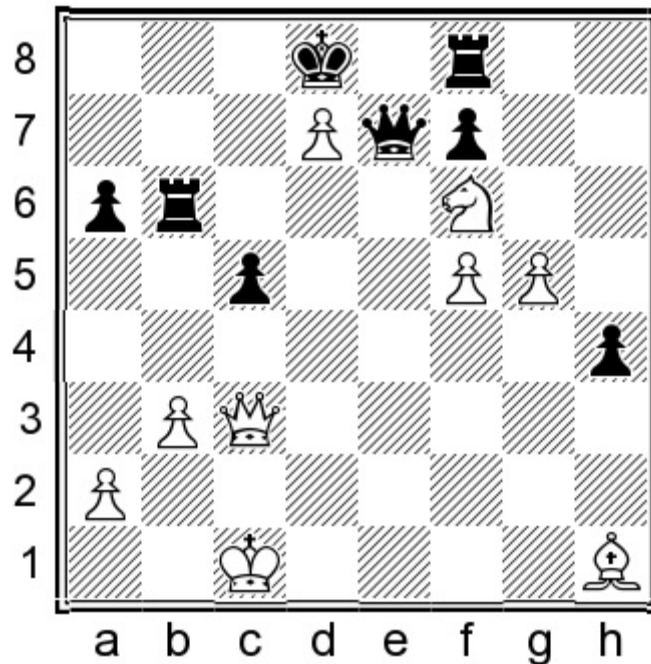
38...h3!

There is another move which sets White some serious problems, viz. 38...♖e7!?, after which White has to work hard to stay alive. 39.♖c3! ♜b6



Position after: 39...Rb6

40.♔h1!! This unexpected ‘move back’ is not only the strongest move, but also the only one! This example is worthy of chapter one, but let’s not disturb the integrity of this dramatic game. (40.♔f3? ♖xf6 41.gxf6 ♜d6+; 40.♔g2? h3!→ Δ 41.♔xh3 ♜h8 42.♔g2 ♜h2 43.♜g3 ♜d6 44.♜xh2 ♜e1+ 45.♔b2 ♜d2+ 46.♔a3 ♜c1+ 47.♔a4 ♜xa2#)

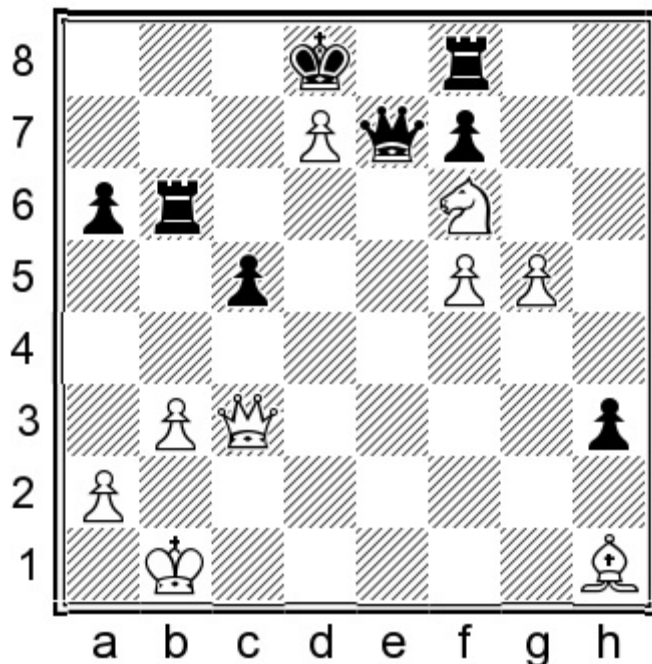


Position after: 40.♔h1!!

A) 40...♖xf6 41.gxf6 ♜d6!/? Taking the d7-pawn would just lead to perpetual check in many ways. 42.♜f3! This is why the white bishop hid so far back – the white queen needs the f3-square! Now White can exploit

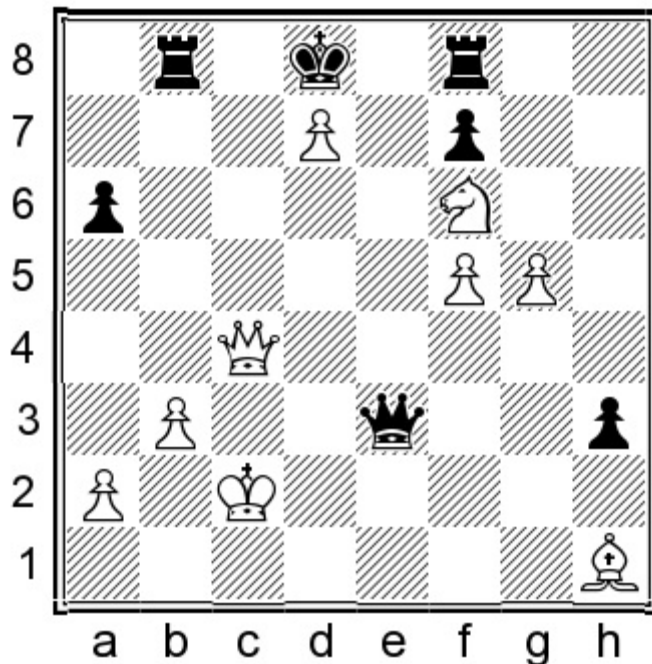
the open position of the black king, and this is enough for equality, e.g. 42...h3 43.♖a8+ ♔xd7 44.♗b7+ ♗c7 45.♗d5+ ♔c8 46.♗a8+ ♖b8 47.♗c6+=.

B) 40...h3 41.♔b1!!



Position after: 41.♔b1!!

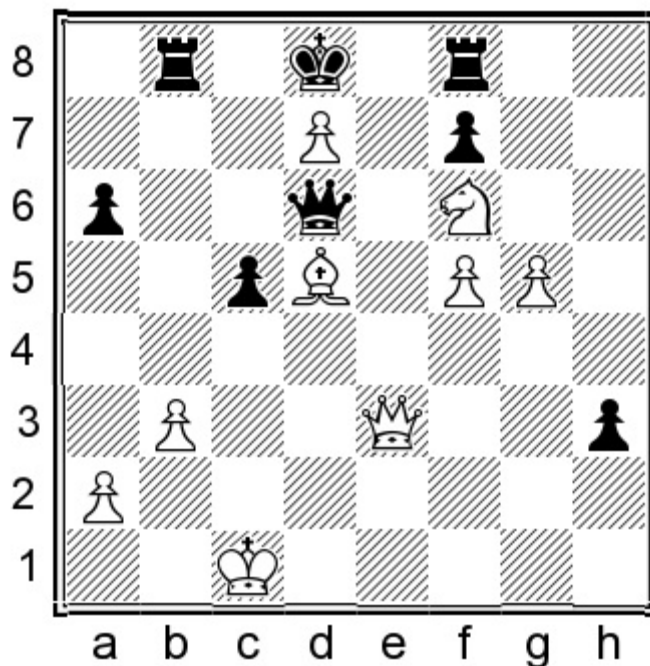
Again, the only move! (41.♔b2? ♗e2+ 42.♔a3 ♗b5-+) The position is equal. Here are some possible variations. 41...c4 (41...♗d6 42.♗e1! ♗d3+ 43.♔c1! ♖xf6 44.gxf6 ♗d6 45.♗e4 Here we see why 43.♔c1! was right: so Black can't exchange queens by playing ...♗d4+. 45...h2 46.♗a8+ ♔xd7 47.♗b7+=; 41...h2 42.♗a5 ♗d6 43.♔d5=) 42.♗xc4 (42.♗a5? ♗b4-+) 42...♗e1+ 43.♔c2 ♗f2+ (43...♖b8 44.♗b7=) 44.♔c1 ♗e3+ 45.♔c2 ♖b8



Position after: 45... ♖b8

A remarkable series of best moves by White follows. If they aren't found, then there is no clear draw.

46. ♙b7! ♚f2+ 47. ♗c1! ♚xf5 48. ♘d5! ♚xd7 49. ♗b4! ♖xb7 50. ♗xf8+ ♚e8 51. ♗d6+ ♗c8 52. ♗c5+ ♗b8 53. ♗d6+=



Position after: 38...h3!

39. ♗xh3??

The decisive mistake. And again a 'move back' could save White!

39. ♗e1!!= It is important for the queen to keep an eye on both the e8- and a5-squares. In this case, Black cannot improve his position.

39... ♗f4+ 40. ♗b1 ♗xg5-+

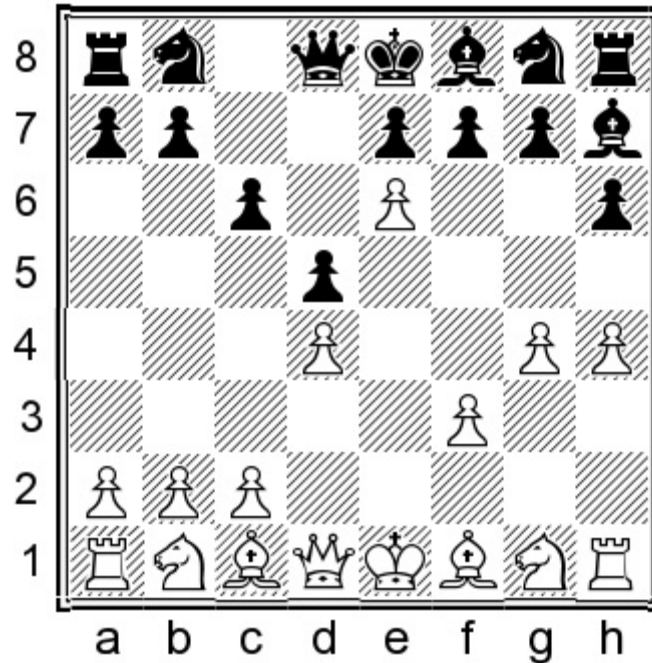
There is no need to comment on the rest of the game.

41. ♗c3 ♗g1+ 42. ♗c2 ♗f2+ 43. ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 44. ♗xd2 ♗e7-+ 45. ♗e4 ♗xd7 46. ♗c3 a5 47. a3 ♖fe8 48. ♗xc5+ ♗d6 49. ♗d4 ♖e1 50. ♗xf7 ♖d1+ 51. ♗d3 ♗e7 52. ♗c4 ♗f6 53. ♗c3 ♗xf5 54. ♗c2 ♖g1 55. ♗c5 ♖g3 56. ♗d3+ ♗f4 57. ♗c3 ♖c8 58. b4 axb4+ 59. axb4 ♗e5 60. ♗c4 ♖g4+ 61. ♗b3 ♖h8 62. ♗b5 ♗d6 63. ♗c3 ♖hh4 64. ♗d3 ♖g3 65. ♗c4 ♖g7 66. ♗a6 ♗d5 67. ♗c5 ♖h3+ 68. ♗d3 ♖g4 69. ♗b3 ♖c4+ 70. ♗d2 ♖xb4 71. ♗c1 ♖b2+ 72. ♗c3 ♖g2 73. ♗b4 ♖g1 74. ♗c4+ ♗d6 75. ♗d3 ♖g7 76. ♗c5 ♖h4 77. ♗b3 ♖gg4

0-1

Skvortsov, Oleg
Dreev, Alexey
Training game 2016

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5 4.h4 h6 5.g4 ♙e4 6.f3 ♙h7 7.e6



Position after: 7.e6

7...♗f6!?

This very rare move is an alternative to the more deeply studied (and in my opinion weaker) continuation 7...♚d6 8.exf7+ ♔xf7 9.f4 ♗f6 10.♗f3! ♗xg4 11.h5↑.

8.♗h3!?

This is an interesting opportunity from both a practical and analytical point of view.

A) Hitherto only the unnatural 8.♙f4 has been met at a high level.

B) 8.exf7+ does not lead to an advantage: 8...♔xf7 9.g5 hxg5 10.♗h3 ♙f5 11.♗xg5+ ♔g8 12.♙d3 e6 13.♗c3 ♙d6∞.

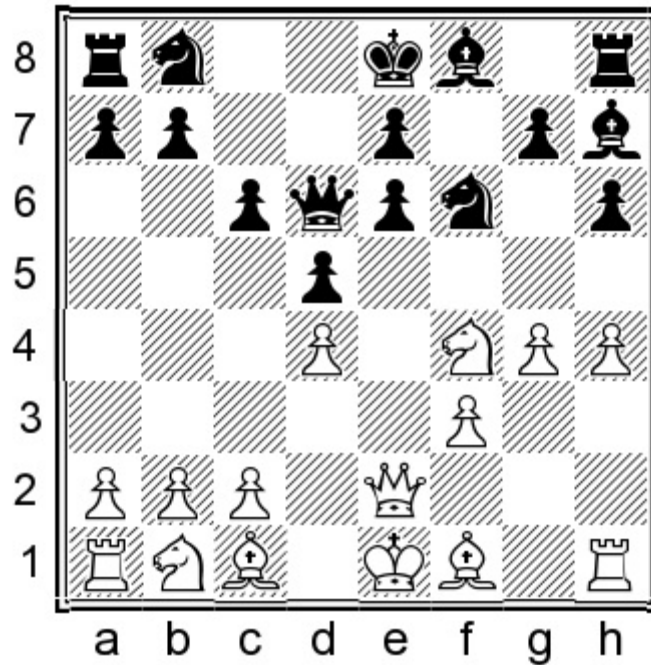
C) 8.♗c3!? is an interesting possibility to check.

8...c5!?

This is certainly a risky continuation, but not without practical value. Let's examine a second option in depth.

A third one could have been 8...♚d6!?.

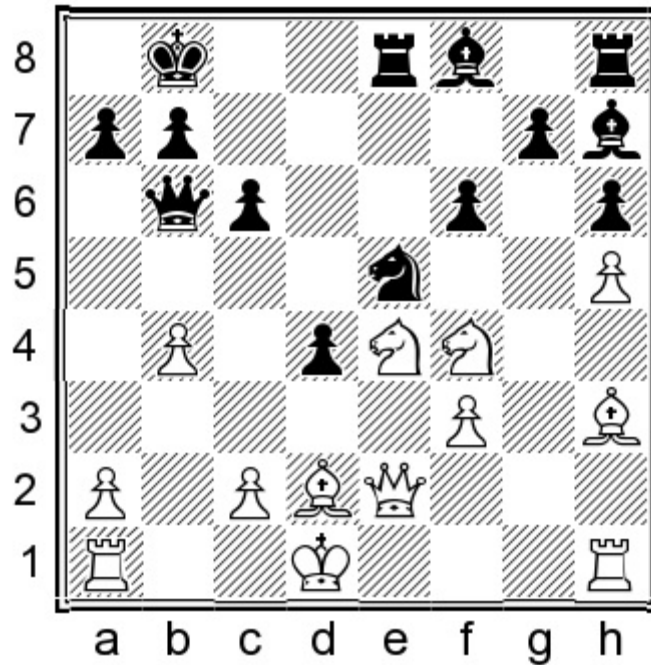
Probably the more 'correct' move 8...fxe6 could lead to a full-blooded game, e.g. 9.♗f4 (The next move needs practical verification. 9.♙d3!? c5!?) 9...♚d6 10.♚e2



Position after: 10. ♖e2

A) 10... ♖bd7!? is an interesting alternative to option B below. 11.g5 (11. ♖xe6 ♖xe6+ 12. ♗xe6 ♔f7 13. ♗xf8 ♖axf8 14.c3 e5 15. ♕e3 e4 16.g5 hxg5 17.hxg5 ♗e8 18.fxe4 ♕xe4 19. ♖xh8 ♖xh8 20. ♗d2 ♕f5=) 11...0-0-0! (11...e5?! 12.dxe5 ♗xe5 13.gxf6 exf6 14. ♕h3 g5 15. ♗d3 ♔f7 16. ♗xe5+ ♖xe5 17. ♖xe5 fxe5 18.c4!±) 12.gxf6 (12. ♗xe6 ♗h5 13. ♗xd8 ♔xd8 14. ♖g1 e5♖; 12.b3 e5 13.dxe5 ♗xe5♖) 12...exf6 13. ♗c3 e5 14.dxe5 ♗xe5!

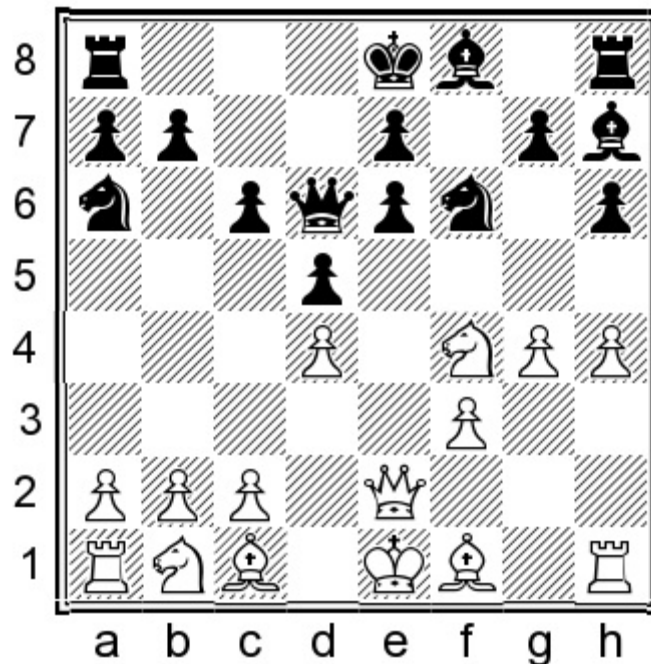
It may seem that Black does not have full compensation for the piece, however, after analysing it, I have come to the conclusion that he does, e.g. (14...fxe5 15. ♗d3±) 15. ♕h3+ (15.h5 ♔b8 16. ♔d1 ♕f5 17. ♖f2 ♖d7∞) 15...♔b8 16.h5 ♖e8 17. ♔d1 (17.0-0 ♕e7 18. ♖g2 ♕d8♖) 17...d4 18. ♗e4 ♖d8 19. ♕d2 It is tempting to play 19...♖b6!? (19...c5!?∞ It is very difficult to be sure of the evaluation here, but Black looks OK.) 20.b4!



Position after: 20.b4!

But after this move White takes the initiative. 20...♖xf3 21.♗e6 ♖xd2 22.♜xd2 (22.♜h2+ ♔a8 23.♗c7+? fails to 23...♜xc7 24.♜xc7 ♗xe4+.) 22...♔a8 23.♜f4 (23.♗4c5 ♕xc5 24.♗xc5 ♜e3+ or 24.bxc5 ♜b2+ 23...♜xe6 24.♕xe6 ♕xb4 25.♕f5 ♕g8 26.a3 ♕a5 27.♗c1 d3 28.♜b1! (28.cxd3?! ♜d4 29.♜b1 ♜xd3+ 28...♜d4 29.♜d1 ♕c4 30.♜f2 d2+ 31.♜xd2 ♕xd2+ 32.♜xd2 ♜e5 33.♕g6±.

B) 10...♗a6!?



Position after: 10...♗a6!?

B1) 11.g5 ♗b4 12.♗a3 (12.g6?! ♕xg6 13.♗xg6 ♜g3+ 14.♔d1 ♜xg6 15.c3 ♗a6 16.♕f4 ♜f7 17.♕h3 ♗h5

18.♔h2 ♖f4 19.♙xf4 ♚xf4 20.♚xe6 ♚d6⌘) 12...hxg5 13.hxg5 ♙d3! 14.♚g2 (14.♚xh8 ♙xe2 15.gxf6 exf6 16.♙xe2 g5! 17.♖g6 ♚g3+ 18.♔d2 ♖f7⌘) 14...♚xh1 15.♚xh1 ♙xc2 16.gxf6 exf6 17.♙d2 (17.♚h5+?! g6⌘) 17...♙f5 18.♙h3 ♖d3+ (18...g5 19.♙xf5 exf5 20.♚h5+) 19.♖xd3 ♙xd3 20.♖f2 ♖f7 21.♚e1 ♚e8∞

B2) 11.♙h3?! g5 12.hxg5 hxg5 13.♖xe6 ♖b4 14.♖a3 ♖e4!⌘

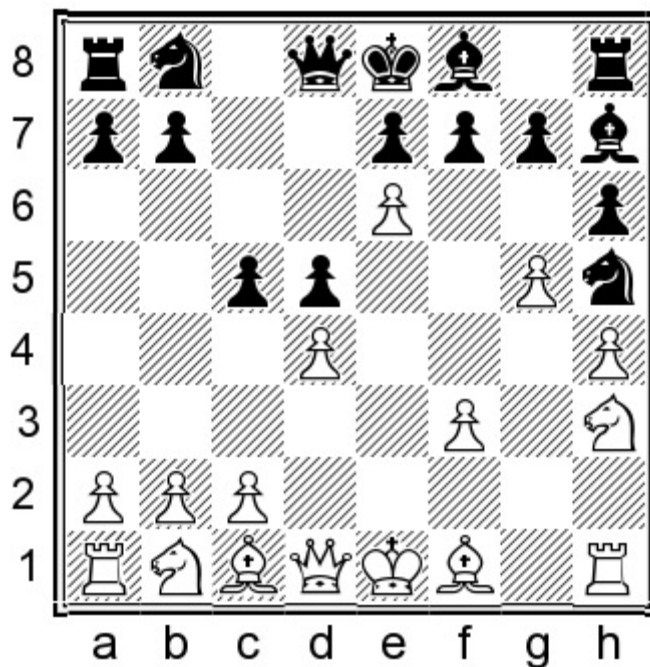
B3) 11.♖xe6?! ♖b4 12.♖a3 ♖f7⌘

B4) 11.♚xe6 ♚xe6+ 12.♖xe6 ♔d7!/? This looks equal. (12...♖f7!/? 13.♖xf8 ♚xf8 14.♖a3 h5!/?) 13.♙xa6 bxa6 14.♖c5+ ♖c8 15.♙f4 e5! 16.♙xe5 (16.dxe5 ♙xc5 17.exf6 ♚f8 18.g5 gxf6 19.gxh6 ♚e8+ 20.♔d2 ♚g8⌘) 16...♙xc5 17.♙xf6 ♚e8+ 18.♖f2 (18.♔d2 ♙b4+ 19.c3 ♙d6 20.♙xg7 ♙f4+ 21.♔d1 ♚b8 22.b3 ♚e3⌘; 18.♔d1 gxf6 19.dxc5 ♚b8 20.♖c1 ♚b4⌘) 18...♙b6 19.♙xg7 ♚e7=

9.g5!?

Decisive and strong. Black feared 9.♖f4!?. White gets the advantage, but not a very big one. 9...cxd4 (9...fxe6 10.g5 ♖fd7 11.♙d3↑) 10.g5 hxg5 11.hxg5 ♙xc2 12.g6 (12.♚xh8 This leads to the same position as after 12.g6. 12...♙xd1 13.exf7+ ♖xf7 14.g6+ ♖e8 15.♚xf8+) 12...fxe6 13.♚xh8 ♙xd1 14.♚xf8+ ♖xf8 15.♖xe6+ ♖g8 16.♖xd8 ♙xf3 17.♖d2 (17.♙h3!/? ♙g4 18.♙xg4 ♖xg4 19.♖e6 ♖c6 20.♖a3±) 17...♙h5 18.♖xb7±

9...♖h5



Position after: 9...♖h5

10.f4!?

A very interesting and tempting continuation, which sets Black some difficult

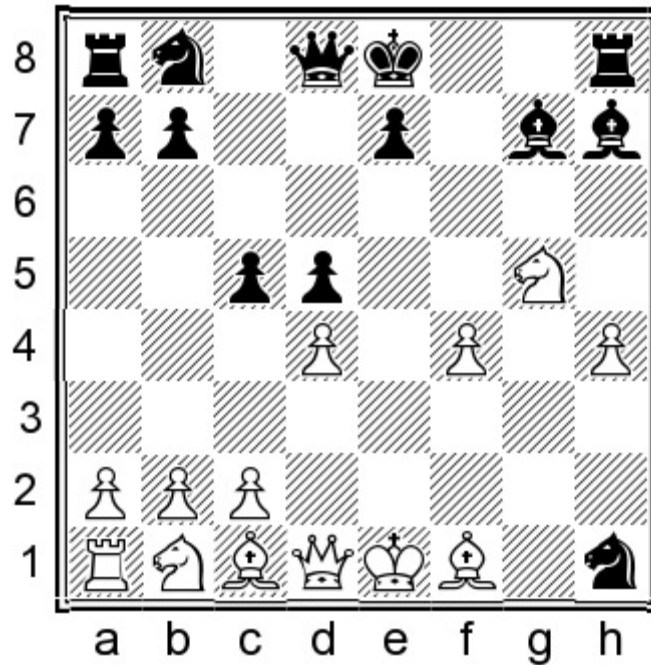
problems. 10.♙d3!/? probably gives White better chances: 10...♙xd3 11.♚xd3 ♚c8 12.exf7+ ♖xf7 13.dxc5 ♚e6+ 14.♖f2 ♖c6 15.♖f4±.

10...♖g3 11.exf7+ ♔xf7 12.gxh6

12.f5 ♜xf5 (12...♜xh1 13.g6+ ♔g8 14.♚e2 ♚d7 15.♚g4!! ♜xg6 16.♚xg6 ♜c6 17.♜g2∞) Δ 13.♜f4 e6
14.♚g4 g6 15.h5 ♚xg5! 16.hxg6+ ♜xg6

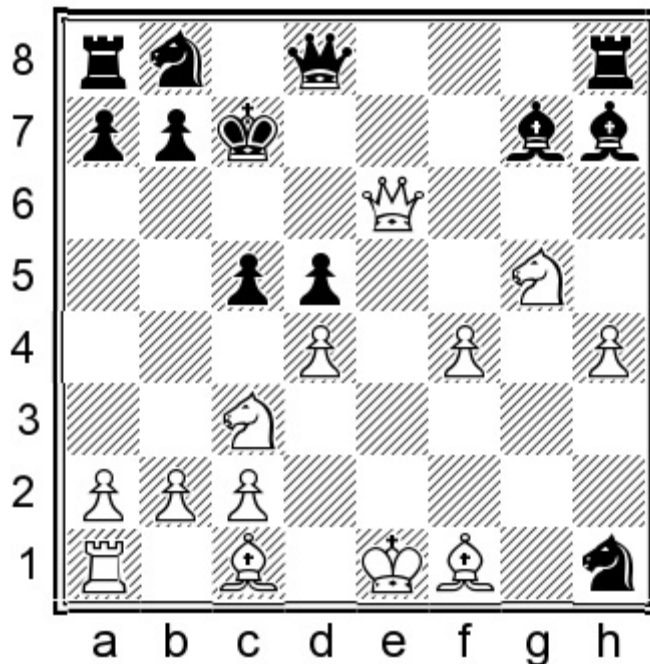
12...gxh6

12...♜xh1 Accepting the sacrifice could lead to incredible complications. 13.♜g5+ ♔e8 14.hxg7! ♜xg7



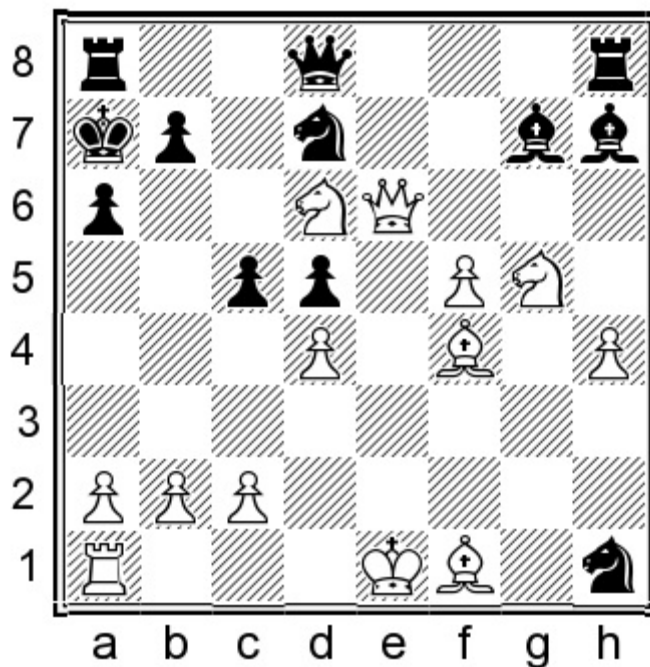
Position after: 14...♜xg7

15.♚h5+! (15.♜e6?! ♚d6 16.♚h5+ ♔d7 17.♜xg7 e6 18.♜h3 ♜g3 19.♚f7+ ♚e7 20.♜xe6+ ♔d8 21.♚xe7+ ♔xe7 22.f5 ♜c6 23.♜f4 ♜xd4 24.♜xg3 ♜g8! Capturing on c2 would allow ♔d2 and ♜e5 with huge compensation. 25.♔d2 ♜xe6 26.♜xe6 ♜xf5 27.♜c7 ♜xg3 28.♜xa8=) 15...♔d7 16.♚g4+! (16.♜f7? would be refuted by the incredible 16...♜f5! 17.♚xf5+ e6-+.) 16...e6! (16...♔e8? 17.♜e6!?±) 17.♚xe6+ (17.♜xe6? ♚e7) 17...♔c7 18.♜c3



Position after: 18. ♖c3

A) 18... ♗d7!? 19. ♗b5+ (19. ♗xd5+ ♔c8 20. ♗e7+ ♔b8 21. f5 ♚c7! 22. ♕d2!∞) 19... ♔c8 (19... ♔b8 20. f5!+-) 20. ♗d6+ ♔b8! (20... ♔c7? 21. f5 ♕g8 22. ♗df7 ♕xf7 23. ♕f4+ ♕e5 24. ♕xe5+ ♗xe5 25. ♚xe5+ ♚d6 26. ♚xd6+ ♔xd6 27. ♗xf7+ ♔c6 28. ♗xh8+-) 21. f5 a6 22. ♕f4 ♔a7

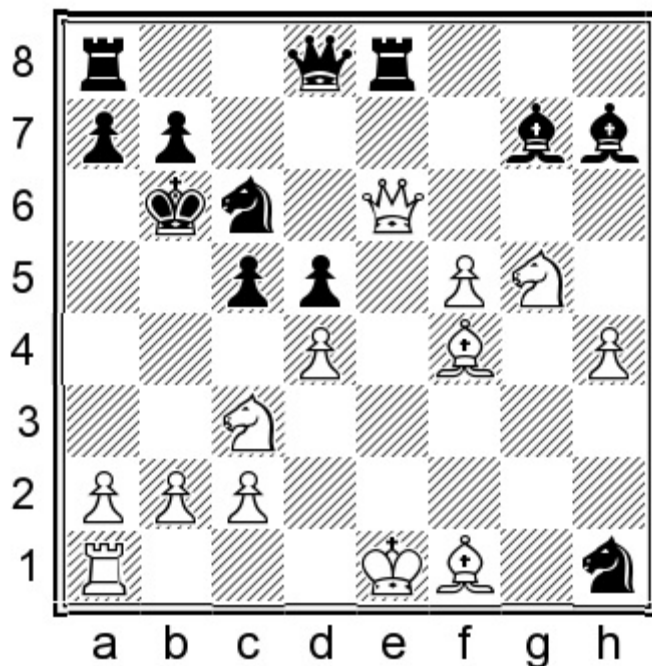


Position after: 22... ♔a7

23. a4!! ♚b8!! White has different ways of drawing here, e.g. 24. ♗b5+ ♔a8 25. ♗c7+= It's not clear if there is anything more.

B) 18... ♗c6 19. f5! The only move. (19. ♗xd5+? ♔b8 20. f5 ♚e8 21. ♕f4+ ♕e5!-+-) 19... ♚e8 (19... a6!? doesn't

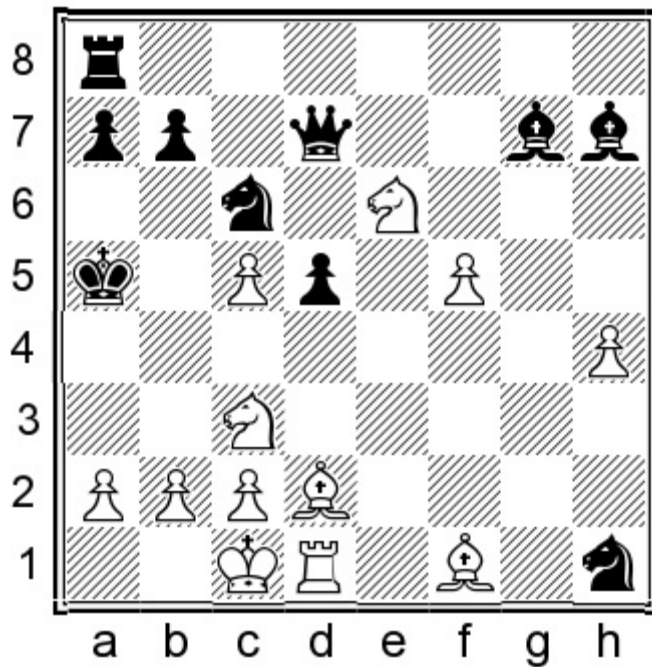
seem to solve all the problems: 20. ♖xd5+ ♜b8 21. ♙f4+ ♜a7 22. ♙c7 ♚e8 23. ♙b6+ ♜b8 24. 0-0-0! ♚xe6
 25. fxe6 ♜f2 26. ♜e1 ♙g6 27. e7 ♙xd4 28. ♜e6 ♙e8 29. ♜d6 ♙h5 30. ♙g2 ♜d1 31. ♜e6±) 20. ♙f4+ ♜b6



Position after: 20... ♜b6

21. 0-0-0! (The correct order. It would be a fatal mistake to play 21. dxc5+? ♜a5 22. 0-0-0 ♙xc3!-+.)

B1) 21... ♜xe6? Tempting, but wrong. 22. dxc5+ ♜a5 ♘ 23. ♜xe6 ♚d7 24. ♙d2!!+-



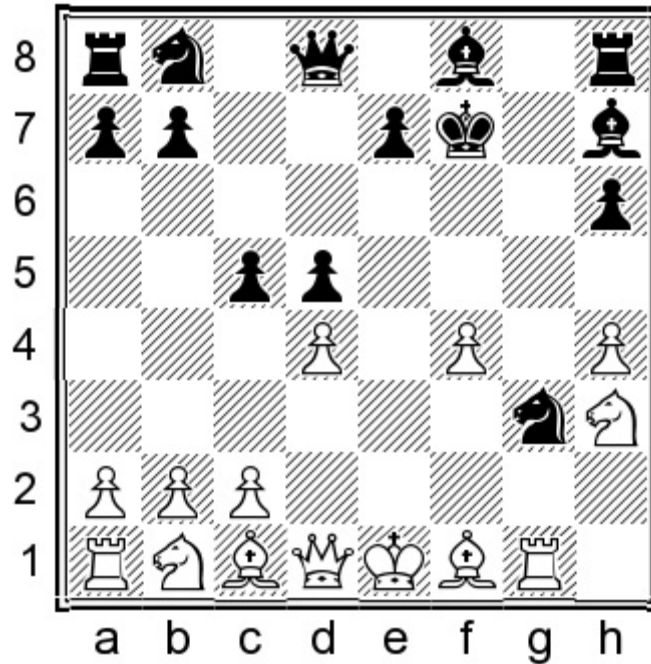
Position after: 24. ♙d2!!+-

24... ♙h6 (24... ♜f2 25. ♜b5+ ♜b4 26. a3 ♚xb5 27. axb4+ ♚xb4 28. ♙xb4+ ♜xb4 29. ♜xd5+-) 25. a3!!+-

This is beyond the bounds of possibilities! (25.♙xh6 ♖g3!∞ Δ 26.♙d2? ♖xf1-+) 25...♙xd2+ 26.♖xd2 b6 27.♖d4! bxc5 (27...♖xd4 28.b4#) 28.♖a4+ ♖b6 29.♖a6+ ♖b7 30.♖xc5+-

B2) 21...a6! A timely solution! 22.♖xd5 ♙xd4 23.♖xh1 ♙xf5 24.♖d5+ ♖a7 25.♙c7 ♙e3+ 26.♖b1 ♖b4! and Black is not worse.

13.♖g1



Position after: 13.♖g1

13...♖f5?!

This looks strong, but really just gives the advantage to White.

A) It seems that the spectacular move 13...e6!? does not lead to full equality, e.g. 14.♖xg3 ♖xh4 15.♖g4 ♖xg4 16.♖xg4 ♙xc2 17.♙e3 ♖c6 18.dxc5 ♙f5 19.♖g3 ♙g7 20.♖xg7+ ♖xg7 21.♖a3±.

B) The correct move is 13...♖g8! 14.♙d3 (14.♖g5+ hxg5 15.♖xg3 ♖c6∞ or 15...g4!?) 14...♙xd3 15.♖xd3 ♖e4 16.♖xg8 ♖xg8 17.♖c3 ♖c6 18.♖xe4 dxe4 19.♖xe4 ♖xd4 20.♖e6+ ♖h8 21.c3 ♖f6=

14.♖h5+ ♖f6

14...♖e6? 15.♙d3 ♖c6 16.♖g6+-

15.♖g5! hxg5 16.fxg5+ ♖g7 17.g6 ♙g8 18.♖xf5 e6 19.♖e5+ ♖f6 20.♖c7+ ♖e7 21.♖e5+ ♖f6 22.♖c7+

½-½

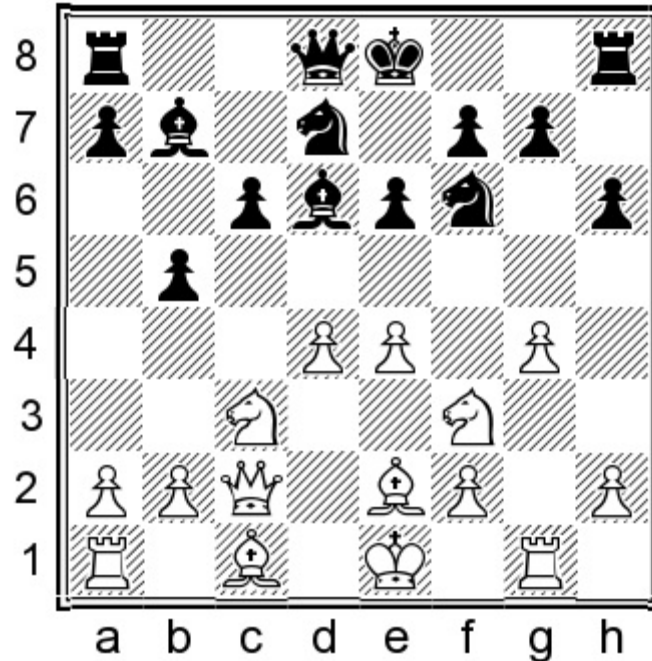
Short of time, forcing a draw looks logical. 22.♙g5!? After this White is better, but it is not so easy to play in time trouble. 22...♖xe5+ 23.dxe5 ♖d7 24.♙e2! ♖xe5 25.h5 ♖c6 26.♖c3 ♙e7 27.0-0-0 ♙xg5+ 28.♖xg5 ♖f8 29.♖b5!±.

Dreev, Alexey (2570)
 Bareev, Evgeny (2660)
 Biel 1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.e3 ♘f6 4.♗c3 e6 5.♗f3 ♘bd7 6.♚c2 ♙d6 7.g4 h6 8.♞g1 dxc4 9.♙xc4 b5 10.♙e2

10.♙xe6 is too optimistic due to 10...fxe6 11.♚g6+ ♔f8 12.g5 hxg5 13.♗xg5 ♚e8 14.♗xe6+ ♔e7.

10...♙b7 11.e4

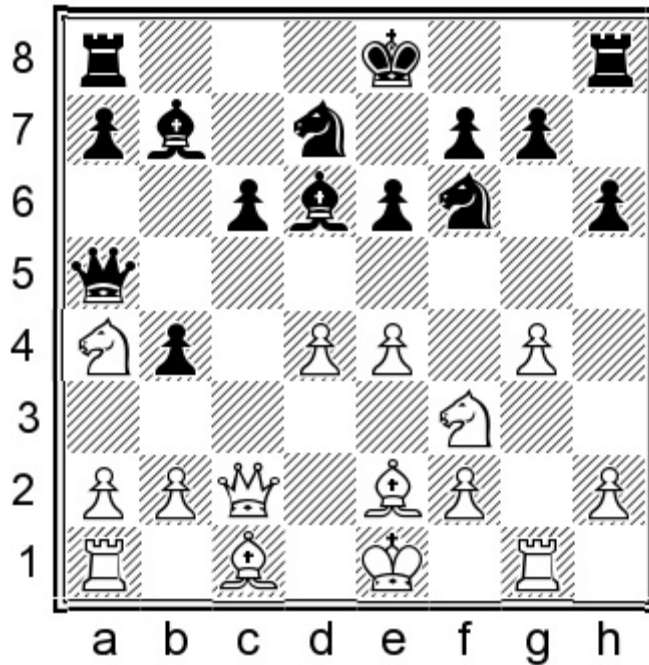


Position after: 11.e4

To find the right solution it is necessary to delve more deeply into the position: White's previous moves have clearly outlined his plan with g4-g5. This can only be countered by playing ...c6-c5. A standard move such as 11...a5 would do nothing to prevent this plan.

11...e5?!

11...b4 12.♗a4 ♚a5

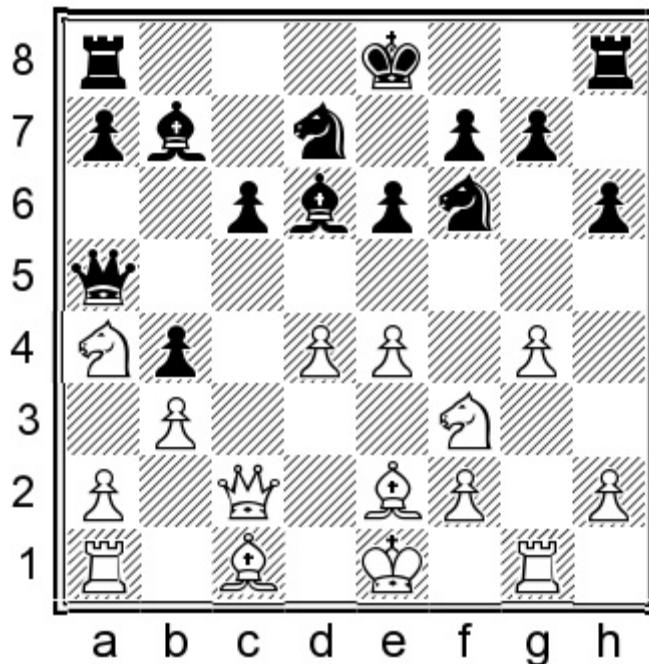


Position after: 12...♙a5

(12...♙e7 13.g5 hxg5 14.♘xg5 c5 15.e5 cxd4 16.♘xf7!±; 12...♙f8 13.♙e3 c5 14.♘xc5 ♙xc5 15.dxc5 ♙xe4 16.♚c4± White's chances are better here.)

A) If 13.♘d2 ♙f8! Paradoxical, but also the best response. (If 13...♙e7 14.g5 hxg5 15.♘c4 ♚c7 16.e5 ♘d5 17.♙xg5± Black is forced to play 17...♙f8 and White gets an important tempo.) 14.♘c4 ♚c7 15.♙e3!? c5∞ The position remains completely unclear. While the incredible move ...♙f8 has twice been the strongest, it should be noted that it doesn't work without 12...♙a5.

B) 13.b3



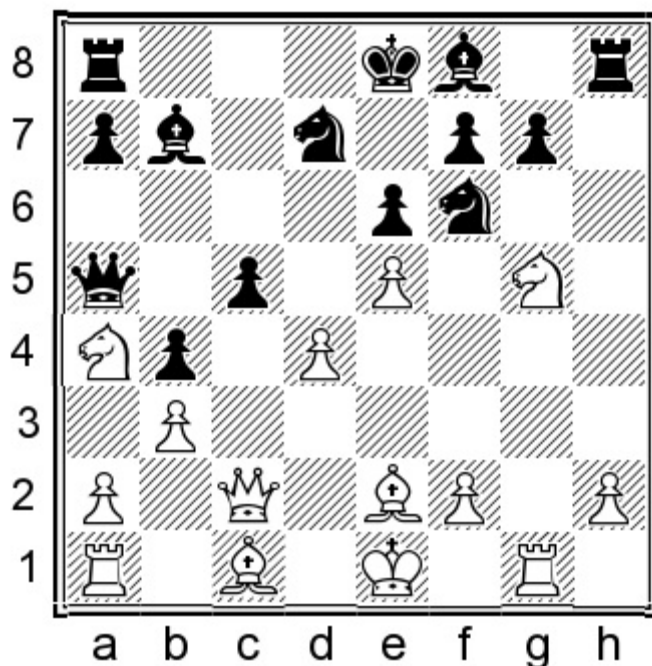
Position after: 13.b3

Which move should Black play? We are actually just one step away from solving this problem.

The right move is 13...♙f8!! (13...♙e7?! 14.g5 hxg5 15.♘xg5 ♠ 15...c5 16.e5 cxd4 17.exf6 gxf6 18.♗xf7+→) Admittedly it is very difficult to make such a 'move back', especially when the king is still uncastled and development is not complete, but remember that Black's main idea is to organise the breakthrough ...c6-c5, and we need to ensure the implementation of this plan.

I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that quite often our decisions are based on stereotypical solutions. After moves such as 13...♙f8!! our brain often stops, because they appear to contradict some general principle, in this case the principle of development.

General principles are certainly needed, but there are special situations when you need to act without being restricted by 'rules', i.e. thinking must be attuned to the possibility of exceptions to the rules. If White now plays... 14.g5 (14.♙e3?! c5⊖) 14...hxg5 15.♘xg5 (15.♖xg5 c5!±) 15...c5! 16.e5



Position after: 16.e5

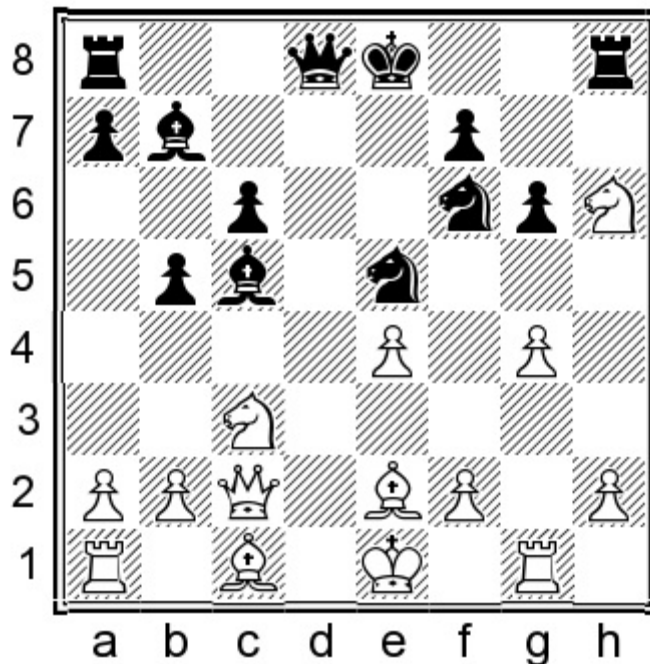
...what has changed? This position with the bishop on e7 was bad, but the piece sacrifice is possible now! 16...cxd4! (16...♗d5? 17.♗xf7+→) 17.exf6 gxf6 As we remember, with the bishop on e7, ♗xf7 would win, but now this resource does not work, thus it is necessary to retreat. 18.♗f3 ♕d5 Threatening 19...e6-e5. 19.♗b2 (19.♕d3 e5 20.♗d2 e4= with full compensation.) 19...♖c8 20.♕d3 (20.♗c4? d3→) 20...e5⊖

Note that 11...c5? is not good: 12.e5 cxd4 13.exf6 dxc3 14.fxg7±.

12.♙e3!±

This calm developing move keeps the pressure in the centre and retains the possibilities for advancing g4-g5.

12.dxe5 is not as strong as it seems. 12...♗xe5 13.♗d4 ♙c5 14.♗f5 g6 15.♗xh6



Position after: 15. ♖xh6

15... ♗g8! 16.g5 (16. ♗xg8? ♕xf2+! 17. ♖xf2 ♗xh2+ 18. ♖f1 ♜h4+-) 16... ♗xh6 17.gxh6 ♜h4 18. ♗g2 f6!?∞
Black's chances are not worse.

12...exd4 13. ♗xd4

Of course, White is ready to sacrifice the h-pawn for the initiative. 13. ♕xd4 ♜e7∞ is much weaker.

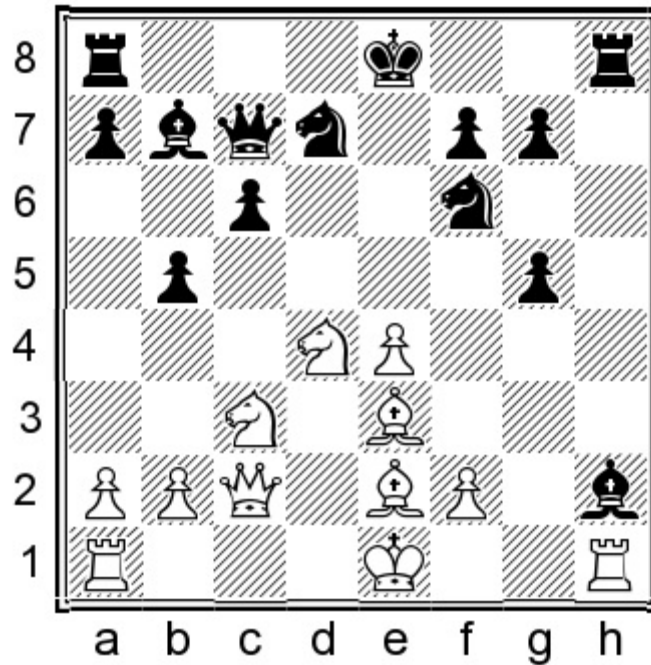
13...♕xh2

Black figures that if he's going to suffer, he might at least have something for it.

14. ♗h1 ♜c7 15.g5

White's position is close to winning after the 'banal' 15.0-0-0! b4 (15...0-0-0 16. ♗xh2 ♜xh2 17. ♗cxb5+-; 15...0-0 16. ♗f5+-; 15...♕f4 16.g5+-) 16.g5 bxc3 17.gxf6 cxb2+ 18. ♖b1 ♗xf6 (18...g6 19. ♕c4!? ♗xf6 20. ♗xh2 ♜xh2 21. ♕xf7+ ♖xf7 22. ♜b3+-) 19. ♗f5+-.

15...hxg5



Position after: 15...hxg5

16. ♖xb5?!

White could still win after the not so obvious move 16. ♖d5!

A) 16... ♚d6 17. ♖xf6+ ♚xf6 (17... ♖xf6 18. 0-0-0+-) 18. ♖f3+-

B) 16... ♖xd5 17. exd5 c5 18. 0-0-0!! (18. ♖f3? 0-0-0∞) 18... a6 19. ♖f3 0-0-0 20. ♖xh2 ♖xh2 21. d6+-

16... ♚b8 17. ♖c3

17. ♖xc6?! ♗xc6 18. ♚xc6 0-0 19. ♗xa7 ♚f4 20. ♗e3 ♚b8=

17... c5

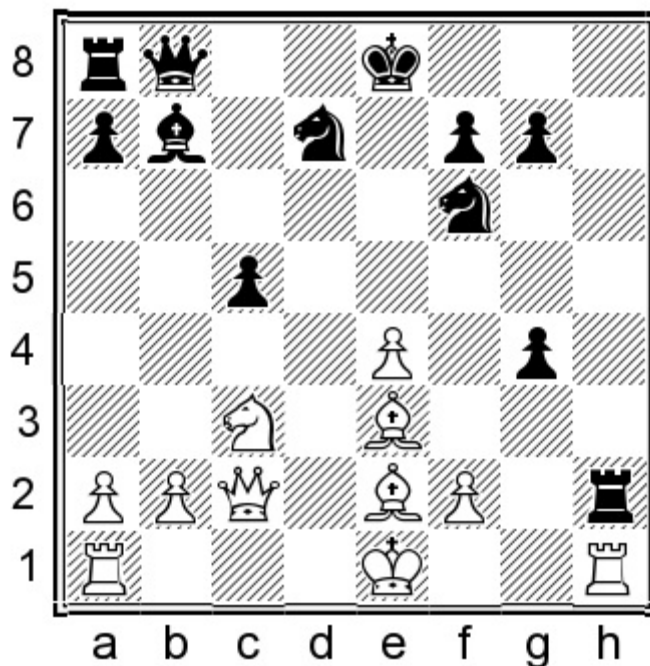
Now Black manages to hang on and resist. White needs to compare the retreats of the knight.

18. ♖f3!?

A) 18. ♖b3!/? would lead to a white advantage, but not decisive: 18... ♗f8 19. ♖a5 ♗g8 20. 0-0-0 ♗e5 21. ♖xh8+ ♗xh8 22. ♖xb7 ♚xb7 23. ♗xg5±.

B) 18. ♖f5?! g6 19. ♖g3 ♗f8!∞

18... g4! 19. ♖xh2 ♖xh2



Position after: 19... ♖xh2

20.0-0-0

Amazingly, this natural move loses all the advantage.

It was necessary, even at the cost of losing tempi for development, to keep attacking potential and not allow the rook to be exchanged, although I am not so sure that there are many players who would have played this way.

20. ♖g1! ♔f8 21.0-0-0 ♘e5 22. ♖b1! Preparing ♕e3-f4. Black could have profitably answered this move earlier with ... ♘e5-d3+. 22...c4 (22... ♖g8 23. ♘d5±) 23. ♕f4 ♖xf2 24. ♕g3±.

20... ♖xh1!

Without prejudice: the check on h8 is not dangerous. From this point onwards, Black, feeling the easing of the pressure, begins to play extremely accurately.

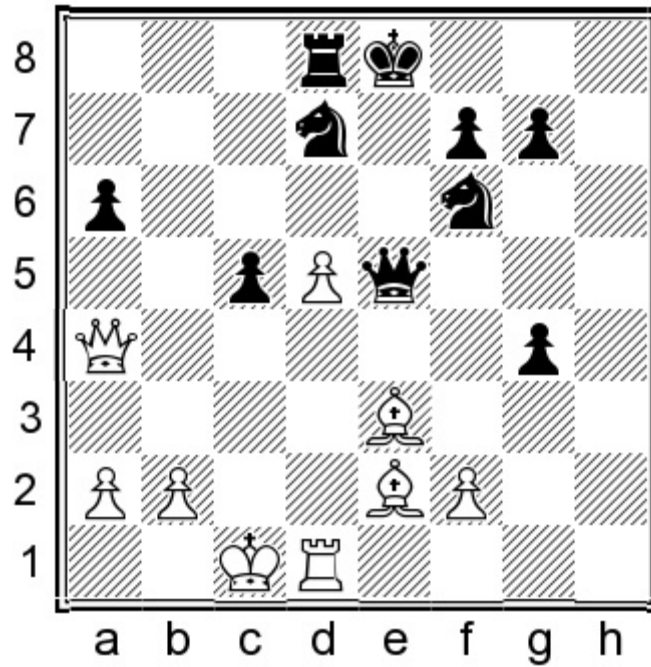
21. ♖xh1 ♕e5! 22. ♖a4 a6!

Another accurate, this time preventive, move.

23. ♖d1 ♖d8

The position is approximately equal.

24. ♘d5 ♕xd5 25. exd5



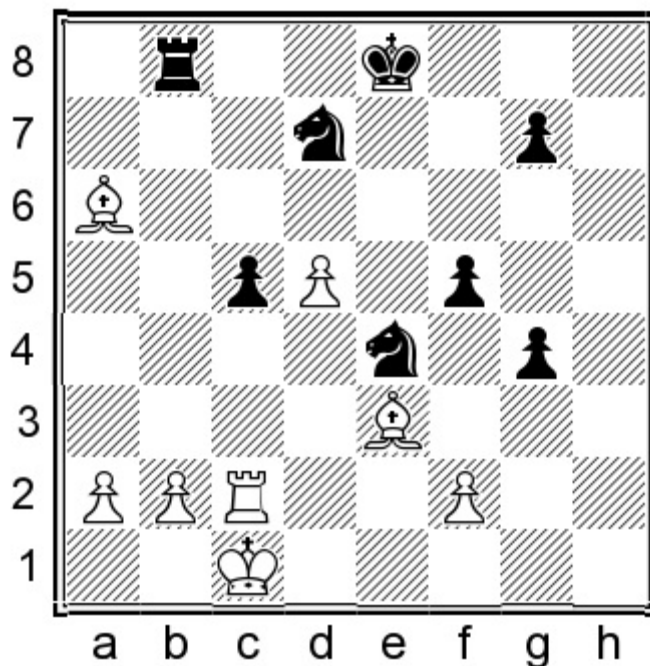
Position after: 25.exd5

25...♖b8!?

This move could lead to risky positions for both sides.

25...g3!?! 26.♙xa6 g2 27.♙b5 (27.♙xc5 ♜e4 28.♙d4 ♚f5∞) Here only the unexpected pawn sacrifice 27...c4!! leads to equality. (White's chances in the endgame are slightly better after the logical 27...♙f8 28.♚h4 ♙g8 29.♚g3±.) 28.♚xc4 ♙f8∞ 29.♚h4? Now this move is not good because of 29...♖c8+, thus it becomes clear why Black sacrificed the pawn. 30.♙b1 ♚xd5!-+

26.♞d2 ♚e4 27.♚xe4+ ♜xe4 28.♞c2 f5 29.♙xa6



Position after: 29. ♖xa6

The position has become much sharper, but remains equal.

29... ♖a8 30. ♕d3 ♖xa2 31. ♕xe4 fx4 32. ♖c4 ♔f7 33. ♖xe4 ♘f6 34. ♖e5

It may seem that White has gained the initiative, but this is an illusion.

34... ♖a4! 35. d6 ♖e4 36. ♖xc5 g3= 37. ♖c7+ ♔e6 38. fxg3 ♔xd6 39. ♖c3 ♘d5 40. ♕c5+ ♔e6 41. ♖c2 ♔f5 42. b3 ♔g4 43. ♖c4 ♖xc4+ 44. bxc4 ♘f6 45. ♕d6 ♘e4 46. ♕e5 g5 47. ♔c2 ♔f3 48. ♔d3 g4 49. ♔d4 ♘xg3 50. c5 ♘f5+ 51. ♔d5 g3

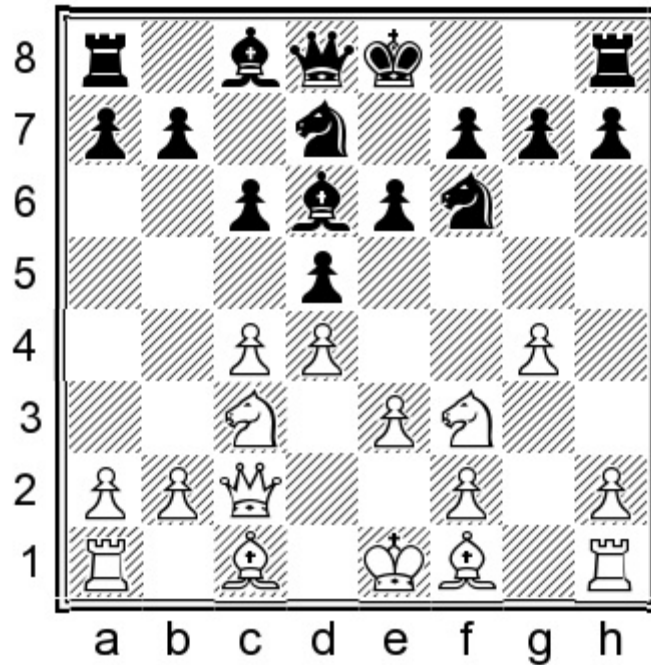
1/2-1/2

Dreev, Alexey (2704)

Dominguez Perez, Leinier (2661)

Poikovsky 2005

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♘c3 ♘f6 4. e3 e6 5. ♘f3 ♘bd7 6. ♖c2 ♕d6 7. g4!?



Position after: 7.g4!?

The history of this interesting option began in the early '90s – White offers a pawn as payment for immediate activity on the kingside.

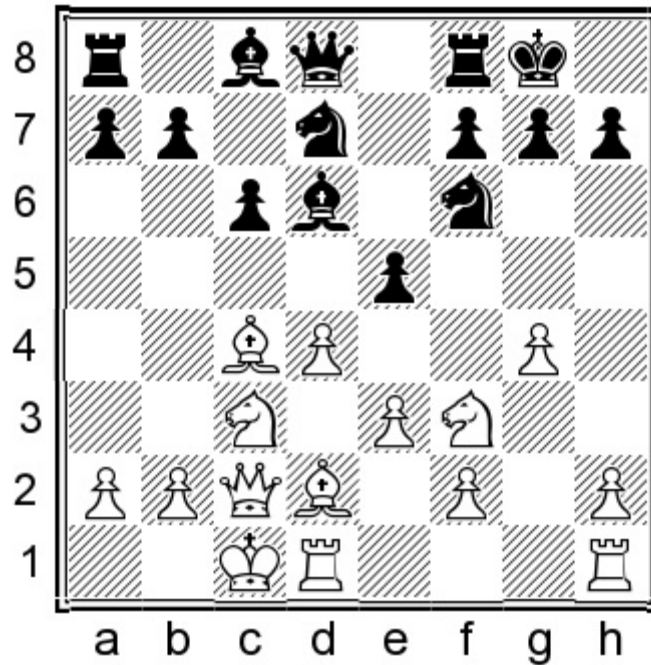
7...dxc4 8.♙xc4 e5 9.♙d2!?

A relatively rare continuation. After 9.g5 ♖d5 White has a choice between 10.♙d2 and 10.♖e4.

9...0-0!?

In case of 9...exd4 10.♖xd4 ♖e5 11.♙e2 White has a certain initiative for the pawn, for example 11...♖fxg4 (11...♙xg4?! 12.f4! ♖g6 13.♙xg4 ♖xg4 14.♖f5± Shirov, A – Fressinet, L Calvia 2004) 12.♖e4 ♙e7 (12...0-0!? 13.0-0-0 ♖f6 14.♖xd6 ♙xd6 15.♙hg1±) 13.0-0-0 Gelfand, B – Dominguez, L Mallorca 2004.

10.0-0-0!?



Position after: 10.g5-0-0!?

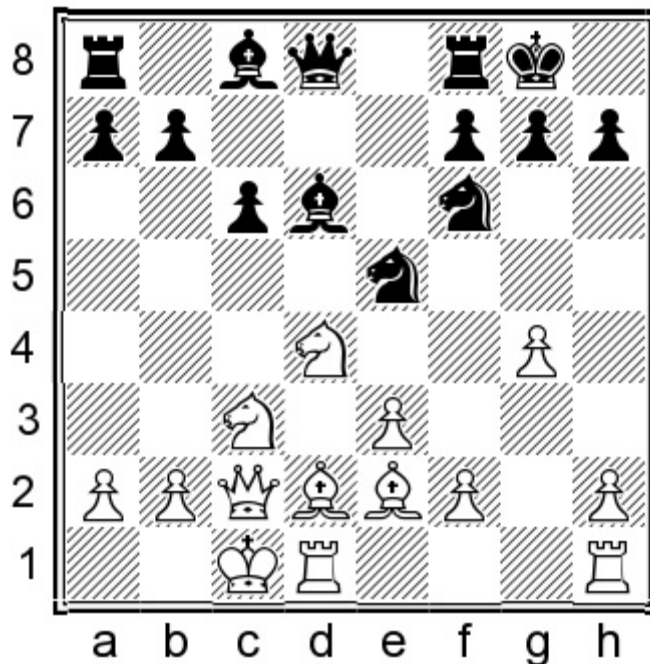
This move should probably be condemned from an analytical point of view, but let's not forget about the practical component of any game.

This move had never been played before; it is unlikely that the opponent will have checked it on the computer and Black will have to come up with difficult decisions at the board.

The unconventional position, plus increased nervousness caused by the need to protect the king, can prevent even such a strong and experienced player as Dominguez from making the correct choice. I would like to add that the idea of 10.g5 was not preparation; it was thought up during the game!

Modern theory considers 10.g5 ♖d5 11.♙d3!? to be more promising.

10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♗e5 12.♙e2



Position after: 12. ♔e2

Taking every measure. There are no problems for Black after straightforward 12.g5 ♖fg4 13. ♗e4 ♗xc4 14. ♚xc4 ♔e7=

12... ♗exg4

Black makes the most natural and principled choice. Other moves are noticeably weaker, for example:

A) 12... ♔xg4? 13.f4! ♗g6 14. ♔xg4 ♗xg4 15. ♖hg1 ♗f6 16. ♗f5±

B) 12... ♗fxg4? 13.f4 ♗g6 14.f5 ♗6e5 15. ♗e4=

13. ♖hg1 ♗xf2 14. ♖df1 ♗h3

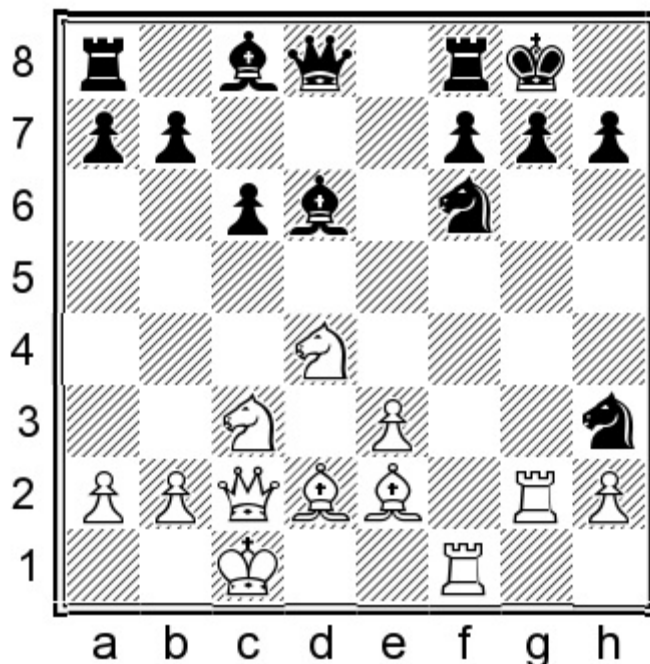
14... ♔xh2!? was an interesting alternative, but hand on heart, ask yourself, would you have played it!?

A possible continuation: 15. ♖xg7+ (15. ♖xf2?! ♔xg1 16. ♖g2 ♔xe3 17. ♔xe3 ♖e8+ White's initiative comes to an end; 15. ♖g2?! ♗2g4 16. ♗f5 h5! 17. ♗e4 ♔e5 18. ♗xf6+ ♚xf6 19.e4 ♔xf5 20. ♖xf5 ♚d6 21. ♖xh5 ♗f6+)

15... ♗xg7 16. ♖xf2 ♔e5 17. ♗e4 A normal person of sound mind will not go in for such a position.

Objectively it's probably equal, for example: 17... ♗d5 18. ♖g2+ ♗h8 19. ♗g5 f5 20.e4 ♔xd4 21.exd5 cxd5 22. ♖h2 ♗g8 23. ♖g2 ♔g7 (23... ♗h8 24. ♖h2=) 24. ♔c3 ♖f6 25. ♔c4! ♖g6 26. ♚d2 ♔xc3 27. ♔xd5+ ♗f8 28. ♗xh7+ ♗e8 29. ♚xc3 ♖xg2 30. ♗f6+ ♗f8 31. ♗h7+ ♗e8 32. ♗f6+=.

15. ♖g2



Position after: 15. ♖g2

15... ♔e5!?

A) 15... ♔h8?! 16. ♗f5±

B) 15...g6!? was an interesting preventive move, that could have led to an equal endgame with ideal play from both sides: 16. ♕c4! (16. ♗f5?! ♕e5±; 16. ♗e4? ♗xe4 17. ♖xe4 ♗g5--+) 16... ♔h8 17. ♗e4 ♗xe4 18. ♖xe4 ♗g5 (18... ♖e7!? 19. ♖xe7 ♕xe7 20. e4!∞ Even without queens White has sufficient initiative for the sacrificed pawns due to the bad position of the black knight.) 19. ♖d3! (19. ♖h4?! ♗e6!±) 19... ♕h3 20. ♕c3 ♕e5 (20...f6? 21. ♖xg5+-) 21. ♗xc6 ♖xd3 22. ♕xe5+ f6 23. ♕xd3 ♕xg2 (23...fxe5 24. ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 25. ♖xg5 ♖c8 26. ♖xe5 ♖xc6+ 27. ♔d2 ♖c7=) 24. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 25. ♕xf6+ ♔g8 26. ♗e7+ ♔f8! (26... ♔f7? 27. ♕xg5 ♖e8 28. ♕c4+ ♔f8 29. ♕d5!+-) 27. ♕xg5 ♖e8=

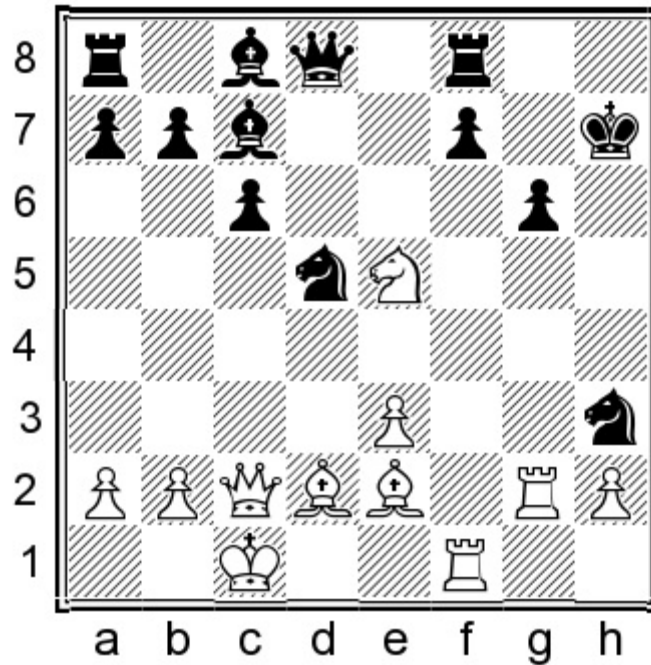
16. ♗f3! ♖e7

16... ♕c7!? looks logical, however it seems to me that it is easier to predict the famously erratic weather on Mount Washington in New Hampshire than predict the results of the retreat 17. ♗e4 during the game.

(17. ♕c4 ♔h8 18. ♗e4 ♕f5 19. ♕c3 ♕xe4 20. ♖xe4 ♗xe4 21. ♕xg7+ ♔g8 22. ♕f6+ ♕g3±; the position remains unclear after 17. ♕d3!? g6! 18. ♕c4∞.)

In case of 17... ♗d5 Black has to be like a camel trying to fit through the eye of a needle. You don't get the analogy?

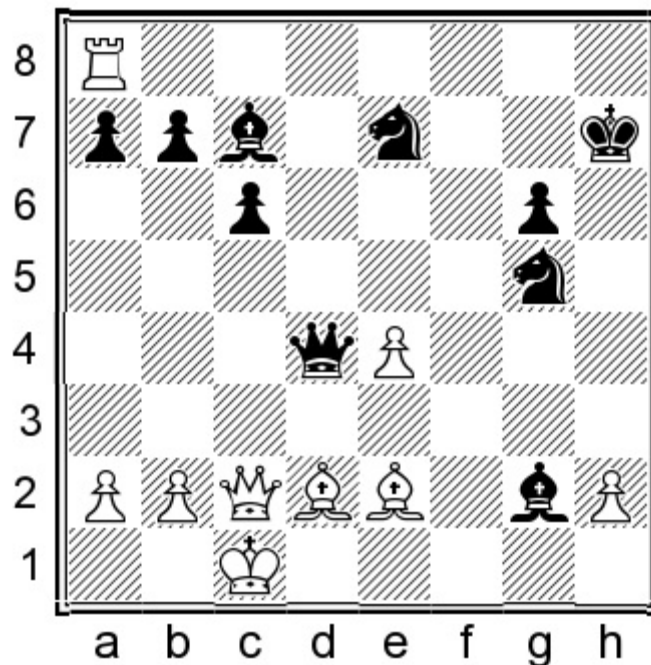
Let me verify it. (If 17... ♕f5! 18. ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 19. ♖c4 Black should consider 19...b5□!! in his calculations, otherwise he has a bad position. 20. ♕c3 bxc4 21. ♕xf6 ♕g6 22. ♕d4± Black has solved his problems, but it's still unclear.) 18. ♗eg5 g6□ 19. ♗xh7 ♔xh7 20. ♗e5



Position after: 20. ♖e5

20... ♗e7!! (20... ♕xe5 21. ♖xf7+ ♖xf7 22. ♗xg6+ ♔h8 23. ♗h5+! ♖h7 24. ♗xe5+ ♗f6 25. ♕c3 ♖h6 26. ♗e4!! A miracle move! Other moves lose. 26... ♗f8 27. ♖g6 ♕e6 28. ♕d3 ♗g5 29. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 30. ♗g6!+-) 21. ♗xf7 ♗d5 22. e4

A) 22... ♗d4 23. ♗g5+ ♗xg5 24. ♖xf8 ♕h3 25. ♖xa8 ♕xg2



Position after: 25... ♕xg2

26. ♗c3!! Amazingly, even after the exchange of queens and with a material advantage Black has serious difficulties stemming from the unprecedented activity of the white rook and poor coordination of the black

forces.

Let's see. 26...♖e6 27.♗xd4 ♘xd4 28.♙d3 ♙h3 29.♞xa7 ♚c8 30.♙g5 ♘g8 31.♙c4 ♘h6 32.♙e3 ♘b5 33.♞a8 ♙d7 34.a4! ♘g4 (34...♘d6? 35.♙f4!+-) 35.♙d2 ♘d4 (35...♘d6 36.♙g8+ ♖g7 37.♙c3+ ♖h6 38.e5! ♘e4 39.e6+-) 36.♙c3 ♙e5 37.♞a7 ♙c8 38.♙xd4! ♙xd4 39.♞a8 ♙d7 40.♞b8 b6 41.♞b7 ♘e5 42.♙e6 ♘d3+ 43.♖d1 ♘c5 44.♞a7 ♘xe6 45.♞xd7+ ♖g8 46.b4 ♖f8 47.a5+-

B) 22...♞xa2 23.♘g5+ ♘xg5 24.♞xf8 ♞a1+ 25.♞b1 ♞xb1+ 26.♖xb1 ♘xe4 27.♞f7+ ♖h8! (27...♖g8? 28.♙c4!+-) 28.♞xe7 ♘xd2+ 29.♖a2 ♙f4 30.♙d3=

17.♙d3

A) 17.♞a4?! ♙d6 18.♞h4 ♖h8±

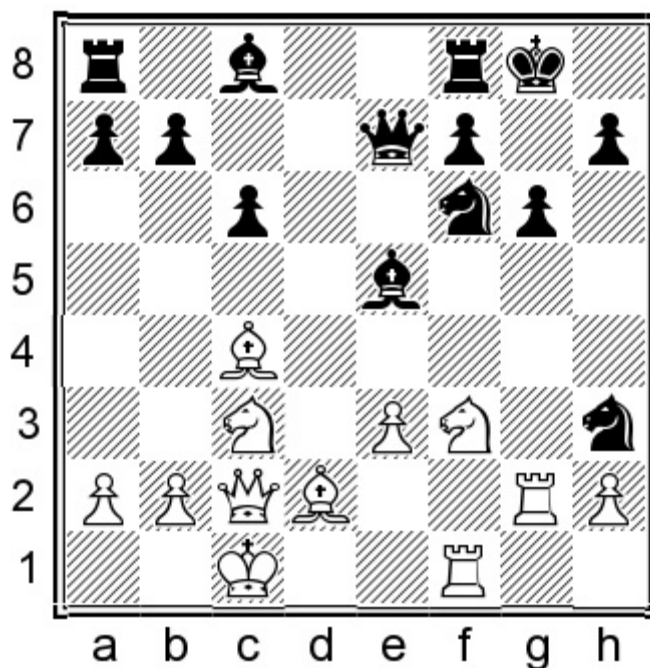
B) 17.♘h4? ♖h8 18.♘f5 ♞c5 19.♘xg7 ♞g8+-

C) 17.♘xe5!? ♞xe5 18.♙d3=

17...g6

17...♙d6 18.♙f5 ♖h8 19.♙xc8 ♞axc8 20.♞f5 ♞d7 21.♘h4±

18.♙c4!?



Position after: 18.♙c4!?

Black has a huge number of continuations here, but he chose probably one of the worst and lost. Let's examine the other weak continuations, then return to critical position in the game.

From an analytical point of view it was better to play 18.♘xe5, however, based on practical factors, the move in the game is much stronger. 18...♞xe5

A) 19.♙xg6!? leads to draw: 19...fxg6 20.♖xg6+ hxg6 (20...♔h8 21.♖h6 ♗g5 22.h4 ♗ge4 23.♗xe4 ♜xe4 24.♖hxf6 ♜xc2+ 25.♔xc2±) 21.♜xg6+ ♔h8 22.♜h6+=.

B) 19.♜a4!? ♙e6! (19...♖d8 20.♙c2 ♖d6 21.♜h4 ♜h5 22.♜g3↑) 20.♜h4 ♖ad8 21.♙c2 ♖xd2! (21...♔g7 22.♖f3±) 22.♔xd2 ♗d5∞

18...♗g4?

Some of the following lines are heavy going, but extremely interesting; it would have been a pity to skip them.

A) 18...b5? 19.♖xg6+ hxg6 20.♜xg6+ ♔h8 21.♜h6+ ♗h7 22.♙d3 f5 23.♗xe5 ♜xe5 24.♗e4+–

B) 18...♙g4? 19.♗xe5 ♜xe5 20.♖xf6 ♜xf6 21.♖xg4+–

C) 18...♗h5? 19.♗xe5 ♜xe5 20.♖xg6+ hxg6 21.♜xg6+ ♔h8 22.♖xf7 ♖xf7 23.♜xf7 ♗f6 24.♜f8+ ♔h7 25.♙d3+ ♙f5 26.♙xf5+ ♜xf5 27.♜xa8 ♗f2 28.♜xb7+ ♔g6 29.e4!?!±

D) 18...♗d5?! 19.♗xe5 ♜xe5 20.♖g3! ♙e6 21.♗e4±

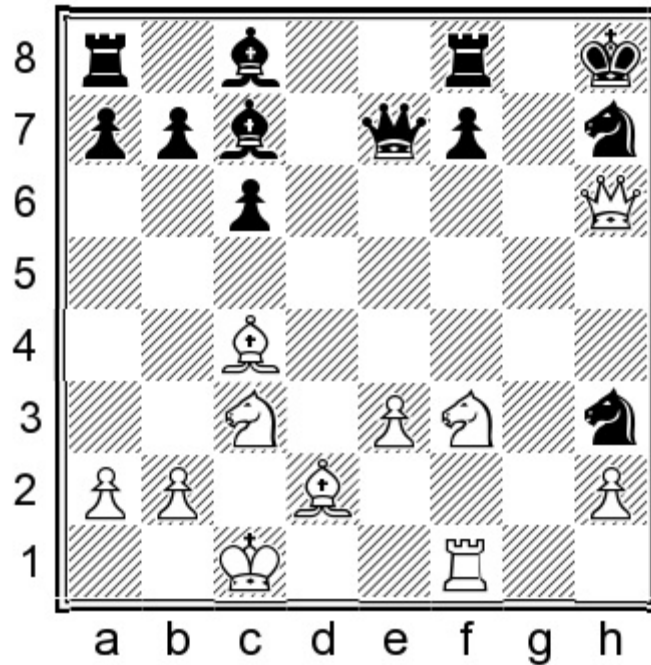
E) 18...♔h8 19.♗xe5 ♜xe5 20.♖xf6! ♜xf6 21.♗e4 ♜g7 (21...♜f3 22.♙c3+ f6 23.♗xf6 ♖xf6 24.♜e4!!+– What a beauty!) 22.♗f6!!+– The black queen feels like a genie sealed in a bottle.

F) 18...♔g7 Clearly stronger than 18...♔h8, but it does not relieve his majesty of his worries. 19.♗xe5 ♜xe5 20.♖g3 (20.♖xf6? ♜xf6 21.♗e4 ♜f3–+; 20.e4!?!∞) 20...b5! (20...♗g5 21.e4! is problematic.) It seems that after this move Black should not lose, but with the feeling that ‘it’s only the beginning’, it is difficult to cope. Let us leave a search for the truth to posterity. I will mention only the possibilities 21.♖g3!?! (21.♖xf6!?! ♜xf6 22.♗xb5∞, but not 21.♗xb5?! ♗e4 22.♙b4 when Black has the brilliant defensive resource 22...f6!!♠.) 21...bxc4 22.♖xf6∞

G) 18...♙xc3 19.♙xc3 is terrible for Black, e.g. 19...♗g4 (19...♙e6? 20.♗h4 ♙xc4 21.♗f5 ♜e6 22.♗h6+ ♔g7 23.♖xf6 ♜xe3+ 24.♔b1+–; 19...♗d5 20.♗e5→; 19...♗e4? 20.♗e5+–; 19...♜xe3+ 20.♗d2 ♗d5 21.♖g3 ♜h6 22.♙xd5 cxd5 23.♜d3±) 20.♗h4! ♜xh4 (20...♜g5 21.♖f6!! wins, ready to sac on g6.) 21.♜e4 c5 22.♙xf7++– with checkmate.

H) So, having rejected all the possibilities except for retreats of the bishop, it seems that it is easy to make the right decision now, but don’t jump to conclusions! The exotic 18...♙b8!? does not lose: 19.♖xg6+ hxg6 20.♜xg6+ ♔h8 21.♜h6+ ♗h7 22.♗e2 f6 23.♗h4 ♖g8 24.♙xg8 ♔xg8 25.♜g6+ ♔h8 26.♜h5 ♔g8 27.♜g6+ ♔h8 28.♙c3 ♙e5 29.♜h5 ♔g8 30.♜g6+ ♔h8=.

I) That leaves 18...♙c7 and 18...♙d6. They lead to so many possible lines that I will try to show you the most important ones. 18...♙c7 19.♖xg6+ (19.♗h4? ♔h8–+) 19...hxg6 20.♜xg6+ ♔h8 21.♜h6+ ♗h7

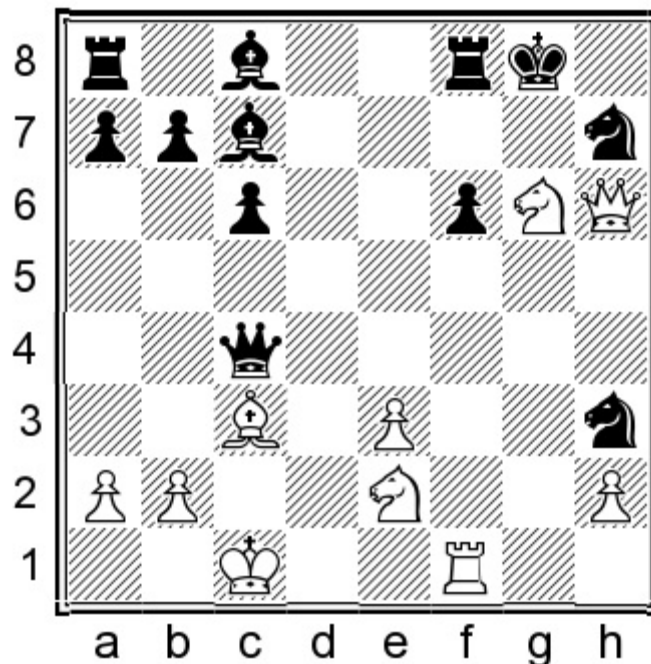


Position after: 21...♖h7

And now with the simple 22.♗e2! (22.♗b5 leads to a draw: 22...cxb5 23.♗c3+ f6 24.♗h4 ♜g7 25.♗g6+ ♜xg6 26.♜xg6 bxc4 27.♞xf6 ♞xf6 28.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 29.♜xf6+ ♔g8=; 22.♗d3?! f6! 23.♗h4 ♜g7 24.♗g6+ ♔g8 25.♗c4+ ♞f7 These complications can only favour Black.) White activates his dark-squared bishop and Black's position becomes dangerous, for example:

I1) 22...♗e6? 23.♗c3+ f6 24.♗h4+–

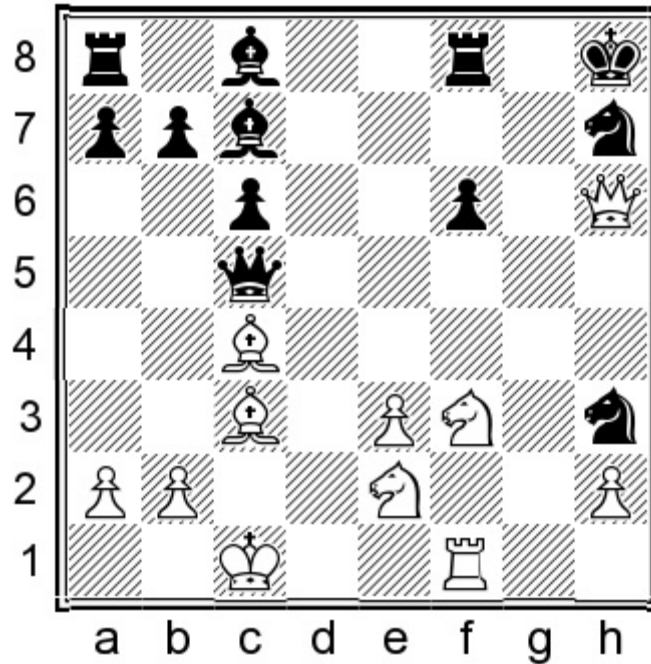
I2) 22...♜e4!? 23.♗c3+ f6 24.♗h4 ♜xc4 25.♗g6+ ♔g8



Position after: 25...♔g8

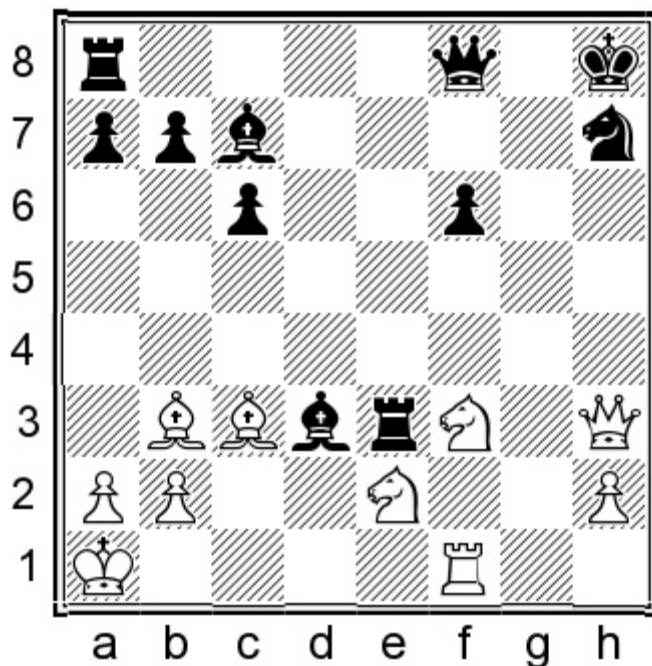
White can force a draw or continue the adventure with 26. ♖xf8!? (26. ♗e7+ draws, since 26... ♔f7?! is met by 27. ♖xh7+ ♕e8 28. ♗g6 ♖f7 29. ♗xf8 ♗g5 30. ♖d3!±.) 26... ♖e4 27. ♗xh7 ♖xh7 28. ♖xf6± but that also soon leads to a draw: 28... ♗g4 (28... ♗d7!? 29. ♗g1 ♗b6! 30. ♖f3 ♗g4 31. ♖g3 ♗xe3+ 32. ♖xe3 ♖f8=) 29. ♗d4!? ♖e8 30. ♗xc6! bxc6 31. ♖xc6 ♖e4 32. ♖f8+ ♖xf8 33. ♖xe4 ♖f1+ 34. ♕d2 ♖f2+ 35. ♕e1 ♖e2+ 36. ♕f1 ♖f2+=.

I3) 22... ♖c5 23. ♗c3+ f6



Position after: 23...f6

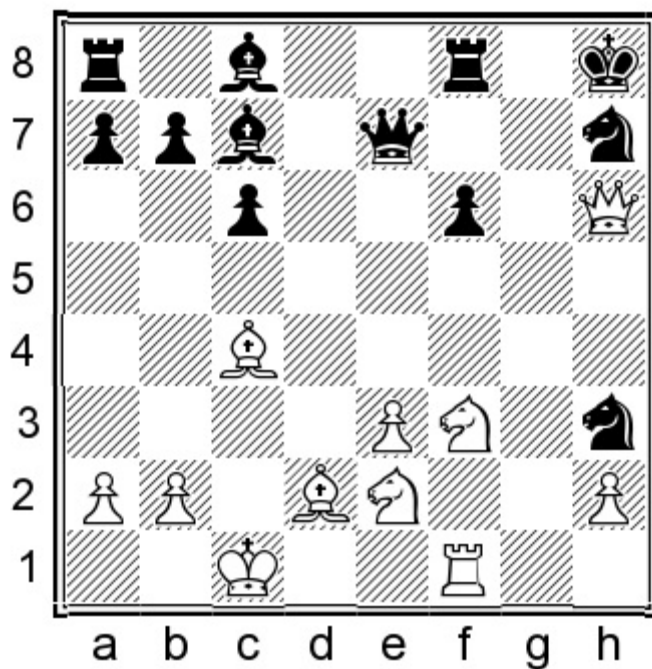
24. ♗b3! (≤ 24.b3 ♗b6 25. ♗ed4 ♗e6! 26. ♗h4 ♖f7! 27. ♗xe6 ♖xe3+ 28. ♖xe3 ♗xe3+ 29. ♕c2 b5 30. ♗e2±) 24... ♖e8 (24... ♗f5 25. ♗ed4 ♖ae8 26. ♗xf5 ♖xf5 27. ♗c2 ♗f4 - or 27... ♖e4 28. ♗d2 – 28. ♖xf8+ ♖xf8 29. ♗xf5 ♗xe3+ 30. ♕c2 ♗f4 31. ♗h4 ♖g8 32. ♖f3 ♗d5 33. ♗e6 ♖e8 34. ♗xd5 cxd5 35. ♗f5 ♗b6 36. h4±) 25. ♕b1!! ♗f5+ 26. ♕a1 White's slow attack is amazing. It looks like he is playing without a rook! 26... ♖f8 27. ♖h5 ♗d3 (27... ♖xe3 28. ♖xf5 ♖h6 29. ♗fd4±) 28. ♖xh3 ♖xe3



Position after: 28... Rxe3

(28... Rxe2 29. Nf5!+-) 29. Rg1! Rxe2 (29... Re5 30. Nf4!+-) 30. Rg8+ Qxg8 31. Rxf6+ Qg7 32. Rxf7+ Qxg7 33. Qg4+ Kh6 34. Qh4+ Kg6 (34... Kg7 35. Qd4+-) 35. Rc2+ Rd3 36. Rxd3+ Rxd3 37. Qe4+-

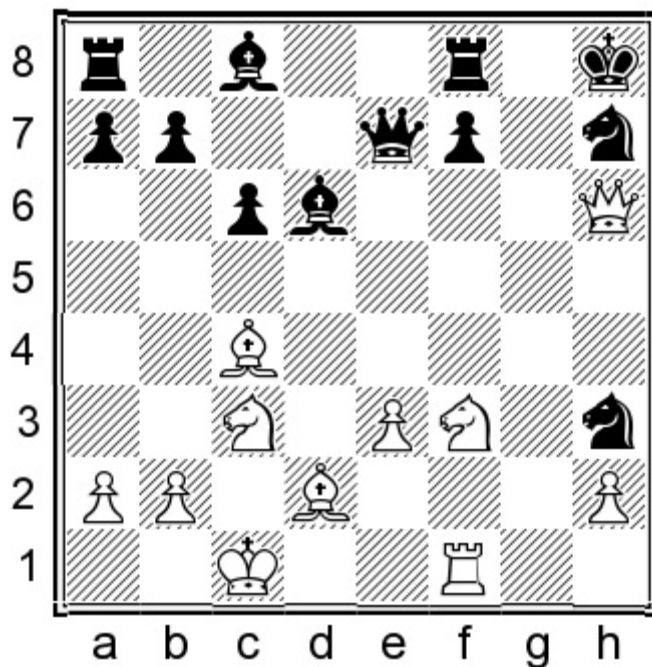
I4) 22...f6!



Position after: 22...f6!

The most accurate way to draw, which is very difficult to spot. 23. Nf4 Rg8 24. Rc3 Re5 25. Rxf7 Qxf7 26. Qg6+ Kh8 27. Qh5 Qg8 28. Qg6+ Kh8=

J) The right move is 18...♔d6! Even if Black excluded all continuations except retreats of the bishop such a move could not be played based solely on calculation or logic. You need an *idea*! Does – or might – logic lead you to such a move? After 19.♖xg6+ hxg6 20.♗xg6+ ♔h8 21.♗h6+ ♖h7

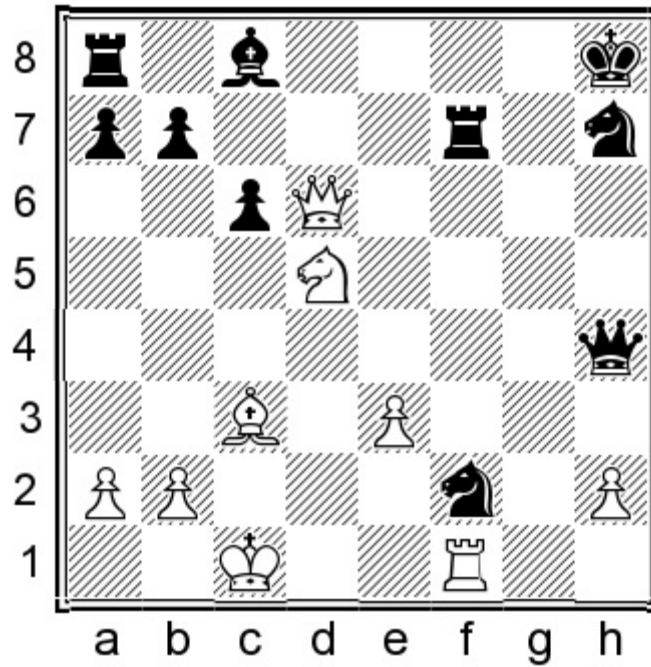


Position after: 21...♖h7

the white queen is aimed at the d6-bishop, which could be further threatened by ♖c3-e4, but as soon as Black realises that his main enemy is the dark-squared bishop, he will find the idea! As soon as White frees the c3-square for the bishop the vital ...♔d6-b4! will follow.

So far, so good, but what happens after 22.♖h4! (22.♔d3? f6; 22.♖e2 ♔b4!±; 22.♖b5 cxb5 23.♔c3+ f6 24.♖h4 bxc4 25.♖g6+ ♔g8+)? With the bishop on c7 this move is easily parried by 22...♗g5! (22...♖3g5? 23.♖d5+-; 22...♔e6? 23.♔d3 ♖3g5 24.♖e4+-; 22...♔e5? 23.♖xf7+-) 23.♗xd6

J1) 23...♗xh4 24.♔xf7 ♖f2 White needs to get his bishop to c3. 25.♖d5!? (25.♖e4!? ♖xe4 26.♔c3+ ♖xc3 27.♗e5+ ♖f6 28.♖xf6 is drawn. Here is one of many ways to peace: 28...♗e1+ 29.♖c2 ♗d1+ 30.♖xc3 ♗c1+ 31.♖b3=) 25...♖xf7 26.♔c3+

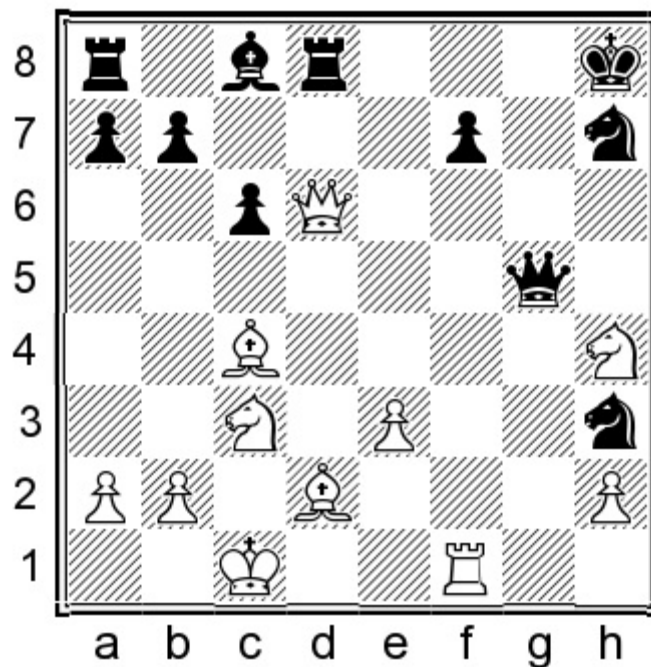


Position after: 26. ♔c3+

26... ♖g7 27. ♚c7!! A difficult move. (27. ♚g6? ♜f6 Δ 28. ♙xf6 ♚c4+-) 27... ♚g5 28. h4! ♜d3+ 29. ♜b1 ♜g8! 30. ♙xg7 ♚xd5 (30... ♚xg7?? 31. ♜e7+ ♜h8 32. ♚d8+-) 31. ♖g1! ♚d7 32. ♙h6+! ♜h8 33. ♙g7+ ♜g8 34. ♙h6+=

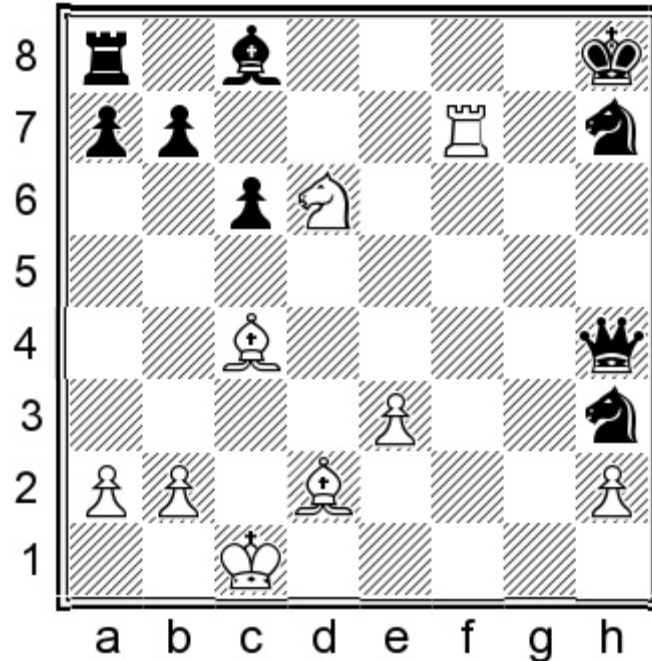
J2) 23... ♙e6? 24. ♜e4 ♚xh4 25. ♙c3+-

J3) 23... ♖d8!



Position after: 23... ♖d8!

The attentive reader will ask, “What were these sacrifices and all the excitement for? Would you not have been better to follow theory and avoid all the grief? Oh, wait, I forgot, you won by leaving theory! But you just got lucky, didn’t you?”. However, we are still fighting. 24.♘e4!! (A bleak prospect is 24.♙c7 ♖d7 25.♙g3 ♙xg3 26.hxg3 ♘3g5±, and 24.♘g6+? fxg6 25.♘e4 ♖xd6 26.♙c3+ ♖f6–+ is just bad.) 24...♖xd6 25.♘xd6! ♙xh4 (25...♙e6?! 26.♙xe6 ♙c5+ 27.♙c3+ f6 28.♘hf5!∞; 25...♙c5? 26.♖xf7+–) 26.♖xf7



Position after: 26.♖xf7

Beautiful, but the triumph of mind over matter is not complete.

26...♙f6 (After 26...♙xc4+ 27.♘xc4± Black is better, but White does not have to lose. Black must sacrifice some pawns to free his queenside pieces, allowing White to hope for a draw.) 27.♙c3! (27.♖xf6?! ♘xf6 28.♙c3 ♖g7 29.♘e4 ♖g6 30.♘xf6 ♘f2±) 27...♙xc3+ 28.bxc3 ♘3g5 29.♖c7± White retains chances of survival.

19.♘xe5!

≤ 19.♙e4 ♙f5 20.♖xg4 ♙xe4 21.♖xe4 b5 (21...♘g5 22.♖xe5 ♙b4 23.♙b3 ♘xf3 24.♖xf3∞) 22.♙b3∞ (22.♖xe5? ♙d8 23.♙b3 a5±)

19...♘xe5 20.♘e4 ♖h8

20...b5 does not make for a happy life: 21.♘f6+ ♖g7 22.♙e2±.

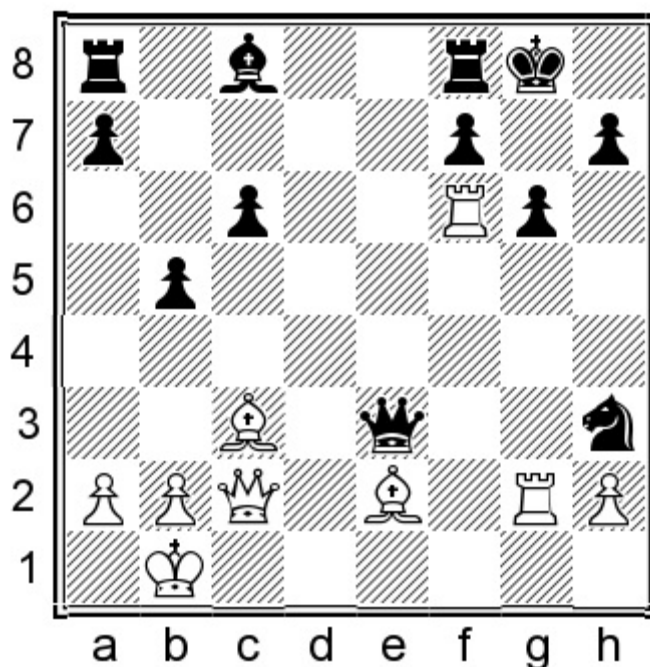
21.♘f6!+–

The white knight ascends the throne. It deserves no lesser epithet in such a position.

21...b5

21...♚c5 22.♙e2 ♚xc2+ 23.♜xc2 ♘d7 24.♘e4+-

22.♙e2 ♘d7 23.♙c3! ♚xe3+ 24.♜b1 ♘xf6 25.♞xf6 ♘g8



Position after: 25...♘g8

26.♞xg6+!+-

Not difficult, but still beautiful!

26...fxg6 27.♞xg6+ ♔f7 28.♞g7+ ♔e6

28...♔e8 29.♙h5+ ♔d8 30.♚d1+-

29.♙g4+ ♔d5 30.♚d1+ ♔e4 31.♞e7+ ♔f4 32.♞xe3

32.♙e5+!? would have finished more quickly: 32...♚xe5 (32...♔g5 33.♞g7+ ♔h4 34.♞xh7+ ♔g5 35.♞h5+ ♔g6 36.♚d6+-) 33.♚f3+ ♔g5 34.♞xe5+-.

32...♙xg4 33.♚d4+

But this isn't bad either.

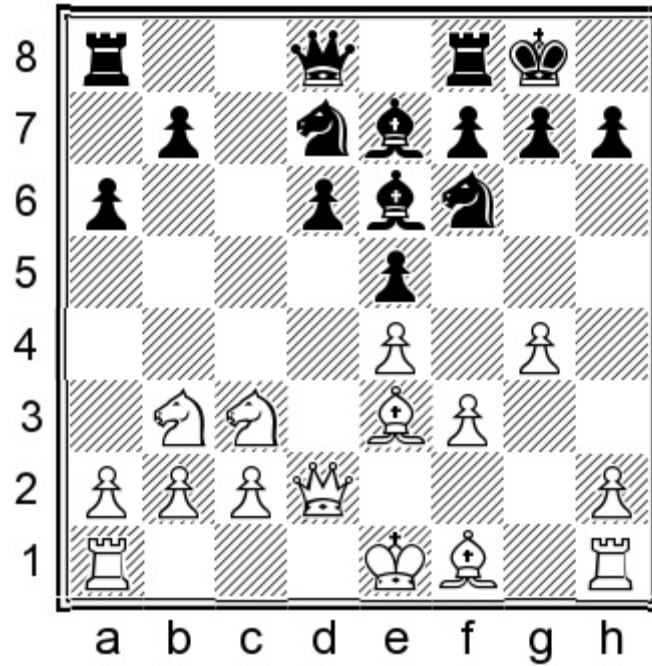
33...♔g5 34.♚g7+ ♔h5 35.♚xh7+ ♔g5 36.♞e5+

36.♞g3!?+-

36...♞f5 37.♙d2+ 1-0

Caruana, F. (2784)
Mamedyarov, S. (2809)
Berlin 2018

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.f3 e5 7.♘b3 ♙e6 8.♙e3 ♙e7 9.♚d2 ♘bd7 10.g4 0-0



Position after: 10...0-0

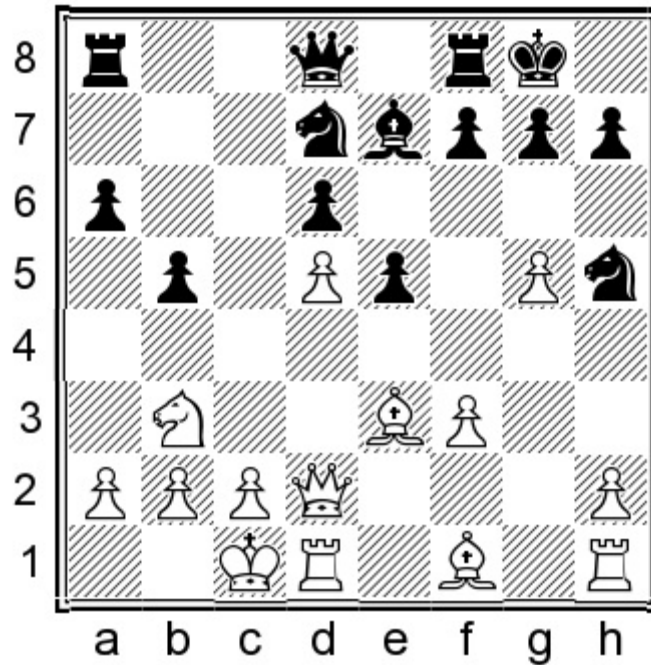
11.g5

One of the main lines of the Sicilian Najdorf. Of course, there are a lot of opening nuances here, for example, White's last move is much less common than 11.0-0-0 b5 12.g5 when Black has a choice between 12...♘h5 and 12...b4. White probably played 11.g5 to avoid the line with 12...b4, where you need to remember a huge number of variations. In my opinion, it is not stronger than 11.0-0-0, but certainly more practical.

11...♘h5 12.0-0-0 b5

There are not only pluses for White with such an order of moves, for example Black can try to do without ...b7-b5 and play 12...♞c8!? Najdorf expert Dmitry Kokarev played in one game 13.♞g1 ♘b6 14.♙b1 ♚c7 15.♘d5?! ♘xd5 16.exd5 ♙f5 17.♞c1?! f6! and Black seized the initiative. Movsesian, S – Kokarev, D Loo 2014.

13.♘d5 ♙xd5 14.exd5



Position after: 14.exd5

14...f6

We also meet 14...f5, but in this case White can ignore Black and play 15.♞g1.

15.gxf6

The theory of this opening continues to develop. There is particular interest in 15.g6 hxg6 16.♘a5∞.

15...♙xf6 16.♚b1

White makes a useful move and gives Black the chance to declare his intentions. White more often plays 16.♘a5.

16...♘f4

There are other moves, but Black decides to determine the position immediately.

17.♞g1 ♜h8

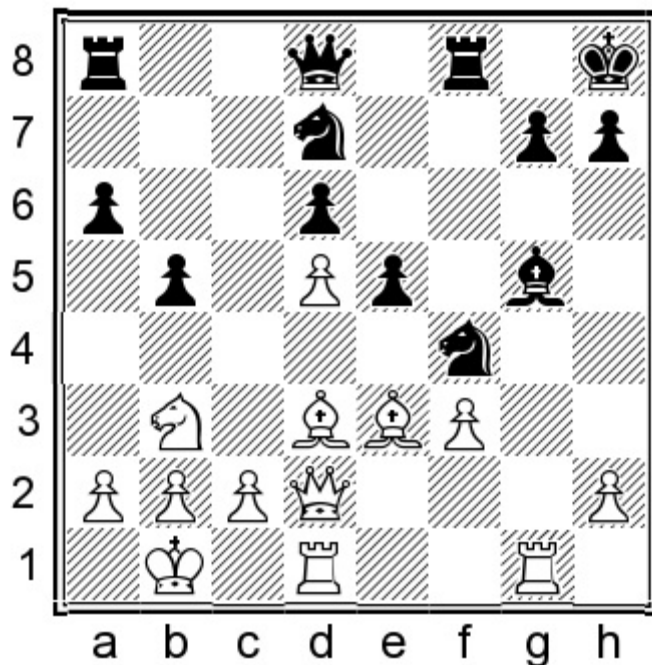
This is a good preventive move. It would be hasty to play 17...♙g5 because of 18.♞b4!↑.

18.♙d3

A) 18.♞b4 is not good because of 18...♘b6!↑.

B) In the case of transferring the knight to c6, Black could respond by attacking the f3-pawn: 18.♘a5 ♞e8 19.♘c6 ♞h5∞.

18...♙g5!



Position after: 18...♙g5!

Black takes the opportunity to successfully regroup his forces.

19.♘a5 ♘h6 20.♘c6?!

Probably White should not rush to c6 but play 20.♙e4!?, keeping a variety of possibilities.

20...♚h4

Black in turn makes what appears to be the most active move, but it is not the strongest. White faces serious positional problems after the seemingly more 'discreet' 20...♚f6!, and if 21.♙e4 Black exchanges dark-squared bishops, which is useful for him. 21...♘h3! 22.♖g3 ♘xe3 23.♚xe3 ♘f4.

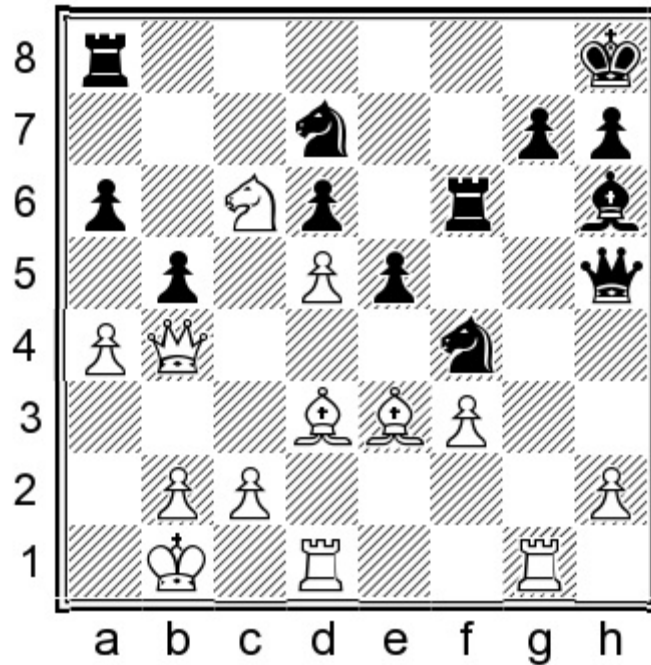
21.♚b4!

Now with the queen on h4, the white d5-pawn is untouchable, so White can afford this lunge.

21...♖f6 22.a4 ♚xh2?

Black's sense of danger lets him down.

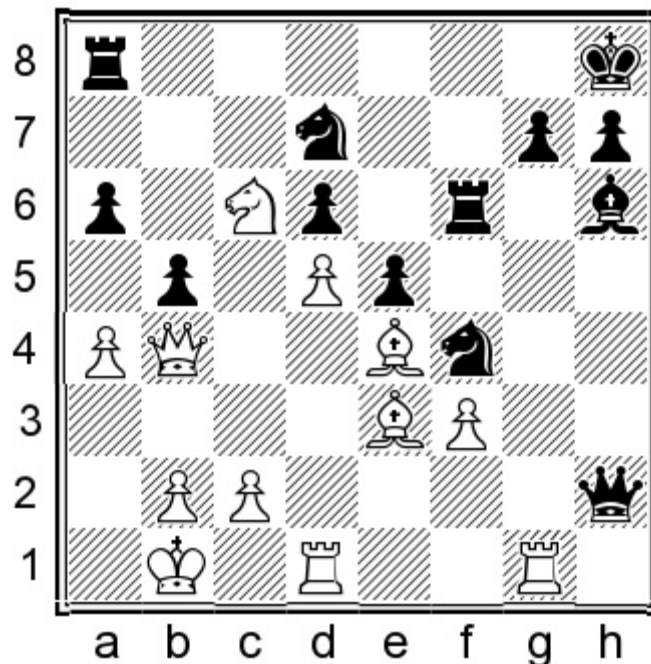
He should not take this pawn under any circumstances. It actually helps Black as it closes the h-file. Besides, since White has begun active operations on the queenside, it was much more important to find something to counter this. In this connection 22...♚h5! looks good.



Position after: 22... ♖h5!

The f-pawn is more important for White than the h-pawn, but it is not very convenient to protect it. To keep the balance White needs to find a difficult continuation: 23. ♕a7!! The point of this move is to avoid the exchange of dark-squared bishops and, with no other square available, it has to go here. At the same time, if the a-file becomes open, the bishop will close it. (23. ♕e4?! ♜h3 24. ♖ge1 ♕xe3 25. ♖xe3 ♜g5±; 23. axb5 ♜xd3 24. ♖xd3 ♕xe3 25. ♖xe3 ♖xh2±; 23. ♖g4 ♜xd3 24. ♖xd3 ♕xe3 25. ♖xe3 ♜b6) 23... ♜xd3 (Of course not 23... ♜xd5?? 24. ♖e4+-; 23... ♖xf3 24. axb5 axb5 25. ♖xb5∞) 24. ♖xd3 ♖xh2 25. ♖e1∞.

23. ♕e4



Position after: 23. ♖e4

Now Black's queenside begins to crumble.

23... ♚e2

The black queen rushes to the rescue, but only succeeds in exchanging the dark-squared bishop for the knight.

24. ♙xf4 ♜xf4 25. ♚a5!

The white queen 'seeps' into the black camp. Its counterpart would like to help, but can't.

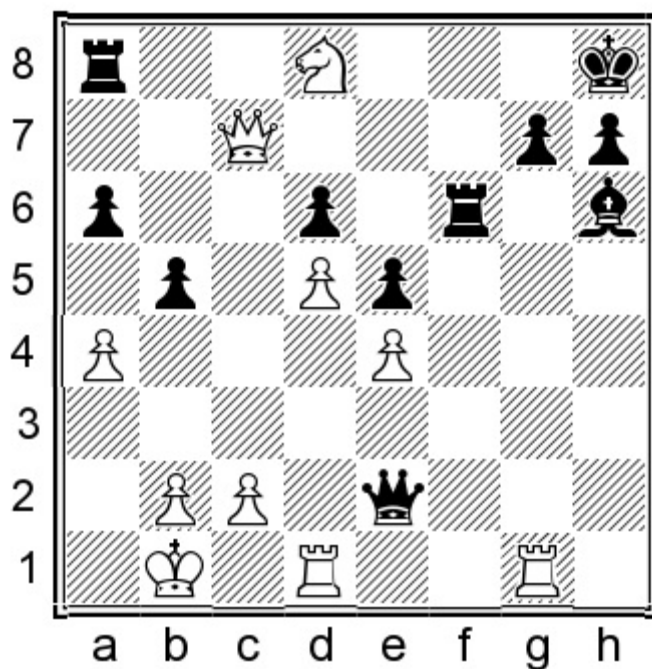
25... ♞c5 26. ♚c7 ♜h6 27. ♞d8!

Another strong move.

27... ♞xe4

Black was expecting 27... bxa4 28. ♚e7 ♚b5. Now the e8-square is covered, but he noticed the knock-out move 29. ♚xf6!+- in time.

28. fxe4

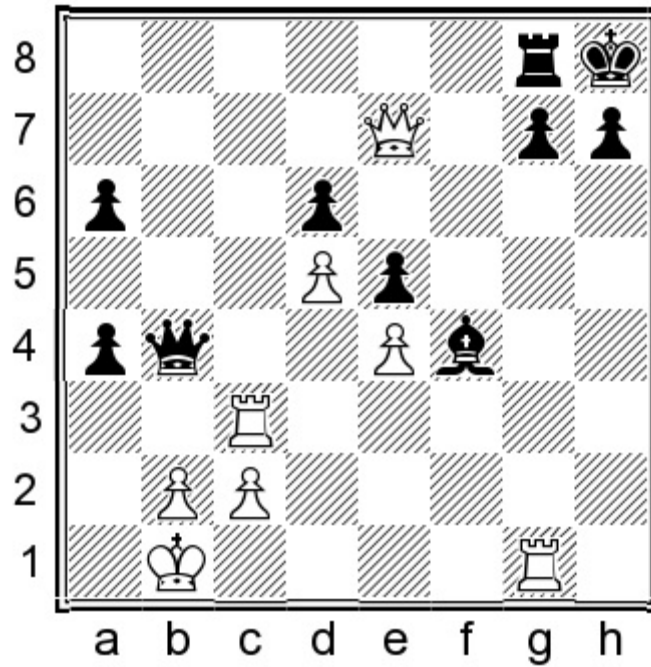


Position after: 28. fxe4

28... ♜f8

Black has to go for an exchange sacrifice, otherwise he will lose the d6-pawn, which would be even worse.

28... ♔g8 29. ♞de1 ♚c4 (29... ♚f2 30. ♞e6 ♜f7 31. ♚xd6) 30. ♚e7 ♜f2 31. ♚e8+ ♜f8 32. ♚e6+ ♔h8 33. ♞f7+ ♜xf7 34. ♚xf7 bxa4 35. ♞ef1 ♞g8 36. ♚e7+- ♚c5 37. ♞g3! ♙f4 38. ♞c3 ♚b4 39. ♞g1

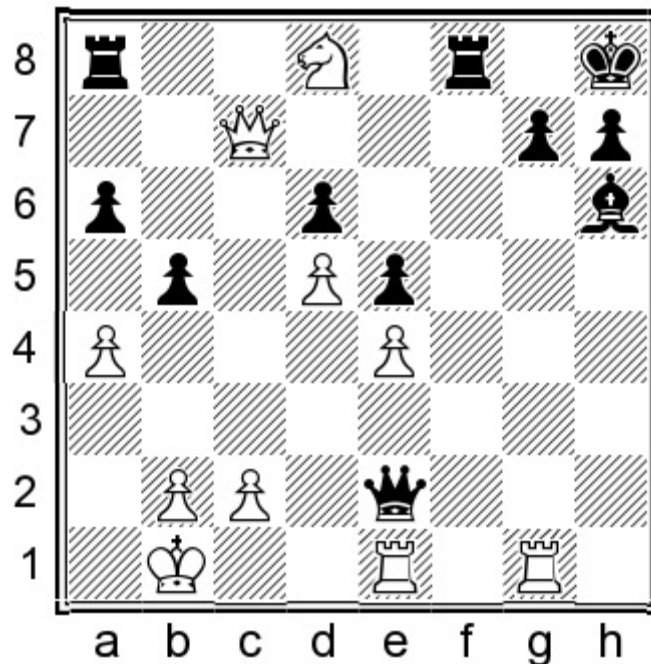


Position after: 39. ♖g1

(Threatening ♔xg7!) 39... ♗h6 40. ♕e6+- Black needs to defend himself against 41. ♖c8, but then the d-pawn is lost and White gets a passed pawn.

29. ♗f7+?!

This move does not spoil the win, but it was more accurate to play 29. ♖de1.



Position after: 29. ♖de1

A) The sacrifice of the queen does not help now. 29... ♕xe1+ 30. ♖xe1 ♖axd8 31. a5+- Here it might seem

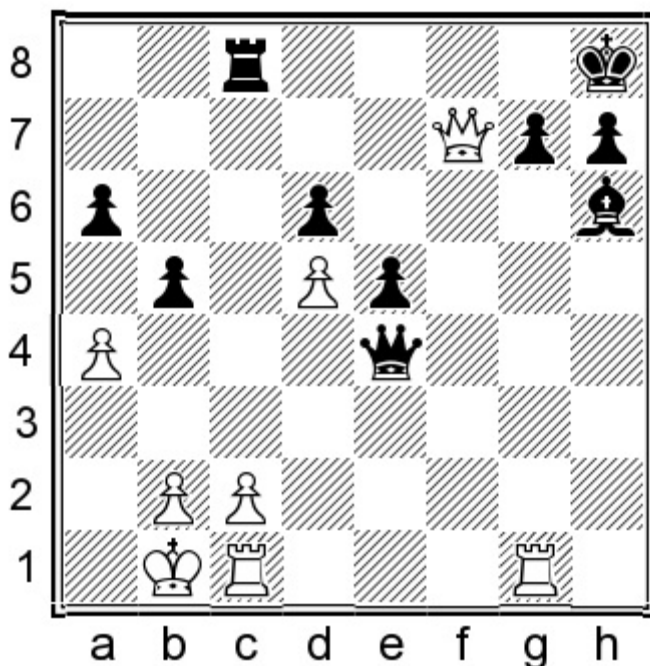
that the position is unclear, but +4 in any line calms the human imagination. Black's problem is the weakness of the a6- and d6-pawns, and he cannot solve it.

B) 29...♖c4 30.♘f7+ ♜xf7 31.♙xf7 bxa4 32.♞f1 ♞g8 33.♚e7+- returns us to the variation considered above.

29...♞xf7 30.♙xf7 ♞c8

30...♙xe4 31.♙e6+-

31.♞c1 ♙xe4



Position after: 31... ♙xe4

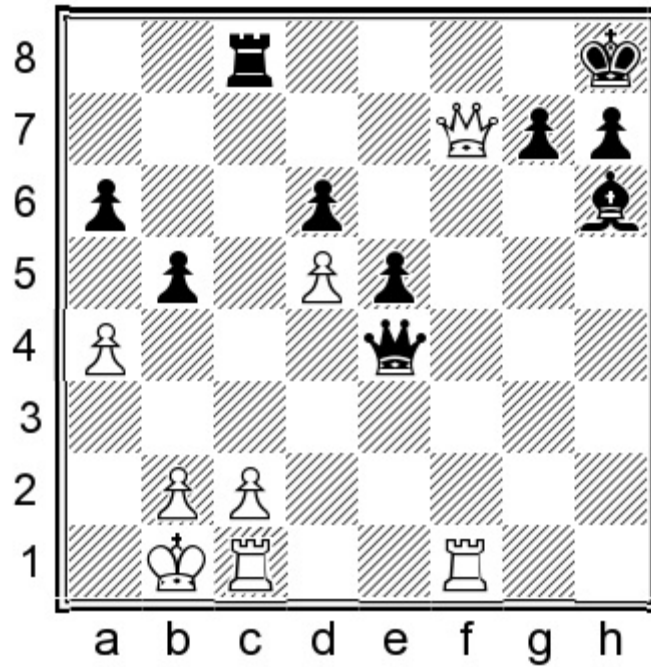
Here, in a winning position, White begins to repeat moves for some reason.

32.♞gf1

A) 32.a5! ♙c4 33.♞g2! ♙c7 34.♞f1 ♙f4 35.♙f5 ♞g8 36.♞h1 h6 37.♞g6+-

B) Maybe it wasn't so easy to find the previous winning move, but there was also a simple move. 32.♞g3± also leads to an obvious advantage: 32...♙f4 (32...b4 33.♙d7 ♞g8 34.♞cg1 ♙xd5 35.♞d3 ♙c5 36.♞gd1±) 33.♞f1 ♙xf7 34.♞xf7±.

32...♙f4 33.♞g1 ♙h6 34.♞gf1



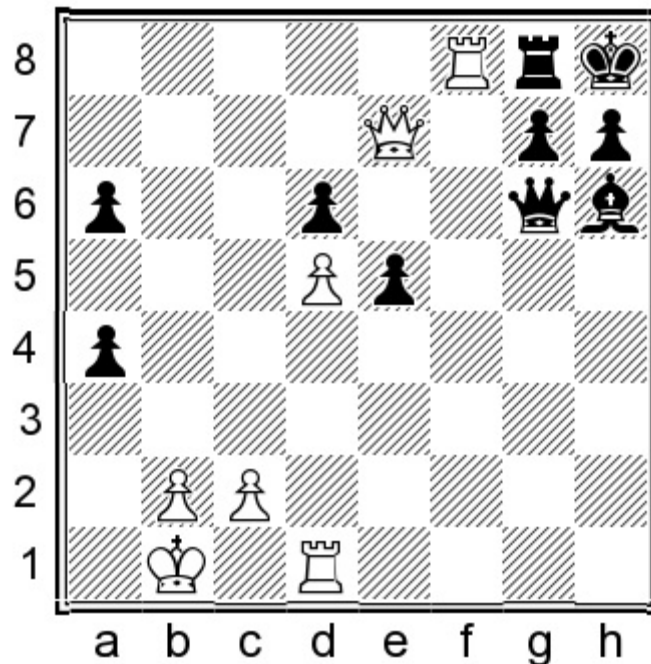
Position after: 34. ♖g1

Now Black refuses to repeat, apparently believing that his position is better!

34... ♜g8 35. ♖cd1

35. ♜ce1 ♜b4! (After 35... ♜xa4 36. ♜e7 the important pawn on d6 is lost. 36... ♜b4 37. ♜xe5+—) This doesn't look a simple position, as Black is ready with counterplay, but White can neutralise his opponent's initiative with accurate moves. 36. a5! ♜xa5 37. ♜e6 ♜b4 38. ♜d1! ♜g5 39. ♜f7 h6 40. ♜d7±.

35... bxa4 36. ♜e7 ♜g6 37. ♜f8



Position after: 37. ♖f8

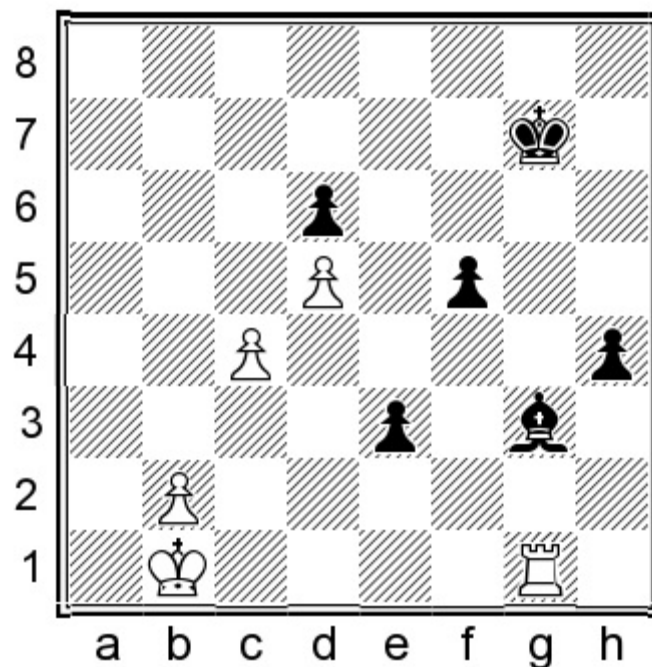
37... ♗g5!

The only, but strongest, move.

38. ♖xg8+ ♔xg8 39. ♖d7

A complicated but equal position has arisen, with both players rising to the occasion.

39... h5= 40. ♖g1 e4 41. ♖xa4 e3 42. ♖xa6 ♖f5 43. ♖a8+ ♔h7 44. ♖e8 ♗f4 45. ♖e6 g6 46. ♖f1 ♔g7 47. ♖xf5
gx5 48. c4 ♗g3 49. ♖g1 h4



Position after: 49...h4

The players agreed a draw in view of the obvious variation 49...h4 50. ♔c2 e2 51. ♔d2 e1=♖+ 52. ♖xe1 ♗xe1+
53. ♔xe1 ♔f6 54. b4=.

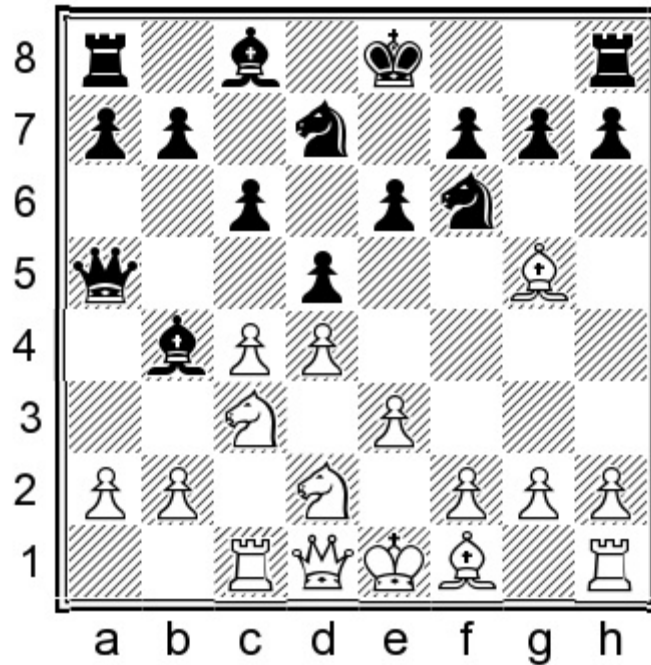
½-½

Khalifman, Alexander (2614)

Dreev, Alexey (2654)

Legnica 2013

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ♘f3 ♘f6 4. ♘c3 e6 5. ♗g5 ♘bd7 6. e3 ♖a5 7. ♘d2 ♗b4 8. ♖c1!?



Position after: 8.♖c1!?

This is a quite rare but interesting continuation. I did not know this line and had to solve my opening problems at the board. It was very important not to postpone these problems till later, when they could no longer be solved. A sense of danger comes in useful here. The main line of this Cambridge Springs variation is 8.♗c2.

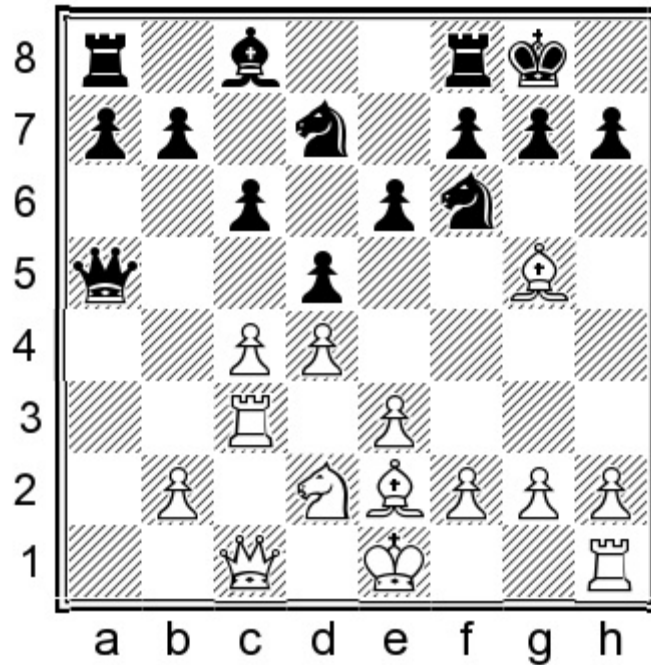
8...0-0

Of course this is Black's natural answer.

However, before playing it, it was necessary to understand how not to end up worse after White's answer.

9.a3

Some time later, White found an interesting pawn sacrifice: 9.♙e2 ♗xc3 10.♖xc3 (10.bxc3 dxc4 11.♙xf6 ♗xf6 12.♗xc4 ♗c7 13.0-0 b6= does not promise White any advantage.) 10...♗xa2 (10...dxc4?! 11.♙xf6 ♗xf6 12.♗xc4±) 11.♗c1 ♗a5



Position after: 11... ♖a5

Undoubtedly White has compensation here, but does he have a real advantage? Further tournament practice should tell.

So far, this position has been encountered only twice, and only in my games, both of which Black managed to win.

For those who are interested in this position, I include them here without comments.

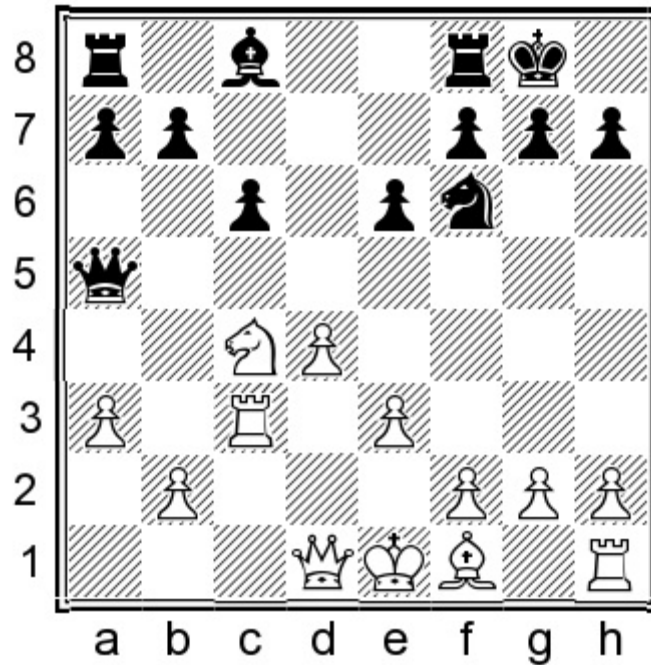
A) 12. ♕h4 ♜e8 13. 0-0 e5 14. ♞a3 ♞b4 15. dxe5 ♞xe5 16. ♕g3 ♞e8 17. cxd5 cxd5 18. ♞b3 ♞e7 19. ♗f3 ♗c5 20. ♞c3 ♗fe4 21. ♞c2 ♗xg3 22. hxg3 b6 23. ♗d4 a5 24. ♞d1 ♕d7 25. b3 ♞ac8 26. ♞b2 ♗e4 27. ♞dc1 ♞c5 28. ♕d3 ♗xg3 29. ♞xc5 bxc5 30. ♗f3 ♗e4 31. ♞a3 ♗xf2 32. ♕xh7+ ♗xh7 33. ♗xf2 ♞xe3+ 34. ♗g3 ♞e4 35. ♞xc5 ♞g4+ 36. ♗h2 ♞f4+ 37. ♗h1 ♕f5 38. ♞f1 ♞g3 39. ♞f2 ♕e4 40. ♞xg3 ♞xg3 41. ♗h2 ♞g6 42. ♗h4 ♞f6 43. ♞d1 g5 44. ♗f3 ♕xf3 45. gxf3 ♞xf3 46. ♞xd5 ♗g6 0-1 Smirnov, A (2527) – Dreev, A (2653) chess.com 2018.

B) 12. ♞a3 ♞d8 13. 0-0 e5 14. cxd5 cxd5 15. ♗b3 ♞b6 16. ♕xf6 ♞xf6 17. ♞c7 exd4 18. ♗xd4 ♗e5 19. ♞c5 ♗c6 20. ♞xd5 ♞d8 21. ♞e4 ♗xd4 22. exd4 g6 23. ♞d1 ♞b6 24. ♞d2 ♕e6 25. h4 ♕d5 26. ♞f4 ♞d6 27. ♞xd6 ♞xd6 28. b4 a6 29. ♞a5 b5 30. ♞d1 ♞e8 31. ♕f1 ♕b3 32. ♞d3 ♕a4 33. ♞e3 ♞c8 34. h5 ♗g7 35. hxg6 hxg6 36. g3 ♞cc6 37. ♞e4 ♞c1 38. ♗g2 ♕b3 39. ♞f4 ♕d5+ 40. f3 ♞b1 0-1 Molner, M (2499) – Dreev, A (2628) Las Vegas 2015.

9... ♕xc3 10. ♞xc3 dxc4

Logical. Without this move White would keep the bishop pair.

11. ♕xf6 ♗xf6 12. ♗xc4



Position after: 12. ♖xc4

12... ♗d5!

An important continuation that Black had to see in advance when castling. The move hampers White's kingside development and prevents White from 'clamping' Black, that is from playing ...c6-c5.

12... ♗c7?! 13. ♕d3 b6 14. 0-0 ♘b7 15. b4±

13.b4

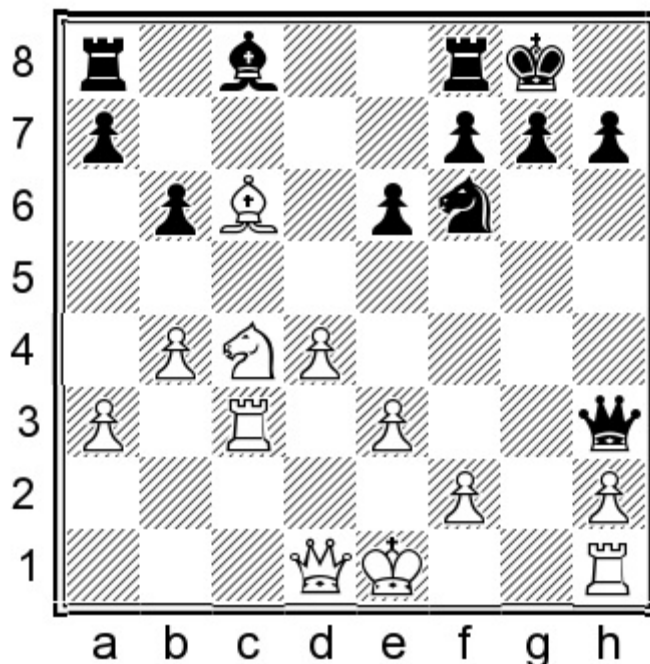
White played this with the obvious intention of preventing Black from playing ...c6-c5.

13.f3 c5!=

13...b6

Black still wants to play ...c6-c5, so White has to let the pawn go to fight for the advantage.

14. ♕e2!? ♗xg2 15. ♕f3 ♗h3 16. ♕xc6



Position after: 16. ♖xc6

16... ♗d5!?

For a long time after the game I considered this move to be the strongest and was ready to give it an exclamation mark. However, recently I discovered an interesting alternative. It turns out that Black can play an exchange sacrifice.

16... ♖a6!?! With accurate play on both sides, the game would not stray far from approximate equality, e.g.

A) 17. b5!?! ♜ac8 (17... ♗d5 18. ♜c2 ♜ac8 19. ♔d2∞) 18. ♛a4! ♖xb5 (18... ♗d5=) 19. ♖xb5 (19. ♛xb5 a6 20. ♛xb6 ♗d5=) 19... ♛g2 20. ♜f1 ♗g4 21. ♔e2 (21. ♛c2 ♗xh2 22. ♗e5 ♜xc3 23. ♛xc3 h5∞) 21... ♗xh2 22. ♜fc1 ♗g4 23. ♜f1=

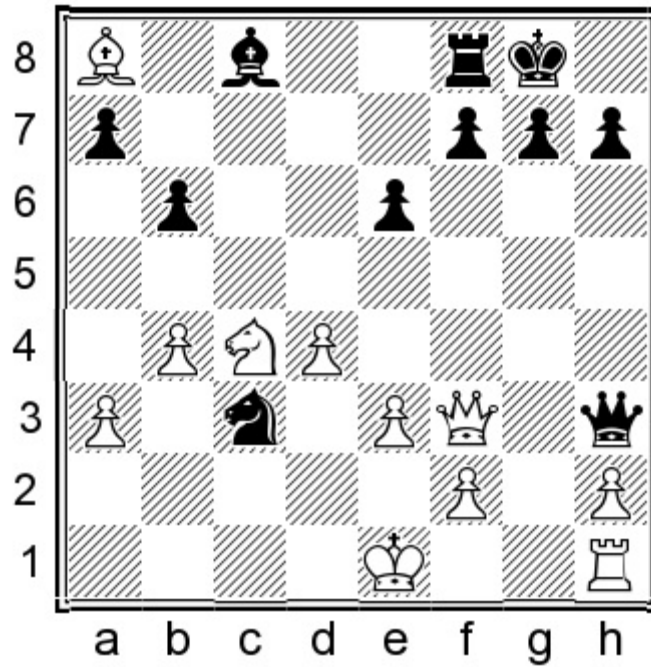
B) 17. ♖xa8 ♜xa8 18. ♗e5! (18. a4? ♖b7 19. ♜f1 ♖g2-+) 18... ♖b7 19. ♜f1 h5!?! 20. ♜c7 ♖g2 21. ♛c2 ♖xf1 22. ♜c8+ ♜xc8 23. ♛xc8+ ♔h7 24. ♛c2+! ♔g8= (24... g6? 25. ♛c7+-)

17. ♖xa8

17. ♜c2 ♜b8 18. ♗e5 f6 19. ♛f3 ♛xf3 20. ♗xf3 ♗e7=

17... ♗xc3 18. ♛f3

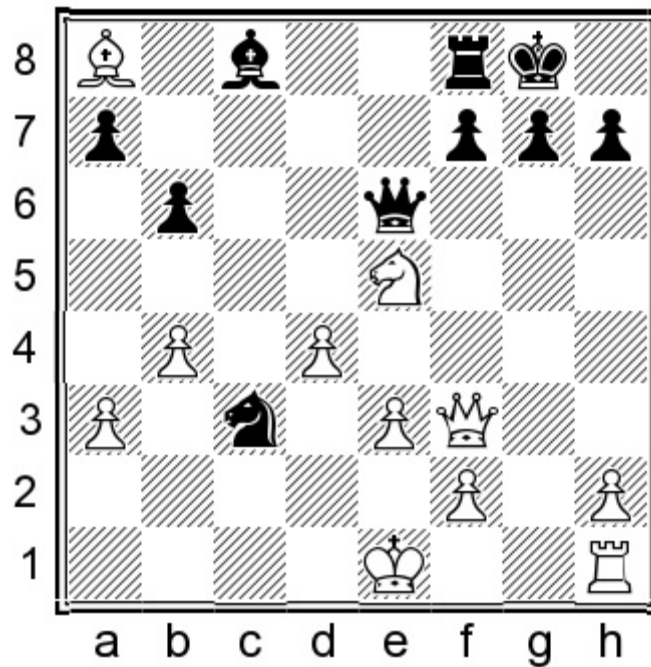
A curious moment. Based on the tournament situation, Black would have been happy with a draw and it is clear that this determined his choice of move. However, Black had two opportunities to play on, both of them more interesting than the move in the game. White would have kept the balance, although with difficulty.



Position after: 18. ♕f3

18... ♖xf3

A) 18...e5!? For some time after the game I considered this move the strongest. 19. ♘xe5 Why did Black sacrifice the pawn? 19... ♕e6!

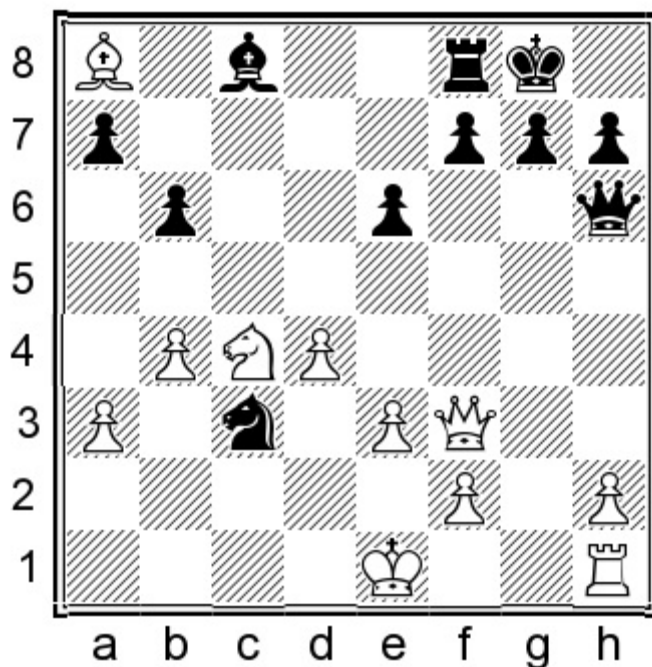


Position after: 19... ♕e6!

This brilliant ‘move back’, coupled with the pawn sacrifice, does not come to mind so quickly. 20.e4! (In case of the optimistic 20.0-0? Black’s plan will work. 20... ♗a6 21. ♖e1 f6 and the strong white knight

suddenly becomes a burden.) Now 20...♖a2!? (20...♙a6 21.♗xc3 ♖a2 22.♗d2 ♖a1+ 23.♗d1 ♗c3+ 24.♗d2=) is interesting, but even here White achieves approximate equality by accurate moves, for example: 21.♔f1 ♙a6+ 22.♔g2 ♗d2 23.♙d5 ♘xd5 24.exd5 ♗g5+ 25.♗g4 ♗d8 26.♗d7 ♗g5+ 27.♗g4=.

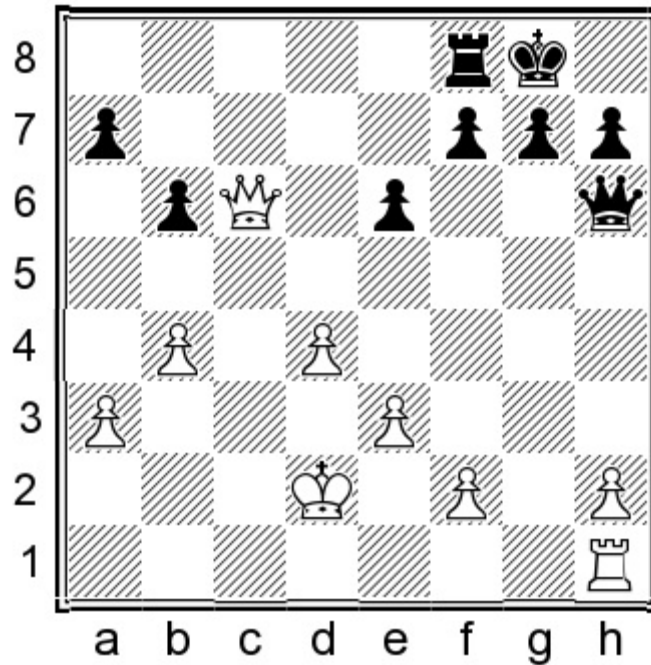
B) There is another possibility which is very dangerous for White despite its apparent simplicity: 18...♗h6!?



Position after: 18...♗h6!?

19.♘d6 This move leads to obvious simplifications, but exchanges do not always bring relief.

(19.♘e5?! ♙a6 20.♙b7 ♙xb7 21.♗xb7 ♗h3≠; 19.♔d2!?) Only escaping from the danger zone saves the white king. Black has better chances with other continuations. 19...♘b5 20.♔c2! ♙a6 21.♔b3 ♘c7 22.♙c6∞)
 19...♙a6 (19...♗g6!?) 20.♙e4 ♘xe4 21.♗xe4 ♗xe4 22.♘xe4 ♙b7 23.f3 f5 24.♘d6! Otherwise ...♞c8.
 24...♙xf3 25.0-0! ♙e2 26.♞c1 The c-file might provide good consolation for White. 26...♞d8 27.♘b7 ♞d7
 28.♞c8+ ♔f7 29.♘d8+ ♔f6 30.♘c6≠ Keeping good chances of salvation.) 20.♔d2 ♘b5 21.♘xb5 ♙xb5
 22.♙c6 ♙xc6 23.♗xc6

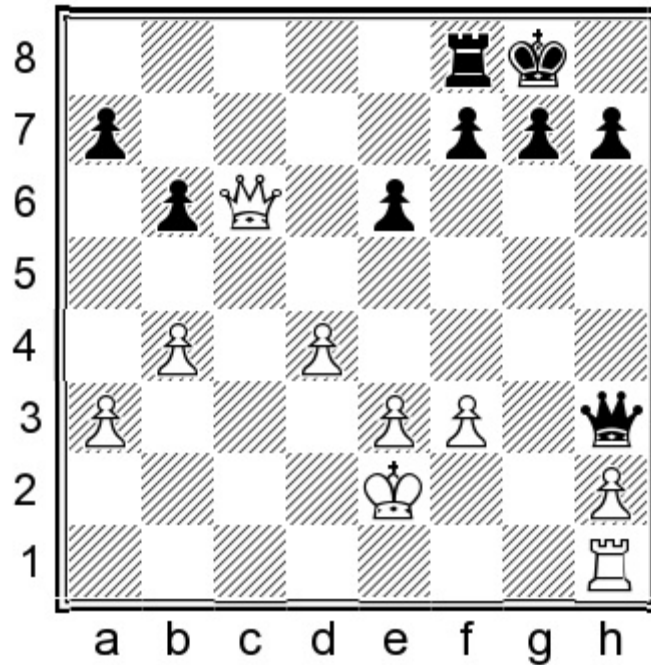


Position after: 23. ♖xc6

This position, or rather its unexpected evaluation, is very interesting, so I decided to discuss it in more detail.

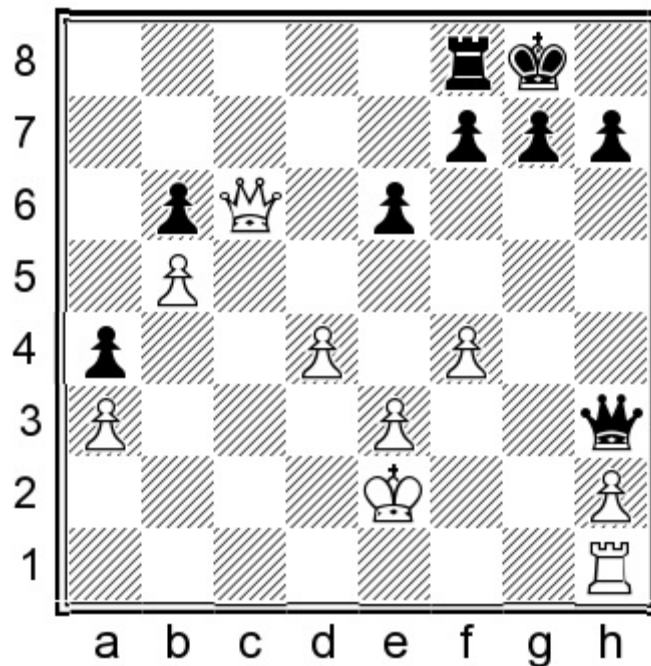
It seems that after the exchange of light pieces, the dangers for White are past. His king has started to breathe more easily, and there are fewer pieces for playing... All of this can indicate a peaceful mood for both White and Black. But it is not like this at all. If the will is there, we will find resources to go on playing!

23... ♖h3! It is important to nail down the h-pawn and the rook at the same time, while maintaining the working capacity of the queen. A deeper look at the position reveals White's main problem – he cannot improve his position, as his queen must control the c-file and the rook has to protect the h2-pawn. With White suddenly reduced to observer status, Black can strengthen his position by advancing pawns on the kingside or trying to transfer his rook to the fifth rank, depending on the situation. 24. ♔e2 Moving the king is explained by Black's hidden threat. (For example, if you play from 'general considerations', then there will be a decisive move involving the connection between queen and rook, e.g. 24.a4? e5 25.d5 ♖c8–+ or 25.dxe5 ♖d8+ 26. ♔e2 ♖g4+ with checkmate.) 24... ♖h5+! (24...e5 Here this tempting move is parried by a brilliant defensive resource: 25. ♖d1!! and White is fine, since 25... ♖c8 is answered by 26.dxe5! =) 25.f3 (25. ♖f3 ♖b5+ 26. ♔d2 ♖c4–+; 25. ♔d2 e5! Now, when there is no ♖h1-d1, this move is very strong. White can't push d4-d5 because of... ♖f3. 26. ♖d5 ♖h4 27. ♔e2 ♖g4+ 28. ♖f3 ♖c8! ♯) 25... ♖h3



Position after: 25...♔h3

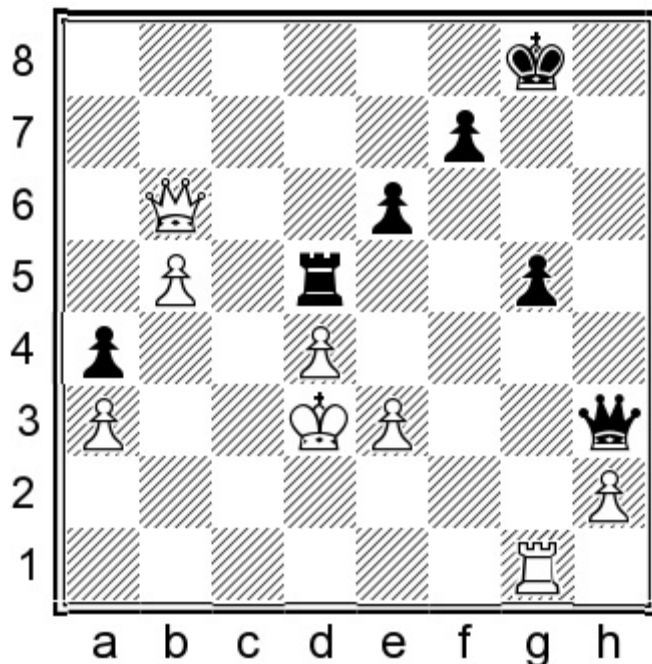
The position of the white king is starting to feel a little draughty. It seems that White must accept that he could not prevent the sacrifice of the e-pawn and should start to play less ambitiously. 26.f4 Now White no longer needs to worry about ...e6-e5, but the problems remain. (26.♔f2 e5! 27.dxe5 ♖c8 28.♔e4 g6) 26...a5!! A fantastic deep move! (After a routine continuation the position would be easier for White: 26...g6 27.a4 ♜d8 28.♔f3) 27.b5 And you may well ask what is so fantastic. 27...a4!



Position after: 27...a4!

Now Black's intention is clear – to create a second weakness, the b5-pawn. In order to play this way Black

must use prophylactic thinking and understand that White should not be able to play a3-a4 himself. 28.♔d3
 White's attempt to sit things out is suppressed by Black more than convincingly. (White's position is very
 unpleasant anyway after 28.♟f3 ♟h4 29.♟c6 h6±.) 28...h6 29.♔d2 (29.♟xb6? ♟c8+; 29.♟c1 ♟xh2
 30.♟xb6 ♟b2 31.♟c3 h5!+) 29...♟d8 30.♔d3 g5! (Of course not 30...♟d5? 31.♟e8+; however 30...♟h5!? is
 also quite strong.) 31.♟g1 ♟d5 32.fxg5 hxg5 33.♟xb6

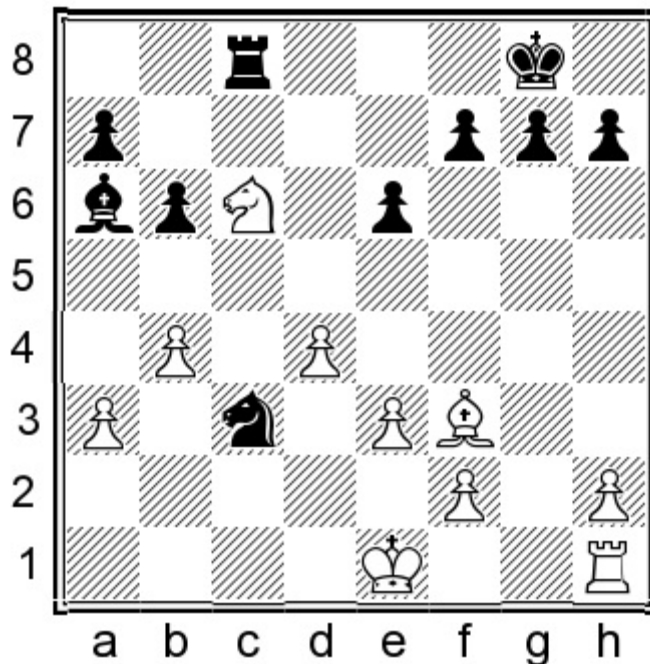


Position after: 33.♟xb6

33...♔g7!! What a wonderful move! It is important for Black to get rid of the threat of ♟g1xg5 (followed by ♟d8+), yet keep the h7-square for the queen.

Despite an extra pawn and having the move, the position is completely hopeless for White. (33...♔h7?!
 34.♟c1!; 33...♟h7+? 34.♔c3 ♟xh2?? 35.♟xg5+-) 34.♟c6 (34.♟c1 ♟h7+! 35.♔c3 ♟xh2 36.♟c6 ♟e2+)
 34...♟h7+! 35.♔c3 ♟xh2 36.♟c1 g4 (36...♟e2!?) 37.b6 ♟e2 38.♔b4 ♟xe3 39.♔xa4 ♟xd4+ 40.♟c4 g3+.

19.♟xf3 ♟a6 20.♔e5 ♟c8 21.♔c6



Position after: 21. ♖c6

21...♞c7?!

Unfortunately the natural desire to protect the pawn doesn't lead to equality. The correct move is 21...♔f8!

A) 22. ♗xa7 ♞c7 23. ♕d2 (23. ♗c6? ♗d5⚡) 23...♗d5 24. b5 ♞xa7=

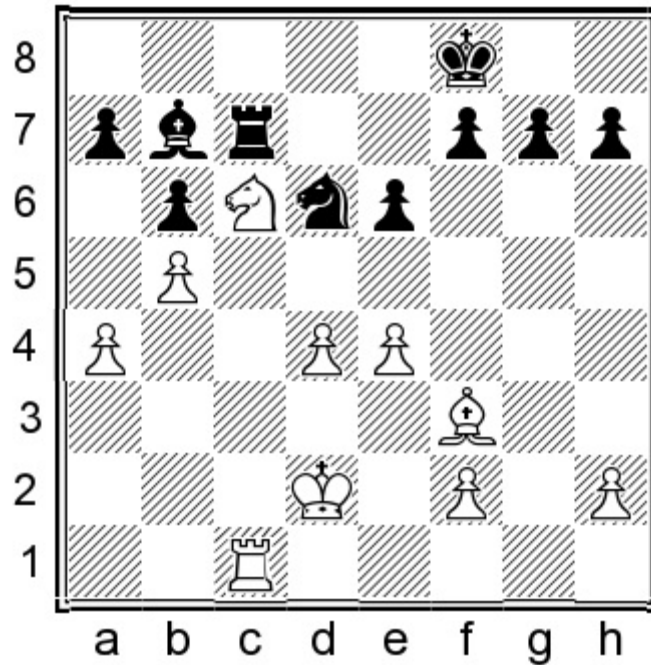
B) 22. ♕d2 ♗b7! 23. ♞c1 (23. ♗xa7? ♗xf3 24. ♗xc8 ♗e4+!-+ An extremely important intermediate move!) 23...♗xc6 24. ♞xc3 ♗d7=

22.♕d2 ♗b5

A forced retreat.

22...♗b7? 23. ♞c1!+-

23.a4 ♗d6 24.b5 ♗b7 25.♞c1 ♔f8 26.e4±



Position after: 26.e4±

White is definitely better, the question is, how much?

26...a5?!

Black must have thought he was improving his position, removing the pawn from the gaze of the white knight. However, sometimes ‘doing nothing’ is better than an active desire to ‘improve’ things.

It was correct to retain the possibility of ...a7-a6 and wait: 26...♔e8 27.♞c2 ♞c8 28.♔d3 (28.♘xa7? ♞a8) 28...♞c7±.

27.♔e3 ♔e8 28.♙e2?!

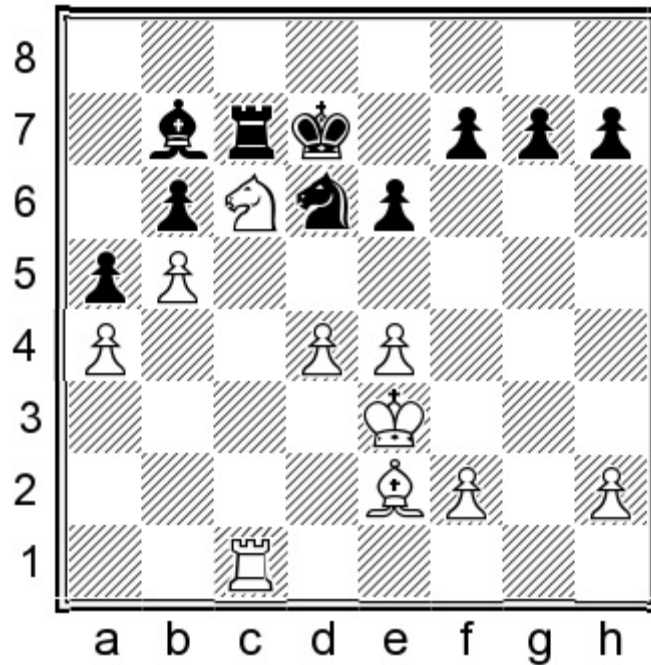
White probably did not like his bishop and decided to move it to d3, but now is a bad moment to do so.

28.♔f4 f6 29.h4± This simple move, strengthening the position, could make the endgame extremely unpleasant for Black.

28...♔d7

Things have got easier.

29.♘e5+ ♔d8 30.♘c6+ ♔d7



Position after: 30...♔d7

31.♗e5+

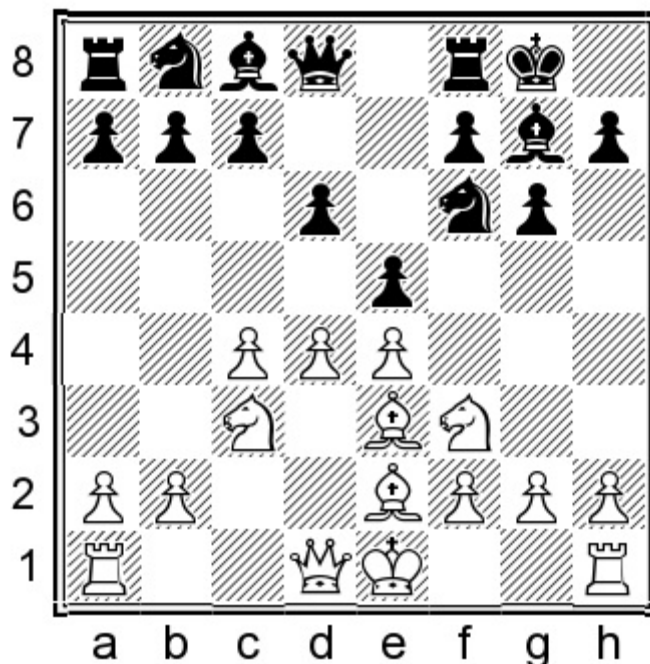
White accepted a draw, though he could still have posed some problems for Black. With 31.♗f3! White could have tried to correct what he missed on the previous move, but with the king on d7 Black has an excellent defensive resource: 31...♞c8! The only 'move back' takes Black out of trouble. It is important to free the c7-square for the king, and now Black wants to take on c6. (31...♔e8?! 32.h4±; 31...f6?! 32.♔d3±) 32.d5! (32.h4 ♗xc6! 33.bxc6+ ♔c7= Blockade!) 32...exd5 33.♗g4+ f5 34.exf5 ♞e8+ 35.♔f3 h5! 36.♗xh5 ♞e4 37.♗g4 ♔e8 38.♞d1 ♗xc6 39.bxc6 ♞c4 40.♞xd5 ♞xc6 Black is entitled to hope for a draw.

31...♔d8 32.♗c6+ ♔d7

½-½

Komarov, Dimitri (2595)
Smirin, Ilia (2625)
 Vienna 1996

1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.♗c3 0-0 5.e4 d6 6.♗e2 e5 7.♗e3



Position after: 7. ♕e3

7...c6

In this line 7... ♖g4 or 7... ♖c6 are more common. It is difficult to say which is better; it's basically a matter of taste.

8.d5 ♖a6 9.0-0 ♖g4 10. ♕g5 f6 11. ♕d2

This is a rare continuation. The fight for an advantage for White here is usually associated with the retreat of the bishop to h4.

11...f5 12. ♖g5

It was worth thinking about 12.exf5 gxf5 13. ♕g5!?!↑ with a complicated position.

12... ♖f6 13.exf5 ♕xf5!?

Taking with the pawn also looks interesting: 13...gxf5!?! 14.f4 e4 15. ♕e3 Black doesn't have to block the position with ...c6-c5, but can continue with 15... ♖e7!?!∞ (15...c5 16. ♖h3♣ Gelfand, B Topalov, V Novgorod 1996).

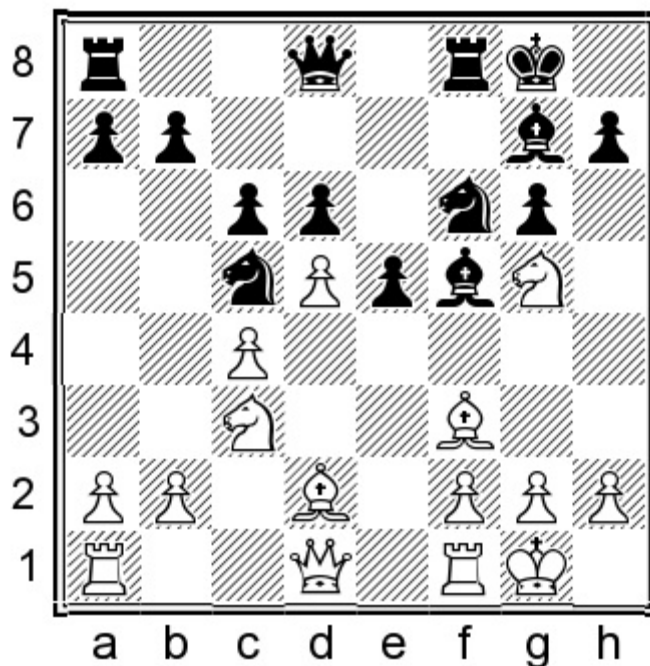
14. ♕f3!?

White creates a threat to the c6-pawn and tries to take control of the e4-square.

14. ♕e3!?! h6 15. ♖e6 ♕xe6 16.dxe6 ♖c7 17. ♖d3 g5 18. ♖ad1 ♖xe6 19. ♖xd6 ♖xd6 20. ♖xd6 ♖fe8∞

14... ♖c5!

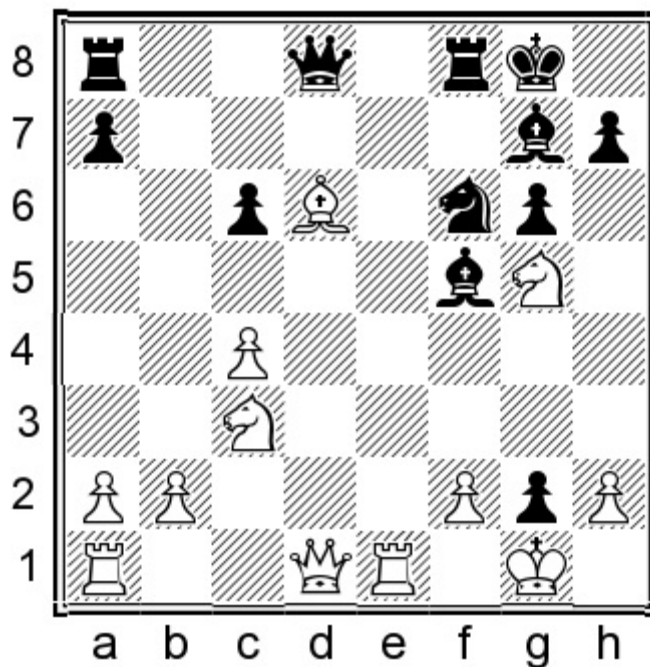
Dynamically played. Black is ready to sacrifice a pawn for the initiative, and does not make concessions by playing, for example, 14...h6 15.♖ge4±.



Position after: 14...♖c5!

15.b4!?

15.dxc6 bxc6 16.♙e3!?. (It is dangerous to accept the pawn sacrifice. 16.♙xc6 ♖c8 and now if 17.♙f3 then 17...e4, while if 17.♙d5+?! ♗xd5 18.♖xd5 h6 19.♗f3 ♙d3⚡.) 16...e4 (≤ 16...♗c7 17.b4↑) 17.♙xc5 exf3 (17...dxc5 18.♗cxe4 ♗xe4 19.♗xd8 ♖axd8 20.♙xe4 ♙xb2 21.♖ab1 ♙d4 22.♙xf5 ♖xf5 23.♗e4=) 18.♙xd6 fxg2 19.♖e1

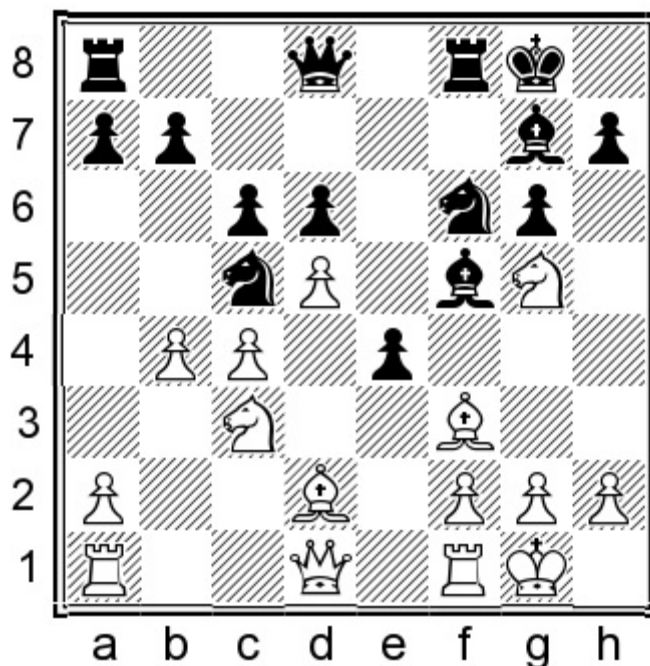


Position after: 19. ♖e1

A) 19... ♗g4? This tempting move is not a declaration of war, only a blank shot. 20. ♕xf8 ♜xg5 21. ♕d6 ♖g1=♜+ 22. ♔xf2 (21... ♖d8 22. ♕e7+-) 22. ♔xf2 ♖g1=♜+ 23. ♖xg1 ♜h4+ 24. ♕g3 ♕d4+ 25. ♔g2 ♜h3+ 26. ♔h1 ♕xc3 27. ♜e2! (27. ♜f3? ♖e8+-) 27... ♕d4 28. ♖g2! Although it is not obvious, White is close to winning, as Black cannot create real threats, for example: 28... c5 29. ♖f1 ♕d7 30. ♜f3! ♖c8 31. ♜f7+ ♔h8 32. ♜e7+-.

B) 19... ♖e8 20. c5 ♖xe1+ 21. ♜xe1 ♗e8∞

15...e4!



Position after: 15...e4!

Neither player wants to give up the fight for the initiative. The game is reminiscent of a boxing match in which the participants do not think about defence anymore.

15... ♗d3 16. dxc6 bxc6 17. ♕xc6 ♖c8 18. b5±

16. ♕e2 ♗d3 17. g4?

In the fight for the initiative White goes too far. It was time to ‘hold the horses’.

A) 17. ♕xd3 exd3 18. h3! This is not a *luft* for the king; it is important to take control of the g4-square. (18. ♖e1? cxd5 19. cxd5 ♗g4+-; 18. ♗e6 ♕xe6 19. dxe6= ♜e7 20. ♖e1 ♗h5↑)

B) 17. ♖b1!?∞

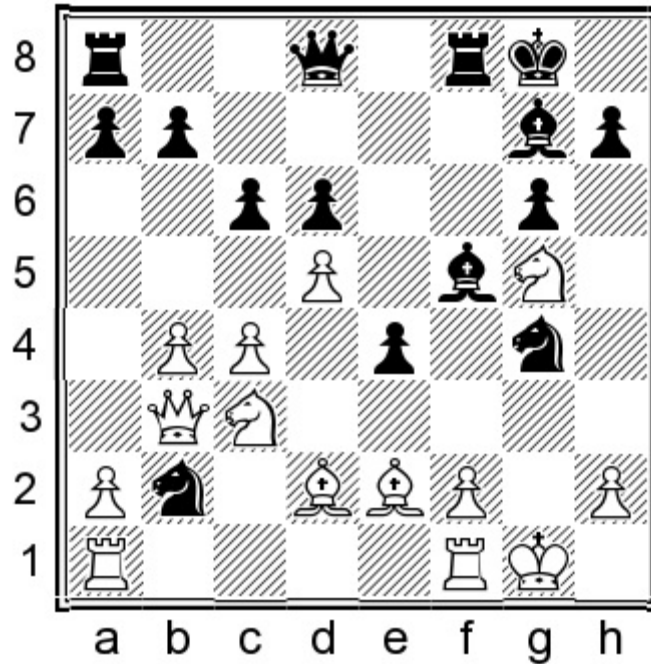
17... ♗b2?

Black believed his opponent, but wrongly.

After 17... ♗xg4 18. ♗cxe4 (18. ♕xg4 ♕xc3+-) 18... cxd5 19. cxd5 ♕xa1 20. ♜xa1 h6+- White has no

compensation.

18. ♖b3 □ 18... ♗xg4



Position after: 18... ♗xg4

19. ♗cxe4

A) Of course not 19. ♖xb2? e3!+-.

B) White could take the knight, but it's not clear why he should hurry to do so. 19. ♗xg4!? ♗xg4 20. ♗cxe4∞

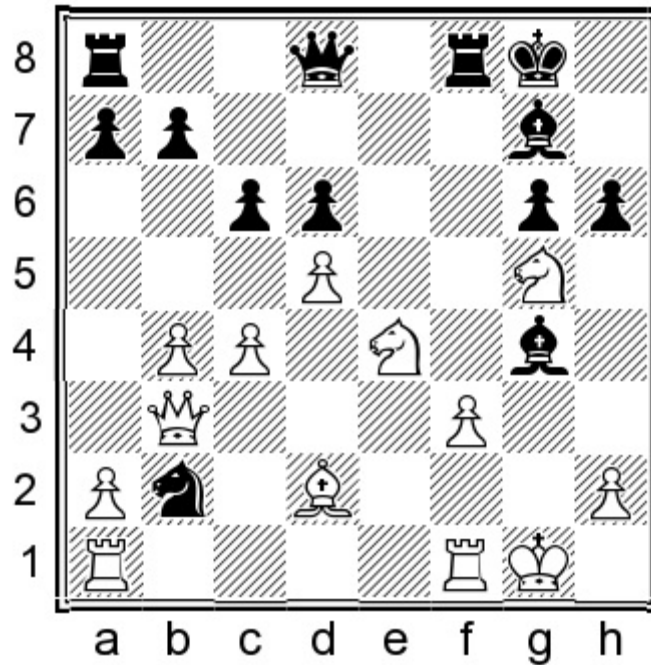
19... ♗xe4?!

Here Black has many continuations leading to an unclear position. Which of them is best is very difficult to say.

However, the move in the game is clearly not the best choice.

A) 19... ♗e5? 20. c5!+-

B) 19... h6!? 20. ♗xg4 ♗xg4 21. f3



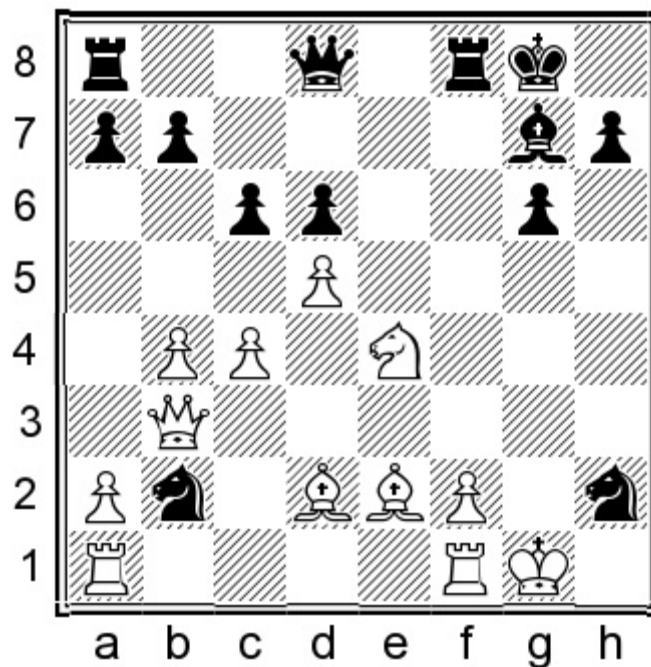
Position after: 21.f3

There could be intense complications resulting in equality after 21...hxg5!? (21...♙f5!? 22.♘e6 ♙xe6 23.dxe6 d5 24.cxd5 ♖xd5 25.♙c3 ♖xb3 26.axb3 ♙xc3 27.♘xc3 ♘d3=; 21...♙d7 22.♘e6±) 22.fxg4 ♖d7 23.h3 cxd5 24.cxd5 ♙d4+ 25.♙e3! (25.♙g2? ♖b5+) 25...♖g7 26.♖ae1 ♖ae8 27.♖xf8+ ♙xf8 28.♘xg5 ♘d1! 29.♖xd1 ♙xe3+ 30.♖xe3 ♖xe3 31.♘e6+ ♖xe6 32.dxe6 ♙e7=

C) 19...cxd5!? 20.cxd5 b5!? 21.♙xg4 ♙xg4 22.♙c3 ♙xc3 23.♖xc3 ♘c4 24.a4∞

20.♙xg4

≤ 20.♘xe4 ♘xh2!

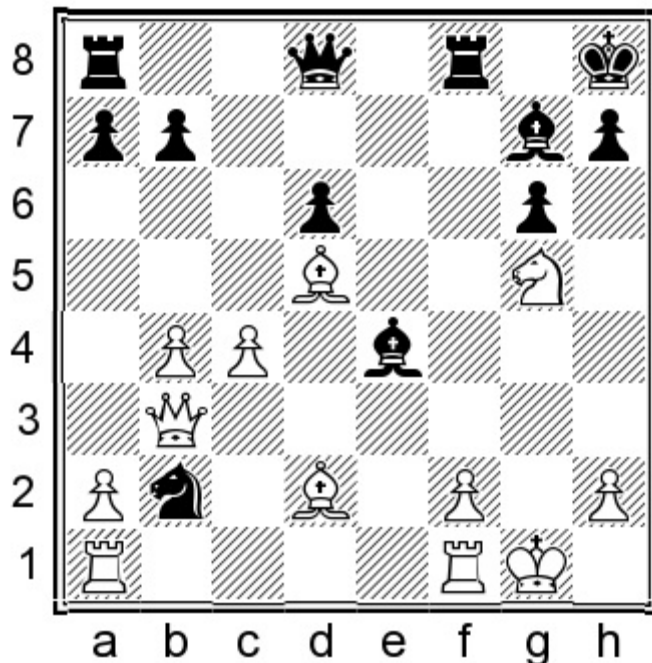


Position after: 20... ♖xh2!

21.c5□ (21.♔xh2? ♜h4+-+; 21.♞f1 ♜h4+-+; 21.♙g5? ♜e8+-+; 21.♜h3? ♜xf1 22.♞xf1 ♞f5+-) 21...♜xf1
 22.♞xf1 dxc5 23.dxc6+ c4 (23...♔h8 24.cxb7♞) 24.♙xc4+ ♜xc4 25.♜xc4+ ♔h8 26.cxb7 ♞b8 27.♙g5□
 27...♜b6 28.♜c5=

20...♙d3

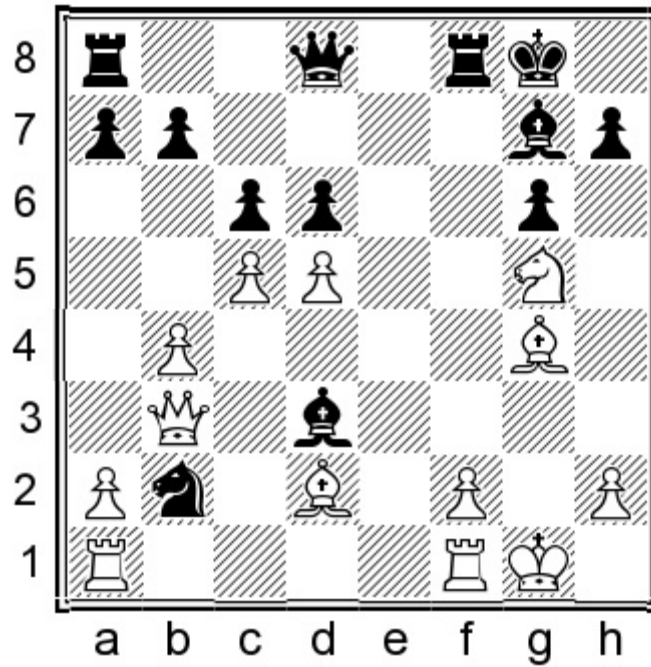
20...cxd5! 21.♙e6+ (21.cxd5 ♙d3 22.♜e6 ♜h4 23.h3 ♙c4 24.♙g5 ♜xg4+ 25.hxg4 ♙xb3 26.axb3 ♞f7∞)
 21...♔h8 22.♙xd5



Position after: 22. ♙xd5

22...♙f5! Sacrificing the exchange is the best solution! (The banal move 22...♙xd5 leads to a heavy position:
 23.cxd5 ♜f6 24.♜e6+-.) 23.♜f7+ ♞xf7 24.♙xf7 ♜d3 25.♙d5 ♜h4 26.♙c3 ♞e8 27.♙xg7+ ♔xg7 28.♞ad1 ♜f4
 29.♔h1 ♙g4!♞

21.c5



Position after: 21.c5

21...♔h8!

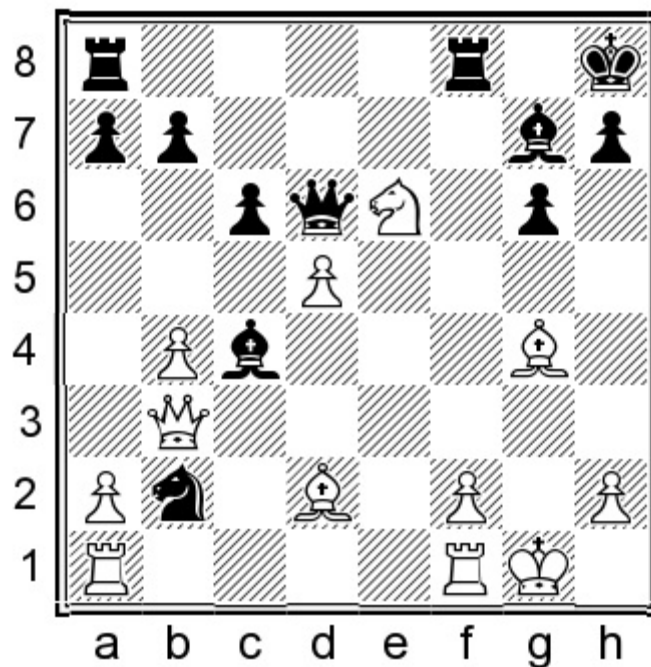
This is the strongest continuation, at least from a practical point of view.

A) 21...dxc5 22.bxc5 cxd5 23.♘e6 ♕d7 24.h3!+-

B) 21...♙c4 22.♚g3? ♙xd5 23.♘e6 ♙xe6 24.♙xe6+ ♔h8 25.cxd6 ♚f6 26.♞ae1+-

22.♘e6

22.cxd6!? ♚xd6 23.♘e6 ♙c4



Position after: 23...♙c4

A) 24.♚h3 ♕f6! It is necessary not to take, but to sacrifice, the exchange! (24...♙xf1 25.♞xf1 ♕f6 26.♙c3 cxd5 27.♚f3 ♕xc3 28.♚xc3±±) 25.♜xf8 (25.♙c3 ♜d3 26.♜xf8 ♞xf8∞) 25...♞xf8 26.♞fe1 ♜d3 27.♞e6 ♚d8 28.♞f1! ♜e5 29.♞e1 ♜xg4 30.♚xg4 ♕xd5 31.♞6e2 ♜g7 32.♚g3±

B) 24.♚e3!

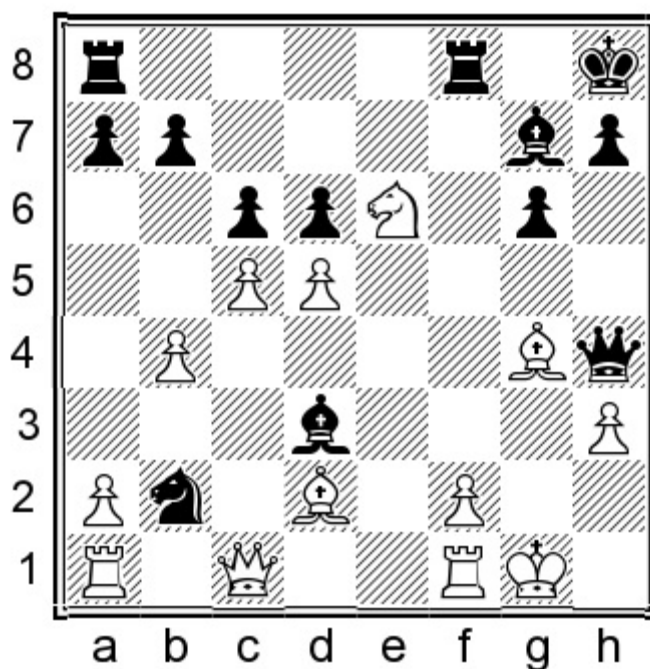
B1) 24...cxd5 25.♜xg7?! d4 26.♚h6 ♚f6 27.♜e6 ♕xe6 28.♕g5! ♚f7 29.♞ae1 ♞fe8 (29...♕xg4 30.♞e7+–) 30.♕xe6 ♞xe6 31.♚h4 ♞ae8 32.♚xd4+ ♜g8 33.♕d2 ♞xe1 (33...♜a4 34.b5 ♞xe1 35.♕xe1 ♜b6 36.♕c3+–) 34.♞xe1 ♞xe1+ 35.♕xe1 ♜a4 (35...♜c4 36.♕c3+–) 36.♚xa7+–

B2) 24...♕e5! 25.♙c3! (25.f4?! ♕f6 Δ 26.♜xf8 ♞xf8∞) 25...♜d3 26.♕xe5+ ♜xe5 27.♞ae1 ♜xg4 28.♚d4+ ♞f6 29.♚xg4 ♚xd5□ (29...cxd5 30.♚d4±) 30.♜c7 ♚d6 31.♜xa8 ♕xf1 32.♞e8+ (32.♜xf1 ♞f8=) 32...♞f8 33.♚c8 ♞xe8 34.♚xe8+ ♜g7 35.♜xf1 ♚xb4=

22...♚h4 23.h3 ♙c4! 24.♚c2

24.♚e3 is approximately equal: 24...♙xf1 25.♞xf1 (25.♜xg7 ♜c4 26.♚d4 ♜e5∞) 25...♜c4 26.♚g5 ♚xg5 27.♕xg5 ♞f7 28.♜d8=.

24...♕d3 25.♚b3 ♙c4 26.♚c2 ♕d3 27.♚c1!?



Position after: 27.♚c1!?

White refuses a draw, not without reason.

27...♙xf1 28.♚xf1 ♜d3?

Flashy, but wrong. After the modest 28...♕f6! the position remains unclear.

29. ♖xg7!

29. ♖xd3?? ♗xf2+ 30. ♔h1 ♕xa1—

29...h5

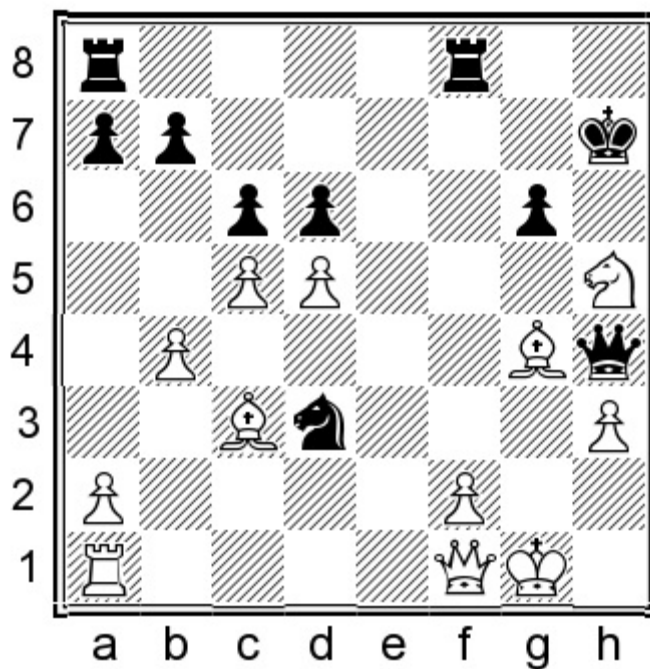
A) 29... ♔xg7 30. ♖xd3+—

B) 29... ♖xf2 30. ♖e6 ♖xg4 31. ♖xf8+—

30. ♕c3?

Of course with both players in time trouble it is very difficult to avoid mistakes in such situations. The winning move is 30. ♖xh5! gxh5 31. ♖xd3 hxg4 32. ♕c3++—.

30... ♔h7 31. ♖xh5



Position after: 31. ♖xh5

Not as strong now as on the previous move.

31... ♖xf2 32. ♖g2

A) 32. ♖f6+ ♖xf6 33. ♕xf6 ♗xf6=

B) 32. ♕e1 gxh5 33. ♕xf2 ♗g5 34. ♖d3+ ♔g8 35. ♕e3 ♗g7 36. ♕d4 ♗g5=

32... ♖xg4

32... gxh5?? 33. ♕f5++—

33.hxg4 ♖ae8!

33...gxf5? 34.♖e4+ ♔h6 35.♖e6+ ♔h7 (35...♔g5 36.♙d2+-) 36.♖d7+-

34.cxd6 gxf5 35.♖c2+ ½-½

The opponents agreed to a draw in view of perpetual check: 35.♖c2+ ♔h6 36.♖d2+ ♔g6 37.♖d3+ ♔h6=.