

MASTERING CHECKMATES



NEIL McDONALD

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Neil McDonald

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A BATSFORD CHESS BOOK

Contents

	Introduction	5
1	Back Rank Mate	7
2	The Magnificent Seventh	21
3	Mating the Fleeing King	30
4	Mate from the Front with Queen and Rooks	39
5	Knight and Queen against the Fianchetto Position	47
6	The Greek Gift and Other Queen and Knight Mates	60
7	The Deadly Diagonal: Queen and Bishop Mates	73
8	The Killer Pawn	85
9	Rook and Minor Piece Mates	105
10	Mates with the Minor Pieces	119
	Solutions to Puzzles	132

Introduction

The aim of this book is to give you lots of ideas about how to carry out a checkmating attack on the opponent's king. By presenting all the typical mating patterns, it will enable you to spot what moves have the capacity to be strong in any attacking scenario.

Naturally it is by no means easy to decide what a good move looks like. Choose a move—however ridiculous—and I can tell you a game or position where it was the best move. Nevertheless, if you have a pawn on f6 right in the heart of the enemy kingside, with the black king sitting on g8, then certain queen moves have the capacity to be strong—notably ♖g7 has a good chance of being mate!

The exact positions given in this book will never come up in your games and lots of the factors will be different; even changing the position of one piece might stop the idea working. But knowledge of the basic ideas will allow you to make imaginative decisions.

Once you have decided what moves might be good, you then have to calculate to see if they work. Calculation in chess is about turning speculation—or *guesses*—

into wonderful triumphs. You ask yourself 'what if I do that?' or 'will this idea work?' Lots of your guesses will be failures, but sometimes you will come up with a bullseye—a wonderful, unexpected and beautiful idea that gives you creative satisfaction.

In an ideal world before making a sacrifice you would either calculate everything right up to a checkmate or have enough experience—and confidence!—to be able to say to yourself 'the opponent's king is wide open if I make the sacrifice; it cannot possibly survive the attack!' But even the best players are neither infallible calculators of variations nor blessed with perfect intuition. In reality these two methods are usually blended into a statement such as the following: 'well, I've *checked* the variations *as well as I can* and it *feels* like the sacrifice is strong. Let's do it!'

Computers don't make guesses, they dredge up every possibility in the position and along with the sand and seaweed and old boots and mud and fish they will haul up a clam with a diamond inside it. There is no creativity in this process, they cannot fail to discover the diamond if they look at everything. So where is the beauty?

6 Introduction

In contrast, there is something mystical, beyond logic about guessing. We call it a hunch or our sixth sense or intuition—when it works!

Which brings us to the next point. Once you have dared to dream that there is a mate in three, that all the requirements fall in place, and feel the glow of excitement at your incredible idea ... stop! You must check it. In fact you must be absolutely ruthless in analysing it.

Players that never guess will never come up with anything original or clever; they might play a decent game, by applying the logic of chess to build up their position sensibly and rationally; but they will miss the brilliant coup.

On the other hand some players are full of imagination but they lack the discipline to put these guesses

under the microscope and reject them if they don't work. It becomes wishful thinking; unsound but exciting attacks dominate.

In post-mortems between players after the game, most of the time is spent looking at exciting, quirky possibilities rather than musing on strategy. Sacrificing a piece goes against everything we have learnt about looking after our pieces, so when it becomes a possibility it is thrilling. That is what interests us: the magic of making an assumption based on the data available and finding, almost unbelievably, that it works!

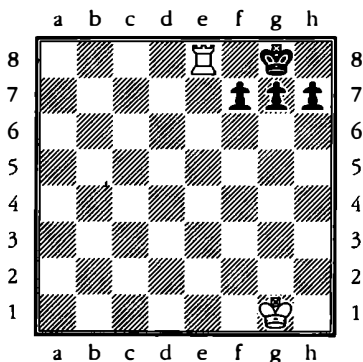
This book doesn't tell you what moves to play, but it tells you what ideas you will need to succeed. I wish you the best of luck in developing a checkmating style.

1 Back Rank Mate

This is one of the most common checkmating patterns. It is seen in tournaments of all levels, from those involving beginners to the world elite. It is especially valuable as a counter attacking weapon since a player lunging forwards can often miss the unobtrusive threat to his first rank.

Indeed, a back rank mate is one of the most dangerous of mating themes as it often comes without any fanfare. When a player is trying to mate on g7 with a queen and knight it is usually obvious to the defender; but a back rank mate is sometimes well concealed.

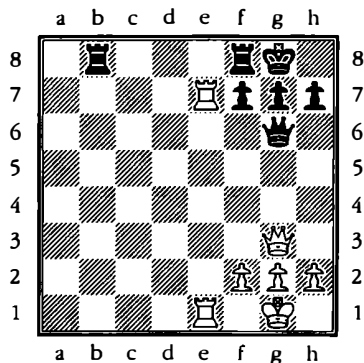
Here is the best known example.



The black king is in checkmate as his own pawns prevent him escaping to the second rank.

Setting up the back rank mate pattern

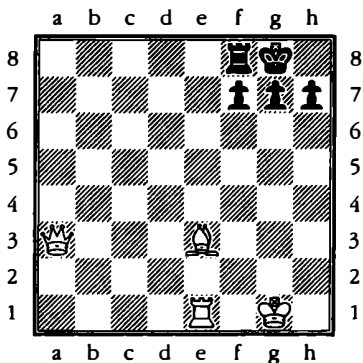
First Example



White can upset the defence of Black's back rank with 1 ♖xb8! when after 1... ♗xb8 2 ♕e8+ ♗xe8 3 ♗xe8 is mate. Note that if Black saw the mate and tried to play on a rook down with 1... h6, then White has another instant mate with 2 ♗xf8+! ♔xf8 3 ♕e8.

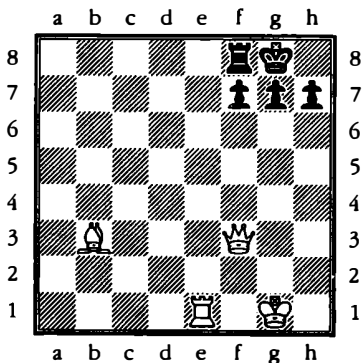
8 Back Rank Mate

Second Example



Here is another mating pattern of which the defender has to beware. White to move softens up the defences with 1 ♖xf7+! ♜xf7 2 ♜e8 mate. The black rook was unable to carry out its dual role of defending the back rank and the f7 square.

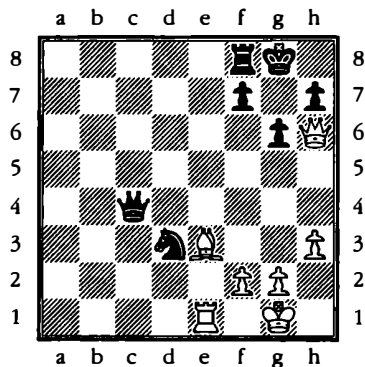
Third Example



Sometimes a weak back rank can lead to a disaster on the f7 square.

White mates with 1 ♖xf7+! ♜xf7 2 ♜e8 mate. The black rook was unable to carry out its dual role of defending the back rank and the f7 square.

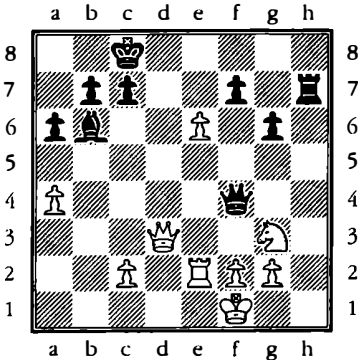
Fourth Example



Black has played g7-g6, making a hole for his king, but that doesn't stop him being mated by rook and bishop after 1 ♖xf8+! ♜xf8 2 ♜h6+ ♜g8 3 ♜e8 mate.

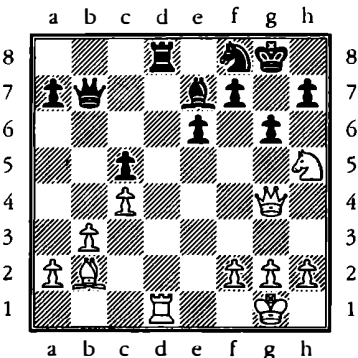
Now let's look at how the back rank mate works in practice. It can take many forms in addition to the familiar f7/g7/h7 pawn coffin, but the basic mechanism is always the same.

Tiviakov - Forintos
San Giorgio 1994



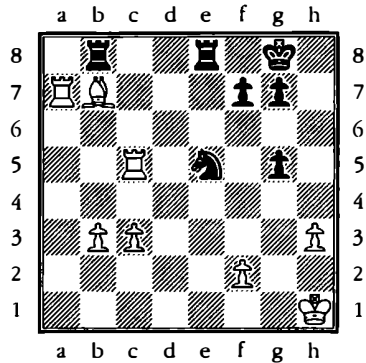
Here Black exploited the weak back rank with 26...♖xg3! when if 27 fxg3 it is mate all the same after 27...♗h1 as the black bishop is controlling the f2 square. Tiviakov tried 27 ♖e3 but resigned after 27...♗h1+ 28 ♕e2 ♖g4+ 0-1

Xie Jun - Seirawan
China 2002



The former Women's World Champion has a penchant for the attack. Here she played 23 ♘f6+ ♕xf6 24 ♖xf6, when her control of the long dark diagonal looks ominous for the black king. However, there came 24...♗e4!! and White resigned as she is mated after 25 ♗xe4 ♗xd1+ or else loses at least a rook. Note that if 25 ♗xd8 it would be a mistake to play 25...♗xg4 as 26 ♖e7 allows White to fight on strongly; but 25...♗e1 mate will do very nicely.

Topalov - Morozevich
Cannes 2002

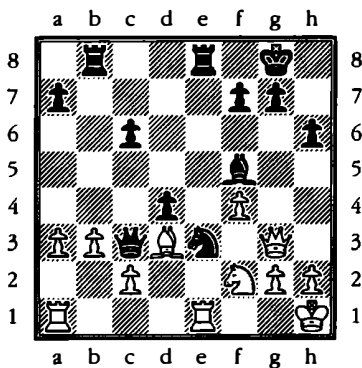


Back rank tricks can fool the strongest players as the following extract shows. Alexander Morozevich has a fantastic eye for tactics but in this position he played 31...♗e7 pinning and apparently disabling the white bishop. But after 32 ♗b5 ♘d3? there came 33 ♖e4!!

10 Back Rank Mate

Only a pin on the king is absolute! The bishop bounds free and Black sees to his horror that he is mated after 33... Exa7 34 Exb8 or more slowly after 33... Exb5 34 Ea8+ or 33... Qxf2+ 34 Qg2 Exb5 35 Ea8+ . I suspect that having played h7-h6 to make a hole for his king way back at move 13 Morozevich was no longer looking for back rank tricks.

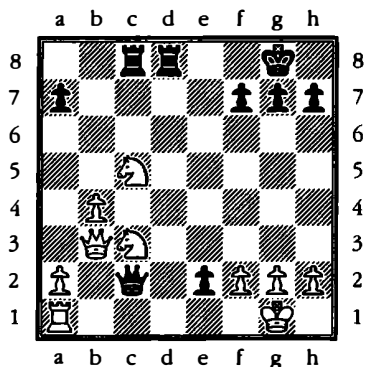
Rozentalis - Adams
Olympiad, Elista 1998



Here White played 30 Qxf5 , no doubt expecting an endgame after 30... Qxf5 31 Exe8+ Exe8 32 Wxc3 dxc3 . Instead there followed 30... Wxe1+!! and White resigned. Posterity doesn't record whether he fell off his chair. After 31 Exe1 Qxf5 32 Exe8+ Exe8 there is no way for White to deal with the double threat to his queen and the back rank, for example if 33 Wd3 Ee1+ 34 Wf1 Exf1 is mate.

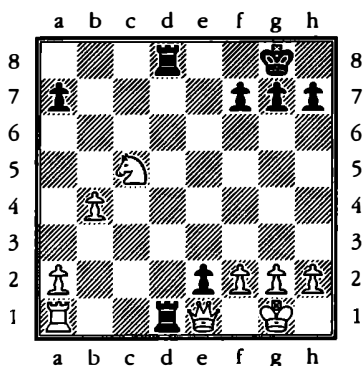
A pawn on the seventh rank often introduces threats of a back rank mate, as it is only one square from being a queen or equally a rook.

Kir.Georgiev - Gulko
Saint John 1988



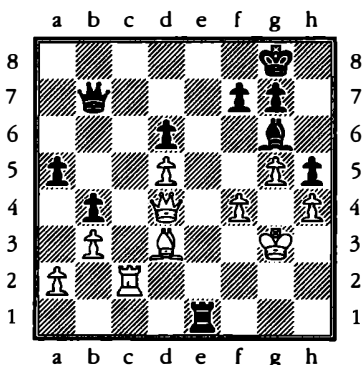
With the d1 square covered three times White might have thought he was safe from a back rank mate. After 25... Wd2 White could fight on by giving up a knight with 26 Qxe2 . Instead Gulko found 25... Ed1+! 26 Exd1 Wxc3! and White resigned as Black threatens to queen and he is mated after 27 Wxc3 exd1 promoting to a queen or rook, while 27 Wb1 exd1=W+ 28 Wxd1 Wxb4 is entirely lost.

Gulko played the most accurate series of moves, but such is the strength of the passed pawn that even if he had played less incisively he would still have won, for example 25... Wxc3 26 Wxc3 Ed1+ 27 We1 (the only move) 27... Ecd8!



and notwithstanding White's huge material advantage he has no good reply to the threat of 28... Rxa1 29 Wxa1 Rd1+ followed by queening and mating. He can only limp on in a lost endgame after say 28 f3 Rxa1 29 cf2 Rxe1 30 cfel .

Grischuk - Sokolov Olympiad, Bled 2002



You might not think that Black's back rank is weak here, as the queen is defending c8 against the white rook and besides there is a

bolt hole for the king on h7. Nonetheless, 39 f5! was lethal as if the bishop retreats to h7 it becomes the equivalent of the pawn on h7 in our standard back rank mate scenario. Then the black queen can be crowded out from defending c8 by a sham queen sacrifice that is well worth remembering: 39... gh7 40 Wa7! If then 40... Wxa7 41 Rc8+ and mate follows, or similarly 40... Re7 41 Wxb7 Rxb7 42 Rc8 mate.

In the game Sokolov tried for a swindle to exploit the rather exposed state of the white king:

39... $\text{Wd7!?$ 40 fxc6 Rh1 41 gxf7+ cf8

A simple answer to 41... cfxf7 is 42 gf5 Wxf5 43 Rf2 Rh3+ 44 cfg2 .

42 Rh2 Rd1 43 Re2 Rh1 44 Re8+!

There is an old saying that 'patzer sees a check, patzer gives a check'. It is true that inexperienced players often waste valuable time with needless checks, as if sticking to another dubious adage: 'always give a check, it might be mate!' As if in support of this assertion, the future GM Paul Motwani recounts that his first game of chess ever, against another absolute beginner, went 1 e4 d6 2 gf5+ and here the game finished, with both players convinced that Black was checkmated!

On the other hand, when it comes to combinations if you see a line of play with checks you should always

12 Back Rank Mate

give it preference over an equally good looking line without checks, as it cuts down the opponent's options. In other words it is a more forcing line of play than a sequence without checks, as it gives the opponent fewer chances to counterattack.

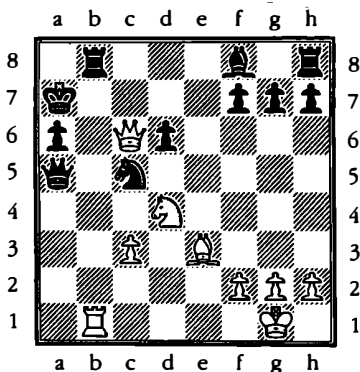
Here White is a piece and a pawn up, but he could still have lost if he had played the unforcing 44 ♙g6?? with the threat of 45 ♖e8 , as Black gets in first with 44... ♚h3+ 45 ♕f4 (or 45 ♕f2 ♜f1 mate) 45... ♚g4+ 46 ♕e3 ♜h3+ and White loses his queen.

The line Grischuk chooses in the game does everything with check.

44... ♕xf7 45 ♙g6+! ♕xg6 46 ♚e4+

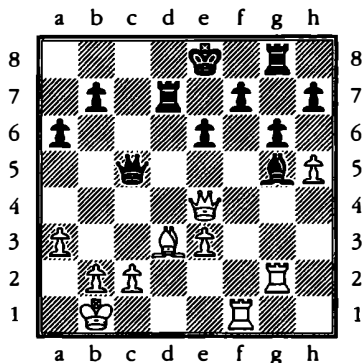
and Sokolov resigned as after 46... ♕f7 (or else 46... ♚f5 47 ♖e6+ wins the queen) 47 g6+ ♕f6 48 ♜f8+ he is mated next move.

Golubev - Mantovani Biel 1992



Black's back rank appears to be adequately defended, and he has an extra rook ... However after 26 ♚xc5+! White was winning since if 26... ♚xc5 27 ♘c6+ ♕a8 (the black queen is pinned) 28 ♜xb8 is mate. The black rook was defending every important square on the b file and first rank apart from b8. It is worth remembering that a piece doesn't control the square it stands on!

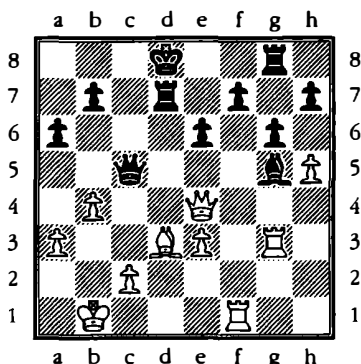
Adams - Sasikiran Olympiad, Bled 2002



Here black back rank looks perfectly safe. But besides being a highly gifted strategist, Michael Adams is also adept at spotting tactical nuances. Here he played the quiet 28 ♜g3 , which defends e3 and waits for his opponent to fall for the trap.

Sasikiran—concerned at White's potential pressure on f7 and keen to evacuate his king to the queenside

—duly fell for it with 28...♔d8?? when Adams pounced with the unexpected 29 b4!!



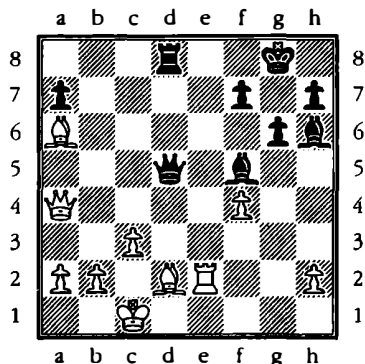
Now out of the blue the back rank becomes a problem for Black as he is mated after 29...♚e7 30 ♚e5! ♔h4—or any other move that saves the bishop—31 ♚b8 is mate!

So Black had no choice but to play 29...♚d5, the only other queen move that keeps the bishop defended. However, it led to a lost endgame as the white rook crashed through on f7: 30 ♚xd5 ♔xd5 (forced, or else the bishop is lost) 31 ♔xf7 ♔h4 32 ♔g4 ♔xh5 33 ♔xb7 ♔e8 34 ♔c4 ♔d8 35 ♔c8 ♔d5 36 ♔xh7 ♔d7 37 ♔h6 ♔f7 38 ♔xa6 and Black's pawn structure having collapsed on the queenside White eventually ground out a win with his passed pawns.

In the next position in order to find the winning combination for Black you have to look at the whole board: not just glance down the

open diagonal leading to h1 or forwards at d1. It is the bishop on f5, taking away the b1 and c2 squares from the white king, that is central to the combination.

Adams - Fedorov
Wijk aan Zee 2001



27...♔xf4!!

When you have the ascendancy on squares of one colour—here it is control of the light square complex on b1, c2 and h1—the winning breakthrough occurs on a square of the other colour.

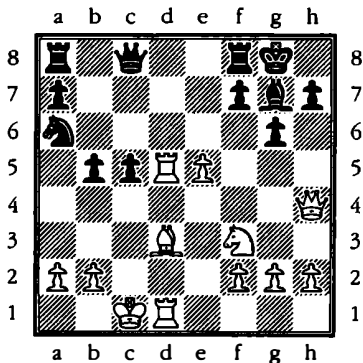
The first point is that 28 ♔xf4 ♚h1+ mates. Meanwhile if 28 ♚xf4 disaster strikes in a completely different direction: 28...♚xa2! and there is no good answer to 29...♚a1 or 29...♚b1 mate. For example if 29 ♔e4 Black can win easily with 29...♔xe4 30 ♚xe4 ♚xa6, but much more effective is the showy 29...♚a1+ 30 ♔c2 ♚a4+!! ♔c1 ♔xe4.

14 Back Rank Mate

In the game Adams tried 28 ♖e8+ but was dropping material after 28...♟g7! 29 ♜xf4 (if 29 ♖xd8 ♙xd2+ 30 ♟d1 ♜xd8 wins a piece) 29...♞xe8 30 ♙c4 ♜h1+ 31 ♙f1 ♟g8 and the exchange down he resigned.

Next up is a great fighting game with tactical themes that range across several chapters in this book.

Beliavsky - Kasparov Belfort 1988



A battle royale began after 18...♖b4! 19 ♙xg6! fxg6!

The alternative 19...hxg6 forms one of the puzzles in the chapter on the Greek Gift and other queen and knight mates.

20 ♖d7

Threatening 21 ♜e7 with a quick mate on the seventh rank. Black's reply is therefore forced.

20...♜e8 21 ♖e7

Now Black appears to be in desperate straits, for if the queen moves, say 21...♜c8, then 22 ♖dd7 leads to a massacre on the seventh rank. But Kasparov had ready an unexpected defence:

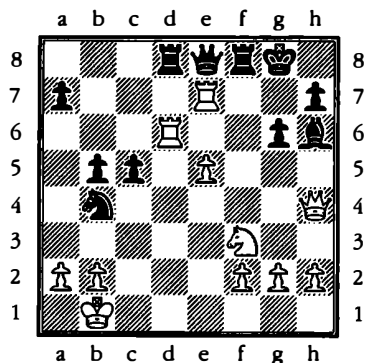
21...♙h6+! 22 ♟b1

Of course if 22 ♜xh6 ♜xe7.

22...♖d8!

The back rank outwits the magnificent seventh (see the next chapter!). White is mated if he takes the queen, while 23 ♖xd8 ♜xd8 leaves him defenceless against the threat of 24...♜d1 mate or if need be 24...♜d3+.

23 ♖d6



23...♜c6!!

A brilliant coup. White is mated on d1 if he takes the queen or in the corner if he takes the bishop: 24 ♜xh6 ♜e4+ 25 ♟a1 ♟c2+ 26 ♟b1 ♟a3+ 27 ♟a1 ♜b1: a queen and knight attacking mechanism seen in the chapter on smothered mate.

24 a3 ♖xd6 25 exd6 ♜xd6!

The only move but sufficient to win. If instead 25...♘d5? 26 ♜xh6 ♘xe7—hoping for 27 dxe7 ♜e4+ picking up the e7 pawn—27 ♘g5! and we are in the queen and knight mate chapter!

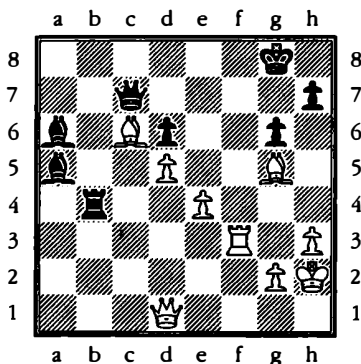
26 axb4

If 26 ♜xh6 Black could take the rook but simplest is 26...♜d3+! (the intermediate check cuts out the defence 26...♜d1+? 27 ♜c1) 27 ♔a1 ♜d1+ and mate follows.

26...cxb4 27 ♜e4 b3 0-1

Too gruesome to contemplate is 28 ♜e2 ♜a6! 29 ♜e6+ (or else mate on a2) 29...♜xe6 30 ♖xe6 ♖c8 (threatening mate on c1) 31 ♖e1 ♖c2 32 ♖f1 ♔g7 and White can only watch as his position is eaten up.

Karjakin - Shirov
Benidorm 2002



Karjakin exploited his opponent's weak back rank as follows:

35 ♔h6! ♖b8

The only move.

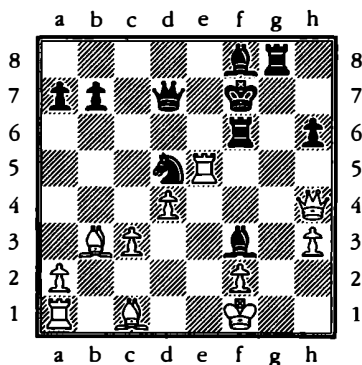
Now Karjakin sees that if he gets his queen to f6 he will be winning. There would be the threat of ♜f8+! ♖xf8; ♖xf8 mate. Black wouldn't be able to reinforce his back rank, say with ♜d8, as then ♜g7 mates. However, if he plays 36 ♜d4 then Black can reply 36...♜e7, keeping the white queen out of f6. He found a way to prevent the ♜e7 defence with

36 ♜a1!

The queen gets to f6 as 36...♜e7 drops the bishop on a5.

36...♔e2 37 ♖f2 ♔d3 38 ♜f6 1-0

Sulskis - Seirawan
Olympiad, Bled 2002



White is a piece for two pawns down but he has attacking chances against the black king. However, the white king is in danger as well.

16 Back Rank Mate

Not only does Black have an extra piece, but even more importantly he has every piece active, whilst White still has a rook slumbering on a1. Seirawan therefore decided to strike immediately to exploit his considerable advantage in firepower.

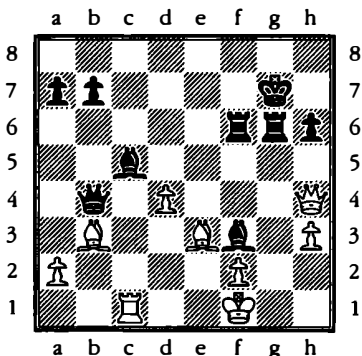
28...♖b5+!

There is a tendency when material up to play defensively and hope to win 'on points'. Seirawan knows better. It is ironic that he entices Sulskis to play c3-c4, which looks like the sort of attacking move he should be happy to play, but in fact it creates more mating chances against the white than the black king!

29 c4 ♖b4 30 ♜e3

Giving up a further exchange leaves him a rook down, but if 30 cxd5 ♖b5+ 31 ♖e1 ♜b4+ 32 ♜d2 ♜g1 is mate!

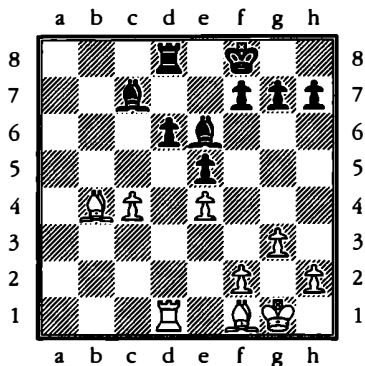
30...♟xe3+ 31 ♜xe3 ♜gg6 32 ♜c1 ♟g7 33 c5 ♜xc5!



34 ♜c4

Since 34 ♜xc5 ♜g1+! 35 ♟xg1 ♖e1+ 36 ♟h2 ♖h1+ 37 ♟g3 ♖g2 is another mate of the wrong kind for White he might as well resign. He did so after 34...♜d6 35 ♜d3 ♜h2 36 ♜xh6+ ♜xh6 37 ♖g5+ ♜hg6 0-1

Mnatsakanian - Fominyh Katowice 1993



White showed some ingenuity in turning what looks like a completely drawn position into a losing one. The obvious move is 28 c5 to exchange off the last of the queenside pawns. Instead he played 28 ♜g2? with the idea that after 28...♜xc4 29 ♜c1 wins a bishop. But instead there came 28...♜b8! when White suddenly realised that after 29 ♜xd6+ ♜xd6 30 ♜xd6 ♜b1+ 31 ♜f1 ♜h3 he is mated! (note that this is even better than 31...♜xc4, when White could limp on with 32 ♟g2). Nevertheless, he could avoid

disaster with 29 ♙d2! when 29... ♜xc4? 30 ♞c1 would win the piece safely, as if 30... ♙e6 31 ♞xc7 ♞b1+ White can block with 32 ♞c1 . Instead he completed the road to ruin with 29 ♙e1? ♜xc4 30 ♞c1 ♙a6 . Now 31 ♞xc7 ♞b1 regains the bishop and leaves Black with an extra pawn. The game ended

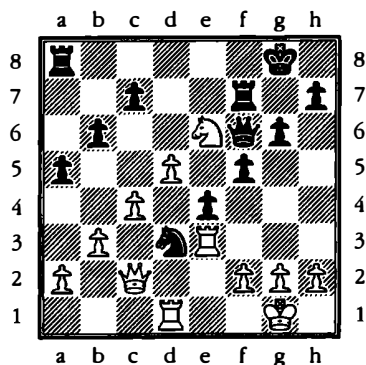
31 ♙f1 ♙xf1 32 ♚xf1 ♞b7 33 ♙d2 ♚e7 34 ♙e3 ♚e6 35 g4 g6 36 ♞a1 ♞b4 37 ♞c1 ♙d8 38 f3 ♞b3 0-1

I leave the reader to decide why the game ended here as there is still some fight left in the white position. Maybe White lost on time, or perhaps he went to play 39 ♚e2 before noticing that 39... ♞xe3+ 40 ♚xe3 ♙g5+ wins a piece.

Who gets in first?

As was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, it is often the case that a player falls for a back rank mate because he has become carried away with his own attacking ideas and has forgotten that his own king might need a bolt hole.

In the next position, based on a game played at Loughborough, 2001, chances are approximately even: the two knights cancel each other out. Now White to move should have prepared a strategy to undermine Black's centre, perhaps with an immediate 25 f3! ?



Instead he came up with the plan of attacking along the h file. However, this leads to the white pieces becoming one by one decentralised: not a good state of affairs when the centre is still open.

25 ♚d2 c6 26 ♞h3? cxd5 27 cxd5 ♚e5 28 ♚h6 ♞d7 29 ♙g5

White's attack reaches its high point and there is the threat of 30 ♙xh7 . Nevertheless, it is intolerable that the rook on d1 is expected to look after the first rank, second rank and centre while the other pieces attack! It is no wonder that the poor rook proves unequal to this huge task.

29... ♚f4!

Attacking f2 and stopping the threat to h7, for in reply Black can exchange queens then capture the knight.

30 ♚h4

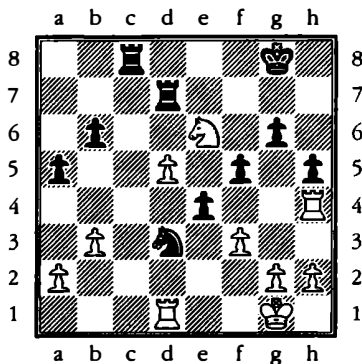
Offering an exchange of queens is an admission of failure, but if 30 ♞f1 then 30... ♞c8 31 g3 ♚d2 32

18 Back Rank Mate

♔g2 ♖c1 33 ♜xc1 ♜xf2+ 34 ♔h1
 ♜xc1 and there is no way to prevent ♜f1 mate. All the white pieces are uselessly placed on the h file.

30...h5 31 ♖e6 ♜xh4 32 ♜xh4
 ♜c8 33 f3

A desperate move as otherwise Black will simply capture the d5 pawn.



33...e3!

A powerful response. Black defends the knight by leaving it en prise, for if 34 ♜xd3 ♜c1 mates.

34 ♔f1 ♜xd3 35 ♔e2

If 35 ♜c4 then 35...♜e8 is a simple reply.

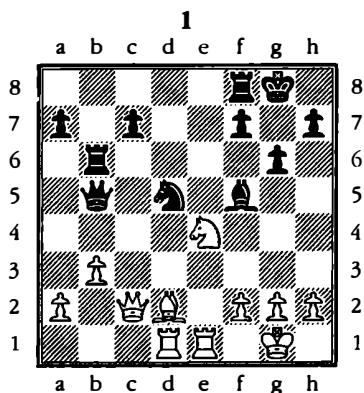
35...f4 36 ♜xf4

Losing a piece, but it is in any case hopeless. If instead 36 ♜xd3 ♜c2+ 37 ♔e1 ♜xd3 wins.

36...♜c2+ 37 ♔xe3 ♜xf4 38 ♜xd5 ♜xd5+

and Black has an extra piece.

Puzzles

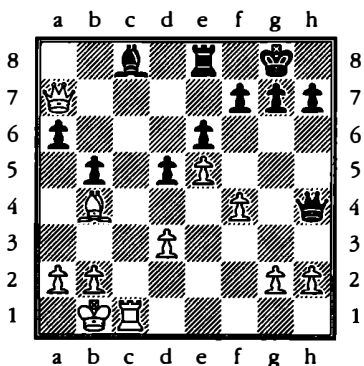


White to play

White played 1 ♔h6. What happens if Black responds 1...♜e8 increasing the pressure on the pinned white knight?

2

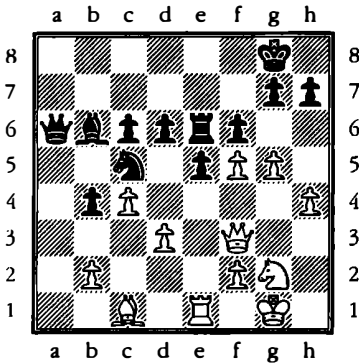
Rudolf - Moritz
 Rostock 2002



White to play

The difference in value between the bishops gives White a decisive positional advantage, but how after 22 g3 ♖xh2 did he clinch the game?

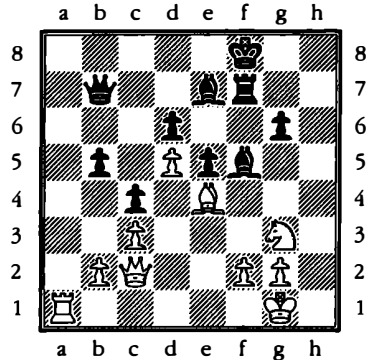
3
Movsesian - Godena
Olympiad, Elista 1998



Black to play

The rook on e6 is attacked. Not liking the look of 28...♖e8 29 ♖xc6, Godena decided that the lesser evil was 28...e4, offering the pawn immediately, when if 29 dxe4 ♖e8 he maintains a solid formation. Was this a good decision by Black?

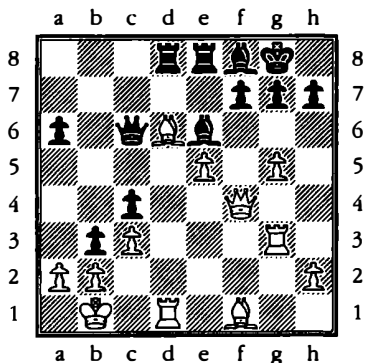
4
Adams - Giorgadze
Groningen 1997



Adams had been exerting positional pressure on his opponent throughout the game but here he gave up the d5 pawn with 39 ♖xf5 gxf5 40 ♘xf5 ♖xd5, when Black had a strong centre. What was the tactical justification for Adams' play, or had he just gone mad?

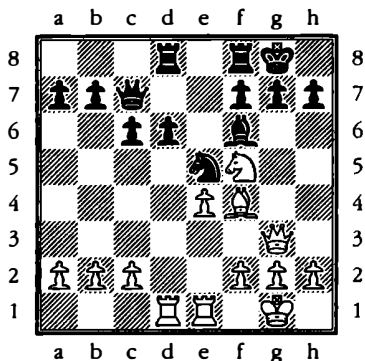
Black has a strong centre, but don't forget the white knight hovering menacingly over his king! It is also a good idea not to forget that this chapter is on back rank mates...

5
Ljubojević - Kasparov
 Belfort 1988



How did Kasparov break through White's defences?

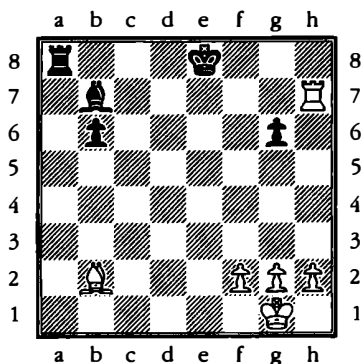
6



White to play

The question here is whether White can safely play 17 ♞xd6 —investigate back rank tricks for both players!

7



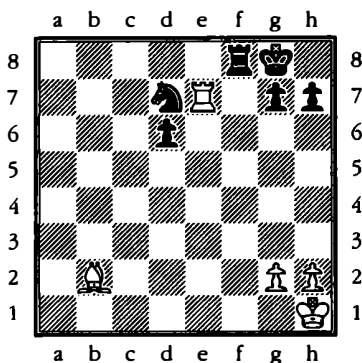
White to play

Can White safely take the bishop?

2 The Magnificent Seventh

Many a catastrophe in the endgame has been suffered due to an underestimation of the power of the rook on the seventh rank. As this chapter shows the rook can be equally deadly in the middlegame if it breaks into the king's defences from the side.

Mating pattern one: rook supported by bishop —the windmill



The rook on the seventh rank supported by the bishop can wreak a fatal discovered check on the g7 square. Here 1 Rxd7? loses to mate on f1, but 1 Rg7+ Kh8 2 Rxd7+ has bought time to snatch the knight

with check. Note that 2 Rg3+? allows the defence 2... Ke5!

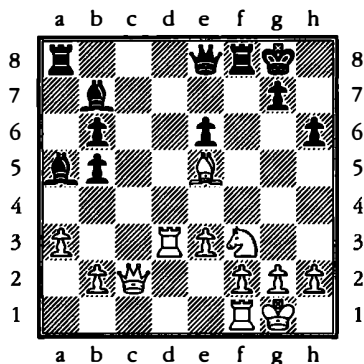
2... Kg8

If 2... Rf6 3 Kxf6+ is useless for Black.

3 Rg7+ Kh8 4 Rg6+ or any other available square on the g file 4... Rf6 5 Kxf6 Black is mated.

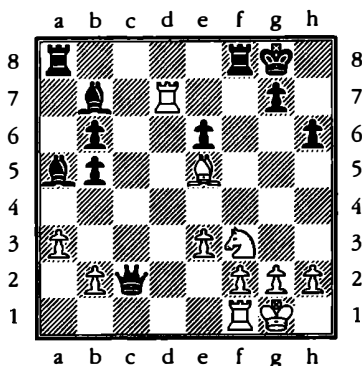
The action of taking a piece with discovered check from the bishop followed by checking again with the rook and then giving another discovered check is sometimes referred to as a 'Windmill' in view of the repetitive nature of the combination.

Bareev - Adams Wijk aan Zee 2002



22 The Magnificent Seventh

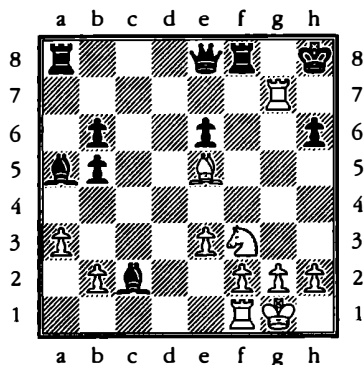
Here 20...♖g6 looks tempting, with the threat of 21...♙xf3. But Bareev had prepared the crushing reply 21 ♖d7!! when the full force of the windmill is seen after 21...♗xc2:



22 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 23 ♖xb7+ ♔g8 (also hopeless is 23...♞f6 24 ♙xf6+ ♔g8 25 b4 when White emerges with a rook and two pieces for the queen; alternatively the attacking 25 ♘e5! also looks lethal) 24 ♞g7+ (back again to win some more booty) 24...♔h8 25 ♞c7+ ♔g8 26 ♞xc2 and White has recouped his queen offer with a piece as a bonus.

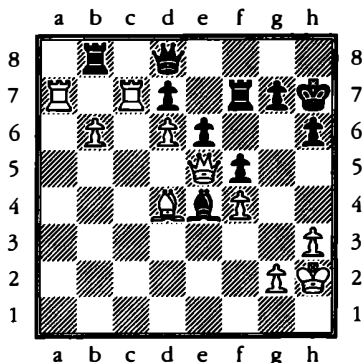
So in the game Black played 20...♙e4, pinning the rook and maintaining the idea of 21...♗g6, when there would be the double threat of ♙xd3 and ♙xf3. Nevertheless, the response was still 21 ♖d7! offering the queen. If now 21...♗xd7 22 ♗xe4 leaves Black

the exchange up, but he would be facing the threat of 23 b4, snuffing out the bishop on a5. So Adams decided to call it a draw with 21...♙xc2 22 ♞xg7+ ♔h8 ½-½



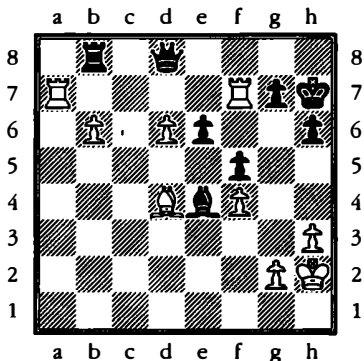
If they had played on then 23 ♞f7+ ♔g8 24 ♞g7+ is a draw without any fuss. However, if Bareev wanted to give Black the chance to lose then 23 ♖b7+ is the compliant move, when 23...♔g8 draws, but 23...♞f6? aiming to give the king the f8 square is a terrible mistake: 24 ♙xf6+ ♔g8 25 ♞g7+ ♔f8 26 ♘e5! (with the threat of 27 ♘d7+ picking up the queen for the knight, so the black queen has to flee) 26...♗c8 27 ♘d7+ ♔e8 28 ♞e7+ ♔d8 29 ♘e5! (back again and this time the threat of mate on f7 forces the queen to the edge) 29...♗a6 30 ♞c1! and Black has no moves as if 30...♞c8 or 30...♙e4 then 31 ♘f7 is mate.

Kasparov - Vallejo Pons
Linares 2002



Kasparov realised that conquering the g7 square would lead to a quick win and so he played 48 ♖xe6! offering his queen. Now Black lost quickly after 48...♗h4 49 ♗xf7 ♗xf4+ 50 ♔g1 1-0 — there are no more good checks and he is a rook down. So why was Vallejo so unwilling to accept Kasparov's queen?

After 48...dxe6 49 ♖xf7 Black has various defensive tries.



Ignore the threat.

I recall some advice that the best response to a threat is to ignore it. Here 49...♗xd6 is suitably laid-back, but the black king perishes after 50 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 51 ♖h7+ ♔g8 52 ♖h8 mate.

Give up the queen for a rook.

Alas, any attempt to give up the queen will cost a rook as well as Black falls into the familiar windmill after 49...♗g8 50 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 51 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 52 ♖b7+ followed by 53 ♖xb8+.

Run with the king to h5.

In that case he is mated after 49...♔g6 50 ♖xg7+ ♔h5 51 g4+ fxg4 52 hxg4+ ♔h4 53 ♖f2 mate. So even in this line the black king is unable to escape the attentions of the white bishop!

Try to hide the king on h6.

This is a noble attempt to get out of range of White's bishop, but Black is mated after

49...h5 50 ♖xg7+ ♔h6 51 ♖h7+ ♔g6 52 ♖ag7

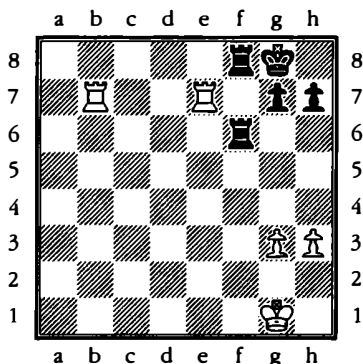
Run with the king towards the centre.

49...♔g8 50 ♖xg7+ ♔f8 51 ♖af7+ ♔e8

Now White can win the queen with 52 d7+ ♗xd7 53 ♖xd7, when it will be mate in a couple of moves. But even deadlier is 52 ♖c5! introducing the threat of 53 d7+ ♖xd7 54 ♖f8 mate. Black then has to give up his queen with 52...♗d7 just to stave off mate for a couple of moves.

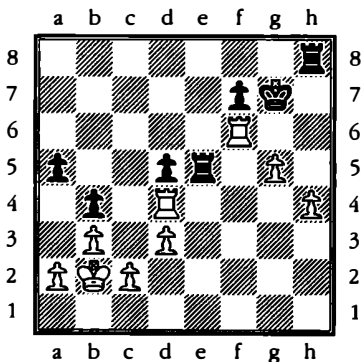
Mating pattern two: doubled rooks

You must always judge the position very carefully before letting your opponent's rooks have free rein on your second or first rank.



Whoever is to move mates as follows:

1 $\text{R}xg7+$ $\text{K}h8$ 2 $\text{R}xh7+$ $\text{K}g8$ 3 $\text{R}bg7$ mate or 1... $\text{R}f1+$ 2 $\text{K}g2$ $\text{R}8f2$ mate.



I learnt about the power of rooks on the seventh rank the hard way. Here is a position I reached as White at 12 years old. With two extra pawns, White should win easily if he defends his second rank with 43 $\text{R}f2$ or—a bit more complicated—goes after the d pawn with 43 $\text{R}d6!$ when 43... $\text{R}c8$ 44 $\text{R}6xd5$ $\text{R}e2$ 45 $\text{R}c4!$ removes all danger.

Instead I was oblivious to any danger and went grabbing more pawns with

43 $\text{R}a6??$ $\text{R}c8!$

Now it is possible that White is already losing as there is no way to prevent 44... $\text{R}e2$ followed by a massacre on c2. The white rooks are simply unable to defend the vital c2 square. It turns out that the white king—which looks very safe on b2—is actually in terminal danger.

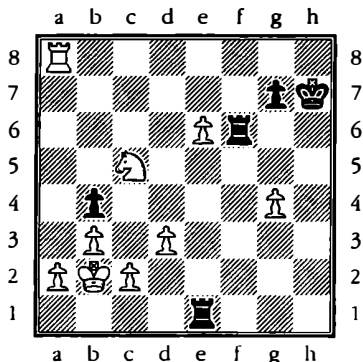
44 $\text{R}xa5$ $\text{R}e2$ 45 $\text{R}f4$

There is no way out for the white king. If 45 $\text{K}c1$ $\text{R}cxc2+$ 46 $\text{K}b1$ (*it's the same old story after 46 $\text{K}d1$ $\text{R}ed2+$ 47 $\text{K}e1$ $\text{R}h2$ 48 $\text{K}d1$ $\text{R}cg2$) 46... $\text{R}b2+$ 47 $\text{K}c1$ $\text{R}ec2+$ 48 $\text{K}d1$ $\text{R}g2!$ Note the way Black has pushed the white king out of contact with either rook, so that he menaces both 49... $\text{R}b1+$ and 49... $\text{R}g1+$. All White can do is play 49 $\text{K}c1$, getting back in contact with a rook, but after 49... $\text{R}bf2$ he is out-distanced and will be mated with 50... $\text{R}f1$ or 50... $\text{R}g1$.*

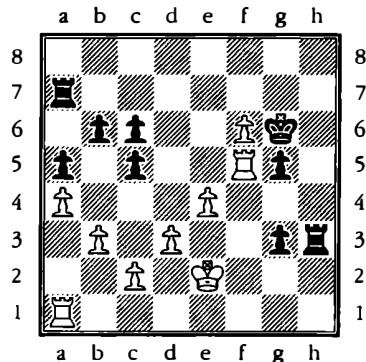
45... $\text{R}exc2+$

Stronger than 45... $\text{R}cxc2+$ as there is an immediate mate.

46 ♖b1 ♜c1+ 47 ♖b2 ♜8c2
mate.



neutralises his opponent's counterplay based on the g3 pawn.



Here is another example based on the previous game which shows the danger to the white king if it is caught on b2 when the black rooks infiltrate. This time the attack on c2 fails after 1...♜f2 2 ♖e4 or 1...♜e2 2 ♖e4, when if necessary White can always defend c2 with ♜c8. Therefore with no less than four pawns for the exchange, you might imagine that White has every chance to win. Not so: Black can attack along the back rank by playing 1...♜ff1! when White cannot avoid being mated. Once again the pawn on b4 proves to be lethal as it takes away the a3 and c3 escape squares from the white king. White is mated after both 2 c4 ♜f2 mate and 2 a3 ♜b1+ 3 ♖a2 ♜a1+ 4 ♖b2 ♜fb1 mate.

This can be done with 39 ♖f3! stopping the pawn advancing and preparing to answer 39...♜f7 with 40 ♜f1, when 40...♜xf7? 41 ♜xf7 ♖xf7 42 ♖g2+ wins a rook.

Instead White played 39 ♜f3? losing vital time, after which the black rooks swung into action:

39...♜ah7 40 ♜g1 ♜h2+ 41 ♖e3 ♜xc2 42 e5?

The passed pawns look marvellous, but meanwhile the white king is getting very short of squares. Here he should bail out with 42 f7 ♜xf7 43 ♜g3 ♜xf3+ 44 ♜xf3 when he might well save the endgame for if 44...♜c3?! 45 e5 and the passed pawn is difficult to stop.

42...♜hh2!

The mate threat on e2 will prove decisive.

43 ♜e1

The only chance was 43 ♖e4 but then 43...♜ce2+ 44 ♜e3 ♜hf2!

The next position was reached in a game between two strong amateurs in 2002. White's connected passed pawns give him every chance to win as long as he

threatening 45...♖f4 mate, when 45 ♜xe2 ♜xe2+ 46 ♕f3 ♜xe5 47 ♜xg3 ♕xf6 is a lost endgame for White.

43...g2 44 f7

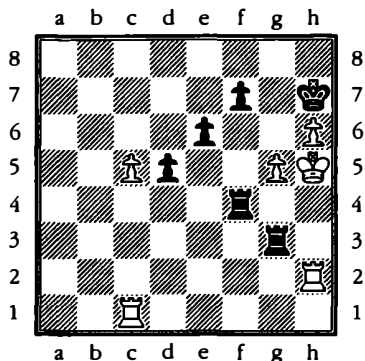
It looks as though White's strategy is going to triumph after all, as the pawn is about to queen. Alas, it all proved a mirage:

44...g1=♚+!

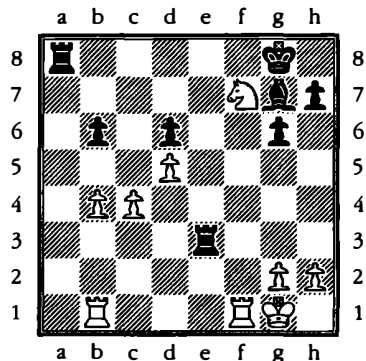
and White resigned as after 45 ♜xg1 it is mate with either rook to e2.

result was creditable for both players with Kasparov winning narrowly 2½-1½. Here is the conclusion to the first game. Having regained his material Kasparov was always odds-on (so to speak!) to outplay Chapman in the endgame. Perhaps White thought his king was well placed on h5, but this square became its tomb after 35...f6! 36 gxf6 ♜xf6 37 ♕h4 ♜g8 when there was no way to prevent mate.

Chapman - Kasparov
Charity Odds Match, London 2001



Velikhanli - Hunt
Olympiad, Bled 2002



In bygone days a strong player would often give an amateur opponent material odds, ranging from a pawn and the first move all the way up to a queen according to the supposed difference in playing strength. This seems to have died out as a regular practice by about 1920. However, in 2001 Terence Chapman, a strong amateur and businessman, took on Kasparov receiving the odds of two pawns. The

Here Black realised that seizing the seventh rank with both rooks was far more important than defending the d6 pawn:

33...♜e2! 34 ♖xd6 ♜aa2 35 ♜fd1 ♜xg2+

When making such a sacrifice it is comforting to know that there is always a perpetual check to fall back on if you suddenly discover that you have missed something.

36 ♖h1 ♜xh2+ 37 ♖g1 ♜ag2+
38 ♖f1 h5!

The black rooks need some extra help to mate the white king. Black's idea is to advance the rook pawn to h3 and then play ♜h1 mate.

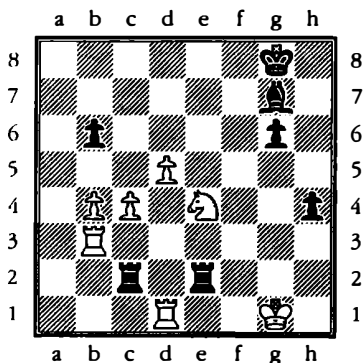
39 ♘e4 h4 40 ♜b3! ♜c2

White was hoping for 40...h3 41 ♜xh3!

41 ♖g1

If 41 d6 ♜h1 mate.

41...♜he2



42 d6

Also after 42 ♘g5 ♙d4+! the entry of the bishop is decisive: 43 ♖f1 (or 43 ♖h1 ♜h2 mate) 43...♜f2+ 44 ♖g1 (this time it is 44 ♖el ♜ce2 mate) 44...♜fd2+ 45 ♖f1 ♜xd1 mate.

42...♙d4+! 43 ♘f2

If 43 ♜xd4 ♜e1 or 43 ♖f1 ♜h2 44 ♜xd4 ♜h1 are both mate.

43...♙xf2+ 44 ♖f1 ♙g3 45 ♜xg3

Or 45 d7 ♜f2+ 46 ♖g1 ♜g2+ 47 ♖h1 (if 47 ♖f1 ♜cf2+ 48 ♖el ♜gl mate) 47...♜h2+ 48 ♖g1 ♜cg2+ 49 ♖f1 ♜h1+ as in the game.

45...hxg3 46 d7

The pawn is about to queen with check. Has White pulled off a swindle?

46...♜f2+ 47 ♖g1 ♜g2+ 48 ♖h1 ♜h2+ 49 ♖g1 ♜cg2+ 50 ♖f1 ♜h1+!

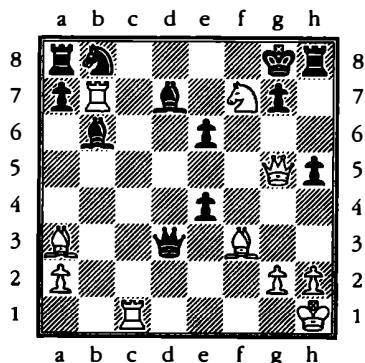
A simple solution. There is no mate but Black will have an extra rook after 51 ♖xg2 ♜xd1. Therefore White resigned.

Other mating scenarios

Naturally there are other mating possibilities with a rook on the seventh rank. Here are three examples.

Veroci - Glaz

Olympiad, Malta 1980



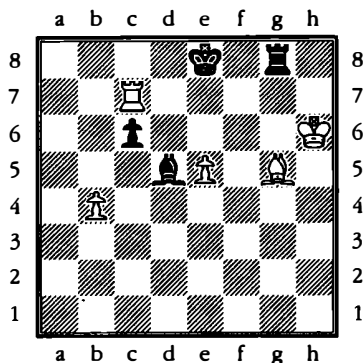
White wants to mate Black on g7 but there are two pieces in the way: the white knight on f7 and the black bishop on d7. Veroci found a way to remove both obstacles with gain of time:

23 ♖e5! ♜xa3 24 ♜c8+!

If now 24...♙xc8 25 ♜xg7 mate, while 24...♚h7 25 ♜xh5 (or 25 ♜g6) is also mate.

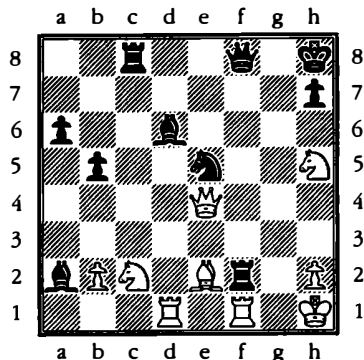
So Black tried the entirely useless 24...♜f8 but resigned after 25 ♜xf8+ ♚xf8 26 ♘g6+ ♚g8 27 ♙xe4 1-0

Ponomariov - Vallejo Pons Olympiad, Bled 2002



Here the black pieces are doing a good job in shutting out the white king. The only way to break the blockade is with 59 e6! when the black king is terrorised with 60 ♜c8 mate. There is no escape except by 59...♙xe6, but this costs a piece after 60 ♜e7+ ♚d8 61 ♜xe6+. White soon exploited his advantage.

Anand - Topalov Monaco 2001



It appears at first glance that there is a hard fight ahead, despite Black's extra pawn. However, after 30...♘d3! Anand resigned straight-away. The discovered attack on h2 is fatal. If 31 ♜xf2 ♘xf2+ wins the queen, while all three ways of capturing the knight fail:

31 ♙xd3 looks a good reply as White is threatening mate himself on h7. But after 31...♜xh2+ 32 ♚g1 ♜g8+! the only move way to ward off mate is 33 ♜g6, stopping one square short of Nirvana on h7, when 33...hxg6 nabs the queen.

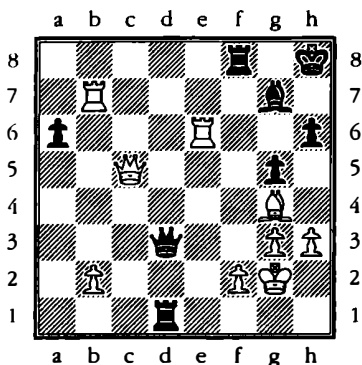
If 31 ♜xd3 then 31...♜xf1+ when the back rank collapses.

Finally 31 ♜xd3 is the most resistant but 31...♜xh2+ 32 ♚g1 ♜g8+ 33 ♘g3 ♙xg3 leaves White facing a decisive discovered check on the g file.

Puzzles

8

Lputian - Spraggett
Olympiad, Bled 2002

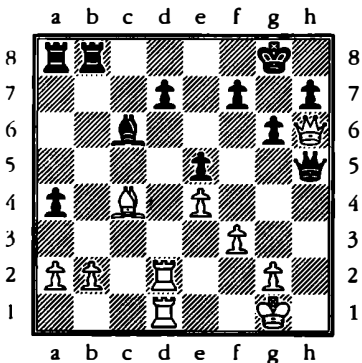


White to play

How did White force the win?

9

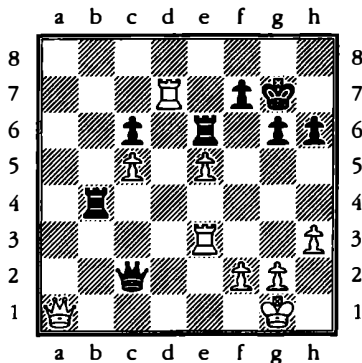
Short - Rogers
Olympiad, Manila 1992



White to play

10

Korchnoi - Kraidman
Beersheba 1978

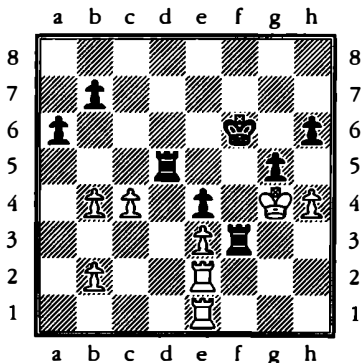


White to play

Black has just played 34...♙c2, threatening to win the white queen with 35...♜b1+. What is the best reply?

11

Sahović - Korchnoi
Biel 1979



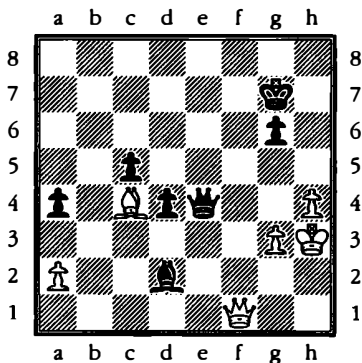
Can you see Black's mating attack?

3 Mating the Fleeing King

Whereas there are standard mating patterns you can call to mind when attacking a castled position, it is harder to find recurring themes in the pursuit of a king across the board. Basically you have either to mate the king or failing that allow it to escape to shelter but at the cost of material or some other irreparable damage to the defender's position.

Beyond this general statement I can only think of one theme that is special to the king hunt and I have made it the subject of this chapter. Namely if the opponent's king has been forced forwards, try to see if you can get your king or pawns, or even both, involved in the attack.

Karpov - M.Gurevich
Reggio Emilia 1991



Karpov forced the king forwards:

75 ♖f7+ ♔h6

The only move as if 75...♔h8 76 ♜g8 mate.

76 ♜f8+ ♔h5

Again the king has to advance as if 76...♔h7 77 ♜g8+ ♔h6 78 ♜h8 mate.

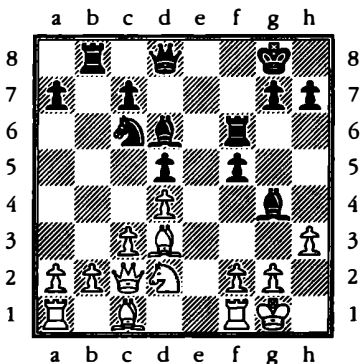
77 ♜h8+ ♕h6

Now, however, it looks as if Black has escaped as there are no more obvious checks and he has a mate threat of his own on h1. But Karpov had realised that his king wasn't a target on h3: it was part of a mating net.

After 78 ♜e5+!! Gurevich resigned as 78...♜xe5 29 g4 is mate. The presence of opposite coloured bishops and Black's weakened king position (besides of course the first move from the diagram!) all played a major part in White's success, but he still wouldn't have won without the help of his pawns and king forming a barrier around the enemy monarch.

If you have sacrificed a piece or more to drive out the enemy king you will need to look for every attacking resource possible to finish off the king, as your army will be numerically inferior to your opponent's.

Oza - Lindermaid
IBCA World Championship 2002



White's kingside is weak for two reasons: firstly, there are no pieces defending it; and secondly there is a pawn weakness on h3. The first of these weaknesses can be remedied if White is given time to organise his defences, so Black struck at once with 15...♙xh3! when if 16 gxh3 ♖g6+ 17 ♔h1 ♜g5 and there is no way to prevent mate on g2. So White tried 16 f3, but after

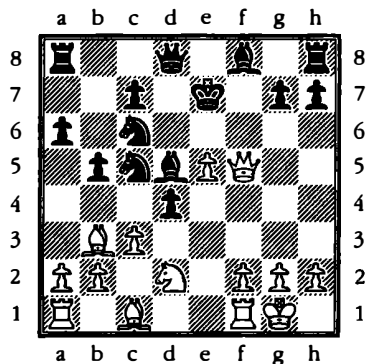
16...♖g6 17 ♜f2 ♜h4 18 ♘f1 ♜f8
19 ♙d2 ♜ff6 20 ♜e1

Black found a forced mate by driving his opponent's king outside of its defences:

20...♜xf2+! 21 ♔xf2 ♜xg2+ 22 ♔e3 f4 mate!

I don't know at what point Black found the forced mate; perhaps when he played 15...♙xh3 he was relying on his judgement that told him 'I will have a very strong attack' rather than on deep calculation.

J.Polgar - Mamedyarov
Olympiad, Bled 2002



Judith Polgar has sacrificed a piece to catch the black king in the centre. If Black is given a free move then he could block the centre with ♙e6. Polgar realised that it was essential to keep lines open with

16 e6!

which also introduces ideas of ♜f7+ and reveals a double attack on d5.

16...♙e6

If instead 16...♙xb3 17 ♘xb3 ♘xe6 (if 17...♘xb3 18 ♙g5+ wins the queen) 18 ♜e1 gives White a winning attack, for example 18...♜d6 19 ♙g5+ ♔d7 20 ♘c5+ ♔c8 21 ♜xe6 etc.

17 ♜e1!

White resists the urge to claw back some material with 17 ♜xc5+ when 17...♜d6 puts up a staunch defence. Polgar refuses to give Black any breathing space: her objective is to mate and she doesn't

32 Mating the Fleeing King

waver for a moment. The threat is now 18 ♖xe6+ ♜xe6 19 ♜xe6 mate.

17... ♜d6 18 ♖xe6 ♜xe6 19 ♜e4

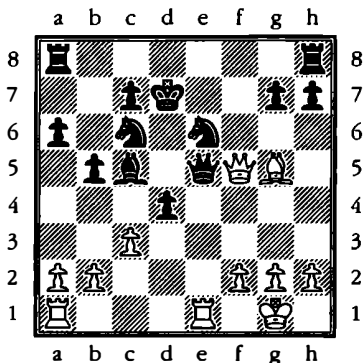
Everything flows smoothly: one by one the white pieces find excellent attacking squares.

19... ♜e5

If 19... ♜d7 20 ♜c5.

20 ♖g5+ ♜d7 21 ♜c5+! ♖xc5

It is immediate mate after 21... ♜xc5 22 ♜xe6.



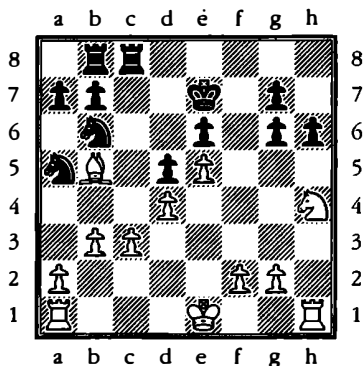
22 ♜f7+! ♜d6 23 ♖e7+! ♜d5

Or 23... ♜xe7 24 ♖xe5 ♜xe5 25 ♖e1+ ♜d6 26 ♜xe6 mate. Here **Black resigned**. You can bet that having resisted the urge to take Black's queen for so long Polgar wouldn't have fallen for 24 ♖xe5+? ♜xe5, when suddenly Black is at least equal. Instead there is a pleasing mate after 24 ♜f3+ ♜c4 25 b3.

A very pretty game in which Polgar showed a lot of attacking flair and determination. Most notable was her refusal to be sidetracked

from the aim of mate by the chance to win material. Once again, the honour of mating the king went to a humble pawn!

Kasparov - Korchnoi Zürich 2001



This game is taken from a tournament held to celebrate the 70th birthday of the magnificent tournament fighter Viktor Korchnoi. It was Kasparov who broke the monopoly of Karpov-Korchnoi matches for the World Championship by defeating Korchnoi in their semi-final match of 1984, before eventually claiming the crown himself. It must be said that Kasparov didn't show much birthday spirit in this tussle with the great veteran.

Both sides have pawns hanging and 19 ♜xg6+ ♜f7 followed by 20... ♖xc3 looks good for Black. The lazy move would be 19 ♜d2, when 19... g5 chases back the knight with equality. Instead Kasparov played 19 ♜h3!!

He had to calculate what follows to the end, or at least rely heavily on his intuition, because White is now committed to a piece sacrifice.

19...g5 20 ♖g6+

There is no way back for if 20 ♖f3 g4.

20...♔f7

Korchnoi decides to test White's calculation—not necessarily a good idea when it is Kasparov sitting opposite you. However, 20...♔d8 21 ♖f3 is just horrible.

21 ♖f3+! ♔xg6 22 ♕d3+ ♔h5 23 ♖h3+ ♔g4 24 f3+ ♔f4

So far White has forced everything with checks. But now comes a deadly quiet move:

25 ♔f2!!

Keeping the black king out of e3, after which he suffocates through lack of space.

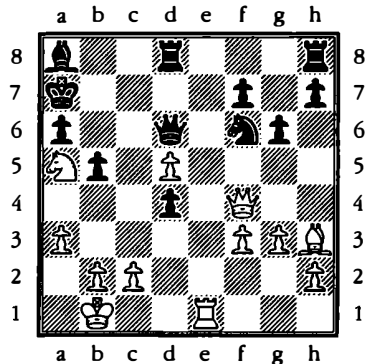
25...g4 26 g3+ 1-0

Mate follows after 26...♔g5 27 f4.

So what gave Kasparov the idea for his combination? First and foremost, it was the fact that every black piece was out of action on the queenside. Just look at those knights on a5 and b6—what were they doing when the king needed some protection? Even after the piece sacrifice, White had an overwhelming advantage in firepower aimed at the black king—as well as rook and bishop, don't forget the role of the king and pawns.

Next is an amazing king hunt by Kasparov. The variations are extremely complicated but the overall effect is so beautiful that I couldn't resist choosing it.

Kasparov - Topalov
Wijk aan Zee 1999



The world number one has already sacrificed a rook as we join play, and here he offered the other rook with

25 ♖e7+!

If 25 ♖xd4+? safe for Black is 25...♖b6, so White wants to deflect the black queen from d6 to rule out this defence.

Black dare not accept as it is mate after 25...♖b6 26 ♖xd4+ ♔b8 27 ♖b6+ ♕b7 28 ♖c6+ ♔a8 29 ♖a7 mate. Also bad is 25...♔b8 26 ♖xd4 ♖d7 (to block mate on a7—note the bishop on h3 is guarding the c8 square!) 27 ♕xd7 when 27...♖xe7 28 ♖b6+ mates while 27...♖xd7 28 ♖xh8+ leaves Black

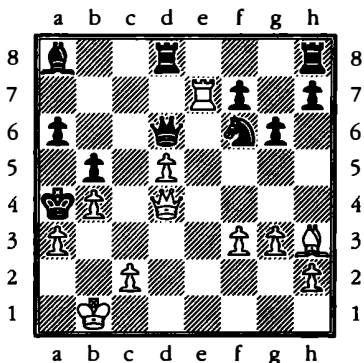
34 Mating the Fleeing King

material down. The black king has therefore to advance.

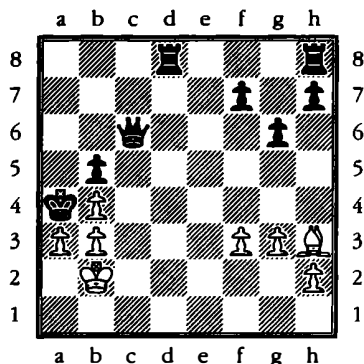
26 ♖xd4+! ♕xa5

Or 26...♗c5 27 ♗xf6+.

27 b4+ ♕a4



The black king is now trapped deep in White's territory on a4, but how can it be mated? One idea would be to get the queen to a5, probably via b6 or c7. But the two main mating set ups are as follows: firstly, White plays ♖a7 and then after deflecting the black queen from d6, mates with ♖xa6. The second scenario is to get in ♗b3 mate. With his next move White aims directly for this idea, but after the game Kasparov found that 28 ♖a7! immediately was stronger. He then gives the following wonderful finish: 28...♕xd5 29 ♖xa6+!! ♗xa6 30 ♗b2 ♕c3+ (the only way to prevent 31 ♗b3 mate) 31 ♗xc3 ♕d5 32 ♕b2!! and Black has no defence against a smothered mate on b3, for example 32...♗c6 33 ♗b3+!! ♕xb3 34 cxb3 mate.



A wonderful picture. Black has a huge material advantage and the only white piece, the bishop on h3, is doing nothing; but the white pawns and king checkmate the black king all by themselves.

28 ♗c3

Not as strong as 28 ♖a7, but still leading to a spectacular finish.

28...♗xd5 29 ♖a7 ♕b7

There is no way else to defend a6, for if 29...♕d6 30 ♕b2! (with the by now familiar threat of 31 ♗b3+ and mate next move) 30...♗d4 31 ♗xd4 ♖xd4 32 ♖xa6 mate.

30 ♖xb7 ♗c4

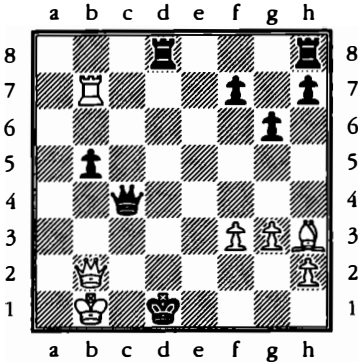
Topalov gives up the knight to break up the pawn cage around his king.

31 ♗xf6 ♕xa3 32 ♗xa6+ ♕xb4 33 c3+!

Now the nature of White's attack changes. Instead of trying to smother the black king within a compact wall of pawns Kasparov wants to open all the lines so that every piece can join in the assault.

And, as shall be seen, that includes the king and bishop!

33...♔xc3 34 ♚a1+ ♔d2 35 ♚b2+ ♔d1



36 ♔f1!!

The forgotten bishop finally enters the battle. Black has to give up the queen for if 36...♚c5 37 ♚e2 is mate or 36...♚xf1 37 ♚c2+ ♔e1 38 ♚e7+ and mate next move. You will see that the white king played a part in both of these mates: in the first it took away the c2 and c1 squares from the black king, while in the second it supported the queen check on c2.

36...♚d2 37 ♚d7!

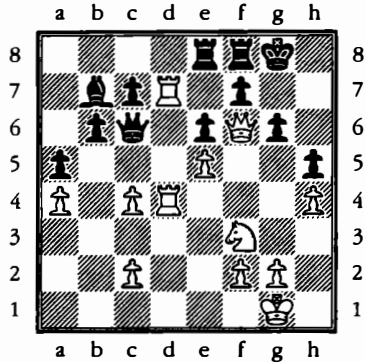
White saves his own queen before taking Black's. A little care is still needed but Kasparov efficiently broke the remaining resistance:

37...♚xd7 38 ♔xc4 bxc4 39 ♚xh8 ♚d3 40 ♚a8 c3 41 ♚a4+ ♔e1 42 f4 f5 43 ♔c1 ♚d2 44 ♚a7 1-0

A fantastic attacking game.

In the middlegame it is rare for the attacker's king to be able to advance up the board and become directly involved in a mating pattern: it is simply too dangerous an enterprise. Here is a marvellous exception.

Short - Timman
Tilburg 1991



The white rooks dominate the only open file and the queen is unchallenged on the key f6 square. Yet how is White to finish off the game? If 31 ♖g5?? then 31...♚xg2 is mate. An advance of the g pawn to break open the kingside would require careful preparation and again would allow the black queen and bishop to come alive along the light square diagonal.

Instead Short came up with an ingenious solution: 31 ♔h2! ♚c8 The only fighting move is 31...♔c8, but understandably Timman hadn't yet realised White's intention.

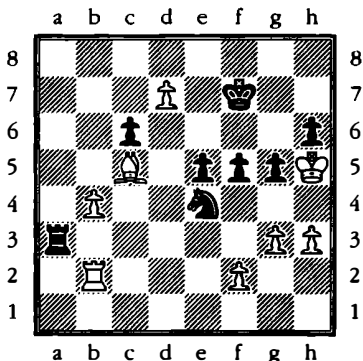
32 ♔g3! ♚ce8 33 ♔f4 ♔c8 34 ♔g5 and Timman resigned in the face of 35 ♔h6 and 36 ♚g7 mate. If

Black had played ♔h7 at any point then ♜xf7+ would have won at once.

A most remarkable king advance, made possible by the paralysis of the black pieces.

Here is another example which shows the potential for mate when a king moves forwards and becomes surrounded by his opponent's pawns.

M.Prizant - Sowray
 England 2002
Black to play



The position above was reached in an English club match between Mushrooms and Wood Green. My thanks to my Wood Green team mate Peter Sowray for explaining to me what was going on in this interesting endgame.

With a passed pawn on the seventh rank White appears to have an excellent position. True, his king is deep in enemy territory but

everything seems fine as soon as you notice that $42... \text{♔g7}$, with the intention of $43... \text{♞f6}$ mate, can be answered simply by $43 \text{ d8=♚} \text{ ♞f6}$ 45 ♜xf6+ , or even better with 43 ♞f8+! destroying the mating net and queening next move.

Nonetheless, there is a decisive mating idea in the position that is revealed after the game move

42... ♜a8

Black not only stops the pawn queening but threatens $42... \text{♞f6+}$ $44 \text{ ♔xh6} \text{ ♜h8+}$ $45 \text{ ♔xg5} \text{ ♜h5}$ mate!

43 g4

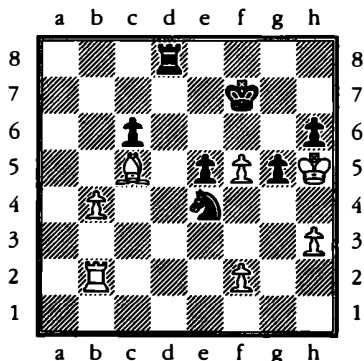
White must try to prevent the mate outlined above by controlling the h5 square.

43... ♜h8!

Not $43... \text{♔g7?}$ 44 ♞e7 , but now the other mating pattern is back on the cards with $44... \text{♞f6}$. White has to give up the passed pawn as a delaying tactic.

44 d8=♚ ♜xd8 45 gxh5

There is nothing better.



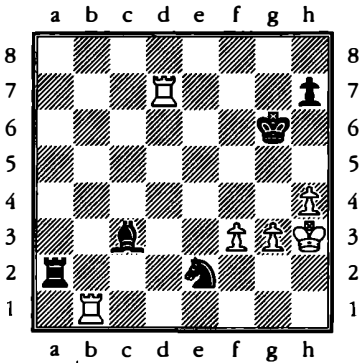
45...♔f6?

After the game Sowray admitted he had become confused by the different mating ideas. Here 45...♔f6+ 46 ♖xh6 ♜h8+ 47 ♖xg5 ♜h5 mates! After this error Black had to win all over again which he managed to do as follows: 46 ♖b6 ♜d3 47 ♖3 ♖g7 48 ♖g4 ♔f6+ 49 ♖f3 4+ 50 ♖e2 ♔d5 51 ♜d2 ♔xb4 52 ♜b2 ♔d5 53 ♜b7+ ♖f6 54 ♜h7 ♖xf5 55 ♜xh6 ♜c3 56 ♖d2 ♜c2 with an extra pawn Black should win but White's next move makes it easy 57 ♜h5? ♔f4+ 0-1

Puzzles

12

Kotronias - Hausrath
Germany 1996

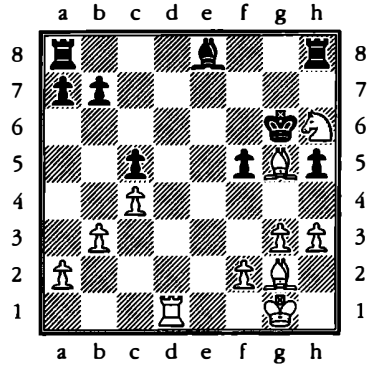


White to play

Can White win with 43 ♜b6+ ♖f6 (if 43...♖h5 44 g4 mate or 43...♖f5 44 ♜f7+ ♖e5 45 ♜xh7 with an easy win) 44 ♜dd6, pinning the bishop?

13

Kalinin - Skotorenko
Correspondence 1991

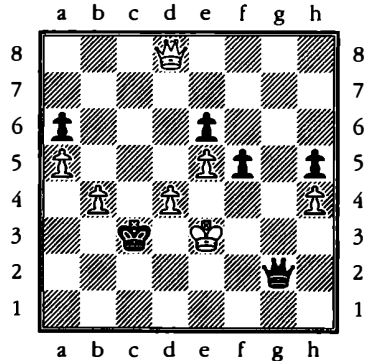


Black to move

Black resigned in the position above, but what if 26...♖xg5 winning the bishop and intending to take the knight next move?

14

Topalov - Kasparov
Linares 1999

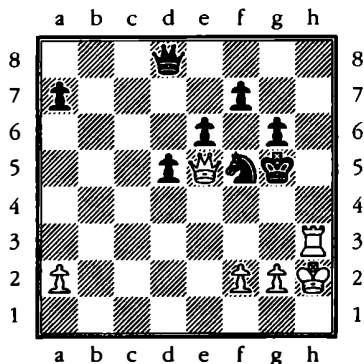


Black to play

38 Mating the Fleeing King

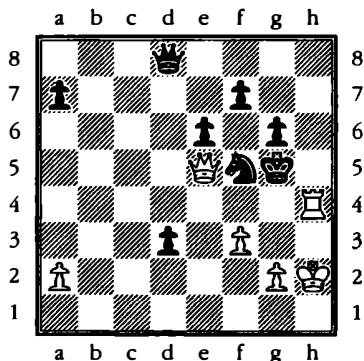
Again Topalov is the hapless victim of a Kasparov attack. How did the world number one force mate? You will need to use the queen, king and a pawn, though not necessarily in that order!

15
Schaefer - Novik
Sofia 1994



Black to play

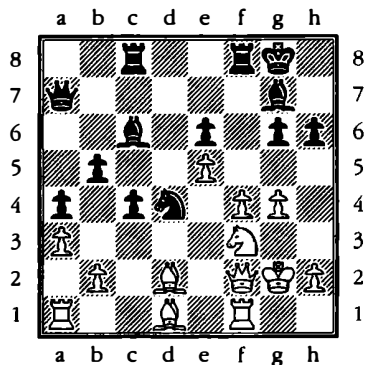
Find a mate for White if Black plays 45...♙d6 aiming to exchange queens. The game actually went 45...d4 46 f3 now after 46...d3 47 ♖h4!



Work out a mate for White after both 47...♙xh4 and 47...d2

Remember to use your king and pawns when necessary!

16



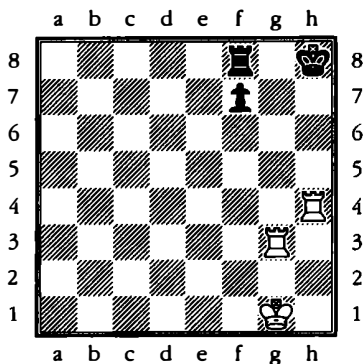
Black to play

Here Black decided to offer his queen with 27...♙xf3!? Now 28 ♙xf3 is safe enough for White, but instead he played 28 ♙xa7 ♙xd2+ 29 ♙f2, with the idea that if 29...♖xf4+ 30 ♙e3 forks the black knight and rook and wins for him. Is this correct?

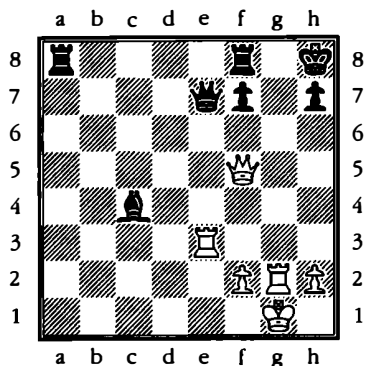
4 Mate from the Front with Queen and Rooks

In this chapter we examine mates with the queen and rooks that occur after decisive frontal pressure is applied on the enemy castled position. A typical scenario is seen in the diagram.

Typical mate with two rooks



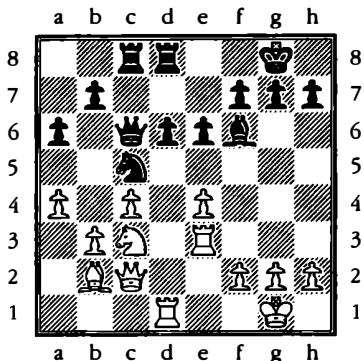
The black kingside pawn cover has been swept away and so the king is mated by the two rooks. I was much addicted to this scenario when I first began playing chess, as it is the simplest of all mating methods.



Here's a way that the mating scenario in the first diagram could arise. If White takes the black queen he is mated himself on the back rank after 1 ♖xe7? ♖a1+ 2 ♜e1 ♖xe1. Instead 1 ♜xh7+!! ♜xh7 2 ♖h3+ ♜h4 3 ♖xh4 is mate.

Knowing the winning theme above allowed White to find a brilliant combination in the following game:

Tkachiev - Watson
London 1993

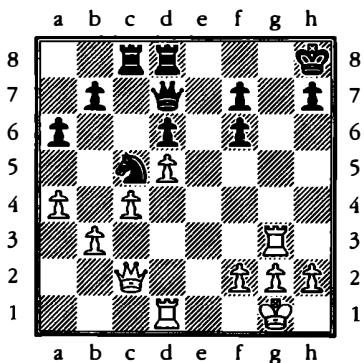


20 Qd5!! exd5

There is little choice for if 20... Qxb2 21 Qe7+ wins the queen.

21 exd5 Qd7 22 Qxf6 gxf6 23 Rg3+ Qh8

Black is destroyed after 23... Qf8 24 Qxh7 , for example 24... Ne8 (or else 25 Ne1 cuts off the black king's retreat followed by mate with Rg8 or Qh8) 25 Rg8+ Qe7 26 Ne1+ Qd8 27 Rxe8+ etc.

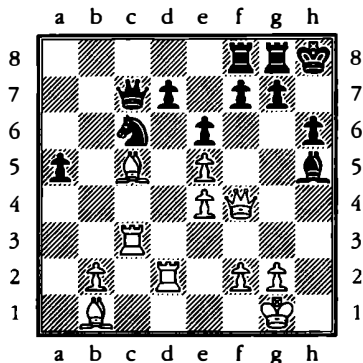


Black might have thought his king was safe on h8, but after seeing the mating pattern above you will know that he is about to be hit by a thunderbolt:

24 Qxh7+!! Qxh7 25 Rd4

and Black resigned because there is no way to stop Rd4 mate.

Adams - Shirov
Linares 2002



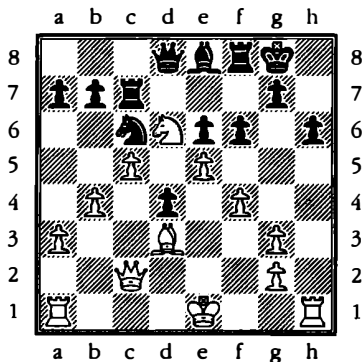
White resisted the urge to win the exchange with 31 Qxf8 . Instead 31 Rh3! was strong enough to persuade Shirov to resign. If 31... g6 32 Qxh6 is mate, so 31... Qg6 32 Rhx6+! when 32... Qh7 33 Rhx7+ Qxh7 34 Qh4+ Qg6 35 Qg4+ Qh6 . Now 36 Rd3 would win quickly, but the most accurate sequence is 36 Qe3+! g5 37 Qh4+ Qg6 38 Qxg5+ Qh7 39 Qh6 mate.

If instead 32... gxh6 33 Qxh6+ Qh7 34 Qf6+! Rg7 35 Qxf8 is crushing.

After the game Shirov admitted that in his earlier calculations he had only looked at lines with 31 ♙xf8? ♜xf8 32 ♜h3, when after 32...♙g6 33 ♜xh6+? gxh6 34 ♜xh6+ Black has 34...♙g8.

Here is a more complicated example in which White gradually builds up an attack with his rooks along the h file.

I.Sokolov - Short
Olympiad, Bled 2002



White has an excellent knight on d6 and a semi-open h file, but how is he to exploit his advantage? Note that if it were Black to move he could play 24...fxe5 breaking up the centre. If White lost control of the position he could well find that it is his own king that is in trouble!

One of the 'rules' in such positions is that when you have a queen and bishop in an attacking

formation aiming at the opponent's king it is better to have the queen in front. Thus if the white queen were on d3 and the bishop on c2 we would already be talking about 24 ♜h7 mate.

It so happens that a move which prepares to put the queen in front of the bishop along the diagonal also defends against the threatened 24...fxe5. When things work out like that it is a sure sign that things are going well with the position!

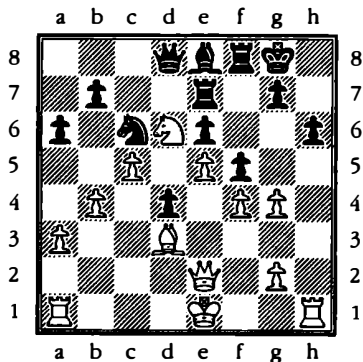
25 ♜e2! a6

Black has no constructive plan for if 25...fxe5 26 ♜e4 g6 27 ♜xh6 ♜g7 28 0-0-0 intending ♜dhl and ♜h8 mate is too much to bear.

26 ♜e4!

White provokes f6-f5 for two reasons. Firstly it takes the pressure off the e5 pawn and so ensures that Black has no potential counterplay by opening the centre, and secondly it creates a target on f5.

26...f5 27 ♜e2 ♜e7 28 g4!



42 Mate from the Front with Queen and Rooks

Giving Black the grim choice between opening the diagonal again for White's queen and bishop or allowing the g4 pawn to join in the attack.

28...fxg4

Here is what might have happened after 28...♙g6: 29 0-0-0! As there is no need to hurry, White brings his queen's rook into the game. 29...♞d7 30 g5 hxg5 31 ♜f3! g4 (If 31...gxf4 32 ♜h3 and mate follows on h8) 32 ♜g3 ♙h7 33 ♜xh7 ♜xh7 34 ♜h4+ ♜g6 (or 34...♜g8 35 ♜h1) 35 ♜g5+ ♜h7 36 ♜h1+ ♜g8 37 ♜h5 g6 38 ♜h8 mate. In this variation you can see the importance of the knight on d6 taking away the f7 square as an escape route for the black king.

29 ♜xg4!

Sokolov plays according to the motto: no counterplay at all for the opponent! Nigel Short, a resourceful defender, had prepared to answer 29 ♜e4 with 29...g5! which gains some counterplay after 30 ♜xh6 ♜xf4. If instead 30 fxg5 the h file closes for the white rook and opens for the black rook on e7 after 30...h5 though even here White's initiative is strong.

29...♜h8

Now how can White strengthen his attack?

30 g3!

A little move but deadly. The attack can only be carried with the assistance of the rook on a1. This is just as fast as 0-0-0, ♜h2 and ♜dh1

and by defending f4 rules out any tricks.

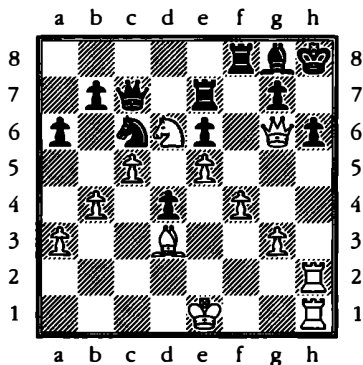
30...♙f7 31 ♜a2

In a nutshell the battle is decided by the fact that White succeeds in activating his rook on a1 whilst keeping the black rooks passive.

31...♙g8 32 ♜ah2

White has achieved his optimum build up which was enough to provoke Black to resign. A possible finish is:

32...♞d7 33 ♜g6 ♜c7



34 ♙e4!

Defending the rook on h1 but not immediately 34 ♜xh6+? gxh6 35 ♜xh6+ when Black can turn the tables with 35...♜h7 36 ♙xh7 ♜xh7 37 ♜xf8 ♜h1+. Now 35 ♜xh6+ followed by picking up the rook is really a threat.

34...♜d8

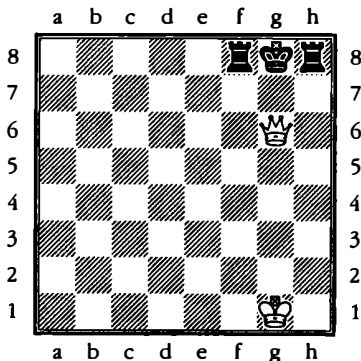
The rook saves itself but leaves the f file undefended. If instead 34...♞d8 35 ♜xh6+ mates in a couple of moves.

35 ♖xh6+ gxh6 36 ♜f6+ ♔g7 37 ♖xh6+ ♔h7 38 ♖xh7+ ♚g8 39 ♜xe6+ with a quick mate.

Note that White's thoughts were always about how he was going to get the rook on a1 into the attack on the h file. The attack couldn't have succeeded without this vital reinforcement. Also remarkable was Sokolov's patience: he was just as concerned with stopping his opponent's counterplay as rushing forwards with his kingside pawns.

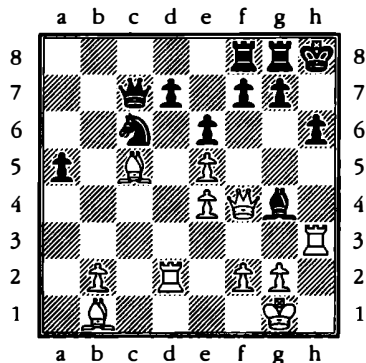
The epaulette mate

You may have noticed that in the examples above and indeed throughout the book one or more of the defender's pieces often does more harm than good by getting in the way of the king's escape route. A startling example of this is seen in the so called *epaulette mate*.



Here the black king is in check-mate for no other reason than that his rooks are boxing him in! A less extreme example of a self inflicted

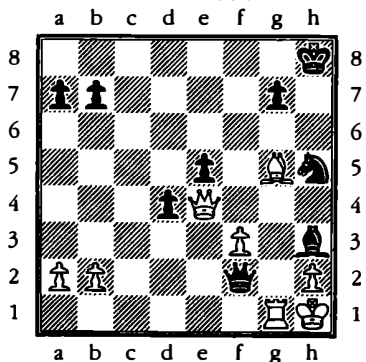
mate may occur when the king is on h8 and a defending rook is on g8. For example, in the Adams-Shirov game above imagine if after 31 ♖h3 Black had played 31...♔g4.



Now White could simply capture the bishop, but why bother when he can end the game with 32 ♖xh6+ gxh6 33 ♜xh6 mate: the rook on g8 shuts in the king.

I once managed to use the idea of the epaulette mate to win from the following position:

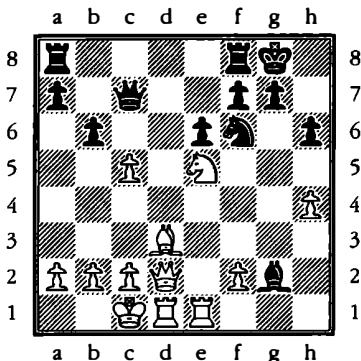
Stanton - McDonald London 1990



Black forced mate with
 27...♔g2+! 28 ♖xg2 ♜f1+ 29 ♔g1
 ♜g3+! 30 ♖xg3 ♜h3 mate!

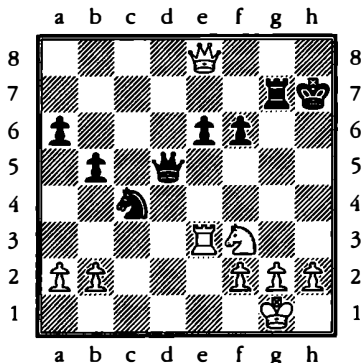
Whilst we have concentrated in this chapter on a frontal attack down the h file, it is naturally possible to launch a similar assault down the g file, or any other file that occasion demands.

Anand - Korchnoi
 Wijk aan Zee 2000



Korchnoi has just grabbed the g2 pawn with 15...♔xg2, no doubt thinking that White can't quickly utilise the g file as if 16 ♔g1 ♜xe5 17 ♖xg2 ♜h5 looks solid enough for Black e.g. 18 ♜xh6 ♜f4+ 19 ♜xf4 ♜xf4. But he had missed the fiendish move 16 ♔e2!! which keeps e5 defended and clears the way for the other rook to come to g1. After 16...♜h8 17 ♔g1 ♔d5 18 ♜f4 ♜xc5 19 ♔e3! Black resigned. He is quite defenceless against the threat of 20 ♖xg7! ♜xg7 21 ♔g3+ ♜h8 22 ♜xf6 mate.

Pert - Ganguly
 British Championship,
 Torquay 2002



By sacrificing his knight White cleared the way for his rook and queen to launch a decisive attack against the under-defended black king:

28 ♜g5+! ♖xg5

If 28...fxg5 29 ♖h3 mate.

29 ♜f7+ ♜h6

Or 29...♜h8 30 ♖h3+ .

30 ♜xf6+ ♜h7

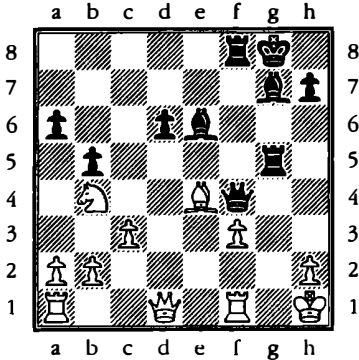
Black is mated after 30...♜h5 31 ♖h3+ ♜g4 32 f3+ etc.

31 ♜f7+!

White realises that he has to combine threats of the rook going forwards and sideways in order to force the win. Black resigned as if 31...♜h6 32 ♖xe6 (forwards!) or 31...♜h8 32 ♖h3+ (sideways!) is decisive.

Puzzles

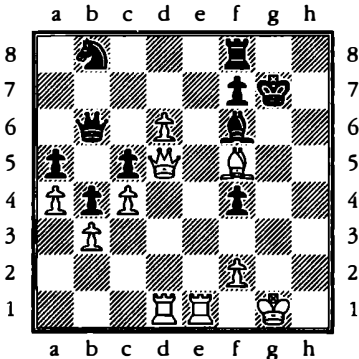
17
Prokopp - Scholz
 Correspondence, 1996



Black to play

Does Black have enough activity to compensate for White's extra pawn and control of the d5 square?

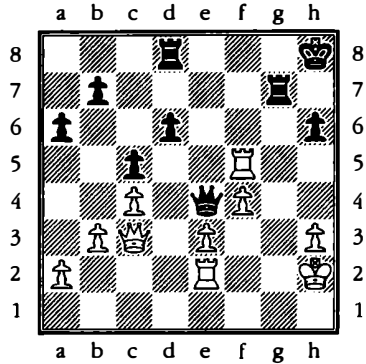
18
Kasparov - Grischuk
 Cannes 2001



White to play

White is winning easily with a rook for knight and a passed pawn, but how did Kasparov most efficiently end the game?

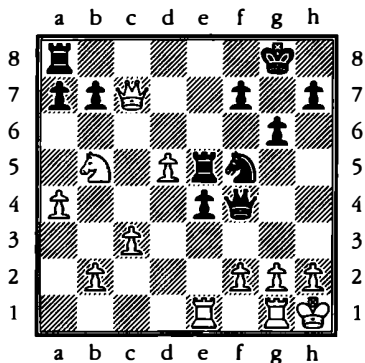
19
Malaniuk - Tseitlin
 Hastings 1995



White to play

White's rook is hanging, but Malaniuk thought he had found the complete answer with 40 ♖f6, which threatens both the rook on d8 and the h6 pawn. Was he right?

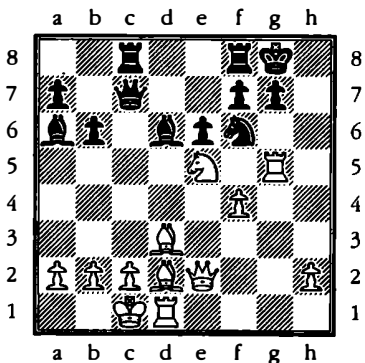
20
Yudasin - Kramnik
Wijk aan Zee 1994



Black to play

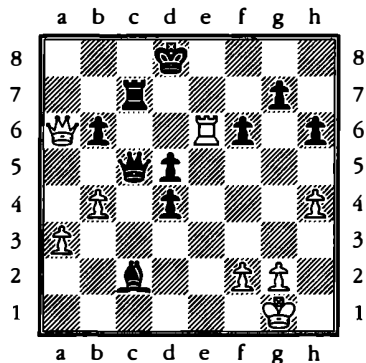
How did Kramnik break through?

21
Baklan - Matzat
Bad Zwosten 1999



White to play

22
Haba - Khenkin
Koszalin 1999



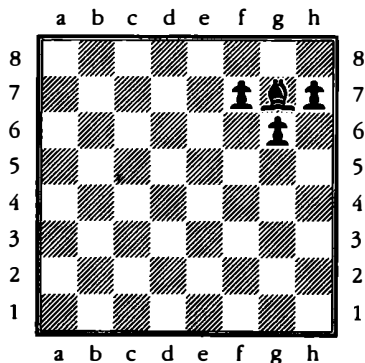
Black to play

Despite being a piece down with his previous move 36 ♖a6 White has spurned the chance to draw by repetition. Was he right to do so?

5 Knight and Queen against the Fianchetto Position

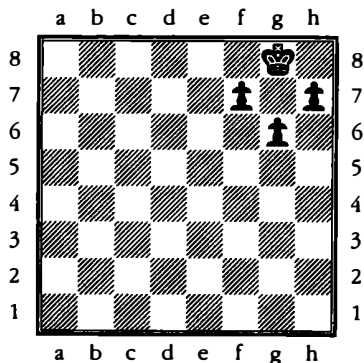
In this chapter we shall investigate mates with the queen and knight that exploit the loosened pawn structure created by a fianchetto. The examples won't be exclusively White attacking Black's kingside but in practice this is often the case due to the popularity of the black fianchetto on g7.

In many opening set ups Black fianchettoes his king's bishop—for example the King's Indian, Grunfeld, Benko Gambit and Pirc Defences. The bishop on g7 controls an important diagonal aiming at the d4 square: naturally this makes it a favourite of players seeking to counterattack.



In addition, the bishop on g7 helps to fortify the kingside. Thus in the King's Indian it isn't unusual to see Black push forwards all his kingside pawns in attack against the white king, despite the fact that he himself has also castled kingside: he trusts in the bishop on g7 to protect his king.

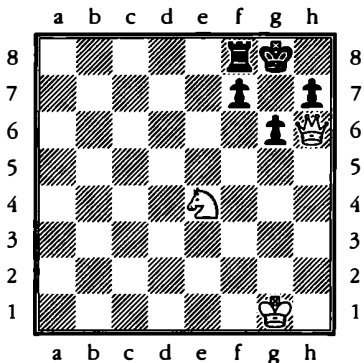
But what if this bishop is exchanged off, or is lost through an accident? Or what if it loses contact with the g7 square? In that case Black may well be left with the following pawn structure on the kingside:



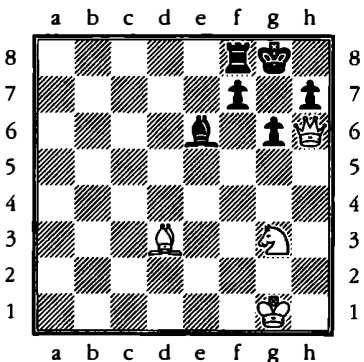
Without the bishop on g7 this set up has the potential to be disastrous

48 Knight and Queen against the Fianchetto Position

for the black king. Just look at the dark square holes on f6 and h6: they are simply inviting an attack by a white knight and queen!



Here the worst has come to pass for the black king. White can mate with either 1 Qf6+ Kh8 2 Qxh7 or 2 Qxf8 mate, or one move longer with 1 Qg5 Ne8 2 Qxh7+ Kh8 3 Qxf7 mate.

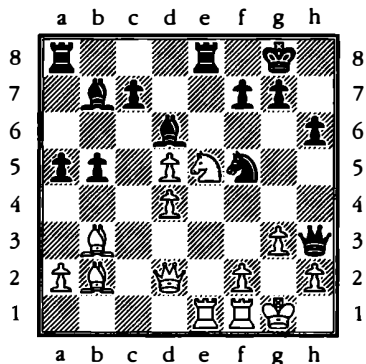


A slightly more complex example. If 1 Ne4 Black can

defend against both Qf6 and Qg5 with 1...f6. But 1 Nh5! does the trick: Black can only prevent 2 Qg7 mate with 1...gxh5 when 2 Qxh7 is mate. Here the mating honours go to the bishop, but it was the knight that provided the vital build up by attacking f6 and g7.

In the first example from a practical game Black gets some revenge.

Morozevich - Adams Wijk aan Zee 2001



Black threatens 24...a4, when after the bishop moves to safety, say 25 Bc2 , 25... exd5 will win a pawn and threaten 26... Qg2 mate. So Morozevich played

24 a3

clearing the a2 square for the bishop.

24...b4 25 axb4?

White is thinking about the pawn structure in the endgame and so

forgets about the danger to his king in the middlegame. Obviously he has no wish to leave his opponent with a protected passed pawn after 25 a4, but that was the only chance.

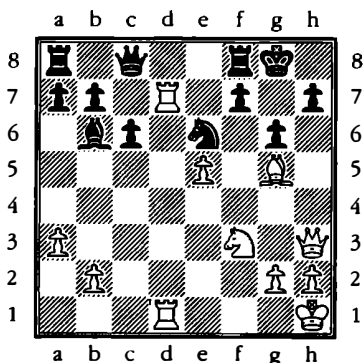
25...♙xb4 26 ♖c3

Saving the exchange but losing his queen. Still, against a world class player it was only a question of the speed of defeat.

26...♙xc3 27 ♜xc3 ♘h4! 0-1

There is no way to prevent mate on g2 apart from giving up the queen with 28 gxf4 ♜xc3. Such a drastic finish is seldom seen in a game between players rated over 2740.

**Debowska - Mikhalev
Krynica 1999**



With absolute control of the d file it is easy for White to exploit the weakness created by g7-g6:

25 ♜h6!

The plan is to overwork the black knight with ♙f6 and ♘g5, when the reply ♘xg5 will allow mate on g7, while otherwise ♜xh7 will be mate. There is nothing Black can do to prevent this.

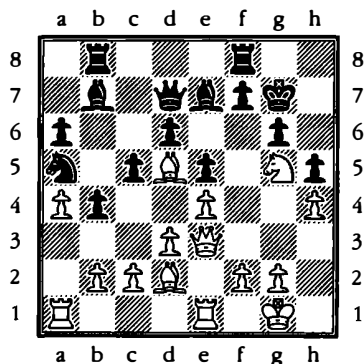
25...♙d8 26 ♙f6 ♙xf6 27 exf6

Black has got rid of the white bishop but the pawn on f6 is just as murderous in controlling g7.

27...♙h8 28 ♘g5 1-0

It is mate on g7 or h7 next move.

**Kasparov - Vladimirov
Batumi 2001**



This time it is Black who has a loose kingside pawn structure. If you put the black king on g8 and the black bishop on g7 he would have a tenable defence. But as things stand the bishop is misplaced on e7. Furthermore, Black has a knight off side on a5. All these considerations are enough to justify an outright attack. Kasparov played

23 ♘h7! ♙xd5

There is a quick massacre after 23...♙xh7 24 ♖h6+ ♕g8 25 ♖xg6+ ♕h8 26 ♖xh5+ ♕g7 27 ♜e3 as Black has no defence to 28 ♜g3+. The 'quiet' bishop on c4 plays an important part in the attack by pinning the f7 pawn and so making 25 ♖xg6+ possible in this sequence. It is no wonder that in the game Black eliminates it as soon as possible.

24 ♖h6+ ♕g8 25 ♜g5!

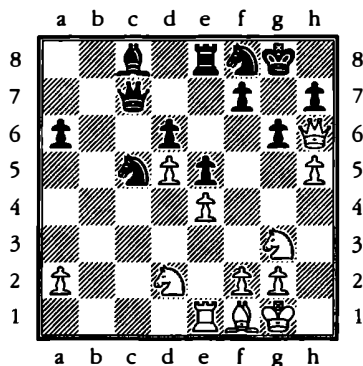
The invasion on the dark squares continues. Kasparov isn't going to waste any time recapturing on d5. Now Black tried 25...♜xe4 but resigned immediately as he is mated on g7 or h8 after 26 ♘f6+ ♜xf6 27 ♜xf6. Other moves were also hopeless, for example 25...♖d8 (to prevent 26 ♘f6+) 26 ♘xf8 ♜xf8 27 ♜xd8 ♜xh6 28 ♜xa5, or 25...♜xg5 26 hxg5! f5 (he has to prevent 27 ♘f6+ with a familiar mate on g7 after 27...♖xf6 28 gxh6) 27 ♘xf8 ♜xf8 28 ♖xg6+ ♖g7 29 ♖xg7+ ♕xg7 30 exd5 and in both cases Black is the exchange down with a hopeless endgame.

Next up are two high class demolitions of the fianchettoed position.

In the first example we see the usual ominous feature for the black king: a bishop missing from g7 which Leko has exploited by putting his queen on the h6 square. The question is whether White can find a way to break through with his

other pieces in support of the queen, or will Black's defensive wall shake a little but still hold firm?

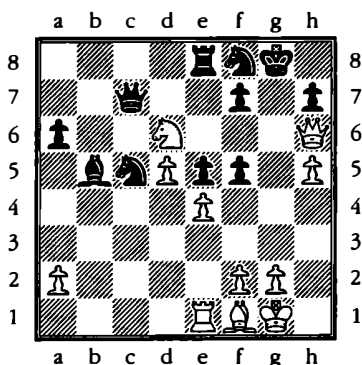
Leko - Beliavsky
Olympiad, Bled 2002



Here Black to move should have played defensively with 30...♖e7, but instead he developed his bishop with 30...♜d7? This move not only cuts off his queen's defence along the second rank but also takes away the d7 square from the knights. Leko began his onslaught with

31 ♘c4 f6

Perhaps when he played his previous move Black was hoping to exchange off his bishop for the knight with 31...♜b5. This makes a lot of positional sense, but unfortunately for him tactics come before strategy and White has the excellent reply 32 ♘f5! gxf5 33 ♘xd6.



(diagram of variation)

If now 33...♗xf1 34 ♖xe8 with the unanswerable double threat of mate on g7 or capturing the queen. Instead 33...♜b8 34 ♖xf5 f6 35 ♜xf6 h6—to stop 36 ♖h6 mate—36 ♖e7+ ♗h7 37 ♜f7+ ♗h8 38 ♜g8 is mate. Finally if 33...♜d7 34 ♖xe8 ♜xe8 35 ♜g5+ ♗h8 36 ♜f6+ ♗g8 37 h6 and here warding off mate on g7 will cost too much material.

32 ♜e3!

Leko might have reasoned as follows before making this move: 'if I can get a knight to h5 I will have the double threat of ♜g7 mate and ♖xf6+. This would be unanswerable apart from the obvious reply gxf5, eliminating the knight. Therefore I'll put the rook on e3, so that after I play ♖h5 and Black captures the knight, I'll have ♜g3+, when the entrance of the rook is decisive!'

32...♜e7

Everything also goes to plan for White after 32...♗c8 33 hxc6 hxc6

34 ♖h5! gxf5 (if 34...♜f7 35 ♖xd6 or 34...♜e7 5 ♖xd6!) 35 ♜g3+ ♗f7 36 ♜g7 mate.

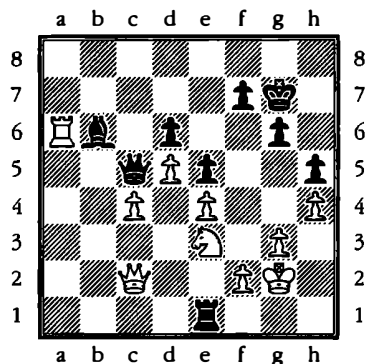
33 hxc6 hxc6 34 ♖h5! gxf5 35 ♜g3+ ♗g4

If 35...♗f7 36 ♜xh5+ ♖g6 37 ♜xg6+ and mate next move.

36 ♜xh5 ♖xe4 37 ♜xg4+ ♖g5 38 ♖e3 e4 39 ♜f4

Here Beliavsky resigned or more likely lost on time. In any case he loses a pawn and faces a decisive attack. For example 39...♖h7 (or 39...♜f7 40 ♖f5! ♖g6 41 ♜xg5 fxg5 42 ♜xg5 ♗h7 43 ♜h5+ then 44 ♜xg6+ etc.) 40 ♖g4 ♗f7 (or 40...♜f7 41 ♖h6+) 41 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 42 ♜xg5 etc.

Adams - Torre
Olympiad, Bled 2002

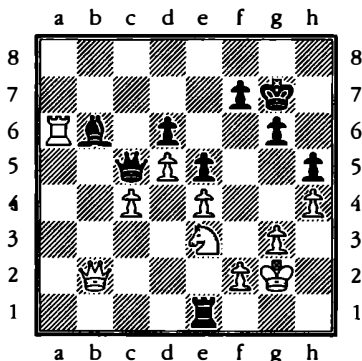


First of all we notice that White has an extra pawn. Torre still has his dark squared bishop, but it has wandered a long way from its

defensive role on b6. Nevertheless, all the black pieces are actively placed and the c5 square appears to be firmly in his grasp. In fact, if it were Black to move he might well consider the exchange sacrifice 43... Exe3! 44 fxe3 Wxe3 forcing 45 Ra1 , when it is difficult to see how White could make any progress with his queen tied to the defence of e4 and f2 and his rook having to defend g1.

With all the pieces on the queenside and the centre, you might have forgotten about Black's king which is sitting unobtrusively on g7 hoping not to be noticed. But Adams is always alert to tactical chances and with his next couple of quiet moves prepares a deadly attack.

44 Wb2!



It is absolutely vital for the success of White's plan that he wins access for his rook to his opponent's back rank and also has it attacking the d6 square.

44... La7

The bishop stands its ground on the long diagonal. Going back to c7 or d8 was hopeless e.g. 44... Lc7 45 Lc6 Wa7 46 c5 dxc5 47 d6 followed by Wxe5+ etc. is fatal.

As a rule a strong player will always prefer 44... La7 in such situations as the best fighting chance: if White plays insufficiently energetically Black might emerge with a good game, whereas 44... Lc7 doesn't give White much chance to go wrong.

45 Wd2 Lb1 46 Lc6

Completing his preparation. The rook both attacks d6 and can get to the back rank.

46... Wd4

This looks very strong, as if 47 Wxd4?? exd4 when the passed pawn will probably win the game for Black while moving the queen away to e2 is also disastrous: 47 We2?? Lb2 (even stronger than 47... Wxe4+) 48 Qc2 (or 48 Wf3 Wxe3) 48... Wc3 wins a piece. But Adams had prepared a tactic of his own!

47 Qf5+!

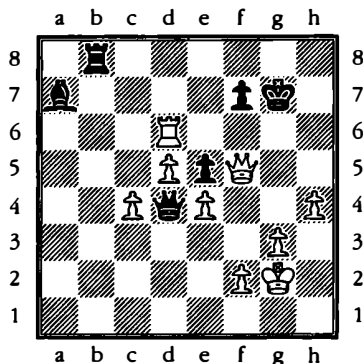
It soon turns out that the black pieces, so threateningly placed on the queenside, aren't doing any defensive duty for the king!

47... gxf5 48 Wg5+ Qh7

Naturally if 48... Qf8 49 Lc8 mate.

49 ♖xh5+ ♜g7 50 ♖g5+ ♜h7 51 ♖xf5+ ♜g7 52 ♜xd6! ♜b8

If 52...♜b2 53 ♖g5+ ♜h7 (or 53...♜f8 54 ♜d8 mate) 54 ♜h6 mate. Meanwhile there was no point in playing on three pawns down after 52...♖xf2+ 53 ♖xf2 ♜xf2 54 ♜xf2.



53 h5!!

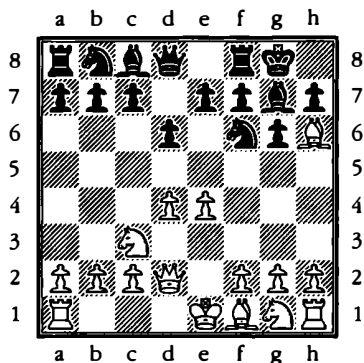
The pawn proves the vital reinforcement of the attack. Black resigned here as he always ends up being mated by ♜d8 or ♜h6, e.g. 53...♜c5 54 h6+ ♜f8 (if 54...♜g8 55 ♖g5+ ♜f8 56 ♜d8+ ♜xd8 57 ♖xd8 mate) 55 h7 (or 55 ♜d7 ♜e7 56 d6) 55...♜g7 56 ♖f6+ ♜xh7 57 ♖xf7+ ♜h8 58 ♜h6 mate.

White's choice of winning plan in the game wasn't influenced by emotion—that is, preferring the excitement of a kingside attack to the exploitation of a pawn on the queenside. Instead he chose to sacrifice because that was the best

way to break down the defensive layout adopted by Torre.

Exchanging off the dark squared bishop

If Black still has his dark squared bishop defending the squares f6, g7 and h6 the first stage of a successful kingside assault is often to exchange it off. Thus one of White's best responses to the Pirc or Modern Defence set ups is 1 e4 g6 2 d4 d6 3 ♘c3 ♜g7 4 ♜e3 ♘f6 5 ♖d2, when if 5...0-0 6 ♜h6 gets rid of Black's bishop without more ado.

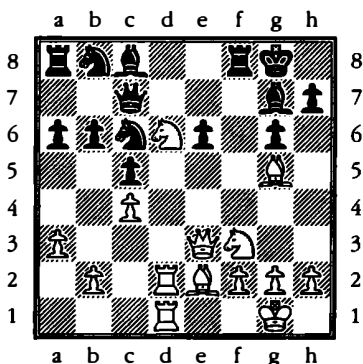


This method of play seems rather crude, hence its somewhat derogatory appellation in England as the '150 Attack', because lots of players with this British grade—equivalent to Elo 1800—are supposed to play it. In fact it has also been adopted many times by Michael Adams (rated 2745 as I write) and occasionally by Garry

54 Knight and Queen against the Fianchetto Position

Kasparov (2838), so I guess the number should be multiplied a couple of times! The truth—as revealed in many examples in this chapter—is that the exchange of the bishop on g7, even if White uses an artificial looking means to achieve it, is a blow to the safety of the black king.

Kotronias - Kuntz Olympiad, Bled 2002

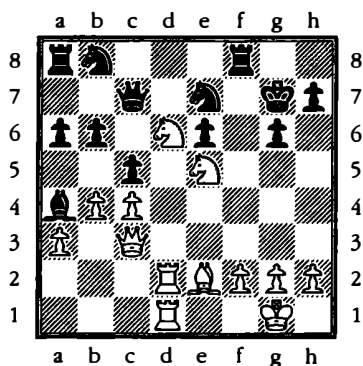


White's basic plan here is to exchange off dark squared bishops and then mate by exploiting the holes in Black's kingside with the queen and knights. Let's see how Grandmaster Kotronias does it:

24 ♙h6! ♜d7 25 ♙g7 ♝xg7 26 b4!

White intends to win the e5 square for his knight after b4-b5. Black obliges by giving up the square straightaway!

26... ♞e7 27 ♞e5 ♙a4 28 ♞c3!



White's control of the dark squares is so overwhelming that he can ignore the threat to the rook for if 28... ♙xd1 29 ♞g4+ ♝g8 30 ♞h6 mate.

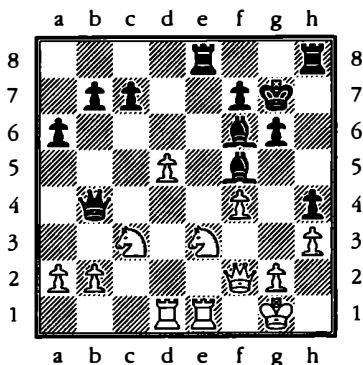
28... ♝g8 29 ♞g4 ♞f5 30 ♞xf5 1-0

Black gave up as it is mate next move if he takes back the knight.

In the following example a young chess superstar found a clever pawn sacrifice to get rid of Black's important bishop, after which White again became dominant on the dark squares.

Black's king appears perfectly safe. True, he has loosened his pawn structure with both g7-g6 and h5-h4, but it hardly seems right to complain about this when he has such a wonderful bishop on f6 guarding all the dark squares. Harmless would be 21 ♞xf5+ gx5 as it strengthens Black's hold over the e4 square.

Radjabov - Estrada Nieto
Olympiad, Bled 2002



It is apparent that White can hardly succeed in storming the kingside with the bishop on f6. With this in mind, Radjabov played

21 d6! cxd6

Black had the unenviable choice between facing a big attack as in the game or allowing his opponent a strong passed pawn after 21...c6.

22 dcd5

Now the fate of the bishop on f6 is sealed.

22...Wxb2 23 Ee2!

A vital move. The black queen is forced off the diagonal.

23...Wa3 ' 24 dxf6 cfxf6 25 d5+ cg7 26 Wd4+

Black's hold on the dark squares has collapsed.

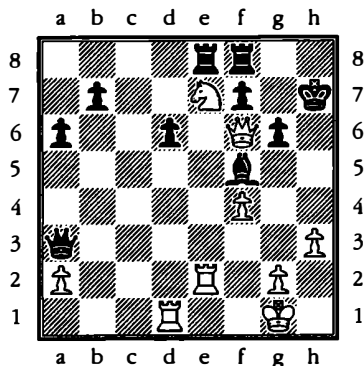
26...ch6 27 Wf6! Ehf8

Of course taking on e2 allows mate in one.

28 Wxh4+ cg7 29 Wf6+ cg8

The only chance was 29...ch6 30 Exe8 Exe8 31 Wxf7 when Black is mated after 31...Ee2 32 Wf8+ ch5 (or 32...ch7 33 df6 mate) 33 Wh8 mate, but 31...Wa4!? would have slowed down the white attack.

30 de7+ ch7



31 ch2!!

It isn't always the most violent move that is best. Radjabov resists the urge to leap in with 31 dxf5, which allows 31...Wc5+! when Black stays alive after 32 ch1 (not 32 dd4? Exe2 dropping the exchange.) 32...Wxf5. After the quiet king move in the game Black no longer has this defence as if 31...Wc5 32 Ed5 and f5 collapses.

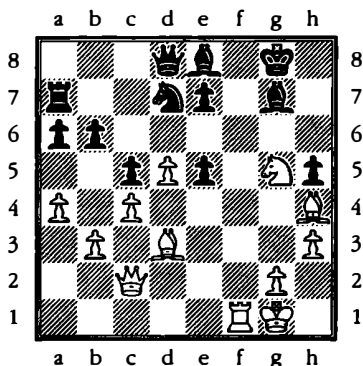
31...Ed7 32 Exd6 Eb5 33 Wh4+

Radjabov sees an absolutely forced win and so is right to play it. In fact 33 df5 is one move faster, e.g. 33...gxf5 (or 33...Eg8 34 Wh4 mate) 34 Wh6+ cg8 35 Wg5+ ch7 36 Eh6 mate.

56 Knight and Queen against the Fianchetto Position

33...♔g7 34 ♖f5+ ♔g8 35 ♜f6
and Black resigned as if 35...gxf5
36 ♜g5+ and mate follows on h6.

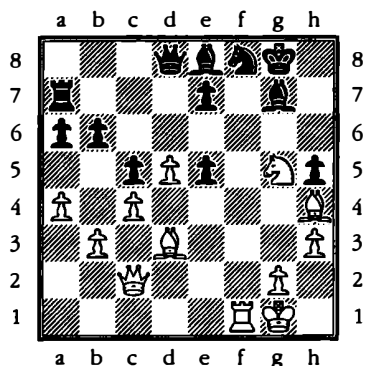
J.Levitt - D.Coleman
England 2002



In the previous examples the defender had a kingside pawn structure but no bishop on g7; here the situation is reversed as he has the bishop but no pawn structure to speak of! The white pieces are well placed to exploit the multiple light square holes on e6, f5, f7, g6 and h7.

In the game Black lost on time after 30...♖f6 31 ♖e6 ♜d6 32 ♜d2!—which was just as well as he has no defence to 33 ♜g5 with a quick massacre on the kingside. The black pieces on the queenside are shut off from contributing to the defence of the king by the barrier on the e file, which consists of a knight and two black pawns.

Instead Black could have tried 30...♖f8, when the aim should be to win as in the game without giving Black any counterchances whatever.



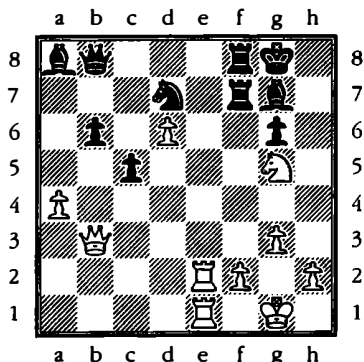
A clinical method is 31 ♖h7+! (also good enough is 31 ♜xf8+ ♖xf8 32 ♖e6 ♜d6 33 ♖h7+ ♔h8 34 ♖xf8) 31...♔h8 32 ♜xf8+ ♖xf8 33 ♜f5! when the entry of the queen is decisive. If 33...♖d7 34 ♖f7+ ♔g7 35 ♜g6 mate, while 33...♖g7 34 ♖g8! clears the h7 square for the queen with a mate after either:

(a) 34...♔xg8 35 ♜h7+ ♔f8 36 ♖e6+ ♔f7 37 ♜xg7 mate or

(b) 34...♖g6 35 ♜xg6 ♜xg8 36 ♜xh5+ ♖h6 37 ♜xh6+ ♜h7 38 ♜xh7 mate.

In the final example the bishop was again unable to compensate for the collapse of the light squares around him.

**Karpov - Kir.Georgiev
Tilburg 1994**



Black is two pieces up so White had better do something fast! Karpov exploited the weakness on f7 to break through with

32 ♖e8!

Then followed...

32... ♜xd6

If **32... ♜xe8** **33 ♜xf7+ ♕h8** **34 ♜xe8+** winning the black queen.

33 ♜xf7+ ♕h8 **34 ♘e6!**

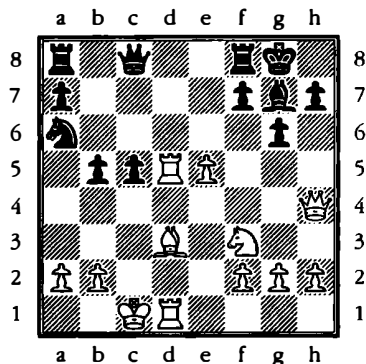
But for the strength of this move Black would still be fighting hard. Now however all resistance came to an end as Black can't deal with the threat of mate on g7 and also

prevent **35 ♘xf8** followed by **36 ♜xa8**. Such is the strength of the queen and knight when acting in tandem against a fractured kingside.

Puzzles

23

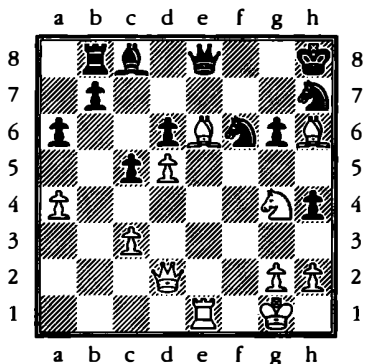
**Beliavsky - Kasparov
World Cup, Belfort 1988**



Black to play

After **18... ♘b4** **19 ♗xg6** Kasparov played **19... fxg6**. Here the question is what happens after the alternative recapture **19... hxg6**— can Black survive the attack?

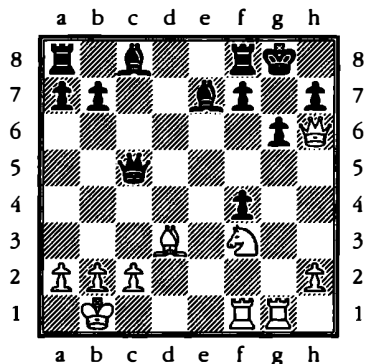
24
Mecking - Pace
 Olympiad, Bled 2002



White to play

Positionally speaking Black is busted with disorganised pieces and a flimsy kingside. Nevertheless the great Mecking, making a return to the Olympiad after many years, came up with an elegant finish. The question is how can he bring his queen into the action as quickly as possible to finish things off?

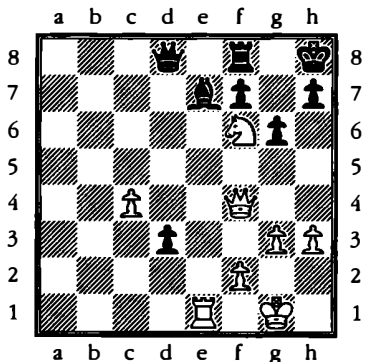
25
Khalifman - Bareev
 Wijk aan Zee 2002



White to play

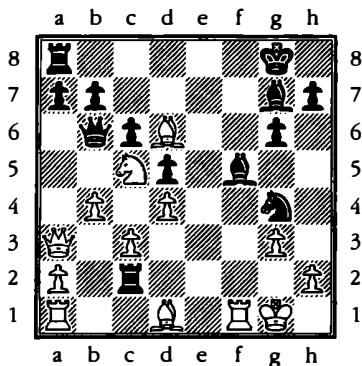
How did Khalifman finish the game?

26



White to play

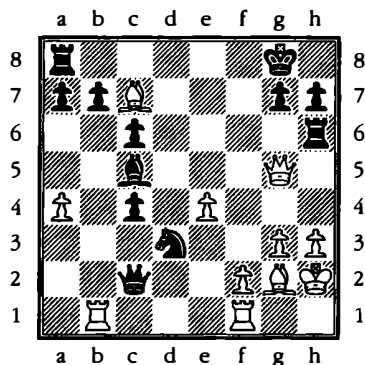
27
Szabolcsi - Legky
Val Thorens 1990



Black to play

Black played 26...Wb5. Now what happens after (a) White accepts the rook with 27 Qxc2 or (b) White plays 27 Rc1, declining the offer?

28
Topalov - Kramnik
Linares 1997

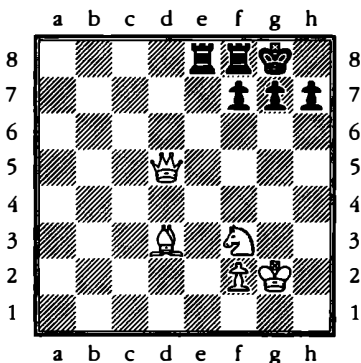


Black to play

Black played 26...Qxf2. What happens after 27 Wxc5, nabbing a bishop?

6 The Greek Gift and Other Queen and Knight Mates

The Greek Gift sacrifice is the most famous method of launching an attack with queen and knight against the enemy king. It comes at all levels of sophistication, from extremely complex to very simple; in some positions it yields the attacker an easy win, while at other times the verdict can be unclear or even downright bad! The basic mechanism is as follows.



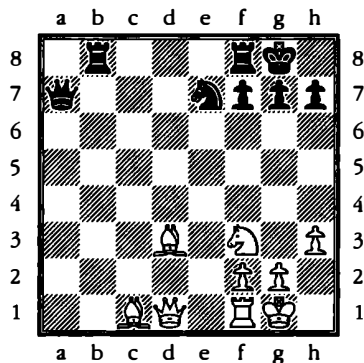
White begins by sacrificing his bishop with 1 ♖xh7+! ♜xh7 there is little choice for after 1...♜h8 2 ♚h5 Black is soon mated, for

example 2...g6 3 ♚h6! followed by 4 ♜xg6+ and 5 ♚h7 mate.

2 ♚h5+ ♜g8 3 ♜g5

The bishop sacrifice has gained White the time to get his queen and knight into the attack. Now Black has no defence against 4 ♚h7 mate.

As stated above, the Greek Gift is by no means always gives such a clear cut win. Here is another scenario which I have composed:



1 ♖xh7+! ♜xh7 2 ♜g5+

Already we see that things aren't so concrete as in the previous example where White could play ♚h5+ before ♜g5+ and so force the

black king back to g8. Here Black has three possible king moves:

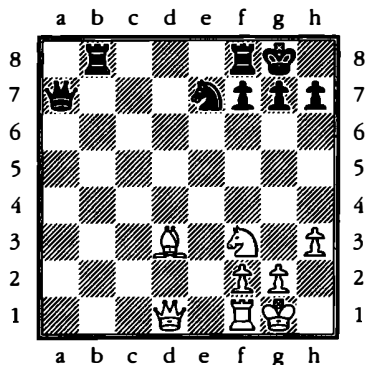
2...♔g8 3 ♖h5 ♜fe8 In the previous example Black couldn't make an escape route for his king on f8. Nevertheless here after 4 ♜xf7+ ♔h8 White has seriously weakened Black's pawn cover and in fact can win with 5 ♖b2! attacking g7 when 5...♜xb2 (or 5...♜g8 6 ♖h5 mate) 6 ♖h5+! ♔g8 7 ♖xe8 is mate.

The second alternative for Black is 2...♔h6, but this looks highly dubious as it walks into a potential discovered check. And indeed, White has 3 ♘e6+ when 3...♔h7 4 ♖h5+ ♔g8 5 ♘g5 has transposed to 2...♔g8, while 3...♔g6 4 ♖g4+ ♔f6 5 ♜e1! wins as if 5...fxe6 6 ♖xe6 is mate, while otherwise 6 ♖g5 mate or if this is prevented 6 ♖g5+ will win.

That leaves 2...♔g6 but then 3 ♖g4 looks killing, e.g. 3...f5 4 ♖g3 ♜g8 (to meet the threat of 5 ♘e6+ when g7 would drop) 5 ♖d6+ ♔h5 6 g4+ fxg4 7 hxg4+ ♔xg4 8 ♖d3! and there is no good way to stop 9 ♖h3 mate (if 8...♜h8 9 ♖f3+ ♔h4 10 ♖h3) Alternatively 4...f4 (the best fighting chance) looks bad after 5 ♖g4 or 5 ♖xf4 ♘f5 6 ♖g4 etc.

So here too the Greek Gift comes out on top, but note that in the starting position White already had two pieces for a rook, so after the sacrifice he still had two minor pieces to play with. Now let's see what happens if we remove the bishop from c1 in the starting position:

The bishop on c1 has been removed



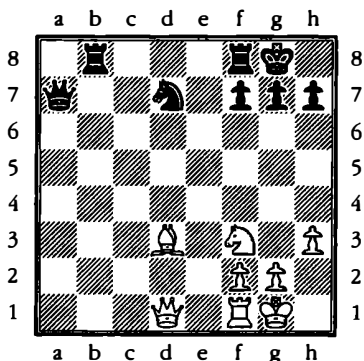
Now Black is the exchange up and White can no longer wreak havoc with his dark squared bishop. Let's see if the Greek Gift maintains its power:

1 ♖xb7+ ♔xh7 2 ♘g5+

If now 2...♔g8? then 3 ♖h5 is still very powerful: 3...♜fe8 4 ♜xf7+ ♔h8 5 ♖h5+ ♔g8 6 ♖h7+! Naturally White can never lose in this scenario as he has a draw if he wants it by repetition with 6 ♖f7+ —a nice state of affairs when you are a rook down! 6...♔f8 7 ♘e6+ ♔f7 and now White has the choice of a king hunt beginning 8 ♖xg7+ ♔xe6 9 ♜e1+ ♔d7 10 ♜d1+ ♔c6 11 ♖f6+! or the more restrained 8 ♜e1 threatening mate on g7, when 8...♜g8 9 ♘g5+ ♔f8 10 ♖h5! g6 11 ♖h7 ♜g7 12 ♘e6+ wins.

If 2...♔g6 then 3 ♖g4! and although there's nothing clear White has a dangerous initiative for the rook, for example 3...f5 4 ♖g3 ♜g8 5 ♚e1! keeping up the pressure. Finally that leaves 2...♕h6!—a reasonable proposition with no white bishop on c1. If now 3 ♖g4 ♕g6! and the white attack has run out of steam. So 3 ♖d2 looks the trickiest, but after 3...♔g6! White no longer has ♖g4 as an option. Therefore the initiative is fading, e.g. 4 ♖f4 ♜b5! and Black will eventually win.

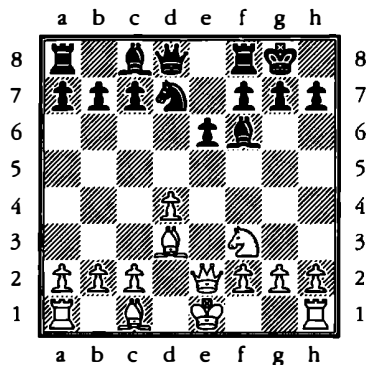
Note that in order for the Greek Gift to work Black mustn't have the option of a move like ♕f6 or ♔f5 after his king has been driven back to g8. Thus if you move the black knight to d7 in the diagram above



then 1 ♔xh7+?? ♕xh7 2 ♕g5+ ♔g8 3 ♖h5 can be answered simply by 3...♕f6. If the black knight on d7 metamorphosed into a

bishop, then Black would have another complete defence with 3...♔f5. Or finally, if the black queen were on c7 rather than a7 there would be 3...♖c2. In every case the h7 square is defended and White can resign.

Jacobs - Carter
Las Vegas 2002

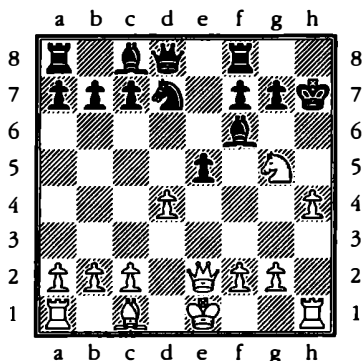


Here is another version of the Greek Gift. White played 9 h4! which prepared the bishop sacrifice by giving the knight a support on g5.

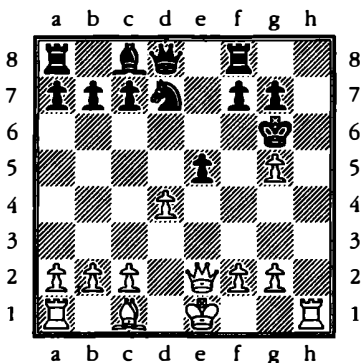
9...e5

This loses by force, but Black is already in a bad way as if 9...g6 creates a target for 10 h5, while after 9...h6 10 ♖e4 Black can't defend h7 as if 10...g6 11 ♔xh6.

10 ♔xh7+! ♕xh7 11 ♕g5+!



The familiar sacrifice and check, but here there is an extra ingredient: if Black takes the knight then the rook on h1 joins in the attack. The effect would be lethal, as after 11... $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{xg5}$ 12 hxg5+ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{g6}$ (12... $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{g8}$ transposes to the game) White can start a long series of checks that end in mate:



13 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h5+}$ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{f5}$ 14 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h3+!}$ (the most difficult move in the sequence) 14... $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{e4}$ (there is no way

back as if 14... $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{g6}$ 15 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h7}$ mate) 15 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{f3+}$ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{xd4}$ 16 $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{e3+}$ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{c4}$ 17 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{e4+}$ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{b5}$ 18 a4+ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{a5}$ 19 b4+ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{a6}$ 20 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{c4+}$ b5 21 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{xb5}$ mate.

The game continuation ended in an even quicker defeat for Black.

11... $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{g8}$ 12 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h5}$ $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{xg5?}$

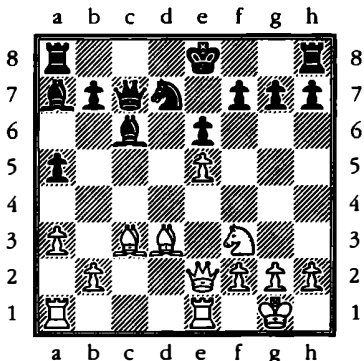
A bad blunder. The only move was 12... $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{e8}$. Then 13 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{xf7+}$ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{h8}$ 14 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h5+}$ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{g8}$ 15 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h7+}$ (It turns out that White was risking nothing with the bishop sacrifice as he could always force a draw by repetition with 15 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{f7+}$. Of course, he wants much more than a draw, but when he calculated the sacrifice some moves ago it must have been comforting to know that if he had missed something he would still be able to avoid defeat.) 15... $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{f8}$ 16 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h8+}$ $\text{\textcircled{c}}\text{e7}$ 17 $\text{\textcircled{w}}\text{h5}$ and White maintains a strong attack after 17... $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{f8}$ 18 $\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{d2}$ or 17... exd4 18 0-0.

13 hxg5 f5 14 g6 1-0

The killer pawn mate on h7 can be countered by 14... $\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{f6}$, but that still leaves a mate on h8.

By now you will have realised that it is no easy matter to judge the soundness of a Greek Gift sacrifice. On the other hand, simply being aware of the pattern might give you an idea to win a game which would never otherwise have occurred to you. Or indeed it might save you from falling into the mate by carelessly castling!

Richards - Heymann
Battle Abbey 2001



Two girls were battling it out in an England-Germany match, but it seems only one of them knew about the Greek Gift. Black 'castled into it' with 16...0-0?? when after 17 ♙xh7+! 18 ♜xh7 19 ♞h5 20 ♜fe8 21 ♞ad1 , when the only way to stop 22 ♜d3 followed by 23 ♜h3 with a quick mate was by the sad 21... ♙xf2+ 22 ♞xf2 ♜f8 , when 23 ♜d3 was still very strong.

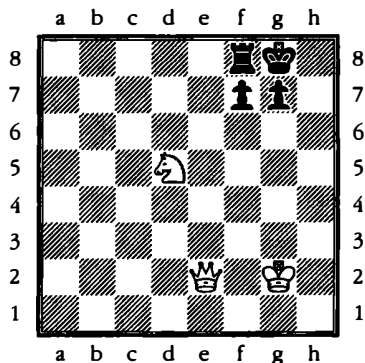
In fact it was more accurate to begin a long forcing variation with checks: 21 ♞h5+ ♜g8 22 ♞h7+ ♜f8 23 ♞h8+ ♜e7 24 ♞xg7+ ♜d8 25 ♜f7+ ♜c8 26 ♜d6+ ♜d8 27 ♞g5+ ♜e7 28 ♞g8+ ♜f8 29 ♞xf8+ ♙e8 and only now, having captured a knight and pawn, should White pause for breath with the quiet 30 ♞ad1!

Here I should quote my own comment about this game in *Chess*

magazine: 'If you think the Greek Gift is an obvious trap, then try giving the position after 16 ♙xc3 to a strong computer program and the chances are that it will fall into it! It is only obvious to players who have seen the idea before.'

Cutting off the king

In storming the castled position, a very common mating pattern involves the queen or rook checking from the front, while a bishop or knight prevents the enemy king running away to the side. Here is a typical instance with queen and knight:

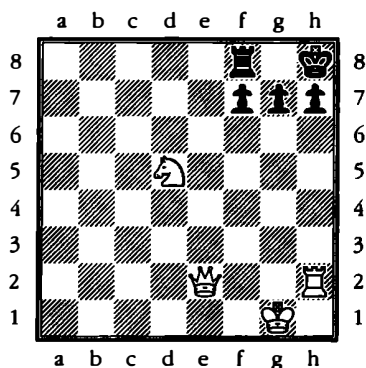


It is mate in two. First the knight drives the black king to the open h file, then the queen gives the fatal check: 1 ♜e7+ ♜h8 2 ♞h5 .

Here the mate isn't achieved because the queen is giving a deadly check protected by the

knight. Nonetheless the white pieces are acting perfectly together. I have called this mating pattern 'cutting off the king'. It is very important as it will be seen in other chapters where the mate is given by the rook in concert with a minor piece, or by the queen and bishop.

Sometimes a slightly different version of this mate is possible if the black king is already on h8. In that case it is the knight that gives mate:

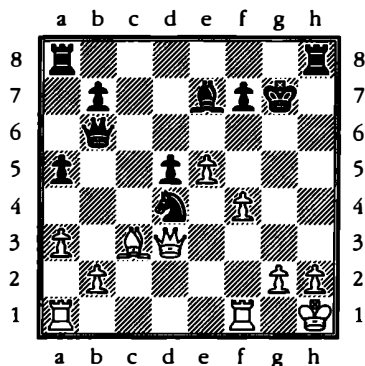


First of all the h file is forcibly opened. Then White gains control of it and drives the black king to g8, where it is mated:

1 ♖xh7+! ♜xh7 2 ♜h5+ ♜g8 3 ♜e7 mate.

Here is a sophisticated example of the knight mate involving two players with Elo ratings well over 2600.

Grischuk - M.Gurevich
Esbjerg 2000

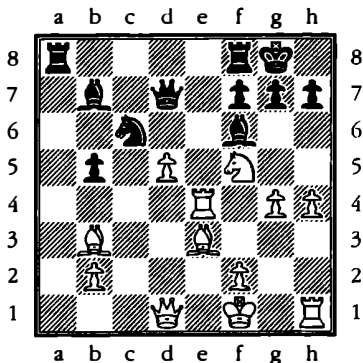


At first glance things look great for White, despite the fact that he is a piece for two pawns down: after all, he is attacking the black knight and after it retreats the white pawns will mow down the black king with f4-f5 etc.

But the knight didn't retreat. Instead there came 27... ♖xh2+!! 28 ♜xh2 ♖h8+. Now 29 ♜g1 allows mate with 29... ♜e2 or 29... ♜f3—an unanswerable double, discovered check!

Grischuk tried 29 ♜g3 but resigned after 29... ♜h4+ 30 ♜g4 ♜h6! There is no escape for the king, for example 31 ♜xd4 ♜h5+ 32 ♜h3 ♜f2 mate.

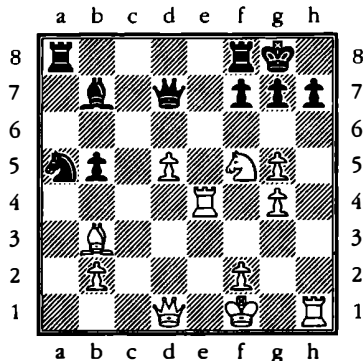
Navara - Delchev
Olympiad, Bled 2002



We join this sharp game just after Black has played 20...Qc6, putting his knight en prise. His clever idea is to escape White's middlegame build up on the kingside by simplifying to the endgame after 21 dxc6 ♖xd1+ 22 ♔xd1 ♕xc6 23 ♕f3—White cannot avoid losing the exchange—23...♖a1+ 24 ♕e2 ♖xh1 25 ♕xh1 ♕xe4 26 ♕xe4 ♕xb2 etc. Instead White ignored the knight with 21 ♕g5! when the game finished quickly after 21...Qe5 (he can no longer afford to leave his knight on c6 as if 21...♕xb2 22 dxc6 ♖xd1+ 23 ♕xd1 ♕xc6 runs into the fork 24 Qe7+)

22 ♕xf6 gxf6 23 ♖c1! and Black resigned as there was nothing to be done about 24 ♖h6 followed by mate on g7: a striking example of the power of the queen and knight against a weakened kingside.

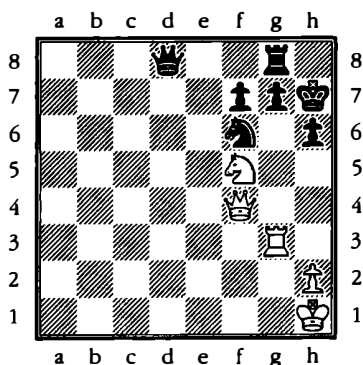
You may wonder why Delchev, a strong GM, preferred to have his kingside pawns wrecked rather than play 21...♕xg5 22 hxg5 and then save his knight with 22...♕a5.



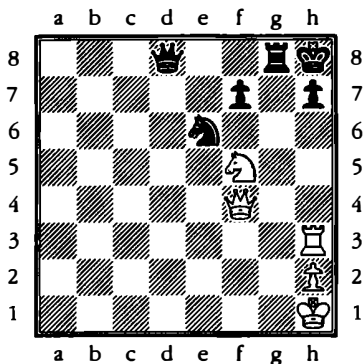
The answer is the familiar mating pattern: 23 ♕e7+ ♖h8 24 ♖xh7+! ♕xh7 25 ♖d3! This is far better than 25 ♖f3 as not only does it threaten mate with 26 ♖h3 all the same but after Black gives up his queen on e7 White can recapture with a discovered check. After 25...♖xe7 (or 25...g6 26 ♖h3+ ♕g7 27 ♖h6 mate) 26 ♖xe7+ ♕g8 27 g6 ♕xb3 28 ♖xb3 etc. Black is in ruins.

Queen and knight versus weak kingside

A knight stationed near the king's defensive line is very threatening as it controls two squares. Thus it can support a mate whilst at the same time taking away a retreat square from the king.

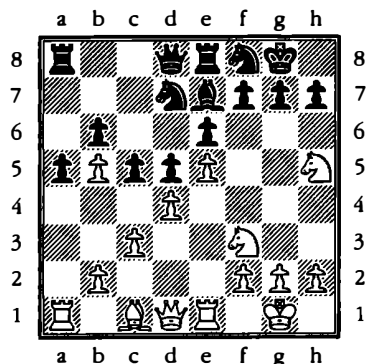


A very common mating pattern: 1 $\text{R}xg7+$! destroying the defender of h6. 1... $\text{R}xg7$ Or 1... $\text{K}h8$ 2 $\text{W}xh6+$ $\text{Q}h7$ 3 $\text{W}xh7$ mate. 2 $\text{W}xh6+$ $\text{K}g8$ 3 $\text{W}xg7$ mate.



Here Black has the g7 square guarded, but his own rook on g8 takes away a retreat square from his king. As usual a rook sacrifice clears the way for mate: 1 $\text{R}xh7+$ $\text{K}xh7$ 2 $\text{W}h6$ mate.

Kasparov - Short Zürich 2001

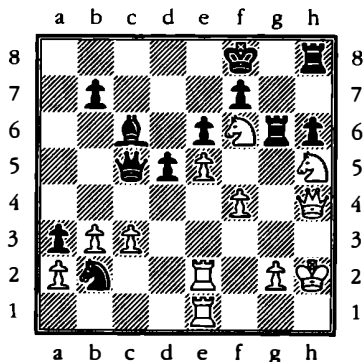


In this book there are many combinations, but you may wonder how you get the positions in the first place that contain favourable combinations? The answer is to learn all about strategy and tactics —it is as simple and hard as that!

Here we see one of the greatest chess minds at work. White has a knight stationed threateningly on h5, but there is no immediate combination. So what does Kasparov do? He waits! Or rather he makes a couple of pawn moves that tighten his grip on the kingside and feign an all out attack in the future. In looking for counterplay Short allows a winning combination. The game went 15 $\text{g}3!$ $\text{Q}g6$ 16 $\text{h}4$ $\text{Q}df8$ 17 $\text{K}g2$ It seems that Kasparov is thinking in the long term about $\text{R}h1$ etc. but after the careless 17... $\text{W}d7?$ he pounced with 18 $\text{Q}h6!!$ $\text{g}xh6$ (the only move) 19 $\text{W}d2$. Suddenly

there is no good answer to the threat of 20 ♖xh6 followed by 21 ♖g7 mate. The queen and knight prove a lethal combination, but if Black's queen were on d8 rather than d7 he would have the defence 19...♘d7 20 ♖xh6 ♕f8, refuting the attack. As it is the black queen is blocking the d7 square and he had no adequate defence. The game ended 19...f5 20 exf6 ♕d8 21 ♖xh6. Now the second wave of the attack with ♘g5 and f6-f7 will be decisive. 21...♖a7 22 ♘g5 ♖xb5 23 f7+ ♖xf7 24 ♘xf7 1-0 It is mate on g7 if he takes the knight.

Kasparov - Bareev
Cannes 2001



White should be looking for combinations here as the black knight on b2 is criminally out of play, while there are weak dark squares around the black king. Also it helps if you notice that the black king and queen are separated by the distance of a knight fork.

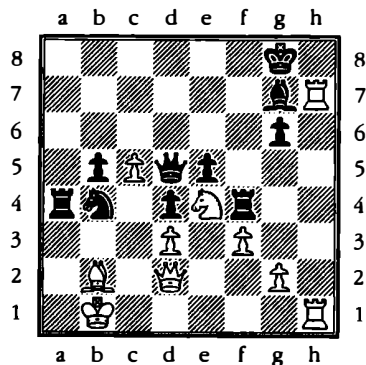
Kasparov saw that the key to breaking down Black's defence was to exchange off the black rook on g6, which is holding together the kingside.

There followed 37 ♖e3! d4 38 ♖g3 dxc3?

If 38...♖xg3 39 ♖xg3, intending 40 ♖g7+, 39...♗e7 40 ♖h4 looks horrible for Black. Bareev gambles that the passed pawn will give him counterplay, but he has overlooked the threat.

39 ♖xg6 fxg6 40 ♘d7+! ♕xd7 41 ♖f6+!

The loosening of Black's pawn structure after the exchange of rooks has made this killer check possible. **Black resigned**, as it is mate next move with either 41...♗g8 42 ♖g7 or 41...♗e8 42 ♘g7.

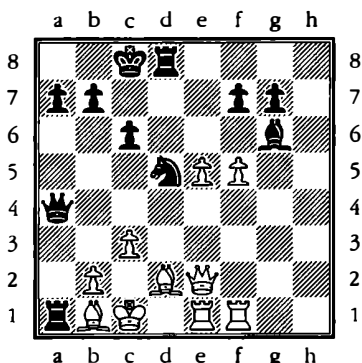


White played 1 g3 hoping for 1...♖f7 2 ♖xg7+! when 2...♖xg7 3 ♘f6+ wins the black queen and

2...♖xg7 3 ♜h6+ ♖g8 4 ♜h8 is mate. But Black got in first with 1...♜b3!

If now 2 gxf4 Black mates with 2...♠a1+! 3 ♖xa1 ♜a2. Also hopeless for White was 2 ♖c1 ♗xd3+ with a massacre after 3 ♜xd3 ♜xd3 4 gxf4 ♠c4+ or mate after 3 ♖b1 ♜a2+ 4 ♖c2 ♜xb2+ 5 ♖xd3 ♜b3+ 6 ♖e2 ♜xf3+ 7 ♖el ♠a1+.

Nijboer - Hodgson
Holland 1994



Black not only has an extra pawn but he also has the makings of a big attack on White's beleaguered king. Nevertheless after 25...♗h7 his bishop will be shut out of the game and White with his superior centralisation might one day come out on top. Black could try to exploit the pin on b1 with the immediate 25...♜a2, but 26 ♜e4 keeps everything protected. Perhaps it was a consideration of these two factors—not wanting a passive bishop and the fact that White has ♜e4—that

led Hodgson to hit upon the winning method in the game with

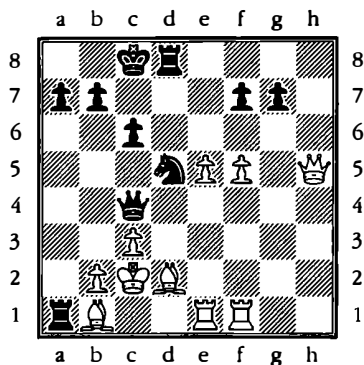
25...♗h5! 26 ♜xh5

If White declines the offer with 26 ♜e4 then the following sharp continuation was possible: 26...♗xc3!! when 27 ♗xc3 ♠d1+! 28 ♠xd1—forced—28...♜e4 wins White's queen. Or if 27 bxc3 ♜a3+ 28 ♖c2 ♠a2+ 29 ♗xa2 ♜xa2+ 30 ♖c1 ♜xd2+ 31 ♖b1 ♠d5! 32 c4 (to prevent 32...♠b5+) 32...♜b4+ 33 ♖c1 ♠d2 and there is no good way to stop 34...♜b2 mate. That only leaves 27 ♜xa4 ♗xa4 when White is two pawns down.

26...♜a2 27 ♖c2

Now that White no longer has 27 ♜e4 this is forced.

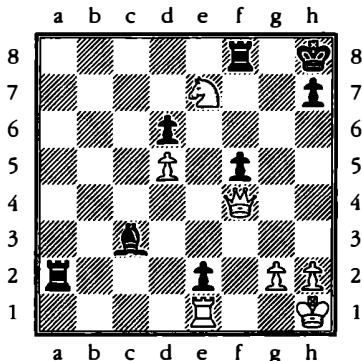
27...♜c4!



With the unanswerable threat of ♗b4+ when the queen and knight will combine to force a quick mate on the light squares, for example 28 ♠f2 ♗b4+ 29 ♖c1 ♠xb1+! 30 ♖xb1 ♜a2+ 31 ♖c1 ♜a1 mate.

28 b3 ♖b4+ 29 ♕c1 ♜xb1+ 0-1

After 30 ♕xb1 ♜xb3+ 31 ♕c1 Black has three ways to mate on the move.



This position was reached in a casual game in Istanbul played blindfold by Chris Ross, Julie Leonard and other participants in an international tournament. (An odd encounter that judging from the blunder on move two seems to prove that in chess at least the proverb ‘many hands make light work’ is less valuable than ‘too many cooks spoil the broth!’)

Black had sacrificed his queen for a rook in order to establish a pawn on the seventh rank. There followed

1 ♜xd6! ♜fa8

The knight and queen will mate the black king after 1...♗xe1 2 ♜e5+ ♜f6 3 ♜xf6: a common mating pattern.

Now however Black has the strong threat of 2...♜a1 forcing the pawn to e1. The game actually

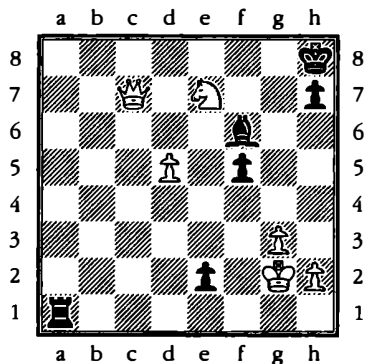
ended 2 ♕g1? ♗d4+ 3 ♕h1 ♜a1 4 ♜g3 ♜xe1+ 10 ♜xe1 ♜a1 and White resigned: Black has triumphed on the back rank.

Instead 2 ♜c7! threatens 3 ♜xc3 mate, and if 2...♗xe1 then 3 ♜e5 is mate: note that from c7 the power of the white queen expands to two key squares on the diagonal, c3 and e5. Therefore it is much more powerful than the equally plausible looking moves 2 ♜c6 or 2 ♜c5.

After 2 ♜c7 Black is forced to ease the pressure on e1 by retreating his bishop, but this allows White just enough time to neutralise the threat to his king and carry out his own winning attack.

Thus if 2...♗g7 3 g3! ♜a1 4 ♜xa1 ♜xa1+ 5 ♕g2 e1=♜ 6 ♜d8+ and mate next move.

Or 2...♗f6 3 g3 ♜a1 4 ♜xa1 ♜xa1+ 5 ♕g2

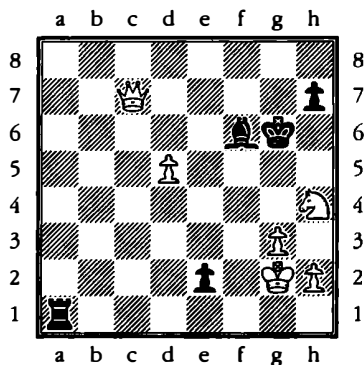


and no matter how Black plays he either loses the vital e2 pawn or gets mated: 5...♗xe7 6 ♜xe7 e1=♜ 7 ♜f8 is mate, or equally 5...e1=♜ 6 ♜d8+ ♕g7 7 ♜g8+ ♕h6 8 ♖xf5+

♔h5 9 g4 is mate. If 5...♖a8 the simple reply 6 ♕f2 to win the e2 pawn is quite sufficient.

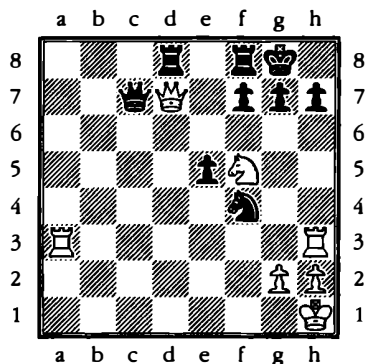
Nor does running with the king help:

5...♖g7 6 ♘xf5+ ♖g6 7 ♘h4+!



Puzzles

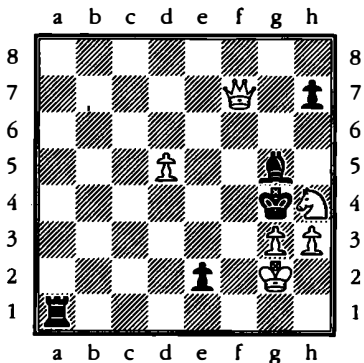
29



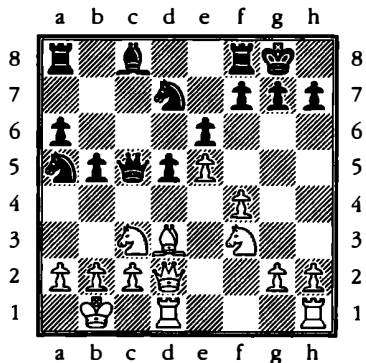
White to play

Watch out for your weak back rank!

and Black has the sad choice between losing his e pawn after 7...♗xh4 8 ♖c2+ ♕h6 9 ♖xe2 or being mated after 7...♕h6 8 ♖f4+ ♗g5 9 ♖f8+ ♕h5 10 ♖f7+ ♖g4 (10...♕h6 11 ♘f5 mate) 11 h3 mate.



30

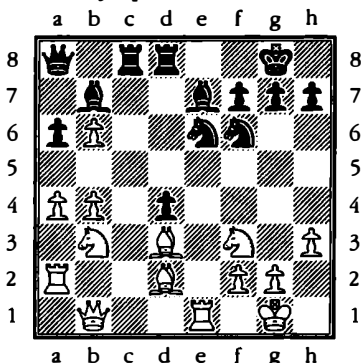


White to play

Have a go at making the Greek Gift work—remember the option of ♖d3 to get the queen involved in the attack.

31

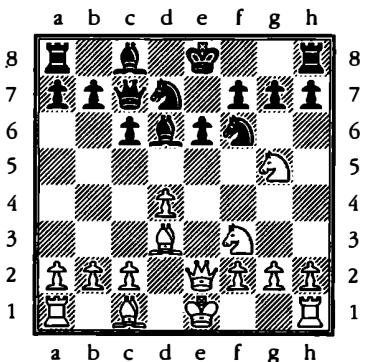
Korchnoi - Kotsur
Olympiad, Bled 2002



Korchnoi played 26 Ng5 . Now find a winning combination for White if Black plays 26... Rxg2 .

32

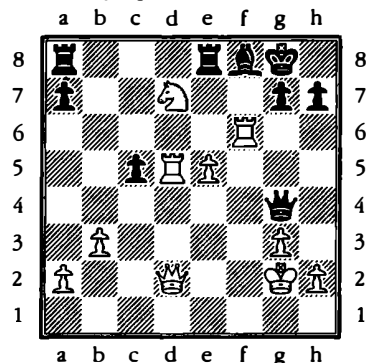
You are White in the Caro-Kann and the game begins 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nd2 dxe4 4 Qxe4 Qd7 5 Qg5 Qgf6 6 Rd3 e6 7 Q1f3 Rd6 8 We2 . Now your opponent surprises you with 8... We7 .



Can you take advantage of this non-theoretical move?

33

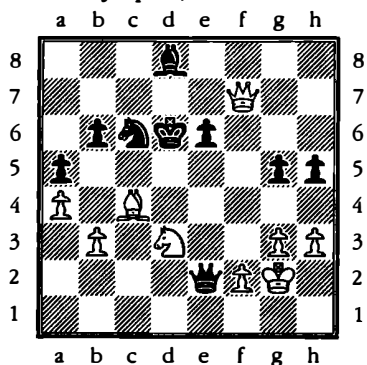
Beliaevsky - Wu Shaobin
Olympiad, Bled 2002



The white rook is immune because of the knight fork on f6, so Belyavsky played 28 Wd3 to stop We4+ and also set a little trap. Black replied 28... Rac8 . Now what should White play?

34

Christiansen - Mosquera
Olympiad, Bled 2002



White to play

How did Christiansen finish off the black king?

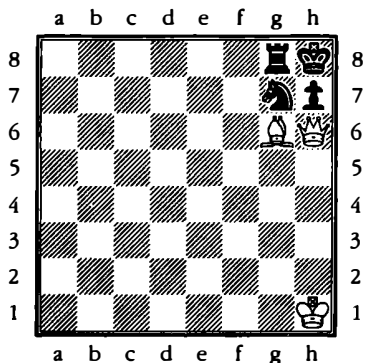
7 The Deadly Diagonal: Queen and Bishop Mates

This chapter is concerned with all types of mates in which the queen and bishop play a starring role. As you will see chess has come a long way from Scholar's mate—1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♙c4 ♘d4?? 4 ♚xf7 mate—but the bishop and queen remain a ferocious attacking force.

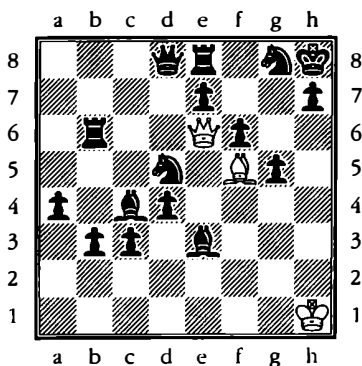
We'll start by looking at scenarios in which the queen mates at close range protected by the bishop. This occurs when fatal pressure is brought to bear against a key point near or next to the defender's king; when it collapses mate follows on the square itself, or on another square nearby that has become fatally exposed.

When the defender has castled the most frequent target is the square held by his rook's pawn on the second rank. As usual for the sake of argument I have assumed that it is White attacking the black king on the kingside. In such cases the target square is h7.

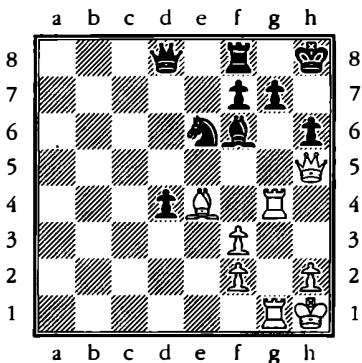
Basic mating pattern of pressure on the h file



The white queen and bishop combine with deadly effect against the h7 square, which often proves the most vulnerable point in the protective wall around the king. Here Black has no piece capable of thwarting 1 ♖xh7 mate.



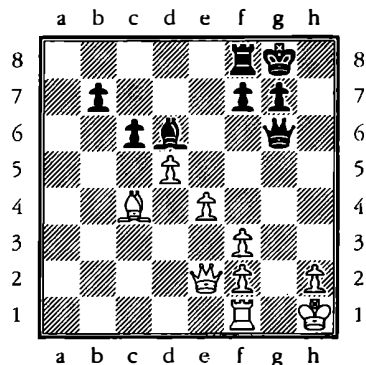
Here Black has an invincible material advantage and well placed pieces that control the centre. But all this does him no good after 1 ♖f7 as he can't prevent mate on h7. The normal yardsticks for judging a position, notably material advantage, are completely overturned by the finality of mate.



The g7 point is defended three times, but White can nevertheless win with 1 ♙xg7! when if 1...♗xg7 2 ♖xh6+ ♔g8 3 ♖h7 mate, or

1...♙xg7 2 ♖f5! when after 2...♗g5 3 ♙xg5 mate follows on h7. By eliminating the g7 pawn White prevented Black from answering 2 ♖f5 with 2...g6. Therefore the h7 square again proved fatally weak.

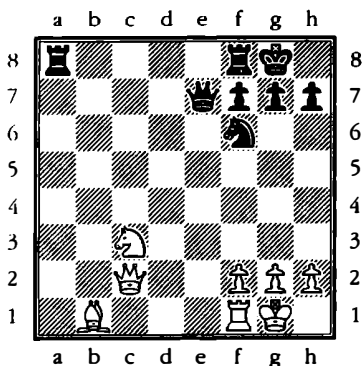
I saw a tragedy unfold in a tournament game as follows.



Black played 1...♗xd5, whereupon White replied 2 ♙xd5?? only to find that after 2...♖h5! he had no good way to defend h2.

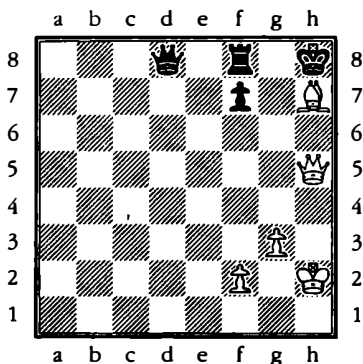
In fact the only way to avert mate was 3 e5 ♙xe5 and now either 4 ♖xe5 giving up the queen or 4 f4, allowing 4...♖xe2. If White had played 2 exd5 he could have answered 2...♖h5 with 2 f4 as the queen would be defended by the bishop, and then 2...♖xe2 3 ♙xe2 ♙xf4 is only equal for Black.

Note that for the attack on h7 (or h2) to succeed it is often important that a knight on f6 (or f3) is eliminated or at least driven away from the defence. Here is a striking example of the removal of this key defender:



After 1 $\text{d}5!$ Black is in a hopeless dilemma: if he takes the knight it is mate with 2 $\text{W}xh7$, while if he saves his queen he is also mated, e.g. 1... $\text{W}e6$ 2 $\text{Q}xf6+$ $\text{W}xf6$ 3 $\text{W}xh7$ mate. Nor does 1... $\text{W}e4$ help much because of 2 $\text{Q}xf6+$ $\text{g}xf6$ 3 $\text{W}xe4$. Remember this pattern and be careful of putting your queen on e7 in such a situation!

An important tactical idea

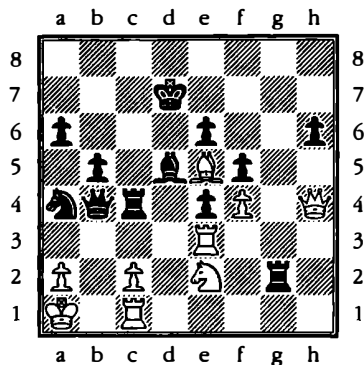


Sometimes a little finesse is required to force mate, even if the

queen and bishop have already conquered the h7 square.

White won't achieve more than a draw if he starts checking with 1 $\text{Q}e4+$ $\text{Q}g7$ 2 $\text{W}h7+$ $\text{Q}f6$ 3 $\text{W}f5+$ $\text{Q}g7$ etc. but the quiet 1 $\text{W}h6!!$ taking away the g7 escape square from the black king is deadly. It also prepares an attacking mechanism with the queen in front of the bishop. If Black does nothing he is mated after 2 $\text{Q}f5$ $\text{Q}g8$ 3 $\text{W}h7$, while if 1... $\text{Q}e8$ the f7 square is fatally weakened and 2 $\text{Q}g6+$ $\text{Q}g8$ 3 $\text{W}h7+$ $\text{Q}f8$ 4 $\text{W}xf7$ is mate.

Grischuk - Kasparov Cannes 2001

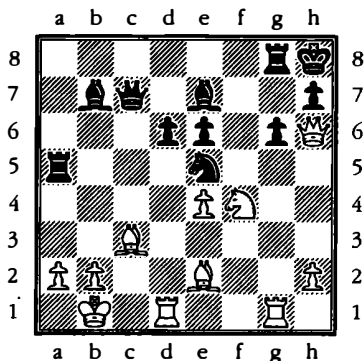


Kasparov realises that the bishop on d5 will win the game for him if he can introduce a threat of $\text{W}xa2$ mate. The first step is to clear the a3 square for the queen. This is achieved with 34... $\text{Q}xe2!$ 35 $\text{Q}xe2$ $\text{W}a3$. Now White has no time for 36 c3, when the rook on e2 guards a2, because of 36... $\text{W}xc1$ mate. So

Grischuk played 36 ♖g1. Now if the rook on c4 moves backwards or sideways, uncovering a threat of 37...♜xa2 mate, White again has the defence 37 c3. So the only move is 36...♞c3! to mechanically prevent the advance of the c pawn. Now there is no defence to mate on a2. White gave a couple of checks but when they ran out he had to resign:

37 ♜g7+ ♔c6 38 ♞c7+ ♔b6 39 ♜d4+ ♔xc7 0-1

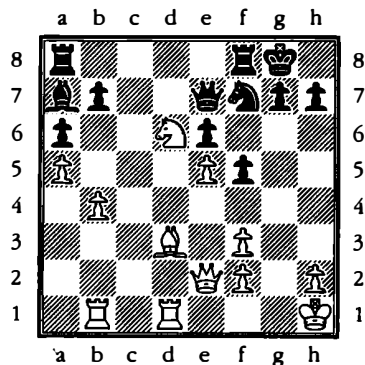
Svidler - Bischoff
Olympiad, Bled 2002



Here it would be easy for White to be tempted by 32 ♜xa5, when 32...♜xe4+ 33 ♔a1 ♜xa5 would give Black counterplay along the a file. Instead Svidler realised that his bishop was performing a vital function on c3: it paralyzes the black knight on e5 and so prevents it from helping to defend the king.

Therefore he kept up his attack with 32 ♖xg6+ ♜xg6 33 ♜xg6 ♜xe4+

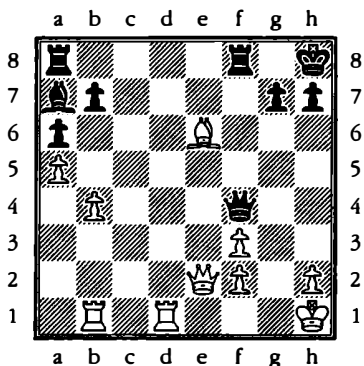
It looks like Black is also getting play here, but after 34 ♜d3! Bischoff abruptly resigned. There is no good way to prevent mate on g7 after 34...♜xd3+ 35 ♞xd3, while 34...♜xg6 35 ♜xg6 is our familiar attack on h7. None of the black pieces is able to offer any help, not least because moving the bishop from e7 allows mate on f8.



White's pride and joy in the diagram above is his excellent knight on d6. Black would like to eliminate it, but he saw that after 1...♜xd6 2 exd6 ♜xd6—of course he doesn't want to leave White with a passed pawn—White has the discovered attack 3 ♜xf5, when after the black queen moves to safety he captures on e6 and emerges a pawn up. Therefore Black settled for 1...♖g5 allowing the white knight to remain unchallenged on the d6 square. Not

surprisingly White was able to use his positional superiority to break through on the queenside and win.

Black was wrong to reject 1...♖xd6, as after 2 exd6 ♜xd6 3 ♙xf5 he has the strong response 3...♜f4! when if 4 ♙xe6+ ♚h8.



White has an extra pawn, but there is the unexpected and deadly threat of 5...♙b8! when White has no way to defend h2. Mate follows on 6 ♚g2 ♜xh2+ 7 ♚f1 ♜h1. This would be the reply to a move like 5 ♙d5. If instead White prepares to defend with 5 ♖g1, then 5...♞ae8 puts his queen and bishop into a fatal pin.

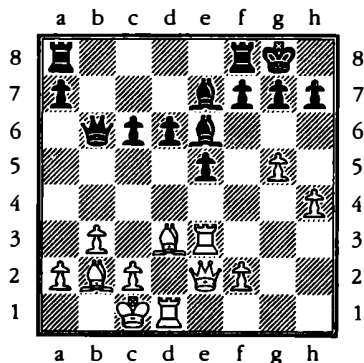
Such is the power of a queen and bishop along a diagonal against an undefended point. Note that the queen and bishop are the optimum way round, with the queen in front. It is quite possible that Black had simply forgotten about his bishop sitting quietly on a7 and never dreamed that it could become the star of the show.

Pressure against other key squares

Generally speaking, when there are only a couple of pieces, such as queen and bishop, involved in the attack there are more defensive resources the closer the vulnerable square is to the centre. It is easier for the defender's pieces to come to the rescue: thus a knight has four ways of defending g2 but only three ways to defend h2. Therefore a piece that was performing some other role in the centre might find 'by accident' that it can lend a hand to its king.

Nevertheless, under the right circumstances the queen and a bishop can be a lethal combination against the g7 square, as the following two games demonstrate.

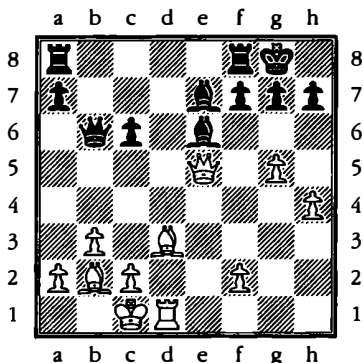
Hengles - Palacios Perez IBCA World Championship 2002



A pawn up with a broad centre, you would think that Black is doing well in the diagram position. But with his next move White unleashed

the bishop on b2 in astonishing fashion: 22 ♖xe5!!

After 22...dxe5 23 ♜xe5



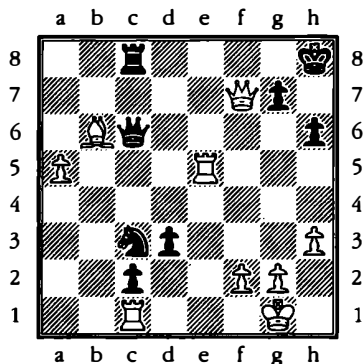
there is only one weak point in Black's position, but it happens to be on g7, which is of course one square in front of his king. That is why checkmate is such an unusual feature of a chess game: here it overthrows the laws of space, material and development, as according to every criteria Black is doing OK or very well apart from the fact that he is mated!

Black has to block the diagonal, but it is only a temporary remedy: 23...f6 24 ♜xe6+ ♔h8 (or 24...♞f7 25 ♙c4 ♞af8 26 ♜xe7) 25 ♜xe7 winning too much material or 23...♙f6 24 gxf6 and the f6 pawn proves a killer, for example 24...g6 25 ♜g5 ♔h8 26 h5! ♞g8 27 hxg6 fxg6 28 f7+ ♞g7 29 ♜h6 with a quick mate.

In the game Black declined the offer with 22...♞ae8, but he couldn't stem the momentum of White's attack: 23 ♞xe6! ♙xg5+ (if

23...fxe6 24 ♙xh7+! ♔xh7 25 ♜h5+ ♔g8 26 g6 and the killer pawn triumphs again) 24 hxg5 ♞xe6 25 ♙xh7+ and Black resigned. If 25...♔xh7 26 ♜h5+ ♔g8 27 ♞h1 f5 28 g6 when Black has to give up a rook to stave off mate on h8 or h7.

Anand - Karpov
Lausanne 1998



White has an extra rook but he had better be careful as the black passed pawns are storming down the board. Anand decided that attack is the best form of defence:

38 ♙d4!

If now 38...d2 the pressure on g7 proves fatal: 39 ♞e8+ ♞xe8 40 ♜xg7 mate.

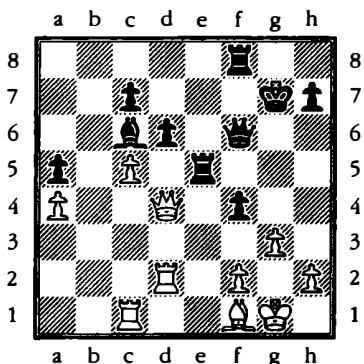
38...♞g8 39 ♞e6!

Now the black queen finds itself in trouble as 39...♜d5 40 ♞xh6 is mate.

39...d2 40 ♞xc6 dxc1=♜+ 41 ♔h2 ♜d2 42 ♞c8! 1-0

Disaster follows all the same on g7.

Even the strongest players can have blind spots when it comes to certain squares. I think it is easy to overlook combinations on the four corner squares—a1, a8, h1 and h8—because most of the time nothing much ever happens there.



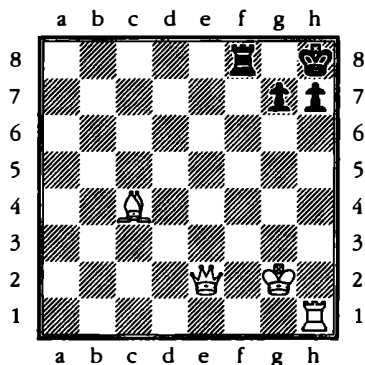
From one of my own games. I played 26...fxg3, delighted that after 27 fxg3—'forced' the f file would be open so that I could win a pawn with 27...♖xc5! 28 ♖xc5 dxc5 (of course 28...♗xf1 is illegal because the queen is pinned!) when White can't play 29 ♗xc5?? because of 29...♗xf1 mate.

Imagine my surprise when my Grandmaster opponent played 27 hxg3?? allowing 27...♗f3 when White had to resign as 28 ♗h4 ♖h5 will win the queen or mate on h1. He had simply forgotten about the h1 square.

Cutting off the king's escape

So far we have looked at examples in which the queen, protected by the bishop, struck a mating blow at close quarters against the enemy king. In other words they acted against a particular square on the same diagonal. Now we shall look at some examples in which the pieces co-ordinate their action to mate by controlling different squares.

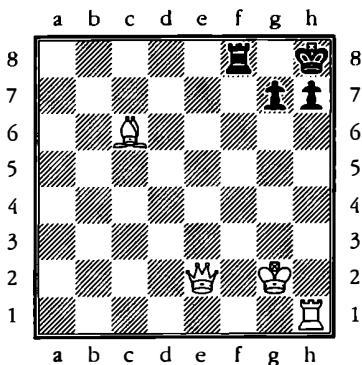
The most well known scenario is what I have termed 'cutting off the king' in the chapter on the Greek Gift and other queen and knight mates.



Here the queen checks from the front, while the bishop prevents the king running away to the g8 square:

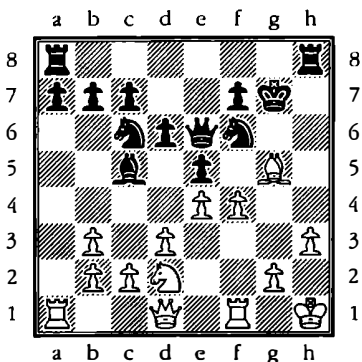
1 ♖xh7+! ♔xh7 2 ♗h5 mate.

Besides giving the fatal check, the queen also stops the king escaping to g6.



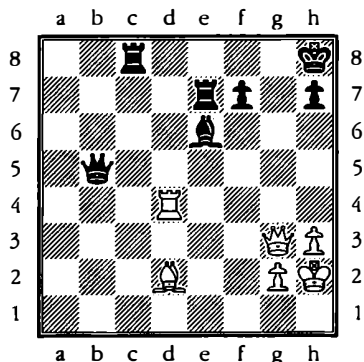
Here mate is achieved by winning time to get the bishop aiming at g8:

1 Exh7+ ! Kxh7 2 Wh5+ Kg8 3 Ed5+ . Note that if Black had a bishop rather than a rook on f8 it would already be mate. As it is he can last three moves longer: 3... Ef7 4 Wxf7+ Kh8 5 Wh5 mate.



From a recent tournament game. White played 1 fxe5 , uncovering an attack by the rook on the black knight on f6. If he thought he was

doing well he was in for a rude shock as 1... Exh3+ 2 gxxh3 Wxxh3 mate followed.



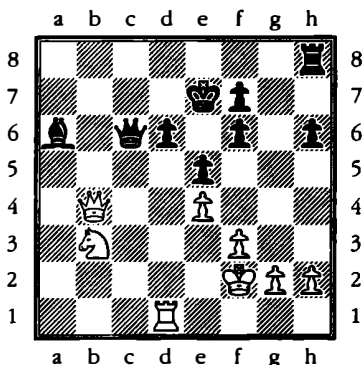
Despite being a rook down White can win as follows: 1 Ed8+ ! when

1... Exd8 2 Ec3+ mates in two moves or 1... We8 2 Eg5!! and Black has no way to prevent a fatal check on f6. Finally if 1... Ee8 2 Exe8+ Wxe8 3 Eg5!! Wd8 (he has to stop 4 Ef6) 4 Exd8 Exd8 5 We5+ Kg8 6 Wg5+ and White picks up the rook and wins easily. An incredible example of queen and bishop co-ordination.

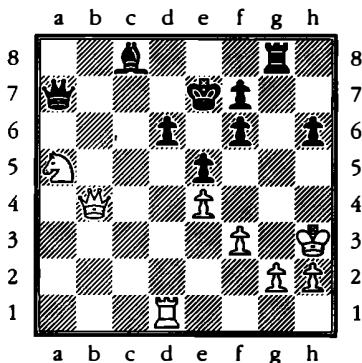
The bishop and queen in a king hunt

We end with two further examples of the queen and bishop acting against different squares in order to achieve mate. In both examples the enemy king has been driven out of his defences.

Campos Moreno - Adams
Cala Galdana 2001



Here Adams played the crafty 26...♞c7 when White should have adopted a defensive stance with 27 ♞d2, for example 27...♞b6+ 28 ♞e3. But he failed to see the danger to his king and played the aggressive 27 ♞a5? when 27...♞a7+! was fatal: 28 ♞g3. If 28 ♞e1 ♞e3 mate 28...♞g8+ 29 ♞h3 ♞c8+! and White resigned. White has his own threat of ♞xd6+ ♞d8; ♞d8 mate, so Black has to do everything with check.

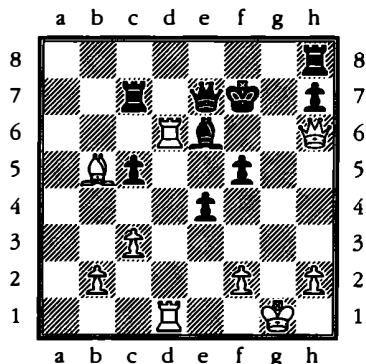


There are two variations:

30 ♞h4 ♞f2+ 31 g3 ♞xh2 mate
or if 31 ♞h5 ♞g5+ 32 ♞xh6 ♞h4 mate.

30 g4 ♞xg4+! 31 fxg4 (or 31 ♞g3 ♞e6+ 32 ♞h4 ♞f2+ 33 ♞h5 ♞xh2 mate) 31...♞e3+ 32 ♞h4 (or 32 ♞g2 ♞xg4+ 33 ♞h1 ♞f3 mate) 32...♞f2+ 33 ♞h3 ♞f3+ 34 ♞h4 ♞xg4 mate.

Kasparov - Ponomariov
Linares 2002



An epic battle from the penultimate round of the great Linares 2002 tournament. For the first time Ruslan Ponomariov was playing in a world elite tournament and he was lying equal first with Kasparov. At least until he fell into the bind in the position above.

Black's defences along the d file are holding firm, but Kasparov cleverly exploited an undefended diagonal on the kingside with 36 ♞e2! rerouting the bishop to h5. Already there is the threat of 37

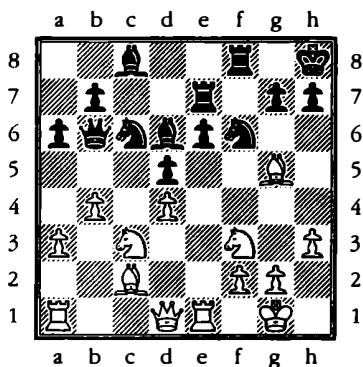
♔h5+ ♕g8 38 ♖d8+ ♜xd8 39 ♜xd8 mate. If 36...♗g8+ 37 ♕h1 leaves Black defenceless against either 38 ♔h5+ or 38 ♜xh7+. So Ponomarev tried 36...♜f6, but resigned after 37 ♔h5+ ♕e7 38 ♜xe6+! as 38...♜xe6 39 ♗g7+ ♜f7 40 ♜xf7 is mate, while if 38...♕xe6 39 ♖d6+! ♕xd6 40 ♜xf6+ wins the queen with mate to follow.

After winning the game above, Kasparov beat Shirov in the final round to win the tournament in emphatic style.

Puzzles

35

V.Karpov - Rudykh
Novosibirsk 2002

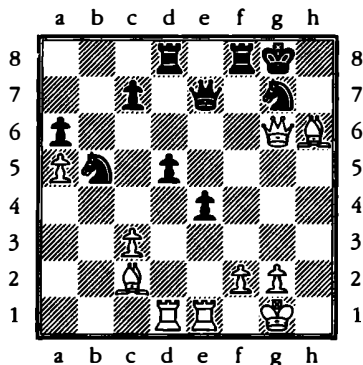


White to play

Viktor Karpov might not be as famous as Anatoly, but he can still spot a combination. Here he played 19 ♜d3, no doubt trying not to look too much at the h7 square...Now Black should play 19...g6, but instead he fell for it with 19...♔d7 And now?

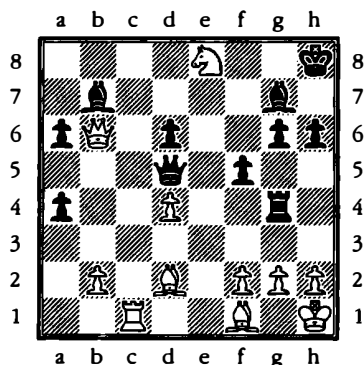
36

Ramesh - D.Ledger
Torquay 2002



White to play

37



White to play

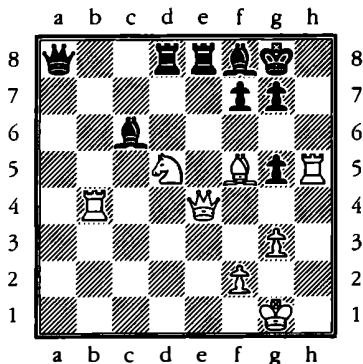
White is a piece up. Should he:

- a) play 1 ♜d8, when the threat of 2 ♕f6+ wins for him.
- b) attack the black queen with 1 ♕c7, winning more material as if 2...♜e4 3 f3 is a fork on queen and rook.

c) play 1 f3 to rule out any tricks against g2.

d) play 1 ♖xg7 to continue the attack on Black's king.

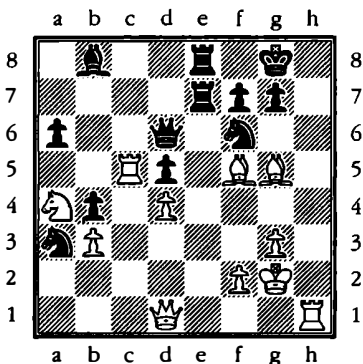
38



White to play

39

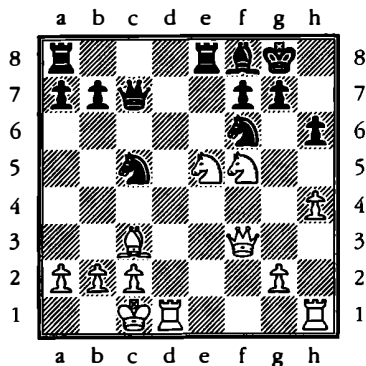
Karpov - Morovic Fernandez
Las Palmas 1994



White to play

40

Adams - Leko
Linares 1999



White to play

Another Adams-Leko encounter. It looks like Black has a secure defence here as 20 ♖xh6+ gxh6 21 ♜xf6 can be answered by 21...♗g7 when the knight on e5 is en prise if the queen moves. Can you spot the improvement for White which gives White an easy win?

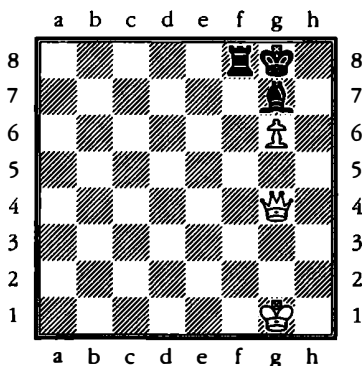
8 The Killer Pawn

The subject of this chapter is mating patterns created by an advanced pawn jammed in the heart of the enemy king position.

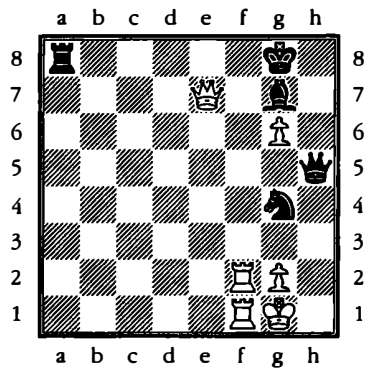
With good reason I have designated this a 'killer pawn'

A simple example is when the queen, supported by an advanced (or killer) pawn, is placed right next to an enemy king to deliver checkmate.

A killer pawn creates mating threats not only by supplying the friendly queen or another piece with support on a crucial square but also by denying the defender's pieces the use of a key square. This becomes clear if we examine the following diagram.



Black's king looks well defended, but he cannot stave off mate after 1 ♖e6+ ♔h8 2 ♜h3+ ♚g8 3 ♜h7, or equally 1... ♜f7 2 ♜xf7+ ♔h8 3 ♜e8+ ♙f8 4 ♜xf8. The pawn on g6 provided the white queen with the perfect 'hook' to mate on h7 or wreak havoc on f7. It also ruled out the defensive move ♜f7 by Black.

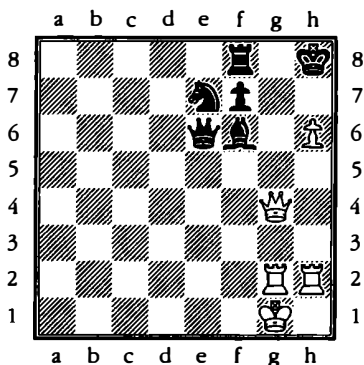


A more complicated example. Black threatens 1... ♜h2 mate, so White had better find something fast. In fact he can win by 1 ♜f8+! with two variations:

1... ♜xf8 2 ♜xf8+ ♙xf8 3 ♜f7+ ♔h8 4 ♜xf8 mate.

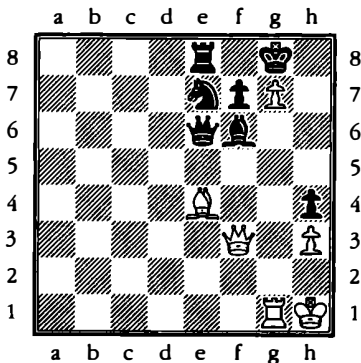
1... ♙xf8 2 ♜f7+ ♔h8 3 g7+! winning Black's queen. After 3... ♙xg7 4 ♜xh5+ ♔h6 5 g4! the second pawn advance quells all

resistance, for there is no answer to 6 g5 winning a further piece, as 5...♙g8 6 ♗d5+ wins the rook.

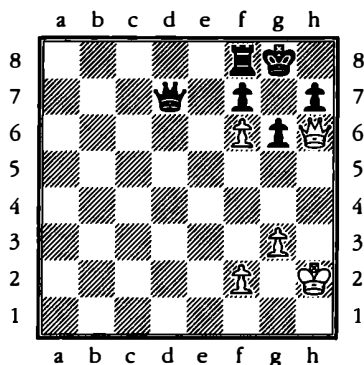


Here the pawn on h6 provides a lever for a mating combination:

1 ♗g7+! ♔xg7 2 hxg7+ ♙g8 3 ♚h8 mate.



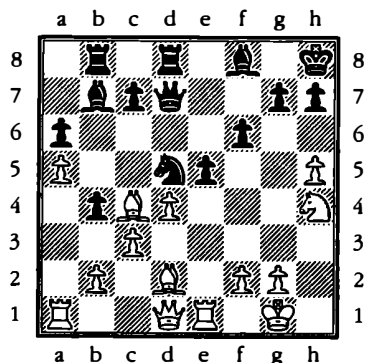
Again the killer pawn supports a mate after 1 ♔h7+! ♙xh7 2 ♗h5+ ♙g8 3 ♗h8 mate.



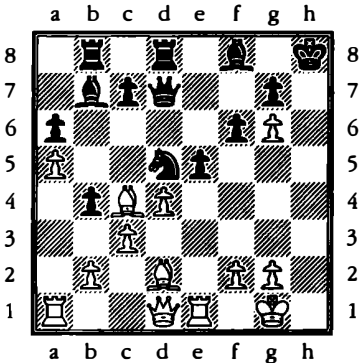
The final pattern shows every player's nightmare when they fianchetto the king's bishop on g7. The dark square bishop has vanished and now the pawn on f6 paralyses the black kingside. In this instance mate is inevitable on g7, but this type of set up should be avoided at all costs by the defender, even if there is no immediate mate looming.

Let's see how Michael Adams utilises the theme of the killer pawn.

Adams - Tomorhuyag
Moscow Olympiad 1994



Here he played 23 ♘g6+! hxg6
24 hxg6



with the threat of 25 ♖h5+ ♕g8
26 ♖h7 mate. The pawn on g6 both
supports the queen on the mating
square and takes away the f7 flight
square from the black king. Black
has two possible defensive tries
against the mate.

Prevent White from playing ♖h5.

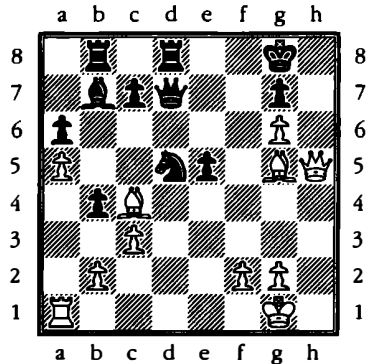
Unfortunately for him if 24...♗f5
White can deflect the black queen
from the defence of the h5 square
with 25 ♙d3! as there are no safe
squares in the vicinity of h5. The
queen must either retreat or capture
the bishop when in either case mate
follows as above after say 25...
♗xd3 26 ♖h5+

*Clear a flight square for the king
by moving the bishop from f8 which
is what occurred in the game:*

24...♙d6 25 ♖h5+ ♕g8

Now the obvious 26 ♖h7+ ♕f8
27 ♖h8+ allows 27...♕e7 when
Black can continue to resist after 28

♗xg7+ ♕e8 29 ♖g8+ ♙f8. Adams
came up with a brighter idea: why
not prevent the black king escaping
to e7, when mate will follow sooner
or later on h8? With this in mind he
played the further sacrifice 26
dxe5! ♙xe5 27 ♗xe5! fx5 28
♙g5!

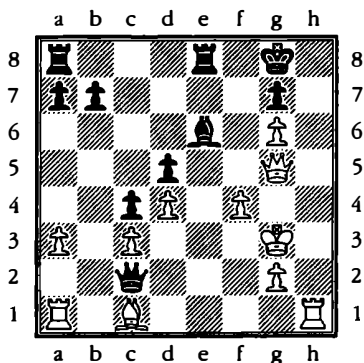


Now the threat is 29 ♖h7+
followed by mate on h8 because the
black king is denied e7. The bishop
on c4 is doing a good job in pinning
the black knight and so preventing a
defence based on ♘f6. Black made
one last attempt to save his king
with 28...♗e6, so that if 29 ♖h7+
♕f8 30 ♖h8+ ♖g8 blocks the at-
tack. But Adams had one last trick
up his sleeve:

29 ♙e7!! 1-0

This takes away the f8 square
from the black king and so threatens
mate again on h7. The black knight
can't capture the bishop without
dropping the queen and after
29...♗xe7 30 ♖h7+ ♕f8 31 ♖h8 is
mate as the black queen boxes in
her king.

Morozevich - Dolmatov
Moscow 1996



Such was Morozevich's belief in the power of the killer pawn that he was willing to give up a rook with 25 $\text{R}h5!!$ to further his attack along the h file. There followed

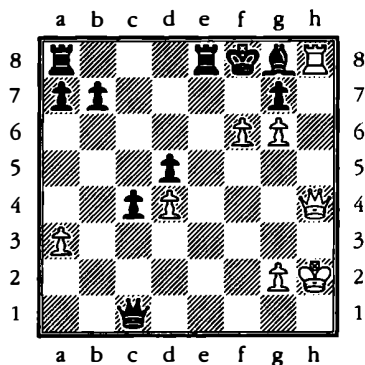
25... $\text{W}xc3+$ 26 $\text{Ch}2$ $\text{W}xa1$

After 26... $\text{W}xd4$ 27 $\text{Wh}4$ $\text{Ch}8$ (forced) 28 $\text{Qe}3!$ $\text{W}xe3$ 29 $\text{Re}1$ Black has to give up his queen as he is mated after 29... $\text{W}d3$ (if 29... $\text{W}c5$ the quickest win for White is 30 $\text{Rf}5+!$ $\text{Qxf}5$ 31 $\text{Wh}8$ mate) 30 $\text{Rh}8+$ $\text{Qg}8$ 31 $\text{R}xg8+$ $\text{Ch}xg8$ 32 $\text{Wh}7+$ $\text{Ch}f8$ 33 $\text{Wh}8$ mate.

27 $\text{Wh}4$ $\text{Ch}8$ 28 $\text{f}5$ $\text{Qg}8$

If 28... $\text{W}xc1$ 29 $\text{fxe}6$ and Black will have to give up his queen to avert 30 $\text{Rh}8$ mate.

29 $\text{Rh}8$ $\text{W}xc1$ 30 $\text{f}6!$



A pretty situation. One killer pawn is bad enough but two are just invincible!

Black has an extra rook and bishop but has no good way to stop 31 $\text{R}xg8+$! $\text{Ch}xg8$ 32 $\text{Wh}7+$ $\text{Ch}f8$ 33 $\text{Wh}8$ mate, for if 30... $\text{gxf}6$ 31 $\text{W}xf6$ is immediate mate.

30... $\text{Wh}6$ 31 $\text{R}xh6$ $\text{Re}4$

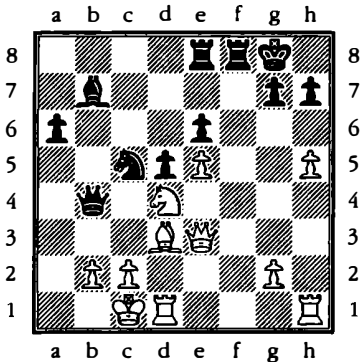
Black can't even recapture on h6 as 32 $\text{W}xh6$ is mate.

32 $\text{Wh}5$ $\text{gxf}6$

Whereas now 32... $\text{g}xh6$ 33 $\text{g}7$ is mate. Morozevich made no mistake in the mopping up phase:

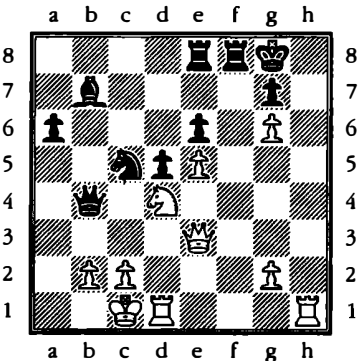
33 $\text{g}7+!$ $\text{Ch}e7$ 34 $\text{Wf}5$ $\text{Re}6$ 35 $\text{W}xd5$ $\text{Rd}8$ 36 $\text{W}xc4$ $\text{Rc}6$ 37 $\text{Wb}4+$ $\text{Rcd}6$ 38 $\text{W}xb7+$ $\text{Rd}7$ 39 $\text{We}4+$ $\text{Qe}6$ 40 $\text{Rh}8$ $\text{Rxd}4$ 41 $\text{Wh}7$ 1-0

Svidler - Short
Dubai 2002



Nigel Short has just played 21...dxc5, in order to eliminate the strong white bishop with dxd3+ and so weaken any attack on his king. But Peter Svidler saw the chance to exploit the idea of a killer pawn and keep his bishop with 22 g6!!

Let's see what happens if Black accepts the offer with 22...hxg6 23



Now the winning idea for White is ♖h3, followed by ♖h7 or ♖h8 mate. Black could try 23...dxa4, when he has his own threat of mate on b2. If then 24 b3?? ♖a3+ 25 ♜b1 ♖b2 is mate, while 24 dxb3? allows 24...♖f4! and Black forces the exchange of queens.

But White has a way to get his mate in first with checks:

24 ♜h8+!

You may have noticed that White's winning idea of ♖h3 followed by ♖h8 or ♖h7 amounted to an overkill—one mate is quite enough to win the game, and by giving up the rook on h8 White wins time for the mate on h7.

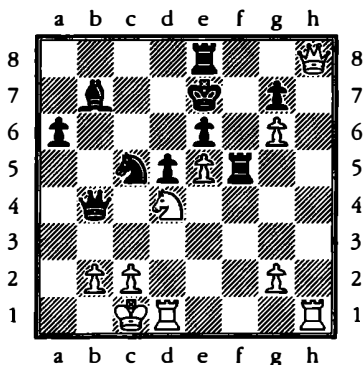
24...♜xh8 25 ♖h3+ ♜g8 26 ♖h7 mate

Because every move is check, Black had no chance to carry out his own threat. As a general rule, you should train yourself to always play the most forcing series of moves, even if you can't see any counterplay for your opponent.

Now let's assume that from the diagram above Black made a hole for his king with 23...f5.

Play could then go 24 ♖h3 ♜f8 25 ♖h8+ ♜e7

Black's king has been driven out into the centre. Now White has two interesting winning methods.



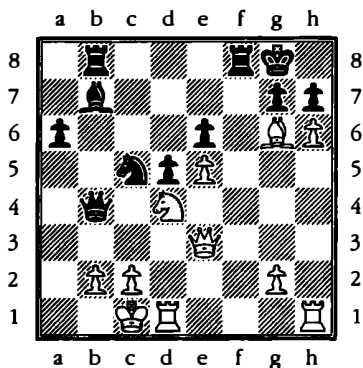
The first is immediately decisive but difficult to see: **26 ♖h4+!! ♔d7** **27 ♘xf5** and as White threatens **28 ♜xb4**, Black has nothing better than **28...♜xh4** **29 ♘xh4** when White is the exchange and a pawn up.

The second idea is more natural: **26 ♜xg7+ ♔d8** **27 ♜h7 ♜b6** (to stop mate on c7) **28 ♘xf5 exf5**. Now White can create connected passed pawns with **29 ♜f6+! ♜xf6** **30 exf6** which will cost Black his rook within a couple of moves.

These winning methods have nothing to do with mate—but if your opponent has to play a move like **23...♜f5**, then you are guaranteed to regain all your sacrificed material with **♘xf5** and keep up a strong attack. So you are taking no risk. Something good is bound to turn up: it might not be a mate, but there will be a win there somewhere if you look closely enough. In fact, I suspect that Svidler didn't bother looking very closely at the defence **23...♜f5** when he made his decision to put the bishop on g6. He would

see that he was getting his material back and so would have spent his time looking at other lines.

So much for Black accepting the bishop offer. Instead he could have tried **22...♜b8**, with ideas of a counterattack against b2. However, White then has the powerful **23 h6!**



There is no time to be wasted in prosecuting the attack. Now there are two variations:

23...hxg6 **24 hxg7 ♔xg7** (or else **♜h8+** will win) **25 ♜h6+ ♔f7** **26 ♜df1+ ♔e7** **27 ♜g7+ ♔e8** **28 ♜xf8** mate.

23...♔c8, a despairing attempt to hit b2. Now remembering our rule that everything should be done with check if possible, White can win with **24 ♔xh7+! ♔xh7** **25 hxg7+ ♔xg7** **26 ♜g5+ ♔f7** **27 ♜h7+ ♔e8** **28 ♜e7** mate.

Poor Black. In the game (see the first diagram on page 89) after **22 ♔g6** Short declined the offer with **22...♜e7**, which bolsters his second rank against a possible **h5-h6**

advance, but leaves his first rank under-defended. The game continued

23 $\text{Hd}f1$ $\text{Hxf}1+$ 24 $\text{Hxf}1$ $\text{Qa}4$ 25 $\text{Qb}3!$

Here this is a necessary precaution. Not seeing much in the way of defence after the threatened $\text{Wf}3$, Short finally decided to accept the bishop.

25... $\text{h}xg6$ 26 $\text{h}xg6$ $\text{Wh}4$

He has to stop 27 $\text{Wh}3$ or else be mated on h7.

27 $\text{Wf}3$ $\text{Wg}5+$

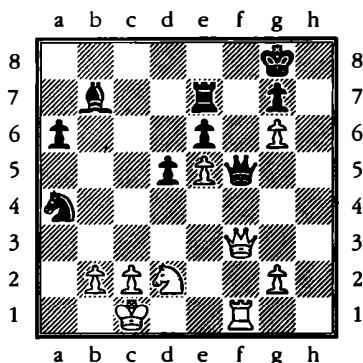
And now the black queen has to hurry to prevent disaster on the f file.

28 $\text{Qd}2!$

Everything flows nicely in White's attack. The fact that the knight defends the rook proves crucial on the next move.

28... $\text{Wf}5$

Equally disastrous are 28... $\text{He}8$ 29 $\text{Wf}7+$ and 28... $\text{Wxg}6$ 29 $\text{Wf}8+$ $\text{Qh}7$ 30 $\text{Hh}1+$.



29 $\text{Wg}3!$

Gradually Svidler edges his queen to h4, where she will both threaten mate on h7 and attack the rook on e7.

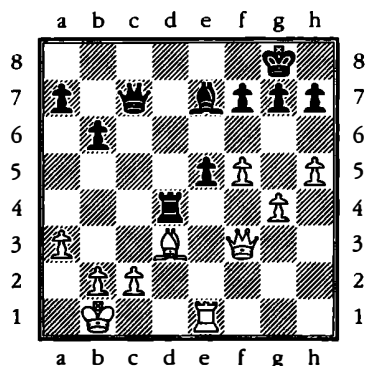
In a recent interview the Russian GM said he thought his greatest strength in chess was maintaining the initiative. It is hard to argue with this verdict when you see his skill in exploiting the killer pawn.

29... $\text{Wh}5$ 30 $\text{Wf}4$ $\text{Wf}5$ 31 $\text{Wh}4$ $\text{Wxe}5$

Hoping against hope that White will take on e7, when 32... $\text{Wxb}2+$ comes with a loud cry of check. In any case 31... $\text{Wxg}6$ 32 $\text{Wxe}7$ was entirely hopeless.

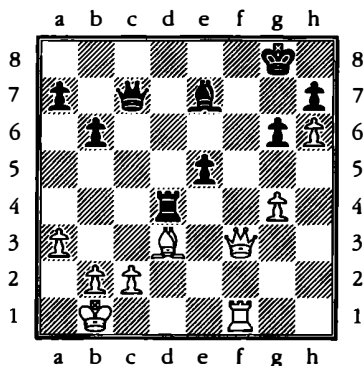
32 $\text{Wh}7$ mate.

Van den Doel - Sakalauskas Olympiad, Bled 2002



White began to undermine the black kingside with 31 h6!

Black has the miserable choice of allowing a white pawn on h6 or g6. If 31...g6 32 fxg6 fxg6 33 ♖f1



and Black cannot hold out for long due to his weaknesses on the light squares which are made manifest by the presence of opposite coloured bishops. Here are two sample variations which illustrate the danger down the f file:

33...♙d6 34 ♜a8+ ♜b8 35 ♙c4+! ♚h8 (Black loses the rook after 35...♞xc4 36 ♜d5+) 36 ♜xb8+ ♙xb8 37 ♞f8 mate.

33...♞f4 34 ♜d5+ ♚h8 (or 34...♙f8 35 ♞xf4+ exf4 36 ♙c4 followed by a devastating check on the long diagonal e.g. 36...♙g5 37 ♜g8+ ♚e7 38 ♜xh7+) 35 ♞xf4 exf4 36 ♜f7 ♙d6. There is no other way to defend g7. 37 ♜e8+ and mate follows.

The game actually went:

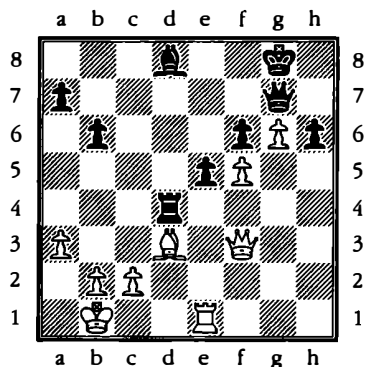
31...f6 32 hxg7 ♙d8

Or 32...♚xg7 33 g5!

33 g5!

This leads to the creation of a killer pawn on g6 as abysmal for Black is 33...fxg6 34 f6.

33...♜xg7 34 g6 h6



Black hopes to construct a solid blockade, but when you have lost control of the light squares there is no hiding place on the dark squares! White's winning plan is very instructive: he will intensify the pressure on the diagonal a2-g8 until Black can no longer guard the f7 square and hold onto the h6 pawn.

35 ♙c4+! ♚h8

Not 35...♞xc4 36 ♜d5+ winning the exchange.

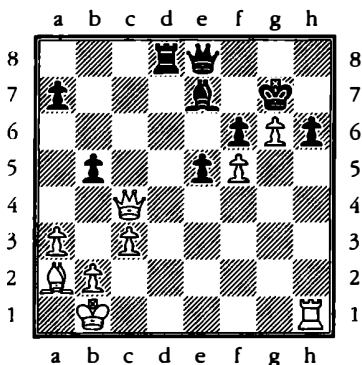
36 ♙f7 ♜f8 37 ♞h1 ♚g7 38 ♜h3 ♜h8 39 ♙a2!

White gradually carries out his plan. The pawn on g6 severely hampers Black's ability to manoeuvre.

39...♙e7 40 ♜b3 ♜e8 41 c3 ♞d8 42 ♜c4 ♙c5 43 ♞xh6! 1-0

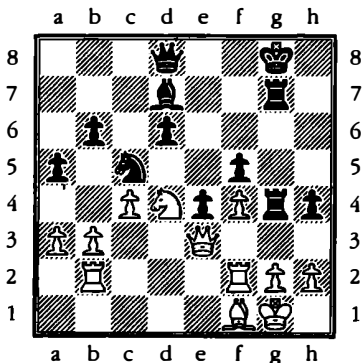
Black resigned as the pawn queens with check after 43...♚xh6

44 ♖h4+ ♔g7 45 ♖h7+ ♔f8 46 g7+. If on the previous move Black had played 42...b5, attacking the queen, then I can offer you the following brilliant win:



43 ♜xh6!! bxc4 44 ♜h7+ ♔f8 45 ♙xc4!! and despite being a queen up there is nothing Black can do about 46 g7+

Keres - Petrosian
Candidates Tournament 1959



Keres played 47 b4, aiming to push back the knight and gain the initiative on the queenside. With the g2 square securely defended he didn't foresee any trouble on the kingside. But Petrosian offered a rook in order to establish a killer advanced pawn:

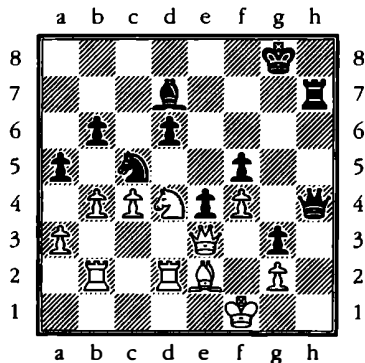
47...♜g3!! 48 hxg3

Retreating the queen allows 48...♘d3.

48...hxg3 49 ♜fd2 ♖h4

It turns out that White's pieces are well positioned to defend all points apart from those on the h file.

50 ♙e2 ♜h7 51 ♔f1

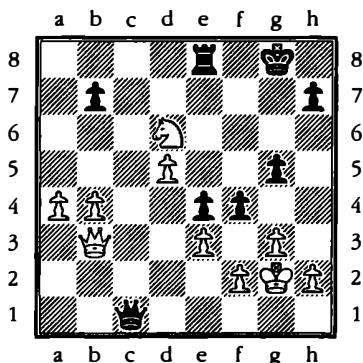


Apparently Keres, who was renowned as a tactician in his youth, had completely missed Black's next move and thought he was a rook up for nothing!

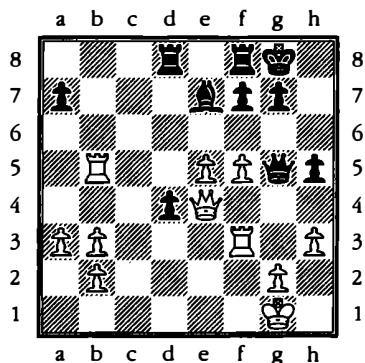
51...♖xf4+! 0-1

It is mate after 52 ♖xf4 ♜h1.

Crouch - Summerscale
British Rapidplay 2002



Dominguez - Johansen
Olympiad, Bled 2002



Grandmaster Summerscale knew the value of having a pawn on f3 and won as follows: 32...f3+ 33 ♔h3. Now a little finesse is required as the obvious 33...♚f1+?? allows 34 ♔g4 when the white king escapes and suddenly it is Black who has to start thinking about how to draw the game! Instead Summerscale played 33...h5! A strong player knows from experience that in such situations the king should be kept imprisoned. In fact I doubt that Summerscale did much, if any, calculation before playing this move: as soon as he saw the threat of 34...♚f1 mate he would know this was the winning move. IM Colin Crouch resigned straight-away: he also knew that he must be losing. There is only one variation: 34 ♚c4 ♚h1! (or 34...♚g1!) and there is no defence against 35...♚g2. The fact that the rook on e8 is hanging was a complete irrelevance.

White, who has already sacrificed a piece for two pawns and the initiative, was willing to give up both rooks to establish a killer pawn on f6:

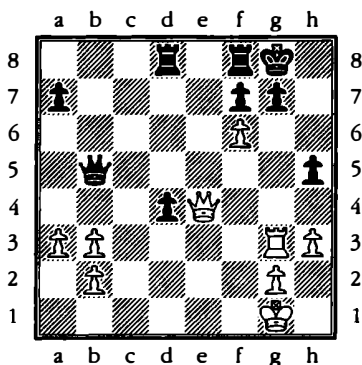
30 f6! ♙xf6 31 exf6 ♚xb5 32 ♖g3!

Threatening 33 ♖xg7+ ♔h8 34 ♚h7 mate. First of all let's see how the game finished:

32...g5 33 ♚h4 g4? 34 ♖xg4+!

and Black resigned as he is mated on g7 after 34...hxg4 35 ♚h6, while if 34...♔h8 35 ♖g5 ♚xg5 (or else disaster occurs on h5) 36 ♚xg5 ♖g8 37 ♚h6 mate.

This looked very convincing, but Black overlooked two adequate methods of defence. Firstly, at move 32 instead of 32...g5

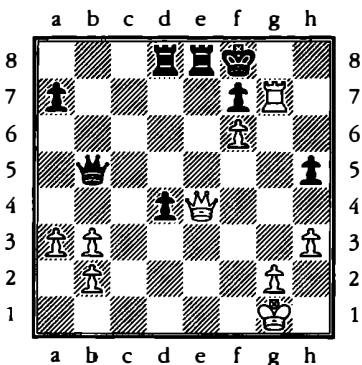


Black would be mated after 32...g6? 33 ♖xg6+ fxg6 34 ♗xg6+ ♕h8 35 ♗g7, but he could have played 32...♖fe8! which clears the f8 square for his king and attacks the white queen. After 33 ♖xg7+ (forced) 33...♕f8

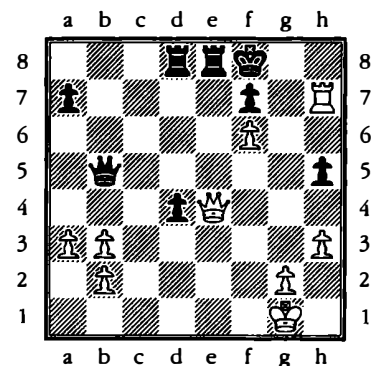
mates he is threatening on the back rank look unavoidable. However, Black has enough firepower to counterattack and even win as follows: 34...♖e1+ 35 ♕h2 (even worse is 35 ♕f2 ♗f1+ 36 ♕g3 ♖e3+ 37 ♕h4 ♗xf6+) 35...♗e5+ 36 ♖g3 ♗xf6 and by eliminating the killer pawn Black destroys the mating pattern, when he wins with his extra rook.

So does this mean that White would be losing after 32...♖fe8 because he has over sacrificed? In fact he can save a draw by employing a method that is well worth remembering. After 33...♕f8 in the diagram above, he can ignore the threat to his queen and play

34 ♖h7!

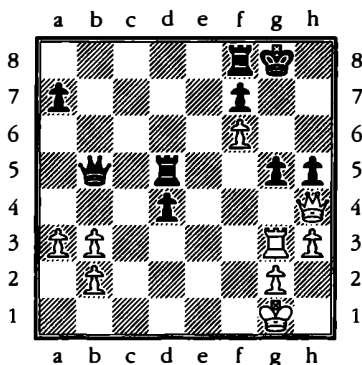


it is very annoying for White that Black has a pawn on h5 as otherwise he could force mate with 34 ♖g8+ ♕xg8 35 ♗g4+ ♕f8 (alas, 35...hxg4!) 36 ♗g7. Still, it looks like 34 ♗h7 will do the job as the



Black has no time to take the queen as he is mated on h8. Therefore it is a draw by repetition after 34...♕g8 35 ♖g7+ ♕f8 36 ♖h7. A fantastic demonstration of the power of a killer pawn!

Finally we should mention that one move later instead of 33...g4? Black could have defended adequately with 33...♖d5!

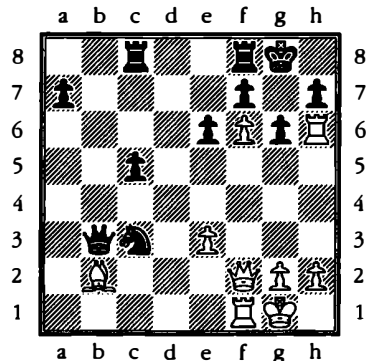


Then 34 ♖xh5 ♜f5! prepares to eliminate the killer pawn with ♖f1+ and ♜xf6. Now White would lose after the slow methods 35 ♔h2? ♜e5, attacking f6 and pinning the rook or 35 h4 ♜f1+ 36 ♔h2 ♜e5 37 hxg5 ♜e1 and Black gets in first with mate on h1. So White has to press on with 35 ♜h6, when the game finishes with perpetual check after 35...♜f1+ 36 ♔h2 ♜xf6 37 ♜xg5+ ♜g6 38 ♜xg6+ fxg6 39 ♜xg6+ ♔h8 40 ♜h6+ ♔g8 41 ♜g6+ etc.

When there are combinational themes for both players, the outcome of the game can be decided by the possession of the next move.

Take a look at the diagram above. It is a very tense position: Black has two extra pawns on the queenside, but White has the monstrously strong pawn on f6. Black has no

dark squared bishop to defend the g7 square. But just how good is the white rook on h6?



With White to move: the white rook is brilliant on h6: he has played like a genius to get it to this square!

With Black to move: the white rook is horribly misplaced on h6, as it should be defending the back rank. What an idiot White was to put it on this square!

If it were White's move the attack would break through at once with 1 ♜xh7! with a quick mate whether or not Black took the rook:

1...♔xh7 2 ♜h4+ ♔g8 3 ♜h6 and mate inevitably follows with ♜g7.

1...♜fe8 2 ♜h4 and mate with ♜h8.

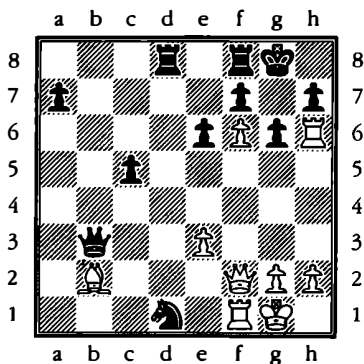
1...♞e4 2 ♜g7+ ♔h8 4 ♜h4 mate.

If Black throws in a check with 1...♞e2+ White does best to ignore the knight and play simply 2 ♔h1,

when he maintains the threats of ♙g7+ or ♜h4 . Then Black has one more useless check with $2...♘g3+$, when after $3 ♜xg3$ he must bow to the inevitable on the kingside.

Note that if you see two equally good ways of prosecuting attack it is sensible to play the sequence that involves giving checks as it cuts down the defender's options. Thus in the line above after $1...♘e4$, White could also win with $2 ♜h4$, but giving a check with $2 ♙g7+$ and then mating next move with $3 ♜h4$ is the safest and most precise method.

In contrast, if it were Black's move in the diagram above he could save himself by getting in first with $1...♘d1!$ attacking White's queen and clearing the way for combinations based on exploiting the weakness of the e3 square.

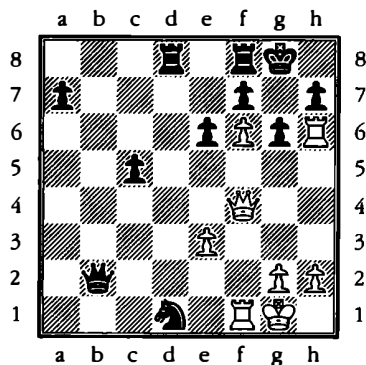


Then after $2 ♜h4 ♜xe3+$ $3 ♚h1 ♘f2+$ White is mated after both 4

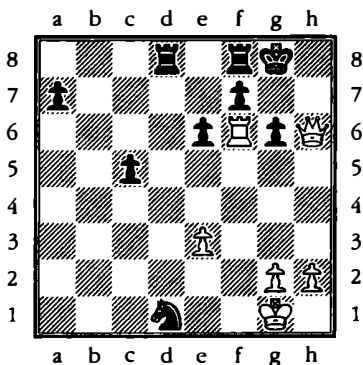
$♙xf2 ♘d1+$ or $4 ♜xf2 ♜xf2 5 ♙xf2 ♘d1+$. If instead he tries $4 ♚g1$ he walks right into a discovered check and can resign after $4...♘g4+$ $5 ♚h1 ♘xh6$ —the trapper trapped!

You will see that Black exploited two tactical themes: firstly, the power of the queen/knight attacking mechanism (which is discussed further in the context of smothered mate in Chapter 10) and secondly the weakness of White's back rank.

Now let's imagine that after $1...♘d1$ White had tried $2 ♜f4$. Then $2...♜xe3+$, exchanging queens, would win easily. But say Black instead decided to capture the irrelevant bishop on b2: $2...♜xb2?$



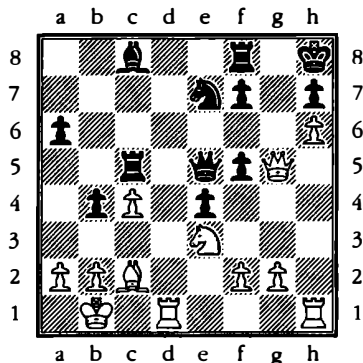
There follows $3 ♙xh7!$ and once again White gets in first: $3...♚xh7$ $4 ♜h4+$ $♚g8$ $5 ♜h6$ and in order to stave off mate Black has to play $5...♜xf6$ when $6 ♙xf6$ gives White winning chances.



Here is an exciting finish: 6...c4 7 h4! If White wanted a draw he could force it with 7 ♖xg6+ fxg6 8 ♜xg6+ ♔h8 9 ♜h6+ etc. with perpetual check. With only a queen and rook left to attack with he has to utilise his rook's pawn as well if he wants to win. 7...c3 8 h5 c2 (or 8...hxg5 9 ♜g5+ ♔h8 10 ♖h6 mate.) 9 hxg6 destroying the black king's cover. Now he is mated after 9...c1=♜ 10 ♜h7 or 9...fxg6 10 ♖xg6+ (the quickest) 10...♔f7 11 ♜h7+ ♔e8 12 ♖xe6 with a form of the epaulette mate.

The next excerpt features the themes of a killer pawn, weak back rank and smothered mate. The pawn on h6 looks impressive, and White has only to dislodge the black queen from e5 for it to be mate on g7...but how exactly can this be done? It is also a matter of urgency as Lautier is ready to play ♖g8 next move or even f5-f4!

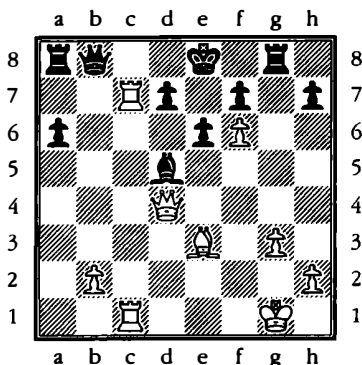
Kasparov - Lautier Olympiad, Moscow 1994



Kasparov came up with 27 ♖h5!! which pins the f pawn. And as the black queen dare not move from e5 it threatens to win the exchange with 28 ♔g4 fxg4 29 ♜xe5 ♖xe5 30 ♖xe5. Lautier tried 27...♖g8 but 28 ♔g4!! was lethal all the same. If 28...♖xg5 29 ♔xe5 ♖xh5—any other move by this rook allows a similar mate, while 29...♖xe5 30 ♖xg5 leaves him the exchange down 30 ♖d8+ ♔g8 31 ♔xf7 with a smothered mate!

Now a game from the World Under 20 Championships. With his next move White forced instant resignation by exploiting both the weakness of Black's back rank and the e7 square. It is often said that the attacker has an extra piece when there are opposite coloured bishops! Black's bishop on d5 does nothing to defend the dark squares.

Solak - Iljushin
Yerevan 2000



Play continued: 28 ♖b4! 1-0

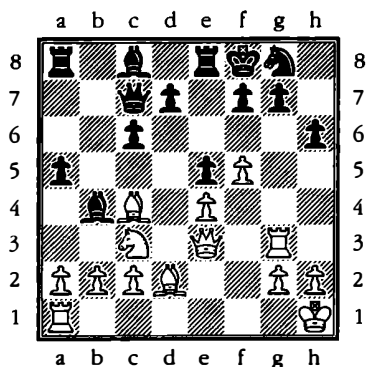
After 28...♗xb4 29 ♜c8+ ♜xc8 30 ♜xc8 is mate, while 28...♗d8 only delays it: 29 ♜c8! deflecting the queen 29...♜xc8 30 ♜xc8 ♗xc8 31 ♗e7 mate.

The mobile killer pawn

So far we have seen the killer pawn in a static role, like the proverbial bone in the throat. In the next couple of examples it is used as a battering ram to break up Black's defensive line:

Kasparov - Movsesian
Simul, Prague 2001

Kasparov reduced Black's kingside pawn structure to a pile of rubble with



18 f6! gxf6

If 18...g6 the pawn on f6 becomes intolerable: the position forms a puzzle in the chapter on minor piece mates. Also hopeless would be 18...g5 19 ♜xg5! hxg5 20 ♗xg5 ♘xf6 (if 20...♜d8 21 ♗g7+ and mate next move) 21 ♗xf6 d5—to ward off mate on f7—22 ♗h6+ ♔g8 23 ♗g7 mate.

If instead 18...♘xf6 then 19 ♜xg7! ♔xg7 20 ♗xh6+ ♔g8 21 ♗g6+! exploiting the pin on the f7 square to capture the knight with check 21...♔h8 22 ♗xf6+ ♔h7 23 ♗xf7+ ♔h8 24 ♗f6+ (of course, 24 ♗xe8+ isn't bad either!) 24...♔h7 25 ♗h6 mate.

Incidentally in all these variations you will see the importance of the 'quiet' bishop on c4. The king's bishop frequently plays a key role in an attack without receiving any applause. In these lines it is easy to forget it as it never moves even once, but the themes of ♗xf7 mate or the pin on f7 after ♗g6+ or its control of g8 are all central to the winning combinations.

19 ♖f1!

Kasparov's play is a wonderful blend of quiet moves that bring up reinforcements and aggressive thrusts. Here for example he methodically brings the rook into the attack, whereas after

19...♙xc3

...he forgoes the recapture on c3 in favour of a lightning attack:

20 ♖xg8+! ♜xg8 21 ♗g3+ ♜f8
22 ♖xf6!

Threatening 23 ♖xf7 mate and if 22...♞e7 then 23 ♙xh6+ and mate next move. So Black loses his queen by force:

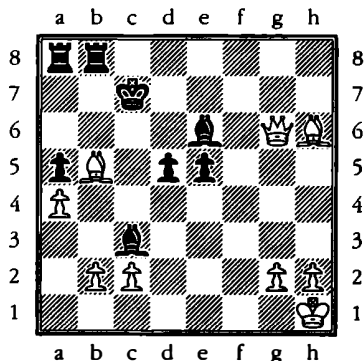
22...d5 23 ♙xh6+ ♜e7 24 ♖xf7+! ♜d6

Or 24...♜xf7 25 ♗g7+ picking up the queen straightaway.

25 ♗g6+! ♙e6

If 25...♞e6 26 ♙f8+.

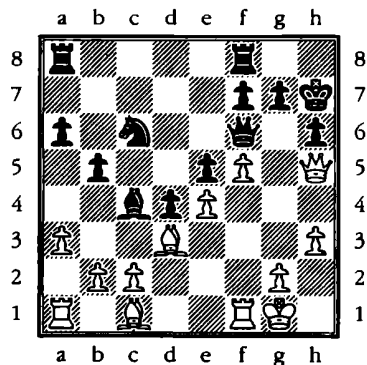
26 ♖xc7 ♜xc7 27 exd5 cxd5 28 ♙b5 ♞eb8 29 a4!



The combinations end and Black has two bishops hanging. Kasparov's tactical virtuosity is evidently undimmed by the fact that he is playing four games simultaneously against the best players in the Czech Republic. The rest is easy; in fact I assume that Black played on in the hope that it would in some small way distract Kasparov from the other games in the simul.

29...♙d7 30 bxc3 ♙xb5 31 axb5 ♖xb5 32 h4 a4 33 ♙g7 d4 34 ♗f7+ ♜b6 35 ♗e6+ ♜b7 36 ♙xe5 ♖xe5 37 ♗xe5 a3 38 ♗d5+ ♜b8 39 cxd4 a2 40 ♗b3+ ♜c7 41 ♗c3+ ♜d7 42 ♗a1 ♜d6 43 c4 1-0

Karjakin - Amura,
Benidorm 2002



The 12 year old Russian prodigy played 19 g4! g5

It is too late to retreat the queen for if 19...♖d8 it is the f pawn that rampages forwards: 20 f6! ♕xd3 21 fxg7! ♖xg7 (after 21...♕xf1 22 ♗xh6+ Black is mated on h8) 22 ♕xh6+ ♖g8 23 cxd3—simplest—and Black faces ruinous material losses.

20 h4! gxh4

Hopeless is 20...♖g8 21 hxg5 winning the exchange.

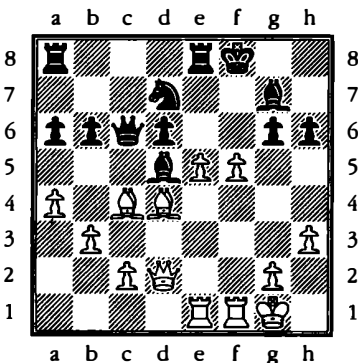
21 g5 ♖g8

Black had relied on this defence pinning the g pawn. But the end was abrupt:

22 g6+!

Cutting off the queen's defence of h6. It is mate after 22...fxg6 23 ♗xh6, so Black resigned.

Kotronias - Murshed
Olympiad, Bled 2002



Having seen what one killer pawn can do in the examples above it will

be no surprise that a pair of killer pawns can sweep all before them as they advance against an exposed king. In the diagram above the pawns just keep on rolling: all the material he grabs doesn't save Black:

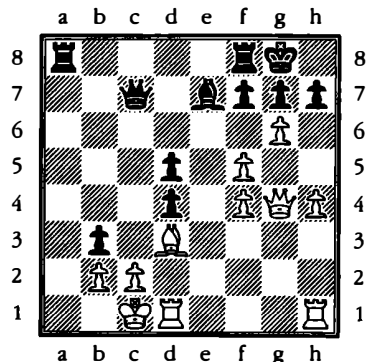
24 e6! ♕xc4 25 f6! ♕xf1 26 fxg7+ ♖g8 27 ♖xf1 ♖xe6

If 27...g5—to keep the queen out of h6—then 28 ♗f2! ♖e7 (or 28...♖xe6 29 ♗f7+ and mate next move, while 28...♗e5 29 ♕xe5 doesn't help) 29 exd7 ♗xd7 30 ♗f8+ and mates.

28 ♗xh6 ♗f6 29 ♕xf6 1-0

In the following game Black showed fine judgement in sacrificing a piece to destroy his opponent's potential killer pawns whilst maintaining his own pawn deep in the enemy camp.

Ponomariov - Akoplan
Olympiad, Bled 2002



White had adopted a very aggressive set up against the Sicilian Defence, but by now he must have realised that Black's attack was far faster: already there is an open a file, while as yet there are no lines of attack open on the kingside. So Ruslan Ponomariov tried **25 f6** hoping to break things open and create some counterplay after the plausible **25...♙xf6 26 gxf7+**. But Akopian found a great response: **25...hxg6!!** just offering the bishop to get rid of White's advancing pawns.

After **26 fxg7 ♖xe7** there was the threat of **27...♜a1+ 28 ♔d2 ♜e3** mate. In giving up the bishop Black has also won time to cut off the white king's escape route to d2. There followed **27 ♜h3** to guard the e3 square **27...♜b4!**

Again Black is more concerned with preventing the flight of the white king to d2 than in starting an immediate attack with **27...♜a1+**.

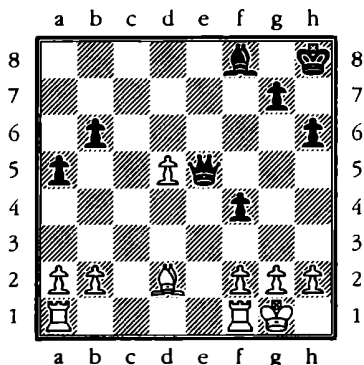
28 ♔b1 ♜a5 29 cxb3 ♜fc8!

Finally the white king has been boxed in. There is the threat of **30...♜a1** mate, and **30 ♙c4 dxc4** is useless. So Ponomariov had to give up his queen with **30 ♜xc8+ ♜xc8** when despite a long and stubborn resistance he couldn't hold the position. He resigned on move 47.

Puzzles

44

Adams - Seirawan
Bermuda 1999

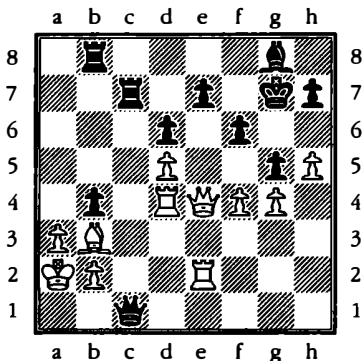


Black to play

After **26...f3** White played **27 ♜fe1**. Now what should Black do?

45

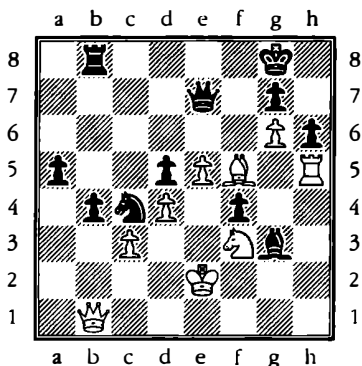
Bruzon - Felgaer
Olympiad, Bled 2002



White to play

How did White force a quick win?

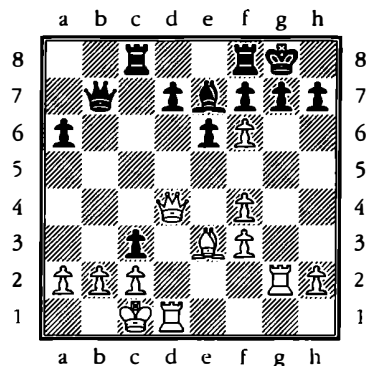
46
Ganguly - Barua
Nagpur 2002



White to play

Black has an overwhelming advantage on the queenside, so White has to do or die on the kingside. He came up with 40 $\text{d}4\text{g}5$. Now Black took the knight, reasoning that if necessary he can block the h file with $\text{d}4\text{h}4$. Was he right?

47
Ehlvest - Andersson
Belfort 1988

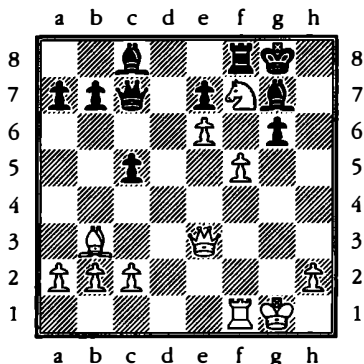


White to play

Here is a race between the wings where at first glance it looks like Black is winning: after all, with his previous move 17... $\text{w}b7$ he threatens mate on b2. However, White got his attack in first. How?

48

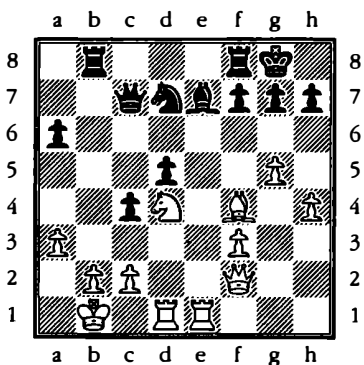
Kislov - Zoltek
Polanica Zdroj 1995

*White to move*

Black has just played 24...c5, so that he can meet the threatened 25 fxg6? with 25...d4, winning the white queen. What should White do?

49

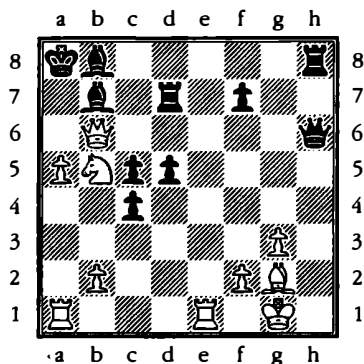
Kasimdzhanov - Ye Jiangchuan
Olympiad, Bled 2002

*Black to play*

White has just played 23 ♖f4, with the idea that after 23...♗xf4 24 ♜xe7 he dominates the centre. Now try to work out if a 23...♜xb2+ sacrifice is (a) winning (b) a complete waste of a rook (c) giving Black some pressure but unsuccessful.

50

Kasparov - Ivanchuk
Linares 1994

*White to play*

White would like to play 30 a6 to bludgeon his way forwards with the killer pawn, but of course that would leave his queen en prise. What was the more subtle approach found by Kasparov?

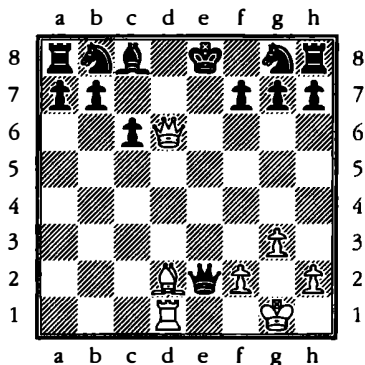
9 Rook and Minor Piece Mates

Rather unexpectedly, looking at the games in this chapter taught me above all to respect the power of the queen! Even when the rook and minor piece carried out a successful attack, they often needed the 'dead body' of the queen to soften up the defences. There is no doubt that the best advice to give to someone who wants to avoid being mated in the middlegame is to exchange off queens as soon as possible.

Nonetheless, compared to the minor pieces acting on their own the rook and minor piece are a most formidable attacking force. In this chapter we shall investigate all four main mating patterns—two with rook and bishop and two with rook and knight.

Rook mates protected by bishop

In the first case the rook gives the fatal check whilst protected by the bishop. Much less frequently the roles are reversed with the bishop mating protected by the rook. Here is a striking example of this scenario in both its forms:



Black has a whole set of pieces but he is punished for his non-existent development after 1 ♖d8+!! winning time for a double check.

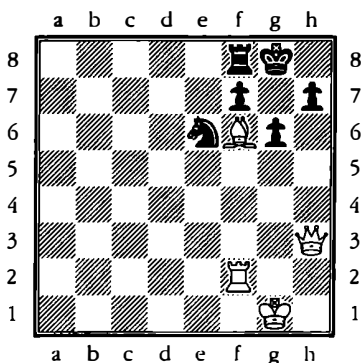
1...♔xd8 2 ♖g5+

Now Black is mated by either rook or bishop:

2...♔e8 3 ♖d8 mate or 2...♔c7 3 ♖d8 mate.

This queen sacrifice on d8 was brought off a couple of times in the last century, but is hardly ever seen: it requires a lot of help from the opponent for everything to fall into place.

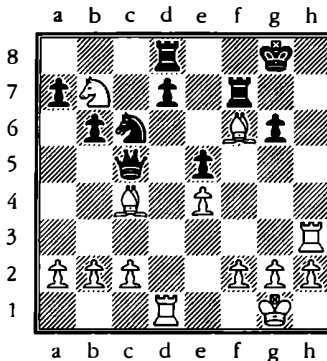
It is more reasonable to expect a scenario like the following in one of your games.



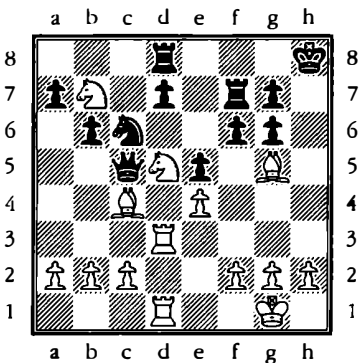
Black has the g7 square guarded against 1 ♖h6, but it is still mate in three:

1 ♖xh7+! ♜xh7 2 ♜h2+ ♜g8 3 ♜h8 mate.

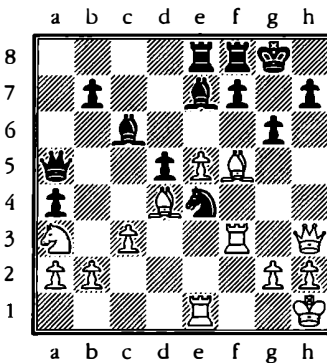
If instead 2...gxf6 3 ♜xf6 Black is defenceless against 4 mate.



The following position reached in an English tournament 2002.



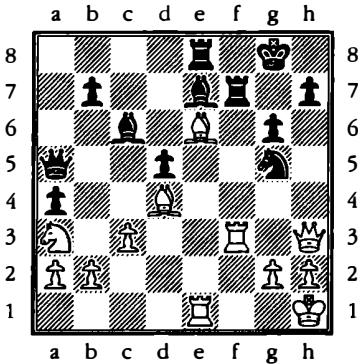
White had sacrificed his queen to reach this position and finish off the attack in beautiful style: 1 ♜h3+ ♜g8 2 ♜xf6+!! ♜f8 3 ♜h8+ ♜e7 4 ♜e8+! ♜xe8 5 ♜xd7+ ♜f8 6 ♜xf7 mate! (Capablanca-Souza Campos, Sao Paulo 1927)



The lazy move for White would be 23 ♜xe4, which deals with double threat of 23...♟g5 23...gxf5. However this would all the momentum of his attack. Instead he applied the tactical device described above with

23 e6!

This threatens 24 ♚xh7+ ♜xh7 25 ♜h3+ ♜g8 26 ♜h8 mate. If now 23...gxf5 24 ♜xe4! opens the way for a mate with ♚g3 or ♜g3. Another way for Black to lose is 23...♜g5 24 exf7+ ♜xf7 25 ♚e6!



Again the rook and bishop come out trumps: 25...♜xh3 26 ♚xf7+ ♜f8 27 ♚xg6+!

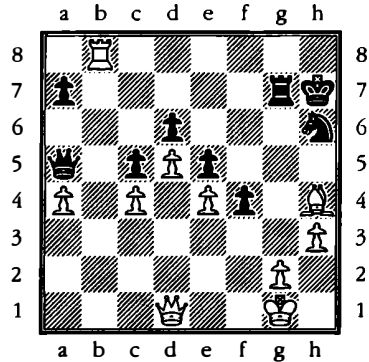
This takes away the h6 square from the black king in contrast to the immediate 27 ♚xd5+ ♚f6 28 ♜xf6+ ♜g7.

27...♜g8 28 ♚f7+ ♜f8 29 ♚xd5+ ♚f6 30 ♜xf6+ ♜g7 31 ♜fe6+ ♜f7 32 ♜f1+ ♜g8 33 ♜xe8 mate!

Returning to the diagram before last, after 23 e6! f6 24 ♚h6! gxf5 (or else ♚xg6 next move tears apart the black kingside) 25 ♜xe4 ♜h8 (or 25...dxe4 26 ♜g3+ and mate next move) allows White the by now familiar mating pattern 26 ♚xh7+! ♜xh7 27 ♜h4+ ♜g6 28 ♜g3.

So Black has various responses but for different tactical reasons they all fail. If White hadn't been aware of the queen sacrifice he might never have thought of the move 23 e6!

Ehlvest - Kozul
Olympiad, Bled 2002

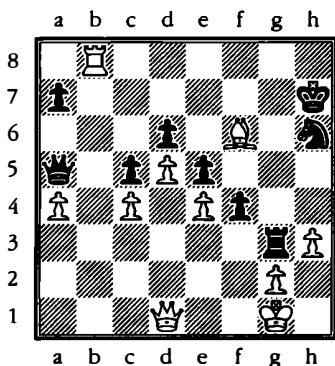


White played 47 ♚f6 whereupon the game finished 47...♜g6?? and to give him some credit Black got his resignation in before White played 48 ♜h8 mate.

This position is most instructive if we consider what White should do if Black plays the superior 47...♜g3! keeping a bolt hole on g6 for his king. White has an extra pawn, the superior minor piece in the form of long range bishop versus feeble knight, and a succulent target for bishop and rook on d6: indeed, if this pawn collapses the whole black pawn structure will follow. We can reasonably state: there is absolutely no reason for White to take any

risks in trying to mate the black king: the endgame will always be winning for him.

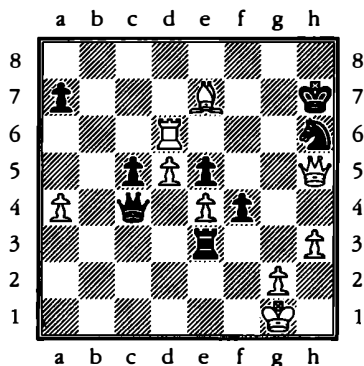
Now we should ask ourselves if there are any ways for White not to win the game. Apart from gross blunders, the only likelihood is if he allows his king to be exposed to perpetual check.



Here's what might happen if White tries for an immediate knock-out blow with 48 ♖h5. On the face of it, this looks fatal for the black king as there seems no way to avert 49 ♜h8 mate. But in fact Black can counterattack with 48...♗e1+ 49 ♖h2 ♜xg2+! sacrificing the rook. After 50 ♖xg2 the question is whether White's king can evade perpetual check. It isn't obvious, for example 50...♗xe4+ 51 ♖f2 (after 51 ♗f3 ♗g6+ Black picks up the bishop with more than a fighting chance) 51...♗e3+ 52 ♖f1 ♗c1+ 53 ♖e2 ♗c2+ etc. and the checks continue. But even if there is an

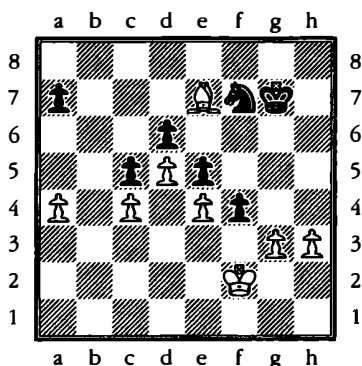
escape route, why should White jeopardise the win by allowing this variation when he has such a crushing positional advantage?

The solid, logical alternative is 48 ♜b7+! to keep control. Then 48...♙g6 49 ♗h4! ♜e3 50 ♜d7! (going after the d6 pawn. Note that the bishop is doing an excellent job on h4 guarding the e1 square. If now 50...♜xe4 51 ♗d3 puts the black rook in a fatal pin. 50...♗a6 51 ♗e7 ♗xc4 (or 51...♙f7 52 ♗g4+) 52 ♜xd6+ ♖h7 53 ♗h5!



Finally ♗h5 comes and this time Black's pieces are unable to set up a perpetual check.

Alternatively if 48...♙g8 49 ♗h4 ♜g7 50 ♜xg7+ ♙xg7 51 ♗h5 ♗c7 (if 51...♗xa4 52 ♗g5+ ♖h7 53 ♗e7+ ♙g8 54 ♗xd6 and the black centre collapses) 52 ♗g5+ ♖h7 53 ♗e7+! forces an easily winning endgame after 53...♗xe7 54 ♗xe7 ♙f7 55 ♖f2 ♙g7 56 ♖g3

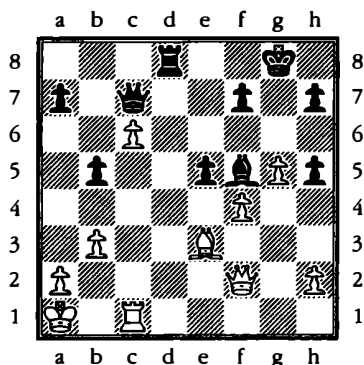


With his knight tied down to the defence of the d6 pawn, and the king unable to approach the white bishop, Black is paralysed and can only wait for the advance of the white king. The situation here seems a long way from checkmating scenarios in the middlegame. In fact, Kasparov and other great masters of attack are always looking for ways to simplify to such technically winning positions, even in the middle of an attack. This is because first and foremost they want to win in the most straightforward, economical style.

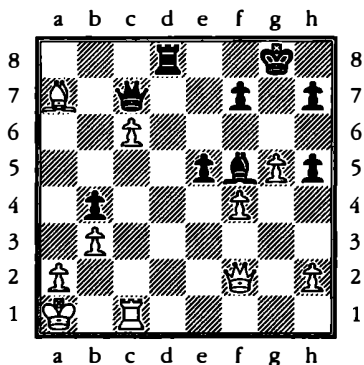
If you have a winning material or positional advantage, you should never risk making a sacrifice unless you are convinced it works.

There is an old saying, with a lot of truth in it, that when there are opposite coloured bishops the attacker is a piece up!

Gara - Mrvova Olympiad, Bled 2002



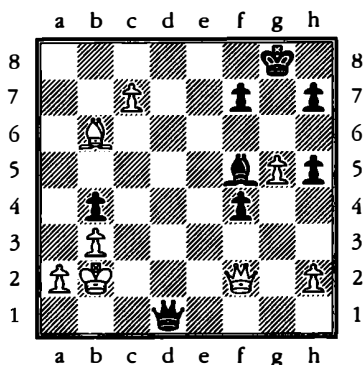
A game from the 2002 Women's Olympiad. White has a strong passed pawn, but the presence of opposite coloured bishops complicates the winning task. Here Black missed the chance of setting a devilish trap with 33...b4 when the reply 34 Qxa7 looks strong as it prepares to clear the way for the passed pawn with 35 b6 .



But Black would then have 34...♖xc6!! winning the key passed pawn for if 35 ♜xc6 ♜d1+ 36 ♚b2 ♜b1 is mate!

In the game Black actually played 33...♜d5?! losing a vital move on the idea above:

34 ♙xa7 exf4 35 ♙b6 ♜d6 36 c7 ♜d1 37 ♜xd1 ♜xd1+ 38 ♚b2 b4



The threat of mate forces White to give up her passed pawn, but the scenario is much worse for Black here as the rooks have been exchanged. This means that Black cannot generate enough counterplay against the white king to offset the weakness of her own king or indeed to prevent White creating connected passed pawns on the queenside.

39 c8=♖+ ♙xc8 40 ♙c5 ♙f5 41 ♙xb4 ♜b1+ 42 ♚a3 ♜c1+ 43 ♜b2

Giving Black an impossible choice: either enter a losing endgame or keep the queens on, when it is her own king that will be in the most danger.

43...♜c6 44 ♜d2!

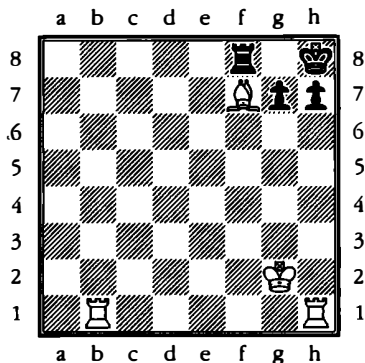
Now Black prefers to be mated than to give up her passed pawn.

44...♜3 45 ♜d8+ ♚g7 46 ♜f8+ 1-0

For if 46...♚g6 47 ♜h6 is mate.

Cutting off the king

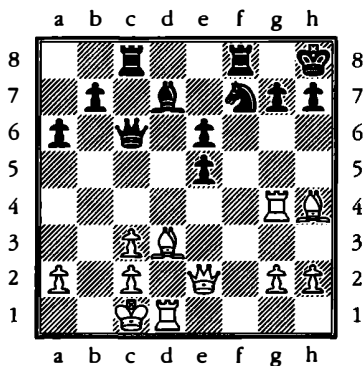
This is the second scenario of mate with rook and bishop. We have already seen this mating pattern but with queen rather than rook. The bishop mates, with the rook cutting off the king's escape; or vice versa, with the rook checking and the bishop guarding the only escape square or squares.



The rook gives checkmate on the h file whilst the bishop cuts off the king's flight: 1 ♜xh7+! ♚xh7 2 ♜h1. Note that the bishop is ideally placed on f7 as it prevents the king escaping to either g8 or g6.

White has many ways to win, but the most precise method—the way you should always choose—is 3 Eg8+! with double check. Now entirely forced is 3... ♖xg8 when 4 ♗h8 is mate.

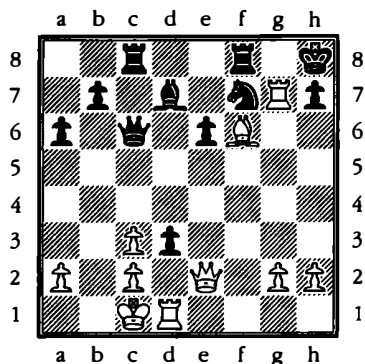
Ramesh - Kunte
Torquay 2002



After 23... e4 White ignored the threat to his bishop and played 24 Eg7! Now we should investigate the replies 24... exd3 , 24... ♗xc3 and 24... ♖xg7 .

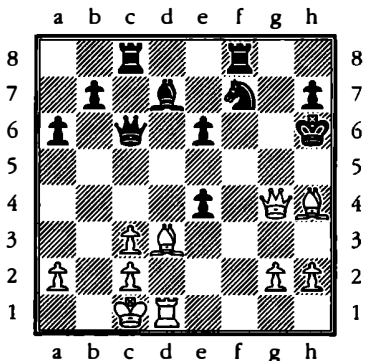
If 24... ♗xc3 Black is mated in three moves: 25 Ehx7+! ♖xh7 26 ♗xe4+ ♖g7 27 ♗h7 mate.

In the game 24... exd3 also led to a quick defeat: 25 ♗f6! creating the typical rook and bishop mating pattern.



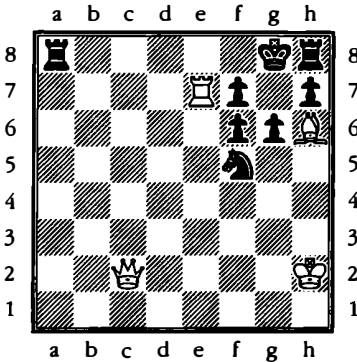
If Black takes the queen then the rook gives mate by moving anywhere on the g file apart from g8. Black tried one last gamble with 25... ♗xc3 but he resigned after 26 Eg8+! as 26... ♖xg8 27 ♗g4+ ♕g5 28 ♗xg5+ ♖f7 29 ♗g7+ will mate on e7.

Finally after 24... ♖xg7 25 ♗g4+ Black is also lost. If 25... ♖h8 26 ♗f6 mate, while 25... ♕g5 26 ♗xg5+ ♖h8 27 ♗g3! leaves him defenceless against 28 ♗e5 . That leaves 25... ♖h6 , when White has the following elegant winning method:



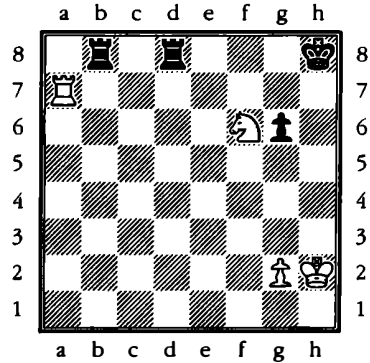
26 ♔f6! (threat 27 ♔g7 mate)
 26... ♖g8 27 ♜h4+ ♚g6 28 ♜f1!
 (spurring the crude 28 ♔xe4+)
 28... exd3 29 ♜g4+ ♚h6 30 ♔g7+
 ♜xg7 31 ♜h4+ ♚g6 32 ♜f6 mate!

Here is one final mating pattern with rook and bishop that deserves attention



Rook mates defended by knight

If the king can be forced into the corner then he becomes particularly vulnerable to mate, as the following diagram shows.

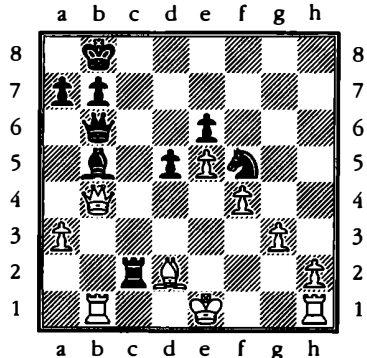


Despite his material advantage Black cannot avert mate on h7.

The simplest way for White to win is 1 ♜xf5!! gxf5 2 ♜e2 with inevitable mate by ♜e8 or ♜g2, depending on how Black chooses to lose. If there was just the threat to e8 he could battle on with 2... ♜a4, but with two potential mates the poor rook on a8 is overwhelmed. Note that if Black throws in 1... ♜a2+ then the most elegant and quickest win is 2 ♜f2! ♜xf2+ 3 ♚g3 when the rook can't get back to cover the back rank.

Now we'll look at mates with the rook and knight, beginning with examples in which the rook gives the check defended by the knight.

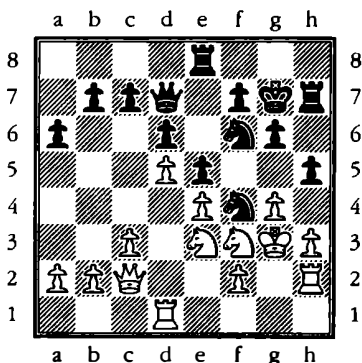
Van der Weide - Werle Groningen 2001



The opposite coloured bishops and rook on the seventh rank are decisive factors, but don't forget the knight! Black won with 23...♖e3+!! when after 24 ♔xe3 ♔e2+ White has the choice of being mated by 25 ♖d1 ♖xe3+ 26 ♖c1 ♔c2 or 25 ♖f1 ♖xe3+ 26 ♖g1 ♔g2. In effect, the c1 and g1 squares became like corner squares, as White's own rooks on b1 and h1 formed a barrier to the further flight of the king.

The game actually went 24 ♖d1 ♖d3 and White resigned. If 25 ♖e1 ♖e2 mate, while 25 ♔e1 ♔xd2+ 26 ♖xd2 ♖xb1+ 27 ♖c1 ♖b3+ 28 ♖c2 (28 ♖d2 ♖d3 mate) 28...♔e3+ 29 ♔xe3 ♖xe3 and Black is a piece up.

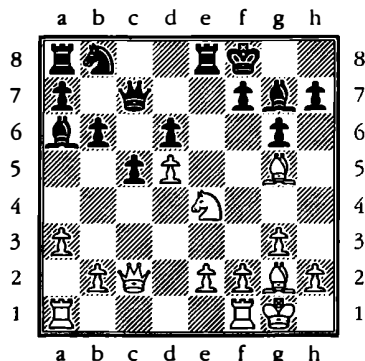
Esplana - Mannion
Olympiad, Bled 2002



For some unfathomable reason White had advanced his king to g3. He was punished with 32...h4+! 33

♖xh4 the only move 33...♔eh8 34 ♖hf5+ A desperate attempt to gain time with a check as if 34 ♖f3 ♔xh3+ 35 ♔xh3 ♔xh3 is mate. 34...gxf5 35 ♖xf5+ ♖xf5!! and White resigned as if 36 gxf5 ♔xh3+ 37 ♔xh3 ♔xh3 mate.

Bu Xiangzhi - Barle
Olympiad, Bled 2002



Here the Chinaman, who was at one time the World's youngest Grandmaster, sacrificed his e pawn with

18 ♖f6! ♔xe2 19 ♖a4

The idea is to answer 19...h6 with 20 ♔fe1! when if 20...hxg5? (in any case 20...♔xe1+ 21 ♔xe1 threatening mate on e8 doesn't help much) 21 ♖e8+! ♔xe8 22 ♔xe8 mate.

Therefore Black took the knight, but this meant he had lost his key defensive piece.

19...♔xf6 20 ♔xf6 c4

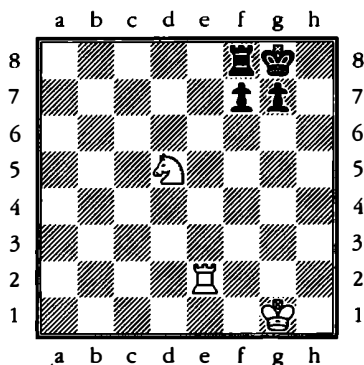
If 20...♔d7? 21 ♖xa6 ♖xf6 22 ♖xe2. Black therefore cannot

develop his queenside in time to save his king.

21 ♖f1 ♜d7 22 ♜b4 ♖x1+ 23 ♖x1 b5 24 ♜d2! and Black resigned as the white queen gets to h6 with a quick mate.

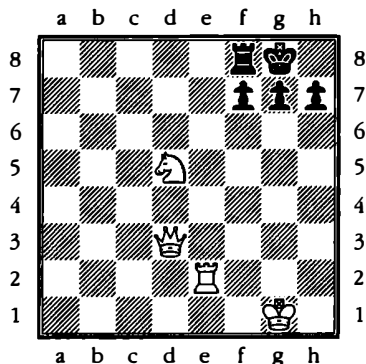
Cutting off the king with rook and knight

This idea has already been discussed in relation to the queen and bishop, queen and knight and rook and bishop. As always, one piece has the task of mating while the other piece cuts off the king's escape.



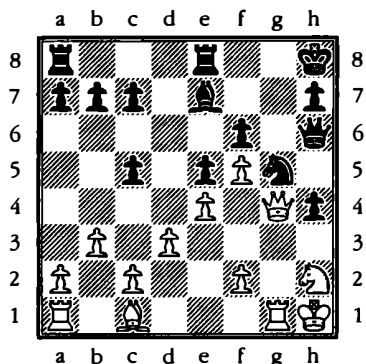
White to move mates with 1 ♔e7+ ♜h7 (or equally 1...♜h8 2 ♖h2) 2 ♖h2 mate. In effect this is a form of smothered mate as Black's defending pieces block up all the escape routes of the black king.

Here is a spectacular method of setting up the checkmate:



Black's king looks safe behind its wall of pawns, but 1 ♔e7+ ♜h8 2 ♜xh7+! ♜xh7 3 ♖h2 is mate.

Capablanca - Jaffe New York 1913

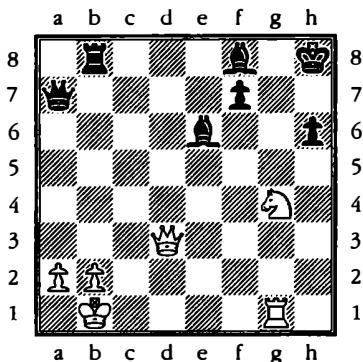


My greatest chess hero is former World Champion Jose Raul Capablanca, who lost fewer games in his

career than any other top player. Indeed, he once went eight years without suffering a single defeat! Here is one of those exceptionally rare instances in which his marvelous defensive radar suffered a breakdown. Pressing for the advantage, he broke up Black's pawn structure with 27 f4 exf4 28 ♖b2 (threatening 29 ♜xg5) 28...♜g8 29 ♜xf4. All seems well but Capa was rocked back by 29...♘h3!! when White is mated after 30 ♜xh6 ♘f2. He tried 30 ♜xg8+ ♜xg8 31 ♜f1 but resigned after 31...♜e3. One finish would be 32 ♘f3 ♘f2+ 33 ♘h2 ♜f4 mate.

Puzzles

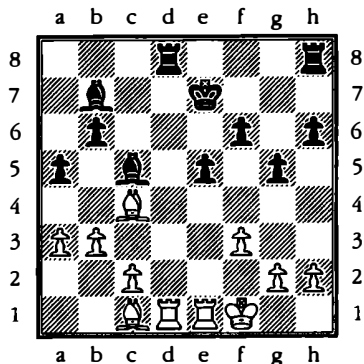
51



White to play

52

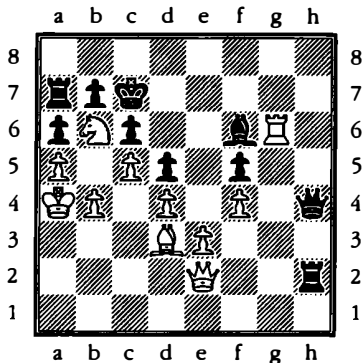
**Leko - Adams
Dortmund 1996**



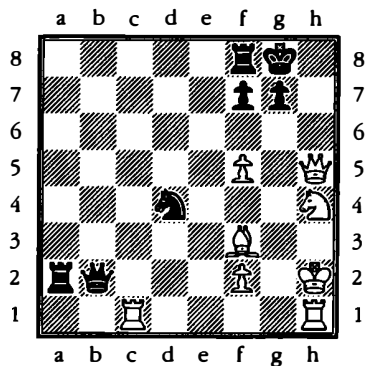
Black to play

An extraordinary case of mutual tactical blindness by two of the best players in the world. From the diagram the game went 29...h5 30 ♖e3 ♖xe3 31 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 32 ♜xe3 ♜d1+ 33 ♜e1 ♜d2 34 ♜e2 ♜d4 and Black eventually ground out a win in the endgame. Someone somewhere missed an instant win in this sequence! Can you do better than Adams and Leko and find it? There is no actual mate, but if you want to turn it into a mating puzzle simply move the black pawn back from g5 to g7 and then start looking!

53
Wells - Berry
Torquay 2002



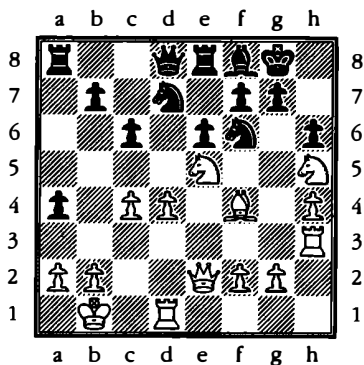
55



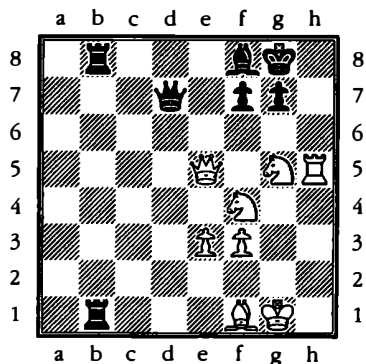
White to play

White to play. What is his best line of play and does it win?

54
Kasimdzhanov - Rausis
Olympiad, Bled 2002



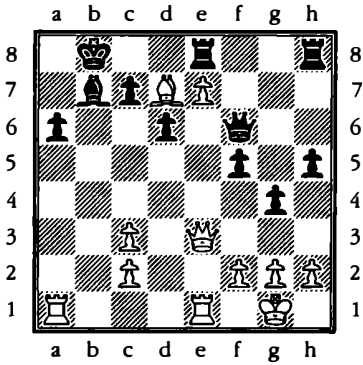
56



White to play

What is the best way for White to continue his attack?

57



In this position White could win the exchange with 1 ♖xe8, but how did he save himself a lot of time in finishing the game?

10 Mates with the Minor Pieces

A combination in the middlegame that concludes with mate by a minor piece often makes a stirring impression. It is aesthetically satisfying to see a knight or bishop strike down a mighty king without any help from the heavy pieces.

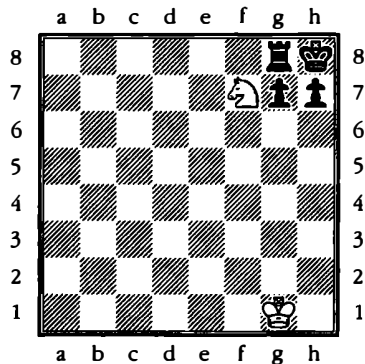
Actually the phrase 'without any help from the heavy pieces' needs qualifying somewhat. Unless the opponent is very obliging or very badly placed, the mate will frequently require the sacrifice of a queen or rook as a prelude. Of course this is no bad thing as it adds to the excellence of the combination.

It also means that a mate with a minor piece is highly unusual in practice: a mating pattern that derives its vitality from a preceding queen sacrifice has to be extremely rare, since queen sacrifices themselves are extremely rare. Thus an aura of magic surrounds the minor piece mate.

Let's start with the most well known of all the mating patterns.

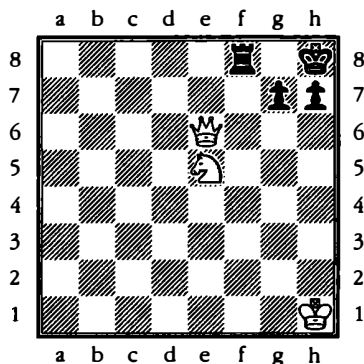
The smothered mate

The mobility of the queen cannot extend beyond the obstacles she faces on each rank, file and diagonal that she controls. If the barrier is an enemy unit she can capture it but go no further; if it is one of her own pieces or pawns she cannot even do that. In contrast, the knight, for all its obvious weaknesses compared to the queen, has the power to look through the most formidable of barriers. It can use this ability to mate a king that is surrounded by defenders — too many defenders in fact!



This is the standard smothered mate position. The black pieces block all the escape routes for their own king and so prevent him moving out of check.

Here is a famous sequence of moves involving a queen sacrifice that leads to the position above.



White to play mates in four moves:

1 ♖f7+ ♜g8

If 1... ♜xf7 2 ♜e8+ ♜f8 3 ♜xf8 is a back rank mate.

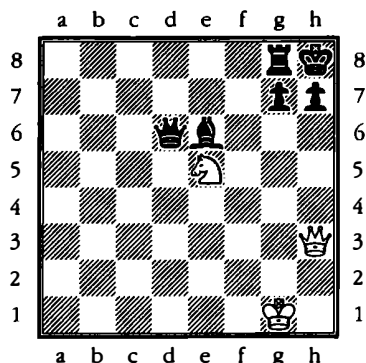
2 ♜h6+!

Note the destructive power of the double check in this sequence. When a king is in double check the only response is flight—blocking or capturing cease to be options.

2... ♜h8 3 ♜g8+!

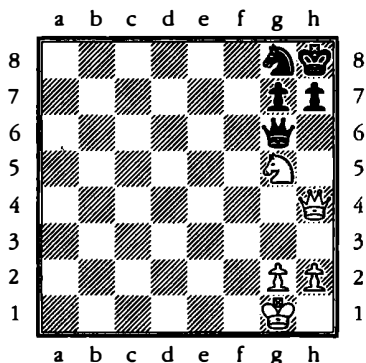
Deflecting the rook from the defence of f7.

3... ♜xg8 4 ♜f7 mate.



In this scenario the h pawn is pinned and the king has no flight square, so 1 ♜g6 is mate.

Here is example which combines the idea of a pin on the h file with mate on f7.

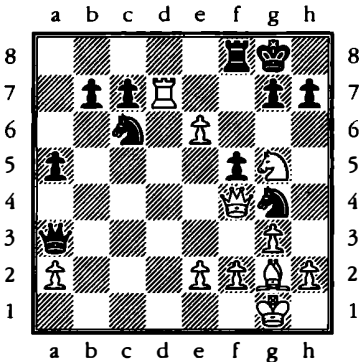


By winning control of the f7 square and keeping the black king boxed in White forces mate: 1 ♜xh7+! ♜xh7 2 ♜f7 mate. The black queen is both deflected from her defence of f7 and becomes part of the smothered mate apparatus.

When you have a knight and queen aimed at a king that is shut in by its own pieces you should always have half an eye on the chance of a smothered mate.

In all the examples above the key square was f7. White was prepared to sacrifice heavily to gain control of it, so that he could either use it directly to mate with ♖f7 or, because he had eliminated the black pawn on f7, mate with ♘g6.

Timman - Short
Tilburg 1990



Timman found the cleanest way to begin the combination.

24 ♙xc6!

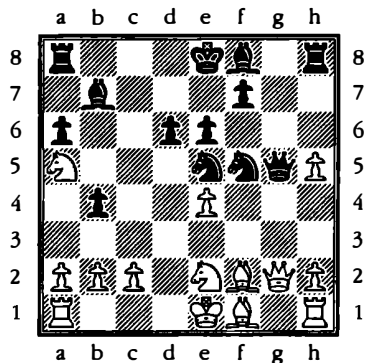
If instead 24 e7 ♗xe7 25 ♛c4+ ♖h8 26 ♗f7+ White still has to find a win after 26...♗g8. It's there with the sophisticated 27 ♜d8! but not 27 ♗h6+ ♖h8 28 ♛g8+?? ♗xg8 when he would probably feel like giving up chess.

24...bxc6 25 e7

Now everything runs smoothly.

25...♜e8 26 ♛c4+ ♖h8 27 ♗f7+ ♗g8 28 ♗h6+ ♖h8 29 ♛g8+ ♜xg8 30 ♗f7 mate.

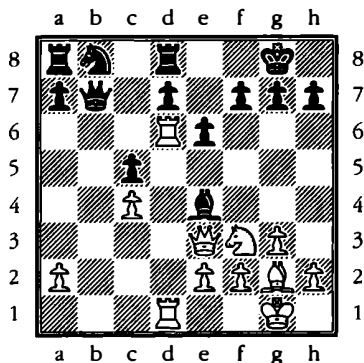
Shirov - J.Polgar
Buenos Aires 1994



Smothered mate doesn't only occur on the side of the board. Here Judith Polgar looks to be in big trouble as Black: she has a queen, knight and bishop all hanging! However, she came up with the ferocious move 16...♗e3!! when if 17 ♛xg5 ♗f3 is mate! White's queen is attacked and if 17 ♙xe3 ♛xe3 then there is no good way of defending the d2 square against ♗f3+ or ♙h6: thus 18 ♗xb7 ♗f3+ 19 ♖d1 ♛d2 is mate. In the game a downcast Shirov tried 17 ♛g3, so that an escape square becomes available for his king after the exchange of queens. However, he

faced ruinous material losses after 17...♖xg3 18 ♜xg3 ♜xc2+ 19 ♔d1 ♜xa1 20 ♜xb7 b3 21 axb3 ♜xb3 and resigned after another eight moves.

H.Olafsson - Levitt
Reykjavik 1990



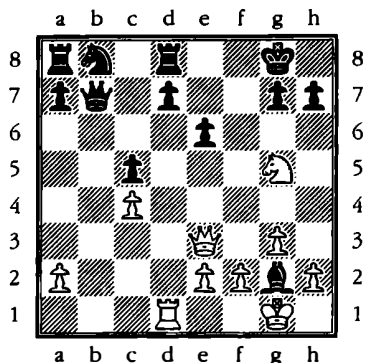
Here White came up with the brilliant combination:

17 ♜xe6!! fxe6 18 ♜g5!

It seems like Olafsson has gone mad: first of all he gives up a rook on what looks like the most highly defended point in Black's position, and then he offers the bishop on g2 also 'for nothing'!

Such a sequence of moves does indeed seem like madness if we are unaware of two tactical themes concealed in the position, namely back rank mate and secondly smothered mate.

Levitt turned down the offer of the bishop and with good reason, for if 18...♗xg2



19 ♗xe6+!! and Black is mated no matter how he replies. If 19...dxe6 20 ♜xd8 we have a back rank mate, while if 19...♔f8 White has the choice of 20 ♜xh7 or 20 ♗f7. The longest variation is the standard smothered mate:

19 ...♔h8 20 ♜f7+ ♔g8 21 ♜h6+

Again the double check is the killer. Both the white queen and knight are hanging but Black has no time to capture either piece.

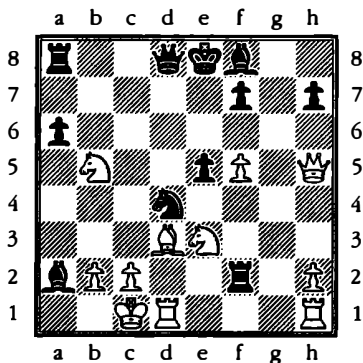
21 ...♔h8 22 ♗g8+ ♜xg8 23 ♜f7 mate.

So how did Olafsson come to think of the combination? I guess his Grandmasterly instinct told him that it was worth looking for something sharp and unusual: after all, White's pieces are all poised for action whilst Black still has a knight on b8. More specifically, this undeveloped knight no doubt suggested that a back rank mate might somehow be on the cards. Nevertheless, it still required imagination to see 17 ♜xe6!! Most players wouldn't even dream of

charging with a rook headlong against e6. I showed the diagram position to IM Afek, who has composed some profound endgame studies, but he didn't easily find the idea of the sacrifice on e6: it is an incredibly counter-intuitive move.

In the game Levitt—himself the author of a book entitled *Secrets of Spectacular Chess*—avoided the combinations above with 18...h6, but with his kingside shattered the white attack eventually prevailed: 19 ♖xe4 ♘c6 20 ♖xc5 ♜c7 21 ♖xd7! ♜ac8 If 21...♜xd7 22 ♜xe6+ ♜f7 23 ♖xc6 and there is no defence against the threats of 24 ♖xa8, 24 ♜d7, 24 ♖e8 or 24 ♖d5. 22 ♜xe6+ ♖h8 23 ♖e4 ♖e7 24 ♜d6! ♜xc4 the knight dare not save itself for if 24...♖g8 25 ♜g6 ♖f6 26 ♜xf6 soon mates 25 ♜xe7 ♜c1+ 26 ♖g2 ♜e8 27 ♜f7 ♜xe4 28 ♜g6 1-0

Brodsky - Kramnik
Kherson 1991



White has just offered his knight on b5, having worked out two variations after 18...axb5 19 ♖xb5+: 19...♖e7? 20 ♜h4+ and he wins the rook on f2 or 19...♖xb5 20 ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 21 f6! with unclear play.

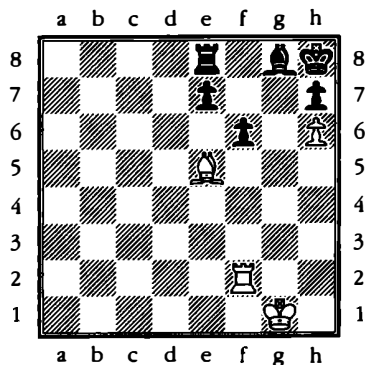
Instead Kramnik played 18...♖h6!!

If White takes the bishop he is mated after 19 ♜xh6 ♜xc2+!! 20 ♖xc2 (or 20 ♖xc2 ♖e2 mate) 20...♖b3 mate! In the game he tried 19 ♜he1 but lost after 19...axb5 20 ♖xb5+ (here 20 ♜xh6 no longer allows smothered mate, but Black has a lethal attack after 20...♖c4 when 21 ♖xc4? allows 21...♜a1 mate.) 20...♖e7 21 ♜h4+ f6 22 ♜xf2 ♖f7 23 ♖d3 ♜b6 and Black soon had an overwhelming attack on the queenside.

Mate with the bishop

This isn't quite so interesting as mate with the knight as it duplicates more common mates with the queen down the diagonal. Thus in the famous Fool's Mate 1 g4 e5 2 f3?? ♜h4 mate it would equally be mate if it were a bishop rather than queen on h4. The bishop mate also requires a great deal of connivance from the enemy pieces: namely there must be clumsy defenders that can neither block the check nor eliminate the checking piece, but still take away all escape squares from their king. That sounds remarkably like a definition of smothered mate, even though formally

the term applies only to mates with the knight. Here is an example:



The bishop on g8 lends White a hand in mating after

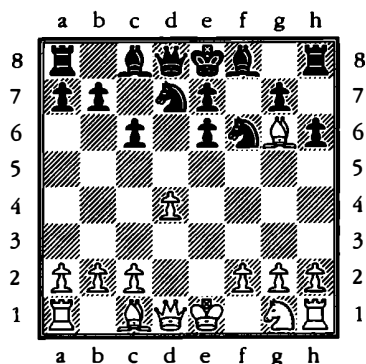
1 ♖xf6 exf6

Or 1...♗f7 2 ♖g6 mate.

2 ♗xf6 mate.

Another form of this mate could occur in the Caro-Kann Defence. Incidentally, it is curious how the Caro-Kann, which is famed for its solidity, provides so many examples of smothered mates!

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘d7 5 ♗g5 ♗gf6 6 ♗d3. Now 6...e6 is the usual move, as if Black tries to kick away the knight with 6...h6?! he would fall for 7 ♗e6! fxe6?? (he has to play something like 7...♗a5+ 8 ♗d2 ♗b6, when 9 ♘xf8 is only a positional advantage for White) 8 ♗g6 mate.



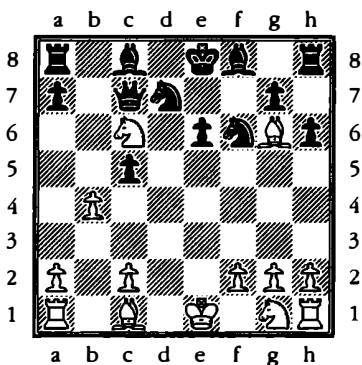
The black pieces are making a huge contribution by blocking all the escape exits of their king: hence the term smothered mate seems valid.

Mate with knight and bishop

When it occurs the effect is often very beautiful. Here for example is a miniature game with a delightful finish:

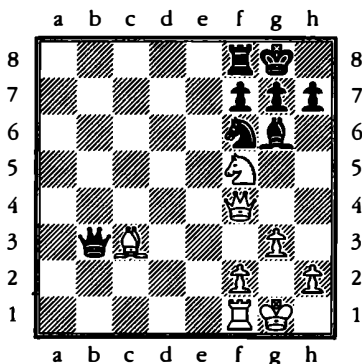
Perenyi - Eperjesi
Hungary 1986

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘d2 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♘d7 5 ♗c4 ♗gf6 6 ♗g5 e6 7 ♗e2 ♗b6 8 ♗d3 h6 9 ♘5f3 c5 10 dxc5 ♘bd7 11 b4 b6?! 12 ♘d4 bxc5? Falling for the trap, but it was already bad for Black. 13 ♘c6! ♗c7 14 ♗xe6+!! fxe6 15 ♗g6 mate!



The knight and the clutter of black pieces take away all the escape squares from the black king.

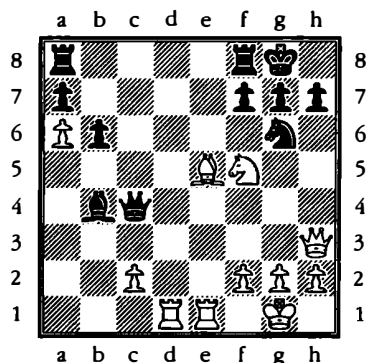
In the distant past I managed to carry out the following type of combination, which became the first game I ever had published:



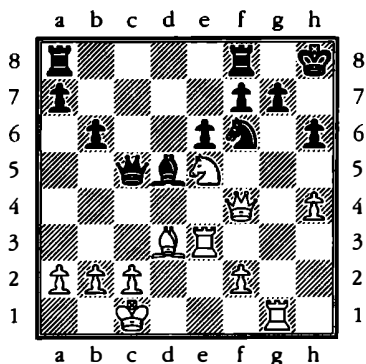
1 Qh6+ Kh8 (if 1...gxh6 2 Wxf6 and mate follows on h8 unless he gives up the queen for the bishop) 2 Wxf6! gxf6 3 Qxf6 mate.

The mating pattern was seen in practice in the following game. It is very rare for such mates to occur in games between titled players: strong players are aware of these attacking mechanisms and will do all they can to avoid them.

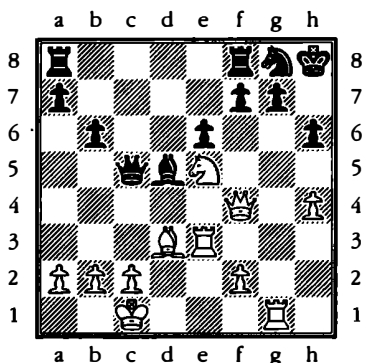
Kotronias - King
New York 1990



With the white bishop and knight both aiming at the g7 square the scene is set for a decisive combination. Still, White has to be precise as if 26 Qh6+? gxh6 27 Wxf6 f6 28 Qd7 Qf7 just leaves him a piece down while 26 Qxg7? Qxe1 27 Qxe1 Qfe8 threatening mate on e1 is another disaster. However, 26 Wf6!! does the trick. Black resigned immediately. The sham queen sacrifice attacks g7 a third time, so if either 26...Qxe5 or 26...f6 there is still the knight to support a mate with 27 Wxg7. And on 26...gxh6 27 Qxh6 is a pretty mate.



This is the final position in the Anand - Korchnoi game given in the chapter on queen and rook mates. Black resigned because there was no good way to prevent 20 ♖xg7! ♜xg7 21 ♜g3+ ♜h8 22 ♜xh6+ with mate next move on g7 or h7. If he had defended g7 with 19...♜g8 then 20 ♜xf7 is mate, while on 19...♜g8

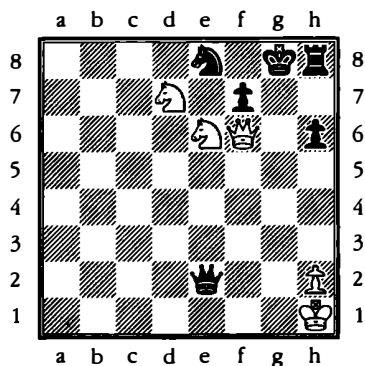


the most efficient way to finish the game is 20 ♜xf7! threatening

mate on g7 and clearing the way for ♜g6 or even better ♜g6+ if needed. If 20...♜xf7 21 ♜xf7 is immediate mate.

Mate with the two bishops or two knights

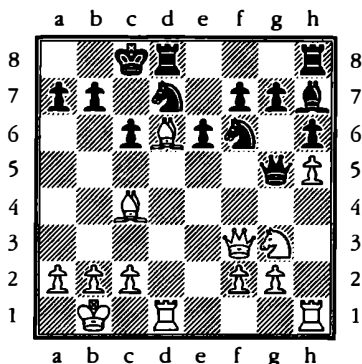
Both these mates are very rare in tournament play. Here is a double knight mate I have constructed:



White would be in deep trouble if he didn't have 1 ♜g7+! ♜xg7 2 ♜f6 mate.

The double bishop mate is also highly unusual in tournament play. I just want to point out one memorable mate that can occur in the Caro-Kann.

Movsesian - Schlosser
Germany 1998



Here Black played 17...♞e5 and a draw resulted after 18 ♛c3 ♞xc4 19 ♛xc4 ♛b5 etc. Instead 17...♛g4? would fall for a devilish trap: 18 ♛xc6+! bxc6 19 ♔a6 and the black king is mated!

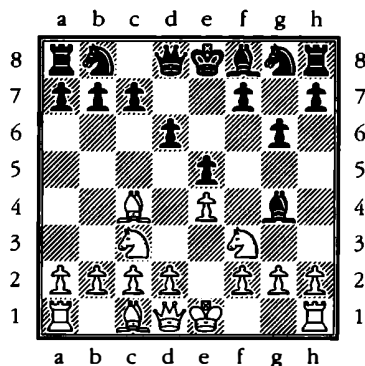
Legall's mate

Finally in this chapter we shall look at a celebrated mating pattern involving three minor pieces, in which the knight has the honour of mating. It dates back to the following game:

Legall - St Brie
Paris 1750

1 e4 e5 2 ♔c4 d6 3 ♞f3 ♔g4 4 ♞c3 g6?

A terrible move that grants immortality to the name of his opponent.



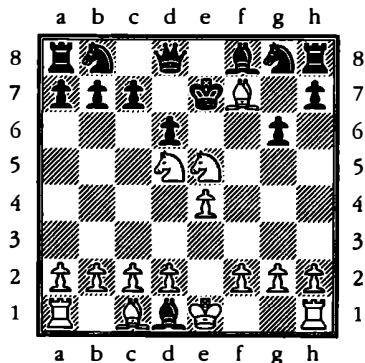
5 ♞xe5!!

Nowadays I would expect any strong player to find the combination that follows, but back in 1750 it took some genius to be the first to discover it.

5... ♔xd1

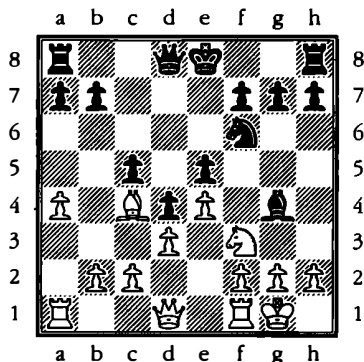
A far lesser evil was to be a pawn down with 5...dxe5 6 ♛xg4, but in old games they always take the queen.

6 ♔xf7+ ♚e7 7 ♞d5 mate.



It is very rare for Legall's mate to occur these days. Indeed, in the example above, it would only have taken a sensible developing move to prevent it, for example 4...♘f6 (defending the bishop on g4) or 4...♘c6 (so that 5 ♘xe5?? can be answered by 5...♘xe5 when the bishop is defended and White loses a piece). So in other words, even if Black has never seen the pattern of Legall's mate he might well avoid it 'by accident', simply by playing a decent developing move!

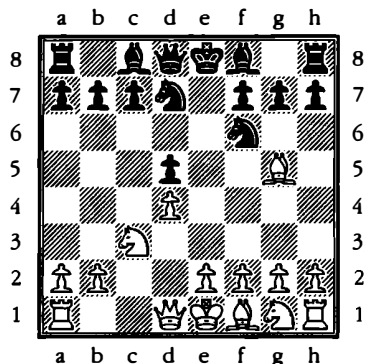
Nevertheless the concept of ♘xe5! ignoring an apparent pin on the knight by the bishop, frequently comes up in tournaments as a useful tactic.



Here we can apply the basic idea seen in Legall's mate to set up a fork on e5 with 1 ♙xf7+! ♜xf7 2 ♘xe5+ ♜e8 3 ♘xg4 and White wins two pawns.

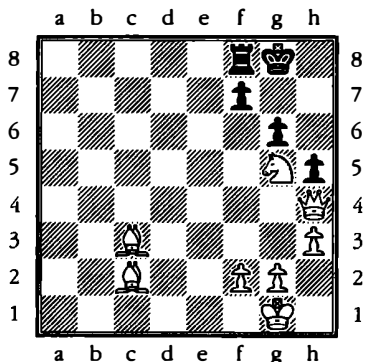
The same device also occurs in a well known trap in the Queen's Gambit:

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♙g5 ♘bd7 5 cxd5 exd5



and here White would lose a piece after 6 ♘xd5? as the pin on the knight can be broken: 6...♘xd5! 7 ♙xd8 ♙b4+ 8 ♚d2 ♙xd2+ 9 ♜xd2 ♜xd8.

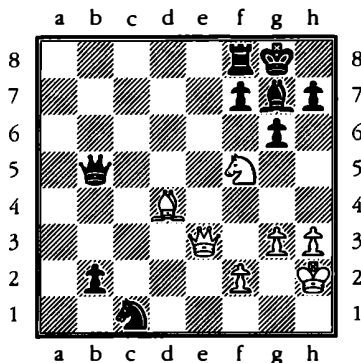
Lastly here is one other mating pattern with three minor pieces that is worth remembering.



Black has responded to $\text{d}g5$ with $\text{h}7\text{-h}5$ to prevent $\text{w}x\text{h}7$ mate, but disaster strikes along the h file all the same after $1 \text{ w}x\text{h}5! \text{ g}x\text{h}5 \ 2 \ \text{e}h7$ mate.

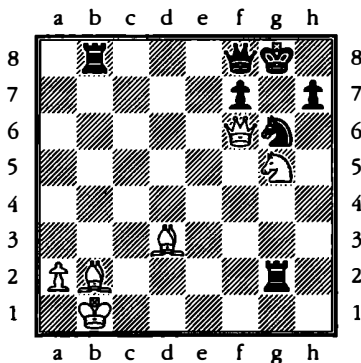
Puzzles

58



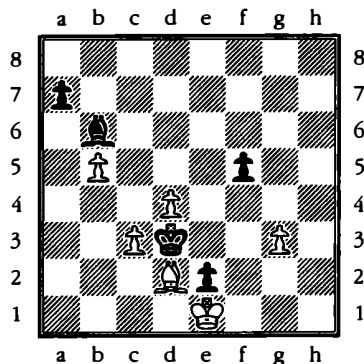
White to play

59



White to play

60

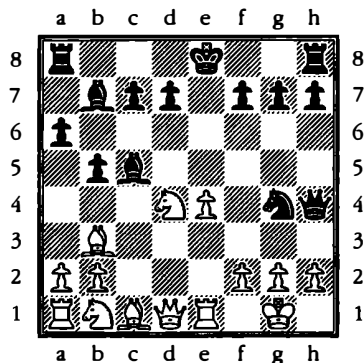


Black to play

The deadly diagonal in the end-game: Black to play and win.

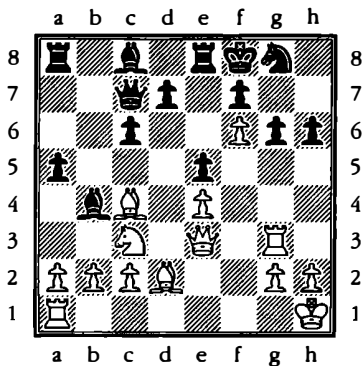
61

After the opening moves $1 \text{ e}4 \text{ e}5 \ 2 \ \text{d}f3 \ \text{d}c6 \ 3 \ \text{e}b5 \ \text{a}6 \ 4 \ \text{e}a4 \ \text{d}f6 \ 5 \ 0\text{-}0 \ \text{b}5 \ 6 \ \text{e}b3 \ \text{e}b7 \ 7 \ \text{e}e1 \ \text{e}c5 \ 8 \ \text{c}3 \ \text{d}g4 \ 9 \ \text{d}4 \ \text{e}x\text{d}4 \ 10 \ \text{c}x\text{d}4$ Black sacrifices a knight with $10\text{...}\text{d}x\text{d}4 \ 11 \ \text{d}x\text{d}4 \ \text{w}h4$ hitting $\text{f}2$ and $\text{h}2$.



Is $12 \ \text{d}f3$ now a safe defence?

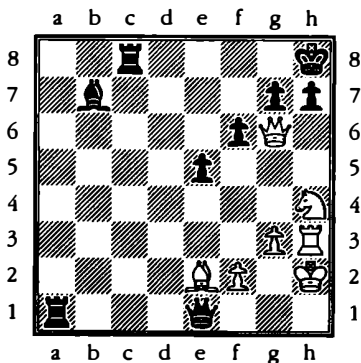
62



White to play

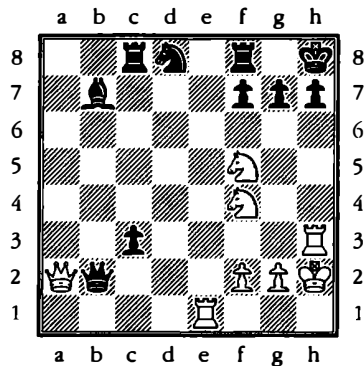
This position could have been reached in Kasparov-Movsesian in the Chapter on the killer pawn if Black had answered 18...f6! with 18...g6. How would Kasparov have exploited his advantage?

63



White to play

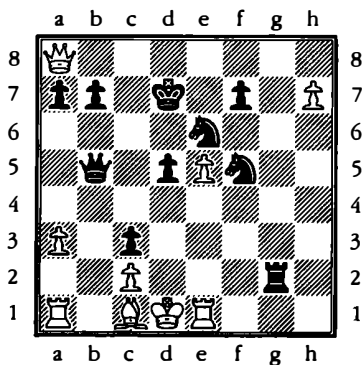
64



White to play

65

Short - Neelotpal
Dhaka 1999

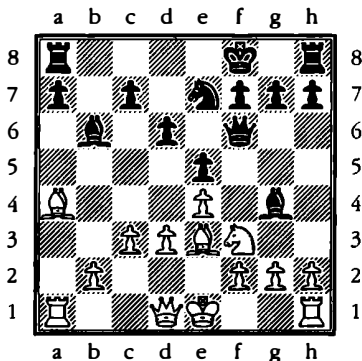


White to play

Black's plight looks terrible. Not only is he the exchange down but White has a pawn on the seventh rank waiting to queen. Surely this is

not a good situation to be in against a former World Championship finalist. It is even White's move. And yet in three moves time, White....resigned! What skulduggery was at work here? (in other words, tell me what you would do as Black here against 24 h8=♔ or 24 ♖a2.)

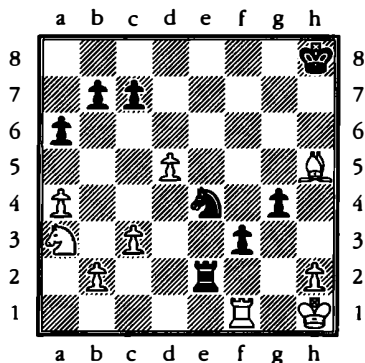
66
Short - Kupreichik,
Hastings 1981



White to play

There is no mate here, but find something strong for White!

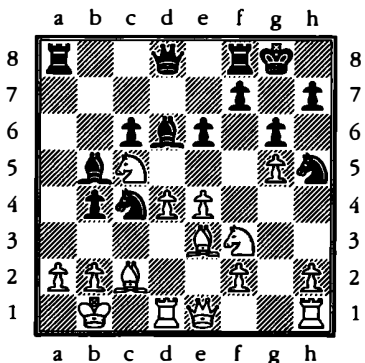
67



Black to play.

Black has to do something fast as he is a piece down!

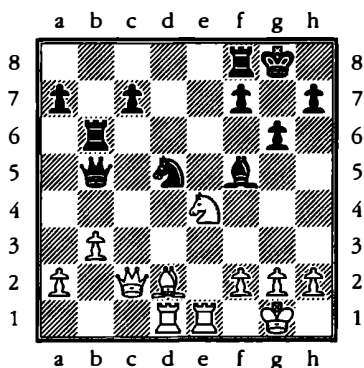
68
Dao Thien Hai - McDonald
Budapest 1996



Black to play

Solutions to Puzzles

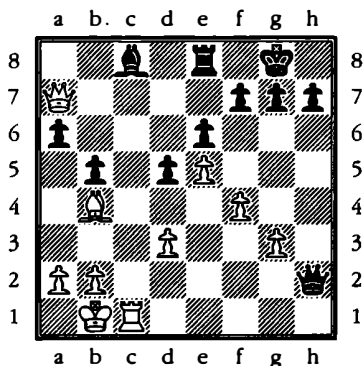
1



If 1 ♙h6 ♜e8 3 ♞xd5! ♚xd5 4 ♜f6+ ♚h8 5 ♜xe8 mate.

2

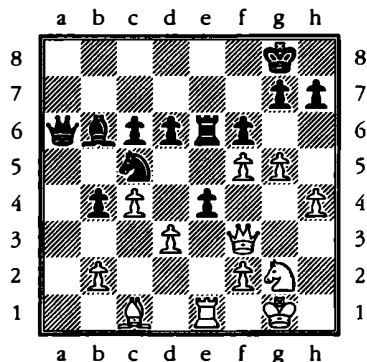
Rudolf - Moritz
Rostock 2002



The game finished 23 ♚e7! 1-0
The black rook has no escape squares and if 23... ♜xe7 24 ♞xc8 mates next move. If from the diagram Black had played 22... ♚d8 then 23 ♞c7 with the twin threats of 24 ♙e7 and 24 ♞xf7 is decisive. After losing control of the dark squares there was no hiding place for the black pieces on the light squares.

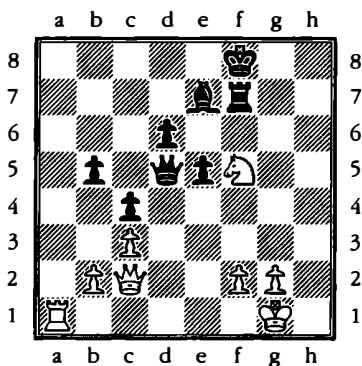
3

Movsesian - Godena
Elista 1998



No, as 29 fxe6! exf3 30 e7 won at once: in view of the threatened mate on e8 Black has no time to take the knight on g2. Godena tried 30... ♚c8 but resigned after 31 e8=♚+ ♚xe8 32 ♞xe8+ ♚f7 33 ♞b8 1-0 as if 33... ♚d7 34 ♞b7 keeps the extra rook.

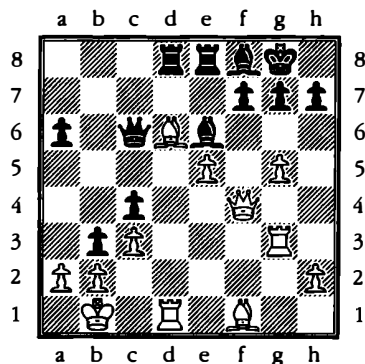
4
Adams - Giorgadze
 Groningen 1997



Adams uncorked 41 ♖d2!! winning time to get his queen to a strong attacking post on h6 as if 41...♗xd2 42 ♖a8+ ♔d8 43 ♗xd8 is mate.

After 41...♗c6 42 ♗h6+ ♔e8 43 ♗e6 Black resigned. The threat is 44 ♖xd6+ ♗xd6 45 ♖a8+ ♗d8 46 ♗xd8+ ♔xd8 47 ♗xf7, and if 43...♔f8 White has the choice between 44 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 45 ♗f6+ ♗f7 46 ♖a8+! ♗xa8 47 ♗h8+ winning the queen for rook or 44 ♖a7 ♗e8 45 ♖xe7 ♗xe7 46 ♗f6+ when 46...♗f7 47 ♗h8 is mate while 46...♗f7 47 ♗h8+ wins a rook.

5
Ljubojević - Kasparov
 Belfort 1988



If 28...bxa2+ White has to avoid 29 ♔xa2? ♗a4+, but 29 ♔a1 looks safe for him. Kasparov kept the pawn on b3 to create mating threats: he only wants to take on a2 when White can't stop the pawn from queening!

The game went 28...♗xd6 29 exd6 ♗xd6! which exploits the weak white back rank to win the crucial passed pawn. Neither recapture is any good for White:

30 ♗xd6 ♗f5+ 31 ♔c1 (it will be mate after 31 ♔a1 ♗xd6 32 ♗xd6 ♗e1+) 31...bxa2! when 32 ♗xc6 a1=♗+ 33 ♔d2 ♗xb2 or 32 ♗a3 ♗e4! 33 ♗d3 (if 33 ♗xa2 ♗c2 mate) 33...♗f4+ 34 ♔c2 ♗e2+ 35. ♗d2 ♗xd2 are both mate. Alternatively 30 ♗xd6 ♗f5+ 31 ♗xf5 ♗e1 mates or here 31 ♔c1 bxa2 32 ♗xc6 a1=♗+ 33 ♔d2 ♗e1 mate.

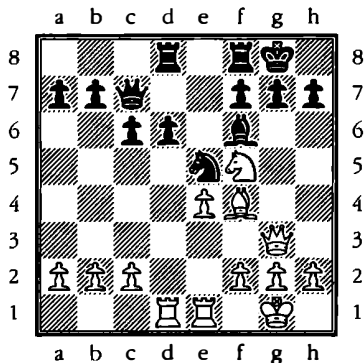
In the game White played the forlorn 30 ♗c1, but having lost his

passed pawn and still not removed the cramping pawn on b3 there was little hope against Kasparov:

30...♖c5 31 ♔a1 ♜e8 32 ♜e3 ♜d1 33 ♜e1 ♜xe1 34 ♜xe1 ♖a5 35 a3 ♗d5 36 ♜e2 g6 37 h4 ♗d2 38 ♗f1 ♜h3! 39 ♗g1 ♜e8 0-1

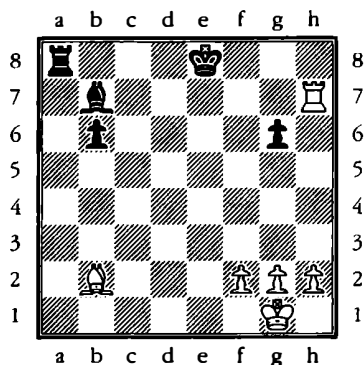
The pin costs the bishop.

6



An old game but one of my favourites: 17 ♜xd6! ♜xd6 18 ♜xe5 ♜d1 the only try as if 18...♜xe5 19 ♗xe5 hits both d6 and g7, and 19...♜g6 drops the queen. It seems that the back rank trick will save Black, but... 19 ♜xd1 ♜xe5 20 ♜h6+! ♜h8 21 ♗xe5! ♗xe5 22 ♜xf7+! 1-0 White has the last laugh as Black's own weak back rank means that he cannot capture the knight. Therefore 22...♜g8 23 ♜xe5 leaves him a piece and two pawns up. (Capablanca-Fonaroff, New York 1918)

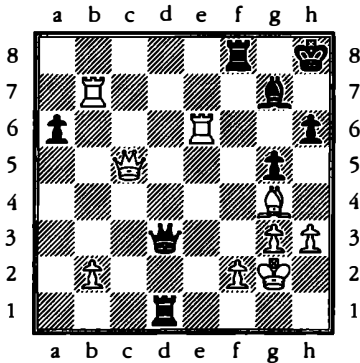
7



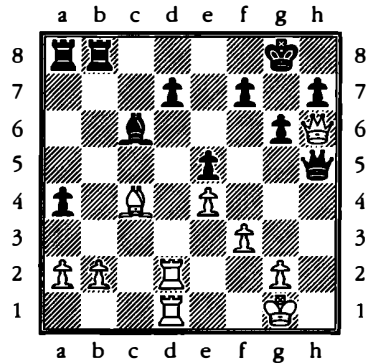
White to play

It looks like White can win at once with 1 ♜xb7, for if 1...♜a2 2 ♜xb6 but 1...0-0-0!! turns the tables: the white rook is attacked and mate is threatened on d1! As he can't deal with both threats White loses the rook and eventually the game after 2 h4 ♜xb7 etc. Instead White should play something like 1 ♜f6 ♜c8 2 h4 with good winning chances. (OK, I guess I should have told you that queenside castling was legal for Black, but that would have given the trick away. At least you won't ever forget this idea!)

8

Lputian - Spraggett
Olympiad, Bled 2002

9

Short - Rogers
Manila 1992

The butcher's approach would be 36 ♖xd1, winning the exchange, though the game would still take some finishing after 36...♜xd1. Black found something speedier and more entertaining, though don't make it too subtle as Black himself is threatening mate in two with 36...♜f1+.

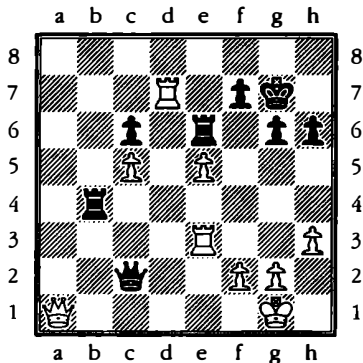
36 ♜xh6+! and Black resigned. The fianchetto defence breaks down after 36...♜xh6 37 ♜e5+ ♜g8 38 ♜e6+ (even more precise than 38 ♜e6+) 38...♜f7 39 ♜xf7+ ♜h8 40 ♜f6+ ♜g8 41 ♜e6 mate.

White was prepared to sacrifice heavily to get control of the seventh rank:

29 ♜xf7+!

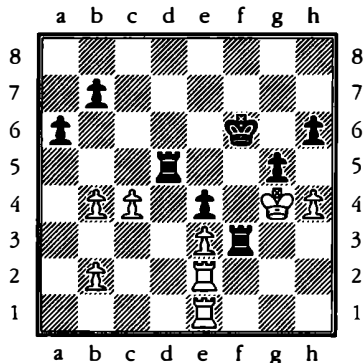
If now 29...♜xf7 30 ♜xd7+ ♜xd7 31 ♜xd7+ and in reply to both 31...♜e6 and 31...♜e8 White has 32 ♜g7 when mate will follow on e7 or f7. So in the game Rogers played 29...♜h8, but after 30 ♜xh5 gxh5 31 ♜xh5 he was a pawn down with a hopeless position.

10
Korchnoi - Kraidman
Beersheba 1978



After the plausible 35 ♖a7 Black can defend f7 with 35...♖b1+ 36 ♕h2 ♗xf2, with at least a draw after 37 ♜f3 ♗g1+. So Korchnoi ignored the threat to his queen with 35 ♜f3!! ♖b1+ 36 ♕h2 It turns out that Black is mated after 36...♜xa1 37 ♜dx7+ ♕h8 38 ♜f8+ ♕g7 39 ♜3f7. So Kraidman tried the desperate 36...g5. Here White had a quick mate with 37 ♜dx7+ ♕g6 (or 37...♕g8 38 ♗a8+ and mates) 38. ♜3f6+ ♜xf6 (or 38...♕h5 39 ♜xe6!) 39 ♜xf6+ ♕h5 40 g4+ ♕h4 41 ♜xh6 mate. Korchnoi played the less precise 37 ♗a8 but also won quickly: 37...♗e4 38 ♜dx7+ ♕g6 39 ♗g8+ ♕h5 40 ♜7f5 ♗e1 41 ♜xg5+! 1-0 for if 41...hxg5 42 ♗h7+ ♜h6 43 g4+ ♕h4 44 ♗xh6 mate.

11
Sahović - Korchnoi
Biel 1979



Another game from the old maestro. There are no rooks on the seventh rank—at least not yet! Let us see how Korchnoi managed to shut in and mate the white king.

1...h5+! 2 ♕xh5 ♜d8!

with threat of 3...♜h8+ 4 ♕g4 ♜xh4 mate.

3 hxg5+

There is no escape with 3 ♕g4 as 3...gxf4 4 ♕xf4 ♕f5 and mate next move, or similarly 4 b5 ♜g8+ 5 ♕xf4 ♕f5 and 6...♜h8 mate.

3...♕f5

with a double threat of mate on h3 or h8.

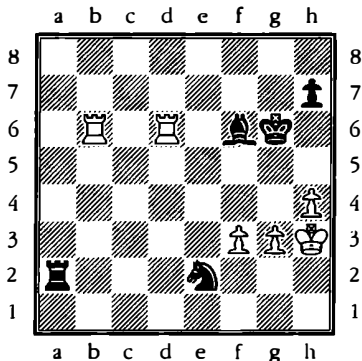
4 ♕h6 ♜h3+ 5 ♕g7 ♜d7+ 6 ♕g8

Or 6 ♕f8 ♜h8 mate.

6...♕g6! 7 ♜f2

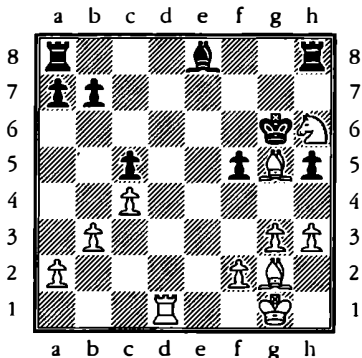
To stop mate on d8, but now Korchnoi ended the game with 7...♜g7+ 8 ♕f8 ♜h8 mate.

12
Kotronias - Hausrath
Germany 1996



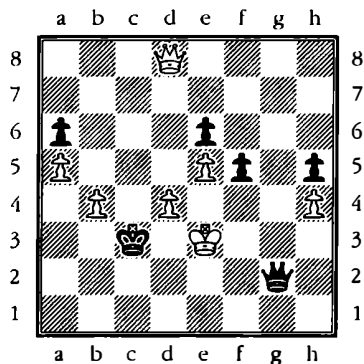
No, as he is mated after 44...♖g1+ 45 ♜g4 ♜a4+! 46 f4 h5 mate! In the game Kotronias played it safe with 43 ♜d5 ♜d4 44 h5+ ♜f6 45 ♜g4 which destroyed all the potential mating nets and eventually won.

13
Kalinin - Skotorenko
Correspondence 1991



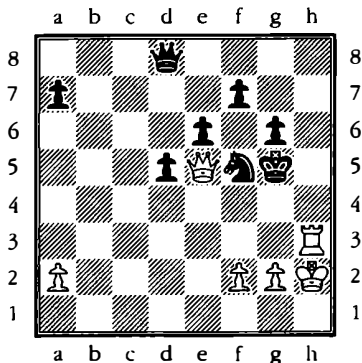
If 26...♙xg5 27 ♜d6! ♜g6 28 ♜f7+! ♜xf7 when White has a choice of pawn mates with 29 f4 or 29 h4. It is no surprise that Black resigned in the diagram position as in a correspondence game there is time to work out such a variation.

14
Topalov - Kasparov
Linares 1999



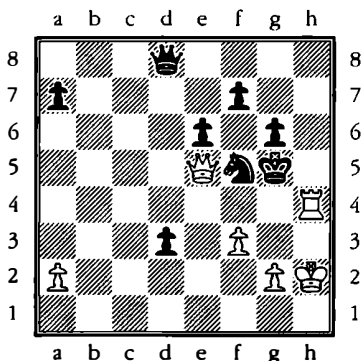
White resigned on 61...f4+! as it is mate after 62 ♜xf4 ♜d3! 63 ♜g5—the only way to prevent 63...♜g4 mate—63...♜f2 mate.

15
Schaefer - Novik
Sofia 1994



After 45...♞d6 White can mate with 46 f4+ ♔g4 47 ♜h4+!! ♔xh4 (or 47...♞xh4 48 ♞g5 mate—better than taking the queen!) 48 ♞f6+ ♔g4 49 ♞g5 mate.

After 45...d4 46 f3 d3 47 ♜h4!

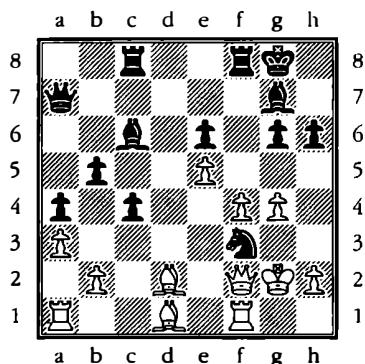


Black is mated after both 47...♔xh4 48 ♞f4+ ♔h5 49 g4+ ♔h4 50 g5+ ♔h5 51 ♞g4 mate and 47...d2 48 ♔h3! (threat 49 f4 mate) 48...♞d3 49 ♜g4+ ♔h5 50 ♞h8+ ♔h6 51 ♞f6 ♞xg4 52 ♞h4 mate.

These variations were given by Novik and Nesis in *Informator*.

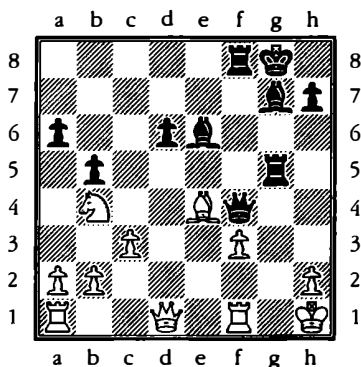
The game itself actually finished 46...f6 47 f4+ ♔g4 48 ♞e2+ ♔xf4 49 ♜f3+ ♔g5 50 ♞d2+ ♔h5 51 g4+ ♔h4 52 ♞f4 1-0

16



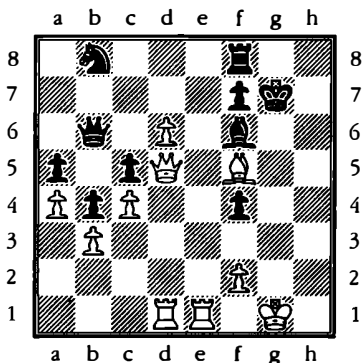
Answer: no, after 28 ♞xa7 ♞xd2+ 29 ♔f2 ♜xf4+ 30 ♔e3 White is mated with 30...♞xf1+ 31 ♔xf4 g5 mate.

17
Prokopp - Scholz
Correspondence, 1996



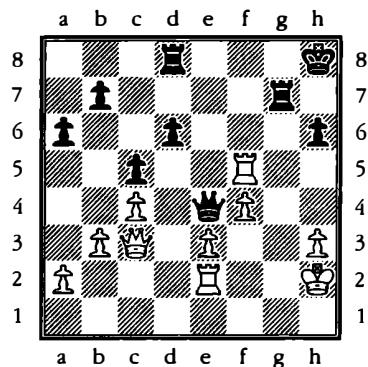
Yes, as 25... ♖xh2+!! 26 ♔xh2
♜f6 forces mate!

18
Kasparov - Grischuk
Cannes 2001



There was no escape for the black king after 40 ♖g2+ ♔h6 41 ♜h3+ ♔g5 (if 41... ♔g7 42 ♜h7 mate) 42 ♜g4+ ♔h6 43 ♜d3 1-0

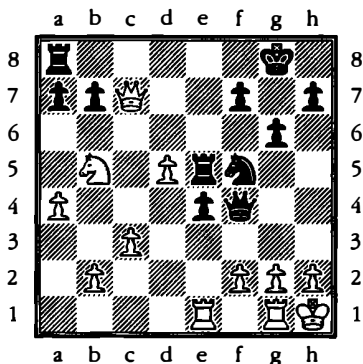
19
Malaniuk - Tseitlin
Hastings 1995



After 40 ♜f6?? ♜f3!! White saw to his horror that he is mated down the g file after 41 ♜xd8+ ♔h7, for example 42 ♜d2 ♜g3+ 43 ♔h1 ♜g1 mate. So he tried 41 ♜xh6+ ♔g8, but once again he was helpless against the double threat of 42... ♜xe2+ and 42... ♜g3+. He resigned after the futile moves 42 ♜g5 ♜xe2+ 43 ♔h1 ♜f3+ 44 ♔h2 ♜dd7 45 ♜e6+ ♜df7 46 h4 ♜c6 0-1

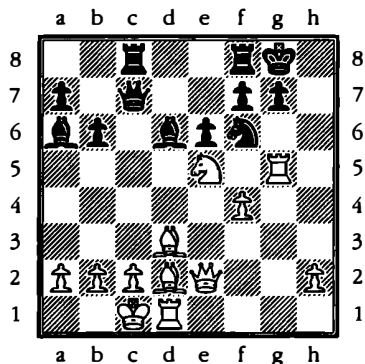
Instead of his terrible blunder in the game White could have forced an endgame a pawn up with 40 ♜f7! ♜dg8 41 ♜f6 ♔h7 42 ♜f5+ ♜xf5 43 ♜xf5 etc.

20
Yudasin - Kramnik
Wijk aan Zee 1994

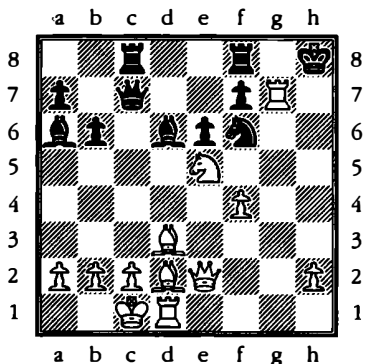


Here 23...e3! softened up the defence of the g3 square, so that both 24 fxe3 and 24 f3 could be answered by 24...♘g3+ 25 hxg3 ♜h5 mate. If instead 24 ♘d4 there is a variation on the same theme with 24...exf2 25 ♜xe5 ♘g3+ 26 hxg3 ♜h6+—this time the queen finds a mating square on the h file. As Black is also threatening 24...exf2, there is nothing White can do. Yudasin tried 24 ♜xe3 but resigned after 24...♜xe3 25 ♘d6 (or again 25 fxe3 ♘g3+ 26 hxg3 ♜h5 mate) 25...♜e7 26 ♘xf5 gxf5 27 ♜d6 ♜e5 28 ♜b4 ♜ae8 29 ♜h4 f6 30 h3 ♜xd5 0-1

21
Baklan - Matzat
Bad Zwosten 1999

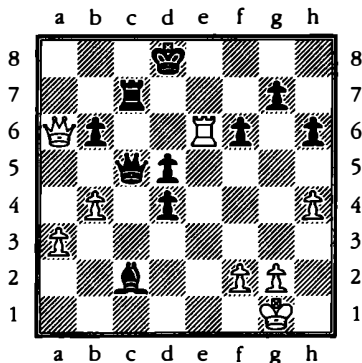


I hope you didn't spend too long thinking about 21 ♘xa6?? ♜xc2 mate. Instead 21 ♜xg7+! ♘xg7 22 ♜g2+ and Black resigned as 22...♗h8 23 ♜h3+ ♘g7 24 ♜g1+ ♘g4 25 ♜xg4+ ♘f6 26 ♜g5 is mate. Black could have made it a little harder for White with 21...♗h8



but he has a pretty win with 22 ♜h5+! ♘xh5 23 ♜h7+ ♘g8 24 ♜g1+ ♘g7 25 ♜gxg7 mate.

22
Haba - Khenkin
Koszalin 1999



The black queen is attacked, and if 36...♖c4 37 ♜a8+! wins for White: 37...♙c8 (or 37...♔d7 38 ♜e8 mate) 38 ♜b7 ♙c7 (Black must deal with the threat of 39 ♜e7 mate, and 38...♜c7 39 ♜xd5+ ♜d7 40 ♙d6 drops the queen) 39 ♜b8+ ♙c8 40 ♜d6 with a form of the epaulette mate described earlier in the chapter.

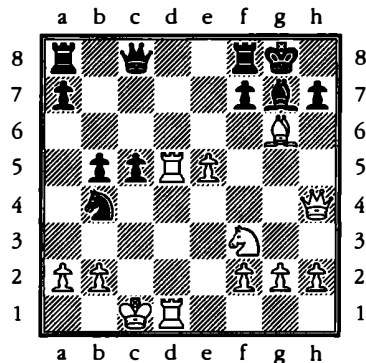
So it seems that White was right to avoid the draw by repetition. However, in the game Khenkin didn't move his queen. Instead he turned the tables with 36...♙d3!! when 37 ♜a8+ ♙c8 is just bad for White so he had to take the bishop:

37 ♜xd3 ♜c1+ 38 ♜f1

The only way to resist was with 38 ♔h2, but 38...♜f4+ is then very good for Black.

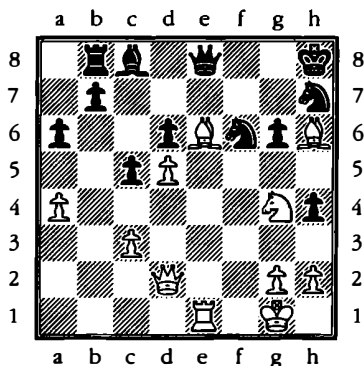
38...d3! 39 ♜e1 d2 40 ♜d1 ♜xd1+ 0-1

23
Bellavsky - Kasparov
World Cup, Belfort 1988



No—19...hxg6? 20 ♖g5 ♙e8 21 ♙d7! is fatal. The threat is 22 ♜h7+ ♔f8 23 ♙xf7, and if 21...♙f8 then 22 ♜h7 mate. Black can only delay things with the useless check 21...♖xa2+ 22 ♔b1, or the bluff 21...♙e7 22 ♙xe7 ♜f5, when his roof caves in after 23 ♜h7+ ♔f8 24 ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 25 ♖xf7 ♔xf7 26 ♙d7+. The situation after Kasparov's correct 19...fxg6! is discussed in the chapter on back rank mate.

24
Mecking - Pace
Olympiad, Bled 2002



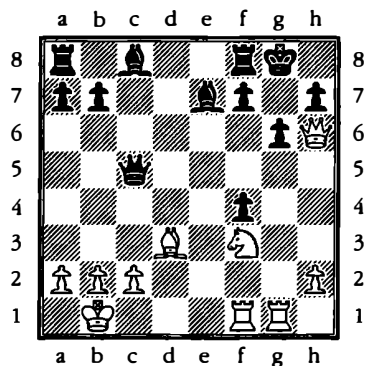
27 ♖g7+!!

This really rubs in the fact that Black should never have parted with the dark squared bishop that was once sitting on g7.

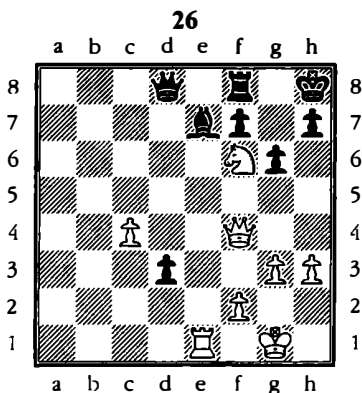
27...♙xg7 28 ♜h6+ ♚h8 29 ♜xf6 ♜e7 30 ♜xh7 1-0

As soon as the white queen enters it all crumbles for Black. He cannot recapture on h7 without allowing mate with 31 ♜f8+.

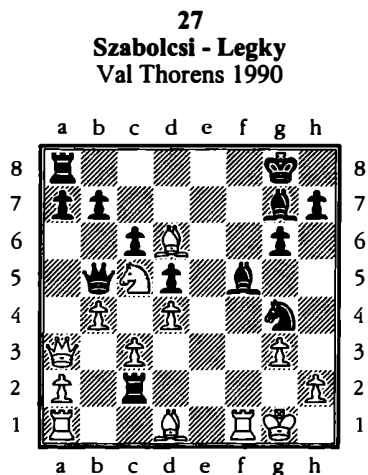
25
Khalifman - Bareev
Wijk aan Zee 2002



After 20 ♖g5! Black resigned. If 20...♙xg5 21 ♜xg5 and Black has to give up his queen to avert mate on h7. Or 20...♜c7 21 ♖h5! gxh5 22 ♜xh7 mate. The only other move allows a breakthrough on g6: 20...f5 21 ♖xg6+ hxg6 22 ♜xg6+ ♚h8 23 ♜h6+ ♚g8 24 ♙c4+! ♜xc4 (if 24...♜f7 25 ♜g6+) 25 ♖g1+ ♚f7 26 ♜g6 mate.



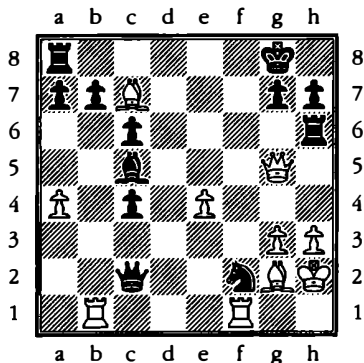
1 ♖xe7! ♗xe7 2 ♖h6! ♗xf6 (also useless is 2...♗e1+ 3 ♖g2 ♗e4+ 4 ♖h2 etc.) 3 ♗xf8 mate: the black queen was unable to keep f8 defended and eliminate the black knight. A tougher defence is 1...d2 but White still wins easily after 2 ♗h6 d1=♗+ 3 ♖h2 ♗h5 (an awful move to have to make) 4 ♖xh5 gxh5 5 ♖d7! (still using the potential mate on f8) 5...♗e8 6 ♗f6+ ♖g8 7 ♖d5 h6 8 ♗xh6 and things get gradually more gruesome for Black as he tries to fend off a fatal check on g5, e.g. 8...f5 9 ♗g5+ ♖h8 10 ♖d6.



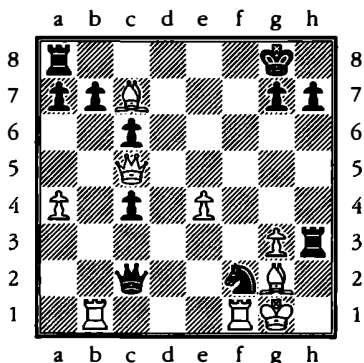
After (a) 27 ♖xc2 ♗e2 wins very quickly as there is no good answer to 28...♗xh2 mate. For example if 28 ♖f4 there is, amongst other winning lines, the delightful variation 28...♗xh2+ 29 ♖f1 ♖e3+ 30 ♖e1 ♖xc2+ picking up the white queen.

In the game White chose (b) 27 ♖c1, but he resigned immediately after 27...♖g2+! which gains time to co-ordinate the queen and knight in a king hunt. There could follow 28 ♖xg2 ♖e3+ 29 ♖f2 ♗xf1+ 30 ♖xe3 ♖e8+ 31 ♖e5 ♖h6 mate! (or less elegantly 31 ♖e4 ♖xe4+ 32 ♖d2 ♗f2+ 33 ♖d3 ♖xd4 mate.)

28
Topalov - Kramnik
Linares 1997

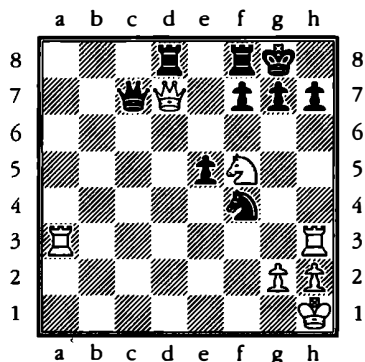


White is mated after 27 ♖xc5? ♜xh3+! when 28 ♙xh3 ♘g4+ 29 ♚g1 ♜h2 is mate or more cleverly after 28 ♚g1



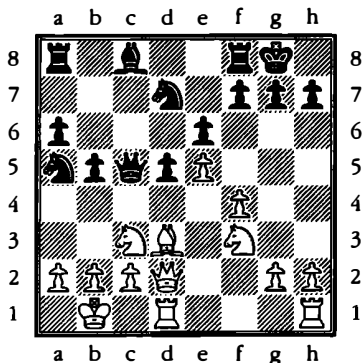
28...♜h1+! 29 ♙xh1 ♘h3 mate. After the game Topalov admitted that he had missed 28...♜h1+ in his earlier calculations when he went in for the puzzle position. It is indeed difficult to see this move, which clears the way for the fatal knight check on h3. In the game Topalov declined to take the bishop but was losing all the same after 27 ♜xf2 ♚xf2 28 ♜f1 ♚d4 etc.

29



Taking the black queen is a bad idea as it is mate on d1. As well as this White is two pawns down and he has both his queen and rook attacked. But one of the mates came to the rescue: 1 ♘e7+ ♚h8 2 ♜xh7+! ♚xh7 3 ♜h3+ ♘h3 4 ♜xh3 mate.

30

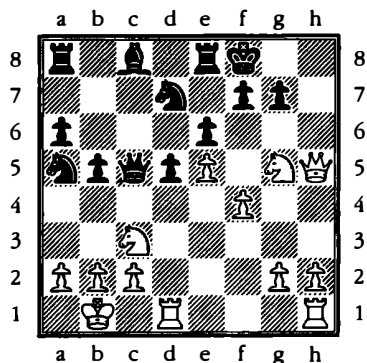


After 1 ♖xh7+ ♜xh7 2 ♜g5+ Black has three alternatives:

Firstly, if 2... ♜h6 3 ♜d3! and there is no answer to the double threat of 4 ♜h7 mate or a similarly fatal check on h3, e.g. 3...g6 4 ♜h3+ ♜g7 5 ♜h7 mate.

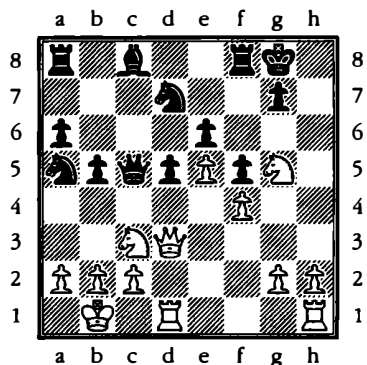
Secondly, 2... ♜g6 3 ♜d3! is lethal after 3... f5 (or 3... ♜h5 4 ♜h3+ ♜g6 5 ♜h7 mate) 4 ♜h3! (even better than pocketing the queen with 4 exf6+ ♜xf6 5 ♜ce4+ dxe4 6 ♜xe4+ etc.). Again Black has no good way to prevent a killing check on h7 for if 4... ♜xe5 5 ♜h7+ ♜f6 6 fxe5+ ♜xg5 7 ♜e2! (the simplest move, taking away the f4 flight square from the black king) 7... ♜f7 8 h4+ ♜g4 9 ♜g6 mate.

Finally, 2... ♜g8 is the best way to fight on. Then after 3 ♜d3 ♜e8 4 ♜h7+ ♜f8 White has the clever move 5 ♜h5! when Black has no good way to defend f7 as moving the queen or rook to e7 allows mate on h8.



After 5... ♜e7 (or 5...g6 6 ♜h7) 6 ♜xf7+ ♜d8 7 ♜xe6+ ♜xe6 8 ♜xe6 Black has avoided mate but his position has been wrecked.

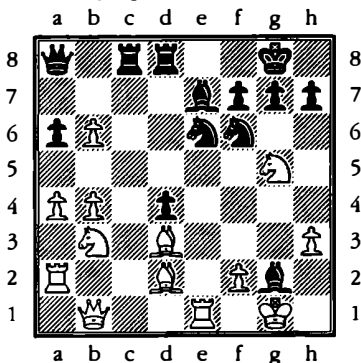
And if 3...f5 in this sequence then White has an instructive win.



4 ♜h3 ♜e8 (or 4... ♜d8 5 ♜h7+ ♜f8 6 ♜h8+ ♜e7 7 ♜xg7+ ♜e8 8 ♜f7 mate) 5 ♜h5! winning time to check on f7 by attacking the rook. 5... ♜b7 6 ♜f7+ ♜h8 7 ♜d3 and mate follows with ♜h3.

31

Korchnoi - Kotsur
Olympiad, Bled 2002



27 ♖xh7+!

A forcing move as if now 27...♔h8 28 ♖xf7 mate or 27...♖xh7 28 ♗xh7+ ♔f8 29 ♗h8 mate. It is possible that the immediate 27 ♗xe6 amounts to the same thing as Black probably has nothing better than the transposing 27...♖xh3 28 ♖xh7+, but you should always try to give your opponent the fewest options.

27...♔f8 28 ♗xe6!

The killer move as after 28...fxe6 29 ♗g6! Black has no way to guard the f7 square. As I remark elsewhere, it is a peculiarity due to the checkmate rule that a whole position can be ruined by the inability to control a single square, when otherwise, speaking of development and material, everything else is looking fine.

Black battled on with 28...♖xh3, but he was losing on 'points'.

29 ♖e4!

Dealing with the mate threat on g2. The potential fork with b6-b7 now proves handy in tidying up the win for Korchnoi.

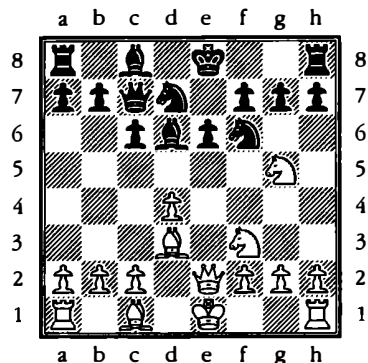
29... ♖xe4 30 ♗xe4 ♖xg5

If 30...fxe6 31 b7 wins, but not 31 ♗g6?? ♗g2 mate.

31 b7 ♗b8 32 bxc8=♗ ♗xc8 33 ♖e5 f5 34 ♖xf5+ 1-0

White emerges a piece up.

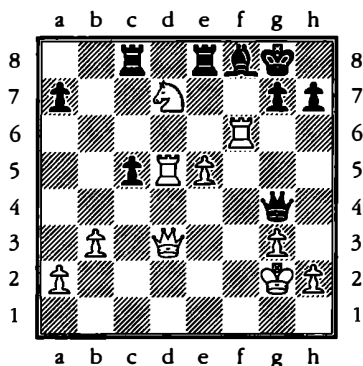
32



Yes, you can play 9 ♖xf7! when Black is already dead lost as 9...♔xf7 10 ♖g5+ ♔e7 (or 10...♔f8 11 ♖xe6+ winning the queen) 11 ♗xe6+ ♔d8 (or 11...♔f8 12 ♗f7 mate) 12 ♖f7 is a smothered mate. Therefore 8...♗c7 is a terrible blunder—usual is 8...h6 to get control of the g5 square and prevent the second white knight from ever landing there.

33

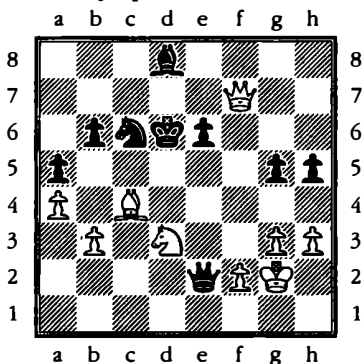
Beliavsky - Wu Shaobin
Olympiad, Bled 2002



White won with 29 ♖h6! 1-0 The h7 pawn has become indefensible because of 29...gxh6 30 ♕f6+ winning the queen. Therefore ♜xh7+ will be crushing.

34

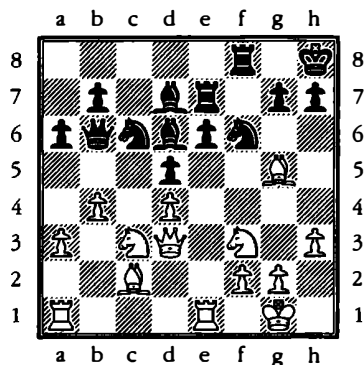
Christiansen - Mosquera
Olympiad, Bled 2002



After 50 ♘c5! the black queen can't remain defending the e6 pawn for if 50...♜e5 51 ♘b7 is mate, while 50...♗e5 51 ♜xe6+ followed by 52 ♘xe2 costs him the queen. Black tried 50...♜c2 but it was mate in three: 51 ♘b7+ ♕e5 52 ♜xe6+ ♕d4 53 ♜e3 mate. I hope you noticed that the f2 pawn wasn't just there to shield the white king!

35

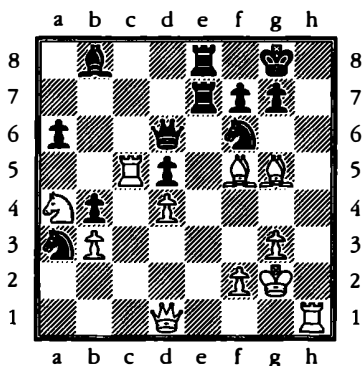
V.Karpov - Rudykh
Novosibirsk 2002



White won with 20 ♗xf6 gxf6 (he has to defend h7 with the rook as if 20...♜xf6 21 ♜xh7 mate) 21 ♘xd5! and Black resigned as he loses the exchange and a pawn or else is mated after 21...exd5 22 ♜xe7 ♘xe7 23 ♜xh7.

39

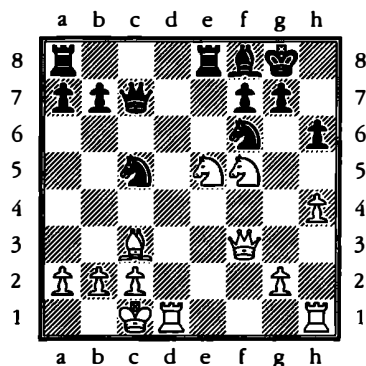
Karpov - Morovic Fernandez
Las Palmas 1994



Karpov won time for a decisive breakthrough on the h file with 32 Hh8+!! Ch8 33 Wh1+ cg8 34 xf6 If now 34... Wxf6 35 Wh7+ cf8 36 Wh8 is mate, while 34...g6 35 Wh8 mate doesn't help either. Black tried the desperate 34... Wxg3+ but resigned after 35 fxg3 Ke2+ 36 ch3 gxf6 37 cg4 1-0

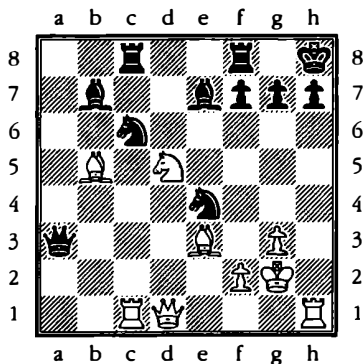
40

Adams - Leko
Linares 1999



After 20 Dxh6+ gxf6 White didn't take the knight on f6. Instead he prevented Black from finding time for fg7 with 21 Dg4! Dxg4 22 Wxg4+ ch7 23 Wf5+ cg8 24 Wf6! when the queen and bishop were the usual deadly duo. The game ended 24... ch7 25 Wh8+ cg6 26 h5+ and Black resigned. The last word goes to the white bishop after 26... cf5 27 Wf6+ cg4 (or 27... ce4 28 Wf3 mate) 28 Wf3+ cg5 29 lf6 mate!

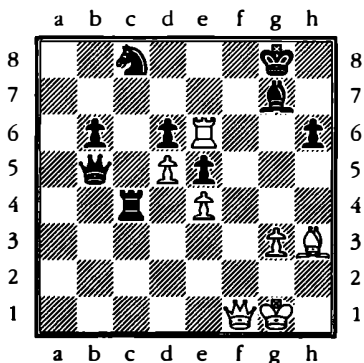
41



1 $\text{R}xh7+$ $\text{C}xh7$ 2 $\text{W}h5+$ $\text{C}g8$ 3 $\text{R}h1$ $\text{f}5$ 4 $\text{R}c4!$ Black has no answer to the threat of discovered check, for example 4... $\text{R}fe8$ 5 $\text{Q}xe7+$ (another way to do it is 5 $\text{Q}f6+$, when there are four mates on the next move!) 5... $\text{C}f8$ when you can choose between 6 $\text{W}f7$ mate and 6 $\text{Q}g6$ mate.

42

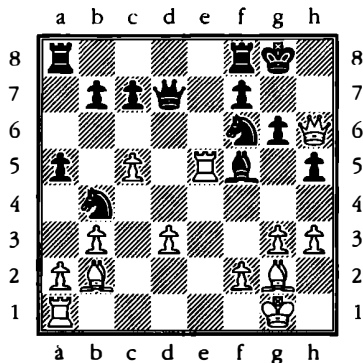
Kasparov - Smirin
Moscow 1988



Kasparov wanted to clear the way for a decisive attack by his queen and bishop with 39 $\text{R}xh6!!$ $\text{R}xh6$ 40 $\text{R}e6+$ $\text{C}h8$ 41 $\text{W}f6+$ 1-0 It is mate after both 41... $\text{R}g7$ 42 $\text{W}h4+$ $\text{R}h6$ 43 $\text{W}xh6$ and 41... $\text{C}h7$ 42 $\text{W}f7+$ $\text{R}g7$ 43 $\text{R}f5+$ $\text{C}h8$ 44 $\text{W}h5+$ $\text{C}g8$ 45 $\text{R}e6+$ $\text{C}f8$ 46 $\text{W}f7$.

43

Speelman - Koneru
Torquay 2002

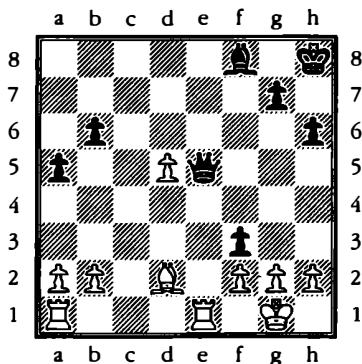


Speelman played 23 $\text{R}e4!$ $\text{R}a6$

If 23... $\text{R}xe4$ 24 $\text{R}xh5!!$ when 24... $\text{Q}xh5$ 25 $\text{W}h8$ is mate, or similarly 24... $\text{g}xh5$ 25 $\text{R}xf6$ and mate is unstoppable.

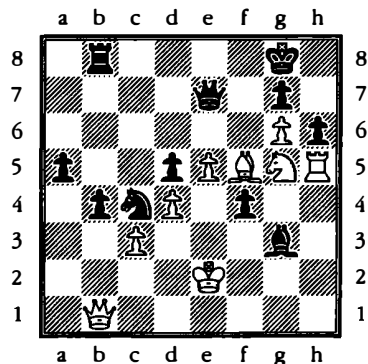
24 $\text{R}xf5!$ $\text{g}xf5$ 25 $\text{W}g5+$ $\text{C}h8$ 26 $\text{R}xf5$ and Black resigned. A possible finish is 26... $\text{W}d8$ 27 $\text{W}h6+$ $\text{C}g8$ 28 $\text{R}xf6$ $\text{W}xf6$ 29 $\text{W}h7$ mate.

44

Adams - Seirawan
Bermuda 1999

If 27...♙xd5 28 ♖f4 is unclear, but Adams had forgotten about 27...♙d4! which both attacks the bishop and threatens our standard mate with 28...♙g4. 29 g3 ♙h3. He resisted with 28 g3 ♙xd2 29 ♜ad1 ♙b4 30 a3 but couldn't hold the game. Instead of 27 ♜fe1?? White should have tried something like 27 ♜fd1 ♖d6 28 gxf3! ♙xh2+ 29 ♔f1 when his king is safe in the centre as it is no longer menaced by the killer pawn.

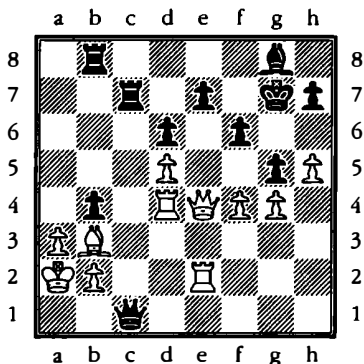
45

Ganguly - Barua
Nagpur 2002

Black found himself being mated after 40...hxg5?? 41 ♙h1 ♖h4 (or else 42 ♜h8 mate) 42 ♙xd5+ and here Barua resigned before 42...♔f8 43 ♜h8. He had quite forgotten that after 41 ♙h1 the power of the white queen extends to the d5 square as well as supporting the rook on the h file. Instead Black should have declined the piece offer, for example with 40...♜b6 (preventing 41 ♖e6+ and 42 ♖xd5) when 41 ♙h1 ♔e3 42 c4 (he has to try to get some counterplay) 42...b3 (not 42...♔xc4?? 43 ♙xd5+) 43 cxd5 ♔xf5 and Black should win despite the messy nature of the position.

46

Bruzon - Felgaer
Olympiad, Bled 2002



30 ♖c4!

This deflects the rook from the defence of e7 with gain of time by attacking the black queen.

30...♗xc4

Black has absolutely no choice as all other moves will leave him at least a rook down.

31 ♜xe7+ ♔f7

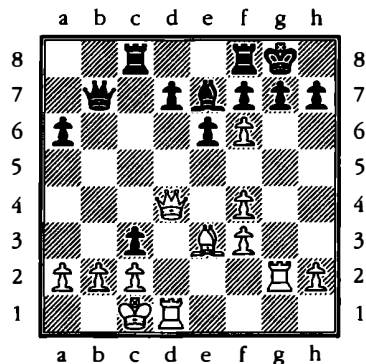
If the king moves he is mated with 32 ♜xf6.

32 h6+ and Black resigned.

If 32...♕g6 33 f5+ ♕xh6 34 ♜xf6+ ♔g6 35 ♖h2 mate, or similarly 32...♕xh6 33 ♜xf6+ ♔g6 34 ♖h2 mate. That leaves 32...♕g8, but after 33 ♜xf6 mate is inevitable on g7. The killer pawn has the last laugh.

47

Ehlvest - Andersson
Belfort 1988



The game ended 18 ♖xg7+ ♕h8 19 ♖g8+!! 1-0. White gives up the rook to force a win with checks, in order to prevent Black carrying out his own threat of mate on b2. Here's what might have happened if Black had carried on:

19...♗xg8

If 19...♕xg8 20 ♖g1+ ♕h8 21 fxe7+ f6 22 exf8=♜+ ♖xf8 23 ♜xc3 and with an extra piece White wins easily.

20 fxe7+ ♖g7 21 ♖g1!

The pin on the g file and the passed pawn on e7 are such a lethal combination that White allows Black to carry out a queen check on b2. Instead 21 ♜xc3 would lead to mate after 21...♗xc3? 22 e8=♜+ ♖g8 23 ♔d4+ etc. but Black could instead break the pin with 21...♕g8!

21...♜xb2+ 22 ♕d1 ♜b1+ 23 ♔c1 ♖cg8

The only move.

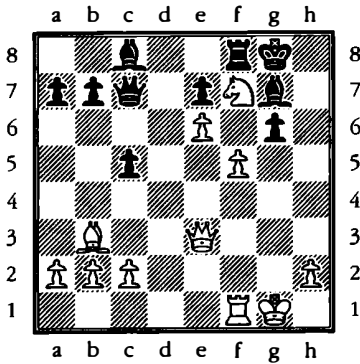
24 ♖xg7+ ♜xg7 25 e8=♖+

Promoting to a rook also wins.

25... ♜g8 26 ♖xg8 mate.

48

Kislov - Zoltek
Polanica Zdroj 1995



White found another way to exploit the killer pawn:

25 f6! ♙xf6

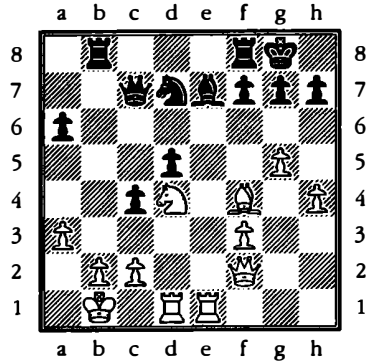
If 25...exf6 the quiet bishop on b3 comes to life: 26 e7 ♜e8 27 ♘d6+ ♕h8 28 ♗xe8 and wins.

26 ♜xf6! exf6 27 ♖h6 1-0

Black has been deprived of the defender of the dark squares around his king. There is no answer to 28 ♖h8 mate as 27... ♜xf7 28 exf7+ costs him the queen.

49

Kasimdzhanov - Ye Jiangchuan
Olympiad, Bled 2002



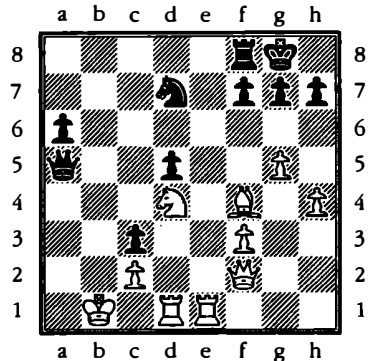
The game went 23... ♜xb2+! 24 ♕xb2 ♙xa3+!!

If you didn't see this follow up to the sacrifice then the verdict has to be (b)—a complete waste of a rook.

25 ♕xa3

If 25 ♕a2 ♖a5 leaves White defenceless, e.g. 26 ♙d2 ♖a4 and then a discovered check with the bishop in conjunction with ♜b8 etc. is decisive.

25... ♖a5+ 26 ♕b2 c3+ 27 ♕b1



Ready to answer 27...♖b4+ with 28 ♘b3 or 27...♗a3 with 28 ♙c1 when Black's attack runs out of steam, e.g. 28...♙b8+ 29 ♘b3 ♙xb3+ 30 cxb3 ♗xb3+ 31 ♖a1 c2 and White mates with 32 ♙e8+ ♘f8 33 ♙xf8+ ♖xf8 34 ♗c5+ ♖e8 35 ♗c8+ ♖e7 36 ♙e1

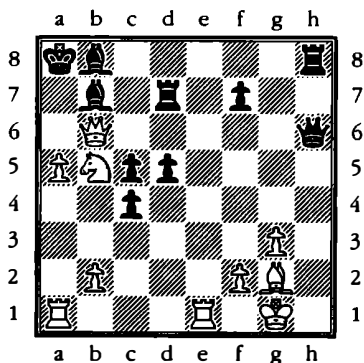
In that case the verdict is (c)—the combination is interesting but ultimately fails.

27...♗b6+!

The point of Black's combination. The white knight has to retreat to b3 to stave off 28...♗b2 mate, but this will leave the queen en prise on f2! So we are well into the territory of (a)—the sacrifice is winning!

After 28 ♘b3 ♗xf2 White battled on grimly, but with only a rook and bishop for queen and two pawns he was unable to save the game.

50
Kasparov - Ivanchuk
Linares 1994



30 ♙e8!! ♗h2+

The threat was 31 ♗a7 mate, and if 30...♙xe8 he drops the queen. Also hopeless was 30...♗xb6 31 axb6+ ♙a6 32 ♙xa6+ etc.

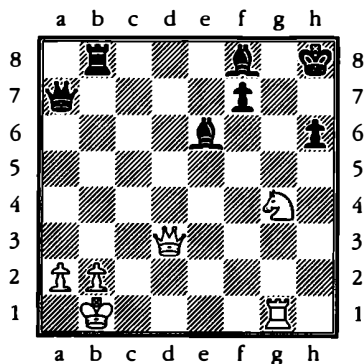
31 ♖f1

If now 31...♙xe8 32 a6! and despite Black's extra rook the killer pawn triumphs: 32...♙c8 33 ♗c6+ ♙b7 34 axb7 mate.

So Ivanchuk gave up his queen with 31...♗xg2+ 32 ♖xg2 d4+ but lost after 33 ♗xb7+! ♙xb7 34 ♙xh8 ♙xb5 35 a6 ♖a7 36 ♙f8 ♙xb2 37 ♙xf7+ ♖a8 38 a7 c3 39 ♙f8 1-0

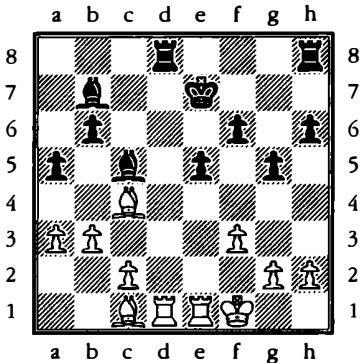
The final triumph of the killer pawn!

51



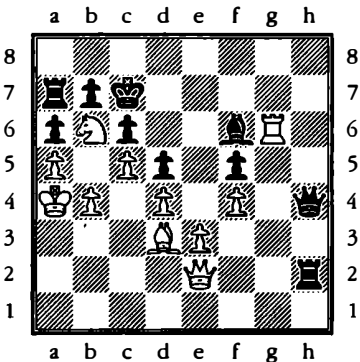
1 ♗h7+! ♖xh7 2 ♘f6+ ♖h8 3 ♙g8 mate

52
Leko - Adams
Dortmund 1996

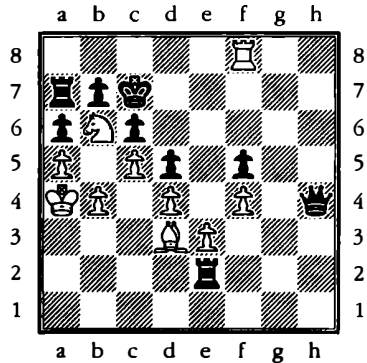


After 29...h5?? Leko could have won with 30 Exe5+! fxe5 (or 30... cf8 31 Exd8+) 31 Qxg5+ cf8 32 Exd8+ .

53
Wells - Berry
Torquay 2002

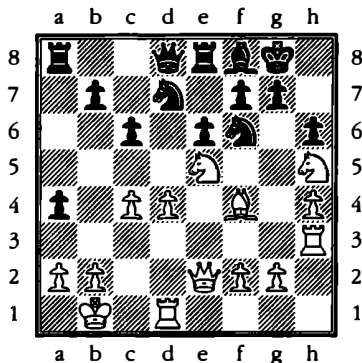


White would be worse if he just moved the queen and if 45 Qg8 Qd8 blocks off the mate on c8. But 45 Exf6! looked great as the game ended 45... Qxe2 46 Qf8 Qa2+ 47 cb3 Wf2 (what else?) 48 Qc8 mate: apparently there was no way for Black to escape from the knight/rook mate. In fact, Black missed a fantastic way to save himself. In this sequence after 46 Qf8



he could have played 46... Qa8!! the rook is less useless off the board than on it, as 47 Qxa8 (if 47 Qxa8+ cd7 and the king escapes from the mating pattern) 47... Qa2+ 48 cb3 Qb2+! 49 cbx2 Wf2+ 50 cb3 (or 50 Qc2 Wxc2+) 50... Wb2+ 51 cbx2 draws by stalemate!

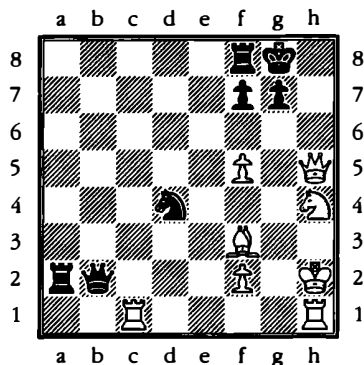
54

Kasimdzhanov - Rausis
Olympiad, Bled 2002

If 18 $\text{H}g3$ $g6$ the black king position looks flimsy, but there is no obvious win, for example if 19 $\text{Q}xg6$ $fxg6$ 20 $\text{H}xg6+$ $\text{Q}f7$ holds on. Instead in the game 18 $\text{Q}xh6!$ just won a pawn as Black would be mated after either 18... $gxh6$ 19 $\text{H}g3+$ $\text{Q}h7$ 20 $\text{W}c2+$! $\text{Q}h8$ 21 $\text{Q}xf7$ mate or 18... $\text{Q}xh5$ 19 $\text{W}xh5$ $gxh6$ 20 $\text{W}xf7+$ $\text{Q}h8$ 21 $\text{Q}g6$ mate.

In the game Black followed the second of these lines as far as 19 $\text{W}xh5$, then grovelled on with 20... $\text{Q}xe5$ 20 $dxe5$ $\text{W}c7$ 21 $\text{H}g3$ when White had both an extra pawn and the initiative.

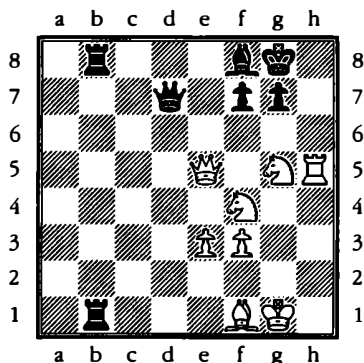
55



After 1 $\text{W}h8+$! $\text{Q}xh8$ 2 $\text{Q}g6+$ Black can choose how he is mated:

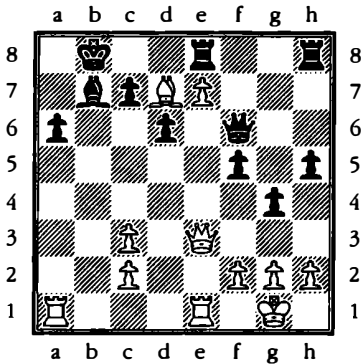
If 2... $\text{Q}g8$ 3 $\text{Q}e7+$ $\text{Q}h7$ 4 $\text{Q}g2$ mate or 2... $\text{Q}h7$ 3 $\text{Q}g2+$ $\text{Q}g8$ 4 $\text{H}h8$ mate (or 4 $\text{Q}e7$ mate) or 2... $fxg6$ 3 $\text{Q}g2+$ $\text{Q}g8$ 4 $\text{Q}d5+$ $\text{H}f7$ 5 $\text{H}c8$ mate.

56



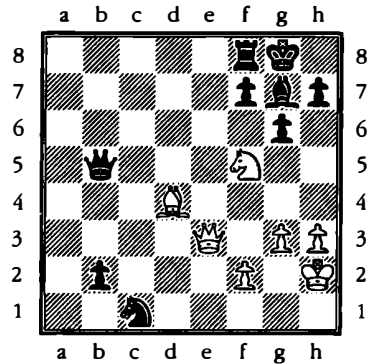
First White breaks the pin on his bishop: 1 $\text{W}xb8!$ $\text{H}xb8$ (if 1... $\text{H}xf1+$ 2 $\text{Q}xf1$ $\text{W}d1+$ 3 $\text{Q}f2$ $\text{W}d2+$ 4 $\text{Q}e2$ etc.). Then he mates: 2 $\text{Q}g6!$ $fxg6$ 3 $\text{Q}c4+$ $\text{W}f7$ 4 $\text{Q}xf7$ mate.

57



Not bad is 1 ♖e1!, when if 1...♙xe7 White has a mate in three: 2 ♜xb7+! ♕xb7 3 ♖b1+ ♕a8 4 ♙c6 mate. Capablanca chose the more forceful 1 ♜xa6! (threat mate on a7) 1...♙xa6 2 ♖b1+ ♙b7 3 ♙c6 ♜xe7 (if 3...♕c8 4 ♜xb7 ♜xe7 would transpose) 4 ♜xb7+ ♕c8 5 ♜a7! and Black resigned—whatever Black does it will be 6 ♜a8. Spotting this combination is child's play for a World Champion. (Capablanca-Pulvermacher, New York 1907)

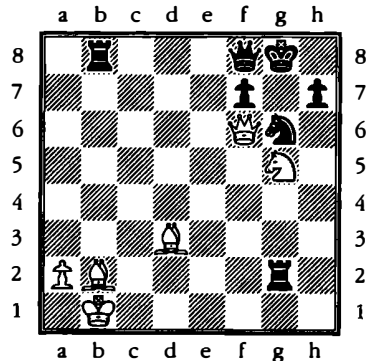
58



White mates with 1 ♜h6! If now 1...♙xh6 2 ♘xh6 mate, or equally 2 ♘e7 mate.

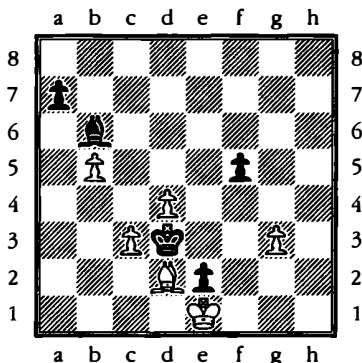
The fact that g7 is attacked three times paralyzes any possible defence.

59



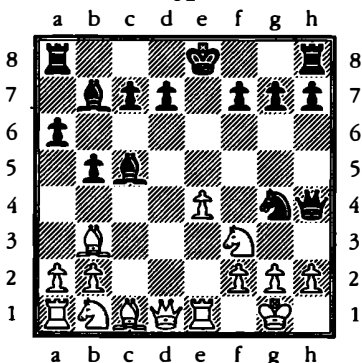
It is mate in two: 1 ♜h8+ ♘xh8 2 ♙xh7 mate. Incidentally, in some books it says that a pinned piece loses its power, but the bishop on b2 is doing a pretty good job in preventing 1...♕xh8!

60



A fine effort by Capablanca. He exploited the superior mobility of his bishop by opening a fatal diagonal against the trapped white king: 1...♗c7! 2 ♖f4 ♗a5 3 ♗d2 f4! 4 gxf4 ♗d8! and White resigned as there is no good answer to 5...♗h4 mate. (Ettlinger-Capablanca, New York, 1907)

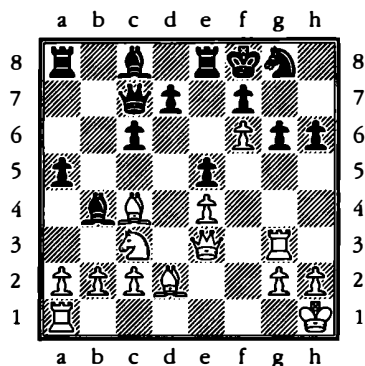
61



No, as 12 ... ♖xf2+ 13 ♔h1 ♖g1+! 14 ♗xg1 (or 14 ♗xg1) 14...♗f2 is mate. Incidentally,

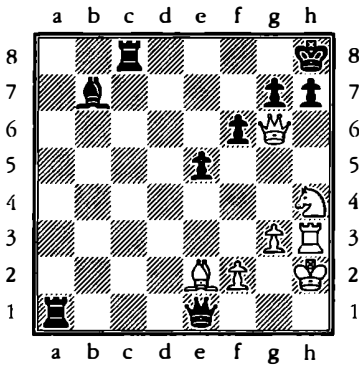
White should have played 10 h3 in the opening sequence, when after the knight retreats 11 cxd4 is excellent for him. In playing 10 cxd4 immediately he fell for an opening trap.

62



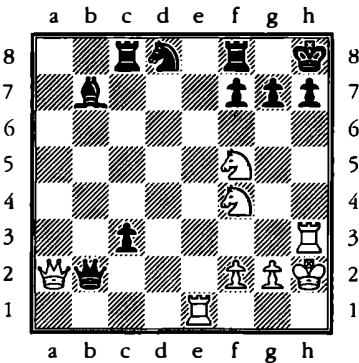
19 ♗xg6! with mate by the two bishops after 19...fxg6 20 ♖xh6+ ♗xh6 21 ♗xh6 or with bishop and rook after 19...d5 20 ♖xh6+ ♗xh6 21 ♗xh6.

63



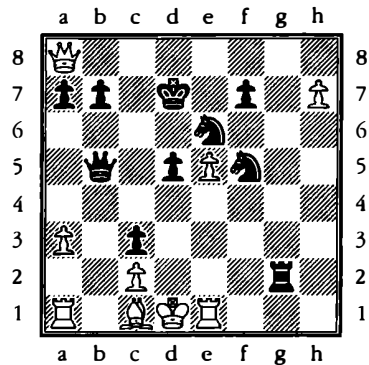
It is mate in four moves: 1 ♔e8+! ♚x8 2 ♘g6+ ♜g8 3 ♘c4+ ♚e6 4 ♘xe6 mate.

64



Here the two knights are the heroes after 1 ♔xf7! ♘xf7 (or else it is a back rank mate after 1...♚xf7 2 ♚e8+) 2 ♘g6+ ♜g8 3 ♘fe7 mate.

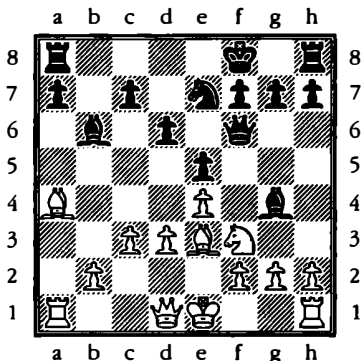
65
Short - Neelotpal
Dhaka 1999



If 24 h8=♔ White is unexpectedly mated by 24...♔d3+!! 25 cxd3 c2. Therefore Short tried to shore up the c2 square with 24 ♖a2 but this allowed an alternative mate: 24...♘e3+! 25 ♘xe3 ♔b1+ 26 ♘c1 ♚d2 mate!

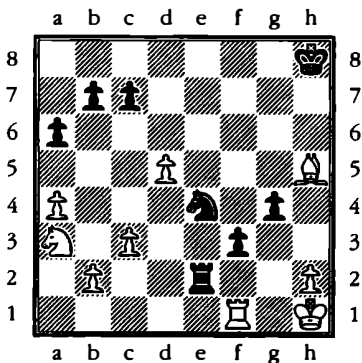
The diagram position is in fact winning for Black in view of his irresistible attack.

66
Short - Kupreichik
Hastings 1981



Further evidence that Legall's mate has evolved into a strong tactical device. Here Short played 14 Qxe5! Black now loses a piece after 14... exd1 15 Qd7+ cg8 16 Qxf6+ gx6 17 cxd1 . If instead 14... exe3 15 Qd7+ wins just the same. So he had to make do with 14... dxe5 but eventually lost after 15 Wxg4 .

67



This position is from another game by Capablanca, who forced mate as follows:

1... Qf2+ 2 cg1

If 2 fxf2 Ne1+ 3 Nfl Nxf1 mate.

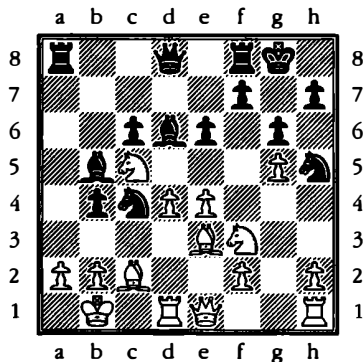
2... Qh3+ 3 ch1

It seems as though the game will end in repetition after 3... Qf2+ 4 cg1 but...

3... Ng2! 4 exg4 Ng1+! 5 Nxc1 Qf2 mate.

68

Dao Thien Hai - McDonald
Budapest 1996



21... Nxa2! 22 cxa2 Wa5+ 23 cb3 exc5

Now 24 dxc5 Wa4 is mate, but my opponent confidently played 24 Na1 attacking the queen. Evidently he thought this refuted the attack, but after 24... Qb6! he resigned. It is mate in one with 25 Nxa5 ec4 or in two with 25 ed3 ea4+ 26 cb2 ec2 .



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