



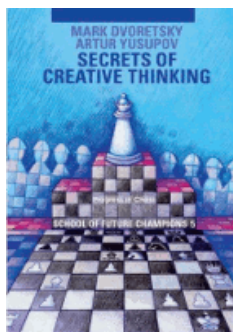
COLUMNISTS

The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky

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The Queen Exchange

Part Two

I've divided up the whole set of examples that I have to offer you into several groups. The division isn't set in stone, of course, as many positions could find a place in other columns too.

Almost all the positions can be considered exercises – usually straightforward ones (the sign of an exercise will be a question mark under a diagram next to an indication of whose turn it is to move). I recommend that before you read the text you try to look for the solution to the exercises on your own (which is given with full annotation).

Forced Play

Often the decision to exchange queens is associated not with the positional peculiarities of the situation that has been created, but purely tactical ones: it's by this method that we can manage to direct play towards a tactical variation that's favorable to us.

Hebert – Portisch

Interzonal tournament, Rio de Janeiro, 1979



[FEN "8/6kp/2bp2p1/2q1p3/Np2P3/1P1Q2P1/2P3KP/8 b - - 0 43"]

1...?

43...Qc5-d4!

An exchange of queens leads to winning material or a breakthrough of the passed pawn to become a queen.

44.Qd3xd4

In the game there was 44.Qe2 Bxe4+ 45.Kf1 Bf5 0-1.

44...e5xd4 45.Kg2-f3 d4-d3!

Of course, not 45...Bxa4? 46.ba d3 47.Ke3!+-.

46.c2xd3 Bc6xa4+-

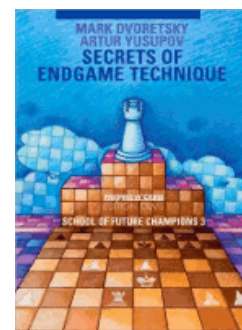
Georgi – Mikhail Tseitlin
 Balatonbereny, 1989

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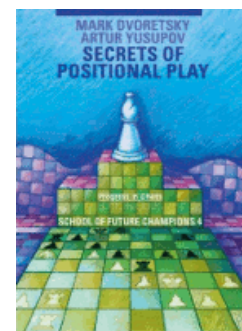
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[FEN "8/p7/1p6/4P2p/P1PPbqk1/Q7/1P4P1/6K1 b - - 0 45"]

1...?

45...Qf4-g3!-+

In the endgame Black mates or promotes his pawn to a queen.

46.Qxg3+ Kxg3 47.e6 (47.Kf1 Bxg2+ 48.Ke2 h4 49.e6 h3) 47...Bxg2 48.e7 (48.d5 h4 49.e7 h3) 48...Bc6 49.b4 h4 50.d5 Be8 0-1

Karpov – J. Polgar

Linares, 1994



[FEN "r3k2r/p7/1qp1bp2/2Qp1n1p/8/BPP5/3N1PPP/R4RK1 w kq - 0 18"]

1.?

18.Qc5xb6! a7xb6 19.Ba3-c5!

White wins a pawn: 19...Rxa1 (19...Rb8 20.Bxb6) 20.Rxa1, threatening 21. Ra8+ and 21.Bxb6.

Karpov didn't notice the favorable tactical possibility for him and simply played 18.Bb4?! Kf7 19.Ra4! Qxc5 20.Bxc5 a6 21.f3+/-.

Belavsky – Hjartarson

Moscow, 1990



[FEN "4rrk1/pp1b1ppp/8/2nBq3/2P1PN2/Pn2BR2/1Q4PP/1R4K1 w - - 0 22"]

1.?

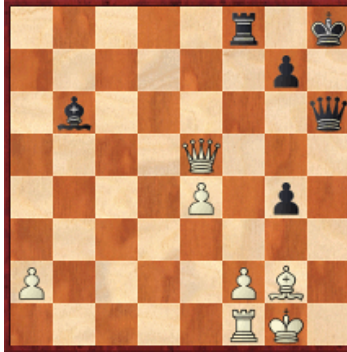
22.Qb2xe5! Re8xe5 23.Nf4-d3! 1-0

Black resigned because of 23...Nxd3 24.Rxb3 Ne1, and now either 25.Rf2 (threatening 26.Kf1) 25...Ba4 26.Rc3+-, or 25.Rf1 Nc2 26.Bc5+.

Playing for an Attack

Theoretically everything is clear here: when you're attacking it's desirable to protect the most important attacking piece from an exchange. But making this simple idea a reality isn't always easy.

Anand – Topalov
Dortmund, 2001



[FEN "5r1k/6p1/1b5q/4Q3/4P1p1/8/P4PB1/5RK1 b - - 0 40"]

1...?

Veselin Topalov chose **40...Qh4?**, and after **41.Qh2 Bxf2+ 42.Kh1 Qxh2+** (42...g5 43.Qxh4+ gh 44.a4! h3 45.Bxh3 gh 46.a5=) **43.Kxh2** an ending arose that despite being better for Black was still objectively drawn.

But meanwhile the game could literally have ended in two moves.

40...Rf8-f4!

Black prevents the exchange of queens and creates the formidable threat of 41...g3.

41.Qe5-c3 Qh6-h4+

Fischer – Spassky
Fourth match game, Reykjavik, 1972



[FEN "7r/5pk1/4p3/p1b1q1p1/2B5/P4Q1P/1PP3P1/3R3K b - - 0 31"]

1...?

White plans 32.Rf1 or 32.Qc3. Nothing comes from 31...Qxb2?! 32.Rf1 Rf8

33.c3, threatening 34.Qf6+.

In the game there followed **31...Bd6?! 32.Qc3! Qxc3 33.bc Be5** (33...Bxa3 34.Ra1) **34.Rd7 Kf6 35.Kg1 Bxc3 36.Be2 Be5 37.Kf1 Rc8 38.Bh5 Rc7 39.Rxc7 Bxc7 40.a4 Kc7 41.Ke2 f5 42.Kd3 Be5 43.c4 Kd6 44.Bf7 Bg3 45.c5+ 1/2-1/2.**

By allowing the exchange of queens, in essence Boris Spassky let go of the advantage that he had. It's difficult to explain why he failed to play a powerful prophylactic move.

31...Rh8-h4!

With this Black fends off both of his opponent's ideas and preserves a dangerous initiative. For example, 32.Rf1 (after 32.b3? Bd6 White has to give up the exchange, and 32...g4! is even stronger) 32...Rf4 33.Qe2 Rxf1+ 34.Qxf1 Qxb2 (34...Bd6 35.Qg1 Qxb2 isn't bad either), or 32.Be2 Rf4 33.Qh5 Rf2.

Karpov – Timman
Mar del Plata, 1982



[FEN "2r2rk1/1p3pp1/p2p3p/2nPp3/6Pq/4PB2/PPP4P/1K1RQ2R b - - 0 22"]

1...?

White has just played 22.Qd2-e1?!. In the event of an exchange on e1, an equal endgame arises. More dangerous for his opponent is the subtle plan to transfer his queen to the queenside, where the queen and knight, as often happens, form a powerful tandem.

22...Qh4-d8!

Threatening 23...Qb6 and 24...Na4. Even such a skillful defender as Anatoly Karpov unquestionably would find himself powerless to quell Black's attacking surge.

In connection with that we should admit that White's last move was unsuccessful. 22.e4! was significantly stronger, intending 23.Rdg1 and 24.g5. Then again, as Jan Timman pointed out, after 22...Rc7 23.Rdg1 f6 his opponent was hardly likely to find any method of improving his position other than 24.Qe1. But here Black would now have to go for an exchange of queens, leading to approximate equality.

23.e4 Qb6 24.Qe3 Qb5! 25.h4 Na4 26.Qb3 Rc5!

Black prepares to double his rooks, exploiting the circumstance that in the situation that has been created his opponent mustn't exchange queens. I offer a curious variation for your perusal that illustrates the difficulties facing White: 27.g5!? Rfc8 28.Rc1 (28.c3 Qa5 29.Be2 Rxc3! 30.bc Nxc3+ 31.Ka1 Nxe2 with a subsequent Nd4) 28...Qa5 29.Be2 Rc3! 30.Qxb7 R3c7! (but not 30...Qd8? 31.Qb4!) 31.Qb3 Nc5! 32.Qe3 Rb8 33.c4 Rxb2+!! 34.Kxb2 Rb7+ 35.Kc2 Qxa2+ 36.Kd1 Rb3 37.Qd2 Rb2! 38.Qe3 Nb3 and 39...Nxc1+.

27.Rh3 Rfc8 28.c3 (28.Rc1? Rxc2!) 28...R8c7 29.Ka1

29.Re1 Nxc3+! 30.bc Qd3+ 31.Ka1 Rb5 loses immediately. And on 29.Rg3, besides the prophylactic move 29...g6!, preventing the opening of lines on the kingside, there's also a surprising piece sacrifice: 29...Nxc3+!? 30.bc Qxb3+ 31.ab Rxc3 32.Kb2 Re3!.

29...Qd7!

White has repelled the first wave of the attack (and, by the way, has prepared an exchange of queens on b5) – so Timman moves his queen away, switching to a pawn assault on the queenside.

30.Be2 b5 31.a3 (31.Qb4 a5! 32.Qxa5 b4 33.Qxb4 Rb7) **31...a5 32.Kb1 Rb7 33.Rg3 g6!**

Timman skillfully synchronizes his attack with his opponent's prophylactic reciprocal actions. Using a typical method he guarantees the safety of the kingside.

34.g5 h5 35.Bf1 Rcc7 36.Qc2 b4 37.ab ab 38.c4 b3!? (38...Nc5! is simpler, intending 39...Ra7) **39.Qg2**

White had more practical chances with 39.Rxb3 Rxb3 40.Qxb3. Timman looked at 40...Rb7 41.Bh3! Rxb3 42.Bxd7 Nxb2 (42...Rxb2+ 43.Kc1 Rb4 44.Bxa4 Rxa4 45.c5! dc 46.Kc2 isn't completely convincing either) 43.Kc2 Rb6 (or 43...Nxd1 44.Kxb3 Nf2 45.c5 dc 46.Kc4 Nxe4 47.Ba4 Kf8 48.Bc2 Nd6 49.Kxc5 Ke7 50.Kc6 – Dvoretzky), proving a win for Black with 44.c5 and 44.Rb1. But White preserves real counterplay by continuing 44.Re1! Nxc4 45.Kc3 Na5 46.Ra1.

Instead of 40...Rb7?! the continuation 40...Nxb2! 41.Bh3 Qe7 42.Qxb2 Rb7 is much stronger, with a winning position.

39...Rb4 (39...Qc8 probably led to the goal more quickly, preparing Qa8 and Nc5) **40.Qh3 Qxh3**

Not compulsory, but a completely possible decision – Black's attack is strong enough even without the queens.

41.Rxh3 Nc5 42.Kc1 Nxe4 43.Re3 Nc5 44.Kd2 Na4 45.Rc1 Nxb2 46.c5 (46.Kc3 Nxc4 47.Kxb4 Nxe3 48.Rxc7 Nxd5+) **46...Rd4+ 47.Ke2 Rxc5 48.Rxc5 dc 49.Rxb3 Nc4 50.Rc3 Rxh4 51.Ke1 0-1**

Neutralizing your Opponent's Attack

If our king is in danger (even if the danger is potential or latent), then exchanging off the strongest enemy piece is favorable to us, as a rule.

Kasparov – Karpov

Thirteenth game of the second match, Moscow, 1985



[FEN "r2q1rk1/3p2pp/bp2p3/4Q3/3B4/6P1/P3PP1P/R4RK1 b - - 0 18"]

1...?

It's favorable for Black to exchange queens (thereby attacking the e2-pawn), to get closer to a saving endgame with opposite-colored bishops. In a middlegame, though, on the contrary, his position is alarming precisely because of the presence of opposite-colored bishops on the board, which, as is well known, strengthen an attack.

18...Qd8-f6! 19.Qe5-e3

On 19.Qd6, there's both 19...Qf7 (threatening 20...Bxe2) and 19...e5!?

19...Qf6-h6!

20.Qxh6 (20.Qe4 d5 21.Qe5 Rf5) **20...gh 21.Rfe1 Bc4 22.a3** (22.a4 Bb3) **22...b5 23.Rad1 Rf5 24.Bb2 Rd5** ½-½

Alburt – Rohde

U.S. Championship, Estes Park, 1986



[FEN "r4r1k/2p3pp/4Q3/7n/4p2q/5P2/PP3PIP/R1B3RK w - - 0 21"]

1.?

21.Qe6-g4!+-

Exchanging queens is the simplest way to crush Black's hopes of an attack. For example, 21...Qxg4 22.fg Nf6 23.Be3 Nd5 24.Bc5+-.

21...Qxf2 22.Qxh5 ef 23.Bh6! 1-0

Korchnoi – Spangenberg

Buenos Aires, 1993



[FEN "8/p5bk/3Q2p1/4BpP1/qn6/5P1N/4P1K1/8 b - - 0 41"]

1...?

Black has to deal with Qe7(c7) or Nf4. The response 41...Qb5? 42.Bxg7 Qxe2 + 43.Nf2 Nc2 (43...Kxg7 44.Qxb4) 44.Bd4 Ne1+ 45.Kh2 Nxf3+ 46.Kg3+- doesn't work.

After 41...Bxe5?! 42.Qxe5 Qd7 43.Nf4, Black's position remains alarming.

41...Qa4-a6! =/+

In connection with the threat of 42...Qxe2+, Black forces an exchange of queens and thereby eliminates all the danger.

42.Qxa6 Nxa6 43.Bd6 Bc3 44.e4 fe 45.fe Bb4 46.e5 Kg7 47.Kf3 Bxd6 48.ed Nc5 49.Ke3 Kf7 ½-½

The next two considerably more complicated examples are taken from my duels with top-class opponents.

Petrosian – Dvoretsky

Vilnius, 1978



[FEN "r2r2k1/pp2qpp1/2p1bn1p/8/4P3/P1R3N1/1PQ2PPP/1B3RK1 b - - 0 22"]

1...?

White threatens e4-e5; on 22...Nd7(h7) or 22...g6 the response 23.f4 is very strong. In order to weaken White's attack it makes sense to exchange queens.

22...Qe7-d6! 23.f2-f4 Qd6-d4+!

It's important to worsen the position of the white king – the weakness of the back rank will then help Black.

24.Kg1-h1 Qd4-d2

In the ending White still retains the initiative, but it isn't as formidable as with a pawn attack in the middlegame.

25.f5 Qxc2 26.Bxc2 Bd7 27.e5 Ng4

I rejected 27...Nd5 because of 28.Rb3 b6 29.Nh5. Then again, after 29...Kh8 30.Rg3 Rg8 Black's position remains stable, and it isn't clear whether White has a real advantage. For example, on 31.Kg1 Rae8 32.Re1 (with the idea of a subsequent improvement of his position by means of Kf2, Rf3, g4, Bb3 and so on) there follows 32...Re7 33.Kf2 Bxf5! 34.Bxf5 g6, with approximate equality.

A tactical attempt at defending: 28...c5?! (instead of 28...b6) is justified with 29.Rxb7? Ne3 or 29.Nh5?! Ba4. White gets an advantage anyway by means of 29.Be4 Bc6 30.Nh5! Re8 (30...Ne7 31.Bxc6 Nxc6 32.e6! fe 33.Rxb7) 31.e6! fe 32.Rg3.

28.Nh5!?

28.e6 Be8! is unclear, but 28.Re1!? deserved serious attention, and 28...Re8 is bad because of 29.e6! fe 30.Bb3+/- . I would have to reply 28...f6! 29.Bb3+ Kh7 30.e6 Be8 (intending Rd2; h5), but after 31.Nf1! with a subsequent Ne3 Black has to conduct an unpleasant defense.

28...Nxe5 29.Rg3 Kh8 (29...Kf8 30.Rxg7 is weaker, as 30...Be8? 31.f6 and 32.Bh7 loses) **30.Rxg7 Be8 31.Rg3** (31.f6 Rd2 unclear) **31...Rd2 32.Nf6 Bd7**, and the game ended in a draw.

For a long time I was sure that the queen exchange Black undertook was practically forced, and I only recently found a worthy alternative to the move 24...Qd2!? But not 24...Bg4? 25.e5 Bd1 26.Qc1 Ng4 27.h3! (the simplest) 27...Nf2+ 28.Kh2+- when Black's minor pieces are stuck in his opponent's camp, but **24...Ng4!?**

25.f5?! Bd7 leads to conceding the e5-square: 26.Qe2 Ne5 27.Nh5 Be8! 28.Rg3 Qd2 with counterplay that compensates for the loss of the g7-pawn, or 26.h3 Nf6! (26...Ne5 27.Nh5 and 28.Rg3 is weaker) 27.Rd1 Qe5 28.Rcd3 Re8 29.Qb3 Re7! counterplay.

The main line is interesting: **25.e5 Kf8! 26.Qe2!?** (if 26.f5 Bd5 27.e6 counting on 27...Ne3?? 28.e7+! Kxe7 29.Re1+-, then 27...Re8!? unclear) **26...Qd2 27.Bd3!?** (27.Qf3 Qxb2 with the idea of 28...Nf2+ is unconvincing) **27...Qxe2 28.Bxe2 Rd2!!** (28...h5 29.f5 Bd5 30.e6 with the initiative for White is weaker) **29.h3** (29.f5 Bd5 30.Bxg4 Bxg2+ 31.Kg1 Bxf1 32.Nxf1 Rxb2=+/) **29...h5!** counterplay (on 30.hg there follows 30...h4). True, finding and precisely calculating this path at the board is virtually impossible. Exchanging queens is still simpler and sounder.

Korchnoi – Dvoretzky

Dutch League, Apeldoorn, 1999

1.d4 c5 2.d5 e5 3.e4 d6 4.Bb5+ Nd7 5.a4 Be7 6.f4 ef 7.Bxf4 Ngf6 8.Nc3 0-0 9.Nf3 Nh5 (9...Ng4!?) 10.Bd2

On 10.Be3, there's both 10...Ndf6!? 11.0-0 Ng4 and 10...Bf6!? 11.0-0 Qe7.

10...Bh4+! (a useful interim check) **11.g3 Bf6 12.0-0 g6 13.Bh6 Ng7 14.Bf4 Qe7 15.Qd2 Ne5 16.Bxe5!?** **Bxe5 17.Qh6 f6**

As Viktor Korchnoi pointed out after the game, 17...Bf6!? (with the idea of Nh5, Bg7) was possible, as 18.e5 de 19.d6? Qxd6 20.Ne4 Nf5! doesn't work.

17...Bd4+!? 18.Kg2 Nh5 (with the same idea Bg7) isn't bad either.

18.Nxe5 Qxe5 (of course, not 18...fe? 19.Rxf8+ Qxf8 20.Qh4! with a subsequent Rf1) **19.Rf4**



[FEN "r1b2rk1/pp4np/3p1ppQ/1BpPq3/P3PR2/2N3P1/1PP4P/R5K1 b - - 0 19"]

1...?

Fearing an attack I forced an exchange of queens without putting much thought into it: **19...Qh5? 20.Qxh5 Nxh5**. But after **21.Rf2** the endgame turned out to be difficult: my opponent quickly creates threats to the queenside and the weak d6-pawn. For example, 21...Bh3 22.a5 a6 (otherwise 23.a6) 23.Bf1 Bd7 24.Ra3!, and then Rb3-b6+/-, or 21...a6 22.Be2 Ng7 23.a5 Bd7 24.Ra3!, with a subsequent Rb3-b6+/-.

21...Bg4?! (in the hope of 22.Be2 Bxe2 23.Nxe2 Kf7 and 24...Ke7, or 22.Raf1 Bh3) **22.Kg2! a6 23.h3!**, and White has an overwhelming positional advantage. I defended stubbornly, and at one point I even got chances of saving myself, but I still lost on the eighty-seventh move.

I shouldn't have exchanged the active queen on e5 – it was the only piece that was capable of creating reciprocal threats.

19...a7-a6!

Probably the soundest means of parrying the threat of 20.Rh4 – Black banishes the bishop to get the e8-square for his knight. The knight would be less well positioned on h5 in the variations 19...Nh5 20.Rf2 or 19...Rf7 20.Rh4!? Nh5 (threatening 21...Qg5) 21.Qe3. Possible, although also fairly risky is 19...Qd4+!? 20.Kh1 Qd2 (or 20...Qe3!?). To defend against 21...Nh5 White plays either 21.Rd1 Qxc2 22.Rh4 Nh5 23.Be2 Qxb2 24.Bxh5 gh 25.Qxh5 Rf7 unclear or 21.Be2!?, after which 21...Qxc2? 22.Rh4 Qxb2 23.Qxh7+ Kf7 24.Rf1 Qxc3 25.Rh6 with a very dangerous attack is unfavorable.

20.Bb5-e2

20.Rh4? doesn't work, on which the simplest reply is 20...Nh5 21.Be2 Qg5!/+.

20...Rf8-f7

Now in the case of Rh4 the knight can retreat to e8.

21.Ra1-f1 Bc8-d7 22.Rf4-h4 Ng7-e8 23.Be2-g4

If 23.a5, then 23...Nc7 and 24...Nb5.

23...Bd7xg4 24.Rh4xg4 b7-b5!

It isn't clear who is better.

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