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COLUMNISTS

The Instructor
Mark Dvoretsky

Mate on the Back Rank

Combinations on our title theme may be found in any manual or collection of exercises; so I'm not discovering any Americas here. Nor have I set myself the task of collecting a fresh set of positions, probably ones unknown to the reader - what would be the point? If you need to assimilate the typical middlegame combination, one or two dozen examples (three dozen, at most) are quite sufficient; there is no need to pile on more and more. It's far more important to deal with high-quality material, which will illustrate our theme solidly and give esthetic satisfaction as well - thus, it will be securely etched in the memory. I hope that my examples, culled from various sources, meet this criterion.

A most important part of effective work on chess consists of practical training - solving exercises on a study theme. Under each diagram, you will find indicated who is on move; and if the position works as an exercise (which the majority of them do), then there will be a question mark as well. Try solving these yourself, and only afterwards, consult the following text.

I The first and largest part of this collection consists of examples and exercises assisting in the development of fantasy and combinative alertness.

Let's begin with a classic game, known to most players from their earliest youth.

Bernstein – Capablanca
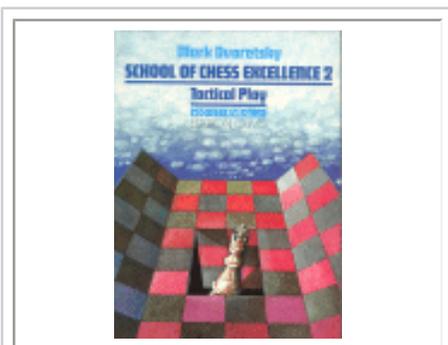
Moscow 1914
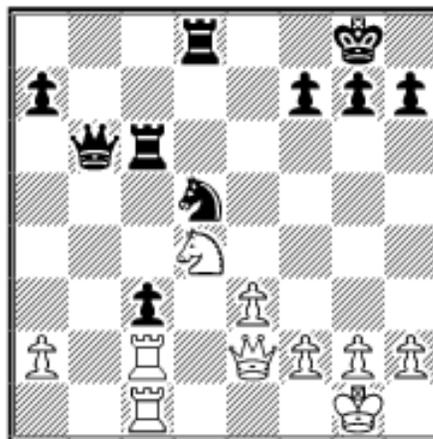
Black to move

Black could have played 25...Rc5 26. Nb3 Rc7 here. Capablanca preferred to set a trap, provoking his opponent to attack the c3-pawn.

25...Rc7!? 26. Nb5 Rc5 27. Nxc3?

White had to bring his knight back to d4; but after 27...Rdc8 (threatening 28...Nb4), Black retains the upper hand, thanks to his dangerous passed pawn at c3.

27...Nxc3 28. Rxc3 Rxc3 29. Rxc3
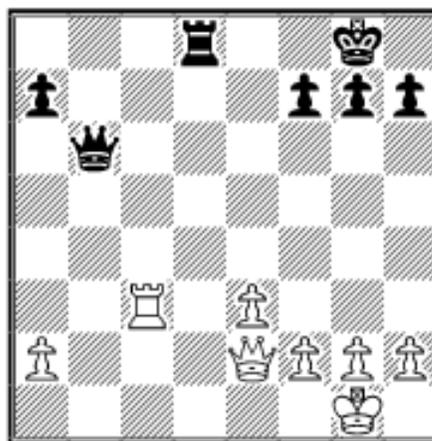
Black to move
?

Evidently, Bernstein expected only 29...Qb1+? 30.Qf1 Qxa2, with a likely draw.

29...Qb2! White resigned.

A most instructive fragment - later on, we shall see the ideas contained in it again and again.

The first thing to note is the deflecting queen sacrifice - a standard technique to exploit the weakness of the back rank. Sometimes, the queen has to be sacrificed repeatedly.

Rovner – Kamyshov
Moscow 1946
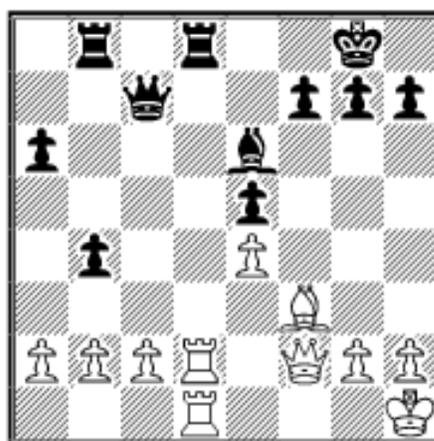
White to move
?

1. Qa7! Qa5 2. Qxa6! Qc7 3. Qa7! Black resigned.

Vogt - Alexander
Berlin 1962

Black to move
?

Can White's queen be decoyed away from the defense of the f1-square? The solution is a bit unexpected.

1...c4! 2. bc (2. Qxc4 Qxd5!) **2...Qa3! 3. Qd1 Qxc1!** White resigned.

Wolf - Spielmann
Moravska Ostrava 1923
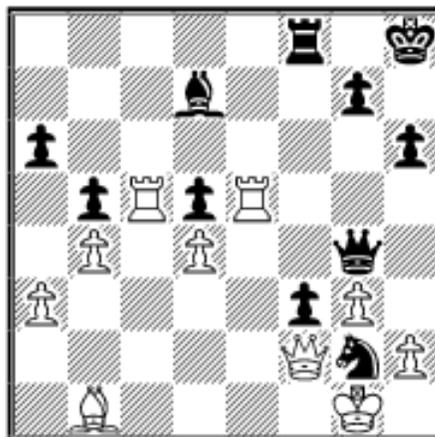
White to move
?

Here, several enemy pieces are decoyed: first, the queen - from the protection of the f3-pawn; then, the rook - from the 8th rank; and finally, the bishop - from the e8 square.

36. h3! Qxh3 37. Qxf3! Black resigned, in view of 37...Rxf3 38. Rc8!+ Bxc8 39.Re8+.

Krause - Capelan
Solingen 1961
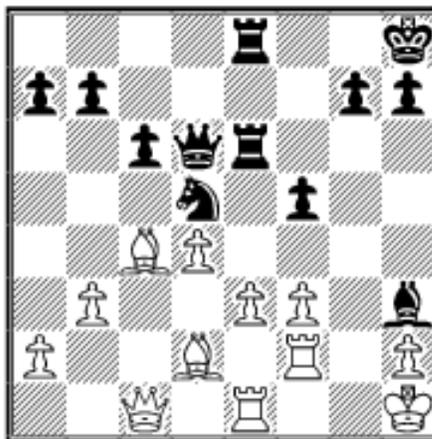
White to move
?

It's important to get the center pawns moving, but Black has concentrated sufficient firepower against the e4 square. Nevertheless, the pawn break is still possible - thanks to the 8th-rank weakness.

1. e4! fe 2. fe Rxe4?

2...b5 was necessary. White would have had to content himself with a rather better position after 3. Bxd5 cd 4. Qc3 Bg4 5. e5, or 3. e5 Qd7 4. Bd3, since the immediate 3. Bd3?! Nf6 leaves his center too shaky. For instance, 4. Qc3 Ng4 5. Rf4 (5. Rfe2? Qf8!) 5...b4! (5...Rf8 is inferior because of 6. e5, when 6...Qd5+? fails to 7.Be4 Rxf4 8. Bxd5 Nf2+ 9. Kg1 Rg6+ 10. Qg3 Rxg3+ 11. hg Rxd4 12. e6!) 6. Qc4 (6. Qxb4? Qxf4! 7. Bxf4 Nf2+ 8. Kg1 Nxd3 - such cases are referred to as "family forks") 6...g5! 7. Rxg4 (forced) 7...Bxg4, and White's compensation for the exchange is problematic.

3. Rxe4 Rxe4 4. Bxd5 cd 5. Qc7!

This was the blow (analogous to the one Capablanca delivered in our first example) that Black overlooked.

5...Bg2+ 6. Kg1 Black resigned.

In this case, the solution found by White objectively should not have led to a win. In essence, what we have here is a successful trap based on the 8th-rank weakness (just as in the Bernstein - Capablanca game).

Here's another example of a successful trap.

Ganchev - Pipkov
Albena 1966
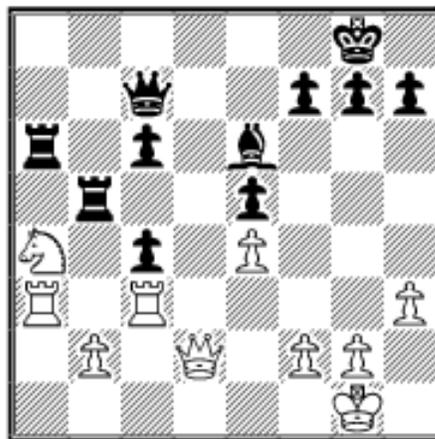
White to move
?

1. Nc5! Rxa3 2. Rxa3 (of course not 2. Nxe6?? Ra1+)
2...Rxc5?

The bait is taken! Black had to play 2...h6 3. Nxe6 fe 4. Ra4, when White would stand a little bit better, but nothing more than that.

3. Ra8!+ Bc8 4. Ra7! Qb6

Black had probably calculated this far, and had found nothing better for his opponent than the repetition after 5. Ra8.

5. Qd7!! Black resigned.

And now, we will examine two episodes from Alexander Khalifman's games. In the first, the grandmaster found a forced win; while in the second, the decisive combination went undiscovered.

Khalifman - Ehlvest
Lvov 1985
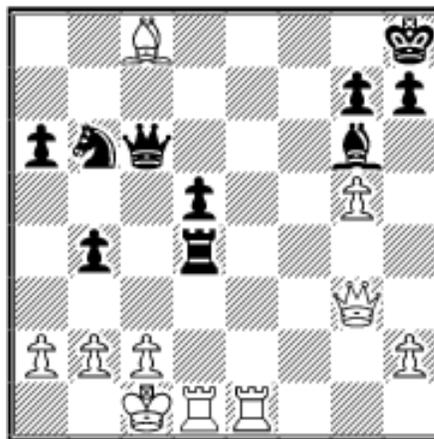
White to move
?

30. Bf5! (decoying the bishop away from the square e8)
30...Bxf5 31. Qc7!! (and here, a standard deflection of
the queen) **31...Rxd1+ 32. Kxd1**

Black might have ended his resistance here. Ehlvest
probably neglected to do so, only out of extreme
disappointment. His last move, leading to the diagram,
had been 29...Qd6-c6?? Had he exchanged rooks on d1
first, everything would have been fine.

32...Bxc2+ 33. **Kc1** (33. Kd2 Nc4+ 34. Kc1 would have
been good, too) **33...Ba4+ 34. Qxc6 Bxc6 35. Re6 Bb5
36. Rxb6 Kg8 37. Rb7 d4 38. Kd2 Kf8 39. h4 d3 40.
b3 h6 41. gh gh 42. Rh7** Black resigned.

Khalifman - Hjartarson
Reykjavik 1991
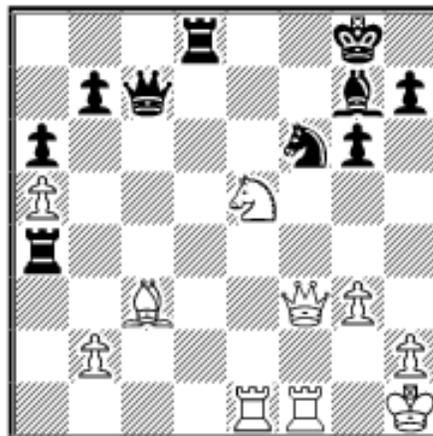
White to move

?

The goal would have been attained after 31. Ng4!! Nxg4 (31...Rxg4 32. Bxf6) 32. Qd5+! Kh8 (32...Rxd5 33. Re8+) 33. Rf7! (threatening, above all, 34. Bxg7+) 33...Bxc3 34. Rxc7.

The game actually continued **31. Nxg6? hg 32. Bxf6 Rf8 33. Qd5+ Qf7 34. Qd1** (34. Qxf7+ Rxf7=) **34...Ra1!** (an excellent counterstroke!) **35. Qxa1 Qd5+ 36. Kg1 Bxf6**

In such a position, the exchange advantage is worth little, in view of the open situation of the White king and the queen's unfortunate position.

37. h4 Qd4+! 38. Kg2 Qd2+ 39. Kh3 (39. Rf2 Qxf2+! 40. Kxf2 Bxb2) **39...Qd7+ 40. Kg2** (40 g4 Qd3+) **40...Qd2+ 41. Kh3 Qd7+ 42. Kh2 Qd2+ 43. Kh3** Draw.

And here's another case in which a strong grandmaster missed a standard combination.

Teschner - Portisch
Monte Carlo 1969
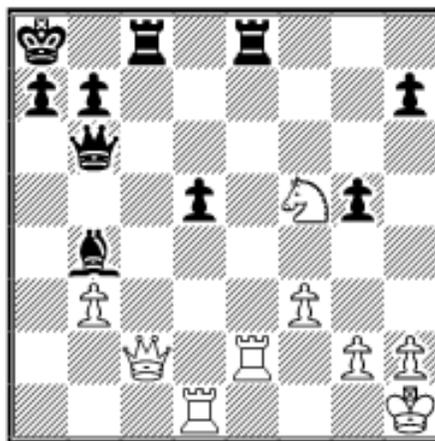
White to move

?

White's position is difficult - on 29. Rc1!? there is the powerful reply 29...Kb8!. He decided to snatch a pawn

with **29. Rxd5?!**, which could have been beautifully refuted by 29...Qf2!! 30. Ng3 Qe1+!.

Portisch chose **29...Qa6? 30. Ng3! Red8 31. Rxd8 Rxd8** instead, and the game ended in a draw ten moves later.

Note that here (as in our first example, Bernstein - Capablanca), both sides were speculating on the weakness of the back rank. Such situations, which we shall see more than once, require special attention and farsightedness from both players.

Let me point out one more particular of the position we just looked at. The move Portisch played was also aimed at exploiting the back-rank weakness; but it proved relatively ineffective - the opponent turned out to have a defense. This can certainly happen to any chessplayer (to some - more often than others): we see a tempting line, and quickly bash it out, without checking the variations, and without seeing if there might be other, perhaps stronger, possibilities.

The examples that follow illustrate precisely this situation.

Crouch - Speelman
Hastings 1992
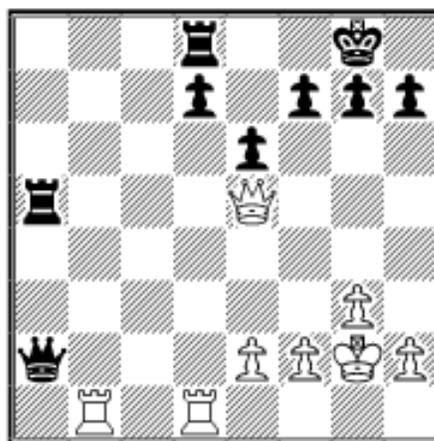
White to move
?

The continuation was **26. Rxd7?! Rf8! 27. Rb2 Rxe5**, when a draw was agreed.

White had a far more effective means of exploiting the back-rank weakness: 26. Rb8! Ra8 27. Ra1!! Qxa1 28. Rxd8+ Rxd8 29. Qxa1.

Leonhardt - Fahrni
Carlsbad 1911
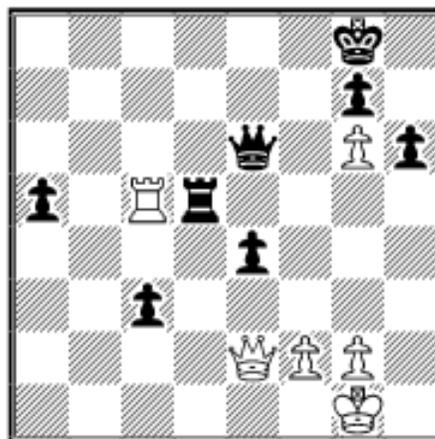
White to move
?

42. Qa2! Rd1+ (42...c2 43. Qxd5!) 43. Kh2 Qxa2 44. Rc8+ would have won immediately.

White actually played something much weaker: **42. Qxe4? Rd1+ 43. Kh2 Qd6+** (this check would not have existed after 42. Qa2!, since the queen would have been pinned) **44. f4 Qf8 45. Rxc3** (White gets nothing from 45. Qe6+ Kh8 46. Rc8 Rd8). He still stands better, but Black can defend. True, the game ended quickly all the same: **45...Rd8 46. Rc6 Ra8 47. f5 Qb8+ 48. g3 Qa7?? 49. Rc7!** Black resigned.

Capablanca - Thomas
Hastings 1919
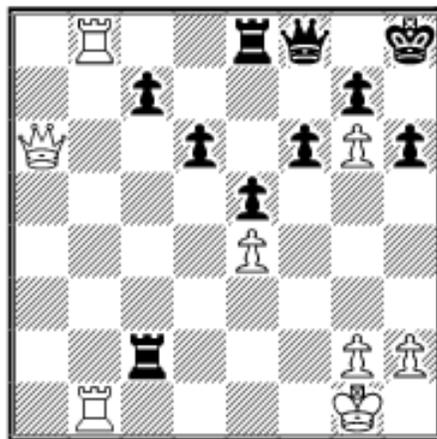
White to move
?

The "conclusive blow" **29. Qa8?** had the effect of causing Thomas to resign; he failed to notice the uncomplicated defense 29...Ra2!, liquidating all threats.

Commentators to this game have suggested 29. Rxe8!? Qxe8 30. Qa4! (a typical queen deflection, coupled with a double threat), when Black either gets mated or loses his rook - on 30...Rc1+, there follows, naturally, 31. Kf2.

So would this have forced his resignation? Not necessarily - he could still have tried 30...Rxg2+! 31. Kxg2 Qxg6+ 32. Kh1 Qh5!? Black would have had four pawns for the rook; and although objectively, his opponent would retain good winning chances, there would still have been a long fight ahead.

So, before executing his "conclusive combination", it would make sense for White to find a different, shorter, and more certain means to his end (following the "candidate-moves" principle). And there is such a means: after 29. Qb5!, a quick capitulation would indeed have been unavoidable. On 29...Rc1+ 30. Kf2 Rxb1 31. Rxe8! is decisive; 29...c6 30. Rxe8 Qxe8 31. Qb8 Rc1+ 32. Kf2 is hopeless too; and if 29...Rxb8 30. Qxb8 Kg8, then either 31. Qb3+ or 31. Qa7.

And here, I must confess to a small falsification. The diagrammed position differs somewhat from the actual game: there White also had a pawn at a2, while Black did not have a pawn at e5. Now the example becomes uninteresting, since the book solution (29. Rxe8 Qxe8 30. Qa4) also leads to an easy win. In my version, White's task becomes more difficult, the exercise is qualitatively improved, and becomes useful even to players at higher rating levels. I believe that, in pursuit of his training goals, a trainer is justified in the occasional introduction of such alterations in his examples. For the demonstration of old games is not an end in itself. The fundamental principle of materials selection must always be: Maximum benefit to the students from learning/training exercises.

To conclude this first chapter - a combination I like very much.

Schwager - Ackerman
Riga 1978
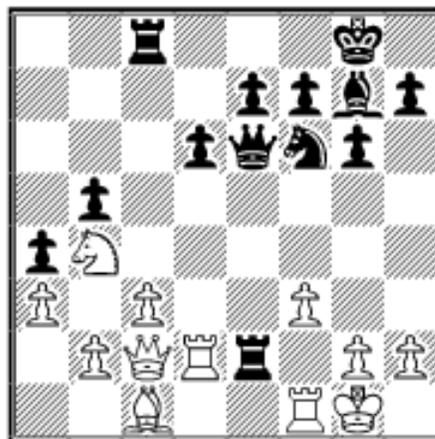
Black to move
?

1...Qe3+ 2. Kh1 Qf2! 3. Rg1

Black's first moves, of course, were obvious - but what now? He certainly didn't invade the enemy position with his queen so that he could exchange everything on d2.

3... Nh5!! 4. Rxe2 Ng3+! 5. hg Rc5!

White resigned, as mate is forced - this time, not on the rank, but on the file.

II Our next cycle of exercises is aimed at developing attention to the opponent's counterchances. This is a very important habit for any chessplayer to develop: the ability to see tactics not only for ourselves, but for our opponent as well, the habit of accurately checking our intentions, to avoid unpleasant surprises. You would already have been well served by such an ability in some of our previous exercises (such as Capablanca - Thomas); now this ability will be placed at the forefront.

In some of the examples which follow, you will be required to foresee and account for the enemy tactic of exploiting your weak back rank in your plans; in others, you will have to examine your own combination critically for this theme.

Panno - Bravo
Fortaleza 1975
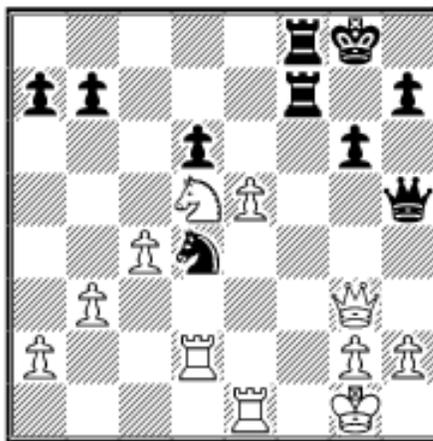
Black to move
?

The tempting 28...Ne2+? 29. Rdxe2 Qxe2 is a mistake, in view of 30. Nf6+! Rxf6 31. ef, when White wins. Black actually played **28...Qe2!!**, and White resigned.

Short - Bareev
Tilburg 1991
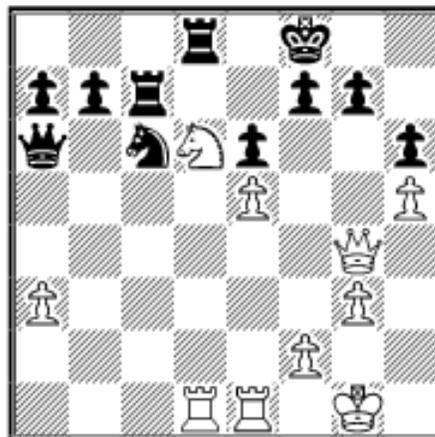
Black to move
?

Having outplayed his dangerous opponent, the Muscovite grandmaster slackened his attention for a moment, and was severely punished: **27...Nxe5?? 28. Nf5!** Black resigned.

"Make haste slowly", said the ancients. The simple 27...Rcd7! (now 28...Nxe5 is threatened) would have led to the win of a second pawn, without any unpleasant consequences.

Fernandez - Marino
Zamora 1996
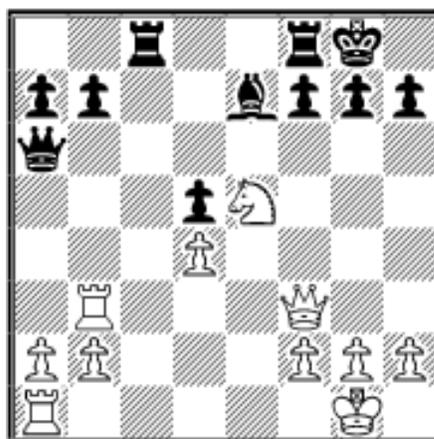
Black to move
?

"The back rank is weak - now's the perfect time for a decoying blow" - is what Black must have thought.

20... Qxa2?? 21. Qd1! Black resigned.

The right move was 20...Bd6!, endeavoring to exchange White's powerful knight. On 21. Qxd5, Qxa2! is now good.

Alden - Nilsson
Sweden 1972
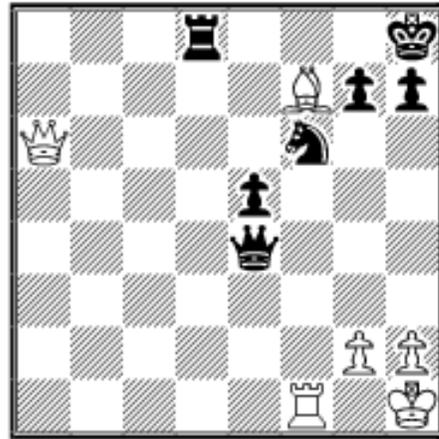
White to move
?

White could have played simply 1. h3, preparing for a lengthy defense a pawn down. However, 1. Rxf6 looks tempting. Which should he choose?

Long-suffering would have been correct in this case, since the sharp move is immediately refutable.

1. Rxf6? Qb7??

Black wins with the spectacular 1...Qc6!! (double decoying, coupled with a double attack); whereas the text move leads to the opposite result.

2. Qf1 (2. h3 works equally well).

Bradford - Byrne

USA 1980
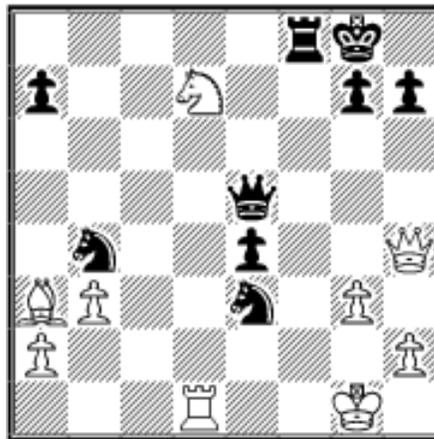
Black to move
?

1...Qd4?? (the consequences of 1...Qd5?? would be the same) **2. Qxh7+!**, and White wins, since after 2...Kxh7 he picks up the rook with check, and only then recaptures the queen.

After the more accurate 1...Qd6!, Black would have won instead - it's important that the queen protects the rook from d6. Another strong continuation was 1...Qf5! 2. Nxf8 Nxd1.

Mikenas - Bronstein
Tallinn 1965
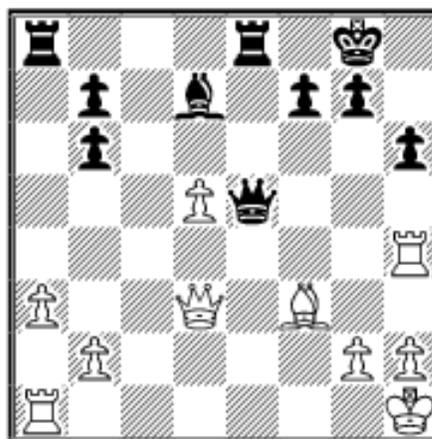
White to move
?

Above all, Black threatens 24...Qxb2 or 24...Qe1+ 25. Qf1 Qxh4. There is also another, hidden threat - and it

was this that Mikenas overlooked.

24. Rb4? Rxa3!! White resigned.

The same blow (24...Rxa3!!) would have been the reply to 24. Qd2? or 24. Qc3? There were two ways of warding off Black's pressure: 24. Qd4! Qe1+ 25. Rxe1 Rxe1+ 26. Qg1; and 24. Rd4! Qe1+ (24...Ra4 25. Rxa4 Qxb2? 26. Qd4; 24...Bb5 25. Qd2) 25. Qf1 - in both cases, White obtains about even chances.

Seirawan - Lobron
Arnhem/Amsterdam 1983
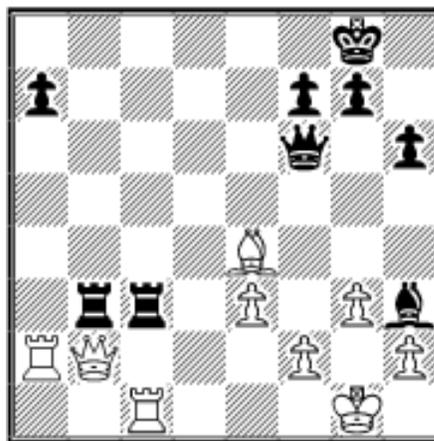
White to move
?

On 22. Qa1! Rxc1+ 23. Qxc1 Qb6 or 22. Qd2! Rxc1+ 23. Qxc1 Qb6, the game should end in a draw - Black is only a little bit better. But couldn't White just get rid of that passed pawn, by exploiting the back-rank weakness?

22. Rxa7? Qxf2+!! 23. Kxf2 (23. Qxf2 Rxc1+) **23...Rxb2+ 24. Kf3 Rxc1** White resigned. Black is a rook ahead, and there is no mate (25. Ra8+ Rc8).

Ballona - Aristazabal
Colombia 1993
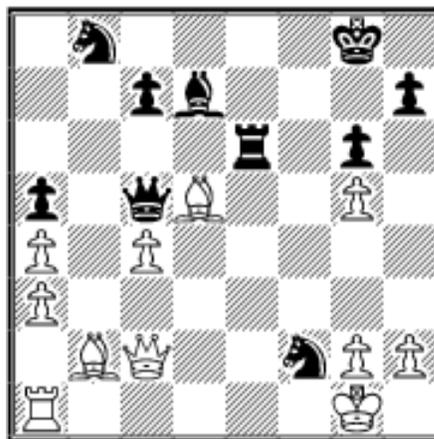
Black to move
?

1...Nd3+ 2. Kh1 Qe3? is no good: after 3. Rf1 (with the threat of 4. Qc3) 3...Nxb2 4. Qxb2, it's White who wins. 1...Ne4+ 2. Kh1 Qe3? is equally useless: 3. Rf1, and Black must consider both 4. Bc1 Qd4 5. Bb2=, as well as 4. Ba1 (preparing 5. Qb2).

Black executed a pretty combination:

1... Nd1+ 2. Kh1 Qxd5!? 3. Rxd1! (of course, not 3. cd?? Re1#) **3...Bxa4!!**

Black had to have foreseen this blow, as otherwise, he would even lose: on 3...Qxg5 or 3...Qe4 there follows 4. Qc3; if 3...Qd6, then 4. c5! (but not 4. h3? Qg3, and not 4. Qc1? Bxa4! 5. Rxd6 Rxd6) 4...Qd5 5. h3.

4. Qxa4 Qd2! White resigned, since he remains a piece down, in view of the threatened 5...Re1+.

It's a well-known truism that it is never too late to resign. It would have been interesting to see how Black would have demonstrated his advantage after 5. h3 Qxb2 6. Qxa5. 6...Qb6?! doesn't promise anything: 7. Rd8+ Kf7 8. Qd2! (threatening 9. c5); also unconvincing are 6...Re7 7. Qc5!, or 6...Nc6 7. Qxc7. Black would probably have had to continue 6...Rd6!? (7. Rxd6 Qc1+

8. Kh2 Qf4+ 9. Kh1 Qxd6; 7. Re1 Qf2), but here too, the outcome remains unclear: 7. Qe1 Rxd1 8. Qxd1 is only "=/+".

In a recent training session, I offered this exercise to three young grandmasters: Alexander Motylev,Vladimir Potkin, and Ernesto Inarkiev. None of the three was taken in by the spectacular-looking, but spectacularly ineffective combination; all three preferred the simpler and sounder plan 1...Ng4+! 2. Kh1 Qd6! 3. Bxe6+ (3. g3 Bc6) 3...Bxe6 4. g3 Qc6+ 5. Qg2 Nf2+!? 6. Kg1 Nh3+ 7. Kh1 Bxc4 (or 7...Qb6!?), and wins.

III The third and last cycle of examples are what we call "playing exercises". This is a form of training that I worked out, and began using successfully, many years ago. These are the kinds of positions in which it is not necessary, and in some cases not possible, to foresee everything from beginning to end. So a player must make not just one decision (deep and difficult though it may be), but a whole series of them.

A significant part of the skill of calculating variations is the ability to come to a decision with maximum economy - that is, without calculating any more than necessary. In a practical game, choosing the first move of the right plan doesn't necessarily require us to foresee a refinement on the fourth move - which in turn means that, in an analogous situation, a trainer also does not need to require this ability in his training. Otherwise, the student becomes enmeshed in an irrational algorithm in order to come up with a move, which must inevitably result in the time-pressure disease. You can read more about this form of training in the first and second books of my series, "School of Chess Excellence".

The following examples are very well suited for playing out. Trainers may play them against students (setting the

time-control in accordance with the complexity of the position and the strength of the opponent). If you are training yourself, then cover the text of the "game" with a piece of paper, and then find one move after the other, after which you can move the paper just enough to uncover the "opponent's" move. One good idea is to establish the amount of time used, and then analyze how rationally you worked at this or that moment of the "game".

Our first example is probably the simplest. It lies on the border between the solving and the playing kind of exercises - if desired, you may calculate it at once to the end.

**I. Hoch
1973**
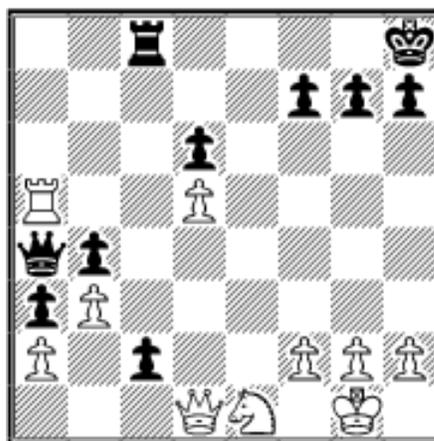
White to move
?

1. Qxc2! Re8! Both sides are working with back-rank mate threats. The question becomes, who will prevail in this sharp duel.

2. Qc8!! Qd7!! (2...Rxc8 3. Rxa4) **3. Qc1!** 3. Qa8? would be a mistake, owing to 3...h6 (or 3...g6).

3...Qc7! 4. Ra8!! (but not 4. Qe3? Qd8!).

Lowtzky - Tartakower
Jurata 1937
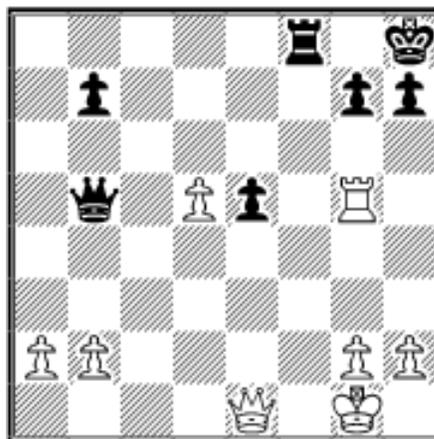
Black to move
?

White's downfall is not only that his first rank is weak (as far as this circumstance goes, both players are similarly placed), but that his rook also stands badly at g5. The experienced player will have no difficulty in predicting that the game must be decided by a double attack: the threat to mate (or to the queen, decoying her away from the first rank), and simultaneously to the rook. But accuracy is required, so as not to overlook the opponent's resources. For example, 1...Qb6+ 2. Kh1 Qf6? would be a mistake, in view of 3. h4.

1...Qc5+ 2. Kh1 Qc4! 3. Kg1 Qd4+ 4. Kh1 Qe4! Just so - it's important to drive the queen away from its best square: e1. Black gets nothing from 4...Qd2? 5. Rxe5 or 4...Qf4? 5. h4; and 4...Qd3 5. Kg1 is also useless.

5. Qc1. The most stubborn defense. 5. Qd1 Qf4 loses at once (here's the fatal double attack, now that White no longer has h2-h4), as does 5. Qg1 Qe2. With the text, White sets a small trap: the tempting 5...Qe2? would let slip the win, because of 6. Rf5!.

5...Qd3! 6. Kg1 Qd4+ 7. Kh1 Qd2! White resigned.

The following is an example of the difficulties facing a trainer searching for quality exercises for playing purposes.

Lilienthal - Aronin
Moscow 1948
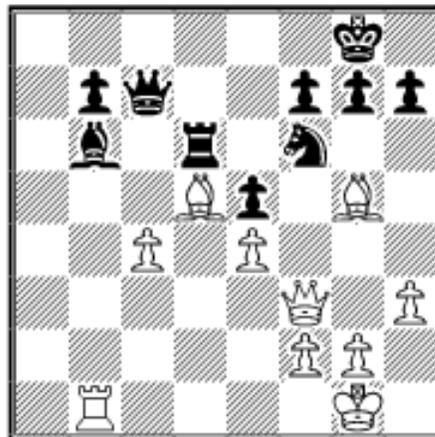
White to move
?

25. c5! Thanks to this pawn sacrifice, White's rook gets through to the 7th or 8th rank, which Nimzovich called the goal of any operation on an open file.

25... Qxc5 As K.-D. Maier has pointed out, Black could have offered stiff resistance - perhaps even saved the game - by giving up his queen for rook and minor piece: 25...Bxc5! 26. Rxb7 Nxd5! 27. Rxc7 Nxc7. This circumstance may lessen the impression of the exercise; but it does not negate its value entirely, since there seems to be no equivalent alternative to the move 25. c5!

26. Rc1 Qa5 27. Bxf6 Rxf6 28. Rc8+ Bd8. White's last two moves could be transposed, but that's an insignificant demerit in this exercise. What' s much worse is that, by rejecting the standard text blow in favor of 29. Qd1!, White could have won instantly, thanks to his irresistible threats on the d-file (29...Kf8 30. Bc6!; 29...Rd6 30. Bxf7+ Kxf7 31. Qxd6), and all his refinements in the game would have been rendered

unnecessary. Which means that this position isn't a very good one for training play - finding the first moves (including 29. Qd1!) is rather simple.

29. Qc3?! Qb6 30. Qb2! Qd6 30...Qa5 is met decisively by 31. Qd2!

31. f4! A excellent stroke! The inviting 31. Qxe5 would have been much less energetic - after 31...Kf8 or 31...Qd7, Black could still defend. The same evaluation is true after 31. Qxb7 Kf8.

Such would have been my comments - before I read Maier's analysis. The German analyst has shown that after 31. Qxb7! Kf8 (on 31...Qf8, 32. f4! becomes still stronger) 32. Rb8 Ke8 33 Bb3! or 32...g6 33. Qc8 Ke8 34. Bc4, the unbreakable pin on the 8th rank must decide the game.

31...ef If 31...Rxf4, then 32. Qxe5 (a double - no, more exactly, a **triple** attack: Black's queen and rook no longer defend one another). 31...Qf8 (threatening 32...Bb6+) is also hopeless after 32. Qxb7 Rd6 33. Kh2!? However, according to Maier's analysis, Black can put up stiff resistance with 31...Qd7!? Which means that the spectacular move 31. f4!? was not the strongest.

32. e5 Qd7 33. Qxb7! Qe8 34. Qb8 Rd6 35. Qxd6 Bb6+ 36. Qxb6 Qxc8 37. e6 g5 38. e7 Kg7 39. Bc6 Black resigned.

P. Rakolta, E. Janoczy
1978
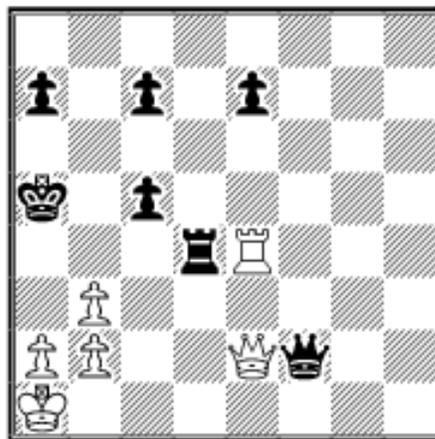
White to move
?

Both kings are in trouble, so White must act with great energy. Black's queen is taboo, because of the first-rank mate.

1. b4+! Kb6! The pawn cannot be taken either with the rook or with the queen, in view of 2. Qxf2. And 1...cb is refuted by 2. Re5+. On 1...Ka4, the winning path is only slightly longer: 2. Qa6+ Kxb4 3. a3+ Kb3 4, Qb5+ Kc2 (4...Rb4 5. Qd3+) 5. Re2+.

2. bc+ Kb7 2...Kc6 doesn't help: 3. Qa6+ Kd7 (3...Kd5 4. Qe6+ Kxc5 5. Re5+ Kb4 6. Qb3 is mate) 4. Qe6+ Kd8 5. Qg8+! Kd7 6. Qg4+ and 7. Rxd4 - the check is no longer a threat, as White interposes on d1.

3. c6+! Ka8! Here (as opposed to the starting position), the back rank is vulnerable on both sides. There follows a hot finishing duel.

4. Rg4! Rd8 5. Rg8! Qd4 (5...Rxg8 6. Qxf2) **6. Qg4! Qd2 7. Qc8+! Rxc8 8. Rxc8 mate.**

We conclude with two short games, ending with spectacular thematic attacks (these may also be used for play-action training, beginning in each case with the diagrammed positions). It should be noted that the first

and most widely known game was probably never actually played - according to many sources, it was made up. But this should not prevent us from enjoying this brilliant combination - or better still, finding it ourselves, step by step.

Adams - Torre
New Orleans 1920

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 ed 4. Qxd4 Nc6 5. Bb5 Bd7 6. Bxc6 Bxc6 7. Nc3 Nf6 8.

0-0 Be7 9. Nd5 Bxd5 10. ed 0-0 11. Bg5 c6 12. c4 cd 13. cd Re8 14. Rfe1 a5?! 15. Re2 Rc8? (15...h6) **16. Rae1 Qd7**
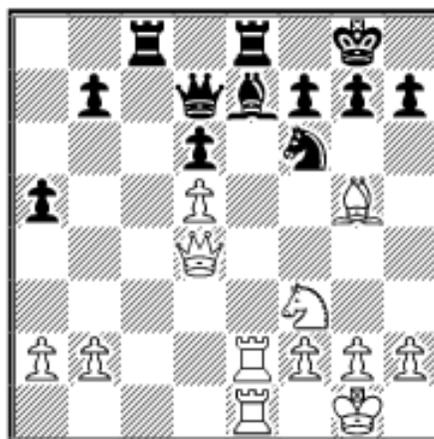
White to move
?

17. Bxf6! Bxf6 17...gf was objectively better, when 18. Rxe7? fails to 18...Qxe7! (18...Rxe7? 19. Rxe7 Qxe7 20. Qg4+) 19. Rxe7 Rc1+. However, after the simple 18. h3, Black's position is not to be envied.

18. Qg4! Qb5 19. Qc4!! Qd7 20. Qc7!! Qb5 Now the direct 21. Qxb7? is refuted by 21...Qxe2! 22. Rxe2 Rc1+. Nor is 21. Qxa5? good: 21...Qxe2! 22. Rxe2 Rxe2.

White has an elegant way of getting his rook off the e2 square with tempo.

21. a4! Qxa4 22. Re4! (threatening 23. Qxc8!) **22... Qb5 23. Qxb7!** Black resigned.

Korchmar - Polyak
Ukrainian Championship 1937

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bb5 d6 5. d4 ed 6. Nxd4 Bd7 7. 0-0 Nxd4?! 8. Bxd7+ Qxd7 9. Qxd4 Be7 10. Rd1! 0-0 11. e5 Ne8 12. Bf4 a5 13. Rd3 Ra6 14. Re1 Qf5 15. Nd5 Bd8 16. ed Nxd6 17. Rg3 f6 18. Bh6 Rf7
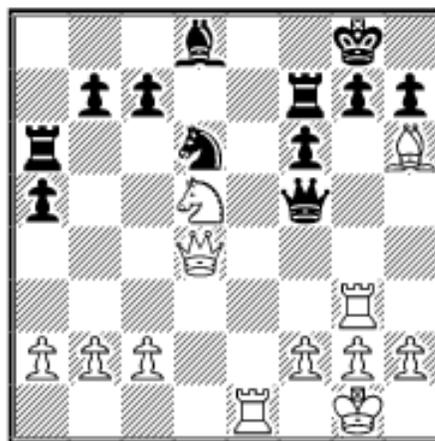
White to move
?

19. Nb4! The start of the decisive combination. White gets nothing out of 19. Qc5?! Rd7.

19...ab 20. Qxd6! Qd7! 21. Qd5!! The key move in White's attack, creating the threat of 22. Rxg7+. On 21...g6, there would follow 22. Rge3.

21...Kf8 22. Rxg7! Qxd5 23. Rg8+! Kxg8 24. Re8+ Rf8 25. Rxf8 - mate.

Translated by Jim Marfia

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