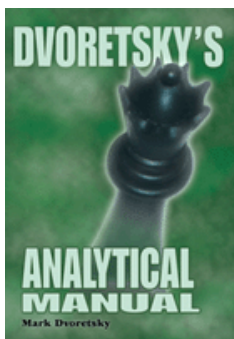




COLUMNISTS

The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



CHESSTHEATRE

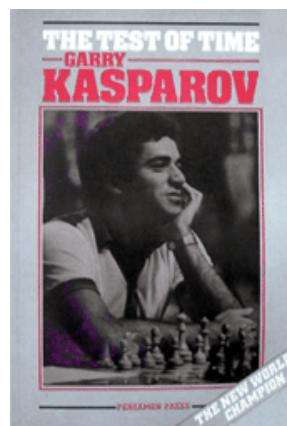
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When to Trade

Sometimes the main problems a player has to resolve during the course of the game all come down to one and the same theme. In the game we now bring to your attention, the theme was trading pieces. In order to render the material suitable for independent study, it is organized in the “game with questions” format, with the great majority of the questions involving the indicated theme. The answers to the questions are placed at the end – in fact, they form this article’s second half.

The game is taken from Garry Kasparov’s book, *The Test of Time*, published in 1985 (all direct quotes from it will be in italics). In those days, annotators could not make use of a computer; nevertheless, the level of Kasparov’s analysis was, as a rule, quite high. But not in this game!



I have already rendered my opinion that intuitive assessment of the situation at the board is not the thirteenth world champion’s strong suit. He has always had the ability to immerse himself deep in a position, calculate long and accurately, and find (notice: I said *find*, not *guess*) the optimal solution, even when it may be difficult and subtle. But not every task in chess can be resolved on the basis of accumulated knowledge and accurate calculation. Sometimes what is chiefly needed is an ability to sense what is the main problem in the present position, to give preference intuitively to one direction of play or the other, and only thereafter, if needed, to support one’s feeling by analysis. In the game under consideration, Kasparov’s positional evaluation betrayed him over and over again – and not even so much at the board, as in his later annotations. As a result, the concrete variations upon which he based his conclusions turned out insecure and unconvincing.

Try it yourself: can you cope with these tasks better than a future world champion?

Veingold – Kasparov
USSR Spartakiad, Moscow 1979

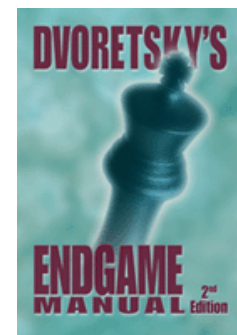
1 d2-d4 Ng8-f6 2 Ng1-f3 g7-g6 3 c2-c4 Bf8-g7 4 Nb1-c3 d7-d6 5 e2-e4 0-0 6 Bf1-e2 e7-e5 7 d4-d5 a7-a5 8 Bc1-g5 h7-h6 9 Bg5-h4 Nb8-a6 10 0-0 Qd8-e8 11 Nf3-d2 Nf6-h7 12 a2-a3 f7-f5?!

A serious inaccuracy: 12...Bd7 was correct.

13 e4xf5 Bc8xf5

13...gf 14 Bh5 Qd7+/- was not very attractive.

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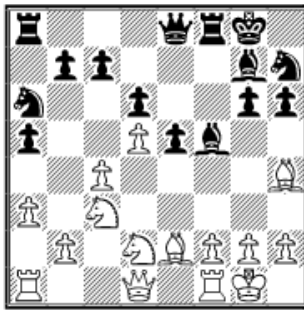
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1) How should White continue?

14 g2-g4 Bf5-d7 15 Nd2-e4 a5-a4

Black's only achievement in this unattractive position. Had White managed to play b2-b3, his Q-side offensive would have developed unhindered. But how should the resulting position be assessed? During the game, depressed by my mistake on the move 12, I considered Black's position to be poor. Veingold, as it later transpired, assessed the situation quite differently, reckoning that everything was relatively all right for Black. The most accurate assessment was given by Botvinnik: "White for a long time holds a strategic initiative, and if he does not go wrong he will be able to dictate his conditions. Black's position, although passive, is solid, and with accurate defence it is unlikely that he should lose."

16 f2-f3 b7-b6 17 Be2-d3

With his last move White probed a weak point in Black's position – his g6-pawn, and prevented 17...Nc5 (18 Nxc5 bc 19 Qc2). Therefore it is natural that Black should want to defend the weak pawn with his king, and at the same time to activate his king's bishop.

17...Bg7-f6!?



2) How should White continue?

18 Ne4xf6+ Nh7xf6 19 Qd1-d2 Na6-c5 20 Bd3-c2 Kg8-g7?

By this time I had convinced myself that Black's prospects were not after all so cheerless, and I quickly went the other extreme – I began to overrate my chances. I rejected the correct 20...g5, not wishing to allow the perpetual check after 21 Bxg5 hg 22 Qxg5+ Kh8 23 Qh6+ Kg8 24 Qg5+ (but not 24 g5 Qh5, or 24 f4 Qe7).

White is not obliged to force the draw – **21 Bf2!?** instead is worth considering.



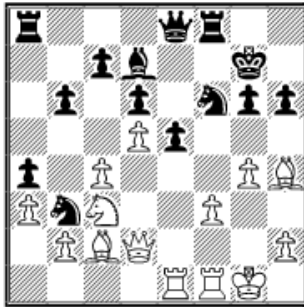
3) How should Black continue?

21 Ra1-e1!

Now there is the extremely dangerous threat of f3-f4. For example, 21... Qf7 22 f4 e4 23 Qxf4 g5 24 Bxg5 hg 25 Qxg5+ Kh8 26 Rxf6 Qxf6 27 Qh5 +, and mates (Kasparov).

21...Nc5-b3!?

At the cost of a pawn Black tries to eliminate the dangerous white-squared bishop and to parry the attack.



4) How should White play?

22 Qd2-d3 g6-g5 23 Bh4-g3

23 Bf2 is evidently more accurate.

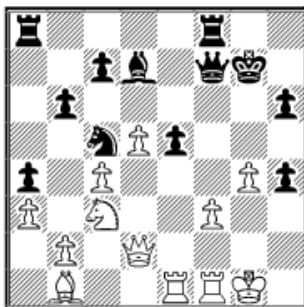
23...Nb3-c5 24 Qd3-d2 Qe8-f7 25 h2-h4 Nf6-h7 26 Bc2xh7 g5xh4!?

Black could have given up a pawn: 26...Kxh7 27 hg hg 28 Qxg5 Qg6 with an acceptable position.

27 Bg3xe5+

27 Bxh4 Kxh7 would have been weaker.

27...d6xe5 28 Bh7-b1



5) How should Black defend?

28...Qf7-f4 29 Qd2xf4

On 29 Qg2, Black could try 29...Rae8, for one thing. The exclamation mark that Kasparov attaches to 29...h5? is wrong: Black is actually worse after 30 gh+ Kh8 31 Qh2.

29...Rf8xf4!

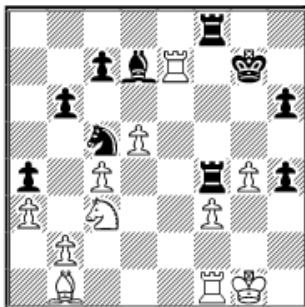
29...ef 30 Re7+ Rf7 31 Rfe1+/- holds no prospects for Black.

30 Re1xe5 Ra8-f8

Only by activating his forces to the maximum can Black gain sufficient counter-chances. There was no time to restore the material balance: 30...Rxc4? 31 Re7+ Kf6 32 Rh7.

Instead of White's last move in this line, he might also try 32 d6!? (threatening 33 Nd5+), forcing his opponent to give up the exchange: 32...Rxc3 33 bc cd 34 Rh7+-. And Kasparov's own recommendation is just as good: on 32...Kg5, the quickest way to win would be 33 Ne4+! (33 Rg7+ is good too – Bellin and Ponzetto) 33...Nxe4 34 fe Bxg4 35 Rg7+ Kh5 36 Bd3, followed by 37 Rf5+ or 37 Be2.

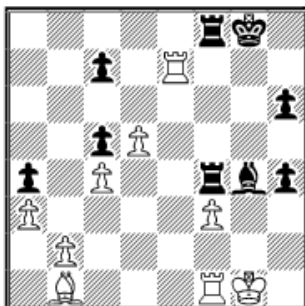
31 Re5-e7+



31...Rf8-f7

A mistake, which reduces to naught all Black's efforts. By retaining both rooks, he could have avoided defeat...

Unfortunately, he's not going to avoid it that way, either. Let's examine Kasparov's continuation: 31...Kg8?! (my assessment) 32 Ne4 Bxg4 33 Nxc5 bc.



The line 34 Rxc7? Bxf3 35 Rxc5 Rg4+ 36 Kh2 Rg2+ 37 Kh3 Rg7 (37...Rg5!?) would, in fact, lead to a draw. But the other line he gives, 34 Be4 Bh3 35 Rf2 R8f7 36 Rxf7 Kxf7, is totally unconvincing.

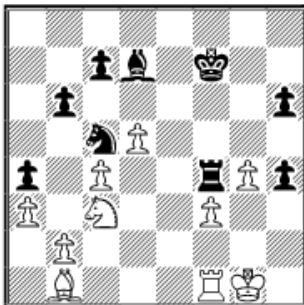
In the first place, the king recapture on f7 can be easily forestalled by giving a check first: 34 Bh7+!? Kh8 35 Be4 Bh3 36 Rf2+/-.

And the immediate 34 Be4 is strong enough, anyway. After 34...Bh3 35 Rf2 R8f7, White should try 36 d6. Black can mount a successful defense

here with 36...Rxe7! 37 de Kf7 38 Re2 Bd7! 39 Bd5+ Ke8. But our examination of this variation tells us where we should seek an improvement for White. Instead of 35 Rf2?, let's play 35 Re1! R8f7 36 d6! (threatening 37 Bd5) 36...Kf8 (here Black can't trade at e7) 37 Rxc7 (37 Bd5! is still more energetic – in fact, it wins) 37...Rxc7 38 dc Rf7 39 Bc6 Rxc7 40 Bxa4, and White has a great advantage.

I believe Kasparov played the correct line: White had more complex tasks to solve in the actual game.

32 Re7xf7+ Kg7xf7



6) Which piece should White put on e4?

33 Nc3-e4 Nc5-b3?

To this day I cannot understand what caused me to make such a ridiculous move. I was obviously unable to withstand the tension in a game which had been difficult from the very start.

34 Kg1-f2!

A precise move, which essentially concludes the game. Black is without both a pawn, and any activity – he has only weaknesses.

34...Bd7xg4 35 Kf2-e3 Rf4-f5 36 Rf1-f2 Bg4-h5 37 Ne4-d6+ c7xd6 38 Bb1xf5 Kf7-f6 39 Bf5-c2 Nb3-c5 40 Rf2-h2 Kf6-g5 41 Bc2-d1 1-0

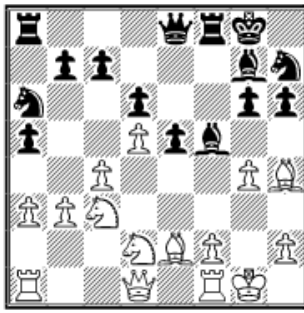
Answers

1) With 14 g4!, White drives the bishop off the b1-h7 diagonal (it's important to get this in before Black plays g6-g5). This establishes secure control over the e4-square, guaranteeing White the better chances. *Such a ridiculous losing of opening battle upset me and, as the course of the game shows, partly prevented me from making a sober assessment of what was happening.*

What is the nature of the error (12...f5?!) made by Kasparov?

After 12...Bd7 13 b3, the theoretical main line is 13...h5. The young grandmaster came up with a different plan: to push the f-pawn instead (which is also quite feasible), but to do so before White plays b2-b3.

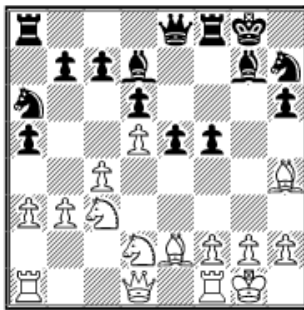
Kasparov was following a game Timman – Westerinen, Geneva 1977, in which Black obtained an excellent game after 12...Bd7 13 b3 f5 14 ef Bxf5 15 Re1?! g5 16 Bg3 Nf6 17 Nf1 Nc5 18 Ne3 Bg6=+. A more principled line for White would be 15 g4!.



However, Black would then reply 15...e4! 16 Rc1 e3 (16...g5?! 17 gf gh 18 Ndx4 Rxf5 19 Bg4+/=) 17 fe (17 gf ed 18 Qxd2 Nc5 unclear) 17... Qxe3+ 18 Bf2 Qg5 unclear.

Clearly, with the pawn still on b2, Black no longer has the counterstroke e5-e4.

Later, Kasparov found an interesting positional exchange sacrifice in this line: 14...gf!? (instead of 14...Bxf5).



15 Bh5 Qc8 16 Be7 Re8 17 Bxe8 Qxe8 18 Bh4 e4 with compensation (Yusupov-Kasparov, Barcelona 1989).

2) Our first problem on the exchanging theme. Should we take on f6; and if so, which piece should we take with?

The one thing we can say for certain is that trading off the bishop on h4 is bad, as it leads to the weakening of White's dark-squares. After 18 Bxf6? Nxf6 19 Qd2 Nxe4 20 Nxe4 Kg7 (but of course not 20...Rf4?? 21 Qxf4! ef 22 Nf6+), Black's position is preferable – he intends Rf4 and Nc5.

Kasparov considers his opponent's actual choice, **18 Nxf6+!?**, to have been his strongest.

The exchange by White of his finely-placed knight at e4 for the bishop is the result of a correct evaluation of the position: the King's Indian bishop was playing an important part in the defence of its king, and after its transference to g5 it could have become a powerful force.

Generally speaking, when you have an advantage in space, it is recommended to avoid making unforced exchanges – that is why I am not one hundred percent convinced of the correctness of Kasparov's assertion – the more so, in that it will be Black's formally "bad" bishop that leaves the board. Retreating the bishop from h4 deserved serious consideration.

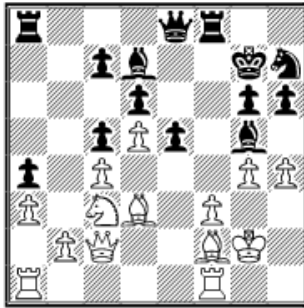
A) Playing **18 Bf2**, White of course must pay close attention to the activation of Black's bishop by Bg5. An immediate 18...Bg5?! would be unpleasantly met by 19 h4 Bf4 20 Ne2. Kasparov gives the variation **18... Nc5 19 Nxc5 bc**



And continues 20 Ne4 Bg5, with good counterplay.

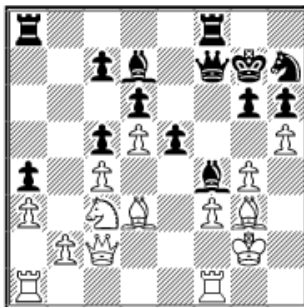
White could try 20 Qc2!? Kg7 (20...Ng5 is dubious: 21 Kg2 threatens 22 Bxg6 and 22 h4, and I don't see any tactics involving the weakness at f3) 21 h4, restricting the mobility of the enemy pieces. However, after something like 21...Be7 22 Kg2 Qf7, the situation looks tense enough: White would find it difficult to prove he has an advantage in this position.

I also tested the prophylactic move 20 Kg2!?. For example, 20...Bg5 (20...Kg7!? 21 h4) 21 Qc2 Kg7 (a move Black must make anyway: in the line 21...Qf7 22 Bg3 Be8 23 h4 Bf4 24 Bxf4 Qxf4 25 Bxg6 Bxg6 26 Qxg6+ Kh8 27 Qe4, his compensation for the pawn would be problematic) 22 h4



22...Bf4 suggests itself, when the tempting 23 h5?! would allow Black to begin a dangerous counterattack with 23...Ng5 24 hg Qc8! (threatening 25...Bxg4) 25 Qe2 Nxf3! 26 Qxf3 Bxg4. So White should reply 23 Ne2!, keeping the better chances.

The intermediate move 22...Qf7! would be stronger, continuing 23...Bf4 only after 23 Bg3. The only question would be how to react to 24 h5.



24...Ng5 25 hg Qf6 26 Bh4+/- is no problem for White. 24...Bxg3 25 hg Qe7 26 gh is also dubious, though Black does maintain an active stance.

Black must sacrifice a piece: 24...gh! 25 Bxh7 Bxg3 26 Kxg3 Qf4+ 27 Kg2 hg. For example, 28 Qg6+ Kh8 29 fg Qd2+ 30 Kh1 Qe3! 31 Qd3 Qg5, with full-fledged counterplay.

B) In the variations examined thus far, White's bishop has had to move from f2 to g3, in order to protect the f3-pawn. So why not play **18 Bg3!?** immediately, saving an important tempo?



Now the reply 18...Nc5 loses a considerable amount of its force: 19 Nxc5 bc 20 Qc2 Kg7 21 Rae1 (intending f3-f4) 21...Qf7 22 h4, and White stands better.

And if 18...Bg5, then 19 Kg2!?, without fear of 19...Be3 20 Qc2, followed by 21 Rae1, preparing to meet the bishop's retreat from d4 with an attack on the enemy center by f3-f4.

Time to take stock. Kasparov was correct in saying that the text move was safe, and deprived Black of counterplay. But was it enough to maintain White's advantage? I doubt it; and in the answer to my next question, I shall try to demonstrate my assessment. But then the question arises: shouldn't White have chosen a more principled line, one where he certainly would find it very easy to make a mistake and hand over the initiative to his opponent, but also one in which, if he played accurately, he could hold on to his advantage?

In a game, such a decision could only be taken intuitively. Alexander Veingold probably took into account that his youthful opponent would find it particularly unpleasant to play a dried-out kind of position, offering him little room for imagination. And the white player's calculation was in fact borne out.

3) As Kasparov noted, 21...Qe7?! would not be good for Black: 22 h4 Qg7 (22...Nh7!? 23 Be3 – Dvoretzky) 23 Be3+/- (or 23 hg!/? hg 24 Be3 +/-).

The grandmaster gives 21...Kf7 an exclamation mark. After 22 h4 Rg8 23 hg hg 24 Be3 Ke7 25 Bxg5 Qf7, he writes that *White probably retains the advantage, but playing for a win would involve some risk in view of the insecure position of his king.*

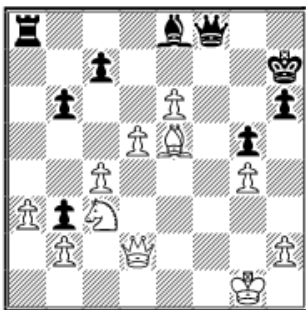


Kasparov continues 26 Ne4 Nxe4 27 Bxe4 (27 fe? Rxg5 28 Qxg5 Rg8) 27...Qg7 28 Bxf6+ Qxf6 29 Rf2 Rh8, with chances for both sides.

Instead of 26 Ne4?, White has better in 26 Rf2!. For example, 26...Qg7 27 Bh6+/-, and Black has no real compensation for the pawn. And an even more energetic response, 26 f4!, was pointed out by Robert Bellin and Pietro Ponzetto.

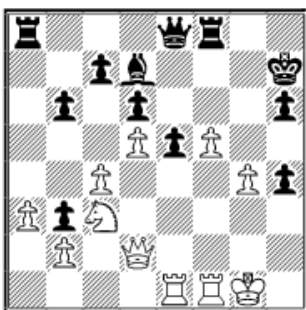
In light of this, I consider Kasparov's recommendation inferior, and believe the correct move was **21...Nb3!**, forcing the exchange of the dangerous bishop after **22 Bxb3 ab.**

The grandmaster also examines the stronger 24 fe! Nxg4 25 Rxf8 Qxf8 26 e6 Ne5 (26...gh 27 Qg2! Qf4 28 h3) 27 Rxe5 de 28 Bg3 Be8 29 Bxe5 + Kh7.



True, he does end this variation with a terrible blunder, 30 Bxc7?!, overlooking 30...Qc5+. But his general assessment of the position as favoring White is correct. For example, White could play 30 Qe2+/-, and follow it up with 31 Ne4.

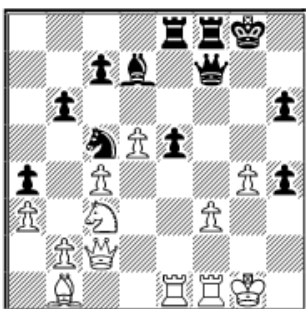
Instead of 23...g5?!, Black has another defensive try that deserves preference: 23...Nxg4!? 24 h3 (24 fe? Nxe5!/=+) 24...g5! (24...Nf6 25 fe +/-) 25 hg! (25 fg Qh5) 25...gh 26 f5 Kh7.



Here too, however, it looks like White stands better.

5) Kasparov thought the move he actually played, 28...Qf4 (threatening Qg3+) was the only move here. And in fact, 28...Qf6? is bad, because of 29 f4! (if White transposes moves by 29 Qc2 Rf7 30 f4, he has to consider 30...e4) 29...ef (29...e4 30 f5+/-; 29...Bxg4 30 fe Qg5 31 Qxg5 + hg 32 Nb5+/-) 30 Qc2 Rh8 (30...Rf7 31 Rxf4!+- [Kasparov]), and now either 31 Ne4 Nxe4 32 Rxe4+- or 31 Rxf4 Qxf4 32 Qg6+ Kf8 33 Rf1 Qxf1+ 34 Kxf1+-.

However, even in the game, White still had the advantage, the grandmaster's opinion notwithstanding. With this in mind, we can recommend **28...Rae8!? 29 Qc2 Kg8.**



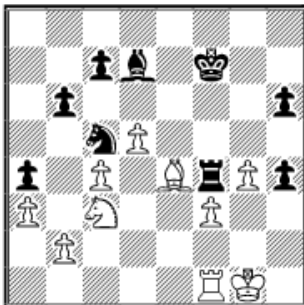
In the middlegame, the position remains almost even – I don't see how White can make progress here.

6) The very same question could be phrased differently: considering a likely trade on e4 (now or in the near future), which piece should White

leave on that square – the knight or the bishop? This task will have to be solved on an intuitive level, since it would be nearly impossible to demonstrate the correctness of your choice with exact variations.

In Kasparov's opinion, the move 33 Ne4, as played in the game, was an error, and should have resulted in a draw. We shall see later on whether this is correct; but first, let's examine the other choice.

33 Be4! would have consolidated White's advantage. Kasparov presents no variations in support of his assessment; nor does my own analysis support it.

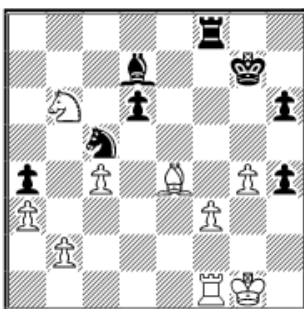


33...Bxg4?? is bad: 34 fg (the black rook is pinned); so is 33...Kf6? 34 Ne2. I examined two possibilities:

A) With 33...Kg7!?, Black sets up the threat of 34...Nxe4 35 Nxe4 Bxg4. It cannot be parried by 34 Rf2, since then 34...Nxe4 35 Nxe4 Bxg4!? is still playable, with the continuation 36 Rg2 h5 37 Nd2 h3 38 Rg3 Rd4, with enough counterplay.

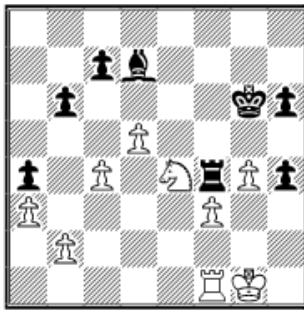
Black meets 34 Kf2 with 34...Nxe4+ (but of course not 34...Bxg4? 35 Ke3) 35 Nxe4 Bxg4 36 Ke3 Rf7, with an equal, or nearly equal, position.

The surprising shot 34 d6!? deserves serious consideration, clearing the d5-square for the knight. On 34...Nxe4, White plays 35 Nd5! Rf7 36 fe Rxf1+ 37 Kxf1 cd 38 Nxb6, or 35...Nd2 36 Nxf4 Nxf1 37 Kxf1 cd 38 Kg2 – in either case, White has the better endgame. The only question is: how much better? However, Black could very well choose 34...cd 35 Nd5 Rf8 36 Nxb6 instead:



Now 36...Bxg4 fails against 37 fg Rxf1+ 38 Kxf1 Nxe4 39 Kg2+/-; instead, he should play 36...Be6!, preparing 37...Rb8. The rook is aiming for the pawn on b2; attempting to prevent this by 37 Rd1 runs into the unpleasant riposte 37...Nxe4 38 fe Rf4 39 Rxd6 Rxd6 40 Kh2 Rxe4. And on 37 Nd5, Black can now play 37...Bxg4 38 fg Rxf1+ 39 Kxf1 Nxe4 40 Kg2 Kg6 unclear, since the pawn at a4 is no longer under attack, as it was after the premature 36...Bxg4?.

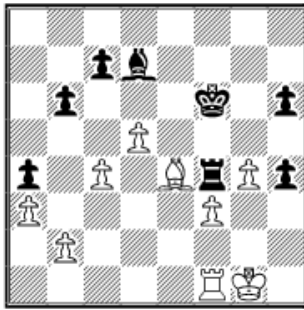
B) The immediate exchange by 33...Nxe4!? 34 Nxe4 (34 fe Rxf1+ 35 Kxf1 Kf6 would be inferior) 34...Kg6 would not be bad, either:



If 35 Kh2, then 35...Bxg4!? works: 36 Rg1 h5 37 Nd2 h3! 38 fg Rf2+ 39 Kxh3 Rxd2, with an even rook endgame. And 35 c5 bc (but not 35... Bxg4? 36 d6!+/-) 36 Nxc5 Bc8+/- is not so dangerous for Black, either – he intends to continue 37...Rc4.

And now, let's examine 33 Ne4, which – Kasparov's opinion to the contrary – looks like the strongest move to me.

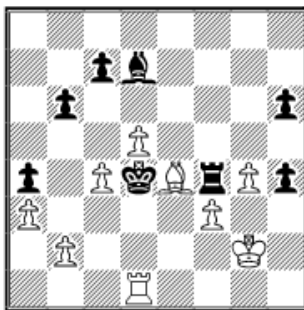
Whereas after 33 Ne4? Black has a clear draw by 33...Nxe4 34 Bxe4 (34 fe? Rxf1+ 35 Kxf1 Kf6, and it is only White who is in danger of losing) 34...Kf6! and ...Ke5.



In order to neutralize the black king's march to the center, White would like to play Kf2-e3; but an immediate 35 Kf2 runs into 35...Bxg4! 36 Ke3 Ke5 37 Rg1, and now either 37...Bh5!? 38 Rg7 Bf7 (Bellin, Ponzetto), or 37...Bf5!?

The strongest move turns out to be the prophylactic **35 Re1!**, putting Black in a difficult dilemma: which way should his king go?

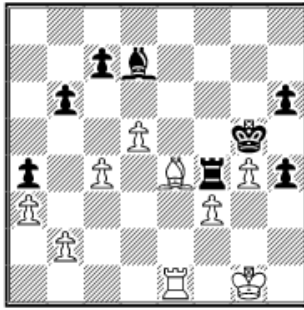
35...Ke5 is met, not by 36 Kf2? Bxg4=, and not by 36 Bf5+? Kd6= either, but simply by 36 Kg2!. Now Black's best would be to retreat his king by 36...Kf6!+/- . The temptingly active 36...Kd4 could be met either by 37 Bb1!? Kxc4 38 Re7 Bb5 39 Ba2+ Kd4 40 Rxc7+/-, or by the more energetic 37 Rd1+!



On 37...Ke3, 38 d6! leads to a decisive advantage for White. And 37... Ke5 38 d6! cd 39 Rd5+ Ke6 40 Rh5 would be equally hopeless. On 37... Kxc4 38 Rc1+ Kb3 39 Rxc7 Bxg4 40 Bc2+ Kxb2 41 fg Rxg4+ (or 41... Rd4 42 d6 Rxd6 43 Bxa4+-) 42 Kf3 Rd4 43 Be4+-, White's extra bishop must tell eventually. And finally, 37...Kc5 allows White to bring his own king to the center by 38 Kf2!, followed by 39 Ke3, with an overwhelming

advantage.

In my view, Black gets better practical drawing chances by taking a different route with his king: **35...Kg5!?**, with the idea of taking the first reasonable opportunity to trade off a pair of pawns by h6-h5.

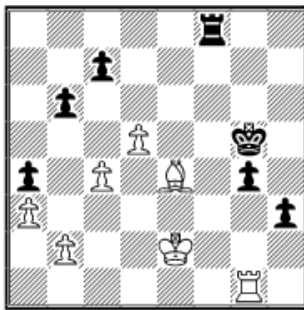


Here's an interesting variation, which, although not forced, serves to illustrate Black's counterattacking possibilities.

36 Kg2 h5!? 37 gh Kxh5 38 Kf2! h3 39 Rg1 (39 Kg3 Rf7 40 f4 Rg7+ with counterplay, or 39 c5 bc 40 Rc1 h2 41 Kg2 Bf5! 42 Rxc5 Bxe4 43 fe Kg6!, with a drawn rook ending) 39...Rh4 (39...h2 40 Rh1 Rh4 is equivalent) 40 Rg7 h2 41 Rh7+ Kg5 42 Rxh4 Kxh4 43 Kg2 Kg5 44 Kxh2 Kf4 45 Kg2 Ke3, and despite Black's two-pawn deficit, the bishop ending looks like a draw: the king either goes to d4 to get the c4-pawn, or to d2 for the b2-pawn.

36 Kf2! would be stronger, when either 36...Bxg4?? 37 Ke3 or 36...h5? 37 gh Kxh5 38 Rg1 would lose for Black. He should wait, instead, playing something like **36...Rf8!?**

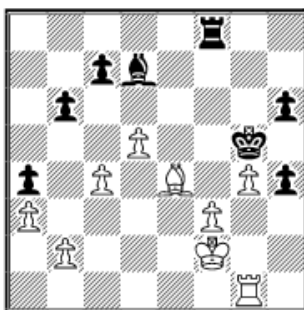
And now White really does have to worry about losing the pawn at g4. For example: 37 Rh1?! Bxg4! 38 Rg1 h5 39 Ke2 h3 40 fg hg=.



Black's strong passed pawns counterbalance White's extra bishop.

37 Ke3?! would also be premature: 37...h3 38 Rg1 (by defending the g4-pawn, White prepares to return his king to f2) 38...Kh4 39 Kf2 (threatening Bd3-f1) 39...Rf4, and on 40 Bd3, Black has the unpleasant 40...Rd4.

But the prophylactic move **37 Rg1!** keeps White's advantage.



Black can only wait until White plays something like Ke3 (with the rook on g1, the reply h4-h3 is now bad, because White can put his king back on f2 and continue Bd3-f1). Still, Black's position remains defensible; and it's unclear whether White can find a way to strengthen his position substantially.

On the basis of my own difficult analysis (which I doubt is error-free!), we may conclude that 33 Ne4!, as White played, is more promising than 33 Be4 – after the exchange of knights on e4, the clear draw Kasparov promised us is nowhere to be seen. But in any case, Black had to play this: declining the exchange deprived him of any counterchances whatsoever, and led to a speedy defeat.

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