

Introduction

“I used to attack because it was the only thing I knew. Now I attack because I know it works best.” – Garry Kasparov.

This book is aimed at helping players who want to refine their attacking technique and be able to understand how to go about creating the right conditions to ensure victory. In order to maximize our chances it is important to study the various ways an attack can be created and whether there are ways to ensure we move up to the next level.

I will endeavour to point out general considerations that can help an improving player and shortcuts that experienced opponents take for granted. It is not always easy to understand when to conduct an attack and this handicap can be due to a lack of confidence in the ability to assess a position. The examples I give throughout the book should be regarded as reminders of what to do right, and these ideas, if absorbed, are bound to improve your performance at the board.

I will also take time to gently remind everyone to constantly be aware of the practical side of the game. There

is no point playing brilliantly if you then throw a win away because you only have thirty seconds left on the clock to finish things off.

Introducing Some Ideas

1. Count the Pieces

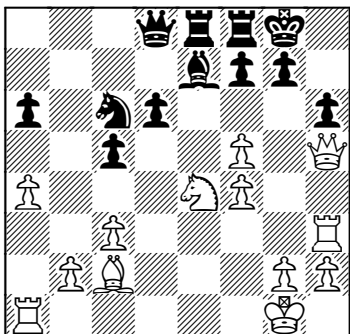
A simple way to try and correctly evaluate what is going on in a position is to count the pieces that are attacking compared to the number defending. This basic but effective idea was passed on to me and it makes a lot of sense when trying to work out a plan. This is because, even if you cannot fathom every tactical detail, it does help to boost your confidence in the knowledge that such positions tend to favour the one with the majority of pieces. I reckon just about all of us will acknowledge that the next position is in White's favour:

A. Shabalov-A. Stripunsky
US Championship,
St Louis 2010

This position looks good for White –

Prepare to Attack

and so it should be because it is four pieces against two. The white queen, rook, bishop and knight are well placed, whereas Black has to count on the bishop and rook on f8 to defend the honour of the king. Not surprisingly the tactics favour White:



White to play

24 f6! ♕xf6

Of course 24...gxf6 allows 25 ♖xh6 and Black cannot prevent mate.

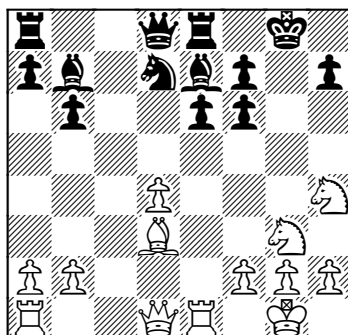
25 ♖f5! 1-0

A wonderful move which threatens checkmate on h7 after ♖xf6+ by revealing the bishop on c2. There is no hope for Black: 25...♕e7 26 ♖f6+ ♕xf6 27 ♖h7 mate, or 25...g6 26 ♖xf6+ ♔g7 27 ♖xe8+ and White wins a rook.

I think the knowledge that you will have more attacking options if you have a majority of pieces near the opposing king will be a positive motivation when trying to think up a plan. It is an influence on assessing a likely position that is easily taken on board be-

fore you have to consider any special factors. The next game looks splendid for White using the *count the pieces* policy and, sure enough, the advantage in having more pieces attacking than those defending is soon evident. My role in this book is to try and encourage you to create these kinds of positions and, if you do, going up to the next level will be a lot easier.

Zhao Zong Yuan-G.Canfell Suncoast 1999



White to play

I would argue that this is a five vs. two scenario on the kingside. The white knights, bishop and queen are well placed for the attack, while the rook on e1 can join in the fun via e3. In contrast Black is relying on the dark-squared bishop and king's rook to aid the defence, while he just needs the luxury of another move to bring the knight back to f8. These positive factors, combined

with Black's exposed king, mean that tactical options multiply and there is a way to win quickly:

17 ♖xh7+! ♔xh7

The bishop has to be taken, otherwise Black is soon routed:

a) 17...♔g7 18 ♖hf5+ exf5 19 ♖xf5+ ♔h8 20 ♗h5 ♖f8 21 ♖g6+ ♔g8 22 ♖xf7 mate.

b) 17...♔h8 18 ♗h5 ♔g7 19 ♖hf5+ also leads to mate.

18 ♗h5+ ♔g8 19 ♖gf5

The threat is 20 ♗g4+ followed by 21 ♗g7 mate, so Black has little choice but to accept another sacrifice.

19...exf5

19...♖f8 runs into 20 ♖e3, again forcing mate.

20 ♖e3!

The move that Black missed – the rook is poised to swing across to the g3 or h3-squares with devastating consequences. Instead, the obvious 20 ♖xf5 fails to impress due to 20...♖f8 when Black will exchange the king's rook, so White has to bale out with a perpetual check after 21 ♗g4+ ♔h7 22 ♗h5+ ♔g8 23 ♗g4+ etc.

20...♖d6 21 ♖h3 1-0

White will move the knight to f3 or f5 and then force mate or win material.

It is impressive that all five of White's attacking pieces were directly involved in the attack.

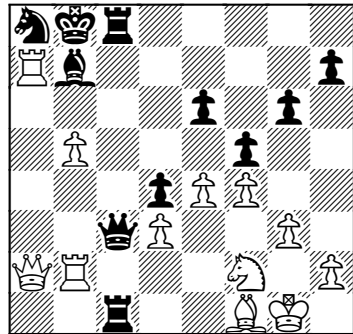
2. Predict-a-move

An attacking idea that helps make the difference is something I call *predict-a-*

move. So often overlooked by improving players, this is a proven method of winning more games. Quite simply you try to anticipate what your opponent is about to do next and then find a move that conceals a deadly trap if he just blindly carries on with his plan.

I have used the predict-a-move method for years, and it has helped me win numerous games. For example:

G.Lane-A.Ashby Torquay 1982



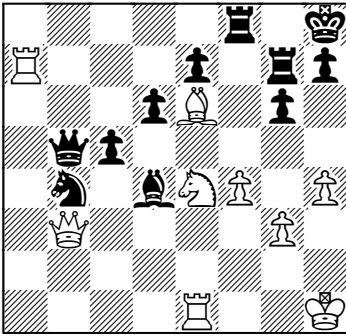
White to play

Black has just played 31...♗c3 and I was beginning to panic since the obvious idea is to play 32...♗e1 next move. However, I used this knowledge to think of a trap if he carried on with the plan and came up with **32 b6!** My opponent loudly banged his queen on the board with the expected **32...♗e1**, which allowed me the neat finish **33 ♖xa8+ ♖xa8 34 ♗a7 mate**.

Prepare to Attack

Predict-a-move is not only used for a mating combination, it is also an effective way to win material:

A.Sztern-G.Lane Canberra 2001



Black to play

I am on top here but wanted to make sure of victory before I was dragged into time-trouble. My first thought was 28...c4 with a discovered attack on the a7-rook by the bishop on d4, but after 29 ♕xc4 my own queen would come under fire. So I played 28...♖c6, pinning the knight on e4, and my opponent did the obvious thing and moved his king out the way with 29 ♔h2, allowing 29...c4! 0-1

3. Pattern Chess

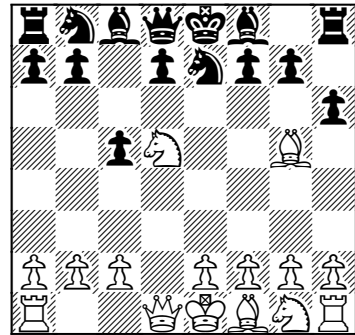
The opening is the place where people can go seriously wrong, so it makes sense to be prepared to attack at the earliest opportunity. There are times

when someone plays something odd in the opening and you don't know how to respond; all too frequently authors assume the reader will know what to do just because they take such things for granted. However, I will make a point of showing any tricks and traps available in the annotated games, to make it easier to catch opponents out in the future.

I think you should be on red alert if someone plays something completely different. This is the case in the following game where Black is an American renowned for his fine attacking style and innovation in the opening, but sometimes it can all go wrong:

Game 1 A.Yermolinsky-E.Tate Western Open 2001 *Old Benoni*

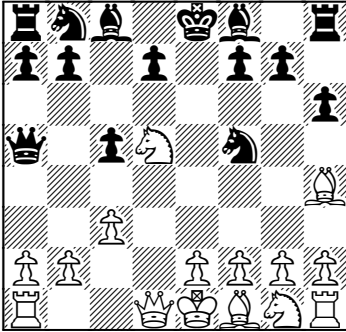
1 d4 c5 2 d5 e6 3 ♖c3 exd5 4 ♘xd5 ♖e7
5 ♙g5 h6!?



A slightly different move to the

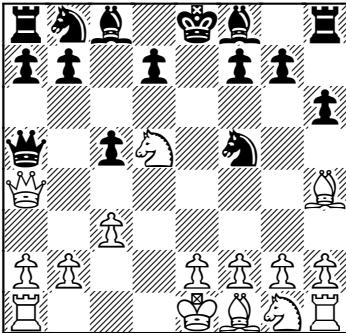
normal 5... ♖a5+; Black has come up with the idea of forcing the bishop back and then trading pieces.

6 ♙h4 ♖a5+ 7 c3 ♘f5?



8 ♕a4!!

A clever and crushing reply. The threat of mate allows Yermolinsky to offer his queen for nothing, which is a reminder to be on the lookout for refutations of strange opening moves.



8... ♖xa4

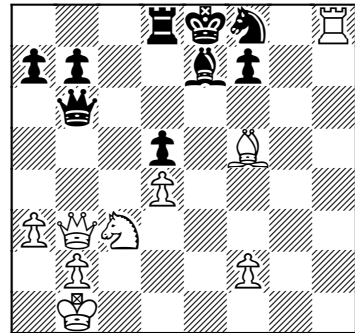
Emory Tate is a good sport and allows his opponent a fitting finale. There is not much choice about the final result because the queen has no sensible retreat and 8... ♘c6 allows 8

♖xa5 ♘xa5 10 ♘c7 mate anyway.

9 ♘c7 mate

The most spectacular sacrifices tend to involve a queen – and remembering such attacking themes can make you look out for similar mating patterns in the future.

N. Legky-I. Efimov
Asti 1994



White to play

It might initially be quite daunting to try and spot a win here for White, but knowledge of the previous game should be a big help:

30 ♘d5!

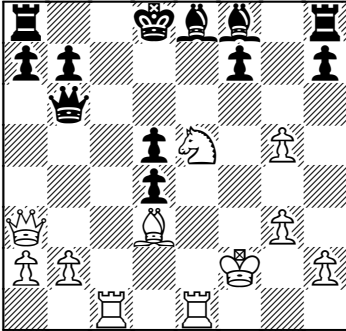
This idea should come quickly to mind if you are looking out for a mating combination with the knight and bishop.

30... ♖a5 31 ♖b5+! 1-0

If we take it up to another level then

knowledge of the mating pattern can work wonders:

D.Solak-J.Kozamernik
Ljubljana 2003



White to play

23 ♖a4!

Yes, this should be more obvious by now; once again a mating net is set up.

23...h6??

Black clearly saw enough not to accept the sacrifice: 23...♙xa4?? 24 ♖xf7+ ♔d7 25 ♙f5+ ♖e6 26 ♙xe6+ gives White enough time to take the king's rook, winning easily; and 23...♖xb2?? fails to 24 ♖c2 ♙xa4 25 ♖xf7+ ♔d7 26 ♙f5 mate. But he failed to notice that 23 ♖a4 was actually threatening something, otherwise he would have played 23...♙e7!, preparing a safe square at e8 for the king.

24 ♖d7+! 1-0

Since 24...♙xd7 25 ♖xf7 is again mate.

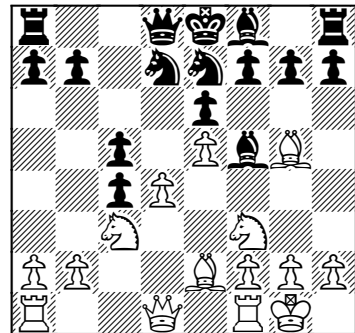
Here's a final reminder that watching out for such a mating pattern can improve your standard of play, even in slightly different circumstances:

Game 2
Z.Runic-D.Bosnjak
Sarajevo 2010
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 e5

This is known as the Advance Caro-Kann.

3...♙f5 4 ♖f3 e6 5 ♙e2 ♖d7 6 0-0 c5 7 c4 ♖e7 8 ♖c3 dxc4 9 ♙g5



9...♖b6 or 9...f6 are the normal moves in this position, but Black decided on an independent course:

9...h6? 10 ♖b5!

Surely such a move comes to mind a lot quicker by now?

10...♖b6

10...hxg5?? 11 ♖d6 mate would be truly embarrassing.

11 ♖d6+ ♔d8 12 dxc5 ♖xb2 13 ♙xe7+ ♙e7 14 ♖xf5

14 ♖xf7+ and 15 ♖xh8 is also good, but White has spotted a mating net.

14...exf5 15 ♖b1 1-0

Moving the queen allows 16 ♖xb7 and mate on d7.

How to Win Friends and Influence the Chessboard

“One should respect a defeated opponent!” – Alexander Khalifman.

Although I take a look at the role of psychology, of how it can influence decision making at the board and away from it, the emphasis is on the lighter side. Now that we expect to win many more games, I would expect a graceful response to questions from potential opponents. Always make them leave feeling that if they survive 25 moves in the next game that would be quite something. If they take an interest in your favourite chess opening, direct them towards a risky gambit and add knowledgeably that the resulting position with a two pawn deficit for them is ‘interesting’ and worthy of further study.

Just to be serious, all I really mean is be polite. After all Vishy Anand is such a gentleman that everyone wants to help him, to the point where rivals Carlsen, Kramnik and Kasparov phoned him on Skype to lend him support and analysis in his 2010 match World Championship match against Topalov.

What you should not do is to encourage people to beat you by being a

bad loser. Some people mutter their outrage at losing and stride off after the game without even bothering to help set up the pieces. This is not the right way to conduct yourself, especially as the consequence is that a long line of opponents will try even harder to beat you.

The Ultimate Reply to Any Onlooker

“These things are not conducive to high-class play!” – Bobby Fischer recalling an incident to interviewer James Burke in 1972 when an onlooker whispered a move in his ear during an American tournament.

I have seen all kinds of response to onlookers who misguidedly offer advice to stronger players than themselves when the players are analysing after a result. I have heard the master who kindly replied that the suggested move did have a lot going for it and he would have chosen it but for the loss of a queen. I think you should be polite, especially if you start getting the winning habit by attacking in more games.

The most devastating reply that I know of was recorded by the English master Amos Burn in a letter dated from 1889. He wrote:

“I once heard of Mr Schüll, one of the strongest players we ever had in the Liverpool Chess Club, but who has now for some years been living in Waterdown, Dacota. Mr Schüll was one

Prepare to Attack

day taking lunch at the club when he observed, at a little distance, a rather weak player engaged in analysing a particularly fine game that he, Mr Schüll had played the day before. In the course of his analysis the weak player kept suggesting, as *improvements* on Schüll's play, inferior moves which probably would have lost the game off-hand. Mr Schüll stood it as long as he could, but finally he could endure no longer, and turning on the offender he inquired in accents stern 'Mr ---, did you ever see a monkey examining a watch?'"

I would only add that experienced players are usually more than happy to share views with players about a game, but a word of warning from my own experience: don't suggest a winning move while the game is still in progress.

Nothing Can Go Wrong Now

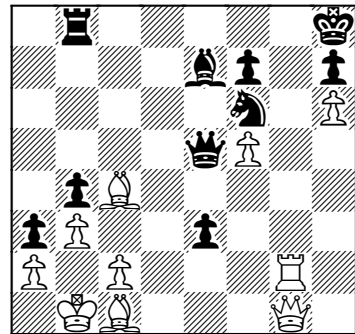
At the end I have added a chapter called *Tricks of the Trade*, giving guidelines on the practical side of chess and how to step up to a higher level. I discuss various issues, perhaps not directly linked to attacking, but which can alter the course of a game.

The number one problem for a lot of players is running out of time. I have met many people who played the game of their life, some even claim to have been unstoppable, but they still lost. There is no point honing your attacking skills only to allow your opponent off

the hook. The comments afterwards are normally of the kind: "I was a piece up, winning easily, and then I lost on time." It always sounds to me as though they are suggesting someone else should take the blame.

I will give some pointers on how to reduce the number of occasions in which you are fighting against the clock as well as the pieces on the board. It is clear that time-trouble can cause all sorts of problems, which can lead to the ruin of a game:

J. Benjamin-B. Gulko
US Championship,
Seattle 2000



White to play

The former US Champion later recalled "In time pressure, I tried to weigh the consequences of 32 ♙xf7 (unclear) and 32 ♚xe3 ♘e4 (probably a draw). Suddenly I had a brainstorm."

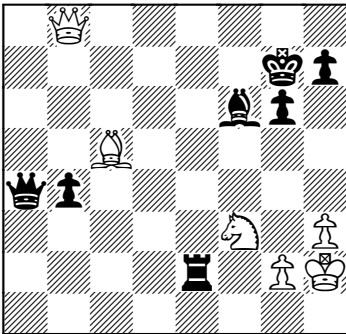
32 ♙xe3?? ♚b2 mate

There are a lot of people who excel at blitz or rapid games but fail miserably when trying to play well in time-trouble. It is hardly surprising – there is more at risk when you have been toiling for around four hours and are on the verge of winning or losing over the space of a few minutes. Here is another reminder of how it can all go wrong:

Draw!

How can a draw offer be part of the package for the attacking player? It sounds ludicrous but time and time again I have witnessed players reasonably offering a draw, only for their opponents to refuse and then go berserk. It might be a psychological trick but occasionally it does work.

B.Jones-N.Povah
British Championship,
Chester 1979



Black to play

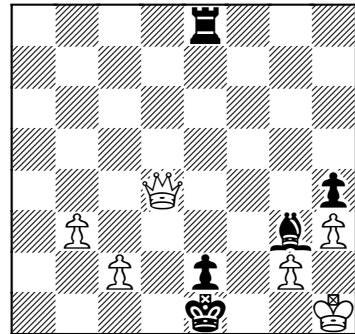
A typical example where Black has worked hard for victory all the game and now only needs to complete one more move to reach the time control.

40...♖c6??

The lure of attacking the bishop and threatening ...♖xf3 proves too much for Black who can't resist one more trick. But he overlooked something:

41 ♖f8 mate

A.Morozevich-K.Maslak
Russian Championship,
Moscow 2008

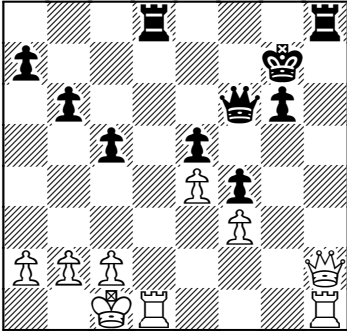


White to play

After giving a number of checks White played **69 ♖d4** and offered a draw. This makes sense because he has no realistic winning ambitions, and 69...♗f2 70 ♖a1+ ♔d2 71 ♖a5+ ♔xc2 72 ♖a2+ will end up in a draw eventually since the queen will keep checking. However, the psychological ploy worked: the draw was immediately rejected and Black quickly played the

blunder 69...♔f1?? allowing 70 ♖g1 mate.

The Exception



White to play

Although I am always advocating strong, attacking play with the emphasis on securing the win at all costs, I did

track down one game where, I have to admit, sportsmanship took over and is to be admired. The star American junior Stuart Rachels was playing Black in the Birmingham tournament in 1983 when his lowly rated opponent set up a big shock with the brilliant 24 ♖d7+!, plunging the youngster into despair: 24...♔g8 25 ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 26 ♜xh8+ wins quickly, while 24...♗xd7 also leads to a forced loss after 25 ♜xh8+ ♔f7 26 ♖h7+ ♔e6 27 ♜e8+ ♜e7 (27...♗e7 28 ♜c6 mate) 28 ♜xg6+ ♜f6 29 ♜e8+ ♜e7 30 ♖h6 mate.

So why did White accompany the winning move with a draw offer? Because there can be exceptions in the pursuit of winning even against gifted juniors – especially when it turns out that White was Jim Rachels, his dad.

Contents

Introduction	5
1 Count the Pieces	15
2 Carry on Attacking	40
3 Direct Attacks from the Opening	58
4 Secrets of Success	94
5 Cashing in Your Chips	114
6 History Always Repeats Itself	140
7 Tricks of the Trade	170
Index of Openings	190
Index of Complete Games	191

Chapter Four

Secrets of Success

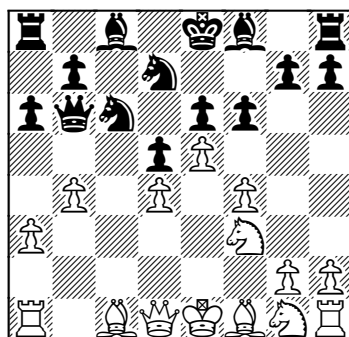
"I don't believe in psychology, I believe in good moves." – Bobby Fischer in the *New York Times*, 1972.

G.Lane-R.Eccles
Touckley 2007

Predict-a-move

I think it is fundamental when you have the advantage that you go on the attack. However, this happy state of affairs will not always be true, so there will be a need to be smart and tricky to extract an advantage from even an equal-looking position. In my experience one way to lure an opponent to their doom is *predict-a-move*. The standard idea is that you spot what your opponent is planning and then find a move that hides a trap should he carry on as intended. In other words you mask your true intentions while still playing a reasonable move to avoid suspicion.

This seems an obvious method of winning to experienced players, but it can be quite a revelation to others. Here is the idea of *predict-a-move* in action:



White to play

This is the easiest example I could think of that demonstrates Black walking into a trap. In a French Defence Black has applied the usual pressure against the d4-pawn with ...♘c6 and ...♗b6, so I am happy to make things easier for him.

11 ♙d3

A perfectly reasonable move, pre-

paring ♖e2 and setting up a trap if Black wants to grab the d-pawn.

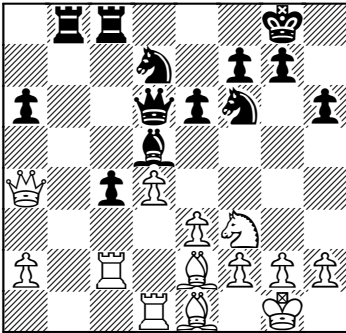
11...♗xd4? 12 ♗xd4 ♖xd4??

Still happily counting the pawns.

13 ♕g6+ 1-0

The next game shows that even the top American players can be lulled into a false sense of security when coming up against *predict-a-move*:

J.Kraai-A.Stripunsky
US Championship,
St Louis 2010



Black to play

It is clear that White intends to take on c4, so the position is ripe for *predict-a-move* by setting up a trap while also playing a constructive move:

21...♖b5

Black makes little attempt to hang on to the pawn since the obvious 21...♗b6 allows 22 ♖xa6.

22 ♕xc4?

White walks into the trick, whereas a more considered approach might have found 22 ♖dc1, followed by ♕a5, before taking on c4 with equal chances. This is the beauty of *predict-a-move* – it can tip the scales in your favour when a draw is the more likely result.

22...♖xc4! 23 ♖xc4 ♗b6

The point of Stripunsky's crafty play is that he emerges with two pieces for a rook and a winning position.

24 ♖xb5?!

After 24 ♖xa6 ♕xc4 there is no hint of counterplay by White who will suffer in the long term. Sensing that all is lost White pins his hopes on the queen sacrifice with vague ambitions to advance the passed a-pawn. The game concluded:

24...axb5 25 ♖c5 ♗g4 26 ♖xb5 ♗d7 27 a4 ♕xf3 28 gxf3 ♖xh2+ 29 ♖f1 ♖h3+ 30 ♖e2 ♗h2 31 ♕b4 ♖xf3+ 32 ♖e1 ♗f6 0-1

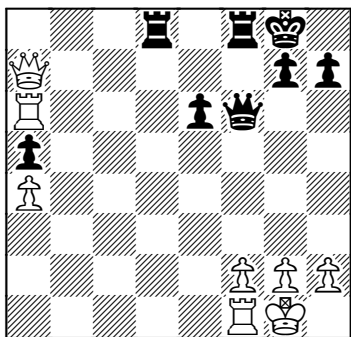
In the next game many players would agree a draw, but Black proves that luck is on your side if you prepare to attack:

R.Pruijssers-F.Kroeze
Dutch Team
Championship 2008

White has just played ♖c6-a6, making it abundantly clear that he is about to take the a-pawn. Just that information is sufficient for an experienced player to set in motion the process of

Prepare to Attack

predict-a-move. Basically, knowing White's next move almost for sure should allow you to try and think up something special. I have to admit it does look like a draw, but look again.



Black to play

24...♖d4!

A classic move to hide your true intentions, because attacking the a-pawn looks like a perfectly normal continuation. The subtle change to the position is that the rook now blocks the white queen's protection of the f2-pawn.

25 ♖xa5?

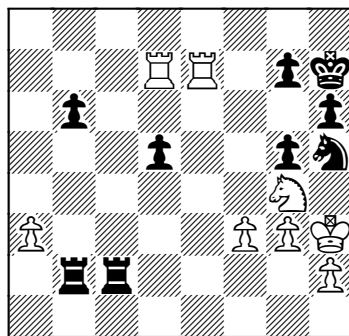
There seems nothing to fear so White carries on with his intended plan. If he had been on high-alert he would have found 25 h3, and after 25...♖xa4 26 ♖xa5 a draw will soon be agreed.

25...♞xf2+! 0-1

Bravo! White is humiliated upon 26 ♖xf2 ♖d1+ 27 ♖f1 ♖dx1 mate.

The ending is also a perfect place to disguise your true intentions:

P.Cramling-S.Brynell Stockholm 2010



Black to play

White has done a lot of work to try and revive her position by activating her pieces, in particular by getting her rooks to the seventh rank.

33...♖c3

Black sets up the chance by playing a reasonable move which attacks the a- and f-pawns. White needs to protect f3, as otherwise the massive threat after 34...♖xf3 would be 35...♞f4 mate.

34 ♖f7?

This is the obvious move to look after the f-pawn but it is also rather predictable. Instead, 34 ♞e5?! is met by 34...♖e2!, when 35 ♖xd5 fails to 35...♞f6 36 ♖d6 g4+! 37 fxg4 ♖cc2 and wins. Perhaps the passive-looking 34 ♞e3 is best, although 34...♖xa3 leaves Black on top.

34...♞f4+! 0-1

White is in no mood to give up the

exchange for a hopelessly lost ending, while 35 gxf4 allows 35...♙xf3 mate.

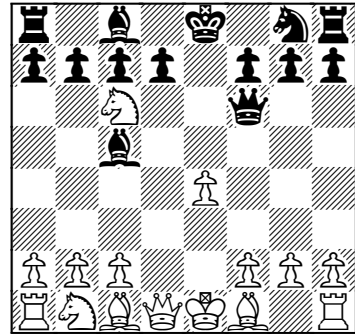
The Biggest Loser

The next game looks like a formality on paper: Black is an Indian grandmaster rated 2682, and expensively hired to give his team a turbo boost on top board; whereas White is merely a decent player rated 2284. Most onlookers assumed it was just a matter of *when* he would be overpowered, even with the white pieces.

The big difference in the outcome? Yes, *predict-a-move* came to the rescue by hiding White's intentions, enabling him to engineer a delightful tactic:

popularity can be traced back to sensational 14th and 16th games of the Kasparov-Karpov 1990 World Championship match in Lyons. The fascinating complications of those games and the romantic nature of the Scotch Opening captured the public's imagination.

4...♙c5 5 ♖xc6 ♕f6



The line with 4...♙c5 is known as the Classical Variation, in which 5 ♖xc6 is the Kasparov Variation. Here Black's queen move is just a ploy to allow him to capture on c6 with the d-pawn and avoid the exchange of queens. Only the most hopeful player will dream of checkmate on f2.

6 ♕f3

The invitation to exchange queens is a perfectly acceptable way to handle the position. The lower-rated player with White will harbour thoughts of a draw, while Black assumes he will eventually be able to grind his opponent down in the long term. If White wishes to avoid the queen swap then 6 ♕d2 should be preferred, which has Kasparov's seal of approval, after which

Game 27
J.Valmana Canto-
P.Harikrishna
 Spanish Team
 Championship 2006
Scotch Game

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♘xd4

The Scotch derived its name from a correspondence game between Edinburgh and London chess clubs, dating from 1826 to 1828. The popularity of the opening has fluctuated wildly over the last century or so. The Scotch Four Knights was quite popular in the early 20th century, but eventually developed a drawish reputation and attention turned to other openings, principally the Ruy Lopez. The current wave of

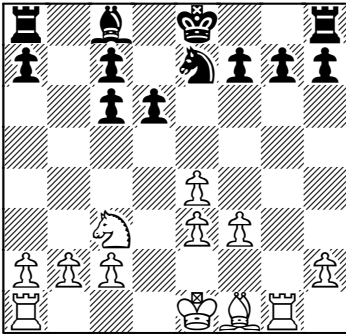
Prepare to Attack

a typical set-up involves ♖c3, ♕d3 and perhaps kingside castling.

6...♗xf3 7 gxf3 bxc6 8 ♕e3

White is happy to exchange Black's only active piece and make sure the fight for an advantage will be held in the middlegame.

8...♗xe3 9 fxe3 ♖e7 10 ♖c3 d6 11 ♖g1



White's moves all seem fairly straightforward and should cause Black little harm with careful play. However, if Black wants more he has to try and fight back, which is when things become interesting.

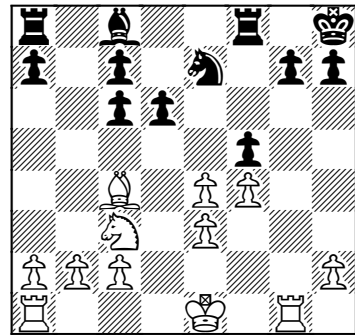
11...0-0

In the game A.Muzychuk-L.Galojan, European Women's Championship, Rijeka 2010, Black tested 11...g6, after which White used her extra room to manoeuvre to seek further concessions: 12 0-0-0 ♕e6 13 h4 f6 (13...h5, to block White's h-pawn, can be met by 14 ♖e2 aiming for f4 and a possible exchange on e6 when the timing is right) 14 f4 ♖f7 15 ♕e2 ♖hg8 16 ♕f3 ♖ab8 17 ♖d4 ♖b6 18 ♖a4 ♖a8 19 ♖a5 intending h4-h5 with the initiative.

12 f4 f5

White is making small but steady progress in improving his position, so Black rightly challenges his authority. The f-pawn is advanced to stop White thinking about f4-f5 to restrict the light-squared bishop on c8, and also to prepare to exchange on e4 and then catch up on development.

13 ♕c4+ ♖h8



14 e5!

A clever way to spice up the position. White offers a pawn in return for making his opponent's life difficult, and to keep the c8-bishop from finding a decent square after all. The added bonus is that 14...d5 would fully justify his decision, since White would be presented with a very valuable passed pawn.

14...dxe5 15 0-0-0

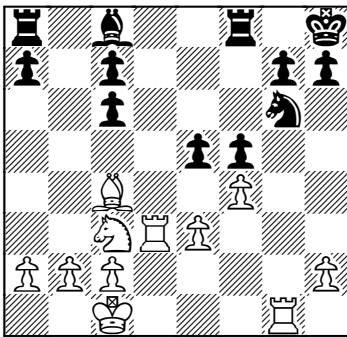
Naturally not 15 fxe5? ♖g6 16 e6 ♖e5!, when the threats at c4 and f3 mean that Black wins the pawn in far more favourable circumstances. Now, on the other hand, Black has problems completing his development, since if

he moves the bishop to b7 to coordinate his rooks, then White can swoop down with his own rook and take up residence on d7.

15...♖g6

Black attacks the f-pawn again. If instead 15...exf4 16 exf4 ♖b8 (but not 16...♖g6? 17 ♖xg6 hxg6 18 ♖d3 with an echo of the main game), then 17 ♖de1 ♖g8 18 ♖e5 leaves White with the advantage.

16 ♖d3!



The ultimate *predict-a-move*: an incredibly subtle trick, giving his grandmaster opponent ample opportunity to go wrong. It is clear that Black wants to take on f4 and may have reasoned that his lower-rated opponent has acquiesced to the inevitable, allowing him to take control of the position. Certainly, White seems to have minimal compensation after 16...exf4 17 exf4 ♖xf4 18 ♖f3 ♖h5 – at least that is what the star player thought to his cost.

16...exf4?

The Indian Olympiad player allows himself to be tricked in spectacular

fashion. This game has inspired others to follow, and even if Black does not always lose a piece, the ending still presents problems:

a) 16...a5 17 ♖e2 ♖e8 (the immediate 17...♖a6 18 ♖xa6 ♖xa6 19 ♖d7 is good for White) 18 ♖f7! ♖a6 19 ♖xe8 ♖xe8? (Black should really try 19...♖xd3, although 20 ♖xc6 ♖a6 21 ♖d1 ♖xc6 22 ♖xd3 ♖g8 23 ♖d8+ ♖f7 24 ♖d5 still gives White an edge) 20 ♖d2 ♖xe2 21 ♖xe2 exf4 22 ♖f1 and White had a clear advantage in S.Haslinger-R.Berzinsh, British League 2007.

b) 16...e4 17 ♖d2 gives White a steady position with lots of room for improvement, such as by ♖dg1 and ♖a4-c5, designed to hound the black bishop. I was watching this game (D.Smerdon-T.Rej, Gold Coast 2009) being played and saw how difficult it is for Black to find something active to do. In fact here, when he should be contemplating something quiet like 17...a5, Black quickly ran out of patience and played 17...♖h4?! 18 ♖gd1 g6 (18...♖f3 19 ♖d8 ♖b7 20 ♖8d7 ♖ac8 21 ♖a4 also gives White excellent chances) 19 ♖d8! ♖g7 20 ♖xf8 ♖xf8 21 ♖d8+ ♖e7 22 ♖h8 h5 23 ♖a6 and White went on to win (if 23...♖d7, then 24 ♖a4 is very convincing).

17 ♖xg6!

The game should be all but over: this ingenious idea wins a piece, as 17...hxg6 is met by the simple 18 exf4 and Black is defenceless against the

Prepare to Attack

stunning threat of ♖h3 mate. Yes, the top-class grandmaster missed it and he now pays a heavy price.

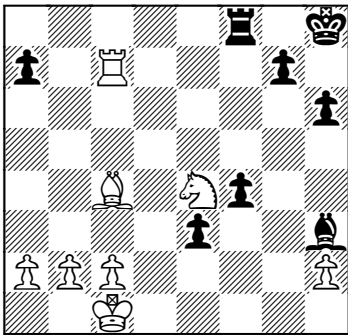
17...fxe3 18 ♖xc6 f4 19 ♖xc7 ♕h3

Black's position is very poor but it seems that Harikrishna comes from the school of thought that you never win a game by resigning.

20 ♖d4 ♖ae8

Or 20...f3 21 ♖e4 f2 22 ♖d1! f1♖+ 23 ♕xf1 ♖xf1 (23...♕xf1 24 ♖xe3 is no better) 24 ♖xa7! ♖af8 (not 24...♖xa7?? 25 ♖e8 mate) 25 ♖xe3 and White should win by quickly advancing his queenside pawns.

21 ♖e4 ♖xe4 22 ♖xe4 h6



23 ♖f7?!

Trading rooks makes the opposing pawn mass more dangerous. White could have safely captured 23 ♖xa7, when again after 23...♖e8 (or 23...f3 24 ♖e7 f2 25 ♖g3 f1♖+ 26 ♕xf1 ♕xf1 27 ♖xe3) 24 ♖f7 ♕g2 (not 24...♖xe4? 25 ♖f8+ ♖h7 26 ♕d3) 25 ♖c5 e2 26 ♕xe2 ♖xe2 27 ♖xf4, he should win with his queenside pawns.

23...♖xf7 24 ♕xf7 g5

After the immediate 24...f3 25 ♕h5 f2 26 ♖g3 f1♖+ 27 ♖xf1 ♕xf1 28 ♕d1, followed by 29 ♕e1, White will pick up the e-pawn to reach a winning bishop endgame, although Black has hopes of survival.

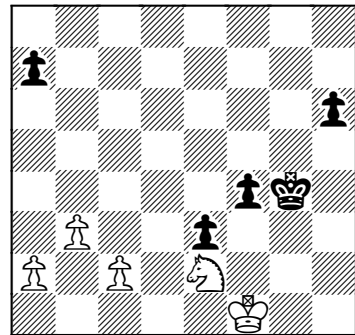
25 ♕h5

It requires some work, but White is still heavily the favourite. First, he needs to restrict Black's chances of advancing the kingside pawns before pushing his own passed c-pawn.

25...♖g7 26 ♕d1 ♕e6 27 b3 g4 28 ♕e2 ♕d5 29 ♖c3 ♕f3+ 30 ♖f1?

An error; the white king should advance with 30 ♕d3, so that after 30...♖f6 31 h3! (a nice finesse) 31...♖g5 32 ♕xg4 ♕xg4 he can play 33 ♖e4+! ♕h4 34 hxg4 ♖xg4 35 ♕e2 and wins.

30...♖f6 31 h3 ♖g5 32 ♕xg4 ♕xg4 33 hxg4 ♖xg4 34 ♖e2?



And this should actually have lost. Instead, 34 ♕e2 leads to a draw after 34...h5 35 ♖b5! h4 36 ♖d4 h3 37 ♖f3 ♖g3 38 c4 h2 39 ♖hx2 ♖hx2 40 c5 ♖g3 41 c6 f3+ 42 ♕xe3 f2 43 c7 f1♖ 44 c8♖ ♖f2+ 45 ♕d3 ♖xa2.

34...f3??

The grandmaster finally gets his chance and – presumably in a time scramble – misses it! Here 34...h5! would have won for Black. For example, 35 c4 h4 36 c5 h3 37 c6 h2 38 ♖g2 f3+ 39 ♖xh2 fxe2 40 c7 e1♔ 41 c8♗+ ♕f3! and the remaining e-pawn cannot be stopped.

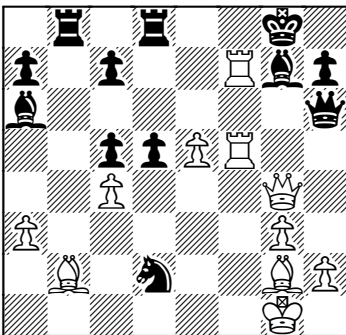
35 c4!

Back on track. White is now ahead in any pawn race, so the rest is easy.

35...a5 36 a3 f2 37 c5 ♕f5 38 ♖g3+ ♕f4 39 ♕g2 h5 40 ♖xh5+ ♕e4 41 ♖g3+ 1-0

The next game is a tougher example because, using predict-a-move, Black can see that his position is on the brink of defeat but, by noting the forcing nature of the combination, comes up with a dramatic conclusion:

D.Petrosian-N.Grandelius
Sarajevo 2010



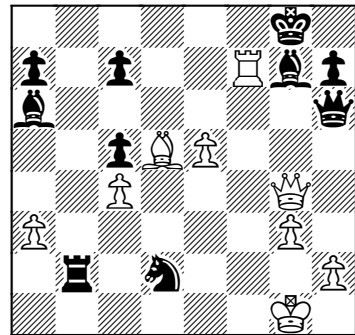
Black to play

White has just played 24 ♗e2-g4 inviting Black to dare take the bishop on b2. As White has just pinned the g7-bishop Black can take a good guess that the intended reception, if the queen's rook moves, will be ♖f8+ and ♙xd5+ with very dangerous play. But being able to predict the moves allows Black to figure out that White has merely trapped himself.

24...♖xb2! 25 ♖f8+ ♖xf8 26 ♙xd5+

Now if 26...♕h8?!, then 27 ♖xf8+ ♙xf8 28 ♗g8 is mate. But Black has seen further:

26...♖f7! 27 ♖xf7



If 27 ♙xf7+ ♕h8 White has nothing.
27...♗xh2+! 0-1

White resigned rather than allow 28 ♕xh2 ♖f3+ followed by ...♖h2 mate.

“A bad plan is better than none at all.” – Frank Marshall.

The next example is similar to the theme, because I improve my position in the knowledge that the obvious defensive action in reply leads to defeat.