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Series Foreword

Move by Move is a series of opening books which uses a question-and-answer format. One of our main aims of the series is to replicate – as much as possible – lessons between chess teachers and students.

All the way through, readers will be challenged to answer searching questions and to complete exercises, to test their skills in chess openings and indeed in other key aspects of the game. It's our firm belief that practising your skills like this is an excellent way to study chess openings, and to study chess in general.

Many thanks go to all those who have been kind enough to offer inspiration, advice and assistance in the creation of *Move by Move*. We're really excited by this series and hope that readers will share our enthusiasm.

John Emms
Everyman Chess

opponent's desire to challenge White with a theoretically sharp line exceeded reality; he lacked a grip on the theory. It is a dangerous game to cross an opponent with knowledge of sharp theory unless you carry compensating knowledge. My opponent sat frozen for several minutes and ate up about 15% of his time right there! He knew the theory up to move six but now was at a loss on how to proceed. He couldn't remember his theoretical prep. Needless to say, he misplayed it and compounded his trouble by his unfamiliarity with the line. Do you think this would have happened if I had opened with a Lopez? He would undoubtedly have known (and more importantly understood) his theory to move 19 or so. This is why I play the Four Knights. Players just don't face the Four Knights very often, so when you hit them with it, it has been ages since they last looked at it. Also, we, not your opponents, get to pick the "like" in the position, be it the Lopez, Scotch, Belgrade/Max Lange or Glek/King's Indian facsimiles.

Old is New

The Four Knights, once the darling of past legends like Tarrasch, Capablanca, and many of the top players in the period between 1850 and 1925, went stale after that and was essentially a discarded opening, pushed aside by the Lopez. In the 1980s, GM John Nunn revived the opening as a newly-honed old weapon. He showed through his games that the Four Knights' stodgy reputation was undeserved and untrue by winning many sharp games with it. Today, the Four Knights fits in the repertoire of many of the top players in the world, including Carlsen, Shirov, Radjabov, Ivanchuk, Glek and many other super-GMs. It has finally gained respectability and is now considered the other Lopez.

The Format of the Book

If this is your first experience of the *Move by Move* format, then let me explain. The book is designed as a series of chess lessons. We begin each game with a question-and-answer format, mostly during the opening theory phase. Then we switch to middlegame and endgame exercises. This book is not just a standard issue opening theory volume. It is also a middlegame/endgame interactive workshop. Since the book is designed as a series of lessons, the format is casual.

The Four Knights doesn't just confuse humans. Watch how Larsen turned Deep Blue into a bumbling, inept opponent with it:

Game 1
B.Larsen-Comp Deep Blue
Copenhagen 1993

1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 c3

Exclam! Principle: Develop knights before bishops.

3...♘f6 4 ♙b5

Larsen enters the Four Knights Spanish, hoping to bog the computer down in a heavy manoeuvring game.

4...♙b4

Possibly a misjudgement on the part of Deep Blue's programmers? I would have had the computer play the more tactical 4...♘d4 line versus the human. Of course, then it risks the drawish 5 ♘xd4 variation. Maybe this is why the programmers avoided it.

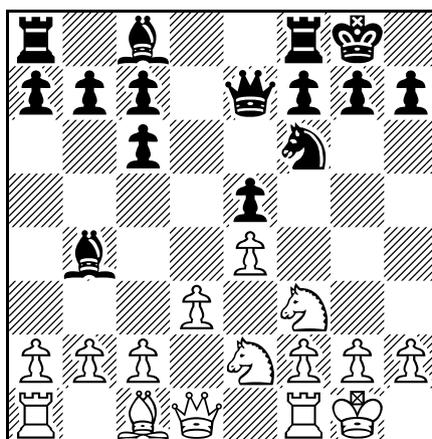
5 0-0 0-0 6 ♙xc6

What we do isn't as important as why we do things. This line is an excellent choice versus the computer. Humans still edge out computers in the realm of tedium.

6...dxc6 7 d3 ♖e7

The first glitch appears. 7...♘d7, allowing for ...f6 later on, is the more accurate move.

8 ♘e2



Question: It looks to me like White is playing scared, isn't he?

Answer: I would also be cautious against an opponent who calculates thousands of moves per second. White's last move, far from passive, plans a transfer to g3 in Lopez fashion. In fact, White is in essence playing the Black side of this variation, but a move up since he is White.

8...♙g4

8...♘h5 9 ♘g3 ♘f4 was J.Rosito-A.Sorin, Buenos Aires 2000. Here White can force the superior position with 10 d4! f6 11 c4!.

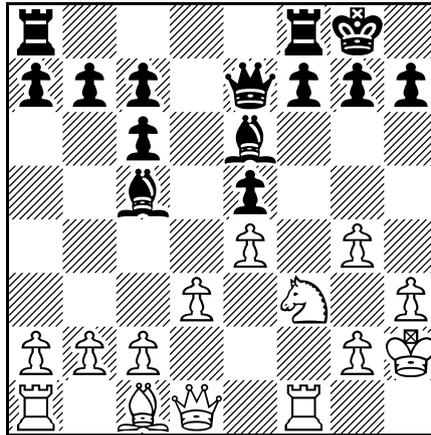
9 ♘g3 ♘h5 10 h3 ♘xg3 11 fxg3 ♙c5+ 12 ♖h2 ♙c8 13 g4

I prefer White, who clamped down on all of Black's pawn breaks and remains with a good bishop.

Question: What about Black's bishop pair?

Answer: Unimpressive. The position is blocked for now so this doesn't constitute any kind of plus for Black.

13...♙e6



Exercise: Black just offered us his e-pawn.
Evaluate the acceptance. Should we grab it or not?

14 ♖e2

Answer: Never trust a computer! We should decline. Black gets tremendous play after 14 ♜xe5? ♙d6 15 ♙f4 f6 16 ♞c4 ♙xc4 17 dxc4 ♙xf4+ 18 ♚xf4 ♛e5 19 g3 ♚ad8.

14...f6 15 ♙e3

Question: Offering a swap of White's good bishop for Black's bad bishop?

Answer: True, but White also followed the principle stating: When your opponent has the bishop pair, remove one of them if possible.

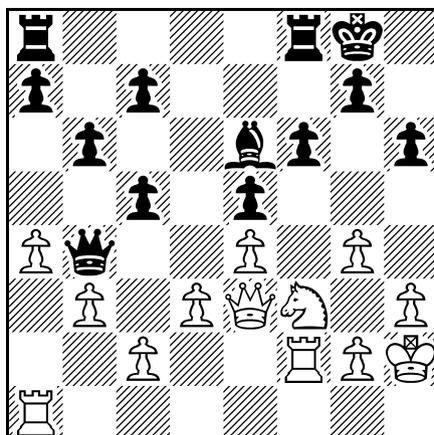
15...♙xe3

It's a hard thing psychologically (even for a computer!) to back down, just to retain your inferior bishop with 15...♙d6.

16 ♛xe3 h6 17 a4 ♛b4 18 b3

Principle: If your opponent has a single remaining bishop against your knight, then place your pawns on the same colour as his bishop.

18...b6 19 ♚f2 c5



Exercise (planning): We sense that White stands better, yet it is not so easy to come up with a concrete plan of action to improve his position. White hopes to set in motion a minority attack with h4 and g5, but how to implement it?

Answer: 20 ♔g3!

We humans still dominate silicon if the fight remains within the framework of the conceptual rather than the mathematical. I'm impressed if you predicted this move!

Step 1: Larsen plans a kingside minority attack soon with h4 and g5. By playing his king to g3, he covers his g4-pawn. He also leaves options open for ♖h1 to take over the h-file if necessary.

20... ♚a5?!

Oh, the sweet innocence. Deep B fails to realize its king is in danger and makes an aimless move. Black, playing without will, simply drifts. As Terminator Arnold once observed, "Desire is irrelevant. I am a machine."

21 h4!

Step 2: The minority attack begins: g5 is coming.

21... ♚c3

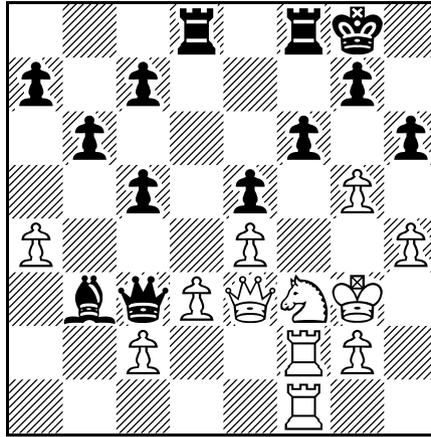
Question: Can't Black just shut down the minority attack with 21...g5?

Answer: Suicide. White simply blows the barrier away with a sac: 22 hxg5 hxg5 23 ♘xg5! and Black can resign.

22 ♖af1 ♜ad8 23 g5

Step 3: White lights the fuse with the disruptive g5 pawn break.

23...♙xb3!?



Nourished by the other pieces' reassurances, the bishop plucks up his courage and goes charging in.

Exercise (critical decision): Black just played a piece sac and managed to spill a problem on our lap. Should we accept the piece or plough forward with our attack, with 24 gxh6?

24 cxb3!?

In the end this works out well for White but I have my doubts about this decision.

Answer: White gets a winning attack after 24 gxh6!. For example:

a) 24...♙xa4 25 hxg7 ♖xg7 26 ♘g5! ♚d6 27 ♙h2 c4 28 ♗f3! (threat: ♗h5) 28...♙e8 29 ♗g4 and Black collapses.

b) 24...♙xc2 25 ♗c1 is similar to the game except White manages to break apart the black king's pawn cover.

24...♖xd3 25 ♗e2 hxg5 26 hxg5 fxg5?!

The computer weakens all its pawns with this capture. 26...♗e3 looks better.

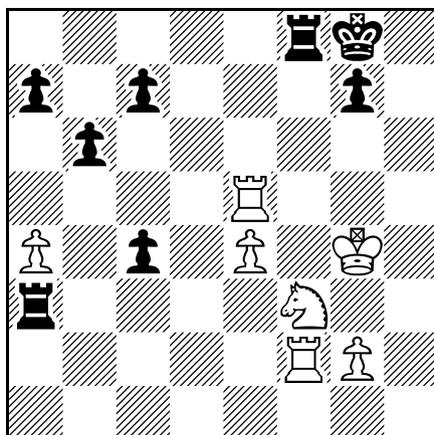
27 ♖d1 ♖e3 28 ♗b2 ♗xb3 29 ♗xb3+ ♖xb3

A former criminal must still answer for past deeds, even if redeemed in the present. Black's energetic but speculative bishop sac doesn't fully make up for its aimless play earlier in the game. At the moment Deep Blue has collected four pawns for the piece – merely a temporary state since black pawns are about to fall left and right.

30 ♖d5 ♖a3 31 ♖xe5 g4 32 ♙xg4

White is happy to add his king into the attack.

32...c4



Exercise (planning): Even though it is an ending Black's king remains unsafe with so many white pieces milling about in that zone. Come up with a plan of attack.

Answer: 33 ♖d2!

Take control of the seventh rank.

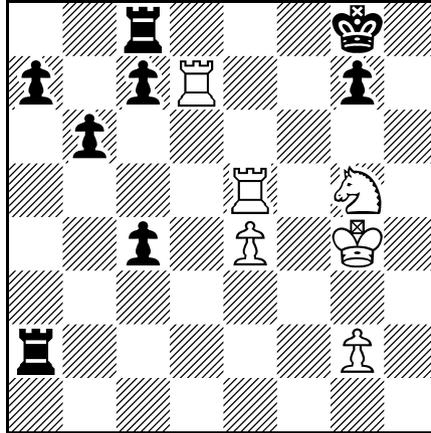
Question: Isn't White nervous about Black's surging c-pawn?

Answer: No, speed is of the essence and the c-pawn isn't fast enough. Mate arrives first. A bull may be larger and possess greater physical strength than a horse but it still gets beaten in a race.

33...♗xa4

33...c3 34 ♖d7 ♗xa4 35 ♖ee7 is no better for Black.

34 ♖d7 ♗c8 35 ♘g5 ♖a2



Exercise (combination alert): Black's king clings to survival with tenuous fingers and the back rank is not so secure. How to exploit these factors?

Answer: Play for tricks on the back rank:

36 ♖xc7!

Game over. Now the three angry bull mastiffs approach Black's king.

36...♖a8 37 g3 ♜f2 38 ♜ee7 ♔h8

This poor guy is a bug in a sealed jar.

39 ♜xg7 ♜h2 40 e5 ♜d8 41 ♜h7+ ♜xh7 42 ♞xh7 ♜g8+ 43 ♞g5 1-0

Black's terminally ill king thinks to himself, "Please, just a little more time!" A creature already dead is incapable of dying, and it is always such a relief for the human race when the Terminator's red eyes grow dim and then go black.

Summary

The 6 ♞xc6 line proves very difficult to beat and is a perfect choice against a tactically oriented or higher-rated opponent.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to my editor, Grandmaster John Emms, for his help and encouragement throughout this book and all the others. Thanks to Nancy, CEO of proof reading, and thanks to Timothy, staunch ally in my eternal war against all things high-tech.

Good luck with the Four Knights. May your opponents raise their eyes toward the ceiling in exasperation as they observe you moving your second knight out!

Cyrus Lakdawala,
San Diego, April 2012

Summary

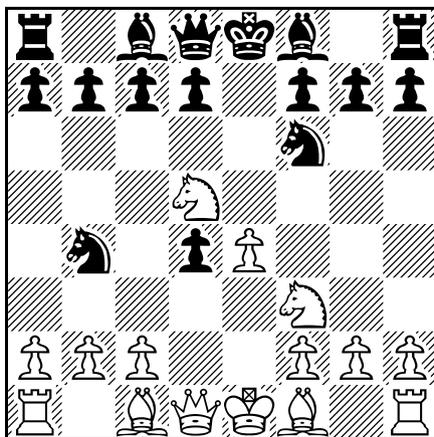
Black remains behind in development in the popular but dubious 5...♘d5?! line.

Game 36

B.Monson-A.De Groot

Correspondence 1998

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c3 ♗f6 4 d4 exd4 5 ♘d5 ♘b4



Question: Isn't Black's last move unnatural?

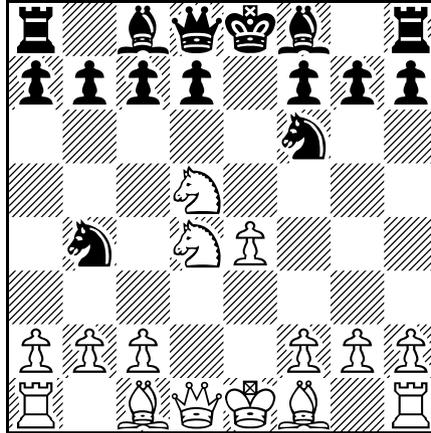
Answer: It is unnatural but also a main line that scores well for Black. The idea: Black wants to swap knights but would prefer to swap with his b4-knight rather than the f6-knight.

6 ♘xd4

Alternatively:

a) 6 ♘xf6+ (to deny Black his aim: swap on d5 with his b4-knight rather than the one on f6) 6...♚xf6 7 ♙c4 (I hope everyone saw 7 ♘xd4?? ♚xd4! winning a piece for nothing) 7...♙c5 8 0-0 d6, K.Van der Weide-V.Golod, Groningen 1995. White played too tamely and I don't believe in his compensation.

b) 6 ♙c4 ♘bxd5 7 exd5 ♙b4+ 8 ♙d2 ♚e7+ 9 ♚e2 ♙xd2+ 10 ♙xd2 ♚xe2+ 11 ♙xe2 c5! 12 dxc6 bxc6 (12...dxc6 is safe and equal) 13 ♘xd4 d5 14 ♙d3 c5 15 ♘b5 0-0, E.Van Haastert-V.Golod, Dieren 1998. I already prefer Black. The position looks a lot like something from last chapter but slightly in Black's favour since he controls the centre.



6...♖bxd5

Question: Is White's e-pawn poisoned?

Answer: Black can actually take it. 6...♖xe4 7 ♖f5 c6 8 ♖xb4 and now:

a) 8...♗xb4+ 9 c3 ♖f6 10 cxb4 ♖xf5, A.Schenning-B.Monson, correspondence 1998. White's bishop pair and Black's greater central control should balance each other out.

b) 8...♖a5 (E.Prie-L.Psakhis, Paris 1990) 9 ♖xg7+ ♗xg7 10 a3! looks dynamically balanced since 10...c5? fails to 11 ♖g4.

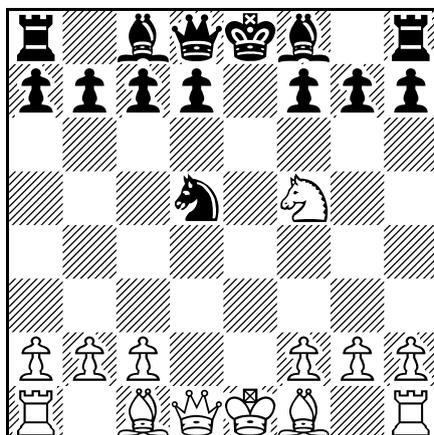
c) 8...d5!? is an interesting and untried idea here.

7 exd5 ♖xd5

Question: You are getting me nervous. Aren't we down a pawn without compensation?

Answer: On the surface it looks that way. But my friend, Bruce Monson, probably the world's leading expert on the Belgrade Gambit (a sure way to pick a fight with him is to tell him his beloved line is unsound!), plays it religiously and seems to keep winning with it as White. White pushes with his slight development lead. The following moves are theory:

8 ♖f5



8...♞e7!

Question: Isn't this just a very poor, passive move?

Answer: Quite the opposite. Everything else is bad:

a) 8...♙b4+? 9 c3 ♞xc3. Now we pull a little trick on Black: 10 ♚d4! ♞d5+ 11 ♙d1. Black has all sorts of things en prise and is in big trouble.

b) 8...♞f6? This natural move is also a blunder: 9 ♚e2+! ♙e7 10 ♞xg7+ ♙f8 11 ♙h6 and Black is busted.

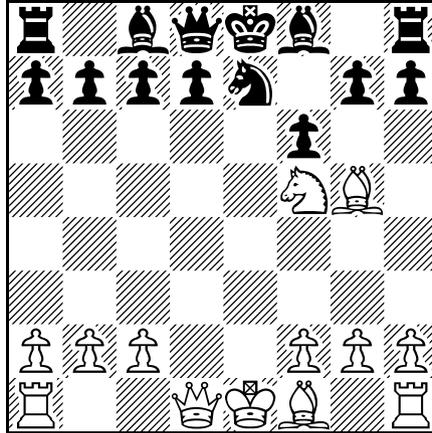
Question: Why not maintain the centralized knight with 8...c6?

Answer: The Belgrade Gambit is a landmine of opening traps. 9 ♚e2+! ♙e7 10 ♞xg7+ ♙f8 11 ♙h6 gives White a winning attack. If Black tries some counter-cleverness with 11...♚a5+ 12 c3 ♞xc3 it falls badly short after 13 ♞f5+ ♙g8 14 ♞xe7 mate!

9 ♙g5 f6

Black's last move virtually forces a piece sac.

After 9...d5!? 10 ♙xe7 ♙xe7 11 ♞xg7+ ♙f8 12 ♞h5 Black's bishop pair and stronger pawn centre make up for his damaged pawn structure and displaced king, R.Ilchov-K.Kostakiev, Sofia 1992.



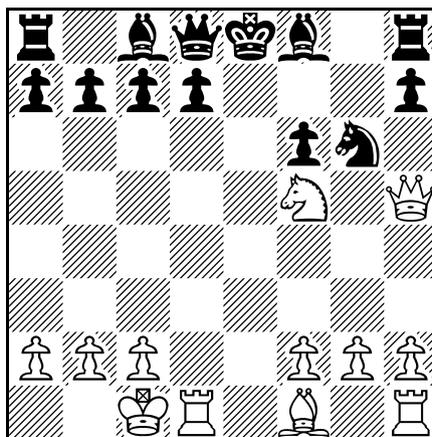
10 ♙xf6!

A general may love his troops but remains aloof since he may one day issue an order sending them to their deaths. White has no choice but to sac or else he remains down a pawn for nothing.

Question: Isn't White going overboard? Maybe it would be better to remain down a pawn rather than a full piece.

Answer: Not in this case. Caution, whose sole function is self-preservation, by its very nature also contains the seed of mediocrity. It is quite a trick to play cautiously and then go on to produce a truly brilliant game. In this case all or nothing is the best course and the piece sac is the only logical way to continue.

10...gxf6 11 ♖h5+ ♘g6 12 0-0-0



A critical position to the line.

Question: We are down a full piece! Do we have enough compensation?

Answer: Belgrade Sage Monson seems to think so. Let's assess. For the piece, White has a massive development lead, open lines and an attack. I can't put my finger on any specific threat from White. Instead, White's compensation is more like that annoying, tiny rock ensconced in a shoe. It pokes Black's foot with each step. The computers still like Black but in real life such positions are exceedingly difficult to defend, especially with a natural attacker playing White.

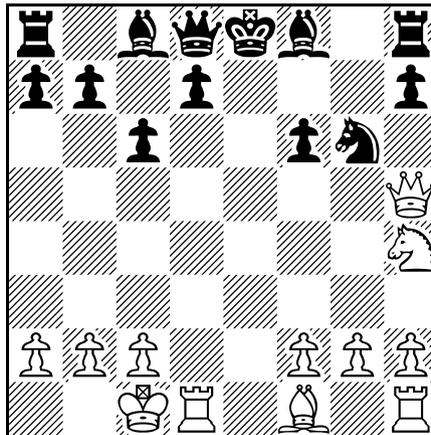
12...c6

Given as best by *Houdini*. Others:

a) 12...d5 13 ♖xd5! ♜xd5 14 ♘g7+ ♙xg7 15 ♜xd5 c6 16 ♜e4+ ♚d8, H.Hoffmann-T.Balogh, German League 2000. Black gets plenty of material for the queen, yet his king exposure gives White enough counterplay.

b) 12...d6 13 ♘h4 ♙g7 14 ♙c4 ♜d7 was J.Bellon Lopez-R.Jamieson, Wijk aan Zee 1977. Now *Houdini* gives the spectacular drawing line 15 ♖xd6!? ♜xd6 16 ♘xg6 hxg6 17 ♜xg6+ ♚d8 18 ♜xg7! (the naive 18 ♖d1?? is refuted by 18...♙h6+) 18...♖h4 19 ♖d1 ♖d4 20 ♜h8+ ♚d7 21 ♜h3+ ♚c6 22 ♜f3+ with perpetual check, since the greedy 22...♚c5?? loses to 23 ♜a3+! ♚xc4 24 ♜c3+ ♚b5 25 ♖xd4 when Black either hands over his queen or gets mated, his choice!

13 ♘h4



13...♙g7

It is so easy to go wrong in this position. The careless 13...♙f7? 14 ♙d3 gives White a winning attack. For example, if Black tries 14...♙g7? he gets slaughtered after 15 ♙xg6+ hxg6 16 ♜xg6+ ♚f8 17 ♘f5 ♖g8 18 ♘d6! ♜e7 19 ♖he1 ♙h8 20 ♜h5.

14 ♖d6!

Bottling up Black's entire queenside.

Question: Why not take on g6?

Answer: It's better to add to the pressure. The attack tends to evaporate somewhat after 14 $\text{N} \times \text{g6}$ $\text{h} \times \text{g6}$ 15 $\text{Q} \times \text{g6} + \text{K} \times \text{f8}$.

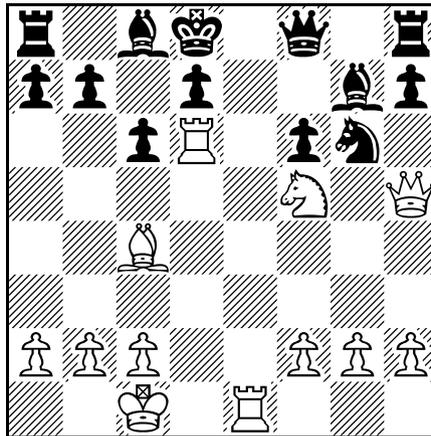
14... $\text{Q} \times \text{e7}$ 15 $\text{N} \times \text{f5}$ $\text{Q} \times \text{f8}$

Question: Why didn't the queen go to f7?

Answer: White can make him go to f8 anyway and gain a tempo to boot after 15... $\text{Q} \times \text{f7}?!$ 16 $\text{Q} \times \text{g4}!$ $\text{K} \times \text{d8}$ 17 $\text{K} \times \text{c4}$ $\text{Q} \times \text{f8}$.

16 $\text{K} \times \text{c4}$ $\text{K} \times \text{d8}$ 17 $\text{Q} \times \text{e1}$

Furniture in the department store showroom lacks the warmth of furniture in our living rooms. Black's pieces just lie around, barely capable of moving, although his king looks safe for now and he remains up a full piece.



17... **b5!?**

Risky, yet I don't see another way for Black to unravel. He opens new targets for his opponent.

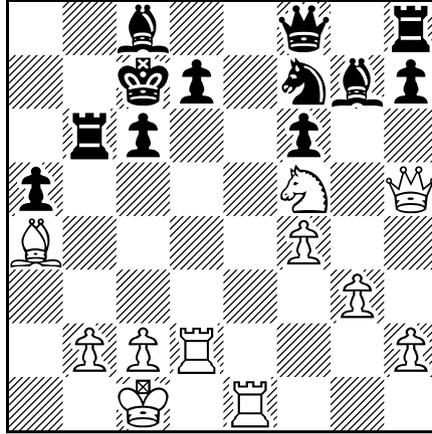
18 $\text{K} \times \text{b3}$ a5 19 a4 $\text{b} \times \text{a4}$ 20 $\text{K} \times \text{a4}$ $\text{Q} \times \text{a6}$ 21 g3

Note the calm Sunday stroll quality of White's play. He remains down a piece yet trusts in his attack.

21... $\text{N} \times \text{e5}!$

In order to go to f7 to eject that annoying rook on d6.

22 $\text{Q} \times \text{e2}$ $\text{N} \times \text{f7}$ 23 $\text{Q} \times \text{d2}$ $\text{K} \times \text{c7}$ 24 f4 $\text{Q} \times \text{b6}$ 25 $\text{Q} \times \text{h5}?$



Exercise (combination alert): White's last move is a blunder which hands Black a sudden counterattack possibility. Both players missed it. Can you find it?

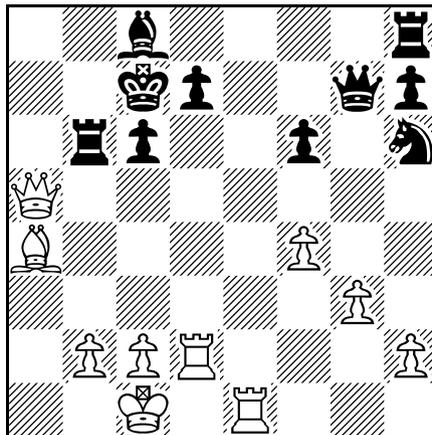
25...♘h6?

Answer: Black can swoop in with 25...♖b4!, with a crushing attack. For example:

a) 26 ♜xf7 ♜xa4 27 ♜d3 ♜f8 28 ♜xf6 ♜a1+ 29 ♚d2 ♜xb2 30 ♜c3 ♜b5! gives Black a winning attack whether White takes the offered rook or not.

b) 26 ♜b3 a4 27 ♘g7 axb3 28 ♜xf7 ♜a6! wins.

26 ♘g7 ♜xg7 27 ♜xa5



Exercise (critical decision/multiple choice): One way holds on, the other gets crushed. Which way would you go? a) 27...♙b7, developed at last!
b) 27...♜f8, intending to come to the rescue with ...♜b4 next.

27...♜f8?

After this move Black's game collapses with startling speed.

Answer: Black should play 27...♙b7! 28 ♜c5 ♜d8 29 ♜e7 ♜g4 30 ♙b3 ♜a6 31 ♚b1 ♜f3 32 c3. *Houdini* assesses this mess at 0.00!

28 ♜e4! f5

Other moves fail to save Black:

a) 28...d5 29 ♜d3! dxe4 30 ♜b3 ♚d7 31 ♜xb6 when White's attack is out of control.

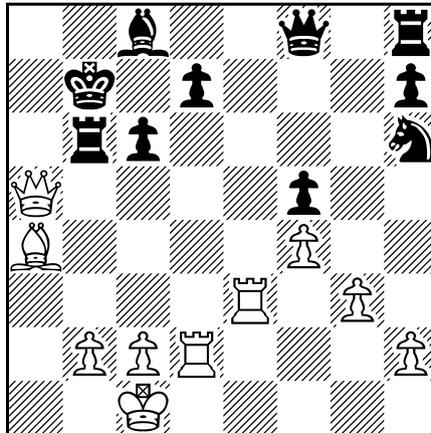
b) 28...♚b7 29 ♜d3 ♜f7 30 ♙xc6+!! dxc6 31 ♜a3 c5 32 ♜e7+! wins.

29 ♜e3

The torpedoes approach the RMS Lusitania.

29...♚b7

Neither does Black survive 29...♜b4 30 ♜e5+ ♚b7 31 ♙xc6+ dxc6 32 ♜xh8.



Black believes he has time to pause, catch his breath and refresh himself, as the sun slips behind cloud cover on a hot summer day. This is illusion.

Exercise (planning): One powerful move is all it takes to induce Black's resignation. This one is really tough since White's next move appears so innocuous. We must continue our build-up around Black's king. How to leverage this strength?

The Four Knights: Move by Move

Answer: We all must die some day, yet each morning our subconscious lulls us with the thought: not today. It is always a shocking moment when a player nourishes expectations of this and instead encounters the dreaded that! One little shift of the rook and Black collapses:

30 ♖d4!! 1-0

Halting ...♙b4.

Question: It looks to me like Black is winning! Why did he resign?

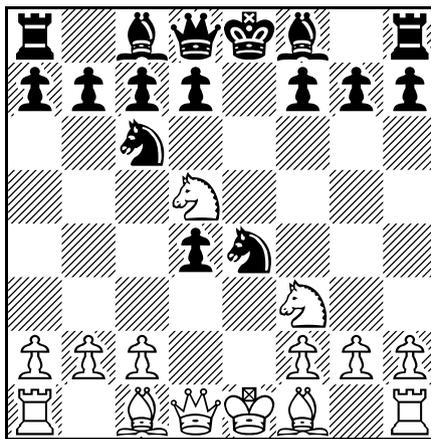
Answer: His king is a lot less safe than it looks! 30...♘f7 31 ♖b3! (removing a key defender; now the defence crumples like burning leaves) 31...♗xb3 32 ♙xb3 (with the crushing threat ♖b4+) 32...♚b8 33 ♙b6+! ♙b7 34 ♖xd7 ♗c8 35 ♖xf7.

Summary

I realize it is a lot to ask a reader to sac a piece in speculation. But keep in mind, speculation is the very nature of this chapter!

Game 37
B.Monson-J.Owens
Correspondence 1998

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 d4 exd4 5 ♘d5 ♘xe4



Question: Isn't it dangerous for Black to go pawn hunting like this?

Answer: I had always considered 5...♘xe4 as the refutation of the Belgrade Gambit, thinking it led White down a narrow corridor, and I was not sure White liked what was at the end of the corridor!

Question: So why even have a chapter on a line which is refuted!?

Answer: Our hero, Bruce Monson, proves through his email games that this “refutation” line is actually quite playable for White. But only if we break from the herd and go off on a virtually unknown path.

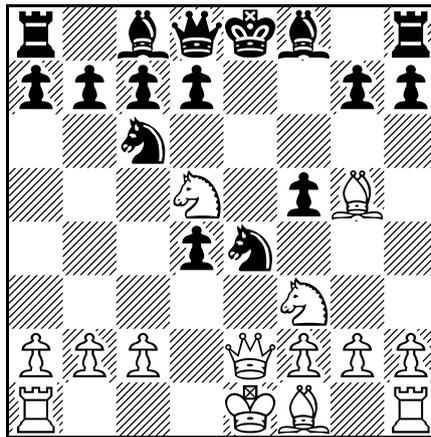
6 ♖e2

White tries to milk the pin on the e-file.

Question: Shouldn't White be getting on with his development with 6 ♘c4?

Answer: It is too straightforward and doesn't place obstacles in front of Black, who develops rather smoothly: 6...♗e7 (the simplest path to equality; IM Obodchuk considers 6...♗b4+ 7 c3 dxc3 8 0-0 0-0 where White may have enough for the pawn) 7 ♖xd4 0-0 8 ♗b5 (neither does White get enough compensation in the line 8 0-0 ♗f6 9 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 10 ♘g5 ♗g6 11 ♗f3 ♗e5) 8...♘c5 9 0-0 ♗xf2! 10 ♗h5 (10 ♗xf2? ♘xf2+ 11 ♗xf2 ♗h4+ 12 ♗g1 ♗xc4 regains the piece with a full exchange plus pawn interest) 10...♗e5! (the knight is immune) 11 ♘e3 ♘xe3 12 ♗xe3 ♗xc4 13 ♗xc4 d5 14 ♗e3 c6 15 ♗xf2 ♗b6 16 ♗e2 d4 17 ♗xd4 ♗xd4 left White down a pawn for absolutely zero compensation, P.Lehtinen-C.Rich, correspondence 2000.

6...f5 7 ♘g5!



In Monson we trust. This is where we diverge with a rare and more polished sideline.

Question: If this move is so great for White then why do more people play 7 ♗g5?

Answer: This isn't the Ruy Lopez where a hundred GMs labour day and night on the

position. It's a rare move in a rare line. The answer is the vast majority of players simply don't know about 7 ♖g5. The move scores a very healthy 59% for White – not so bad for a “refuted” opening.

7 ♖g5?!, the move everyone plays, is virtually refuted by the forcing sequence 7...d3! 8 cxd3 ♘d4 9 ♖h5+ g6 10 ♖h4 c6 11 dxe4 cxd5 12 exd5 ♖g7 13 ♘d1 h6 14 ♗f3 and now:

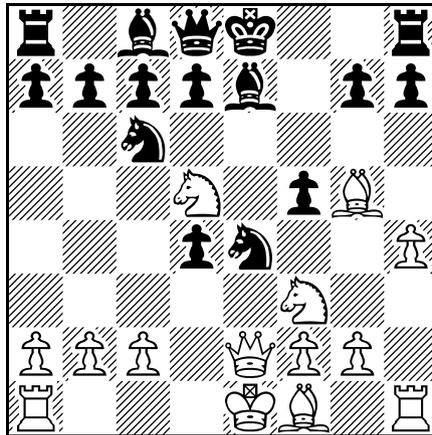
a) In his book *The Four Knights Game*, Andrey Obodchuk gives 14...♗xf3 as the main line. I feel the capture on f3 gives White enough counterplay along the newly opened g-file: 15 ♖xd8+ ♘xd8 16 gxf3 ♖d4 17 h4 b6 (maybe he should just take on f2) 18 ♖e3! ♖xb2 19 ♖b1 ♖e5 20 f4 ♖f6 21 ♖g1 ♖g8 22 h5 ♖b7 23 ♖c4 ♖c8 24 ♖c1 g5 25 d6 just barely gave White enough play for the pawn, M.Ruefenacht-M.Read, correspondence 1998.

b) In my opinion 14...♖hx4! makes White's life rather miserable in the ending: 15 ♗hx4 ♗f7 16 ♖e3 f4! 17 ♖xd4 ♖xd4 18 ♖d3 ♖g8! and White will be hard pressed to hold the ending, M.Hermans-V.Guskov, correspondence 2006. If this was the best we could get as White, then the Belgrade Gambit would indeed be refuted.

7...♖e7

7...♗e7 8 ♖xe7! ♖xe7 9 ♗xd4 d6?! (9...0-0 10 ♗xf5! leads to unclear play) 10 f3 ♗f6 (10...♗c5 11 b4! ♗a4 12 ♗b5! leads to a mess, probably in White's favour) was M.Alvarez Palacios-J.Martinez Fernandez, Gijon 2002. Now 11 ♗xf6+ gxf6 12 0-0-0 gives White huge compensation for the pawn.

8 h4



8...♖xg5!?

Question: Doesn't it seem a bit obliging to allow White an open h-file?

Answer: I agree with you yet *Houdini* gives the move thumbs up. With all due respect to *Houdini*, perhaps Black should go with 8...0-0 9 0-0-0 h6 10 ♗xe7+ ♗xe7 11 ♗xd4! (warriors tend to lack subtlety and solve all their problems one way: by declaring war!)

11...hxg5 12 ♖e6 dxe6 13 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 14 g4 ♗d2 15 ♕e1 ♗xf2 16 gxf5, as in B.Monson-J.De Waard, email 1999. I actually prefer Black at this point, but White went on to win in the chaos ahead.

9 hxg5 0-0

Alternatively:

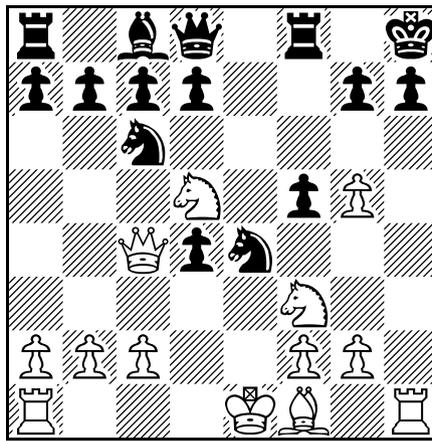
a) 9...♖e7 10 ♖e5 d6 11 ♗h5+ g6 12 ♖xg6! ♖xg6 13 ♗xg6+ hxg6 14 ♗xh8+ ♔d7 15 ♗xd8+ ♔xd8 16 ♖f4 with an equal position.

b) If 9...d6 White should go for Monson's idea 10 ♗c4!

10 ♗c4!

Threatening mate in two moves.

10...♖h8



11 ♖f4!

The first new move of the game and a clear improvement over 11 ♖h4? ♗xg5 12 ♖f3 ♗d8 13 ♖h4 ♖e5 14 ♗xd4 d6 15 f4 ♖c6, when White didn't have enough for the pawn, M.Bulgarini Torres-J.Canibal, correspondence 1999.

11...♗e8 12 0-0-0!?

Certainly more enterprising than 12 ♖e2.

12...♖xf2 13 ♗e1 ♗xe1+

13...♖e4? 14 ♖d3 (threatening mate with ♗xh7+! next move) 14...g6 15 ♗h6 gives White a crushing attack.

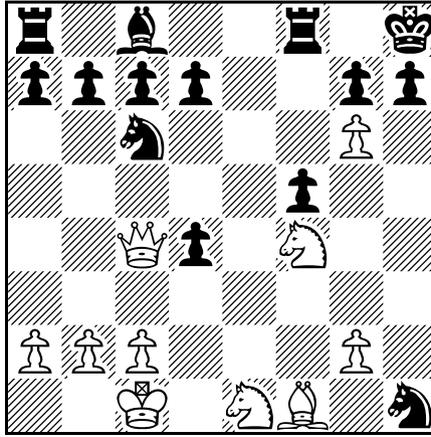
14 ♖xe1 ♖xh1 15 g6

Once a flea lands on a dog's back it's tough to shake him off.

Question: Who stands better here?

Answer: I was afraid you would ask that. I don't have a clue and must respond with the copout answer: Unclear. Technically Black is up some material. But this isn't your run-of-

the-mill, standard-issue material sac from White. Black's king is in real danger, so I think that unclear is actually a fair assessment. If I had to pick a side I would take White since Black's position looks harder to navigate.



15...d5?

An overreaction, after which Black may well be busted. The nature of a protest is to inconvenience the other side. This move fails in that respect.

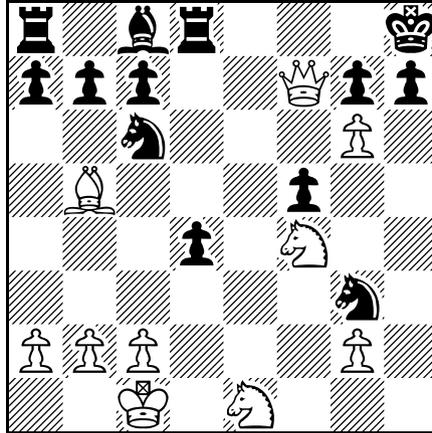
Question: Why? It looks to me like Black wisely returns some material in order to catch up in development.

Answer: A plan can't be half correct. The move is well intentioned, but incorrect. Black gives away a pawn for nothing and more importantly, allows White future access to e5 for his knight. After the calm 15...d6 play may go 16 gxh7 ♖xh7 17 ♘f3 ♘f2 18 ♘g5+ ♔h6 19 ♘f7+ ♘h7 with perpetual check.

16 ♖xd5 ♘g3 17 ♘b5 ♖d8?!

He shouldn't allow White's queen access to f7. Better to play 17...♘e4.

18 ♖f7

**18...h6**

A bathtub may be a small body of water yet it's still possible to drown in one. The computers all claim this move is the culprit which destroys Black's position by entombing his king. Yet if he goes with 18...♙d7 19 ♘e3 he looks busted even here. For example, 19...a6 20 ♙xc6 ♙xc6 21 ♘e5 ♖f8 22 ♚e7 ♗ae8 23 ♘f7+ ♙g8 24 gxh7+ ♙xh7 25 ♗h4+ ♙g8 26 ♘g5 ♗e1+ 27 ♙d2 wins.

19 ♙xc6

Opening a gateway to e5 for a knight.

19...bxc6 20 ♘f3

Equation: queen + knight + knight = mate. Black has no defenders to speak of near his king.

20...d3

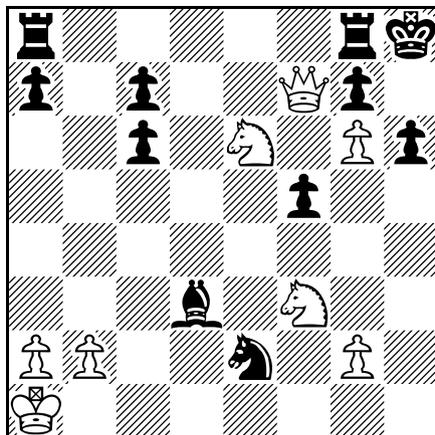
Question: Desperation?

Answer: Well-justified desperation! Normal play gets clobbered. For example, 20...♙d7 21 ♗e7 ♘e4 22 ♘e5 and White has too many threats.

21 cxd3 ♙a6 22 ♘e6 ♘e2+ 23 ♙b1 ♙xd3+ 24 ♙a1

Black has no time for back rank tricks since he must tend to his own problems on g7.

24...♗g8



Exercise (planning): If you find the right attacking plan Black collapses.

Answer: Threaten smothered mate on f7:

25 ♖e5! 1-0

A fisherman increases chances of success if he casts his net in an aquarium. If g7 is the mind of the position, then f7 is the heart. Now all that is left is to clear f7: 25...♙e4 26 ♚e7! mates.

Summary

7 ♙g5! creates just the kind of mess Belgraders love and cherish.