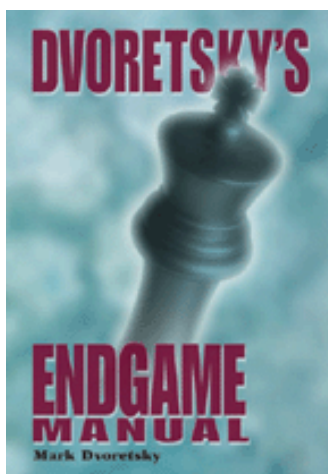




## COLUMNISTS

*The*  
*Instructor*  
Mark Dvoretsky

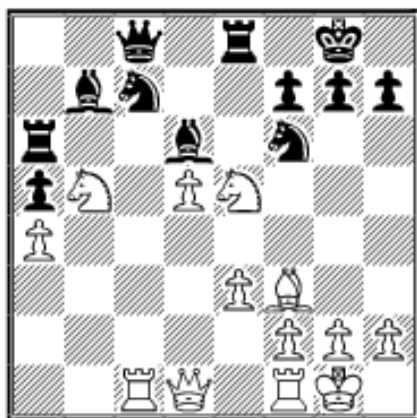


## Combinative Discoveries

From time to time, I publish articles in which I share new discoveries with my readers, which I sometimes uncover while studying well-known games, and sometimes when checking my own previously published analysis. In such articles, the endgame is most frequently discussed; this time, however, I would like to show you some curious tactical discoveries, based upon examples from my own books. As usual, I have indicated whose turn it is to move beneath the diagrams, and a question mark indicates that the position may be used as an exercise, to find the solution yourself. In the majority of cases, you will have to find an unexpected idea, not the first one that pops into your head; this means that the exercises are aimed at developing your combinative awareness and resourcefulness. And still, you should not forget to make a careful calculation of the variations.

We begin with the dissection of a critical moment in a tense battle between two top-class grandmasters. The game received detailed treatment in the chapter “20 Years Later” from my book, *School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play*, and also in Artur Yusupov’s lectures, “General Principles of Opening Play”, from the book *Secrets of Opening Preparation*, the second book in our series written with Yusupov, *School for Budding Chess Champions*.

*Yusupov – Ljubojevic*  
Tilburg 1987



W?

White has sacrificed a piece for two pawns. Here, the value of each move is exceptionally high – any inaccuracy may shift the balance toward one side or the other. Black gains the advantage after either 22. Nxd6 Rxd6 23. Nc4 Rdd8, or 22. Nc6 Qd7! (threatening 23...Nxd5) 23. e4 Nxe4 24. Bxe4 Rxe4 25. Nb8 Qe7 26. Nxa6 Nxa6.

**22. Ne5-c4!**

The only worthwhile possibility.

**22...Bd6-c5!?**

After the game, the players decided that this was the move that led to the loss. And it was only many years later that I established that the decisive error was in fact committed later.

Black is clearly worse after 22...Bxh2+?! 23. Kxh2 Ncxd5 24. Qd4, or 24. Kg1 Qb8 25. Qd4. 22...Bb4!? is possible – then Yusupov would have chosen either 23. d6 or 23. e4 (23...Nxe4?! 24. d6). In either case, White's pawns and active pieces would have compensated fully for the sacrificed piece, but probably no more than that. The battle would have been double-edged, with an uncertain outcome.

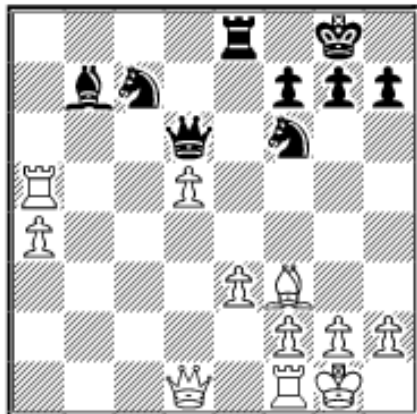
### 23. Nc4xa5! Ra6xa5 24. Rc1xc5 Qc8-d8

24...Qb8 loses to 25. Qd2 Na6 26. Rc4 Qd8 27. Nd6! Qxd6 28. Qxa5.

### 25. Nb5-d6!!

A beautiful shot, which Ljubomir Ljubojevic hadn't seen. 25...Rxc5 is bad: 26. Nxb7 Qe7 27. d6.

### 25...Qd8xd6 26. Rc5xa5



B?

Knowing how the game went, it's easy to label this moment or that moment critical; but how is one to see it in the heat of battle? Who would think that the absolutely natural capture of a center pawn would turn into the decisive error?

**26...Bxd5? 27. Qd4! Qe6** (27...Ne6 loses to 28. Rxd5) **28. Bxd5 Ncxd5 29. Rd1 Rc8 30. Rc5! Rxc5 31. Qxc5** Formally, two knights are considered almost equal in value to a rook and two pawns; but not in the endgame, especially with that strong passed a-pawn, which the ungainly knights simply don't have the ability to fight against. And Black's rook and bishop, which might have put up some interference with the pawn's advance, Yusupov already had the forethought to exchange. Black's position is completely hopeless. (Notes from my book – there's nothing I can add here.) **31...h5 32. a5 Qe4 33. h3 g6 34. Qc6 Qb4 35. a6 Qa5 36. Qb7 Qa4 37. Rb1** Black resigned.

And now, let's see how the game should have been played.

### 26...Bb7-a6!

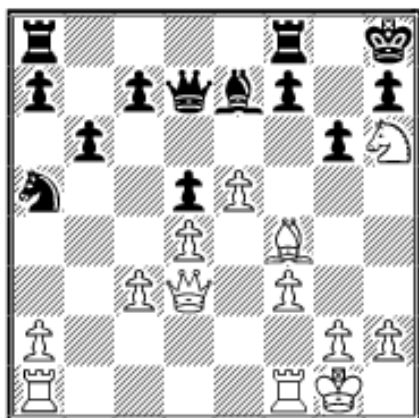
An unexpected move, hobbling the a5-rook. On 27. Re1, Black plays 27...Qb4!, while 27. Be2 is met by 27...Qb6! White would have to respond 27. Rxa6 Nxa6 28. Qd4, with a probable draw.

The variations aren't hard to calculate. What's much more difficult is to suspect the possibility of capturing the rook, to start thinking in the proper direction – this requires a sharp sense for combinations.

The following example is examined in the above-cited book, *Tactical Play*, and also in the 4<sup>th</sup> book of our "School" series with Yusupov, *Positional Play*.

**Shamkovich – Dvoretsky**

Viljandi 1972



B? (Evaluate 18...f5)

This is the position that could have been reached, had Leonid Shamkovich played 18. Bc1-f4. Instead, the grandmaster chose 18. **Re1?!** (it would be better to put the other rook here instead). After 18...**Rae8!** 19. **Bf4** (19. Nxf7+ Rxf7 20. e6 Bh4!) 19...**Bh4!?** 20. **g3 Bd8**, Black retained a defensible position, and even went on to win the game.

Most likely, Shamkovich rejected 18. Bf4!? because of the reply 18...f5. On any other move of mine (18...Nc4, for instance), he would continue 19. Rae1, and then retreat the bishop; setting up the threat of f3-f4-f5. The knight stands prettily on c4, but it's useless – here it has not the slightest thing to do with the defense of the kingside.

In the positional sense, of course 18...f5 is the proper reaction; however, White has a clever combinational reply.

19. e6 Qxe6 20. Rae1 Qd7 21. Rxe7! Qxe7 22. Be5+ Rf6 23. Ng4! (but not 23. g4? Nc4 24. g5 Nxe5) 23...fg 24. fg – White recovers the rook, and appears to gain the advantage.



B

When your opponent has thought up something, from a practical point of view it sometimes makes sense to take a side line, rather than meet his plan head-on. But here, the f7-f5 advance is too important for Black to toss aside at the first sign of difficulty. Let's continue examining the combination. There are two replies: 24...Rf8 and 24...Kg8.

After 24...Rf8 25. Rxf6 (25. g5? Qxe5!) 25...Rxf6 26. g5 Kg8 27. gf, White stands better, although not so much as to make it necessary for Black to refrain from the strategically necessary move 18...f5.

And besides, he has a second possibility: 24...Kg8!? After 25. Rxf6 Nc4? would be a mistake, in view of 26. Rxf6+! hg 27. Qxf6+ Kf8 28. Qh6+ Kf7 (28...Ke8 29. Qc6+) 29. Qh5+! Kf8 30. Qh8+ Kf7 31. Qxa8 Nxe5?! 32. Qxd5+. Well, OK then – before we put our knight on c4, we'll move the rook to a safe square, like d8 or e8, and the position becomes unclear.

Up to this point, I have said nothing new – all this may be found in my books. But now, many years later, the young Pole Kamil Miton has suggested an important strengthening of the attack.

**18...f7-f5!? 19. g2-g4!! f5xg4**

On 19...Qe6 20. gf gf 21. Kh1 followed by 22. Rg1, Black's position is difficult, since his pieces will be tied down to the defense of the weak pawn at f5.

**20. e5-e6! Qd7xe6 21. Ra1-e1**

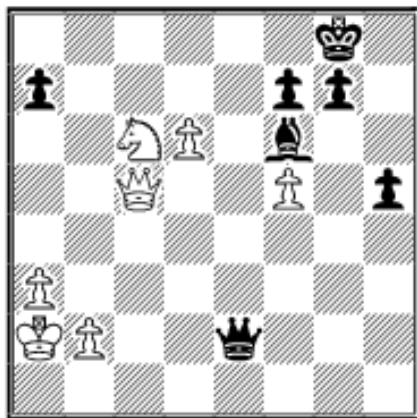
Black's game is difficult. 21...Qd7 no longer works, in view of 22. Rxe7! Qxe7 23. Be5+ Rf6 24. fg. And White also achieves a clear advantage after 21...Qc6 22. Rxe7 Rxf4 23. Qe3.

Imagine that you are considering 18...f5; having first convinced yourself that the combination beginning with 19. e6 was harmless, you then discover 19. g4!! Would you then have decided to push the f-pawn? It's hardly possible to give a definite answer here; but I would probably have gone ahead and taken the risk. Black's position is shaky, but the move f7-f5 resolves the defense's problems in the majority of variations; and the likelihood that my opponent would find the hidden refutation was not very great.

Now let's examine two episodes from my book, *School of Chess Excellence 1 – Endgame Analysis*.

### ***Psakhis – Yusupov***

USSR Championship, Frunze 1981



W?

The game continuation, **45. Qb4?!** (intending 46. Ne7+ Kh7 47. Nd5) **45...Qd3!** allowed Black to gain a decisive advantage. Now the important d5-square is under control, the simplest answer to 46. Ne7+ Kh7 47. Qb8 would be 47...Qd4!

**45. Nc6-d4 Qe2-d2 46. d6-d7 Kg8-h7**

Yusupov and I had seen this position in our home analysis, and considered it won. But in fact, right here is where White unexpectedly saves himself by sacrificing the passed pawn.

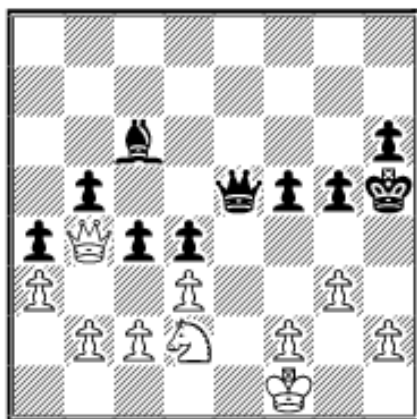
47. d7-d8Q!! Bf6xd8 48. Qc5xa7 Bd8-f6 49. Qa7xf7

Threatening a perpetual check.

49...Qd2-g5 50. Nd4-e6 Qg5xf5 51. Ne6xg7! Qf5-g6 52. Qf7xg6+ Kh7xg6 53. Ng7xh5

*Mateu – Dolmatov*

European Junior Championship, Groningen 1978/79



B?

With **39...f4?**, Black lost his winning chances. The game ended as follows: **40. Qf8 Bd5 41. Nf3!**, and the draw was agreed, in view of 41...Bxf3 42. Qf7+ Kg4 43. Qd7+.

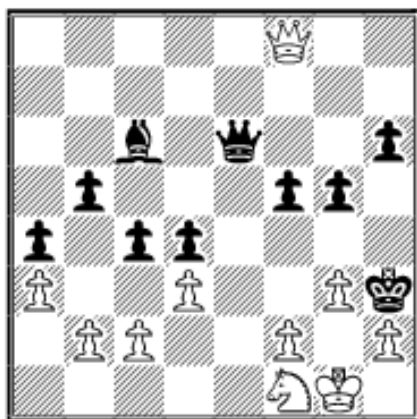
Nor is 39...c3 convincing, in view of 40. bc dc 41. Nb1. After 39...Qd5, 40. dc? bc 41. Nxc4 d3! is bad; but White does have the simple 40. Ke2.

It was time to bring the king into the attack.

**39...Kh5-g4!**

Now 40. dc? Kh3 41. Kg1 Bg2 42. Nf1 Qe2 is really bad for White. After **40. Qf8 Qe6**, White's position is critical, owing to the threat of 41...Kh3. On the other hand, it's still not easy at all to demonstrate a win.

At first, I studied only **41. Kg1 Kh3** (41...c3!? is no less powerful, for example: 42. bc dc 43. Nf1 f4! 44. gf gf 45. Qg7+, and now either 45...Kh3 46. Ne3!? b4! 47. ab a3 48. Ng2 Bxg2 49. Qxg2+ Kh4, or simply 45...Kh5!, threatening 46...Qg6+) **42. Nf1**



B?

White has managed to beat off the immediate threats to his king somehow. In order to breathe new life into his attack, in line with the "two weaknesses principle," Black must undertake decoying activity on the queenside, where the pawn configuration allows him to make a break. The only question is: What is the most accurate way of doing so?

42...Bg2?! 43. Qg7 b4 does not work, in view of 44. ab! (44. dc? b3 45. cb Bxf1 46. Kxf1 d3 would be bad) 44...c3 45. bc a3 46. cd Bxf1 (46...a2 47. d5!) 47. Kxf1 a2 48. Qa7! (but not 48. d5? Qa6 49. Qa1

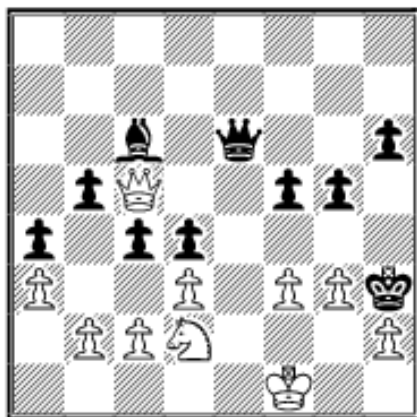
Qa4) 48...Qd5 49. Ke2 Kg2 50. Kd2.

Black must play **42...b4!** immediately. One interesting variation is 43. ab c3 44. bc a3 45. cd a2 46. d5 Bxd5 47. Qg7 Ba8! (threatening 47...Qc6) 48. b5 (48. Ne3 f4) 48...a1Q! 49. Qxa1 Qd5, and wins.

**43. dc h5!** Threatening 44...Qe4. 43...b3 44. cb Bg2 is also possible (the idea being 45...Bxf1 46. Kxf1 d3) – 45. Qc5 ab.

**44. f3** (44. Qh8 Qe2!) **44...ba 45. ba Bxf3**, and Black has a decisive advantage.

Joel Lautier has suggested an interesting defensive idea: **41. Qc5!?** (in place of 41. Kg1) **41...Kh3** (after 41...Qd5 42. f3+ Kh3 43. Qe7!, White even wins; and 42...Kh5 43. Qxd5 Bxd5 44. Ke2 would lead to a drawn endgame) **42. f3**, with the idea of 43. Qxd4.



B?

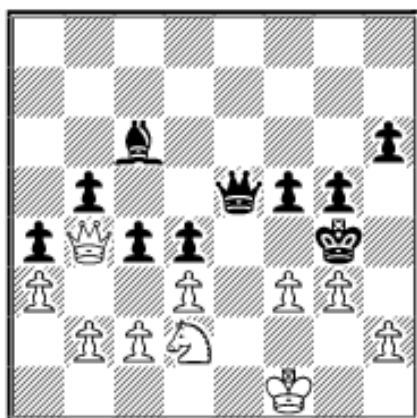
I managed to unearth a pretty combination leading to a forced win.

**42...cd! 43. cd Qe3!! 44. Qxc6** (44. Qxf5+ Kxh2 is no help here) **44...Qxd3+ 45. Ke1 Qe3+ 46. Kf1** (46. Kd1 d3 47. Qxh6+ Kg2) **46...Kxh2 47. Qxh6+ Kxg3 48. Qd6+ f4 49. Ne4+ Kxf3 50. Nxf5+ Kg3**

Not long ago, I decided to have another look at my old analysis. Experience has taught me that, although in the above-cited complex and pretty variations there might be errors hidden in any move, the overall assessment of the position (or, at the board, the fate of the game) hinges generally on mistakes made at the very beginning of the analysis.

And so it was that, having examined the position with fresh eyes, I discovered that after 39...Kg4!, White's first move in reply (40. Qf8) is not forced:

**40. f2-f3+!!**



B

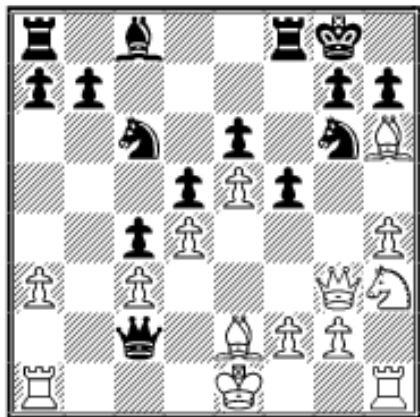
After 40...Bxf3? 41. Nxf3 Kxf3? 42. Qd2, the king finds itself in a mating net (42...Kg4 43. Qd1+ Kh3 44. Qh5 mate) – we must always deal with such dangers when we leave the queens on and run our own king into the enemy's lair.

**40...Kg4-h3 41. Qb4-f8 Qe5-e6 42. Qf8-g7!**

This threatens to capture on d4. The difference between this line and Lautier's variation (40. Qf8? Qe6 41. Qc5!? Kh3 42. f3) is that here, Black's queen is tied to the defense of the h6-pawn, and therefore cannot return to e3. The game should be drawn.

### *Heuer – Dvoretsky*

Viljandi 1972



W

We will be examining only an episode from one of my memorable games, which was analyzed in detail in *School of Chess Excellence 2: Tactical Play*.

The actual continuation was **15. h5 f4! 16. Nxf4 Rxf4 17. hg** (17. Bxf4 Nxf4, and White can't play 18. Qxf4? Qxc3+) **17...gh**. This position looks very dangerous for Black, but in point of fact White has no advantage here

(I refer anyone who doubts this to my book).

The move White made was so obvious that it wasn't even commented upon. Only many years later did I turn my attention to an alternative possibility.

### **15. Nh3-f4!? Rf8-f7!**

15...gh? 16. h5! is just bad for Black.

### **16. Nf4xg6 g7xh6! 17. Ng6-f4+ Rf7-g7 18. Qg3-e3 Kg8-h8**

On 19. Rc1 Qb3, the queen can return home, after snatching the a3-pawn.

### **19. Nf4-h5**

Here, Black needs to play **19...Rg6**, when his position, although shaky, is far from being hopeless.

Taking the g2-pawn is too risky. On the other hand, it's not all simple here, either: White has to see through a clever trap.

### **19...Rg7xg2?**



W

The attempt to win immediately by 20. Qxh6? would allow Black to force a spectacular perpetual check: 20...Rg1+!! 21. Rxc3 Qxc3+ 22. Kf1 Qh3+.

And trapping the rook by 20. Ng3!? offers very little either. The position would be unclear after either 20...Bd7 21. Kf1 Rxc3, or 20...f4!? 21. Qf3 (21. Qxf4 Qxc3+ 22. Kf1 Rxc3 draws) 21...Bd7 22. Kf1 Rxc3 23. fg

Rf8 24. gf Ne7.

**20. Rc1!?** Qb2 is tempting; but here too, White gets nothing out of 21. Qxh6 Bd7 (21...Qxa3!?) 22. Nf6 Rg7 23. Nxd7 Rxd7 24. Rg1 Rf7, or 23. Rh3 f4! 24. Qxf4 Qxa3. The correct plan involves the quickest possible exchange of Black's rook, guarding the kingside: **21. Kf1! Rg6 22. Rg1 Rxc3+ 23. Kxc3 24. Qxh6 Qe7 25. Kh2! Qxh4+** (25...Bd7 26. Nf6 followed by 27. Rg1, and the exchange of queens at g7 leads to the loss of the bishop) **26. Kg2 Qe7 27. Kh3 Bd7 28. Nf6**, or 28. Rg1, with a decisive advantage.

But in our main line, the exchange of rooks can be carried out by slightly different means.

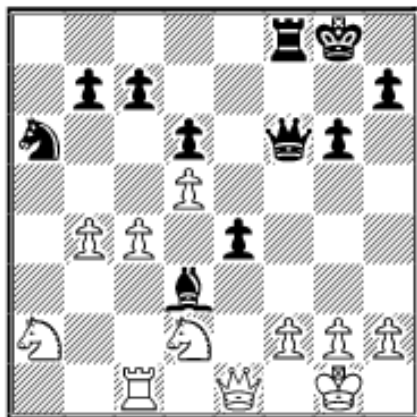
**20. Ke1-f1! Rg2-g6 21. Rh1-g1 Qc2-e4 22. Qe3-d2**

After 22...Rxc3+ 23. Kxc3, a strong answer to 23...f4 is 24. Bg4!, preparing 25. Nxf4. If 23...Qxh4, then 24. Qxh6 Qe7 25. Kh2!, as in the variation examined earlier. The best defense is 23...Bd7 24. Qxh6 Rg8+, but the exchange-down endgame after 25. Ng3 Qxe2 26. Qf6+ Rg7 27. Qf8+ Rg8 28. Qxc8+ Kxc8 29. Nxe2 is very hard for Black.

We conclude with a fragment from a game presented with brief notes in the introduction to my lecture on the formation of an opening repertoire, from Yusupov's and my second book in the "School" series: *Secrets of Opening Preparation*.

**Mukhin – Dvoretzky**  
Moscow 1969



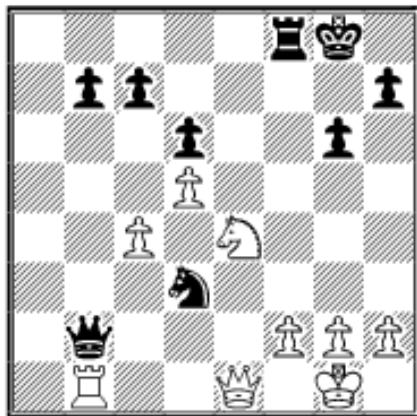


B

Black has an obvious advantage. The continuation was **26...Qb2!** (natural and strong) **27. Nc3 Nxb4 28. Ndx4 Bxe4 29. Nxe4 Nd3 30. Rb1**

One of the (unfortunately, many) shortcomings of my play was a careless calculation of variations, which is what happened in this case, also. Sometimes, it can work out anyway, provided you have

evaluated the situation properly in general, and don't commit too many gross blunders. Nevertheless, it behooves a player to rid himself of this shortcoming, by developing an ability to concentrate fully at the board, and by solving appropriate exercises.



B?

**30...Qe5!?**

This move, which wins a pawn, had been foreseen, and was therefore made quickly.

During the game, it seemed both to me and to my opponent that **30...Qd4?! would be refuted by 31. Qe2 Qxc4 32. Ng5 Qxd5 33. Qe7.** We both failed to see the only, but sufficient defense against the mating threat:

**33...Rxf2! 34. Qxh7+ Kf8.** On the other hand, **34. Nf3** or **34. Qh6+ Ke7 35. Nf3** would still have left the outcome uncertain.

Instead of **31...Qxc4?**, **31...Rf4!** **32. Ng5 Rxf2** is decisive. But White's play can be improved too: **31. Qe3!**, after which we would still have had to go into the afore-mentioned complex variation **31...Qxc4 32. Ng5**, etc.

In examining **30...Qc2! 31. Qd1**, I saw that the exchange sacrifice **31...Rxf2? 32. Nxf2 Qxf2+ 33. Kh1 Qe3 34. Qf3(or f1)** would give Black nothing. But for some reason, I forgot about the simple **31...Qxc4**. Here, Black gains a decisive advantage, because the white queen is less active than after **30..Qd4?!**

**31. Qe2 Nxf2 32. Re1 Nxe4 33. Qxe4 Re8! 34. Qxe5 Rxe5 35. Rxe5?!**

The rook endgame was probably lost, too.

**35...de 36. Kf2 Kf7 37. Ke3 Ke7!**

And White resigned, since after **38. c5 b6 39. Ke4 bc 40. Kxe5**, he soon falls into zugzwang.

The rule is: Let well enough alone! But recently, I noticed still another means of playing from the position in the next-to-last diagram, and decided to test it out. The results were quite pretty.

### 26...Qf6-d4!?

Creating the terrible threat of 27...Rxf2! 28. Qxf2 e3. 27. Rc3 Nxb4! (but not 27...Rxf2? 28. Rxd3!) 28. Nb3 Qb6 is hopeless.

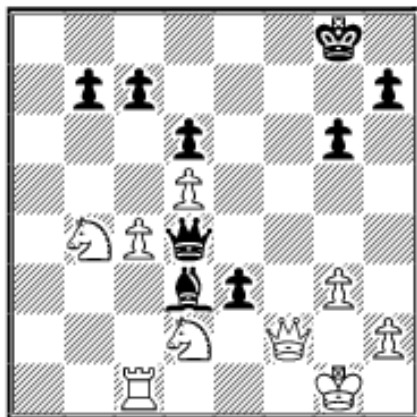
### 27. g2-g3!

The only defense. On 27...Rxf2?! 28. Qxf2 e3, White now has the saving move 29. Qf4! It's not too late to return here to the plan executed in the game: 27...Qb2! But how can one resist the spectacular combination that is now at Black's disposal?

### 27...Na6xb4?!

On 28. Nb3 Qb2 29. Nxb4 Qxb3, the outcome is not completely clear yet, but Black would still hold the advantage. White has a much stronger response – try to find it first.

### 28. Na2xb4! Rf8xf2! 29. Qe1xf2 e4-e3



Now 30. Qf4 ed+! is no help, since the rook at c1 is no longer defended by the knight. But a fantastic move saves White.

### 30. Qf2-f7+!!

Right here!

### 30...Kg8xf7 31. Nd2-f3

The queen cannot retreat to e4 because of the knight fork. And otherwise, White plays 32. Nxd3 and 33. Nfe1, consolidating, when he stands no worse.

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