

Kotronias on the King's Indian 2

Mar del Plata I

By

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With contributions by Yannis Simeonidis

For my children, Adoria, Athanasia and Dimitrios



Quality Chess
www.qualitychess.co.uk

Introduction

The idea of defending Black's chances in the **Mar del Plata variation** was in my mind for quite some time and Quality Chess gave me the opportunity to materialize it through this series on the King's Indian. It proved to be an uphill task with many disappointments and joys waiting along the way, but in the end I think I managed to solve the problems and provide a comprehensive repertoire for Black.

During this great adventure I had the invaluable help of my good friend Yannis Simeonidis, several strong engines, and my intuition. Looking back, I am certain that it would have been impossible to accomplish such an enormous task were it not for a combination of strengths such as the ones described above. Even at the moment of writing these lines I still stand in awe, fascinated by the variation's complexity and beauty. I hope that the readers will feel the same fascination by going through these volumes, experiencing the full flavour of the King's Indian in such a unique way that only the Mar del Plata variation can offer.

The first volume is about the move 9.♘e1 (after the introductory moves 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0–0 6.♗e2 e5 7.0–0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e7), which produces in my opinion some of the most sparkling variations the chessboard has ever seen. Deep sacrifices, brilliant positional ideas and sharp tactical skirmishes are all to be found here, creating a melee that every chess player should experience, even if only as a reader. I have no doubt by now that the King's Indian is an absolutely correct opening, and this is perfectly exemplified by the material presented in this volume. On the other hand, one might argue that the load of all these lines might prove too hard to handle – even for a professional of the highest calibre. This may be true, but the same applies to White players as well, and besides, chess is a game for bloodthirsty warriors where we come equipped to fight, knowing that at some point we will be on our own.

In the 9.♘e1 variation the creative Black players will have the opportunity to show their full potential, as it requires a combination of positional and tactical mastery. The pawn chains show the targets for each side, but obviously Black is playing for higher stakes as his own pawn chain points directly at the white king. This is obviously a psychological advantage on our side as the slightest mistake can lead to White's demise, while we can always hope to checkmate our opponent, even large amounts of material down! Another advantage is that during preparation, engines can be misleading in these sharp positions, even showing that White is winning just a few moves before he gets checkmated!

I sincerely hope that this volume will enhance the chess understanding of those willing to explore it and offer them success in their tournament games.

Vassilios Kotronias
Athens, 17th December 2014

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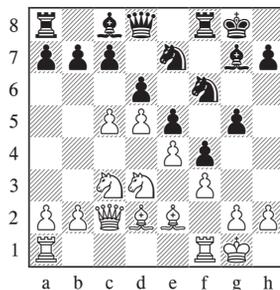
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Chapter 6

13.c5



14.♔c2

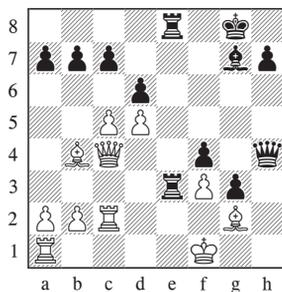
Variation Index

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♙e2 e5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e7
 9.♘e1 ♘d7 10.♘d3 f5 11.♙d2 ♘f6 12.f3 f4 13.c5 g5 14.♙c2 g4!! 15.♘b5

15...g3!

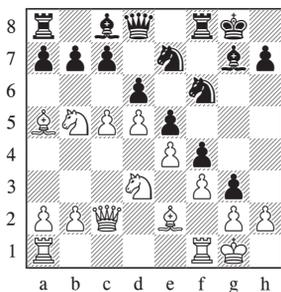
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A) note to 26.♙d2



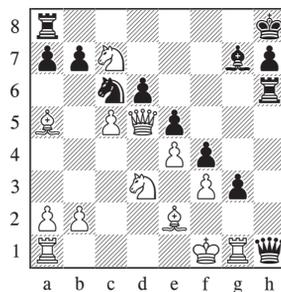
29...♙8e4!!

B) after 16.♙a5N



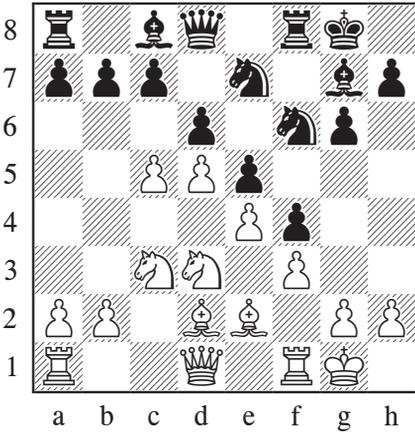
16...♘fxd5!!

B2) note to 24.♘f2!!



25...♙h2!!

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♕g7 4.e4 d6 5.♗f3
0-0 6.♖e2 e5 7.0-0 ♗c6 8.d5 ♗e7 9.♗e1
♗d7 10.♗d3 f5 11.♖d2 ♗f6 12.f3 f4 13.c5

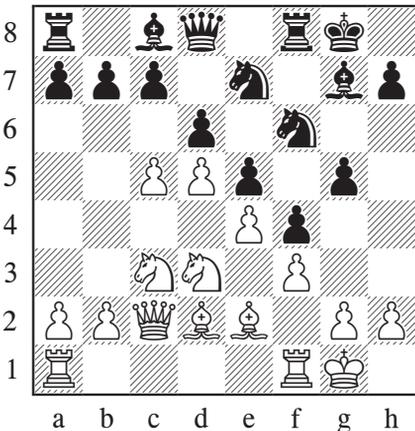


Most principled. From now on it becomes a wild race with mutual chances. This chapter contains several nuances Black players need to memorize, all the more so as most of them are impossible to find over the board.

13...g5 14.♖c2

14.cxd6 is examined in the next chapter, while 14.♖c1 is the topic of Chapters 8-10.

With the text, White tries to assault the c7-square quickly, but this has the disadvantage of allowing Black's next reply.



14...g4!!

A move that the engines highly disagree with. Are they right? The double exclamation mark implies not, and the following analysis shows that humans can still outdo our silicon friends on occasion.

Before proceeding, however, I would like to point out that the more pedestrian 14...c6!? 15.cxd6 ♖xd6 16.dxc6 ♗xc6 17.♗b5 ♖d8! (17...♖e7 18.♗b4!) 18.♖b3† ♔h8 19.♖b4 ♗xb4 20.♖xb4 g4 should also be sufficient for equality.

15.♗b5

Clearly White should not take on d6 too quickly, as then ♗b5 would become unplayable.

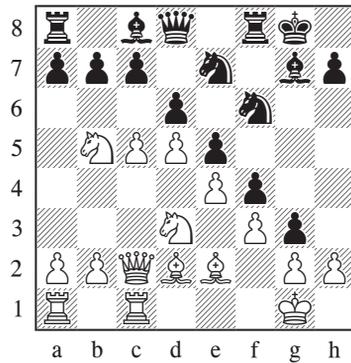
Another option could be as follows:

15.♖fc1N g3!

All three of the moves 15...♖e8!?, 15...♖d7!? and 15...♗g6!? deserve attention too.

16.♗b5

16.cxd6? cxd6† looks suicidal.



16...♖e8!

This typical move hits the b5-knight and prepares to switch the queen over to h5.

17.♖a5!

17.♗xc7 ♖h5--+

17...♖xb5 18.♖xc7 gxh2† 19.♗xh2

19.♗h1 would be met by 19...♗h5.

19... ♖e8!

This leads to a strong attack for Black.

20.cxd6

20. ♙xd6 ♜h5→

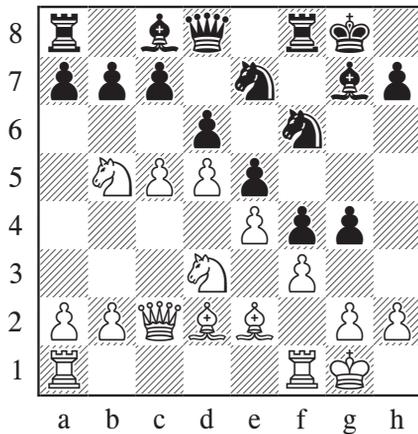
20... ♖h5† 21. ♖g1 ♜g6 22. ♜c5 ♜h4 23. ♜e6

23. ♙f1 ♜h8†

23... ♜h8†

With the idea:

24. ♜xf8 ♜xg2



15...g3!

The engines are highly critical of this move, yet it's the best way to continue. Now I believe White's two best options to be **A) 16. ♙b4N** and **B) 16. ♙a5N**.

The meek 16.h3? led to a happy end for Black after 16... ♜e8 (16... ♙xh3!?N 17.gxh3 ♖d7 is also good) 17. ♖fc1 ♜g6 18.a4 (Black is spoiled for choice even in case of 18. ♙f1 ♜h4 19. ♖d1 ♖f7†/†, as the white king is trapped on g1 and has to await a sacrifice on h3, f3 or g2.) 18... ♜h4 19.cxd6? (19. ♖d1N was imperative) 19...cxd6 20. ♜c7 ♙xh3! 21.gxh3 ♖c8 22. ♜e6 ♖xc2 23. ♜xd8 ♖xd2 24. ♜f1 ♜f6 25. ♜e6 ♜xe4! 26.fxe4 f3 0–1 Orgovan – Rajna, Budapest 1984.

16.cxd6?! cxd6 17. ♜c7

By the way, 17. ♖c7 should again be answered by 17... ♖e8†.

Now Black has a stunning bolt from the blue:



17... ♜fxd5!!

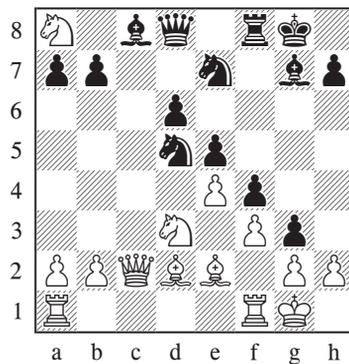
Already I don't see any salvation.

18. ♜xa8

A rook is a rook, and as they say the proof of the pudding lies in the eating. However, I feel the present situation is best described by the expression: "He chose to die with a full stomach."

a) An alternative "last wish meal" is 18.exd5 ♜f5 19. ♜e6 ♙xe6 20.dxe6 gxh2† 21. ♜xh2 ♖h4† 22. ♖g1 e4→

b) After 18. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 19. ♖c4 (19.exd5 ♖h4 20.h3 ♙xh3→) 19... ♖h4! 20. ♖xd5† ♜h8 21.h3 ♙f6!! (21... ♙xh3 22.gxh3 ♖xh3 23. ♖f2 gxh2† 24. ♜xf2 ♖g3† 25. ♜f1 is unclear) 22. ♜f2 gxh2† 23. ♖xf2 ♖g8† the unstoppable ... ♙xh3 will give Black a raging attack.

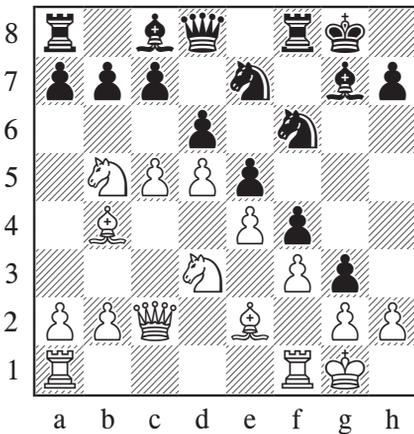


18...♗c6!?

Black is inching towards the white king. I don't think that any further explanations are needed here; the attack is tremendous and Black's moves come naturally.

A) 16.♖b4N

This allows a brilliant tactical shot:



16...♗fd5!!

Black utilizes this tactical resource once again. White already has to overcome a minefield to stay alive.

17.♞b3!?

The best try.

I also analysed 17.exd5? ♗f5 18.♞d2 gxh2† 19.♗xh2 ♞h4†→ when Black attacks ferociously by playing ...♞f6 next.

17.♞c4?! is dubious, and the best attacking recipe is the following one: 17...♗h8! (17...♖e6 18.♗c3) 18.exd5 ♗f5 19.♖d2 (19.hxg3 fxg3 19...♖e1 [20.♖d2?! ♗d4→] 20...♖h6! 19...a6 20.♗c3 ♗d4→

Finally, Black is at least slightly better after 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♖xd6 a6

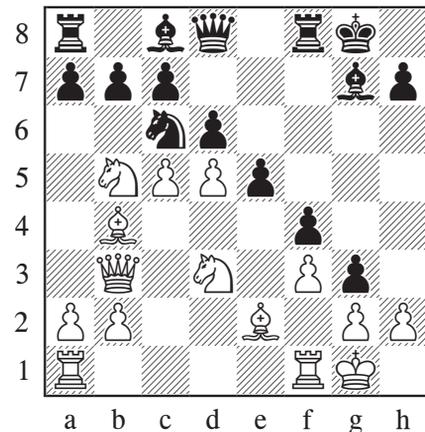
17...♗c6!?

Opening the way for the queen immediately is spectacular and sound. We are entering rich tactical territory where every slip by White leads to disaster.

17...♗h8!? could also be a winning try, after 18.exd5 ♗f5 or 18...♗xd5!?

18.exd5

18.♞xd5?! ♗h8 19.h3 ♞h4 20.♖e1 ♖xh3 21.gxh3 ♞xh3 22.♞f2 gxf2† 23.♗xf2 ♞g3† 24.♗f1 ♞g8 19 produces a typical situation where White can hardly survive, as his king cannot escape to the queenside with impunity.



18...♗d4!! 19.♗xd4 ♞h4 20.h3 ♖xh3 21.gxh3 ♞xh3 22.♞f2 e4!!

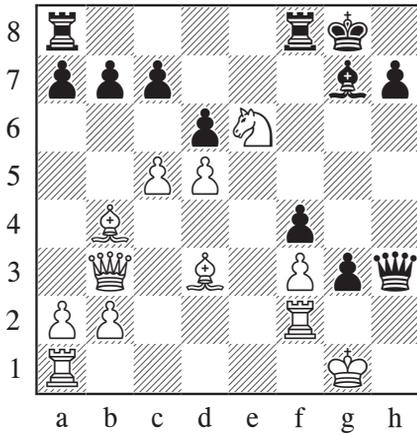
A stunning position, with Black temporarily being three pieces down.

23.♗e6!

After 23.♖f1?? gxf2† 24.♗xf2 ♞g3† 25.♖g2 ♖xd4 26.♖e1 ♞ae8→ the threat of ...exf3 followed by ...♞e3 cannot be parried.

23...exd3 24.♖xd3

24.♞xd3?? is swiftly punished by 24...gxf2† 25.♗xf2 ♞g3† 26.♗f1 ♞f6→.



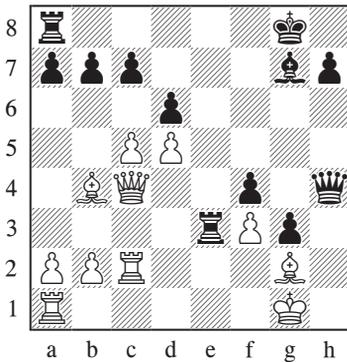
24... ♖f6! 25. ♕f1 ♖h4!

Here White has to decide where he will place the f2-rook.

26. ♖d2

White's other possible rook move produces some stunning variations:

26. ♖c2!? ♖xe6 27. ♕g2 ♖e3 28. ♖c4
28... ♕c3 ♕xc3 29. bxc3 ♖ae8 ♣



28... ♖ae8!! 29. ♕f1 ♖8e4!! 30. fxe4
30. ♖b5?? ♖h5!-+
30... f3 31. ♕xf3 ♖xf3 †

White is the one struggling to draw despite being a rook up:

32. ♕g1!

Only this move holds.

White loses abruptly after 32. ♕e2?? ♖g4-+.

32. ♕g2?? also leads to destruction: 32... ♖f2 †
33. ♖xf2 ♖h2 † 34. ♕f3 ♖xf2 † 35. ♕g4 h5 †!

36. ♕g5 (36. ♕xh5 ♖f3 † 37. ♕h4 ♕f6 †
38. ♕h3 g2 † 39. ♕h2 ♕e5 † 40. ♕g1 ♖g3-+)
36... ♖f6 † 37. ♕xh5 ♖f3 † 38. ♕g5 ♕f6 †
39. ♕g6 ♕e7!-+)

After 32. ♕g1! Black has to acquiesce to a draw.

32... ♕h6! 33. ♖f1 ♕e3 † 34. ♕g2 ♖xf1 35. ♖xf1
♖xe4 † 36. ♕xg3 ♖xc2 37. ♖f6! =

26. ♖d2 seems to halt Black's attack, but appearances are deceiving:

26... ♖xe6! 27. ♕c3!

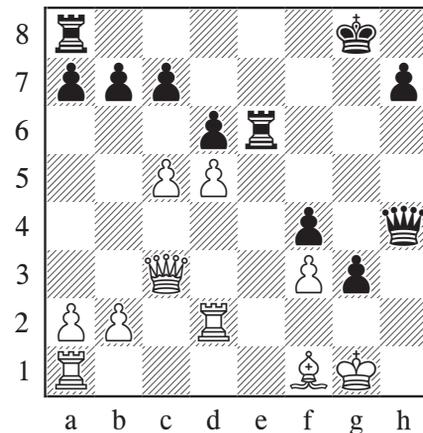
The rook is immune.

27. dxe6?? loses immediately to 27... ♕d4 † with mate soon to follow.

27. ♖c4 is answered by 27... ♖e3 28. ♕g2
♖ae8 → when the attack continues unabated and White is in great danger.

27... ♕xc3 28. ♖xc3

After 28. bxc3 there can follow 28... ♖e7 ♞ or 28... ♖e3! 29. ♖xb7 ♖f8, with great compensation in either case.

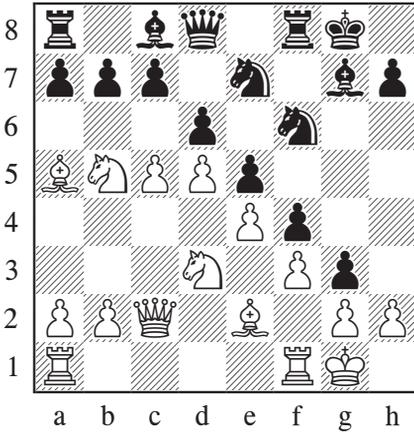


28... ♖e3 29. ♖c2 ♖ae8 ♞

With excellent chances for both sides! The computer shows 0.00 here, but there is still some play left and the position could go either way.

B) 16.♔a5N

The main suggestion of the engines.



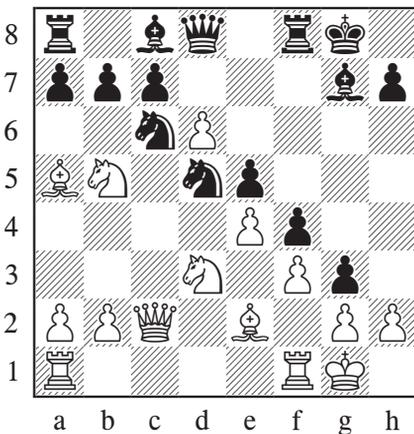
16...♗fxd5!!

It should come as no surprise now to see this stunning move make another appearance. The remainder of the chapter will see us consider **B1) 17.cxd6** and **B2) 17.♖b3!**.

17.exd5?! ♗f5⚡ allows Black to get the party started on the kingside.

B1) 17.cxd6 ♗c6!!

Illustrating the main point of Black's play. The position is highly complicated, so we will take a deeper look.



18.exd5!

This looks like the best practical chance.

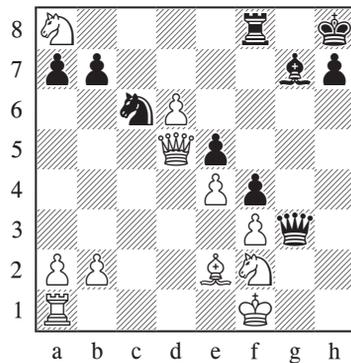
18.♖c4?! ♗xa5 19.♖xd5† ♗h8 20.♗xc7 ♖h4 21.h3 ♗xh3 22.gxh3 ♖xh3 23.♖f2



23...gxf2†!

Sometimes, even KID players who are generous by nature have to accept material. Less clear is: 23...♖f6?! 24.♖g2 (24.d7 ♖d8 25.♖g2 ♖h6 26.♗f2 gxf2† 27.♗xf2 ♖xd7 28.♖xa5 ♖h4† 29.♗f1 ♖h1† 30.♖g1 ♖h3† 31.♗e1 ♖h4† 32.♗f1 gives White chances to hold as well.) 24...♖h6 25.♗f1 ♖h1† 26.♖g1 g2† 27.♗f2 ♖h4† 28.♗xg2 ♖g6† 29.♗f1 ♖h3† 30.♗e1 ♖xg1† 31.♗d2 ♖xa1 32.♗xa8 ♗c6 33.♗c7⚡ White's strong passed d-pawn offers him sufficient compensation.

24.♗xf2 ♖g3† 25.♗f1 ♗c6 26.♗xa8 26.d7 ♗f6+

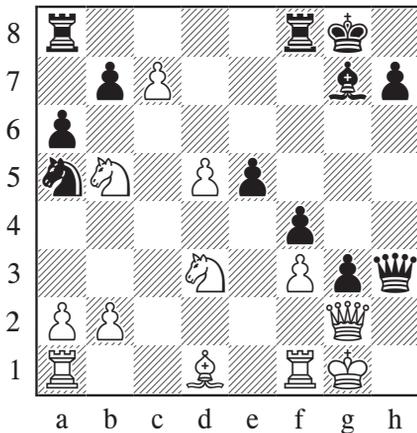


26... ♟f6 27. ♞g4 ♟h4+

White's fragile defences are about to collapse.

18... ♞xa5 19. dxc7 ♖h4 20. h3 ♟xh3
21. gxh3 ♜xh3 22. ♟d1 a6! 23. ♖g2

23. ♞d6? loses rather easily to 23...e4!
24. ♖g2 ♟d4† 25. ♜f2 ♖d7!-+.

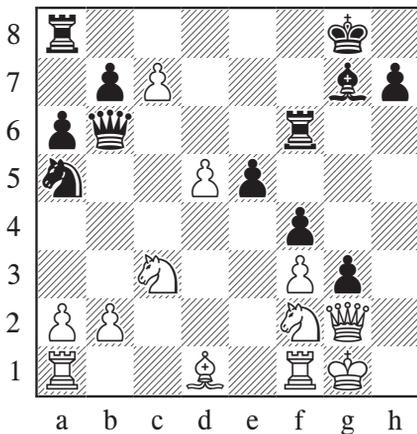


23... ♖h6! 24. ♞c3 ♖b6† 25. ♞f2

The only move.

25... ♜f6

Black is planning ... ♜f6-h6-h2.

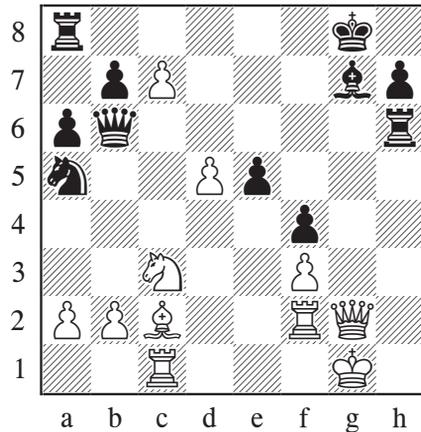


26. ♟c2!! ♜h6 27. ♜ac1! gxf2†!

27... ♜h2? 28. ♞a4!!± is an impressive motif, with a sudden turning of the tables.

28. ♜xf2!?

After 28. ♜xf2 ♖xc7 29. ♟f5 ♞c4! 30. ♞e4 ♟f6→ White is not out of the woods yet.

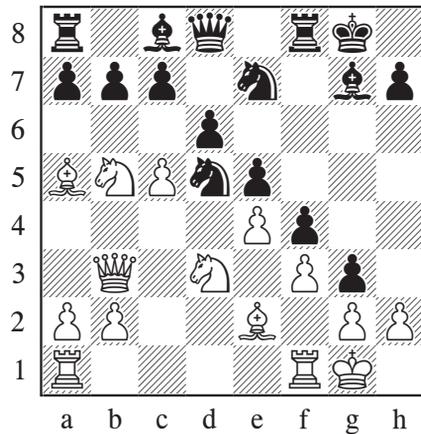


28... ♖xc7 29. ♟f5 ♜f8 30. ♟e6† ♞h8 31. ♖f1 ♖b6→

With a complicated position; Black still has a strong attack and holds the better prospects, but the game is far from over.

B2) 17. ♖b3!

According to my research, this is the best move.



17... ♞c6!!

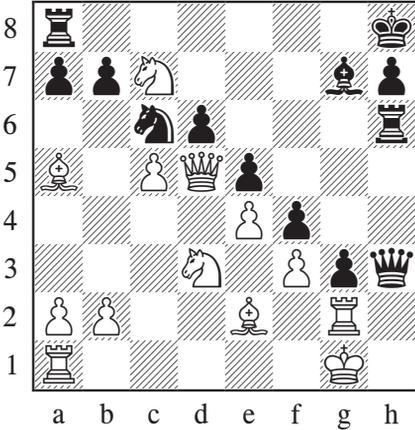
Still strong enough to upset White, although I haven't been able to find more than a draw in this specific line.

18. ♖xd5† ♕h8 19. ♗xc7! ♜h4 20. h3 ♙xh3
21. gxh3 ♜xh3 22. ♖f2 ♖f6

This is, perhaps, the point where Black can look for an improvement.

22...gxf2†!? 23. ♗xf2 ♜g3† 24. ♕f1 ♞ac8
25. cxd6 ♙f6∞ is worth examining.

23. ♞g2 ♞h6



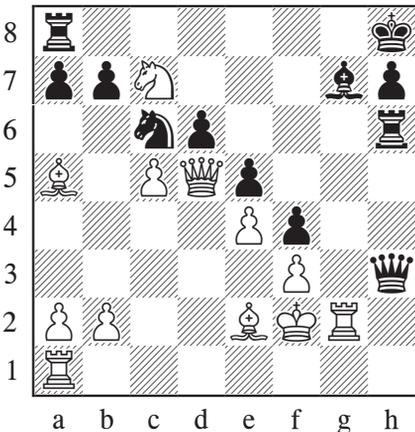
24. ♗f2!!

The only move to stave off defeat.

24. ♕f1? loses to the amazing 24... ♜h1†
25. ♞g1 ♞h2!! 26. ♙c3 ♖f2† 27. ♗xf2 g2†
28. ♕e1 ♜xg1† 29. ♕d2 ♜xa1 30. ♗h3 ♜h1
31. ♜e6 ♙d8+.

24...gxf2† 25. ♕xf2 ♜h4† 26. ♕f1 ♜h3
27. ♕f2

27. ♗xa8 ♞g6†



27... ♜h4†=

White has held miraculously; I don't see more than a perpetual at this point.

Conclusion

Tactics, tactics, tactics! In this chapter we continued our journey to the magical world of 11. ♙d2 ♗f6 12. f3 f4 by introducing ourselves to the intricacies of 13.c5 g5. I think that 14. ♜c2 has been a worthy appetizer for the whole line as the positions arising after 14...g4!! 15. ♗b5 g3! are a treat for the eye and arm us with one of the most essential ideas in the whole classical system: once a pawn has reached g3, the d8-h4 diagonal acquires paramount importance, and clearing it with sacrifices is often the way to success.

This is evident after 16. ♙b4 ♗fxd5!! 17. ♜b3!? (17.exd5? ♗f5 makes things easy for Black) 17... ♗c6!? 18.exd5 ♗d4!! 19. ♗xd4 ♜h4 20. h3 ♙xh3 21. gxh3 ♜xh3 22. ♖f2 e4!! when, in spite of being three pieces down, Black is at least equal. The same motif occurs after 16. ♙a5 ♗fxd5!! 17. ♜b3! ♗c6!! 18. ♜xd5† ♕h8 19. ♗xc7! ♜h4 20. h3 ♙xh3 21. gxh3 ♜xh3 22. ♖f2 ♖f6 23. ♞g2 ♞h6 24. ♗f2!! gxf2† 25. ♕xf2 ♜h4† 26. ♕f1 ♜h3 27. ♕f2 when the fireworks are bound to end in a perpetual check. I am not 100 percent sure that the final word has been said in these lines, but what I am sure of is that White is walking a tightrope and has to avoid several pitfalls in order to secure the draw as things stand.

What I would like to add, wrapping up this chapter, is that no particular memory markers exist here; if Black knows the main ideas then he should be able to find the details rather easily as the flow of the moves is natural.