## NEIL McDONALD <br> ATTACK!THE SUBTLE ART OF WINNING BRILLIANTLY

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## About the Author

Neil McDonald became a grandmaster in 1996 and a FIDE trainer in 2017. He is a regular coach of the England Junior team at international events. Neil has written numerous books on openings, endgames, tactics and strategy as well as biographies of famous players. He lives in Gravesend in Kent, England.

## Also by the Author:

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## Introduction

A world champion gives the following advice in his autobiography, "To be passive ... is fatal to the beginner or medium player - such players must be aggressive. He must attack, because only in that way can he develop his imagination, which is a very important thing."

You might think this is Tal or Alekhine endorsing the virtues of their dashing style of play. In fact the quotation is from Capablanca writing in My Chess Career back in 1920. In other words the positional maestro, whose careful approach meant he avoided defeat for eight years, is telling us to attack. Only when we've reached a high level should we pause and consider if a strategic style suits us better. Now that's food for thought.

Did Capa follow his own advice? Well he played thousands of simultaneous games in his younger years and used them to try out sacrifices and speculative attacks. These games are extant and are fun to play through. There are also beautiful attacks in his serious games - he won several brilliancy prizes - though he only went for broke when the needs of the position demanded it. He wouldn't have been Capablanca otherwise.

Even if you prefer a steady positional game with the gradual accumulation of advantages, it is vital that you know how to attack and make sacrifices. For example your opponent might play in a highly provocative style which gives him excellent winning chances unless you punish him with an aggressive counter-action. Or you might build up a winning positional advantage but then see it dissipate and even lose in the end because you lacked the resolution to make a sacrifice. And remember that becoming a good attacker will open your eyes to the defensive resources inherent in a position. When you are attacked, which is of course inevitable, this knowledge will make you a more resilient defender.

The purpose of this book is to deepen your understanding of dynamic chess. The nature of an attack is that it can't always be explained by general principles: sometimes a checkmate on the board is the only certain proof of the correctness of a sacrifice.

For this reason l've included a lot of variations. When you first play through a game feel free to skip the murky details and focus on the general flow. You can always return later to examine the finer points of the struggle. If you are very serious you can treat the variations as tactical exercises. Whatever path you choose you'll be improving your tactical flair.

As well as being useful for developing your imagination in Capablanca style I hope you find the games entertaining and full of enjoyable surprises.

Neil McDonald,
Gravesend, February 2021

# Chapter One Trapping the King in the Centre 

In the opening a player aims to gain a foothold in the centre, develop pieces at a pace reasonable for the setting, and castle the king into safety. The purpose of a rough and ready gambit is to offer a pawn or even a piece to short-circuit this methodical build up. The philosophy is that the overall material balance won't matter if the attacker can crash through an ill-prepared defence or at least maintain a long-term initiative.

An extreme form of the gambit ideal is to catch the king in the centre and drag him out into the open before other pieces are capable of protecting him.

## Game 1

A.Shirov-J.Lapinski

Daugavpils 1990

The King's Gambit in its most uncompromising form involves heavy sacrifices. It has an earnestness unspoilt by the realities of positional chess. "You tell me the weakest square in Black's position is $f 7$. Well then, why mess about? Open the f-file and let's get at it!"

## 1 e4e5 2 f4

White dislodges the pawn from e5 in order to build an unopposed centre with d2-d4. He hopes eventually to pick off the pawn with 宦xf4, when he will have the open f-file along which to attack f7 with a rook (after 0-0) and a bishop (after 菝c4) and maybe a knight (after find and then or assailing the weak point.

## 2...exf4

Objectively this is probably the best response, but it does fall in somewhat with the
plans of a gung－ho opponent．More＇annoying＇for such a fellow would be 2 ．．．d5 leading to


## 3 flof

Black is also unyielding．He not only bolsters the advanced pawn but，given the chance， intends to drive the white knight from f 3 and seize the initiative himself．

The England grandmaster Mark Hebden used to be a big fan of the King＇s Gambit in his youth．He told me for nostalgia＇s sake he decided to give it one more go in a tournament as White in 2019．The game continued $3 . . .0 \mathrm{f} 6$ ？？ 4 e 5 h 5 and Mark was already regretting his choice because he couldn＇t remember any of the theory of this line．His opponent mean－ while was moving briskly and confidently．There followed 5 岩e2 息e760 6 d5（actually Black should castle with at least equal chances，but he sees no reason not to grab some space）．Hebden sat gloomily wondering what to do about Black＇s looming counterplay on his centre．Then suddenly his mood brightened．


Question：Can you see what cheered Hebden up？
Answer：The move 6．．．d5？？was a howler as 7 exd6 稿xd6 8 憎b5＋！won the hanging knight on h5 in M．Hebden－K．Ansmann，South Normanton 2019．Black immediately resigned．You should always watch out for double attacks by the queen in the opening．
4 累c4
Not being swayed from his chosen course even though it demands a piece sacrifice．Less venturesome players might prefer the variation 4 h 4 g 45 気 5 （it＇s OK to save the knight now as White＇s fourth move has cut out a disruptive check by the black queen on h4）

4．．．g4
Again the sharpest response．Black refuses to＇blink＇with 4．．．鼻g7，though after 5 d 4 d 66 o－0 h6 White would have trouble arranging a breakthrough on the f－file，whereas in the game it is handed to him on a plate．
5 0－0！

Saying farewell to the knight on f3，but White wants to keep the initiative，not concede it with 5 觉e5 期h4＋

## 5．．．gxf3 6 願xf3



It＇s hard not to admire the elegant efficiency of White＇s build up．He has castled and brought his queen，bishop on c4 and rook on f1 into strong attacking positions．Meanwhile the black pawn stump on f 4 makes a sad impression．

Nonetheless Black can point out that an extra piece is worth a lot of suffering．It is a huge material investment which will cost the game if the compensation proves insuffi－ cient．

And the compensation needed has grown in size over the decades and centuries．Nowa－ days everyone from the world champion to a club player is a better defender than their counterparts of 50 years ago，to say nothing of the difference compared to 100 years ago．

Question：Try to find a specific move which is Black＇s best response to White＇s build up along the f－file．What do you like about it？

## Answer：6．．．寝f6！

A brilliant defensive move．Firstly，Black makes a hole on d8 for the king to retreat into if necessary．Secondly he guards the vulnerable point on f 7 and the barrier on f 4 （in principle White won＇t want to exchange queens as it severely weakens his pressure on the black king）．And thirdly there is the threat of $7 . .$. 響d $4+$ ，winning the bishop on c 4 ．

Finally it is an unwritten rule that the best place for the queen is on the third rank．

## 7 e5！

Distracting the black queen from her defence of $f 7$ and clearing more lines as a prelude to $s$ second major sacrifice．
7．．．薌xe5 8 寞xf7＋

Throwing more wood on the fire．More restrained is 8 d 3 ，but Black can quickly develop with 8．．．宽h69c3 etc，when castling kingside is already an option．Therefore White elects to give up a second piece to speed up the attack and keep the black king floating around in the centre．
8．．．東xf79 d4！


Gaining more time for the mobilisation of the queenside pieces．

## 9．．．皆 $x d 4+$ ？

White＇s lead in development and the discomfort of the black king is surely worth one piece，but is it really enough for two pieces？One of the golden rules when facing an attack with heavy sacrifices is to give back some material in order to draw its fangs．

The game move is one pawn grab too many．After 9．．．${ }_{\text {Wiff }} \mathrm{f} 5$ ！Black is ready to develop his knight to f 6 which confounds the attack．After 10 宦xf4 Black can gradually unfold with 10．．． 11 f6 11 d 3 etc．So 10 g 4 is the big test．The problem is that the exposed white king then becomes a resource for the defence．Following 10．．．響g6！（still keeping f6 free for the





 too much for the queen and is about to launch his counterattack against the white king．

In the cherished attacking masterpieces of the 19th century you don＇t get that sort of clinical defence．But back then stockfish was a type of unsalted fish not a mega－brain chess computer．

Here Lapinski seems to feel honour bound to accept every sacrifice．I doubt very much if Shirov would have chosen such a cavalier opening when facing a more experienced oppo－ nent．Indeed，it is hard to imagine anyone speculating against Kramnik in this fashion．

## 10 崽e3！

Utilising the pin on the f－file．
10．．．新f6
The alternative 10．．． a computer program could hope to defend as Black．

Question：If you＇ve studied the analysis of 9 ．．．鿷f5 above could you outline some reasons why the black queen is worse placed on $f 6$ than on $f 5$ ？

## 11 察 $x f 4$

Answer：Shirov will take full advantage of the black queen being on $f 6$ rather than $f 5$ ．It is a vital boost to his initiative that the knight is blocked from going to f6．A second blessing for him is that the queen will be vulnerable（after he develops with 8 ）to attack by 0 d5 or e4．And thirdly his own queen has access to d5 or h5 as attacking squares．

## 11．．．気e8

The king hopes for sanctuary on d 8 but it will prove to be his tomb．It was better to stay on the kingside and try to hide behind the other pieces，though after say 11．．． 12 e7 120 ©f5 13 d5 White＇s attack is rampant．
12 合


## 12．．． 6

The last chance was $12 \ldots$ ．．． 7 to prevent the next move when White can build up with 13 睼ae1 planning 14 d5 etc．
13 d5
You＇ll see further examples in this book of the power of an unchallenged white knight on d5 or e5．

## 13．．．断g614莫ae1＋宦e7

My Stockfish claims that after 14．．． 0 ge7 15 宽xc7（preparing what seems a totally killing

## Attack！

check on f6） 15 ．．．d6！ 16 f6＋White has nothing better than to give perpetual check with 17 d7＋㯖e8 18 f6＋．Of course White could still maintain the tension in other ways． Nonetheless this variation shows how very difficult it is to mate a king，even in hopeless－ looking positions．It also explains why computer programs have ridiculous ratings like 3300 Elo（at the time of writing Magnus Carlsen＇s peak classical rating has been a lowly 2882 back in 2014）．We are not only inferior to computers in technical matters such as cal－ culation，we are also hampered by psychological baggage：I doubt any human would have any truck with a variation which sends the king into the line of fire of the white queen and rook on f1．


15 真d6！
A rocket－charged clearance move．The threat is immediate mate on $f 8$ ．
15．．．氰d8

Question：Can you see two ways to clinch it？

## Answer： 16 崖f8＋！

We all love a queen sacrifice．This is more elegant than 16 息xc7＋象e8 17 湈f8 mate （note e7 is pinned）．
16．．．崽xf8
If 16．．．铛e8 all the same it＇s 17 置xc7 mate．

## 17 崽xc7 mate

There＇s nothing wrong with the romantic philosophy of attacking at all costs without caring about the result．But l＇ve found most players do care very much about the result． Their love for cruder gambit lines begins to wane when they start playing stronger oppo－ nents and suffer demoralising defeats．Or more likely their efforts are easily neutralised and they are dragged into dull endgames．

It has to be faced that an attacking foray which is essentially against the strategic requirements of a position can be exploited by a skilful defender. Nonetheless the Evans Gambit or King's Gambit aren't strategically wrong in themselves. They only fall short in the 'primitive' lines where White pursues an attack in reckless fashion rather than choosing a more measured option.

## Game 2 <br> Zi Han Goh-R.Pert London 2019

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 © c3 c5 4 cxd5 cxd4


IM Richard Pert tries out the von Hennig-Schara Gambit. Evidently he hoped his ten-year-old opponent hadn't got around to studying it yet!
 he no longer has the strong reply in the game. A long theoretical line continues 6 ...exd5 7

5 宸 $x d 4$ ?

Question: Can you suggest a way for Black to exploit the queen's early arrival on d4?

Having developed his pieces to active squares Black seeks to attack on the kingside but 13 b4! is a strong counterblow. It returns the pawn in order to open the b-file for the major pieces, clear b2 for the bishop, and, by deflecting the black bishop from c5, reduce the pres-
 16 cb5! there are a lot more open lines around the black king than its white counterpart.

Black is far from lost but 13 b4！has clearly snatched the initiative from his hands．He had hoped that White would play some passive moves and let him build up his kingside attack in peace．

## Answer：5．．． 0 c6！

Black gains time to develop by utilising the pin on d5．He didn＇t have this option in the
 way．

## 6 宸d1 exd5 7 断xd5

Letting the pawn live with 7 f3 allows it to disrupt White＇s game with 7．．．d4，while the wet 7 e3 hands Black a lead in development and more space for free after $7 . . .{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{ff} 6$ ．Still White could then develop with 8 f3， 9 睆e2 and 100 －As a practical decision that would have been better than grabbing the pawn and coming under a big attack．


## 7．．．眔 C ！

There is an old saying that every gambit is sound in practice．We could amend it to say： every gambit is sound when the opponent hasn＇t analysed it before the game．

Objectively speaking White is fine，but this is a horrible position to have to muddle through if you don＇t come armed with opening knowledge．Fears are going to start crowd－ ing in．For example how can you avoid your queen being hounded from pillar to post？And even more terrifyingly，how can you stop Black landing a big check in your soft underbelly with ．．． $0^{\mathrm{b} 4}$ and ．．． 0 c 2 ，when the king is driven into the open？

Ask a computer program these two questions and the answer you will get is：easily！At the last moment when ${ }^{0} 2$ is about to cause a massacre our silicon frien will show a neat little move to keep out the horse．It will allay our anxiety over the queen by guiding her calmly through a series of prods by the black pieces towards an unlikely shelter．There＇s no problem playing as White here if you are nerveless and can calculate umpteen moves ahead without making any errors：in other words exactly what a human player is not． 8 ） 5 ？

White doesn＇t have time for this manoeuvre when he has no kingside pieces in play．Af－
 won＇t be able to invade on c2） 9 爰g5！（a pretty＇unhuman＇post for the queen！）

If now 9．．．h6？！ 10 鬼f4！（gaining time by hitting the enemy queen）10．．．嶿d8 11 爰b5！and having oscillated the queen on the fifth rank White is ready to develop with 12 e3 etc．In reply to 11 ．．．蒬d7 most humans would settle for 12 断b3，but a computer will tell you，nope， don＇t be modest，just play 12 馒xb7！－it＇s better to be two pawns up than one．
 very nicely for White） 11 営c1 the c2－square is secure．
So Black should give up on trying to land a tactical blow and mobilise his pieces e．g．9．．．． $\mathrm{S}_{\mathrm{G}} \mathrm{e} 6$

 pressure due to the superior coordination of the black pieces（he has a bishop still stuck on c1 and his queen remains out on a limb）but his king is safe and he still has an extra pawn． It is dynamically equal．

## 8．．．欮b6 9 d6＋？

Carrying out his fatal plan．Here my computer suggests 9 宸e4＋息e6 10 c3 11㥪b1！which solves the problem of the weak c2－square and the wandering queen at the same time．But I doubt many humans would want to retreat their knight back to c3，let alone envisage putting their queen on b1（Black would have a strong initiative after 11．．．寞b4 etc．）．
9．．．息xd6 10 聯xd6


Question：Can you see the refutation of White＇s play？
Answer：10．．．${ }^{\text {d }} 4$ ！
Finally Black gets to land a bloody blow against c2．Unusually the exchange of queens
would empower Black＇s initiative rather than dampen it down．Pert chooses d 4 for his
 is still highly unpleasant for him．

## 11 㟶e5＋

 disaster now strikes with $12 . . .{ }^{\circ} \mathrm{b} 3$ ！exploiting the pin on a2．Black wins the exchange whilst keeping up his attack with 13 囬b1寞f5 14 axb3 菣xb1．Goh rightly decides it＇s better to face a raging attack on his king than simplify to a losing endgame against a much higher－rated player as there＇s（very slightly）more chance of Black messing it up．
11．．．宦e6


## 12 欮xg7

 have to calculate that much as Black here．It would be very strange if the white king man－ aged to fend off the attack of all the black pieces whilst walking around in the centre．Play
愋b4＋and White is reduced to 20 憎 C 3 giving up the queen to stay alive a little longer）
 but what good does it do when his kingside is still asleep and his king is wide open？ 20


## 12．．．0－0－0！

A powerful castling which threatens mate in one．

Or 16 崽e3 宦 $C 4$ mate．
16．．． $0 x$ x1
It feels rather pedantic to point out that there is a faster mate with 16．．．卛e1＋17 猡xc2




There are other ways force mate but the bishop check is instructive as it obliges White



An energetic attack by Pert and a lesson in the dangers of accepting a gambit if unprepared.

## All the details matter

In one of his books IM Bill Hartston talks about luck in chess. If I remember correctly, the example he gives is of a player as White starting a complex tactical sequence which lasts many moves. Eventually the murky fight burns out to a simple position. White then wins because he has a pawn on h3. If the pawn had been on h2 he would have lost. He couldn't have known the massive effect this small difference would have when he started to play sharply. In other words he was lucky!

Many combinations succeed or falter due to one tiny detail, but it's a moot point whether you can blame luck. I don't remember Kasparov being unlucky when he launched attacks with sacrifices which couldn't be calculated to an end. His intuition seemed to tell him if the little details would work out for him.

I assume Hartston chose a pawn being on h 3 rather than h 2 to illustrate his point as it feels such an insignificant difference. But we can easily imagine White's success in a middlegame attack being dependent on whether he has found time for h2-h3 to make a hole for his king. If he has not then Black might suddenly launch a saving (or winning) counterattack based on a back rank mate. But was White unlucky, or did he commit himself without taking a sensible precaution?

I was reminded of the importance of small details when I examined the following fantastical (l've chosen that word carefully) game between two well-known master players of the 1920s.

## Game 3 <br> E．Steiner－E．Colle <br> Budapest 1926

## 1 e4f6！

Something of a trendy move at the time as it had been adopted by Alekhine，after whom the defence is now named，only five years earlier in 1921．And the very first player the world champion had beaten with his new opening was ．．．Endre Steiner．

## 2 e5 0 d5 3 寞c4

Diverging from 3 d 4 which he played against Alekhine．

Beginning to play with fire．Development with 6．．．息f5 7 d4 e6 $80-0$ 悤e7 was a safe ap－ proach．
7 fxe5 0 d4 8 0－0！？


Steiner offers a pawn to speed up his development．
8．．．${ }^{2} \mathbf{x f} 3+$ ？
Acceptance of the gambit is far too dangerous．It wasn＇t too late for 8．．．敉f5 and 9．．．e6 with a reasonable game．



## 12 c4


 oping as $13 \ldots$ ．．．e6 14 d5！breaks open lines while $13 \ldots \mathrm{~g} 6$ is also unsatisfactory： 14 a 4 ！？ （threatening to trap the knight with 15 a5 and also creating a base on b5 for his own horse

 White has regained his pawn with a strong attack．

## 12．．．兓d7

Avoiding 12．．． $0 x$ x 4 ？which costs a piece after 13 耋a4＋．
13 角c3c6
 velopment has increased and he will gain even more time by kicking the knight with 15断 2 ．

## 14 C5！

Also very strong is 14 d 5 ！cxd5（the computer suggestion $14 \ldots \mathrm{f} 6$ is far from inspiring af－ ter 15 愫e2） 15 c5！when the black horse no longer has the d5－square．Then 15．．．d4 16 cxb6
 a total mess with two pieces blocking his king from castling to safety．

## 14．．．${ }^{\text {d }}$ d



Question：What＇s the best way to get the white queen into the attack？

## 15 唇b3？

 ©xd5 would be winning for White） 17 瞋d2 leaves Black in deep trouble．It＇s best not to rush things when simple development leaves the opponent to stew．Just how is Black going to get his pieces out or evacuate his king from the centre？He can＇t develop his bishop to e7 without dropping f7．If he tries 17 ．．．g6 then 18 踏e 5 will ensure he doesn＇t get to castle kingside．

With Black about to castle Steiner＇s initiative is flagging．He might continue 19 息f4 0－0 20 e4 and 21 d6 when he＇d have some compensation for the missing pawn．Instead he tried the enterprising（and entirely wrong）sacrifice．

## 19 昆xf6 gxf6 20 蒐xf6



Question：At first glance it all seems over for Black as catastrophe is about to follow on e7．But how can he refute White＇s combination？

## Answer：20．．．0－0！

Exactly．Castling removes the king from the pin on the e－file and so makes White＇s weak back rank the key tactical factor．Not good enough would be 20 ．．．黒f8 with the same idea as
 play 22．．．． sign，but instead he continued serenely with．．．

## 21 亘xe7



Question：Hopefully one of the easier puzzles in the book．Black to play and win．

## 21．．．${ }^{\text {m }} \mathrm{xf6}$

Answer：The first oddity．This is good enough to win a rook（！），but you＇d expect Colle to play
 on f 6 as well，leaving him with two extra rooks．

## 22 曷xd7！？

The second eccentricity．But well，we might conclude that Steiner is annoyed with him－ self for his blunder and is letting Black mate him．In any case there was little point playing on a rook down after 22 皆e1．
22．．．舁xd7
And now things are getting truly bizarre．Both players are missing mate in one！

## 23 © 4 量 57

The last moment of madness，after which the game follows a logical course again－or at least for a couple of moves．


Anyone prefer 27 gxh 3 ，winning a piece for nothing？
 though 30 崖b8＋登g8 31 宸xb7 would eventually win．

Was that really Endre Steiner playing White，a player who won two board medals at Olympiads for Hungary，against Edgar Colle playing Black，the Belgian master and inventor of an opening system named after him？Yes indeed．The logical parts of the game attest to the high level of understanding of both players．But we still need an explanation for the absurd parts．I＇ll quote from the Oxford Companion to Chess：
＂（after 13．．．c6）Steiner accidentally knocked his king off the board with his coat sleeve and replaced it on g1．＂

Aha．
If you play through the game again，but this time putting the king on g1，you＇ll see that all the moves make sense．Black has no back rank resource：Steiner＇s sacrifice with 19 登xf6！ is sound as well as imaginative，and Colle＇s moves make the best of a bad lot．At the end 26．．．寞h3 doesn＇t just drop a piece as with the king on g1 the bishop can＇t be captured．And Black was well advised to resign，because 27．．．寞xg2 doesn＇t save the bishop with check，so


You might be wondering what happened when the misplacement of the white king was discovered after the game．The result was allowed to stand，despite Colle＇s appeal．

This is a curious anecdote from chess history，but it illustrates a very serious point about chess strategy．All the details matter．Shifting a piece from one square to another might seem of trifling significance，but it can change the assessment of a position．A sacri－ fice such as 19 筸xf6 can be splendid with the king on g1，but a crass oversight with the king on h1．The same can apply to tiny differences in a pawn structure．Many times a black king＇s defences are rock solid when he has a pawn on h7；push the pawn to h6 and sud－ denly there is a hook for a white piece sacrifice with 宦xh6！or perhaps a target for a white pawn when it advances with g4－g5．

Going back to Bill Hartston，if he saw this game he＇d probably make some notes for a new edition of his 1970 s book How to Cheat at Chess！

So far we have looked at games in which a sacrifice tempted the defender from the straight and narrow．No such provocation was needed in the following two examples． Black brings down an attack on his king＇s head by wasting a precious tempo on a luxury pawn move rather than developing a piece．

A perfectly acceptable system which imbalances the game from the start．Magnus Carl－ sen has used it as Black himself，though mostly in rapid and blitz games．We could debate the wisdom of playing one of the world champion＇s favoured opening lines against him（it might even be a good idea as he might not want to reveal what he thinks is the best re－ sponse to it！）



Question：What is the best way for White to build up his initiative？
If you adopt a sharp opening line you need to be well－versed in the theory，as the game move is a significant loss of time．It is true it stops White gaining any more space on the queenside，which is a noble aim．However，the position is not quiet enough to permit Black the extravagance of a non－developing move．He is after all still three moves from castling kingside．The usual moves are 8．．．${ }^{\text {．}}$ b6 or 8．．．g6．

## Answer： 9 幽f3！

White＇s queen enters the struggle and supports his next move when he gains further time for his initiative．
9．．．${ }^{\text {b }} 6$
寞xd6 12 寞xd6 when White＇s monster of a bishop on d6 keeps the black king stuck in the centre．

## 

Not only defending d 4 but also with the less apparent aim of hampering the develop－ ment of Black＇s kingside．


Question: With that in mind can see you a cracking response to $11 \ldots . . \mathrm{g} 6$, planning 12...思 g 7 to get the bishop out?

## 11... ${ }^{\text {Ob }}$ bd5

Answer: Resigning (and accepting stoically that the game is going to be published everywhere) would be the least bad option for Black after 11...g6? 12 d6+! seeing that 12...exd6 13 蒐xf6 or 12...

## 12 ©xd5 $\mathbf{~ x d 5} 13$ c3

Preparing his next move without letting Black molest the bishop with 14... $\triangle$ b4. Carlsen realises he doesn't need to hurry: his Kazakhstani opponent will be forced to weaken himself at some point to shake off the pressure on $\mathrm{g7}$.



Question：Black hopes that by conceding the bishop pair he has bought himself time to complete his kingside development with 17．．．鼻e7 and 18．．．0－0． Can you see how Carlsen proved him wrong？

## Answer： 17 断g3！

To paraphrase the great world champion Emanuel Lasker，there are three types of chess moves：developing moves，those which increase the power of your pieces，and those which stop the opponent＇s pieces doing stuff．By attacking 97 Carlsen prevents the bishop on f8
 imagine Carlsen flummoxing an opponent in a blitz game if he were playing Black with 19．．．氰d7！？and then an attack down the $g$－file！）．

## 17．．．g6

Utegaliyev switches to Development Plan B：a fianchetto on g 7 ．


Question：Here＇s a question I don＇t get to ask often：can you find a powerful tactic for White which Carlsen missed？

## 18 f4

Answer：To be fair it was a rapidplay game，but Carlsen could have crashed through in the centre if he had found 18 d 5 ！！White breaks through what appears to be the most secure
 the opening of the e－file is decisive－the black king can＇t flee the 21 置xf6＋discovered
 leaves the knight on e4 pinned．Finally 18．．．cxd5 keeps the e－file closed but opens up a le－
皆d6 is mate．

After 18 d5！！objectively best for Black is 18．．．鼻g7 19 dxe6 0－0，giving up material in or－ der to castle．But White can do even better than 20 exf7＋with 20 曽fe1！for example 20．．．


## 18．．．寞 g 7 ？

An obvious reply which allows White gets to catch the king in the centre after all．Much more resistant was 18．．．息e7！which misplaces the bishop but stops it from becoming a tar－ get on g7．After 19 卤ae1 0－0 20 f5 exf5 21 㲋xf5 etc．Carlsen would have all his pieces poised for the attack，but it＇s much nicer for Black to have the king behind a wall of pawns on g 8 than stranded on a draughty centre square．

## 19 f5！

In the event of 18．．．葸e7 19 f 5 ？Black could have kept the centre blocked with 19．．．gxf5， whereas now this would drop the bishop on 97 ．
19．．．exf5


Question：How does White stop Black castling and enjoying his extra pawn？

## Answer： 20 崽c7！

The direct 20 置d6 would be pretty effective after 20．．．${ }^{\text {Q }}$ e4？ 21 䴗ae1 etc．though not as strong as the game move．But 20．．．
 22 㥪e3，when 22．．．鱼xd6 pockets a piece（the black king isn＇t quite out of the woods but this would be a disaster for White）．The game move is far more effective as it clears the e－file with gain of time．


Question：If you fancy a tactical exercise，you might like to work out the best




 threat of mate in two beginning 27 坒e6＋．Though this line might be Black＇s best option as
䴗h7 31 h 3 etc．

寞xf7＋．It is to avoid this double attack in the game Black chose c 8 for his queen rather than d7，but it doesn＇t help him much．
20．．．良 C 8
 for White，but can you see a more incisive way to conclude the attack？ （the answer is revealed by the next move）．


## Answer： 21 欮d6！

Not letting the black king budge from e8．

## 21．．． 0 e4 22 葛ae1

Question：What is White＇s threat？And try to figure out the most decisive reply to 22 ．．．亶f8－you might find it in a flash but it looks a bit weird to me！

## 22．．．欮d7

 leaves Black with no way to stop 24 亘fxe4＋fxe4 25 曾xe4＋with a quick mate（do you also think 23 㨘f4 is rather odd？I guess I＇m not used to putting rooks on that square，especially in order to go sideways）．

## 23 笪xe4＋！

Our familiar breakthrough to conquer the f7－square．

## 

 computer tells me it＇s mate in eight moves，but Black doesn＇t need to look any further than the loss of his bishop to know it＇s time to resign．

Apart from the hiccup at move 18 －and we can＇t expect perfection even from the world champion in a rapidplay game－this was an excellent lesson in attacking chess．It shows the danger of indulging in slow moves such as $8 . .$. a5 when you haven＇t castled and the situation in the centre isn＇t fixed．This lapse meant that Black had to play the entire game against one of the greatest players in chess history without moving his rooks even once．It＇s no wonder the defence was hopelessly outnumbered．

