

## Michael Prusikin

# Attacking Strategies for Club Players 

How to Create a Deadly Attack on the Enemy King

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## Foreword by Alexander Khalifman

The attack on the king is one of the most attractive elements of the game of chess. The attack itself and the combinations and material sacrifices that often go hand in hand with it provide broad scope for demonstrating imagination and strengthens the belief in the inexhaustible wealth of ideas concealed within the 64 squares. Classical players regard it as the best evidence for the victory of intellect over material and I see no reason to contradict them.

For most chess players, from amateurs to grandmasters, their love affair with this ancient game started when they became acquainted with the masterpieces played by Paul Morphy and Adolf Anderssen in the romantic period. The desire to create something similarly wonderful just once in your life takes hold and prompts further progress. I'll let you in on a secret at this point. Even those proponents of a dry technical and positional style of play are generally proud of their tactical shots above all:

## Alexander Khalifman 2645

Grigory Serper 2575
St Petersburg 1994 (6)


Of course, this important aspect of the game has always attracted the attention of chess theoreticians and authors. Out of all the books written about this topic, I would like to highlight the classic work by Vladimir Vukovic entitled The Art of Attack. Even though this book was
written in the middle of the last century, it remains an undisputed and timeless masterpiece. Of course, some of Vukovic's evaluations have been superseded and some variations do not stand up to (computer-assisted) analysis, but even so the author has subjected the topic of the attack on the king to a thorough analysis.

Admittedly, the attack on the king is an almost inexhaustible theme, and that's why several dozen books on the topic have appeared in recent decades. Of course, I haven't had the chance to read them all, but those that I have invariably display the following defects, either individually or in different combinations:

## 1. Lack of originality

Sometimes almost bordering on clear plagiarism, sometimes quite skilfully done, yet reading the text brings on a feeling of déjà vu.
Collections of basic attacking motifs appear in abundance.

## 2. Exaggerated sensationalism

Of course there are numerous spectacular attacking games; every year sees new jewels of attacking chess and of course studying a collection of forcefully pursued king hunts is both interesting and impressive. But from a methodological perspective, the educational value of such an approach is not particularly high, quite frankly. You don't learn anything about physics or chemistry by watching a fireworks display.

## 3. Complication

Of course, chess isn't a simple game. There are no easy and universal algorithms and nor can there be. But too much is too much. Many authors genuinely try to convey to the reader something astute and important, but what that is exactly remains completely unclear.

## 4. Subjectivity

This is a typical vice of authors who like to include a lot of games. After studying such books, the reader knows exactly how grandmaster NN goes about attacking and how he approaches the game in general, but he is none the wiser about how he can apply what he has read to his own games.

It's possible, dear reader, that I am also subjective in my assessments, but I always try to assess chess books that come my way not as a stern critic and reviewer but as a practicing trainer. I'm not interested in their weaknesses, rather in the rational core that could be useful for the further development of my students. But most of what I've seen hasn't been very
inspiring. Hence at some point I came to the conclusion that Vukovic had already said everything there was to say about attacking the king, and had exhausted the topic.

After reading the present book I realised I was wrong: the topic is truly inexhaustible and its treatment was far from over with the publication of Vukovic's work.

The book by Prusikin deals primarily with the question 'how?'. How do I set up an attack? What are the necessary prerequisites? The vast majority of attacking patterns are presented with strikingly clear logic. I wouldn't want to say that I learnt a lot that was new to me, but the simplicity and the clarity with which the author articulates his thoughts leave a powerful impression.

It's not my intention to pick out a specific chapter, as they are all excellent in my opinion, but I do believe that the neglected topic of attacking the king in the endgame and in queenless middlegames deserves particular attention.

It seems to me to be equally important that most examples come from modern practice. This increases the likelihood that the same types of positions will appear on the board in your own games.

Prusikin's approach to include in the concluding exercises not just examples with a direct tactical solution but also ones that involve seeking out the correct strategic idea to launch an attack on the king is both interesting and very unusual.

In my opinion, this is the correct idea, and one worth copying ultimately while playing through the game you aren't given any hints as to the type of solution required in the respective situation.

As I mentioned above, the game of chess is too complex for a single book, even one as good as this, to be able to contain universal answers to every question. There are dozens of exceptions to every general rule in chess.

Nevertheless, I believe that any reader who studies this book, almost irrespective of their playing strength, will come away with new ideas for conducting an attack on the king in particular and about chess understanding in general.

Attack and seize victory!

Alexander Khalifman,
October 2020

## Introduction

The subject of attacking the king is certainly a rewarding one, both for the author and for the reader, as attacking the king is associated (not entirely incorrectly) with spectacular tactical twists, and tactics is the aspect of chess with the highest aesthetic value - at least according to the majority of chess players, completely regardless of their playing strength. Whether it's the 'Evergreen game', the 'Immortal game' or the Steinitz rook perambulating on the seventh rank as though it were quite at home these are the games that both amateurs and professionals know and love, and they are characterised by tactical fireworks, an extravagant approach to sacrificing material and an unswerving attack on the king.

To believe that the ability to produce such 'games for eternity' is something that only a few lucky individuals are born with is a major and widespread error. Certainly, innate talent for the game of chess plays a role and possibly defines the limits we could reach with maximum effort, but it is above all hard work and the amount of time invested in learning the secrets of chess that are crucial for tournament success and creative flights of fancy.

In some ways, learning how to play chess is like learning a foreign language. Both chess and languages are comprised of blocks of information, so-called 'chunks', that we memorise and then must put together/ apply correctly on the board (or when speaking). In chess we generally talk in this connection about 'patterns', a typical example being the different mating motifs such as the back-rank mate, smothered mate etc. Of course, there are also corresponding chunks for the topics of strategy and the endgame. A strong chess player differs from one less strong primarily by the greater number of chunks that he has internalised. Talent and creativity have an impact when the player, in a tournament situation, 'digs out' from his memory the right chunks at the right time and puts them together. As useful as general rules and strategic explanations may be, the number of internalised tactical and strategic patterns is, as already mentioned, the crucial factor when it comes to playing strength. That's why the individual chapters in this book only contain what is absolutely necessary in terms of introductory text and much more in the way of annotated games.

However, the theme of this book is not basic attacking motifs. I assume you are already familiar with these or I would recommend that, if so
inclined, you read the classic The Art of Attack by Vladimir Vukovic or its modern counterpart Essential Chess Sacrifices by David LeMoir. In this book we shall address the strategic requirements for a successful attack on the king and some lesser-known attacking motifs, though no less relevant in practice. I hope this will be both interesting and useful for players with an Elo rating between 1500 and 2300.

Despite the numerous diagrams that accompany the annotated games, I would recommend to all players who are serious about improving their chess and would like to derive the maximum benefit from this book that they use a chessboard to play through the games. To benefit even more, stop before each diagram and try to work out the next move. But even simply using the book for a spot of bedtime reading will not only provide aesthetic enjoyment but should also yield some rating points.

Have fun!
Michael Prusikin
Parsberg, Germany
June 2021

## CHAPTER 1

## Prerequisites and rules for attacking the king

As already discussed in the introduction, familiarity with typical attacking motifs and ideas is crucial for a successful attack on the king. However, there are of course a few general rules that you should know to significantly increase your chances of toppling your opponent's king from his throne.

Here's a list of tips relevant to practical play:

## Prerequisites for successfully attacking the king

1. Lead in development/uncastled opposing king

The well-known maxim of the very first World Champion, Wilhelm Steinitz, that 'Whoever has the advantage must attack', refers above all to dynamic advantages such as a lead in development. These dissipate very quickly if the better developed player does not act quickly enough. More on this can be found in the chapter 'King in the centre'.
2. Space advantage on the side of the board where the opposing king is located You should attack where you stand stronger. And you are stronger where you have more space, as a space advantage allows us to accumulate more attacking pieces on the relevant side of the board than our opponent can muster defenders. Which brings us to the next point:
3. Few defensive pieces around our opponent's king

I came across a valuable idea many years ago in the game annotations of Garry Kasparov: we often completely fail to notice that our opponent's king is denuded of defenders. But if we divide the board into two halves in our mind, this deficiency becomes much more obvious. If the queen has abandoned her consorts and is far away from her king, this also increases our chances of launching a resounding attack - this is a special case of the rule under discussion.
4. Lack of/weakened pawn protection for the king

This point might seem self-explanatory. The last bastion of a king's protection is always the pawn wall. If some of the pawns are missing, or the pawn protection is damaged, this represents a danger to the king.

## Tips for successfully attacking the king

1. The most important rule for the attacker, which we will repeat time and time again throughout the book, was put very memorably by US grandmaster Yasser Seirawan:
'Everyone must be invited to the party!'
Another way of putting it, which I also really like, is:
'Attack with as many pieces as possible, defend with as few as necessary.'
2. Open lines!

In most cases, there comes a point when the attacker cannot avoid advancing pawns to use them as levers to open lines for his major pieces. This applies both to positions with kings castled on the same side and with kings castled on opposite sides.
3. Have the courage to sacrifice!

There regularly comes a point during an attack when progress can only be made by sacrificing material. Don't be stingy when this point arrives. If a sacrifice can be calculated exactly through to the end, there's no real risk anyway. If the consequences of the intended sacrifice cannot be calculated exactly, a decision should be made based on a combination of calculation and intuition.

To freely adapt the old proverb: it is better to sacrifice and regret it than to not sacrifice and regret it. If you timidly decline a promising sacrifice because the consequences cannot be foreseen exactly, then you pass up the opportunity of adding another jewel to the treasure trove of chess masterpieces.

## 4. Time is key!

Time is the decisive factor especially when it comes to exploiting a lead in development and with reciprocal attacks when the kings are castled on opposite sides. The attack should - bearing in mind the three points above - be pursued rapidly, purposefully and straightforwardly.

## CHAPTER 4

## Attacking the king without the queen

The Soviet master and theoretician Sergei Belawenets, largely unknown in the west, wrote in one of his books that, after exchanging queens, every player should take the time to switch from thinking in concrete terms (calculating variations) to general terms (formulating plans).

In actual fact, the exchange of by far the strongest pieces generally changes both the rhythm of the game and the assessment of the position, primarily because king safety becomes far less important.

However, it would be a serious error to automatically equate exchanging queens with a transition into the endgame and to completely disregard king safety thereafter, which is something that happens frequently in practice nevertheless.

Positions in which only the queens have left the board, or perhaps also one or two pairs of minor pieces, often still have the character of a middlegame, and the king can still stumble into a mating net even in positions than can justifiably be assigned to the endgame phase.

Let's summarise and try to formulate a few recommendations for practical play:

1. Chess literature contains neither a clear definition of the term 'endgame' nor a clean demarcation with the middlegame.
2. The decision to exchange queens is always to be taken only after careful and sensible consideration - the reason being that it completely changes the assessment of the position, and can even reverse a previous assessment.
3. The absence of the queens does not automatically mean that king safety can be disregarded.
4. Factors such as a concentration of forces in one part of the board, better development, or better coordinated pieces also favour an attack on the king in the absence of the strongest pieces.

We'll start with two examples, which resemble twins. The difference between them is that the first is a game from practical play while the second is a study (with very much a practical orientation).

Game 14
Alexander Berelowitsch
Lothar Vogt
Leipzig 2003 （7）


A dull double－rook endgame which will soon send in a draw？
30．h4！！
Not quite！Suddenly the black king is ensnared in a mating net．The idea of the move $30 . \mathrm{h} 4$ ！！is to cut off the black king＇s escape routes．
30． ． ecc 8 g5＝．

## 30．．．むg7！

The best defence！
A） 30 ．．．幽h 3 31．曾cc8 g5 32．f5！！exf5
33．h5！！（there it is，the point of $30 . \mathrm{h} 4$ ！！）

B） 30 ．．．h5 31．${ }^{\text {eccc }} 8$ g5 $32 . f 5!!+-$ ．




And now what？Is there something more for White in this position other than perpetual check？

## 35．h5！！

The idea of this astonishing move is to regroup the rooks，namely to double them vertically instead of horizontally：

## 35．．．gxh5 36．${ }^{[g}$ g2！1－0

Black is completely powerless to prevent 37．${ }^{\text {Eh }} \mathrm{h} 88$ followed by 38．皆1g7\＃．

Game 15
V．Evreinov
1967


## 1． ． Edd 8 g 5

The only way to continue the fight．
2．f5！
A familiar motif，wouldn＇t you say？
2．．．g4

5．．e．cg8\＃．
3． ．eg8＋
3．畀 h 8 ？党bc2＋！．
3．．．혈h6 4．\＃̈xg4
Mate in one is threatened．
4．．．．${ }^{3} h 7$ ！
4．．．gh5 5．elg3＋－
5．

5．f6？量g2 and White would still have to fight for a draw．

## 5．．．営xh2

Again，Black＇s choices were rather limited．

6．．．象g8 7．f6．



The black king has had to take a lot of punishment and，most to its dislike，has been pushed from pillar to post over the last few moves．But where is the mate？

## 9． －d3！！

10．f6\＃is threatened，but the main idea of this quiet move is to regroup the rooks once again．


## 9．．．exf5 10．${ }^{\text {U．}} \mathrm{dd} 8$

Sets up a new mating threat and continues to eye up the square d2 so that Black would only have one check on c2 and no more．
10．．．f6
Forced again．

White gains a new trump card－the far－advanced passed e－pawn．

14． g g ？䒤 b 7 ！is a blind alley．



## 

The passed pawn promotes with check，so further resistance is pointless．

Game 16
Klaus Bischoff
2541
Igor Stohl
2534
Austria Bundesliga 2001／02（2）


A position that couldn＇t be more innocuous：symmetrical pawn structure，both sides have the same pieces and queens have already been exchanged．Black has still to castle，admittedly，but the white bishop on c1 is also still undeveloped．A draw can＇t be far away？
13．a4！
Klaus has seen a few unobvious weaknesses in Black＇s position：the
queenside is somewhat vulnerable and the dark－squared bishop has become slightly displaced．It would be better situated on e 7 ．
13．．．b4
13．．．bxa4 is no better either．After
 for example，Black would have great difficulties to contend with，as the pawn on a6 is weak and the bishop pair is lost．

## 14．a5！

The point of the last move．
Retreating the knight was out of the question，of course：14． E b1？a5 and Black is even slightly better．

## 14．．．bxc3？

Igor accepts the pawn sacrifice and underestimates the associated difficulties．Necessary was 14．．．${ }^{\text {（ }} \mathrm{C} 7$
 17．発c1 鼻xb3 18．惜xc7＋－）16．f3！． A typical course of action：the ＇breakwater＇，the g2／f3／e4 pawn chain，is installed in order to restrict Black＇s minor pieces
 18．$\dagger 1$ 1d2 $\pm$ ．The pawns on a6 and b4 are weak，Black＇s minor pieces are more passive than their white counterparts．The first player enjoys a large strategic advantage．

As desirable as castling would be， the passed pawn on b6 had to be
 18． ® $^{\text {c }} 5+-$
17．025 鼻e4
17．．．．鼻d5 18．鼻a3 would not have changed much．

## $18 . f 3$ 国 66



## 19．賭a3

A remarkable position：the queens have long since left the board，play is concentrated on one side and yet White is winning－because Black cannot connect his rooks or move his king from the centre！
19．．． 0 －$f 5$ 20． 0 b7！
20．e4 气c3 21．曾d2 also won，but the move played in the game is more energetic．
20．．．f6
The pawn is taboo： $20 \ldots$ ．．． ex 3



26． $4 \mathrm{C} 7+-$ ．
21．\＃ac1 包 4



The white position is already an easy win，but once again Klaus opts for the most spectacular method：
 ©c4 25．蔂c5 a5 26．寞xc4 dxc4 27．0 d $^{2}+1-0$


Mate cannot be avoided：27．．．


 32． 0 e6＋象e8 33．胃e7\＃）30．寞b6＋
 something magical about the perfect interaction between the three remaining white pieces．

Game 17
Dmitry Chuprov
2477
Denis Khismatullin
2583
Kazan ch－RUS sf 2005 （3）


With his last move，19．．． Df6－g4，$^{2}$ Black guarded the pawn on e5 and the g5－square and also set up
the threat 20．．．${ }^{\text {exe3 }}$ ．On the other hand，his rooks are once again unconnected and he will need a few more moves to complete his development．How should White react？
20． 0 g5！
Even so！
20．．．宴xg5？
As in the previous game，the second player cannot resist the temptation to grab material．He didn＇t see the coming variation which admittedly was not very obvious．
 would still keep the game equal．

## 21．胃xf7 \＆

This second mistake in a row loses on the spot．With 21．．．鼻c6 22. V $^{\text {d }} 6+$


 27．${ }^{\text {exc6 }} \pm$ ，Black could have still put up some resistance．
22．르 dd7 累c6


23． 0 d6！
A familiar motif：we already saw this mating idea in the Bischoff－ Stohl game．

趷f8＋26．．t．ge1 1－0

## CHAPTER 6

## Pawn storm with same-side castling

In contrast to positions with castling on opposite sides, where the pawns can be 'let loose' against the opposing king without any great misgivings, unleashing a pawn storm with kings castled on the same side must be well prepared and well thought out as doing so takes away one's own pawn protection.

The most important requirement for a successful pawn storm is central stability. This is because if the centre collapses, our opponent's forces can quickly swarm round our king via the centre and we are outcountered even before our own attack really gets going.

The centre needs not necessarily be closed off with pawn chains; it's completely sufficient that the attacker can adequately control the centre with pawns and pieces and penetration of the opposing pieces via the central files is ruled out.

Otherwise, the usual attacking rules apply for using a pawn storm with kings castled on the same side. It requires speed, accurate calculation, imagination and awareness of the endgames that may ensue.

Game 29
Alexei Gavrilov
2456
Radek Londyn
2404
Prague 2016 （9）


Assessing this position is no trivial matter．At first glance，White has a very favourable version of the isolani structure：the white pieces are well positioned，the dark－squared bishops have been swapped off，which has provided the first player with secure control over the important blockading square d 4 ，and on the kingside it looks as though Black has no counterplay（one of the reasons being the lack of the dark－squared bishop）．However，a second look reveals that the black army is also perfectly mobilised，the isolani is not blockaded（or in the words of Nimzowitsch，＇a criminal who is NOT under lock and key＇）and the second player can obviously assemble more pieces on the kingside than his opponent．But in concrete terms，how does Black achieve counterplay？Londyn puts forward a convincing solution：

## 19．．．g5！

The stable centre and Black＇s active pieces allow him to get things moving in front of his own king． 20． 0 h5！
The other retreat would have resulted in a typical sacrifice： 20.0 e2 d4！！．＇Jettisoning＇the pawn liberates the black rooks and above all the bishop on b7，e．g．21． Qexd4（21．$_{\text {Efxd }}$
 gives Black a monstrous attack for minimal material investment； 21．exd4 铭f6！22．䙾xe4 ©xe4 with full compensation for the sacrificed pawn）21．．． $0 x$ xd3 22．莳xd3 鲜f6 23．h3 h5 24．©h2 g4！．Here，the computer insists as usual that the position is equal，but over the board I would have considerable reservations about defending this position as White． 20．．．f5


The threat of mate on $g 7$ had to be attended to．
21． V $^{2} 4$
White had two viable alternatives here，but both，just like the text move，lead to equality：



B） 21.0 g 3 ！昆f8 22 ．寞b5 亘 $\mathrm{h} 6=$ ．

## 

Objectively speaking，this move is still OK，but it leads to a position in which White must find some very difficult moves to maintain equality．
Simpler would have been the retreat 22． 0 g 3 ．

## 22．．． 르h6 23．h3？

This loses immediately，but the only sequence of moves to keep White in the game was，to put it diplomati－ cally，not easy to find：23．${ }^{\text {曷f }}$ ！（to cover the sensitive f2－square as a precaution）23．．．f4 24．g4！．
23．．．g4！24． Vf4 $^{\text {f }}$


24．．． Qxf $^{2!}$－＋
This is why White＇s rook needed to be on f 1 ！A square that is only defended by the king always tends to be weak．
25．象xf2 g3＋！26．象f1
Somewhat more tenacious，but still ultimately hopeless，was $26 .{ }^{\text {dag xg }} 3$
 29．恩f3 䴗g6－＋．
26．．．謄xe3 27． V d $^{\text {d }}$ f4！
The threat is $28 \ldots . .0 x d 3$ followed by 29．．．f3．
28．包3 4 xd3 29．暻xd3



This counterstrike（and above all a suitable reply to it！）had to be seen by Black far in advance．
33．．．旬f7！
But not 33．．．高xh7？？34．㽞c7＋and White mates first．


Game 30
Alexander Kovchan
2575
Anton Korobov
2698
Kiev ch－UKR 2018 （1）


With his last move，17．．．h7－h6， Black imperceptibly weakened his kingside，a fact that Kovchan tries to exploit immediately：
18．g4！©bd7！

In answer to the logical 18．．． $\mathrm{V}_{\mathrm{fd}} \mathrm{f}$ ， so that after any exchange on e5 the knight on f 6 is not immediately attacked again by the pawn， Kovchan had surely planned 19． $0 x$ xfl ！©xf7 $20 . g 5$ with a strong， although perhaps not decisive， attack on the king．The black army assembled on the queenside would scarcely have been able to come to the aid of its king．
19． $0 x$ x 7 ？
Similar to the variation above， but here Black is better prepared to counter this strike．The piece sacrifice is still correct，but the second player stands no worse afterwards．
 ©d7 22．f4 ©xe5 23．fxe5 訔e7＝

## 

Korobov was certainly in a position to display a healthy degree of greed：
 to a position with equal chances．
 c5 24．


## 26．鼻g3？！

Kovchan had no luck with this bishop either now or as the game progressed．A logical continuation
was 26．f4！exe5 27．fxe5 cxd4
 substantial positional advantage for White．
 29．畕 44 ！！
29．欮h5 ©xe5 30．dxe5＋－

## 29．．．cxd4 30．exd4 芭c6 31．断h5 8 f6！

Allows the bishop to return to e5． By playing 31．．．党e7 Black could have maintained equality．

## 

 34．．．易b6！would still have kept Korobov in the game．

## 35．르 dg2

Thus，White achieves a dream position：all his pieces are now perfectly positioned．A sure sign that from now on strikes that could decide the game hang in the air． 35．${ }^{\text {暑xe6？would be disastrous here：}}$ 35．．．蒠xe5！and Black wins．

## 35．．．${ }^{\text {man }} 7$ ？！

With 35 ．．．昆c7 or 35 ．．．量b6 Korobov could have avoided the worst， although his position would still have caused him problems．


36． 0 xd5！！
Initiates a wonderful climax．

[^0]Anton resigned in view of 37．．．gxh6 38．

Game 31
Vitaly Tseshkovsky
Vladimir Karasev
2383
Zvenigorod ch－RUS sr 2005 （3）


By way of an exception，evaluating this position is easy：White has a solid advantage due to his space advantage and the resulting active locations of his minor pieces．But Black＇s position is also sturdy． Tseshkovsky＇s creative mind finds a way to quickly disrupt the fortress：

21．．．崽g8 22．暻g6 弟e7 23．g4！＋－would have been even simpler．
22．g4！©e6 23．寞xe6！䓢xe6 24．f5！崽c4


## 25．g5！！

Forward march，regardless of losses！ Sometimes this simple strategy works．
25．
Black to consolidate，after which he would have started a counterattack with ．．．d6－d5．

## 25．．．思xf1 26．${ }^{\text {tuff1 fxg5 }}$

 completely hopeless．

29．르g1 昆d7


With a pawn for the exchange and an excellent position，White can certainly look to the future with optimism，but is his compensation sufficient for more than equality？ And above all－how can he increase the pressure on Black＇s position？

## 30．b3！！

According to the engine，this move， both surprising and strong，is the only way to maintain White＇s advantage．The idea is primarily prophylactic in nature：counterplay by way of ．．．留c 4 is prevented，which also allows the white rook to leave the first rank．
30．．．c5？
30．．．黒de7 31．． e g 4 d 5 was the only way to offer resistance，even though
there is no question that White has the advantage after $32 . f 6$ 党xe4

31． 0 d5
31．宽f6！＋－．

Once again Black misses the right time to resign the game．

36．登f1 b5 37．axb5 皆xb5 38．f6 皆e5

42．㘳e6 gxf6 43．登xf6 皆ce7 44．謄d5

47．宸xd6 崽f8 48．莀e6 寞b4 49．h4


韩f8 58．d6 1－0

Game 32
Vladimir Tukmakov
2574
Florin Gheorghiu
2462
Crans Montana 2000 （6）


We have a position before us which is very unbalanced，and is not easy to assess as a result． The pair of white bishops do not seem particularly threatening， and White＇s pawn structure is weakened．However，the decisive
factor is the offside black knight．It needs a couple of moves to get back into the game．Two tempi－that＇s all that White has to organise an attack on the black king，but luckily the pawn on h6 offers a point to attack．

## 

Accepting the pawn sacrifice was pretty much forced．

## 23．g5 f5

23．．．hxg5？24．寞h7＋唱h8 25．fxg5
 outright，but the best defence， 23．．．${ }^{2}$ d6！，deserved closer examination．After the forced sequence 24．寞h7＋\＆



 31．鲜f7＋署h8 32．g6＋－）29．宽e3 曾xe3 $30 . \mathrm{fxe} 3 \pm$ ），the critical position arises，which superficially appears to quite OK for Black：

analysis diagram
28．宽e3！！brings the last dormant piece into the game．We will return to this move later in the game．But can＇t Black simply rescue himself by exchanging queens？28．．．鲜e4＋

29．欮xe4 包xe4（29．．．fxe4 30．亘xh6＋

 position has arisen．Not only have the queens been exchanged but there are hardly any pieces left on the board，Black is to move but still has no good way of parrying the obvious threat of 31 ． e．g．30．．．党fe8（30．．．b4 31．f3！！exc3
32．胃xh6＋gxh6 33．囬xh6＋我g8 34．g6＋－）31．品xh6＋gxh6 32．唱xh6＋
 35．鼻f6＋－．
24．客xf5 0 d6
24．．．hxg5 25．葸h7＋東h8 26．罩e5！包d6









 43．皆e5＋一．
落f6



28．宜e3！！

The belated party guest will immediately raise spirits！But only for the first player．
28．．．．．．g8
28．．．gxf4 leads to another study－like variation：29．皆xh4＋階x xh4 30．胃h1
 this way！It＇s not sufficient for the queen to access the h－file，it must be

©h6）33．．．亘xf7 34．斷h2＋＋－．This
double attack explains why White＇s
32nd move is so important．
29．寞h7＋！殸f7

30．fxg5 悤xg5 31．f4
31．㝟d4＋－．
31．．．崽xf4
31．．．崽h6 32．䓢d4＋－．



The game is decided．Why the Romanian didn＇t resign at this point is a mystery to me．

昆xf4 36．兠e5



包b646．．
48．崽e4
And finally Black resigned．

## CHAPTER 16

## Breakthrough on the strong point

The subject of breaking through is old hat, of course, but all the authors that I'm aware of only look at breaking through with pawns in the endgame, with the aim of promoting one of the resulting passed pawns into a queen.

Back in 2004, grandmaster Igor Zaitsev, a well-known analyst and second to Anatoly Karpov, wrote a small but notable book with the title that I have used as the name for this chapter.

In this book, Zaitsev made the interesting observation that when a point is excessively protected, the surrounding points are automatically somewhat neglected. I initially found his conclusion surprising, to put it mildly: according to Zaitsev, the best thing to do is to utilise the aforementioned weak points by breaking through at the best defended point. However, the longer I thought about it, the more sense Zaitsev's proposition made. Over the years I have gathered together or produced some examples that support it.

The first position is from Zaitsev's book, with his comments not referring to Pavel Smirnov's victory, but to the game Kramnik-Polgar mentioned in the notes, in which Big Vlad missed the correct continuation.

Game 85
Pavel Smirnov
Dmitry Batsanin
Arkhangelsk ch－RUS 1996


The endgame would be completely equal．But can White plausibly avoid the exchange of queens？

## 13．g4！！

The 14－year－old future grandmaster Pavel Smirnov answers this question with a resounding＇yes＇， and in a way that is as spectacular as it is effective！Two years previously，no less a player than Vladimir Kramnik had failed to find the solution，although admittedly in rapid chess： $13 . \varrho \mathrm{b} 5$ ？鼻xb5 14．鼻xb5 宸xf3 15．gxf3士 Kramnik－Polgar，Paris rapid 1994.

## 13．．．㟶xg4

Nothing can be done，the pawn sacrifice cannot be accepted，but nor can it be refused：13．．．鼻xg4 14．峌c6＋！！bxc6 15．鼻a6\＃；13．．．仓xg4



Black could have spared himself the rest．
15．．．h5 16．自xg4＋hxg4 17．割e3


22．${ }^{\text {．ed1 1－0 }}$

Game 86
Pal Benko
2415
Lev Psakhis
2605
Aruba 1992 （3）


The thematic 8 ．．．d5 clearly doesn＇t work straightaway．But that＇s no reason to discard the idea completely！
8．．．©xe4！！9．乌xe4 d5 10．cxd5？！
10．© ${ }^{\text {Q }}$ 2 was somewhat more tenacious，but the position after something like 10．．．dxe4 11．锶xd8＋当xd8 12．鼻xe4 乞b4 doesn＇t look pleasant for White．

## 10．．．．${ }^{\text {eb }}$ b

10．．．鼻xd5 11．f3 真b4 would just be a transposition．
 $0-0-0$ ！
White is completely powerless against the perfectly mobilised black forces．

## 14．（1e2

14．0－0－0 鼻xf3－＋．




Game 87 Réti Opening
Vladimir Kramnik
Alexander Beliavsky
Belgrade 1995 （11）

1． 0 f3 d5 2．g3 c6 3．畕g2 畕g4 4．0－0



It looks logical to try the Stonewall set－up with the bishop OUTSIDE the pawn chain，but the idea has a serious flaw：the e6－square becomes very weak．
$7 . c 4$ 曽d6
I＇ve already had some positive experiences with this position as

 11．e4＋－Prusikin－Lipok，Augsburg 2014.


睍h5 12．e4＋－）11．e4！dxe4 12．c5


 1－0 Prusikin－Krejci，Merlimont 2011.

10．cxd5 cxd5 11．h3 畕h5
11．．．寞xf3 12．exf3！部e7 would have been much more tenacious，but for one thing Black＇s position is rather
dismal due to the weakness on e6， and for another，Kramnik＇s idea after the text move wasn＇t easy to see．


## 12．e4！！

Here it is，the thematic break－ through at the strongpoint！The black position quickly collapses．

## 12．．．fxe4 13． Vg $^{\text {g }}$



17．宦xh6 gxh6 18．当ae1 also won， but in fact Kramnik＇s move is even stronger．

Black can certainly accept the piece，but cannot retain it： $13 . .$. 謄xg5



analysis diagram


14．©dxe4！dxe4 15．包xe6 䔈xe6

 gxh6 20．邑ae1＋－．We are already familiar with this motif，see the comment to White＇s 13th move．
18．若 d 5

20．总e6！so Black resigned．

Game 88

## Igor Khenkin <br> Michael Prusikin



## 12．啠 c2？！

Igor fails to sense the impending danger．With the prophylactic
12．宽c2 he would have retained a slight advantage．
12．．．e4！！
Thematic and incredibly strong．
From the freed－up e5－square，the black knight can keep tabs on all the weak squares in White＇s camp． 13．蔂xe4
Suddenly White is in serious diffi－ culties．The black pieces swarm out and start stinging like a provoked swarm of bees：13． 0 xe4 0 e5 and now：

16．gxf5 0－0 17．眔f4 置xf5 18．e4

B）14．0－0 h5！also looks dangerous for the white king；
 16．鲜e2（16．f4 学h4＋－＋）16．．．h5 with tremendous compensation for the sacrificed pawn．

## 13．．． 0 e5 14．g5

Good advice was already in short supply：
A）14．0－0 0－0！15．．
16．彩里x $4 \mathrm{f} 5-+$ ；
B） 14. 欮e2 0 xe4 15． $0 x e 4 \mathrm{f} 516 . g x f 5$


analysis diagram
断xe4＋一＋
 17．f4 0－0 18．宣d2
鼻d7颜h4；
 The white king is hopelessly weak and the black bishop is clearly superior to its white counterpart．

## 18．．．謄h4！19．0－0－0？？

After deliberating for 30 minutes， White curtails his suffering．

20．芘xg4 ©xg4 21．Me6



©xf2 23．高xf2 皆ae8戸）；



## 19．．．賭f5

Igor missed a good time to resign here，but who resigns as White on the 19th move？
20．宣e1
20．嵝g 2 比xf2－＋


b5 26．cxb5 a6 27．鼻d2 嗖h4 0－1
Game 89
Michael Prusikin 2529
Wolfram Heinig 2328
Saarbrücken ch－GER 2009 （5）


A very interesting position．What is more important，the better position of the white king or the mobile black centre，supported by the mighty knight on c3？

## 30．b4！！

The quick way to bring the white problem child，the rook on a3，into the game．
30．．．cxb4
Best．



## 31．㧝 $55+$ ！！

The real point of the spectacular 30th move．



B）Nor does the obvious 31．圌xc3？
 In both cases，Black＇s passed pawns ensure sufficient counterplay．
31．．．．．add
31．．．我c6 32．${ }^{\text {ex xa }}$ xa was also hopeless．


Now there＇s no escape for the black king．
33．．．唇e6

35．${ }^{4} \mathrm{c}$ c $8++$－




## 34．写 $x d 4+!$

The last finesse！In contrast， winning the queen is not enough
 35．品xe6 昆xe6 and the mighty central passed pawns save the day for the second player．
34．．．．． 35．欮 $\mathrm{C} 5+!+$ ．
啚xb6 38．．
Black resigned here．The rook endgame after 39．．．囬f8＋40．罗e2笪f2＋41．鼡xe3 囬xg2 42．h3 is an easy win for White．


[^0]:    36．．．exd5 37．䘡xh6＋

