



# **The Lighter Side of Chess**

**Games, Goofs and Funny Facts  
Volume 1**



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# **The Lighter Side of Chess**

## **Games, Goofs and Funny Facts Volume 1**

**Georg Mohr, Adrian Mikhalchishin**

**Thinkers Publishing 2026**



## Key to symbols

|    |                                                  |    |                                |
|----|--------------------------------------------------|----|--------------------------------|
| !  | a good move                                      | ±  | White has a serious advantage  |
| ?  | a weak move                                      | ∓  | Black has a serious advantage  |
| !! | an excellent move                                | +− | White has a decisive advantage |
| ?? | a blunder                                        | −+ | Black has a decisive advantage |
| !? | an interesting move                              | →  | with an attack                 |
| ?! | a dubious move                                   | ↑  | with initiative                |
| □  | only move                                        | ↔  | with counterplay               |
| =  | equality                                         | Δ  | with the idea of               |
| ∞  | unclear position                                 | ⊃  | better is                      |
| ≡  | with compensation for the<br>sacrificed material | N  | novelty                        |
| ±  | White stands slightly better                     | +  | check                          |
| ∓  | Black stands slightly better                     | #  | mate                           |

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# Introduction

Dear Readers,

Countless chess books have been written – hundreds, thousands, perhaps even more. And because chess is often seen as a serious pursuit, most of these books reflect that tone, offering lessons on history, openings, middlegames, and endgames.

But chess isn't just about learning! Far from it. As many great minds have said, chess is a reflection of life itself. That's why we, the authors, set out to create something different – an unconventional book that presents chess through a lens of humor, wit, and even a touch of tragicomedy. We wanted to offer a fresh perspective on the royal game, filled with jokes, anecdotes, and the remarkable (and sometimes bittersweet) stories of chess legends. Within these pages, you'll find fascinating quotes, curious incidents, and astonishing moments that have unfolded on the chessboard – and will undoubtedly continue to do so. And yes, even grandmasters are only human, prone to mistakes – sometimes spectacular ones.

This is a book for every chess lover, from absolute beginners to seasoned grandmasters. Over the years, we've collected these stories with great passion, and we're certain this will not be our last – there are always more captivating tales waiting to be told.

A final word of advice: not everything in this book is meant to be taken at face value. Some stories remain unverified, passed down through generations of chess players. Some we've borrowed from other authors, while others have been shared informally for years. So, read with an open mind, a good sense of humor, and just a pinch of skepticism.

But then again... what if it's all true?

Maribor, 2025

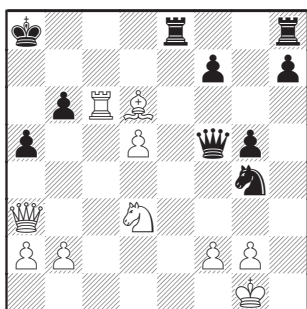
Georg Mohr & Adrian Mikhachishin  
chess enthusiasts – and grandmasters, too.



## Grandmasters are (still) human

Let's start close to home! Here's a look at how one of the authors earned his grandmaster title:

**Sermek : Mohr**  
Maribor, 1993



This game comes from the traditional tournament in Maribor, Slovenia, held in honor of **grandmaster Vasja Pirc**. The player with the Black pieces (me!) needed a win to secure his grandmaster norm, and in a mutual time scramble, he played...

26...♞f5

King Louis XIV once played chess with a courtier when an urgent minister interrupted. Louis handed the minister the board and said, "*Decide the result!*" The minister declared: "*You've lost, Your Majesty!*" – without even looking at the board.

...setting up a deadly mating threat. Black now threatens the crushing 27...♞f2!, and after 28.♘f2 ♚e1#, it would be checkmate.

The Croatian-Slovenian grandmaster, under immense pressure, frantically searched for a way out. There was no immediate check, so he had to defend the back rank:

27. ♚c1??

If White had just a little more time - or better concentration - he would have surely found the brilliant 27.♞a5!!, sacrificing the queen: 27...ba5 28.♞a6 ♖b7 29.♘c5 ♗c8 30.♞a8#!

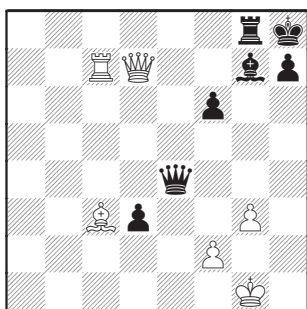
Had this happened, your humble servant might have remained just an International Master, and this book might have lost a bit of its credibility... Instead, the game continued:

27...♞d5 28.♙g3 ♚c8 29.♞f1 ♜hd8  
30.♞a4 ♞c4 31.♞c4 ♚c4 32.♘e5 ♘e5  
33.♙e5 ♞dc8 0:1

### A more recent gift for the other author

The next example is much more recent, and this time, the other author of this book was the lucky recipient!

**Klinova : Mikhalechishin**  
San Francisco 2014



This game was played in one of the fascinating chess festivals organized in the United States by **Anatoly Machulsky**, a Ukrainian émigré, businessman, and grandmaster. He frequently invited his old rivals, many of whom later became legendary grandmasters.

**43. Bc8?**

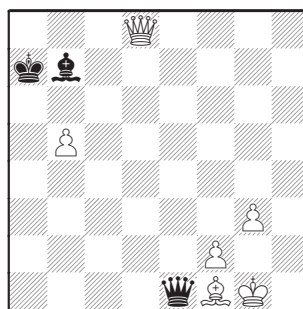
After the game, **Irina Krush** was the only person in the hall who immediately spotted the winning move: 43. Qg7! Bg7 44. Bc8 Bg8 45. Qf6#! Instead, the game continued:

43...h5 44. Bc7 Qg6 45. Qd2 ½-½

**Even World Championship players  
are not immune**

Now, you might be thinking that the authors of this book are the luckiest people in the chess world. Not at all! Let's take a look at an example from the Women's World Championship.

**Daulyte : Socko**  
Sochi 2015



**57. Qa5??**

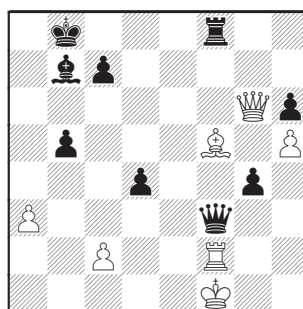
White completely missed a mate-in-one: 57.b6#! Instead, in severe time trouble, she repeated the position twice (57...Qb8 58. Qd8 Qa7 ...) but then...

**57...Qa5 0:1**

A complete shock!

Our next missed opportunity is from a battle between two German grandmasters:

**Knaak : Luther**  
Zittau 1989



**39...Qh3?**

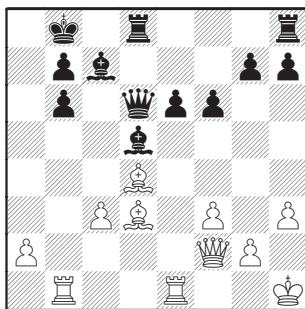
39...Qd1#!

40. ♖e1 ♜h1?  
40... ♜e3; 40... ♜c3+.

41. ♜f1 ♜d5 42. ♜g4  
and White slowly edged his way to a draw! 1/2 (68).

Even (future) world champions can make mistakes:

**Euwe : Landau**  
Netherlands 1933



27. ♜b6?? ♜h2#!!

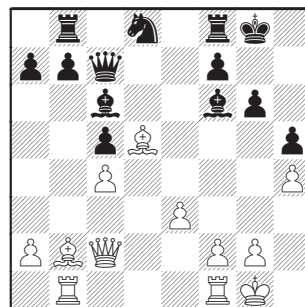
Despite their immense skill, even grandmasters miss mate-in-one opportunities on rare occasions. However, they much more frequently overlook simple forced combinations – sequences where the opponent has only one reasonable reply, or in the best-case scenario, only one legal move.

One of the most legendary chess tournaments of all time was the **Candidates Tournament** in **Zürich 1953**, largely thanks to **David Bronstein**, who documented the event in his famous book. His commentary not only covered the

games but also summarized almost all the chess knowledge known at the time.

The tournament was dominated by Soviet grandmasters, but two other players also played a significant role: the Hungarian László Szabó and the legendary American Samuel Reshevsky. Their game had a major impact on the top standings and, for a long time, it looked like Szabó was on his way to victory.

**Szabó : Reshevsky**  
Zürich 1953



21. ♙f6??

Unbelievable! Szabó did everything right, and later admitted that he had actually seen the mate in two, but suddenly “forgot” about it and instinctively captured the piece.

If he had played 21. ♜g6! ♙g7 22. ♜g7#!!, the game would have ended in a beautiful checkmate. Instead, the game continued:

21... ♙d5 22. cd5 ♜d6 23. ♜c3 ♜d5  
24. ♜fd1 ♜f5 25. e4 ♜e6 26. ♙g7 b6  
27. ♙f8 ♙f8 1/2-1/2