

Tibor Károlyi

# THE EXCHANGE QUEEN'S GAMBIT FOR BLACK



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# KEY TO SYMBOLS

=	Equality or equal chances
±	White has a slight advantage
∓	Black has a slight advantage
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+-	White has a decisive advantage
-+	Black has a decisive advantage
∞	unclear
∞	with compensation
↔	with counterplay
↑	with initiative
→	with an attack
Δ	with the idea
□	only move
N	novelty
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!?	an interesting move
?!	a dubious move
+	check
#	mate





# PREFACE

The Orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined is the one of the most solid, if not the most solid, defences against the closed openings. Unlike the Nimzo-Indian and the Grünfeld, other very decent answers to closed openings, it can be played against virtually everything except 1.e4 and the Catalan. At the recent World Championship, out of the 56 games they played 1.e4 only 17 times. I think that will affect many players, so it is recommended to have another weapon against the closed openings.

The Tartakower-Bondarevsky-Makogonov system was always considered very reliable; many simply had worries about the pawn structure after cxd5. This fear did not appear from nowhere; many great players — and especially Kasparov and Karpov — scored really well with it. But chess, with the emergence of 'the computers', has changed dramatically ever since these giants retired and the exchange variation became more appetizing from Black's point of view. By the way, chess engines have reduced the importance of the colours.

Dear Reader, in this book I will guide you through the opening after 1.d4

d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5 exd5. I will give a full repertoire for Black against all of White's reasonable possibilities. All lines can occur with different move orders, and some positions can be reached in many ways, so I have changed the first moves of the example games in order to have a clear structure, to help your orientation within the variations.

The pawn structure immediately becomes asymmetrical; this fact guarantees some long-term tension. In modern chess very sharp lines as Black in the openings are risky in two ways; one is of course forgetting something, and an inaccuracy may lead to a disaster; also, White may at least have a line where Black can do nothing but agree to a draw. The Poisoned Pawn Variation of the Najdorf is a nice example of this. In the exchange Orthodox QGD things rarely get wild, but the tension may last longer and one can do well just by understanding the positions. One has to orientate oneself in the variations, yet fewer lines have to be memorised. The most important thing the Orthodox is that it ensures that one gets a playable and safe position. Investigate and play it, you will enjoy it!



# CHAPTER 1.

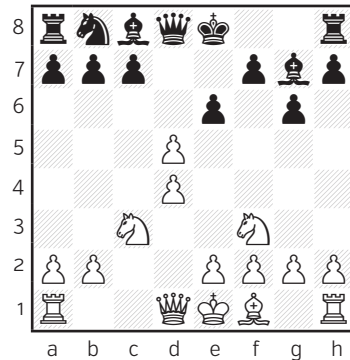
## MASTERPIECES

I would like to show a few masterpieces from this opening. The masterful play of the giants will help you to understand certain strategic ideas, and be warned — they may cause some artistic pleasure!

▷ **Y. Seirawan**

▶ **G. Kasparov**

Chess Olympiad, Dubai, 1986



**1.d4** ♘f6 **2.c4** g6

It may seem strange that I cite a Grünfeld game first and foremost, but Kasparov adopted a plan that can very much be implemented in the Exchange Queen's Gambit.

**3.** ♘c3 d5 **4.** ♘f3 ♙g7 **5.** ♙g5 ♘e4  
**6.cxd5** ♘xg5 **7.** ♘xg5 e6 **8.** ♘f3

**8...exd5**

The players have reached a pawn structure that resembles very much the opening we will investigate.

**9.b4** ♙d6

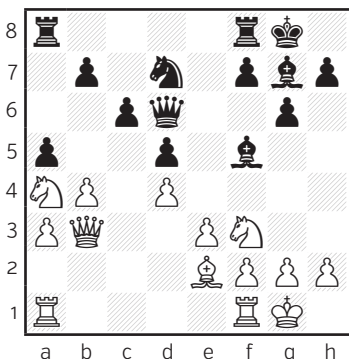
This move was a novelty back then. Kasparov likes to bring his queen to this square. The lady indeed stands well, as she not only defends d5, but also on b5 Black may now answer ...c5 under good conditions.

**10.a3** o-o **11.e3** c6 **12.** ♙e2 ♙f5

The bishop stands well on f5, but it would also be fine on e6 — and after 12...b6 on b7 as well.

13. 0-0 ♖d7 14. ♘a4 a5 15. ♔b3?!

15. b5 c5=



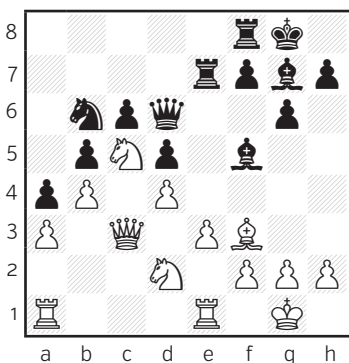
15...b5!

Kasparov carries out the plan of placing the knight on c4.

16. ♘c5 a4 17. ♔c3 ♘b6 18. ♘d2 ♖ae8!

After closing the queenside, Garry starts concentrating on the kingside.

19. ♖fe1 ♗e7 20. ♙f3



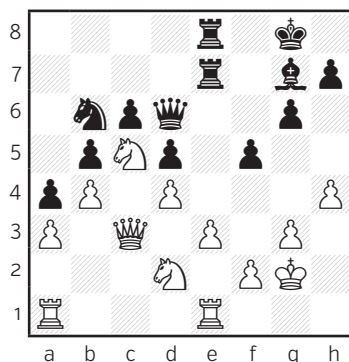
20... ♖fe8

The world champion mentioned after the game that he preferred 20...g5!?, transferring the bishop to g6 followed by pushing the f-pawn.

21. g3 ♙h3 22. ♙g2 ♙xg2 23. ♔xg2 f5

Black starts pushing the kingside pawns.

24. h4

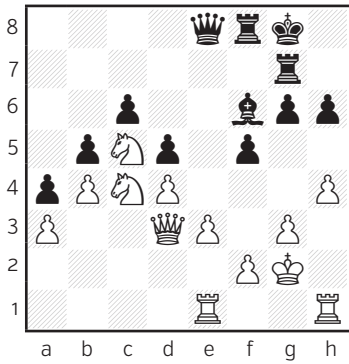


24... ♘c4

So the knight reaches the desired destination. Over the next few moves Kasparov improves his kingside.

25. ♘f3 ♙f6 26. ♖e2 ♖g7!? 27. ♖h1 ♗e7 28. ♖ee1 h6 29. ♔d3 ♖f8 30. ♘d2 ♗e8 31. ♘xc4

Perhaps the number one American grandmaster would have done better without taking the c4-knight.



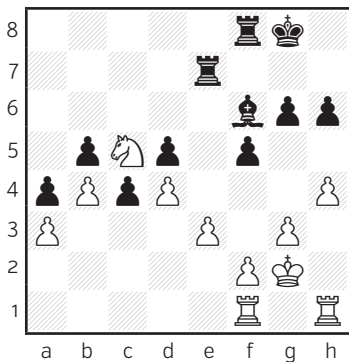
31...dxc4

The defended passed pawn is an ace on its own: it doesn't decide the outcome, but it is very hard for White to live with.

32. ♖d1 ♜e7 33. ♜ef1 ♚f7 34. ♚f3 ♚d5 35. ♚xd5+

Exchanging queens doesn't negate Black's initiative.

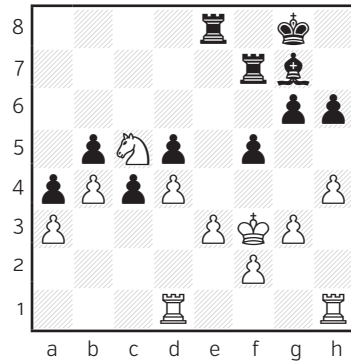
35...cxd5 36. ♚f3



36... ♙g7

Kasparov starts manoeuvring. Perhaps he simply wanted to pass the time control.

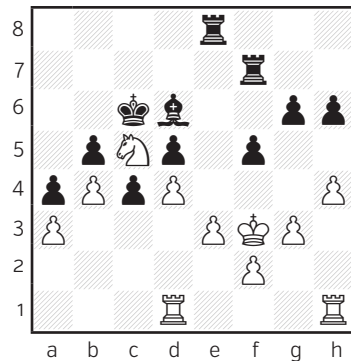
37. ♜d1 ♜ff7 38. ♜d2 ♜e8 39. ♜dd1 ♙f8 40. ♜dg1 ♙g7 41. ♜d1



41... ♚f8

Centralising the king is a strong weapon in endgames.

42. ♜d2 ♚e7 43. ♜dd1 ♚d6 44. ♜h2 ♚c6 45. ♜hh1 ♙f8 46. ♜d2 ♙d6 47. ♜dd1



47... ♙xc5?!

An impatient move. It was possible to improve some more pieces first with 47... ♜ee7 48. ♜d2 (48. ♜h2? ♙xc5! 49.dxc5 ♜e4 wins.) 48... ♜h7 49. ♜dd1 g5 and Black could have pressed.

48.dxc5 ♖e4

Later, Kasparov played too much on Yasser's time-trouble and even lost. It is a pity as he had produced an exemplary game on how to play as Black with such a pawn structure.

49.♖he1 ♜d7 50.♜d4 g5 51.hxg5 hxg5  
52.♜ed1 ♜xd4 53.♜xd4 ♜h7 54.♚e2  
♜h3 55.g4 f4 56.exf4 ♜xa3 57.fxg5  
♜a2+ 58.♚f3 c3?

58...♜a3! 59.♚g2 (59.♚f4 ♜a2!) ♜a2!!  
This extremely difficult to find move would have held as it helps Black in the race and, more importantly, with this pin he temporarily stops White pushing his passed pawns together, thereby gaining a tempo to win the race.

59.♜d1 d4 60.g6 d3 61.♚e3 ♜xf2  
62.g7 1-0

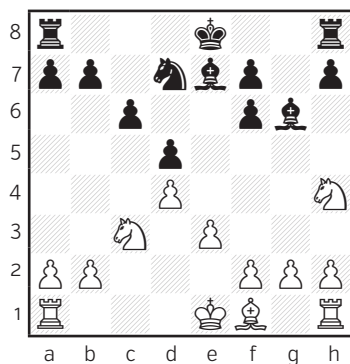
▷ **M. Carlsen**

▶ **V. Kramnik**

Norway Chess, Stavanger,  
2016

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.cxd5  
exd5 5.♙g5 c6 6.e3 ♙f5 7.♚f3 ♙g6  
8.♙xf6 ♚xf6 9.♚xf6 gxf6 10.♘f3  
♘d7 11.♘h4 ♙e7

In the book I will try to improve on this game: I prefer other possibilities.



12.♘e2!

They say that this brilliant idea was found by Jon Ludvig Hammer, who mentioned it to his fellow countryman. It looks very strong, White aiming to occupy the f5-square with a knight. Almost two years have passed and now we can see how it has fared; I found 15 games with this move and White has scored very well — 7 wins, 7 draws and only 1 loss.

12...♘b6

The knight will go to a4, but this will not tie up White's hands enough. Ever since, 12...f5 has been the most-often played and it scores relatively best, but still a clear minus. I also tried to make it work, and later you can check whether I managed or not.

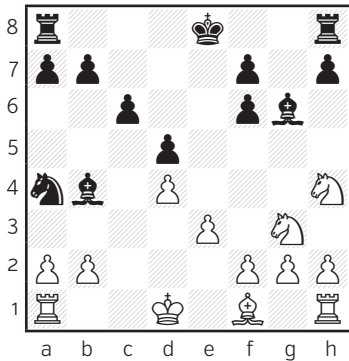
13.♘g3 ♙b4+

13...♘c8 Transferring the knight to d6 is a standard plan in this line, but this time it is less attractive. 14.f4 h6 15.f5 Marin doesn't like Black's posi-

tion, while the engine is not worried. I agree with the Romanian grandmaster.

14. ♖d1 ♜a4

I wonder what went wrong from Kramnik's point of view. Whether he overestimated his own play on the queenside or underestimated Carlsen's on the kingside?



15. ♞gf5!

Marin writes: "During the game I was not sure about the meaning of this regrouping. At first sight, the knights are clumsily placed, being neutralised by one bishop. Everything became clear a few moves later".

15... ♖d7

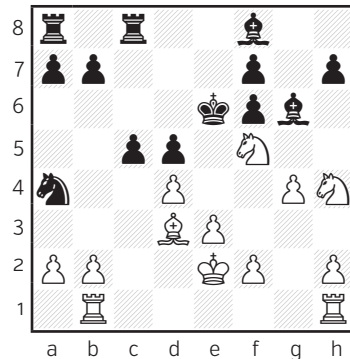
After 15... ♞xb2+ 16. ♖c2 ♞c4 17. ♙xc4 dxc4 18. ♜hb1 Black would be in trouble.

16. ♜b1 ♖e6?!

The king move will not obtain its aim and will not affect the f5-knight, but Black's other plans would also fail to equalise. 16... ♜hc8 17. ♙d3 (17.g3 ♞b6 18. ♙h3 is also fine for White.) 17... ♙f8 (17... ♙d6 18. ♖e2 a6 19.g4 c5 20. ♞xd6 ♖xd6 21. ♞f5±±) 18. ♖e2 a6 19.g4 c5 20. ♞g2 ♙d6 21.h4 and White is better according to Marin.

17. ♙d3 ♜hc8 18. ♖e2 ♙f8 19.g4 c5?!

Kramnik worsens his position, his move creating more weaknesses, but waiting passively would be very depressing as well. 19... ♖d7!? 20. ♞g3 ♞b6 21. ♞hf5 (21. ♞xg6 hxg6 22.h4 is also very one-sided.) 21... ♜e8 22.h4 and Black remains passive.



20. ♞g2!!

Out of the blue, Carlsen uncovers the fact that the d5-pawn is vulnerable.

20... cxd4

On 20...a6 21. ♞f4+ and if 20...c4 21. ♞f4+ ♖d7 22. ♙c2 ♞b6 23.h4 Black is lost.

21. exd4

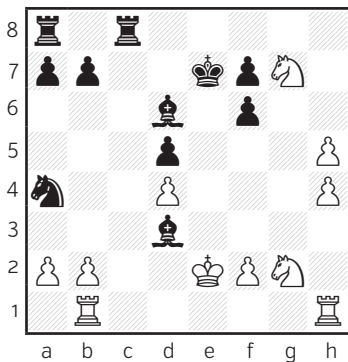
21. ♖xd4+ ♔d6 22. ♖f5+ would also be horrible for Black.

21... ♔d6 22. h4 h5?!

Kramnik gives away a pawn, but he gets no counterplay at all. Kramnik could instead defend the h7-pawn with 22... ♖h8, but that would also be nothing short of a nightmare. 23. h5 (23. ♖f3 ♔xf5 24. ♔xf5+ ♖e7 25. ♖he1+ This is also dreadful.) 23... ♔xf5 24. ♔xf5+ ♖e7 25. ♖e3 ♖b6 26. ♖f3 h6 27. ♖he1 ♔d8 28. ♖bc1 Black's position is awful: White can transfer the bishop to b3 and take the d5-pawn.

23. ♖g7+ ♖e7 24. gxh5 ♔xd3+

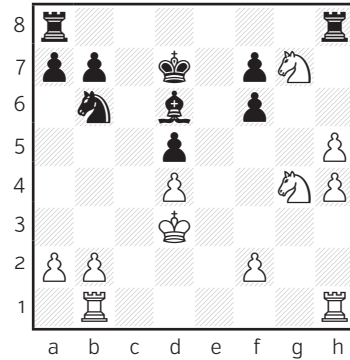
Black has to exchange, but all exchanges make the h-pawn ever-more important.



25. ♔xd3

Black is hopelessly lost. Such domination reminds one of 19<sup>th</sup> Century chess.

25... ♔d7 26. ♖e3 ♖b6 27. ♖g4!? ♖h8



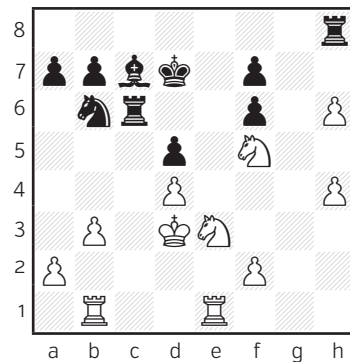
28. ♖he1

Magnus cuts the black king off from the kingside and doesn't even bother to take the pawn.

28... ♔e7 29. ♖f5 ♔d8 30. h6 ♖c8 31. b3!

Magnus cuts the b6-knight off as well.

31... ♖c6 32. ♖ge3 ♔c7



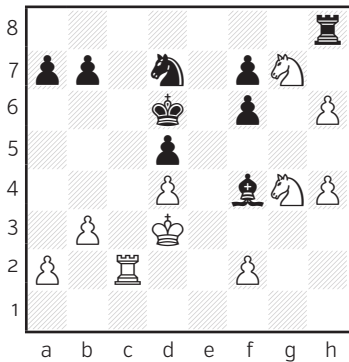
33. ♖bc1



Exchanging pieces is correct when the opponent faces a big problem. Here the rook on h8 is forever out of play.

33...♖xc1 34.♖xc1 ♔f4 35.♞c5 ♕e6  
36.♜g7+ ♕d6 37.♜g4 ♜d7 38.♞c2

The rook aims to go to the e-file.



38...f5

Kramnik probably feels humiliated and just gives away another pawn instead of resigning.

39.♜xf5+ ♕e6 40.♜g7+ ♕d6  
41.♞e2 ♕c6 42.♞e8 ♞xe8 43.♜xe8  
♜f8 44.♜e5+ ♔xe5 45.dxe5 ♕d7  
46.♜f6+ ♕e6 47.h5 ♕xe5 48.♜d7+  
♜xd7 49.h7 ♜c5+ 50.♕e2 1-0

Carlsen's opening preparation worked incredibly well, but he was impressive all the way.

▷ **M. Bobotsov**

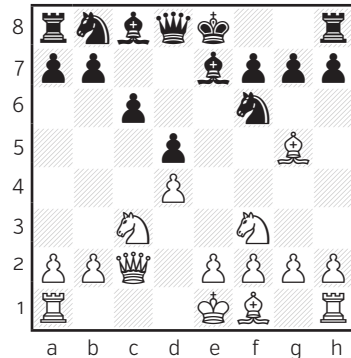
▶ **T. Petrosian**

Chess Olympiad Final A, Luga-  
no, 1968

1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 e6 3.♜f3 d5 4.cxd5?!

Though taking on d5 while the knight is on f3 is somewhat gaining in popularity, it should not really be dangerous. I think they started playing this way just hoping that the opponent would not be so familiar with it.

4...exd5 5.♞c3 c6 6.♔g5 ♔e7 7.♞c2



7...g6!

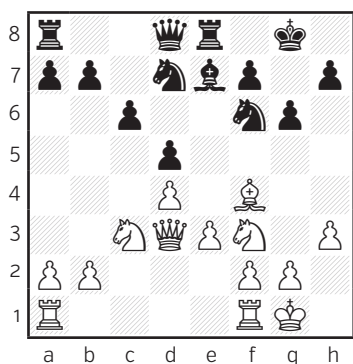
Black wants to develop the bishop to f5.

8.e3 ♔f5 9.♔d3 ♔xd3

After exchanging the bishops, one of White's main plans — the minority attack — is toothless, as White has a hole on c4.

10. ♖xd3 ♘bd7 11. ♙h6 ♘g4 12. ♙f4  
o-o 13. o-o ♖e8 14. h3 ♘gf6 15. ♘e5

White plays for a draw against the reigning world champion. I prefer 15. ♘d2!?



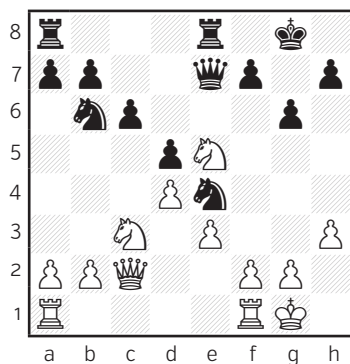
15... ♘b6!

I cite Kasparov from his 'My Great Predecessors' book: "An original and very deep positional idea. Black avoids the exchange of the 'good' knight at e5, and moves his knight to the 'bad' square b6. But in fact, the knight is predatorily eyeing the c4-square, in anticipation of the standard minority pawn attack b2-b4-b5. And in general, after the exchange of the light-squared bishops, Black has play aimed at exploiting the weak light squares in the opponent's position. As for the e5-knight, let it stand there for the moment..."

16. ♙g5

White is looking for more exchanges.

16... ♘e4 17. ♙xe7 ♖xe7 18. ♖c2



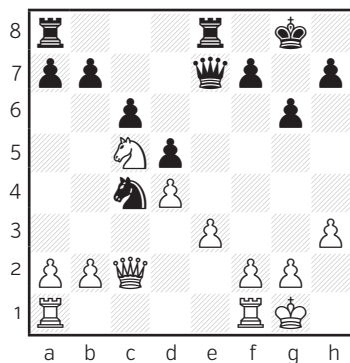
18... ♘d6

Petrosian sends a message: I want a knight on c4.

19. ♘a4

19. ♖fe1 Perhaps it is better to keep the knight on c3.

19... ♘bc4 20. ♘xc4 ♘xc4 21. ♘c5



21... ♘d6

The knight stands superbly on d6, defending the b7-pawn and making the minority attack unattractive. I quote Kasparov again: "Petrosian demon-

strates an original exception to the rules. The key role here is played by the sentry knight at d6, suppressing any attempts with b4–b5. Under its watchful eye Black can calmly prepare an advance of his kingside pawns.”

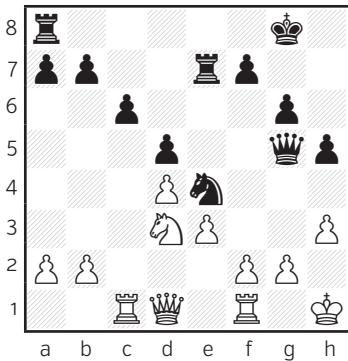
22. ♖ac1 ♔g5!

Black aims to build an attack on the kingside

23. ♔d1 h5!

Black starts pushing his kingside pawns, and this will be the decisive factor in the game.

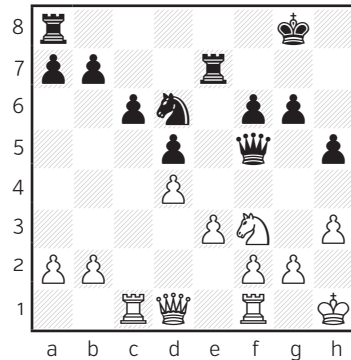
24. ♔h1 ♖e7 25. ♘d3 ♘e4



26. ♘c5

26. ♘e1 I would prefer transferring the knight to d2 to take away the e4- and the c4-squares from the black knight. 26... ♕f5 27. ♖g1 f6 28. ♘f3 ♖ae8 29. ♘d2 ♘d6 30. ♕f3 I think Black’s advantage is small; White should be able to hold.

26... ♘d6 27. ♘d3 ♕f5 28. ♘e5 f6 29. ♘f3



29... ♖g7!

The rook stands superbly on g7 and will help when Black pushes the g-pawn.

30. ♘h2?!

This is overcautious. 30. ♘d2!?

30... ♖e8 31. ♔g1 ♘e4

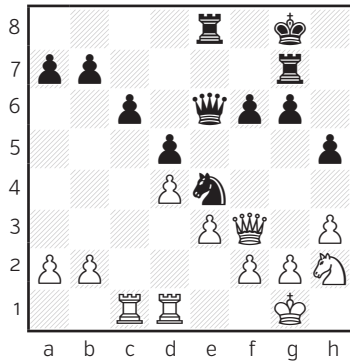
The knight is powerful on e4.

32. ♕f3

A bit naive. 32.a4 White could try to keep Black a bit busier on the queenside. 32... ♕e6 33. ♖c2

32... ♕e6 33. ♖fd1?

Bobotsov loses a tempo. 33. ♖fe1 g5 34. ♕xh5 f5 35.g4 ♖f8 36. ♖e2 and White is alive.



40.f4 ♖h8 41.♙xh8+ ♔xh8 42.fxg5 g3 43.♘f3 ♘xg5 44.♚e2 ♞e4 and White is in trouble.

b) 37.♙h4 Kasparov mentions a pretty possibility. 37...♗g6 38.♙f1 (38.f3 gxf3 39.♘xf3 ♖h6 wins.) 38...♙g7! 39.f4 ♘d6 (39...♙f5 with g3 and ♖h6 wins.) 40.♙e1 ♘f5 41.♙c3 ♖h8 Kasparov calls it 'an elegant win'.

33...g5!

An excellent pawn sacrifice, but as Kasparov pointed out, 33...♙f7 with ...g5 was strong as well.

34.♙xh5 f5! 35.♙e1?

In the end part of the game, Tigran Vartanovich's clear superiority plays a role and contributes to the quick finish, but he has already outplayed his opponent.

35.♙f3! g4 36.♙f4 gxh3 37.g3 ♖g4!! 38.♙f3 ♘g5 39.♙e2 ♙e4 40.♙f1 White would be very passive, but can still resist.

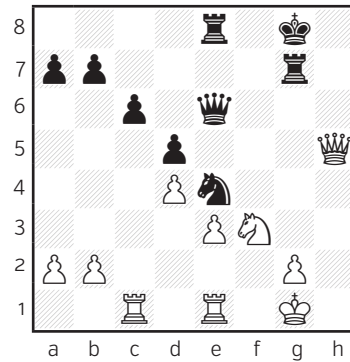
35...g4!

Black threatens to win the queen.

36.hxg4 fxg4 37.f3

a) 37.♙c2 would have forced the champion to find difficult moves: 37...♗g5 38.♙h4 ♙g6 39.♙f1 ♙g7

37...gxf3 38.♘xf3



38...♙h7

Petrosian traps the queen.

39.♙e5 ♙c8 40.♙f4 ♖f8 41.♙e5 ♖f5 0-1

I will quote Kasparov once more: "Perhaps not the most outstanding game, but an instructive one: the subtle and non-routine positional idea employed here enriched the treasury of strategic skills. Two decades later I was able to employ the same idea".

▷ **L. Portisch**

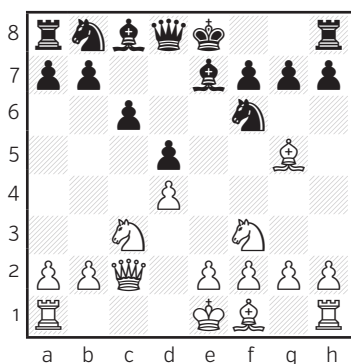
▶ **G. Kasparov**

World Cup, Skelleftea, 1989

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5

This is a bit surprising; Portisch normally did not look for a peaceful outcome in the opening.

4...exd5 5.♘c3 c6 6.♙c2 ♘a6 7.a3  
♘c7 8.♙g5



8...g6!

Kasparov insists on developing the bishop to f5.

9.e3 ♙f5 10.♙d3 ♙xd3 11.♙xd3 ♙e7  
12.o-o o-o 13.b4

The black knights are far from the c4-square, so the minority attack looks fine.

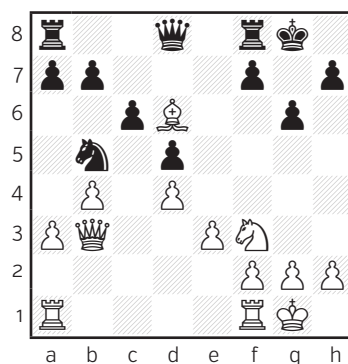
13...♘e4 14.♙f4 ♘xc3 15.♙xc3

Garry prefers inserting the capture on c7, evaluating the position as equal.

15...♙d6 16.♙xd6?!

Portisch exchanges too much, and actually helps the knight to get to the desired d6-square. 16.a4!? White would do better by accepting doubled pawns.

16...♘b5 17.♙b3



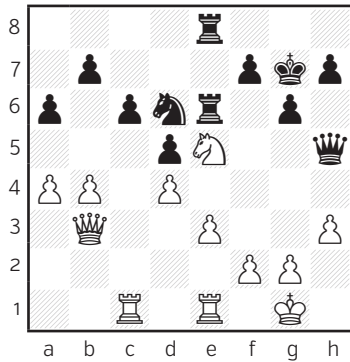
17...♘xd6 18.a4 a6 19.♘e5 ♖e8  
20.♖fe1 ♙g5!

Kasparov copies Petrosian's treatment of the queen.

21.h3 ♙g7 22.♙c2 ♖e6 23.♖ac1

Portisch has the same problem as Bo-botsov: he has no active play and just has to wait and see how Black improves his position.

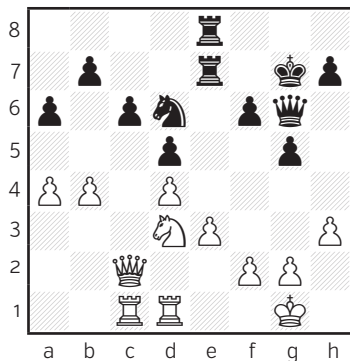
23...♖ae8 24.♙b1 ♙h5 25.♙b3



25...f6!

Kasparov starts pushing his pawns on the kingside.

26. ♘d3 g5 27. ♙d1 ♙g6 28. ♙c2 ♖6e7  
29. ♖ed1



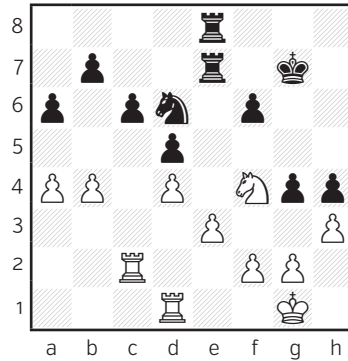
29...h5 30. ♙b1

30. ♙f1 Maybe White should get ready to walk to the other wing with his king.

30...h4 31. ♙c2 g4 32. ♘f4?

Portisch wants to exchange queens badly, but instead 32.hxg4 ♙xg4 33. ♘f4 and White seems able to hold.

32... ♙xc2 33. ♖xc2



33...g3!

Suddenly White's e3-pawn is in danger.

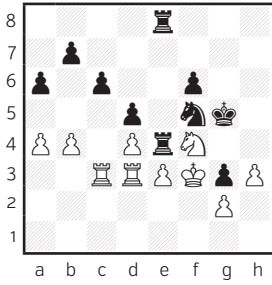
34. ♖d3 ♙h6 35. ♙f1 ♙g5

Towards the time-control Garry plays a move which requires precise calculation.

35...gxf2 36. ♙xf2 ♘c4 37. ♖e2 ♙g5+

36. ♘e2?!

36.fxg3! This capture offers some practical chances: 36...hxg3 37. ♙e2 ♖e4! A tough move to find. (37... ♘c4?! 38. ♖cc3 ♘b2 39. ♙f3 Black can take a pawn or an exchange, but as the position would be closed and g3 is weak, Black would have difficulties converting the material advantage.) 38. ♙f3 ♘f5 39. ♖cc3



38...♞xa4

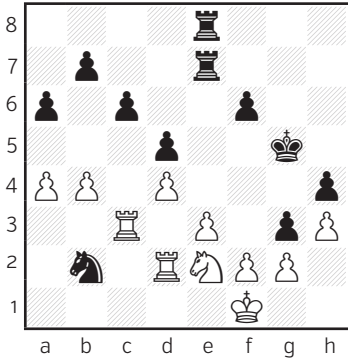
Kasparov wins a pawn and in addition keeps his positional advantage. Kasparov never let his opponent back into the game. Portisch resigned a bit later than world-class players normally do.

39...a5! Another brilliant tactical shot. 40.bxa5 c5!! and White's position falls apart.

36...♞c4

Now White's position crumbles.

37.♞cc3 ♞b2 38.♞d2



39.♞b3 ♞b6 40.♞g1 ♞c4 41.♞f3+ ♖h5 42.♞dd3 a5 43.bxa5 ♞a8 44.♞d1 ♞xa5 45.♞e1 b5 46.♞e2 ♞a1+ 47.♞e1 ♞ea7 48.fxc3 ♞xe1+ 49.♖xe1 ♞a1+ 50.♖e2 hxc3 51.♞e1 ♞a2+ 52.♖d1 ♞d2+ 53.♖c1 ♞e2 54.♖d1 ♞xe3 55.♞xe3 ♞xe3+ 56.♖e2 ♞f5 57.♞c2 ♞h4 58.♞b4 ♞xc2 59.♖f3 ♞h4+ 60.♖xc3 ♞f5+ 61.♖f4 ♞xd4 62.♖e3 ♞f5+ 0-1