

Mini-Lessons From Short Games Of 21st Century

By IM Nikolay Minev

The Always Exciting Queen Sacrifice

The sacrifice of the Queen is the highest point of the tactics, and the dream of every chess player from beginner to grandmaster. Here is small collection of such fresh examples, arranged by the result of the sacrifice, either gain of material or delivery of mate. These educative combinations deserve to be seen and remembered.

Sacrifices That Win Material

B30 Glek – S. Arkhipov

Russia (ch team) 2001

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 e6 4.O-O Nge7 5.Re1 a6 6.Bxc6 Nxc6 7.d4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 Qc7 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.e5! Bb7

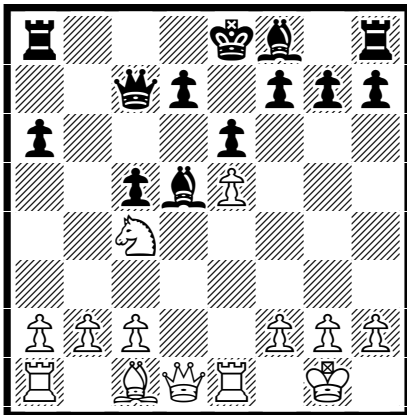
10...d6!?

11.Nd2 c5

11...d6!?

12.Nc4 Bd5?

The decisive mistake, but the position is already very difficult for Black.



13.Nd6+! Bxd6

Or 13...Ke7 14.c4 Bc6 15.Qh5 and White wins.

14.Qxd5!! 1-0

Because of 14...exd5 15.exd6+ winning a piece.

The next examples lead to a gain in material, but by promotion to a new Queen, rather than by simple double attacks and captures.

B33 D. Rombaldoni – M. Sibilio

Italy (ch) 2009

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Qb6 5.Nb3 Nf6 6.Nc3 e6 7.Qe2!?

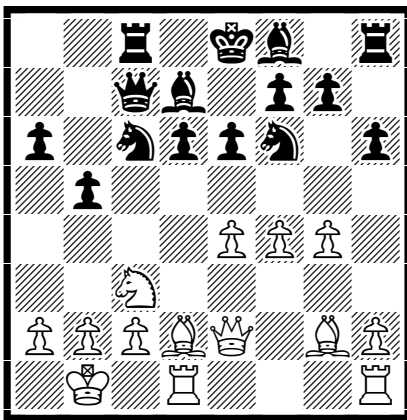
A relatively new continuation, which already has many followers.

7...Qc7 8.Bd2 d6 9.g4 h6 10.f4 Bd7 11.O-O-O a6 12.Bg2 Rc8

12...O-O-O!?

13.Kb1 b5

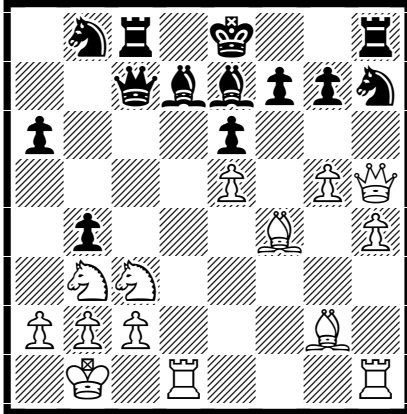
White's development is finished, it is time for action!



14.e5! dxe5 15.fxe5 Nh7

If 15...Qxe5 16.Bxc6 and White wins a piece. Or if 15...Nxe5 16.Bf4 Bd6 17.Rxd6 Qxd6 18.Bxe5, with two minor pieces for Rook and strong attacking chances.

16.Bf4 Be7 17.h4 Nb8 18.g5 h5 19.Qxh5 b4



20.g6! bxc3 21.Qxh7! 1-0

After 21...Rhx7 22.gxh7 the promotion of a new White Queen is inevitable, while the position after 21...Rf8 22.Be4 is hopeless for Black.

A40 D. Grosdemange – T. Duchateau

Vandoeuvre les Nancy 2008

1.e4 g6 2.d4 Bg7 3.c4 d6 4.Nf3 Bg4 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.Be3 Bxf3 7.gxf3 e5 8.d5 Nce7 9.Qa4+!? Qd7

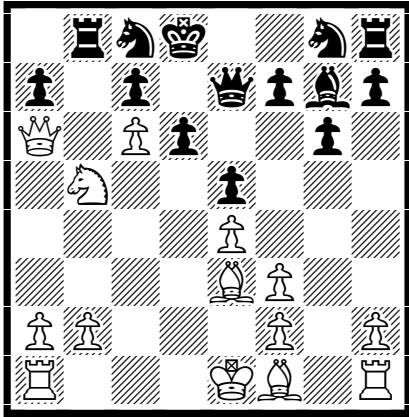
If 9...c6 10.dxc6 bxc6 11.c5! with the better game for White.

10.Nb5 Kd8

Maybe 10...Kf8!? should be preferred, but not 10...c6? 11.c5! dxc5 12.Bxc5 and Black is in big trouble.

11.c5! Nc8 12.c6! bxc6 13.dxc6 Qe7 14.Qa6! Rb8

If 14...Nb6 15.Qb7 Rc8 16.Nxa7 and White wins.

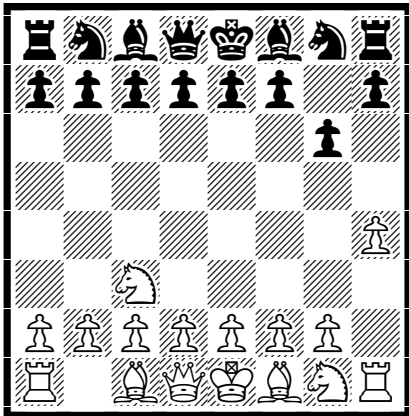


15.Qb7!! Rxb7 16.cxb7 c6 17.b8=Q cxb5 18.Rc1 1-0

Sacrifices That Win by Mating Patterns

B07 P. E. Chaplin – P. Kelly
 England (ch team) West Bromwich 2005

1.Nc3 g6 2.h4



How many times have you seen these opening moves?

2...Nf6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.Be2

We are now, by transposition of moves, in one of main variation of the Pirc Defense –
1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Be2 Bg7 5.h4.

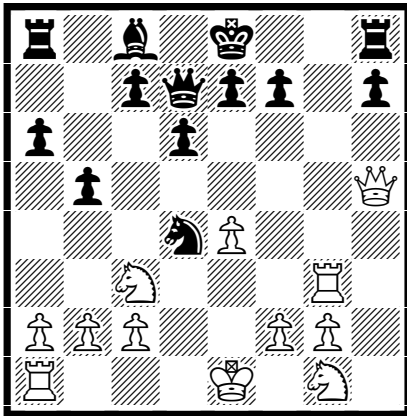
5...a6

Maybe too passive, but recent theory does not give a clear indication which response is best for Black.

6.h5 Nxh5 7.Bxh5 gxh5 8.Be3 b5 9.Qxh5 Qd7? 10.Rh3 Nc6

If 10...Qg4?? 11.Qxg4 Bxg4 12.Rg3 and White wins a piece.

11.Rg3! Bxd4 12.Bxd4 Nxd4



13.Qxh7!

Simple, but effective. If 13...Rxh7 14.Rg8#

13...Rf8 14.O-O-O c5 15.Nd5 Rb8 16.Rxd4! cxd4 17.Rg8 Qg4

There is no defense against the threat 18.Rxf8+ Kxf8 19.Qh8#

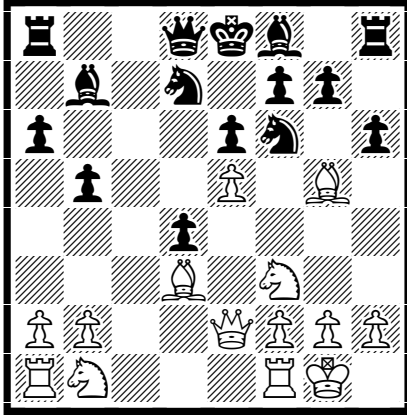
18.Rxg4 Bxg4 19.Qh4 1-0

D36 Tunik - A. Geller
Togliatti 2001

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 c6 4.Qc2 dxc4?! 5.Qxc4 b5 6.Qc2 Bb7 7.e4 Nf6 8.Bd3 Nbd7

Relatively better is 8...Bb4+.

9.O-O a6 10.Qe2 c5 11.Bg5 cxd4?? 12.e5! h6



13.exf6 hxg5 14.Qxe6+!! 1-0

Because of 14...fxe6 15.Bg6#, which is one of the typical mates that can occur in the opening after a Queen sacrifice. The alternative 14...Be7 15.Qxe7+ is also hopeless for Black.

C15 K. O'Brien – D. Salter
Athens (Kallithea) 2008

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.a3?!

A rarely used continuation, played mostly as an opening surprise.

4...Bxc3+ 5.bxc3 dxe4 6.Qg4 Nf6 7.Qxg7 Rg8 8.Qh6 Nbd7 9.Ne2

9.f3!?

9...b6 10.Bg5 Bb7 11.Ng3 Qe7 12.Qh4 O-O-O 13.Bb5 c6 14.Bc4 h6!

With this surprising pawn sacrifice Black achieves a dangerous initiative.

15.Qxh6

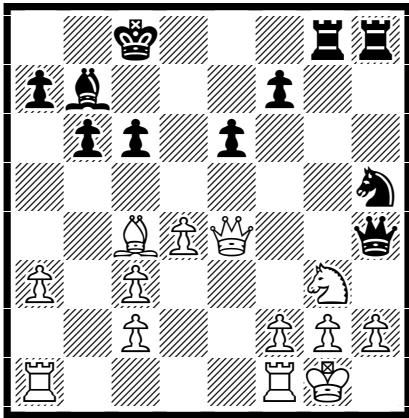
Worse is 15.Bxh6 Rg4!

15...Rh8 16.Bxf6 Nxf6 17.Qf4 Rdg8 18.O-O Nh5 19.Qe5?

The decisive mistake. The position after 19.Qxe4 is still unclear.

19...Qh4 20.Qxe4?

Also after 20.h3 Nf4 Black's attack should prevail.



20...Qxh2+! 21.Kxh2 Nxf3+ 0-1

For if 22.Kg1 Rh1#, an original mating pattern.

E32 M. Carlsen – V. Kramnik
Nice (Amber Blindfold) 2009

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 O-O 5.e4!? d6

The theory recommends 5...d5.

6.Bd3 Nc6 7.Nge2 Ba5!?

An original idea!

8.O-O Bb6 9.d5 Nb4 10.Qd2 exd5 11.cxd5 Ng4! 12.Bb1 Qh4 13.Qf4 f5!

It is clear that Carlsen overlooked this move. Now Black has a strong – probably decisive – attack.

14.exf5 Bxf5 15.h3

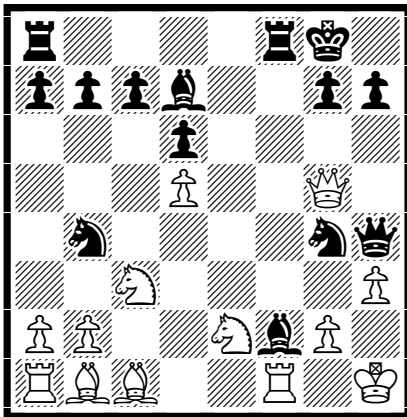
If 15.Bxf5 Rxf5!

15...Bxf2+ 16.Kh1

Or 16.Rxf2 Qxf2+ 17.Qxf2 Nxf2 18.Kxf2 Bxb1+ and Black wins.

16...Bd7 17.Qg5

Or 17.Qxb4 Bc5 and Black wins.



17...Bc5!! 18.Rxf8+ Rxf8 19.Ng1 Rf1 20.Bxh7+ Kh8 0-1

Our final examples are with my favorite mating pattern after a Queen sacrifice: mate with two Bishops and a Knight.

E11 T. Nyback – U. Von Hermann
Germany (Bundesliga) Hamburg 2009

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Bb4+ 4.Nbd2

This continuation is more promising than 4.Bd2.

4...d5 5.a3 Be7 6.e3 O-O 7.Bd3 c5 8.b3 cxd4 9.exd4 b6 10.O-O Bb7 11.Qe2 Nc6

12.Bb2

The main line, and a typical position for this variation. In my opinion, White stands better.

12...Re8 13.Rfe1 Bf8 14.Rac1 g6 15.c5! e5

This fails into a tactical trap, but Black was forced to react with something to counter the positional threat of b3-b4.

16.dxe5 bxc5

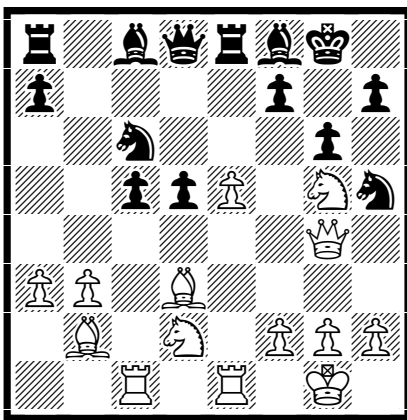
Maybe 16...Bxc5 offers better resistance.

17.Ng5! Nh5 18.Qg4

The obvious threat is 19.Nxh7 Kxh7 20.Qxh5+.

18...Bc8

Now comes the hidden threat.



19.e6! Rxe6 20.Qxh5!! 1-0

For if the Queen sacrifice is accepted with 20...gxh5, then the Bishops and Knight cooperate to deliver mate with 21.Bxh7#. This is my favorite mating pattern resulting from the sacrifice of a Queen!

Incredibly, here is another example of the same pattern.

D27 M. Rodshtein – A. Diamant
Puerto Madryn (Argentina) 2009

**1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 dxc4 4.e3 e6 5.Bxc4 c5 6.O-O a6 7.Bb3 Nc6 8.Nc3 cxd4 9.exd4
Be7 10.Bg5 O-O 11.Qd2 Na5 12.Bc2 b5 13.Qf4 Bb7 14.Qh4 g6**

If 14...Bxf3?? 15.Bxf6!

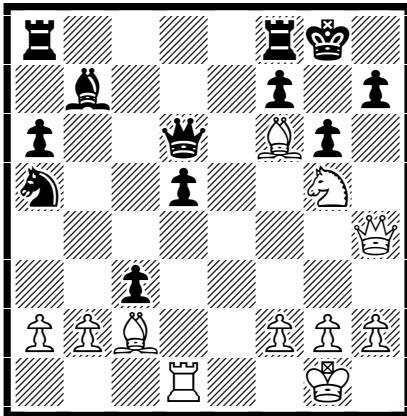
15.d5! b4

If 15...exd5 16.Rfe1, intending 17.Rxe7, or 15...Bxd5 16.Rad1, intending 17.Nxd5 exd5
(17...Nxd5 18.Rxd5) 18.Rfe1 with the threat 19.Rxe7.

16.Rad1! exd5

If 16...bxc3 17.d6! and wins.

17.Rfe1! bxc3 18.Rxe7 Qxe7 19.Bxf6 Qd6 20.Ng5



1-0

Because of 20...h5 21.Qxh5!! gxh5 22.Bh7#.