

The Surprising Sacrifice: Bg6!!

By IM Nikolay Minev

Some combinations are obvious and easily recognizable, others are surprising and not so easy to find. Among the last are all combination where the sacrifices occur without check and without capturing some material. The following four instructive examples are of this relatively rare type of combination.

Our “hero” in each of the following examples will be a White Bishop, and in each case, its landing square will be g6 (remember, without capture or check!). This represents a somewhat fantastic idea, and is a move that deserves to be remembered!

Let’s start with a little known example.

Queen’s Pawn A46
Efim Bogoljubow
Ludwig Rellstab
Krakow. Krynica, Warsaw 1940

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.d4 b5 3.Bg5 Bb7 4.e3 a6 5.a4!

Strategically correct. In this way White takes possession of the c4-square.

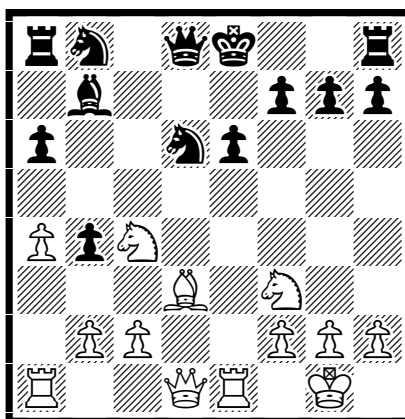
5...b4 6.Nbd2 e6 7.Bd3 c5 8.O-O Be7?

8...d5!? or 8...cxd4 9,exd4 Be7.

9.dxc5 Bxc5 10.e4 Be7 11.e5 Nd5 12.Bxe7 Nxe7 13.Nc4 Nc8 14.Re1 d5?

The decisive mistake in a position that is already much worse.

15.exd6 Nxd6



16.Bg6!!

What a surprise! If now 16...Nxc4, then White wins by 17.Rxe6+!

16...hxg6 17.Nxd6+ Ke7 18.Nxb7 Qc7 19.Qd5!

This ruins Black's hope of regaining the lost piece.

19...Rh5 20.Qe4 Nc6 21.g4 1-0

Worth noting is that in this example (and as we shall see, also in the other three examples), the tactical idea of Bg6 (without check or capture) is realized when Black's King is still in the center. And that is probably an obligatory condition!

Here is the next example.

Richter-Veresov D01
Gavriil Veresov
Oleg Dementiev
 Moscow 1966

1.d4 d5 2.Nc3 Bf5

Usual is 2...Nf6 3.Bg5 etc.

3.Bg5!? c6 4.e3

4.f3!?

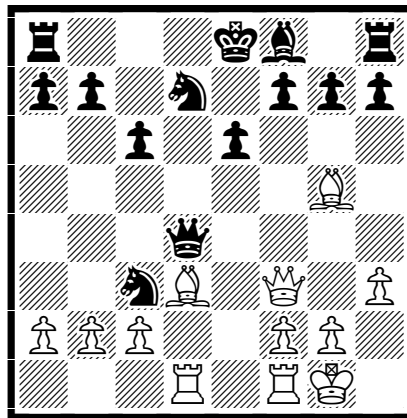
4...Qb6 5.Rb1 Nd7 6.Nf3 Ngf6 7.Bd3 Bg4?!

Losing a tempo in the opening is always a dubious idea.

8.h3 Bh5 9.O-O e6 10.e4! Bxf3 11.Qxf3 Qxd4?

The oldest recipe for disaster is to grab a pawn when you are behind in development and the King still remains in the center.

12.exd5 Nxd5 13.Rbd1 Nxc3



14.Bg6!!

Black clearly overlooked this tactical threat. If now 14...Ne5 15.Bxf7+! and White wins.

14...Ne2+ 15.Qxe2 Qe5

There is nothing else. If 15...Qc5 16.Qxe6+ and wins.

16.Bxf7+! 1-0

Now a third example.

Center-Counter B01

Viswanathan Anand

Joel Lautier

Biel 1997

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Qxd5 3.Nc3 Qa5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nf3 c6 6.Bc4 Bf5 7.Ne5 e6 8.g4 Bg6 9.h4 Nbd7 10.Nxd7 Nxd7

ECO gives all this with the assessment that the position is unclear. As shown in our game, perhaps this opinion should be changed in favor of White.

11.h5 Be4 12.Rh3 Bg2?! 13.Re3 Nb6

According to Anand, after 13...b5 14.Bd3 b4 15.Ne4 White stands slightly better.

14.Bd3 Nd5 15.f3!

The innovation, which turns the table in White's favor.

15...Bb4

Naturally 15...Nxc3 16.bxc3 Qxc3+ 17.Bd2 Qxd4 18.Kf2 Bxf3 19.Kxf3 is not attractive for Black – Anand.

16.Kf2 Bxc3 17.bxc3 Qxc3 18.Rb1 Qxd4 19.Rxb7 Rd8

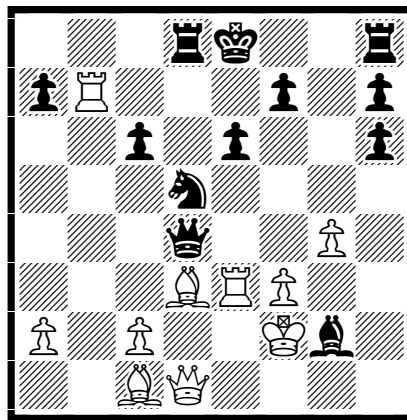
If 19...Bh3 20.Rxf7 c5 21.Rf5!! and White wins – Lautier.

20.h6!

A necessary introduction to the following brilliant tactical idea.

20...gxh6

Black does not see the surprise that is coming. Otherwise he would play 20...Nxe3. But according to Anand, White keeps a considerable advantage in any case by 21.Bxe3 Qe5 22.hxg7 Rg8 23.Qc1 Bxf3 24.Qa3 Qh2+ 25.Kxf3 Qh3+ 26.Ke2 Qxg4+ 27.Kd2 Qh4 28.Qc3 c5 29.Rxa7.



21.Bg6!!

A truly diabolical blow! If 21...Qxd1 22.Rxe6+ Kf8 23.Bxh6+ Kg8 24.Bxf7#

21...Ne7

Instead 21...Qf6 does not help because of 22.Bxf7+ Qxf7 23.Rxf7 Nxe3 24.Qxd8+! Kxd8 25.Bxe3 Bh3 26.Rxa7 and White wins – Anand.

22.Qxd4 Rxd4 23.Rd3! Rd8 24.Rxd8+ Kxd8 25.Bd3 1-0

For if 25...Bh3 26.Ba3 Nc8 27.Rb1 and White wins.

In the end, we shall see one of my favorite classics.

French Defense C11

Rudolf Spielmann

Paul Schmidt

Noordwijk 1938

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.e5 Nfd7 5.Nce2 5...c5 6.c3 Nc6 7.f4 cxd4?! 8.cxd4 Bb4+ 9.Nc3!?

Usual is 9.Bd2.

9...Nb6 10.Nf3 Bd7 11.Bd3 Ne7

If 11...O-O?? 12.Bxh7+! Kxh7 13.Ng5+ etc. — the most typical combination in the French Defense.

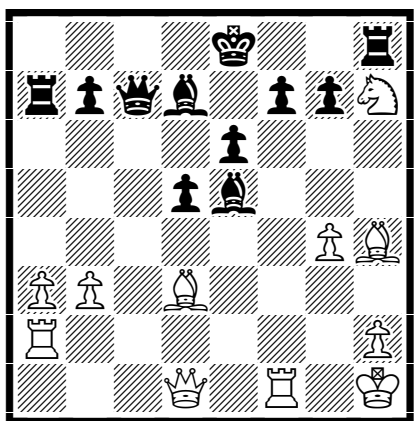
12.O-O Rc8?

Necessary was 12...Bxc3.

13.Nb5 Nc4 14.Nxa7 Ra8 15.b3 Nxe5 16.fxe5 Rxa7 17.a3 Nf5 18.g4 Nh4 19.Ng5! Rf8 20.Nxh7 Rh8 21.Ra2! Bc3?

Already there is no satisfactory continuation for Black. If 21...Be7 22.Raf2 with a decisive attack.

22.Bg5! Bxd4+ 23.Kh1 Qc7 24.Bxh4 Bxe5



25.Bg6!! 1-0

What a surprise! If 25...fxg6 26.Qd3 and wins.

(Note: this game and notes are excerpted from my recent book, Rudolf Spielmann: Fifty Great Short Games. The book is available on the internet – search for ISBN 978-0-9661889-4-3 or visit thechesslibrary.com or lulu.com).