

**TONY MILES:  
Fifty Great Short Games**

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**International Master  
Nikolay Minev**

**The Chess Library  
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**Tony Miles: Fifty Great Short Games**

IM Nikolay Minev

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## CONTENTS

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<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>Page</b> <b>5</b>
<b>A00-A99.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>B00-B99.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>C00-C99.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>D00-D99.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>E00-E99.....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Indices.....</b>	<b>88</b>



# **TONY MILES (1955 – 2001)**

## **His 50 Great Short Stories**

**Selected and annotated by IM Nikolay Minev**

*“This is chess from another planet.” - V. Hort.*

The life of Tony Miles was cut short on November 12, 2001, when he died of heart failure while sleeping. In his enviable career, he became England’s first Grandmaster, and led the way for a generation of strong English players to follow.

Anthony John Miles was born in Birmingham, England on April 23, 1955. He learned chess at the age of five, and won the British under 14 championship in 1968. He continued to improve rapidly as a player, and won the World Junior Championship at Manila 1974. He was awarded the International Grandmaster title in 1976.

His most sensational victory came at the 1980 European Team Championships in Skara. There he defeated the reigning World Champion, Anatoly Karpov, after opening the game with the seemingly laughable 1.e4 a6. Perhaps his best tournament result came in 1984 at Tilburg, a strong event which he won by one and a half points, beating three world-title candidates.

At his peak, Miles was ranked among the top 10 grandmasters in the world. But despite his tournament successes, he never advanced to the candidates round of the world championship.

Miles was very active as a player, and participated in an extraordinary number of chess events during his career. He had many fine tournament successes, but also stretches of bad performance. Miles suffered from both mental and physical afflictions that surely impacted his consistency and level of play.

Never one to be accused of merely endorsing the status quo, he instead pursued original ideas on and off the chessboard. He was known for a biting wit and was not shy to criticize pretensions,

whether by players or authorities in the administration of chess.

On the board, Miles was an innovator. He tried to be original in every game. Some of his ideas appear “crazy” but on further examination prove instead to be deeply considered and profoundly original. He liked offbeat systems and unexpected moves, and frequently used rare variations.

Sometimes his opening choices caused consternation, as if the moves played were intended to affront. He once wrote of a post-game encounter with GM Gufeld: “...what really sticks in my mind, though, is that at breakfast the next morning Gufeld spent fully two hours yelling at me ‘I hate you, my friend... You are destroying chess with your stupid ideas!’ ...Such a reaction is surely testament to the opening’s surprise value... Heaven help me if I had won.” (Miles, Chess Café, column #7)

His middle game was tough and professional. Although his tactical intuition was well developed, he did not like to get involved in complex calculations when a simple and solid option would do. But what made him most exceptional as a player was an extraordinary determination and will to win.

Welcome then to the refreshing world of Tony Miles. In the games that follow you will see creative, fighting chess, with just a touch of genius!

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[1]

**McNab I. – Miles A.  
Oxford 1967**

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**A00**

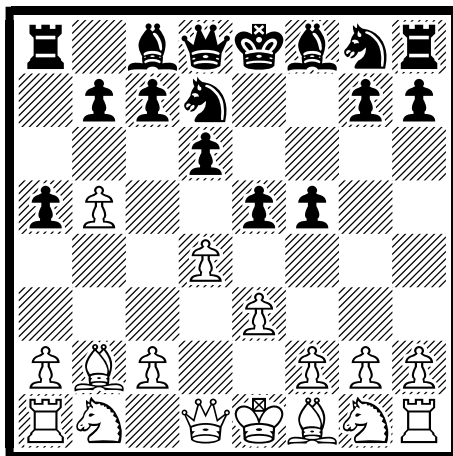
**1.b4 a5!?**

A rare first thrust, and an even more rare reply!

**2.b5 e5**

I like 2...c6 and if 3.c4 (3.a4), then 3...cxb5 4.cxb5 d5, intending Nd7-Nb6.

**3.Bb2 d6 4.d4 Nd7 5.e3 f5!?**

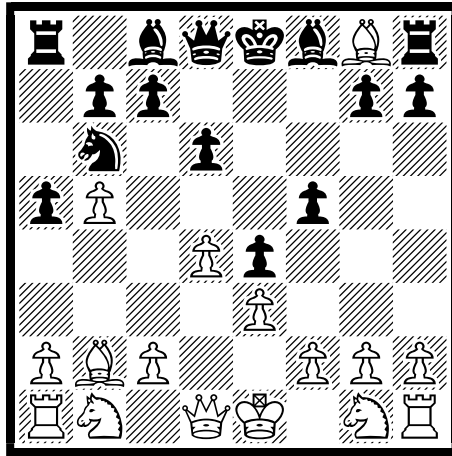


A forgotten novelty that creates quite an original position.

**6.Bd3**

In the spirit of the opening is 6.g4!?, when the resulting position is unclear.

**6...e4 7.Bc4 Nb6! 8.Bxg8?**



Played with the idea of 8...Rxf8 9.Qh5+, but overlooking Black's reply. However, after 8.Bf1 d5 or 8...Na4!? Black's position is to be preferred.

**8...Qg5! 9.Bxh7**

This loses, but not much better are the alternatives 9.Ne2 Qxg2 10. Rg1 Qxh2 11.Bb3 a4 or 9.g3 Rxf8. White has many light-squares holes.

**9...Qxg2! 10.Qh5+ Kd8 11.Qg6 Qxh1 12.Qg5+ Be7 13.Qxg7 Rxf7 14.Qxh7 Qxg1+ 15.Ke2 Be6 16.Nd2 Qg4+ 17.Kf1 Nc4! 18.Qh8+ Kd7 19.Qxa8 Nxd2+ 20.Ke1 Nf3+ 21.Kd1 Qg1+ 22.Ke2 Bc4# 0-1**

---

[2]

**Ammann P. – Miles A.  
World Junior championship  
Teesside 1973**

**A04**

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*In this game Black demonstrates something that top players must perform very well – resilient defense!*

**1.Nf3 g6 2.g3 c5 3.Bg2 Bg7 4.O-O Nc6 5.c3!? e5!?**

Welcoming the complications that follow. Instead 5...d5 6.d4 cxd4 7. cxd4 Nf6 transposes into the Grunfeld Defense.

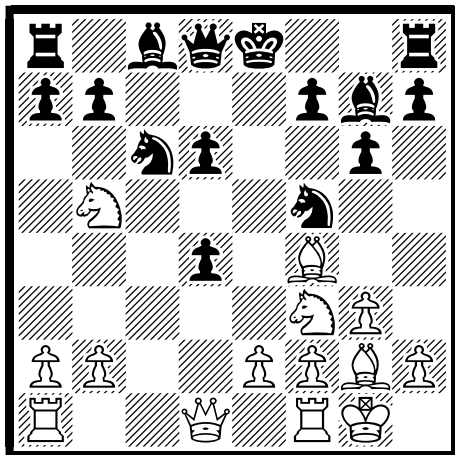
**6.d4 exd4**

If 6...cxd4 7.cxd4 Nxd4 8.Nxd4 exd4, and then either 9.Na3 or 9.Nd2-b3. According to ECO, White has initiative as compensation for the pawn.

**7.cxd4 cxd4**

Here again after 7...Nxd4 8.Nxd4 Bxd4 9.Nc3 White has more than enough compensation for the pawn.

**8.Na3 Nge7 9.Nb5 Nf5 10.Bf4 d6!?**



A forgotten novelty which deserves serious attention. The theory

gives 10...O-O 11.g4 Nh4 12.Nxh4 Qxh4 13.h3 a6 14.Nc7 Ra7, with an unclear position.

**11.e4**

The point of Black's novelty is that if 11.g4 now, then 11...a6!

**11...dxe3 12.Nxd6+ Nxd6 13.Bxd6 Be6**

Opening the e-file by 13...exf2+? 14.Rxf2 is only in White's favor.

**14.fxe3 Qb6 15.Qa4 O-O-O!**

Too dangerous is 15...Qxe3+?!

**16.Bf4 h6 17.h4 Bd5! 18.Rac1 Rhe8 19.Rfd1?**

A blunder, but White's position is already much worse.

**19...Rxe3! 20.Bxe3 Qxe3+ 21.Kh2 Bxf3 22.Bh3+ f5 0-1**

An interesting game for the theory of this relatively rare and little analyzed variation.

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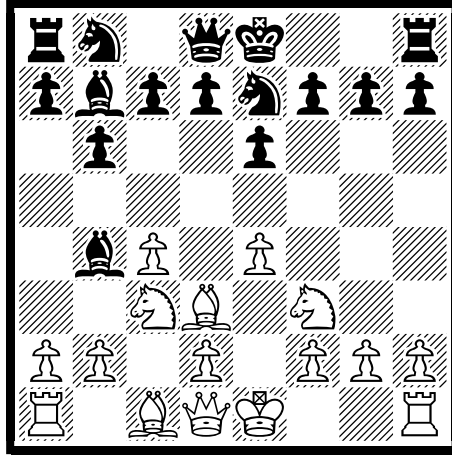
**[3] Miles A. – Hermesmann H. A05**  
**Bundesliga**  
**Germany 1988/89**

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**1.Nf3 Nf6 2.g3 g6 3.b3 Bg7 4.Bb2 d5 5.Bg2 O-O 6.O-O c5 7.c4 dxc4**

If 7...d4?! 8.b4, or 7...Nc6 8.cxd5 Nxd5 9.Bxg7 Kxg7 10.d4, in both





## 6.Qe2

A novelty, but no better than 6.O-O O-O 7.Re1 f5. Now, instead of 8.e5? Ng6 9.Bf1 Bxf3! 10.Qxf3 Nc6 (as in Hubner-Miles, Bad Lauterberg 1977), according to Miles White should play 8.a3 Bxc3 9.dxc3 fxe4 10.Bxe4 Bxe4 11.Rxe4 Nc6 with equal chances.

## 6...O-O 7.O-O Nbc6 8.e5?!

8.a3!? or 8.Bc2!?

## 8...Ng6 9.Be4 d6 10.d4?

After this Black achieves a strategically superior position. Good or bad, 10.exd6 was obligatory.

## 10...dxe5 11.dxe5 Bxc3! 12.bxc3 Na5 13.Ba3?

13.c5!?

## 13...c5 14.Rfd1 Qc8 15.Ng5 Bxe4 16.Nxe4 Nc6! 17.f4

A desperate attempt to achieve some counter play for the lost pawn.

**17...Nxf4 18.Qf3 Ng6 19.Nd6 Nxe5 20.Qg3 Qa6 21.Nb5 Qa4 0-1**

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**[5]**

**Miles A. – Wall G.  
British Team championship  
Great Britain 1999**

**A10**

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**1.c4 g6 2.e4 e5 3.d4 Nf6 4.Nf3 Nxe4**

The theory suggests 4...exd4 5.e5 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Qe7 as the better try.

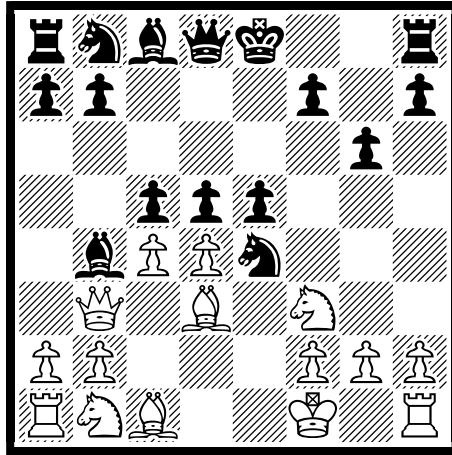
**5.Bd3 Bb4+**

The alternative 5...d5 6.O-O Nd6 7.dxe5 Nxc4 8.Bxc4 dxc4 9.Qa4+ is in White's favor.

**6.Kf1! d5 7.Qb3!**

Stronger than 7.Nxe5 O-O! The text also avoids the tempting 7.Qa4+ Nc6 8.Nxe5, because of Black's surprising reply 8...Nxf2! 9.Nxc6 bxc6 10.Kxf2 Qf6+ 11.Ke3 Qg5+ which equalizes.

**7...c5**



It is hard to believe that such complicated position can arise so early in English Opening. A paradise for tacticians!

**8.cxd5 Nf6 9.dxe5 Nxd5 10.Bg5 Qd7 11.a3 b5**

Maybe 11...Ba5 should be played.

**12.Be4!**

Not so clear is 12.e6 fxe6 13.Ne5 Qb7 14.axb4 c4 15.Nxc4 bxc4 16.Qxc4 O-O and Black has counter play.

**12...c4 13.Qc2 Ba5 14.Nc3 Bxc3**

After 14...Bb7 15.Rd1 Bxc3 16.bxc3 Na6 17.Bf6 O-O 18.Qd2 Nxf6 19.Qxd7 Nxd7 20.Bxb7 White also wins.

**15.Bxd5! 1-0**

For if 15...Qxd5 16.Rd1.

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[6]

Miles A. – Timman J.

A30

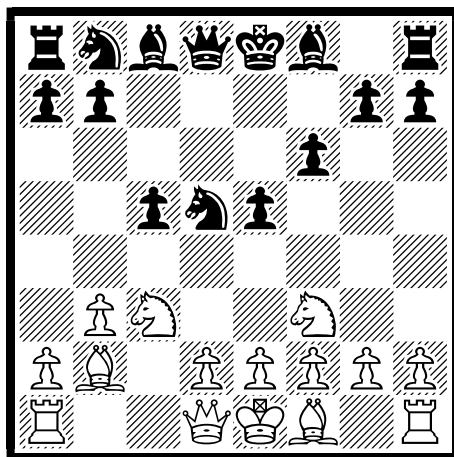
OHRA  
Amsterdam 1985

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1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.b3 d5

Beginning an ambitious (but suspicious) plan for domination in the center. Alternatives are 3...e6, 3...d6 or 3...g6!?

4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.Bb2 f6 6.Nc3 e5



7.Nxd5 Qxd5 8.e3 Be6

Maybe 8...e4!? deserves attention.

9.Bc4 Qd7 10.O-O

White has the advantage. He is ahead in development and the breakthrough d2-d4 is hanging dangerously over Black's position.

## 20...Bxc4

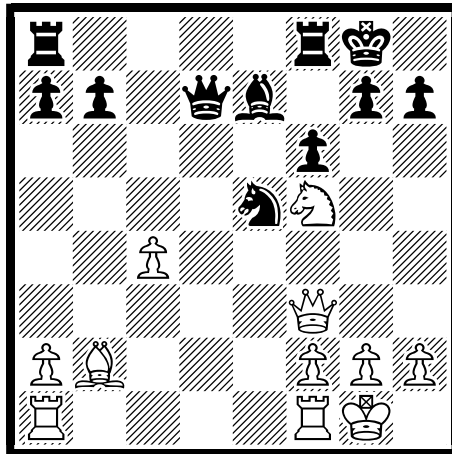
The complications after 10...e4 11.Ne1 (11.Nh4!?) are in White's favor.

**11.bxc4 Be7 12.d4! cxd4 13.exd4 exd4 14.Nxd4 O-O 15.Qf3 Nc6 16.Nf5!**

With the typical tactical threat 17.Qg4! winning the Queen

## 16...Ne5?

As very often happens in situations with dangerous pressure, here Black makes a fatal mistake. He should try 16...Rad8.



**17.Bxe5 fxe5 18.Qd5+! 1-0**

For if 18...Qxd5 19.Nxe7+.



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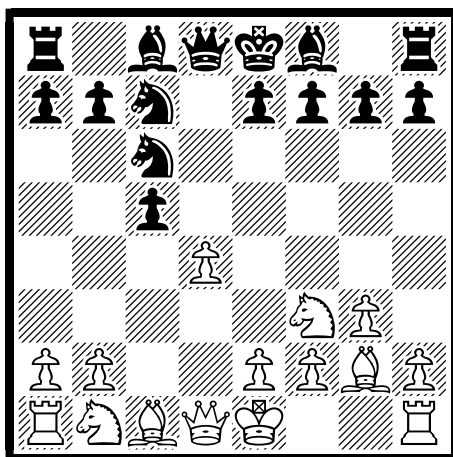
[7]

**Miles A. – Ljubojevic L.  
Bugojno 1986**

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**A30**

**1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 Nf6 3.g3 Nc6 4.Bg2 d5 5.cxd5 Nxd5 6.d4 Nc7!?**



At that time, a novelty! More often used in practice is 6...Nf6 and now either 7.Qa4 Bd7 8.dxc5 e5 9.O-O, or 7.Be3!?

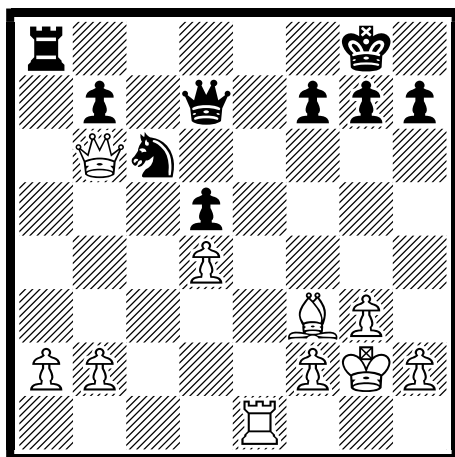
**7.e3 Bg4 8.Nc3 cxd4 9.exd4 e6 10.Qa4 Qd7 11.O-O Be7 12.Bf4**

Deserving attention is 12.Ne5!? Nxe5 13.dxe5 Qxa4 14.Nxa4 Rb8 15. Be3.

**12...Nd5 13.Nxd5 exd5 14.Rfe1 Rd8 15.Bg5 Bxf3?**

According to Ljubojevic, after 15...f6 16.Be3 O-O Black has a slight edge. In my opinion, this assessment is not correct. The position looks and is equal, especially after 16.Bd2 instead of the ugly 16.Be3.

16.Bxf3 O-O 17.Bxe7 Nxe7 18.Qxa7 Rfe8 19.Qb6 Nc6 20.Kg2  
 Rxe1 21.Rxe1 Ra8



22.Qb5! 1-0

For if 22...Rxa2 (22...Ra5) 23.Qxb7!, or 22...Rd8 23.Qxd5!

[8]

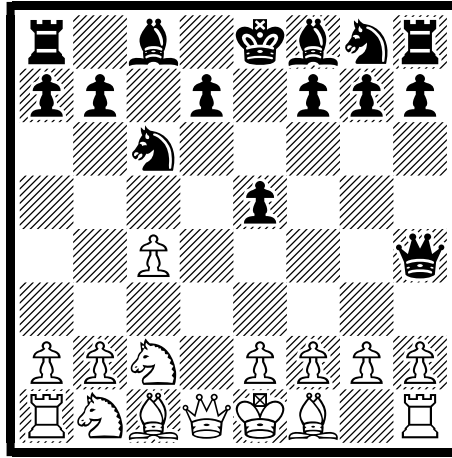
Miles A. – Benjamin J.  
 Zonal playoff  
 San Francisco 1990

A30

1.Nf3 c5 2.c4 Nc6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 e5 5.Nc2!?

The top professionals always have in reserve something that is rarely played and less analyzed. For example, here 5.Nb5 d6 6.g3 is the most common continuation.

5...Qh4?!



**6.Nc3! Nf6**

After 6...Qxc4 7.e4 Qc5 8.Be3 White has development and initiative as compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

**7.Nb5 Rb8**

Hoping for 7.Nd6+? Bxd6 8.Qxd6 Qxf2+ 9.Kxf2 Ne4+ and 10... Nxd6.

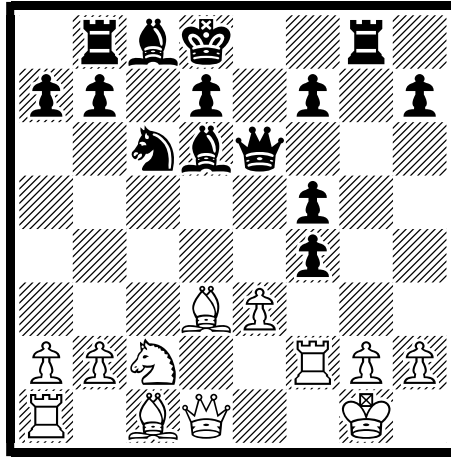
**8.Nc7+ Kd8 9.Nd5 Qxc4**

Clearly a dangerous adventure, but already there is no other satisfactory continuation.

**10.Nxf6 gxf6 11.e3 Qe6 12.Bd3 f5 13.O-O Rg8 14.f4 Bd6?!**

Too optimistic. With his King in the center and Queenside still frozen, Black's chances for a successful attack are very slim. Avoiding the opening of files by 14...e4 was preferable.

**15.Rf2 exf4?**



**16.Bxf5! Qxf5 17.Qxd6 Qe5 18.Qh6 Qd5 19.Bd2 Ne5 20.Qf6+ Kc7**

If 20...Ke8 21.exf4 Nf3+ 22.Rxf3 Qxf3 23.Re1+ Kf8 24.Bb4+ and mate on the next move.

**21.Rc1 1-0**

**[9]**

**Webb – Miles A.  
England 1975**

**A34**

**1.c4 c5 2.Nc3 Nf6 3.Nf3 d5 4.cxd5 Nxd5 5.g3 Nc6 6.Bg2 g6 7.Qb3**

The main line is 7.d3 Bg7 8.Bd2 O-O 9.Qc1 with approximately equal chances.

**7...Ndb4!?**