

Studies for Practical Players

**Book 2
Improving Important
Endgame Concepts**

**Oleg Pervakov
&
Mark Dvoretsky**

Foreword by Garry Kasparov



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Studies for Practical Players
Book 2: Improving Important Endgame Concepts
by Oleg Pervakov & Mark Dvoretzky

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Foreword

For You, Practical Players!

The authors of this book are widely known through the world of chess and do not need a special introduction, so I am going to only touch upon the main points.

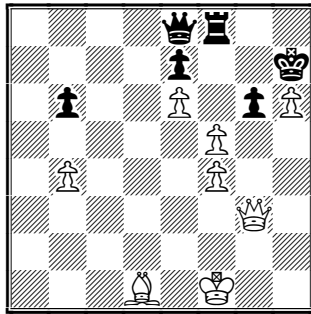
The creative collaboration between Mark Dvoretsky and Oleg Pervakov began as early as in December 1997, when the famous trainer presented the outstanding chess composer with a printed copy of the latter's studies that had been included into Dvoretsky's legendary card index. Oleg recalls that he was greatly fascinated and impressed by that gift. "Every long variation which I had cherished so much was thrown out of the comments as having no practical importance and replaced by interesting and precise moves, and formulations rich with unexpected issues."

Ten years later, they organized an International Chess Study Contest dedicated to Mark Dvoretsky's 60th birthday and became its arbiters. The result of their great work was their first collaboration, *Studies for Practical Players* (Russell Enterprises 2009), an indisputable success among practical players.

Now you have before you a sequel to this bestseller *Studies for Practical Players, Book 2*. The entire final preparation was done solely by Pervakov as, unfortunately, Dvoretsky had passed away (I have written on his contribution to development of chess in my foreword to his book *For Friends*

& Colleagues). Once again, an International Chess Study Contest was staged – this time a memorial one dedicated to the guru’s 70th birthday. I think that you will get real aesthetic enjoyment from studying the contest’s results, analyzing numerous beautiful studies and the games with annotations.

I had experienced such a feeling in spring of 1997, while sitting in the Presidium of the Congress of the Russian Chess Federation that was being held in the Congress Hall of the Cosmos Hotel. Sitting next to me was Andrey Selivanov, who quietly dictated a brand-new study by Oleg Pervakov.

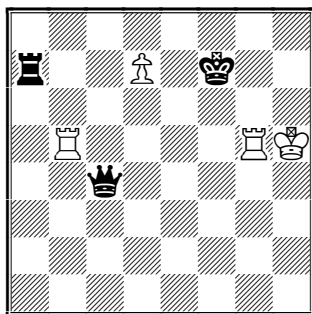


Win

I looked up at the ceiling and got down to calculating of variations. After five minutes or so, I whispered to my neighbor: “1. ♖a4 seems to win.” Of course, it was impossible to take into account every nuance “in the field,” but my intuition did not fail me:

1. ♖a4!! b5! (both a necessary move... and a fateful weakening of the c5-square) **2. f×g6+! ♜×g6!** (the main defensive line) **3. ♖c2! ♜×f4+!** **4. ♜g1!** (the only move!) **4... ♜f6!** (threatening 5... ♜×h6) **5. ♜g5! ♜×e6!** **6. ♜f1! ♜f6+ 7. ♜e1 ♜e6+ 8. ♜d1!** (8. ♜d2? ♜e2+!) **8... ♜d6+ 9. ♜c1! ♜c6! 10. ♜c5!!** (knocking out the opponent) **10... ♜×h6 11. ♖×g6 ♜×c5+ 12. b×c5 ♜×g6 13. c6**, and the pawn queens.

Not without reason, this natural-looking position went into Dvoretzky’s card index immediately as it was “a pleasure to solve.” The following study (1995) that I also found memorable surely must have been there as well.



Win

1.d8♖ ♖e2+! 2.♗h6 ♘a6+ 3.♗h7 ♘h6+!! (a desperate chance!)
4.♗×h6 ♖e6+ (hoping for 5.♗h7? ♖g6+!! with a stalemate) **5.♖f6+!!**
 An unexpected counter-sacrifice. The engine shows this move instantly, but, psychologically, it is extremely difficult for a human to make: you just cannot bring yourself to expose your queen, and with check!

5...♖×f6+ 6.♗h7 ♖c3 (6...♗e8 7.♘b8+!, winning the queen) **7.♘be5!**
 Complete domination: with material equality on the board, the black king is trapped, and its queen is unable to help.

Pervakov has more of these magnificent creations than I can count; some of them are simply phenomenal. Because of them, we get to know the geometry of the chessboard. It became fashionable to talk of the exhaustion of chess, but such studies let us keep faith in the game and its limitless possibilities! Positions with mutual zugzwang are particularly impressive... No wonder, it looks like his studies are taken from real life. The author admits that he has been a player of candidate master strength from his youth, and it was practical play that had brought him into chess composition, so he always tries to integrate it in his creative work.

To quote Yury Razuvaev's subtle observation, "Black's pieces never 'play dummies' in his studies. They always fight to the end just as their white counterparts do, thus creating an atmosphere of a real battle. That is why there is not a drop of implausibility or falsehood in Oleg's studies. Pervakov's chess pieces are endowed with the greatest of energy and literally fly over the board. We get a rare opportunity to watch them working in extreme conditions."

Studies for Practical Players – Book 2

Indeed, Pervakov is one of the heralds of a new era in the chess composition, in which Black is a party in its own right. Previously, a study was only a demonstration of a certain spectacular idea for White; for practical players, such studies are not really valuable as the play is one-dimensional. Then so-called studies with counterplay appeared; we were analyzing them enthusiastically at the Botvinnik School. Now such complex studies are at the frontline of chess composition. I not only often solve them on a plane to keep my mind from over-relaxing, I also examine them together with budding talents at the end of each session of the Kasparov Chess Foundation (we think that Oleg's studies are top-class there also!). They are an excellent training tool, as the Achilles heel of youngsters is precisely that they fail to recognize their opponents' counterplay. And here there is real life for them, everything is as close to battlefield conditions as can be.

Of course, the contents of the book are not nearly limited to studies by one author. It also includes wonderfully annotated creative works of many outstanding chess study composers and practical players. Outstanding!

Garry Kasparov
13th World Chess Champion

From One of the Authors

Nowadays, practical play and creative chess study composition have received an excellent impetus for further cross-fertilization. Development of electronic mass media, common online access to current tournaments and games, availability of powerful computer programs and the possibility to employ a seven-piece database for position evaluation – all this stresses the thesis that has been proclaimed in the title of this book.

Back in Soviet times, every Soviet citizen knew the slogan “The people and the party are one!” Mostly it was a propaganda aimed at the concrete Communist ideology; nevertheless, it contained a clear message, a spiritual staple for the society. Even though that particular social experiment failed in the end, practical chessplayers and study composers would not meet such a fate.

Above all, studies help a player to develop endgame skills, creativity and inventiveness, improve the technique of calculating variations. In their turn, brilliant games with unique ideas provide powerful impetus for the study composer’s creativity.

The idea of writing our second book in collaboration with Dvoretsky was born in the end of 2015 (our first one, *Studies for Practical Players*, was published in 2009 by Russell Enterprises).

Mark Israilevich went to the trouble of selecting and annotating interesting and instructive practical examples which demonstrated study-like ideas and combinations; as for me, my job was to find corresponding or spiritually similar fragments from creative works of chess study composers.

Studies for Practical Players – Book 2

We were not in any particular hurry. No one expected trouble, but on September 26, 2016, the Honored Trainer of the USSR, Russian Federation and Georgia, world-famous specialist Mark Israilevich Dvoretzky passed away...

Naturally, it was a matter of honor for his co-author to stay on the task, even more so that Inna Yanovna [his wife] and Leonid Markovich [his son] delivered their husband and father's dying wish to finish the book.

In the 18 months that followed, I took the liberty of supplementing Dvoretzky's material with several games which have been played during this period, complete with my short comments. Study composing also continued during this period.

The book consists of five chapters; the three final ones are wholly dedicated to chess studies, but do not fall outside the general concept of the book. Works of practical grandmaster players (including those done in collaboration with study composers) are intended for individual solving and are divided into three levels of difficulty. The International Memorial Chess Composing Contest *Studies for Practical Players* with a prize-fund of €1500 was dedicated to Mark Dvoretzky's 70th birthday. The final part of the book shows how studies are born and honed to perfection – I expect that the secrets of a chess composer's mind will be interesting to practical players as well.

The chapter called “The Foresight Effect” deserves a specific reference. Sergiy Didukh, a well-known Ukrainian chess composer, world study composition champion in 2010/2012, has developed a whole theory for chess studies of this kind, but I decided against going deeply into it as this book is primarily aimed at practical players.

The creative works of one of the authors have substantial representation in the book. This is not only my own fancy but also Mark Israilevich's wish. In *Studies for Practical Players* (in the chapter “Challenge to a Duel”) he writes: “I suddenly noticed that this collection contains a lot of Pervakov studies. Do not think that Oleg suggested some of them, or that I wanted to distribute my co-author's work more widely. The explanation is much simpler: these studies were taken from the corresponding (comparatively small) segment of my notebook of exercises. Clearly, Pervakov has succeeded in packing his works with interesting and double-edged struggles better than other composers, so that many of them are suited for two-sided playing-through.”

Improving Important Endgame Concepts

In the book, a conventional system of chess symbols is employed. White is always to move first in the studies, except for those where it is noted under a diagram that Black is on the move. MC stands for Memorial Contest, AC for Anniversary Contest, and WCCT – for World Chess Composition Tournament.

I hope you find the book aesthetically pleasing and, most of all, enjoyable!

Oleg Pervakov

*International Grandmaster of Chess Composition,
Four-time World Champion of Chess Composition*

Chapter 1

Study-like Ideas and Combinations

Any chessplayer would easily recall games in which brilliant ideas and combinations have been carried out (or, *au contraire*, missed). Not every such episode can be called “study-like,” as this epithet expresses the highest possible aesthetic evaluation, and combinations, even the most beautiful ones, are usually more or less standard. We can easily remember similar examples.

Originality is the most important aesthetic factor for the evaluation of studies. Also in practical games, what surprises and delights us most of all is, probably, ideas – if not really complex at all, but unusual; if not one-hundred-percent original (I doubt that those ones exist now), but at least rare. Obviously, such evaluation of levels of originality is to a certain degree subjective.

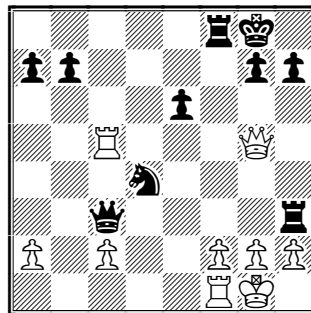
Another study-like aesthetic criterion, *efficiency*, cannot be applied to practical play. Any study composer always removes pieces and pawns that are not necessary for

the expression of his ideas, but a chessplayer has to deal with material that is present on the board. He cannot improve a position in order to obtain greater aesthetic effect.

But a factor such as *uniqueness of solution*, which is necessary for studies, has a significant influence on the aesthetic evaluation of practical fragments as well.

Levitsky-Marshall

Breslau 1912

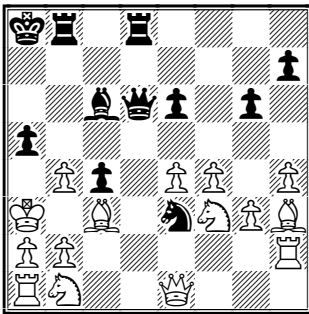


After Frank Marshall’s amazing shot **23...♖g3!!**, his opponent immediately resigned. What prevents us from enjoying it to the

full is the fact that Black has an extra piece, which he retains after various retreats of the queen, including 22...♙e3!?

The following example can be found in many books.

Koskinen-Kasanen
Helsinki 1967



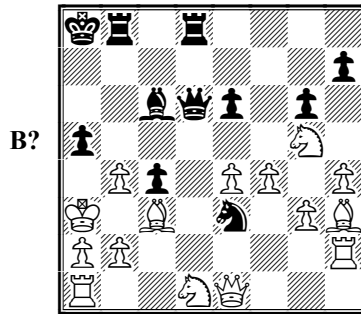
After 1...♙×b4+!! 2.♙×b4 ♖d2!!, White is unavoidably mated, 3.♙×d2 (the capture of any other piece is met with 3...a×b4#) 3...♗c2+ 4.♙×c2 a×b4#.

From an interesting book *Magical Positions* by Czech trainer Michal Konopka, we learn that, almost certainly, this ending never really occurred. It was composed and published by Juha Kasanen, who was most probably building on some real game. In our opinion, his composition is not very good.

If we notice that Black wins easily after 1...a×b4+ (1...♗d1, as well as a few other moves, also wins) 2.♙×b4 ♖d7!, with a threat of 3...♖a7#, the

spectacular combination becomes much less impressive. On the only reply 3.b3, both 3...♗d1 and 3...c3 4.♙×c3 ♖×b4 are good.

In collaboration with study composer Jaroslav Polasek, Konopka found an economical way of eliminating duals by slightly changing positions of white knights.



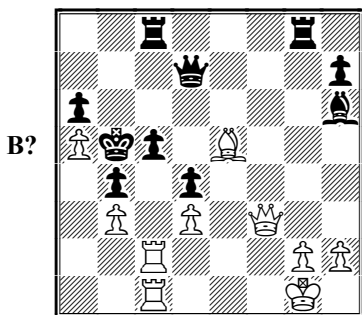
Here 1...♙×b4+!! 2.♙×b4 ♖d2!! is the only way to the goal. 1...a×b4+ 2.♙×b4 ♖d7! allows the opponent to escape: 3.b3! c3! (3...♖×b4? 4.♙b2! c3+ 5.♗×c3+-) 4.♙×c3! (but not 4.♗×c3? ♗c4+!) 4...♖×b4 5.♙b2! (5.♙×b4 is dangerous: ♖a7+ 6.♙b2 ♙×b4 7.♖c1 ♙b5 with an attack) 5...♗c4+ 6.♙c2 ♗a3+ 7.♙b2 (also playable is 7.♙c1 ♖c4!! 8.♙×e6! ♖×c3+ 9.♗×c3 ♙b4 10.♙b2 ♗b5 11.♗×b5 ♖d2+ 12.♖×d2 ♙×d2+ 13.♙a3=) 7...♗c4+ 8.♙c2=.

As a result of the correction, the aesthetic value of the example is greatly improved, and that makes it an excellent exercise for training combinational vision.

We have every right to call this combination “study-like.” In fact, it lies on the border between chess composition and practical play. In studies, there are fewer pieces on the board, but, on the other hand, this position had not arisen during the game but was composed. Symbolically, both practical players and study composers took part in its creation.

The next game seems to be the first one in which a geometrical “interference motif” can be found.

Tarrasch-Allies
Naples 1914

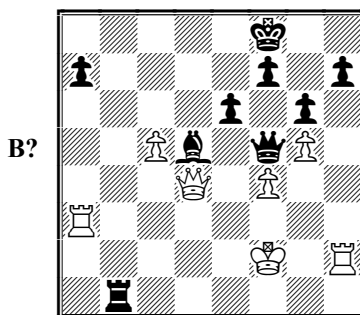


After **31. ♖c7!!**, Black resigned. In contrast with the previous example in which deflection is present in the only variation (3. ♖×d2), here interference is symmetrically combined with deflection in two lines:

31... ♜×c7 32. ♚b7+! ♜×b7 33. ♜×c5#; and 31... ♜×c7 32. ♜×c5+! ♜×c5 33. ♚b7+ ♜×a5 34. ♜a1#.

In chess puzzle books, there are many spectacular mating combinations which we can call “study-like,” for example:

Gaughitz-Horvath
Debrecen 1987



It is clear that Black has compensation for the exchange; he would stand better even if his opponent were on the move. Nevertheless, he seems to have only way to win.

43...e5!! 44. ♜×e5

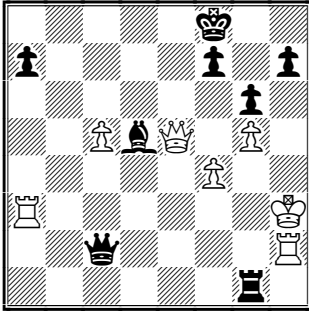
Black’s task is easier after both 44. ♜×d5 ♜×f4+ and 44. ♜d2 exf4 45. ♜×h7 ♜e5!?

44... ♜c2+ 45. ♜g3 ♜g1+

The queen was deflected from d4 precisely for the sake of this check.

46. ♜h3

B?



The most difficult point during calculation of the combination. Black's queen is *en prise*, so it is unable to give a sensible check. Useless is 46...♗g2+? 47.♖h4 ♕f2+ 48.♗g3.

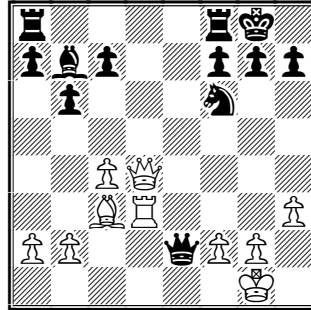
46...♗e6+! 47.♕×e6 ♖×c5!!

This is the whole point! White's queen is under attack now and has no normal checks. There is also a threat of the rook being captured, and to defend it, the queen must leave the important f5-square unguarded. White resigned.

In the following game, Black was able to meet a spectacular queen sacrifice with his own no less impressive counter-sacrifice.

Ahues-H. Müller

Berlin 1920

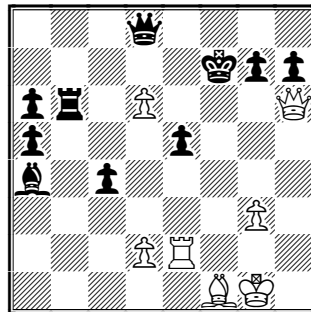


There followed **1.♕×f6!**, and Black resigned in view of 1...gxf6 2.♖g3+ ♖h8 3.♗×f6#. Meanwhile, 1...♕g4!! or even 1...♕d1+! 2.♖h2 ♕g4!! would have led to quite a different outcome.

And that is how the same idea is represented in the study by a German-Russian duo.

M. Minski, O. Pervakov

AC "Chess Informant-50" 2016
Third prize



Win

1.♖f2+