— I believe Hostage the most interesting, exciting variant that can be played with a standard chess set. Mating attacks are the norm. Anyone can hope to discover new principles and opening lines.

Grandmaster Larry Kaufman
2008 World Senior Chess Champion

— Fascinating, exciting, extremely entertaining——what a wonderful new game!

Grandmaster Kevin Spraggett
Chess World Championship Candidate

— Probably the most remarkable chess variant of the last fifty years. Captured men are hostages that can be exchanged. Play is rarely less than exciting, sometimes with several reversals of fortune. Dramatic mates are the rule, not the exception.

D.B.Pritchard
author of "The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants"

— Chess is not yet played out, but it is no longer possible to perform at a high level without a detailed knowledge of openings. In Hostage Chess creativity and imagination flourish, and fun returns.

Peter Coast
Scottish Chess Champion

— With only a few rule changes, Hostage Chess creates a marvelously exciting variant on the classical game.

Lawrence Day
International Chess Master

— Every bit as intriguing as standard chess. Beautiful roads keep branching off in all directions, and sharp eyed beginners sometimes roll right over the experts.

Robert Hamilton
FIDE Chess Master

Published 2012 by Aristophanes Press

John Leslie (***johnlesl@uoguelph.ca***) invented the game of Hostage Chess. A Canadian university teacher, his hobbies include mountaineering, canoeing, board games, and writing books like "*Universes*" (Routledge), "*The End of the World: the science and ethics of human extinction*" (Routledge), and "*Infinite Minds*" (Oxford University Press).

Website:
www.hostagechess.com

Hostage Chess

John Leslie

Contents

Chapter 1

Introducing "Hostage"

Starting with all the normal rules of chess, the normal chessboard, and the normal thirty-two chess pieces in their normal starting positions, Hostage Chess adds rules about *hostages*. That means all chess pieces — usually just called "men" , so that even a queen is a "man" — that have been captured during the game and haven't yet been *rescued*.

You *rescue* men captured by your opponent through *"ransoming"* them, *"paying for"* them, which you do *by releasing men that you yourself have captured*. That is called "an exchange of hostages". What makes Hostage Chess so exciting is that men released or rescued *can parachute back into the fight*. "Parachuting" just means returning to the board, "as if being **dropped** from the air".

Prisons for captured men are at the side of the board, each near its owner's right hand. They are simply areas, right next to the board, where the players "imprison" all captured men, keeping them fully visible — so prisons have no walls and roofs. Until captured men are placed in them as "hostages" waiting to be exchanged, the prisons are just empty areas on the dining table, coffee table or whatever else is the thing on which the board rests.

There are **airfields** as well, each near its owner's left hand. Once

again, they are simply areas right next to the board. (It's a good idea to put things like saucers, plates or beer mats in these areas, to help you to remember that they are airfields and not prisons, but you don't have to.) Any men in the airfields were sent there when released from prison, so they don't need to be "paid for". No longer hostages, they have become paratroops ready for action.

The full rules of the game will be explained later. Here, though, are the TWO MAIN NEW RULES which make Hostage Chess so different from normal chess.

— **Rule #1** *To rescue a man your opponent has imprisoned, PAY by releasing a man OF GREATER OR EQUAL VALUE that you have imprisoned.*
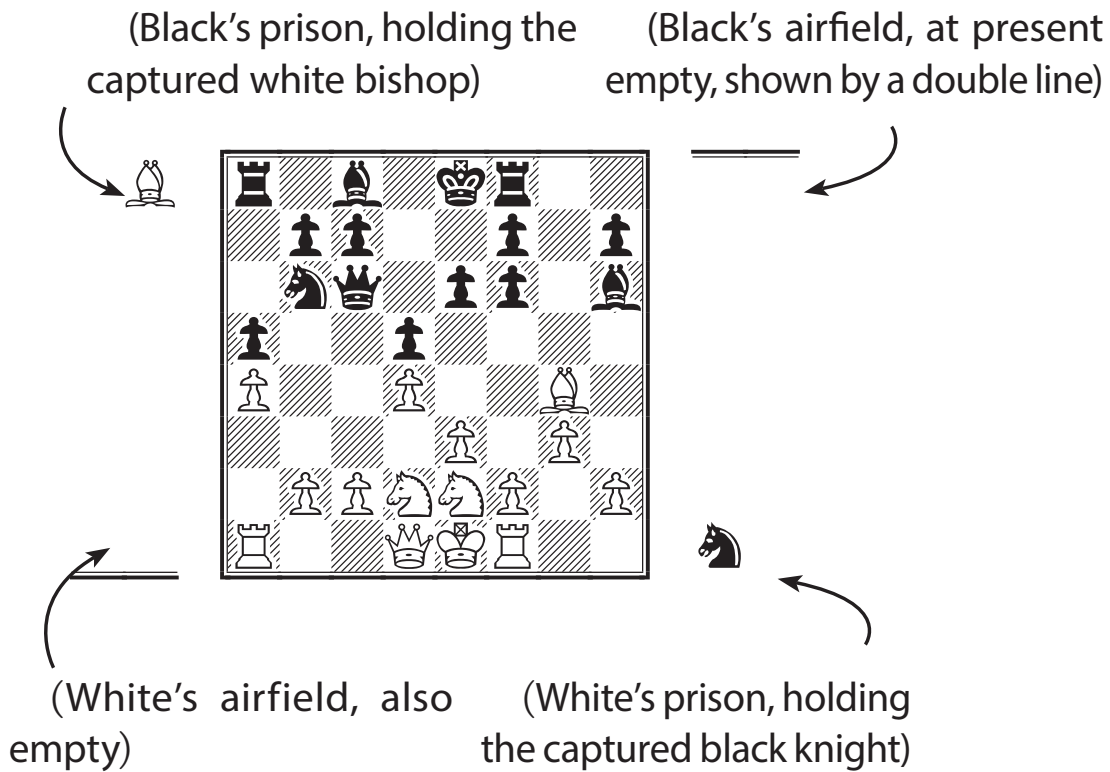
> (Values run in steps starting from PAWN, then up to KNIGHT-or-BISHOP, then ROOK, then QUEEN. So, for instance, you could rescue a pawn by releasing an imprisoned rook. Or you could rescue a bishop by releasing a knight, because that's equal in value.)

– Push the released man ("the payment") forward into your opponent's airfield.

– Then AT ONCE "parachute" the man you are rescuing onto an empty square. (Just make sure you don't parachute pawns onto first or eighth ranks.)

— **Rule #2** *Anything in an airfield waits there until a turn is used for parachuting it. (Once again, pawns can't be parachuted onto first or eighth ranks.)*

Here's how it works. Playing as in normal chess, two beginners might reach this position in which Black has captured a bishop while White has captured a knight:

(Black's prison, holding the captured white bishop)   (Black's airfield, at present empty, shown by a double line)

(White's airfield, also empty)   (White's prison, holding the captured black knight)

Instead of using the next turn as in standard western chess, suppose that White chooses to make use of **Rule #1**. This means releasing the black knight from the prison and pushing it forward into Black's airfield. Since knights and bishops are of equal value, *releasing the knight allows White to rescue the imprisoned white bishop*, *which must immediately parachute back onto the board*. Well, let's say that White uses the parachuting bishop to attack the queen, as in Diagram 1:
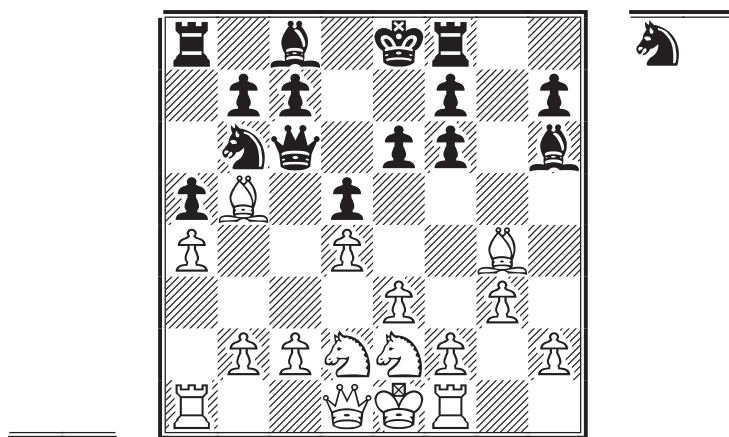

Diagram 1

White's turn has ended. *The black knight has gone forward to Black's airfield*, to "buy" the white bishop. *The bishop had to parachute AT ONCE, as Rule #1 said.* It could parachute onto absolutely any empty square, and it now threatens the queen. Should Black capture it? There's a far better move — a move using **Rule #2**. *The airfield knight is available for parachuting,* and this looks the right moment for using it to attack White's king as in Diagram 2:
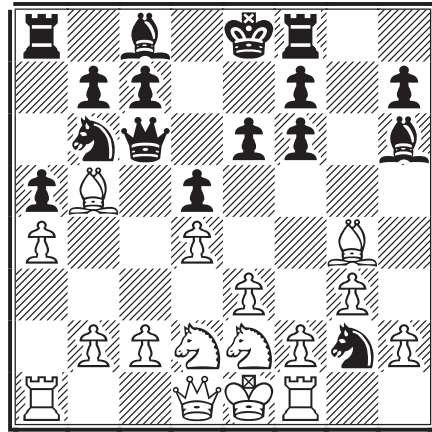

Diagram 2

The knight has moved from Black's airfield to the board. Black can do nothing else in this turn, but wouldn't want to anyway — for it's checkmate!

Scenes from an actual game

In the next chapter you'll be told the complete rules of Hostage Chess. But first, it's best to get a really good idea of the game's central mechanism by looking at a longer sequence of moves, ones which only need those two new rules. The sequence ends in checkmate by a parachuting queen.

Remember that in the diagrams, the airfields — to each player's left — are shown by double lines. A player's prisoners ("hostages") are simply grouped at the side of the board, by the player's right hand.

The game is shown starting from the position after Black's eighth move. So far, no use has been made of parachuting (very often called "dropping", while men that parachute become "drops").
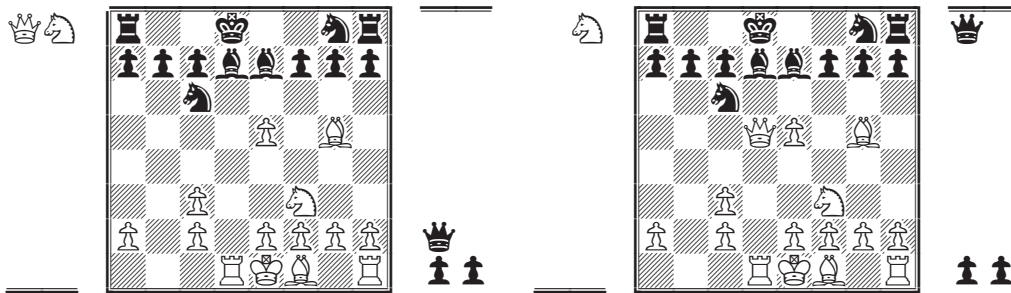
1. White to move. White's prison contains three hostages. Black's contains two. With the hostage queens waiting to be exchanged at any time, expect fireworks!

2. White has now pushed the imprisoned black queen into his opponent's airfield, rescuing his own queen and at once dropping it near the center of the board. (Remember, anything rescued must immediately be dropped.)
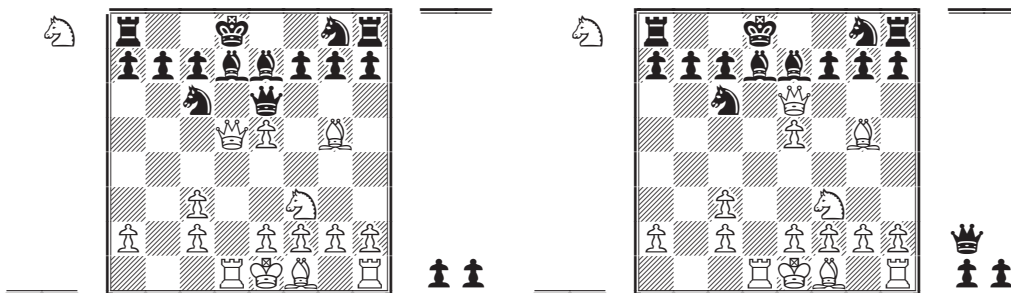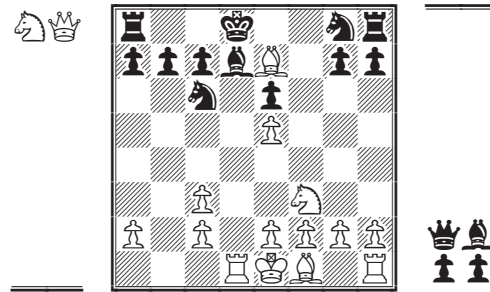
3. To stop mate by the white queen, Black has taken the queen from his airfield and dropped it to defend his threatened bishop. (The black queen could have been left in the airfield, but Black wanted to use it at once.)
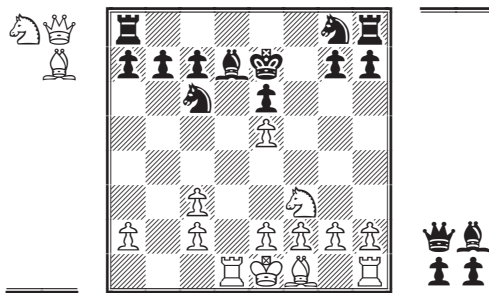
4. White has captured Black's queen, so it has returned to being a hostage.

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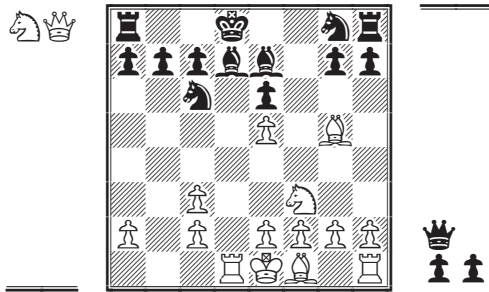
5. *White's queen has itself now been captured and imprisoned.*
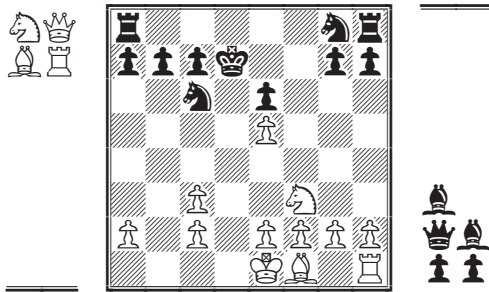

6. *White has captured and imprisoned a black bishop, and attacks the black king.*

7.*The king has captured the attacker — but shouldn't the knight in the corner have made the capture? Well, Black feared an exchange of hostage bishop for hostage knight, the rescued knight then dropping to attack king and rook simultaneously.*
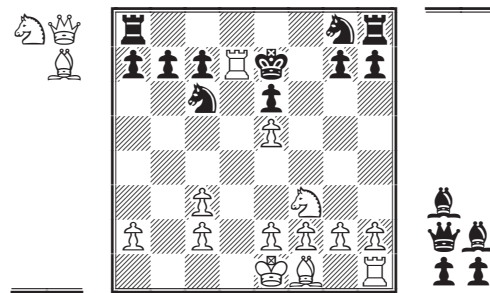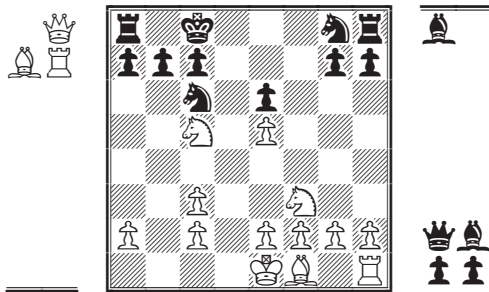

8. *White's rook has captured Black's bishop, giving check.*

9. The black king has captured the rook. The king is in great danger because a queen-for-queen hostage exchange is possible.
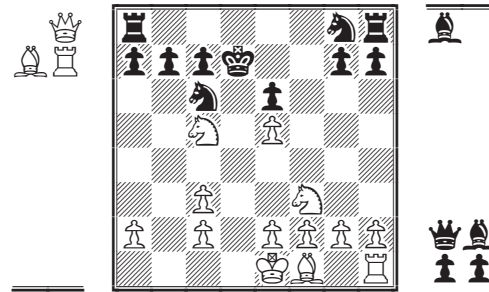
10. White has pushed an imprisoned bishop into Black's airfield, rescuing a knight (of equal value to the bishop) and dropping it so as to give check.

11. The black king has fled, but the square chosen for the flight is no safer than any other.
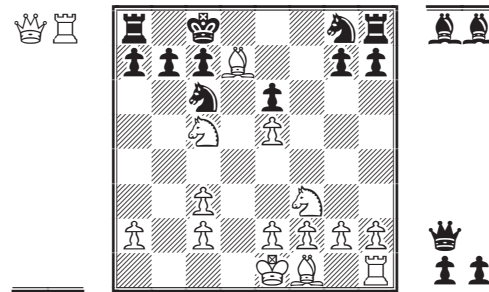
12. Another exchange of hostages. White pushed a bishop into Black's airfield, rescuing and dropping a bishop to attack Black's king once again. White now has two white-square bishops, but that's legal.
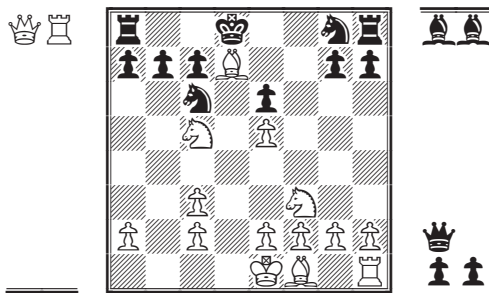
13. The king has run away once more. Unfortunately, nowhere was safe.
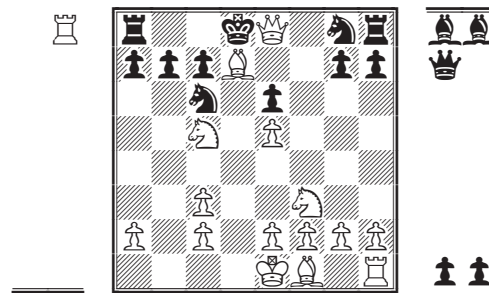
14. Then came the queen-for-queen hostage exchange. Pushing the black queen into his opponent's airfield, White rescued and dropped his own queen, with checkmate.

The fascination of Hostage Chess

"Shogi" is the great chess game of Japan, where it is hugely popular. Millions play it. Top players become millionaires. What makes it so exhilarating is that its chessmen change sides when captured. Shaped like spearheads, they turn their points towards their old allies and parachute back into the fight. Only one or two per cent of the contests end in draws. The game offers immensely much room for skill. There are hundreds of techniques that the professionals need to master.

Hostage Chess — *Hostage* for short — uses western chessmen in a Shogi-like game, with parachuting. However, western chessmen tend to be more powerful than Shogi ones, and there are fewer of them in each army. This means that if they simply swapped sides when captured, like Shogi men, then we'd have a game ruined by sudden, huge alterations in the strengths of the battling armies — a game of continual tactical violence and hardly any strategy. In Hostage, however, captured men never swap sides. Instead they are "held hostage" (imprisoned) and can be parachuted back onto the board only when hostages have been exchanged. And although hostage exchanges can never be refused, the player who forces an exchange must give equal or higher value — a queen to buy a queen, for example, or a rook to buy a pawn — and therefore should never rush into this blindly. It all works so well that the games expert David Pritchard, who played standard western chess on England's team, gives Hostage a chapter of his book *Popular Chess Variants* before going on to describe Shogi itself.

The two games play very similarly. For instance, both often end in long sequences of checks. Also both can lead into forests so thick that nobody can see far through them. A beginner at Hostage Chess can hope to ambush even the most expert players of today.

That's where much of the fascination of Hostage lies. Added to the usual difficulties of western chess, there's the need to imagine what could happen if hostages were exchanged and parachuted. Mightn't you think, then, that weaker players would stand much less chance

than usual? In fact quite the opposite is true. Expertise in the orthodox western game — *orthochess* for short — does carry over strongly into Hostage. Here, however, daring and luck often triumph over talent, experience and careful calculation. At orthodox western chess, in your typical small-town club of ten to twenty members, the best player could probably beat the worst player fifty times in a row. Not much fun to be had from that! In Hostage, in contrast, a player of very ordinary skill will have entertaining fights against the world's strongest, with real chances of winning from time to time.

After I'd dreamed up the central idea of the game — exchanging prisoners and then parachuting them — the rules more or less wrote themselves. Anything much different would have led to something obviously inferior. Then I tested the game with my friend Roger Smook whose passion in life is chess. He is about as strong as you can get without becoming a professional and spending years studying the openings.

It was quickly clear that we'd stumbled on a wonderful game, and that Roger would quite often be defeated. In orthochess, chess of the West without parachuting, he would come out of the openings just slightly ahead, then grind me down in the standard western fashion. If you lose a knight or a bishop in the orthodox game, you often might as well resign. Lose a pawn, even, and your opponent can start exchanging pieces, almost emptying the board until being a pawn behind means defeat. Not so in Hostage, where there can be huge swings of fortune. In spite of Roger's enthusiasm for orthochess he found Hostage more addictive.

It isn't just the difficulty of predicting what will happen that makes Hostage so intriguing. There is also the fact that having the initiative, having an attack so strong that your opponent cannot disregard it, can be much more important than being ahead in material. There's the fact, too, that after an attack has failed its intended victim will typically have built up "airfield" forces for a dangerous counterattack. Battles frequently include many checks in swift succession. Multiple

sacrifices are often made. It may be impossible to calculate whether they will work. This game can be just too difficult for calculations! Sacrifice you must, or you will surely lose. But if the checks and the sacrifices don't end in victory it will be your turn to try living through a storm.

You can employ plenty of cunning. Sometimes your opponent will regret capturing something for you can rescue it next move and parachute it at the head of an assault. When the enemy queen is sitting in your prison, having your own queen sent to prison sometimes gives you a win. A queen-for-queen hostage exchange follows, and you then perhaps parachute a checkmate. Even capturing one of your pawns might lead your opponent to disaster. At times your prayer will be that he or she won't realize how dangerous it would be to capture something. Yet occasionally you'll make a move that would be senseless (grabbing a protected pawn, say, with an unprotected rook) unless you wanted your man to be captured so that you could ransom it, "buy it back" through exchanging hostages and parachute it in some deadly fashion. Then your opponent's difficulty won't be in detecting what you have in mind. It will be in knowing how to survive.

Exchanging hostages can be a good way of launching an attack, but it's a risky business. Yes, it gives you new paratroops for breaking up a king's defenses. But when an exchange of hostages puts, say, a knight into the opposing airfield, then this enemy knight, ready to swoop down onto any empty square, can be roughly as strong as a rook on the board. That's why having four or five pieces you could parachute doesn't always mean having a win. If those pieces are sitting in the enemy prison, only needing to be "paid for" by giving your opponent four or five new airfielders, think twice before paying for them! Occasionally, though, it is good to pay a queen for a mere pawn which then drops onto the board in some lethal way.

Hostage games can begin with eight or more moves in which the new rules appear to be doing nothing. But appearances are often illusory. In reality those rules may be hard at work, pushing play

away from orthodox chess openings which would run into trouble from paratroopers. Then comes the first exchange of hostages, and soon after you find yourself in what feels like an orthochess "middle game" of an extraordinarily interesting type. In the standard western game, Grandmasters almost always have several plans they would love to put into practice. For ordinary mortals, in contrast, forming any plan at all can be extremely hard. In Hostage Chess, however, the big difficulties are of choosing between several tempting avenues of attack — or of resisting temptation so as to defend instead.

As in real warfare, attack is often a good means of defense, quite a bit more than in orthochess. Still, Hostage is a field whose theory remains in much need of development. Maybe straightforward defense ought always to be your first thought? Well, my hunch is that even when its theory has been well developed Hostage will strongly reward aggression. And certainly there is less need than in orthochess for subtle positional play. Positions almost never become so blocked that delicate maneuvering is the only option. This may be something of a pity. It may be a pity, too, that there is no endgame in which just a few pieces move around very carefully. Such a stage cannot be reached in Hostage where captured men are forever returning to the board. So, sorry, much rich and beautiful chess theory simply isn't applicable to Hostage Chess.

In compensation, drawn games occur hardly ever, except through perpetual check which happens only rarely. And — see the chapter on Tactics and Strategy — Hostage is packed with new techniques to be learned. Perhaps best of all, there will never be heavy volumes of opening theory all having to be mastered before you can hope to become really strong. After each player has made a few moves, the possibilities become astronomically numerous. A computer that could remember them would have to be gigantic. You can become impressively skilled at Hostage Chess without memorizing any openings.

Hostage is above all a friendly game. When defeated you can very often blame it on bad luck. Only demons could have calculated all the

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variations in detail. This is one of the few games that remain intriguing when you play "left hand against right": controlling both armies, you know each side's plans, but there's often no knowing whether they will work. In Hostage you can lose (yes, even to a much weaker player) without feeling bruised. You can genuinely admire the surprising fashion in which you got mated. If, though, you find yourself beaten with depressing regularity by some very strong opponent then don't hesitate to accept a handicap. Before starting the next battle remove a hostile knight, bishop or rook from the enemy ranks and place it in your prison.

Games usually end after fewer moves than in orthochess, but a time limit of fifteen or twenty minutes for each player can still produce an extremely tense struggle since it is so easy to blunder, so hard to see beyond the next three or four moves. For a satisfying contest without clocks, allow at least fifty minutes.

Playing by mail or on the Internet, will even the strongest players soon need to fear that their invisible opponents are actually computers? It seems unlikely. The possible paths branch with such speed that not even the fastest computers can hope to keep sight of them. For many years to come, Hostage will probably be a game in which humans remain the champions. It calls for "intuition": in other words for the kind of high level pattern-recognition that computers remain so bad at. None the less Paul Connors has developed a computer program, "HostageMaster", which will often win against players who are graded Expert in the orthodox game and who aren't newcomers to Hostage. Grandmasters, too, could have a tough time when they set the computer to move every ten seconds and then tried to do the same themselves.

David Pritchard wrote the first article on Hostage for *Variant Chess,* journal of the British Chess Variants Society. He said it dethroned a game he had earlier called "variant of the decade" and it soon became popular. The rules and specimen games were also given prominent treatment in a website run by Hans Bodlaender in the Netherlands.

Next Fabrice Liardet of Switzerland gave it star billing on his own website. Further articles appeared in later issues of *Variant Chess,* in the Italian journal *Eteroscacco,* in *NOSTalgia,* journal of the Knights of the Square Table who mostly live in the States, in the Canadian journal *Abstract Games* and in the high-circulation U.S. journal *Games.*

The chapter in Pritchard's *Popular Chess Variants* has helped the game to spread as far as Australia where Steve Evans wrote the first computer code allowing it to be played by the Zillions game-playing engine. The new computer program by Connors plays it well enough to merit the attention of gamers worldwide. It will beat most comers but they'll enjoy the experience. Win or lose, Hostage is fun.

A final note: Orthochess, orthodox chess, the standard western game, is itself only a variant (with a much more powerful queen to add excitement) on a game popular in medieval times. It's a particularly fine variant, though, and the good news for its admirers is that becoming strong at Hostage will boost your orthochess rating. Hostage gives you dazzlingly many chances for trying out the kinds of maneuver — attacking combinations above all — which are so easy to overlook in your orthochess games. It develops your imagination, your sense for the big fish lurking in chess waters.

Chapter 2

Rules and Notation

COMPLETE RULES OF HOSTAGE CHESS

To the normal rules of western chess, Hostage Chess adds these new rules:

(1) Each player owns two areas at the side of the board: a prison for "hostages" — captured enemy men — near the player's right hand, and an airfield near the player's left hand.

In each turn you do only one of three things. You

*(*a) move normally;

or else

(b) make a hostage exchange and drop, which means rescuing ("buying", "ransoming") just one man from your opponent's prison by pushing a man WHOSE VALUE IS EQUAL OR HIGHER from your prison into your opponent's airfield, then at once parachuting ("dropping") the rescued man onto an empty square;

or else

(c) parachute just one man from your airfield onto an empty square.

(2) VALUES run from PAWN upwards to KNIGHT-OR-BISHOP, then ROOK, then QUEEN. So, for example, by pushing an enemy knight from your prison into the enemy airfield you can rescue a knight, bishop or pawn from the enemy prison. There is no need to get your opponent's permission before making this exchange of hostages.

(3) Parachuting can place a player's two bishops on squares of the same color.

Pawns cannot parachute onto first or eighth ranks.

Pawn jumps from the second rank, and acts of castling, may involve men that reached their squares by being parachuted onto them, no matter where they were positioned before they became hostages.

(4) A pawn can promote only by changing places with a queen, rook, bishop or knight in the enemy prison. The player, not the owner of the prison, chooses the piece for this changing of places if more than one piece is available. Unless the prison contains such a "promotion piece", a pawn one step away from promoting is totally frozen. *Unable to move forward, it cannot even give check.* Similarly, it cannot attack a square so as to prevent castling.

A frozen pawn is said to "pseudo-check" a king instead of genuinely checking it. However, when your king is in pseudo-check you cannot legally capture a queen, rook, bishop or knight. That's because capturing it would unfreeze the pawn, putting you into a genuine check.

Comments on the Rules:

— To put men you capture into your prison, just place them beside the board near your right hand. For the airfields, use beer mats, saucers, plates or other flat objects: books, perhaps. This is not a rule but

it can be of great help. (Without my beer mats, I can't keep track of what's happening.)

— When rescuing an imprisoned bishop, for instance, by pushing an imprisoned knight forward into the enemy airfield, it can be helpful to say *"Knight buys bishop"*. First push the knight into the airfield, then grab the bishop and parachute it immediately. (But note that HostageMaster, the powerful computer program developed by Paul Connors, requires you to parachute the bishop first. Then, if there's a choice, it asks what you want to push into the enemy airfield as "payment".)

— Quite often in books on chess, and throughout this book, "a piece" means a king, queen, rook, bishop or knight, but not a pawn. "A man" means just any unit, even a rook or a queen.

— If it feels strange to speak of "men in airfields" then you can always refer instead to "men in hand". And instead of saying "parachuting" or "dropping" you could talk of "re-entering" men into the battle.

— The rules dictate that when you make an exchange of hostages, the man you "buy" must straightaway be parachuted. You cannot store it for use in some later turn. In contrast, you can accumulate in your airfield as many men as you please. Having several men in your airfield, men you could parachute in successive turns, often gives you a winning attack.

— *There is never any need to ask what men did before being taken prisoner and then parachuting.* So a pawn dropped onto a normal starting square for a pawn always has the option of jumping two steps forward when it first moves. And though (just as in orthodox chess) moves by the king make castling permanently impossible, a rook dropped onto a home corner square *can* be used for castling exactly as if it had stood there unmoved since the beginning of the game — even if it started the game in the other home corner, and even if it was captured when in the center of the board. Above all, there is no need to ask whether

a bishop was a black-square bishop or a white-square bishop before being captured. A bishop can always be dropped onto any vacant square. How that square is colored makes no difference.

— Since all the rules of western chess apply except when otherwise stated, a pawn that could be taken *en passant* must have reached its present square by jumping two steps forward. If dropped onto that square, it is safe against *en passant* capture.

— The only slightly tricky rule is the one about pawn promotion. Promotion is always by moving to the very far end of the board **and then immediately changing places with a piece in the enemy prison**. As well as ensuring that no man ever falls out of the game entirely, this means there is never any need to borrow additional units (new queens or other pieces) from a second boxful of chessmen. It also means that a pawn one step away from promoting can be less strong than it seems. Any such pawn may find itself **unable to move forward or even to give check** because there is no imprisoned piece with which it could change places. And even when it can move forward, it may be able to promote only to something fairly useless. Consequently, dropping pawns in the hope of promoting them isn't a tactic powerful enough to dominate and unbalance the game.

The difficult thing, though, is remembering that **when your king is in "pseudo-check" from an enemy pawn, not real check**, because your prison contains no piece with which the enemy pawn could change places, **then you cannot legally capture anything except pawns** (unless, that's to say, the king itself does the capturing, which of course moves it out of the pseudo-check). If you captured a bishop, for instance, then the pseudo-check would change into a real check since the enemy pawn could now in theory move forward, promoting to bishop. Of course it would never actually move forward, capturing the king and then promoting. In Hostage Chess just as in orthodox western chess, no king is ever actually captured. But having something to which the pawn could promote makes it able to move forward "in

theory" and this is what allows it to give check.

Do not disregard being in pseudo-check! Although the check isn't real, you may be in very big trouble since your opponent can spread destruction with pieces you cannot legally capture.

All the same, it sometimes helps if you *turn a real check into a pseudo-check*, which is often possible. Suppose a pawn attacks your king. You seem checkmated. But what makes the enemy pawn's check into a real one, not a pseudo-check? Answer: the enemy rook in your prison, for the prison contains no other man with which that enemy pawn could change places. Well, perhaps you could remove the rook from the prison by using it in an exchange of hostages. You might, for instance, use it to "buy" a bishop. The enemy pawn would then no longer give check since promoting to rook would no longer be possible.

These points will be illustrated shortly with the help of diagrams.

Notation for recording Hostage Chess

Normal chess notation (algebraic system) with the following additions:

    ♘***c7** means that a knight from an airfield parachutes onto c7.

    (♗)♘***c7** means that an imprisoned bishop goes to the enemy airfield and a knight is rescued, the knight then at once parachuting onto c7.

    *g3 means that a pawn from an airfield parachutes onto g3.

    (♖)***g3** means that an imprisoned rook goes to the enemy airfield and a pawn is rescued, the pawn at once parachuting onto g3.

    gxf8=♖ means that a pawn on the g-file captures on f8 and then promotes to rook by changing places with a rook in the

enemy prison.

f8=♗ means that a pawn steps forward to f8 without capturing anything, then at once promoting to bishop by changing places with a bishop in the enemy prison.

For people new to the algebraic system, here are more details.

Squares are given by rank and by file. Ranks range from 1, nearest to White, to 8 which is nearest to Black. Files start with a, which is to White's left, and end with h, to White's right. ♖d5 means that a rook moves to square d5. If two rooks can travel to this square, you must specify the file or the rank from which the journey starts, as in ♖(h)d5 or ♖(3)d5. Capturing is shown by "x" followed by the square on which the capture is made, as in ♖xb3, and any doubts about which piece does the capturing are once again removed by specifying file or rank, as in ♖(f)xb3 or ♘(6)xh7. A pawn move to square d3 might be recorded as ♙d3 but it is usual to write d3 only, leaving out the symbol "♙", while exd3 means that a pawn on the e-file captures on d3. An e-file pawn's en passant capture of a pawn which jumped over square d3 is shown as "exd3 e.p.". Castling is O-O if kingside, O-O-O if queenside. Check is + or else ch., or perhaps dis.ch. or dbl.ch. for discovered check and double check. Moves are given in numbered pairs. When mentioning just one move you insert dots, as in 7...♘c6, if it is a move by Black.
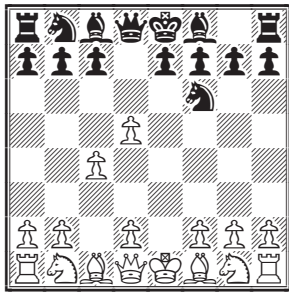
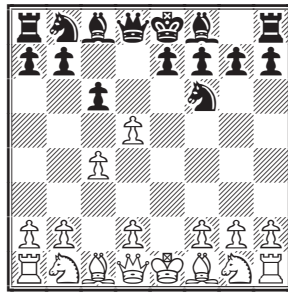To show the notation in action, here is a short game:
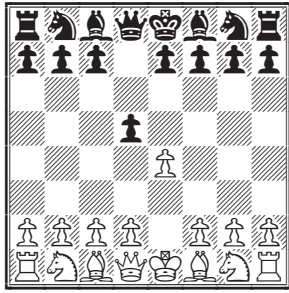
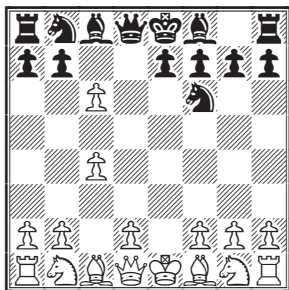*1 e4 d5 White's pawn goes to e4 and Black's then goes to d5.*
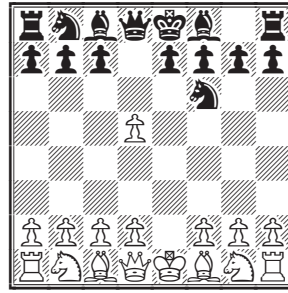
2 exd5 ♞f6 The e-file pawn captures on d5, and Black's knight goes to f6.
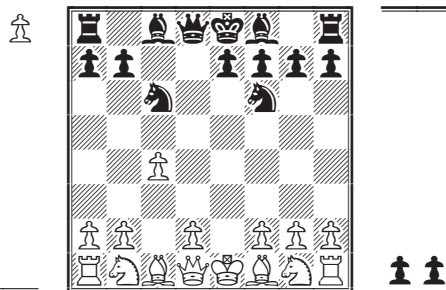
3 c4 A white pawn advances.
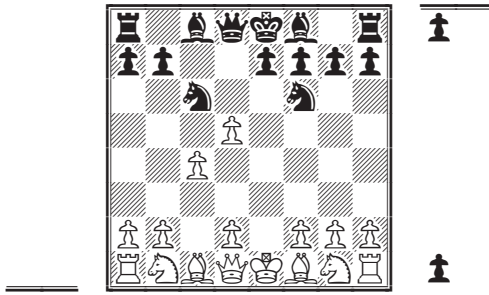
3...c6 So does a black one.
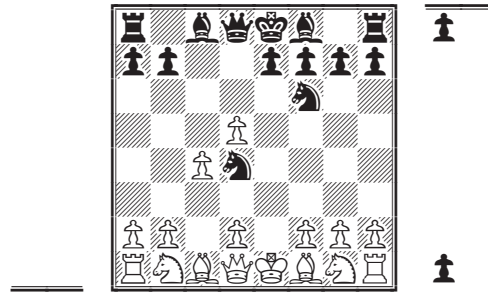
4 dxc6 The d-file pawn captures on c6.
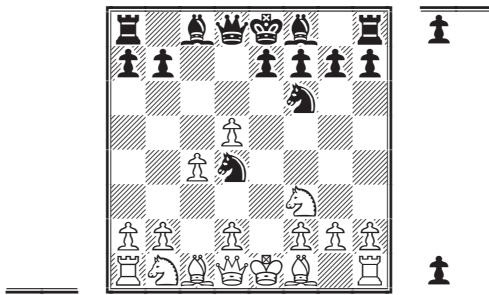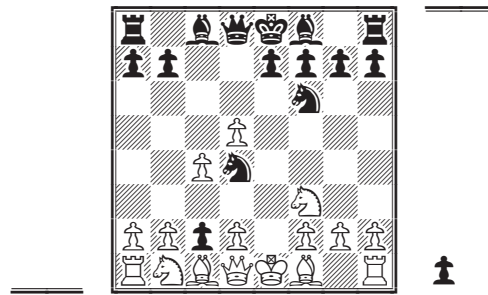
4...♞xc6 A knight takes revenge.

5 (♙)*d5 Exchange of hostage pawns, White's rescued pawn dropping on d5.

5...♘d4

6 ♘f3

6...*c2 The pawn from Black's airfield drops on c2. Wrongly thinking the queen is lost, White resigns. (In reality, the queen is in no immediate danger since the black pawn cannot promote — **there is no imprisoned black queen, rook, bishop or knight with which it could change places** *— and therefore cannot move forward.)*

Here is all of the game whose final moves were shown in chapter one: **1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 e5 3 dxe5 d4 4 ♘f3 dxc3 5 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 6 ♗g5+ ♗e7 7 bxc3 ♘c6 8 ♖d1+ ♗d7** (this was the position in the first diagram given in chapter one) **9 (♕)♕*d5 ♕*e6 10 ♕xe6 fxe6 11 ♗xe7+ ♔xe7 12 ♖xd7+ ♔xd7 13 (♘)♘*c5+ ♔c8 14 (♗)♗*d7+ ♔d8 15 (♕)♕*e8 mate**.

Finally, here is a game in which the pawn promotion rule features very interestingly. It starts **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♞c6 3 ♗c4 f5 4 d3 f4 5 d4 ♞xd4 6 ♘xd4 exd4 7 ♕xd4,** and then comes:
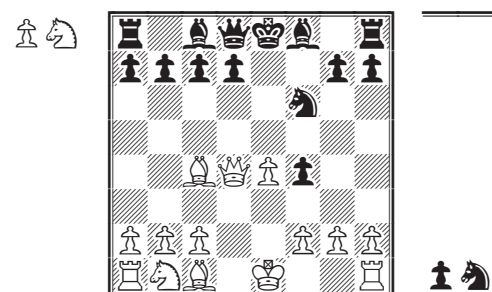

7...♞f6 This is the position just before the first hostage exchange. Black uses his seventh move to advance his knight.
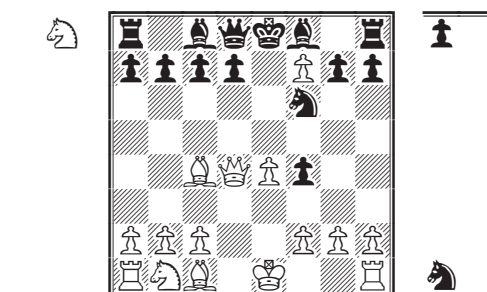
8 (♙)*f7+ White now pushes an impris-oned pawn into the enemy airfield, buying a pawn which parachutes with check. **The check is a real check, not just a pseudo-check, because the pawn is in theory able to promote to knight by changing places with the imprisoned white knight. This allows it to move forward.**
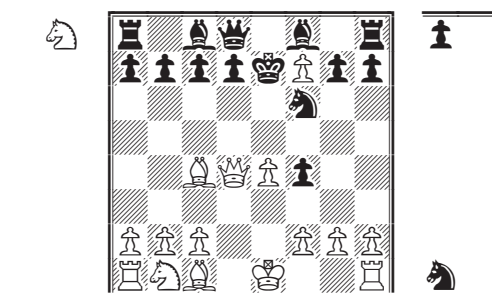
8...♚e7 The king moves out of check.
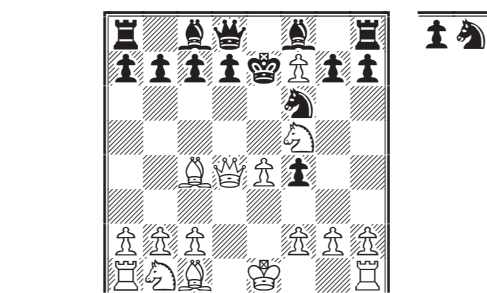
9 (♞)♘*f5+ Another exchange, this time of hostage knights, and the king is in check from a parachuted knight.
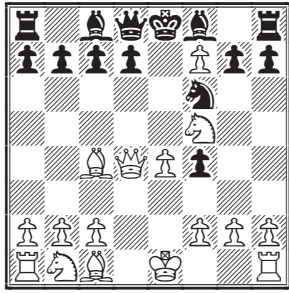
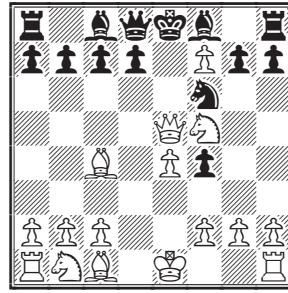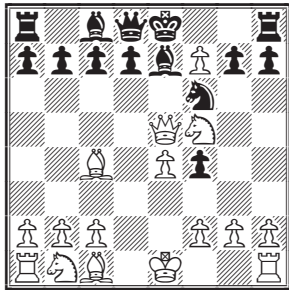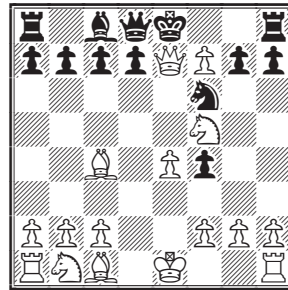*9...♔e8 The king returns to the square on which it was in check earlier. **Because no longer able to promote to knight, White's pawn no longer attacks that square. It's pseudo-check only.***

10   ♕e5+ The white queen gives check.

10...♗e7 A black bishop blocks the check.

*11 ♕xe7+ **Is it checkmate? It is. See the next diagram.***
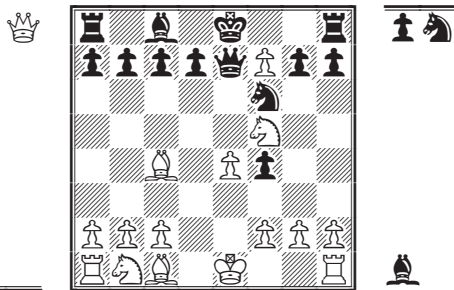
*Black would like to play ...♕xe7, capturing the white queen and creating this situation. **But the move would be illegal, for it would simply replace one check by another. That's because the white pawn, suddenly able to promote to queen, would be giving a real check — not just the pseudo-check it was giving previously.***

.. Never forget: WHEN IN PSEUDO-CHECK FROM A PAWN, YOU CAN CAPTURE ONLY PAWNS — unless, of course, you capture with your pseudo-checked king, which gets you out of the pseudo-check. (You can capture pawns because a pawn cannot "promote to pawn" by changing places with a captured pawn.)

To end the chapter, here is a rules summary for sending to your friends:

HOSTAGE CHESS Rules as in normal western chess, except these:

I. Each player owns two areas at the side of the board — a prison for captured men, to the player's right, and an airfield to the player's left. Imprisoned men have VALUES running from PAWN upwards to KNIGHT-OR-BISHOP, then ROOK, then QUEEN.

II. In each turn you (i) move normally,

or else (ii) rescue just one man from the enemy prison by transferring a man WHOSE VALUE IS EQUAL OR HIGHER from your prison to the enemy airfield, then at once dropping the rescued man onto an empty square,

or else (iii) drop a man from your airfield onto an empty square.

III. Dropping can place a player's bishops on squares of the same color. Pawns cannot drop onto first or eighth ranks. Pawns dropped onto a player's second rank can later make two-square leaps from it, and rooks dropped into corners can later take part in castling.

IV. A pawn promotes by changing places with a queen, rook, bishop or knight in the enemy prison. Unless the prison contains such a piece, a pawn one step away from promoting is "frozen". It cannot move or give check or prevent castling.

Chapter 3

Tactics and Strategy

Estimating the Value of Material

A man can be parachuted when it sits in an airfield, obviously. Do not forget, though, that it is also available for parachuting — it is "a droppable man" — when it sits in a prison but can become active at any moment since the other prison contains something which could be exchanged for it.

Because they can move to so many squares, droppable men tend to be quite a bit more important than men on the board. Trying to judge who leads in material, you have of course to consider all the men on the board and in the airfields. However, you should add something to each player's score for every man that's an airfielder (and therefore droppable without having to be "paid for" by an exchange of hostages) instead of being on the board.

Just how much should you add? Let's start by asking how much **men on the board** are worth. It can be useful to think of them as having point values roughly like these:

Pawn: **1**   *Knight*: **3**   *Bishop*: **3**   *Rook*: **5**   *Queen*: **9**

In suggesting the value of **5** for a rook, I have kept in mind that *losing a rook* means putting into the enemy prison a hostage that your opponent could use for ransoming ("buying") a rook *or else* for

ransoming a knight or a bishop. This extra flexibility should increase your eagerness not to lose the rook which, if considered simply as a piece roaming the board, could be worth somewhat less since in Hostage Chess the board is typically too cluttered for rooks to move around easily.

Why give bishops the same weight as knights, when in Hostage a knight can usually move around more easily than a bishop? The answer is that this reason for weighting knights more heavily is counteracted by the fact that *losing a knight* in return for the capture of a bishop is often good because having a bishop to put in your prison can be better than having a knight to put in it. Imagine, for instance, that an enemy bishop is the sole man in your prison. Your opponent's prison contains a knight of yours, again as its sole man. Well, this allows you to ransom a knight — a piece tending to parachute very powerfully. Your opponent can ransom only a bishop, and bishops tend to be weaker paratroopers.

Now, here are what **men in airfields** are typically worth:

Pawn: **2**   *Knight*: **5**   *Bishop*: **4½**   *Rook*: **6½**   *Queen*: **12**

Note that airfield knights tend to be worth more than airfield bishops, and the immense power of an airfield queen.

Comparing point values, we find that *the increase in worth* of men that have gone to your airfield, instead of remaining on the board, is roughly as follows:

Pawn **1**;   Knight **2**;   Bishop **1½** ;   Rook **1½** ;   Queen **3**.

Of course points given for material are only extremely rough guides to who is ahead in the game. Far more clearly than in standard western chess, who's really winning depends on the details of the situation. In Hostage the winner often puts a huge force into the enemy airfield during a mating attack. All the same, you will be defeated if you forget the typically great difference in power between airfielders and

mere men on the board.

Far the simplest way to find out who leads in material is as follows. First, *total the point values of each of the player's PRISONERS*, and afterwards *add a few extra points for each of the player's AIRFIELDERS* on the scale given just a moment ago: Pawn **1**; Knight **2**; Bishop **1 1/2**; Rook **1 1/2**; Queen **3**. When you then compare the two player's totals, you get the right result for who is ahead, and by how many points. (Much, much simpler than adding up the point values of all the men on the board and then counting an airfield queen, for instance, as "plus **12** points".)

But shouldn't your prisoners perhaps be counted *a second time as well* since each of them, in addition to meaning that there's one enemy man fewer on the board, is also "cash" for ransoming a man imprisoned by your opponent? The answer is a definite No. When all you can do with a prisoner is exchange it for some man in the enemy prison, "paying" equal or higher value—a rook to buy a rook, for instance, or a rook to buy a pawn—then you cannot count the prisoner as pure profit! Any enemies that you've imprisoned can in fact be constant threats to you. Yes, you can picture them as money for purchasing paratroops. But picture them also as bombs which could be purchased by your opponent and dropped on you.

Still, taking another look at the prisoners can lead you to revise your point totals in two ways:

First, you should remember that having an enemy bishop in your prison and a knight of yours in the enemy prison is usually better for you, because a knight that you ransom will tend to parachute more powerfully than a bishop ransomed by your opponent. In many situations, therefore, add a little to your point count if yours is the prison containing the bishop.

Second, you should ask whether only one player has the chance of forcing a hostage exchange. That's often worth a point or two.

Suppose the enemy has imprisoned a knight and a pawn while your prison contains just a rook. Your opponent cannot use the knight or the pawn to buy the rook. You, on the other hand, can use the rook to buy the knight or the pawn — which would usually be a poor idea, yet there are many times when dropping a knight or dropping a pawn can be crucial.

Weaknesses that Paratroops Attack

All the usual weaknesses of chess position are made worse when paratroops can exploit them. Pieces become easier to fork or to skewer. (A "fork" attacks two men simultaneously. A "skewer" attacks a man which then can't move without exposing another that lies behind it.) Trappable men become more readily trapped. Unprotected men become especially vulnerable, and it is more important than ever to protect pieces with pawns rather than with other pieces. Being mated on your back rank by rook or by queen can be harder to avoid (although sometimes the reverse is true because men can be dropped to prevent it). Threats of smothered mate become particularly severe. A king tends to be in especially great trouble when enemy guns are trained on neighboring squares, or when those squares are empty so that paratroops can land on them. Castled positions that have been weakened by pawn movements tend to collapse more frequently. And as droppable forces grow larger, everything becomes more and more tense. As soon as there are three or four "drops" you could make, perhaps through exchanging hostages, look hard for a mating attack!

Exchanging Hostages, and Using Up Your Airfielders

When your opponent "pays" for a hostage by releasing another of at least equal value, you can never refuse the exchange; but just how often should you be the one who forces such an exchange? It's a delicate question. Remember, when a hostage exchange is of your own making then you must immediately drop the hostage that you ransom. In contrast, your opponent gets a new paratrooper for drop-ping at any later time. Particularly when the enemy airfield already

contains one or more paratroopers, building up the force on it can be hazardous. It is wrong, therefore, to force hostage exchanges so as to obtain slight improvements on the board. The result is that experts will sometimes have quite large populations in their prisons before any hostages are exchanged.

There can often be a big advantage, though, in forcing a hostage exchange. It could be the start of an attack in which the enemy has to answer each drop with another drop, getting no chance to accumulate more and more airfielders. Besides, games frequently end with a player adding impressively many men to the opposing airfield but delivering checkmate before any of those men can be used.

Note that forcing an exchange *of men on the board* — capturing a man, your opponent then having to "recapture" (capture the capturer) so as not to fall behind in material — gives you the first opportunity to force an exchange *of hostages*, and therefore of dropping your man *first*. You capture; your opponent recaptures; and then you decide to exchange hostages and drop. Attacks often begin like that.

What if you greatly shrink the forces in your airfield when you attack? Particularly if your opponent has to answer each drop of yours with another drop, this often won't matter very much. And it will never matter if you are speeding towards victory.

The Queen

An enemy queen in your prison may sometimes be of little help to you. True, it can be used for ransoming just any hostage from the enemy prison, but (unless this leads to a quick mate) you probably won't want to use it for ransoming anything less than a queen. Using it to ransom a rook, for instance, could be an extremely poor transaction. Sometimes, then, it is good to lose a queen in return for capturing, say, an enemy knight plus an enemy bishop. You get two new prisoners, useful cash for rescuing men from the enemy prison. Your opponent gets more cash, but in a single lump which in effect cannot be used.

All the same, having the enemy queen in your prison can often be very useful: just about as useful, sometimes, as having an airfield queen. This is because one of the most feared maneuvers in Hostage Chess is the queen-for-queen hostage exchange. As soon as both queens have left the board, being the player who made the first queen capture can give you a winning advantage. You captured the enemy queen; your opponent then captured yours; and now you can exchange hostage queens and drop your queen first. Admittedly the enemy queen (which has gone to the enemy airfield) is available for dropping at once, but "at once" can be too late. An attack headed by a parachuting queen is frequently so strong that not even another parachuting queen can stem it.

Of course what's crucial here isn't actually who makes the first queen capture. Instead it's who gets to make the queen-for-queen hostage exchange. A short game illustrates this: **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♘f6 4 ♘g5 d5 5 exd5 ♘xd5 6 ♘xf7** (the "Fried Liver Attack" of standard western chess) **...♔xf7 7 ♕f3+ ♔e6 8 (♙)*f5+ ♔f6 9 ♕xd5 ♕xd5 10 ♗xd5** (now both queens have been taken hostage) **10 ...♘d4**. Black is threatening to mate next move with ...(♕)♕*e2, but White gets there first, as follows: **11 (♕)♕*f7+** (the queen-for-queen hostage exchange, here made by the second player to make a queen capture; this player goes on to win almost at once) (Diagram 3)

Diagram 3

34

11 ...♚g5 12 h4+ ♚f4 13 g3+ ♚g4 14 (♞)♞*e3 mate. This was one of my earliest games of Hostage, and one of my son Tom's earliest wins.

Since making the first queen drop can be so murderous, queens often become "rampagers". Suppose yours is the only queen to have been captured. The enemy queen may now "rampage", rushing around taking your protected men. If ever you dare to capture it, you're at once faced with a queen-for-queen hostage exchange and could easily end up being mated. The situation in Diagram 4 is a case in point:
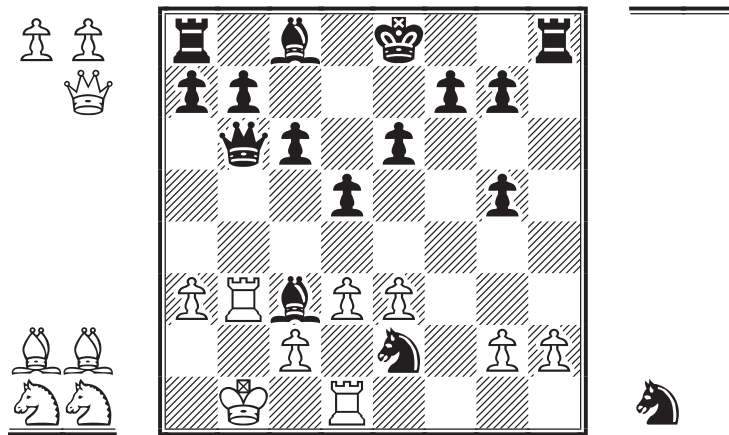
Diagram 4

White has just dropped a rook on b3 in answer to a check from the black queen. Unfortunately this simply causes the queen to rampage: **...♛xb3+**. When White captures the queen with **cxb3**, it returns at once: **...(♛)♛*b2 mate**.

Here comes a more complex queen rampage. It is conducted by Grandmaster Kevin Spraggett, playing Black. His opponent, another very strong player, has just captured a bishop with dxe7, his eighteenth move (see the diagram below). Fairly new to Hostage Chess, White tells himself that the queen sitting in Black's prison won't be much

use for ransoming anything, for who'd want to use a hostage queen to ransom anything less than another queen? Yet planning to use a hostage queen to ransom another queen is what a queen rampage is all about, as he'll shortly find out! (Diagram 5)
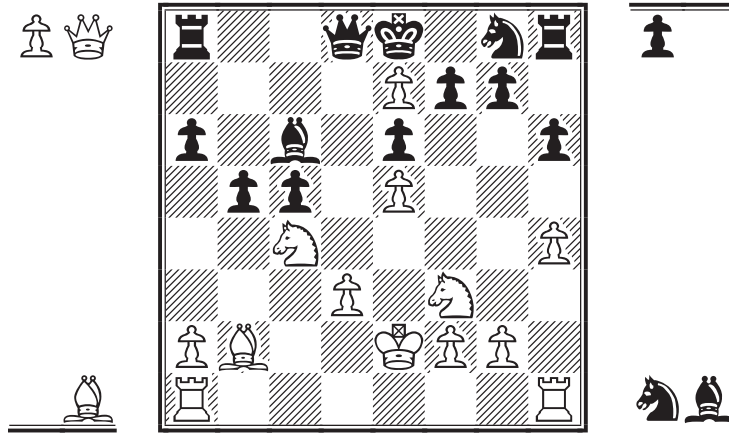
Diagram 5

Black at once shoots down the nice path that has just been opened: **18 ...♛xd3+** (the queen sacrifice that starts the rampage) **19 ♔xd3 bxc4+ 20 ♔e3 (♕)♛*e4+** (return of the queen through a hostage exchange) **21 ♔d2 ♛d3+ 22 ♔e1 (♞)♞*c2 mate**.

The Rook, and Castling

Rooks tend to be less powerful than you'd expect. Hostage Chess never gets to an endgame as in orthochess (orthodox western chess) in which rooks really shine. Frequently knights can seem more or less as strong. Still, you should usually grab a rook for a knight if you can, if only because the rook is more valuable "officially". You can use a hostage rook to buy a hostage knight. You cannot use a hostage knight to buy a hostage rook.

Imagine, for instance, that your prison holds an enemy rook and nothing else. Your opponent's prison contains a knight, a bishop and a pawn. The airfields are empty. First thoughts suggest that you are at quite a large disadvantage in material, which may well be true — but in Hostage having the initiative can be vital, and here you have a

choice of three men to parachute while your opponent cannot parachute anything. It might actually put you in the lead.

A common tactic is dropping a knight so as to fork two enemy pieces, one of them a rook which you then capture. Even when the knight is sure to be taken, this is often a good idea — for rooks do tend to be worth more than knights. However, the parachuting knight must come either from your airfield (meaning that you use up a potentially very helpful paratrooper) or else from a hostage exchange that puts something (perhaps a very dangerous knight) into the enemy airfield. The knight drop might therefore be inadvisable. After congratulating yourself on your clever knight fork, you could end up deeply regretting it. All depends on the details of the situation. If your knight finished in a corner, able to do little, your opponent might not even bother to capture it.

What about castling? In Hostage just as in orthochess, castling early can be an excellent plan. It tends to put the rook in a better position. The king tends to end up better protected. Even more than in orthochess, however, you have to make sure you aren't castling into trouble. And your castled king can be so vulnerable to paratroops that it may make sense to reinforce the castle by, for example, dropping an extra pawn in front of it.

Think seriously of reinforcing your castle if your opponent gets a queen or a bishop or a rook lined up on it, or could sacrifice a knight, a bishop or a pawn just ahead of it, forcing one of its pawns to move. In such circumstances it can be foolhardy to wait until the enemy has droppable forces that could join an attack on the castle. *In Hostage droppable forces can arrive in a flash, through on-the-board exchanges.* After three on-the-board exchanges your castled king could be facing an attack into which three additional men were going to be thrown when the newly imprisoned hostages were exchanged.

After your opponent has castled, you'll often have a knight and a bishop attacking the pawn that the enemy rook protects. If the king is

its only other protection, how about capturing that pawn? When the little skirmish ended, an enemy pawn and rook would have entered your prison while your knight and bishop had entered the enemy's prison. Who would have gained from the skirmish?

In orthochess capturing rook and pawn in return for knight and bishop usually means getting a bad bargain, but in Hostage evaluating the bargain becomes very complicated. (i) One factor is that the rook might at any stage ransom either the knight or the bishop, pieces that could parachute powerfully. In contrast, the knight or the bishop could ransom only the pawn, not the rook, and swapping an imprisoned knight or bishop for a mere pawn is usually a poor idea. As holder of the rook and the pawn, you could benefit from the resulting tension for quite a long period during which nobody ransomed anything. (ii) Then, too, you must consider such sequels as the following. An enemy pawn captures a pawn of yours. Your opponent expects you to recapture, which would allow time for guarding against a pawn-for-pawn hostage exchange by which you could cause havoc. Because of the little skirmish, however, your prison already includes a pawn to fuel such an exchange. You therefore proceed with it immediately, causing the havoc.

The Bishop

Like rooks, bishops tend to be less strong than in orthochess. The board seldom empties enough to give them full freedom of movement. Pawn drops can trap them, or at least block their lines of attack. They are even none too strong as paratroops. If a dropped bishop attacks a man, the defender can often get rid of the threat by dropping something to block the bishop's line of fire — a solution unavailable when the attacking piece is a knight instead. Admittedly bishops can be especially useful because they can parachute onto any empty square regardless of its color. In practice, though, this is often of little help. For one thing, when you have bishops of the same square-color then half the squares on the board cannot be reached by them. Sure enough,

they can protect each other — but so, too, can one of them obstruct the other when it wants to retreat. As droppable pieces, therefore, bishops tend to be less useful than knights.

This means it is often best to get your knights forward quickly *and then lose them in exchange for your opponent's bishops*. Always bear in mind that when your opponent captures a knight while you capture a bishop, *you are the one getting the knight to parachute* if hostage knight and hostage bishop are exchanged.

Once again, though, all depends on the details of the situation. A bishop drop will sometimes be much more useful than a knight drop. In a far forward position and in company with a friendly pawn, a dropped bishop can be very powerful, perhaps immobilizing the enemy king.

A dropped bishop can also be used to pin the enemy queen. You can sometimes set up a fatal pin *in two stages*. First you drop a bishop onto a protected square, pinning the queen "absolutely": it cannot legally move out of the line of fire since the bishop would then be giving check. Your opponent drops a knight, say, on the square between the bishop and the queen. You capture the knight with the bishop. The queen, capturing your now unprotected bishop, *is thereby drawn forward*. And you next use the captured knight as cash for ransoming the bishop — which you drop onto the same protected square as before. It is now right up against the drawn-forward queen.

The Knight

Droppable knights are wonderful things to have. When you attack by dropping some other piece, an enemy man can often block the attack: it can be used to shield the king, for instance. A dropped knight simply cannot be countered in this way. It can be lethal either by itself or in company with a second dropped man. Followed or preceded by a dropped queen, a dropped knight is often decisive.

Dropped knights can fork devastatingly. When a knight is in the enemy airfield, would you be likely to place your king and queen so that the knight could attack them simultaneously. Not unless it was your first game of Hostage! When the enemy airfield is empty, however, it is easy to become careless. A knight takes a bishop of yours, perhaps. You capture the knight. Your opponent captures something protected by your queen. And now you see, too late, that if the queen recaptures then it will fall to a bishop-buys-knight hostage exchange and a fork from the knight when it parachutes. The knight entered your prison as a bomb ready to be bought and then dropped on your head.

A parachuting knight can be particularly powerful if it lands on a square protected by a fellow knight. If the parachuted knight is captured, the fellow knight captures the capturer — and can now proceed to do whatever the parachuted knight had been threatening to do. The success of knight forks very often depends on this trick. So does the effectiveness of knight attacks on the castled king.

Again, knights can quite often "rampage" as effectively as queens, for in many positions capturing them would lead only to being forked, to being checked and chased into danger, or to suffering smothered mate as in Diagram 6:
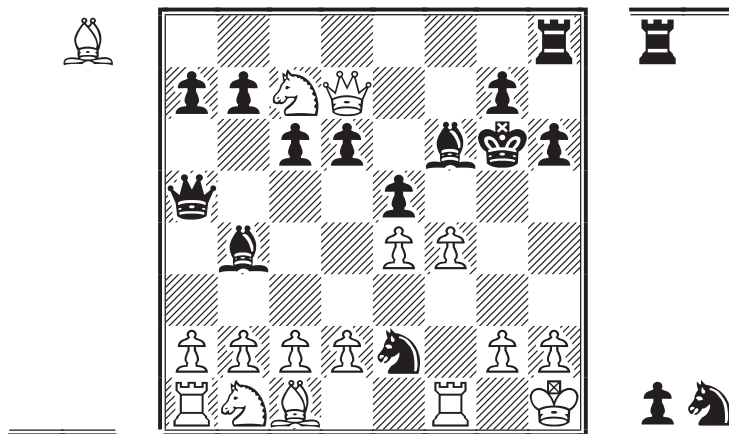
Diagram 6

A black knight has just been captured — but it can be ransomed. Black starts by playing **...♖*g1+**. When the white rook takes the

intruder, Black's answer is **...(♗)♘*f2 mate**.

The power of knights dropped one after the other features dramatically in the following game: **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 d3 d5 5 exd5 ♘xd5 6 ♘xd5 ♕xd5 7 (♙)*e4 ♕e6 8 ♗d2 ♗c5 9 a3 *g4 10 ♘g1 O-O 11 g3 ♘d4 12 ♗e3 (♘)♘*f3+ 13 ♘xf3 ♘xf3+ 14 ♔e2 (♘)♘*g1+ 15 ♖xg1 ♘xg1+ 16 ♔d2 ♘f3+ 17 ♔c1 ♗xe3+ 18 fxe3 (♗)♗*d2+ 19 ♔b1 ♗xe3 20 b3 (♖)♘*c3+ 21 ♔b2 ♘xd1+ 22 ♖xd1 a5 23 c3 ♘d2 24 c4 ♗d4+ 25 ♔c2 ♘xf1**. (Black has missed a quick win, for 25 ...♕xc4+ would have made his queen a rampager. If captured by 26 bxc4, it could have parachuted back through a queen-for-queen hostage exchange, ...(♕)♕*b2 mate.) **26 ♖xf1 (♗)♘*e3+ 27 ♔b1 ♕xc4** (Diagram 7)
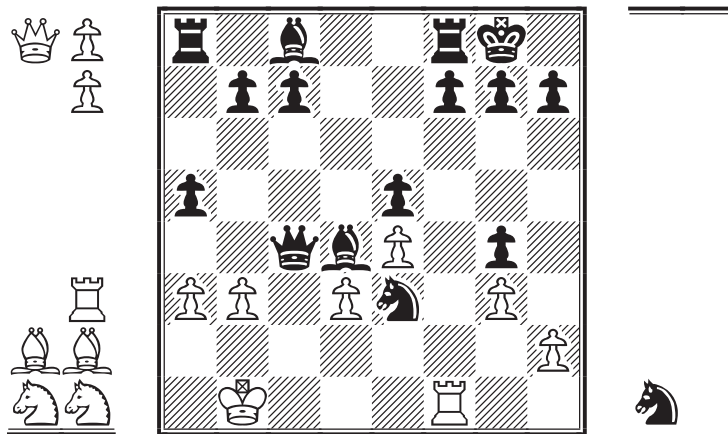
Diagram 7

Black has at last remembered that queens can rampage. Capture of the queen would once again be answered by ...(♕)♕*b2 mate. But his move *was not a check* and therefore White can now launch an attack. With two knights in his airfield, he springs into action: **28 ♘*e7+ ♔h8 29 ♘*g6+ hxg6 30 ♘xg6+ fxg6 31 ♖xf8+ ♕g8 32 (♘)♘*f7+ ♔h7 33 (♖)♘*g5 mate**.

Suppose the airfields are empty. One side has imprisoned a bishop and a knight. The other side's prison contains two knights. Knowing

nothing else about the situation, which player should you prefer to be? It is hard to say. One player has two droppable knights — knights simply needing to be purchased with the "cash" of the knight and the bishop. Since dropped knights tend to be so strong, that looks very attractive. However, the other player can drop knight or bishop, or first the one and then the other. Well, having more choice of what to drop can be quite an advantage.

The Pawn

Dropped pawns can be surprisingly effective. Naturally, they are especially useful when placed so that they might soon promote. Enemy pieces may then be rendered almost useless through having to keep an eye on them. Again, a parachuting pawn may fork two pieces. Or it could disorder a king's defenses, for instance by appearing right in front of the monarch's castle. Or perhaps an exposed king will have a pawn dropped at it with check. It may then have to become yet more exposed by moving forward to capture the pawn, as in the following game: **1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♘f6 3 d4 ♘xd5 4 ♘f3 ♗g4 5 ♗e2 e6 6 O-O ♗d6 7 ♘e5 ♗xe5 8 dxe5 ♗xe2 9 ♕xe2 ♘c6 10 ♖d1 ♕h4 11 (♗)♗*g3 ♕e7 12 (♙)*d6 ♕d7 13 c4 ♘b6 14 dxc7 ♘d4 15 ♖xd4 ♕xd4 16 (♗)♘*d6+ ♔d7 17 ♗e3 ♗*d3 18 ♕d2 ♘xc4 19 ♗xd4 ♘xd2 20 ♘xd2 *h3 21 ♘xf7 (♖)♘*e2+ 22 ♔h1 hxg2+ 23 ♔xg2** (Diagram 8)

Diagram 8

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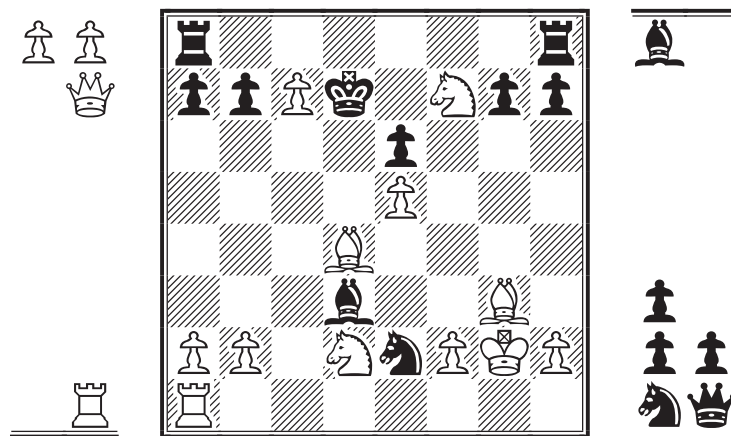
Here Black sees a chance to parachute a pawn check which draws the white king forward into a mating attack: **23 ...(♙)*h3+ 24 ♔xh3 ♗f5+ 25 *g4 (♛)♛*h5+ 26 ♖*h4 ♗xg4+ 27 ♔g2 ♗*h3+ 28 ♔h1 ♗f3+ 29 ♘xf3 ♛xf3+ 30 (♙)*g2 ♛xg2 mate**.

In some cases a king will be forced to capture a pawn even if it is not giving check, because if left un-captured it would protect the drop of some more powerful man. And sometimes two pawns will drop one after the other, the first drawing the king forward and the second bringing it still further forward or kicking it sideways to somewhere more dangerous for it.

This sort of thing can of course happen to other pieces as well. Dropped pawns can draw them forward or kick them sideways, getting them to where they are useless or endangered.

Again, pawns may be very threatening when dropped close to the enemy king or anywhere behind the enemy front lines. The threat can be particularly severe if a first pawn makes its appearance and a second then arrives to protect it, or perhaps to stand next to it on the seventh rank so that there are two pawns ready to be promoted: if one then promotes and is captured, the other promotes by capturing the capturer. A player will often have to lose a rook to get rid of such invaders.

Pawn drops can be helpful, as well, for guarding squares; for trapping unwary bishops; for compelling pieces to move so that they no longer protect others; for blocking the lines of enemy bishops, rooks or queens, or stopping the advance of enemy pawns; for cutting connections between enemy pieces. In all such cases, the fact that pawns are humble things makes them doubly useful. You want, for example, to block the file down which an enemy rook is glaring. Parachuting a mere pawn blocks it — and if the pawn is then at once taken by an enemy pawn, so what? The enemy pawn now does the blocking and you've lost only a pawn.

"Drop where your opponent wants to!" is important advice. If you've filled a square with a paratrooper, no enemy man can parachute there. Pawns are the men most often used in this connection. When wishing to deny landing places to enemy paratroops, why use valuable pieces if lowly pawns can do the job? An example comes from Diagram 9:

Diagram 9

Black has just dropped a pawn on h3. He threatens to mate by dropping another on g2. But White drops where the enemy wants to, **(♙)*g2**, and this gives him a fighting chance.

What if your opponent has tried out a gambit on you, sacrificing a pawn to get a positional advantage? Gambits do sometimes work well since Hostage Chess is such an attacking game. However, the player who gambits away a pawn will typically find that the enemy then gets the first opportunity to make a pawn-for-pawn hostage exchange. Well, in Hostage having the first chance of doing something can often be profitable. And of course, one thing which a pawn-for-pawn exchange might achieve is reconstruction of a shattered position.

Next imagine that, playing Black, you have castled kingside. Protected by a bishop, a pawn from the enemy airfield parachutes onto h6 to attack the castle. You play ...g7xh6. The protecting bishop captures on h6. You next play ...(♙)*g7, driving the bishop back to its original

position and rebuilding the damaged castle. Things are exactly as they used to be except that you have "gained a tempo" since it is now your turn to move, not your opponent's.

Draw all the profit you can from the details of the pawn promotion rule. In one game a pawn forked my rooks on their home rank. In reply, I got rid of the sole piece in my prison — got rid of it by pushing it into the enemy airfield, that's to say, since I used it for ransoming a hostage. The pawn *was no longer able to capture anything because now there was nothing to which it could be promoted.* (Remember always that a pawn one step away from promoting *can make a capture only if able to promote*, and that it can promote only by changing places with an imprisoned piece.) This little trick left me feeling so smug that in the very next game I overlooked something crucial. An enemy pawn promoted to knight. At once I took the knight with my queen. As I saw things, moving my queen to a less threatening position had been the enemy's sole purpose in promoting that pawn. But unfortunately the pawn had ended up where the promotion rule had sent it. I now held it hostage in my prison. My opponent had been longing for a pawn he could ransom. He had one now, and his next move was a dropped-pawn checkmate.

Be sure you know all about pseudo-checks. When can a pawn, one step from the far end of the board, give genuine check to a king who stands there? Only when there is at least one "promotion piece" — an imprisoned queen, rook, bishop or knight — with which the pawn could in theory change places. And remember, a genuine check becomes a mere a pseudo-check when the very last "promotion piece" leaves its prison through an exchange of hostages. Here is a remarkable case where a player, *turning a check into a pseudo-check, manages to deliver mate in the very same move.* **1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 ♕xd4 ♞c6 4 ♕a4 ♝c5 5 c3 ♞f6 6 ♗g5 O-O 7 (♙)*d4 ♝e7 8 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 9 ♞d2 d6 10 ♗d3 ♝d7 11 ♕c2 g6 12 ♞(g)f3 ♜e8**

13 O-O-O a6 14 ♖(d)e1 b5 15 h4 ♗g7 16 h5 *h6 17 hxg6 fxg6 18 d5 (♗)♘*b4 19 cxb4 ♘xb4 20 ♕b1 (♙)*c3 21 bxc3 ♗xc3 22 *b2 ♗g7 23 (♙)*c3 ♘xd3 24 ♕xd3 *g4 25 ♘d4 (♗)♘*f4 26 ♕f1 g5 27 g3 ♘xd5 28 ♗*b7 ♘b4 29 cxb4 ♗xd4 30 ♗xa8 ♗xb2+ 31 ♔xb2 ♕f6+ 32 ♗*c3 (♘)♘*a4+ 33 ♔b1 ♕xc3 34 ♘*f6+ ♔h8 35 (♗)*g7+ (Diagram 10)
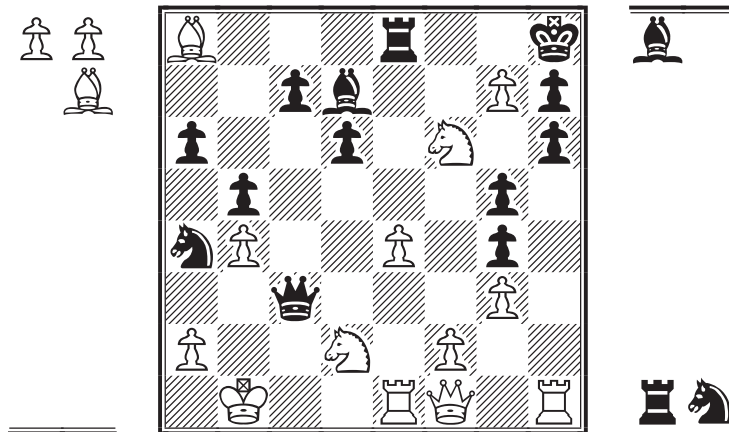
Diagram 10

Black decides to end the check by leaving the g7 pawn with nothing to which it could in theory be promoted. He releases the imprisoned white bishop, playing **...(♗)♘*a3+,** and right away the game is over. Because it no longer has the bishop as "promotion piece", the white pawn has become frozen. It no longer attacks the black king — so it's White who is in check, and checkmated!

Promoting, since it involves changing places with an imprisoned piece, is sometimes a shabby affair: promotion just to bishop, perhaps. It can even be impossible until something new has entered the enemy prison. A common tactic, then, is sacrificing a piece to make a promotion possible — the piece returns to the board when the pawn promotes — or to allow a promotion to be splendid instead of shabby. A queen, for instance, takes a protected rook and is itself taken immediately, but it returns to the board through a pawn promoting to queen.

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Standard Chess Openings Can Fail

Orthochess openings often run into quick trouble, usually starting with a dropped pawn. Here, for example, a normally successful handling of the Queen's Gambit Declined leads to Black's ruin: **1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♗g5 ♘(b)d7 5 cxd5 exd5 6 ♘xd5 ♘xd5** (in the standard western game this works beautifully, but we are about to see that in Hostage it fails) **7 ♗xd8 ♗b4+**. If the white queen now had to block the bishop's line of fire, it would be captured with check so that Black gained the time needed for capturing the d8 bishop. This being Hostage, however, White can play **8 (♙)*d2** so the loss of Black's queen remains unavenged.

Next, a Staunton Gambit leads to disaster. **1 d4 f5 2 e4 fxe4 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 f3 ♘c6 5 d5 ♘e5 6 fxe4 d6 7 ♗f4 ♘g6 8 ♗b5+ ♗d7 9 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7** (Diagram 11)
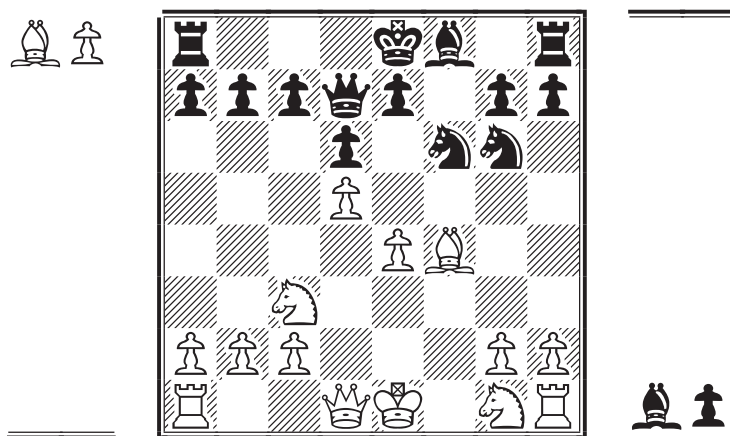
Diagram 11

Instead of defending with the move recommended in orthochess, ♘(g)e2, White can play **10 (♙)*f7+**, with the threat of dropping a bishop on e6. It's no use replying **10 ...(♗)♗*g8** to turn the check into

a pseudo-check and attack the pawn, for this just leads to **11 ♗*e6 ♛d8 12 ♗xd6**. The bishop now cannot legally be captured since this would turn the pseudo-check back into a real one. It can next move to c7; the knight can advance to b5; etcetera.

Finally, here are three ways in which White can get into hot water when playing the Ruy Lopez:

In the first example a queen is lost to a dropped knight: **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 O-O ♗e7 6 d4 exd4 7 e5 ♘e4 8 ♘xd4** (good in orthochess, bad in Hostage) **...♘xd4**, after which recapturing with **9 ♛xd4** means that the queen can be forked by **...(♘)♘*e2+**.

The second case features an exchange of hostage queens: **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗xc6 dxc6 5 d4 ♗g4 6 dxe5 ♛xd1 7 ♔xd1 O-O-O+ 8 ♔e1** (successfully played by Lasker against Marshall, but in Hostage it is a beginner's blunder) **...(♛)♛*d1 mate**.

In the third instance a minor piece finds itself unable to escape: **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 O-O ♘xe4 6 d4 d5 7 dxe5** (in orthochess this would be fine) **7 ...b5 8 ♗b3 (♙)*c4** and now the bishop attacked by the pawn cannot retreat.

Trapping

We have just seen a bishop being trapped: a pawn pestered it, and after it moved it was attacked by a second pawn arriving by air. Next, here is a parachuted bishop helping to trap a queen. **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♗e7 4 O-O ♘f6 5 ♘c3 O-O 6 d4 d6 7 ♗g5 ♗g4 8 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 9 h3 ♗xf3 10 ♛xf3 ♘xd4 11 ♛g4 (♗)♗*e6 12 ♗xe6 fxe6 13 ♗*c4 (♘)♘*f4 14 (♘)♘*h5 ♘xh5 15 ♛xh5 (♘)♘*f4 16 ♛g4** (Diagram 12)

Black plays **...♗*h5**, attacking the white queen and adding to the

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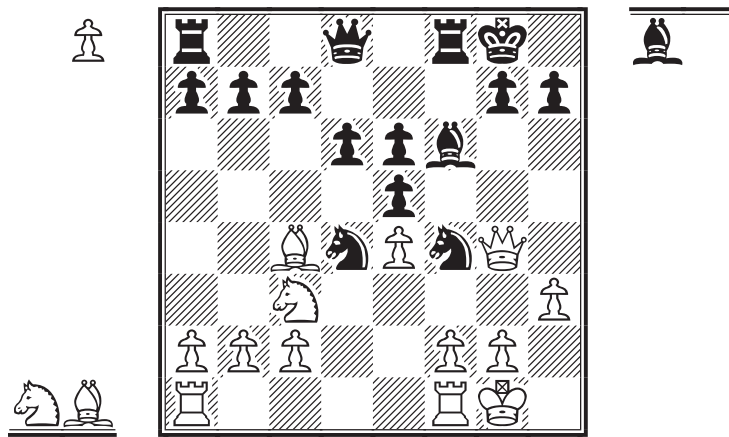
Diagram 12

pressure building up around the white king. White replies **17 ♗xe6+** in the hope of deflecting one or other of the black knights. But Black simply steps out of check, **...♚h8**, and now 18 ♕g3 cannot save the queen because of ...♘(d)e2+ 19 ♘xe2 ♘xe2+ 20 ♚h2 ♘xg3. White thinks it best to lose the queen right away, playing **18 ♕xf4**. The game is soon over: **...exf4 19 ♗c4 f3 20 g3 ♕d7 21 ♘*f4 ♕xh3 22 ♘xh3 (♕)♕*g2 mate**.

Exchanging Hostages to Limit Your Opponent's Options

Imagine that at some point you fear a knight drop much more than a bishop drop. By making a hostage exchange, you may be able to do something about it. Let's say you've imprisoned a bishop and a knight. The enemy prison contains only a bishop. The hostile airfield is empty, but the knight in your prison could mate you if ransomed. What if you now exchange hostage bishop for hostage bishop? Your opponent will then no longer hold an imprisoned bishop for use in ransoming the knight.

Again, imagine that the airfields are empty; that you have a knight and a pawn in your prison; and that a pawn has just entered the previously empty enemy prison. Looking to see what damage you could suffer through an exchange of the hostage pawns, you find two places where a pawn drop would really hurt you. Exchanging the

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pawns and then following the rule *"Drop where your opponent wants to!"* therefore cannot help you. You can, however, buy the pawn in the enemy prison with your knight, leaving your opponent without any "cash" for a pawn-purchase.

Bear in mind, too, that you may want to exchange hostages so as to make an enemy pawn unable to promote, or so as to leave nothing powerful to which it could be promoted. By exchanging hostage queens, for instance, you would stop the pawn promoting to queen. Or, after exchanging off the only piece in your prison, you could surprise your opponent by castling out of trouble, your king passing over a square which the enemy pawn had previously controlled. Suddenly unable to promote, the pawn would only give pseudo-check to the king as it crossed that square.

Sacrificing

In Hostage, sacrifices are frequent. In the following game a queen is sacrificed to kill a knight that guards a square. A piece then drops onto the square, lethally: **1 d4 ♞f6 2 ♞c3 d5 3 ♞f3 e6 4 ♝f4 a6 5 e3 c5 6 dxc5 ♝xc5 7 (♙)*d4 ♝d6 8 ♝xd6 ♛xd6 9 (♝)♝*e5 ♛d8 10 ♝xf6 gxf6 11 ♝e2 ♜g8 12 ♞h4 ♞c6 13 ♛d2 b5 14 O-O-O b4 15 ♞a4 ♛a5 16 b3 *c3 17 ♛e1** (Diagram 13)

Diagram 13

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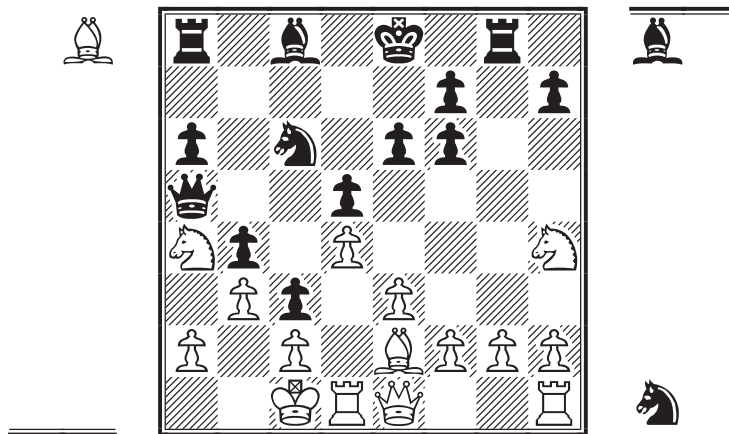
Black plays **...♕xa4**. The sequel is **18 bxa4 ♗*b2+ 19 ♔b1 (♘)♘*a3 mate.**

Another reason for sacrificing is that you want to capture some piece, any piece, so as to be able to ransom something the enemy has imprisoned — something you cannot ransom at present because your own prison contains absolutely nothing to give in exchange. You capture, say, a bishop with your rook, at once losing the rook. The bishop was doing you no harm, so your rook-for-bishop sacrifice could seem senseless. However, the captured bishop is the cash you needed for buying a knight. Ransoming and dropping the knight, you win quickly. To get the bishop for buying the knight, you would happily have sacrificed your queen.

The reverse of this coin is that whenever your opponent has just captured something you must ask yourself what this something could ransom. In the next game Black blundered disastrously when he took the enemy queen. His thinking was that the queen had captured a knight in order to prevent a quick mate. Well, so it had, but that was no excuse for grabbing the queen without asking what the newly imprisoned knight could ransom. The game started as follows: **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 d6 4 ♘c4 ♘xe4 5 ♘c3 ♘xc3 6 bxc3 ♗e7 7 d4 O-O 8 (♙)*h6 g6 9 ♗d3 *e4 10 ♗xe4 d5 11 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 12 ♘e3 ♕e4 13 (♘)♗*g7 ♖e8 14 ♕d3 ♕h4 15 O-O ♗d6 16 g3 ♕h3** (Black has here missed 16 ...♘*f3+ 17 ♔g2 ♕xh2+ 18 ♔xf3 ♗g4+ 19 ♘xg4 (♘)♗*g2 mate.) **17 f4 b6 18 ♘d5 ♘d7 19 ♕b5 ♘*e2+** (Diagram 14)

The dropped knight can be captured not just through desperation but in complete safety: **20 ♕xe2 ♖xe2**. White has now lost a queen, but the enemy knight he has just gained can be used to ransom something sitting in Black's prison. The beauty of parachuting a knight onto a square protected by a fellow knight is about to be demonstrated: **21 (♘)♘*f6+ ♘xf6 22 ♘xf6 mate**.
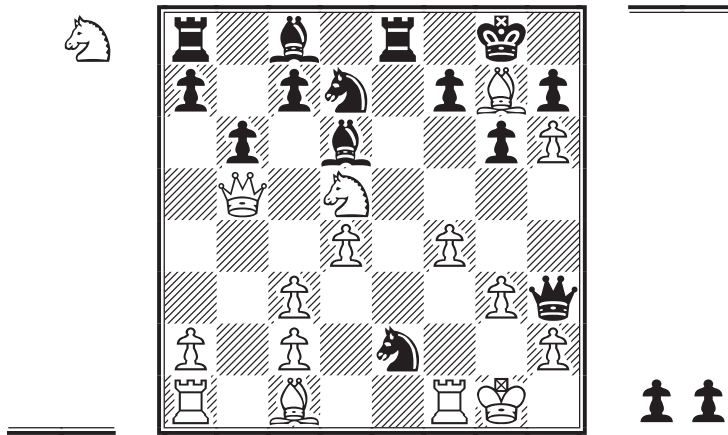
Diagram 14

Playing Hostage Chess at a friendly pace, almost anyone could blunder as Black did. Note, by the way, how Black's king has been fenced in by a parachuted bishop protected by a parachuted pawn. Similar formations, sometimes with pawn ahead and bishop behind, are fairly common.

Exchanging Downwards

"Exchanging downwards" when you exchange hostages is sacrificial play of an often useful type. Giving up a queen to purchase a mere knight makes perfect sense if checkmating then comes quickly or (as in this next game) immediately: **1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 e5 3 dxe5 d4 4 ♘f3 ♘c6 5 e3 dxc3 6 ♕xd8+ ♘xd8 7 bxc3 ♗d7 8 ♗c4 ♘e6 9 O-O ♘h6 10 ♖d1 ♗e7 11 ♗xe6 fxe6 12 e4 ♘f7 13 ♗e3 ♗c6 14 ♘d4 ♗d7 15 (♘)♗*h5 g6 16 ♗g4 ♘*c5 17 ♗xe6 ♘xe6 18 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 19 (♘)♘*g7+ ♔f8 20 ♘xe6+ ♔e8 21 (♕)♘*g7 mate**.

Now, here is a game which sees hostage bishop exchanged for hostage pawn, again during a mating attack: **1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 d5 3 ♗g5 ♗f5 4 f3 ♘(b)d7 5 ♗xf6 ♘xf6 6 (♘)♗*g5 h6 7 ♗xf6**

♞*e3 8 ♕cl ♞xc2+ 9 ♔dl exf6 10 e4 (♝)♞*e3+ 11 ♔e2 dxe4 12 fxe4 (♟)*d3+ 13 ♔f2 ♛xd4 14 ♗*f4 ♞g4+ 15 ♔g3 ♕f2+ 16 ♔h3 ♝e6 17 *f5 ♞xal 18 fxe6 h5 (Diagram 15)
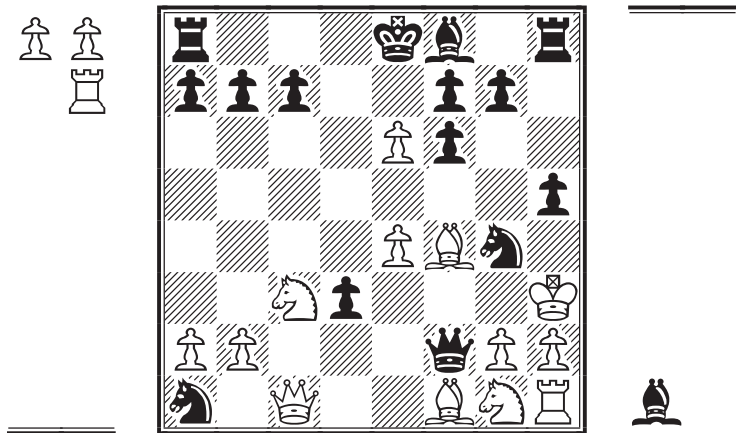
Diagram 15

19 (♝)*d7+ (the sacrificial exchanging downwards) **...♔d8 20 ♝xc7+ ♔xc7 21 ♞d5+ ♔d6 22 ♕c7+ ♔xe6 23 (♟)*f5+ ♕xf5 24 exf5+ ♔xf5 25 ♕f4+ ♔g6 26 (♕)♝*f5 mate** (more exchanging downwards). This last game is fascinating for its marked reversal of fortunes. White looked just about as beaten as you can get. In Hostage, always think long and hard before resigning.

Dying So As To Return By Air

Maybe the most important type of sacrifice involves losing a man which then returns to the board through an exchange of hostages. Queens and knights are not the only men able to "rampage". Rooks and bishops can rampage as well. You sometimes even see a pawn rampager: a pawn that would be ransomed as soon as it was captured,

then doing decisive damage. If this sort of thing occurred often enough, you'd hardly ever dare capture anything. Luckily it doesn't. The vast majority of good orthochess captures would be good in Hostage Chess as well. Taking a rook at the cost of a mere bishop, or a queen at the cost of a mere rook, is almost always worthwhile. Still, forcing the capture of something which then returns to the board in some crushing fashion is a classic Hostage Chess stratagem. Correspondingly, a classic Hostage Chess blunder is taking something which then returns to mate you — or, less dramatically, noticing too late that the something had better not be taken, "too late" perhaps meaning when you want to avenge the capture of a man.

The thing to remember is that when your opponent holds prisoners which could be used for ransoming what you capture, you have to look carefully before capturing anything. You don't want to imprison something that will quickly be ransomed in a way you'll regret. In Diagram 16, an incautiously captured bishop returns to checkmate
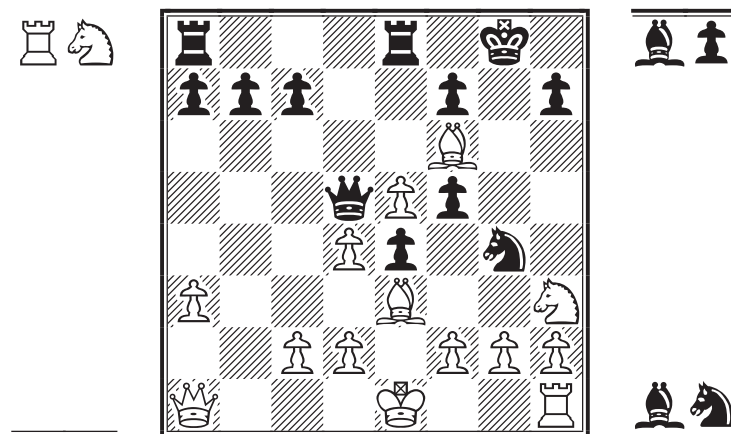
Diagram 16

the capturer. White has just made his nineteenth move. Black replies **19 ...♞xe3** (the incautious capture of the bishop). We then get **20 (♝)♞*h6+ ♚f8 21 (♞)♝*g7 mate**.

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Attacking and Defending

In Hostage, the scales of fortune can swing wildly in reflection of who has the attack. Aggression is usually the key to success, particularly for the weaker player. The tree of possible moves branches explosively, and by attacking you keep the explosiveness under your own control. If challenged by a much stronger opponent, play aggressively or not at all. A large proportion of all Hostage games end in flurries of checks, with men parachuting one after another. You want to be the one who does the checking.

Parachuting can add remarkably to the fury of a mating attack. Again and again, the attacker will have a wide choice of where to drop a man. The defender will typically have little or no choice of how to reply. The attacker's message is "Move your king to such and such a square, or else position a man between it and my attacking man! Your only alternative is immediate defeat." But the king that moves obediently is at once re-attacked. And when something is instead placed between attacking man and king, this something can often be captured. No doubt whatever makes the capture will next itself be captured, but in that case each prison will have gained a new inhabitant so that the attack can probably begin once more, fueled by a new hostage exchange.

An assault may therefore involve many more acts of parachuting than you'd have dreamed possible. It isn't enough to count just the droppable men—men in airfields and men available for ransoming—that the attacker can call upon initially. In a game in the next chapter, White begins his attack with nothing but a rook and two pawns he could ransom, plus an airfield bishop. *Fourteen successive checks follow*, the last one being a mate. Fully eight of the checks are by paratroopers. The series of drops is constantly extended with the help of new captures, new hostage exchanges.

Generally, the details of a long attack cannot be worked out in advance. Hostage simply isn't that sort of game. Its complexities are altogether too great. For the reasons just now given, however, the attacker tends to have quite an advantage. Attack, therefore, even if you cannot predict exactly what will happen. Attack unexpectedly after exchanging two or three men on the board — for men exchanged on the board become new hostages ready to be ransomed. Remember that you can often force a succession of exchanges on your opponent because whenever a man is captured any failure to avenge the capture means falling behind in material. Suppose, then, that you have *two* men in your airfield and see *three* possible on-the-board exchanges, each able to add a new inhabitant to the enemy prison while at the same time giving you a hostage to use in ransoming that new inhabitant. This means you could well have *five droppable men* for an airborne assault.

Correspondingly, if the enemy airfield also contained two men then your opponent could probably mobilize an equally great force for an airborne assault on you, unless you attacked first. Now, would your king survive being assailed by five successive paratroopers?

Attacking, you will probably need to keep exchanging hostages, and you may sometimes have to "exchange downwards" as when you use a rook to ransom a bishop. All this will tend to build up a powerful army in the enemy airfield. Meanwhile your own store of droppable men will be shrinking, possibly all the way to zero. Never mind, for with any luck you'll soon be checkmating. Admittedly an attack can fail, and then woe to the attacker who now faces numerous airfielders and has nothing to drop in self-defense! But if regularly unwilling to risk attacking, you will lose just as regularly. Hostage Chess seldom rewards the meek.

Here come two games in which one side triumphs very quickly through launching a series of checks. Please don't think that most Hostage struggles are as brief as these. A typical contest between

experienced players lasts a good twenty-five moves, and quite often forty or fifty. Still, a flurry of checks will occasionally decide matters at a very early stage. In the first game White wins in sixteen moves only: **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 d6 4 ♗b5 a6 5 ♗xc6+ bxc6 6 dxe5 dxe5 7 ♕xd8+ ♔xd8 8 ♗g5+ f6 9 ♘xe5 ♔e7 10 (♕)♕*f7+ ♔d6 11 ♘c4+ ♔c5 12 b4+ ♔xb4 13 a3+ ♔b5 14 ♘c3+ ♔c5 15 (♘)♗*b4+ ♔d4 16 ♗e3 mate**.

The second game is won by Black with almost equal rapidity: **1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 c5 4 ♘f3 ♘h5 5 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 6 (♘)♗*b5+ ♗d7 7 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8 ♘e5 ♕c7 9 ♘xd5 ♕a5+ 10 ♕d2 ♕xd2+ 11 ♔xd2 ♘*e4+ 12 ♔d3 (♕)♕*d2+**

13 ♔xe4 ♕xd4+ 14 ♔f3 (♗)♗*e4+ 15 ♔g4 ♗xd5+ 16 ♔g5 ♕f4+ 17 ♔xh5 (♟)*g6+ 18 ♘xg6 hxg6 mate. For a king, being drawn forward can be disastrous.

Next, here is a case where a player's attack has failed. Fearing the counterattack that is brewing, he resorts to an unusual defensive measure. Diagram 17 shows the position after White's twenty-sixth move:
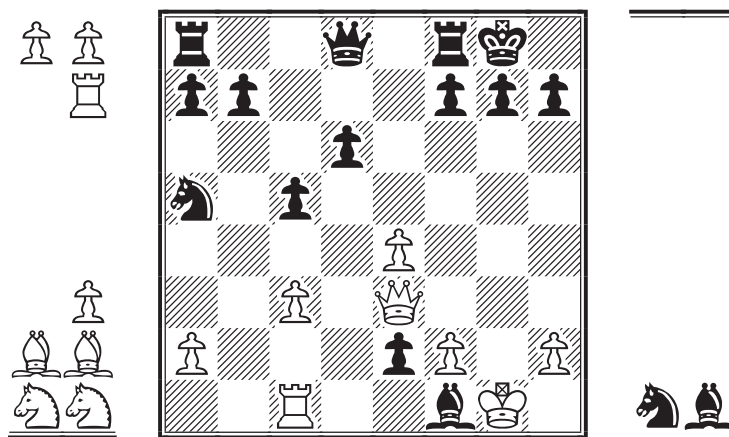
Diagram 17

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Despite having his bishop right next to the white king, Black judges his assault has faltered, and he fears the large force in White's airfield plus the two pawns that White could ransom. He therefore plays **26 ...♕g5+** which deflects the white queen and leads to a draw as follows: **27 ♕xg5 (♖)♘*h3+ 28 ♔h1 ♘xf2+ 29 ♔g1 ♘h3+ 30 ♔h1 ♘f2+ etc**.

A draw like that, by perpetual check, is available only rarely. What's to be done when no such draw can be had? It is usually worth battling onwards, hoping that the opponent's counterattack will fail. Wait till it seems to falter, then start attacking again. Even when nobody blunders, some strange changes of fortune occur in this deeply mysterious game.

Defending instead of attacking can sometimes be an excellent idea. Don't just get securely castled. Drop a pawn in front of the castle; drop a knight nearby; close any gaps in your position that are invitations to enemy paratroops; and so forth. But all this takes time, and in Hostage Chess time is in short supply. *"Attack's the best defense"* should therefore often be your maxim.

Space, and getting a man near the enemy king

Pushing the enemy army back can cramp it, giving you "a space advantage". Yet there can be an accompanying disadvantage, often fatal. Your position comes to contain more landing spots for enemy paratroops. More important, almost always, than gaining space, is controlling squares close to your opponent's king — possibly from a distance but often better from nearby so that no drops can get in your way. Yes, Hostage Chess attacks can seem to materialize out of thin air. It helps make this game exciting even when beginners play experts. But when one or two enemies enter the air around a king, it is already getting too thick for him to breathe.

Chapter 4

Illustrative Games

I played in some of these games. For their spirited play and for suggested annotations, warm thanks to the other players — Hal Bond, Peter Coast, Tom Leslie, Frank Parr, David Pritchard, Roger Smook, Paul Yearout.

Game (i): Short and sweet. White faces an opponent skilled enough to win a large majority of their games. This, though, is one of his defeats, brought about by White's aggressiveness. Whenever given an opportunity the weaker player must attack. **1 d4 f5 2 ♗f4 ♘f6 3 ♘c3 e6 4 ♘f3 b6 5 e3 ♗b7**. A bishop fianchetto like this tends to work poorly in Hostage: the bishop often gets traded away, after which the square it used to occupy becomes a weakness begging to be exploited by pawn drops or knight drops. **6 ♗d3 ♗e7 7 ♘b5 d6 8 ♕d2 ♘h5 9 ♗g3 ♘xg3 10 hxg3 ♘d7 11 O-O-O ♘f6 12 ♘g5** (Diagram 18)
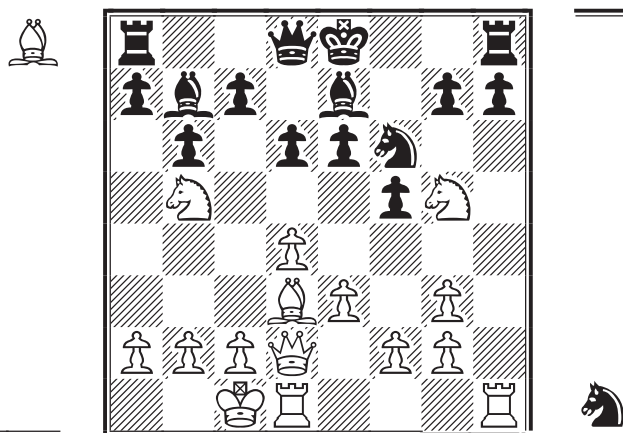
Diagram 18

Black has stumbled into a severe problem. Defending his threatened pawn with ...♕d7 would be useless since White's knight would capture it anyway; the recapture ...♕xe6 would be answered by ♘xc7+, a knight fork which wins the queen. He tries **12...(♗)♘*f8** but soon gets into a mess: **13 ♗*f7+ ♚d7 14 ♕c3 ♘d5**. The attack on the white queen threatens to win the g5 knight, but White replies vigorously: **15 ♘xe6**. White has concluded that his king is more secure than Black's so that capturing second in an exchange of queens, and therefore giving his opponent the first opportunity to exchange queen hostages, will not put him at a disadvantage. Well, Black now doesn't like playing ...♘xe6 instead of going ahead with the queen exchange, for White's ♗xe6+ would then draw the black king forward. So play continues as follows: **15...♘xc3 16 ♘xd8 ♖xd8** (White was threatening (♕)♕*e8+ ♚c8 18 ♘c6+ ♕*d8 19 ♘xe7+ ♚b8 20 ♕xd8+ and mate next move) **17 ♗xf5+ (♘)*e6 18 ♗(5)xe6+** (keeping up the checks so as to restrict Black's options, a typical Hostage Chess procedure) **18...♘xe6 19 ♗xe6+ ♚xe6** (the king has now been drawn forward dangerously, but playing ...Ke8 instead would have been answered by (♕)♕*f7 mate). White now has so much he can parachute — the airfield knight, plus a bishop and a queen which can be rescued through exchanging hostages — that Black's position looks fairly hopeless. (Diagram 19)
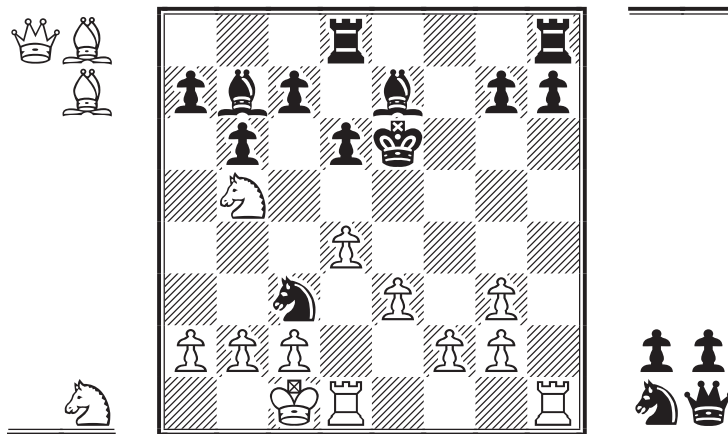
Diagram 19

Black is all the more clearly in trouble after **20 ♘*f4+**. He could try 20 ...♔f6 or ...♔f5 (both answered by (♕)♕*e6+, and mate next move by the rook) or 20...♔d7 (answered by 21 (♘)♗*e6+ and then either ...♔c6, with mate by ♘xa7, or else ...♔e8 with mate by (♕)♕*f7). What actually happened was **20...♔f7 21 (♘)♗*e6+ ♔f8 22 (♕)♕*f7 mate**. White's onslaught ended with six checks in a row, Black never getting a chance to counterattack. Notice how quickly the black king was caught after being drawn forward.

Game (ii): An immensely interesting and exciting contest between strong players. The winner, a chess professional, is very keen on Hostage Chess, but the loser defeats him more often than not. **1 e4 ♘f6 2 e5 ♘d5 3 d4 d6 4 f4 dxe5 5 fxe5 c5 6 c4 ♘b6 7 d5 ♗f5 8 ♗d3 e6 9 ♗xf5 ♕h4+** (by attacking instead of obediently taking the bishop, Black demonstrates that he knows a thing or two about Hostage) **10 g3 ♕xc4 11 ♗d3 (♙)*g2** (Diagram 20)
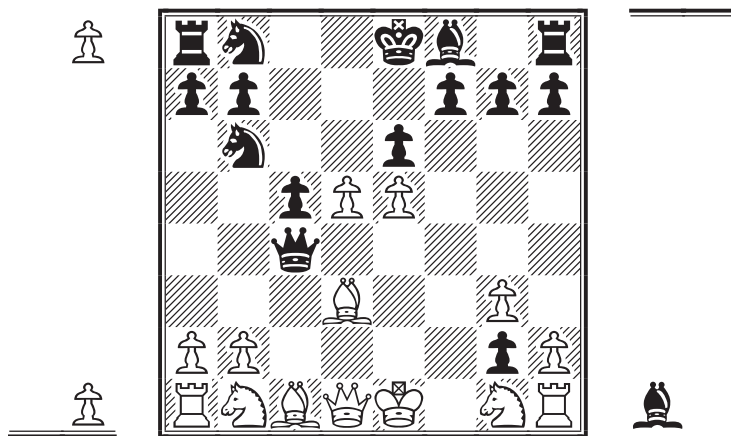
Diagram 20

Nice! Black threatens not only to take the rook but also to promote to queen if his queen is now captured. **12 ♘f3 ♕xd3** (with the same threat) **13 ♖g1 ♕xd5** (probably stronger would be 13...♕xd1+ 14 ♔xd1 (♕)♕*f1+) **14 ♖xg2 ♕xd1+ 15 ♔xd1 (♕)♕*f1+**. (What if White had played 14 ♕xd5? It looks better. After 14...exd5 15 ♖xg2 the black queen would not have been able to parachute where it did, and nowhere else seems as good. Parachuting on e4, for instance, could

be answered by *e2.) **16 ♘e1 (♙)*f2 17 (♗)♗*b5+** (Diagram 21)
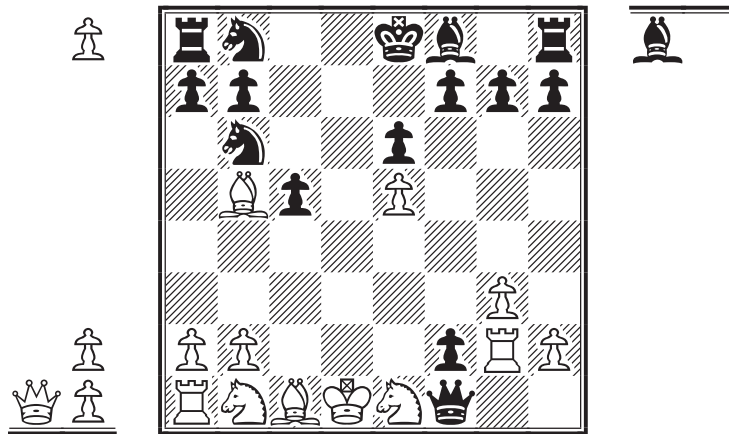
Diagram 21

White felt forced to sacrifice the bishop in this way, to break Black's attack. **17...♕xb5 18 ♖xf2 ♘c6 19 ♘c3 ♖d8+ 20 *d6 ♕c4 21 *f4** (as well as defending the e5 pawn, this restricts the movements of Black's queen) **21...♗xd6** (with this sacrifice Black's attack starts up anew) **22 exd6 ♖xd6+ 23 (♙)*d3 ♖xd3+** (violence, establishing once again that Black knows about Hostage) **24 ♘xd3 ♕xd3+ 25 ♖d2 ♕f1+** (Diagram 22)
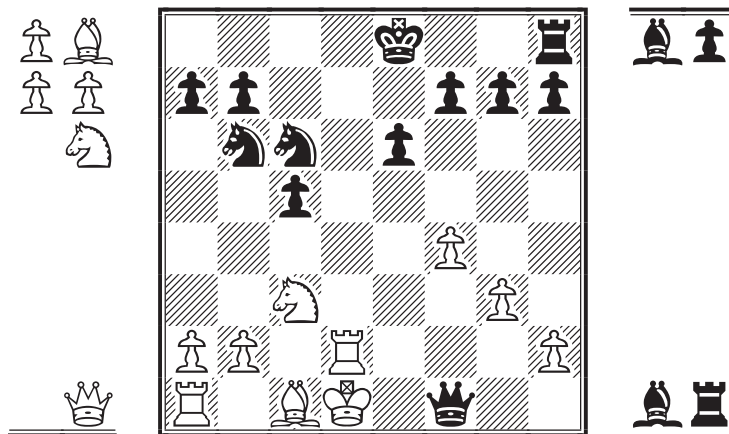
Diagram 22

26 ♔c2 ♗*d3+ 27 ♔b3 ♘a5+ 28 ♔a3 *b4 mate.

Game (iii): Played by post, and with a major reversal of fortunes at the end. **1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 c5 3 dxc5 ♕a5+ 4 ♘c3 ♘f6 5 ♗e3 e5 6 ♘xe5 ♗xc5 7 ♗xc5 ♕xc5**. If White next played 8 (♗)♗*a3 to attack the queen, the reply ...(♙)*b4 would fork his knight and the attacking bishop, so instead we get: **8 ♘d3 ♕e7 9 (♙)*e5 ♘e4 10 ♘xd5**. Black had in fact seen this far, and even further: he expected 10...*d2+ 11 ♕xd2 ♘xd2 12 ♘xe7 (so both queens would have been taken hostage) ...♘e4. He now changes his mind, however, deciding that after the continuation 13 (♕)♕*a4+ ♔xe7 14 ♕xe4 his exposed king would be in too much trouble; he pictures such things as a ransomed white bishop dropping on d6. Hence he saves his queen with **10...♕d8**. (Diagram 23)
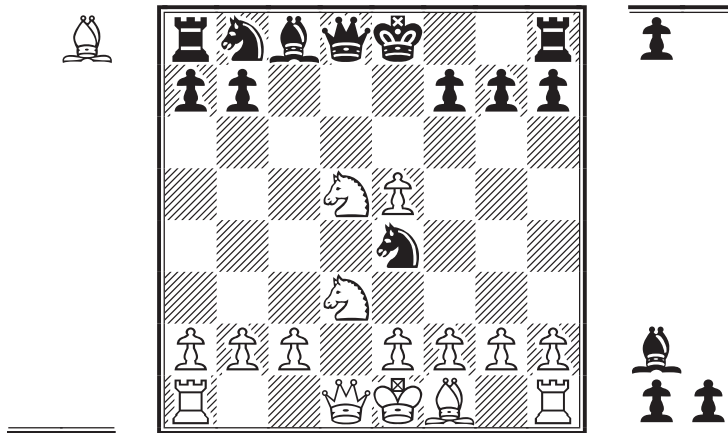
Diagram 23

Yet now comes **11 e3**, making an escape square for the king, and Black sees too late that the knight on d5 is invulnerable because its death through ...♕xd5 would be followed immediately by its rebirth, (♗)♘*c7+, a knight fork of king and queen. So play proceeds: **11 ...*d2+ 12 ♔e2 (♗)♗*c4** (threatening to capture the knight with the bishop instead) **13 f3** (if you take my knight, I'll take yours, giving me the chance to capture that horrible pawn) **...♕xd5 14 fxe4 ♕xe5** (...♕xe4 would have led to (♘)♘*d6+ and loss of the queen) **15 ♗*d4**

♕**h5+** (Black hopes that 16 ♔xe2 ♕xd1+ would be dangerous to White, although 17 ♖xd1 could be an adequate reply)

16 (♙)*f3 (seeming to agree about the dangerousness) **...(♘)♘*g3+ 17 hxg3 ♕xh1 18 ♘*d6+ ♔f8 19 ♘xc4**. White allowed the exchange of knight and rook so as to gain time for dropping his airfield knight and capturing the c4 bishop. Looks good! **19...♘c6 20 ♗c5+ ♔g8** (forced to bottle up his h8 rook, Black appears far along the road to defeat) **21 ♔xd2 ♗e6 22 ♘(c)e5 ♘xe5 23 ♘xe5 ♖d8+** (desperation?) **24 ♗d3** (looks very reasonable, but the sequel suggests it is a game-losing move) **...♕xg2+ 25 ♔e2** (Diagram 24)
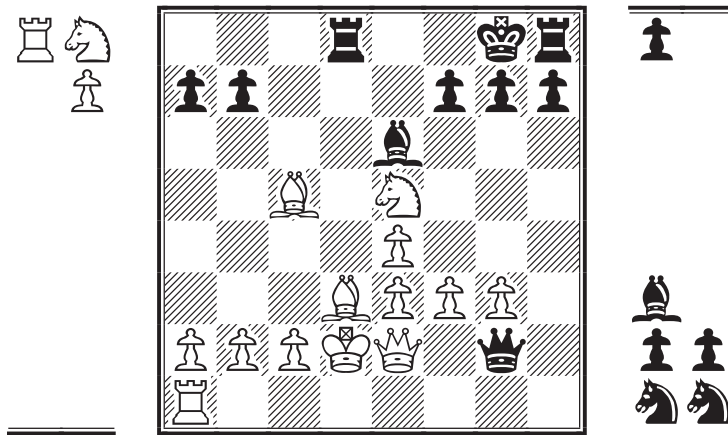
Diagram 24

White thinks Black must now exchange queens; the black attack will then have failed. But Black has a magnificent move up his sleeve: **25...♖xd3+**. Black has concluded that all three possible ways in which his opponent could capture the rook do not work, despite the fact that once it has been captured he must keep going check, check, check, to avoid being mated by (♖)♖*f8+. His numerous and varied possibilities of parachuting will give him an irresistible attack. What in point of fact followed was **26 ♘xd3 (♘)♘*c4+ 27 Resigns**. A short finale would have been 27 ♔c3 (♗)♗*d2+ 28 ♔b3 *a4+ 29 ♔xa4 (♖)♖*a5+ 30 ♔b3 (♙)*a4 mate. Or there might have been this superb sequence: 27 ♔c1 *d2+ 28 ♔b1 (♗)♘*c3+ 29 bxc3 (♖)♖*c1+ 30 ♘xc1 dxc1=♖+ 31 ♔xc1 (♙)*b2+ 32 ♔b1 bxa1=♖+ 33 ♔xa1 (♖)♖*c1+

34 ♖*b1 (♘)*b2 mate.

Game (iv): Here a Hostage enthusiast beats a real expert by attacking repeatedly. The game ends with fourteen successive checks. **1 e4 ♘f6 2 e5 ♘d5 3 d4 d6 4 exd6 cxd6 5 ♗c4 ♘b6 6 ♗b5+ ♗d7 7 ♗xd7+ ♕xd7 8 ♘c3 e6 9 ♘f3 ♗e7 10 ♗g5 (♙)*g4**. Black's move could seem a good one — if the knight retreats then the bishop loses its protection — but it gives White an airfield pawn and this, the previous chapter suggested, could be worth twice as much as a pawn on the board.

11 ♗xe7 gxf3 (...♕xe7 would have been safer for Black, who is about to find himself in difficulties) **12 *f6** (nicely illustrating the uses of an airfield pawn; White would meet the reply ...gxf6 by playing ♗xf6, attacking the rook; if it moved, White could take his pick of (♙)*e7 and (♙)*g7 and (♗)♘*g7+ and ♕xf3) **12...fxg2 13 ♖gl (♗)♗*f1** (at the cost of giving White an airfield bishop, Black makes the white king almost as insecure as the black one) **14 fxg7** (abandoning the bishop so as to attack the black rook; this time, the result of moving the rook would be (♗)♘*f6+ which wins the queen) **...♕xe7 15 gxh8=♗** (remember, the promoting pawn goes to Black's prison, replacing the bishop to which it has been promoted) **15...♘(8)d7**, guarding against a bishop drop on f6. (Diagram 25)
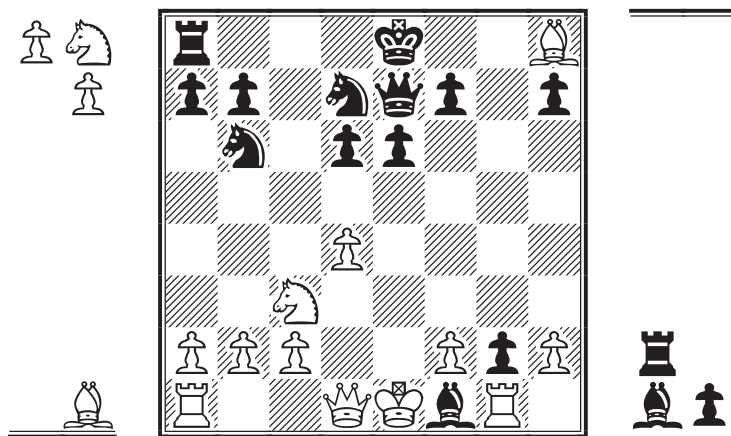
Diagram 25

Now the question is whether Black's growing attack can beat White's large material advantage (which includes, don't forget, the advantage of having that bishop in the airfield where it is likely to be more powerful than on the board). **16 (♗)♘*c7+** forks king and rook. The game continues: **16...♔d8 17 ♘xa8 ♘c4** (Black is threatening ...(♗)*d2+, which wins White's queen)

18 ♖xg2 (so that the queen need not lay down her life in defense of the king) **18...♗xg2** (which fails to worry White, for he expects that the captured rook will soon return to the board) **19 (♙)*c7+** (beginning the fourteen successive checks) **...♔c8 20 (♖)♖*d8+ ♕xd8 21 cxd8=♖+ ♔xd8**. As well as still having the airfield bishop, White has a queen, a rook and a pawn in his prison, while Black's prison contains just a rook and two pawns. But with a rook, a bishop and a pawn in his airfield, Black's total dropping power (for you have to include things available through exchanging hostages) is two rooks, a bishop and two pawns. White therefore decides he must keep checking:

22 (♙)*c7+ (once again) **...♔e7** (Diagram 26)
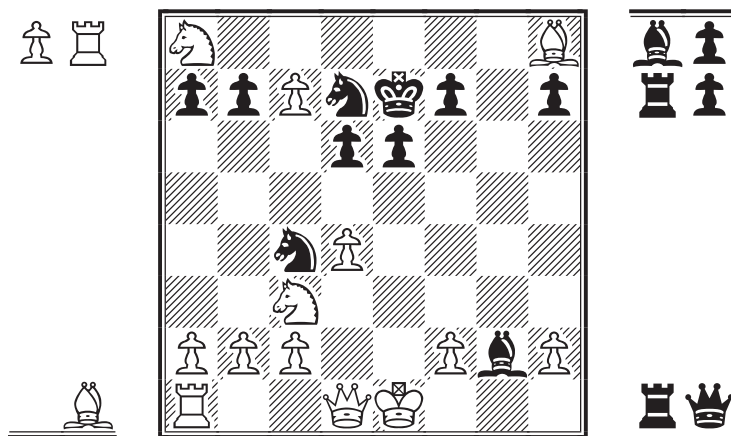
Diagram 26

(Had Black played ...♔e8, we'd then have seen 23 (♖)♖*d8+ ♔e7 24 ♗*f8+ ♘xf8 25 (♕)♗*f6 mate.)

23 ♗*d8+ ♔f8. (Well, how about ...♔e8 at this point instead? Unfortunately it would fail to solve Black's problems, for the sequel would be 24 (♖)♖*e7+ ♔f8 25 ♖xf7+, after which there are forced mates using the fact that White's queen can rampage, returning at once if captured. For instance, we might see 25 ...♔xf7 26 ♕h5+ ♗*g6 27 ♕xg6+ (rampaging) ...hxg6 28 (♕)♕*g7+ ♔e8 29 ♕e7 mate.)

After this, Black is checked again and again, all the way to checkmate: **24 ♗g7+ ♔xg7**

25 ♕g4+ ♖*g6 26 ♕xg6+ hxg6 (White doesn't care, confident that his queen will soon be reborn)

27 (♖)♗*f6+ ♘xf6 28 ♗xf6+ ♔xf6

29 (♘)♗*d8+ (Diagram 27)
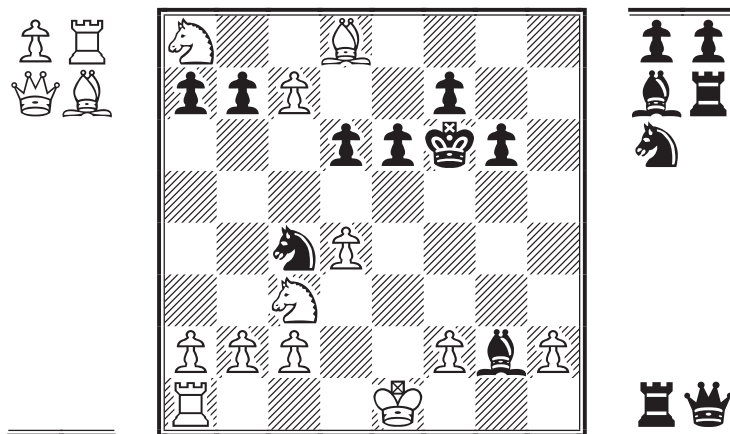
Diagram 27

29...♔g7 (if Black instead interposes something, perhaps playing ...(♗)*e7, then the white bishop simply captures it; a recapture by the king results in (♕)♕*d8 mate) **30 (♕)♕*f6+ ♔h6** (if ...♔f8 then ♗e7+ leads to mate next move by a ransomed rook) **31 (♖)♖*h5+**

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(a neat final sacrifice) **...♕xh5 32 ♕g5 mate**.

Although Black ended with enormously much in his airfield, accumulating this huge force was useless because of White's constant checks. Captures made during an attack are wood for feeding its fires, but when the attack fails the player who launched it can be in deep trouble.

Game (v): Historic: the first game to feature two players very strong at orthodox western chess, and also the first experience that these players had of Hostage — yet they managed to create a beauty. **1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 ♘c3 e5 4 d5** (If White played dxe5 instead, Black could gain central control and development by harassing the knight with 4...(♗)*d4. Alternatively, might Black even exchange queens on d1 ? This would give him the first opportunity to parachute a queen after a hostage exchange. Is that important here? Probably not, for a pawn grabbed after a forking check by the parachuted queen could be poor compensation for putting a queen into the enemy airfield.) **4...c6 5 e4 b5 6 dxc6 (♗)*d4 7 *d7** (Diagram 28)
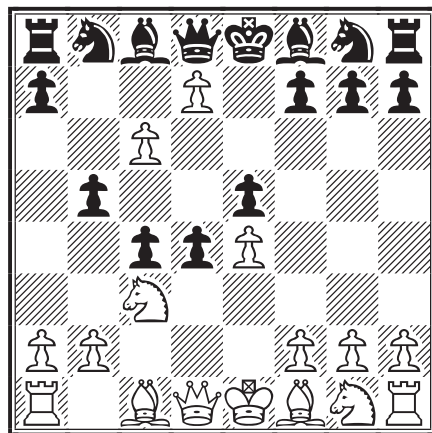
Diagram 28

7...♘xc6. This last move exploits the fact that Black is only in pseudo-check since the white pawn cannot promote — there is no

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imprisoned piece with which it could in theory change places — and so cannot move forward or give check. Taking advantage of that feature of the pawn promotion rule tends, however, to be very dangerous. **8 ♕xd4**: an example of the sort of danger you run into. The queen has become "a super-rampager". Black cannot legally capture it. Sending it to his prison would be giving check to himself because the d7 pawn, at present delivering pseudo-check only, would then be made in theory promotable—promotable to queen—and so would deliver a real check. **8...♗xd7** (capturing the pseudo-checking pawn, and consequently making it legal to capture the queen) **9 ♕d1** (hurried retreat of Her Majesty, therefore) **...(♗)*d4 10 ♘d5 ♗b4+ 11 ♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12 ♕xd2 ♗e6 13 a4** (Black's ingenious next moves will show that the pawn should have gone to a3 instead) **13...♗xd5 14 exd5 (♗)♗*b4 15 *c3 dxc3 16 bxc3 ♗xc3** (White's queen, pinned by the sacrificial bishop, will be drawn forward to its doom) (Diagram 29)

Diagram 29

17 ♕xc3 (♘)♗*b4 (the drawn-forward queen is attacked again, and this time the attack is a fatal one)

18 ♕xb4 ♘xb4. As reward for his ingenuity, Black has taken

White's queen. Looking just at the prisoners, we might judge him well ahead in material. However, his advantage is reduced by the fact that two white pieces are now airfielders and therefore stronger than if they were on the board. Further, he could be unlikely to want to exchange the imprisoned queen for a mere bishop or pawn. White, 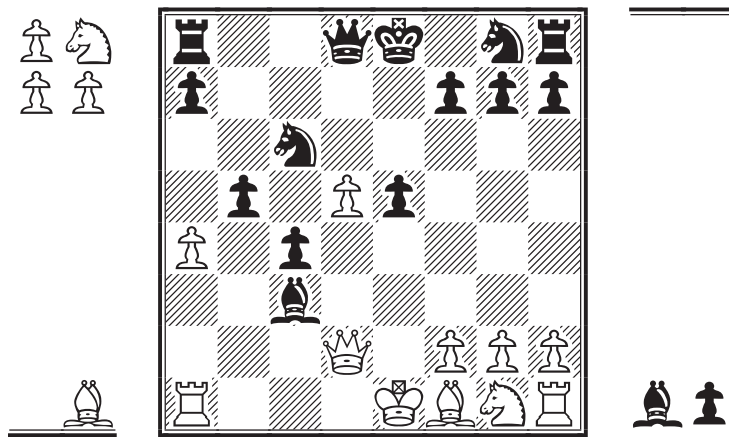in contrast, might usefully exchange bishop for pawn so as to have two pawns dropping in swift succession, or could even give up both hostage bishops to buy pawns; hence his total dropping power is knight, bishop, pawn, pawn, pawn. He might still win, therefore, because Hostage Chess is so full of tricks. **19 ♖bl (♙)*d2+** (Diagram 30)
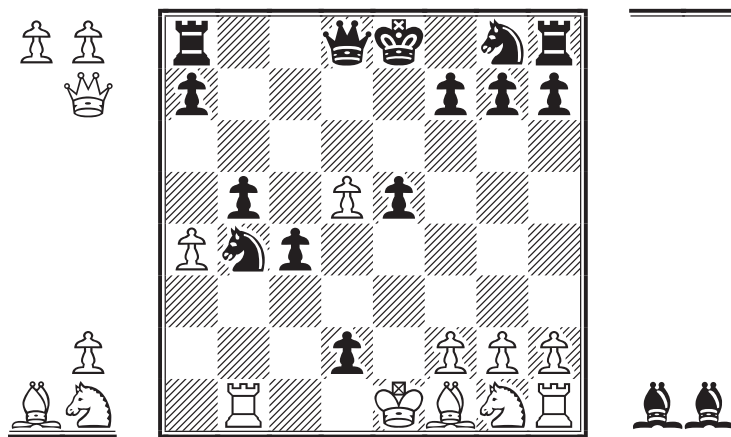
Diagram 30

   20 ♔xd2: it was the king's turn to be drawn forward, this time by a sacrificial pawn. An alternative was ♔d1, taking refuge behind the pawn, but one problem with this was that Black's queen could then rampage since its capture would be followed by its immediate return to the board, ...(♕)♕*e1 mate. Hence the queen could, for instance, capture the d5 pawn without fearing the knight fork ♘*c7+. Putting the king on d2, however, has its own big disadvantage, which is that the queen captures on d5 *with check*: **20...♕xd5+**. The end now comes quickly. **21 ♔cl** (dropping the airfield pawn on d3 would have been somewhat better) **...♘a2+ 22 ♔c2 (♙)*b3+ 23 ♔b2 (♕)♗*c3+** (I said Black could be unlikely to exchange queen for bishop, but there he's done it) **24 ♔a3 b4 mate**. White's total dropping power was

great enough to make Black extremely keen to keep checking again and again.

Game (vi): Seizing a chance to go on the offensive, White outplays a vastly stronger opponent. The game ends with an interesting queen sacrifice. **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♗c5 4 d3 d6 5 ♘c3 ♗g4 6 h3 ♗h5 7 g4 ♗g6**. White may have advanced his kingside pawns a little recklessly. His vague hope was that the black bishop would one day find itself trapped by a dropped pawn. **8 ♘d5 ♘a5 9 ♗g5 f6 10 ♗d2**. That White is the weaker player seems to have been illustrated here. Black's pawn push has opened a square for the bishop, which need no longer fear being trapped. It has also given Black a tempo, used at once for a maneuver which should have been guarded against: **10...♘xc4 11 dxc4 ♗xe4**. As well as gaining a pawn, Black has exchanged his knight for an enemy bishop. That, remember, is usually a good idea (because ransoming and dropping a knight tends to be better than ransoming and dropping a bishop). What's more, White now feels forced to put the knight into Black's airfield, making it worth about a rook on the board, for he plays **12 (♘)♗*f5** to get rid of the e4 bishop. Black, however, does not bother about his threatened bishop. Instead he at once uses his new airfielder to attack: **12...♘*g2+**. The trouble with this, though, is that White manages to defend well: **13 ♔f1 ♗xf3 14 ♕xf3 ♘h4 15 ♕g3 ♘xf5 16 gxf5**. Black, it seems, has accomplished nothing. Instead he has used up that nice knight drop, and he faces a highly charged situation. Because of the hostage knights and bishops waiting to be exchanged, each side now has a dropping power of knight plus bishop, and White might even instead drop knight plus pawn or bishop plus pawn (which shows that even being a pawn down can sometimes have its advantages since a pawn in the enemy prison is a pawn you might usefully ransom). Worse still, there is the white knight on d5, a bone in Black's throat, and the white pawn on f5 which controls the empty, unprotected square e6. Finally, the position of White's queen means

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that castling kingside could turn out badly. In this crisis Black tries **...♕d7** but that only leads to **17 (♗)♗*e6** (Diagram 31)
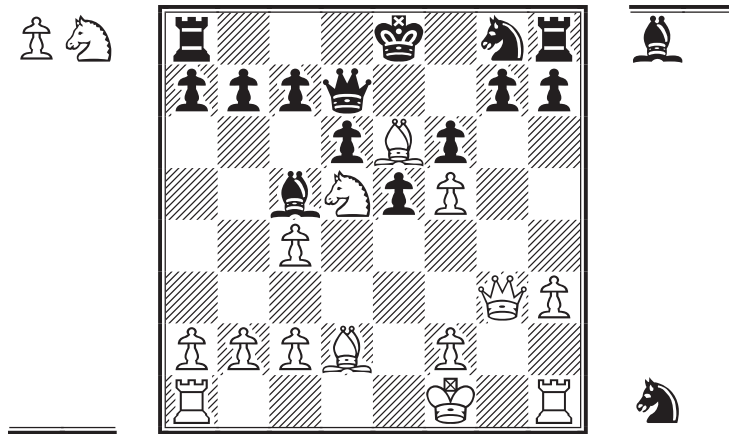
Diagram 31

The dropped bishop rips open the black position. The black queen runs away, **17...♕a4** (if running to c6, the queen would be trapped by (♘)*b5; playing ...♕d8 instead would invite (♘)♘*f7, forking queen and rook and forcing the queen to escape to the useless square b8; in contrast, on a4 it at least threatens to grab the pawn on c4, delivering check). But then comes **18 ♘xc7+ ♔f8**

19 (♘)♘*d7+, and now Black judges he had better exchange his queen for one of those menacing knights: **19...♕xd7**

20 ♗xd7. And next he feels he must also use up his airfield bishop; he plays **...♗*f7**, guarding against 21 ♘e6+ ♔e7 22 ♕xg7+ ♗*f7 23 ♕xf7+ ♔xf7 24 (♕)♕*g7 mate. Has he earned himself time to catch his breath? If so, he could still win. Since the knight in his airfield is worth more through being there, not on the board, he may be less than a rook's-worth down in material; he is an alarmingly strong player; and this is Hostage Chess, not orthodox western chess where being even a pawn down can be fatal.

Thinking it best to attack while still able to, White makes a bold sacrifice: **21 ♕xg7+** (Diagram 32)

Diagram 32

The players are moving quickly so White has not worked everything out, but experience tells him his sacrificial queen will probably soon parachute back into the game. There fol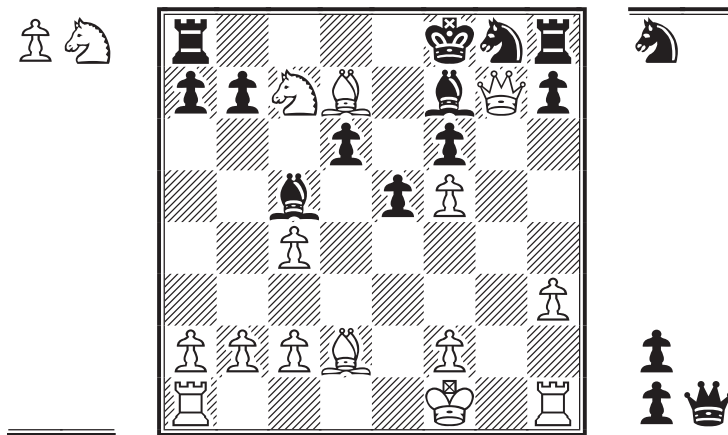lows **21...♔xg7 22 (♙)*h6+ ♘xh6 23 ♗xh6+ ♔xh6 24 (♘)♘*g4+ Resigns**. Black's alternatives to resignation were moving the king forward, into (♕)♕*h6 mate, or instead returning it to g7 and therefore into 25 (♕)♕*h6+ ♔g8 26 ♘xf6 mate.

Game (vii): Here the loser of that last game shows how he normally treats its winner. His swift victory ends with a furious attack: eight checks in an unbroken row, with superb sacrifices. **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♘c3 ♗c5 4 ♗b5 ♘d4 5 ♘xe5 ♕e7 6 ♘xf7**. Although Hostage Chess can reward the bold, White's play is altogether too impertinent when he faces an opponent as powerful as this one. Still, he gets the satisfaction of seeing the black king strangely placed after the next few moves: **6...♔xf7 7 ♗c4+ ♔f8 8 d3 g6 9 ♗xg8 ♖xg8**. Now, though, he judges that his kingside is under threat. Also that provoking an exchange of knights on the board could usefully reduce the imbalance in dropping power that his impertinence has produced (for at present exchanging hostages would give him only one man to drop, whereas Black could drop a knight and a pawn). This leads him to play **10 ♘e2**, rather a passive move: ♘d5 or ♗h6+ could be better. Instead of playing ...♘xe2 as White hoped, Black

attacks with **...(♘)♘*f3+**. Then, following **11 gxf3 ♘xf3+ 12 ♔f1 ♕h4**, the white king is clearly in danger. Yet **13 (♙)*g3** prevents the threatened mate on f2, and after **...♕h5 14 ♘*f4** White fancies he has broken the attack and started to harry the black queen. (Diagram 33)
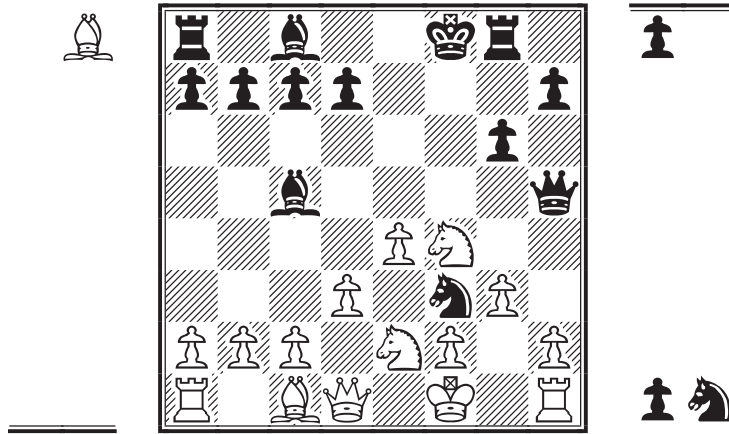
Diagram 33

But now comes the first of the eight checks: **14...♘xh2+**. Next we get **15 ♔g1 (♗)♘*f3+ 16 ♔g2 *h3+ 17 ♘xh3**, and then the splendid sacrifice **...♕xh3+**. After taking the queen, **18 ♔xh3**, White's king is seriously exposed, yet how can Black possibly exploit this? Answer: by a discovered check, **18...d5+**. How does that help? Blocking the bishop's line of fire with **19 (♙)*f5** strikes White as perfectly adequate. (Diagram 34)
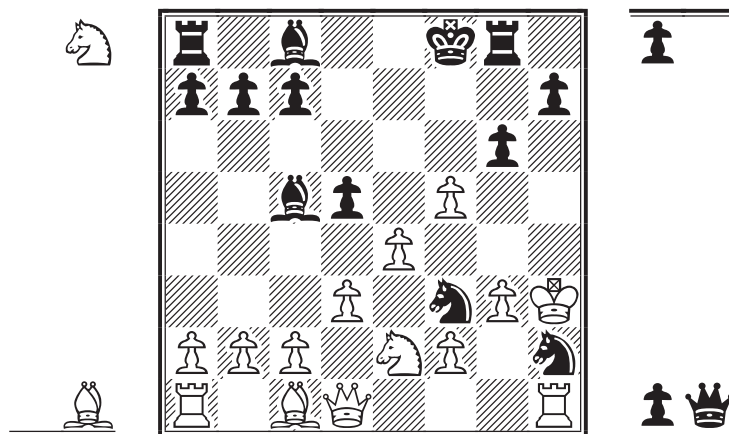
Diagram 34

Ah, but the bishop is now sacrificed (with yet another check) so that it can later be ransomed and dropped! Black plays **...♗xf5+**, and after **20 exf5 *g4+ 21 ♔g2** the bishop returns with **...(♘)♗*h3 mate**.

See what I meant by Black's strength? White did have to hurry in order to win game (vi) before this formidable adversary got his breath back.

Game (viii): Conducted across the Atlantic, and by post rather than e-mail. A long and intricate game in which one player got far ahead in material but failed to develop well enough, his opponent then mobilizing just enough force for an elegant win. **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 ♘xe4**: a standard sacrifice. White could now play ♗xf7+, taking the knight only after this check — a sequence probably stronger than in orthodox chess because in Hostage it leads to richer chances of pestering the king. In fact, however, this is what happens: **5 ♘xe4 d5 6 ♗xd5 ♕xd5 7 ♘c3 ♕a5 8 O-O (♙)*d4** (establishing a strong center, but giving White a useful airfielder) **9 ♘e4 ♗g4 10 h3 ♗h5** (a blunder, as White will now demonstrate) **11 g4** (the useful airfielder will trap the bishop if it retreats) **11...f5** (counterattacking, to make the best of a bad situation) **12 gxf5 O-O-O 13 *g4 ♗f7 14 (♘)♗*e6+** (the developing move d3 would have been better; one reason, in fact, for White's eventual loss of this game is that the d-pawn remains motionless to the bitter end) **14 ...♗xe6 15 fxe6 ♘*f4**. Now White rather regrets not having played d3. As well as attacking two pawns, the parachuted knight threatens to support a drop of bishop or of pawn on e2. **16 (♗)♗*d7+** (keeping up the pressure) **...♖xd7** (reasoning that a bishop so close to the king must be removed) **17 exd7+ ♔xd7 18 (♙)*e2** ("Drop where your opponent wants to!") **...♗*g2 19 ♖e1 ♗xf3 20 exf3 *e2** (so the black pawn gets to drop on this spot after all) **21 ♖xe2 ♘xe2+ 22 ♔xe2 (♘)♘*f4**. The knight has returned to the same nice placement, but now White, instead of tamely saving his queen,

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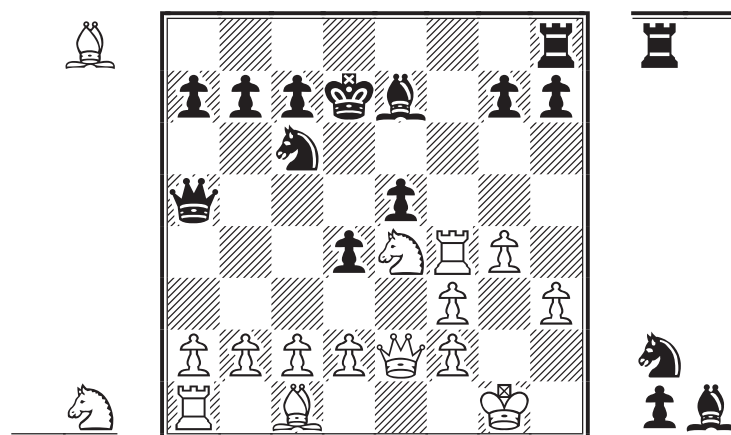can fight back with **23 (🜚)🜚*f7+ 🜚e7 24 🜚xf4** (Diagram 35)

Diagram 35

Black might next take the rook, 24...exf4, but White could reply 25 (♗)♗*f5+. Blocking with ...♗*e6 would then be bad for Black: imagine 26 ♘c5+ ♛xc5 27 ♛xe6+ ♚e8 28 ♛d7+ ♚f7 (since ...♚f8 loses the queen to ♘*e6+) 29 ♘*g5+ ♚g8 (once again ...♚f8 loses the queen, while ...♚f6 leads to (♗)♘*e4+ ♚e5, and then ♛e6 mate) 30 ♛e6+, with mate next move. The black king would therefore need to retreat. If the retreat were 25...♚d8 then 26 ♘*f7+ would fork king and rook; yet why not 25...♚e8 instead? A continuation might be 26 ♘f6+ gxf6 27 ♘*g7+ but it is hard to see any winning White attack starting from there — particularly as any failure to keep checking would give Black a chance of using the material advantage he'd have been accumulating (the knight and rook in Black's prison frowning across at the mere knight and pawn in White's, plus the rook and the bishop in Black's airfield, each worth more than if it had remained on the board). Black's next move, **24...d3**, therefore seems an act of uncalled-for desperation. One idea behind it is that cxd3 would be answered by ...(♗)♘*c2, and if White now moved his threatened rook then ...🜚*e1+ would win the queen.

To add to his difficulties, Black next blunders rather badly. He answers **25 ♛xd3+** with **...🜚*d5**. What was needed was ...🜚*d4, as

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becomes clear when **26 ♘*c5+** has been hurried to him by aircraft, train and postal van. His opponent has cut the connection between the queen and the rook — and with a check, too. The rook is pinned, so Black plays **26...♔c8** and White duly takes the rook, **27 ♕xd5**. Black replies **...♖d8**, hoping to capture the f4 rook after the queen moves away, or even for the queen-winning sequence 28 ♕e6+ ♔b8 29 ♖f5 (♗)♗*d5. But White's answer is **28 (♗)♗*d7+**. The black king takes flight, **...♔b8**, and White saves his rook with **29 ♖f7**. The defeat of the black forces appears virtually complete. White has a rook, a knight and two pawns as prisoners, while Black has none. Hostage Chess, however, offers remarkably many resources to players who have fallen behind, and Black does have in his airfield the bishop that White has just now placed there. He proceeds to make fine use of it, playing **29...♗*g8** (Diagram 36)
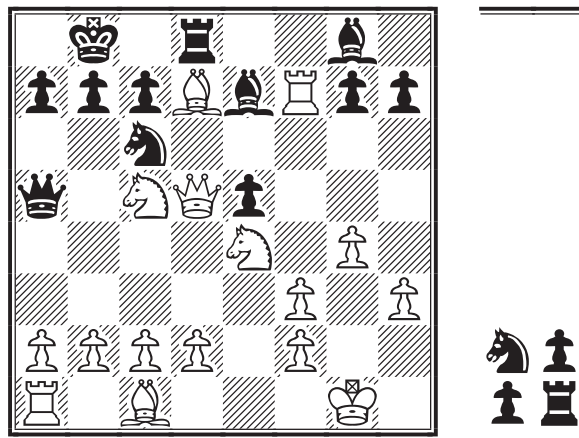
Diagram 36

At this point it becomes White's turn to go wrong. Best for him could be 30 b4. If Black replied ...♕xb4 we could next see 31 ♘a6+ bxa6 32 ♗xc6 (♙)*b7 (because if ...♖xd5 instead, then this would be answered by ♖f8+ since capturing the rook would simply invite it to return through a rook-for-rook hostage exchange) 33 (♘)♘*d7+, after which White would seem able to crash through in one way or another: perhaps we would get 33...♖xd7 34 ♖f8+ ♗xf8 35 (♖)♖*c8+ ♔xc8 36 ♕xd7+ ♔b8 37 (♖)♖*c8 mate. But instead White plays

30 ♗e6 with complicated ideas about a back rank mate, ideas not worked out in enough detail. Black takes the queen as anticipated, **30...♖xd5,** and White pushes on with his ideas, producing **31 ♖f8+**. Yet now instead of kindly taking the rook, a move rather too clearly asking for a checkmate in next week's mail, Black plays **31...♘d8**. White then tries **32 ♘d7+**. Black replies **...♖xd7**. White now takes the rook, **33 ♗xd7**, but Black promptly makes an escape square for his king with **33...a6**, thereby preventing 34 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 35 (♖)♖*c8 mate. And here White can think of nothing better than the leisurely **34 ♖xg8**, adding another bishop to his prisoners. Sorry, but that isn't quite good enough, even though it leaves him with a marked material advantage.

The trouble is that White's a1 rook and c1 bishop are "undeveloped". Never having moved, they are doing hardly any work. Black now comes up with **34...♛d5**. Besides attacking the g8 rook and the c7 bishop, this puts the exposed white king in grave danger. For one thing, the black queen could soon rampage, sacrificing herself so as to return through a queen-for-queen hostage exchange. White, though, seems blind to his peril and the game continues like this: **35 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8 36 (♖)♖*c8+ ♚a7 37 ♖xd8**. White's activities have maintained his material advantage, but Black is about to prove that this doesn't count for much: **37...(♘)♘*e2+ 38 Resigns**. (Diagram 37)
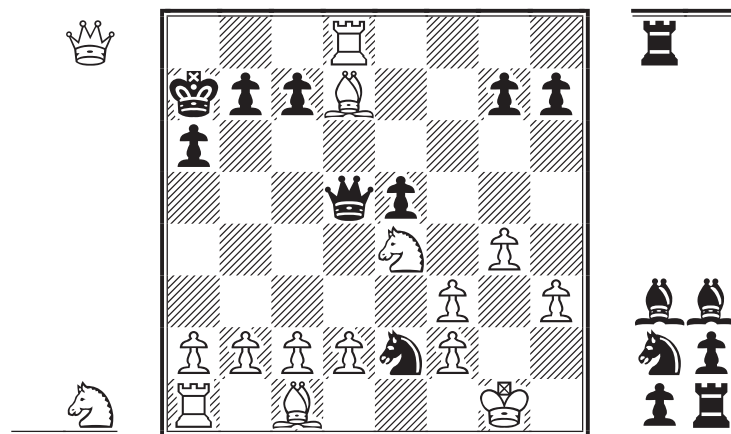

Diagram 37

The longest alternative to resignation was 38 ♔f1 ♖*g1+ 39 ♔xe2 (♕)♘*f4+ (possible since the d2 pawn never moved) 40 ♔e3 ♕d4 mate. Shorter was 38 ♔g2 ♖*g1+ 39 ♔h2 (♕-♘)♘*f1 mate. Or again, there was 38 ♔h2 (♕)♘*f1+ 39 ♔g2 (or ♔h1) ♖*g1 mate.

Game (ix): A brevity showing what can be in store when you exchange hostage queens and then launch an attack that fails. **1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 e5 3 dxe5 d4 4 ♘e4 ♕d5 5 f3 ♕xe5 6 (♙)*e3** (White feared that the simple pawn push e3 would lead to losing a pawn through 6...dxe3 7 ♗xe3 ♕xb2, but the move he chose instead leaves him with a badly blocked position as well as giving Black an airfielder) **...♗b4+ 7 ♗d2 dxe3 8 ♗xb4 ♕xe4** (a clever sequence, for fxe4 would be punished by ...*f2 mate) **9 ♕d3** (vacating d1, so that now dropping the black pawn on f2 would only win a knight) **...♕xd3**. As will shortly become plain, capturing the dangerous bishop would have been far better. Or else ...*d2+ which could lead to 10 ♗xd2 ♕xd3 11 cxd3 exd2+ 12 ♔xd2 (♙)*e3+ 13 ♔xe3 (♗)♗*c5+ 14 *d4 ♗xd4+, and then if 15 ♔xd4 we get ...♘c6+ to attack the very badly exposed king. **10 cxd3 (♕)♕*f2+ 11 ♔d1 ♕xf1+ 12 ♔c2 ♕xa1** (Diagram 38)
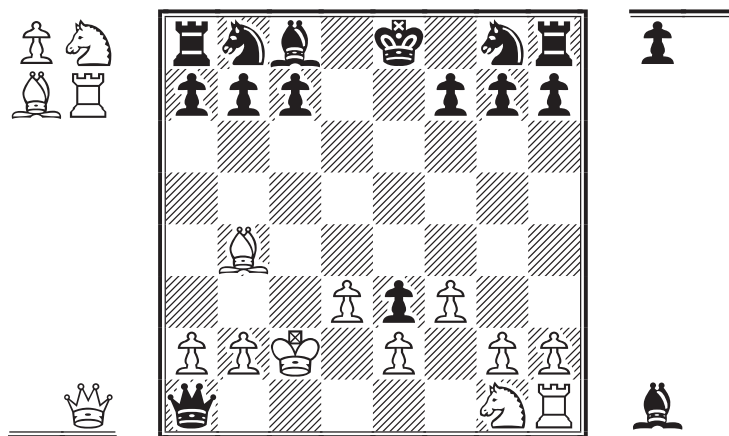

Diagram 38

Black has won a rook — but White has avoided using up his airfielder

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in the sequence 12 ♕*e1 ♕xe1 13 ♔xe1 or ♗xe1. The airfielder can therefore now begin a mating attack in which the black king's every move is dictated: **13 ♕*f8+ ♔d7 14 (♗)♘*e5+ ♔e6 15 ♕xf7+ ♔xe5 16 f4+ ♔d4 17 (♙)*c3 mate**.

Game (x): Another demonstration of how swiftly storm clouds can gather in Hostage Chess. **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c4 dxe4 4 ♘c3 ♘f6 5 ♗g5 ♗e7 6 f3 exf3 7 ♘xf3 O-O 8 ♗d3 ♘g4 9 ♗xe7 ♕xe7** (better would have been ...(♙)*f2+ before White could prevent it) **10 (♙)*f2** (to stop Black dropping pawn or bishop here) **...*e3 11 (♗)♗*h4 exf2** (it's only pseudo-check for there's no imprisoned black piece with which the pawn could in theory change places if it moved forward — but remember, until the pseudo-check is ended no black piece can legally be captured) **12 ♔e2** (capturing the pawn, ♔xf2, would have been safer) **...♕b4 13 ♕c2 ♗*g6 14 h3** (fearing that ♗xg6 would lead to ...fxg6, bringing the rook to bear on the weak white position, and next perhaps to ...(♗)♗*e1, reinforcement for the irritating pawn) **14...♗xd3+ 15 ♔xd3 e5 16 (♗)♗*c5**: though this looks attractive, capturing the dangerous knight, hxg4, is what was needed — for Black is about to disregard the attack on his queen, reckoning that attacks on kings are what are crucial. **16...♗f5+ 17 ♘e4 ♗xe4+ 18 ♔xe4**. The king is now dangerously drawn forward. (Diagram 39)
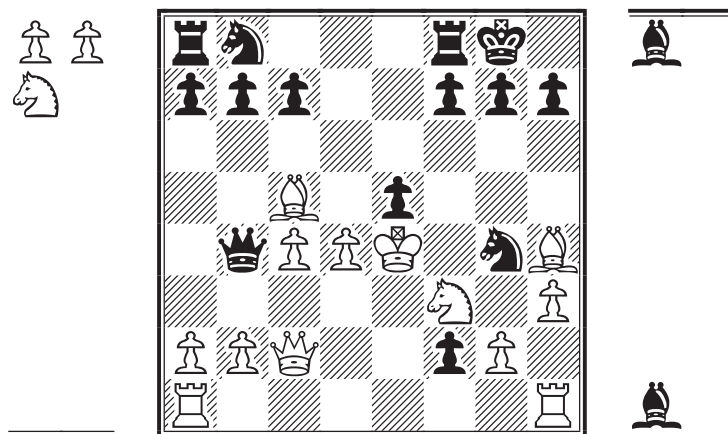

Diagram 39

18...f5+ 19 ♔d5 (reasoning that ♔d3 would mean losing the queen through ...♗*e4 20 ♔e2 ♗xc2, after which taking the enemy queen in return, ♗xb4, just yields ...(♕)♕*d3 mate) **19...♗*c6+ 20 ♔e6 ♗d7+ 21 ♔e7 (♘)♗*d8 mate**, the alternative being 21 ♔d5 (♘)♗*c6 mate.

Game (xi): Played quickly (maybe it took forty minutes) and with victory going to the weaker player after an attack launched at the right moment. **1 e4 e5 2 ♗c4 ♗c5 3 b4 ♗xb4 4 c3 ♗c5 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 O-O ♘f6 7 d4 exd4 8 cxd4 ♗b6 9 e5 ♘e4 10 ♖e1 (♙)*g4 11 ♖xe4 gxf3 12 ♗xf7+ ♔xf7 13 (♘)♘*g5+ ♔g8 14 ♕xf3**. White now has a very aggressive position thanks to his sacrificial bishop, following up the pawn sacrifice he made on his third move so as to gain an advantage in development. He actually threatens to mate next move. **14...♘*h6 15 *c5 ♗xc5** (Black argues that having a bishop and two pawns to rescue and drop will reduce White's pressure on him) **16 dxc5 (♙)*b2** (if the white bishop captures this pawn, White's knight will be taken) **17 ♕b3+ (♙)*e6 18 ♕xb2**. Black might seem to have pushed away the danger, but at great cost. He has put two pawns into White's airfield, and his former advantage in material has been replaced by being a pawn down. **18...d6 19 exd6 cxd6 20 ♘xe6 ♗xe6 21 ♗xh6 gxh6**. Here, instead of just capturing the bishop, White plays **22 (♗)♗*f6** (Diagram 40)
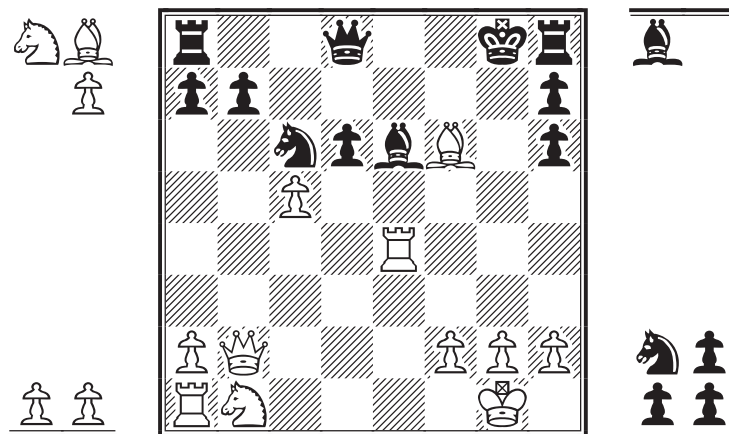

Diagram 40

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With king exposed and rook about to be taken, Black looks in a terrible state. He finds a superb answer, however. Disregarding the attack on his queen, he plays **22...♗*e5**. Besides cutting the connection between the white queen and bishop, this attacks the queen, making White wish he had played 22 *g7. Judging that it would be poor to take the black queen, losing his own and then no doubt the rook as well, White replies **23 ♗xe5**. Next comes **...dxe5 24 ♘c3 (♙)*b4 25 ♖d1 (♗)♗*d4** (blocking the attack on the queen and pinning the white knight) **26 ♖(d)xd4 ♘xd4 27 ♗*d6** (attacking the e5 pawn, blocking the black queen's fire and entering Black's camp very aggressively) **...bxc3 28 ♕xb7 (♗)♘*e2+** (Diagram 41)
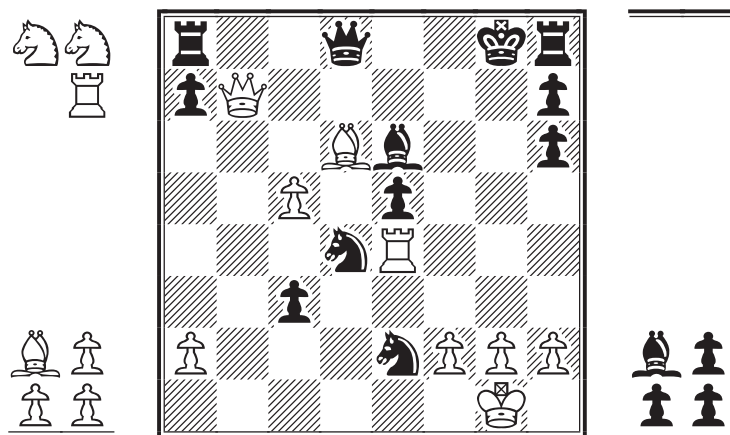
Diagram 41

Black thinks of himself as lashing out wildly, but White, expert enough to recognize trouble when he sees it, starts shaking his head and groaning. The game continues with **29 ♖xe2**. (White feared ...♖b8 if the king moved. Playing 30 ♗xb8 would then yield ...(♖)♖*g1 mate, yet if he instead moved the queen out of danger ...♖b1+ looked very threatening.) **29...♘xe2+ 30 ♔f1 (♘)♘*d2+** (correctly keeping up the checks instead of saving the knight) **31 ♔xe2 ♗c4+ 32 ♔e1** (fearing that if *d3 instead, then Black would reply ...♗xd3, sacrificing the bishop to draw the king forward) **32...(♘)♘*d3+ 33 ♔d1 ♘xf2+ 34 ♔e1 ♘d3+ 35 ♔d1 (♙)*e2+ 36 ♔c2** (the alternative

loses the queen) **...(♖)♗*d1+** (this, the ninth check in an unbroken series, had better lead to victory soon, for the force in White's airfield has become gigantic) **37 ♔xc3 ♕a5+** (so now White might mate with ♘*f6 if given an opportunity) **38 ♗*b4**. This looks adequate, but is refuted by a fine sequence in which the black queen dies when capturing a bishop which is then used to ransom a crucially important pawn:

38...♕xb4+ 39 ♕xb4 (♗)*d4+ 40 ♔xd2 (♖)*e3 mate. The alternative was 38 ♖*b4 ♕a3+ 39 ♔xd2 ♕c1 mate.

Game (xii): A contest between close relatives, with two thousand miles of Canada dividing them. They are playing on the board at a Hostage Chess website set up by Fergus Duniho:

http://play.chessvariants.org/pbm/presets/hostage_chess.html

Filled with ingenious moves, the game has one king castled while the other is stuck in the center. What's more, that is the situation after a heavily sacrificial capture of a queen. Everything is therefore weirdly out of balance. **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗c4 d6 4 d3 ♗g4 5 h3 ♗xf3 6 ♕xf3 ♘f6 7 (♗)♘*g5 ♘d4 8 ♕d1 d5 9 exd5 ♗b4+**. This seems to be asking to lose material, yet Black has worked everything out. (Diagram 42)
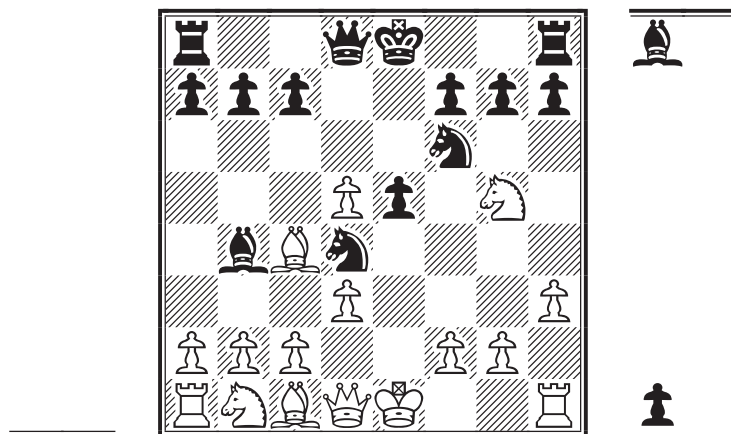

Diagram 42

10 c3 ♗xc3 11 ♘xc3 (♙)*c2 12 ♕d2 ♗*f4 13 *e3 ♗xg5 14 ♘b5 (to get rid of that aggressively placed black knight) **...♘e4** (another startling move, but once again Black has worked out everything) (Diagram 43)
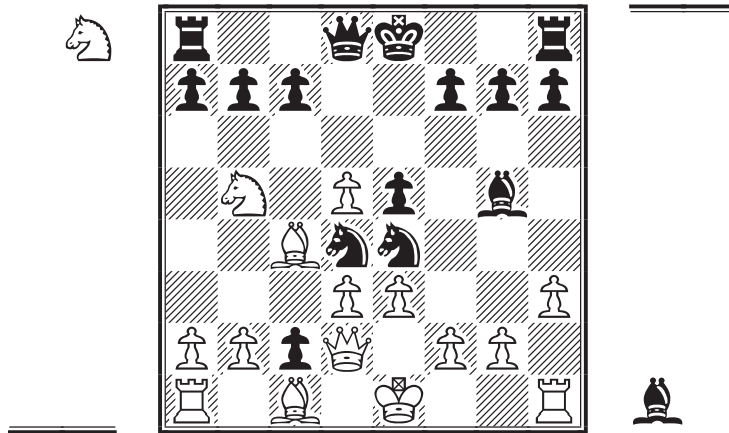

Diagram 43

15 dxe4 (♘)♘*f3+ 16 gxf3 ♘xf3+ 17 ♔e2 ♘xd2 18 ♗xd2. Although the queen-grab took place exactly as planned, it has cost Black two knights in addition to moving an imprisoned knight into White's airfield. In compensation, the white position has been made to stagger drunkenly; White's king cannot castle; and Black can hope for a "queen rampage" since capture of his queen could be followed at once by a queen-for-queen hostage exchange. **18...O-O**

19 ♘a3 a6 20 ♗b3 b5 21 ♗xc2 ♕d6 22 ♖(a)g1 ♕f6 (an unfortunate move, as the dramatic sequel shows)

23 ♘*f3 ♗h4, since moving to h6 would be answered by (♙)*g5. **24 ♘xh4 ♕xh4 25 ♖xg7+** (safe because ...♔xg7 would be answered by ♘*f5, forking king and queen; this gave Black quite a surprise) **...♔h8 26 ♖g4** (Diagram 44)
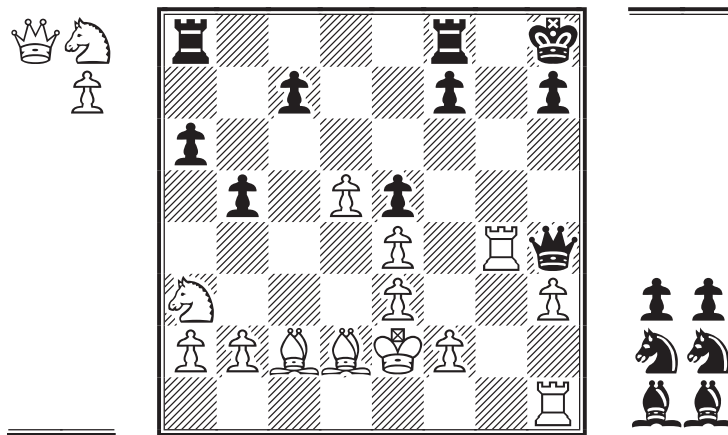
Diagram 44

Black is in trouble, for if he saves the queen then his king can be attacked by (♙)*g7+. If he next moves the king back to g8, he risks getting mated by a knight dropped on h6 or on e7, or first on one of those squares and next (after being captured and then ransomed) on the other. The mate could be prevented by having the queen flee to f6 or h6 so as to cover g7, but when the pawn dropped the queen would have to capture it and die.

Still, Black thinks he sees a solution: **26...(♙)*f3+**. The idea is that if White plays 27 ♔xf3 the black queen can escape to f6 *with check*, gaining the tempo needed for repairing the king's weakened position. Even better for Black would be if White tried 27 ♔d3. This would lead into ...(♘)♗*e2+ 28 ♔c3 ♛xg4, after which White couldn't afford 29 hxg4 because of ...(♕)♕*c5 30 *c4 (♖)*b4 31 ♔b3 ♗xc4 32 ♘xc4 ♛xc4 mate.

In fact White plays **27 ♔d1** instead. None the less Black continues to see hope: **27...♛xg4 28 hxg4 (♘)*e2+**

29 ♔c1 (*not* ♔e1, mated at once by a parachuted knight) **...(♕)♛*f1+** (Diagram 45)
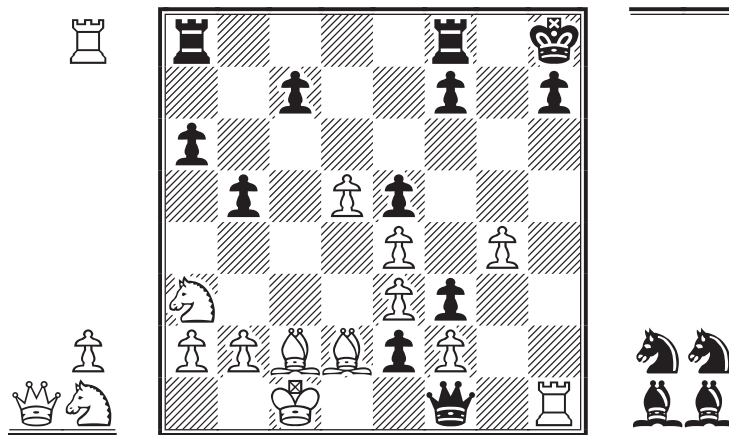
Diagram 45

If the rook now sent the queen to prison, the pawn would take the rook and promote by changing places with her.

Unfortunately White just blocks the check with **30 ♗e1**. The rook protects the bishop by an "X-ray" through the black queen. Black's response is **...♕xh1**, allowing a short ending: **31 *g7+ ♔xg7 32 ♘*f5+ ♔f6 33 ♕*g7 mate**. There were several alternative responses but none would have done more than delay the defeat.

Chapter 5

A Chess Master in Trouble

Here a very good chess-player, a strong International Master, lost to David Pritchard who took White.

The loser fully understood the Hostage Chess rules allowing men to parachute back onto the board. However, having had too little practice meant he wasn't sufficiently alert to the effects of hostage exchanges. He tried to play a normal Scotch Opening. The game began as follows: **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 exd4 4 ♘xd4 ♗c5 5 ♘xc6 ♕f6** (Diagram 46)
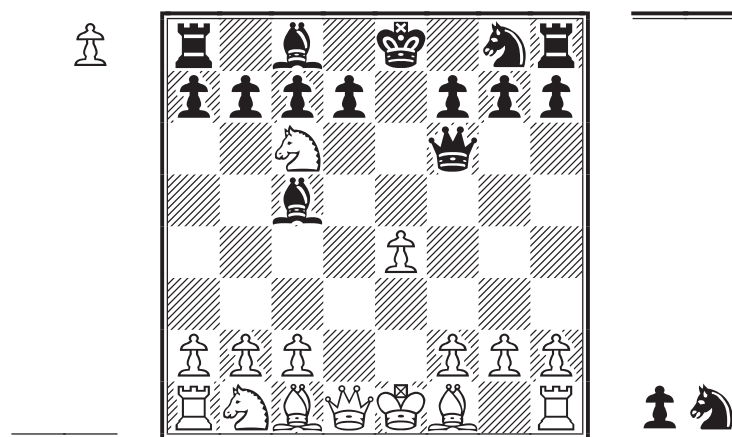

Diagram 46

That's a standard move in this opening. It threatens mate by Qxf2. The idea is that when White guards against the mate, Black

will capture the knight with the queen instead of with a pawn so that he avoids "doubling" his pawns (putting one in front of the other on the same file). Well, the move loses a piece in Hostage Chess. White played **6 (♙)*d4** and the dropped pawn, protected by the knight, both guarded against the mate and attacked Black's bishop. Take the knight and lose the bishop? Save the bishop and let the knight escape? Doubled pawns would have been far preferable! The game continued: **6 ...♛xc6 7 dxc5** (adding a whole bishop to the knight in White's prison) **...** ♛xe4+ (picking up a mere pawn, not nearly enough compensation) **8 ♕e2 ♛xe2+ 9 ♗xe2**. Two hostage queens were now waiting to be exchanged, so the players needed to be extremely careful.

Then came **9 ... ♞f6 10 O-O ♞e4** (hoping for an attack before White became developed enough to make use of his advantage in material) **11 ♗e3 O-O 12 ♞d2 f5 13 ♗c4+ ♚h8** (Diagram 47)
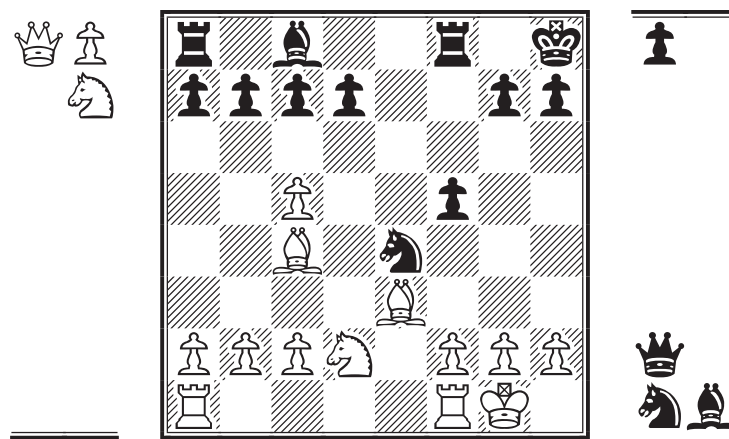
Diagram 47

Sadly, that was inadequate. Something had to be parachuted so as to block the bishop's line of fire. Black's move got him smothered immediately: **14 (♕)♕*g8+ ♖xg8 15 (♗)♞*f7 mate**. (Diagram 48)
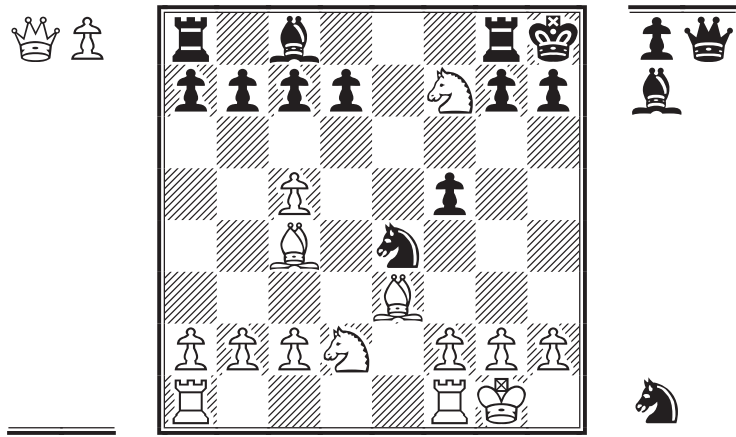
Diagram 48

What moral can we draw? That even chess champions will find this field too difficult? Of course not. Mistakes like those are made by everyone who is fairly new to Hostage Chess. After building up a little experience you will make far fewer of them. Your skill at normal western chess should then make itself felt very strongly. At that stage it would be kind if you warned newcomers of the perils of Hostage. Remember, after only fifteen moves a master of the standard game had his king in the top right corner of Diagram 48.

Chapter 6

More Master Games

The chapter begins with FIDE Master Robert Hamilton fighting first against Grandmaster Kevin Spraggett, then against International Master Lawrence Day. Next there are games between Ray Kaufman, another International Master, and his father, Grandmaster Larry Kaufman.

Game (I.): *White* **FM Robert Hamilton** *Black* **GM Kevin Spraggett**

After warming up by playing several games at speed, the contestants feel ready for something serious. **1 e4 b6 2 d4 ♗b7 3 ♗d3 e6 4 ♘f3 d6 5 c3 ♘d7**

6 ♕e2 ♘e7. Spraggett seems to think it wise for Black not to push forward quickly in Hostage Chess. Light-square weaknesses have appeared in his queenside, however, and Hamilton at once exploits them.

7 ♗a6 ♕c8 8 ♗xb7 ♕xb7 9 (♗)♗*a6 ♕b8 10 e5 dxe5 (opening up the position in this way leads Black into difficulties, so 10...d5 might have been preferable) **11 ♘xe5 ♘xe5**

12 ♕xe5 (♙)*b7 (White might have played (♙)*b7 himself instead

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of ♕xe5; Black has now prevented it, using the principle of dropping where your enemy wants to. Black could alternatively have forked White's king and a rook with 12...(♞)♞*c2+, which is Peter Coast's suggestion. Then, Peter writes, we might have seen 13 ♔d1 ♞xa1 14 (♙)*b7 *c2, or else perhaps 13 ♔d2 ♞xa1 14 (♙)*b7 ♗*f4+ 15 ♕xf4 (♖)♗*h6, pinning the white queen disastrously; any attempt to save it with 16 ♘*g5 only leads to the return of the pin through ...♗xg5 17 ♕xg5 (♞)♗*h6.)

13 ♗b5+ ♗*c6. (Rather a waste of a bishop drop? Might 13...♞c6 have been better? The resulting pins, of Black's knight and of his e6 pawn, could have proved troublesome. Still, trying to exploit them by playing 14 d5 would have been a mistake because—hard to spot and beautiful—Black could have replied ...(♞)♞*d3+, attacking the queen. If the bishop captured the parachuted knight to prevent it from killing her, then the job could instead be done by the other knight, now released from the pin.) **14 *h6** (a fine idea) **...♗xb5**

15 ♕xb5+ (♞)♞*c6. The simple pawn block, 15...c6, was quite an attractive alternative, creating weaknesses but freeing the black queen and putting no knight in White's airfield; or again, there was the possibility of 15...(♗)♗*c6, attacking the white queen.

16 ♘*h5 ♘f5 17 d5 (♗)♗*a6 (trying to end the pin, now at the cost of giving White an airfield bishop)

18 hxg7, threatening to become a queen on h8 if Black captures and imprisons the white queen — for only then could the pawn promote to queen, which it would do by changing places with the royal prisoner. The rule, remember, is that a pawn can step forward to promote only if able to change places with an imprisoned piece. If unable to do this, it is powerless even to threaten squares on the opponent's back rank — so that, for example, any check which it seems to deliver is a pseudo-check, not a real check. **18...♗xg7** (Diagram 49)
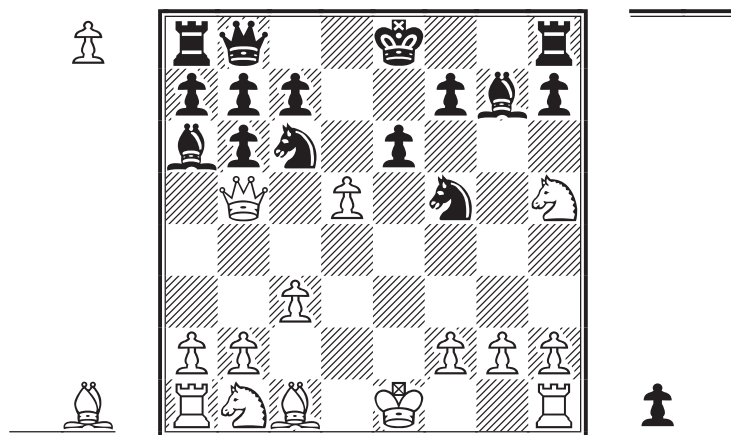
Diagram 49

19 ♕xa6 exd5. Whew! White concluded that giving up his queen for a bishop plus a knight would be worthwhile, granted that Black's queen was so decentralized. Black then thought it best not to take the queen; he saved his knight instead! Correct reasoning by both players? Examining dozens of variations, Roger Smook (Solutions Editor for *The Problemist Supplement* and knowing all about detailed chess analysis) judged that Black's positional weaknesses probably spelled defeat whether or not the queen was taken — but who can ever be sure when evaluating long sequences in Hostage? An alternative line was 19...bxa6, capturing the queen, followed by 20 dxc6 ♕d8 21 ♗*d7+ ♔f8. This would have left Black all broken up, but where is any obvious way in which White could have exploited it?

20 ♕e2+ (♙)*e4 21 ♗*f6 ♖g8 (Black's king looks in grave danger) **22 ♗(c)g5 ♗f8 23 *g7 ♗xg7**

24 ♗xg7 ♖xg7. Then comes **25 ♘f6+,** to which Black replies **...♔f8** because not wanting to move into the bishop's line of fire. (Diagram 50)
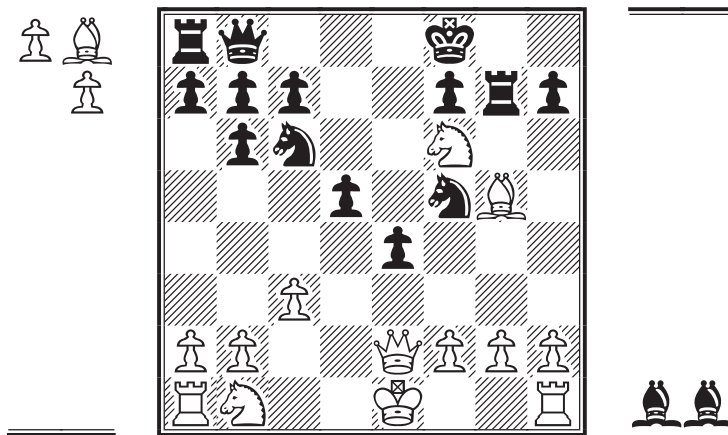
Diagram 50

The knight can now fork queen and king, yet White instead chooses to try for a mate: **26 (♘)♗*a3+ ♗*c5 27 ♗xc5+ bxc5** (White's last two moves seem only to have helped Black)

28 (♘)♗*h6 ♞e5 (at least temporarily ending the possibility of the knight fork)

29 ♗xg7+ ♚xg7 30 ♞xe4 dxe4 (we can see one reason White had for sacrificing the knight; it has become available for rescuing and dropping) **31 (♗)♗*f6+ ♚f8**

32 (♙)*g7+ ♞xg7 (Why did White sacrifice the pawn? Black is about to find out.) **33 ♕xe4 ♛e8** (centralizing the queen at last, but too late)

34 (♙)*e7+ ♚g8 35 (♖)♞*h6+ (possible since White's pawn sacrifice at move 32 deflected Black's knight from guarding h6) **...♚h8 36 ♗xg7+ ♚xg7**

37 ♕xe5+ (Why not (♞)♗*f6 mate? Look again at how the promotion rule can restrict a pawn's power to move forward or give check!) **...♚g6 38 ♕f6+ ♚h5 39 g4 mate**. (Diagram 51)
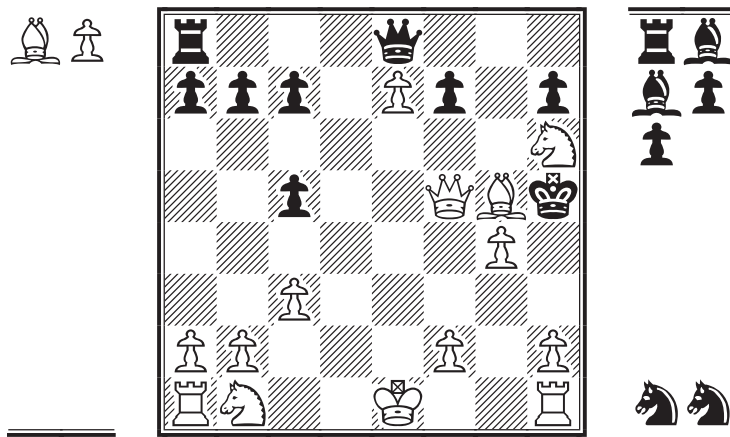
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Diagram 51

Black saw the end coming but played onwards to allow White to complete the fine mating combination. A very interesting struggle, with the players concentrating so much on attack and defense that they seemed to pay scant attention to the value of material. Yet that can sometimes be right in Hostage. Particularly in the orgy of parachuting that so often ends a game, queens, rooks, knights, bishops, pawns, can seem all about equally strong. A check arriving by air is a check, no matter which man delivers it.

Game (II.): *White* **GM Kevin Spraggett** *Black* **FM Robert Hamilton**

1 c4 c6 2 ♞c3 d5 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 d4 ♞f6 5 (♟)*e5 ♞e4 6 ♞xe4 dxe4 7 (♞)♞*c3 e3 8 ♗xe3 ♞*g4 9 ♛d2 ♞c6 10 ♞f3 ♞xe3 11 fxe3 (if White captures with the queen instead, Black plays …(♗)♞*c2+, forking king and queen) **11…*f2+ 12 ♚xf2** (through the maneuvers starting at his seventh move, Black has prevented castling and drawn the white king forward, but at the cost of two pawns) **12…g6 13 h3 ♗h6 14 g4 ♗xg4 15 hxg4 (♟)*b4**. This pawn drop was what Black had in mind when making the bishop sacrifice, which gave him a pawn as "cash" with which to pay for it.

White now risks losing his queen to the knight drop ...(♘)♘*e4+, but he prevents this by moving his threatened knight to the square the enemy knight would like to land on:

16 ♘e4. He has a material advantage of a knight plus a pawn, and also a pawn usefully in his airfield instead of on the board. Play continues: **16...♗g7 17 *h6 ♗f8 18 ♖c1 (♗)♗*d5**

19 ♖xc6 bxc6. White's exchange of rook for knight has broken up Black's position: the black king has come to look as dangerously exposed as the white one. (Diagram 52)
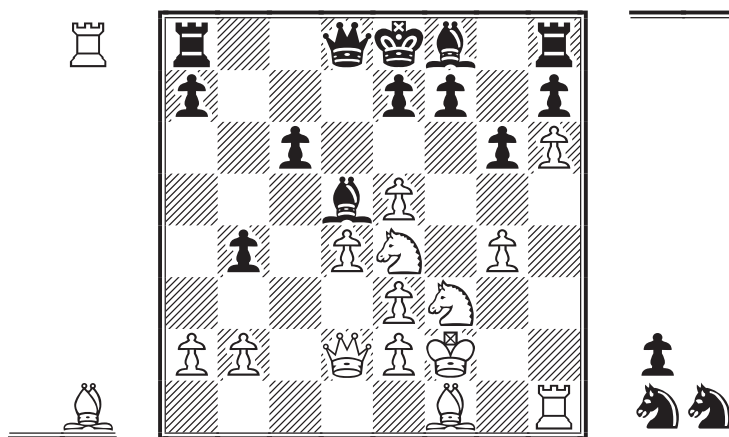
Diagram 52

20 ♗*b3 ♕c8 (...♗xe4 would just have walked into 21 ♗xf7+, the reply...♔xf7 then being answered by 22 ♘g5+ which forks king and bishop)

21 ♗xd5 cxd5 22 (♗)♗*a4+ ♗*c6 23 ♘d6+ exd6

24 (♘)♘*f6+ As well as attacking with a check, White has kept his grip on e4, preventing the loss of his queen through ...(♖)♘*e4+ **24...♔d8**

25 ♗xc6 ♕xc6 26 ♘g5 dxe5

27 dxe5 (♙)*c3 28 bxc3 bxc3 29 ♘xf7+ ♔c8 (Diagram 53)
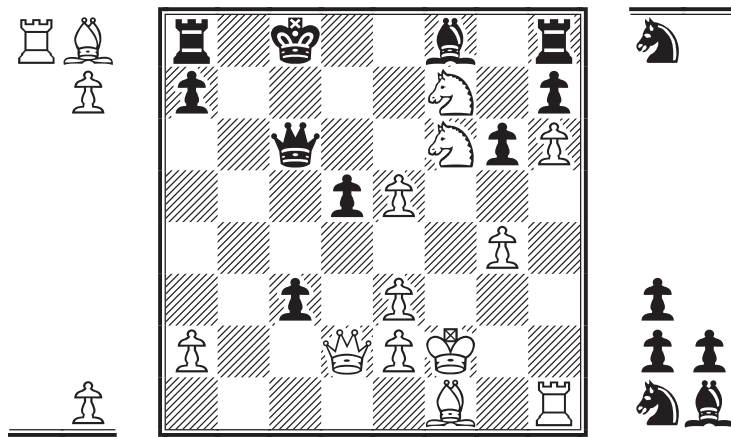
Diagram 53

Now 30 (B)B*d7+ would win the black queen, and if Black immediately countered by taking the other queen then White would get the first chance to exchange hostage queens and attack. But White thinks he can do better than that, for the game goes as follows: **30 *d7+ ♔b7 31 (♙)*a6+ ♔xa6 32 (♙)*b5+ ♔xb5 33 a4+ ♔a5 34 (♗)♗*c7+** (trying to tempt Black into playing...♕xc7 so that he can reply ♕xd5+) **34...♔xa4 35 ♕a2+ ♗a3** (Black could drop something on a3 instead, but he wants to save up his drops for counterattacking) **36 (♙)*b3+ ♔b5 37 ♘d6+** (Diagram 54)
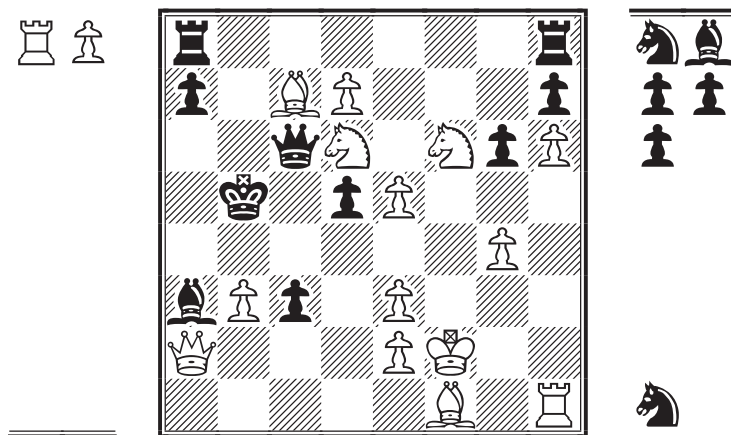
Diagram 54

37...♛xd6. By offering his queen, Black hopes to gain the tempo needed to start a powerful counterattack. White thinks it fairly safe to accept the offer, so we get **38 exd6** and the black attack then gets moving: **38...♞*d1+ 39 ♔f3 *e4+ 40 ♔g2 ♞xe3+ 41 ♔f2 ♝*e1+ 42 ♔g1 ♝f2+ 43 ♔xf2 (♞)♞*d1+ 44 ♔g1 *h2+ 45 ♖xh2 ♞c2** (an admission that White's careful play has made the attack fizzle) **46 ♛xa3** ("rampaging"; if ...♞xa3, then White would play (♛)♛*a4+, and next either ♞*b7 mate or (♙)*d4 mate) **46...(♖)♝*b6+ 47 ♔h1** (Diagram 55)

Diagram 55

47...Resigns because ...♞xa3 remains pointless and ...♞f2+ leads nowhere.

Game (III.): *White* **FM Robert Hamilton** *Black* **GM Kevin Spraggett**

This time a counterattack will produce a superb change of fortune. **1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♛xd5**

3 ♞c3 ♛d8 4 ♝c4 e6 5 d4 (♙)*d5 6 ♝d3 c5 7 ♝f4 cxd4 8 ♞b5 ♝b4+ 9 ♔f1 ♞a6 10 *d6 ♛h4 11 ♝g3 ♛h6 12 ♞f3 ♞f6 13 ♞(b)xd4 O-O 14 (♙)*g5 (Did the Grandmaster

see this pawn fork too late? When it was time to select his thirteenth move, it had become urgent for him to castle before a pawn drop on e7 caught his king 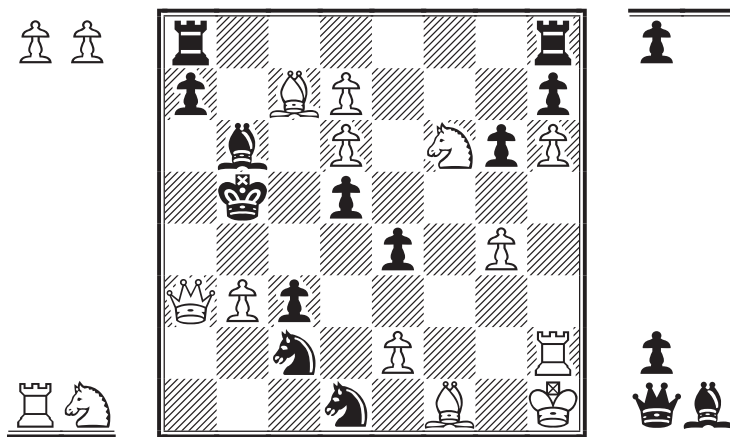in the center; hence he was forced to walk into the fork.) **14...♕h5 15 gxf6 gxf6 16 ♗xa6 bxa6 17 ♘c6 ♗c5 18 ♘e7+ ♔h8 19 ♘e5 ♕xd1+ 20 ♖xd1** (Diagram 56)
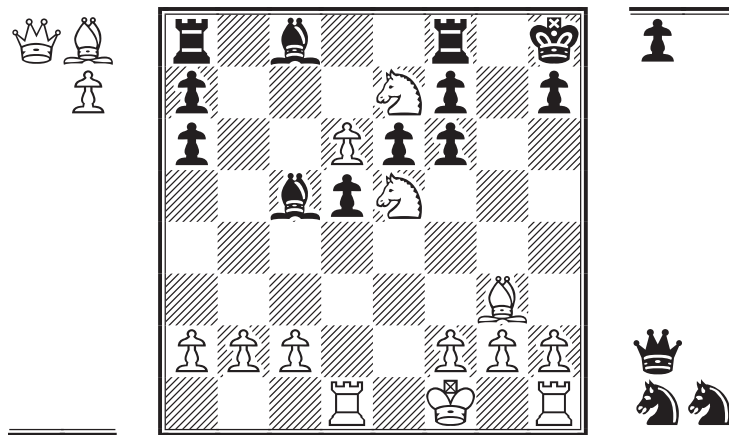
Diagram 56

Now White threatens to force Black down a thorny path. He dreams of 21 ♘xf7+ ♔g7 (*not* ...♖xf7, which invites 22 (♕)♕*g8 mate) 22 (♘)♗*h6+ ♔xf7 23 (♕)♕*g7+ ♔e8 24 ♕xf8+ ♔d7 25 (♙)*c6 mate. But instead of defending, Black tries for mate himself: **20...*e2+**

21 ♔e1 (not wanting to be drawn forward with Kxe2) **...♗b4+** (it might at first seem better to play ...exd1=♕+, but then the reply ♔xd1 puts the white king on a safer square)

22 ♔xe2 (because now feeling compelled to play this; note, for a start, that moving the pawn from c2 could be just asking for a black knight to parachute there) **22...(♕)♕*e4+ 23 (♙)*e3 ♕xc2+**

24 (♘)♗*d2 ♘*c1+ (are you wondering why White doesn't resign?) **25 ♖xc1 ♕xd2+**

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26 ♔f3 (♗)♘*g5+ 27 ♔g4 ♕e2+ 28 ♔h4 (Diagram 57)

Diagram 57

And now Black, seeing no further check he can usefully give, plays
28...*g7 to defend his king. White has survived and can counterattack,
relying on the airfield forces built up during Black's failed onslaught.
29 ♘xf7+ ♘xf7 (since, just as before, ...♖xf7 means getting mated
by a parachuted queen) **30 (♘)♘*g6+ hxg6 31 ♘xg6+ ♔g8
32 ♗*h7+ ♔xh7 33 ♘xf8+ ♔g8 34 (♙)*h7+** (Diagram 58)
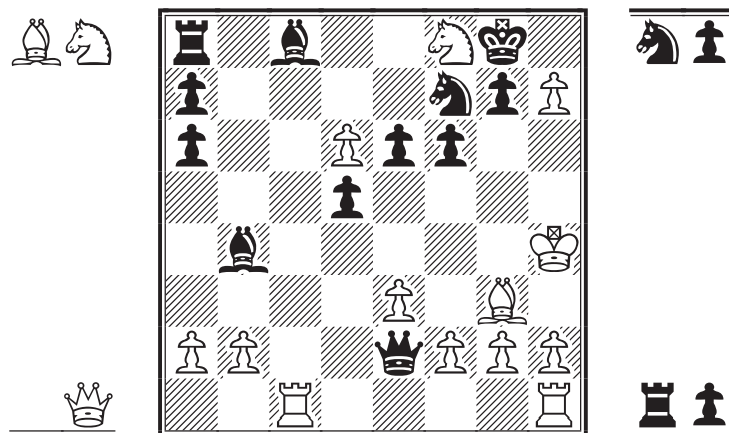
Diagram 58

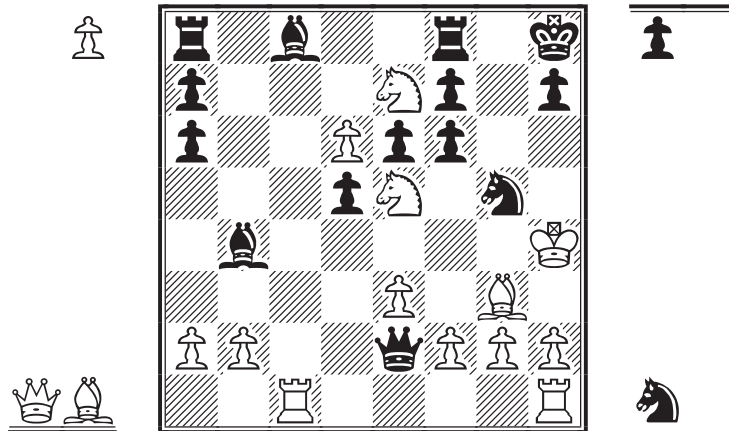— at which point **Black resigns**, for if ...♚xf8 then 35 ♛*e7 mate; or if ♚h8 instead, then

35 ♛*g8 mate. A fine confirmation that in Hostage you shouldn't give up quickly. Just look where White's king ended up, and yet he won!

Game (IV.): *White* IM Lawrence Day *Black* FM Robert Hamilton

A game finishing with an interesting mate of a king that had been pushed forward. **1 ♘f3 d5**

2 d3 ♗f5 3 c3 c6 4 ♗f4 e6 5 ♗xb8 ♛xb8. This was probably a poor exchange for White. He can now buy and drop a bishop only, while Black can buy and drop a knight which, remember, is usually better. Also Black's queen seems fairly well placed for attacking him. And there's worse to come: **6 ♘(b)d2 ♗d6 7 e4 ♗g6 8 (♘)♗*g3** (so that now White has even used up his option of dropping a bishop, while Black has the knight powerfully in his airfield) **8...♗xg3 9 hxg3 dxe4 10 (♗)♗*f4 exd3** (Diagram 59)
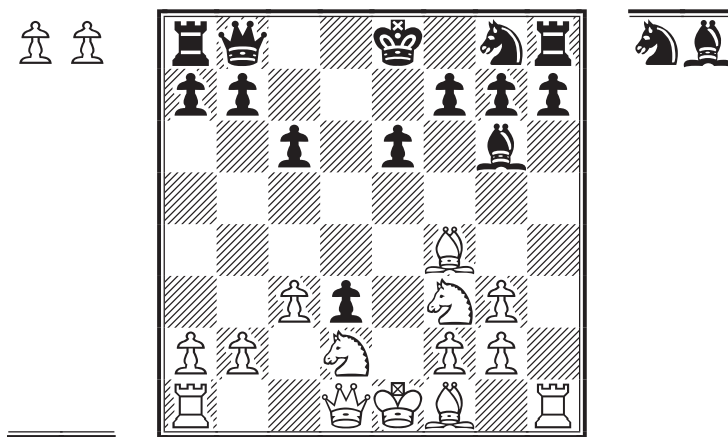
Diagram 59

Ingenious play by Black, as his next moves show:

11 ♗xb8 ♘*c2+ 12 ♛xc2 dxc2. With those captured queens

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now longing to spring into action, both players must exercise caution.

13 (♕)♕*c8+ ♗*d8 14 ♗b5 ♖xb8 15 ♕xb8 cxb5

16 ♕xb7 (♙)*e3: Not cautious enough! Black's idea is that 17 fxe3 would lead to ...(♗)♘*d3+ and then...♕*f2 mate. Unfortunately, though, his move has given White the tempo needed for an attack by paratroops:

17 *d7+ ♔e7 18 (♘)♗*c5+ ♔f6 19 (♖)♗*g5+ ♔f5 20 ♕e4+ mate. (Diagram 60)
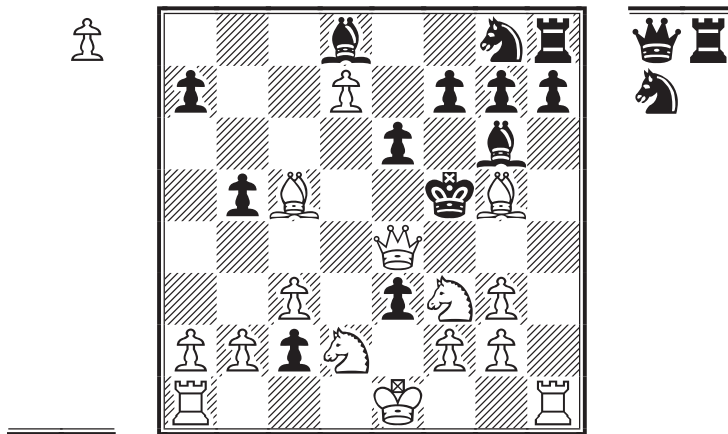
Diagram 60

Not at all bad, as Day's first major game of Hostage Chess! But he'd had plenty of highly relevant practice. He'd been influential in giving popularity to "Bughouse" (otherwise known as "doubles", "tandem chess", "Siamese"). That's a game played by two teams. Men you capture on one board become paratroops for your ally who is fighting on another board.

Game (V.): *White* FM Robert Hamilton *Black* IM Lawrence Day

A still more interesting mate of a pushed-forward king. This time Lawrence is the victim. **1 d4 d5 2 ♗g5 ♕d6 3 ♘c3 ♗f5 4 e3 a6 5 ♗d3 ♗xd3 6 ♕xd3 (♗)♗*g6 7 ♕d2 ♘c6 8 ♘f3 e6 9 h4 f6 10 ♗f4 ♕d7 11 h5 ♗f7**

12 a3 ♘(g)e7 13 h6 gxh6 14 ♗xh6 (♚)*g7 (thanks to White's pawn-pushing on the h-file, his airfield now holds a bishop and a pawn, which seems to put him ahead)

15 ♗f4 ♘g6 16 ♗h2 h5 17 ♘a4 ♖d8 18 *b6 e5

19 bxc7 ♕xc7 20 dxe5 ♘(c)xe5 21 ♘xe5 fxe5 22 (♚)*f5 ♘h4 23 (♚)*e6, so that now two pawns are threateningly close to Black's king. (Diagram 61)
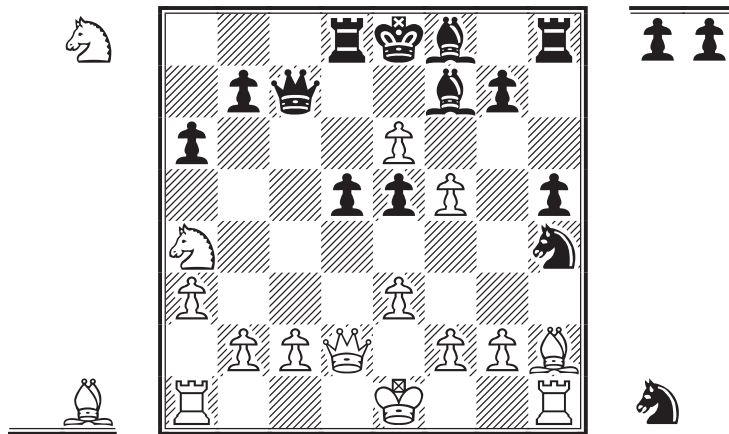
Diagram 61

23...♘xg2+

24 ♔d1 (because not keen on moving the king to f1, afterwards having to face checks arriving by air) **24...(♘)♘*e4**

25 exf7 (a pseudo-check but not to be disregarded, and capturing the white queen would actually be illegal because turning it into a real check) **25...♔xf7**

26 ♗*e6+ ♔f6. Then come

27 f4 *f3, moves so dramatic that we definitely need Diagram 62:
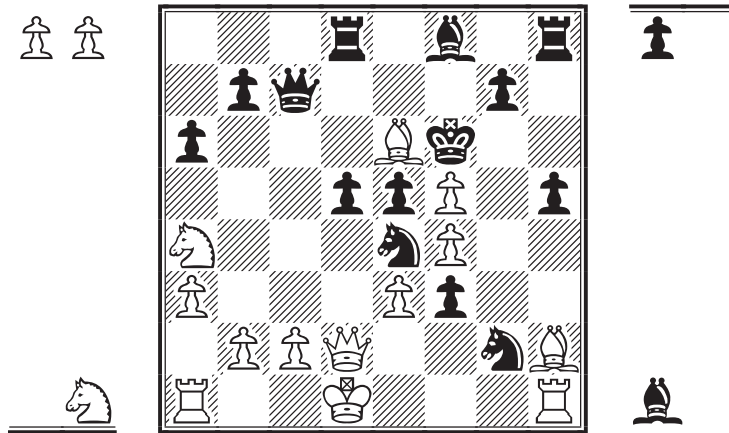
Diagram 62

Why on earth didn't Black capture the queen? Well, both players judged that capturing it would have involved him in disaster, starting with exactly the same move as White now makes: **28 fxe5+**. Black replies **...♔g5** and the game then develops like this: **29 ♕xg2+ fxg2 30 ♗f4+ ♔g4 31 (♙)*f3+ ♔xf3 32 ♘*h2+ ♔f2** (Diagram 63)
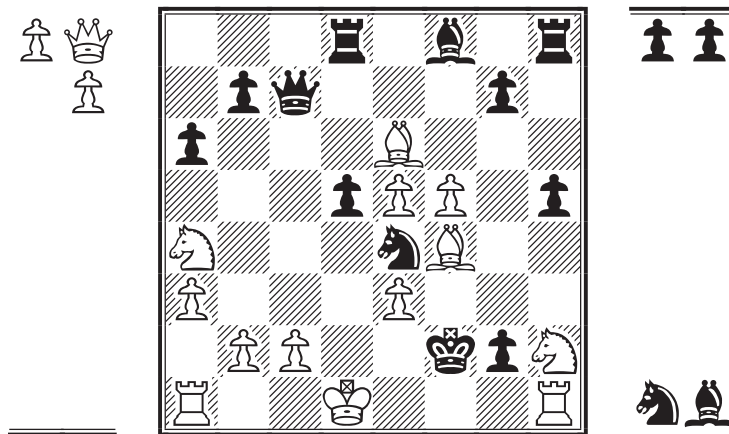
Diagram 63

Now comes **33 ♘g4+**, and Black has met with disaster anyway. **Black resigns**. The choice was between, first, ...♔f3 34 (♗)*e2+ ♔xg4 35 (♘)*f3 mate, and second, ...hxg4 34 (♗)♘*d3+ ♔f3 35 (♘)*e2 mate.

Game (VI.): *White* **IM Lawrence Day** *Black* **FM Robert Hamilton**

1 ♘f3 d5 2 d3 c5 3 c3 ♘c6 4 ♗f4 f6 5 ♘(b)d2 e5 6 ♗g3 ♗e6 7 e4 ♘(g)e7 8 exd5 ♘xd5 9 d4 (♙)*e3 10 dxe5 exf2. The black pawn gives only *a pseudo-check*, because there is no imprisoned black piece to which the pawn could in theory be promoted if it stepped forward. Promotion is always by changing places with an imprisoned piece — and the rule says that even this pawn attempting to give check must be treated as "trying to promote". Still, White is very wise to capture the pawn: **11 ♗xf2**. We then get **...(♙)*e3** once more, which helps explain why Black hadn't earlier played ...exd2, capturing a knight, instead of capturing a pawn with ...exf2. **12 ♗g3 exd2** (another pseudo-check, but these things can be almost as forcing as real checks) **13 ♕xd2 ♘xe5 14 ♗b5+ (♙)*c6 15 ♗xe5** (Diagram 64)
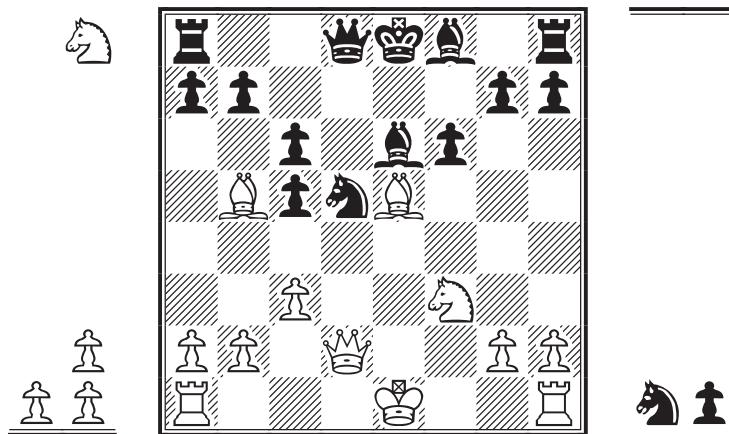
Diagram 64

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A tense situation. White has three pawns in his airfield rather than on the board; well, does that compensate for being about to lose a bishop? Or could this be one of those situations in which pawns would actually be better on the board, where they can prevent acts of parachuting, block lines of attack, and stand ready to capture things immediately? Play proceeds **15...cxb5 16 *e4 fxe5 17 exd5 (♗)♘*c4 18 ♕c2 (♗)♘*e3 19 ♕e2 ♕xd5** (possible because Black put only bishops into White's airfield on his previous two moves; if he had put a knight into it, he'd now lose his queen to ♘*c7+) **20 b3 (♙)*d2** (pseudo-check yet again) (Diagram 65)
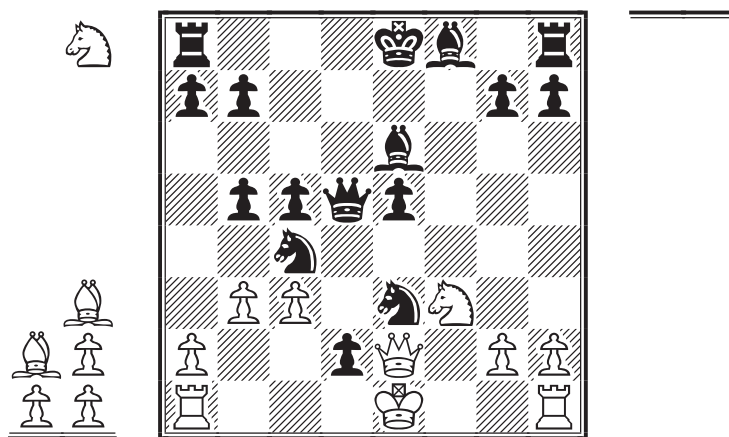
Diagram 65

Looking at all those men in White's airfield, Black has to feel a bit worried even though he's attacking.

21 ♔f2 ♘g4+ 22 ♔g3 ♘d6 23 ♘g5 ♘f5+

24 ♔h3 O-O-O (rushing for safety since his king-chase has run out of steam?)

25 ♗*e4, answered by **...♘f2+** (this vigorous reply to the attack on his queen shows that Black still has some steam left!) **26 ♕xf2 (♘)♘*f4+**

27 ♕xf4 exf4 28 ♗xd5: needing to catch up, and begging Black to blunder? (Diagram 66)

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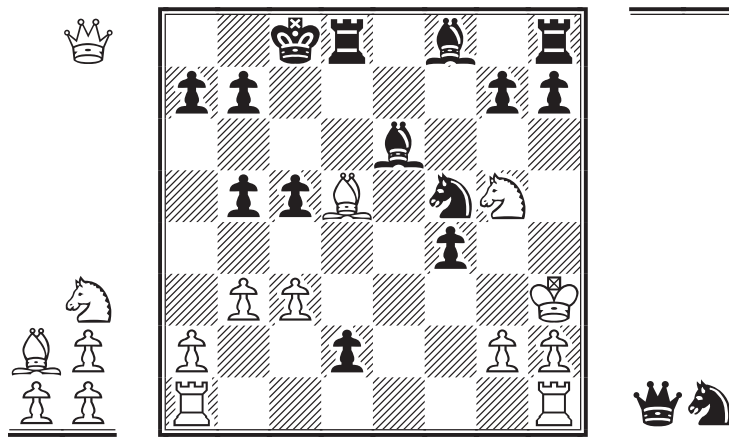
Diagram 66

Black didn't, so we got **...(♕)♘*f2 mate**. The three pawns remained inactive in the airfield, White never getting a good chance to use them even for defense.

Game (VII.): Grandmaster Larry Kaufman and his son Ray, a newly minted International Master, have much experience of kinds that are helpful in Hostage. For a quarter of a century Larry has been the world's strongest non-Japanese player of Shogi, the great chess game with parachuting from which Hostage took its inspiration. Ray is experienced both at Shogi and at "Bughouse", the chess variant where the men you capture can be parachuted onto another board by your team-mate.

Our two contestants have played several games at speed, and a comparatively slow game which was marred by a blunder. (Loss of a queen through forgetting how much damage a captured man can do when it has been rescued.) Now, here is their second fairly slow game. Each player gets forty-five minutes, plus thirty seconds for every move played. Larry's victory has a Capablanca-like elegance.

White **GM Larry Kaufman** *Black* **IM Raymond Kaufman**

1 e4 ♘f6 2 e5 ♘d5 3 ♘c3 e6 4 ♘f3 d6 5 ♗c4 ♘b6

6 ♗b5+ ♗d7 7 O-O ♗e7 8 d4 O-O (Larry thinks Black should instead have traded bishops) **9 ♗d3 ♗c6 10 ♖e1 ♗xf3 11 ♕xf3** (Black has captured knight for bishop and that, as Larry points out, is usually a poor idea because rescued knights tend to drop more powerfully than rescued bishops) **...dxe5 12 dxe5 (♘)♗*c6**. Can this bishop drop have been wise? It has put a knight into White's airfield where it could form a long-lasting threat, and maybe it is pushing the white queen to where she wants to go. However, the bishop is frowning across at the castle in which White's king has taken refuge. **13 ♕h3 (♙)*f5 14 *g4** (Black's pawn-drop stopped an immediate mate, but White is now winning in Larry's judgment) (Diagram 67)
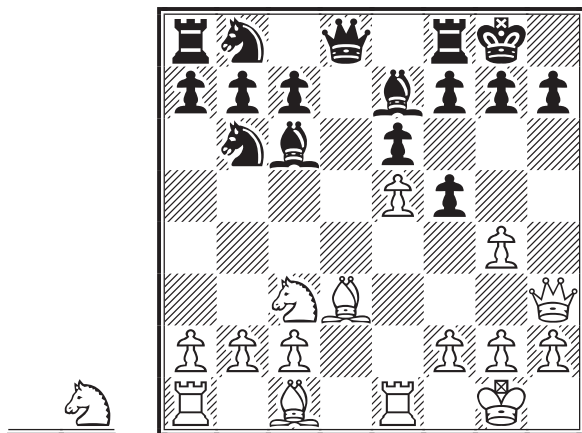
Diagram 67

14...♘(8)d7 15 gxf5 exf5 16 ♗xf5 (♙)*g6 (killing the attack?) **17 ♗d3 ♘c5 18 ♗f1** (useful against that frowning black bishop) **...♕d7 19 ♕xd7 ♘(b)xd7**. Black's decision to provoke an exchange of queens looks like desperation. True, he could now buy and drop a queen in his defense. But White, besides having a knight and a pawn to drop without needing to buy them, could buy and drop a queen during a renewal of the attack. **20 *h6 gxh6 21 ♗xh6 (♙)*g7** ("Drop where your opponent wants to drop an immediate mate!") **22 ♗xg7** (a fine sacrifice, keeping up a vicious onslaught) **...♔xg7** (to avoid another immediate mate by dropped queen) **23 *f6+ ♗xf6**

24 exf6+ ♘xf6. Black had to decide whether the first of those two pawn-captures would be made by the knight or the bishop. The result of his choice is that a knight now stands on f6. A bishop standing there instead could cover g7 and g5. Bear it in mind when you see what happens next: **25 (♙)*h6+ ♔xh6 26 (♙)*g5+ ♔xg5** (Diagram 68)
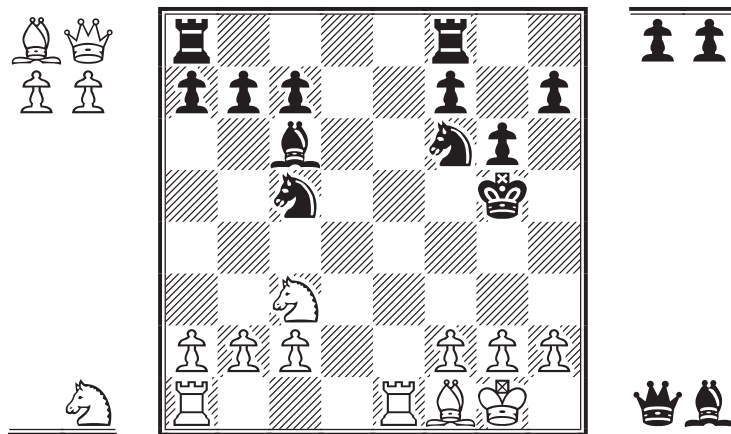
Diagram 68

Why did the king move forward? Answer: retreat would have meant being smashed by a bishop parachuting onto h6, then a queen landing on g7.

27 (♗)♗*d2+ *f4

28 ♗xf4+ ♔xf4. Here Larry sees a clear win. He plays

29 (♕)♕*e5+ ♔g4

30 ♘*e3+ ♔h4

31 g3 mate instead of searching for anything faster.

Let's now ask what would have happened if Ray had played so as to get his bishop to f6, rather than his knight: 23...♘xf6 24 exf6+ ♗xf6 (Diagram 69)

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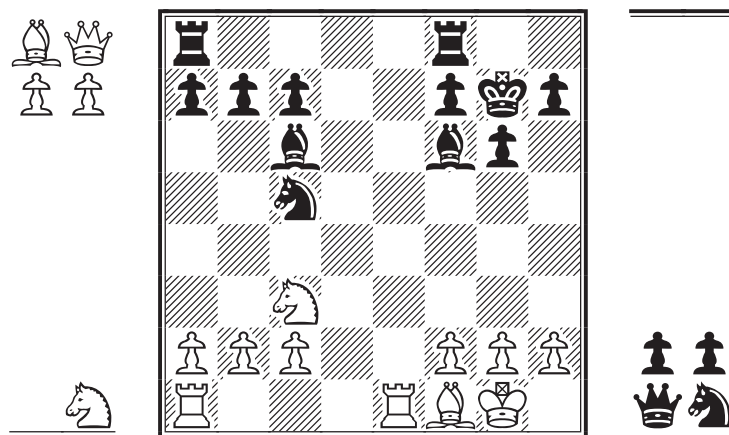
Diagram 69

Once again the white assault can start with 25 (♗)*h6+. And despite how the bishop is now there to guard g7 and g5, it turns out that Larry can again get a fast victory. If Ray's answer is ...♔g8, then there is 26 ♘*e7+ ♔h8 27 (♗)*g7+ ♗xg7 28 hxg7+ ♔xg7 29 (♗)♗*f6+ (a Hostage trick worth remembering) ...♔xf6 30 (♕)♕*e5 mate. If instead Ray chooses ...♔xh6, there is 26 ♘*g4+ ♔g7 27 (♕)♕*h6+ ♔h8 28 (♘)♗*g7+ ♗xg7 29 ♕xg7+ ♔xg7 (those last two white moves, sacrificing first the bishop and then the queen, could deliver quite a jolt) 30 (♗)♗*f6+ ♔g8 31 ♘h6 mate. However, it would have been fairly easy to go wrong here. Ray might therefore have won, using the force you so often build up while beating off an attack.

Game (VIII.): Larry and Ray, continued. With an elegant attack which maybe shouldn't have worked, Ray wins this exciting game.

White **IM Raymond Kaufman** *Black* **GM Larry Kaufman**

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 O-O ♗e7 6 ♗xc6 dxc6 7 ♘xe5 ♘xe4 8 ♕e2 ♘d6 9 d4 O-O 10 ♘d2 ♗e6 11 ♖e1 ♖e8 12 ♘f1 ♘f5 13 c3 c5 (Ray thinks

13...(♗)*f6 best) **14 ♘e3** (14 (♗)*e4 ♘h4 15 d5 also looked promising) **14...cxd4** (could look good, but this somewhat slow move got Black into great difficulties: Ray suggests instead ...♘xe3 15 ♗xe3 (♗)*f6) **15 ♘xf5 ♗xf5 16 ♘xf7**, starting the elegant attack. (Diagram 70)
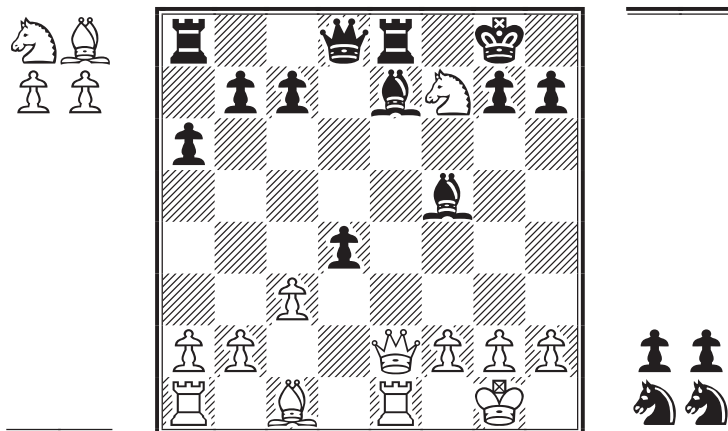
Diagram 70

16...♕c8. (A sad move to have to make; but if 16...♔xf7 then Larry saw himself running headlong into 17 (♘)♗*e6+ ♗xe6 18 ♕xe6+ ♔f8 19 (♘)♘*g6+ hxg6 20 (♗)♘*h7 mate.) **17 (♙)*f6**. (Here 17 (♘)♘*h6+ could have been better, Larry suggests. Play might then have continued: 17...gxh6 18 ♘xh6+ ♔f8 19 (♙)*g7+ ♔xg7 20 (♘)♘*h5+ ♔f8 21 (♙)*g7+. Isn't that mate? No, for it can be answered by 21 ..(♗)*e3. This *turns the pawn's check into a pseudo-check*: when the bishop leaves the prison there's no longer any white piece to which the pawn could in theory be promoted. However, it makes Black legally incapable of answering White's next move, 22 ♕xe3, by capturing the queen, because a captured queen would be something for that pawn to promote to! What's threatened, therefore, is that White will continue with 23 ♕xe7 mate, once again using the fact that Black while in pseudo-check can't capture the queen. And parachuting again and again on the e-file can do no more than delay

the queen's fatal advance.)

Black's response cannot be 17...gxf6 because 18 ♘h6+ would then finish the game quickly: for instance, through 18...♔h8 19 (♟)*g7+ ♔xg7 20 (♘)♘*h5+ and then either 20...♔h8 21 (♘)*g7 mate (for here the check can't be turned into a pseudo-check) or else 20... Kg6 21 (N)B*f7 mate. And his actual next move, **17...♗xf6**, seems a mistake (Larry thinks 17...♗f8 would have been better, after which Ray suggests 18 (♟)*e7 as the strongest continuation). The point is that White can now keep attacking with check: **18 ♕xe8+ ♕xe8 19 ♖xe8+ ♖xe8 20 (♘)♘*h6+ gxh6 21 ♘xh6+** (which wouldn't work if 17...♗f8 had been played) **...♔h8 22 (♟)*g7+** (Diagram 71)
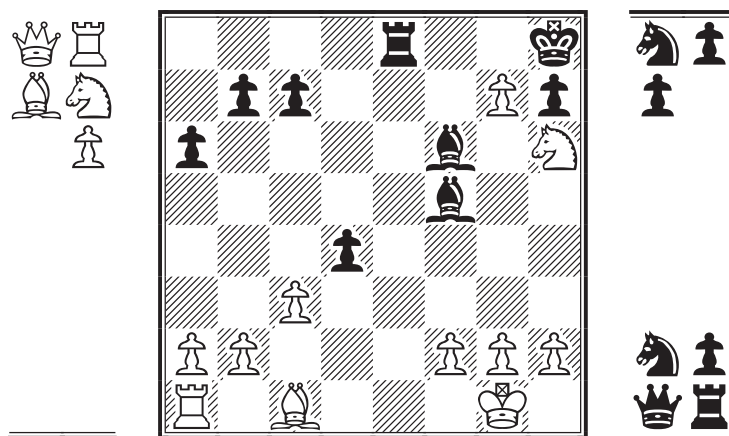
Diagram 71

22...Resigns. Because if 22...♗xg7 then 23 (♘)♘*f7 mate. And if instead 22...♔xg7 then 23 (♕)♕*f7+ ♔h8 24 ♕xf6+ ♕*g7 (or something else landing on that square) 25 (♘)*f7 mate. The prisons had become filled with lots of stuff for buying, plus lots of cash for buying it.

The game was certainly a fine win for White, but maybe Black fled at a crucial stage from an imaginary danger. Look again at that first diagram. Would 16...♔xf7 truly have meant disaster? After it had been followed by 17 (♘)♗*e6+, what if the move Larry thought necessary, 17...♗xe6, had been replaced by 17...♔f8 ? This replacement

move would immediately have been punished by the loss of the black queen: 18 (♞)♞*d7+ ♛xd7

19 ♗xd7. Still, would losing the queen have been so very terrible? Black could now play

19...♗xd7. And then, while White would have imprisoned two pawns plus a queen, Black's prison would hold two pawns plus two knights and a bishop: not at all bad, surely. When you consider the other two knights, the two that had just entered Black's airfield, each worth maybe as much as a rook on the board, Black might well seem to be winning.

Game (IX.) Ray wins what Larry rightly calls "a very beautiful sacrificial game ... a real gem".

White **GM Larry Kaufman** *Black* **IM Raymond Kaufman**

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♞f6 3 ♞f3 ♞xd5 4 d4 ♗f5 5 ♗c4: Larry comments, "in standard chess 5 ♗d3 is thought best, but here it would lose a piece": Black could reply ...(♟)*e4, forking knight and bishop. **5...e6 6 O-O ♗e7 7 ♖e1 (♟)*e4 8 ♞e5 ♗d6 9 ♗f1 ♞d7**

10 ♞c4 (Ray judges that 10 *f4 would have been best, to guard against what's coming next) **10...♗xh2+** (Diagram 72)
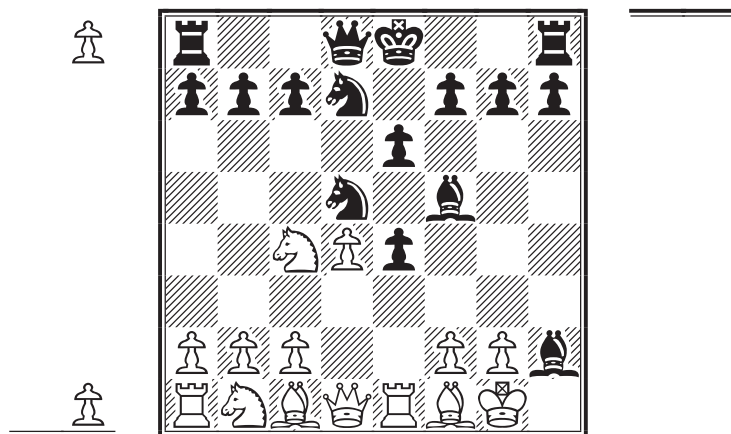
Diagram 72

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Naturally the Grandmaster had looked at the attack starting with this violent bishop sacrifice, but his conclusion was that Black couldn't get enough material to make it work. However, it's very hard to be sure of this sort of thing. In Hostage an attacker tends to acquire new material as quickly as the old is used up.

11 ♔xh2 ♛h4+ 12 ♔g1 e3 (aggression, excellent) **13 *g3 exf2+ 14 ♔xf2 (♙)*e3+** (this pawn can count as "newly acquired material" for it has only just now become available for rescuing and dropping)

15 ♗xe3 ♞xe3 (you're attacking my queen, but I'm attacking yours as well) **16 ♞xe3**, correctly rejecting a queen exchange in which Black's queen-capture would have been made *with check* in a tense situation (consider

16 gxh4 ♞xd1+ 17 ♖xd1 (♗)♞*a1+ 18 ♔g1 (♙)*f2+ 19 ♔xh1 (♛)♛*g1 mate) **16...(♗)♞*e4+** (an attack "paid for" by a bishop that was newly acquired material)

17 ♔e2 ♛xg3 18 ♞xf5 (since otherwise the bishop might soon have given a very nasty discovered check) **...♛f2+ 19 ♔d3 exf5 20 *f3 ♞e5+** (Diagram 73)
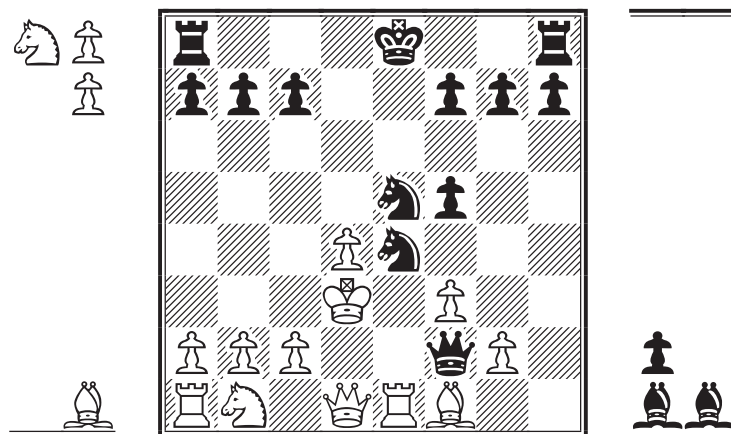
Diagram 73

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Although his opponent is ahead in the value of his prisoners and has an airfield bishop, Black here disregards the attack on his e4 knight and even sacrifices his other knight! He wants to keep up his hunt of the seriously exposed white king. When the pawn captures on e5 an important diagonal will be cleared for the black queen. And with any luck the sacrificed knight will later be ransomed, then dropping in some powerful fashion. **21 dxe5 (♙)*c4+** (giving away a pawn so as to force the king forward) **22 ♔xc4 ♛c5+** (exploiting the cleared diagonal) **23 ♔b3 (♙)*c4+** (another pawn given away, this time for a particularly ingenious reason: the bishop that captures it will fill one of the escape-squares of the hunted king) **24 ♗xc4 (♞)♞*a5+** (a powerful fashion of dropping the knight that was sacrificed) **25 ♔a4 ♛xc4+ 26 *b4** (Diagram 74)
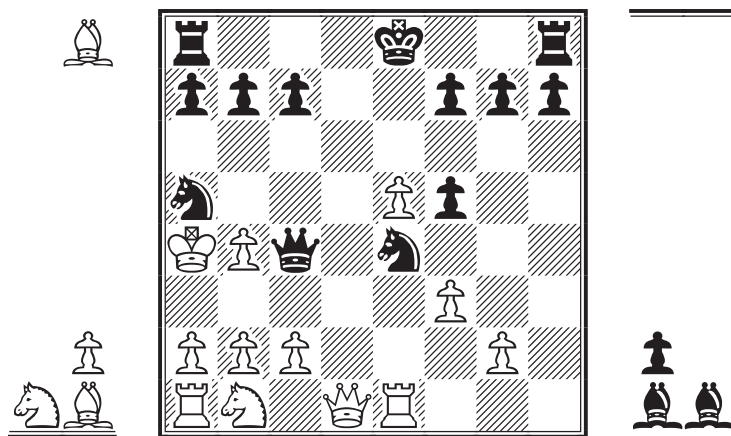
Diagram 74

26...♞c5+ 27 ♔a3 ♛c3+, magnificently offering the queen so as to vacate a crucial square. **28 Resigns** because nothing can stop 28...♞c4 mate.

Let's look again at that last Diagram. If White had instead dropped a bishop on b4 so as to guard square c3, mightn't Black's attack have failed, White then perhaps winning with the help of all the power he had accumulated? The Paul Connors computer program,

HostageMaster, finds an astounding answer. With sufficiently accurate play the Black victory would have come almost as rapidly: 26 ♗*b4 ♕c6+ 27 (♗)♗*b5 ♕xb5+ (sacrificing spectacularly to draw the king into danger) 28 ♚xb5 ♗*c6+ 29 ♚xa5 (♗)♗*b6, using up the last of the available material but delivering checkmate. (27 ♚a3 loses faster: ...♘c4+ 28 ♚b3 (♗)♗*a4 mate.)

Game (X.) White gets an opening advantage and Black never manages to catch up.

White **IM Raymond Kaufman** *Black* **GM Larry Kaufman**

**1 e4 d5 2 exd5 ♕xd5** (...♘f6 as in the previous game seems better) **3 ♘c3** (as in standard chess, gives White the speedier development by kicking the queen) **3...♕a5** (...♕d8 would have been safer) **4 d4 ♘f6 5 ♘f3 c6** (Larry: "combines poorly with the later ...e6 due to the weak square d6, but other moves have other problems")

6 ♗e2 ♗f5. An interesting alternative was attacking with 6...(♙)*b4. Would the attacked knight have retreated to its starting square, or would White just have continued developing swiftly? **7 ♘e5 e6 8 O-O ♗e7** (Larry: "Already I'm losing, but we could not find any move that is fully playable"; maybe ♗b4 could have been tried?)

9 ♗f4 ♘a6 (Larry: "desperation") **10 (♙)*d6** (ingenious; 10...♗xd6 would lead to 11 ♘c4 followed by loss of the bishop) **10...♗f8** (bottling up one of White's rooks; yet 10...♗d8, bottling up the other instead, would have been much worse since 11 ♘c4 then traps the queen) **11 a3 *b5** ("it's a shame to waste my pawn in this way, but other moves lose faster") **12 b4 ♕b6 13 a4 ♘xb4**

14 axb5 ♘xc2. 14...♗xc2 might have been better through forcing Ray to delay his attack. He now just leaves his rook to its fate and plays **15 d7**. Although this puts the king merely into pseudo-check, the reaction **15...♘xd7** can seem wise. **16 ♘xd7 ♚xd7 17 (♙)*c5**

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♕**d8 18 bxc6+ bxc6 19 (♘)♘*e5+** (Diagram 75)
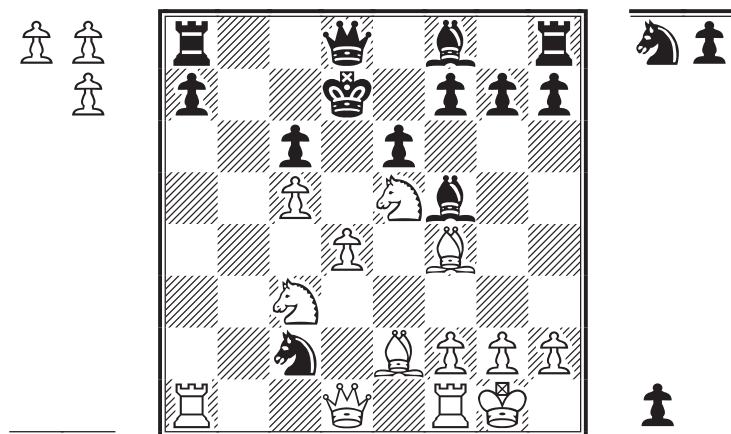
Diagram 75

19...♚e8 20 (♙)*d7 ♕xd7, since **...♚e7** would simply have been answered by 21 ♘xc6. But now White can grab the queen, **21 ♘xd7**.

If the black king had moved elsewhere at move 19, the queen would have been lost all the same: either by 19...♚c7 20 ♘xf7 discovered check, or else by 19...♚c8 20 ♘xc6 ♕d7 21 (♙)*b7 ♕xd7 (*not* ...♚xb7 which produces 22 ♗a6+ ♚xc6 23 (♙)*b5 mate) 22 ♗a6, skewering. ..However, what if at move 20 Black had taken advantage of being in pseudo-check only? (Never forget: a pawn one step away from promoting *cannot even give check* if there's no "promotion piece"— queen, rook, bishop or knight — in the enemy prison: see Rule (4) at the start of Chapter Two.) Well, being pseudo-checked can be just about as forcing as being checked genuinely. Losing the queen to remove that dreadful pawn appears as good as anything. Had the pseudo-check remained in force then White could next have played ♖xa7, exploiting the fact that the troops of a pseudo-checked king cannot legally capture a queen, rook, bishop or knight: it would make the check genuine.

21...♚xd7. Ray continues to have work to do if he is to win this game. The queen is his sole prisoner. His airfield is empty. Larry, on

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the other hand, has a knight plus three pawns as prisoners, and the knight plus two pawns in his airfield could be quite a bit stronger than if they were on the board. Still, the white king is so exposed that a rapid end seems likely. **22 d5 exd5 23 ♘xd5 *d4 24 ♘b6+**. As Larry notes, "rampaging queen" could have been neater: 24 ♕xc2 ♗xc2 25 (♘)♘*e5+, and mate next move when the queen parachutes back. Yet the mate was merely delayed momentarily: **24...axb6 25 ♖xa8 ♗xc5 26 ♖xh8 ♘*c3 27 ♗g4 ♘xd1 28 (♕)♕*e8 mate**. (Diagram 76)
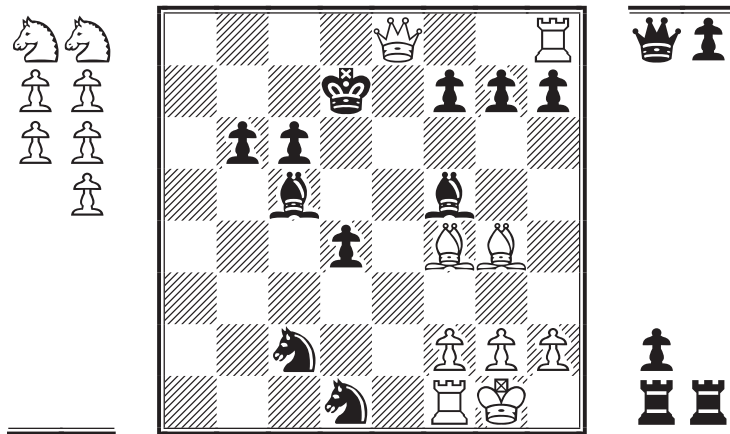
Diagram 76

Chapter 7

A Grandmaster Victory

While neither of them with much knowledge of Hostage Chess, our players were so strong at the orthodox game (although a Grandmaster, the winner nearly lost) that they created something very interesting. Up to and including White's seventeenth move, play proceeded as in a game of the 1999 Chess World Championship between Kasparov and Kramnik, by which time the forces available for ransoming and dropping had become alarmingly large. Black's failure to attack then led to his defeat through Hostage Chess maneuvers. Understanding the situation becomes extremely complicated, but when David Pritchard sent the game record he added helpful annotations.

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 a6 4 ♗a4 ♘f6 5 O-O b5 6 ♗b3 ♗c5 7 a4 ♗b7 8 d3 O-O

9 ♘c3 ♘a5 (Black activates his position at the cost of leaving the e5 pawn without protection) **10 axb5 ♘xb3 11 cxb3 axb5 12 ♖xa8 ♗xa8 13 ♘xe5 d5**

14 ♗g5 dxe4 15 dxe4 ♕xd1 16 ♖xd1. In orthodox chess an exchange of queens often takes the tension out of a game. In Hostage it increases the tension dramatically. Now that each hostage queen can be ransomed, parachuting back onto the board, a swift and violent ending is quite to be expected. **16...b4 17 ♗xf6** (Diagram 77)
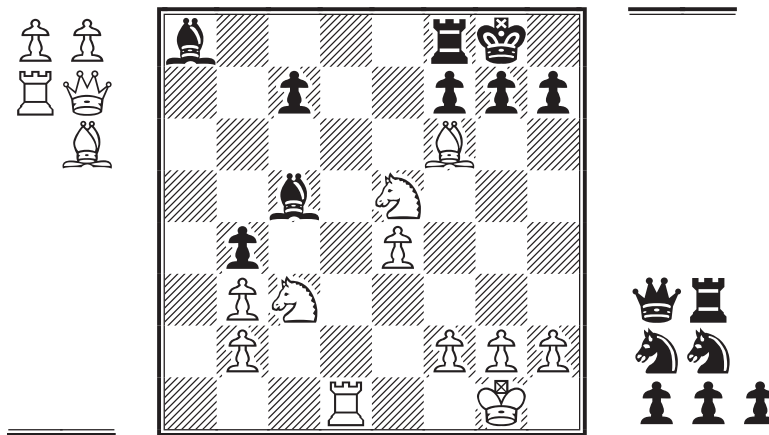
Diagram 77

A very critical stage. Those hostages are dynamite! White, with a bishop threatening to take Black's g7 pawn, could ransom and drop the entire contents of his opponent's prison, and if the bishop were captured he could ransom and drop it as well. Note that white pawns dropped on e7 and then d7 could give Black severe problems. Black could at present ransom and drop only five men in total, yet the five could do great damage. Look not just at the imprisoned black queen and rook but also at the imprisoned black knights (White's rook might well be used to buy one of them, because the arrival of two knights by air can be even worse news than the arrival of a knight and a rook). With such powerful forces available to them, both sides can hope for a mating attack involving successive checks. If Black played 17...bxc3, which is what happened in the orthochess World Championship game, then—this being Hostage—he would lose at once since White would reply 18 (♘)♘*h6+. After that, 18...gxh6 could be answered by (♕)♕*h8 mate or (♕)♖*h8 mate or (♖)♖*h8 mate. And 18...♔h8 would be equally disastrous, for White could once more ransom either the queen or the rook, dropping it on g8 with check and then getting a smothered mate by playing ♘xf7 with one or other of the knights; or again, he could play ♘(e)xf7+ and then mate with a queen drop or a rook drop on g8. In short, the white knight on c3 mustn't be captured since it strikes far too powerful a blow when rescued and parachuted to attack Black's king.

However, as will become clear in due course, taking the white bishop is no better. What Black instead needs is *a pre-emptive strike, 17...♗xf2+*. Replying 18 ♔xf2 would be dangerous for White because Black would have 18...(♙)*e3+. Then capturing the dropped pawn, Kxe3, would mean that the king was drawn far into the open, yet the sole alternative would be to allow Black's queen to drop with check, ...(♕)♛*f2+, capturing the bishop next move, ...♛xf6. So presumably we'd instead get 18 ♔h1, perhaps leading to ...(♗)♞*g3+ 19 hxg3 (♖)♜*h6+ 20 ♗h4. It would at that point be unclear who had the better position — a very typical situation in Hostage Chess. All we could say for sure would be that capturing the white knight would remain disastrous: 20...bxc3 21 (♞)♞*e7+ ♔h8 22 ♞xf7+ ♖xf7 23 ♖*g8 mate.

Black, though, failed to see the importance of striking pre-emptively. (With a little more experience of Hostage, attacking in a situation of this type would have been instinctive.) Instead he took the bishop, **17...gxf6**. It was a fatal slip, for White's reply was **18 (♙)*g7** which threatened (♕)♛*h8 mate. 18...(♗)♞*g6 to stop the mate would have been answered by 19 ♞xg6, leading into variations which all end in Black's defeat. We might have seen 19...fxg6 20 (♕)♛*h8+ ♔f7 21 (♞)♞*h6+ ♔e6 22 ♗*d7+ ♔e5 23 (♞)♗*g3+ and next (after Black had made his only legal move, parachuting something onto f4) a neat ending, 24 ♞g4 mate. The alternative, 19...♔xg7, allows 20 (♙)*h6+, which gives Black two possibilities, neither of any use to him. The first is ...♔xh6, which leads to 21 (♖)♜*h5+ (right up against the king so that Black cannot delay the mate by dropping material in between) ...♔xh5 22 (♕)♛h4+ ♔xg6 23 ♗*f5+ ♔g7 24 ♛xh7 mate. The second is ...♔xg6, leading to 21 (♕)♛*g7+ ♔h5 22 ♗*g4+ ♔h4 23 g3 mate.

What was Black to do, then? Well, how about 18...♔xg7, removing the intruder right away? The trouble is that he'd then have been faced with 19 (♙)*h6+. This forces ...♔xh6, capturing the sacrificial pawn, for if the king instead retreats the result is (♕)♛*g7 mate.

Next would have come 20 ♘g4+ and now Black would just have had a choice of how to lose. Suppose he replied ...♔g5. This leads to 21 (♕)♕*h6+ ♔xg4 22 h3 mate. But his alternative, ...♔g7, is equally poor since it, too, leads to 21 (♕)♕*h6+ which is now followed either by **...**♔h8 22 (♙)*g7+ ♔g8 23 ♘xf6 mate or else by ...♔g8 22 ♘xf6+ ♔h8 23 (♙)*g7 mate.

What Black actually played was **18...(♗)♘*h8**, using the principle of dropping where your opponent wants to. Yet even this was of no help, for White's reply was **19 gxh8=♖+** (remember, the promoting pawn changes places with the imprisoned rook). Now ...♔g7 would have led to 20 (♙)*h6+ followed, after the king captured the sacrificial pawn, by ♘g4+ and the choice of how to lose that we saw just a moment ago (the first line starting with ...♔g5, and the second with ...♔g7). Yet the move which Black selected instead, **19...♔xh8**, simply resulted in **20 (♙)*g7+ Resigns**.(Diagram 78
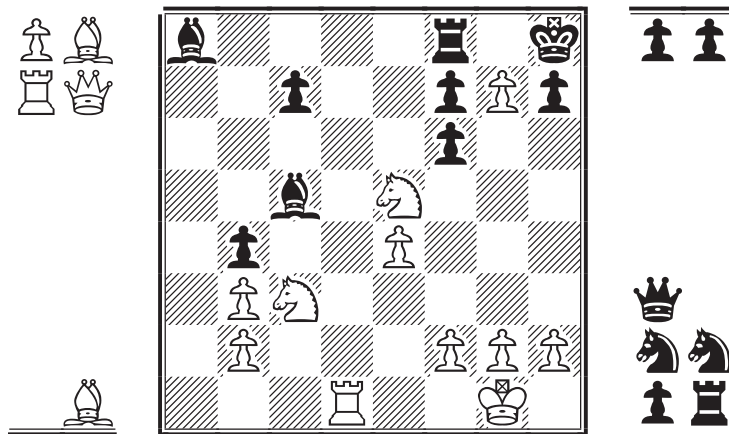
Diagram 78

The alternative to resignation was 20...♔xg7, but White could then have played 21 ♗*h6+. When his sacrificial bishop had been captured by the king, he'd have continued the attack with ♘g4+, presenting Black with the very same choice of how to lose.

The pre-emptive strike with the bishop would have been so strong

that Black could even have forced a win by making it on his *sixteenth* move instead of pushing his pawn to b4. At that stage a black knight still stood on f6 — and this knight, we shall see, could have played a crucial part in an attack. 16...♗xf2+ would have yielded the following position: (Diagram 79)
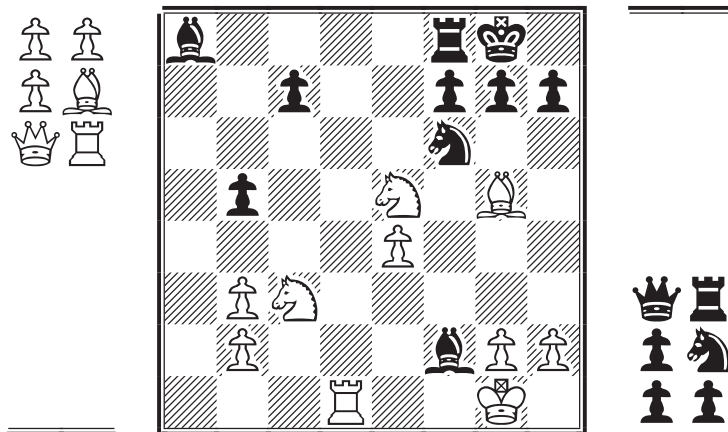
Diagram 79

A glance at this diagram suggests that White's earlier line of play was far too risky, for the captures following 14 ♗g5 made very large forces available for rescuing and dropping, with Black to move. Suppose the black bishop had then delivered the check that the diagram shows. White couldn't safely have captured it because 17 ♔xf2 leads to ...(♗)♘*g4+ (dropping a knight onto a square protected by a fellow knight which will take its place when it is captured) 18 ♘xg4 ♘xg4+. Next 19 ♔g3 (or ♔f3) is followed by ...(♕)♕*f2+, with Black's victory coming from 20 ♔xg4 h5+ 21 ♔xh5 g6+ 22 ♔g4 (♙)*h5+ 23 ♔h3 (♙)*g4 mate, or else from 20 ♔h3 (♖)♖*h4+ 21 ♗xh4 (♘)♘*f4+ 22 ♔xg4 f5+ 23 exf5 h5+ 24 ♔g5 (♙)*f6 mate. (Alternatives to 19 ♔g3 lose still faster. 19 ♔g1 gives rise to ...(♕)♕*f2+ 20 ♔h1 (♘)♘*g3+ 21 hxg3 (♖)♖*h2 mate; or if 19 Ke2 instead, then ...(♕)♕*f2+ 20 ♔d3 ♘e5 mate.) However, playing 17 ♔f1 in place of capturing the bishop wouldn't have been good enough either, because of the sequence ...(♕)♕*g1+ 18 ♔e2 (♗)♘*d4+. After that, a possible continuation

is 19 ♔d3 ♗xe4+ 20 ♘xe4 ♕xd1+, and next either 21 ♔c3 ♕xb3+ 22 ♔d2 (♖)♖*d1 mate, or else 21 (♖)♖*d2 (♖)♗*e2+ 22 ♔c3 ♘d5 mate; alternatively there is 19 ♔d2 (♖)♖*c2+ 20 ♔d3 ♗xe4+ 21 ♘xe4 ♕xd1+ 22 ♖*d2 (♖)♗*e2 mate; or again, there is (just look at this!) 19 ♖xd4 ♕e1+ 20 ♔d3 (♙)*c4+ 21 ♖xc4 (to avoid ...(♖)♘*b4 mate) ...bxc4+ 22 ♔xc4 (♖)♖*c5+ 23 ♔b4 ♘d5+, with 24 ♕a1+ coming next, and then mate by two last paratroopers.

White's sole remaining possibility would have been flight into the corner, 17 ♔h1, yet Black has a fine answer, ...(♕)♕*h5. This sets up two threats, the first being 18...(♗)♘*g3 mate; the other is 18...♕xd1+ followed by 19...(♖)♖*g1 mate. White could counter both threats with 18 g4, but Black could next play 18...♕h3, this time threatening mate with ...(♗)♘*g3 or else with ...(♙)*g2. The reply 19 (♖)♖*g2 leads to ...(♗)♘*g3+ 20 ♖xg3 ♗xg3, and now White needs to defend his second rank. 21 ♕*d2 can do the job temporarily, yet then we get ...(♙)*g2+ 22 ♕xg2 ♕xg2+ 23 ♔xg2 (♕)♕*f2+ 24 ♔h3 ♕xh2 mate.

Chapter 8

Games by the Computer

Created by Paul Connors, the Hostage Chess computer program is a delight. Very aggressive, capable of superb tactics, "HostageMaster" can give just about anyone an entertaining game. Expertise at orthodox chess does carry over strongly into Hostage, however. After a little practice chess-players rated 2000 might expect to beat HostageMaster nearly half the time, while if rated 2100 you could well win a majority of your games. (With a FIDE rating of 2000 you're an Expert. At 2200 the Masters begin.)

How about weaker players, though? Well, you can always set the computer to one of its lower strengths, giving it less time for its thinking. And anyway, you can expect to win at least occasionally even if your skill is far below the computer's. In Hostage Chess it's usually impossible to see far ahead, so good players take risks. Taking plenty of them, HostageMaster quite often gets into difficulties. When it does, show it no mercy!

Then again, you can win more games if you let yourself *take back* moves. Left-arrow once, twice or several times, and play something else instead. Even when you haven't blundered, you could do this to investigate alternatives. You might force the computer to try a new opening line, for instance. Just left-arrow backwards through any sequence that's not in the line you want played, then move the

computer's men for it.

You could sometimes even be generous, giving back moves when HostageMaster has blundered. Make sure, though, that it really has blundered instead of producing brilliant sacrificial play! Let it play on a little before left-arrowing and replacing what looks like a blunder by something else.

You can also let the computer program play against itself. If you're new to Hostage this will teach you a lot about the game. And even experienced players will find plenty to keep them interested. Watching HostageMaster-White struggle against HostageMaster-Black, at ten seconds a move, can be wonderfully relaxing. If you think some move a mistake, stop the game and replace it by something that looks better. Then see whether your "better" move gets slaughtered by the computer's reply.

HostageMaster's main strength is in tactics, not strategy. And, while its short-term tactical abilities are often little short of genius, its look-ahead horizon isn't far distant. Particularly when the prisons and airfields have begun to fill with men for parachuting back into the battle, the computer can be in trouble. The field it would like to explore can be altogether too huge. At each step further into the future, the number of possibilities can grow much, much faster in Hostage than in standard western chess. If several men are available for parachuting almost anywhere, HostageMaster may become swamped. Even taking five minutes over a move often lets it see scarcely any further into the future than if it had taken just ten seconds — which, by the way, can seem a good enough reason for *not* asking it to think for five minutes when playing against you, unless you're an unusually patient opponent.

To defeat the computer, therefore, you should try to reach a situation which features numerous possible acts of parachuting, and then make sure you attack before it does. The difficult thing, though, is getting that far without losing too much material to HostageMaster's

cunning tactics. An electronic Bobby Fischer, it tends to grab all it can, hoping to smash through any problems that result. Well, you need to survive without too much damage until you get a complicated position: plenty of airfielders, and/or many hostages waiting to be exchanged, and/or lots of men that could soon become hostages if you started a fight. So long as you're not trailing by too much at that stage, you've good chances of victory if you attack *first*. HostageMaster can sometimes be blind to the need to seize the initiative when large forces have become available, or individual very heavy guns. It may even provoke an exchange of queens when it shouldn't, giving you the first opportunity to make a decisive queen drop. If the sad results of *dropping second* are hidden over its horizon, it can happily wander into them.

Once again because its horizon is a fairly close one, HostageMaster sometimes won't take defensive measures until too late. It may open up the squares around its king too riskily, or push the king forward into a mating net.

In contrast, it's a wizard at *turning a check into a pseudo-check* by exchanging off the only prisoner available for a pawn promotion. A human may find it hard to bear in mind that a seventh-rank pawn has lost its right to move forward *or to give check* when there's no longer a piece of its color in the enemy prison. The human may know this as a fact, but that's not the same as "seeing it at once" when relevant situations arise. If you're the human in question then you'll sometimes expect the computer to announce victory, thinking HostageMaster has broken down when it keeps silent. The truth, however, will be that you're not checkmated. By exchanging hostages and therefore leaving nothing to which any enemy pawn could be promoted, you'd get to mere pseudo-check from what seemed like Game Over. HostageMaster never overlooks this sort of thing. It sometimes wriggles out of several apparent checkmates in the course of a single game.

You'll soon discover that HostageMaster can wriggle out of just

about anything. Far ahead in material, you suddenly find yourself mated. Or with the computer's king badly exposed, maybe actually fleeing from square to square in your half of the board, you still can't quite deliver a decisive blow. Your king chase continues until you've stumbled into a disaster.

Correspondence Play: If you are playing by post or by e-mail then HostageMaster can be of great help. Using its "Save" or its "Save as", you can record what the position looked like after your latest move.

Of the games given in this chapter, some feature HostageMaster playing against itself (the computer is programmed in such a way that the two sides can never know each other's plans). I'm the machine's opponent in other instances. Brad Arnold, Hal Bond, Cy Prezel, Richard Yam and FIDE Master Robert Hamilton are the remaining contestants.

Game (i): An early version of HostageMaster, at that stage called "SWAT", controls both armies here, taking just a second to think about each move. The computer's struggle against itself is very instructive and amusing. Black-SWAT seems to be winning easily, and then all of a sudden White-SWAT has won. **1 d4 d5 2 ♗f4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘c6 4 ♘b5 ♗b4+ 5 c3 ♗a5 6 ♘f3 ♗d7**

7 g4 a6 8 ♘a3 ♘(g)e7 9 ♗g2 O-O

10 O-O ♘g6 11 ♗d2 ♗b6 12 e3 e5 13 dxe5 ♗xg4. Probably White should now play (♙)*d4 to defend the e5 pawn, even though that would put a pawn on Black's airfield where it would be worth about as much as two on the board. Instead, however, what's played is this:

14 h3 ♗xf3 15 ♕xf3 (♙)*e4 16 ♕h5 ♘(g)xe5

17 ♖(a)d1 (♘)♗*f3 18 ♗xf3 ♘xf3+ 19 ♔h1 (Diagram 80)
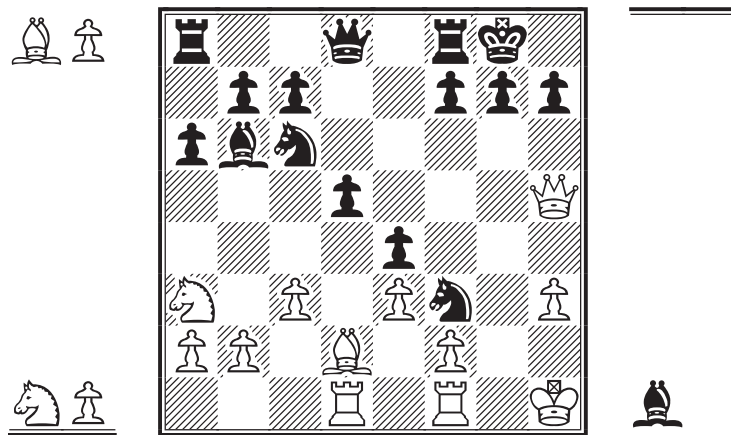
Diagram 80

Next we get the fine move **19...♘xd2**. It wins a piece; for if White now played ♖xd2 to avenge the capture of the bishop, Black would reply ...(♗)♗*f3+, a fork killing the white queen.

20 *e7 ♘xe7. (White-SWAT had decided that Black-SWAT's position would be worsened no matter which piece captured the white pawn. If the queen did the capturing, it would be exposed to attack. If the knight did it, the queen would be obstructed.)

21 ♘*h6+ gxh6 22 ♖g1+ ♘g6

23 (♗)*e2, defending at last against losing the queen to that bishop fork, and also closing the Black knight's only real escape route. Then comes **23...♕f6** (meaning that the knight could now get genuine safety at c4)

24 ♖xd2 ♕xf2 25 (♘)♘*e7+ ♔h8 26 ♘xd5 ♗*g2+ 27 ♖xg2 ♕e1+

28 (♗)♗*g1 ♕xd2 29 ♘c4 ♕c1 30 ♘(c)xb6 cxb6

31 (♙)*g7+ (Diagram 81)
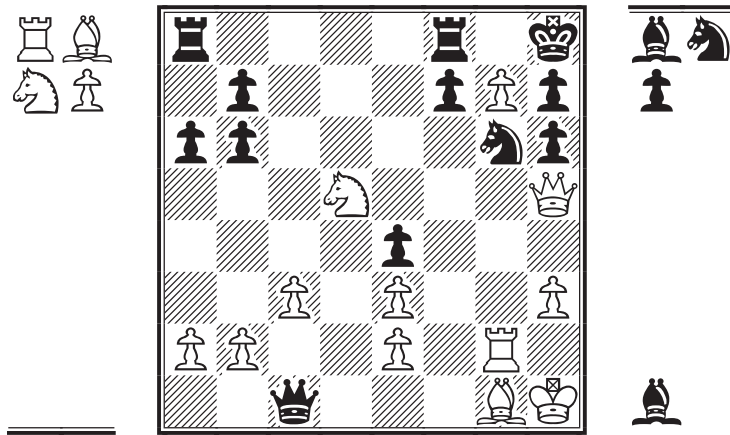
Diagram 81

White's last move was very powerful, for ...♔xg7 would lead to 32 (♗)♗*f6+ ♔g8 and then 33 ♘e7 which is mate since the black knight is pinned. **31...♔g8 32 ♕xh6** (with the threat of ♘f6 mate) **...♘*f2+ 33 ♖xf2 (♘)♘*g3+** (Black had sacrificed the knight so as to be able to ransom it and drop it here) **34 ♔h2 ♘f1+ 35 ♔h1 ♘g3+ 36 ♔h2 ♘f1+ 37 ♔h1** (Diagram 82)
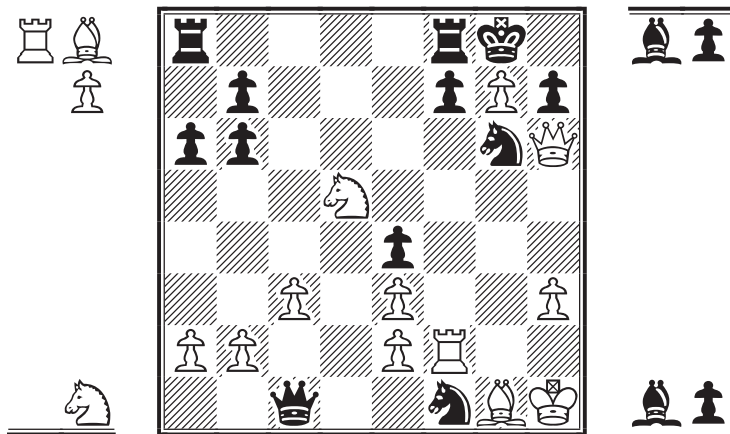
Diagram 82

At this point Black-SWAT could settle for a draw by threefold repetition. However, it instead comes up with **...♗*f3+** (Why this

sacrifice of a bishop? We'll find out soon enough.) **38 exf3 ♞g3+ 39 ♔h2 ♞f1+ 40 ♖xf1 ♛xb2+** (this check was made possible by the bishop sacrifice, which took White's pawn out of the way and also provided something for the black pawn to capture in due course) **41 ♖f2 (♝)♝*e5+**. Black's last move has prevented mate by ♞f6, but it's fortunate that it was also a check for White still threatens to play ♞*f6+, *parachuting a knight onto a square protected by a fellow knight* with the idea of crashing in with ♞xf6 mate when the parachuted knight is taken. **42 ♔h1 (♖)♞*g3+ 43 ♔g2 exf3+ 44 ♔xf3 *e4+ 45 ♔g4 f5+ 46 ♖x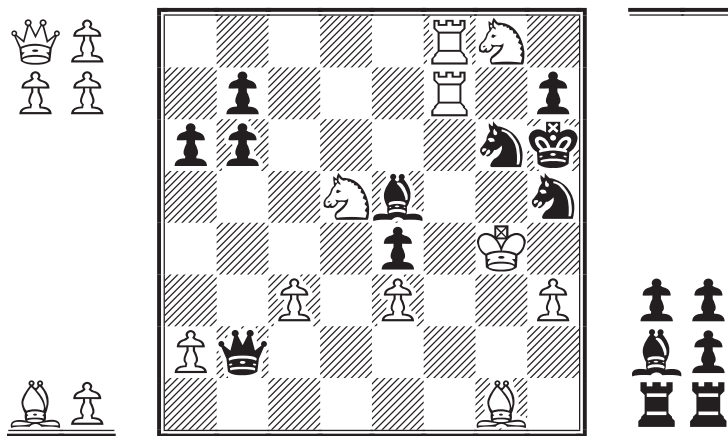f5 (♙)*h5+ 47 ♛xh5** (since ♖xh5 would invite a disaster starting with ...♛e2+) **...♞xh5 48 gxf8=♛+** (the promoting pawn changes places with the imprisoned queen) **...♖xf8 49 ♞*e7+ ♔g7 50 ♖*f7+ ♔h8** (for if ...♖xf7 instead, then 51 (♖)♖*g8+ ♔h6 52 (♙)*g5 mate) **51 ♖xf8+ ♔g7 52 ♖(5)f7+ ♔h6 53 ♞g8 mate**.(Diagram 83)

Diagram 83

A remarkable recovery from what seemed a thoroughly lost position!

Game (ii): HostageMaster takes Black against FIDE Master Robert Hamilton. Robert tries to play a very "positional" game. ("Club players play for material, Masters play to control squares.") However, this often works poorly in Hostage because positional weaknesses can be repaired by parachuting. Again, underlying Robert's strategy is the reasoning that, generally speaking, losing a rook for a knight or a

bishop wouldn't be getting the worst of it. After all, rooks cannot develop their full power until the board becomes fairly empty, which in Hostage is hardly ever! Well, that's very true — yet it's also true that a hostage rook can "buy" a hostage knight or bishop, but not vice versa; hence most Hostage players classify "knight at the cost of a rook" and "bishop at the cost of a rook" as bad bargains. At any rate our Master has to struggle on for a full sixty moves, and near the end the computer is even in a position to launch a mating attack. Why doesn't it launch it? Only because there are too many possible drops for it to consider. Still, it's the rare newcomer to Hostage who can beat the computer — and that's what Robert manages to do in this, his very first game. **1 d4 d5 2 ♘c3 ♘f6 3 ♗g5 ♗f5 4 ♗xf6 exf6 5 e3 ♗b4 6 ♗d3 ♗xd3 7 ♕xd3 O-O 8 ♘e2 (♗)♗*c4 9 ♕d1 (♗)♘*a4 10 O-O ♘xb2 11 ♕c1 ♘a4 12 ♘xa4 ♗xe2 13 c3 ♗xf1 14 ♕xf1 ♗e7**. HostageMaster has just gained a rook in exchange for a bishop, but Robert is unworried by it — wrongly, I'd say. **15 ♖b1 (♘)♘*d2 16 ♕d1 ♘xb1 17 ♕xb1 ♕c8 18 *f5 ♘d7 19 ♘*c5 ♗xc5 20 ♘xc5 (♘)♘*e2+ 21 ♔h1 ♘xc3 22 ♕c2** (Diagram 84)
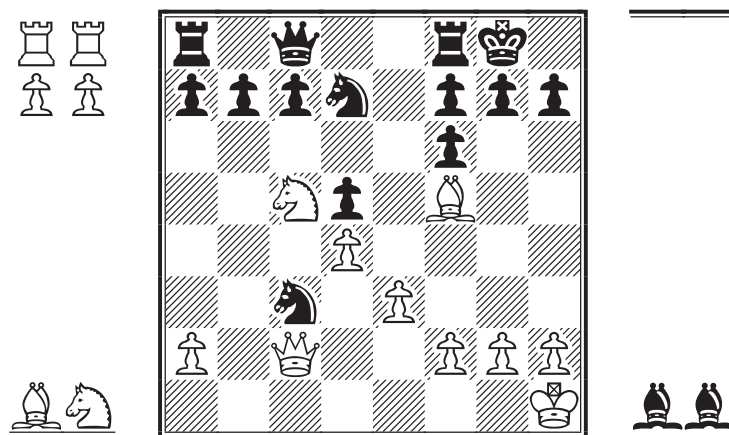
Diagram 84

22...(♖)♗*b1. Faced with the threatening alignment of the queen and the bishop, the computer has found an elegant reply. But with a rook, a bishop and a knight now in his airfield, Robert seems to be

doing well. **23 ♗xh7+ ♔h8 24 ♕xc3 ♗xh7 25 ♖*c1 (♗)♘*e2 26 ♕d2 ♘xc1 27 ♕xc1 ♖e8**

28 ♗*h3 f5 (blocking with (♙)*e6 could have been still better) **29 ♘*g5 ♗g6 30 (♙)*h5 ♗xh5 31 ♗xf5 *e6 32 ♗b1 ♘xc5 33 dxc5 f6**, creating a serious weakness that White at once exploits:

34 (♗)♘*f7+ (parachuting a knight onto a square protected by a fellow knight) **...♗xf7 35 ♘xf7+** (the second knight steps into the shoes of its captured companion) **...♔g8 36 (♙)*g6** (Diagram 85)
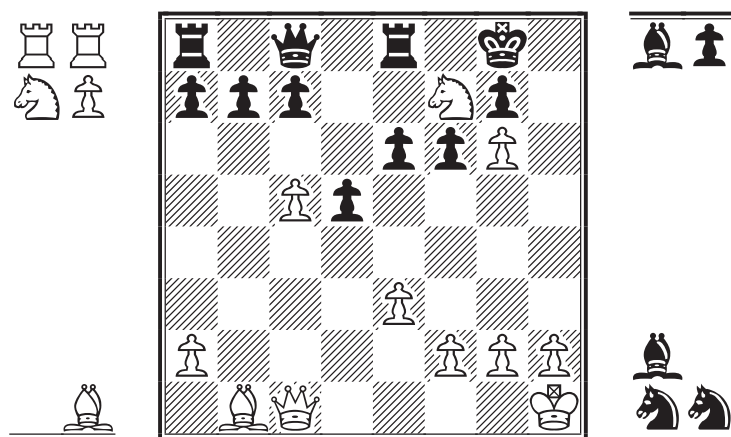
Diagram 85

36...♔f8. White has a powerful attack in progress, though the computer's last move has stopped him from playing the nasty (♗)*h7+, followed by promoting to rook.

37 c6 bxc6 38 ♗*c5+ *d6 39 ♘xd6 cxd6

40 ♗xd6+ ♖e7 (not ...(♙)*e7, because that leads to 41 (♙)*f7 with the threat of (♘)♘*h7 mate)

41 (♘)♘*h7+ ♔e8 42 ♗xe7 ♔xe7 43 (♖)♖*f7+ ♔d8 44 (♙)*c7+ (Diagram 86)
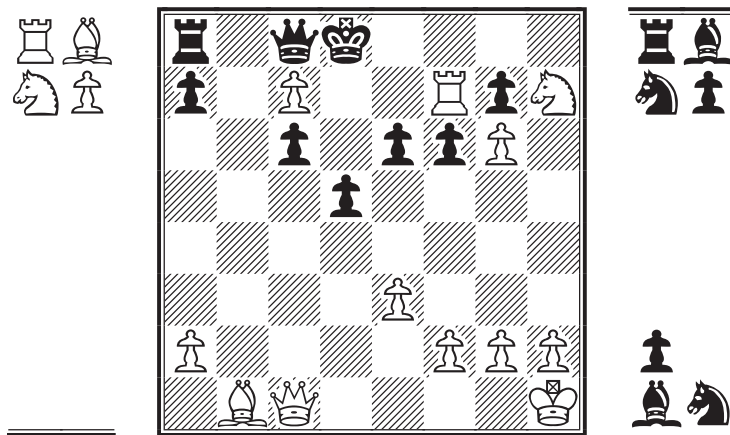
Diagram 86

...♕xc7 (because ...♚e8 would have been answered by (♗)♘*d6 mate) **45 ♖xc7 ♚xc7 46 (♙)*d6+ ♚xd6 47 (♗)♗*c5+ ♚c7 48 ♗d3 *c4 49 ♗xc4 dxc4 50 (♙)*d6+ ♚b7 51 (♕)♖*c7+ ♚a6 52 ♖xc6+.** White has just missed a forced mate starting with 52 ♕a3+, after which Black's lengthiest resistance runs ...(♘)♘*a5 53 ♖xc6+ ♚b7 54 ♖c7+ ♚a6 55 (♙)*b5+ ♚xb5 56 ♕a4+ ♚xa4, White then mating with 57 ♘*c3. **52...(♗)♘*b6** (very clever — instead of just dropping a pawn from the airfield to block the check, Hostage-Master pulls the knight from its prison, *leaving White without "cash" for buying anything*) **53 ♗*f1** (Diagram 87)

Diagram 87

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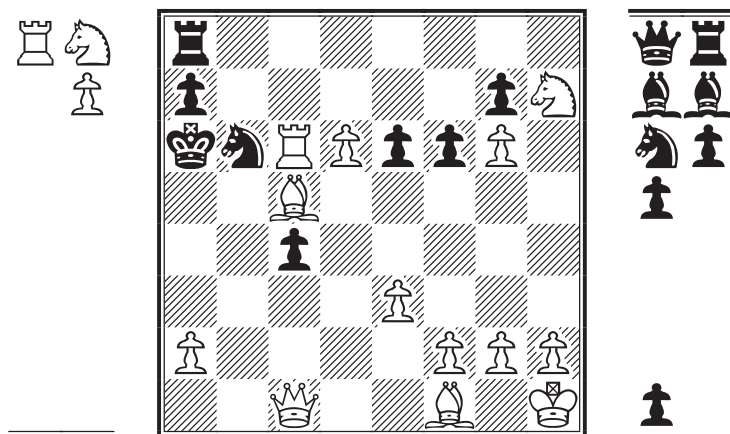
53...*d5. Here, through not being able to see the right combination when hugely many possibilities were available, HostageMaster has missed a decisive attack. If it had gone on the offensive with 53...♖*g1+ 54 ♔xg1 ♘*h3+, it could have forced a win: 55 gxh3 (to avoid immediate mate by dropped queen) ...(♘)♘*f3+ 56 ♔g2 ♗*h1+ and next either 57 ♔xh1 ♕*g1 mate or else 57 ♔g3 ♕*h4 mate. *Moral*: The troops in Black's airfield were much too powerful for a "slow" play like 53 ♗*f1 to be made safely. However, the move that the computer has actually played soon leads to its defeat:

54 ♕a3+ ♖*a5 55 (♙)*b5+ ♔xb5 56 ♖xb6+ axb6 57 ♕b4+ ♔c6 58 ♕xb6+ ♔d7 59 ♕c7+ ♔e8 60 ♕e7 mate. (Diagram 88)
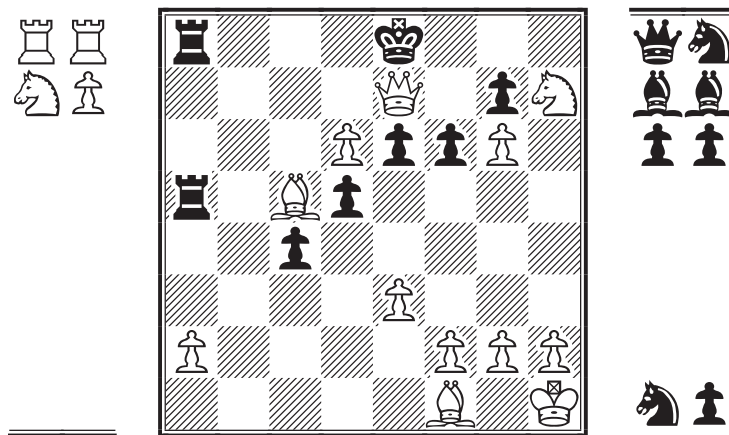
Diagram 88

After the machine had missed its big opportunity, the Master crushed it very expertly.

Game (iii): Moving quite quickly with the white pieces, a professional chess-player loses to HostageMaster just when his victory seemed inevitable. **1 ♘f3 d5 2 d4 ♗f5 3 ♘c3 e6 4 a3 ♗d6 5 ♗g5 ♘f6 6 e3 O-O 7 ♗d3 ♗xd3 8 cxd3 h6 9 ♗h4 g5 10 ♗g3 g4 11 ♘e5 h5 12 h3 gxh3 13 ♖xh3 c5 14 ♖xh5 ♘xh5 15 ♕xh5** (Diagram 89)
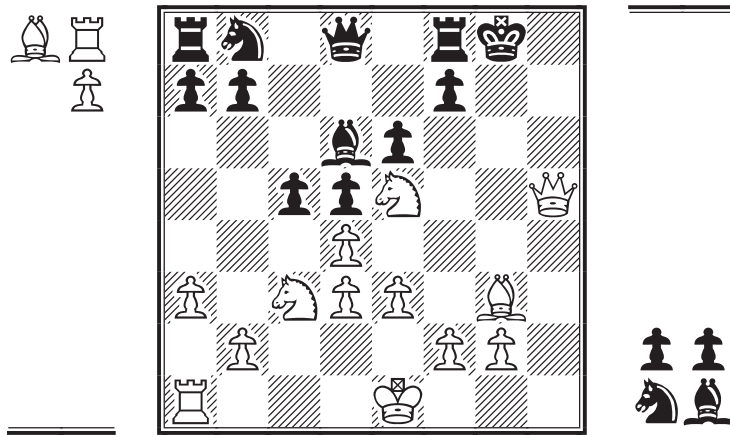
Diagram 89

The computer's king looks far too exposed, yet through its tactical skill HostageMaster quite often survives such positional diseases. **15...(♗)♘*c2+ 16 ♔f1 (♙)*e2+ 17 ♔xe2 ♘xa1 18 *h7+ ♔g7 19 ♗*h6+ ♔h8 20 ♗xf8**. Now White threatens 21 (♖)♖*g8 mate — and if HostageMaster were to try 20...♕xf8 in this emergency then it would face just the same move, 21 (♖)♖*g8+, with the end only slightly delayed (21...♕xg8 22 hxg8=♖+ ♔xg8 23 (♕)♖*h8+ ♔g7 24 ♕h6 mate). It instead does just the right thing: *it attacks*. It plays **20...(♖)♖*c2+**. Then comes **21 ♖*d2 ♖xd2+ 22 ♔xd2 ♘b3+ 23 ♔d1 (♖)♖*c1+ 24 ♔e2 ♖c2+** (Diagram 90)

Diagram 90

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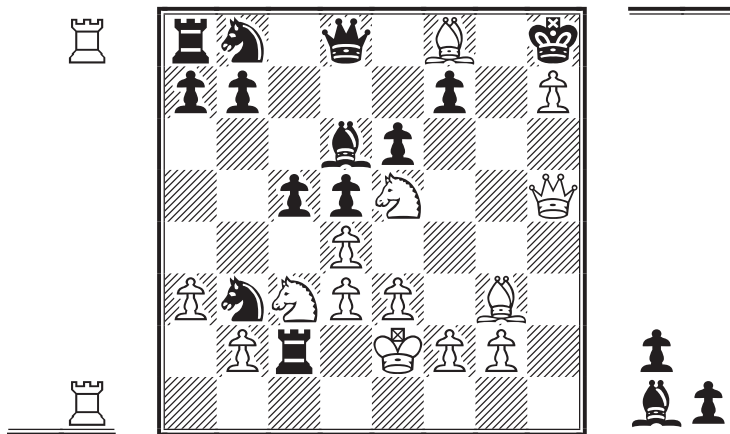
White ducks onto his back rank but is soon defeated: **25 ♔e1 ♖c1+ 26 ♘d1 ♖xd1+ 27 ♔xd1 (♖)♖*c1+ 28 ♔e2 (♘)♗*d1+ 29 ♔f1 ♗xh5+ 30 ♖*e1 ♖xe1+ 31 ♔xe1 (♕)♖*d1 mate**, though the black king had been staring death in the face for the previous eleven moves.

White then left-arrowed back through the game, move by move, to the position in the last diagram. He now played **25 ♔f3** instead, the new continuation being **...♘d2+ 26 ♔f4 ♕f6+ 27 ♔g4 (♖)*f5+ 28 ♔h3 ♕g7 29 ♗xg7+ ♔xg7 30 ♕xf7+ ♔h8 31 ♘g6 mate**. Strange that having his king chased forward made him victorious!

Game (iv): HostageMaster plays Black against an opponent who tends to beat it. Pouncing at the right moment, it wins this particular game — and with *nineteen* successive checks. **1 e4 ♘f6 2 e5 ♘d5 3 c4 ♘f4 4 d4 g5 5 g3 ♘g6 6 ♗g2 e6 7 ♕h5 ♗e7 8 ♘h3 h6 9 ♗e4 ♘f8 10 ♘c3 ♘c6 11 ♗e3 ♘a5 12 b3 ♗b4 13 ♔d2 ♗e7 14 d5 d6 15 f4 exd5 16 ♗xd5 ♖h7** (White's threats were ♕xf7+, which leads to mate, and (♗)*g7 to fork knight and rook) **17 exd6 ♕xd6 18 (♗)*e5 ♕g6 19 ♕xg6 ♘xg6 20 ♘f2 gxf4 21 gxf4 ♗d7 22 (♗)*g5 (♕)♕*b2+** (Diagram 91)

Diagram 91

HostageMaster has gradually recovered from what looked like weak

opening moves that gave it too cramped a position. Now it attacks, and it seems as if White could be in trouble through being too *un*cramped, his king too exposed. Maybe the attack is premature, though? Admittedly Black's queen drop could be followed by up to three pawn drops, two from the airfield and one afte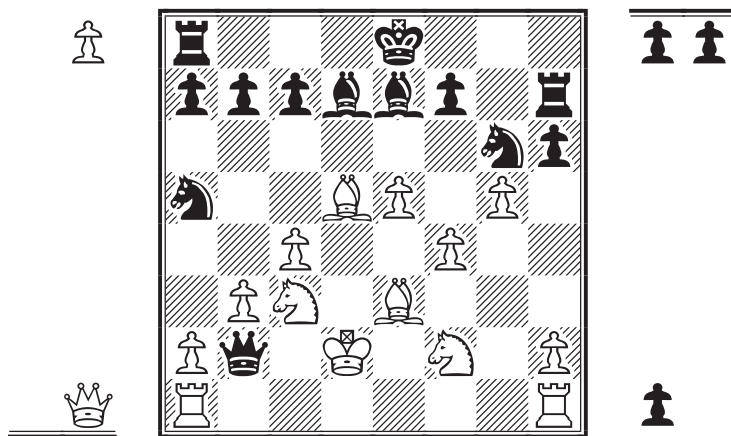r an exchange of hostage pawns — but is that enough? If it isn't, mayn't Black be the one in trouble, through having put a queen into White's airfield? **23 ♕d3 ♗f5+ 24 (♙)*e4 *d4**: aggressive as always, the computer has answered one attack with another. **25 ♗xd4 ♘xf4+ 26 ♔e3 ♘xd5+ 27 ♘xd5 (♗)♘*c2+ 28 ♔d3 ♕xd4+ 29 ♔xc2 (♗)♘*a3+**. That's the fifth check in a row and, with the force in the white airfield now grown dangerously large, Black may have to keep checking from here onwards in order to survive. **30 ♔c1 ♕xa1+ 31 ♔d2 ♕xa2+ 32 ♔e3 ♕xb3+ 33 (♙)*d3 ♘(3)xc4+ 34 ♔f4 hxg5+**

35 ♔g3 (rather than ♔xf5, answered by ...(♖)♗*e6 mate) **...*h4+ 36 ♔g2 h3+** (the twelfth check in a row) **37 ♔g3 *h4+ 38 ♔f3 ♘xe5+ 39 ♔e3 ♗c5+ 40 ♔e2 ♗g4+ 41 ♔d2 ♘f3+** (seventeenth check!) **42 ♔e2 ♕c2+ 43 ♔f1 ♕xf2 mate**. (Diagram 92)

Diagram 92

Game (v): As Black, HostageMaster challenges an extremely competent eleven-year-old. Setting a trap, it gets its opponent's queen for a bishop plus a knight. Then, however, it fails to take defensive measures quickly enough, so that it has to scramble for a perpetual

check. **1 e4 ♘f6 2 ♘c3 e5 3 ♘f3 ♗d6 4 ♗c4 O-O 5 O-O ♘c6 6 d4 exd4 7 ♘xd4 ♘xd4 8 ♕xd4 ♗xh2+ 9 ♔xh2** (walking into the trap) **...(♘)♗*e5+** (Diagram 93)
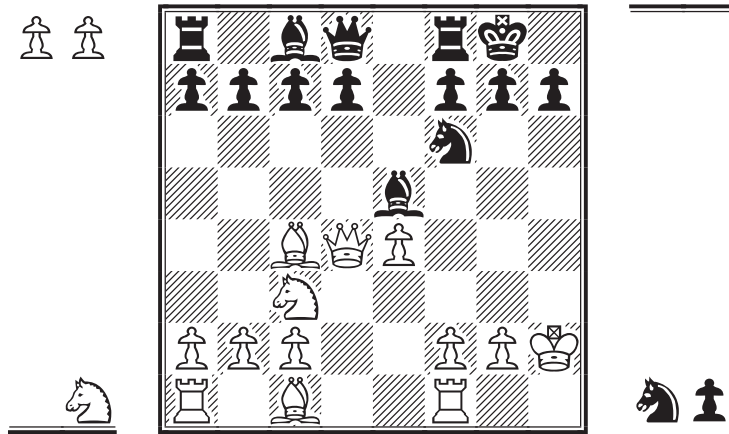

Diagram 93

The computer has now managed to force the capture of the white queen: **10 ♕xe5 ♘g4+ 11 ♔g1 ♘xe5**. Next, though, the electronic marvel lets greed triumph over caution:

12 ♗b3 d6 13 ♗f4 ♗d7 14 ♘d5 ♘g6 15 ♗g3 ♖e8 16 (♙)*f5 ♘f8 17 (♘)*e7 ♘*e2+ 18 ♔h1 ♘xg3+ 19 fxg3 ♖xe7

20 ♘xe7+ ♕xe7 21 (♘)♗*h4 ♕e5 22 ♘*g5 ♗e8 23 ♘xf7 ♗xf7 24 (♗)♘*e7+ ♔h8 25 ♗xf7 ♕xb2 26 (♙)*g6 ♕xc2 27 gxh7 *e2

28 ♖g1 *d2 (preparing to promote one pawn or the other) **29 ♗g6** (now White's attack gets going, and it looks as if HostageMaster will lose) **...♗*c4** (defending against (♗)♘*f7 mate)

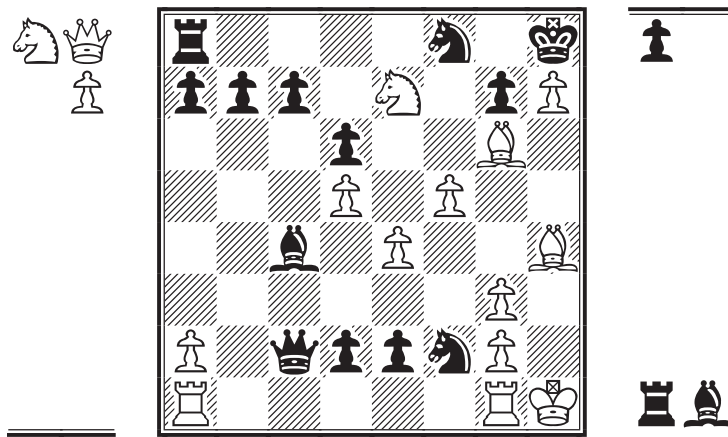**30 (♙)*d5** (cutting the defense) **...♘*f2+** (Diagram 94)

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Diagram 94

31 ♔h2 ♞g4+ 32 ♔h3 (rather than ♔h1 (♕)♖*h2 mate)
...♞f2+ 33 ♔h2 ♞g4+ draw, by repetition.

Game (vi): HostageMaster is Black in a battle in which its opponent plays rather too rapidly, a weak move then giving him what could look like a lost position. It's astonishing, though, how little difference speed of play makes, just so long as utterly disastrous blunders are avoided. In Hostage detailed calculation doesn't get you very far: not, at any rate, unless you take ages over each move. Rather, what you need is the right gut feelings, above all ones which tell you when it's time for a major offensive. In this instance the computer gets all ready to inflict a resounding defeat — but then White wins by attacking forcefully.
1 e4 ♞f6 2 e5 ♞e4 3 ♞c3 ♞xc3 4 bxc3 d6 5 exd6 cxd6 6 d4 ♝d7 7 ♝e2 ♞c6 8 ♞f3 ♛a5 9 ♝d2 (♞)♞*e4 10 c4 ♞xd2 11 ♛xd2 ♛xd2+ 12 ♞xd2 (♙)*b2

13 ♖b1 (♕)♛*c1+ (if the queen is captured, Black's b2 pawn will promote to queen) **14 ♛*d1 ♛xd1+ 15 ♝xd1 (♕)♛*b6** (defends the b2 pawn and guards against a fork on c7 by a dropped knight, but whether all this is worth the price is doubtful: the queen now

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sitting in White's airfield looks so very much stronger than Black's queen on the board!)

16 c5 dxc5 17 dxc5 ♕c7 (taking the pawn would have meant suffering the abovementioned fork by dropped knight) **18 O-O** (not good enough, as the computer quickly demonstrates) **...♕a5 19 ♘f3 ♕xa2** (this looks so bad for White that maybe he should have played 19 ♖xb2 instead of saving his knight) **20 ♘*c3 ♕a3 21 ♘d5 (♗)♘*c3**

22 ♘xc3 (♙)*a2 (even better than capturing the knight) **23 ♘xa2 ♕xa2 24 ♗e2 (♘)♘*c3** (Diagram 95)
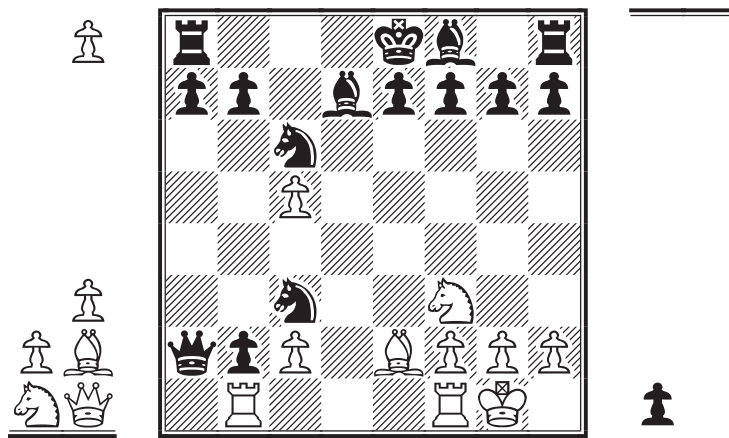

Diagram 95

25 ♘*c7+ (abandoning the fight in the corner so as to start an attack on the black king — for White's gut feelings say that his airfielders are strong enough to give him good hopes of victory) **25...♔d8 26 ♘xa8 ♘xb1 27 *c7+ ♔e8 28 (♖)♖*b8+ ♖*c8 29 ♖xc8+ ♗xc8**

30 *d5 ♘c3 (saving the knight on c6 would mean getting mated by ♕*d8)

31 dxc6 ♘xe2+ 32 ♔h1 (♗)♘*e6 33 (♙)*d7+ (♖)♖*d8 (*turning the check into a pseudo-check because now the d7 pawn, left with nothing to which it could in theory promote, cannot legally move*

forward; what's more, the c7 pawn is similarly paralyzed, so Black's rook is safe for the moment) **34 ♖*g8** (Diagram 96)
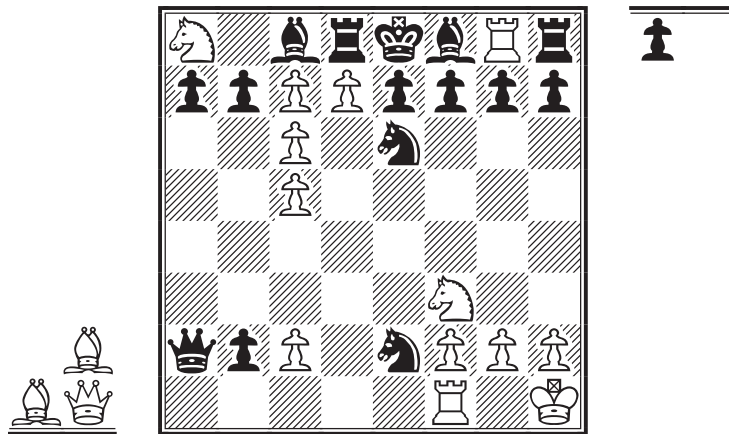

Diagram 96

...♗xd7 (since capturing the parachuted rook was illegal; it would have made the pseudo-check into a real check through giving the d7 pawn the theoretical possibility of promoting to rook) **35 cxd7** (once again only a pseudo-check, yet very threatening all the same) **...♕xd7 36 ♘e5+ ♔e8 37 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 38 cxd8=♖+** (remember, the promoting pawn changes places with the rook in Black's prison) **38...♘xd8 39 ♘d7+ ♔e8 40 ♘c7+ ♔xd7**

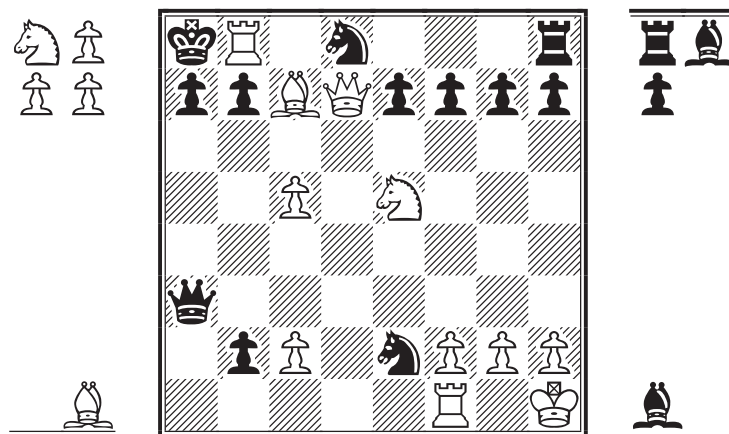**41 (♗)♘*e5+ ♔xc7 42 ♕*d7+ ♔b8 43 ♗*c7+ ♔a8 44 (♖)♖*b8 mate**. (Diagram 97)

Diagram 97

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Black's defeat was fairly predictable once White's attack had begun. It's so hard to defend against a parachuting queen!

Game (vii): Playing as White against strong opposition, Hostage-Master loses a queen but triumphs by counterattacking magnificently.
1 ♘f3 ♘c6 2 e3 e5 3 ♘c3 d5 4 ♗b5 ♗g4

5 ♗xc6+ bxc6 6 (♘)♗*b7, a standard maneuver to win a pawn and break up your opponent's position, though at the cost of putting a piece in the enemy airfield. Most people just move the rook out of danger. Black's actual reaction is a fierce pawn push, **6...e4**. It leads to **7 ♗xc6+ ♔e7 8 ♗xa8 ♕xa8 9 h3 exf3 10 hxg4 fxg2 11 ♖g1 (♙)*h2**

12 (♖)♘*f5+ (by using the rook to buy the knight, HostageMaster *removes the rook from the prison*, making Black unable to promote the h2 pawn to rook) **...♔e6 13 ♘d4+ ♔e7 14 *g5** (not ♖xg2, which would be answered by ♖*g1+) **...♖*f1+**

15 ♖xf1 gxf1=♖+ 16 ♔xf1 (♖)♖*g1+ 17 ♔e2 ♖xd1 (with its queen captured, the computer looks certain to lose) **18 (♗)♗*f3** (Diagram 98)

Diagram 98

Why didn't the black rook get captured? Well, the parachuted bishop guards against a promotion on h1 (imagine 18 ♔xd1 h1=♖+) and in addition White threatens to play ♘xd5+ followed by a "discovered attack" by that same bishop on the queen when the knight moves off the diagonal. **18...♔d7** (not saving the rook, because fearing the discovered attack)

19 ♔xd1 ♗c5 20 ♘xd5 ♗*b7 (to prevent loss of the queen through ♘b6+ or ♘f6+) **21 c4 ♘e7 22 ♘b3 ♘*d3 23 ♘xc5+ ♘xc5 24 (♖)♘*e5+ ♔d8 25 ♘xf7+ ♔d7 26 ♘e5+ ♔d8 27 ♘f7+ ♔d7**

28 ♘e5+ (Diagram 99)

Diagram 99

28...♔d6 (although thinking it will lead to his defeat, Black sportingly decides to avoid a draw by repetition)

29 ♘f7+ ♔e6 30 ♘xh8. Playing a knight fork and then taking the queen would have risked ruin since Black would have got the first chance to exchange hostage queens: 30 ♘xc7+ ♔xf7 31 ♘xa8 ♗xf3+ 32 (♗)♗*e2 ♗xe2+ 33 ♔xe2 ♗*d3+ 34 ♔f3 (♗)♗*e4+, and next either 35 ♔f4 ♘g6+ 36 ♔g3 (♕)♕*g2 mate or else 35 ♔g3 (♕)♕*g2+ 36 ♔h4 ♖*h3 mate.
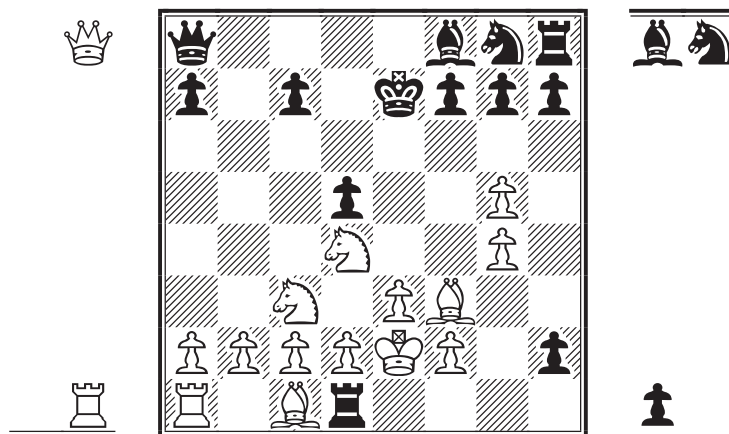
30...♖*g1+

31 ♔c2 h1=♖ 32 ♖*e4+ (a fine sacrifice to displace the black knight from protecting square d3, so that grabbing Black's queen wouldn't be punished by (♕)♕*d3 mate) **...♘xe4**

33 ♘xc7+ ♔d7 34 ♘xa8. With its capture of the black queen, less risky now that the position has changed, has HostageMaster shot into the lead? Well, Black answers the computer with his own fine sacrifice, the start of what seems likely to be a very strong attack: **34...(♖)♗*d3+** (Diagram 100)
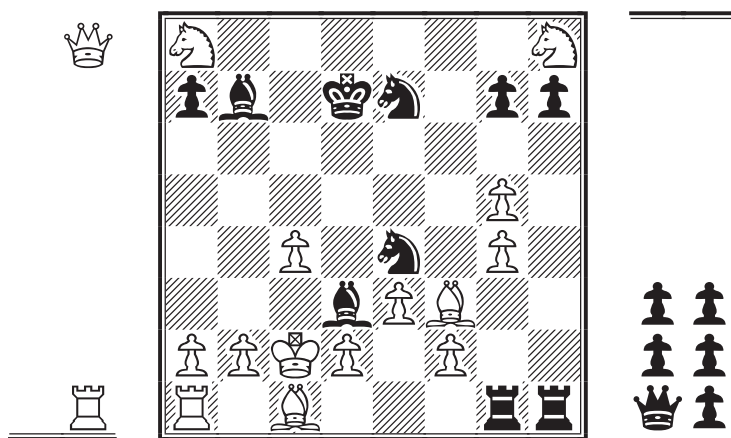

Diagram 100

An exchange of hostage queens is coming shortly, after which HostageMaster must play its king flight very carefully. It does, and is rewarded by victory when the pressure fades. **35 ♔xd3 ♘c5+ 36 ♔d4 (♕)♕*d3+ 37 ♔xc5 ♕d6+ 38 ♔b5 ♗a6+ 39 ♔a5 ♕c5+ 40 ♔xa6 ♕d6+ 41 ♔xa7 ♘c8+ 42 ♔b7 ♕b4+ 43 ♖*b6 ♘xb6 44 ♗c6+ ♔e6 45 ♘c7+ ♔e7 46 ♕*e6+ ♔f8 47 ♕f7 mate**. (Diagram 101) An intriguing struggle!
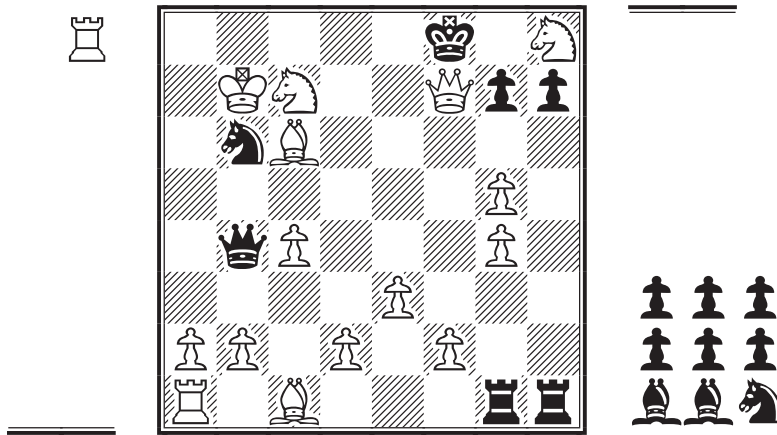
Diagram 101

Game (viii): A cliffhanger. Once again playing as White, HostageMaster is defeated this time. It does seem to be winning, but then continues to attack when it should be taking precautions. **1 b3 e5 2 ♗b2 ♘c6 3 e3 ♗c5 4 ♘f3 d6 5 d4 ♗b6 6 dxe5 dxe5 7 ♕xd8+ ♘xd8 8 ♘xe5 (♕)♕*a5+ 9 ♘d2 (♙)*c3 10 ♕*b5+ ♕xb5 11 ♗xb5+ c6 12 ♗xc6+** (selling its life for a pawn, with check, so that White can play ♗xc3 later) **...bxc6 13 ♗xc3 ♘e7 14 O-O f6 15 ♘c4 O-O**

16 (♕)♕*a3. As well as attacking the knight on e7, the computer is threatening to play ♘xb6 (since answering this with ...axb6 would mean losing a rook) **16 ...♘d5 17 *e7 c5**

18 exf8=♗ ♘xc3 19 ♘xb6 axb6. Here ...(♗)♗*b4 would have been better through chasing away the queen. Notice, though, that clever play by White would delay the queen's retreat until after 20 (♙)*e7 (threatening to promote to queen if the queen is captured) ...♕*e8 (it's infuriating to have to use a queen drop like this). **20 ♕xa8 ♗h3** (Diagram 102)
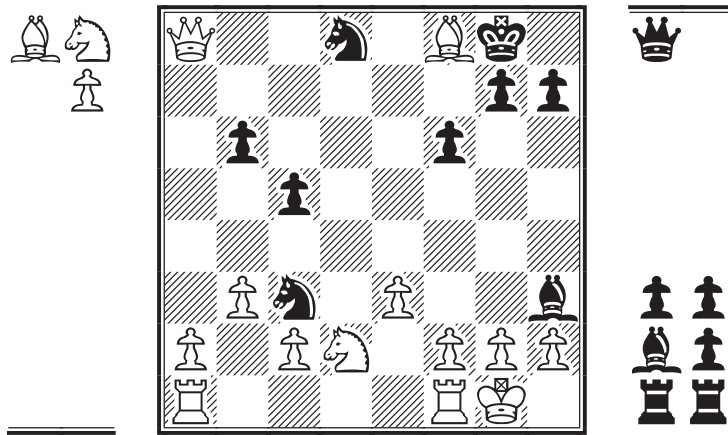
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Diagram 102

With a black bishop attacking its castle, and a queen and another bishop and two pawns able to arrive by air to join the attack (for remember, one of the imprisoned white pieces could pay for the second pawn), and with the threat, too, of being checked by the black knight, the computer's king is severely endangered. Capturing the bishop wouldn't solve the problem, for if 21 gxh3 then ...♘e2+, after which 22 ♔g2 or ♔h1 can be answered by ...(♗)♗*c6+, a queen-killer. HostageMaster, though, seems unaware of the danger and pushes on with its attack: **21 ♕xd8**. Black's reply is crushing, **...♘e2+**. Next comes **22 ♔h1 ♗xg2+ 23 ♔xg2**, and now Black has a choice of mating lines. One of them is 23 ...♕*g4+ 24 (♙)*g3 *h3+ 25 ♔h1 (♗)♗*g2 mate. Actually played was **23...(♗)♘*h4+24 ♔h3 (♘)♗*g2+ 25 ♔g4 ♕*g5 mate.** (Diagram 103)
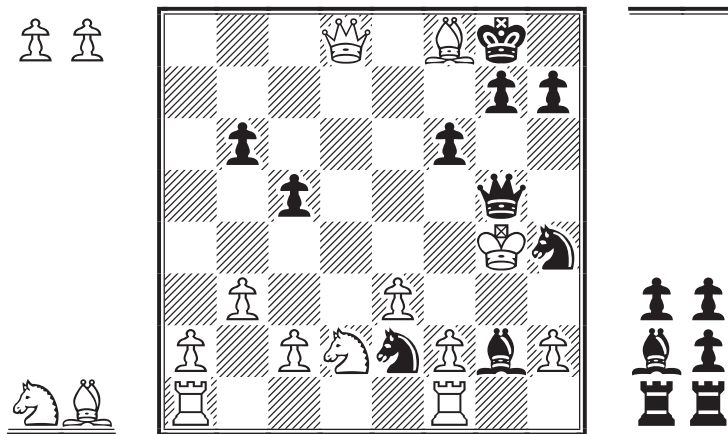

Diagram 103

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Game (ix): HostageMaster plays as both White and Black in a game filled with ingenious moves. **1 b4 e5 2 ♗b2 ♗xb4 3 ♗xe5 ♘f6 4 (♗)*g5.** Up to this point the computer's moves were all chosen for it, for experimental purposes. It's a way of exploring this vast new world of Hostage Chess. **4...♘h5 5 a3** (if g4 instead, to attack the knight, then ...Qxg5 can solve Black's problem) **...♗c5 6 d4 ♗b6 7 h4 d6 8 ♗h2 ♗g4 9 a4 ♗a5+ 10 ♘d2 O-O 11 ♖b1 ♕c8 12 g3 ♘c6 13 ♗g2 ♗f5 14 ♗f3 ♗xd2+ 15 ♕xd2** (Diagram 104)
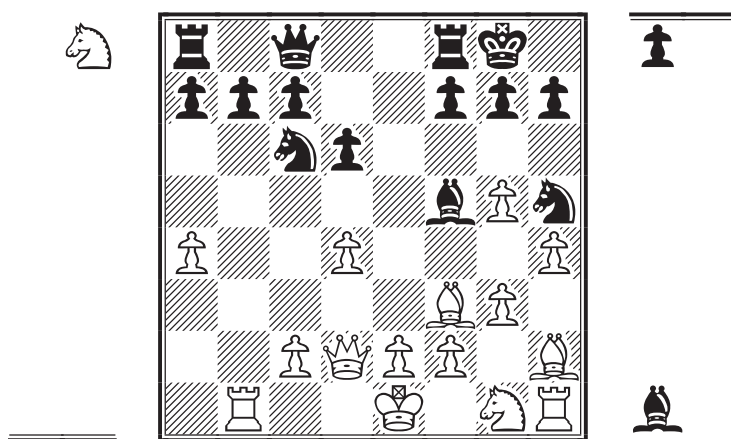
Diagram 104

15...♔h8, because 16 ♗xh5 could be answered by ...*g4, trapping the bishop, and because of the risk of White pushing a pawn to kick the knight off c6, next forking king and queen with (♗)♘*e7+. An alternative chosen by HostageMaster when it was shown the position a second time (for its play included a random element) was 15...(♘)♗*a5. We might next see 16 ♘*b4 ♗xb4 17 ♖xb4 a5 18 ♖b1 (♘)♗*b4 19 ♖xb4 axb4, a sequence winning rook for bishop. After this White should do something to prevent queen and king being skewered by ...(♖)♗*c3. If White instead tried to be clever with 20 ♕xb4 ♘xb4 21 ♘*e7+ ♔h8 22 ♘xc8, happily looking forward to 22...♖xc8

23 (♗)♘*e7, then Black would have the happiness-smashing sequence 22...(♕)♕*c1+ 23 ♕*d1 *e1+ 24 ♔f1 ♕xd1+ 25 ♔g2 (♖)♗*f1 mate. **16 e4 ♖e8 17 ♕d3 ♗xe4 18 ♗xe4 (♘)♗*g2 19 (♗)*e5 ♗xh1 20 ♗xh1 dxe5 21 ♗xc6 bxc6 22 dxe5 ♖xe5+ 23 ♘e2 ♕h3 24 ♗g1 ♖xg5** (Diagram 105)
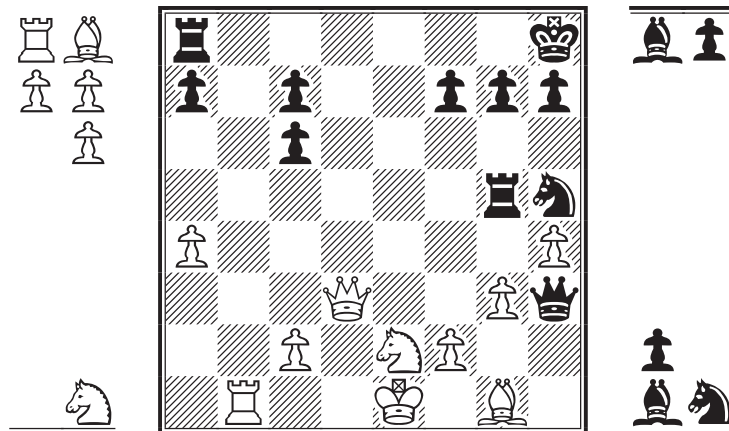

Diagram 105

Capturing the impudent rook, 25 hxg5, might invite the reply ...(♖)♖*f1+, leading into 26 ♔d2 ♖xb1, and then Black could feel pleased at having won a pawn and placed a rook aggressively on White's back rank. (Admittedly the rook it had just put into White's airfield could start an attack, 27 ♖*d8+ ♖xd8 28 ♕xd8+ (♖)♖*g8, after which 29 ♖*e8 might look powerful. But Black could counterattack forcefully with ...♗*e1+, and now White would have to play 30 ♔e3 or else lose the queen after ...♖d1+. Yet next would come 30...(♗)♘*f5+ and then White, unable to reply ♔f3 without getting mated by ...(♖)♗*g2, would need to play 31 ♔e4. When ...(♖)♗*d5+ answered it, the white queen would need to capture the bishop and die, for otherwise there is only 32 ♔e5 f6 mate or else 32 ♔d3 *c4 mate.) **25 (♗)♗*e6** (sacrificing ingeniously to free up square f7) **...fxe6** (not ...♕xe6, which permits the white pawn to capture the rook without causing problems) **26 ♘*f7+ ♔g8 27 ♘xg5 (♗)♘*g2+ 28 ♔d2 ♗*a5+ 29 (♙)*c3 *e4** (Diagram 106)
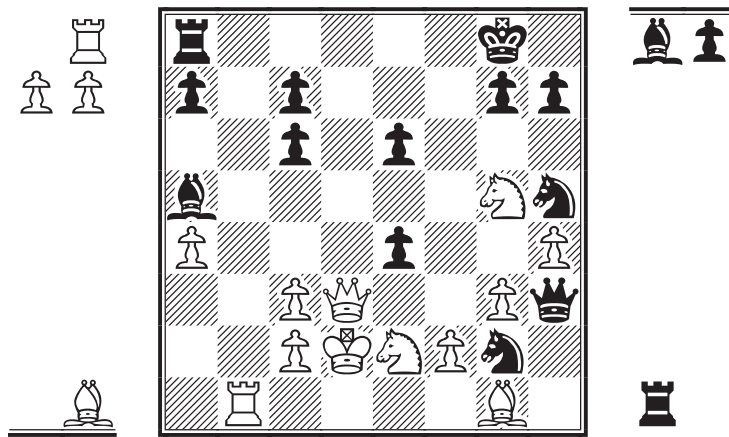
Diagram 106

30 ♘xh3 exd3 31 (♖)♖*b8+ ♖xb8 32 ♖xb8+ ♗*f8 33 ♖xf8+ ♔xf8 34 (♖)♖*d8+ ♖*e8 35 (♕)♕*h8+ (♖)♗*g8 36 ♖xe8+ ♔xe8 37 ♕xg8+ ♖*f8 38 ♕xe6+ ♕*e7 39 ♖*c8+ (♖)♖*d8 40 ♗*d7 mate. (Diagram 107) An attractive conclusion
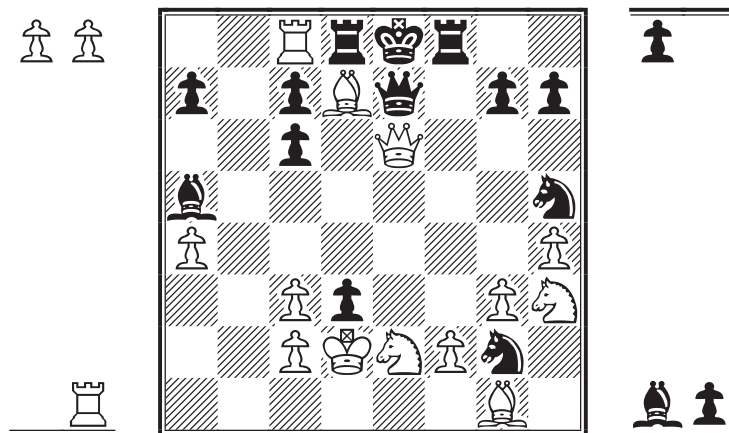
Diagram 107

to a wild fight.

Game (x): As White, the computer replays the opponent who beat it in Game (viii). This time it wins swiftly, but very interestingly. **1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 ♗b5 f6 4 O-O a6 5 ♗e2 ♗c5 6 c3 d5 7 d4 dxe4 8 dxc5 ♕xd1 9 ♖xd1 exf3 10 ♗xf3 ♘(g)e7 11 (♙)*d6 ♘f5** (...*c2 could be better) **12 dxc7 *d4** (to block the

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file, but castling was an alternative) **13 ♗xc6+ bxc6 14 (♘)♘*d8** (threatening (♕)♕*f7 mate) **...♘*f7** ("drop where your opponent wants to", yet (♗)♗*d5 was another possibility) **15 ♘xf7 ♔xf7**

16 (♘)♘*d8+ ♖xd8 (making a king move instead would have meant getting mated by (♕)♕*f7) **17 cxd8=♘+ ♔e7 18 (♕)♕*f7+ ♔xd8 19 (♗)♗*c7 mate**. (Diagram 108)
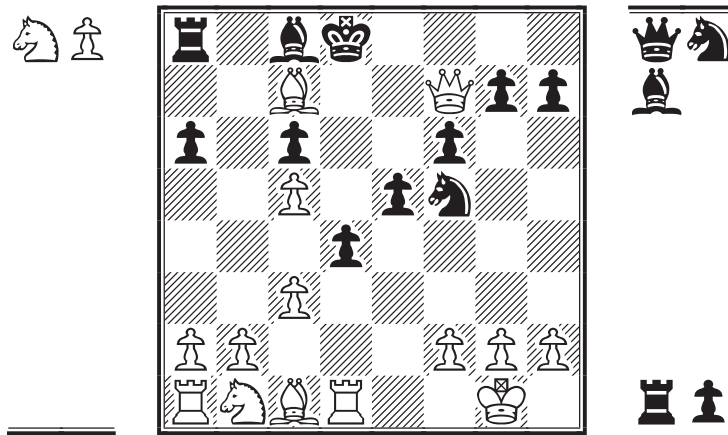

Diagram 108

Game (xi): HostageMaster once more plays against itself, and once again the game is filled with ingenuity. **1 e4 ♘f6 2 e5 ♘d5 3 d4 d6 4 c4 ♘b6 5 ♘f3 ♘c6 6 ♗e2 dxe5 7 d5 ♘d4 8 ♘xe5 ♘xe2 9 ♕xe2 e6 10 (♘)♗*b5+** (Diagram 109)
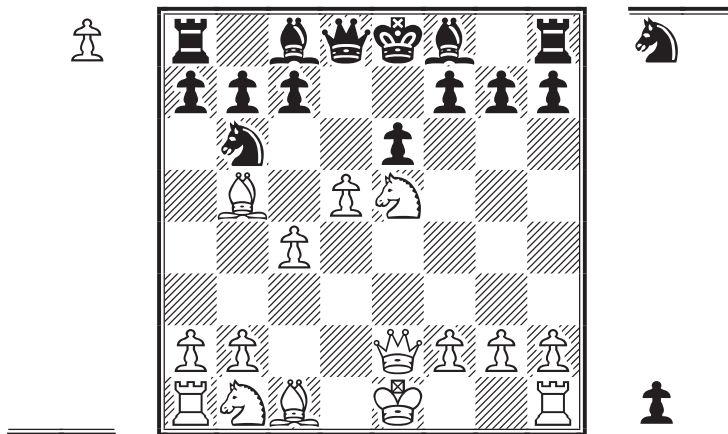

Diagram 109

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...♔e7 (Why didn't Black block with ...♗d7 ? Well, it leads into 11 ♗xd7+ ♞xd7 12 ♞xd7 ♛xd7 13 (♗)♗*b5 (for the second time) ...c6 14 dxc6 bxc6 15 ♗xc6, and now the black queen cannot capture the bishop without dying through yet another white play of (♗)♗*b5.) **11 dxe6 ♗xe6**

12 O-O f6 13 ♞f3 c6 14 (♙)*f5 *e5 15 fxe6 cxb5 16 ♖d1 ♛c8 17 (♗)♗*d8+ ♔xe6 (not 17...♔e8 which invites 18 (♙)*f7: admittedly this would be only a pseudo-check, not a mate, since the pawn is paralyzed—there's nothing to which it could in theory be promoted; yet it would clearly be very threatening) **18 ♗xb6 axb6** (Diagram 110)
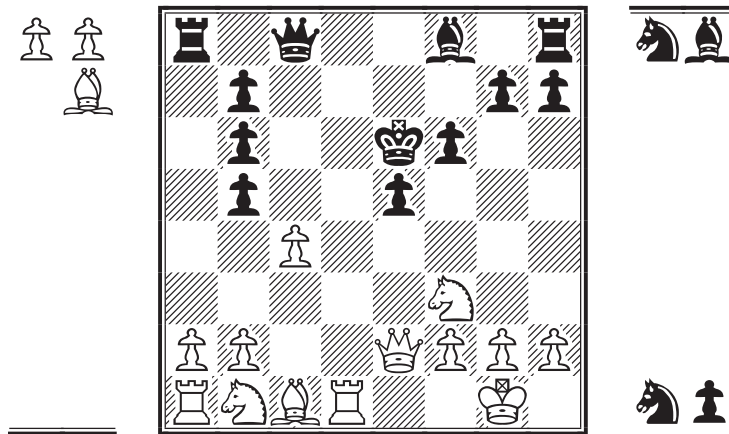

Diagram 110

19 (♞)♗*d7+ ♛xd7 20 ♖xd7 ♔xd7. The black queen has died expensively, for its price included adding a lot of power to Black's airfield. Still, taking your opponent's queen while keeping your own does often give you the great advantage of being able to plan a "queen rampage" — which, remember, means threatening to sacrifice your queen so that it will return to the board through a queen-for-queen hostage exchange. This, on top of how Black's king is exposed in the center while White's is safely castled, seems to put White ahead.

21 ♛d1+ ♞*d6 22 cxb5 ♗*a4 23 b3 ♗xb5 24 (♙)*c4

♗a6 **25 (♙)*b5** (trapping the bishop, which can now do no better than sell itself for a pawn, but White had to put two pawns into the enemy airfield in order to do the trapping) **25...e4 26 ♘d4 *c5 27 ♘f5 *c2** (a sacrifice to deflect the queen)

28 ♕xc2 (♙)*d3 29 ♕d1 ♘xf5 (reward for the queen deflection) **30 bxa6 ♘*e2+ 31 ♔h1 bxa6 32 ♗b2 ♔c7**

33 *c2 ♘e3 (if captured, the knight will at once be ransomed and will return to the board at f2 with check, which wins the queen) **34 (♗)♘*d5+**, an ingenious move. (Diagram 111)
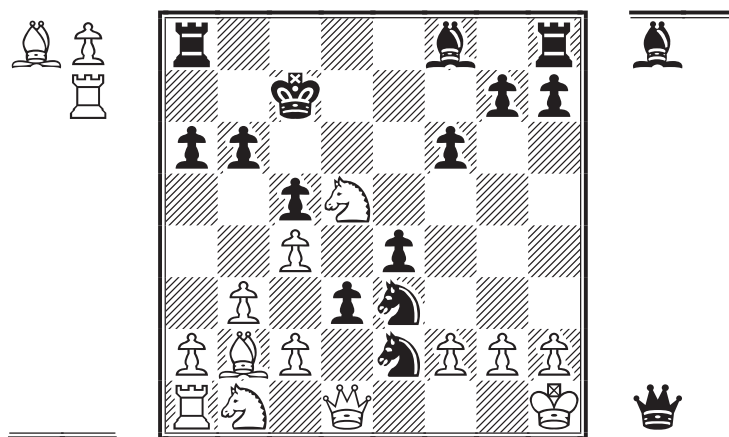

Diagram 111

...♘xd5 35 cxd5 (♗)♘*e3. Now the black knight is back to where it used to be, and once again the pawn cannot safely capture it — so did White's "ingenious move" really help? Well, its result was that a white pawn now sits nearer to Black's king. As we'll see shortly, that's important!

36 ♕d2 ♘xc2 37 ♘c3 ♘xc3

38 ♗*g3+ (since White's last move deflected the knight from covering the square) **...♗*d6 39 ♕xc2** (here comes a queen rampage!) (Diagram 112)
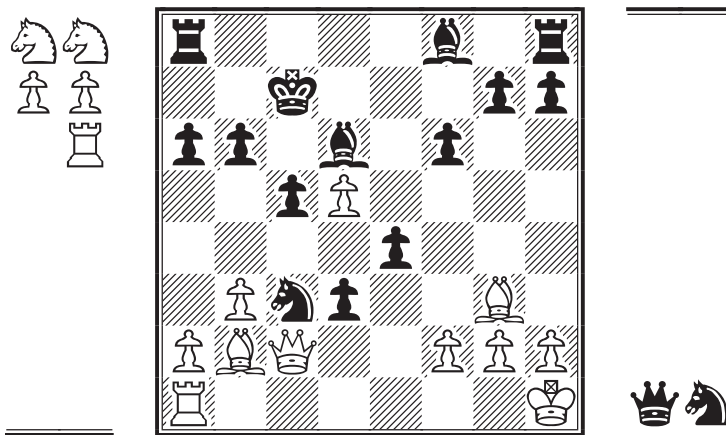
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Diagram 112

...dxc2 40 (♕)♕*c6+ (the queen is protected by the important pawn) **...♔d8 41 ♕xa8+ ♔e7 42 ♗xd6+ ♔xd6 43 (♘)♘*f7+ ♔e7 44 (♖)♖*d7+ ♔xd7 45 ♕d8 mate.**

Game (xii): Playing as Black once again, the strong opponent beaten in Game (vii) manages to do better here, but the war against the computer lasts a long time. **1 ♘f3 ♘f6 2 e3 b6 3 ♗c4 e6 4 O-O ♗b7 5 d4 c5 6 ♘c3 d5 7 ♗b5+ ♗c6 8 ♗xc6+ ♘xc6 9 (♗)♗*b7 ♘a5 10 ♗xa8 ♕xa8**

11 ♘e4 (safe, since capturing it would lose the queen to (♖)♘*c7+) **...♕b8 12 ♘xf6+ gxf6 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 (♘)♗*b5+** (the bishop is safe for exactly the same reason) **...♔d8**

15 ♗e2 ♖g8 16 c4 (again safe; if the knight captures it then (♖)♘*c6+ kills the queen) **...♗d6 17 cxd5** (too slow; what seems needed instead is strengthening of White's castle by something like (♙)*f4 or (♙)*g3, or maybe (♙)*h3 on the principle of dropping where your opponent wants to) **...(♙)*h3**

18 g3 ♔e7, so that the queen could rush to g8 if this became

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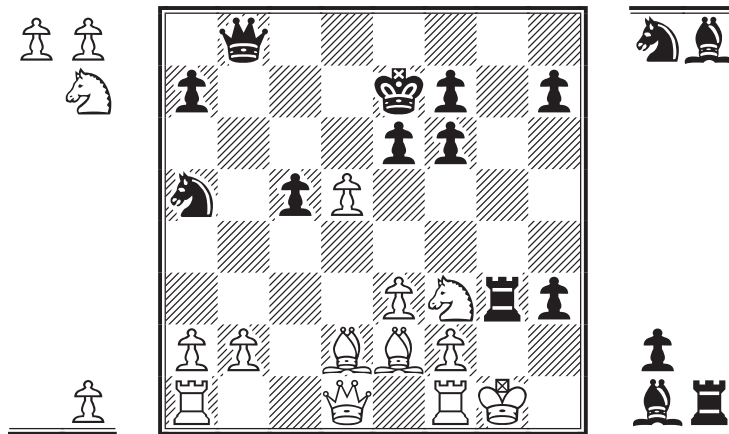useful. **19 ♗d2** (again too slow) **...♗xg3 20 hxg3 ♖xg3+** (Diagram 113)

Diagram 113

Black has played the last two moves very nicely, for if 21 fxg3 then the queen takes the pawn with check, mating next move. **21 *g2 ♖xg2+ 22 ♔h1 ♖xf2** (vacating g2 so that a pawn can drop there) **23 d6+** , a horrid surprise for Black! The pawn now blocking the black queen's line of fire seems safe. The queen cannot take it unless willing to die through (♗)♘*c8+. If instead the king took it, then (♗)♘*e4+ could be pleasant for White. Playing ♖xf2 without first blocking the line would have given White problems such as 23...(♙)*g3 24 ♖f1 g2+ 25 ♔g1 ♗*h2+ 26 ♔f2 ♕g3 mate. **23...♔d7**

24 ♖xf2 (♙)*g2+ 25 ♔g1 ♗*g3 (with the threat of ...(♘)♗*h2 mate)

26 ♖xg2 (♙)*f2+ (Black feared that taking the rook would be answered by (♖)♖*c7+, which struck him as too powerful)

27 ♖xf2 ♗xf2+. If 28 ♔xf2 next, then Black plays ...(♖)♖*g2+, the continuation being 29 ♔e1 (♘)♗*f2+ 30 ♔f1 ♘*g3 mate or

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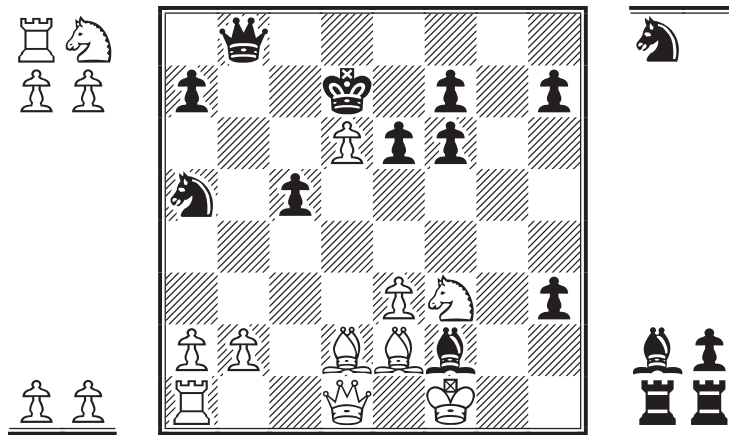else 29 ♔f1 ♞*g3+ 30 ♔e1 (♞)♝*f2 mate. Therefore we instead get **28 ♔f1** (Diagram 114)

Diagram 114

28...(♖)♖*h1+ . Given the chance to play the black pieces, HostageMaster later showed that Black had here missed a quick win. What Black ought to have played is ...(♙)*g2+, which forces 29 ♔xf2, and then ...♞*e4+. The continuation is 30 ♔e1 (♞)♝*f2 mate, or else 30 ♔g1 (♖)♖*h1 mate. **29 (♖)♞*g1 ♝xg1 30 ♞xg1 ♞*h2+ 31 ♔e1 ♖xg1+ 32 (♝)♞*f1 ♖*h1 33 ♝xa5 ♖xf1+ 34 ♝xf1 ♖xf1+ 35 ♔d2 (♝)♞*c4+ 36 ♔d3 ♞xb2+ 37 ♔c2 (♙)*d3+ 38 ♕xd3 ♞xd3 39 ♖xf1 ♕b2+ 40 ♔xd3 ♝*e2+ 41 ♔e4 ♕e5 mate**. (Diagram 115)
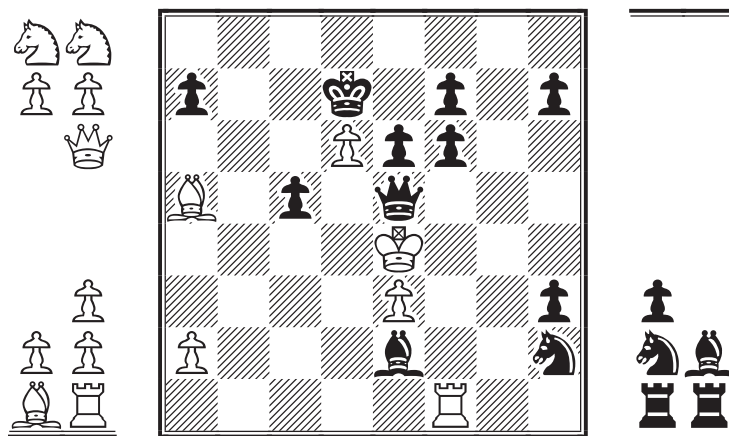

Diagram 115

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