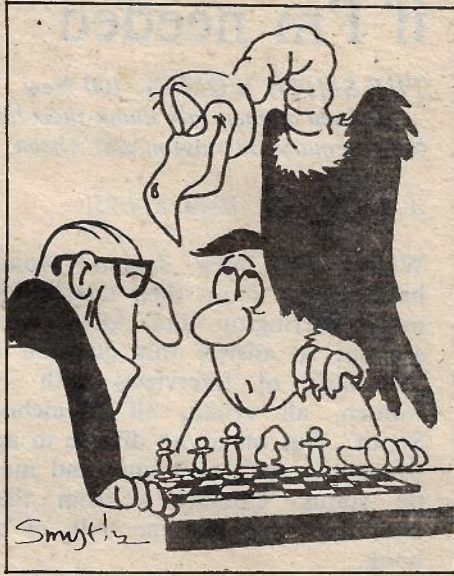


Party pieces

AT A RECENT club match several friends and I were well entertained by a Teutonic colleague possessing an extraordinary skill in palming cards and making coins vanish. Party tricks in chess are different, but can be similarly baffling. They have the added bonus that, rather than hiding up a magician's sleeve, the puzzles are subjected to the closest scrutiny by the audience.

Here, for example, is the infamous "missing move trick" which should tantalise your guests before cocktails are served.



- | | |
|---------|------|
| 3. Nf3 | Bg7 |
| 4. Nc3 | d5 |
| 5. cxd5 | Nxd5 |
| 6. e4 | Nxc3 |
| 7. bxc3 | c5 |

Mikhailchishin and Romanishin share a house in Lvov, and had probably even analysed this fashionable variation of the Grunfeld together.

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 8. Be3 | Qa5 |
| 9. Qd2 | Nc6 |
| 10. Rb1? | |

The most usual move is 10.Rc1, a fact which may have contributed to the game's abrupt finish just two moves later.

- | | |
|----------|------|
| 10. ... | cxd4 |
| 11. cxd4 | 0-0 |

A fairly standard position has been reached. But Mikhailchishin's next is quite unbelievable!

ROMANISHIN



MIKHALCHISHIN

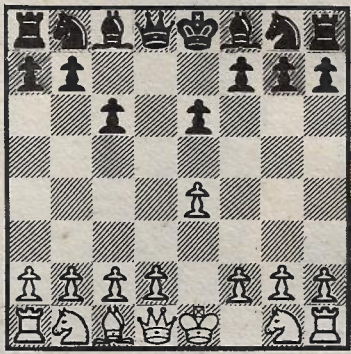
- | | |
|--------------|-----|
| 12. d5??? | Bc3 |
| 13. Resigns. | |

White loses his queen! Sovietsky Sport relates that Mikhailchishin, realising what he had done, wordlessly donned his coat and left the playing hall. Romanishin and the audience were left dumbfounded. Grandmasters, it seems, are human after all.

The solutions to the two party problems are:

Problem 1. 1.e4 e6 2.Bb5 Kc7! 3.Bxd7 c6 4.Be8! Kxe8 and the required position has been reached after four moves.
 Problem 2. 1.f3 e6 (or 1...e5) 2.Kf2 Qf6 3.Kg3 Qxf3!! (a difficult move for a strong chessplayer to make, even in jest!) 4.Kh4 Be7 mate.

MURRAY CHANDLER

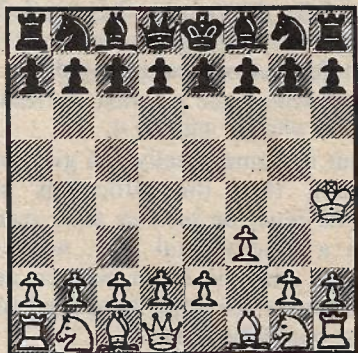


This position, you can explain, was reached during your previous party in a game between two not-so-strong players. Unfortunately they couldn't remember the actual moves. But they were adamant about the number of moves played — definitely four by each side (rather than three, eg 1.e4 e6 2.Bb5 c6 3.Bxc6 dxc6).

How was the position reached?

* * *

Then, of course, there was the time you invited that Grandmaster to dinner. Some Russian or something, name starts with a K... anyway, he thought he was so good he'd tell us his first four moves. "Whatever you play," he said, "I'll go 1.f3, 2.Kf2, 3.Kg3 and 4.Kh4."



Well, we knew he was so good we'd have to checkmate him on our (Black's) move four. How did we do it? Be careful that the White king is not impeded — eg 1.f3 d5 2.Kf2 Qd6 makes 3.Kg3 illegal as it would be check.

* * *

The solutions to the previous two puzzles are upside-down at the end of the column. To further entertain your guests, here is a quite remarkable mini-miniature from the 1981/82 USSR championship.

GRUNFELD DEFENCE

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| A. MIKHALCHISHIN | O. ROMANISHIN |
| 1. d4 | Nf6 |
| 2. c4 | g6 |