

GM Nikola Nestorović ♦ IM Dejan Nestorović

# THE POWER OF DEFENCE AND THE ART OF COUNTERATTACK IN 64 PICTURES



♦♦♦ Untold chess secrets



Chess Informant  
SINCE 1964

**GM Nikola Nestorović**  
**IM Dejan Nestorović**

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OF DEFENCE  
AND THE ART OF  
COUNTERATTACK IN  
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## Editor-in-chief's Foreword

My sincere friendship with the members of the Nestorović family lasts for about thirty years now. Irena (WFM-Woman Fide Master) and Dejan (IM-International Master) met at a chess tournament and from that day chess became an integral part of their lives. For many years, with great success, they run one of the best chess schools in Serbia.

I was extremely privileged to spend a lot of time with Dejan and Irena, having the opportunity to follow the development of their school and witness the growth of their children. Today, all five members of the Nestorović family are holders of international chess titles. The eldest son, Nikola won the Grandmaster title a few years ago, and also holds the title of the FIDE Trainer. The younger son, Lazar was awarded the title of the International Master. He dedicated himself to further professional education for the time being. The youngest in the family, Katarina followed in her parent's and brother's footsteps. With a great commitment and complete focus on education, Kaća is currently the holder of the Woman FIDE Master title, having far greater ambitions, of course. These basic facts are quite sufficient to assure us about the excellent achievements of the "Nestorović Household Mastership" in the area of chess publishing.

A great number of years of both playing and teaching experience gave the authors freedom to present their broad knowledge and teaching skills to the readership by exploring such a demanding chess topic. Of course, it is not uncommon to find examples of defence and counter-attack in the publications of eminent chess authors, since it is a very handy topic for books which investigate the middlegame. However, Dejan and Nikola went one step further and dedicated the entire book to a highly demanding topic. The most striking quality of the topic lies in the fact that it is almost impossible to determine the general rules that must be followed in order to navigate safely through all the maelstroms during a game of chess.

The most important factor is good position of the pieces, and the healthy pawn structure. Also, a very significant ingredient of good defensive play and counter-attacking prowess is intuition. The possibilities of defence with the transition to counterattack cannot always be calculated to the very end, so one must follow and trust his own instincts, experience, and feeling for the position on the board.

The book in your hands contains a symbolic number of 64 chess games and is written for a wider chess audience. It is both a highly instructive piece of chess literature for readers who want to improve their chess skills, and a very practical manual for experienced players who wish to refresh and reevaluate their own knowledge. The presented examples are extremely rich in chess brilliances both in defending the position and in developing the counterattack, while the complexity and importance of the topic itself is best explored in the games of the world's best players. In majority of the examples, the players could not find the best solutions over-the-board, so the subsequent analyses showed great opportunities for both sides.

Also, the concept and structure of the book offer readers the opportunity to use it as a collection of instructive and entertaining puzzles. All the examples are rich in beautiful and highly unexpected moves, so can be used to practice tactical skill and develop chess imagination.

Finally, I hope that you will spend many joyful hours with this book, improving your chess, while appreciating the authors' passion for the topic and our royal game.

*GM Branko Tadić*

Belgrade, June 2020.

## **A Word from the Authors**

Although, while writing this book, Nikola and I had a great cooperation and complemented each other, he gladly let me address the prospective readers on behalf of the authors.

As it says in my biography, I have been a chess trainer for more than 30 years. Throughout this period, working on regular improvement with my students or preparing them for tournaments and specific games, I have collected materials and classified them by topics. A few years ago I started thinking about turning years-long experience into chess books. The topics suggested themselves, the only thing missing was my experience as an author. That is why Nikola's desire to participate in this project was very important to me. Each of us was set certain tasks and, by all means, one of the most important tasks was selection of the games.

Originally envisaged topic was "defence", but through selection of the games we noticed that in a large number of games the motif of a counterattack as a consequence of good defense was easily noticeable. That is how this book came to be. Of course, considering that we had never written any text sitting together, it seemed more appropriate to address the reader in the first person singular.

It wasn't easy to divide the book into chapters, so we decided to do that according to the chronology of the creation of the games, leaving our own experiences and accomplishments for the end. Some less known chess names justifiably found themselves among chess greats and their accomplishments can really be called brilliant.

We recommend that the reader carefully study these examples because they contain many secrets of good defense; at the same time, he will get to appreciate the importance of such defense for the purpose of executing a counterattack. Every example is a story in itself, but taken all together, we are sure, they represent a detailed and quality course on this important topic.

Of course, this first book of ours could not be realised without the understanding and support of the rest of our family and numerous friends, who, with their advice,

helped us evade all the traps of such a débutante edition. We will be very grateful for any well-intentioned remark, suggestion or critical comment, because it will tell us whether we are on the right track.

*Dejan Nestorović*



**IM Dejan Nestorović with junior national team of Serbia in Poland in 2017  
(silver medal of the men's team at the European Championship)**

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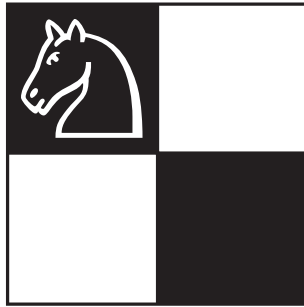
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## SYSTEM OF SIGNS

±	white stands slightly better	∕	diagonal
∓	black stands slightly better	⊕	centre
±	white has the upper hand	»	king's side
∓	black has the upper hand	«	queen's side
+−	white has a decisive advantage	×	weak point
−+	black has a decisive advantage	⊥	ending
=	even	♖♗	pair of bishops
∞	unclear	♖♗	bishops of opposite color
∞	with compensation for the material	♖♗	bishops of the same color
○	development advantage	○○	united pawns
○	greater board room	○-○	separated pawns
→	with attack	⊝	double pawns
↑	with initiative	♞	passed pawn
↔	with counter-play	>	advantage in number of pawns
⊙	zugzwang	⊕	time
♯	mate	75/199	Chess Informant
!	a very good move	E	12 Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings
!!	an excellent move	♚	3/b Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings
?	a mistake	N	a novelty
??	a blunder	(ch)	championship
!?	a move deserving attention	(izt)	interzonal tournament
?!	a dubious move	(ct)	candidates' tournament
△	with the idea	(m)	match
□	only move	(ol)	olympiad
△	better is	corr.	correspondence game
↔	file	RR	editorial comment
		R	various moves
		└	with
		┘	without
			etc
		—	see

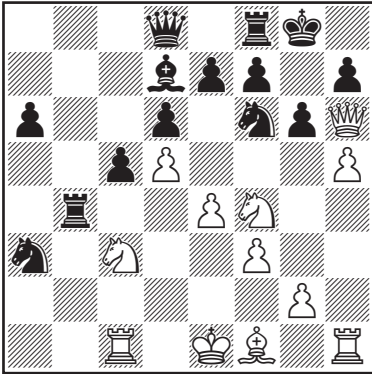


**Pearls don't lose their luster**

## Counterattack with the rook

Lj. Ljubojević 2600 – J. Nunn 2605

Monaco (rapid) 1994

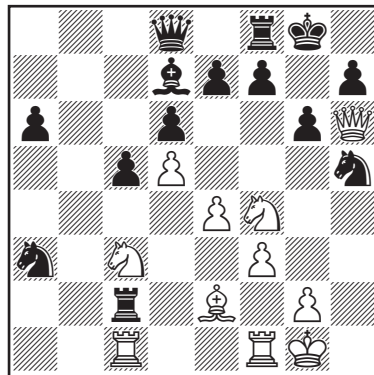


18... g5!!

A phenomenal motif of defence! Nunn has no intention of waiting for the opening of the h-file and immediately takes energetic steps in order to actively defend. Right now what matters is who will be the one to create a strong threat. Black has two extra pawns but for now this is not a primary factor in the assessment of the position.

Ljubojević has sacrificed a lot for the initiative and the attack on the black king, while his own king is left without castling, he lacks material, but definitely some threats do exist, and what is of essence here is that it is not the correct assessment of the position that matters but how difficult it is to find a solid solution. Nunn passes his first test with flying colors.

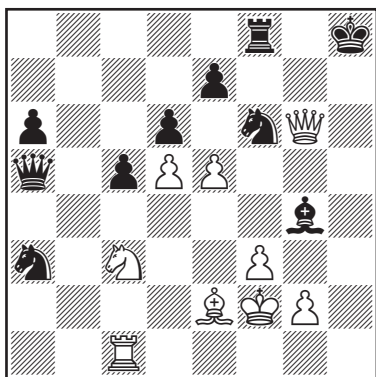
18... ♖b2!? A totally different way of thinking about defence!? Black is behaving as if there were no serious threats and is trying to attack the uncastled king. The story of a counterattack is an integral part of the story of defence. 19. ♕e2 ♖c2 20. 0–0 ♜h5!!



The only reaction that resolves urgent issues, after which the play could be transferred to the other part of the board. If White comes to the conclusion that Black's thoughts are devoted to counterplay only, he could launch a dangerous attack based on a central break e5 or a knight sacrifice at g6!

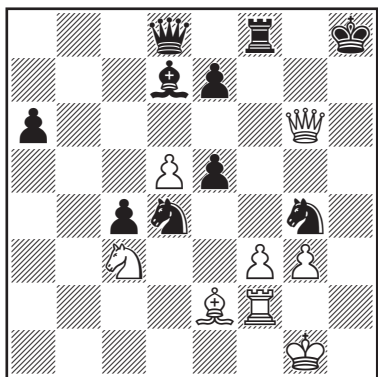
a) 20... ♔a5? A logical continuation based on a counterattack is a bad mistake. The conditions have not been fulfilled yet! 21. hg6 hg6? 22. ♜g6 fg6 23. ♔g6 ♜h8 24. ♜f2! All of a sudden

there appears a threat of a checkmate along the h-file. 24... ♖c1 25. ♖c1 ♕g4 26. e5!!



26... de5 27. ♖h1 ♕h5 28. ♕d3 With irresistible checkmate.

b) 20... c4? 21. ♖c2 ♖c2 22. hg6 fg6 23. e5! Now a familiar motive that gives White a good tactical play. 23... de5 24. ♖g6 hg6 25. ♖g6 ♖h8 26. ♖f2! ♖g8 (26... ♖d4?! 27. g3! The idea of manoeuvre ♖f2 becomes obvious! The threat is ♖h2! Black must be very careful now not to be checkmated. 27... ♖g4!!



A very nice tactical stroke which would force White to draw by perpetual check.

28. fg4 ♖f2 29. ♖h6 ♖g8 30. ♖g6 ♖f8 31. ♖h6 Draw.) 27. ♖c2 With unclear position.

21. ♖h5 gh5 22. ♖c2 ♖c2 23. ♕d3 ♖b4 24. ♕b1 c4 With the idea to respond to the anticipated e5 with ♖d3 repelling all serious threats while Black gets to keep extra material which guarantees him a serious advantage.

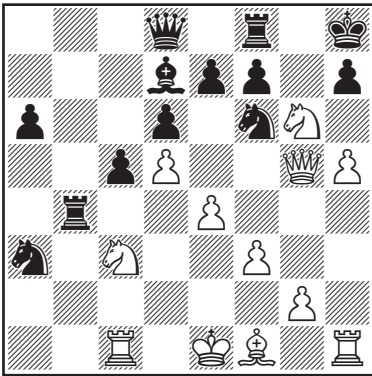
### 19. ♖g5!?

A continuation in which there is more energy and potential, the possibility for mutual mistakes has been increased and here lies the chance to play for a win regardless of the realistic assessment of the position. That is why I think that this move is a logical choice for a player like Ljubojević. So, it is not a desire to possibly save a weaker ending that matters but looking for a chance until the last move!

19. e5!/? I suppose that the reason for making a lot of mistakes lies in the hesitation when choosing the ways to attack! I think that a large number of players would be thinking like this: This continuation is good, and the other one is ok, too! And now what? Sometimes time has a significant impact on decisions, and sometimes those decisions are based on the estimations of qualities and flaws of the opponent. Only for chess engines it is easier to make assessment and they assess these two continuations as roughly equal. I think that in the line with e5 Ljubojević takes much lesser risk and even if his attack fails to get through, his chanc-

es for an active result are much better. 19... g4 20. e6 ef6 21. ♔f2! f5! It is necessary to deprive the knight of the e4-square. (21... c4 22. ♕f4 ♔h8 23. ♞e4! A lot of things are unclear, some threats are starting to appear.) 22. ♕d6 ♕e8 23. ♕c5 ♖b2 24. ♔g1 ♕e3 25. ♕e3 fe3⌘ There arose a semi-ending with the equal material. Black returned the pawns, repelled threats, and gained a clear positional advantage. A very nice example of transformation of advantage.

19... ♔h8 20. ♞g6!



A necessary knight sacrifice expected after ♕g5 because nothing else makes any sense.

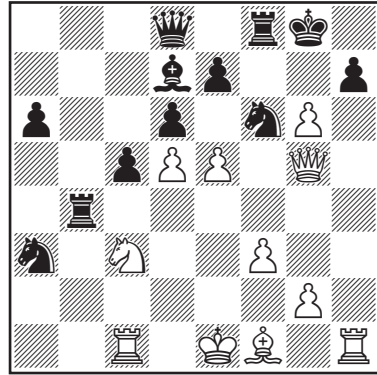
20... fg6 21. hg6 ♔g8!

A necessary move! The g7 threat must be prevented!

21... ♔g7? (21... ♖g8? 22. ♕f6! ef6 23. ♖h7#) 22. ♕h6 ♔g8 23. e5! After a familiar push, White is creating strong threats that guarantee him a decisive advantage. 23... de5 24. ♔d3 The idea is g7! threatening to capture

the h7-pawn with the bishop. 24... e6 25. g7!+- Black doesn't have a satisfactory response.

22. e5!



Another pawn break that Black had to anticipate when he entered the defence setup based on g5!!

22... de5 23. ♔d3

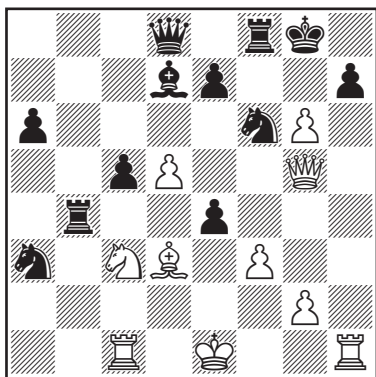
White brings another extremely important piece into the attack and gives Black a rather serious problem to solve. Black's defence is based on a perfectly placed knight, and in the event that it is thrown out of play, his defence will have more holes than "Swiss cheese"! That's why everyone has their own task. Ljubojević's task is to find the way to get rid of the knight while Nunn's is to keep it safe and possibly relieve it of its obligations and shift some of its responsibilities to its teammates.

23... ♖d4?

In his second exam, Dr. Nunn did not get a passing grade. The task is not easy to solve! Ljubojević's reaction is being expected, he has just got a great chance

to prove the concept he had chosen!?

23... e4!!



A necessary move that would successfully repel any threats in all lines! One that is not easy to play because there is a large number of possibilities that are difficult to calculate.

24. ♖e4 The most dangerous option of attack!

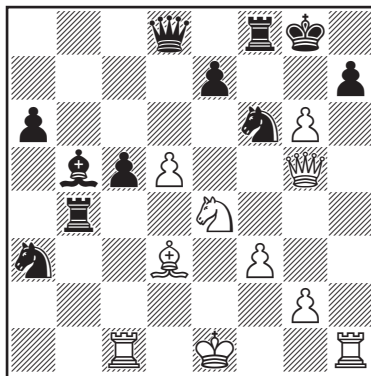
a) 24. ♙e4!? ♜b5! 25. ♚h6 ♞c3 26. ♜c3 ♚b8 27. g7 ♙h8—+ The threats are disappearing, the material is to Black's advantage, the assessment is that Nunn has a huge advantage.

b) 24. fe4!? A possible alternative, but one in which threats are eliminated in the easiest way in case of a solid defence. 24... c4! It is important to get the bishop out of the attack. 25. ♙e2 (25. e5 cd3 26. ef6 ef6! Gaining time for check on e8 with further relieving of the position. 27. ♚h6 ♚e8 28. ♙f2 ♚g6—+) ♙e8! Run to the rescue! The threat is e5. 26. e5 ♙g6!

The replacement for the perfect knight has arrived in the form of a bishop

which is ready to perform all given defensive tasks! 27. ef6 ♜f6—+ Another picture of the transformation of advantage: Black returns material, threats disappear and in the end we talk about the safety of the white monarch.

24... ♙b5!

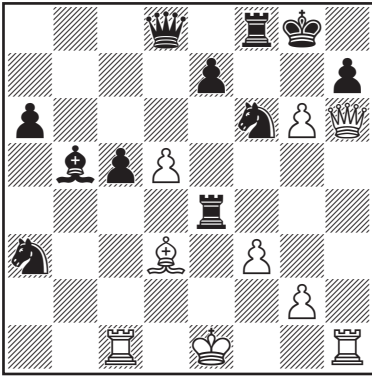


Perhaps the most difficult move in the defence. White has two great pieces which joined the attack and it is necessary to exchange one of them. It is difficult to play ♙b5 while it seems that everything around the king is burning and a "side move is being played".

25. ♚h6 (25. ♙b5 ♜e4 26. fe4 ♚a5! Time for a counterattack! 27. ♙d1 ♞b5 28. e5 ♚a4 After a few precise checks it becomes clear that White doesn't have time to attack the knight and finish the attack, instead, he has to think about some defensive moves because Black is the one who has more concrete threats. 29. ♙e2 ♚e4 30. ♙d1 ♞g4 31. gh7 ♙h8! All threats have disappeared while the white king remained exposed; the announcement of his execution is being expected.)



25... ♖e4!!



A necessary motif of defence for the prevention of incoming threats. 26. ♘e4 ♗a5 27. ♔d1 (27. ♔f2? ♖g4) ♗a4 28. ♔e1 ♗b4 29. ♔d1 ♖d8! The knight on f6 is a true miracle piece!

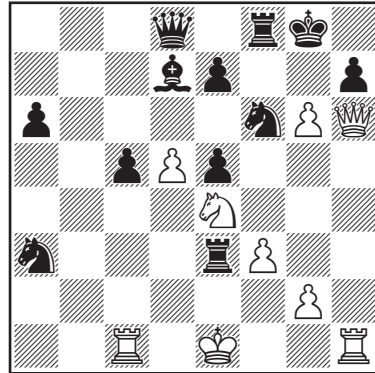
Black has enough time to play a preparatory move for a counterattack and to leave complete defence to the knight! It is interesting that despite having three powerful pieces in the attack, White can't create any threats! 30. g7 ♗b3 31. ♔e1 ♘d3! 32. ♘d3 ♗d3—+ Only now does it become clear that the attack is off!

And the moment is coming when material will become an important factor in the assessment of the position.

#### 24. ♖h7?

And the chance goes to waste! But the idea is worth thinking about!? I think that at the crossroads on the 19<sup>th</sup> move, Ljubojević made the right choice, e5 or ♗g5? He took a chance to play for a win against the alternative of saving a draw. The young generations should

build an attitude about whether to play extremely risky in order to win, or try to patiently defend an inferior position !? 24. ♗h6! The chance lay in this threat! 24... ♖d3 There follows a unique series of moves related to defence, otherwise defeat is a real option! 25. ♞e4 ♖e3!!



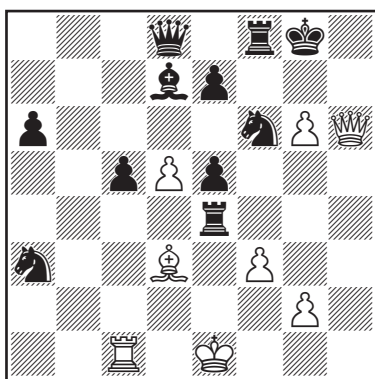
Now the only continuation in order not to lose the game! 26. ♗e3 ♗a5 27. ♔f1 ♞e4 28. ♗e4 ♗d2! 29. gh7 ♔f7 30. ♖c5 It becomes obvious that both players have a chance to win the game with some of possible strokes though it seems that White has better chances! 30... ♞c2 31. h8♞! ♖h8 (31... ♔e8? 32. ♗g6 ♔d8 33. ♗b6 ♔e8 34. ♗b8 ♘c8 35. ♗c8#) 32. ♖h7! ♖h7 33. ♗h7 ♔f8 34. ♖c2 ♗d1 35. ♔f2 ♗d4= Still everything would finish with an interesting picture of perpetual check.

#### 24... ♞h7! 25. ♗h6

Ljubojević must have seen a chance here!?

25. gh7 ♔h8 26. ♗e5 ♖f6 And all threats have been repelled.

#### 25... ♞f6 26. ♞e4 ♖e4!



It is necessary to remove the knight which represents the basic threat to the safety of the black king.

27. ♔e4 ♕b5

Preparations for a counterattack!

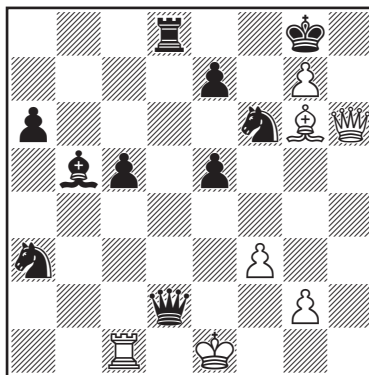
28. ♕f5 ♖d5

All the moves are necessary.

29. g7 ♜d8

The only square, but sufficient one.

30. ♗g6 ♞d2!!



There are other options here but the only safe one is transformation of advantage!! 30... ♘c2 31. ♜c2 ♞d1 32. ♔f2 ♞d4 33. ♔g3 (33. ♔e1 ♞g1#) ♞f4—+

31. ♞d2 ♜d2 32. ♔d2 ♘c4—+

In further course of the game, there followed an exemplary technique of realisation of material advantage.