

Chess Gifts for Christmas

by Grandmaster Raymond Keene OBE

I had hoped this festive month to pose an exciting question, such as: does Santa Claus play chess? Or unearth a startling revelation, for example, a reindeer chess piece discovered in Lapland, which can only move when dragging a sleigh piece behind it, much as the (real) Xiangqi (Chinese chess) piece, the cannon, can only capture *through* another piece. No such luck, sadly, so I shall instead focus on items to fill the Christmas stocking for chess enthusiasts.

When we come to the classics, books which inspired me as a teenager. Second-hand copies exist, of course. However, an invaluable service has been rendered to the chess community by the publishing house co-founded by Julian Simpole, (teacher of prodigies Josh Altman and Shreyas Royal, as well as budding and future Grandmasters: Luke McShane and David Howell) in tandem with Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, in the form of Hardinge Simpole Publishing. Hardinge Simpole is a publisher which has adopted the preservation of major English language classics as a kind of mission statement.

In my regular columns for *The British Chess Magazine* I have often expressed my admiration for the games and writings of Aron Nimzowitsch, exploits which exerted a significant influence over my early personal development as a chess player. Nimzowitsch excelled at chessboard strategy, long-term planning deriving from the particular openings which he developed, including 1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 against the French Defence, 1. Nf3 d5 2. b3 in the form of the Nimzowitsch Attack, and of course his signature Nimzo-Indian Defence: 1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4. Nimzowitsch's *magnum opus* is his book of chess strategy, *My System*. Usefully, Hardinge Simpole Publishing offer a full menu of chess desiderata.

Somewhat paradoxically, given the diametrically opposite nature of their styles, another major influence was Nimzowitsch's fellow Latvian, and also citizen of Riga, Mikhail Tal. In contrast to Nimzowitsch, Tal was primarily a tactician. I first became aware of Tal's extraordinary power and energy from his victory in the 1959 Candidates Tournament which decided the challenger to the throne of World Champion and Red Czar of The Soviet Chess Imperium, Mikhail Botvinnik.

The book which introduced me to the Wizard of Riga, as Tal came to be known, was Harry Golombek's first hand account of that self-same Candidates Tournament. There, Golombek himself acted as Chief Arbiter, a most signal international honour for the distinguished British Master, later to become Grandmaster Emeritus. The book had, in fact, been originally published in a somewhat primitive offset format, which looked for all the world, as if it had been produced in the editor's back room on a duplicating machine, which it probably had.

The *arte povera* design of the initial book belied the depth, elegance and insights of Golombek's contents, writing which had already earned Golombek numerous accolades for his books on Reti, Capablanca, and the World Championships of 1948, 1954 and 1957. One of life's great pleasures over Christmas would be to play over Reti's elegant masterpieces from Golombek's book *Reti's Best Games of Chess*, with an accompanying glass of Dow's Port 1977, listening to Schubert's "Trout Quintet" and, possibly, with a large wedge of Colston Bassett Stilton.

It is also interesting to compare Golombek's reportage of the 1948 Championship (which I used to carry around with me as an aspiring youngster) with his treatment of the 1959 Candidates.

Golombek enjoyed a unique gift for conveying the drama of battles on the chessboard, elevating chess commentary to the bardic literary level of the Icelandic epic sagas which Golombek had studied for his Doctorate. Tal's performance, 61 years ago, must be rated as one of the most outstanding tournament performances of all time. Against the leading grandmasters of his time, excluding of course Botvinnik (waiting in Moscow to discover the identity of his challenger), Tal's restless energy notched up a huge plus score, including thirteen wins and just three draws out of sixteen encounters against Bobby Fischer, Svetozar Gligoric, Fridrik Olafsson and Pal Benko. Against Fischer, Tal scored 100 per cent. Indeed, Tal could also easily have defeated Benko in the one draw permitted him, had he not agreed in the final round to split the point in an overwhelming position, where Benko could have safely resigned. Tal once said that there are two types of sacrifice, sound ones and his! Oddly enough, Tal triumphed in 1959 largely through sound attacks, creating a tsunami of energy and dynamism which simply blew away the opposition. The waves of kinetic force in Tal's conduct of his games brings to mind those lines from Shakespeare's *Othello* Act III, Scene 3, one of the most impactful descriptions of raw energy ever to appear in English literature:

*"Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er keeps retiring ebb but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont"*

The contrast with the elite of 1948 is dramatic. Eleven years before Tal's advent, the top players were heavily into deep strategic manoeuvres and the battles unfolded, by and large, at a relatively slow pace. Tal, on the other hand, demolished even the greatest with a Napoleonic élan, rarely seen before on the chessboard.

Golombek's book, 4th Candidates' Tournament, 1959 remains in print in a much-improved edition, both visually and in terms of design. Hardinge Simpole Publishing have also reissued

Peter Clarke's anthology of Mikhail Tal's Best Games of Chess, which takes the Rigan Wizard's meteoric career up to and including the World Championship match victory against Botvinnik, which crowned Tal, albeit briefly, as World Champion. I found Clarke's book just as inspiring and instructive as Golombek's account of the 1959 Candidates Tournament. In fact, it was the book which taught me to play Tal's signature defence, the Modern Benoni, which rewarded me with fifteen straight wins from my first fifteen games with it.

Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championship Volume 1 (1920–1937) by Sergey Voronkov, published by Elk and Ruby, with a foreword by former World Champion and one of the greatest chess players in history, Garry Kasparov. This book fully lives up to its title including accounts of the daunting problems of organising anything in the chaotic times of the post-Russian Revolution. The tournaments were of high quality (greats such as the mighty Alexander Alekhine, Efim Bogoljubov and Mikhail Botvinnik were amongst the winners) and there are many historical, dramatic, and competitive games to enjoy. A book of considerable importance, but also an absorbing read.

Next, *Smyslov, Bronstein, Geller, Taimanov and Averbakh* by the prolific American Grandmaster, Andrew Soltis, published by McFarland. Subtitled 'A Chess Multibiography with 220 Games', Soltis says he wanted to explore the lives of five exceptionally talented chess players, but very different men, who survived the horrors of the Second World War and of the brutal Soviet regime and why only one of them, Vasily Smyslov, became World Champion. The way their lives entwined in the competitive, political, Russian chess world after the World War II is fascinating. Interested readers may find my column on Yuri Averbakh, the sole surviving member of the quintet on *TheArticle* website, as follows: <https://www.thearticle.com/averbakh-at-99-mens-sana-in-corpore-sano>.

The Chess Saga of Fridrik Olafsson by Oystein Brekke and Fridrik Ólafsson is published by Norske Sjakkforlag. A tribute to the Icelandic Grandmaster who, besides being strong enough to play in the 1959 Candidates' Tournament, is an iconic figure in his native Iceland. An elegant attacking player, the book contains 118 games, many annotated by Olafsson himself. The book is much more than a collection of games; many writers contribute to describe his long life (87 years) and varied career, not all in chess. A Saga, indeed, and an affectionate and beautiful book in every way.

And finally, an important, no holds barred book, which heralds Nigel Short's entry into the field of chess literature.

Winning by Nigel Short is published by Quality Chess. Tournament books have traditionally been an important part of chess culture. Short has taken an unusual approach – this is a book giving ALL the games he played himself in eight tournaments he won dating from 1987 to 2016. The games are thoroughly annotated and show the drama, the good play, the

practical play and sometimes survival play required to win tournaments. This is Short's first book and his personal approach, along with his lively style, engender hopes that he will follow up with a sequel.

There is, indeed plenty of scope for a second volume, which might include Short's bid for the World Title, as well as his exploits against the British elite, even before he reached his teens. Now picture this: a 12-year-old boy sits at a chessboard. Facing him is a formidable and deadly opponent. The man is an experienced master, a player who has beaten, nay annihilated, one World Champion (Mikhail Tal) and himself won the British Championship a record 10 times. The scene is Brighton in the summer of 1977. The boy is Nigel Short, the first pre-teenager ever to compete in the British Championship, and the hardened veteran is Dr. Jonathan Penrose.

After a few moves of play, to the amazement of the onlookers, Penrose offers the boy a draw. To the even greater consternation of those looking on, the boy declined the offer. The game proceeds. First, Penrose almost loses his queen, and then, faced with an inevitable checkmate, on the 41st move, the shattered Master concedes defeat.

That sensational game announced the advent of a new chess prodigy, in the tradition of young geniuses of the calibre of Paul Morphy, José Capablanca and Bobby Fischer. Since his own auspicious debut, Nigel Short progressed with meteoric brilliance to indisputably become the greatest British chess player in the history of the game. He has reached a world ranking of number 3 and has been the inspirational leader of the grandmaster-packed English team, spearheading them to three Olympic silver medals, behind only the hitherto dominant Russians.

The highlight of Nigel Short's career was his victorious challenge in April 1992, to the living chess legend, Anatoly Karpov, in the semi-final of the World Chess Championship Qualifying Competition. Karpov held the World Title for 10 years, until he was deposed by Garry Kasparov. He is one of the three or four greatest chess players the world has ever seen.

Beating Karpov raised Short to the pinnacle of world chess, a position he reinforced in January 1993 by his victory over the formidably talented Dutch Grandmaster, Jan Timman in the final of the World Championship Qualifying Competition, a result which enabled Nigel to challenge Garry Kasparov himself in a match for the World Championship Title. Sponsored by *The Times* newspaper, this challenge took place in 1993 and resulted in honourable defeat for Short. It should, though, be remembered that no native born British player had ever come that close to world domination since Howard Staunton demolished the leading players of Europe between 1843 and 1846.

So, what made Nigel so devastatingly effective over the chessboard? Short is a tough

pragmatist, self-educated and self-reliant. His physical appearance belies his ruthlessly aggressive and starkly individualistic approach when in play. Short is tall, softly spoken and mild, not at all the stereotype of the mad genius which Bobby Fischer fitted so well. However, in a particularly endearing trait, he not only means what he says, he also acts upon it.

Short's career has been studded with glittering successes, first prize in tournaments and match victories around the world, but there have also been, as distinct from the careers of Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov, the occasional equally stunning setbacks. When he was only 14, Short was thrown, by well-meaning chess officials, who wanted to encourage and accelerate his progress, into the shark pool of the 1980 London International Tournament, with a line-up including the World Title Challenger, Victor Korchnoi, who was not even able to win first prize, such was the strength of the competition. Short was unable to avoid a disastrous last place; he was just too young and inexperienced for this murderous field. In a time characterised by national engines of pre-teenage Grandmaster creation, this might sound anomalous, but four decades ago pre-pubescent Grandmasters were not then as numerous as Milton's leaves in Vallombrosa. However, Nigel overcame these early problems, developed enviable mental toughness and when he went one down in the semi-final against Karpov, he did not become discouraged.

In fact, Nigel had a grand strategy for the all-important match against Karpov. Both he and Karpov, as opposed to the brilliantly destructive Kasparov, are architectonic players, pure stylists, who seek to expose and make visible the inner harmonic workings of the dynamic interplay of the pieces. Where others would simply see a discordant chaos of clashing chessmen, Short and Karpov, perceive almost infinitely beautiful patterns, networks and fields of force. In the past, Short had laid the accent on such pure thought: the superiority of his thinking apparatus, over that of his opponents. But defeating Karpov required a new dimension of combat: physical as well as mental fitness now became of vital importance – it may even have proved to be the deciding factor.

For the showdown against Karpov, the 26-year-old Short was determined to be at the peak of physical strength. The plan was to play longer games and wear down his 41-year-old (and slightly paunchy) opponent. The war of attrition, to drain Karpov's energy, would suddenly transform into a Blitzkrieg when the former Champion was suitably enervated. This did, indeed, happen. Games three, four and five of this 10-game match were mind-exhausting marathons, but then Short struck to take games six and eight with lightning victories. Chess may seem all in the mind, but the mind is connected to the body.

The challenge to Karpov took place in the Andalusian city of Linares in southern Spain. Linares is famous for two other things apart from chess. It was the birthplace of Himilke, The wife of Hannibal, and the city also boasts a fountain from which Hannibal is reputed to have

drunk. Local legend has it that those who, emulating the Carthaginian general, drink from this fountain, will inevitably return.

Turning from over the board chess to chess politics, Nigel in 2018 made brilliant use of every opportunity to make a bid to become elected as President of FIDE, The World Chess Federation. Disgracefully, that self-same English Chess Federation who are now pondering the merits of Nigel's book, failed to support him and, sadly, even obstructed him. Nevertheless, Nigel emerged from the electoral process, with the glittering prize of FIDE Vice President to his credit.

One of the reasons for my admiration of Nigel is that he succeeded in two areas where I harboured ambitions, but ultimately failed. These are winning the World Championship and taking a high post in FIDE. As far as the former is concerned I never made it past the first qualifying stage (known as the Zonal) while I spectacularly failed to be elected as FIDE General Secretary in 1986.

Short's travails with his National Federation bring to mind an episode from an illuminating book from Elk and Ruby: *Yakov Vilner, the first Ukrainian Chess Champion and the first USSR Chess Composition Champion: a world champion's favorite composers* by Sergei Tkachenko. Here we learn the truth about a brush with death at the hands of Soviet executioners, by the immortal Alexander Alekhine. Tkachenko writes:

"Gradually, I managed to put together a true account of those events. I found clear evidence that the versions that Alekhine was saved by important Soviet functionaries were incorrect. Historical facts and memoirs pointed to the undoubted fact that his salvation was down to the modest Jewish lad Yakov Vilner, who, at the time the Grandmaster was arrested, was working as a clerk in the Odessa Revolutionary Tribunal."

How did the modest clerk save Alekhine? This book does not give details, perhaps by eating the charge sheets against Alekhine, as does the loyal clerk, Tristan Fleuri, working in the Department of Public Safety, from Abel Gance's 1927 epic *Napoleon*. In the case of the Gance movie, it is, of course, Napoleon and Josephine, who are saved by the intervention of the sympathetic 'docuphage'.

The episode of conflict with the National Federation, to which I refer, arose when the Soviet chess authorities began to undermine Vilner, in a way that foreshadows the social media storms nowadays which are often a prelude to a campaign of Cancel Culture. I quote *"In fact, the attacks on Vilner started according to a well-developed procedure – with angry letters from ordinary chess fans. The aim of such "signals" was to provide an official excuse to the relevant organs and services to take actions against an awkward person."*

Plus ça change, indeed!

Short, however, not only survived but also prospered in the teeth of official opposition. Vilner, sadly, did not, succumbing at a relatively young age to the asthma which had bedevilled his entire career.

Two games demonstrating Nigel Short's struggles and sacrifices against the world's greatest are well worth study:

First, Nigel Short's win against Garry Kasparov in 1987. This game can be viewed at the following web address: <https://www.chessgames.com/perl/chessgame?gid=1070263>. The notable features of this game are Short's material sacrifice to gain control of the light squares, followed by advancing his own king to join in the attack, during the middle-game.

And from the match between Nigel Short and Anatoly Karpov in 1992. A mighty struggle against the former World Champion , who defended his title for a decade. This was the key win which broke Karpov's resistance in the World Championship Qualifier.

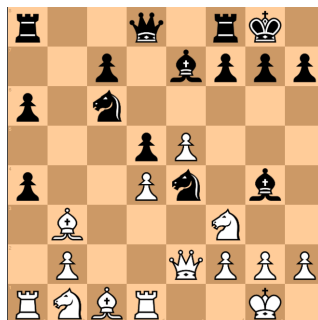
Nigel Short vs. Anatoly Karpov

Candidates semi-final, Linares SPA, game 8, April 1992

The following analysis needs to be seen in the context of near perfect accuracy. Stockfish 15 estimated that Short's play attained a 96% accuracy rating whereas Karpov scored 90%, yet played neither blunder nor mistake; several inaccuracies being sufficient to doom his game.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. O-O Be7 6. Qe2 b5 7. Bb3 O-O 8. c3 d6 9. d4 Bg4 10. Rd1 exd4 11. cxd4 d5 12. e5 Ne4 13. a4 bxa4?!

After the text move, the engine considered White to have a small advantage, preferring, 13... Bh4. For example, 14. Be3 Na5 15. Bc2 Nc4 16. Rf1 Bg5 17. Nc3 Bxf3 18. Qxf3 Nxe3 19. fxe3 Nd2 20. Qh3 g6, gives Black an scintilla of initiative.



14. Bxa4 Nb4 15. h3 Bh5 16. Nc3 Bg6 17. Be3 Rb8 18. Na2 c5 19. dxc5 Nxc5 20. Nxb4 Rxb4 21. Bc6 Qb6?!

This self-pinning inaccuracy is poor, compared to the option of 21... Be4. Best play is posited, 22. Nd4 Bg5 23. f3 Bxe3+ 24. Qxe3 Bg6 25. b3 h6 26. Ba4 Qb6 with a residual edge to White.



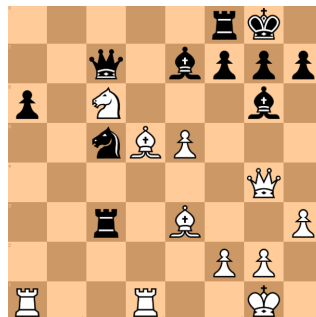
22. Bxd5 Rxb2 23. Qc4 Rc2

This move seemed questionable and, indeed, when interrogated, the engine significantly preferred, 23... Rb4 24. Qf1 Bc2 25. Rdc1 Nb3 26. Bxb3 Bxb3, constraining White's edge.

24. Qg4 Qc7

Black needed to play either 24... Rd8 or ...Qe8 to maintain the status quo.

25. Nd4 Rc3 26. Nc6

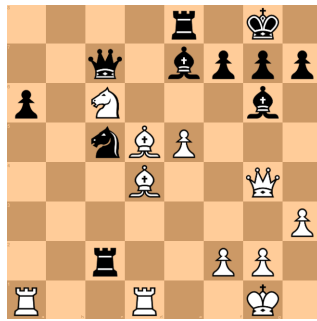


The computer's single reproach featured here, at White's moves. The text is good and concedes nothing. But perhaps superior was the immediate, 26. e6. The following lines illustrate that preference: 26... f5 (25... h5 27. exf7+ Bxf7 28. Bxf7+ Rxf7 29. Qxh5; 25... Kh8 27. exf7 Rxe3 28. fxe3 Qe5 29. Qf3) 27. Qf4 Qxf4 28. Bxf4 Re8 29. Nc6 Bf6 30. Ne5 Kf8 31. Nd7+ Nxd7 32. exd7 Rd8 33. Be6 Rc6 34. Rd6. White is much better than Black in all lines.

26... Re8?!

This reply condemns Black to a very bleak future. Necessary was, 26... Nd3 27. Rxa6 Nxe5 28. Nxe7+ Qxe7, after which the game may have continued something like, 29. Qd4 Rfc8 30. Ra7 Qe8 31. Bb7 h6 32. Bf4 Nd3 33. Bxc8 Nxf4, when Black clings on for a little longer.

27. Bd4 Rc2?!



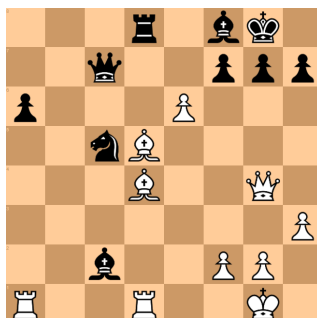
The inaccuracies accumulate as the pressure increases. A little better was, 27... Rd3 28. Rxd3 Nxd3 29. Rxa6 Bc5 30. Bxc5 Nxc5, when Black at least poses the prospect of counterplay.

28. Nb4 Rd8?!

Another marginal mistake contributes to an evermore desperate situation. Comparatively best, is, 28... Qc8, when, 29. Nxc2 Qxg4 30. hxg4 Bxc2, exchanges material but changes little.

29. Nxc2 Bxc2 30. e6 Bf8?!

Prosaically, 30... Nxe6 offered more resistance, but after, 31. Bxe6 Bf8 32. Rd2 fxe6 33. Rc1 Bf5 34. Rxc7 Bxg4 35. hxg4 a5, Black presumably knew he was destined for a fish supper.



31. exf7+ Kh8 32. Re1 Bg6 33. Re8 Rxe8 34. fxe8=Q Bxe8 35. Bxc5 Bxc5 36. Qe6 Black resigns 1-0

At the next level of difficulty, for the truly serious enthusiast, I can recommend the entire series of Garry Kasparov's epic, *My Great Predecessors* (published by Everyman). This takes the reader on a journey through the best games, annotated in profound detail by the former champion, of every champion and proto-champion from the days of Philidor, via Lasker, Alekhine, Fischer, Karpov to Kasparov himself and beyond. It is a chess course and education in itself. Much as Gustav Mahler claimed that all human life was present in his third symphony, so Kasparov could justly assert that all significant chess life was present in his multi-volume anthology of exploits at the pinnacle of the chess Everest.

A recent addition to the treasure house of chess literature is the anthology Magnus Carlsen's *Sixty Memorable Games* (published by Batsford), a self-evident homage by the always reliable American Grandmaster Andrew Soltis to the Bobby Fischer classic, *My 60 Memorable Games*. Soltis takes the ex World Champion's career right up to 2020, when elite chess pivoted towards being played online, a predominantly rapid play discipline, in which the infinitely adaptable and tenacious Norwegian reigns as serenely as he did in the formerly prevalent face-to-face over the board classical version of the game.

Finally, I come to one of the most significant volumes on chess ever written, *Game Changer* (New in Chess), by the duo of Grandmaster Matthew Sadler and our own flesh and blood Beth Harmon, Natasha Regan. This is the story of AlphaZero, the computing champion devised by Demis Hassabis CBE and his team from Deep Mind. The person who can fathom how AlphaZero decides on its chessboard strategies holds the key to the future. To me, the moves of probably the strongest chess playing entity the world has ever seen, or is likely to see, resemble one long stream of rule breaking paradoxes: unfathomable sacrifices, attacks launched from seemingly unpromising corner squares such as h1, and transitions to endgames when material in arrears. *Game Changer* contains within its pages the Holy Grail of chess understanding, waiting for some new Galahad to unravel its mysteries and deploy them in action on the competitive chessboard.

This month's further example, an imperishable *tour de force* of dynamic movement, by an early master of the game, also resurfaces as a victory by the fictitious mistress of chess, Beth Harmon, in *Queen's Gambit*. It was a favourite of the immortal Bobby Fischer. I once saw him demonstrate the moves, with evident glee, to a somewhat bemused El Comandante Fidel Castro in the lobby of the Havana Libre (formerly Hilton) Hotel, during the chess Olympiad of 1966. In this game we see the crisp efficiency of Fischer, combined with the vibrant dynamism of Tal, over seven decades before either of those modern maestros even saw the light of day.

With Christmas just around the corner, the time has come to nominate some new chess books for chess enthusiasts. A real heavyweight is the latest Elk and Ruby disquisition on the inside stories of the Soviet Chess Imperium, *Masterpieces and Dramas of the Soviet Championships Volume III (1948-1953)*, compiled by Sergey Voronkov. In the final throes of Stalin's dictatorship, Botvinnik, Bronstein, Smyslov and Keres, imposed their stamp on world chess. Botvinnik had conquered the world title in 1948 and retained the supreme accolade against Bronstein in 1951. Meanwhile, Bronstein and Smyslov carried off the laurels in the first two FIDÉ Candidates tournaments, while a phalanx of young talent — including Petrosian, Taimanov, Geller and Averbakh — was rising to the fore.

Yet, paradoxically, internal intrigue and division were rending this mighty empire apart, resulting in some inconsistent messages to the world chess community. In spite of their

overwhelming force, the USSR team boycotted the 1950 Olympiad, or world team tournament, an omission not repeated until the Haifa Olympiad in 1976. More recently, Russia was excluded from the 2022 Olympiad, in the wake of the illegal invasion of Ukraine. Astoundingly, for the 1952 Olympiad, world champion Botvinnik was voted off the squad — which nevertheless still won gold, with Paul Keres on top board. For the student of Soviet life during the embers of the Stalin era, this book is a must.

Which brings me to my next choice: *The Most Exciting Chess Games Ever* by Steve Giddins. This book is subtitled: The Experts' Choice in *New In Chess* magazine. Twenty years ago, *New In Chess* started its own Questionnaire, entitled "Just Checking". In this back page column, chess players and personalities named their favourites, preferences, moods, life mottos and so on. One of the questions has always been: What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw? Chess greats such as Anand, Shirov and Ivanchuk, authors and commentators such as Jeremy Silman, Jennifer Shahade, and Tania Sachdev nominated their choice of the most memorable games.

This anthology now presents the 45 most exciting of these games. Besides the usual suspects — such as Kasparov-Topalov (Wijk aan Zee 1999) or the 'Immortal' Anderssen-Kieseritzky (London 1851) — readers are treated to a wide variety of lesser-known gems. You'll see Ding Liren revelling in an all-out attack, Ivan Saric juggling a knight and five pawns versus two rooks, and Sergei Radchenko chasing the white king all over the board. Every game is a showcase of the richness and resourcefulness of chess. The ever reliable Steve Giddins edited this selection (200 pp, New in Chess, £22), a job he immensely enjoyed: "I hope that every reader will find games here which bring a smile to their face and a lift to their heart."

There is of course a debate about what constitutes an ideal book for the general chess reader and, indeed, what constitutes an exciting game. In terms of the first category Giddins' work scores very highly: clear printing and layout, a powerful narrative, notes not overburdened with computer analysis print out and a definite personal character driving the commentary. It reminds me of the best days of Harry Golombek, king of chess annotators, whose books on Reti and Capablanca (both published by Hardinge Simpole) remain classics of the game anthology genre.

The choice of exciting games largely centres on those of the blood and thunder variety, such as the two samples linked above. Personally, I think there can be a quite different dimension to excitement. For example, the 24th and final game of the 1987 Kasparov v Karpov world championship in Seville. In many ways unremarkable, the game was adjourned overnight with Kasparov in a superior position, but could he break down Karpov's fortress, win the game and salvage his world title?

During the overnight adjournment, the chess world, divided into supporters of Kasparov or Karpov, were on tenterhooks, with *nessun dorma* applying to everyone who could get their hands on a chess set to analyse the unfinished game. When the Spanish TV programme on the game, hosted by the world's leading chess journalist, my good friend Leontxo Garcia, resumed live transmission next day, it was avidly followed by millions of viewers.

As the great Praeceptor Germaniae, Dr Siegbert Tarrasch, rightly said: "Chess, like love, like music, has the power to make men [and women] happy."

Raymond Keene's book "Fifty Shades of Ray: Chess in the year of the Coronavirus", containing some of his best pieces from TheArticle, is now available from Blackwell's. Meanwhile, Ray's 206th book, "Chess in the Year of the King", with a foreword by TheArticle contributor Patrick Heren, and written in collaboration with former Reuters chess correspondent, Adam Black, has also just appeared and is also available from the same source.