

the move, which he did in a rather aggressive manner.

7...♖e7 8.♘c3 c6 9.♙g5 b5 10.♘xb5?

The beginning of the end. This error is even worse than his 7th move. He obviously overlooked that this pawn is protected. I replied quickly, though for a moment I did wonder if it was fair to take advantage of his blunder. Somehow beating a goldfish at chess seemed like taking candy from a child but then I remembered that there is no such thing as a friendly game of chess.

10...cxb5

It was at this point that I asked Leslie just how good he thought Murphy could become and how did he compare with the chess-playing budgerigar that had been in the news a few years back. This, it turned out, was not the thing to say. 'Don't talk to me about Joey; he was a one-day wonder. He played one good game against somebody, it might have been Kasparov, and was never heard of again. Don't mention Joey to me.'

I quickly changed the subject and play continued.

11.♙xb5+ ♘bd7 12.0-0-0 ♖d8

'Teaching Murphy to play was easy; I just put a copy of the rules by his bowl and left him on his own for four hours. When I returned, he had obviously played against himself a huge number of times, for he had learned a tremendous amount. Now he loves following games on my computer, but I do wonder what he sees when he views a board from inside his bowl. I mean, does the curved glass distort his vision? Do the ranks and files appear as straight lines to him? I ask this because initially he found the moves of the rooks and bishops difficult, but he latched on to the knights' move instantly. And do the squares at the edge of the board look smaller than those in the centre?'

I was relieved of the necessity of attempting an answer by Murphy's next move.

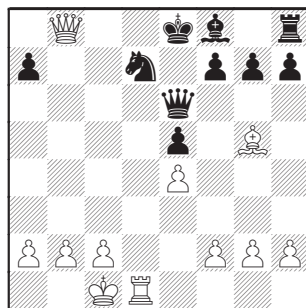
13.♖xd7?

I was as embarrassed as Leslie by this ghastly error; it cannot be blamed on time pressure; more likely Murphy's tiny, little mind was over-loaded. Apologetically, I took the rook.

13...♖xd7 14. ♖d1 ♖e6 15.♙xd7

When down in material, exchanging pieces is not to be recommended but his position is passed saving. I couldn't help wondering how a goldfish resigns a game of chess; this was not something that I had ever contemplated before today.

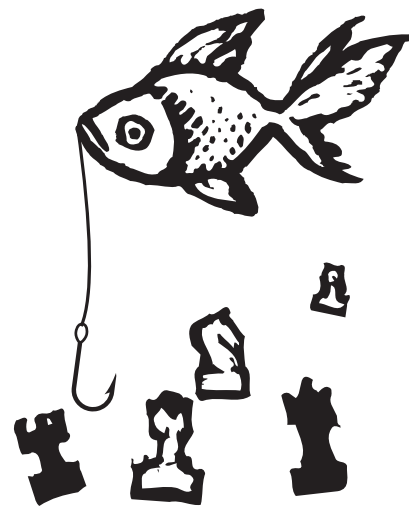
15...♘xd7 16.♖b8+??



On seeing this further, pathetic howler I giggled and Leslie slumped back in his chair. I don't know whether it was my laughter or the realisation that Murphy was being trounced that upset him but after I reluctantly played

16...♘xb8

Leslie, without a word, started to put away the chess pieces. He didn't need to say that the game was over, his demeanour stated it all too clearly. With a sad, parting glance at me, Leslie got up and left.



One final curious thing was, that as Leslie placed the towel back over the bowl and put the bowl back inside the box, I could hear that Murphy was thrashing madly with his fin, so much so, that water was being sprayed out of the bowl. I regret to report that this display of poor sportsmanship continued until my two visitors were out of my house.

Upon reflection, if training a goldfish for months only produces a standard of play that wouldn't get into our fourth team, if we had one, it doesn't say much about the coach. Unsurprisingly Leslie kept quiet about this episode, although years later, when I cautiously inquired, he did mention that chess had been abandoned by Murphy in favour of studying the law. This venture had an equally unsatisfactory conclusion: the public being unwilling to accept that a goldfish's memory was up to the task, resulting in Murphy's final years being rather troubled.

Subsequently the chess world was rocked by the revelation that the exploits of Joey, the budgerigar, were a deplorable hoax, meaning that Murphy is unique among animate chessplayers.

## BOOK REVIEW

### Werner Keym: 'CHESS PROBLEMS OUT OF THE BOX'

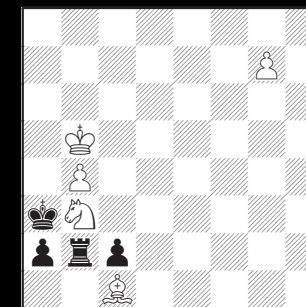
By Christopher Jones

If you are tempted by an escape from the practicalities of over-the-board chess, then the book 'Chess Problems Out of the Box' may be for you. The author is a long-standing expert in the chess problem world, specializing in problems featuring castling, promotions, en-passant captures, and other exotic features, often with a fascinating under-pinning of retro-analysis.

Werner Keym has made a painstaking selection from thousands of problems that exist in databases, using Voltaire's aphorism 'All genres are good except the boring' as the motto for this book.

This English-language publication is an updated and expanded version of a 2010 German-language edition.

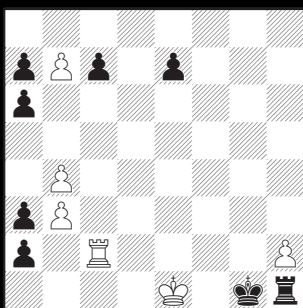
The problems range from the reasonably conventional to the distinctly unconventional. Take this problem, from the section dealing with promotions, as an example of the former end of the spectrum:



Matjaz Zigman  
1<sup>st</sup> Prize, Delo-Tovaris 1970  
Mate in 3

Clearly the g7 pawn will promote. It seems at first that 1.g8=queen must do the trick, planning to move the b3 knight with unanswerable threats of both 3.♖b3 and 3.♗a8. However, Black has the resource 1...a1=♙, when any move of the b3 knight gives stalemate. So try 1.g8=♖, when 1...a1=♙ fails (2.♗d2 ♖a2 3.♗a8) but now 1...a1=N refutes. Therefore we must invert the moves - 1.♗d2! and now we have 1...a1=♙ 2.g8=♖ and 1...a1=♗ 2.g8=♗. Thus we have (very economically) all 4 promotions, known to problemists by the German word *Allumwandlung* ('AUW' for short). (Note that it is to d2 that the white knight must go so as to guard b1.)

A couple of other examples give an idea of having to think 'outside the box' - beyond the parameters of everyday chess calculation. The following problem, by Werner Keym himself, was published in *Die Schwalbe* in 1997 with the unusual stipulation: 'add white bishop on a1, white rook on a1 or white queen on a1. Mate in how many moves?'



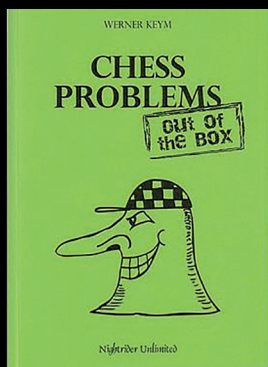
I quote Werner's solution: "There is mate in 1 single move by a bishop (1.♙d4♠). The last move could be a4-a3 because the black pawns could capture the 9 missing pieces on light squares. With ♖a1 or ♗a1 the black pawn d7 captured the dark-squared bishop on c5 or b4 or c3, so the last move could not be a4-a3 and Black is to play. The rook needs one single move more: 1.♖xh2 0-0-0♠ and the queen even four moves: 1.♖xh2 ♗g7+ 2.♗h1 ♖xh2+ 3.♗xh2 ♗f2 4.♗h3 ♗g3♠." The paradoxicality -

the stronger the piece the longer it takes to mate - is typical of the quirky humour of this book.

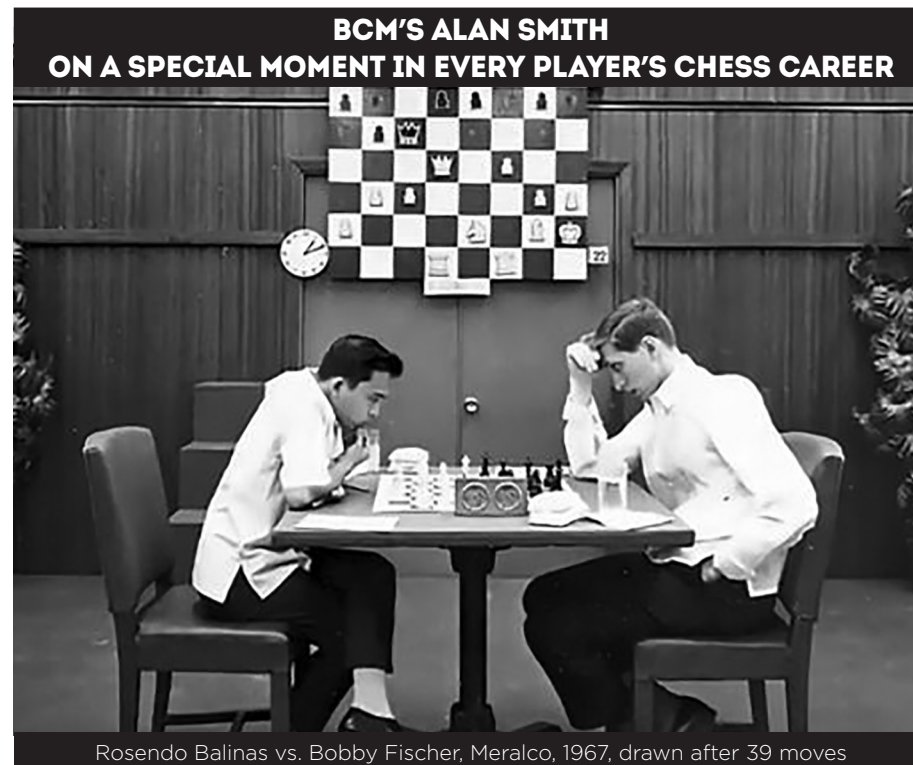
One final example, again by Werner himself, this time from *Allgemeine Zeitung Mainz* 2002, and this time with the odd stipulation 'Has White been mated?' Try and set up the following position: White - king on d3; bishop on c1; pawns on b2 and d2; Black - king on b1; queen on e5; bishop on a6; pawns on b7, c3 and d4. Now have a look at the position again - it's not a mistake!

It seems that this position would have to have arisen from a sequence of moves ...b5-b4+; c2-c4, bxc3 e.p. However, if the white pawn had been at c2 so recently, how on earth did the black king get to b1?! So the white pawn must have been at c3, in which case '...bxc3 e.p.' was an illegal move: Black, having touched his b4 pawn, must move it, and the result of his doing so, ...b4-b3, is stalemate! (Yes, a pinch of salt is sometimes needed with humorous puzzles such as this one...)

All in all, a very diverse and diverting potpourri of problems (and even a few studies), which should prove a pleasant introduction to the enjoyably impractical aspects of chess.



Nightrider Unlimited  
(www.nightrider-unlimited.de) 2018  
500 diagrams, 184pp.



## FIRST MEETING WITH A GRANDMASTER

By Alan Smith

A chess player's first meeting with a grandmaster is a memorable occasion. Back in 1978 grandmasters did not prowl the circuit like hungry wolves: indeed, it was rare even to see an IM.

I played my first grandmaster back in 1978 in round 5 of the first Benedictine International, held at the Wythenshawe Forum. I started the event slowly, losing to Keith Arkell in round 1, but recovered well with wins against Cockroft and Bruce Rind. After 4 rounds I had scored +2 =1 -1 and I was level with three grandmasters. When I was travelling back from the venue with Chris Morrison and David Kilgour, they pointed out that I was probably going to meet a GM the next day.

The next morning I was paired with GM Rosendo Balinas. He was one of a select band of foreign visitors who won an outright tournament victory in the USSR:

- Capablanca at Moscow 1936
- Fine at Moscow 1937
- Flohr at Leningrad-Moscow 1939
- **Balinas** at Odessa 1976
- (Nigel Short went on to win at Baku in 1983.)

Rosendo Carreon Balinas, Jr. (September 10, 1941 - September 24, 1998) was a player from the Philippines who received his GM title in 1976. A lawyer by profession, he was also an acclaimed chess writer and journalist. He is considered to be one of the strongest Asian chess players during the