

## BOOK REVIEW

# Werner Keym: Anything but Average Chess Classics and Off-beat Problems

By Chris Jones

Werner Keym's book 'Anything but Average - Chess Classics and Off-beat Problems' was published in Goettingen (Germany) earlier this year. On 198 pages, it has 375 games, studies, problems, puzzles by 240 authors, 120 related problems, 180 additional diagrams. And it's in English! For details see <http://www.berlinthema.de> and [www.nightrider-unlimited.de](http://www.nightrider-unlimited.de).

This is a book to gladden the hearts of all chess lovers, even those who usually have little or no interest in composed chess positions. A large part of the book is devoted to 'The Classics', beginning with classic games and then going on to classic studies and classic problems. The emphasis is on crowd-pleasers. Amongst the famous (and some not so famous) problems there are some sensational, unexpected key moves, and a lot of surprising and paradoxical continuations. You will pick up some strategic concepts of problem composers along the way, but the emphasis is on entertainment rather than instruction. (Often a really surprising move in a solution leads you into exploring why this move is the only way to achieve the aim of the problem, and gaining an understanding of problems in this auto-didactic fashion is much the most enjoyable way!)

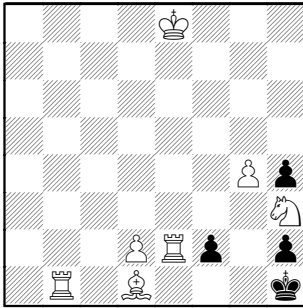
The text is very readable (in excellent English), and in studies and longer problems liberally sprinkled with diagrams showing intermediate positions reached during the solution, so that you can derive enjoyment from browsing without having to set up a chessboard.



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There are also sections on 'Special Moves' and 'Problems Out of the Box', which show how composers have exercised their ingenuity to seek out optimal achievements in showing promotions, e.p. captures, etc.. There are also fascinating problems in which you have to work out what must have happened in the previous play to reach the position diagrammed.

To give you a flavour of the book, here's a classic (which however was unknown to me!!) and Werner Keym's exposition of it:



**Ado Kraemer** 1<sup>st</sup> Prize,  
*Roemmig Memorial 1954*  
*Mate in 3*

Black can only play 1...♔g2 (2.♖xf2+ ♔xh3 3.♖b3) or 1...f1♖ (threatens 2...♗f8+). After 1...f1♖ 2.♙a4 ♖xb1 3.♙c6+ fails to 3...♗e4+.

**Tries:**

1.d3?! prevents ...♗b1>e4, but also (after 1...♔g2! 2.♖xf2+ ♔xh3) the mating move 3.♖b3.

1.♙a4? ♔g2! 2.♖xf2+ ♔xh3 3.♖b3+ fails to 3...♔xg4.

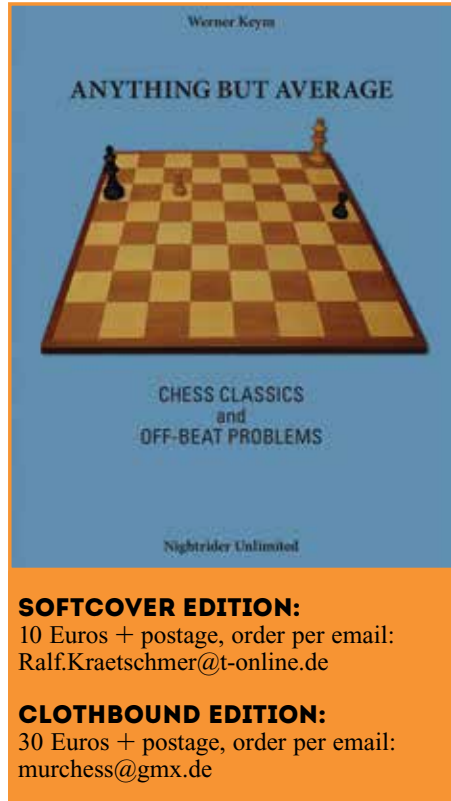
1.♖c1!? (or 1.♖a1) 1...f1♖ 2.♙c2 ♖x♖ 3.♙e4♖

However, there is an ingenious underpromotion defence 1...f1♙! ... and 2.♙c2 will stalemate Black.

1.♔f7? f1♖+ 2.♖f2 ♖c4+!

1.♔d8!? (on a dark square) 1...f1♖ 2.♖f2 ♖d3+!

1...♔e7 (on a dark square) 1...f1♖ 2.♖f2 ♖e1+!



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**SOLUTION:**

Paradoxically, only 1.♔f8!!! works, creating something extraordinary: a zugzwang position which allows Black an immediate check

1...f1♖+ 2.♖f2 (threatens 3.♙f3♖);  
2...♖xf2+ 3.♙f3♖ double check; 2...♗g2  
3.♙f3♖ pinning ♗g2; 2...♗e2 3. ♙xe2♖;  
2...♖xd1 3.♖xd1♖

1...f1♖+♙/♗ 2.♖f2 ...

Keym ends by quoting the expert composer Herbert Grasemann's comment: "Only for people with nerves of steel".

This is but one of a host of spectacular examples of chess beauty in a book that can be thoroughly recommended.