



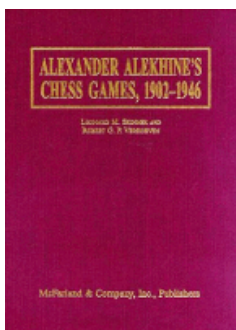
SKITTLES ROOM

From the Archives

Hosted by Mark Donlan

[\[Find us on Facebook.\]](#)

[Translate this page](#)



From the Archives...

Since it came online in 1996, [ChessCafe.com](#) has presented thousands of articles, reviews, columns and the like for the enjoyment of its worldwide readership. This high quality material remains available in the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#). However, we decided that the occasional selection from the archives posted publicly online might be a welcomed addition to the regular fare.

Watch for an item to be posted online periodically throughout each month. We will update the [ChessCafe.com](#) home page whenever there has been a "new" item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

Alekhine's Imagination

by Lev Khariton

It is difficult to find another chess player who was consistently as imaginative and creative as Alexander Alekhine. Certainly both Tal and Bronstein in their prime could be considered, but overall, Alekhine probably stands alone. Unfortunately for historians and anyone else concerned about historical accuracy, he occasionally carried things too far.

The most famous case in point is the famous "Five Queens Game" allegedly played in 1915. To begin, let us present the game score:

Alekhine – Grigoriev
Moscow, 1915

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Bb4 5 e5 h6 6 ef6 hg5 7 fg7 Rg8 8 h4 gh4 9 Qg4 Be7 10 g3 c5 11 gh4 cd4 12 h5 dc3 13 h6 cb2 14 Rb1 Qa5 15 Ke2 Qa2 16 h7 Qb1 17 hg8=Q Kd7 18 Qf7 Qc2 19 Kf3 Nc6 20 Qge6 Kc7 21 Qf4 Kb6 22 Qee3 Bc5 23 g8=Q b1=Q 24 Rh6 1-0



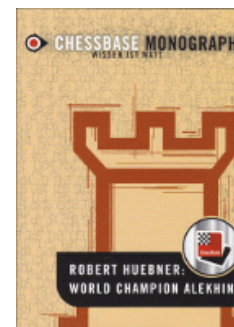
[FEN "r1b3Q1/pp6/1kn4R/2bp4/5Q2/4QK2/2q2P2/1q3BN1 b - - 0 24"]

Perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of the historical accuracy of this game is presented by Tim Krabbé in his excellent book *Chess Curiosities* (George, Allen & Unwin, London, 1985), upon which is placed great reliance in this discussion.

Krabbé notes that Black appears to be lost in all variations:

(a) 24...Be3 25 Qd8 Kc5 and now White can choose from two different mates

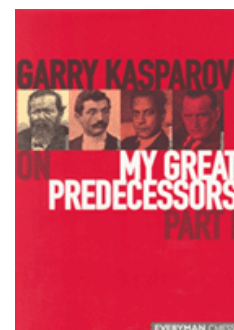
Purchases from our [chess shop](#) help keep [ChessCafe.com](#) freely accessible:



World Champion Alekhine
by Robert Hübner



The Giants of Power Play
by Neil McDonald



My Great Predecessors, Part 1
by Garry Kasparov

in three: 26 Qfd6 Kd4 27 Qdf6 Ne5 28 Qfe5 (Alekhine) and 26 Qd5 Kb6 (26... Kd5 27 Qd6) 27 Qd8 Kc5 28 Qfd6.

(b) 24...Qf1 25 Qb4 Qb5 (25...Kc7 26 Qg3 and quickly mate) 26 Qd8 Ka6 27 Qa3.

(c) 24...a6 (or 24...a5) 25 Rc6 bc6 (25...Kc6 26 Qe6 and mate in two) 26 Qd8 Ka7 27 Qde7 Bb7 (Kotov) and Black has avoided mate at the cost of still being a queen down in the endgame.

Unbelievable. But not everything which is unbelievable is true for that reason alone and this holds for Alekhine's five queen game in two ways.

In the first place, the game is a fake. It was never played. It is a pure concoction of Alekhine's, and he must have had it in mind when in 1929, in preface to the autobiography of the French player and study composer Lazard, he wrote the following words:

"I would like to be able to create alone, without the necessity, as in games, of adjusting my plans to those of the opponent, in order to create something that will remain. Oh! This opponent, this collaborator against his will, whose notion of Beauty always differs from yours and whose means (strength, imagination, technique) are often too limited to help you effectively! What torment, to have your thinking and your fantasy tied down by another person!"

Looking to Albert Buschke's articles that appeared in *Chess Life*, Krabbé investigates further. The Championship of the Moscow Chess Club was played in the last months of 1915. In this forgotten tournament, won by Alekhine with 10½ out of 11, there were but a few other players whose names have survived: Zubarov, Nenarokov and, the best known among them, N.D. Grigoriev (1895-1938). Grigoriev was to become famous as a theoretician and composer of endgames (he is still regarded as one of the greatest authorities on pawn endgames), and as a publicist he was for many years chess editor of *Izvestia*. He was also a strong player, winning the Moscow Championship in 1921 and 1924. The year of his early death suggests he was a victim of Stalin's purges.

The game Grigoriev-Alekhine was played in the sixth round of that 1915 tournament. Note: Grigoriev played *white*, and Alekhine *black*. It was an interesting game, and Alekhine analyzed it for the February 1916 issue of the national Russian chess paper of the time: *Shakhmatny Vyestnik*.

Grigoriev – Alekhine

Moscow, November 13, 1915

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Bb4 5 e5 h6 6 ef6 hg5 7 fg7 Rg8 8 h4 gh4 9 Qg4 Be7 10 g3 c5



[FEN "rnbqk1r1/pp2bpP1/4p3/2pp4/3P2Qp/2N3P1/PPP2P2/R3KBNR w KQq c6 0 11"]

11 O-O-O Nc6 12 dc5 Qa5 13 Kb1 e5 14 Qh5 Be6 15 Nd5 Bd5 16 Rd5 Nb4 17 Re5 Qa2 18 Kc1 O-O-O 19 Bd3 Qa1 20 Kd2 Qb2 21 Ke3 Bf6 22 Qf5 Kb8 23 Re4 Nd3 24 cd3 Bd4 25 Kf4 Qf2 0-1

The game deviates from the previous beginning with White's eleventh move. In the note to that move, Alekhine gives "...an example of the fantastic variations that could have arisen after [11 gh4]." And move for move, Alekhine produced the game as given above.

So far so good. The five queen game had been published and not one untrue word had been written. But later, Alekhine must have deplored not having actually played the phenomenal game he had invented and, perhaps to save his readers from having to share in this sadness, he included it in his 1927 book, *My Best Games of Chess 1908-1923*. As game twenty-six we find **Tarrasch-Alekhine**, Petersburg 1914 which begins: **1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 Bg5 Bb4**. When Tarrasch plays **5 ed5** Alekhine annotates: "Interesting, too, is Chigorin's continuation: 5 e5 h6 6 ef6 hg5 7 fg7 Rg8 8 h4 gh4 with the improvement 9 Qg4! instead of 9 Qh5. A game played by the author in Moscow, 1915, continued as follows..." and the five queen game is presented.

But how did Grigoriev come to be Alekhine's opponent? Alekhine does not mention the name of the opponent in the book, and the game was circulated as Grigoriev-Alekhine even *before* Alekhine's book appeared in 1927. Buschke found it in a 1925 book by J. DuMont and investigating this, he came close to the solution: Alekhine had personally shown the game to DuMont somewhere in 1923.

The conclusion that Krabbé reaches is that as the game was passed around, it became known as a variation that could have happened in the Grigoriev game, with names reversed. It also appears certain that Grigoriev himself was familiar with the game, as it was mentioned in Grigoriev's *Shakhmatny Listok* (as *Shakhmatny Vvestnik* was then known) in a review! As Krabbé observes, Grigoriev knew the five queen game, but it never occurred to him it had anything to do with **Grigoriev-Alekhine**, Moscow 1915!

There is at least one other instance of Alekhine possibly changing a gamescore so that posterity might perceive him better. In the *British Chess Magazine Chess Annual* for 1916, the game **Evenssohn-Alekhine** is given. It also appears in Alekhine's *My Best Games of Chess 1908-1923*. In the latter publication it appears as follows:

Evenssohn – Alekhine
Kiev, May 1916

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 Nf6 4 Nc3 Nbd7 5 Bc4 Be7 6 O-O O-O 7 de5 de5 8 Bg5 c6 9 a4 Qc7 10 Qe2 Nc5 11 Ne1 Ne6 12 Be3 Nd4 13 Qd1 Rd8 14 Nd3 Be6 15 Be6 Ne6 16 Qe1 Rd7 17 f3 Rad8 18 Bf2 Nh5 19 Ne2 c5 20 b3 Nhf4 21 Nef4 Nf4 22 Nf4 ef4 23 c3 Qe5 24 Ra2 Rd3 25 Rc2 b6 26 Qc1 Qe6 27 Qb1 Bf6 28 b4 c4 29 Qc1 g5 30 h3 Be5 31 Qa1 h5 32 a5 g4 33 ab6 ab6 34 Bh4 f6 35 Be1 g3 36 Qa7 Qc6 37 Qa3 b5 38 Qb2 Qb6 39 Kh1 Rd1 40 Rc1 Qe3 41 Ra1



[FEN "3r2k1/8/5p2/1p2b2p/1Pp1Pp2/2P1qPpP/1Q4P1/R2rBR1K b - - 0 41"]

41...Ra1 42 Qa1 Qe2 43 Rg1 Rd1 44 Qa8 Kg7 45 Qa7 Kg6 46 Qe7 Qe1 47 Qe8 Kg5 48 Qg8 Kh4 0-1

However, in the *BCM Chess Annual*, Black's forty-first is not shown as **41...Ra1**, but **41...Bc7**. It concludes as follows: **41...Bc7 42 Qa2 Ra1 43 Qa1 and 0-**

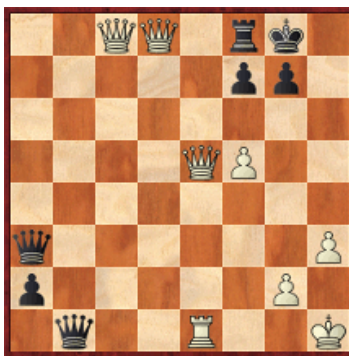
1 in five more moves. When Alekhine himself annotated the game in *Novoye Vremya*, however, he indicated in a note after Black's forty-first move that "... [t]here was a simpler win with 41...Ra1 42 Qa1 Qe2 43 Rg1 Rd1 44 Qa8 Kg7 45 Qa7 Kg6 etc." As questioned in *Chess Notes* Vol. I, No. 1, #24, was this another example of Alekhine's dishonesty?

Krabbé's investigation had been prompted by the attempt to determine which legitimate game had the most queens. He concludes that it is the following game, which he verified on page 172 of the 1913 volume of the *Tijdschrift NSB* (Dutch):

Tresling – Benima

Winschoten (Holland) 1896

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Be7 6 O-O b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 d3
Be6 9 Qe2 Qd7 10 Nd5 Bd5 11 ed5 Na5 12 d4 Nb3 13 ab3 e4 14 Nd2 O-O
15 c4 Rfe8 16 Ne4 Ne4 17 Qe4 Bf6 18 Qd3 Qg4 19 Be3 b4 20 f4 h5 21 h3
Qd7 22 f5 Qe7 23 Rae1 a5 24 Kh1 Qe4 25 Qd1 c5 26 dc5 Bb2 27 Rf4 Qe7
28 Qh5 Bf6 29 cd6 Qd6 30 Qf3 Re5 31 Re4 Re4 32 Qe4 Qg3 33 Bf4 Qb3
34 d6 Rf8 35 c5 a4 36 c6 a3 37 Be5 Be5 38 Qe5 a2 39 d7 Qa3 40 c7 b3 41
d8=Q b2 42 c8=Q b1=Q



[FEN "2QQ1rk1/5pp1/8/4QP2/8/
q6P/p5P1/lq2R2K w - - 0 43"]

43 Qf8 Qf8 44 Qf8 Kf8 45 Qe8 1-0

© ChessCafe.com. All Rights Reserved.

This article first appeared at ChessCafe.com in April 1996.

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)
[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[ChessCafe Archives\]](#)
[\[ChessCafe Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#)
[\[Contact ChessCafe.com\]](#)

© 2010 BrainGamz, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of BrainGamz, Inc.