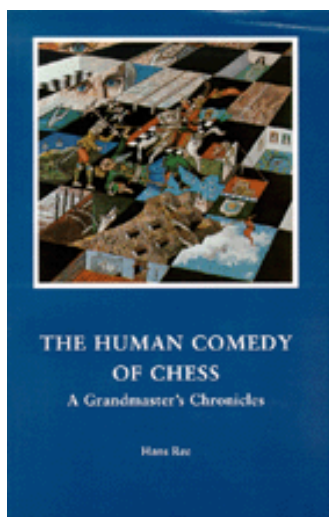




COLUMNISTS

Dutch Treat

Hans Ree

*The Human Comedy
of Chess*

by Hans Ree

Cheating for Sport

After the Linares tournament, it became known that Garry Kasparov had done something for which lesser mortals might have been disqualified from the tournament. Twice he had left the playing area for about a quarter of an hour, without giving notice to anyone. The second time the organisers had sent a spy to follow him and it turned out that he had gone to his hotel room.

Really! To the holy sanctuary where he keeps his laptop, with database, playing engines and all his legendary opening analysis. Nowadays, when your cell phone rings during a game, you forfeit automatically and this seems a much graver offence.

The organisers didn't take action. Kasparov said that he had gone to his room to take medicines. If he had said so before leaving the playing hall the arbiter would probably have arranged a guardian to accompany him to his room, and everything would have been alright. But then Kasparov would have had to acknowledge that rules apply not only to commoners, but also to the king.

I do not think that he was really cheating; I think that what he said was the truth. But nevertheless the incident turned my mind to the real cheaters who will be always with us, especially on the internet.

They are strange people. Sometimes you can understand why they do it: just for the money. But often they seem to derive their pleasure from cheating itself, as art for art's sake, without monetary motives.

In the past I have written about the 1995 Senior World Championship in which Milan Matulovic took part. In his heyday he was able to sell a place in the candidates matches for real money, but in this veteran's tournament prizes were low and anyway Matulovic wasn't doing well and had little chance to win one.

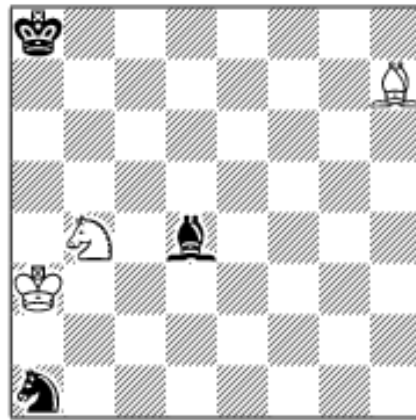
But still he was applying his tricks, setting his clock back when he had overstepped the time limit and setting his opponent's clock ahead to make up for the lost time. It was not for the money, just cheating for the fun of it. In a way I was touched by the old man still going strong in his particular field.

A special case is the plagiarists among composers of problems and endgame studies. Here the chances of monetary rewards are extremely low and the chances to be found out and gain eternal infamy instead of glory are rather high.

In the latest issue of EBUR, a quarterly devoted to endgame studies, the editor Harold van der Heijden writes about what he calls “a second generation of plagiarists”. They are smarter than their predecessors in the way they disguise their plagiarism, but on the other hand the means of detection have improved too, especially because of Van der Heijden's study database.

Even so one of the cheaters, a certain I. Borisenko from Ukraine (not to be confused with the well-known player Georgy Borisenko) had managed to trick Van der Heijden, who in the previous issue of EBUR had published three studies by Borisenko that upon closer inspection turned out to be plagiarised, all three of them.

Here is one. We start with the original model.



White to move and win.

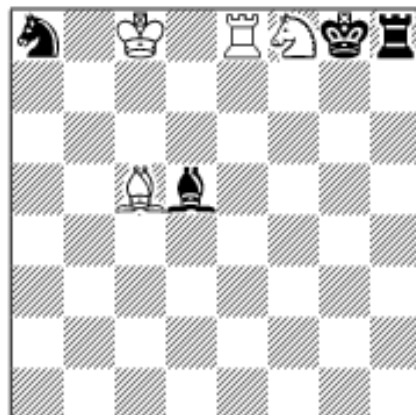
H. Rinck

first prize Ginnering MT 1935

White can easily capture Black's bishop, but to win he also has to get the black knight stranded on a1. Black's king will try to come to the rescue of his knight.

1. Bh7-e4+ Ka8-a7 2. Nb4-c6+ Ka7-b6 3. Nc6xd4 Kb6-c5 5. Nd4-e2 Kc5-c4 5. Ne2-c1 Kc4-c3 6. Nc1-a2+ Kc3-c4 7. Be4-h7 Na1-b3 8. Bh7-g8+ and wins.

And here is Borisenko's version.



The board has been turned 90 degrees and two rooks have been added for a silly introduction that only serves as a smoke-screen to confuse the authenticity-checkers.

Now the solution starts with **1. Nf8-d7+ Kg8-h7 2. Re8xh8+ Kh7xh8 3. Bc5-d4+** and the rest as in Rinck's study.

“Why do Borisenko and his partners in crime send these studies to me?” Van der Heijden wonders. He is well-known as one of the greatest experts when it comes to spotting cases of plagiarism and he suspects that this is exactly the reason. The cheaters do it as a sport and they want to challenge a worthy opponent.

This is confirmed by the fact that Borisenko didn't pick a relatively unknown study by a minor composer to work on. No, flirting with exposure, Borisenko choose a study by the famous Henri Rinck that had won a first prize in a tourney.

Another article in EBUR is perhaps not connected with cheating, but certainly with mystification. Once again the mysterious *tractor problem* surfaces, that differs from the monster from Loch Ness by the fact that it really exists, even in several different versions.

The canonical version is the one published in the Dutch magazine *Schakend Nederland* in 1990 by the composer Gijs van Breukelen.



White to move and win.

1. Bf8-g7+ Kh8-g8 2. Ne8xf6+ Kg8xg7 3. Nf6-h5+ Kg7-g6 Not 3...Kf7, because this square is needed for the black knight.

4. Bd1-c2+ Kg6xh5 5. d7-d8Q Ne5-f7+ He has to remove the new queen, otherwise he will be mated quickly.

6. Kd6-e6 Nf7xd8+ 7. Ke6-f5 e3-e2 8. Bc2-e4 e2-e1N 9. Be4-d5 c3-c2 10. Bd5-c4 c2-c1N Twice promoting to a knight black has been able to delay the mate.

11. Bc4-b5 Na6-c7 12. Bb5-a4 But now the four black knights cannot prevent mate in a few moves.

A nice problem that comes with a nice story of which many different versions exist. The Dutch journalist Jules Welling told the story as he heard it in the pressroom of the 1978 Karpov-Kortchnoi world championship match.

Supposedly the position had appeared in a game and white had resigned. Then a Georgian farmer became obsessed with this position and glued it to his tractor. After twenty years of farming he had found the solution, a forced mate, which he sent to the Russian magazine *64*.

Much later, when Karpov took over as chief editor of *64*, he asked Tal to go through the piles of unanswered mail and that's how Tal found the tractor problem.

When Welling asked him if this was really true, Tal slyly answered that truth should never be in the way of a good story.

Harold van der Heijden thinks that Welling invented this story, but this I doubt. Welling isn't like that. Other people would be proud of inventing the tractor story, but Welling found the suggestion an attack on his journalistic integrity.

Anyway, it is certain that this problem existed long before it was published in 1990. Does this mean that Van Breukelen was guilty of plagiarism? Not necessarily. Van der Heijden's opinion is that Van Breukelen composed it during the seventies, but only showed it to a few friends at that time.

The new light that EBUR sheds on the matter is a photograph from 1976. We see Dutch IM Hans Böhm and the draughts world champion Harm Wiersma together with the painter Hans Verhoef, who is showing his painting of the tractor problem, with insects as pieces.

So, we know for sure that the problem existed already in 1976, though in a slightly different version, with Black's king on h7 and without the f6-pawn, and White's knight on g4 and without the bishop on f8. Then the solution starts with 1. Nf6+ Kg7 2. Nh5+ Kg6, and so on.

To add to the mystery, in the book by Arnold Denker and Larry Parr *The Bobby Fischer I knew and other stories*, Denker claims that this position had already been shown to him in 1953 by Ossip Bernstein, who supposedly had seen it in Spain a few years earlier. If this is true it would mean that Gijs van Breukelen was indeed guilty of plagiarism in 1990.

But again, it doesn't have to be so, for Denker too was no stranger to the notion that truth should not always get in the way of a good story.

More about the tractor problem can be found on the Chessbase website. The link is www.chessbase.com/puzzle/puzz16b.htm



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