Mikhail Tal
TACTICAL GENIUS
Alexander Raetsky & Maxim Chetverik

EVERYMAN CHESS
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Mikhail Tal: A Short Biography</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Simple but Effective</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Stepping Up</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Getting There!</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Tal's World of Magic</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Chess Wizardry</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Endgame Magic</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 A Tasting of his own Medicine</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Tal Tips</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Solutions to Puzzles</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the magical world of Mikhail Tal's chess combinations! In this book you will find xxx examples of artistic chess performance by the eighth world champion. We have tried to create a little book of combinations, which at the same time allows the reader to improve his tactical vision and to obtain an intimate knowledge of Mikhail Tal – one of the most popular of all world champions.

It is our opinion that you cannot reproduce a chess talent like Mikhail Tal, but that you can still learn from him and enjoy his creativity. Imitation is in itself not a goal to be pursued, but at times it can be useful to pretend to be someone else, and to walk in the footsteps of giants.

Because a gardener needs to learn about the roots as well as the flower, we have chosen to include many of the games in full for those who want to go deeper into these games. However, it is perfectly possible to be like the florist who prepares the flowers for selling, or simply the customer who enjoys the beautiful flower without worrying about how they got here. We are happy to let each reader choose what suits him best.

The structure of the book is as follows: each chapter will discuss an aspect of Tal's combinational play and there will be several examples. The reader then has the opportunity to solve a number of positions from the great man's games. If you need a little help, you can consult the 'Tal Tip', which will give you a gentle push in the right direction.

Here is an example to whet your appetite.

Chukaev-Tal
Soviet Championship, Tbilisi 1956

After the natural 26...\texttt{a}e1+ 27 \texttt{w}a2 we reach the moment for the combination. Black has several tempting continuations, some of them enough to secure the win. Tal, of course, found the quickest way to force White to resign. What did the magician play?
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Tal Tip
Black's queenside pawns play an important role in the mate as Tal demonstrated in the game. Also, notice that Black's bishop 'x-rays' the a1-square.

Solution
27...\text{\texttt{w}}xa3+!
Black now mates on the next move with 28...\text{\texttt{a}}a1. This was definitely the fastest way to win the game. However, other moves did also win for Black here (27...\text{\texttt{b}}xb2! is one of these).

While working on this book, we have once again received technical support from Esben Lund and Jacob Aagaard, for which we are very grateful.

Maxim Chetverik and Alexander Raetsky,
Voronezh,
August 2004
Before the triumph of the knockout system and the subsequent general anarchy, the chess world was ruled, in turn, by thirteen kings. Mikhail Tal was on the throne for a shorter time than any of the others. His rule lasted one year and five days — seven days less than that of Vassily Smyslov. However, to tell the history of chess without including Tal is unthinkable. His style and manner of play were inimitable and a textbook for the preparation of a new Tal simply does not exist. His excellent book on the 1960 Botvinnik-Tal match deeply analyses a specific event without suggesting any systematic theories. Tal’s unusually interesting commentaries on his own games are also not of a textbook nature. In the book Attack like Mikhail Tal the journalist Yakov Damsky tries on the basis of Tal's games to divide the theory of attack into elements. However, the thinking of the brilliant champion is hard to reduce to categories such as ‘weakness of the back rank’ or ‘vulnerability of the f7-square’. The features of the great master of combinations stand out more vividly if you play through all of Tal’s fighting games one after another. Probably even closer to understanding the Tal enigma were those fortunate enough to observe his play with their own eyes, following the creativity at the moment of creation. It is sad that this is no longer possible. But just as Mozart left us the notes of his brilliant music, so Mikhail Tal, the Mozart of chess, has bequeathed us his combinations. It is not worth trying to imitate the inimitable. It is better simply to look and admire.

Mikhail Tal was born on 9th November 1936 in Riga into the family of a doctor. From his early years he was observed to have brilliant mathematical ability, an exceptional memory and perfect musical ear. Later his unique chess talent also revealed itself. At the age of seven Misha learned the rules of the game and chess soon pushed aside all other passions. It was in the post-war period that chess life in the Soviet Union rapidly began to be restored. Latvia was no exception. The nine-year-old Misha joined a chess club with an excellent trainer Yanis Kruzkop. His progress was rapid: at twelve he made his debut in the Latvian junior team, at thirteen he achieved first category status and made his first appearance in the adult championship of Riga, and at fourteen he made his debut in the Latvian Championship.

At the age of fifteen Tal effectively chose his career. He became a student of philology, since a study of the exact sciences would have interfered with chess. Under the super-
vision of the highly experienced trainer Aleksandrs Koblencs, at the age of sixteen Tal became champion of Latvia. At seventeen Mikhail gained the right to a match for the master title, won it, and began his ascent through the qualifying stages to the final of the Soviet Championship. The debutant shared 5th-7th places, only a point behind the winners – an excellent result for the nineteen-year-old junior!

Thanks to his success in the Soviet Championship, Tal was included in the student team that participated in the World Team Championship. On board three he scored six points out of seven. One of his victims, Grandmaster Ivkov, published an article with the prophetic heading ‘Tal! Remember this name!’

Fame was already on the threshold. Early in 1957 Mikhail became Soviet champion. He defeated, among others, Bronstein, Keres, Taimanov and Petrosian. For this success FIDE awarded Tal the title of International Grandmaster. The following year Tal defended his title in his native Riga. The top four qualified to the Interzonal Tournament. In the middle of the tourment Tal had only 50%, but he put in a splendid finish and before the last round he was already assured of a place in the top four. In a dramatic struggle with Spassky, the Riga player was under threat of defeat, but in the end he won. This brought Tal his second successive victory in the Soviet Championship.

After the very difficult test in Riga, the Interzonal Tournament in Portoroz proved for Tal to be virtually an easy stroll. The twice Soviet champion not only secured a place in the Candidates Tournament, but also took clear first place. There then followed a successful debut in the Olympiad in Munich, a share of 2nd-3rd places in the next Soviet Championship (Tal evidently considered that a third successive win would have been indecent) and victory in a very strong tournament in Zürich.

The 1959 Candidates Tournament took place in Yugoslavia, a happy country for Tal. Eight players contested a four-cycle event. The deciding games perhaps proved to be those between Tal and Smyslov, who was dreaming of playing a fourth match for the champion’s crown with Botvinnik. Tal lost in the first cycle and in the second he caught his opponent in a trap in a dubious position. In a winning position from the third cycle, in time trouble Smyslov overlooked a perpetual check, and in the last cycle he altogether suffered a disappointing defeat. Tal’s main rival turned out to be Keres. However, in the end, with a score of 20 points out of 28, Tal finished one and a half points ahead of the Estonian. The way to the throne was open.

Let us turn to the reasons for the rapid ascent of Mikhail Tal. He possessed a rare intuition and in addition he calculated variations more deeply and accurately than the majority of his opponents. However, many of Tal’s complicated combinations were incorrect! He could calculate faultlessly a far-from-obvious ten-move variation and not notice a hidden defence on the third move. Tal did not even bother too much about seeking a refutation. Driven by fervour, carried away by an unusual idea, he did not disdain bluff. In a concrete struggle, in positions lacking a clear strategic pattern and with the pieces unusually placed, Tal’s opponents would usually find an opportunity to go wrong. A strong, present-day computer program would have caused the young Tal considerable problems. But at that time the only awkward opponent for Tal was Korchnoi, a strong-willed fighter and top-class defender.

It was not so unusual for Mikhail to lose, including against comparatively weak opponents. But thanks to his exceptional psychological stability, he would often answer a defeat not simply with a win, but a series of wins.

Incidentally, the young Tal played the endgame splendidly. In positions with few
pieces there was no hindrance to deep calculation. The myth about Tal’s psychological influence on his opponents and especially about hypnosis is an obvious exaggeration. Players with solid nerves are impossible to unsettle, whereas those with weak nerves had sufficient problems even without Tal. It was rather Tal who, in a way, was handicapped compared with his opponents, since from childhood he had serious problems with his health. They even tried to persuade Mikhail’s fiancée, Sally Landau, not to marry the sick young man, but Sally, in defiance of her advisers, married her beloved and soon bore him a son.

Tal won the love of his admirers not only with his entertaining play, but also his fantastic personal charm. He was completely without any snobbery and he genuinely enjoyed human contact. Witty and artistic, Tal became the centre of attention in any company. He endeavoured not to enter into any relations with the Soviet authorities. The authorities became reconciled to the existence of a cat that walked by himself and did not greatly bother them.

After each of his successes in his matches for the world championship, Mikhail Botvinnik would plunge into scientific work in the field of electrical engineering. His rare appearances before the match with Tal were fairly successful, but only thanks to his colossal strategic mastery. In tactical complications Botvinnik felt less confident. Therefore the style of Tal, who was capable of muddying the water in any situation, was awkward for the world champion. In the opening Tal did not even hope for superiority. He counted only on avoiding Botvinnik’s favourite set-ups and obtaining positions to his taste — perhaps objectively inferior, but with tactical counter-chances. A Chessmind.net release

For Tal the first game was a good omen. He had developed the habit of beginning a tournament with a loss, but in Moscow the challenger began with a good win. After four draws he won the fantastically complicated sixth game. In a completely irrational position Botvinnik was unable to find a refutation of the sacrifices made by Tal. Nevertheless, after the ninth game the gap was reduced to the minimum. Of the next seven games, Tal won one and drew six. The impatient player from Riga could not endure this and in the seventeenth game he embarked on a risky venture in the opening. By accurate play Botvinnik gained a winning position, but in time trouble he overlooked a mate threat. The match concluded earlier than the allotted 24 games, Tal winning 12½-8½.

The FIDE rules gave Botvinnik the right to a return match. After his unequivocal win in 1960, Tal underestimated his opponent the following year. But in his preparations for the return match, Botvinnik successfully combined opening preparation with over-the-board practice. At the Olympiad in Leipzig, on top board Tal scored 11 points out of 15, but on the adjacent 2nd board Botvinnik, who had eradicated his time trouble problems, scored 10½ out of 13. Tal did not expend much energy on studying the openings and before the match he also fell ill. Botvinnik opposed the postponement of the match and demanded that Tal should travel to Moscow for a medical examination. Not possessing the same tough character as Botvinnik, the world champion agreed to play the match at the appointed time. The challenger won the pre-match psychological duel.

In the return match, for the first and last time Tal levelled the scores after the second game. He barely managed to hold out in the fourth and fifth games, but in the seventh game Botvinnik was irrepressible. The world champion won the eighth game, but he was unable to build on his success. On account of mistakes in the opening he lost three games in succession and the fate of the match was effectively decided. Subsequently the two players exchanged blows and the big difference in scores was retained. In the 20th
game Botvinnik saved a very difficult endgame on the 121st(!) move. The following day the challenger won the 21st game, and with it the match by a score of 13-8. Tal became the youngest ex-world champion in history.

It cannot be said that Tal suffered badly and for a long time after his defeat. In the autumn of 1961 he won the super-tournament in Bled. With 14½ points out of 21 he finished a point ahead of Fischer and two ahead of Gligoric, Keres and Petrosian.

In the marathon Soviet Championship in Baku, after 15 rounds Tal had only 50%, but a fast finish (5 out of 6) brought him a worthy share of 4th-5th places. But due to attacks of his kidney illness, Tal was forced to have an operation. The subsequent 1962 Candidates Tournament on the exotic island of Curacao was a disaster. For three of the four cycles Tal was engaged in a struggle for the last but one place. Everything that he painstakingly erected in the first four hours of play would collapse in the fifth hour. Due to unbearable pain, the Riga player withdrew from the tournament.

Now it is obvious that Tal no longer had any chances of regaining the crown. After Botvinnik's defeat at the hands of Petrosian in 1963, the world champions became younger, full of strength, and the main thing - absolutely healthy players. Tal, who was still by no means old, did not show any concern for his fragile health. He smoked constantly and drank, and due to his lengthy use of medicines he became increasingly dependent on them. This makes it all the more surprising that for three further decades Tal achieved outstanding tournament successes and won numerous brilliant games.

Tal rose from the ashes in 1962 at the Olympiad in Varna. He made the best score among the second reserves and he won the most brilliant game of the Olympiad against the German player Hecht. In 1963 Tal shared 2nd-3rd places in the Soviet Championship and won tournaments in Miskolc, Hastings and Reykjavik. In the Interzonal Tournament in Amsterdam (1964) Tal shared first place with Larsen, Smyslov and Spassky with the splendid result of 17 points out of 23. By the FIDE rules only three representatives of one country were allowed into the Candidates event. Tal had to win his last game in order to finish half a point ahead of Stein. The Riga player did not simply win: by sacrificing two pieces he tore apart the position of the Bulgarian grandmaster Tringov as early as the 17th move!

In 1965 the Candidates Tournament was replaced by matches. Tal's quarter-final opponent, the solid positional player Portisch, was often unable to withstand the combinative onslaught of the ex-world champion. The allotted number of 10 games was not even required. The semi-final match with Larsen took a more dramatic course. With the score standing at 4-4, Tal was very lucky in the ninth game. After the adjournment Larsen fell into a simple trap and missed a clear win. In the last game Tal made a not altogether correct piece sacrifice, but only a modern computer program has been able to demonstrate this. The Danish player did not exceed the bounds of human possibilities and was unable to disentangle himself.

For two thirds of the final Tal-Spassky match things were evenly balanced, but then Tal lost three times in a row. The world championship match of 1966 demonstrated the superiority of the world champion Petrosian over the challenger Spassky. It is possible that Petrosian would also have beaten Tal, but in any case a match between the creative antipodes could have been highly intriguing.

At the Olympiad in Havana (1966) Tal's health was subjected to another severe test. He was hit on the head with a bottle. He was obliged to miss the first four rounds, but the subsequent 13 games brought him 12 points!
In 1968 Tal took another step down from the chess throne. At any event, after losing the first game of his quarter-final match against Gligoric, Tal was not in a hurry to recoup his losses. As he himself said, he twice... agreed premature draws so that he could hurry off to football matches. Nevertheless, wins in the 7th and 9th games took Tal into the quarter-final. Here his old and awkward opponent Korchnoi blocked his path (5½-4½).

In 1969 Tal altogether missed out on the qualifying cycle. A match with Larsen for a place in the Interzonal Tournament ended in a clear defeat (2½-5½). And in the Soviet Championship, which was also a Zonal Tournament, Tal did not even score 50%. Finally he decided to have his diseased kidney removed. The operation was a success and a month later the ex-world champion won a strong international tournament in Tbilisi.

Early in the 1970s the marriage of Mikhail Tal and Sally Landau broke up. Tal's second marriage did not last long and a chess magazine employee, Angelina Perukhov, became his third wife. The USSR always cared about the moral make-up of its citizens. The twice-divorced Tal began travelling abroad significantly less.

Tal's results in the 1970s were very unstable. In the 1971 Soviet Championship he shared 2nd-3rd places, but in the Alekhine Memorial in Moscow - only 6th-7th. But then came a series of 83 games without defeat. Tal won five successive first prizes, and playing on board 4 at the Olympiad in Skopje he achieved the absolute best result - 14 points out of 16. Moreover, the number of wins in this unbeaten series was much greater than the number of draws.

The 1973 Interzonal Tournament in Leningrad ended in catastrophe - six defeats and a 50% score. In the Soviet Championship Tal scored only 'minus 1'. And here there followed a new undefeated series of 93 games in seven tournaments! Even when this series was broken in Novi Sad, the Riga player won the tournament. Tal completed the triumphal year of 1974 as USSR champion.

In the super-tournament in Milan (1975) Tal did not limit himself to his 'traditional' defeat in the first round, but added to it in the second. 5½ out of 11 after such a start was a favourable outcome. He was more successful in the Soviet Championship - a share of 2nd-5th places. Compared with the previous one in Leningrad, the Interzonal Tournament in Biel (1976) was a success - a share of 2nd-4th places. However, in the additional event to determine the odd one out, it was Portisch and Polugaevsky who prevailed.

Tal's last brilliant surge came at the end of the 1970s. In the 1978 Soviet Championship the Riga player won his sixth and last gold medal. In the double-cycle 'tournament of stars' in Montreal (1979) Tal shared first place with the world champion Karpov. He could have achieved an undefeated series of 79 games, but it was broken by a defeat against an outsider in Tallinn.

Fears regarding the outcome of the next Interzonal Tournament in Riga were fortunately not destined to be realised. The compulsory pairings presented Tal with four Soviet grandmasters at the start and he crushed them all! With the phenomenal result of 14 points out of 17 he finished 2½ points ahead of his nearest pursuer. This pursuer was Polugaevsky, who crushed Tal in the Candidates quarter-final match (5½-2½). The fairy-tale came to an end.

In 1981 Tal produced an undefeated series of 80 games, but these were from tournaments of modest strength. The ex-world champion's play was gradually transformed. He was physically unable to withstand the strain of lengthy all-play-all tournaments. Therefore in the majority of games Tal satisfied himself with short draws, in the hope of defeating the outsiders. The result was tour-
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Tal's play in the Interzonal Tournaments of the 1980s was very good. In Moscow (1982) he was third, but only two qualified for the Candidates. In Subotica (1987) Tal finished only half a point behind the winning trio. In 1985 the ex-world champion qualified from the Interzonal Tournament to the Candidates Tournament. Here he was let down by his finish - half a point from two games. Tal shared a qualifying place with Timman, drew a match with him and suffered on account of his inferior tie-break score.

The open tournaments that had become fashionable did not suit Tal, since they took too much energy. On the other hand, in view of their shortness, rapid and blitz tournaments were very much up Tal's street. He even won the first FIDE Blitz World Championship in 1988.

Tal played his last tournament game on 5th May 1992 in Barcelona. Grandmaster Akopian, who was playing Black, rejected the offer of a draw in the opening. Tal won an excellent game. He also managed to play in a strong blitz tournament in Moscow, where he finished behind only Kasparov and Bareev, defeating the reigning world champion Kasparov! After this Tal went into hospital, and did not come out.


Three games from Mikhail Tal
From his almost divine collection of games, we have chosen three to illustrate his original and complex style.

Tal-Panno
Portoroz 1958
Ray Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 Qc6 3 A6b4 a6 4 Aa4 Qf6 5 0-0 Ae7 6 Aa1 b5 7 Ab3 d6 8 c3 0-0

9 h3 Qd7 10 d4 Qb6 11 Qe3 exd4 12 cxd4 Qa5 13 Qc2 c5 14 e5?

Tal is playing the opening in his usual very sharp style. However, better was 14 Qc3 Qac4 15 Qc1, when White has good chances of obtaining the better prospects. For example, 15...cxd4 16 Qxd4 Qf6 17 a4 bxa4 18 Axa4 Ac7 19 b3 Se5 20 Ab2 Ab7 21 Mc1 Wb8 22 Aif5 Ad8 23 Aa3 with a slight edge in Gligoric-Olafsson, Bled 1959.

14...dxe5

After 14...Qac4 15 exd6 Wxd6 16 Wd3 Wg6 17 dxe5 Qxe5 18 Wxe3 Ac2 19 Wc7 Qd5 20 Wc5 Ac5 21 Qc3 White would emerge from the opening with some pressure.

15 Qxe5 Qbc4

15...Af6 16 Qc3 Afc4 17 Qxc4 Qxc4 18 dxc5 would leave White with a slight advantage.

16 Wd3

White has no advantage after 16 Wh5, for example 16...f5 (16...g6 is also possible, and quite likely why Tal did not play this; after 17 Qxg6 fxg6 18 Qxg6 hxg6 19 Wxg6+ Wh8 all White has is a perpetual check) 17 Qxc4 Qxc4 18 Wf3 cxd4 19 Qxd4 Qxd4 20 Wx8 Ahe 21 Wf3 Wxb2 22 Qd1 Axc2 23 Wd5+ Wh8 24 Wf7! Axt2+ 25 Sh2 Ac5 26 Me8 Ad6+ 27 Sh1 Ac6 28 Axf8+ Axf8 29 Wxb8+ Axb8 30 Qxc4 bxc4 31 Ad1 Wxa2 32 Axf5 a5 with a likely draw - Kasparov.

16...f5
Also possible was 16...g6? 17 h6 Qxe5! 18 Qxe5 Qc6 19 Qxf8 Qxf8 20 Qe1 Qxd4 and the strong knight should easily outweigh the loss of the exchange.

17 Qb3

Interesting is 17 f4?, after which Black has two options:
a) 17...Qxb2!? 18 Qc3 Qa4 21 Qxa4 bxa4 22 Qd2 gives White some pressure.
b) 17...cx4 18 Qd2 Qb4!? 19 Qxc4 bxc4 20 Qxe4 Qxe1 21 Qxe1 Qxe4 22 Qc4+ Qh8 with a messy position – Dvoretsky.

17...f4

Black plays the opening very sharply. Also possible were 17...e6 18 dxc5 Qxb3 19 Qxb3 Qc8 20 Qxc4 Qxc4 21 Qc3 and 17...Qf6 18 Qxc4 Qxb3! 19 Qxb3 Qe6 20 dxc5 Qxc4 21 Qc2, in both cases with a rather unclear position, though nothing like the game.

18 Qd2 Qxb3

The bishop must be eliminated. After 18...Qf6 19 Qxa5 Qxa5 20 Qc3 Qxc3 21 Qxc3 Qxd4 22 Qxc4 bxc4 23 Qxc4+ Qh8 24 Qxe7 dxc3 25 bxc3 White will be a pawn up in the endgame.

cxd4 25 Qd1 b4 26 Qxd2 bxa3 27 Qxd4 axb2 28 Qb4 Qxb8 29 Qeb6 the endgame would result in a peaceful draw.

19...Qxa1 20 Qxd8 Qf5

Panno accepts the challenge. 20...Qxd8 was safe: 21 b3 Qxd2 22 Qxd2 Qf5 23 Qe4 Qxd4! 24 Qxa1 Qb6 and Black is no worse – Kasparov.

21 Qf3 Qaxd8 22 Qxe7 Qxb1 23 Qxf4 Qxd4

The attempt to create a passed pawn with 23...Qxd4? does not work after 24 b3 Qg6 25 bxc4 d3 26 Qg3 d2 27 Qxd2 Qxd2 28 Qc3 Qd1+ 29 Qh2 Qf7 30 c5 and it is Black who is struggling.

24 Qg4

After 24 Qg3 Qg6 25 Qe5 Qxe5 26 Qxe5 Qf7 27 Qxc5 Qd1+ 28 Qh2 Qxa2 White should settle for 29 Qxg7+! Qxg7 30 Qg5+ with a perpetual check – Dvoretsky.

24...Qg6 25 We6+

25...Qf7!

The right choice. After 25...Qh8? 26 Qe5 Qxe5 27 Qxe5 Kg8 28 Qxc5 Qc2 29 Qa7 Qd1+ 30 Qh2 Qe1 31 Qxe1 Qxe1 32 Qxa6 b4 33 a4 bxa3 34 bxa3 Qd3 35 f3 White has some chances – Kasparov.

26 Qf5 Qc2

26...Qg6? would have been bad after 27 Qxg7+! Qxg7 28 Qh6+ Qxh6 29 Qxb8+ Qg5 30 Qxc5+ and White wins – Tal. But instead 26...Qd5!? is very interesting: 27 Qg4 h5 28 Qg3 Qd1+ 29 Qh2 Qd2 30 Qg5

19 Mikhail Tal: A Short Biography

10

13
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

1...g1 h4 32 Whxh4 Qe3+ 33 Wh2 Qd5 and Black is slightly better – Kasparov.

27 b3 g6

Maybe better was 27...Qd1!? 28 Wh2 Qd2 29 Axd2 Qxd2 30 Wxc5 Qd4 31 Wc3 Qd1 with a slight edge for Black according to Kasparov.

28 Wxg7+ Wxg7 29 Wh6+ Wh6 30 Wxf2 Wh5 31 bxc4 bxc4 32 g3 Qe4 33 h4+

Also possible was 33 f4+ Wh6 34 g4+ Qxg4 35 g5 Wxe7, though after 35...Qe1! 36 Wc6+ Wh7 37 f5 Qd5 38 Wh6+ Wh8 39 Wxh6+ Qf7 40 Wg6+ Qe7 41 We6+ Wh8 42 Wxa6 c3 Black makes a draw – Kasparov.

33 Wh2 f5

34...Qd5? is met decisively by 35 f3+ Axf3 36 Wc8+ Wh5 37 Qf5+ Wh6 38 Wg5 mate.

35 Wh6

35 Wxc5? would be bad because of 35...Axd2 36 Wxc4+ Qd4 37 Wh1 Qe6 38 Wxa6 Axa2 and the winning chances are with Black, not White.

35...Qh6 36 Wxe5

After 36 Wxh6 Qf3 37 Wf6 Black has 37...Qe3 38 fxe3 Axd2+ with perpetual check – Vukovic.

36...Qe4

36...Axd3 37 f6 Axf5 38 f3+ Wxf3 39 Wxf5+ Ae3 40 Wg6+! would give White winning chances.

37 Wg7+ Wf3 38 Ac3+ Qe3

38...Wh2 39 Wxc2+ Aa3 would also give Black chances to draw – Tal.

39 Wh1 Ag4 40 fxe3 h5!

Worse is 40...Wh2 41 Wh1+ Wh3 42 Whf1 and White wins because after 42...Wh4

43 Wh1+ the rook falls. Black’s position also collapses after 40...Qxe3? 41 Whf6+ Qe2 42 Whf1+ Axd2 43 Wh4! as Wh2 is coming.

41 We1

It is of course very tempting to take the pawn, but Black should have aimed at a very basic fortress with 41...Wh6! 42 e4 c3 43 Wxc3+ Ac4 44 Wxc5 Ad3, when it is not possible to see any way that White can create problems for Black.

42 Whf1+ Ac4 43 Wxc4+ Af3 44 Whf1+ Ac4 45 Wxa6 Ad4?

After being under pressure for a long time it is no wonder that Panno is not able to maintain the equilibrium. He could still have saved the game as was later found with 45...Wh2 46 Ac2 Ac3+! 47 Ac2 Ad4 48 Wd6+ Ac4 49 Ac4 Wb4 50 Ab6 Wh8! 51 a5 c4 52 Ab6+ Ac4 53 Ac7 c3 54 a6 Ac3+! 55 Whf2 Ac3 56 Wc5+ Ad2 57 Ab4 and White cannot win – Vukovic.

46 Wd6+ Ac4 47 Ac4 Ac1+ 48 Af1 Ac2 49 Af1 Ac2 50 Ac6+ Wd4 51 Ac a5 c4 52 Ac6+ Ac5 53 Ac6 Ac1+ 54 Whf2 c3 55 a7 c2 56 Ab3+ Ac6 57 Ac+ 1-0

Tal-Botvinnik

World Ch’ship (Game 1), Moscow 1960

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 Ac3 Ab4 4 e5 c5 5
The rook is developed along the third rank.

18...e5 19 Aa3 Wf7

After 19...f4? 20 Axf6! Black's position collapses.

20 dxe5 Aexe5

The pressure is very uncomfortable for Black. If 20...Ah8? then 21 e6! Wxe6 22 Ae3 Ahx5 23 Axc6+ Wf7 24 Wxg6! and White wins.

21 Ae3 Ad7

Black has no choice but to run. If 21...Ah8? then 22 Aexe5+ Ad7 23 Ae7+ Wxh7 24 Wxg6 and White wins.

22 Ab1 b6?

This leaves the bishop hanging, allowing White to gain tempi later on. Better was 22...Ac6, though after 23 Aa4 f4 24 Aexe5! Aexe5 25 Wxf7+ Af7 26 Ae4 Ac8+ 27 Ad2 White has excellent winning chances - Tal.

23 Af4 Aa8

Or 23...Ah8 24 Aexe6 Aexe6 25 Wc2 Ahx4 26 Wa6! and the weakness of the queenside surely tells.

24 Ab4!

Gaining a tempo.

24...Ac6 25 Wa1 Axf4 26 Bxf4 Ag6

27 Ad4 Axe3+ 28 fxe3 Ac7 29 c4! dxc4

29...Dc7 30 cxd5 Ac5 31 Aexe7 Axe7 32 Axe5 Axe3+ 33 Ae2 and wins - Euwe.

30 Ac4 Wg7 31 Axe8 Wxc8 32 h5 1-0

Black had had enough.
Tal-Flesch
Lvov 1981
Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Qc3 dxe4 4 Qxe4 
Qd7 5 Qf3 Qg6 6 Qg3 e6 7 Qd3 c5 8 
c3 exd4 9 Qxd4 9.e5 10 0-0 Qxd4 11 
Qxd4 0-0 12 Qg5

This variation gives White a good chance to develop an initiative. Black is organised in a way that makes it impossible to put pressure on d4 and therefore White has time to place his pieces as he desires. 12 ~f4 1b6

This variation gives White a good chance to develop an initiative. Black is organised in a way that makes it impossible to put pressure on d4 and therefore White has time to place his pieces as he desires. 12 ~f4 1b6

12 ... h6

12 ... Qa5!? 13 h4?! h6 14 Qf4 b6 15 Qe1 
Qb7 and Black was no worse in Howell-Kumar, Eastbourne 1990.

13 Qf4 Qb6 14 Qc2

The piece sacrifice after 14 Wd2 Qfd5 15 
Qxh6 gxh6 16 Qxh6 only results in a draw after 16 ... f5 17 Qg6+ Qh8 18 Qh6+.

14 ... Qbd5

White has strong pressure following 14 ... Qd7 15 Wd3 Qc8 16 Qe4 Qbd5 17 
Qc5.

15 Qe5 Wb6 16 Wd3

White could also try to sacrifice a pawn with 16 Qb3? Qd7 17 Qh5 Qxh5 18 Qxh5 
f6 19 Qg3 Qxd4 20 Qad1, with good compensation.

16 ... Qb4

16 ... Qd7 would be met by 17 Qxf6 Qxf6 18 
Qh5! Qxh8 (18 ... Qf8 19 Qxf6+ Qxf6 20 
Qh7+ Qf8 21 Qb3! and Black is in trouble) 19 Qxh5+ gxf6 20 Qh7+ Qf8 21 d5! and Black has great problems – Kasparov.

17 Wd2!

17 Qf3? does not work: after 17 ... Qxc2 
18 Qxf6 c5! 19 Qc7 Qxa1 20 Qxf8 Qxf8 
Black comes out on top.

17 ... Qxc2

17 ... Qg4? is probably okay for Black.

White should not over-stretch with 18 
Qxg7?!; as after 17 ... Qxg7 19 Qh5+ Qg8 20 
h3 Qxc2 (20 ... c5 21 Qb3 Qd8 22 d5 is not 
clear) 21 Wxc2 c5 22 Wc5 exd4 23 Qxb6 
Qxb6 24 hxg4 Qd8 the passed pawn gives 
Black a good game.

18 Qxf6!

18 Wxc2 Qd5 19 Qe4 Qd8 20 Qd1 Qd7 
and Black has no problems. The bishop will be very strong on c6.

18 ... Qxa1

Not 18 ... Qxg6? 19 Qh6 and Qh5 is coming.

19 Qh5!

White is targeting g7 with all his ammunitions.

19 ... e5!

19 ... Wb5? would not work because of 20 
Qxg7 Qh7 21 Qxa1 Qg6 22 Qf4 Wxb2 23 
Qg3+ Qxf6 (23 ... Qh7? 24 Qf1 Wc2 25 Qxe6 
Qg8 26 Qf8+ and Black is mated) 24 Qh5+ 
Qe7 25 Wc7+ Qd8 26 Qc5+ Qd8 27 Qxf8+ 
Qc7 28 Wc5+ and White's attack is very 
strong.

20 dxe5 g5!

20 ... Qb3 is not good, as Black might need 
the tempo White will have to use on Qxa1 
later on: 21 axb3 Qh7 22 Qxg7 Wxb3 23 
Qxc1 with an attack.

21 e6?!

Once again the sharpest choice – White wants to retain the bishop. Also possible was 
21 Qxa1 Qg4! 22 Qg3 Qfd8! 23 Qxd8 Qxd8
24 \textit{W}c3 \textit{Cc}8 and Black is probably okay despite the pawn deficit. A further alternative is 21 \textit{La}e7 \textit{L}c5! 22 \textit{W}f6+ \textit{La}g7 23 \textit{X}xf8+ \textit{X}xf8 24 \textit{X}xa1 \textit{D}d8 25 \textit{W}c3 \textit{D}d3 26 \textit{W}c2 \textit{W}a5 and Black has reasonable counterplay.

21 ... \textit{W}xe6

Alternatively:

a) 21...\textit{W}xe6? would weaken the king fatally: 22 \textit{W}d3 \textit{L}xf6 23 \textit{X}xf6+ \textit{L}f7 24 \textit{D}h5 \textit{W}xb2 25 \textit{W}h7+ \textit{W}e8 26 \textit{M}d1 and Black will be mated.

b) 21...\textit{X}xe6 is met by 22 \textit{X}xg5! \textit{W}c5 23 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{W}h8 24 \textit{X}h6 \textit{M}d8 25 \textit{W}f4 \textit{W}c4! 26 \textit{L}xa1 \textit{W}xf4 27 \textit{L}xf4 \textit{X}xa2 28 \textit{L}e5 with an unclear game - Kasparov.

22 \textit{h}3!? White is aiming to prevent ...\textit{W}g4 due to the following line: 22 \textit{X}xa1 \textit{W}g4! 23 \textit{D}g3 \textit{W}f4! 24 \textit{W}c3 \textit{X}g4 and Black is better. However, an interesting alternative was 22 \textit{L}g7!? \textit{W}g6 23 \textit{X}xf6 \textit{L}e6 (23...\textit{W}xf6?! 24 \textit{W}d8 b6 25 \textit{D}h4+ \textit{W}h7 26 \textit{X}xa1 is dangerous for Black) 24 \textit{X}c7 \textit{W}xh5 25 \textit{X}xa1 and Black's worse king gives White some pressure.

22 ... \textit{W}f5?!

Or:

a) 22...\textit{W}xa2? is reckless. After 23 \textit{X}xg5 \textit{W}a6 24 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{W}h8 25 \textit{L}h4 \textit{W}g7 26 \textit{W}d4! \textit{L}xg8 27 \textit{W}e4 Black cannot survive.

b) 22...\textit{L}d7 23 \textit{M}e1 \textit{W}e6 24 \textit{L}c3 \textit{F}f5 25 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{W}h8 26 \textit{X}xa1 looks dangerous for Black.

c) 22...\textit{b}6 is right. After 23 \textit{M}e1! \textit{W}f5 24 \textit{g}4 \textit{W}e2 25 \textit{W}d6 \textit{L}b7 26 \textit{L}c3 \textit{W}g6 27 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{W}h8 White is not better - Kasparov.

23 \textit{X}xa1 \textit{L}e6 24 \textit{M}e1 \textit{W}g6

24...\textit{W}c8?! 25 \textit{L}c3 \textit{X}d8 26 \textit{W}e2 was possible, though White clearly has enough compensation for the exchange.

25 \textit{g}4 \textit{X}ac8 26 \textit{L}c3!

26 \textit{L}c7?! would be bad, as 26...\textit{X}c2 27 \textit{W}d4 \textit{X}a8 28 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{W}h8 gives White no obvious way to continue the attack other than with perpetual check.

26...\textit{X}fd8 27 \textit{We}3 \textit{E}d3 28 \textit{W}e5 \textit{W}xc3 29 \textit{b}xc3

29...\textit{W}h7?

Black would also be lost after 29...\textit{X}xh3 30 \textit{X}d1 \textit{W}h7 31 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{X}g7 32 \textit{L}e4+ \textit{W}h7 33 \textit{X}d8 \textit{W}g7 34 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{W}g6 35 \textit{W}g8, when it's all over.

Playable, however, was 29...\textit{X}xa2 30 \textit{X}a1 \textit{X}xh3 (30...\textit{X}d2? 31 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{W}g8 32 \textit{c}4! would win for White) 31 \textit{D}f6+ (31 \textit{W}g2 \textit{X}xh5 32 \textit{gxh} \textit{W}c2 with a mess was also possible) 31...\textit{W}h7 32 \textit{W}g2 \textit{X}h4 33 \textit{D}h5+ \textit{W}h7 34 \textit{X}xa2 \textit{X}xg4+ 35 \textit{D}g3 and Black has reasonable drawing chances, though he is of course worse.

30 \textit{D}f6+ \textit{W}g7 31 \textit{D}d5+

Also possible was 31 \textit{D}d7+ \textit{X}g8 32 \textit{W}h8+ \textit{W}g7 33 \textit{W}f8+ \textit{W}h7 34 \textit{D}e5 and Black must resign.

31...\textit{W}h7?

A better defence was offered by 31...\textit{W}f8, but White could still win with 32 \textit{W}b8+ \textit{W}g7 33 \textit{X}e7 \textit{W}h7 34 \textit{W}e5+ \textit{W}f8 35 \textit{D}f5! \textit{X}xf5 36 \textit{gx} \textit{f} 37 \textit{f} \textit{W}g6 38 \textit{W}e8+ \textit{W}h7 39 \textit{X}e7. 32 \textit{D}e7 1-0
CHAPTER TWO

Simple but Effective

The magic of Mikhail Tal was not limited to his combinational play. He had a certain way of playing for the initiative and an instinct for finding beauty that cannot be duplicated. But even though we cannot replicate the road to the combinations he played, it is possible for us to solve the combinations, and thereby pretend to be Tal, if only for a brief moment.

In this chapter we will look at some of the simplest combinations played by Tal. They mainly consist of one-move tactics and should come easily to more experienced players. However, we believe that it is always good training to go through these kind of combinations. Even if nothing else, they keep your mind sharp and fresh.

Tal was a master of attack, and even in positions where anything would have won, he had a tendency to find the most aesthetic road to victory.

In the diagram both players have a rook and a queen. These positions were called 'the fourth phase' by Romanovsky (the first three are the opening, middlegame and endgame) because it is a hybrid between middlegame and endgame. One of the key features in these positions is who has the initiative and whose king is the safest. Here White threatens $\text{Ke6}+$ but, unfortunately for him, it is Black's move. What is the most convincing line?

**Bjornsson-Tal**
Reykjavik 1964

![Chess Board Diagram](image)

Black wins the queen directly

33...$\text{Kf1}+$!

Tal never missed this kind of tactic. It is no coincidence that his trainer Koblencs wrote a famous book on combinations.

Having said that, we need to remark that Black has other good possibilities, for instance 33...$\text{Wa1}+$ 34 $\text{Kd2}$ $\text{Wc3}+$ 35 $\text{Kd1}$ $\text{d3}$ and Black takes control of the $\text{a1-h8}$ diagonal, thus giving the black king a safe square on $\text{h8}$. Soon his rook will join the attack with deadly effect. The move in the game is more clear-cut, though.

34 $\text{Wxf1}$ $\text{Wa1}+$ 0-1
Though this is a book about Tal's combinations it is worth noting that his style was not like that of Alekhine, where dynamic pressure would lead inexorably to a great combination. Rather he would go for unclear sacrifices, hoping that he would be better at playing the arising position than his opponent. Sometimes he was not, but most often he was. When commentators found refutations to his sacrifices they wondered why his grandmaster opponents had failed to find these resources. The blame was attached to his famous stare and his nickname 'The Magician from Riga'. Tal was also reckoned by many to have hypnotic powers.

However, Tal would never decline to play more simple sacrifices like the following:

**Tal-Menvielle**  
Havana Olympiad 1966

- **White to play and win**

White has a strong attacking position. Black still needs to complete development of the queenside and he lacks defenders for his king on the other wing. White uses this situation to launch a decisive attack.

24 $xf6!

White has another direct approach with the same idea as in the game, namely 24 $xe7. However, it is not so effective as it threatens nothing compared to the text move (in the game White threatens the rook on e8) and Black has time for 24...w5. White still has an almost winning advantage after 25 d5, when he is a pawn up with a good position, but in the game everything is decided at once on the kingside.

24...exf6 25 wxf6+ wh6 26 d5 1-0

Black resigned, as after every queen retreat he will be mated on h5.

An important part of the admiration for Tal was based on his ability to always find the most beautiful way to finish off his opponent. The following is such a case. Just about everything wins, but Tal decides to decide the game with a queen sacrifice.

**Tal-Ballon**  
West Berlin 1986

White again has a very promising position. Tal concluded the game in attacking style, although his position is so superior that other ways will do as well. In the game he played

30 $e8+

A more positional approach is to transfer the knight to d6 with 30 $e8, for instance 30...c8 31 d6 w7+ 32 g2 $f8 and now 33 $e7 wins the queen or mates. Tal's combinative idea in the game is not bad though!

30...w7 31 wh6+!

A very nice queen sacrifice!

31...w8 32 $h8 mate!
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Combinations for Solving

Puzzle 1
Tal-Segal, Riga 1952

White to play. White has a strong knight versus a bad bishop as well as a firm grip on the dark squares and active pieces. However, his rook is threatened, and the b4-pawn may prove to be weak. How can White win?

The Tal Tip is on page 81 and the solution is on page 95.

Puzzle 2
Tal-Mista, Dubna 1974

White to play. White has a strong attack on the kingside with queen and rook hovering around Black's king, while the bishop on b3 is also ready to join the action. Can you find the killer blow?

The Tal Tip is on page 81 and the solution is on page 95.

Puzzle 3
Tal-Vooremaa, Riga 1971

White to play. White seems to be in trouble because Black not only threatens ...Qxd7, but also a nasty discovered attack by moving his rook from e2. However, White has a move that turns the tables. Can you spot it?

The Tal Tip is on page 81 and the solution is on page 95.

Puzzle 4
Westerinen-Tal, Moscow 1982

Black to play. Black's rooks on White's second rank are very active, and the bishop on c6 is a monster. It is time to take action. The opposite-coloured bishops means that White's defences crack on the light squares. How does Black execute the decisive blow?

The Tal Tip is on page 81 and the solution is on page 95.
Puzzle 5

Muratov-Tal. Tallinn (Rapid) 1988

Black to play. Once again Tal has succeeded in penetrating into his opponent’s position with his forces. Black’s problem is that most of his remaining army are offside. Black is three pawns up, but White has better piece coordination. How does Tal prove that White’s compensation is inadequate?

The Tal Tip is on page 81 and the solution is on page 96.

Puzzle 6

Tal-Paehtz. Halle 1974

White to play. White has sacrificed a pawn and has a dangerous initiative. His pieces are very active, just waiting to release their energy in a decisive attack. How did Tal conclude the game in his usual sacrificial style?

The Tal Tip is on page 81 and the solution is on page 96.

Puzzle 7

Tal-Maidla. Riga 1987

White to play. Black has a material advantage and also has strong threats against White’s king, especially the vulnerable g2-square. It’s White move, though, and he can decide the game in his favour. How?

The Tal Tip is on page 81 and the solution is on page 96.

Puzzle 8

Tal-Starodub. Petrozavodsk (Simul.) 1984

White to play. This is a very sharp position with opposite-coloured bishops. Both kings have weak colour complexes around them, ready to be exploited by the enemy bishop in cooperation with the other pieces. How can White make use of the advantage that he is the first to create threats?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 96.
Puzzle 9
Barcza-Tal, Tallinn 1971

Black to play. The game is still in the opening phase and the fight is about the d4-square. White hopes to get rid of the annoying knight on d4. How should Black react?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 96.

Puzzle 10
Tal-Timman, Reykjavik 1988

White to play. White has a development advantage and Black’s king is still in the centre. White’s position looks threatening, especially with the two centrally posted rooks on the d- and e-files. Black would like to exchange queens to relieve some of the pressure, so how should White continue here?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 96.

Puzzle 11
Tal-Kupreichik, Sochi 1970

White to play. Black’s king feels very insecure, and White’s pieces are taking up threatening positions. How did Tal find a way through?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 96.

Puzzle 12
Tal-Zeids, Latvian Championship, Riga 1955

White to play. At first glance Black seems to be doing fine, as material is equal and he has a secure king’s position. However, a closer look shows that White’s domination on the light squares can be used tactically. How did White transform his advantage?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 97.
Puzzle 13
Tal-Wade, Tallinn 1971

White to play. After the logical sequence 39 
\( \text{c4 e6} \) White has to find a way to continue the attack. How can the black defence be broken?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 97.

Puzzle 14
Tal-Botvinnik, World Ch. (7), Moscow 1960

White to play. Black's last move, 34...\( \text{d5xd5} \), was a big mistake. It opened the diagonal for the bishop on c3 and now White has the possibility of launching a simple but nevertheless strong combination, which immediately decides the outcome of the game. What is it?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 98.

Puzzle 15
Tal-Levin, Georgia 1970

White to play. Black's position appears to be solid and White's knights on the edge of the board looks awkwardly placed. However, Tal had prepared a little combination. What should White play?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 97.
In this chapter we move on to slightly more complex combinations. These are no longer than one-movers, and here we get a stronger feeling of Tal's magical play and more elegant ideas. The following is a good example of this.

**Tal-NN**

Riga (Simultaneous display) 1959

In this position many continuations win, but Tal plays a most beautiful combinative idea. The game concluded

\[25 \text{ d6} \]

The idea behind this rook sacrifice becomes evident on the next move.

\[25 \ldots \text{xd3} 26 \text{ d7+!} \]

Black's queen is forced to d7, and White executes a beautiful mate.

\[26 \ldots \text{xd7} 27 \text{ g8 mate!} \]

Most tournament players will still not be stunned by White's idea. To sacrifice one attacking piece in order to open a line for another is not that unusual. However, what is noticeable in Tal's style is that he very often steers in the direction of these combinations, and foresees them well ahead of his opponents.

In the next example Tal has a prosaic win of the exchange at hand, but the pleasure of performing his almost trademark sacrifice of \(\text{Qxf7}\) is simply irresistible.

**Tal-Giorgadze**

Tbilisi 1956

_King's Indian Defence_

\[1 \text{ d4 } \text{f6} 2 \text{ c4 } \text{g6} 3 \text{ c3 } \text{g7} 4 \text{ e4 } \text{d6} 5 \text{ f3 } 0-0 6 \text{ e3 } \text{e5} 7 \text{ d5 } \text{c5?!} \]

This move is asking for trouble. Normally White has to regroup his forces to start an attack on the kingside after Black closes the centre with ...c5, but here he is ready immediately.

\[8 \text{ g4 } \text{h5} 9 \text{ h3 } \text{a6} 10 \text{ wd2 } \text{h7} 11 0-0-0 \text{ h4?} \]

Black tries to keep the position closed,
without success.

12 f4 exf4 13 xf4 c7 14 f3 e8 15 e1 a6

Black’s counterattack is just too slow.

16 dxe5 fxe5 17 d7 18 d3

White’s pieces flow to the right squares.

18...b6 19 h1f1

White has completed development and is ready to take action.

19...f8 20 e4 g7 21 xxc5 c8 22 xb1 ae8 23 h6 xh6 24 xh6 xg5

White now concluded the game beautifully with

25 xf7! 1-0

Besides being two pawns up, White has an overwhelming position. A possible continuation could be 25...xh6 26 xh6+ g7 27 e7+! xh6 28 xh7+ xh7 29 xxf8 and wins.

Another option was the simple 25 xg5 xg5 26 cd7, winning the exchange.

Some world champions, such as Capablanca, Petrosian and Karpov, have always been willing to allow their opponents to collapse by themselves, and play in such a way as to give them the necessary time to do so, whilst ensuring that all their active possibilities are taken away from them. Taking away active possibilities is called prophylaxis and is a strong tool for the positional player. For the attacking player there is another tool which is very useful, and which becomes natural over the years. We are, of course, talking about the sacrifice!

Tal-Karllson
Yerevan 1980
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 xxe4 4 e5 d7 5 f3 b4 6 e5 c6 7 f4 e7 8 0-0 bd7 9 xxe6 xxe6 10 xxe6 xxe6 11 d4 g6 12 c1 b5 13 xe1 h6 14 xe2 cd8 15 a4
d7 16 axb5 xxb5 17 xxe1 xxe1 18 d3

f8 19 h4 g7 20 h5 bd6 21 xh2 cd4 22 xxc1 a5 23 cd4 ae8 24 b3 db6 25 xd3

The game has come to an interesting critical point. After b2-b3 Black has counterchances on the queenside with ...a5-a4, but he has to find a way to deal with the threat on h6 after xd7. In the game he chooses to weaken his kingside structure in order to gain time.

25...xh5!? 26 h2 xf8 27 xd2 xg7 28 xh6 a4 29 cd4 xg8 30 xg7

The knight is not allowed to go to f5.

30...xg7 31 xe3 hhd7 32 bxa4 bxa4 33 cd5 wd6 34 xg3+ xh8 35 xh3

Black is weak on the dark squares, even if he has a bishop to protect this colour complex.

35 xg8 36 xg5 xg5 37 xg5 wd8
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

38 \text{Wf4 } \text{Xg7} 39 \text{Xg7 } \text{Xg7} 40 \text{Xa3}

White's attack is already decisive.
40...h4 41 \text{Wg4+ } \text{Xf8}

White's position is so strong that several ways lead to the goal, but Tal chose the most forceful one.
42 \text{Xxe6}+!

Also possible and sufficient to win is a slow continuation like 42 \text{Xf3}.
42...\text{Xxe6} 43 \text{Xf3+} 1-0

Black did not want to continue the misery and therefore resigned. After 43...\text{Xe8} (43...\text{Xe7} 44 \text{Wg7}+ and mate in next move) 44 \text{Xxe6}+ \text{Xe7} 45 \text{Xxb6 White regains the invested material with a winning position.}

Let us see another example of this drive in Tal.

\textbf{Kristiansen-Tal}

\textit{Havana Olympiad 1966}

\textit{Sicilian Defence}

1 \text{e4} c5 2 \text{d3} e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 \text{Xxd4} a6 5 \text{Xd3} d6 6 0-0 \text{Xf6} 7 \text{Xe3} g6 8 c4 \text{Xg7} 9 \text{Xc3} 0-0 10 h3 \text{Xc6} 11 \text{Xxc6} bxc6 12 \text{Xb8} 13 \text{Xf2} \text{Xe8} 14 \text{Wf3} \text{d5}

Black is the first to do something in the centre. The battle soon becomes sharp.
15 \text{Xa7} \text{b7} 16 \text{c5} d4 17 \text{Xe2} \text{d7} 18 \text{Xd6}?

White boldly sacrifices a pawn to fight for the initiative.
18...\text{Xxb2} 19 c5 \text{Xf8} 20 \text{c1} \text{Xd6} 21 cxd6 c5 22 \text{Wg3} \text{Xb7} 23 e5 \text{Xa2}

Black calmly takes pawn number two.
24 \text{c4} \text{Xa4} 25 f5 \text{Xxe4}!

A strong exchange sacrifice. With the light-squared bishop gone, White's initiative clearly disappears.
26 \text{Xxc4} \text{exf5} 27 \text{Xxf5} \text{Xe4} 28 \text{Xf1} \text{Xxe5}

Black has a winning advantage. He can slowly improve his position, whereas White has little counterplay.
29 \text{Wf4} \text{We8} 30 \text{Xxd4}

Desperation.
30...\text{Xxd4} 31 \text{Xc1} \text{Xg7} 32 \text{Xc7} \text{Xf5} 33 \text{Xwd} 34 \text{Xc6} \text{We6} 35 \text{Wb4}

Black converted his winning advantage to a decisive attack on White's king with 35...\text{Xg2}! 0-1

Objectively the strongest. White resigned as after 36 \text{Xxg2} \text{Xg5}+ 37 \text{Xf1} \text{Xf5}+ 38 \text{Xg1} \text{Xxe3}+ 39 \text{Xh2} \text{Xf2}+ 40 \text{Xh1} \text{Xxh4}+ 41 \text{Xg1} \text{Xg2} he is mated. 35...\text{Xg5}? was among the many other possible winning moves.
Combinations for Solving

**Puzzle 16**

Tal-Portisch, Candidates (2), Bled 1965

*White to play.* Black has plenty of material to compensate the queen but, unfortunately for him, his king is not feeling safe at all. How did Tal take advantage of this?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 98.

**Puzzle 18**

Tal-Botvinnik, World Ch. (17), Moscow 1960

*White to play.* White has sacrificed two pawns to create threats against Black’s king. Botvinnik was in time trouble and didn’t find the best response to White’s dubious play. Anyway, how did Tal continue before the game was adjourned?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 99.

**Puzzle 17**

Tal-Filip, Moscow 1967

*White to play.* Black’s last move, 26...Na6?, was the decisive mistake; maybe the pressure of defending was too much for him. Tal does not let a chance like this one slip away. How did he punish Black?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 99.

**Puzzle 19**

Tal-Chandler, Sochi 1982

*White to play.* White has a strong centralised position, mainly due to the proud bishop on d5 and the knight on d4. Tal had a little surprise ready for Black that secured him a material gain. Can you guess what he played?

The Tal Tip is on page 82 and the solution is on page 100.
White to play. Another typical Tal position. Black has much material for the queen, but his insecure king proves that White's initiative is of greater importance. How did Tal use the power of the queen this time?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 101.

Puzzle 21
Tal-Shabalov, Yurmala 1985

White to play. Black's position makes a clumsy impression. If he had time to double rooks on the d-file, he would be okay, but Tal finds a way to take advantage of Black's temporary disruption to his pieces. What did Tal play?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 101.

Puzzle 22
Tal-Holm, Kapfenberg 1970

White to play. A tactical onslaught has just begun, and material is still roughly level. Tal now sensed that the position was ready for a combination, and his next shows an original drawback of Black's position. What was Tal's beautiful idea?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 101.

Puzzle 23
Chukaev-Tal, Riga 1955

Black to play. Black has won a pawn and has the better position. White's king is exposed, the question being how to exploit it. How did Tal execute the decisive blow?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 101.
Puzzle 24
Ambroz-Tal, Riga 1981

Black to play. White has an isolated and passed pawn on b3, which might prove either strong or weak, depending on how play develops. However, pawn structures are not that important here, as Tal proved with his next move. What did he play?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 101.

Puzzle 25
Ostrauskas-Tal, Vilnius 1955

Black to play. Black's advantage is indisputable. All his pieces occupy active posts while White's pieces are tied up protecting his stripped king. However, with the threat on the h3-bishop, White now hopes to swap queens. How did Tal avoid this?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 102.

Puzzle 26
Tal-Wade, Palma de Majorca 1966

White to play. Both players have an attack going against the king. White's king looks insecure, and besides that his knight on d4 is threatened. However, White has the move and this is a more important issue. How did Tal continue the attack?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 102.

Puzzle 27
Tal-Demedovich, Prokopjevsk (Simul.) 1972

White to play. Black has offered the exchange of bishops. If White captures, Black will have a chance to catch up in development. However, with all his pieces actively posted, White shouldn't allow this scenario. What did Tal play instead?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 102.
Puzzle 28
Ufimtsev-Tal, Moscow 1967

Black to play. Black has sacrificed the exchange and his pieces totally dominate the board. Just take a look at the two proud black knights in the centre. With his last move, White is trying to free himself with an exchange of knights. How did Tal react to this?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 102.

Puzzle 30
Tal-Johansson, Stockholm 1961

White to play. Another typical Tal position. He had the gift of developing pieces smoothly while his opponents lacked behind in development, making concessions like ...$f8 in the diagram position. How did Tal convert his superior position here?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 102.

Puzzle 29
Naranja-Tal, Nice Olympiad 1974

Black to play. Black has concentrated all his remaining forces on the kingside. The white bastion is not easy to storm, it seems, but Tal found a breakthrough. How did he conclude the attack?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 102.

Puzzle 31
Tal-Kiriakov, Riga 1965

White to play. This position is symmetrical, and Black appears to be quite solid. However, in such positions the evaluation depends on who has the more active pieces. What should White play here?

The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 102.
**Puzzle 32**

Tal-Tringov, Amsterdam 1964

![Chessboard image]

White to play. The opening is hardly over, and Tal has already sacrificed a piece to develop a dangerous initiative. At the same time, both his bishops are hanging. The game continuation shows that Black was a bit too greedy, though. How did Tal punish that?

*The Tal Tip is on page 83 and the solution is on page 103.*

**Puzzle 33**

Tal-Mohrlok, Varna Olympiad 1962

![Chessboard image]

White to play. White has built up an attacking position, but with his last move, threatening the white knight on d4, Black hopes to gain some time to organise a successful defence. Does Tal let Black get away with that?

*The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 104.*

**Puzzle 34**

Niebuil-Tal, Latvia 1954

![Chessboard image]

Black to play. White has just captured on c5, expecting Black to recapture with the pawn. Instead Tal launches a typical King's Indian way of attack against White's king. How did he proceed?

*The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 104.*

**Puzzle 35**

Miezis-Tal, Riga 1958

![Chessboard image]

Black to play. Black has an overwhelming position despite being two pawns down. The knight on e4 cannot be driven away, and the rest of Black's army is also active. White's pieces are passive, trying to shelter the king. How did Tal execute the final attack?

*The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 104.*
Puzzle 36
Tal-Zilberg, Riga 1949

White to play. Tal has managed to strip his opponent’s king to the bones and also has a dangerous passed pawn. Black has two bishops for a rook, but again material is secondary to White’s initiative. Black has offered an exchange of queens, but this is not in White’s interest. What should White play?

The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 104.

Puzzle 38
Tseshkovsky-Tal, Sochi 1970

Black to play. The position seems about equal at first glance. Black’s rooks are the more active, but White has a strong knight on c5 compared to Black’s on d8. However, Black has a continuation that shows the superiority of his position. Can you spot it?

The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 105.

Puzzle 37
Tal-Shmit, Latvia 1965

White to play. Black threatens mate on g2. White can capture the bishop on h3, but Tal played another move that leads to a forced mate. What did he do?

The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 104.

Puzzle 39
Chukaev-Tal, Tbilisi 1956

Black to play. White has just threatened the bishop on c4. It is difficult to guess what White counted on here. Of course Tal was not happy to retreat to f5, after which his pawn structure would be damaged with 2xf5. He had something else in mind. What?

The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 106.
Puzzle 40
Unzicker-Tal, Hamburg 1960

Black to play. The position looks quiet at first glance, but a storm is about to break out... If only White had a few tempi to complete development, he would be fine. Well, he hasn't, as it is Black to move. How did Tal punish White for his opening play?

The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 106.

Puzzle 42
Tal-Petrosian, Moscow 1974

White to play. Black has treated the opening disastrously, and now tries to catch up with his lack in development. But White's pressure against f7 and on the open files in the centre quickly breaks down Black's defences.

How?

The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 107.

Puzzle 41
Tal-Nievergelt, Zürich 1959

White to play. Black has just offered a swap of queens. His position makes a clumsy impression, so maybe it's a good idea to seek salvation in the endgame. However, Tal found no reason to exchange queens bad. Where did he move his queen?

The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 106.

Puzzle 43
Spassky-Tal, Montreal 1979

Black to play. White's position doesn't make that bad an impression: His pieces are basically well located and his king's position appears to be quite safe. However, Tal shows with his next move that this is not the case! What did he play?

The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 107.
Black to play. Black's position is promising, with an extra pawn and attacking possibilities. But at some point he will have to transform the advantage into something more concrete, and the game has reached this critical moment. What should Black play?
*The Tal Tip is on page 84 and the solution is on page 107.*

**Puzzle 46**
Tal-Szabo, Sochi 1973

White to play. White's king on d2 doesn't make too good an impression. The bishop on b4 is threatened as well, so Black seems to have adequate counterchances here. Any suggestions for White?
*The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 108.*

**Puzzle 45**
Gradus-Tal, Riga 1953

Black to play. White threatens the bishop on c4 and if it retreats, White will have an excellent position after d4-d1. However, Black has a strong reply to White's last move. Can you spot it?
*The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 108.*

**Puzzle 47**
Tal-Pasman, Riga 1953

White to play. White has sacrificed plenty of material here. Black has two knights whereas White has put his trust in the connected passed pawns on g7 and h6 supported by the rook and queen. Earlier Black could have defended better, but now he is lost after White's next move. What did Tal play?
*The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 109.*
White to play. Black's material compensation in this position is principally adequate, with the bishop pair and a pawn versus White's knight and rook. The problem for him is his lack of coordination and that White is able to improve his position from the diagram. What did Tal play?
The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 109.

Puzzle 48
Tal-Kampenuss, Latvia 1953

White to play. Again Tal has sacrificed with disrespect to material. His benefits are Black's lack of queenside development and a king stuck in the centre. How did Tal continue the attack?
The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 109.

Puzzle 50
Tal-Vooremaa, Tallinn 1971

White to play. Black didn't treat the opening well and White hasn't sacrificed anything (yet) to obtain this promising position. Tal now concluded the game in style. How?
The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 109.

Puzzle 49
Tal-Suetin, Tbilisi 1969

White to play. White has a strong position with a dangerous passed pawn on e7 and a centrally posted queen. Tal neatly combined the threat of promoting the pawn with a kingside attack. How?
The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 110.

Puzzle 51
Tal-Lyavadnsky, Kiev 1964
Puzzle 52
Ljubojevic-Tal, Las Palmas 1975

Black to play and draw. This position shows Tal from another side. With the black pieces he has long been under pressure from Ljubojevic, and now he has to find a resource that saves the game. What did he play?

The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 110.
In this chapter we will look at some moderately tricky combinations played by Tal. These are the kind of combinations that can appear randomly in a tense struggle, without either of the players being able to anticipate them. They can also arise when one side has long-term pressure where, eventually, the defender can no longer avoid some kind of fatal end. Finally, they can also arise from pure blunders.

The first example sees Tal playing cat and mouse with the Hungarian grandmaster Bilek.

**Tal-Bilek**
Amsterdam 1964
*Sicilian Defence*

1 e4 c5 2 d3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 exd4 g6 5 c3 a6 6 a3 g5 7 d3 c6 8 c4 h6 9 xh6 gxf6 10 xh6 f5 12 d5 xd5 13 exd5 d7 14 fxe5 dxe5 15 d6

Black was afraid of accepting the sacrifice, but after 15...fxb3 16 d7+ nothing is clear. This king move is Black's only chance, as staying on the kingside he will suffer from White's dominance on the light squares. After 17 dxe6+ d6 18 d7+ White has compensation for the piece and Black's position is difficult to play. Still, nothing is clear and it seems to be a better chance than the game continuation.

16 xg7+ f8 17 e6+ e8 18 h4

Now White simply has a winning advantage.

18...g5+ 19 xg5 h5 20 xh5 f4 21 b3 a5

Many moves here lead to a win for White, but Tal, in typical style, chooses an aesthetic path:

22 c7+! xc7

22...d8 23 xa8.

23 d6 1-0

The point behind the knight sacrifice. Next comes d6-d7 and the queen enters the attack on f7 with deadly effect.
Tal had a great love of chess beauty. In the following example against a Belorussian grandmaster, he decides to take the direct route against the king instead of winning a piece with his passed pawn. Actually there is no reason to be surprised by this. Tal always preferred going for the king and sacrificing material instead of winning it.

Tal-Kupreichik
USSR Team Championship 1981
King's Indian Attack

1. \text{d}f3 \text{d}f6 2. \text{g}3 \text{d}5 3. \text{g}g2 \text{c}c6 4. 0-0 \text{e}5
5. \text{d}3 \text{g}4 6. \text{h}3 \text{f}f5 7. \text{c}c3 \text{w}d7 8. \text{h}h2
9. \text{e}4 \text{e}6 10. \text{e}xd5 \text{c}c5 11. \text{e}e1
\text{b}xc3 12. \text{b}xc3 \text{d}6 13. \text{d}4 \text{e}xd4 14. \text{c}xd4
\text{c}cxd4 15. \text{c}c6 16. \text{e}4 0-0

White's next move is logical. He has an extra pawn in the centre, and at some point he will play d4-d5 to create a passed pawn in the centre. Another consideration for White is where to place his pieces, but Tal plays the move he has to play sooner or later.

17. \text{d}5! \text{c}xd5 18. \text{a}b2 \text{c}5

18...\text{dxc}4? loses on the spot to 19. \text{w}d4 \text{f}6
20. \text{w}xe6!.

19. \text{c}xd5 \text{f}f5 20. \text{w}d2

Now White develops smoothly. He has a small advantage due to his d-pawn, his next goal being to create other targets.

20...\text{e}ac8 21. \text{c}ac1 \text{f}6?!

21...\text{b}6! is a much better move.

22. \text{d}4! \text{a}3

After 22...\text{c}xd4 23. \text{w}xd4 \text{b}6 24. \text{w}xc8
\text{e}xc8 25. \text{d}6 White is very active and Black's position is unpleasant.

23. \text{w}xc8 \text{c}c8 24. \text{c}xa7 \text{w}a4

Black has sacrificed a pawn to activate his pieces. The bishop on a7 is threatened, but Tal keeps up with play.

25. \text{d}6!

Now the f5-bishop is also loose.

25...\text{h}8 26. \text{w}d5 \text{c}7 27. \text{e}e3

White has a winning advantage. Black's compensation is not enough.

There are many good moves here, but Tal again finds the most forceful one.

29. \text{b}xh6!

Also good was 29. \text{d}7!? \text{d}8 30. \text{b}b6 \text{c}c3
31. \text{c}c8+ \text{h}7 32. \text{c}c3, as well as many other options.

29...\text{g}xh6 30. \text{w}e7 \text{f}7 31. \text{w}c6+ 1-0

White's rook will enter the attack sooner or later. 31...\text{g}g8 32. \text{e}4! is a good example.

Tal was the master of surprise, no doubt about it. In the following example he could have won with many moves, but we are sure that the possibility of a beautiful bishop sacrifice completely clouded his eyes to all other opportunities.

Tal-NN
USSR (Simultaneous display) 1964
White has a strong attack, but the way he concludes the game is built on brilliant tactical imagination. Tal played

1 \( \triangle b6!! \)

1 \( \triangle f8+ \triangle f6 \)
2 \( \triangle d4+ c5 \)
3 \( \triangle h8+ \triangle g7 \)
4 \( \triangle xe5+ \triangle xe5 \)
5 \( \triangle xg7+ \) also wins, but is slower.
1 ... \( \triangle x b6 \)

Black has a choice between two evils, as the queen cannot protect \( d8 \) and simultaneously. This is the point behind Tal's imaginative idea.

1 ... \( a x b6 \)
2 \( \triangle d8 \) is an immediate mate.
2 \( \triangle h4+ \triangle f6 \)
3 \( \triangle x b4+ 1-0 \)

White mates next move.

As you might have noticed we have used those combinations by Tal which have possible alternative solutions as introductory material for the chapters. Just because they are of little use in a training context does not mean that we should disregard them for their beauty. The next example appeals greatly to us, but as White could have defended much better, we decided not to include it as an exercise, but only as an example of chess beauty.

\[ \text{Pytel-Tal} \]
\[ \text{Yurmala 1983} \]
\[ \text{English Opening} \]

1 \( \triangle f3 c5 \) 2 \( c4 \) \( \triangle c6 \) 3 \( \triangle c3 \) \( g6 \) 4 \( e3 \) \( d6 \) 5 \( d4 \) \( \triangle g7 \) 6 \( d5 \) \( \triangle e5 \) 7 \( \triangle d2 \) \( f5 \) 8 \( \triangle e2 \) \( \triangle f6 \) 9 \( h3 \) \( e6 \) 10 \( f4 \) \( \triangle f7 \) 11 \( dxe6 \) \( \triangle xe6 \) 12

\[ \text{\( a3 \) 0-0 13 0-0 \( \triangle b8 \) 14 a4 d5 15 cxd5 \( \triangle d5 \) 16 \( \triangle x d5 \) \( \triangle x d5 \) 17 e4 \( \triangle e6 \) 18 \( \triangle c2 \) \( \triangle h4 \) 19 \( \triangle b3 \) fxe4 20 \( \triangle x e4 \) 20 \( \triangle x g5 !! \) 21 fxg5? \]

Much better was 21 \( \triangle a3! \). The knight on b3 is supported and the rook is developed into the game via the third rank. After 21 ... \( \triangle x e4 \) 22 \( \triangle x e4 \) \( \triangle e7 \) Black has the bishop pair in an open position, but his advantage is not yet alarming. After the move in the game White just loses.

21 \( \triangle f3 \) \( \triangle x f3+ \) 22 \( \triangle x f3 \) c4! prepares ... \( \triangle d4+ \) and ... \( \triangle d5 \) with a crushing attack.

21 ... \( \triangle x f1+ \) 22 \( \triangle x f1 \) \( \triangle f8+ \) 23 \( \triangle f3 \) \( \triangle c4+ \) 0-1

White resigned as he is mated after 24 \( \triangle g1 \) \( \triangle e1+ \) 25 \( \triangle h2 \) \( \triangle e5+ \) etc.
**Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius**

**Combinations for Solving**

**Puzzle 53**

*Tal-Keres*, Tallinn 1973

*White to play.* White has a winning position. He is an exchange up, with attacking possibilities. How did Tal finish Black off?

_The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 110._

**Puzzle 55**

*Tal-Balashov*, Moscow (Rapid) 1987

*White to play.* Black has the long-term advantages with an extra pawn and the bishop pair. However, the short-term advantages are on White's side, with a lead in development and better piece coordination. Black's lack of pieces to defend his king proved to be the decisive factor, but how did Tal punish this?

_The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 110._

**Puzzle 54**

*Tal-Unzicker*, Stockholm 1961

*White to play.* White has a strong position with good central control. However, Black wants to capture on d5 and then slowly free himself and improve his minor pieces, which at the moment are now clumsily placed in front of his rooks. White reacts quickly. How?

_The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 110._

**Puzzle 56**

*Tal-Smyslov*, Bled 1959

*White to play.* White's attack has been going on for quite a while now, and Black has been constantly under pressure. Finally White finds the decisive way through. How?

_The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 110._
Puzzle 57
Tal-Sveshnikov, Tallinn (Rapid) 1988

White to play. Black has weakened his king position with ...h6 and ...g5. However, this may not be a big problem if Black's pressure on the d-file against White's centre diverts White from his possibilities to create threats against Black's king. Where should White move his bishop?

The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 110.

Puzzle 58
Tal-Botvinnik, World Ch. (11), Moscow 1960

White to play. Botvinnik has been under pressure for a long time, and Tal's slow build up has forced him to weaken the position in front of his king. How did Tal deliver the decisive blow?

The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 112.

Puzzle 59
Tal-Masfarinas, Lvov 1981

White to play. White has a strong position with many tempting continuations. One is far better than the other, though, and Tal saw it. Can you see a direct way to Black's king?

The Tal Tip is on page 85 and the solution is on page 112.

Puzzle 60
Romanishin-Tal, Leningrad 1977

Black to play. Being two pawns down and about to lose a piece after 5hxg7 and Whxe5, Black has to look for something extraordinary to save the game. Actually, the first pawn sacrifice Black made gave him active play, and by the second he probably already had the game continuation in mind. What did Tal play?

The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 113.
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Puzzle 61
Larsen-Tal, Bugojno 1984

Black to play. White has just captured a black pawn on d4. His position was bad with the two majestic pawns on d4 and e3, but the move played by White hastens the end. How did Tal punish the Danish grandmaster?

The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 113.

Puzzle 62
Tal-NN, Smolensk (Simultaneous) 1983

White to play. This is a typical isolated queen’s pawn position that has gone wrong for Black. With his last move, threatening the bishop on g5, Black wants to sacrifice to get counterchances against White’s king after ...Qg4, eyeing h2. However, it is White who seizes the initiative. How?

The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 114.

Puzzle 63
Tal-Chikovani, Gori 1968

White to play. Here Black appears to be okay. He has centrally posted pieces and pressure against the weak e5-pawn. However, White is to move, and Tal had prepared a nice little combination. How did he proceed?

The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 114.

Puzzle 64
Tal-Geller, Budva 1967

White to play. Here Black appears to be okay. He has centrally posted pieces and pressure against the weak e5-pawn. However, White is to move, and Tal had prepared a nice little combination. How did he proceed?

The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 114.
Puzzle 65
Tal-NN, Stuttgart (Simultaneous) 1958

White to play. Black has just captured a white rook on h1, and now Tal plays an original combination worth remembering: Black is now punished for not having castled! How did Tal conclude?
The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 114.

Puzzle 66
Tal-Malich, Varna 1958

White to play. Some might find this exercise more difficult than some of the others. White has a strong position with centrally posted pieces: His rooks occupy the two central files and the bishop points towards Black's king. How should White continue?
The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 115.

Puzzle 67
Tal-Gipslis, Riga 1958

White to play. Black is now punished for not having castled!

Puzzle 68
Tal-Platonov, Dubna 1973

White to play. White has sacrificed a piece in his attack against the black king. Black's queen and rook have entered White's position via the queenside, and now he is preparing to ease the tension a bit with a rook exchange. How did Tal react to this?
The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 115.
Puzzle 69
Tal-Shamkovich, Baku 1972

White to play. White has a strong attack against Black’s king. With his last move, ...g7-f8, Black hopes to consolidate his rather shaky position and complete the development of the queenside soon thereafter. How should White use his temporary development advantage?

The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 115.

Puzzle 70
Tal-Koblencs, Yurmala (Training) 1976

White to play. Again Tal comes up with a creative move in a Sicilian. Black threatens e2 and seems to have taken over the initiative. The combinative idea in this game is similar to the one in Puzzle 65. What did Tal play?

The Tal Tip is on page 86 and the solution is on page 115.

Puzzle 71
Tal-Zaitsev, Moscow 1969

White to play. Black has just captured a bishop on g5. If White recaptures, Black plans to castle short and thereby complete development. Tal came up with another move, though. What move?

The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 116.

Puzzle 72
Tal-Toran, Oberhausen 1961

White to play. Unfortunately for his opponent, this is a typical Tal scenario. Tal has completed development, whereas his opponent’s king is stuck in the centre – this is an even worse case than usual! How should White proceed?

The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 116.
**Puzzle 73**  
Tal-van der Wiel, Moscow 1982

*White to play.* Tal has sacrificed the pawn for the sake of initiative. Black's king is still in the centre, and he is weak on the dark squares around it. Besides that, White's knight is clearly the better than its counterpart. Any suggestions?

*The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 117.*

**Puzzle 74**  
Tal-Lozov, Riga 1952

*White to play.* The opening phase is hardly over, and already the storm breaks out. How did Tal handle the threat of his knight on e5?

*The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 117.*

**Puzzle 75**  
Tal-Speelman, Subotica 1987

*White to play.* In this position Tal has found no reason to castle just yet; maybe the g-file can be used for the rook. Anyway, it's not White's king that is in danger here. It's White who has built up a threatening attack against Black's king. How did Tal proceed?

*The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 118.*

**Puzzle 76**  
Tal-Zilberstein, USSR 1973

*White to play.* The Poisoned Pawn Variation of the Najdorf Sicilian is a very sharp opening choice. Black grabs the pawn on b2 and White gets a dangerous initiative – Black often has to defend for a while. How did Tal continue here?

*The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 118.*
**Puzzle 77**

**Tal-Kozlov, Riga (Rapid) 1973**

*White to play.* White is the exchange up with attacking chances. Black has his chances as well, as the light squares around White’s king are weak, but White is first to attack. What did Tal play to open up the black king?

*The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 118.*

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**Puzzle 79**

**Tal-Podgaets, Sochi 1970**

*White to play.* The black army makes a clumsy, uncoordinated impression. The queen’s rook still hasn’t moved and the king is in the centre. White now wins material with a basic combination. How?

*The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 119.*

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**Puzzle 78**

**Hjartarson-Tal, Manila 1990**

*Black to play.* With his last move, White threatened the pawn on e5, and protecting the pawn is very awkward for Black. With opposite-coloured bishops on the board, Black should instead turn to the queenside and the white king. Can Black break White’s defence?

*The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 119.*

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**Puzzle 80**

**Tal-Dzindzichashvili, New York 1991**

*White to play.* This is a typical IQP position where White tries his luck on the kingside whereas Black strives for an endgame, seeking to exchange pieces to reduce White’s attacking potential. Here Tal has succeeded in building up a strong attack. How did he continue?

*The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 119.*
Puzzle 81
Tal-Bilek, Hungary 1963

White to play. With his last move, Black threatened the white bishop on b3. It is not clear how White can save the bishop, so Black must have felt happy here, believing he was on his way to victory. Suggest a move for White.

The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 119.

Puzzle 82
Tal-Ghitescu, Hungary 1963

White to play. This time Black doesn’t lack behind in development. The problem is his king position, where he lacks defending forces. Black has just taken a pawn on e5 – a very brave decision against the great magician. How did Tal punish Black’s greed?

The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 120.

Puzzle 83
Tal-Matanovic, Moscow 1963

White to play. Any bishop move by White is met by ...\(\mathcal{W}\)xc1, while White also has to consider the fate of his knight on g5. What should White play?

The Tal Tip is on page 87 and the solution is on page 121.

Puzzle 84
Tal-Plaskett, Sochi 1984

White to play. The middlegame has hardly begun, and already Black finds himself in serious trouble after White’s next move. What did Tal play in this position?

The Tal Tip is on page 88 and the solution is on page 121.
Puzzle 85
Tal-NN, Berlin (Simultaneous display) 1974

White to play. The evaluation of the position depends on whether Black can catch up with development on the queenside. For the sake of the lead in development, Tal has sacrificed a pawn, and he quickly has to show that the investment was worth it. What did he play here?

The Tal Tip is on page 88 and the solution is on page 122.

Puzzle 86
Tal-Velimirovic, Teslic 1979

White to play. Tal has sacrificed a piece for the sake of the initiative and attacking possibilities against Black’s king. His task now is to find a way to let the queen join the attack. How did he continue the attack?

The Tal Tip is on page 88 and the solution is on page 122.

Puzzle 87
Bönsch-Tal, Halle 1974

Black to play. Both sides are attacking here. The simultaneous threat on f8 and h7 means that White’s position looks promising. However, Black has the move, and he shows that his attack is stronger. How?

The Tal Tip is on page 88 and the solution is on page 122.

Puzzle 88
Kristinsson-Tal, Reykjavik 1964

Black to play. As compensation for the three pieces, White has a queen and two dangerous passed pawns on the queenside. What counts in this position is not material, but activity, and against a passive queen like this, a rook and two minor pieces are simply too much. How did Tal conclude the attack?

The Tal Tip is on page 88 and the solution is on page 122.
Puzzle 89  
Thorbergsson-Tal, Reykjavik 1964

Black to play. Black has a strong attack, but it is not easy to see how he can get to White's king. How should he continue?

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Puzzle 90  
Tal-Taimanov, Yerevan 1962

White to play. White's last move was ...Qxe5 and it turns out to be the decisive mistake. Before this move Black's position made a clumsy impression, although a win for White was not in sight. However, after the mistake by Black, things are clear enough. How should White punish Black's careless play?

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Puzzle 91  
Tal-Timman, Skopje Olympiad 1972

White to play. White has sacrificed a pawn for the initiative. Black has just captured another pawn, when instead he should have been dealing with White's attack on the kingside. How did Tal punish this greed?

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Puzzle 92  
Tal-Benko, Bled 1959

White to play. White's queen has penetrated into Black's position. With his last move, Black threatened the knight on c3. How should White react if he wants to keep the initiative?

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The Tal Tip is on page 88 and the solution is on page 123.
Puzzle 93
Khasin-Tal, Leningrad 1956

Black to play. White has just played \texttt{w12-f3}. After Black's queen moves he hopes to recapture the knight on d3 with good prospects. Tal had foreseen this move and had a strong reply ready. How did he respond?

The Tal Tip is on page 88 and the solution is on page 125.

Puzzle 94
Evans-Tal, Amsterdam 1964

Black to play. Black appears to have nothing. White threatens an exchange of rooks, after which it is difficult to believe that Black will win the resulting queen endgame. However, Black is to move and the white king is rather shaky on g4. How did Tal take advantage of this?

The Tal Tip is on page 88 and the solution is on page 126.

Puzzle 95
Nogueiras-Tal, Brussels 1988

Black to play. Things look bad for Black after White's previous move \texttt{Qd8}. Black has to careful about both e8 and f5 and his queen is threatened too. However, but Tal had everything under control. How did he react?

The Tal Tip is on page 88 and the solution is on page 127.

Puzzle 96
Tal-Donner, Wijk aan Zee 1968

White to play. Tal has once again built up a very strong attacking position. We wonder what it is with Tal and the opponent's king's stuck in the centre of the board! How does White strengthen his attack further?

The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 127.
Puzzle 97
Tal-Schmidt, Cologne 1981

White to play. Black's position is not very promising, with a rook like that on h6 and passive pieces in general. On the other hand, White's set-up is very active and aggressive. If Black succeeds in holding the position on the kingside, maybe White's queenside pawns can be an object of attack later on. But now it is Tal to move...

The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 128.

Puzzle 98
Tal-NN, England (Simultaneous) 1974

White to play. Black threatens White's queen and it is not so obvious where it should go. All the squares seems to be inferior to g4. However, White has built up a strong position in the centre, so maybe there is an alternative solution to the problem?

The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 128.
After the previous warm-up material, we have now arrived at the truly wonderful and magical combinations. In this chapter you will experience some true Tal wizardry, as in the following example, where White can win in more than one way, but Tal decides on the road leaving most pieces en prise.

Tal-Grigorian
Yerevan 1982

\[
1 \text{c4 e5 2 \text{\texttt{d}}c3 \text{\texttt{d}}f6 3 \text{\texttt{d}}f3 \text{\texttt{d}}c6 4 \text{g}3
\text{\texttt{d}}b4 5 \text{\texttt{d}}d5 \text{a}5 6 \text{\texttt{d}}g2 \text{d}6 7 0-0 0-0 8 \text{e}3
\text{\texttt{d}}c5 9 \text{\texttt{d}}b3 \text{\texttt{d}}xd5 10 \text{\texttt{d}}xd5 \text{\texttt{d}}b4 11 \text{\texttt{d}}d4
\text{\texttt{d}}xd4 12 \text{\texttt{d}}xd4 \text{\texttt{d}}xd4 13 \text{\texttt{d}}xd4 \text{\texttt{d}}e8
\]

13...\text{c}6 is also possible, with the idea that after 14 \text{dxc6} \text{bxc6} Black wants to play on the light squares with ...\text{\texttt{d}}e6-d5. If 15 \text{\texttt{d}}d5 \text{\texttt{d}}xd5 \text{cxd5} then Black has compensation due to the opposite-coloured bishops.

\[
14 \text{\texttt{d}}a3 \text{\texttt{d}}a6 15 \text{\texttt{d}}d2 \text{\texttt{d}}b6 16 \text{\texttt{d}}b4
\]

Now Black's pieces are a bit misplaced.

\[
16...\text{\texttt{d}}b8
\]

Another possibility for Black was to enter the following endgame, a pawn down, but with chances of survival: 16...\text{\texttt{a}}xb4 17 \text{\texttt{a}}xb4 \text{\texttt{d}}d7 18 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}e}1 \text{\texttt{b}}5 19 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}f1 \text{\texttt{d}}d7 20 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xe8+ \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xe8 21 \text{\texttt{d}}xb5 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xb5 22 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}f1 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xf1+ 23 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xf1 \text{\texttt{b}}5 24 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}a5 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}f8 25 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xb5 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}b}8.

\[
17 \text{\texttt{b}}xa5 \text{\texttt{b}}xa5 18 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}e1 \text{\texttt{a}}4?! 19 \text{\texttt{\texttt{w}}}h5 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}d7
20 \text{\texttt{\texttt{w}}}e4
\]

20 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}g5 is less clear. After 20...\text{\texttt{f}}6 21 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}c4 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xe4 22 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xe4 \text{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}xg5 23 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}a6 White has the initiative, but it's probably not enough for an advantage: 23...\text{\texttt{g}}6 24 \text{\texttt{w}}h6 \text{\texttt{w}}f8 25 \text{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}g5 \text{\texttt{d}}a6 26 \text{\texttt{\texttt{w}}}f4 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}f5 27 \text{\texttt{g}}4 \text{\texttt{h}}6 28 \text{\texttt{w}}e7 (28 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}h4? \text{\texttt{g}}5) 28...\text{\texttt{w}}xe7 29 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}xe7 \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}c2 and Black is OK.

\[
20...\text{\texttt{g}}6
\]

A serious weakening of the dark squares around the king.

21 \text{\texttt{w}}h6 \text{\texttt{w}}f6 22 \text{\texttt{d}}g5 \text{\texttt{w}}xd4 23 \text{\texttt{\texttt{w}}}h4! \text{\texttt{w}}g7
24 \text{\texttt{d}}h6 \text{\texttt{w}}h8

White's position is superior. He has sacrificed a pawn, but as compensation he has activity, a development advantage and control of the dark squares. Now the simple 25
\( \text{d3!} \) is very strong. Black cannot develop his queenside, as 25...\( \text{d6} \) loses to 26 \( \text{dxa6} \) \( \text{dxa6} \) 27 \( \text{e8}+ \) \( \text{xe8} \) 28 \( \text{e7} \). Meanwhile, White can just improve his position step by step. Instead Tal converted the advantage with the creative move...

25 \( \text{f5}! \)

\[ \text{Wc1 fxe8} \]

Black's pieces flow to natural squares. In comparison, the rook and queen on the queenside make a sad impression.

21 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{h3} \) 22 \( \text{d1} \)

\[ \text{Tal transformed his activity into something concrete after} \]

22...\( \text{dxe2}! \)

A fantastic combination involving many sacrifices. White understands this and settles for returning the pawn. 22...\( \text{d4}+? \) was also a good move: 23 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d4} \) 24 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{f1}+ \) 25 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{d4}+ \) and Black will eventually win.

23 \( \text{d8} \)

If 23 \( \text{d8} \) then 23...\( \text{d2}! \) 24 \( \text{d8}+ \) \( \text{f8} \) and White cannot avoid mate.

23...\( \text{d3}+ \) 24 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d8} \) 25 \( \text{c3} \)

Avoiding ...\( \text{d4} \), but now Black activates the bishop on the other diagonal.

25...\( \text{d6}! \) 26 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{f1}+ \) 27 \( \text{f1} \)

At last White has freed himself on the queenside and has exchanged queens. But the price he had to pay was too high, as the endgame is very unpleasant for him.

27...\( \text{f4} \) 28 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{d2} \)

Black has the more active position and a better pawn structure.

29 \( \text{d1} \)

This shortens the pain, but Black was well on his way to winning anyway.

29...\( \text{f2} \) 30 \( \text{f2} \) \( \text{b5} \) 31 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{bxa4} \) 32 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{h5} \) 33 \( \text{f5} \) 34 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 35 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{b7} \)

0-1
Combinations for Solving

Puzzle 99
Tal-Speelman, Reykjavik 1988

White to play. Of course, White could retreat the knight here, but that's not in the spirit of the eighth world champion, and it is certainly not what brought our attention to this exercise. But what did Tal actually play here?

The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 129.

Puzzle 100
Tal-Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1987

White to play. White has won a pawn, but it seems that it was poisonous and that Black had planned a strong pin. What can White do to prevent getting humiliated?

The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 129.

Puzzle 101
Tal-Szymczak, Lublin 1974

White to play. Tal has sacrificed material to obtain the initiative. White has bishop and two pawns for two knights, which are momentarily out of play on the edge. The problem for White is how to let the rook join in the attack. What should White play?

The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 130.

Puzzle 102
Tal-Andersson, Stockholm 1976

White to play. With Black's king surrounded by very weak dark squares, White's position looks promising. However, Black is a pawn up, and if he can organise a defence, the future doesn't look too bad. What did Tal play?

The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 130.
**Puzzle 103**  
*Tal-Kupreichik*, Soviet Ch., Moscow 1969

White to play. White has sacrificed the exchange, but in compensation he dominates the light squares and has prospects of an attack on this colour complex. Maybe Black counted only on the obvious move \(\texttt{Qx}t7\), but Tal chose another move. What did the Latvian wizard play?  
The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 131.

**Puzzle 104**  
*Tal-Gedevanishvili*, Georgia 1970

White to play. White has built up a strong attack king, and for that he gladly sacrificed a pawn. Black seriously lacks in development, and his queen is separated from the rest of the army on a2. How did Tal continue?  
The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 131.

**Puzzle 105**  
*Tal-Averbakh*, Riga 1961

White to play. Tal must have seen the game continuation far in advance, as the knight on g5 has no way to retreat. White has to sacrifice, but how?  
The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 132.

**Puzzle 106**  
*Tal-Hecht*, Varna Olympiad 1962

White to play. Tal has sacrificed his queen, and at the moment he has only a minor piece for it, and his bishop on h4 is hanging! However, he had foreseen everything. How did he continue?  
The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 132.


**Puzzle 107**  
**Tal-Korchnoi, Reykjavik 1987**

![Chess Position](image1)

*White to play.* White is a pawn up, but Black threatens the knight on f5, and it is not clear what White should do. Black seems to have good compensation for the pawn. However, Tal had a little surprise for Black. What did he play?  
*The Tal Tip is on page 89 and the solution is on page 134.*

**Puzzle 108**  
**Tal-Golombek, Munich Olympiad 1958**

![Chess Position](image2)

*White to play.* White has a very strong attacking position, but it all depends on his ability to include other pieces in the attack on Black's king. The knight on c5 is threatened. How should White react to this?  
*The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 134.*

**Puzzle 109**  
**Kudrin-Tal, Titograd 1984**

![Chess Position](image3)

*Black to play and draw.* White has made a temporary bishop sacrifice to win the pawn on a7, and now he threatens both of Black's rooks. Here Tal uses his tactical skills to solve the problems in a radical way. How?  
*The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 134.*

**Puzzle 110**  
**Varasdy-Tal, West Berlin 1986**

![Chess Position](image4)

*Black to play.* Black has an active position. His pieces are located on the kingside, pointing at White's king. Material is equal but White does have a strong passed pawn on the queenside, so Black has to seek his chances in an attack. How should Black continue?  
*The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 134.*
**Puzzle 111**
Timman-Tal, Tallinn 1973

Black to play. In this type of position the possible g4-push normally secures White the better chances, but here White's king feels insecure and Black, who has concentrated his forces on the kingside, has strong pressure file. How did Tal convert his advantage?

*The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 135.*

**Puzzle 112**
Tal-Vasiukov, Riga 1955

White to play. Black sacrificed the exchange some moves ago. With a pawn and a strong dark-squared bishop, Black has compensation if things develop slowly. However, Black should have exchanged queens earlier, and now he is punished for this mistake. How?

*The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 135.*

**Puzzle 113**
Tal-Hartston, Hastings 1974

White to play. A typical Sicilian position, where White has won the strategic battle in the important question: will the e5-pawn prove to be weak, or will White's initiative prove it's worth? How did White proceed with the attack?

*The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 135.*

**Puzzle 114**
Bannik-Tal, Riga 1955

Black to play. Positionally White is better due to Black's weak d6-pawn, but Tal had foreseen this position when he let White take on e7. How should Black continue his assault on White's king?

*The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 135.*
Puzzle 115
Gulko-Tal, Sochi 1970

Black to play. This is a difficult exercise. Black has two ways of capturing the pawn on d4, both opportunities leading to material imbalances. It’s one thing to calculate the lines exactly, quite another to judge the resulting positions properly. What should Black play?

The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 136.

Puzzle 117
Tal-Olafsson, Bled 1961

White to play. White’s position looks promising: his pieces are active and Black’s king seems to be in danger. But White still has to prove that his initiative is worth the exchange. How did Tal do this?

The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 137.

Puzzle 116
Spiridonov-Tal, Tbilisi 1969

Black to play. Black’s pieces can hardly be improved upon, so he is ready for action. To get to White’s king, Black has to destroy the pawn structure in front of it. How should Black proceed?

The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 137.

Puzzle 118
Tal-Padevsky, Moscow 1963

White to play. With the pawn sacrifice ...d5-d4, Black wants to get his knight to d5 with tempo. If allowed to do this, he will have good chances to seize the initiative. Tal wants to be the one to lead the way, so how did he react here?

The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 138.
Puzzle 119

Hoelzl-Tal, Malta Olympiad 1980

Black to play. White has no light-squared bishop, and Black only needs to protect the pawn on f3 before he can execute mate on g2 in two more moves. How did Tal use the weakness of the light squares?

*The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 139.*

Puzzle 120

Honfi-Tal, Sukhumi 1972

Black to play. Black’s major pieces are placed on the open files on the queenside, ready to attack White’s king. His bishop on c4 is threatened, and here the challenge for Black is what to do with the bishops? The first question is where should he move the light-squared one?

*The Tal Tip is on page 90 and the solution is on page 139.*

Puzzle 121

Tal-Klaman, Soviet Championship, Moscow 1957

White to play. Black’s king hasn’t castled, but the black pawn mass seems to provide him with a perfect shelter. However, Tal proved that this is not the case. What did he play?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 139.*

Puzzle 122

Tal-Campomanes, Leipzig Olympiad 1960

White to play. Again Tal’s opponent has failed to get his king into safety. Tal made use of this with active play, boldly sacrificing to keep the initiative. What did he play?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 140.*
**Puzzle 123**  
**Tal-Brinck Claussen,**  
Havana Olympiad 1966

*White to play.* White’s h-pawn has been exchanged for Black’s a-pawn. This gives White the opportunity to create an outside passed pawn later. However, Tal wasn’t thinking about the endgame when he played the following move. What did he play?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 140.*

**Puzzle 124**  
**Tal-Zaichik,** Tbilisi 1988

*White to play.* Black hopes to exchange the bishop on c3, as this piece exerts unpleasant pressure against the black king. Did Tal allow Black to do this?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 140.*

**Puzzle 125**  
**Rytov-Tal,** Tallinn (Rapid) 1976

*Black to play.* Black has a good position. He controls the d4-square, and the White bishop on e2 is not a good piece. He has also forced a weakening of the white king’s position and now uses this small weakness to develop an initiative. How did Black proceed?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 141.*

**Puzzle 126**  
**Mukhin-Tal,** Moscow Olympiad 1972

*Black to play.* Here Black has a small lead in development. Often the king is well placed in the centre in this type of position, but here Black can use his small advantage to attack White’s king. How?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 141.*
Puzzle 127
Tal-Yuhtman,
Soviet Championship, Tbilisi 1956

White to play. Things look bad for White here, with Black’s pressure on his kingside and especially the threat to exchange on f3. However, Tal had foreseen this and had something in mind. What was it?
The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 142.
In this chapter you will have the chance to solve five of Mikhail Tal's greatest combinations. After the difficult job of following his footsteps in the previous chapter, you will now have the chance to mimic his greatest achievements, such as the following:

**Tal-Rantanen**  
Tallinn 1979  
_Sicilian Defence_

```
1 e4 c5 2 d4 c6 3 Bb5 e6 4 0-0  
4 d5 e5 5 c3 a6 6 cxc6 bxc6 7 d4 cxd4  
8 dxd4 d6 9 e1 b7 10 c6 bxc6 11  
8 g4 e5 12 g3 f6 13 e3 d7 14 ad1  
5 d7
```

15 a4! b8 16 b3 a8 17 c4 c5  
Black tries to keep the position closed, but now the knight finds a brilliant outpost on d5.

```
18 c3 f8 19 f4 g8
```

20 f1  
White slowly improves the position of all his pieces. Tal prepares for the opening of the f-file, and therefore the rook is better placed on f1 than on e1. Notice also that he waits to occupy the d5-square with the knight, as at the moment it does a good job protecting e4. Black has very little prospects of counterplay and he can only wait passively.
for White to do something.

20...\textcolor{red}{\textit{wc8}} 21 \textcolor{red}{\textit{fxe5}}

White is not only a pawn up, he also has the more active pieces.

21...\textcolor{red}{\textit{fxe5}}

Or 21...\textcolor{red}{\textit{dxe5}} 22 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf6}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{g4}} 23 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf8+}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf8}} 24 \textcolor{red}{\textit{d5}} and Black's pawns will fall like ripe apples.

22 \textcolor{red}{\textit{d5}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{h8}} 23 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf7}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{g4}}

Tal now played a strong, creative move. He must have seen the variation right to the end.

24 \textcolor{red}{\textit{f6!}}

The simple 24 \textcolor{red}{\textit{df1}}, with ideas similar to game, also wins. Black is not mated, but White forces a clearly superior position after 24...\textcolor{red}{\textit{h5}} 25 \textcolor{red}{\textit{h6!}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{g4}} (25...\textcolor{red}{\textit{xf7}} 26 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf7}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{gxf6}} 27 \textcolor{red}{\textit{f6 mates}) 26 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xg4}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xg4}} 27 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c7 ec8}} 28 \textcolor{red}{\textit{a6}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{a8}} 29 \textcolor{red}{\textit{c7 e8}} 30 \textcolor{red}{\textit{g5}}.

26...\textcolor{red}{\textit{xd1}}

Or 26...\textcolor{red}{\textit{g8}} 27 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xd6}}. White simply proceeds with the attack as if nothing has happened. Black is a piece up, but he cannot organise a defence properly. For example, after 27...\textcolor{red}{\textit{h7}} White wins back the invested material: 28 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xg7+}} (or 28 \textcolor{red}{\textit{df6}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf7}} 29 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf7}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{w8}} 30 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xg7}} 28...\textcolor{red}{\textit{xg7}} 29 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xb7}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{wb7}} 30 \textcolor{red}{\textit{d8+}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{g8}} 31 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xg8+}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{g8}} 32 \textcolor{red}{\textit{yg4+}}. White is a pawn up in this queen endgame. He should win, but precise technical play is required.

27 \textcolor{red}{\textit{yg7+}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{g8}} 28 \textcolor{red}{\textit{h8!}}

White mates within three moves.

28...\textcolor{red}{\textit{xf7}} 29 \textcolor{red}{\textit{xf6+}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{g8}} 30 \textcolor{red}{\textit{yg7}} mate (1-0)
White to play. With his last move, Black has offered the exchange of bishops. This would of course be to Black's benefit, as the bishop on f4 is exerting much pressure on the h2-b8 diagonal. What can White play to avoid the exchange of this valuable bishop?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 143.*

Puzzle 129
Tal-Gurgenidze, Alma-Ata 1968

White to play. White is a pawn down, but has a strong attack on the kingside including the use of the half-open h-file. How did Tal continue here?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 144.*

Puzzle 130
Tal-Najdorf, Leipzig Olympiad 1960

White to play. White has strong pressure on the kingside but Black also has trumps, including a beautifully posted knight on e4. How did Tal exploit his initiative?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 145.*

Puzzle 131
Tal-Suttles, Sukhumi 1972

White to play. This position looks reasonably quiet, with White's main advantage being the control of the only open file on the board. Tal's next move, however, is a bolt from the blue. What did he play?

*The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 145.*
Puzzle 132
Tal-Uhlmann, Moscow 1971

White to play. A typical Tal position. Black has two extra pawns but his king is still in the middle of the board and White's pieces are very active. How did Tal exploit his obvious lead in development?

The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 145.
Endgame Magic

In the previous chapters we have seen Tal sacrifice almost every piece in every way ever invented. The Latvian wizard was known for his artistic and chaotic style, which produced all of these wonderful pieces of chess art. But what about his technical abilities? How did he play in the endgame?

Tal-Smirin
USSR 1990
King's Indian Defence

The story about this game was that Smirin had said that all you needed to do against Tal was to get the queens of the board; then you could never lose. Tal took this as a challenge and convincingly showed his opponent that it is not a wise idea to underestimate a world champion.

1 d4 f5 2 c4 g6 3 ∆c3 ∆g7 4 e4 d6
5 d4 0-0 6 ∆e2 e5 7 dxe5!

'Just because I do not write like God, people assume I would not be able to' is what the famous American writer Hemingway once said. Here Tal proved that just because he didn't especially wish to play endgames, it didn't mean he couldn't.

7...dx e5 8 ∆xe8 ∆xe8 9 ∆g5 c6!? A more interesting line than the solid 9...∆c8.

10 ∆xe5 ∆e8 11 0-0-0 ∆a6 12 ∆d6!
A new move at the time, and probably quite strong.
12...∆xe5
12...∆f8 13 ∆xf6 ∆xe5 with compensation was suggested by Tal, but 13 ∆xf7!, a Tal-like sacrifice in the endgame, would have ended that story.
13 ∆xf6 ∆xf6 14 ∆xf6 ∆c5 15 ∆d6!
15 f4 ∆xe4! is nice, while 15 f3 ∆c6 16 f4 ∆xe4 17 ∆xe4 ∆xe4 18 ∆xe6 fxe6 19 ∆d1 would have given White a slight advantage. However, Tal's way of play is stronger.
15...∆xe4 16 ∆d8+ ∆g7 17 ∆xe4 ∆xe4

18 ∆f3!
18 ∆d3 ∆e7 is not that bad for Black. The c4-pawn is less of an importance here.
18...\texttt{Exc4+}

Or 18...\texttt{Ec7} 19 \texttt{Hd1!} and Black cannot free himself easily.

19 \texttt{Ed2 c5?}

This does not make a lot of sense. The idea, of course, is ...\texttt{Ed4+}, but this is not good enough. Better was 19...\texttt{b6!} 20 \texttt{Hc1 Exc1} 21 \texttt{Hxc1} \texttt{Ab7} 22 \texttt{Hd7 Hb8} 23 \texttt{Ec7}, when Black is worse but can comfort himself with being a pawn up for the moment.

20 \texttt{Hc1!}

Black's plan is revealed after 20 \texttt{Hc1? Ec2+} 21 \texttt{Hxc2} \texttt{Af5+} 22 \texttt{Ad3 c4} and the endgame is roughly level.

20...\texttt{Exc1?}

The last chance was the uncomfortable 20...\texttt{Ed4+} 21 \texttt{Hxd4 exd4} 22 \texttt{Hc7 Aes} 23 \texttt{b3} with a clear advantage for White, but Black still has some activity and some chances.

21 \texttt{Ec1}

![Chessboard diagram]

Now Black cannot free himself; eventually he will lose material.

21...\texttt{h5} 22 \texttt{h4 Hb8} 23 \texttt{Hb8} \texttt{f6} 24 \texttt{Hd5 g5} 25 \texttt{g3 gxh4} 26 \texttt{gxh4 Aes} 27 \texttt{Ed2 b5} 27...\texttt{Ec6} 28 \texttt{Ec4+}.

28 \texttt{Ed3 b4} 29 a3 bxa3 30 bxa3 \texttt{a5} 31 \texttt{Ec4} 32 f3 It's zugzwang!

32...\texttt{Ag7} 33 \texttt{Hf6} \texttt{Hxe6} 34 \texttt{Hxb8 Hb3} 35 \texttt{Hb5 1-0}

So Tal \textit{did} know how to play the endgame. But like Kasparov and Alekhine, the two world champions with a style closest to Tal, he played them dynamically. He still had the same alertness for tactical possibilities, as can be seen from the following example.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Olim-Tal}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
Parnu 1971
\end{center}

![Chessboard diagram]

Black's bishop on \texttt{h6} appears to be bad, but more important in the position are his active possibilities on the b-file. If White could exchange a pair of rooks and knights, the resulting knight versus bishop endgame would be better, but he can't...

42 \texttt{Hac3 Hb8} 43 \texttt{Hde2 g4} 44 \texttt{f4 Hxb2} 45 \texttt{Ed4 g3} 46 \texttt{Hf1} 47 \texttt{Hg4} 48 \texttt{Hf5 Hb4} 48 \texttt{Hg5}

48...\texttt{Hxe3+!}

48...\texttt{Hxg5} 49 \texttt{fxg5 He5} with an extra a-
paw was also good enough, though slower. If White plays 50 \( \text{e}xe7 \), he loses at once to 50...\text{b}1+ 51 \text{c}e2 \text{h}3 and the pawns cannot be stopped.

The game continuation is more clear-cut though.

49 \text{d}xe3 \text{xf}4+ 50 \text{f}3

50...\text{h}3! 51 \text{c}8+ \text{g}7 0-1

Either the h-pawn promotes or White will lose both knights after 52 \text{g}xh3 \text{xf}3+ 53 \text{g}2 \text{xe}3.

Players who like to take many risks will actually have to be very strong in the endgame in order to stay on top or pull on the breaks and fight for half-a-point. Or they will, like the rest of us, have to be able to 'take the money and run'.

Tal understood very well what good technique is: to win the game as easily as possible. And to win at once is often the easiest way to do so, as in the following example.

\text{Tal-Brakmanis}
USSR 1959
Gimnogo Piano

\begin{game}
1 e4 e5 2 \text{f}3 \text{c}6 3 \text{c}c4 \text{c}5 4 b4 \text{xb}4 5 c3 \text{e}7 6 d4 \text{d}6 7 \text{dx}e5 \text{g}4 8 \text{w}d5 0-0 9 \text{h}3 \text{h}6 10 0-0 \text{d}6 11 \text{ex}d6 \text{cx}d6 12 \text{h}5 \text{w}a5 13 \text{d}5 \text{e}6 14 \text{d}1 \text{f}e8 15 \text{f}4 \text{d}ad8 16 \text{bd}2 \text{w}xc3 17 g4 \text{w}f6 18 \text{e}3 \text{xd}5 19 \text{ex}d5 \text{e}5 20 \text{exe}5 \text{w}xe5 21 \text{w}xe5 \text{dxe}5 22 \text{d}h6 \text{g}xh6 23 \text{e}4
\end{game}

White's advantage is obvious: a strong knight on e4 and a passed pawn on d5. He also dominates on the light squares, while Black has some pawn weaknesses too.

23...\text{g}7 24 d6 \text{f}8 25 \text{d}e1 \text{d}7 26 \text{g}2 \text{ed}8 27 \text{c}7 \text{b}6 28 \text{d}d3 \text{xc}7 29 \text{dx}c7 \text{c}8 30 \text{d}d7 \text{b}4

The passed pawn on c7 is very dangerous. White only needs to activate his knight to protect the promotion square (with \text{a}7 or \text{d}6) and Black will lose his rook. Right now Black's bishop dominates the knight, so White has to distract it a bit.

31 a3!

Also possible was 31 \text{g}3 b5 32 f4 \text{ex}f4+ 33 \text{xf}4 a5 34 \text{e}5 a4 35 \text{d}6 \text{xd}6+ 36 \text{w}d6 b4 37 \text{d}8 and White wins.

31...\text{xa}3 32 \text{d}e3 \text{a}5

If 32...a6 then White plays 33 \text{d}d5 \text{c}5 34 \text{d}d8.

33 \text{d}b5 \text{b}2 34 \text{d}e6 \text{xc}7 35 \text{xc}7 \text{a}4 1-0

Black resigned, as he is mated within five moves with 36 \text{f}5+ \text{g}6 37 \text{e}6+ 36 38 \text{c}7 \text{g}5 39 \text{g}3 and \text{f}7.

An important part of the endgame is the pawn breakthrough, which is completely tactical in nature. Here is an example from Tal's hand.
Khanov-Tal
Riga 1955
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 d4 c6 3 g3 g6 4 Bg2 Bg7
5 d3 d6 6 Be2 f6 7 0-0 0-0 8 h3 Be8
9 Be3 d5 10 Bc1 Bb8 11 a4 a6 12
d2 b5 13 axb5 axb5 14 0xd4 cxd4 15
Bd5 Bb7 16 Bh6 Bxd5 17 exd5 Bf6 18
xg7 Bxg7

Black wins a pawn and with it the
19 Bf4 Bb6 20 Bxe7 Bxe7 21 Bxe2 Bb4 22
a1 Ba7! 23 b3 Bb5 24 Wh4 Bxa5 25
Bh2 Ba1 26 Bxa1 Wxa1 27 g4 Bd1

Black has a solid advantage due to his
dark-squared control.
28 Bf3 h6 29 Wg3 Bc1 30 Bg2 g5 31
f3 Bf8 32 Wg1 Bxg1+ 33 Wxg1 Bc3
34 Bg2 Bc5

White's bishop on g2 is rather bad at the
moment, shut in by its own pawns. White
has some pressure on the e-file against c7,
but this point is not particularly difficult for
Black to defend. White should really do
something to fight for the dark squares, but
he fails to do so in the game.

Black's position is close to winning, but he
has to find the right plan. Tal breaks through
with a pawn sacrifice to create weaknesses in
White's camp.

44...f4! 45 Bh3
45 Bg2? Bxc2+ loses right away.

45...e4!

The decisive breakthrough. Not 45...Bh8+
46 Bg2 Bxh2+? 47 Bxh2 d5 48 Bg2 e4 49
Bf2 and Black cannot win, as White has built
a fortress.

46 fxe4

White can also capture with 46 dxe4 but
then Black penetrates with 46...Bc3 47 Bf2
d3 48 cxd3 Bxb3 with a won endgame after
49 d4 Bc3 50 Bxa2 b3.

After fxe4 the major weakness is g4.

49 Bf3 Bh3+ 50 Be2 Be5 51 Bf1 Cg3
52 Bf2 Bxg4 0-1

Endgame Magic
**Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius**

**Combinations for Solving**

**Puzzle 133**

Tal-Averkin, Soviet Ch., Moscow 1973

*White to play.* Black has just played ...\textit{c}4. He plans to regain the lost pawn, after which his active pieces would assure good prospects. However, Black's king on f5 is more exposed than it is active! What did Tal play?

The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 146.

**Puzzle 135**

Tal-Dely, Hungary 1963

*White to play.* White is a pawn up with an active position. Tal now simplified the position even more, and the win became obvious. How did he do that?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 147.

**Puzzle 134**

Tal-Pytel, Lublin 1974

*White to play.* Black's previous move (...\textit{d}5-c5) was the decisive mistake although, with a pawn majority on the queenside and bishop versus knight, White was clearly better anyway. How did Tal conclude the game?

The Tal Tip is on page 91 and the solution is on page 146.

**Puzzle 136**

Tal-Olafsson, Bled 1959

*White to play.* White's bishop on b5 is threatened, but White has a strong move that shows up Black's bad piece coordination. What is the winning continuation for White?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 147.
Puzzle 137
Medina García-Tal, Palma de Majorca 1966

Black to play. Without the queens on the board, the pawn structure could favour White, who has an outside passed pawn. However, in this concrete position Black’s pawn is already on h3, and it decides the outcome of the game. How?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 148.

Puzzle 138
Rashkovsky-Tal, Sochi 1973

Black to play. Black is two pawns up in this double rook endgame. White hopes to generate some active play to compensate for the deficit, but with his last king move he became over-active. How did Tal punish White for his careless king move?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 149.

Puzzle 139
Tal-Antoshin, Kharkov 1967

White to play. So far White has shown great strategic understanding in this endgame. Now he forces a win. How did Tal continue?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 149.

Puzzle 140
Pinter-Tal, Taxco 1985

Black to play. Black has just played ...c5-c4, forcing White to capture with the h-pawn. In this position Tal showed what was important and what wasn’t. How did he proceed?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 150.
Black to play. Black sacrificed the h-pawn and turned his attention to the queenside and the centre instead. Now he has a strong continuation that wins back the invested material with a superior position. What did Tal play?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 151.

Puzzle 143
Tal-Sisniega, Taxco 1985

White to play. White has sacrificed a pawn for initiative. How did he continue from the diagram position?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 151.

Puzzle 142
Tal-Pribyl, Tallinn 1973

White to play. Black must have expected a retreat of the bishop on d5. Instead White played an aggressive move that takes advantage of the long a1-h8 diagonal. What was White's surprise for Black?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 151.

Puzzle 144
Tal-Trifunovic, Palma de Majorca 1966

White to play. White's position is won, but Tal finds the most convincing way to victory. What did the ex-world champion play?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 152.
**Puzzle 145**

**Tal-Bronstein, Tbilisi 1959**

*White to play.* Black looks okay, but with his next move Tal changed the nature of the position and obtained a small advantage. What did he play?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 153.

**Puzzle 146**

**Gipslis-Tal, Vilnius 1955**

*Black to play.* The following treatment of the final phase of the endgame demands a lot of calculating power, as many variations end up as pawn races. How did Tal make sure that his pawns were the fastest?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 153.

**Puzzle 147**

**Tal-Etruk, Riga 1954**

*White to play.* White is the exchange up, but the protected knight on d3 plus a pawn seem to give Black compensation. However, in this position White can obtain a decisive advantage. How?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 154.
CHAPTER EIGHT

A Taste of his own Medicine

The course of a game of chess, like life, does not always run smoothly. If, like Tal, you live by the sword then you must be prepared to die by it too. In this chapter you will get the chance to wield the sword and to slay the eighth world champion - with a little assistance from the great players who got the chance in the real world. This is the moment when you can get the better of the great Tal - the chance is yours!

Klasup-Tal
Riga 1953
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 d6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 Bg7 4 Bg2 0-0 5
Bc3 d5 6 Bd3 c6 7 0-0 Bd7 8 e5 c5 9
Bc4 e5 10 d5 exd5 11 cxd5 Bb4 12 e6
Bxe6 13 Dc3 f5 14 Be3 Bf5 15 Bxf5
Bxf5 16 Bg5 Be7 17 De4 Bf6 18 Dh4
Df8 19 Bh3 Bc8 20 Bb2 Bb4+ 21 axb4
Bxb4 22 Be5

Threatening both on a5 and h6. Black's best chance to create counterplay is 20...f5?!
20...b4?! 21 Bxb4 Bxb4 22 g5 Bg7 23
Bf6+ gxf6 24 Bxe7+ Bxe7 25 Dh5+ Bf8
26 Bg4 Bb5 27 a4 Bc6

White's position is overwhelming, especially because of the knight on f6. White now played a nice little combination, although 28 He4, with the idea of a slow build up with He1, also wins - Black has no good defence.

28 Bc6+ Be8 29 Bxd6+ He7 30 He1

White wins back the material with an overwhelming position.

30...Wh8 31 Bxe7 Wh7 32 Whx6 Bxe6 33
Wha7 Whx8 34 Bh5+ Bf7 35 Bh6+ Bf8 36 Bh7
37 Bh6+ Wh8 38 Wh6+ Wh7 39 Bh7+ Wh6

The check on h4 is deadly.

With a style like Tal's, you are expected to crash and burn from time to time. Often you just end up short in the endgame, but sometimes you will taste your own medicine and die by the sword you live by.
There were some players who were good at playing against Tal. The list includes Polugaevsky and Korchnoi, who looked for flaws in the wizard’s inspirational sacrifices, and often had the ability to out-calculate him. However, sometimes it was also possible to get a fierce attack going against the Latvian’s king, as he would often go for positions involving attacks on both flanks.

A Taste of his own Medicine

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Gufeld-Tal

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Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

so strong that other moves will do as well, for instance 30 \textit{hxg3} \textit{exg6} 31 \textit{fxg6} (Black is allowed some counterplay, but it is nothing special) 31...\textit{wxb3} 32 \textit{gf5} \textit{wa2}+ 33 \textit{we2} \textit{wa4}+ 34 \textit{wd2} and White’s king escapes, leaving him with a winning position.

30...\textit{axg7} 31 \textit{hlg5} \textit{gf8} 32 \textit{wg4}+ \textit{gg7} 33 \textit{we7}+ \textit{gg7} 34 \textit{dxg6}

In this line Black has no chance to create counterplay.

34...\textit{wxb3} 35 \textit{dxe5}+ \textit{fgf6} 36 \textit{wg6}+ \textit{dxe5} 37 \textit{d4}+ 1-0

Black resigned in view of 37...\textit{xd4} 38 \textit{xb3}.

By the end of his career Tal had to compete with many youngsters who had grown up admiring his games, analysed them and understood what he was all about. Probably Tal would have torn them apart had he still been in a strong physical state, but his health was always his Achilles’ heel.

Here a young man gets the better of him.

\textbf{M. Gurevich-Tal}

Manila 1990

\textit{Queen’s Gambit}

1 \textit{c4} \textit{e5} 2 \textit{d4} \textit{d5} 3 \textit{dxc3} \textit{c5} 4 \textit{cxd5} \textit{exd5} 5 \textit{df3} \textit{c6} 6 \textit{g3} \textit{d6} 7 \textit{lg2} \textit{f6} 8 \textit{0-0}

0-0 9 \textit{lg5} \textit{cx}d4 10 \textit{dx}d4 \textit{h6} 11 \textit{e3}

The main line Tarrasch.

11...\textit{e8} 12 \textit{f1} \textit{f8} 13 \textit{wa4} \textit{e5} 14 \textit{xc}d1 \textit{d7} 15 \textit{wb3} \textit{c6} 16 \textit{xc}6 \textit{bxc6} 17 \textit{f4} \textit{bb8} 18 \textit{wc2} \textit{wa5} 19 \textit{wxf5} \textit{axb2}?

A clever try to seize the initiative. White, however, has an effective reply.

20 \textit{axd5}!

On 20 \textit{xc5} Black has the strong 20...\textit{d4}! White’s queen is unprotected on f5 and Black wins back the piece with an active position. White’s move in the game is far stronger and gives him the better chances.

20...\textit{e2} 21 \textit{fxe5}+ \textit{xe5} 22 \textit{we4} \textit{g7} 23 \textit{wh7}+ \textit{f8} 24 \textit{ec1} \textit{f5} 25 \textit{xc6} \textit{ge7}

White has a good position, with the bishop pair and active possibilities against Black’s exposed king. There are a couple of good moves here, Gurevich choosing

26 \textit{b5}?

26 \textit{g2} is a good prophylactic move against ...\textit{f3}.

26...\textit{f3}+ 27 \textit{g2} \textit{xd4} 28 \textit{ec8}+ \textit{e8} 29 \textit{xe8} \textit{wd5}+ 30 \textit{wh3}

So far, so good. Black has to take on \textit{e8} and the position is simplified.

30...\textit{xe8} 31 \textit{xe8}+ \textit{xe8} 32 \textit{wg7} \textit{we4} 33 \textit{f4} \textit{e6} 34 \textit{we5} \textit{wc2} 35 \textit{fl3} 35...\textit{f8} 36 \textit{ab3} 1-0

White is an exchange up, is well coordinated and now turns his attention to Black’s king.
Combinations for Solving

Puzzle 148
Portisch-Tal, Moscow 1967

White to play. Tal's last move (15...a6) was the decisive mistake. With a temporary sacrifice, White can win material. How should he play?

The Tal Tip is on page 92 and the solution is on page 154.

Puzzle 149
Tal-Lutikov, Soviet Team Ch., Moscow 1963

Black to play. White has sacrificed a pawn for an attack, but instead it is Black who first finds a way to the opponent's king. How?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 154.

Puzzle 150
Tal-Abramov, Petrozavodsk (Simultaneous display) 1984

Black to play. Black has a passed c-pawn, but more important is his attack. Given time, White's counterplay on the light squares could be dangerous, especially as f7 is a weak point. What should Black play?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 155.

Puzzle 151
Tal-Smyslov, Herceg Novi (Blitz) 1970

Black to play. Both players have active play, but the black knight on f4 gives Black better prospects of a successful kingside attack. In fact, Black has a strong continuation right away. How should he proceed?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 155.
**Puzzle 152**

**Romanishin-Tal, Tallinn 1977**

White to play. White has sacrificed the exchange to get his knight to f5, an excellent outpost. How should White proceed?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 155.

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**Puzzle 153**

**Tal-Darsniek, Riga 1950**

Black to play. If White had one more move here, his position wouldn't be bad at all. He would play a rook to the open d-file to strengthen the outpost on d5. However, it's Black to move. How did he take advantage of his slightly better development?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 155.

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**Puzzle 154**

**Unzicker-Tal, Milan 1975**

White to play. White has built up a strong attacking position. How can he make use of this before Black catches up in development and organises a defence?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 155.

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**Puzzle 155**

**Tal-Anand, Cannes 1989**

Black to play. Black has both a material and a positional advantage. With his previous move (35 Wh5) White threatens to penetrate with his queen into Black's camp. How should Black react to this?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 156.
Puzzle 156
Tal-Gligoric, Candidates Match (Game 1), Belgrade 1968

Black to play. White’s set-up on the kingside looks very dangerous, but Black has a strong defensive resource that puts a question mark to White’s eager attacking play. How should Black continue?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 156.

Puzzle 157
Tal-Vaganian, Leningrad 1974

Black to play and draw! A dozen moves ago White won the exchange, but since then Black has been able to generate a lot of counterplay. Now Tal’s opponent played a little combination. What is it?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 158.

Puzzle 158
Tal-Olafsson, Las Palmas 1975

Black to play. It is difficult to say what Tal had overlooked in this position, but the combination carried out by Black is not easy to spot. The ex-world champion would have been proud if he had played it himself.

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 158.

Puzzle 159
Nezhmetdinov-Tal, Baku 1961

White to play. Up till now White has played very aggressively and Tal has been on the defensive. Now White continues in an active style. How should he proceed with the attack?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 158.
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Puzzle 160
Korchnoi-Tal, Yerevan 1962

White to play. White has built up a strong attacking position, but Tal has succeeded in generating plenty of counterplay. However, White now wins with a pretty combination. How?

The Tal Tip is on page 93 and the solution is on page 159.

Puzzle 161
Polugaevsky Tal, Soviet Championship, Tbilisi 1956

White to play. With his last move (...f6) Tal pinned White's knight on b5. He now threatens to capture on b5, when the pawn on d4 falls. However, White had prepared a long and complicated combination winning a pawn. What was it?

The Tal Tip is on page 94 and the solution is on page 159

Puzzle 162
Tal-Vaganian, World Blitz, Saint John 1988

Black to play. This is a game from the fun of the World Blitz Championship. Tal was so obsessed about blitz that he would often play with chess journalists in the morning, only taking a break to play an afternoon game in Candidates match! White seems to be winning, but Vaganian actually had a last resort that could have helped him win. What was it?

The Tal Tip is on page 94 and the solution is on page 160.

Puzzle 163
Lutikov-Tal, Kiev 1964

White to play. We are very happy to be able to end with one of the most brilliant simple combinations ever seen. With a flash of lightning, Lutikov sends Tal packing. How?

The Tal Tip is on page 94 and the solution is on page 160.
CHAPTER NINE

Tal Tips

Puzzle 1) Tal-Segal, Riga 1952
Note the position of Black's king and queen. This is a job for a tricky knight once it reaches the ideal square.

Puzzle 2) Tal-Mista, Dubna 1974
Time is everything here, and the pressure on the g file can be used for something other than pinning the g pawn.

Puzzle 3) Tal Vooremaa, Riga 1971
White finds a way to activate his dark squared bishop, and Black will end up with back rank problems.

Puzzle 4) Westerinen-Tal, Moscow 1982
Because of the vulnerable back rank, Black has to proceed with tempo. Black needs to find a way for the queen to join the attack, simultaneously undermining the forces around White's king.

Puzzle 5) Muratov-Tal, Tallinn rapid 1988
With only the queen and knight joining in the attack, White's king can hardly be checkmated. However, Black can make use of the poor placement of White's king and queen for a little combination that secures him a decisive material advantage.

Puzzle 6) Tal Paetz, Halle 1974
White's queen threatens to invade on the dark squares. You should consider which of White's remaining pieces best attacks on the other colour complex.

Puzzle 7) Tal Mikhail-Maidla, Riga 1987
If the f7 pawn weren't there, White would execute the mate easily...
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Puzzle 8) Tal-Starodub. Petrozavodsk (Simultaneous display) 1984
The dark squares around Black’s king are terribly weakened, so it is natural that White executes the decisive blow here. Note that the rook on e8 is unprotected: if White could move the bishop on e7 with tempo...

Puzzle 9) Barcza-Tal, Tallinn 1971
White’s knight on f3 might prove a bit loose after Black’s next move! Another clue is to look for unprotected white pieces.

Puzzle 10) Tal-Timman, Reykjavik 1988
Maybe White shouldn’t be so afraid of a queen swap if he can win material. Again it is a good advice to look for unprotected black pieces, and in this case it is noteworthy that the bishop on e6 is pinned and thus loses much of its power.

Puzzle 11) Tal-Kupreichik, Sochi 1970
Try to get rid of Black’s best defender!

Puzzle 12) Tal-Zeids, Latvian Championship, Riga 1955
Note that the black queen is undefended – this is the clue to White’s combination.

Puzzle 13) Tal-Wade, Tallinn 1971
The most efficient way to conclude the attack is to distract the queen.

Puzzle 14) Tal-Botvinnik. World Championship (Game 7), Moscow 1960
White’s pieces can hardly be improved any further, so he proceeded with a clever rook sacrifice!

Puzzle 15) Tal-Levin, Georgia 1970
The rooks and the bishop are so well placed. This can be used with deadly effect!

Puzzle 16) Tal-Portisch, Candidates Match (Game 2), Bled 1965
White can win material with the following little combination. The rook on h8 is more exposed than it looks at first sight!

Puzzle 17) Tal-Filip, Moscow 1967
The positioning of Black’s king and queen on the same diagonal should give White a clue about what to do.

Puzzle 18) Tal-Botvinnik, World Championship (Game 17), Moscow 1960
With a rook sacrifice White clears the way for his queen. As play moves on, it is noteworthy that the rook on c8 is unprotected.

Puzzle 19) Tal-Chandler, Sochi 1982
The d4-knight and d5-bishop are the cornerstones of the combination.
**Tal Tips**

**Puzzle 20)** Tal-Keller, Zürich 1959
The queen has to enter Black's position before Black is coordinated. For this purpose, White doesn't refrain from temporary sacrifices.

**Puzzle 21)** Tal-Shabalov, Yurmala 1985
With a tricky knight move, White opens up other possibilities for his other pieces.

**Puzzle 22)** Tal-Holm, Kapfenberg 1970
Black's queen and knight are so clumsily placed that his king is effectively trapped after White's move in the game.

**Puzzle 23)** Chukaev-Tal, Riga 1955
Black needs to open another file to get to White's king. This might happen in a brutal way.

**Puzzle 24)** Ambroz-Tal, Riga 1981
After an exchange on a3, the bishop is now unprotected. Tal makes full use of this fact.

**Puzzle 25)** Ostrauskas-Tal, Vilnius 1955
Black wins White's queen with a combined attack of bishop and rook.

**Puzzle 26)** Tal-Wade, Palma de Majorca 1966
Before playing the obvious moves, one should look for other candidates. Here White can make a typical sacrifice that clears the seventh rank for the rook.

**Puzzle 27)** Tal-Demidovich, Prokopjevsk (Simultaneous display) 1972
One should not necessarily care about the unprotected bishop on b5. Instead White can play his own plans, dictating the course of the game. White breaks down Black's defences with a brilliant sacrifice.

**Puzzle 28)** Ulfimtsev-Tal, Moscow 1967
With a piece sacrifice, Black's queen enters the attack with tempo and White is mated.

**Puzzle 29)** Naranja-Tal, Nice Olympiad 1974
Black sacrifices the knight in order to give space to the heavy pieces. An important point when calculating lines is that the bishop on e3 is unprotected.

**Puzzle 30)** Tal-Johansson, Stockholm 1961
White crashes through with a sacrifice.

**Puzzle 31)** Tal-Kiriakov, Riga 1965
White has a direct approach here, using his initiative to launch an attack against Black's king.

**Puzzle 32)** Tal-Tringov, Amsterdam 1964
As many of White's pieces are en prise, there is only one way: forwards!
Puzzle 33) Tal-Mohrlok, Varna Olympiad 1962
The knight on d4 might not be the most important feature in the position. Try to look for soft spots in the black camp, especially the light squares. White can considerably improve his worst placed piece.

Puzzle 34) Niebuilt-Tal, Latvia 1954
Black attacks on the dark squares, and later the light-squared bishop joins in. Don’t be afraid to sacrifice to weaken the dark squares!

Puzzle 35) Miezis-Tal, Riga 1958
The game is not surprisingly decided on the light squares. Try to search for an ideal square for the black queen, even if this involves a sacrifice.

Puzzle 36) Tal-Zilberg, Riga 1949
The simultaneous threat of a queen swap and on c2 forces White to proceed with tempo all the way.

Puzzle 37) Tal-Shmit, Latvia 1965
Either White will have to check all the way to mate, or maybe more to the point, he will have to distract the bishop on h3.

Puzzle 38) Tseshkovsky-Tal, Sochi 1970
Black’s move must have shocked White. It seems he thought that his king’s position was rather safe...

Puzzle 39) Chukaev-Tal, Tbilisi 1956
You should turn your attention to the queenside, where White’s king is located. Black can strengthen the pressure even further by bringing another piece into the attack.

Puzzle 40) Unzicker-Tal, Hamburg 1960
Look for unprotected white pieces: this is the clue to Tal’s combination!

Puzzle 41) Tal-Nievergelt, Zürich 1959
The queen is able to create decisive threats from one particular square before Black gets time to organise a defence. The bishop on c8 needs protection, thus making its defender immobile.

Puzzle 42) Tal-Petrosian, Moscow 1974
White threatens mate on h7 after Wh4, but Black has one way to avoid this scenario. Therefore, White should try to remove a defender of Black’s king.

Puzzle 43) Spassky-Tal, Montreal 1979
The knight threatens Black’s bishop, and maybe Black should come up with something other than a mere retreat.

Puzzle 44) Averbakh-Tal, Riga 1958
Black should not be afraid to seek complications!
Puzzle 45) Gradus-Tal, Riga 1953
White's queen is a bit shaky on d4!

Puzzle 46) Tal-Szabo, Sochi 1973
Black's king is not too safe either!

Puzzle 47) Tal-Pasman, Riga 1953
Black's back rank is a bit vulnerable, and White should improve his worst placed piece.

Puzzle 48) Tal-Kampenuss, Latvia 1953
White's worst placed piece is the knight, and he can improve it with tactical means!

Puzzle 49) Tal-Suetin, Tbilisi 1969
White's queen is under attack and has to move. White wants to attack f7, and with a beautiful sacrifice he gives Black no time to create counterplay.

Puzzle 50) Tal-Vooremaa, Tallinn 1971
White cuts off Black's queen from the defence with a well-timed sacrifice.

Puzzle 51) Tal-Lyavdansky, Kiev 1964
White decides the game in his favour with a temporary sacrifice.

Puzzle 52) Ljubojevic-Tal, Las Palmas 1975
The fewer the pieces defending White's king, the less it is defended!

Puzzle 53) Tal-Keres, Tallinn 1973
White smashes his way through to Black's king with a rook sacrifice.

Puzzle 54) Tal-Unzicker, Stockholm 1961
Without a light-squared bishop, Black suffers defeat on this colour complex.

Puzzle 55) Tal-Balashov, Moscow (Rapid) 1987
Rooks are not everything in this world!

Puzzle 56) Tal-Smyslov, Bled 1959
Black has problems on the back rank!

Puzzle 57) Tal-Sveshnikov, Tallinn (Rapid) 1988
White plays a classic sacrifice to be able to enter the black king's position with his queen.

Puzzle 58) Tal-Botvinnik, World Championship (Game 11), Moscow 1960
White can strip Black's defences even more, which might let the queen penetrate into Black's position.

Puzzle 59) Tal-Mascarinas, Lvov 1981
Try to imagine where your queen would like to go, if given the opportunity!
Puzzle 60) Romanishin-Tal, Leningrad 1977
Try to find a weak spot in White’s king’s position. This is the key to force the draw by perpetual check.

Puzzle 61) Larsen-Tal, Bugojno 1984
Beware of possible sacrifices by White. Instead, Black should be the one to sacrifice to secure victory.

Puzzle 62) Tal-NN, Smolensk (Simultaneous display) 1983
A good move would be a bishop retreat to b3, but White has something more forceful.

Puzzle 63) Tal-Chikovani, Gori 1968
Black doesn’t have many defenders on the kingside. With the help of White’s other pieces, White’s queen quickly gets at Black’s king.

Puzzle 64) Tal-Geller, Budva 1967
Try to find a weak spot in the black king’s position. With a timely sacrifice, White can remove a defender.

Puzzle 65) Tal-NN, Stuttgart (Simultaneous display) 1958
If White simply recaptures on h1, he has nothing special, so one should look out for something less ordinary. Again it is a good idea to look for unprotected pieces (as mentioned earlier, they tend to drop!) and here we find the queen on a5 and the bishop on g7. White uses these features to the maximum.

Puzzle 66) Tal-Malich, Varna 1958
Black threatens mate on b2, but White is not interested in weakening his king’s position unnecessarily. Look for other solutions to the problem.

Puzzle 67) Tal-Gipslis, Riga 1958
The bishop on c3 is strong as it points toward a weak point in the black king’s position, namely g7. Tal’s move in the game simply improves his queen and keeps maximum flexibility, which makes things rather difficult for Black.

Puzzle 68) Tal-Platonov, Dubna 1973
Look for an aggressive approach, but be aware of possible counterplay by Black. Which white piece needs to be improved the most?

Puzzle 69) Tal-Shamkovich, Baku 1972
Black’s dark-squared bishop has no opponent and is a very important piece in the defence of the black king. If White can distract this bishop, the way to the king is open.

Puzzle 70) Tal-Koblencs, Yurmala (Training game) 1976
The best way to meet a threat is to make a threat of your own, and this concept fits in fine here. Instead of the passive h1, White finds a more aggressive approach.
Puzzle 71) Tal-Zaitsev, Moscow 1969
With his next move Tal catches Black’s king in the middle of the board, where it is exposed to a dangerous attack.

Puzzle 72) Tal-Toran, European Team Ch., Oberhausen 1961
White removes Black’s last shelter in front of the king.

Puzzle 73) Tal-van der Wiel, Moscow 1982
White finds a forceful way to let the a1-rook join the attack.

Puzzle 74) Tal-Lozov, Riga 1952
With a timely sacrifice, White secures the dominance of the light squares and starts a dangerous attack.

Puzzle 75) Tal-Speelman, Subotica 1987
Once again Tal destroys the pawn formation in front of Black’s king.

Puzzle 76) Tal-Zilberstein, USSR 1973
Black’s queen is not safe at all on a4.

Puzzle 77) Tal-Kozlov, Riga (Rapid) 1973
White opens up the position with a sacrifice that clears the seventh rank. Note also the numerous unprotected black pieces.

Puzzle 78) Hjartarson-Tal, Manila 1990
White’s pawn chain around the king provides him with a good shelter on the dark squares. If Black can break it, he will find the way to the king.

Puzzle 79) Tal-Podgaets, Sochi 1970
A queen check on g8 yields nothing as the rook on a8 is protected. But White has a stronger first move that makes the plan work after all.

Puzzle 80) Tal-Dzindzichashvili, New York 1991
White has a tactical shot that removes the shelter in front of Black’s king.

Puzzle 81) Tal-Bilek, Hungary 1963
White destroys Black’s defence on the dark squares with a beautiful sacrifice. The Black rook on a5 and the bishop on c8 will not participate in the defence (Black’s bishop is light squared!).

Puzzle 82) Tal-Ghitescu, Hungary 1963
White removes the shelter in front of Black’s king with a piece sacrifice.

Puzzle 83) Tal-Matanovic, Moscow 1963
White seizes the initiative with a timely sacrifice.
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Puzzle 84) Tal-Plaskett, Sochi 1984
Black’s king is not as safe as it appears. With this in mind, White’s next move is not too difficult to see. Besides, the a1-rook would like to go to e1.

Puzzle 85) Tal-NN, Berlin (Simultaneous display) 1974
This is a classical sacrifice. Black lacks defenders on the kingside.

Puzzle 86) Tal-Velimirovic, Teslic 1979
The pin on the c8-h3 diagonal looks unpleasant for White, as he cannot free the rook easily. But Tal showed that this pin is in fact more unpleasant for Black, as his king is on the same diagonal.

Puzzle 87) Bönsch-Tal, Halle 1974
Black cannot defend White’s two threats simultaneously, so he has no other choice but to sacrifice if he wants to seize the initiative.

Puzzle 88) Kristinsson-Tal, Reykjavik 1964
The pressure on the long a8-h1 diagonal and the weakness of the g3-square are the clues to Black’s move.

Puzzle 89) Thorbergsson-Tal, Reykjavik 1964
The first move is obvious, but afterwards you shouldn’t be afraid of sacrificing one of the minor pieces!

Puzzle 90) Tal-Taimanov, Yerevan 1962
There is no time to move the knight, as the weakness of the c2-square then makes it impossible for White to use his rooks actively. Instead White should play forcefully with the rest of his army.

Puzzle 91) Tal-Timman, Skopje Olympiad 1972
Black threatens to take on f3. White’s classic attacking set-up with Wh4 and Dh6 is especially dangerous if he can put further pressure on h7.

Puzzle 92) Tal-Benko, Bled 1959
Tal opens the way to the kingside for his queen with a clearance sacrifice.

Puzzle 93) Khasin-Tal, Leningrad 1956
Black has no time to move the queen, as White then obtains a good game. Instead he executes a decisive counterblow.

Puzzle 94) Evans-Tal, Amsterdam 1964
In one move White exchanges rooks, so Black should look for something forceful.

Puzzle 95) Nogueiras-Tal, Brussels 1988
Black can effectively meet White’s threat with another threat.
Puzzle 96) Tal-Donner, Wijk aan Zee 1968
White can hardly improve his rooks, so the question is how he should let the knight join the attack.

Puzzle 97) Tal-Schmidt, Cologne 1981
White gets to Black's king by smashing his light-squared structure. This is not so solid as it appears!

Puzzle 98) Tal-NN, England (Simultaneous display) 1974
White crashes through to Black's king with a timely knight sacrifice.

Puzzle 99) Tal-Speelman, Reykjavik 1988
Sometimes an attack on the queen can be a useful way to gain a tempo!

Puzzle 100) Tal-Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1987
You only need so many pieces around the king to win.

Puzzle 101) Tal-Szymczak, Lublin 1974
The black queen is a very dominating piece on f6, defending Black's king so well. With a brilliant rook sacrifice, White distracts the queen to continue the attack.

Puzzle 102) Tal-Andersson, Stockholm 1976
Accuracy is required! Given time, Black's two next moves are ...g8 and ...d8.

Puzzle 103) Tal-Kupreichik, Soviet Championship, Moscow 1969
White attacks on the light squares, and in cooperation with the queen, often only one minor piece is needed to conclude the attack. White sacrifices one of his minor pieces to weaken Black's king and simultaneously let the queen enter the attack.

Puzzle 104) Tal-Gedevanishvili, Georgia 1970
Black's biggest problem is his lack of defensive forces around his king. With a strong sacrifice, White's attack on the dark squares becomes irresistible.

Puzzle 105) Tal-Averbakh, Riga 1961
The bishop on f6 is somewhat loose, and with a forceful move White also finds a way to improve his worst piece - the bishop on c2 - considerably. Where would this bishop like to go?

Puzzle 106) Tal-Hecht, Varna Olympiad 1962
White has to create further threats quickly, and he has a strong bishop move, opening the d-file for his a1-rook.

Puzzle 107) Tal-Korchnoi, Reykjavik 1987
Try to get the other white pieces to join in the attack, both the knight on f2 and the rook on f1.
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Puzzle 108) Tal-Golombek, Munich Olympiad 1958
The pawn on f6 is as strong as a piece in this position. White needs one more piece to join the attack, so the fate of the knight is decided...

Puzzle 109) Kudrin-Tal, Titograd 1984
Look at the white king’s position. Black needs one more piece to join in the attack.

Puzzle 110) Varasdy-Tal, West Berlin 1986
White threatens to undermine c4 with $xd3, but maybe this threat is not so strong if Black can develop threats of his own.

Puzzle 111) Timman-Tal, Tallinn 1973
Black cannot strengthen his position further, so it’s time to take action.

Puzzle 112) Tal-Vasiukov, Riga 1955
White finds a weak spot in the black king’s position.

Puzzle 113) Tal-Hartston, Hastings 1974
An important point when calculating the sacrificial line is that the queen on c8 will be unprotected at some point.

Puzzle 114) Bannik-Tal, Riga 1955
Black has to find a way to let the rook on c8 join the attack (the rook on f8 is needed to protect the king).

Puzzle 115) Gulko-Tal, Sochi 1970
Tal used his rooks very well, and one can say he was a specialist in the material imbalance of rook versus bishop and knight.

Puzzle 116) Spiridonov-Tal, Tbilisi 1969
Black storms White’s barricades with a sacrifice

Puzzle 117) Tal-Olafsson, Bled 1961
White’s main aim is to weaken the black king’s position, and to do this he has to destroy the pawn structure. White’s e-pawn can help him achieve this goal.

Puzzle 118) Tal-Padevsky, Moscow 1963
With an inventive queen sacrifice, Tal suddenly creates many threats against the enemy king.

Puzzle 119) Hoelzl-Tal, Malta Olympiad 1980
Black can protect the pawn on f3 with active play. Look for alternative ways, and do not be afraid to sacrifice a thing or two!

Puzzle 120) Honfi-Tal, Sukhumi 1972
Black should move the bishop with tempo. Try to see if the bishop can threaten anything when it moves.
**Puzzle 121**) Tal-Klaman, Soviet Championship, Moscow 1957
White needs to open up files for his rooks down to Black's king.

**Puzzle 122**) Tal-Campomanes, Leipzig Olympiad 1960
Given the time, Black would like to play ...e7-e6 to secure the outpost on e4 for the knight and also to castle. White does not allow this.

**Puzzle 123**) Tal-Brinck Claussen, Havana Olympiad 1966
White uses the pin on the a2-g8 diagonal and the fact that the rook on d8 is unprotected.

**Puzzle 124**) Tal-Zaichik, Tbilisi 1988
Black's position would be quite good after the exchange of dark-squared bishops, so of course Tal did not allow this to happen. Instead he removed Black's only defender of his king.

**Puzzle 125**) Ryтов-Tal, Tallinn (Rapid) 1976
This might seem insignificant, but the bishop on b2 is unprotected. These things always count, and Tal used exactly this feature in the following combination...

**Puzzle 126**) Mukhin-Tal, Moscow Olympiad 1972
White's most important piece is the light-squared bishop. Black should seek to exchange it at any cost!

**Puzzle 127**) Tal-Yuhtman, Soviet Championship, Tbilisi 1956
First of all, find a way to save yourself. Then be aware of tricks.

**Puzzle 128**) Tal-Hübner, Montreal 1979
With a temporary sacrifice, White makes sure that the right pieces are exchanged. White wants to exchange his knight for the black bishop.

**Puzzle 129**) Tal-Gurgenidze, Alma-Ata 1968
White breaks through with a classic sacrifice.

**Puzzle 130**) Tal-Najdorf, Leipzig Olympiad 1960
White cannot do much while Black's superb knight remains on e4.

**Puzzle 131**) Tal-Suttles, Sukhumi 1972
If Black's rook were not on the first rank, Ad8+ would be a good move.

**Puzzle 132**) Tal-Uhlmann, Moscow 1971
White's attack would be even stronger if the e6-pawn were not on the board.

**Puzzle 133**) Tal-Averkin, Soviet Championship, Moscow 1973
The rook on c4 is unprotected, and Black's king is caught in a mating net!

**Puzzle 134**) Tal-Pytel, Lublin 1974
The c-pawn is a winner!
Puzzle 135) Tal-Dely, Hungary 1963
White can force the exchange of bishops and win a pawn if Black avoids a queen swap.

Puzzle 136) Tal-Olafsson, Bled 1959
Once again activity and cooperation between the pieces are more valuable than the 'numerical value' of the pieces. White wins with a timely exchange sacrifice.

Puzzle 137) Medina Garcia-Tal, Palma de Majorca 1966
After a queen swap Black can promote the pawn within a few moves.

Puzzle 138) Rashkovsky-Tal, Sochi 1973
White's king is stuck in a mating net!

Puzzle 139) Tal-Antoshin, Kharkov 1967
The pawns on g7 and h6 have been the long-term problem for Black, as they are placed on the colour complex of White's extra bishop - the dark-squared one.

Puzzle 140) Pinter-Tal, Taxco 1985
The first priority is the attack on the f2-pawn. Black should be aware that his pawn on f3 is on a light square and can therefore be attacked by White's bishop.

Puzzle 141) Krimer Yu-Tal, Vilnius 1955
White's queenside pawns become an object of attack!

Puzzle 142) Tal-Pribil, Tallinn 1973
Precise calculation is needed after White's next move, a temporary sacrifice.

Puzzle 143) Tal-Sisniega, Taxco 1985
After the capture of the e6-pawn, White has an in-between move that makes the combination work out well.

Puzzle 144) Tal-Trifunovic, Palma de Majorca 1966
White sacrifices a pawn to disrupt Black's pieces.

Puzzle 145) Tal-Bronstein, Tbilisi 1959
White develops a piece and offers Black the chance to enter a rook versus bishop and knight ending where White's rooks are very active.

Puzzle 146) Gipslis-Tal, Vilnius 1955
The h-pawn is not enough to win. Black needs more forces to join in.

Puzzle 147) Tal-Etruk, Riga 1954
White sacrifices back the exchange and is winning in the resulting rook endgame.

Puzzle 148) Portisch-Tal, Moscow 1967
The a5-knight is trapped, and Black plans to open up the a-file to give it the needed support.
Puzzle 149) Tal-Lutikov, Soviet Team Championship, Moscow 1963
Black weakens the dark colour complex around White’s king with a timely sacrifice.

Puzzle 150) Tal-Abramov, Petrozavodsk (Simultaneous display) 1984
The weak point in White’s position is f2.

Puzzle 151) Tal-Smyslov, Herceg Novi (Blitz) 1970
Black sacrifices a piece to get to White’s king.

Puzzle 152) Romanishin-Tal, Tallinn 1977
It is not clear how White can bring his rook to join the attack, but fortunately for him the rook is not needed!

Puzzle 153) Tal-Darsniek, Riga 1950
White’s queen and king are both placed on the long a8-h1 diagonal.

Puzzle 154) Unzicker-Tal, Milan 1975
Black’s kingside has to be destroyed to develop an initiative. Later the weakness of c6 and the unprotected rook on a8 will be of significance.

Puzzle 155) Tal-Anand, Cannes 1989
Black forces White to defend for many moves with a powerful sacrifice to open up the king’s position.

Puzzle 156) Tal-Gligoric, Candidates Match (Game 1), Belgrade 1968
The bishop on f8 plays a decisive role.

Puzzle 157) Tal-Vaganian, Leningrad 1974
Black opens up the white king’s position and secures a draw.

Puzzle 158) Tal-Olafsson, Las Palmas 1975
White’s back rank is vulnerable, and with a clever queen move Black wins a decisive tempo on the queen.

Puzzle 159) Nezhmetdinov-Tal, Baku 1961
The most important thing in the position is to open the files in the centre down to Black’s king.

Puzzle 160) Korchnoi-Tal, Yerevan 1962
Material is not important here. White sacrifices to gain time, and his attack proves more dangerous than Black’s pawns on the queenside.

Puzzle 161) Polugaevsky-Tal, Soviet Championship, Tbilisi 1956
White moves his queen out of the pin. Notice that the black knight on g4 is unprotected.
Do not let the white king get away!

Puzzle 163) Lutikov-Tal, Kiev 1964
If the pawn on f7 becomes a queen...
CHAPTER TEN

Solutions to Puzzles

Puzzle 1)
Tal-Segal, Riga 1952

29 \text{\textit{f}}xd7!
White removes the defender of e6. Also good was the less spectacular 29 \textit{f}ee8! with the same idea as in the game. Now 29...\textit{xc}5 30 \textit{gg}8+ \textit{h}6 31 \textit{wd}2+ g5 32 \textit{bxc}5 leaves White an exchange up with a continuing attack.

29...\text{\textit{f}}xd7
29...\textit{xc}5 30 \textit{xf}7+! leaves White a rook up.
30 \textit{ee}6+ 1-0
White wins the queen.

Puzzle 2)
Tal-Mista, Dubna 1974

34 \textit{xf}g6+!
Another solution to the exercise is the slower 34 \textit{xf}d5 with the point 34...\textit{xc}2+ 35 \textit{bb}1 The Black counterattack is easily stopped and now he has no defence against the crushing rook sacrifice on g6; for instance, 35...\textit{ee}6 36 \textit{g}xe6+ \textit{xe}6 37 \textit{xe}6+ wins the house.

34...\textit{fxg}6 35 \textit{xd}5+ 1-0
Note that White's attack proceeded without loss of tempo - after the rook sacrifice the pawn on d5 was captured with check. Now there is no defence, as after 35...\textit{e}e6 36 \textit{xe}6+ \textit{f}7 37 \textit{g}xg6+ Black is soon mated.

Puzzle 3
Tal-Vooremaa, Riga 1971

34 \textit{xf}f8+! 1-0
A nice little combination! After 34...\textit{xf}8 35 \textit{h}6+ \textit{e}8 (35...\textit{g}8 doesn't help either) 36 \textit{a}8+ White mates on the next move. Note how White used his entire army in the assault on Black's king: after the queen sacrifice the dark-squared bishop was activated, protecting g7 and thus keeping Black's king on the back rank. The rook on a1 was activated on the a-file, and the light-squared bishop on f5 was participating as well, protecting the rook on d7.

Puzzle 4
Westerinen-Tal, Moscow 1982

36...\textit{h}xh2+! 0-1
White resigned due to 37 \textit{h}xh2 (notice the pin of the knight on f3; 37 \textit{g}1 \textit{g}xg3 is mate!) 37...\textit{g}2 mate. Black found the g2 square for his queen, and the attack was executed well on the light squares.

36...\textit{g}xg3?? basically uses the same idea,
the only problem being that it is without check! Black is mated after 37 \( \text{Wh}c8+ \).

**Puzzle 5**
*Muratov-Tal, Tallinn (Rapid) 1988*

31 ... \( \text{Wxg}3! \) 0-1

White resigned in view of 32 \( \text{fxg}3 \) \( \text{Qc}3+ \). Those tricky knights! White saw no point in continuing the battle being a rook and three pawns down.

**Puzzle 6**
*Tal-Paehtz, Halle 1974*

21 \( \text{Qxe}6! \) 1-0

If Black recaptures, he will be mated: 21...
\( \text{fxe}6 \) 22 \( \text{Wh}f6+ \) \( \text{Qe}8 \) (22...
\( \text{Qg}8 \) 23 \( \text{Qxe}6 \) mate!) 23 \( \text{Qc}6 \) mate.

21 \( \text{Qxe}6? \) is not the best. After 21...
\( \text{fxe}6 \) 22 \( \text{Wh}f6+ \) \( \text{Qg}8 \) 23 \( \text{Qxe}6+ \) \( \text{Qg}7 \) the white rook cannot join the attack easily.

21 \( \text{Wh}h8+ \) \( \text{Qe}7 \) leads to nothing as the rook on b8 is protected from the distant queen on h2.

21 \( \text{Wh}f6? \) is another, slower solution to the problem. Black is allowed some time to organise a defence, but he doesn't succeed: 21...
\( \text{Wh}h6+ \) (21...
\( \text{Qxd}5 \) 22 \( \text{Wh}h8 \) mate!) 22 \( \text{Qc}3 \) \( \text{Qg}7 \) 23 \( \text{Qxe}6 \) and White wins.

**Puzzle 7**
*Tal-Maidla, Riga 1987*

1 \( \text{Qxg}6+! \) 1-0

1...
\( \text{fxg}6 \) (no better is 1...
\( \text{Qg}7 \) 2 \( \text{Ac}8 \) mate) 2 \( \text{Ac}8 \) mate. A nice cooperation of White's two rooks!

**Puzzle 8**
*Petrozavodsk (Simultaneous display) 1984*

26 \( \text{Wh}h8+! \) 1-0

Black resigned due to the forced line 26...
\( \text{Qxh}8 \) 27 \( \text{Qf}6+ \) \( \text{Qg}8 \) 28 \( \text{Qxe}8 \) mate.

**Puzzle 9**
*Barcza-Tal, Tallinn 1971*

9...
\( \text{Qh}3! \) 10 \( \text{Qfxd}4? \)

Of course not 10 \( \text{Qxh}3?? \) \( \text{Qxf}3+ \) and White loses the queen. Also not working is 10 \( \text{Qh}4 \) \( \text{Qxg}2 \) 11 \( \text{Qxg}2 \) \( \text{Qf}3+ \), when Black again wins the queen. 10 0-0 offered White better chances, even though he loses the exchange after 10...
\( \text{Qxf}3+ \) 11 \( \text{Qxf}3 \) \( \text{Qxf}1 \). In the game, however, he simply loses a piece.

6...
\( \text{Qxg}2 \) 11 \( \text{Qg}1 \) \( \text{exd}4 \) 12 \( \text{Qxd}4 \) c5 13 \( \text{Qb}5 \) \( \text{Qf}3 \) 14 g4

White hopes to trap the bishop on f3, which has bravely entered enemy territory. However, Black plays actively and gives White no time for this.

14...
\( \text{Qd}5 \) 15 \( \text{Qxc}5 \) \( \text{Qc}8 \)

Another piece is brought into action.

16 \( \text{Qa}3 \) \( \text{dxe}4 \) 17 \( \text{dxe}4 \) \( \text{Qb}6! \) 18 \( \text{Qxe}7 \) \( \text{Qxb}5 \) 19 \( \text{Qxf}8 \) \( \text{Qxb}2 \) 20 \( \text{Qxg}7 \) \( \text{Qxg}7 \)

Actually White has a material advantage here, but now Black's initiative is decisive. The bishop on f3 is a giant on the light squares.

21 \( \text{Qc}1 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 22 \( \text{Qe}3 \) \( \text{Qxc}2! \)

White cannot avoid mate.

23 \( \text{Qf}1 \) \( \text{Qd}1+ \) 0-1

White resigned in view of 24 \( \text{Qxd}1 \) \( \text{Qxd}1+ \) 25 \( \text{Qe}1 \) \( \text{Qd}3+ \) 26 \( \text{Qe}2 \) \( \text{Qxe}2 \) mate!

**Puzzle 10**
*Tal-Timman, Reykjavik 1988*

20 \( \text{Qc}1! \) 1-0

Black resigned as he loses a whole rook after 20...
\( \text{Qxa}3 \) 21 \( \text{Qxe}8+ \) \( \text{Qd}7 \) (Or 21...
\( \text{Qe}7 \) 22 \( \text{Qc}7+ \) \( \text{Qd}8 \) 23 \( \text{bxa}3 \).

20 \( \text{Qa}4?? \) \( \text{Qc}6 \) leads White nowhere. The trick with \( \text{Qc}1 \) doesn't work now, as White's queen is unprotected on a4.

**Puzzle 11**
*Tal-Kupreichik, Sochi 1970*

27 \( \text{Qxf}5! \) 1-0
Black resigned due to 27...gxf5 28 We6+ (Black has no defence against the deadly cooperation of White's queen and knight) 28...Gg7 (28...f8 29 Wf6+ leads to mate as well) 29 Wf6+ Gg8 30 Ce7 mate.

27 We6+ Gh8 28 xf7! is a variation of the same combination: 28...gxf5 29 Wf6+ Gg8 30 Ce7 mate.

Puzzle 12

Tal-Zeids, Latvian Championship, Riga 1955

28 Gxf7! Gxd5

After 28...xf7 29 Gd8+ the queen is suddenly en prise (loose pieces tend to drop).

29 cxd5 Wd7 30 Gg5

White has won a very important pawn and simultaneously has kept his dominance on the light squares. The d-pawn now decides the game quickly.

30...c4 31 d6! c3

After 31...Wxd6 32 f7+ Gh8 33 xc4 White wins further material due to the threat of Gf7+.

32 Wd5+ 1-0

Black is mated within few moves.

Puzzle 13

Tal-Wade, Tallinn 1971

We start with

39 Lc4 e6

Equally hopeless is 39...d5 40 Gf5! Lxe4 41 Lxc4 Wh7 42 Lxc7+ Wh8 43 Gg6+ Gg8 44 Lxf8 with a decisive material advantage for White.

40 Lxe6!

Distraction from the g6-square.

40...Wxe6 41 Gg6+ 1-0

Black resigned because of 41...Wh8 42 Lc7 Wc1+ 43 Gf1 with mate to follow.

Puzzle 14

Tal-Botvinnik, World Championship (Game 7), Moscow 1960

26 Lxd7+! Gxd7 27 Lxd7+ Wxd7 28 Gf6+

White obtains two knights for a rook, but matters are far from clear.

28...Wd6 29 Gxg8 Cc5

A perfect outpost for the rook: here it attacks c2 and simultaneously protects g5.

30 Gc6 31 Gg4 Lxc2?!

31...f5 is better, for instance 32 Lc3 f4 33 Sc4+ Gc7 with a complex game ahead. White still needs to obtain full coordination between his pieces. With active pieces and pawns on both wings Black seems to have plenty of counterplay.

32 Gxf6 Lxb3 33 axb3 Cb5

34 Gxg5! Lxb3

34...Gxg5 35 Sc4+ loses on the spot.

35 f4

White's two knights neatly follow the f-pawn to the promotion square. Black's pawns never really become a threat for White.

35...Gb1+ 36 Gg2 Hb2+ 37 Gf3 Hb3+ 38 Gg4 Hb2 39 Hg3 b5 40 Hg4+ Hd5 41 f5 b4 42 Hf6 Ha2 43 Hf7 Ha8 44 Gc7 b3 45 Hc2 Hb2 46 Gf3

White has full control of both promotion squares.

46...Gb4 47 Ge2 c5 48 Gf8 Hxf8 49 Hxf8 c4 50 Ge6+ Hd5 51 Hf4+ Hd4 52 Gb1 1-0

and Black finally resigned.
Puzzle 15
Tal-Levin, Georgia 1970

36 \text{\textit{W}}xd5!

The queen is immune because of 35...\text{\textit{Q}}xd5 36 \text{\textit{W}}e8+ and 37 \text{\textit{Q}}h8 mate!

35...\text{\textit{Q}}f4 36 \text{\textit{W}}e4

White has a winning advantage.

36...g5 37 \text{\textit{Q}}f6 d5 38 \text{\textit{W}}d3 \text{\textit{Q}}h2+ 39 \text{\textit{Q}}g2 c4

Any queen move is sufficient to secure the full point, but White saw a way to conclude the game quickly by tactical means. Tal played the brilliant

40 \text{\textit{W}}f5!

Both g5 and e7 are hanging, so Black accepted the sacrifice.

40...\text{\textit{Q}}xf5 41 \text{\textit{Q}}e8+ 1-0

Black resigned in view of 41...\text{\textit{W}}h7 42 gxf5!, when Black will have to sacrifice the house to avoid immediate mate on h8.

Puzzle 16
Tal-Portisch, Candidates Match
(Garde 2), Bled 1965

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 \text{\textit{Q}}c3 d5 3 \text{\textit{Q}}f3 dxe4 4 \text{\textit{Q}}xe4
\text{\textit{Q}}g4 5 h3 \text{\textit{Q}}xf3 6 \text{\textit{W}}xf3 \text{\textit{Q}}d7 7 d4 \text{\textit{Q}}g6
8 \text{\textit{Q}}d3 \text{\textit{Q}}xe4 9 \text{\textit{W}}xe4 e6 10 0-0 \text{\textit{Q}}e7 11
\text{\textit{Q}}c3 \text{\textit{Q}}f6 12 \text{\textit{W}}h4 \text{\textit{Q}}d5 13 \text{\textit{W}}g4 \text{\textit{Q}}f6 14
\text{\textit{Q}}e1 \text{\textit{W}}b6 15 c4?! \text{\textit{Q}}b4

Or 15...\text{\textit{Q}}e7 16 d5! cxd5 17 cxd5 \text{\textit{Q}}xd5 18 \text{\textit{W}}a4+ and Black's king will be stuck in the centre.

16 \text{\textit{Q}}xe6+ fxe6 17 \text{\textit{W}}xe6+ \text{\textit{Q}}f8

The defence 17...\text{\textit{Q}}e7 gives White a strong attack after 18 \text{\textit{Q}}g6+! (but not 18 \text{\textit{Q}}g5? \text{\textit{W}}e7 19 \text{\textit{Q}}e1 \text{\textit{Q}}xd3! 20 \text{\textit{Q}}xe7 \text{\textit{W}}d7! and Black wins) 18...\text{\textit{Q}}d8 (the point of White's previous move is that the defence Black used before doesn't work here: 18...hxg6 19 \text{\textit{Q}}g5 \text{\textit{W}}c7 20 \text{\textit{Q}}e1 and now 20...\text{\textit{Q}}d3? is met by 21 \text{\textit{W}}xg6+ and 22 \text{\textit{Q}}xe7) 19 \text{\textit{Q}}f5 \text{\textit{W}}xd4 20 \text{\textit{Q}}f4 \text{\textit{Q}}e8 21
\text{\textit{Q}}e1 (21 \text{\textit{Q}}e5 \text{\textit{W}}d2 22 \text{\textit{Q}}f4 \text{\textit{W}}d4 with an immediate draw) 21...g6 22 \text{\textit{Q}}g4! (Dvoretsky)
22...\text{\textit{Q}}d3 23 \text{\textit{Q}}e4 \text{\textit{W}}xf2+ 24 \text{\textit{W}}h2 \text{\textit{Q}}g1+ 25
\text{\textit{Q}}xg1 \text{\textit{Q}}c5+ 26 \text{\textit{Q}}e3 \text{\textit{Q}}xe6 27 \text{\textit{Q}}xe6 a5 with roughly even chances.

18 \text{\textit{Q}}f4 \text{\textit{Q}}d8

Or:

a) 18...\text{\textit{Q}}e8?! 19 \text{\textit{Q}}d6+ \text{\textit{Q}}e7 20 \text{\textit{Q}}e1 \text{\textit{W}}d8
21 \text{\textit{Q}}e3! and the threatening check on f3 decides.

b) 18...\text{\textit{W}}d8?! 19 \text{\textit{Q}}e1 \text{\textit{Q}}g5 20 \text{\textit{Q}}d6+ \text{\textit{Q}}g7 21
\text{\textit{Q}}xb4 and White has a strong initiative.

19 c5 \text{\textit{Q}}xd3! 20 cxb6 \text{\textit{Q}}xf4 21 \text{\textit{W}}g4 \text{\textit{Q}}d5
22 bxa7 \text{\textit{Q}}e7?
22...g6 and Black is no worse.

23 b4! \text{\textit{Q}}a8?
23...\text{\textit{Q}}e7?.

24 \text{\textit{Q}}a1+ \text{\textit{Q}}d6 25 b5 \text{\textit{Q}}xa7

26 \text{\textit{Q}}e6+ \text{\textit{Q}}c7 27 \text{\textit{Q}}xf6! 1-0

White checks on g7 next and wins the rook. Black then has inadequate compensation for the queen so he resigned.
Puzzle 17

Tal-Filip, Moscow 1967

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ∆c3 dxe4 4 ∆xe4 ∆d7 5 ∆f3 ∆gf6 6 ∆g3 e6 7 ∆d3 ∆e7
8 We2 c5 9 0-0 0-0 10 ∆d1 cxd4 11 ∆xd4 ∆e8 12 b3 ∆b6 13 ∆b2 ∆f8 14
03 f3 d7 15 ∆e5 ∆ad8 16 ∆e4 ∆xe4 17 ∆xe4 ∆c8! 18 Wh5 ∆g6

If 18...f6? White mates with 19 ∆xh7+! ∆xh7 20 Wh7+ Wh8 21 ∆g6!. The move
18...g6? is no better: 19 ∆g4! f6 20 ∆xf6!

Tal now played an interesting sacrifice with consequences not easy to foresee.

19 ∆xf7?!

Less convincing is 19 ∆xg6 hxg6 20 Wh3 ∆f8! 19 ∆xd8 ∆xd8, with the idea that 20
∆xf7 is strongly met with 20...∆f8! and after 21 ∆xg6 hxg6 22 Wh8+ ∆xf7 23 ∆xg7+
∆e8 24 ∆xg6+ ∆f7 Black is doing okay. White has three pawns for the piece, but his
attack is not very strong anymore. Black has the long-term advantage if he can get his
pieces out, when the extra piece will show its value.

19...∆xf7 20 Whx7 a5 21 ∆xd8 ∆xd8 22
Wh5!

White clearly has compensation for the piece, and in practice Black's position is very
difficult to play.

22...We6

Or 22...Wf6 23 f4! Wh8 24 ∆xg6+ Wh8 25

Whxe5 and White has won back the piece and has a winning advantage. Better for Black
was the active continuation 22...∆d2! 23 ∆f1 ∆c5 24 ∆h1 ∆xf2 25 ∆xf2+ ∆xf2 and, after
26 ∆d5+, simply 26...∆e7. With the rooks off the board, Black's king is rather less ex­
posed.

23 h3!

White keeps the tension in the position. Black is not allowed to play ...Wg4.

23...∆c5 24 Wh1 ∆d4 25 ∆d1 ∆d6 26
∆a3 ∆a6

27 ∆xd4! 1-0

Black resigned, as 27...exd4 and 27...∆xa3 are both answered by 28 ∆d5, winning the
queen.

Puzzle 18

Tal-Botvinnik, World Championship
(Game 17), Moscow 1960

Caro-Kann Defence

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 ∆c3 dxe4 4 ∆xe4 ∆f5 5 ∆g3 ∆g6 6 ∆c4 e6 7 ∆e2 ∆f6
8 ∆f4 ∆d6 9 ∆xg6 hxg6 10 ∆g5 ∆bd7
11 0-0 Wa5 12 f4?! 0-0-0 13 a3 We7 14
b4 ∆b6

14...∆de8 is better.

15 ∆e2 ∆e7 16 Wd3 ∆fd5?

Botvinnik missed a strong opportunity here with 16...c5! 17 bxc5 ∆xd4 18 exb6
∆xd3 19 bxc7 ∆c5+ 20 Wh1 ∆xg3 21 ∆xf6

Ae3, when Black's activity secures him the
better chances.

17 \( \text{a}x\text{e}7 \text{w}x\text{e}7 \) 18 \( \text{c}4 \text{c}6 \)

The piece sacrifice 18...\( \text{a}x\text{c}4 \) 19 \( \text{w}x\text{c}4 \)

\( \text{w}h4 \) is not enough after 20 \( \text{dx}f4 \) 21 h3

\( \text{xd}4 \) 22 \( \text{w}c5! \).

19 \( \text{ab}1? \) \( \text{wd}7! \) 20 \( \text{bd}1 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 21 \( \text{wb}3 \)

\( \text{wc}7 \) 22 a4 \( \text{h}4 \) 23 a5 \( \text{c}8 \) 24 \( \text{we}3 \) \( \text{ae}7 \)

25 \( \text{we}5 \) \( \text{hh}8 \) 26 b5?! cb5 27 \( \text{wx}b5 \) a6

28 \( \text{wb}2 \) \( \text{md}7 \) 29 c5 \( \text{a}8 \) 30 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{ac}6 \) 31

\( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{wc}x\text{e}6 \) 32 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{wa}4 \) 33 \( \text{fx}d3 \) \( \text{xc}8 \) 34

\( \text{xb}1 \) \( \text{xa}5 \) 35 \( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{wc}7 \) 36 \( \text{wa}3 \) \( \text{xa}7 \)

36...\( \text{wd}8 \) is better.

37 \( \text{xb}6 \) \( \text{wf}4 \) 38 \( \text{ae}2 \)

Better for White is 38 \( \text{wb}4 \) \( \text{wa}d4+ \) 39 \( \text{wx}d4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \).

After 40 \( \text{xb}7+ \) \( \text{a}8 \) 41 c6 \( \text{ac}4 \)

42 \( \text{xf}7 \) \( \text{bx}c6 \) 43 \( \text{g}xg7 \) \( \text{dg}4 \) the endgame is equal.

38...\( \text{we}4 \) 39 \( \text{wb}3 \) \( \text{wd}5 \)

It should be noted that Black could still have defended successfully with the cool

39...\( \text{a}8 \). After 40 h3 \( \text{xd}5 \) (also good enough is 40...\( \text{wd}5! \) 41 \( \text{wa}4 \) \( \text{ac}6 \) 41 \( \text{xb}7 \)

\( \text{xb}1+ \) 42 \( \text{xb}1 \) \( \text{xb}7 \) Black has all the chances to convert the advantage to a full

point. White's pawns are stopped and the a-
pawn is soon ready to advance.

40 \( \text{xa}6+! \) \( \text{xb}8 \)

The alternative capture 40...\( \text{bxa}6 \) leads to

mate after 41 \( \text{wb}6+ \) \( \text{a}8 \) 42 \( \text{xa}6+ \) \( \text{a}7 \) 43

\( \text{wc}8! \).

41 \( \text{wa}4 \) 1-0

Black resigned as White's attack is too strong.

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Puzzle 19

**Tal-Chandler, Sochi 1982**

**Semi-Slav Defence**

1 \( \text{df}3 \) \( \text{cf}6 \) 2 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 3 \( \text{dc}3 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 4 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 5

\( \text{ag}5 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 6 \( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 7 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{dd}7 \) 8 \( \text{dd}3 \)

\( \text{wd}8 \) 9 0-0 \( \text{ae}7 \) 10 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{dx}c4 \) 11 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{b}5 \)

12 \( \text{bb}3 \) \( \text{b}4 \) 13 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 14 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{ex}d5 \) 15

\( \text{dd}4 \) \( \text{ac}8 \) 16 \( \text{ex}d5 \) \( \text{cx}d5 \) 17 \( \text{we}1 \) 0-0 18

\( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{dd}6 \)

19 \( \text{ee}6! \) \( \text{fxe}6 \) 20 \( \text{xe}6+ \)

White cashes in on \( \text{d}6 \) and wins a pawn.

20...\( \text{hh}8 \) 21 \( \text{wd}6 \)

The unprotected bishop on a6 gives White another tempo, securing the win of another pawn.

21...\( \text{ab}5 \) 22 \( \text{xb}4 \) \( \text{xa}4 \) 23 \( \text{xa}4 \)

White has a winning advantage; all he has to do is to neutralise Black's slight initiative.

23...\( \text{dc}5 \) 24 \( \text{wa}7 \) \( \text{ge}6 \) 25 \( \text{we}6 \) \( \text{we}2 \)

26 \( \text{ee}1 \) \( \text{ec}2 \) 27 \( \text{bf}1 \) \( \text{xb}2 \) 28 \( \text{a}4 \)

White is back behind the wheel.

28...\( \text{wd}5 \) 29 \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{we}5 \) 30 \( \text{we}3 \) \( \text{ff}6 \) 31

\( \text{dd}2 \) \( \text{bb}4 \) 32 a5 \( \text{wa}6 \) 33 \( \text{dd}2 \) \( \text{ff}5 \) 34 \( \text{we}7 \)

\( \text{bb}5 \) 35 \( \text{wd}8+ \) \( \text{hh}7 \) 36 \( \text{wd}3 \) \( \text{hh}8 \) 37

\( \text{ee}1 \)

White combines an attack on Black's king with the advance of the a-pawn. Black cannot withstand the pressure for long.

37...\( \text{ff}8 \) 38 \( \text{ee}5 \) \( \text{bb}8 \) 39 \( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{xb}5 \) 40

\( \text{bb}2 \) 1-0

Black resigned due to 40...\( \text{xa}5 \) 41 \( \text{bb}8+ \) and mate.
Puzzle 20

Tal-Keller, Zürich 1959

29 $b7+$! $xb7 30 $d7+

The invasion square.

30...$b8 31 $e8+ $xe8 32 $xe8+

White has won back the rook, and now he wins another minor piece and the game.

32...$b7 33 $d7+ $b8 34 $xc6 1-0

Black’s position is hopeless.

Puzzle 21

Tal-Shabalov, Yurmala 1985

26 $xe6! $xe6

Or 26...$xd2 27 $xd2 and Black’s queen is threatened, giving him no time to capture the annoying knight on e6. White wins material and has a winning advantage after 27...$xe5 28 $xc7.

27 $xd8 $xd8 28 $xd8 $f8 29 $d1

All White’s pieces join the attack.

29...$c4 30 $b4 $a4 31 $c5+ $g8 32 $f4 $b6 33 $f2 $f7 34 $d4! $xa3 35 $d6 $xf4 36 $xe6 $f8 37 $xb6 $c4

Now White finishes off the game in style:

38 $xe8 $xe8 39 $d5+ 1-0

Mate follows, either on e5 or h4.

Puzzle 22

Tal-Holm, Kapfenberg 1970

26 $e8!

A beautiful queen sacrifice: Black cannot avoid disaster on the back rank.

26 $xg7+ $xg7 27 $xg4 leaves White two pawns up with a good position, clearly sufficient to win the game.

26...$xe8 27 $xe8 $d7 28 $d8 1-0

Puzzle 23

Chukaev-Tal, Riga 1955

49...$a4+! 50 $xa4

If White’s king moves, a discovered knight check will decide.

50...$b7+ 0-1

White’s king is stripped bare, and the cooperation of the queen and rook is too strong.

Puzzle 24

Ambroz-Tal, Riga 1981

36...$xe4! 37 $f3

After 37 $xe4 $d5 White’s queen cannot do anything to help the loose bishop on a3 and Black will follow up with...$xa3. A pawn up, with better pawn structure and bishop versus knight, Black would win easily.

37...$f6 38 $b2 $d5

The rest is hopeless for White. He has no counterplay, and besides, the b-pawn now becomes the next target of attack.

39 $c1 $b8 40 $c6?! $xb3 0-1

Puzzle 25

Ostrauskas-Tal, Vilnius 1955

31...$g2+! 32 $xg2 $f2+ 33 $xf2 $wh2+

Black wins the bishop on c2 as well. White could resign here.

34 $f3 $xc2 35 $e3 $h2 36 $e2 $d3 37 $g3 $e5+ 38 $f4 $h4+ 0-1

At last White throws in the towel. Black mates on f6 next move.
Puzzle 26
Tal-Wade, Palma de Majorca 1966

25 Qe6! 1-0
Black resigned in view of 25...fxe6 (25...Rb8+ 26 Qc1 doesn't help Black) 26 Wh7+ Qf8 27 Wh8+ Qe7 28 Qh7+ (here it is, the benefits of the knight sacrifice) 28...Qf7 (or 28...Qd8 29 Wh6 mate!) 29 Wh6+ with mate following soon.

Puzzle 27
Tal-Demedovich, Prokopjevsk (Simultaneous display) 1972

23 Qxf7! Qxf7 24 Wg5
Black's king is now in serious danger, and White also has an eye on the loose rook on h8.

24...e5 25 Wg7+ Qe6 26 f7 1-0
Instead of the greedy and straightforward 26 Wh8, White prepares for the rook to enter the attack via g6. Black has no defence, so he resigned here.

Puzzle 28
Ufimtsev-Tal, Moscow 1967

27...Qh3+! 28 Wxh3

28...Qg5+! 0-1
28...Qf2+ wins the queen, but why go for the smaller crown of the two? White is mated within a few moves, so he resigned.

Puzzle 29
Naranja-Tal, Nice Olympiad 1974

40...Qxg3! 41 hxg3 Qxg3

42 Wxe4
42 Qxg3 leads to mate after 42...Qxg3+ 43 Wh1 Qh5, while 42 Qf2 is no better than the game continuation.

42...Qxg2+ 43 Qxg2 Wxe3+ 0-1
White is forced to offer the exchange of queens with 44 Wh2 (44 Wh1 loses to 44...Qh5+) but now Black combines the attack on the king with the positional threat of queening the c-pawn: 44...Wh2+! 45 Qxf2 c2 46 Qf1 Qd5 the pawn cannot be stopped.

Puzzle 30
Tal-Johansson, Stockholm 1961

21 Qxe6!
Also possible is the slow build up with 21 Qd6!? Black's position is so awkward that he cannot avoid a decisive sacrifice on e6.

21...fxe6 22 Qxe6+ Qg8 23 Qd3 1-0
White calls for the last force to join the attack. There is no defence to Qg3+.

Puzzle 31
Tal-Kiriakov, Riga 1965
Queen's Gambit Declined

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Qc3 Qf6 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Qg5 Qb4 6 e3 0-0 7 Qd3 c5 8 Qge2
White actually announced mate within four moves here.
15...\textbf{xf7} 16 \textbf{g5+} \textbf{e8} 17 \textbf{e6+} 1-0

Black resigned in view of 17...\textbf{d8} 18 \textbf{xf7+} \textbf{c7} 19 \textbf{wd6} mate! Asked the question on how he felt about having so many pieces en prise, Tal replied that his opponent could only capture one at a time. Tal saw this as a problem for his opponent, not for himself!

Puzzle 33
\textbf{Tal-Mohrlok, Varna Olympiad 1962}  
\textit{Sicilian Defence}

1 \textit{e4} c5 2 \textit{f3} \textit{c6} 3 d4 cxd4 4 \textit{ xd4} 5 \textit{c3} d6 6 g5 e6 7 \textit{wd2} \textit{e7} 8 0-0-0 0-0 9 \textit{b3} \textit{wb6} 10 f3 a6 11 g4 \textit{d8} 12 \textit{e3} \textit{wc7} 13 g5 \textit{d7} 14 h4 b5 15 g6 fxg6 16 h5 gxh5 17 \textit{xc6} \textit{d6} 18 \textit{g5} \textit{e5} 19 \textit{w}g2 f6 20 \textit{e2} \textit{d4} 21 \textit{xc4} bxc4 22 \textit{d4} \textit{d8} 23 \textit{h1} \textit{b7} 24 \textit{h6}! \textit{g7}

If 24...g6 White plays 25 \textit{hxg6+}! \textit{hxg6} 26 \textit{g}xg6+ \textit{xf7} 27 \textit{g}5 with dangerous threats: 27...\textit{h7} 28 \textit{w}h5 \textit{f6} 29 \textit{xf6+} \textit{xf6} 30 \textit{xf5}!! leads to mate.

25 \textit{h4} \textit{wb6} 26 \textit{d}d1 \textit{wc7} 27 f4 h6 28 \textit{g}g6 \textit{e}e8 29 f5 e5

More resistance was offered with 29...\textit{e}f5 30 \textit{exf5} \textit{e}e5 31 \textit{f}f4 \textit{xf5}, although White keeps a very dangerous initiative after 32 \textit{xd6}! \textit{xd6} (32...\textit{xd6} 33 \textit{g}xe7+ loses the queen) 33 \textit{xf5} \textit{xf5} 34 \textit{xf6+} \textit{xf6} 35
**Puzzle 34**

Niebult-Tal, Latvia 1954

King's Indian Defence

1 d4 £f6 2 c4 g6 3 £c3 £g7 4 e4 d6 5 £f3 0-0 6 £e2 £e5 7 d5 £h5 8 g3 £d7 9 0-0 a5 10 £e1 £c5 11 £g4 f5 12 exf5 £f6 13 £h3 gx£f5 14 £h1 f4 15 £g2 £g4 16 f3 £h6 17 £d3 £f5 18 £xc5

**Puzzle 35**

Miezis-Tal, Riga 1958

62...£x£g3+!
Black's position is so good, that a move like 62...£f4! also wins. Still, the move in the game is more to the point.

63 £x£g3 £h1+ 64 £g1 £h3+ 0-1
White is mated next move. One can call that an execution on the light squares!

**Puzzle 36**

Tal-Zilberg, Riga 1949

26 £e6+
A double check – Black has to move the king.

26...£xf7 27 £g7+! £xe6 28 £h6+
The rook joins in the attack and Black is mated.

28...£g6 29 £x£g6+ £e7 30 £h7+ £f8 31 £g7+ £e8 32 £d7+ £f8 33 £h8 mate (1-0)

**Puzzle 37**

Tal-Shmit, Latvia 1965

31 £d7+! 1-0
White distracts the bishop and has time for a quiet move. Black resigned as he saw the mate Tal was about to execute. On
31...\textit{exd7} Tal planned 32 \textit{h6}!, when mate is inevitable. 31...\textit{e8} loses after 32 \textit{g8+ \textit{f8}} 33 \textit{xf8} mate.

\textbf{Puzzle 38}

Tseshkovsky-Tal, Sochi 1970

\textit{Ruy Lopez}

1 e4 e5 2 \textit{\textit{f3}} c6 3 \textit{\textit{b5}} a6 4 \textit{\textit{b4}} \textit{\textit{f6}}
5 0-0 \textit{\textit{e7}} 6 \textit{\textit{e1}} b5 7 \textit{\textit{b3}} 0-0 8 d3 d6
9 c3 \textit{\textit{a5}} 10 \textit{\textit{c2}} c5 11 \textit{\textit{bd2}} \textit{\textit{e8}} 12
\textit{\textit{f1}} \textit{\textit{f8}} 13 \textit{\textit{e3}} \textit{\textit{b7}} 14 b4 \textit{\textit{xf4}} 15
\textit{\textit{cxb4}} \textit{\textit{c6}} 16 a3

Or 16 \textit{\textit{b3}} \textit{\textit{cxb4}} 17 \textit{\textit{g5}} \textit{\textit{e7}} 18 \textit{\textit{f5}}
\textit{\textit{d7}} with a complex game – White has active play for the pawn.

16...d5 17 \textit{\textit{exd5}}

17 \textit{\textit{exd5}} is dubious in view of 17...\textit{\textit{d4}}.

17...\textit{\textit{exd5}} 18 \textit{\textit{exd5}} \textit{\textit{wd5}} 19 \textit{\textit{b3}} \textit{\textit{w7}}
20 \textit{\textit{g5!}} 20...\textit{\textit{d8}} 21 \textit{\textit{wh5}} \textit{\textit{h6}}

21...\textit{\textit{xf5}} is good for White after 22 g4!
\textit{\textit{wg6}} 23 \textit{\textit{wg6}} \textit{\textit{hgx6}} 24 \textit{\textit{b2}}.

22 \textit{\textit{ae3}?!}

22 \textit{\textit{ae4}!}.

22...\textit{\textit{ad5}!} 23 \textit{\textit{exd5}} \textit{\textit{cxd5}} 24 \textit{\textit{ce4}} \textit{\textit{ae6}}
25 \textit{\textit{g3}} \textit{\textit{wh8}} 26 \textit{\textit{ae3}}

White should avoid the exchange of bishops. Better was 26 \textit{\textit{d2}} with equality.

26...a5 27 \textit{\textit{b5}} \textit{\textit{cxe5}} 28 \textit{\textit{xc5}} \textit{\textit{f6}} 29
\textit{\textit{f1}} \textit{\textit{axb4}} 30 \textit{\textit{axb4}}

30...\textit{\textit{xf2}!} 31 \textit{\textit{ae1}}

Or:

a) 31 \textit{\textit{xf2}} \textit{\textit{a1}+} 32 \textit{\textit{f1}} \textit{\textit{d4}+} and White

is mated.

b) 31 \textit{\textit{xf2}} \textit{\textit{d4}+} 32 \textit{\textit{g3}} (or 32 \textit{\textit{e2}}
\textit{\textit{a2}+}) 32...\textit{\textit{xf4}+} 33 \textit{\textit{e2}} (the king is forced
on to the second rank, and Black’s rook enters with deadly effect) 33...\textit{\textit{a2+}}.

31...\textit{\textit{f4}} 32 h3

The pawn on e5 is poisonous: 32 \textit{\textit{xe5}??} \textit{\textit{xe5}} 33 \textit{\textit{xe5}} \textit{\textit{a1}+} and mate. Instead
White makes some breathing space for his

32...\textit{a1} 33 \textit{\textit{xa1}} \textit{\textit{d4}+} 34 \textit{\textit{h2}} \textit{\textit{xa1}}
35 \textit{\textit{d4}!} \textit{\textit{c6}}

Other moves are bad and lead to a white
advantage: 35...\textit{\textit{xd4}+} 36 \textit{\textit{d3}}, 35...\textit{\textit{xd4}??} 36
\textit{\textit{b3}}, as well as 35...\textit{\textit{exd4}+} 36 \textit{\textit{e5}} \textit{\textit{f6}} 37
\textit{\textit{e8}+} \textit{\textit{h7}} 38 \textit{\textit{d7}}.

36 \textit{\textit{d6}!}?

Or 36 \textit{\textit{d5}} \textit{\textit{f1}} 37 \textit{\textit{c3}} \textit{\textit{d4} and Black wins
more material and keeps his active position.

36...\textit{\textit{f1}} 37 \textit{\textit{xc7}+} 38 \textit{\textit{g3}} \textit{\textit{e1}+}
39 \textit{\textit{g4}} \textit{\textit{e2}+} 40 \textit{\textit{h4}}

40...\textit{\textit{wxh5}+?}

40...\textit{\textit{ttl}+} 41 \textit{\textit{g3}} \textit{\textit{h6}+} is even more
clear-cut, but Tal decided to exchange
queens. A strange decision, as he normally
doesn’t miss a opportunity like this!

41 \textit{\textit{wh5} \textit{\textit{f1}}}

Bad is 41...\textit{\textit{xc6}?} 42 \textit{\textit{c7}!} and White se­
cures the draw due to his active pieces. He
threatens mate after \textit{\textit{g6}}, which forces Black
to give up his extra minor piece.

42 \textit{\textit{g6}} \textit{\textit{d8}} 43 \textit{\textit{xc6} \textit{\textit{axe6}!}}

This is better than 43...\textit{\textit{xc6}?} 44 \textit{\textit{d7},}
which is not absolutely clear. White’s activity gives him some compensation, although probably not enough. 43...
44 g5
45 dxe6 46 fxe6+ 47 xe5 also gives White some hope of survival.
44 h7+ g8 45 dxe6
White has won back his piece, but the joy doesn’t last for long. Probably Tal calculated this to the end when he decided to exchange queens.
45...f6+ 46 g5
White has won back his piece, but the joy doesn’t last for long. Probably Tal calculated this to the end when he decided to exchange queens.
45 ...
46 h7+ g8
47 f5
White can win back the rook after 49 w+ x8 50 xg6, but then Black’s e-pawn decides the outcome after 50...e4.

Puzzle 39
Chukaev-Tal, Tbilisi 1956
King’s Indian Defence

1 d4 f6 2 c4 g6 3 c3 g7 4 e4 d6 5 e2 0-0 6 g5 c5 7 d5 e6 8 w2 exd5
9 exd5 w6 10 d3 f5 11 h4 de4
12 xe4 xxe4 13 0-0-0 a6 14 f3

14...b4! 15 fxe4
There is nothing better.
15...xa2+ 16 b1
16 c2? allows mate after 16...xb2+ 17 d3 wb3+ 18 wc3 xc3.
16...c3+ 17 c1 xe4
White’s queen cannot simultaneously protect b2 and g5. Black wins back the material with a winning advantage.

18 wc2 xg5 19 f3 xf3 20 xf3 a5
The opposite-coloured bishops don’t help White; in fact the opposite is true. Black plans to undermine b2 – the last defender of the dark squares – after which his attack will be decisive.
21 d3 a4 22 e1 w4 23 e7 fe8 24 xe8+ xe8 25 b1 b5 26 a3
Black now mates after...
26...e1+ 27 a2 wxa3+ 0-1

Puzzle 40
Unzicker-Tal, Hamburg 1960

19...fxd5! 20 exd5 e4
Whoops! The rook on a1 is hanging. The combination by Tal is only a temporary sacrifice, but the benefits include active piece play and a vulnerable white pawn on d5 instead of a solid centre.
21 xe4 xa1 22 g5 f6 23 e3
If the bishop now returns to e5, White has some active play to compensate for the minor material loss. Instead Tal plays to seize the initiative.
23...xd5! 24 xa1 xe3 25 xe3 xe4 26 xe4 d5 0-1
Clarifying Black’s advantage. The material plus easily converts to a full point.

Puzzle 41
Tal-Nievergelt, Zürich 1959

34 wh6! xd8
Not 34...xh6 35 xc8+ wb8 36 xb8+ and mate next move.
35 xa6
The white attack plays itself.
35...d2 36 f6
Of course not 36 xd2? xa6 and Black is off the hook. With the text move White instead puts more pressure on Black, as now the rook on d8 is threatened as well.
36...wd7 37 xc8 1-0
Black resigned in view of 37...xc8 38 xa6+ xa6 39 wa6+ wa7 40 xeb8+.

106
Puzzle 42
Tal-Petrosian, Moscow 1974

22 $xd7!
Not 22 $h4? $f6!.
22...$xd7
After 22...$xd7 23 $h4 Black cannot avoid mate on h7. Therefore the knight had to be eliminated, otherwise it could have moved to f6, defending h7.
23 $xf7+ 1-0
But now this move is possible after the recapture on d7 with the bishop. Black resigned due to 23...$xf7 24 $xf7+ $h8 25 $xg6 $f5 26 $f7+ $g8 27 $h6+ $h8 28 $xf5.

Puzzle 43
Spassky-Tal, Montreal 1979

20...$xh2+! 21 $xh2

21...$h5+!
The twist to this classical combination.
21...$g4+ 22 $g3! does not work.
22 $g1
Or 22 $g3 $e4+ 23 $xe4 $h4+ 24 $f1 $xg4+ 25 $g3 $h4 mate!
22...$g4 0-1
Spassky resigned because his pieces are too far away from the kingside to organise a defence, for instance 23 $f3 $h1+ 24 $xh1 $h4+ 25 $g1 $h2+ 26 $f1 $h1 mate.

Solutions to Puzzles

Puzzle 44
Averbakh-Tal, Riga 1958
Modern Benoni Defence

1 d4 $f6 2 c4 $e6 3 $c3 $c5 4 d5 $exd5 5 $xd5 $d6 6 e4 $g6 7 $e2 $g7 8 $f3 0-0 9 0-0 $e8 10 $c2 $a6 11 $d4 $b4 12 $b1 $xe4
Koblenz gives 12...$h5 13 $g5 $f6 14 $e3 $f5 15 a3! $xe4 16 $xb4 $xf3 17 $xf3 $xb4 18 $xe4 with advantage to White.
13 $xe4 $f5 14 $fd2 $xd5 15 $xd6?
White should have instead played 15 $g3 $c7 16 $f3 (better is 16 $b5 $xe4 17 $xe4 $xe4 18 $xe8 $xe8 19 $xd6 $c6 20 $g3 $c4 and Black has compensation for the exchange due to his activity on the queenside) 16...$ad8, when the game is unclear.
15...$f6! 16 $f3
16 $xc5 $xe4 17 $xe4 $xe4 is good for Black as well.
16...$xe4 17 $xe4 $xe4 18 $xe4 $xd6 19 $c2 $e7 20 $f3 $ae8 21 $ad1 $d4
Black is a pawn up, has a strong bishop on d4 and controls the c-file. The presence of opposite-coloured bishops gives him prospects of an attack, especially as $f2 is a weak point.
22 a4 $b6 23 $b3 $e5 24 $d2 $h5 25 $e2 $xe2 26 $xe2 $h4 27 $h1 $f4 28 $g3 $f6 29 $d1 $d8 30 $g4
30...\textit{xf}2! 31 \textit{We}2 \textit{Xd}2! 32 \textit{We}8+

Not 32 \textit{Wxd}2 \textit{Cc}6+ with mate to follow. White cannot block the long diagonal after accepting the rook sacrifice.

32...\textit{Xg}7

Black has won a pawn and his attack is still going strong.

33 \textit{gxh}4 \textit{Wf}4+ 34 \textit{Xh}3 \textit{Wd}3 35 \textit{Xg}2 \textit{Xd}1 0-1

\textbf{Puzzle 45}
Gradus-Tal, Riga 1953
King's Indian Defence

1 \textit{d}4 \textit{f}6 2 \textit{f}3 \textit{g}6 3 \textit{c}4 \textit{g}7 4 \textit{c}3 0-0
5 \textit{g}3 \textit{d}6 6 \textit{g}2 \textit{bd}7 7 0-0 \textit{e}5 8 \textit{e}4 \textit{exd}4
9 \textit{exd}4 \textit{dc}5 10 \textit{h}3 \textit{xe}8 11 \textit{de}1 \textit{a}5 12
\textit{b}3 \textit{c}6 13 \textit{f}4 \textit{e}4 14 \textit{b}4 \textit{de}6 15 \textit{xe}6
\textit{Xxe}6 16 \textit{xd}6 \textit{xc}4 17 \textit{e}5 \textit{Xd}7 18
\textit{Wd}4

18...\textit{Xxe}5! 19 \textit{Xxe}5 \textit{Xxe}5 20 \textit{Xxe}5
\textit{Wxd}4 21 \textit{Xxd}4 \textit{Xxd}4 0-1

This basic trick is well known from the Averbakh Variation of the King's Indian. White simply resigned, as the endgame is hopeless after the further 22 \textit{Xc}1 \textit{Xxc}3 23
\textit{Xxc}3 \textit{Xxa}2.

\textbf{Puzzle 46}
Tal-Szabo, Sochi 1973
Modern Defence

1 \textit{e}4 \textit{g}6 2 \textit{d}4 \textit{g}7 3 \textit{c}3 \textit{d}6 4 \textit{f}4 \textit{a}6 5
\textit{d}3 \textit{b}5 \textit{d}3 \textit{b}7 7 \textit{W}e2 \textit{c}5 8 \textit{dxc}5
\textit{dxc}5 9 \textit{e}5 \textit{Cc}6 10 \textit{Xe}3 \textit{Xd}4 11 \textit{Xxd}4
\textit{Xxd}4 12 0-0-0 \textit{b}4 13 \textit{Cc}4 \textit{Xh}6 14 \textit{Xxd}4
0-0 15 \textit{Xc}5 \textit{Wa}5 16 \textit{Xxe}7 \textit{Xfe}8 17 \textit{Xd}6

Another line is 17 \textit{Xf}6+ \textit{Xf}6 18 \textit{Xxd}6 \textit{Xxa}2 19 \textit{We}5 \textit{Xad}8! 20 \textit{b}3 \textit{Xg}4! 21 \textit{Wb}2
\textit{Xxb}2+ 22 \textit{Xxb}2 \textit{Xf}2 23 \textit{Xxd}8 \textit{Xxd}8 with approximate equality.

17...\textit{Wxa}2 18 \textit{Xxb}4 \textit{Xxe}4 19 \textit{Wxe}4 \textit{Xg}4

19...\textit{Xac}8 is better, although White remains on top after 20 \textit{Wd}2 \textit{Xxb}2 21 \textit{Xb}1
\textit{Wxa}2 22 \textit{Xa}1 \textit{We}6 23 \textit{Xa}6. It seems that there is no way to exploit the position of White's king, and White's material superiority begins to count.

20 \textit{Xc}4 \textit{Wa}1+ 21 \textit{Xb}2 \textit{Wxb}2

Instead of ...\textit{Wxb}2, Black could have played the active 21...\textit{Xad}8+. However, after 22 \textit{Xe}2 \textit{Xxd}1 23 \textit{Xxf}7+! (the same combinational idea as in the game) 23...\textit{Xf}7 24
\textit{Xc}4+ \textit{Xe}6 25 \textit{Wc}7+ \textit{Xg}8 26 \textit{Wc}8+ \textit{Xf}7 27
\textit{Xxd}1 Black is ready to resign.

22 \textit{Xxf}7+! \textit{Xxf}7 23 \textit{Wd}5+ \textit{Xe}6 24
\textit{Wb}7+

White will regain one of the black rooks - with check!

24...\textit{Xe}7 25 \textit{Wxe}7+

Also possible was 25 \textit{c}6+ \textit{Xg}8 26 \textit{Wxa}8+
\textit{Xf}8 27 \textit{Wxe}4.

25...\textit{Xg}8 26 \textit{Wxe}6+ \textit{Xh}8 27 \textit{Wc}4

White has won a pawn and the exchange with his little combination and now he wants to coordinate his pieces fully. Black sacrifices
to avoid this, but it's simply not enough.  

\[27 \text{\&}xe5 \text{28 }fxe5 \text{\&}xe5 \text{29 }c3 \text{e5} \text{30 }c6 \text{\&}b8 31 \text{\&he1 }\text{\&}h6+ 32 \text{\&}c2 \text{\&}f5+ \text{33 }\text{\&}e4\]

White is ready to take over the initiative again.

\[33...\text{\&}c8 \text{34 }\text{\&}d7! \text{axb4}\]

Or \[34...\text{\&}xd7 35 \text{\&}e5+ and the rook on b8 is hanging.\]

\[35 \text{\&}e5+ \text{\&}g8 36 \text{\&}e6+ 1-0\]
Black will be mated soon.

Puzzle 47
Tal-Pasman, Riga 1953

\[33 \text{\&}d3 \text{\&}a8 34 \text{\&}xe4! \text{\&}xe4 35 \text{\&}d8+ \text{\&}f7 36 \text{g}8\text{+w}+ \text{\&}f6 37 \text{\&}d6+\]

Suddenly Black's king is out in the open.

\[37...\text{\&}f5 38 \text{\&}g6+ \text{\&}f4 39 \text{\&}e3 40 \text{\&}d3+\]
Black loses his queen.

\[40...\text{\&}xd3 41 \text{\&}xd3+ \text{\&}f2 1-0\]

Puzzle 48
Tal-Kampenuss, Latvia 1953

\[29 \text{\&}e4!\]

\[29...\text{\&}h5? \text{\&}xb2 is no improvement for White. The knight does little on h5 whereas Black has won an important pawn.\]

\[29...\text{\&}xe4 30 \text{\&}c4+ \text{\&}e8 31 \text{\&}xe4+!\]
Better than the simple 31 \text{\&}xc5.

\[31...\text{\&}e7 32 \text{\&}g8+\]

Take a look at White's active heavy pieces on the open files and compare it to Black's passive set-up.

\[32...\text{\&}f8 33 \text{\&}xe7+! \text{\&}xe7 34 \text{\&}e1+ \text{\&}d6\]
\[35 \text{\&}xf8+ \text{\&}c7 36 \text{\&}xg7 \text{c5 37 f6 1-0}\]

Puzzle 49
Tal-Suetin, Tbilisi 1969

Sicilian Defence

\[1 \text{e4 }c5 2 \text{\&}f3 \text{e6 3 }d4 \text{cxd4 4 }\text{\&}xd4 \text{a6}\]
\[5 \text{\&}d3 \text{\&}e7 6 \text{\&}c3 \text{\&}bc6 7 \text{\&}b3 \text{\&}g6 8\]
\[0-0 \text{b5 9 }\text{\&}e3 \text{d6 10 }f4 \text{\&}e7 11 \text{\&}h5 \text{\&}f6\]

\[12 \text{\&}ad1 \text{\&}xc3 13 \text{bxc3 }\text{\&}c7 14 \text{\&}d2 \text{\&}ce7 15 \text{\&}d4 \text{\&}d7 16 \text{f5 }\text{\&}xf5 17 \text{exf5}\]
\[18 \text{\&}e5 19 \text{\&}e6 \text{\&}xe6 19 \text{\&}xe6 \text{g}6\]

\[20 \text{\&}xe5!\]
\[20...\text{\&}xb5+!? \text{axb5 21 }\text{\&}xe5 with the same idea as in the game, but also to deliver mate if the queen sacrifice is accepted after 21...\text{\&}xe5?? 22 \text{\&}f7+ \text{\&}f8 23 \text{\&}h6 mate, is very nice, but Black doesn't have to take the queen. Instead he can play 21...0-0-0, although White is clearly better here as well.\]

\[20...\text{\&}xe5 21 \text{\&}f7+ 1-0\]
Black resigned due to 21...\text{\&}d7 (21...\text{\&}f8 22 \text{\&}h6 mate) 22 \text{\&}f5+ \text{\&}c6 23 \text{\&}e4+ and Black will soon lose almost all his pieces except his queen! The remaining position after 23...\text{\&}d5 24 \text{\&}xd5+ \text{\&}d7 25 \text{\&}xh8+ \text{\&}c6 26 \text{\&}f8 \text{\&}xf8 27 \text{\&}xf8 is quite funny, and of course absolutely hopeless for Black.

Puzzle 50
Tal-Vooremaa, Tallinn 1971

\[27 \text{\&}e6+! \text{\&}xe6\]

Also hopeless is 27...\text{\&}xe6 28 \text{\&}xf7 \text{\&}xf7 29 \text{\&}xf8+ \text{\&}c7 30 \text{\&}xf7+ \text{\&}d7 31 \text{\&}xe6. A typical scenario: due to his initiative, White wins back the invested material, and with a continuing attack. After 31...\text{\&}d8 32 \text{\&}c7 there is no point in continuing the fight.

\[28 \text{\&}xe6 \text{\&}xe6 29 \text{\&}h7 1-0\]
Black loses the rest of his developed army, and with it the game.
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Puzzle 51
Tal-Lyavdansky, Kiev 1964

32 $\text{hxh7+}!\text{g7h7} 33 \text{wff7+ g6h6} 34 \text{wxh8}

The pawn will inevitably promote. Black's only hope is a perpetual.

34...\text{wff2} 35 \text{wff8+ h7g5} 36 \text{h4+}!

No back rank mate.

36...\text{g4} 37 \text{e8w wff1+} 38 \text{h2 wff4+}

39 \text{g1 wff1+} 40 \text{wff2}

There is no perpetual.

40...\text{wff4+} 41 \text{wff2} 1-0

Puzzle 52
Ljubojevic-Tal, Las Palmas 1975

\text{ Sicilian Defence }

1 \text{e4 c5} 2 \text{d4 c6} 3 \text{d4 cxd4} 4 \text{exd4} \text{d5} 5 \text{c3 d6} 6 \text{g4 a6} 7 \text{g5} \text{e5} 8 \text{f4 b5} 9 \text{h5} 10 \text{h6} 11 \text{gxf6} 12 \text{hxg6} 13 \text{hxg6} 14 \text{h6} 15 \text{g6}

0-0 16 \text{gxf7+ wxf7} 17 \text{wff2}

17 \text{gxf6} 18 \text{wff6} \text{gxf6} gives Black a dangerous initiative after 18...\text{h4} 19 \text{wff4} \text{wff3} 20 \text{wff6} \text{wff7}.

17...\text{wff7} 18 0-0 \text{wff6} 19 \text{wff6}

The game becomes very sharp now.

19...\text{gxf6} 20 \text{wff6} \text{gxf6} 21 \text{d5} \text{wff4} 22 \text{wff6} \text{gxf6} 23 \text{wff5} \text{gxf6} 24 \text{wff6} \text{wff6} 25 \text{wff6}

26 \text{gxf6} 27 \text{gxf6} 28 \text{gxf6} 29 \text{gxf6} 30 \text{wff1}

30...\text{wff1}

Deflecting the knight from the defence of g3. Now after...

31 \text{gxf6} \text{wff3+} 32 \text{g1} \text{wff1+} 33 \text{wff1} 

$\frac{1}{2}$-$\frac{1}{2}$

...a draw was agreed.

Puzzle 53
Tal-Keres, Tallinn 1973

42 \text{h7!} \text{e4}

Or 42...gxh6 and now:

a) 43 \text{gxf6} (the threat was simply return with the rook) 44 \text{xf6} \text{wff7} 45 \text{wff8+} \text{wff7} 46 \text{wff6} \text{wff7} is not clear. White has many pawns for the knight and an active queen, but his own king on h1 is not secure at all.

b) 43 \text{h4!} and Black cannot organise a proper defence.

43 \text{h5} \text{gxf6} 44 \text{wff6} 1-0

Black resigned as mate follows.

Puzzle 54
Tal-Unzicker, Stockholm 1961

24 \text{xf7+} 25 \text{wff3+} \text{wff1} 1-0

Black resigned without waiting for the obvious move 26 \text{g5}. Black is mated by force after 25...\text{wff6} 26 \text{h4+} \text{wff5} 27 \text{wff3+} \text{gxf4} 28 \text{wff6} 29 \text{wff5+}.

Puzzle 55
Tal-Balashov, Moscow (Rapid) 1987

1 \text{wff7+}!

It's mate in five!

1...\text{wff7} 2 \text{wff5+} \text{wff8} 3 \text{wff6} 4 \text{wff6+} 1-0

Due to 4...\text{wff4} 5 \text{h8 mate!}

Puzzle 56
Tal-Smyslov, Bled 1959

\text{ Caro-Kann Defence }

1 \text{e4 c6} 2 \text{d3 d5} 3 \text{d2 e5} 4 \text{gff3 d7
5 d4 dxe4 6 dx e4 exd4 7 wXxd4! Qgf6 8
Lg5 L.a7 9 0-0-0 0-0 10 Ld6 wa5
10...Ld5 is better: 11 h4 f6 12 Lc4 L7b6 gives Black an equal game.
11 Lc4 b5?
After 11...wa5 White only has a slight advantage.
12 Ld2! wa6 13 Lf5!! Ld8
Or 13...bxc4 14 Lxe7+ Lh8 15 Lb1 with a dangerous initiative and active possibilities on the kingside.
14 Lh4! bxc4
14...Ld5 15 Lg5 h6 16 Lxh6+ gxh6 17
Lxh6 Lxg5 18 Lxg5+ Lh8 19 Lc3+ Lcx3
20 Lxd4 and White wins.
15 Lg5 Lh5
Another entertaining line is 15...g6 16
Lh6+ Lg7 17 Lc3 Lxa2 18 Lh4 La1+ 19
Ld2 La4 20 Lxf5+ Lh8 21 Lg4 Lb5 22
Lxf6 Lxf5 23 Lxf5 gx5 24 Lxd7+ Lg8 25
Lxf8 with a decisive plus for White.
16 Lh6+ Lh8 17 Lxh5
17...Lxa2?
Not the best. Also bad is 17...gxh6? 18
Lxh6 Lf6 19 Lc3 Lxc3 20 Lg5! and White mates on h7.
Better was 17...Lfl! and now:
a) 18 Lxf7+ Lg8 19 Ld3 g5 Lxg5 20
Lxg5 Lf6! and Black holds.
b) 18 Lg5! gxh6 (or 18...Lxg5 19 Lxg5
Lxa2 20 Lh4! c5 21 Lf5 Lg8 22 Ld6 Lf8
23 Lc3 f6 24 Ld5 with a continuing attack) 19
Lxh6 Lxg5 20 Lxg5 f6 21 Lhe1 and
there is no defence against Lxf6+ and Lc7.
18 Lc3 Lf6
Or 18...f6 19 Lhe1 winning.
19 Lxf7! La1+
19...Lxf7 20 Lxd8+ Lg8 21 Lxf7 mate
was one point of White's combination.
20 Ld2 Lf7 21 Lxf7+ Lg8 22 Lxa1
Lxf7
23 Lc5+
White has a winning material advantage. Black fought on for a while before finally resigning.
23...Lxe6 24 Lxc6 Lc4+ 25 Lf3 Lb6+
26 Ld4! 1-0
Puzzle 57
Tal-Sveshnikov, Tallinn (Rapid) 1988
Semi-Tarrasch Defence
1 d4 d5 2 Lf3 Lf6 3 c4 e6 4 e3 c5 5
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Unfortunately Black has to exchange the dark-squared bishops, as 23...\(\text{h8}\) is met by 24\(\text{exf5 exf5 25 xf5}\).

24 \(\text{Wxf6+ \text{h7} 25 \text{e1 \text{h8}} 26 \text{a5 \text{b6}}\)

27 \(\text{e6 \text{g7}} 28 \text{d2 \text{d6}} 29 \text{f1 \text{d7}}

30 \text{exf5 xf5 31 \text{f5+ \text{f6}}?}

Better was 31...\(\text{d5}\) with equal prospects.

32 \(\text{h4 \text{g7}} 33 \text{h5 \text{g8}} 34 \text{h4 \text{g8}} 35

\text{a3 \text{a7}} 36 \text{e5 \text{f7}} 37 \text{h6 \text{e7}} 38

\text{exh5 \text{d5}} 39 \text{d2 \text{d6}} 40 \text{h6 \text{d6}} 41

\text{f4 \text{f8}}

Black was not tempted by 41...\(\text{g4}\) 42

\(\text{axh7+! 42...\text{h8} 43 \text{xf7+ xf7} 44 \text{g6}

\text{xf2} 45 \text{g8+ \text{f7} 46 \text{d3}, when Black's

king is by far the more exposed.}

42 \(\text{e3 \text{d5}} 43 \text{xf7 xf7} 44 \text{e5 \text{c7}}

45 \text{c5+ \text{f8}}

If Black had played 45...\(\text{a6}\) instead then 46

\(\text{b6}, when \text{b7} is very weak. Also, 46...\text{d5?}

is not possible in view of 47 \text{d8+ \text{f8} 48

\text{xf7+! xh7 49 \text{xf7} 50 \text{xc7+}

\text{e8} 51 \text{xf7}.

The endgame is won for \text{White}; he only

needs to overcome a few technical problems.

51...\(\text{b4} 52 \text{a6} \text{f1} 53 \text{g2 \text{f4} 54

\text{c1} 55 \text{g2} 56 \text{f3}

\text{d5+ 57 \text{xc3 \text{g5} 58 \text{xe2 \text{h5} 59

\text{d2}}

There are no more annoying checks, and

\text{White is ready to take over the initiative.}

59...\(\text{f6} 60 \text{xc6 \text{a5} 61 \text{c3 \text{xa2}}+

\text{f8}} 48

\text{d8+ \text{g7} 49 \text{xf7+ xf7} 50 \text{xc7+}

\text{g6} 51 \text{xf7}.

The endgame is won for \text{White}; he only

needs to overcome a few technical problems.

51...\(\text{b4} 52 \text{a6} \text{f1} 53 \text{g2 \text{f4} 54

\text{c1} 55 \text{g2} 56 \text{f3}

\text{d5+ 57 \text{xc3 \text{g5} 58 \text{xe2 \text{h5} 59

\text{d2}}

There are no more annoying checks, and

\text{White is ready to take over the initiative.}

59...\(\text{f6} 60 \text{xc6 \text{a5} 61 \text{c3 \text{xa2}}+
62 \( \text{\texttt{B}e3} \text{\texttt{B}f7} \) 63 \( \text{\texttt{B}d5} \) \text{\texttt{B}xd5} 64 \( \text{\texttt{B}c7}+ \text{\texttt{B}e6} \) 65 \( \text{\texttt{B}c6+} \text{\texttt{B}e7} \) 66 \( \text{\texttt{B}xd5} \)

The connected passed pawns on the kingside will be decisive.

66...\( \text{\texttt{B}a1} \) 67 \( \text{\texttt{B}e4+} \) \text{\texttt{B}f7} 68 \( \text{\texttt{B}xf4} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}c6+} \) \text{\texttt{B}e7} 69 \( \text{\texttt{B}xd5} \)

69...\( \text{\texttt{B}a1} \) 70 \( \text{\texttt{B}d5+} \) \text{\texttt{B}f8} 71 \( \text{\texttt{B}f5} \) \text{\texttt{B}b1+} 72 \( \text{\texttt{B}f6} \) 1-0

Puzzle 59
Tal-Mascarinas, Lvov 1981

28 \( \text{\texttt{B}c7!} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}xc7} \)

29 \( \text{\texttt{B}h8}+ \) 1-0

Black resigned due to the line 29...\( \text{\texttt{B}xh8} \) 30 \( \text{\texttt{B}h6+} \) \text{\texttt{B}g8} 31 \( \text{\texttt{B}h7+} \) \text{\texttt{B}f8} 32 \( \text{\texttt{B}h8} \) mate.

Puzzle 60
Romanishin-Tal, Leningrad 1977

26...\( \text{\texttt{B}h3!} \) 27 \( \text{\texttt{B}xe5} \)

Of course not 27 \( \text{\texttt{B}xb7??} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}f3}+ \) 28 \( \text{\texttt{B}xf3} \) \text{\texttt{B}xf3} and mate on g2.

27...\( \text{\texttt{B}x2!} \)

The f2-square was the weak point!

28 \( \text{\texttt{B}xf2} \) \text{\texttt{B}h2+} 29 \( \text{\texttt{B}f1} \) \text{\texttt{B}f8}+ 30 \( \text{\texttt{B}f4} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}xf4}+ \) 31 \text{\texttt{B}xf4} \text{\texttt{B}c8}.

Black has a perpetual when he wants, but with this move Tal tests his opponent one last time.

32 \( \text{\texttt{B}ed1!} \)

Now White’s king has an escape route via e1 and Black forces perpetual.

32...\( \text{\texttt{B}h1+} \) 33 \( \text{\texttt{B}f2} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}xh4+} \) 34 \( \text{\texttt{B}g1} \) \text{\texttt{B}g3+} 35 \( \text{\texttt{B}h1} \) \text{\texttt{B}h3+} 36 \( \text{\texttt{B}g1} \) \text{\texttt{B}g3+} 37 \( \text{\texttt{B}h1} \) \text{\texttt{B}h4+} 38 \( \text{\texttt{B}g1} \) ½-½

Puzzle 61
Larsen-Tal, Bugojno 1984

The immediate check with 28...\( \text{\texttt{B}f3}+? \) is bad: 29 \( \text{\texttt{B}xf3} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}xf3} \) 30 \( \text{\texttt{B}xg7+} \) \text{\texttt{B}h8} (30...\( \text{\texttt{B}h8} \) 31 \( \text{\texttt{B}g6}+ \) mates) 31 \( \text{\texttt{B}f1} \) and White wins. Therefore Tal played

28...\( \text{\texttt{B}e2!} \) 0-1

Larsen resigned in view of the following variations:

a) 29 \( \text{\texttt{B}xc2} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}f3}+. \\

b) 29 \( \text{\texttt{B}xe2} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}f3}+ \) 30 \( \text{\texttt{B}xf3} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}xe1}+. \) This is why the c-pawn had to be sacrificed: without this last point that the rook on e1 is hanging, the queen sacrifice on f3 works out well for White (see above). Now, though, White loses everything after the sequence 31 \( \text{\texttt{B}f2} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}f1+} \) 32 \( \text{\texttt{B}xf1} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}xf3+} \) 33 \( \text{\texttt{B}f2} \) \text{\texttt{B}g2+}+ 34 \( \text{\texttt{B}g2} \) \text{\texttt{B}xg2}+ \text{\texttt{B}xd4}.

c) Equally bad is any other queen move, for example 29 \( \text{\texttt{B}a1} \) \( \text{\texttt{B}f3}+ \) 30 \( \text{\texttt{B}h1} \) \text{\texttt{B}xd4}, and if 31 \( \text{\texttt{B}xd4} \) Black simply exchanges everything with 31...\( \text{\texttt{B}xg2}+ \) 32 \( \text{\texttt{B}xg2} \) \text{\texttt{B}xd4}, leaving him a rook up.

Puzzle 62
Tal-NN, Smolensk (Simultaneous) 1983

1 \( \text{\texttt{B}xf6!} \)

1 \( \text{\texttt{B}h3} \) is also better for White, but the
move in the game is decisive.

1...\textit{xf6} 2\textit{ xf6! \textit{xe4} 3 \textit{f7 h6} 4 \textit{f8w}+ \textit{h7} 5 \textit{g8+}

White mates within a few moves.

5...\textit{g6} 6 \textit{wf7+} \textit{g5} 7 \textit{wh5} mate (1-0)

Puzzle 63
Tal-Chikovani, Gori 1968
Caro-Kann Defence

1 c4 \textit{c6} 2 e4 \textit{d5} 3 exd5 \textit{cxd5} 4 d4 \textit{f6} 5
\textit{c3} \textit{e6} 6 \textit{f3} \textit{e7} 7 \textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 8 \textit{d3}
\textit{c6} 9 0-0 0-0 10 \textit{e1} \textit{f6} 11 a3 b6 12
\textit{c2} \textit{a6} 13 \textit{g5} \textit{c8} 14 \textit{w2} \textit{d6} 15
\textit{ad1} \textit{fd8} 16 \textit{b1} \textit{wb8} 17 \textit{wc2} g6 18
\textit{a2} h6

19 \textit{xe6l} \textit{hxg5}

19...\textit{fxe6} 20 \textit{wg6+} is even worse.

20 \textit{wg6+} \textit{h8} 21 \textit{wh6+} \textit{g8} 22 \textit{xd5}
\textit{f8}

Black can protect his weak point at f7, but he is helpless against the long-term attack that White quietly builds up. After 22...\textit{fxe6}
White plays 23 \textit{wg6+} with mate on the next move.

23 \textit{a4} 1-0

Mate cannot be avoided after \textit{h4} and \textit{h8}.

Puzzle 64
Tal-Geller, Budva 1967

23 \textit{xd5!} \textit{xd5} 24 \textit{f3} 1-0

The unpleasant pressure against f7 forced Black to resign at this stage. A bit too early maybe, although his position is critical after

24...\textit{exe5} 25 \textit{fxe7+} \textit{h8} 26 h4!. White simply threatens \textit{h4-h5}, and neither of the Black rooks is able to move. For instance, 26...\textit{e1+} 27 \textit{h2} \textit{xb1} 28 \textit{w8+} and mate, while 26...\textit{d8?} allows a well known mate
with 27 \textit{g8+} \textit{yg8} 28 \textit{f7}!

Puzzle 65
Tal-NN, Stuttgart (Simultaneous) 1958

16 \textit{gxf6!! \textit{xd1+}}

17 \textit{xd1!}

Brilliant!

17...\textit{xd2} 18 \textit{f6+}

The threat of \textit{g8} mate is so strong that
Black loses everything.

18...\textit{e6} 19 \textit{g8+} \textit{d7} 20 \textit{xc8+}
\textit{xc8} 21 \textit{xd2} 1-0

White remains on top with two extra minor pieces.

Puzzle 66
Tal-Malich, Varna 1958

24 \textit{exe5! fxe5}

24...\textit{dxe5} is met by 25 d6+ \textit{d8} 26 \textit{h6}
with a quick mate.

25 \textit{wg5+} \textit{f8} 26 \textit{f6}

Black is helpless to the invasion of White’s pieces. After
26...\texttt{Ag8} 27 \texttt{Ae6} 1-0

Black resigned, as material losses are inevitable. 27...\texttt{Ac7} 28 \texttt{Wd8+} is worth noticing!

Puzzle 67
Tal-Gipslis, Riga 1958

22 \texttt{Wg2!}

The ideal square for the queen: it eyes both g7 and a8. 22 \texttt{Wg4} \texttt{Af6} 23 fxe6 dxe6 24 \texttt{Wxe6+} \texttt{Wxe6} 25 \texttt{Axe6} \texttt{Axc3} 26 bxc3 gives White good winning chances in this double rook endgame, although Black has chances for survival. However, the game continuation is more clear-cut.

22...\texttt{Af6} 23 \texttt{Axg7+} \texttt{Ah8} 24 \texttt{Wxe6+} \texttt{Axe6} 25 \texttt{Axg4+} \texttt{Ah8} 26 \texttt{Wxa8+} \texttt{Ah7} 27 \texttt{Wxa6+} 1-0

Black saw no point in continuing the game.

Puzzle 68
Tal-Platonov, Dubna 1973

\texttt{Sicilian Defence}

1 e4 c5 2 \texttt{Af3} d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 \texttt{Axd4} \texttt{Af6} 5 \texttt{Ac3} a6 6 \texttt{Ag5} e6 7 f4 \texttt{Wb6} 8 \texttt{Wd2} \texttt{Wxb2} 9 \texttt{Qb3} \texttt{Wxa3} 10 \texttt{Axg6+} \texttt{Fxg6} 11 \texttt{Ae2} \texttt{Ac6} 12 0-0 \texttt{Ad7} 13 \texttt{Ah5} \texttt{Ag7}! 14 \texttt{Ae3}

Another possibility is 14 \texttt{Ad1?} 0-0 15 \texttt{Axg6} \texttt{Wxd6} 16 \texttt{Axe6} \texttt{Ah8} with roughly equal play.

14...0-0 15 \texttt{Af1} \texttt{Da5} 16 \texttt{Ah3} \texttt{Ab3} 17 axb3 \texttt{Axc8} 18 \texttt{Ah1} f5! 19 exf5

19 e5 is best answered by 19...\texttt{Ac6}!

19...\texttt{Wb4} 20 \texttt{f6} \texttt{Af6} 21 \texttt{f5} \texttt{Af3}

21...\texttt{Af5} weakens the pawn structure, but Black opens up the c8-h3 diagonal for his light-squared bishop. After 22 \texttt{Af3} f4 Black has the advantage.

22 \texttt{Ag3+} \texttt{Ah8}

Had Black played the far better 22...\texttt{Ag7}, the game would have remained unclear after 23 f6 \texttt{Af3}! 24 \texttt{Ag7+} \texttt{Ah8} 25 \texttt{Wc2} \texttt{Af1}+ 26 \texttt{Wxf1} \texttt{Ae3}.

23 \texttt{Wh6+} 1-0

Bad is 23 fxe6? \texttt{Af3!!} and Black keeps an extra piece after 24 \texttt{We2} (24 \texttt{Wxb4} \texttt{Af1} is mate) 24...\texttt{Af1}+ 25 \texttt{Wxf1} fxe6.

After 23 \texttt{Wh6}, however, Black immediately resigned in view of 23...\texttt{Af3} (other continuations also lose) 24 \texttt{Ag6}, when mate on h7 or f8 follows.

Puzzle 69
Tal-Shamkovitch, Baku 1972

25 \texttt{Af4!} \texttt{Af4}

Black cannot ignore the rook and continue the development of his queenside. If, for instance, 25...\texttt{Ad7} White wins by force after 26 \texttt{Af7+} \texttt{Af7} 27 \texttt{Af1+} \texttt{Af7} 28 \texttt{g6+} \texttt{Ad6} 29 \texttt{Wb4+} with a quick mate. The move 25...b6 is best answered by the simple 26 \texttt{Af2} followed by \texttt{Ag6}.

26 \texttt{Wh6+} \texttt{Af7} 27 \texttt{Af6+}

Black has no cover on the dark squares.
27...$f8 28 g6
Threatening g7 mate!

28...$h6 29 $f1 !-0
Black resigned as he cannot avoid mate:
29...$d8 30 $h8+ $e7 31 $xf7+ $d6 32 $d4+ $c6 33 $c5!

Puzzle 70
Tal-Koblencs, Yurmala (Training) 1976

1 f6!! $xe2
1...$xf6? loses to 2 $xd6+ $e7 3 $xc7+ $xc7 4 $f4+ and the rook on h2 is hanging.
Also bad is 1...$xf6? 2 g7 $g2 3 $g1 and the pawn cannot be stopped.
2 $xg7 $xd2 3 $xd2 $e2
3...$xg6 4 g8$ $c8 offered more resistance.
4 $c1 !-0
The pawn promotes and White remains the exchange up.

Puzzle 71
Tal-Zaitsev, Moscow 1969
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 $d2 c5 4 $gf3 $c6
5 exd5 exd5 6 $b5 $e7+ 7 $e2 $c7 8 0-0 $xd4 9 $b3 $d6 10 $bx$ 4 a6 11
$c4 $f6 12 $g5 $e4 13 $xd5 $xd4 14
$xd4 $xg5

15 $xg7! $xf3+ 16 $xf3
Notice that White won a tempo with this exchange on f3 as the rook now comes to e1
with check.

Puzzle 72
Tal-Toran, European Team Ch.,
Oberhausen 1961

21 $d6! $xd6
Or:
A) 21...$c5+ 22 $e3 and White has a winning advantage.
B) 21...$xf3 22 $xf3 mate!

22 $d6+

Black resigned as his position is hopeless, for instance 21...$d7 22 $c6! $xe6 23
$xe6+ and White wins.

17...$xh2+
No chances are offered by 17...$d8 due to 18 $f1+ $e7 19 $f6 and White wins.
There is no way to stop the d-pawn.

18 $h1 $d6 19 g3
White simply regains the material. Given a couple of moves, Black’s king will not find
shelter anyway.

19...$xg3 20 $xg3 $f5 21 $f1+ !-0
Black resigned as his position is hopeless.

15 $xg7! $xf3+ 16 $xf3
Notice that White won a tempo with this exchange on f3 as the rook now comes to e1
with check.

16...$f8 17 $c1

17...$xh2+
No chances are offered by 17...$d8 due to 18 $f1+ $e7 19 $f6 and White wins.
There is no way to stop the d-pawn.

18 $h1 $d6 19 g3
White simply regains the material. Given a couple of moves, Black’s king will not find
shelter anyway.

19...$xg3 20 $xg3 $f5 21 $f1+ !-0
Black resigned as his position is hopeless.

For instance 21...$d7 22 $c6! $xe6 23 $xe6+ and White wins.

Puzzle 72
Tal-Toran, European Team Ch.,
Oberhausen 1961

21 $d6! $xd6
Or:
A) 21...$c5+ 22 $e3 and White has a winning advantage.
B) 21...$xf3 22 $xf3 mate!

22 $d6+

Bad is 22 $e3? $c8! 23 $e7+ $xe7 24
$xe7+ $c7 25 $e8$ $xe8 26 $xe8 (winning
the exchange) because of 26...$c5+. After
White’s king moves to a light square, a
bishop check wins the rook on e8.

22 $a3, however, is another perfectly possible solution. White wins after 22...$h6+
White has two pawns for the exchange, better coordination and a dangerous attack against the enemy king.

24...\textit{\textbf{Bxb2}} 25 \textit{\textbf{Wg7}}

25...\textit{\textbf{Bxc2}}

25...\textit{\textbf{Bf8}} was the only chance to continue the game, although after 26 \textit{\textbf{We7+}} \textit{\textbf{Bxe7}} 27 \textit{\textbf{fxe7+ Bxe8}} 28 \textit{\textbf{exf8W+ We8}} White should win easily.

26 \textit{\textbf{Wxh8+ Bc7}} 27 \textit{\textbf{Wc8+ 1-0}}

Puzzle 73

\textbf{Tal-van der Wiel, Moscow 1982}

\textbf{English Opening}

1 \textit{\textbf{c4 d5}} 2 \textit{\textbf{c2}} e6 3 \textit{\textbf{f3}} b6 4 e4 \textit{\textbf{bd7}}
5 \textit{\textbf{d3}} c5 6 0-0 \textit{\textbf{d6}} 7 e5 \textit{\textbf{d4}} 8 \textit{\textbf{e4}}

16 \textit{\textbf{Bxf7! Bxf7}} 17 \textit{\textbf{Bxe6+ Be8}} 18 e5

19 \textit{\textbf{Bxf7! Bxf7}} 20 \textit{\textbf{Bf6+ Bg8}} 21 \textit{\textbf{Bxe7}}

Threatening mate on f6.

21...\textit{\textbf{Bf8}} 22 \textit{\textbf{Bf1 1-0}}

Black resigned, as after the rook swap he has to sacrifice the queen to avoid mate.

Puzzle 74

\textbf{Tal-Lozov, Riga 1952}

\textbf{Catalan Opening}

1 \textit{\textbf{c4 e6}} 2 \textit{\textbf{d3}} d5 3 \textit{\textbf{d4}} \textit{\textbf{d6}} 4 \textit{\textbf{g3 Bd7}} 5 \textit{\textbf{g2}}

6 0-0 \textit{\textbf{Bb6}} 7 \textit{\textbf{c3 Bd7}} 8 \textit{\textbf{e5}}

\textit{\textbf{Wc8}} 9 \textit{\textbf{cx}d5 \textit{\textbf{cxd5}} 10 \textit{\textbf{cxd5 Bxd5}} 11 \textit{\textbf{e4}}

\textit{\textbf{Bb7}} 12 \textit{\textbf{Wc2 c5}} 13 \textit{\textbf{d5 Bb8}} 14 \textit{\textbf{h3 Wc7}}

15 \textit{\textbf{f4 Bx6}} 16 \textit{\textbf{Bd6}}

Solutions to Puzzles
With this move, a path to the kingside is opened up for White's queen.

18...\texttt{\texttt{xf8}}

18...\texttt{\texttt{xe5}} is met by 19 \texttt{\texttt{xh7} \texttt{e7}} 20 \texttt{\texttt{fe1}}.

19 \texttt{\texttt{wxh7} \texttt{xd5}}

Black hopes to create a blockade on the light squares, but Tal ignores the rook sacrifice and proceeds with the attack.

20 \texttt{\texttt{g6+ d8}} 21 \texttt{\texttt{g5+ e7}} 22 \texttt{\texttt{f7!}}

Or 22...\texttt{\texttt{xg5}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{g8}} mate!

23 \texttt{\texttt{g8+ 1-0}}

Black is mated after 23...\texttt{\texttt{xg8}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{xf8}}. An interesting point about the game continuation is that Tal concluded the attack without the rooks, although we saw in some lines that one or both rooks had to join in.

Puzzle 75
Tal-Speelman. Subotica 1987

22 \texttt{\texttt{xg6!}}

22 \texttt{\texttt{d1?}} was also strong, but after 22...\texttt{\texttt{xd1+}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{xh1} bxc3} 24 \texttt{\texttt{xc3}} \texttt{\texttt{d7}} Black would have been able to offer more resistance.

22...\texttt{\texttt{bxc3}}

Or 22...\texttt{\texttt{fxg6}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{g6}} \texttt{\texttt{g7}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{h7}} mate!

23 \texttt{\texttt{exf7}}

With a mate threat on h8.

23...\texttt{\texttt{d2+}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{f1} \texttt{xf7}} 25 \texttt{\texttt{xf7+}}

25 \texttt{\texttt{xf7}} \texttt{\texttt{f8}} and Black survives.

25...\texttt{\texttt{g7}} 26 \texttt{\texttt{g1}}

White's rook joins the attack with deadly effect.

26...\texttt{\texttt{g5}} 27 \texttt{\texttt{g5+xf7}} 28 \texttt{\texttt{bxc3 e5?!}}

1-0

Black resigned before White could play 29 \texttt{\texttt{xc8}}.

Puzzle 76
Tal-Zilberstein. USSR 1973

\texttt{\texttt{Sicilian Defence}}

1 \texttt{\texttt{e4}} 2 \texttt{\texttt{f3}} 2 \texttt{\texttt{d6}} 3 \texttt{\texttt{d4}} cxd4 4 \texttt{\texttt{xd4}}

118

18 \texttt{\texttt{c3}} \texttt{\texttt{b3}} 6 \texttt{\texttt{g5}} \texttt{e6} 7 \texttt{\texttt{f6}} 8 \texttt{\texttt{f2}} \texttt{\texttt{xb2}} 9 \texttt{\texttt{b3}} \texttt{\texttt{wa3}} 10 \texttt{\texttt{xf6}} gxf6 11 \texttt{\texttt{d2}} h5 12 0-0 \texttt{\texttt{g6}} 13 \texttt{\texttt{b1}} \texttt{\texttt{a4}} 14 \texttt{\texttt{c4}}

15 \texttt{\texttt{b4}} 15 \texttt{\texttt{we3} \texttt{g7}} 16 \texttt{\texttt{a3}} \texttt{\texttt{wa4}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{g3}}

\texttt{\texttt{xf8}}

Puzzle 77
Tal-Kozlov. Riga (Rapid) 1973

30 \texttt{\texttt{xh6!=}} g\texttt{\texttt{xh6}}

Or 30...\texttt{\texttt{d5}} 31 \texttt{\texttt{xd5} exf5} 32 \texttt{\texttt{g5!}} with too many threats against the black king.

31 \texttt{\texttt{e4}}

With simultaneous threats on c4, h7 and h7.

31...\texttt{\texttt{d5}} 32 \texttt{\texttt{wh7+ f8}} 33 \texttt{\texttt{xd5 f6}}

If 33...\texttt{\texttt{exd5}} then 34 \texttt{\texttt{e7}} decides.

34 \texttt{\texttt{wh8+ e7}} 35 \texttt{\texttt{xc8}}
Loose pieces tend to drop off!
35...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xd5 36 \textit{\textbf{W}}xb7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}f6 1-0
Black's situation is hopeless.

\textbf{Puzzle 78}
\textbf{Hjartarson-Tal}, Manila 1990
31...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xa3! 32 bxa3 \textit{\textbf{W}}xa3+

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
% Chessboard diagram
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

33 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d2

On 33 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b1 Black replies 33...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xe3! (the greedy 33...\textit{\textbf{W}}xb3+ 34 \textit{\textbf{Q}}a1 \textit{\textbf{W}}a4+ 35 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b2 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe4 is less convincing, as it gives White a breathing space; after, for instance, 36 \textit{\textbf{Q}}de1 \textit{\textbf{W}}f4 Black should still win the endgame quite easily) 34 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe5+ f6 35 gxf6 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b3+ 36 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c2 \textit{\textbf{W}}a2+ 37 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c1 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e8+ and he mates next move.
33...\textit{\textbf{Q}}fd8+ 34 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e1 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd1+ 35 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd1 \textit{\textbf{W}}a4+ 0-1

Black wins back the piece on the next move with ...\textit{\textbf{W}}xe4 and the attack still going strong.

\textbf{Puzzle 79}
\textbf{Tal-Podgaets}, Sochi 1970
27 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xb6!

Also possible, but not quite as good, is 27 \textit{\textbf{W}}g8+ with the idea 27...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c7 28 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xb6 \textit{\textbf{X}}g8 29 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}d8 30 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd7 31 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b8+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}c7 32 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xg8. White is a piece up after this long forced sequence, but after 32...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xd4 Black has some compensation, although White remains on top.
27...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xb6 28 \textit{\textbf{W}}g8+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}e8
Or 28...\textit{\textbf{Q}}c7 29 \textit{\textbf{W}}xa8.
29 \textit{\textbf{W}}xh7 1-0

Compared to 27 \textit{\textbf{W}}g8+, this line is cut after 29...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xa3 30 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xb6 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c8 31 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}d8 32 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b8+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}e7 33 \textit{\textbf{Q}}b7+.

\textbf{Puzzle 80}
23 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xg7! \textit{\textbf{Q}}xg7 24 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xh6+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}g8

A better try was to accept the challenge with 24...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xh6 25 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}g7 26 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd6 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd6 27 g3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c1. Black has a rook and two knights for the queen, but his king in this wide open position is exposed. In positions like this, the queen is worth plenty of material, and besides, White has extra three pawns.
25 \textit{\textbf{Q}}h3

25 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xh7! is even stronger.
25...\textit{\textbf{Q}}g8 26 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f8+ 1-0

Black resigned as mate will soon follow.

\textbf{Puzzle 81}
\textbf{Tal-Bilek}, Hungary 1963
\textit{\textbf{Modern Defence}}

1 e4 d6 2 d4 g6 3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g7 4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f3 c6 5
\textit{\textbf{Q}}c4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f6 6 e5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe5 7 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe5 0-0 8 0-0
\textit{\textbf{Q}}bd7 9 f4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c7 10 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f3 a6 11 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e1 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e6 12
\textit{\textbf{Q}}b3 c5 13 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e3 cxd4 14 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe5 15
\textit{\textbf{Q}}xe5! \textit{\textbf{Q}}d7 16 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe5

16...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xe5 loses immediately to 17 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f6+.
17 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe5 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe5 18 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f6

As compensation for the pawn, White has natural development and the initiative.
18...\textit{\textbf{Q}}g7 19 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d6 \textit{\textbf{Q}}c5+ 20 \textit{\textbf{Q}}h1 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e6

Not 20...\textit{\textbf{Q}}f6? 21 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf6+, followed by a knight fork on e4.
21 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f4 f6 22 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f1 a5 23 h4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}a6

If 23...a4?! White continues 24 \textit{\textbf{Q}}e8+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}e8 25 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf6+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}g8 26 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d8 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd8 27
\textit{\textbf{Q}}xd8+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}g7 28 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f6+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}g8 29 h5 gxh5
(29...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xb5?? 30 h6) 30 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g5+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}h8 31 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f7
\( \text{Qxf7} \) 32 \( \text{Wxc5} \) (whoops!) and White wins. Black cannot take the bishop as mate on f8 is threatened.

24 \( \text{Qe4 We7} \) 25 h5 h6 26 \( \text{Wg3 a4} \)

27 \( \text{Exf6! Exf6} \)

The alternative 27...axb3? 28 \( \text{Qxf8 Qxf8} \) 29 \( \text{Wxe5 bxa2} \) is insufficient due to 30 \( \text{Wh8+ Qf7} \) 31 \( \text{Hf1} \).

28 \( \text{Wxe5 axb3} \) 29 axb3

Black is a rook up, but he cannot free himself from the pin on the knight along the e5-h8 diagonal.

29...b6

With the idea ...\( \text{Qa5} \).

30 b4 1-0

and Black simply resigned as he has no good answer to \( \text{Hf1} \), winning back the rook, after which a deadly attack on the dark squares will follow. 30...\( \text{Qb7} \) doesn't work either because of 31 \( \text{Qxf6 Wxf6} \) 32 \( \text{Qd7+} \).

35 \( \text{Qxg6+} \)

The only way, as Black threatened to simplify with exchanges. But it's certainly good enough!

35...\( \text{Qh8} \)

No better is 35...\( \text{fxg6} \) 36 \( \text{Wxg6+ Qh8} \) 37 \( \text{Qxe5 Qxe5} \) 38 \( \text{Wf6+} \).

36 \( \text{Qxf7 Qd4+} \)

Both 36...\( \text{Wxf7} \) 37 \( \text{Qg6+} \) and 36...\( \text{Qf4} \) 37
lead to a decisive advantage for White.

37 \( \text{xd4! xe1+ 38 wxe1 xf7} \)

Or 38...\( \text{cxd4 39 we5+ wh7 40 we4+ wh8} \)
41 \( \text{we6! xd6} \) 42 \( \text{xe6} \) and White mates.

39 \( \text{we5+ wg7 40 wc5} \)

The smoke has finally cleared and White remains two pawns ahead with a superior position.

40...\( \text{c6} \) 41 \( \text{d2} \) 1-0

Puzzle 83
Tal-Matanovic, Moscow 1963

24 \( \text{xf7! xf7 25 xg6} \)

25...\( \text{wd6} \)

25...\( \text{xc1} \) 26 \( \text{xf7+ xf7} \) 27 \( \text{h5+} \) wins Black’s queen. After, say, 27...\( \text{e7} \) 28 \( \text{we5+} \)
\( \text{xf7} \) 29 \( \text{c7+ xg6} \) 30 \( \text{xc1 xc1+ 31 xh2} \)
Black’s uncoordinated army cannot put up adequate resistance.

26 \( \text{xf7+ xf7} \) 27 \( \text{xc8 xc8} \) 28 \( \text{wc2} \)

White has a rook and two pawns for two minor pieces, but more importantly he has the initiative. The queen move threatens the bishop on \( \text{c8} \) and thus gives White time to penetrate into Black’s camp.

28...\( \text{d7} \) 29 \( \text{wh7+ df8} \) 30 \( \text{xe3} \) 1-0

It should be noted that Tal was a true master with the heavy pieces. Positions like the above (a rook against bishop and knight) often appeared in his games, and he treated these positions brilliantly.

Puzzle 84
Tal-Plaskett, Sochi 1984

English Opening

1 c4 e5 2 g3 \( \text{dc6} \) 3 \( \text{g2} \) f5 4 e3 \( \text{df6} \)
5 d4 \( \text{dc3} \) \( \text{xb4} \) 6 \( \text{ge2} \) 0-0 7 0-0 \( \text{xc3} \) 8
\( \text{xc3} \) f4 9 exf4 exf4 10 d4 fxg3 11 fxg3
\( \text{d6} \) 12 \( \text{d5} \) h6 13 \( \text{wd3} \) \( \text{e6} \)

14 \( \text{xh6! xd5} \)

14...\( \text{gxh6} \) fails to 15 \( \text{g6+} \) \( \text{h8} \) 16 \( \text{xd6,} \)
so Black tries something else.

15 cxd5 \( \text{b4} \) 16 \( \text{wg6} \) \( \text{we7} \) 17 \( \text{a3} \)

17...\( \text{dc2} \)

17...\( \text{bxd5} \) is strongly met by 18 \( \text{ae1} \) \( \text{f7} \) 19 \( \text{xd5!} \).

18 \( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 19 \( \text{xc2} \)

The combination is over, and White has a winning material advantage.

19...\( \text{ae8} \) 20 \( \text{ae1} \) \( \text{g4} \) 21 \( \text{xf8+} \) \( \text{xf8} \)
22 \( \text{wd2} \) \( \text{wg6} \) 23 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{f2} \) 24 \( \text{wd1} \) 1-0
A strong, quiet move – these are always the most difficult to find. Now Black threatens mate beginning with ...\texttt{g4+}.

37 \texttt{gxg6}

37 \texttt{h6} frees f4 for the king, but Black wins after 37...\texttt{g4+} 38 \texttt{f4} \texttt{h5}. Now White cannot both prevent mate on g4 and e3 in a reasonable way.

37...\texttt{wg4+} 38 \texttt{f2} \texttt{g4+} 39 \texttt{f1} \texttt{g6} 0-1

Suddenly it is Black who has an extra piece!

Puzzle 90
Tal-Taimanov, Yerevan 1962

22 \texttt{xd7}! \texttt{xd7} 23 \texttt{xd7} \texttt{wc4} 24 b3 \texttt{wf1}+ 25 \texttt{d1}

Black cannot defend f7 without loss of material.

25...\texttt{d6} 26 \texttt{xd6} \texttt{wg2} 27 \texttt{wd5}

White has a material superiority and the initiative. Black could have resigned at this stage.

27...\texttt{h8}

27...\texttt{f8} is answered with 28 \texttt{xf7}!.

28 \texttt{xf7} \texttt{g8} 29 \texttt{wh5} \texttt{xe4} 30 \texttt{f3} \texttt{wf4}+ 31 \texttt{e3} \texttt{a6} 32 \texttt{d5} \texttt{b8} 33 \texttt{f7} \texttt{wd4} 34 \texttt{f3} \texttt{wa1}+ 35 \texttt{d2} \texttt{wd4}+ 36 \texttt{e2} \texttt{wc5} 37 a4

\texttt{h6} 41 \texttt{wh7}+ \texttt{g5} 42 \texttt{h4}+ \texttt{f4} 43 \texttt{wh6}.

40 \texttt{xdg6} \texttt{h5} 41 \texttt{f6}+ \texttt{h7} 1-0

Finally Black resigned.

Puzzle 91
Tal-Timman, Skopje Olympiad 1972

Pirc Defence

1 \texttt{df3} \texttt{g6} 2 e4 \texttt{d6} 3 \texttt{d4} \texttt{df6} 4 \texttt{bd2} \texttt{ag7} 5 \texttt{ac4} 0-0 6 \texttt{we2} c6 7 \texttt{b3} \texttt{ag4} 8 e5 \texttt{dxe5} 9 \texttt{dxe5} \texttt{d5} 10 0-0 \texttt{d7} 11 \texttt{h3} \texttt{f5} 12 \texttt{a1} \texttt{wc7} 13 \texttt{f1} \texttt{ad8} 14 \texttt{ag3} \texttt{a6} 15 \texttt{we4} \texttt{afe8} 16 \texttt{wh4} f6 17 \texttt{h6} \texttt{axe5}

White is ready to execute the final attack.

37...\texttt{a7} 38 \texttt{g6} \texttt{a6} 39 \texttt{xg7! xg6}

39...\texttt{xdg7} leads to mate after 40 \texttt{f7}+

124
Black can win a pawn with 15...b4 16 Qb1 Qh5, but after 17 Qh2 Qxb2 18 e5 White gets a strong initiative.

16 e5?

16 axb5 is a slightly better move.

16...b4 17 Lle4

17...

17...Qxe4

17...Qxd5 is very dangerous for Black: 18 exd6 exd6 19 Lc4! Qxf4 (19...Qc6 is met by 20 Qxd6 with a big advantage: all of White’s pieces are well placed and the pressure on f7 is unpleasant) 20 Qxf7+ Qxf7 21 Qxd6+ Qg8 22 Qxe8.

It is funny how these positions repeat themselves: again we have one with rook and pawns versus two minor pieces. Tal played these positions well, but it should be noted that in many cases they came from a tactical sequence where he kept the initiative after the material imbalance had been established.

Play could continue:

a) 22...Qxe8 23 Wxf4. Take a look at the difference in the activity of the pieces. White’s queen eyes the rook on h8, the knight on e8 looks odd and the pin on the d-file is annoying. Black will soon lose material.

b) 22...Qcd5 23 Qxg7 Wxg7 24 Lc4 gives White a strong initiative as well. The Black knights look active, but in fact they are merely exposed.

18 Lxe4 Qxa4 19 Qh6! Qh8

On 19...Qxc2 White sacrifices everything to mate the black king: 20 Qh4! Qxd1 21 Qxg7 Qxf3 22 Wh6 Qh5 23 Qxh5 gxh5 24 Wg5 and mate will soon follow.

20 Qde1 f6?

Better was 20...e6! 21 dxe6 Qxe6 22 Qg5 dxc5 and Black has no problems.

21 e6 f5 22 Qh4 Qxb2

23 Qf8! Qxf8 24 Wh6

White is winning, as Black has no good way to defend h7. The pawn on e6 is a thorn in Black’s side, dividing the board in two and thus preventing him from getting more defensive forces to the kingside.

24...Qf7

A sad necessity.

25 exf7+ Qxf7 26 Wxh7+ Qg7 27 Qh6 Qg8 28 Wxg6+ Qf8 29 Qg5 Qxd5 30 Qh8+! 1-0

Black resigned in view of 30...Qxh8 31 Qh7 mate!

Puzzle 93
Khasin-Tal, Leningrad 1956

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 Qf3 Qc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Qxd4 Qf6 5 Qc3 d6 6 Qc4 e6 7 0-0 a6 8 Qe3 Qc7 9 Qb3 Qe7 10 f4 b5 11 f5 Qxd4

12 Qxd4 0-0 13 fxe6

13 Qad1 is suggested as an improvement by Koblenz.

13...Qxe6

After 13...fxe6 14 Qd5 Qxd5 15 Qxd5 White has a small advantage due to Black’s
somewhat exposed central pawns.

14 $\text{h}d1 \text{ac}8 15 \text{h}1 \text{fd}8 16 \text{d}5 \text{xd}5 17 \text{ex}d5 \text{d}7 18 \text{f}4 \text{f}6 19 \text{d}4 \text{e}8

After 19...\text{xd}4 20 \text{xd}4 \text{ce}5 21 c3 \text{e}8 22 \text{c}2 the domination of the dark squares and a strong knight on e5 promises Black good prospects at first glance. However, White’s play on the kingside is not to be underestimated and indeed White’s chances are preferable.

20 c3 \text{e}7 21 \text{c}2 \text{xd}4 22 \text{Wh}4

Better was the simple 22 \text{xd}4.

22...\text{f}8 23 \text{xd}4

In this position it is more difficult for White to create play against Black’s king. The position is unclear.

23...\text{e}2 24 \text{f}5 \text{e}8 25 \text{bd}4 \text{d}2 26 \text{e}4 \text{e}7 27 \text{f}1?

This move drops a pawn. White should have continued 27 \text{f}4 \text{e}2 28 \text{f}3.

27...\text{xd}5 28 \text{f}2 \text{e}5 29 \text{d}3 \text{d}7 30 \text{f}4 \text{f}6!

Black has won a pawn, and now the knight enters the game with great effect. Black has an almost decisive advantage. After White’s next move, there is no longer any doubt!

31 \text{xf}7?

Slightly better for White was 31 \text{b}1 \text{e}2 32 \text{f}3 \text{e}1, although his position remains very difficult.

31...\text{xd}3 32 \text{f}3

32...\text{e}1! 33 \text{d}5

Or 33 \text{xe}7 \text{xf}1+ 34 \text{xf}1 \text{xe}7 followed by ...\text{e}1 and Black wins.

33...\text{xf}1

Also possible was 33...\text{h}8 with the idea 34 \text{xd}3 \text{xf}1 and Black wins.

34 \text{xf}1+ \text{h}8

Again White cannot prevent the loss of his queen due to the threat of ...\text{e}1 after the exchange on f1.

35 \text{g}1 \text{xf}1+ 36 \text{xf}1

Note that 36 \text{xf}1 \text{e}1 is mate!

36...\text{e}1 0-1

Puzzle 94

Evans-Tal, Amsterdam 1964

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 \text{f}3 e6 3 \text{c}3 a6 4 \text{e}2 b5 5 d4 \text{cxd}4 6 \text{xd}4 \text{b}7 7 a3 \text{c}7 8 0-0 \text{f}6 9 \text{d}3 d6 10 \text{g}5 \text{bd}7 11 \text{e}3 \text{e}7 12 \text{ad}1 0-0 13 \text{f}4 \text{ac}8 14 \text{g}4 \text{b}6 15 \text{xf}6 \text{xf}6 16 g5 \text{xd}4

16...\text{e}7 appears to be too slow after 17 \text{f}5 e5 18 \text{b}3! \text{c}4 19 \text{xe}4 \text{bxc}4 20 \text{f}6 \text{cxb}3 21 \text{fxe}7 \text{xe}7 22 \text{cxb}3 and White has a good position.

17 \text{xd}4 e5 18 \text{ed}2 \text{exf}4 19 \text{xf}4 \text{e}8

20 \text{f}2 \text{e}7!

An interesting option was 20...d5! 21 \text{exd}5 \text{xd}5 22 \text{xd}5 \text{xd}5 23 \text{xd}5 \text{xe}2 24 \text{xc}2 \text{xf}4 25 \text{c}3, when Black should be slightly better due to White’s exposed king. The move in the game is stronger though.

21 h4

Not 21 \text{xb}6? \text{xb}6+ with the point 22 \text{g}4 \text{xd}2 23 \text{xb}7 \text{xc}3 24 \text{xc}3 \text{xe}2 and Black wins due to White’s many weaknesses.

21...\text{c}4 22 \text{xc}4 \text{xc}4 23 \text{d}4 \text{ec}8

24 \text{xc}4 \text{xc}4 25 \text{wa}7 \text{wd}7 26 \text{f}2 d5? 27 \text{xd}5

Here White had a chance to stay in the game with 27 \text{f}5 \text{dxe}4 28 \text{d}5 e3+ 29 \text{e}1 \text{wc}7 30 \text{we}3! 30...\text{c}6 with unclear consequences.
27...\texttt{Qxc2}+ 28 \texttt{\underline{Q}g3} \texttt{\underline{Q}e8} 29 \texttt{\underline{Q}f6} 

29 h5?! is a bad idea after 29...\texttt{\underline{Q}d8} 30 h6 \texttt{\underline{Q}xd5} 31 \texttt{\underline{Q}d4} and White's pressure against g7 is non-existent. After 31...\texttt{\underline{Q}h3}+ 32 \texttt{\underline{Q}xh3} \texttt{\underline{Q}xh3} followed by ...\texttt{\underline{Q}xd3} Black wins the endgame easily.

29...\texttt{\underline{Q}a8} 30 \texttt{\underline{Q}c5} \texttt{\underline{Q}d8} 31 \texttt{\underline{Q}b6} \texttt{\underline{Q}xd5} 32 \texttt{\underline{Q}xd5} \texttt{\underline{Q}f5} 33 \texttt{\underline{Q}d6} \texttt{\underline{Q}d3}+ 34 \texttt{\underline{Q}g2} \texttt{\underline{Q}c2}+ 35 \texttt{\underline{Q}g3} \texttt{\underline{Q}b3}+ 36 \texttt{\underline{Q}f4} \texttt{\underline{Q}e8} 37 \texttt{\underline{Q}b8}?

White's desire to exchange rooks is understandable due to his exposed king, but better was 37...\texttt{\underline{Q}e5}. After 37...\texttt{\underline{Q}c4}+ 38 \texttt{\underline{Q}g3} \texttt{\underline{Q}c8} 39 \texttt{\underline{Q}d4} \texttt{\underline{Q}g6}!, however, Black still has every chance to convert his advantage to a full point.

37...\texttt{\underline{Q}e3}+ 38 \texttt{\underline{Q}g4}

38...\texttt{\underline{Q}f5}+! 39 \texttt{\underline{Q}xf6}

And not 39 \texttt{\underline{Q}h5}? when the game is terminated by 39...\texttt{\underline{Q}f3} mate!

39...\texttt{\underline{Q}h5}+ 40 \texttt{\underline{Q}xh5}

Again White has to take the bait, as 40 \texttt{\underline{Q}f5} \texttt{\underline{Q}e4}+ 41 \texttt{\underline{Q}g5} \texttt{\underline{Q}g4} is mate.

40...\texttt{\underline{Q}f3}+ 41 \texttt{\underline{Q}g5} \texttt{\underline{Q}xf6}+!

This little combinative trick is logical, as it shows the immobility of White's queen. After White played \texttt{\underline{Q}b8}, his queen momentarily lost the ability to work anywhere other than on the h2-b8 diagonal. Black used the inflexibility of White's queen to win the game quickly.

42 \texttt{\underline{Q}xf6} \texttt{\underline{Q}xf6}+ 43 \texttt{\underline{Q}xf6} \texttt{\underline{Q}xb8} 44 \texttt{\underline{Q}d6}

Black still has to play precisely for another couple of moves.
24 exf6 gxf6 25 wF3 d7

Other options are:

a) 25 ... f7?! 26 h5+ g7 27 c3 and the rook joins the attack.

b) 25 d7 26 g4 d8 27 xe6 e8 28 xd5 e2 29 c4 e6 30 xa5! xd5 31 db7 mate.

26 wxf6 xe8

Had Black played 26 ... xd6 instead then the following line was possible: 27 c4+ c7 28 c5 e2 29 g7+ d6 30 b7 mate. Very nice indeed!

27 c4

Also possible is 27 f7+ c7 28 c4, although it is not at all clear whether the queen should be on f7 or not. In the game Black played ... c7 anyway, so maybe f7 is just a waste of time. However, White’s position is probably still winning.

27 ... e7

If Black plays 27 ... dxe4 the execution will take place on the dark squares: 28 g7+ c7 (or 28 e7 29 cxe7+ d5 30 g5+ e8 31 xd5 exd5 32 xcd6 and mate on e7) 29 c7+ d5 30 f6+ d6 31 c5 mate.

28 c5+ xc5 29 cxc5 c4 30 c7 1-0

Black resigned due to the line 30 ... x7 31 xd5+.

Puzzle 97
Tal-Schmidt, Cologne 1981

39 x7! x7 40 xg6 xg6
After 40 ... e8 a possible continuation is 41 xh4+ f8 42 g6+ g7 43 g3 with numerous threats.

41 xg6+ f8 42 xf7+ x7 43 xh6+ g7 44 xh4
White has transformed his attack into a favourable endgame. The rook and three pawns clearly outweigh Black’s two knights. White also still has prospects of attack against the bare enemy king.

44 e8 45 d3 e7 46 xc4 bxc4 47 e3

Logical play by Tal. After the exchange on c4 the rook joins in the attack.

47 f7 48 f3 e8 49 h8+ e7 50 g4 d8

50 ... xd4 51 f6+ wins the bishop.

51 g5 xd4 52 g6!

White plays as actively as possible.

52 ... xg6 53 f8+ d7 54 d6+ c8
55 f8 Wh4 56 xex6+ c7 57 d6+ c8 58 xg6 1-0

Puzzle 98
Tal-NN, England (Simultaneous) 1974

16 xex6!! a7

If Black accepts the queen sacrifice with 16 ... xg4, White’s attack becomes very dan-
gerus: 17 \( \text{x}b5+ \text{c}7 \) (not 17...\( \text{x}b5? \) 18 \( \text{c}7 \) mate!) 18 \( \text{x}f8+ \text{w}e6 \) (again Black is mated after 18...\( \text{x}f8 \) 19 \( \text{e}8 \) 19 \( \text{x}e6 \) \( \text{fxe6} \) (Black has survived the first storm, but the next is already on the way) 20 \( \text{c}4 \) and White has a pawn plus the initiative. Still, this would have been a better chance for Black.

After the game continuation, Tal concludes the attack in classical fashion.

22 \( \text{x}f7!! \)

Typical Tal – White now seizes the initiative. 22 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{hxg5}\)! was less clear.

22...\( \text{x}f7 \) 23 \( \text{b}3! \)

The following rook manoeuvre is the brilliant point of White’s play.

23...\( \text{a}4 \) 24 \( \text{e}6+ \text{f}8 \) 25 \( \text{b}7 \)

White only wants to exchange rooks after \( \text{xe7} \) under more advantageous circumstances. Now \( \text{xd6} \) is threatened, and it turns out that Black has no good way of defending this square.

25...\( \text{xe4} \)

Or:

a) 25...\( \text{a}6 \) 26 \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{exe7} \) 27 \( \text{xe7}+ \text{g}8 \) 28 \( \text{xe7} \) and the rook on a6 looks rather stupid, far away from the kingside. 28 \( \text{b}7 \) is another way of exploiting the rook’s awkward position.

b) 25...\( \text{x}d8? \) fails to 26 \( \text{exe7} \) \( \text{exe7} \) 27 \( \text{exe7}+ \) and the rook on d8 is hanging.

26 \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{g}8 \) 27 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 28 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 29 \( \text{xe7} \)

Another good option was 29 \( \text{e}5 \), as Black cannot defend e7 anyway. After 29...\( \text{xe6} \) 30 \( \text{xe6} \) 31 \( \text{xe7}+ \) 32 \( \text{exe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 33 \( \text{d}6 \) White’s attack is decisive.

29...\( \text{xe7} \) 30 \( \text{xe7}+ \) \( \text{x}e7 \)

Or 30...\( \text{xe7} \) 31 \( \text{f}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 32 \( \text{xe6} \) and it’s soon mate. Notice how White attacks Black on the light squares.

31 \( \text{xf6}+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 32 \( \text{f}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 33 \( \text{xe7} \)

White has restored material equality but, as in many other cases, the attacking player keeps the initiative. Black is defenceless against the final assault from the rook and queen.

33...\( \text{xd5} \) 34 \( \text{f}7 \) 1-0

22...\( \text{xf7} \) 23 \( \text{b}3! \)

The following rook manoeuvre is the brilliant point of White’s play.

23...\( \text{a}4 \) 24 \( \text{e}6+ \text{f}8 \) 25 \( \text{b}7 \)

White only wants to exchange rooks after \( \text{xe7} \) under more advantageous circumstances. Now \( \text{xd6} \) is threatened, and it turns out that Black has no good way of defending this square.

25...\( \text{xe4} \)

Or:

a) 25...\( \text{a}6 \) 26 \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{exe7} \) 27 \( \text{xe7}+ \text{g}8 \) 28 \( \text{xe7} \) and the rook on a6 looks rather stupid, far away from the kingside. 28 \( \text{b}7 \) is another way of exploiting the rook’s awkward position.

b) 25...\( \text{x}d8? \) fails to 26 \( \text{exe7} \) \( \text{exe7} \) 27 \( \text{exe7}+ \) and the rook on d8 is hanging.

26 \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{g}8 \) 27 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 28 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 29 \( \text{xe7} \)

Another good option was 29 \( \text{e}5 \), as Black cannot defend e7 anyway. After 29...\( \text{xe6} \) 30 \( \text{xe6} \) 31 \( \text{exe7}+ \) \( \text{exe7} \) 32 \( \text{exe7}+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 33 \( \text{d}6 \) White’s attack is decisive.

29...\( \text{xe7} \) 30 \( \text{xe7}+ \) \( \text{x}e7 \)

Or 30...\( \text{xe7} \) 31 \( \text{f}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 32 \( \text{xe6} \) and it’s soon mate. Notice how White attacks Black on the light squares.

31 \( \text{xf6}+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 32 \( \text{f}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 33 \( \text{xe7} \)

White has restored material equality but, as in many other cases, the attacking player keeps the initiative. Black is defenceless against the final assault from the rook and queen.

33...\( \text{xd5} \) 34 \( \text{f}7 \) 1-0

Puzzle 100

Tal-Hjartarson, Reykjavik 1987

Ray Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 3 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 4 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \)

5 0-0 \( \text{e}7 \) 6 \( \text{e}1 \) b5 7 \( \text{b}3 \) 0-0 8 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \)

9 h3 \( \text{a}5 \) 10 \( \text{c}2 \) c5 11 d4 \( \text{c}7 \) 12

\( \text{bd}2 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 13 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{cx}d4 \) 14 \( \text{cx}d4 \) \( \text{ac}8 \)

15 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 16 d5 \( \text{b}4 \) 17 \( \text{b}1 \) a5 18

\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 19 b4 g6 20 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{axb4} \) 21 \( \text{axb4} \)

\( \text{b}7 \) 22 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 23 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 24 \( \text{a}3 \)

\( \text{xa}8 \) 25 \( \text{wd}2 \) \( \text{axa}1 \) 26 \( \text{xa}1 \) f5 27 \( \text{h}6 \)
A traditional Tal sacrifice, which surprisingly wins the b-pawn. However there are some important details that needs to be covered.

36...\(\text{wa}6\) 37 \(\text{xb}5\)

37 \(\text{c}3\) gives White a clear edge.

37...\(\text{c}7\)

Or 37...\(\text{xc}6\) 38 \(\text{dx}c6\) \(\text{c}7\) 39 \(\text{a}5!\) \(\text{xd}3\) 40 \(\text{xa}8\) \(\text{xa}8\) 41 \(\text{a}1\), which forces Black to seek counterplay with the rather desperate 41...\(\text{g}3!\)!. However, this loses after 42 \(\text{fx}g3\) \(\text{fx}g3\) 43 \(\text{a}7+\) \(\text{h}6\) 44 \(\text{h}1\), when Black has no defence against the white pawns.

38 \(\text{b}8!!\)

38 \(\text{fx}e5\) \(\text{a}1+\) 39 \(\text{xa}1\) \(\text{xa}1+\) 40 \(\text{h}2\) \(\text{xb}5\) 41 \(\text{xd}7\) \(\text{c}3\) and it's not at all clear that Black is worse!

38...\(\text{xd}3\) 39 \(\text{xe}5!\)

39 \(\text{fx}e5?\) \(\text{d}1+\) 40 \(\text{h}2\) \(\text{xc}6\) 41 \(\text{xc}6+\) \(\text{f}6\) 42 \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{xb}8\) 43 \(\text{ex}f6+\) \(\text{h}7\) 44 \(\text{xb}8\) \(\text{xd}5\) and Black is still in the game.

39...\(\text{d}1+\)

Or 39...\(\text{dx}e5\) 40 \(\text{xe}5+\) \(\text{f}6\) 41 \(\text{e}7+\) \(\text{h}6\) 42 \(\text{f}8+\) \(\text{h}5\) 43 \(\text{xf}6\) and White wins.

40 \(\text{h}2\) \(\text{a}1\)

Black's last chance is this counterattack, but now Tal has a forced mate in five.

41 \(\text{g}4+\) \(\text{f}7\) 42 \(\text{h}6+\) \(\text{e}7\) 43 \(\text{g}8+!\)

1-0

Black resigned in view of 43...\(\text{f}7\) 44 \(\text{g}5\) mate!

**Puzzle 101**

Tal-Szymczak, Lublin 1974

32 \(\text{xd}6!\) \(\text{c}1+\)

32...\(\text{e}5\) 33 \(\text{g}8+\) \(\text{e}7\) 34 \(\text{d}7+\) \(\text{xd}7\) 35 \(\text{xc}8\) \(\text{f}6\) 36 \(\text{xb}7+\) \(\text{c}7\) 37 \(\text{b}4+\) \(\text{d}6\) 38 \(\text{xa}4\) and White has a winning endgame.

33 \(\text{h}2\) \(\text{e}5+\) 34 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{xd}6\)

Black's queen is away from the action, and now her counterpart takes over.

35 \(\text{g}8+\) \(\text{e}7\) 36 \(\text{e}8+\) \(\text{f}6\) 37 \(\text{h}5!!\)

This is the real point behind White's play. Mate on f7 is threatened, and Black has no good defence. Neither of the black knights are helpful, and both rook and queen moves also fail, as we shall see.

37...\(\text{xe}6\)

Or:

a) After 37...\(\text{c}7\) the rook blocks the escape route for the king: 38 \(\text{g}6+\) \(\text{e}7\) 39 \(\text{f}7+\) \(\text{d}8\) 40 \(\text{e}8\) mate!

b) 37...\(\text{c}7\) is answered with 38 \(\text{e}7!\) \(\text{xe}7\) 39 \(\text{g}6\) mate.

38 \(\text{f}8+\) 1-0

It's mate next move

**Puzzle 102**

Tal-Andersson, Stockholm 1976

25 \(\text{b}6!!\)
The idea behind this move is to leave the black knight unprotected; this will be of significance later on. The straightforward 25 \text{Wh}6 is not dangerous for Black: 25 ... \text{gx}8 26 \text{h}4 (26 \text{Wh}h7?? \text{gx}h7 27 \text{h}4+ is not mate: 27 ... \text{Wh}5! and Black wins) 26 ... \text{Df}8 and Black survives.

25 ... \text{Ec}8

Of course not 25 ... \text{Dxb}6? 26 \text{Wh}6 \text{Ag}8 27 \text{Ah}4 and White wins. The knight is heading for \text{f}8, and therefore the bishop on \text{b}6 cannot be captured.

26 \text{Wh}6 \text{Ag}8

27 \text{Dd}4!

This is the point: Black's queen cannot simultaneously protect the knight on \text{d}7 and the \text{h}5-square.

27 ... \text{Dxb}6

27 ... \text{Dc}6 loses directly to 28 \text{Wh}xh7+! followed by mate.

28 \text{Dxd}5 \text{Dxd}5 29 \text{Df}3 \text{Cc}3

The only defence against the queen sacrifice on \text{h}7, but now White simply wins positionally. Black hasn't adequate compensation for the queen.

30 \text{Dxc}3 \text{Dxc}3 31 \text{We}3 \text{b}4 32 \text{Dwa}7 \text{Af}8 33 \text{Wc}5 \text{b}8 34 \text{Dd}6 1-0

Puzzle 103
Tal-Kupreichik, Soviet Championship, Moscow 1969

30 \text{Dxh}7! \text{Dxh}7 31 \text{Df}7

The threat on \text{g}6 can only be prevented by Black's next move. 31 ... \text{Dg}7? 32 \text{Dxg}6+ \text{Df}8 33 \text{Dxf}6 is of course just bad, and White will mate very soon.

31 ... \text{Dg}8 32 \text{Dxg}8+ \text{Dxg}8 33 \text{Dxg}6+ \text{Dg}7 34 \text{h}4

White has four (!) passed pawn for the bishop. Black's only counterplay is to create a passed pawn on the queenside, but this plan is simply too slow.

34 ... \text{Wc}3 35 \text{h}5 \text{Wf}6 36 \text{Dxf}6! \text{Dxf}6 37 \text{Df}3

White's king fights against Black's passed pawn on the queenside - White's four passed pawns need no help from the king.

37 ... \text{Df}7 38 \text{Dd}4 \text{Dd}6 39 \text{f}4 \text{a}5

After 39 ... \text{a}6 40 \text{g}4 \text{b}5 41 \text{cx}b5 \text{ax}b5 42 \text{g}5 \text{a}1 43 \text{f}5+ \text{Df}7 44 \text{Dd}5 the endgame is easily winning for White.

40 \text{g}4 \text{b}5 41 \text{cx}b5 1-0

Puzzle 104
Tal-Gedevanishvili, Georgia 1970

\textit{Akhkhine Defence}

1 \text{e}4 \text{Df}6 2 \text{e}5 \text{Dd}5 3 \text{Dc}3 \text{e}6 4 \text{d}4 \text{Dxc}3 5 \text{bxc}3 \text{d}6 6 \text{f}4 \text{c}5 7 \text{Df}3 \text{cx}d4 8 \text{cx}d4 \text{Dxe}5 9 \text{fxe}5 \text{Dd}4+ 10 \text{Dd}2 \text{Dwa}5 11 \text{Dd}3 \text{Dc}6 12 0-0 \text{Dxd}2 13 \text{Dxd}2 \text{Dwc}3 14 \text{Df}4 0-0 15 \text{Dh}1 \text{De}7 16 \text{De}4 \text{Wb}2 17 \text{Db}1 \text{Wxa}2

18 \text{Df}6+! \text{gxf}6 19 \text{Dxh}7+ \text{Dh}8

Black tries to prevent the white queen
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

joining in the attack. If 19...\texttt{\textbf{e}}xh7 20 \texttt{\textbf{w}}h5+ \texttt{\textbf{g}}8 21 \texttt{\textbf{g}}1 Black has no defence against White's numerous threats.
20 \texttt{\textbf{h}}4 \texttt{\textbf{g}}7

21 \texttt{\textbf{w}}c1!

The queen enters the attack on the dark squares, whilst protecting the rook on b1.
21...\texttt{\textbf{g}}8 22 \texttt{\textbf{x}}xg8 1-0

Black resigned, as the only way to avoid mate is to sacrifice the queen, which is of course hopeless.

Puzzle 105
Tal-Averbakh, Riga 1961
Ray Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 \texttt{\textbf{f}}3 \texttt{\textbf{c}}6 3 \texttt{\textbf{b}}5 a6 4 \texttt{\textbf{a}}4 \texttt{\textbf{f}}6 5 0-0 \texttt{\textbf{e}}7 6 \texttt{\textbf{e}}1 b5 7 \texttt{\textbf{b}}3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 \texttt{\textbf{a}}5 10 \texttt{\textbf{c}}2 c5 11 d4 \texttt{\textbf{w}}c7 12 \texttt{\textbf{d}}d2 \texttt{\textbf{c}}6 13 dxc5 dxc5 14 \texttt{\textbf{f}}1 \texttt{\textbf{d}}8 15 \texttt{\textbf{e}}2 g6 16 \texttt{\textbf{a}}e3 \texttt{\textbf{b}}8 17 \texttt{\textbf{g}}5

White eyes the f7-square. It is hard to say how far Tal saw when he played this move, but positionally it is sound and logical. Should Black chase away the knight, his kingside will be weakened further. The position is quite closed, so there is time for such manoeuvring.

17...\texttt{\textbf{f}}8 18 \texttt{\textbf{w}}f3

But from here Tal must have seen the game continuation, as the knight cannot retreat anymore.

18...\texttt{\textbf{g}}7 19 \texttt{\textbf{d}}5! \texttt{\textbf{w}}d6

19...\texttt{\textbf{x}}d5 20 exd5 \texttt{\textbf{a}}5 was worth a try.

20 \texttt{\textbf{e}}3 h6 21 \texttt{\textbf{xf}}6+ \texttt{\textbf{x}}f6

21...\texttt{\textbf{x}}f6 is stronger, although White is clearly better after 22 \texttt{\textbf{xf}}6 \texttt{\textbf{xf}}6 23 \texttt{\textbf{f}}3. Both c5 and h6 are hanging, and it is hard to believe that Black's activity on the queenside is adequate compensation.

22 \texttt{\textbf{a}}d1 \texttt{\textbf{w}}e7

23 \texttt{\textbf{x}}c5! \texttt{\textbf{xd}}1 24 \texttt{\textbf{xd}}1 \texttt{\textbf{xc}}5 25 \texttt{\textbf{xf}}6 h\texttt{gx}\texttt{f} 26 \texttt{\textbf{b}}3!

This is a brilliant square. After the sacrifice Black no longer has ...c5-c4.

26...\texttt{\textbf{b}}7 27 \texttt{\textbf{w}}xg6+ \texttt{\textbf{h}}8 28 \texttt{\textbf{w}}h6+ 1-0

Black resigned and a closer look at the position shows that this decision is not too early. A possible line is 28...\texttt{\textbf{e}}8 29 \texttt{\textbf{d}}5! (forcing Black's queen to a much inferior square) 29...\texttt{\textbf{w}}h6 30 \texttt{\textbf{h}}d6 \texttt{\textbf{c}}7 (or 30...\texttt{\textbf{d}}7 31 \texttt{\textbf{w}}h8+ \texttt{\textbf{c}}7 32 \texttt{\textbf{f}}6+ \texttt{\textbf{e}}8 33 \texttt{\textbf{f}}7+ and mate within a few moves) 31 \texttt{\textbf{w}}h8+ \texttt{\textbf{c}}7 32 \texttt{\textbf{h}}6!. White's rook has worked its way into Black's position and now \texttt{\textbf{w}}f6 followed by \texttt{\textbf{h}}8 is threatened. Because of Black's bad piece coordination, this threat is decisive.

Puzzle 106
Tal-Hecht, Varna Olympiad 1962
Queen's Indian Defence

1 d4 \texttt{\textbf{f}}6 2 c4 e6 3 \texttt{\textbf{f}}3 b6 4 \texttt{\textbf{c}}3 \texttt{\textbf{b}}4
An interesting pawn sacrifice. White opens up the position and forces Black to place a pawn on c5 before the Black knight reaches e6.

13...dxc5 14 dxe5 \(\text{W}xe5\)

The queen is vulnerable here, and White will win another tempo later on with \(\text{Qe}4\).

15 \(\text{W}a4+\) c6?

15...\(\text{D}d7\) is better. Still, White has the initiative after 16 \(\text{W}c2\).

16 0-0

16...\(\text{Q}g6\)

The greedy 16...\(\text{W}xc3?!\) is very dangerous, as it helps White develop the initiative at a price of only a pawn. Both 17 \(\text{a}6\) and 17 \(\text{c}4\) b5 18 \(\text{d}6+\) \(\text{d}7\) 19 \(\text{x}b5\) \(\text{c}xb5\) 20 \(\text{x}b5+\) are possible, and with Black’s king stuck in the centre, he will face problems.

17 \(\text{Q}c4\) \(\text{W}e6\)

17...b5? is bad in view of 18 \(\text{Q}xe5\) \(\text{b}xa4\) 19 \(\text{Q}xg6\) \(\text{fxg6}\) 20 e5 and with bishop pair, an active position and strong central pawns, White has a winning advantage.

After 17...\(\text{W}e6\) White begins a very deep combination.

18 e5! b5 19 exf6!! \(\text{b}xa4\) 20 fxg7 \(\text{Q}g8\)

21 \(\text{Q}f5!!\)

Simply fantastic! White offers Black further material.

21...\(\text{Q}xh4\)

There are three main alternatives that Tal had to consider:

a) After 21...\(\text{W}xc4\) White wins by force: 22 \(\text{Q}e1+\) \(\text{W}e6\) 23 \(\text{x}e6+\) \(\text{fxe6}\) 24 \(\text{Q}xg6+\) \(\text{d}7\) 25 \(\text{d}d1+\) \(\text{c}7\) (there are no prospects after 25...\(\text{Q}c8\) 26 \(\text{Q}f6\) 26 \(\text{Q}e3+\) \(\text{b}6\) 27 \(\text{b}1+\) \(\text{a}6\) 28 \(\text{d}d3+\) \(\text{a}5\) 29 \(\text{c}7\) mate!)

b) 21...\(\text{W}xh5\) 22 \(\text{d}d6+\) \(\text{d}7\) 23 \(\text{x}f5\) \(\text{Q}xh4\) 24 \(\text{d}d1+\). One brilliant point about the sacrifice Tal made was that he had seen that he would even gain an advantage in the arising endgames, mainly due to his activity, but also the structural plusses as Black’s queenside pawns are weak. 24...\(\text{c}7\) 25 \(\text{x}h4\) \(\text{Q}xg7\) 26 \(\text{Q}e1\) and White has great chances to convert his advantage into a full point.

c) 21...\(\text{Q}xh4\) 22 \(\text{Q}x6\) \(\text{fxe6}\) 23 \(\text{d}d6+\) was probably Black’s best try. Still, White is much better when his knight arrives at c5 after
joining in the attack. If 19...\texttt{wxh7} 20 \texttt{wh5+ gh8} 21 \texttt{gl} Black has no defence against White’s numerous threats.

20 \texttt{h4 g7}

21 \texttt{wc1!}

The queen enters the attack on the dark squares, whilst protecting the rook on b1.

21...\texttt{g8} 22 \texttt{xg8} 1-0

Black resigned, as the only way to avoid mate is to sacrifice the queen, which is of course hopeless.

Puzzle 105
Tal-Averbakh, Riga 1961

\texttt{e4 e5 f3 c6 b5 a6 f4 xf6 0-0 exf6 b3 d6 c3 0-0 a5 c2 c5 d4 wc7 d2 c6 13 dxc5 dxe5 14 ef1 d8 15 we2 g6 e3 b8 17 d5}

White eyes the f7-square. It is hard to say how far Tal saw when he played this move, but positionally it is sound and logical. Should Black chase away the knight, his kingside will be weakened further. The position is quite closed, so there is time for such manoeuvring.

17...\texttt{f8} 18 \texttt{f3}

But from here Tal must have seen the game continuation, as the knight cannot retreat anymore.

19...\texttt{xh5} 20 exd5 \texttt{a5} was worth a try.

20 e3 h6 21 xf6+ xf6

21...\texttt{xf6} is stronger, although White is clearly better after 22 \texttt{xf6} xf6 23 f3. Both c5 and h6 are hanging, and it is hard to believe that Black’s activity on the queenside is adequate compensation.

22 \texttt{d1 w7}

23 \texttt{xh5} \texttt{xd1} 24 \texttt{xd1 xxc5} 25 \texttt{xf6 hxg5}

Black is a piece up, but now the white bishop comes alive.

26 \texttt{b3!}

This is a brilliant square. After the sacrifice Black no longer has ...c5-c4.

26...\texttt{b7} 27 \texttt{xg6+ f8} 28 \texttt{w6+} 1-0

Black resigned and a closer look at the position shows that this decision is not too early. A possible line is 28...\texttt{e8} 29 \texttt{d5!} (forcing Black’s queen to a much inferior square) 29...\texttt{w6} 30 \texttt{d6 f7} (or 30...\texttt{d7} 31 \texttt{w8+ e7} 32 \texttt{f6+ e8} 33 \texttt{xf7+} and mate within a few moves) 31 \texttt{w8+ e7} 32 \texttt{h6}. White’s rook has worked its way into Black’s position and now \texttt{w6} followed by \texttt{h8} is threatened. Because of Black’s bad piece coordination, this threat is decisive.

Puzzle 106
Tal-Hecht, Varna Olympiad 1962

Queen’s Indian Defence

\texttt{d4 f6 c4 e6 f3 b6 d3 c3 b4}
5...\textcolor{red}{\textsf{g5}} \textcolor{blue}{\textsf{b7}} 6...\textsf{e3} \textsf{h6} 7...\textsf{h4} \textcolor{green}{\textsf{xc3}}+ 8 \textsf{bxc3} \textsf{d6} 9...\textsf{d2} \textsf{e5} 10...\textsf{f3} \textcolor{green}{\textsf{e7}} 11...\textsf{e4} \textcolor{blue}{\textsf{bd7}} 12...\textsf{d3} \textsf{d8} 13...\textsf{c5}

An interesting pawn sacrifice. White opens up the position and forces Black to place a pawn on c5 before the Black knight reaches e6.

13...\textsf{dx}c5 14...\textsf{xe}5 \textcolor{green}{\textsf{xe}5}

The queen is vulnerable here, and White will win another tempo later on with \textcolor{green}{\textsf{c4}}.

15...\textsf{wa}4+...\textsf{c6}?

15...\textsf{d6d7} is better. Still, White has the initiative after 16...\textsf{c2}.

16 0-0

16...\textsf{g6}

The greedy 16...\textsf{xc3}?! is very dangerous, as it helps White develop the initiative at a price of only a pawn. Both 17...\textsf{a6} and 17...\textsf{c4} b5 18...\textsf{d6+ e7} 19...\textsf{x}b5...\textsf{x}b5 20...\textsf{xb5+} are possible, and with Black’s king stuck in the centre, he will face problems.

17...\textsf{c4} \textsf{we6}

17...\textsf{b5?} is bad in view of 18...\textsf{exe}5...\textsf{xa}4 19...\textsf{yg6}...\textsf{g6} 20...\textsf{e5} and with bishop pair, an active position and strong central pawns, White has a winning advantage.

After 17...\textsf{we6} White begins a very deep combination.

18...\textsf{e5}! b5 19...\textsf{xf}6!!...\textsf{xa}4 20...\textsf{fxg7} \textcolor{green}{\textsf{g8}}

21...\textsf{xf}5!!

Simply fantastic! White offers Black further material.

21...\textsf{exh}4

There are three main alternatives that Tal had to consider:

a) After 21...\textsf{xc}4 White wins by force: 22...\textsf{fe}1+ \textsf{we}6 23...\textsf{xe}6+...\textsf{xe}6 24...\textsf{g}6+...\textsf{d}7 25...\textsf{d}1+...\textsf{d}7 (there are no prospects after 25...\textsf{c}8 26...\textsf{f}6) 26...\textsf{g}3+...\textsf{b}6 27...\textsf{b}1+...\textsf{a}6 28...\textsf{d}3+...\textsf{a}5 29...\textsf{c}7 mate!

b) 21...\textsf{xf}5 22...\textsf{d}6+...\textsf{d}7 23...\textsf{xf}5...\textsf{xh}4 24...\textsf{ad}1+. One brilliant point about the sacrifice Tal made was that he had seen that he would even gain an advantage in the arising endgames, mainly due to his activity, but also the structural plusses as Black’s queenside pawns are weak. 24...\textsf{c}7 25...\textsf{hxh}4...\textsf{gxh}7 26...\textsf{fe}1 and White has great chances to convert his advantage into a full point.

c) 21...\textsf{xh}4 22...\textsf{x}e6...\textsf{xe}6 23...\textsf{d}6+ was probably Black’s best try. Still, White is much better when his knight arrives at c5 after
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Puzzle 107
Tal-Korchnoi, Reykjavik 1987

34 \( \text{h6}+! \) \( \text{g7} \) 35 \( \text{fg4 hxg4} \) 36 \( \text{xf7}+! \)

The point of the combination: White obtains a decisive attack for the piece.

36...\( \text{xf6} \) 37 \( \text{xf8}+ \) \( \text{g5} \) 38 \( \text{h4}+ \) \( \text{xf4} \)

Now White is winning.

41...\( \text{h5} \) 42 \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{c2}+ \) 43 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{c4} \) 44

\( \text{ee5} \) 45 \( \text{g6} \) \( \text{h1} \) 46 \( \text{c5}+ \) \( \text{d3} \) 47

\( \text{xc2} \) \( \text{xc2} \) 48 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{g1} \) 49 \( \text{g5} \) 1-0

A brilliant game by Tal!

Puzzle 108
Tal-Golombek, Munich Olympiad 1958

30 \( \text{a4}! \) \( \text{bx5} \)

Or 30...\( \text{d5} \) 31 \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) (this is the point: Black wants to remove the annoying f6-pawn; he then hopes to exchange knights and obtain some time to free himself) 32 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) (but unfortunately for Black, White has a very strong reply) 33 \( \text{xe6}+! \) \( \text{xe6} \) 34 \( \text{xf7}+! \) \( \text{f8} \) 35 \( \text{xf5}! \) and White wins, as the knight is very powerful on f5. If 35...\( \text{h7} \), the rook on d1 joins in the attack after 36 \( \text{d7}+! \) \( \text{g8} \) 37 \( \text{d3} \). One beautiful finish is 37...\( \text{b8} \) 38 \( \text{a4}+! \) \( \text{xg3} \) 39 \( \text{xd8} \) mate!

31 \( \text{xf4} \)

White forces the rook away from the protection of \( g7 \) and then forces mate.

31...\( \text{xf4} \) 32 \( \text{g7}+! \) \( \text{xd4} \) 33 \( \text{xf4}+! \) \( \text{d7} \)

34 \( \text{xf4}+! \) \( \text{d6} \) 35 \( \text{xf4}+! \) 1-0

Black resigned, as he will be mated.

Puzzle 109
Kudrin-Tal, Titograd 1984

22...\( \text{c4}! \) 23 \( \text{xc4} \)

This is the point. Now White cannot avoid perpetual check.

24 \( \text{g4} \) 25 \( \text{xf3}+! \)

This combination is also made possible because of the white bishop on \( f1 \).

27 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{h4}+! \)

Puzzle 110
Varasdy-Tal, West Berlin 1986

36...\( \text{g4}! \) 37 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 38 \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{xf4} \)

So far, so good. Now comes the point of the combination.

38...\( \text{g3} \) 39 \( \text{g2} \) \( \text{xf5}+! \) 40 \( \text{g1} \)

Notice that the pawn on d3 protects the very important e2-square. White is mated after 40 \( \text{xf1} \) \( \text{xf1} \) 41 \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{g4} \) 42 \( \text{g4}+! \) \( \text{g4} \) 43 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g6} \)

The quiet move. White's king is helpless on the edge of the board.

43 \( \text{xf5}+! \) 44 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{g5} \) 45 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{xf5}+! \)

Mate on h2 follows.
Puzzle 111
Timman-Tal, Tallinn 1973

27...\(\text{Qe}4!\) 28 \(gx4\) \(\text{Qe}4+\) 29 \(\text{Qg}1\) \(\text{Qf}3\)

White is totally disorganised. The piece sacrifice has opened up further possibilities for Black — now he threatens to let the bishop join the attack after ...f5-f4. The central pawns are also very powerful themselves.
30 \(\text{Qf}2\) \(\text{Qxh}3\) 31 \(\text{Qb}1\) f4 32 \(\text{Qb}2\) f3 0-1

Puzzle 112
Tal-Vasiukov, Riga 1955

24 \(\text{Qxf}7!\) bxc4 25 \(\text{Qe}1\)

This is better than the more forcing 25 \(\text{Qxf}8+!\) \(\text{Qxf}8\) 26 \(\text{Qf}1+\) \(\text{Qg}7\) 27 \(\text{Qf}7+\) \(\text{Qh}6\), when Black holds on thanks to his counterplay on the queenside. After 28 \(\text{Qxe}7\) cxb3 29 \(\text{Qxd}7\) bxa2 30 \(\text{Qh}3+\) \(\text{Qg}7\) White has nothing more than perpetual check.
25...\(\text{Qc}8\) 26 \(\text{Qf}8+\) \(\text{Qh}7\) 27 \(\text{Qg}8+\)

Now there is much more bite in the White's attack.
27...\(\text{Qh}6\) 28 \(\text{Qxc}8\) \(\text{Qxc}8\) 29 \(\text{Qxc}8\)

White has won the exchange and still has an attack. He has time to strengthen his position, as Black has no such counterplay on the queenside as in the note to White's 25th move.
29...cxb3 30 axb3 \(\text{Qf}6\) 31 \(\text{Qf}8+\) \(\text{Qh}7\) 32 \(\text{Qf}7+\) \(\text{Qh}6\) 33 \(\text{Qd}5\)

Black could have resigned here — the win is just a matter of technique.
33...\(\text{Qa}2\) 34 \(\text{Qd}3\) a5 35 \(\text{Qc}4\) \(\text{Qg}7\) 36 g3 \(\text{Qb}2\) 37 \(\text{Qd}3\) \(\text{Qa}2\) 38 \(\text{Qc}1\) \(\text{Qf}2\) 39 \(\text{Qf}1\) \(\text{Qb}2\) 40 \(\text{Qf}1\) \(\text{Qc}2\) 41 \(\text{Qf}2\) \(\text{Qb}1+\) 42 \(\text{Qg}2\) \(\text{Qf}7\) 43 h4 \(\text{Qe}8\) 44 h5 g5 45 h6 \(\text{Qf}8\) 46 \(\text{Qf}5\) \(\text{Qxb}3\) 47 \(\text{Qc}8+\) \(\text{Qf}7\) 48 h7 1-0

Puzzle 113
Tal-Hartston, Hastings 1974

24 \(\text{Qxf}7!\) \(\text{Qxf}7\)

24...\(\text{Qxf}7\) allows 25 \(\text{Qxg}6+\) \(\text{Qg}8\) 26 \(\text{Qh}7\) mate.

25 \(\text{Qxg}6\)

White threatens mate in two. Black can defend against this, but the problem is his queen on c8!
25...\(\text{Qe}5\) 26 \(\text{Qxf}7+\) \(\text{Qxf}7\) 27 \(\text{Qh}7+\) 1-0

Black resigned in view of 27...\(\text{Qe}8\) 28 \(\text{Qxh}5+\) \(\text{Qf}8\) 29 \(\text{Qh}8+\), winning the queen.

Puzzle 114
Bannik-Tal, Riga 1955
King's Indian Defence

1 d4 \(\text{Qf}6\) 2 \(\text{Qf}3\) g6 3 c4 \(\text{Qg}7\) 4 \(\text{Qc}3\) 0-0 5 g3 d6 6 \(\text{Qg}2\) c5 7 0-0 \(\text{Qc}6\) 8 h3 \(\text{Qxd}4\) 9 \(\text{Qxd}4\) \(\text{Qxd}4\) 10 \(\text{Qxd}4\) \(\text{Qe}6\) 11 \(\text{Qh}4\) \(\text{Qe}8\) 12 b3 \(\text{Qh}5\) 13 \(\text{Qd}2\) \(\text{Qd}7\) 14 \(\text{Qc}1\)

15 \(\text{Qg}5\) \(\text{Qxg}5\) 16 \(\text{Qxg}5\) \(\text{Qxh}3\) 17 \(\text{Qxh}3\) \(\text{Qxh}3\) 18 \(\text{Qxe}7\)

18...\(\text{Qxg}3!\) 19 f\(\text{xg}3\) \(\text{Qxg}3+\) 20 \(\text{Qh}1\) \(\text{Qxe}8!\)

Not 20...\(\text{Qc}5??\) 21 \(\text{Qd}5!\).
21 \(\text{Qxb}7\) \(\text{Qe}5\) 22 \(\text{Qg}2\) \(\text{Qh}5+\) 23 \(\text{Qg}1\) \(\text{Qe}3+\) 24 \(\text{Qf}2\) \(\text{Qh}6!\)

A very strong move that Black had to see in advance. Black threatens to win the queen after both ...\(\text{Qh}1+\) and ...\(\text{Qg}5+\), but the real strength of this move is that it also serves a second purpose: it eyes the rook on c1. Tal had a brilliant imagination and calculated very well, but great attacking moves like this also come from positional understanding (the maximum flexibility of the pieces), which is important to master. And one will find many
moves like this in Tal’s games.
25 \texttt{Wxa7 Wg5+ 26 f2 Nh2+ 27 ef2 Wg3.}  
27...\texttt{Wxc1+}  
Whoops! The rest of the game needs no discussion.
28 \texttt{Qd1 Wc2 29 We7 Wxa2 30 Qf2}  
\texttt{Wxa5+ 31 Qf1 Nh1+ 0-1}

\textbf{Puzzle 115}
\textbf{Gulko-Tal, Sochi 1970}

\textit{Grünfeld Defence}

1 d4 Qf6 2 c4 g6 3 Qc3 d5 4 cxd5 Qxd5 5 e4 Qxe4 6 bxc3 Qg7 7 e4 0-0 8 Qe2 c5 9 0-0 Qc6 10 f3 \texttt{Qc7 11 Wc1 Axd7 12 Bb1 cxd4 13 cxd4 Qac8 14}  
\texttt{Qb5 Wa5 15 Wb2 Qfd8 16 d2 Wb6 17} \texttt{Qa3}

\texttt{17...Qxd4!}

Another option is the queen sacrifice
\texttt{17...Qxd4 18 Qxd7 Qxe2+ 19 Qh1 Wxb1 20 Axb1 Qxd7 21 Bb4 b6 22 g3,} when Black’s position is solid, but no more than that. He has rook, knight and pawn for the queen, but he lacks control of the light squares. After, for instance, \texttt{22 Qc7 23} \texttt{Qb2 h6 24 Qe1 Qd4 25 Qc1 Qc2 26 Wb3 Qxb4 27 Qxc7 Qxc7 28 Wxb4} the most likely result is a draw.

The move played by Tal gives more winning chances with rook versus bishop and knight.
\texttt{18 Qxc6 Qc5 19 Qxb6 Qxa3 20 Qd7 Qxd7 21 Qb4}  
After 21 \texttt{Bb3 Qxd2 22 Qxa3 Qxe2 23 Qxa7 Bb2} Black has the more active position. He can easily double rooks on the seventh rank, whereas White’s rooks don’t cooperate quite as well. All in all, a very unpleasant endgame for White.
\texttt{21...axb6 22 Qxa3}

This is the situation that Tal had to evaluate when chose the variation. Actually, he had to foresee another couple of moves, as Black wins a pawn by force after
\texttt{22...Qc4 23 Qg3}

White cleverly avoids this weakening \texttt{23 f3?!}, which opens up the second rank to \texttt{g2}, a point much more difficult to defend than \texttt{f2}.
\texttt{23...Qa4 24 Qc1 Qxa2}

One very important point about this position is that White’s two minor pieces are passive, have difficulties finding good squares and cooperate badly. This is why Black’s b-pawn quickly becomes a powerful force.
\texttt{25 Qe3 Aa2 26 Qc1 b5 27 Qf1}  
\texttt{27 e5!!, to activate the knight via e4, was worth a try.}
\texttt{27...b4 28 Qe1! Qb3 29 Qc3 h5 30 e5}  
\texttt{Qd5 31 Qe4 Qb5 32 e6}  
This push comes too late now.
\texttt{32...Qb1+ 33 Qd2 Qb2 34 Qd4 Qd1+ 0-1}

White resigned because the pawn is queening.
Puzzle 116
Spiridonov-Tal. Tbilisi 1969
King's Indian Defence

1 63f3 g6 2 d4 6g7 3 c4 d6 4 6c3 6f6 5 e4 0-0 6 6e2 e5 7 0-0 6bd7 8 d5 6c5 9 6wc2 a5 10 6d2 6h6 11 6b3 6xc1 12 6xc5?

Now Black keeps his dark-squared bishop. White should have captured on c1.

12 ... 6h6 13 6d3 6d7 14 6g4

White wants to exchange the light-squared bishops to strengthen his control of the light squares. Of course Black doesn't allow this – at least not for the moment.

14 ... f5 15 6h3 6h4 16 6ae1 6f6 17 f3 6f7 18 6f2 6h5 19 c5 fxe4!

Black now develops a strong initiative on the kingside.

20 6xc8 e3 21 6wc2 6xc8 22 6wa4 6cf8 23 exd6 cxd6 24 6c1

24 ... 6c2 is strongly met with 24 ... e4!.

24 ... 6e2!

Black gives back the pawn to activate his bishop.

25 6xe2 6g4! 26 h3 6e3 27 6xe3 b5 28 6xb5

28 ... 6xf3!

Another good move for Black was 28 ... 6xg2, which also tears White's defences apart: 29 6xg2 6xf3 30 6e2 6wh3 and White cannot defend against all of Black's threats.

29 gxf3 6xf3 30 6d3 6g3+ 31 6h1 6wh3+ 32 6g1 e4!

A nice point: the knight has no squares, and if the pawn is captured, Black also wins material (or mates).

33 6xe4 6f1+ 34 6xf1 6xf1+ 35 6h2 6xe2+ 36 6ef2 6f4+ 0-1

White will either lose his queen or be mated.

Puzzle 117
Tal-Olafsson, Bled 1961
Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 6f3 6c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 6xd4 e6 5 6c3 6c7 6 6e3 a6 7 a3 6f6 8 6f4 d6 9 6f3 6e7 10 6d3 0-0 11 0-0 6d7 12 6ae1 b5 13 6g3 6h8 14 6xc6 6xc6 15 e5

Dubious is 15 6d4? e5 16 fxe5 6h5, when Black is doing well.

15 ... 6g8

Better was 15 ... 6e8.

16 6wh3 6h6 17 f5 6xf5 18 6xf5 exf5 19 6xf5 g6 20 6d4 6g8

Had Black instead played the better defensive move 20 ... 6d8, his chances for a successful defence would have been good:

a) If 21 6wh6? dxe5 22 6xe5+ 6f6 23 6e3 6g8! White will not deliver mate, and so he remains material down.

b) On 21 e6+ Black defends well with 21 ... 6f6 22 6wh4! fxe6 23 6xe6 6e5!!.

c) Also 21 exd6+ fails in view of 21 ... 6f6
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

22 \( \text{Wh}4 \) \( \text{g}7! \) and Black holds on.

Now the piano plays a different tune...

21 e6! \( \text{g}5 \)

21...f6 is strongly met by 22 \( \text{hxg6} \) \( \text{hxg6} \)
23 \( \text{Wh}6 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 24 \( \text{Ec}3 \) \( \text{Cc}4 \) 25 \( \text{Hh}3 \) \( \text{Wxd}4+ \) 26 \( \text{h}1 \) and mate cannot be avoided.

22 exf7+ \( \text{xf7} \) 23 \( \text{hxg6}! \) \( \text{g}7 \)

Of course not 23...hxg6?? 24 \( \text{Wh}8 \) mate, but the move 23...\( \text{He}7 \), with the idea 24 \( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{g}7 \)?!, is interesting because White doesn't have a queen check on e6 now. Still, White has other ways to proceed with the attack.
24 \( \text{We}6+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 25 \( \text{e}8! \)

White exchanges the strong bishop on c6 to dominate on the light squares. Even in highly tactical positions like this one, positional considerations have to be made.

25...h6

Black cannot take on e6, as he will be mated on the back rank.

26 \( \text{Axc}6 \) \( \text{Wxc}6 \) 27 \( \text{Qe}4 \) \( \text{He}8 \) 28 \( \text{Wg}6 \) \( \text{He}7 \) 29 h4 \( \text{Wd}5 \) 30 \( \text{Axg}7+ \) \( \text{Axg}7 \) 31 \( \text{Wxd}6 \)

White exchanges into a winning endgame.

31...\( \text{Wxd}6 \) 32 \( \text{AXd}6 \) \( \text{Axh}4 \) 33 \( \text{Ae}8+ \) \( \text{Ag}8 \) 34 \( \text{Ad}7+ \) \( \text{Ah}7 \) 35 \( \text{Axg}8 \) \( \text{Axg}8 \) 36 \( \text{Ah}6+ \) \( \text{Ah}7 \) 37 \( \text{Af}5 \) \( \text{Ag}5 \) 38 b3 1-0

Puzzle 118
Tal-Padevsky, Moscow 1963
French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 \( \text{Ac}3 \) \( \text{b}4 \) 4 e5 b6 5 \( \text{Wg}4 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 6 \( \text{Ag}5 \) \( \text{Wd}7 \) 7 \( \text{Af}3 \) \( \text{Cc}6 \) 8 a3 \( \text{Ab}7 \) 9 \( \text{Ad}3 \) h6 10 \( \text{Ad}2 \) 0-0-0 11 h4 \( \text{Ge}7 \) 12 0-0-0 f5 13 exf6 exf6 14 \( \text{Ae}6+ \) \( \text{Ag}8 \)

15 \( \text{Wxe}6 \) \( \text{Axg}2 \)

Bad is 15...\( \text{Wxc}6 \) 16 \( \text{Axe}6 \) \( \text{Axg}2 \) 17 \( \text{Ac}3 \), when White's pieces dominate the board.

16 \( \text{We}3 \)

16...\( \text{Wb}8 \)

16...\( \text{Ag}4 \), with the idea of sacrificing the exchange, is a better try. After 17 \( \text{Af}1 \) \( \text{Af}5 \) 18 \( \text{Wd}3 \) \( \text{Oxd}4 \) 19 \( \text{Ah}3 \) \( \text{Oxf}3 \) 20 \( \text{Wxf}3 \) \( \text{f}5 ? \)
Black will have some compensation for the exchange. For example, his light-squared bishop on f6 will be strong. It all depends
whether or not White can create a passed pawn on the kingside or create active play on the open files with his rooks, but it seems that Black is ready to meet this.

17  \( \text{xf1} \) \( \text{g8} \) 18  \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{f5} \)

18...\( \text{xf5} \) 19  \( \text{wd3} \) \( \text{c8} \) loses because of the pin: 20  \( \text{h5}! \) \( \text{wh7} \) 21  \( \text{h4} \) and White wins material.

19  \( \text{wd3} \) \( \text{c8} \) 20  \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{we8} \) 21  \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{wh5} \)

22  \( \text{db5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 23  \( \text{wc3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 24  \( \text{a5} \) \( \text{xe5} \)

25  \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{d4} \)

26  \( \text{e6}! \) \( \text{dxc3} \) 27  \( \text{exd7} \) \( \text{g7} \)

28  \( \text{xc7} \) 1-0

29...\( \text{fxe6} \)

Black resigned due to 28...\( \text{wd3} \) 29  \( \text{h5}+ \) \( \text{eh8} \) 30  \( \text{g2}! \). A brilliant point. White improves his bishop, and the following knight manoeuvre is decisive: 30...\( \text{wd2} \) 31  \( \text{xc7}+ \) \( \text{h8} \) 32  \( \text{xe8}+ \).

Puzzle 119

Hoelzl-Tal, Malta Olympiad 1980

29...\( \text{f4}! \)

This move serves to weaken White’s kingside. 29...\( \text{h4}! \) also looks good, although it does nothing to protect \( f3 \) right away. However, Black’s position is so good that he can afford this small loss of time.

30  \( \text{xf4} \)

On 30  \( \text{exf4} \) Black has many winning continuations, one of the prettiest being 30...\( \text{xc3}! \).

30...\( \text{g5} \) 31  \( \text{xf5} \) \( \text{f8}! \)

Black attacks on the light squares, and he only needs to protect the pawn on \( f3 \) to execute mate on \( g2 \). The bishop on \( g5 \) is irrelevant, as it cannot help White to defend.

32  \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{xd4}! \) 33  \( \text{d5} \)

Or 33  \( \text{exd4} \) \( \text{xf4}! \) and \( f3 \) is protected once again.

33...\( \text{xa1} \) 1-0

Black has won a rook.

Puzzle 120

Honfi-Tal, Sukhumi 1972

27...\( \text{a2}! \) 28  \( \text{xe2} \)

After 28  \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xd1} \) 29  \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{xc7} \) Black has many ideas. He threatens to double rooks on the a-file, and the b-pawn is hanging as well. White is under a heavy attack and has very little counterplay.

28  \( \text{xe2} \) is bad in view of 28...\( \text{wa5} \) and mate next move.

28...\( \text{wa5} \) 29  \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{a2}+ \) 30  \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{xc3}+ \) 31  \( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{b4}+! \) 32  \( \text{xb4} \) \( \text{wa5}+ \) 33  \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{wa6}+ \) 0-1

A deep point of Black’s first move: Black threatened mate in many lines, but the unprotected queen (after the capture of the bishop on \( c2 \)) caused White’s defeat in the end.

Puzzle 121

Tal-Frame, Soviet Championship, Moscow 1957

23  \( \text{xf5}! \) \( \text{exf5} \)

If Black continues his own play on the queenside with, say, 23...\( \text{a5} \), then the logical continuation is 24  \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 25  \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{xe6} \)

26  \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{d8} \) 27  \( \text{f5} \) when White has three pawns for the piece and a strong attack.

24  \( \text{xe7}+! \) \( \text{xe7} \) 25  \( \text{e1}+ \) \( \text{d8} \) 26  \( \text{wh4}+ \) 27  \( \text{wh6} \)

White wins back the invested material, with a winning advantage.

27...\( \text{wa5} \) 28  \( \text{db3} \) \( \text{wd5} \) 29  \( \text{xf8}+ \) \( \text{c7} \)

30  \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{e8} \) 31  \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{a4} \) 32  \( \text{wd4} \) \( \text{b7} \)

33  \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{e6} \) 34  \( \text{wc4}+ \) 1-0
Puzzle 122
Tal-Campomanes, Leipzig Olympiad 1960

23 \textcolor{red}{	extit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{hx}}}}\textbf{d}5! \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{@$}}}}xg5 24 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{B}}}}b5+ f7 25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}f1+

25...\text{g}6

25...\text{g}8 is no better: 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}xb7 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e8 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}d7 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}g6 28 gxf5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}xh5 29 g4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}g6 30 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}xe8+ \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}xe8 31 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xg5+ and the endgame is winning for White.

26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}d3+ \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}h6 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{H}}}}h1 1-0

Black has no defence. Notice that Black got no time to develop – his rooks are still in their initial positions!

Puzzle 123
Tal-Brinck Claussen, Havana
Olympiad 1966
Semi-Tarrasch Defence

1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}f3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}f6 2 c4 c5 3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}c3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}c6 4 e3 e6 5 d4 d5 6 a3 cxd4 7 exd4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e7 8 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}d3 0-0 9 0-0 dxc4 10 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xc4 b6 11 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}d3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}b7 12 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}d1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}c8 13 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}a2 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}c7 14 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}g5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}d8 15 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e2 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}d5 16 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xd5 exd5 17 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}d3! \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}d6 18 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xe7 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xe7 19 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}g6 20 g3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e8 21 h4! \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}f6 22 h5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}f8 23 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xe8 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xe8 24 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}g5 25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}f3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}f6 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}c4!

26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xd5+?! is dubious: 26...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xd5 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xd5+ \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e6 28 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}}d8 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xh5 when White has lost the initiative and has to retreat the knight from e5. Instead he keeps the symmetry. In this position activity is the most important feature, and here White has the initiative.

26...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}d8 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e1 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}c8 28 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e6 29 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}e1

White's pieces are well placed. Now White wants to penetrate to the seventh rank.

29...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}f7 30 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xh6 31 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}c7 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}g5 32 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xa7 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}g6

Puzzle 124
Tal-Zaichik, Tbilisi 1988

25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xf6! \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xe1 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xh5 gx6

Or 26...h6 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}g4 g6 28 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Q}}}}xg6 fxg6 29


If White succeeds in exchanging queens here, the endgame would be easily winning due to the two connected passed pawns on the kingside. Black’s only chance is the passed d-pawn, but it is not too dangerous.

38 \text{Wg5+ \text{d3} 39 \text{Le6 \text{c4} 40 \text{Wf4+ \text{d4} 41 \text{wc1+ \text{b4} 42 \text{Wxc5+ \text{xc5} 43 b3 \text{d6} 44 \text{c8 \text{e5} 45 g3 \text{e4} 46 \text{g2 \text{c5} 47 \text{b7l}}}}}}

Making it difficult for the d-pawn to move.

47...\text{b4 48 h4 \text{c3} 49 \text{h3 \text{e1} 50 g4 \text{e5} 51 g5 d4 \text{b4} 53 \text{g4 \text{e4} 54 g6 \text{f8} 55 \text{g5 1-0}}}}

One of White’s pawns promotes.

Puzzle 125
Rytov-Tal, Tallinn (Rapid) 1976

23...\text{\text{Qxg3+1 24 \text{Qxg3 \text{Wh4+}}}}

24...\text{c4! was the most accurate execution of the combination, as 25 \text{Qxe4 \text{xb2} 26 \text{c2 \text{e5} does not give White any counterplay.}}}

25 \text{\text{Wg1 e4! 26 \text{Wxg7}}}

Perhaps better is 26 \text{\text{Qxe4?! \text{Wh3} 27 \text{Wh2 \text{Qxb2} 28 \text{Wh2. Black’s strongest line here is}}}}

28...\text{\text{Qxe4! 29 \text{Qh3 \text{xc2 and Black wins because of 30 \text{Wh1 \text{Qxh3+ 31 \text{Whxh3 \text{xc1.}}}}}}}

26...\text{e3! 27 \text{Qc2 \text{Wh3} 28 \text{Qd1 e2}}}

This is a pawn with willpower!

29 \text{\text{Wf2 exf1W + 30 \text{Qxf1 \text{Wg7}}}}

Black is the exchange up. Notice that Black has remained with his good piece (the knight on f4), whereas White still has his bad light-squared bishop.

31 \text{\text{Wd2 \text{Wh4} 32 \text{Wc3+ \text{Wf6} 33 \text{Wxf6+ \text{Wxf6 0-1}}}}}

Puzzle 126
Mukhin-Tal, Moscow Olympiad 1972

1 \text{d4 \text{Qf6} 2 \text{c4 e6 3 \text{Qc3 \text{b4} 4 e3 0-0 5 \text{Qge2 d5 6 a3 \text{e7} 7 \text{f4 c6 8 \text{d3 dxc4} 9 \text{xc4 \text{bd7} 10 \text{d3 c5 11 dxc5}}}}}

\text{Qxc5 12 \text{Qxc5 \text{xc5} 13 \text{Wxd8 \text{xd8} 14 b4 \text{e7} 15 \text{ab2 \text{d7} 16 \text{e2 \text{ac8} 17 \text{d3 \text{c6} 18 f3 \text{d7! 19 \text{e4}}}}}})

19 \text{b5 leads to a black advantage after 19...\text{e5} 20 \text{bxc6 \text{xd3} 21 \text{cxb7 \text{b8.}}}

19...\text{f5 20 \text{d2?}}

Or 20 \text{d2 \text{b5!}}.

20...\text{\text{d6} 21 \text{d4}}

Instead of the text move, White had two
other main alternatives:
  a) 21 b5 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xd3}}!} 22 bxc6 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ cd8}}} 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d4 xd2+}}} 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xd2 e5}}} 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ cxb7 exd4}}} 26 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ hc1 dxe3+}}} 27 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xe3 db8}}} and Black has a winning advantage.

  b) 21 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ db3 xd3!}}} (again this exchange sacrifice is strong: the weakening of the light squares in White's camp is a problem time and time again) 22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xd3 b5+}}} 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d2 c4+}}} 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c1 xe3+}}} 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d2 c4+}}} 26 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c1 xb2+}}} 27 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xb2 f6+}}} and Black wins back the exchange with a winning endgame.

\begin{center}
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\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e5!}}} 22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c5}}}

If the pawn sacrifice is accepted, White's king gets into real trouble: 22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xe5 xd3!}}} 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xd3 b5+}}} 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d4 a4!}}} (the king is trapped in the middle of the board) 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d5}}} (25 e4 doesn't work either in view of 25...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d8+}}} 26 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e3 xd3+}}} 25...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ f7}}} 26 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d4 b6!}}} 27 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xf6 gx6!}}} 28 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d6 e6+}}} 29 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d5 ec7!}}} 30 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e4 d7+}}} 31 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d6+}}} 32 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e7}}} and White is mated next move.

22...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xd3}}} 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ cxd3}}}

After 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xc7 b5}}} 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c5 a4}}} 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ hxc1 xa3+}}} White loses further material.

23...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ b5+}}} 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c2 a4}}} 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ b3}}}

Another possibility was 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d1, when}}} Black slowly improves his pieces: 25...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ f6}}} 26 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e4 b6}}} 27 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c3 c3}}} 28 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ f2 b2+}}} 29 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e1 d3+}}} 30 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e2 c2}}} 31 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d1 a4}}} and Black wins.

25...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ b6}}} 26 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c4}}}

Or 26 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xe7 c3+}}} 27 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ a2 c2+}}} 28 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ b1}}}

\begin{center}
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\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Very beautiful! There is no way to prevent...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c3}}} mate

Instead White tries to free himself radically, but it costs him too much material.

26...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ bxc5}}} 27 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xe5 cxb4}}} 28 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ ac1 c5+}}} 29 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xb4 a6}}} 0-1

\textbf{Puzzle 127}

\textbf{Tal-Yuhtman, Soviet Championship, Tbilisi 1956}

\textbf{Sicilian Defence}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

1 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e4 c5}}} 2 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ f3 d6}}} 3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d4 cxd4}}} 4 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xd4 f6}}} 5 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c3 a6}}} 6 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ g5 bd7}}} 7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ c4 h6}}} 8 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ xf6 xf6}}} 9 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e2 e6}}} 10 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ a3 a7}}} 11 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ b3 d7}}} 12 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ 0-0 wa5}}} 13 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ ad1 wh5}}} 14 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ we1 g5}}} 15 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ e5 g4}}} 16 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ f3 c6}}}

17 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ d5!}}}

Closing the diagonal of the strong c6-
bishop. Black cannot take on d5, as the pin on the e-file will win back the invested material.

17...\texttt{Qxd5}?! seems quite similar, but after 17...\texttt{dxe5} 18 \texttt{Qc7+ \texttt{Qe8} 19 h3 \texttt{Qxf3} 20 \texttt{gx}f3 \texttt{Qx}h3 the best White has is to allow Black to give perpetual check. Actually, after 21 \texttt{hx}g4 \texttt{Qx}g4+ 22 \texttt{Qh}2 \texttt{Qh}4+ 23 \texttt{Qg}2 Black could even consider a double-edged middlegame with 23...\texttt{Qc}8?.

17...\texttt{Qxe5}

The only move. 17...\texttt{dxe5} 18 \texttt{Qxc6+ \texttt{Qxc6} 19 \texttt{Qx}f6 20 \texttt{Qxe}5 gives White a clear advantage.

18 \texttt{Qxe5} \texttt{exd}5 19 \texttt{Qxd}5 \texttt{Qxd}5 20 \texttt{Qxd}5 \texttt{dxe}5 21 \texttt{Qxe}5 0-0

Black gets his king into safety, but a pawn down and with a worse king's position, Black's disadvantage is decisive.

18...\texttt{Qxe5} 19 \texttt{Qh}4 \texttt{Qe}8

White wants to create a passed pawn on the queenside.

25...\texttt{bxc}4 26 \texttt{Qxc}4 \texttt{Qg}6 27 \texttt{Qe}7 \texttt{Qfe}8 28 \texttt{Qxe}8+ \texttt{Qxe}8 29 g3 \texttt{Qe}6 30 \texttt{Qg}2 \texttt{Qf}6 31 \texttt{Qa}8+ \texttt{Qh}7 32 \texttt{Qd}8 \texttt{Qxf}2+?

Black falls into the trap, losing without a fight. Black should have done nothing, when it would still be difficult for White to win the game.

33 \texttt{Qxf}2 \texttt{Qf}6+ 34 \texttt{Qe}3 \texttt{Qxd}8 35 \texttt{Qd}3+ \texttt{Qxd}3+ 36 \texttt{Qxd}3

The pawn endgame is winning for White, primarily because Black’s king is very far away from White’s potential passed pawn on the queenside.

36...\texttt{Qg}6 37 \texttt{Qe}4 \texttt{Qf}6 38 g4 \texttt{Qe}6 39 b4 h5 40 g\texttt{x}h5 f5+ 41 \texttt{Qd}4 \texttt{Qf}6 42 a4 g4 43 b5 1-0

Puzzle 128
Tal-Hübner, Montreal 1979
Caro-Kann Defence

1 \texttt{e}4 \texttt{c}6 2 \texttt{d}4 \texttt{d}5 3 \texttt{Qc}3 \texttt{dxe}4 4 \texttt{Qxe}4 5 \texttt{Qf}5 5 \texttt{Qg}3 \texttt{Qg}6 6 h4 h6 7 \texttt{Qf}3 \texttt{Qd}7 8 h5 \texttt{Qh}7 9 \texttt{Qxd}3 \texttt{Qxd}3 10 \texttt{Qxd}3 \texttt{Qgf}6 11 \texttt{Qf}4 \texttt{Qa}5+ 12 \texttt{Qd}2 \texttt{Qc}7 13 0-0-0 \texttt{e}6 14 \texttt{Qe}4 0-0-0 15 g3 \texttt{Qxe}4 16 \texttt{Qxe}4 \texttt{Qf}6 17 \texttt{Qh}2 c5?

It was better to play 17...\texttt{Qd}6 18 c4 \texttt{Qhe}8 19 \texttt{Qh}4 c5 20 \texttt{Qc}3 \texttt{a}6 21 \texttt{Qb}1 \texttt{cxd}4 22 \texttt{Qxd}4 \texttt{Qc}5 23 \texttt{Qc}1 \texttt{Qxd}4 24 \texttt{Qxd}4 e5 25 \texttt{Qc}3 \texttt{Qd}7 with equality.

18 \texttt{dxc}5 \texttt{Qxc}5 19 \texttt{Qh}4! \texttt{Qb}8?

Black would still be okay after the line 19...\texttt{Qe}7! 20 \texttt{Qc}4 \texttt{Qb}8 21 \texttt{Qe}5 \texttt{Qd}5! 22 \texttt{Qf}4 \texttt{Qd}6.

20 \texttt{Qf}4 \texttt{Qd}6

21 \texttt{Qxd}6! \texttt{Qxd}6 22 \texttt{Qe}5!

Both \texttt{Qxf}7 and \texttt{Qc}4 are threatened, securing White the desired exchange of minor pieces.

22...\texttt{Qa}8

Or:

a) 22...\texttt{Qhd}8 23 \texttt{Qc}4 \texttt{Qe}8 24 \texttt{Qxd}6 \texttt{Qxd}6 25 \texttt{Qg}4! is similar to the game.

b) 22...\texttt{Qd}5 23 \texttt{Qxf}7! \texttt{Qxf}4 24 \texttt{Qxf}4 \texttt{Qf}8 25 \texttt{Qxd}6 \texttt{Qxf}4 26 \texttt{gx}f4 \texttt{Qxd}6 27 \texttt{Qe}5 with a won pawn ending.

23 \texttt{Qc}4 \texttt{Qe}8 24 \texttt{Qg}4 \texttt{Qe}7

After 24...\texttt{Qg}8 25 \texttt{Qxd}6 \texttt{Qxd}6 26 \texttt{Qd}3 \texttt{Qd}8 27 \texttt{Qg}7 White has a winning material and positional advantage.

25 \texttt{Qxd}6 \texttt{Qxd}6 26 \texttt{Qg}7

White has won a pawn, and the bishop is clearly superior to the knight. Now h6 is a serious weakness.
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

26...\textit{Qf}5 27 \textit{Qg}4 \textit{Qd}8 28 \textit{Qe}5 \textit{Qf}6 29 \textit{Qc}3 \textit{Qe}5 30 \textit{b}3 \textit{a}6 31 \textit{Qb}2 \textit{Qw}6 32 \textit{Qw}4! \textit{Qw}8 33 \textit{Qg}6 \textit{Qc}8 34 \textit{Qw}4! \textit{Qd}8

- Or 34...\textit{Qx}a4 35 \textit{bxa}4 \textit{Qc}6 36 \textit{g}4 \textit{Qb}6+ 37 \textit{Qc}1 \textit{Qc}6 38 \textit{Qx}e5! and White wins. If Black captures the bishop, White exchanges everything to a won pawn ending. If not, the pawn on f6 falls as well.

35 \textit{Qw}4!

- Bad is 35 \textit{g}4? \textit{Qd}6 36 \textit{Qx}h6 \textit{Qb}5+ with unclear play – Black is suddenly very active.

35...\textit{Qd}6 36 \textit{Qw}3 \textit{Qw}7 37 \textit{Qb}4 \textit{Qb}5

- The sacrifice 37...\textit{Qe}4 38 \textit{Qx}d6 \textit{Qx}c2+ 39 \textit{Qa}3 \textit{Qc}1+ 40 \textit{Qa}4 \textit{Qb}5+ 41 \textit{Qa}5 doesn't work for Black: the king escapes and White wins.

38 \textit{Qx}f6 \textit{a}5

- 38...\textit{Qd}4 allows the rook sacrifice 39 \textit{Qxa}6+! \textit{bxa}6 40 \textit{Qxa}6+ \textit{Qb}8 41 \textit{Qd}6, winning the queen. Also, if 38...\textit{Qe}4 39 \textit{Qxe}4 \textit{Qg}7 White has the strong reply 40 \textit{Qg}6+.

39 \textit{Qd}6 \textit{Qx}d6 40 \textit{Qxd}6 \textit{e}4 41 \textit{Qd}2 1-0

- Black has no more tricks.

Puzzle 129

Tal-Gurgenidze, Alma-Ata 1968

Caro-Kann Defence

1 \textit{e}4 \textit{c}5 2 \textit{d}4 \textit{d}5 3 \textit{Qc}3 \textit{b}5 4 \textit{a}3 \textit{dxe}4 5 \textit{Qxe}4 \textit{Qf}5 6 \textit{Qd}3 \textit{Qxe}4 7 \textit{Qxe}4 \textit{Qf}6 8 \textit{Qd}3 \textit{e}6 9 \textit{Qf}3 \textit{Qe}7 10 \textit{Qw}2 \textit{Qbd}7 11 0-0 0-0 12 \textit{Qe}1 \textit{Qe}8 13 \textit{Qe}5 \textit{Qxe}5 14 \textit{dxe}5 \textit{Qd}5 15 \textit{Qg}4 \textit{a}5

- 15...\textit{g}6 is better. Then if White plays 16 \textit{h}4?, Black can capture the pawn. Following 16...\textit{Qx}h4 17 \textit{g}3 \textit{Qc}7 18 \textit{Qg}2 \textit{h}5 it is not entirely clear if White will break through on the kingside, though he does have compensation.

16 \textit{h}4! \textit{Qx}h4 17 \textit{g}3 \textit{Qe}7 18 \textit{Qg}2 \textit{g}6

- Or:

  a) 18...\textit{b}4 allows the sacrifice 19 \textit{Qx}h7+ \textit{Qx}h7 20 \textit{Qh}5+ \textit{Qg}8 21 \textit{Qh}1 with good prospects for a kingside attack.

  b) 18...\textit{Qf}8 19 \textit{Qh}1 \textit{f}5 20 \textit{Qh}5 \textit{h}6 21 \textit{Qg}6 \textit{Qh}8 22 \textit{Qx}h6 gxh6 23 \textit{Qx}h6+ \textit{Qx}h6 24 \textit{Qh}1 \textit{Qe}3+ 25 \textit{fx}e3 \textit{Qd}5+ 26 \textit{e}4 and White mates.

19 \textit{Qh}1 \textit{Qf}8 20 \textit{Qg}5!

- Black survives after 20 \textit{Qx}h7?! \textit{Qx}h7 21 \textit{Qg}5 \textit{Qe}3+! 22 \textit{fx}e3 \textit{Qd}5+ 23 \textit{Qe}4 \textit{Qxe}5 24 \textit{Qh}4+ \textit{Qg}8 25 \textit{Qf}6 \textit{Qh}5.

20...\textit{Qc}7

- The alternatives were not too encouraging either:

  a) 20...\textit{Qe}7 21 \textit{Qh}7 \textit{Qx}g5 22 \textit{Qh}1 \textit{Qf}8 23 \textit{Qg}6 and White wins.

  b) 20...\textit{Qe}7 21 \textit{Qx}g6 \textit{fx}g6 22 \textit{Qxe}6+ \textit{Qg}8 23 \textit{Qx}h7+ \textit{Qx}h7 24 \textit{Qh}1+ \textit{Qh}6 25 \textit{Qx}h6+ \textit{Qg}7 26 \textit{Qf}6+ \textit{Qx}h6 27 \textit{Qh}3 mate.

21 \textit{Qx}h7! \textit{Qxe}5

- a) After 21...\textit{Qx}h7 White wins with 22 \textit{Qh}1+ \textit{Qg}8 23 \textit{Qf}6 \textit{Qxf}6 24 \textit{Qx}f6 \textit{Qe}5 (24...\textit{Qd}7 25 \textit{Qg}1! – threatening \textit{Qh}4 – 25...\textit{Qd}5 26 \textit{Qx}g6!) 25 \textit{Qx}g6 \textit{Qxf}6 26 \textit{Qh}7+ \textit{Qh}8 27 \textit{Qg}8 mate.

  b) 21...\textit{Qg}7 22 \textit{Qf}6 \textit{Qxf}6 23 \textit{Qx}f6 \textit{Qxf}6 24 \textit{Qx}g6+ \textit{Qx}g6 25 \textit{Qx}c7 and White has a
winning endgame.

22 \texttt{xf7! xf7} 23 \texttt{xg6+ xg8}

An important point is that White wins after 23...\texttt{hxg6} 24 \texttt{fxa+ f6} 25 \texttt{hxh4!!}.

24 \texttt{xe8}

Now it's game over.

24...\texttt{g7} 25 \texttt{d7 c7} 26 \texttt{xe6 f8} 27 \texttt{d1 c5} 28 \texttt{f3 xxc2} 29 \texttt{d7 f7} 30 \texttt{d8+ f8} 31 \texttt{f6 wh7} 32 \texttt{e4 wh6} 33 \texttt{g5 wh8} 34 \texttt{d7} 1-0

Puzzle 130
Tal-Najdorf, Leipzig Olympiad 1960

21 \texttt{xe4! dxe4} 22 \texttt{e6!!}

White attacks on the dark squares, of which he will have total superiority once the g7-pawn drops. It's true that Black also has a dark-squared bishop as well, but this is far away from the kingside. Black cannot organise a defence in time.

22...\texttt{wb6}

Or 22...\texttt{fb8} 23 \texttt{e7+ h8} (23...\texttt{h8} 24 \texttt{xh7 gxh6} 25 \texttt{d5 and White wins}) 24 \texttt{wh6 g8} 25 \texttt{f5 xd4+} 26 \texttt{xd4 f6} 27 \texttt{yg7 xg7} 28 \texttt{xf6} with a winning attack as well as a material advantage.

23 \texttt{yg7 ef8} 24 \texttt{e5 wg6} 25 \texttt{h6+ f8} 26 \texttt{i5} 1-0

Black simply resigned here, as White gradually builds up the attack. At some point his position just falls apart, for example 26...\texttt{c6} 27 \texttt{wh5 wc4} 28 \texttt{d6+ e7} 29 \texttt{d1} leaves Black unable to defend himself. Still, it was probably a little early to resign.

Puzzle 131
Tal-Suttles, Sukhumi 1972

27 \texttt{xa5l xa5} 28 \texttt{d8+ f8} 29 \texttt{wd2}

The queen eyes the h6-square and the unprotected rook on a5. At the same time White secures the d-file.

29...\texttt{wc7}

29...\texttt{wb6} 30 \texttt{g5l}, with the idea of \texttt{wd7}, wins even more quickly.

30 \texttt{e8!}

Again \texttt{wh6} is threatened. Notice that Black's rook and knight are totally out of play.

30...\texttt{g7}

The only move.

31 \texttt{wg5 a7}

Other moves lose in a similar fashion.

32 \texttt{w6+ g8} 33 \texttt{g5}

Black has no defence against the sacrifice on h7 followed by mate. He chooses to give up the queen, but this is of course hopeless.

33...\texttt{wd7} 34 \texttt{d8 b6} 35 \texttt{xd7 xd7} 36 \texttt{b3 g7} 37 \texttt{f3 h6} 38 \texttt{a8+ f8} 39 \texttt{e4 d1+} 40 \texttt{wh2 b2} 41 \texttt{d6}

Black's major problem is f7.

41...\texttt{d3} 42 \texttt{w3} 1-0

Puzzle 132
Tal-Uhlmann, Moscow 1971

French Defence

1 \texttt{e4} e5 2 d4 d5 3 \texttt{d2} c5 4 \texttt{g3} f6 5 \texttt{b5} dxe4 6 \texttt{fxe4 d7} 7 \texttt{g5} wa5+ 8 \texttt{c3} edx4 9 \texttt{xd4 a4} 10 0-0 \texttt{xc3} 11 \texttt{bxc3 xxc3}

12 \texttt{f5!! exf5}

Black chooses to test Tal's idea. Another possible line is 12...\texttt{wc5} 13 \texttt{d6+ f8} 14 \texttt{e3 we5} (14...\texttt{wd5} 15 \texttt{xb7 f6} 16 c4 \texttt{adc1} 17 \texttt{fxd1} and Black will never survive) 15 \texttt{b1!} (Black has problems controlling White's knight) 15...\texttt{f6} 16 \texttt{xb7 g8} 17
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

The bishop is transferred and White obtains a winning attack.

15...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{fd}}}} \texttt{d2}! leaves black without a defence: 15...
\texttt{a6} 16 \texttt{xf6} \texttt{gxf6} 17 \texttt{xe6+ fxe6} 18 \texttt{Wxe6+ f8} 19 \texttt{d7} and White wins.

Puzzle 133
Tal-Averkin, Soviet Championship, Moscow 1973
Caro-Kann Defence

1 \texttt{e4} \texttt{e6} 2 \texttt{d4} \texttt{d5} 3 \texttt{c3} \texttt{dxe4} 4 \texttt{e4} \texttt{f5} 5 \texttt{g3} \texttt{g6} 6 \texttt{c4} \texttt{e6} 7 \texttt{d3} \texttt{bd7} 8 0-0 \texttt{e5} 9 \texttt{g5} \texttt{h6} 10 \texttt{h3} \texttt{d6} 11 \texttt{f4} \texttt{xf4} 12 \texttt{xf4} 0-0 13 \texttt{c3} \texttt{a5} 14 \texttt{c4} \texttt{e8} 15 \texttt{e1} \texttt{b6} 16 \texttt{c5} \texttt{b5} 17 \texttt{c2} \texttt{xc2} 18 \texttt{Wxc2} \texttt{b6} 19 \texttt{d6}

The d5-square is an excellent outpost for Black's knight. Black’s only problem is that he has two knights, and Tal cleverly avoids the exchange of one pair of knights.

19...\texttt{a4} 20 \texttt{ac1} \texttt{wb4} 21 \texttt{ed1} \texttt{bxc5} 22 \texttt{a3} \texttt{wb7} 23 \texttt{dxc5} \texttt{ha5} 24 \texttt{d4} \texttt{hb5} 25

Now the game ended abruptly.
70 \texttt{d5}! \texttt{xa4} 71 \texttt{e7} mate!

Puzzle 134
Tal-Pytel, Lublin 1974
Ray Lopez

1 \texttt{e4} \texttt{e5} 2 \texttt{d3} \texttt{c6} 3 \texttt{a3} \texttt{b5} \texttt{a6} 4 \texttt{a4} \texttt{d6} 5 0-0 \texttt{f6} 6 \texttt{e1} \texttt{d7} 7 \texttt{xc6} \texttt{bxc6} 8 \texttt{d4} \texttt{dxe4} 9 \texttt{e5} \texttt{dxe5} 10 \texttt{xe5} \texttt{e6} 11 \texttt{xc6}
White wins the pawn on d4, but the weakened pawn structure gives Black counterplay.

13...c5 14 b4 c6 15 b2 d5 16 a3 0-0 17 exd4 exf4 18 b2 d4 19 exf6 fxe6 20 d4+ f1g1 f5? 23 f1d1 h5 24 d7 f1f7 25 e6 f1f8 26 f1f8+ f1f8 27 e4 g5 28 c1 c6 29 exb8 cxb8 30 g1 d4+ e5

39 c5 f6

40 f8+! xf8

Not 40...g6? 41 g8+ and all the remaining pieces will be exchanged, as 41...f5 42 g4 is mate!

41 xf6+ e8

If Black tries to avoid the exchange of queens, he loses another pawn on h6 without compensation. Still, it was a better chance, as the pawn ending is certainly lost. After 41...g8 42 g6+ h8 43 xh6+ g8 Black can still put up some resistance.

42 h8+ d7 43 g7+ c8 44 xxc7+

The easiest way to win.

44...xc7 45 f3 d6 46 f2 1-0

Puzzle 136

Tal-Olafsson, Bled 1959

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 f3 c6 3 b5 a6 4 a4 f6 5 0-0 b5 6 b3 a7 7 d4 d6 8 c3 g4 9 h3 h5 10 d5 a5 11 c2 c6 12 dxc6 wc7 13 cxd2 0-0 14 e1 ad8 15 w2 d6 16 f1 d5 17 ed5 xd5 18 g3 g6 19 xg6 fxg6 20 e4 h6 21 a4 wb7 22 axb5 axb5 23 d1 f6 24 xd8 xd8 25 f2 h8 26 fxg6 xf6

The problem for Black is his somewhat exposed kingside, which will tell later.

27 b3 wh7 28 a5 wa6 29 b4 ed5 30 w13 d6 31 e3 f5 32 g4 wc8 33 xc6 xc6 34 a7 ec7 35 xc7 wc7 36 gxf5 gxf5 37 wc5+ g7 38 we6 g5

18...c5 is a better move.

19 e2 b5 20 hf1 f6 21 d2 wc7 22 w3 f17 23 wc3 g8 24 b1 e5 25 d3 g7 26 d2 b8 27 db1 a8 28 a2 a5 29 wc3! xc3

It was better to avoid the queen swap with 29...c6. In the game White quickly devel-
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

ops strong pressure against Black’s queenside pawns.

30 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}\texttt{c}3} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}}8}}} 31 \texttt{\texttt{b}4} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}6}}} 32 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}xa5} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}4}}} 33 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}4} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{i}7}}}

33...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{i}f3}} leads to a white advantage after 34 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}}6! \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}6}} 35 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}6}}. Being the exchange down is not important. White’s pieces work well together and his initiative on the queenside is very strong. After 35...f5 36 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}3}} White is on top. However, Black could have obtained equal chances with 33...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}3}}! 34 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}f}3} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}3}} 35 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}2} f5}.

34 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}3}} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}6}} 35 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}b}5} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}b}5}} 36 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}b}5} d5} 37 c4! \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}8}}} 38 a6 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}h}8}} 39 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}2} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}b}4}} 40 axb4 dxc4

41 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}7}+! \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}7}} 42 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}7}}+

Black has to retreat to the back rank, after which his rooks don’t cooperate. Actually, the rook on h8 is not worth much for many moves to come.

42...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}8}} 43 a7 1-0

Black resigned, as after 43...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}8}} 44 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}6}} his position is lost.

Puzzle 137

Medina Garcia-Tal, Palma de Majorca 1966

\textit{Sicilian Defence}

1 e4 c5 2 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}f3}} e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}4} a6} 5 \texttt{\texttt{c3} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}e}7}} 6 g3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}6}} 7 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}2} \texttt{\texttt{e}7}} 8 0-0 0-0 9 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}e}2}} d6 10 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}3} \texttt{\texttt{c}6}} 11 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}d}1} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}7}} 12 f4 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}c}8} 13 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}1} b5} 14 a3 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}4}} 15 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}4} e5} 16 \texttt{\texttt{e}3} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}6}} 17 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}e}1} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}4}} 18 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}d}2} a5 19 b3!? 

Now the game becomes sharper.

19...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}b}3}} 20 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}b}5} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}c}2}} 21 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}6} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}6}}} 22 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}x}d6} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}4}} 23 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}e}5} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}e}8}} 24 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}d}4} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}6}}

A position with a symmetrical pawn structure has arisen. White has the bishop pair, which would be of significance if he could exchange the heavy pieces. However, this is not the case, and the evaluation of the position depends on who has the more active play.

25 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}e}1} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}f}5} 26 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}2} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}xc}1}} 27 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}xc}1} h5} 28 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}1} h4} 29 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}3} h3} 30 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}1} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}1}+}} 31 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}x}e}1} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}5}} 32 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}5} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}d}5}}} 33 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}x}a5} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}b}1+} 34 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}2} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}1}} 35 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}2} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}x}h}2+} 36 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}f}2} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{h}1}} 37 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}3}}

37...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{w}xf}3+! 38 \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}f}3} \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}3}} 0-1

White resigned, as he has no defence against ...h3-h2-h1\#. 148
Puzzle 138
Rashkovsky-Tal, Sochi 1973
Grunfeld Defence

1 d4 g6 2 c4 3 f6 3 3 c3 d5 4 cxd5
5 e4 3 x c3 6 bxc3 3 g7 7 c4 0-0
8 b2 c6 9 0-0 b6 10 e3 a7 11
\( \text{Wd2} \) a5 12 d3 e6 13 h6 c5 14
xg7 3 x g7 15 f4 c6 16 b5 f6 17
\( \text{Wxf6+} \) 3 xf6 18 dxc5 bxc5 19 c1

An interesting position has arisen. It's roughly equal, but Tal proved to be the better endgame player.

19 ... 3 a5 20 e1 a8 21 e5+ 3 g7 22
b3 x g2 23 c4 x b3 24 a x b3 b7 25
3xa7 3d8 26 f1 f3 27 d7 x b3 28
x e6 b7 29 a3 x e5 30 x f3 d4 31
x e6 d7 32 d1 e4 33 f4 x c4 34 d2
e2+ 35 d3 x h2 36 c1 h3+ 37
37 ... 3 d7!
Threatening mate on d4.

38 x c5 x d3 0-1
White resigned as he is mated after 39
3c7+ 3h6 40 f5 3g5! 41 x g6 3he3.

Puzzle 139
Tal-Antoshin, Kharkov 1967
Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5 2 3 f3 3 c6 3 b5 a6 4 a4 3 f6
5 0-0 3xe4 6 d4 b5 7 b3 d5 8 dxe5
3 e6 9 c3 3 c5 10 3bd2 0-0 11 c2

\( \text{\( \Box d2 \)} \) 12 \( \text{\( \Box d2 \)} \) f6 13 a x f6 3 x f6 14 3 g5
15 b4 3 b6 16 d3 3 e7 17 a4 d8
18 axb5 a x b5 19 d1 c6 20 e2 3 g6
21 3 f3 h6 22 3 d4 3 x d4 23 x d4 3 w d7
24 f3 x e6 25 3 f2 3 b e8 26 3 d2 c3 27
x e6 x e6 28 e1 e1+ 29 x e1

An interesting endgame has arisen. At first sight White’s pawns on b4 and d4 appear to be weak, as they are posted on the same colour as the dark-squared bishop, but this is not the case. They are actually strong, as they are easy to protect and they hold back Black’s three pawns. White has a majority on the kingside, and it is much easier for him to use this than Black’s on the queenside. Another important feature of the position is that Black’s kingside pawns are placed on dark squares. This will be of significance later...

29 ... 3 e6 30 d1 2 e2?!?
Perhaps 30 ... 3 f4?!

31 x e2 3 e2 32 3 f2 3 d3 33 e3
3 b1 34 h4
White has a small but lasting advantage.

34 ... 3 f7 35 h5 3 e7 36 g4 3 e8 37 3 d1
3 d6 38 d2 3 b4+ 39 f4 3 x e6 40 3 f1
3 b2 41 c3 3 e4 42 h3 3 f6 43 e1
3 b2 44 3 d2 3 e4 45 c1
White is soon ready for the g4-g5 push. If White’s bishop reached the d7-square, Black is doomed, so he seeks counterplay.

45 ... c5! 46 b x c5 3 d3 47 c6 b4 48 c7
3 d6 49 e3 3 a6 50 3 d2 3 g5 51 e1+
3 h4 52 f1 3 f1 53 3 f1 3 g3 54 3 e2
b3 55 ½d3! ½xf3

56 ½xh6! ½xg4

56...gxh6 57 g5 wins.

57 ½xg7 ½hxh6 58 ½e5 ½c8 59 ½c3
½g6 60 ½xb3 ½f7 61 ½b4 ½e6 62 ½b5
½d7

This would be a theoretical draw without the d-pawns, but now White wins with the help of zugzwang.

63 ½a6 ½e6 64 ½f4 ½e7 65 ½e7 ½c8+
66 ½b8 ½d7 67 ½b7 ½e7 68 ½c1 1-0

Black resigned due to 68...½c8 69 ½a3.

Puzzle 140
Pinter-Tal, Taxco 1985
King's Indian Defence

1 ½d4 ½f6 2 c4 d6 3 ½c3 ½bd7 4 e4 e5
5 ½f3 g6 6 ½e2 ½g7 7 0-0 0-0 8 ½e3
½c6 9 ½wc2 ½e7 10 ½fe1 exd4 11 ½xd4
½c5 12 ½d2 ½e8 13 ½ad1 h5 14 h3
½h6 15 ½f1 ½f4 16 ½f3 ½fd7 17 ½e3
½xe3 18 ½xe3 ½e5 19 ½d2 ½e6 20 b3
½xf3+ 21 ½xf3 ½ad8 22 ½h6 ½c8 23
½d5 ½f8 24 ½xf8+ ½xf8 25 ½d4 ½e6
26 ½d2

Black has no problems in this King's Indian endgame.

26...½g5 27 ½e3 f5 28 ½ed3 ½xe4 29
½xe4 ½xe4 30 ½xd6 ½xd6 31 ½xd6 ½e6
32 ½d8+ ½e8 33 ½xe8+ ½xe8

It is hard to believe that White should lose this position! However, Black's king is a bit more active, so White should at least be careful.

34 c5?! ½f4 35 ½g3 ½f3! 36 ½h4 ½e7 37 ½d3
½f5 38 ½c4

The pawn ending is lost for White due to Black's active king.

38...½f6 39 ½f1 ½e5 40 ½e1 ½d4

Now the c-pawn is an object of attack.

41 ½d2 a5 42 ½f7 ½xc5 43 ½c3 b5 44
a3 b4+ 45 axb4+ axb4+ 46 ½d2 ½d4
47 ½e8 c5 48 ½b5 ½e4 49 ½a6 ½d5 50
½c2 ½e5?!

After a short trip towards the kingside that brings nothing, Black finds the right way to win the game.

51 ½b5 ½f5 52 ½d7+ ½e6 53 ½b5 ½g4
54 ½f1 ½d5 55 ½b2 ½f5 56 ½c2 ½e4+
57 ½d2 ½e5 58 ½a6 ½d5 59 ½c4+ ½d4
60 ½b5 ½f5 61 ½a6 ½e6 62 ½c2 ½c4

At last!

63 bxc4

63...b3+!

After the natural 63...½xc4 White has counterplay with 64 ½b7 ½d5 65 ½a6, when it's hard for Black to reach f2.

64 ½b2 ½d3

Black uses the c4-pawn as a shelter to get to f2.

65 c5+ ½d2 66 c6 ½e1 67 c7 ½xf2

Black is winning now.

68 ½c4

The straightforward 68 ½c8 69 ½xc8 ½xg3 etc.
Solutions to Puzzles

68...g4 69 d3
A last try.
69...g1 70 xg6 f2 71 xh5 f1w 0-1

Puzzle 141
Krimer Yu-Tal, Vilnius 1955

26...xb2! 27 xb2
After 27 d4 Black plays 27...b4! 28 xex6 bxcc 29 db3 c4 30 f4 d5, dominating in the centre.
27...xc3 28 e5+ xe5 29 xe5 xc2+ 30 xc2 dxe5
The whole exchange operation has left Black with a winning advantage.
31 c3 d5 32 a3 a5 33 f3?! It was better to stay passive.
33...xe7 34 g4 f6 35 c2 e4 36 g5+ g6 37 fxe4 xe4+! 38 c3
White loses after 38 xex4 fxe4 39 c3 a4 because he cannot stop both the a- and e-pawns.
38...d5 39 d4 b4 40 axb4 axb4 0-1

Puzzle 142
Tal-Pribyl, Tallinn 1973
Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 f3 2 c4 g6 3 c3 d5 4 cxd5
3 exd5 5 g3 g7 6 g2 0-0 7 0-0 c5 8
d5 w xd5 9 d3 d6 10 e3 xa2 11
b1 f6 12 w a4 w d7 13 xc5 d4 14
wd1 xf3+ 15 xf3 b8 16 a7 a8
17 e3 xa2 18 wb3 a5 19 fxe5 h5
20 h6 e8 21 ad2 a8 22 e4 w a4
23 w d5 wa2 24 af4 w xd5 25 x xd5 e5
26 d2
White has the small advantage in this endgame, as the b7-pawn is a weakness.
26...e7 27 b6 g7 28 h4 h7 29
e4 e7 30 ac4 d6 31 c3 f6 32
b2 b8
White’s pieces are ideally placed, and he is ready to strike in the centre.
33 d4 exd4 34 xd4
Now f6 is weak too.

34...e7 35 d5 xd5 36 xd5 d8 37
b3 b5 38 e3 b7 39 b3 c6 40
e6 d7 41 xd6 xb7 42 e4
Now White wants to open up the black king’s position further.
42...e7 43 a6 e8 44 e5 f5 45 a8
c6 46 ac8 f3 47 c3 e2 48 d5
d7

49 e6!! xd5?!
49...d8 also fails to save Black after 50 c7+ h8 51 f6!! xfx6 (or 51...xd5 52
e7+ e8 53 f6 d8 54 h7 and it’s soon mate) 52 f7+ g8 53 f6 xd5 54
c7 e5 55 f8+ g7 56 ed ed ec8 57 exf8
c4 58 b8. Now passive defence won’t save Black, so his only chance is to activate his king on the queenside and advance the b-pawn. However, this shouldn’t be enough to save the game.
50 c8+! g6
Or 50...h7 51 h8 mate!
51 c7+ g8 52 xf6 1-0
Black resigned as White will be the first to mate after 52...d1+ 53 h2 f3 54 e8+ h7 55 h8.

Puzzle 143
Tal-Sisniega, Taxco 1985
Sirian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 f3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 xd4
f6 5 c3 c6 6 g5 e6 7 wd2 e7 8
0-0-0 0-0 9 db3 a5 10 a4 d5 11 b5

151
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

19 ♘xe6! ♘xd7 20 ♘c7
The point: White wins the exchange.
20...♕xa4 21 ♘xe8 ♘e6 22 ♘b6 ♘e8
23 ♘d6 ♗c6 24 ♘xa5 ♖f6 25 ♘d5+ ♘g6 26 ♘e3 1-0

Puzzle 144
Tal-Trifunovic, Palma de Majorca 1966
Queen’s Indian Defence

1 c4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 e6 3 g3 b6 4 ♘g2 ♘b7
5 0-0 ♘e7 6 d4 0-0 7 ♘c3 ♘e4 8 ♘d2
d5 9 exd5 exd5 10 ♘e5 ♘xc3 11 ♘xc3
♗d7 12 ♘d3 ♘d6 13 ♘d4 ♘c6 14 ♘a4 ♘a6 15
♗b3 ♘e8 16 ♘a2 ♘b5 17 ♘c5 ♘xc5 18
dxc5 ♘xe4 19 ♘b2 ♘f8 20 ♘xa4 ♘c8 21
♕xa1 ♘b8 22 ♘d4 ♘h5 23 ♘h4 ♗e6 24 ♘f3
g5 25 hxg5 ♘xg5 26 ♗c1 ♘f5 27 ♘f4
White wants to play the endgame. Black’s
pawns on the queenside are on light squares
and are vulnerable to attack.
27...♕xf4 28 gxf4 ♘g7 29 ♘xg7
Yes, please!
29...♕xg7 30 ♘h2 ♘g6 31 ♘g1 ♘xg1 32
♘xg1 h4 33 e3 ♘f6 34 ♘e2 ♘a8 35 ♘g2
♕e7 36 ♘d3 ♘f6 37 f3 ♘a7 38 ♘e4
Unfortunately for Black, he cannot keep
the tension in the centre as White threatens
to exchange on d5 and then play b4-b5.
38...h3+??

45 e6!
After 45 exf6+ ♗xf6 46 ♘h2 ♘g8+ 47
♕f2 ♘h8 White has only a small advantage.
45...♕xe6
After 45...♕xe6 46 ♘xh3+ f5 47 ♘a6 ♘c8
48 ♘g2 White has a winning endgame. Both
of Black’s pawns are on light squares and will
soon come under attack.
46 ♘a7+ ♘d7
Or 46...♕d8 47 ♘a8+ ♘c8 48 ♘a6 ♘c7
49 ♘xc8+ ♘xc8 50 ♘xc8 ♘xc8 51 ♘xh3
with a winning pawn ending.

47 ♘h2
White now threatens b4-b5.
47...♗h5 48 b5! ♘xc5 49 ♘xh3 f5 50
bxc6 ♘xc6 51 ♘f5 ♘d6 52 ♘g3
Next White exchanges everything and
wins the pawn ending.
52 ... \textit{w}e8 53 \textit{h}xd7 \textit{hx}d7 54 \textit{x}xd7+
\textit{w}xd7 55 \textit{g}4 \textit{w}e6 56 \textit{g}5
Taking the opposition.
56 ... \textit{w}f7 57 \textit{w}f5 1-0

Puzzle 145
Tal-Bronstein, Tbilisi 1959

28 \textit{h}h6+! \textit{g}8
Black declines the sacrifice. If 28...\textit{w}xh6
29 \textit{x}xf7+ \textit{g}7 30 \textit{g}xd8 \textit{hx}d8 31 \textit{a}a5
Black’s pawn weaknesses on the queenside cannot be defended.
29 \textit{c}c6 \textit{xc}8 30 \textit{ad}1 \textit{xc}6 31 \textit{ad}5
Black faces the same problem as before: the queenside pawns are very weak.
31 ...f6 32 \textit{xb}5 g5 33 \textit{xb}3 \textit{f}f7 34
\textit{b}b7 \textit{e}6 35 \textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6 36 h4 \textit{g}8 37
\textit{f}4 \textit{xc}5+ 38 \textit{f}f1 gxh4 39 \textit{b}b5 \textit{c}c8 40
\textit{f}5+ \textit{d}d6 41 b4 h3 42 \textit{xc}5 h2 43 \textit{f}f4+
1-0

Finally Black resigned.

Puzzle 146
Gipsis-Tal, Vilnius 1955

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5 2 \textit{f}f3 \textit{d}c6 3 c3 d6 4 \textit{ex}d5
\textit{wx}d5 5 d4 \textit{g}4 6 \textit{e}e2 e6 7 0-0 \textit{f}f6 8
h3 \textit{h}5 9 \textit{e}e3 \textit{cx}d4 10 \textit{xd}4 \textit{xe}2 11
\textit{wx}e2 \textit{dx}d4 12 \textit{hx}d4 \textit{e}7 13 \textit{d}d2 0-0
14 \textit{fx}d1 \textit{w}f5 15 \textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 16 \textit{e}e4
\textit{ab}8 17 \textit{d}d7 a5 18 a4 \textit{we}5 19 \textit{xf}6+
gxf6 20 \textit{wx}e5 \textit{fxe}5 21 \textit{we}1
White has a clear edge in this double rook endgame due to his active rook on the seventh rank. It is really impressive that Tal actually wins this game!
21 ...f6 22 c4!
Preventing any counterplay on the queenside with ...b5.
22 ...\textit{f}f7 23 \textit{ad}1 \textit{c}8 24 b3 \textit{ac}7 25
\textit{xc}7 \textit{xc}7 26 \textit{ad}6 \textit{f}f7 27 \textit{f}f1 f5 28 g3
\textit{f}f6 29 \textit{b}b6 f4 30 gxf4 \textit{xf}4 31 \textit{e}e2
\textit{w}f5 32 \textit{t}f3 \textit{w}e5 33 \textit{d}d3 \textit{d}d7+ 34 \textit{c}c3
\textit{w}f5 35 \textit{b}b5+ e5 36 \textit{xx}a5 \textit{dd}1
Black’s activity gives him plenty of counterplay. The position is sharp and unclear.
37 \textit{d}d5 \textit{h}1 38 a5 \textit{xx}h3 39 \textit{d}d3 \textit{g}3 40
\textit{dd}2 \textit{g}2+ 41 \textit{we}1 \textit{ab}2 42 c5 h5 43
\textit{f}f1 h4 44 \textit{ac}3 h3 45 \textit{g}1

45 ...\textit{e}4! 46 a6
Or:
a) 46 fxe4+ \textit{w}g4 47 a6 f3 48 \textit{bx}b7 f2+ 49
\textit{f}f1 h2 50 \textit{g}g3+ \textit{h}4 and Black wins: after White promotes, he will be checkmated.
b) 46 c6 \textit{xx}c6 47 \textit{ac}5+ \textit{c}6 48 fxe4 f3
and again Black’s pawns decide.
46 ...\textit{e}3 47 axb7 \textit{ab}1+ 48 \textit{wh}2 a2 49
\textit{ee}3!
The best try. White loses immediately after
49 b8 \textit{h}1+ 50 \textit{hx}h1 \textit{e}1+ 51 \textit{h}2 \textit{g}3+ 52 \textit{h}1 \textit{w}2 mate.
49 ...fxe3 50 b8 \textit{h}1+ 51 \textit{hx}h1 e1+ 52 \textit{h}2 \textit{f}2+ 53 \textit{hx}h3
Now there is no mate on g3.
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

Puzzle 147
Tal-Etruk, Riga 1954
Nimzo-Indian Defence

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 d3 c5 4 f3 dxe4 5 dxe4 dxc4 6 bxc3 d6 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 e3 e5 9 d4 c6 10 c5 dxc5 11 bxc5 e6 12 c6 a5 13 cxb6 e7 14 e3 b8 15 a3

White’s dark-squared bishop is very strong in this position.

15...d7 16 h3 b6 17 f4 a4 18 d4 c6 19 a4 e5 20 d4 e7 21 d5+ cxd5 22 cxd5 a5 23 b6 e5 24 b7 e2 c6 25 e3 d8? 27 e1 xh7

White’s connected pawns on the kingside are too strong.

Puzzle 148
Portisch-Tal, Moscow 1967
King’s Indian Defence

1 d4 f5 2 c4 g6 3 g4 d5 4 cxd5 gxf5 5 d4 c6 6 e4 b5 7 dxe5 c4 8 f4 a6 9 e5 dxe5 10 fxe6

White has compensation for the loss of a piece.

11 b6! xxb6 12 c5 a8 18 c5 xxa5 xxc2 19 c1

32 h8+ 33 xh8 34 c6

31 dxf2!
Soon White has no more checks, so he tries a last trick...

36 \(Le4+ \quad Wxe4\) 37 \(Wa8+\)

...but he threw in the towel after

37... \(\Box b7\) 0-1

Puzzle 150
Tal-Abramov, Petrozavodsk
(Simultaneous display) 1984

26...\(\Box x f 2!\) 27 \(\Box x f 2 \quad Wa1+\) 28 \(\Box h 2 \quad Le5\) 0-1

Nice geometry that shows the weak dark squares!

Puzzle 151
Tal-Smyslov, Herceg Novi (Blitz) 1970

33...\(\Box x h 3+!\) 34 \(gxh3 \Box x h 3\)

Black wins back the knight on g4 with an irresistible attack.

35 \(Wd4 \quad \Box d 3\) 36 \(Wb6 \quad Wxg4+\) 37 \(Wf1\)

\(\Box h 3\) 38 \(Wc6 \quad \Box f 3\) 39 \(Wc5 \quad W h 4\) 0-1

Puzzle 152
Romanishin-Tal, Tallinn 1977

29 \(\Box x h 6! \quad Wb8\)

29...\(\Box x h 6\) loses to 30 \(Wh4+ \quad \Box g 6\) 31 \(Wg4+\), when the rook on f3 drops.

30 \(Wf5 \quad Wc3\) 31 \(Wh4+ \quad Wg8\) 32 \(Wxh5 \quad \Box d 8\)

33 \(\Box e 7+\) 1-0

White’s queen and knight make a very dangerous duo, for instance 33...\(Wf8\) 34 \(Wg6+ \quad Wg8\) 35 \(Wh8+\) and White wins back the exchange. With three extra pawns, White wins easily.

Puzzle 153
Tal-Darsniek, Riga 1950

22...\(Wx d 5!\) 23 \(exd5 \quad \Box d 4\) 24 \(Wd1 \quad \Box x d 5+\)

25 \(\Box f 1 \quad \Box c 4+!\)

Black opens up a route for his queen.

26 \(\Box g 1 \quad \Box f 3+\) 0-1

Tal resigned, as he must give up his queen to avoid mate.

Puzzle 154
Unzicker-Tal, Milan 1975

24 \(Wxf7! \quad Wxf7\) 25 \(Wxg6 \quad Wg7\) 26 \(\Box d 6+\)

\(\Box x d 6\) 27 \(\Box c 6+ \quad W e 7\) 28 \(Wxf7+ \quad Wxf7\)

29 \(Wx h 6\)

Much better than the primitive 29 \(Wxf7+\)
Mikhail Tal: Tactical Genius

\( \text{Kxf7 30 \text{Kxa8}, when the endgame is still winning, but it takes another 50 moves. The move in the game threatens mate in a few moves.} \)

29...\text{Ke5}

If 29...\text{Kb8} then 30 \text{Kxg5+ Kf6} 31 \text{Kxf6 mate!}

30 \text{Kxg5+ Kd6} 31 \text{Kxa8 Wc7} 32 \text{Kxe5+! 1-0}

Puzzle 155
Tal-Anand. Cannes 1989

35...\text{Ke3+!}

36 \text{Kg1}

After 36 fxe3 \text{Wc2+ 37 Kh3} Black mates with 37...\text{Kg4+ 38 Kxh4} (or 38 gxh4 \text{Kf3+ 39 Kg4 \text{Kg2} mate) 38...\text{Kxh2}+ 39 Kg4 \text{Kf5.} 36...\text{Wc2}

36...\text{Kxd1} allows some counterplay after 37 \text{Wd7}, although Black is still winning.

37 \text{Kf1 Kxd3 0-1}

There is no chance of a counter blow, as 38 \text{Wd7} is strongly met by 38...\text{Kxf2+! 39 Kxf2 Kd1+} and mate next move.

Puzzle 156
Tal-Gligoric. Candidates Match (Game 1), Belgrade 1968

\text{Ruy Lopez}

1 e4 e5 2 \text{Kf3 d6} 3 \text{Kb5 a6 4 a4} \text{g5} 5 0-0 \text{f5} 6 \text{Kce1 b5 7 \text{Kb3} d6 8 c3 0-0}

9 h3 h6 10 d4 \text{Ke8} 11 \text{Kbd2 Kf6} 12 \text{Kf1 Kc7 13 g3 Kd5 14 Kc2} \text{Ke4 15 a4} d5 16 b3 dxe4 17 \text{Kxe4} \text{Ke4 18} \text{Ke4} \text{Kxe4} 19 \text{Ke4} \text{Wd5} 20 \text{Kg4} \text{Kd5} 21 \text{Kxh6} \text{Kxb3} 22 \text{Kd3 bxa4} 23 \text{Kxa4 Wh8!}

24 \text{Kxa6?}

24 \text{Kc3} is stronger.

24...\text{exd4?}

There was no need to exchange immediately. 24...\text{Kxa8} is better.

25 \text{cx}d4?

Slightly better was 25 \text{Kxd4} \text{Kxd4} 26 \text{cx}d4, but maybe Tal wanted to keep the knight for a kingside attack.

25...\text{c5?}

It was stronger to first occupy the a-file and then push in the centre: 25...\text{Ka8} 26 \text{Kxa8} \text{Kxa8} 27 \text{Wh3} \text{c5} with mutual chances.

26 \text{Kb3} \text{Kb4} 27 \text{Kg5 Wb7} 28 \text{Khe6!} \text{Kxd4}
28...g6 is another option. Abramov gives 29 hxg6+ fxg6 30 hxg6+ g7 31 Qg5 e7 32 h5 d5 33 h7+ (or 33 xg7+ xg7 34 h7+ f8 35 h8+ g8 36 f6+ e8 37 e6+ e8 with equality) 33...f8 34 e6+ with unclear consequences.

In the game Black chooses a more active approach.
29 Qxd4 b1 30 c1

30...wb2
This active move is better than 30...cxd4, when White's initiative is very dangerous after 31 h5 xc1+ 32 h2. Black has to play very precisely here:

a) 32...d6?! 33 xxd6 c7 34 h6+ (White's attack continues) 34...g6 35 xgg6+ fxg6 36 xgg6+ f8 37 h6+ g8 38 g3 (Black's extra rook is not relevant compared to the position of Black's king; the power of White's queen and rook is too strong) 38 e7 39 e6+ f7 40 h7+ e8 41 e6+ d7 42 d5+ and White wins.

b) 32...c7+ is a more sober option. After 33 g3 g6 34 h8+ e7 35 h6+ f6 36 h4 Black can force the draw with 36...h1+! (not 36...e6? 37 c4+ f6 38 xe8 xg5 39 e8 f6 40 e4 g7 41 e8 and White has a winning attack) 37 g2 e1+. If White takes the rook with 38 xg1 there follows 38...c1+ 39 h2 xg5 and Black wins.
31 Wh5?
Better was 31 Db3 with the possible continuation 31...We2 32 d5 e6 33 h4 e1+ 34 h2 d6+ 35 f4 g1+ 36 g3 e3+ 37 g4!, given by Tal himself. He obviously overlooked something when he played h5.

31...Wxc1+ 32 h2 d6+!
It is possible that Tal had overlooked this move?
33 xxd6 f4+ 34 g3 Wxd6
Black has a winning material advantage.
35 f5

35...e11!
Or maybe this one? If Black didn't have this move, White's position would be preferable.
36 Wxf7+
Forced. Of course not 36 xxd6 h1 mate!
36...f7 37 xxd6 e6 38 g6+ d5 39 f5
White has some chances of counterplay, but with a couple of precise moves there is no doubt about the result.

39...\textit{Kb7} 40 \textit{Qe3+ Kxe3!} 41 \textit{fxe3 Qc7}

The pawn cannot be stopped.

42 \textit{Qg3} c4 43 \textit{Qf4} c3 44 e4+ \textit{Qc4} 45 \textit{Ha6} c2 46 \textit{Ha1} \textit{Qd3} 0-1

**Puzzle 157**

\textit{Tal-Vaganian, Leningrad 1974}

\textit{Queen's Indian Defence}

1 \textit{Qf3} \textit{Qf6} 2 c4 b6 3 d4 e6 4 \textit{Qc3} \textit{Ab7} 5 \textit{Qg5} \textit{Ab4} 6 e3 h6 7 \textit{Qh4} g5 8 \textit{Qg3} \textit{Qe4} 9 \textit{Wc2} \textit{Qxh3+} 10 \textit{bxc3} d6 11 \textit{Qd3} f5 12 d5 exd5 13 cxd5 \textit{Qxd5} 14 \textit{Qd4} \textit{Wf6} 15 f3 \textit{Qxg3} 16 \textit{hxg3 Qd7} 17 \textit{Qxf5} 0-0-0 18 \textit{Wa4} a5 19 \textit{Qf2} \textit{Ab7} 20 g4 \textit{Qe7} 21 \textit{Qc6}

White has a clear advantage. Black’s only chance is the exchange sacrifice.

21...\textit{Wg7} 22 \textit{Qxd8} \textit{Qxd8} 23 \textit{Wd4} \textit{Wf8} 24 \textit{Qh3} \textit{Qb8} 25 \textit{Mh1} \textit{Wf7} 26 a4

26 \textit{Wd2} was more solid.

26...\textit{Qe5} 27 \textit{Qxh6} \textit{Wa2+} 28 \textit{Qg3} \textit{We2} 29 \textit{Qh8} \textit{Qxh8} 30 \textit{Qxh8+} \textit{Qa7} 31 \textit{Qe4}

31...\textit{Qxf3+}!

Forcing a draw.

32 \textit{Wd3}

Or 32 \textit{Qxf3} \textit{Qxf3} 33 \textit{gxf3} \textit{Qe1+} and Black draws by perpetual check.

32...\textit{Qg1} 33 \textit{Qh2} \textit{Qf3+} 34 \textit{Qg3} \textit{Qg1} 1/2-1/2

**Puzzle 158**

\textit{Tal-Olafsson, Las Palmas 1975}

22...\textit{Wf4+} 23 \textit{Kxe7}

23 \textit{Wxf4} \textit{Qd1+} mates.

23...\textit{Qf8} 24 \textit{Wa5}

If 24 \textit{We2} Black wins with 24...\textit{Qxf3} 25 \textit{Wxf3} (25 \textit{gxf3} \textit{Qg5+} drops the rook immediately) 25...\textit{Qd6!} in view of the double threat on e7 and d1.

24...\textit{Qd1+} 25 \textit{Qe1} \textit{Qg5} 0-1

Black eyes both a5 and e7.

**Puzzle 159**

\textit{Nezhmetdinov-Tal, Baku 1961}

\textit{Sicilian Defence}

1 e4 c5 2 \textit{Qf3} d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 \textit{Qxd4} \textit{Qf6} 5 \textit{Qc3} e6 6 \textit{Qe2} a6 7 0-0 \textit{Wc7} 8 f4 \textit{Qb7} 9 g4 b5 10 a3 \textit{Ab7} 11 \textit{Qf3} \textit{Qc5} 12 \textit{Wb2} e5 13 \textit{Qf5} g6 14 \textit{fxe5} dxe5 15 \textit{Qh6!} \textit{Qe6} 16 \textit{Qg2!} \textit{Qg7} 17 \textit{Qxf6!}

![Diagram](image)

White sacrifices the exchange.

17...\textit{Qxf6} 18 \textit{Qd5} \textit{Wd8}

18...\textit{Qxd5} offered more chances. After 19 \textit{exd5} \textit{Qd4} 20 \textit{Wf2} \textit{Wb6} 21 g5 Black can exchange queens and go for the endgame with 21...\textit{Qc2+} 22 \textit{Qf1} \textit{Qxf2+} 23 \textit{Qxf2} \textit{Qd4} 24 \textit{gxh6} \textit{Qxc2} 25 \textit{Qxa2} although, with two bishops for a rook, White still has all chances to win.

19 \textit{Wf2} \textit{Qf4?} 20 \textit{Qxf4} \textit{exf4} 21 e5! \textit{Qxe5} 21...\textit{Qxd5} 22 \textit{exf6!} \textit{Qxg2} 23 \textit{Qe1+} wins.
22 \( \text{He1 f6} \)

If Black plays 22...\( \text{exd5} \) 23 \( \text{He5+ f6} \)
White’s attack proceeds with 24 \( \text{c6+ f8} \)
25 \( \text{xa8 xxa8} \) 26 \( \text{d4 g7} \) 27 \( \text{f5+} \) (very nice - Black is mated) 27...\( \text{hx6} \) 28 \( \text{h5+ gxh5} \) 29 \( \text{f6 mate.} \)

23 \( \text{xf6+ xf6} \) 24 \( \text{d4!} \)

Black cannot castle, the bishop on e5 falls and White’s attack is irresistible. The bishop on b7 is less relevant.

24...\( \text{f8} \) 25 \( \text{xe5 d4} \)
Black has no time for 25...\( \text{g2}, \) while after 25...\( \text{d8} \) White wins the queen with 26 \( \text{c8+ g7} \) 27 \( \text{e7+}. \)

26 \( \text{f5+ gx5} \) 27 \( \text{xh8+ e7} \) 28 \( \text{g7+} \)

If 29...\( \text{d6} \) 30 \( \text{f7+} \) Black loses his queen.

50 \( \text{xd7!} \)

The greedy 50 \( \text{xf7+?! xf7} \) 51 \( \text{xd7+} \) is not the best. After 51...\( \text{e6} \) 52 \( \text{e7+ d5} \) the outcome of the game is not yet clear.

50...\( \text{xd7} \) 51 \( \text{e6} \)
The counterattack 51...\( \text{b5+} \) is not good enough either. After 52 \( \text{h4 b7} \) (or 52...\( \text{g5+} \) 53 \( \text{h5 e8+} \) 54 \( \text{xg5 b5+} \) 55 \( \text{h4} \) and White is ready to mate Black’s king) 53 \( \text{f1!} \) Black has no defence against d6-d7 or e6-e7 followed by mate on either g7 or f8.

52 \( \text{e5 xb2} \) 53 \( \text{e7} \)

Threatening mate on g7.

53...\( \text{f7} \) 54 \( \text{d7+} \) 1-0
Black resigned in view of 54...\( \text{xd7} \) 55 \( \text{f6+ e8} \) 56 \( \text{f8 mate} \) or 54...\( \text{b1} \) 55 \( \text{e8+ xe8} \) 56 \( \text{dxe8 mate!} \)

Puzzle 161
Polugaveisky-Tal, Soviet Championship, Tbilisi 1956
Semi-Tarrasch Defence

1 \( \text{d4 d5} \) 2 \( \text{c4 e6} \) 3 \( \text{c3 c5} \) 4 \( \text{e3 f6} \) 5 \( \text{f3 e6} \) 6 \( \text{a3 exd4} \) 7 \( \text{exd4 e7} \) 8 \( \text{d3} \)
9 \( \text{xc4 0-0} \) 10 \( \text{b6} \) 11 \( \text{d3 b7} \)
12 \( \text{e1 b8} \) 13 \( \text{a2 c7} \) 14 \( \text{g5 ed8} \)
15 \( \text{e2 g4} \) 16 \( \text{b5 a6} \)

17 \( \text{xe6!} \)

This wins a pawn, but the story is not yet over.
17...\( \text{xb5} \)
17...\( \text{fxe6} \) leaves White with a winning posi
tion after 18 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}e6+ \texttt{\textbackslash f}8 19 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c7 \texttt{\textbackslash x}c7 20 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}g4.}}

18 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xg4 \texttt{\textbackslash e}2

This, of course, had to be taken into account.

19 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}e7 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xe7 20 \texttt{\textbackslash e}1 \texttt{\textbackslash x}f3 21 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xf3 \texttt{\textbackslash w}d7

Both players have seen this far. The pressure on d4 seems to give Black counterplay, but Polugatevsky had seen further.

22 \textbf{d5!}

White temporarily sacrifices the exchange to seize the initiative.

22...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash d}4 23 \texttt{\textbackslash w}d3 \texttt{\textbackslash c}2 24 \texttt{\textbackslash b}1! \texttt{\textbackslash x}e1

Not 24...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xd5?? 25 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xd5 \texttt{\textbackslash x}d5 26 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}c2 \texttt{\textbackslash c}8 mate!}}

25 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xh7+ \texttt{\textbackslash f}8 26 \texttt{\textbackslash f}5 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xd5

The knight cannot be protected as 26...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}7?? leads to mate after 27 \texttt{\textbackslash w}h8.}

27 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}e1

The threat of mate forces Black to give back the exchange.

27...\textbf{f6 28 \texttt{\textbackslash x}c8 \texttt{\textbackslash x}c8

With a pawn up and an insecure black king, White should win. However, Tal manages to save half-a-point.

29 \textbf{h4 \texttt{\textbackslash d}8 30 h5 \texttt{\textbackslash w}d3

31 \textit{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xd3??

In the rook endgame Black has real chances of survival. White should have kept the queens on, after which the game would have been practically winning.

31...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}xd3 32 \texttt{\textbackslash c}1 \texttt{\textbackslash b}3 33 \texttt{\textbackslash c}2 \texttt{\textbackslash g}8 34 \texttt{\textbackslash g}4 \texttt{\textbackslash h}7 35 \texttt{\textbackslash g}2 \texttt{\textbackslash h}6 36 f3 \texttt{\textbackslash a}5 37 \texttt{\textbackslash g}3 \texttt{\textbackslash a}4 38 \texttt{\textbackslash c}4 \texttt{\textbackslash x}b2 39 \texttt{\textbackslash x}a4 \texttt{\textbackslash b}3 40 \texttt{\textbackslash a}8 \texttt{\textbackslash h}7 41 \texttt{\textbackslash f}4 \texttt{\textbackslash b}5 42 \texttt{\textbackslash e}4 \texttt{\textbackslash c}3 43 \texttt{\textbackslash a}5 \texttt{\textbackslash b}4 44 \texttt{\textbackslash x}b4 \texttt{\textbackslash c}4+ 45 \texttt{\textbackslash f}5 \texttt{\textbackslash x}b4 46 \texttt{\textbackslash e}7 \texttt{\textbackslash b}3 47 \textbf{f4 \texttt{\textbackslash b}5+ 48 \texttt{\textbackslash e}6 \texttt{\textbackslash b}4 \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}

Puzzle 162
Tal-Vaganian, World Blitz Championship, Saint John 1988

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
% Pawn diagram
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

27...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash w}xh2?

Black can win with 27...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}g1+!! 28 \texttt{\textbackslash x}g1 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xh2+ 29 \texttt{\textbackslash f}1 \texttt{\textbackslash w}h1 mate.}

28 \texttt{\textbackslash e}1 \texttt{\textbackslash a}5+ 29 \texttt{\textbackslash x}a5 \texttt{\textbackslash x}a5 30 \texttt{\textbackslash f}6+ \texttt{\textbackslash f}7 31 \texttt{\textbackslash d}7+ \texttt{\textbackslash x}f6 32 \texttt{\textbackslash c}3+ \texttt{\textbackslash e}5 33 \texttt{\textbackslash d}4 \texttt{\textbackslash x}d4 34 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xd4 \texttt{\textbackslash w}xd4 35 \texttt{\textbackslash x}d4 \texttt{\textbackslash b}3 36 \texttt{\textbackslash c}6i 1-0

Puzzle 163
Lutikov-Tal, Kiev 1964

24 \texttt{\textbackslash x}b7+ \texttt{\textbackslash x}b7 25 \texttt{\textbackslash w}d8!! \texttt{\textbackslash x}d8 26 \texttt{\textbackslash x}d7+ \texttt{\textbackslash x}d7 27 \texttt{\textbackslash f}8\texttt{\textbackslash w

White is a piece up and winning.

27...\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash w}d4 28 \texttt{\textbackslash f}3+ \texttt{\textbackslash a}7 29 \texttt{\textbackslash e}4 \texttt{\textbackslash w}b6 30 \texttt{\textbackslash f}1 \texttt{\textbackslash w}d6 31 \texttt{\textbackslash g}3 \texttt{\textbackslash g}5 32 \texttt{\textbackslash e}3+ \texttt{\textbackslash a}8 33 \texttt{\textbackslash e}4 \texttt{\textbackslash d}1+ 34 \texttt{\textbackslash g}2 1-0
Mikhail Tal was simply a chess phenomenon. The ‘magician from Riga’ stunned the chess world when he became the youngest ever World Champion (at that time) in 1960, and he won countless supporters for his scintillating tactical play and his infectious enthusiasm for the game. Tal’s dazzling tactical style would often leave his hapless opponents in a state of shell shock. As former World Champion Vassily Smyslov once noted, ‘Tal’s appearance in chess had the effect of an exploding bomb, since his style of play was distinguished by extraordinary combinative brilliance.’

In this book Alexander Raetsky and Maxim Chetverik revisit Tal’s brilliant victories. The authors have carefully picked his most famous and instructive games and combinations, ones which set the chess world alight with admiration. A study of this tactical genius is sure to entertain and benefit the aspiring chess student.

- Includes Tal’s most brilliant sacrificial attacks
- Ideal for the attacking-minded chess player
- Perfect for sharpening your tactical ability

Alexander Raetsky is a Russian International Master and an experienced competitor on the chess tournament circuit. He’s also a skilled writer and has been a frequent contributor to the famous Russian magazine 64 and the internationally renowned publication New In Chess. His first book for Everyman, Meeting 1 e4, was very well received by the chess-playing public.

Maxim Chetverik, also from Russia, is a FIDE Master and a renowned openings theoretician. Earlier works for Everyman include English ...e5, which he also co-authored with Raetsky.