

Evgeny Bareev & Ilya Levitov

From London to Elista

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Cover design: Steven Boland

Supervisor: Peter Boel

Proofreading: René Olthof

Production: Anton Schermer

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Contents

FOREWORD		
What you Sow...		12
Strategy and Tactics		13
Team Politics		16
Physical Preparation		20
Acknowledgements		25
PART ONE	Overthrow of a Colossus	27
A Gift from the Gods		29
Forward, to Berlin!		34
‘The Blunder of the Century’		39
On World Championship Matches		48
Horsing Around		60
The Ghost of the Mad Rook		68
Chess and Kabbalah		84
A Toilet Story		85
The Berlin Philosophy		91
Incidents Come in Pairs		93
Knockdown		102
Akela Has Missed!		105
The Results of the First Half of the Match		112
The King Went to the Left...		118
On the ‘Iron Enemy’		123
Torn to Shreds		126
A New Twist on an Old Story		134
Multicoloured Swings and Painted Roundabouts		139
On the Greats		145
A Holiday Resort		147
Blade Runner		150
Eyes Wide Shut		159
The Results of the Match		165
PART TWO	Photo Finish in Brissago	173
Between London and Brissago		175
The Last Step		179
The Unbearable Lightness of Being		181

A Pyrrhic Victory	186
‘A Brilliant Game’	192
Russian Wall	196
Chess and Literature	198
Leko-ish Way	202
White to Win	205
A Hungarian with no Hunger	214
Chess and Action	219
A Dog in the Manger	224
Chess and Psychology	228
Mission Accomplished	240
A Tablet under the Tongue	250
Time in Chess	254
A Miracle We Need	255
Live and Let Die	259
A Prisoner of Faint-Heartedness	262
When the Gods Play Jokes	266
When the Gods Laugh	275
The Results of the Match	283
Two Matches	298
PART THREE	
Big Brother in Elista	301
Introduction	303
You’re Responsible for the One Who Made You	307
Kramnik Versus Kramnik	309
A Sudden Blow	312
Double Whammy	317
Flea Market	324
Cash in While You Can	328
Eagerly Waiting for the Champions League	341
Sweet and Lowdown	345
The Horse Is Stolen	354
Topa – Cheater?!	357
The Story of H6	363
Groundhog Day	368
Rock Bottom	374
The Usual Procedures	377
Condemned to a Tie-Break	381
To Be Continued...	384
The Moment of Truth	388
Index of Openings	398

FOREWORD

'I can't get to sleep, it's freezing. Volodya went all-out!'

Evgeny Bareev during the match in Brissago (2004)

When Vladimir Kramnik surprised everyone in Game 8 of his World Championship match with Peter Leko by sharply complicating the situation on the board and playing a variation with a queen sacrifice that he'd prepared at home, his second, Evgeny Bareev, unusually, couldn't get to sleep peacefully after having been up all night working.



Evgeny BAREEV. Professional. In this book also called 'Zhenya'.

Born November 21, 1966 in Chelyabinsk Oblast, International Grandmaster. Gold medal-winner on the Russian team in four Chess Olympiads (1990, 1994, 1996, 1998), participant in two World Championships (1997, 2005) and two European Championships (1992, 2003). Winner of many Russian and international tournaments.

Character restrained and gentle. Lives in Moscow. Graduated from GTsOLIFK (the State Central Order of Lenin Institute of Physical Training). Married, has two children. Favourite animals: big cats, crocodiles, sharks. Favourite food: sweetcorn, tomatoes. Favourite drink: black tea. Hobbies: poker, downhill skiing.

Kramnik, six games from the end of the match, with an equal score, decided to throw off the fetters of a heavy, stodgy battle and take a risk... The computer, evaluating the position, endlessly changed its opinion and showed an unconditional win first for Kramnik, then for Leko. Volodya was playing unbelievably fast, and it was obvious that the entire variation was sitting at home on his computer screen... Peter was thinking for a long time. After Black's 25th move the computer thought for a minute or two and finally announced that Kramnik was losing the game. Having put himself in a critical position, Vladimir was only able to outplay his opponent in the last game and keep the title of World Chess Champion.

Constantly exchanging impressions with Bareev during this match, I thought it would be interesting to convey to the reader the unbelievable tension of the struggle that's characteristic of a battle for the chess crown. I – am Ilya Levitov.

Ilya LEVITOV. Amateur.

Born September 11, 1979 in Moscow. A partner in the Russian consultancy agency SV Consulting. By profession – public relations expert, by declaration – chess amateur.

Character strange. Married, has a son. Favourite animal: elephant. Favourite food: 'Soviet' pie with cabbage. Favourite drink: apple juice, diluted carbonated water with a ratio of 40/60. Hobbies: chess, football.



In autumn 2004 in the Swiss town of Brissago Vladimir Kramnik defended the title of World Champion that he had won in London in 2000 in single combat against the hitherto invincible Garry Kasparov.

Kasparov's five matches with Anatoly Karpov (1984-1990) had been an outstanding occurrence, and not only in the professional sense. They marked the end of a golden age of chess, an era when the duels for the title of strongest player on the planet attracted interest even from people who were far removed from this game. At least, this was the case in the USSR. In the '90s Russian citizens' value system endured powerful external pressure. People lost interest in chess, quiet indoor pastimes were the last thing on their minds. The chess kingdom also had to deal with restructurings¹ and revolutions.

The departure in 1993 of Garry Kasparov and Nigel Short from the International Chess Federation (FIDE), just before their match for the world crown, caused a schism, and the strict system for determining the chess king that had existed for half a century collapsed. People who hadn't been regularly following events in the chess world started asking professional players more and more often – some perplexed, others ironically – 'So how many champions do you have, exactly, and who are they, in fact?'

All the events that were held in that decade to establish the strongest chess player in the world suffered from some deficiency or other, which made it impossible to take them completely seriously. Either the strengths of the players were

1 A reference to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of perestroika, which means restructuring.

clearly unequal, or the absence in a tournament of several of the top grandmasters inevitably devalued the title that was won in a tough sporting struggle, or the rules were too obviously favourable to one of the players, putting the other in disadvantageous conditions. And, most importantly, despite all his efforts to give weight to the play-off for the title of World Champion in the democratic knockout system, FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov didn't manage to shake the 'monarchist convictions' either of the ordinary amateurs or the venerable professionals that had developed over decades. In their opinion, the title could only be considered legal if it was won in single combat with the thirteenth chess king, Kasparov, who for all these years had still remained the absolute leader of the ratings list.

Indeed, the history of chess bears witness: the genuine World Champion, acknowledged by everyone, is the one who takes the title from the previous king in a one-on-one duel. Why is that? Because it just can't be any other way in this game.

A battle on the chess board is an ideal vehicle for a confrontation of personalities, a real intellectual rivalry. Here it's impossible to dump the blame for defeat on partners (there aren't any), arbiters (they decide almost nothing, they just ensure that the rules are followed), or coaches (during the game they can't do anything to help you). You have to depend only on your own strengths and possibilities.

In the hall where a World Championship match takes place, spectators sit and listen through earphones to the grandmasters' play being gone through with a fine toothcomb by other grandmasters; amateur chess players sit at home with a sandwich in their hand and, using the most modern computer programs, they see the strongest move in the position each time. But the participants have to find the best decisions over the course of five or six hours without any computers or hints, to the sound of the inexorably ticking clock, constantly bringing them closer and closer to their biggest nightmare – TIME TROUBLE.

A person walks down the street and says on his mobile phone: 'Dude, I'm in time trouble, talk faster.' And he doesn't suspect that he's slashed a knife through the heart of the professional chess player walking past him! What does he know about time trouble?! You get an advantage in the opening, you increase it in the middle of the game – the middlegame – and, when you only have to make a couple of precise moves to get the win... you make a mistake, because there's a minute left on your clock. You can only imagine what a tragedy this is – the results of complicated, stressful work that you've been doing for many hours, disappear in one minute! Or for the entire game you've had to defend, to search for hidden resources, to devise traps, and when there are seconds left before the time control and you have to make the only correct decision, you slip, nervously making the first move you can think of, and you immediately realise that you can shake your opponent's hand to admit defeat. Against the applause of the audience, turning red with shame and vexation, you hide backstage. And there isn't anyone you can pass the responsibility onto – you lost in an honest battle, one on one, and you turned out to be worse, weaker...

It's precisely these emotions that Kasparov went through when he lost the second game of his match with Kramnik in one move. We'll return to this incident again.

A defeat in chess has a more powerful impact on the human psyche than a defeat in any other sport, and a victory takes you to a higher peak of intellectual pleasure. Why did the famous Bobby Fischer, after winning a World Championship match, not sit down at the board for 20 years? Why did Morphy, Steinitz and Rubinstein go crazy? Why, when they look at some of today's great chess players, do people rotate their finger on their temple? Because it's sometimes impossible to withstand the crazy nervous tension of a game, a tournament or a match, and it's hard to acknowledge someone else's intellectual superiority. A defeat in chess is a harsh public destruction of the personality, and always a small death.

A World Chess Championship match... everyone's attention is riveted on you, and you have to come out onto the biggest chess stage in the world and prove that you're better, smarter, more talented. In 2000 in London Vladimir Kramnik achieved the biggest victory of his life. Beating Garry Kasparov in two out of fifteen games and not losing a single one, he became the fourteenth World Champion. We'll make a proviso: not everyone agrees with this. Part of the chess community thinks that Kramnik didn't obtain the right to a match in an honest sporting selection process, as Kasparov himself nominated him as his opponent, despite the fact that two years earlier Vladimir had lost a match to challenger Alexey Shirov. However, in the conditions of confusion that reigned in the chess world, evidently no decision existed that would have suited everyone. No matter how it all happened, only a person with very biased leanings, to put it mildly, could possibly diminish Kramnik's outstanding achievement.

After his London triumph Vladimir started organising the Candidates cycle that he had agreed on with Kasparov even before the match. The ex-champion didn't want to take part in the selection process, insisting that Kramnik should give him the right to a rematch – a ridiculous idea to transport from a century ago without a time machine, when anyone could challenge the champion to a match if they could secure a prize fund. So what, it was his business, his problem. Kramnik fulfilled his obligations. In 2002 in Dortmund a Candidates Tournament took place, which Peter Leko won. It took over two years to organise his match with Kramnik – another testament to the fact that chess wasn't going through its best times. In these years two attempts by FIDE to hold its own match, in which Kasparov's opponent would be the FIDE World Champion, were also unsuccessful – first this was Ruslan Ponomariov, and then Rustam Kasimdzhanov.

Next came the scandalous unification match between Vladimir Kramnik and Veselin Topalov, after which Kramnik became the absolute World Champion without any prefixes ('classical') or slander ('but he's completely forgotten how to play!').

In this way, the matches in London, Brissago and Elista have now become the last in the series of classical duels for the chess crown. Journalist Iakov Damsky and

grandmaster Sergey Shipov have already written a book, *The Last Intrigue of the Century*, about the Kasparov-Kramnik match. Is it worth going back to the events of seven years ago again? In our opinion, it is. If we're talking purely about the chess content, then in previous years events on this scale always underwent a critical interpretation – variations were checked thoroughly, and evaluations were fine-tuned several times. In our day it would seem that the annotator's use of 'infallible' computer programs would allow us to dot all the 'i's immediately. However, we appeal to the reader: don't become like the kind of advanced amateurs who, sitting at home on their sofa and watching their Fritzes or Juniors work on the grandmasters' game, criticise chess players from on high and think that there are no more secrets left in this game. There are still areas where a person understands things better, and for a high-quality commentary on a game between two grandmasters it isn't enough to simply press one button. And although Sergey Shipov did his work professionally and conscientiously, that doesn't mean at all that there's nothing left for other analysts to do here.

There are two more reasons why we decided to describe the London match in detail. Firstly, Evgeny Bareev was Kramnik's second in the matches with Kasparov and Leko, he viewed the battle from within, he was a direct participant in it and is able to convey the drama of the intellectual confrontation at the highest level like nobody else. Another motive is the natural desire to compare the matches. In the opinion of a large number of people, in particular Kasparov, a World Champion is a spokesman for the ideas of his era. If we take this as an axiom, then how can the era of Vladimir Kramnik be characterised, how is it different from the preceding ones? How did Kramnik manage to conquer a giant like Kasparov? What did Vladimir change in himself and in the chess world in the four years that passed before the next match? Why did the duel with Leko turn out to be so difficult, and thanks to what did Kramnik nevertheless manage to obtain the result that he required? In order to answer these questions, we met a few times a week and recorded Evgeny's opinion about Kramnik's matches on a Dictaphone. The interrogation was wide-ranging.

In our difficult times, concerned manufacturers often try to offer the grateful consumer a light version of their product. Shapely women drink the low-calorie Diet Coke, and the simple chess amateur puts the program ChessBase Light onto the computer, not burdening it with a database of a million games. It's rumoured that they've even invented a 'Viagra Light'.

By our reckoning, the notes to the games offered here shouldn't scare away those readers for whom chess is merely a pleasant leisure-time activity... Explaining the course of the battle to us, Evgeny laid stress on the positional and psychological subtleties, avoiding cumbersome theoretical computations and densely tangled variations. But for chess professionals all the games have also been annotated by Bareev in the traditional manner.

In the same form as the Platonic dialogues, discussions are presented about important elements like preparation for a match. In our time-outs and tea breaks we also touched on other subjects that the chess community is concerned about nowadays. Don't be surprised if, reading the book, you stumble upon reflections about the length of tennis player Maria Sharapova's legs and the whiteness of her skirt, or the dramatic penalty that Roberto Baggio missed. If we remain in our tower made of black and white wood, chess will never get out of the current crisis.

We hope that you won't get bored in the intervals between games. We have tried to ensure that a book about the most difficult ordeal in the life of a chess player can be read easily.

WHAT YOU SOW...

In 2000 Vladimir Kramnik won the title of World Chess Champion, outplaying the 'eternal' champion Garry Kasparov in brilliant style with a score of 8½-6½. For the majority of chess amateurs (and professionals, too) this result was shocking. Once again: Kasparov didn't win a single game!

But the people who were with Kramnik at that moment knew that Volodya had been able to approach the match in a virtually ideal physical and psychological condition. In this chapter you'll frequently read the delighted opinions of Kramnik's seconds about his external appearance before the match with Kasparov – 'he'd lost weight', 'he'd got stronger', 'he was glowing with health', 'he looked like an athlete'. In 2000 everything turned out better than it ever had – the choice of opening strategy proved to be correct, and his fighting mood and good sporting form helped him to save some hopeless positions. As often happens, a person approaching the peak of his career was able to gather everything he needed into his hands and carry out the final push towards the main goal of his life.

Four years passed. Kramnik looked more and more pale with each year (already not like an athlete). His health declined, he wasn't winning tournaments. Not possessing a big reserve of energy, he always gained his victories with great difficulty. In 2003 at the Dortmund tournament Vladimir was able to win only one game out of ten, and the rest were drawn. But Kasparov, whom he had conquered, won five(!) games out of ten in 2001 at the Linares super-tournament, not losing a single one. The chess world started talking about 'the accidental champion'... We, too, were starting to worry...

In July 2002, after winning the Dortmund Candidates Tournament, the young Hungarian Peter Leko was set for a match with Kramnik. Here we exchanged glances approvingly: 'Yes, this isn't a Kasparov for you, Volodya won't have any problems, he's both more talented and more experienced'. Volodya himself assessed his chances as 60-40. We assumed he was being modest.

And the first game of the match completely confirmed our assumptions – in a dead-drawn endgame Leko contrived to lose as White! But in the direct internet

broadcast of the post-game press conference we saw the tired, pallid face of Kramnik, who was only able to produce something like a smile at the end. It was then that doubt also crept in, the sense that something was rotten in the state of Denmark.

As a result, the match with Leko turned into sheer torment. Unconfident play, obvious psychological problems, the loss of a drawn endgame in the fifth game, an opening failure in the eighth. And only at the very end was Kramnik able to break Leko's resistance with an unbelievable exertion of his will, taking the match to a tie and retaining the World Title.

Doing a comparison with Bareev of Kramnik's preparation for the matches, we found that for Leko it was conducted differently than for Kasparov – most of the attention went to analysis of opening positions, and the physical and psychological aspects were put onto the back burner.

After the Leko match, we'd established with sadness that in our eyes Kramnik had lost his unique understanding of chess, his creative mood, his fighting spirit; or, in other words, all the qualities that had allowed him to beat Kasparov. Vladimir approached the match with Topalov in Elista in 2006 in a much more combative condition. He'd been able to deal with his health and to bring back his former understanding and energy at the board.

The general public in Russia mainly knows about how preparation is conducted for an important chess event from the Vladimir Vysotsky² song *The Honour of the Chess Crown*. Much of it is true to life, although some parts are grotesque, perhaps. In this chapter we'll try to look into the kitchen of a chess player in the period of his preparation for a World Championship match and to draw a complete picture of this labour-intensive process, and we'll also ask a question about why Kramnik, who had a successful recipe for preparation in 2000, didn't use it in 2004.

As Evgeny Bareev wasn't Kramnik's second at the time of the match with Topalov in 2006, our account of this event has received a slightly different form. There are obviously no 'notes of a second', but as there was frequent contact before, during and after this match, the information given will still be very much 'from the lion's mouth'.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS

JOEL LAUTIER, Kramnik's second in the London match: 'There was a strategy, but it didn't work, as the match didn't follow the planned scenario. It's psychologically difficult to work out a strategy in advance, because it's impossible to foresee many subtle points.' (*In this case Joel means the quick win in Game 2. A long series of draws or even a loss at first for Kramnik had been envisaged – E.B.*)

2 A Soviet singer, poet, actor and alcoholic who died in 1980, aged 42.

VASILY SMYSLOV, the seventh World Champion: ‘The spirit of the age dictates that people have to prepare well. All these computer variations put pressure on them. I remember Marina Dolmatova described how Seryozha (*grandmaster Sergey Dolmatov – I.L.*) was playing in a tournament and before a game he worried: “Oh, we haven’t looked at this variation.” And I: “Does it really matter?” I often had to play people I didn’t know. I didn’t have a computer, I wasn’t familiar with the ideas of the new players, I had to play it by ear. And I was used to playing any move – 1.e4, 1.d4, 1.c4, 1.♘f3.’

BAREEV: No, it does matter if your opponent is well prepared. The difference is that these obscure players also played it by ear and they played much worse than the harmonious Vasily Vasilievich.

LEVITOV: In recent years there’s been a revolution in opening preparation. What only Kasparov used to do, everyone now does, and there’s an enormous amount of work for the top-class grandmasters to shoulder in the search for a new move. It’s become difficult to find any untravelled path.

BAREEV: This is mainly a problem for the top chess players. In essence, scrupulous analytical work that demands an enormous investment of effort and time is done by only a handful of people. They find and play the novelties, and the overwhelming majority of chess players sit with the Internet, patiently waiting for a fresh idea to appear in a variation that’s interesting to them, and as soon as they see something new, having quickly checked it on their computer, they rush to successfully use it first. It’s the kind of work that the mechanics do in the film *Only Old Men Go to Battle*³. They wait.

LEVITOV: So, does a grandmaster today really have to sit for two or three hours before the game and simply refresh his memory with a huge number of opening lines? To learn everything from cover to cover – otherwise he can’t do anything?

BAREEV: If you’ve done a huge amount of work, then yes – you have to refresh your memory, because otherwise you won’t remember it for the game, and it’ll be as if you never had this knowledge. And Kramnik had to spend several hours before a game refreshing his information, memorising certain variations.

LEVITOV: So there’s no creative work during a match?

BAREEV: Of course there is. Where do you think novelties come from?! But the volume of information that the chess player has to deal with is now so great that a team of assistants working several hours a day is needed, in order to work through a framework of variations. And to refresh the variations and ideas before the game, this takes several hours.

3 Soviet film about World War II pilots, released in 1973. In the film, the old men are only about 20.

strengths of blondes and brunettes and their preparedness for the specific encounter. In other words, you have to investigate every specific case separately.

LEVITOV: How do you control your emotions, how do you avoid showing that your opponent has surprised you horribly, for example, with his choice of opening? Does everyone have their own acting methods?

BAREEV: To a certain extent. People sometimes get ideas on this from the good results of new players. Later they adapt to their openings and style of play and stop reacting to the unexpected. It's better to combine your acting talents with specific skills and abilities.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

NOTES OF A SECOND: The most dramatic game of the two first matches. Kramnik comes out for the game with guns blazing, after preparing a very dangerous variation with a queen sacrifice. Leko brilliantly solves the problems, finds a hole in Kramnik's analysis and wins this extremely important game. The score is now +1 in Leko's favour. Smells like a barbecue.

SVIDLER: 'I certainly remember what Volodya's mood was like before Game 8. I'd played with him, I'd worked with him a lot, I knew what kind of a chess player he was. People who think he's a boring, uninteresting player don't know what they're talking about. At a certain point it dawned on him that everything that was happening was gnawing him to shreds from the inside. We said to him before the game: "The Marshall isn't fully prepared, let's play another Anti-Marshall, and we'll have it ready by Sunday." We'd have done it by Sunday. Naturally, it would have been all right. But he said: "No, I can't do any more. Enough."

KRAMNIK: 'Before the game I decided that it was time to put away the Anti-Marshall because I hadn't managed to start a battle with it, I'd played three games with these moves a3 and h3 and I hadn't managed to get a full-blooded game. For two days my whole team worked on a very sharp variation in the Marshall that I'd prepared for the match a long time ago.'

7 October 2004
No 23. Ruy Lopez
KRAMNIK – LEKO
8th Match Game

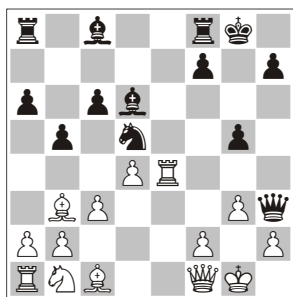
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6
5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♙b3 0-0 8.c3**

The disconsolate results of the opening discussion in the Anti-Marshall literally

forced Kramnik to urgently look for another weapon in the Spanish, and by now there was nothing left other than to go headlong into – more accurately, to withstand the siege of – the sharp main lines of the Marshall. No cosmetic repairs could overcome the general tendency: that his opponent had no problems with Black.

**8...d5 9.exd5 ♖xd5 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5
11.♞xe5 c6 12.d4 ♕d6 13.♞e1 ♔h4
14.g3 ♔h3 15.♞e4 g5 16.♞f1**

Taking a rest from the very popular and fresh continuations, we had prepared a quite rare, virtually forgotten variation. The calculation was made on the basis that his opponent might not be fully prepared, and indeed, he thought for nearly an hour, deciding whether to play for a middlegame that he didn't understand, or an endgame that he didn't know.



16...♞h5

Preferring a game with queens. In fact not at all bad is 16...♞xf1+ 17.♔xf1 ♕f5! (17...♕h3+ 18.♔g1 f5 19.♞e1 f4 20.♗d2 ♔h8 21.♗e4 ♕e7 22.♕d2± Botoy-Xu Jun, Manila 1991; 17...f5 18.♞e1 f4 19.♔g2 ♞a7 20.♗d2 ♕f5 21.a4±) 18.f3 h6 19.♞e1 ♞fe8 20.♕xd5 cxd5 21.♞xe8+ ♞xe8 22.♔f2 a5 23.a3 ♕d3= Peng Xiaomin-Grischuk, Shanghai 2001.

The genius of Svidler allowed him, as always, to be the first to exploit the fruits of joint analysis of the superficial 19.♗d2. Peter managed to neutralise Anand's bishop with his rook: 19...♕xe4! 20.fxe4 ♗c7 21.♔g2 c5 22.e5 ♕e7 23.♗e4 cxd4 24.cxd4 a5 25.♕e3! a4 26.♕d1 ♗d5 27.♕f2 ♞ac8 28.♞b1 f6 29.exf6 ♕xf6

30.♗d6 ♞c6 31.♗xb5 ♞b6 32.♕xa4 ♞fb8 33.♗a3 ♞xb2 34.♞xb2 ♞xb2 35.♗c4 ♞xa2 36.♕b3 ♞xf2+ 37.♔xf2 ♕xd4+ 38.♗e3 ♕xe3+ 39.♔f3 ½-½ Anand-Svidler, San Luis 2005.

And Anand delights, not missing a single worthwhile new opening idea. A short analysis with Fritz and you can be sure that the second game played in any variation will be his. It's like the operator of a milking machine, he's a top producer.

17.♗d2

White's position has mainly been defended by players who aren't very strong. Various attempts have been made:

A) 17.a4 f5 18.♕d1 g4 19.♞e1 f4 20.♞g2 ♞a7 21.♗d2 ♞af7 22.♗e4 ♕b8 23.axb5 axb5 24.♞a8 ♕f5 25.♞xb8 ♞xb8 26.gxf4 ♞e8± Krajnak-Cizmar, Slovakia 2000;

B) 17.♕d1 ♞g6 18.♞e1 f5 19.♗d2 f4 (19...g4 20.c4 ♗f6 21.c5 ♕c7 22.♞g2 ♗d5 23.♕b3 ♕e6 24.f4 ♞ae8± Rujevic-Zong Zhao, Melbourne 1999) 20.♗f3 ♕f5 21.♗e5 ♕xe5 22.♞xe5 ♞ae8 23.♕d2 ♞xe5 24.dxe5 ♕d3± J.Rubinstein-F.Benko, Buenos Aires 1961;

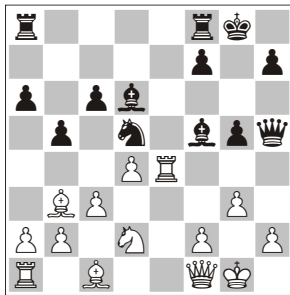
C) 17.♞e2 ♞g6 18.♞e8 ♕f5 (18...♕h3 19.♞xa8 ♞xa8 20.♕e3 f5!± Dormeden-Hecht, Germany 1961) 19.♞xa8 ♞xa8 20.♗d2 ♕d3 21.♞e1 (21.♞g4 ♗f6 22.♞d1 ♞e8 23.♗f1 ♞e2± Morales-Zabala, Guaymallen 2001) 21...♗f4 (21...f5 22.♗f3 ♞e8 23.♞d2 f4 24.♕d1 ♞e4 25.b3 g4 26.♗e5 ♕xe5 27.dxe5 ♞xe5± Gregorova-Petrovich, Mureck jr 1998) 22.gxf4 gxf4+ 23.♔h1 ♔h8 24.♞g1 ♞f6 25.f3 ♞e8 26.a4 ♞h4 27.♗e4 ♞g8± T.Ernst-Hebden, Gausdal 1987;

D) 17.f3 ♕h3 18.♞f2 f5 (18...♞ae8 19.♗d2 ♗f6 20.♞e3 ♞g6 21.♗e4 ♗d5

22.♔xd5 cxd5 23.♖xd6 ♖xd6 24.♞xe8
 ♞xe8 25.♙g5 draw, Puc-O’Kelly, Bled
 1950) 19.♞e1 ♞ae8 20.♙d2 f4 21.g4
 ♞xe1+ 22.♞xe1 ♙xg4 23.fxg4 ♞xg4+
 24.♖h1 ♞f3+ 25.♖g1 ♞g4+ ½-½
 Puc-Fuderer, Dortmund 1951.

We can draw the conclusion that in all
 cases Black has sufficient compensation.

17...♙f5



18.f3

Other moves have also been tried – one
 worse than the other:

A) 18.♙xd5?! cxd5 19.♞e3 ♞ae8
 20.♖f3 (20.a4 ♙h3 21.♞e1 f5 22.f3 ♙f4
 23.♞xe8 ♞xe8 24.♞d1 ♙e3+ 25.♖h1
 ♙f2 26.g4 fxg4 27.fxg4 ♙xg4 0-1
 Megaranto-F.Garcia, Oropesa del Mar
 2000) 20...♙f4 21.gxf4 ♙h3☞;

B) 18.♞e1 ♞ae8 19.♙d1 g4 20.♞xe8
 ♞xe8 21.♙e2 ♖f4 22.gxf4 ♙xf4 23.h3
 ♞xh3 24.♞xh3 gxh3 25.♖f3 ♙xc1
 26.♞xc1 ♞xe2 27.♖e5 ♙e4☞ Endthaler-
 Brestan, Austria Staatsliga 1999/00;

C) 18.♙d1?! looks absurd, but in the
 game Astalosz-Antal, Eger 2002, after
 18...♞g6 19.♞e1 ♞ae8 20.♙e2 ♞e6
 21.♖f3 ♞d7 (21...♙h3) 22.♙d1 ♙h3
 23.♞d3 ♖f4 24.♙xf4 gxf4 25.♙c2 f6
 26.♖h4 fxg3 27.hxg3 White had the ad-
 vantage.

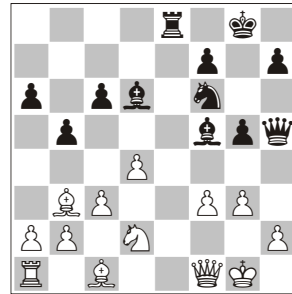
18...♖f6

Besides this, Black also had 18...♞ae8.

19.♞e1

I didn’t like this continuation very much,
 particularly after the game. As an alterna-
 tive 19.a4!?! was suggested: then 19...♙h3
 20.♞f2 ♖xe4 21.♖xe4 ♙e7 22.g4.

19...♞ae8 20.♞xe8 ♞xe8



21.a4

Kramnik played more or less instantly,
 whereas Peter was slow to make his deci-
 sions. During our preparation it was estab-
 lished that 21.♖e4 led to an equal position:
 21...♖xe4 22.fxe4 ♞xe4 23.♙d2 ♙e6
 (23...♞e2 24.♙xf7+ ♖xf7 25.♞xf5+)
 24.♙xe6 ♞xe6 25.♞e1. Now White wants
 to either open the a-file or force b5-b4, to
 have at his disposal the important c4-square.

21...♞g6

The most natural and strongest move
 (21...b4 22.♙c4).

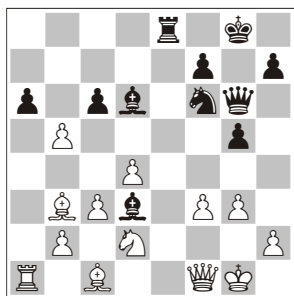
KRAMNIK: ‘While Leko was thinking over
 his 21st move, I was in the rest room and
 working out how to play against 21...♞g6.
 He had 17 minutes left, I’d used up a total
 of 20 minutes. If I were to think for about
 40 minutes after 21...♞g6, it would’ve
 given him the chance to calmly calculate
 everything and given him the confidence
 that my preparation had ended, and that I
 was already not so sure about the final as-
 sessment of the variation. I understood that
 if I wanted to win this game, then a move –
 no matter how indifferent – needed to be

made quickly. I was faced with a choice – 22.axb5 with sharp play or 22.♘e4 with a draw. And I took the decision to play for a win, enlisting the support of the computer. I played *va banque*, it's hard to blame anyone here, even myself. I didn't make a mistake, one could say that I placed 'everything on zero'.

22.axb5

If 22.♙d1, then 22...♙d3 23.♚f2 b4; again possible is 22.♘e4 ♘xe4 23.fxe4 ♙xe4 24.♙xg5 bxa4 25.♙c4 ♙d5 26.♙xd5 cxd5 27.♚f6 with equality. Kramnik goes for a variation prepared earlier.

22...♙d3



White quickly played

23.♚f2?

It was the last moment when he could think and correct the bad analysis of his seconds by playing 23.♚d1!, after which the game ought to have ended in a repetition of moves, since there's still no basis for Black to play for a win: 23...♙e2 24.♚e1 (24.♙c2?! ♙xd1 25.♙xg6 hxg6 26.bxa6 ♙c7 27.a7 ♚a8 28.♘c4 ♘d7 29.♙xg5 ♙e2). For example:

A) 24...♚d3? 25.bxa6 ♙xf3 26.♚f1;

B) 24...axb5? 25.♘e4 (25.♚a7) 25...♘xe4 26.♚xe2 ♘f6 27.♚d2 g4 28.♙c2 ♚g7 29.♚f2;

C) 24...♙xb5 25.♘e4 ♘xe4 26.c4 ♘f6 27.♚d1 ♙b4 28.♙d2=;

D) 24...♙d3 25.♚d1=.

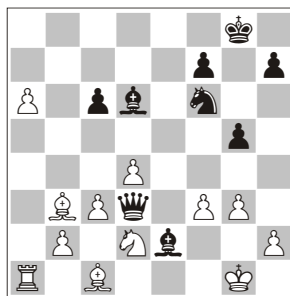
But, firstly, there was no reason for Vladimir not to trust his loyal helpers, and secondly, he tried to exert psychological pressure on Leko, imbuing him with a feeling of a lack of confidence and not giving him extra time to think.

23...♙e2! 24.♚xe2

By now there's no salvation in 24.bxa6 ♚xf2 25.♘xf2 ♚h5 26.♘g1 (26.♘e3 ♙xa6 27.♚xa6 ♚xh2) 26...♙xg3 (26...♚h3 27.♚a5) 27.hxg3 ♚h3 28.a7 (28.g4 ♚g3+ 29.♘h1 ♙e4) 28...♚xg3+ 29.♘h1, and here there's the beautiful win: 29...g4! 30.a8♚+ ♘g7, and Black mates despite being a rook and a piece down.

24...♙xe2 25.bxa6 ♚d3!

A move that couldn't be correctly assessed either by me or by our home computer. Upon 25...♙xa6 White has more than sufficient compensation for the queen and in a while the machine evaluated the position after 25...♚d3 as winning for White. But in another minute or so it decisively changed to the diametrically opposite assessment symbol. Only at this point did Kramnik think for a long time.



26.♘f2

But by now he could boldly resign, because all variations are simple and very short, and it isn't necessary to be a com-

puter to calculate them: 26.a7 ♖e3+
 27.♔g2 ♕xf3+ 28.♗xf3 ♖e2+ 29.♔g1
 ♜g4 30.a8♖+ ♔g7 31.♕e3 ♖xe3+
 32.♔g2 ♖e2+ 33.♔h3 ♜f2+.

26...♕xf3 27.♗xf3 ♜e4+ 28.♔e1 ♜xc3!

The last finesse. White loses the house.

29.bxc3 ♖xc3+ 30.♔f2 ♖xa1 31.a7

He could have tried to build a fortress
 with 31.♕xg5 ♖xa6 (31...♖b2+
 32.♜d2 ♕b4 33.a7 ♖xd4+ 34.♕e3 ♖a1
 35.♜e4 c5 36.♜xc5 ♖xa7) 32.♕d1, but
 there's no doubt that it will be destroyed.

31...h6 32.h4 g4

White resigned. Match score: 3½-4½.

BAREEV: So, before the game Kramnik came to the conclusion that he had to face the Marshall Attack, as he couldn't stand the flat course of the battle any longer. The choice fell to a forgotten double-edged variation.

I'll describe what happened before, during and after the game. We'd been given a firm directive to prepare this variation specifically. Of course, he shouldn't get a worse position, his opponent has to solve problems at the board, which is also why the rare move 16.♖f1 was chosen. And the most important thing was to avoid a draw – a complicated position, perhaps an equal one, but not a drawn one. Unfortunately, the work went in various directions and although there were several of us, we didn't manage to analyse the position as much as we should have done, and we couldn't give a precise evaluation in all the lines.

SVIDLER: 'In accordance with his personality, Leko will typically strive for simpler positions, and theory also maintains that an exchange of queens will easily equalise – and we had dozens of conversations over those few days when we were looking at this position, and I raised my hand, and Zhenya, as far as I can recall, was of the same opinion, we all said to Volodya: "Of course, 16...♖h5 is a hundred times more dangerous, but he'll take yours on f1." I didn't doubt that for a second. I thought – it's impossible that they didn't look at this at all – although, judging by everything that happened, they really didn't. We'd contrived to fall into what was virtually a blind spot. How this could happen, if they chose the Marshall as one of their main openings, I don't understand, but nevertheless. 'He thought for a whole hour, choosing between ♖h5 and ♖xf1. After the game at the press conference Leko said roughly the following (and I don't think you could make up such nonsense): "I realised that I'd fallen into his analysis, I wanted to take on f1, but then I went for h5, deciding that I'd have practical chances there." A natural trajectory developed at the point when the e5 pawn was taken. He thought for an hour over 16...♖h5, then about another 20 minutes over 17...♕f5. After 21...♖g6 he had about 17 minutes left. At that point he started playing quickly because he'd already calculated a great deal of all this, he'd chosen a particular line and he was following it. But to choose it he'd burned up an hour and 40 minutes of his two hours. Correspondingly, there was a desire to take advantage of this. That isn't a justification. Of course, Volodya shouldn't have done what he did. It's obvious – a man is sitting opposite you who doesn't know

anything. But he can work things out very well, he goes for the main line. However, it's still full of problems, and there's a side line that they told you about at home, where it's also possible to go. And of course, there's a temptation to recalculate it and check it – Volodya isn't in his first day on the job. But recalculating means wasting time, and moreover, as soon as you start recalculating, your opponent may realise that something is bothering you.'

BAREEV: Black has many plans. Only in the morning, a little late, we found a plan associated with 18...♟f6. This was an unpleasant surprise, we'd spent more time looking at something like ♟h8, f5-f4 or ♚ae8. Of course, after a sleepless night it was incredibly unpleasant to find all this. We attempted to delay the inevitable. We suggested to Kramnik that he postpone the use of this variation by another game and we presented some ideas in the Anti-Marshall. But the internal stress was so powerful that Volodya, although he understood the full extent of the risk, was already incapable of making a short draw. This was beyond his strength. He said: 'Good, we'll have to look for something in this line, let's find something in this variation.'

The work continued and we found two continuations. A game with 19.♚e1 was quite forced, then I thought that it was more logical to look at 19.a4 immediately. Especially if his opponent goes ♚ae8 – we would've won an important tempo. If Black takes the material, White has compensation everywhere. It wasn't clear why the rook would retreat, but let's suppose it did. The idea would now be to go a2-a4. It was indicated that 21.♟e4 would always result in a draw, Kramnik knew this. We had the draw, but, on the other hand, it was indicated that 22.axb5 leads to a big advantage. That was the problem.

LEVITOV: How cleverly you enticed him!

BAREEV: Furthermore, Kramnik describes how he tried to put psychological pressure on Leko and played quickly. Instead of thinking himself, he decided to follow the recommendations of our analysis, which was based on the computer's work. It was assumed that the iron machine calculated variations very well – perhaps it evaluates badly, but it calculates well. And here the idea was that a queen is sacrificed and a new one is being created.

As Artur Yusupov fairly indicates, after 22...♟d3 it still wasn't too late to think for a while and go 23.♚d1 ♟e2 24.♚e1. And the position still seems to be equal. You can play 24.♚c2 as well. There was plenty of time, but we'd told him that the position had a big advantage, and he went for it. Leko played 23...♚e2, but I later thought that even with 23...axb5 24.♟d1 Black still has quite serious compensation, and the only plus is that Leko is short on time. However, 23...♚e2 also wins. Analysts aided by computers justifiably indicate that 24.bxa6 loses due to the queen being taken and 25...♚h5.

LEVITOV: What did you work out with the computer?

BAREEV: With the computer the following happened. It indicated that after 25.bxa6 ♚d3 or 25...♟xa6 White has a big advantage.

When Leko was thinking about whether to play 16...♖xf1+ or 16...♖h5, it was being decided who'd go to sleep – me or Petya. It turned out that I was the lucky one – Leko went for Petya's analysis.

I lay down for a rest, it was already impossible to sleep, and every 15 minutes Svidler called to tell me how the battle was going. They got to the position before 25...♗d3. Petya says White has a big advantage. And suddenly, five minutes later, he calls: 'I have an idea, I'll check it... Because Black has ♗d3. It seems that this is lost, but it's not all that clear.' He put the move ♗d3 into the computer for about five minutes. At that point Leko happened to be thinking. Four minutes later Petya called and calmly said: 'Black has a forced win.' This was where the story basically ended, because Leko quite quickly went 25...♗d3, and after this the win was not only quick, but also elementary, as four pieces were attacking the lone king.

SVIDLER: 'Zhenya stayed at the headquarters and I took the computer and went to my room to look at it. They went for the Marshall, I think – the opening has been determined, I need a nap. I lay down and for some reason couldn't get to sleep, although we hadn't slept that night. Something was nagging inside me... I'd found the move ♗d3 before this position arose on the board. Without any computer, it hit me, and I realised that we hadn't fully considered this.'

LEVITOV: And I remember that I was communicating with you at that moment. I was doing exactly the same thing that Petya was doing – nervously watching the monitor. What's more, I even called you for the first time in the whole match, and apparently this was immediately after Petya's call. You said in a rather deathly voice: 'That's it, we lose by force.'

BAREEV: Petya put this position into the computer for about 30 seconds. A very powerful computer will say that this is won for Black within 90 seconds to two minutes. The fact is that it won't tell you this within 10-15 seconds – and during analysis you rarely give it more than that, everything happened in a situation where there wasn't enough time, and there were a lot of positions to check.

LEVITOV: But can you say that if you'd used a more powerful computer it would've shown you this?

BAREEV: No. The capability that it had was more than enough, we just needed to hold on a little longer. But anyway, no one would've left it for 90 seconds. We would've given it another 15 seconds, and it again would've shown that it was won for White. We needed to give it 90 seconds, and the game would have ended in a draw.

LEVITOV: Tragic.

BAREEV: Funny.

LEVITOV: What happens is that people try to lighten their own burden by putting it on the machine.

BAREEV: But what can a person do here? The position can be calculated, you have to trust your equipment.

LEVITOV: A surprising thing happened. Volodya lost a game without having made a single move of his own.

BAREEV: He moved into the position after 25...♙d3 with the confidence that he had a big advantage. He got there and became convinced that Black had to resign. In principle, you don't even have to be a computer here to calculate two moves ahead. We were blamed. What can I say about it, we blamed ourselves, too.

LEVITOV: Did he shout at you?

BAREEV: Justifiably.

LEVITOV: Did he call you arseholes?

BAREEV: Yes.

LEVITOV: He said exactly that?

BAREEV: He put it slightly differently.

LEVITOV: And he didn't look Petya in the eye?

BAREEV: Here, I can assure you, Petya wasn't the only guilty one. Each of us did our bit in preparing this game.

SVIDLER: 'This wasn't only my work, but the last word was mine. I gave the conclusive verdict on this whole line. If I hadn't touched it at all, Volodya wouldn't have known about the move 18...♘f6, he would've thought at the board and made a draw – it would've been enough here to calculate the whole line to a draw, and he wouldn't have given away his queen without preparation. But there was a whole set of positions that simply hadn't been studied, which I found on the day of the game, at 10 in the morning. Between that time and the start of the game I covered quite a decent amount of ground (Zhenya had his own), including this position specifically, but it was one of many. Of course, this is all mine. How can I say this... I'm not a religious man, but I believe in certain key turning-points.'

LEVITOV: This hadn't happened before. To lose a game in a World Championship match without making a single move of his own!

BAREEV: What can I say? He made a mistake with his team.

LEVITOV: All right, all right. No one's asking that question. This was an unlucky break. Sappers get blown up by mines. True, one time only.

BAREEV: Yes, and I remember, we ate fish that evening with a feeling of fulfilling a duty, they brought us halibut with tartar sauce and a magnificent salad. We drank wine, the dessert was wonderful – Viennese strudel. Volodya began the conversation with the words: 'Well, that's too much...' It would've been better if he'd shouted.

LEVITOV: Such a noble man.

BAREEV: Still, he expressed surprise about the poor quality of the analysis. We ourselves also remarked that we hadn't done our best work.