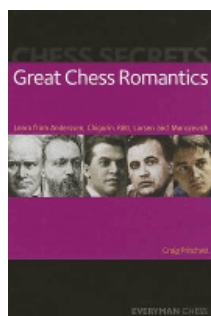




Book Reviews



Translate this page



Rating Chart

- Awful –
- Utter rubbish
- Poor –
- Inferior
- Uneven –
- Mix of good and bad
- Good –
- Worth buying
- Great –
- Above average
- Excellent –
- Everyone should own



Romance is Not Dead

by Chris Wainscott

Chess Secrets: Great Chess Romantics, Craig Pritchett, Everyman Chess 2013, Paperback, Figurine Algebraic Notation, 319pp. \$27.95 (ChessCafe Price \$22.37)

Great Chess Romantics is part of the *Chess Secrets* series of books from Everyman Chess. The idea behind the series is that the author chooses a number of chess legends who have excelled at various aspects of chess and then deeply studies their games. Previous titles include *Giants of Innovation* (Steinitz, Lasker, Botvinnik, Korchnoi, and Ivanchuk); *Great Attackers* (Kasparov, Tal, and Stein); *Heroes of Classical Chess* (Carlsen, Anand, Fischer, Smyslov, and Rubinstein); *The Giants of Power Play* (Topalov, Geller, Bronstein, Alekhine, and Morphy); and *The Giants of Strategy* (Kramnik, Karpov, Petrosian, Capablanca, and Nimzowitsch).

I read *Heroes of Classical Chess*, also written by IM Craig Pritchett, so I was very much looking forward to *Great Chess Romantics*, and the content fully lived up to my expectations. This book examines the following players: Adolph Anderssen, Mikhail Chigorin, Richard Réti, Bent Larsen, and Alexander Morozevich. I was relatively familiar with all of them except Anderssen, so I eagerly turned to the first chapter. Of course, I was already acquainted with the Immortal Game, the Evergreen Game, and a number of games from the match between Anderssen and Paul Morphy.

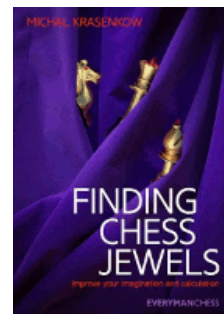
Here is a position from the first game of their match. Morphy, as white, has essayed the Evans Gambit, which was very popular at the top level in those days.



[FEN "3rr1k1/p1p2pp1/4n2p/3qP3/6QP/5N2/P7/SRRK b - - 0 32"]

Here Black could very easily pick off White's loose a-pawn, but decides that the much simpler winning strategy is to first properly centralize his pieces prior to exchanging a pair of rooks on the d-file. Therefore he starts out with 32...Qc6 33.Rg2 Rd3 34.Qf5 Red8 35.Qf6 Qd5 36.Qf5 Rd1 37.Rxd1 Qxd1+ 38.Kh2 Rd3 39.Rf2 Re3 40.Nd2 Re2 41.Qxf7+ Kh8 42.Ne4 Rxf2+ 43.Nxf2 Qd5 44.Ng4 Qxa2+ 45.Kg3 Qb3+ 46.Kh2 Qc2+ 47.Kg3 Qc3+ 48.Kh2 Qc6

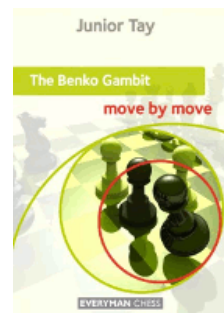
Purchases from our [chess shop](#) help keep ChessCafe.com freely accessible:



[Finding Chess Jewels](#)
by Michal Krasenkow



[Korchnoi: Move by Move](#)
by Cyrus Lakdawala



[The Benko Gambit: Move by Move](#)
by Junior Tay



[FEN "7k/p1p2Qp1/2q1n2p/4P3/6NP/8/7K/8 w - - 0 49"]

Here Anderssen has completed his fortress. The queen guards the knight, and the two combine to prevent White from checking on f8, e8, or d8. White can sacrifice his knight to break up the Black king's cover, yet there is no perpetual check. Anderssen now goes on the win easily in twenty-four additional moves.

I very much enjoyed this game since it showcased the strategic side of someone who is known as a great attacker. I appreciate the inclusion of games such as this, rather than a rehash of well-known and heavily analyzed games, such as the Immortal or Evergreen games. However, Pritchett does include the scores for both of those games, so that readers unfamiliar with them can at least see the games themselves.

Mikhail Chigorin is another figure of the early modern era that is not overly well known outside of Eastern Europe. He was the earliest world class Russian-born player. In fact, Chigorin did not even learn how the pieces moved until his late teens, and did not start playing regularly until his early twenties.

Along with Steinitz, Mikhail Chigorin was one of the early adopters and refiners of positional play rather than wholesale swashbuckling attacks. Sure, Chigorin could, and often did, attack with great enthusiasm and precision, but only when the position would allow him to do so soundly.

One of Chigorin's last great international results came in Budapest in 1896. Although his powers were rapidly declining as he entered his late forties, he had a magnificent showing in this event, tying for first with the emerging twenty-two-year old Hungarian star Rudolph Charousek. Both men finished with 8½/12 with Charousek having defeated Chigorin in their individual game.

In the four game playoff the old master called upon his much greater experience to vanquish his younger opponent by the score of 3-1. Here is a position from the second game of the playoff match. Chigorin, as white, has played the Max Lange Attack against the Two Knights Defense and the following middlegame position has arisen:



[FEN "3k4/ppp1n2p/1b3Q2/6N1/2pp4/8/PPPBqPPP/6K1 w - - 0 26"]

Here Chigorin plays **26.h4!** Charousek passes on taking the bishop and instead loses after **26...d3? 27.Nf7+ Kc8 28.Qh8+ Kd7 29.Qd8+ Ke6 30.Ng5+ Kf5**

31.Qf8+ 1-0

One of the better features of this collection is the fact that Pritchett gives very detailed, in-depth analysis of all thirty-five games from start to finish. This includes showing the modern opening lines for the older games. Naturally opening theory has greatly evolved since the times of players such as Anderssen, Chigorin, Réti, etc. So, while it would be unfair to criticize the old masters for their opening play, it is very useful to show how the theory has evolved.

Here is an endgame position from the game **Geller – Larsen**, Monte Carlo 1967:



[FEN "8/3kp2p/3p1pp1/R2P4/1P5P/1r3P2/6PK/8 w - - 0 32"]

Here Geller plays **32.Ra7+?!** and Pritchett notes

"By driving Black's king to f7, White probably helps Black, who eventually digs out a win on the kingside that critically involves his king in an active central role around the f6 and e5 squares. White no doubt wished to avoid 32.Rb5?! Kc7!, which immobilizes White's rook and sets up the manoeuvre ...Re5 and ...e7-e6, winning Black's pawn on d5. Larsen then gives: 33.f4 h6 34.g3 Rb2+ 35.Kg1 (35.Kh3? h5! is zugzwang) 35...g5 36.fxg5 fxg5 37.hxg5 hxg5 38.Kf1 g4 39.Kg1 Re2 40.Kf1 Re5 41.Kf2 Rf5+ 42.Kg1 e6 and wins, but does not consider 42.Ke3, and if 42...Rf3+ 43.Ke4 Rxc3+ 44.Kf4 Rg1 45.Kg5 g3 46.Kg4 Rg1 47.Kf3, which might still be difficult. Black can also try 41...e6, and if 42.Ra5 exd5, which might be better.

"White's best chance, however, may have been 32.b5!?, seeking to make more active use of White's rook and passed b-pawn. Larsen considered that Black should then win, by playing 'his king to f7, in order to play ...Rd3, and if b6 ...Rb3, Ra6 ...Rb5, winning one of the pawns'. But after 32...Ke8 33.Kg3 Kf7 34.Kf4, White's king may be able to dash to the queenside in time to support his b-pawn and create a sufficient diversion: e.g. after 34...f5, and if 35.g4 fxg4 36.fxg4 h6 37.Ke4 Rb4+ 38.Kd3 Rxc4 39.Kc3 Rg1 40.Kc2, when Black's rook can't get behind White's b-pawn and has to give perpetual lateral rook checks to prevent the pawn from queening.

"Black's best chance to win in this line may instead be 32...h5, and if 33.Kg3 g5 (but 33...Ke8 34.Kf4, and if 34...Rb4+ 35.Ke3 Rxh4 36.Kd3 may only draw) 34.hxg5 fxg5 35.Kf2 h4 (or perhaps 35...g4), which still leaves White with problems."

Many of the positions are covered in the same depth as the above, which is to be expected in a book of more than 300 pages in which only thirty-five games are analyzed!

The quality of the annotations are great (thorough without seeming overly exhaustive) as is the fact that the annotations are verbal as well as variational. IM Pritchett also did a terrific job of making this book accessible to players of all levels, from beginner to master.

Where the book falls short is its binding. The spine is so unyielding that it is almost impossible to hold the book open as you play through the games without doing irreparable harm. As someone who takes care of their books, I have a real problem with this. Yet, in contrast, the *Move by Move* series by

Everyman Chess are slightly oversized with a soft spine that allows them to easily lay flat next to a board as you are reading them. So I would love to see them print all of their books in that fashion. Other than the binding, the quality of the printing itself is rather high. The paper is of a good quality, and the font is crisp and easy to read.

I give this book four out of six stars, but would give it five with a better binding.

My assessment of this product: 

Order [Chess Secrets: Great Chess Romantics](#)
by Craig Pritchett

A PDF file of [this week's review](#), along with all previous product reviews, is available in the [ChessCafe.com Archives](#).

Comment on this week's review via our official [Chess Blog](#)!

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE
CHESS CAFE](#)

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

© 2014 BrainGamz, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of BrainGamz, Inc.