



**GRIVAS CHESS
INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY**

FOUNDED 2012

ATTACK OF THE YEAR

EFSTRATIOS GRIVAS

Attack of the Year

In the start of November, World Cup runner-up Ding Liren played a mesmerising game of the kind that you see only once a year.

The Chinese League is a huge event in fact, with 12 teams playing a double round robin between April and December. Usually three or four rounds are organised together, so that players can gather just a few times a year.

Many international players are active in the league, such as Vassily Ivanchuk, Ernesto Inarkiev, Dmitry Jakovenko and Dmitry Andreikin.

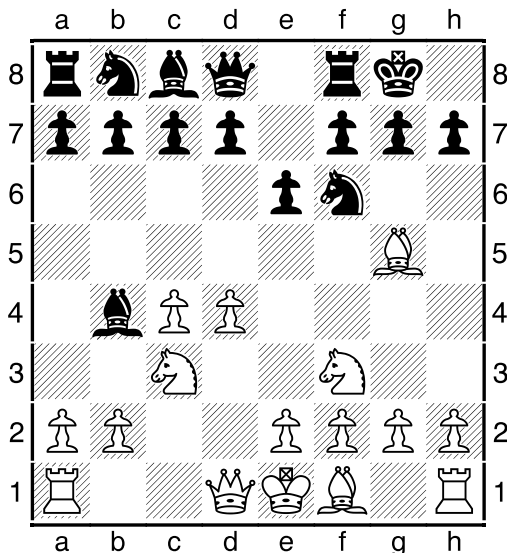
The rounds 16, 17 and 18 were played in Tianjin in north-east China. In the match between the city of Shaoxing and the city of Hangzhou, a very special game was played on board one.

□ **Bai Jinshi (2553)**

■ **Ding Liren (2772)**

E21 Tianjin 04.11.2017

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nf3 0-0 5.Bg5 (D)



This could be called an 'expanded' variation of the 'Leningrad Defence' of the notorious 'Nimzo-Indian Defence'. Well, all these look a bit complicated, but hold on - real complications are about to come!

5...c5 6.e3

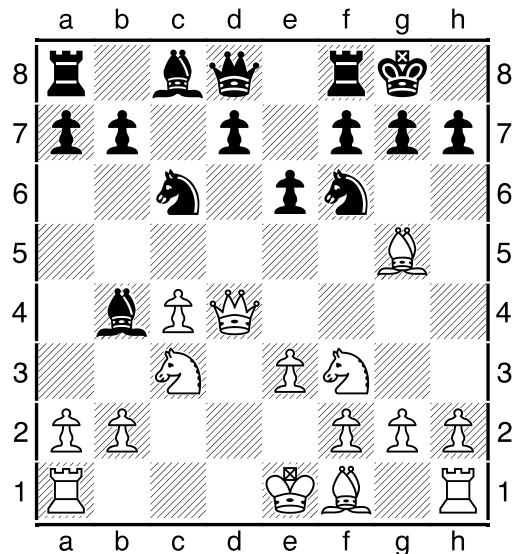
6.d5 is a principled follow-up: 6...exd5

7.cxd5 d6 8.e3 Nbd7 9.Bd3 h6 10.Bh4 Qa5 11.0-0 Bxc3 12.bxc3 Qxc3 13.Bg3 Nxd5 14.Bb5 N5f6 15.Bxd6 Re8 16.Rc1 Qa5 17.Qb3 Qb6 18.Rfd1 a6 19.Bxd7 Qxb3 20.axb3 Nxd7 21.Bxc5 Nxc5 22.Rxc5 Bg4 23.h3 Bxf3 24.gxf3 Rac8 25.Rxc8 Rxc8 26.Rd7 b5 27.Rd6 Rc3 28.Rxa6 Rxb3 29.f4 b4 30.Rb6 Rb1+ 31.Kg2 b3 ½-½ Le,Q-Leko,P Tromsøe 2014. Of course this is just a sample variation/game between two top-players and nothing more to be proven!

6...cxd4 7.Qxd4

Possible is 7.exd4 d5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.Be2 h6 10.Bxf6 Qxf6 11.0-0 Bxc3 12.bxc3 Nc6 13.Re1 b6 14.Nd2 Be6 15.Nf1 Na5 16.Ne3 += Mamedyarov,S-Carlsen,M Paris 2017. But in the end of the day the World Champion won!

7...Nc6 (D)



8.Qd3

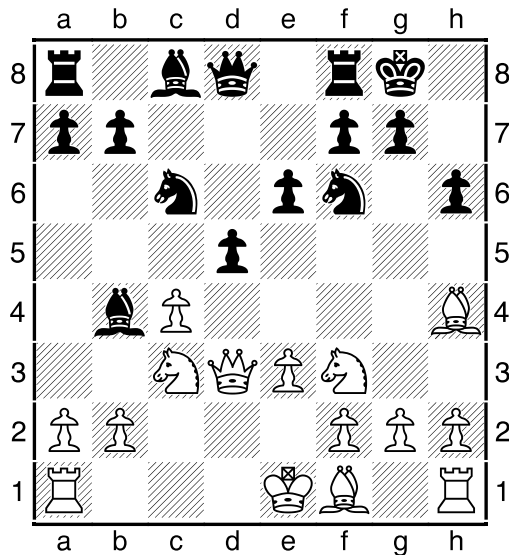
A more sensible move (a novelty) than the 'known' 8.Qh4 h6?! (8...Bxc3+! 9.bxc3 h6 =+) 9.Bxf6 Qxf6 10.Qxf6 gxf6 11.Rc1 b6 12.Bd3 Bb7 13.0-0 Rac8 14.a3 Bxc3 15.Rxc3 = Iniyana,P-Paszewski,M Graz 2017.

8...h6

The position is equal, but of course the Black player is 'obliged'; to create something, due to his huge rating difference.

9.Bh4 d5 (D)

Black rightly fights for his share in the centre...



10.Rd1

Maybe not the best, similar to 10.cxd5 exd5 11.Be2 g5 12.Bg3 Ne4 =+. I feel that White should have opted for 10.a3 Bxc3+ 11.Qxc3 g5 12.Bg3 Ne4 13.Qc2 oo.

10...g5!

The principled move in such positions.

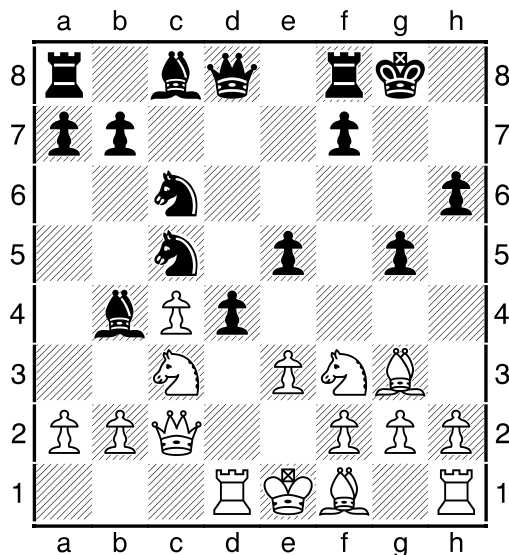
11.Bg3 Ne4 12.Nd2!

Accurate - White shouldn't 'allow' ...Qa5.

12...Nc5

12...Bxc3! 13.bxc3 Qf6, with equal chances was the logical follow-up. But Black wants to do something more...

13.Qc2 d4 14.Nf3 e5! (D)



15.Nxe5

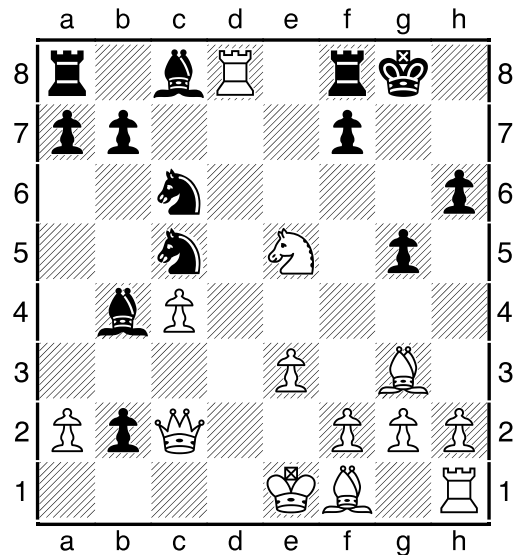
A logical move, but due to what happened, I would have preferred 15.Bxe5 Nxe5 16.Nxe5 Qf6 17.exd4 Bf5 18.Qc1 Ne6 19.Be2 Rad8 20.Qe3 Rfe8 21.0-0 Nxd4

22.Rxd4 Rxd4 23.Ng4 (23.Qxd4 Qxe5 24.Qxe5 Rxe5 =) 23...Bxg4 24.Qxe8+ Kg7 25.Bxg4 Bxc3 26.bxc3 Rxg4 =.

15...dxc3!

A very interesting queen sacrifice. The alternative 15...Re8?! 16.Nxc6 bxc6 17.Be2 could only favour White.

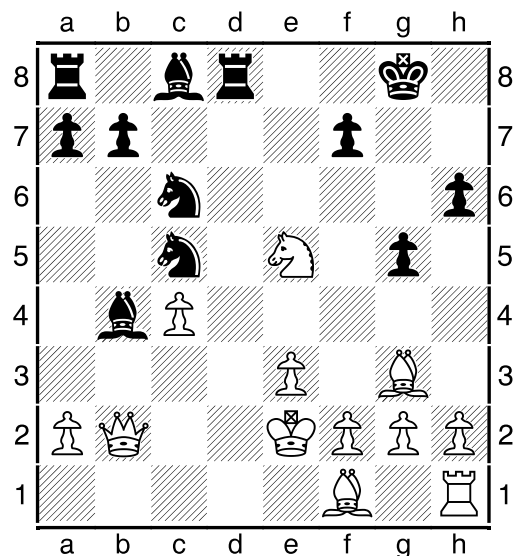
16.Rxd8 cxb2+! (D)



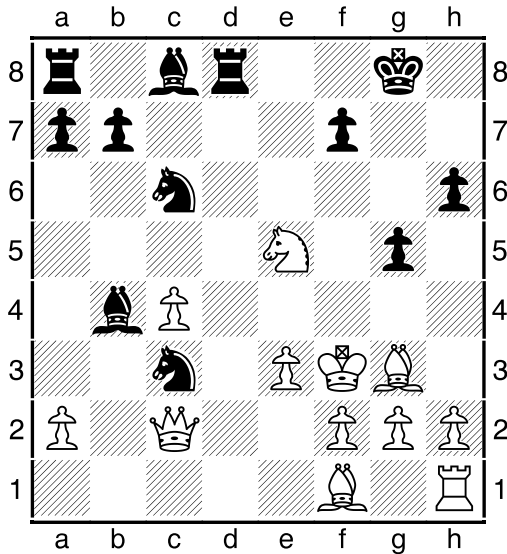
17.Ke2?

This could be easily called a blunder but only if White had seen Black's 20...Rd4!. 17.Rd2! was forced: 17...Rd8 18.Nf3 (18.Qxb2 Rxd2 19.Qxb4 Nxb4 20.Kxd2 Be6 =) 18...Bg4 19.Qxb2 Bxf3 20.gxf3 Rxd2 21.Qxd2 Bxd2+ 22.Kxd2 Rd8+ 23.Ke2 Nb4 =. Well, obviously White couldn't see any good future black moves, so he decided to play for a win with the text move.

17...Rxd8 18.Qxb2 (D)



18...Na4! 19.Qc2 Nc3+! 20.Kf3 (D)



After a series of forced moves the critical position has arisen. What Black can play here?

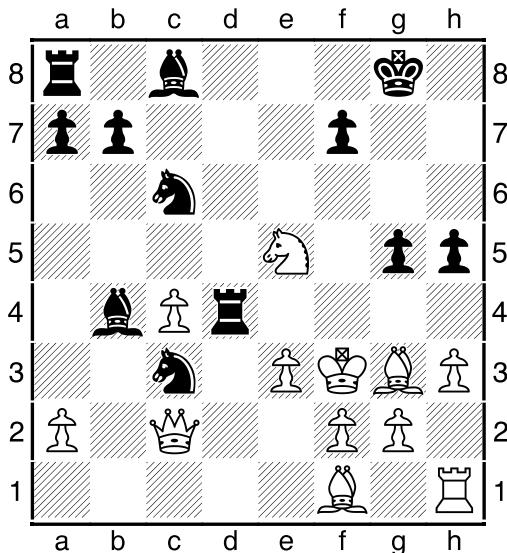
20...Rd4!

A stem-move!

21.h3

Aiming for Bh2. Some alternative variations, which prove the strength of 20...Rd4!, are: 21.exd4 Nxd4+ 22.Ke3 Nxc2+ -+ ; 21.Nxc6 g4 # ; 21.h4 g4+ 22.Nxg4 Bxg4 #.

21...h5! (D)



Renewing all the above threats!

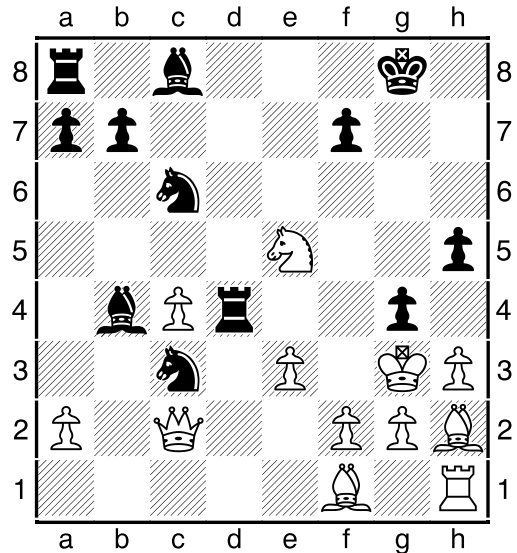
22.Bh2

22.e4 looks like a better defence: 22...Rxe4 23.Qxe4 Nxe4 24.Kxe4. The problem here is that Black can go for 24...f5+! 25.Kd3 f4 26.Nxc6 bxc6 27.Bh2 Bf5+ -+. Also note that 22.Bf4 is losing to 22...Rxf4+! 23.Kg3

(23.exf4 Nd4+ -+) 23...Bf5 24.Bd3 Ne4+ 25.Bxe4 Rxe4 26.Nxc6 Bd6+ -+.

22...g4+ 23.Kg3 (D)

Nothing to be changed with 23.hxg4 hxg4+ 24.Kg3 Rd2! 25.Qxd2 Ne4+ 26.Kh4 (26.Kf4 Nxd2 27.Nxc6 Bd6+ 28.Kg5 Ne4+ 29.Kh4 g3 30.Bxg3 Nxg3 31.fxg3 bxc6 -+) 26...Be7+ 27.Kh5 Nxd2 -+.



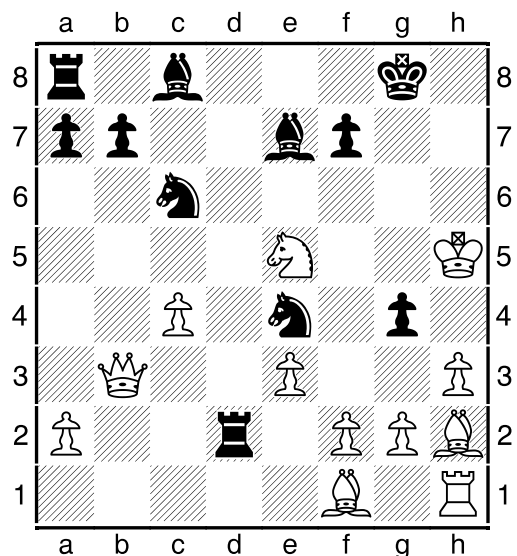
23...Rd2!

The 'self-destructed' rook continues its paths! Nevertheless, this is the only winning move.

24.Qb3

White is also plain lost after 24.Qxd2 Ne4+ 25.Kh4 Bxd2 26.Nxc6 bxc6 27.Bg3 Bb4.

24...Ne4+ 25.Kh4 Be7+ 26.Kxh5 (D)



The white king has been caught to a deadly mating net! Black just needs to empty his last rank, so his a8-rook to deliver the mate!

26...Kg7

Also good was 26...Rxf2 27.hxg4 Kg7 -+.

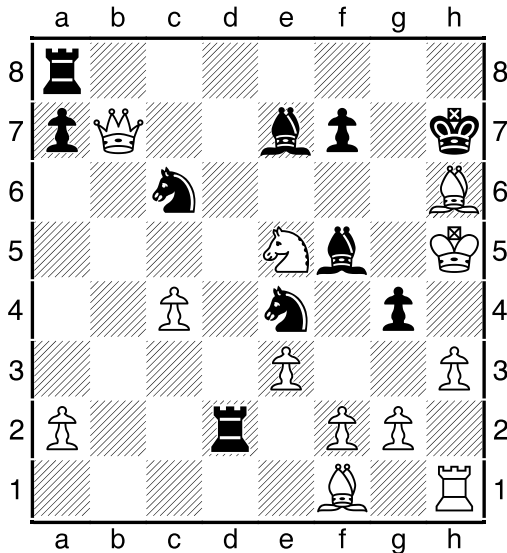
27.Bf4 Bf5

27...Rxf2! -+.

28.Bh6+

Or 28.Nxc6 Rh8+ 29.Bh6+ Rxh6 #.

28...Kh7 29.Qxb7 (D)



29...Rxf2!

The last trick, evacuating square g3!

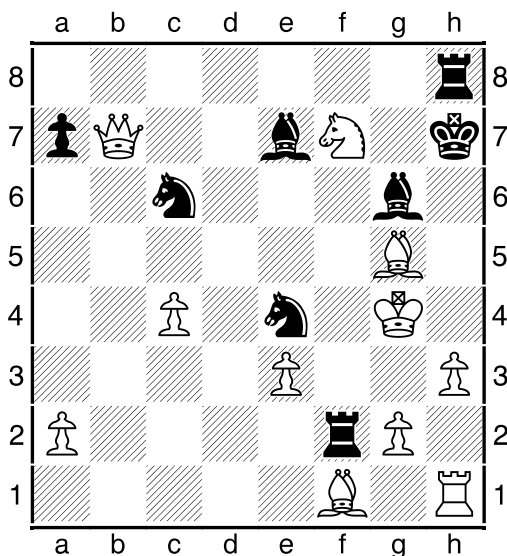
30.Bg5

What to do? If 30.Qxa8 Ng3 # or 30.Qxe7 Nxe7 31.hxg4 Ng3+ -+.

30...Rh8! 31.Nxf7

31.Qxc6 Kg8+ 32.Qh6 Rxh6+ 33.Kxh6 Bxg5+ 34.Kh5 f6 35.Nxg4 Ng3 # is a nice variation by the way!

31...Bg6+ 32.Kxg4 (D)



32...Ne5+!

And White resigned, due to 33.Nxe5

(33.Kh4 Kg8+ 34.Nxh8 Bxg5 #) 33...Bf5+ 34.Kh5 Kg7+ 35.Bh6+ Rxh6 #.

0-1

Conclusion

Well, the precision on White's moves was a poor 45%, while Black had a natural (for his rating) 88%.

Of course, what you got to think about it is that this is very easy for us to say when we are reading game analyses in our computer in our room.

The situation is very different at the time, when you are sitting at a super important chess game from a huge tournament, playing a super Grandmaster 200 rating point ahead of you.

At that moment, said GM just unexpectedly sacrificed his queen(!) for a very unclear attack, obviously that had a huge psychological impact for White; he was probably feeling excited about taking the queen, but scared of the consequences, and strongly hit by surprise, all in which impairs his decision making.

Also yeah, there are mistakes in 'game of the years' and immortal games, because mistakes are a part of chess, and punishing said mistakes is what makes those games so beautiful.



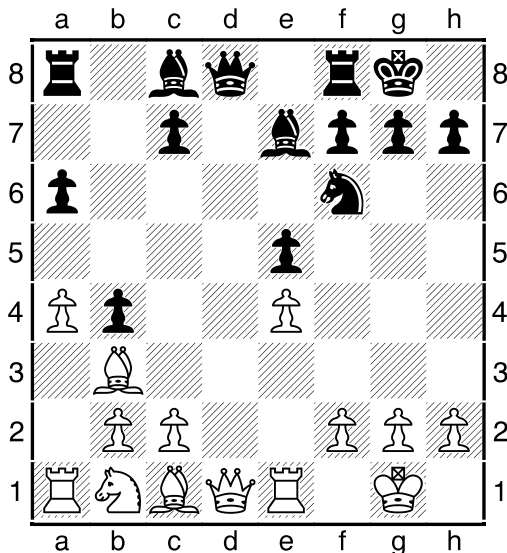
Well, not so long after, in the Palma de Mallorca FIDE Grand-Prix, Ding Liren was given another chance to sac his queen!

□ Inarkiev Ernesto (2683)

■ Ding Liren (2774)

C88 Palma de Mallorca 19.11.2017

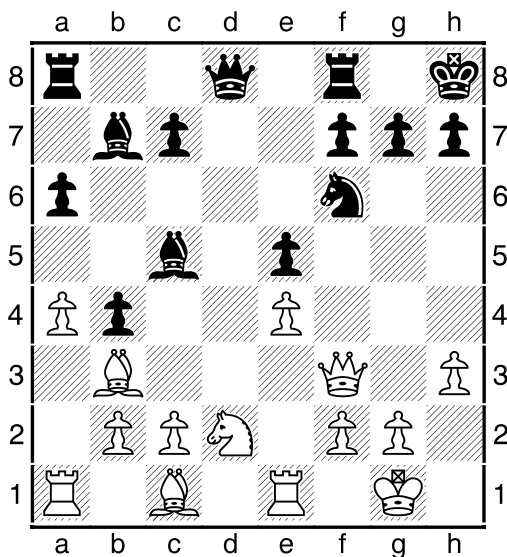
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 0-0 8.a4 b4 9.d4 d6 10.dxe5 Nxe5 11.Nxe5 dxe5 (D)



12.Qf3

Not much also is 12.Qe2 a5 13.Bg5 Bc5 14.Nd2 h6 15.Bh4 Qe7 = Navara,D-Grandelius,N Germany 2017.

12...Bc5 13.h3 Bb7 14.Nd2 Kh8 (D)



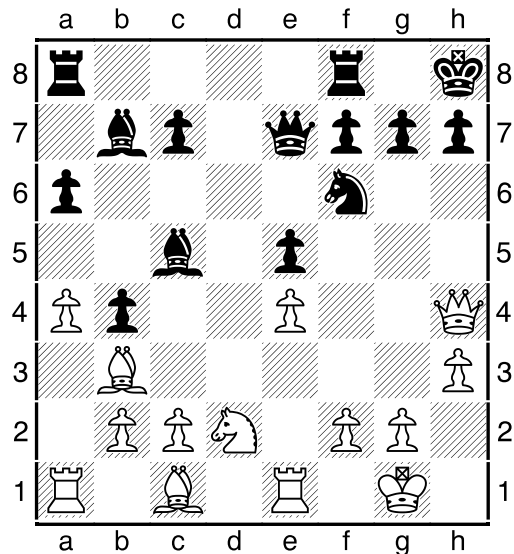
15.Qg3

A dubious novelty, preparing the queen swift to h4. Previously we have seen 15.g4!? Ne8 16.Nc4 Nd6 17.Nxd6 Qxd6 18.Be3 Bxe3 19.Qxe3 Rad8 20.a5 oo Klein,F-Van Meegen,R Maastricht 2017.

15...Qe7 16.Qh4?!(D)

As said above, this manoeuvre is a dubious one, adding nothing to White's activity and development. Somehow it seems that White hasn't done his homework properly, as all engines suggest Black's next move in no time! A strange case that cannot go in our modern times, where engines are playing an

important part of the game...



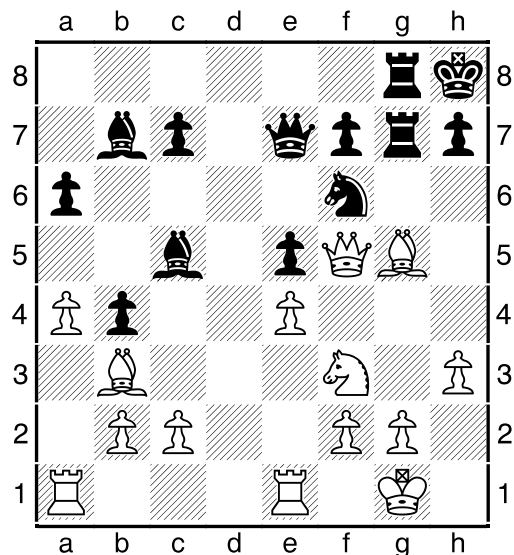
16...g5!

A bolt from the blue! Black sacrifices his g-pawn to open-up the g-file and attack via it! Well, a move that needs strategical and tactical evaluation at the same time...

17.Qxg5 Rg8 18.Qf5 Rg7 19.Nf3?

White failed to find the defence with 19.Nf1 Rag8 20.g3 Rg6 -/+, preferring more active continuations....

19...Rag8 20.Bg5 (D)

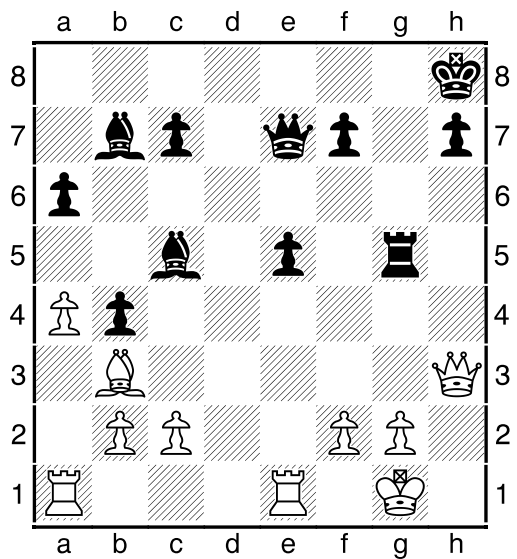


20...Nxe4! 21.h4

It seems that this Ding doesn't give a penny for his queen! Well, the alternatives are not rosy for White as well: 21.Bxe7 Rxe2+ 22.Kh1 (22.Kf1 Rxf2 #) 22...Nxf2 # or 21.Rxe4 Rxe5 22.Nxe5 Rxe5 23.Rxe5 (23.Qf3 f5 -+) 23...Qxe5 -+.

21...Nxe5

21...Bxf2+ 22.Kh2 Bxe1 23.Rxe1 Nxc5 -+.
 22.hxc5 Rxc5! 23.Nxc5 Rxc5 24.Qh3 (D)



24...Qf6! 25.Re3 Rxc2+ 26.Qxc2 Bxc2
 27.Kxc2 Bxe3 28.fxe3 c5
 And Black got good material advantage,
 turning it to a point later.
 29.Bc4 Qg6+ 30.Kf3 Qf5+ 31.Kg3 Qe4
 32.b3 Qxe3+ 33.Kg2 Qd2+ 34.Kh1 f5
 35.Rg1 Qh6+ 36.Kg2 Kg7 37.Rd1 Qg5+
 38.Kf2 Qf4+ 39.Ke2 Qh2+ 40.Ke3 f4+

41.Ke4 Qxc2+ 42.Rd3 Kf6 43.Bxa6 Qg2+
 44.Rf3 Ke6
 0-1

Conclusion

If you are facing someone called Ding Liren, try to exchange queens as soon as it is possible...



And a
 Happy New Year
 2018!