



NO GREATER LOVE

By James R. O'Mahoney

"YOUR move, grandmaster."

Grigory Samarin glanced at the board. His right hand gracefully lifted his squared bishop between his index and middle fingers and in one continuous motion exchanged it for the black knight on king bishop 3. He looked up at his opponent—a plump, matronly woman—smiled deferentially, and stated without a trace of condescension, "I offer a draw."

The woman's face broke into a broad grin as she nodded her head and extended her hand. After all, not everyone could draw a game against the world's champion. The spectators erupted into sustained applause. Samarin was always the gentleman. The chess cognoscenti in the audience recognized a chivalrous gesture when they saw one. A pawn up and possessing perhaps the best end game technique in grand-master chess, Samarin hardly could have failed to win the game. He bent low and kissed the woman's hand. She had been the last remaining opponent in a 25-board simultaneous exhibition against the top women players of the Soviet Union. Samarin had scored 24 wins and one draw.

Igor Belayevsky was at his side as he left the Belgrade Central Chess Club. Belayevsky was always at his side. Samarin feared and hated his chief second, although he was careful never to

Suddenly he glanced up at Eric Thalfassen. The handsome Swede's face was contorted in horror and consternation.

allow his true feelings to show. That, he knew, would be fatal. Belayevsky was already suspicious of him, although it was vaguely comforting to know that Belayevsky was suspicious of everyone. Still, he never could let his guard down.

"Igor," Samarin began stiffly, trying to force the tension out of his voice, "what did you think of the Winawer that woman—Svetlana, I believe—played on board eight? She shows a remarkable grasp of opening principles, no?"

Samarin chuckled to himself. Belayevsky had spent the better part of his adult life writing monographs critical of the French defense, and the Winawer variation in particular. Belayevsky's reaction was predictable.

"She is a fool. She always will be a fool," Belayevsky's beady eyes squinted as he picked up the pace of his stride. "Grigory, you played, as I recall, a line I recommended in 'Shakhmaty' nearly seven years ago. That line is timeless. It never will be refuted. You learn well. Only the ignorant or the fool persists in playing into my published refutation."

Svetlana was neither ignorant nor a fool, Samarin thought, as he murmured in agreement. She was just different from most of the other Russian chess players. She had a totally independent cast of mind. When a great opening theoretician like Belayevsky pontificated, the others would

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