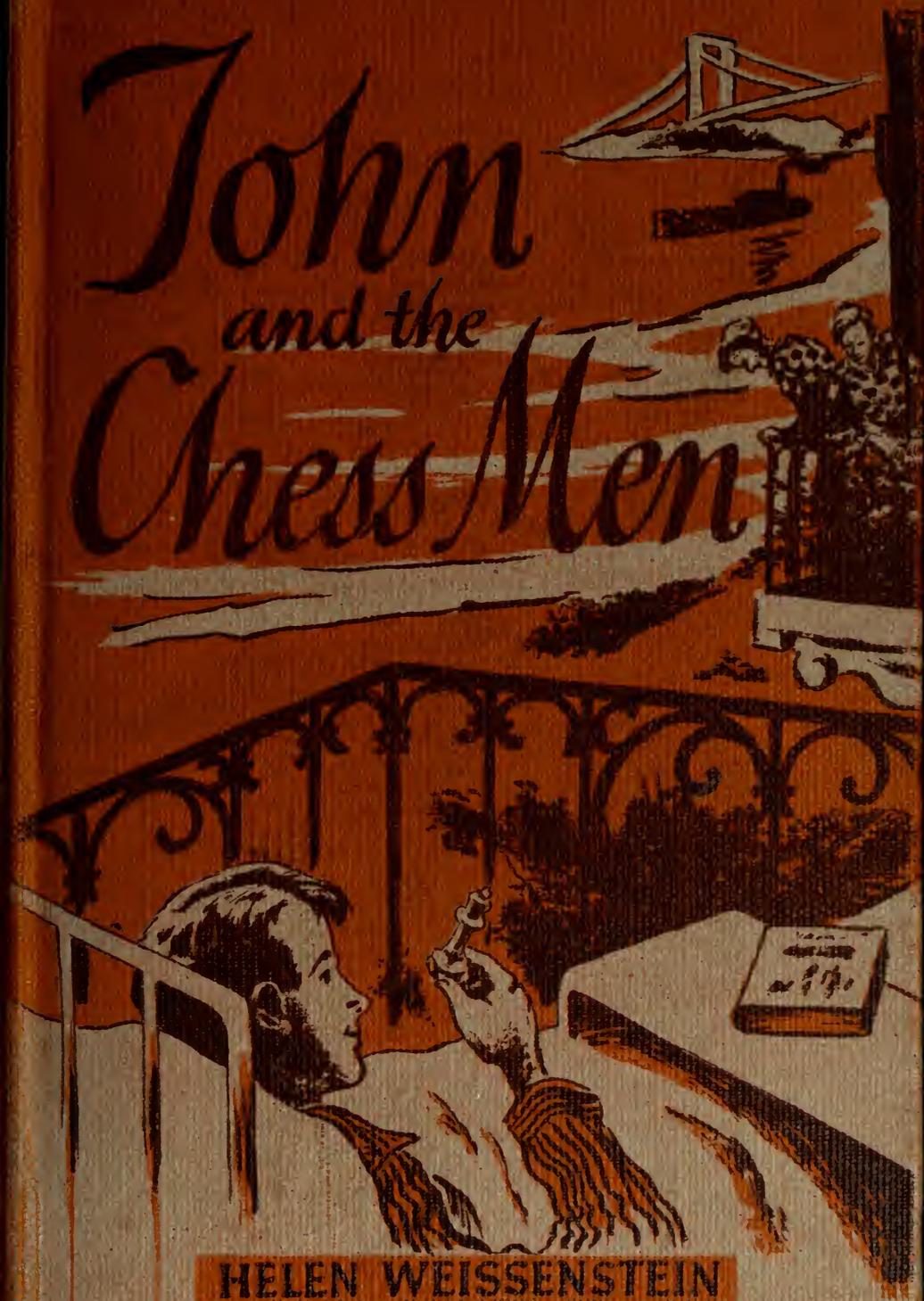


John and the Chess Men



HELEN WEISSENSTEIN

JOHN
AND THE
CHESS MEN

BY HELEN WEISSENSTEIN

Illustrated by Kurt Werth



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DAVID MCKAY COMPANY, INC.

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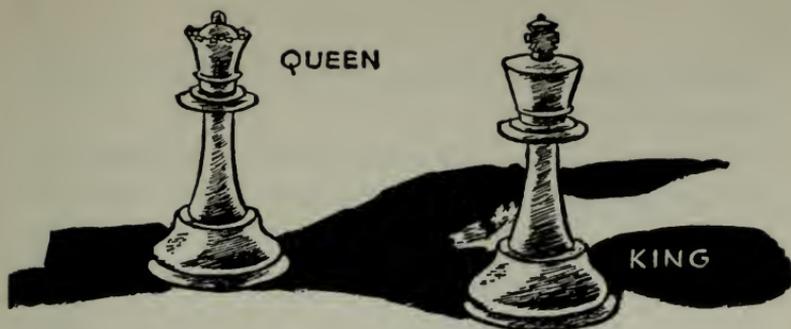
*To my fellow members of the
Manhattan Chess Club
where I spend many pleasant hours*

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Chapter One

THE SECRET CODE

JOHN lay on the terrace and watched the ships glide slowly up and down the Hudson. Three gray battleships had passed during the last hour, and then came a large flatboat, loaded with cargo. It was black and red and looked gay on the blue

water. Blowing its whistle shrilly, it soon vanished from sight.

Next a white ship with two yellow smokestacks appeared. A rope was suspended between its two high masts, and many small flags were flying from it, red and blue and white, waving merrily in the wind. There must be a pleasant breeze on the river! When the ship came closer, John could hear the faint sound of music and see a tightly packed crowd of people on the decks. It was an excursion boat, making a pleasure trip up the river. Perhaps it would pass his home town, which he had left only a few days ago. All his friends had come down to say good-by. They stood in the road and waved until the car that took him and his parents to New York for good, was out of sight.

John knew why it was better for him to live in New York, for his father had explained it to him. In the large city there were more doctors, and more could be done for his injured back. But he felt lonely, lying here, thinking of his friends. What wonderful times they had had together, he and the other boys! Though he was one of the youngest in the crowd, he had always been Chief of the Detective Squad when they played Cops and Robbers. It was he who uncovered the most dangerous plots, trapped the worst culprits, and deciphered the most complicated secret codes.

During one of those games the accident had happened. He had chased two of the culprits up into an attic, out again through a window, and over the roof of a barn. Somehow he slipped, fell to the ground, and injured his spine. For months now he had been flat on his back, and there was no telling when he would be well again.

His glance fell on the terrace to his right. The railing was covered with crimson ramblers, in full bloom, that blocked the view. From behind the ramblers came voices—boys' voices. John craned his neck, trying to catch a glimpse of the speakers, but he could not see them. Were they sitting on the floor of the terrace? They seemed to be having a good time.

Presently John heard one voice cry out excitedly, "Look out, Paul! The score!"

"Take it easy, Pete," came a second voice, "you don't need it any longer."

The second voice sounded very much like the first, but quiet, not excited, and John wondered if he *had* heard two distinct voices. As he strained his eyes and ears, he noticed that the brisk river breeze had lifted a narrow sheet of paper. It rose above the crimson ramblers of the neighboring terrace and fluttered in the air.

"Over here," John whispered to the breeze. "Oh, please, blow it over here."



The paper floated closer, hung for a second above the empty space between the two terraces, approached hesitantly, and finally came to rest on John's bed. He stretched out his hand eagerly and caught the sheet. What a curious piece of paper it was! A strange border ran along the upper margin, and the printed heading read, "C.C. of the Grinning Knight." A red center line that went from top to bottom divided the sheet in half. The paper was ruled, and the lines were numbered. *White* was printed above the left half; *Black* above the right. Under *White* was written in a jerky hand *Pete Dalley*; under *Black*, *Max Smith*.

"Take it easy, Pete!" the voice on the next terrace had said a moment ago. So one of the boys there must be Pete Dalley; but who was Max Smith? And what did "C.C. of the Grinning Knight" mean? John studied the sheet with mounting interest.

"P-Q4" was written on the left half of the first line under the name Pete Dalley. And "P-Q4" appeared again on the right half.



C.C. OF THE GRINNING KNIGHT

WHITE	BLACK
<i>Pete Dalley</i>	<i>Max Smith</i>
1. P-Q4	1. P-Q4
2. P-QB4	2. PxBP
3. B-KB4	3. B-KB4
4. P-K3	4. P-K3
5. KBxP	5. KB-QKt5, ch
6. QKt-QB3	6. KKt-KB3
7. KKt-KB3	7. P-KR3
8. O-O	8. P-KKt4
9. B-K5	9. P-KKt5
10. Kt-KR4	10. B-KR2
11. P-Q5	11. B-Q3
12. P-KB4	12. KKtPxKBP
13. KtxP	13. BxB
14. KtxB	14. QKt-Q2
15. KtxKt	15. KtxKt
16. PxP	16. PxP
17. Q-KR5, ch	17. K-K2
18. Q-KB7, ch	18. K-Q3
19. QxKP, ch	19. K-QB4
20. Q-Q5, ch	20. K-QKt3
21. Q-QKt5, mate	21.
22.	22.
23.	23.
24.	24.
25.	25.
26.	26.
27.	27.
28.	28.
29.	29.
30.	30.

John's eyes skimmed over the lines. "P-QB4," "B-KB4," and so on. The whole sheet was covered with mysterious letters and numbers that made no sense to him. Some secret code, of course! How many months had gone by since he had last deciphered a secret code! His cheeks flushing with excitement, he shifted his position a little and tried to make out the meaning of the signs. P appeared in the beginning and seemed a most important letter. What did it mean? He racked his brain in vain.

The breeze came back. It felt good on his hot face. "Hello, wind," he said softly. "Can't you bring me a clue?"

The voices on the next terrace grew louder. Again it struck John how alike they sounded, though as before, one voice seemed to be excited, the other, calm.

"I'd have moved my King, Pete," the quiet voice said.

"If I'd moved my King, I'd be licked," replied Pete irritably.

"No, you wouldn't. Don't you remember that book about Paul Morphy we were reading the other day? Back in 1858 he had just such a position and he won."

John tried to recall past history lessons. Had there been a famous General Morphy in the nineteenth century? Those fellows must be awfully

good in history if they could remember and reel off battle dates just like that.

The argument on the other terrace grew more heated.

"Stop talking such rot!" the irritable voice cried, and suddenly John saw something fly through the air and approach him with lightning speed. The next moment it struck his face. The object was hard and pointed. His cheek burned like fire. He pressed his hand against it and smiled wryly. Perhaps he should not have asked the wind to bring him a clue! When the pain eased up, he groped about his bed with both hands, trying to locate what had struck him. His fingers found something small and hard, and he picked it up. It was a chessman.

John knew nothing about chess; he had always played outdoor games. As he wondered about the name of the chessman in his hand, his thoughts were disturbed by the placid voice from the next terrace.

"How often must I ask you, Pete!" it said. "If you've got to throw something at me, take a shoe or a plate or whatever else is handy, but do leave our chessmen alone! Someday you'll lose or break one. Which did you throw this time?"

"The White King." Pete's voice was meek now. "I guess I lost my temper again."

"So—you're a King," John said to the chessman

in his hand. Again he glanced across to the other terrace. Muffled sounds now came from it. Were the boys creeping around on the floor, searching in the corners? Well, if they wanted their White King back, they would have to get up from the floor, and John at last would be able to see them. He was eager to catch a glimpse of those fellows whose voices were so strangely alike, and who had a secret code that he could not decipher.

"Paul, do you suppose it fell down to the street?" The voice was Pete's and it was still meek.

"We'd never see it from here," Paul answered. Nevertheless, the next moment two figures popped up from behind the roses and peered anxiously over the railing down into the street.

John lay, his mouth half open, his eyes round with surprise. The boys were twins. No wonder they had the same voices! They also looked exactly alike. Who could ever tell them apart? They were about his own age, tall and slender, with fair hair and sparkling eyes.

"Did you lose a chessman by any chance?" John called out.

The twins looked up and gazed across at the King that John was holding up.

"Did it fly over to you?" one of the boys exclaimed.

"Yes, the wind brought it," replied John with a grin.

"The wind!" The boy laughed. "I threw it because I got mad at my brother. I hope it didn't hurt you."

"Not very much," John said, touching his face.

"I'm awfully sorry," said the boy, and he looked as if he meant it, too. "I'm Pete Dalley," he went on. "This is my brother Paul. He never gets mad." Pete linked his arm through his brother's.

John watched them a little enviously. What fun to have a twin brother!

"I'm John Lane," he said, "and I'd throw your chessman back to you, but I've been in an accident and can't move around very well. Won't you come over and get your King? It's apartment eighty-seven."

"Sure!" The twins stooped down. John saw them stuff something into their pockets. Then they hurried inside their apartment, and he waited impatiently for them to arrive.



Chapter Two

THE CHESS TWINS

LISTENING intently, John heard the door from the hall to the living room open and steps approach. Then came his mother's voice: "You mean you threw a chessman across the terrace and it hit John in the face? How could you!"

She came out on the terrace, and the twins followed her in single file. Which was Pete, and which Paul? One boy kept his head bent guiltily. He must be Pete!

He took a step closer. "I'm sorry, John."

Paul put his hand on his brother's arm. "Pete didn't mean to hurt you. He threw the King at me. I'm used to it," he added cheerfully.

John noticed that each twin wore a lapel button on his black- and white-checked shirt, a tiny chessboard, leaning against the black head of a horse. The horse's green glass eye gazed at the board. Both buttons were exactly alike, of shining enamel with a golden edge. But Pete wore his on his right lapel, and Paul on his left. "That's how I'll be able to tell them apart," John thought, pleased.

Aloud he said, "It's all right, Mother. Pete didn't hurt me." Mrs. Lane nodded and left the terrace, and John hoped that the twins would not take their King and rush away but that they would stay for a while. Quickly he went on, "I've been here since Saturday, but I haven't seen you around."

"Oh, our dad took us on an overnight hike last week end," replied Paul. "Afterward we weren't in much. It's swell baseball weather, and Riverside Park's a good place to play."

John nodded silently. He, too had been a de-

voted baseball player before he got injured and had to lie all day on a hospital bed that his parents wheeled from room to room. He saw Pete look at the bed thoughtfully and nudge his brother.

Paul, following Pete's glance, grew very red. "Hiking and baseball are all right," he said, embarrassed, "but you needn't always run around to have fun. There are lots of other things to do."

"Like what?" asked John.

"Like chess," Paul said. "Chess is a *great* game."

"That's right," agreed Pete with conviction. "There's *nothing* like chess."

John became eager to know more about this game that the twins enjoyed so much. Looking at the King in his hand, he said, "I suppose this is the most important chessman, the King."

"You're right," replied Pete, "the King *is* the most important piece. The player who can't save his King is mated—that means he loses the game, even though he has kept all his other chessmen."

"Can he move all over the board?" John asked, his eyes on the King.

"No, he can't," cried both twins, and Paul explained, "The King can't move far. Quite the contrary! He can never move farther than one step at a time. This makes him a very vulnerable piece. Always be careful to keep your King secure from attack, or your opponent might mate him. On the

other hand, the King may move in all directions, like this." (See Diagram 1.)

"The King can never move farther than one step at a time. On the other hand, he may move in all directions."

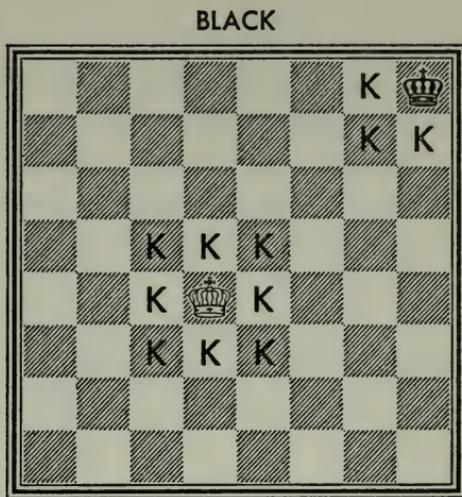


DIAGRAM 1

Paul took one step forward.

"Or like this!" He stepped backward, holding himself very erect and moving stiffly as if he were carved of wood. He took one step straight to the right, then another straight to the left. John could almost see a chessboard under his feet.

Now Paul walked no longer straight ahead or to the side, but in between, diagonally. Four times he walked diagonally—forward to the right, forward to the left and back to the right, back to the left.

Funny, in how many directions the King could

move! John counted them carefully: there were eight all together.

"But remember," warned Paul, lifting his finger, "the King can never move more than *one step at a time*. He can never capture an opponent's piece, unless it stands on a square next to him."

"Isn't it odd," said John thoughtfully, "that the King is such an important chessman, even the most important, though he can't move more than just one little step?" John wondered whether he himself would ever be able to move about again.

Paul looked puzzled, but Pete replied quickly, "Not odd at all! It isn't your legs that count, but what you have here." He tapped his forehead. "And what you have here," he went on. This time he struck his chest hard. The blow hit his shirt pocket. A small object leaped out and fell to the floor.

But Pete went on, undisturbed. "I guess the guy who invented chess knew that a man can be a king, though he's unable to move about much." There was warm sympathy and friendship in his voice. Suddenly John felt very good. From the corner of his eye he noticed that his mother had returned and was looking at Pete with a friendly smile.

"Why don't you boys sit down?" she asked. "I'll get some ginger ale and cookies," and she went into the kitchen.

The twins pulled two chairs up beside John's

bed. But before Pete sat down, he picked up the small object that had fallen out of his pocket and held it between his finger tips.

"This is the Queen," he said. "As you can see, she isn't much smaller than the King. You put her beside him when you set up the pieces on the chess-board."

"How does she move?" John asked. "Does she take timid little steps?"

"The Queen can speed from one end of the board to the other."

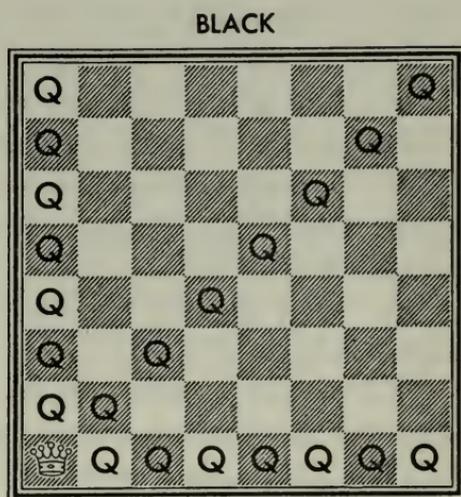


DIAGRAM 2

"You'd be surprised," said Paul. "The Queen moves forward, back, and sideways, like the King; straight in four directions and diagonally in four directions. But you can just bet she isn't satisfied to take one step at a time. Not she! She can speed

from one end of the board to the other." (*See Diagram 2.*)

"Like this!" cried Pete. He got up and rushed all over the terrace.

"Ouch!" He came to an abrupt stop, his hand pressed against his shin. In his eagerness to show how far the Queen could move he had bumped into a chair.

"Fine!" His brother applauded. "You showed John one of the most important rules of chess all right: no chessman can proceed in his course if another piece stands in his way."

"You mean, no chessman except the Knight," Pete corrected him, rubbing his shin.

"No chessman except the Knight, that's true," agreed Paul. "The leap of the Knight goes right over another piece."

"But what does the Queen do if another chessman bars her way?" asked John.

"Oh, she can do different things," Paul replied. "She can stop before she reaches the chessman. You see, she *needn't* move all over the board, although she *can*. She may move one step or two, or three up to seven, just as the player wants."

"But only if no piece stands in her way," muttered Pete with an angry look at the heavy iron chair.

Paul nodded. "She can either stop before she reaches the piece, as I said before, or, if it belongs to the opponent, she can capture it and occupy its

square. Not only the Queen can do this, of course, but also any other chessman, if an enemy piece stands in his way."

The door opened, and John's father joined the boys. "Oh, you have company," he said, pleased. He shook hands with the twins, who got up from their chairs to greet him.

"Don't let me disturb you, boys! Please sit down again," he said, making himself comfortable in a deck chair beside the railing.

"These are Pete and Paul Dalley, Dad." John introduced his guests. "Pete has a little chessboard in his right lapel, and Paul in his left. They're chess players," he added proudly. "They showed me how some of the chessmen move. Let me see—" Wrinkling his forehead, he tried to repeat what the twins had taught him. "The King moves only one step at a time, but he can move in all directions. He can move straight and also diagonally."

John saw the twins nod their heads, like two well-satisfied schoolteachers.

"Very good," Pete praised him. "Perhaps you'd better practice now with the board and men." He and his brother stepped to John's bed and emptied their pockets over it. Chessmen, white and black, rained down on the blanket, clinking pleasantly as they touched each other. John looked at them curiously.

"Now the board," said Paul. From his shirt

pocket he drew a folded sheet of drawing paper and spread it out on John's bed table, smoothing it carefully with his palm. A chessboard was drawn on the sheet, the black squares painted neatly with Chinese ink.

"We always take our chessmen and this board with us when we go out," Paul explained. "Yesterday we had to wait at the dentist's. We played a game of chess in the waiting room, and the time passed in a flash."

Mrs. Lane came back, carrying a tray with a large platter of cookies and three tall frosted glasses of ginger ale.

"Help yourselves!" she invited the boys, and then she joined her husband.

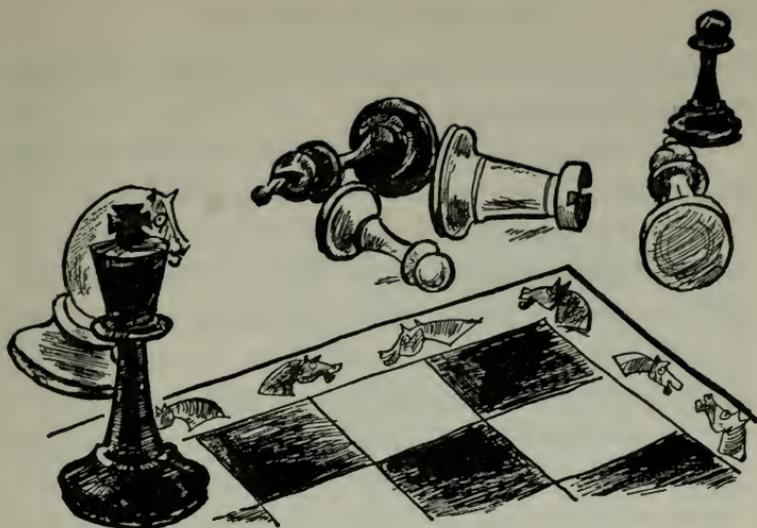
The twins ate and drank heartily, and John enjoyed the snack more than anything he had eaten in a long time. But his glance returned again and again to the chessboard on his bed table. "It looks just like a checkerboard, doesn't it?" he asked.

"Sure," replied Paul, "you use the same board for chess and checkers. But of course chess is much more fascinating."

John counted the squares of the chessboard. "There are eight across and eight up and down," he remarked.

"That's right," agreed Pete, "and each player has eight officers and eight Pawns."

John noticed that tiny heads of horses were



painted as a border around the chessboard. They were in different colors and positions, but all grinned cheerfully.

“Why did you paint so many horses?” he asked.

“They are Knights.” Paul came to the bed and lifted a chessman from John’s blanket. It was shaped like the head of a horse. “This is a Knight, and we belong to a chess club called the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight.”

“So that was what ‘C.C. of the Grinning Knight’ meant,” John thought.

“You belong to a chess club!” he cried eagerly.

“Yes, a chess club for boys. We always have the same number of members, thirty.”

A real club! John’s respect for chess increased. “Please teach me more about the game,” he begged the boys.

"Sure!" Pete, too, stepped to the bed. "Show us first the pieces you know."

John looked sharply at the chessmen that were scattered over his blanket. "This is the King!" he cried, picking up the largest of the white pieces. It was the chessman that had come to him through the air. John's finger brushed gratefully over the little wooden man. If it were not for the White King the twins might never have called on him.

"This is *one* of the Kings," Paul corrected him, "the *White* one. Now look for the *Black* King!"

"Here!" John lifted a chessman, shaped like the White King, but colored a deep black.

"Good! Do you know any other piece?"

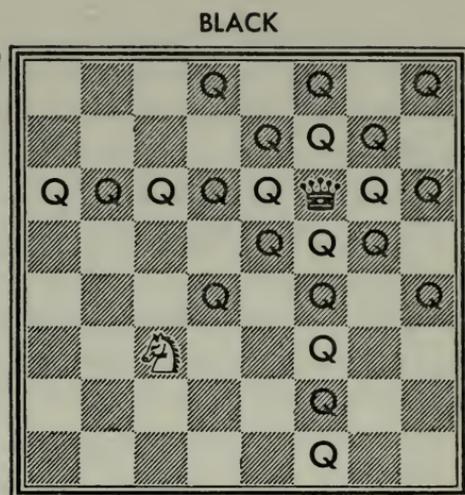
"The Queen. You showed her to me before." It did not take John long to find the two chessmen, one black and one white, that were next in size to the King. "And you said they can move from one end of the board to the other." Holding a Queen in each hand, he let them speed over the chessboard, now straight, now diagonally, now forward, now back. It was great fun.

"And what will you do now?" Pete took a White Knight and put it on a square of the diagonal on which the Black Queen stood. (*See Diagram 3.*)

"I'll capture it!" cried John excitedly. He took the White Knight off the board and set the Black Queen on the square on which it had stood. "You told me that's the way to capture. And the piece

that the Black Queen captured was the White Knight. Now I must look for the Black Knight. Here it is!"

*"I'll capture it!"
John cried
excitedly.*



WHITE
DIAGRAM 3

"Are these all the Knights you can find?" asked Paul.

John looked at him, surprised. Each side, White as well as Black, had one King and one Queen. But Paul spoke as if there were more than one Knight of each color. And indeed, looking again, John found two more Knights. So each player had one King and one Queen, but two Knights.

"I suppose you don't know any of the other pieces," John heard Paul say.

His eyes wandered over the chessmen on his

blanket. There were many of one kind, much smaller than the rest. "These are the Pawns!" he declared firmly.

"How did you know?" Paul asked, surprised. "We haven't shown you the Pawns yet."

"No. But you mentioned that each player has eight Pawns, and there are only that many of this kind."

"Doesn't John catch on fast?" asked Paul.

Pete nodded. "I'm sure he'll soon be a first-class chess player."

John had not felt so pleased for months. But he was disturbed by a woman's voice that called from the twins' place: "Pete! Paul!" He was afraid the boys would have to leave at once.

But Pete went on calmly, "Now we must show you the Rooks and the Bishops." He picked up two chessmen. "This is a Rook, and this is a Bishop. Each player has two Bishops and two Rooks, a King's and a Queen's Bishop, a King's and a Queen's Rook, just as he has two Knights, a King's and a Queen's Knight."

"Wasn't somebody calling you?" asked Mrs. Lane. "Of course, I don't want you to leave if you don't have to."

"Yes, Mom was calling, but it isn't urgent," Paul assured her with a smile.

"How do you know?" asked Mr. Lane.

"If it were urgent, she would call us differently.

Mom knows what makes us come at once," Pete explained, his tall frame bent over the chessboard on John's bed table. "Don't you think, Paul, we'd better show John now how the pieces stand on the board?"

"Yes, do show me!" asked John eagerly.

"Well, whenever you set up a chessboard, you must make sure that you have a *white* square in the corner at your right, never a *black* one. It's a great disgrace if two chess players start playing, and the chessboard lies the wrong way between them with black squares in their right-hand corners. Of course they have to stop at once when they notice their blunder, turn the board around, and start the game all over again. You must never set your chessboard the wrong way, like a duffer."

"I won't," promised John firmly. He was determined never to disgrace himself or his teachers, the twins, by doing such a foolish thing.

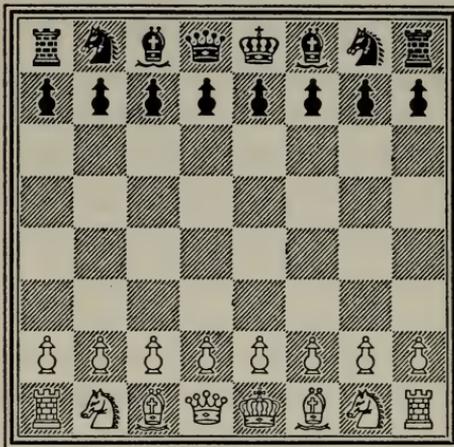
"Let's suppose you have the white pieces," Pete went on, "and your opponent the black. "Your officers stand on the row of squares nearest to you, and your Pawns on the next."

While he was talking, Pete put the two White Rooks on the corner squares of the first row, one Rook on the white square in John's right-hand corner, the other on the black square at John's left. Then he set up the Knights, one Knight beside each Rook. On the other side of the Knights

stood the Bishops. There were two empty squares between the Bishops, and on these Pete put the King and the Queen. Then he lined up the eight small Pawns.

At the other end of the board Paul set up the black chessmen in the same order.

BLACK



WHITE

DIAGRAM 4

When all the men stood lined up, John drew a deep breath.

John lay, watching attentively. When all the men stood lined up, with four rows of white and black squares between the two armies (*See Diagram 4*), he drew a deep breath. "Now tell me how the game goes," he asked. "What must you do to win?"

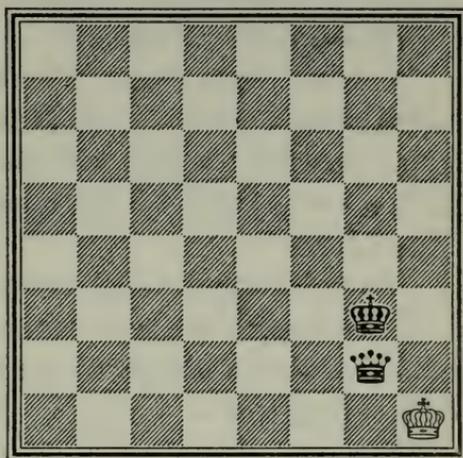
"You must mate your opponent's King," Pete replied. "You must attack him until he can't save

himself any longer. The player who mates the enemy King has won the game. I'll show you a few positions—”

At this moment his mother called again, but this time she said only one word, “Check!”

The twins leaped up from the edge of the bed,

BLACK



The White King is mated.

WHITE

DIAGRAM 5

on which they had been sitting, and stuffed their chessmen and folded board into their pockets.

John felt a strange pang of regret when he saw the little black and white men disappear.

“Check!” cried Paul. “Check means the King is attacked. You must rescue him at once. If you can’t, he’s mated, and you’ve lost the game, as Pete said. (See Diagram 5.) Mom knows that when

she calls, 'Check,' we'll leave everything and come at once. Just as in the game: when the King is attacked, in check, then his owner must do something about it right away."

The twins had now put all the chessmen into their pockets and were about to leave.

But John called, "Wait! I've got something that belongs to you, a sheet of paper. The wind brought it over from your terrace."

"Keep it!" said Pete. "It's the score of a tournament game I played with Max Smith." The way Pete wrinkled his nose and waved his hand scornfully showed John that his new friend did not like Max Smith.

The twins turned and rushed out of the door.

"Do you play in chess tournaments? Who's Max Smith? Does he belong to your chess club?" John called after them.

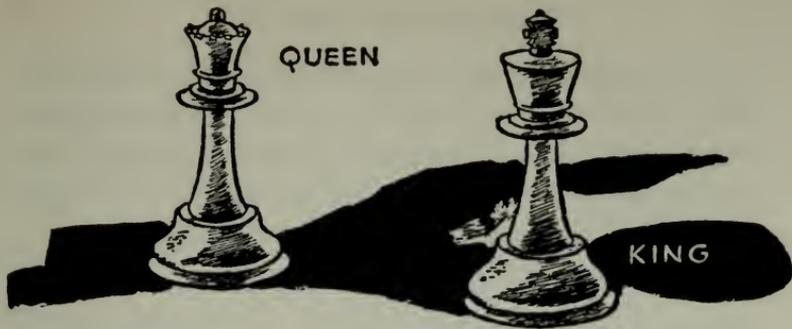
"We play in the vacation tournament of our chess club, Max is a member," one twin replied as they ran through the living room.

Of course John could not tell which had spoken. He heard the hall door open.

"Thanks for the ginger ale!" one boy called out.

"And for the cookies," the other added.

Then the door slammed shut.



Chapter Three

THE FIRST TRIAL

AFTER the twins left, Mr. Lane said, laughing, "At times I wondered whether they were real boys or chessmen come to life, looking exactly alike. But they certainly are fine fellows. I hope they'll call often."

John hoped so, too, with all his heart. "Did you ever play chess?" he asked his father, as his mother rose to carry the tray back into the kitchen. "Do you know how the pieces move? The twins showed me only the moves of the King and the Queen."

"Well, when I was a youngster, your grandfather taught me a little. But I didn't get far. It was summer, and there were many other things I wanted to do. One chessman, the Knight, had a queer way of moving, I remember, a kind of leap. But I don't know how it went."

Mr. Lane went back to the evening newspaper he had been reading.

John recalled the Knights, the four chessmen shaped like heads of horses, two white and two black. Would the twins come back and show him how the Knights and the other chessmen moved? It was summer. No doubt they had better things to do than visit him. If he were well, he could join them in the green park beside the river which he could see from the terrace.

The telephone rang in the living room. "Hello," John heard his mother say. "How are you, Mother?"

So it was his grandmother calling.

"Yes, he'll come on Monday and look at John's back. Stan went this morning to show him the X-rays and reports from our doctors at home."

John knew his mother was talking of his father's

call on the famous doctor who had been recommended to them.

"He said it looks as if the injuries were healed, thank Heaven," she went on, "but he seemed worried because John isn't able to sit up yet. He asked whether the long sickness made the boy very listless, whether he has anything that interests him and that he enjoys. I don't think he knows much about boys. How can the child enjoy himself, when he has to lie on his back for months and months?"

John wondered whether he was supposed to listen. He glanced at the twins' terrace. It was deserted. His bed table looked bare without the checkered board and the white and black chessmen. The humid air made him tired and sleepy, and he shut his eyes. . . .

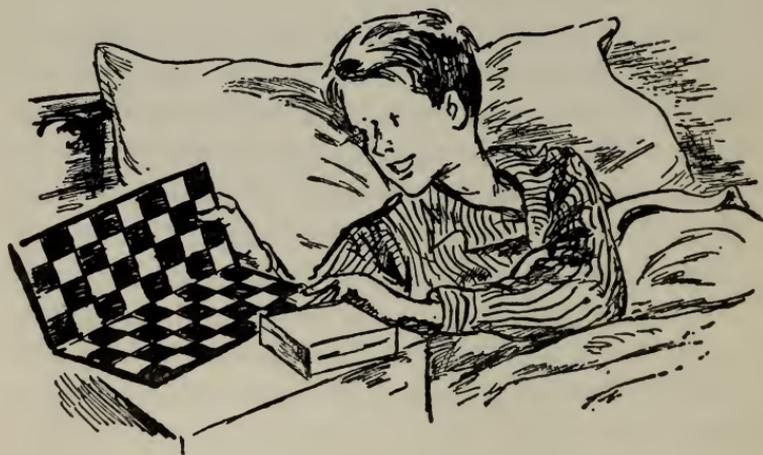
When he opened them, he was alone. He must have dozed off and did not hear his father leave. He closed his eyes again and heard his mother come through the door and approach his bed on tiptoe. Noiselessly she arranged the things on the shelf beside him. She probably thought he was still asleep, and he was too drowsy to open his eyes.

His mother left again. He heard cars speed down the drive, ships whistle on the Hudson, children shout in the park. No sound came from the twins' apartment.

John's hand slid under his pillow. There lay the sheet of paper that the wind had brought, the

score of a tournament game that Pete had played with Max Smith. John drew it forth. If he had chessmen and a board, he could try to decipher the secret code on the sheet, the secret code of chess. It would be fun, like playing detective again. If only he had asked the twins! Maybe they had an old chess set that they would have lent him.

His glance fell on the shelf beside his bed. What was this? He rubbed his eyes. Perhaps he had been thinking too much of the twins in their black- and white-checked shirts and of chess, for now he was seeing chessboards everywhere, even on his shelf. Suddenly he remembered how his mother had come and busied herself beside him. He stretched out his hand.



There *was* a chessboard on the shelf, a real chessboard! He set it down in front of him and turned

once more to the shelf. Yes, there stood a flat box he had never seen before. When he pulled it closer, he heard some hard objects roll around inside. CHESSMEN was printed on the cover.

John opened the box hastily, thinking how good his parents were. A leaflet fluttered out of the box and fell on his blanket. He paid no attention, absorbed in the sight of his chessmen. They were much smaller than the twins', but he recognized every single one.

First he took the four Rooks from the box and set them up in the corners of the board, the White Rooks on his side, the Black on the opponent's. Looking at the shining White Rook in the right corner, he noticed that it stood on a black square. "There must always be a white square in your right-hand corner," the twins had warned him.

Glancing at their terrace, he turned the board so that he had a white square in the corner to his right. Once more he set up the Rooks. Beside them he put the Knights and beside the Knights the Bishops, as the twins had done.

But then he hesitated, staring thoughtfully at the board. Between the two White Bishops, as well as between the two Black, two squares were vacant. The Kings and Queens belonged there. Undecided he lay, the White King in his hand. Had Pete put him on the white or the black square between the two White Bishops? John shook his head, unable to remember.

There had been a leaflet in the box, he recalled. Perhaps it contained the rules of the game. Where had it fallen? He saw it on his blanket and picked it up. Yes, it was an instruction sheet. His eyes skimmed over the lines. But he understood only little of the meaning. He could see now what excellent teachers the twins were. Then he found what he had been looking for.

So the *White King* belonged on a *black* square, and the *Black King* on a *white*. John hoped he would never forget it again. He put the two Kings on their squares and the Queens beside them, the *White Queen* on a *white* square, and the *Black* on a *black* one. (See *Diagram 4*, p. 24.) It was easy afterward to line up the Pawns in front of the officers, as he had learned from the twins.

"It's time for dinner. We'll wheel your bed into the living room."

Looking up in surprise, John saw his parents beside him. "Is it really dinnertime?" he asked. "Thanks awfully for the chess set."

His parents looked pleased. "We thought you'd like one of your own since you seemed interested in the game," explained his mother. "So Dad went down to the stationer's and bought it."

"I thought we might be able to figure out together how all the pieces move," Mr. Lane said.

"Oh, yes," replied John quickly. "Can we start at once?"

"No, John, we have to eat first," his mother reminded him. "Let's go in before the food gets cold."

His parents took him into the living room. The veal cutlets with new potatoes and green peas were delicious, but John could not take his eyes off the desk, where his chessmen stood, lined up on the board. How exciting they looked, the white and the black armies that seemed impatient to start the battle.

Afterward Mrs. Lane brought in a peach pie from the kitchen and cut it into large pieces. The yellow peaches looked cool and juicy, the crust of the pie crisp. But John would almost have preferred to do without dessert, so eager was he to start playing chess at once.

At last dinner was over! Mr. Lane lit his pipe, brought John the chessmen, and sat down beside the bed.

"Do you think we could play a real game?" John asked.

"Well, we can try."

"Who'll have the white pieces, Dad?"

"You may have them. That gives you the first move. White always moves first, I remember."

John looked thoughtfully at the board. Which piece should he move? The officers were all walled in by the Pawns that stood in front of them. True, the twins had said the Knight could leap over the

other pieces, but John did not know how. He decided to move a Pawn.

"Do you know how the Pawn moves?" he asked.

"Yes, I think I know. The Pawn moves straight ahead, a step at a time. And it never moves backward. The Pawn is the only chessman that can't move backward."

John picked up the Pawn in front of the Queen and advanced it one square toward the center of the board.

Mr. Lane shook his head. "This looks strange to me. I've often seen your grandfather and his friends begin a game by moving this Pawn or the next that stands in front of the King. But somehow it was different." Frowning, he studied the board. "Now I remember," he exclaimed. "People usually advance the Pawn one square farther than you have—to this square."

"But Dad, I don't understand. You said the Pawn can move only *one* square at a time, and now you want me to advance it *two* squares."

"I don't understand it myself," admitted Mr. Lane, bent low over the chessboard. "But that's how I remember your grandfather started his game."

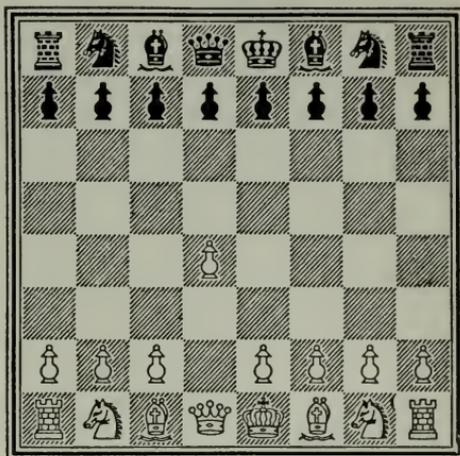
He reached for the leaflet with the rules that lay on John's bed, but withdrew his hand again. "It comes back to me now. *Usually* the Pawn can move only *one* square at a time, but *on its first move* each

Pawn can advance *one* or *two* steps, whichever the player prefers. So it's all right to move your Pawn that far." (See Diagram 6.)

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Mr. Lane
BLACK

"The Pawn moves straight ahead, a step at a time, but on its first move it may advance one or two steps."



WHITE
John

DIAGRAM 6

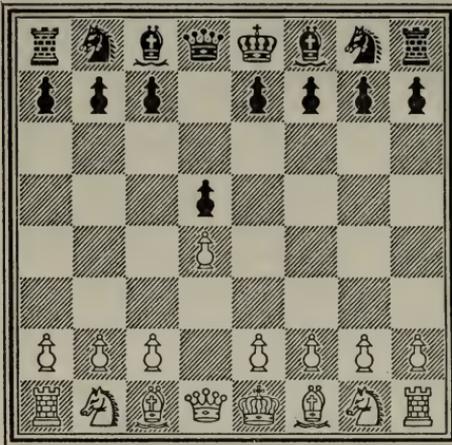
John nodded. "Now it's your turn." He was very anxious to see what move his father would make.

Mr. Lane, too, moved the Pawn that stood in front of his Queen, pushing it two squares ahead. The two Pawns, the White and the Black, stood in the center of the chessboard, facing each other

from two adjoining squares. (See Diagram 7.)

“Now my Pawn captures yours,” John cried excitedly. He took his father’s Black Pawn off the board and put his own White Pawn in its place.

Mr. Lane
BLACK



WHITE
John

DIAGRAM 7

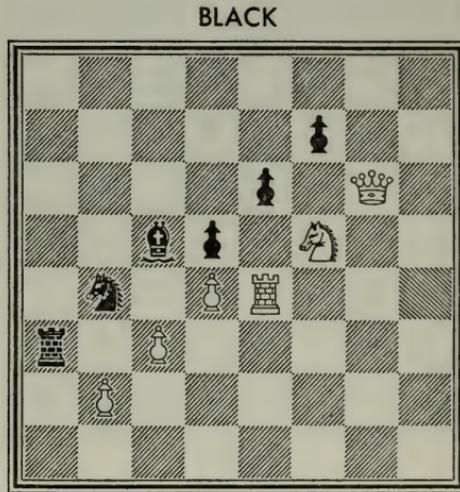
The two Pawns, the White and the Black, stood in the center of the chess-board.

His father shook his head. “Put my Pawn back, John. You can’t capture it.”

“Why not?” Reluctantly John set the two Pawns up as they had stood before he had captured the Black one. “Your Pawn stands right in front of mine on the next square,” he argued. “Why can’t I capture it?”

“Because . . .” Mr. Lane looked thoughtfully at the two Pawns. “Oh, I know why. The Pawn, though it *moves* straight ahead, *captures* on the *diagonal*. I remember it clearly now. A Pawn can

The White Pawns can take the black officers, the Black Pawns the white officers.



WHITE

DIAGRAM 8

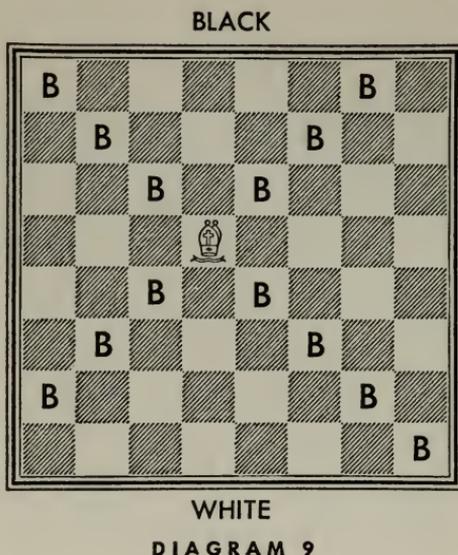
only capture a man that stands on the same diagonal one step ahead. It's the one chessman that captures differently from the way it moves." (See *Diagram 8*.)

“So I can't capture your Pawn,” said John, a little disappointed.

“But you can move your Bishop now,” his father

told him. "The Bishop moves diagonally, always diagonally." (See Diagram 9.)

John looked sharply at the board. Since he had advanced the Pawn in front of the Queen, the



"The Bishop moves diagonally, always diagonally."

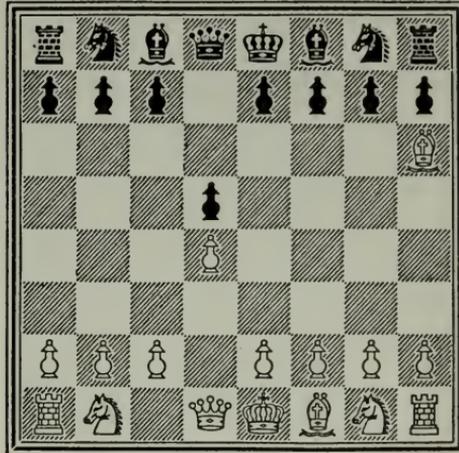
Bishop that stood beside her was no longer closed in.

"May I move the Bishop anywhere on the diagonal?" John asked. "May I move it here?" He put the Bishop at the end of the diagonal.

"You may if you want to, but I don't think it's a good move. I can capture the Bishop with the Pawn that stands in front of my Knight." (See Diagram 10.)

"Then I won't go that far." Quickly John moved the Bishop one square back. "I go here," he decided.

Mr. Lane
BLACK



WHITE
John

DIAGRAM 10

"You may if you want to, but I can capture the Bishop with the Pawn that stands in front of my Knight."

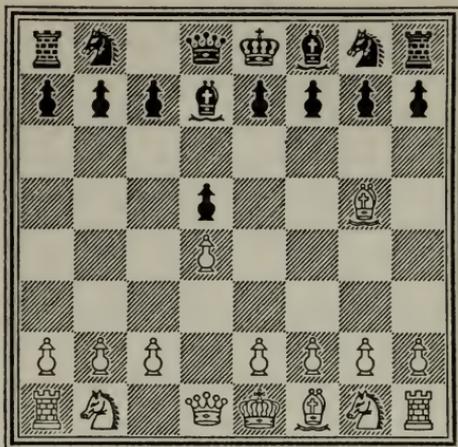
"Well, I, too, shall move my Bishop," said Mr. Lane. "But I'm not as ambitious as you. I'll move it only one square."

He picked up the Bishop that stood beside his Queen and moved it one square diagonally. (*See Diagram 11.*)

"I'd like to move one of my Rooks," said John, looking at the sturdy chessmen in the corners of

the board. "But I guess I can't because there isn't any free space around them where they could go. How does the Rook move?"

Mr. Lane
BLACK



WHITE
John

DIAGRAM 11

Mr. Lane moved the Bishop that stood beside his Queen one square diagonally.

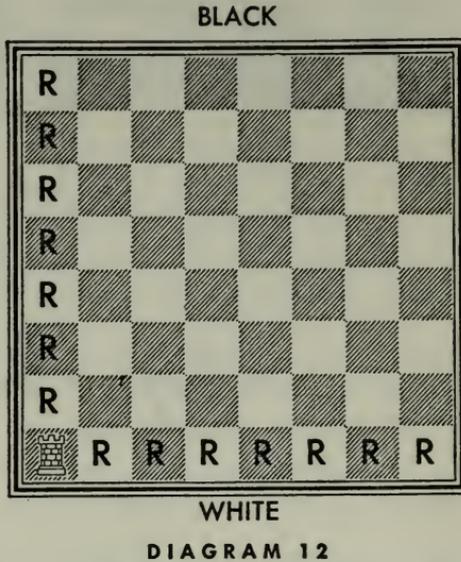
"The Rook moves straight, I think, never diagonally. It can move as far as it wants if the way is free. (See Diagram 12.) But, as you said, your Rooks are still hemmed in. I think you should move another Pawn."

"I'm sorry to interrupt," John heard his mother say, "but it's getting late."

"Late?" He lifted his head and stared at her, as she sat in the large chair beside the floor lamp, a book in her hand. "Why, we've only just had dinner."

She laughed, closing her book. "You think so? It's almost ten o'clock."

"The Rook moves straight. It can move as far as it wants if the way is free."



"No!" John glanced at his wrist watch, bewildered. Since his accident, the time after dinner seemed endless. But today it had gone like lightning.

Were the twins, too, in bed now, he wondered, as he lay in the dark. How did their room look? Perhaps the floor was covered with black- and white-checked linoleum. Were the walls white with a border of black chessmen, Kings and Queens and the others? He smiled at the thought.

"I must ask them when I see them next. I hope I'll see them tomorrow. . . ." John fell asleep.



Chapter Four

DETECTIVE WORK

THE next morning, when John awoke, rain was pouring from a gray sky. And he had hoped that he would be able to lie out on the terrace! Perhaps the twins would have seen him and come over again. It was Sunday, but his father had to

leave early, because friends of his were sailing for Europe, and he wanted to spend the day with them.

John felt a little low, as he lay in the living room beside the open door of the terrace. Cool fresh air came in from outside, but the cement floor of the terrace was covered with puddles. More rain fell into them, making bubbles. There was no telling when he could lie out there again.

His mother came to the bed, carrying the box with his chessmen and the folded chessboard. "I thought you might like to play."

"Thank you, Mom." John laid the board in front of him and set the men up, remembering clearly where each belonged. As he looked at his shining white and black chessmen lined up on the board, he felt all at once very comfortable in the pleasant room, sheltered from the rain outside.

First he would study the instructions that had come with the chess set, he decided. For a while he tried to concentrate on them, but they seemed dry and dull, and he could not understand them. How alive and exciting chess had been, when the twins had taught him, and when he had played with his father!

Disgusted, he threw the rules aside. His hand reached under his pillow where he still kept the paper that the wind had brought the day before from the twins' terrace. Yesterday, when the sheet

had fallen on his bed, he had not known what it was. But he had felt at once that it must hold exciting messages and had tried in vain to decipher them. Today he knew so much more, though only one day had passed. He knew that the paper in his hand was a tournament score. A whole game was written on it in the secret code of chess. If he succeeded in deciphering the code, he could play over the tournament game between Pete and Max Smith. It would be almost as good as being present at a tournament of the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight and watching the twins play.

"Now I'll play detective and chess at the same time," thought John, filled with pleasant excitement, as he looked at the tournament score.

Obviously Pete had had the white pieces because his name was written under the printed word *White* on the left half of the sheet. "White's moves are on the left side," John realized, "and Black's on the right."

He read White's first move: "P-Q4." What did P mean? P? P? John tried to recall what moves his father and he had made last night when they had started their game. They had moved Pawns.

Well, P meant Pawn, of course! How was it possible that he had not thought of this at once? Pete, too, had moved a Pawn on his first move.

So the first part of each move on the score, the letter or letters *before* the dash, meant the *piece*

that the player moved. Did the part *after* the dash show the *square* to which he moved it? Q4? Was Q4 the name of a square?

Yesterday, playing with his father, John had moved the Pawn that stood in front of his Queen. He had moved it two squares ahead. Had Pete moved the same Pawn and put it on the same square? John pushed the White Queen's Pawn two squares ahead as he had done the night before. Then he counted the squares from the edge of the chessboard to where the Pawn stood; one, two, three, four. The Pawn stood on the fourth square, the Queen on the first. Q1 could easily be the square on which the Queen stood, Q4 the one occupied now by the Pawn. It really seemed as if Pete had moved his Queen's Pawn, had moved it two squares ahead. (*See Diagram 6, p. 35.*)

"It's a good thing Dad and I played yesterday," John thought. "Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to figure this out. And I made the same first move Pete made in a real tournament game." He felt very proud and excited. "I'd better take some notes," he decided.

He rang the small silver bell that stood on a chair beside his bed and heard his mother approach from the kitchen.

"Please, Mom, may I have my large notebook and a pencil?" he asked when she opened the door.

She took the book and a long yellow pencil from

a desk drawer and brought them to his bed. "You look so much better now, so happy," she said. Her eyes fell on the chessmen, and she smiled.

When she left, John sketched a chessboard on a page of the notebook, eight squares long, and eight wide. The black squares he shaded with a few strokes of his pencil, the white he left as they were.

Comparing his drawing with the real chessboard, he marked the square on which the White Queen belonged "Q1," the next toward the enemy line "Q2," and so on until he came to "Q8," the square on which the Black Queen stood. He wondered whether these were really the names of the squares, or whether he had gotten everything wrong. Well, it was fun to try his wits on the secret code of chess, and he would go on.

He took up the tournament score again and read Black's first move: "P-Q4." But the White Queen's Pawn stood on Q4! John had moved it there. How could he put another Pawn on the same square?

John stared at the board, full of doubt. He must have made a mistake, mixed everything up! Discouraged, he closed his eyes, feeling very tired. He had better give up!

For a while he lay thus. Then he opened his eyes again. They fell on his black and white chessmen that looked so neat and inviting. The White Queen's Pawn stood all alone in the center of the

wide checkered battlefield, calm and courageous.

"I won't give up," John thought. "I want to go on with the game. Couldn't I . . . ?"

Again he rang his bell.

"Do you think I might call up Pete and Paul and ask them something about chess?" he said, when his mother entered the room.

"I don't see why not," she replied. "They seemed very friendly. I'm sure they'll be glad to help you." She wheeled John's bed close to the sideboard on which the telephone stood.

Leafing through the directory, he found an Alexander Dalley who lived in the same house. He must be the twins' father. As he dialed the number, John hoped that Pete and Paul would be in.

"Hello," said a boy's fresh voice, "this is Pete Dalley."

"Hello, Pete, this is John Lane speaking. What are you doing?"

"Dad's helping us build a small television set. We have a big one in the living room, but he says our taste is too different from his. He and Mom like all kinds of high-brow stuff, and of course we want to watch ball games and wrestling matches. So he's helping us make a small set for our own room. He's an electrical engineer, you know. What are you doing?"

"I'm trying to play over your tournament game with Max."

"You are! But how can you, without a chess set?"

"My parents gave me chessmen and a board yesterday after you left."

"Well, that's grand," Pete replied. Then John heard him announce, "Listen, Paul! John got a chess set and is playing over my tournament game with Max. What do you think of that?"

Over the wire came an indistinct whooping. Probably it was Paul's expression of approval.

"How far have you got?" asked Pete.

"Not far," John admitted. "I've made just one move for White."

"Never mind," Pete encouraged him. "People usually don't play games over until they know all the rules and something about chess notation."

"Chess notation?" John asked eagerly. "Is that what you call the way you write down the moves? I called it the secret code of chess. I always thought it great fun to decipher a secret code. But I'm stuck and thought I'd better ask you."

"Go ahead!"

"Well, the first move you made and wrote down on the score is P-Q4. So I advanced my Queen's Pawn two squares. I figured the squares are called after the pieces. The one on which the White Queen stands is Queen 1. Then come Queen 2, Queen 3, and so on to Queen 8 where the Black Queen stands. Is that right?"

"Absolutely! And on the score you write them

Q1, Q2, Q3. I never thought you could figure that out by yourself."

"But I did get stuck. I read Black's first move on the score, and it was again P-Q4. How can I put the Black Pawn on the same square on which the White Pawn stands?"

"So that's your trouble," replied Pete. "Well, you see, there are *two* squares, called Q4. If you write down one of *White's* moves, you count the squares from *White's* side. Therefore Q4 is the *fourth* square counted from *White's* end of the board. But if you write a move that *Black* made, you must count the squares from *Black's* side. If we record *Black's* moves, the square on which the *Black* Queen stands is called Q1 not Q8, the one occupied by the *White* Queen, Q8 instead of Q1.

"The square Q4 to which the *Black* Queen's Pawn moved would be called Q5 if you counted the squares from *White's* side. So you see, Max didn't put his *Queen's* Pawn on the *same* square where I moved mine, but on the *next*. Each square of the chessboard has really two names, and each name means two squares, all depending on from which side you look at the board."

"Are you through? Let *me* talk with John now!"

"This must be Paul," thought John, though the voice sounded exactly like Pete's.

"All right! Paul wants to talk with you, John," said Pete.

"Hello, John. I hear you're doing very well

with your chess. Is there anything else you want to know? Anything Pete didn't tell you?"

Well, there was a question that had bothered John ever since the twins had told him about chess and the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight. "Does a feller have to be very smart to become a real chess player?" he asked hesitantly.

"No, of course not," Paul said, and then John heard him repeat laughingly, "John wants to know if it takes special brains to be a good chess player."

There was more laughter at the other end of the wire.

"Let me talk with John and put that straight!"

"No, I want to tell him myself. Listen, John, where did you get that idea? Any average boy can learn about chess and become a good player. Once I spoke with a great chess master, and he told me that young boys pick up chess as easy as pie if they're interested in the game."

John did not know any longer whether Pete or Paul was talking, but he felt very pleased.

"What is it, Dad?" he heard one of the boys, whichever he was, ask. "Yes, I'll tell him. Hold the wire, John. My dad wants to say hello."

"Hello, John," said a deep friendly voice, "my sons talked about you last night. Let me tell you something. If a boy had to be very smart to learn chess, those two youngsters of mine would never have become chess players."



"Don't believe him," one of the twins called into the phone. "He just doesn't want to show how proud he is of us."

"Quiet," said Mr. Dalley. "Go back to work, boys, and let me talk with John. You know," he went on to John, "their chess made those boys actually less lazy at school. Shall I tell you how?"

"Yes, please, do!" said John. He was enjoying this telephone visit immensely.

"Well, they both admire Benjamin Franklin no end, because he was a chess player. His essay 'The Morals of Chess,' is very beautiful."

"We have it hanging over our beds, and some-day we'll show it to you," John heard a voice call.

"What about those screws I told you to put in, Pete?" Mr. Dalley reminded his son, before he continued. "They have Franklin's autobiography, too, and one day, leafing through it, I found a passage where he describes how he and a friend of his studied Italian. The friend was a chess player and often asked Franklin to play with him. Franklin didn't want to neglect his Italian. He played only on the condition that the winner of each game should give a short assignment to the loser, for instance, an exercise in grammar. And the loser had to make good before they met again."

"Now you'll see that Dad's a slave driver," one twin called loudly.

"I'm not a slave driver, but I suggested to my boys that since they admire Franklin so much, they should follow his example. Whenever one of them loses a game, he should do a little extra task in arithmetic or history or any other subject that the winner prescribes for him.

"Of course, they couldn't let Franklin, their hero, down. They really weren't very good students before. But after they adopted the Franklin method, they even skipped a year in school."

"Now let me speak with John, Dad. You've talked a long time."

"Yes, I've talked enough, but you mustn't talk any more either, Paul. John will be getting tired. . . . Good-by, John. I'll look forward to meeting you soon."

John's mother, who had been setting the table, smiled at him when he put down the receiver. "What did Pete and Paul say that made you laugh so much?" she asked.

"Oh, I didn't only talk with Pete and Paul, but also with their father. He seems lots of fun." All through lunch John told his mother what Mr. Dalley and the twins had said.

But as soon as they had finished their meal, he asked for his chess set and notebook. "I can't rest now," he explained to his mother, knowing that she wanted him to sleep a while. "I must try out what Pete told me about chess notation before I forget it."

The White Pawn still stood on Q4 where John had put it before lunch. Now he made Black's first move. He was no longer puzzled because Max, too, had played P-Q4. Since he had talked with Pete, he knew that if you wrote down one of *Black's* moves, you counted the squares from *Black's* side.

"So Q1 is now the square on which the *Black* Queen stands," he thought. "And the *Black* Queen's Pawn stands on Q2." He took the Pawn between his finger tips and advanced it one square. "This is Q3, and this"—he advanced the Pawn another square—"is Q4. That's where Max put his Pawn in his game with Pete. (*Compare Diagram 7, p. 36.*) But before going on with their game, I'll finish the sketch in my notebook," John

decided. "I must try to figure out the names of all the squares and put them down on the drawing. Too bad Pete didn't tell me more about them."

His eyes fell on the leaflet with the rules that lay on his blanket, and he picked it up. Perhaps it could help him, now that he had learned something about chess notation from Pete and had done a little detective work of his own.

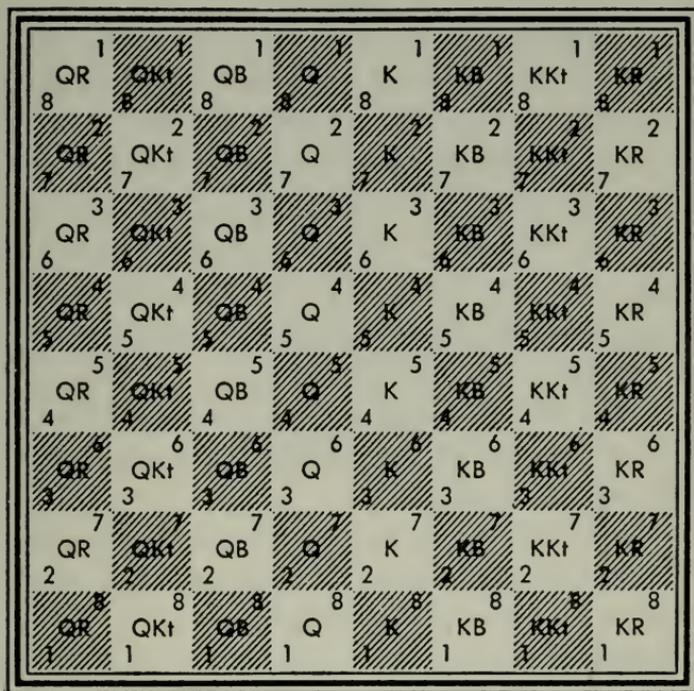
And indeed, studying the instructions carefully, he found what he needed. If you looked at the board from *White's* side, the square on which the White King stood was called King 1. Beside the King stood the King's Bishop on King's Bishop 1. Then came the King's Knight on King's Knight 1, and the King's Rook on King's Rook 1. On the Queen's side the Queen's Bishop stood on Queen's Bishop 1, the Queen's Knight on Queen's Knight 1, and the Queen's Rook on Queen's Rook 1. It was really quite simple.

The abbreviations of the chessmen's names that John read in the rules were so obvious that he did not even make notes of them. He knew now that P stood for Pawn and Q for Queen. K meant King, of course, and KB, KKt, and KR stood for King's Bishop, King's Knight, and King's Rook, just as QB, QKt, and QR were used for Queen's Bishop, Queen's Knight, and Queen's Rook.

But he wrote down the abbreviated names of the squares on his sketch, consulting the instructions. KR1, KKt1, KB1, K1, Q1, QB1, QKt1, QR1 were

the names of the squares on which the white officers stood. The squares in front of them, occupied by the white Pawns, were KR2, KKt2, KB2, K2, Q2, QB2, QKt2, QR2. The letters were the same

BLACK



WHITE

DIAGRAM 13

as in the first row of squares, but each square of the second row had the number 2 instead of 1. He went on row after row: KR3, KKt3, KR4. . . . Finally he came to the squares on which the black pieces

stood: KR8, KKt8, KB8, K8, Q8. . . .

With satisfaction John examined the drawing in his notebook, showing the names of the squares, seen from *White's* side. Now he had to put in the names used if one of *Black's* moves were written down. He copied them from the instruction sheet. Yes, it was as Pete had said. Each square had two names: John could see it clearly now. The letters were the same, but the numbers were different. (See *Diagram 13*.) The square K1, for instance, seen from *White's* end of the board, was K8, when looked at from *Black's* side. Q2 was Q7 and KR6 was KR3. Why, the sum of the two numbers of a square seemed always to be 9 if you added them!

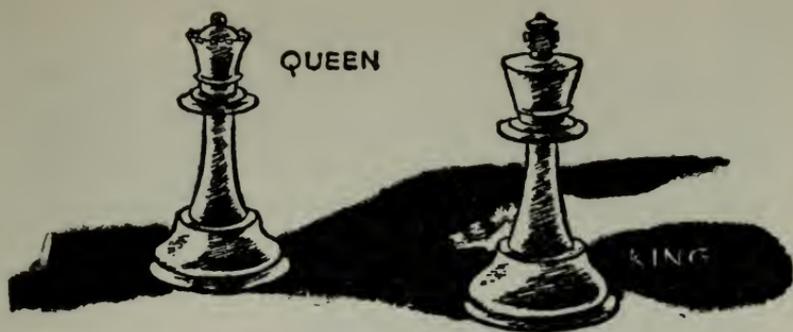
His mother came into the room, carrying a book with a bright cover.

"Don't you think you've had enough chess for today, John?" she asked. "How about seeing what Tom Sawyer is up to?"

"O.K., Mom. Have you got time to read to me?"

"I always have time for Tom Sawyer," she replied, sitting down beside his bed.

It was strange, John thought, ever since his grandmother had given him the book, he had been too restless to enjoy it. But now he was looking forward to having his mother read to him. He glanced at his chessmen on the bed table. Tomorrow he could turn to them again for pleasure and excitement. Snuggling comfortably against his pillows, he listened to the story.

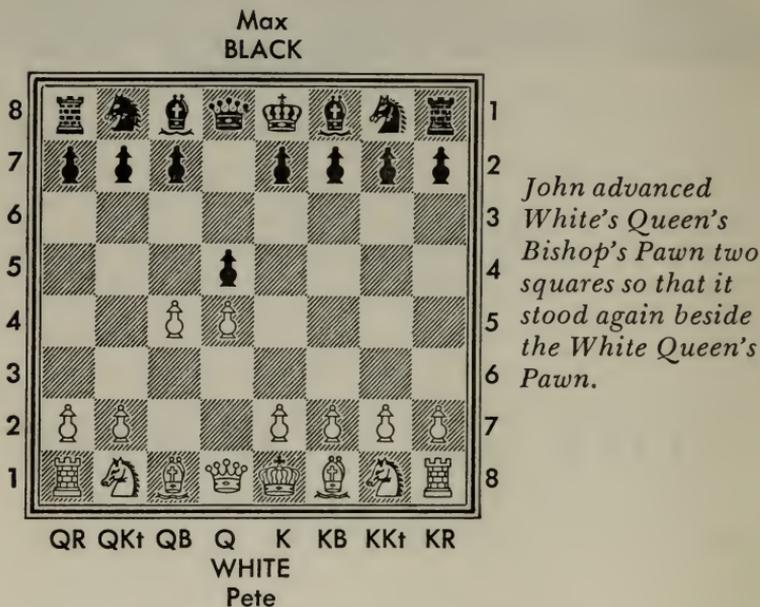


Chapter Five

THE IMMORTAL ARMY

SOMETHING was going to happen today, John knew, as soon as he opened his eyes the next morning. Oh yes, the famous doctor was coming to look at his back. John hoped the physician would make him well, but he felt a little afraid,

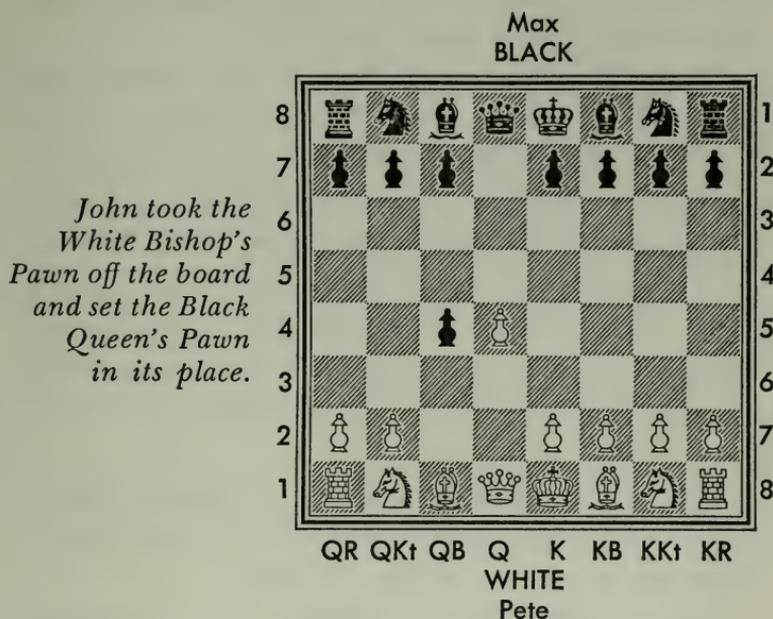
too. What if Dr. Miller could not help him? Nonsense! He must not think that. His eyes fell upon his chess set. Quickly he reached out and drew it into his bed. He would go on with the game.



When he had set up the pieces, he repeated the two moves he had made the day before. White: P-Q4, Black: P-Q4. (See Diagram 7, p. 36.)

What was Pete's second move, he wondered, looking at the tournament score? P-QB4. John advanced the Pawn in front of the White Queen's Bishop (White's Queen's Bishop's Pawn) two squares so that it stood again beside the White Queen's Pawn. (See Diagram 14.)

Then he read Black's second move from the score: PxBP. What did x mean? A glance at the score showed John that this letter appeared in several places. He lay, thinking. The Black Pawn



stood one square away from the White Bishop's Pawn, not straight in front of it, but on the same diagonal. What was it his father had said? "The Pawns move *straight* and take *diagonally*." So Black's Queen's Pawn could capture the White Bishop's Pawn, and that was obviously what had happened, and what the sign x meant. John took the White Bishop's Pawn off the board and set the Black Queen's Pawn in its place. (See Diagram 15.)

But he was not satisfied. Why had Pete put his Pawn on a square where Max could take it? Why had he given the Pawn to Max? John could not understand it.

Well, he might find out later. Meanwhile he read White's third move: B-KB4.

"When I played with Dad, I, too, moved my Bishop early in the game," John thought. "And Pete must have moved the same Bishop I moved, the *Queen's* Bishop, because the *King's* Bishop is still walled in by Pawns. Probably that's why he didn't write down which Bishop he meant. Every chess player knows it can be only the *Queen's* Bishop. I know it, too." John felt very pleased with himself. Perhaps he was really beginning to be a chess player!

He moved the White *Queen's* Bishop diagonally to KB4 and then he read Black's third move from the tournament score: B-KB4.

Again only the *Queen's* Bishop was free to move. Again it was the square *King's* Bishop 4 to which it went along the diagonal. (*See Diagram 16.*)

John gazed at the two Bishops he had moved. One stood on a *black* square, and it had come from a *black*. The other stood on *white* and had moved from a *white* square.

Could a Bishop move only to a square of the color on which it had stood in the beginning of the game? John tried and moved the Bishops all

over the board. "Yes, it was true; the Bishop that stood on *black* could never move to a *white* square, and the Bishop that started from *white* was bound to this color. And each side had two Bishops, one

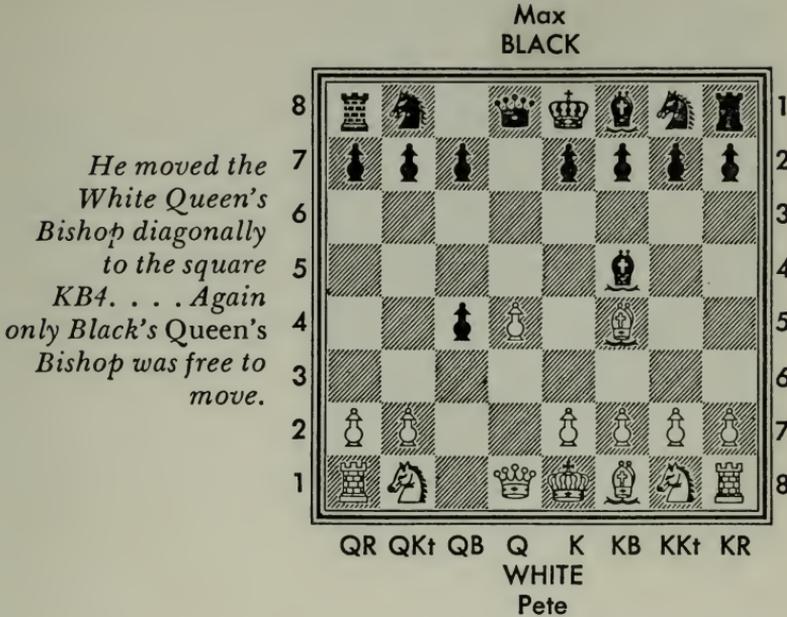
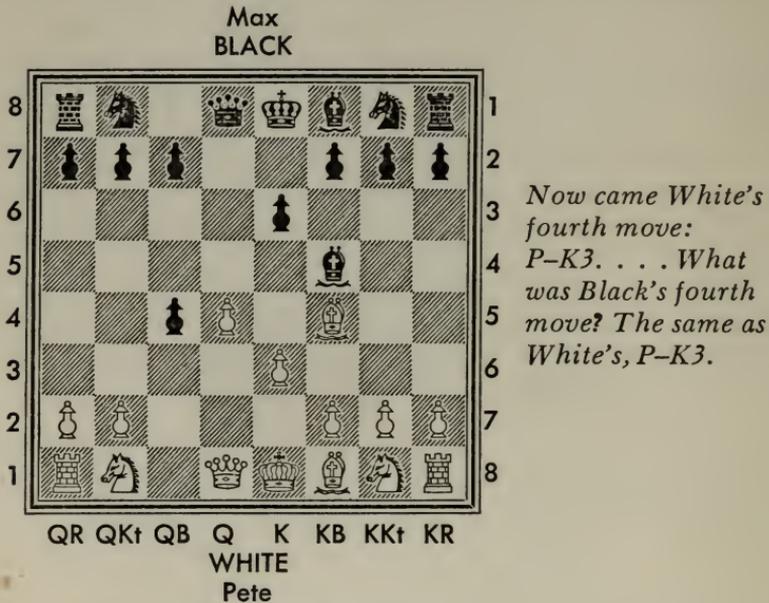


DIAGRAM 16

on white and one on black, a white and a black Bishop.

John was still trying out the Bishops, when his mother came to get him ready. She dressed him in his best pajamas, the ones with the pink and gray stripes. He knew it was on account of the famous doctor who would come today. Now and then she gave him a long look, her eyes full of concern.

Later, when they had all had breakfast in the living room, John noticed the same expression in his father's eyes. He wished his parents would not look at him that way. His heart began to pound.



"May I have my chess set, Dad?" he asked.

"Sure, son." Mr. Lane went into John's room and came back, carrying the board carefully.

John looked at the tournament score. Now came White's fourth move: P-K3. This was easy. John pushed the Pawn that stood in front of the King, the King's Pawn, one square straight ahead.

This Pawn had moved only one square. It had moved from a white square to a black. It was not

John glanced up from the board. Beside his bed stood the large stiff armchair, usually placed in the corner by the window. He did not know when his parents had moved it. Silently they stood beside the fireplace, looking at him. He realized that they expected the doctor any moment now.

The doorbell rang.

"Hurry!" John heard his mother say.

His father left the room quickly.

Mrs. Lane took a few steps toward the bed. Perhaps she wanted to remove the chessboard so that it would not be in the way of the doctor, whose every minute was precious. But she stopped in the middle of the room, listening tensely. John, too, listened to the deep voice greeting his father.

In another moment a big man with white hair and a stern face was shown in by Mr. Lane. He bowed stiffly before John's mother, then he turned to the bed. His face lit up. "A chess player!" he cried. "Good!"

Mr. Lane pointed to the armchair. But the doctor ignored it and sat down on the edge of John's bed. "Let's see what you are doing. Are you playing a game by yourself?"

"I'm trying to figure this out." John showed the tournament score to the doctor. He liked him at once and felt completely at ease with him. "A friend of mine played the game. But I began only the day before yesterday to study chess."

"Only the day before yesterday!" The doctor was astonished. "Well, for this short time you seem pretty far ahead with the game. You must be cut out for a chess player."

"You really think so?" John asked, very proud. He wished Pete and Paul could hear the doctor.

"John," his mother admonished him, "you mustn't take up Dr. Miller's time with your chess. He's a very busy man."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "I'm busy, it's true. But these little men—they have some strange power. You always find time for them if you're a chess player." His long strong fingers slid gently over the heads of the chessmen.

"It's only a cheap set," said Mr. Lane. "I bought it in a hurry when John became so interested in the game."

"A cheap set or an expensive one, it doesn't make any difference," Dr. Miller replied, smiling. "As long as they are chessmen, they have true magic. Isn't that right, John?"

John nodded. He must try to remember every word Dr. Miller said to tell the twins. They would be delighted.

"The immortal army of chessmen," the doctor went on thoughtfully. "It has survived centuries and centuries, more centuries than any other army. It has survived because it's an army of peace, not of war; of life, not of death. Countries fight

and destroy each other. But in all of them the Royal Game is played; in all of them it has survived gloriously because of its exquisite wisdom, the wisdom of life."

Dr. Miller spoke of chess with the same devotion as Pete and Paul! Perhaps all chess players had something in common, like the members of a secret society. John wondered whether he, too, belonged to this society, though he did not yet know all the moves of the chessmen.

While Dr. Miller was talking, they had put John on his side and taken off the top of his pajamas. He could feel the doctor's fingers examining his back carefully. "May I have another look at the X-rays you showed me in my office?" he heard Dr. Miller ask.

"Of course! I have them right here!" John's father went to the desk on which the large envelope with the X-rays lay.

Dr. Miller followed him and opened the envelope. Standing with his glasses pushed up on his forehead, he studied the first picture. The room was very quiet. The doctor was looking at the second picture now.

"You know," he said, "I was born in New Orleans, only a few blocks away from the house where Paul Morphy lived. Did you ever hear of him?"

"Paul Morphy!" cried John. "Pete and Paul,

the chess twins, mentioned him. I thought he was a general."

Dr. Miller smiled. "And so he was—a general of the immortal army. He was the world's greatest chess player."



"He was!" John stared at the doctor, who still kept his eyes on the X-ray pictures. "Did you ever see him? Did you talk to him? How did he look?"

"I can't remember him. I was a baby when he died in 1884. But in the Manhattan Chess Club down on Central Park South they have a beautiful picture of him, a large oil painting. When you're well, I'll be glad to take you there and show it to you."

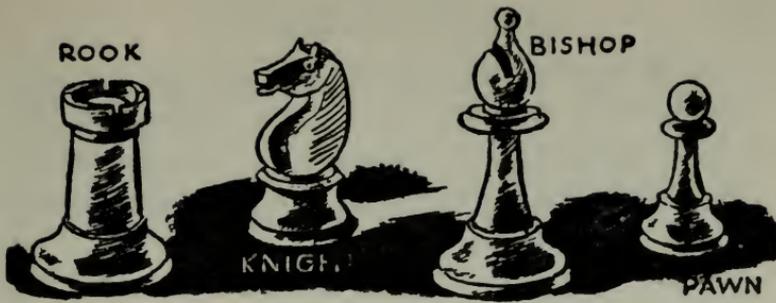
"When I'm well?" asked John quickly.

"Yes, when you're well," repeated Dr. Miller, returning to the bed. "There's no reason, John, why you shouldn't get well very soon, if you want to."

John did want to get well soon. He wanted to become a good chess player, join the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight, and play in tournaments, like the twins. He wanted to go with Dr. Miller to the Manhattan Chess Club and look at the picture of Paul Morphy, the world's greatest chess player.

"Is there anything special for us to do?" asked Mr. Lane. "Any treatment or medicine?"

Dr. Miller gazed at the black and white chessmen and shook his head, smiling. "I guess John has found his best medicine by himself."

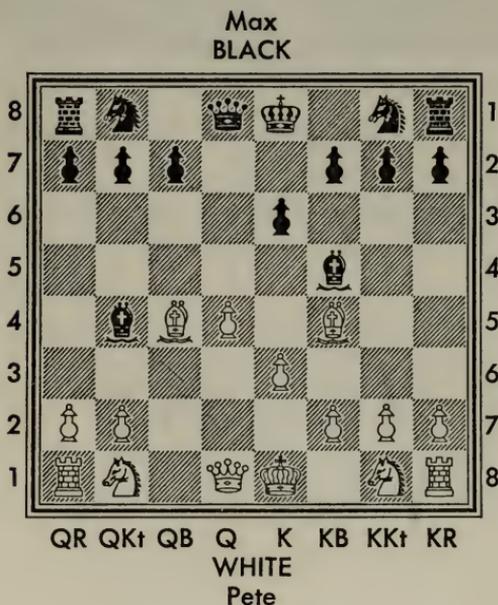


Chapter Six

THE MODEST TURK

THE following day John lay again on the terrace, playing chess. Every now and then he looked up from the board and glanced at the twins' place. But their terrace was empty. Were they down in the park, this lovely day? He felt a little sad.

Well, he had his chess set! Only four days ago he had been much worse off, because he had not played chess, he told himself. He had not known then what fun he would have, playing over Pete's



The King was attacked by the Bishop, he was in danger, in check!

DIAGRAM 19

game with Max. On his fifth move Pete had captured one of Max's Pawns.

What would be Black's fifth move, John wondered and read it from the tournament score: KB-QKt5, ch.

What did ch mean? John had never seen this sign. Well, perhaps he would find out when he had moved the Bishop to QKt5. He moved the

Black King's Bishop diagonally to that square.
(See Diagram 19.)

But what about the sign *ch*? He gazed at the Bishop and at the diagonals along which it could

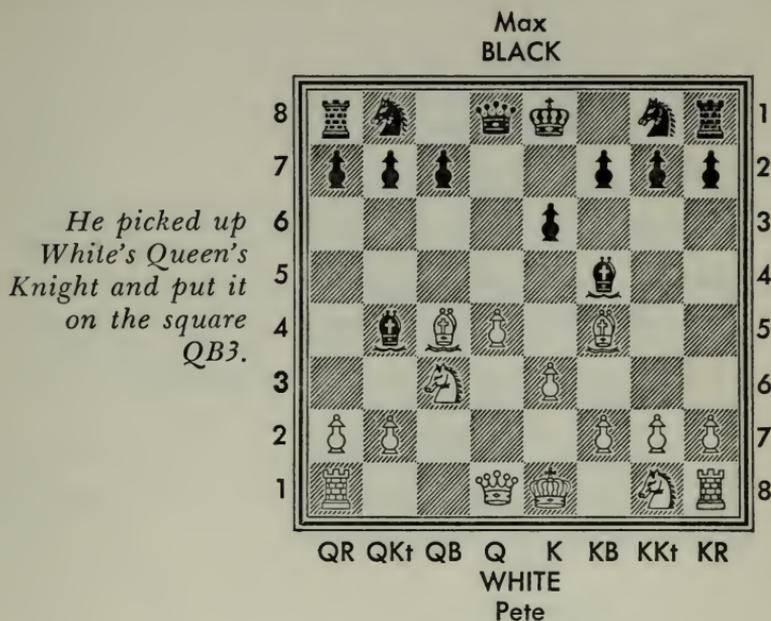


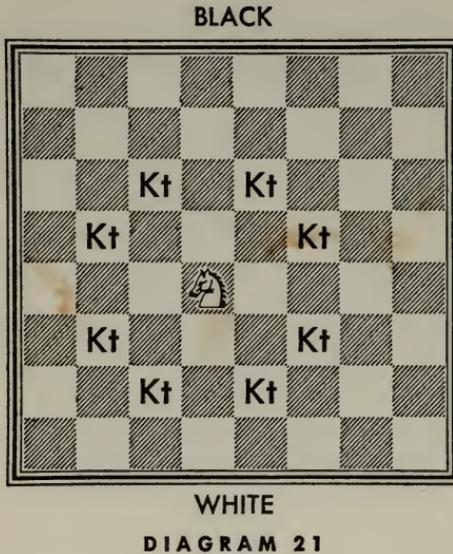
DIAGRAM 20

move from where it stood. Why, the White King was attacked by the Bishop! He was in danger, in check. This was what *ch* meant!

John grew very excited. When the King was attacked, in check, the player must rescue him at once. What would Pete do? He could not capture the Bishop that attacked his King. Would he move the King away?

Curious, John glanced at the score. No, White did not move his King away. Instead he played QKt-QB3. Pete had moved his Knight!

John suspected that the leap of the Knight was



Were these the parts of which the leap of the Knight consisted, one step straight, and one diagonally?

hardest of all chess moves to understand. Would he be able to learn it all by himself?

He picked up his Queen's Knight and put it on QB3. (See Diagram 20.) Carefully he studied how the Knight had leaped. It had stood on a white square beside the Queen's Rook. Now it stood on a black square, on QB3. How had it got there? It had moved neither straight, nor diagonally. Half

straight and half diagonally, this was the right description, John decided. With the tip of his finger he traced the way that led from QKt1 to QB3.

The Knight had made one step diagonally to QB2 and from there one straight step that took it to QB3. Were these the parts of which the leap of the Knight consisted, one step straight and one diagonally? It did not look so difficult. (*See Diagram 21.*)

The Knight had started from a white square and moved to a black. Did it always leap to a square of different color, while the Bishop moved either on the white or the black squares all through the game?

John would find out when he made more Knight moves! But first he had to see whether the Knight shielded the White King from check, from the attack of the Black Bishop. Indeed, it did! The Knight stood between the King and the Bishop. The King was no longer in check.

John peered at the twins' terrace. Would they never come? Where were they, he wondered.

He returned to the game and read Black's sixth move: KKt-KB3. Another Knight move! John put Black's King's Knight on KB3. This Knight, too, had made a leap that consisted of one straight step and one diagonal. It, too, had moved from a white square to a black.

And it had leaped right over the Pawns. Well,

in the middle of the terrace, doubled up with laughter. Obviously he had not noticed John, but was talking with someone inside the apartment.

"Pete!" called John. "Paul!"

The boy came to the railing. "Hello, John," he said.

"Hello—" John strained his eyes until he saw the button on the boy's left lapel. "Hello, Paul. Where's Pete?" It seemed strange to see one twin without the other.

Again Paul laughed. "Oh, Pete isn't around just now. But we have a visitor, a very famous chess player. I'll introduce you to him. Won't you come out, sir," he called, "and meet my friend John?"

A strange figure stalked through the door of the terrace. John stared at him with wide eyes. Was he a human being? Was he a dummy, an enormous doll as tall as a man and with a machine inside that made him walk? The figure was fancifully dressed in an old-fashioned dark-green coat. But the trousers were hidden by the crimson ramblers that covered the railing of the terrace. On his head the man wore a white turban in which a long plume was stuck. But longer than this plume was the pipe that he carried stiffly in his left hand. His movements were wooden, and his face looked like a mask. A frightfully big moustache covered his lips.

"May I introduce the famous Automaton Chess

Player, also called the Turk," Paul said with a deep mock bow. "In his time he made the chess players all over the world crazy because he played excellent chess, even though he's only a machine. But some people insisted that there was a live chess player in the big wooden box at which the Turk sat when he played. What do you think, John? Is he really just a machine, or is there a human being hidden inside?"

"I can't tell at this distance," John said. "Why don't you bring him over, so that I can see him better?"

"All right, we'll come," Paul replied. "Would you mind accompanying me, sir," he added, turning politely to the Automaton Chess Player. They left the terrace, the Turk walking with the stiff awkward movements of a mechanical doll.

John laughed. It was fun to pretend that Pete in his droll disguise was a chess-playing machine. Probably there had been an Automaton Chess Player in the past, and the twins had read about him in some book. John wished he could see his mother's face, when she answered the bell, and the Turk stood outside with Paul.

She opened the door of the terrace and stepped back to let the Turk enter first. "Out here, sir, please," she invited him in a respectful voice. "My son will feel very honored to have such an illustrious visitor. Will you take the chair over there? It's the most comfortable."

John grinned, pleased that his mother was willing to play the game with them.

"Thank you very much, madam," the Turk answered in a deep hollow voice, letting himself fall stiff-legged into the chair. "You're very kind. I appreciate your consideration because I'm an old, old man. You mightn't believe it, madam, when you look at my handsome face—" he pointed to his ugly papier-mâché mask—"but I was created as far back as 1769. And I'm of very distinguished background. I was built by a Hungarian nobleman, a Baron Wolfgang von Kempelen. He invented me especially to amuse the Austrian emperor and empress and the court in Vienna."

"Now listen, sir," Paul interrupted him. "Don't start bragging about your fine past and noble connections! You aren't supposed to talk. You know that you never said anything except *échec*, when you attacked your opponent's King."

The Turk shook his finger at Paul. "More respect for your elders, my boy," he said. "A little more respect."

"Please tell me, Mr. Turk," John asked, "when did you perform publicly?"

"Many years ago," replied the Turk, turning to John. "First I played in the great cities of the European continent, very much admired by everybody. In 1783 I was brought for the first time to London, and, of course, people there admired me no end. Later I came to this country and—"

"Aroused a good deal of admiration no doubt," Paul interrupted him. "Isn't it nice, John, to see how modest our Automaton Chess Player is about his achievements?"

"Well, people had every reason to admire me," the Turk went on, not at all bothered by the interruption. "They had never seen a machine play chess."

"And how did you do it, sir?" John wanted to know.

"I'll show you," said Paul, pushing a small table in front of the Automaton Chess Player. From the Turk's pockets and his own he took their chessmen and board and set them up on the table.



"You could use my chess set," said John.

"No, you'll need your set yourself because you are to have the great honor of playing against the Turk. His opponent always sat at a separate board and separate table. And I'm Mr. Maelzel," Paul explained, "the man who brought the Automaton to the United States. I'll go back and forth between you two and repeat your moves on the Turk's board and his on yours.

"Ladies and Gentlemen"—Paul pretended to address a huge imaginary audience—"now I will show you the inside of this box, so that you can make sure for yourselves that it's filled with machinery, and that no living being is hidden in it." Paul stooped and opened make-believe doors between the table legs.

Laughing, John turned his head to see whether his mother, too, was enjoying the fun. But she had left the terrace.

"Which pieces shall I have, Mr. Maelzel, the white or the black?" he asked.

"The black," Paul replied. "The Turk always had the first move."

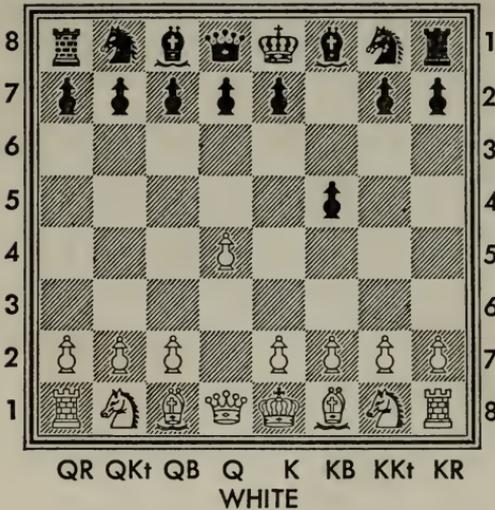
John set up the chessmen on his board, the black on his side.

"Let me have your pipe, sir," Paul said, taking the Turk's pipe. "Now we can start. No, we can't. I forgot to wind up the Automaton." He inserted his finger into an imaginary hole in the table and

turned it around as if winding up a clock with a key. "All right!"

The Turk raised his left hand stiffly, picked up a Pawn, and put it down on another square.

John
BLACK



The Automaton Chess Player

DIAGRAM 23

*He advanced the
White Queen's
Pawn two squares.
. . . John moved
his King's Bishop's
Pawn two squares
ahead.*

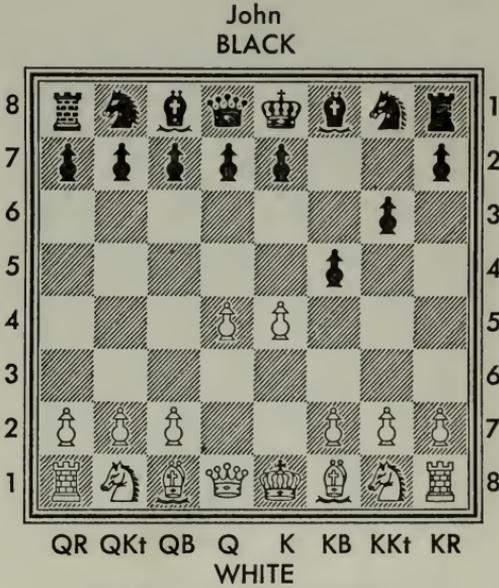
Paul came over to John and advanced the White Queen's Pawn two squares. "This is Pete's move, I mean the Turk's move," he corrected himself. "Now it's your turn."

After a moment's thought, John moved his King's Bishop's Pawn two squares ahead (*See Diagram 23*), and Paul repeated the move on the Turk's board.

Now Pete pushed his King's Pawn, playing P-K4.

"What's this? Does Pete want to give me a Pawn for nothing?" John wondered. He felt like grab-

"Does Pete want to give me a Pawn for nothing?" John wondered. "No, I won't take it," he decided and played P-KKt3.



The Automaton Chess Player

DIAGRAM 24

bing the White King's Pawn quickly. But he admonished himself. "I mustn't be hasty! Pete is an experienced player—he wouldn't just give a Pawn away. Probably it's a trap. No, I won't take the Pawn," he decided with slight regret and played P-KKt3. (See Diagram 24.)

The Turk captured the Black King's Bishop's Pawn with his King's Pawn (K Px KBP).

the White Queen to KR5. (*See Diagram 25.*)
"Check!" he said.

"My King is attacked. I must rescue him at once," John murmured, studying the position. Could he take the Queen with one of his pieces, he wondered, but realized that this was not possible.

"Well, if I can't capture the Queen that attacks my King, I must move him away, out of check," he said.

"Do—if you can," replied Paul.

What did he mean, "If you can?" John thought, worried, and then he saw what Paul meant. There was only one square vacant next to the King, KB2, and the King could not move to it because he would still be attacked by the White Queen.

"It looks as if I couldn't move my King out of check," he said with a sigh. "Can I put a piece between him and the Queen?" But as he scrutinized the board, it dawned on him that he could not.

"Listen, Paul!" John stared at his friend with wide eyes. "There seems to be no way to save my King. Does that mean I'm mated and have lost the game?"

"I'm afraid it does," Paul replied.

John glanced at the Turk and saw him turn his head proudly from right to left, as if inviting the applause of an admiring audience.

"Look at this vain Automaton Chess Player!" cried Paul. "Gloating over his victory! That's

what the Turk always did. Pete himself would never do such a thing, of course. It's really very bad chess manners because it makes the loser feel worse than he already does."

"I don't feel bad," John said. "It's almost an honor to lose to so famous an opponent."

"You're a good sport," Paul said.

"Thank heaven for that," the Turk boomed in a loud voice. "There's nothing worse than a poor sport."

John laughed. It had been such fun to play with the Turk. "Tell me more about the Automaton Chess Player," he said. "Was he really very famous?"

"Oh yes," replied Paul. "There are lots of stories about him. People went wild over the Turk when Maelzel showed him around. There was no end to the arguments about whether he was really only a machine or not."

"And was he only a machine?" asked John.

"Of course not," said Paul. "There was a man hidden so skillfully in the box that no one could see him, not even when Maelzel opened the doors. What a shame the Automaton was burned about a hundred years ago. I certainly would have liked to see him."

"The Automaton's spirit wasn't destroyed," the Turk's deep voice interrupted Paul. "He is immortal, like chess. And tomorrow he will appear at the meeting of the directors of the Chess Club



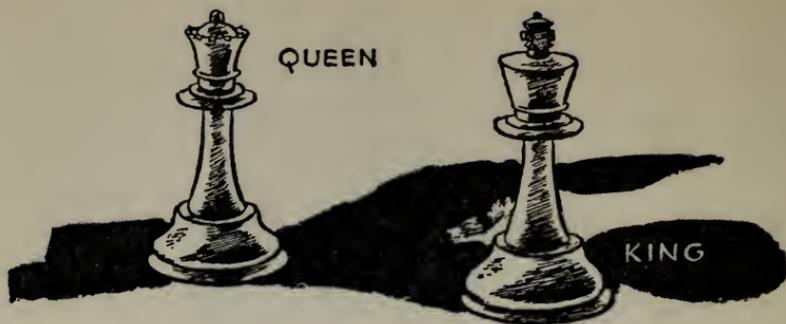
of the Grinning Knight. I'm sure everyone will feel highly honored by his company."

"Oh," said John, "are you going to have a meeting of your club tomorrow? And Pete, will you go as the Automaton? What fun you'll have!"

"Fun and work, too," replied Paul. "I'm the treasurer and I must get all the accounts ready. I'd better get started. Let's go, Pete."

"Too bad you have to leave so soon," John said, as he watched the twins pocket their chessmen. He hated to see them go.

"Here, I have something for you." Pete drew from his large coat pocket a magazine with a gay cover and threw it on John's bed. "It's the last issue of the *Chess Review*. You'll like it. So long, John."



Chapter Seven

PETE DOES NOT GIVE UP

HOW do you like this cake, John?" asked Mrs. Lane the next day before lunch.

John looked up from the *Chess Review* he was reading. "Oh Mom, it's a chessboard!" He had never seen such a wonderful cake. It was a choco-

late cake, square and very big. The icing was checked, black and white, eight checks in length and eight in width. A real chessboard! The dark squares were chocolate.

"Before supper I'll spread the sides with whipped cream," his mother said.

"But why did you bake this grand cake? It's only an ordinary day."

"Well, I've invited some guests for tonight."

"Who? Chess players?"

Mrs. Lane put the heavy cake platter on a table. "You see," she explained, "last night, when I went out to mail a letter, I met Mrs. Dalley. She told me that the twins were supposed to bring two friends home for supper tonight after some meeting of their chess club. But she and Mr. Dalley have to go out to dinner and so all she could plan to have for the boys was cold cuts and potato salad. Well, I thought since I'm cooking supper anyway—"

"Oh Mom, did you invite Pete and Paul and their guests for tonight?" cried John happily.

"Yes. Do you think I shouldn't have done it?" she asked innocently.

John laughed. "You know how I want them to come! Thanks, Mom. Thanks, loads."

He spent the afternoon reading the *Chess Review*. That was the best way to make the time pass till supper. The magazine fascinated him. It had many pictures of chess players, old and young.

John was interested to see how many young boys seemed to be great chess players.

At long last the afternoon was over, the doorbell rang, and the guests arrived.

Pete still wore his disguise as Automaton Chess Player in which he had shown himself at the directors' meeting. And he spoke in the Turk's deep voice, as he introduced the twins' two friends.

The quiet-looking tall boy, a little older than the others, was Bert Gibson, the president of the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight and referee of the tournament.

Ted Butler was a short fellow, round-faced with rosy cheeks. "I'll be Pete's next victim," he said pleasantly, as he shook hands with John. "On Monday we'll play our tournament game, and, boy, will he lick me! I'm just an average player, but I do enjoy chess."

"Is Pete very good?" John asked.

"Pete? I should say so! He's our club champion," cried Ted, looking proudly at his friend. "And Paul is second best."

"They never told me."

"Modesty is the most outstanding quality of the Automaton Chess Player," said the Turk rather smugly.

John could imagine Pete's grin under his funny mask.

"And I'm not the second-best player," added

Paul. "Max is just as good. Well, we'll see what happens when I play him Monday."

There was a short silence. John had the impression that his guests exchanged glances. Bert looked worried, Paul thoughtful. John could not see Pete's face, of course, because it was hidden by the mask.

His mother interrupted the silence, as she entered the room, carrying a large well-filled tray. Mr. Lane followed her and greeted the guests.

"Won't you make yourself more comfortable, great Turk," he said, pointing to Pete's head.

Pete touched his turban hesitantly. "I think I'd rather keep it on."

"Well, I don't mean your smart hat, though I'm afraid it will make you a little warm this fine night. But I wonder whether you hadn't better take your mask off. It might prevent you from eating, and that would be a shame."

He looked at the table, and the others followed his glance. There stood a large platter, piled with fried chicken, another heaped with buttered new potatoes, and a deep glass bowl, filled to the brim with fruit salad, sliced peaches and apples, oranges, bananas, and cherries.

"I guess you're right, sir," Pete said, and took his mask off quickly.

The guests enjoyed the meal very much, but John was a little impatient. He could hardly wait

for the moment when his mother would bring in the chessboard cake. When she finally did, he was not disappointed. "Wow!" cried his guests, staring at the cake with admiration.



The Turk emptied his glass of milk and rose slowly to his feet. "Dear friends! For more than a hundred and eighty years, I've been moving around in the most distinguished chess circles. But never have I seen a cake like this. In fact, to my knowledge, such a cake hasn't been recorded through the whole history of chess, a history that goes back to the sixth century. I therefore propose a big

hand for our hostess, who shows so much understanding of us chess players."

John saw his mother's lips move. Obviously she was thanking Pete for his speech, but her words were drowned by the boys' applause.

Mr. Lane raised his hand and said, "Having admired the cake and made a speech in its honor, I now move that we eat it without delay."

The motion was seconded with enthusiasm and unanimously carried. In a very little while only a few crumbs lay on the large platter.

After supper, when the table had been cleared, and John's parents had gone out for a walk, Ted stepped to the desk on which John's chess set stood. "The twins told me how quickly you learned the game," he said.

"Oh, I'm just starting," replied John. "I wish I could watch two good players some day."

"Well, that's easily done. What about it, masters?" Bert looked at the twins.

"Sure!" said Paul. "Will you bring the board over, Ted?"

Ted brought the chess set and put it on the table. Paul took a white and a black Pawn, hid one in each hand and let his brother choose. Pete picked the hand that held the White Pawn and got the white pieces.*

* The score of the game between the twins with John's comments appears at the end of this story.

From where he lay, close to the table, John could see every move the twins made. "And what will *you* do while they play?" he asked Bert and Ted in a whisper.

"We'll watch and talk," answered Ted cheerfully.

"May one talk during a chess game?" John asked, surprised. He had thought everybody in the room had to be quiet when two people played chess.

"Sure! The talk is half the fun." Paul looked up from the chessboard with a grin.

"But if it's a tournament game, you must keep quiet," Bert added.

John saw Pete make a strange move, no, not one move, two. Two moves at a time! He moved his King and also his King's Rook. (*See Diagram 26.*)

"What's he doing?" John whispered to Bert.

"Pete castled. Don't you know about castling? I'll show you." Bert drew a wallet from his pocket. But when he opened it, John saw that it was a pocket chess set. The board was of leather, black and light brown checks. The chessmen were small slips of some thin material on which crowns and heads of horses and other symbols were printed in gold. You could stick them into tiny slits in the board.

The two armies on Bert's little board stood lined up in their original positions. He took the

White King's Bishop and King's Knight out. "You can castle only if no piece stands between the King and Rook, and if neither of them has moved," he explained. "The aim of castling is to

Pete made a strange move, no, two moves at a time. He moved his King and also his King's Rook.

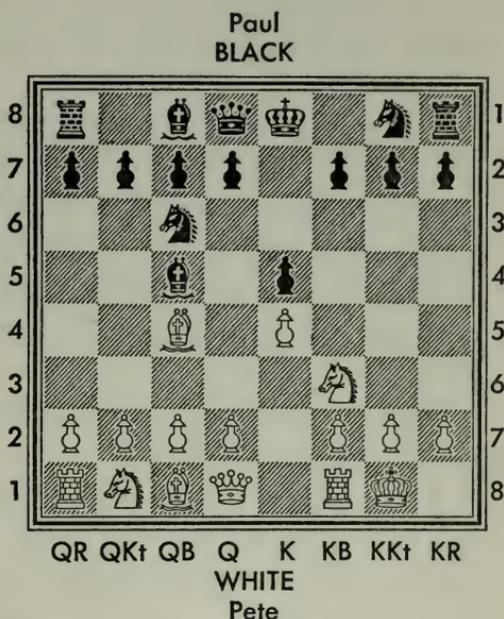


DIAGRAM 26

get your King into a sheltered place behind the Pawns with the strong Rook beside him for protection. You're allowed to castle only once every game and never when your King is in check. And naturally you can't castle if your King would walk right into a check; that goes without saying. Castling is *one* move that really consists of *two*. This is how you do it."

Bert put the White King on KKt1 and the White King's Rook beside him on KB1. "Now White castled on the King's side," he went on. "And on the score you write it O-O."

"So O-O means castling," said John. "It didn't make sense to me, when I found it in the *Chess Review*."

"Yes, you write O-O, when the King castles on the *King's* side, but when he castles on the *Queen's* side, you score it O-O-O."

"Look at that!" Ted interrupted.

Paul took one of Pete's Bishops off the board and put his own Queen in its place. (*See Diagram 27.*)

Ted went on with a grin, "Our great Pete has left a piece *en prise*."

John looked inquiringly at Bert.

"Ted means Pete overlooked that Paul could take his Bishop," Bert explained.

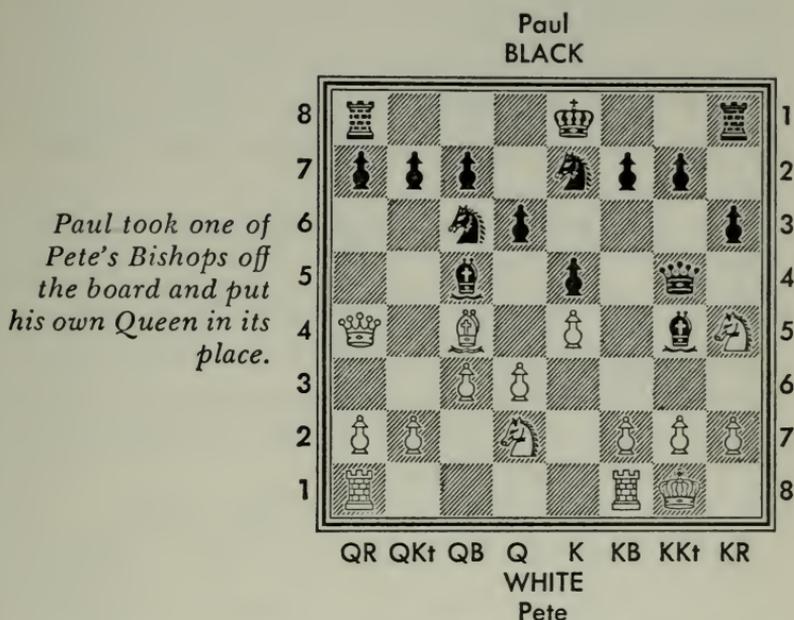
"And I took it," added Paul cheerfully.

"I'm getting weak-minded in my old age," the Turk complained. "My hundred and eighty years are beginning to tell on me."

"Can't *your* Queen take Paul's Knight, just as *his* Queen took your Bishop?" John asked.

The Turk lifted his finger warningly. "It would be a horrible mistake. True, my Queen could take Paul's Knight. But if she did, his second Knight or this little Pawn of his would recapture her. That's the difference. Paul's Queen could capture

my poor Bishop for nothing, because it wasn't protected—that means because none of my pieces can recapture her. But as I said, Paul's Knight is protected *twice*, by his second Knight and a Pawn,



and if my Queen took it, I'd lose her at once. Why would it be bad to give a Queen for a Knight?" The Turk looked piercingly at John.

"Because she's more valuable than the Knight," John replied after a moment's thought. "She can go to many more squares."

"Very good!" said the Turk, satisfied, while he made a move.

John wondered how his friend could talk and play chess at the same time.

"Except for special reasons, you must never give a piece for a less valuable one of your opponent's," Pete went on. "You may give a Knight for a Bishop. They're called the minor pieces and have about the same value. But most players will hesitate a little before exchanging a Bishop for a Knight, because the Bishop is considered slightly better."

He fell silent and studied the board with a frown.

Bert took up where Pete left off. "Three Pawns are about as valuable as a Knight or a Bishop. The Rook is stronger than a minor piece, but not nearly as good as a Queen. In fact, the Queen is as valuable as two Rooks."

"And what about the King?" John asked.

The Turk had made his move, and it was he who answered the question. "You can't compare the King with any other chessman. If your King is mated, you've lost the game."

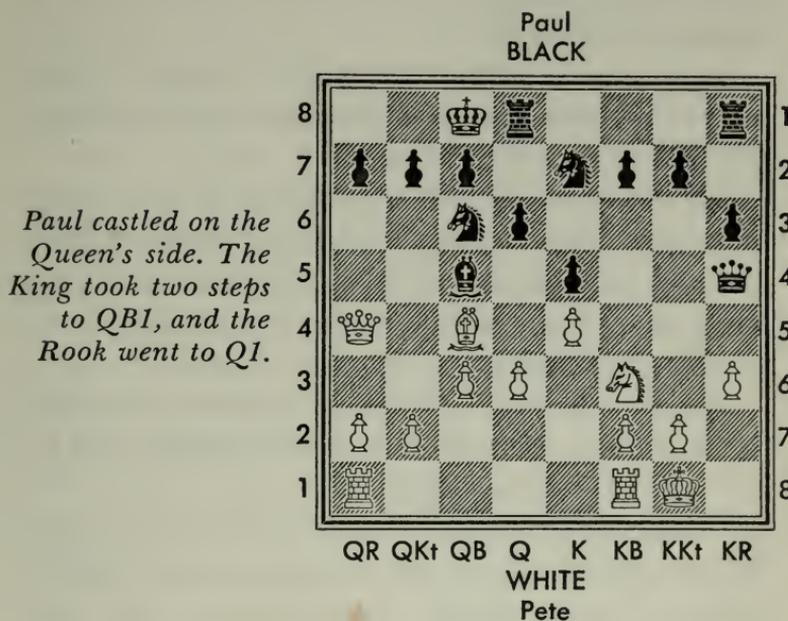
Pete's King, which had castled, looked safe in his sheltered nook, but the Black King still stood on K1.

"Why don't you castle, Paul?" Bert asked. "Be a good boy and castle on the *Queen's* side so that John can see how it's done."

He turned to John. "Now Paul can castle on the

Queen's side, because no piece stands between his King and Queen's Rook, and neither of them has moved."

"All right," replied Paul. "Let's castle on the



Paul castled on the Queen's side. The King took two steps to QB1, and the Rook went to Q1.

DIAGRAM 28

Queen's side. Probably castling on the King's side would be better, but since this duffer, Pete, is a whole piece down, I can take it easy."

The brothers grinned at each other.

John watched attentively, as Paul castled on the Queen's side. The King took two steps to QB1, and the Rook went to Q1. (See Diagram 28.) So this was castling on the Queen's side.

"When does a player castle on the King's and when on the Queen's side?" John asked Bert.

"Well, usually it's better to castle on the King's side, the King is safer there. But the player has the choice. Of course, he needn't castle at all, if he doesn't want to."

Bert was watching the game. "Listen, Turk, why don't you give up?" he asked after a while. "Now you're a Rook down."

"Mind your own business, you fresh youngster," the Turk admonished him. "Don't neglect your pupil! Did he tell you, John, that the King must never pass through a check in castling?"

"No," replied John, "I don't think so."

"Shame on you," Pete said, looking reproachfully at Bert. "Go back to your teaching and let *me* take care of my game."

"Pete means you aren't allowed to castle if your King would have to pass a square where he's in check," Bert explained. "But of course, you may castle if not your *King* but your *Rook* has to go over a square where he's attacked. The Rook is allowed to *stand* on a square where another piece attacks him. He's allowed to *move* to such a square. Why should he be forbidden to *pass* it in castling? It's only the King for whom the strict rule exists; he must never be exposed to a check."

Bert shook his head, as he looked at the board. "Why *don't* you resign, Pete?" he asked once

more. "Your game gets worse almost every moment."

"Give up, Pete!" Paul told his brother, making a move.

"Give up, Pete!" Ted echoed. He sat, his elbows propped upon the table, his face cupped in both hands, watching the game.

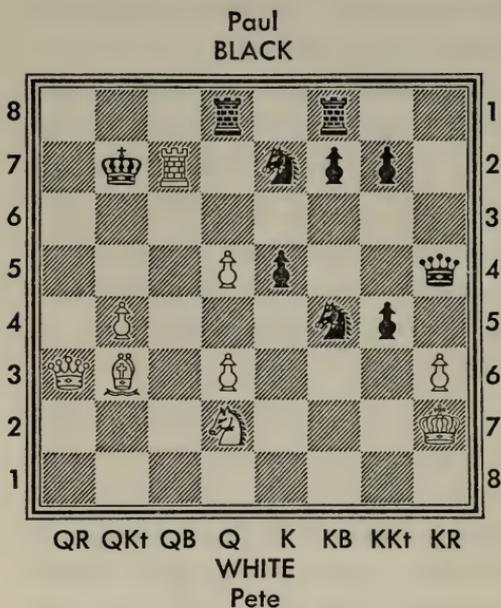
His eyes on the chessboard, Pete replied calmly, "You're inexperienced and rash in your judgment, my young friends. But the Turk is old and very wise, and he knows a legend that's even older than he. It tells how long, long ago a game like our backgammon, called *nard*, was invented and much played in India. In that game who won or lost was just a matter of luck.

"But once there lived a Brahman in India, who must have been a very great man. He went to the king and told him that *nard* wasn't a good game because it led people to rely on luck and fate instead of on their courage, foresight, perseverance, and other human virtues. The king could see the Brahman's point and asked him to invent a game for the people of India that would show and develop those virtues. Well, we can say that the Brahman fulfilled the king's wish far above any expectation. He gave the whole world a priceless gift—chess.

"The Turk likes this legend, my young friends, and he doesn't give up so easily." For a moment

Pete lifted his eyes from the board and grinned at the other boys. Then he captured the Black Queen's Bishop's Pawn with his Rook. (See Diagram 29.) "Check!" he called.

Bert whistled softly. "A sacrifice!"



*Pete captured the
Black Queen's
Bishop's Pawn with
his Rook. "Check!"
he called.*

DIAGRAM 29

"What does that mean?" asked John.

But Bert and the other boys were absorbed in the game now and did not hear him. They all sat bent forward, their heads almost touching over the chessboard. John studied the board, trying to find out by himself what had happened. The White Rook that had taken the Black Queen's

Bishop's Pawn stood on QB7, and the Black King on the next square. Why, Paul's King could take Pete's Rook that was not protected by any of the white pieces! How could Pete give up his valuable Rook for a single Pawn? And why didn't Paul grab the Rook at once? John shook his head, unable to understand what was going on. Then he caught Pete's glance.

The Turk, leaning back smugly in his chair, was winking at John over the table. "If you sacrifice," he explained, "you give up a chessman and get a less valuable or none at all in return."

"But why did you do it?"

The Turk grinned. "Not exactly out of kindness," he admitted. "I expect to get something for my sacrifice. That's why one sacrifices a piece."

"What do you expect to get?" John wanted to know.

Presently Ted lifted his head and slapped Pete's shoulder. "Pete, you sly fox," he chuckled, "have you got a perpetual check?"

"A perpetual check? Is that what Pete gets for his sacrifice? What does it mean?" John couldn't keep from asking questions.

"Oh, please, be quiet for a moment," Paul said, stopping his ears with his fingers.

John pressed his lips together and sighed. It was very hard to be quiet when so much was going on that he did not understand.

Bert leaned over his bed and whispered, "You see, Pete's position was desperate. So he made this bold Rook sacrifice, and if Paul takes the Rook, Pete has probably a perpetual check."

"And what does it mean, a perpetual check?" John whispered back.

"It means that Pete can check Paul with every move till doomsday," Bert explained. "Of course, that leaves Paul no chance to mate Pete. If Pete has a perpetual check, the game is undecided; it's a draw. Paul's last move with the Queen was a blunder. He played the game very well, only in the end he got too confident and therefore careless. Otherwise this wouldn't have happened to him."

"But must Paul take Pete's Rook? Can't he just move his King out of check?" John asked.

Bert shook his head. "If the Black King doesn't recapture the White Rook, but moves away, the White Queen checks and mates him at once. I'll show it to you afterward."

John nodded silently. The room was very quiet now. At last Paul said, "I guess I've got to take it." He captured the White Rook with his King.

"Check!" cried Pete, moving his Queen to QR7. (*See Diagram 30.*)

Turning to John, he added, "Now you'll see the perpetual check."

Paul sat, bent low over the chessboard, frowning

deeply. He put his King here and there, moving him out of check, but the White Queen followed the King without mercy. Check! Check! Check!

Paul shrugged his shoulders. "All right, you've

"Check!" cried Pete, moving his Queen to QR7.

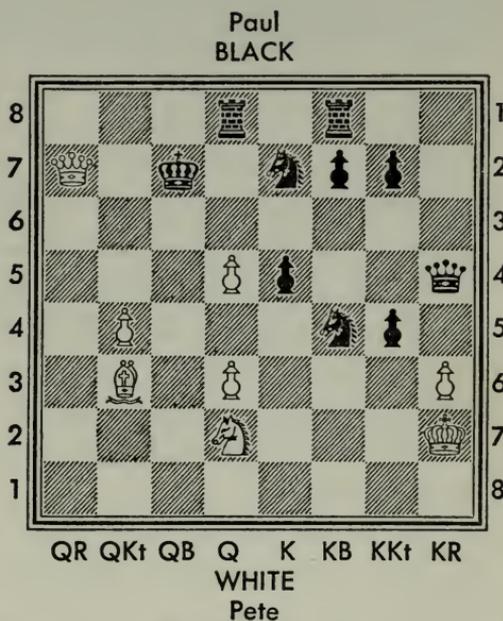


DIAGRAM 30

got your draw." He was laughing, though he looked a little disappointed.

Pete turned his head stiffly to the right and left like a mechanical doll, a proud smile on his lips. "I told you the Turk doesn't give up so easily," he announced. "The Turk was right."

The boys discussed the game, suggesting moves that Pete or Paul might have made. Not only the

twins moved the pieces around now, but also Bert and Ted.

John's parents came home and joined the boys.

Bert glanced at the clock.

"I'm sorry, but I promised my parents that I'd leave at half past nine."

"We ought to be going too," agreed Paul.

"Me, too," said Ted.

John saw his parents look with approval at Bert and knew that they thought his new friend a reliable boy. But then Bert was the president of the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight and referee of the tournament.

"You'll play tournament games again on Monday?" John said a little wistfully.

Pete gazed at him. "Why don't you come and watch?" he said.

"How could I?"

"That's simple. Next Monday the tournament will be held in our place. We'll come and get you."

"Will you really! What time?"

"At two. That's when the tournament starts."

As the door closed behind the boys, John sighed with impatience. Many hours had to pass before it would be two o'clock on Monday.



Chapter Eight

MAX

ALL the days had passed. It was twelve thirty on Monday, and John lay on the terrace, waiting for the twins. He had asked his mother to give him lunch early and refused to rest afterward. If the tournament started at two, perhaps Pete and

Paul would come for him a few minutes before.

"An hour and a half isn't a few minutes," his mother had pointed out. But John couldn't rest. He looked at his watch, lifted it to his ear. It was ticking all right.

On his bed table stood his chess set, and beside him lay a pile of well-worn chess books that the twins had lent him. They had told him that they were going away for a few days but would be back early Sunday evening. Although he had watched for them, he hadn't seen them.

"The time will fly while you study them," Pete had said when he and Paul brought the books. "And the more you know about chess, the more you'll enjoy the tournament."

Of course, John had studied the books eagerly, but just now he was too impatient to think of anything but the tournament itself. Finally he opened a book where he had put a scrap of paper between the pages, and began to read about the draw.

It made sense to him when he read that any time during the game the players could agree upon a draw. After all, if neither of them thought that he could mate his opponent, the best thing for them to do was to stop the game and start a new one.

John understood, too, that a game could be nothing but a draw if each player had only his King left. But it puzzled him a little that you had to be satisfied with a draw if you had a Knight or

Bishop beside your King, and your opponent his King only. And even if you had two Knights instead of one, you could not mate the lone King as long as your opponent did not make a mistake. Strange, thought John, but decided that the book must know best.

He read that you could claim a draw if for the last fifty moves of White and Black no Pawn had been pushed, and no chessman captured. Fifty moves of White and fifty moves of Black, he thought. That made one hundred if you added them up. Quite a number!

You could also claim a draw, he learned, if you had repeated your moves three consecutive times, and your opponent his, and if it was your turn to move.

The book also explained about the perpetual check, but John just glanced at the explanation. He understood it very well because he had seen with his own eyes how Pete had drawn his game with Paul through perpetual check.

What would he see today at the tournament, he wondered. He had read enough about the draw and, closing the book, glanced once more at his watch. If only the time would pass a little faster!

He made sure that he had the score sheet of Pete's tournament game with Max in his pajama pocket. He understood the game up to Black's twelfth move, which made no sense to him. Maybe

one of the boys would have time to explain that strange move to him during the tournament.

John reopened the book at random. He learned that once a player had made a move, he could not change his mind, take the move back, and make another. And even if he only touched a piece, he had to move it.

Boy, it was dangerous to touch a piece rashly, John thought. Perhaps you'd better keep your hands behind you, while you pondered a move.

His thoughts were interrupted by the doorbell ringing. Was it time? No, it was still only a few minutes after twelve thirty.

He heard his mother's voice. "He's waiting for you impatiently," she said.

"We knew he'd be impatient. You're always impatient before a tournament. So we came early," one twin replied.

The door of the terrace flew open, and Pete and Paul rushed out. "Hello, John! We thought you'd like to watch us while we get things ready. But we're in a hurry."

John had no time to find out by the buttons on their lapels which twin had spoken. One dashed to the head of his bed, one to the foot. Oh, this was Pete!

John's bed flew over the terrace. Never before had it been moved so quickly. Now he was in the living room.

His mother came in. "Do be careful, boys," she cautioned them.

"Please open the door for us!" Pete called cheerfully. "We're kidnaping your son."

They were in the hall of the apartment house. Door number 88!

"Please let us in, Mom!" called the twins.

Mrs. Dalley opened the door.

"I'm so glad you could come to the tournament, John," she said.

"We're in a terrific hurry, Mom," cried Pete, as the twins wheeled the bed speedily past her, through one room, and another, out onto the terrace.

John glanced about. It was fun to look from here at his own terrace, where he had been lonely and unhappy less than two weeks ago.

"From this side you'll see best," said Pete, pushing the bed against the wall. "Now we'll set up the pieces."

There was a large table on the terrace. Piled on it were chessboards and boxes. John guessed that they contained chessmen. The sight of them made him feel good.

The twins brought another table and put it close to the end of the large one. Now they had one very long table. On it they laid five chessboards in a row.

"There are ten of us in the tournament," Paul

explained. "The ten strongest players of the club. The others just watch."

Pete set the chessmen up on the boards. Paul brought a big box and with great care took out five clocks. They were the strangest clocks John had ever seen. Each had two faces and looked like two clocks welded together. "What are those?" he asked.

"Our tournament clocks," replied Paul proudly. "They're quite expensive. All the club members saved a good long time so that we could buy them."

He carried a clock to John's bed, explaining, "You see, it's two clocks in one, connected by a very fine mechanism. Each player has two hours in which to make forty moves. But he can use up this time any way he wants. In the beginning he'll move quickly. Later in the game, when he is thinking out some combination, he might brood half an hour over one move.

"Now each side has his own clock that shows how much time he has used up. When he has made his move, he pushes this button, which stops his own clock and sets his opponent's running. The opponent, of course, has such a button, too, which he pushes after every move. Smart, isn't it?"

John nodded. "What happens if he hasn't made forty moves in two hours?"

Paul shrugged his shoulders.

"It's too bad, but he loses his game on time."

"And is every game over after forty moves?"

"Oh, no! But once the players have made their forty moves, they get one more hour for every twenty moves they make. They can add it to the time they saved from their two hours. The time rules aren't the same in all tournaments, though. For instance, in some the players have to make fifty moves in two and a half hours instead of forty in two."

Paul drew a small key from his pocket and wound the clock cautiously. "Now!" He pushed a button, and the clock began to run. John could hear it ticking and saw a small hand move to and fro on one of the faces. Paul pushed another button, and the tiny hand stopped, while a similar one on the other face of the clock began to move.

"Got it?" he asked, and John nodded, thrilled.

Paul pressed the first button again, but gently this time. The ticking stopped, and neither hand moved.

He carried the clock to the table and put it beside a chessboard. Then he wound another clock.

Pete watched him with a grin. "Paul doesn't trust me with the clocks. He says I'm too impatient. I'd break one."

"You set up the pieces!" his brother told him.

The long table looked very exciting. The black-and white-checked boards, the rows of shining

white and black chessmen lined up on them. The immortal army, Dr. Miller had called them. It was a good name.

Paul put a two-faced clock beside every board. Pete brought a pile of clean white sheets of paper. They were long and narrow, and John recognized them at once. Blanks of tournament scores like the one on which the score of the game between Max and Pete was written!

Pete laid two blanks beside every board, one on White's side, one on Black's. On each sheet he put a black pencil.

Finally the twins drew ten chairs up to the table. Now everything was ready.

The boys came over to John. Paul sat down on the sun-flooded floor of the terrace; Pete stretched out beside him on his stomach, his elbows propped up, his chin cupped in his hands. It struck John that his friends were unusually quiet.

"Don't you look forward to the tournament?" he asked.

"Yes, we do," replied Pete. "It's only . . ." An angry frown appeared on his forehead. "It's that Max Smith that—"

"What's the matter with Max Smith?" John asked quickly. Whenever the twins mentioned Max, John felt that Pete was annoyed.

"Max threatened to make trouble for us in the

club," Paul explained. "He's jealous of us, especially of Pete, who's club champion. He'd like to have us expelled from the club, so he would be top player."

"But how could he make trouble for you? How could he have you expelled from your club?"

Paul shrugged his shoulders. "We have no idea. We only know he's up to something."

Pete lifted his head. "Max is full of tricks and sometimes tells lies. Yesterday he met Ted and told him that he had something on us and that he would expose Paul and me as swindlers today. Afterward we'll be thrown out of the club, he said, because no decent boy'll want to have anything to do with us. Ted is a good friend. He called us up last night and told us to watch out for Max. We tried to figure out what Max is up to, but we can't. Well, we shan't let him get away with anything!" Pete's voice was loud and angry.

He turned to his brother. "Listen, Paul, you must lick Max today!"

"I'll do my best," Paul promised quietly. "But you know that he beat me the two last times we played. Perhaps he really is the better player."

"No, he isn't. Don't be a fool! You're just as good, even better. You must have confidence in yourself and lick him. If you do, you'll win second prize."

Paul did not reply. Maybe he felt a little dis-

couraged, though he did not want to show it.

"Just a moment," Pete said and left the terrace.

Soon he came back, carrying a large framed sheet of paper. He brought it to the bed, and John saw that it was covered with small neat writing.

"This is Benjamin Franklin's essay, 'The Morals of Chess.' Remember our dad telling you about it? Paul copied it. We have it hanging over our beds. I thought you might want to see it."

"Sure!" John began to read the essay. He liked the second paragraph:

"The game of chess is not merely an idle amusement; several very valuable qualities of the mind, useful in the course of human life, are to be acquired and strengthened by it, so as to become habits ready on all occasions; for life is a kind of chess . . ."

Pete interrupted him, putting his finger on a passage lower down. "Read this! Read it aloud!"

Complying with his friend's wish, John read, "And, lastly, we learn by chess the habit of not being discouraged by present bad appearances in the state of our affairs; the habit of hoping for a favorable change, and that of persevering in the search of resources. The game is so full of events, there is such a variety of turns in it, the fortune of it is so subject to vicissitudes, and one so frequently, after contemplation, discovers the

means of extricating one's self from a supposed insurmountable difficulty, that one is encouraged to continue the contest to the last, in hopes of victory from our skill . . ."

John lifted his head. He had to look at the rows of chessmen, lined up on the large table, the immortal army. His glance met Paul's, and they both smiled.

Paul rubbed his hands. "I'm looking forward to my game with Max. Now it won't be long."

He stepped to the railing and looked down. The next moment he was back. "Guess who's standing in front of the house."

"Who?" asked Pete quickly.

"Max!"

"What's he doing?" Pete rushed to the railing.

Paul seized his arm and held him back. "We'll watch him, but he musn't see us."

Ducking low, they approached the rail and, hidden by the ramblers, looked down on Max. For a while they watched silently, side by side, their tall frames bent.

John heard one of them whisper, "There comes Jack."

"Look at that!" The other twin gripped his brother's shoulder. Since they stood with their backs to John, and he could not see the buttons in their lapels, he was no longer able to tell them apart.

But now one turned around—Paul. “Jack wanted to go into the house, but Max wouldn’t let him. They’re both down there. Max is talking and talking.”

“Henry,” whispered Pete.

The members of the club arrived in rapid succession. The twins mentioned name after name. But none of the boys came up to the apartment.



“What are they doing?” John asked in an undertone, though Max and the other boys eight flights down in the street could not possibly hear him.

“They’re standing around on the sidewalk, and Max is making a speech,” Pete reported. “But of course we can’t hear what he’s saying.”

Then Paul announced, "Now they've all gone into the house."

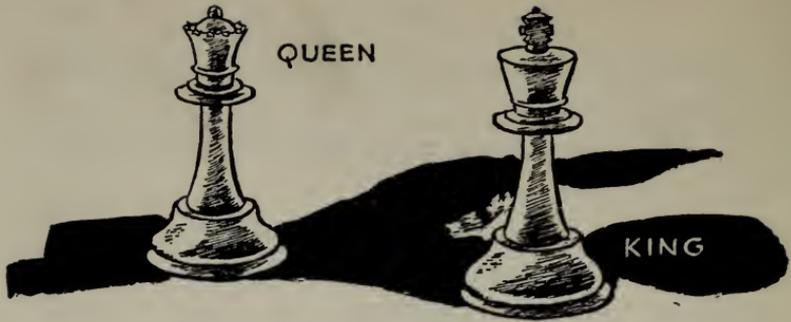
"Let's go and meet them before Max does too much mischief!" Pete said.

The twins walked to the door.

"Be careful! Don't let Max put anything over on you during the tournament!" John warned them, as they passed by his bed.

Pete smiled. "You'll help us, John, you're our friend, aren't you?" He left the terrace with his brother.

"I am!" John called after them. He wished he could be of use to the twins.



Chapter Nine

THE TOURNAMENT

WHICH one was Max, wondered John, when the twins came back with about fifteen boys. He hoped someday he would know them all. He hoped someday they would let him join the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight.

There was Bert. "Hello!" he called, when he saw John, and started toward the bed. But another boy stopped him and asked him something. Bert listened with polite attention.

"He must be a good club president," John thought. "The boys were right to elect him."

At last Bert reached John and shook hands with him. "Listen, fellows!" he called out. "This is John Lane, a friend of the twins. He's just a beginner, but has a great interest in chess and shows much promise. I'm sure we're all glad to have him as our guest today."

"Sure!" "Glad to meet you!" "Hi, ya," the boys said, nodding at John.

He nodded back, very happy. Which one was Max, he wondered again. And where was Ted?

"Didn't Ted come?" he asked.

"I don't know what's the matter with Ted. He should be here by now." Bert glanced at his wrist watch.

"He called us up last night and seemed all right," said Pete.

A fat boy looked at him, laughing. "Perhaps he got cold feet and stayed home because he has to play you today."

"Why should anybody be scared to play with Pete?" John heard a sharp voice from the other end of the terrace.

Astonished, he turned his head. Didn't the

speaker know that Pete was the top player of the club, the champion? John saw an unusually handsome boy, very tall and broad-shouldered. Was he the one who had spoken with that unpleasant sharpness in his voice?

The boy stepped to the table, where two fellows had sat down and were playing a game of chess with lightning speed. Hardly had one player set a chessman down, when the other moved a piece in his turn.

"Playing *blitz*?" the handsome boy asked, and the players nodded. He watched them silently for a few moments, standing beside the table. Then he bent down and talked with them in an undertone. They stopped their game, listening.

In spite of the noise, the talking and laughing around him, John heard the bell ring. "That will be Ted," he thought.

The door of the terrace opened, and Ted stood on the threshold.

"Oh, here you are, Ted!" the boys greeted him. "We thought you got scared of Pete. Why are you late?"

Ted sat down on the floor of the terrace, his round face flushed and dripping with perspiration. "I'm so hot," he panted. "I ran all the way. I didn't realize how much time I spent preparing to play with the great Pete."

"Don't tell me you studied a chess book," Paul said.

"Well, not exactly," Ted replied, clasping his knees with both hands, "though I really meant to look at one after lunch. But then I saw how little time I had left and decided it would be better if I got more energy for the tournament. So I went to a drugstore and had two ice cream sodas. Suddenly I noticed how late it was and dashed off."

"Yes, it's late," Bert agreed, glancing at his watch. "We'd better start."

Before the boys sat down to play, they crowded around a sideboard on which the twins had put a huge pitcher of lemonade and many glasses. They drank with obvious enjoyment.

John saw Pete nod to his brother, as the players sat down at both sides of the long table. Only the place in front of Paul was empty now. John watched the handsome boy approach the table slowly, a haughty expression on his face, as if he were forced to play with an opponent far beneath him. Then he sat down in front of Paul.

The players bent over the boards. Those who had the white pieces made their moves and pushed the buttons of the clocks. Both opponents recorded the moves on their score sheets.

John counted the boys. There were ten players, and eight onlookers. Eighteen, and the club had

thirty members. Probably the twelve missing were away on vacation.

Bert was sitting at a small table on which he had put some papers, a pen, and two bottles of ink, one black, one red. He made entries on a large sheet.

Now he got up, stood with the other spectators beside the players, and looked at the positions on the chessboards. He filled a glass with lemonade and emptied it thirstily. The drink looked good and cold.

Bert glanced over at John, filled another glass, and brought it to the bed. "Here you are," he said.

"Thanks." The lemonade tasted very good. When John had finished it, he asked in a whisper, "How are the games?"

"Well, nothing much has developed yet, except in Pete's game. He has a clear advantage."

"Is Ted a poor player?"

"He certainly is no match for Pete. But he hasn't been playing long. When he joined the club he was just a beginner."

"Do you have beginners in your club?" John asked quickly.

"Sure! And you'd be surprised to see how fast they become good."

John looked at the long table. Everybody seemed most interested in the game between Paul

and Max. The spectators stood around them, their necks craned, watching every move eagerly, discussing it in excited whispers, nodding if they liked it, shaking their heads if they disapproved. Not only the boys who had come to watch surrounded the aspirants to second prize, but also one or two players.

"Can you get up and walk around when you play a tournament game?" John asked, astonished. He had thought that you had to sit still all the time as in a class.

"Of course you can, while your opponent is thinking over his move. Some people say it's much better than staring at the board all the time."

"And doesn't it disturb Paul and Max to have all these onlookers around?"

Bert laughed. "Oh, they don't mind. They're used to kibitzers."

John nodded. He wondered whether he would ever get used to having six or seven kibitzers around when he played a game of chess. "And Paul or Max, whoever wins, will get second prize?" he asked.

Bert nodded. He looked thoughtful now, almost worried. "Yes, it's a very important game. That makes it so difficult."

"Makes what difficult?"

Bert did not reply. He shrugged his shoulders and went to join the boys around Max and Paul.

What had Bert meant, wondered John, as he lay, watching. He could not follow the events on the chessboards, but he saw the little white and black men move about and shared the excitement of the tournament. So the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight did have beginners among its members. Maybe someday . . .

Now and then one of the twins came to the bed and asked whether John was having a good time.

"You bet!" he replied.

Then Bert stood again beside him, and John asked eagerly, "Who'll win? Paul or Max?"

"Well, Paul has a Pawn that's far advanced. And it's protected by the Bishop and Queen. Do you remember what I mean when I say the Pawn is protected?"

John thought a moment. "Yes, you mean that if one of Max's chessmen takes the Pawn, the man can be taken by Paul's Bishop or Queen, which protect the Pawn."

"That's right," said Bert. "I really don't see how Max can stop the Pawn." Thoughtfully he added, "Paul is playing above his usual strength today."

"Stop the Pawn from doing what?" John asked.

"From becoming a Queen."

"But how could a Pawn ever become a Queen?" In his bewilderment John had forgotten to lower his voice. Guiltily he looked at the players, but none of them seemed to have heard him.

“Oh, haven’t you learned that yet? You see, if a Pawn reaches the eighth row, you may change it

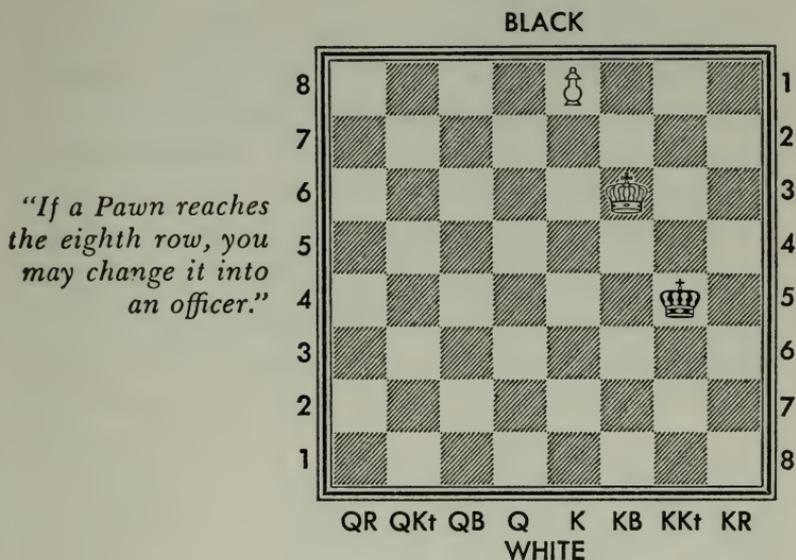


DIAGRAM 31

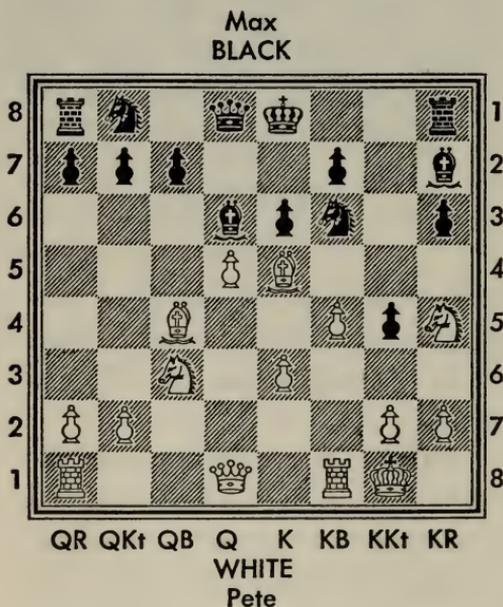
into any piece you want, except a King. (See Diagram 31.) Naturally, as a rule, you’ll make a Queen out of it. You can have two Queens, the old and the new, or even more.”

A Queen out of a Pawn! “It’s quite a career for a tiny Pawn, isn’t it?” John said. “The Pawn is a funny little thing. It can never move backward. Usually it advances only one square at a time, but on its first move it may advance two. It moves

straight and captures diagonally. And finally it can even become a Queen.

“Oh, there’s something I wanted to ask you,” he added. “In his tournament game with Pete, Max made a Pawn move that looks just impossible to me.” John drew the score sheet from his pocket and tried to smooth it out with his fingers because it looked rather crumpled. “Here!” He pointed to the twelfth line.

“Let’s see!” Bert took the score and opened his chess wallet. With lightning speed he played over the first eleven moves of each side as they were recorded on the score.



“That’s all clear to me,” John said, “and so is White’s twelfth move, P-KB4.”

DIAGRAM 32

"That's all clear to me," John said, "and so is White's twelfth move, P-KB4." (See Diagram 32.)

"Do you know why Pete made this move with his King's Bishop's Pawn?" Bert asked.

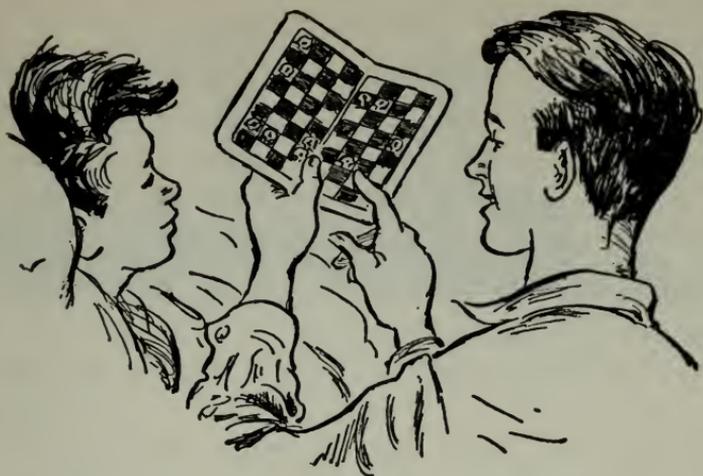
John nodded. "Yes, Pete pushed his Pawn so that it would protect his Bishop that was attacked by Max's. But how could Max now take that Pawn with his King's Knight's Pawn? The two Pawns don't stand on the same diagonal. They stand side by side on a straight line. I don't understand it."

"I can't blame you," Bert replied. "The Black Pawn captured the White *en passant*, as it is called. A Pawn can capture *en passant* only if it stands on a square of the fifth row, on K5, or Q5, or B5, or whichever 5 it is."

"Why?" John asked.

"Because, as you just mentioned, a Pawn is allowed on its first move to advance two squares," Bert explained. "Look at Pete's King's Bishop's Pawn! By advancing two squares, it proudly passed the square KB6 on which the Black Pawn could have taken it. Therefore we have the rule that the Pawn on the fifth row can capture a Pawn beside it that advanced two steps, *en passant*, that is, while it passes. Now show me how you think that Max took Pete's Pawn *en passant*." Bert handed the chess wallet to John.

"That way, I guess." Eagerly John drew the White King's Bishop's Pawn from its slit in the



Bert nodded. He stood, his neck craned, trying to see Paul's board. But the kibitzers' heads and shoulders were in his way. "I must find out whether Paul's Pawn has advanced farther and will soon be a Queen," he said and went back to the table.

John lay, musing over the Pawn. He remembered what Dr. Miller had said about the wisdom of chess that reflected the wisdom of life. Was the Pawn a symbol of man? It seemed small and unimportant among the strong powers around it. But when it marched courageously toward its goal, it could accomplish great things in the end.



Chapter Ten

THE PROOF

MOST of the kibitzers, leaving Paul and Max, crowded around a husky boy and his sun-burned opponent, whose face showed stubborn determination. John guessed that something interesting was happening on their board.

He saw the two boys shake hands and get up.

Bert went to his referee table, dipped the pen into the red ink, and made an entry on a sheet. Then he caught John's questioning glance and came over to the bed.

"Is the game over?" John asked. "Who won?"

"Nobody won. It was a draw. Henry's King got stalemated. That is Henry." Bert pointed out the husky boy.

"I read about the stalemate," said John. "Please show me the position at the end of the game."

Again Bert opened his chess wallet. He took most pieces off the board and stuck only a few into the small slits. The White King stood on KB1, a White Pawn on QR4, another on QKt5. These were all the men White had.

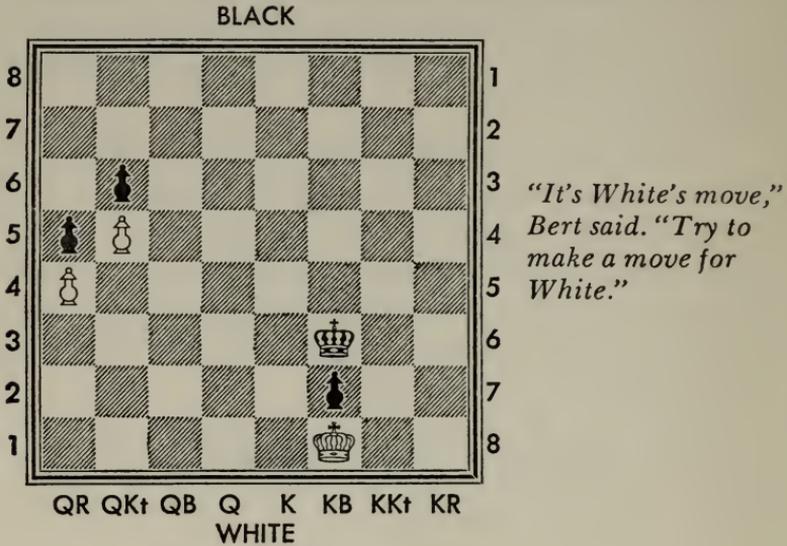
Black had three Pawns, one on QKt3, one on QR4, and a third on KB7. "This Pawn will become a Queen," John thought.

The Black King stood on KB6.

"It's White's move," Bert said. "Try to make a move for White." (*See Diagram 34.*)

John looked at the board. The two White Pawns were blocked. It was clear that he could not move either. "I've got to move my King," he thought. But where? John could not put the King on K1, or KKt1, because he would be in check. Neither could the King move to K2 or KKt2, as both squares were controlled by the Black King.

"I see," said John. "It's a stalemate. I read about it in one of the twins' books. My King isn't attacked. But I couldn't make a move without exposing him to a check. And, of course, I'm not allowed to do that."



Bert nodded. "Yes, White is stalemated. The game is a draw."

"Too bad for Black," John went on. "I'm sure he thought he could make a Queen out of his King's Bishop's Pawn and win the game. Instead he got only a draw."

Bert seemed preoccupied. "Well, two of our games today won't be draws," he remarked. "Pete has a dead-won game against Ted, and Paul, too,

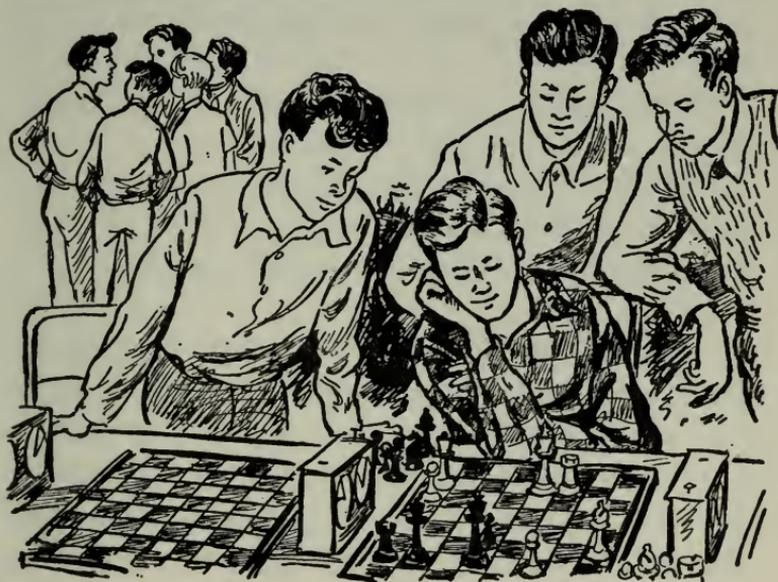
will win. Paul never played so well before. It's strange."

"I'm glad you think Paul will win," said John.

Bert stood silently, looking at him in a queer way. Then he said, "If he wins this game, he'll win second prize in the tournament. Pete'll win first prize, and Paul second." Again he was silent for a while before he asked, "You're a close friend of the twins, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am. I haven't known them long, but they're great guys!"

Bert was about to reply, but Max came and called him away. They withdrew to a corner of the terrace. More boys joined them. Max talked and whispered. The others listened. All looked flustered and excited.



John did not doubt that Max was hatching some plot against the twins. If he were well, he could help his friends. As Chief of the Detective Squad he had always uncovered the culprits' schemes. He had always thought out some way of exposing them and protecting the innocent.

The group in the corner stood listening to Max. When Paul had made his move, and Max returned to the chessboard, the other boys stayed behind, talking excitedly.

Finally they separated, and Bert returned to John. He looked thoughtful. Once or twice he opened his mouth as if to speak. In the end he asked, "Can you tell the twins apart, John?"

"Sure. That is if they are facing me and I can see the little chessboards on the lapels of their shirts. Pete wears his on the right, and Paul on the left."

Bert nodded. "And if it weren't for the chessboards on their lapels?" he asked.

"Then it'd be difficult. No, then I wouldn't be able to tell them apart." Why did Bert ask these queer questions? Had they anything to do with Max?

"It wouldn't be hard to change the little chessboard from one lapel to the other, would it?" Bert said slowly. He turned around and walked away.

John lay, his hands crossed behind his head. He had to think this over. Clearly Bert had hinted that the twins might put their tiny chessboards on

the wrong lapels so that people would think Pete was Paul, and Paul was Pete. But why should his friends do such a thing? Why?

He saw the two boys who had drawn their game stand not far from his bed.

"Max doesn't have a chance," he heard Henry say. "Paul'll win second prize."

"Yes," replied the other boy. "I never thought Paul better than Max. Pete is much stronger, I know, but Paul . . ."

Henry shrugged his shoulders. "Well, Max says—"

His companion nudged him with his elbow, glancing at John. "Careful!" he whispered.

They walked away.

It took John a few moments to figure this conversation out. But then he had it. Max! He was mean all right. Only a mean boy could spread such nasty gossip about decent fellows like the twins.

John waved both hands to attract Bert's attention.

At last Bert noticed him. Quickly he came to the bed. "Do you—"

John left him no time to speak. "Tell me, does Max—" He paused and swallowed, breathless with indignation. "Does Max say the twins are trying to cheat him? Does he say that it isn't Paul who is playing with him, but Pete?"

"Yes, that's what he suspects."

"Do you really think the twins would do such a dreadful thing?"

Bert sighed. "No, I don't think so. I like the twins. Most of the fellows like them in spite of Pete's quick temper. But Max is hard to convince. He insists I must tell the twins of his suspicion while the others are around. I don't want to. He says they must be expelled from the club. Some of the boys, quite a few, are inclined to side with him if the twins can't prove that it's Paul who is playing Max."

"And, of course, they can't prove it," John said thoughtfully. It must be a funny feeling if you cannot prove who you are, funny and a little frightening. John tried to imagine it.

"Can't you think of something that would show they aren't cheating?" Bert asked. "We'd all be grateful to you. Nobody really likes Max. We didn't pay attention to his talk until we saw Paul's excellent game today. He certainly is playing above his usual strength." Bert left John and walked over to the table where the boys were crowded in excitement around Max and Paul.

John lay, very quiet. Did Bert think the twins guilty or innocent? Perhaps he did not know what to believe. John remembered how Pete had told his brother before the tournament that he must beat Max. He remembered how, speaking of Max, the twins had exchanged glances.

No, he decided, his friends would never cheat.

If only he could clear them from suspicion in the eyes of the other boys! If only he could get one of those sudden ideas which he had so often had, when he was well and played he was Chief of the Detective Squad! Too bad he was unable to move about!

Impatiently he shook his head. You did not get ideas by pitying yourself because you had to lie on your back! Anyhow you did not need to move about to get them. They came from your brain, not your legs. Was not the King the most important piece, though he moved only one square at a time? Could not the little Pawn, that advanced slowly step by step, become a mighty Queen if it had enough perseverance to reach the eighth row? It was the mind not the body that counted in chess. Perhaps this was what made the chessmen the immortal army.

The mind not the body . . . John pressed his fingers against his forehead, groping for an idea. The mind, not the body!

"Bert!" he called.

Only a few moments ago he would not have dared to lift his voice during the tournament. But suddenly he felt very self-confident. And what he had to say was urgent.

Bert came over at once.

"I know how we can prove that the twins are innocent."

"How?"

John shook his head. "I'd rather not tell you yet. Will you help?"

"Sure!"

"Good! You have a bottle of red ink on your table, haven't you?"

"Yes," said Bert, puzzled. "But what . . . ?"

John went on eagerly. "Mark Pete somewhere with the red ink—his skin—not his clothes. And don't let the twins or Max see what you're doing. It would be all right though, if the other boys see."

"O.K.," said Bert. "But I'd like to know what you're planning."

"You'll know soon," John promised.

His eyes followed Bert, who walked to the referee table and looked down, undecided, at the bottle of red ink. Finally he opened it, tore a scrap from a sheet of paper, and soaked it with the ink until it was a bright red. Hiding it in his hand, he stepped behind Pete who sat, his head bent, studying the board. Quickly Bert drew the red wet paper over the nape of Pete's neck.

Pete hunched his shoulders and shook his head, but he did not look up from the chessboard.

Some of the boys who had been watching Bert gazed at him inquiringly.

He put his finger to his mouth.

They kept quiet, and he went over to John's bed. "All right?" he asked.

"Perfect!" John replied, looking with satisfaction at the bright red smear on Pete's neck.

"What next?" asked Bert.

"Can you interrupt the tournament for a while and tell the twins before the others what Max is saying about them? He wants you to tell them, doesn't he?"

Bert nodded, frowning. Reluctantly he called out, "Stop the clocks, please!"

Heads rose. Fingers reached for the buttons on the clocks. The boys' tanned faces looked tense with excitement. Probably they guessed that the decisive moment in the battle between Max and the twins had come.

"As referee, I think it best to tell Pete and Paul what Max is saying about them." Bert spoke quickly. Perhaps he wanted to get his unpleasant task over. "Max says that the boy who is playing with him today isn't really Paul, but Pete. He says that the twins changed roles so that Pete would win the game and second prize for Paul."

"Does Max think I—" Paul cried.

He had no chance to go on. Pete hurled himself on Max and threw him to the floor. "How dare you say such a thing about us? You're even meaner than I thought, you—" Pete stopped talking, but his fists kept hammering at Max.

Bert and the other boys intervened. "Come on. Cut it out. That's enough." They tore him from his victim.

Max got to his feet unsteadily.

Pete's face was full of rage, almost as red as the

mark on his neck. But fortunately the ink still showed clearly.

Well, everything worked out fine, John thought. "May I say something, Bert?" he asked.

"Sure, John. We're waiting to hear it."

John sat up in bed. "You all know that Pete has a violent temper, don't you?"

The boys nodded, grinning. "We sure do."

John went on, "Can anybody doubt that the fellow who thrashed Max is Pete?"

"He's Pete, all right!"

"No question about that."

"Paul'd never get so mad."

Max stepped forward, glaring at Pete. "This is Pete, of course. But who can say that he wasn't my opponent? Between the moment Bert made us stop the clocks and the moment this guy went for me, the twins had plenty of time to shift their buttons from one lapel to the other. Nobody watched them."

"I can say that he wasn't your opponent, but Ted's," John replied calmly. "And I can prove it, too. Turn around, Pete!"

Pete looked surprised, but obeyed. A bright red streak shone on his neck.

"You see this?" John pointed to it. "While Pete played I asked Bert to mark him, I mean Ted's opponent, with red ink. Bert marked him. You have your own referee as witness that this fellow who's proved by his temper that he's Pete, wasn't

playing with you, but with Ted. Paul has no red ink on his neck. Turn—”

But Paul had already turned around and was displaying the clean nape of his neck. Then he shook John's hand warmly. "Thanks, John," he said. "You're almost as good as Sherlock Holmes."

Pete, too, came to the bed. "What do you mean *almost?*" he asked. "And John is a good friend, too!"

"It was easy," John said. "You see, as I lay here wondering how I could prove that Pete is Pete, and Paul Paul, it struck me that they're really not at all alike. Under their skins they're as different as two people can be."

Max approached Paul, his hand outstretched. "You played an excellent game today. Congratulations! My position is hopeless. I resign."

So this was how a chess player behaved when he was beaten! He did not sulk or get angry. No, he shook the opponent's hand and said, "Congratulations!" John's eyes sought the white and black chessmen on the table. How fortunate were the boys who belonged to a chess club!

"And perhaps I'd better resign my membership, too," Max went on in a low voice. "I guess you won't want me around now." Slowly, very slowly, he walked toward the door. Perhaps he hoped somebody would call him back.

But Pete said quickly, his eyes on John, "If Max drops out we'll need a new member."

“Yes!”

“Of course!” called several voices.

John realized what his friend had in mind and felt very happy. Would he really be allowed to join the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight? He looked away from Max's disappointed face, and his glance fell on the sheet with Franklin's essay, “The Morals of Chess,” that still lay on his bed. A paragraph caught his attention:

“You must not, when you have gained a victory, use any triumphing or insulting expressions, nor show too much of the pleasure you feel; but endeavor to console your adversary, and make him less dissatisfied with himself by every kind of civil expression that may be used with truth; such as, you understand the game better than I, but you are a little inattentive, or, you play too fast; or you had the best of the game, but something happened to divert your thoughts, and that turned it in my favor.”

John frowned. He wanted to forget what he had read. The victory he had won over Max . . . He had meant to clear the twins of suspicion and had succeeded. Perhaps this was enough. Perhaps there was no reason why Max should resign his membership, humiliated. But if Max stayed, there would be no room for a new member. . . .

Again John glanced at the chessmen on the table. They stood, upright, their polished surfaces shining in the sun.

"Pete, Paul," he said quickly, "look at this!" He put the tip of his finger on the paragraph he had read.

The twins stood beside the bed, bending over the framed sheet.

Pete lifted his head first and said, "I don't see why Max must drop out. He was foolish all right, but only because he thought he was being treated unfairly. Now that he's seen he was wrong, everything will be O.K."

"And another thing," he added. "We always had thirty in our club. But that isn't a law we have to stick to."

"Right!" Bert agreed. "No reason why we couldn't be thirty-one for a change. If anybody wants to suggest a new member, raise your hand!"

Arms went up fast and stood like trees in a forest. There was not one boy who had not lifted his hand. Max, too, held his up.

"Let's go over there!" said Bert, leading the boys away from John to the other end of the terrace.

John watched them, as they stood, clustered together in whispered conversation. The conference was very short. John saw all the boys nod their consent. Then they returned.

"We want to ask you whether you'd like to join the Chess Club of the Grinning Knight," Bert said.

"*Would I?*" cried John. "When?"

"At once. We're all glad to have you."

"You bet we are!" called the others. They stood around John's bed, shaking hands with him.

How lonely he had felt not so long ago! Now he had many new friends, and they had admitted him to their chess club. His parents would be so glad when he told them.

He looked across to his own terrace. His mother and father were standing there, close to the railing, staring at him, their faces strangely happy. He lifted his arm and waved. They waved back.

"I don't know why my folks look so pleased and excited," he said, puzzled.

"Don't you?" Pete asked, laughing. He stood with his arm around his brother's shoulder. Paul, too, was laughing. "We've been noticing it for a long time," he said.

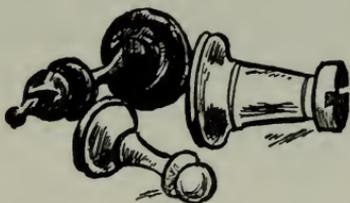
"Noticing what?" asked John.

"We thought you couldn't sit up," said Paul with a grin.

"No, I can't—" John stopped. He was sitting up—had been sitting up—he had no idea for how long!

He smiled at his parents' happy faces and at his new friends whom the chessmen had won for him. He felt sure he was going to have a great time, playing the Royal Game with the other boys, as healthy as they. Yes, he guessed he would get well in a hurry, now that he had joined the immortal army.

From John's Notebook



*THE SCORE OF THE GAME BETWEEN
PETE AND PAUL*

The following score with John's comments is from his notebook, in which he recorded many exciting chess games:

This is the game the twins played when they came the first time to our house for supper with Ted and Bert. Ted wrote down the moves for me during the game so that I would be able to play it over by myself when I was alone.

WHITE	BLACK
Pete	Paul
1. P-K4	1. P-K4
2. Kt-KB3	2. Kt-QB3
3. B-QB4	3. B-QB4
4. O-O (<i>See Diagram 26, p. 93.</i>)	4. P-Q3
5. P-QB3	5. Q-KB3
6. Q-QR4	6. KKt-K2
7. P-Q3	7. B-KKt5
8. B-KKt5	8. Q-KKt3
9. QKt-Q2	9. P-KR3
10. Kt-KR4	

Here Pete made a bad mistake, a horrible blunder, as he himself called it when he and the other fellows discussed the game after it was over. In his eagerness to attack the Black Queen with

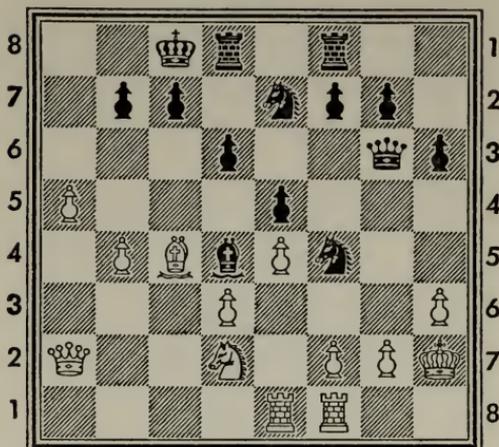
his Knight he forgot that by moving the Knight he left the Bishop without protection. On his next move Paul could take the Bishop. Of course, it wasn't a tournament game, and we were all talking. Otherwise, I'm sure, Pete would never have made that blunder.

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 10. . . . | 10. QxB (See Diagram 27, p. 95.) |
| 11. KKt-KB3 | 11. Q-KR4 |
| 12. P-KR3 | 12. BxKt |
| 13. KtxB | 13. O-O-O (See Diagram 28, p. 97.) |

Paul castled on the Queen's side because Bert wanted me to see how it's done. Being a whole Bishop ahead, he thought he could afford to take it easy. But now Pete starts attacking on the Queen's side.

- | | |
|------------|------------------------------|
| 14. P-QKt4 | 14. B-QKt3 |
| 15. Q-QKt3 | 15. KR-KB1 |
| 16. P-QR4 | 16. P-QR4 |
| 17. Kt-Q2 | 17. QRPxQKtP |
| 18. QBPxP | 18. Kt-Q5 |
| 19. Q-QR2 | 19. Kt-K7, ch |
| 20. K-KR2 | 20. Q-KKt3 |
| 21. P-QR5 | 21. B-Q5 |
| 22. QR-K1 | 22. Kt-KB5 (See Diagram 35.) |

Paul
BLACK



QR QKt QB Q K KB Kkt KR

WHITE

Pete

DIAGRAM 35

*Black threatens now
Q x KktP, mate.*

Black threatens now QxKktP, mate. Paul played very well, the boys said. Of course Pete has to prevent the mate. But how? If he plays R-Kkt1, Black's Bishop snatches the King's Bishop's Pawn and attacks both White Rooks. So White plays:

23. P-Kkt3

24. P-QR6

25. QRPxQKtP, ch

26. KPxQP

23. Kt-KR4

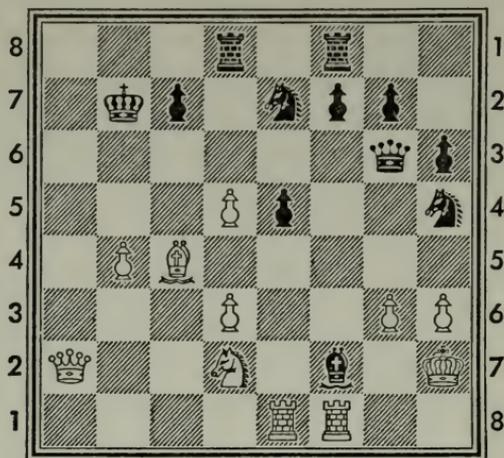
24. P-Q4

25. KxP

26. BxKBP (See Diagram 36.)

Paul
BLACK

Paul played
 $B \times KBP.$



QR QKt QB Q K KB KKt KR

WHITE

Pete

DIAGRAM 36

I would have grabbed Black's Bishop with my Rook at once if I'd been White. But Pete said afterward that if he had accepted Paul's clever sacrifice and taken the Bishop with his Rook, the Black Queen would have captured his King's Knight's Pawn, checking his King and at the same time attacking his Rook. Therefore he played:

27. P-KKt4

28. RxB

29. Q-QR3

27. BxR

28. Kt-KB5

Pete showed us when the game was over that he shouldn't have played Q-QR3, but Kt-K4, threatening the terrific move Kt-QB5, ch. But he didn't think of this excellent move until later, when it was no longer good and when he had to sacrifice his Rook to save his skin. And none of the other boys had seen that strong Knight move either!

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| 29. . . . | 29. P-KR4 |
| 30. R-QB1 | 30. KR Px KKtP |
| 31. B-QKt3 | 31. Q-KR4 ????? |

I put the question marks behind Paul's last move because now Pete sacrificed his Rook and got a perpetual check. And Paul could have prevented that perpetual check so easily by playing R-QR1! In fact, he said he should have played R-QR1 long ago. But he felt too sure that he would win the game and got careless.

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| 32. RxQBP, ch (See
Diagram 29, p.
100.) | 32. KxR |
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Bert explained to me why Paul would have lost at once if his King had not taken the White Rook, but moved out of check, to QKt1 or QKt3. The White Queen would have mated the King by moving to QR7 in case he had gone to QKt1 and by attacking him from QR5 if he had moved to QKt3.

33. Q-QR7, ch (See Diagram 30, p. 103.)
33. K-QB1

If the Black King had gone to Q3, Pete would have played Kt-K4, mate.

34. Q-QR8, ch
34. K-QB2

Had Paul moved his King to Q2, he would have lost the game as the twins showed me. Pete would have played Q-QKt7, ch, chasing the Black King to K1. Now Pete's Bishop would have gone to QR4, checking the Black King. This would have meant the end of Black, though he could have struggled on for two more moves the following way: Black: Kt-QB3, White: BxKt, ch, Black: R-Q2, White: QxR, mate. Seeing this danger, Paul was careful and didn't move his King to the square Q2.

35. Q-QR7, ch
35. K-QB1
36. Q-QR6, ch
36. K-QKt1
37. Q-QKt6, ch
37. K-QR1

And so on until Paul had to realize that his King couldn't get out of the perpetual check, and that the game was a draw. Of course Paul took it as the good sport he is. When some time ago Dr. Miller took me down to the Manhattan Chess Club to show me the picture of Paul Morphy, the world's

greatest chess genius, he told me that people who are good losers in chess are also able in real life to accept disappointments placidly. Boy, chess is a wonderful game!