

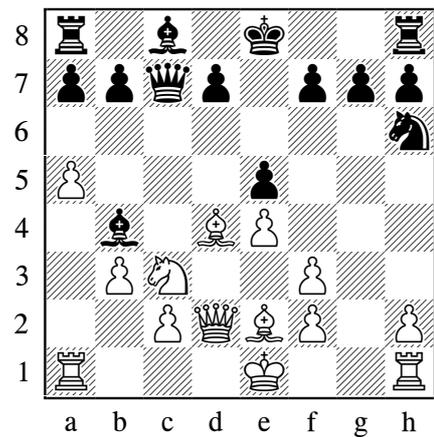
When I am analysing with friends, it happens from time to time that one of us propose a move that just can't work. The intuition screams that it is fundamentally wrong.

But in the end, it turns out that everything falls into place in an incomprehensible way. In those moments, we enjoy the position for a while before continuing.

For me, the main characteristic of a beautiful combination is that it is counterintuitive. I appreciate when my intuition turns out to be wrong.

A few weeks ago, I saw a beautiful combination in a dream, but when I woke up, I couldn't arrange it on the board. After keeping the motif in my head for a few weeks, I noticed that it's **Nils Grandelius 20th birthday** today. Finally, I found a position that works. Here it is, celebrating his day.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙e2 ♚b6 4.b3 ♘d4 5.♙b2 ♘xf3+ 6.gxf3 e6 7.a4 ♘h6 8.a5 ♚c6 9.d4 cxd4 10.♙xd4 ♚c7 11.♘c3 ♙b4 12.♚d2 e5



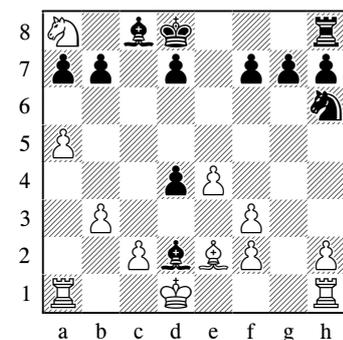
White to move

The bishop on d4 hangs but can't move. White seems to be lost, but there is a solution.

13.♔d1!

White is now threatening ♘c3-d5, since Black doesn't take on d2 with check. But why the counterintuitive square d1? The idea is to defend the queen.

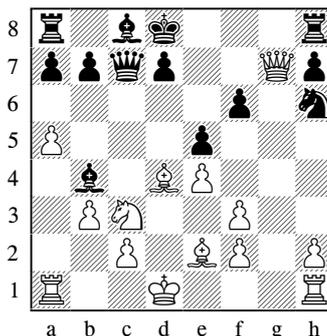
The main line is 13...exd4 14.♘d5 ♙xc7+ ♔d8 16.♘xa8



White is an exchange up. The stranded knight gives Black some compensation but the lines show that White is better: 16...♙c3 17.♙a2 d5 18.a6! bxa6 [18...dxe4 19.♘b6!±] 19.♙xa6 dxe4 20.♙xc8 ♔xc8 21.♘b6+!±

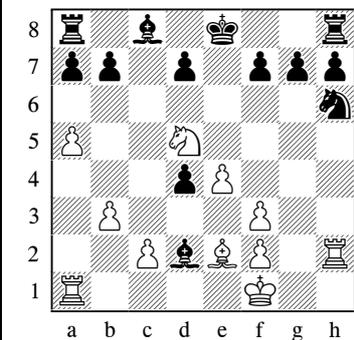
Black can step out of ♘c3-d5 by moving the queen, but she can't defend e5 and attack c3 at the same time. Thus:

- a) 13...♚b8 14.♙e3 (no pressure against c3 – clear advantage)
- b) 13...♚c6 14.♙xe5 (the pawn was not defended – winning position)
- c) Also 13...♔d8 14.♙g5+ f6 15.♙xg7 wins for White – but it shouldn't if White castled on move 13!



- d) Finally, 13...♚d6 14.♘b5 ♚xd4 15.♙xd4 transposes to the mainline.

So why is 13.♔f1 not as good? My idea was that Black has 13...exd4 14.♘d5 ♚xh2! 15.♙xh2 ♙xd2



With the king on d1, White could simply take on d2 to with a fantastic position. Now he has to go for 16.♘c7+ ♔e7 17.♘xa8 ♙f4 18.♙h4 ♙e5 with unclear play.

However, it turns out that 13.♔d1 is good, but not because the king could take back on d2:

- 1) After 13.♔f1 exd4 14.♘d5, Black doesn't have to go for 14...♚xh2 but can also play 14...♙xd2 15.♘xc7+ ♔d8 16.♘xa8 ♙c3 17.♙a4 d5. He gets enough play with ... ♙c8-h3+.
- 2) After 13.♔d1 exd4 14.♘d5 ♚xh2, White has a better option than ♔xd2: 15.♙xb4 wins on the spot.

The only reasonable conclusion is that the position I dreamt about was much more beautiful!