

Caruana, Fabiano **C65**
- Kramnik, Vladimir **2775**
2799
 Dortmund SuperGM 40th (2) 1.07.2012
 [A.J. Goldsby I]

GOTM / July, 2012.

Young GM F. Caruana won the 40th Annual Super-GM tournament (Sparkassen) in Dortmund this year, edging out Karjakin on tiebreaks. Further, he defeated GM V. Kramnik in a monstrous struggle ... this whale of a game is my choice for my GOTM for July, 2012.

Play starts off with a Ruy Lopez. (Spanish Game.)
1.e4 e5 ; 2.Nf3 Nc6 ;
 This is probably Black's best move, (it is the move that most masters invariably choose here); although Kramnik is also known to play the Petroff Defense as well. (Also known as The Petrov Defence.)

[Black can also play: 2...Nf6 ;
 3.Nxe5 d6 ; 4.Nf3 Nxe4 ;
 5.d4² , (with an edge)

when White is slightly better, but Kramnik knows a thing or two of how to play the Black side of this position!

[See MCO-15, page # 98; columns #01 - 06, & all notes.]

A good - relatively recent example - would have to be the following master-level clash:
 GM Vassily Ivanchuk (2751) - GM Vladimir Kramnik (2799);
 [C42]
 Corus Super-GM (R#07)
 Wijk aan Zee, NED;
 / 19,01,2008.
 {A well-played game, it was eventually drawn in 37 moves.}]

3.Bb5 Nf6 ;
 (The Classical line.)
 Kramnik's favorite move, he uses this (nowadays) almost to the exclusion of all other systems.

[Black could have also played:
 3...a6 ; 4.Ba4 Nf6 ;
 5.0-0 Be7 ; 6.Re1 b5 ;
 7.Bb3 d6 ; 8.c3 0-0 ;

9.h3² , (center, strategy)
 when - according to modern
 opening theory, White is
 just a little bit better here.

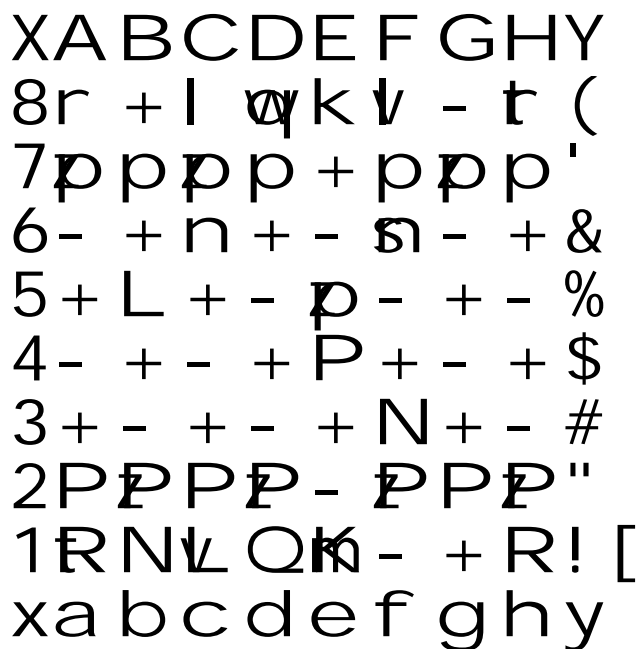
[See MCO-15, pgs. #79-95;
 columns #01 thru 42, & all
 notes.]

A good game, that is also
 relatively recent, would
 have to be:
 GM Veselin Topalov (2813) -
 GM Michael Adams (2682);
 [C95]
 17th European (men's) Champ.
 (EU-chT)
 Novi Sad (R#3) / 24,10,2009.
 {White won a very interesting
 encounter here, 1-0 in 43
 amazing and complex moves.}]

(Diagram)

3...a7-a6; [Main line.]
 ("The Morphy Defense.")
 is the main line here ...
 and is analyzed just below.

4.d3 , (!?) hmmm
 Caruana - knowing full well



Kramnik's propensity for the
 formations of the variation
 known as "The Berlin Defense"
 - decides to prevent that
 system ... and play a much
 slower series of moves,
 instead.

[The "Berlin System" goes
 as follows:
 4.0-0 Nxe4 ; 5.d4 Nd6 ;
 6.Bxc6 dxc6 ; 7.dxe5 Nf5 ;
 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 ; 9.Nc3² ,
 and although White has a
 slight edge, not many players
 have been able to punch a
 hole in one of V. Kramnik's
 favorite systems.

[See MCO-15, page # 46;
 col.'s # 8-10, (mostly col. #8);
 and all applicable notes. (k.).]

There have literally been hundreds of games played in this line, yet one of the better known examples would have to be this historic encounter:

Garry Kasparov (2849) - Vladimir Kramnik (2772); [C67] Corus Super-GM / (R#05) Wijk aan Zee, NED / 18,01,2001. {A draw in 46 hard fought moves.}

Kasparov and Kramnik also disputed the Berlin ... in several of their games from the WCS match in 2000.]

(Diagram)

And since not even Garry Kasparov could knock a hole in Kramnik's pet line, (Berlin); then I think that White's choice was more than justified, especially seeing the outcome of this particular matchup.



4...Bc5 ; {aggressive}
 (Classical / Dev. / ---> f2)
 Kramnik almost always plays in this fashion, although it is not 100% clear here, which line is the best one for Black.

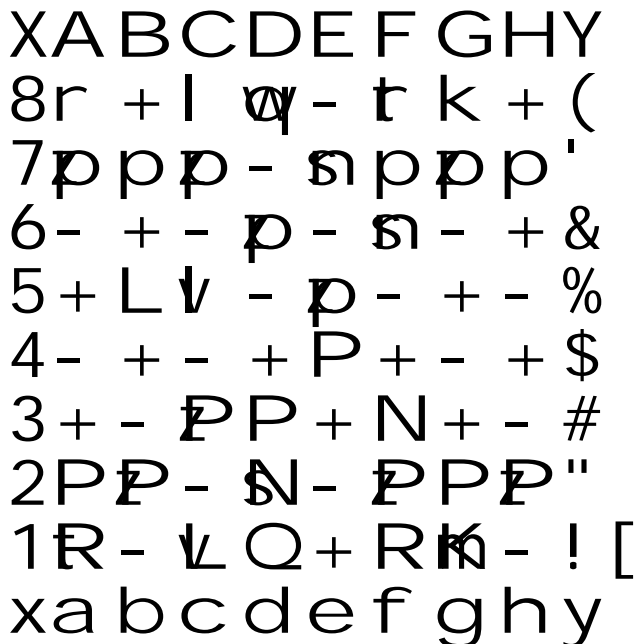
Karjakin played this line against Magnus Carlsen in the 2012 World Blitz Championships ... White won in just under fifty total moves.

5.0-0 d6 ; 6.c3 0-0 ; 7.Nbd2 Ne7!? ;
 (redeployment)

Black gets set to move his Knight over to the Kingside, although this method allows

White an immediate d3-d4 advance, and with a gain of time, as well. (Perhaps Kramnik wished to avoid getting doubled QBP's out of this position?)

[The move, given by the Power-Book makes a lot of sense: (>/=) RR7...a6 ; 8.Ba4 Ba7 ; 9.h3² , (Center.) when Black may have a slightly better set-up than the actual method used in the game here.]



Black could have also played 7...a6; here - see the analysis, just below.

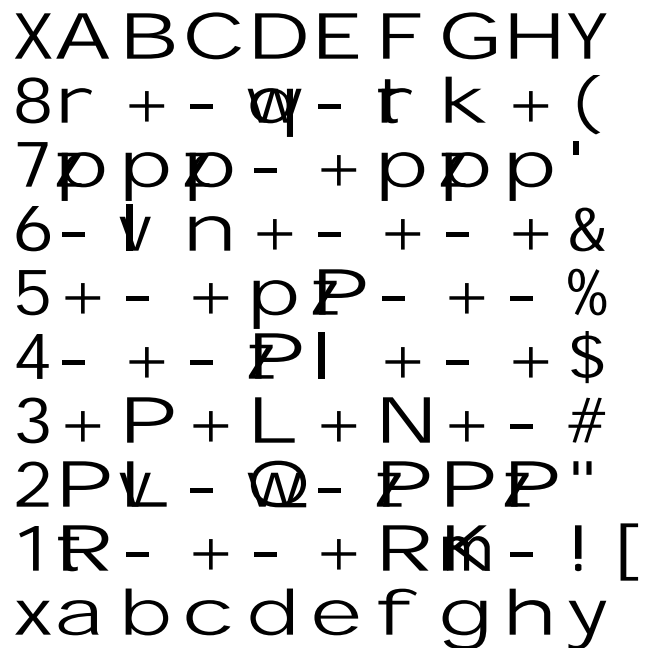
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The series of moves that now follows looks to be very close to being best - for both sides.

8.d4 exd4 ; 9.cxd4 Bb6 ; 10.b3 d5 ; 11.e5 Ne4 ; 12.Bd3 Bf5 ; 13.Qe2 Nc6 ; 14.Bb2 Nxd2 ; 15.Qxd2 Be4! ;

Black's last move is good ... and even a little tricky. (Black threatens to double White's King-side Pawns, and Caruana will lose a Pawn if he captures on e4.)

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The opening is over, both sides have a decent position ...

and a playable game as well.

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16.Be2 , (Strategic retreat?)
 Caruana keeps pieces on, I am not sure if he already thought about winning here ... or was he just trying to maintain the status quo?

[The machine prefers:
 16.Qe3² , (w / an edge)
 as the best try for White.]

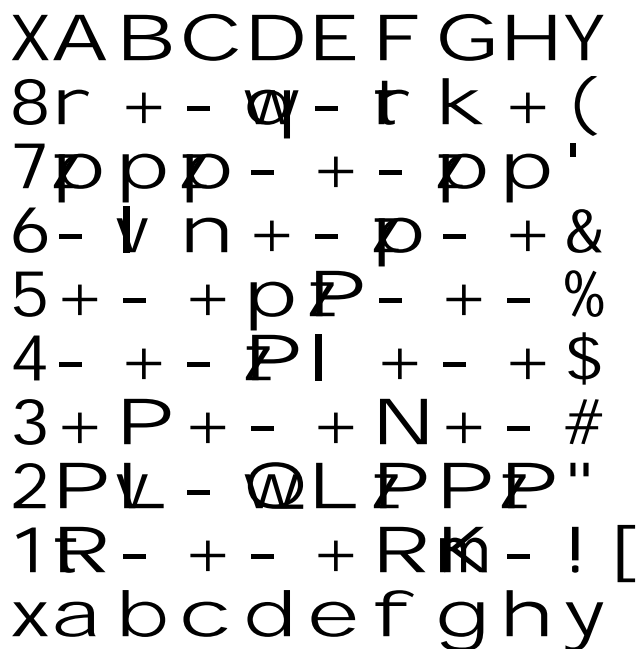
.
16...f6 ; (Chip away?)
 Black tries to undermine White's pawn duo in the center.

(Diagram)

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 According to all the engines that I use, Black has just about equalized in this position.

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17.b4! , (space, initiative)
 Hmmm, how do you find a move like this, I wonder?

.
 Let me just share {here} some



of my thoughts when I first saw this particular game:
 << Tarrasch said - over 100 years ago - that you should play on the side of the board where you have more space. Here - it is obvious that, (due to the Pawns on d4 & e5); that White has an advantage in space on that side of the board. Normally, I would expect White to find some method of playing in the "correct" sector. However, I expect that Caruana knew this, and maybe even spent a good deal of time looking for a good move on his right-hand side of the board. When he found nothing, he then turned his attention to other areas, and eventually found this neat move - which several strong

chess engines approve of -
 which hands White a way of
 holding on to the initiative.

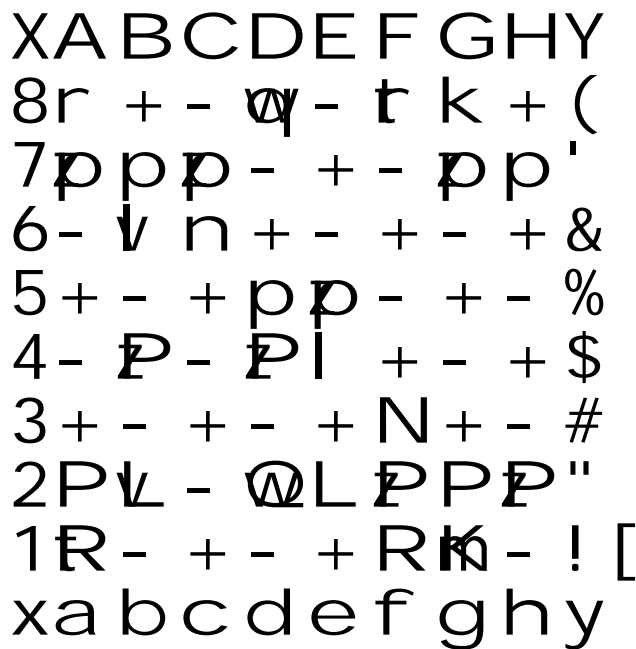
White does have more than
 just a few idle, passing threats.
 For example, if left alone,
 White might {now} play a4-a5,
 trapping Black's Bishop on
 the (not-so-secure)
 b6-square. >>

[Another way for White
 to go was: RR17.a4 a5 ;
 18.Rae1÷ , - Fritz 13.
 ("Unclear," maybe close
 to equal ...
 White MIGHT hold the
 timest of edges in this
 position.)]

17...fxe5!? , hmmmm
 (Changes the Pawn-structure.)

Andrew Soltis once
 recommended that you think
 long and hard before
 doing anything that
 permanently changed the
 way the pawns are arranged.
 (Such decisions always
 have long-term consequences,
 and cannot be taken back,
 not once they are made.)

[The box recommends:
 RR17...a6 ; '~' (unclear)
 and it also looks good
 to me, as well.]



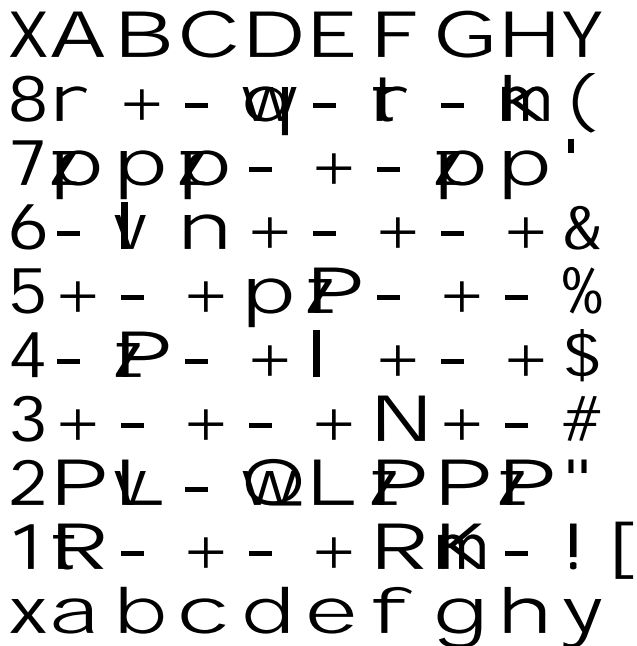
Here, Kramnik opens the
 game ... and his d-Pawn
 may become an eventual
 target ... although the amount
 of risk (if any) is acceptable
 here, and I am sure that it was
 not this move that caused
 Kramnik to lose this game.

Naturally, White has to
 recapture on e5, so as
 not to lose a Pawn.

18.dxe5 Kh8?! ;
(Less than best.)

Here, Kramnik is worried about latent threats to his King, so he hides his Royal Highness in the corner

I tested this move on a half a dozen different engines ... all with a similar result. (The warning light comes on, and the evaluations of White's position rises dramatically.)



Instead of this errant move, the tries of >/= 18...a7-a6; and even the play >/= 18...d5-d4; were both reasonable and completely

playable here.

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Now White grabs some space ... and does so with a gain of time.

19.b5 Ne7 ; 20.Ng5 Ng6!?! ;
(hmmm)

The f5-point was obviously a more active square for the Knight ... the only question here is: "Why didn't Kramnik play that move instead?" (Perhaps he mistakenly thought that g2-g3 was not really playable for White.)

This move was probably also an inferior try from Kramnik.

21.g3! Qe7 ; (1 ... | f5)
22.e6 Rf5 ;

Black's last move was very close to being best/forced here.

(Diagram)

This is the position that

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XABCDEFGHIY
8r + - + - + - ♞ (
7p p p - ♚ - p p '
6- ♜ - + P + n + &
5+ P + p + r ♞ - %
4- + - + | + - + $
3+ - + - + - ♞ - #
2P ♜ - ♚ L ♞ - ♞ "
1R - + - + R ♞ - ! [
x a b c d e f g h y
    
```

we currently have on the chessboard.

.
23.Nxe4 ,
 (Grabs the Bishop-pair.)

.
 Caruana rightfully goes for a line which gives him two powerful strikers, and they will be raking Black along diagonals that are near his King. (GM F. Caruana is borrowing a page from Kramnik's book, we have seen the former World Champion use these same strategic concepts to soundly defeat many a strong GM!)

[Just as good - and perhaps better - was the following

(fairly interesting) continuation:
 RR23.Nf7+! Rxf7™ ;
 Chess engines indicate this is forced.
 (Or 23...Kg8 ; 24.Bg4± , "+/" and the Rook on f5 is trapped.).
 24.exf7 Qxf7 ; 25.Bd3² ,
 (Maybe "+/")
 White is obviously better here, having won a Rook for a Knight and a Pawn.]

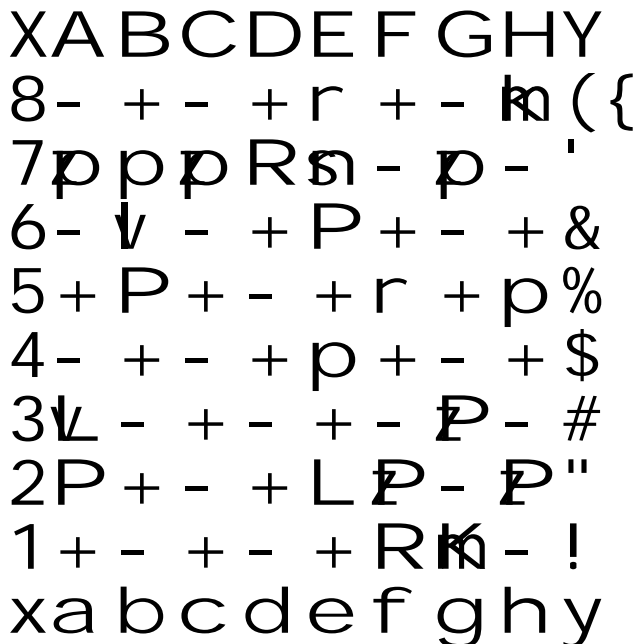
.
 .
23...dxe4 ; 24.Qd7 Raf8!? ;
 Rather than this move, the machine prefers the exchange on d7, although White retains a solid advantage ... no matter what line Black chooses.

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 .
 Now watch how skillfully the Italian GrandMaster manuevers and gets his "laser-cannons" focused on the key open lines. (This next series of moves - at least, until Black's 27th turn - looks to be all best here.)
25.Qxe7 Nxe7 ; 26.Ba3 Re8 ; 27.Rad1 h5!? ; (Inferior?)
 Another doubtful move, Black should probably play >/= 27...Nd5; here ... to prevent the White Rook reaching the seventh rank. (Not only this, the button on

h5 will now be identified as a target for White's pieces.)

28.Rd7 , (A pig on the 7th!!)
Many books for beginner's are always preaching the value of getting a Rook to your opponent's second row. This is usually because, once there, they can gather in many of the opponent's Pawns and also the Rook will usually restrict the opponent's King, as well.

[Also good was: 28.Bc4]



Now many of the engines - like Fritz, Deep Shredder and Houdini - all are showing a

large edge for White; and one that seems to grow with every one of Caruana's moves.

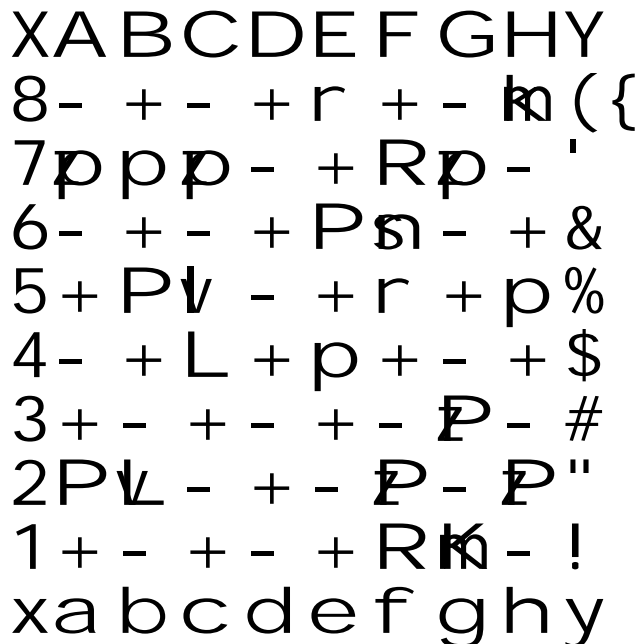
28...Nd5 ; (Too late!)
Oddly enough, the time for this move was past, now the metal monster shows that this Knight would have been better placed on g6.

Now 29.Bc4! was probably the most accurate move for White, although it seems (at least - to me) to be little more than a transposition
29.Rf7 Nf6!? ; (Close, but ... ?)
No cigar for this move, all the engines show that 29...Re5!; was probably Black's best bet in this position.

30.Bc4 Bc5 ; 31.Bb2 ,
(Almost - '!')

I love what I call, "little rules of thumb," they can be a great aid in helping you to reach the correct decision, especially when calculating (alone) does not really provide the correct answer.

[<31.Bxc5? ; Rxc5 32.Bb3²]



Here, the general guideline is that: "When you are better, exchange pieces."
 However, here that would be an entirely incorrect approach, White needs all of his fighting units to pressure the Black King and also to support the far, advanced passed-Pawn on e6.

31...Re7 ; 32.Bd4! Bd6TM ;
 (Forced.)

Black had no choice here, grabbing the Bishop on d4

meant dropping the Black Rook on e7.

Now, all the engines (even Crafty) will show that White's best move was probably \geq 33.Rd1!, here. (However, Caruana's move is also strong, and keeps the pressure on. And after 33.Re1, the box shows that Black should play 33...Kg8; or even 33...Kh7; here.)

33.Re1 b6?! ; 34.Rf8+! Kh7 ; 35.Rxe4 , (A foot-soldier falls!)

Now White is a solid Pawn ahead ...

[35.h3!?, (DIH)]

(Diagram)

Now Caruana will eventually win the game, even if Kramnik finds the best defense.

35...Rxf2 ; (Tricky, tricky!)
 Kramnik is diving deep into his little black bag, but here,

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X A B C D E F G H Y
8 - + - + - ♖ - + ( {
7 ♙ - ♘ - ♗ - ♞ ♚ '
6 - ♙ - ♘ ♜ - + &
5 + ♙ + - + ♖ + ♗ %
4 - + ♙ ♘ ♖ + - + $
3 + - + - + - ♙ - #
2 ♙ + - + - ♙ - ♙ "
1 + - + - + - ♚ - !
x a b c d e f g h y
    
```

there just aren't enough magic gimmicks left in there that can save Black's bad position.

[Or RR 35...Nxe4 ;
36.Rxf5 Kg6 ;
37.Rf3± , (Maybe "+/-")]

(Diagram)

This is the current position that we must examine, here on the chessboard.

36.Kxf2!? , (Hmmm ... OK, but ...)
This will win - eventually - for White. However, the

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X A B C D E F G H Y
8 - + - + - ♖ - + (
7 ♙ - ♘ - ♗ - ♞ ♚ '
6 - ♙ - ♘ ♜ - + &
5 + ♙ + - + - + ♗ %
4 - + ♙ ♘ ♖ + - + $
3 + - + - + - ♙ - #
2 ♙ + - + - ♗ - ♙ "
1 + - + - + - ♚ - ! [
x a b c d e f g h y
    
```

engines show that GM F. Caruana did not find the most accurate continuation here to quickly decide the game.

(See the continuation given - just below.)

[MUCH better was the line:
>/= 1 36.Re1! Rf3 ;
37.Kg2! Ra3 ;
38.Bb3+- , "+/-"
(material & position)

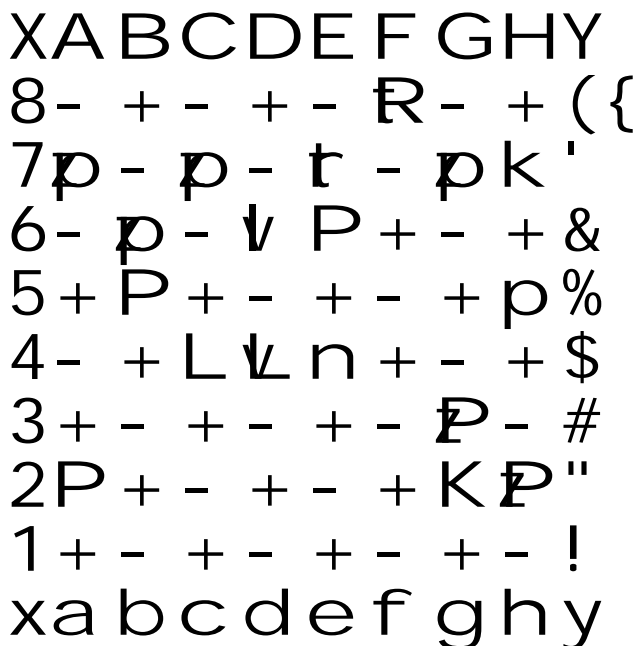
when White has a relatively easy win - from here.
{After 38...Ra5; 39.a4, and the Rook is trapped and rendered completely useless for the rest of the game.}]

36...Nxe4+ ; 37.Kg2 ,

(Off the file.)

.
White naturally sidesteps the threat, the rules of chess dictate that one cannot leave your King in check.

[Probably better was: >/= 1 37.Ke3 Nc5 ; 38.Rf7 Kg6 ; 39.Rxe7 Bxe7 ; 40.g4! hxg4!? ; 41.Kf4+- , "+/-" (domination) when all of White's pieces are so much better than his opponent's ... and White has that monster of a passed pawn, to boot.]



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However, here Ke3 was probably just slightly better than the actual line that

was played in the game, see the analysis of this move.

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.
37...Nc5 ; 38.Ra8 Nxe6? ;
Kramnik - perhaps short of time in this position - decides to immediately neutralize White's passed Pawn, rather than allow White to continuously drive all of his pieces to squares that are grossly inferior to the squares that his opponent's pieces occupy.

[A much tougher defense was: >/= 1 38...Kg6™ ; (forced) 39.Bxc5 Bxc5 ; 40.Rxa7± , and while White is decidedly better in this position, the clear and absolutely forced win ... is still a long way off.]

(Diagram)

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Normally, Kramnik would be correct. Here, however, his great sense of positional acumen fails him. (The presence of opposite-colored Bishops means that White must play

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XABCDEFGHIY
8R + - + - + - + (
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6- p - v n + - + &
5+ P + - + - + p %
4- + L v - + - + $
3+ - + - + - P - #
2P + - + - + K P "
1+ - + - + - + - ! [
xabcdefghijklmnopghy
    
```

absolutely perfectly to win.

Also - in these types of endgames - sometimes even the advantage of two Pawns is not enough to win. Therefore, Black should have held off on this particular capture ... and simply continued to try and slowly improve his position.)

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Now White moves in for the kill. (40.Be3+!, was a fairly significant improvement for White.)

39.Bd3+ Kh6 ; 40.h4!? g6 ; 41.Rh8+ Rh7 ; 42.Rg8 , (g6)
 Now 42...Nf8; is not plausible, as 43.Be3+ wins the house.

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[42.Kf3 , (DIH)]

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XABCDEFGHIY
8- + - + - + R + ( {
7p - p - + - + r '
6- p - v n + p k &
5+ P + - + - + p %
4- + - v - + - P $
3+ - + L + - P - #
2P + - + - + K + "
1+ - + - + - + - !
xabcdefghijklmnopghy
    
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.
 What this means is that now Kramnik's position is just lost, and not even his (normally) great defensive powers will be able to save him. (This is why all of the engines show an immediate downturn in their overall evaluations, following Black's faulty 38th move.)

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 Now Black must surrender the exchange its either that, get mated or give up a ruinous amount of material.

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The rest of the game does not really require a lot of commentary, a good club player could probably win with the advantage that White now finds himself left with

42...Rg7TM ; (Forced!)
43.Bxg7+ Kh7 ;
44.Re8 Nxg7 ; **45.Re3 Kh6** ;
46.a4 Kh7 ; **47.Kh3 Kh6** ;
48.Bc2 Kh7 ; **49.g4 hxg4+** ;
50.Kxg4 Kh6 ; **51.Re2 Bb4** ;
52.Re5 Nh5?! ; ('?')
[>/= 52...Bc5]

.
53.Re6+- , (&) Black Resigns.

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Kramnik has run out of ideas ...
and also decent moves here ...
so it was past time to quit.

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A great game by GM F. Caruana!

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