

THEORETICAL ALAPIN TRAPS!

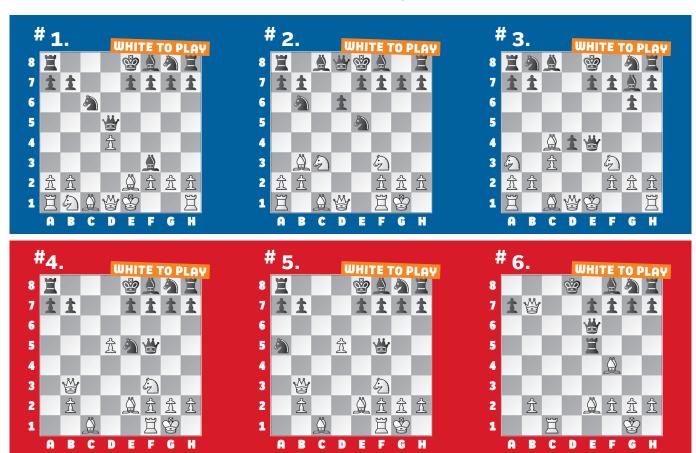
In the February issue of *Chess Life Kids*, we recommend the Alapin as an aggressive anti-Sicilian. We even endorse a rook sacrifice with **1. e4**

c5 2. c3 d5 3. exd5 Qxd5 4. d4 Nc6 5. Nf3 Bf5 6. Be2 cxd4 7. cxd4 Bxb1 8. Rxb1 Qxa2 9. 0-0 Qxb1? 10. Qb3! (see diagram) claiming White is better after d4-d5, as the knight has no moves (see puzzles 4 and 5).

One model game Ovod - Parol, Warsaw, 2021, continued with 10. ... 0-0-0 11. d5! Qg6 12. dxc6 Qxc6 13. Bf4! when Black is already lost: she is underdeveloped and her king is exposed. After 13. ... Rd5 14. Ne5 Qe6, White won with 15. Bg4 but

faster was **15. Rc1+ Kd8 16. Qxb7 Rxe5** and puzzle **6** picks up here.





SOLUTIONS

1) In 2. ... d5 lines with an early ... Nb8-c6, Black comes close to winning the d4-pawn if they play ... Bc8-g4-xf3, but here it loses the queen: 8. Bxf3 Qxd4?? While 8. ... Qc4 is far better, but now Black's play makes no sense. 9. Na3! Qb4+ 10. Bd2 Qxd4 11. Qb3! Qd7 12. 0-0-0 with initiative. 9. Bxc6+ bxc6 10. Qxd4 2) An important idea in several variations will be exposing Black's under-developed back rank,

specifically the fact that only the king currently defends the queen.

10. Nxe5! wins a piece, as 10. ... dxe5? 11. Bxf7+! Kxf7 12. Qxd8 wins the whole queen. 3) By far the best way to get out of this check is the shocking 8. Be3 when Black cannot play 8. ... dxe3?? Instead 8. ... Nh6! secures a playable game, but nothing special for Black. 9. Bxf7+ Kxf7 Or 9. ... Kf8 10. Qd8+ Kxf7 11. Ng5+ is the same. 10. Ng5+ The point! 10. ... Ke8 11. Nxe4 GG.

4) Black's king is drafty, especially after removing the knight before it can block on d7. 12. Nxe5 Qxe5 13. Qxb7 and there's no way to defend the rook and Be2-b5+. 5) The knight is no safer on the edge: 12. Qb5+Qd7 13. Qxa5 and the threat of Be2-b5 is still strong. 13. ... a6 14. Ne5 But the knight is powerful, too. Black is lost: 14. ... Qd6 15. Qa4+b5 16. Bxb5 Kd817. Nxf7+ cleans house. 6) Fastest is 17. Qb8+ Kd7 18. Qc8+ Kd6 19. Qc6 is quite a mate.

