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Foreword

The *Move by Move* format is designed to be interactive, and is based on questions asked by both teachers and students. It aims – as much as possible – to replicate chess lessons. All the way through, readers will be challenged to answer searching questions and to complete exercises, to test their skills in key aspects of the game. It's our firm belief that practising your skills like this is an excellent way to study chess.

Many thanks go to all those who have been kind enough to offer inspiration, advice and assistance in the creation of *Move by Move*. We're really excited by this series and hope that readers will share our enthusiasm.

John Emms
Everyman Chess

Introduction

“What others could not find in a month’s study, he saw at a glance.” – Reuben Fine.

It isn’t easy to write a book about one’s chess hero and remain an unbiased annotator. This is what I wrote about Capablanca in another book: “When it comes to all things Capa, I am one of those love-struck annotators who itches to give every move he played an exclamation mark.” And another: “As a faithful acolyte of Saint Capa, I hope you will forgive me for sneaking in yet another of the Blessed One’s games into the book.” So you see, it won’t be easy, but in this book I try and remain objective, revealing Capablanca’s warts as well as his double exclaims.

Capa’s opening play, especially in the earlier part of his career, was uninspiring at best, so we don’t spend much time there. Fischer theorized: “Some kid of 14 today, or even younger, could get an opening advantage against Capablanca...” On the other hand, Capa’s middlegame play, especially when it came to pawn structure and planning, was two or more generations ahead of his time. If you look at his handling of the King’s Indian against Menchik (Game 31), it looks as if a contemporary GM like Karpov or Kramnik plays the white pieces against a C-player who bought books on KID but didn’t bother to study them. Strategically, Capa had a deceptive, elegant way of threading through the maze, the only sighted person among the multitude of his day. He would somehow find a way of removing the complexity of any position, no matter how chaotic, and translate it into a plan which we can all understand. In the late middlegames and endings he has no rival and may well be the greatest player of all time. Only Bobby Fischer could make a case to be his equal in technical endings. Hopefully, after going over the games in this book, some of this will rub off on us!

A Look at Capa’s Career

The four-year-old Jose Raul Capablanca quietly watched his father and a fellow army officer play chess each night. One evening, tot-Capa corrected his father after an inaccurate move and suggested another. When Capa’s father checked the suggested move, it turned out to be an improvement! Don Jorge Capablanca then played his son a game – and lost! He ran out into the street and shouted “A miracle!” after his four-year-old son beat him in his very first chess game. Thus began the career of the most naturally gifted player of all time.

Shortly afterward, the four-year-old Capa attended the Steinitz-Chigorin world championship match in Havana in 1892. This match left a powerful imprint upon his mind. He also watched astounded as the American GM Harry Nelson Pillsbury performed a 16-board blindfold simultaneous display. "Pillsbury's displays ... electrified me." Capa's interests as a youth included such diverse fields as mathematics, history, philosophy, violin and baseball. His parents sent him to the U.S. to study chemical engineering at Columbia University on the strict promise that he avoided playing chess. Luckily for us, he disobeyed them. Legend has it that he breezed through and aced a horrifically complex three-hour engineering problem in just 40 minutes in his final exams.

He quickly earned a reputation in the United States as an unbeatable amateur and earned a match shot in his first real test in 1909 with then U.S. Champion Frank Marshall, a player in the Top 10 in the world, and an overwhelming favourite against the unknown but gifted Cuban amateur. Capa outplayed Marshall both strategically and tactically in two out of three phases of the game. The result was an embarrassingly lopsided +8-1=14 bloodbath in Capa's favour. Capablanca held his own in the opening ("His heart is not in it," said Znosko-Borovsky about Capa in the opening stages of the game), and dominated the American in the middlegame and ending, as his pieces glided along with the flow of a concert pianist's fingers along the keys. Next, Capa toured the U.S. on a simultaneous exhibition tour; the newspaper headlines read: "Beyond all Expectations!" and "Astonishing!" He managed to avoid losing a single game in his first ten simulms.

The crushing victory over Marshall earned Capa an invitation to the elite GM event, San Sebastian 1911, where he vaulted to world prominence with a stunning first place finish. Suddenly Capa usurped Rubinstein's spot as Lasker's natural challenger. Lasker dodged Capa for a full decade in a world title match. Meanwhile, during the years before and after World War I, Capa lapped up ten first place finishes, often with overwhelming scores, like a hungry cat with a bowl of cream. In short matches, he also beat the likes of Teichmann and Alekhine, among others. Finally in 1921, the pressure in the press grew unbearable for Lasker, who finally agreed to a championship match in Havana. Capablanca methodically broke Lasker down with a never-before-seen level of technical accuracy, defeating Lasker by +4, without a loss in the match.

So difficult was Capa to beat that he went ten years without losing a tournament game, from the St Petersburg tournament of 1914 to New York 1924, where he finally lost a game to Réti. (It was believed the only reason for that defeat was loss of composure when Capa's rumoured mistress walked into the tournament hall while Capa's wife – and the press! – also attended!) When he was world champion, his dominance was absolute and his first place finish – without a single loss – was almost a forgone conclusion. In the chess world, Capa was the beginning, the middle and the end, both God and devil – the way Fischer would have been had he continued playing after he won the World title from Spassky.

Capa continued to dominate until the unthinkable happened: He lost his world title to Alekhine. A grossly overconfident Capa entered the match unprepared psychologically for the new and improved Alekhine. In the end, Capa lost the match because he had never

previously been tested to the degree with which Alekhine pressed him. Capa was simply unprepared for this caprice of fate. The loss of his title had a contracting effect on Capa's style. Now terrified of defeat, he began to play super safely, a bit like a Petrosian prototype. Nevertheless, he continued to be placed at the very top of elite tournaments and even defeated world champion-to-be Max Euwe +2=8 in a short match as late as 1931.

Capa's Style

Capa was the consummate incrementalist/minimalist, who would win squeakers by a single tempo in positions everyone else drew. Znosko-Borovsky said that Capablanca was the first player to truly introduce the concept of piece harmony/activity over structure. His opponents rarely failed to look awkward and clunky. Playing over the games in this book, the difference is noticeable. It can be a jarring sight to see a ballerina waltzing with Frankenstein. His strength rocketed from the late middlegame into the ending. The fewer the pieces, the stronger he played. Don't believe for a second that Capablanca was a pure positional player. He was also probably the best tactician in the world between 1917 and 1927. Capa's games erupted with "little combinations", short-range but unexpected shots which he conjured at a glance. He was also capable of combinations and calculations on a grand scale, as in his game against Bernstein from St Petersburg 1914 (Game 8), but was generally too lazy or cautious to enter such positions on a regular basis.

In each chapter we encounter three Capablanucas:

1. The young, aggressive adventurer, 1901-1915.
2. The mid-years, where Capa ruled as uncontested king at the height of his powers, 1916-1927.
3. In his final period, from 1928 to his death in 1942, we see a very cautious, super-positional player, plagued by health issues like high blood pressure and chronic headaches during his games. Apparently time and poor health managed to kill Capas 1 and 2 by this point. Even in this period he produced many magnificent strategic gems and dazzling endings.

Viewing the ease with which he won, the reader may get the feeling that Capa played chess while his opponents played checkers, or some other game. If any of this rubs off, our own play will hopefully turn more subtle and harmonious.

Capa the Greatest?

Well, I'm sorry to disappoint, but in my opinion Capablanca was the *second* strongest player in the history of the game, behind Fischer but ahead of Morphy and Kasparov. Capa easily possessed the most natural talent but was also, unfortunately, the laziest world champion, who couldn't be bothered to log heavy study hours. Had he been ingrained with the fanatical zeal of an Alekhine or a Fischer, then Capa would most certainly have reached the number one spot. Of course, this is all total speculation and it's impossible to say who

was or wasn't the greatest. The only marker we go by is to gauge who dominated his peers most in his prime. No player ever logged an impossible, mythical performance like Fischer did immediately before his match with Spassky – not even Capablanca.

The Format of the Book

In the end, this book isn't so much about Capablanca as it is about us extracting lessons and learning from Capablanca. The *Move by Move* interactive, question and answer format is designed for the reader to put in a little sweat going through the games. The reader is challenged with exercises in planning, discovering combinations, calculation and critical decisions. Of course, you are not obligated to do the exercises, but if you do put in the work, there will be a payoff in the end.

The chapters are arranged by theme: Attack; Defence; Exploiting Imbalances; Accumulating Advantages; and Endgames. Since Capa's games were rarely one dimensional, several of the games fit into multiple chapters.

Behold, the Awesome Power of Capa!

I became an accidental beneficiary of a Capa-boost in rating. Normally my USCF rating hovers in the 2500-2550 range. As soon as I began work on this book (I looked at so many Capa games that sometimes the pieces began to merge in my blurred vision!) my rating unexpectedly began to climb... and climb... until it reached 2588, only ten points away from my peak rating from 1998. Such a thing is unheard of for a 51-year-old geezer like me. (You know you are old when you have so many candles on your birthday cake that there is no hope of blowing them out.) Was this the result of a placebo effect or perhaps rating inflation? I'm not sure. A sample of one isn't exactly scientific proof, but I stubbornly maintain that my rating shot up as a result of Capa's disembodied, ectoplasmic spirit rubbing off. So he gets full posthumous credit for my unexpected rating hike.

The revelation of a long dead genius still remains available to us today. After examining Capa's games in detail you begin to ask yourself the question in each position: Where is the essential core?

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to editor, Grandmaster John Emms, for offering the opportunity to write a book about my hero. Thanks to Jonathan Tait for the final edit. Thanks also to the Capaphiles, David Hart, Peter Graves and Tom Nelson, for their insightful discussions on all things Capa; and finally, thanks to the pit crew, Nancy, Regional Vice President of Commas, and computer handyman Tim.

I hope you enjoy reading the book as much as I enjoyed writing it. May your play always achieve Capa-like accuracy and harmony.

Cyrus Lakdawala,
San Diego, June 2012

Chapter One

Capa on the Attack

The words “Capablanca” and “attack” are not normally associated with one another. As a kid who studied Capa, I remember mostly going over endings and positional games. His attacking games never really stuck out. Researching this book, I was shocked at just how many amazing king hunts Capablanca produced. In fact, at one point I had over 100 candidate games for this chapter! Attacks were mainly the product of the younger, more impetuous Capa, but even then, only once in a while, like an overweight person indulging in a dessert on occasion. After Capablanca became world champion in 1921, his play grew more cautious and the number of his attacking games sharply receded. I suppose he had his reputation to defend, and avoiding loss became the prime directive over winning brilliantly. Even late in his career, Capa was still capable of the occasional sparkler, like his game against Levenfish, the final game of the chapter.

Capablanca certainly had all the necessary requirements of a great attacker: Intuition, positional build-up skills two generations ahead of his rivals, a perfect sense of timing, and unrivalled combinational skills, especially in short range calculation. If his temperament were different and he didn’t fear a loss to such a great degree, Capa could have been another Morphy, Tal or Alekhine. But he chose not to. He wanted to be Capa instead. Emanuel Lasker once observed with shock, that Capablanca didn’t get the normal artistic exaltation which arises from combinations or a beautifully produced attack in his own games. Capa’s two bottom lines were: Victory and, barring that, avoiding loss. Even with this business-like temperament, Capa managed to pull off many beautiful attacking games when he decided to let go and be someone else. Before entering this chapter I quote myself from another book: “And you thought Saint Capa was just an endgame player!”

Game 1

J. Corzo y Prinzipe-J.R. Capablanca

8th matchgame, Havana 1901

King's Gambit (by transposition)

Corzo, our hero's early rival, later went on to become one of Capablanca's biggest fans, even writing a regular column in – what else? – *Capablanca Magazine*.

1 e4 e5 2 ♖c3 ♘c6

Today, the Vienna Game is more commonly met by 2...♗f6 3 f4 d5.

3 f4 exf4 4 ♗f3 g5

Question: Still a Vienna?

Answer: The game transposed to a line of the King's Gambit. We choose our openings as a way of reflecting our natures. The King's Gambit and Colle player are two very different people.

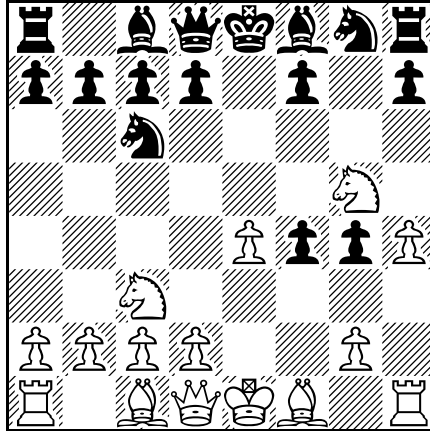
5 h4 g4

What 12-year-old isn't delighted to enter the violent Hamppe-Allgaier Gambit on either side?

Question: Isn't it an unsound gambit?

Answer: Relax and allow Corzo his fun. I believe it was H.L. Mencken who defined puritanism as a fear that someone, somewhere, was having a good time! A century ago, the line was exceedingly dangerous to Black. Today, the computers have proven you correct and ruined White's fun with powerful defensive schemes favouring Black. Just as people are born, live their lives, and pass away, the same holds true for some chess openings. GM Nigel Short has an amusing theory about the King's Gambit in general: "The only reason the King's Gambit is playable is because Black has about ten good lines, but he can only play one at a time. That's actually why it's okay."

6 ♗g5



We are reminded of the Men at Work song: “Who can it be knocking at my door? Go away! Don’t come round here no more!”

Question: A blunder? White’s knight is trapped.

Answer: The knight is on a suicide mission, a deliberate piece sac for initiative and attack.
6...h6

Question: Why not 6...f6?

Answer: White gets reasonable compensation for the piece after 7 ♖xg4 h5 8 ♗f5 ♘ce7 9 ♗xf4, J.Goetze-D.Rupel, Seattle 1984.

7 ♘xf7 ♖xf7 8 d4

Others:

a) 8 ♗c4+ d5! (a quick ...d7-d5, even at the cost of a pawn, is standard operating procedure in Black’s simple goal of survival) 9 ♗xd5+ ♖g7 10 d4 ♗d6 (goads White forward) 11 ♗xc6 (11 e5 ♗b4 comes to the same thing) 11...bxc6 12 e5 ♗b4 13 ♗xf4 ♗e6 14 ♗d3 ♘e7, when Black achieved a light-square blockade and stood clearly better, G.Welling-V.Mikhalevski, Gibraltar 2008.

b) 8 ♖xg4 ♘f6 9 ♗xf4 ♗d6! looked like shaky compensation for the invested piece, T.Kalisch-L.Hazai, Gold Coast 1999.

8...d5

A pawn is a tiny investment if he gets rapid development in exchange.

9 exd5

9 ♗xf4 looks better than Corzo’s choice, but even here White is hard pressed to prove he gets full compensation for the piece.

9...♗e7+ 10 ♖f2

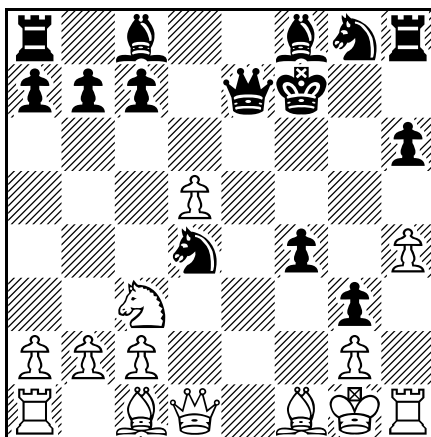
Capablanca: Move by Move

Corzo's attempted improvement over his unsound 10 ♕e2? f3 11 gxf3 gxf3 12 O-O ♖xh4, which gave Capa a winning position in the sixth game, although he botched it and only drew. Capablanca writes: "Corzo analyzed the position and told someone that he should have played K-B2 (10 ♖f2). When I heard this I analyzed the situation myself and decided to play it again, as I thought that Black should win with the continuation that I put in practice in this game." Very sneaky! So the prodigy went home and began studying the position and came up with a fantastic idea in his home prep.

10...g3+! 11 ♔g1

Now the h1-rook remains unused for the remainder of the game.

11...♗xd4!!



This brilliant return sac takes firm control over the initiative.

12 ♖xd4

Question: What compels White to accept? He can just pick off f4 instead.

Answer: Let's take a look at your line: 12 ♕xf4 ♖f5 (threatening a nasty queen check on c5) 13 ♖h5+ ♔g7 14 ♖g4+ ♔h7 15 ♖h3 (to make air for the king) 15...♗f6 16 ♖f3 ♖g8 17 ♕d3 ♔h8 and White's initiative comes to an end.

12...♖c5 13 ♗e2 ♖b6!

The point. Black threatens the devastating ...♕c5.

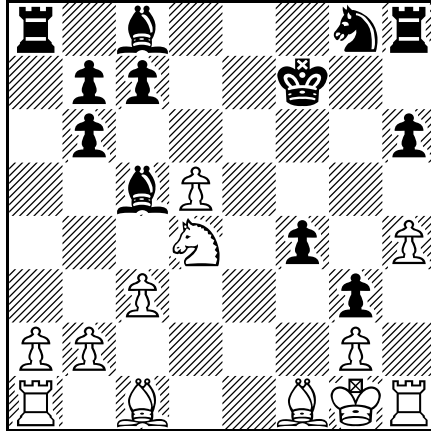
14 ♖xb6

Black's initiative also rages on after 14 b4 ♕xb4 15 ♕e3! (the only move) 15...fxe3 16 ♖xh8 ♕f8! 17 ♖e5 ♕d6.

14...axb6 15 ♗d4

After the queen exits, the knight proves to be an unreliable understudy.

15...♕c5 16 c3



Exercise (planning): The fight for d4 is the centre of gravity in the universe. It looks like White has everything under control. He doesn't. There is an odd but strong way for Black to increase the pressure on d4. How?

Answer: 16...♖a4!

Threat: ...♖xd4!

17 ♙e2

His king needs air. The tricky 17 b4 is met by the counter-tricky 17...♖xb4!

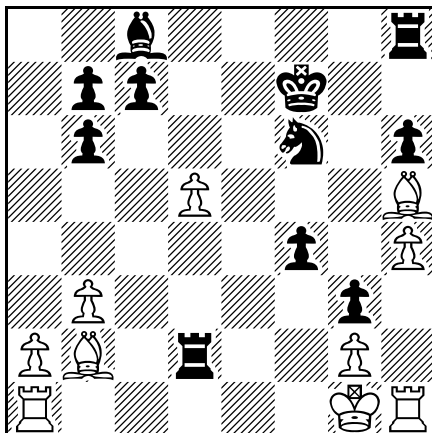
17...♙xd4+ 18 cxd4 ♖xd4

How annoying for White: f4 remains defended. Even from an early age, Capa's pieces magically coordinate despite raging complications.

19 b3

Threatening to poke both black rooks along the a1-h8 diagonal.

19...♞f6 20 ♙b2 ♖d2 21 ♙h5+

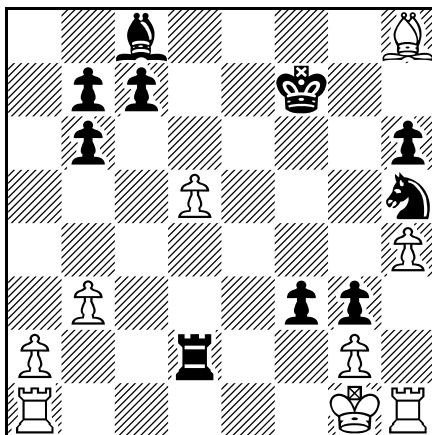


White fires a bullet into the wall to test the forensics of the position. The move is also a diversionary tactic designed to try and throw the young Capa off.

Exercise (critical decision): It looks like White managed to develop and now hopes to grab some initiative. What should Black do about it?

Answer: The exchange sac gives Black a crushing attack.

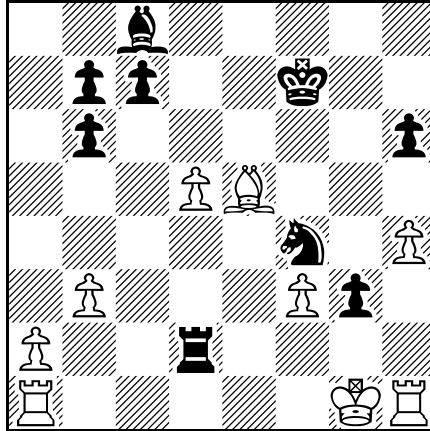
21...♖xh5! 22 ♗xh8 f3!



Clearance. A powerful early display of Capa's nimble feel for where his pieces should go: f4 is ripe for occupancy.

23 gxf3 ♗f4 24 ♗e5

24 ♖c1 ♖f2! 25 ♖xc7+ ♗d7! and White is curiously helpless against the inevitable ...♗e2 mating pattern.



Exercise: White's defences – layers on an old wedding cake – crumble. Black can force resignation in a few moves. How would you play here?

Answer: The white king's fevered dreams conjure very real phantoms, as he tosses in his sweat-soaked bed.

24... ♖g2+! 25 ♔f1 ♜f2+ 26 ♔e1

26 ♔g1 ♞e2 mate!

26... ♞d3+ 0-1

27 ♔d1 g2! 28 ♜g1 ♞xe5 leaves White completely helpless.

Are you ready for a mindblower fact? Hooper and Brandreth claim in *The Unknown Capablanca*, that the prodigy consumed just five minutes on his clock for the entire game.

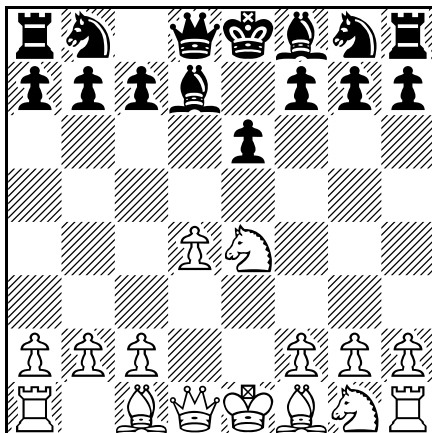
Game 2

J. Corzo y Prinzipe - J.R. Capablanca

Casual game, Havana 1902

French Defence

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 ♘c3 dxe4 4 ♘xe4 ♙d7



Question: What is the idea behind Black's strange last move?

Answer: This is the first recorded game with the Fort Knox variation of the French Defence. The idea is to develop the bishop via c6 and chop a white knight, either on e4 or f3. Then Black plays ...c7-c6 and we get a Caro-Kann-like formation where Black eliminates his potentially bad bishop and then switches the pawn structure to the opposite colour of his remaining bishop.

5 Nf3 Bc6 6 Bd3 Nd7 7 0-0 Ngf6 8 Bg5

Illogical. This is the kind of move club players tend to bang out without thought.

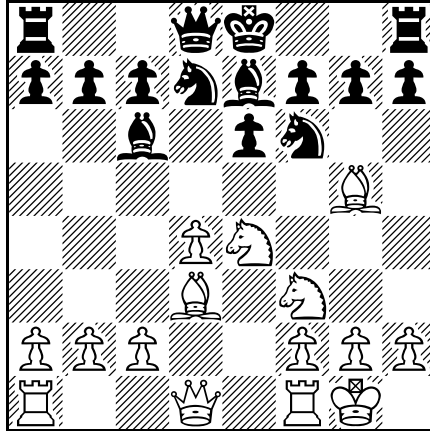
Question: How can a move which simultaneously develops and pins be wrong?

Answer: White's last move increases the likelihood of trades.

Question: How would this factor help Black?

Answer: Although Black's position stands solid, his only worry is that he remains cramped. If this is the case, swaps are in his favour. 8 Ng3 and 8 Ned2 to keep pieces on the board is the modern way to play as White.

8...Be7



9 ♖xf6+

Others:

a) 9 ♖xf6 ♜xf6 10 ♔e2 0-0 11 c4 ♕xe4 12 ♕xe4 c6 13 ♖ad1 ♜xe4 14 ♔xe4 ♔c7 15 ♖d3 ♕f6 16 b3 ♖ad8, when White should theoretically stand a tad better but my experience in the line argues otherwise. White's extra space is counter-balanced by Black's target on d4, S.Belkhodja-A.Berelowitsch, German League 2002.

b) 9 ♜ed2 is probably the best move for White, who avoids mass exchanges: 9...h6 10 ♕h4 0-0 11 ♖e1 b5!? and Black's control of the central light squares gives him a reasonable position, N.Vink-T.Bottema, Wijk aan Zee 1998.

9...♕xf6

Remember, every swap helps Black. After 9...♜xf6 10 ♜e5!? ♔xd4 11 ♜xc6 bxc6 12 c3 White's bishop pair and superior pawn structure give him a good return for the invested pawn.

10 ♕e3

Corzo belatedly realizes that he should keep pieces on the board; however, now his eighth move proves a clear waste of a tempo.

10...0-0 11 c3 b6

Intending to chip away at White's centre with ...♕b7 and ...c7-c5. The alternative is to go super solid with 11...♕xf3 12 ♔xf3 c6. I play this line as Black once in a while, and also reach such positions from the Caro-Kann, and even from the Slav, with White's pawn on c4 rather than c3. White's bishop pair is an advantage only on paper, just as long as Black doesn't allow the position to open prematurely.

12 ♔c2?! ♕h8

Question: Shouldn't Black damage White's pawn structure by chopping the knight on f3?

Answer: Correct. I'm not certain why Capablanca shouldn't, wouldn't or couldn't take on f3. In this case the young Capa gets too cute. Better to bite with 12...♙xf3! 13 gxf3 (h7 is taboo: 13 ♙xh7+?? ♖h8 14 gxf3 g6 15 ♙xg6 ♜g8) 13...g6 and the damage to White's structure is more meaningful than his bishop pair and light-square control.

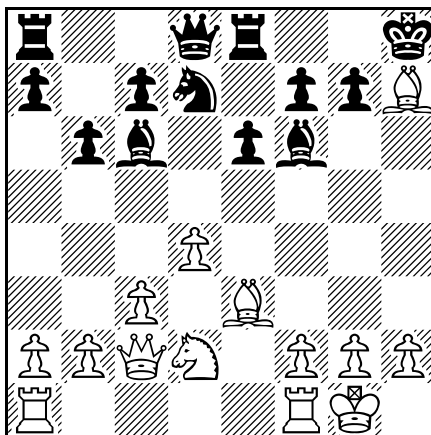
13 ♘d2

13 ♙xh7?? ♙xf3 14 gxf3 g6 15 ♙xg6 ♜g8 wins a piece for no compensation.

13...♞e8

Eventually, Black seeks the freeing break ...e6-e5.

14 ♙xh7?



Poor judgment. White's dream of attack fails to correspond with reality. It was P.T.Barnum who said: "There is a sucker born every minute!" Black's king is perfectly safe and three pawns aren't enough.

14...g6 15 ♙xg6 fxg6 16 ♖xg6

Question: I disagree with your assessment of the sac. White extracted three healthy pawns for the piece, exposed Black's king and now enjoys an attack. Shouldn't the assessment be: Advantage White?

Answer: In the end what we want doesn't count for much. It's what we get that matters. Black stands clearly better for the following reasons:

1. White failed to assemble sufficient reinforcements to commit to such a radical course of action and there simply is no attack.
2. White kindly opened the g-file for Black's rook and his future attack down that file, taking aim at g2.
3. Black has a grip on the light squares.
4. White passers can't be pushed until a considerable amount of material comes off the board.

16...♔e7?!

Yielding to instinct. Black shouldn't be in a rush to swap queens. White's attack simply doesn't exist. 16...♔e7!, retaining queens, is much stronger.

17 f4?!

Now light-squared punctures dot White's position, as on a pox-scarred face.

Question: Once again I disagree with your assessment of White's last move. I like it. He clamps down on e5, preventing Black's freeing break, creates a target on e6, and prepares ♖f3 and ♘e5.

Answer: White's last move was a strategic error, typical for the time, where White in his delusion of an attack weakens his light squares further, especially g2. He also destroys the potency of his remaining bishop whose menial job on e3 is quite at odds with his previous station in life and self-esteem. With 17 f3 ♔g8 18 ♖h6+ ♗h7 19 ♖xh7+ ♘xh7 20 ♘e4 White keeps his disadvantage to a minimum.

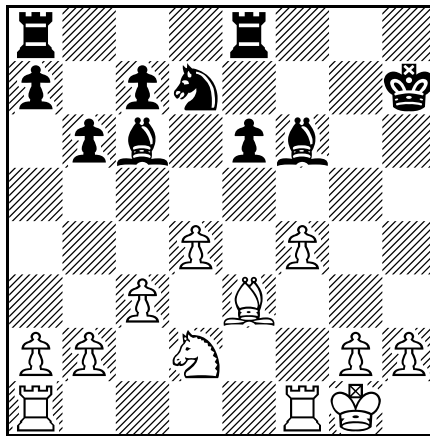
17...♖h7

Even as a child, Capa's instinct was to swap down to an ending, a realm he ruled with an iron fist.

18 ♖xh7+

Otherwise Black begins to attack with ...♔g8.

18...♘h7



Black stands better because White's kingside pawns have little chance of advancing due to the danger to his king. Black's light-squared bishop rules the long diagonal and worries White about potential attacks on g2.

19 ♘f3 ♔g8

Target: g2.

20 ♔ae1 ♔g6 21 ♘d2

Capablanca: Move by Move

The ugly bishop walks a few paces behind his more powerful brothers on Black's side. I would play 21 ♖g5+ to try and seal the g-file. Black can eventually break the blockade or induce White into weakening further with h4.

21...♗d5 22 b3 ♖f8

22...b5 isn't necessary yet.

23 ♖h1

Naturally not 23 c4?? ♗xf3 24 ♖xf3 ♗xd4+.

23...c5

Principle: Open the game when you have the bishop pair.

24 dxc5

Question: Doesn't this help Black?

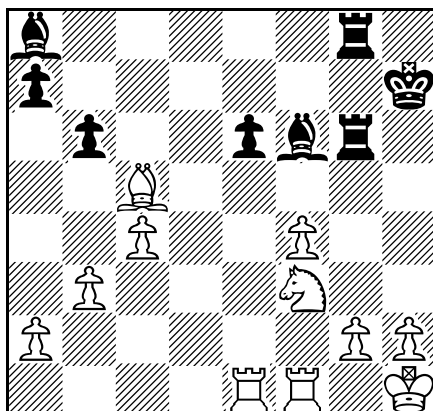
Answer: It does. But 24 ♗e3 isn't much better. Frisco Del Rosario writes: "...but White is spellbound into keeping the line open to the e6-pawn." And 24 ♖g5+ fails to help White anymore: 24...♖h8 25 c4 ♗b7 26 dxc5 ♖xc5, when Black's pieces become more and more active.

24...♖xc5 25 c4 ♗a8

Question: What is the point of Black's last move?

Answer: Just a precaution. Capa avoids future tricks on his bishop if White ever seizes the seventh rank.

26 ♗b4 ♖fg8 27 ♗xc5



Exercise (critical decision): We can recapture the bishop. But we can also sac the piece back and play 27...♖xg2. Judge the ramifications. Is it worth it?

Answer: It sure is: g2, like gravity, quickly brings White down, as the contagion on the light squares continues to spread. White's position, for so long a three-legged stool, finally collapses as Black's light-squared bishop gathers demonic power down the h1-a8 diagonal.

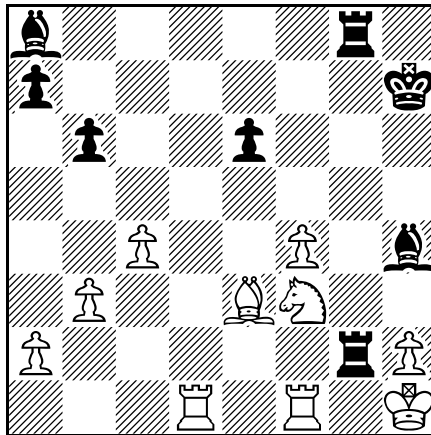
27...♖xg2! 28 ♜e3!

The only move. Corzo walks into mate in each of the following lines:

- a) 28 ♜g1?? ♖xg1+!
- b) 28 ♖xe6?? bxc5 29 ♖xf6 ♜xf3.
- c) 28 ♜d6?? ♖g1+! 29 ♖xg1 ♜xf3+.

28...♜h4! 29 ♖d1

White can safely rule out 29 ♜xh4?? ♖g1 mate (twice)!



Exercise (combination alert): Black has a shot which short-circuits the defence. Let's see if you can find it.

Answer: The bishop's hypnotic oscillations continue with a beautiful interference. Get used to this kind of thing in the book. The math always seems to work for Capa's side alone.

29...♜f2!!

Keep in mind that Black was a 13-year-old kid and White the IM/GM strength Cuban champion.

30 ♖d7+

White's forces are sent scattering like a nest of eels startled by the approaching shark.

30 ♖xf2 ♖xf2 31 ♖d7+ ♜h6 32 f5+ ♜h5 33 ♖h7+ ♜g4 34 ♜xf2 ♜xf3! (all alone and all powerful: for Black's king, loneliness is the price of his absolute power) 35 ♜g3 ♖d8! mates in five moves.

30...♜h6 31 ♖d5

A move like this is a synonym for resigning. The rest is easy since 31 ♖xf2?? ♖g1 mate

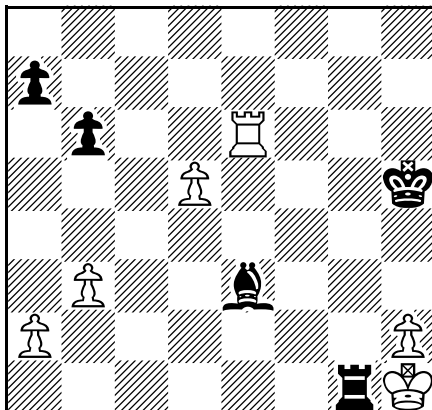
Capablanca: Move by Move

and 31 h4?? ♙xf3 fail miserably.

31...♙xe3 32 ♖g5 ♜2xg5

Not the best move but the simplest – the Capa trademark.

33 fxg5+ ♜xg5 34 ♜f6+ ♚h5 35 ♜xe6 ♙xd5+ 36 cxd5 ♜g1 mate!



Game 3 J.R.Capablanca-O.Bernstein San Sebastian 1911 Ruy Lopez

Which narcotic is as deliciously addictive or intoxicating as revenge over an oppressor? San Sebastian 1911 was one of the strongest tournaments ever held. Only established giants of the game were invited, with the exception of the young Capablanca who squeaked in on the merit of his crushing +8 -1 =14 match victory over Frank Marshall – a player who may have been deserving of an invitation to San Sebastian himself. As expected, a few of the more prickly participants protested the entry, the loudest of which was Bernstein, Capa's first round opponent. Can anyone guess what happened next? The universe has a sense of humour and must have planned the whole thing. The story ended happily for all but Bernstein, who duly got clubbed like a baby seal while Capa walked away with the tournament brilliancy prize for this game.

1 e4 e5 2 ♖f3 ♘c6 3 ♙b5 ♗f6

How very fashionable, the Berlin Defence to the Ruy Lopez.

4 0-0

4 ♘c3 transposes to Spanish Four Knights.

4...♙e7

Question: This move isn't normal, is it?