

## 20 Monsters

By Harrie Grondijs

*[I created a Monster' says Dr. Frankenstein after a bolt of lightning sets life to his creation (a bolt of lightning that serves as a cosmic metaphor for the spark of inspiration that puts a monster study into motion). Many of us blame the Monster's appearances for the terror it causes. What matters truly, in the book as in the film as in the endgame study is the 'impression' the crooked growth will make on humanoids. The selection of Monsters in this article is not a representative one, for that one would have to first collect and study them all. It is only fitting to treat Monsters in a monster article: this is the first part of three ...]*

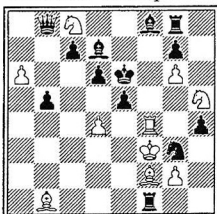
### Introduction

A Monster is a study with 16 or more pieces in the diagram position. What can be the special value of such a study? What can it 'say' that a miniature wouldn't say and wouldn't say better? Because of the space limitations the classical examples (including ones from Stamma, the Petrov's famous Napoleon Crossing The Berezina and so on) have been left out. Certain composers have shown a certain predilection for Monster composition, other have shunned away from them as much as possible. A quick investigation yields following results:

Name composer	Total considered	Monsters	%
Kasparyan	474	9	2
Duras	34	4	12
Melnichenko	84	26	30
Neistadt	34	8	24
Bondarenko	218	41	20

### MONSTER THE FIRST

An early 'modern' example:

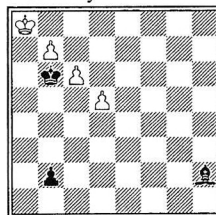


O. Duras, 1901

1.Rf6† gxf6 2.Sg7† R(B)xc7 3.d5† Kxd5  
4.Ba2† Kc6 5.Sa7† Qxa7 6.Bd5† Kxd5  
stalemate.

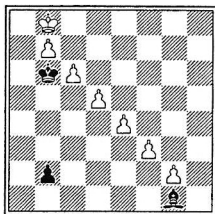
White would love to see the black king come out to d5, where it can be mated after Ba2† followed by d5 #. In the solution the moves order must be turned around and White settles for stalemate.

A *monstrosity*, that often comes in the shape of a Monster, is a study (or part of a study) with not just many, but rather *too* many pieces. It arises when a certain manoeuvre is repeated just because it *can* be repeated, or when pieces are added to hide the stalemate from view (as in the Duras study the rook on f4 and the knight on h5!). An example of how a monstrosity is born:



H. Rübeseamen, 1913

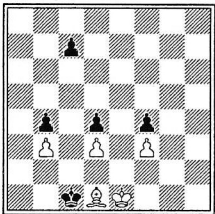
1.d6 Bxd6 2.b8Q† Bxb8 3.c7 K(B)xc7 stalemate.



A. Krämer & W. von Holzhausen, 1930

1.Ka8 (not 1.c7? Bh2) 2.g3 etc. Dr. Krämer and von Holzhausen, both brilliant composers of problems and of endgame studies, added to the Rübessamen one useful extra move and three too many pawns.

Another example:



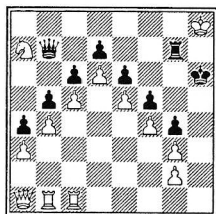
K. Fabel, 1949, 3rd HM

1.Ke2 Kb2 2.Kd2 Kb1 3.Bc2† Kb2 4.Kd1 Ka1 5.Kc1 Ka2 6.Bd1 Ka1 7.Kc2 8.Be2 9.Bf1 10.Bg2/h3 11.Bh3/g2 12.Bf1 13.Be2 14.Bd1 Ka1 15.Kc1 Ka2 16.Bc2 c6 etc. +- .

'Adding further black pawns eg on b7, d7 and f7 he might have enlarged the number of moves quite considerably (comment Dr. Speckmann).'

So 'too many pieces' in the definition of a monstrosity means 'uneconomical' in the wide sense of adding redundant repetition into the composition. According to me this must be avoided as much as possible. This is an *esthetical* imperative (and therefore remains quite apart from the issue of correctness).

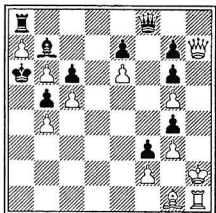
### MONSTER THE SECOND



E. Melnichenko, 1991

1.Rh1† Kg6 2.Rh6† Kxb6 3.Rh1† Kg6 4.Rh6† Kxb6 5.Qh1† Kg6 6.Qh5† Kxb6 7.Kxg7 Qa8 8.Sc8 Qxc8 9.Kh7 Qe8 10.Kg7 Qg6† 11.Kh8 Qh6† 12.Kg8 etc. = .

### AND MONSTER THE THIRD



E. Melnichenko, 1982

1.Qg8 (1.Qxg7? Qh8† +- ) Qe8 (1... Rxa7 2.Qxf8; 1... Rb8 2.axb8S†; 1... Qf5 2.Qb8; 1... Rd8 2.a8Q† Rxa8 3.Qxf8) 2.Qf8 Qd8 3.Qe8 Qc8 4.Qd8 Qxe6 5.Qb8 Qg8 6.Qxb7 Kxb7 stalemate.

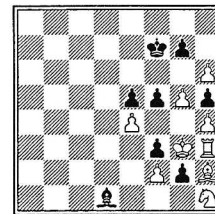
The first study by Melnichenko shows a sacrifice of the heavyweight pieces that we know since Damiano, which sacrifices bear no relation to the ensuing positional draw: a monstrous aspect of a Monster.

In the second one the queen's marching down the eight rank is a logical extension of an idea of Korolkov: like pieces of opposite sides walk down a line or rank toward the border of the board: a first-class Monster.

### In defiance of Monsters

In problems 'heavy settings' are widely accepted, as long as they serve to express the theme in a reasonably effective way. For studies this is different. Generally heavy settings are a minus, and regarded as 'ugly' no matter what their content is. The Post Great War (Paradoxical-)Romantic generation tried to overthrow such inhibitions: everything was allowed to demonstrate original ideas.

### AND MONSTER THE FIFTH



V. Korolkov, 1928

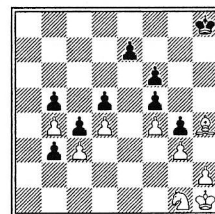
1.Bg1 gxf1Q 2.Rxh1, f4† 3.Kh3, Bb3 4.h7, Be6† 5.Kh2, Kg6 6.h8R +- . Gurwich puts it rather sarcastically:

'In this study the white pieces are 'stalemate', 'incarcerated', 'blocked'. A violent jostling, the heat is unbearable. As befits studies of this style Black threatens to mate immediately. And that is when the white pieces, crammed in the corner, start to scramble about, to exchange one uncomfortable position for another. All this theater in the end is 'justified' by the underpromotion to rook, to evade positional draw or stalemate.'

Gurwich gives no credit to the intended thematic aim of positional draw through caging. The auto-incarceration of the bishop and rook, is not economical as a means of implementing incarceration, but it is 'pure' as the 'paradoxical' ornament it wants to be, its Romantic 'Umwertung aller Werte'. White incarcerates two of his own side, normally only used to achieve stalemate, and still goes on to win.

I do not exclude the possibility that Gurwich introduction to *Sovietsky Shahkmatny Etyud* of 1955, entitled the Poetry of Chess has held back the further growth and development of the family of Monsters. In a later article we might well investigate more deeply the statistical growth curve of Monsters in relation to the overall quantitative development of the Endgame Study.

### MONSTER THE FOURTH



F.M. Simkhovich, 1923, HM

1.Bxf6† exf6 2.h4 b2 3.Kg2 b1Q 4.Kf2 Qb2† 5.Se2 Qa1(6.Ke3 Qe1 7.h5 = .

Gurwich writes:

'From the start all pieces are in circumstances which emphasize that between them something similar to chess-like play is out of the question... What then can the new idea be that justifies these costs? Obviously the demonstration of a fortress position, a concept that happened to be more than a century old at the time of publication.'

The theme of this study is indeed the fortress, but what Mendheim had shown 100 years earlier was isolation of an enemy queen, (which isn't quite the same), he completely missed the real point that Simkhovich wanted to drive home: en-passant capture must take place directly, there is no time left for an intermediate move. If h4 is postponed until the end the en-passant capture will win.

### Monsters versus Monstrosities

Generally we can distinguish between two kinds of Monster Studies:

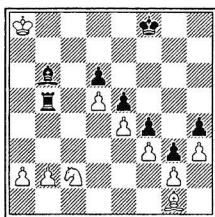
. ones that represent 'normal' ideas or problem themes that happen to require heavy settings

. ones that represent *ideas* that are monster-specific: evocation of a story (scacchographics), maximummers, and onion monsters.

Being a monstrosity is a possible negative aspect of a Monster. A Monster is *not* a monstrosity when:

*The idea it expresses has not been shown with other lighter settings:*

#### MONSTER THE SIXTH

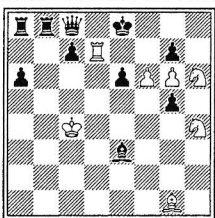


E. Vlasek, 1983, 4th HM

1.b4 Bxg1 2.a4 Rb6 3.b5 Bc5 4.Sa3 Bxa3 5.Ka7 Bc5 6.a5 Rxb5† 7.Ka6 =.

Maybe one day the same idea will be realized in a much lighter setting. When this happens the Monster will become a Monstrosity or branded a sketch.

#### MONSTER THE SEVENTH



D. Gurgenzidze, 1993

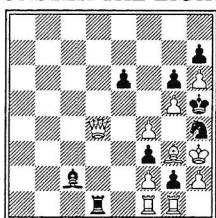
1.Re7† Kf8 2.Rf7† Ke8 3.fxg7 Rb4† 4.Kc3 Rb3† 5.Kc2 Rb2† 6.Kxb2 Qxb7† 7.Ka1 Bd4† 8.Bxd4 Qh1† 9.Bg1 Qxg1† 10.Ka2 Qh2† 11.Sg2 Qxg2† 12.Ka3 Qg3† 13.Ka4 Qh4† 14.Sg4 Qxg4† 15.Ka5 Qf5† 16.Rxf5 Ke7† 17.Rf7† Kd6 18.Rf8 +-.

The movement of the queen can be thought to be the compound of that of the bishop and the rook. The idea of the present study is to demonstrate how to neutralize the 'bishop in the queen' forcing it to use its rook power instead. The implementation uses the possibility for the king to zigzag from a white to a black square at will as it moves up the board. At the same time the black queen is forced to follow a pathway that brings it on the wrong colour of square for the saving diagonal check each time.

Note how nice it would be if the rook would be on f7, and 1.Re7† and 2.Rf7† would be played only to remove Black's right to castling!

The idea demands a complex manoeuvre that requires a heavy setting:

#### MONSTER THE EIGHTH

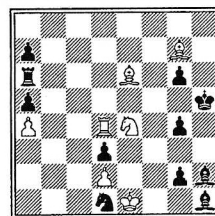


V. Korolkov, 1936

1.Qc5 Bf5† 2.Qxf5 exf5 3.Re1 Rc1 4.Rd1 Rb1 5.Rc1 (5.Rge1? g1S† 6.Rxg1 Sg2) Ra1 6.Rb1 Rxb1 7.Rxb1 g1Q 8.Rxg1 Sg2 9.Rxg2 fxg2 10.Kxg2 +-.

*It combines several ideas in a single setting:*

#### MONSTER THE NINTH



V. Neistadt, 1985 1st Prize

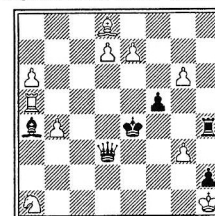
1.Rd5† Be5 2.Rxe5† Kh4 3.Bf6† Kh3 4.Rh5† gxh5 5.Sg5† Kh2 6.Be5†Kg1 7.Bxg4 hxg4 8.Sh3†gxh3 9.Bd4†Sf2 10.Bb6 Kh2 11.Bc7†Kg1 12.Bb6 =.

Pins, annihilation, blockades and stalemate. You name it, Neistadt delivers...

*It maximizes the parallel or serial implementation of certain chess devices like pinning, checks, or underpromotions.*

Using either: *serial linking* ...

#### MONSTER THE TENTH



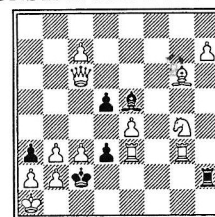
V. Chekhover, 1961

1.e8Q† Kf3 2.Rxf5† Qxf5 3.Qf7 Qxf7 4.gxf7 Kg4 5.Bxh4 Kh3 6.d8S Bb5 7.a7 Be2 8.f8R Bd3 9.a8B +-.

Chekhover succeeds in realizing all four different promotions in a single line.

Or *parallel linking*...

#### MONSTER THE ELEVENTH



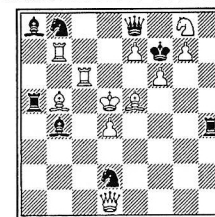
V. Neistadt, 1989, Special Prize

1.Re2† Rxe2 2.Se3† Rxe3 3.Rg2† Re2 4.Rxe2† dxe2 5.exd5† Kc1 6.bxa3 and now a) 6... e1Q 7.c8R Qd2 8.Bc2 Qxc2 9.Qh6† +- , or b) 6... e1S 7.h8B Bxh8 8.Qf6 Bxf6 9.e8R +-.

*'Wh and Bl get together to give birth to all possible pieces (judge An. Kuznetsov).'* This monster features a Black Hole on e2.

Or *concurrent linking*...

#### MONSTER THE TWELFTH

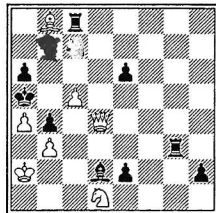


A.P. Grin, 1988, Special Prize

1.Sh6† Rxh6 2.g8Q† Qxg8 3.Qh5† Rxh5 4.e8Q† Kxe8 5.f7† Qxf7† 6.Rxe6† K any stalemate. 4 white men are pinned in the final position: *concurrent linking*.

*The monster realizes pattern based problem themes:*

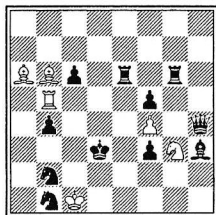
### MONSTER THE THIRTEENTH



H. Grondijs, 1992

1.Sb2 Rc3 (1... Rxc5 2.Qxc5 Sxc5 3.Sc4;  
1... Rxb3 2.Sc4† Kxa4 3.Qd7†) 2.Qe5 Bf4  
(2... R3(8)xc5? is Nietvelt) 3.Qxc3 bxc3  
4.Ka3 Rxc5 5.Ba7 Rb5 6.Sc4 #.

### MONSTER THE FOURTEENTH



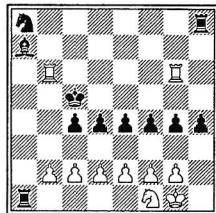
A. Hait, 1972

1.Rc5† Sc4 2.Bxc4† Kc3 3.Bxe6† Kd3 4.  
Bc4† Kc3 5.Ba2† Kd3 6.Bxb1† Kd4 7.  
Rc2† c5 8.Bxc5† Kd3 9.Kd1 (Zugzwang)  
10.Rc1 #.  
Mirror mate, prepared by a curtain fire  
of rook/bishop batteries.

*When the study evokes a certain  
graphic pattern*

Here is a novelty by Korolkov that is on  
the border of monstrosity: the chess idea  
becomes visible at the end. Korolkov has  
not been able to resist the temptation of  
multiplying the manoeuvre as many  
times as he possibly could, because it  
forms such a funny pattern.

### MONSTER THE FIFTEENTH



V. Korolkov, 1940,  
Commended

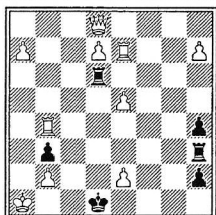
1.b4† cxb3 2.Rgc6† Kd5 3.e4† dxc3 4.  
Rd6† Ke5 5.d4† exd3 6.Re6† Kf5 7.e4†  
fxe3† 8.Rf6† Kg5 9.f4† gxf3 10.Rg6†  
Kh5 11.g4† hxg3 12.Rg5† Kxg5 13.Rg6†  
Kf5 14.Rf6† Ke5 15.Re6† Kd5 16. Rd6†  
Kc4 17.Rc6† Bc5 18.Rxc5† Kb4 19.  
Rb5† Ka3 20.Rxb5† +-.

*'This is the circus arena on the chessboard  
- the en passant sabre dance (Judge  
Kuznetsov in the jury report, that was  
published more than 45 years later).'*

#### The Monster today

It is my feeling that monsters are becom-  
ing more fashionable in these post-mo-  
dern days, when 'anything goes' as long  
as it is 'good'.

### MONSTER THE SIXTEENTH



N. Grechishnikov, 1988,  
3/6th HM

1.a8Q Ra6† 2.Kb1 h1Q 3.Qxh1† Rxh1  
4.Rxh4 Re1 5.Rh1 Rxh1 6.h8R Re1  
7.Rh1 Rxh1 8.Rh7 Re1 9.Rh1 Rxh1  
10.Qh4 Rxh4 11.d8Q† +-.

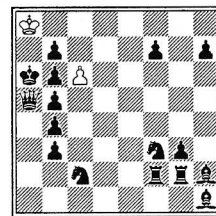
This one, a present-day counterpart to  
Korolkov's novelty, is not soul-less repe-  
tition but a conscious effort to stack up  
motivation onto motivation, to let it hap-

pen: h1 is the Black Hole in this univer-  
se. 9 times (out of total 22) a move plays  
to h1, 4 times a move departs from it.  
Only 3 moves check.

#### One against all

One side, not necessarily White, has king  
and one, or just a few, other men. This  
is a special form of Scaccographics. and  
two nice examples by B. Sidonov.

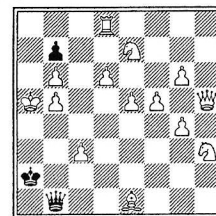
### MONSTER THE SEVENTEENTH



B.N. Sidonov, 1985, Special  
Comm.

1.c7 Re2 2.c8Q Re8 3.Qxe8 Rd2 4.Qb8  
Rd8 5.Qxd8 Qa1 6.Qb8 Qh8 7.Qxh8 Sfd4  
8.Qb8 Sc6 9.Qxb7† Ka5 10.Qa6† Kxa6  
stalemate.

### MONSTER THE EIGHTEENTH



B.N. Sidonov, 1983 3rd  
Comm.

White's prospects are good!

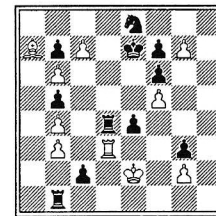
1.g7 Qb3 2.Qf7 Ka1 3.Qc4 Qxc4 4.Rc8  
Qb3 5.Rc4 Qxc4 6.Rc8 Qb3 7.Rc4 Qxc4  
8.g8B +-.

#### Towards the Onion Monsters

An onion monster is a study of which  
layer after layer can be peeled off until  
(almost) nothing remains, - preferably  
not even a stalemate, bare kings are  
best. The Onion Monster denies any

meaning but the peeling off process  
itself. Because the pretence for thematic  
representation has been given up, the  
economy cannot be put into question.  
The Onion Monster elevates itself above  
monstrosity.

### MONSTER THE NINETEENTH

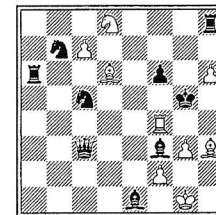


Noam Manella, 1993, 2nd  
Prize

1.c8S† Kd7 (1... c8/e8Q exd3† etc.; 1.  
Rxd4 Re1† 2.Kxe1 c1Q† 3.Ke2) 2.Rxd4†  
Kxc8 (3... Kc6 4.Se7 #) 3.g8S (not  
3.g8Q/R Re1† 4.Kxe1 c1Q† 5.Ke2 Qe3†  
6.Kxe3 stalemate) Re1† 4.Kxe1 c1Q† 5.  
Ke2 Qb2† 6.Rd2 Qe5 7.Bb8 (and now  
after 7... Qb8 and Kxb8 White mates,  
and after 7... Sd6 8.Bxd6 Qe8 9.Rc2†  
White wins.

(A personal note: the final Bb8 inverts  
the decisive 5.Ba7 in my own Monster  
The Thirteenth).

### MONSTER THE TWENTIETH



S. Varov, 1991, 1st Prize

1.Sf7† Kg6 2.Sxh8† Kxh6 3.Bf8† Kh7  
4.Bf5† Kxh8 5.c8Q Bxf2† 6.Kh2 Bxg3†  
7.Kh3 Bg2† 8.Kg4 Bh3† 9.Kh5 Bxf5  
10.Rxf5 Ra8 11.Qxa8 Bb8 12.Bxb8 Qh3†  
13.Kg6 Qh7† 14.Kxf6 Sd7† 15.Ke6 Sxb8  
16.Bg7† Qxg7 17.Rh5† Kg8 18.Rg5 Qxg5  
stalemate.

(to be continued)