

OOPS!

I Resigned

AGAIN!

Ha ha!

Ian Rogers

Foreword by Sam Shankland



# **Oops! I Resigned Again!**

**Ian Rogers**

**Foreword by  
Sam Shankland**



**2021  
Russell Enterprises, Inc.  
Milford, CT USA**

Oops! I Resigned Again!

ISBN: 978-1-949859-42-3 (print)  
ISBN: 978-1-949859-43-0 (eBook)

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Published by:  
Russell Enterprises, Inc.  
P.O. Box 3131  
Milford, CT 06460 USA

<http://www.russell-enterprises.com>  
[info@russell-enterprises.com](mailto:info@russell-enterprises.com)

Cover by Fierce Ponies

Printed in the United States of America



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# Introduction

“The most embarrassing moment in my chess career.”

“I felt like an idiot.”

“It is still a painful memory.”

Resigning a game where you stand well or are actually winning is every player’s nightmare, as the above quotes from strong players show. So why would anyone want to read (or write) a puzzle book covering such unfortunate events?

First, this is the perfect puzzle book for building up a player’s self-confidence. No matter what solution the reader discovers, it cannot possibly be worse than the choice made by the player in the game.

Second, *schadenfreude*! Resigning unnecessarily is the chess equivalent of slipping on a banana peel – one person’s misfortune, but inherently humorous to observers. Deriving joy from another chessplayer’s heartbreak and embarrassment may not be an honourable character trait, but they brought it on themselves, didn’t they?

When I first started collecting examples for *Oops! I Resigned Again!*, it soon became clear that a trail had already been blazed by a trio of silly resignation pioneers: Ian Mullen and Moe Moss in their book *Blunders and Brilliances*, Tim Krabbé, creator of the *Chess Curiosities* book and web site, and Klaus Trautmann, arbiter and author of *Der letzte Fehler*.

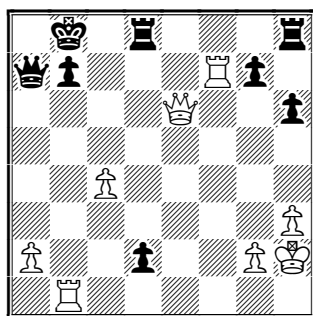
## *Oops! I Resigned Again!*

However as my collection of dumb resignations in classical games rose above 300 and I researched the stories behind the examples, I began to realise that plenty of the claimed silly resignations were not that at all.

Often a player had not resigned in the position claimed but had played on, or the claimed resource would not have saved the game. Less often, the position shown was never reached in the game, or a player had not resigned but had lost on time.

As an example, the following position arose in an East German Women's Team Championship

### **Inge Rollwitz – Helma Beutner** Viareck East German Team Ch. 1965



Inge Rollwitz – a renowned Berlin player still active in 2020 at age 85 – played the powerful move **1. ♕c6!** and her younger opponent Helma Beutner resigned.

Later it was claimed that this was an unnecessary resignation because after the stunning resource **1... ♖g1+!!**, Black can save the day. However **1... ♖g1+**, while a wonderful idea, can be met by **2. ♗xg1 d1(♕)+ 3. ♖f1 ♖d4+ 4. ♗h1** when White stays a

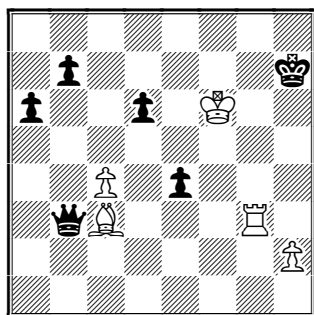
pawn up with a safer king – in other words White was winning anyway.

More than 40 possible Oops! puzzles similar to the above had to be discarded.

Then came hallucinations; most often players resigning because they thought they were going to be checkmated when there were no serious threats at all. (Having done this myself, I can empathise.)

An extreme example came in the following game.

**Tom Rydstrom – Pia Cramling**  
Stockholm Rilton Cup 2014



Grandmaster Pia Cramling, one of the top seeds competing in Sweden's premier open tournament, had been cruising to victory in the first round but after she played **68...♙×c4 69.♖g7+ ♜h6**, she suddenly realised that **70.♘d2+** would force mate and resigned before her opponent moved.

Of course there is no checkmate after **70.♘d2+ ♜h5**, and Black would have won in a few more moves had she played on. Such examples, while amusing, are regrettably not puzzle material.



## *Oops! I Resigned Again!*

Fortunately, there were still plenty of examples of human frailty from which to choose, and you will find moments of idiocy from many top Grandmasters in this book, some costing a Grandmaster first place in a high level tournament.

However while *Oops! I Resigned Again!* is intended to be fun to read and solve, the puzzles are not easy. Some require sophisticated endgame knowledge, some involve finding an unexpected stalemate, some just require finding an idea which would not normally be on a player's top ten candidate moves.

The best way to approach these puzzles is to treat each example as a magic act; the player who resigned was fooled by his or her magician opponent. If a magician tells you that a move is !! or ??, don't believe your eyes!

If, after doing your best to solve a puzzle, you find yourself saying "I would have resigned that one too!" at least you are in the company of legendary Grandmasters such as, Tarrasch, Nunn and Kramnik.

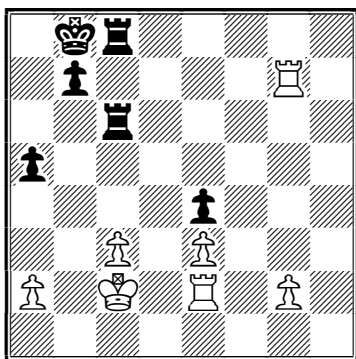
However if you succeed in solving a set of five correctly, you can consider yourself a chess magician. And if you solve the final four puzzles, you are a genius!

Ian Rogers  
Sydney  
July 2021

## Chapter 1

### *Oops! I'm Getting Mated!*

(1) **Max Notkin – Jaroslav Ulko**  
Moscow City Ch. 1994



This rook endgame from the Moscow Championship was headed for a draw, but after **39...♖×c3+** White carelessly played **40.♗d2?**, instead of retreating to b1, and after **40...♖c1!**, Notkin realised that something had gone terribly wrong.

Notkin takes up the story: “I was in severe time trouble from move 30 or even earlier, played rather randomly and hardly managed to reach the time control. When my flag fell after Black’s 40th move, my first intention was to act in accordance with classical prescriptions; to go to the bathroom and walk around a bit in order to calm myself down. But then I decided that there was no point since mate was absolutely unavoidable. When I stopped the clock, my opponent, a nice guy, looked at me sympathetically...” Why?