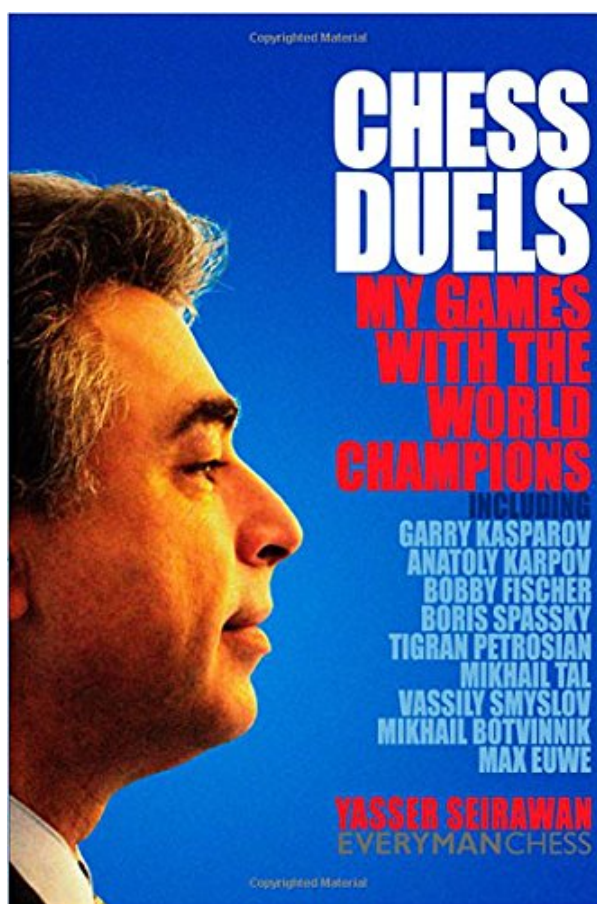
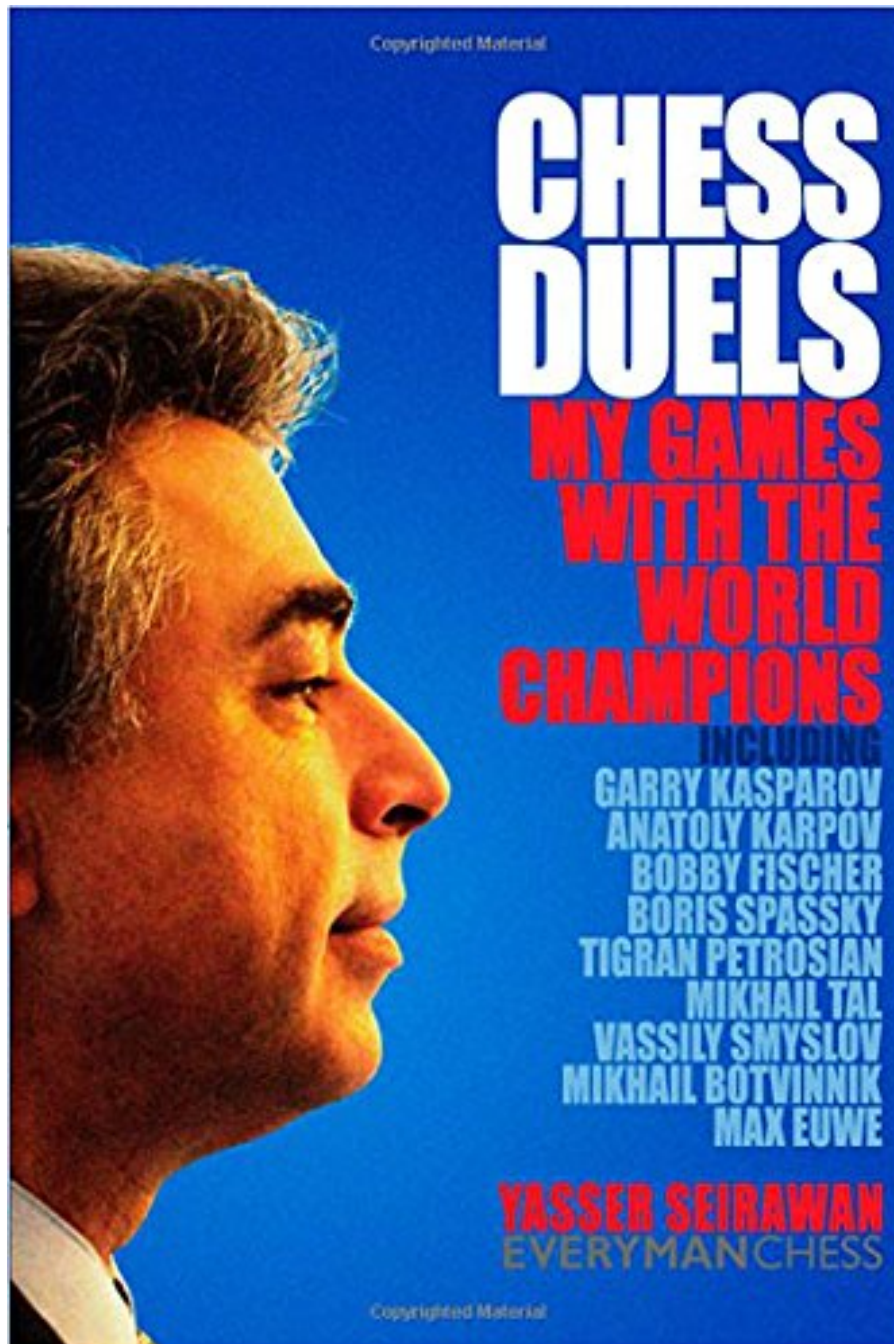


CHESS DUELS: MY GAMES WITH THE WORLD CHAMPIONS BY YASSER SEIRAWAN



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Review

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64 of 67 people found the following review helpful.

A Great Book

By Parker Rose

I initially had some doubts about this book. After all, Seirawan, who was the top American player for so long, played the world champions. "So what?" I thought. Many other players have played many world champions. However, I have also long thought that his game annotations in his books, in his magazine and various other places, were superb, so I thought I'd give it a try.

My reaction? WOW!! What a great book!

First, let's get the games themselves out of the way. Seirawan takes every single game he played in his career against a world champion beginning with Smyslov and right through Kasparov (he did not play Botvinnik or Fischer, although the latter has a special chapter because of Fischer's special place in chess and the special connection Seirawan made with Fischer in 1992).

His annotations are excellent. Usually more explanatory text than dense variations, they can be followed by any player, regardless of strength, and will benefit all. That alone would have made this a great book. But Seirawan did not stop there.

For every champion, the author goes into what I can only describe as a fascinating "story-telling mode." Lest we forget how well respected and well connected Seirawan was/is with his contemporaries, the stories and anecdotes that he relates are wonderful. Each champion is given an extensive introduction and discussion, while the chess politics and other events of the day are also presented to give the reader a complete sense of

the not only Seirawan's opponent, but the atmosphere surrounding the games. The tapestry so well woven is a masterpiece.

The result is surely Seirawan's opus magnum, which in fact is saying something, since his works (e.g., the "Winning Chess" series, his book on the Kasparov-Karpov matches, No Regrets, etc., etc.) are already well respected.

The only thing that would have made this outstanding work even better would have been photographs. My guess is that Everyman Chess (the publisher) is not favorably disposed to photographs in their books. Kasparov's famous My Great Predecessors series would also have benefited from photos. Alas, there are none.

Be that as it may, this book should take its place next to classics such as Zurich 1953 by Bronstein and Tal-Botvinnik 1960 by Tal. It is that good. Period.

Well done.

Parker

48 of 50 people found the following review helpful.

"...a vast meadow!"

By TT

GM Seirawan has given us an epic book. As a high-schooler and B player back in 1984 at the U.S. Open in Berkeley, I had the good fortune of watching Robert Byrne and Yasser during the post-mortem of their drawn game. I was standing around trying to remain attentively inconspicuous when they asked me to grab a chair and analyze with them! Who gives such an opportunity to a young, aspiring tournament player? -- Seirawan and Byrne did. Years later in 1999 I saw Seirawan at the FIDE World Championship knock-out tournament in Las Vegas and approached him to thank him for having given me that chance years earlier. To my great surprise, he took me into the players' room and we began looking at rook endgame ideas that he was working on for his then latest book. Kramnik was sitting near us and Nigel Short came up and chatted with Yasser. I was a lowly NM and again was awed by Yasser's warmth and graciousness. I remember him saying to me, "Chess is like...like, lying down in a vast meadow!" This book is entirely reflective of both his love and passion for the game as well as that grace that he had shown me. He creates in this book, the sensation that you are sitting with him at a chessboard, musing over remembrances of past World Champions. There are many anecdotes which will draw smiles from the reader. While the analyses of the games are not Timman-like in depth, there is certainly plenty of analytical red meat for strong players. Additionally, we get the valuable insight of his thought process during each game. On more than one occasion he is wonderfully candid to the point of being self-effacing when he criticizes his own decisions. "What was I thinking?" etc.. This is not exactly the standard self-criticism one often sees from top-flight GMs when analyzing their own games. Yasser is human, and he happily reveals it to the reader. Of course his tournament record against the World Champions is quite impressive. This is what a chess book should be in all facets. Yasser's work is refreshingly insightful and combines incisive analysis with great reflections of the World Champions...and it is all bound by Yasser's great, affable spirit. I really believe this will end up being considered one of the greatest chess books on record! This book is a vast meadow.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Great Chess Games and Interesting Chess Stories

By M. Ararat

I am glad a chess master of Seirawan caliber decided to write a book on his games with the champions.

If you put together a top GM, a skilled (former chess editor) writer a chess personality, hard work and time

the result is this book.

The book is the perfect companion for a chess player. You have the mix of very interesting and insightful chess stories and great chess games. The stories are well elaborated and give you a better understanding of the development of chess in the post Fischer Era. The games are high quality with clear annotations. These combinations make the book perfect for a light read before bed (stories) or as a tool for chess improvement (going over the games in detail).

Seirawan reveals the untold stories related to many important chess tournaments and matches. The role played by preparation, the strong and weak points of the players as well as the politics behind critical/life-changing decisions.

This book belongs to any chess player's library. Highly recommended.

Disclaimer: I am not a professional reviewer and my chess skill level is just over 1900

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