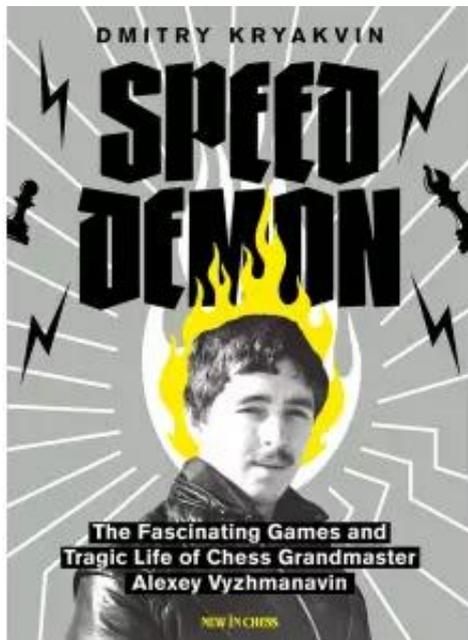


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Speed Demon by Dmitry KRYAKVIN

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Almost as fascinating as chess is the community of chess players. In every major city in the world, you are guaranteed to meet interesting people when you walk into a local chess club or chess cafe. This book pays tribute to one of those characters who gave colour to the chess world, the Russian grandmaster Alexey Vyzhmanavin.

The best chance to bump into Vyzhmanavin in the 1980s and early 1990s was in Sokolniki park in Moscow, playing blitz. You could meet him at the 1992 Chess Olympiad as a member of the winning Russian team. Or in the finals of the PCA rapid events of the 1990s, frequently outplaying his illustrious opponents with his fluent and enterprising style. In Moscow in 1994, he reached the semi-final, narrowly losing out to Vladimir Kramnik, having already beaten Alexei Shirov and Viktor Korchnoi. Commentating at a PCA event, Maurice Ashley described Vyzhmanavin in predatory terms: 'He's a dangerous one, looking like a cat, ready to pounce.'

For this book, grandmaster Dmitry Kryakvin has talked to dozens of people, enabling him to give a complete picture of Vyzhmanavin's life. The result is a mix of fascinating chess, wonderful anecdotes, and some heartbreaking episodes. The stories are complemented by the memories of Vyzhmanavin's ex-wife Lyudmila. They revive his successes but also reveal the dark side of this forgotten chess genius who battled with depression and the 'green serpent', a Russian euphemism for alcoholism. He died in January 2000 at the age of forty, in circumstances that remain unclear. The stories and games in this book are his legacy.

Dmitry Kryakvin is an International Grandmaster from Russia and an experienced chess trainer and author. For New In Chess he wrote *Attacking with g2-g4: The Modern Way to Get the Upper Hand in Chess*.