

**Carlsen, M. and Howell, D., 2023. *Grind Like A Grandmaster*. Alkmaar: New In Chess.**

For weaker players, say under 2000, the endgame can be a tricky part of the game and one which players tend to give little attention to. Certainly my own endgame play is weak, although how much weaker than my middle game play I cannot be sure. Yet it is in the ending that many points can be won. This book is your guide to those positions which look drawn and where you are likely to offer or accept draws.

The type of games we are thinking about here are the sort that Keith Arkell has made a living out of at the weekend circuit. If you have ever played a congress in which Keith is playing I guess you must, as I have, wandered over to his board and thought 'He's never going to win from there' only to return a while later to find that with one bound he is free and winning easily. I reviewed Keith's book. *Arkell's Endings* a while back and the subject of this review is a good supplement to Keith's book.

*Grind Like a Grandmaster* is divided into eight chapters, each with a notional theme such as 'Accumulating small advantages' or 'Defensive Grinding: saving the half point.' Each chapter has one or two full games with Carlsen and Howell providing the expert commentary. A particular highlight is Howell prompting Carlsen to reveal his thoughts during the marathon Game 12 of his World Championship match against Ian Nepomniachtchi. Each chapter also includes a historical example of the theme under discussion. Finally, each chapter has a brief introduction sometimes with some nice advice. For example, this from Carlsen in the chapter 'Accumulating small advantages.'

'Very often you have no clear short-term goal, but some vague long-term goals. You have to think of how to make your opponent make slight concessions that in 20 moves will give them a difficult decision they won't be able to face.'

Sometimes the introduction has some frankly odd content. 'Grinders don't feel comfortable on the wrong side of a grind' for example. Yet much of the book is about inducing a vague discomfort leading to a breaking point so surely no one likes being on the wrong side of a grind?

There is much to like in this book and I do recommend it. However, I do feel that it could have been even better. It was, originally, a course on Chessable and it looks as though it has mostly just been transcribed from that spoken word course. However, there is a difference in how best to convey information depending on whether one is speaking or writing.

Another minor gripe is the physical book itself. New In Chess seem to have adopted a new 'house style.' This includes producing books in hardback, which is great for a book like this but I'm not sure it's required for opening books, and the use of a large, sans-serif font that gives the pages a 'typed on an old IBM typewriter' look about them which, personally, I do not like and found rather irritating after a while. However, those with learning difficulties such as dyslexia may get on with the font very well.

At just over 200 pages - and hardly that when one considers the large font - and costing, today on Amazon £26.54 for the hardback this is not a great value for money book. It is, however, a book worth having and I expect that careful study of its pages will teach you lessons to take into your own games.