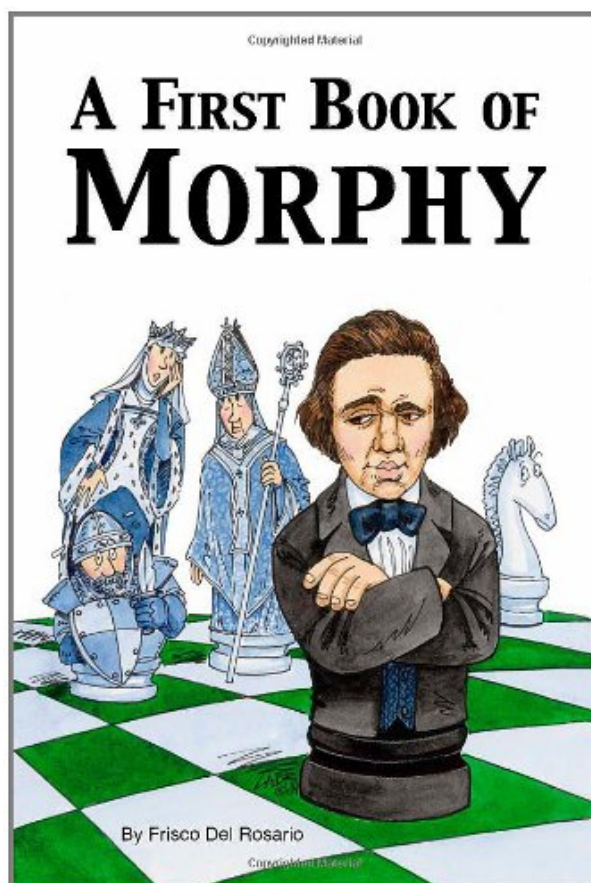


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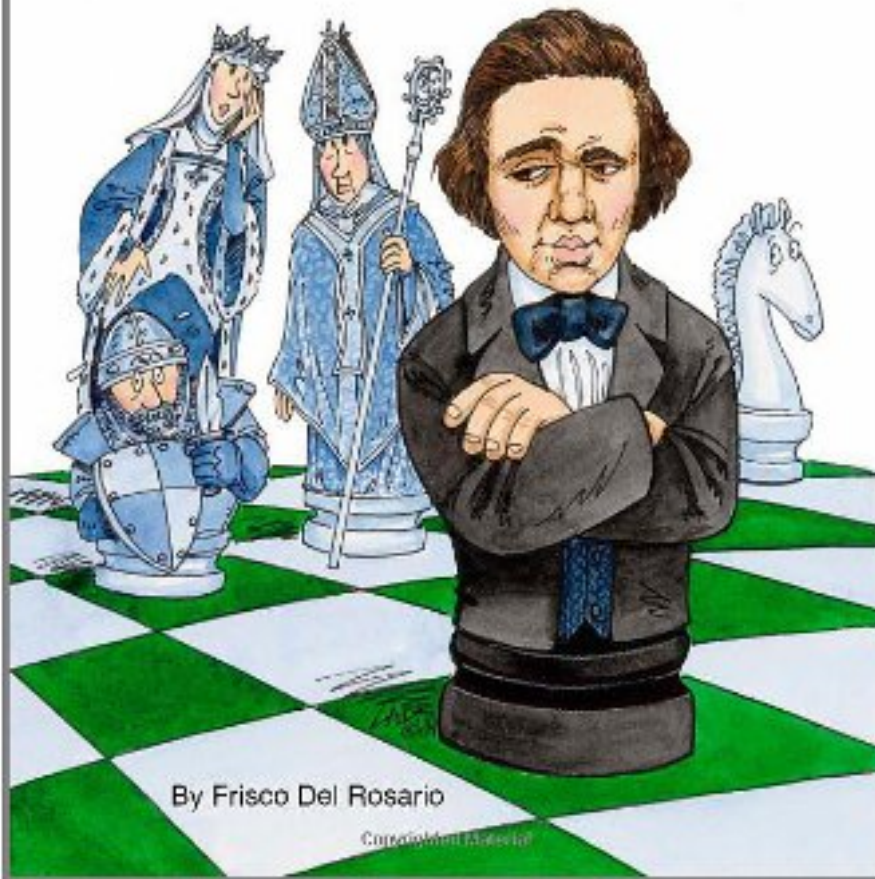


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Frisco Del Rosario is a chess teacher and writer. He edited the California Chess Journal from 2001 to 2003, when the magazine won national awards for analysis and general excellence. He resides in San Mateo, Calif., where he writes about basketball for a local newspaper.

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A First Book of Morphy illustrates basic principles of chess with more than 60 brilliant and instructive games played by the first American chess champion, Paul Morphy.

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14 of 21 people found the following review helpful.

Disappointed

By Goosemeyer

Like the reviewer, Jonathon, I had high hopes for this book but I was disappointed. I was looking for a gentle introduction to Morphy but this just doesn't cut it.

The pseudo- or minimalist algebraic notation is extremely distracting away from a board and a nuisance at the board. There are no capture indications nor check indications. This is a serious distraction when trying to focus on the game content - it's not like somebody at the target level can afford a lack of focus. The most disturbing thing is that this is so totally unnecessary - it's like a personal challenge to the reader. Hasn't regular algebraic or figurine notation been established as the standard for decades? If the author wants to include perverse visualization exercises in a book then let him write another one and tell the buyer.

I could get past that if the book was appealing in other ways, but it's just not good enough to overcome the nuisance factor and I abandoned it. I've moved on to Beim and I'm already seeing more benefit, even though it's much harder. Skip this one.

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful.

Lots to Learn from Morphy

By Eric Noel

I bought this book after reading the recommendation list of Dan Heisman and because I like Morphy's style of super rapid development, not to mention brilliant attacks.

The book is well written, with not too much commentary, so as not to get bogged down in endless variations. Thirty basic chess principles are put forward (10 opening, 10 middlegame and 10 endgame). Morphy games are then discussed with a focus on the principle being illustrated (one principle per chapter with a few games to illustrate it).

The method of teaching chess principles with real games is an excellent way to learn, at least for me. After going through about half of the book, it becomes not too difficult to guess what Morphy's next move will be as you will be well acquainted with his style.

My only gripe is the non-standard notation, which takes some getting used to. I am not sure why the author abandoned standard notation but it is a pain to read his bare bones notation if you are used to standard algebraic notation. Hence, only 4 stars.

20 of 25 people found the following review helpful.

Great Player, Good Games, Okay book.....

By Amazon Customer

I am still new to the study of chess so my opinion could change with hindsight in a couple of years, but I have to say this book was just okay. I was really excited when I ordered the book, as it was going to be my first game collection focused on one person. (I have gone through Chernev's Logical Chess, which obviously has games featuring many different players)

It has been fun to play over Morphy's games but the book's layout is a little awkward to me and the annotations are somewhat dry, especially for a book that acts as if it is going to be an instructional book.

I know that it has been a worthwhile experience to go through Morphy's games but I am glad to be done with this book and looking forward to studying some Tarrasch and maybe some Tal.

In the spirit of full disclosure, I will say that at this VERY EARLY stage of my chess study, I seem to prefer playing over games that are strategic struggles instead of quick and flashy "brilliances". The games I really enjoyed in this book were the few that took Morphy awhile to win (and even the one he lost to Anderson!!)

This IS a worthwhile book to study just because of Morphy's tactics and sound principles, it just hasn't gotten me as excited about chess as some other ones I have worked through.

Update: 11/18/08

I am even more convinced that this book is over rated! I have played through some other game collections and have a little more experience under my belt, and these annotations are just not that informative. I have recently gone back and begun to analyze some games I have played over per my coaches instructions. I went back to a few of these Morphy games and the author's annotations just don't give you anything to go on. I am thinking there has to be a better Morphy collection out there..there just has to be! I have changed my rating from three stars down to two stars! If you want to get game collections that have truly instructional annotations I recommend the following books: Chess: The Art of Logical Thinking, Anything by Paul Keres (especially his own game collections), anything by Chernev and Best Lessons of a Chess Coach.

See all 21 customer reviews...



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