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Keep them in check...

By: Kyle Wilson

"Good afternoon, Sir."

"Good afternoon, Thomas. How's your mother?"

"She's doing fine. Working at the grocery store has kept her busy."

"I'm sure it has. She's still the only worker?"

"Yeah. But she works hard, so her boss feels that she'll be alright."

"Hard worker, she was. I remember teaching her. Can you pass the wooden chess set?"

"Here you go."

"Thank you."

"So you must be older than sixty?"

"Yes. I'm afraid that all I can rely on is chess to make me feel youthful. How many people can beat a grandmaster like me?"

"I will when I finish our lesson today."

"Oh you will, will you?"

"Sir, can we talk about something else other than chess? It's been a while since we have had any sincere discussions that didn't end up talking about the Second World War."

"What's wrong with that? It's interesting to discuss the human race and their endeavors. Especially for a history professor."

"Why not native cultures? I'm Gitksan, you know. My mom was around when the Delgamuukw case started. She told me what she knew. But other than that, no one else really wants to talk about that case."

"Why not?"

"I don't know.. ."

"NO! How many times must we go over this?! You shouldn't move your pieces unless it is necessary."

"Sorry, sir. I was thinking about something else."

"What would that be?"

"That case thing again!"

"It isn't surprising; it is part of your contemporary history."

"But why won't anyone talk about it with me?"

"You haven't asked me."

"You're not native."

"Interesting how the game of chess has an equal, leveled playing field."

"So?"

"So it means both players have a fair chance excusing white's privileged first move."

"I guess that makes sense."

"Now lad, which hand: left or right?"

"Left."



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"You're black!"

"Do you understand the theory behind this opening?"

"Kind of, it's a bit advanced."

"I only teach that to advanced students."

"Am I that good?"

"Well, that depends on whether or not I, as you say to your friends, 'kick your ass'."

"That doesn't solve this conundrum."

"Conundrums are for losers, we're talking about chess, lad."

"Well I guess this loser has reached his limit."

"Losers never have a limit; only winners."

"What? How's that related to our chess game?"

"Why can't I move my hone in this manner? I'm still moving in an L."

"Legally speaking, your "horse" cannot move because it discovers your king to check.

Additionally, on the next move my queen would take the rook and put your king in mate.

Would you like to lose in this manner?"

"I don't like the way this game is set up. I want to play something else."

"Don't pout now; only idiots pout. Are you an idiot?"

"Aren't British old frumps, pompous and proper?"

"This game can get a little dry. I sometimes like to talk falsely and make rude comments."

"But you're from England! Being "proper" is supposed to be your forte, sir."

"Being proper didn't get me a reputation what I really wanted."

"Alright, it's been months since we started, may I ask why I haven't got better?"

"It's because you think that case you're working on is a very good distraction."

"My heritage is not a distraction!"

"Nor is chess and its strategies; It's not based on chance."

"Cliches aren't your strong suit sir. I'm more interested in uneven playing fields."

"I think I got this opening down, sir. Advanced, it was not! I think I can really beat you."

"Oh really, lad? You should enter the city's chess tournament this weekend."

"I don't have money for that kind of tournament. Besides, I don't have the time or energy to deal with manipulative players."

"Manipulative? You mustn't mean me do you? Then again.. .it's how I won games."

"It's futile."

"We haven't had time to progress our game, lad!"

"It's not that. The case study is futile. No one really is giving me any personal feedback. The case was a ground breaker for all indigenous nations around the world! Yet the very people who did this seem.. .seem tired of it!"



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"You realize how much money is put into those cases, yes? It's better to leave things alone for a time before someone else can take up the reins. Oh damn...I didn't see that move."

"I made that subtle variation myself, sir. I **knew** you would go for it. You won't find it in any opening manual. You never were one to sit and wait. "

"Being slow has advantages."

"Being slow was what brought colonialism to Canada."

"Sir, I know this will sound unorthodox, but-"

"Oh lad.. .I knew this would come one day. Yes, I would like to adopt you."

"Pardon?"

"Hehe, I don't like serious topics, you see. If it's about the case, I believe I'm getting good and ready to smite you."

"Sir, I'm very serious about the case! If there's anyone who is willing to lend an ear and insight, it would be you. You've offered before."

"I did. Indeed, I did."

"Now the King's Indian Defense is one of my favorites; it has many advantages."

"Does it have to be called 'King's *Indian* Defense'?"

"Well, I suppose not, but-"

"It's a bit racist."

"No, it isn't."

"Why not? It sounds as though Europeans had used Natives for their own vanity and pride."

"This is chess. It is a game for the intellects and competitive at heart."

"It also illustrates the ideology of white men playing a romantic version of slavery and decapitation."

"With that given, I believe we need a coffee break. Do you drink coffee?"

"No. I don't drink."

"Now about your case study, are you taking a First Nations Course at the university?"

"Yes, sir. I need to prove why the Delgamuukw case was vital and essential to the very existence of Indigenous Rights around the world."

"But you're having trouble? Why?"

"No one where the whole case started wants to talk about it. It feels like it's a taboo subject. I feel like I'm digging up a grave that was put to rest."

"Graves are where dead ideas lie. Your case still lives on; the question is, do the people?"

"Of course they do, we even have non-taxable gas and free houses. My grandparents have satellite and neither them work anymore."

"Check"

"Pity, I thought I can beat you in mere thirty moves. It seems you plan other wise. Rook



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takes pawn and that puts your king in check."

"Queen blocks rook."

"Sacrificing yet again?"

"It's one way to win."

"Check."

"Sir, you never attack this early."

"Check."

"Say something. Why are you so angry?"

"Check."

"Sir, your attacks are getting sloppy. Do you want to ta- "

"Stop talking and play. It's time you became more professional in your mannerisms in chess, sir."

"Sir?"

"That's how you address me properly. Like a gentleman. I like that you are becoming a better player."

"I've decided to stop having sessions with you, sir."

"Got bored with me?"

"You're becoming more assertive in how I play!"

"Well, you want to intimidate your opponents, don't you?"

"I want to play for the sake of it. To be fluid and have decisions made on intuition and experience. Not formulas and strategies."

"Well, I'm afraid you will lose. Learning to be articulate and strategic are what made men great. You have to agree."

"I really do believe you are right. Just look at our lifestyles."

"My project was fantastic. Everybody in class appreciated my insight into the case and how my personal experience gave a more realistic view on today's image of the case. I want to the case wasn't worthless in the eyes of my own nation."

"And how did you manage that?"

"I've offered to help present the case in court again."

"That's better than playing chess with an old man?"

"It is much better."

"Good luck with the case."

"Good luck with the game."



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Author's Statement

Greetings to all those who taken the time to yet again judge another set of fantastic stories. I have gone a radically different route. I have decided to take on the Delgamuukw case as a foundation for my story. I wanted to try to convey a message to the First Nations of Canada what we are a people who have always been politically active. This story arises from my writing and research abilities and the help of my mentors: Ms. Erica Ball and Mr. Mike Carson. Through my endeavors and my determination to make a well built story, I have found myself contemplating what would reality look like if someone did another trip through the legal system with this case. How would my childhood world, Kispiox and surrounding area, look if another case won the battle for land claims and self-governance? I find myself more empowered and intrigued as to how the world would look if my nation got to make their rules, to dictate what should happen on our land and what would be controlled. This story is something that has, over time, become a symbol of my understanding of this modern world of laws, of traditions and of acceptability. I hope you appreciate my efforts as much as I appreciate this opportunity to show the world what I am made of.