

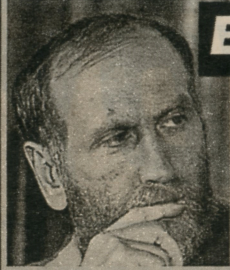
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ENQUIRER

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BOBBY: Checkmate

BOBBY FISCHER IS 49 — SHE'S JUST 19

Oddball chess champ flips for teen fan — rook, line and sinker!

Oddball chess master Bobby Fischer — who once said, "Girls are nice but chess is better!" — has fallen so hard for a bespectacled roly-poly teenage fan that he's just a pawn in her hands.

Although the queen in 49-year-old Fischer's life is young enough to be his daughter, 19-year-old Zita Rajcsanyi of Hungary has checkmated the chess king's heart.

"Until Zita, Bobby had never even been seen with a woman. It's possible she's his very first love," Allen Kaufman, a boyhood friend of Fischer, told *The ENQUIRER*.

Not only did Bobby fall hard for Zita, he ended 20 years of living a hermit's life for her. She convinced him to make a comeback and even arranged for his headline-making rematch in Yugoslavia against Russian Boris Spassky.

Zita told a close friend: "Bobby insisted that the opening ceremonies for the match begin on September 1 — my birthday. He said, 'No day could be luckier for me. With you by my side, I will never lose!'"

A source at the games also noted that smitten Bobby "has broken his intense concentration and turned to gaze at Zita — unheard of behavior for a chess master."

LOVE MATCH:
Bobby and his sweetheart Zita enjoy a recent dinner together.

Zita, daughter of a former diplomat and Hungary's junior chess champion, wasn't even born when Fischer became the first American to win the World Chess Championship by defeating Spassky in 1972.

Then, after his victory, Fischer dropped out of public sight.

For 20 years, he lived in se-

clusion in California — and got even weirder.

Published reports say he had teeth fillings removed because he thought Russians were sending radio signals through them . . . joined a church which believed Christ would return to Earth in 1975 . . . and spent

days in his messy Pasadena apartment replaying chess games of champions who replaced him.

Zita, a chess star as a child, grew up worshiping Fischer as her hero. She wrote him a fan letter two years ago but he didn't answer it. Then last

year, when Zita wrote again, Fischer wrote back.

"I was stunned when I got the letter. My heart was beating like a jackhammer when I opened it," Zita told her close friend. "Then he actually called me and I was in heaven."

Zita, who speaks perfect English, visited Fischer in California last April and love blossomed as they made all the right moves — chess moves.

"They played chess together, with Bobby as teacher," said a source close to Zita.

"She would also sit at his feet for hours as he spouted his views on life and chess. And when she came home to Budapest, she told friends, 'I love Bobby very much.'"

In interviews, Zita also ad-



PAWN PAL: Bobby keeps an eye on her every move.



'It's like a music student dating Mozart'

mitted with a smile that she is drawn to "crazy people or geniuses."

Said Fischer's boyhood friend Kaufman: "Her attraction to Bobby is simple. She's a chess player and he's the greatest chess genius."

"It's like a music student dating Mozart."

The teen convinced the balding, bearded and paunchy Fischer that he should return to the limelight. And she got a Hungarian banker to put up \$5 million. The first player to win 10 games gets \$3.35 million; the loser, \$1.65 million.

Fischer emerged from his self-inflicted hibernation as ornery and bizarre as ever.

Although his mother is Jewish, he made remarks many felt were anti-Semitic at a press conference before the match. And he defiantly spat on a U.S. document warning that he could be violating U.N. sanctions by playing in war-torn Yugoslavia.

But when he's with Zita, Fischer is as gentle as a lamb.

"They are staying together in the same hotel. They dine together every night, and I saw them holding hands and walking in the evening moonlight," said a pal of Zita.

As for the future, the star-struck teen told her pal: "We're not considering marriage — yet. Bobby has never had a serious romance before. Neither have I."

— JOHN BLOSSER and DAVID WRIGHT



THE YEARS BETWEEN: A young Fischer and rival Boris Spassky go eyeball-to-eyeball 20 years ago — and in their \$5-million rematch.

