

Entrance

Order: Pawn (girl – timid)
Bishop (boy – reverent)
Knight (boy – courageous)
Rook (girl – with an attitude!)
Queen (girl – regal)
King (boy – commanding presence)

Host: Welcome, chess pieces! Thank you for granting us this exclusive interview!

All: You're welcome, we're happy to be here.

Host: The club members were all wondering what it is you want, so we'll know how to treat you right.

King: We each have different needs. You'll have to ask that question to us as individuals, one at a time.

Host: Okay, thanks for the tip, your majesty. Little Pawn, we'll start with you. What can you tell us about yourself?

Pawn I'm very nervous about being here alone. I feel so isolated.

Host What do you mean "alone"? You have these other pieces here.

Pawn I miss my sister Pawns. It makes me nervous when they're not beside me. These other guys here: they don't like to be tied down defending me: they run off when attacked and leave me to be captured. But my sister Pawns are brave and stand behind me and say "Don't you dare take this little Pawn or I'll capture you back!"

Rook: Pawns as brave? Ha, give me a break!

King: Now, now, Rook: we all have our roles to play. Remember: the Pawns boldly venture forth into the middle of the chess board at the start of the fray while you snooze comfortably in your bed.

Rook: [*Rolls her eyes but says nothing.*]

Host: So, little Pawn, is that why you have so many sisters? So you can protect each other?

Pawn Yes, that, and also so we can act as a fence in front of these other pieces: protecting them.

Rook: Getting in our way, you mean.

Pawn: Well, at some point we do need to move out of the way so the other pieces can come out and play too.

Knight: Except for me! With my horse, I just jump right over you little Pawns, and anything else that would stand in my way!

Host: Little Pawn, I understand you have a glorious dream. Can you tell us about it?

Pawn: [*proudly*] Someday, I want to be a Queen.

Host: And how will you make that dream come true?

Pawn: That's up to you players out there: don't just throw me away, help me and use these other guys to run interference and escort me on my long, dangerous journey to the furthest end of the kingdom. That's where all my efforts will be rewarded and I'll be crowned Queen!

Rook: Or Rook!

Host: Yes, I understand that once you reach the furthest end of the kingdom you can actually choose to transform into something other than a Queen. Is that right?

Queen: [*haughtily*] Oh, why should anyone want to be less than a Queen?!

Rook: [*Aside*] To keep from losing by stalemate, for one.

Host: [*addressing Queen*] Yes, your majesty, thank you. We'll be getting to your interview shortly.

Little Pawn: is there anything else you'd like us to know?

Pawn: Well, I don't like standing in line behind my other sisters. When we double-up like that we get in each others' way and aren't too effective. It's usually better when we stand diagonal to each other so we can all move if we need to.

Host: [*Pointing to screen*] So, you mean you'd rather be like this [*Pawns on d2 and e3*], than like... this [*Pawns on d2 and d3*]?

Pawn: Yes.

Host: [*Still indicating screen*] And you hate being all alone like this? [*isolated Pawn*]

Pawn I really do; I'm so helpless then.

Host: Okay, thank you little Pawn. We'll all try to keep your needs in mind as we play, and try to place you and your sister Pawns where you'll be happy.

Pawn: If you do, I will bravely fight for you and protect you. And even though I'm small, I may even win the game for you. [*raises both arms*] Pawns Rule! [*applause as Pawn steps aside.*]

Host: Bishop, I'd like to turn our attention now to you --

Bishop: You may address me as Your Reverence or Your Holiness. I am a man of the cloth, as you see. A cleric of the Church, you know. A very high official and powerful man, attending on the court of his and her majesty. [*bows to the King & Queen, then raises hand and addresses audience*] Blessings to you all.

Rook: [*Aside*] Yeah: stuck on one color square his whole life. [*sarcastically*] Some power!

Bishop: [*To Rook*] I can move from one corner of the kingdom to the opposite diagonal corner in one move. [*To audience*] It takes her [*pointing to Rook*] two moves to do that. [*looks down his nose at the Rook.*]

Host: Is it true, though, that you're stuck on one color square your whole life?

Bishop: Well, yes. But that's why there are two of us. I cover all the squares of one color while my fellow Bishop covers the squares of the other color. Between us we have the entire board covered.

Host: So, what is it that you want? How can we help you to help us win?

Bishop: Keep those Pawns off of my color! How do expect me to move around when those pesky Pawns are on my color square?

Host: But there are two of you. The Pawns have to be on one of your square colors.

Bishop: All right. But at least let us get outside of the Pawn fence then, or Pawn "chain" as they like to call themselves when they're all joining hands so no one can get past them.

Host: [*Points to screen*] Like this, you mean?

Bishop: That's it, exactly. You'll still end up with one of us being a good Bishop, and I'm afraid one of us may be a bad Bishop.

Host: What do you mean by a bad bishop?

Bishop: When our own Pawns are on that Bishop's square color, especially in the center, where our main diagonals cross at that major intersection --

Host: [*Pointing to the screen*] The colored squares shown here you mean?

Bishop: Yes, of course. The Bishop that is blocked by our own center Pawns is a bad Bishop, you can exchange him readily for a Knight or your partner's good Bishop. But try to hang onto your **good** Bishop--

Host: The one that's not blocked by its own Pawns?

Bishop: Precisely!

Host: But we need our Pawns out there to grab the center in the opening and to open the gate for you and the other pieces.

Bishop: Well, yes, I realize that. But you've got to keep us Bishops in mind all the same. At some point, either move one of those Pawns, or get us out and around the blockade somehow.

Host: Anything else you can tell us?

Bishop: Just remember that I work very well with the Rook to deliver checkmate. I can watch his back along the diagonal when he moves onto the back rank to attack your partner's King. I don't work as well with a Knight as with a Rook.

Host: Thank you, your reverence.

Bishop: [raises arms] Blessings to you all!
[applause as Bishop steps aside.]

Host: We turn our attention now to Sir Knight.

Bishop: [*self-importantly*] You know, some people say I'm more valuable than a Knight.

Knight Yes, but more intelligent people say that it depends on the position. In contrast to the Bishop stuck on a single square color, I change my square color on *every* move! And I can never get blocked by our own Pawns, so I'm certainly more valuable than a bad Bishop.

Host: Is there such a thing as a "bad" Knight?

Knight We say that "a Knight on the rim is dim."

Host: What does that mean, exactly, sir Knight?

Knight In the large center I can move to 8 squares, but on the rim – or the edge of the board--it's only half that many.

Host: Four squares!?

Knight: That's right. And in the corner I can only move to 2 squares.

Host.: So it makes a huge difference for you to be in the large center. So, obviously you want us to keep you in the large center when possible. That's a natural first move for you Knights, isn't it?

Knight: That's right.

Host: We'll remember that. Anything else you'd like to tell us?

Knight: My specialty is the sneak attack and the fork.

King: All my subjects can fork -- as can I.

Knight: Yes, your majesty, but it's harder to see my forks coming, especially since I'm not as respected as her majesty the Queen -- who of course is also a forking expert. Also, I'm the only piece that can execute a Royal Fork without getting captured by the Queen.

Host Well, thank you Sir Knight. Anything else?

Knight Remember that unlike the Rook, I'm a powerful piece in the opening, as well as the middle and end game. One of your first few moves in the game should be to get me into the large center where I can exert an influence on the center, defend Pawns and other pieces, and keep your partner's pieces away. You don't have to move Pawns aside to let me enter the game since I can jump. So I'm usually the first piece out there after a Pawn or two.

The Knights pledge to serve you! [*striking his chest*]

[*applause as Knight steps aside.*]

Host: Ms. Rook, we've already heard from you several times. I'm almost afraid to ask, but do you have anything else to tell us about yourself?

Rook: [*grabs the microphone*] I am the Rook [*dramatically*]: the second most powerful piece in the kingdom! Armies fear me!

Host: [*taking back the microphone*] What makes you so powerful? Are you good in the opening?

Rook: [*Yawns*] I usually sleep through the opening.

King: Except when I command you to castle!

Rook: Right, yeah, your majesty: except for when I castle with the King.

Rook: The thing of it is: I long for the open road –

Host Open *files* you mean?

Rook Yeah: open files, and you don't usually get those in the opening: not until the middle or end-game.

Host: Those are files with no Pawns on them, correct?

Rook: Yeah, they're the best. Though I'll settle for files without *my* Pawns on them, just give me a straight shot down that open road, man, and I'm ready to go!

You talk about your Bishop and your Knight: **minor** pieces all the way, man. I'm a **major** piece! You got your bishop controlling 13 squares -- if you're lucky enough to get it in the center -- and the Knight with 8 square at the most. [*boastfully*] I control **14** squares no matter where I am!

And if you get me to the 7th rank, I'll eat up your partner's Pawns like a pig in a gummy bear factory!

Host: I've heard that arrangement called "hog on the seventh" is that what that means?

Rook: You got it.

And if you put me and my brother Rook together on a file you've got real power, man!

Host: So, while doubled Pawns are usually bad – as little Pawn told us -- doubled Rooks are good?

Rook: Good? We're *awesome*, man!

When it comes time, you'll often find me and my brother Rook on the back rank and second to back rank, mating your partner's King. Together the two of us are more powerful than her majesty the Queen!

Host: Thanks, Ms. Rook. Any parting words of wisdom for us?

Rook: Remember to put me on an open file before your partner sticks her Rook on it. If there are no open files, try exchanging a Pawn to open a file for me.

King: Just don't be doing that around *me*!

Rook: Yeah; the center is usually the place: after I've castled with his majesty.

Host: Thanks again, Ms. Rook.

Rook: Rooks! [*raises sword*] Fear the power!
[*applause as the Rook steps aside.*]

Host: That brings us to her majesty, the Queen. What would you like us to know, your majesty?

Queen Remember I am the most powerful piece in the kingdom. So, don't send me out into the opening battle. All those pesky pieces of your partner just keep attacking me, and I weary of running from them.

Host So we should leave you at home during the opening?

Queen Oh, yes. Unless your partner has made a blunder and you need me to finish off the game. But normally, you should let our subjects out first to weaken your partner's forces, and only then – when it's safer – unleash my power.

Remember: no one can defend me when I'm attacked (except when I'm attacked by your partner's Queen), because I'm more valuable than any of them.

King Except for me, my dear.

Queen Yes, of course, your majesty. But you can't defend me either because if we lose you we lose the kingdom.

Host So, no one can defend you except from a Queen, but can you defend others?

Queen Of course; I am an excellent defender, but my real power comes in the attack. Did you know that I can fork 8 pieces at once?

Knight: As can I, your majesty.

Queen: Yes, yes. But I don't limp along a couple of squares at a time, covering only 8 squares like a Knight. I can control 27 squares at once, and I can move from one corner of the board to the other in a single move.

Bishop: Like me, your majesty.

Queen: Yes, yes [*annoyed at the interruptions*]. But I'm not limited to one color square like the Bishop. On an open board I can move to any square in 2 moves!

Rook Like me, your majesty.

Queen: [*glares at the Rook.*]

Host: Anything else you'd like us to know, your majesty?

Queen: Just remember that my power makes me a prime target for your partner, so you need to keep me safe until it's time for me to attack – or defend if I have to.

Host: We promise we'll remember. Thank you, your majesty.

Queen: [*bows graciously and steps aside to applause.*]

Host That brings us to our audience with his majesty the King.

King: Here's what you need to know about me. I am what it's all about. If you lose me you lose the entire kingdom. So, more so than even my lovely Queen, you must keep me safe at all times!

Usually the best way to do this is to tuck me safely away in my castle at the earliest possible opportunity.

Host That's when you castle with the Rook, as we're showing on the screen.
[*Screen. demonstrates castling kingside on the board -- with Pawns at f2,g2,h2 and Knight at f3.*]

King: Yes. And once I've castled, try to keep the roof on!

Host What do you mean by that?

King: I mean don't be moving those Pawns that form the roof of my castle unless you're forced to do so. And try to keep the Knight there guarding the entrance, and don't be in too big of a hurry to move my Rook from where it defends my back rank!

Host Okay. But do you want us to keep you locked away in that castle forever?

King: No, no! Not at all. I expect to come out fighting in the endgame, when there are few pieces left. Then it's much safer for me, and you need me to mop up your partner's Pawns, and escort our Pawns to the edge of the kingdom so I can crown a new Queen or two [*smiles at the thought of this.*]

Queen [*glaring at the King. In accusatory tone:*] Isn't one Queen enough for you?

King: Yes, of course [*apologetically*]. But often by the endgame you're gone, and I must seek another.

Host Thank you, your majesty. Any final words of advice for our club?

King Learn from your mistakes, and constantly improve. Treat me and my subject well, and we shall reward you with a lifetime of enjoyment in this royal game.