CHESS FOR HAWKS

Improve your vision, sharpen your talons, forget your fear
Chess for Hawks

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New In Chess 2017
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The chessboard with its coordinates:

- White to move
- Black to move
- King
- Queen
- Rook
- Bishop
- Knight
- White stands slightly better
- Black stands slightly better
- White stands better
- Black stands better
- White has a decisive advantage
- Black has a decisive advantage
- Balanced position
- Good move
- Excellent move
- Bad move
- Blunder
- Interesting move
- Dubious move
Introduction

*The root presupposes everything else* – Henri Matisse

The starting position of a chess game is the same for all of us. Upon this blank canvas we all project our stylistic world view – either peaceful and cautious, or adventurous and quick to initiate conflict. Our styles reflect exactly that which we love and that which we fear. When a naturally aggressive player sees complications arising, he or she thinks: ‘Hooray, an adventure!’ To a player like me, the concept of complication means looking into the face of a sinister stranger I don’t trust and don’t like on first sight.

**The parable of e2 versus e7**

There is one type of person whose natural instinct is to push to the front line of an emergency situation. I am not one of those people.

At age 8, if memory serves, I reached the following position as White in my third grade lunch room chess club, against a 10-year-old rival. I played the most natural move on the board, which was e2, covering my second rank against his … d2 ‘threat’. At this point, the teacher ‘tisk tisked’ my move, when he revealed: ‘Why not play your rook to the seventh rank instead? You would be a much stronger player if you would stop playing like such a sissy.’ For me this was an epiphany on par with that time Sir Isaac Newton got bonked on the head with an apple (I learned this in second grade science class). The teacher’s humiliating ‘sissy’ pronouncement induced the following physical effects on me:

1. I froze like a startled deer, followed by a gasping intake of breath and a pounding roar in my ears.
2. I experienced the odd feeling that the room receded before my eyes, and thought the power and lights went out, when in reality it was just the blood draining from my head.
3. My half-eaten chutney and cheese sandwich plunged to the floor from my now nerveless fingers, making an unpleasant ‘Splat!’ sound, which further offended my already offended ears.

It had never even occurred to me to take an aggressive stance by placing my rook on e7. I realized to my horror that I was a dove (which is this book’s euphemistic replacement for the teacher’s far ruder word ‘sissy’). But I could cure myself, right? I would go over Morphy’s and Tal’s games, and solve millions of tactical puzzles which would release my inner hawk, and everything would be fixed, right?

Well, not quite. Today, almost a half century later, I can’t truthfully call myself anything but a dove, since my brain is designed for the abstract of logic and planning, rather than specificity of calculation. When it comes to our negative stylistic tendencies it’s a matter of unlearning, rather than learning to live with our limitations. I still struggle with issues of aggression – or the lack of it – over the board and a transformation to a pure hawk would be as unlikely as a left-handed person who suddenly decides to switch to the majority right hand. The difference is today I’m aware of my weaknesses, and adjust accordingly.

This book is mainly for the doves out there, who seek to reduce their natural tendencies and want to move closer to hawk status. Essentially, the purpose of this book is for you to reflect deeply at your own style, and correctly gauge where you stand. Are you lopsided (which is by far the most likely statistic)? Or are you a balanced player?
Now it may strike you that a player with my style advising you on how to play more aggressively is much the same as the chicken-hawk politician who dodged military service in his youth, and now, in old age, is pro war in every possible situation. I’m not promulgating an instant-aggression cure to the doves who read this book. Instead, my point is that exact knowledge of where you stand stylistically can be weaponized. For instance, if my opponent is a tactical-leaning IM, then I know not to enter an open position with crowded pieces on the board, since he (or she) will out-hawk me virtually every time. But if I can lure him or her into an ending, or a simplified, logic based position with little scope for tactics, I increase my chances to win exponentially. When I read a chess book and follow the writer’s advice, which may be inappropriate to my style, if I follow it blindly and lose, am I not evoking the Nuremberg Defense?: ‘I was just following orders.’

This book isn’t about my offering you advice. Instead, it is comprised of a series of questions about your style which you should ask yourself if you feel that your style is too heavily weighted toward static factors, like material considerations and structure, over dynamic factors like piece play, initiative and attacking chances. I’m not asking you to play chess with divided loyalties. Our goal is to interpret the chess board’s reality with clear, unbiased eyes, since sometimes we must play in the position’s attributes, despite our stylistic inclination to do exactly the opposite. We are forced to obey the position’s commands and continue to play in a coldly factual way.

Another motivation for writing this book is for the natural strategist to understand the inclinations and mental processes of aggressive tacticians to survive their assaults and dirty attempts to confuse the innocent – us. In most positions the club player will only look for the ‘how’ of the position. It’s every bit as important to ascertain the ‘why?’ of our opponent’s motivation.

Is there such a thing as a perfectly balanced player?
The answer is yes, but such players are exceedingly rare. Having taught for nearly four decades now, I can testify that the vast majority of my students are either hawk or dove, with most of them at least 60% – 40%, veering one way or another. Bobby Fischer, to my mind, was a perfectly balanced player, stylistically. He was Capablanca and Alekhine merged into a single mind. I on the other hand am an extreme example of an approximate 80% dove, which doesn’t leave much hawk in me!

The stigma of our styles
The positional player suffers from an image problem, since the dove’s play is virtually a negation of everything society considers noble and honorable in a soldier. We tend to be viewed as the teeth-chattering, knee-knocking type, reminding people of Lou Costello when he accidentally bumps into the Mummy or Frankenstein. At the 2016 Rio Olympics, U.S. Soccer team captain goalkeeper Hope Solo allowed Sweden’s ball to get past her during the sudden death shootout. The U.S. lost the game 4-3. Solo, in a fit of hawkish sour grapes, contemptuously said of her defensive-minded Swedish rivals, who had held the higher ranked American team at bay in the game, and basically beat them in the sudden death shootout – the soccer equivalent of a technical ending: ‘We played a bunch of cowards. The best team did not win today.’ We doves must face the reality that defensive play is looked down upon, while attacking, aggressive play is viewed as virtuous. Mikhail Tal gathered far more chess fans than Tigran Petrosian, and it will always be that way.

What is the difference between a hawk and a dove?
It’s annoying that there is one set of rules for hawks, who act like people who watched too many Quentin Tarantino movies – namely, no rules – and another set for us law abiding doves. First, we must ask ourselves: just what constitutes bravery? And is bravery a vice or a virtue in chess?

In most chess games, there comes a point where we must decide if we should hold back, or go for it. It’s human nature to withdraw into the comfort of our narrow world views. The facts may be plainly laid out, but with opposing dedications of optimism and pessimism. We become our own enabler when we reinforce our own incorrect assumptions. When we land in positions alien to our skills, it is almost as if we are robbed of a dimension of ourselves, playing with two dimensional skills in a 3D position. Hawk and dove are raised in divergent chess environments by the books we read and the heroes we worship. Hawks tend to love the Great Romantics, and players like Alekhine, Tal and Kasparov, while players like me studied and were influenced by Nimzowitsch, Capablanca, Petrosian, and Karpov. This divergence leads to the two camps’ unique perspectives, which can also distort a position’s reality. For example, in an identical position an attacker may think: ‘Oh boy! My sacrifice will lead to mate!’ while a positional player, his opponent, thinks: ‘My opponent’s sacrifice is ridiculously unsound. Bring it on!’ Both can’t be simultaneously correct.

The following is a list of some of the strengths, fears and weaknesses of both camps. Of course these are just tendencies, not absolutes, since on occasion, we have all seen doves attack brilliantly, and hawks produce subtle positional games:

1. Hawks interpret simplification as a concession, while doves view it with relief.
2. It saddens my heart to see hawks pick a fight with us kindly doves, on the flimsiest of pretexts. Hawks are willing to pay for initiative/attack with either material or strategic concessions. Doves tend to be far less concerned about their king safety,
and often willingly allow the opponent an initiative, which we consider a fickle entity, susceptible to sudden alteration, if in return we receive material compensation (even though an avaricious nature is frowned upon in society) or strategic concessions, which we guard with reverent care. We tend to be weak attackers (attacks should be the closest thing to religious exultation, yet in us they produce fear), who get tempted into backpedaling. Honestly, when I’m forced to hand over material to attack, the biblical Job’s quote ‘That which I feared most has come upon me’ is the truth.

3. A hawk’s instinct is to fight, while a dove’s is to evade.

4. The hawk tends to crave winning a brilliant game, while the dove’s philosophy is: the inartful is just fine, if in the end it produces a win. We refuse to embroider when the simple path is available. One side stresses a commitment to perfection, while the other goes with the practical.

5. For their opening choices, hawks tend to prefer complex hair-trigger openings, like King’s Gambit and Dragon or Najdorf Sicilians, which natural strategists may view as unnatural as a sociopath’s smile. Strategists operate better in closed or simplifying openings like London System, Flank Openings, Slav, Caro-Kann or French, since tactically we are small forest animals, wary of predators, and who fear standing out in the open. We view any opening which produces great complications with instinctive suspicion and our goal in the opening tends to be to reduce our opponent’s entertainment options as much as possible.

6. When risk/opportunity arises, the hawk, a champion of gallant causes, is quick to invest in decisive action, although they are completely unaware of the saying Patience is a virtue. My own tendency in such situations is to slip into a kind of Hamletesque dithering, and a tortoise on valium would be regarded as more energetic than one of my attacks, or attempts at seizing the initiative. Our silence represents a subconscious evasion, and we are masters of broken promises since we often start risky projects and then back down. We are full of contradictory forces, where we are willing to gamble, but secretly hope to accomplish it without any risk! Now you may cite a dozen logical objections to passive play, none of which I can logically contradict. But why do we do it? All I can answer is the heart wants what the heart wants. The naturally aggressive player can be accused of too much haste, while we strategists can be cited for too little.

7. Hawks tend to lose via overextension, while doves lose by drifting aimlessly, where we die a kind of slow, genteel death via inaction.

8. Strategists like me tend to think in abstractions, which is also why I tend to stink in detailed phases (like winning a won game) where absolute precision is required.

9. Tacticians feel constrained in closed games, while we strategists lose our bearings in open games, since we lack the familiar pawn-to-piece landmarks which strategically orient us.

10. When it comes to sacrificing – materially or strategically – doves refuse to play it on a hunch. Unless we see a clear outcome, we refuse to speculate.

11. The meek dove is willing to suffer the indignity of a setback in the present, if in turn it benefits in the long run. The dove is willing to take humbling – even degrading – action, if it means a greater likelihood of survival, while the gallantly imperious hawk is more prone to favor a last-stand approach, since pride tends to veer to violence when it is mocked.

12. I hate it when I come down with that incoherent flu-like haze, also known as the unclear position, which often is unclear only to me, but not my hawk opponent, who tends to comprehend the essence of the chaos. In clear positions, I proceed with a wisdom rivaling that of King Solomon.

13. Natural tacticians drive with their gas tanks perilously close to empty, while positional players never allow the tank to go below the halfway mark.

14. To sum it up: when hawks lose, they regret their risky actions; when doves lose, we regret avoiding risky actions, since in doing so, we simultaneously squandered opportunity.

The games selection for the book
The games I chose for the book were mostly ones I played over and was deeply influenced by in my youth. These masterpieces are awkwardly juxtaposed with some of my own non-masterpiece efforts which I added to try and show the reader just what a dove thinks about during a chess game.

Acknowledgements
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May the hawks who read this book drink more chamomile tea and learn to calm down on the chess board, and may we doves stand our ground against them, without trepidation.
Janis Joplin’s lyrics felt appropriate as the chapter title. The question often arises: when should we trade in our initiative for material? In this chapter we discuss our reverence or apathy toward the initiative. From my experience, aggressive players tend to overestimate initiative, while strategists tend to downplay it, giving heavier consideration to static factors, like extra material and superior structure. The question we ask ourselves in this chapter: should we settle for the inartful, if it leads to a certain win? As a natural strategist, my inclination is ‘Yes!’ We examine the vexing question of if-and-when we should sell our precious initiative for material or strategic gain.

KP 3.7 – C41
King’s Pawn Openings
Paul Morphy
Duke of Brunswick and Count Isouard
Paris 1858

We begin with a night at the opera. I speak of perhaps the most famous chess game ever played, between Paul Morphy and a pair of aristocrat amateurs, the Duke of Brunswick and Count Isouard, at a Paris Opera box during Morphy’s European tour. I played this game over first when I was nine years old, and I remember being deeply puzzled over Morphy’s chivalrous decision on his eighth move. In this chapter we examine that point in the game where our opponent offers material. The questions arise: when should we accept, and when should we decline?

1.e4 e5 2.f3 d6
Very appropriate. The two Frenchmen honor their great forefather by playing Philidor’s Defense. It was probably fortunate that Philidor was already dead, since his countrymen’s subsequent play would have made him cringe in shame.

3.d4 g4?!
The worst of Black’s many responses. Better are 3…exd4, 3…f6, and 3…d7.

4.dxe5!
Simple chess. Morphy relies on the principle *Fan a development lead by opening the position*. The move induces an immediate and serious concession from Black.

4…xf3?!
Now White gets bishop pair, development lead and light square control, after only four moves. I quote Cole Porter: ‘Who could ask for anything more?’

A) 4…dxe5? 5.xd8+ xxd8 6.xe5 and White wins a pawn for absolutely zippo compensation;

B) I think Black’s best chance is to continue in gambit fashion with 4…c6!, hoping White bites on d6, when at least then Black gets some development for the pawn. White can also try 5.b5 (5.exd6 xd6 offers Black some – but not enough – compensation for the pawn) 5…dxe5 6.d5! f6 7.xe5+ e7 8.xc6+ bxc6 when Black gets a bit of compensation for the pawn with a development lead.

5.xf3 dxe5 6.c4
There is something deeply joyful in threatening a vulgar mate in one, in the Cro-Magnon fashion of our ancestors.

6…f6?

When we sense the presence of a combination, yet can’t find it, there are only three reasons why:
1. A combination simply doesn’t exist.
2. The combination exists, but is so deeply embedded that it essentially represents (to a human, not to a comp!) an insoluble mystery.
3. The combination exists, all the onlookers see it instantly, except one (in this case two!) incompetent person: (insert your name).

This is a case of number three on the list, where the Duke/Count miss a simple double attack. This obvious/weak developing move only makes matters worse. Black should have played more actively with 6…f6 7.b3 d7! 8.xb7 b8 when Black gets the consolation of a development lead for the missing material.

7.b3!

Morphy simultaneously attacks f7 and b7.

7…e7!

Well, at least the Duke/Count find one good move this game. Now, White has a choice – one noble, the other ignoble, yet practical. Should he grab b7 and enter a won ending? Or should he go for the glory, continue developing, banking on his overwhelming development lead? When I first played through this game, I was completely stunned by Morphy’s decision.

8.c3!

Noble it is. Sometimes it feels as if there is one set of rules for a genius, and another set of rules for the rest of us. Here arise the questions: do you play chess to create a beautiful game? Or do you play chess to win? Morphy arrives at a solution. But does it represent the position’s truth? My nine-year-old mind experienced serious confusion at this point.

Morphy refused to chop the hanging b7-pawn, all in the holy name of initiative. Well, the annotators all offered their rationalizations: Lasker said that Morphy was an artist, not a butcher, and others praised the valor of his decision not to sully himself with mere material.

But is his decision objectively correct? To me, Morphy's noble irrational decision to decline the material is slightly irrational as well. Yet I can’t help but wonder: maybe as a nine-year-old, I should have approved of Morphy’s decision, since it offers deep reverence to initiative. And isn’t underestimation for the opponent’s initiative the bane of most strategic players? It certainly has been in my case.
White had two very tempting alternatives:

A) 8.\texttt{xb7!} To my safety-first, practical way of thinking, this is clearly White’s best decision. 8…\texttt{b4+!} (guilt can be a beneficial state, when it spurs us into repentance to take action to right past wrongs we committed) 9.\texttt{xb4} \texttt{xb4+} 10.\texttt{c3} \texttt{d6} 11.\texttt{f3}

Let’s take stock:
1. In this version White is up a clean pawn in an ending.
2. White owns the bishop pair.
3. White’s c4-bishop is unopposed and dominates the light squares, which for Black is a communicable disease, likely to spread from square to square.
4. Black’s inferior structure is riddled with a pair of isolanis on the a- and c-files.
Conclusion: the ending for Black is a Petri dish of strategic rot. Another key point is that Black’s game is totally devoid of any trace of the initiative in this version, unlike line B.

Morphy had access to another tempting, yet probably incorrect idea:

B) 8.\texttt{xf7+?!} Deflection. Now Black lacks access to the queen swap on b4. However, this overly-clever material grab comes with a heavy price – loss of initiative: 8…\texttt{xf7+!} 9.\texttt{xb7} \texttt{c5} 10.\texttt{c8+} \texttt{e7} 11.\texttt{h8} \texttt{xf2+!}

All of a sudden White, although up materially, finds his king under attack while he lags in development, offering Black at least decent practical chances. The greedy computer still likes White, but no rational human voluntarily gives away the initiative for just a scrap of a material lead like this.

So we reject line B. But the question remains: Why on earth did Morphy reject the completely won ending stemming from line A? I’m certain that 90% of modern GMs and IMs would have taken this safe, sure route to victory, and the glory-seeking 10% who agree with Morphy’s route clearly played over too many Tal games as children! Of course the chess world is grateful to Morphy that he didn’t take the practical and objectively superior route, since he produced a model display of how to exploit a development lead, and ended with a sparkling combination. If you are a chess dove/pure strategist like me, what the reader should take away from this chapter is the thought: ‘Maybe I should offer more respect to the initiative, than my present level.’

8…\texttt{c6}
Covering \texttt{b7}, while denying White access to \texttt{d5}.

9.\texttt{ag5}
Morphy develops, while pinning the f6-knight.

9...b5?
The reader may note that French chess has come a long way from the painfully incompetent Duke and Count of the past, to GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of the present. Maybe this pawn stab was played for comedic effect. Black’s move choice borders on crazy. Not tin-foil hat/Bobby Fischer-crazy, but close, since it allows Morphy an obvious and powerful sacrifice on his next move. Team Duke/Count, both masters of fake nonchalance, had to try the admittedly depressing line 9...a6 10.xa6 bxa6 11.0-0-0 b4 – a move played with the thought: entering a nauseating ending is the lesser evil, when juxtaposed with getting immediately mated in the opening.

10.axb5!
Of course. What a pleasure when obligation and inclination match. Such a sacrifice hardly requires calculation. Our eyes simply declare: ‘It will work!’ Did Duke/Count actually believe Morphy would be too afraid to sacrifice? Or did they not even consider the sacrifice?

10...cxb5 11.xb5+ bd7
Black voluntarily enters a second pin. Duke/Count won’t survive 11...d8 12.0-0-0+ c7 and now the rook lift 13.d3! is decisive.

12.0-0-0

12...d8
Evading the d7 pin with 12...0-0-0?? is immediately fatal. 13.a6+ c7 14.b7 is mate!

13.xd7!
Lazy people, by definition, are also efficient people. Morphy refuses to waste an iota of time by doubling rooks on the d-file. For the record, also winning is the mundane line 13.d3 although this time consuming extra step isn’t necessary. I’m deeply ashamed to confess to you that this chickenish move would most likely be my choice. Why? It is risk free, since it isn’t possible to miscalculate in this version: 13...b4 14.hd1 xb3 15.axb3 c7 16.xf6 xf6 17.xd7+ with two extra pawns in the ending for White.

13.xd7 14.xd1 e6
14...d6 prevents the coming mate but is obviously hopeless for Black after 15.xd7+ x7d7 16.xd6 xd6 17.b7! 0-0 18.xd7.
For the one percent of you who actually haven’t seen this game, try and solve the finish. White to play and force mate in two moves:

16. \texttt{\texttt{b8}+!}\n
Attraction/clearance/queen sacrifice.

16… \texttt{\texttt{xb8}}

I’m certain Duke/Count – whose dual lives were probably shortened by a year each due to this game – saw the coming mate in one, but their spite-capture may be an attempt to deaden the pain of failure with one last act of defiance.

17. \texttt{\texttt{d8}}

Mate! We chess players never forget the image of the final position, which dances like floaters in our eyeballs after a camera flash. If this position doesn’t teach beginners to develop rapidly in the opening phase, then nothing will. Down a queen and a piece, White delivers mate.

Okay, fine, shower the board with gold coins, yet this continues to evade the true question: was Morphy’s decision to develop rather than enter a pawn up ending on his eighth move an objectively correct decision, or was it a form of Great Romantic bravado? My vote goes with the latter theory. If you are a natural attacker, you may argue that the eighth move decision is one which should be a 50/50 proposition, based on one’s style. But in reality, much like when you accidentally drop your morning toast, doesn’t it fall butter-side-down 100% of the time? So the moral of this chapter is: respect the initiative, but balance this respect with practical considerations.

SI 39.7 – B44
Sicilian Defense
Paul Morphy
Adolf Anderssen
Paris m 1858 (9)

1.e4 c5 2.\texttt{\texttt{f3}} \texttt{\texttt{c6}} 3.d4 cxd4 4.\texttt{\texttt{xd4}} e6 5.b5 d6 6.\texttt{\texttt{f4}}

Morphy provokes a hole on d5. The Great Romantics relied on piece play, rarely opting for a bind, so a non-developing/space-gaining move like 6.c4 was probably not even a consideration for Anderssen.
Sure. Let’s fall behind in development against Paul Morphy. What could go wrong? It’s unwise to play only aware of our position’s virtues, while remaining oblivious of our sins. This is an unjustified attempt to seize the initiative. Such moves are designed for emotional effect, more than actual efficiency. It’s one thing to fight for the initiative, and quite another to lash out wildly while ignoring principle (which the Great Romantics did on a routine basis), without a rational fear of terrible repercussions. This move is in gross violation of the principle *Avoid opening the game or creating confrontation when lagging in development.*

7…f6 is the move every club player would find today: 8.e1c3 a6 9.a3 b5 10.d5 and now Black can either play 10…b8 or chop the knight, with a fully playable game.

8.e1c3!

d5 is a serious issue for Black.

8…f4
Anderssen brushes aside White’s d5 and c7+ implication with lofty contempt, creating a threat of his own.

A) After 8…a6 the attack on White’s b5-knight is ignored with 9.e5 axb5 10.b6. An old grievance reappears. Just as in the game, White invades c7, forking, with advantage;

B) 8…f6 9.g5 is also heavily in White’s favor, since he threatens 10.xf6 gxf6 and then a queen check on h5.

9.e5

Doesn’t occupation of a weak square make us feel like we attend an exclusive nightclub opening? Morphy correctly avoids retreating his bishop by creating an even greater threat.

9…fxe3

The consistent move.

10.e1bc7+ f7
White must make a critical decision:

A) Grab material with 11.\texttt{xa8} and hope to stabilize and consolidate;

B) Go for one of those everything/nothing deals by playing all out for mate by developing rapidly with 11.\texttt{f3+} and 12.\texttt{c4}.

Which one would you play?

11.\texttt{f3+}?!  
White’s queen, pining for Black’s king, is a Romeo-like suitor beneath the lover’s window, except in reverse. Morphy overestimates his attacking chances, predictably opting for the developmental path, while spurning material gain. Just like last game he should have cashed out with 11.\texttt{xa8! exf2+ 12.\texttt{xf2 h4+ 13.g3 xe4 14.g2}. White is well developed and should comfortably consolidate his extra exchange, since the a8-knight escapes.

11…\texttt{f6 12.c4}  
Threat: 13.\texttt{xf6+}. It’s too late to get retroactively greedy with 12.\texttt{xa8??} since Black seizes a decisive initiative with 12…\texttt{d4 13.d1 g4! 14.c1 (14.f3 xd5 15.exd5 xf3+! 16.gxf3 h4+ 17.e2 f2+ 18.d3 and now Black has access to the crushing clearance/attraction shot 18…e2!) 14…a5+ 15.c3 e2. White is completely busted in a position which is almost a parody of his earlier development lead.

12…\texttt{d4!!}  
Hey, I just said: ‘Threat: 13.\texttt{xf6+}’! Anderssen, remaining unflinchingly calm in the face of an existential threat, ignores his opponent’s discovered check and fights for the initiative with an attack on Morphy’s queen. I wish a scientist from that era had had the foresight to scrape skin cells from Anderssen and Morphy, so that we in the present day were given the opportunity to create a cloning program.

13.\texttt{xf6+ d5! 14.xd5+}
Oh mein Gott im Himmel! What the hell is going on? The comp unhelpfully assesses at 0.00 – dead even!

In this position Black has a choice of three moves:

A) Pseudo-sacrifice his queen by chopping on d5;
B) Move Black’s king to g6;
C) Move the king to e7.

There is only one correct path for Black. Let’s test our tactical intuition. Which one would you play?

14...g6?

The reason this gets only one question mark, rather than two, is that the unnaturally correct plan is only seen by a comp. Right now only amorphous shapes lurk within the black king’s peripheral vision, with no clearly defined menace. This will soon change.

This is the worst of Black’s three choices. Even Anderssen’s vast computative abilities are not enough to orient himself within the chaos, and all hope of absolution vanishes.

A) 14...xd5?! also leaves White on top after 15...fxd5+...xf3+ 16.gxf3 exf2+ 17...xf2 b8. Maybe Black’s bishops provide some degree of compensation, but I would take White, with an extra pawn and entrenched d5-knight;

B) Anderssen incorrectly rejected the counterintuitive jungle with 14...e7!!, the key idea of which is that in this version White lacks access to checks on Black’s king.

Black’s amazing king in this line, much like the non-Arnold Terminators, possesses the ability to be blown to smithereens and then magically reassemble. A human isn’t likely to find or even consider such a blatantly ugly move, which clogs Black’s development and offends our strategic sensibilities: 15...h5 (15...g8+?! d6! is in Black’s favor) 15...gxf6 16...f7+...d6 17...xa8...xe2+ 18...e2...d4+! A move missed by both Zukertort and Maroczy in their annotations, but in their defense, they lacked access to 3200 rated Komodo. Correct is 19...d3! (19...xe3?...h6+! 20...d3...d7 21...c4!...c6 – at some point the a8-knight falls and Black is the one who stands better: 22...c7! f5!! and Black is the one with the winning attack) 19...exf2 20...c4...h6 21...d5+...e7 22...f7+ with perpetual check.

15...h5+!

Now Black’s king is in deep trouble.

15...xf6
16.fxe3!
Principle: *Use all attacking resources when hunting the enemy king.* A brand new cast of characters is introduced into the story. Black won’t survive the open f-file, which allows White’s rooks access into the attack. How wonderful when we experience the ‘Eureka!’ effect, where we suddenly discover the solution to a vexing problem. Morphy avoids the following pitfalls:

A) 16. e8+?? xe8! 17. xe8 b4+ 18. c3 xe8, leaving White in a lost ending;
B) 16. f7+?? g5 17. xa8 h6! 18.0-0-0 e7 and Black escapes, since 19.fxe3 is met with the queen trapping 19... f8.

16... xc2+
Also hopeless are the lines:

A) 16... g6 17. h4+ g5 18. h5!;
B) 16... xc7 17.0-0 e7 18. f7+, picking up Black’s queen.

17. e2 1-0

The juice press of Black’s fears emerges in the line 17... xc7 18. af1+ e7 19. f7+ d6 (‘At least he means well,’ sighs Black’s queen, who has long realized she married a dolt) 20. xc7 xc7 21. c1 and Black doesn’t have nearly enough for the queen.
CHAPTER 2

Low expectations come with a high price tag

Why is this so? It’s because with low expectations, we say ‘No!’ to Opportunity. I remember showing the following game to students, and one of them said: ‘I can’t play like this! What is the point of trying to imitate great players, when I am unable to find the double exclams that they unearth?’ This is a fair question. One part of me completely agrees with his assessment. Playing through this game with the comp’s help gives me the disorienting sensation of speaking fluently in an incomprehensible alien language, through some technology I don’t understand.

My response was that he had fallen into the low expectations trap, where our fear resists entry into highly complex positions, due to a lack of confidence in our ability to find the correct move. The trick is to just keep entering them, ignoring our failures. Also, we should study games like this one, which, honestly, feel over our heads (well, at least over my head). Believe it or not, we get better and better in such disorientingly chaotic positions if we do. We won’t get better when we underestimate our resources and continually dodge such kill-or-be-killed situations. Let’s vow to at least try and reach for the impossible.

PU 9.15 – B07
Pirc Defence
Garry Kasparov 2812
Veselin Topalov 2700
Wijk aan Zee 1999 (4)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 f6 3.c3 g6 4.e3 g7 5.d2 c6 6.f3 b5 7.g2 bd7 8.xh6

This move isn’t so dangerous for Black when he hasn’t yet castled kingside, since his king shifts to the opposite side.

8…xh6! 9.xh6

The queen plays tag with a ghost, since Black’s king has no intention of hanging around in the center or kingside.

9.b7 10.a3 e5 11.0-0-0 e7 12.b1 a6

Topalov supports b5 to play for a future …c6-c5 break.

13.c1

Eyeing a5, via b3.

13..0-0 14.b3 exd4?! Topalov, also itching for action, initiates a minor central confrontation.

15.xd4 c5 16.d1 b6 17.g3

Kasparov understands that his bishop would be awkwardly posted on e2, so it seeks another diagonal.

17.b8 18.a5 a8 19.h3
19...d5!
Topalov has achieved his thematic central break and dynamic equality.

20. f4+ a7 21. he1 d4!
21...dxe4?! 22.fxe4 he8 23. d5! bxd5 24.exd5 d6 25. xe8! xe8 (25... xf4?? loses material to 26. e7+ b6 27.gxf4
d xa5 28. xf7 and Black can resign) 26. xf7+ c7 27. xc7+ xc7 28.e4 b6 29.b4 cxb4 30.axb4 bxc4 31.d6! d5
dxe5 e5 33. d4! with advantage to White in the ending, due to the dangerous passed d-pawn.

22. d5!?
Respect for chess laws is what separates the strategist from the bomb-tossing tactician, who constantly burns in a fever of impatience. When I play in Las Vegas or Reno, my wife Nancy forces me to risk 25 cents of my hard earned money in the slot machines, which I do with trembling hand. I don’t claim to understand the mind of a natural gambler, who, to my interpretation, submissively gives up free will, handing it over to capricious Luck. Now when Kasparov made this move, he couldn’t possibly have foreseen how the rest of the game would unfold. Yet he took the gamble. This is a profound object of contemplation for us doves, on the nature of risk in chess. Objectively, this move, the prelude to a startling rook sacrifice, is dubious, yet it is one of a natural hawk, who refuses to agree to the passive alternative, 22. a2. Kasparov probably felt that such a half measure is worse than not taking one at all.

22... bxd5 23.exd5 d6

White’s pistol is primed and cocked, ready to fire.

24. xd4!?
Strategists fear the painful consequence of risk, while natural tacticians like Kasparov weigh the rewards of risk-taking more heavily. This game suggests that a great player may substitute accuracy with pure intensity and then get away with it.

This sacrifice – which strikes us as either profoundly heroic, or astonishingly reckless – is Kasparov’s mind-blowing idea, which contains multiple interpretations. We arrive at that hazy grey place between the conjuring of an idea and the irrevocable intention to implement it, no matter how impractical, or how high the cost. On the one hand it is an incredibly deep combination, with bizarre mating patterns embedded, and on the other hand, nothing more than a colossal cheapo! Over the board, without the help of a computer, such moves are empirically untestable. You just play the move and then pray.

For the high cost of a rook, Topalov’s king is hunted for the remainder of the game. White’s problem: Black is by no means forced to accept the offer. Let’s be honest: a speculative rook sacrifice would never occur to the chess doves out there (me included) since we abhor mindless violence. We arrive at a pivotal moment: would you take White’s hanging rook, or is it...
better to decline?

24...cxd4??

In positions which require exact calculation, our ‘gut feeling’ is the last thing we should trust. Acceptance of the sacrifice represents the morphine which eases the pain, but also does nothing to cure the overall disease. There are too many moving parts for our addled brain to make sense of the position. You know that feeling when you bang out a quick, logical-looking move, and then are transfixed by a creeping horror that it was a double question mark? In one move Black goes from better, to completely losing.

It’s psychologically difficult to back down from such a challenge, yet it was crucial to decline the offer with the soberly brilliant 24...b6!!. Sometimes we are willing to pay a price for what we desire – but not the full price. This cool response insures Black the better side of an ending after 25.b4 xf4 26.xf4 xd5 27.xf7 exb4 28.axb4 xb4 29.b3 d5 when Black stands just a shade better in a virtually unlosable ending.

25.e7+!!

Perhaps Topalov had overlooked this brilliant deflection/mating net idea. He probably counted on the flawed line 25.xd4+? b6 26.e7+ d7! when Black is winning.

25...b6!

This time declining is obligatory:

A) 25...xe7?? 26.xd4+ b8 27.b6+ b7 28.c6+ a8 29.a7#;

B) 25...b8 26.xd4 Threatening mate on a7. Black is still unable to capture on e7, due to the 27.b6+ and 28.c6+ sequence: 26...d7 27.xd7 xd5 (if 27...xd7 28.xd7 xd7 29.xh8+ wins) 28.c4!! (this necessary adjunct cuts off ...a2+ discoveries) 28...bxc4 29.c6+ and White mates.

26.xd4+! xa5

Black is up a rook and piece and yet completely busted by the unfavorable geometry.

26...c5 27.xf5+ d6 28.e6+ xd5 (28...xa5?? 29.b4+ a4 30.c3 xd5 31.b2 forces mate) 29.b4 (threatening a mate in two, starting with 30.d4+) 29...c6 30.xf7 (threatening a nasty check on b7) 30...d1+ (30...b8 31.xc6 xc6 32.f4 and amazingly, Black is helpless to halt a queen check on d4 or e3) 31.b2 xf3 32.g7 hf8 33.f7! (White threatens 34.e5 and 35.c5 mate) 33.xf7 34.xf7 d5 35.c3 (threat: 36.e3+) 35...d4 36.xd4+ xd4 37.f6 and game over.

27.b4+ a4
Black’s deposed king is led through the streets in chains, where the cheering townspeople pelt him with rotten fruits, vegetables, eggs, and fresh animal dung.

28. c3?
Now it’s Kasparov’s turn to slip into incoherence. In such head-spinning positions, even a world champion’s range of perception is skewed from the position’s ultimate reality. This natural but incorrect move offers Black chances to escape.

28... a7!  b7 (28... xd5 29. c3  he8 30. b2  e2 31. c7! – the deflection shot wins) 29. xb7  xd5 30. b6! a5 31. a6  a8 32. e3!!  xa6 33. b2 axb4 34.axb4 and now the only way for Black to prevent mate is to offer a full queen with 34... a2+ 35. xa2  xb4+ 36. b2. Black has two rooks for the queen, yet his awful king’s position insures White’s victory.

30... xd5 29. a7  b7
On 29... d6 30. b2 (threatening to mate with a pawn, starting with 31. b3+) 30... d4 31. c3  b2+?!

30. xb7
Black’s queen can’t touch the rook, since she must watch over b3.

30... c4
30... he8! is perhaps a better try but still loses to 31. b6  a8 32. f1!!  e8 (32... e6 33. xe6 fxe6 34. b2 and there is no remedy to the coming mate threat on b3) 33. c8! (deflection) 33... d1+ 34. a2  d5+ 35. c4!!  xc4+ 36. xc4 bxc4 37. xf6  a7 38. c6  b5 39. c5+  b6 40. xc4 – Black is down two pawns and busted.

31. xf6  xa3 32. xa6+!
32. b2+?!  a4 33. a1+!  xb4 34. b2+  a5 35. c1!  c8 36. a3+  a4 37. xa4+  a4 38. xc8  xc8 39. xf7 is an ending assessed by the comp at 0.00.

32... xb4

It feels like White is out of useful checks and Black threatens mate with a rook check on d1. On the surface it appears that Black is on the verge of victory.

33.c3+!!
It’s a hateful thing to rob our opponent of a false dream. Kasparov finds one problem-like shot after another to keep his attack alive.

33... xc3
Forced, since his queen must keep watch over b5.

34. a1+!  d2 35. b2+  d1
Threat: 36... d2!. 35... e3 36. e7+ xf3 (or 36... d3 37. f1#) 37. g2# (‘The duration of one’s lifespan tends to be an unpredictable event’) consoles the queen. 36. f1!  
Another startling shot. 36... d2!  
If 36... xf1?? 37. c2+ e1 38. c7+ e2 39. xe2#. Did Topalov find a miracle save?

37. d7!! xd7 38. xc4 bxc4 39. xh8  
The rest was very easy. We logically ask: how on earth did Kasparov connect these two very distant dots, when he began his sacrificial binge on this 24th move?

39... d3 40. a8 c3 41. a4+ e1 42. f4 f5 43. c1 d2 44. a7 1-0

In a game like this, which may be a candidate for most brilliant attacking game ever played, we can read anything we wish into it and still be correct, since it defies category. So impossibly brilliant is Kasparov’s play, that it almost emits the contrived feel of a composed chess problem, rather than an actual contest.

OI 2.9 – A54  
Old Indian/Benoni Wall

Lev Polugaevsky  
Rashid Nezhmetdinov  
Sochi 1958

1.d4 e6 2.c4 d6 3.e3 c5 4.e4!?  
A somewhat radical approach, where White agrees to lose a tempo to secure central space. In my 1...d6 book, I came to the conclusion that Black got the better of the deal. I normally play 4. f3.

4... exd4 5. xd4 c6 6.d2  
This doesn’t really block the dark-squared bishop, which will be fianchettoed.

6... g6 7.b3 g7 8.b2 0-0 9.d3 g4!?  
More natural is 9... e8 when White must watch out for ... xe4 tricks.

10. ge2?!
This move allows Black to seize the initiative. White should have gone into damage control mode with 10. \( f3 \) \( g5 \) 11. \( e2 \) \( xB3+ \) 12. \( Axf3 \) \( d4 \) 13. \( d1 \). It’s psychologically difficult to play so many passive moves in a row. (13.0-0-0!? still appears to be slightly in Black’s favor, due to the presence of the towering d4-knight.) 13… \( e8 \) 14.0-0 with a playable position.

10… \( h4 \)

The queen scans the kingside for targets.

11. \( g3 \)

This move allows Black a future tempo gaining mechanism with …\( f7-f5 \) and …\( f5-f4 \). Perhaps 11.\( g3 \) is a better choice. Now 11… \( cE5 \) 12.\( gxh4 \) \( f3+ \) 13.\( d1 \) \( xf2+ \) 14.\( c2 \) \( xd2 \) 15.\( xd2 \) \( xh1 \) 16.\( xh1 \) looks okay for White.

11… \( gE5 \) 12.0-0-0?!

Nothing of worth eventuates from castling directly into our opponent’s attack. 12. \( e2 \) was necessary, but if this is the case, then White’s entire opening scheme must be deemed a failure.

12… \( f5! \)

An important moment. Nezhmetdinov prefers to push his initiative rather than pick up material with the mini-combination 12… \( g4 \) 13.\( h3 \) \( xf2! \) 14.\( gxf2?! \) (I suspect that Black feared this move, where White hands over his queen for an initiative. 14.\( xf2 \) \( h6 \) 15.\( c1 \) \( xg3 \) 16.\( e5 \) \( e2 \) 17.\( xh3 \) 18.\( c3 \) \( xc3 \) 19.\( xc3 \) \( e6 \) 20.\( xC7 \) \( ad8 \) leaves Black up a pawn in the ending) 14… \( d4 \) 15.\( xd4 \) \( xd4 \) 16.\( d5 \) \( f5! \) 17.\( xD4 \) \( xg3 \) 18.\( b3 \) \( h4 \) 19.\( xc7 \). The comp still prefers Black, but defending such a position makes us humans nervous.

13.\( f3?! \)

He should have played 13.\( exf5 \). Principle: Meet a wing attack with a central counter.

13… \( h6 \) 14.\( d1 \)

Also awful for White is the line 14.\( f4 \) \( g4 \) 15.\( h3 \) \( xg3 \) 16.\( hxg4 \) \( e5 \) 17.\( e2 \) \( fg4 \) and if 18.\( d5?? \) \( h4 \) when Black’s threat of 19… \( g3 \) is decisive.

14… \( f4?! \)

Move order issues represent the chicken-or-the-egg question of which comes first. In this case Black should have tossed in a bishop check on \( e3 \), and only then played …\( f5-f4 \): 14… \( e3+! \) gives Black a superior version of the game’s continuation after 15.\( h1 \) \( f4 \) 16.\( ge2 \) \( g5 \) 17.\( d5 \) \( g4! \) 18.\( g3 \) (18.\( xe3?? \) is ignored with 18…\( g3! \), which forces mate after 19.\( h3 \) \( xh3 \)) 18…\( fxg3 \) 19.\( xe3 \) \( d4 \) with a winning position for Black.

15.\( ge2 \) \( g5 \) 16.\( d5 \) \( g4! \)
Black ignores the threat to c7, which is far more energetic than the dovishly passive response 16...f7.

17.g3!

Polugaevsky rightly goes into desperation mode. He can’t allow Black to play 17...g3: 17...xe7?? g3 puts White’s king in a coffin and after 18.h3 xh3 is crushing.

17...fxg3?

Nezhmetdinov isn’t satisfied with 17...h3 18.exf4 xf4 19.xf4 xf4! 20.xe5 xe5 21.gxf4 xf3+ 22.xf3 gxf3 23.d2 f2+ 24.xf2 xf2+ 25.h1 h1+ 26.f1 xe4+ with good winning chances for Black, who is up a pawn.

18.hxg3 h3 19.f4

The assessment ‘unclear’ merely describes the limitations of the human mind. Picture yourself as Black in a tournament game. You must weigh resources consumed, against progress gained in your attack. Your e5-knight hangs, as well as the c7-pawn. How would you respond?

19...e6!

The only move, but a very strong one. Ask yourself: would you have fallen for 19...f3+? If so, you walked into White’s trap: 20.d2 h2+ 21.e3 Now Black’s queen is in grave danger due to the 22.h1 threat: 21...h5 22.h1 g6 23.xc7 White is up a pawn, with a strong initiative and with a perfectly safe king in the center of the board. This is exactly the kind of botched attack in which we doves specialize!

20.c2

20.fxe5?? xd5! (threat: 21...e3+) 21.c1 xe5 22.xh6 f3+ 23.f2 xe6 24.cxd5 e5+ 25.g2 h3+ 26.g1 f3+ 27.d2 d2+ 28.f4 xf4+ 29.gxf4 xd3 with a winning attack for Black.

20...f7

21.f2

This is a desperate bid for White’s king to reach safety by walking over to the queenside.

A) 21.fxe5?? xd5 22.c1 xe5 is similar to the above variation, favoring Black;

B) White should probably have tried 21.xe5! Principle: Remove as many of your opponent’s attackers as possible when under assault. 21...xe5 22.f2 h2+ 23.e3 xd5 24.xd5 White may survive and the comp calls it even.

21...h2+ 22.e3

White’s hard-to-catch king acts like one of those action movie kick-butt heroes who faces 12 assassins, and then announces: ‘I like my odds!’
22…xd5 23.cxd5 b4 24.h1

24.a3 xc2+ 25.xc2 h3 and now White is unable to play 26.h1?? (correct is 26.e5! dxe5 27.d3 but even then, White is in bad shape) due to 26…xf4+! 27.d4 g2 28.gxh4 f2+ 29.c3 e3+ 30.b4 d3+ 31.a4 xe4+ 32.d4 e8+ and Black wins.

Forces collide, more than interact, and the game of one-upmanship continues. Like most get-rich-quick schemes, White’s is of a dubious nature. We, as Black, are in a critical situation. Our queen is attacked, and behind it, our h6-bishop is loose. We face a certain drubbing if we are unable to come up with the correct attacking continuation. What would you play?

24…xf4!!

Apparently the buck has no intention of stopping here. We rarely get a second chance at a once in a lifetime opportunity. This dazzling queen sacrifice is both necessary and powerful. The transaction leaves Black in a state of queen-down material destitution, while leaving White’s king stark naked along a crowded street. The meek 24…g2?? hands White the game after 25.xh6 f3+ 26.d2. Black has no good path to continue the attack, and remains a piece down for nothing.

25.xh2

As the saying goes: ‘Be careful for what you wish for, since you may get it.’ There is no choice but to accept. If 25.gxf4?? xf4+ 26.xf4 xc2+ wins White’s queen.

25…f3++ 26.d4

White’s king is the equivalent of the underweight inmate who unwisely picked a fight with Mike Tyson, while he served his prison sentence for a rape conviction. Although an awful attacker for my rating, even I know that d4 is not such a great place for a king with so many black attackers remaining on the board.

26.g7!

The elderly bishop prods White’s surprised king in the butt with his cane. Black constructs a mating net, intending 27…b5! and 28…ec6, which is double checkmate.

27.a4

White blocks one mating net and falls into another.

A) 27.a3? b5! Principle: When hunting the enemy king, don’t chase him. Instead, cut off all avenue escape routes.

B) 27.gl1 is White’s strongest path of resistance, but still loses after 27…xg3 28.e2 f3 29.gl1 ed3+ 30.c4
27...c5+
Every possible attacking resource is utilized.

28.\textit{dxc6} \textit{bxc6}
Threat: 29...c5 mate!

29.\textit{d3}
Polu is like the battlefield doctor who grasps for the morphine he no longer has. This god-awful move is forced.

29...\textit{exd3+} 30.\textit{c4}

The position remains a quilt work of unanswered questions. Should we chop the bishop on b2, forking White’s queen and king? Or is there a superior path, leading to mate?

30...d5+
A strategist at heart would bail out with the winning but inferior line 30...\textit{xb2+}.

31.\textit{exd5} \textit{cxd5+} 32.\textit{b5} \textit{b8+} 33.\textit{a5} \textit{c6+} 0-1
34. a6
‘So all is forgiven?’ asks White’s king, in what has to be one of the dumbest questions of all time. What a wonderful sense of empowerment when we are offered multiple ways to execute our enemy.
Black has the delightful choice of three separate mates in one with 34... db4, 34... b6, or 34... c5.
Obey the position’s requirements, not your inclination

Some advice for us doves, who quake in fear when we are obliged to attack: just remember that cowardice and fear are not the same entity, since a hero may take risky but necessary action, even when afraid. When the position requires us to attack, force yourself to do so with immense gusto – even when you are not a stellar attacker. Holding back in such situations is akin to surrender.

In this chapter we look at two of my ‘attacking’ games. I place the quotation marks around the word, since for my rating I’m so painfully weak in this sector. The first game is a completely botched effort, and the second successful, against the same hawk opponent.

QP 6.6 – A46
Queen’s Pawn Openings
Cyrus Lakdawala
Dionisio Aldama Degurnay
San Diego rapid 2016

1.d4 ₁f6 2.₁f3 e6 3.c3 b6 4.₁g5
This is the Torre system, which mimics a Slav a move up as White, which is certain to infuriate my hawk opponent, an IM and the 2015 American Open co-champion.

4…₁b7 5.₁bd2 ₁e7 6.₁e3 c5 7.₁d3 d6 8.₁e2?

8…₁bd7
My opponent plays it safe, out of fear of my opening prep (despite what you may have heard, your writer isn’t completely incompetent in every phase of the game).

Aldama had seen GM Sevillano and IM Kiewra try a set-up involving 8…₁h6 9.₁h4 ₁g5!? 10.₁g3 ₁g4 11.₁e4 and both got into trouble. We look at these games in a later chapter.

9.₁h3
9.0-0!? is castling into it. I may try this in the next outing. I thought for certain he would try 9…₁h6 10.₁h4 ₁g5!? 11.₁g3. The comp prefers White, but such positions must be practiced thoroughly in the home lab, before attempting it over the board.

9…₁h6 10.₁h4 ₁c7
He is still waiting for me to castle kingside.

11.₁g3
Targeting the d6-pawn. Now the position looks more like a London System, than a Torre Attack.

11...a6 12.a4

Preventing the …b6-b5 expansion.

12...0-0

At last.

13.0-0

So I frustrated his attempts to reach some crazy opposite wings attack situation.

13...fe8 14.g2 f8 15.fd1!

Normally this rook is placed on e1. In this instance the idea was to get him nervous about defending the d6-pawn.

15...c6?!

The start of an incorrect plan. This overly ambitious idea upsets the position’s delicate equilibrium. Hawks tend to get restless in controlled positions, and initiate action even when the situation doesn’t call for it. Correct was 15...cxd4.

16.e4

I considered 16.b4!? but wasn’t sure how 16...d5 would play out. Komodo assesses this as favorable for White after

17.xfe8 18.xxd2 19.ab1 c7 20.dxe5 dxe5 21.xxe5 dxe5 22.c4 c6 23.a5. Black looks uncomfortable here, since a6 is weak, his e5-pawn is pinned, and White makes use of the c4-hole.

16...d5?!

I saw this idea coming and knew that my opponent seriously underestimated White’s attacking chances.

17.e5

So White owns kingside space, signaling a coming attack.

17...e4 18.e1 xd2

After 18...f5?! 19.exf6 gxf6 20.f1 Black’s king looks aired out and in danger.

19.xd2 c4?!

Consistent and probably incorrect, since the move removes all the pressure off my center and allows White to concentrate on a mating attack. The move is in violation of the principle Don’t close the center when attacked on the wing.

20.b1!

This move leaves c2 open for my queen. By now I sensed the joyful expectancy of victory of a contestant on the The Price is Right game show, hoping to score a new car, or an all expense paid vacation to Amsterdam.

20...b5

20...e7? The idea is to avoid weakening the king’s position by meeting c2 with ...f8. In this case White switches targets
with 21.\texttt{f4!}, threatening a decisive sacrifice on h6. Now if 21…\texttt{f8} 22.h4 and the coming \texttt{c2} forces a decisive weakening upon the black king’s pawn front.

21.\texttt{c2}

What happens when outside energy attempts to penetrate a self-contained system? The answer: all hell breaks loose. Black’s kingside is decisively punctured, as I attempt to tunnel my way into Fort Knox, one shovel full of dirt at a time.

21…\texttt{g6}

The move 21…\texttt{f5} follows the principle \textit{Counter in the center when assaulted on the wing}, yet it fails miserably. The principles don’t work 100% of the time. When followed, they merely increase our mathematical odds of success, since past precedence is on our side: 22.exf6 \texttt{xf6} 23.\texttt{e5} \texttt{c7} 24.\texttt{g6} \texttt{d6} 25.\texttt{f4} and there is no reasonable way to prevent the coming \texttt{xh6}.

22.h4

Intending h4-h5.

22…\texttt{h5}

This serious concession – more a coping mechanism than an actual defense – allows my knight into the attack. After 22…\texttt{g7} 23.h5 \texttt{f8} 24.\texttt{f4} \texttt{c7} 25.\texttt{h2!} (preparing to target h6 by transferring to g4) 25…\texttt{b4} 26.\texttt{g4} \texttt{h7} (26…\texttt{g5} 27.\texttt{e3} \texttt{a5} 28.\texttt{f1} \texttt{e7} 29.f4 rips open his king’s cover) 27.\texttt{d2} the h6-pawn falls and Black’s game collapses.

23.\texttt{g5} \texttt{e7}

Where are Macbeth’s three witches when you need their advice? After I have disposed of the preliminary steps, now comes the moment to strike. I analyzed both the piece sacrifice on f7 and also the even more violent line 24.g4!? In this case both are winning for White, but the 24.g4!? version is more complicated.

24.g4!? When indignation arises, it becomes almost impossible to remain silent. I didn’t merely want to win; I craved a slaughter. So your normally mild-mannered, accountant-like writer inexplicably begins playing like a deranged methed-out junkie, in search of someone to kill, just for the fun of it, perhaps in a futile attempt to circumvent the stigma of being a boring strategist. We doves should leave such moves to the Tals and Kasparovs of the chess world. When our attacking/initiative intuition is weak (as mine so painfully is), we should go with the clearest line, rather than the most dramatically tempting one. I have a feeling I wouldn’t have botched this game had I gone for the clearer, less flashy version 24.\texttt{xf7!} \texttt{xf7} 25.axb5 axb5 26.\texttt{xa8} \texttt{xa8} 27.\texttt{e6+} \texttt{g7} 28.\texttt{xe7}. I reached this point in my analysis, grossly misjudging it as unclear. I completely underestimated the
force and ease of White’s attack. I thought Black had chances to defend, but the comp says otherwise. For example: 28…c8 29. f4! e7 30. h6 f8 31. xg7 xg7 32. c3 and it’s time for Black to resign. This line is easy to play, unlike my crazy move choice in the game.

24…hxg4 25.h5 h6

Here I had intended to sacrifice my knight on f7, which is indeed winning. But my clock was low, and then I spotted an even more crushing mating idea, which I impulsively banged out:

26.hxg6??

In time pressure we animalize, in that we become creatures of instinct, rather than intellect. Sigh. Maybe some people just subconsciously crave suffering. I would have made a wonderful medieval monk, with such a penchant for self-flagellation on the chess board. This move, which reduces the attack’s fun potential by about 99.999 %, is a huge hallucination. Having botched so many promising attacks, I feel like I’m only one loss away from locking myself in the garage and allowing the car fumes to take effect. But upon further reflection, there are two problems with this plan:
1. My garage is packed full of crap and there is no way I can get my car in there.
2. I drive a hybrid, so it’s on fumeless electric mode when idling.
Crushing was my original intention: 26. xf7! xf7 27. xg6+ g7

I foresaw this position and unbelievably thought Black was okay, but Komodo contradicts, assessing at a whopping +6.23! 28. h7+! (I only analyzed the lame 28.h6 f8 29. g5 and even this is highly favorable for White) 28…f8 29. g6! e8 30. xf7 xf7 31. g6+ f8 32.h6 h8 33. h7 and game over.

26…xg5 27.g7
When I played this ‘winning’ move I actually thought he would resign. At this point – and I did this for dramatic effect for the benefit of the spectators – I gazed up at the ceiling, as if attempting to gather profound thoughts, when in reality I was certain I was about to deliver mate.

27...f5!

Dang. My pride did go a pinch lower after this fall. Suddenly Black’s king is given a clean bill of health. For some insane reason, I completely forgot he had this obvious response, after which White has given away a piece for no good reason. A lesser man would contemplate giving up chess and taking up checkers, but not your writer, who believes in the Easter bunny, the tooth fairy and Caissa’s (eventual) favor.

A) 27...f5! 28.exf6 xf6 29.e5 xf7 and White is just down a piece for nothing.

I had only foreseen the moronic lines:

B) 27...f8?? 28.gxf8+ xf8 29.h7 ee8 30.h5! d8 31.f4 with a winning attack for White.

C) 27...xg7?? 28.h7+ f8 29.h8#

0-1

CK 8.7 – B17
Caro-Kann Defense
Dionisio Aldama Degurnay 2526
Cyrus Lakdawala 2546
San Diego rapid 2014

1.e4 c6
My opponent leads the tournament by a half point and I’m desperate for the win. My opening choice? The Caro-Kann, where the dullard and the dullardess discover grace. Before you accuse me of chess quackery, please allow me to explain. My feeling is that natural strategists should play solid opening systems, even in must-win situations, since we tend to make fools of ourselves in ultra-sharp tactical openings. I cringe when I see one of my irresponsible/suicidal dove students bang out the Danish Gambit, and then go on to get slaughtered by their hawk opponent. I tell them to take charge of their lives and beg them to play openings suited to their stylistic disposition. Doves should not play openings which go against the gain of our natural styles, even when desperate for a win. If we excel in solid positions, then let’s weaponize dullness.

2.d4 d5 3.c3 dx4 4.e4 d7 5.g5
Blind obedience to chess fashions can lead one into suffocation of one’s natural creativity. When we do enter sharp, fashionable lines, we had better know the theory well – including the sub-variations.

My opponent predictably enters the sharpest possible line, designed for predation. Hawks almost never grovel when they need a draw. Aldama refuses to enter a drawish line like 5. e3 g6 6. xf6+. xf6.

5…g6
5…h6?! is met with 6. e6!.

6. d3 e6
6…h6?! once again walks into 7. e6!.

7. f3 d6

It’s unwise to get greedy against a hawk, by grabbing material in exchange for initiative and attack. So I didn’t even consider the line 7…h6?! 8. xe6! c7 9.0-0 fxe6 10. g6+ d8. White ends up with one pawn for the piece, but gets more than enough compensation from the fact that Black’s king is stuck in the center and his pieces are in a terrible tangle. In such situations, the practical difficulties of defense tend to be overwhelming. At the time of this writing, Black scores a sorry 27% from this position in my database.

8. e2 h6

9. e4

This time the sacrifice is completely unsound after 9. xe6? fxe6 10. g6+ c7 11.0-0 f8 12. d3 f7. Black unravels and White doesn’t get nearly enough for a piece.

9…xe4 10. xe4 c7

The modern interpretation, fighting for the crucial e5-square. In the 1990’s everyone, including me, played 10…f6.

11. d2
Last time Aldama tried 11. g4 f8 12. d2 and lost, so he tries something new.

11…c5? 11…b6 is Black’s main line, but I wanted to avoid his prep.

12.0-0-0?

He gets confused by my last move. Castling, although natural looking, is in reality ill adapted to his needs, since the coming …c5-c4 push gains time for Black and endangers White’s king. 12. e2 looks correct, preventing Black’s next move.

12…c4!
Securing d5, while costing White time. The move follows the gangster’s motto: if someone is coming for you, then be certain to get to him first.

13. \textit{f}1

White’s initiative goes kaput. This bishop may not have committed a crime, but can certainly be considered an accessory, having wasted two tempi with \textit{d}3 and then moving back to its home square. 13. \textit{e}2 is no improvement after 13... \textit{f}6 14. \textit{h}4 \textit{d}5. Black’s attack is obviously faster.

13... \textit{f}6

The knight’s sly winks and leering eyes are noticed by White’s prim/outraged queen.

14. \textit{e}2?!  

More accurate is 14. \textit{e}1!, fighting for control over the critical c3-square.

14...\textit{b}5 15. \textit{e}5 \textit{b}7 16.\textit{f}3!


16... \textit{e}5

The goal is to eventually play ...\textit{c}4-\textit{c}3.

17.\textit{c}3 \textit{0-0}

To make the claim that doves are competent in opposite wings attack positions is the same as the priest opening his sermon with profanities. Yet there is a message within the message: in this case I am perfectly willing to enter an opposite wings attack, since my opponent generously offered me a head start by losing tempi in the opening. Of course, for a hawk, castling on opposite wings is a Pavlovian cue to go bonkers, but in this case White is so preoccupied with his own king that he just never got the chance to launch his own attack.

18.\textit{g}4

White’s attack is slow, to the point of non-existent. A more defensive minded player would be more inclined to forget about attacking and prepare to dig in for the coming storm with 18. \textit{b}1, which in a sense is an admission that White has reached the abort-mission stage of frustration.

18...\textit{f}6! 19. \textit{e}g6

This knight actually gets in the way of his pawn storm.

19...\textit{fe}8 20.\textit{h}4 \textit{f}7!
Remove the opponent’s target and we starve the flame of an object to consume. This idea introduces disharmony into White’s camp by turning my multiple enemies against one another. By forcing White to secure his knight with h4-h5, Black misaligns White’s attacking chances by removing the g4-g5 pawn storm mechanism.

21.h5 b4

I’m a really wonderful attacker when all the moves are completely obvious! The singular goal is to rip open the White king’s cover.

22.cxb4

A) White won’t survive 22.e1 ab8;

B) The line-opening pawn grab 22.xc4? is suicide after 22…bxc3 23.bxc3 ec8 24.b3 ab8 and White’s position collapses.

22.ac8 23.c3 xb4 24.xb4

White can’t maintain the bishop on c3:

A) 24.d2?? xc3 25.bxc3 a3+ 26.b1 xf3 and White can resign;

B) 24.c2 c7 25.g2 a5 There are too many attackers and not nearly enough defenders to save White’s king.

24…xb4 25.a3 d5

…c4-c3 is coming and White’s king is stripped.

The law of Occam’s razor states: When you have a choice of solutions to your problem, your best and safest bet is to go with the simple, clear path. So maybe I should have gone for the clearer line 25…d3+ 26.b1 d5 27.xd3 cxd3 28.xd3. Black is up the exchange and still attacking.

26.h2

A desperate attempt to laterally lift a defender to the queenside.

26…c7 27.e1

27.b3?? loses instantly to 27…c2! and now:

A) 28.d2 c3 29.d3 a2+ 30.b2 c1+;

B) 28.e1 c7 29.d2 b6 30.b2 c3 and White is crushed;

C) 28.d3 a6

27…c7!

The queen returns to the attack with a tempo gain on the h2-rook.

28.f2

28.c2?? loses to 28…cxb2+.

28…cxb2+ 29.xb2 xc1 30.xd3

30.c1 b6+ 31.a1 b3 is decisive.

30…a4+ 31.b1

White’s king fervently wishes he were somewhere – anywhere – else. On 31.a1 c1+ 32.xc1 xc1+ 33.a2 d5+ wins.

31…d5 32.f4 b8+ 33.a1 ec8

Threatening a mate in two moves with 34…c1+.

34.d1 d6

Dance! This forces the rook back to d3.

35.d3 b3!

Interference. a3 can only be defended at a too-heavy cost.
36. a2xa2 37. cxa2 c2+ 38. a1 bb2 0-1
39. g5 a2+ 40. b1 cb2+ 41. c1 a1 mate.

The moral of this game: it’s okay for us doves to gamble on a reasoned probability – but let’s make certain that the odds are in our favor. We are capable of attacking competently, as long as we are given a head start, and are not obliged to find double exclaims!
When should we weaken our structure in exchange for attack or initiative?

When I weaken my structure for an initiative or attack, I’m often uncertain if I’m going overboard, or if it’s a sensible risk. Am I squandering that which matters most, for something enduring, or am I agreeing to weaken for just the transient fling of a temporary initiative?

In this game Lasker takes on a pawn structure which would make most of us doves exceedingly nervous, and yet he succeeds confidently. Then, in the following game against Altounian, I refuse to weaken my position in any way, and quickly land into difficulties, due to my unwillingness to take risk.

QG 13.4 – D37
Queen's Gambit Accepted
Emanuel Lasker
Geza Maroczy
Paris 1900

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6
2...dxc4 is the normal route into the Queen’s Gambit Accepted.
3.c3 f6 4.f3 dxc4!? 5.e3
5.e4 can be met with 5...b4.
5...c5 6.xc4 a6 7.a4
This weakening/aggressive move suppresses ...b7-b5 at the cost of offering Black a hole on b4. Such moves make doves cringe, since we hate to create concrete pawn weaknesses for abstract/noble ideals, like initiative and attack.
7...c6 8.0-0 cxd4 9.exd4
Lasker, a notable hawk, is completely at ease in taking on an isolani, coupled with a hole on b4. The dove’s argument against it is that if we had White’s position, we would bungle our initiative/attack, and then suffer a miserable ending or late middlegame, where we are left defending our multiple weaknesses.

9...e7 10.e3
I know this is going to sound ridiculous, but when I showed dove students this game, the majority wanted to immediately eliminate their isolani with the painfully unambitious move 10.d5, which, although not intrinsically incorrect, openly admits to the opponent: ‘I am a hopeless attacker, so why even try?’
10...0-0 11.e2 a5
I would be more inclined to keep the queen where she sits and develop with something like 11...b4 12.e5 d7.
12.fd1 d8
This move adds pressure to d4, at the cost of slightly weakening f7. Why does f7 matter? It is one of White’s thematic sacrificial squares in QGA isolani positions.
13.ac1 b4?!
Maroczy is intent on domination of d5 and b4, at the same time allowing Lasker e5.
13...d5 is a safer and probably wiser alternative.
14.e5 fd5?!
The wrong knight. Maroczy, in typical dove fashion, underestimates White’s coming kingside attack by voluntarily moving
defenders away from his own king. Black should play 14…\(d7\), intending to reinforce f7 with a future \(\ldots e8\).

15.\(b3\)

When we are confused, we only make matters worse when we attempt to hide our confusion. Tempi matter, and we can only manipulate the variables so much. Worried about f7, Black negates his previous 14…\(d8\) with a time-wasting reversal, retreating the rook to its originally castled state at f8. If such a move is necessary, then it suggests deep problems with Black’s position already. Alternatives:

A) 15…\(\text{xe3}\) 16.\(\text{exe3}\)! (16.fxe3 \(c6\) looks okay for Black) 16…\(\text{h6}\) 17.\(\text{f3}\) \(f8\) Now White applies the principle Create confrontation when leading in development: 18.d5! is in White’s favor;

B) 15…\(d7\) 16.\(d2!\) \(b6\) 17.a5! and now:

B1) 17…\(a7??\) loses a piece to 18.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 19.\(\text{xd5}\) exd5 20.\(c7\);

B2) 17…\(\text{xa5??}\) 18.\(\text{xd5}\) exd5 19.\(\text{c2!}\) \(c6\) 20.\(\text{h5}\) with a winning attack. If 20…\(\text{g6}\) 21.\(\text{xe6}\)! \(\text{hxg6}\) 22.\(\text{xe6}\);

B3) 17…\(\text{xd4}\) 18.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 19.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xb2}\) 20.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{a4}\) 21.\(\text{a3}\) \(\text{a8}\) 22.\(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{xd1}\) 23.\(\text{d1}\) \(\text{ab8}\) 24.\(\text{e1}\) and White’s two minor pieces will beat Black’s rook and pawn.

16.\(e4\) \(d8\)

Another two tempi lost. In this game Maroczy spots Lasker four free moves to launch his attack.

17.\(f4??\)

Soltis gives this move an exclam, while I am convinced of its dubious nature. So then why do I give the move an interesting rather than a dubious assessment?

The reason is the move also increases the position’s complexity level and comes with a clear practical benefit, where it reaches a type of position Lasker excelled in, and Maroczy did not. But practical chances aside, always keep in mind that most attacks are strategic leeches that tend to consume rather than provide.

Only a hawk of the highest order would dare to bang out such a move, which crosses the point of strategic no-return. No dove, on the other hand, would ever play such an odiously weakening move in a million years, since we fear the white attack’s initial euphoria may soon pass, and then comes the time to tally the strategic bills:

1. Lasker’s move instantly consigns White’s dark-squared bishop to bad bishop status.

2. The move weakens White’s central light squares, \(e4\) and \(f5\).
3. If White intends an undermining of f5, then his rook is misplaced on the d-file; it should rather be on the f-file.

4. If White intends f4-f5, this can be either discouraged or prevented with a coming ...g7-g6 from Black.

Four points against the move, and yet it is fully playable from an over the board perspective. Such is the awesome confusion power of a hawk’s complications, mixed with initiative/attack. We strategists loathe ostentation of any kind, and would be more inclined to go with the tame (but possibly superior!) 17. d2.

17... b6!

Maroczy senses weakness on White’s side on the central light squares and prepares a fianchetto, aiming at e4, while further supporting d5. After 17... xe3?! 18. xe3 d5 19. f3 White looks better since Black experiences trouble developing his queenside pieces, and the undermining f4-f5 idea is in the air.

18. d2 b7 19. g3

Preparing f4-f5.

19... c8!?

To my mind, unwise. I would toss in 19... g6!, not fearing the slight weakening of the dark squares around my king.

20. f5!

This is White’s only viable way to proceed with his kingside plans.

20... xc1

A move made with the principle Swap down if your opponent prepares a kingside assault to reduce attacking potential.

21. xc1 exf5??

This move is like the person who fervently prays for a miracle to save him, while simultaneously laboring to obstruct its occurrence. Yes. We conciliatory doves occasionally make such boneheaded moves, which allow our opponent’s pieces free jumps into the attack. Black may yet survive with the cold-blooded 21... c8!.

22. xf5

Suddenly White, with a million kingside threats, has a winning attack. If you prove a point’s underlying validity, then you also prove its ultimate truth. The Wright brothers proved humans can fly, and just over six decades later, humans flew to the moon. Some annotators in the pre-comp days tried to prove that Black could still survive the assault, but the truth was laid bare by the comps: Black is busted, no matter how he continues.

22... f6

This move allows White a combination, as do other tries:
A) 22...g6 23...g4! c8 24...xe7+ xe7 25...xc8! xc8 26...xc8 xe8 27...xb4! Not only is White up material, but e7 and f7 hang simultaneously;

B) The idea of 22...a5 is that if White chops on b4, Black need not release his d5-blockade. 23...g4 g6 24...h6+ d7 25...hx7! xf7 (a dying person may blurt out a dangerous secret, which ordinarily would never be revealed if he or she were going to face the consequences in life) 26...h6+! (attraction/knight fork) 26...g8 (Black’s king looks like he just walked off the set of a bloody season-ender of Game of Thrones) 27...e6 e8 28...f1 wins.

23...xb4!
Shatters the d5-blockade, allowing White a combination on f7.

23...xb4

24...xf7+
24...xf7

24...xd4+ 25...h1 xf7 26...xf7+ xf7 27...xd4 xd4 28...f1+! either mates or wins Black’s queen.

25...e6 h8

25...f8 allows 26...c7 d5 27...xd5 xd5 28...c8 and Black can resign.

26...xf7 xd4+ 27...h1 e3 28...f1
Threatening 29...xd4 and 29...xb7.

28...xg2+
28...a8 29...h4!, threatening a back rank mate on f8, while covering g2: 29...f2+ (29...h6 30...f8+ xf8 31...xf8+ h7 32...g8+ h8 33...g6# – a good time was had by all except Black’s king) 30...xf2 xf2 31...xf2 with an extra piece for White.

29...xg2 g5+ 30...h3 1-0

Black is out of checks, since he must cover his back rank. 30...d8 31...xd4 is hopeless since capturing with 31...xd4 allows White three separate mates in one. Although it was only one night of passion with the queen, Black’s king will spend the remainder of his life attempting to expunge the memory of it.

Three and a half decades after Lasker’s game, Botvinnik absorbed his predecessor's lessons to crush Vidmar with this game, which is annotated in my book on Botvinnik: 1.c4 e6 2...f3 d5 3...d4 ...f6 4...g5 c6 5...c3 c6 6...e3 bd7 7...d3 c5 8.0-0 cxd4 9.exd4 dxc4 10...xc4 b6 11...b3 d7 12...d3 bd5 13...e5 c6 14...ad1 e4 15...h3 d5?! 16...xd5 bxd5 17...f4! c8 18.f5 exf5?! (Maroczy made the same mistake against Lasker. 18...d6 should be played) 19...xf5 d6?? (19...c7 was
20. \( \text{Qxf7!} \) (I thought this was all trail blazing stuff by Botvinnik, but GM Andy Soltis, in his book *Why Lasker Matters*, points out this same shot, and also the earlier f2-f4 thrust was first used by Lasker, against Maroczy) 20... \( \text{Qxf7} \) 21. \( \text{Qxf6!} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) (21... \( \text{Qxf6} \) is crushed by 22. \( \text{Qxf6!} \) – clearance: 22... \( \text{gxf6} \) 23. \( \text{Qxc8+} \)) 22. \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{c6} \) 23. \( \text{Qd6!} \) \( \text{e8} \) 24. \( \text{Qd7} \) 1-0, Botvinnik-Vidmar, Nottingham 1936.

**QG 8.2 – D25**  
**Queen's Gambit Accepted**  
**Cyrus Lakdawala**  
**Levon Altounian**  
**Irvine 1998 (7)**

This game was played in the final round of the 1998 Southern California State Championship. My friend IM Levon Altounian led by a full point, so I had to play for a win in order to tie for first place. My solution was to allow a sharp isolani position – except without the isolani!

1. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{e6} \) 2. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 3. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{dxc4} \)

Now I felt a pang of nerves coming on, thinking: ‘Oh, no! Must I take on an isolani?’

4. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{a6} \) 5. \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{e6} \) 6. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{b5} \) 7. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{c5} \) 8. \( \text{xc5}?! \)

This obnoxiously passive choice is not an objectively bad move, yet I deem it dubious, since it is guilty in thought, if not in deed. I decide to hop on the bandwagon with a blatantly stupid choice when needing to win. Such evasions offer our opponent a glimpse into our own fear of confrontation. In this case I refuse to compromise my safety-first ideals, since then it feels like paying a greedy merchant a too high price, for an object we desperately desire – in this case safety, while desperate for a win, which I freely admit makes absolutely no sense!

8... \( \text{xc5} \) 9. \( \text{xc6} \) 10. \( \text{e3} \) 11. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 12. \( \text{b2} \)

White’s bishops ally themselves in a common cause, taking aim at Black’s king, which for now is certainly well guarded.

12... \( \text{e7} \) 13. \( \text{a4} \)

The idea is to force his b-pawn to b4, and then take advantage of the newly created hole on c4. What I failed to appreciate was that Black’s grip on c3, and also my b3-pawn becoming weak, fully compensated.
13…b4!
13…bxa4? leaves his a6-pawn a target after 14. e4 xa4.

14. e4 x e4 15. x e4
I strategically misjudged this position, thinking I had an edge since I can later post a piece on the c4-hole. As I mentioned above, the factor I underestimated was the weakness of my b3-pawn. In reality the game is even.

15…e5!

Targeting b3. I hate getting out-dove, which is an intolerable state for a player like me, accustomed to outplaying opponents strategically (and then botching it later in the complications!).

With his last move the tiny pilot light of my would-be kingside attack just got extinguished, since my pieces are forced into defensive postures.

16. c2 f8 17. d4?!
The knight on d4 is an unstable defender of b3. I should have played 17. ac1 d5 18. d2.

17…d5

Advantage Black, who pounds and tenderizes away at b3, as if the pawn were a cheap cut of meat. At this point the Lakdawala molars were grinding away in frustration, since my world at this stage is devoid of joy or hope of winning. It may have been a hallucination, but I swear that my sickly b3-pawn looked back at me with a sad emoticon face.

18. ab1 b7
I thought he might try 18…e5!? 19. f5 (19. f3?! f6 20. d2 f7 when White is tied down to the defense of b3) 19…e6 20.f4 xb3 21. e4 c4 22. g4 g8 23. f3 g6 24. g5. The computer likes Black, but we humans get nervous with so many attackers hovering in close proximity of our king.

19. g4
Threat: 20. c6! with a double attack on the mating square g7 and his d8-rook.

19…f5?
An overreaction. Black stands better after the calm 19…g6.
20. xf5!
Ambition rarely lies dormant, eternally. For the piece White gets two pawns and a strong attack with the queen/bishops lineup against Black’s king.

20…exf5 21. xf5 h6?
He had to try 21…g6 22. e5 e7 23. h8+ f7 24. xh7+ e8 25. xg6+ f7 with advantage to White, who picked up four pawns for the piece.

22.e4?
I begin to confuse and merge actual variations with fantasies. This move, which defends against Black’s non-existent threat on g2, regains the sacrificed piece, but only leads to an equal position.

White would be winning had I found 22. bc1! f7 (if 22…ac8 23. fd1 f7 24. xd5! wins) 23. h7+ f8 24. g6 g8 (24…e7 25. h8+ g8 26. xc5 overloads Black’s queen and wins for White) 25. xg8+ g8 26. xc5 xb3 27. c7 with a winning attack, despite the absence of queens.

22…xb3 23. xc5 ac8 24. xa5 xc2 25. bc1 axe4
I thought to myself: ‘Well, there goes my chance to tie for first in the State Championship.’ It’s an almost certain draw, and the only reason I won was a combination of my own irrationality, mixed with blind luck.

26. xc8 xc8 27. f3 g6 28. d1 b3 29. d6??

Tip: Follow the position’s requirement, not the one in your mind, since it’s a lot better to be a survivor than a martyr. This is the demarcation point of the move we want to play and the move we ought to play. If a move like this is a chess crime, then it is a crime of passion, rather than one of cold calculation. Here I irrationally discarded normal self-preservatory instincts, all in the name of attempting to win an unwinnable game. Correct was to bow to the position’s reality and take an almost certain draw with 29. d8+ xd8 30. xd8+. The only problem with this version was that I didn’t get to be State Champion!

29…e7!
Threatening to mate on e1.

30. d5+ f7 31. d2 c2 32. d8+
The secret of luring our opponent into a trap is that our geometry must feign total innocence. This move – which on the surface looks like no more than a spite check and a display of injured dignity – indicates an intent more sinister than outward appearances would have us believe.

32…h7??
If we are winning and miss an opponent’s cheapo/combination, we become a person who catches a glimpse of paradise, only
to be barred entry at its gate.
The unnatural 32...\textcolor{red}{e}8! wins after 33.\textcolor{red}{d}5+ \textcolor{red}{h}7 34.\textcolor{red}{e}5 \textcolor{red}{x}e5 35.\textcolor{red}{x}e5 \textcolor{red}{a}4 and the \textcolor{red}{b}-pawn costs White a piece. If 36.\textcolor{red}{b}8 (36.\textcolor{red}{d}1?? \textcolor{red}{b}2! White must give up a piece, or face ...\textcolor{red}{c}1) 36...\textcolor{red}{b}5 (the bishop interferes with the white rook's coverage) 37.\textcolor{red}{b}7 \textcolor{red}{h}5! 38.\textcolor{red}{x}g7+ \textcolor{red}{h}6 39.h4 \textcolor{red}{b}2 40.\textcolor{red}{x}b2 \textcolor{red}{xb}2 Black will convert.

It appears as if White must resign, but the opposite is true. White to play and win:

\textcolor{red}{h}8+!

Attraction/pin. When we are saved by a miracle, we realize we owe the chess goddess a debt we will never be able to repay. When we get hit with such unexpected shots, the feeling of disconnection is similar to when our dentist novocaines our mouth, and we no longer feel our tongue.

I confess, in the time scramble, this wasn't a pre-planned event. It was more of a crime of opportunity, which I saw in my desperation, only a few moves before it happened.

33...\textcolor{red}{g}6
33...\textcolor{red}{x}h8 34.\textcolor{red}{x}h6+ -- the point of the rook check on h8 is that Black’s g-pawn is pinned in this line: 34...\textcolor{red}{g}8 35.\textcolor{red}{x}g7 mate.

A) 35...\textcolor{red}{h}5 36.\textcolor{red}{f}5+ \textcolor{red}{g}5 37.\textcolor{red}{d}4+ \textcolor{red}{f}6 38.\textcolor{red}{h}5# To deliver checkmate with a pawn is the sweetest of all possible fairy tale endings;

B) 35...\textcolor{red}{x}h4 36.\textcolor{red}{d}4+ \textcolor{red}{g}5 37.\textcolor{red}{g}4#

36.\textcolor{red}{d}4+ \textcolor{red}{f}5 37.\textcolor{red}{g}4#

I will go down in history as the flukiest State Champion of all time!
CHAPTER 5
Petrosian: the Yin Master

As a child I was deeply influenced by Tigran Petrosian’s mysteriously yangless games. On the surface it appeared that he
played outright passive moves, and that he would rather flee than fight. Later on, I discovered Petrosian’s secret. When he was
World Champion, his understanding of pawn structure and its relationship to both sides’ pieces was deeper and more refined
than that of any other player of his day. In this chapter we examine the subtle demarcation line between patience and its
negative opposite, apathy.

QO 12.4 – D55
Queen’s Gambit
Pal Benko
Tigran Petrosian
Los Angeles 1963 (10)

This game is one of the clearest examples of how one should meet an opponent’s queenside minority attack.

1. c4  e6 2. c3  e5 3. f3  d5 4. d4  e7 5. g5 0-0 6. e3  b6
Today, more commonly seen is the move order 6...h6 7. h4  b6.
7. a1  b7 8. cxd5
This move order allows Black the …xe5 recapture option, so perhaps a tad more accurate would be 8. xf6  xf6 9. cxd5
exd5.
8...exd5
Petrosian appears to be ready to take on the dynamic hanging pawns, with a future …c7-c5. Like my last (non!) ‘isolani’ game
against Altounian, in this game, Petrosian denies Benko the sharper version with hanging pawns. He also refuses to simplify
with the more drawish line 8...xd5 9. xe7  xe7.

9. xf6!? This is a standard idea in such structures. Benko gives up the bishop pair to lessen Black’s control over d5.
9...xf6 10. e2
Perhaps more logical is to clamp down and discourage Black’s …c7-c5 break with 10.b4.

10...e7!
With bishop pair on hand, Black’s position screams for a …c7-c5 break. So why did Petrosian avoid it? Perhaps he didn’t like
the line 10...c5 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.0-0. Here Black’s game contains only one flaw: it’s not that easy to develop the b8-knight.
Still, the game looks level after 12...d4 13.exd4 cxd4 14. b3  d7. Here White can take a repetition draw with 15. b5  f5
16. e2  d7 17. b5.
11.0-0  d8 12. c2
12... $d7!  
Still no $c7-c5. To a reader unfamiliar with Petrosian’s games, it feels as if he continually prefers to temporize, rather than act. Most players would opt for the more active 12...$c5 13.dxc5 bxc5 14. $a4! $c4 15. $fd1. Petrosian probably didn’t like creating a hole for White on d4.

13. $fd1  
Benko keeps waiting for Petrosian to play …$c7-c5.

13...$g6 14. $b1  
b2-b4 is coming. Surely now Black is obliged to play …$c7-c5, right?

14...$c6  
No!

15.$b4 $a5!  
This move tickles, more than challenges.

16.$a3?  
It’s amazing how quickly a perfectly good position can sour with the inclusion of an ill-considered move. This strategic inaccuracy can be traced as the seed of White’s future difficulties. 16.$b5! is level after 16...$c5 17.dxc5 $xc5 (forced, since Black must guard his d5-pawn) 18.$d4 $xd4! 19.exd4 (Black seizes the initiative after 19.$xd4?! $e6 20.$d3 $d4) 19...$e4 and Black stands no worse.

16...$b5!  
Black’s queenside play begins to assume a vitality of its own. GM Sergei Dolmatov incorrectly gave this strong move a dubious mark. When I first played over this game as a kid, this move came as a revelation.

Let’s evaluate:
1. Why did Black take on a backward c6-pawn?
Answer: Black plans to plug the c-file with …$b6! and …$c4. If White’s bishop chops the knight, then Black gets a protected, passed c-pawn, two bishops versus two knights, and enhanced control over the light squares.
2. Isn’t Black’s b7-bishop awful?
Answer: No. The bishop later re-routes to f5 or g4, via c8.
3. White’s queenside minority attack actually represents a liability, since the b4-pawn is weak, with his pieces following it around like butlers, attentive to the irrational master’s every need.
4. If White ever plays bxa5, hoping to eliminate the weakness, then Black will win both white a-pawns.
5. White’s passive pieces are forced to assume prim ‘No ma’am, yes sir’ postures to parry Black’s strategic threats. 

Conclusion: White’s structural defects scar so deeply, they may be beyond full healing.

17. b3

Dolmatov gives 17.e4 with an exclam and a ‘.’ evaluation. I think this is incorrect and the move is no better than the one Benko played in the game. Black stands better after 17…dxe4 18. e4 (18.xe4 axb4 19.axb4 xe4! 20. xe4 c7 21. c5 xe5 22.dxc5 f6 and Black’s bishop pair, dark-square control, along with White’s weak b4-pawn, insure Petrosian of the superior ending) 18.axb4 19.axb4 a4!. White loses a pawn, since c5 isn’t possible due to the hanging c2-bishop.

17…b6!
The knight prepares to slip into c4.

18. a1 a7!

By avoiding an early exchange on b4, Petrosian forces Benko’s rooks into an awkward defensive placement.

19. a2

19.bxa5? xa5 20.a4 da8 21. db1 c8 and the pinned a4-pawn falls.

19…da8 20. da1

20…c8!

We subconsciously tend to interpret any form of retreat as a kind of partial surrender. Petrosian re-routes his once bad bishop to the more promising c8-h3 diagonal, and his move reminds us of the Tartakowerian quip about the worst bishop being superior to the best knight.

21. d3

This cuts off …f5, but still leaves Black with the g4 option. 21. e1?! (the idea is to transfer the knight to c5) 21…c4 and if 22. d3? xe3! (this sacrifice disorganizes the defense) 23.fxe3 xe3+ 24. h1 xd4 25. c1 f5 26. d1 g5 27. cc2 e8 and White is on the verge of collapse.

21…g4 22. d2

Benko doesn’t allow 22…xf3, rightfully fearing that his king may come under assault, since his pieces are tied up on the other side of the board.

22…g7!

Worrying White about …f8, with a pile-up on b4.

23.h3 e6 24. c2 axb4 25.axb4 xa2 26. xa2
The newly pinned knight guards b4 the way a nervous hen sits on her precious egg. This awkward recapture is forced.

26... e4

Compare this diagram to the last one, and we see just how much progress Petrosian has accomplished.

27. b3 g5

Threatening to clip h3, while also making White worry about knight sacrifices on e3. Black begins to make direct threats on White’s king, following the principle *When you have the opponent tied down on one wing, then consider opening a second front on the other, where the defender deals with a troop deficit.*

28. f1 f8!

The changes in Petrosian’s games are as subtle as the alteration of our breath, when we stir in our sleep.

29. c1

A) 29. c5 xc5 30.bxc5 (30.dxc5?? e3+! followed by 31... f6+ wins material) 30... f5! 31. xf5 xf5 32. e2 (32. xf5 gxf5 and the trouble is Black threatens ...b5-b4 and ...b4-b3, to which there is no remedy) 32... b4 33. e1 b3 34. c3 b2 and White won’t survive Black’s deadly, entrenched passed b-pawn;

B) 29. a5 is met with the undermining shot 29... c5! and if 30.dxc5? e3+! (the same theme as in the above variation) 31.fxe3 f6+ picks up heavy material, since the a1-rook is loose.

29... f5!

Eliminating White’s best defender of his light squares.

30. xf5

30. e2 is met with the probing 30... e4! 31.g3 d6 32. c5 xg3! with a winning attack.

30... xf5 31. c3 a4! 32. g1

32. c5?? is met with the trick 32... xc5 33.dxc5 xa2! 34. xa2 b1+ with an extra piece for Black after the rook falls.

32... c8

This is an attempt to outflank and sneak up on the enemy from behind, intending ... a8.

33. ac1?

This is the ‘if-thine-eye-offends-thee,-then-pluck-it-out’ moment. Benko lets go of his b-pawn with the philosophy *Better to get it over with and directly confront a problem, rather than put it off and live in constant anxiety.* 33. c5 xc5 34.dxc5 a8 35. c2 a3 36. h2 a4 37. b1 h5 38.g3 b3 with ... b2 to follow. 39. d1 b2 40. xa4 bxa4 41. g1 a3 leaves White helplessly tied down.
33...xb4 34.d3 d6 35.b1 h5
Suppressing g2-g4, while contemplating a future kingside assault with the push of his h- and g-pawns.
36.e2
Intending to activate the c1-knight, via d3.
36...f5 37.d3

37...f5 38.d3
37...a3!
Preventing either knight from entering c5.
38.bc1
38...bc5?? simply hangs a piece to 38...xc5 when neither d-pawn nor knight may recapture.
38...g7 39.b3 h4
Petrosian squeezes on both sides of the board.
40.bc1 e4 41.c2
Petrosian avoids anything remotely messy, like 41...xe3!? 42.fxe3 xe3+ 43.f2 e4, which still heavily favors Black.

42.b3 d6
White can’t do anything, so Petrosian shuffles to psychologically reinforce his opponent’s helplessness.
43.a1
If White did nothing, then Petrosian would push his g-pawn forward to expose White’s king.

43...xe3!
Petrosian converts by giving up his knight for three pawns, leaving him with four pawns for the piece.
44.fxe3 xe3 45.h1 xa1+ 46.xa1 xd4 47.db3 c4 48.db1 c3
45...xe3+ 46.h1 xa1+ 47.xa1 xd4 48.xb3 c4 49.xb1 c3
It’s easy to develop a persecution complex in such a situation. White’s knights float without firm support or objects to attack, and there is no defense to Black’s coming pawn pushes.
49.bc1 c5! 50.e2
50.xb5 c4 51.xd5 cxd3 (threat: 52...c1 mate) 52.xd6 (52.xd3?? a1+ forces mate) 52...xc1+ 53.h2 e3 is an easy win for Black.
50...f6 51.xb5 c4 52.g1

Such decisions come with the finality of a funeral. White is close to exhausting every avenue of desperation, short of outright resignation. 52.xd5 cxd3 53...g1 (53.xd3?? hangs the queen to 53...f1+) 53...f4 54.f3 c1+ 55.g1 c5 forces mate.
52...cxd3 53...xd3 e5 54...g3
Such a move comes as a resignation equivalency. 54...f3 a1+ 55...g1 c5 mates.
54...xg3 55...d4+ e5 0-1

TD 2.5 – A34
Tarrasch Defence
Tigran Petrosian 2635
John Peters 2370
Lone Pine 1976 (2)

IM Jack Peters, my buddy for over three decades, in an email wrote the following about his encounter with Petrosian: ‘I knew I was lost in the middlegame long before I let him trade his bishop for my knight. When he moved his king to the queenside, I realized that I was doomed to be the victim in a memorable game. What mystified me was not Petrosian’s middlegame play, but how I got into trouble so quickly in a position I thought I understood. What did I do wrong? I went over the game repeatedly for about a month before I concluded that the combination of 11...a5 and 12...d4 ruined Black’s position. I remember a funny story about the game. Ron Gross posted odds on each game before the round, a practice that TD Isaac Kashdan soon banned. Ron didn’t think much of my chances against Petrosian, setting my odds as one in three of drawing or winning. My friend, Norman Weinstein, bet on me. After the opening, when I was walking around the tournament hall, Weinstein came over and asked me if I was crazy. “Don’t you know he’s the best in the world against an isolated pawn?” I said, “I’m going to make him play like a world champion.” And he did!’

1.c4 e6 2.c3 c5 3.g3 c6 4.g2 e6 5.f3 e7 6.d4 d5 7.cxd5 xd5 8.0-0 0-0 9.xd5 exd5 10.dxc5 xc5

In our data-addicted chess world, such isolani systems like Tarrasch and Semi-Tarrasch represent a comprehensive system which is simple to learn, and yet contain a bite if White is unprepared for Black’s burst of piece activity. Both dove and hawk are happy. White gets the superior pawn structure, while Black gets complete freedom for his pieces and a greater share of the center, due to his isolated d-pawn.

11.a3 a5?
Hawks like Jack are genetically predisposed to systematically self-vandalizing their structure, if in return it enhances their activity, or limits the opponent’s options. This move is played in the spirit of Lasker’s a2-a4, against Maroczy, from the previous chapter. I wouldn’t call 11...a5, which suppresses White’s b2-b4, at the cost of weakening b5, dubious. It’s more a matter of style. I checked the database and it’s actually Black’s highest scoring move in the position. Still, a structurally responsible good-citizen dove like me would avoid it, since I don’t like committing to potentially weakening moves which don’t allow room to retract. I prefer Spassky’s non-weakening treatment with 11...f5 12.b4 b6 13.a2 e4 14.d2 e7 15.b2 f8 16.a1 f6 17.fd1 e6 18.a2 ad8 (Portisch-Spassky, Bugojno 1978). Maybe it’s just stylistic bias, but I slightly prefer White here.

12.e1
I play this way as well. We love it when a World Champion plays our line, since it corroborates our existing faith in our opening by a higher power. This unforced retreat is actually quite logical, since the knight re-routes to d3, and then possibly to f4, inducing Black into ...d5-d4. 13 years previous to his game against Peters, Petrosian played 12.g5 on Tal and went on to win.
12...d4
Jack criticized this move, which is Black’s main move in the position! Black weakens his dark squares but at the same time creates a target of the e2-pawn, which can no longer move to e3. In any case, Black can’t avoid playing ...d5-d4, since a move like 12...g4 is met with 13.e3 d5 14.d4, which pretty much forces 14...d4.
13.d3 b6 14.d2 e8
14...a4, intending ...e6 and ...b3, can be met with 15.f4 e8 16.c1, intending c4, when the a4-pawn is a target.
15.c1 g4
Jack plays on his strength, which is Black’s ability to tie White down to the defense of e2.
16.e1 c8 17.h3 g5
17...h5?! allows White to pick off the bishop pair and enhanced light-square control after 18.f4 g6 19.xg6 hxg6.
18.b3

Note that due to Black’s previous 11...a5!?, his bishop lost its natural base of support and Black’s queen must take up the job.
18...e4!?
Sometimes we begin what we believe to be a project of momentous importance, when in reality our action fails to make our position either better or worse. Stylistically, this is clearly a hawk’s decision: Jack swaps away a key defender of White’s king, at the cost of making his remaining bishop a bad one, since both his a5- and d4-pawns are fixed on the same color. A dove would reject the decision to swap, since it doesn’t look all that easy to generate an attack on White’s king. To me, Jack’s decision is a bit like applying for a new job, which is a slight demotion from the one you have now, simply because you believe that ‘it’s time for a change in my life.’
19.xe4 xe4 20.b5
Petrosian annoyingly reminds Jack that he has weakened b5.
20...e8
Swaps benefit White, who owns the superior structure. Maybe Jack should have played 20...h6 and gone into a holding pattern, but hawks, as we all understand, resent having to wait!
21.xc8 xc8 22.g5
He wants to induce the weakening ...f7-f6.
22...d6 23.c1 a7
24. f5! e8!
If 24... xe2? 25. f3! e6 26. xb7 h6 27. f4 d8 28. c7! Black experiences difficulty holding his queenside pawns and pieces together.
25. f4 d8 26. c2 c6

27.h4!
In such positions the defender’s defensive duties are monotonous, yet light, since he can do nothing active. So to create new potential targets, Petrosian begins to push his h-pawn forward, inducing ...h7-h6, which weakens Black’s light squares further.
27...h6 28. b5 a7 29. f5 c6

How does White make progress? Come up with a plan.
30. f1!!
This is the beginning of an outwardly innocuous yet Petrosianically devious plan:
Step 1: White plans to walk his king over to b1, where it resides in relative safety.
Step 2: With his king transferred to the queenside, White is free to push forward his kingside pawns, to either attack or provoke further weaknesses in Black’s camp. It’s one of those plans which looks obvious (after we are told!), but in reality exceedingly difficult to find over the board.
30...e6 31.b5 a7 32.b3 c6 33.h5 e7 34.e1! d5 35.b5 f6
35...xf4?! 36.xf4 d6 leaves Black with bad bishop versus good knight.
36.d1 d5 37.e5
Reminding Black that d4 is also slightly weak.
37...e7 38.g4!
Step 2 of his plan begins, even though White’s king hasn’t yet reached the b1-promised-land-square.
38...ec6 39.g3 a7 40.b3 c6 41.c1 e4 42.f3
It appears as if Black has extracted a concession, but in reality he has no way to exploit the weakening of e3.
42...e3 43.b1
It appears as if Petrosian has castled queenside in this game. His king’s journey reminds us of the Von Trapp family from The Sound of Music fleeing from the Nazis, and finally reaching a safe haven where Julie Andrews and the Von Trapp children warble away like songbirds, without fear of arrest.
43...e7?
Jack can continue to resist if he plays 43...e6 and awaits White’s intent. But does doing nothing constitute a plan? My feeling is yes, since when under pressure, the systematic elimination of tempting yet dubious ideas is, in a strange way, a kind of progress.

The knight’s hypothesis of generating activity is doomed to be defeated by its own implication, since this is an activity-less position for Black. How does Petrosian take advantage of Black’s last move to increase his strategic advantage to decisive levels?
44.h4!
Petrosian, who excelled in finding such small strategic deceits, forces a swap of his bishop for Black’s remaining knight, leaving Black with a remaining bad bishop, who now resembles one of those mysteriously useless appendages created by Nature, similar to eyebrows on a human. This factor decisively weakens Black’s already anemic light squares.
44...d6 45.xe7 xe7
Time’s alterations have not been kind to Black’s position. When we take on an isolani and our position later sours, our decision becomes like the drunken one night stand with someone we perceive as beautiful, and then we see the physical flaws in dawn’s hungover, sombre light.
46.c8+
White’s rook infiltrates, causing further problems on the light squares.
46...h7
White’s threats grow wider in meaning.

I declare with some confidence that Jack’s position is not a good situation against one of the greatest pure strategists of all time. Petrosian just found the correct plans effortlessly if the complex variables of heavy calculation were removed, as in this case.

Black’s strategic bereavements continue to pile up:
1. White’s pieces gaze transfixed upon f7 with the same reverence as your datelessly nerdy writer in high school, when a curvy yet unattainable cheerleader sashayed by in the hall.
2. Black has landed in a terrible bishop versus good knight situation.
3. White rules the light squares.
4. Black’s king is in grave danger, since Black is unable to play ...f7-f6, due to the mate on g8.

This means White can play f2-f4! next, which creates dual threats of:

A) e5, picking up either the f7-pawn, or the exchange;
B) g4-g5 and g5-g6! and after ...fxg6, g8 is mate.

47...c7

A) 47...xe2?? is out of the question, since 48...xf7 e6 49.g6+! xg6 50.hxg6+ f6 51.f4+ forks king and rook;
B) 47...e6? 48.xe6 fxe6 49.f4 (threat: 50.g6 and 51.h8 mate) 49...g5 50.hxg6+ g7 is a completely hopeless ending for Black;
C) 47...f6? 48.e2!; e2 is tactically protected and e4 follows, when Black collapses.

48.f4!

Petrosian dangles the e2-bait, hoping for a bite.

48...c5

48...xe2?? 49.e5 and game over.

49.d5!

Now Black’s endangered king hovers between this world and the next. Petrosian threatens to check on f5, and after 50...g6, slip the queen to f6, forcing mate. Also winning were:

A) 49.xc5! xe5 50.d3+ g6 51.xf7+! (the rook has always believed that dishonest forms of employment tend to pay better than slaving away at an honest job) 51...xf7 52.xg6+ h8 (the king prays for this interview to come to an end) 53.xf7 with too many extra pawns for White;
B) The mundane 49.e5 also gets the job done after 49...xe5 50.c2+ g6 51.hxg6+ fxg6 52.fxe5.
49... e5!
Double attack/discovered attack. The fact that Jack evades mate is in itself an architectural marvel.

50. xf7
The simplest. When attacking it’s easy to get caught up in the excitement of the chase, while ignoring the final objective, which is to win the game. We are not obliged to deliver mate 100% of the time, when a simple entry to an easily winning ending suffices. 50... xd5 51. xc7 b6 52.f5 g8 53.c2 is a completely hopeless ending for Black.
1-0
… the sincerest form of flattery

We can’t help but obey the strictures of our upbringing. I studied Petrosian’s games intensely as a kid. In the next two games I do my best to imitate Petrosian’s style, which is in harmony with the way I naturally play.

EO 52.8 – A15
English Opening
**Cyrus Lakdawala** 2545
**Darwin Laylo** 2499
San Diego rapid 2014

1.\_f3 \_f6 2.c4 g6 3.c3 d5

Another instant ending, opening system I play is 3…\_g7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.\_e2 e5 and now I immediately swap down into an ending with 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.\_xd8 \_xd8 9.\_g5 and have scored well from this admittedly even position from White’s side.

4.cxd5 \_xd5 5.e4

Filipino GM Darwin Laylo, visiting his sister, showed up for three months (I miraculously survived the ordeal without a single loss) at our local Saturday San Diego rapid Gambito tournaments. This was our second encounter, and I had studied his games, realizing he was both a hawk and a Grünfeld player. So I thought Ulf Andersson’s Anti-Grünfeld instant ending line was a perfect choice. I evaluated the position after 5.a4+ \_c6!? 6.e5 \_d6! 7.\_xc6 \_xc6 8.\_xc6+ bxc6 as better for White, due to superior structure. Darwin shockingly disagreed, claiming that Black’s slight development lead and open lines compensate. So if you like White, you are a clear dove, and if you think Black is okay, you are a hawk. 9.g3 \_g7 10.\_g2 \_e6 11.b3 0-0 12.\_b2 \_xc3 13.\_xc3 \_xc3 14.dxe3 \_d5 15.\_f3 Pushing my e-pawn two squares is the only way to try to extract an edge for White. We agreed to a draw here, Lakdawala-Laylo, San Diego rapid 2014.

5…\_xc3 6.\_xc3!

This move – with its Puritan aversion to all forms of joy – is a reminder to my opponent that I have no obligation to be entertaining. For me, the discovery of this anti-hawk, anti-Grünfeld, line is a diamond mine. As you may have guessed, this opening choice is not for the adventurously dispositioned. I learned long ago that my play becomes uncharacteristically competent, the moment queens come off the board.

My last move sucks the dynamism from the position and is a way of telling my hawk opponent that the fun ends here. For my opponent, who relishes action and adventure, my tedious opening choice is one of those situations where you and your wife are out on a Sunday afternoon for a pleasant lunch, and an acquaintance who you don’t even like barges over to your table, sits down uninvited, and asks: ‘What looks good on the menu?’

6.bxc3 \_g7 7.d4 c5 leads to normal – and far more dynamic – Grünfeld positions. But for me, to voluntarily enter such a theoretical/dynamic position is akin to attempting to find a single name in a public records part of the library without bothering to look at the index. I looked at Laylo’s games in the Grünfeld proper and noted a bunch of wins and draws he scored against GMs and IMs, so I had no doubt that he would beat me if I challenged him to his theoretical specialty position.

From my perspective, to increase the complications is to agree to a game without rules or a referee. In many sharp opening lines we have before us a fortune in data, but for a strategist like me, also a poverty of context, since I tend to get hopelessly
confused in such tangles.

6…\textit{xd}1+ 7.\textit{xd}1

It feels like this featureless position is almost too boring for description, and any distinction between White and Black isn’t immediately apparent. But remember that laws differ from country to country, and from style to style. An act considered ignoble (i.e. swapping queens early to reach a drawish ending!) in one, draws high praise in another. I admit that my opening choice is short on adventure and fluctuation, while high on solidity and simplicity, the latter of which I tend to play at my best. Hamlet’s misogynistic claim ‘Oh frailty, thy name is woman’ comes to mind, regarding my lifelong relationship to my own queen. I always feel a sense of relief with an early queen swap, since then it becomes hard for me to hang my queen!

7…\textit{g}7?!

Believe it or not, this move is considered an inaccuracy. Now it’s very rare that you can trick a GM so early in the opening. The only way to do it is to play an innocuous sub-variation, under the GM’s theoretical radar.

A) 7…\textit{f}6! is Black’s most accurate move, and is theoretically supposedly dead equal. Yet I usually extract an edge in this version as well, since the positions suit my technical style so perfectly: 8.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}5 9.\textit{c}4 (after 9.\textit{d}2 \textit{e}6 10.\textit{c}4 \textit{xc}4 11.\textit{xc}4 \textit{c}6 12.a4 \textit{a}5 13.\textit{c}2 0-0-0 14.g3 \textit{e}7 15.h4 \textit{h}5 16.\textit{f}4 White held a slight but nagging edge in Lakdawala-Mahooti, San Diego rapid 2015) 9…\textit{d}6 10.\textit{c}2 \textit{c}7 11.\textit{d}2 \textit{d}7 12.b4 \textit{b}6 13.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}6 14.a4 a5 15.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6 16.\textit{xb}6! \textit{cxb}6 17.\textit{b}3 \textit{hd}8 18.\textit{c}4 and Black landed in a bad bishop versus good knight ending, Lakdawala-Duesterwald, San Diego rapid 2007;

B) I was very much influenced by Ulf Andersson, one of my dove heroes, in the following game: 7…\textit{c}5?! 8.\textit{e}3 \textit{b}6 9.a4 \textit{c}6 10.\textit{b}5 \textit{d}7 11.\textit{c}2 \textit{g}7 12.\textit{hd}1 \textit{a}6 13.\textit{c}4 (now Black is forced to babysit his a6-pawn) 13…\textit{g}4?! (handing over the bishop pair weakens his light squares) 14.h3 \textit{xf}3 (I would apologize and play the retro 14…\textit{c}8!!?) 15.\textit{gx}f3 0-0 16.\textit{f}4 \textit{a}7 17.e5 a5?! (understandable, but still perhaps wrong, since now White’s king is offered an infiltration path into Black’s position via b3, c4 and b5 later on) 18.\textit{d}2 e6 19.\textit{ad}1 \textit{c}8 20.\textit{b}3! (when a hole opens, pieces tend to scramble in to fill the vacuum. Andersson avoids …\textit{d}4+ tricks, while preparing a king march into Black’s position, via the light squares) 20…\textit{f}8 21.\textit{b}5 \textit{cc}7 22.\textit{xc}6 (22.\textit{d}6! is also very strong. If 22…\textit{xd}6?? 23.\textit{exd}6 \textit{c}8 24.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 25.d7 Black will end up down a full piece) 22…\textit{xc}6 23.\textit{c}4 (White’s super-active king almost represents an extra piece in the ending) 23…\textit{e}7 24.\textit{d}7 \textit{cc}7 25.\textit{xc}7 \textit{xc}7 26.\textit{b}5 \textit{c}8 27.\textit{d}7 \textit{f}8 28.\textit{xb}6 \textit{e}8 29.\textit{b}7 \textit{d}8+ 30.\textit{b}5 \textit{c}4 31.\textit{c}5 (Andersson makes chess look so simple) 1-0 Andersson-Tempone, Buenos Aires 1979. When we lose games like this one, we are reminded of that obnoxious euphemism our mothers recited, when our junior high school girlfriend dumped us for a non-nerd rival: ‘Everything happens for a reason.’ 8.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}5

White scores 73% after the passive 8..\textit{c}6.

9.a4 0-0 10.a5!
Natural strategists excel in luring opponents into positions where they sense hidden menace, which however remains characterless, without specificity. Now Black is denied ...b7-b6 and his c5-pawn may come under unpleasant pressure after a future e3.

10...d7!
The idea is to cover his c5-pawn with ...c8 next. I think the GM’s choice is more accurate than the routine 10...c6 11.c4 d7 12.c2 b5 13.axb6 axb6 14.e2! (evading ...b4+ tricks) 14...e5 (this move creates a hole on d5, but on the plus side, it eliminates c7 ideas) 15.g3. Now if Black gets active with 15...f5?! (he should suffer in silence with 15...fd8 16.c4 h6 17.d5) 16.c4+ h8 17.xa8 xa8 18.d1 follows, with mounting pressure.

11.e3 c8 12.e2
The c4-square is virtually an artificial hole for White’s pieces to occupy, since ...b7-b5 will be very difficult to engineer for Black.

12...e6 13.c4 xc4 14.xc4 a6 16.e5 17.f4 d4 18.c1 g7 19.d1 c7 (I don’t think Black will save the game with 19...d8 20.e3 b6 21.xd8+ xd8 22.axb6 axb6 23.a7 f8 24.b7 d6 25.b4) 20.e3 e6 21.g4 f8 22.b3! c4+ (Black can’t allow White’s king to reach c4) 23.c2 e8 24.d2 f8 25.ad1 e8 and now White can attempt to open a second front on the kingside with 26.h4! with enduring pressure.

21.e3 d7

The position is as dreary as can be, and my action-loving opponent holds me personally responsible for the activity deprivation. As I have mentioned before in the book, patience is not the hawk’s strong suit. This attempt at generating activity leads to new weaknesses in his position. He was probably better off going into grovel mode, swapping down with 15...e5 16.xe5 xe5 17.f4 d4 18.c1 g7 19.d1 c7 (I don’t think Black will save the game with 19...d8 20.e3 b6 21.xd8+ xd8 22.axb6 axb6 23.a7 f8 24.b7 d6 25.b4) 20.e3 e6 21.g4 f8 22.b3! c4+ (Black can’t allow White’s king to reach c4) 23.c2 e8 24.d2 f8 25.ad1 e8 and now White can attempt to open a second front on the kingside with 26.h4! with enduring pressure.

16.hd1 c7 17.exf5 gxf5 18.d5!
By provoking ...e7-e6, White forces Black to weaken d6.

18...e6 19.xd6 f8 20.ad1 f7
20...f6 21.h6 (threatening to eliminate the defender of e6) 21...e8 22.g3 e7 23.d6 d8 24.e1 e8 25.h3! with g2-g4 to follow. It looks to me like the defense in this version is an exhausted serf at harvest time.

21.d8
White's rook infiltrates. 21. $\text{f4}!$ first is more accurate.

21... $\text{xd8}$

Of course GMs don't fall for idiotic traps like 21... $\text{ac8}??$ 22. $\text{xc8} \text{ xc8}$ 23. $\text{d6+}$, forking.

22. $\text{xd8} \text{ e5!}$

The only move. 22... $\text{f6}??$ loses to 23. $\text{a8}$ and if he tries to save the a-pawn with 23...a6 then comes 24. $\text{d6+} \text{ e7}$ 25. $\text{e8} \text{ c6}$. 26. $\text{xf6}$, winning a piece.

23. $\text{d6+}$!

This combination wins material by force.

My tactics tend to be accurate in relatively simplified positions, with forcing lines. It's when branches appear that my accuracy plummets. In this case, I correctly calculated a single forcing line.

23... $\text{g6}$!

He avoids the trap 23... $\text{e7}??$ 24. $\text{g5+} \text{ e6}$ 25. $\text{e8}$ 26. $\text{d6}$ mate.

24. $\text{b5}$

With a double attack on $\text{c7}$ and $\text{a7}$. I also considered 24. $\text{b8}!?$.

24... $\text{d7}$ 25. $\text{c8}??$

I was worried he might generate kingside play if I grabbed a pawn right away with 25. $\text{xd7} \text{ xd7}$ 26. $\text{xa7} \text{ f4}$ 27. $\text{d2} \text{ f5}$.

25... $\text{a6}$ 26. $\text{xc5}??$

This is one of those moves which probably isn't the most accurate, yet also not so far from the truth. I also considered and eventually rejected the superior 26. $\text{a3}!$ 27. $\text{e6}$ 28. $\text{c4} \text{ e4}$ 29. $\text{xc5} \text{ f4}$ 29. $\text{g3} \text{ d3}$ 30. $\text{b6} \text{ f7}$... $\text{f5-f4}$ is coming, but I don't believe Black has enough counterplay to save the game.

26... $\text{e6}$ 27. $\text{a3} \text{ d5}$ 28. $\text{b6} \text{ e4}$

Black's only chance is to somehow drum up distracting play on the kingside.

29. $\text{c4} \text{ f4}!!$

Laylo again refuses to go passive with the sounder 29... $\text{d7}$.

30. $\text{e8}!! \text{ f6}$!

He avoids another trap. 30... $\text{f7}??$ is met with 31. $\text{b8}!$, and Black's king on $\text{f7}$ has been lured into a fork square after 31... $\text{d7}$ 32. $\text{xb7}$.

31. $\text{d2}!$

Both clocks were low by now. I wanted a resolution of his central pawns, not wanting to calculate both... $\text{e4-e3}$ and... $\text{f4-f3}$ on every move.

31... $\text{e5}$ 32. $\text{b8} \text{ e3}$

Here he comes. Laylo places all his hopes on his passed e-pawn.

33. $\text{fxe3} \text{ fxe3}$ 34. $\text{f3} \text{ e2}$ 35. $\text{f2}$

I also considered activating my king with 35. $\text{h6+}$, which is a touch stronger than the move I picked in the game: 35... $\text{h6}$ 36. $\text{e1} \text{ c4}$. Here I feared both 37... $\text{f4}$ and 37... $\text{c1}$ and stopped analyzing. The comp says White wins easily after 37.$\text{g3} \text{ c1} 38.\text{b3}$ and Black has no way to make progress.

35... $\text{b5}$ 36.$\text{b4} \text{ h6}!$

Resourceful defense. He cuts off $\text{d2}$.

37. $\text{g3}$
The decision of a hawk. His rook chafes at being tied down to defense of b7, so he activates it, giving up his b-pawn in the process. The essence of a sacrifice – even one of a dubious nature – is that the longer we look at it, the more attractive it becomes in our eyes. We essentially become the bar patron who finds the plain looking woman next to you more and more attractive, with each drink ingested.

38.\texttt{xb7} f4 39.\texttt{h4+} g5

39... \texttt{f5} 40.\texttt{b6} c7 41.\texttt{f6+} d7 42.\texttt{f7} e6 43.\texttt{xh7} d1 44.\texttt{e7} c1+ 45.\texttt{b3} – Black can’t make anything of his passed e-pawn, and loses.

40.\texttt{xh7}?! Rather greedy. 40.\texttt{f2}! was more accurate.

40... \texttt{f5}?! In time pressure we both miss the combination 40... \texttt{xh4}! 41.\texttt{h6+} e7 42.\texttt{xh4} g5! Oh no! And all this time I thought his e-pawn was no more than a hanged corpse, twisting in the wind. Black forces promotion, but it isn’t enough to save the game:

43.\texttt{g5} e1 44.\texttt{c4+} e5 45.\texttt{xel} 46.\texttt{d3}. The problem is that even in this version White has picked up too many pawns for the exchange and still should win.

41.\texttt{h6+}!

A beneficial expedient presents itself. This pin/simplification trick ends the game.

41... \texttt{f5} 42.\texttt{xg5} 5xg5 43.\texttt{h5} 1-0

On 43...\texttt{e1} 44.\texttt{g5+} f6 45.\texttt{xel} wins.

KF 15.4 – B06
King’s Fianchetto
Bruce Baker 2312
Cyrus Lakdawala 2524
San Diego rapid 2016

1.e3 g6

This is not a move normally associated with the institutional blandness I so dearly strive for in the opening. For a pure strategic player, a sharp system is a fearful place, where we risk exposing our ignorance of dynamic factors. Why would I, a card-
carrying dove, reject my solid normal Slav structure, and flirt with the far more volatile 1…g6? The reason is my opponent, National Master Bruce Baker, plays rather drawish lines against it, so I prefer to increase my chances for a win (or a loss!) with the Modern Defense, which is a mix of the desirable and the deadly, and a place where we give ourselves permission to dream. Essentially, I become the irritating valet parker, who changes the radio station in your car. Another reason is that I like to switch my openings around. Why? Well, the other day I noticed a painting in my living room of a pleasant country cottage with a rose garden. I never noticed it before and was stunned to realize that we put it on the wall in 1987, when my wife and I bought our house. This is what happens to us when we play the same opening system over and over, without change. It’s so easy to sink into the comfortable everydayness of our lines and play it automatically without thought, contemplation, or without ever really seeing it.

2.d4 g7 3.e4 My opponent plays both Queen’s pawn and King’s pawn against the Modern, and last time had played 3.c4.

3…d6 4.c3 a6 5.e2 d7 I prefer this move order to 5…b5.

6.0-0 6.a4 can be met with 6…b6 when Black goes into a Hippopotamus formation.

6…b5 7.e3 This system isn’t terribly dangerous for Black.

One of the wonderful things about writing millions of opening books is that many of my lower-rated opponents falsely believe that I remember everything I preach in them. So they often avoid sharp opening systems, assuming I know more than they do. Maybe I understand some of the positions better than they do, but I certainly don’t remember them better.

7…b7 8.d5! This is a pawn sacrifice. 8.a3 g6 9.e2 c5 is at least even for Black.

8…g6 We are distrustful of an opponent who refuses to take our bribe. The questions arise: when to grab material? And from whom? My opponent’s strength rises in open positions where he holds the initiative, so I didn’t feel comfortable handing him the initiative for a pawn with 8…b4 9.a4 g6 10.a3! bxa3 11.xa3 x4 12.c4.

For my opponent, a hawk mimicking a dove in this game, there is no need to go over the details in a fastidious inspection. He just sacrifices a pawn because it ‘feels’ right. And I agree with his assessment. It appears to me that White gets reasonable compensation for the pawn invested.

9.a3 c6 It’s crucial to challenge the d5-point before White has time for d4, seizing control over c6.

10.dxc6 x6 11.e4!
A calculated risk can still be a good gamble.

11...\textit{b7}
The bishop’s self-restraint isn’t nearly as saintly as appearances indicate. No thanks. Once again I decline.
The fact that I didn’t grab his e-pawn doesn’t indicate strength of character on my part, since in this case greed leads to suffering for Black after 11...\textit{xe4}? The statement \textit{Fortune favors the brave} is often contradicted on the chessboard: 12.\textit{xe4 xe4 13.c4} (White gets a development lead, the bishop pair and strong light-square control for the relatively small investment of a pawn) 13...\textit{bxc4 14.xc4 ef6 15.e6 c7 16.c1} and Black’s game exudes a distinctly unhealthy ‘Oh-my-God,-how-will-I-complete-development?’ feel.

12.f3 0-0 13.d2 c8
Black equalized rather comfortably, since White chose a solid yet unambitious setup.

14.ad1
14.h6?? is a catastrophic blunder after 14...\textit{xf6} 15.g6 b6 and the coming ...e7-e5 wins a piece.

14.c7
I thought about preserving my dark-squared bishop with 14.e8 15.h6 h8 but then I asked myself: ‘Why bother?’ An exchange of dark-squared bishops helps me, since I don’t fear a kingside attack, and the swap automatically leaves White with a slightly weak, potential bad bishop.

15.h6
The desire to attack is a religion which often masks itself as a political ideology. Natural ‘attacking’ moves are not always healthy ones. In this case, all this intended swap of bishops accomplishes is that he weakens his own dark squares, since his odds of pulling off a successful kingside attack are low. But what to do when nothing obvious suggests itself? In my opinion he would have been better off with a useful waiting move like 15.fe1.

15.d8
The goal is to eventually play for a ...d6-d5 break, which fits the principle \textit{Counter in the center when assaulted on the wing}.

16.xg7
As mentioned above, this is a case where simplification represents a minor concession.

16...xg7 17.h1 b6
Slightly more accurate was the immediate 17...e5! 18.b3 b6, since in this version White’s knight is denied access to f5.

18.g5
Sometimes when we can’t get the real thing (an attack), we fashion an inferior \textit{ersatz} version. White is under-resourced to
accomplish the ambitious undertaking of a kingside attack. I interpreted his last move as chest-thumping, more than the launching of an actual attack.

18…e6
I don’t want to allow his knight into f5.

19.e3! h6 20.g3
I would play the queen to e3, since now I get 20…h5 with tempo.

20…h5 21.h4
He dreams of an attack which doesn’t really exist. He should have played the queen to f2.

21…e5!

White fights a shapeless enemy. He has landed in a passive Najdorf structure. In this game it’s actually difficult to find outright mistakes from White. A few seemingly insignificant failings, like a slightly bad bishop, slightly weakened dark squares and an overall passive position, which, when tallied, risks adding up to a future loss.

22.d2 f4 23.\text{ }d3 \text{ }d5
This thematic move follows the principle \textit{Initiate confrontation when your pieces are more aggressively posted.}

24.exd5 \text{ }bxd5 25.gxf4 \text{ }f5 26.e1

Every concession we make is a reproach to our ego. This awkward move is forced.

26…f4!

Insuring that White’s structure sustains damage.

27.xd1 \text{ }c5 28.b3 \text{ }d3
28.cxd3?? hangs a piece to 28…x\text{ }c1.

28…cxd3 29.cxd3
After 29…cxd3 30.cxd3 \text{ }c2 31.e1 \text{ }xb2 Black has an extra pawn, superior piece placement and superior structure.

29.d4
Now his d-pawn is frozen in place, is the powered down android set on standby mode.

30.e1 c\text{ }d6 31.h3 \text{ }c5 32.e2

There is no question Black is in control with a pleasant advantage, but when it comes to cashing out for the full point, ‘pleasant’ is sometimes not enough to extract a win. White’s palsied d3-isolani may be under heavy pressure, but for now can be defended as many times as Black’s major pieces attack it. After all, it is well known that a single weakness usually isn’t enough to defeat the opponent in a major piece ending. So let’s come up with a potential plan:
Plan A: The ratio of attack to defense swings in Black’s favor if I triple major pieces on the d-file and then engineer a well-timed …f7-f5 and …e5-e4!, playing upon a pin, since White’s rook or rooks will be on d2 or d1. I’m a bit nervous about this plan, since if I open my king too much, he can let his d-pawn go at some point and try and play for perpetual check.

Plan B: This is the one I chose in the game. Black keeps one rook on the d-file on d4, and queen and rook on the c-file. This means White must be on the lookout for rook infiltrations on c2 and c1. For the next step Black slowly pushes on the kingside, with …f7-f6 (reinforcing e5), …h6-h5 and …g6-g5. When this stage is reached, I go directly after White’s king with a well-timed …g5-g4 break.

32...f6 33...e3...cd5

Have I switched to Plan A? No. White can’t improve his position, so for now I’m just probing and testing, intending to return to Plan B in a few moves.

34...c3
34...a5?! b4! 35...a4 bx a3 36...xa3...xa3 37...xa3 and a3 will fall.

34...h5 35...b4?!

He shouldn’t have weakened c3. When we sense our position degenerating, yet don’t fully understand how, we die a slow and mysterious death, from an odorless, poisonous gas.

I thought maybe he would try 35...c1, allowing d3 to fall to generate activity: 35...xd3 36...xd3...xd3 Now if he enters a rook ending with 37...c7+...xc7 38...xc7+...f8 39...c6...f7 40...xa6...b3 41...h4...xb2 42...h2...b3 43...a4 bxa4 44...xa4 it’s a four versus three ending with pawns on the same side. Black has considerably higher chances of winning this over a three versus two, which is nearly always drawn. Still, this was perhaps White’s best shot at a draw.

35...d7 36...g1 g5 37...f1...d6!

Now it’s time to switch to Plan B.

38...e2?!

White’s king is the man in the desert dying of thirst, who thinks to himself: ‘Thank God. Those kindly vultures will send for help.’ White seeks help defending d3 with his king. The problem is it isn’t safe for his king in the center, despite the relatively reduced material on the board. White should adopt a suffer-in-silence policy, where he just waits, hoping for the best. When we are unable to effect a full recovery, then the next best thing is to alleviate our existing pain. 38...g1 is probably White’s best.

38...c6 39...b2...c7

Threat: 40...c2+.

40...d2...c3 41...e4 f5 42...xd4

42...c3 f4 43...e4 g4! (this is the break I have been playing for) 44.hxg4 hxg4 45...fxg4...dxd3! 46...xd3...c2+ 47...d2 (47...xc2...xc2+ picks up a rook) 47...xb2 48...xb2...c6 and White loses a rook in every version:

A) 49...d3...d5+;

B) 49...f3...c3+;

C) 49...xc5...xg2+ and the b2-rook falls.

42...exd4 43...f2...h4
Zugzwang. White resigned. g3 is the salient square, and my attack finally awakens with mastodonic slowness.

A) 44. a1 is met with 44...g4! and if 45. fxg4 f4+ 46. e2 e3+ 47. d1 g1+ 48. e2 xa1;

B) 44. e2 h2 45. f2 g4! 46. fxg4 fxg4 47. hxg4 h3 48. f3 hgx2 49. xg2 xd3+ 50. e4 e3+ 51. d5 e5+ 52. c6 f6+ 53. c5 e7+ 54. d5 d7+ 55. c5 e5+ 56. b6 e6+ 57. a5 c7#.

C) After 44. e2 the hated d3-pawn is the abandoned, blighted crop: 44...xd3 (threatening to mate in three with 45...g3+) 45. c2 c3 46. d2 g6 47. g1 (47. xd4 g3+ 48. gl c1+ mates) 47...c4 48. h2 xa3 is completely hopeless for White.
CHAPTER 7

The God of War

Last year I wrote a book on Tal, revisiting the games of perhaps the most extreme hawk of all time. In this chapter we take a look, not at his most beautiful games, but at two of his shadier examples, where he just increased the complication levels to the point where both his opponents became disoriented and blundered. His sacrifices felt 20% fact and 80% conjecture, yet the geometrical benedictions kept coming his way. It’s difficult to question Tal’s methods when he so often achieved his aims with empirically unsound ideas, which somehow passed imperviously safely, through his opponents’ confusion.

BI 13.2 – A70
Benoni Defense
Isaak Birbrager
Mikhail Tal
Kharkov 1953

1.d4 f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6

Tal popularized the Benoni with many stunning wins in the 1950’s.

4.e3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.e4 g6 7.f3 f5 8.d3

8.h3, preventing 8…g4, is popular today.

8…0-0 9.0-0

9…a6

Black’s light-squared bishop is often a problem piece in the Benoni, so today most players opt for 9…g4 10.h3 xf3 11.xf3 bd7.

10.d2

10.h3! favors White.

10…b4 11.e2

Or 11.b1, keeping an eye on e4.

11.e8 12.a3 a6 13.e1 c7 14.c2

Inaccurate. Correct was 14.a4.

14.b8

The preparationless 14…b5! is worth a try: after 15.xb5 (15.xb5 fxd5! is at least even for Black) 15…xb5 16.xb5 a6 17.c3 b6 Black gets loads of compensation for the pawn, with bishop pair, light-square control and open b-file.

15.a4 b6 16.b5

More consistent is 16.e4 a6 17.f3 xc4 18.xc4 a6 19.g5 b5 20.f1. I slightly prefer White, due to the bishop pair, and light-square potential.

16.a6 17.xc7 xc7 18.a2

The rook is more actively placed, lifted to a3.

18.e7 19.f3?

This move bolsters e4 at the cost of losing control over h5, which allows Tal to seize the initiative with his next move. 19.a3 had to be played.

19.e5! 20.f1 f5! 21.xd3 f4!
Now Black’s pieces gain access to e5, and this enables the plan ...g6-g5 and ...g5-g4. The position begins to resemble the one in the Polugaevsky-Nezhmetdinov game.

22. g4?!  
This violent attempt to eject the knight or break up the bind loosens his king’s pawn cover.

22... d4+  
Even stronger is 22... h4! 23. e2 h3!, threatening a nasty check on d4: 24. f2 d4 25. gxh5 xf3 (threat: 26... xf2+, followed by 27... xd3). If 26. c4 h3! when the mate threat on g2 is decisive.

23. h1 h4  
Threatening White’s loose e1-rook.

24. e2 h3  
Threatening mate on f1.

25. g2

25... xf3!?

In chaotic situations, Tal sacrificed, not because his idea was inherently sound, but more from the desire that it was. This risky venture, which is so tempting in the abstract, and so distressingly demanding of details for White in the immediate, wasn’t strictly necessary. Black attacks in safety with 25... f6! 26. d1 g5 with an eventual ...h7-h5 to follow.

26. d2!  
26. gxh5?? xe4! with dual threats: 27... e1 and 27... h3. Black has a winning attack.

26... e3 27. e1 f3  
Tal refuses to enter the line 27... e1 28. d2 h4 29. gxh5 h3 30. c3 xc3 31. bxc3 xg2+ 32. xg2 xh5 33. xa6 and White doesn’t look so badly off.

28. d2
This is a draw offer, to which Tal predictably replies: ‘Nyet!’

28...\texttt{xg4}?

Before this moment, Black’s bishop led a mostly uneventful life. The text move informs us all that most attacks tend to be expensive, but Tal’s idea is more an emotional sentiment than a financial one.

The comp says the queen sacrifice is unsound, but for a human, it proved to be virtually impossible to safely navigate the defense. Tal is in his element, since White’s pieces aren’t organized in any familiar geometric pattern, and the position is essentially unscannable, from Logic’s point of view.

Far safer was 28...\texttt{g3}+ 29...\texttt{hxg3} 30...\texttt{e2} \texttt{h3}+ 31...\texttt{h2} \texttt{xg3} 32...\texttt{d1} with a messily even game, where Black gets three pawns for the piece. In this line – unlike the line Tal entered – White’s king remains relatively safe.

29.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{xf3} 30...\texttt{h4}!

Preemptively preventing ...\texttt{e5} and ...\texttt{g5}.

If he tried to activate his sleeping rook with 30...\texttt{a3} there would follow 30...\texttt{e5}!, threatening 31...\texttt{g5}. White must play 31...\texttt{h4} in any case.

30...\texttt{f8}!

Black threatens to shove his f-pawn all the way to the promotion square with 31...\texttt{xg2}+, followed by 32...\texttt{f3}.

31.\texttt{e2}??

A single confused moment for White is all it took to make it game, set and match.

Tal’s vision-impaired opponent predictably makes a stomach-churning blunder. Now events begin to resound with facile ease to Tal’s wishes.

Correct was 31...\texttt{b3}! \texttt{be8} (31...\texttt{xg2}+ 32...\texttt{xe2} \texttt{f3} 33...\texttt{h3} \texttt{f2} 34...\texttt{e6}+ \texttt{h8} 35...\texttt{f1} and White consolidates) 32...\texttt{h2} \texttt{xg2} 33...\texttt{xe2} \texttt{f3} 34...\texttt{g4} \texttt{f2} 35...\texttt{h6}. Now if 35...\texttt{f1} 36...\texttt{xf1} \texttt{xg1} 37...\texttt{d7} when Black’s would-be attack is merely a wasp in a glass jar, with its malice safely contained within.

31...\texttt{g3}+!

The odd thing about Tal’s swindles is that we have no sense of how he righted a wrong in his position. What we understand is that all is suddenly well in Black’s camp.

32...\texttt{h2} \texttt{xg2}! 33...\texttt{xe2} \texttt{xe2}!
Oops. If White takes the knight, he must return the queen.

34. \( \text{xe2} \)

This decision is to agree to starvation in the midst of plenty, yet there is nothing better. If 34. \( f1 \) \( f3 \) 35. \( b3 \) be8 36. \( h6 \) g3+ 37. \( e1 \) f2+ 38. \( xf2 \) xf2+ 39. \( xf2 \) xe4+ White’s game crumbles.

34...f3+ 35. \( xf3 \) xf3 36. \( xf3 \) \( f8+ \)

Not only is Black up a pawn, but also White’s remaining pieces remain hopelessly dormant.

37. \( g3 \)

37. \( e2 \) f2+ 38. \( d3 \) e5 and White is virtually in zugzwang.

37... \( e5+ \) 38. \( g2 \) f4! 0-1

If 39. \( a1 \) \( a5! \) 40. \( b3 \) \( xc1 \) 41. \( xc1 \) f4 picks off a second pawn.

CK 10.5 – B18
Caro-Kann Defence
Mikhail Tal
Mikhail Botvinnik
Moscow Wch m 1960 (17)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.c3 dxe4 4.xe4 f5 5.g3 g6 6.c4 e6 7.e2 f6 8.f4 d6 9.xg6

9.c3 is White’s only prayer for an edge.

This exchange, which borders on the dubious, isn’t the opening’s normal modus operandi. Picking up the bishop pair wasn’t such a wonderful deal for White:

1. Tal took three moves to chop a piece which moved twice, effectively losing a tempo.
2. The capture allows Black to open the h-file, which may endanger White’s king, should he choose to castle kingside.
3. Black is left with a remaining good bishop, with key central pawns on the opposite color.
4. For now the position remains inflexible, which benefits Black’s knights.
5. Tal’s move weakens key central squares and Black can prepare to seize control over f4, with ...c7 and ...d5.

9...hxg6 10.g5 bd7 11.0-0?

Tal isn’t afraid to castle into Black’s open h-file. I would be inclined to play 11.c3, intending to castle queenside.

11... \( a5 \)
White’s choice: servility on the one side, and presumption on the other.

12.f4?!

Presumption it is. Don’t you hate it when your chess errors turn into a parable of your own character flaws? In this case Tal can justly be accused of recklessness. He refuses to make do with what he has, and takes an appalling strategic risk under the banner of playing for higher stakes.

It has been my observation that the outlandish tends to be our Plan B, when Plan A fizzes. The optimist’s greatest gift is the ability to wilfully ignore a harsh reality, always believing: ‘It will all work out for the best in the end.’ Strategically, Tal’s move of startling bellicosity is an awkward contraption, more than a legitimate idea, since it weakens f4 and multiple central squares, leaves the g5-bishop without wiggle room to move, and makes the structure even more rigid – all of which benefit Black.

Tal’s motivation? My guess is that he would rather recklessly push forward than make a chastened admission that he got nothing from the opening with a quiet move. So he went with the thought: when we lack knowledge of what to do, then make up for it with sheer muscle.

Tal in his book on the match (which is a must read, if you seek a glimpse into the thought processes of a World Champion) insisted he understood the strategic defects, but rationalized it for the raised complexity level – which is how he often won. But in this case I see a concession without real return and his argument to me, sounds like a case of the devil citing scripture for his own ends!

12...0-0-0?!

Tal was probably happy to provoke this aggressive reaction. I’m curious why Botvinnik didn’t go with the calmer reaction 12...0-0 with a safe, tiny edge for Black.

13.a3

Tal prepares his coming pawn storm.

13...c7 14.b4

Tal continues to underestimate the swiftness of Black’s counterattack. Come up with a plan for Black to seize a clear strategic advantage.

14...b6?!

This move allows Tal back into the game. The unpinning 14...d8! prepares either ...d5 or ...h7, after which White is in deep trouble. For example: 15.b3 e5
16. \textbf{f3} \textit{f6!} (even stronger than 16.\textit{xf4}) 17.\textit{xf4} \textit{fxg5} 18.\textit{cxd5}. Opposite-colored bishops arise, an imbalance which favors Black, who has both the initiative and the faster attack: 18...\textit{exd5} 19.\textit{f5g5} d8 20. \textit{xf8} \textit{xf8} 21.b5 (21.d2 is met with 21...\textit{f4} when g5 falls) 21...\textit{xg5} 22.\textit{bxc6} e3+ 23.\textit{h1} bxc6 with an extra pawn plus a dark-square initiative for Black.

15.\textbf{e2}?! 15.\textbf{b3} \textit{bd5} 16.\textbf{d2} is okay for White.

15...\textit{e7}?! Botvinnik misses another opportunity to seize the initiative with the energetic 15...\textit{e5}! 16.\textit{fxe5} \textit{xe5} 17.\textit{c3} \textit{xg3} 18.\textit{g4+} \textit{bd7} 19.\textit{hxg3} \textit{g3}, which leaves White down a pawn for insufficient compensation.

16.\textbf{d3} \textit{fd5} For doves, sloth in chess is a sin perhaps even more grievous than gluttony.

Botvinnik wastes time with this swap. He could have once again seized the advantage had he found the tactical central counter 16...\textit{c5}!! Now arrives the moment for Botvinnik to press his advantage. If White plays the natural 17.\textit{bxc5}? (correct is the meek 17.c3 \textit{exd4} 18.\textit{cxd4} \textit{d7} when Black hammers away at d4, while seizing firm control over d5) 17...\textit{xd4} 18.\textit{exb6} \textit{xd3} 19.\textit{bxc7} \textit{g3}! with a winning advantage for Black.

17.\textit{xe7} \textit{xe7} 18.\textit{ab1} Yes, d4 remains weak, but at least in this version Tal gets to attack Botvinnik’s king.

19...\textit{d7} 20.\textit{bd1} An indication that Tal worries about the health of his f4-pawn, so he retains his rook on f1.

20...\textit{b8} 21.\textit{b3} \textit{c7} 22.\textit{a4} \textit{h4} Botvinnik hopes to distract from the attack by simultaneously harassing the f4- and d4-pawns.

23.\textit{a5} \textit{c8} 24.\textit{e3} \textit{e7} 25.\textit{e5}!

25...\textit{hh8} Possibly the wrong rook:

A) 25...\textit{dh8}! 26.\textit{h3} \textit{f5} looks like a better version for Black than he got in the game;

B) 25...\textit{xe5}?? would be an awful blunder after 26.\textit{fxe5} \textit{fg8} 27.\textit{xf7}.

26.\textbf{b5} 26.a6! \textit{b6} 27.\textbf{f3} is beginning to look better for White.

26...\textit{cxb5} 27.\textit{xb5}?!
Now Tal experiences difficulty maintaining coverage of his central pawns. After 27. c1! bxc4 28. xc4 d6 29. b1 the pressure down the open b-file offers White full compensation.

27...a6!? This looks like paranoia, and the nervous kind of move I would play when low on the clock. There is no reason for Black to avoid the double attack 27... c6!, winning a pawn.

28. b2

Suddenly, Tal’s position is off the hospital gurney and into rehab, since his attacking chances compensate for his loose structure.

28... d7 29. c5 a8 30. f3 c6

Botvinnik has b7 adequately covered.

31. xc6

This swap releases some of the pressure from d4, at the cost of handing Black a powerful influence on the light squares.

31...xc6!? Botvinnik was short on time, yet refused to cop out with the simplifying line 31...bxc6 32. b1 b8 33. xb8+ xb8 34. xb8+ d8 35. b1+ c8 36. e2 d5 37. f2 with a balanced ending.

32. f3

Intending to triple on the b-file.

32...a4

Attacking the d1-rook, while increasing pressure on d4.

33. fd3

After 33. b3! hd8 34. e2 d5 35. b1 c6 I’d rather be White, since Black can only wait.

33...c8 34. b1 xa5?!

A merchant never misses a chance for profit. An instructive moment. Botvinnik, underestimating the power of the newly opened a-file, violates the principle Avoid line-opening pawn grabs in front of your king. The game remains tensely balanced after 34... c4 35. d2 d5.

35. b3?!

Powerful is 35. f1!, intending e3, c4 and b6+: 35... e4 36. a3 c7 37. b3 b8 38. b6 Threatening 39. c6 – Black is obliged to give up a piece on c5.

35...c7 36. a3 a7 37. b6 xf4!
This pawn grab, on the other hand, is perfectly justifiable.

38. **e2!?**

A person who is broke and without opportunity, begins to believe that revolution benefits society, since it purges a corrupt system and redistributes hoarded wealth, currently out of his or her reach. White’s position approaches the dreaded lose-all-hope phase. So Tal gathers what he can from his rapidly dwindling resources for a final stand. He refuses to grovel in an inferior ending with 38. **b4!?**.

Unilateral disarmament can be unwise when facing a still hostile enemy: 38... **xd4+** 39. **xd4** **xd4** 40. **xb7+** **a8** 41. **xf7** **d7** 42. **xd7** **xf7** and White, down a pawn, struggles for a draw.

38... **e4** 39. **b3**

So far, so good. Black’s business is booming. Two pawns up, and with a relatively well defended king, Botvinnik is just one strong move from winning the game.

39... **d5??**

Accordingly Botvinnik forgot about the self-evident adage *First things first*. 39... **a8!** avoids Tal’s trap. White’s attack has run its course and is at an end. If 40. **xc6** **xc6** 41. **xb7** **xb1+!** 42. **xa6+** **a7** 43. **xc8#.

40. **xa6+!**

Suddenly, the tensile strength of the defense reaches the soggy level of tapioca pudding. Tal was the chess fan’s dream come true: a coffeehouse player, who was capable of swindling world champions. Now Black’s defensive barrier is no more than a remote image of its previous self.

40... **b8**

A) 40... **xa6** 41. **a4#** ‘Ah! My new birdfeeder arrived,’ squeals the queen, as she views her late brother’s head on a pole;

B) 40... **bxa6** 41. **b6+** **a8** 42. **xa6+** **a7** 43. **xc8#.

41. **a4! 1-0**

I added this ugly game because we innocent doves have an inexhaustible capacity for getting duped when low on the clock, exactly like Botvinnik in this game. 42. **a8+** is coming and Black’s king has nowhere to run. If 41... **c7** 42. **a5+** **b8** 43. **a8#.
What happens to me when the complications reach a Tal-like level? Well, the results are not pretty. Like most doves, I get disoriented and my strength drops precipitously, to the point where I feel on the same cognitive level of a below average chimpanzee. The vexing part for us strategists is there is no way to avoid complications against an opponent who is determined to muck it up, and the recurring pattern is I continually miss opportunities to win a won game. The good news is the more of these positions we play, the greater our orientation – or maybe we doves just tell ourselves this to make us feel better!

SL 1.5.5 – D30
Slav Defense
Alexander Baburin 2598
Cyrus Lakdawala 2436
San Francisco 2001 (4)

I know what you are thinking: when you go from a Tal game to a Lakdawala game, the intensity level goes from tackle football played on pavement to patty-cake played by two six-year-old girls. But not in this case. GM Baburin ensured that this game reached Tal-like levels of irrationality.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.e3 f6 4.e3 e6
4…f5 5.e3 c6 6.h4 is another heavily contested theoretical tabiya.

5.bd2
GM Baburin avoids the main theoretical byways with 5.e3 bd7 and now either 6.d3 or 6.c2.

5…bd7 6.d3 b6
The debadification process begins, as I prepare to develop my light-squared bishop.

6.e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 dxe4 9.xe4 xe4 10.xe4 f6 11.c2 b6 (the position has more of a Caro-Kann feel to it than a Semi-Slav) 12.e2 b7 13.f4 c5 14.ad1 cxd4 15.xd4 c8 16.b3 d8 17.xb5?! (17.f5! gives White an edge)

17…c6! 18.f3 a6 19.d4 c5 20.e3 c7 (Black has equalized) 21.f2 d7 22.xe3 xe3 23.xe3 ad8 24.xd7 xd7 25.xd1 xd1+ 26.xd1 f8 27.c2 h6 28.xc2 b7 29.xb4 f6 30.b3 e7 31.g4 g5 32.d4! (32.h5?! is an overpress after 32…d6! 33.xh6 xb4 when Black has all the winning chances) 32…d6 33.xd6+ xd6 34.f2 ½-½ Kasparov-Lakdawala, ICC 1996. Yes, your initiative- and talent-challenged writer miraculously drew with a world champion. The lesson of this game is that a dove can sometimes hold off an infinitely stronger opponent, if we can keep the position controlled.

7.0-0 b7 8.b3 e7
If I develop my bishop to d6, then White can play for the same plan with b2 and e5, when I am disqualified from playing…xe5, due to the pawn fork.

9.b2 0-0 10.e2
10.e5 is met with 10…c5.

10…c7
Connecting my rooks, while keeping an eye over e5.

11.ac1

11.ac8 12.e5!
To my mind, Baburin’s setup is one of the most dangerous ones for Black in the Semi-Slav.

12…c5

Principle: Counter in the center when assaulted on the wing, since White prepares a kingside attack with f2-f4 next.

12…\textit{xe5}? plays into White’s hands after 13.dxe5 d7 14.cxd5 exd5 15.f4. h5 is in the air and White has a strong – perhaps winning – attack, since 15…c5? is met with 16.xh7+! xh7 17.h5+ g8 18.f5 f3 d7 20.e6 xe6 21.f3 f6 22.xf6 gxf6 23.d4! g7 (if 23…xd4 24.g3+ wins Black’s queen) 24.h7+ f7 25.g3 g8 26.xf5! and White wins.

13.f4 dxc4 14.bxc4

Now we have a potential hanging pawns game.

14…\textit{cd8}!

I was afraid to play 14…fd8, which weakens f7.

15.f5?!

Just because our fortunes are on the rise, it doesn’t give us license for an overreach. This impatient move self-undermines e5. Correct was 15.\textit{cd1}.

15…d6! 16.df3

After 16.fxe6? \textit{xe5} 17.dxe5 \textit{xe5} 18.xf6 xb2 19.xf7 xf7 20.exf7+ xf7 White may already be strategically lost, with no attack, broken pawns and weak dark squares.

16…\textit{fe8}?! No Virginia, there is no Santa Clause. Why we repeat our own bad habits over and over is an irresolvable human mystery. Here I fall victim to my usual problem of lack of an energetic response to an emergency situation. I incorrectly rejected the line Alex pointed out after the game: 16…xf3! 17.xf3 e5! (threat: 18.e4) 18.dxe5 \textit{xe5} 19.c2 fe8 20.e4 xf3+ 21.gxf3 e5 when White’s attack is history and he is left with a remaining bad bishop.

17.fx6 \textit{xe6}

17…fxe6 18.xd7 xd7 19.c2 also favors White.

18.xd7 xd7

18…xd7?? 19.d5! (even stronger than 19.f5) 19…ce8 20.xf6 gxf6 21.h4 and Black can resign.

19.d5!

Alex isn’t tempted into the dubious adventure 19.g5?! xh2+ 20.h1 h6 21.xh7+ xh7 22.xh7 g3 23.f4 xg2+ 24.xg2 xg2+ 25.xg2 xf4 26.exf4 xh7 and White will have to fight for a draw in a pawn down ending.

19…\textit{e7}?!
This lax move allows my opponent a winning attack. Now White has two tempting continuations of his attack: the violent
20. \texttt{\textbackslash x}h7+, or the more restrained 20. g5.
I had to go into grovel mode with 19… h6!? 20. g3 e5 21. xxe5 xxe5 22. xe5 xe5 23. f5 e8 24. cf1 f6. My h6-rook is
awkwardly out of play, but at least I'm not getting mated in this version.

20. xh7+?!
Alex continues with the glowing heat of attacking obsession. He acts like a patient recovering from Mad Cow disease, asking
the nurse if steak tartare is on the hospital menu. In this game, I keep making typical dove errors of judgment, only to be kept
alive by Baburin's hawkish errors!
Correct was 20. g5!, which gives White a risk-free and winning attack after 20… g6 21. g4 e5 22. h4 f5 23. e2 c8
24. e4! when lines open dangerously against Black's king.

20… xh7 21. g5+ g8 22. h5 f8 23. f3
Threat: 24. h3 and 25. h8 mate.

23… xh2+?
I don't know what is going on. Do you? It feels as if a U-Haul truck is needed to remove the central and kingside clutter.
In this case my apprehension gives way to panic. Everything is under control after 23… c8!. I may have hallucinated, fearing
24.g4??, with h3 to follow. Except that it's completely refuted by the simple 24… d7! 25.h3 e8!, intending 26… f6:
26. f6 c5 27. xe5 xe5 and White's attack collapses.

24. h1!
He didn't fall for the obliging 24. xh2? xh2+ 25. xh2 f6 26. h3 de8 27. c3 a6 28. f2 g6, leaving White fighting for
the draw.

24… d6!
Threat: 25… h6. 24… g3? is met with 25. xg7! xg7 26. cf1 when Black is busted.

25. xg7!
Alex finds the only move.

25… xg7 26. cf1 f4?
Gulp! Out I merrily skip into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I lament the transient frailty of the human brain – especially
my own. In this case my sang attempts to out-froid my opponent, but fails miserably.
I had been playing for a... h6 pin trick for quite some time now, and picked the worst possible moment to implement it. It's psychologically difficult to abandon our precious idea, which we previously invested with meaning. The comp found 26...f5!! 27. h3! (27. xf4? f4! 28. xf4 h6 29. xh6+ g6 30. f7+ g7 31. d6 g6! 32. dxc7 xf4 favors Black) 27... g6 and miraculously, Black is okay. For example: 28. h7+ f8 29. xf5+ e8 30. g8+ d7 31. f7 c8 32. h7+ c7! (attacking the f5-rook, while securing my king's safety on the queenside) 33. xd6 xd6 34. xg6 d7 and Black stands no worse.

27. h3!
Baburin avoids the trap 27. xf4?? h6 28. xf7+ xf7 29. xf7+ xf7 30. xh6+ xh6 31. xf7+ g6 and Black wins.

27... g6
28. xf4!
This game is one of those give-and-take situations, where White does most of the giving and Black most of the taking. His move is even stronger than 28.exf4 f6 when Black at least has a prayer to survive. 28... xf4 29. exf4

29. h8+! forces mate: 29... g6 30. exf4 e1+ 31. h2 and Black is unable to reasonably meet the threat 32. h7+, followed by 33. h6+ and 34. xf7 mate.

29... e1+ 30. h2 a8?
Black’s only practical chance was to enter the line 30... e8! 31. h7+ f6 32. g3 d7 33. h6+ e7 34. xf7+ d8 35. xd6 e2+ 36. g1 xd6 37. xb7 g6.

31. h8+ e7

ET phone home! Will my king ever get rescued?
32. h4!
Answer: It won’t. The nature of a losing position is, just when you think ‘It can’t possibly get any worse’ is the exact moment when it gets worse. Right here your writer began to blush, the color of a salmon fillet. White threatens Black’s loose rook, and also 33. c6+, picking up Black’s queen. Also winning is 32. xf7 c8 33. g7.

32... e2
32... d7 33. xe1 is also hopeless for Black.

33. c6+ d7
Here I attempted a gesture of expressing my dismay by raising just one eyebrow, which Mr. Spock (and Vulcans in general)
mastered, unlike me, who just can’t seem to get it right, even after years of practice.
34...xc7 xc7 35.b5 d6 36.b3 a5 37.a4! is similar to the game’s finish.
38.f2! b5 39.b3! 1-0
On 39...a6, 40.a4 wins, since 40...b4 is met with 41.xb4+

KI 31.11 – E70
King’s Indian Defense
Cyrus Lakdawala 2524
Leonard Sussman 2010
San Diego rapid 2016

1.c4 e6 2.e3 g6 3.d4 d6 4.d5 e5 5.d3 f5 6.d4! a6! 6...c6 was played in the only other game in this position in
my database.
7.d5 e8 8.h4 h6
This is actually a theoretical novelty, rather unusual for move six. 6...c6 was played in the only other game in this position in
my database.

8...e5 8...f5
Sealing the queenside is a heavily lopsided deal, since White owns all the kingside play, due to a territorial advantage in that
sector. 10...f4 is preferable.
11.0-0 a6 12.c1 b4 13.b1
The bishop may technically be stuck on b1, yet it continues to take aim at Black’s king, from a long distance posture.
13...d7 14.e1

If you guessed that my last move represents one of those make-it-up-as-you-go-along strategies, you would be correct. I freely
admit that my last move flouts my normal threshold of opening decorum. I outrated my opponent by 500 rating points, so I
uncharacteristically embraced a brave lifestyle.
8...0-0 a6 9.f3 a6 10.a4 a5?

White’s attacking plan is oddly similar to the Sicilian Grand Prix, with h4, h6 and g5.
14...e8
My opponent goes into Maginot Line mode, preparing to hunker down. I expected 14...f6 15.h4 h6.
15. h4
My queen takes proprietary interest in the black king’s home, measuring walls and ordering furniture for when she moves in, which she hopes is soon. Also tempting was 15. e5 f6 16. h4.
15…f6
A weakening move like this suggests an atmosphere of emergency. I don’t have improvements for Black, who is already in deep trouble.
16. h6 f8

The choice of White’s next move indicates style. Would you play 17. e5, or 17. f5?
17. f5
Whenever I am presented with a choice of safe or crazy, I tend to give safe the benefit of the doubt. I proceed cautiously in a position which would normally call for a kind of berserker élan. My natural inclination is to squeeze. A hawk would probably play for mate with the more direct 17. e5 dxe5 18. fxe5.
17…xh6 18. xh6 d7!
A move made with the philosophy *If you are unable to achieve the impossible (defend his king), then the next best thing is to go for the improbable (pray that he does!)*. He hopes to accentuate the positive – however fragmentary! – in his position. This is actually a really snaky defensive move, the idea of which is to later play …g4, when his queen comes to the defense of his king. It shouldn’t have been good enough, but my future inaccurate play almost made it work.
18…g5? is met ruthlessly with 19. e5! fxe5 20. h4! and if 20…gxh4 21. f4 is crushing.
19. e5!
Better late than never. Here I attempt to endow an admittedly pedestrian attacking theme with distinction. A thematic attacking break is achieved and Black is slaughtered… or at least *should* be slaughtered if a competent attacker played White.
19…dxe5 20. fxg6
I tend to see the correct idea and then inexplicably back out for an incorrect reason. I looked at 20. e5! fxe5 21. fxg6 and thought Black was okay after 21…e6. Komodo tells me Black is far from okay and demonstrates a mate in four moves with 22. xf8+!, which, with hindsight, seems kind of obvious! 22…xf8 23. gxh7+ f7 24. f1+ e7 25. xf8#
20…g4

So his queen comes charging to the rescue of his king, however there is one problem: Komodo’s assessment of +8.07, which approaches the level of a full queen up for White. From this point on, I keep playing second and third best moves, eventually
allowing Black back into the game.

21.gxh7+

I really stink at finishing off a nearly dead opponent. I don't know why on earth I rejected 21.h3!, which was my original intention: 21…f4 22.gxh7+ h8 23.h5 d7 24.e4 e3+ 25.h1 when there is no defense to the coming 26.e5. If 25…f4 26.f5 e3 27.f7+ g7 28.h8 is a surreal looking checkmate, almost as if White got queen odds at the start of the game.

21…h8 22.e4?! 21…f4 22.h3! which was my original intention: 21…f4 22.gxh7+ h8 23.h5 d7 24.e4 e3+ 25.h1 when there is no defense to the coming 26.e5. If 25…f4 26.f5 e3 27.f7+ g7 28.h8 is a surreal looking checkmate, almost as if White got queen odds at the start of the game.

21…h8 22.e4?! Critical positions are not a box of assorted chocolates, where we have the luxury of picking more than one. Only a single method wins. Once again I reject 22.h3! g7 23.h5 d7 24.e5! fxe5 25.f7 g3. I thought maybe he was okay here since 26…e3+ and 27…xc1 is threatened. But is it? The comp says Black is dead if I ignore it with 26.e4! e3+ 27.h2 xc1. Sigh. I saw to this point and hallucinated, missing 28.f4#. Stop your calculation just one ply too early, and it can mean the difference between a crushing win or a depressing loss.

22.g7 23.e3?! We tend to listen only when it’s something we want to hear. I was obsessed with the delivery of checkmate, so I barely considered the heavily favorable queen swap with 23.xg7+. To my mind, a queen exchange represented the dreaded swallow-my-pride moment, where the swap openly declares my attacking incompetence. 23…xg7 24.b5 d8 25.d6! I missed this idea. Now if 25…exd6 White has the overloaded defender shot 26.xf6! c6 27.cf1 e6 28.h6! h8 29.xf8+ xf8 30.g6+ g7 31.xf8 xf8 32.xe6 and wins.

23.b6

24.f5?! I again inexplicably rejected my original intention 24.f3! xh7 25.g3 g5 and once again I grossly misassessed, forgetting I had the painfully obvious 26.e4 when Black’s position collapses.

24.xf5 25.xf5?!

My attackers, extras on a movie set, just kind of mill around aimlessly, waiting for the director to call them. I should have taken the opportunity to lift a rook into the fray with 25.xf5! e6 26.f3 and 27.g3 next is a winning attack.

25.e6!

Principle: Create a central diversion when attacked on the wing. Black’s king, who should have been mated long ago, is like the lucky Russian noble with the good fortune to be vacationing outside the country when the Bolsheviks began lopping off aristocratic heads in the revolution.

26.e1! exd5 27.cxd5 b6 28.d1 f4 29.f3 ad8 30.cd1 f8?!

Black should have played more actively with an attempted diversion on d3: with 30…c4 31.f5 f8 32.c4 g5 Black achieves a superior version of the game’s continuation.

31.g3 e3 32.f5 g5 33.g2 f7?!

Much stronger was 33…e7 intending to blockade on d6.

34.d6
Principle: *Passed pawns should be pushed.*

34...\textit{exh7} 35.h4?!  
Another wishy-washy move, which weakens g3. I should have stayed on message and continued pushing with 35.d7! f8 36.h3+ g8 37.e6! xe6 38.xe6 h8 39.e4. Black is completely busted, since 39...dxd7 is met with 40.xd7 xd7 41.xf6, forcing mate.

35...h6 36.d7 e3 37.d6 c4 38.e6?!  
After 38.e4! d3 39.xh7, f6 falls and Black can resign.

38...g7 39.e4 d3 40.xc6?  
My intention is 41.c8, but it’s too slow. Correct was 40.f5! f4 41.f2 xf2 42.xf2 d3 43.c2. White’s d-pawn is paralyzing and he is about to mow Black’s pawns down.

OMG, through my lackluster play the assessment dropped from its previously crushing +8.07 to its currently dismal +.51!

41.xf4?  
Man, I’m getting worried that FIDE may revoke my IM title after seeing this game. I lash out with an incorrect combination. I should have settled for 41.f3!. Once again, I rejected a queen swap, since I felt cheated that I was unable to deliver checkmate this game. 41...xf3+ 42.xf3 xe6 43.xe6 gxd7 44.xb6 still gives White the edge.

41...exf4 42.xc8
42... e1+?
42... gxd7! 43. xd7 xc8 44. xc8 f3 45. c2?? (45. d2! xe4 46. g1 with an equal ending) I intended this lemon, not having time to analyze past this point, and assumed I was winning. The comp found 45... e1+ 46. h2 e2+ 47. xe2 fxe2 and I resign.

43. h2
Now I'm winning again.
43... fxg3+ 44. h3
Black’s g3-pawn is used as a shield and my king is completely secure. An immense sense of relief came over me.
44... gxd7 45. xd7 xc8 46. xc8 e3 47. f5 1-0
CHAPTER 9

When to fight and when to bail out with a draw offer?

If you tend to be the timid type like me, then the answer is: stop offering draws (and of course that includes stop accepting them as well). I have this awful habit of assessing pessimistically where I perceive the position to be unclear, when in actuality it’s totally in my favor. After this game with GM Sevillano, where I agreed to a draw in a virtually winning position, I vowed: ‘No more draw offers. I’m playing every game out to the bitter end.’ Of course, I quickly reneged on this vow and still keep offering draws in favorable situations.

This chapter is also about paranoia, a disease which tends to afflict us doves, who perceive non-existent threats. Our goal is to refuse to allow apprehension to give way to panic, which is a lot easier to say than to actually achieve in our play.

QP 6.11 – A46
Queen’s Pawn Openings
Cyrus Lakdawala
Enrico Sevillano
San Diego rapid 2016

1.d4 e6 2.g5!?
Ah yes, here we see the confident sparrow, preparing to swoop down upon the unsuspecting eagle. The Trompowsky Attack is a sharp line, not conducive to trial-and-error experimentation. So why do I enter it against a hawk GM, which is in open violation of sacrosanct dove conduct? After all, guilt by association still represents partial guilt. Normally I don’t play such lines against hawks, where to survive, we must follow theory with the obedience of a Roman Centurion.

In this case I knew my opponent and was confident that my opening prep would trump his. So I’m not afraid of sharp positions when I have done my homework with comped prep, since it isn’t me playing Sevillano anymore. Komodo and the database take over, at least in the opening stage. The following game felt disturbingly similar to my game against GM Sevillano. 2.e3 b6 4.f5 b7 5.b2 c7 6.e3 h6 7.h4 d6 8.d3 g5!? 9.g3 g4 10.h4 h5 11.h3 c5 12.e2 e2 c6 13.0-0-0! (next time I may play the more accurate move order 13.dxc5! bxc5 14.0-0-0!) 13…a6?! 14.dxc5! bxc5 15.e4 e5 16.e5 xe5 dxe5 17.hxg4 hxg4 18.g3 c7 19.g2 g8 20.e3 (Black has been outplayed. He must guard the a6- and g4-pawns, while allowing White’s pieces eternal access to c4) 20…c6 21.b1 b8 22.c ec4 a5 23.a1 a4 24.a3 b7 25.b1 c7 26.e3 d8 27.b1 b8 28.b1 d8 29.b1 c6 30.f4 c5 4.f3.

3.d2 h6 4.h4 c5 5.e3 e7 6.c3 b6 7.gf3 b7

8.d3?! I guess playing an initially sharp opening like the Trompowsky doesn’t automatically turn us into Davy Crockett, king of the wild frontier. I’m happy with the boring outcome of the opening, which binds the hawk opponent’s capacity for mischief. The ultra-solid Torre Attack structure is a step sister to the Slav, which in this case I get a move up, since I play the structure with white.
With my last move I create a bit of mischief of my own, inviting complications by goading him into an aggressive/weakening \ldots g7-g5 and \ldots g5-g4 thrust.

I could also have played it safe with the boring 8.h3, which essentially takes his \ldots g7-g5 and \ldots g5-g4 idea off the table.

8...c6

8...g5?! is premature: 9.g3 g4 10.e5 and now if Black gets greedy with 10...xg2? he falls behind in development with 11.g1 h3 12.e4 and if 12...h5 13.g5 f8 14.gxf7! xf7 15.g6, which wins.

9.a3

The idea is to be able to play e3-e4, without fear of \ldots cxd4 cxd4 and \ldots b4 irritations.

9...d6

I'm okay with 9...g5!? 10.g3 h5. Black picks up the bishop pair, at the cost of weakening his kingside pawns.

10.e2?

I also thought about castling into it with 10.0-0!? g5 11.g3. I'm not so terrified by Black’s coming kingside pawn storm, since his own king lacks a safe haven across the board.

10...g5!?

It is fundamentally against the hawk's nature to leave well enough alone. At last, we feel the fish nibbling at the bait. To my mind White’s challenge is one best left undisputed, meeting it with a stony silence. Soundest is of course the simple 10...0-0.

11.g3 g4

So what is going on?

1. The teetering h4-appendage doesn’t appear too stable and is vulnerable to pile up with a future \ldots f6.

2. The problem is the second Black plays \ldots f6, White protects the h4-knight and wins a pawn in the process with \textcolor{red}{xg4}.

3. If Black tries \ldots h6-h5, intending \ldots f6 next, White simply tosses in h2-h3, which keeps the h4-knight secure once again.

Conclusion: In reality, the vulnerability of this knight is an optical illusion, and the piece is in actuality an island of order within an ocean of disorder. Completely wrong is 12.g1??, which is met by the simple clearance shot 12...xd4, winning material, since g2 hangs.

12...c8 13.h3 h5 14.f1!?

This is the wrong spot for the king, since in this version I have trouble connecting my rooks. In my game with IM Keaton Kiewra, shown above in the notes, I improved with the plan of castling queenside and opening the d-file with dxc5. So in this position I should play 14.dxc5! bxc5 15.0-0-0! with a favorable position for White, whose king is safe and who applies central pressure.

14...b8

A sign of frustration. Black gets nowhere if he percolates with 14...g8 15.d1 d7 16.hxg4 hxg4 when g4 has been weakened and there is no way to win White’s knight.

15.g1 a6 16.e4 cxd4 17.cxd4 g8 18.hxg4 hxg4 19.d5!
A strong pawn sacrifice, which isn’t really a sacrifice, since Black is unable to accept. Now Black’s infected structure is a serious health threat to his position. He can’t afford to play ...e6-e5, which critically weakens f5. Yet, by leaving the central tension, Black’s king finds himself in danger.

19...e5!

Sevillano finds the best defense:

A) 19...exd5? 20. f5 with a winning attack for White. The knight finally ends his life of unstinting dormancy on h4;

B) After 19...e5? the outhouse-like stench of Black’s structure makes our eyes water: 20. f5 with a strategically won game for White, who dominates the light squares.

20. d1?!  
I should have kept my bishop with 20. b5+ f8 21. e3!.

20...fd7?  
He should have jumped at the chance to reduce White’s light-square influence with 20...xd3!.

21. b5!  
This should have been the moment of triumph of the dove’s adaptability over a harsh, hawkish environment. Instead, I stupidly agreed to a draw and ruined it. If an unsound sacrifice is a bad investment, then the agreement to a draw in a promising position is under-investing in a golden business opportunity.

As you know, my anxiety level increases in positions which can crash and burn in the flicker of an eyelid, if one side plays the wrong move. Both clocks were low and I offered a draw. Enrico accepted. However, we both misevaluated, thinking the game was messily unclear, when White has a clear +1.58 advantage, according to Komodo, after 21...a6 22. c4! (if 22. xa6?! xa6 23. xa6 c7 Black threatens infiltration to c2 and stands no worse) 22...b5 (22...xc4 23. xc4 e5 24. f5 f6 25. xe5! dxe5 26. d6 f8 27. d7+! xd7 28. cd6+ xd6 29. xd6+ e7 and Black’s king is overruled. 30. h7 is crushing) 23. a2 exd5 24. f5 is a winning attack for White.

KI 80.7 – A15  
King’s Indian Defense  
Cyrus Lakdawala 2536  
Ali Morshedi 2336  
San Diego rapid 2010
1.e4 f5 2.c4 g6 3.e3 c6 4.d4 d5 5.exd5
This is one of Black’s most dangerous systems in the London versus the King’s Indian. He seeks to enforce the traditional …
e7-e5 break, at the cost of a little contortion.
7.e3 e5 8.h2 a6 9.e2 f5 10.0-0 g5
Black plays directly for mate. I think my opponent’s last move is more accurate than the more straightforward continuation
10…e4 11.e2 d5 12.f3 e6 13.e5! dxe5!? (Black should consider closing the center with 13…d5 14.b3 a6) 14.dxe5
Principle: Create a central counter when assaulted on the wing. When I repeat chess principles ad nauseam for the ten
thousandth time, some of my students roll their eyes, deeply offended that I dare to patronize them with such trivially common
knowledge, telling me ‘Yes, yes, I already know this!’ And then the very next game they show, they violate that same principle!
11.dxe5 12.e5!
Our natural jurisdiction ends on our fourth rank. Enter the fifth, and we step into enemy territory. In my book Play the London
System I advocated 12.d5+, but since then comps have gotten a lot stronger, and now I think 12.e5! is a more effective
central counter. My last move achieves the following:
1. It discourages …e5-e4, since Black’s c7-pawn hangs.
2. It prepares a future b2-b4 push.
3. The knight enters Black’s territory, requiring my opponent to expend energy in expelling it.
12…h5?!
A new move in the position, which was actually played on me before in an online blitz game by GM Gilberto Hernandez. As
logical as it looks, the move may be flawed, according to the comps.
13.xg5?
It’s time to waive strategic guidelines. This temporary piece sacrifice breaks up Black’s kingside pawn avalanche. Komodo
suggests the counter-intuitive and stronger 13.h4! gxh4 (13…g4?! 14.e5 and 14…c5 is met with the combination 15.xc7!
xh4 16.d5+ e6 17.xe6 when White is winning) 14.b4 and White’s central and queenside attack is faster than Black’s on
the kingside.
13…xg5 14.xc7
My idea is that 14…\textit{b8} is met with a fork on \textit{e6}.

14…\textit{b6}?

A move made with the philosophy: when busted, chaos is synonymous with opportunity. The only issue here is that Black is far from busted, as my opponent may have believed during the game. There is a difference between a separation and an amputation. This looks a lot closer to the latter.

My opponent, obviously surprised by my sacrifice, indulges in a hawkish overreaction, overestimating his own kingside attacking chances. Correct was 14…\textit{b8} 15.\textit{e6} \textit{f6} 16.\textit{xf8} \textit{xf8} 17.\textit{xh5}. White is up material with a rook and three pawns for two minor pieces. Still, I think Black’s kingside build-up gives him reasonable chances to attack.

15.c5!

Now Black loses more material.

15…\textit{f4}

My opponent counted on this lunge, but the comp says White is winning.

16.\textit{exf4}

This move is slightly inaccurate, since it gives Black’s pieces access to the \textit{d4}-square. More accurate was 16.\textit{xb6}! \textit{xh3} 17.\textit{d5+} \textit{h8} 18.\textit{exf4} \textit{g6} 19.\textit{xa8} \textit{d8}. Now simplest is 20.\textit{f3} (the comp suggests the inhuman but stronger move 20.\textit{d3}) 20…\textit{g4} 21.\textit{e3}. Black is busted and his attack is at an end.

16…\textit{exf4} 17.\textit{cxh6} \textit{d4}!

Threat: 18…\textit{f3}. 17…\textit{xh3}?? hangs a piece to 18.\textit{b3+} \textit{h8} 19.\textit{hxh3}.

18.\textit{h1} \textit{d7} 19.\textit{e3} 18…\textit{f3}

In case you think Black’s attack is real, Komodo’s assessment is +8.95! So from the computer’s perspective, the actuality of the attack is as meaningless as punctuation, without the actual written words.

20.\textit{xf3} \textit{xf3}

Would you play 21.\textit{gxf3}? Or does White have a better option?

21.\textit{c1}?! 19.\textit{c7} \textit{e4} 24.\textit{g1} \textit{g6+} 25.\textit{h1} \textit{e4}
Is White forced to take a repetition draw? Or is there still a way White can pull out a win?

26. g1?? ½-½

Sigh. Komodo assessment +6.01! Boy, talk about squandering your birthright. Sometimes the acceptance of a draw offer is worth a double question mark.

I missed the winning idea 26. e1!! Admittedly, this is a very difficult move to find when low on time: 26… e3+ 27. f3! x f3 28. xe3! xe3 29. bxa7 xa7 (29… e2 30. a8 + h7 31. g3 h4 32. e8 ends Black’s dreams of checkmate) 30. xf3 and White gets way too much material for Black’s queen, who now acts like one of those actresses in a black and white film who gets hysterical, and then the leading man is forced to slap her face to calm her down.

I only looked at 26. e1?? e3+ 27. g1 (or 27. f3 xe1+ 28. xe1 xf3+ 29. g1 e2+ 30. xe2 d4+! 31. f2 xf2+ 32. h1 f3#) 27… xe1+ 28. xe1 f3+ 29. f1 xh2+ 30. g1 f3+ 31. f1 and I thought Black had a draw anyway, but it’s even worse: I lose! 31… xe1! 32. bxa7 d3! 33. a8 + h7 34. c2 (34. e6 h1+ 35. e2 xe1+ is also winning for Black) 34… f4 and Black mates.
CHAPTER 10

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you

In this chapter, ‘unto’ means the delivery of checkmate before our opponent mates us. We examine the mindset needed for opposite-wing castling games. The instant we castle on opposite sides of the board, our existence splits into irreconcilable worlds, perpetually at war. The idea of course is simple: get your opponent before he or she gets you.

Of course such hazy hypotheticals must be backed up with concrete calculation. One passive or indifferent move and our opponent mates us first. So in opposite-wing castling situations, we doves must regretfully renounce our passive inclinations. The key is to eliminate all redundancy and understand that every tempo is precious.

Our first game is an example of a one-sided version of an opposing wing’s attack.

VO 18.4 – D06
Various Openings
Alexander Alekhine
Frank Marshall
Baden-Baden 1925

1.d4  e5
2.c4  d5
3.cxd5  cxd5
4.e4  f6
5.c3  c5
6.d4  cxd4
7.  xd4  xd4
8.  xd4
9.e5  g4
10.  d5

A pawn sacrifice which can’t be accepted. In this way Marshall attains freedom, at the cost of remaining behind in development.

5.e5!

A serious underestimation of Black’s development lead after 7…c5 when White is already in big trouble.
Technically not the best move. Alekhine, who, like King Lear, feels more sinned against than sinning, isn’t satisfied with an endgame edge after 8.0-0 gx e5 9. x e5 x e5 10. e2 xd1 11. xd1.

8…c6 9.g5!?
Exuberance has a way of leaving a mess in its wake. It’s one thing to be wrong, and it’s quite another to be wrong outside tolerable parameters. This move costs Black time he can’t afford to lose. He looks okay after the more natural 11… e5 with a still playable position for Black.

12.h3
Was Marshall hoping for 12.0-0?? xh2#?
12…f6 13.d2!
A powerful strategic idea, seizing control over f4, while preparing to castle queenside.

13…d7 14.e3!
Preventing Black from castling queenside, while increasing White’s hold over the dark squares.

Alekhine rejects the civilized to embrace the primitive.

When I first played over this game as a kid, Alekhine’s decision to castle on opposite sides of the board was a revelation. Why not castle kingside and be safe? Today I see the reason: he wanted to attack, rather than squeeze. If 15.0-0 d8! and now if 16.f4 Black removes queens from the board with 16…d4.

15…0-0 16.f4
White’s central pawns are already in motion and Black’s passively placed pieces are not efficiently placed to threaten White’s king.

16…e6 17.e5 f8 18.h7 h1 e8 19.f5
It’s glaringly clear who owns the faster attack. Of course a hawk like Alekhine wouldn’t even consider the comp’s greedy choice 19.xa7, which opens lines to White’s king, and also wastes time.

19…e7 20.g5 e5?
Marshall misses the weirdly effective 20…f8! and now 21.exf6?! (21.b1! still gives White an edge, but not the winning position Alekhine achieved in the game) isn’t so great after 21…xe1 22.xe1 xd3 with equality.

21.f6 f8
Events press down on Marshall like a violin/cello crescendo in a horror movie, when the creature corners the hero. Alekhine increased his advantage to decisive levels. How?

22. c4!
The bishop, who for so long contributed to the attack only peripherally, now makes a direct entrance, forcing away Black’s best placed piece.

22... e5
23. xed8! xed8 24. fxg7
The pawn on g7 is immune, due to the black queen’s need to cover her d8-rook.

23... e5
24. dxe5+ dxe5
25. b1!
25. a2?? e5+ 26. b1 d7 and it is Black who stands better.

25... e5
26... e4+
A swindle attempt which Alekhine contemptuously brushes off.

26. a1!
26... e4+!
A) 27. xe4! also works. Black’s attempted attack fails after 27... d1+ 28. c2 a4+ 29. b3 c1+ 30. xc1, forcing mate;
B) 27. a2?? would not be a move typical of a future World Champion: 27... a4#

27... f5
This move walks into a mate. After 27... fxe6 28. xe6+ e6 29. xd8+ g7 30. d4+ White picks up the loose e4-bishop with an easy win.

28. e7+ d5

You don’t need the observational powers of Sherlock Holmes or Monsieur Poirot to realize that something has gone terribly wrong for Black. One glance at the attacking potency of the two sides, and we see that Marshall’s side stands out with the awkwardness of an anorexic at one of those speed hotdog eating contests. How did Alekhine force mate?

29. f6+
Threat: 30. f8+. Alekhine’s line is even faster than 29. xe4 e b4 30. xd5+ xd5 31. xf5 xe7 32. e6+.

29... f7
The fact that Marshall actually played this move, rather than resign, is a sign of his boundless optimism. He is like that Japanese soldier who continued in a state of preparedness to fight WWII on some South Pacific Island until 1955, when he got his radio to work and finally realized that the war is over.

30. e8+! 1-0
Deflection/clearance/back rank mate: 30... xe8 31. xd5+ xd5 32. xe8# And if you didn’t see the mate, also winning is the pedestrian 30. xf7+ xf7 31. xd5+ xe7 32. g8#.

SI 31.7 – B31
Sicilian Defence
Jeffery Xiong 2633
Chithambaram VR Aravindh 2543
Bhubaneswar Wch jr 2016 (8)
Due to the existence of databases and powerful chess engines, the kids we play today are surreally strong. In this game World Junior Champion GM Xiong and his Indian IM rival go at it in opposite-wing attacks, like you have never seen before.

1.e4 c5 2.f3 d5 3.b5 g6 4.xc6 dxc6
4...bxc6 is also popular here.
5.d3 g7 6.h3 b6 7.c3 f6 8.e3 0-0
If you were wondering why White hasn’t castled yet, it is because he plays to go queenside.
9.d2 e8
9...e5, seizing a fair share of the center, is played more often.
10.h2!?
This is a very rare move, the idea of which is a future g4 and h6+. 10.h6 is played most often in the position.

10...e5 11.0-0-0
11...a5 12.a4?! A new move, but, in my opinion, not a particularly effective one. I don’t know if it was an impulsive over-the-board inspiration, or one meticulously prepped in the home lab. Or did he simply misremember these opening lines – did his memory become tangled with imagination? White hopes to suppress ...b6-b5 by placing pressure upon c5. The trouble is it turns out to be a temporary measure, since Black can play for ...b6-b5 after securing the c5-square with the preparatory ...d7 and ...e7. So in the end, White’s idea may actually be a slight loss of time.

12.g4 was played in the only other two games from this position in my database.
12...e6 13.b1 d7 14.g4 e7
...b6-b5 is coming and White’s 12.a4?! adventure turns out to be a loss of time.
15.h6+ h8 16.h4 b5 17.c3 f6!

11...a5 12.a4?!
A new move, but, in my opinion, not a particularly effective one. I don’t know if it was an impulsive over-the-board inspiration, or one meticulously prepped in the home lab. Or did he simply misremember these opening lines – did his memory become tangled with imagination? White hopes to suppress ...b6-b5 by placing pressure upon c5. The trouble is it turns out to be a temporary measure, since Black can play for ...b6-b5 after securing the c5-square with the preparatory ...d7 and ...e7. So in the end, White’s idea may actually be a slight loss of time.

12.g4 was played in the only other two games from this position in my database.
12...e6 13.b1 d7 14.g4 e7
...b6-b5 is coming and White’s 12.a4?! adventure turns out to be a loss of time.
15.h6+ h8 16.h4 b5 17.c3 f6!

The idea is to meet White’s intended line-opening move h4-h5 with the bypassing ...g6-g5.
18.h5 xh6 19.xh6
19.hxg6?? is completely unsound. Black easily survives 19...xe3 20.xe3 f8.
19...g5 20.df1
White’s only path to opening the kingside is the g2-g3/f2-f4 break.
20...f7?!
This move indirectly attacks a2 by threatening to boot away the defender with 21...b4 next. However, Black’s move is inaccurate since he will later lose time, as Black’s queen isn’t securely placed on the f-file.
More vigorous was 20...a4! 21.g3 c4!, when Black looks faster. If 22.f4 b4 23.e2 c3 Black gets to White’s king first.

21.g3!
He ignores the threat and makes it a pure race to the other’s king. In such situations a club level dove may be lured into a passive move which saves the a-pawn, at the cost of time and also weakening.

Fatally passive are:

A) 21.b3?? If we only die once, then let’s take great pains that we don’t die in vain. It’s so easy for us doves to fall back on our old passive habits. Why? Because they are so comfortable. 21...a4 22.b2 axb3 23.axb3 e7! (threat: 24...c4 and a queen infiltration into a3) 24.a1 c4 and it’s obvious that Black’s attack arrives first;

B) 21.a3? ed8 22.g3 b4 23.a4 c4 24.f4 cxd3 25.fxd5 dxc2+ 26.exd5 a2+ 27.a1 b3 28.c1 xa4 29.gxf6 g8 and White’s mild attacking chances fail to compensate his material deficit.

21...b4 22.a4 xa2+ 23.a1 c4! 24.f4
White’s king is unable to scold the presumptuous a2-bishop, since 24.xa2?? is met with the discovered check/double attack 24...c3+, winning White’s queen.

24...exf4 25.gxf4 cxd3
I would try 25...g4!?, bowing to the principle Close attacking lanes against your own king.

26.fxd5 dxc2 27.gxf6

Both sides proceed myopically in their respective attacks, almost as if they are unaware that the other’s attack even exists.

27...b1
Threat: 28...a2 mate. Black’s lurking bishop gives White’s king the creeps.

28.g7+
John Henderson gave this move an exclam, but Komodo says White can also play:

A) 28.b3 e5! when White has nothing better than a repetition draw with 29.g7+ g8 and now:

A1) 30.h1 xh5 and there is no mate for White, who must take a draw;

A2) 30.g2 c1 31.xc1 xe4 32.g4 e6 and Black is okay;

A3) 30.h6 h8 (if 30...xb3?? 31.h1+ h8 32.g7+ g8 33.f7+ xf7 34.xe5+ mates) 31.g7+

B) 28.xb1? cxb1+ 29.xb1 xf6 and Black will win, with a relatively safe king and up material.

28...g8 29.b3
Such positions either induce joy or fear, depending on who you ask. Both sides willingly entered a dark corridor of an abandoned house. In such positions, a pure strategist like me feels completely out of his depth. This is a moment of mind-warping chaos, mixed within a haze of ambiguity, where both sides appear to be aspiring serial killers, who just can’t seem to get it right. How would you proceed as Black?

29...c5?

A move made with the thought: ‘If confrontation is inevitable, then why waste energy in delaying it?’ This sacrifice is disproportionately aggressive to White’s provocation, and the move feels like an example of desperation crowding out rational thought and seizing control with a fatalistic shrug.

A) 29...xb3? was too slow: 30.f7+ gxf7 31.g8# (the correct rook) 33.g6 34.gxh6+ hxg6 35.h7+ f7 36.d7+ f6 37.f1+ e5 38.c7+ d4 39.d6+ c3 40.g3+ d4 41.xb3 wins;

B) The powerful centralizing move 29...e5! is Black’s path to salvation. The comps work it out to a draw:

B1) 30.hg1 xh5 and White has nothing better than to take perpetual check;

B2) 30.h3 c1 31.xc1 xe4 32.g1 ae8 Once again, White can make use of the discovered check and has no better than to accept a perpetual check;

B3) 30.h6 h8 31.g7+ g8 32.h6 with a draw.

30.xc5 a4

Surely White must now agree to a perpetual, right?

31.b2!

31.xa4? xa4+ 32.b2 c1+! 33.xc1 a1 34.d4 ea8 (threat: 35.xe4+) 35.d2 a2+ 36.e3 xb3+ 37.f4 g2! and Black stands no worse in this irrational position.

When opposing wills are in contradiction, the one more in harmony with the position’s essence tends to emerge victorious. Our opponent’s wrath is entirely wasted when we disdainfully ignore it. White’s king finds refuge along the dark squares. It takes remarkable tactical intuition to realize that White is actually winning here.

31...axb3

31...xe4?? 32.g2 e5 33.h6+ h8 34.g7+ xg7 35.fxg7+ d8 36.f8+ xf8 37.gxf8# I would of course have made a rook to checkmate, but I haven’t figured out how to underpromote on Chessbase.

32.xb3?

This allows Black back into the game. After 32.d3! a2+ 33.c1 a1 34.xb4 a2+ 35.d2 b1 36.h6 Black is almost in
zugzwang: 36...c5 37...xc5 b2 38...xc2 xf1 39...xf1 b1 40...xb1 xb1 41...xb1 and White should convert.

32...c1+?
Black misses his opportunity with 32...ed8! 33...xb4 db8 34...hg1! a2+ 35...c1 xb4 36...h6+ h8 37...g7+ and perpetual check.

33...xc1
Amazingly, White’s knight covers all his king’s sensitive light squares.

33...xe4 34.hg1 a5 35.g5
Understandably, he seeks to swap off an attacker, but there was no need to do so. 35.f8+! h8 (35...xf8 36...h6+ mates next move) 36.h6 ea8 37.g7+ xg7 38.xg7+ g8 39.f7 is mate.

35...c5 36.fg1
Again 36.f8+! works for White.

36...c4! 37.xb4!
37.xa5?? turns out to be the move of a chump after 37...c3+.

37...c3+
Black logically clears away his own pawns to open lines against White’s king, who appears to be getting mated. And again, White’s remarkable knight and queen team manages to keep him safe.

38.xc3 b8+ 39.b3 xg5 40.xg5 d5

This looks serious. Three black attackers on b3, with only two defenders. White, however, arrives first. White to play and force the win.

41.h6+!
Step 1: Drive Black’s king to h8, where it’s vulnerable to f6-f7 mating tricks. One of my students found 41.f8+! xf8 (41...h8 42.xd5! is similar to the game’s continuation) 42.c5+ e8 43.e5+ e6 44.c6+ d7 45.xe6+ and White wins.

41...h8 42.xd5!
Step 2: Remove the f7-blockader.

42...xb3+
42...xd5 43.f7+ and mate next move.

43.xb3 1-0
On 43...xd5 White avoids the stalemate trap with the simple 44.g7+ g8 45.xd5#. Black’s humiliated queen is greeted with a chorus of derision.
Doves tend to be acutely aware of their strengths and weaknesses on a single color. My late friend GM Tony Miles was most proud of his play in the following two games, where he conducted decisive attacks based upon domination of a single color – in this case the dark squares. In one game he defeats one of the greatest initiative players of all time, and in the other, he does the same to one of the most skilled strategists of our day.

QI 2.4 – E12
Queen’s Indian Defense
Anthony Miles 2565
Boris Spassky 2630
Montilla 1978 (2)

1.d4 f6 2.f3 b6 3.c4 e6 4.g4 b7 5.e3 e7
5…b4+ 6.fd2!? (Tony’s specialty) 6…0-0 7.a3 c7 8.c3 d5 9.cxd5 xd5 10.xd5 xd5 11.c2 d6 12.xd6 xd6?! (Black equalizes with 12…cxd6) 13.c1 c8 14.d3 h6 15.0-0 b7 16.h7+ h8 17.e4 xe4 18.xe4 c6 19.c4 with a pleasant strategic advantage for White, Miles-Trois, Buenos Aires 1979.

6.h3 0-0 7.c3 d5 8.cxd5

8…exd5
Spassky invites future hanging pawns. His move is more dynamic than the safer recapture with the knight.

9.e5
Spassky, unlike Petrosian in the earlier game against Benko, isn’t afraid of taking on hanging pawns, and pushes to c5 immediately.

10.0-0
This move says ‘No thanks’ to the offer to hand Black hanging pawns. The game looks dynamically balanced after 10.dxc5 bxc5.

10…e6 11.e5
White clears the way for f3, and a potential kingside assault.

11…c4!?
This is a high risk venture, where opposing world views are unlikely to be reconciled with a future truce of any kind. Spassky grabs a queenside pawn majority, which would be favorable in an ending, at the cost of violating the principle Don’t close the center when your opponent prepares to attack your king on the wing. He can also play to challenge White’s control over e5 with 11…d6.

12.c2 a6
The majority prepares to roll forward with 13…b5 next.
13.g4!?
Sudden improvisation tends to be synonymous with recklessness, but not in this instance, where a laissez-faire attitude from White’s side only courts defeat. White’s last move follows the principle: \textit{When attacking, obey the position’s requirements, not your personal stylistic inclinations}.

If you played the white pieces, would you have courage enough to play such a move? I’m not so sure I would. Why? At every airport destination my suitcase is the very last one to plop itself on the luggage carousel, so I’m accustomed to coming in last, even when attacking! Tony openly declares his position’s mission statement: deliver checkmate.

Didn’t I earlier refer to Tony as a dove? Well, having analyzed with him over the ICC for hours on end, I can assure you he was far happier in technical positions, rather than ones like this. But he also correctly realized that such situations require enforced bravery from the dove, since passive play allows Black to eventually take over on the queenside.

I’m ashamed to confess that I would be more inclined to play the safer, Diet Coke version with 13.\textit{f}3, leaving g2-g4 as a future option.

13...b5 14.g5
Chasing away a defender of g4 and h5.

14...e8 15.g4
We note a scary build-up of force around Black’s king. If given time White plays h2-h4, h4-h5 and g5-g6, ripping open the black king’s shelter.

15...g6
Spassky judges that he needs this move sooner or later, so why not sooner? After 15...b4 16.e2 xe5 17.dxe5 c7 18.h4 e6 19.d4 g6! Black looks okay, since 20.xe6 is met with 20...c8!.

16.ad1
This move discourages ...xe5, since White may elect to recapture with the d-pawn, applying pressure to d5.

16...e7 17.h4 b4?
This bishop is like a problem child at the daycare center who wanders away from the other kids. Spassky perhaps intends ideas like ...xc3, followed by ...a5, but in doing so he removes an invaluable defender from the kingside dark squares. Correct was 17...b4 18.e2 xe5 19.xe5 (after 19.dxe5 b6 20.d4 c5 21.g3 c8 Black’s control over the central light squares trumps White’s on the other color) 19...a5. I slightly prefer Black’s queenside chances over White’s on the kingside, while a natural attacker would most certainly pick White.

18.d7!!
When it comes down to a contest between rational supposition versus intuitive hypothesis, don’t underestimate the power of the latter. Such a nerve-tingling decision, if miscalculated even slightly, can lead to our resignation six moves later. It takes incredible confidence to allow a self-pin in this conspicuously undovish decision. This last move follows the bed-of-burning-coals principle (which isn’t a real principle, and is something I just made up!) *Step on one hot coal and it really hurts; step on a bed of burning coals, and no single one stands out.* So Tony goes all in for his dark-square attack, at any cost.

18... c8

18... xc3 is met with the zwischenzug 19. f6+ h8 20.bxc3 with a winning bind on the dark squares.

19. xd5

The d7-knight is kept alive by tactics, but for how long?

19... h8

A) 19... f5?? fails miserably to 20. xf6+ xf6 21. xf6+ xf6 22.gxf6 fxg4 23.fxg7, leaving White up an exchange in the ending;

B) 19... xd7?? 20. xd7 xd7 21. f6+ h8 22. xd7 fd8 23. e4 ac8 24. xc6 xc6 25. e5 c7 26. xg6+ wins heavy material.

20. 5f6 a7

Now what? It appears as if White is about to lose heavy material.

21.d5! e7 22. e5?!

What a dystopian circus. On the eve of victory, Tony stumbles, missing a tiny yet vital detail. Such a detail-oriented attack is like a snake which carries only venom enough for a single strike. If it misses, the would-be victim may have time to kill it. Correct was to first toss in 22.a3! a5 and only then play 23. e5! xd7 24.h5! c7 25. c3 xd5 26. h4 xc3 27.hxg6 h5 28. xh5 fxg6 29. f6+ h5 30. xd7 e2+ 31. g2 xd7 32. xh5 g8 33. xg6. Black’s extra piece won’t save him, since his king is fatally exposed.

22... xd7 23.h5


23... xd5?

Welcome aboard the Titanic. 23... d6! saves Black after 24. c3 c7 25. f3 (25. h4? ef5 26. h1 b4 27.hxg6 h5! 28.gxh6 bxc3 29.hxg7+ xg7 30. h5+ xg6 and White has no mate and must resign) 25...b4 26. d4 ef5 27.h6 xd4 28.hxg7+ g7 29. xd4 h8. Suddenly Black’s king looks perfectly safe.

24. f4

Even stronger was 24. h4!, threatening 25.hxg6: 24... ef5 25. xf5 xf5 26.h6 ef6 27. xd5+ g8 28. f6+ h8 29. xd8 and White wins.

24... xd1

Now Spassky goes down in an inglorious blaze. 24... d6 fails to save Black after 25. xd6 xd6 26. xd6 xd6 27. xd6 xh5 28. xh5 gxh5 29. h6 g6 30. xh5 with a completely won ending for White.

25. xd1 a5 26. e8!
26. h2! is also crushing.
26...f6
26...xe8 27. xf7 g8 28. h6 e5 29. xf5 f8 30. xc8 b6 31. c6! and Black’s king is asphyxiated.
27. gxf6 g8
   A) 27... xe8 28. h6! forces mate;
   B) 27...xe8 28. f7+ g7 29. xg7+ xg7 30. h6+ h8 31. f6 mate.
28. xg7 1-0
28...c6 29. hxg6 hxg6 30. xg6 leads to mate.

RE 21.1 – A00
Réti Opening
Anthony Miles
Ulf Andersson
Las Palmas 1980

‘Rare are the players who could so comprehensively outplay Ulf Andersson, one of the strongest positional players of all time,’ writes GM Tony Kosten.

1.g3 c5 2.g2 c6 3.e3 g6 4.c3
This leads to a rather boring symmetrical line of the Grünfeld. 4.c4 is a Symmetrical English.

4...g7 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 d5 7.e3

If you claimed the players’ opening choice feels a bit lacking in the go-getter spirit, you would be correct. This caffeine-deficient position emits the raw animal magnetism of an Exchange Slav. But remember it is the adventure-seeking hawks who crave the risky and exciting, while we doves derive comfort from the dull and the practical. I have played White’s side many times, with a high winning percentage, since the excitement-numbing position suits the dove’s style and temperament perfectly. Tony’s opening choice to my mind is odd, since his opponent is one of the greatest doves of our time. So he is essentially playing into his opponent’s strength.

7...e6
The question arises: when should we disrupt absolute symmetry? If we keep it going too long, it gets irritating for the move-down side. Maintaining symmetry with the egalitarian, when-in-Rome… gesture 7...f6 is more common.

8.f4 e7 9.e2!
Intending \( \text{h}6 \), which follows the principle *In fixed pawn structures try and leave your opponent with a bishop on the same color of his or her remaining pawns.* In this case, after a swap of dark-squared bishops, Black is left with a remaining bad bishop.

9...0-0
Andersson allows his opponent’s intent. I would perhaps consider an extreme measure like 9...h6!? 10.\( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 11.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \)!
12.\( \text{c}7 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 13.\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{g}8 \). White must have an edge here as well.

So Black gets stuck with a slightly bad bishop, with an otherwise incredibly solid position.

11...\( \text{f}5 \) 12.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{b}6 \)

The bishop soon emerges on a6.

13.\( \text{d}1 \)
What on the surface appears to be a super-dovish decision, is actually far more aggressive than it appears. White’s last move discourages Black from future \( \text{e}6-\text{e}5 \) ideas.

But you may ask: why not castle first? The answer is White plans to keep his king in the middle and attack on the kingside with h2-h4! next.

13...\( \text{a}6 \)
This diagonal lends the bishop a degree of functionality it previously lacked.

14.\( \text{h}4! \)

Black has three choices:

A) Play \( \text{h}7-\text{h}5 \) to halt White’s intended \( \text{h}4-\text{h}5 \);

B) Play \( \text{f}7-\text{f}6 \) to bypass with \( \text{g}6-\text{g}5 \), when White pushes his h-pawn to the fifth rank;

C) Ignore White’s attack and counterattack with \( \text{a}5 \), intending \( \text{c}4 \).

Of the three options, two purify, while one defiles. Which one would you play?

14...\( \text{a}5 \)!

When we experience a problem, it’s human nature to overcompensate the attempted cure. In some defensive positions silence is golden, since any attempted demonstration is sure to favor our more heavily armed opponent. Timing matters. A person can libel Queen Elizabeth II and get away without negative consequence. If our ancestor libeled Queen Elizabeth I, he would most likely spend some time in the Tower of London, and then get his head lopped off.

This mistimed counter is the worst of Black’s possibilities.

A) Andersson probably rejected 14...h5 since it places yet another pawn on the wrong color of his remaining bishop, and further weakens his dark squares, but Black still remains very close to equality, since it doesn’t feel like enough of a white edge to be overly concerned;

B) 14...\( \text{f}6 \) was probably rejected due to 15.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 16.\( \text{g}5 \) (this attempts to undermine Black’s dark squares) 16...\( \text{e}4 \) 17.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 18.\( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 19.\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{b}5 \). Yes, Black’s dark squares may be weak, but at least in this version his pieces remain active.

15.\( \text{g}4 \)!

An inaccurate follow-up. Correct was 15.\( \text{h}5! \) and if 15...\( \text{c}4 \) 16.\( \text{c}1 \). White threatens 17.\( \text{g}4 \), followed by \( \text{h}6 \), with a winning attack. Black must hand over a pawn with 16...\( \text{f}6 \) 17.\( \text{hxg}6 \) \( \text{hxg}6 \) 18.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 19.\( \text{d}3! \) (the rook may later swing over to h3 or e3) 19...\( \text{f}7 \) 20.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 21.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 22.\( \text{e}5+ \) \( \text{e}8 \) 23.\( \text{e}3 \). Black’s game is peppered with holes and his king remains in deep trouble.
15…d6?!  
This is actually a typical dove error: over-caution, mixed with an unwillingness to enter a messy tactical line. Correct was to enter the high-risk line 15…c4 16.c1 (Tony actually intended the incorrect adventure 16.d3? e3! 17.xa6 e2+ 18.f1 e4xh4 19.e2 – it appears that Black’s knights are tied to each other in a knot, but this ignores White’s king position. Black achieves a strong attack after 19…f5!) 16.g7 17.h5 gxh5 18.gxh5 h8. Black should survive White’s attack after 19.h3 d6. 
16.h5 g6  
Andersson isn’t yet ready to enter desperation mode with 16…g5!!, giving up a pawn to close White’s attacking lanes. 
17.hxg6 fxg6  
This ugly recapture is the chess version of the Heimlich maneuver to reverse the choking effect. It follows the defensive principle Capture away from the center if your king is in danger of getting mated. 
17...hxg6? 18.g5 (threat: 19.h7). The trouble is 18...fc8 is met with 19.h7 g7 20.xd5!! exd5 21.xd5 (threat: 22.f6+, which fatally forces Black’s king to h8) 21...f4! 20.h2 xh2 21.xh2 c8 22.e5 e7. 
18.h6 f7  
19.g5  
This move follows principle by fixing yet more pawns on the light squares, yet is not White’s best, since it gives Black’s knight access to f5. Stronger was 19.h4! 
19...g7??  
He swaps queens but does it the wrong way, which loses several tempi. He would stand only slightly worse after 19...f4! 20.h2 xh2 21.xh2 c8 22.e5 e7. 
20.e5 xh6 21.xh6 f7 
21...e7?? walks into 22.xd5!
24. \textdagger

The gathering of data offers us a kind of assimilative understanding, which raw computer analysis alone is unable to do:
1. Even though queens are off the board, White’s attack remains very real, since he can double rooks on the h-file, applying unbearable pressure to h7.
2. White’s pieces rule the dark squares.
3. Black’s stinking structure is in desperate need of a bath, with holes and weak pawns, on e6, h7, e5 and f6.
4. Black’s forces languish on the fringes of respectability. They lack white targets, and I don’t see an available source of counterplay.

Conclusion: White’s joy continues to rise like bubbles in our beer, and Black is strategically busted – all the more astounding when we factor in that master strategist Ulf Andersson plays the black side.

24...c8

24...f5 25...xf5 gxf5 26.d2! (intending to bring his d1-rook into the attack via the h-file) 26...c4+ 27.d1 c8 28 dh1 cc7 29.e8! cc7 30.g6 wins for White.

25.d2!

Intending \textdagger

25...g7

Intending 26...f7, with a double attack on g5 and h6.

26.f4

Even though Black’s strategic issues continue to compund, Tony keeps reducing his advantage by catering to strategic concerns, rather than playing for a blowout. Much stronger was to ignore Black’s threat of 26...f7 with 26...h1! f7 27.h4 xg5 28.f4 xh3 (on 28...f7 29.xe6 White forces mate) 29.lxh3 and Black’s problem is 29...h5 is a mere prop, which fails to secure his king due to 30.xh5+! gxh5 31.xh5+ h7 (this is the part of the war movie where the wounded soldier nobly declares to his comrade: ‘Leave me here! Go on and save yourself!’ In this case, however, both characters are destined to die in the war) 32.xh7#.

26...b8 27.h1 aac4+ 28.d3! bb7

Black doesn’t have time to get greedy with 28...xb2? 29.c2 bc4 30.xe6!, which uncovers deadly force upon h7 (a student pointed out that 30...f5! also wins): 30...bb7 (forced) 31.xc8 xc8 32.xd5 is totally hopeless for Black.

29.b3 a3 30.e4! dxe4+
I hate to bring this up, but following the principle *Counter in the center when attacked on the wing*, doesn’t work 100% of the time. 30... e7 31.e5 is a slow death for Black.

31. cxe4  xe4 32. xe4!
White’s king enters the attack.

32... b5 33.e5! e7

Find one powerful idea and you force Black’s resignation.

34. f1! 1-0
To play on now is the same as reclaiming your television set from the ashes of a house fire. No matter how many times you click the remote, it’s not going to turn on. Black has no way to stop the leisurely d3 and xg6, e.g. 34... c7 35. d3  e5 36. xg6.
CHAPTER 12

How to survive the gifted kid

How much does the human mind change, from generation to generation? In the case of the chess era before computers (my time) and the database/chess engine armed kids of today, the answer is: a lot! As we age, we are like a sports team that has won a championship, and then the following year begins its slow descent to mediocrity, with results getting worse and worse with each passing game.

In this chapter we deal with an ever growing problem: how do old, not-so-gifted doves (i.e. your writer), overcome the young and gifted hawks, who, to all appearances, feel like a genetically engineered breed of super soldiers? Don’t worry. Old age and deceit are still capable of overcoming youth and talent. My survival suggestions for elderly doves:

1. Simplify whenever possible. A young hawk’s strength tends to plummet if you manage to remove queens from the board.
2. Try and reach closed games if possible, since a young hawk’s tactical gifts are enhanced in open positions.
3. In the opening, either force as dull a line as possible, or play a rare sharper line (as in this game) where you remove your booked up kid-opponent from his or her theoretical comfort zone.

In this chapter, if you are expecting a bunch of naive kid-moves from my opponents, suggestive of inexperience, then think again. The fact is that with databases coupled with powerful chess engines, a child can go over a hundred games a day, and, by age 12, play like a veteran of 25 years. Yet when we force them into simplified technical positions, like in the two games of this chapter, they generously produce unforced errors.

SI 35.2 – B33
Sicilian Defense
Alexander Costello 2232
Cyrus Lakdawala 2527
San Diego rapid 2015

1.e4

My opponent at the time was a 12-year old master, which is a pretty scary thought, since I was about 1150 rated at age 12.

1...c5?!

Wait, wait, one moment, let me explain. Sometimes your writer is a highly skilled actor over the chess board, who puts on the haughty airs of an alpha male, when in reality I am no more than an imposter. Normally to allow a kid-opponent an Open Sicilian is to put your life at deep risk. I had a pet endgame line prepared, so this game is the exception to the rule.

2.f3 c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 f6 5.c3 e5 6.d5 h6?!

I know what you are thinking, and no, I wasn’t caught in the throes of some kind of reefer madness when I banged out my last move. The American Revolutionary War taught us that if we are the weaker army (if not in rating, then talent-wise at least!), then there is no reason to agree to meet a more powerful foe on an agreed upon venue of an open field. In this case insurgency tactics are necessary to survive a gifted kid opponent.

But is this an unsound line from Black? I doubt it. I score over 90% with it, with wins over several titled players. Black’s idea is that 7.d6+ isn’t really a threat, while White’s 7.g5 and 8.xf6 actually is one, since this weakens Black’s hold over d5. This is the opening I named the Ulfie Sicilian, which admittedly looks like a collaboration between Ulf Andersson and Pablo
Picasso. GM Andersson successfully perfected this odd sideline, which I cover in my book on the Sveshnikov Sicilian. Rule number one against gifted kids: Avoid sharp and popular theoretical byways, since odds are they out-memory you. My opponent took a satisfyingly long time to respond, which left me with the happy feeling that he was already yanked out of his prep.

6…d6 enters the normal theoretically dense lines of the Sveshnikov Sicilian, which your initiative-challenged writer takes to like an elderly tuna to the ocean’s mercury, since it’s a mist-shrouded kingdom which only a privileged few GMs and IMs (your memory-challenged writer is not in this group!) are allowed to enter. Maybe I would embrace lines like this more often if I were endowed with total recall and didn’t routinely hang pieces.

7...d5
This attempt to refute the opening fails to do so. 7...d6+ is the main line: 7...xd6 8...xd6 e7 and here White can swap, or play 9...b5, or keep queens on the board with 9...d1.

7...exd5 8.exd5 a6
This magician’s sleight-of-hand counter keeps Black alive. Instantly losing are the bone-headed options:
A) 8...e7?? 9...d6#;
B) 8...b8?? 9.d6 a6 10...c4 with a crushing bind and a development lead.

9.dxc6?!
This natural move loses the initiative. Correct is 9...c3 d4 10...d3 d6 11.0-0 with perhaps an edge for White, Van Kampen-Andersson, Utrecht 2012.

9...axb5 10.cxd7+
I have had a few online blitz games which went 10.cxb7 xb7 11...xb5?? a5+ and 0-1, since White has hung a piece.

10...xd7

This is a deceptive position. Black’s doubled b-pawns are not weak and Black stands slightly better due to superior central control and the open a-file.

11...e2
The bishop is better posted on d3.

A) The double attack 11...d5 is met with 11...c7! 12...d2 (12...xb5?? hangs a piece to 12...a5+ 13...d2 xb5)
12...c5 when Black stands slightly better;
B) 11...d3 is probably White’s best setup: 11...c6 12.0-0 c5 13...g4 f6 with at least equality, since …a4 is in the air.

11...c6 12.0-0 c5 13...d3
13...xd8+...xd8 14...d1...d1+ 15...d1...e7 16...d2 f5 17...e2 a8 18.a3 b4 19...fl bxa3 20.b4...d6 21...c4 b5 22...a2
23.c3...e6 24...e2...xa2 25...xa2...e6 26...d3...d5 27...e4+ 28...c2...c4 29.h4 h5 30...e3...e5 31...d2 f4 32...e1 e3 (zugzwang) and White resigned in Carreto-Lakdawala, San Diego rapid 2006.

13...xd3

Anti-kid principle: Swap queens whenever possible.
Their strength tends to drop about 100 points the second queens are removed from the board.

14...xd3?! This isn’t quite a pick-your-poison moment. White accepts a permanent structural weakness. My opponent feared a future loss of tempo after 14...xd3. This may be the lesser evil. He didn’t like White’s position after 14...0-0 15...e1 e4! 16...fl...fd8
17...e3...xe3 18.fxe3 b4 with an unpleasant defensive task ahead for White.
Now White has real issues developing his queenside pieces.

14...d4!

Now White has real issues developing his queenside pieces.

15.a3

15.a3 is met with 15...b4.

15...d5 16.a3 b4 17.b1 a2!?

I didn’t want to activate his rook with the comp’s choice 17...bxa3 18.bxa3. White remains tied down to the defense of a3.

18.a1 b3!?

Why would I banish my bishop to the outskirts of nowhere? The answer: Black’s a2-bishop is buried, but so are White’s a1-rook and c1-bishop, which constitutes a good deal for Black. Also, White now must watch out for ...xa3 tricks.

19.e1 0-0!?

Rare is the time when your normally law-abiding writer deliberately violates principle, but here I break the one which states: Activate your king in an ending, rather than hide it.

In this case I didn’t feel comfortable with my king in the middle after 19...xa3 20.f3 a5 21.xb7 e7! 22.e2 b8 23.f3 c5 24.e3 d8 25.ae1 xe3 26.xe3 f6 when White must guard both d3- and b2-pawns. I was a bit worried that this version my a2-bishop would indeed be out of play.

20.e2

If 20.f3 xa3 21.xb7 d8 22.e2 a7 23.f3 c7 White remains tangled up. Now he is ready for 21.e3, so I think it’s time to strike on a3.

20...xa3 21.bxa3?

White’s best chance to save himself is to eliminate Black’s monster dark-squared bishop with 21.e3!.

21...xa1 22.a2 bx2 23.xb2 d8!

He may have only counted upon 23...c8? 24.f1 when White holds the draw.

24.xb3 xd3

This back rank trick wins a pawn.

25.xa2 xb3 26.f3

If White were a seasoned adult opponent, he would have drawing chances, but a kid – even a gifted one – is heavily favored to lose such a technical ending, which relies upon experience, more than tactical ability.

26...h5 27.f2 h7 28.h4 g6
29.g3?
White’s best shot at a draw is to avoid all forms of weakness with 29.a4 b4 30.g3 f5 31.a5 f6 32.a6 bxa6 33.xa6 with decent chances to hold the draw.

At long last, a kid-error. Children tend to measure life on the scales of fair and unfair. As we get older, we get more and more accustomed to unfair, when we are deprived of our rightful share of life’s profits.

This unforced error, typical of kids, burns White’s capacity for holding the draw. If White were an adult, I would label this move with a double question mark. Perplexing questions are often answered by simple explanations: why would he voluntarily weaken his kingside pawns? The answer is that he wanted to keep my king out of f4, and in doing so, fatally weakened g4 due to a future …e5-e4 break.

29…f5 30.a4
Come up with a clear winning plan for Black.

Step 1: Puncture White’s barrier with …e5-e4.

30…e4 31.fxe4+ g4!
Step 2: Invade g4, after which White’s kingside pawns turn into over-ripe cantaloupes, dropped from a third-story balcony to the pavement below.

32.d2 f3+ 33.e2 xg3
The taxman cometh.

34.d7 b6 35.b7 f6 36.e5 f5 37.xb6 xe5+ 38.f1 xh4 0-1

‘While it is true that you are my beloved brother, business is business,’ rationalizes Black’s king, as he raids his e1-brother’s treasury.

RE 21.7 – A04
Réti Opening
Cyrus Lakdawala 2525
K. Chor 2205
San Diego rapid 2016

1.f3 c5
He offers to transpose to a Sicilian, which to a kid is Summer vacation, with three straight months of Saturdays and Sundays,
without Monday ever showing up.

2.c3!

Oh no you don’t! My advice is to always lead the kid to Winter positions, leading to a dormant period for tactics. My 13-year-old master-rated opponent gets a reversed Slav, rather than the Sicilian he hoped for.

The art of groveling is an under-appreciated skill in chess. My buddy GM Jesse Kraai in a video dubbed this magnificently dovish move ‘The Lakdawala Accelerated’, where White essentially forces a super-solid Slav formation with an extra move. The positions can lead to Colle, London System, Torre, or even pure Slav setups a move up, which happened in this game. Of course 2.e4 plays into my opponent’s tactically grubby kid-hands. There is a line from a Kipling poem which perfectly sums up this move when played against a kid: ‘Can’t! Don’t! Shan’t! Won’t!’

2…g6 3.d4 cxd4

On 3…f6 I tend to grab the c5-pawn and hang on to it for dear life: 4.dxc5 g7 5.b3 c7 6.e2 c6 7.g2 b5 8.a4 d5 9.e3 h5! I could avoid Black’s next move with 9.h3.

9…e5

For youth, the itch for adventure rivals that of chicken pox. Predictably, he attempts to muck it up a bit by chasing down my bishop for his knight, at the cost of weakening his kingside structure.

10.g5 h6 11.h4 g5 12.g3

I didn’t like the line 12.d2 f4 13.exf4 gxf4 14.e3 f3 h3 15.g3 g4 16.e2 xe2 17.gxe2 a5+ (this move is the problem: a2 hangs) 18.d2 xa2. Now if White attempts to regain the lost pawn with 19.xc6? bxc6 20.xc6?! I fall seriously behind in development after 20…f8 21.xc8+ xc8 22.0-0 b8. When b2 falls, Black’s passed a-pawn will be impossible to stop.

12…xg3 13.hxg3 b8
The immediate 13... f5? hangs a pawn to 14. b3 with a double attack on d5 and b7.

14.0-0
It may seem like a strange decision to castle when I own an open h-file, but I wanted to bore him, not attack him!

14... f5 15. a3
Principle: When your opponent owns the bishop pair, swap one of them off. It also follows the kid-principle: Always swap anything for anything, in all cases, since with each trade, your opponent grows weaker!

15... xxd3 16. a4 17. e7 18. c2 19. fc1 d8
19... c7 20. b4 and now the careless 20... fc8? is met with 21. b5 d7 22. xa7 winning a pawn.

20. a4?!
I provoke 20...e5, which he planned anyway, so the move wastes time. The superior alternative is 20.b4! with a nagging strategic edge. Now if he lashes out with 20...e5? 21.dxe5 e6 22. e2 e5 23. xxe5! xc8 (23... xd3 24. xd8+ is also very much in White’s favor) 24. xc8+ xe8 25. xe5 xe5 26. xd5 White has an extra pawn in the ending.

20...e5!
I was 100% certain he would play this rather than wait passively, but in this case his intent fits his position’s requirements and should equalize.

21. dxe5 xe5 22. xe5 xc2 23. xc2 xe5 24. c3 d4?
A typically impatient kid decision. He should go passive with 24…f6 25.e2 e4 26.b3 and I doubt White has anything.

25.e2!
Oops, he just hangs a pawn, due to the pin on the d-file.

25…a5
After 25…d5 26.xd4 xd4 27.d2 White wins a pawn.

26.xd4 e1+ 27.h2 b1 28.e4 xd4 29.exd4 d1+ 30.f3!
The hasty 30.c7? allows Black an immediate perpetual check with 30…h5+ 31.g1 d1+.

30…xd4

White has a choice of plans:
A) Swap queens and enter a pawn-up rook and pawn ending with c7;
B) Avoid the queen swap and chop his b7-pawn.

Now the key to this decision is: whose king is weaker? If mine is weaker, then I should go for Plan A; if his is weaker, then I should opt for Plan B.

31.xd4?!
Paranoia is that warning on the side mirror of our car: ‘Objects are larger than they appear.’ As it turns out, his king, not mine, is the one in greater danger.

I hate it when my anti-risk theology is in direct conflict with my position’s needs. This is a typical dove bad decision, to enter a position which I might win, and can’t possibly lose. The problem is Black’s chances to draw go up in a pure rook ending. Still, I was influenced by the fact that kids hate queen swaps, and regard the opponent’s queen with hatred.

Correct was the braver 31.xb7!. I feared 31…g4 but then play may continue 32.c6 gxf3 and here I missed the potency of my threat after 33.c4! d5 34.g4+ h7 35.f6 (threatening mate on the move) 35…g8 36.d4 e6 37.xe6! (now is the correct time to enter the rook ending) 37…fxe6 38.gxf3. White’s chances to win this rook and pawn ending are very good, since Black nurses an all-isolani ward.

31…xd4 32.c7 d2 33.xb7 a5 34.g4 a7 35.a4 c2 36.b5 g6 37.b3 b2 38.g1
This position is as nail-bitingly thrilling as one of those World Cup soccer games which end in a 0-0 tie. Luckily my opponent commits an uninduced mistake on his next turn.

38...f6?
Here I paused to give prayerful thanks to the chess goddess. Just like last game, my kid-opponent commits an unforced error, allowing his barricade to exhibit gaps. But they virtually always do this, since the compulsion to take action clings to kids like fleas on stray dogs.

Black should hold the draw with passive play, which kids tend to interpret as the opponent’s unspoken mockery.

Let’s take a look at the do-nothing option: 38...g7! 39.xa5 b3 40.a8+ a1 41.a5 g6 42.a6 f6 44.g3 a2+ 45.g1 a3 46.d2 e6 47.c2 f6 48.a7 (White is unable to make progress. 48.d2 can be met with 48...xf3)

48...g7 49.d2 f6 50.c2 g7 51.b2 a5 52.b3 f6 53.b4 a1 54.c4 a5 I don’t think White can win, since all he can achieve is a three pawns versus two drawn ending with pawns all on the same side.

39.b6 g7

How did I exploit his …f7-f6 mistake?

40.h2
Step 1: Hide my king on h3.

40...g6 41.h3 g7 42.b5 g6 43.g3!
Step 2: Prepare a mating net with f3-f4, rook to the seventh rank, and then f4-f5 mate.

43...g7 44.f4 f7 45.xa5
Also winning is the plan 45.f5 g7 46.xa5 g8 47.a7+ g8 48.a5 a3 49.d2 a2+ 50.f3 a3+ 51.f2 a2+ 52.e1 a3 53.a6 d8 (53...xg3 54.b7 a3 55.a7 wins his rook) 54.d2 g8 55.c2 a1 56.b3 a5 57.b4 a1 58.b5 b1+ 59.c6 c1+ 60.d6 a1 61.e6 when f6 falls and White wins.

45...xb3 46.a7+ g8

Now an air of indentured servitude hangs over Black’s cut-off king: 46...g6?? 47.f5 mate. This wouldn’t have been the case if he had left his f-pawn on f7.

47.g2 b2+ 48.f3 b3+ 49.e4
g3 isn’t important. White wins with the king entry, thanks to the earlier 38...f6?, which weakened his kingside light squares.

49.xg3 50.f5
50...gxf4
If 50...f3 51.g6 f8 52.f5 f4 53.xf6 g8 54.g6 f8 55.f6 e8 56.f7+ f8 57.a8+ e7 58.e8+ d7 59.f8 wins.
51.xf4 a3 52.f5 g3 53.a5 f8 54.a6 g8 55.b7
This move wins Black’s rook.
55...a3 56.a7 1-0
My opponent is a quick learner. After the game, I asked him: ‘Do you see why you didn’t hold the draw?’ He responded immediately: ‘38...f6?’
CHAPTER 13
Surviving opening ambushes

Our opponent’s unorthodox/outrageous opening idea can leave us flustered. In the following two games, which should be taken
as a warning, Black’s play did just that, against two very powerful white opponents.

So how does the dove navigate an opponent’s deliberately byzantine byway? My advice is to stay calm and do your best to
force a future position which relies at least partially upon understanding, rather than an irrational one of hardcore calculation.

VO 1.1 – B00
Various Openings
Anatoly Karpov 2725
Anthony Miles 2545
Skara Ech-tt 1980 (1)

1.e4
Karpov was one of those rare doves who pushed his king’s pawn forward two squares on his first move. Most doves prefer the
more sedate queen’s pawn or flank openings.
1…a6!?

Ah yes, very logical. Tony bangs out the heavily under-analyzed St. George Defense. Man, this takes real chutzpah. To play this
move against a reigning world champion constitutes a clear insult – and even more so when you pull off the impossible and
win with it!
To claim this move is incorrect – which is similar to the fan who criticizes from the perspective of a spectator, when compared
to the one who fights in the arena – would be inaccurate, since judging it from its intrinsic value ignores the move’s
psychological effect, which was clearly to simultaneously offend and fluster.
2.d4 b5 3.f3
The immediate 3.a4 follows the principle Create confrontation when leading in development.
3…b7 4.a3 f6 5.e2
Karpov, obviously out of his theoretical prep, plays it safe. Perhaps he should have gone into punishment mode with 5.e5 d5
6.a4 and if 6…b4 7.c4!, the same principle as above. It feels to me like Black has got tricked into a rather lousy Alekhine’s
Defense-like position.
5…e6 6.a4
This attempted confrontation can be ignored. White can also play to retain his strong center with 6.c5 7.c3.
6…c5?!
No compromise from Black. Threat: 7…c4. This is a pawn sacrifice. He refuses to back down with 6…b4, after which White
gets a better version of the game’s continuation.
7.dxc5
After 7.axb5 axb5 8.xa8 bxa8 9.dxc5 xxc5 10.bd2 b4 11.e5 d5 12.e4 White’s queen can easily transfer to the kingside.
7…xc5
8. \text{bd}2!?
In this game, Karpov keeps disharmoniously shifting from aggression to safety. Here he declines Tony’s sacrifice. Perhaps he should have challenged Black by grabbing the offered pawn with 8.e5 \text{d}5 9.axb5 axb5 10.\text{xa}8 \text{xa}8 11.\text{xb}5 and asked him to prove full compensation. Black will castle and then open the f-file with …f7-f6. The comp still favors White, but Black obviously gets practical chances, with all his pieces aimed at White’s kingside.

8…\text{b}4 9.e5
Karpov allows Black control over d5, if in turn he seizes control over e4.

9…\text{d}5 10.\text{e}4 \text{e}7

11.0-0
White could go for an invade-d6 policy with 11.\text{g}5! 0-0 12.\text{d}6 \text{xg}5 (12…\text{c}6 13.h4 also looks better for White) 13.\text{xb}7 \text{e}7 14.\text{g}5 \text{g}5 15.\text{g}3 \text{c}6 16.\text{f}4 \text{xf}4 (Black gets three pawns for the piece) 17.\text{xf}4 \text{xf}4 18.\text{f}1 \text{xe}5 19.\text{xe}5 \text{xe}5 20.\text{d}6 and I prefer White’s chances in the ending.

11…\text{c}6 12.\text{d}2?!  
When a commanding officer issues a harsh order and then rescinds it, he or she risks losing face. Our perceptions are not impervious to stylistic bias, and therefore deception. Karpov falls prey to a dove inaccuracy with a passive move, and begins a sub-par plan. He plays it too safely to extract an edge.

Playing for c2-c4 weakens White’s queenside. He should once again have gone for the more forceful 12.\text{g}5! and if 12…f6 13.\text{xf}6 \text{xf}6 14.\text{ad}1 is in White’s favor.

12…\text{c}7
13...c4!? Consistency fails to represent a virtue when we are on the wrong path. Perhaps White should consider altering his course by refusing to weaken his queenside with 13...g3.

13...bxc3 14.xc3 xc3 I would be more inclined to occupy b4 with 14...db4 15.e4 0-0 with dynamic equality.

15.xc3 b4 16.xb4 The handing over of the bishop pair, coupled with his self-inflicted b4-hole and weak b2-pawn, aggravates Karpov’s growing sense of instability in his position. But there was no real choice since Black’s knight was too strong, and White needs his light-squared bishop to try and launch an attack upon Black’s king.

16...xb4 17.ac1 b6 Tony pulled off the impossible by achieving dynamic equality against a reigning world champion, with his ridiculous-looking first move.

18.e4 Karpov follows the principle of dismantling his opponent’s bishop pair. 18.g5 g6 19.e4 0-0 20.fd1 ac8 21.xc8 xc8! also looks fine for Black. In fact, I slightly prefer his position.

18...0-0!

More provocation from Tony. If you played White, would you sacrifice a piece on h7?

19.g5 White’s forces creep closer to Black’s king in sinister fashion. However, this lunge fails to bother Black, whose king is adequately protected.

The problem is White also gets no advantage from 19.xh7+. On the surface this move looks rather scary for Black. But subsequent analysis shows he survives: 19...xh7 20.g5+ g6 21.g4 f5 22.g3 e4! (threatening to force the queens off the board with 23.g4) 23.xe6+ g4 24.xf8+ xf8 25.xg4+ fxg4 26.c4 a5 27.xg4+ h7 and Black’s monster bishops hold their own against White’s rook and three pawns. I have a feeling this was White’s best try though.

19...h6 20.h7+!? After 20.xb7 xb7 21.e4 ab8 White stands worse, since his b2-pawn is weak.

20...h8 21.b1 Dreams of the delivery of checkmate are the source of Karpov’s abstraction. Now d3 is in the air.

21...c07 22.e4
A) 22. d3 g6 23. e4 xe4 24. xe4 xb2 leaves Black up a pawn, with all the winning chances.
B) 22. h4 g6 23. f3 xf3 24. xf3 xh4 once again leaves Black up a pawn.
The psychological difficulty for Karpov in entering such pragmatic lines is that Black’s superiority in both lines represents a living, taunting refutation to White’s cherished belief that Miles should have been clubbed like a baby seal after his 1…a6!?.

22… ac8

White’s would-be attack is no more, while his weak queenside and b2-pawn are very real. Black stands slightly better. Now White’s choice is between vengeance or a reality-based submissiveness.

23. d3?
He should have tried 23. f6! b4! 24. cd1 gxf6 25. h5 f4 26. d4! g5 27. xg5 h5 28. xd7 c6 29. xe7 fxe5 30. d3 xa4 31. xa6 c2. Even here White struggles for the draw in the ending.

23… xc1!
Tony accepts the challenge.

24. xc1 xb2 25. e1
25. c7?? c6 26. d2 g6 27. c4 b8 picks up material with no compensation for White.

25… xe5! 26. xd7

Karpov may have counted upon this double attack, but Black has everything under control with his next move.

26… b4 27. e3
If you had Black, would you force queens off and enter a technically won ending with 27… d5? Or should you play on White’s weak back rank with 27… b2? One of them is much stronger than the other.

27… d5
I told you Tony was a dove (who liked to mimic a hawk). He predictably takes the safe, practical – and inferior! – route, forcing a won ending. Game-endingly stronger was 27… b2! 28. d3 xe4 29. xe4 c5 and game over, since the principle Opposite colored bishops favors the attacker kicks in. 30. e2 (30. e2 c1+, forcing mate) is met with 30… b1+ picking up White’s rook.

28. xd5 xd5 29. c3 c8!
That weak back rank again.

30. e2 g5
Rare is the game where we see a reigning world champion look so inept. The reason? Karpov was clearly psychologically flustered by Tony’s rather obnoxious first move! If White’s position was a face, it would have scars, a broken nose, missing teeth and a pirate’s eye patch:
1. Black is up a pawn.
2. Black owns the bishop pair and the more active rook.
3. White’s pieces are rhythmless lummoxes dancing on the ballroom floor, stepping on their partners’ toes.
Conclusion: this is not so hard to win for a great technical player like Miles, even against a world champion.

31.h4 g7 32.hxg5 hxg5 33.d3 a5 34.g3 f6 35.e4 d6 36.f1 e5 37.h8 38.f4 gxf4 39.xf4 c6 40.e2
40.c2 h1+ 41.e2 g1 42.g3 d6 is also completely hopeless.
40...h1+ 41.d2 h2 42.g3 f3! 43.g8 g2!
Now White’s g-pawn falls.
44.e1 xe2 45.xe2 xg3 46.a8 c7 0-1

The bishops of opposite colors won’t save White here.

RE 17.1 – A09
Réti Opening
Tiger Hillarp Persson 2527
Alexander Morozevich 2683
St Petersburg 2016 (3)

1.f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.b4 g5!
What the hell!? It almost feels as if the distinction between reality and metaphor begins to blur. To Morozevich the word ‘moderation’ is synonymous with only a tolerable level of mediocrity. This new version of a wing gambit pushes the carpe diem philosophy to an entirely new level.

I would label Moro the modern-day Chigorin – the only living example of a super-GM who consistently plays in the Great Romantic style of our forefathers – in the category of a pure anarchist tactician, whose chess soul is completely devoid of any sense of structural or fiscal responsibility. He is a thing of the past, like when airlines allowed people to smoke on planes, except he lives in the present.

Black’s last move is no typo. What would Morphy say about this move? If we ask Komodo, however, it shockingly just gives White a tiny edge, rather than the ‘+-’ evaluation we expect. Black’s last move is the very definition of a speculative sacrifice, where the hawk settles for circumstantial evidence, rather than the definitive proof a dove demands. The hawk’s justification lies in the gambler’s motto: Never allow an absence of proof to get in the way of your desired conclusion.

4.e3

A position this flexible can be shaped, pounded and molded into any form our mind conjures. This follows the principle Counter in the center when attacked on the wing, yet it may not be White’s best, which may be to accept the sacrifice:

A) 4...b2! g7 5...xg5
I follow a lifelong philosophy: The best way to refute an opening gambit is to accept it. I just don’t believe that Black’s initiative is enough for a pawn. 5...e5 6.e4 (6.h4! h6 7.e4 f5 8.c5! and I don’t believe in Black’s alleged compensation) 6...f5 7...g3?! (g3 is the wrong square for the knight. Correct was 7...c5!) 7...f6 8.e3?! (correct was 8.e4!) 8...0-0 9...d3 (9.exd4 exd4 10...d3 f4 and suddenly Black gets a ferocious initiative for his material outlay) 9...e4?! (9...f4! looks very dangerous for White) 10.e2 xf2? (unsound! But such warnings have never stopped Moro in the past) 11.xf2 f4 12.exf4 d3 13...f3 e4 (discovered attack) 14...xg7 e5 15.e4 f5+ 16.g1 g6! 17.bc3 xf4! (Black’s best practical chance) 18.xf4?? (White allows a draw in a completely winning position – my specialty! With 18.e1! e5 19.f2 White wins) 18...f5+ 19.g1 e3 d4+ 20.f1 f5+ 21.exf3 ½-½ Agrest-Morozevich, Berlin 2015;

B) The immediate capture 4.xg5 surprisingly allows Black full compensation for the pawn:

4...e5 5.d3 xxb4+ 6.d2 xg5 7.xb4 c6 (Black stands no worse, which is a minor miracle, considering his fourth move!) 8.a3 h5! 9.d2 b4 10.b1 b6! 11.a4 g6 12.c5? (it was high time to develop his kingside with 12.g1 b7 13.g1 when his f1-bishop soon emerges) 12...b7 13.c4 0-0-0! (he correctly gauges that White’s attack on the queenside is a phantom,
since White’s kingside is grossly undeveloped, unable to assist) 14.cxb6 axb6 15.\textit{b5 e4} (principle: \textit{Create confrontation and open the game when leading in development}) 16.\textit{c2 f6} 17.dxe4 \textit{xe4} 18.\textit{b3 e6}! (threat: 19…d3) 19.f3 \textit{c3} 20.e4 \textit{f5} (White, now grossly behind in development, is busted) 21.\textit{d3 fxe4} 22.fxe4 \textit{h3} 23.g3 \textit{xe4} 24.0-0 \textit{xe4} 25.\textit{f3 e1+} 26.\textit{f1 xf1} 0-1 Bocharov-Morozevich, Kazan 2015.

4…\textit{e5}!

White is faced with a dystopian bureaucracy of requisitions, appropriations and distribution dilemmas. How should he bring out his pieces? His choices:

A) 5.\textit{b2 g7} 6.h3 looks more harmonious than the game’s continuation;

B) 5.\textit{xe5}?! \textit{g7} 6.f4 dxe3 7.dxe3 \textit{xd1+} 8.\textit{xd1} \textit{c6} leaves White dangerously behind in development.

5…\textit{exd4}!

If 5…\textit{g4}?! 6.\textit{xe5} \textit{xd4} 7.d3 \textit{xa1} 8.\textit{b2} \textit{xa2} 9.\textit{xe8} \textit{xc4} 10.\textit{c3} White’s development lead offers full compensation for the pawn. Moro likes to offer material, not take it.

8.\textit{h5}?

Correct was the meek 8.d3! 0-0 9.\textit{d1}! when the onus is on Black to prove that he gets full compensation for his pawn.

8…\textit{xe6} 9.d3

9.\textit{e2}?! is met with 9…\textit{e5} with threats of 10…\textit{d3} and 10…\textit{xg5}: 10.d3 \textit{e7}! (threat: 11…\textit{xd3+}) 11.\textit{d1 f5} and White
is too far behind in development.

9...\textit{\underline{g}e7+!} 10.\textit{\underline{g}e2}

10.\textit{\underline{g}e2}? is met with 10...\textit{\underline{e}5}, threatening 11...\textit{\underline{xd}3+:} 11.\textit{\underline{d}1} \textit{\underline{f}5}, transposing to the above variation, favorable for Black.

10...\textit{\underline{d}7!}

Of course Black isn’t tempted to help White develop with the greedy 10...\textit{\underline{xb}4+} 11.\textit{\underline{d}2}.

11.0-0 \textit{\underline{f}6}

Now White’s forces go into full retreat mode.

12.\textit{\underline{f}3}

On the surface it appears as if White’s king is perfectly safe, surrounded by a fortress of beefy defenders. The comp shatters this delusion by informing us that White is completely busted here.

12...\textit{\underline{h}6!}

A) 12...\textit{\underline{g}4?} 13.\textit{\underline{xb}7} favors White;

B) 12...\textit{\underline{h}4} 13.\textit{\underline{g}3} \textit{\underline{f}5} 14.\textit{\underline{f}3} \textit{\underline{h}4} is merely a repetition draw.

13.\textit{\underline{h}3}

This is that frustrating situation where the mechanic has loads of spare parts, yet not a single one which fits our foreign car. 13.\textit{\underline{e}4??} fails to 13...\textit{\underline{xe}4} 14.\textit{\underline{xe}4} \textit{\underline{xe}4} 15.dxe4 \textit{\underline{d}3} and the rook in the corner is lost.

13...\textit{\underline{h}xh3!}

Moro alertly plays upon the fact that White’s overloaded queen is unable to recapture, due to her need to cover the e2-bishop.

14.\textit{\underline{gh}xh3}

After 14...\textit{\underline{xb}7??} 0-0 15.\textit{\underline{d}1} \textit{\underline{fb}8} 16.\textit{\underline{f}3} \textit{\underline{g}4} 17.\textit{\underline{g}3} \textit{\underline{x}d1} 18.\textit{\underline{x}d1} \textit{\underline{e}2} 19.\textit{\underline{f}1} \textit{\underline{xb}4} 20.\textit{\underline{d}2} \textit{\underline{e}5} 21.\textit{\underline{b}3} \textit{\underline{h}5} 22.\textit{\underline{h}4} \textit{\underline{x}d3} 23.\textit{\underline{x}d4} \textit{\underline{xc}4} 24.\textit{\underline{xe}2} \textit{\underline{h}4} 25.\textit{\underline{b}1} \textit{\underline{c}5} Black’s dominating d3-knight, coupled with his passed c-pawn, give him a winning game.

14...\textit{\underline{h}4!!}

We sense danger ahead for White’s queen and king. Black initiates a chain of hopeful suppositions, all of which later prove correct. This brilliant sacrifice is even stronger than the dove’s safer, more practical and weaker choice 14...0-0-0, which I would most certainly play (although I would never, ever get this position!). Black gets a strong attack after 15.\textit{\underline{e}1} \textit{\underline{hg}8}. Not only is White’s king in danger, but he also lags considerably in development.

15.\textit{\underline{xb}7} \textit{\underline{xe}2!}
To Morozevich, losing material at this stage is perhaps how a leper feels when another finger drops off, thinking: ‘What is one more, when I have already lost so many?’ Black’s separate ideas begin to intersect, since this exchange sacrifice robs White of his kingside light squares.

16. \texttt{xa8+ d7 17. h1?}

A blunder in an already lost position, after which the white defenders scatter in different directions. The trouble is White’s king needs h1, a square now occupied by the queen. 17. \texttt{xa7 f3+!} (17… \texttt{f3?? hangs the h4-knight; after 18. xd4+ d5 19. xb4 \texttt{xa1} 20. g3! White survives the mating attempt and wins) 18. g2 g8 19. a4+ c6 20. d1 e1+!! 21. xe1 (the only move) 21… f8+ 22. h1 xf2 and now:

A) 23. g1 d6! forces mate;

B) 23. e2 f3+ 24. g2 xg2#

C) 23. e2 g1+! 24. xg1 xe2 (‘The only distinguishing factor between us is your hubris,’ says the queen, as she puts her blade to her identical twin sister’s throat) 25. d2 xb4 and White can fight on, but is still busted.

17… f3+ 18. g2 g8

When all our plans go horribly awry like this, our outrage is fueled even further when our opponent calmly reminds us of our king’s puniness. Not only is White’s queenside completely undeveloped, but also his king, exposed to the elements, is mated by force.

19. f4 h5 0-1

After 20. g3 f8 (threat: 21… f4 mate) 21. g1 h4+! 22. h1 f3+ 23. g2 xg2# White’s king – whatever is left of him – can only be identified via his dental records.
In the next ten games we look at minor piece relationships in their various incarnations. In the first four games the knight dominates, and in the next chapter we examine examples where the bishop rules.

TD 4.16 – D34
Tarrasch Defence

**Anatoly Karpov** 2705
**Garry Kasparov** 2715

Moscow Wch m 1984 (9)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.f3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5
Kasparov borrows Spassky’s strategy against Petrosian, where he voluntarily takes on an isolani to generate activity with the Tarrasch Defense.

5.g3 f6 6.g2 e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.e5 c6 9.g5 cxd4
Also tried is 9…c4 10.e5 c6, which doesn’t suit Kasparov’s style.

10.exd4

Now it’s official. It will be an isolani position, which all doves love to play against, since doves tend to interpret isolanis as weaknesses, while hawks like Kasparov give greater weight to the dynamic factors involved, like freedom and enhanced central control.

10...h6 11.e3 e8 12.b3
Karpov applies direct pressure to d5.

12...a5 13.c2 g4 14.f5 c8
Also played is 14...b4 15.d4.

15.d4 c5 16.xc5
Anti-isolani principle: *All swaps are welcome.* Now Black gets a slightly bad remaining bishop.

16...xc5 17.e3 c6

17...d4 18.ad1 c6 19.xg4 xg4 20.e3 g5 21.b3 d3 22.xb7 Babula-Orsag, Ostrava 2010. My material-loving dove heart tells me that White’s pawn is worth more than Black’s deeply entrenched d-pawn.

18.ad1

18.b4 fails to win a piece: 18...c8 19.bxa5 d4 20.fd1 xa5 21.xd4 xc3 is fine for Black.

18...c8 19.a4 d8 20.d3
Karpov has out-maneuvered the young Kasparov into some pressure.

20...a6
21. \textit{fd1!}

A safety-first dove decision. Karpov would rather pressure d5 than win it and allow complications with 21. \textit{exd5! e5xd5 22. \textit{fxe5 dxe5 (threatening a fork on e7) 24. \textit{f8 f4 25. \textit{c8 c3! The b2-pawn is tactically secure due to a queen check on d6. I don’t see any compensation for Black’s missing pawn.}}}

21…\textit{c4 22. \textit{xc4 xc4 23. \textit{a5 c5 24. \textit{xb6 d7 25. \textit{d4 c7! kasparov feels the need to swap away white’s powerful queen, but as we know, every swap helps the non-isolani side. I would have kept queens on and suffered in silence with 25… c6.}}}

26. \textit{xc7 dxc7 27. h3 h5 28. a3 g6 29. \textit{e3 g7 30. h2 c4 31. f3 b5 32. g2 7c5 33. xc4!?”}


Kasparov feels the need to swap away White’s powerful queen, but as we know, every swap helps the non-isolani side. I would have kept queens on and suffered in silence with 25… \textit{c6.}

26. \textit{xc7 dxc7}

Premature.

Kasparov’s shortcut turns into the long cut. When we attempt to increase activity in an inherently passive situation, it’s as tricky as attempting to grow vegetables in your backyard during the winter. The hawk’s infatuation with activity at all costs is a compulsive entity. So forceful are some players’ chess styles that sometimes it’s difficult to tell where the chess game ends, and the player begins.

Kasparov goes with his natural inclination, taking the high end aggressive route by offering his d5-pawn as a sacrifice to reach a drawn pawn-down rook and pawn ending. Karpov, having seen deeper, correctly declines the offer.

The thing about legends is that their status tends to increase with the passage of time. It is the hateful comps who keep reminding us of the unpleasant truth: that they are human after all. When isolani positions go slightly wrong, like Black’s game here, we are left with the choice: rescue or abandon. Here, Kasparov perhaps incorrectly decides upon the latter, offering his IQP, missing a chance to immediately draw the game with 33…\textit{dxc4!} 34. \textit{d6 a5 35. b6 d7! 36. \textit{xb5 xb5 37. \textit{xb5 c5.}}}

White’s problem is that he can’t defend b2, since he is unable to simultaneously cover the a4- and d3-squares: 38. \textit{c2 a4 39. \textit{h4 b2 40. \textit{f1 White still stands better since Black’s passed c-pawn remains weak, but this looks like a less torturous path to the draw than the one Kasparov chose in the game’s continuation.}}}

34. \textit{d4!}

Refusal of a gift can be interpreted as a prideful luxury, but not this time.

This is the kind of kill-joy move which drives hawks crazy. It’s one of those situations where the defender urgently emails someone, and it annoyingly bounces back to him. Karpov, in clinical dove fashion, declines Black’s offer of the IQP, constantly draining his opponent of all dynamic possibilities, by always striving for the blandest possible outcome.
This move offers White some practical chances to win the ending. White can win a pawn, but not the game after 34.\textit{xd5} (Kasparov may have expected only this move) 34…\textit{c2} 35.\textit{b4} 36.\textit{xd5} 37.\textit{xd5} 38.\textit{a4}! bxa4 39.\textit{a5} a3 40.\textit{xa6} g5! (intending 41…\textit{g4}, which reaches a theoretically drawn ending) 41.\textit{g4} hxg4 42.hxg4 \textit{b3} 43.\textit{f3} f6 44.\textit{a7+} \textit{g6} 45.\textit{b5} \textit{xb5} 46.\textit{xa3} with a near-certain draw. In practice, a club level player may still lose Black’s position, but Kasparov wouldn’t!

34…\textit{f8} 35.\textit{e2} \textit{xd4}

It isn’t easy to write your resume when you lack achievements to put in it. Black should hold the draw, despite his bad bishop.

36.\textit{exd4} \textit{e7} 37.\textit{a2} \textit{c8} 38.\textit{b4} \textit{d6} 39.\textit{f3}

39…\textit{g8}!

Kasparov chooses not to loosen his queenside pawns with 39…\textit{a5} 40.\textit{d3}.

40.\textit{h4} \textit{h6}!

Excellent defense, frustrating White’s attempts to break open the kingside with g3-g4.

41.\textit{f2} \textit{f5} 42.\textit{c2} \textit{f6} 43.\textit{d3} \textit{g5}!

This move should actually achieve the draw, but Kasparov follows up incorrectly.

44.\textit{xf5}!

I will let you in on a little secret: many doves like me prefer the knight to the opponent’s bishop. Why? Well, knights are trickier pieces which tend to fork us when we are in time pressure. We tend to see bishops coming, so they don’t scare us as much. Of course this doesn’t apply to Karpov, whose quick sight of the board prevents such mishaps, even when he is low on the clock. Karpov forces a favorable knight versus bishop ending.

So we reach an ending hauntingly close to the Saidy-Fischer game (see below!). Black’s single issue is his bad bishop, and with it, slightly weak dark squares. I’m pretty sure a comp would draw this against another comp. We fallible humans have a way of botching tiresome defensive chores. Most of us view the bishop as the favored one – the superior high school football player with the unpimpled face, compared to the pockmarked nerd of a knight. But not in this case, where Black’s queenside pawns and his d-pawn sit on the wrong color, favoring Karpov’s knight.

44…\textit{xf5} 45.\textit{e3} \textit{b1} 46.\textit{b4}

Fixing both black queenside pawns on the same color of Kasparov’s remaining bishop. White’s problem: how will his king break into Black’s attempted fortress? For now, Karpov’s intent remains subterranean.

46…\textit{gxh4}?
It isn’t easy to defend such drab positions. Kasparov must have missed Karpov’s shocking reply.

46…\textbf{g}6! is Geller’s suggestion, which may just hold the game after 47.g4! e6. Have you ever been trapped in a conversation with a really boring person, and your eyes just go out of focus, and all you can respond with is: ‘Uhm! Interesting! Wow, I didn’t know that!’ Such endings tend to be tediously difficult to endure for the bishop’s side. 48.g3 hxg4 49.xg4 f5 50.d4 g4 51.e4 c5 52.g3 f4 53.c5 e8 54.g2 f7 White can play on and on but in the end, if Black defends accurately, he creates a fortress and holds the draw.

\textbf{47.a}2!!
The knight continues to rasp at Black’s peace of mind. The concept of the impenetrable fortress, once Black’s principal solace, is suddenly yanked away from him. This stunning non-recapture was most certainly overlooked by Kasparov. The idea is that by temporarily giving up a pawn, White breaks Black’s attempted fortress draw and achieves entry into Black’s camp with his king and knight.

Kasparov undoubtedly expected the auto-recapture 47.gxh4? \textbf{g}6 when Black has excellent chances to fortress his way to the draw.

47...hxg3+
47...h3 fails to help at all after 48.f4.

48.xg3 e6 49.e4+ f5
49...d6 50.h4 c2 51.xh5 e6 52.f4+ d6 53.g4 d1 54.e3 b3 55.e6 c2 56.xa6 c2 57.h5 d3 58.c5 d6 59.h6 e7 60.g7 (zugzwang) 60...b1 61.a4 and the creation of a passed b-pawn wins.

50.xh5
Not only did Karpov regain his sacrificed pawn, but now he threatens 51.g7+, followed by e8 and c7, raiding Black’s queenside pawns.

50...e6
Forced.

51.e4+ d6 52.g4
White’s king is enabled entry.

52...c2 53.h5 d1 54.g6

54.e7
Desperation. Is our plan really rash folly, if the alternative is an agonizing slow death? Black’s king clearly doesn’t view his
menial job of defending pawns as a glamorous assignment.  
54...xf3 55...xf6 e4 56...e6 and c5 will be decisive.
55...xd5+
Black’s remaining pawns are captured revolutionaries before a firing squad.
55...e6
Black could put up greater resistance with 55...d6, a suggestion of Geller: 56...c3 xf3 57...xf6 c6 58...c7+ d7
56...d6 57...e8+ c7 (if 57...d5 58.f4! xd4 59...xf6 c3 60.f5 c2 61...e6 b3 62...c7 xa3 63...xa6 White secures b4 and his f-pawn will win Black’s bishop) 58...xf6 xf3 59...f5 is similar to the game’s continuation.
57...xa6 xf3 58...xf6 d6 59...f5 d5

Black is so close to chopping d4, but White hangs on to it with a tempo gain on his next move.
60...f4 h1 61...e3
Just in the nick of time to secure d4.
61...c4 62...c5
Cutting off 62...b3.
62...c6 63...d3 g2
After 63...b3 64...e5 d5 65...d3 xa3 66...c3 the passed d-pawn will be shepherded forward.
64...e5+ c3
64...b3 65...d3 xa3 66...c3 d5 67...g4 is the same as the above variation. White’s d-pawn wins.
65...g6 c4 66...e7 b7 67...f5
Threatening a big fork on d6.
67...g2
67...d5 68...d3 followed by 69...e3+ is a simple win for White.
68...d6+
There goes Black’s last pawn.
68...b3 69...xb5 a4 70...d6

Black resigned.
70...xa3 71.b5 will cost him his bishop.
Karpov’s win against Kasparov is hauntingly similar to Fischer’s squeeze of Saidy in the following game:

1.c4 c5 2.f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 f6 5.e3 f5 6.b5 a6 7.a4 cbb 8.xc3+ d5 9.e3 0-0 10.exd5 exd5 11.e2 f5 12.xb5 b6 13.0-0 a6 14.d4 xd4 15.xd4 xd4 16.exd4 ac8 17.d1! c2 18.e3!? xd1 19.fxdl c2 20.d2 xc8 21.xc2 xc2 22.c1! xc1+ 23.xc1

Fischer begins a three-step plan to increase his winning chances.

Step 1: Re-route the knight to e6: 23…d7! (destination e6, where it pressures d4) 24.f1 f8 25.e2 e6 26.d3.

Step 2: Play …h7-h5, then transfer the king to f5: 26…h5! 27.e3 h7! 28.f3 (principle: Place your pawns on the opposite color of your remaining bishop) 28…d6 29.a4 f5 30.e2.

Step 3: Try and puncture White’s kingside pawns to infiltrate with his king. 30…g5! 31.f2 d8 32.d2 g6 33.e3 e6 34.d3 f5 35.e3 f6 36.e2 g6 37.d3 f5 38.e2 f4 39.f2 g7 (transferring the knight to f5) 40.h3 f5 41.d3 g4! (the kingside breakthrough arrives, yet it shouldn’t be enough to win the game) 42.hxg4 hxg4 43.fxg4 f6 44.e1? xg4 45.d2 f5 46.e1 f6 47.h4 h5 48.e1 (in such positions the shift of a single square can mean the difference between a catastrophe or a delightfully unexpected windfall. The indolent bishop is no match for Black’s hard-working knight) 48…g4 49.e2 g3+! 50.d3 (50.f2 f5 51.c3 e3 zugzwang; now 52.e1 d1+ 53.e2 xb2 54.a5 c4 is hopeless for White) 50…f5! 51.f2 h4 (g2 falls, and with it all of White’s chances) 52.a5 xg2 53.c3 f3 54.g1 e2 55.h2 f3 56.g3 e3! 0-1 Saidy-Fischer, New York 1964.

This game is annotated in Fischer: Move by Move.

SI 14.12 – B90
Sicilian Defense
Robert Fischer
Julio Bolbochan
Stockholm izt 1962 (21)

This and the next game are non-ending versions of knight domination.

1.e4 c5 2.f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.exd4 e6 5.c3 a6

We all struggle with our private Moby Dick openings, which are just beyond our mental grasp. In my youth I desperately wanted to play the Najdorf and Dragon. You guessed it. I generally got clobbered and sent home humiliated.

6.h3!

Fischer had a quirky fondness for the h2-h3/g2-g4 plans against the Sicilian, which are now back in fashion. This is kind of the Stone Age version of the English Attack of the Sicilian, where f2-f3 and g2-g4 is substituted by h2-h3 and g2-g4.

6…c6 7.g4

Fischer dispenses with normal formulaic courtesies and starts a brawl early.
7…xd4?!  
This move loses time. Black is better off with 7…b6 8…b3 e6 9.e3 c7 10.f4 b5 11.g2 b7 12.g5 d7 (Caruana-Karjakin, Zurich 2015). I’m no savant of such positions, but it feels like Black has achieved dynamic equality, since White has reached a Keres Attack structure, but with the redundant tempo loss h2-h3 included.

8.xd4 e5  
No real choice, since 8…e6? 9.e3 and if Black develops his kingside with 9…e7 10.g5 e5 this leaves Black in a move-down version of what he got in the game’s continuation.

9.d3 e7 10.g5!  
Black did not gain a tempo, since White’s queen needed to be on d2 anyway.

Black did not gain a tempo, since White’s queen needed to be on d2 anyway.

11…c5?!  
Another flower slips into Black’s bouquet of opening inaccuracies. The knight ends up misplaced on c5, getting in the way of a black rook on c8 later on, so the tempo gain in reality is a tempo loss.

Alternatives:
A) 11.xg5?! 12.xg5 13.xd6 e7 (13…f6 14.a3 and Black has nothing better than to play 14…e7) 14.xe7+ xe7 15.d5+ f8 16.0-0-0 with a nagging development lead in the ending;
B) 11…b5 looks best for Black, with an inferior but still playable position.

12.d2  
Black did not gain a tempo, since White’s queen needed to be on d2 anyway.
15...d7!?
He concludes his knight does nothing on c5, except get in the way. Black seems to have slipped into some kind of identity crisis, unable to decide if he is attacking or defending. This move represents the loss of two tempi, since earlier he moved his knight to c5 for no good reason.
The alternative was to play 15...b5 16.h4 b4 17.d5xd5 a5 18.h3 c7 20.f4 exf4 21.xf4 a8 22.a1 xd5 23.exd5 with a miserable ending for Black, but perhaps one slightly less so than the one he got in the game’s continuation.
16.h4 b5 17.h3

17...xh3
If you are obliged to take a belly flop into a strategic abyss like this, then you are already losing. Black commits strategic suicide, giving White absolute control over d5, while putrefying his dark-squared bishop even further.
Also awful is 17...b6 18.xb6 xb6 19.c5 xd5 (this is one of those don’t-ask-don’t-tell situations where you just make the sacrifice, not even bothering to ask yourself: ‘Is it sound?’ since you already know the answer) 20.xc8 xa2+ 21.xa2 xc8 and Black doesn’t have enough for the exchange.
18.xh3 b6 19.xb6
Of course. Now White dominates d5. The deceptive natural progression in Fischer’s games, along with Capablanca’s, give us that illusory feeling that we would make all the same moves.
19...xb6 20.e5
He makes it look so easy.

It almost feels offensively patronizing when I inform you that White has a winning position, due to:
1. A monster knight, whose reach almost feels octopod, versus a lame bishop, who is that ineptly redundant player on every sports team, where every fan wonders: ‘How in God’s name did this loser make it on to the team roster?’
2. A strategic grip on d5, and on the light squares in general, which feel bound in Saran wrap.
3. White’s attack looks far more potent than anything Black can drum up on the queenside.

20... d8 21.f4!

Most certainly not the suicide-inducing line 21. xe7+? xe7 22. xd6?? fd8! and White loses a queen due to his weak back rank.

21... exf4 22. xf4 d7 23. f5!

This awkward move is forced:
A) 23... fd8?? hangs a full exchange to 24. xd7 xd7 25. b6;
B) 23... xf5?? hangs a piece to the simple zwischenzug/fork 24. xe7+ h8 25. xf5.

24. a3!

Such a move shows a flexible outlook. Fischer surprisingly targets Black’s vulnerable queenside.

24... a7 25. c3!


25... g6!

The only move. After 25... d7??, now that Black’s queen has been lured to the queenside, White has the killing shot 26. f6+! gxf6 (26... xf6 27.gxf6 leaves Black’s king hopelessly alone) 27.gxf6 fd8 28. g5+ f8 29. g7+ e8 30. xe7 xe7 31. f1 and it becomes obvious that Black’s king won’t survive.

26. g4 d7 27. f3

27. h3! was slightly more accurate.

27... e6 28. c7 de8 29. f4 e5 30. d5 h8 31. a3!

Fischer calmly excludes future back rank cheapos.

31... h6 32. gxh6 xh6 33. h5!

Fischer begins to systematically strip Black’s king.

33... g5

Dare I question Fischer’s overlord chess board status? On the surface it may feel as if Black’s long-suffering queen and bishop
experience a slow, foggy recovery process.

33...g5 is met with 34. h3 when Black can barely move.

34.hxg6!!
When we are (strategically) filthy rich, then we can afford princely gestures. Fischer gives away his prize knight to reach for Black’s king.

34...fxg6
35.gxf4 36.e6 37. f5+ 38. e6 39. a8! 40.e5! dxe5 41. h4+ Black’s exposed king won’t survive. For example: 41... d7 42. f6 e7 43. h3+ d8 44. d3+ c7 45. c3+ d8 46. c6 a7 47. d6+ d7 48. a8+ c7 49. c6#

35. b3! xf4
35... h8 36. xg5! xf4 (if 36... xg5 37. h3+ forces mate) 37. c3+ g8 38. d7 fxe4 39. f6 4e6 40. f7+ h8 41. g3 (threat: 42. h3) 41... e1+ 42. a2 f8 43. b3 (threatening 44. h3 again) 43... e5 44. xd6 g8 45. c3 f4 46. h3+ g7 47. d7+ f6 48. f3 and White wins.

For Black it must have been hard to shake off the growing sense of apprehension that White was about to strike, and strike hard. How did Fischer force mate?

36. e5+! f8 37. xe8+ xe8 38. e6+ 1-0
38... g8 39. c8+ d8 40. xd8#.

RE 20.1 – A04
Réti Opening
Cyrus Lakdawala 2524
Brandon Xia 2149
San Diego rapid 2016

My 14-year-old dove close-to-master rated student, Brandon, loves fianchettos with both colors, deciding to enter a theoretical no-man’s land. This is the Hippopotamus formation, which cedes space, yet its slippery flexibility makes it hard for White to
find targets.

5.0-0 a7 6. e3 c5 7. d4 d6 8. e4 0-0 9. e1 e5 10. h3 a6 11. a3 h6 12. d2

I wanted his king on h7 to open possibilities of future g5+ discovered attack tricks on his b7-bishop, which later happened in the game.

12... h7 13. ac1

I'm playing for a b2-b4 and c4-c5 break.

13... c8 14. ed1?! 

Doubt in the validity of our original plan tends to cloud our judgment. This counterintuitive move is dove wishy-washiness at its worst. The move is directed at discouraging ...c7-c5. But then the question arises: why did I play the rook to e1 in the first place? I should stop goofing around and just commit with 14.d5.

14...f5!? 

I thought this was a mistake during the game, thinking: ‘Why begin an adventure when chances are the danger outweighs the scant chances for reward?’ Yet the move is Houdini’s first choice. If Black sits, then White simply plays b2-b4 and c4-c5.

15.exf5 xf5? 

Brandon gets casual about protocol. I expected 15... xf3 16. xf3 xf5 17. b7 b8 18. g2!, with a strategic edge for White, due to enhanced control over the light squares.

16. g5+! 

I get the steward of his light squares, while damaging his kingside structure.

16... hxg5 17. xb7 

Black’s light squares have been seriously weakened.

17... b8 18. g2 

I didn’t want to put my bishop out of play and lose the initiative for a pawn with 18. xa6!? x e3 19. xe3 e5 20.d5 g4! (threatening a cheapo on h6) 21. e2 g3h3 22. g4 e5 23. b5 f6 24.c2 f3 25.xh3+ g8 26. e1. It felt to me like Black would achieve at least some activity for his missing pawn.

18... xe3 

With this swap a new imbalance arises. With it, the principle Opposite-colored bishops favors the attacker kicks in.

19. xe3 e5 20.d5 

Komodo suggests 20. e4!? h6 21. c2 exd4 22. xd4 e5. I didn’t like this position as much as the one I got in the game.

20...g4 

Threat: 21... h6. He unloads his weak doubled g-pawn, at the cost of enhancing the power of my remaining bishop.

21. e2 gxh3 22. xh3
White is winning the ideological battle, since the last few moves saw a sizable diminution of Black’s king safety:

1. Opposite-colored bishops favor the attacker, in this case obviously White.
2. White controls e4.
3. White can play for control of the h-file with g2 and h1.
4. White is in possession of the only pawn break in the position with a future b2-b4 and c4-c5 plan.

22...f6 23.g2 h6 24.c2 h5 25.g4 eg7?!

Sometimes it isn’t possible to right all our strategic wrongs. When we formulate a plan, we first define what quality we hope to extract from the position.

In this case his intention is clear. He plans ...f5 and ...d4. In doing so, he underestimates the dangers to his king, by neglecting the details of the plan’s implementation. In this case Black’s arid position refuses to tolerate activity of any kind. He should have postponed his yearnings with the meek 25...f6.

26.h1 ef5

By some trick of the light, Black’s game appears active, when in reality the opposite is the case. This was Black’s intent. He hopes his knight will be like the infuriating old man at the grocery store, who slows the express checkout line by paying for his single item by check, rather than cash.

27.e4

Black’s intended ...d4 can be ignored for the moment.

27...g7

27...d4?? walks into 28.d2 g5 29.xg5+ g6 30.xh6+ xh6 31.f7+, winning the queen.

Come up with a winning idea for White.

28.xf5!

How annoying when a player takes every possible precaution – except the one he overlooked. I think my opponent missed this trick. Black is tactically unable to recapture with his g-pawn.

28...xf5

Now White’s knight rules over Black’s bishop. 28...gxf5? 29.h5 f6 (even worse is 29...h8 30.xf5) 30.xf6 xf6 is also hopeless for Black.

29.c3!

Intending 30.g4 and 31.ch3. Contrary to popular supposition, doves are actually competent attackers, but only when the attack arises from a logical strategic base.
29...e7
29...d7 30.g4 f4 31.g3 (threat: 32.g5) 31...g5 32.f3 b8 33.gh3 and Black can resign, since 33...h8? is met with 34.xg5.
30.g4 f4
On 30...ff8 I intended 31.g5! xg5 32.g3 f4 33.h5 xg3 34.h7#.
31.ch3 xe4
31...h8 is met with the game-ending 32.g5.
32.xe4 h8 33.f4! g5

To work out the win at this stage isn’t such an intricate dedication. Find one strong move, and Black’s game explodes like a hillbilly’s meth lab.

34.h5 1-0
The rook provides auxiliary assistance to the f4-pawn, who remains where it sits, as if chiseled from stone. There is no reasonable defense to the coming 35.fxg5. If 34...gxf4 35.g5 f8 36.gxh6 g8+ 37.f2 and there is no counterattack for Black.

QP 7.9 – A45
Queen’s Pawn Openings
Cyrus Lakdawala 2545
Bruce Baker 2330
San Diego rapid 2007

1.d4 e6 2.g5 d5 3.e3
I sometimes also play in pure Trompowsky fashion by chopping the f6-knight.
3...bd7 4.d2??
This move, not exactly abuzz with the can-do spirit, invites a French Defense a move up as White, if Black chooses to push his e-pawn two squares.
4.f3 is more normal.
4.h6
Objectively better is 4...e5 5.dxe5 xe5 6.f3, which is a Rubinstein French with colors reversed, and Black achieves easy equality.
5.f4
Now it’s a London System, with Black getting the extra move 4…h6, which isn’t always beneficial for Black, if White launches a kingside attack.

5…e6 6.d3 d6
6…e7 7.gf3 0-0 8.g4! and my opponent regretted his ‘free’ 4…h6 move, since White gets a dangerous attack whether Black accepts the g-pawn or not, Lakdawala-Arnold, San Diego rapid 2005.

7.gf3 xf4!?
He probably rejected 7…e7 since it can be met with the annoying 8.e5. His move is Komodo’s first choice, but I believe it helps White in the following ways:

1. It opens the e-file for White’s rook.
2. White increases his grip on e5.
3. Black is left with a remaining bad bishop.
4. The swap weakens Black’s dark squares.

8.exf4 c5
Maybe it’s better to toss in 8…b6 since then he can recapture on c5 with a pawn, if White ever swaps.

9.dxc5!
The idea is to clear d4 for my knights. I think my move is stronger than the routine 9.c3.

9…xc5 10.0-0
I don’t care if he chops off my bishop.

10…xd3 11.cxd3 0-0 12.b3 d7
Intending 13…a4 to eliminate his bad bishop.

13.bd4
Black’s bad bishop is a strategic liability.

13…b6 14.d2 ac8 15.fc1
The goal is to swap down to an ending where Black gets stuck with his clunker bishop.

15…fd8 16.h3 e8 17.a3 d6 18.b4
I gain a bit of queenside space, at the cost of potentially weakening my queenside pawns down the road.

18…a4 19.xc8 xc8 20.c1 c7 21.c3 e8 22.g3 f8 23.b2
The queen eyes the central dark squares.

23…d1
Intending 24…xf3, ridding himself of his worst piece.
24. \textit{xc7}  \textit{xc7}

25. \textit{e5}

Oh no you don’t. I won’t allow him to dump his bad bishop.

25… \textit{d6} 26. \textit{g2}  \textit{e7} 27. \textit{d2}  \textit{a4} 28. \textit{eef3}  \textit{e8} 29. \textit{e1}

The queen eyes e5, while continuing to control c3. The comp correctly points out that stronger is 29. \textit{e3}! and if 29… \textit{c3} 30. \textit{fxa3} (30… \textit{d7}? 31. \textit{fxe6}  \textit{xe6} 32. \textit{e5} \textit{xd3} 33. \textit{e6} \textit{fxe6} 34. \textit{g7+} Black is busted, since 34… \textit{f7} is met with 35. \textit{xf7+!} \textit{xf7} 36. \textit{e5+}, forking and winning a piece) 31. \textit{fxe6} \textit{f6} 32. \textit{h4} \textit{xb4} 33. \textit{hf5+} \textit{xf5} 34. \textit{xf5+} \textit{f8} 35. \textit{c1} (threat: 36. \textit{c7}) 35… \textit{c6} 36. \textit{d4} Black’s queenside passers are not good enough to outweigh White’s queen/knight/e-pawn combination: 36… \textit{g8} (on 36… \textit{a5}? 37. \textit{f4} \textit{g8} 38. \textit{g4} \textit{f8} 39. \textit{e7} \textit{f7} 40. \textit{xe6+} wins) 37. \textit{g4} \textit{a5} 38. \textit{f4} with a winning attack for White: 38… \textit{a4} 39. \textit{b8+} \textit{h7} 40. \textit{e7} \textit{a3} 41. \textit{f8} forces mate.

29… \textit{g6}

29… \textit{f8??} allows the tactic 30. \textit{xe6}!.

30. \textit{e5} \textit{b5}!

29. \textit{e5} \textit{b5}!

31. \textit{ef3}?

In life, generosity implies hospitality, yet over the board our sacrificial generosity suggests hostility. In an uncharacteristic burst of bravery, I offer my a3-pawn to launch an attack. The problem is he doesn’t have to accept it.

I considered:

A) 31. \textit{xg6}?! \textit{fxg6} 32. \textit{xe6+} \textit{f8} 33. \textit{xb5} 34. \textit{g6} \textit{c6} and I don’t think Black stands worse;

B) 31. \textit{xb5}! is White’s best line: 31… \textit{xb5} 32. \textit{e3} \textit{b6} 33. \textit{g4}! Now Black can’t get greedy with 33… \textit{c3}? 34. \textit{g5} \textit{h5} 35. \textit{f5} \textit{gxf5} 36. \textit{g6}!. Black’s king is in serious trouble.

31… \textit{xd4}!

A wise decision, despite the fact that it accentuates his bishop’s inferiority. With every swap, White’s hoped-for attack gets less forbidding:

A) 31… \textit{xa3}? 32. \textit{f5} \textit{gxg5} 33. \textit{xf5+} \textit{d8} 34. \textit{xe6} \textit{c2} 35. \textit{d2} \textit{d4} 36. \textit{h2} White’s two knights and queen make a dangerous attacking team, and also White’s passed h-pawn can be pushed down the board;

B) 31… \textit{d6}?! It’s a mistake to allow White both knights to help out his queen in attacking Black’s king. White gets good chances after 32. \textit{g4}.

32. \textit{xd4} \textit{b6}

\textit{31}\textit{.ev7}\textit{a3}

\textit{31}\textit{.ev7}\textit{a3}
The aperture of opportunity narrows if I do nothing. Now is the time to act. I have a choice of two plans:

A) Play 33.\textit{e5}, which virtually forces Black into the wrong side of a good knight versus bad bishop ending;

B) Play on the principle \textit{Queen and knight make a potent attacking team}. Therefore, keep queens on the board and strive to go after Black’s king with 33.f5.

Which line would you play?

33.\textit{e5}??

There it is: the dove’s compulsion to swap, even when it harms us. Sigh. One can only be this cowardly if one puts one’s mind to it. When you make a move this clueless (the move completely ignores the fortress factor), you realize that it was your second mistake of the day. Your first mistake was deciding to play chess.

My safe move is the orderly, logical progression, and it’s totally wrong, since it allows Black a fortress draw. If I were an anthropologist, I would separate chess players into two categories: those who gamble, and those who play it safe and abstain. Unfortunately, gambling isn’t in my nature.

Time pressure is a place devoid of precision or sound judgment, at exactly the moment we need it most. Your writer, a serial abuser of his clock, falls back on the dove’s subconscious comforting drive to simplify. I get some practical chances, but Black should hold the draw, despite his bad bishop.

White gets excellent winning chances with 33.f5! after which Black’s king throbs in defensive agitation: 33…\textit{gxf5} 34.\textit{xf5}+ \textit{d8} 35.\textit{xh6} with an extra pawn for White.

33…\textit{xh6}! 34.\textit{f5}

Is White’s plan of converting the good knight versus bad bishop feasible, or am I dreaming? Fortunately I have learned never to congratulate myself until the game is over. The latter argument is correct. Chess is a capricious entity, where logic isn’t always dependable. It \textit{looks} like I should win, but I just don’t. Yes, Black’s bishop is awful, but just as in the Karpov-Kasparov ending from this chapter, White’s king entry – or lack of it – is a more pertinent issue, which allows Black to hold the fortress draw.

34…\textit{f6}!

I think this move is necessary, otherwise White may engineer an f2-f4, g3-g4 and f4-f5 break.

35.f4

After 35.\textit{exf6+} \textit{xf6} 36.f4 \textit{e5} 37.\textit{fxe5+} \textit{xe5} 38.\textit{f3}+ \textit{f5} 39.\textit{f2} \textit{g5} 40.\textit{d4+} \textit{e5} 41.\textit{e3} \textit{d7} 42.\textit{f3+} \textit{f6} 43.\textit{g4} the game will end in a draw.

35…\textit{g5}

35…\textit{a6}!, threatening to force a drawn king and pawn ending with 36…\textit{b5}: 36.\textit{f2} \textit{fxe5} 37.\textit{fxe5} \textit{g5} and White can’t win.

36.\textit{f3} \textit{fxe5} 37.\textit{fxe5}
Here we see the opposite of my earlier blunder. This is a prime example of the hawk’s compulsion to ‘do something’ in a situation where doing nothing is both appropriate and correct. I realized that I had blown the win, but after his last move I sobbed with joy and relief at his time pressure blunder.

A wish can easily transmute to a compulsion, and this kind of lashing out is the same as having a really bad day and then yelling abusively at your goldfish, who you accuse of looking at you in a threatening way. This itch for activity is a verification of a long held suspicion that hawks loathe waiting passively. Sometimes no plan is the best plan. This move, a claustrophobic spasm, is made with the philosophy *Patience is not always a virtue*. The problem is that it opens the position just enough for White’s king to enter. It also allows White to fix Black’s future a-pawn on the wrong color of his remaining bishop.

I don’t see a way to make progress against the fortress after 37…a6.

38.bxa5 bxa5 39.b3!

**Principle:** Fix your opponent’s remaining pawns on the same color as his remaining bishop.

39…a4 40.c5 h5+ 41.e3 d1

This bishop is like the already overworked employee, whose boss hands a load of extra work responsibilities, without a penny of extra pay, and then congratulates him on his ‘promotion’.

41…e8 42.d4 b5 43.c3 e8 44.b4 and the a-pawn falls.

Now Black is tied down to both the e6- and the a4-pawns.

42.h5

This move allows White’s king even easier entry to the kingside. But everything loses. For example: 42…f7 43.d2 and White’s king marches to b4, winning the a-pawn, and with it, the game.

43.h4

This creates a dark-square puncture on the kingside.

43…gxh4 44.gxh4 f7 45.f4 e7 46.g5

This is a home invasion where White’s thugs imprison Black’s king on his own premises. After 46…f7 47.h6 e7 48.g6 Black is in zugzwang and must give up either his a-, e-, or h-pawn.

1-0
CHAPTER 15

Bishop domination

In endings in particular, bishops, unlike knights, are designed for aerodynamic efficiency, since they are capable of simultaneous defense and aggression. This game is one of the clearest examples of just why this is.

G1 5.12 – D86
Grünefeld Indian Defense

Boris Spassky
Robert Fischer
Santa Monica 1966 (8)

1.d4 f6 2.c4 g6 3.e3 d5
Fischer avoids his normal King’s Indian, perhaps out of concern for Spassky’s preparation in the Sämisc.

4.cxd5 exd5 5.e4 xc3 6.bxc3 g7 7.c4
The old main line. Today, White plays a variety of alternatives, including 7.f3; 7.e3; 7.b5+; and 7.a4+.

7…c5 8.e2 c6 9.e3 0-0 10.0-0 c7 11.c1 d8

12.e1
The idea is the Grand Prix Sicilian-like attacking plan of f2-f4, f4-f5 and h4, when White’s pieces target Black’s under-protected king.

A) 12.f4 g4 13.f5 gxf5 14.xf7+!? is unsound, but very dangerous over the board: 14…xf7 15.b3+ e6?! (Black looks better after 15…f8! 16.f4 b6!) 16.f4 and White had a strong attack for the piece in Spassky-Shishkin, Tallinn ch-URS 1959;

B) Today most top GMs go for the more positional 12.f4 d7 13.d5 a5 14.d3 b5 where White’s center probably slightly outweighs Black’s queenside expansion, Carlsen-Svidler, Moscow 2008.

12.e6
This keeps White’s d-pawn in check, and also hampers White’s f4-f5 intent. Today, more often seen is 12.a5.

13.f4 a5
Fischer plans …f7-f5 next.

14.d3 f5!
Fischer applies the principle *Meet an opponent's wing attack with a central counter.*

15.\texttt{d1} b6 16.\texttt{f2} cxd4

Fischer claimed 16…\texttt{f8} was more accurate, but White could then go bonkers with 17.exf5 exf5 18.g4!? with dangerous attacking chances.

17.\texttt{xd4}

Spassky wants to remove a key defender, Black’s dark-squared bishop.

17…\texttt{xd4} 18.\texttt{cxd4} b7 19.\texttt{g3} f7

Fischer thought Black stood better after 19…\texttt{g7}. He may have slightly underestimated the dangers to his king. Komodo assesses White slightly better after 20.\texttt{e2} and if 20…\texttt{fxc4} 21.\texttt{e4} d6 22.\texttt{fxe4} ad8 23.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xd4} 24.\texttt{xe6+} \texttt{f8}! 25.\texttt{c3}. I prefer White, due to Black’s slightly insecure king.

20.\texttt{d5!}

Spassky, a lifelong hawk, is intent on ripping open the pawn cover around Fischer’s king, and now stands a shade better.

20…\texttt{fxe4} 21.\texttt{dxe6} \texttt{xe6}

21…\texttt{f6}? 22.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xe6} 23.\texttt{g5} \texttt{f6} 24.\texttt{h4} h5 25.\texttt{fe1} (threat: 26.\texttt{h6}) 25…\texttt{d5} 26.f5 and White has earned himself a winning attack.

22.\texttt{f5!}

Spassky’s attackers come screaming down, like war-painted Apaches in a John Ford cowboy movie.

22…\texttt{f7??}

Fischer’s first real inaccuracy of the game.

A) Black remains close to even after 22…\texttt{e7!};

B) 22…\texttt{gx5??} 23.\texttt{xf5} (threat: 24.\texttt{g3+}, when Black’s queen is unable to block, due to a knight fork on \texttt{e7})

23…\texttt{f6} 24.\texttt{c3!} (threat: 25.\texttt{h6+} and 26.\texttt{xf6})

24…\texttt{h8} 25.\texttt{h6} \texttt{g6} 26.\texttt{f7+} \texttt{g8} 27.\texttt{xd8} wins material for White.

23.\texttt{xe4}

23.\texttt{xe4?} is met with the undermining 23…\texttt{xd3!} 24.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{xe4} 25.\texttt{e3} \texttt{c6} (25…\texttt{xf5??} 26.g4 and if 26…\texttt{e6} 27.\texttt{e1} wins the bishop) 26.f6 \texttt{e8} when Black stands at least even.

23…\texttt{xd1}

23…\texttt{xe4?} 24.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{xd1} 25.\texttt{xd1} \texttt{xf5} 26.\texttt{f6+} \texttt{g7} 27.\texttt{b2} \texttt{c4} 28.\texttt{e8+} \texttt{f7} 29.\texttt{g7+} \texttt{xe8} 30.\texttt{e1+} \texttt{d8} 31.\texttt{h8+} picks up the a8-rook and White stays up the exchange, with a continuing attack.

24.\texttt{xd1}
24...f8!
Fischer finds the only move in a difficult position. 24...xe4? allows White's knight into the attack after 25...xe4 f8 (25...xf5? 26...f6+ g7 27...b2! c4 28...e8+ f7 29...g7+ is the same winning line as in the above note) 26.f6 b7 27...h4 (threat: 28...g5) 27...h5 28...f1 and...g5 comes next, with a strong attack.
25...b1!
By retaining his bishop, the black king's cover is seriously compromised.
25...f6 26...c2! h8
26...g7?? walks into the trap: 27.fxg6 hxg6 28...h5+! gxh5 29...h7 mate.
27.fxg6 hxg6 28...d2?!
Spassky eyes h6, missing the most promising continuation:
A) 28...e4?? would be monumentally punished by 28...f2+ 29...h1 xg2 mate;
B) 28...h5! is deadly. For example: 28...e4 29...e2 (White must guard f2) 29...e5 30...d5!! (this computer shot is an easy move to miss) 30...c3 (30...xd5?? 31...b2+ h7 32...g7#) 31...xe4 c1+ 32...d1 c5+ 33...h1 xh5 34...b2+ g8 35...c2 Black's king is seriously exposed and his knight hangs in limbo on a5.
28...g7 29...f1! e7 30...d4+ f6!
Once again Fischer finds the only move:
A) 30...h7? 31...xg6+! xg6 32...d3+ h6 (32...g5?? walks into 33...f5+) 33...f5+ xf5 34...xf5 and Black's king is seriously compromised;
B) 30...h6? 31...xf8 xf8 32...h1! c6 33...h4+ g7 34...g5 f7 35...h5+ h7 36...f4 e7 37...h4 Threat: 38...h5. Black remains under tremendous pressure.

31...e4!
Spassky picks up the bishop for a knight imbalance, a slight but nagging edge in the open position with opposite wing majorities.
31...xe4 32...xe4 gc5!
Black's king breathes a huge sigh of relief, since the white queen's love for him remains unconsummated. When we suffer multiple strategic wounds, all we can do is prioritize them on a scale of significance.
Fischer correctly decides to take his chances in an inferior ending, since keeping queens on with 32...f7?? leads to a winning attack for White after 33...d5+ g7 34...h1! (now Black no longer has the option of swapping queens) 34...g5 35...h4 gxh4
36.g3! hxg3 37.f5 d6 38.g4+ f8 39.g8+ e7 40.g7+ d8 41.xf6 and it’s game over.

Such simplified positions are deceptively easy to misplay. So error-sensitive are they, that if we waver even a millimeter from
the mathematically correct path, the natural result of the game can be turned upside down.

This move allows Black to reduce the kingside pawn count to a drawn state. 35.e2! was more accurate and offered White
winning chances.

35...c4 36.e2

Come up with a clear drawing plan for Black.

36...e5?!

Black wants to secure the immediate draw by following the principle The inferior side in an ending benefits from pawn
exchanges.

Black should have tried to reduce White’s kingside pawn count with 36...h6! 37.g4 (after 37.g3 g5 38.f3 e5 Black holds
the draw) 37...e5 38.f3 g5 39.h5 c4 40.e3 c3 41.e2 (41.d1 is met with 41...c2! 42.xc2 xg4+) 41...g7 42.d1 h6 and White can't make progress, since if 43.d4 xg4! 44.xc3 xh5 45.b4 is a drawn ending after 45...h4 46.a5
e3 47.f3 g4 48.e4 g3 49.a6 h3 50.xa7 d1 51.c6 b2 52.b6 g2 53.xg2+ xg2 with a draw.

37.e3 f6 38.g4 f7

Intending 39...g5+, to swap down pawns.

39.e3?!

Spassky defends against a non-existent threat. He misses 39.d5! d6 (39...g5+ 40.hxg5+ xg5 41.g8! (this now becomes a
contest between the g8-wolf and the grievously crippled, elderly g5-bunny. Suddenly Black’s knight is out of moves, since any
swap leads to a lost king and pawn ending) 41...g6 42.e5 g7 43.f5! h6 44.a4 h5 45.a5 h4 46.d5 h5 47.e5
g4 48.d6 and both the c- and a-pawns fall) 40.g4 c4 41.e4 c3 (a swap on e4 is out of the question, since White wins the
king and pawn ending, due to his outside passed pawn potential) 42.d3 c8 43.e4 g5 44.h5 d6+ 45.d4 and Black’s c-
pawn falls.

39...g5?!

Gligoric’s suggestion 39...h6! seems to hold the draw after 40.g3 c4. Now if 41.d4 f5+! 42.xc4 (42.xf5 xf5
43.xc4 g4 44.a4 xg3 45.b5 xh4 46.a6 g5 47.xa7 g4 48.a5 g3 49.a6 g2 50.b7 g1 51.a7 is one of those quirky
textbook drawn endings, where the extra queen is unable to win, since White’s king hides on a8, threatening stalemate)

42…xg3 43. c2 f5! 44. xf5 xf5 45. b5 g4 46. a6 gxf4 47. xa7 g5 48. a4 g4 49. a5 g3 50. a6 g2 51. b7 g1= 52. a7 and there it is again. Black is unable to win, despite his extra queen.

40.h5

Black has a choice of two plans:

A) Blockade the h-pawn with 40…h6 and then utilize this king to defend his queenside;

B) Reverse the order and play for a fortress plan with 40…d6, keeping White’s king out of the queenside, and then Black uses his king to keep White’s passed h-pawn in check.

We arrive at the bomb-defusing moment: which wire to cut, and which wire to leave alone? This is a question of resource allocation. Only one plan holds the draw. Which one though?

40…h6?

Now Black’s position is like a drowned body, which only mimics life through its rhythmic rocking against the shoreline. I tried Plan B – 40…d6! and held the draw against Komodo.

White is unable to nurse his small cushion to a win after 41. d3 (41. g4 c4+ 42. e2 e5 43. f5 f7 44. d3 d6 45. g6 g7 46. c3 f6 47. b3 d4 48. a4 f6 49. a5 c4+! 50. b5 e3 51. xc5 xg4 52. b5 e5 53. e8 f4 54. xa7 g4 55. c6 g5 56. a4 xh5 57. a5 f5 58. a6 g3 60. b8 d4 61. g2 b5 with a draw) 41…g4 42. a4 g5 43. g6 h6 44. e3 g5 45. g3 c4+ 46. e4 e2+ 47. e3 f1+ 48. e2 f2 d2 and White is unable to make progress.

41. d3 e5 42. a8 d6 43. c4 g4 44. a4 e8 45. a5 h6

45…f6? 46. h6 and the h-pawn costs Black his knight very soon.

46. e4 g3 47. b5

White’s king crawls, bayonet in teeth, creeping closer to his target: Black’s doomed a-pawn.

47…g8

If 47…d7 48. xc5 g8 49. d3 h6 50. d5 White’s king walks over to the kingside and wins both the g3-pawn and the black knight.

48. b1 h6 49. a6 c6 50. a2 1-0

On 50…c7 51. xa7 f5 52. a6 c6 53. b1 h6 54. e4+ c7 55. b5 wins.
A ...c7-c5 Benoni setup is the general antidote to the Four Pawns Attack of the King’s Indian.

7. e5

This overly cautious move is anathema to the normal swagger of the Four Pawns Attack. This wimpy version leads to a far duller, non-advantageous Maroczy Bind position, since White committed to an early f2-f4, which weakens his e-pawn and allows Black counterplay with ...e7-e5.

Normal is 7.d5. When we enter such a life-and-death theoretical line, we risk unleashing a power which isn’t so easy to control, and which may later turn on us, its creator. 7...e6 8. f3 exd5 9.cxd5 leads to the main lines of the KID Four Pawns Attack.

7...cxd4 8. xd4 e5

9...g4!

Principle: Swaps favor the more cramped side. Also interesting is 9...b6 10. c2 a5 (Black can’t get greedy with 10...xb2?? 11. d3 when the queen is trapped).

10. xg4

After 10. xc6?! xc3 11. xd8 xd1 12. xd1 xd8 13. c5 e6 14.cxd6 exd6 Black’s bishop pair exerts pressure on White’s queenside.

10...xd4 11. xd4 xg4 12. d2

12. xg4 xd4 13. d1 e5 14.0-0 f5 is also fine for Black.

12...xd4 13. xd4

Uhlmann may have incorrectly concluded that his knight was superior to Fischer’s remaining bishop.

13...e5!

Principle: Create confrontation and open the position when leading in development.
14. fxe5 h4+

After 14…dxe5 15. g3 hxg3+ 16. hxg3 d8 18.0-0 d3 White’s damaged structure insures that Black gets full compensation.

15. f2

15.g3?! dxe5 and now if White gets greedy with 16. xe5? h3 17. f2 f5 18. d5+ f7 19. af1 fxe4+ 20. e1 f3 21. xe4 f5 22. xf5 xf5 White loses material.

15…xf2+ 16. xf2 dxe5

Again we reach a bishop versus knight position with opposite-wing majorities. But this one feels different from Spassky-Fischer, since White’s knight will be powerfully posted on d5 and is in no way inferior to Black’s bishop.

17. ac1 ad8 18. d5 a6 19. a3 f5

Fischer is the first to activate his majority.

20. e3?

This move feels wrong, since it energizes Black’s central pawns and also weakens White’s grip on d5. The game remains even after 20. ef1. Principle: Use your king as a fighting piece in the ending. Black should avoid 20…fxe4? 21. e4. Now e5 is under attack. Black is unable to invade the seventh rank by 21…f2?? in view of 22. f6+ with a discovered attack on Black’s hanging d8-rook.

20…gxf5 21. d2 f7 22. cd1 d7!

Black threatens …fd8, followed by …xd5, when White’s newly isolated d-pawn becomes a serious liability.

23. c3

A decision made under duress isn’t a true decision, since we lack free will. Sometimes we have no choice but to humble up and ignominiously retreat. White is unable to maintain his d5-outpost with 23.b3? fd8 24. e3 xd5 25.cxd5 h5 26. d3 f6 27. c3 c8 28.g3 c6. White is in a kind of zugzwang. If he moves his king to e2, then Black plays …e5-e4, …e5, …c5 and White’s d-pawn falls. And if 29. d3 Black simply plays 29…e4 30. d4 b5!. Now 31…c5 can’t be prevented (the immediate 30…e5 can be met with 31. c4). Now White’s problem is that his intended 31. f4?? is met with the endgame mating net idea 31…c3!, threatening mate on f3: 32. f1 d8! (threat: 33…g8 and 34…g4 mate) 33. f2 g8! 34.h3 gxh3 Black’s rooks are bulldozers, ripping roots, rocks and vegetation from their unstoppable path. White must hand over a rook to prevent mate.

23…fd8 24. xd7+ xd7 25. xd7+ xd7
White has landed in deep trouble, since we reach a bishop versus knight with opposite-wing pawn majorities, a mirror image of Fischer’s dismal position versus Spassky.

26.b4!?  
White, refusing to play passively, rolls forward his majority, at the cost of weakening c4, which takes on great significance a few moves later.

26…b6 27.a4?  
This is the dead-canary-in-the-mine moment, where Uhlmann fails to heed the dire warning. 27.\textit{a}3\textsubscript{e} was necessary, to defend his c4-pawn in case Black’s bishop attacked it.

27…\textit{a}6!  
White’s queenside pawn majority is boiled down to a weak and isolated c-pawn.

28.c5  
28.\textit{d}5?? \textit{\textsubscript{d}}x\textit{d}5 29.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{e}7 and Black’s king picks up the stray d-pawn.

28…\textit{b}xc5 29.\textit{b}xc5 \textit{e}7  
Fischer prepares to transfer his king to c6 and then pick up the c-pawn.

30.\textit{g}3!  
Uhlmann intends to raid Black’s unguarded kingside, with \textit{h}4 next, but it shouldn’t generate enough counterplay to save the game.

30…\textit{d}7 31.\textit{h}4 \textit{c}6 32.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}4  
Threat: 33…\textit{c}4, followed by …\textit{e}4-e3 and …\textit{e}3-e2.

33.\textit{g}4!  
White’s best practical chance is to break up Black’s hanging pawns cluster. 33.\textit{f}6?? is too slow: 33…\textit{c}4 34.\textit{xf}5 \textit{e}3 Black wins the knight with …\textit{e}3-e2 next.

33…\textit{x}g4 34.\textit{e}xe4 \textit{a}5!  
A new pawn target is fixed on a4.

35.\textit{f}4

Black has a choice of two plans:

A) Should Black take the time to play …\textit{h}7-\textit{h}5, securing his g4-pawn?  
B) Or should he not waste the tempo and go for the immediate 35…\textit{b}3, going after White’s a4-pawn?

This isn’t one of those positions where we can’t wing it. We must assume the accuracy of our doctor, when she prescribes a certain drug, with an exact dosage, to be taken a certain number of times each day.

35…\textit{b}3??  
As a person who annotates chess games for a living, I consider myself a witness to the frailty of the human brain – even one of a genius – from observing so many won games thrown away. Fischer’s last move is in direct violation of the principle \textit{In endings, pawns matter}. Don’t sacrifice them, as if you are playing a middlegame.

Normally, once Fischer’s implacable strategic talons dig into his opponent’s tender flesh, there is no letting go. But this time he flubs it. After Fischer’s hasty last move, White should draw. 35…\textit{h}5! seals the win after 36.\textit{e}3 (36.\textit{f}6 \textit{f}7 37.\textit{g}5 \textit{xc}5 38.\textit{e}x\textit{h}5 \textit{e}8 39.\textit{g}7 \textit{xa}4 40.\textit{xg}4 \textit{d}1+ 41.\textit{f}4 \textit{a}4 42.\textit{e}6+ \textit{c}4 43.\textit{e}3 \textit{a}3! and neither white knight or king is fast enough to reach Black’s a-pawn) 36.\textit{h}4 37.\textit{g}5 \textit{b}3 38.\textit{f}4 \textit{xa}4 39.\textit{d}f4 \textit{e}2 40.\textit{e}6 \textit{d}1+ 41.\textit{xh}4 \textit{a}4 42.\textit{e}d4+ \textit{xc}5 and the quirky geometry insures that White’s knight is unable to sacrifice itself for Black’s a-pawn.

36.\textit{a}3!  
Uhlmann correctly avoids the greedy 36.\textit{\textsubscript{d}}x\textit{g}4?? \textit{\textsubscript{a}}4 37.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}2 38.\textit{e}3 \textit{xc}5 and note that if White sacrifices his knight for Black’s a-pawn, Black is left with the favorable bishop and remaining h-pawn, since the promotion square on h1 is a light
square, the same color of the bishop.

36... axa4 37. f6 xc5 38. xg4 d2 39. d6 f6 xa4 41. e3 a3 42. d5 a4 (42... a2 43. c7 a4 44. b5 is the same draw) 43. e3 f7 44. c2+ a2 45. d4 and White secures control over a3. The question is answered, and White’s non is no longer being plussed. Black is unable to make progress.

37. d2 h6 38. e6 xc5 39. xg4 Every black pawn off the board gets Uhlmann closer to his goal of a draw.

39... h5 40. e3 d4

Find a clear plan to secure the draw for White.

41. e1?? In its desperation to eliminate Black’s h-pawn, Uhlmann’s careening knight is like a drunk driver, doing 75 miles per hour in a school zone. This is the wrong way to target Black’s h-pawn. Correct was to first fix it in place with the patient 41.h4! d7 (41... b5 is met with 42. f5+ e5 43. g3 e8 44. xh5! with the same drawn piece down, wrong-color bishop/rook pawn ending) 42. f1 a4 43. g3 g4 44. xh5! xh5 45. c2. White’s defense is airtight, and Black’s attempts to penetrate the barrier remind us of those unfortunate summer flies who bounce off our screen door, in their futile attempts to infiltrate our house. Black may be up material, but everyone knows a rich man is barred entry to the kingdom of heaven. Such chess anomalies offend our sense of justice. This is an elementary draw, since Black’s bishop is on the wrong color of the queening square of the rook pawn.

41... e5! 42. e3

A) 42. g3 h4 43. f1 f4 44. e3 c6 45. e2 a4 46. c2 e4 47. a3 g4 48. e3 h7 49. f2 h3 50. g1 d3! (zugzwang for White’s knight) 51. h1 g4 52. g2 h3+ 53. f2 f4 54. g1 g3 55. h1. Now White must either give away his knight or, more humiliatingly, submit to a helpmate after 55... f2! 56. b1 e4#. But certainly not 56... xb1?? stalemate!;

B) 42.h4 (intending 43. g3 and 44. xh5, but the idea comes a move slow) 42... f4 43. e3 b3 44. e2 a4 and the surging a-pawn wins.

42... b6 0-1

A) 43. e2 d5 45. a3 f5 46. f2 g4 47. c2 b3 48. a3 h3 49. g1 e6 50. b5 f5 51. h1 (51. a3 d3 and there is the knight-zugzwang again. Black wins as in the note above) 51... d3 52. d4 e4+ 53. g1 a3 54. b3 a2 55. a1 a4 56. f2 d3 57. g2 f5 58. b3 f4 59. f2 e6 60. a1 e4 61. e2 c4+ 62. d2 (on 62. f2 d3 63. g3 c3 wins the knight and promotes) 62... f3! Black’s king pulls the bait and switch, suddenly shifting directions. White’s h-pawn falls;

B) 43. g3 a4 44. d2 h4 45. f1 a3 46. c3 a4! (this move’s significance becomes apparent in a few moves) 47. e3 f4 g2+ e4 49. xh4 It’s drawn, right? 49... xh4 No! This is the quirk within the quirk. Black wins an otherwise drawn wrong-color bishop/rook pawn ending after 50.h3 xh3 and White’s king is in zugzwang, since any move allows Black’s a-pawn to promote.

SI 34.4 – B33
Sicilian Defense
Robert Fischer
Jacobo Bolbochan
Mar del Plata 1959 (14)
This game is an example of when one bishop dominates another bishop.

1.e4 c5 2.e3 c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.e4 e6 5.e5 d5 6.c3 e6 7.db5 a6

In this variation Black gives up the bishop pair and also takes on an isolani, in exchange for a development lead and complete freedom of movement for his pieces.

6...d6 7.f4 e5 8.g5 transposes to the Sveshnikov Sicilian.

7.a3

7...d6+ is a false path. Black stands at least equal after 7...e7 8.f4 e5 9.f5+ f8 10.d2 d5!

7...xc3+ 8.xc3 d5 9.d3?

One trait for great endgame players like Capablanca, Fischer and Carlsen is that they consciously or subconsciously steered for the dovish decision to enter endings – even when the decision to remain in a middlegame is objectively superior. Fischer decides to waive the opening’s normal code, by offering an instant ending, but one which isn’t advantageous. I think it’s a sub-par line for White, since Black’s development lead should fully compensate for White’s bishop pair.

The best way to extract an edge is to give Black the isolani with 9.exd5 exd5 10.d3 0-0 11.0-0 d4 12.e2 g4 13.g5 d6 14.c1 fe8 15.d2 xe2 16.f4 d7 17.xe2 xe2 18xe2 e8 19.f1 e6. White’s two bishops give him the edge, but Grischuk was able to hold the draw, due to his active position, in Kasparov-Grischuk, Cannes 2001.

9...dxe4

With this move Black enters a fully playable ending. Also okay is 9...d4 10.e2 e5 11.0-0 0-0 12.h3 e8 13.g3. I’m not certain White’s bishop pair means much here since Black owns central space and his pieces are active, Carlsen-Nepomniachtchi, Moscow 2010.

10.xe4 e4 11.xe4 xd1+ 12.xd1

We reach a queenless position of bishop pair versus bishop and knight, with opposing-wing majorities. In this version I feel like Black stands equal, since he leads in development, and White loses even more time later, moving his king off the d-file.

12.d7 13.e3

This natural move may not be accurate either, since the bishop is vulnerable to a future ...f7-f5, ...e6-e5 and ...f5-f4 tempo loss. I would play 13.c1 0-0-0 14.d2.

13.f5!

Black activates his pawn majority with tempo.
Of course Fisher isn’t interested in the near certain draw with 14.\textit{x}c6 15.xc6.

14...e5 15.b4?\textit{c6}

This looks a bit early, with his lag in development. The comp suggests the inhuman developing scheme 15.\textit{d}2! f4 16.\textit{c5} 0-0 17.\textit{c3}!?. But even here Black looks fine after 17...\textit{he}8 18.\textit{he}1 b6 19.\textit{d}6 0-0 17.\textit{c3}!? The forcing of opposite-colored bishops all but insures Black a draw after 20.\textit{x}xe5 (20.\textit{e}4?? hangs a piece to the knight fork 20...\textit{b}5+) 20...\textit{xf}3 21.\textit{gx}f3 \textit{e}6! 22.\textit{d}4 (22.\textit{xf}4 allows 22...\textit{c}6+ 23.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}5+ 24.\textit{e}2 \textit{xc}2+ 25.\textit{f}1 \textit{g}5! and it is Black who stands slightly better, in a likely drawn ending) 22...\textit{c}6+ 23.\textit{d}2 \textit{b}6 and Black looks fine after 20...\textit{he}8 21.\textit{g}x\textit{e}5 (21.\textit{f}4?? hangs a piece to the knight fork 21...\textit{b}5+) 21...\textit{xf}3 22.\textit{gx}f3 \textit{e}6 and Black should comfortably hold the draw, due to his enhanced activity, coupled with the presence of bishops of opposite color.

15...0-0-0 16.\textit{c}1

16...\textit{d}4?!\textit{c6}

After this inaccuracy, Fischer seizes and maintains a structural edge. Black should have played more forcefully with 16...f4! 17.\textit{d}2 (17.\textit{c}5 b6 18.\textit{d}6 \textit{he}8, menacing both 19...\textit{e}6, and also 19...\textit{e}4. Black stands no worse) 17...\textit{d}4 18.\textit{c}4 \textit{f}5! (principle: If your opponent owns the bishop pair, swap one of them off) 19.\textit{xf}5+ \textit{xf}5 20.\textit{e}1 \textit{he}8. I slightly prefer Black, whose development lead outweighs White’s bishop over knight imbalance.

17.\textit{xd}4\textit{xc}6

Principle: One of the reasons why bishops tend to outweigh knights in endings, is that they have access to opportunity to trade themselves away at a favorable moment, as we see here, where Fischer inflicts his opponent with a worrisome isolani.

17...\textit{ex}d4

Now Black’s isolated d-pawn really is a cause for concern.

18.\textit{xe}1 \textit{he}8 19.\textit{d}2 \textit{b}5 20.\textit{xe}8

With a swap of rooks, Black’s isolani grows weaker.

20...\textit{xe}8 21.\textit{a}4 \textit{c}4 22.\textit{xc}1! \textit{b}8

23.\textit{c}3!

A brilliant strategic decision on Fischer’s part. He allows Black to eliminate the isolated d-pawn, the only weakness in Black’s camp, in exchange for superior piece activity.

23...\textit{dxc}3+ 24.\textit{xc}3 \textit{f}7

24...\textit{c}6 is more accurate.

25.a5 \textit{e}7
Black can’t challenge the c-file with 25…c8? 26.\textit{xe8+ }xc8 27.\textit{e3} (threatening 28.\textit{f4}, which would further weaken Black’s kingside pawns) 27…c7 (27…g5?? 28.\textit{d4} with \textit{e5} to follow) 28.\textit{f4}. Black is in serious trouble. If 28…\textit{e6} 29.\textit{e5} \textit{d7} 30.\textit{d5} b6 31.\textit{f4} White’s dominant king and bishop team will prevail.

26.\textit{e3!} \textit{d7+} 27.\textit{d3} \textit{e7}
Black can’t afford to exchange rooks, and must allow White’s rook entry into his position.
28.\textit{d8+} \textit{c7} 29.\textit{h8} h6
I would avoid this weakening move and go passive with 29…\textit{g6}.
30.\textit{c3} a6?!
He fears b4-b5, but now Black’s queenside pawns sit on the wrong color of his remaining bishop. He should have just sat tight and played 30…\textit{d7} 31.\textit{b5} \textit{d6} 32.\textit{a8} \textit{c7+} 33.\textit{d4} b6 with chances to hold.
31.\textit{d4} \textit{e8} 32.\textit{f8} \textit{d7} 33.\textit{h4} \textit{a8} 34.\textit{d5} \textit{d7} 35.\textit{f4}?
Correct was 35.\textit{g3!} with a winning advantage for White.

‘And the Rest is Technique.’ This is one of those clichéd chess phrases which for the club level player is utterly useless, since he or she knows in their heart that they may well botch the winning side’s position if they were playing, instead of an IM or GM. In this case, even Bobby Fischer allows his opponent a chance to escape from the inescapable.
Your writer, a crusader for justice in an otherwise unjust chess world, naively expects to win when he’s winning. Yet, exasperatingly, sometimes we can do everything right and according to principle, and still not be able to win, due to some infuriating geometric quirk, which represents a dark agency, which doesn’t operate under traditional constitutional restraints.
On the surface White’s position oozes the contentment of our dog, lying on her back, as we scratch her belly. But the comp tells us this just isn’t so. First let’s pause to contemplate the magnitude of Black’s overwhelming difficulties:
1. White’s king assumes a dominant position in mid-board.
2. White’s powerfully centralized bishop covers against black rook checks. Black can’t afford to challenge it with …\textit{e6}, since White swaps and wins the rook and pawn ending with \textit{f7+}.
3. White’s rook menaces Black’s kingside pawns, tying down Black’s rook in a defensive posture.
4. Black’s queenside pawns are fixed on the wrong color of his remaining bishop.
On his last move Fischer logically fixed yet another black pawn on the wrong color, yet amazingly this following of principle allows Black to save the game. Black has a choice of two plans:
Plan A: Build a fortress with 35...g6, followed by ...h6-h5 and ...e8.
Plan B: Forget about the defense of g7 and get active with 35...e1, allowing White 36...f7.
One plan leads to freedom, the other leads to dismemberment and death. Which one would you play?

35...g6??
Purgatory is just a fractional taste of the eternal hell which follows. This is the part where that cartoon unfortunate, Wile E Coyote, goes off the cliff, and, for a few seconds before falling, fruitlessly spins his legs in mid-air.
Black continues to offer massive strategic concessions in a blithely indiscriminate manner. To voluntarily fix all your pawns on the wrong color of your remaining bishop is strategic suicide. Black should have abandoned his rook's defensive posture and taken a chance on a desperate yet necessary expedient with 35...e1!. Now if 36...f7 d1+ 37...c4 d6 here is the problem: Black threatens to win a piece with 38...b5+, and if White's bishop moves, then Black has the skewer 38...e6. 38...f3 (the only move for White to save the game) 38...e6+ 39...c3 c1+ 40...d2 xf7 41...xc1 d5 42...c2 xf3 43...gxf3 d5 44...d3 g6 45...c3 (the king and pawn ending is drawn) 45...h5 46...d3 c6 47...c4 b5+ 48.axb6 xb6 49...c3 b5 50...b3 c6 The ending is drawn. Black must avoid 50...a5?? 51.bxa5 a5 52...c4 when White’s king reaches the g6-pawn first.

36...f6 e8 37...e6!
Now his king attains access to e5. Also strong is the undermining 37...h6.

37...c6 38...g3 c7 39...e5

White’s pieces feel as inseparably in harmony as a flock of sparrows, who by some mysterious signal all veer right in mid-air.

39...e8 40...d5
Also easily winning is to force a rook ending with 40...f8 c7 41...f6 d6 42...f7! xf7 43...xf7 e3 44...xg6 xg3+ 45...xf5 c6 46...h7.

40...h5
He rules out White’s h4-h5 ideas, at the cost of placing every single one of his pawns on the wrong color.

41...b6 c8 42...e6+ c7 43...f6 h7
The defenders desperately scurry away out of the white pieces’ reach.

44...d5 c8 45...e6 d8 46...d6+ c7 47...b6 c8

I don’t know if it’s possible to land in a position more cringingly passive than this one for Black. How did Fischer force the win?

48...g8!
An iridescent shimmer appears on the wizard’s fingertips, as he raises his arms to incant the spell.

48...\texttt{c7} 49.\texttt{e6+}! 
This move seizes control over d8.

49...\texttt{b8} 
49...\texttt{d8} loses the king and pawn ending to 50.\texttt{d6+} \texttt{d7} 51.\texttt{xd7+} \texttt{xd7} 52.\texttt{xd7} \texttt{xd7} 53.\texttt{g6xg6}. 
50.\texttt{d6!} 
Threat: 51.\texttt{d8+}, picking up Black’s bishop. Black resigned in view of 50...\texttt{a7} 51.\texttt{d8} (at long last, the lone defender of Black’s kingside is chased away) 51...\texttt{b5} 52.\texttt{c8}! (this move denies Black even the crumb of counterplay he expected with ...\texttt{c4}, or ...\texttt{c3}) 52...\texttt{h7} 53.\texttt{g6xg6} and all of Black’s kingside pawns fall.

RL 3.2 – C60
Ruy Lopez
Alexander Sellman
Wilhelm Steinitz
London 1883

There are two kinds of teams:
1. Ones which glide in harmony, like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.
2. Ones which stumble about out of synch, like King Kong and Fay Wray, who end up getting shot at by WWI bi-planes at the top of the Empire State Building.

In case you were wondering, in this game White’s clunky bishop and knight pair qualify for the latter category. This game is an example of how the bishop pair can still be a decisive factor, even when neither side owns a pawn majority.

1.e4 e5 2.\texttt{f3} c6 3.\texttt{b5} g6!? 
Many of us bang out the first 15 or so moves of a chess game with trance-like routine. To Steinitz and his opponent, even a Ruy Lopez must have felt like virgin opening territory, in need of thought and exploration. I envy the players of this era, since they were not obliged to study their openings in torturous detail just to survive, as we do today. In this instance Steinitz avoids his own variation of the Lopez.

4.\texttt{d4} 
I don’t think this direct Scotch Game-like version gives White anything. A superior alternative is to build more slowly with 4.c3 a6 5.\texttt{a4} d6 6.\texttt{d4} \texttt{d7} 7.0-0 \texttt{g7} 8.d5 \texttt{ce7} 9.\texttt{xd7+} \texttt{xd7} 10.c4 h6 11.\texttt{c3} f5. The nature of the position has shifted from a Ruy Lopez to a King’s Indian, where White has swapped off his light-squared bishop for Black’s good bishop, which looks good enough for an edge, Adams-Carlsen, Shamkir 2015.

5...\texttt{exd4} 5.\texttt{xd4} 
Since this game was played in the golden age of gambits, maybe White should try 5.c3!? aiming for a Ruy Lopez version of the Smith-Morra Gambit. If Black accepts, it feels like White gets decent compensation after 5...\texttt{dxc3} 6.\texttt{xg3} \texttt{g7} 7.\texttt{g5}. 
5.\texttt{g7} 6.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e6} 7.\texttt{c3} 0-0 8.0-0 \texttt{e7}! 
This oddly efficient move is designed to enable the freeing ...\texttt{d6-d5} break.

9.\texttt{c4}! 
This move effectively hands over the bishop pair in an open position. White should try 9.\texttt{b3} c6 10.\texttt{c2} d5 11.exd5 \texttt{exd5} 12.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{d4} 13.\texttt{d4} \texttt{f4} 14.\texttt{f3} here, with an even game.

9...\texttt{d5} 
The thematic freeing break.
10.exd5 exd5 11...xd5 12...xd5
White must hand over the bishop pair, since 12...c1?? hangs a piece to the double attack 12...b6.
12...xd5 13.c3 b6
Preparing to fianchetto, taking aim at g2.
14...f3?!
What? I thought doves didn’t exist in the era of the Great Romantics. White no longer feels safe with queens on the board and agrees to an uncomfortable but still playable ending.
14...xf3 15...xf3

[Diagram]

Yes, Black has the bishop pair, but his edge doesn’t feel all that great, since he lacks a pawn majority on either side. Watch how Steinitz slowly restricts White’s minor pieces from this point.
15...c5!
Steinitz seizes control over d4, preventing White’s coming d4, which would challenge Black’s bishop pair.
16.h3 e6!
The correct diagonal for the bishop. Now White faces a dilemma: how to protect his a2-pawn? If he pushes it, then the light squares are weakened and Black’s bishop may later land on b3, seizing control over the d-file.
17...fd1 fd8 18.a3
White’s position slowly gets worse. I would try 18...xd8+ xd8 19.a4.
18...b3 19...xd8+ xd8 20...d2 a4!

[Diagram]

The bishop annoyingly controls d1. White’s problem is that any future b2-b3 push weakens his queenside pawns.
21...e1 h6 22.g4?!
White, fearing a kingside pawn expansion from his opponent, preemptively seizes space, at the cost of weakening his light squares further and also creating new targets for Black’s bishops and rook. A dove would play 22.f3 and go into fortress mode. But of course in 1851 a dove was a virtually non-existent entity. Three prominent ones which come to mind are Staunton, Paulsen and Owen, who were all precursors of the hypermoderns of the 1920’s.
22...f8
The bishop is better placed later on the h2-b8 diagonal. Black also now has the option of pushing his queenside pawns later on, with a clash point on b4.
23.e4
Maybe he doesn’t care about the time wasted. 23.f3 is a more useful move.
Another option is to try and open the kingside with the plan 24...h7 25.f3 g5 26.e4 d6, intending 27...f5 next.

Some players just don’t know how to go into waiting mode.

25...a7 26.f3 d5 27.a2 f5!

This strong move accentuates White’s vulnerabilities. White must now either allow the game to open, enhancing Black’s bishops, or White can push his pawn to g5, placing virtually all his pawns on the wrong color of his remaining bishop. 27...h5! achieves the same goal as in the game after 28.g5 f5.

25.h4!?

Some players just don’t know how to go into waiting mode.

25...f7 26.f3 d5 27.a2 f5!

This strong move accentuates White’s vulnerabilities. White must now either allow the game to open, enhancing Black’s bishops, or White can push his pawn to g5, placing virtually all his pawns on the wrong color of his remaining bishop. 27...h5! achieves the same goal as in the game after 28.g5 f5.

28.g5 h5

29.f4??

This is not the moment for a give-me-liberty-or-give-me-death sentiment. The danger fails to register in White’s consciousness and events get reshuffled from their natural flow. This is the part where the prosecutor goads the defendant into uttering an incriminating admission, and then announces to the judge: ‘I have no more questions, your honor.’

White could still offer resistance by going into back-and-forth mode with 29.e4 b5 30.d2. This version is a story with a still unwritten ending. Black would eventually push his queenside pawns forward to create confrontation and open the game further. I’m not so certain this is enough to win the game against proper defense. Psychologically this is a difficult course to take, since most of us feel that a laissez-faire path is rarely a good option in difficult positions, since the natural course of events can be the equivalent of a death sentence. This just isn’t the case here. I think White’s odds of drawing are actually slightly higher than Black’s chances to extract the win.

White’s last move loses. How did Steinitz force the win?

29...d6!

The position goes from courteous to belligerent in the space of a single move. White’s overloaded bishop runs out of room.

30.c4

No choice since other options immediately hang a piece:

A) 30.xd6 xd2+;
B) 30.g3 xd2;
C) 30.e3 f4

30...d4!

Steinitz seizes upon a new untapped market in targets along the fourth rank.

31.e3

The bishop greets his d4 non-guest with the same feeling of resigned despair as I do, when a salesperson, ignoring the prominent No Solicitors sign on my door, rings the bell in the hopes of selling me magazine subscriptions. White saves his knight, at the cost of hanging his kingside pawns.

31...xh4

Not only did Black win a pawn, but now his rook threatens to invade h2.

32.ef1 h3 0-1

Of course there was also nothing wrong with just chopping the c4-pawn.

After the text, 33.f4 xf4! 34.xf4 f3+ (‘Is this seat taken?’ asks the rook as he sits on the white king’s throne) 35.e2 xf4 leaves Black up two pawns, and about to win more.
Opposite-colored bishops

When we land in a position of bishops of opposite color, we witness people of faith who preach completely opposing doctrines. In this chapter we continue our exploration of when a game should be drawn or not, mixed with discussion about the myth that the presence of opposite-colored bishops always means the game is a draw.

EO 16.12 – A26
English Opening
Kamran Shirazi 2565
Cyrus Lakdawala 2400
Pasadena 1983 (8)

1.c4 g6

In the early 1980’s IM Kamran Shirazi – a Tal-like hawk – was my boogey man. My dismal record against him before this game was 0-7, despite four winning positions. I always got swindled! In this game I swore to myself that it was not going to shift to 0-8. So I made a conscious effort to play more aggressively, and not go into my normal tortoise-like shell. I only half fulfilled the promise, since in the latter part of the game I predictably reverted to every negative dove trait possible. Since winning this game, I started winning more than my fair share against my dreaded boogey man. It’s not easy to overcome our psychological barriers.

2.g3 g7 3.g2 c6 4.c3 d6 5.d3 e5

In those days I played a King’s Indian setup against all non-1.e4 openings, which didn’t suit my style. When I took up the Slav in the early 1990’s, my rating went up by almost 200 points. Maybe I just got stronger, or maybe the rating jump was due to playing openings in harmony with my natural style.

6.b1 a5 7.a3 f6 8.b4 axb4 9.axb4 b8 10.b5 e7

11.d5!

Normally, a d5 plan is sort of the opening’s uniform. But here the move is mistimed, since he isn’t fully developed. He tries to confuse me with a non-standard, time-losing move, and with it he loses his opening edge.

I think Shirazi’s opening choice was a bad one, since he was just experimenting with the English, and normally played the hawk’s true love, 1.e4. The problem is, superficial theoretical knowledge without application in over-the-board play is like the soldier who just graduated from military college, yet has never been battle-tested.

More normal would be to continue with 11.f3 0-0 12.0-0 h6 13.d2 e6 14.c2. Maybe it’s stylistic, but I prefer White.

11...fxd5

I felt I could defend c7 as many times as it was attacked.

12.cxd5 0-0 13.b3

He continues to neglect his kingside development. In this case though, he had little choice since 13.f3?? hangs his d5-pawn after 13...xd5.

13.d7 14.a3?

He neglects his development in search of an adventure, based on the undermining idea of b5-b6. Necessary was 14.f3 c6! when even here, I slightly prefer Black.
14...c5!
Witches are safe from being burned at the stake only when science supplants (the hawk’s!) belief in magic. Principle: Create confrontation when leading in development, via a pawn sacrifice.
Even though this is a strong move, I somehow feel slightly psychologically soiled when a caveman or cavewoman hawk opponent forces me down to their own savage level of kill-or-be-killed.

Also strong was the simple 14...a8!, intending ...a5. If 15.b6? c5 16.dxc6 e6! White is busted. If 17.e3?? (17.e3?? hangs a piece to 17...c6 18.c7xb3 19.xd8 a2) 17...e6 18.b2 e4 wins.

15.b6
The doomed b-pawn is stuck in traffic, with truck exhaust spewing into his car.

A) He realized he can’t develop if he accepts with 15.bxc6 bxc6 16.e3xb8 cxb8 17.e3xb8 cxb8 18.dxc6 e6 19.xd6 b1+ (one look at the development of the two sides, and we see that White suffers from the comparison) 20.d2 c4 21.e3 b2+ 22.c1xe1 c1xb3. White can barely move. If 23.e3 e4! 24.e5 c5xe5 25.c5xe5 c1xb1+ 26.f2 g8+ 27.f3 xf3+ 28.f2 xh1 wins a piece;

B) 15.e3 a8 16.e3 a5 17.e3xa5 (17.b6 is met with 17...b5) 17...b6 and the b-pawn falls.

I wanted to drive his queen into the a-file, facing my rook.

17.e2
17.e2 b2?? e4 and White’s knight falls.

My pieces attach themselves to b6, like remora on a larger fish.

18.d2 a6 b8 21.a6 e4 d7
This move dispels any illusions White may have had to generate Benko Gambit-like pressure for the pawn on the open b- and c-files. I unraveled successfully and now my b-pawn is ready to be pushed.

23.h3 b6
The dove’s instinct to swap predictably kicks in. Stronger was 23...a5!

24.d2 a5 b1 25.xb1 e6
I'm a beggar, who pleads for swaps.

26. \(\text{c}3 \text{ a}8\)

I'm ready for 27...b5, so he sacrifices a second pawn in order to remove my good light-squared bishop.

27. \(\text{b}5?! \text{ xb}5\)

I didn't consider the stronger line 27...b6! 28. \(\text{c}3 \text{ a}6\) 29. \(\text{b}2 \text{ b}5\).

28. \(\text{xb}5 \text{ xd}5\)

29. \(\text{b}2?!\)

Some moves eloquently express our dismay, far better than words on paper. In an attempt to complicate and confuse, he provokes 29...e4. His move is made with the philosophy/principle *A shocking alteration isn't always a bad thing if we are already losing, since confusion is a welcome byproduct of the following change.* This move makes his position worse, since his intent to complicate feels unformed and still searching.

29...e4 30. \(\text{c}2 \text{ c}3\) 31. \(\text{b}3 \text{ exd}3\) 32. \(\text{exd}3\)

32. \(\text{xd}3??\) allows 32...e4.

32...b5! 33. \(\text{b}2\)

33. \(\text{xc}3??\) loses more material to 33...\(\text{xc}3\) 34. \(\text{xc}3\) b4.

33...b4 34. \(\text{xc}3\)

His only chance is to play for a two-pawns-down ending with bishops of opposite colors, who eternally refuse to make eye contact.

34...\(\text{xc}3\)

Another cowardly move, simply to enable another swap. It was stronger to keep my pawns intact with 34...\(\text{xc}3\)! 35. \(\text{g}2\) d7! 36. \(\text{d}5\) f5! 37. \(\text{e}4\) e5. Black seizes control over d5 and my pawns roll forward.

35. \(\text{g}2\) b4 36. \(\text{d}5\) \(\text{xb}3?!\)

More wishy-washyness. There was absolutely no reason for this concession. Better was 36...d4 37. \(\text{g}2\) c8! intending ...\(\text{f}5\) next.

37. \(\text{xb}3\) d4 38. \(\text{d}1\) e7 39. \(\text{b}3\) g7 40. \(\text{f}3\)

40...f6

You can have no more terrifying an enemy than when you fight with yourself, internally. Of course a queen swap offers White his only prayer for a draw.

From a psychological standpoint, my move was inevitable. Why? It ensured that I wouldn’t lose this one. Essentially I’m
willing to reduce my winning chances, if in turn I receive some soothing safety for it. Which is pretty stupid, since it’s virtually impossible for Black to lose with queens on the board.

I missed the far stronger interference idea 40…c4!. When we suddenly see such hidden combinational patterns, it’s as if our camera, long out of focus, shifts into clarity and alignment with a simple twist of the lens. 41.dxc4 is forced, since the recapture with the bishop allows Black’s c-pawn to promote. Now White’s pressure on f7 is temporarily off line, allowing Black to activate his queen: 41…e1+ 42.g2 c5! (plugging up White’s intended c4-c5 ideas) 43.h4 d2 and there is no reasonable way to halt …c3-c2. If 44.d1 xf2+ is totally hopeless for White.

41.e2!?
Retreat isn’t an option when you have no place to go. He should have traded immediately, but as we realize by now, hawks tend to react to queen trades the same way Count Dracula reacts when he stumbles upon a crucifix.

41…g5 42.f3 f5?!

I would like to blame such a moronic decision on the onset of old age, except for the fact that I was two months away from my 23rd birthday when this game was played.

Why oh why do I play this way? I was afraid I would be perpetually tied down to the defense of f7, so with my last move I offer a serious concession in order to implement a plan which seriously compromises winning chances. As it turns out, the position is still a win for Black, but this is pure luck.

42.f1 f6 43.h4+ g6 44.a4 f4 45.e8+ h6 50.gxf4

On 50.g4 I had planned 50…f2! 51.h5 f5! 52.gxf5 e3 (threat: 53…c2) 53.d1 g5 54.f6 xf6 55.d7 h6 56.c2 d4 57.g4 g5 58.d1 h4 59.c2 g3 60.d1 f2 (zugzwang number 1) 61.c1 e2 62.c2 c5 – zugzwang number 2. Black wins.
Principle: Force your opponent’s pawns on the same color of their bishop, since in doing so, it automatically weakens the opposite color.

51.h5
51.\textit{xf2}?? isn’t much of a consideration after 51…c2 when Black promotes.
51…g3! 52.f5
Mission accomplished: all his pawns are fixed on the wrong color, allowing my king to travel along the dark-squared highway.
52.e3?? is met with 52…\textit{xf4+}.
52…f4
Threat: 53…c2.
53.d1 d5 54.f7 g5 55.g8
Immediately fatal is to allow Black another passed pawn with 55.\textit{xd5}?? \textit{xfh5} and Black’s h-pawn costs White a piece.
55…h6 56.f7 d4 57.e8
57.\textit{g6}?? \textit{g6!} is zugzwang. White must move his bishop and lose his f5-pawn, since unplayable is 58.e2?? (or 58.c2?? \textit{f4} 59.d1 c4! 60.e2 \textit{e3} 61.dxc4 d3+ 62.e3 d3 63.c2 \textit{g2} \textit{e2} and Black promotes) 58…c4! 59.dxc4 e2 60.d2 d3 when there is no defense to the coming …\textit{f4+}.
57…\textit{xf5} 58.f7 g5 59.e8 c7 60.c2 \textit{a5} 61.f7 f4 62.d5 \textit{e3} 63.e4 c7 64.d5

White’s bishop controls c4, while keeping watch over f3. Is the game destined for a draw? After all, it appears as if White has achieved a firm blockade. Black to play and force the win:

64…c4!
Overloaded defender. Black wins, whichever way White takes the c4-pawn.
65.xc4
‘Nice try!’ were the words we feared most during our youth sports with the neighboring kids, when we allowed the enemy’s ball or puck through the goal post, and failed.

A) 65.dxc4 d3+! 66.xc3 d2 67.e2 \textit{e2} and Black promotes;
B) 65.e4 cxd3+ 66.xd3 \textit{xf3} and wins.

65…\textit{xf3}
Black creates a passed f-pawn and White can resign.
66.e6
Hey, I just said: ‘Black creates a passed f-pawn and White can resign!’
66…e3 67.d1
Okay, fine. Everyone is entitled to a little joke before resignation.
67.g4 \textit{f4} 68.d1 f5 69.b3 \textit{c3} 70.c2 \textit{f4} and the f-pawn costs White his bishop.

QP 7.6 – A45
Queen’s Pawn Openings
\textbf{Cyrus Lakdawala}
\textbf{Enrico Sevillano}
Los Angeles 2008

1.d4 e6 2.e3 b5!!
While your writer is an embarrassingly inept middlegame player, I tend to get opponents – even GMs – nervous in the opening phase. Enrico decides to take a chance on a non-vetted idea, in order to take me out of my book – except it didn’t! This system is sometimes used to ‘punish’ White for his neglect of 2.c4, but I don’t think the line is all that great for Black. He plans …b7, …a7-a6, …e7-e6 and eventually …c7-c5. From my experience, the extended b-pawn is a problem for Black, more than a benefit.

3.\(\textbf{\textit{g5}}\)

I considered 3.e4!? a move which would only appeal to a development-worshiping hawk. 3…\(\textit{xe4}\) 4.\(\textit{xb5}\) b7 5.0-0 Yes, White has a development lead and an open e-file. The cost was to give Black my valuable e-pawn for his lesser b-pawn.

Now Black reaches a slightly inferior version of a Trompowsky formation. Enrico didn’t like 4…e6 5.e4 and I don’t blame him, since White looks comfortably better.

5.e3

6.e4 is more ambitious but not in alignment with my ultra-safe style.

6…a6 7.a4

This prod slightly weakens Black’s light squares.

7…b4 8.d3 g6?!

He planned to fianchetto, but then a move later realized he can’t.

9.0-0

9…\(\textit{e7}\)

Correcting his inaccuracy on move eight. Enrico saw through the trap I had set: 9…\(\textit{g7}\) 10.c3! bxc3 11.bxc3 and now he had planned 11…0-0?? but then saw White’s trick 12.\(\textit{xe6! fxe6}\) (12…\(\textit{xf3}\) fails to 13.\(\textit{xf3 fxe6}\) 14.\(\textit{xa8}\) 13.\(\textit{b3+ h7}\) 14.\(\textit{xb7}\) and White has won a pawn.

10.c3 \(\textit{c6}\)

I expected 10…a5.

11.a5!

Planning to artificially isolate the pawn on a6 and perhaps also the pawn on b4.

11…0-0 12.c4

More energetic and stronger is 12.\(\textit{b3! d5}\) (12…\(\textit{g7}\) loses a pawn to 13.d5 \(\textit{a7}\) 14.\(\textit{xb4 b8}\) 15.\(\textit{fc1}\) a8 16.\(\textit{xa6 xb4}\)
17...d6 may have been better, preventing my next move.

13...c5 d6
He needs some freedom, but his last move also undermines his knight’s stability.

14...cxd6 cxd6
14...xd6 is met with 15...b3, seizing control over c5.

15...c4 b8 16...a4 d6 17...ac1!
The correct rook. I wanted to keep my f-rook on d1 or e1 in case he later played ...f5-f4.

17...g7!
Very alert! He sees that I will soon play b6, and after his knight moves, White gets d7 fork tricks. With his king on g7, my xf6 is not with check, so Black can pin the knight on d7 with ...e8!.

17...f4? is met with 18...b6 e8 (18...xa5? 19...d7 and if 19...c6 20...xf6+ is check! This is why Enrico moved his king on his last move).

18...fd1?!
This superficial do-nothing move allows my edge to slip:

A) 18...c2!, intending to double rooks, increases the pressure on Black’s queenside;

B) 18...b6? allows the undermining combination 18...xa5! 19...xa5 xf3 20.gxf3 xb6 21...xa6 (maybe the less greedy 21.f4 should be considered) 21...f4! with a slight edge for Black, whose king is safer.

18...e8 19...f1 d5 20...b6 e6
20...xa5 21...d7...c6 22...xc6...xd7 23...e5!...xe5 (23...xe5?? hangs the queen to the discovered attack 24...xg6+)
24.dxe5...xc6 25.exf6+...xf6 26...xa6 is about even, since White gets full compensation for his missing pawn.

21...c5
I allow Black’s coming undermining combination. White’s last chance for an edge may have been 21...xa6!...xa5! 22...xb7...xb7 23...xa5...xb6 24...e5! and even though White’s knight is the superior piece, Black can’t afford to swap it away, since this would favorably open the d-file for White.

21...xa5!
This should equalize.

22...xd5...xd5 23...xa5...xf3 24.gxf3 f4
Black threatens to ruin White’s pawn structure. White has only one idea which maintains equality. How would you respond?

25.exf4?

I freely admit that my kingside pawn structure gives one the distinct impression of slovenly housekeeping. We agree to such painful concessions, only with muttered vows of revenge. I believed him and decided to enter an inferior ending, banking on the drawing power of the bishops of opposite color.

After the game, Sevillano pointed out that White had the clever 25.e4!. Now Black is unable to play 25…xd4?? (after 25…xa5 26.xa5 d8 27.d5 the game should end in a draw. Black is unable to play 27…xb2?? due to 28.dxe6! xd1 29.e7 when Black’s king, rook and bishop are all helpless to stop promotion) 26.xd8! xd8 27.d5!. This is the move I missed. Black loses a piece due to the unfavorable geometry.

25…xd4 26.xd8 xd8

Threat: 27…xf2+ and 28…xd1.

27.g2?

Another mistake.

I should have played 27.d2! xc5 28.xd8 e1 29.g2 a5 30.b5 c1 31.d2 with much better drawing chances than what I got in the game.

27…xf2!

I had missed this trick. He picks up another pawn.

28.cd5 xd5 29.xd5 e3 30.e5?

We feel betrayed when we follow principle, and then later discover that in doing so, we allowed an anomaly. I follow the principle When defending an opposite-colored bishops ending, try and boil it down to just your bishop against your opponent’s. In this case, an exception, the swap of rooks turns a probable draw into a win for his side.

The trajectory of my drawing chances moves into a noticeably downward arc. I’m flustered by now, deciding to go two pawns down, praying the bishops of opposite colors will save me, when they won’t.

I should have played 30.f5! c6 31.fg6 c2+ 32.g3 fxg6 (32…xb2 33.xf7 xf7 34.xa6 is drawn) 33.b3 with far better drawing chances than I got in the game.

30…xe5 31.fxe5 a5 32.b3 f4 33.b5 fxe5

There goes pawn number 2.

34.h3

My chances for a draw feel better than in Shirazi’s last game (although this isn’t true!).
At this point I thought I should hold the game, despite being two pawns down, since Black is unable to create a passed pawn on the queenside, and even if he does create a passed pawn on the kingside, it gets blockaded. What I underestimated was the power of zugzwang, which is the typical action which usually causes the defense to collapse in such opposite-colored bishops positions.

34...f5 35.e8 f6 36.a4 g5 37.d7 d4 38.f1 e5 39.g2 f4 40.e8 b6 41.d7 h5 42.e8 h4 43.d7 c5 44.c6 d4 45.d7 a6 46.c6 e3 47.d7 d2?

The great danger with being handed power, is that it tends to go to our head. His idea is a sneaky but unsound attempt to pull a fast one while my back is turned. If I take his f5-pawn with 48.xf5, he then creates a queenside passer with 48...a4. Should I take this route, or should I just wait, do nothing, and shuffle with 48.c6? One line leads to a draw, while the other loses. This is a position of sudden reversals. Black’s last move was an error. But how do I exploit it?

48.c6?

Now my ‘the-game-is-dead-drawn’ theory turns into a mountingly improbable proposition. To not use our available resources makes us one of those kids who refuses to remove her toy from the original box, since playing with it depreciates its value. I continue to play penitently, when there is no reason to do so. I shouldn’t have believed him. His last move was a mistake and he should have played 47...f4!, reaching a position similar to the one he got in the game. I hold the draw with 48.xf5. ‘I have never killed before, but there is a first time for everything’, thinks the bishop. White holds the draw after 48...c3 49.e6 c7 (after 49...a4 50.bxa4 b3 51.f4 gxf4 52.f3 b2 53.a2 c7 54.a5! xa5 55.xf4 c2 56.e3 b1 57.xb1+ xb1 58.e2 Black’s winning chances fade to non-existence and the game will end in a draw, since Black ends up with the dreaded wrong color rook pawn for his bishop) 50.e2 a4 51.bxa4 b3 52.e3 b2 53.a2 b4 54.a5 a3 55.b1 xa5 56.f4 b6+ 57.e4 gxf4 58.e3 f4 b3 59.e3 c3 60.xg2 d2 61.xg1 c1 62.g6 b1 63.xb1 xb1. Just as in the note above, the game remains drawn, since Black once again ends up with the wrong-colored rook pawn for his remaining bishop.

48...d8!!

I began to regard my position the way we do when on a walk, we glance up at the darkening sky and wonder: ‘When is it going to rain?’ At this point I thought to myself: ‘Damn!’ (although it is very possible that it may have been some other four letter
I mentally uttered). I saw what was coming. Zugzwang looms for White. For now, Black’s future passers remain in dormant mode. This situation is about to change. Black’s winning plan:

1. Play for both the …g5-g4 and the …a5-a4 break. This action in some cases returns both his extra pawns and also allows White two passed pawns.

2. However, Black’s bishop, now posted on d8, freezes both of White’s passers, while Black’s are free to move forward with the help of his king on either side of the board.

51. \( \text{b}5 \)

51. \( \text{d}7? \) fails to save White after 51…g4! and now:

A) 52.fxg4 f3+ 53.\( \text{f}1 \) f4 54.\( \text{c}6 \) g3 55.\( \text{d}5 \) f6 56.\( \text{c}6 \) a4! 57.\( \text{xa}4 \) xh3 58.\( \text{d}7 \) g3 and Black’s two passed pawns will win;

B) 52.hxg4 h3+ 53.\( \text{x}h3 \) xf3 54.\( \text{c}6+ \) f2 55.g5 \( \text{x}g5 \) 56.g4 e3! (Black’s bishop is immune and White is in zugzwang) 57.\( \text{d}5 \) a4! 58.bxa4 \( \text{d}8 \) – another zugzwang. Black’s pawns roll forward and he wins;

C) 52.\( \text{x}g4 \) a4 53.bxa4 b3 54.\( \text{e}6 \) b2 55.\( \text{f}5 \) c7 56.\( \text{e}4 \) d2 57.\( \text{f}1 \) c1 58.\( \text{e}2 \) b1 59.\( \text{xb}1 \) \( \text{x}b1 \) 60.\( \text{d}3 \) c1 61.\( \text{c}4 \) d2 62.a5 \( \text{xa}5 \) 63.\( \text{xf}4 \) Surely White has achieved a draw? Incorrect. Although White did stick Black with the wrong-colored rook pawn for his bishop, the unfortunate White king is unable to reach the h1-square. Black wins after 63…\( \text{d}3 \) 64.\( \text{g}4 \) d8 65.f4 \( \text{e}4 \) 66.f5 \( \text{f}6 \) 67.\( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 68.\( \text{h}6 \) (ugh! White’s king is a million miles away from the drawing h1-square) 68…\( \text{f}4 \) 69.\( \text{g}6 \) \( \text{g}3 \) 70.\( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xh}3 \) wins.

51…g4!

Either capture from White allows Black a passed pawn.

52.hxg4

At the board I worked out the very depressing line 52.fxg4 f3+ 53.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{f}4 \) 54.\( \text{h}2 \) b6 55.\( \text{c}6 \) e3 56.\( \text{b}5 \) a4 57.\( \text{g}5 \) c1 58.\( \text{d}4 \) h1 a4!. My bishop can’t take it and my b-pawn can’t take it. Time for White to resign.

52…h3+!

His h-pawn is the bit-part actor who unilaterally takes it upon himself to assume the lead role in the show.

Zugzwang! I long to say something wise or profound at this point, but all that pops into my head is the word ‘crap!’ (and also another four letter word).

61.\( \text{d}5 \) a4 62.bxa4 c7! 63.h3 f3 64.a4 d4 65.f7 d3 66.e6 e2

Failure, like illness, takes a while to recover from its effects.

On 67.\( \text{d}5 \) f2 68.\( \text{c}4+ \) e1 69.\( \text{g}2 \) b3 wins. By now I was really sick and tired of getting zugzwanged, and I resigned.
I don’t really get the Stonewall Dutch. It just feels to me like White gets a kind of super-London System, with that gaping e5-hole. The only time I play the black side of a Stonewall setup is in situations where White commits to an early e2-e3, via the Semi-Slav move order with 3...c6 4.e3 f5. This one doesn’t feel so bad for Black.

4...f3 c6 5.f4 d6?!

For Black to deliberately play for a swap of dark-squared bishops here is a strategic buzz-kill equivalent to switching to decaf. This move just hands White the superior remaining bishop. Preferable is 5...f6 6.e3 e7.

6.e3

White would welcome 6...xf4 7.exf4, after which the e6-pawn sits vulnerably backward on an open file.

7...d3 c7?!

Not only is this a tempo loss, but also the queen won’t thrive well on the c-file, since Black later becomes vulnerable to tricks on d5.

8.g3! 0-0 9.0-0 e4 10.b3

This move threatens a cheapo, but gets in the way of a future b2-b4 push. I would be more inclined to play 10...c1.

10...h8
10...d7?? walks into White’s trap after 11.cxd5 exd5 (11...xc3 12.dxe6 is also awful for Black: 12...d5 13.xd6 xd6 14.exd7 xd7 15.c4 with an extra pawn and a development lead) 12.xe4! fxe4 13.xd5! and wins.

11.ac1 xf4 12.exf4 f7?
If 12...d7?? 13.cxd5 exd5 and now White exploits the black queen’s position with 14.xd5. His queen should move to e7. This bizarre tempo-loss move makes a statement. But just what that statement is, nobody but John knows. Black avoids a shallow trap by removing his queen from the c-file. But why walk into another tempo loss?

This game was played in a ‘Meisterturnier’, and I assume Black was a master. So my question is: how could he possibly overlook White’s next move?

13.e5 e7

Black now threatens a fork on d2. The retracting of our previous bad move is in essence an open confession of our previous carelessness.

14.xe4!
Schlechter finds a powerful strategic plan which saddles Black with a rotten bishop. On the surface it appears counter-intuitive since White’s kingside light squares are slightly exposed. Schlechter correctly foresaw that Black’s light-squared bishop will never get near his king.

14...fxe4 15.f3
By eliminating Black’s e4-pawn, White airbrushes out the wart on the model’s otherwise beautiful face.

15...exf3 16.ce1 c7

Black’s pieces have the joyless look of homeless people who eat Christmas dinner at the soup kitchen, with only each other as a substitute for family.

16.d7 17.cxd5 and Black must recapture with his c-pawn to dodge a discovered attack with 17...cxd5 18.xf3, with a position which looks like a French Defense gone wrong for Black (18.xd5 isn’t as strong due to the simple 18...d6).

17.a3
Threatening the loose rook on f8, while suppressing ...c6-c5 freeing ideas.

17...g8 18.xf3 a6?!
The knight is misplaced on a6. Slightly less wretched is 18.d7 19.c5! with a bind for White (perhaps John feared 19.e7??, which is in actuality a blunder: 19...xe5! 20.xc7 xf3+ 21.f2 xe1 22.xe1 f7 and Black is just fine, with two rooks for the queen).
19.b3 d8

Threat: 20...dxc4 and 21...xd4+.

A) 19...c5 20.dxc5 dxc4 21.b4 is also busted for Black;

B) I would try 19...dxc4 in a desperate bid for freedom. After 20.bxc4 c5 21.d5 exd5 22...xd5 d6 23.d3 Black’s game still stinks, but at least in this version his bishop has a prayer to eventually get developed.

20.c5

Schlechter accumulates further space on both wings, and, coupled with his overwhelmingly superior minor pieces, he gets a strategically won game.

20...c7 21.b2 d7 22.c2 e7 23.ef1 ae8 24.g4!

Intending 25...h3, targeting h7.

24...c8

The miserable bishop is about as compatible with its pawn structure as a match to dry kindling.

25.h3

Provoking further weakness in Black’s camp.

25...g6

Another pawn on the wrong color of his remaining bishop means a further degradation of his dark squares. After 25...h6?? Black’s king gets stripped with 26.g5!, which is even stronger than forking with 26.g6.

26.b4

Just a little reminder to Black that White controls enormous tracts of territory on both wings.

26...f6 27.hf3

Stronger is the plan he found in just a few moves with 27.d1!.

27.e7 28.a4 a6

Congratulations are in order. It’s not easy to place every single pawn on the same color of your awful remaining bishop.

29.d1!

White plans e3, g4-g5 and 3g4, with absolute domination of the kingside dark squares.

29...g7 30.e3 e7 31.g5 d7 32.g3g4 a8 33.h6+ h8 34.e2 d8 35.eg4!

White’s knights continue to spin in dizzying revolutions. Schlechter feels that there is no need for ornamentation when a simple path is available. So he euthanizes any of his opponent’s potential counterplay by clearing the way for e5 and f6.

Another winning plan is to simply load up rooks along the h-file and then look for a sacrificial breakthrough. For example:
35. h3 e7 36. h4 d8 37. f3 e7 38. h3 a8 39. e3 e7 40. h1 a8 41. hg4 c7 42. xc6!! (this killing clearance shot attempts to tease out the magical from the outwardly mundane) 42... xc6 43. e5 (now h7 is under fire) 43... g8 44. h6+ h8 (we sense the imminence of a Hindenburg-like explosion) 45. f5! Clearance/double attack. Now if 45... xf5 46. xh7+ g8 47. f7+ h8 48. xg7+, picking up the queen.

35... d7 36. e5 e8 37. h3 c7 38. f3 e7 39. f6

If there is such a thing as chess board nirvana, then this is it. If only Norman Rockwell were here to paint this idyllic scene.

Have you ever seen a more dominant knight? Or a more comatose bishop?

You may be wondering why this game is inserted in the Space chapter, rather than the one where knights dominate bishops, or...
even the chapter on domination on a single color. The point is White reached his reward — this position — due to his exploitation of space. White can now further increase his advantage by walking his king up to f4, playing his rook to b1, and then breaking into Black’s position with a b4-b5 break, in conjunction with a threat to open the h-file with h2-h4, h1 and h4-h5.

44...d8 45.g2 f8 46.h4 e8 47.f3 f7 48.f4 e8
On 48...e8 49.f7! d7 50.h5! is a reminder to Black that White can also infiltrate the kingside. Normally when we divide our resources between two plans (open the queenside/open the kingside) we risk serving two rival masters, but not this time, since White has the luxury to switch from one plan to the next, depending on how Black sets up: 50...gxh5 51.g6! g7 52.gxh7 xh7 53.g5 and the problem is that after 53...g7 54.xd7, recapture allows White to promote, while non-recapture also allows promotion!

49.b1 f8 50.b5 1-0
50...axb5 51.axb5 e8 52.bxc6 xc6 53.xc6 bxc6 54.b7 g8 55.e5 and the rook and pawn ending isn’t much of a fight.

QI 9.6 – E18
Queen’s Indian Defense
Friedrich Sämisch
Aron Nimzowitsch
Copenhagen 1923 (6)

This is one of the most famous squeezes of all time. I remember surreptitiously going over this game during eighth grade Science class and then unpleasantly being busted by the teacher, who threatened to keep me after school with a detention.

1.d4 f6 2.c4 e6 3.f3 b6 4.g3 b7 5.g2 e7 6.c3 0-0 7.0-0 d5 8.e5 c6 9.cxd5?!
With the release of tension, White loses any hope of an advantage. He should have played 9.e4.

9...cxd5
The symmetrical recapture leads to easy equality.

10.f4 a6
Better was the immediate 10...c6.

11.c1 b5
Black gains space at the cost of weakening c5.

12.b3
I would consider the retrograde 12.e1!, intending d2/e3 and c5.

12...c6
Nimzowitsch, whose inclination toward the dramatic sometimes surpasses even your writer’s, comments: ‘The ghost! With noiseless steps he presses on towards c4.’

13.xc6
He removes the knight, fearing 13...a5. White could also play a mini-combination with 13.xd5! xd4 14.xc6+ xc6 15.e3 xc2 16.xg2. I slightly prefer White’s game.

13...xc6

14.h3?!
This almost looks like a random move, devoid of any meaning. There is no reason to avoid 14.e4! dxe4 (14...c8 15.c5 with a tiny edge for White) 15.xc6 xd4 16.d1 b4 17.xb4 xb4 18.g5 f8 19.xd8+ xd8 20.xe4! d1+ 21.g2 xe4 22.c8+ f8 23.e7 when White stands slightly better in the ending.
14...d7!
Now White is unable to double rooks on the c-file, due to a coming ...b5-b4, followed by ...a4.
15.h2?!
Another planless move. White should have anticipated Nimzo’s intent with 15. b1! with the idea to transfer the knight to b3, and then to c5, or to f3 and then e5.
15...e5 16.d2

16.f5?!
Nimzo gave himself an exclam for this move, which unnecessarily weakened e5, which I’m demoting to a dubious mark. Black could have seized a clear advantage with 16...b4! 17. d1 a5 with an alarming space advantage.
17.d1?!
This is an example of the dove’s tendency to do nothing, when the position screams: ‘For God’s sake, don’t just sit there. Do something!’ After this unforced retreat, White’s pieces land on awful squares, rivaling John’s from last game. White maintains equality with 17. b1!, intending 18. b4: 17...a5 18. f3 e6 19. c2 b4 20. f4 f6 21. fc1.
17...b4
This no-brainer move, which any player rated over 800 would make automatically, was generously given an exclam by Nimzowitsch.
18.b1 b5 19.g1?!
Yester-year’s GMs were painfully weak by today’s GM standards. In fact, I have a feeling that B-level club players of today possess better strategic understanding than strong masters of the past, like Sämisch or John from last game.
I don’t get it. Is he planning an attack along the g-file, with his queenside pieces paralyzed? White could still somewhat unravel with 19. f3 e6 20. f4 ac8 21. d2. His game remains inferior, but not as bad as in the game’s continuation.
19...d6

Nimzo adds a little extra con to the confusion by allowing his opponent a combination.
Black’s last move, a chess version of a white lie, provokes White into a radical ‘What if?’ with 20.e4. Should he play it?
20.e4??
The only way to keep our false claim alive, is to continue to lie. Both sides strive to take control of the game, but there the similarity ends, since White’s version is destined for a humilitating failure.
This attempt to alter the position’s natural itinerary is made with the philosophy: If we are unable to repair a broken but
necessary piece of machinery, then the next best option is to try and jerry-rig it.

When it comes to payback, we all want to do unto our opponent that which they have already done unto us. In this case it’s a blunder, since Black gets way too much for the piece.

I suppose Sämisch felt that anything but vigorous action would be akin to entering the hospital emergency room with severe chest pains and then reconsidering with: ‘It’s probably just in my head. I will go home and take an aspirin and be fine.’ He should have tried to unravel with 20.\textit{f3! f6} 21.\textit{f4} when Black’s 19…\textit{d6} must be deemed in inaccuracy, since he allowed White to swap away his good bishop.

\textbf{20…\textit{fxe4}}

Forced but strong. White’s game melts and sags. Doesn’t it remind you of one of Salvador Dali’s clocks?

\textbf{21.\textit{xh5}}

This ‘win’ of a piece is the thief who robs from herself.

\textbf{21…\textit{xf2} 22.\textit{g5}}

If 22.\textit{e1} \textit{xb2} the a-pawn falls as well and Black wins easily by pushing his queenside passed pawns.

\textbf{22…\textit{af8}}

For the piece, Black received the following:
1. Two healthy pawns, including an intruding and connected passed e-pawn.
2. Control over White’s second rank with his rook.
3. A massive territorial advantage.
4. Most importantly, White’s minor pieces are totally immobilized.

Conclusion: White is completely busted.

\textbf{23.\textit{h1} \textit{8f5} 24.\textit{e3}}

I’m afraid this isn’t the moment when the prince kisses the Sleeping Beauty on e3, and she awakens, refreshed, rested and full of love. Find a simple forcing sequence which traps White’s queen.

\textbf{24…\textit{d3}}

Threat: 25…\textit{e2}, trapping the queen. Nimzowitsch could also just immediately trap White’s queen with 24…\textit{e2!} 25.\textit{b3 \textit{a4}} when White’s disgraced queen holds only a marginal place in the hierarchy.

\textbf{25.\textit{ce1} \textit{h6!}}

If the chess board represents the world, then White’s position is the Soviet era Siberian gulag. It’s much easier to describe a
presence, rather than an absence. After 25…h6! White’s zugzwanged position is as unresponsive as a corpse. He can only move pawns for a few moves and then must lose heavy material. For example: 26.\texttt{g}h2 (if 26.\texttt{c}c1 \texttt{e}e2 White’s queen has no place to go) 26…\texttt{f}5f3 traps the queen.

0-1

KI 17.3 – E92
King’s Indian Defense
Tigran Petrosian
Anatoly Lutikov
Tbilisi ch-URS 1959 (7)

1.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{f}f6 2.c4 \texttt{g}g6 3.\texttt{c}c3 \texttt{g}g7 4.e4 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.\texttt{e}2 e5

Lutikov’s opening choice is to issue a dare to Petrosian, the unrivaled king of closed positions of his day. The choice of the King’s Indian played into his strength. The problem is, if the KID is all you know and play with black, then there is little choice.

7.d5
This is Petrosian’s own variation of the KID, where he removes all …exd4 options and forces an immediate closed game.

7…\texttt{a}a6 8.\texttt{g}g5 \texttt{h}h6 9.\texttt{h}h4

9…\texttt{c}5?!
The mixture of …\texttt{c}7-c5 with …\texttt{a}6 isn’t a harmonious fit for Black, whose knight either ends up out of play on a6, or c7. Black’s main line runs 9…g5 10.\texttt{g}g3 \texttt{f}5.

10.\texttt{d}d2
White possibly prepares g2-g4 to suppress a future …f7-f5 break.

10…\texttt{d}7
Petrosian suggested an immediate improvement. 10…\texttt{c}7.

11.\texttt{b}b5!
He makes defense of d6 difficult.

11…\texttt{a}8
A bit artificial.

A) 11…\texttt{x}b5? gives up his good bishop, weakens his light squares and virtually negates his …f7-f5 options;

B) 11…\texttt{e}7 looks best.

12.a3 \texttt{d}7
Another artificial move, shutting in his e8-bishop, this time designed to break the f6-pin. Black probably didn’t like 12…\texttt{c}7 13.\texttt{c}c3! a6 14.b4 and Black doesn’t have time for his intended …b7-b5 break.

13.\texttt{g}4
Petrosian stakes out kingside space.

13... c7
Petrosian suggested 13... h7 intending ... f6 and ... g5.

14. c3
Principle: *If you own greater space, then avoid swaps in order to keep your opponent cramped.*

14... a6 15. a4!? More thematic is 15.b4!.

15... c8
Maybe Black should have sealed the queenside with 15... a5.

16. h3!
Intending to suppress any future ... f7-f5 break with c2, d1 and e3.

16... b8 17. c2 d7
Maybe Black should try 17... b5!? 18.cxb5 axb5 19.xb5 b4 20.xb5 xb5 21.xb5 d7 23.0-0 fb8 24. a6 e8 25. f1. Black's game remains under pressure, yet this line gives him some measure of opportunity to hold the draw, since he nurses on a single, defendable weakness on d6.

18.b3 b6

19. d1!
The knight heads for e3, where it suppresses ... f7-f5.

19... b5 20. a5! h8
After 20... bxc4 21.bxc4 b4 22. b2 b8 23. d3 b7 24.0-0 a7 25. fb1 fb8 26. xb7 xb7 27.f3 c8 28. b1 f8 29. g3 g5 (sealing White's f2-f4 intent) 30. f1 e7 31.e3 g7 32.e1 d8 White obviously stands clearly better, but may have trouble winning due to a fortress from Black's side.

21. g3 g8
21... g5? allows 22. c3, seizing control over f5.

22. e3 e7
I would try 22... bxc4 23.bxc4 b4.

23. h4
This may be an opportune moment for 23.b4! cxb4 24.c5! dxc5 25. xc5 exd5 26.exd5 xd5 27. xc8 bxc8 28. xd5 c6 29. b6 xh1 30. xc8 xc8 31. b1. Black fails to achieve full compensation for his sacrificed piece.

23... e8
Black’s claustro gets even more phobic than before. This move allows White his b2-b4 break. I don’t think the fortress plan will succeed here. For example: 23...g5 24.\textbf{g}3 b4 25.h4! (it isn’t easy to aerate the dry, hard soil of the kingside) 25...f6 26.\textbf{xf}5 e5 27.\textbf{exf}5 e8 28.\textbf{e}4 g8 29.\textbf{f}3 f7 30.\textbf{hxg}5 hxg5 31.\textbf{h}7 h8 32.\textbf{xe}8 xh8 33.\textbf{f}2 \textbf{g}7 34.\textbf{f}1 c7 35.\textbf{a}2 b7 36.\textbf{a}1 e7 37.\textbf{h}7 d8 38.\textbf{g}2 c8 39.\textbf{h}1! b8 (on 39...\textbf{xa}5?? 40.\textbf{g}7 xg7 41.\textbf{xd}6+ White wins) 40.\textbf{g}7! (the boundary into Black’s camp no longer feels forbidding) 40...\textbf{xg}7 41.\textbf{h}8+ e8 42.\textbf{xf}6 d8 43.\textbf{e}4 c7 44.\textbf{h}6 e7 45.\textbf{f}6 f7 46.\textbf{xg}5 and White’s kingside pawns win easily.

\begin{center}
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\end{center}

24.b4!

At last, Petrosian establishes his thematic queenside pawn break.

24...\textbf{e}8

A) 24...\textbf{xc}b4 25.c5! \textbf{c}8 26.\textbf{xe}7! e7 27.c6 \textbf{e}8 leaves Black hopelessly tied up;

B) 24...\textbf{xc}4 is met with 25.bxc5 \textbf{b}5 26.cxd6 \textbf{e}8 27.\textbf{dc}4 with a winning position for White.

25.\textbf{bxc}5 \textbf{dxc}5 26.\textbf{xc}b5

Slightly stronger is 26.\textbf{c}3.

26...\textbf{xb}5 26...\textbf{xb}5 is met with 27.\textbf{xc}5 d7 28.\textbf{ec}4 with a huge bind and also an extra pawn.

27.\textbf{xb}5

Petrosian didn’t want Black’s knight to reach d4.

27...\textbf{xb}5 27...\textbf{xb}5! offers Black more play than he got in the game. White should avoid taking c5, which opens lines for Black. Instead he retains a significant edge with 28.\textbf{dc}4.

28.0-0 f5

The ...f7-f5 break is no big deal if White can play f2-f3 in response.

29.f3 f7 30.\textbf{dc}4 b4 31.\textbf{e}1!

Petrosian simultaneously boots Black’s rook from b4, and also transfers his bishop to e3 with tempo, where it pressures e5.

31...b7 32.\textbf{c}3! h5?

Black, in his desperation, tries to muddle the game with his last move.

33.\textbf{gx}f5??

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34.\textbf{xf}5?
This is the point in the game where many of us doves lament to our friends: ‘I had a won game, but got confused and blew it.’

Petrosian’s subsequent play is a model example of a dove taking decisive action when required – even when doing so increases the complication level. It’s a brave decision, since doves fear open spaces.

This is the point where doves tend to falter. I routinely outplay opponents and reach such winning positions. Then my downfall occurs when the game opens and complications arise. In such situations I envision the worst case scenario – just to provide perspective – and then secretly hope for the best.

Watch how Petrosian puts his opponent away, without allowing counterplay or losing the thread as the complications grow. I would be more inclined to play it safe with 34. h2.

34…e4

The idea fits the narrative, yet the mechanics fail. Ambition or perhaps desperation begins to nibble at Black’s mind. ‘Possibly’ is a word which normally makes us uneasy about the accomplishment of our intent. This is a position which doesn’t allow for such a presumption, yet over the board it isn’t so easy to find the right moves for White, since the complication level increases dramatically. With correct play from White’s side, Black won’t be reimbursed for the pawn, or to the voluntary deconstruction to his king’s cover. Black’s so-called activity is an ‘accomplishment’ on par with people who feel proud because they get a bunch of ‘likes’ on their Facebook page.

35. h2!

Petrosian formulates a plan to attack down the open g-file. Also strong was 35.fxe4! d4 36.f4! b5 37.h2 and White consolidates.

35…exf3 36.xf3 d4 37.d3!

Principle: Remove your opponent’s most active piece from the board.

37…f6 38.g1

It grows increasingly clear that Black’s king is far more exposed than White’s.

38…h7 39.xf6 xf6 40.c3! f8 41.g6!

This is the part of the movie where the audience learns how the hero is going to kill the monster. Black, now shorn of all attacking illusions, is unfit to hold his blockade of f6.

41…f7 42.a5 1-0

Black’s king is hopelessly under-protected: 42…h6 43.c8 g6 44.f4 (44…f8 45.f6 bc7 46.e5 with mate to follow) 45.g2 c7 Now comes a pretty attraction mating net: 46.h6+! (Black’s king is lured to h6, allowing White’s queen to slip past the defenses) 46.xh6 47.h8+ h7 48.f6+ g6 49.xg6#. The queen, feeling nothing from her brother’s ‘accidental’ death, decides to hire ‘weepers’ for his funeral, so that they may shed tears in her place.

GI 3.16 – D82

Grünfeld Indian Defense

Anatoly Karpov 2705

Garry Kasparov 2740

London/Leningrad Wch m 1986 (5)

Stylistically, Karpov and Kasparov were each other’s obverse. In this game the dove chokes the hawk.

1.d4 e6 2.c4 g6 3.e3 d5

The Grünfeld tends to be a battle between a pragmatist and a dreamer.

4.f4!? In the first game of the match Karpov played the more standard move order with 4.f3 g7 5.f4.
4…g7
Kasparov correctly leaves Karpov’s bishop alone and continues to develop.
Alekhine got tempted into a dubious adventure with 4…h5?! 5.e5! f6 6.g3 xg3 7.hxg3 c6 8.e3 g7 9.d3 0-0?? (9…f5 gives Black an inferior but still playable position).

Alcohol consumption and World Championship aspirations don’t mix well. This oblivious move – the very definition of castling into it – walks straight into an almost rote sacrifice, which I’m guessing would be seen by the vast majority of club-level players of today: 10.xh7! A sacrifice so obvious that it almost doesn’t deserve an exclam. Alekhine found himself in a resignable position after 10 moves in a World Championship match game, Euwe-Alekhine, Netherlands 1935.

5.e3 c5
Kasparov, perhaps fearing Karpov’s opening preparation, avoids the gambit line 5…0-0 6.cxd5 xxd5 7.xd5 xd5 8.xc7 when Black gets a development lead for the pawn.

6.dxc5
The trick is to make Black lose energy to regain the temporarily sacrificed pawn.

6…a5 7.c1
7…\textit{e}4

In playing this line, Black agrees to partake in an inequity. I don’t think Black fully equalizes with this move, which objectively deserves a dubious mark, and I honestly don’t understand why it continues to be played. Kasparov tried the more reliable 7…\textit{dxc4}! in the ninth and eleventh games of the match.

8.\textit{cxd5} e\textit{xc3} 9.\textit{e2} a\textit{xa2} 10.b\textit{xc3} d\textit{d2}+

10…a5 also falls short of equality after 11.\textit{f3} (11.\textit{c4} d\textit{7} 12.\textit{e2} e\textit{5} 13.\textit{a2} f\textit{5} 14.\textit{xe5} xe\textit{5} 15.\textit{d4} xc\textit{5} 16.\textit{xf5} gx\textit{f5} 17.0-0 with a clear advantage to White, who has the far safer king, Petrosian-Fischer, Buenos Aires 1971. Petrosian’s victory in this game snapped Fischer’s unbelievable 17-game winning streak) 11…d\textit{7} 12.c\textit{6} bxc\textit{6} 13.dxc\textit{6} c\textit{5} 14.\textit{c4} a\textit{6} 15.\textit{e2}! and Black is in trouble no matter how he responds. For example: 15…\textit{xc3}+ (15…b\textit{3} 16.\textit{xa6}! e\textit{1} 17.\textit{c4} also favors White, whose passed c6-pawn is very dangerous) 16.\textit{fl} a\textit{3} 17.e\textit{4}. Black’s pieces jumble incoherently and the comp assesses heavily in White’s favor.

11.\textit{xd2}

This is a tabiya of the Grünfeld, although it shouldn’t be, since Black has reached a difficult ending. Black hopes that his slight development lead, coupled with White’s awkward king position, offers compensation for the pawn. He will win his pawn back, yet still fall short of equality if White plays it correctly.

11…\textit{d7} 12.\textit{b5} 0-0 13.\textit{xd7}!

White shouldn’t get greedy with 13.c\textit{6}? b\textit{6} 14.e\textit{4} f\textit{5}! when White’s mastodonic center overextends.

13…\textit{xd7} 14.e\textit{4} f\textit{5}!

Kasparov applies the principle \textit{Create confrontation when leading in development, which in this case still shouldn’t be enough to equalize.}

15.e\textit{5}

Nobody has ever tried 15.\textit{b1}!? which, according to Komodo, leads to an edge for White as well.
15...e6!
A prepared novelty from Kasparov, which fails to reach its goal of equality. 15...ac8 16.c4 xc5 17.e3 c7 18.f4 fce8 19.e2! xc4 20.xc4 xc4 21.ha7 gives a comfortable edge for White in the ending, due to his strong central pawns which seal in Black’s dark-squared bishop, Petursson-H.Olafsson, Reykjavik 1988. If this is the case, then Grünfelders must admit that the entire line starting with 7...e4?! is simply a dubious adventure for Black.

16.c4
This natural move may not be White’s best. 16...b1! places enormous strain upon Black’s game. For example: 16...ab8 17.f3 h6 (17...exd5?? 18.e6 xe6 19.xb8 doesn’t offer Black any compensation for the exchange) 18.d6 g5 19.e3 (Black looks strategically busted) If 19...g4 20.e1 xe5 21.xh6 fe8 22.h3 with a winning position for White.

16...fc8 17.c6
This is a typical dove decision, choosing structure over development. Karpov expends a bit of time to secure a protected passed d-pawn. Also favorable was the developmental path with 17.f3 xc5 18.e3 cc8 19.c3 when Black’s game falls short of equality.

17...bxc6 18.d6
If Black is unable to shake White’s e5/d6 bind, he will suffocate. Radical action must be taken.

18...c5?
We don’t worry about a problem when we are unaware of its existence. In this case Kasparov commits a chronological inconsistency, reversing the natural move order of ...g6-g5! and only then playing ...c6-c5.

When we blunder, we envy the movie director who has the power to yell ‘Cut!’ and then demand the correct lines from the actors. Chess is a stage performance, without warm-ups or rehearsals. This is a flaw in Kasparov’s home analysis, after which his hoped-for piece harmony fails to cohere, since he is unable to disintegrate Karpov’s bind.

Kasparov rushed to activate his dark-squared bishop via c6, when it was critical to break up White’s central bind with 18...g5! (brute force is required of Black’s position, not finesse) 19.xg5 xe5 20.c5. Even here I prefer White, but Black’s position is better than the one he got in the game’s continuation, since his dark-squared bishop has escaped its previous confinement.

19.h4!
Karpov makes certain that Black’s undermining ...g6-g5 ideas are suppressed.

19...h6 20.e3!!

Great strategists often conceal their true abilities with an outward show of passivity, and this move is a dire warning to us all...
of the deceptively erroneous nature of outer appearances. This idea completely steals Kasparov’s momentum. Karpov found a plan of astonishing strategic depth – which Kasparov described as ‘a cold shower’ – over the board, while Kasparov’s entire analytical team missed it in their home analysis.

Here is a summary of Karpov’s ideas behind 20. h3!!:
1. White increases control over g5, which makes Black’s …g6-g5 freeing ideas virtually unplayable.
2. By developing the knight to h3, Karpov plans to meet Black’s coming …c6 with f2-f3!, which kills the light-squared bishop’s influence down the diagonal.
3. White, after securing his e-pawn further, plans to play f2-f3 and then transfer his knight to d3, via f2, where it performs the following functions:
   a) It continues to keep a grip over e5.
   b) It pressures Black’s c5-pawn.
   c) It covers the b2-square against black rook infiltration attempts.
   d) If Black pushes his passed a-pawn down the board to a2, then White can play a1, transfer his other rook to c2, then play c1, placing three attackers on the a-pawn, with Black only able to defend it twice.
4. If Black is unable to achieve a successful …g6-g5 break, then White’s gigantic space advantage thanks to his e5- and d6-pawns essentially chokes Black, since he plays down a piece, with his dark squared bishop – a vampire who may never ever see daylight again – eternally shut out of the game. Kasparov wrote that he only expected 20. f3.

20...a5
There is nothing better: 20...cb8 21.f3 b2+ and the rook’s infiltration doesn’t benefit Black a bit after 22.c2 xc2+ 23.xc2 a4+ 24.d2 b8 25.a1 b2+ 26.e1! e8 27.xa7 xg2 28.d7 and White wins a piece.

21.f3 a4 22.f2!
Karpov isn’t distracted by Black’s surging a-pawn and continues to follow his plan. The inaccurate 22.f2?! allows Black to lash out with 22...g5!.

22...a3 23.a2
Karpov’s inexorable plan is kind of a death threat in the mail for Kasparov.

23...a2 24.a3
White’s geometry is a self-supporting entity. Mission accomplished. The position morphed into a cirque de dismay for Black, who has no play and is strategically busted.

24...a3
24...a4 25.a1! xc4 26.xa2 d4 27.e3! d5 28.e5 xe5 To the naked eye, it feels as if Black’s troubles are behind him, but comp analysis proves that this just isn’t the case: 29.a7 b5 30.xe5 xe5 31.b1! xe3 32.xb5 e2+ 33.c3 e3+ 34.g2 e5 35.d7 a8 36 bb7 and White’s double rooks on the seventh rank, coupled with his passed d-pawn, mean that Black is busted.

25.a1
Now Karpov systematically surrounds Black’s a-pawn.

25...g5? 26.dg5 hxg5 27.xg5 ef7
27...b8 28. g2 e2! b3 29. x c5 b2+ 30. f1 c8 31. d7 and game over.

White’s forces begin to stick to the a2-pawn, like barnacles on a ship’s hull.

31...b8 32. e1 1-0

The conversion came with understated elegance. It’s time to wave bye-bye to Black’s only resource, the a2-pawn. The unbelievable part of it all was that he foresaw this scenario a dozen moves ago when he played 20. h3!! , which almost constitutes a kind of strategic clairvoyance denied to the rest of the chess world.

QP 6.15 – A04
Queen’s Pawn Openings
Cyrus Lakdawala 2438
Melikset Khachian 2480
Los Angeles 2001 (3)

1. f3 c5 2. c3
A sure-fire way to infuriate a hawk is to reach a position of enforced idleness. It took incredible will power to refuse to award this move the ‘!!’ it truly deserves. It fills my heart with loving warmth that my beloved Lakdawala Accelerated is perhaps the most boring opening in all of chess.

2...e6 3. d4 f6 4. e3 b6
The position transposes to Queen’s Indian vs. Colle.

5. b d2 b7
Removing White’s good bishop with 5... a6 is both boring and equal, neither of which interested the GM, who wanted to complicate.

6. d3 d6
Melik doesn’t want to occupy d5 with a pawn. Also played are 6... c6; 6... c6; and 6... d5.

7. e4 e7 8.0-0 0-0 9. e1

9...e8?!
He wants to eventually play ...e6-e5, in Ruy Lopez fashion, but it feels to me that he gets an inferior version. 9... c6 10. a3 d7 (10... c8 11.b4 e8 12. b2 f8 13. c1 g6 14. b3 (a hawk would play the queen to e2, closer to Black’s king) 14... c7 15. b1 g7 16. c d1 e7 17.h3 d7 18. a2! b8 19. a1! Réti would have been so proud of me. The game is about even, Lakdawala-Rensch, Century City 2002) 11.b4 c7 12. b2 f6 13. c1 g6 14. f1 g7 15. b1 a d8 16. e3 f6 17.d5 exd5 18.exd5 e5 19.c4 h5? (19... xf3+ is correct) 20. xe5 dxe5 21. f5! with a clear advantage for White, Lakdawala-Sevillano, Los Angeles 2002.

10. a3
The idea is to slowly expand on the queenside with b2-b4. The alternative is to play for an e4-e5 break with 10. e2 and go directly after his king.

10... f8 11. f1 e5?
Black doesn’t want to worry about White playing e4-e5, so he does it himself. The problem is he ends up in an inferior Ruy Lopez structure with his light-squared bishop staring at a wall on d5. I was relieved to get a blocked position with a space advantage, both of which doves tend to handle well. I think he is better off keeping the center flexible with something like 11…cxd4 12.cxd4 bd7 13.g3 g6 14.g5 h6 15.e3 with only an edge for White.

12.d5 bd7 13.g3 c7 14.c4
I'm not about to allow him …c5-c4, …b6-b5 and …c5, which generates queenside play.

14...a6?!?
I don’t think his plan to transfer his knight to g6 is all that worrisome for White, since I can simply play g2-g3, denying the knight good squares. 14...g6 would be more in accord with normal Lopez protocol.

15.e5 d8
It may seem strange that he dodges a swap of his dark-squared bishop, but the problem is if he goads it with 15...g6?
16.xe7+ the dark squares around his king are seriously compromised.

16.h3 b8 17.h2
Clearing f3 for the queen and opening g4 for the knight.

17...c8 18.f3 g6 19.g3
This move restrains his g6-knight.

19...xf5?!
Sometimes following principle can be incorrect. He follows the edict *Swap pieces when cramped*, but he also violates the principle *Don’t swap away your good bishop*. In this case Black applies a misdiagnosis, since the latter principle carries greater weight. Now Black’s light-square fears magnify. Correct was 19...e7. I planned 20.e3. Principle: *Avoid swaps when you own more space*. Now my h-pawn is untouchable since his bishop gets trapped after g3-g4, and White enjoys a pleasant space advantage.

20.xf5 c8?!
When we make concessions like this, we ask ourselves: ‘What is the worst that can happen?’ and then the result turns out to be even worse than that. Fearing a direct attack upon his king, Melik forces me into a very favorable ending, which was just fine with your attack-challenged writer, whose competence level rises dramatically the second queens are removed from the board.

21.xc8 xc8
1. Extra central territory, with possibilities to expand on both wings.
2. The bishop pair.
3. Black gets stuck with a bad bishop, with many of his pawns fixed on dark squares.
4. Black’s light squares are weak.
Conclusion: this position is a dove’s dream come true.

22. d2 e7 23. g4 b7

He plays for a …b6-b5 break, which will be very difficult to pull off. 23… xg4 follows the principle of trading when cramped, but doesn’t really help Black much here, since after 24.hxg4:
1. White’s last move clamps down on all future …f7-f5 breaks from Black.
2. White may opt for doubling rooks on the h-file, pressuring h7, especially if I get a chance to play g4-g5 next.

24. e3
Principle: Avoid trades when you control extra space.

24… e8
Idea … g5, activating his bad .

25. h4!
Oh no you don’t!

25… f8 26. b4
White begins to expand on the queenside.

26... g6 27. eb1 f6
His idea is to play for an …f6-f5 break with … f7 and … g7. The comp doesn’t like this attempt to get active at all and suggests remaining passive with 27… d7.

28. g2
White may later want to expand with f2-f4, but then my e4-pawn could get tender after …exf4, so my king may be able to help out with its defence with a future f3.

28… f7 29. a2
With the possibility of transferring to the kingside later, or doubling on the b-file.

29… g7
Still playing for …f6-f5.

30. bxc5 dxc5
He allows me a protected passed d-pawn to close queenside lines.

A) 30…bxc5 allows White absolute control of the open b-file;

B) Maybe the time has arrived for a radical exchange sacrifice: 30… xc5!?, to seize control over the dark squares and play for a fortress after 31. b4 d7. This is the way I would play as Black.

31. c3!
Preventing 31…f5, while preparing an f2-f4 break.

31…c7 32.g4
 Threatening a cheapo on h6, which has the effect of also disorganizing his …f6-f5 plan.

32…h8 33.h6
 This move basically announces that he isn’t getting an …f6-f5 break.

33.e7 34.g1 e8 35.f4
 At long last. The comp prefers 35.g4 intending g4-g5 next.

35.g7 36.g4 h5?!
 This move is based on the philosophy If the enemy is about to capture you, our best bet may be to ingest the cyanide pellet to avoid torture. As mentioned before, waiting is not the hawk’s strong suit. This impatient move weakens the pawn front around his king, and pushes the odds of a successful defense to the level of insurmountable.

37.e3
 An f4-f5 break looms for Black, whose choices are apathy or violence.

37…exf4!?
 Violence it is. If you summon a genie, make certain she arrives in a puff of smoke, and not on a bus. Black’s counterplay on my e4-pawn arrives too slowly. This is another impatient move, this time opening the game for my bishop pair, handing me a gigantic pawn center, and enabling White an attack down the g-file on the vulnerable g6-pawn. Naturally aggressive players get embarrassed when unfamiliarly forced on the defensive, since they believe in their hearts that any kind of defensive servitude shames them.

37…d7 allows White to continue squeezing with 38.f5.

38.gxf4 ed7 39.f3 ed6
 The position contains multiple volatile elements, all of which favor White.
Black wants to double rooks and pressure e4. Should I protect my e4-pawn, or is there a superior plan for White?

40. g2!
When stodgy positional players find even the most basic tactical inspiration, we feel that we are blessed by Father Mikhail Tal. White should ignore Black’s threats on e4 and play for mate, targeting g6.

40… g8!
He can’t afford to win e4 in exchange for his g6-pawn with 40… ce8?. His king is fatally exposed after 41. fgl (the Bat signal is aimed at g6)

A) 42… f7 43. g7+ f8 44. g8+ f7 45. lg7#;
B) 42… h7 43. f5! x34 44. h6#;
C) 42… h8 43. xe4 xe4 44. h6#

41. e5+! xf5 42. exf5
White attackers queue up on g6.

42… f8 43. fxg6 d7
Black’s disharmonious pieces, puppets manipulated by a puppeteer with some kind of medical nervous disorder, jerk about without purpose.

44. f5 ge8 45. d2
Black’s infiltration squares are covered.

45… f8
He might have been better off attempting to mess it up with 45… b5 46. cxb5 b6 47. c6 d8 48. c1 xd5 49. f5 b6 50. a4 c7 51. c4. White threatens 52. a5 and is still winning.

46. a4
This move halts 46… b5.

46… a5
The attempt to put up a fortress fails, since White has too many inroads into Black’s position via the leaking light squares.

46… a6 is met with 47. b1.

47. ff2 de6 48. d3!

Black’s only source of power in his position is his doubled rooks, so my plan is to trade just one pair of rooks.

48… c7 49. e2 xe2 50. xe2! xe7 51. c3 d8 52. d3 d7 53. f5 b7 54. e6 1-0
The finish would be 54… b8 55. f7 b7 56. g5! a7 (56… c7 is met with 57. xf6+! xf6 58. g7 when White promotes...
his g-pawn) 57.f5 g7 58.xh5 a7 59.d2 d7 60.h6+ h8 61.xf8 mate.
CHAPTER 18
Major-piece endings

We look at two of the most famous major-piece endings ever played in the next two games.

QO 16.6 – D30
Queen’s Gambit
Akiba Rubinstein
Emanuel Lasker
St Petersburg 1909

1.d4 d5 2.f3 e6
If Black intends a Queen’s Gambit Declined, Tarrasch Variation, the modern move order normally runs 2…c5 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.g3 c6 6.g2, and only now 6…f6.
3.c4 e6 4.g5 c5!? 5.cxd5 exd5 6.c3 e6 7.g5
Rubinstein, a certified dove, wouldn’t likely be attracted to a violent attempt to refute Lasker’s move order with 5.xf6!? xf6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.c3 e6 8.e4! (even though Black owns the bishop pair, White should still open the position, since the principle is: A development lead outweighs an opponent’s bishop pair, when it comes to opening the game) 8…dxe4 9.b5+ c6 10.a4 c8 11.xe4 f5 and now White gets away with 12.0-0! xe4 13.f1 f5 14.c5 f4 15.d5 xax4 16.xa4 d6 17.e2 0-0 18.dxe6 fxe6 19.xe6 and White retains some pressure in the ending.
5…exd5 6.c3 cxd4!?
This move is based on the belief that great reward walks side by side with great risk. Lasker the hawk decides to flout precedence, attempting to lure Rubinstein into murky complications with a pawn sacrifice. The fact that Lasker started with a QGD and now wants to complicate like crazy, is a bit like looking to hire a hit-man, but only one with an upstanding moral character. When we go crazy from a solid opening, we make a deal with the devil, who, as we all know, loves to double cross on the signed contract.
7.xd4
No thanks. Rubinstein wisely avoids 7.xf6!? xf6 8.xd5 d8 9.xd4 c6 10.d2 e6 11.0-0-0 c8 with a complex position where it feels like Black may have enough for the pawn, with bishop pair, development lead and an open c-file.
7.c6 e3 a7 9.b5 d7
10. \( \text{x} \text{xf6} \)?

Many doves, including your writer, are notorious pawn grabbers who tend to underestimate an opponent’s compensation. Rubinstein, perhaps unwisely, grabs a pawn after all. It was safer and probably stronger to continue developing and play strategically with 10.0-0 a6 11. \( \text{x} \text{xc6 bxc6} \) 12. \( \text{c} \text{c1} 0-0 \) (12...c5? 13. \( \text{b} \text{b3} \) e6 14. \( \text{x} \text{xf6} \) with a clear advantage for White, no matter which way Black recaptures) 13. a4! with a safe edge for White, due to his coming blockade of c5.

10... \( \text{xf6} \) 11. \( \text{xd5} \) xd4 12. \( \text{xc6} \) bxc6 12. \( \text{c1} \) 0-0 (12...c5? 13. \( \text{b3} \) e6 14. \( \text{x} \text{xf6} \) with a clear advantage for White, no matter which way Black recaptures) 13. a4! with a safe edge for White, due to his coming blockade of c5.

Lasker’s queen creates simultaneous attacks on g2, d5 and even b5, via an x-ray.

13. \( \text{xc6} \) 

13. e2+!? isn’t all that tempting for White, since after 13...f8 Black threatens multiple points in White’s position, with the added menaces of 14...e8+ and 14...xd4.

13... \( \text{xc6} \) 14. e3 0-0-0?

‘Logical’ for the natural tactician often translates to ‘incomprehensible’ for the strategist. In inferior positions, our grief tends to mix with a corresponding need for vengeance.

Lasker overreacts. Black’s temporary initiative doesn’t signify an equivalence to White’s strategic superiority. As it turns out, Lasker’s king is far less safe on the queenside than Rubinstein’s king on the kingside. Black should save the game if he complies with 14...xg2! 15. g1 a5+ 16. d2 xd2+ 17. xd2 e4. Black stands only slightly worse in the ending, since White’s development lead remains: 18. g4! (18. xg7?? is met simply with 18...g6 with ...f8 to follow, winning an exchange) 18...g6 19. c1 d8 20.d5 0-0 21. c7 f5 22. d4 f4 23. g2 f7 and Black should hold the ending.

15.0-0 \( \text{he8} \)

Which is the more powerful force? The hunter’s drive for food, or the prey’s spirit of self-preservation? Black threatens 16...xe3, undermining the only defender of the mating square g2. How should White deal with it?

16. \( \text{c1} \)!!

The answer is to allow Black his ‘combination’. One side interprets his threats literally, while the other perceives hidden meaning behind the outer form. Rubinstein’s move oozes contemptuous indifference to his opponent’s intent, but just remember, we can sometimes get the opponent’s guard down by professing (outward) stupidity.

The passively weakening 16.g3? \( \text{b8} \) offers Black full compensation for the pawn.

16... \( \text{xe3} \)

Just because you dream it, doesn’t mean you have the capability of building it. Lasker’s magic contains the ‘hocus’, yet is
missing the vital ‘pocus’ portion of his spell. After 16...a8 17.d5 xe3 18.fxe3 xe3+ 19.f2 xd5 20.e1 Black doesn’t get enough for the exchange.

17.xc6+
Obviously not 17.fxe3?? xg2 mate.

17...bxc6 18.c1!

Black’s hypothesis is upturned when tested by hard evidence. This is Rubinstein’s startling point to his previous 16.c1!! To just ignore Black’s hanging e3-rook creates the same jarring effect as the President of the United States, loudly snoring up mucus, just before delivering a speech before the United Nations.

18...xd4
There is nothing better.

19.fxe3
Another nasty point is that Black is unable to simultaneously protect d4, c6 and f7, and soon ends up with a pawn in the hole.

19...d7?
As so often happens, the psychological shock of missing something earlier leads to a second error. Lasker underestimates the danger to his king, perhaps due to the minimal material level on the board. 19...d6! minimizes the damage: 20.xf7 h5! (threatening White’s rook and also 21.d1+, winning White’s queen) 21.c4 d1+ 22.f1 xf1+ 23.xf1 f5+ 24.e2 b7 The queen ending won’t be so easy for White to convert, despite his extra pawn.

20.xc6+ d8

21.f4! f5
21...d1+ 22.f2 d2+? 23.e1! xg2?? 24.d4+ loses the queen, since 24...e7 allows mate after 25.d6+ e8 26.d8#. The king’s flesh creeps at his sister’s anything-but-sisterly touch.

22.c5 e7!
It’s humiliating when our opponent forces us to publicly confess our failure. Lasker, now correctly perceiving the dangers to his king, goes into damage control mode, offering to enter a pawn down rook and pawn ending, his best chance for survival. Unfortunately for him, he faces one of the greatest endgame technicians of all time.

Once again, Black is unable to pick off White’s g-pawn: 22...d1+ 23.f2 d2+?? 24.e1 xg2 25.f8+ d7 26.f7+ c6 27.e6+ b7 28.d7+ b6 29.b4+ c5 30.b5+ c4 31.d5 mate.

23.xe7+ xe7 24.xf5 d1+ 25.f2
25...f1 doesn't help due to 25...d2 26...f2 8d1+.

25...d2+ 26...f3 8xb2 27...a5

Endgame principle: Tie your opponent’s rook down to a passive posture by forcing it to defend a weakness.

27...b7 28...a6!

This move, like nuclear weapons, is built not to actually fire, but to deter. Rubinstein further hems in Black’s king. In such positions the defender must simply endure with little or no hope of recourse.

28...f8 29.e4 8c7 30.h4 8f7

Black can do nothing but await events.

31.g4 8f8 32.f4 8e7 33.h5

White needs to create a puncture in Black’s attempted kingside fortress.

33...h6

Well, that was easy! Lasker does the work for his opponent. This appears to be an expression of exasperation, more than one of resistance.

Doing nothing also fails after 33...f7 34.d5 8c7 35.e5 8f7 36.a4 8e7 37.a5 8d7 38.g5 8d7 39.h6 8g6 40.d4 8c4+ 41.d5 8c7 42.e6 8b7 43.d6 8b1 44.xa7+ 8xe6 45.xh7 8g1 46.a6 8xg5 47.a7 and the a-pawn costs Black his rook.

34.d5 8f7 35.e5 8b7 36.d6 8e7 37.a6 8f7 38.d6 8f8 39.c6 8f7 40.a3! 1-0

It’s zugzwang:

A) 40...e7 41.e6+ 8f8 42.c8+ 8e8 43.xe8+ 8xe8 44.g6 8f8 45.e7+ and White wins the king and pawn ending;

B) 40...f8 41.g6 (White threatens a back rank check) 41...b8 42.e6 8e8 43.e7+! wins, no matter how Black captures;

C) 40...d7?? walks into 41.e6+;

D) 40...a5 41.a6 8b5 42.a7+ 8f8 43.g6 8b6+ 44.h7 is totally hopeless for Black.
When I first played this game over it exerted a deep influence, enhancing my dove’s natural aversion for taking on an isolani.

```
1.c4 e6 2.e3 d5 3.d4 Ae7 4.e4 f5 5.Ag5 h6 6.h4 0-0 7.c1
```

7.e3 is White’s main line.

```
7...dxc4
```

The game turns into a delayed version of a Queen’s Gambit Accepted.

```
1.e3
c5
```

The more ambitious 8.e4 can be met with 8...c6! (the immediate 8...xe4!? leads to 9.xe7 xc3 10.xd8 xd1 11.e7! (threatening Black’s rook and also a3, trapping the wayward d1-knight) 11...xb2 12.xf8 xf8 13.c2 d3+ 14.xd3 cxd3 15.xc7 a6 16.c3 f6 17.d2 d7 18.xd3 c6 and Black may have full compensation for the exchange, with one pawn and control over d5) 9.e5 (9.xc4? xe4! (now this trick works out well for Black) 10.xe4 xh4 with an extra pawn) 9...d5 10.xe7 cxe7 11.xc4 f5 12.bxc3 b6. Black has developed harmoniously and stands slightly better, since White’s center will be attacked with a coming ...c7-c5, Tukmakov-Beliavsky, Tilburg 1984.

```
8...c5 9.xc4 cxd4 10.exd4
```

So we end up with an isolani position.

```
10...e6 11.0-0
```

```
11...h5!
The comp doesn't approve of this time-losing maneuver, but I do, since it follows the principle The side playing against the isolani should seek swaps.
```

```
12.xe7 e7 13.b3
```

If White tries to exploit his development lead with 13.c5 f6 14.e1, Black plays 14...d6! and prepares to complete his development with ...d7 next.

```
13...f6 14.e5 d7
```

This looks like a more accurate development plan than the weakening 14...b6 15.e3.

```
15.e2 c8
```
16. \( e4? \)
The finely tuned balance of force has been disrupted. Such a passive choice – which is in direct contradiction to his position’s aggressive requirements – expresses a thought which fails to conform with Kortchnoi’s normally fanatical religious beliefs on the chessboard. This move fails to fit the standard for an isolani’s minimal daily requirement. Now White’s attacking chances become nothing more than a two-dimensional facade. It’s in clear violation of the principle *Avoid swaps when you own the isolani*, which, for some bizarre reason, Kortchnoi – normally a master of the isolani – continually violates the entire game.

16. \( \text{fd1} \) looks about even, while stylistically I prefer Black.

16. ... \( \text{xexe4} \) 17. \( \text{exe4 c6} \) 18. \( \text{xc6?!} \)

The position’s exchange-induced absence of violence is similar to sullen silence, immediately after a screaming match. This does remove one of Black’s best pieces and creates a bishop for knight imbalance, but again Kortchnoi violates the isolani/anti-swapping principle.

18. ... \( \text{xc6!} \)

18... \( \text{xc6?!} \) allows White to bail out with 19.\( \text{d5} \), eliminating his isolani.

19. \( \text{c3?!} \)
Correct is 19. \( \text{xc6} \), which should be met with 19...\( \text{bxc6!} \) when White’s d-pawn looks weaker than Black’s isolated c-pawn. At least in this version Black gets stuck with a pawn weakness.

19. ... \( \text{d6} \) 20. \( \text{g3 d8} \) 21. \( \text{d1} \)

Karpov begins to load up on the isolani.

21. ... \( \text{b6!} \)
A relentless probing of the opponent has a way of setting the defender’s nerves on edge. Karpov worries White with ... \( \text{b4} \) ideas.

22. \( \text{e1} \)
A passive retreat is always depressing. After 22. \( \text{g2} \) perhaps Kortchnoi feared a line like 22...\( \text{b4} \). White should have played 23. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 24. \( \text{xc4 b4} \) 25. \( \text{b3 a5!} \) with annoying pressure.

22. ... \( \text{d7} \) 23. \( \text{cd3 d6} \)

25. \( \text{xc6?} \) \( \text{xc6} \) 26.\( \text{d5 b4} \) and the isolani falls.

25. ... \( \text{d5} \) 26. \( \text{d2 b6} \)
Threat: 27...\( \text{b4} \) and 28...\( \text{xd4} \).
27.\textit{xd5}?
He continues to squander that which matters most. Ugh! Most of us would rather suffer through our doctor’s prostate exam than defend this position for Kortchnoi’s side. Now White’s position is one to be endured, rather than played.

We see yet another violation of the same principle. This is one of the most un-Kortchnoic games I have ever seen, where he obligingly hands Karpov favorable swaps in lamb-like fashion. His judgment was also impaired by serious time pressure, which can feel like a kind of demonic possession, where our traitorous hand seizes control of our brain.

He could have minimized his suffering with 27.a3.

27\ldots\textit{xd5}

We reach a major-piece ending that is highly favorable for Black. The physiognomy of White’s slightly weak isolani reflects past structural abuse. But is it enough for Black to win? Here is the problem: when we attend to a single weakness, we tend to create further concessions, which have the effect of a snowball tossed down a hill, which grows larger with each turn.

Black’s simple plan is: triple on the d-file and then follow with \ldots\textit{e6-e5!}, which adds a fourth attacker and wins White’s isolani. So Kortchnoi is tempted to play \textit{f2-f4?!}, which creates new dents in his position, and, most importantly, weakens his king.

28.\textit{b3} \textit{c6} 29.\textit{c3} \textit{d7} 30.\textit{f4}?! The sickly d-pawn continues to hold White’s defenders in its gravitational embrace. Kortchnoi continues to sacrifice to a lost cause, opting to weaken his position to suppress \ldots\textit{e6-e5}. White would have been better off just handing over the pawn with 30.\textit{f3} \textit{b6} 31.\textit{c3} \textit{e5} (White’s tender d4-pawn is the cracking twig underfoot an obese hiker) 32.\textit{e1} \textit{exd4} 33.\textit{d3}. White’s pieces will be tied down by Black’s extra and passed d-pawn. Perhaps this position may be a technical win for Black, but it won’t be easy. This is a lesser evil than weakening his king with 30.\textit{f4}?!.

30\ldots\textit{b6} 31.\textit{b4} White’s passively posted major pieces grudgingly dance attendance to the isolani, like children being dragged to the dentist by their mother. It is well known that lateral defense is the worst posture for a rook.

31\ldots\textit{b5} Now \ldots\textit{a7-a5} is in the air.

32.\textit{a4} Kortchnoi’s rook needs air, so he temporarily sacrifices a pawn.

32\ldots\textit{bxa4} 33.\textit{a3} \textit{a5}! 34.\textit{xa4} \textit{b5}! Now White must cover Black’s threat to infiltrate e2 with his queen.

35.\textit{d2}
35...e5!
Karpov reminds his opponent that even chains couldn’t hold back King Kong. Karpov’s almost infallible strategic judgment
fathoms the correct plan. He rips his mask off, Mission Impossible style, revealing his true intent: he isn’t interested in winning
a pawn. Instead, he opens avenues for his major pieces to go after White’s under-protected king.
36.fxe5  
37...e5
Threatening a mate in two, starting with 37... e1+.
37...a1?
A mistake in an already lost position. White could put up more resistance with 37... f2  f5 38... xf5  xf5 39... a1.
37...e8!
The e1-check threat forces White’s next move, allowing Karpov’s other rook decisive infiltration.
38.dxe5
38...xd2 39...xa5
39...e1  d8 (threat: 40... d1) 40...e3  d5 41...e4  d3 42...f4 (42...e2 loses the queen to 42... d1+ 43... f2  d2) 42...g5
43...f5  d1+ 44...f2 (if 44... g2  e1 45... f3  f1+ wins) 44...d2+ 45...e2  d4+ 46...g2 g4! (with a mating threat on g1)
47...f2  d5+ wins.
37...c6
Threat: 40...g2 mate. The queen is the German Shepherd police dog, charging after a perpetrator who is stupid enough to try
and outrun her.
40...xg8? 41...xa8+  h7 41...b1+  g6 42...f1  c5+
Karpov isn’t likely to fall for 42...xa8?? 43...xf7+  h8 44...f6+. This is that mutually awkward moment when the stripper
bursts from the cake and then realizes she was delivered to the wrong address: the minister’s house. Black must agree to a
draw, since 44...g8?? actually loses to 45...xg6+  f8 46...xh6+  e7 47...xd2.
43...h1  d5+ 0-1
White loses his queen after 44...g1  d1.
Compare the following game with Karpov’s play: 1.e4 c6!? (my old student, Varun, at the time one of the top juniors in the
country, led the tournament by a half point. So of course, desperately needing to win, I played the Caro-Kann, which, I freely
admit, makes sense only to another dove!) 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.c4  f6 5.e3 c6 6.e3 b4 7.cxd5  xd5 8.d2  c6 9.d3
f6 10.a3  e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.g5 h6 13.h4  h5!
Like a good copycat, I followed Karpov’s anti-isolani plan.

14. \texttt{xe7 xe7} 15. \texttt{e5 f6} 16. \texttt{c1 d7} 17. \texttt{b1 c6} 18. \texttt{d3 c8} 19. \texttt{fd1 e8} 20. \texttt{h3 ed5} 21. \texttt{a2 xc3} (every swap helps Black) 22. \texttt{bxc3 e4} 23. \texttt{e3 b5} 24. \texttt{d3 xd3} 25. \texttt{xd3 a5} 26. \texttt{c4 bxc4} 27. \texttt{xc4 ed8} 28. \texttt{b1 d7} 29. \texttt{a2 cd8} 30. \texttt{b5 c7} 31. \texttt{b1 d6} 32. \texttt{e3 c6} 33. \texttt{b3 d6} 34. \texttt{e3 d5} 35. \texttt{d3 g6} 36. \texttt{a2 c7} 37. \texttt{f3 c6} 38. \texttt{e2 a6} 39. \texttt{c4 xa3} 40. \texttt{d3 d6} 41. \texttt{d1 f4} 42. \texttt{b3 xd4} (even the Sesame Street Cookie Monster would condemn me for my inexcusable table manners. Black picks up a second pawn) 43. \texttt{xd4 xd4} 44. \texttt{b7 c6} 45. \texttt{a2 f4} 0-1 Krishnan-Lakdawala, San Diego rapid 2014.
CHAPTER 19

Revolt of the proletariat

In this chapter we look at positions with a queen vs multiple minor pieces.

KI 63.5 – E68
King’s Indian Defense
Mikhail Botvinnik
Vasily Smyslov
Moscow Wch m 1 1954 (14)

1. d4

In a simul game as a kid, against the great Mikhail Botvinnik, I blew a strategically won game and went down in a blaze of humiliation when he complicated and I hung all my pieces. It was then that I realized that dove world champions have the ability to transform into bloodthirsty hawks, any time it pleases them!

1... f6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 g7 4. g2 0-0 5. c3 d6 6. f3 bd7

Today, 6... c6 is popular.

7. 0-0 e5 8. d4 c6 9... e3

Slightly inaccurate, since it allows Black the disruptive 9... g4. 9.h3 is considered White’s most accurate continuation today.

9... g4! 10. g5 b6

This move, which pressures d4, isn’t as strong as it looks, since it leaves Black vulnerable to e7 tricks. Better was 10... f6!, which offers Black equality at a minimum: 11. c1 exd4 12. xd4 c5 13. b1 a5 14. b3 f5! 15. exf5?! (White remains equal after 15. h3 c6 h6 16. xh6 xh6 17. exf5) 15... f6 16. ce2 xf5 17. xf5 xf5 and Black’s super-activity outweighs White’s bishop pair, Kovalenko-Kotronias, Cappelle-la-Grande 2015.

11. h3! exd4

Better is 11... gf6 12. b3 exd4 13. xd4. Black shouldn’t try to exploit White’s semi-loose d4-knight with 13... xe4?

14. xe4 xd4 15. c1. Black’s extra pawn isn’t worth his strategic difficulties: 15... c5 16. e1 e8 (16... e5?? 17. f6+ g7 18. d5 a5 19. f6+ h6 20. b4! (interference) 20... xa2 21. c2 a3 22. d2+ and White forces mate) 17. d2 and Black experiences serious difficulties in completing his queenside development, since any shift of his knight allows White to invade f6.

12. a4 a6 13. hxg4 b5
Smyslov’s point. Black wins the piece back. The resulting complications still slightly favor White.

14. \texttt{xd4}

This move allows Black dynamic equality. Perhaps better is 14. \texttt{e7!} \texttt{xe8} 15. \texttt{xd6 bxa4} 16.\texttt{c5!}. Now if Black grabs the e-pawn with 16…\texttt{xe4?} (correct is 16…\texttt{d3!} 17.\texttt{e5!}), 17. \texttt{e1 \texttt{xe1+} 18.\texttt{xe1} 1f 19.\texttt{e5} is heavily in White’s favor.

14…\texttt{bxa4} 15. \texttt{xc6}?

This is as high-risk a strategy as keeping rat poison next to the sugar jar in the kitchen. Like the vast majority of doves, Botvinnik’s strength decreased in open and messy positions, like this one. Here he gets tempted into winning material, at the cost of allowing Smyslov’s pieces greatly enhanced power.

He could also have ignored the material and sacrificed it himself with 15. \texttt{e7!} \texttt{e8} 16. \texttt{xd6 e5} 17.\texttt{c5! \texttt{xg4}} 18.\texttt{f3 c4!} 19.\texttt{fxg4 \texttt{xd6}} 20.\texttt{e5!} (20.cxd6 \texttt{b6} is at least even for Black) 20…\texttt{c4} 21. \texttt{xc6 \texttt{e8}}.

15…\texttt{xc6} 16.\texttt{e5}

In chaotic situations like this, both players view the other as patients in the physician’s waiting room, each maliciously praying the other is sicker than he is. The unconfused comp says the game is even.

16. \texttt{xc4} 17. \texttt{xa8 \texttt{xe5}}

Black has received full compensation. For the exchange Smyslov achieved pressure against g4 and White’s kingside light squares, and also pressure against White’s queenside pawns.

18. \texttt{c1 \texttt{b4}}

18…\texttt{xe4!} looks at least equal for Black after 19.\texttt{f3 \texttt{b4}} 20.\texttt{fxg4 \texttt{xa8}} 21.\texttt{d5 \texttt{e8}}.

19.\texttt{a3 \texttt{xb2}} 20.\texttt{xa4 \texttt{b7!}}

Botvinnik gets tempted by the black queen/b7-bishop line up and plays:

21.\texttt{b1??}

When we look back on our double question mark decisions, it feels like we just took a selfie, wearing a court jester’s uniform, with a hat with bells on it. This is a rare catastrophic strategic misjudgment from Botvinnik, who grossly underestimates the power of Smyslov’s minor pieces versus his queen. For Botvinnik, the correct plan continues to press itself into the shadows.

He could have saved the game with 21. \texttt{xb7!} \texttt{xb7} 22. \texttt{c3!}, returning his extra exchange: 22…\texttt{f3+} 23. \texttt{xf3 \texttt{xf3}} 24. \texttt{e7 \texttt{c8}} 25. \texttt{xd6} and the game heads for a draw.

21…\texttt{f3+} 22. \texttt{h1 \texttt{xa8!}}

It’s time for pitch forks and torches to drive the monster from the cliff. Democracy isn’t all that appealing when the vote count
doesn't go your way. Black’s three minor pieces overwhelm White’s ineffective queen.

23. \textbf{x}b2  xg5+ 24. \textbf{h}2  f3+ 25. \textbf{h}3  \textbf{x}b2 26. \textbf{x}a7  e4

Debris begins to wash ashore after the tsunami. White is busted:
1. Three minor pieces are way too much for the queen.
2. Black also owns a passed d-pawn he can shepherd down the board.
3. White’s queen is stripped of her power, since she has no vulnerable points of attack in Black’s position.
4. White’s king is precariously posted on h3, and any attempt to play d g2 allows Black’s f3-knight a nasty looking discovered check.

I remember in my first rated tournament, I ‘won’ my opponent’s queen for a rook and two bishops and delusionally thought I was winning. I got crushed. When we first learn chess, we are indoctrinated into thinking that a queen is all-powerful.

27.a4
This guy isn’t going anywhere.
27…g7
Smyslov decides to play directly for White’s king rather than go for the plan of pushing his d-pawn down the board with 27…d5, which also wins.

28. \textbf{d}1  e5 29. \textbf{e}7
Is it just me, or does White’s aimless queen remind you of a barely sober Lindsay Lohan at one of her many court appearances?

29…c8!
Intending 30…c2, 31…xf2 and 32…h2 mate. White is surprisingly defenseless against this simple plan.

30.a5
30. \textbf{x}d6  c1 and White’s king is caught in a mating net after 31.g5  xg5+! 32.\textbf{x}g5  h1+ 33.\textbf{g}4  f5+ with mate in three moves.

30…c2 31.g2
The king attempts to tiptoe past the black attackers, the way a cartoon mouse tries to sneak by the dozing cat.

A) 31. f1 fails miserably to 31…d3 32. d1  xf2 33. xd3  h2 mate;

B) 31. a7 d5 32.a6 d4 severs the white queen’s connection to f2: 33. f1  d3 34. g2  xf1+ 35. xf1  d3 36. a8  c1+ 37. \textbf{g}2  d2 and Black promotes.

31…e4+
Also crushing is 31… \( \texttt{e2} + 32. \texttt{h2} \texttt{f3} 33. \texttt{e1} \texttt{e4} 34. \texttt{g1} \texttt{xf2} 35. \texttt{xe4} \texttt{g2} + 36. \texttt{f1} \texttt{xe4} \). Black’s queen has no chance against Black’s numerous pieces.

32. \texttt{f1} \texttt{f3} 33. \texttt{b1} \texttt{c6} 0-1

After 34. \texttt{c7} (34. \texttt{g5} \texttt{xa5} is also totally devoid of hope for White) 34… \texttt{d4} Black’s attackers reach the vulnerable \( f2 \)-underbelly.

CK 4.4 – B12
Caro-Kann Defense
Magnus Carlsen 2570
Evgeny Bareev 2675
Khanty-Mansiysk 2005 (4)

Unlike last game, this time the queen outweighs Black’s multiple pieces, at least for most of the game.

1.e4 \texttt{c6} 2.d4 \texttt{d5} 3.e5 \texttt{f5} 4.\texttt{c3}!

Hostility hangs in the air like a stench. This is Shirov’s ultra-risky (and in my opinion rather shady) line, a virtual attempt to refute the Caro-Kann. Now calling it ‘shady’, I point out that many of my dove Caro-Kann students are afraid to face this line and don’t do well against it, due to the nightmarish complications which arise.

Don’t blame the opening for your poor score. Instead, work to improve your understanding of the line, and you will eventually beat it. From personal experience, I feel it’s considerably harder to equalize after GM Nigel Short’s line 4. \texttt{f3}.

4…\texttt{e6} 5.g4 \texttt{g6} 6.\texttt{ge2} \texttt{c5} 7.h4 \texttt{h5}

This pawn sacrifice is considered Black’s best line.

8.\texttt{f4} \texttt{h7} 9.\texttt{gxf5} \texttt{cxd4}

10.\texttt{b5}

Today, this line is known to be inferior for White, who loses time and makes concessions by bringing out the queen too early. After 10. \texttt{xd4}?! \texttt{c6} 11. \texttt{b5} \texttt{ge7} 12. \texttt{g5} \texttt{a6} 13. \texttt{xc6}+ \texttt{xc6} 14. \texttt{a4} \texttt{b5} 15. \texttt{f4} \texttt{c7} 16.0-0-0 \texttt{b4} 17. \texttt{xd5} (17. \texttt{e2} \texttt{c8} 18. \texttt{d2} is met with 18… \texttt{exf5} 19. \texttt{d4} \texttt{d3}+! and Black wins material) 17…\texttt{xd5} 18. \texttt{d2} \texttt{d8}! 19. \texttt{xd8} \texttt{xd8} 20. \texttt{c1} \texttt{g6} White didn’t have enough for his invested piece in Ehlvest-Bareev, Moscow 2001.

10…\texttt{c6} 11. \texttt{exd4} \texttt{ge7} 12.c3
Carlsen returns his extra pawn to gain time.
12...exd5 13. b5+ d7 14. g5
14. h6 is met very simply by declining with 14...g8.
14...a6 15. xd7+
15. a4 b6 16. xd7+ xd7 favors Black.
15...e5 16. b5+ d7 17. g5
14...h6 is met very simply by declining with 14...g8.
14...a6 15. xd7+
16. e2 0-0-0

After all of White’s opening bluster, I prefer Black, who controls the center and enjoys the more solid structure, the bishop pair and a relatively safe king.
17. h3 g6
Black looks clearly better after 17...e8! 18. e3 c6 19. f2 b8. I don’t see a plan for White, while Black can eventually try and force ...e6-e5.
18. f4 e5? 19. xg6 a4 20. xd8?
The trouble is the capture doesn’t really win material, since when Black recaptures, he simultaneously threatens White’s knight, and also the ...f4 fork. Carlsen would have been better off declining with 20. f5 f6 21. e3 a4 22. h5 b8 23. f1 e7. Even here White is struggling against Black’s central control.
20...xd8?!
The wrong recapture. In a single move, the evaluation slips considerably for Black. Best was 20...xd8! 21. f3 xh4 22. b4 xh4 23. c5+ c7 24. xf7+ e7 25. xe7+ x e7 26. c2 c6 with a difficult ending for White, who deals with Black’s central control and superior remaining minor piece.
21. f5 f4

Carlsen offers material to seize an initiative. 22. f3 xh3 23. xh3 g6 is at best equal for White.
22...xh3 23.0-0-0!
White threatens 24. xd5, and also 24. g3, trapping Black’s knight. 23. g3? e6+ 24. e3 xf2 with advantage to Black.
23...c8
23...xf2?? allows mate after 24. b8+.
24. g3 g6?
This move chases White's knight to the square it wants to go to. Black only maintains near-equality if he finds the counter-intuitive 24...g5! 25.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}3}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g}xh4}} and if 26.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}3}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{h}6}} Black maintains equality.

25.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}3}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{g}xh2}}

26.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}3}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}d}5!!}

Threat: 27.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}6}+}. The mind of a radical tends to be attracted to a startling idea, which no one else ever even considers. Carlsen's last move displays astonishing assessment power. In my opinion his intuitive ability to out-assess his opposition is the main reason he is World Champion today. His decision is a forcing line where Black gets a load of pieces for the queen, yet, due to multiple geometric anomalies, still favors White.

Bareev probably only considered 26.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}f}2}? In irrational positions, it makes a kind of perverse sense that the rational choice is often the incorrect one. This move allows Black to equalize with 26...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}5}}.

26...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}5}} 27.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}6}+} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}b}6} 28.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}d}7} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}d}7}

Isn't Black winning? After all, he has a rook and two pieces for White's queen and pawn.

29.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{f}3}!}

When we come up with a simple idea in a complex position, it becomes a tiny nook of normalcy in an otherwise irrational world. The once vague outline begins to assume density and detail. White is the one who stands clearly better, with his steroidally angry queen.

This double attack hits f7 and b7. Carlsen's deeply assessed combination is based on the principle \textit{A queen tends to be superior to multiple pieces only when she is provided multiple targets}, as is the case here.

29...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}8}} 30.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}f}7} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}8}}

Another deep point of Carlsen's idea is that White's h- and g-pawns are untouchable. For example: 30...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}h}4}?? 31.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}6}+!} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}8}} (even worse is 31...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}7}}?? 32.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{e}7}+} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}8}} 33.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}h}4}) 32.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}b}6} and Black will lose even more material since his pieces are unstably posted and splattered all over the place, like a Jackson Pollock painting. 32...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{h}2}} isn't possible, and Black's knight hangs, and also, White threatens 33.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}8}+}, popping the loose rook on h4. If 32...\textit{\textbf{\textsc{h}1}+} 33.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}2}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}g}4} 34.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}8}+} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{a}7}} 35.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}4}+} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{a}8}} 36.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}g}4} wins.

31.\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}2}} \textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}8}?!}

The desperate tend to hold their secret plots closely, and Bareev's wish easily transmutes to a compulsion. Now Black's penalty is amplified.
It’s hard to reconcile a dubious idea’s optimism with our need’s absolute disparity. Bareev’s move is hard to fault in one respect, since in such stagnating situations, we are desperate for vertical movement. His move is made with the philosophy that honesty isn’t always the best policy when you want to win. I guess sometimes this is true. For example: if your wife or girlfriend asks you: ‘Does this dress make me look fat?’ then if you value your piece of mind, for the love of God, never, never answer with the double question mark response: ‘Yes, it kind of does make you look fat!’

Bareev goes for a rather desperate counterattack, with some practical chances, rather than for a fortress with the objectively superior 31… d6! (this move plan is initiated with the thought *The humblest and most basic of all goals is survival*) 32.h5! \(g4\) 33.hxg6 34.\(f8+\) 35.\(g7\) 36.\(g8\) 37.\(g8\). This won’t be so easy for White to win, despite Komodo’s +1.97 assessment. I feel like Black’s chances for a fortress draw are far higher than White’s for a win.

32. \(xg6\)

White’s two passed pawns should be decisive and it is nothing less than a miracle that Bareev managed to swindle the future World Champion in this game.

32… \(e3\)

Bareev’s point: his rook infiltrates \(d2\), after which he targets \(b2\).

33. \(g5\)

Every square forward for the white passers represents toil. This is the wrong push, according to the comp. White is better off with 33.\(h5!\) \(d2+\) 34.\(b3\) (threat: 35.\(c8+\) and 36.\(xe3+)\) 34… \(a7\) 35.\(h6\) \(e3\) 36.\(g7\)?! (36.\(h7??\) \(xb2+\) 37.\(a4\) (the trouble is the \(c4\)-square allows Black to fork king and queen on \(e5\)) 37… \(b5+\) 38.\(a3\) \(c5#\) 36… \(xb2+\) 37.\(c4\) \(xe5\) 38.\(d4+\) \(a8\) 39.\(d8+\) \(a7\) 40.\(d3\) when White’s \(g\)-pawn is decisive and will eventually cost Black his bishop.

33… \(d2+\) 34.\(b3\) \(d1\) 35.\(a4?!\)

He would be better off removing his queen from the vulnerable \(g6\)-square with 35.\(g8+!\).

35… \(b5?\)

Now Black is dead lost once again. 35… \(xb2+!\) 36.\(c4\) \(b6\) 37.\(e8+\) \(a7\) 38.\(g6\) \(h6\) 39.\(f7\) \(e3+\) 40.\(d4\) \(c6\) isn’t so easy to win for White. If 41.\(h5!\) \(b8\) 42.\(g7\) \(xg7+\) 43.\(dxe3\) \(xe3\) 44.\(h6!\) \(a7\) 45.\(h7\) \(a1\) 46.\(f8\) \(c7\) 47.\(h8\) \(c8\) 48.\(xh8\) \(c6\) Black achieves a fortress draw.

36.\(axb5\)

The comp points out the problem-like 36.\(c6!!\) \(xb2+\) 37.\(d3\) \(d2\) 38.\(b6+\) \(c8\) 39.\(xa6+\) \(d7\) 40.\(b7+\) \(d8\) 41.\(d5+\) \(e7\) 42.\(xb5\) with too many pawns for Black to deal with.

36… \(axb5\) 37.\(b4\)

The king’s hands are bound and he is jerked forward into an involuntary trot. 37.\(h5??\) allows mate with 37… \(xb2+\) 38.\(d3\) \(c5#\).

37… \(xb2+\) 38.\(a5\) \(xe3\) 39.\(e8+\) \(c7\) 40.\(e5+\)

40.\(xe3??\) allows another infuriating fork after 40… \(a2+\) 41.\(b4\) \(d5+\).

40… \(b7\)
41. \textit{g7+!}

The position is infuriating for White. Black’s pieces are hanging, yet not hanging, standing around and smirking, like when a brutal dictator addresses the United Nations, vilifying his critics with total impunity.

A) 41. \textit{x}e3?? \textit{a}2+ 42. \textit{b}4 \textit{d}5+ forks king and queen;
B) 41. \textit{x}c3?? \textit{b}6 mate.

41… \textit{b}8

Bareev, through some unknown source of magic, keeps his scattered pieces alive, via tactical means.

42. \textit{g}6

42. \textit{x}c3?? allows the killing pin 42… \textit{d}2.

42… \textit{f}4

White’s goal is to promote his g-pawn. He can give a queen check on f8, or slide his queen to f7. An emergency is not the time to leisurely muse on the conjectural. White’s urgency requires a concrete solution. One move wins, while the other does the opposite. Which one would you play?

43. \textit{f}8+??

Logic tends to be inoperable in an environment of darkness and confusion. This natural move allows Black’s king to participate in the attack, tipping the game’s result in Bareev’s favor. 43. \textit{f}7! \textit{c}7+ 44. \textit{a}6! \textit{a}2+ 45. \textit{x}a2! (the trapeze artist catches her \textit{a}6-partner in mid-air. This is the point of the check on \textit{f}7, rather than \textit{f}8. White avoids mate, while forcing promotion) 45… \textit{x}a2 46.\textit{g}7 and White gets a new queen, while Black doesn’t.

43… \textit{b}7

Threat: 44… \textit{c}7 mate.

44. \textit{f}7+$

44. \textit{x}f4 \textit{a}2+ 45. \textit{b}4 \textit{d}5+ and there it is again in its umpteenth incarnation, the king/queen fork.

44… \textit{c}7+ 45. \textit{xc}7+

This isn’t going to cut it. White’s pawns are way too slow.

45… \textit{xc}7 46.\textit{h}5 \textit{g}2 0-1
Strategists, perhaps out of force of habit, tend to be stronger than their rating level when on the defensive. My feeling is that an average club level player of today is several magnitudes higher in defensive skill than a strong master at the time of the Great Romantics. The first game of the chapter is an example of just how incompetent our forefathers were when on defense – in fact, it was non-existent. Essentially, they drove a car with no reverse gear.

KG 3.2.3 – C33
King’s Gambit
Adolf Anderssen
Lionel Kieseritzky
London 1851

1.e4 e5 2.f4

If you don’t believe that a toymaker is incapable of loving his creation, then just ask Mister Geppetto, Pinocchio’s dad. Our opening loyalties shape our chess identity. The King’s Gambit isn’t merely an atavism, harkening back to the Great Romantics. Hawks the world over still play it with success today, even against booked-up doves. I have come to the conclusion that people who routinely play opening gambits don’t operate in the same moral paradigm as law abiding folk, which is a euphemism for doves.

2…exf4 3.c4 h4+ 4.f1 b5!?
The players attempt to outdo each other, caprice for caprice, each seeking to present his opponent with an erratically shifting target.

This is kind of a wannabe hybrid Evans Gambit version, but with the black pieces. It actually scores 55% for Black in my database, but with too few games to consider it an accurate sample. The idea is to return the pawn to divert White’s bishop from the f7-square.

5.xb5 a6 6.f3 h6 7.c3 c6!

It isn’t often when a member of the Great Romantic era finds a better move in the opening than Kasparov, but in this instance Kieseritzky’s move is superior to 7…g5?. When we botch the move order, we feel a disorganization of the position’s natural chronology, as if we read the headlines of yesterday’s newspaper, today. 8.d4 b7 9.h4! g8 10.g1 (threat: 11.hxg5, now that White’s h1-rook is protected) 10…gxh4 11.xh4 g6 12.e2 fxe4? (this loses, but I have no helpful suggestions for Black, who is busted no matter how he plays. Wretched as it looks, he had to try 12…c6 13.xf4 0-0-0 14.d1 e7 when White has a strategically won game, but nowhere near to the level of the actual game’s continuation) 13.xf4 (Komodo assessment: +5.65! You don’t see this too often. Kasparov has been completely confused and is in a resignable position, amateurishly behind in development, after just 13 moves) 13…f5 14.h4 g3 15.xe4 1-0 Short-Kasparov, London 1993. This has to be the shortest and most humiliating loss of Kasparov’s career. If Kasparov had played on, the following would have occurred: 15…fxe4 16.h5+ d8 17.xf8+! xf8 18.g5+ c8 19.f5! and Black’s queen is trapped, since White’s knight is immune, due to the Black’s loose back rank.

8.c4 d6

Forestalling 9.e5.
9...h5?!
One of the reasons we all love the games of the Great Romantics, is that their play was utterly devoid of guile or artifice. Their openly declared objective was to destroy. Black threatens a cheapo on g3, at the high cost of development. Better was to bring out pieces with 9...c7.

10.e2?!
Covering against Black’s intended 10...g3+ trap, but the wrong way. White had 10.g1! c7 11.e1! a6! (not 11...0-0? 12.c2! f6 13.d3 and Black is strategically busted) 12.xa6 xa6 13.f3 0-0 14.g4! f6 15.xf4 g6 16.h3 h5 17.g2 hxg4 18.hxg4 xg4 19.f2 xf3+ 20.xf3 with a vastly superior ending for White, who dominates the center and still has chances to attack Black’s king due to the open h- and g-files.

10...c7 11.e5?!
This move only helps Black. I prefer White after 11.d3 0-0 12.g1, intending g2-g4. If 12...g5 13.g3! White’s king looks to be the safer of the two.

11...d5 12.d3 0-0 13.g1?!
Anderssen attacks when he might have been better off defending. When we blindly continue with faith in our semi-sound attack, we, as martyrs, risk an agonizing death for our faith. The comps suggest going into defensive mode with 13.g1 f6 14.g3 g4 15.e6 f5 16.f1 xe6 17.xh5 xh5 18.xf4. White’s control of e5 compensates the fact that his h1-rook will be out of play for a while.

13...g5! 14.e1?!
Where is he going? 14.g4 was necessary.

14...f6
14...g4! 15.d2 f6! 16.xf4 xf4 17.xf4 gxf4 18.xf4 fxe5 19.xe5 d7! favors Black. If White tries to save his piece with 20.xd2 Black earns a won ending after 20...xe5 21.dxe5 b8 22.b1 (remember, White already moved his king earlier and can’t castle) 22...c5 23.f1 e8 24.d1 xe5 and Black’s bishops rule in the open game.

15.g3?
This is the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse moment for Black. He has access to no less than two promising continuations. The more forcing 15.g4 was necessary.

15...fxg3?
This one allows White back into the game. Fel missed:

A) 15…g4! 16. f1 fxg3! (this is the correct timing) 17.hxg3 fxe5 18. xe5 xf1+ 19. xf1 xg3+ with a winning attack for Black;

B) 15…fxe5! 16. xe5 f3 (threatening both 17…fxe2 and also 17…f2+) 17. f4 gxf4 18.gxf4+ g7 19. xf3 d7 when White only has fishing chances for the piece, and it’s not enough.

16. xg3 a4?
Black's ‘pin’ isn’t as effective as he originally believed. Black is still okay after 16…g7!.

17. xe5!
A chess decision is generally made in one of two ways:
1. After a careful weighing of the facts.
2. Your hand impulsively picks up a piece and moves it to a random-looking square, because a psychotically tempting idea popped into your confused head.

This clearly looks like a case of number 2 on the list, yet in this circumstance Anderssen’s idea is absolutely sound. White’s crazy knight enters with great theatrical flair. When our intuition works, it can be described as ignorance at its smartest. Over the board, there is no way any human can ‘know’ that this move works, without the help of a comp. However, the all-seeing machine tells us that the move is not only sound, it is winning for White.

17…xd4 18. f5!
An almost invisible geometric shift contains the power to invalidate our otherwise brilliant idea. In this case the complications push beyond a human’s – even a genius like Anderssen – ability to comprehend. All we can hope to achieve is to swim freestyle through the quagmire and pray we don’t go under.

Anderssen stumbles on the follow up. He would have won with 18. e6!! (it’s pretty difficult to find two double exclam moves in a single game!) 18…f4 19. f5+ h8 20. xf4! (this is even stronger than regaining the queen with 20. xh6) 20…h5 21. xe7 (our attacks begin to lose some of their allure when the time comes to pay the bills, but not in this case. White only has two pieces for the queen, yet double attacks Black’s rook and bishop) 21…e8 22.exf6 and now if Black attempts to extricate his bishop with 22…g4, 23. c7 wins.

18…fxg5 19. exh6+ g7 20. xg5?!
The irrationality of the hawk’s psyche is beyond your logical dove writer’s comprehension. Why on earth did Anderssen reject the stronger and more natural knight check on f5? 20. f5+! xf5 21. xf5 f3 22. xg5 xg5 23. xg5+ f7 (if 23…h6 24. g8 is decisive, since it freezes Black’s queenside rook and knight) 24. xh7 (threat: 25. g6+ and 26. xh5) 24…g7 25. d2 and there is no defense to the coming f1.

20…xg5 21. e5+ xf5 22. xf5
No less than three black pieces hang simultaneously.

22...h6 23...xd1 a6 24...d3!

White’s attack isn’t over. With the rook lift he threatens 25..h3, followed by g4.

24...f8 25...g4 f4 26...h3

White’s rook and bishop ganging up on Black’s h5-knight feels the same as when an out-of-town relative’s visit takes on a foreversness feel to it.

24...e4+

Black’s coming initiative/counterattack is no more than a creature of the imagination, with no actual substance to it.

27...f2 f4+ 28...e2 e4+ 29...d3 b4+ 30...c3 e3a2+ 31...b3 c1+

There isn’t much point in playing strong of purpose, when your disorganized army is weak in body. This is a false initiative which goes nowhere.

32...a4

Also winning is 32...a3 e3+ 33...xe3 xe3 34...e1 d2 35...d1 g5 36.h4! f4 37...f1 (threat: 38.xh5, followed by 39...xf4) 37...d2 38.e6. Now if Black tries to halt the surging e-pawn with 38...g7, 39...f6 is an amusing helpmate.

32...xd4+ 33...a5 d8+ 34...a6

Not all king hunts are dangerous. Black only gets spite checks, rather than actual threats.

34...xg4

34...a4+ 35...b7 b4+ 36...xc6 Black has got nowhere and there is nothing better than 36...xg4 37...xg4 with a winning position for White.

35...xg4 b6 36...g8 e2 37...e6 ef4 38...e7 ee6

For some bizarre reason, the Great Romantics interpreted resignation as a kind of moral disgrace, and tended to play on till kingdom come. Today’s reader will agree that playing on here is utterly meaningless.

39...xh5...xh5 40.e8+ 1-0

CK 10.6 – B18
Caro-Kann Defense
Andreas Dückstein
Tigran Petrosian
Varna ol 1962 (6)
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.c3 dxe4 4.xe4 f5 5.g3 g6 6.f3 d7 7.d3
Black equalizes if White refuses to push his h-pawn. Today’s tabiya is reached via 7.h4 h6 8.h5 h7 9.d3 xd3 10.xd3 e6.
7...e6 8.0-0 c7 9.c4

9...0-0-0?
From childhood on, the brains of hawks and doves develop on divergent neural pathways. It’s a disconcerting phenomenon when a dove decides to declare war from a position of inferiority, since simplicity is virtually an axiom to our self-preservation.
In this case we see the king of the doves unwisely agree to opposite-wing castling from a position of cramped inferiority. Unlike sharper openings, the Caro-Kann isn’t as adaptable to a multitude of stylistic interpretations and this is an inappropriate moment to apply the war paint to his position’s face. I doubt Petrosian would have taken this route if his opponent were Spassky! Petrosian wants to up the ante, since he is playing a lower rated opponent. Objectively his move is a mistake, since White’s attack is clearly faster, due to his extra central space.
Safer and sounder was 9...gf6 10.e1 e7 and then castle kingside, with equality.
10.xg6
There is no urgency to hand Black an open h-file.
10.b1!, intending 11.b4 next, looks rather dangerous for Black, for example: 10...e5 (principle: Meet a wing attack with a central counter. 10...c5 11.xg6 hxg6 12.e2 also favors White) 11.b4! exd4 12.c5! gf6 13.e1 d5 14.xg6 hxg6 15.xd4 and White’s coming attack is the more promising of the two.
10...hxg6 11.a4!
A strong multi-purpose move, removing his queen from the vulnerable d-file, while attacking a7 and preparing b2-b4.
11...b8 12.b4 e6 13.b3
Stronger is 13.c5!, intending 14.b5. If 13...a6 14.b3 c7 15.a4 f5 16.xf5 gxf5 17.b5 g5 18.bxa6 and Black’s problem is that 18...g4?? is met with the instant game-ending 19.f4!, overloading Black’s queen.
13...f5 14.e4 e5
This central counter is ineffective, since it fails to slow down White’s attack.
15.dxe5
15.xf5! gxf5 16.c5! and now 16...f6 (16...e4? is met with 17.g3!, threatening 18.f4) 17.h3 e4 18.e1 g5 19.e6 g4? (19...e7 20.xf5 and Black lacks compensation for his missing pawn) 20.xf5 and Black doesn’t have time to capture on h3, since White threatens 21.f4.
15...xe5 16.xe5 xe5 17.b2 c7 18.c5?!
White proceeds with the warm, happy glow of a person about to score a gigantic upset. To the non-Petrosianic eye, it appears as if White’s attack is the more promising. Best was 18.a5!, which prevents Petrosian’s coming idea.
18...a5!!
The alien removes the mask of a human face, revealing its own hideous form. Petrosian treats an irrational looking idea as if it were perfectly reasonable. His motto: why worry about etiquette when someone is trying to kill you?

Before we start our plan, we must decide how much of our intent we are willing to reveal to our opponent. In this case, it looks like 0% disclosure. An opponent’s clinically cold response is sometimes more unsettling than violence.

I award a double exclam to this undermining move, not so much on its objective strength, but more so for the psychological unsettlement value inflicted upon the opponent. When I first played over this game, Petrosian’s move was one of the most shocking I had ever seen. Is he not in violation of one of the most sacred principles, which states: Don’t voluntarily open lines against your own king? Petrosian senses a startling defensive anomaly, that he will survive White’s assault and slowly pick off White’s now weak queenside pawns. How? With his king!

19. ad1

19.b5? is ineffective as well. He doesn’t get compensation for his missing pawn after 19...cxb5 20.axb5 xc5. Now White is unable to play 21. fc1?? due to 21... xf2+! 22. xf2 d2+ 23. g1 (23. f1?? xg3+ 24. xg3 xg3 25. hxg3 h1#)

23... b6+ 24. h1 xb2! and White’s queen is unable to recapture due to the mate threat on g3. After 25. c3 d6! 26. xb2 xg3+ 27. g1 b6+ 28. f2 e2+ 29. f1 xf2+ 30. xf2 xc1 31. xc1 a7! White’s b5-pawn soon falls and Black wins by simply pushing his queenside passers.

19...xd1 20. xd1 h4?!

20... a7! is a more accurate method of implementing his undermining idea.

21.bxa5 xc5 22.a6 b6

23. e1?!

Too slow. Soon it becomes clear that White’s attack is destined for foreclosure. White retains an advantage after 23. xf5! gxf5 (h2 isn’t really hanging: 23... xh2+? 24. f1 and Black doesn’t have enough for the piece. His problem is that he is unable to recapture with 24...gx5?? due to 25. d8+ c7 26. e8!, threatening both 27. xf7+ as well as 27. e5+. The rook also covers Black’s intended rook check on e4. Following 26... h1+ 27. e2 e4+ 28. xe4 fxe4 29. xf7+ d6 30.a7 b1 31. b3 Black’s threats are neutralized and he must resign, since there is no way to halt promotion of the a7-pawn) 24. g3 g4 25.a5 b4 (Black is unable to close lines with 25...b5?? 26. e5! xe5 27. xf7 e7 28. d8+ a7 29. d7+ and White wins) 26.axb6 xb3 27.bxc7+ xc7 28. xg7 with a technically won ending for White.

23... a7 24. e5 d7 25. e4 d4! 26.g3
Doves are just fine with giving up material, if doing so draws them closer to their strategic end. Petrosian bangs out one of his patent strategic exchange sacrifices, the most famous of which was his 25…\textit{e}6!! offer of an exchange sacrifice at the Zurich Candidates’ tournament against Sammy Reshevsky, for domination of the light squares. In this version, Petrosian’s sac gets him domination of the dark squares, as well as damaging White’s structure.

27.gxh4 \textit{d}4 28.d1 \textit{d}5 29.e3 f5 30.e1

30…\textit{x}d5?? cxd5 and White hangs material, due to Black’s double attack.

30…\textit{d}4 31.d3 \textit{f}5

Of course Petrosian is unsatisfied with a draw.

32.g5 c5!

This is merely a warning that worse is yet to come for White. Petrosian unleashes another asset: his passed c-pawn.

33.e3 c4

Should White return the exchange with 34.\textit{x}e5, followed by 35.\textit{xc}4? Or should he keep his extra material and back his queen up to d1? When we are confronted with a choice, then usually either path is justified. Not in this case, where there is only one correct answer. Which one?

34.d1?

When we set forth on a plan we misinterpret, we compound our error when we proceed with the belief that we understand. He had to try 34.\textit{x}e5! \textit{xe}5 35.\textit{xc}4.

34…\textit{xa}6

White’s position throbs in defensive agitation:

1. Black’s deadly centralized pieces dominate their white counterparts.
2. Black rules the dark squares.
3. White’s king is insecure.
4. Black c-pawn is about to surge.
5. Black’s active king soon takes on a further offensive posture.

35.a3 f6 36.h3 f4

Now White must worry about 37…\textit{g}x\textit{g}5, followed by 38…\textit{g}x\textit{g}5+.

37.g4 a5!! 38.f3

A blunder in a hopeless position. White will live longer with 38.d1 but his position is so depressing that he must ask himself:
Do I want to?

38...b4!
Most of us only think to protect our king. Rarely do we interpret it as an attacking force – and especially not in a middlegame.
To fall victim to a combination in a relatively simplified situation, as is White’s case here, often comes as a shock, since we only expect violence arising from a situation of war, rather than a cease-fire. White’s rook, summoned by the black king’s imperious finger, has run out of squares, since it protects the f3-knight.

39.\textit{xd4 }xa3
White’s poor rook never even got a decent burial.

40.\textit{c2+ }xa4 0-1
Black’s two queenside passers win easily.

SL 3.1. – D10
Slav Defense
\textbf{Hikaru Nakamura 2613}
\textbf{Nicholas Pert 2501}
Gibraltar 2005 (10)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\textit{c3 }f6 4.e3 a6
The Chebanenko Slav, once an offbeat side line, has today gone mainstream.
5.\textit{f3}
5.\textit{c2}, suppressing ...f5, is also played here.
5...b5 6.c5
Once White seals the center, then Black can play for an ...e7-e5 break, if necessary with the inclusion of ...g7-g6.
6.b3, maintaining central tension, is the main line.
6...\textit{bd7}

7.\textit{b3}?
Nakamura possibly plays for e3-e4 tricks, yet his move feels somehow askew from his position’s requirements, since it blocks White’s future space-gaining mechanism, b2-b4. 7.a3 and 7.b4 are White’s main lines here.
7...\textit{b8}
I think this move is slightly less accurate than 7…a5! 8.e4 a4 9.\textit{c}2 b4 10.\textit{exe}4 11.\textit{d}3 a6! after which Black stands at least even) 10…\textit{cxd}5 11.\textit{c}6 \textit{a}5 (11…\textit{b}6 12.\textit{c}7 \textit{d}7 13.\textit{e}5 \textit{d}6 14.\textit{b}5+ \textit{fd}7 15.\textit{f}4 looks rather scary for Black) 12.e5 \textit{e}4 13.\textit{cxd}7+ \textit{xd}7 14.\textit{d}2, Gershon-Svetushkin, Athens 2004. Black looks better after 14…\textit{c}8.

8.\textarrow{e}2!? An uncharacteristically passive follow-up to his earlier 7.\textit{b}3 idea. In our modern day Babel of database information, it’s easy to misinterpret. Thematic is 8.e4! \textit{e}5! 9.exd5 \textit{exd}4 10.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xc}5 11.\textit{d}1 \textit{cxd}5 12.\textit{c}6 \textit{b}6 13.\textit{b}8 \textit{xb}8 14.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}6. Black’s super-activity certainly compensates somewhat for handing over the exchange. But full compensation? I have my doubts.

8…\textit{e}5 He refuses to carefully prepare the …\textit{e}7-\textit{e}5 break with 8…\textit{c}7.

9.0-0 9.dxe5 \textit{xc}5 10.\textit{c}2 \textit{fe}4 11.0-0 \textit{xc}3 12.\textit{xc}3 \textit{d}7 also looks fine for Black.

9…\textit{e}7?! A) 9…\textit{e}4 10.\textit{d}2 and White will challenge Black’s central space with \textit{f}2-\textit{f}3 next, with a reversed French-style position; B) Maintaining central tension with 9…\textit{c}7! looks best.

10.\textarrow{e}1?! This move has the effect of simultaneously quelling and inflaming White’s problems. Running away before you are threatened can’t be right. Nakamura is clearly trying to provoke his opponent. When members of the hawk clan attempt to play defensively, doves tend to interpret them as a savage, lawless people who attempt the pretense of being civilized.

10.dxe5! favors White after 10…\textit{xe}5 (if 10…\textit{g}4? 11.\textit{d}4 \textit{gxe}5 12.f4 White wins material by undermining the defender of \textit{c}6) 11.\textit{c}2 \textit{fd}7 12.\textit{d}4 \textit{c}7 13.\textit{f}4 when White’s future kingside attacking chances look promising.

10…0-0 11.\textit{d}3 \textit{c}7 12.\textit{f}3 \textit{e}8 13.\textit{d}2 \textit{d}8? Threat: 14…\textit{exd}4, followed by 15…\textit{b}4, undermining the defender of the loose \textit{e}2-bishop.

d8 is an oddly contorted piece-placement choice. More natural is 13…\textit{f}8, intending \textit{g}7-\textit{g}6 and \textit{g}7, applying pressure to \textit{d}4.

14.\textit{d}1 The queen’s reverse-engineered return can hardly be described as triumphant.

14…\textit{a}5 15.\textit{b}4? If you are about to take your first step off the cliff’s ledge, you would be wise to consider what comes after. It’s okay to dream for the far off, but not so okay to dream for the impossible. White’s \textit{b}4-pawn is insufficiently supported. White should have played 15.a3 e4 16.\textit{f}xe4 \textit{xe}4 17.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 18.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}5 19.\textit{f}2 \textit{e}8 20.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}6 21.\textit{d}3 with a playable reversed French-style position.
15…e4! 16.e1 16.fxe4 dxe4! 17.e1 axb4 18.b1 d5 is also quite awful for White.
16…axb4 17.b1
We note a lot of back and forth retreating from White in this game, which can’t be a good sign for his deteriorating position.
17.exf3 18.gxf3
This move weakens Black’s king. There isn’t much choice, since 18.xf3 allows 18…e4 19.xb4 g5 when White’s backward e3-pawn is about to get hammered on Black’s open e-file.
18…f8 19.c2
19…h5!
A move imbued with ominous meaning. It feels as if Black’s coming unstoppable attack is a blind mechanism, devoid of free will. The gathering of intelligence looks damning for White. Let’s see if Black acquired the proper conditions for launching an attack:
1. Development lead, check.
2. Open lines against White’s weakened pawn front, check.
3. …g3 sacrificial ideas are in the air, check.
4. Black’s last move prepares an attacking rook lift with …e6, check.
Conclusion: White is in deep trouble.
20.h1
Most chess games boil down to a single decisive moment. Well, this is it. We as Black have a choice between building and striking:
A) Play 20…f5 to increase the pressure;
B) Sacrifice with the immediate 20…g3+.
Choose wisely, since there is no room for misinterpretation.
20…g3+?
This move is like the pharmaceutical ad which ends with ‘Side effects may include…’ Pert’s still unformed yet logical assumption begins to assume the place of truth.
Black achieves a strategically won game with 20…f5! 21.f2 xc2 22.xc2 a8 23.b2 d7!. Now if White attempts to unravel his queenside with 24.xb4 then Black’s kingside attack gets out of control after 24…h3 25.g2 g6.
21.hxg3 xc3
I wish someone would tell my sister that men are terrified of needy women,' thinks White's king. By all appearances, White should resign, right? After all, there is no good defense to the coming rook lift ... \( e6 \). Nakamura's unbelievably compish next move is nearly impossible for a human to find.

22. \( f2!! \)

By some bizarre confluence of events, White's position appears simultaneously winning and busted! In reality though, he is winning via a geometric quirk, which disallows Black from capturing the en-prise rook.

But I logically ask: how is it possible that White is the one with the defensive combination, given the massive activity disparity between the two camps? It almost feels like Nakamura's surreally unimplementable idea (yet he implemented it!) is a lonely scientist who creates a 'perfect' holographic woman, who he sees and speaks with, yet may never touch, since she isn't real.

By the law of averages, the universe owes Pert a huge debt of luck, since he walked into such unlucky geometry in this game. He undoubtedly only expected 22. \( e1?? \) \( h3+ \) 23. \( g1 \) \( e6 \) 24. \( d3 \) \( h6 \), forcing mate.

22... \( c7 \)

22... \( xf2?? \) 23. \( e1! \) is Nakamura's unbelievably devious point: Black's queen is trapped.

23. \( g1! \)

Now everything works out neatly for White.

Nakamura avoids the less accurate line 23. \( g2?! \) \( h4+ \) 24. \( g1 \) \( h3 \) 25. \( e1 \) \( e7 \) 26. \( f1 \) \( xg2 \) 27. \( xg2 \) \( g6 \) when Black's attacking chances easily compensate his slight material deficit.

23... \( h3+ \) 24. \( h2 \) \( xh2 \) 25. \( xh2 \) \( xh2+ \)

This leads to a lost ending.

The alternative is also dismal: 25... \( f5 \) 26. \( xb4 \) \( e6 \) 27. \( g2 \) \( g6+ \) 28. \( f2 \) and Black's attack has come to an end and White should convert.

26. \( xh2 \) \( e6 \) 27. \( xb4 \) \( h6+ \) 28. \( g1 \) \( g6+ \) 29. \( f2 \) \( h3 \) 30. \( f1 \)

There was no real threat to invade \( g2 \). Stronger was 30. \( e4 \) when the check on \( g2 \) was without meaning. For example: 30... \( e8 \) 31. \( c3 \) \( g2+ \) 32. \( e3 \) \( dxe4 \) 33. \( fxe4 \) \( g3+ \) 34. \( f3 \) \( g2 \) 35. \( f2! \) \( xf3+ \) 36. \( xg2 \) and White's central pawns will be decisive.

30... \( xf1 \) 31. \( xf1 \) \( e8 \) 32. \( c3 \) \( h6 \)

Threatening a cheapo on \( h1 \).

33. \( e2 \) \( f5 \) 34. \( d3 \) \( ee6 \) 35. \( a4 \)

At last, the a1-rook is freed.

35... \( bxa4 \) 36. \( xa4 \) \( h3 \) 37. \( a6! \)
Principle: *Undermine your opponent’s pawn chain at its base.* White’s move is even stronger than 37.f4 g5 38.fxg5 f4 when Black achieves a touch of counterplay.

37…xf3 38.xc6 g5 39.xd5 h5 40.c8 f4

Black loses the queening race after 40…h4 41.c6 h3 42.c7 h2 43.xf8+ xf8 44.c8+.

41.c6 fxe3 42.xe3 g4 43.c7 g3 44.h8 g2 45.c8+ gxe3+ 45…g1?? is met with 46.xe6+ with mate to follow.

46.xe6+ g1 47.e6+

It becomes clear that Black’s king is far more exposed than White’s.

47…f7 48.bc2 1-0

White will get to Black’s king long before this h-pawn promotes. The finish could be 48…h4 49.d5 g3 50.d4 h3 51.df5 g5 52.xf8+ xf8 53.c8+ d8 54.xd8 mate.

CK 3.1 – B10
Caro-Kann Defense
Keaton Kiewra 2470
Cyrus Lakdawala 2549
San Diego 2014

My buddy IM Keaton Kiewra and I just finished a teacher/student black repertoire book on the Caro-Kann and the Semi-Slav. I’m the teacher and Keaton the student, even though our ratings are about the same and Keaton picked up two GM norms. Such is the nature of our hubris when we reach old age!

1.c4 c6 2.e4 d5 3.cxd5

3.exd5 cxd5 4.d4 reaches Panov-Botvinnik main lines.

3…cxd5 4.exd5
Keaton goes for an isolani position, which, as we understand, can be a curse or a gift in equal measure.

4…e6 5.c3 exd5 6.af3 e6 7.d4 a6
I think this version allows Black equality easier than 7…c7.
8. \( \text{d2} \)

The safer move. Keaton is very cautious with me in the opening stage (everyone falsely believes that if a person has written a lot of opening books, then he remembers everything in them!) and doesn’t normally challenge me with theoretically sharp, forcing lines, which can be heavily comped. So he avoids the sharper \( 8. \text{c2} \text{ c6} 9. \text{d3} \text{ a5}?! 10.\text{a3} \) (covering against \( 10...\text{b4} \) \( 10...\text{xc3} \) \( 11.\text{bxc3} \) \( \text{cxd4} \) \( 12.\text{xd4} \) \( \text{xc4} \) \( 13.\text{b5}+ \). According to theory White gets full compensation for one or two pawns sacrificed, no matter how Black plays it here. This isn’t a position you enter without a lot of pre-game homework!

\( 8...0-0 9.\text{d3} \text{ c6} 10.0-0 \text{ f6} \)

Uncovering an attack on White’s isolani. \( 10...\text{e7} \) is Black’s main alternative: \( 11.\text{e2} \text{ f6} 12.\text{e4} \text{ b6} 13.\text{a3} \text{ d7} 14.\text{fd1} \text{ ad8} 15.\text{xf6+} \text{ xf6} 16.\text{e4} \text{ g6} 17.\text{e3} \text{ e7}! \) Black already stood a shade better and Karpov went on to win a model anti-isolani game in Kamsky-Karpov, Elista 1996.

11.\text{g5} \text{ e7} 12.\text{a3}

Preventing Black’s thematic \( ...\text{b4} \) and \( ...\text{bd5} \) ideas. \( 12.\text{c1} \text{ h6} 13.\text{h4} \text{ e5} \) \( 13.\text{h5}! \) is similar to Kortchnoi-Karpov, which we examined in a previous chapter.

12...\text{b6}

I forgot to play Karpov’s plan! Best is \( 12...\text{h6}! 13.\text{e3} \) \( 13.\text{h4} \text{ e5} \) \( 13.\text{h5}! \) and only then \( 13...\text{b6} \) with a much safer version than the one I got in the game.

13.\text{c1} \text{ b7} 14.\text{b1} \text{ c8}

14...\text{d5} can be met with \( 15.\text{h4} \text{ xg5} 16.\text{hxg5} \text{ e7} 17.\text{e5} \text{ g6} 18.\text{g4} \) with slight pressure for White.

15.\text{d3}

Threatening a vulgarity on h7, after chopping off the defender on f6.

15...\text{g6}

This eyesore weakening of the dark squares around the black king tends to be a necessary evil in many isolani positions.

16.\text{a2}!

This move is inaccurate and gives White dangerous attacking chances. I should have applied the principle to counter in the center when attacked on the wing, with \( 16...\text{d5}! 17.\text{h6} \text{ e8} 18.\text{e4} \text{ f8} 19.\text{d2} \text{ e7} \). Every hawk in the world will prefer White here. In actuality Black has earned approximately even chances, and stylistically I actually prefer the defender’s side here.

17.\text{a2}!
Oh, no. Now I must worry about sacrifices on e6 and maybe later even f7, as well as d4-d5 breaks.

17...g7?

My king is like a politician who discloses: ‘I have nothing to hide,’ which, as we all understand, is a 100% indicator that he is hiding something. I wanted to cover h6 and planned the super-dovish retreat 18...g8 next. Once again I neglect a crucial central counter with the necessary 17...d5!, after which Black only stands slightly worse.

18. d2 g8!

There’s no place like home. To the reader, Black’s position must look like that 90 pound weakling getting sand kicked in his face in the Charles Atlas ad on the back of 1960’s comic books. On the one hand, I realized I was in serious trouble on the dark squares around my king; on the other hand... Wait, I just realized that there is no ‘other hand’.

I just couldn’t stomach the more natural line 18...d5 19. h6+ g8 20. xd5 exd5 21. f4 with tremendous pressure for White.

19.h4!?

Stronger is to retain pieces on the board with 19. f4!.

19...h6 20. xe7!?

As every actor understands: between college and winning the Academy Award for best actor, lies waiting tables at a restaurant where the customers are lousy tippers. When you take on an isolani and then your attack/initiative fizzes, expect long strategic drudgery ahead. Now White’s attacking alliance is seriously compromised. This move is in violation of the principle Avoid swaps when attacking. Keaton’s rationale was that the swap of the bishops weakens the dark squares around my king, but in doing so, it also feeds the c6-knight to my king’s rescue as a defender.

Black remains in serious trouble after 20. f4! and if I get greedy with 20...xh4? then 21.d5! is very tough to deal with. For example: 21...a5 (21...exd5?? overloads Black’s queen after 22. xe8 xe8 23...xb4, winning) 22.dxe6 xd2 23. xd2 xf3 24.exf7! (zwischenzug) 24...xe1+ 25. e7 26.gxf3 with a winning ending for White, who retains a strong initiative with extra material.

20...cxe7

Strategic threat: 21...xf3. Normally when I’m under fire, fear is my co-pilot. In this case though, an oddly alien feeling crept over me, one which I had never previously experienced: confidence. Now that the dark-squared bishops have been removed from the board, Black’s chances of avoiding mate have increased dramatically.

21. e5 f5

Double attack on d4 and h4.

22. cd1?!

I have doubts of his compensation-level for the pawn in this version. 22.h5! xd4 23. cd1 xd2 24. xd2 offers White compensation for the pawn, since Black is unable to bypass with 24...g5?! due to 25. xf7! (threat: 26. d7+ and if Black blocks with the rook, then comes 27. xe6+) 25...xc3! 26.bxc3 xf7 27. d7+ e7 28. xb7 xb7 29. xe6+ f6 30. g8 e7 and Black should hold the draw comfortably, despite White’s extra pawn, since White’s queenside pawns constitute a serious liability.
22…
xh4

The right pawn, but perhaps the wrong piece. Grabbing a pawn and allowing an opponent the initiative is the equivalent of filing a financial reimbursement form asking the government to give you money, which, as we all understand, doesn’t happen too often.

Boy, I didn’t see this coming. Suddenly my position felt healthy, wealthy and wise. Still, one part of my brain said of White’s compensation: ‘It’s no problem,’ and then another part of my brain added: ‘Are you sure?’ I also considered 22…
xh4!, attacking g2: 23.d5 exd5 24.
xd5

f5 …
f6 is coming and I don’t believe in White’s compensation, mainly since Black’s king remains perfectly safe.

23.d5!

If he fails to take action, he risks a slow death.

23…
exd5 24.
xd5

g5 25.
xg5!

I didn’t think he would do it! I knew removing queens from the board caused him mental suffering, but White’s position can’t tolerate the self-inflicted weakening 25.f4?, which I was certain he would try. After 25…
h4 White has no good way to proceed with his attempted attack, and he has punctured all the dark squares around his king.

25…hxg5

I thought I was safely up a pawn here, blissfully unaware that the Teflon coating had eroded.

26.
xf7!

Your writer tends to blush the color of borscht when a conniving opponent manages to out-Machiavelli me (which is depressingly often). I had totally missed his shot.

Have you ever been in a ‘conversation’ where the other person is the only active participant? I felt that way right here. Keaton won’t let my pieces get in a word edgewise. In strategic situations your writer is a Botvinnikian soothsayer, who accurately foretells the future. In messy positions, like this one, I play much closer to Curly, the dumbest of the Three Stooges.

26…
exd5

My instinct when under fire is to swap everything in sight. 26…
exd5?? 27.
xb6+

f6 28.
xe8

xe8 29.
d7 and Black must resign, since my bishop and the f7 mate threat hang simultaneously.

27…
xh1+

When Keaton, a deadly accurate calculator/attacker/tactician, makes me such offers, my policy is to always suspect his underhanded worst. 26…
xf7?? 27.
xb6+ g6 28.
xe8

xe8 29.
d7 and Black must resign, since my bishop and the f7 mate threat hang simultaneously.

27…
xh1

My instinct when under fire is to swap everything in sight. 27…
xf7?? 28.
xb6+ g7 29.
xe8

xe8 30.
xd5

xe8 31.
e8+

and White wins.
Wow, he remains ambitious and allows my rook into c2. The comp says it’s okay but I felt he pushed too far for the win, since allowing my rook infiltration to his second rank is a sacrifice to a lost cause.

I expected him to retreat with a contrite heart with 29. b3 g4 30. g5 h6 31. e6 g3 32. fxg3 33. f2 ge4+ 34. e3 g5 when the game heads for a likely draw.

29… c2

I strongly suspect that my habitual time pressure issues stem from a past alien abduction/missing time situation. I swear that I look at the position for what feels like 35 seconds, and mysteriously, 12 minutes are missing from my clock. This game was the rare exception, where I was actually ahead on the clock. I’m not sure if this applies to other doves, but as soon I reach an ending, my speed increases, as well as my accuracy level. If only the thoughtless inventor of chess had created a queenless game, instead of the horribly complex one with two queens on at the start of the game.

30. xg5 xb2 31. c1

Keaton goes for a direct endgame attack.

31… g4

f2 is under attack.

32. xf5

I expected 32. e4.

32… gxf5 33. h3?!

His knight is out of play on h3. White just barely holds the game with 33.f3! e3 34. e6+ f6 35. f4 c2 (35… g5 is met with 36.g3!, keeping Black’s king out. White should hold the game) 36.a4 g5 37. h3+ h4 38. e4 a2 39. d5 g3 40. c3 b2 41. e2+ h4 42. f4 and I don’t think Black can make easy progress.

33… a2

He can’t easily cover his a-pawn, due to his loose back rank. His only option is to weaken with 34.f3 to give his king air. The problem is it allows my knight into e3.

34.f3 e3 35. c7+ f6 36. xa7 xg2+ 37. h1 b2 38. f4

His best drawing chance lies in 38. a8.

38… g5 39. h3+?

His time pressure grows ever more serious. He had to keep my king at bay with 39. e6+ h4 40. g7 f2 41. f4.

39… h4 40. h7+ g3 41. g1
Black’s super-king participates in the attack against White’s boxed-in king. Come up with a winning plan.

41... e1?!
Threat: 42... f2 mate. This simplistic plan isn’t Black’s best. The comp found the ultra-sneaky 41... g2!! (threat: 42... f2)
42.a4 (42... g7+ g4 – this block allows Black to threaten mate on h2: 43... h3 xh3 44.fxg4 fxg4 is a lost rook and pawn ending for White) 42... f2 43... h3+ xf3 44... g1+ f2 45... h3+ g3 46... g1 a2 wins.

42... h3+ f4
More accurate than 42... d f2.
43... h4+ e3 44... c4
44... h5 f4 45... e5+ d f2 46... h5 d2 47... h2+ e3 48... h5 c3 49... h8 a2 50... a8 d f2 51... a7 b5 Threat: 52... b4. Now if 52... a5 g3 forces mate.

44... f2
One move merges with the next and my attempts at progress come slowly. Stronger is 44... b5! 45... c8 f2+ 46... g2 e4+ 47... h3 g5+ 48... g3 f4+ 49... g4 g2+, which picks up the loose white knight.

45... f4?
In the haze of time pressure, no lens is capable of sharpening the focus of an already blurry object. This is a blunder in a lost position. He had to try 45... h4.

45... g3! 0-1

Black simultaneously threatens mates on f2 and h2, while White lacks even a single check.
CHAPTER 21

Attack and initiative

General George S. Patton, a hawk if there ever was one, observed: ‘Nobody ever defended anything successfully. There is only attack and attack and attack some more!’ It’s no secret that we doves are insanely jealous of the hawk’s natural ability to both attack and hold firmly to the initiative. This chapter contains a variety of games which both deeply influenced me in my youth and also made me realize my lack in this area of the game, which exists to this very day.

IG 2.3 – C54
Italian Game
Wilhelm Steinitz
Curt von Bardeleben
Hastings 1895 (10)

1.e4 e5 2.\(f3\) c6 3.\(c4\) \(c5\) 4.\(c3\)
4.b4, the Evans Gambit, was almost socially obligatory in this era.
4…\(f6\) 5.d4
Today’s GMs are more likely to go for a more Lopez-like maneuvering game with 5.d3.
5…\(\text{exd4}\) 6.\(\text{cxd4}\) b4+ 7.\(c3\)
7.\(d2\) \(\text{xd2+}\) 8.\(bxd2\) d5 is known today to equalize for Black.

7…\(d5?!\)
This move is in violation of the principle *Don’t open the position when lagging in development*, which Steinitz exploits ruthlessly. The tabiya is reached via acceptance of the challenge with 7…\(\text{xe4}\)! 8.0-0 \(\text{xc3}\) 9.d5 (9.bxc3 \(d5\) is fine for Black)
9…\(f6\) 10.\(e1\) \(e7\) 11.\(\text{xe4}\) \(d6\) and now White tries either 12.\(g5\) or the radical 12.\(g4\)!

8.\(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 9.0-0!
\(c3\) isn’t worthy of defense and White continues to develop.
9…\(\text{xe6}\)
Alternatives fail to extricate Black. For example:

A) 9…\(\text{xc3}\) 10.bxc3 \(\text{e7}\) (10…\(\text{xc3}\)?? 11.\(b3\)! \(\text{xa1}\) 12.\(\text{xf7+}\) \(f8\) 13.\(\text{a3+}\) \(e7\) 14.\(\text{xa1}\) and there is no remedy to the coming \(c1)\) 11.\(c1\) 0-0 12.\(b1\) \(b8\) 13.\(d3\) \(c6\) 14.\(e4\) \(d5\) 15.\(c2\) \(\text{xe4}\) 16.\(\text{xe4}\) (threat: 17.d5) 16…\(\text{c8}\) 17.\(f4\) \(d7\) 18.d5 \(a5\) 19.e5 and Black is getting kicked around;

B) 9…\(\text{xc3}\) 10.bxc3 0-0 (10…\(\text{xc3}\)?? hangs the knight to 11.\(\text{e1}\)+) 11.\(\text{e1}\)! and White owns both the bishop pair and a strong pawn center. If 11.b5 12.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 13.\(\text{d3}\) \(d5\) 14.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{ce7}\) 15.\(g5\) Black’s position collapses due to multiple pins;

C) 9…\(b6\) 10.\(\text{e1}\)+ \(c7\) 11.e2! \(\text{xc4}\) 12.\(\text{xc4}\) 0-0 13.d5 \(\text{a5}\) 14.\(\text{c4}\) \(f6\) 15.\(f4\) \(d7\) 16.\(\text{ac1}\) \(\text{e8}\) 17.d3 White retains strong pressure, similar to positions which arise from a Petroff’s Defense gone wrong for Black.

10.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{e7}\)
Black could minimize the damage with 10…d7 11.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 12.\(b3\) \(\text{xf3}\) 13.\(\text{xf3}\) 0-0 14.\(\text{fd1}\) \(d6\) 15.\(\text{ac1}\) \(\text{ab8}\) when White’s advantage is slightly smaller than the one he got in the game.
11. \texttt{x}d5!
Steinitz clears the e-file to keep Black’s king in the center.

11... \texttt{x}d5 12. \texttt{x}xd5 \texttt{xd}5 13. \texttt{x}e7 \texttt{xe}7
Black is just one move short of castling, which would give him a good position. But as we all understand, one move in some positions is the equivalent of a million miles.

14. \texttt{xe}1 \texttt{f}6
A good move, cutting out \texttt{e}5 ideas, while preparing ... \texttt{g}7.

15. \texttt{e}2
The comp found 15. \texttt{a}4+! \texttt{d}7 (15... \texttt{f}7? is met with 16. \texttt{e}5+! and the knight can’t be taken – 16... \texttt{g}8 17. \texttt{ac}1 with a winning development lead) 16. \texttt{b}4 White attacks b7, and if 16...b6?? 17. \texttt{xe}7+ \texttt{xe}7 18. \texttt{e}1 wins material.

15... \texttt{d}7 16. \texttt{ac}1?!
Too slow. White should have played 16.\texttt{d}5! \texttt{f}7 17. \texttt{ad}1 \texttt{ad}8 18.\texttt{d}6! \texttt{cxd}6 19. \texttt{c}4+ \texttt{d}5 (19... \texttt{d}5 is met with 20. \texttt{d}4) 20. \texttt{b}4 \texttt{he}8 21. \texttt{cd}1 \texttt{b}5 22. \texttt{d}6 \texttt{g}6 23. \texttt{d}7+ \texttt{e}7 24. \texttt{xe}7+ \texttt{xe}7 25. \texttt{e}1 \texttt{e}8 26. \texttt{d}4 \texttt{d}5 27. \texttt{xa}7 and Black’s misery continues, but less so than that of the game.

18. \texttt{e}4
White’s knight enters the assault.

18... \texttt{f}7 19. \texttt{ac}6
Threat: 20. \texttt{c}7.

19... \texttt{hc}8
After 19... \texttt{c}6 20. \texttt{c}5 \texttt{d}6 21. \texttt{xb}7 \texttt{d}7 22. \texttt{c}5 \texttt{d}6 23. \texttt{h}5+ \texttt{g}6 24. \texttt{h}3 Black is unable to unravel.

20. \texttt{g}4!
Attacking \texttt{g}7, while threatening dirty discoveries on Black’s queen.

20... \texttt{g}6
20...g6?? hangs Black’s queen to 21. g5+.

21. g5+!

Discovered attack/double attack. The voodoo doll is constructed, and now all that is required is the pin through its heart.

21...e8

If you fear the boogey man, then make certain you lock your doors and windows before going to sleep. I have some bad news for Von Bardeleben (actually I don’t know why we precede the delivery of bad news with ‘I have some bad news’, since the statement itself is an angst infuser into the unfortunate recipient’s nervous system). White’s coming attack is an electrical power line, downed in a storm, just waiting for someone to touch it.

After Steinitz’ next move, Black is blown away. But be careful. Correct observation without calculation to back it up, is still a kind of circumstantial evidence. Our intent may be homicidal, but if our calculation goes astray, the result is benign. Do you see the start of the combination, one of the greatest ever played?

22. xe7+!!

Attraction/overloaded defender/annihilation of defensive barrier. Long, forcing lines are forkless roads which lead to pleasant and unpleasant destinations. In this instance, this is a well-planned heist and Steinitz is rewarded for his deadly accurate calculations.

One of my students found 22. xh7, which isn’t nearly as powerful as Steinitz’ continuation, yet has the considerable practical benefit of not requiring White to come up with exclam after exclam to finish the game.

22...f8!

The world of yesterday vanishes for Black, with only an unendurable present and future. He desperately plays upon his last trump, White’s weak back rank.

Neither the king nor the queen could touch the white rook:

A) 22...xe7?? 23. xc8+ xc8 24. xc8+ leaves Black down a piece;
B) 22...xc7 is met with 23. b4+! and now:
   B1) 23...d8 24. f8+ e8 25. f7+ d7 26. d6#;
   B2) 23...d6 24. xb7+ d7 25. e1+ d8 26. f7+ wins;
   B3) 23...e8 24. e1+ d8 25. e6+ and Black must hand over the queen, since 25...e8 walks into 26. f8 mate.

The king’s fervent hope of a platonic relationship with his sister tragically never comes to pass.

23. f7+!

A bullet can go astray and still manage to strike its intended target via a ricochet.

23...g8

Black’s king, who makes a frantic rush for the lifeboats, obviously disagrees with the maritime edict which states: The captain must go down with his ship.

24. g7+!

The rook continues to slice, dice and hack, with the elegance of a sushi chef.

What an amazing picture. Every white piece on the board with the exception of his king simultaneously hangs, and yet Steinitz is crushing his opponent.

24...h8

A) On 24...f8 25. xh7+ wins;
B) 24...xg7 25. xc8+ is a game ender;
C) 24...xg7 hangs the queen to 25. xd7+.

25. xh7+!
I read that the humiliated Bardeleben sulked out of the tournament hall at this point, without actually resigning the game. The brutal finish would be 25...g8 26.g7+! f8 (26...h8 27.h4+ xg7 28.h7+ f8 29.h8+ e7 30.g7+ e8 31.g8+ e7 32.f7+ d8 33.f8+ e8 34.f7+ d7 35.d6#) 27.h7+! xg7 28.xd7+ (‘Do you require further clarification of my intent?’ asks White’s queen, as she retrieves her bloody dagger from her sister’s belly) 28...h6 29.xe8 and there goes Black’s queen, and also his hoped-for back rank mate.

HD 3.2 – A90
Dutch Defense
Efim Bogoljubow
Alexander Alekhine
Hastings 1922 (10)

A Shakespeare sonnet declared that an idea is capable of outliving a monument of marble. In this immortal game, Alekhine proves Shakespeare correct by producing one of the most beautiful initiative games ever played.

1.d4 f5 2.c4 f6 3.g3 e6 4.g2 b4+
This move mixes Dutch with Bogo-Indian themes, which must have been flattering to Alekhine’s opponent.

5.xd2
5...c6 is played more often today.

6.xd2
This move allows Black full equality. Better is 6.xd2!, preserving the b1-knight for the more centrally posted c3-square, after 6...0-0 7.e3.

6...c6 7.gf3
7.d5 fails to bother Black after 7...e7.

7...0-0 8.0-0 d6

Now that Black has eliminated his dark-squared bishop, he logically plans to switch the structure to the opposite color of his remaining bishop with ...e6-e5 to follow.

9.b3
9.c2, playing for e2-e4, is met with 9...e5 with at least equality for Black.

9...h8
This inaccurate move wasn’t necessary. Black should have proceeded as planned with 9…e5! 10.c5+ h8 when White gets no benefit from pushing forward his c-pawn.

10.e3
White prepares b2-b4, or Bogoljubow may have been under the mistaken impression that his last move suppressed …e6-e5. 10.d5! may give White an edge.

10…e5! 11.e3
Black’s e-pawn is immune since White’s d2-knight hangs at the end of the line 11.dxe5 dxe5 12.e5?? xe5 13.xe5 g4 11…a5
Alekhine puts White’s b2-b4 ideas on hold.

12.a3 e8
Alekhine’s queen begins to slide over in the direction of White’s king.

13.e5??
Alekhine sets a trap, leaving his e5-pawn en prise.

14.g5??
This is a hawk reaction, to push back when pushed. It’s dangerous to move pawns in front of your king, especially if your opponent shows every indication of going after him.

A) 14.b4 e4 15.b5 d8 16.f4 d7 17.e1 g6 and Black can leisurely build up his kingside attack;

B) 14.dxe5 dxe5 15.e5?? falls for Alekhine’s trap after 15…xe5 16.xe5?? g4 with dual threats of mate and chopping White’s now hanging queen.

14…g4
This move conveniently covers e5, while the knight inches closer to White’s king.

15.e5??
It feels as if the knight jumps into the pond to escape the rain. I don’t get this move, since Black probably wants to play …h7-h6 anyway.

15…d7
Maybe Alekhine refused to play 15…h6 16.e3 because now White’s knight reinforces the potential f2-f4 break.

16.e3??
White’s choice, regarding Black’s annoying g4-knight: meddle, or leave well enough alone. Such impulsive weakening moves are the equivalent of when we speak hastily without thinking and say something stupid, which we then immediately regret. This weakens the pawn front around White’s king. He should have played 16.b4.

16…e6
17.f4?  
His king gets safer after this move, but he allows Black a commanding central space advantage.  
17...e4 18.fd1 h6 19.g3 d5  
This move halts White’s d4-d5 ideas.  
20.f1 e7 21.a4  
Intending 22.b4 next.  

21...c6!  
Such moves are white collar crimes, in that they flaunt the law, yet remain non-violent. The knight returns, now that White has weakened b4.  
22.d2 b4 23.h1  
I don’t know where this guy thinks he is going. Bogoljubow clears g2 for his rook, possibly fantasizing about a future g2-g4 break, which will never come to pass.  
23...e8! 24.g2  
This move essentially gives up a pawn. 24.c5 seals the queenside and allows Black to play for ...g7-g5 and ...b7-b6 breaks, with White having nothing to do.  
24...dxc4! 25.bxc4  
Bogo hands over his a-pawn, since when we stand worse, the status quo only tends to increase our agitation. There was no real choice since 25.xc4 e6 26.c3 f7 27.b1 a6 is awful for White.  
25...xa4 26.f2 d7 27.d2 b5!
Alekhine’s empire stretches to virtually every corner of the board, and this game could easily have been placed in the chapter covering a space advantage. His last move is designed to break down the defender of the d5-square.

28.\_d1
28.cxb5 e6 is hopeless for White.

28...e3!

We sense the growing power imbalance between the two sides.

29.\_xa5

10 seconds to detonation isn’t a good place to daydream. This is a blunder in an already busted position.

After 29.cxb5 xb5 30.\_xc7 d5 31.\_c2 a4 Black controls the entire board.

29...b4 30.\_xa8 bxc3!

Black’s queen, a singularly unpleasant old biddy, refuses to budge from e8, even when politely asked to leave. Black’s non-recapture of the a8-rook feels like Alekhine seeks to go from step A to step C, completely bypassing step B. What an unfamiliar delight when a geometric anomaly works for our benefit! This move, a preliminary to an amazing queen sacrifice, would get a double exclamation, if not for the fact that Black also wins after the mundane 30...\_xa8 31.\_b3 a1 32.\_f1 a8 33.\_b2 a3 34.\_d1 xd1 35.\_xd1 a1 36.\_b2 g4 (threat: 37...\_xe3) 37.\_e2 b3 and White is crushed in anaconda-like fashion.

31.\_xe8

31...c2!

Black’s c2-pawn turns out to be Bogo’s combined Angel of Death/Chernobyl. Black threatens both 32...\_xd1+ and also 32...c1+. Alekhine has given up his queen and now allows his opponent to take his rook with check, all in order to promote to another queen.

32.\_xf8+ \_h7 33.\_f2 c1+ 34.\_f1 e1!

With a rather sneaky threat.

35.\_h2

A desperate attempt to get out of the straitjacket. White’s groveling kingside pieces are a sorry sight.

35.e5?? e3#

35...\_xc4 36.\_b8 a5!

This forces White to hand over his only active piece.

37.\_xb5
Buying time barely qualifies as a strategy. There was no choice on account of 37.\textit{d2} \textit{c1} 38.\textit{f1} \textit{f3+} 39.\textit{xf3} \textit{xf1#}.

The stinking septic tank overflows and Bogo’s assaulted nostrils desperately crave fresh air.

38…\textit{f3+} 39.\textit{xf3} \textit{exf3} 40.\textit{gxf5} \textit{e2} 41.\textit{d5} \textit{g8!}

White is in zugzwang, except for pawn moves.

42.\textit{h5} 42.\textit{h3} \textit{xd5} 43.\textit{h2} \textit{xe3} and White can resign.

Bogo virtually begs his opponent to take his pawns.

43…\textit{xe4} 44.\textit{xe4} \textit{xe4} 45.\textit{d6} \textit{cxd6} 46.\textit{f6} A miser feels pain at parting with even a penny in his pocket. On the other hand, the level of Bogo’s generosity in this game is overwhelming.

46…\textit{gxf6} 47.\textit{d2} 47…\textit{e2!}

How many queens is it possible to sacrifice in a single game?

48.\textit{xe2} White has to capture Black’s queen.

48…\textit{fxe2} I’m almost certain Bogo groaned inwardly at this point, thinking: ‘Not again!’

49.\textit{f2} \textit{xf1#} Technically, this is the third queen Alekhine sacrificed in a single game!

50.\textit{xf1} ‘Aaargh!’ says the frustrated king, who really needs to work on his verbal skills. Come on, Bogo, resign. You are down a pawn in a hopelessly lost king and pawn ending against a future World Champion.

50…\textit{g7} 51.\textit{e2} \textit{f7} 52.\textit{e3} \textit{e6} 53.\textit{e4} \textit{d5+} 0-1

VO 9.7 – A00
Various Openings
Richard Réti
1.\textit{g3}  
Réti sticks to his hypermodern guns in the opening in this classic dove/hawk clash.  
1...\textit{e5} 2.\textit{g3} \textit{e4}!  
This is essentially an Alekhine’s Defense with colors reversed, with White having the extra and useful move \textit{g2-g3} tossed in. I would go for a reversed Pirc with 2...\textit{c6} 3.d3 \textit{d5} (3...\textit{g6} 4.c4 would turn the game into an English Opening versus King’s Indian formation).  
3.\textit{\textit{d4}} \textit{d5} 4.\textit{d3} \textit{exd3} 

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{pawn_triangle.png}
\end{center}

5.\textit{\textit{xd3}}  
The wrong recapture, after which Black stands at least even, since White doesn’t get his fair share of the center. 5.cxd3! would keep it in line with Alekhine’s Defense theory of today.  
5...\textit{\textit{f6}} 6.\textit{g2} \textit{b4}?!  
The Bogo-Indian-like check hurts Black in this case, since it aids White’s development. It was better to keep the bishop on the board and play 6...\textit{c5} 7.\textit{\textit{f3}} \textit{c6}.  
7.\textit{\textit{d2}}!  
Principle: The cramped side should seek exchanges.  
7...\textit{\textit{xd2+}} 8.\textit{\textit{xd2}} 0-0 9.\textit{c4}  
Réti challenges Black’s central space and now chances look even.  
9...\textit{a6}?!  
This is a time-wasting exercise. Perhaps Alekhine feared 9...\textit{c5} 10.\textit{\textit{e2}} \textit{c2}. Now \textit{d4} can be undermined with 11.b4! when I slightly prefer White.  
10.\textit{\textit{cxd5}} \textit{b4} 11.\textit{c4} \textit{bxd5} 12.\textit{d3} \textit{c6} 13.0-0 \textit{e8} 14.\textit{fd1} 

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{pawn_triangle.png}
\end{center}

Réti has outplayed Alekhine from the opening, and now stands slightly better for the following reasons:  
1. White’s kingside pawn majority is more mobile and therefore superior to Black’s queenside majority.  
2. White’s rooks will apply pressure down the open c- and d-files.  
3. White can play for a queenside minority attack with the plan \textit{c5}!, \textit{b2-b4}!, \textit{a2-a4} and \textit{b4-b5}, after which Black may get stuck.
with a weak queenside isolani.  
14…\textit{g}4 15.\textit{d}2  
Covering e2, while preparing e2-e4.  
15…\textit{c}8  
Alekhine’s queen feels uncomfortable facing White’s d2-rook.  
16.\textit{g}5!  
Clearing the way for his coming minority attack, while covering against …\textit{e}4 tricks.  
16…\textit{h}3  
Black can’t afford to weaken his queenside with 16…\textit{b}6?! 17.\textit{c}b3 \textit{d}7 18.\textit{c}1 with mounting pressure for White.  
17.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}4 18.\textit{g}2 \textit{h}3 19.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}4 20.\textit{h}1!  
Oh nyet you don’t, buddy boy, no draw! Réti correctly avoids the draw, since White stands strategically better.  
20…\textit{h}5?!  
Attacking from a position of lack of space is generally a recipe for failure. In this case I don’t have any helpful suggestions for Black, who doesn’t have anything better to do.  

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  % Chessboard and pieces
  % Code to draw the chessboard and pieces
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21.\textit{b}4!  
Réti begins a queenside minority attack, which is a routine strategy to a club player of today, but at the time of the game, a strategy virtually unknown. It was Capablanca who first used the strategy to beat Lasker in game 10 of their 1921 World Championship match.  
21…\textit{a}6?!  
Alekhine stalls White’s b4-b5 intent, which makes his position worse, since now he has weakened his queenside dark squares. He would have been better off leaving his queenside pawns alone with 21…\textit{b}6 22.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}7.  
22.\textit{c}1  
This is exactly the move I would play, but perhaps it isn’t the best one. When opportunity comes to call, we should open the door. The dove’s weakness: we prefer to build, when we should strike.  
White declined a more vigorous option with 22.e4! \textit{c}7 23.f3 \textit{e}6 24.\textit{c}1 \textit{a}5 25.e5 \textit{d}5 26.b5! \textit{x}b5 27.\textit{x}b5 \textit{cxb}5 28.f4 \textit{b}6 29.\textit{e}6 \textit{fxe}6 30.\textit{xd}5 \textit{exd}5 31.\textit{xd}5 with a serious advantage for White.  
22…\textit{h}4 23.\textit{a}4?!  
White’s advantage begins to decrease. Réti once again misses a chance to increase his advantage with the more forceful idea 23.e4! \textit{hxg}3 24.\textit{hxg}3 \textit{b}6 25.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}7 26.f3 \textit{xc}5 27.bxc5 \textit{h}3 28.\textit{g}2. Black has no play, no center, and will later be tied down to defense of b7.  
23…\textit{hxg}3 24.\textit{hxg}3
24…c7!
Alekhine takes aim at g3.

25.b5
Again, Réti’s aversion to moving his central pawns arises. He once again avoids 25.e4.

25…axb5 26.axb5

26…e3!
White’s latently weak g3-pawn is the ideal vantage point from which to launch a future attack. Alekhine’s startling shot is a reminder to us all that our enemies are as deeply woven into our lives as our closest friends – and maybe more so. Alekhine hopes to generate an attack from a strategic vacuum. White still stands slightly better, but only if he finds the correct move.

27.f3?
A) Black’s rook is an encumbrance which must be endured without complaint. If the rook is captured with 27.fxe3?? White walks straight into 27…xg3+ 28.g2 xe3 with a forced mate in two moves;
B) 27.f3! retains a slight edge for White, and Black’s pleasant state of intoxication ends with a sobering realization that his would-be attack is no more, after 27…ae8! 28.bxc6 xf3 29.xf3 bxc6 30.b2 with a tiny edge for White, since Black’s c6-pawn remains weak.

27…cxb5!
Distracting White’s queen from coverage of the c3-square. Alekhine begins an incredibly long combination – one of the deepest ever played – which stretches to the margins of the human ability to visualize.

28.xb5 c3!
With a double attack on White’s queen and the e2-pawn. How do great hawks pull this off? When I stumble into positions with multiple hanging pieces, I tend to hang them! In this case Alekhine’s pieces float magically unharmed.

29.xb7 xb7 30.xb7
Réti must have believed that he was safe now that queens have come off the board.

30…e2+ 31.h2
Réti assumes that at last he forces Black’s intruding c3-rook to move.
If 31.f1 xg3+! 32.fxg3 xf3 not only is White down a pawn, but his king isn’t completely safe, nor is his weak g-pawn.
31... e4!!

Or maybe not! This is the sixth consecutive move Alekhine leaves his rook en prise. This position is the hawk’s element and the dove’s nightmare: a virtually pawnless position where piece activity dominates, while strategic signposts are non-existent.

A) After 31… xc1? 32.fxe3 a3 33.g5 xe3 34.d8+ e8 35.e4! f8 36.xf6 gxf6 37.xe8+ xe8 38.g1 White easily holds the draw;

A) If 31… xf3?! 32.xe2 xg3 33.xg3 xe2 34.d6 a3+ 35.f4 h5+ 36.e4 of course Black, up a pawn, has some winning chances, but nowhere nearly as much as with Alekhine’s game continuation.

32.c4!

Réti finds White’s best practical chance, which is to try and swap pieces to relieve the pressure on White’s… well, I don’t even know what is threatened specifically in White’s camp. All my confused dove brain senses is danger all around!

32… xf2!

Comp-like accuracy from Alekhine.

A) 32… xf3?! allows White survival chances after 33.xe4! xe4 34.fxe3 xh1 35.xh1 xg3+ 36.g2 e4 37.d5!, preventing 37…f5. White has excellent chances to hold the same-side, pawn down ending;

B) After 32… xd2? 33.xd2 e6 34.fxe3 a2 35.d8 xd2 36.xe6 f4+ 37.g1 xe6 White’s pawns are split, but this isn’t enough for Black to win the game.

33.g2

33.g5 xh1 34.xh1 xg3+ leaves Black with two extra pawns.

33.e6

After 33… e4! 34.xc2 xf3 35.xf3 xf3 36.xe2 xg3 37.g2 b3 Black consolidates with two extra pawns.

34.cc2

This makes matters worse.

34.b4 fails to save White after 34… g4+ 35.h3 e5+ 36.h2 xf3! 37.xe2 g4+ 38.xg4 xg4 39.xf3 xf3 40.e7 a1!. Black wins, since the mate threat on h1 forces White to hand over his g-pawn with 41.g4.

34… g4+ 35.h3

White’s king must enter the discovery zone. 35.h1 loses instantly to 35… a1+ when White has neither a king move, nor a good block to the check.

35.e5+ 36.h2

36… xf3!
Alekhine knocks out his opponent in a game which feels like it was just one enormously long combination.

36…\texttt{xf3+?!} 37.\texttt{xf3} \texttt{xf3} 38.\texttt{xe2} isn’t all that easy for Black to win.

38.\texttt{g1??} is impossible due to White’s ongoing weak back rank issues after 38…\texttt{a1+}.

The lesson doves should learn from this game is to never allow open, pawnless positions against hawks, since they make us look like fools in them!

\textbf{SI 39.9 – B44}

\textbf{Sicilian Defense}

\textbf{Anatoly Karpov}

\textbf{Garry Kasparov}

\textbf{Moscow Wch m 1985 (16)}

1.e4 c5 2.\texttt{f3} e6 3.d4

Karpov was one of few doves who, throughout their career, successfully navigated Open Sicilians from White’s side.

3…\texttt{cxd4} 4.\texttt{xd4} e5 5.b5 d6 6.c4

Karpov is attracted to the normally strategic byways of the Maroczy Bind formation, rather than the alternative 6.\texttt{f4} (favored by Bobby Fischer) 6…\texttt{e5} 7.\texttt{e3} \texttt{f6}.

6…\texttt{f6} 7.\texttt{c3} a6 8.\texttt{e3}

The final double attack is deadly.
Today, when we play such a forcing line, we become incarcerated by precedence and convention of past games. At the time of the game, this was unexplored territory and it must have come as a shock for Karpov.

8…
e7 is the safer strategic route: 9.
e2 0-0 10.0-0 b6 11.b7 12.d7 13.\f1 e8 14.\f8 Karpov-Romanishin, Moscow 1981. Karpov held a slight edge and went on to take the full point.

9.cxd5 exd5 10.exd5 \b4 11.\e2!

Karpov offers to return the pawn to retain a slight strategic edge. 11.\c4!? is the greedy route. Black looks like he gets full compensation after 11…\d6 12.e2+ \f8 13.0-0 \b5 14.\b3 \f5.

11…\c5?!

When Kasparov offered a pawn earlier, he meant it! He refuses to regain the pawn and give White a development lead after 11…\fxd5 12.0-0.

12.0-0 0-0 13.\f3!?

Karpov gets ambitious and decides to keep his extra pawn. I would be far more inclined to play it safer with a line like 13.\g5, when there is nothing better for Black than to regain the gambit pawn with 13…\bxd5 14.\xd5 \xd5 15.\xf6 \xd1 16.\xf1 \gxf6 17.\e1 \xa3 18.\xa3 \e6 19.\f3 \ab8 and Black should hold the draw without much difficulty.

13…\f5

Kasparov seizes control over both d3- and c2-squares.

14.\g5 \e8

15.\d2?

This move may be the tipping point where Black begins to take control over the game. When we refuse to return material at the proper moment, our material feast can quickly turn into an activity famine.

It was high time to return material in exchange for board control with 15.\c4. Now if Black takes the bait with 15…\d3 (if 15…\d3 16.\d6 \xf2 17.\xf2 \xf2+ 18.\xf2 \g4+ 19.\xg4 \xg5 20.\xf5 \xf5+ 21.\f3 \c5+ 22.\e3 \xd6 I prefer White’s knights over Black’s rook and pawn) 16.\e1! \xf1 17.\xf1, White threatens 18.a3, trapping Black’s knight. Now if 17…\a5 18.a3 \a6 19.\f5 \e5 20.\c2 \b6 21.\d1 I prefer White, who has a powerful pawn for the exchange and tremendously active pieces.

15…\b5

Now White’s a3-knight languishes.

16.\ad1 \e3!
Threat: 17...b4.
17...ab1?!
This is the same as tying an anchor around your neck as ballast and then jumping into the deep end of the pool. By deciding to play the crappy hand he is dealt, Karpov commits the dove-sin of under-diagnosis of the gravity of his decreasing piece activity, and as a result his indescribably tedious position gets worse and worse. To Karpov’s deep consternation, his refusal to return material fails to generate play and his position contains precious little to bargain with.
The time has come for emergency measures like 17.b4!. A skilled gambler knows when to fold to minimize losses: 17...xb4 18.\textbf{e}c2 \textbf{xc}3! (18...a5? is met with 19.\textbf{d}d4 intending 20.\textbf{e}c6) 19.\textbf{xc}3 \textbf{c}8 20.\textbf{xf}6 \textbf{xc}3 21.\textbf{xd}8 \textbf{xc}2 22.\textbf{b}6 \textbf{e}5
Even here White is fighting for his life in the ending, yet his chances are far better than in the game.

17...\textbf{h}6 18.\textbf{h}4 b4!
Kasparov not only displaces the c3-knight, but also cuts off the b1-knight’s access to freedom.

19.\textbf{a}4
Even worse for White is 19.\textbf{e}2 \textbf{b}6 20.\textbf{c}1 \textbf{e}5 (threatening White’s loose b1-knight) 21.\textbf{b}3 \textbf{xf}3+ 22.gxf3 \textbf{d}7. The white king’s cover has been seriously compromised, and his pieces remain listless.

As I begin to describe the monumental awfulness of White’s position, I warn you that it’s a subject almost too painful to discuss. Kasparov’s position radiates energy, while Karpov’s hopes to regain a modicum of piece activity is barred by multiple concerns:

1. Black’s knight perches on d3 and has no plans to leave soon. The effect of this knight is that Karpov is unable to challenge either the c- or the e-file with his rooks, who remain unemployed.
2. Getting White’s knights back into play feels as difficult as rousing hibernating rodents to wake up and leave your backyard.
3. White must watch out for infiltration on the e4-square in the future.
4. White must worry about future rook infiltration to c2.

Conclusion: White’s disharmonious position is marred by acrimony and endless recriminations over whose fault it was, that they all ended up in this awful situation.

20.\textbf{g}3
Karpov hopes to ease the pressure by swapping away Black’s powerful blockader on d6.

20...\textbf{c}8 21.\textbf{b}3!
Karpov, in an attempt to contain the fallout, weakens his queenside dark squares with the desperate hope to swap away Black’s d3-monster with \textbf{b}2.

21...\textbf{g}5!
This is the kind of energetic/weakening move doves tend to refuse to commit to. Normally seizure of the initiative implies uplifting connotations, but not always to doves, when the perceived strategic cost tends to dampen our mood. After Kasparov’s powerful move, White must factor in ideas of ...\textbf{f}4, ...\textbf{f}4 and also ...\textbf{g}5-g4.

22.\textbf{xd}6 \textbf{xd}6 23.\textbf{g}3
Karpov cuts out ideas of infiltration on f4, while giving his light-squared bishop air. The cost was to weaken his kingside light squares, and especially the f3-square, which Kasparov’s next move zeros in on.

23.\textbf{b}2?? wasn’t possible due to 23...\textbf{xb}2 24.\textbf{xb}2 \textbf{g}4, trapping White’s bishop, since 25.\textbf{e}2 is met with 25...\textbf{c}2.
23... \textit{\textbf{e}}d7!
\textit{\textbf{...}} \textit{\textbf{\textbf{e}}}5 will back up the knight's counterpart on d3, while simultaneously eyeing White's newly weakened f3-square.

24. \textit{\textbf{g}}2?!  
White should probably have taken the opportunity to eliminate one of his problem knights with 24. \textit{\textbf{b}}2 \textit{\textbf{e}}5 25. \textit{\textbf{g}}2 a5 26. \textit{\textbf{x}}d3 \textit{\textbf{x}}d3. White got rid of one occupier of d3, only to see another take its place, but at least one headache white knight is removed from the board.

24... \textit{\textbf{f}}6!  

25.a3 a5  
This insures that the b1-knight remains locked out.

26.a\textit{\textbf{x}}b4 a\textit{\textbf{x}}b4 27. \textit{\textbf{a}}2  
The queen's hands, previously unsullied by labor, become rough and hardened by her new job of palace floor scrubber. Karpov vacates d2, hoping to have time for \textit{\textbf{d}}2 to free his b1-knight.

27... \textit{\textbf{g}}6  
Kasparov misses (or perhaps saw and rejected!) the even stronger clearance combination 27... \textit{\textbf{e}}1!! 28. \textit{\textbf{d}}xe1 \textit{\textbf{x}}e1 29. \textit{\textbf{x}}e1 \textit{\textbf{c}}2 and White's queen is trapped.

28. \textit{\textbf{d}}6  
28. \textit{\textbf{d}}2?? loses instantly to the pinning 28... \textit{\textbf{e}}2 when f2 can't be defended.

28... \textit{\textbf{g}}4!  
Kasparov's army creeps closer.

29. \textit{\textbf{a}}2 \textit{\textbf{g}}7 30. \textit{\textbf{f}}3  
This freeing attempt fails. White's game collapses quickly if he shuffles with 30. \textit{\textbf{a}}2 \textit{\textbf{e}}6 31. \textit{\textbf{d}}2 \textit{\textbf{c}}e8 (there is no remedy for the coming 32... \textit{\textbf{e}}2) 32. \textit{\textbf{c}}2 \textit{\textbf{e}}2 33. \textit{\textbf{d}}2 \textit{\textbf{c}}1! 34. \textit{\textbf{x}}d3 \textit{\textbf{x}}d3 35. \textit{\textbf{x}}d3 \textit{\textbf{e}}8! (threat: 36... \textit{\textbf{f}}2+) 36. \textit{\textbf{f}}4 \textit{\textbf{g}}f3 37. \textit{\textbf{x}}f3 \textit{\textbf{d}}4+ 38. \textit{\textbf{h}}1 \textit{\textbf{f}}2! and if 39. \textit{\textbf{x}}e1 \textit{\textbf{x}}f3 40. \textit{\textbf{x}}f3 \textit{\textbf{f}}2 Black wins.

30... \textit{\textbf{d}}6 31. \textit{\textbf{f}}xg4 \textit{\textbf{d}}4+ 32. \textit{\textbf{h}}1 \textit{\textbf{g}}6!  
The knight threatens to invade via g4 and e4.

33. \textit{\textbf{f}}4  
Karpov sends his opponent a message: 'You have come this far, and will not go even a single step further.' Unfortunately this just isn't the case, since Kasparov refuses to retreat his queen on his next move.
White wouldn’t hold out much longer with 33.h3 e3 with a crushing bind.

Kasparov hits Karpov with a discovered attack combination which quickly ends the game.

34...e4!

Kasparov hits Karpov with a discovered attack combination which quickly ends the game.

No choice, since 34...a2 is the equivalent of writing a suicide note: 34...df2+ and White can resign.

‘Sometimes the breaking of vows carries no consequences,’ the bishop tells White’s stunned queen.

Now he plays upon Karpov’s weak back rank.

37...xd3

One blow after another.

38...b2

38...xe3 xd1+ 39...f1 xe3 40...g2 xb3 and the b1-knight falls, leaving Black up two exchanges.

38...f2 39...d2

39...xe1 e1+ forces mate in two.

39...xd1+

39...e2! mates faster.

40...xd1 e1+ 0-1

41...f1 xf1+ 42...xf1 xf1#

EO 1.10 – A29

English Opening

Garry Kasparov

Anatoly Karpov

Seville Wch m 1987 (2)

We don’t normally think of the name Karpov when factors like initiative and attack are mentioned. I put this game in the book to demonstrate that doves are capable of occasionally shining in this realm as well.
1. c4 \(e_6\) 2. \(c_3\) e5 3. \(f_3\) \(c_6\) 4. g3 \(b_4\)
This line of the English is, in essence, a reversed version of the Rossolimo Sicilian.

5. \(a_2\) 0-0 \(e_4\) 7. \(e_5\) \(a_6\) 8. \(bxc_3\) \(e_8\) 9. f3

This line of the English is, in essence, a reversed version of the Rossolimo Sicilian.

5. \(g_2\) 0-0 \(e_4\) 7. \(e_5\) \(a_6\) 8. \(bxc_3\) \(e_8\) 9. f3

This line of the English is, in essence, a reversed version of the Rossolimo Sicilian.

5. \(g_2\) 0-0 \(e_4\) 7. \(e_5\) \(a_6\) 8. \(bxc_3\) \(e_8\) 9. f3

9\ldots e_3!?
This time Karpov is the one to offer a gambit pawn with black, with GM Igor Zaitsev’s sacrificial idea, which is to clog White’s development. A year after this game was played, Kasparov beat Ivanchuk brilliantly after 9\ldots exf_3 10. \(xf_3\) d_5 11. d_4 \(e_4\) 12. \(c_2\) dxc_4 13. \(b_1\) f_5 14. \(g_4\)! \(c_7\) (14\ldots \(f_4\)) 15. \(e_5\) favorites White) 15. \(gxf_5\) \(d_6\)? (Black had to try 15\ldots \(xf_5\) 16. \(g_5\) \(a_6\) 17. \(xe_4\) \(xe_4\) 18. \(xe_4\) \(xe_4\) 19. \(xe_4\) \(xe_4\) 20. \(xb_7\) \(xe_2\) 21. \(xc_7\) \(e_7\) 16. \(e_5\)! \(xe_2\) 17. \(d_5\+) \(h_8\) 18. \(xe_2\) \(xe_2\) 19. \(f_4\) (even with queens off the board, Black has no way of coping with White’s out of control initiative) 19\ldots \(d_8\)? (Black had to play 19\ldots \(h_6\) 20. \(xd_6\) hxg_5 21. \(xc_7\), which also heavily favors White) 20. \(xd_6\) cxd_6 21. \(b_1\) xe_1 22. xe_1 (we think of development leads in association with the opening stage of the game, not endings, as we see here) 22\ldots \(d_7\) 23. \(e_7\) \(c_6\) 24. \(f_6\)! 1-0 Kasparov-Ivanchuk, Moscow 1988 (Black is mated after 24\ldots \(xd_5\) 25. \(e_8\+) \(g_8\) 26. \(f_7\) \(f_7\) 27. \(xf_7\#)

10. d_3!
Kasparov realizes that even though Black’s e_3-pawn exerts a cramping influence on his position, he hopes to later surround it and win it. Black scores well when White accepts with 10.dxe_3 b_6.

10\ldots d_5 11. \(b_3\)?
11. cxd_5 allows Black equality after 11\ldots \(e_5\) 12. \(b_3\) \(a_5\) 13. \(a_3\) b_6 14. \(f_4\) \(b_7\).

11\ldots \(a_5\) 12. \(a_3\) c_6 13. cxd_5 cxd_5 14. \(f_4\)
Kasparov frees his light-squared bishop, supports his knight and worries Black with ideas like a future \(f_3\), or \(e_4\), which may endanger the extended e_3-pawn.

14\ldots \(c_6\) 15. \(b_1\) \(c_7\)
Karpov covers b_7 to develop his bishop.

16. \(b_2\) \(g_4\)

17. c_4!? 
Principle: *Open the position when you own the bishop pair* (even when you won’t own it for long!). Kasparov offers a pawn sacrifice to damage the pawn front around Karpov’s king. Kasparov decides that the time has come to escalate, making the game a referendum on his enhanced piece activity, versus the weaknesses created in his position.

Before we make threats, we would be wise to take stock of the risk. Kasparov’s move opens the dark-squared bishop’s
diagonal to f6, but also weakens d4, a factor upon which Karpov later seizes.

17...dxc4 18.\textit{xf6} gxf6

For a change, Karpov decides to put aside his normal good manners and breeding, when it comes to structure. To our offended strategic eye, Black’s structure can hardly be described as blemish-free, yet his position remains perfectly afloat due to his immense piece activity.

19.\textit{e4}

Targeting f6.

19...\textit{g7}

After 19...\textit{xe4}? 20.\textit{xe4} \textit{xe2} 21.\textit{xd3} \textit{xd3} 22.\textit{xd3} d3 the e3-pawn falls and Black doesn’t get anything for his exchange sacrifice.

20.dxc4?

The fact that most of our suffering in life is self-inflicted, makes it hurt all the more. When we have the choice between ‘yes’ and ‘no’, then the worst one we can pick is ‘maybe’. White loses the initiative after this leisurely recapture, and his defensive requirements remain unmet. He had two superior alternatives in:

A) 20.\textit{xf6}!? Blind faith is a warped form of certainty. I’m surprised Kasparov didn’t go for this speculation, since it suits his style perfectly: 20...\textit{xf6} 21.\textit{b2}+ \textit{e7} 22.dxc4 \textit{ab8} 23.f5 \textit{g8} 24.\textit{a3}+ \textit{d7} 25.\textit{b5} and it’s anybody’s game according to the comp, who assesses at 0.00, which is often its way of telling us: ‘I have no idea’;

B) 20.\textit{c3} \textit{d8}! (20...\textit{e7}? allows the deflection sacrifice 21.\textit{xb7}! \textit{xb7} 22.\textit{xf6} with a winning attack for White)

21.\textit{xb7} \textit{d4} 22.\textit{xc4} \textit{e8} 23.\textit{c5} is assessed as dead even by the comp.

20...\textit{ad8}!

Karpov cuts out \textit{d6} ideas.

21.\textit{b3}

White minimizes his disadvantage only with 21.\textit{e3} \textit{c2} 22.\textit{d5} \textit{xe2} 23.\textit{xe2} \textit{xe2} 24.\textit{b3} \textit{d8}.

21...\textit{e4} 22.\textit{xex3} \textit{xc4}

Karpov introduces shades of grey in a position which is black and white. He retains an advantage but misses an outright win:

A) 22...\textit{c3} allows White to escape with a draw with 23.\textit{g3} \textit{xe3} 24.\textit{xf6}+ \textit{g8} 25.\textit{g5}+ \textit{f8} 26.\textit{h6}+. Black is unable to escape perpetual check: 26...\textit{e7} 27.\textit{g5}+ \textit{d7} 28.\textit{c5}+ \textit{d6} 29.\textit{xb7}+ \textit{d7} 30.\textit{c5}+ and Black must take the draw, since 30...\textit{c8}?? is met with 31.\textit{b7}+ \textit{b8} 32.\textit{a6}+ \textit{xb7} 33.\textit{xc7} \textit{xc7}. Materially, Black may have enough for the queen. His exposed king is the problem. White wins with 34.\textit{c5}+ \textit{d7} 35.\textit{xa7}+ \textit{d6} 36.\textit{b1} with a decisive attack;

B) 22...\textit{e6}! wins material and is immediately decisive. Now Black actually does threaten the \textit{c2} fork, since White no longer has the perpetual check mechanism seen in line A, as \textit{f6} is now protected.

23.\textit{h1}!

23.\textit{b2} was necessary.
23... f5
Karpov’s leaping/arabesquing knight is like an over-achieving ballerina on angel dust. Often there is but a molecule’s breadth between an elegant solution and a pedestrian one. Black’s position contains every comfort he could wish for, except one: a clean path to victory. The complexity level is too much, even for the two greatest players of their era.

Karpov’s move is still winning but he misses an immediate knockout with 23... c2! 24. b2 (24. x a7 fxe3 25. x e3 d4! and the pin is fatal) 24... x e3 25. x f6+ g8 26. g5+ f8 and White no longer has perpetual check. If 27. h6+ e7 28. g5+ d7 29. f6+ c7 Black’s king escapes and White’s attack is precariously short of funding after 30. x g4 x f1 31. x f1 d1 32. g2 x f1! with a mating attack.

24. d3 x e2 25. x d8 x d8 26. e1 e8

27. a5
Attacking Black’s knight, while securing his rook.

A) After 27. d6 x d6 28. x d6 Black has the killing shot 28... f3! 29. g1 x g2+ 30. x g2 e2+ 31. h3 h5+ 32. g2 e2+ 33. f1. The trap door snaps open and the noose wrapped around the king’s neck jerks tightly: 33... f3 mate;

B) The attempt to confuse with 27. g4! looks like White’s best practical chance: 27... x g4 28. x a7 d6 29. g1 x e4 30. x e4 x e4 31. x g4+ f8 32. d1 c6 33. g2 and White still has some chances to save the game.

27... b5
He covers his hanging knight, where there was no necessity. Karpov misses the problem-like 27... x e4! 28. x f5 f3! (pin/overloaded defender/weak back rank) 29. g1 d3! 30. h3 c2. There is no defense to the threat 31... x g2, followed by 32... f1 mate, other than to hand over a queen.

28. d2 d3 29. e b3
White’s king, the position’s Humpty Dumpty, is about to fall off the wall and end up in intensive care, where even the most skilled surgeons are unable to put him back together again.

29. f1 loses to 29... f3!
29...gxf3!
Hooray! Karpov finally exhumes the long-buried idea which ends the game. What a joy, when our hidden combination reveals itself like dug up pirate’s treasure.

30.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}f3} gxf3+ 31.\texttt{\texttt{g}}1
White’s king dreams of privacy yet lives a life of constant intrusion.

31...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}e1+ 32.\texttt{\texttt{x}}e1 \texttt{e}3! 0-1
We are reminded of the line from Monty Python: ‘The beatings will continue until morale improves.’ White must hand over his queen, since if 33.\texttt{\texttt{f}}2 \texttt{d}1+ 34.\texttt{\texttt{f}}1 \texttt{xf1} mate.

SI 35.2 – B33
Sicilian Defense
\textbf{Ronald Bruno}
\textbf{Cyrus Lakdawala 2428}
Los Angeles 2005

I’m a bit ashamed to show you a game of mine in this chapter, which demonstrates my handling of the initiative, since the five preceding games are all played by world champions. So this game, played by a shrimpy IM, is the very definition of the statement: ‘It’s a hard act to follow!’

1.e4 c5 2.\texttt{\texttt{f}}3 a6 3.d4 \texttt{cxd4} 4.\texttt{\texttt{e}}xd4 \texttt{e}6 5.\texttt{\texttt{e}}c3 e5 6.\texttt{\texttt{d}}b5 a\texttt{c}5!

Altering our opening systems is the chess version of a farmer who practices crop rotation. I play this blood-pressure-elevating provocation, which obviously steps outside the normal Sveshnikov Sicilian’s framework, when I’m in need of a good laugh. After dosing myself with caffeine, ginseng and prayer. I tell myself: ‘I have come to bury this shady line, not to praise it,’ and then a few weeks later I find myself playing it again! Playing with a death wish results in one of two outcomes:
1. It kills us.
2. It makes us fearless, and therefore invincible.

In the rare instances when I embrace bravery, my heart pounds in my temples like war drums. Like most doves, your writer tends to sometimes resent the dominant and obnoxiously submissive Dr. Jekyll, and occasionally seek out the hateful inner Mr. Hyde, as in this case.

In the 2005 State Championship, my strategy for winning was to hold every IM and GM to a draw, and then pick off the three
lowest rated masters. I managed to do just that, by upping the aggression against the players I needed to beat. A salesperson is tempted to lie if he or she believes the customer is willing to sign on the dotted line. So can you blame me for pulling out yet another one of my quirky/shady/aggressive opening lines? My opponent, a 2350 rated player, was on my ‘must beat’ list. Now my playing this way against a hawk tactician may strike you as similar to signing up to an equestrian event without owning a horse. But sometimes tournament necessity nudges the meek into rash actions.
I’m pretty certain my line fails to meet acceptability’s threshold, yet I score well with it as an ambush weapon against an unsuspecting opponent, which is the bottom line.

7...g5
   A) 7...d5 0-0 and I have caught people with the trap 8.g5? xf2+!
   B) 7.e3 is supposedly the ‘refutation’, except that I beat a master when he tried it. The game went 7...d6 8.xc5 dxc5 9.xd8+ xd8 10.0-0+ e7 11.c7 (11.e5+ xd5 12.exd5 is also quite scary for Black) 11...b8 12.e3 d5+ xd5 13.exd5+ f8 14.e3 e6 15.xf6+ e7 16.xb6 fxe6 17.c3 b5. The comp claims White stands slightly better, but I disagree, since Black’s doubled e-pawns are weak in name only, and Black can expand on the queenside, Baker-Lakdawala, San Diego rapid 2009;
   C) After 7...d6+ e7 8.f5+ f8 the comp likes White but I’m 3-0 versus this one, all against masters rated over 2300: 9.e3 (9.e3! may give White an edge) 9...b4! 10.c4 d5! Black already stands better since the f5-knight gets undermined.

7...0-0!
7...h6 8.e3! favors White.

8.f3!
Intending 9.d5. This is White’s most logical move, pressuring f6, while preparing to castle queenside. I played a few online blitz games where titled players fell into 8.d5? xf2+!, which favors Black – just a permutation of the same trap shown in the note above.

8...e7
8...a6? is too slow. White ignores it with 9.d5! when it isn’t possible to capture on b5.

9.xf6!
He eliminates a defender of d5, at the cost of weakening his dark squares, with White getting the better of the bargain.

9...xf6 10.a5 e7
Covering d6. White has achieved an edge from the opening and at this point your writer’s beady eyes flickered paranoiacally, up, down, left and right, perceiving threats, both real and imagined. I was also wondering: ‘Am I destined to score 0-7 in this tournament?’

If I hang on to my bishop with 10…\text{g}5?! 11.h4 \text{h}6? 12.\text{d}6 \text{d}4 13.\text{d}1 I am in deep trouble, since c2-c3 comes next, and I can’t easily develop my queenside.

11.\text{bc}7?! This move violates the opening stage’s social taboo to avoid falling behind in development. White would stand better by playing it simply with 11.\text{xe}7+! (eliminating Black’s only trump, which is control over the dark squares) 11…\text{xe}7 12.0-0-0. I intended 12…\text{d}6! as I can’t allow his knight to roost on d6. When in a strategically inferior situation, we have little choice but to ignite a crisis. 13.\text{xd}6 \text{e}6, and I hoped my open c-file and attacking chances compensated my lost pawn – which it probably doesn’t fully.

11…\text{b}8 12.\text{xe}7+

12…\text{xe}7!

Fighting for control over d5.

13.\text{c}3

More time lost. White should have gone for 13.\text{b}5 \text{d}5! 14.exd5 \text{xd}5 (14…\text{xd}5 15.0-0-0 \text{g}5+ 16.\text{b}1 \text{f}4 17.\text{e}3 is also fine for White) 15.\text{xd}5 \text{xe}5 16.0-0-0 \text{c}6 17.\text{c}4 \text{e}3! 18.fxe3 \text{xc}4 19.\text{d}6 \text{e}6 20.b3. White looks okay in the ending since his entrenched knight looks no worse than Black’s bishop.

13…\text{d}5!

Both parties take risk, yet there is a significant difference in scale. This is the part where Mr. Scrooge repents his past cheapskatehood and dances a merry jig with the ghosts of Christmas past and future. My jangled ganglia desperately needed some soothing good news, and here it is: Principle: \textit{Create confrontation when leading in development.}

14.\text{exd}5?!

He had to try 14.\text{xe}5! \text{c}6 15.\text{g}3 \text{dxe}4 16.c3 (preventing …\text{b}4) 16…\text{g}4! 17.\text{c}4 \text{c}8 18.\text{d}5 \text{a}5 19.\text{xg}4 \text{xc}4 20.0-0-0 \text{f}5 21.\text{e}2 and I only slightly prefer Black.

14…\text{xd}5 15.\text{xd}5 \text{xd}5

White is in trouble:

1. He lags in development.
2. His king is stuck in the middle of the board.
3. He can’t play 16. \( \text{d1} \), since this hangs his a2-pawn.
4. White must watch out for a queen check on e4, which wins either the g2- or the c2-pawn, or forces his king to move to the open d-file.
5. He can’t move his bishop, since this hangs g2.

16. \( \text{e3} \)

Or 16. \( \text{f3} \) e4 17. \( \text{f4} \) e6 18. \( \text{e2} \) bc8 19.c3 fd8 20.0-0 \( \text{d2} \) 21.\( \text{xe4} \) xb2 22.\( \text{f1} \) xc3 23.\( \text{xb7} \) d2 24.\( \text{f3} \) xf3 25.\( \text{xf3} \) xa2 with an extra pawn for Black in the ending.

16… \( \text{f5} \) 17.\( \text{c3} \)

This is a forced weakening of d3, which later takes on great significance.

16… \( \text{f5} \) 17.\( \text{c3} \)

This frees his bishop at the cost of eliminating kingside castling as an option.

18.\( \text{f3} \) e4! 19.f4 \( \text{fe8} \) 20.\( \text{e2} \) h5! and if 21.\( \text{xb5} \) b5 22.b3 \( \text{d3} \) 23.\( \text{xa7} \) h3! White must remove queens from the board: 24.\( \text{a4} \) xa4 25.bxa4 \( \text{xc2} \) 26.\( \text{g1} \) \( \text{f3} \) 27.\( \text{g4} \) xc3 and White is saddled with too many isolanis to save himself in the ending.

18… \( \text{g6} \)

Clearing the path for the f-pawn to move forward. 18… \( \text{c2} \) was perhaps a superior option.

19.\( \text{g4} \)

He hopes to discourage …\( \text{f7-f5} \).

19… \( \text{f5!?} \)

I play the break anyway, since opening the f-file has to be more beneficial for Black than opening the g-file for White’s rook, since White’s passivity insures there will be no attack upon the black king. I also considered probing for weaknesses along the third rank with the rook lift 19… \( \text{d6} \).

20.\( \text{gxf5} \) \( \text{xf5} \)

This automatic recapture lessens my edge. I should have played 20… \( \text{h5} \), threatening mate: 21.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xe2} \) 22.\( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{xf5} \) with a rough major piece ending for White, since his king will never feel safe.

21.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{h8} \) 22.\( \text{h4} \) \( \text{h6} \) 23.\( \text{h5} \)

His h-pawn may turn into a liability for White if I remove bishops from the board.

23… \( \text{h7} \) 24.\( \text{b3} \)

He is sick and tired of his a1-rook babysitting his a-pawn. The trouble is that with every pawn push, White’s queenside becomes more vulnerable.
24...b6?!
Blind Faith’s equally evil twin for strategists is Crippling Doubt. I fall prey to the dove’s tendency to solidify, when I should be pressing. 24...a5! leaves White struggling to unravel.

25.d1!
A swap of rooks eases his defense.

25...e6
25...a5 26.xd8 xd8 27.g3 d7 28.f1 and it isn’t so easy for Black to press his edge.

26.g3?!
White unravels with 26.xd8! xd8 27.f4!, clearing f2 for his king: 27...e4 28.f2 and White should probably hold the game.

26...xd1+ 27 xd1 f6 28.e2

29.a4?
This self-induced weakening only serves to inflame already tender flesh. Here we see the hawk’s tendency toward inappropriate activity.
White gets excellent drawing chances if he gives up his a-pawn with 29.e3! b1 30.g3! (30.a4? c2 31.c4 e4 leaves White in deep trouble) 30...xa2 31.g6 f4 32.xf4 exf4 33.d1 b1 34.c6. Black will have a very tough time converting his extra pawn.

29...c2 30.c4?!
Giving up a pawn with 30.b4 was necessary.

30...e4!
Black threatens 31...d3, cutting off the white queen’s coverage of c3.

31.e2 d3+
‘I’m done with prayer. From this point on I am the fulfiller of my own wishes,’ declares the bishop. With the elimination of bishops, Black’s rook infiltrates d3.

32.xd3 x3 33.g4
33.b8+ h7 (Black threatens 34...f3+ and then mate on d1) 34.g3 f3 35.xf3 xf3+ 36.e1 xc3+ 37.f1 h3+ 38.d1 h1+ 39.d2 xh5 40.xa7 d5+ with a won queen ending for Black.

33.xc3 34.f1
Black’s e-pawn is taboo. If 34.xe4?? c2+ 35.f1 d1+ wins White’s queen.
We come to a crossroads of plans:

A) Black can play 34…e3, going for a direct attack on White’s king, which would appeal to the hawk;

B) Black can remove the queens from the board with 34…c1+, followed by 34…g5, entering a pawn up rook and pawn ending, which of course a dove would favor.

We must ask ourselves: which factor matters more than any other? One path is an easy win, while the other puts Black’s win at risk. Which one would you play?

34…c1+?! 

It’s not easy to evade your inner nature. My desire to play it safe sets me in the direction of the wrong plan. Black should have gone for White’s king with 34…e3! 35.f3 (threatening perpetual check) 35…xb3 (planning to meet a back rank check with …g8) 36.g3 d1+ 37.g2 exf2! and White can resign, since he is down too many pawns with a fatally exposed king.

35.g2 g5?

Consistency isn’t a virtue when we are on the wrong track to begin with. My conscious policy of self-sabotage continues. It wasn’t too late to reverse with 35…c6! 36.h2 f6 37.xe4 xf2+ 38.g2 c3 39.xe3 xe3 40.b2 e5. h5 falls and White is totally busted, down two pawns in the rook and pawn ending.

36.xg5 hxg5

37.h2?

37.c1! offers White excellent drawing chances after 37…d4 38.a5 bxa5 39.c1 h7 40.c5 h6 41.xa5 d7 42.e5 b7 43.xe4 xb3 44.a4 b7 45.a5 xh5. White should hold the draw, despite Black’s two extra pawns.

37…xb3

Now Black is winning again.

38.xg5 a3 39.e5 xa4 40.g3 h7 41.e6 b4

Clearing the way for …a7-a5. The black rook plays a mentoring role with my queenside passed pawns, preparing to assist them up the board.

42.f4 a5

My e-pawn remains safe, since a king and pawn ending is hopeless for White.

43.h6
43...e3+!?
I don’t really remember the reason for this paranoid move, but it’s unnecessary:
   A) 43...g6! is an easier path to the win;
   B) 43...gxh6 also wins after 44. e7+ g6 45. e6+ g7 46. e7+ f6 47. h7 g6.
44. xe3 gxh6 45. f4 h5 46. e7+ g6 47. e6+ g7 48. e5 h4 49. h5 h3
This is a society characterized by the haves and the have-nots, and it becomes painfully clear which is which. White is just down two pawns and can resign.
50.f5
50. xh3?? hangs the rook to the painfully obvious 50... b3+.
50... f6 51. d2 b3 52. c2 a4 0-1
I hope my students will forgive me for using them as lab rats, to demonstrate the differences between a dove and a hawk. In this chapter we look at two games. In the first, my student Josh, a young History professor teaching in Australia, is a master-strength dove. In the second, Uri, a programmer who lives in New York, is an A-level hawk.

**QP 6.3 – A46**

**Queen’s Pawn Openings**

**Josh Specht**

**Ly Thai**

Melbourne 2016

1.d4

In this first game Josh outrates his opponent, a 2000-player, by several hundred points.

1...f6 2.f3 e6 3...bd2 d5 4.e3

Like father, like son. Josh plays a virtually identical dove opening repertoire as his teacher.

4...c5 5.c3 a6 6.d3 c7

I think it’s slightly inaccurate to place his queen on the c-file, since it may later open, with White gaining a tempo with c1 in the distant future.

7.0-0 d6 8.dxc5 xc5 9.b4

When I advise my students to play ‘this’ way, and they play ‘that’ way instead, I take on the role of a movie director who throws a fit when his actors and actresses ad-lib, rather than stick to the script.

I talked Josh into the b2-b4 version, which is more of a reversed Semi-Slav than a Colle. 9.e4 is the more mainstream version of the Colle.

9...d6 10.b2

White prepares a2-a3 and c3-c4, which can work out well for White, who has just freed his dark-squared bishop, as well as opened the c-file with c1 to come, harassing Black’s prematurely developed queen.

10...0-0 11.c1

Josh analyzed and incorrectly rejected the more forceful 11.b5! e5 12.xe5 xe5 13.f4! (White’s c-pawn is taboo, due to the pin on the c-file) 13...d6 14.c4 when White’s bishops assume tremendous activity, while taking aim at Black’s king.

11...e5

This tempting push is perhaps premature, since Black experiences difficulty holding his center. He equalizes with 11...g4 12.h3 e5 13...c2 d8.

12.e4

White can play more energetically with 12.c4!? xb4 13.cxd5 e7 14.b1 bxd5 15.e4 (threat: 16.xd6, followed by 17.e4) 15...e4 16.xd6 xd6 (if 16...exf3? 17.xc8 axc8 18.xf3 White’s bishops are powerful in the open position) 17.xf6 exf3 18.d3! f5 (18...g6? 19.a1! with strong pressure down the a1-h8 diagonal) 19.xf5 xf6 20.xf3 e7 with perhaps a tiny edge for White, since his bishop looks superior to Black’s remaining knight.

12...g4 13.exd5
‘This seemed thematic to me, but it allows ...e5-e4 later,’ writes Josh. Upon 13...c2 xf3 14.gxf3!? d7 15.h1 White’s open g-file and light-square control make up for his damaged kingside structure.

13...e7?

A) 13...e4! leads to huge complications after 14.xe4 xh2+. Here White can give up his queen for two pieces and attacking chances: 15.xh2! xd1 16.xf6+ gxf6 17.xd1 e5 18.c4 White has two pieces and a pawn plus serious attacking chances for the queen, and I actually prefer his side, despite the comp’s nearly even evaluation;

B) The natural move 13...xd5! looks correct. Black shouldn’t fear 14.xh7+?! xh7 15.g5+ g6! 16.xg4 f5 17.d1 xg5 18.f3+ h6 19.xd5 e4 20.d4 xh2+ and Black stands better.

14.c4

‘Here I felt like I had a great position and was already imagining some sort of miniature,’ writes Josh. I agree.

14...e4? It’s unwise to stare into the evil eyes of the Medusa. This move is one of those gambles/hunches which leads either to great wealth, or more likely to homelessness. To my mind it makes an already bad position even worse. When in trouble, we sometimes put on a facade of open hostility – whatever the cost – when our true motivation is to seize the initiative to protect ourselves from the opponent’s wrath. Black’s last move feels like it was made with just this motivation.

A) 14.xf3 15.xf3! (superior to 15.xf3 xb4, which breaks up White’s imposing pawn center) 15...e4 16.xf6 exf3 17.xe7 xe7 18.c5 f4 19.xf3! xc1 20.xc1 and White has two imposing central pawns for the exchange and still stands considerably better;

B) 14...xb4 15.xe5 xe5 16.ex5 xxd1 17.fxd1 leaves White up a pawn in the ending.

15.xe4 xe4 16.xe4 f5 17.d4!

Black may have overlooked this mate-threatening zwischenzug.

17...f6 18.c5!

Energetically undove-like play from Josh. I like this shoot-first/ask-questions-later move.

18...fxe4 19.cxd6 xd6
Should White play his knight to e5 or g5?

20. \( \text{g5?} \)

Josh falls prey to paranoia, the dove’s bane. To our minds, cheap plots hatch everywhere, and our opponents are guilty until proven innocent – not the other way around.

Josh said he feared 20. \( \text{e5!} \) due to … \( \text{f5} \) ideas. Let’s take a look to see if his fears were justified: 20… \( \text{f5??} \) (according to the comp, White’s evaluation rises dramatically here. Correct is 20… \( \text{f5} \) 21. \( \text{c4!} \) \( \text{d7} \) (White’s b-pawn is immune, since a queen capture is met with \( \text{a3} \), winning Black’s knight due to a skewer) 22.\( \text{d6} \) \( \text{g6} \) 23. \( \text{fd1} \). White is a pawn up and his pieces rule the board) 21. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{h5} \) 22. \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{xg4} \) 23. \( \text{xg4} \) and Black can resign. He can’t even move his rook to \( \text{g6} \), since this would hang his knight.

20… \( \text{g6} \)

In this version White stands better, but nowhere near to what he could have had, if he had picked the e5-square for his knight. Black’s rook now works both offensively and defensively, covering \( \text{g7} \).

21. \( \text{xe4} \)

21… \( \text{f3!} \)

This forces White into a temporarily defensive posture and is more accurate than 21… \( \text{xd5} \) 22.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xd4}+ \) 23. \( \text{xd4} \) with a healthy extra pawn for White in the ending.

22. \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 23. \( \text{fe1} \)

Threat: 24. \( \text{xe7} \), followed by 25. \( \text{xd5}+ \).

23. \( \text{d8} \)

23… \( \text{c6} \) 24. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xa2} \) 25. \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xd6} \) 26. \( \text{xg7!} \) \( \text{xb4} \) (26… \( \text{xb4} \)?? gets forked with 27. \( \text{f5+} \)) 27. \( \text{c7} \) \( \text{e6} \) 28. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 29. \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{d8} \) 30. \( \text{g7+} \) \( \text{h8} \) 31. \( \text{xb7} \) \( \text{c6} \) My feeling is that White should convert the ending, due to Black’s chronically insecure king.
24. $xa7

‘After the game I thought this wasn’t energetic enough. But maybe it’s fine, my real mistake comes on the next move and I think it’s instructive.’

I agree. It isn’t energetic enough. White has better with 24.b5!, cutting off 24…c6: 24...a6 25.$h4! $e6 26.$g5 $g6 27.$ed1 $f5 is coming and Black’s game is on the verge of collapse.

24…c6 25.$e3

White should have played 25.$xb7!. ‘ANYTHING MESSY SCARES ME,’ laments Josh! When my students blow a game and then blame me (Josh doesn’t but some others do!) I tell them: ‘A skilled teacher (that would be me, of course!) can only go so far and is unable to teach goldfish to sing!’ For some reason, my overly sensitive students tend to get offended when I tell them this.

25…$xb4 26.$b5.

25…$xb4 26.$a3

26.$c1! is stronger. Black can’t play 26…$xb2 27.$xd5 $xd5?? 28.$e8 mate.

26…$g4 27.$h3

This feels like the wrong pawn. White should have eased the pressure on g2 with 27.f3.

27…$a4 28.$c3?!

With 28.$ed1 White robs his opponent of leverage by pinning Black’s bishop.

28…$xa2

29.$e4?!

White’s once crushing advantage is down to nearly zero. White still retains pressure after 29.$a1! $b3 30.$xb3+ $xb3 31.$ab1 $d4 32.$b2 $a2 33.$a1 $e6 (33…$c2 fails to win an exchange and is met with 34.$ed1) 34.$xe6 $c6 35.$a7 $c8 36.$a8 $c6 37.$h5 with pressure on the kingside dark squares.

29…$a6?!

29…$b3! should have held the game.

30.$ce1?!

30.$a1! ‘I found this with Fritz and just assumed I’d missed an easy winning tactic. It wasn’t until we looked at it that I realized how weird and deep it is.’ Analysis runs: 30…$d5 31.$e7 $xg3! (after 31…$xa1?? 32.$xa1 $e8 33.$c5 $xe4 34.$a2+ $h8 35.$xe4 Black is completely busted, since he can’t touch White’s hanging bishop, due to his weak back rank)
32.fxg3 b6+ 33.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} b3 34.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xb3 \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xb3 and White should convert his extra exchange.

30…h6 31.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} b2 32.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} c5?! 32.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e8+ h7 33.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xd8 xc3 34.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xd8 e7 35.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e7 is tough for Black, since White piles up on g7, with e5 h5 to follow.

32…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} f7!

A dual purpose move, blocking future seventh rank pressure on g7, while eyeing h5, which cuts off future e h5 attempts to reach g7.

33.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} g4

Removing a defender of g7.

33…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xg4 34.hxg4 \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} d5 35.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} c1 \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} d4

36.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xd4?! In time pressure we interpret data with a snapshot view, rather than one of reflection. ‘I’m trading largely because I want to clarify the position. I need to be more courageous… I’m the stronger player.’ If I had a dollar for every time I repeated this dove’s mantra, I would be a multi-millionaire, rather than the multi-thousandaire I am today. 36.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} c8+! ‘Here I’m low on time so I can’t be too hard on myself for missing this winning idea, but it does show that I don’t really know what I’m doing in positions that are all about piece play.’ All doves feel uncomfortable in open games, since pawns, our strategic markers, vanish and we begin to play in the rudderless fashion of dream characters, who speak and act randomly. Here though, you do have a single yet critical strategic marker which assists understanding: you realize that g7 is Black’s weakest point, and consistently increase pressure on the pawn. 36…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h7 37.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e7 38.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} b1+ 39.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h2 \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xb2 39.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xf7 b6 40.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h5 41.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} d6+ 42.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} g3 and Black must hand over the exchange since 41…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} g5?? is met with 42.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} f8 and game over, since a rook check on h8 will be fatal for Black. For example:

A) 42…b5 43.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h8+ \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} g6 44.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e8#;

B) 42…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e6 43.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h8+ \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} g6 44.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} f4+ forking king and queen;

C) 42…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e7 43.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h8+ \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} g6 44.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e8! \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} d6 45.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} f8 (threat: 46.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} f4+ and 47.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h8 mate) 45…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} c5 46.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} f4+ \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} g5 47.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h3+ \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} g6 48.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e8+ \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h7 49.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h8#

36…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xd4 37.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} c8+ \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h7 38.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xb7

It’s natural to want to be a pawn up. The angst-free comp prefers 38.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e7.

38…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} d5 39.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} c8 \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} c4 40.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} f5+?!

As Josh mentioned before: we doves love to swap. I’m not sure this is White’s best plan, but it’s the same one I would be inclined to play.

40…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} xf5 41.gxf5 \textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} c2 42.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} e7

Threats: 43.f6 and also 43.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h5.

42…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} c1+ 43.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h2 c2?!

Correct was 43…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} g8, intending to meet 44.\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} h5 with 44…\textit{\textup{\textbf{\textsf{\textbullet}}}} f7.
44. d7
44. h5! ‘I didn’t even consider this at first but it might be close to winning. I need to play sharply!’ Actually, Josh transposes to the correct idea a few moves later.
44… xf2?? is met with 45. f6+ h8. The black king’s corpse tumbles out of the locked closet: 46. c8+ g8 47. xg8#
44… c6 45. c7 e4 46. e7 d5 47. h5!
Now he finds it.
47… g8
47… xf2?? 48. f6+ is the same mate.
48. xg7+ f8 49.f6?
Low on the clock, Josh blunders and his variation ends up in a drawn cul-de-sac. 49. d7! f7 50. f4 xf2 51. g3 offered White serious winning chances.
49… f7!? 50. g4
What? Black holds the draw far easier with 49… xf2, intending 50… xf6! next.
50.f4
50. f4 runs into unsympathetic geometry: 50… xf2 51. g3 c2 52. g6+ xg6 53. xg6 h5 54. h4 c5 55. h6 (55. g5 c6 56. xh5 xf6 is drawn, despite the fact that Black’s king is cut off from the promotion square) 55… c2 The rook and pawn ending is drawn.
50… xf2+ 51. g3

51… xf6!
This final undermining trick secures the draw. A miracle save.
52. xf6 xg7 ½-½

KP 10.1 – C48
King’s Pawn Openings
Andrew Hoy 2254
Uri Feld 1822
New York 2016

1.e4 c6
My student, Uri, likes this move order, which usually reaches double king’s pawn positions, while eliminating some lines, like the King’s Gambit. In this case he is outrated by over 400 points by his master strength opponent.

2. e4
2.d4 is a pure Nimzowitsch Defense, which can be met with 2…d5 (2…e5, 2…d6, or 2…e6).
2…e5 3. c3 4. f6
So we transpose to a Four Knights.
4. b5 5. d6

This odd looking move is gaining popularity. Black’s idea is to play …0-0, …e8, and then play …d7-d5 without having wasted a tempo on …d7-d6, as in Ruy Lopez structures.

5.a3
I’m guessing that the motivation behind this odd move is that it creates room for White’s bishop on a2 if Black plays …a7-a6, …b7-b5 and …e5.

5.0-0 6.d3 h6 7. e3 e8 8.h3 a6 9. a4 (I think he was better off exchanging on c6) 9.b5 10. b3 a5 11. d2 f8 12. e2 xb3 13.axb3 d5 and Black already stood better with bishop pair in Grazian-Lakdawala, San Diego rapid 2007.

5…0-0 6.d3 h6?
Sometimes the dutiful response isn’t always the best one. This looks awfully risky, since White hasn’t castled yet and can play for sudden g2-g4 lunges, as in the game. I would go for 6…d4.

7.g4?!
Our styles are our source of identity. This move is freighted with a single meaning: ‘Prepare to get blown away, lower rated guy!’ This kind of move is especially intimidating when your opponent heavily outrates you. White’s not-so-subtle intent is to strip the black king with g4-g5 next. The comp however, frowns upon it and deems it premature.

7…e7?!
This meek reaction gives White a strong attack. Black should have reacted more vigorously with 7…d4! (principle: Counter in the center when assaulted on the wing) 8. c4 c6 9.g5 hxg5 10. xg5 e7! 11. g1 (11. xe5 d5 offers Black tremendous activity for the pawn) 11…d6 (threat: 12…g4) 12. xd4 exd4 13. e2 d5 and Black is the one with the initiative, despite White’s open g-file.

8.g5 hxg5 9. xg5
It looks like White now has a winning attack, with an open g-file. Black’s needs …e7 but his knight is in the way.
There is no reason to retreat. 10...c4! gives White a winning attack.

Intending a central counter with ...d7-d5 next.

The last thing White should be doing when attacking on the wing, is open the center. White looks better after 12.g1 d5 13.b3 e6 (13...d4? fails to 14.h6) 14.g5 xg5 15.xg5 f6 16.h6 f7 17.h5.

Principle: Meet the enemy wing attack with a central counter. Uri discovers the virus embedded within the data, suddenly seizing a strong initiative.

This makes matters worse by allowing Black’s pawn center to surge. He was better off with 13.e2.

This loses even more time. 15.g5 had to be tried.

White is reeling. When we get outplayed by a lower rated player, the feeling of disorientation is the same as when we see a flower incongruously growing in city concrete.

Black brings his point home forcefully, gaining one free tempo after another.

18.d2

‘The worst kind of snob is a rich person who comes from a humble background,’ thinks the bishop of Black’s obnoxious f-pawn, who acts like he owns the place. When we begin to lose our capacity for self-determination, it’s a sure sign that our position is in a period of steep decline.

Challenging White’s best piece and also the d4-pawn.

My natural inclination would be to challenge White’s knight with 20...f8.

This move just puts the knight out of play after Black’s next move.
22...e3! is also crushing. If 23.fxe3 hxg6! (clearance) 24.hxg6 hxh4+ 25.e2 hxg6 White is unable to recapture due to a queen check on h5, while his king hopelessly dangles in mid-board.

23...c3 hxg6 24.axg6
Komodo evaluation: -6.00 – more than a full rook.

24...f3!
This move cuts out White’s last hope of generating a sudden attack with h5. We contrast White’s miserable reality (he is up to his ankles in cow dip!) to Black’s resplendent life of strategic wealth, freedom and ease:
1. Black’s e4/f3 bind is a nail driven into already tender flesh.
2. White’s pieces are scattered, ineffective and dangerously loose.
3. White is grossly behind in development with his king still hanging around in the middle.

25...xe4!?
To call this desperate bid a sacrifice is the same as a restaurant renaming chocolate pudding: ‘Mousse au chocolat’, and then hiking the price up by three dollars. White, noting the rapid degeneration of his position with mounting dismay, looks desperately for some way – any way – to circumvent his fate.

25...e8!
Komodo evaluation: -7.27! After this deadly zwischenzug, the well of White’s threats runs dry.

26...d3
26...d3 f5+; White’s king has no good squares and he has no reasonable block.

26...f5
Uri was in serious time pressure here, and made the hawk’s typical error of avoiding simplification when winning. He should have kept it simple with 26...dxe4! and if 27...xe4 f5. The queens come off the board and Black is up a piece, with a vicious initiative.

27.0-0-0...xe4 28.b5

28...e7
With his time pressure, Black’s correct plan remains an unformed lump of clay. Preachers and chess teachers derive great pleasure in scolding their flock. There is no reason to retreat when you are the one with the initiative. It’s understandable to seek exchanges when up material and in time pressure.

Uri missed a crushing game ender with 28...f4+ 29.b1 xc2+! and if 30.xc2 xd4+ 31.xd4 xb5 32.xf6 xa4+...
b1 and it's time for White to resign.

The idea is to swap queens on b5. I would play 29...c8, which discourages White from moving his bishop, since c2 would then be under fire.

30. de1

30...b5?
Consistent and incorrect. He should have first tossed in 30...f5! 31. b1 and only then played 31...b5 32. a2 f7 33.b3 c8 after which Black is up a piece and attacking.

31. b4!
Forced moves can also be good ones. An unnerving impediment arises before Black: White threatens both 32. xe7 and also 32. xe4. Black can slide his rook to f7, or more aggressively to e6. Which one should he play?

31...e6??
A book which desperately needs to be written is: *How to Win a Won Game*. I would love to write it, if only I could work out the secret of how to accomplish it, since I routinely bungle winning games.

This blunder violates the sacred time pressure principle: keep it simple! Practicality tends to transcend high-minded ideals, when our clocks run low. After 31...f7 32. c3 d7 33. xe7 xe7 34. xd5 xd5 35. xd5 d8 36. h5 d7 Black is still winning.

32. c3! c4
If 32...d7? 33. xe4 dxe4 34. xe7 xe7 35. xe4 e8 36. ge1 White wins due to the e6-pin.

33. xc4
If chess is supposed to be this silent, introspective game, then why is it so noisy in our heads when we play? Discouraged, Uri resigned here, which is a psychological error. His position remains worse yet still very playable after 33...dxc4 34. xe4 xe4 35. xe4 f5 (with a double attack on d4 and h2) 36.d5 xh2 37. g4 d8 38. d2 b5 39. xf3 c7 40. c3 xd5 41. h4 f8 42. xf5 xf5 43. xg7+ e7 44. d4 and Black has reasonable chances to hold the game.
In a New in Chess magazine article, IM Jeroen Bosch coined the term ‘Prophylactitis’, a state of mind where the dove defensive player (he was talking about Petrosian) ‘could detect and prevent his opponent’s threats well before they had even entered their minds.’ This state of mind, when taken too far, lapses to paranoia. I know exactly what Jeroen was talking about, since I could fill 10 volumes with the ones-that-got-away botched wins, due to too much prophylactitis on my part.

My following two games against IM Aldama are a ‘before and after’ commercial. I played the first game, which I botched royally, before I began writing the book, and the second, a smooth win, while writing the book, where I avoided my usual Charlie Brown-like indecision and paranoia for a change, and converted a won game rather smoothly. I think the deliberate decision not to back down, coupled with a slight increase in confidence, makes a world of a difference. Okay, now let’s watch the infomercial:

QP 3.9 – A48
Queen’s Pawn Openings
Cyrus Lakdawala
Dionisio Aldama Degurnay
San Diego rapid 2016

1.d4  e6 2.f3  g6 3.f4
If dove society seeks a deterrent to the hawk’s anti-social acts, then examples must be made of the flagrant violators. There is no comparison between my tactical ability and that of IM Aldama. So to compensate my lack, I go for the dullard’s sacred refuge, the London System (which drives him and all other hawks crazy since it denies them their malicious tactical fun). 3...g7 4.e3 0-0 5.e2  c5 6.c3  b6
Aldama tried 6...b6 in our following encounter.
7.0-0  b7 8.h3  d6 9.bd2  bd7 10.e1  a6 11.a4

11...c7
   A) 11...c6 is met with 12.c4!?
   B) 11...e4 is both dull and equal, neither of which suits my opponent’s temperament. Still, this is objectively Black’s best move.
12.h2  ac8 13.af1
13...b8 14.e4
I begin to seize central space.
14.cxd4 15.cxd4  e5
Aldama attempts to level the central playing field.
16.dxe5
I thought this move would annoy my opponent more than going for a more dynamic King’s Indian structure with 16.d5.
16...\textit{xe5} 17.\textit{xe5} dxe5 18.\textit{b3} cd8?!
With 18...\textit{c6}! 19.\textit{c4} d7 Black covers all his weak points and looks okay.
19.\textit{c4}!
The dove’s power is our ability to correctly assess a strategic outcome after a structural shift. Oddly enough, Black’s b-pawn is more valuable than White’s e-pawn.
19...\textit{xe4} 20.\textit{xb6}
White has an annoying edge, since:
1. Black must defend wobbly a6- and e5-pawns.
2. Black must keep an eye out for worrying a5 ideas.
20...f6?!
Black had to try 20...\textit{d2}! 21.\textit{xe5}?! \textit{xf6} 22.\textit{xd2}! (22.\textit{xe5}?! \textit{xf1} 22.\textit{xf1} a8 23.f3 \textit{fe8} offers Black loads of compensation for the pawn) 21...\textit{xd2} 22.\textit{ed1} \textit{d8}! 23.\textit{b3} \textit{xe1} 24.\textit{xd1} c7 25.a5 and Black stands only slightly worse.
21.\textit{ad1} \textit{a8}

An addict requires only a taste of his or her drug of choice, and then both body and spirit cry desperately for ‘More!’ Aldama, uncomfortable on the defensive, offers me his a-pawn with the hopes of generating piece activity. Should I take it?
22.f3?!
I hate it when the voices in my head just won’t shut the hell up, and as the years pass, my para seems to be getting more and more noid. His last move was a blunder and I should have just grabbed his a-pawn with 22.\textit{xa6}! c5 23.\textit{xd8} \textit{xd8} 24.\textit{b6} \textit{xa4}. I saw up to here and mistakenly thought Black had equalized. But the comp, who loves to humiliate us flawed humans, informs me that White is winning after 25.\textit{a5}! \textit{c6} (25...\textit{xb2} loses to the pinning 26.\textit{b1}) 26.b3!, trapping the knight.
22...\textit{g5} 23.f4!
This move either frees my h2-bishop, or inflicts a structural weakness upon Black.
23...\textit{xd1}
There was no reason for Black to hand over the d-file.
24.\textit{xd1} \textit{f7}
24...\textit{xf4}?! fails to help Black at all after 25.\textit{xb8} \textit{xb8} 26.\textit{xf4} \textit{f8} 27.\textit{d6} with threats to take his a-pawn, and also to give check on c4.
25.fxe5 fxe5 26...xb8
This is the dove’s weakness for rushing to swap. My queen is stronger than his, so I should continue to build with 26.a5!. But honestly, my clock was running low and I was afraid he would keep the queens on the board with 26...c8.
26...xb8 27.a5
Fixing a6 as a target, while enabling b6.
27...c6 28.e6 c8
Threat: 29...c5+ and 30...xb6.
29.c1 b5 30.xb5

Your strategically competent writer accrued the following advantages:
1. White owns a dangerous passed a-pawn, which in some lines threatens to promote.
2. Black’s e5- and b5-pawns are isolated and vulnerable.
3. All of White’s pieces are more active than Black’s, and White’s rook can invade the seventh rank.

We feel it in our bones that White is winning. I have a choice of plans, one intuitive, the other requiring calculation:

A) Play 31.d7 and pick off his bishop for my knight, adding yet another advantage to my list;

B) Play 31.c8, in a direct attempt to promote my a-pawn. This one requires exact calculation. Which one would you play?

31.d7
I vow to build a time machine which allows me to teleport to the exact moment, just before my bad decision on the chess board. This is one of those positions where the annotator writes: ‘White’s position is winning, yet…’ Why must there always be a ‘yet’ when we are winning?

Braver and stronger was the version which required more calculation, with 31.c8!. Have you ever been forced to go to a high-priced restaurant by your wife, where they serve you a dish so elegantly perfect, that you are afraid to eat it? The same feeling afflicts doves when we are winning. We refuse to alter the beautiful landscape with a radical shift, which we fear will turn it ugly. 31...b7 32.a6! xb6 33.a7 b6 34.a8b8 bxa8 35.xa8 b4 I saw to this point and mistakenly thought Black might hold a fortress draw, since he had a pawn for the exchange. Had I analyzed just one ply further, I would have seen that his fortress would crumble after 36.e8! and his e-pawn falls, with a clear technical win for White.

31...a8 32.exf8 xf8 33.b4
I support my b-pawn and c5 is coming.

I analyzed and incorrectly rejected 34.c5! d1+ 35.d2 d2+ 36.f1. The b5-pawn falls and Black has no chance against White’s queenside passers.
34...a8
35. c6!
I confess to a deliberate violation of the principle *Don't defend laterally with a rook, which should be behind the passed pawn*. I violated the principle since Black may hold a draw after the principled, but incorrect 35. a1?! e7 36. f2 d6 37. e3 d8 and I got worried about the health of my b-pawn: 38. d3 c6 39. c3 and I’m not sure if White is able to make progress.

35... e7 36. b6 d6 37. xe5 c4
My much beloved a-pawn is swapped for Black’s less valuable b-pawn.

38. xb5 xa6 39. b7+ e6 40. d4 d5 41. c5 a1+ 42. f2 a2+ 43. g3 h5
My clock was down to three seconds and I lived off the five second increment. I can’t remember the rest of the game (either that, or subconsciously I don’t want to remember the rest of the game!). I felt the win slipping from my grasp, and was tempted to click my heels three times, in the hope that I would awaken into the soothing embrace of Aunty Em, and she would tell me that it was all just a bad dream. I’m still better here but I allowed him to eliminate the kingside pawns and hold the draw.

QP 3.9 – A48
Queen’s Pawn Openings
Cyrus Lakdawala
Dionisio Aldama Degurnay
San Diego rapid 2016

1. d4 f6 2. f3 g6 3. f4
As I mentioned so often throughout the book, I advocate that we should play the opening in harmony with our natural strengths, since when we ape fashionable lines which go against our stylistic grain, we wilfully attempt to become something we are not.

3... g7 4. e3 0-0 5. e2 d6 6.0-0 c5 7. c3 b6 8. bd2!

I played this move instantly, and Aldama went into a minutes long think. A gain on the clock is one of the side benefits of superior opening preparation.

8... f5

A) 8... xb2? 9. c4 b5 (9... xc3?? 10. c1 b4 11. b1 c3 12. b3 traps Black’s queen) 10. xd6 a5 11. xc8 xc8 12. b3 and White has reached a kind of super Grünfeld, with the bishop pair, pressure down the b-file and a strong, stable pawn center;
B) 8…
\text{\textcolor{red}{c}}6 can be met with the annoying 9. \text{\textcolor{red}{g}}5;
C) 8…
\text{\textcolor{red}{d}}5?! 9.\text{\textcolor{red}{dxc5}}! and now:
C1) 9…
\text{\textcolor{red}{xc5}}?? 10. \text{\textcolor{red}{b3}} \text{\textcolor{red}{c6}} 11. \text{\textcolor{red}{a5}} \text{\textcolor{red}{c5}} 12.\text{\textcolor{red}{b4}} wins a piece;
C2) 9.\text{\textcolor{red}{dxc5}} 10. \text{\textcolor{red}{c4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{e6}} 11. \text{\textcolor{red}{g5}} \text{\textcolor{red}{f5}} 12. \text{\textcolor{red}{d3}} \text{\textcolor{red}{g4}} 13. \text{\textcolor{red}{xc6}}! with a discovered attack on Black’s knight: 13…
\text{\textcolor{red}{xf4}} 14. \text{\textcolor{red}{xh7+}} \text{\textcolor{red}{h8}} 15.\text{\textcolor{red}{exf4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{xd1}} 16. \text{\textcolor{red}{axd1}} \text{\textcolor{red}{f6}} 17. \text{\textcolor{red}{e4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{fxg5}} 18.\text{\textcolor{red}{hxg5}} and White stands better, with three healthy pawns for the piece and a development lead;
C3) 9…
\text{\textcolor{red}{xb2}} 10. \text{\textcolor{red}{c4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{xc3}} 11. \text{\textcolor{red}{xb2}} \text{\textcolor{red}{c6}} 12.\text{\textcolor{red}{axd1}} \text{\textcolor{red}{xb2}} 13.\text{\textcolor{red}{cxd6}} \text{\textcolor{red}{exd6}} 14. \text{\textcolor{red}{xd6}} and Black stands worse, behind in development.

9.\text{\textcolor{red}{b3}}
Of course doves love it when we back the hawk into an early queen swap.

9…
\text{\textcolor{red}{xb3}}?
The open a-file often benefits White:
A) 9…
\text{\textcolor{red}{c6}} is Black’s best move;
B) 9…
\text{\textcolor{red}{e6}} 10.\text{\textcolor{red}{dxc5}} \text{\textcolor{red}{xc5}} (10…\text{\textcolor{red}{dxc5}} 11. \text{\textcolor{red}{xb6}} \text{\textcolor{red}{axb6}} 12.\text{\textcolor{red}{a4}} intending \text{\textcolor{red}{c4}}, or \text{\textcolor{red}{g5}} followed by \text{\textcolor{red}{c4}}. White stands better in the ending) 11.\text{\textcolor{red}{xb7}} \text{\textcolor{red}{bd7}} 12. \text{\textcolor{red}{b3}} \text{\textcolor{red}{b6}} 13.\text{\textcolor{red}{xb6}} \text{\textcolor{red}{xb6}} 14.\text{\textcolor{red}{fd4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{c4}} 15. \text{\textcolor{red}{d2}} \text{\textcolor{red}{xe2}} 16. \text{\textcolor{red}{xe2}} and I don’t believe Black’s open b- and c-files offer enough pressure to compensate the loss of a pawn.

10.\text{\textcolor{red}{axb3}}

10…
\text{\textcolor{red}{c6}}
I was hoping to lure Aldama into 10…
\text{\textcolor{red}{h5}}? 11. \text{\textcolor{red}{g5}} \text{\textcolor{red}{f6}} 12. \text{\textcolor{red}{h4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{g5}} 13.\text{\textcolor{red}{dxc5}}! \text{\textcolor{red}{gxh4}} (13…\text{\textcolor{red}{dxc5}} 14.\text{\textcolor{red}{h3}}! and if 14…\text{\textcolor{red}{gxh4}} 15. \text{\textcolor{red}{xh4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{g6}} 16. \text{\textcolor{red}{xg6}} \text{\textcolor{red}{hxg6}} 17.\text{\textcolor{red}{g4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{g3}} 18.\text{\textcolor{red}{fxg3}} Black lacks compensation for the pawn) 14.\text{\textcolor{red}{xh4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{g6}} 15.\text{\textcolor{red}{cxd6}} \text{\textcolor{red}{f5}} 16.\text{\textcolor{red}{dxe7}} \text{\textcolor{red}{e8}} 17. \text{\textcolor{red}{c4+}} \text{\textcolor{red}{h8}} 18. \text{\textcolor{red}{xg6+}} \text{\textcolor{red}{hxg6}} 19. \text{\textcolor{red}{f7}} \text{\textcolor{red}{xe7}} 20. \text{\textcolor{red}{xe7}} \text{\textcolor{red}{xe7}} 21. \text{\textcolor{red}{xf5}}. Five pawns for the piece is way too many and Black is busted in the ending.

11.\text{\textcolor{red}{h3}} \text{\textcolor{red}{cxd4}}?!
He is just itching for action. I think Black is better off going passive with 11…
\text{\textcolor{red}{fd8}}. His worry is that he doesn’t feel comfortable entering a dull position against me, the king of dullards, since he fears this route could end in a death by a thousand cuts, fate.

12.\text{\textcolor{red}{exd4}} \text{\textcolor{red}{xe8}}
This is the start of a slightly dubious plan. Black’s weakened dark squares weigh more heavily than the disruption quality of his e-pawn.

13. \text{\textcolor{red}{c4}}
13...e5?!
It wasn’t too late to back down with 13...d5 14...d2!, preventing ...h6. White only holds a slight edge, due to his open a-file.
14.dxe5 dxe5 15.h2 e4!?
Black’s ship takes on water, fast. His instinct to seize the initiative also goads him into further weakenings on the dark squares. He refuses to play it safe with 15...e4.
16.fe5 xe5 17.xe5
In this way White gains a tempo over 17...xe5 since my bishop gets a free lift to g3, a superior square than h2, since the bishop then menaces h4 ideas.
17...d5
If 17...e6 18...d6 e7 19.b4...d5 20.xg7 xg7 21...xe4 f4 22.f3 Black doesn’t have compensation for the pawn.
18.g3
This way I can later think about transferring the bishop to h4.
18...e7 19.fd1
I preferred to develop, over 19...d6, which also looks quite promising.
19...e6 20.a5!
White’s pressure mounts on d5, the central dark squares, and along the a-file.
20...d7 21.e5 xe5?!
Wow. Handing White the bishop pair and dark squares represents a serious concession. The alternative is to humble himself with the admittedly painfully passive 21...dd8 22.c4 f6.
22.xe5
What a comforting absence, to remove the protector of his dark squares.
22...b6?!
This move weakens the queenside light squares, inviting ideas of a future invasion with b5 and c6. Necessary was 22...f6 23...g3 e7.
23.a4 f6
After 23...ad8 24.da1 f6 25...g3 e7 26.xa7 xa7 27.xa7 f5 28.f4 xb3 29.b7 g5 30.c1 d6 31.g4 e4 32.e3 his b-pawn falls and I don’t think Black will hold the ending.
24.g3 ad8
In this desperate position, and short on time, my opponent has reached the ‘Why-the-hell-not?’ stage of decision-making. This is misguided loyalty to an incorrect idea. When our flawed combinational idea gets out of control, we become the drunk at the party, desperately attempting to convince everyone that he is sober. Aldama sets up a trap which doesn’t work. After 24… e7 25. xd7 xd7 26. xe4 White’s win is just a matter of time.

25. xe4!
A good liar adds a partial truth to make the lie all the more convincing. I ‘fall’ for his trap, which is in actuality my trap. It’s a wonderful feeling when we see through our opponent’s trap and set our own, watching our opponent step into our scheme with a blinkered feeling of false well-being. I accept his challenge to enter a calculation battle, since for a change, I am the one ahead on the clock.
Also winning was 25. b5!.

25… xc3?
The easiest person in the world to con is a swindler, since he or she innocently believes you are the mark. When we sacrifice like this, we had better make certain that our credits and debits tally – which, in this instance, they fail to do. Black’s move is a suicidal venture. Objectively better is 25… f5 26. ed4 e7 27. c4+ g7 28. xd7 xd7 29. c1 when White should convert the extra pawn without too much difficulty.

26. xd7 xe2+ 27. xe2
Did Black achieve a drawn position? No: after 27… xd7 28. d2 the pin is decisive. Oh, the heartbreak of watching our scheme, just short of fruition, getting blown to pieces: 28… f7 29. c7 e7 30. e2+ e6 31. xd8+. ‘This was a warning shot designed only to scare him,’ claims the bishop, as he puts a giant hole in the black rook’s head with a Magnum .45. Black loses a full rook.

1-0
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