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Best regards!! Saludos!!
Why Lasker Matters

Andrew Soltis
Introduction

“The greatest of the champions was, of course, Emanuel Lasker.” – Mikhail Tal

“Emanuel Lasker was a coffeehouse player” – Bobby Fischer

“The idea of chess art is unthinkable without Emanuel Lasker” – Alexander Alekhine

“I admired him until I studied his games” – Bent Larsen

‘My chess hero.” – Viktor Korchnoi

“The quality of (19th century games) games they are horrible Even Steinitz-Zukertort, Steinitz-Lasker (groans) – Garry Kasparov

Emanuel Lasker is a controversy. But he’s also a mystery. How could someone who played so many profound and yet so many second-best moves have become world champion? And how could someone who played so many dull and also so many sparkling games – in short, so much bad chess as well as great chess – have remained champion for a record 27 years?

The answer that comes to the minds of many young players is that some stars of Lasker’s era would be, well, no better than mere masters today. There’s some evidence to support this. The level of play, particularly in defense, was poor when Lasker began to play, and endgame technique was uneven, to say the least. But Lasker’s opponents included Alexander Alekhine, Mikhail Botvinnik, Max Euwe, Jose Capablanca, Akiba Rubinstein, Yefim Bogolyubov, Richard Reti, Frank Marshall and Siegbert Tarrasch. They were much more than mere masters, to say the least. And his total record against the group is a big plus score.

Another explanation is that Lasker remained at the top for so long simply because he played so rarely. There is evidence for this, too. Lasker often went years between tournaments and world championship matches. But whenever he returned he was surprisingly active and surprisingly strong. Garry Kasparov once declared that he had “won the world championship title three times in three years, a record for chess history!” In fact, he didn’t. No one has ever won three championship matches in three years. But the closest was Lasker, who did it in four years.

Lasker’s contemporaries had their own explanations for his remarkable accomplishments: He beat Wilhelm Steinitz in their first match because he didn’t blunder and because he wasn’t 58 years old, they said. But that hardly explains how Lasker went on to amass a tournament record over the next 35 years that Reti said “must be considered the most successful of all chess masters.”

Tarrasch gave three answers to the Lasker riddle. Early in Lasker’s career
Tarrasch presented the case that his fellow German was simply lucky. In his tournament book for Nuremberg 1896, he itemized examples of Lasker's good fortune in a "luck scoretable" that explained why Lasker finished at the top of the real scoretable. Later Tarrasch had another explanation. He "circulated the legend that Lasker had a simple plan of play: trade off all the heavy pieces and go into the endgame," Aron Nimzovich said. Still later, Tarrasch came up with a third answer: Lasker hypnotized his opponents. Only that can explain how the world's best players made bad moves against him that they would never consider against anyone else, he said.

And then there was Euwe, who said there was simply no way to imitate Lasker. "It is not possible to learn much from him," Euwe wrote, "One can only stand and wonder." That view – that someone could play chess so powerfully and yet inexplicably – was exactly the kind of fuzzy thinking that would have outraged Lasker.

THE PSYCH HOAX

Long before Lasker, there were masters who made their decisions in the most practical way. They tried to find the moves that had the greatest chance of success, regardless of whether they were "correct." After Adolf Anderssen lost three straight games in his match with Paul Morphy he abandoned 1 e4, in favor of 1 a3?! Another of Morphy's opponents met his 1 e4 with 1... f6? to avoid the American's huge book knowledge. (It worked—he won.) Morphy himself switched strategies after he got off to relatively poor starts in his matches with Louis Paulsen and Daniel Harrwitz Capablanca suggested that a player could take the practical approach even if he didn't know his opponent. When Capa adopted a dubious Ruy Lopez line in a 1914 clock simultaneous he explained, "This defense is not good but I used it in the conviction that my opponent would not know what to play."

But the pragmatic attitude was discredited by Wilhelm Steinitz. He said Morphy used his great "intuitive knowledge of human nature" to "play the man rather than the board." Morphy's quaint approach could now be retired, Steinitz added. In his era, science had great cache and Steinitz claimed to have applied the scientific method to formulate eternal rules. Anyone could apply these rules against an opponent. Only the board mattered. "My opponent might as well be an abstraction or an automaton," Steinitz wrote.

It is well nigh impossible to underestimate the influence that Steinitz (and his disciple Tarrasch) had on chess thinking during their era. As a result when Lasker arrived on the scene – and successfully violated the Steinitz/Tarrasch rules – his success was a mystery. What could explain it?

Reti thought he figured it out when he read an interview Lasker gave to the Dutch newspaper De Telegraaf after his victory at New York 1924. Lasker said that some of his opponents have recognizable quirks, such as Geza Maroczy who was better at defense than attack. Reti concluded that Lasker "is not so much interested in making the objectively best move as he is in making those most disagreeable to his opponent." In other words, Lasker played the man.

But then Reti went completely off the rails: Lasker often accomplishes this, he wrote, "by means of intentionally bad moves." This is nonsense.

If this were true, Lasker would not have been just a 2500-player as some of today's players believe. Or a 2700-plus-player as retroactive ratings
Why Lasker Matters

suggest. If Lasker could deliberately play badly against the world’s best players – and regularly beat them – he would have been over 3000.

The primary evidence cited by Reti and his successors in advancing the psychology hoax are:

—Lasker played obviously bad opening moves – such as g2-g4 in the Dragon Sicilian.

—He gave up material for something hard to define, something called “positional compensation.”

—He often played the “practical” move rather than try to find the best move, and

—He counterattacked and complicated even before his position was clearly bad.

Today’s players should look at this and laugh. In a typical Sicilian Defense nowadays you might see g2-g4 by White, a Black counterattack by move 10 a positional sack by either player and “practical” moves by both. No one would consider the moves deliberately bad or the slightest bit “psychological.”

Nevertheless, Reti offered a simple way of explaining the inexplicable – and Lasker was the perfect subject since his moves were often so original they defied any other explanation.

Lasker – Levenfish
Moscow 1936

White’s center is collapsing. His chances of survival seem slim after 27 cx5 d6 28 cxb4 wxd4+. Some computers recommend retreat (27 w2) although that would likely lose without a fight (27...bxc3 28 axc3 exd5 29 fxe5 xe5).

Lasker played 27 xe3! so that he could attack with wh4 and xh3. It’s a good try in a bad position. But even if everything worked out, all that White threatens is a check on h7.

Yet Black called it “one of those moves which time and again have given Lasker the chance to save himself in a difficult position. When his strategic plan proves to be refuted, Lasker boldly and skillfully creates tactical complications and nearly always comes out of them the victor.”

That was the case here. 27...bxc3 28 axc3 exd5 29 fxe5 xe5 30 wh4 xe3? 31 axc3 xd4+ 32 wh1 a4 (32...xc3 33 wd8+) 33 dd3 b5 34 axg6! fxg6 35 xh3 xd7 36 eg3 d3? 37 xd3 Resigns.

Today we would say White complicated because he had to. But in Lasker’s day 27 xe3 was considered his special brand of sorcery. And Reti revealed the magician’s trick. His moves were part of elaborate mind games. In the 1920s “psychology” was a buzzword, just as “science” had been a few decades before, and so the mind-game explanation came into vogue. Nimzovich, for example, used “psychology” and “psychologically” nine times in his slim volume on Carlsbad 1929 to explain moves.

The hoax that Reti “foisted on the world” – to use Gerald Abraham’s words – allowed annotators to become arm-chair Freuds. If you couldn’t explain a move, there was a simple answer. Psychology! In Game 81 Maroczy adopted a variation of the French Defense as White that Maroczy
himself had discredited as Black years before. No one could explain why he
did this. The possibility that the world’s
leading authority on the French could
have found improvements for White
was ignored. No, the annotators
concluded that Maroczy had a death
wish, a “suicide mood,” as one put it,
and that Lasker had encouraged it in
some mysterious but diabolical way.

Even a move that was objectively
best— but looked strange— would be
rationalized in shrink terminology:

**Ilyin-Genevsky – Lasker**
**Moscow 1925**

![](image)

White to play

In this position from Game 87 White
played 13...e2, which was given an
exclamation point in the tournament
book. (It deserves “?” at best.) Lasker
sacrificed his queen with 13...xa2
14 xa1 xb2 15 fb1 xb1+ and
Black obtained a rook, bishop and
pawn as compensation. But he didn’t
get a mating attack or even the
initiative as a result. The conclusion
then and one that is still being
circulated is that “13...xa2?!” was
pure psychology “It probably wouldn’t
occur to any modern master to sacrifice
the queen in such a position,” wrote
Yefim Bogolyubov.

And that’s been the unfortunate Reti
legacy—a tendency to exaggerate
the role of psychology in the moves of
Lasker (or anyone else). In fact,
13...xa2! was simply the best move
in the position. True, it was also a
good move to play against such an
inexperienced opponent. Lasker did
play the man. But he didn’t play the
fool.

**LASKER ON LASKER**

The one person who could unravel
the mystery of Emanuel Lasker was
Emanuel Lasker. But unlike Steinitz
and others of this era, who kept few
secrets, Lasker said fairly little about
his chess instincts and often seemed to
be trying to mislead his opponents. He
regularly took calculated risks yet
claimed that taking chances in chess “is
nearly as difficult as to take chances,
say, in geometry.” He revealed in
complications but insisted the simpler
of two equal moves was always better.

His critics ignored the contradictions.
Reti cited the *De Telegraaf* interview to
show how Lasker studied his
opponent’s games. But he also
attributed his success to “healthy
common sense.” To illustrate this he
told a story: After one of his matches,
Lasker lectured at the Vienna Chess
Club. A member of the audience asked
whether the reason he chose certain
openings was that his opponent
had declared those lines to be
unsatisfactory and Lasker had found
flaws in the analysis. Lasker denied
this. He chose the openings because
they were grounded in solid, general
principles, he said. “I did not study
anything.”

So which was it? Lasker the clinical
researcher who deeply scrutinized his
opponents’ every move? Or Lasker
who didn’t study anything? Reti
accepted both notions and Lasker
didn’t disabuse him of them. In one of
his last articles Lasker had this to say:
"About my style very much has been written, comprehensible and incomprehensible, deep and superficial, praise and criticism. And after being silent on this question for a long time, I wish to speak about it myself." He then went on, in the Soviet yearbook of chess for 1932-35, to say his talent "lies in the sphere of combinations" (!). Considering how rarely he combined, this must be one of his final jokes upon the chess world.

Lasker was more candid in an interview he gave nearly 40 years before, to the Berliner Schachzeitung in 1896, which can serve as a brief autobiographical introduction. Lasker, a brilliant, diligent student with an aptitude for mathematics, began to play chess seriously at 16. He followed his brother Berthold to Berlin's chess cafes and a favorite tea parlor where he became a regular until he had to pursue his education elsewhere. "At 17 I went for two and a half years to a provincial town where I won a match of five games from the strongest local player — my mathematics teacher. Besides him there were only checker players there," he said. When he returned to Berlin he began to frequent the Café Kaiserhof but found that many of the Berliners — "and unfortunately Mr. Horatio Caro was among them" — considered it harmful to play such a weak opponent.

I'm going to interrupt the narrative here to ask a question. The Lasker of the history books, the one he presented to the world, went from 5-odds player at 16 to garden-variety amateur at 19 — to international star at 21. How did he manage this last Leko-like leap if he was a devoted student?

The answer is he wasn't that student. By all accounts Lasker was two years ahead of pupils his age before he took up chess but later graduated "on time" or perhaps a year behind. Instead, he seemed to have become a fulltime café player, perhaps the youngest professional in the world. It was in the cafes and at the teahouse, where he met his blood-rival Tarrasch, that Lasker learned chess. Most of all, he learned to sit on his hands. He acquired legendary patience, which paid off when he avoided bad moves that would have cost him games — and the lunch money he had wagered on their outcome. As a result Lasker blundered less often than any world champion.

End of interruption, Back to the official story.

Lasker's sudden rise began as he turned 20. The Café Kaiserhof organized a tournament. Every player paid a thaler to enter and the winner collected the entire amount. Lasker won every game. He was convinced by an admirer to enter the biennial German Chess Congress, which would be held in Breslau in 1889. These events were hugely important at the time. Foreign players entered them in order to earn the master title, and masters entered them to gain international renown. Lasker was placed in one of the three "Hauptturniere" sections, or minor tournaments, "and to my surprise won first prize! So began my chess career."

And so begins the Lasker mystery. How did he do what he did? No one has provided a satisfactory answer. Yet the clues are there, waiting for us, in the games.
The Games

I

What? Where is Lasker-Bauer? You know, the 2 bishop-sacrifice. Almost every collection of Lasker games begins with that, doesn’t it?

Yes, but we’re going to start earlier, with other games, because the Bauer crush is quite out of character for Lasker He lost more brilliancy prize games than he won and his sacrifices rarely had to do with mating attacks.

What was truly typical of Lasker is that he relied on tactics, not combinations. There’s a difference. He pursued his goals with the help of tactics, often just two or three moves deep, in much the same manner as Sammy Reshevsky, Anatoly Karpov and Peter Leko.

Most of all Lasker wanted to win games with a logical, rational plan, as Steinitz so often did. Here’s a representative example of a Lasker plan working.

Tietz – Lasker
German Chess Congress, Hauptturnier A, Breslau 1889
Ruy Lopez (C79)

| 1 | e4       | e5       |
| 2 | ∇f3      | ∇c6      |
| 3 | ∇b5      | a6       |
| 4 | ∇a4      | ∇f6      |
| 5 | 0-0       | d6       |

This is sometimes called the Steinitz Defense, Doubly Deferred. Among its points is that 6 d4 allows 6...b5! 7 ∇b3 ∇xd4 8 ∇xd4 exd4 and then 9 ∇xd4? c5, the trap as “old as Noah’s Ark.” (But when you check databases you’ll find one example of 5...d6 before this game.)

7 h3 0-0
8 ∇xc6

White’s sixth move was suspicious, his seventh cowardly and this one looks just wrong. What was he thinking? Before we give up on the game here and skip ahead to Lasker-Lipke, let’s try to figure these moves out.

The basic idea comes from Adolf Anderssen, who was the world’s top active player when he introduced it in slightly different form. Anderssen worked out an attacking plan with g2-g4 and ∇e2-g3. To limit Black counterplay and keep the center somewhat closed, he felt White needed ∇xc6.

8 ... bxc6
9 ∇c3 c5!

A fine idea of Louis Paulsen, the first great defensive player. Black prepares the maneuver ∇d7-b8!=c6-d4 and the attack on the center with . . . ∇b7/ . . c4.

10 ∇e2 ∇e8

The young Lasker tried to emulate Steinitz. But he kept finding himself in
situations in which Steinitz’s principles conflicted with one another. One principle suggested the player with the two bishops should give them scope (10. c4 11 a3 cxd3 12 wxd3 ab8). But Steinitz also said a player should not open the position until he finishes development.

11 g4?!

White continues the Anderssen plan and stops the freeing ...f5. He can continue to build up via gh3, a3 and wd2 while keeping the center closed (c2-c4). Once he’s ready he can open matters with gh2 and f2-f4 or just keep building (gh2, agl-g3-ag1/gh5).

11 ... h5!!

Of course. After 12 gh5 ah3 13 a1 f5 Black exploits the exposed kingside. So why the double exclamation? Wasn’t the idea of ...h5 routine, predictable – totally obvious?

The answer is: Not in 1889. Compare this with the problem that King’s Indian players wrestled with more than 70 years later when they tried to find a solution to the Saemisch Variation (1 d4 ef6 2 c4 g6 3 cf3 cg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 0-0 6 ef3). A main line was 6 e5 7 d5 c6 8 wd2 cxd5 9 cxd5 a6 10 g4 bd7 11 ge2.

White’s edge becomes manifest if he can play gh3 and h2-h4-h5. But Svetozar Gligoric introduced a daring idea, 11...h5!, in 1958. The conventional wisdom said that once Black castles kingside, the only open lines he wants there come from ...f5. But that had repeatedly failed. Instead, Gligoric said, Black should challenge g4 head on. He obtained good play after 12 h3 gh7 (13 gh5 wh4+ or 13 0-0-0 h4 followed by ...f6-g5).

12 gh2

A natural positional plan is 12...hxg4 13 hxg4 gh5. But Black is not eager to dissolve the h3 target. Instead, his plan is ...g6/...f5/...f6.

12 ... gh4

13 a3?! g6

14 g2 f5!

Now 15 gh5? f4! would decide the game strategically. That’s the kind of game Lasker wanted to play. With the g-file opened and h3 exposed, Black should win with simple moves (16 gh2 wg5+ 17 gh1 gh3 18 gh1 wgxh5).

15 f3

White loses the game during moves 13-16. Opening a file with 15 gxf5 gxf5 16 exf5 ghx5 17 gh3 wd7 18 xf5 whxf5 is dubious. But he can put up a good fight for the kingside with 15 f4 gh7 16 gxf5 and 17 gh3.

15 ... f6

16 gxf5?

After f2-f3 White had to leave his pawns where they are – not this or 16 g5? gh7. Black certainly has the better chances following 16 gh1 gh7 17 wh2 but there’s still a lot of game left.

16 ... gxf5

17 f2 gh7

18 wh1

After 18 gh4 wxh4 19 gh1 Black can win a pawn with ...fxe4 and ...gh5 or play for more with 19 wh8, e.g. 20 wh1 gh8+ 21 gh1 gh3.
Another conflict in basic principles. Should Black trade his bad bishop? Or should he avoid exchanges because they ease White’s restriction?

18 ... h7!

It’s the restriction that makes the plan work. White has no adequate defense to ...f4 followed by the doubling of Black pieces on the g-file and the c8-h3 diagonal.

19 h4 h8
20 h1 f4!
21 g1 w8

Black could also win the h-pawn with ...f6, ...e7, ...g8 and ...g8-g6.

22 wfl e6
23 e1 w7
24 d1

This will enable White to swap all rooks on the g-file

24 ... g8
25 d2 g6

Tarrasch believed there was only one right move in any position. “Each position must be regarded as a problem where it is a question of finding the correct move, almost always only one, demanded by that position. In a game of chess secondary solutions are almost non-existent,” he wrote.”

Lasker disagreed. When a position is strategically won, there is likely to be a secondary solution, and here it was winning the h-pawn with 25...d8 and ...g6 (26 d6+ xg6 27 f2 g6 28 e1 d8).

26 xg6 xg6
27 g1 g8

Now on 28 b3 Black would revert to the pawn-winning plan of ...f8/...g7/...g6. White’s choice makes it even easier

28 g2? xg2+
29 xg2 xg2
30 xg2 xg2
31 e2 b1!

White resigned after. 32 c1 xc2
33 b3 f8 34 f1 e6 35 f2 a5
36 e2 a4 37 bxa4 xa4 38 a2 f8
39 c3 d7 40 d5 d8

2

Every world champion is, to some degree, a critic of his predecessor. Kramnik found faults in Kasparov just as Kasparov did with Karpov and so on. Lasker’s critique of Steinitz was below the surface. He went to extraordinary lengths to praise him in words. But his moves showed how he had found flaws in Steinitz’s thinking. Steinitz emphasized positional strengths and weaknesses. Lasker thought in terms of targets, that is unprotected or inadequately protected
enemy material that could be assaulted, like the h-pawn through most of the last game. Here's another illustration.

Lasker – Lipke
German Chess Congress, Hauptturnier A, Breslau 1889
Vienna Game, Paulsen Variation (C26)

1  e4  e5
2  ∆c3  ∆f6
3  g3

This system came briefly into fashion when Paulsen adopted it in the 1870s.

3  ...  ∆c5

But it went out of vogue after the turn of the 20th century, in part because of 3...d5 4 exd5 ∆xd5. One Lasker biography claimed 5 ∆g2 ∆c6 favors Black. That view wasn't overthrown until Smyslov-Polugaveisky, 1961 Soviet Championship: 6 ∆f3 ∆c6 7 0-0 ∆e7 8 ∆e1 ∆f6 9 ∆e4 0-0 10 d3 ∆c7 11 a3 ∆b6 12 b4 and ∆c5 with advantage. Smyslov played the Vienna for the first time in his life and said he had been inspired by Lasker.

4  ∆g2  0-0
5  ∆ge2  d6
6  0-0  ∆c6
7  d3  ∆e6

A standard White option, which he had at moves 6-8, is ∆a4 and ∆xh5. But he has another use for the knight, stopping 8...d5!

8  ∆d5!

Paulsen originated the ∆d5 idea when ...∆xd5/∆xd5 is a fork. Lasker-Popiel, Berlin 1889 went 7 h3 ∆e6 8 ∆d5 and 8...∆xd5 9 exd5 ∆e7 10 c4 ∆f7 11 d4.

8  ...  ∆xd5

White was intending 9 ∆g5 as well as 9 c3/10 d4, winning a piece.

9  exd5  ∆e7

If Black threatens the d-pawn the other way, 9...∆b4, then 10 ∆g5?! is answered by 10...h6. But on b4 the knight cannot get back to exploit the d4-hole and Black would be worse after 10 c4! and 11 a3.

10  ∆g5

Modern masters are always looking for a positional pawn-sacrifice and here the candidate is 10 d4 exd4 11 ∆xd4. But White’s compensation is thin after 11...∆xd5 12 c4 ∆xd4 13 ∆xd4 ∆b4 or 12 ∆b3 c6 13 ∆xc5 dxc5.

10  ...  ∆d7

White doesn’t expect big advantages in the 3 g3 Vienna. One of the small ones he might enjoy is 10 ∆f5 11 ∆c3 h6 12 ∆xf6 and then 12...∆xf6 13 ∆e4 ∆f7 14 ∆xc5 dxc5 15 c3.

11  d4  exd4

This was the first Lasker game that attracted annotators, and virtually all of them cited 11...h6 12 dxe5 dx5 as an alternative. They continued that analysis with 13 d6! exd6 14 ∆xd6 ∆e8 15 ∆ad1 ∆f8 16 ∆xd8 ∆axd8 17 ∆xd8 ∆xd8 18 ∆xe7 and wins. But 12...∆xe5! is obviously superior and nearly equal.

12  ∆xd4  h6!
13  ∆e3  ∆e5?!

There are usually two general policies for Black in such positions. He can maximize piece play or he can
trade enough pieces so that White’s space edge is not significant. The text adopts the first policy but the second one, 13...\textit{-f6} 14 \textit{c4} \textit{wd7} and then 15 \textit{w}-moves \textit{dg4}, was better. White can try 15 \textit{h3} \textit{df5} 16 \textit{dxf5} \textit{wxf5} 17 \textit{xc5} dxc5 White’s bishop is not as bad as in the last note (no \textit{c2-c4}) and he can use his extra tempo to play 18 \textit{fe1} with advantage.

Now on 15...\textit{df5} 16 \textit{dxf5} \textit{wxf5} 17 \textit{xc5} dxc5 White’s bishop is not as bad as in the last note (no \textit{c2-c4}) and he can use his extra tempo to play 18 \textit{fe1} with advantage.

Black apparently agreed, seeing \textit{w}-traps after 17 \textit{b3}!, e.g. 17...\textit{wxg2} 18 \textit{xa1} \textit{wb2} 19 \textit{xb1} \textit{wc3} 20 \textit{dxg5} \textit{wc4} 21 \textit{g4} or 17...\textit{wb4} 18 \textit{c3} \textit{xc3} 19 \textit{bxg5} \textit{wb4} 20 \textit{g2}.

Better is 17...\textit{wa5} 18 \textit{wb5} \textit{wc3} or 18...\textit{wa2} but Black is still a bit south of equality.

Steinitz’s principles held that White’s strengths – his bishops and space edge – should guarantee him an advantage. He can marshal his strengths with \textit{f2-f4} and \textit{g3-g4}, and try to overwhelm Black with \textit{f4-f5-f6}. But this requires considerable care. After 16 \textit{f4} \textit{dg5} 17 \textit{w2} Black can simplify nicely with 17...\textit{xd4}! 18 \textit{xd4} \textit{f5} (19 \textit{c3} \textit{e3}).

16 ... \textit{a6}

Lasker was more concerned with specific targets. He can see targets at \textit{g7} and \textit{h6} but he knows that he created a target for Black by leaving his a-pawn unprotected. To play 16 \textit{ae1} he had to assure himself that 16...\textit{wa4} would not be strong.

The kingside is the more vulnerable target. 18...\textit{wa4} 19 \textit{b3} \textit{xa2} 20 \textit{f5} \textit{e5} 21 \textit{f6} \textit{g6} 22 \textit{fxg7} \textit{xg7} 23 \textit{f5}+ followed by \textit{xc5} and \textit{d2xb6+} wins.

White will try to expose \textit{g7} with 21 \textit{g4}

20 ... \textit{xe1}

There have been relatively few forcing moves to consider so far. But 20...\textit{h5}, with the idea of 21...\textit{h4} 22 \textit{g4}? \textit{g3}, would force both sides to calculate 21 \textit{g4} \textit{hxg4} 22 \textit{hxg4}.

Then 22...\textit{f7} allows a strong 23 \textit{f5} and 22...\textit{f4} similarly fails to 23 \textit{xe8} \textit{xe8} 24 \textit{f5} \textit{g2} 25 \textit{fxg6}!. That leaves 22...\textit{h6} but after 23 \textit{g5} \textit{f5} 24 \textit{e4} White’s position is growing stronger.

20 ... \textit{xe1}

21 \textit{xe1} \textit{e8}

Once all the rooks are gone Black can counterattack with ..\textit{wa4}!.

22 \textit{f3}

To play 22 \textit{f4}, which threatens 23 \textit{g4} and 24 \textit{f5}, you have to see that 22...\textit{h5} is met strongly by 23 \textit{wa3} \textit{h4} 24 \textit{wa4}! White apparently didn’t.
22 ... \texttt{Nxel+}

23 \texttt{Bxe1}

The minor piece ending, 23...\texttt{Be7} 24 \texttt{Bxe7 Oxe7}, leaves Black with no compensation for the two bishops.

23 ... \texttt{Qe7}

Soviet teacher Vladimir Zak, whose students included Boris Spassky and Viktor Korchnoi, was a Lasker fan. In his book on Lasker, Zak investigated the \texttt{B}-raid at various points and pointed out that 23...\texttt{Ba4} 24 \texttt{h4} is strong (24...\texttt{Bxc2?} 25 \texttt{Be4} or 24...\texttt{Bxa2?} 25 \texttt{h5} and 26 \texttt{g4}). The text, which threatens \texttt{Bxh3}, is an attempt to improve the idea.

Since ...\texttt{Ba4} always allows White's queen a free hand on the e-file and d4-g7 diagonal, the more solid alternative is 23...\texttt{Bb5} and ...\texttt{Bc5+}. White's bishops keep his edge after 24 \texttt{Bxg2 Bc5 25 Be4} but progress is unclear.

24 \texttt{Bg2} \texttt{Ba4}

25 \texttt{Bd2} \texttt{Bxa2}

26 \texttt{Bd4} \texttt{f6!}

The knights have to avoid situations in which they alone defend one another (26...\texttt{Bf5?} 27 \texttt{B e4 Oge7 28 Bg4 g6 29 Bxf5}).

27 \texttt{Be4!} \texttt{Bb1?}

On a2 the queen prevented the f3-bishop from moving (...\texttt{Bxd5}). White would have to show what he had after 27...\texttt{Be8!} 28 h4 a5. Black's queen can become active later. For instance, 29 \texttt{Bh3 b5 30 Bh5} looks good -- 30...\texttt{Bh8 31 Bf7 Bh7 32 Bxf6.}

But 30...\texttt{Bd4} 32 \texttt{Bd4 Bf1+} is tough to crack (33 \texttt{Bxg6 Bxg6} 34 \texttt{Bxg6 Bf1+} 35 \texttt{Bg4 Bd1+} and ...\texttt{Bxd4} with a winning ending).

28 \texttt{Bd4!} \texttt{Bf8}

29 \texttt{Bh5}

Now 29...\texttt{Bh8} 30 \texttt{Bh7 Bh7} again loses to 31 \texttt{Bxf6!} (31...\texttt{Bf5} 32 \texttt{Bf5 Bxf6} 33 \texttt{Bd6}).

29 ... \texttt{f5}

30 \texttt{Bd4}

Not 30 \texttt{Bd6} \texttt{Bxc2+} 31 \texttt{Bh3 Be4}. White might have tried 30 \texttt{Bd3}, which threatens to win a piece (31 \texttt{Bxg6 Bxg6} 32 \texttt{Bf5+}). That makes 30...\texttt{Bxg8} 31 \texttt{Bd4!} much stronger because \texttt{Bxg7} is more than a check.

The crucial defense is 30...\texttt{Bf7}. Then White can transpose into the game with 31 \texttt{Bd4 Bxc2+} 32 \texttt{Bh3 Be4}. Or he can try 31 g4!? when 31...\texttt{Bg8} allows him to win a piece with 32 \texttt{Bxg6 Bxg6} 33 \texttt{Bd4}. But 33...\texttt{Bxh4+} 34 \texttt{Bxf4 Bxc2+} looks like a perpetual check.

30 ... \texttt{Bxc2+}

Isaac Linder, the Russian historian, said this game was one of the first examples of a player sacrificing two queenside pawns for a kingside attack.

31 \texttt{Bh3 Be4!}

The threat of ...\texttt{Bh1} mate forces White to rely on checks.

32 \texttt{Bxg7+} \texttt{Be8}

33 \texttt{Bxg6+}

Now 33...\texttt{Bxg6} 34 \texttt{Bxg6+ Bf7} 35 \texttt{Be8} 36 \texttt{Bf6+} wins.

33 ... \texttt{Bf7}

Threatening perpetual check (34 \texttt{Bh2 Be2+} 35 \texttt{Bg1 Bc3+} 36 \texttt{Bf1 Bf3+}).
34 \( \text{xf5+!} \) \( \text{xf5+} \)

35 \( \text{g4!} \)

White's kingside pawns are very fast (35..h5 36 \( \text{xf5+} \) \( \text{xf5} \) 37 \( \text{g4!} \) h\( g \)xg5 38 \( \text{g} \)xg4 or 35..\( \text{e} \)8 36 \( \text{w} \)xf5 \( \text{xf5} \) 37 \( \text{g} \)g4 \( \text{e} \)e3+ 38 \( \text{h} \)h5 \( \text{xd} \)5 39 \( \text{d} \)2 as in the game).

35 ..

36 \( \text{xg4} \) \( \text{xd5} \)

Another fundamental difference is that Tarrasch believed “a good game of chess is decided in the middlegame.” That seemed to be true in an earlier era, when defense was so hideous. But Lasker encountered situations like this, in which a good defender has been outplayed but can reach an endgame with survival chances. Black has potential passed queenside pawns, a centralized knight and an agile king.

37 \( \text{d2!} \)

This keeps the knight at bay (compared with 37 \( \text{g} \)7 \( \text{e} \)e3+ 38 \( \text{h} \)h5 \( \text{f} \)f5 or 37 \( \text{h} \)h5?? \( \text{xc} \)c3 38 \( \text{b} \)x\( b \)c3 a5).

37 ..

38 \( \text{f6}+ \)

Black's king can't stop the pawns by itself (37..\( \text{e} \)f7 38 \( \text{f} \)f5 \( \text{f} \)f7 39 \( g \)4). His choice was between bringing the knight back or starting a pawn-race with 37...c5.

But White has the right queenside pawn to slow down Black's majority. For example, 38 \( \text{f5} \) c4 39 \( \text{g} \)g6 h\( g \)5 40 \( \text{h} \)hx\( b \)6 b\( 4 \) looks dangerous but White prevails after 41 \( \text{e} \)c1 c3 42 h\( 5 \).

38 \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{e7} \)

39 \( \text{g4?} \)

White has to keep the Black knight and king from key kingside squares. He wins after 39 \( \text{g} \)6 \( \text{e} \)4 40 \( \text{e} \)e3! (40..\( \text{g} \)xg3 41 \( f \)5).

39 ..

40 \( \text{d5?} \)

Black misses his opportunity, 39..\( \text{f} \)f7 40 \( \text{g} \)5 \( \text{g} \)g8! (not 40..\( \text{h} \)xg5 41 \( \text{fxg} \)5 \( \text{g} \)8 42 \( \text{g} \)6+ and 43 \( \text{h} \)5, e.g. 42..\( \text{g} \)7 43 \( \text{h} \)5 \( \text{e} \)c7+ 44 \( \text{g} \)5 \( \text{g} \)8 45 \( \text{c} \)c3+).

After 40..\( \text{g} \)8 White is stopped by 41 \( \text{g} \)6+? \( \text{e} \)7 because his h-pawn isn’t passed. Better is 41 \( \text{h} \)5 but Black has useful moves like 41...c5 and 41..b6.

40 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{h} \)x\( g \)5

41 \( \text{fxg} \)5 \( \text{d} \)d7

Black is lost (41..\( \text{e} \)e8 42 \( \text{h} \)5 \( \text{d} \)d6+ 43 \( \text{g} \)6) and played until: 42 \( \text{g} \)6 \( \text{f} \)f8 43 \( \text{h} \)5 \( \text{d} \)4 44 \( \text{h} \)6 \( \text{g} \)8 45 \( \text{h} \)7+ \( \text{h} \)8 46 \( \text{e} \)e6 \( \text{f} \)f8+ 47 \( \text{f} \)f7! Resigns

3

Okay, it can’t be delayed any longer. This is the brilliancy that made Lasker famous. But it was for the wrong reasons. Thanks to it, he became known for his originality in combinational play. But his combination had been played before. What is generally overlooked is that White’s victory is based on a well-grounded plan that was designed to create a huge mismatch on the kingside.

Lasker – Bauer
Amsterdam 1889
Bird’s Opening (A03)

1 \( \text{f4} \)

2 \( \text{e3} \)

3 \( \text{b3} \)

This was considered a sophisticated plan at the time. White obtains a
powerful bind after 3...e5 4 f3 c6?! 5 b5! d7 6 b2 followed by x6 and c5 — a plan that served Nimzovich well in the 1920s just as it did for Fischer in 1970. Today’s players recognize it in reversed form, from lines of the Bogo- and Queen’s Indian.

3 ... e6

Savielly Tartakower suggested White was avoiding c3 because he didn’t want to rule out w3 and h3. But this is an error that Black should punish with 3...d4!

4 b2 c7
5 d3 b6
6 f3 b7
7 c3!

Henry Bird had tried nearly every piece configuration available to make White’s first move work. Along with a3 and bd2, as well a quick b5+ and e2, he experimented with d3 and e3-c2.

For example, Bird-Burn, match 1886, went 1 f4 d5 2 f3 e6 3 f6 4 b3 e7 5 b2 0-0 6 d3 c5 7 0-0 c6 8 h1 a6 9 a4 d7 and now 10 c3 b4 11 e5 and c2. That’s the same basic recipe Lasker has in mind: Shift everything to the kingside.

7 ... bd7
8 0-0 0-0
9 e2

Another rightward shift, used by Tchigorin, is c5, f3 and d1-f2-h3-g5.

9 ... c5

Jean Dufresne, who helped make this game famous in his Das Buch der Schachmeisterpartien, recommended 9 c5 and a quick ...xd3, which would equalize.

10 g3

In light of what follows one might have expected f4 to become a regular part of Lasker’s arsenal. Yet he never played it again except for exhibition games.

10 ... c7

White has to begin a plan before Black gets going with c4, or a6...b5 first. White has a logical idea. If he can trade off all four knights, what remains on the kingside is one Black piece to defend against White’s queen, king’s rook and two bishops.

11 e5

White is already threatening 12 h5 and 13 xd7 — and surely must have seen the basic idea that would make him famous, that 12 h5 h5 could be met by 13 xd7 xd7 14 xh7+ as in the game.

11 ... xe5

White’s last move granted Black another chance for d4. After 11...d4 12 exd4 cxd4 White’s queen’s bishop diagonal is opened, White’s diagonal is closed and the c2-pawn becomes a target on a half-open file. Black’s idea is tactically based on 13 x4 c5!, which regains his pawn and equalizes. However, 13 e2 and 14 ae1 is much better, as Kasparov pointed out, e.g. 13...d6 14 ae1 c5 15 f5.

12 xe5

This move invariably goes by without a comment but 12 fxe5 deserved a look. White is threatening a
$\mathcal{D}f6+$ sack following 12...$\mathcal{D}d7$ 13 $\mathcal{D}h5$ and would be better after 12...$\mathcal{D}e4$ 13 $\mathcal{A}xe4$ $\mathcal{D}xe4$ 14 $\mathcal{W}g4$.

However, he'll be lucky to get a perpetual check after, say, 12...$\mathcal{D}d7$ 13 $\mathcal{D}h5$ $\mathcal{D}xe5$ 14 $\mathcal{D}xg7$ $\mathcal{D}xg7$ 15 $\mathcal{W}g4+$ $\mathcal{D}h8$ 16 $\mathcal{A}xh7$ d4.

12 ... $\mathcal{W}c6$

The immediate $\text{13}\mathcal{D}h5$ allows Black to threaten mate with 13...d4! and buy time for a safe $\mathcal{D}xh5$.

13 $\mathcal{W}e2$!

Kasparov called this a psychological trap. White seems to be threatening $\mathcal{A}b5$ but his real goal is to play $\mathcal{D}h5$, which is stronger now that g2 is protected and 14...d4 would not threaten mate.

13 ... $\mathcal{D}a6$??

But there is another good explanation for this move that has nothing to do with psychology. Black’s counterplay comes from $\mathcal{c}4$, which White just delayed by preventing 13...$\mathcal{b}5$. Bauer, whose promising career was cut short at age 29 by tuberculosis, may have simply been preparing $\mathcal{D}h5$ and what he overlooked was the sacrifice of both bishops. As in many great games, it is easy to find improvements (13...$\mathcal{D}e4/14...f6$ and even 13...g6).

14 $\mathcal{D}h5$!

Thanks to White’s last move, 14...d4 could be ignored – 15 $\mathcal{A}xf6$ $\mathcal{A}xf6$ 16 $\mathcal{W}g4$!, e.g. 16...e5 17 $\mathcal{D}e4!$ $\mathcal{W}xe4$ 18 $\mathcal{D}xh6$ or 16...$\mathcal{A}xh8$ 17 $\mathcal{D}h3$ and wins with 18 $\mathcal{D}xf6$ $\mathcal{A}xf6$ 19 $\mathcal{W}h4$ (or 17...$\mathcal{D}g8$ 18 $\mathcal{A}xh7$!)

14 ... $\mathcal{D}xh5$

There are several quick losses such as 14...$\mathcal{D}e8$ 15 $\mathcal{A}xg7$!. The best try was 14...$\mathcal{A}xd8$ but 15 $\mathcal{A}xf6+$ $\mathcal{A}xh6$ 16 $\mathcal{W}xh7+$! (16...$\mathcal{A}xh7$ 17 $\mathcal{W}h5+$ $\mathcal{D}g8$ 18 $\mathcal{A}xf6$ $\mathcal{A}xf6$ 19 $\mathcal{W}h6$!) or 15...gxf6 16 $\mathcal{W}h5$ $\mathcal{D}f8$ 17 $\mathcal{W}h6+$ lose eventually.

15 $\mathcal{W}xh7+!!$

Not 15 $\mathcal{W}xh5$ because of 15...f5, closing White’s window of opportunity (16 $\mathcal{g}4?$ d4 or 16 $\mathcal{D}f3$ $\mathcal{D}f6$ 17 $\mathcal{D}h3$ h6).

15 ... $\mathcal{D}xh7$

16 $\mathcal{W}xh5+$ $\mathcal{D}g8$

17 $\mathcal{A}xg7$!

This and 15 $\mathcal{A}xh7+!!$ established Lasker’s reputation, much like Carlos Torre’s 25 $\mathcal{A}f6!!$ against Lasker at Moscow 1925 and Fischer’s 17...$\mathcal{D}e6!!$ against Donald Byrne. The 2 bishop-sack has been copied dozens of times and dubbed “Lasker’s Combination,” the title of a 1998 book devoted to it.

But this raises a question that will recur in these pages. Just how original was Lasker? There had been published examples of the 2 bishop-sack before, played in Great Britain in 1867 and 1884. Those combinations were carried out by masters (Cecil de Vere and John Owen) much better known than Lasker was in 1889. Why isn’t it “de Vere’s Combination”?

One school of thought would argue: What counts is who played an idea for the first time. Lasker doesn’t deserve the credit for coming in third.

Another school replies: But Lasker was almost certainly unaware of the British games. (They were little known until mentioned in the British Chess Magazine in 2003.) Therefore Lasker was being original in terms of his own understanding of chess.

Besides, this school would argue, the Bauer game was played in an
international tournament, one of the few held in the 1880s. Surely a player who first tests his ideas in major events deserves the credit. That’s why openings such as Alekhine’s Defense or the Benko Gambit have those names even though others played the moves earlier.

The argument can go back and forth: Is every 10-year-old who discovers the optimal strategy in tic-tac-toe being original simply because they didn’t know what every previous 10-year-old had discovered?

Back to Bauer ...

25 \(d7\) \(f8\)
26 \(g4+\) \(f8\)
27 \(fxe5\)

Since 27...\(exe5\) loses to 28 \(f5\) \(f6\)
29 \(xe5\), Black played 27...\(g7\) The rest was: 28 \(e6\) \(b7\) 29 \(g6\) \(f6\)
30 \(xf6+\) \(xf6\) 31 \(xf6+\) \(e8\)
32 \(h8+\) \(e7\) 33 \(g7+\) \(xe6\)
34 \(xb7\) \(d6\) 35 \(xa6\) \(d4\) 36 \(exd4\) \(exd4\) 37 \(h4\) \(d3\) 38 \(xd3\) Resigns

Scroll ahead to 1914. World Champion Lasker has won the St Petersburg super-tournament. Tarrasch, his bitter rival, finished fourth but consoled himself with a brilliancy prize victory. However, it was only the second brilliancy prize because Tarrasch’s winning idea, a 2 bishop-sacrifice, seemed to lack...something.

At the final banquet, Tarrasch looked for an ally to appeal the prize jury’s decision. According to Pyotr Romanovsky, who was present, he found himself asking Lasker for support. “Isn’t it true, Doctor, that my victory over Nimzovich was a genuine creation of art?” he asked.

“Oh, yes, without a doubt,” Lasker replied. “Similar games are only played once in ...25 years.”

Early in his career Lasker began to recognize that he would be facing some opponents over and over, and that he could use his insights into their styles to his advantage. Today this is obvious. Every tournament player wants to have extra information: Which opponents play well in time pressure and which don’t, who is a swindler and who falls for swindles, and so on. We wouldn’t call it psychology and in Lasker’s youth no one did either. His success against Jacques Mieses – nine wins and four draws in 13 games – is more a case
of his understanding of human nature. Mieses was among the world’s top 20 players at the turn of the century and a feared attacker. Lasker sought ways to stop him from attacking. In their 1889-90 match, for example, he switched from 1 e4 to 1 d4 and even 1 ëf3.

**Mieses – Lasker**  
Exhibition game, Berlin 1889  
*Vienna Game, Paulsen Variation (C26)*

1 e4 e5  
2 ëc3 ëc5

Lasker liked this move, which allows Black to reach a King’s Gambit Declined (after 3 f4 d6) in which he could avoid ëc6 and a possible ëb5 pin. An 1891 game saw Lasker (Black) obtain an edge after 3 f4 d6 4 ëf3 ëg4 5 h3 ëxf3 6 ëxf3 ëf6 7 f5? c6! and ...d5.

3 g3 ëc6  
4 ëg2 d6

Black’s best formation may be ...ëge7/...d6 and ...ëe6, with ...a6 added at some point to preserve the c5-bishop. Mieses had won a brilliancy at Breslau 1899 that went 4...a6 5 ëge2 d6 6 d3 ëge7 7 ëd5 ëxd5 8 exd5 ëe7 9 d4 exd4 10 ëxd4 — along the lines of Game 2. White won after 10...ëf5 11 ëe2 ëf6 12 0-0 ëd7 13 ëe3 0-0-0 14 ëd2 ëde8 15 ëe4 ëg6 16 ëxc5 dxc5 17 b4! ëb5 18 bxc5! ëxf1 19 ëxf1 ëd4 20 c6.

5 ëa4 ëe6!?

In the 3 g3 Vienna, Black usually met ëa4 with ...ëb6 in order to preserve his pawn structure. Instead, Lasker prepares ...ëd7/...h3.

6 ëxc5

This capture should be delayed because after ...dxc5 Black can play ...c4.

6 ... dxc5  
7 d3

Objectively best is 7...c4 with a slight edge for Black after 8 dxc4 ëxd1+ 9 ëxd1 0-0-0+.

7 ... ëf6

But even at this early stage in his career Lasker seemed to have divided the world into two hemispheres — the players whom he might be able to beat in the middlegame and the players who might be able to beat him in the middlegame. Against the latter, Lasker headed for endgames. But Mieses lived in another hemisphere.

8 ëe2 ëd6

Now that it is available, d6 is a better square for the queen because it allows the bishop to retreat (after f2-f4-f5) and protects c5 (compared with 8...ëd7 9 ëe3 c4?! 10 d4)

9 f4

Against 9 ëg5 Black might reply 9...ëg8! and ...ëf6/...ëge7.

9 ... h5

An obvious plan — yet databases cite only a few previous examples of Black playing ...h5 in the 3 g3 Vienna.

10 f5

The modern way of handling the position is 10 h3 and if 10...h4 then 11 g4. This is best even though it surrenders control of e5 (11...exf4 12 ëxf4 ëe5)

10 ... ëd7

11 ëg5
The bishop discourages ...h4.

11 ...  
12  

White has to decide around here what kind of middlegame he wants. If he castles kingside Black can open the position with ...dg8/.g6, followed by  
 and ...h4. If, on the other hand, White castles queenside (13 wd2, 14 0-0-0) his king is vulnerable to ...f6/.e8-f7 and ...d4 or ...b4, as in Game 28.

13  
14  

Mieses picks a third option, taking aim at the enemy king (  , c2-c3,  , and possibly a2-a3/ b2-b4) while temporarily keeping his own in the center. A better idea is 14 g5 followed by  or d5, e.g. 14...c4 15 xf6 gxf6 16 d5 exd3 17 xd3.

14 ...  

Black is ready for 15...c4 (and 16 dx4 xf5). White should forget about the attack and take precautions (15 e2).

15 c3?  

There is more to this than 16 xa7+ xa7 17 xa7 b6. White can obtain compensation after 18 a4 b7 19 a5 xa7 20 axb6+ xb6 21 dx4 but Black does better with 19...a8 or just 18...c6 (19 a5 exd3 20 axb6 d2+!).

16 b4

Better was 16 a4! a6 17 dx4! because of 17...xb5 18 a8+ b8 19 a7. Black should keep the initiative with 17...g4! 18 g1 wg5.

Lasker revealed little of his thought processes. We don't know why he rejected moves or which he considered or even how many candidate moves he looked at. But we can make some educated guesses.

Here, for example, he must have considered 16...a6, which defends and attacks.

Since White appears lost after 17 a3 cxd3, he would have wondered about the piece sack 17 a4 axb5 18 axb5. He almost certainly didn't stop there but also looked at the pawn-sack 17...exd3 18 c5 c8 19 xd3 xf5 20 c3.

16 ...  

Grabbing material in either line seems to favor Black. Yet Lasker makes his own sack, perhaps because it is much easier to calculate. For example, 17 cxb4 xb4+ and 18...xb5 is clearly very good.

17 xa7+ b8

18 xb4 xb4+

Now 19 d2 xd2+ (or 19...e3) and 20...b6 allows Black to regain his piece favorably, as does 19 d2 c5.

19 f1 g4!

Better than 19...b6 20 c1 with chances for both sides (20...xa7 21 xc4 d6 22 a4 or 20...a4 21 d2).

20 g1 a4

21 b1!

Finding shots like this is what Mieses did well! The endgames favor Black (21 c1 xe1+ 22 xe1 b6). But in the middlegame of 21 b1 wa5 there is no threat of 22...xd1 because of 23 c6+. If the queen goes to a3 or c3 White has b5.
21 ... \( \text{	extit{wa}}3!? \)

There was quite a bit to calculate here, including 21...\( \text{c}3 \) 22 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{xd}3+ \), which favors Black slightly, and 22...\( \text{x}b5 \) 23 \( \text{x}b5 \) \( \text{xd}3 \) 24 \( \text{wb}1 \), which seems promising for White.

Retreating the queen to a5 allows White a nice resource of 22 h3! after which 22...\( \text{xd}3 \) 23 \( \text{we}1 \) \( \text{x}e1+ \) is a small edge for Black and 22...\( cxd3 \) 23 hgx4 d2 might win.

22 \( \text{we}2 \)

A key point of Black’s move is that 22 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{x}b5 \) 23 \( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{xd}3 \) 24 \( \text{wb}1 \) is much better with Black’s queen on a3, rather than c3, because he can continue 24...\( \text{hd}8 \) 25 \( \text{xb}7+ \) \( \text{a}8 \)! 26 \( \text{a}7+ \) \( \text{xa}7 \) 27 \( \text{xa}7 \) \( \text{d}1+ \).

White can keep the game going with 26 \( \text{f}3! \) \( \text{xf}3+ \) 27 \( \text{g}2 \). However, Black has 27...\( \text{e}3+! \) because 28 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{f}1+ \) 29 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d}2 \) forces White into a lost ending (30 \( \text{a}7+ \) \( \text{xa}7 \) 31 \( \text{xa}7 \) \( \text{xb}1 \)). White is also doomed following 28 \( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) or 28 \( \text{h}3 \) h4.

22 ... \( \text{xd}3 \)

So that 23 \( \text{wb}2? \) \( \text{d}1+ \).

23 \( \text{h}3 \)

Now 23...\( \text{e}3+ \) 24 \( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 25 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{xa}7 \) favors Black’s extra pawn. But Mieses was a member of the hemisphere who could be mated.

23 ... \( \text{hd}8! \)

The threats of 24...\( \text{d}1+ \), 24...\( \text{d}2 \) and 24...c3...c2 are too much.

24 \( \text{h}xg4 \) c3

Also winning was 24...\( \text{d}2 \) 25 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{yg}3 \) 26 \( \text{h}2 \) \( \text{d}1+ \) or 25 \( \text{we}3 \) \( \text{d}1+ \)

25 \( \text{e}6+ \)

White couldn’t meet the ...c2 threat with 25 \( \text{e}3 \) c2 26 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) or 25 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{xb}5 \) 26 \( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{d}1+ \) 27 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{hd}2 \).

25 ... \( \text{xc}6 \)

26 \( \text{e}3 \)

26 ... \( \text{c}2! \)

The last chance to blunder was 26...\( \text{xe}3 \) 27 \( \text{xc}3 \) c2 28 \( \text{xb}7+! \) and \( \text{xa}3 \).

27 \( \text{xc}2 \) \( \text{xe}3 \)

Now 28 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{d}1+ \) 29 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{e}2+! \) mates (30 \( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{d}3+ \) 31 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{d}4+ \))

28 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{e}3 \)

Resigns

In view of 29 \( \text{wb}2 \) \( \text{e}5+ \) or 29 \( \text{we}2 \) \( \text{c}5+ \) 30 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{c}2 \) 31 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{b}5+ \) 32 \( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{d}1+ \) and mates.

5

In Lasker’s early years the prevailing wisdom about openings is that there were two kinds — good ones and bad ones. Steinitz, representing the “New School,” agreed on this with Tchigorin, of the “Old.” It was the responsibility of masters to figure out which openings were inherently good and play them. When Steinitz and Tchigorin met in the world championship matches of 1889 and 1892 they stuck to their favorite openings — and that cost each man point after point.

Lasker took a different point of view. There were, of course, some openings that were stinkers. But no openings were absolutely best, he felt. Most were neither good nor bad but simply
“playable.” An opening may be unpopular – like the Evans Gambit in the decades before 1995 or the Scotch Game before 1990 – but that didn’t make it unusable.

Blackburne – Lasker
Match, seventh game, London 1892
Center Game (C22)
1  e4    e5
2  ëc3    ëf6
3  d4!?

The opening of this game is often incorrectly given as 2 d4 exd4 3 ëxd4 ëc6 4 ëe3. Why did Blackburne choose the other, highly unusual route? Perhaps to avoid the defense that he adopted himself as Black, with 4...g6, 5...g7 and ...ëge7 followed by an early ...d5 or ...f5.

3  ...  exd4
4  ëxd4  ëc6
5  ëe3

Everyone knows the Center Game is bad. “The early development of White’s queen is a serious breach of the basic rules of development,” said Batsford Chess Openings. “A serious breach of principles,” wrote Reuben Fine. “A serious breach of principles,” echoed Larry Evans in Modern Chess Openings. (No one explains why violating the same principles – a tempo down – is perfectly all right in the Center Counter Defense.)

5  ...  g6

For most of the 20th century the book refutation of the Center Game was 5...b4 6 ëd2 0-0 7 0-0-0 ëe8. A Capablanca analysis that began 8 ëg3 ëxe4 9 ëxc4 ëxc4 10 ëf4 ëf6 was usually cited (with an accompanying note that 8...ëxe4!? may be even better).

But in the 1960s Yakov Estrin and Vasily Panov, in an influential Russian book, argued that 10 c3 ëf8 11 ëd3, rather than 10 ëf4, offered serious compensation. In addition, 8...ëxe4 wasn’t as strong as it seemed because of 9 a3 ëd6 10 ëf4.

Few modern players have looked at any of this. When Karpov was confronted with 1 e4 e5 2 d4 exd4 3 ëxd4 ëc6 4 ëe3 at his first Olympiad, he replied 4...d6? 5 ëc3 ëf6 6 ëd2 ëe7 7 0-0-0 0-0 and nearly lost to an obscure amateur after 8 ëg3 a6 9 f4 b5 10 e5!

6     ëd2     ëg7
7     0-0-0     0-0

One of the best-known collections of Lasker’s games, by Fred Reinfeld and Fine, gave a possible continuation as 8 ëc4 ëa5 9 ëe2 d5, with exclamation points for Black’s moves. But 10 exd5 ëxd5 loses to 11 ëc5!.

8  f3  d5!

Now, however, White is in danger of getting the worst of it because 9 exd5 ëxd5 10 ëxd5? ëxd5 11 ëb4, which he may have intended, is bad after 11...ëxa2 12 ëxf8 ëxb2+. Other complications (9 ëe1 dxe4! 10 ëg5 ëe8) favor Black.

9  ëc5

Best was 8 exd5 ëxd5 9 ëc5!, since 9...ëxc3 10 ëxc3 ëh6+ 11 ëd2 is harmless.

9  ...  dxe4
Here's a paradox. Early in his career, Lasker played his simplest games yet relied on calculation to a greater degree than later on. The explanation is that the older Lasker had acquired an instinct for playing moves he didn't have to calculate. Here, for example, the older Lasker might have played 9...d4 and obtained a favorable middlegame after 10 ∆d5 ∆e6 without having to look half as far into the future as 9...dx e4 requires.

10 ∆g5 We8

Forced say Reinfeld/Fine. But 10...Wc7 is perfectly playable because 11 Wxe7 ∆xe7 12 ∆xe4 ∆xe4 13 ∆xe7?? allows 13...∆f2! with a winning advantage.

11 ∆xf6

Experience tells White to cut his losses. He will only be slightly worse in the coming endgame, whereas he could get killed in the 11 ∆e1 middlegame after 11...b6 12 Wf2 We5.

11 ... ∆xf6
12 ∆xe4 ∆g7
13 ∆b5 We5!

Obviously better than 13...∆d7 14 ∆e2. Black forces an ending (14 ∆xc6? Wxb2+) in which the two bishops guarantee some degree of superiority.

14 Wxe5 ∆xe5
15 ∆e2

White's bishop and king's knight compete for the same squares now. But 15 f4, intending 16 ∆f3, allows 15...∆g4. Even better is 15...a6!, with the idea of driving the bishop off the diagonal so Black can meet 16 ∆f1 ∆g4 17 ∆f3 with 17...∆e8. If 16 ∆a4, Black has 16. ∆c4.

15 ... a6

Black forces moves when they present White with a choice between two equally unpleasant alternatives. After 16 ∆a4 ∆c4 17 ∆2c3 ∆f5 or 17 ∆d4? ∆e3 Black is better.

16 ∆d3

In My System, Nimzovich described a technique he called the "hemming-in process"—"A pawn mass guided by a pair of bishops can roll forward fairly far and this leads to the imprisoning of the enemy knights." He illustrated this with a Tarrasch game but the ideas are similar here: 17 ∆c5 b6 18 ∆b3 c5 or 17 ∆g5 h6 and 18...g5.

17 ∆4c3 ∆e6

Black can win a second "minor exchange" whenever he wants. But 17...Wxd3+ 18 Wxd3 Wc6 19 Wd5 allows White more freedom than he deserves.

18 Wb1 Wfd8
19 Wf4 Wf7
20 Wc2 Wc6!

What is impressive here is how Lasker avoids forcing variations that might allow his opponent out. Here, for example, 20...∆c4 threatens ...∆xc3 and ...∆a3+. But it invites 21 ∆xc4! ∆xc4 22 Wd5, e.g., 22...∆e5 23 b3 ∆b5? 24 Wc6! with advantage.

21 Wxd8+

White takes the opportunity to trade rooks before ...∆d4 denies him. Other
active ideas fail tactically – 21 ½cd5? g5! and 21 ¼d5 ¾d4! (22 ¼xc7? ½ac8 or 22 ¾c4 ¾xc3! 23 bxc3 ½a5).

21 ... ¾xd8
22 ¾d1 ¾e8

Black should retain rooks until he has a kingside target for his king. This move threatens 23...¾xc3 24 bxc3 g5, winning a piece.

23 ¾f1

Forcing matters now with 23...g5 24 ½fd5 ¾e5 will allow White chances such as 25 h4! ¼xh4! 26 f4 or 25...h6 26 hxg5 hxg5, after which trading more pawns with 27 g4? may get White closer to a draw. Bear in mind that Blackburne was one of the best endgame players of his era, perhaps outshine only by Tchigorin, Tarrasch – and Lasker.

This appears to lose to 24...b4 25 ¾e2 ¾xd5 26 ½xd5 ¾d4!, e.g. 27 ¾xd4?? ¾e1 mate or 27 ¾c1 ¾e1 28 ¾d3 ¾h6! (Zak). However, White can make a mess with 25 ¼xc7! bxc3 26 ¼xe8 ¾xe8 27 bxc3 a5. That favors Black but not as clearly as the game.

24 ... ¾d4
25 ¾e2 ¾b6
26 b3

White is running out of useful ideas while Black can continue ...¾g7-f6 and expand on the kingside. He would like to stop ...g5 but 26 f4 gives away e4 to a bishop. The attempt to create a kingside target with 26 g4 only assures that the target is a White one (26...fxg4 27 fxg4 ¾e5 and then 28 ¾xe5 ¾xe5 29 ¾d8+ ¾g7 30 ¾d7 ¾d5! and after a trade of rooks the Black king pillages the kingside).

26 ... ¾g7
27 c3

The best defense is probably h2-h4, here or on the previous or next move, to restrain Black’s pawns and king.

27 ... ¾f6
28 ¾c2

A tactician’s eyes light up when he sees the future fork at e3, e.g. 28...¾e7! 29 ¾e1 ¾d5 30 ¾d2 ¾e3. White can hardly move then while Black wins with ...c5-c4.

28 ... ¾e7!
29 ¾ec1

The effects of hemming-in are evident in 29 ¾b4 a5 or 29 ¾ef4 g5 30 ¾e2 ¾d5.

29 ... ¾d5
30 ¾b2

Also hopeless was 30 ¾d2 ¾e3+ 31 ¾c2 ¾g1 (threat of ...¾e3+) 32 ¾d2 ¾xh2.
An older Lasker might continue hemming with 30...c5! followed by ...\(\text{Q}e3\) and ...c4. The younger Lasker grabbed material when it was available.

30  ...  \(b4!\)

A fork decides after 31 c4 \(\text{Q}d4+\) or 31 cxb4 \(\text{Q}d4+\).

31  \(\text{Q}xb4\)  \(\text{Q}e3\)
32  \(\text{Q}e1\)  \(\text{Q}c4+\)
33  \(\text{Q}xc4\)  \(\text{Qxe1}\)
34  \(\text{Q}xa6\)  \(\text{Q}g1\)

Black kingside pawns are faster than White’s queenside pawns: 35 g3 \(\text{Q}g2+\)
36 \(\text{Q}a3\) \(\text{Q}xh2\) 37 \(\text{Q}e2\) \(\text{Q}g2\) 38 \(\text{Q}c2\) g5
39 \(\text{Q}d3\) h5 40 \(\text{Q}b4\) \(\text{Q}f2\) 41 a4 c5+
42 \(\text{Q}b5\) \(\text{Q}xb3\) 43 a5?! c4! 44 \(\text{Q}xc4\)
\(\text{Q}xc2\) 45 a6 \(\text{Q}d1\) 46 \(\text{Q}d4\) \(\text{Q}xd4\)
47 cxd4 \(\text{Q}xf3\) 48 d5 \(\text{Q}e2\) 49 \(\text{Q}xe2\)
\(\text{Q}xe2\) White resigns

Lasker won one minor tournament in the three years after Amsterdam 1889 (beating his brother Berthold in a playoff). Yet by 1894 he was playing for the world championship. What enhanced his reputation so quickly was his remarkable successes in matches. Blackburne was one of the half dozen best players in the world when Lasker crushed him 8-2, without a loss. In eight won matches before leaving for America in 1892, he scored 30 wins, 16 draws and only three losses. The following was the most impressive game of his 5-0 whitewash of Bird.

**Bird – Lasker**
Match, second game,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1892
From’s Gambit (A02)

1  \(f4\)  \(e5\)

Nearly 40 years later, after Richard Reti discovered Lasker’s secret weapon, his early games were reexamined to uncover the secret subtext. If you look for it, you’re bound to find it. Here Black seizes the initiative on the first move, knowing that Bird loved the initiative. 

\textit{Psychology}!

2  \(fxe5\)  \(d6\)
3  \(exd6\)  \(\text{Q}xd6\)

But many of Lasker’s opening decisions can be explained by that other term associated with him — common sense. Here, for example, he didn’t try to challenge his opponent on his home turf, the Bird’s Opening.

The same thing occurred in the first match game. After 1 \(e4\) \(e5\) 2 \(\text{Q}f3\) \(\text{Q}e6\)
3 \(\text{b}5\) \(\text{Q}d4\), Lasker avoided 4 \(\text{Q}xd4\) in favor of 4 \(\text{Q}c4\). This was hardly best but it made pragmatic sense: The bishop lacks point on \(\text{b}5\) once the knight was gone from c6. Black found nothing better than 4 \(\text{Q}xd4+\) 5 \(\text{Q}xd4\) after which White enjoyed a lead in development.

4  \(\text{Q}f3\)
Bird considered only 4...\heg4 in his 1880 work *The Chess Openings* and he pronounced 1...e5 “not a prudent venture.”

4 ... g5!

A novelty – threatening to win with ...\heg4 6 \hef3 moves \whh4+ – that was introduced into serious chess here. Quiet alternatives (4...\hef6) all but disappeared from practice.

5 d4 g4

6 \heg5

The knight is trapped after 6 \heg5 f5. Half a century later there was a concerted effort by 1 f4 players to revive White’s position with 7 e4 h6 8 c5 \heg7 9 \heh3 gxh3 10 \whh5+ \hef8 11 \hec4. This was considered promising – White’s sixth and seventh moves being given exclamation points in books – until it was refuted in a 1961 postal tournament by 11...\heh7 12 \whg6 \heb4+! and 13...\heg7 (14 \whh6+? \whh4+)

6 ... \heg5!

7 dxe5 \whxd1+

8 \hec6

Black’s moves (...\hef6 or ...\heg5, along with ...0-0-0+ and ...\heg7-g6) are easier to find than White’s.

9 \hef4

Here 9 \hec3 \hexe5? leads to a poor game after 10 \hef4 \hexe4 11 b3 \hec6 12 \heg5. However, 9...\hec6 should transpose into the game after 10 \hef4, or reach equality following 10 ...\heg5 \hexe5 11 \heb5 \heg7

9 ... \hec6

More exact than 9 ...\heg7 10 c3 \hec6 because 11 \heb5 has more punch when Black can’t castle, e.g. 11...\hed7 12 e6! \hexe6 13 \hec7. Black would still have compensation after 13...\hed5 14 \hec1 \hec8 but not as much as in the game.

10 c3

The positions after 10 \hec3 (and 9 \hec3 \hec6 10 \hec5) were put under the microscope by postal players in 1961-62. They found that Black has no problems following 10 ...\hec3 0-0-0+ 11 \hec1 \heg7 12 c3 \hec6.

10 ... \heg7

Here 10...0-0-0+ was recommended to prevent White from playing \hec2 after a bishop move. However, 10...\heg7 11 \hec3 0-0-0 12 \hec2 \hec6 offers Black excellent play, e.g. 13 \hec5 \hed7 14 \hec3 \hec6 15 \hecg6 \hecxg6 16 \hec2 \hecf5.

11 \hec5 0-0-0+

12 \hec1

White may have feared the tactics of 12 \hec2 \hed5!, e.g. 13 \hec3? \hecxh5 14 \hecxh5 \hec4+. Following the superior 13 \hec4 \hec5 14 \hecxh6+ fxe6 15 \hec3 \hecg6 Black is equal and he is a bit better after 13 \hecxh6 \hecxh6 14 \hec3 \hecg5 15 \hecxh6 \hecxg5.

12 ... \hed5?

The bishop only looks good here. Better was 12...a6 and then 13 \hec2 \hec6 regains the pawn, or 13 \hec4 \hed5 14 \hec1 \hecg6

13 \hec1 a6

14 \hec2 \hec6

Thanks to Black’s miscue White could obtain some chances with 15 \hec3 \hec4 16 \hec6 \hecg8 17 \hec3 \hec6 18 \hec4 since 18...\hecxh6 loses to 19 \hecxh6 \hecxh6 20 \hecf6.

15 \hec3 h6!

16 \hecd3

It was, of course, impossible for Lasker to foresee this position when he decided on 6...dxe5. But the outlines of this endgame could be visualized. The best thing about White’s position is the extra pawn that seems about to disappear after ...\hec6xe5. If he tries to keep it by trading on g6, the bishops of opposite color favor Black’s more active pieces.

16 ... \hecg6
White could obtain here was the better chances in a likely draw, whereas now Black has the same.

19 ... g5

20  \(g3\)

White seems convinced he will be worse if he gives back the e5-pawn. However, 20 \(e3! \) \(xe5\) 21 \(d4\) jeopardizes little.

20 ... \(h8!\)

If this move could be translated into words the message would be: "I know I can get the pawn back with 20...h5 and 21...h4. But I want to stop you from playing 21 \(f2\) \(xe5\) 22 \(d4\). Now it’s up to you to prove you’re not worse.”

21  \(b3!\)

Reinfeld/Fine felt 21 \(d5\) needed to be played first. But after 21...\(xd5\) 22 \(exd5 \) \(xe5\) White can’t afford 23 \(xe5 \) \(xe5\) followed by ...\(f2\).

And his bishop is more of a liability than an asset following 23 \(b3 \) \(g6\), which threatens 24...\(xe2\) and 24...h5/...h4. For example, 24 \(d6 \) \(e2\) or 24 \(d2 \) \(f4\) 25 \(b2 \) \(e2\).

21 ... \(h5\)

22  \(d2\) \(h4\)

23  \(f2\) \(xe5\)

White can draw – if he realizes that’s the best he can do – with 24 \(d4/25 \) \(b2\).

24  \(e3?\)
24 ... h3!

A terrific move based on tactics such as 25 gxh3 gxh3 26 hxg5 fxg3 and sacks on h2. For example, 26 ... b2 g4 27 ... f1 d3 28 ... f2 ... xh2! 29 ... xh2 g3 will be followed by ...h2 and ...g4+ f3 or ...h3-g2. Black's advantage is evident in 30 ...h1 h2 31 ... d2 g4.

A better practical try is 30 ... d2 h2 because of a trap (31 ... h1 h3? 32 ... e2! xe4 33 ... xg3 xe3 34 ...d2xh2! which draws). But 31 ... g4 and ...f3 wins.

25 ... xg5

White understandably didn't like the looks of 25 g3 ...f3 although the win remains to be found after 26 ... f1 27 ... b2 g6 28 ... f1! (because of 28 ...dxe4 29 ... c5).

It might be supposed that 25 ... d4 e6 26 g3 is much better. But White has an uphill fight after 26 ... d8! For example, 27 ... b2 e5! and ...f3 is bad and so is 27 ...d3 ...f3.

The best try is 27 ... e5 and then 27 ...f1+ 28 ... b2 ...xa1 29 ...d8+ ...xd8 30 ...xa1 ...e5 Now 31 ...g5+ ...d7 leaves White with no defense to ...f3xh2. Instead he has 31 ...e2 ...f3 32 ...d4! (Khalifman/Soloviov). After 32 ...d7 33 ...f3 ...f3 34 ...b2 ...d6 Black has no serious winning chances.

Black should vary earlier with 27 ...e5 and ...f3. For example, 28 ...d8+ ...d8 29 ...b2 ...f3 30 ...h1 ...f1 followed by ...e6, ...e8 and ...e4.

25 ... g3!

The second fine stroke: 26 gxh3 loses to 26 ...f3.

26 hxg3 f1+

27 ... b2

Black promotes after 27 ...d1? hxg2 or 27 ...d1 h2

27 ... ... a1

White escapes after 31 ...g6 32 ...d5! and ...f6 once Black takes on e4.

31 ... c6!

32 ... c1 g6

A draw still seems probable because after ...xe4/...xe4/...xe4 Black will have no way of breaking through on the kingside. But Black's real intent is ...xe4! because ...xe4/...xe4 would make ...xg2 a winner.

33 ... d2 ...xe4!

34 ... d1?

Black still has his work cut out for him after 34 ...f4, e.g. 34 ...e8 35 a3 ...h8 36 ...xe2 ...xc2 37 ...f3.

He is closing in on a win with 34 ...b4 intending ...h4, e.g. 35 a3 a5 36 ...e2 b4 37 axb4 axb4 because he is playing with virtually an extra rook.
One line runs 38 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{d}6} \texttt{d7} 39 \texttt{f8} \texttt{f5} (to induce zugzwang) 40 \texttt{g7} \texttt{c5} or 40 \texttt{c5} \texttt{e5} 41 \texttt{xb4} \texttt{xc2}.

But 40 \texttt{f4} \texttt{d4+} 41 \texttt{e1} \texttt{xc2!} remains difficult if White avoids 42 \texttt{xc2}? \texttt{e3+} 43 \texttt{b2} \texttt{d2+} and 44 \texttt{d1+}! queening – and plays 42 \texttt{hxh2} \texttt{dxe2} 43 \texttt{xe2} \texttt{fl} 44 \texttt{d3} instead.

34 \ldots \texttt{d4+}
35 \texttt{e2} \texttt{d1+!}

Now 36 \texttt{xd1} \texttt{f2+}

36 \texttt{xd1} \texttt{e4}
37 \texttt{d8+} \texttt{c7}
38 \texttt{d1} \texttt{xg2}

\textbf{White} had one last trick – 39 \texttt{d8+} \texttt{c8} 40 \texttt{b6} – but resigned after 40...\texttt{d5!} 41 \texttt{c4} h1(\textcolor{red}{W}) 42 \texttt{hxh1} \texttt{xh1}.

\textbf{Lasker – C. Golmayo}
Match, Havana 1893
\textit{Sicilian Defense, Dragon Variation (B73)}

1 \texttt{e4} \texttt{c5}
2 \texttt{f3} \texttt{g6}
3 \texttt{d4} \texttt{exd4}
4 \texttt{xd4} \texttt{g7}
5 \texttt{c3} \texttt{c6}
6 \texttt{e3} \texttt{f6}
7 \texttt{e2}

Lasker pioneered the idea of White pushing the g- or h-pawn in the Dragon. After 7...\texttt{d6} 8 \texttt{wd2} \texttt{d7}, a simul game he played in Montreal in 1892 went 9 \texttt{h4}?! \texttt{e5} 10 \texttt{h5}. Another exhibition game, with 6...\texttt{e6} instead of 6...\texttt{xf6}, saw 7 \texttt{wd2} \texttt{d7} 8 0-0-0 \texttt{xf6} 9 \texttt{f3} 0-0 10 \texttt{g4}.

7 \ldots \texttt{0-0}
8 \texttt{f4} \texttt{d6}

9 \texttt{0-0}

Databases suggest this was an innovation. But the real novelty was mixing \texttt{f2-f4} with 0-0 and \texttt{f4-f5} White usually continued \texttt{wd2}, followed by \texttt{a4d1} and \texttt{h2-h3}, with a positional plan in mind.

Lasker later discovered 9 \texttt{b3} with the idea of 10 \texttt{g4}. This was credited to Jan Foltys in the 1930s and made famous in an Alekhine-Botvinnik game.

In one of his most important rules, Steinitz declared that an attack cannot succeed unless the attacker possesses a definite advantage and his opponent has an obvious weakness. This theory made sense in a Morphy brilliancy in which White’s lead in development overwhelmed an uncastled king. It equally made sense in a Steinitz grind-out, when his two bishops could exploit an opponent’s positional disadvantages.

But what about an opening like the Sicilian Defense? In the 1890s the Sicilian usually meant the Dragon Variation. White has no inherent advantage in the Dragon except more space, and Black suffers from no glaring weakness. Lasker’s solution was to ignore Steinitz – and just go for checkmate.

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But Lasker anticipated them in a 1902 exhibition game with Jackson Showalter: 9. \( \text{d7} \) g4 \( \text{e5} \) g5 \( \text{e8} \) 12. h4 \( \text{c8} \) 13. \( \text{d4} \) and then 13 \( \text{e4} \) 14 \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{xc4} \) 15 \( \text{wd3} \) \( \text{e8} \) 16 0-0-0 \( \text{g4} \) 17 \( \text{dg1} \) \( \text{h5} \) 18 \( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{g7} \) 19 \( \text{d5} \) with a dominating position. The familiar form of the "Foltys Attack" 9 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 10 g4 — was introduced by Albert Fox, a frequent Lasker opponent and colleague, two years after the Showalter game.

9 ... \( \text{g4?} \)

The critical move, 9 \( \text{b6} \), wasn’t played for more than 30 years.

10 \( \text{xg4} \) \( \text{xd4} \)

The trap 10 ... \( \text{xg4??} \) 11 \( \text{xc6} \), winning a piece, still snares players today.

11 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{gx4} \)

Forced, since 11. \( \text{xc6} \) loses a piece to 12 \( \text{xc8} \)

12 \( \text{d2} \! \)

A powerful move that Black either underestimated or overlooked. If he eliminates the bishop he’s in trouble on the kingside (12 ... \( \text{xd4} \) 13 \( \text{xd4} \) and 14 f5).

12 ... \( \text{e6?} \)

Steinitz would have been horrified by 12. e5 — creating holes at f6 and d5 and making the d-pawn backward on an open file. But it is mandatory here. Black is worse after 13 \( \text{e3} \) exf4 14 \( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{e5} \) But at least he’s playing chess.

13 f5! \( \text{c4} \)

Black is desperate to stop 14 f6/ 15 \( \text{h6} \)

14 \( \text{f3} \)

The attack must win material (14 ... f6 15 fxg6 hxg6 16 \( \text{h6} \)).

14 ... \( \text{xd4} \)

15 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{a6} \)

Best was the bad endgame of 15 ... \( \text{b6} \) 16 \( \text{xb6} \) axb6 17 b3 and 18 \( \text{d5} \)

16 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{c8} \)

Black plays for ... \( \text{c4} \). On 16 ... e6 17 \( \text{f6} \) \( \text{d8} \) 18 ... \( \text{xe6} \) he must accept a lost ending (18 ... \( \text{b6} \)) because 18 ... \( \text{xe6} \) is mated by 19 \( \text{e8} \)

17 f6!

Threatening the capture on e7 as well as \( \text{e3-h6} \)

17 ... \( \text{c4} \)

Reinfeld/Fine gave 17 ... e6 18 \( \text{e7} \) \( \text{h8} \) and now 19 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{g8} \) 20 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{f8} \) 21 \( \text{xc8} \). But 19 ... \( \text{b6} \) is better. White should win with 19 \( \text{xc8} \) \( \text{xc8} \) 20 \( \text{xd6} \) and 20 ... \( \text{d8} \) 21 \( \text{c3} \).

18 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{exf6} \)

19 \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{f5} \)

20 \( \text{h3} \) Resigns

8

The orthodox view of Lasker’s opening knowledge is that it was, well ... awful. “Lasker had no knowledge of openings,” wrote Max Euwe in Bobby Fischer: The Greatest? "He didn’t bother about new opening variations.”
said Lasker biographer Jacques Hannak.

In reality Lasker was more innovative than any GM today simply because he was present at the creation of so much basic theory. He introduced dozens of new ideas, and not at move 21 or 22. But it was his skill as an improviser that stands out. When an opponent innovated against him, he avoided taking the easy way out, such as trading pieces and offering a quick draw. He accepted challenges in his own way:

Lasker – Albin
New York 1893

Albin Counter-Gambit (D08)

1  d4  d5
2  c4  e5

This had been played in an obscure game in 1881 and forgotten. It was reborn in this game.

3  dxe5

White could avoid all danger with 3 e3, as per Tarrasch, who said “on principle” he never accepted gambits. Then 3...exd4 4 exd4 reaches a position known from the French (1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 exd5 4 c4) since the 1830s and considered reasonably promising.

3  ...  d4
4  c3  c6
5  a3

If you were seeing the Albin for the first time – and that may have been the case for Lasker here – this would hardly be the first candidate you’d consider. Why spend a tempo on a precaution when you can develop with 5 b3 or 5 g3? g2?

Lasker must have appreciated the usefulness of stopping ...b4+. On the previous move 4 e3 would have allowed 4...b4+ 5 d2 dxe3!. Even with 4 b3 c6 inserted Black can still meet 5 e3 with 5 ...b4+ 6 d2 dxe3

6  ...  g4

5  

6  h3

He gives back the pawn but in return obtains the two bishops and an initiative.

7  ...  xf3

6  

7  gxf3!

Only two other examples of 6...xf3 stand out, and in both cases White retook with the e-pawn, e.g. 7 exf3 c5 8 f4 c6 9 e2 f6! with good play for Black in Marshall-Mieses, Monte Carlo 1901.

8  f4  c6

7  

Not 8...c4?? 9 a4+. If Black is entertaining thoughts of kingside castling, 8...c6, with the idea of ...h4, ...f6 and ...c6, may be better

9  g2  d7

8  

10  b4

White has worked out an ambitious plan. He will try to encircle and win the d4-pawn (b3, b2, d3, 0-0-0) He can meet ...d3 with e2-c3.

10  ...  a6

10  

He also discourages Black from castling long because of 11 b5 (although 11...c7 12 a4 b8 is not bad).

11  b2  d8!
Otherwise 12 b5 leads to a favorable middlegame (or, after 11...\(Qf6\) 12 b5 axb5 13 cxb5 and 14\(wxd4\), endgame).

12 \(Qd2\) \(Qge7\)

13 \(Qb3\)

This turns out to be a turning point because Black has to decide whether his knight should go to f5, where it protects d4, or to g6, where it attacks f4 and shields g7.

After 13...\(Qg6\) White doesn’t have time for 14 b5 because of 14...\(Qxf4!\), e.g. 15 bxc6 \(Qxg2+\) 16 \(Rfl\) \(wxc6\), threatening 17...\(Qe3+\) followed by ...\(wxh1+\).

The right way of meeting 13...\(Qg6\) is 14 \(Qd2\) and then 14...\(Qd6\) 15 \(Qxd4\) \(Qxf4\) 16 e3 \(Qe5\) is slightly better for White but 15...\(Qxd4\) should equalize, e.g. 16 \(wxd4\) \(Qxb4+\) 17 axb4 \(wxd4\) or 16 \(wxd4\) 0-0 17 0-0-0 \(Qxf4\) or 17 e3 \(Qh4\).

13 ... \(Qf5\)?

14 \(Qd3!\)

This, not 14 b5 axb5 15 cxb5 \(Qa7!\), is the best chance for advantage.

14 ... \(Qe7\)

Black needs both e7 and d6 for his minor pieces and this move creates a log jam. After 14...\(Qd6\) he can meet 15 \(Qe4\) with the more fluid 15...\(Qce7\). To play that, however, Black has to be confident about his nebulous compensation after 16 \(Qxb7\) e6 17 \(Qxa6\) \(Qxf4\).

15 \(Qe4!\)

The knight doesn’t have a good retreat and 15...\(g6\) 16 \(Qxf5\) \(gx5\) 17 b5 must favor White substantially. When Black chose 13...\(Qf5\) he likely intended 15...\(Qh4\). But he lacks a good follow-up to 16 0-0-0, particularly since 16...\(f5\) 17 \(Qd5\) \(Qf6\) will get him killed (18 \(Qc5\) \(Qc8\) 19 e4!).

15 ... \(Qd6\)

16 \(Qc5\) \(Qc8\)

White’s biggest decisions were general ones at moves 3-10. Now it’s time to calculate. Black has good play after 17 \(Qxa6\) \(Qxe4\) 18 \(Qxe4\) 0-0.

At first, 17 \(Qxh7\) seems promising. It isn’t hard to see that 17...\(g6\) fails to 18 \(Qxg6\) \(fxg6\) 19 \(Qxg6+\) \(Qf8\) 20 \(Qe6+\). If Black just tries to prevent the \(Q\)’s escape – 17...\(b6\) 18 \(Qb3\) \(Qe6\) – rather than trap it, he allows 19 \(Qxd4\). However, White’s position is very loose as a result and Black stands well following 19...\(Qxd4\) 20 \(Qxd4\) \(Qf6\).

17 \(Qf3\)

Typical Lasker. Why take chances when the position might win itself? In his day there was no name for this kind of low-risk decision. Today we call it a practical move.

17 ... 0-0

18 \(Qg1\)

Here 17 \(Qxa6\) was more dubious because of 17...\(Qa5!\) 18 bxa5 bxa6 or just 17...\(Qe8\) and 18...\(Qd6\) with good play for a pawn.

18 ... \(Qe8\)

19 \(Qb3\) \(Qd7\)

20 0-0-0

White will not be playing b4-b5 now but can win the d-pawn with e2-e3.

20 ... \(Qd6\)

Black has to strike at his only targets, the kingside pawns.
Why Lasker Matters

21 \( \text{\#b1?} \)

Too practical. White hopes to win by avoiding complications (21 \( \text{\#xd4} \ \text{\#xf4+} \ 22 \text{e3} \ \text{\#h4} \) and increasing the pressure until the d-pawn drops. But the space-gaining 21 \( \text{\#f5!} \) was best. For example, 21...\( \text{\#f6} \) 22 \( \text{\#c5} \ \text{\#e7} \) 23 \( \text{\#e4} \).

21 ... \( \text{\#xf4!} \)

22 \( \text{\#g4} \ \text{\#h6} \)

By indirectly trading the f4-pawn for the doomed d-pawn, White seems to have made progress. But actually he's wasted much of his edge. Computers like variations such as 23 \( \text{\#xd4} \ \text{\#f6} \) 24 \( \text{\#xc6} \ \text{\#xc6} \) 25 \( \text{\#g1} \) with \( \text{\#f5} \) in the air. But it's not hard to see that 23...\( \text{\#f6?} \) is inferior to 23...\( \text{\#xd4} \) 24 \( \text{\#xd4} \ \text{\#xd4} \) 25 \( \text{\#xd4} \) \( \text{\#b6} \), with a minimal disadvantage

23 \( \text{\#xc6!} \) \( \text{\#xc6?} \)

Black goes into a tailspin now. Reinfield/Fine said 23 \( \text{\#xc6} \) 24 \( \text{\#xd4} \) would leave Black no better than in the game. But 24 \( \text{\#f6} \) is perfectly safe.

The Lasker game collection by Alexander Khalifman and Sergei Soloviov suggests 24 \( \text{\#a5} \) instead, and then 24...\( \text{\#b6} \) 25 c5 with a positional crush (25...\( \text{\#b5} \) 26 \( \text{\#xb5} \) axb5 27 \( \text{\#xb7} \)). But they don't mention 24...\( \text{\#a4} \). White is definitely better in the 25 \( \text{\#c2} \ \text{\#xc2+} + 26 \text{\#xc2} \) endgame, but the outcome is by no means certain.

A third try is 24 \( \text{\#xd4} \) but Tartakower showed that 24...\( \text{\#xd4} \) 25 \( \text{\#xd4} \ \text{\#g6} \ 26 \text{\#f5} \ \text{\#f6} \) was a reasonable defense.

24 \( \text{\#xd4} \)

Better than 24 \( \text{\#xd4} \), which threatens 25 \( \text{\#f5} \) but allows 24...\( \text{\#f5} \) (25 \( \text{\#xf5} \) \( \text{\#xf5} \)).

24 ... \( \text{\#d6} \)

Black doesn't want to trade off one of his few active pieces (24. \( \text{\#xd4} \) 25 \( \text{\#xd4} \) and then 25...\( \text{\#c5} \) 26 \( \text{\#f5} \) \( \text{\#e6} \) 27 \( \text{\#g1} \) with a nice edge.) But his rook ends up on a clumsy square now.

25 \( \text{\#c5} \) \( \text{\#e6} \)

26 \( \text{\#xa6} \)

Trading rooks' pawns ensures White will win most endgames. But 26 \( \text{\#g4} \) and \( \text{\#d1} \) was probably faster.

26 ... \( \text{\#xe3} \)

27 \( \text{\#d3} \) \( \text{\#g2} \)

28 \( \text{\#d4} \) \( \text{\#f6?} \)

After 28...\( \text{\#g6} \) White has a variety of good plans, including 29 \( \text{\#f3} \) and 29 \( \text{f} \), followed by picking off the c6-pawn or pushing the a-pawn. For example, 29 \( \text{\#f3} \) \( \text{\#g4} \) – so that 30 \( \text{\#xc6?} \) \( \text{\#e4+} \) – 30 \( \text{\#f5} \) \( \text{\#f6} \) 31 \( \text{\#xc6} \) or 30. \( \text{\#e4+} \) 31 \( \text{\#d3} \), with a clear edge in either case

29 \( \text{\#e3!} \)

The bishop has no good move (29...\( \text{\#xc5} \) 30 \( \text{bxc5} \) \( \text{\#xf1} \) 31 \( \text{\#c2} \) \( \text{\#g6} \) 32 \( \text{\#d8} \) and wins).

29 ... \( \text{\#d8} \)

30 \( \text{\#c2!} \) \( \text{\#xf2} \)

31 \( \text{\#xd8} \) Resigns

9

When Lasker evaluated the world champion he could see that each of Steinitz's assets hid a liability: Steinitz was a great abstract thinker but also the most impractical of champions. He was
Why Lasker Matters

a tireless innovator but also became stubbornly attached to bad variations. He was a profound middlegame strategist but also someone who could be beaten in the endgame.

Today it’s common knowledge that a great player will probe his opponent’s weaknesses and avoid his strengths. “Kramnik is very good at adapting to his opponent,” Veselin Topalov told New In Chess in 2005. He cited the Kramnik-Kasparov match as “the perfect example” because the challenger quickly steered 11 of the 15 games into endings Lasker anticipated Kramnik by a century.

Lasker – Steinitz
World Championship match, ninth game, Philadelphia 1894
Ray Lopez, Steinitz Defense (C62)

1 e4 e5
2 ∆f3 ∆c6
3 ∆b5 d6

This match put the “Steinitz Variation” into the opening books. Steinitz had only played it once in each of his three previous matches. But he used 3...d6 in the first five games in which Lasker had White.

Steinitz explained in The Modern Chess Instructor (1889) that he had turned away from “the time honored 3...∆f6 (and 3...a6 4 a4 ∆a4 ∆f6)” because Black is more or less committed to .d6 anyway once White protects his e-pawn and threatens to win Black’s with ∆xe6 and ∆xe5.

He added that once Black plays .d6 White’s most promising plan is c2-c3. Therefore, he concluded, Black should play 3...d6 and meet 4 c3 with 4...f5!?. On that remarkable basis, 3...d6 became Steinitz’s main defense in the Lopez.

4 ∆c3 a6

“White could hardly exchange,” he wrote and therefore Black has “gained a move in development as compared with similar positions.” But the extra move is ...a6, which is hardly “development.”

5 ∆c4

Stranger still. White seems to be seeking a livelier game (5...∆f6? 6 ∆g5; 5...∆c7 6 d4). But Black’s move order (compared with 3...a6 and 4 .d6) allows White to reach a book position, 5 ∆xc6+ bxc6 6 d4 – and he, not Black, has an extra tempo.

5 ... ∆e6
6 ∆xe6 fxe6
7 d4 exd4
8 ∆xd4 ∆xd4!

This was a trademarked Steinitz idea in similar positions.

9 ∆xd4

The swap of a second pair of pieces has eased Black’s constriction but 9 ...∆f6 10 ∆g5 ∆e7 11 0-0-0 would keep White on top (11...0-0 12 e5)
9 ... ∆e7

His idea is ...∆c6 and ...∆e7-f6.
10 ∆g5 ∆c6!

Lasker regarded this as “practically forced” because he had “threatened” 11 ∆xe7 “with a very strong position.”
11 \( \text{\underline{xd}} \text{d}8\)!

Most modern GMs would retreat the queen automatically. White enjoys a slight edge after, say, 11 \( \text{\underline{d}}2 \text{\underline{e}}7 \)
12 \( \text{\underline{e}}3! \) and 13 0-0-0. But Lasker had discovered Steinitz’s weakness: he could be beaten in endgames. Queens went off the board as early as move six and eight (twice) in other games of this match. Altogether, endgames were reached in 16 of the 19 games. The average length of a game was 52 moves.

Compare that with the Kasparov-Karpov match of 1984-85, when queens were traded only 17 times in 48 games. Or with the hard-fought Fischer-Spassky match of 1972, which averaged 45 moves a game.

It wasn’t Steinitz’s inclination to play endgames: He did it only six times in 23 games of his previous match, with Tchigorin. It was Lasker’s plan to make it The Great Endgame Match.

11 ... \( \text{\underline{xd}}4 \)

12 0-0-0

A forced move which doesn’t deserve the exclamation point it’s often given.

12 ... \( \text{\underline{b}}5 \)

This looks artificial – and it is. Black had two good alternatives but he only mentioned a third, 11. \( \text{\underline{b}}3+ \), in his notes. (He thought doubling the White b-pawns would give Black a slight advantage.)

With the superior 12...c5 13 \( \text{\underline{g}}5 \text{\underline{e}}7 \), as suggested by Tchigorin, Black should be equal because of his powerful knight. But 12...\( \text{\underline{x}} \text{d}8 \)! is even better and after 13 \( \text{\underline{x}} \text{d}4 \text{\underline{e}}7 \) followed by ...\( \text{\underline{d}}7 \) and ...\( \text{\underline{h}}8 \) he has the edge because White’s knight lacks a good outpost.

13 \( \text{\underline{x}} \text{b}5 \text{\underline{xb}}5 \)

14 \( \text{\underline{xc}}7 \)

Black can’t play 14 ...\( \text{\underline{d}}7 \) because of 15 \( \text{\underline{x}} \text{d}6 \text{\underline{xd}}6 \) 16 e5.

14 ... \( \text{\underline{xa}}2 \)

This compounds 12. \( \text{\underline{b}}5 \). The wrecking of the queenside pawns would have been justified by 14 ...\( \text{\underline{a}}6! \), shutting the door on the bishop’s escape. After the forced 15 e5 d5 Black is assured of regaining the pawn with ...\( \text{\underline{d}}7 \) but also retains pressure against the queenside, e.g. 16 a3 b4! 17 \( \text{\underline{xb}}4 \text{\underline{xb}}4 \) 18 c3 \( \text{\underline{c}}5 \) 19 f3 \( \text{\underline{d}}7 \) is good, as pointed out by Tchigorin. And 16 \( \text{\underline{b}}1 \text{\underline{d}}7 \) 17 \( \text{\underline{d}}6 \text{\underline{xd}}6 \) 18 \( \text{\underline{xd}}6 \text{\underline{ha}}8 \) 19 a3 b4! is better.

15 \( \text{\underline{b}}6 \text{\underline{e}}7 \)

“Feeble,” said Steinitz, who believed 15...b4 would have “rendered White’s game very difficult.” His point is that 16 \( \text{\underline{b}}1 \text{\underline{a}}6 \) 17 \( \text{\underline{e}}3 \text{\underline{d}}7 \) 18 \( \text{\underline{d}}4 \text{\underline{e}}7 \) and now 19 \( \text{\underline{x}} \text{b}4 \)?? loses to 19 ...\( \text{\underline{ha}}8 \) But 19 \( \text{\underline{hd}}1 \text{\underline{ha}}8 \) 20 \( \text{\underline{c}}1 \) is fairly balanced.

16 c3 \( \text{\underline{f}}7 \)

Steinitz called this the losing mistake and later realized his king belonged on the queenside, with 16. \( \text{\underline{d}}7 \) and ...\( \text{\underline{c}}6 \). He considered 17 \( \text{\underline{c}}5 \text{\underline{c}}6 \) 18 \( \text{\underline{a}}3 \text{\underline{a}}1+ \) 19 \( \text{\underline{c}}2 \text{\underline{xd}}1 \) as “at least an even game”.

But one can’t escape the feeling that Steinitz lost because he didn’t believe his own theories. Steinitz valued static weaknesses over piece play. But here he seemed to assume that active play, such as control of the only open file, will compensate for his bad pawns.

The problem is that if Black doesn’t have a target, he will run out of active moves. He needed to play something like 16 ...\( \text{\underline{a}}4 \) and after the pawn is protected by 17 f3 or 17 \( \text{\underline{he}}1 \), then 17...b4.

17 \( \text{\underline{e}}2 \text{\underline{ha}}8 \)

18 \( \text{\underline{b}}3! \)

This temporarily closes the book on ...b4.

34
Black still owns the only open file but lacks a target or point of penetration. A trade of bishops would endanger his d-pawn. Once the active ideas are exhausted, the targets at b5, b7, and d6 are all that count. White will have a choice of threatening the d-pawn with \textit{hd1/\textit{f2-g3}} and opening the kingside with \textit{f1} and \textit{f3-f4-f5}.

21 \ldots \textit{e8}

This anticipates both plans. If he realized how bad his position would soon be, Black would have preferred 21...\textit{d5!} 22 \textit{exd5 exd5} That virtually dooms the d-pawn but improves his chances after 23...\textit{b4!}, e.g. 23 \textit{f2-b4} 24 \textit{exd5} bxc3 25 bxc3 \textit{a3+} 26 \textit{c2? c2? c2?} 26 \textit{c2+} or 26 \textit{c4 c6+} Or 25 \textit{d7 cxb2}.

22 \textit{hd1}

Now 22...\textit{d7} allows a strong 23 \textit{e5!} (23...\textit{c7} 24 \textit{b4} and 25 \textit{e5}).

22 \ldots \textit{e5?}

Lasker felt this was more or less forced. Black defends the d-pawn before \textit{f2-g3} attacks it. He secures e6 for the king and prepares ...\textit{g5-g4}.

Nevertheless Black was better off with 22...\textit{c4}, or 22...\textit{g5} as recommended by Steinitz or even 22...\textit{c6} For example, 22...\textit{c6} 23 \textit{f2 d7} 24 \textit{g3 c7} 25 \textit{d4 a6!}. Or 25...\textit{xd4} 26 \textit{xd4 c5} 27 \textit{b4 c6} and Black "is worse but not by much," according to Pal Benko.

23 \textit{e3 c7}
24 \textit{c5!}

"A beautiful key move to splendid ending play," Steinitz wrote. White threatens to win a pawn with 25 \textit{b4} followed by 26 \textit{d5}, because ...\textit{b6} will allow \textit{xb5!} and \textit{xa4}.

24 \ldots \textit{a1}
25 \textit{d2!}

Black’s weaknesses are easier to defend after a trade of rooks and ...\textit{c6}.

25 \ldots \textit{e6}
26 \textit{a3!}

Suddenly there is no defense of the b-pawn after \textit{d5} followed by \textit{b4}.

26 \ldots \textit{g5!}

Time to panic. Black has no targets (26...\textit{h1} 27 \textit{h3}) unless he can play ...\textit{g4}.

27 \textit{d5 b6}
28 \textit{b4 g4!}

Now 29 \textit{fxg4 a1} gives Black excellent counterchances, although Lasker thought White was still much better after 30 \textit{xa5 d8} 31 \textit{xb5!}.

29 \textit{a5}
“The endgame isn’t simple. It demands distributive attention on a high level,” wrote Boris Vainshtein, a Soviet NKVD officer and devoted Lasker fan. White has to evaluate the situation on both wings simultaneously. For example 29 \&xb5 \&xb5+ 30 \&xb5 gx\&f3 31 gx\&f3 \&f1 32 \&d3 \&f2 gives Black counterplay in the form of a passed h-pawn. But 32 \&b6! is stronger because the passed b-pawn is faster after 32...\&xf3 33 \&xb7 \&e3 34 \&c6.

29 ... \&a6+
30 \&xb5 h5?

The real losing move. Lasker said he had undertaken a “very tedious maneuver” to win the b-pawn and Black could exploit that with 30...\&h1! 31 fx\&g4 \&xe1!, which would leave him with only a small disadvantage (32 h3 \&xe4 33 c4 \&a1).

31 \&d1!

White needed two rooks in order to win a pawn. But now a trade reduces Black’s counterplay because his remaining rook is on the wrong side of the board.

31 ... \&xd1
32 \&xd1 gx\&f3
33 gx\&f3 \&a8!

If he passes (33 ...\&f6) White wins on the kingside with \&g1. Trying to block the file with 33...\&g5 34 \&g1 \&f6 is hopeless after 35 \&c4 and \&d5.

34 \&b6 \&g8
35 \&xb7

White appreciates that he would have to allow some counterplay to avert stiff resistance (35 \&d2? \&g7?).

35 ... \&g2
36 h4!

White can’t push passers easily (36 c4 \&c2 or 36 b4 \&a1) He decides to give up the h-pawn on the fourth, rather than the second rank, to reduce risk in a pawn-race (36 \&c6 \&xh2).

36 ... \&h2
37 \&c6 \&xh4

In the rook-ending, 37...\&xh4 38 \&xd6 \&h2 39 \&xe7 \&xe7, White wins with 40 c4! \&xb2 41 \&h1 or 40...h4 41 b4.

38 \&xd6+

39 \&f7

It’s still not clear how White will make progress, since 39 \&h6 \&g5 40 \&h8 goes nowhere after 40...\&g7 41 \&e8 \&f4 42 \&d6 \&xb2.

39 \&d5!

Carefully calculated and, Lasker said, probably forced: White’s bishop gets back just in time to stop the h-pawn (39...\&d2+ 40 \&xe5 \&g3+ 41 f4 \&xd6 42 \&xd6 h4 43 \&c5 h3 44 \&g1). Then 44...h2 45 \&xb2 puts Black’s bishop in a losing battle against four passed pawns.

39 ... \&f6
40 \&d7+ \&g6
41 \&c6 h4!

This is Black’s only chance now.

42 \&d1! h3
43 \&g1+ \&g2
44 \&xg2+ \&xg2
45 \&c5

Black resigned after 45...\&d8 46 b4 \&g5 47 \&d7 \&f6 48 b5 \&f4 49 b6.
Lasker employed subterfuge. He not only tried to mislead his opponents during a game but between games. Take his explanation of choice of openings in the Steinitz match.

Tarrasch said it was Steinitz's addiction to dubious variations that had made his matches with Tchigorin as close as they were. Tchigorin played the Evans Gambit and won when Steinitz stuck to his ridiculous 5...a5 6 0-0 Wf6? defense. Even Isidor Gunsberg, who never played the Evans, took it up in his match with Steinitz (but too late).

Why didn't Lasker try to exploit Steinitz's crazy lines? His answer was that he wanted to make the match a true test of their abilities, not of their repertoire.

Yeah, right. Lasker had spent the previous four years preparing to challenge Steinitz and when the opportunity arose, he didn't want to use the best weapons because it wouldn't be a "true test of their abilities."

A more truthful explanation is that Steinitz's handling of the Evans may have been bizarre but he knew a lot more about it than Lasker did. The challenger realized Steinitz was most vulnerable in a different kind of position. When Lasker was ready he switched to 1 d4! and repeatedly outplayed Steinitz. This was one of his three 1 d4 games, all won by Lasker.

Lasker – Steinitz
World Championship match, 11th game, Philadelphia 1894
Queen's Gambit Declined (D40)

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<th>1</th>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
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An innocuous system when Black hasn't played ...c6. The modern 5 Qg5 didn't enter the QP canon until adopted by Harry Pillsbury and Tarrasch later in the 1890s.

| 5 | ... | 0-0 |
| 6 | Qd3 | c5 |

In one of the few previous examples of this opening, Steinitz played 7 cxd5 against Gunsberg and got nothing after 7...cxd4 8 Qxd4 Qxd5.

| 7 | dxc5 | dxc4 |

This forces an endgame that onlookers called poor for Black because his king is further from the center. But the winning chances for either side are fairly slim.

| 8 | Qxc4 | Wxd1+ |
| 9 | Wxd1! | Qc6 |
| 10 | a3 | Qxc5 |
| 11 | b4 |

Needing one victory to clinch the title, Lasker repeated this opening in the 19th game. Steinitz then decided his bishop belonged on the kingside (11...Qd8+ 12 Ke2 Qf8) and the chances remained even (13 Qb2 Qd7 14 Qhd1 Qac8 15 Qb3 Qe7 16 Qd4 Qg6 17 Qd2) until Steinitz began to play for a win (17...e5 18 Qf3 Qg4? 19 h3 Qxf3+? 20 Qxf3).

Better is just 11...Qc7, even though that square is useful for a knight, followed by developing the other bishop on b7.

| 11 | ... | Qb6 |
| 12 | Ke2 | Qd7 |
| 13 | Qb3 | Qac8 |
| 14 | Qb2 |

37
Black seems to be doing well with 14...Re8d and ...Qf8 or with one of the attractive knight maneuvers. One of them is 14...c7 and 15...Qe5.

But 15 Qe5! is strong, e.g. 15...e8 16 a5! Qe5 17 Qxd5 a5+ 18 Qf3 Qxd5 19 a4 or 15...Qf8d 16 Qxd7 Qxd7 17 Qb5 and 16...Qxd7 17 Qhd1 Qcd8 18 Qa4).

The most promising try is 14...c7! and 15...Qe5, particularly if White answers 15 Qb5 and allows 15...Qa5! 16 a4 Qc4 or 16...Qxc7? Qxb3.

14 ... a5?!

Steinitz tries to improve on the ...Qc7-d5 idea by creating weaknesses on the queenside. But only the a5-pawn becomes weak. If he was afraid of 15 Qa4 he should have relied on the modest 14...a6 15 Qa4 Qa7.

15 b5 Qe7
16 Qe5! Qe8

Benko, in Chess Life, preferred 16...Qd8 and 17...Qe8. White keeps his edge with 17 Qxd7 Qxd7 18 Qa4 Qc7 19 Qac1.

17 a4 Qc7
18 Qc4

Now 18...Qed5 19 Qxd5 Qxd5 permits a strong 20 Qa3 Qb4 21 b6.

18 ... Qd7
19 Qac1

Lasker pointed out that 19 b6 Qd8 20 Qxa5 Qxb6 21 Qxb7 allows 21...Qb8 22 Qd6 Qxe3!.

19 ... Qed5?

Consistent and bad. Black wanted to anticipate both 20 Qa3 and 20 b6 but should have settled for 19...b6 20 Qa3 Qe8 and then 21...Qd6.

Several annotators thought Black was lost after 19...b6 20 Qfd1 Qfd8 21 Qd6 – but that’s a blunder which allows 21...Qxd6 22 Qxd6 Qxc3!, threatening ...Qxb5+ and ...Qxd6.

20 Qxd5 Qxd5

Leopold Hoffer, perhaps the most influential chess journalist of his time, recommended 20...exd5 21 Qd2 Qe6 22 Qxf6 Qxf6 with chances of a draw. But few defenders would be happy on the Black side of 23 Qf3 Qfd8 24 Qc3

21 Qe5!

Hard to believe but Black is nearly lost. For example, 21...Qfd8 22 Qxd7 Qxd7 23 Qxd5 and 24 b6. Retreating the bishop to e8 allows White a choice of winning with 22 Qa3 Qb4 23 b6 or with 22 Qxd5 exd5 23 Qa3.

21 ... Qxe5

On 21...Qf6 22 Qhd1 Qfd8 White again has a choice between wins – 23 Qxd7 Qxd7 24 Qxd7 and the superior 24 Qa3! and 25 Qe7.

22 Qxe5

The threat is 23 e4 Qf6 24 f3 followed by Qc7.

22 ... f6

Black panics. His position is teetering after 22...Qf6! 23 Qc7 Qa8 but not yet lost.

23 e4!

It is now. White also wins with 23 Qd6!, e.g. 23...Qc3+ 24 Qd3 Qfd8 25 Qxc3 Qxb5+ 26 axb5 or 23...Qfd8 24 e4.

23 ... fxe5

24 exd5
Benko found that Black could have drawn much earlier with 33...gxh5! since 34 g3 h6 35 f3 h4! 36 gxh4 h5 leaves White only 37 f4 exf4 38 exf4 ef6 39 ef4 ef6 with a draw.

26 d6+!

Now it's a win again because of the impending c7.

26 ... f6

27 c3!

More exact than 27 c7 xxc7 28 bxc7 c8.

27 ... xxc1

28 xxc1 c8

Now 29 c7 xxc7 30 bxc7 b6 31 c2 e7! and ...d6 requires White to work further.

29 xxc8 xxc8

30 c2!

"A beautiful move," said Showalter White threats not only 31 xh7 but 31 e4!, with a more direct winning plan of bringing the king to b6.

30 ... f7

Black loses after 30...h6 31 e4! because his king doesn't play enough of a role, e.g. 31...f7 32 f3! e8 (32...b6 33 c6) 33 e4 or 32...f6 33 d3 f5 34 xxb7! xxb7 35 d7.

However, after 30...f7 the king is close enough (31 e4 e8 32 xh7 d7).

31 xh7!
Here Black replied “31...P-N3” according to the on-scene reports – and we don’t know for certain which pawn that was. (Such discrepancies weren’t just a 19th century phenomena. There were differing move orders in the published accounts of, for example, the Karpov-Korchnoi match of 1974, a de facto world championship.)

Several authorities said Black played 31...b6, which would make sense because it enables him to play ...\=
But other sources, including one based on Lasker, gave 31...g6, enabling Black to trap the bishop.

Neither move would save the game. For example, after 31...g6 32 \=e4 White sacrifices the bishop and wins after 32...\=
33 \=xe5 \=xh7 34 \=f6 e5 35 \=e7! and 36 d7.

In any event, the rest of the game went: 32 \=e4 \=f6 33 g4 g5 34 \=f3

White cleared e4 for the bishop and will create a passed pawn with h2-h4. For example, 34...e4+ 35 \=xe4 \=e5
36 h4! gxh4 37 g5 \=xd6 38 \=g4 and wins. Black resigned after: 34...\=
35 \=e4 \=e8 36 h4 \=d7 37 h5 \=e8
38 \=e3.

II

After defeating Steinitz by a score as impressive as in any of Steinitz’s victorious matches, Lasker might have expected to be warmly received as the world’s second official chess champion. He wasn’t.

Tarrasch wrote that it was not Steinitz’s moves, but “his years” that cost him the title. Curt von Bardeleben in Deutsche Schachzeitung praised Lasker’s defense in difficult positions but said a true champion wouldn’t have to defend such positions. Lasker’s “combinations lack fire” and he didn’t approach the “depth of Steinitz’s play,” he added. They and other commentators raised doubts that the world champion was really the world’s best player.

This was a new situation because the world championship title was new. But it would recur when Karpov was awarded the title in 1975 as a result of Fischer’s self-imposed exile. Lasker, like Karpov, sought to confirm his legitimacy in tournaments.

He began with Hastings 1895, the grandest tournament held up to that time. His chances for first prize were initially boosted by the pairing system, which gave him White nine times in the first 14 rounds. But he had Black in six of the last seven rounds, beginning with this.

Schiffers – Lasker
Hastings 1895
Three Knights Game (C46)

1  e4       e5
2  \=f3     \=c6
3  \=c3     g6

This was Steinitz’s method of avoiding Four Knights symmetry, still used today by players such as Mikhail Krasenkow.

4  d4       exd4
5  \=xd4     \=g7
6  \=e3     d6

Steinitz preferred 6...\=f6, with the possibility of a quick ...d5. Lasker’s choice retains a different option, ...

7  \=b5     \=d7
8  \=d2

This hints at 0-0-0 and a kingside attack (8...\=e7 9 h4) that Schiffers was fully capable of carrying off. He was among the dozen or so strongest players in the world at the time, as his sixth place at Hastings showed. Tarrasch was impressed by Schiffers’ skill but described him as a
helpless drunk who ended up being institutionalized for “alcoholic psychosis.”

8  ...  \( \text{\texttt{f6}} \)

9  \( \text{f3} \)

Lasker knew, from Dragon experience, how quickly White’s attack can accelerate. He must have considered swapping. For example, 9...0-0 10 h4? gives Black a fine game after 10...\( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{d} \text{4} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{\texttt{d}} \text{d} \text{4} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{b} \text{5} \) 12 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{b} \text{5} \) d5!.

He is also doing well after 10 0-0-0 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \) 11 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{e} \text{4} \) 12 fxe4 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{b} \text{5} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{b} \text{5} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}} \text{5} \text{+} \). But White could seize the upper hand with 12 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{e} \text{4} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{b} \text{5} \) 13 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}} \text{3} \) (13...f6 14 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}}}} \text{3} \text{+})

9  ...  a6!?

This can be criticized as a loss of time which hands White a slight positional plus (10 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{c} \text{6} \) bxc6 11 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}} \text{4} \) 0-0 12 0-0) That’s true – but Black is not getting mated, which was his main concern. If White tries 12 0-0-0 instead, Black has his own attack along the b-file.

10 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}} \text{e} \text{2} \) 0-0

11 0-0-0 b5!

This is the main reason for Black’s ninth. After 12...b4 White’s best retreat square is occupied by the bishop, and 13 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{a} \text{4} \).

12  \( \text{\texttt{g4}} \)

After 12 a3 Black can speculate with 12...b4! 13 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{c} \text{6} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{c} \text{6} \) 14 axb4 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{b}}}} \text{8} \) or 13 . bxc3 14 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{c} \text{3} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}} \text{8} \).

12  ...  b4

13 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}} \text{5?} \)

This fits in badly with White’s previous move. After 13 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{b} \text{1} \) the onus is on Black to find counterplay before White plays h2-h4-h5. His best bets seem to be 13. \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}} \text{5} \) (intending ...c5) and 13...\( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \) 14 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \) c5 15 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}} \text{3} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}} \text{8} \).

13  ...  \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \)

14 exd5 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \)

15 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \)

According to Steinitz’s principles, White is doing well. He has holes to occupy at c4 and c6, and several weaknesses, such as the queenside pawns, to exploit. In reality, control of the dark squares and the only open file are more important.

15  ...  \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}} \text{8} \)

Black threatens to win a piece with 16...\( \text{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \) and is preparing to trade queens (16 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}} \text{4} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \) 17 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{d} \text{4} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}} \text{5} \text{+} \) 18 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}}}} \text{x} \text{b} \text{1} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}} \text{3} \).

16 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}} \text{g7} \)

Black seizes the dark squares now but 16 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}} \text{e} \text{1} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{b}}}} \text{5} \) wasn’t much better – and 16 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}} \text{2?} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}} \text{6} \) is worse.

16  ...  \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{g}}}} \text{7} \)

17 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}} \text{3} \)

Black threatened to reach a favorable ending with 17...\( \text{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}} \text{7} \)...

17  ...  \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}} \text{6} \text{!} \)

This is the kind of move we take for granted today. White’s space edge would count for something after, say, 17...a5? 18 h4 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{c}}}} \text{7} \) 19 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{d}}}} \text{e} \text{1} \) \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{f}}}} \text{6} \) 20 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{e}}}} \text{4} \).

18 \( \text{\texttt{\texttt{h}}}} \text{f1} \)
Not 18 \( \texttt{Le4} \timesg4. \) But better is 18 \( \texttt{Wxb4 Wxf3} \) 19 \( \texttt{Wc3+} \) \( \texttt{Qg8} \) 20 \( \texttt{Wxe7} \) or 18...\( \texttt{a5} \) 19 \( \texttt{Wc3 Wxc3} \) 20 \( \texttt{bxc3} \) \( \texttt{Ee3} \) 21 \( \texttt{Hf1} \) and \( \texttt{d2}. \)

It seems too early for a losing move but this one bears all the earmarks. Khalifman/Soloviov tried to improve the idea with 23 \( \texttt{Ec1 Eea8} \) 24 \( c3 \) but White would have a difficult defense after 24...\( \texttt{Exa2} \) 25 \( \texttt{Exb4 Ea1+} \) 26 \( \texttt{Ec2} \) \( \texttt{Exc1+} \) 27 \( \texttt{Exc1} \) \( \texttt{Ea1+} \) 28 \( \texttt{Ec2} \) \( \texttt{f1} \).

It seems illogical to play 23 \( \texttt{Ed4} \) \( \texttt{Eea8} \) 24 \( \texttt{Ee1} \) just two moves after 22 \( \texttt{Fb1} \). White would have to move his king again following 24...\( \texttt{Exa2} \) because of the threat of 25...\( \texttt{Ea1+} \).

He would be clearly worse after 25 \( \texttt{Ee1} \) \( \texttt{Ea1+} \) 26 \( \texttt{Ed2} \) \( \texttt{Exe1} \) 27 \( \texttt{Ee1} \) \( \texttt{Ea1+} \) 28 \( \texttt{Ed2} \) \( \texttt{h1} \) or 28 \( \texttt{Ff2} \) \( \texttt{c1} \) 29 \( \texttt{Ed2} \) \( \texttt{f6} \) 30 \( f4 \) \( h5 \).

But White can do better with 25 \( \texttt{Ec2} \) and that turns out to be the best defense.

23 \( \ldots \) \( \texttt{bxc3} \)

24 \( \texttt{bxc3} \) \( \texttt{Ee3} \)

25 \( \texttt{Fb2} \)

The stage seems set for a raid by the Black king to \( f4 \). But 25...\( \texttt{Ff6} \) 26 \( f4 \) stops him in his tracks.

25 \( \ldots \) \( \texttt{Ea4} \! \)

Black must win a pawn with 26...\( \texttt{Ff4} \) or 26...\( \texttt{Ec4} \). For example, 26 \( g5 \) \( \texttt{Ec4} \) or 26...\( h6 \) 27 \( f4 \) \( \texttt{Ec4} \).

26 \( f4 \) \( \texttt{Ec4} \)

And now 27 \( \texttt{Ec2} \) \( \texttt{Ed3} \).

27 \( \texttt{Ed4} \) \( \texttt{Exe3} \)

A rook is so strong on \( c4 \) that this capture virtually wins a second pawn (28 \( \texttt{Ec4} \) 29 \( \texttt{Ec4} \) \( \texttt{Ec4} \) 30 \( \texttt{Ed3} \) \( \texttt{Ed4} \) and 31 \( \texttt{Ec3} \) \( \texttt{Ec4} \) 32 \( \texttt{Ec7} \) \( \texttt{Ed4} \)). White ends up with a similar version:

28 \( \texttt{Ed2} \) \( \texttt{Ee3} \)

29 \( \texttt{Ee1} \) \( \texttt{Eee4} \! \)

30 \( \texttt{Ec4} \) \( \texttt{Ece4} \)

31 \( \texttt{Ec2} \)
31 \ldots \text{\textit{f4}}!

A practical decision. It was not worth the risk of miscalculating the pawn-ending (31...\textit{xc2}+ 32 \textit{xc2} \textit{f6} 33 \textit{b3}) which could turn out disastrously (33...\textit{h5}?? 34 \textit{b4}!). With two extra pawns the game was decided: 32 \textit{xc7} \textit{xg4} 33 \textit{b7} b4 34 \textit{b3} \textit{d4} 35 \textit{xb4} \textit{xd5} 36 a4 \textit{f6} 37 \textit{b7} \textit{xe6} 38 \textit{e4} \textit{d2} 39 \textit{h5} \textit{xb2} 40 a5 h5 41 a6 \textit{xa2} 42 \textit{e7} b4 43 \textit{c4} h3 44 \textit{b6} g5 45 a7 \textit{xa7} White resigns.

12

Hastings was the only tournament in which all five great players of the decade – Steinitz, Lasker, Tarrasch, Pillsbury and Tchigorin – competed. The surprises of the tournament were Steinitz’s great 4\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} start and the splendid results of Tchigorin and, of course, Pillsbury. Lasker overcame a poor start, including a famous loss to Tchigorin and a less-well-known one to Bardeleben. But by the time he met Steinitz in the ninth round the fortunes of both contestants in the recent world championship had reversed.

\textit{Lasker – Steinitz}

Hastings 1895

Ray Lopez, Steinitz Defense Deferred (C75)

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The two leading opening authorities of the day, Steinitz and Tarrasch, sharply disagreed about how to defend the Lopez. “I consider any defense to be bad that blocks Black’s king’s bishop with his d-pawn,” Tarrasch wrote. He dealt a severe blow to 3...d6 at Dresden 1892 when he sprang a new trap. After 3 ...d6 4 d4 \textit{xd7} 5 \textit{c3} \textit{f6} 6 0-0 \textit{e7} 7 \textit{xe1} his opponent, Georg Marco, played the natural 7...0-0? and found he had lost a pawn – 8 \textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} 9 dxe5 dxe5 10 \textit{xd8} \textit{axd8} 11 \textit{xe5}.

This was striking because most opening traps are triggered by greed, not quiet moves, and had been discovered long before tournament chess began. For example, the Queen’s Gambit Declined pitfall of 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 \textit{c3} \textit{f6} 4 \textit{g5} \textit{bd7} 5 cxd5 exd5 6 \textit{xd5} 7 \textit{xd5} had been used by Harrwit in 1847.

3 \ldots a6
4 \textit{a4} d6

The Dresden Trap proved that in the Steinitz Defense Black has to give way in the center (...exd4). But the bedrock of Steinitz’s defensive philosophy was maintaining a pawn on e5. He searched until he found a way (...a6 and ...\textit{ge7}-g6) that allows him to do that.

5 0-0 \textit{e7}

Borislav Ivkov, a former Candidate, fell into virtually the same trap that Marco had – but more than 80 years later. Tal-Ivkov, Belgrade 1974 went 5...\textit{d7} 6 d4 \textit{f6} 7 \textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} 8 \textit{xe1} \textit{xe7} 9 \textit{c3} and now 9...0-0? lost to 10 dxe5 dxe5 11 \textit{xd8} \textit{a8d8} 12 \textit{xe5}. The only difference was the irrelevant ...a6/\textit{a4}.
To reduce pressure on e5 Alexander Alekhine liked to trade knights with 10...\(\text{\texttt{h}4}\), while Tigran Petrosian – of all people – introduced 10...\(\text{\texttt{g}4}\) with the idea of 11 \(\text{\texttt{e}xc6 \text{\texttt{h}4}}\).

10 ... \(\text{\texttt{we}8}\)

This threatens 11...\(\text{\texttt{xd}4}\) 12 \(\text{\texttt{xd}7 \text{\texttt{xf}3+}}\), winning a pawn. But its goal is essentially positional, to prompt a release of center tension (by 11 d5 or 11 dxe5) or a bishop-retreat that removes the danger of \(\text{\texttt{xc}6/dxe5}\).

11 \(\text{\texttt{c}2}\) \(\text{\texttt{h}8}\)

Black can’t afford ...f5 until the center is closed, e.g. 11...f5? 12 exf5 \(\text{\texttt{xf}5}\) 13 \(\text{\texttt{xf}5 \text{\texttt{xf}5}}\) 14 dxe5 and \(\text{\texttt{wb}3+xb7}\). But the immediate 11...\(\text{\texttt{g}4}\) makes sense, since 12 \(\text{\texttt{e}3 \text{\texttt{xf}3}}\) 13 \(\text{\texttt{xf}3 \text{\texttt{xd}4}}\) 14 \(\text{\texttt{xd}5 \text{\texttt{c}8}}\) doesn’t promise White enough compensation.

12 \(\text{\texttt{g}3}\) \(\text{\texttt{g}4}\)

Black threatens 13...\(\text{\texttt{h}4}\) as well as 13...\(\text{\texttt{ex}d}4\) 14 \(\text{\texttt{cx}d}4 \text{\texttt{xf}3}\) (15 \(\text{\texttt{xf}3 \text{\texttt{xd}4}}\))

13 d5

A routine space-gainer – yet Tarrasch regularly denounced it in similar positions. When White has pawns at e4 and d4, “this move is almost always bad if Black as a result obtains the possibility of counterattack with ...f5,” he wrote.

13 ... \(\text{\texttt{b}8}\)

14 h3 \(\text{\texttt{c}8!}\)

Black should preserve his good bishop and this is its best square

15 \(\text{\texttt{f}5!}\) \(\text{\texttt{d}8}\)

Black prepares to oust the knight with ...\(\text{\texttt{e}7}\). He avoids 15...\(\text{\texttt{xf}5}\) 16 exf5 \(\text{\texttt{h}4}\) because of 17 f6!, winning (17...\(\text{\texttt{xf}6}\) 18 \(\text{\texttt{hx}4 \text{\texttt{ax}h}4}\) 19 \(\text{\texttt{wh}5}\) or 17...\(\text{\texttt{xf}3+}\) 18 \(\text{\texttt{xf}3 \text{\texttt{xf}6}}\) 19 \(\text{\texttt{wh}5}\)).

16 g4!?

A modern master would confine his play to one wing at a time, such as with 16 c4 or 16 \(\text{\texttt{c}3}\) in pursuit of c4-c5. But Lasker often followed the two-flank ambitions of Tarrasch, who loved to dominate both wings. Lasker’s game with Fox at Trenton Falls 1906 went 1 e4 c5 2 \(\text{\texttt{f}3 \text{\texttt{c}6}}\) 3 \(\text{\texttt{c}3 \text{\texttt{g}6}}\) 4 d4 cxd4 5 \(\text{\texttt{xd}4 \text{\texttt{g}7}}\) 6 \(\text{\texttt{c}3 \text{\texttt{f}6}}\) 7 \(\text{\texttt{xc}6 \text{\texttt{bxc}6}}\) 8 e5 \(\text{\texttt{g}8}\) 9 f4 \(\text{\texttt{d}6}\) 10 \(\text{\texttt{e}2 \text{\texttt{d}5}}\) 11 0-0 0-0 12 \(\text{\texttt{c}5 \text{\texttt{f}5}}\) 13 \(\text{\texttt{wd}2 \text{\texttt{e}8}}\) 14 \(\text{\texttt{ae}1 \text{\texttt{e}6}}\) and now 15 g4! \(\text{\texttt{e}7}\) 16 \(\text{\texttt{wd}4 \text{\texttt{wc}7}}\) 17 b4! \(\text{\texttt{d}7}\) 18 a4 \(\text{\texttt{c}8}\) 19 a5 \(\text{\texttt{f}6}\) 20 \(\text{\texttt{f}2 \text{\texttt{b}5}}\) 21 \(\text{\texttt{a}4 \text{\texttt{f}6}}\) 22 c4! with a big edge.

16 ... \(\text{\texttt{e}7}\)

17 \(\text{\texttt{g}3}\) \(\text{\texttt{g}8!}\)

Black is preparing to fight back with the thematic ...g6, ...\(\text{\texttt{f}6-g7}\), ...\(\text{\texttt{c}7}\) and ...f5. But why not save a few moves with 17...g6 immediately? The critical question is what happens if White tries to exploit the absence of ...\(\text{\texttt{c}7}\) by means of 18 \(\text{\texttt{h}6 \text{\texttt{g}8}}\) 19 \(\text{\texttt{c}5}\) so that 19...f6 20 \(\text{\texttt{f}3!}\).

After 19...f5 White might have an edge from 20 exf5 gxf5 21 \(\text{\texttt{c}6}\) but the real test of Black’s strategy arises if White closes the kingside via 20 \(\text{\texttt{f}3!}\) f4 21 \(\text{\texttt{c}2}\). Black has gained space but it won’t matter because only the queenside can be opened. Compare this with Benko’s King’s Indian Defense idea – 1 d4 \(\text{\texttt{f}6}\) 2 c4 g6 3 \(\text{\texttt{c}3 \text{\texttt{g}7}}\) 4 e4 d6 5 \(\text{\texttt{f}3 0-0}\) 6 \(\text{\texttt{e}2 c5} 7 0-0 \text{\texttt{c}6}\) 8 d5 \(\text{\texttt{c}7 9 \text{\texttt{e}1 \text{\texttt{d}7}}\) 10 f3 f5 11 g4'}
After 11...f4 White plays 12 h4! and he has the only real targets on the board, on the other wing.

18  \( g2 \)

If 17...\( g8 \) said “I can get away with keeping all my pieces on the first rank,” then this move replies, “I can wait too. What are you going to do while I play c3-c4-c5?”

18  ...  \( d7 \)

Even Steinitz’s defenders were confused by this and his next move but there is a logic to it. Black cannot mechanically stop c3-c4-c5 since ..c5 will allow a favorable dx6. So, he plans another remarkable reorganization (..\( e6/\ldots d7/\ldots e8 \)) to defend d6, b6 and c6.

But what about the earlier plan (18...\( g6 \) 19 \( e3 \) \( f6 \) 20 \( c4 \) \( g7 \) 21 \( c5 \) \( d7 \) 22 \( xdx6 \) \( cxd6 \) ? Its soundness hinges on what happens after 23 \( d2 \) f5?! 24 exf5. That would be too chaotic for a player like Steinitz, e.g. 24...\( gx5 \) (not 24...\( edx5 \) 25 \( dxed4! \)) 25 \( edx4 \) f4.

19  \( e3 \)  \( b6 \)

20  \( b3 \)  \( d7 \)

21  \( e4 \)  \( e8 \)

22  \( d2 \)  \( ce7 \)

This is where Black begins to lose the thread. It was time for 22...\( g6! \).

23  \( c5 \)

White is ready to harvest pawns (\( wb4 \)).

23  ...  \( g6? \)

24  \( w3? \)

Black’s previous move was either an oversight or a bluff because 24 \( cxd6 \) \( cxd6 \) 25 \( wb4 \) wins a pawn. White may have had doubts about that because 25...\( c7 \) 26 \( xb7 \) \( db8 \) would threaten ...\( b5 \) followed by perpetual attack on the queen with ...\( b8-a8 \). However, 27 a4 or 27 \( d3 \) should win.

24  ...  \( f5 \)

25  \( edx5! \)

If you play according to positional formulae, the antidote to ...f5 is g4-g5, which incapacitates Black’s kingside pieces. Here 25 g5 looks impressive because 25...\( f4 \) 26 \( edx5! \) would be crushing. But 25 g5 \( e8 \) is not as promising for White as the game.

25  ...  \( dx5 \)

26  \( wxe5+ \)

And here 26 g5 \( e8 \) 27 \( f4 \) isn’t right (27...\( xg5! \)).

26  ...  \( f6 \)

27  \( d4! \)

Not 27 g5? \( edx5! \) and suddenly Black is alive – 28 \( d4 \) \( b4 \) 29 \( xexe8 \) \( e8 \) 30 \( b1 \) \( c6 \). He even holds the edge after 29 \( gx6? \) \( f7! \), and ...\( exe2 \) or ...\( edx6 \).

27  ...  \( fxg4 \)

28  \( hxg4 \)  \( xg4? \)

The debate over which moves cost Black the game continues to this day but this and the next move are the prime suspects. After 28...\( g8! \) White gets little from 29 g5 \( edx5! \) 30 exd5 \( xexe5 \) 31 \( xexe5 \) \( g4 \) 32 \( e2 \) \( xg5 \).

Better is 31 \( xexe5 \), which some analysts say allows Black to hold after 31...\( edx5 \) 32 \( ad1 \) \( g4 \) 33 \( e4! \) c6 But 34 \( edx5! \) still favors White significantly.
Black should play 32...\textbf{c}e6! instead, with good drawing chances.

29 \textbf{g}5 \textbf{d}7?

Black still had bullets to fire: 29...\textbf{x}xd5! enables him to escape after 30 \textbf{x}g4? \textbf{b}4!.

It seems incredible that Black should survive after the superior 30 exd5! \textbf{d}7 31 \textbf{d}e4. And he wouldn't in lines such as 31...\textbf{f}5 32 \textbf{h}6! \textbf{e}7 33 \textbf{x}f6 \textbf{f}3+ 34 \textbf{g}1 \textbf{x}f6 35 \textbf{e}7.

However, 31...\textbf{g}7! and then 32 \textbf{d}6! leaves the outcome in doubt.

30 \textbf{x}f6+ \textbf{g}8
31 \textbf{d}1 \textbf{h}3+
32 \textbf{g}1 \textbf{xd}5

Black would put up stiffer resistance with 32...\textbf{x}xf6! 33 \textbf{x}xf6 \textbf{xd}5! But the lost Exchange should tell after 34 \textbf{d}d4 \textbf{f}6 35 \textbf{xd}7, e.g. 35...\textbf{xd}7 36 \textbf{c}6! \textbf{bx}c6 37 \textbf{e}5 and \textbf{f}3.

33 \textbf{xd}8! \textbf{f}4
Otherwise 34 \textbf{xd}5+ is resignable.

34 \textbf{f}6 \textbf{d}2

37 \textbf{c}4+! before \textbf{x}g5 and emerges a piece up.

37 \textbf{d}1 \textbf{f}7
38 \textbf{c}4 \textbf{e}6
39 \textbf{e}5!

Fastest because of 40 \textbf{f}5 and a check at \textbf{e}7 or \textbf{h}6.

39 ... \textbf{xc}4
40 \textbf{f}5! \textbf{Resigns}

13

Unlike the world championship match, Lasker played for middlegame knockouts at Hastings. He only traded queens in eight of the 21 rounds. In the 14 games he won, there were \textbf{w}-swaps in only two. Endgame blunders in the late rounds, against Mason and Tarrasch and sloppy play against Bardeleben and Albin, cost him at least two points. The Mason and Tarrasch errors were the worst endgame mistakes he ever made.

\textbf{Tarrasch – Lasker}
Hastings 1895
\textit{Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defense (C67)}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{lll}
1 & \textbf{e}4 & \textbf{e}5 \\
2 & \textbf{f}3 & \textbf{c}6 \\
3 & \textbf{b}5 & \textbf{d}6 \\
4 & 0-0 & \textbf{xe}4 \\
5 & \textbf{d}4 & \textbf{d}6 \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

The Berlin Defense was in one of its bursts of popularity, thanks to its use by Tarrasch, Pillsbury, and even David ("I detest the endgame") Janowsky. At Vienna 1897, 3 \textbf{f}6 was played in 26 of the 73 Lopezes. Of the 18 games that continued 4 0-0, Black played 4...\textbf{xe}4 11 times.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{llll}
6 & \textbf{xe}6 & \textbf{dxc}6 & \\
7 & \textbf{dxe}5 & \textbf{d}f5 & \\
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

46
8  \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{W}}xd8+}  \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{Q}}xd8}

9  \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{Q}}c3}  h6!

This was Black's method in the early days of the Berlin endgame. He stops \textbf{g}5 so that he can move his king to the queenside and develop his bishop on e6 without fear of \textbf{Q}xe6.

Strangely, 9...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{R}}e8} supplant in the 1950s. Theoreticians said Black was only slightly inferior after 9...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{R}}e8} 10 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{Q}}c2} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{a}}e6} 11 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{Q}}f4} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{d}}d5}. They didn't explain why 9...h6 was worse and it took another 40 years before it was revived, spurring the Berlin's comeback to respectability.

10  \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{d}}d2}

White avoids 10 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}f4?}, which gives Black a free tempo after 10...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{e}}6} 11 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{h}}d1+} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{e}}8} 12 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{Q}}e1} g5!, as in one of Lasker's earlier games (13 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}d2} b6 14 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{Q}}d3} c5 with excellent chances).

10... \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{e}}6}

11 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{Q}}e2}

It used to be thought that White's priorities were (a) mobilizing his kingside majority, with h2-h3 followed in some order by g2-g4 and f2-f4, and (b) regaining the "minor exchange." As the experiences of the 1990s showed, (a) is much more dangerous than (b). Black can allow \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}f4xe6}, for example, but not f2-f4-f5.

11... \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{c}}5}

That means Black could delay this move, which keeps knights off d4 and clears a fine square for his king, in favor of ...g5. But 11...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}d5!}, threatening ...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}xf3}, was best. The usual response in similar positions, \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}d2} and c2-c4, is not possible here.

12 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{c}}c3} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}5}

There are no outposts for the e2-knight now. On 13 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{h}}d1+} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{e}}8} Black will eventually continue ...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{b}}b6/...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{b}}7-c6}. He needn't touch his rooks or f8-bishop for some time in the Berlin, development doesn't count!

13 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}d2} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{d}}7!}

This and ...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}6} is a standard idea today and it was introduced in this game.

14 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}4?!}

White would like to play g2-g4 to ensure the f-pawn's advance. But after 14 g4 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{h}}h4} he has to take time out to protect the pawn and following 15 h3 h5 he is weak on the wing in which he is supposed to be strong.

14... \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{c}}6}

The trap runs 14...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e3?} 15 f5 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}xf5} 16 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}xf5}! and wins (16...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{x}}xf5} 17 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}6+} and \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{x}}h8}).

15 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{f}}2}

White still can't push the g-pawn (15...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}e3}) so he prepares.

15... \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}8!}

Black could try to blockade the pawns (15...g4) and then turn to his own majority. But 15...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}8} is a more direct bid for advantage (16 g4? \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}xf4}).

16 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{f}}xg5}

White junks his best positional plan – the kingside advance – in the hope of making the g-pawn a permanent target. It's been suggested that White should settle for equality with 16 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{blue}{g}}3} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{x}}g3} 17 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{h}}xg3}, e.g 17...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}xf4} 18 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{g}}xf4} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{x}}e7} 19 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{e}}4}. But Black's eyes should light
up when he sees 16 Əg3 because of 16... ɇc4!, threatening ɇc5.

He has the advantage after 17 ɇxe4? Əxg3 18 hxg3 ɇd5 and is equal after 17 ɇxf5 ɇxf5 18 ɇd4 ɇd8.

16         \hnxg5
17 ɇe4 ɇd8

Players who are new to the Berlin worry about holes (18 ɇxf6 ɇh8) that don’t matter.

18 ɇ2g3

Lasker’s minimalist approach to the openings held that Black must first equalize before he can play for more. Here he already has equality if he wants it – 18 ɇxg3 19 ɇxg3 g4 (20 ɇe4 ɇh6 or 20 ɇf5 ɇg5 21 ɇaf1 ɇc4).

18         \d4?!

He wants more, e.g. 19 ɇf6 ɇh8 20 ɇge4 g4 and... ɇh6.

Black seems to be in trouble in view of 23 ɇxf6 or 23 b4. But the balance swings back and forth over the next few moves.

22         \g7!
23 ɇxd4?

After 23 b4! White gets the upper hand (23...ɇxe5 24 ɇxc5 ɇb6) whether he continues 25 ɇxe2, 25 ɇxe6 or 25 ɇge4.

23         \xd4
24 ɇxc5+

Black has enough compensation for the pawn now but it was hard to calculate the outcome of 24 ɇxc5 ɇc4! 25 ɇe2! and 25...ɇxe5 26 ɇxc4+ ɇxc4 27 b3 b5

24         \b6
25 ɇc2 ɇd5?!

This is one of several opportunities Black has to cash his two bishops in for something more tangible. For example, on 25...ɇxa2! White’s best is 26 ɇf6 ɇxf6 27 exf6 with a bit the worst of it (27...ɇd1+ 28 ɇf2 ɇb3 29 ɇc2 ɇe6 and 30...ɇxb2).

26 ɇxd5

Black is clearly better after 26 ɇxc7 ɇxe5.

26         \xd5
27 ɇc3 ɇc6
28 ɇf2?

Tarrasch misses his chance to trade. He is at least equal after 28 ɇf5! ɇxe5 29 ɇe7.

28         \xe5
29 ɇxf7 ɇd8!
30 ɇge4 ɇxe4!

This creates a pawn-race in which Black has a head start because his bishop does a better job of stopping pawns than the knight. White would
be doing well otherwise (30...d4 31 e7!).

31 xe4 xb2
32 g4 c5
33 g2 c4
34 f2 d4
35 d2!

37 e2 f6
38 xd8 xd8
39 f3 c3

Black is only complicating his life by going after the a-pawn (39...a3? 40 f4 xa2 41 g5 or 40...f6 41 g5 g7 42 f5 xa2 43 h4).

40 e4 c4

This is a simple trap (35...c3? 36 xc3) but it looks suspicious because White will lose a tempo when ...c3 can be played. His aim is to deter Black from running his king to the kingside (35...c6 36 h4 d5 37 c3+! e5 38 h5 and now 38...b6 39 xd8 xd8 40 f3 a5? 41 e4 c3 42 h6!).

35 ... b5?

Lasker takes a common-sense approach and it’s wrong. Instead of advancing the king immediately he should start pushing pawns – 35...c6 36 h4 b5! 37 h5 b4 38 g5 c3. Since the rooks don’t do a good job of stopping the pawns (39 e2 g8 40 h6) the more active king decides – 40...d5! 41 h7 h8 42 f6+ e4 and wins.

36 c3+?

White would draw after 36 h4!. He may have misjudged what happens when rooks go off, based on the note to his 35th move.

36 ... b4

Both players could sense that the outcome of the game rides on a single tempo. But they each blunder by trying to gain that tempo.

41 f5?

With 41 xc3! White forces a drawable ending (41...xc3 42 f5 b5 43 g5 and Black must give up bishop with 43...xg5 44 xg5 a5 45 h4 b4 etc.).

41 ... d3??

White’s move saved him a tempo compared with 41 xc3. But it allowed Black to use a tempo to get closer to queening with 41...c2!. He would win after 42 g5 if he had calculated 42...xg5 43 xg5 d3 44 c1+ x2 45 b3+ d1 and ...a5-a4.

But there is a simpler win in the surprising maneuver 42...b6! 43 g6 d4, e.g. 44 h4 g7 45 h5 h6! and...

42 xc3! xc3

43 g5 b6
The tempo proves decisive in 43...\textit{f}xg5 44 \textit{xe}g5 b5 45 h4 b4 46 h5. Lasker could have struck his colors here but played out: 44 h4 \textit{d}4 45 h5 b5 46 h6 b4 47 g6 a5 48 g7 a4 49 g8(\textit{W}) Resigns.

\section*{14}

Today we take it for granted when a world champion fails to win first prize in a major tournament. Even when he ties for last place, as Kramnik did at Sofia 2005, it’s not considered shocking. A champion is, after all, a first-among-equals, someone who is expected to have good tournaments and bad ones.

But the attitude was quite different when tournament chess was young. It was assumed then that the best player should regularly prove he was the best player by winning everything he entered. There was a furor when Steinitz, the unofficial champion, failed to win at London 1883. That set off demands that he play a match with Johannes Zukertort, the first-prize winner, to decide who was really No. 1. Three years later they met in a 19th century version of a “unification” match, the first official world championship.

It was that legacy that Lasker tried to defend in the final rounds at Hastings. Going into the last day there was no way for him to emerge clear first. But he still needed a good result to maintain his claim to legitimacy as Steinitz’s heir.

\textbf{Burn – Lasker}

Hastings 1895

\textit{Queen’s Gambit Declined, Semi-Tarrasch Defense (D32)}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
1 & d4 d5 \\
2 & c4 e6 \\
3 & \textit{d}f3 \textit{f}6 \\
4 & \textit{c}3 c5 \\
5 & e3 \textit{c}6 \\
6 & \textit{xd}5 \textit{exd}5 \\
\end{tabular}

The virtues of avoiding an isolated d-pawn with 6...\textit{xd}5 weren’t discovered until the Soviets tried it in the 1930s. In fact, databases show only two 6...\textit{xd}5’s were played before Hastings.

But this is a case when databases can’t be trusted. When Alexander Seliman played 6...\textit{xd}5 at London 1883, his opponent, wrote it had “become the usage of late.”

Many games were simply not recorded before 1900. Blackburne once said only 700 of his 50,000 games had been preserved. The vast majority of those were “casual” and simultaneous games. But even serious games of Lasker’s – including 10 of the 15 at Breslau 1889 and all the games of his 1890 matches with F.J. Lee and Englisch are missing.

7 \textit{d}3

A novelty (in place of 7 \textit{e}2 or 7 \textit{b}5) which invites Black to make the pawn structure symmetrical (7...\textit{xd}4) and drawish.

7 ... a6

8 dxec5 \textit{xc}5

9 0-0 0-0

10 \textit{d}2

A major concern of White is control of d4 to rule out an explosive ...d4. The modern treatment, 10 b3 or 10 a3/11 b4, can be interrupted by 10...d4.

Burn was fond of \textit{d}2 in similar positions, so he could blockade d4, after \textit{c}1 and \textit{e}2/\textit{e}3/\textit{ed}4.

10 ... \textit{e}8

11 \textit{c}1 \textit{a}7

12 \textit{e}2? \textit{g}4!
White should have stopped this with 12 h3, as Pillsbury suggested. Then Black would have the good chances he typically gets in an isolated d-pawn middlegame after 12...\textit{W}d6 or 12...\textit{O}e4.

13 \textit{O}c3

White's fear is realized after 13 \textit{O}g3 d4. Then 14 \textit{O}xa6? allows 14...dxe3! with advantage. Better is 14 e4 \textit{O}e5 15 \textit{O}f4 but he is worse (15...\textit{O}f7 and ...\textit{O}xf3/...\textit{W}f6).

13 ... \textit{O}e4

Black exploits a second defect of 12 \textit{O}e2. On 14 \textit{O}xd4 he can obtain a good game from 14...\textit{O}xc3 15 bxc3 \textit{W}f6 and 15 \textit{O}xc3 \textit{O}xd4. But he can get an edge from 14...\textit{O}xd4! 15 \textit{O}xd4 \textit{O}xd4 16 exd4 \textit{W}b6 17 \textit{O}c2 \textit{O}g5 (18 \textit{O}c2 \textit{O}xe2!).

14 \textit{O}g3

The endgame after 14 \textit{O}xe4 would favor Black. But 15 \textit{O}xe4 is now a threat (15...dxe4 16 \textit{W}xd8 \textit{O}xd8 17 \textit{O}g5 f5? 18 h3).

![Chessboard diagram]

Black would be much better following 14...\textit{O}xc3 15 \textit{O}xc3 d4 and somewhat superior after 15 bxc3! \textit{W}f6 16 \textit{O}c2 \textit{O}ad8.

14 ... \textit{O}xf2!

Each time it's their turn, players are confronted with a choice between (a) moves that they can determine are bad, (b) moves they can determine are good, and (c) all the others. Before Steinitz, the good and bad moves were identified to a large degree by simple tactics – bad moves lost material, for example, and good moves won material. But this left a huge number of choices in category (c).

Steinitz sharply reduced that number by finding new criteria for judging (a) and (b). Bad moves create weaknesses, such as pawn holes, he said. Good moves obtain positional advantages such as the two bishops or a queenside majority.

But that left a substantial number of (c) moves. To evaluate them Lasker employed criteria that weren't found in any book. Here he makes three decisions that turn the game into a crush. The first, 14...\textit{O}xf2, is a calculated risk, the kind he warned other players against.

"To 'take chances' in chess is nearly as difficult as to take chances, say, in geometry," he wrote. "There are, at the utmost, six mathematicians now living who could attempt to guess at a mathematical proposition. All the others have to demonstrate with painful accuracy whatever they may assert."

Between the lines you may hear Lasker saying that top mathematicians – and a world chess champion – can take risks, like guessing that 14...\textit{O}xf2 is better than 14...\textit{O}xc3.

15 \textit{W}xf2

Of course 15 \textit{W}xf2?? is suicidal regardless of how Black takes on e3. White may have discounted 14...\textit{O}xf2 because after 15 \textit{W}xf2 \textit{O}xe3 he would have two pieces in return for Black's \textit{+2}\textit{O}s – and plenty of middlegame left for the pieces to establish their superiority.

15 ... \textit{O}xe3?

Black prepares a strong attack with 16...\textit{O}xf3 17 gxf3 \textit{W}h4 and ...\textit{O}ae8. But this could have lost the game.
His choice was between the text and 15...\texttt{a}xe3, and it wouldn’t take extensive calculation to realize Black has a small edge following 16 \texttt{w}f1 \texttt{a}xf3 17 gxf3 \texttt{a}xc1 18 \texttt{wx}c1 d4 or 16 \texttt{e}e2 d4 17 \texttt{e}e1 \texttt{c}e5. On the other hand it is impossible to calculate all the tree branches of 15...\texttt{a}xe3. His decision was influenced by other factors, and the one that argues loudest for 15...\texttt{a}xe3 is that White has a much tougher decision to make now.

16 \texttt{c}f5??

And he makes a terrible one. With 16 \texttt{c}c2! White seizes the advantage in lines such as 16...\texttt{a}xf3 17 \texttt{a}xf3 \texttt{w}b6 18 \texttt{w}f1 or 17...\texttt{e}e6 18 \texttt{w}xd5!.

Alternatives such as 16...\texttt{w}b6 – which threatens 17...\texttt{a}xc3 and 18...\texttt{w}xf2+ – can be met by the natural blocking defense of 17 \texttt{c}d4. Then 17...\texttt{a}xg3 18 \texttt{a}xg3! or 17...\texttt{a}xe2 18 \texttt{e}xe2 \texttt{a}xe2 19 \texttt{a}xe2 \texttt{a}xd4 20 \texttt{a}xd4 \texttt{a}xd4+ 21 \texttt{a}xd4 \texttt{a}xd4+ 22 \texttt{f}f1.

There is also 16...d4, which works after 17 \texttt{a}xd4 \texttt{f}f6 18 \texttt{a}xd4 \texttt{a}xd4 19 \texttt{a}xg4 \texttt{d}d3. But White again has the advantage if he finds 17 \texttt{a}xd4 \texttt{f}f6 18 \texttt{a}xg4

And there is 16...\texttt{e}c8, since 17 \texttt{d}d4? \texttt{a}xe2! 18 \texttt{a}xe2 \texttt{a}xd4 favors Black. But 17 \texttt{b}b1! leads to positions in which the pieces are better than the rook and pawns.

16 ... \texttt{a}xf3!

This is the third (c) decision. This time Black is comparing the worst-case scenarios of 16...\texttt{a}xf3 and another combination, 16...\texttt{a}xf3 17 gxf3 \texttt{c}d3! 18 \texttt{w}xd3 \texttt{g}5+, which leaves Black two pawns up.

White has a temporary initiative after 19 \texttt{h}h1 \texttt{a}xf2 (19...\texttt{a}xc1+? 20 \texttt{f}f1) 20 \texttt{f}f1 but it ends quickly after 20...\texttt{g}6!, e.g. 21 \texttt{a}xf2 \texttt{a}xf5 22 \texttt{a}xf5 \texttt{g}xf5 23 \texttt{a}g2+ \texttt{f}f8 24 \texttt{f}f6 \texttt{c}e8.

17 \texttt{g}xf3 \texttt{a}xf5

18 \texttt{a}xf5 \texttt{g}5+

This combination uses the same tactical elements as 16...\texttt{a}xf3 – an Exchange attack, a \texttt{w}check on g5 and captures on f3 and f2 – to reach a winning position after 19 \texttt{f}f1 \texttt{a}xf2 20 \texttt{xf}f2 \texttt{a}xf5.

But what about 20 \texttt{a}xa7? \texttt{a}xa7 21 \texttt{xf}f2, when Black only has one extra pawn? He evidently saw 21...d4 and 22 \texttt{d}d3+ \texttt{g}8 23 \texttt{d}d2 \texttt{h}4+ 24 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{e}8 and concluded that position – the best White can obtain after 16...\texttt{a}xf3 – was as good as the endgame reached by best play after 16...\texttt{a}xf3.

In retrospect, his choice of 16...\texttt{a}xf3! was good because it also gave White more chances to go wrong.

19 \texttt{g}4 \texttt{h}5

Black wins back a full rook because of pins (20 \texttt{e}c2 \texttt{h}xg4 21 \texttt{x}g4 \texttt{a}xf2+ 22 \texttt{xf}f2) and still has the attack (22...d4! 23 \texttt{xd}4? \texttt{h}8 24 \texttt{d}d2 \texttt{xd}4 25 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{e}c3+ wins).

20 \texttt{w}d2?

This shortens matters considerably but 20 \texttt{d}d2 \texttt{a}xf2+ 21 \texttt{xf}f2 \texttt{h}4+ 22 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{h}xg4 23 \texttt{x}g4 \texttt{e}c5 24 \texttt{d}d2 \texttt{d}d3 or 24 \texttt{g}5 \texttt{e}4+ is also lost.

20 ... \texttt{a}e3!

Resigns
Tarrasch, who finished a point and a half behind the new world champion, greeted his Hastings result with sarcasm “Third-prize winner Lasker,” he wrote, “showed for the first time that he is a strong player.” But Lasker got an immediate opportunity to redeem himself when Tchigorin announced at the final banquet that the top finishers of Hastings had been invited to his capital for a match-tournament at the end of 1895. This was extraordinarily good fortune for Lasker. Great tournaments were usually separated by a year or two, not just four months, and Lasker’s legitimacy might have remained in doubt for some time.

Tchigorin – Lasker
St. Petersburg 1895–6
Evans Gambit (C52)

1  e4  e5
2  ∆f3  ∆c6
3  ∆c4  ∆c5
4  b4  ∆xb4
5  c3  ∆c5

More accurate is 5...∆a5 because the text can be answered by 6 d4, leading to a position (6...exd4 7 0–0) that was considered quite good for White and had been analyzed well past move 16.

6  0–0  d6
7  d4

Now 7...exd4 8 exd4 ∆b6 creates what was known as the “normal position” of the Evans – or more properly the tabiya or starting position of thousands of games played from that point on.

7  ...  ∆b6!

This move dates back to a McDonnell-LaBourdonnais game in which Black tried to steal the initiative (8 dxe5 ∆g4?!). Lasker’s thinking was quite different:

Like LaBourdonnais, he wanted to stop 8 ∆b3?, by means of 8...∆a5 9 ∆xf7+? ∆xf7 10 ∆d5 ∆f6 and wins. But on 8 dxe5 he intended 8...dxe5! so that 9 ∆xd8+ ∆xd8 10 ∆xe5 ∆e6 reaches a favorable endgame. (Tchigorin didn’t believe it was favorable and lost the ending to Pillsbury at London 1899 – a loss that was regarded as the death blow to the Evans until 9 ∆b3! was found.)

Today the Lasker Variation usually is reached by 5...∆a5 6 d4 d6, and, if White continues 7 0–0, then 7...∆b6!. Why didn’t anyone think of it in the years when the Evans was the world’s most heavily analyzed opening? Probably because of the strange chivalry of the time, when gentlemen accepted the gambits of other gentlemen.

For Lasker, the opening was a matter of pragmatism, not chivalry: Once again he dodged his opponent’s favorite opening and sought a different edge, the superior pawn structure of the 8 dxe5 dxe5 9 ∆xd8+ endgame.

8  a4

Now that ∆b3/∆xf7+ is thwarted, the most vulnerable target is the bishop on b6.

8  ...  ∆f6

Black avoids the adventures of 8...∆g4 9 ∆b5 and 8...exd4 9 exd4 ∆g4 and prepares to castle kingside.
That may not sound like a threat but it must have seemed like one to Tchigorin. He had scored some 25 previous victories with the Evans that have been preserved. In 14 of them, Black never got a chance to play $0-0$. Four of the victories occurred in world championship games with Steinitz.

9 $\text{\textbullet}\text{b}5 \quad \text{a}6$

Black is forced in view of the $\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}6/\text{a}4$ threat.

10 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}6+ \quad \text{bxc}6$

11 a5 $\text{\textbullet}a7$

12 dxe5

White should not allow Black to castle and keep his pawn (12 $\text{\textbullet}d\text{d}2$ exd4 13 cxd4 $0-0$). But 12 $\text{\textbullet}a4$ exd4 13 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}6+$ $\text{\textbullet}d7$ 14 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{a}6!$ was more promising and may equalize.

12 ... $\text{\textbullet}x\text{e}4$

The endgame (12...dxe5 13 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}8+$ $\text{\textbullet}x\text{e}5$) favors White.

13 $\text{\textbullet}e2$

White comes to the logical conclusion that his e-pawn is more useful than Black’s c7-pawn and therefore avoids 13 exd6 exd6. Zak said White has drawing chances after 14 $\text{\textbullet}e2$ d5 15 $\text{\textbullet}d4$ $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}4$ 16 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}4$ 0-0 17 $\text{\textbullet}d2$ but Kasparov felt 17...$\text{\textbullet}d6$ plainly favors Black.

Zak was more successful in showing that 13 $\text{\textbullet}a4$ offers White good drawing chances after 13...$\text{\textbullet}c5$ 14 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}6+$ $\text{\textbullet}d7$ 15 $\text{\textbullet}w\text{d}5$ 0-0 16 exd6 $\text{\textbullet}b5$ 17 $\text{\textbullet}d1$ $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}6$ 18 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}6$ exd6 and now not 19 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}6?$ $\text{\textbullet}e4$ but 19 $\text{\textbullet}e3$.

There’s been little mention of the mixture of the two ideas, 13 exd6 exd6 14 $\text{\textbullet}a4$. But that, too, disappoints after 14 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}2$ 15 $\text{\textbullet}d4$ $\text{\textbullet}d3$ (16 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}6+$ $\text{\textbullet}d7$ 17 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}6$ $\text{\textbullet}b5$).

13 ... d5

White’s compensation is slim after 14 $\text{\textbullet}e3$ $\text{\textbullet}g4$.

14 $\text{\textbullet}d4$

Tchigorin raises the ante. Because he didn’t exchange pawns at move 13, 14...$\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}4?$ 15 exd4 and $\text{\textbullet}a3$ would be excellent for him.

14 ... $\text{\textbullet}x\text{e}3!$

However this capture, not possible in the 13 exd6 line, turns a favorable position into a winning one.

15 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}3 \quad \text{\textbullet}x\text{d}4$

16 $\text{\textbullet}d3 \quad \text{c}5$

Later, in Game 25, Lasker demonstrated brilliance in a “bishops-of-ops” middlegame with an extra pawn. But transition to that kind of middlegame here (16...$\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}3?$ 17 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}3$ $\text{\textbullet}d7$ 18 $\text{\textbullet}c6$ or 18 $\text{\textbullet}a3$ and 17...0-0 18 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}6$) is quite wrong.

17 $\text{\textbullet}g3 \quad \text{\textbullet}e6!$

Black’s center pawns and two bishops serve as both a means of attack and defense. (Not 17...g6 18 $\text{\textbullet}g5$ or 17...0-0 18 $\text{\textbullet}h6$ $\text{\textbullet}x\text{e}5$ 19 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{e}5$ gxh6 20 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}5$.)

18 $\text{\textbullet}g5$

Zak thought 18 $\text{\textbullet}xg7$ could be met by 18...$\text{\textbullet}x\text{c}3$ 19 $\text{\textbullet}xh8+$ $\text{\textbullet}d7$ 20 $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}8+$ $\text{\textbullet}x\text{d}8$ since 21 $\text{\textbullet}b1$ $\text{\textbullet}x\text{e}5$ leaves Black with a material edge, three pawns for the Exchange. However, 19 $\text{\textbullet}g5$ refutes that.
The right way to handle 18 \( \text{W}xg7 \) is 18...\( \text{Q}d7 \)! and 19...\( \text{Q}g8 \), e.g. 19...\( \text{Q}a3 \) 20 \( \text{W}xh7 \) \( \text{Q}xe5 \) 21 \( \text{Q}d1 \) c6 with a big edge (...\( \text{Q}h8 \)).

18 ... \( \text{W}d7 \)
19 \( \text{Q}a3 \)

Black is not out of the woods. On 19...\( \text{Q}b8 \), intending ...\( \text{Q}b3 \), White renews the \( \text{W}xg7 \) idea with 20 \( \text{Q}h4 \)!, e.g. 20...0-0?? 21 \( \text{Q}f6 \) g6 22 \( \text{W}f4 \).

19 ... \( \text{Q}f6 \)!
20 \( \text{Q}x f6 \) \( \text{g}x f6 \)

Lasker’s motto might have been “Find the targets.” Despite his many weaknesses, the most vulnerable target on the board is \( g2 \) and that is what decides the outcome. Black can start the attack on it with ...\( \text{Q}g8 \)/...\( \text{Q}h3 \).

21 \( \text{Q}f4 \)

Not 21 \( \text{Q}e3? \) \( \text{Q}xe3 \) 22 \( \text{Q}xc3 \) d4.

21 ... \( \text{Q}g8 \)
22 \( \text{Q}f3 \)

White can defend \( g2 \) with \( \text{Q}g3 \), and might welcome 22...\( \text{Q}g3 \) 23 \( \text{Q}f1+ \) \( \text{Q}d8 \) 24 \( \text{W}x d5 \).

25 \( \text{W}x d4 \) \( \text{Q}x e2 \) 26 \( \text{Q}f1 \) \( \text{Q}x g2+! \)
27 \( \text{Q}x g2 \) \( \text{W}g4 \) + and mates.

23 \( \text{Q}f1 \) c4!
24 \( \text{W}e2 \) \( \text{Q}f5 \)

White could try 25 \( \text{W}d1 \) \( \text{Q}d3 \) 26 \( \text{Q}g3 \) and dream – more like fantasize – that \( \text{Q}a4-b6+?! \) will work.

25 \( \text{Q}a2? \)

The greatest tacticians have committed some of the worst blunders. Three years earlier Tchigorin spent 20 minutes on his final move in a championship match with Steinitz. Instead of finding the routine win – which would have tied the score – he allowed mate in two. Here he permits a somewhat obvious combination.

25 ... \( \text{Q}x g2+! \)

Now 26 \( \text{Q}x g2 \) \( \text{Q}h3+ \) and 27...\( \text{W}g4(+) \) wins.

26 \( \text{Q}h1 \) \( \text{Q}x f2 \)

Resigns

16

At St. Petersburg Lasker crushed Tchigorin with four wins and two draws and did almost as well against Steinitz. But he lost his mini-match with Pillsbury, and in retrospect it was their meeting in the tenth round that decided first prize. Following this game Pillsbury went into a tailspin, lost five of his remaining eight games, and barely avoided last place.

**Pillsbury – Lasker**

St. Petersburg 1895-6

*Queen’s Gambit Declined (D50)*

| 1 | d4 | d5 |
| 2 | c4 | e6 |
| 3 | \( \text{Q}c3 \) | \( \text{Q}f6 \) |
| 4 | \( \text{Q}f3 \) | c5 |
| 5 | \( \text{Q}g5 \) | |

55
This had only been played once before in a master event and that was a crushing victory for White (Blackburne-Showalter, New York 1889).

5 ... cxd4
6 wxd4

The Reinfeld/Fine book of Lasker’s games came out in 1935 and recommended 6...e5 7 db5. A year later, Fine tried that over the board and got the advantage after 7...d4 8 cd5 exd5 9 xdx8 xb4+ 10 wb2.

However, when he tried it again a year after that he was stunned by 7...a6! and lost (8 xdx5 axb5! 9 xf6+ xfx6! 10 xfx6 b4+) 6...c6
7 wb4

This is natural, although 6...e7 should be equal after 7 xdx5 exd5 8 e3.

7...e7

Marco, who was emerging as the world’s preeminent annotator, helped spread the myth that Pillsbury discovered 7 xf6! after this game and had to wait eight years before exacting revenge against Lasker. Hannak added the detail that Pillsbury discovered it the night that he lost this game and passed up the opportunity “a few months later” to try 7 xf6! “against some minor opponent.”

The story is marred by the fact that Pillsbury had the White pieces twice against Lasker in the three years following St. Petersburg but evaded the issue by playing 1 e4 each time.

7...e7

Showalter played 7..d4 and was surprised by 8 0-0-0 in the 1889 game White won soon after 8...e5 9 ec5 10 xdx4 exd4 11 cd5. Steinitz suggested 7...dxc4 8 xdx1 ad7 equalizes but there’s no evidence that his idea has been tested.

8 0-0-0

Virtually every annotator claims 8 e3 is inferior because of 8...wb6. But the only difference between the position after 9 0-0-0 and that of the game is Black’s queen is on b6, rather than a5, and it’s hardly evident why that should improve his lot

8...wa5

Now White’s king position becomes an issue after, say, 9 xdx5 cd5 10 cd5 wb5 and ...xf5/...e8. What is rarely mentioned is that Lasker found himself playing this line as White in a blindfold simul in 1900 and drew (9...xd5 10 e3 xe6 11 xdx5 wb5 and 12 b1 b6 13 xd6 e5 14 wb5! xe5 15 fe e5?) after he missed a neat combination (16 g3? rather than 16 xdx5! xf4 17 c4 xe5 18 wb6+ wb5+ and mates).

9 e3 xd7

A tempting alternative is 9...e4 and then 10 xdx4 dxe4 11 xe7 xdx7 because ..xa2 is threatened. However Schlechter won a game with 12 xdx4! ag6 (12...xa2 13 xb5) 13 b3!

10 wb1

This threatens nothing (11...hxg5?? 12 wb8+) and begs the question why Blacks didn’t do something more constructive, such as 10...0-0 or 10...e8.
The short answer is that on 10...0-0 White could force matters with 11 cxd5 exd5 12 d3. To meet the mating threat (xf6) Black would have to allow 12...h6 13 xh6! with a likely perpetual check coming up.

Better is 10. c8 but again White has a forcing line, 11 cxd5 exd5 12 b5 followed by a4, seeking an ending that favors him because of the isolani.

Lasker always seemed to learn more from his past games than his opponents did and in their previous games with Pillsbury he managed to do well when the American’s king was a factor. The best way of making that happen was 10 h6

11 cxd5

White’s king goes on the endangered list after 11 d3 b4 12 cxd5 fx5! or 11...0-0 12 xf6 d5 and x3.

11 ... exd5
12 d4

One of the purposes of this move is to block the f6-c3 diagonal so that xf6 can be played. Again 12 d3 is a problem after 12...0-0! 13 xf6 xf6.

12 ... 0-0!
13 xf6

Everyone has their own explanation of why 13 xh6 gxh6 14 xh6 fails. This includes 14...e4, 14...e4 and 14...e5. But the simple 13...e4! wins (14 e6? e3+ 15 b3 b6!).

13 ... xf6
14 h5 d4
15 edx4 e6

The only other defense of the d-pawn, 15 c6, would block the c-file and allow White a nice maneuver, 16 c4! d8 17 d3, without the danger of x3 that he faces in the game. White also seems to be out of danger after 16...g6 17 f3 xd4 18 xd5!.

16 f4

Tartakower said 16 e4 e7 was fine for Black, overlooking the stronger 16...xd4! 17 xd4 e1+.

16 ... ac8

Hindsight says 17 f3 was needed to discourage x3 and prepare 17 f5. Then 17...xd8 18 f5 d7 would transpose into the next note (19 xd5 xf5+ or 19 d3 a4).

17 f5

This is a fork in the road: Black doesn’t have to calculate far ahead to realize he would stand perfectly well after 17 d7 18 f3 xd8 and e8.

But Lasker had passed the point when he knew Black was equal. Once you start looking for an advantage you may reject 17 d7 because White can force a bishops-of-opps ending with 19 xd5 xf5+ 20 xf5 xd5 21 xd5 xd5 22 e2 and 23 f3 in which Black’s extra pawn may mean little.

17 ... x3!!

Now 18 bxc3 xc3 would threaten b4+ as well as xd4. A bit of rapid eyewall movement reveals variations so unfavorable that White’s best might be a dubious Exchange-up ending (19 f3 xf3 20 xf3 xf5+)
– and Black might consider alternatives such as 18...\texttt{xc8} or 18...\texttt{d7/19...xc8}.

\textbf{18 \textit{fxe6}}

This phase of the game is usually portrayed as one long, forcing sequence that Black intended since 16...\texttt{ac8}. But what is striking is how un-Lasker-like it is. If Black asks what the most vulnerable target his, he would say b2, not a2. And that would lead him to the super-safe 18...\texttt{c6} and ...\texttt{b6}, which seems to win without any risk. For example, 19 \texttt{exf7+ xf7} 20 \texttt{d3 b6} 21 \texttt{h7+ xh7!} 22 \texttt{xf7 c3} 23 b3 \texttt{xd4}.

\textbf{18 \ldots \texttt{xa3}!!}

Amos Burn called this "the finest combination ever played on a chessboard" and it is this move that makes it seem so.

\textbf{19 \textit{exf7+}}

This pawn performs an important service in blocking the e-file and White therefore should keep it on the board. If you look at 19 bxa3 \texttt{b6}+ 20 \texttt{c2 c8}+ 21 \texttt{d2 xd4}+ 22 \texttt{e1}

But \textit{My Great Predecessors} helped launch a remarkable series of post-mortems of classic games. One of the unlikely stars of this hyper-analysis is Sergey Sorokhtin, a St. Petersburg amateur who listed his profession as carpenter and his hobbies as chess, photos and beer.

Sorokhtin challenged the \textit{Predecessors} analysis, and Kasparov acknowledged that he was right in finding a win for Black in 22...\texttt{e3}+! 23 \texttt{e2} \texttt{fxe6}, with its threat of 24...\texttt{b8} and 25...\texttt{c3}+.

The key variation runs 24 \texttt{h3 c3}+ 25 \texttt{f1 f8}+ 26 \texttt{f3} and now the quiet 26...\texttt{a5}!! with its threats of ...\texttt{b6} and the advance of the e-pawn, e.g.

\texttt{27 g3 b6} 28 h4 e5 29 \texttt{xd5 e4} 30 \texttt{d7 c3} etc

Nevertheless, 19 bxa3 is the best try. Among the reasons is 19...\texttt{b6}+20 \texttt{a1}. Then the absence of \texttt{exf7+/...xf7} means that after 20...\texttt{xd4}+ 21 \texttt{xd4 xd4}+ 22 \texttt{b1} Black cannot play ...\texttt{f2} as in the game and must spend a tempo on 22...\texttt{xe6}.

But this time the difference is minor since Black's win, 23 \texttt{c2 c4}+ 24 \texttt{a1 c2} 25 \texttt{e1 xd4}+ and 26...\texttt{d2}, is only a bit more difficult to find than what might have happened in the game.

\textbf{19 \ldots \texttt{xf7}}

\textbf{20 bxa3 \texttt{b6}+}

\textbf{21 \texttt{b5}!}

This should not have prolonged matters but it forces Black to come up with a different winning idea (compared with 21 \texttt{a1} \texttt{xd4}+ or 21 \texttt{c2 c7}+ 22 \texttt{d2 xd4}+ 23 \texttt{e1 c3}+ 24 \texttt{d2 c7}+ 25 \texttt{e2 g5}).

Here is where Sorokhtin made his greatest discovery: If White had omitted \texttt{exf7+/...xf7} he could draw with 19 bxa3 \texttt{b6}+ 20 \texttt{b5}! \texttt{xb5}+ 21 \texttt{a1} and 21...\texttt{c8} 22 \texttt{exf7+ f8} 23 \texttt{h3} and \texttt{b3}, or 21...\texttt{fxe6} 22 \texttt{g4}
(22...d8 23 h5f).

21 ... \textsf{wxb5}+

22 \textsf{a1}

Even at the rate of 15 moves an hour, Lasker had only a few minutes left to reach the next control at move 30. This is why masters later denounced the acceleration of time limits in the 1920s to the outrageous 16 moves an hour. After all, how can the human mind find good moves at such a speed?

22 ... \textsf{c7}?

This throws away the win. After 22...\textsf{c4} 23 \textsf{g4} \textsf{e7} (or Arpad Foldeak’s 23...\textsf{e5}!, threatening \textsf{f2} and \textsf{f4}) White’s doom is inevitable.

23 \textsf{d2} \textsf{e4}

24 \textsf{hd1}?

A counter-blunder. Kasparov found a defense in 24 \textsf{e1}! \textsf{xg4}? 25 \textsf{e8}+ \textsf{h7} 26 \textsf{f5}+ \textsf{g6} 27 \textsf{xf6} and wins – or 24...\textsf{a5}! 25 \textsf{e8}+ \textsf{h7} 26 \textsf{f5}+ \textsf{g6} 27 \textsf{e7}+! since 27...\textsf{xe7} 28 \textsf{f7}+ is a perpetual check.

24 ... \textsf{e3}?

Black misses a second cold win, 24...\textsf{c6} and ...\textsf{e1}+ (25 \textsf{b1} \textsf{g5} 26 \textsf{e2} \textsf{xg2} 27 \textsf{xd}2 \textsf{d6}).

25 \textsf{f5}

There’s a pretty loss in 25 \textsf{e2} \textsf{xc4}+ 26 \textsf{xg1} \textsf{xd4}+ as well as a consensus that 25 \textsf{e1} offers good defensive chances. But after the text White should not lose.

25 ... \textsf{c4}

26 \textsf{b2}?

One more mistake. The king looks safer here than on b1 until you see Black’s reply. Lasker thought 26 \textsf{b1}! \textsf{xa3} 27 \textsf{c2} \textsf{c3} favored Black but White seizes the initiative with 27 \textsf{c1}!, with good chances.

26 ... \textsf{xa3}!!

27 \textsf{e6+}

27 ... \textsf{h7}?!  

Kasparov considered this and White’s next move to be a final pair of blunders. The reason is that 28 \textsf{f5}+ \textsf{h8} 29 \textsf{b1}! would leave Black with nothing better than perpetual check (29...\textsf{xa2}! 30 \textsf{xa2} \textsf{b3}+ 31 \textsf{c1} \textsf{g5}+ 32 \textsf{ad2} \textsf{c3}+ 33 \textsf{c2} \textsf{a1}+).

All true – but as Sorokhtin pointed out 28...\textsf{h8}? is the real blunder. Black would win with 28...\textsf{g8}! 29 \textsf{e6}+ \textsf{h8}, reaching the position Black could have gotten in the game with 27...\textsf{h8}.

The king-triangulation means that White’s only check is 30 \textsf{e8}+ and he is lost after 30...\textsf{h7} 31 \textsf{b1} \textsf{xd4}. Similarly, 29 \textsf{b1} \textsf{xd4} 30 \textsf{e1} \textsf{b4}+ 31 \textsf{c1} \textsf{xc3}+ 32 \textsf{c2} \textsf{a1}+ 33 \textsf{b1} \textsf{c3}+ 34 \textsf{c2} \textsf{e3}+!

28 \textsf{xa3} \textsf{c3}+

29 \textsf{a4} \textsf{b5}+!

30 \textsf{xb5} \textsf{c4}+

31 \textsf{a5} \textsf{d8}+

Resigns

There was no brilliancy prize awarded at St Petersburg 1895-96 so this game received no official recognition.
The St. Petersburg tournament was intended by its organizers as a launching pad for Tchigorin’s final bid for the world championship. Instead, his last-place finish ended his title aspirations. Tchigorin’s rivals had figured out his vulnerabilities. “He didn’t have the slightest notion of evaluation of the position,” Tarrasch wrote. “He couldn’t think chessically and this weakness was his greatest strength. It gave him self-assuredness...a constant certainty that he stood better and should win.” His optimism proved fatal in this game.

**Lasker – Tchigorin**  
St. Petersburg 1895-6  
*Queen’s Pawn Game (D02)*

1. d4 d5  
2. ♘f3 ♘f6  
3. ♘f4

Another clue to how much early chess has been lost: This is an obvious move and must have been played hundreds of times previously. Yet there are only a few surviving examples of it before this game.

3. ... ♘bd7

As Black, Lasker also tried this move with the idea of obtaining the two bishops after 4 e3 ♘h5.

4. ♘c3!??

Tarrasch regarded the blocking of the c-pawn as heresy in a 1 d4 opening. But Lasker is looking for a simpler setup that is more aggressive than ♘bd2. He discourages ...c5 in many positions because of ♘b5.

Nearly 30 years later he tried a related idea in a consultation game that began 1 d4 ♘f6 2 ♘f3 g6 3 ♘c3. After 3...d5 he played 4 ♘f4 – another obvious move, yet a novelty according to databases.

4. ... e6  
5. e3 e6  
6. ♘d3 ♘b4

Tchigorin broke with 1 d4 orthodoxy in many ways: He often blocked his c-pawn (1 d4 d5 2 c4 ♘c6). He liked to develop his queen’s bishop early (1 d4 d5 2 ♘f3 ♘g4). Or he developed it last, as in this game and 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 c6 4 ♗f3 ♘d7 5 e4 dxe4 6 dx e4 ♘f6 7 ♘d3 ♘xe4 8 ♘xe4 ♘b4+ 9 ♘d2 ♘xd2+ 10 ♘xd2 0-0.

He could have gotten a cramped but reasonable game with 6...♘c7 7 0-0 0-0 8 e4 dxe4 9 dxe4 ♘xe4 10 ♘xe4 ♘f6 11 ♘d3 b6. Instead he creates the option of minor-piece imbalances such as ...♘c3 and ...♗h5xf4.

7. 0-0 h6  
8. ♘e2

White can avoid ...♘c3 with 8 ♘e2. But where is the knight going? On ♘g3 it invites ...g5!?.

9. ... 0-0

One of the greatest differences in opening theory between Lasker’s day and today is that it was once common to exchange two or more pairs of minor pieces early on. This resulted in simplified middlegames after say, ♗e4 or ...dxe4/. ♘d5 in the QGD. Today there are still such lines (1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 ♘c3 ♘f6 4 ♘c3 c5 5 cxd5 ♘xd5 6 e4 ♘xc3 7 bxc3 ♘xd4 8 cxd4 ♘b4+) but they’re infrequently seen. White’s offer to swap two pairs of pieces here is based on a general sense that his surviving bishop will be better than Black’s.

9. ... ♘xc3  
10. bxc3 dxe4  
11. ♘xe4 ♘xe4  
12. ♘xe4 ♘f6  
13. ♘d3
A reasonable solution to Black’s queen’s bishop problem is 13...b6 and 14...\textit{d}7 (or 14 c4 \textit{a}6) with a slight inferiority. Black has a different priority.

13 ... \textit{d}5
14 \textit{d}2 \textit{e}7

And here 14...\textit{d}7 and 15...c5 makes sense. Tchigorin’s knight heads to g6 so he can eliminate a White knight if it lands on e5.

15 \textit{f}e1 \textit{g}6

16 \textit{e}5!

It’s hard to imagine a strong modern GM playing this, rather than 16 \textit{f}ab1, 16 a4 or 16 c4. Trading knights greatly increases the chances of a drawish ending.

The logic of 16 \textit{e}5 runs this way: Black’s knight is his best piece and it covers up White’s best target, \textit{g}7. Driving the knight off g6, with \textit{e}4 and h2-h4-h5, would be foiled by a well-timed ...f5. White could try, instead, to get his knight to d6 but supporting it there with the c-pawn or bishop seems doubtful. Therefore, White seeks a one-piece middlegame in which Black’s bishop plays no defensive role.

And there’s another factor, the human one. After a trade of knights, Black’s best policy is passive defense...

16 ... \textit{xe}5

17 \textit{xe}5 \textit{f}6

... and Tchigorin was not a passive defender, who would play 17...b6, 18...\textit{b}7, 19...\textit{c}7, 20...\textit{ad}8 and ...\textit{d}5.

18 \textit{e}3 \textit{f}5?

This weakening of the dark squares looks dreadful. But this is what Tarrasch meant about Tchigorin’s optimism. After all, didn’t he beat Pillsbury twelve rounds before this, with a similarly bizarre light-square strategy – 1 d4 d5 2 c4 \textit{c}6 3 \textit{f}3 \textit{g}4 4 cxd5 \textit{x}d5 5 exd5 \textit{xc}6 6 \textit{e}3 \textit{e}6 7 \textit{f}3 \textit{b}6 8 e4 and then 8...f5 9 e5 \textit{e}7 10 a3 \textit{a}5 10 \textit{c}4 \textit{d}5 11 \textit{a}4+ c6 12 \textit{d}3 \textit{b}6 ?

19 \textit{g}3

Now White gets his bishop to e5. Black may have been hoping to stop him with ...f4/...\textit{f}6 and ...\textit{a}7-e7-g6 But 19. f4 20 \textit{f}3 \textit{g}5 costs a pawn (21 \textit{e}4).

19 ... \textit{h}4
20 \textit{h}3 \textit{e}7
21 \textit{e}1 \textit{f}6

This is a second fork in the road. Black’s foresees a situation in which this rook is needed to defend e6 (21...b6 22 \textit{f}4 \textit{b}7 23 \textit{c}4 \textit{c}8 24 \textit{h}3 \textit{f}6). And he can see that the rook would be passively stuck on f7 if White gets to play \textit{f}4-e5. Why not keep the rook active (...\textit{g}6) and anticipate an attack on g7 (\textit{e}5/\textit{g}3)?

The answer, as we’ll see, is that ...\textit{g}6 is a positional blunder.

22 \textit{f}4 \textit{d}7
23 \textit{g}3 \textit{e}8
24 c4

White isn’t committed to attacking g7. He can also assault e6 via 25 \textit{g}e3 and 26 d5.

24 ... \textit{d}7

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Why Lasker Matters

25  
26  

27  

White can launch an attack directed at a7, a6 and b6 with, in effect, an extra rook.

27 ...

White is working with ideas that include b1, c4-c5 and a6-a3.

28...

The c-pawn advance works after, say, 28...e8 29 c5! bxc5 30 xc5, which leaves Black's a-pawn helpless in view of a3. Or 29...b5 30 a6 and 31 c4.

29 cxb5!

Black's queenside pawns are safer if both can advance (29 c5 a5!).

29 ...

30 e3 e8?

This has the effect of exchanging Black's good rook for the one at e1, and that's fatal because the g6-rook is nearly useless.

Black had to continue 30 ..a5, which incidentally would have been even better at move 28. White can penetrate at c7 but Black has serious counterplay after 31 c7 d8 32 c5 g5 and some survival chances in endgames such as 32 c3 g5 33 e2 e8 34 e7 xe7.

If, instead, White goes after the b-pawn (31 e5) Black defends with ..e8. White would have to prepare another plan such as c2-c4/c1.

31 e3!

White should win at least a pawn now.

31 ...

Worse is 31...xc3 32 xc3 d8 33 xa7 since there is little kingside play after 33...g5 34 a8+ and 35 f4 and no hope in the endgame after 33...e8 34 b8!.

32 xc4 bxc4

33 b4

White will win the pawn with c3 but must secure his weaknesses on both wings before trying to push the c-pawn.

33 ...

34 xc4 a5

35 e3 h7

36 h3 e8

37 a3 b5

38 b4 a6!

With queens on the board, the presence of bishops-of-opsps means that whoever has a target has a tactical opportunity. Here that would be perpetual check - or even mate - after ..f1 or ...xg2+...f1+..e2.

39 e7!

To play this White had to see that 39...f1 could be met with a more threatening move, 40 f8! and then 40...xg2+ 41 h1.

But he also had to spot 41...h2+!? - because it would win after 42 xh2?? e2+ 43 g3 g2+.

The checks end, however, after 42 xh2! g2+ 43 xg2 e2+ because the king walks away on dark squares (44 g3 e1+ 45 f4 d2+ 46 e5).

62
Black threatens an immediate draw (40...\textit{Ex}g2+! 41 \textit{Ex}g2 \textit{Ex}e2+ 43 \textit{g}1 \textit{Ex}e3+ 44 \textit{f}1 \textit{Ex}f3+ 45 \textit{e}1 \textit{Ex}e3+ 46 \textit{d}1?? \textit{f}3 mate) as well as 40...\textit{xf}3.

40 \textit{c}4! \textit{xf}3

41 \textit{g}3!

"Lasker does not fall into the trap," wrote Reinfeld/Fine, about 41 \textit{Wf}8 \textit{Ex}g2+ 42 \textit{Wf}1 \textit{Wg}6 with apparent drawing chances. They were unaware that Schiffer had refuted that by analyzing 43 \textit{Ex}g7+ \textit{Wh}7 44 \textit{Ex}g2 \textit{Wxc}4+ 45 \textit{g}1 \textit{Ex}g2 and finding that 46 \textit{Wf}7+ \textit{Wh}4 47 \textit{f}6+ allows White to pick off the bishop safely.

The text, which threatens 42 \textit{Wf}8!, wins without risk of a calculating error.

41 ... \textit{Wb}6

42 \textit{Wf}2 \textit{Ec}4

43 \textit{Wxb}6 \textit{axb}6

44 \textit{a}4

Passed pawns must be created, e.g. 44 \textit{Ec}2 45 d5 (45.. \textit{Ex}d5 46 \textit{Ex}d5 \textit{Ex}d4 47 \textit{d}6 or 45.. \textit{f}4 46 d6! \textit{fxg}3+ 47 \textit{Ex}g3 \textit{f}6+ 48 \textit{e}3).

44 ... \textit{h}5

Now 45 c5 \textit{bxc}5 46 \textit{bxc}5 \textit{h}4! 47 c6 \textit{hxg}3+ 48 \textit{Ex}g3 \textit{e}5! and Black is alive

45 \textit{h}4!

This seals the kingside and provides White a variety of winning ideas, including a king-march to b4. The game ended with 45...\textit{Ex}g4 46 \textit{Wf}3 \textit{g}2 47 \textit{d}3 \textit{g}8 48 \textit{Ec}3 \textit{f}8 49 \textit{f}4 \textit{e}8 50 \textit{a}7! \textit{g}5! 51 \textit{Ex}g5 \textit{Ex}g3+ 52 \textit{b}4 \textit{Ex}g5 53 \textit{hxg}5 \textit{h}4 54 \textit{h}7 h3 55 g6 Resigns.

18

Lasker’s next chess came at Nuremberg 1896, a tournament that’s never gotten the attention it deserves. It was a virtual repeat of Hastings 1895. Only three of the top 14 finishers at Hastings failed to play at Nuremberg and one of them, Amos Burn, was replaced by the talented Rudolf Charousek. There were fewer gift-points at the Bavarian tournament. The also-rans at Nuremberg – Richard Teichmann, Showalter, Emil Schallopp and Moritz Porges – were a cut above the tailenders at Hastings. Porges, for example, was among the world’s top 20 players during this era according to retroactive ratings. This game illustrates how Lasker managed to fatten up his scores by massacring the lesser masters as Black.

\textbf{Porges – Lasker}

\textbf{Nuremberg 1896}

\textbf{Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defense (C67)}

1 e4 e5

2 \textit{Qf}3 \textit{Qc}6

3 \textit{Qb}5 \textit{Qf}6

4 0-0 \textit{Qxe}4

5 d4 \textit{Qe}7

Anyone leafing through a paperback edition of \textit{Common Sense in Chess} might be puzzled by the first pages of opening analysis: Lasker said 5...\textit{Qd}6 leads to an equal position. Yet he eventually concluded that 3..\textit{Qf}6 "is unsatisfactory for Black."
The explanation is that the version of *Common Sense* that most English-language players have seen is the edition Reinfeld revised in 1945. He claimed he managed to maintain “the spirit in which it was written.” But that meant distorting Lasker’s views on the Berlin.

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
6 & \text{We}2 \\
7 & \text{dxc}6 \\
8 & \text{dx}e5 \\
\end{array}
\]

Now 8...\text{Of}5 9 \text{We}4 and Black has to defend the knight with the ugly 9...\text{g}6.

8...

\text{Ob}7

Tarrasch considered it “utterly ludicrous” that Black had spent half of his eight moves to get his knight to b7. But this position, which has been analyzed since Anderssen used it in the 1860s, is quite solid.

\[
9 & \text{b}3
\]

The oldest surviving example of this move was a Lasker simul game from 1891. He enjoyed an edge after 9...0-0 10 \text{Ob}2 \text{d}5 11 \text{Ob}d2 but all that was remembered about 9 b3 is that it must be bad because of what happened to Porges. (It was eventually revived by Yefim Geller and Lev Psakhis.)

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
9 & \ldots \\
10 & \text{Ob}2 \\
11 & \text{ex}d6
\end{array}
\]

In another of Lasker’s games at Nuremberg, Teichmann tried 11 \text{Oxd}4 with ideas such as 11...\text{Ad}7? 12 \text{e}6. But after 11...\text{Wd}7 12 \text{Oxd}2 \text{c5f} 13 \text{Oxf}3 \text{Wf}5 14 \text{Aac}1 \text{c}6 and 15...\text{Ad}8-e6, Black had at least equalized. He won when White panicked with an unsound piece sacrifice.

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
11 & \ldots \\
12 & \text{Ob}d2 \\
\end{array}
\]

This was his improvement over 13...\text{A}6, which Lasker played against Pillsbury at St. Petersburg. Although that move equalized (14 \text{Axf}6 \text{Wxf}6 15 \text{Axe}1 \text{C}e5) he wasn’t playing for equality against *Meister* Porges. Black has chances for an edge from ...\text{d}5 and ...

\[
13 & \text{Axe}1 \\
14 & \text{Ad}7
\]

Tarrasch, in the tournament book, described 14 \text{Wf}1 as necessary. But can White’s position be so bad that he needs such an artificial move?

It’s true that Black has the more comfortable position after 14 \text{Ad}1 \text{Ae}5 or 14 \text{c}4 \text{We}7. But 14 \text{Ad}4 keeps the balance (14...\text{d}5 15 \text{Ae}5 \text{Ad}6 16 \text{Wd}2).

14...\text{Ob}4?

An instinctive move with a huge tactical hole in it.

14...

\text{d}5!

When the knight retreats White will have to scramble to avoid losing material (15...\text{A}3! or 15...\text{Ab}4) Porges finds the only way to keep the game going.

\[
\begin{array}{ll}
15 & \text{Aed}2 \\
16 & \text{Ae}5
\end{array}
\]

This game is often treated as a one-sided crush in which Black’s choices from here on were obvious. “As soon as the opportunity offers, he institutes a vigorous counterattack, gives his opponent no breathing space and
concludes with an artistic mating combination,” wrote Chernev and Reinfield in *Chess Strategy and Tactics*.

In reality, Black faces major technical choices. For example, he can force matters with 16...b6 and avoid the double attack (a6) that occurs in the game.

But after 17 ab1 xe5 18 cxe5 Black doesn’t have more than a slight edge (18...f6 19 af6). For example, 19 cxd6 20 axa3 or 19...fxe5 20 xb7 af5 21 wb4! and wc3

16 ... f6!

Black correctly decides to keep pieces on the board.

17 a6 fxe5

This game should be compared to Game 19. Both were victories against second-tier masters in the same opening variation and Black emerged with a significant edge by move 20. But in this case Black cannot rely on a simple pawn-pushing plan like the one that succeeded against Szymon Winawer. Instead he uses tactics (18 xb7? e4 19 b4 ab2) and makes difficult choices (at moves 22, 25 and 29).

18 axa3 e4

19 b4 w6

His advantage is magnified by White’s temporary problems on dark squares. The immediate targets are the d4-knight and f-pawn.

20 e3?

The unlikely 20 b4!, which seems to walk into ...c5, is best because White’s queen gets back into play (20...ab8 21 wc3 c5 22 b4). Khalifman/Soloviov gives 20... f8 21 f3 with some chances for survival after 21...c5 22 xb7 xd4+ 23 h1 xd2 24 ad1

20 ... f8

This induces a new weakness because the natural 21 fl allows 21...wg5!, with threats of 22.. xd2 and 22..h3.

21 f3

The knight needs the option of e2 as well as c2, and so 21 e2 would lose to 21...c5 (22 bxc2 xc2).

21 ... wg5

Now 22 e2 loses to 22...c5 23 bxc2 exf3.

22 c1

Black faces another technical decision, between two attractive and forcing alternatives and a third move which is just a good maneuver.

One is 22...h3 23 e2 c3 with the intent of blasting away at the kingside following 24 c5 and ...xf3. But after 24 b1 e5 25 d2 xf3 26 dxe3 Black’s edge has vaporized.

A similar idea is, 22...c5. But after 23 d2! neither 23...exf3 24 dxf3 nor 23...h3 24 e2 seem to offer anything.

22 ... c5!

23 b1 g6

The hard part of choosing 22...c5 is realizing that the b5 threat is strong enough to permit this retreat. In contrast, the 23...xc1 24 dxc1 d3 25 a1 d4 26 g3 endgame isn’t much
Why Lasker Matters

24...\textit{c}3

The rook looks clumsy but White needs something to protect \textit{f}3, since 24 \textit{we}3? \textit{d}3 25 \textit{e}2 \textit{c}5 and a capture on \textit{f}3 will win for Black.

24...\textit{d}3

25 \textit{wd}1

The queen must also watch \textit{f}3 (25 \textit{wd}2 \textit{c}5 26 \textit{c}2 \textit{xf}3 or 26 fxe4 \textit{f}2).

25...\textit{f}4

Mate or the queen (26...\textit{h}3+ and 27...\textit{f}2+) are threatened. Note that Black could throw in in...\textit{c}5 in a lot of these positions. But there is nothing clear after, say, 25...\textit{c}5 26 \textit{c}2 \textit{f}4 27 \textit{wd}2.

26 \textit{g}3 \textit{h}5!

Black makes progress with a series of two-move threats. On 27 \textit{wd}1 his queen goes back to g5 with a winning threat...\textit{h}3+. For example, 27...\textit{eg}5 28 \textit{ee}1 \textit{h}4 and then 29 \textit{h}1? \textit{h}3 mate! or 29 \textit{ge}2 \textit{c}5 30 \textit{c}2 \textit{d}3.

27 \textit{de}2

Hoping for something like 27...\textit{xf}3 28 \textit{xf}4 when Black’s edge is disappearing (28...\textit{xf}4 29 \textit{xf}3 \textit{g}4 30 \textit{d}3 or 28...\textit{f}2+ 29 \textit{xf}2 \textit{xf}4+ 30 \textit{g}1).

27...\textit{xf}3

28 \textit{g}2 \textit{exf}3+

Black must have calculated 29...\textit{xf}3 30 \textit{xf}3 \textit{h}4 and seen that he is close to a win after 31 \textit{g}2 \textit{hxg}3 32 \textit{xf}3. But it’s not absolutely certain.

29...\textit{h}3+!

This wins, in view of 30 \textit{f}2 \textit{xf}3+ 31 \textit{xf}3 \textit{h}4 or 30...\textit{g}4 31 \textit{xf}8+ 32 \textit{f}2 \textit{xf}6+ 33 \textit{g}1 \textit{xf}8 34 \textit{e}1 \textit{f}3 or 32...\textit{e}3 \textit{hxg}3 33 \textit{xf}3 \textit{xf}8.

30 \textit{xf}3 \textit{g}4+

31 \textit{g}2 \textit{xf}3+

32 \textit{g}1

Or 32...\textit{h}3 \textit{g}4+ and 33...\textit{h}4.

32...\textit{h}4

It’s over after 33 \textit{f}1 \textit{h}3! or 33...\textit{d}4 \textit{f}2+ 34 \textit{h}1 \textit{hxg}3 or:

33 \textit{h}1 \textit{ce}3+

Resigns

19

One of Lasker’s strengths that was obvious to all was defense. He explained in \textit{Common Sense in Chess} that there were two quite different types of defense: in good positions and bad ones. “When your position is not inferior to that of your opponent, and he nevertheless makes preparations to attack you, disregard them altogether,” he wrote. Lasker urged developing “reserve forces, avoid his attack by the slightest defensive movement possible (like a first-rate boxer, who in the nick of time and with an almost imperceptible movement evades the blow) and institute a quick counteraction.”

Later, in his \textit{Manual of Chess}, Lasker said defense should be based on Steinitz’s “principle of economy.” The defender should make the slightest concession that is warranted. At Nuremberg he defended good and bad positions and the best example of the Steinitz policy is this game.
Why Lasker Matters

Winawer – Lasker
Nuremberg 1896
Ray Lopez, Berlin Defense (C67)

1  e4       e5
2  ∆f3     ∆c6
3  ∆b5     ∆f6
4  0-0     ∆xe4
5  d4       ∆e7
6  w e2     ∆d6
7  ∆xc6    bxc6

An advantage of 6 w e2 over 6 w e1 is that 7...dxe6 8 dxe5 ∆f5 invites a strong 9 w d1.

8  dxe5     ∆b7
9  ∆d4      0-0
10 ∆e3

10... ∆c5!

Black kept e5 free for this bishop even though the Knight seemed to have a claim on it. A year later at the Berlin international, Janowsky played 9 ∆c3 against Winawer, who got a bad game after 9...∆c5? 10 w d1 w a6 11 w e3 w e6 12 w d4 ∆c5 13 w xe6!.

11 ∆f5?

Reinfeld’s revised Common Sense in Chess also threw out Lasker’s analysis of 5...∆e7 and cited 11 w d1 w x d4 12 w x d4 as guaranteeing White a superior game. This was based on a 1914 Schlechter-Reti game that remained the last word on the 5. ∆e7

Berlin for decades. However, 11...∆e8 helped the variation make a comeback.

11... d5!
12 w g4       w x f 5
13 w x f 5     w e 8

Later annotators treated the ∆d4-f5 maneuver as just plain bad. However, Lasker’s contemporaries disagreed. Pillsbury used it, a move earlier (10 ∆f5), in 1897. What gets Black the advantage here is the way he ties White to the defense of his e-pawn.

14 ∆f4       ∆d4!

If White appreciated how bad his position will soon be he would meet the threat (15...g6) by trading the e-pawn off with 15 w d3! and then 15...∆xe5 16 w xe5 w xe5 17 w a6.

15 w f 1 e 1?  w e 5

Black doesn’t hurry ...∆xc3 because it would allow a quicker w e 3.

16 w d 1

It seems odd that Winawer – the Winawer of the 3...b4! French Defense – doesn’t fear ...∆xc3. But he was an attacking player who would be acknowledging, with 16 w d2 w d 7?, that his play so far had been a flop (17 w h 5 w ab 8 or 17 w f 4 w e 4! 18 w e 4 w x e 5).

16... w c 3
17 b x c 3 w c 8!

The endgame looks so bad (18 w x c 8 w x c 8) that White probably paid no attention to 19 c 4!, with the idea of regaining the pawn after ...w x c 4/∆d 4.

Black does better with 19...∆e 6 20 ∆e 3 w e 8!, preparing ...d 4. Then the main question is whether White can hold positions such as 21 e 3 w x c 4 22 f 4!? w d 3 23 f 5 w f 8 24 ∆d 4 w b 8. He gets the kind of piece activity that he never gets in the ensuing middlegame.

18 w h 5
Lasker knew White would refuse the \( \text{\texttt{W}} \)-trade “since he was thinking only of attack,” wrote Vainshtein. This is the kind of mind-reading that annotators indulge in.

18 \[ \text{...} \quad \text{\texttt{W}}a6! \]

Black can see \( \text{\texttt{H}}e3-h3 \) coming. He can also visualize assaulting \( g7 \), with \( \text{\texttt{H}}h6 \) or \( \text{\texttt{H}}g5-f6 \) But based on Steinitz’s law of attack it shouldn’t succeed. White has no advantage and there is no weakness in Black’s kingside. Therefore Black can look, instead, for his own target and the leading candidates lie at \( a2 \), \( c3 \) and \( c2 \).

19 \[ \text{\texttt{H}}e3 \]

White can’t hold onto all of his weaklings forever (19 \( \text{\texttt{H}}a1 \text{\texttt{W}}a4 20 \text{\texttt{W}}f5 \text{\texttt{H}}e6 21 \text{\texttt{H}}e3 \text{\texttt{Q}}e4 \)).

19 \[ \text{...} \quad \text{\texttt{W}}xa2 \]

20 \[ \text{\texttt{H}}e1 \]

But he should stop \( \text{\texttt{W}}xc2 \) because the queen defends \( h7 \) from there. White’s attack is based on assigning one piece, the rook, to defending \( c2 \) and preventing the Black a-pawn from queening. The rest of his army can either be thrown at \( g7 \) or \( h7 \) or serve the dual roles of attack and defense of the \( c3 \)- and \( e-pawns \).

20 \[ \text{...} \quad \text{\texttt{W}}e4 \]

21 \[ \text{\texttt{H}}f3 \]

This looks like a loss of time but 21 \( \text{\texttt{H}}g5 \text{\texttt{Q}}e4 22 \text{\texttt{W}}g4 \text{\texttt{H}}e6 \), for example, allows Black an easier defense.

21 \[ \text{...} \quad \text{\texttt{Q}}e6 \]

22 \[ \text{\texttt{H}}d2 \text{\texttt{H}}e7 \]

Three moves ago it looked like a mismatch of White’s queen, bishop and king’s rook against a lone king. Now Black seems safe, and White needs the help of his pawns.

23 \[ \text{\texttt{H}}h3 \quad \text{\texttt{W}}e4!? \]

“You can’t be mated with a knight on \( f8 \)!” Bent Larsen once said, and here 23...\( \text{\texttt{Q}}f8 \) would allow Black a free hand to start pushing the a-pawn. White has no forcing manner of continuing the attack (24 \( \text{\texttt{H}}e1 \text{\texttt{a}5} 25 \text{\texttt{H}}g5 \text{\texttt{H}}e6 26 \text{\texttt{H}}d2 \text{\texttt{H}}ae8 \)).

24 \[ \text{\texttt{F}}3 \]

The immediate 24 \( \text{\texttt{F}}4 \text{\texttt{W}}g6 25 \text{\texttt{Wh}}4 \) gains a tempo on the game. But whenever White plays his pawn to \( f4 \) he is blocking his bishop, and this means 24...\( \text{\texttt{H}}h6 \) is critical (since \( \text{\texttt{H}}xh6 \) is not possible). Continuing the attack with 25 \( \text{\texttt{W}}g4 \) is halted by 25...\( \text{\texttt{Q}}f8 \), as is 25 \( \text{\texttt{F}}5 \) by 25...\( \text{\texttt{Q}}f4 \).

This and the next move were the last chances for White to abandon the attack in favor of a bad (24 \( \text{\texttt{H}}h4 \text{\texttt{W}}g6 25 \text{\texttt{W}}xg6 \)) ending.

24 \[ \text{...} \quad \text{\texttt{W}}g6 \]

25 \[ \text{\texttt{W}}h4 \text{\texttt{H}}d7 \]

26 \[ \text{\texttt{F}}4 \]
Now 26...a5 allows White to carry out his idea – 27 g4 threatens f4-f5 and forces 27...\( \mathcal{W} \!=\! e4 \) 28 f5 \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! f8 \), which is much more dangerous than Black’s position deserves.

26 ... \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! e4! \)

Black is only a few precautions away from being able to push the a-pawn. Tarrasch’s suggestion of 27 \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! d3 \) a5 28 \( \mathcal{E} \!=\! e1 \) goes nowhere following 28...\( \mathcal{W} \!=\! a4 \) 29 \( \mathcal{E} \!=\! c1 \) \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! c4 \)

27 g4 \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! f8 \)

Of course, not 27...\( \mathcal{D} \!=\! x4 ??? \) 28 \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! x4 \) \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! x4 \) 29 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! xh7+ \). After 27...\( \mathcal{D} \!=\! f8 \) White cannot make further progress without sacrificing a pawn (28 f5 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! xe5 \)).

28 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! f2 \) a5!

29 \( \mathcal{E} \!=\! e3 \) \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! c4 \)

30 f5!

Best. After 30...\( \mathcal{W} \!=\! xg4+ ? \) 31 \( \mathcal{H} \!=\! g3 \) White has real chances, e.g. 31...\( \mathcal{W} \!=\! e4 \) 32 \( \mathcal{H} \!=\! h6 \) g6 33 \( \mathcal{F} \!=\! x6 \) \( \mathcal{F} \!=\! x6 \) 34 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! f1 \) \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! e6 \) 35 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! f6 \) or 33 \( \mathcal{H} \!=\! xg6 \) 34 \( \mathcal{E} \!=\! e1 \) \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! c4 \) 35 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! f6 \) \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! e6 \) 36 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! xg6+ \).

30 ... a4

31 \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! f1 \)

Not 31 e6 \( \mathcal{F} \!=\! x6 \) 32 \( \mathcal{F} \!=\! x6 \) \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! xe6 \) 33 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! xe6 \) \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! xg4+ \). Even if prepared, with 31 h3, Black can safely disregard the advance (31...a3 32 e6 \( \mathcal{F} \!=\! x6 \) 33 \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! e7 \))

The rest of the game is essentially a matter of Black taking elementary tactical care, pushing the a-pawn as far as it will go, and looking for a breakdown of White’s stretched defenses

31 ... a3

32 \( \mathcal{A} \!=\! e1 \) a2

33 h3 c5

34 \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! h2 \) d4

35 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! f3 \) c6!

Based on 36 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! c6 \) dxc3 37 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! a8 \) cxd3 and wins. Also 36 f6 g6 37 \( \mathcal{A} \!=\! a1 \) dxc3 37 \( \mathcal{H} \!=\! h6 \) \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! d5 \) wins.

36 e6 fxe6

37 fxe6

37 ... \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! xe6 \)

38 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! xe6 \) \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! a7 \)

Taking on e6 will allow Black to queen.

39 \( \mathcal{A} \!=\! a1 \) \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! f8! \)

The counterattack on the f-file proved decisive: 40 \( \mathcal{F} \!=\! e1 \) \( \mathcal{D} \!=\! d8 \) 41 \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! b6 \) \( \mathcal{F} \!=\! a7! \) 42 \( \mathcal{G} \!=\! g5 \) \( \mathcal{F} \!=\! f2+ \) 43 \( \mathcal{G} \!=\! g3 \) \( \mathcal{W} \!=\! x3+ \) White resigns.

20

Tarrasch, who helped organize Nuremberg 1896, finished in a disappointing tie for third place, a point and a half behind Lasker. He got his revenge in the tournament book where he created a “luck scoretable” to show how many extra half points and points Lasker had benefited from. Tarrasch was pained to see that in five lost positions, Lasker had scored five points.

This was a remarkable example of sour grapes, something that wouldn’t happen today. As much as Kasparov hated Karpov, it’s hard to imagine him

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drawing up a scoretable for Linares 1994 to show how many allegedly undeserved half points Karpo
amassed that enabled him to finish 2½ points ahead of him.

Of course, Lasker was lucky. But being lucky is a skill that you can learn. You learn, for example, how to exploit
an opponent who has forgotten about his own weaknesses and is thinking only about winning.

One of Lasker’s early lessons in this was an exhibition game he played against Theodor von Scheve (Black) in
1891 which began: 1 e4 e5 2 d3 c6 3 b5 b5 4 0-0 dxe4 5 d4 c7 6 xe2 d5 7 xe6+ bxc6 8 xe5 d7
9 e1 e8 10 c3 c3 11 bxc3 c4 12 a6 c8 13 a5 d6 14 a3 f6
15 f3 g6 16 e3 xxf3 17 cxd3 a7 18 e1 d7 19 c6 c6 20 c4 dxc4 21 d5 e5 22 dxce4 xxe8!!
23 xa3?! xe3 24 xe3 g6 25 wc1 b8 26 h3 f5 27 e1 g5.

Black has battled back from a miserable position and could have honorably offered a draw after playing
27...xe8. His last move indicates he’s playing for more. Lasker accommodated him with 28 d1!!.

Again 28...xe8 was best and drawish. But Black’s rising expectations lured him into 28.. b2?.

Why would White allow his opponent to make such an aggressive move? Because Black’s rook gives up
its flexibility for defense. After 29 h5+ g6 30 g4 c2 31 f3! White took the initiative. (31...xf2? allows 32 h5+ and mates). The game ended with 31...g6 32 e7 h6 33 h5 34 e6 gxf4 35 g8+ f5
36 e7 37 f5 38 xh5 Resigns. Black lost because he had forgotten about the possibility of losing.

A more elaborate – and perhaps luckier – version of this occurred in the eighth round at Nuremberg. Once again
Lasker obtained a terrific opening but botched it with a series of second-best moves:

**Lasker – Tchigorin**

Nuremberg 1896

**Queen’s Gambit Accepted (D26)**

1 d4 d5 2 c4 xxc4 3 f3 e6 4 e3 f6
5 xe4 xe4 6 c3 0-0 7 0-0 dbd7
8 we2 c6 9 c1 wc7 10 e4 e8
11 g5 c8 12 e5! c7 13 xe7
xe7 14 eac1 h6 15 de4 h7
16 a6 eax8 17 d2 g6 18 g3 xax6
19 wxa6 wd7 20 g2 xe7 21 b4 d5
22 a3?! e7 23 edx2 e7 24 wd3 h6
25 e3? xe8 26 e4? f4! 27 a4
28 d8 29 ed5 cxd5
30 ecx7 ecx7 31 ecx7 dc7

Thanks to Black’s well-timed liquidation, he must win at least one of the queenside pawns. White has no
apparent way of creating chances against the king or of blocking Black’s inevitable passed pawn.
But Lasker believed that unless there was a forced loss, a position could be defended. Perhaps it couldn't be defended indefinitely but it could be defended with resources that even the defender didn't suspect existed — until he looked for them. That was a key point. The defender had to be optimistic, not pessimistic as defenders usually are.

32 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{xa4} \)
33 \( \text{e7!} \)

There is nothing to be gained from 33 \( \text{d8+ c8} \).

33 ... \( \text{c2} \)

Tarrasch claimed a more convincing win in 33 \( \text{c6} \) 34 \( \text{h4 b5} \) followed by \( \text{c8} \) and, if necessary, \( \text{xf8} \). In fact, there is no forced win. White can answer 33...\( \text{c6} \) with 34 \( \text{d6!} \). Following a move of Black's queen, say to \( e2 \) or \( c4 \), he can obtain drawing chances from 35 \( \text{d8+} \) and 36 \( \text{d7} \).

34 \( \text{h4} \)

White is a tempo behind the last note if he continues 35 \( \text{d8+} \) \( \text{h7} \) 36 \( \text{d7} \) and Black would sacrifice a pawn with 36...\( \text{a5} \) 37 \( \text{bxa5 bxa5} \) 38 \( \text{xh7} \) \( \text{a4} \). After the game, annotators thought Black was winning once he got to push his a-pawn without fear of perpetual check. But White has more resources than they thought.

34 ... \( \text{a5} \)
35 \( \text{bxa5 bxa5} \)
36 \( \text{h5!} \)

At first it seems that 36 \( \text{d8+} \) \( \text{h7} \) 37 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{a4} \) 38 \( \text{c7} \) allows a strong 38...\( \text{c1} \) 39 \( \text{xh7} \) \( a3 \) (Khalifman/ Soloviov). However, White has a drawing counter in 40 \( \text{g4 a2} \) 41 \( \text{g5!} \).

Why did White pass this up? Because his queen is well placed at \( c7 \) — and because he is playing for more than a draw.

36 ... \( \text{a4} \)

37 \( \text{g4} \)

This is what Tchigorin underestimated. White doesn't need a perpetual check when there is a mate from 38 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{hxg5} \) 39 \( \text{d8+} \) \( \text{h7} \) 40 \( \text{d5+} \).

37 ... \( \text{c1} \)

With a winning threat of 38...\( \text{f4} \). For example, 38 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{f4!} \) 39 \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{gxg4+} \) 40 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{xf3} \). The queen ending is lost after 41 \( \text{c8+} \) \( \text{h7} \) 42 \( \text{c2+} \) \( \text{c4} \) 43 \( \text{xa4} \) \( \text{h1+} \).

38 \( \text{g3!} \)

Black cannot win after this. His best is 38...\( \text{a3} \) 39 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{hxg5} \) — otherwise 40 \( \text{g6} \) wins — 40 \( \text{d5+} \) \( \text{g1+} \) with a perpetual check.

38 ... \( \text{g5?} \)

Black seems desperate to avoid perpetual check — of his own king or White's. But this loses.

39 \( \text{hxg6} \) \( \text{fxc6} \)
40 \( \text{d8+} \)

Some spectators probably believed Tchigorin rejected 40...\( \text{h7} \) because of perpetual check. But 41 \( \text{g5!} \) would have won.

Black gets mated after 41...\( \text{hxg5} \) 42 \( \text{d5+} \) \( \text{g7} \) 43 \( \text{f6+} \). He loses his knight after 41...\( \text{a3} \) 42 \( \text{e7+} \) \( \text{g8} \) 43 \( \text{hxh6} \). And White's g-pawn turns out to be the faster passer after 41...\( \text{h5} \) 42 \( \text{f8+} \).

40 ... \( \text{f7} \)

Now on 41 \( \text{f6+} \) \( \text{e8} \) 42 \( \text{d5+} \) \( \text{h7} \) Black's king escapes.

41 \( \text{g5!} \)

The threat is simply 42 \( \text{g6} \) \( \text{h6} \) Black transposes into the mating line after 41...\( \text{hxg5} \) 42 \( \text{d5+} \).

41 ... \( \text{h5} \)
42 \( \text{d7+?} \)

It was White's turn to blunder. He should pick up the kingside pawns.

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(42 \(\text{Wf6+!}\) not the a-pawn. The game was marred further: 42...\(\text{xf8}\) 43 \(\text{Wxa4}\) \(\text{b4}\)?? 44 \(\text{g4!}\) \(\text{Wb1}\) 45 \(\text{Wd7}\) \(\text{Wg2+}\) 46 \(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{xe8}\) 47 \(\text{Wxe6}\) \(\text{xf2}\) 48 \(\text{Wg6}\) \(\text{g3+}\) 49 \(\text{xe3}\) \(\text{Wg4}\) 50 \(\text{e6}\) \(\text{d6}\) 51 \(\text{Wf6+}\) \(\text{e8}\) 52 \(\text{Wh8+}\) \(\text{e7}\) 53 \(\text{Wg7+}\) Resigns

But the lesson here is that Black made himself unlucky by forgetting that he could lose.

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What happened in Lasker’s game at Nuremberg against Tchigorin’s countryman was more complex. After a mistake-riddled opening and middle-game, Schillers traded queens and reached the ending with a 2\(\text{e}5\)-edge. But for most of the next 30 moves he appeared torn. Did he have to look for the one, correct move that might win? Or would the position win itself, with routine moves? Or should he be content with a draw? And if content, should he allow Lasker to force a draw or do the forcing himself? Eventually he became confused about what kind of move he wanted, and paid the price.

6 \(\text{Wb3}\) with 6...\(\text{Wb6}\). A 1987 Kasparov-Short game continued 6 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{e6}\) 7 \(\text{g3}\) \(\text{b4}\) with a slight White pull.

6 \(\text{Wb3!}\) \(\text{b6}\)?

Since Schillers liked Tchigorin-like defenses, it’s hard to explain why he avoided 6...\(\text{c6}\)! The point is that 7 \(\text{Wxb7?}\) \(\text{cxb4}\) gives him at least a draw by repetition (8 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{b8}\) 9 \(\text{Wxa7}\) \(\text{xa8}\) 10 \(\text{Wb7}\) \(\text{b8}\)) and perhaps more (10. \(\text{xa3}\)). Without the extra ...\(\text{f6}\) move, Tarrasch-Fritz, Breslau 1889 ended in an eight-move draw that way.

7 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{c6}\)

8 \(\text{a4}\)

Development is good but without something to hit at (9 \(\text{a5}\)) Black could escape to a merely inferior middlegame.

8 ... \(\text{a6}\)?

This leaves the knight unprotected and begs for refutation.

9 \(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{exd5}\)

It was too early to become desperate (9...\(\text{b4}\)).

\[
\text{Lasker – Schillers} \\
\text{Nuremberg 1896} \\
\text{Queen’s Pawn Game (D02)}
\]

1 \(\text{d4}\) \(\text{d5}\)

2 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{c5}\)

3 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{f6}\)

4 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{f3}\)

If we subtract \(\ldots\f6\) this is a book position (1 \(\text{d4}\) \(\text{d5}\) 2 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{c5}\) 3 \(\text{c4}\)) considered a shade better for White. The extra tempo is more weakening than constructive.

5 \(\ldots\) \(\text{e6}\)

As in so many QGD positions, Black should play \(\ldots\text{c6}\) first so he can meet 10 \(\text{e4!}\)

This threatens two pieces (11 \(\text{xa6}\), 11 \(\text{exf5}\)) and should win quickly.

10 \(\ldots\) \(\text{dxe4}\)

Black can avoid immediate disaster after 11 \(\text{e4}\) \(\text{a8!}\). Tarrasch took that further and said 12 \(\text{xa6}\) \(\text{xa6}\)
Why Lasker Matters

13 \( \text{We6} + \) \( \text{Ec7}! \) 14 \( \text{Wxe6} + \) \( \text{F7} \)
15 \( \text{Wxe4} \) provides “a pawn more and good play for White.” But White
deserves more

11 \( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{exf3} \)
12 0-0!

Lasker could play in true gambit style when the position called for it.
White prepares 12 \( \text{b7} \) (compared
with 11 \( \text{b7} \) \( \text{We7}^+ \)) and 12 \( \text{e1} + \), not
to mention 12 \( \text{d5} \).

12 ... \( \text{d6} \)
Or 12 \( \text{c7} \) \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{d7} \) 14 \( \text{d5}! \) with a lethal attack.

13 \( \text{b7} \)?

The adage says mistakes come in threes. This is No.1: With 13 \( \text{e1} + \) \( \text{c7} \) 14 \( \text{e4}! \) White’s initiative keeps
growing (14...\( \text{c7} \) 15 \( \text{b7}! \) since
15...\( \text{xb2} + ? \) 16 \( \text{xh2} \) \( \text{e7} + \) 17 \( \text{g3} \)
\( \text{xb7} ?? \) 18 \( \text{d6} + \).)

13 ... \( \text{xb2} + ! \)
14 \( \text{xh2} \)

After 14 \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{fxg2} + \) 15 \( \text{xg2} \) \( \text{d6}! \)
16 \( \text{xc6} + \) \( \text{f8} \) both sides have
chances.

14 ... \( \text{c7} + \)
15 \( \text{g3} \)?

White still has chances for advantage
after 15 \( \text{c4}! \) \( \text{xf4} + \) 16 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g4} \)
17 \( \text{gl} \) or 15...\( \text{xb7} \) 16 \( \text{e1} + \) \( \text{f8} \)
(not 16...\( \text{e7} ?? \) 17 \( \text{d6} ! \) 17 \( \text{d5} \).)

15 ... \( \text{xb7} \)
16 \( \text{e1} + \) \( \text{e7} \)
17 \( \text{f4} \) 0-0-0?

Black returns the favor and allows
18 \( \text{b5}! \) (18...\( \text{xb5} \) 19 \( \text{a1} + \)).

18 \( \text{a5} ? \) \( \text{g6} ! \)

Now 19 \( \text{c3} \) h5! leaves Black with
the attack and extra material, e.g.
19 \( \text{axb6} \) \( \text{xb6} \) 20 \( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{axb6} \) 21 \( \text{d5} \)
h4!.

19 \( \text{axb6} \) \( \text{xb6} ! \)

Black appears safe enough after
19...\( \text{axb6} \) 20 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 21 \( \text{gxf4} \) \( \text{xd4} \)
22 \( \text{xb6} + \) \( \text{c7} \). But then White has
23 \( \text{a4} ! \) with the idea of 23...\( \text{xa4} \)
24 \( \text{e7} + \).

He is also in business following
23...\( \text{d7} \) 24 \( \text{e1} \) or 23...\( \text{b8} \)
24 \( \text{e7} + \) \( \text{d4} \) 25 \( \text{xd4} \) 26 \( \text{b4} ! .

20 \( \text{xb6} \) \( \text{axb6} \)
21 \( \text{a7} \) \( \text{d7} ! \)

Avoiding 21...\( \text{xf4} ?? \) 22 \( \text{e7} ! .

22 \( \text{a1} ! \)

The threat of mate in two is
impressive but it wouldn’t have made
up for both lost pawns after 22...\( \text{d8} ! .

22 ... \( \text{xa7} \)
23 \( \text{xa7} \) \( \text{e8} \)

From move 6 to 22 each side made
enough errors to lose three games. It’s
hard to imagine what follows is one of
the most remarkable endgames of all
time.

White is two pawns down and faced
with losing his only positional assets,
the fine bishop \( \ldots \) \( \text{xf4} \) and
the seventh rank \( \ldots \) \( \text{e7} ! \). He can get back
one of the pawns with 24 \( \text{exe7} \), but
after 24...\( \text{xf4} \) 25 \( \text{gxf4} \) \( \text{d8} \) he is
losing.

Among the factors is that his rook
can’t leave the g-file \( 26 \) \( \text{e7} \) \( \text{g8} ! \)
27 \( \text{e6} \) \( \text{g2} + \) 28 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{d3} ! \) and the
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For example, 29 \text{ex}c6+ \text{d}d7! 30 \text{xb}6 \text{xf}2 and because Black’s king stops \text{e}6, there is no defense to ...\text{c}2 and ...\text{f}2.

It shouldn’t be surprising that the f3-pawn could ultimately decide. But could you guess which pawn plays the role of hero in this game?

24 \text{d}5!

What saves Lasker repeatedly from here on are two qualities that every player envies in the truly great. The first is the ability to create winning chances in positions that seem barren. Like Marshall, Alekhine, Shirov and few others he seemed to find tactics wherever he looked. Here, for example, the threat of 25 \text{a}8+ \text{d}7 26 \text{dxc}6+ allows White’s knight to play.

24 ... \text{xd}5

Black begins to avoid drawish endings, such as 24...\text{e}7 25 \text{xe}7 \text{xe}7 26 \text{d}6 \text{xd}5 27 \text{xd}5 \text{cxd}5 28 \text{f}8. He almost certainly believed the game can have only two results – Black win or draw – and felt he must reject the candidates that led to the second.

25 \text{xd}5

The second quality that saves Lasker is his talent for scaring opponents. Black becomes concerned now by the threats of 25 \text{xb}6+ and 25 \text{a}8+ or even 25 \text{e}3.

25 ... \text{xf}4?

This seems perfectly logical: Black makes sure White has no counterplay and he trades an inactive knight for the good bishop.

But Tarrasch pointed out that after 25...\text{e}2! Black could always meet \text{e}3 with a crushing ...\text{e}5-g4+. He said 26 \text{xb}6+ \text{d}8 wins for Black (27 \text{e}3 \text{e}5 or 27 \text{d}6 \text{xf}2+ 28 \text{g}1 \text{g}2+ 29 \text{h}1 \text{e}8).

Actually the win is a little harder because White can retreat the knight to e3. On 26 \text{g}1!, which Tarrasch thought lost to 26...\text{e}1+ 27 \text{h}2 \text{f}1!, White wins material with 28 \text{e}3! \text{xf}2+ 29 \text{g}1. (Black should play 26...\text{xb}2 and win the hard way).

26 \text{xf}4! \text{e}2

Now 27 \text{xb}6+ fails to 27...\text{b}8 28 \text{xg}7 \text{xf}2+ 29 \text{h}1 \text{f}1+ 30 \text{h}2 \text{f}2! and the pawn promotes (31 \text{g}2 \text{h}3+! 32 \text{xf}3 \text{h}1+).

Moreover 26...\text{e}2 looks like the type of move you should play when you’re winning. Only after the game did Black realize that 25...\text{xf}4? damaged his chances so much that the counter-intuitive 26...\text{e}6! was best (27 \text{xg}7 \text{e}4).

27 \text{g}3!

This is the first of several positions in which White could force a draw. He has a perpetual check after 27 \text{e}7+ \text{b}8 28 \text{e}6+ \text{c}8 29 \text{e}7+. Black must accept because of 29...\text{d}8? 30 \text{xf}5 \text{xf}2+ 31 \text{g}3 \text{xb}2 32 \text{xg}7 \text{f}2 33 \text{g}2.

But why is White playing 27 \text{g}3 if he can force a draw? Objectively he has no right to play for more. True, but Lasker can see that his opponent is the one making the bigger mistakes again. And if both sides have chances, the better endgame player may win regardless of who has the theoretical advantage.
Black eliminates another pawn and leaves the perpetual check on the table. He says, in effect, “You can have a draw. But I’m not offering it. You have to force it with 28 ... $\mathcal{E}e7$.”

But if Black wanted a draw, the right way to get it was to do what Lasker had done—threaten to win. That means 27 ... $\mathcal{A}d8$ and then 28 $\mathcal{E}xg7$ $\mathcal{E}xb2$ 29 $\mathcal{E}xf6$ h6 followed by ...b5-b4.

28 $\mathcal{E}xg7$!

The most dangerous pawn on the board is now the one at f4.

28 ... $\mathcal{A}b8$

Black had to stop $\mathcal{D}e7$+xf5 now that $\mathcal{A}b8$ no longer attacks a rook. He could reach the same position as in the note to 27 ... $\mathcal{E}xb2$ with 28 ... $\mathcal{A}d8$! 29 $\mathcal{E}xf6$ h6.

29 $\mathcal{E}xf6$ b5

30 $\mathcal{E}g5$!

This is strong because Black’s ...$\mathcal{A}b8$ took his king in the wrong direction and made it harder for him to stop the f-pawn.

30 ... $\mathcal{A}d3$

But the f-pawn wasn’t going anywhere quickly (31 f5 h6! 32 $\mathcal{E}g8+$? $\mathcal{A}b7$ and ...$\mathcal{A}xf5$).

31 $\mathcal{D}d7+$! $\mathcal{E}c7$

32 $\mathcal{D}e5$ $\mathcal{A}e4$

33 f5!

Black’s pieces are well placed to push the b-pawn but not to stop the f-pawn, e.g. 33 ... $\mathcal{D}d6$ 34 f6 $\mathcal{D}e6$ 35 f7 $\mathcal{D}e7$ 36 $\mathcal{E}g8$ and queens. It looks like 34 ... $\mathcal{A}d5$ is better (35 f7 $\mathcal{A}xf7$). But White has the killing 35 $\mathcal{D}d3$!, followed by 36 $\mathcal{D}xb2$ or 36 $\mathcal{E}xd5$+!.

33 ... $\mathcal{A}a2$!

34 f6 $\mathcal{A}a8$

35 f7 $\mathcal{A}d6$

36 $\mathcal{E}g8$!

White will be lucky to draw if he has to settle for $\mathcal{D}xf3$. A more attractive idea than that is 36 $\mathcal{E}f4$. But 36 ... $\mathcal{A}d5$! stops 37 $\mathcal{E}g8$ and threatens to win with ...$\mathcal{A}b8$/...b4.

Then 37 $\mathcal{E}g7$ would threaten 39 $\mathcal{D}xg7$. Black replies 37 ...$\mathcal{E}xf8$, after which White’s f-pawn becomes the second best passer on the board following 38 $\mathcal{E}xh7$ $\mathcal{A}e6$ (to stop $\mathcal{E}f5$-f6) and ...b4!.

36 ... $\mathcal{E}e7$

37 $\mathcal{D}f4$ $\mathcal{A}d5$

38 $\mathcal{E}g7$

This is the same position as in 36 $\mathcal{D}f4$ $\mathcal{A}d5$ 37 $\mathcal{E}g7$ except that Black’s king is on e7, not d6. Why did White prefer this one? After all, Black can eliminate the f-pawn and draw with 38 ...$\mathcal{A}f6$ 39 $\mathcal{E}xh7$ $\mathcal{A}a4$+! 40 $\mathcal{E}g3$ $\mathcal{E}xf7$! (41 $\mathcal{D}xf7$ $\mathcal{E}g6$).

But to play that Black has to assume the role of the defender seeking a draw and Schiffer still wasn’t ready to admit that.

The optimal move—whether playing the board or the man—was 38 ...b4!. Then the placement of Black’s king would help White out after 39 $\mathcal{E}xh7$! because of 39 ...b3 40 $\mathcal{A}g6$+! $\mathcal{A}d6$ 41 f8(\wedge)+ $\mathcal{E}xf8$ 42 $\mathcal{D}xf8$ (although 41 ...b2 still draws).
This is best because White also has to worry (after 38...b4 39 \[ \text{ex}h7 \] about the winning try 39...\[ \text{ex}a6! \]. (White saves himself with 40 \[ \text{eh}8 \] and \[ \text{eb}8 \]).

38 \[ \ldots \] \[ \text{eh}8?! \]

Schiffers finds a tricky way to play for a win. His move prepares to push his h-pawn and enables him to meet the winning try of \[ \text{gg}5 \] with \[ \ldots \text{h}6+ \].

39 \[ \text{gg}5! \]

White rejects 39 \[ \text{fd}7 \text{xf7} 40 \text{ce}5 \text{ff}8 41 \text{eh}7, \text{threating gg}6+. After 41...\[ \text{ee}6 \] his best is 42 \[ \text{xf7} \], leading to \[ \text{+e}-\text{vs.}+h+- \] followed by king-vs.-king.

39 \[ \ldots \] \[ \text{h}6+ \]

By now Black must have realized that White has a second way to win, a \[ \text{wh} \]-sacrifice. This is evident after 39...b4 because White has no good move other than 40 \[ \text{f8(\text{w})+} \].

Then 40...\[ \text{xf}8 41 \text{f6} \text{threatens mate with 42 \text{ec}7 and \text{cd}7+ as well as various ways of winning the rook or bishop (42 \text{ec}7 and 43 \text{ec}8+). White wins after 41...\[ \text{ec}8 42 \text{cd}7+ \text{ec}8 43 \text{exd5} \text{because he picks up the remaining pawns while keeping his own.} \]

40 \[ \text{f5}! \]

White keeps \[ \text{g6} \] clear for a knight-check.

40 \[ \ldots \] \[ \text{e}6+! \]

But this forces his king there (since 41 \[ \text{ec}4? \text{f8}! \] favors Black).

41 \[ \text{gg}6 \]

Each of Black’s last few moves was logical at the time he played it. But now Black realizes the rook is badly placed because 41...b4, the move he had been counting on, allows 41 \[ \text{f8(\text{w})+} \text{xf8} 42 \text{f6}, when only White can win.

41 \[ \ldots \] \[ \text{ec}8 \]

Black is finally ready for 42...b4. There is nothing to 42 \[ \text{f8(\text{w})+} \text{xf8} 43 \text{f6} \text{d5! (44 \text{h7 gg8!}).} \]

42 \[ \text{h7}! \]

What could White’s idea be? Is it \[ \text{exh6} \] and \[ \text{hh1} \] so that the rook gets back in time to in time to stop the b-pawn? Or is it to clear a square for his king so that he can play \[ \text{gg6+?} \] Either way this innocuous-looking move gives Black reason to be optimistic again.

42 \[ \ldots \] \[ \text{b}4? \]

He must have looked at two or three scenarios and that turns out to be one too short. Naturally he examined 43 \[ \text{exh6} \text{b3 44 \text{h1}? and saw 44...\text{xf7}+! 45 \text{xf7 gg8+ is a likely Black win.} \]

He would also have checked out 43 \[ \text{gg7}. \] Then 43...\[ \text{f5} \] seems to win (44 \[ \text{exh6 b3 or 44 \text{h8 exh8 45 gg8 ff8). But in fact it loses (44 \text{c6+! \text{dd7 45 hh8).} \]

After 43 \[ \text{gg7} \] Black would play 43...\[ \text{xf7} 44 \text{xf7 ec2 and .ff2 guarantees him the moral victory of knowing he had the better of the draw that follows 45 \text{exh6}.} \]

43 \[ \text{f8(\text{w})+!} \]

Black had to stop this mechanically, with 42...\[ \text{ff8}. \]

43 \[ \ldots \] \[ \text{ff8} \]

44 \[ \text{ff6} \]
The main threat is not 45 \( \text{Bxe6} \) but 45 \( \text{Be7!} \) followed by 46 \( \text{Qg6+ g8} \).

47 \( \text{Bg7} \) mate. Black also loses after 44 \( \text{Bd5} \) 45 \( \text{Bh8+ g8} \) 46 \( \text{Bg6+ e8} \) 47 \( \text{Bxg8+ d7} \) 48 \( \text{c5+} \).

44 ... \( \text{g8} \)

The knight performs wonders after this. But 44...\( \text{g8} \) 45 \( \text{Bg7+ f8} \) 46 \( \text{Bxe6 c6+} \) was no better because of 47 \( \text{Bxe6 c6} \) 48 \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{c2} \) 49 \( \text{Bg8+ f7} \) 50 \( \text{Bf8+ g7} \) 51 \( \text{Bb8} \), so that 51...\( \text{Bxf2} \) 52 \( \text{Bb7+} \) and \( \text{Bf6} \) will mate.

Or 49...\( \text{d7} \) 50 \( \text{f5} \) and 51 \( \text{f3} \), preserving the winning pawn.

45 \( \text{Be7! h7} \)

46 \( \text{Bxh7 g8} \)

47 \( \text{Bg7+ f8} \)

48 \( \text{Bb7!} \)

White goes for zugzwang. Black's rook cannot leave the first rank because of \( \text{Bb8+} \), while 48...\( \text{d8} \) or 48...\( \text{e8} \) allow 49 \( \text{Bg6+} \) a mate.

48 ... \( \text{a8} \)

49 \( \text{Bf7+! e8} \)

White announced mate in six. 50 \( \text{Bc7+ e8} \) 51 \( \text{Bf7+ c8} \) 52 \( \text{Bd6+ d8} \) 53 \( \text{Be6 a7} \) 54 \( \text{Bxa7} \) 55 \( \text{Bb8} \). Some books claim the game ended with 55 \( \text{Bb8} \) but others say 55 \( \text{Bd7} \).

22

Since they met in the Berlin tearoom more than a decade before, Lasker and Siegbert Tarrasch experienced parallel career arcs. At Breslau 1889 when Lasker earned the title of Deutscher Schachmeister in a minor section, Tarrasch was winning the top section with a sterling 13-4 score. In 1890 Lasker was in England, winning matches from Bird and N.T. Miniati. Tarrasch became an international star that year by taking first prize at the Manchester international. Two years later when Lasker moved to New York, Tarrasch was battling a world-class opponent, Tchigorin, to a draw in what became a legendary match. Tarrasch, six years his senior, always seemed to be a step ahead of Lasker.

But Lasker had the presence of mind, self-confidence and just plain ambition to confront and challenge Steinitz. Tarrasch did not. Today we can estimate, based on retroactive ratings, that Lasker had far surpassed Tarrasch in playing strength well before he was world champion. But Tarrasch believed Lasker was the product of an extraordinary series of lucky accidents, such as their game in the penultimate round at Nuremberg.

Lasker – Tarrasch
Nuremberg 1896

Ruy Lopez, Exchange Variation (C68)

1 \( \text{e4 e5} \)

2 \( \text{Bf3 Bc6} \)

3 \( \text{Bb5 a6} \)

4 \( \text{Bxc6} \)

Before the turn of the 20th century this was a rare move, except in Lasker games. Of 29 pre-1899 games in one database, he played seven of them.

4 ... \( \text{dxc6} \)

5 \( \text{Bc3} \)

This is logical because when White protects his e-pawn in the Lopez, he is usually threatening Black's. Yet databases indicate one previous example of it. Instead, 5 \( \text{d3} \), 5 \( \text{d4} \) and 5 0-0 were played.

5 ... \( \text{Bc5} \)

The standard move today in various versions of the Exchange Variation is ...\( \text{f6} \), even in delayed forms such as 4 \( \text{Bc4 d6} \) 5 0-0 \( \text{Be7} \) 6 \( \text{Bxc6 dxc6} \) 7 \( \text{d3 Bb7} \) and ...\( \text{f6} \). But at the time this game was played, it was regarded as too weakening. Instead, Black usually tried ... \( \text{d6} \), ...\( \text{g4} \) and even ...\( \text{Bf6} \).
It wasn't until the 14th game of the Lasker-Steinitz return match that Steinitz showed that e6 is not weak after ...f6 because Black has the only light-squared bishop.

6  d3

If he were White, Steinitz wouldn't have been troubled by the loss of the right to castle (6  \( \text{Qxe5?!} \)  \( \text{Qxf2+} \) 7  \( \text{Qxf2} \)  \( \text{Wd4+} \) 8  \( \text{We1} \)  \( \text{Wxe5} \) 9  \( \text{d3} \)).

6  \( \text{g4} \)

Tarrasch had great respect for the two bishops so it's likely he intended to meet 7  h3 with 7  \( \text{Qh5} \) 8  \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g6} \) After 9  \( \text{Qxe5} \) he could choose between 9...\( \text{Qxf2+} \) 10  \( \text{Qxf2} \)  \( \text{Wd4+} \) and 9...\( \text{Wd4} \) 10  \( \text{Qe3} \)  \( \text{Wxe5} \) 11  \( \text{d4} \)  \( \text{We7} \) 12  \( \text{dx e5} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \).

7  \( \text{e3} \)

A practical decision. There was no reason to calculate 7  h3 when White could eliminate the two bishops this way. After 7...\( \text{Qxe3/fxe3} \) White would open half of the f-file and deny Black's knight the best outposts (d4 and f4).

7  ...  \( \text{Wd6} \)

8  \( \text{Qxe5} \)  \( \text{Wxe5} \)

9  \( \text{Wd2!} \)

White breaks the pin and threatens a pawn (10  \( \text{Wg5} \)).

9  ...  \( \text{Qxf3} \)

10  \( \text{gx f3} \)  \( \text{e7} \)

The knight would be misplaced on f6 (10...\( \text{Qf6} \) 11  \( \text{Wg5} \) 0-0 12  \( \text{Qg1} \)).

11  0-0-0  \( \text{Qg6} \)

12  \( \text{We3!} \)

Common sense: Black had the better placed queen so a trade should help White and his kingside majority. If the queen retreats, ...0-0-0 is out of the question in view of \( \text{Wxa7!} \) and \( \text{Wxa8} \). Black can castle kingside instead (12...\( \text{Wc7} \) 13  \( \text{Qe2} \) 0-0) and prepare f5. But White can obtain a slight advantage via 14  \( \text{f4} \)  \( \text{exf4} \) 15  \( \text{Qxf4} \)  \( \text{Wg5} \) 16  \( \text{Qxg6} \)  \( \text{Wxe3+} \) 17  \( \text{fxe3} \).

12  ...  \( \text{Wxe3+?!} \)

Tarrasch's take on this game was that Lasker deceptively offered trades as if he wanted the half point that would virtually clinch first prize.

13  \( \text{fxe3} \)  \( \text{d8} \)

14  \( \text{Qe2} \)

White's plan is to drive the knight away with f3-f4-f5 so that d3-d4 will be stronger.

14  ...  \( \text{f6?!} \)

Tarrasch placed a lot of blame for his loss on his 12th move but this was equally guilty. Black should play 14...0-0 and .. f5!.

White can anticipate that with 15  \( \text{f4} \) since 15...h5 16  \( \text{exf5} \)  \( \text{Qxf5} \) 17  \( \text{e4} \) and 18  \( \text{f5} \) clearly favors him and 15...exf4 16  \( \text{exf4} \) f5 17  \( \text{c5} \) is a protected passed pawn. But in the last line Black would have active play after 17...\( \text{Qh4} \), followed by ...\( \text{Qf7-e6}, ..h6 \) and .. g5.

15  \( \text{Qh1} \)  \( \text{Qf7} \)

Now 15...0-0 16  \( \text{f4} \) and 17  \( \text{f5} \) and d3-d4 assures White a small but solid edge.

16  \( \text{Qd1} \)  \( \text{He8} \)

17  \( \text{Qg3} \)

The knight can go to h5 or f5, and 17...\( \text{Qe7} \) makes 18  \( \text{f4} \) and 19  \( \text{f5} \) stronger.

17  ...  \( \text{Qf8} \)

18  \( \text{f4} \)
White threatens 19 fxe5 \( \textit{fxe5} \) 20 d4. For example, 18...g6 19 fxe5 \( \textit{fxe5} \) 20 d4 \( \textit{\underline{\text{e6}}} \) 21 e5 f5 22 e4. Then 22...\( \textit{\underline{x}d4} \) 23 exf5 \( \textit{\underline{xe5}} \) allows 24 fxg6+ \( \textit{\underline{\text{g8}}} \) 25 gxh7+ or 25 \( \textit{\underline{\text{f5}}} \) (25...\( \textit{\underline{\text{d7}}} \) 26 \( \textit{\underline{\text{h6}}}+ \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{g7}}} \) 27 gxh7+ \( \textit{\underline{\text{xh7}}} \) 28 \( \textit{\underline{\text{g4}}} \)).

22 \( \textit{\underline{f2}} \) h5

This creates a new target at g6. But Black is lost in the long run, e.g. 22...\( \textit{\underline{\text{d7}}} \) 23 \( \textit{\underline{\text{gf1}}} \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{xf6}}} \) 24 \( \textit{\underline{\text{xf6}}} \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{d7}}} \) 25 \( \textit{\underline{\text{f4}}} \).

23 \( \textit{\underline{\text{d5!}}} \) c6

24 \( \textit{\underline{\text{f4}}} \) c4

Hoping for 25 d4 \( \textit{\underline{\text{xe4}}} \) 26 \( \textit{\underline{\text{xh5}}}+ \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{h8}}} \) 27 \( \textit{\underline{\text{f6}}} \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{xe3}}} \).

25 \( \textit{\underline{\text{f2}}} \)

The rest was straightforward: 25...\( \textit{\underline{\text{d6}}} \) 26 h4 exd3 27 cxd3 \( \textit{\underline{\text{f7}}} \) 28 \( \textit{\underline{\text{g5}}}! \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{xg5}}} \) 29 \( \textit{\underline{\text{g5}}} \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{e6}}} \) 30 e5 \( \textit{\underline{\text{f5}}} \) 31 \( \textit{\underline{\text{xf5+}}} \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{gx5}}} \) 32 d4! \( \textit{\underline{\text{e7}}} \) 33 \( \textit{\underline{\text{d2}}} \) e5 34 \( \textit{\underline{\text{d3}}} \) exd4 35 exd4 \( \textit{\underline{\text{d8}}} \) 36 d5 \( \textit{\underline{\text{d7}}} \) 37 \( \textit{\underline{\text{d4}}} \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{c7}}} \) 38 b4 \( \textit{\underline{\text{d7}}} \) 39 \( \textit{\underline{\text{e5}}} \) \( \textit{\underline{\text{c7}}} \) 40 d6+ \( \textit{\underline{\text{d7}}} \) 41 \( \textit{\underline{\text{d5}}} \) Resigns

23

Tarrasch's 18...c5?? was a dreadful mistake for a world-class player to make. But how did Tarrasch find himself in such a bad position after 18 moves of such a placid opening? And how did Lasker manage to beat good players, over and over, with it?

We're going to interrupt history here to explain a bit about Lasker and the Exchange Lopez. This is different from understanding how Kasparov could beat strong GMs on the Black side of a King's Indian or Fischer defeat them on either side of a Najdorf Sicilian. Those are super sharp openings in which a huge premium is placed on superior preparation and calculating ability. But the Exchange Lopez, particularly when queens are traded, doesn't seem to have that many ways for Black to go wrong - or White to go right. But its basic plan of creating a passed kingside pawn was as strong as it was simple, as Tarrasch learned the second time that Lasker tried 4 \( \textit{\underline{\text{xe6}}} \) against him.
Lasker – Tarrasch
World Championship match, first game, Dusseldorf 1908
Ruy Lopez, Exchange Variation (C68)

1 e4 e5
2 d3 d6
3 b5 a6
4 xc6

"If White can do this with impunity (as indeed seems likely), a6 would be a pointless move," Tarrasch wrote after Game 22. Even with the parenthetical thought it seems he was ridiculing 4 xc6

4 dxc6
5 d4 exd4
6 xd4 xd4
7 xd4 c5
8 e2

This retreat, rather than b3, was a novelty introduced by Lasker in the first Steinitz match, in the game in which Steinitz gave up on 3...d6 and switched to 3...a6.

8 d7
9 b3

The natural response to ...c5 would be bc3 with dd5 in mind. Instead, White wants to solidify his queenside pawns on the color of his missing bishop.

9 d6

Like many annotators, Carl Schlechter tried to find a simple improvement that would explain why Black could do so well in other Exchange Lopez games but lost this one without a major error. He recommended 9...c4! with the idea of creating targets for Black’s bishops (10 bxc4 e6 11 d2 b4 12 c3 a5 and ...0-0-0).

This impressed Alexander Alekhine, then a 16-year-old student, who found a stronger idea in 10...a4, and scored one of his first impressive victories with it. The sacrifice "demolishes White's ninth move," Alekhine concluded.

10 f3 e7
11 b2 f6

Eliminating one of Black’s two bishops is a curious decision. True, his dark-squared bishop could turn out to be a liability (10...d6 11 h2 f6 12 d2 and c4). But 11...f6 was more promising.

12 xf6 xf6
13 d2 0-0-0

Where the king belongs was a matter of debate in the Exchange Lopez. When he lost Game 69, Capablanca indicated Black’s should remain on the kingside to be available to blockade a passed pawn. Reinfeld/Fine claimed it belonged on the kingside “to guard Black’s weak pawns” – while others felt it should be there to mobilize Black’s majority.

14 0-0-0 d7
15 f4 e8

Black has to watch out for some tactics (15...hd8? 16 d3 b6 17 e5). But doubled rooks wouldn’t mean much on either file, and he should be looking for ways (such as g5-g4) to open other lines.

16 c4 b6
17 a4! a5
18 xd7 xd7
19 d1 e5
20 xe5 xe5

80
Black is finally ready to carry out ...c4, or, in the longer term, ...b5.

21  

In his notes Tarrasch made a big deal about the ways he could have managed his pieces better (21...\textit{E}e7 22 \textit{Q}h5 f6). But at some point he has to confront White's plan. First White took steps to keep Black's queenside majority dormant. Now he activates his king, while keeping Black's king confined to the queenside.

22  
23  \textit{D}d3!  
24  \textit{Q}d2  
25  \textit{Q}g3  

In principle, Black should be reluctant to trade rooks (...\textit{E}g6 and ...\textit{D}d8) because there is a danger that White will simply create a passed kingside pawn. Here 26...c6 followed by ...\textit{E}c7 and ...b5 looks right.

26  \textit{E}e3  
27  \textit{Q}h5  
28  g4!  

c6!  

Black needs to play this in order to keep the knight off d5 (28...\textit{D}d8 29 \textit{Q}f4 \textit{Q}e8? 30 \textit{Q}d5) and to finally get his queenside moving.

29  h4  
30  g5  
31  \textit{Q}g3  
32  \textit{Q}xe4  

The thematic 32 fxe4, creating a passer, was better. But Black is OK if he pulls the trigger with 32...b5!, e.g. 33 axb5 cxb5 34 cxb5 \textit{Q}xb5 35 \textit{Q}c3 \textit{Q}b6.

32  

Tarrasch later went to astonishing lengths to prove that he could have drawn. Here he analyzed 32...b5! well into the future and included one note that reached equality after 33 \textit{Q}f4 bxc4 34 bxc4 \textit{Q}e6 35 \textit{Q}c3 \textit{Q}b6 36 \textit{Q}b3+ \textit{Q}c7 37 \textit{Q}xc5 \textit{Q}xc4 38 \textit{Q}b7+ \textit{Q}d6 39 \textit{Q}xe7 \textit{Q}xe7 40 \textit{Q}b7 \textit{Q}b3 41 \textit{Q}xa5 \textit{Q}xa4.

33  h5  

Black's bishop becomes very good after 34 \textit{Q}xd7+? \textit{Q}xd7 35 \textit{Q}f4 \textit{Q}e6 and he would have no problems following 36 h6 gxh6 37 gxh6 \textit{Q}g6.

34  \textit{Q}e3  
35  \textit{Q}f4  

35  

And here 35...\textit{Q}xe4! followed by ...\textit{Q}h1xh5 would have drawn Tarrasch analyzed the consequences out to move 52 in one variation and to 53 in another.

The key to Black's chances is the move Tarrasch kept passing up (...b5!). For example, 36 \textit{Q}xe4 \textit{Q}h1 37 \textit{Q}d3 \textit{Q}xh5 38 \textit{Q}f5 h6 39 f4 hxg5 40 \textit{Q}g6! \textit{Q}h4 41 fxg5 b5! after which Black's king and queenside pawns begin to play
36  \[\text{\textit{He}}3\!\!\!\!\!\!\text{+}!\]

A powerful move which keeps the bishop out of play (...\[\text{\textit{He}}\text{8}!\text{ or ...\textit{He}}\text{6}!\text{ allow }\text{\textit{C}}\text{x}\text{c}!\text{5}) and permits White to continue \[\text{\textit{He}}\text{5}!\text{ and }f3\text{-}f4\text{-}f5!\text{ unmolested.}\]

36  \[\text{...}\text{\textit{He}}\text{1}\]
37  \[\text{\textit{D}}\text{g}3\!\!\!\!\!\text{\textit{He}}\text{4}!\!\!\!\!\!\text{+}\]
38  \[\text{\textit{He}}\text{5}\!\!\!\!\!\!\text{\textit{He}}\text{3}\]
39  \[f4\]
40  \[\text{d}8\]

White switches direction and wins on the queenside after 39...\[\text{\textit{D}}\text{g}4!\text{ 40 }\text{d}5\text{ \[\text{\textit{C}}\text{xh}5\text{ 41 }\text{\textit{He}}\text{6}!\text{ \[\text{d}8\text{ 42 }\text{d}3\text{-}d+!\text{ \[\text{e}8\text{ 43 }\text{d}6\text{ (43...\[\text{\textit{D}}\text{g}4!\text{ 44 }\text{e}3\text{-}e+!\text{ \[\text{f}8\text{ 45 }\text{x}\text{c}6).}}\]

40  \[f5\]

White can choose between king-position and pawn-pushes. But on 40 \[\text{d}6\!\!\!\!\!\text{\textit{C}}\text{h}2\text{ 41 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{d}3\text{ Black can slow him down with }41...\text{\textit{g}}6.\]

40  \[\text{...}\text{\textit{He}}\text{4}\]
41  \[f6\]
42  \[\text{\textit{D}}\text{x}f6\]
43  \[f5!\]

Black cannot contain a passed pawn now (43...\[\text{\textit{C}}\text{xh}5?!\text{ 44 }\text{e}8+\text{ or }43...\text{\textit{D}}\text{g}4\text{ 44 }\text{e}7\text{ \[\text{\textit{C}}\text{xh}5\text{ 45 }\text{\textit{C}}\text{h}7\text{ \[\text{e}8\text{ 46 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{d}6\text{ and }44...\text{\textit{D}}\text{d}7\text{ 45 }\text{\textit{C}}\text{h}7\text{ \[\text{f}4\text{ 46 }\text{d}7\text{-}d+!\text{ and wins).}}\]

43  \[\text{...}\text{\textit{He}}\text{f}4\]
44  \[g6\]
45  \[h\text{x}g6\]
46  \[\text{e}8\text{+}\]

Flashy – but 46 \[\text{\textit{D}}\text{g}3!\ was even better and would fit in more with the basic strategy of the Exchange Variation. The rest: 46...\[\text{\textit{C}}\text{xe}8\text{ 47 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{g}7\text{ \[\text{f}7\text{ 48 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{d}4\text{ \[\text{g}7\text{ 49 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{g}7\text{ \[\text{e}6\text{ 50 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{f}3\text{ \[\text{f}5\text{ 51 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{f}7\text{ \[\text{e}4\text{ 52 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{d}3\text{ \[\text{d}6\text{ 53 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{d}6\text{ \[\text{c}3\text{ 54 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{c}6\text{ \[\text{b}3\text{ 55 }\text{\textit{D}}\text{b}5\text{ Resigns.}}\]

In the end Tarrasch made his point. He should not have lost. There were several opportunities that Black missed. But Lasker also made his point. White's plan from 4 \[\text{\textit{D}}\text{c}6\] on gave him good winning chances almost without having to work at winning. And it was much easier to make bad, losing Black moves than bad White ones.

24

By the end of 1896 Lasker's reputation for relatively error-free chess was established. Actually he made as many mistakes as his opponents at Nuremberg and as many as Steinitz in their first match. The critical difference was degree. His opponents wasted major chances, hung pawns and made gross positional misjudgments, while Lasker's mistakes tended to be of the second-best-move variety. White's errors in this game cost him the advantage he deserved. Black's cost him the game.

Lasker – Steinitz
World Championship rematch, second game, Moscow 1896
Ruy Lopez, Classical Defense (C64)

1  \[\text{e}4\]
2  \[\text{\textit{D}}\text{f}3\]
3  \[\text{\textit{D}}\text{b}5\]
4  \[\text{c}3\]

By 1896 Steinitz's thinking had undergone another change and he was willing to surrender the center when necessary. Here he adopts a system
which had a poor reputation because it was a favorite of John Schulten, the great punching bag of the Romantic era who had a spectacular losing record against the likes of Morphy, Kieseritsky, and St. Amant.

5 0-0

The strongest line was reputed to be 5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 b4+ 7 d2 xd2+ 8 wxd2. Steinitz introduced 8...d5 later in this match and got slightly the worse of 9 exd5 Qxd5 10 Qxc6+. Black would prefer to play 9...wxd5 but 10 Qc3 We6+ 11 Qf1! is very strong because of the threat of 12 d5.

It took the insertion of 8...a6! in a 1913 Alekhine-Bogoljubov game, to make the line playable. Then 9 a4 d5 10 exd5 Wxd5 11 Qc3 allows 11...We6+ 12 Qf1 Qc4+ 13 Qg1! and 13...Qh6 14 d5 Qa7 fully rehabilitated the idea in Tal-Fischer, Curacao 1962.

5 ... Qg6
6 d4 Qxd4
7 exd4 Qb6
8 Qc3

Black’s pieces are too solidly placed for this opening to be refuted (8 d5 Qxe5 9 Qxe5 Qxe5 10 Qf4 Wf6). But why didn’t Lasker take the opportunity, now or next move, to push the d-pawn twice? Probably because he had tried that in a similar position at the St. Petersburg tournament against Steinitz and was outplayed.

8 ... 0-0
9 a4

White threatens 10 Qxc6 and 11 a5, winning a piece. He wants to provoke a move of the Black a-pawn so that Qd5xb6 will be a greater threat.

9 ... a6
10 Qc4 h6

Reinfeld/Fine said White was not threatening Qg5 and therefore 10...d6 was better (11 Qg5 h6 12 Wh5 Qh8! wins the d-pawn).

But it is Qg5 that Black had to be afraid of – 10...d6 11 Qd5 Qa7 12 Qg5! and 13 Qc1 or 13 Qe1 will give White a nice edge.

11 h3?

In his match with Schifflers nine months before, Steinitz tried a similar Lopez defense, 3...Qc5 4 0-0 Wf6 5 e3 Qge7 White played 6 d4 exd4 7 Qg5 Wg6 8 Qxe7 Qxe7 9 exd4 0-0 and continued 10 Qc3 d6 11 Qd5.

But Steinitz was able to repel the knight (11...Qd8 12 Qd3 Qb8! and ...c6) and win with his two bishops. Lasker was well aware of how superbly Steinitz handled such positions.

Here, however, he was being too cautious. White would risk nothing by, say, 11 Qd5 Qa7 12 Qc3 d6 13 Qe1, with a small but solid advantage.

11 ... d6
12 Qe3 Qce7
13 Qe1 c6

One of the advantages of Black’s coiled setup is that he can open the position more easily than White. He prepares ...d5 or ...b5 and might have done better with 13...Qh8 and 14...f5.

14 Wb3 Qc7!
15 Qd2 Qb8
16 Qa1 b5
17 axb5 axb5
18 Qd3
The consistent reply is 18...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{f6}}} \) and then 19 \(\text{\textit{\texttt{c2}}} \) \(\text{f5} \). That encounters a problem in 20 \text{\textit{\texttt{d5!}}}!, e.g. 20...\text{\textit{\texttt{cxd5}}} 21 \text{\textit{\texttt{exf5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} 22 \text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{d5}}} 23 \text{\textit{\texttt{xd5}}} with a positional edge.

But there’s a lot more to calculate. For instance, Black can meet 18...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{e6}}} \) 19 \(\text{\textit{\texttt{c2}}} \) with 19...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{b6}}} \) and then 20...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{f5}}} \), e.g. 21 \text{\textit{\texttt{d5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xe5}}} 22 \text{\textit{\texttt{xe5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{d5}}} 23 \text{\textit{\texttt{exe5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{d7}}} and ...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{e5}}} \).

Black wouldn’t be done because White can also meet 18...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{e6}}} \) with the immediate 19 \text{\textit{\texttt{d5}}}, so that 19...\text{\textit{\texttt{cxd5}}} 20 \text{\textit{\texttt{exd5}}} dooms the b-pawn. Black would analyze until he found 19...\text{\textit{\texttt{xe5}}}! and then 20 \text{\textit{\texttt{f1}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{cxd5}}} 21 \text{\textit{\texttt{exd5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{d7}}}.

21...\text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} can’t be taken (22 \text{\textit{\texttt{xb5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{d5}}} or 22 \text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{d5}}} and ...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{e8}}} \) and therefore Black continues 22...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} \) with a fine game.

18 ... \(\text{\textit{\texttt{h8}}} \)

There were occasions – rare ones – when Steinitz could be as practical as Lasker. This ensures ...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{f5}}} \) without risk of miscalculating.

19 \(\text{\textit{\texttt{e2}}} \) \(\text{f5} \)

20 \text{\textit{\texttt{exf5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} \)

Now 21 \text{\textit{\texttt{g3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xd3}}} 22 \text{\textit{\texttt{xd3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{d7}}} is at least equal.

21 \text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{xf5}}} \)

22 \text{\textit{\texttt{g3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{f8}}} \)

In view of ...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{d7}}} \) and ...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{f4}}} \), Black has reason to be optimistic. He has an obvious plan and White doesn’t.

23 \(\text{\textit{\texttt{c6}}} \)

And that’s why White decides to trade queens.

23 ... \(\text{\textit{\texttt{c8}}} \)

Black can’t allow the queen to remain on e6 for long, and after 23...\text{\textit{\texttt{xf6}}} 24 \text{\textit{\texttt{g4}}} he should play 24...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{xc8}}} \) to avoid being crushed on the kingside by \(\text{\textit{\texttt{e4}}} \) and \(\text{\textit{\texttt{h2-h4-h5}}} \).

24 \(\text{\textit{\texttt{xc8}}} \) \text{\textit{\texttt{fxc8}}} \)

In view of ...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{a8}}} \) and ...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{b6}}} /...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{d5}}} \), it’s safe to conclude Black has outplayed his opponent so far.

25 \(\text{\textit{\texttt{b3}}} \)

White wants his knight on the queenside so he can out a rook at a2 with \(\text{\textit{\texttt{c1}}} \). Black’s advantage would be more visible after 25 \text{\textit{\texttt{f3}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{a8}}}! 26 \text{\textit{\texttt{al}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{d5}}} and 27...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{ge7}}} \).

25 ... \(\text{\textit{\texttt{g8}}} \)

Black’s plan is to safeguard his only target, the c-pawn, by bringing his king to d7. Steinitz believed his king could defend itself, but as in Game 9 he is discounting the danger. He can realize an edge directly with 25...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{a8}}} \) and ...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{a4}}} /...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{c8}}} /...\(\text{\textit{\texttt{c4}}} \).

26 \(\text{\textit{\texttt{e4}}} \) \text{\textit{\texttt{f7}}}?! 27 \text{\textit{\texttt{g3}}}!

This should have been a warning signal to Black of an h3-h4-h5 followed by \(\text{\textit{\texttt{f4}}} \).

27 ... \(\text{\textit{\texttt{e8}}} \)

28 \(\text{\textit{\texttt{e2}}} \)

The advantage has silently exchanged hands and White could make that obvious with 28 \text{\textit{\texttt{h4}}}, e.g 28...\text{\textit{\texttt{a8}}} 29 \text{\textit{\texttt{h5}}} \text{\textit{\texttt{f8}}} 30 \text{\textit{\texttt{d5}}}! and then 30...\text{\textit{\texttt{c5}}} 31 \text{\textit{\texttt{f4}}} or 31...\text{\textit{\texttt{xd5}}} 31 \text{\textit{\texttt{c3}}}.

White’s decision to double rooks before playing h3-h4-h5 can be justified by analysis. But there is a simpler reason. Steinitz doesn’t seem to
realize yet that the advantage has switched sides. After 28 h4 he would have had to start calculating what to do about 29 h5 and would have realized the tactical dangers mounting around him. But 28...e2! is routine enough not to disturb Black's complacency.

28 ... d7
29 e1

Now when h3-h4-h5 drives the knight off g6, White can reply xe6! because ...g6xe6/f6+ and xe7 would be devastating.

29 ... b6?

How much Steinitz saw at this stage is unknown. But it's likely he chose this because he spotted 29...xd5? 30 xb6! and realized he needed to cover c5 (30...gxh6 31 ec5+! leads to mate).

The problem with ...b6 is that it creates a new tactical opportunity, xd6. For example, 29...f5 30 d2 b6 allows 31 xd6! xd6 32 e6+ or 31...xd6 32 e6 f8 33 xe7+ d8 34 f4 c7 35 xg7 and xg8.

Only after extensive post-mortem analysis – and some computer help – does it become evident that what Black needs most is an escape square for his king (29...xh8!). Then without exploitable targets, White has only a slim edge after 30 h4 h5.

And even after 29...b6 he gets little from 30 h4 h5! (31 g5 e8).

30 f4!

Black must have missed this (30...xf4 31 f6+! gx6 32 xe7+ mates in two). Steinitz was behind on time throughout the match as Lasker pointed out something we take for granted today: The clock is the 33rd chess piece.

30 ... c7?

Several annotators thought Black was already lost because 30...f5 allows 31 xd6! again (31...xd6 32 xd6 xd6 33 e6+ and xg6)

But if you look further, the rook ending is tenable (33...d5! 34 xg6 c7)

Black is also alive after 32 bc5+ xc5 33 xc5+ c7 34 a6+ d7, even though his 2 d8s have to battle a e6 and 2 f8s following 35 xb8+ xb8 36 e6 f8 37 e7+ d8 38 xg7. He's worse after 38...b7 39 xb7 xb7 40 f4 xd6 but still able to resist.

31 h4!

It makes sense White is winning. He's been granted two free moves (c1 and f4) while Black played ...b6-c7.

31 ... h5

Or 31...e8 32 xb6 gxh6 33 f6+ and xe8.

32 g5

Black has no defense to 33 g4!, e.g. 32...e8 33 g4! hxg4 34 h5 f8 35 ec5+! dxec5 36 xe7+ and wins, or 32...f5 33 g4! hxg4 34 h5 f8 35 h6!.

32 ... d8

33 g4! hxg4
34 h5 f8

White has good winning prospects after 35 h6 (35...gxh6 36 f6+ c7 37 xe7+) but...
35 \( \text{Qe}5+ \) dxc5
36 \( \text{Qxc}5+ \) d6

The fastest win after 36...\( \text{Qe}8 \) is
37 \( \text{Qxe}7+ \text{hx}e7 \) 38 \( \text{Qxe}7+ \text{d}d8 \)
39 \( \text{Qxg}7+ \text{e}8 \) 40 \( \text{Qe}7+ \text{d}8 \) 41 h6.

37 \( \text{Qf}4+ \) \( \text{d}5 \)
38 \( \text{Qe}5+ \) \( \text{c}4 \)

It’s also mate following 38...\( \text{Qxd}4 \)
39 \( \text{Qd}1+ \text{c}4 \) 40 \( \text{Qe}4+ \).

39 \( \text{Qc}1+ \) \( \text{Qxd}4 \)
40 \( \text{Qb}3+ \) \( \text{Qd}3 \)
41 \( \text{Qe}3 \) mate

This was the first checkmate in a world championship since the unofficial Steinitz-Zukertort match of 1872 – and there’s only been one other since. But did it really happen?

Four collections of Lasker’s games give this finish. But Ken Whyld, the most respected Laskerian, said the final moves were 40 \( \text{Qe}4+ \) \( \text{d}5 \) 41 \( \text{Qd}1+ \) Resigns. One widely available database said it ended with 37 \( \text{Qf}4+ \) Resigns – and two others said Black conceded after he played 36...\( \text{Qd}6 \). We may never know for sure.

25

This game is unlike any that was played before and stands as the first great example of a bishops-of-opposite-color middlegame. Black emerges from the opening with an extra pawn but the bishops render his prospects unclear. His winning technique was highly original: He gives up the pawn to create a situation in which he is the only one with targets to attack. He presses White to make concession after concession. To top it off, White is in zugzwang when he resigns, even though he has a queen, rook and bishop left.

Steinitz – Lasker
World Championship rematch,
third game, Moscow 1896
Gioco Piano (C54)

1 e4 e5
2 \( \text{Qf}3 \) \( \text{Qc}6 \)
3 \( \text{Qc}4 \) \( \text{Qc}5 \)
4 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{Qf}6 \)
5 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{exd}4 \)
6 \( \text{exd}4 \) \( \text{Qb}4+ \)
7 \( \text{Qc}3! \)

A surprising choice in a World Championship game, particularly from Steinitz. This sacrifice had been analyzed by Greco nearly 300 years before but there doesn’t seem to be a record of it being played before Steinitz tried it against Schlechter at Hastings. Instead, 7 \( \text{Qd}2 \) \( \text{Qxd}2+ \) had been analyzed in detail, particularly after Steinitz’s last immortal game, against Bardeleben, also at Hastings.

7 ... \( \text{Qxe}4 \)
8 0–0

Nikolaï Grekov, the early Soviet writer, said Steinitz abandoned his positional moorings when he needed to, and in this case he was “hoping to confuse his opponent with the fruits of his home analysis.”

8 ... \( \text{Qxe}3 \)
9 bxc3?

After 7 \( \text{Qc}3 \) suffered two defeats in two games of this match, it seemed destined for the “refuted” category. But it was saved a year later when Jørgen Moeller, a Danish amateur, published his findings about 9 \( \text{d}5! \).

That ingenious move must have been tested somewhere else, by Moeller or others. But the earliest example of it that we have is from Schlechter, one of the most booked-up players of his era. He tried it against Lasker in the final round of London 1899 and
quickly erred: 9...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}e5 10 bxc3 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xc4
11 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}d4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{f}}}}}5 12 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{g}}}}}g5?? (12 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xc4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xg5
13 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xg7).

Then instead of 13. \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xf3+??
14 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{g}}}}}xf3 and White wins, Black found the killing defense, 13...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{f}}}}}f8! 14 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xg5
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}f6!!

But Lasker was again being too practical. With 12...\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{e}}}}}e6!, instead of 12...
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}f7??, Black would have won more easily, e.g. 12...
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{e}}}}}e6 13 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{f}}}}}3 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{c}}}}}xc3 14
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe6+ \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{f}}}}}f7 15 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}e1 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xd4+ or 13
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{f}}}}}xe4 14 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}d7 15 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}e2
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{b}}}}}f7 and now 16 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}d5 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xd5 17 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}d1 g6!,
as Tchigorin pointed out.

12 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}d5
13 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}e2 0-0-0
14 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}e5

Naturally White wants to swap knights because it increases his chances of
drawing a bishops-of-oppn ending. He also meets the threat of ...
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}f5-d3
because now 14...
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}f5 leads to the
drawish 15 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xc6! \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}xe4 16 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}xe4
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe4 17 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xd8 and 18 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}e1.

14 ... \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}he8
15 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}xc6

Another drawish ending arises from
15 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}e1! because Black has nothing
superior to 15...
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}f5 16 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}e3 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe5
17 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe5 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe5 18 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}xe5 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}xe5 19 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}xe5
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}e6. White's failure to take that
opportunity is one of the many little
turning points in this game.

15 ... \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xc6
16 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}e1

Another case of Lasker pragmatism.
Rather than try to weather the kind of
attack White wants to wage, Black
eliminates all danger, equalizes
development and retains an extra pawn.

Tartakower called this strategy
"economy of means" and said 11...
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{f}}}}}5
12 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}d2 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{f}}}}}7 13 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe4 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe4
14 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}xe4
would have been "much more
dangerous for Black." In fact, that's
what happened in the first game of this
match, which Black won despite
considerable problems following
14...
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}f6 15 \textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{w}}}}}e2.

Black wants to unpin his bishop so
he can play ...
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}d5 or ...
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}f5-d3. An
"economy of means" would be served by
\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}d7/\textit{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{\texttt{d}}}}}ed8.
Why Lasker Matters

16 ... \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{g8!}\)

Black’s move is much deeper and is based on “Find the targets.” Black’s chances are vastly greater in a middlegame compared with the ending, and that means he has to go after g2, the one point White cannot protect for long.

For example, if it were Black’s move 17...\(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{d5}\) 18 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{g4?}\) \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{de8}\) 19 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{d1}\) \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{xe1}+\) 20 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{xe1}\) and 20...h5 21 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{g5}\) f6 or 21 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{g3}\) h4/ 22...h3 breaks through the light squares.

Therefore, White may try to play f2-f3. But thanks to 16...\(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{g8}\) Black can shoot for ...g5-g4!.

17 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{e5}\) b6

18 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{c1}\) g5!!?

Black could have prepared this without sacrifice by means of 18...h6. But both players have targets – and White’s lies at c7. That means Black must avoid 18...h6 19 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{f4!}\) g5 20 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{g3}\) since ...\(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{d5}\) is answered by \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{e7!}\).

19 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{xg5}\!\)!

Of course, not 19 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{xg5??}\) h6 20 d5 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{xd5}\) and wins. But ignoring the sack with 19 f3 was a serious alternative. The drawback is that it sentences White to abject passivity. He’s been forcing matters since 10 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{a3}\) but would have to acknowledge that a new phase has begun and he must make quiet moves, if not passes.

Black, on the other hand, could improve his position with ...h6, ...\(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{e5}\), ...f6, ...\(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{b7}\), and ...h5-h4. To stop ...h3 from wiping out his defensive base, White would play h2-h3. But that guarantees that .. f5 and ...g4 will open plenty of kingside real estate.

19 ... \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{xg5}\)

20 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{xg5}\) \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{g8}\)

Black probably saw this far when he played 18 .g5 and liked what he saw. The position is theoretically even by various measures. But not by margin for error. Black can afford a few mistakes and still be able to draw an ending. White, however, can avoid disaster only by finding some difficult moves.

For example, 23 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{h5!}\) and 23 ...\(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{h1}\) 24 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{h3}\) has been found to be White’s best. But how many players are willing to bet their future on such an artificial-looking defense? Steinitz prefers the logical plan of safeguarding his king at h2.

23 h3 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{h5}\)

Black’s winning ideas now include ...f6, with or without a sacrifice, e.g 24 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{e5}\) f6! 25 \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{xf6}\) \(\textit{\text{\#}}\text{b2}\) and wins.
24 \( \text{b}h2 \) \( \text{g}6 \\
25 \text{w}e2 \\

The threat was 25...\text{e}6 26 \text{w}-moves \text{axel} 27 \text{wxel} \text{wb}2+. \\
25 ... \text{f}6 \\
26 \text{h}4 \text{c}6 \\

Black’s basic plan is ...\text{wd}5 followed by overloading the defenses of h1 and g2 with ...\text{g}8-e8. The choice White faces is between a passive defense, such as \text{w}f2-f1-f2, and creating a flight square at g3.

If White goes passive, Black can try other ideas such as ...\text{f}5 and ...h5 followed by repositioning his rook via d5. If it gets to b2 or a2, the game is over.

27 \text{g}4 \text{wd}5 \\
28 \text{w}f2? \\

This turns out to be the losing move. After 28 \text{f}5 \text{h}6? there is a trap (29 \text{w}f2? \text{hxh}4). But after 29 \text{g}3! White’s crisis is ended (29...\text{wf}3 30 \text{wd}2!).

The real test is 28...\text{g}8, which threatens 29...h5. Having said “A” with 28 \text{f}5, White has virtually forced himself to add “B” with 29 \text{axf}6 and 29...\text{wf}3 (threatening ...\text{f}4+) 30 \text{e}5.

This works because 30 ...h5 31 \text{we}2 \text{wc}5? loses to 32 d5. Black can seek a draw with 31...hxg4 32 hxg4 \text{h}8+ 33 \text{hxh}8 \text{w}f4+ 35 \text{h}3 \text{f}3 – or take his chances with 32 ...\text{wd}5.

28 ... \text{h}5! \\
29 \text{g}5 \\

After 29 \text{f}5 \text{g}8 White is overextended and facing ...hxg4, e.g 30 \text{g}1 hxg4 31 \text{hxg}4 \text{wh}1+ 32 \text{g}3 \text{eh}8.

29 ... \text{fxg}5 \\

Now 30 \text{fxg}5 \text{g}8 followed by \text{f}8+ is powerful. For instance,

31 \text{e}5 \text{wh}1+ 32 \text{g}3 \text{f}8! 33 \text{xf}8? \text{w}g2+ 34 \text{f}4 \text{f}3 mate or 33 \text{e}5 \text{xf}5 34 \text{xf}5 \text{e}1+ 35 \text{f}2 \text{xc}3+ 36 \text{h}2 \text{wd}3 with a winning ending because of ...\text{c}3.

30 \text{axg}5 \\

White threatens to seal the kingside with 31 \text{h}4

30 ... \text{h}4! \\

But he’s lost because there is no flight square at \text{g}3

31 \text{f}1 \\

You can often tell when you’re nearing the end of a nice game because pretty variations appear in the notes. Here there is 31 \text{e}1 \text{g}5! 32 \text{fxg}5 \text{wd}6+ and 31 \text{wd}2 \text{e}6! 32 \text{f}1 \text{e}3! (threatening ...\text{g}3) 33 \text{hxh}4 \text{we}6 and wins (Schiffers).

31 ... \text{g}8 \\
32 \text{wd}2 \\

White is nearly out of playable moves (32 \text{wc}2? \text{xc}5 33 \text{fxg}5 \text{wd}6+ or 32 \text{e}1 \text{e}8 33 \text{e}1 \text{e}3 34 \text{hxh}4 \text{wh}4).

32 ... \text{a}5!?

A typical zugzwang try. The more direct route is 32 ...\text{e}8, threatening 33...\text{e}3!. After 33 \text{f}5 \text{g}8! White finds himself in a position much like the game’s finish and loses after 34 a3 a5 35 a4 \text{g}8, for example

33 \text{a}4? \\

White is hanging on after 33 \text{f}2! \text{e}8 34 \text{g}1 because 33...\text{axh}4 34 \text{g}2! allows him to play an ending.

33 ... \text{e}8! \\

Now the threat of ...\text{e}3! and ...\text{we}6 decides. For example, 34 \text{hxh}4 \text{wh}5 35 \text{e}1 \text{wh}4 or 35 \text{f}2 \text{e}2 36 \text{e}1 \text{f}3 and mates.

34 \text{f}5 \text{g}8!
Another mystery: Several authorities, including Whyld who cited the *Deutsche Wochenschach*, say White resigned here. That makes sense because 35...\texttt{g1} allows 35...\texttt{gxg}5! 36 \texttt{Wxg5} \texttt{Wd6}+ 37 \texttt{g3} \texttt{hxg}3+ 38 \texttt{Wxg3}. Thanks to the extra tempo on the queenside Black would win with 38...b5! 39 axb5 \texttt{Wxg3}+ 40 \texttt{Wxg3} \texttt{e8} and queens.

But Khalifman/Soloviov give five other moves from the diagram: 35 \texttt{He1} \texttt{Wxf5} 36 \texttt{He5} \texttt{e3} 37 d5 \texttt{Wg3}+ 38 \texttt{h1} \texttt{Wxe5} 39 dxe6+ \texttt{Hxe6} Resigns. Spoilsports.

Another contemporary source, *La Strategie*, also gives that version but adds one remarkable fact. The game lasted three hours and 40 minutes. But Lasker took only 58 minutes of it to create one of the most amazing examples of winning technique.

26

Lasker was a money player in the various meanings of the term. Ever since his days at the Berlin teahouse he thought of chess in terms of economic benefit. When he needed money he came back to the board. When he could afford not to, he spent time on his other loves, mathematics, philosophy and eventually his future wife Martha. For most of 1897-98 he was occupied in his studies at Heidelberg University. Only the promise of good prize money at a London tournament in the summer of 1899 lured him to chess again.

**Lasker – Lee**

London 1899

*Caro-Kann Defense, Classical Variation (B19)*

1 e4 c6
2 d4 d5
3 \texttt{Cc3} dxe4
4 \texttt{Cxe4} \texttt{f5}
5 \texttt{Cg3} \texttt{g6}
6 \texttt{Ff3} \texttt{d7}

Max Weiss had brought the Caro-Kann into master chess in 1883 but his opponents responded with moves like 3 e5 and 2 \texttt{Cc3} d5 3 exd5. The only 4...\texttt{f5} game before this one seems to be Charousek-Popiel, Cologne 1898, which varied with 6...e6 7 h4 h6 8 \texttt{d3} \texttt{xd3} 9 \texttt{Wxd3} \texttt{Cxd7} 10 \texttt{Cf4} \texttt{Gf6} 11 0-0-0. If you were playing the Caro-Kann for the first time would it occur to you that 7 h4 and queenside castling was best?

7 h4 h6
8 \texttt{d3} \texttt{xd3}
9 \texttt{Wxd3} \texttt{Gf6}
10 \texttt{d2} e6
11 0-0-0 \texttt{Wc7}
12 \texttt{He1}

Caro-Kann experts have all but exhausted the permutations involving \texttt{b1}, c2-c4 and \texttt{We2} in the search for the proper move order for White. Lasker’s setup is based more on common sense than calculation. He wants to restrain ...e5 and support \texttt{He5}.

12 ... 0-0-0
13 \texttt{Wb3}

This transfer of the queen off the d-file, with \texttt{Wa4} and \texttt{a5} in mind, was later revived by Alonso Zapata, with middling success.
13 ... d6!

A basic Caro-Kann theme: Black threatens to win a pawn (...xdg3) and prepares to exchange bishops (...f4).

14 c2

Zapata's idea was 14 wa4, threatening wxa7, and then 14...b8 15 d5 db6 16 xb6. But after 16...xb6 17 c4 b5! Black is in fine shape.

14 ... g4

A better way of exploiting White's last was 14...e4 15 e3 d6! and 16...g4.

15 f1 df6

But with ...e4 coming up, Black has still managed to equalize.

16 wa4 b8

Now 17 a5 b6 18 e1 is solid but unambiguous.

17 c4

Today we take c2-c4 for granted in the Caro-Kann. But at the time it seemed daring to push the pawns in front of White's king. The virtues are largely tactical: Reinfeld/Fine recommended 17...e5 but this is refuted by 18 c5! e7 19 dxe5 dxe5 20 Nxe5 (20...Qxe5 21 Bf4).

17 ... we7

In the curious annotation style of the day, the tournament book said Black "remains with a cramped game by reason of this retirement." It recommended 17...c5 18 c3 f4 19 d5 xd2+ 20 xd2 wb6, which is excellent for Black. White may do better with 19 d5 exd5 20 cxd5 xd2+ 21 xd2 although the d-pawn may be more a source of weakness than of strength after 21...a6.

18 c3 e7

Black doesn't seem to know whether he should be playing for ...e5 or ...c5, so he returns to the ...f4 idea. But both 18...c5 and 18...e5 were good.

For instance, 18...e5 19 c5 xe7 20 dxe5 dxe5 21 xe5 xe5 and if 22 fe1 then 22...wc7 23 xe5 xd2!. Of course, 18...wc7 admits that Black has just wasted two moves. But the Caro-Kann is so solid it can forgive losses of time.

19 g3!

With his knight transferred to c3 White is thinking of a pawn storm, b2-b4 followed by c4-c5 and b4-b5. But 19 b4 f4 renders that harmless, e.g. 20 b1 xd2 21 xd2 f4+ followed by ...e4 or ...e5.

19 ... wc8

This allows the queen to go to f5 after ...e5 and it frees a square for the bishop (compared with 19...e5? 20 c5 f7 21 dxe5 dxe5 22 xe5 and f4 once more). It also averts attacks on the queen, such as 19...c5? 20 b5 wb6 21 a5.

20 b4
20 ... e5?
What the Caro-Kann can’t forgive is opening the position without proper preparation. As Khalifman/Soloviov pointed out, Black can afford 20...\textit{he8} and 21 \textit{b1 e5}. After 22 dxe5 \textit{dxe5} 23 \textit{dxe5 dxe5} 24 \textit{e3 f5+!} White’s king is the more vulnerable one.

Another point is that 21 c5 b5! (otherwise 22 b5!) 22 \textit{dxb5 cxb5+} 23 \textit{xb5+ a8} is an unsound sacrifice.

21 \textit{dxe5} \textit{dxe5}
22 \textit{e3!}

“A typical Laskerian position,” wrote W.H. Cozens in \textit{The King Hunt}. In reality, king hunts and combinations like this were very rare in Lasker games, and Cozens, like other players, found in Lasker what he wanted to see. Botvinnik saw Lasker as the first great master of pre-game preparation which Botvinnik considered his own strong suit. Others who liked defense or endgames found games they called “typical” of him. Game 27, for example was described by the tournament book as a “true Laskerian game.”

22 ... \textit{dxe4}

A nice feature of 22 \textit{e3} is that the strongest of the three threats is actually 23 \textit{xa7+! c7} 24 \textit{b6+! xb6} 25 \textit{a5 mate}.

If Black had met that with 22...a6 he would have allowed 23 \textit{xd6! xd6}
24 \textit{xe5} or 23...\textit{xf3} 24 \textit{wd1} with a winning attack.

23 \textit{xa7+ c7}
24 \textit{d4!}

In Kasparov’s first book, a monograph on the \textit{f5} Caro-Kann, he concluded Black was lost after 22 \textit{c3}. He didn’t give variations but we can see 24...\textit{b6} loses again to 25 \textit{xb6+}, while 24...\textit{e5} succumbs to 25 \textit{dxe5 dxe5} 26 \textit{a5+}.

24 ... \textit{b5}

Black is also lost after 24...\textit{w5} 25 \textit{xc4 xD3} in view of 26 \textit{b5 d7} 27 \textit{xd6 xD6} 28 \textit{c5+ d7} (28...\textit{c7} 29 \textit{b6+}) 29 \textit{d1+ d5} 30 \textit{xd5+! xd5} 31 \textit{d4}.

25 \textit{dxb5+}

This is so obvious that it hardly deserves the exclam usually awarded it. There was no risk and no alternative even remotely promising.

25 ... \textit{xb5}
26 \textit{wb5 a3}
27 \textit{wa5+ b7+}
28 \textit{c5!}

This wins the knight back. The rest is interesting only because of the way Black’s king walks the plank to the h-file.

28 ... \textit{xe5}
29 \textit{bxc5 xd4}
30 \textit{xd4}
Now 30 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}a8 31 e6+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}b8 32 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}b6+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}e8 33 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xf5 wins with its threats of mate on d6 or e7. The finish was 30...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}d8 31 e6+! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}c8 32 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}a8+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}c7 33 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}a7+! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}d6 34 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}x\textbf{a}3+ 35 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}d5 35 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}d1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}b6 36 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}f3+ 37 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}e6 37 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}d6+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}f5 38 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}d3+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}g4 39 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}e5+ Resigns

"Quite a problem-like ending" said the tournament book of 39...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}h3 40 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}f1+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}h2 41 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}f3 mate and 39...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}h5 40 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}f3+.

27

Like Botvinnik, Lasker always seemed to play better against an opponent after they had met a few times over the board. This learning curve was evident in his record with Jackson Showalter. They first played in December 1892 in what was supposed to be a three-game match but was broken off after one win apiece. The two men agreed to include those results as part of a 10-game match for a $1,000 prize the following April. After one more victory for each player and one draw, Lasker had figured out the U.S. Champion. He easily won the final four games because he knew Showalter’s weaknesses, such as endgame skill.

\textbf{Showalter – Lasker}

\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{London}}} 1899

\textit{\textbf{Stonewall Attack (D00)}}

1 \quad d4  \quad d5
2 \quad e3  \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}f6
3 \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}d3  \quad \textit{\textbf{Q}}d6!

For once one of Tchigorin’s c-pawn blocking ideas was good. This one, introduced by the Russian at Hastings 1895, threatens both 4...e5 and 4...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}b4 5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}c2 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f5.

4 \quad f4  \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}b4
5 \quad \textit{\textbf{Q}}d2

This was Showalter’s improvement on 5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}f3. He tries to force 5...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}xd3+ 6 exd3, which returns pawn-control of e4 to him, and also creates the opportunity to squeeze the queenside with b2-b4.

5 \quad ...  \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}g4

Yet another case of Lasker not wanting to play his opponent’s game.

6 \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}f3  \quad e6
7 \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}xb4!  \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}xb4+
8 \quad c3

White has gotten a good version of the Stonewall since he’s solved his queen’s bishop problem.

8 \quad ...  \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}d6
9 \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}bd2  \quad 0-0
10 \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}b1

"Why not 10 queen to B2, which leaves the queen’s rook in play?" asked the tournament book. The answer is White wants to avoid 10 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}c2 c5 and ...c4!, which drives his bishop off the diagonal that Black will seize with ...\textit{\textbf{Q}}f5.

10 \quad ...  \quad c5
11 \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}e5  \quad \textit{\textbf{Q}}h5

From now on g2-g4, either with preparation or as a sacrifice, is an idea. For example, 12 g4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}xg4 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}xh7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}h8 looks promising. But it turns out that White has more weaknesses than Black (14 ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}h4+ 14 ...\textit{\textbf{Q}}xe3) and 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{W}}}xg4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xg4 15 0-0 f5 is lost.

12 \quad 0-0  \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}c8
13 \quad \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}df3  \quad \textit{\textbf{Q}}e7

Again 14 g4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}xg4 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}xh7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}h8 comes to mind. But 16 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Q}}}xg4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xg4 17 \textit{\textbf{Q}}d3 \textit{\textbf{Q}}h3 18 \textit{\textbf{Q}}f2 cxd4 19 cxd4 g6 favors Black (...\textit{\textbf{Q}}g7/...\textbf{h}8)

14 \quad h3

White has an attractive alternative in 14 \textit{\textbf{Q}}g5 because the bishop might be caught by g2-g4. For example, 14...h6 15 \textit{\textbf{Q}}h7!? \textit{\textbf{Q}}xh7 16 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xh7+ \textit{\textbf{Q}}xh7 17 g4 or 14...g6 15 h3 and 16 g4
Why Lasker Matters

A testing defense is 14...h6 15 \( \text{Q}h7 \text{xf6}! \) after which 16 \( \text{Q}xh6+ \text{xf6} \) 17 \( \text{Q}f3 \) cxd4 18 cxd4 f5 is a tad better for Black. White can’t play 16 h3 and 17 g4 instead because of 16...\( \text{Q}xe5 \) 17 fxe5 \( \text{Q}e4 \), winning a piece.

14 ... \( \text{Q}xf3 \)

There was no reason to allow 15 g4 \( \text{Q}g6 \) 16 \( \text{Q}xg6 \).

15 \( \text{Q}xf3 \) g6!

Both players begin the middlegame with a good bishop in a pawn structure that is unlikely to change. White only hurts his chances by playing c3-e4/.. cxd4, while Black would be improving White’s pawn structure with ..cxd4 exd4.

And ...c4 is double-edged. In a similar position in their match, Showalter as Black managed to follow ...c4 quickly with ...b5-b4. But White’s kingside attack arrived first.

16 g4!

The plan of g4-g5/\( \text{W}e1-h4 \) and \( \text{Q}g4-f6+ \) looks promising.

16 ... \( \text{Q}c7 \)

Black waits for \( \text{W}e1 \) so that he can respond ...\( \text{Q}e4 \) and ..f6.

17 g5 \( \text{Q}h5 \)

18 \( \text{Q}g4 \) \( \text{Q}h8 \)

This is a useful move that takes the sting out of \( \text{Q}xg6 \) sacrifices (after ..f6).

19 \( \text{W}e1 \)

White’s plan is to play \( \text{W}h4 \) and \( \text{Q}f6 \), since ..\( \text{Q}xh6/\text{xf6} \) grants him a relatively free hand for \( \text{Q}f2, \text{W}g5, \text{Q}h1, \) h3-h4-h5 and \( \text{Q}h3 \).

19 ... \( \text{Q}f6 \! \)

Black shouldn’t wait for 20 \( \text{W}h4 \) because then 20...f6 21 exf6 \( \text{Q}xf6 \) 22 \( \text{Q}e5 \) is nice for White.

20 gxf6 \( \text{Q}xf6 \)

21 \( \text{W}h4 \)

White would have an easy time drawing a bishops-of-ops ending (21..\( \text{Q}xg4 \) 22 \( \text{W}xe7 \)). Avoiding that with 21...\( \text{Q}e4 \) 22 \( \text{W}xe7 \) is risky because \( \text{Q}xe4 \) will give Black a distant pawn he can’t defend. But how else can Lasker play to win?

22 ... \( \text{Q}h5 \! ? \)

22 \( \text{W}xe7 \) \( \text{Q}xe7 \)

23 \( \text{Q}af1 \) \( \text{Q}g7 \)

24 \( \text{Q}e5 \)

White has no weaknesses and no bad pieces. All that Black has going for him is greater freedom in changing the pawn structure – and being the superior player. His task is to create a situation in which being the superior player will count.

A modern player might choose 24..c4 25 \( \text{Q}c2 \) b5 followed by ..\( \text{Q}b7 \) and ..b4. Lasker, however, has a different view.

24 ... cxd4

25 exd4

After 25 cxd4 \( \text{Q}c7 \) he would enjoy all the winning chances.

25 ... \( \text{Q}c7 \)

26 \( \text{Q}f2 \)

White prepares to bring his king to e3.

26 ... \( \text{Q}xe5 \)

And now 27 dxe5 \( \text{Q}c7 \) loses a pawn

94
27  fxe5  xf3
28  xf3  f7!
29  xf7+  xf7

30  f4
31  f1  g5!
32  f3!

White gets counterplay from his well-placed king and the prospect of c3-c4, which threatens to create a passed pawn. For instance, 32...h5 33 c4! dxc4 34 xe4 xf3 35 d5 and now 35...f4 36 dxe6+ xe6 37 xe4 draws because of the 38 f5 threat.

Black improves with 36...xe7! 37 e4 h4 because the h-pawn is too fast (38 f3 g6 39 e4 h3). But White can also improve, with 36 d6!. Then one of Black's pieces must protect e6 and/or stop d6-d7, while the other tries in vain to advance the kingside pawns.

32  g6
33  h4

It makes sense to eliminate this weakness. But an easier draw was available from 33 c4! dxc4 34 xe4. It's important for the bishop to be able to drive Black's king back (34...f5 35 b3! and e2+). The bishop can also defend against the h-pawn in lines such as 33...h5 34 exd5 exd5 35 h4! and now 35...f5 36 hgx5 xg5 37 b5! draws by a tempo. Compare this with what happens in the game.

33  h5!
34  b3?

This was the best window of opportunity for 34 c4! dxc4 35 xe4 and then 35...f5 36 hgx5 xe5 37 b3! so he can force the king off f5. Black is winning after 37...h4 38 e2 b6 39 e4 h3! 40 xe3 exf2+ and is close after 39...d1 h5 40 xe3 xe5 and g5.

34  f5

The king threatens to break in (35...g4+ 36 xe3 xe4 or 36 xe3 g3 37 f3 g2).

35  hgx5  xg5
Black’s new plan is to advance his pawn to h3. When White defends with $g3$, Black answers ...f5. Then $xh3$ would lose the pawn-ending and a bishop-move will allow ...e4-e3.

36  c4

White opts for active defense and comes close to eliminating all the Black pawns. An alternative was 36 a4 h4 37 a5 $f5 38 b4$. It looks like Black can make progress with 38...h3 39 $g3$ e4.

But he can’t run White out of moves with 40 $b5$ e3 41 f1 a6?? because of 42 $xa6! bxa6 43 b5$. And the pawn-ending of 41...e2+ 42 xe2 $xe2$ becomes a difficult $w$-ending after 43 c4!

36  dxc4
37  $f5$

Even here it’s unclear if 38 a4 a5 39 c4 h4 40 $b5$ is lost.

38  $g3$
39  d5!

The only chance.

39  ...  exd5
40  e6!  $xe6$
41  exd5

A more practical try is 41 $g2+$ because it presents Black with a choice. Then 41...$d4$ looks right but after 42 exd5 $c5 43 h4 a5 44 xh5$ the passed d-pawn becomes a factor (44...b5 45 d6 $e5 46 c6$).

The correct reply, 41 ... $e5 42 exd5$ $c5$, transposes into the game.

41  ...  $e5$

There were still ways to draw (41. $xd5?? 42 g2+$)

42  $g2+$  $e5$!
43  $h4$

Also doomed is 43 $f3 b5 44 xh5$ $e4+ 45 f3 c3 46 a3 f1$.  

43  ...  a5
44  $xh5$ b5
45  $g4$ b4
46  $f3$ a4

Resigns

In view of 47...b3 48 axb3 a3.

28

There are tournaments in which everything comes easy to a world champion Opponents who had given him trouble in the past suddenly look helpless. This happened with Kasparov at Linares 1992-93, Fischer in 1970-71 and Alekhine at San Remo 1930 and Bled 1931. It also happened to Lasker at London 1899 and Paris 1900, the two strongest events of that era. He scored 2½½ against each of his rivals - Pillsbury, Maroczy, Schlechter, Tchigorin, and Janowsky – in the two tournaments.

Tchigorin – Lasker
London 1899
French Defense (C00)

1  e4  e6
2  $e2$ $e6$!

Lasker was so averse to playing his opponent’s favorite opening that he was willing to transpose into a double-KP game a tempo down. The text may be more exact than 2...e5 because that would allow a King’s Gambit (3 f4) in
which the extra $\text{We}2$ may be useful.

3 $\text{De}3$

Since 2. $\text{De}c6$ was first played against him, by Teichmann at Hastings, Tchigorin had been trying to find a way to make $\text{We}c2$ count. He had had a little success with 3 $\text{Df}3/4 \text{g}3$, that is, with a King’s Indian Reversed. But he wanted more than that and had experimented with mixtures of c2-c3, d2-d4 and even f2-f4.

3 ... $\text{e}5$
4 $\text{g}3$ $\text{Df}6$
5 $\text{g}2$ $\text{e}5$
6 $\text{d}3$ $\text{d}6$

Black can gain the tempo back with ...$\text{Dd}4$ at any point. But the knight will be driven back, e.g. 6...$\text{Dd}4$ 7 $\text{Wd}1 \text{d}6$?! 8 $\text{Da}4$ and c2-c3

7 $\text{Ag}5$

To modern eyes this looks like the wrong bishop to swap. We’d prefer 7 $\text{Da}4$, 7 $\text{Ec}3$ or even 7 $\text{Df}3$ (7...$\text{g}4$ 8 h3 $\text{Dd}4$ 9 $\text{Wd}1$).

7 ... $\text{h}6$
8 $\text{Ax}f6$ $\text{Wx}f6$
9 $\text{Dd}5$

The alternative, 9 $\text{Da}4$ $\text{d}4$ 10 c3, is inconsistent and punishable (by 10...$\text{Wx}f2+11 \text{Wx}f2 \text{Ax}f2+12 \text{Ax}f2 \text{b}5$ with advantage, according to Schlechter).

9 ... $\text{Wd}8$

The diagram recalls a Giuoco Piano (1 e4 $\text{e}5$ 2 $\text{Df}3$ $\text{Dc}6$ 3 $\text{Dc}4$ $\text{Dc}5$ 4 $\text{Df}3$ $\text{Df}6$ 5 d3 $\text{d}6$ 6 $\text{Ag}5$ $\text{h}6$ 7 $\text{Dx}f6$ $\text{Dxf}6$ 8 $\text{Dd}5$ $\text{Wd}8$). The important differences are the better placed White bishop in the Giuoco and the inability of him to play a favorable c2-c3/b2-b4 here. But he has a good alternative in f2-f4. Black lacks an easy way to unleash his two bishops.

10 $\text{c}3$ $\text{De}7$

A year later at Paris, Tchigorin reached a similar position (no $\text{Ag}2$ or ..$\text{d}6$) against Burn and obtained good play after 9...$\text{d}6$ 10 b4! $\text{Ab}6$ 11 a4 a6 12 $\text{Dxb}6$ $\text{cb}6$.

11 $\text{Dxe}7$

But here 11 b4 $\text{Dxd}5$! favors Black’s pawn structure (12 $\text{exd}5$ $\text{Ab}6$ 13 d4 $\text{Wd}7$).

11 ... $\text{Wxe}7$
12 0-0-0 $\text{Dd}7$

It’s easy to skip past the two decisions just made. White castled queenside rather than the modest plan of $\text{Df}3$, 0-0, $\text{Ah}4$ and $\text{Ah}1/\text{f}2-\text{f}4$ or $\text{Df}5$. Black, on the other hand, could have castled kingside and aimed for a quick ...$\text{d}5$ with ...$\text{e}6$ But that makes him vulnerable to f2-f4-f5.

White’s decision isn’t particularly bad and Black’s isn’t necessarily the best. But the balance begins to tip in Black’s favor.

13 $\text{f}4$ 0-0-0
14 $\text{Df}3$ $\text{Ab}6$
15 $\text{Ah}1$

Marco, in Wiener Schachzeitung, recommended 15 f5 and d3-d4. Tchigorin tried that in a later game that went 15...$\text{Ab}8$ 16 $\text{Af}1$, with mixed chances.

15 ... $\text{f}6$
16 $\text{Ab}1$ $\text{He}8$
Why Lasker Matters

The 19th century players lacked a proper sense for handling dynamic positions but they had a good feel for timing their play in passive centers. This threatens 17...exf4 18 gxh4 d5 because 19 e5 would allow 19..d4!, leaving White overextended. Black will meet 17 fxec5? with 17...dxe5, exposing the d-pawn.

17  f5

Closing the position this way had served Tchigorin many times. But that was when his opponent castled kingside. Here there is no urgency for Black to anticipate g3-g4-g5.

17  ...  d4
18  e1  b8
19  d2  a6
20  f3

A good idea, in connection with \[g2/d1-b3. But the bishop never moves again.

20  ...  a7
21  h4  e8!
22  e4  ed8
23  e3  e8
24  fd1

Now that Black has no rook at e8, the d3-d4 plan makes more sense. So does \[e1 followed by \[d1-b3. But whatever plan he chooses, White should have inserted 24 h5 first, to trade off the bishop before Black could plant his on the g8-a2 diagonal.

24  ...  f7!

Now Black will meet \[h5 with \[g8.

25  c4?

A grave positional error that surrenders d4 and ensures that Black will be the one to determine when and how to open the position. Tchigorin must have considered 25 d4. Perhaps he was concerned about 25..c6, after which the bishops come alive following 26...exd4 27 cxd4 d5 or just 26...d5?!

\[c2
27  d1  c7!

26  d4
27  d1  c7!

What White wanted was 27 b5 28 cxb5. Black sees that his queen should be at a5 or a7 before the break, e.g. 28 e1 b6 29 d1 a7

28  d1  a5
29  c3  b5!
30  b3?

This violates the "principle of economy" that Lasker attributed to Steinitz: A defender should "make the least concession that suffices, not an ounce more" to maintain a line of resistance. White's move safeguards one target, the c4-pawn at the expense of weakening three others, b2, a3 and e3.

30  ...  d7!
31  cxb5

The idea behind 30 b3 was to maintain control of the light squares but
White immediately reneges. The problem is that on 31 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}e1}, with the idea of 32 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{R}}}e2, the attack rolls on with 31...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}xc4 32 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}xc4 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}b7. Then 33 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{R}}}e2 allows 33...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb3+ 34 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}a1 mate.

White can try another inconsistent move, 33 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}e2. But after 33...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}b4 34 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}d1 a5 and ...a4, the line of resistance collapses.

31 ... \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb5
32 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}d5 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}b7

A common criticism of Lasker is that he deliberately chose the complex candidate even if it was objectively inferior to a simpler one. Euwe said “his overall strategy” was to “make the second best move in order to complicate”.

Here, however, he chooses the simple move that crowns a strategy he began at moves 25-29. There is no defense to 33...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}dd8, forcing the knight to move, and ...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a8/...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb3.

\textit{Nevertheless his move is second best} Black could have won faster with 32...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}c5 33 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}c3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a7 because \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb3 is imminent. The key line is 33 b4 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb4 34 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc6 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc6 35 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc6 after which 35...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}c5 traps the rook and \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}b7 wins it.

33 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}g4
Or 33 b4 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}a3 followed by 34. \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a8 and 35...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb4+.

33 ... \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}dd8
34 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}c7

White must have known Black’s last move was not an oversight. But, there was nothing better (34 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}c3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a8! and 35...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb3).

34 ... \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb3

Now 35 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc6 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc6! 36 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc6 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}b4! and a discovered check will win.

35 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}xc8 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc8!

36 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}d2

Also lost is 36 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}d2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{F}}}f7 and ...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}b4+ or ...b4-b3, e.g. 37 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}cc2 b4 and 37 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}h1 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}c3 38 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}b2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a8!.

36 ... \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}a3

When you’re about to cap a brilliancy prize candidate you don’t settle for a mere won endgame (36...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc2+ 37 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}b4+ 38 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}b3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb3+ 39 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a8).

37 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}h1

White could have avoided the game’s pretty finish with 37 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}e1 and 38 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}e2. But he loses faster (37 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}e1 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a8 38 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}e2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc2+ 39 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a4 and ...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}b4+).

37 ... \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a8
38 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}h2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xa2+!

He still had 38...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc2+ 39 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xc2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}a4.

39 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xa2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}b3+
40 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}c1

The White bishop finally becomes a factor: 40 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}b2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb2 41 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xb2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xd3+ and \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xf3.

40 ... \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xa2
41 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xa2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}f3+
42 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{W}}}d2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{A}}}xd3!

Resigns
Why Lasker Matters

29

Lasker’s final games with Steinitz became increasingly one-sided. This can be explained, of course, by Steinitz’s decline London 1899 was his worst tournament and he lost twice to players like Pillsbury and Schlechter against whom he had winning records. But another explanation is that Lasker was finally able to directly challenge his predecessor’s chess philosophy. He had probed for weaknesses in Steinitz’s theories in their matches and chipped away at them at Hastings and St. Petersburg. In their last game he tried to refute a basic Steinitzian tenet, about the value of a solid center.

Steinitz – Lasker
London 1899

Vienna Game, Steinitz Variation (C29)

1 e4 e5

2 Scoped f6

3 f4

Black’s victory was so impressive that the tournament book concluded that 3 f4 had been refuted.

3 ... d5

4 d3!?

This was Steinitz’s favorite, rather than 4 fxe5 Scoped 5 f3, and he’d used it to defeat Blackburne twice and Chigorin once. He believed in general that if there was only one center pawn, on the fourth rank and protected, it must confer an advantage. That’s the thinking behind 4...dx5 5 fxe5 Scoped 6 Scoped 7 d4 and c2-c3

4 ...Scoped

5 fxe5

This leads to a similar center but after a trade of knights that helps Black.

5 ... Scoped

6 d4 Scoped

Tartakower said 6... Scoped 7 e5 Scoped was equal. However Black is a little better after 8 Scoped b4 (or the similar 6...Scoped 7 e5 Scoped 8 d3 b4 9 b2 g4)

7 exd5 xxd5

8 xxd5

Steinitz continues according to his canon, but he is overvaluing pawn structure at the expense of centralization and development. More promising was 8 c4 xxc3 9 bxc3.

8 ... b5

9 xfc3 g4

10 e2

Black could use his lead in development to try to liquidate the d-pawn (...e7 and ...c5). That could lead to equality.

10 ... 0-0-0!

Instead, he goes for the crush. A lot of analytical ink has been devoted to how badly off White would be after 11 0-0 and then 11...xf3 12 xf3 xd4+ 13 xd4 xd4 14 c3 d8 15 g4+ b8 (16 xf7? xe5).

Better is 12 xf3 since 12...xd4+ 13 xd4 xd4 allows 14 xf7 with no problems, and 12...e5 13 f4 or 12...c5 13 c3 doesn’t mean much

11 c3

One opponent had played 4 e6 against Steinitz before and he varied with 11...xf3 12 xf3 e8+. But 13 xf2 confirmed Steinitz’s view that a king could take of itself and he soon had a major edge (13...a5? 14 b3!).

11 ... d6

Black often avoids this move in King’s Gambit positions because of c2-c4-c5. But White’s position is too loose for that. For example, had White played 11 0-0 d6 12 c4? Black would be on top after 12...e6, e.g. 13 c5+ xc5 or 13 h3 xf3 14 xf3 xc4 and
Why Lasker Matters

14 $xf3  $c5 15 $e3 $h4 16 $g3 $d6

12 0-0 $he8

Not 12...$h5 13 h3 $xh3 because 14 $g5 wins.

13 h3

This position must have pained Steinitz. He has a superior center, a queenside majority and no weaknesses - all the things he cherished. Yet he doesn’t have good move:

His queen’s bishop has no square better than d2. He doesn’t have enough piece play to withstand 13 c4 $e6 14 $d3 $h4. And he can’t play 13 $b3 or 13 $a4 because his bishop hangs at c2. On 13 $d3 $h4 he has nothing better than 14 $e2, after which the loss of time is probably fatal - 14...$h5 15 h3 $g3!, threatening 16 $xe2 $xe2 $xf3+.

13...

$e7

By driving the bishop back, White made $h4 a stronger threat because of his graver kingside weaknesses. And 14 c4 is worse here because of 14...$h5, e.g. 15 $e5 $h4 16 $xd7 $g3! and wins (Ludwig Rellstab).

The brilliance of brilliancy prize games often lies in the unplayed, subjunctive variations like these, not in the moves that occurred on the board.

14 $g5?

The consistent move was 14 $d3, preparing 15 $b3. Black doesn’t have ...$h4 as he did against 13 $d3. But 14...$f4 (15 c4 $h5 16 c5 $xh3+) or 14...$f6 (15 $b3 $h5) promise an advantage.

14 ...

$h4!

White may have seen that 14...$f6 15 $f3 and 16 $e4 would be excellent for him – but completely overlooked this more (or that 15 $f2? $g3 is lost).

15 $f3

It was too early for Steinitz to bite the bullet with 15 $f3 $xf3+ 16 $xf3 $xf3 17 $xf3 since White’s inferiority is obvious after 17...$b5 18 $e1 $xe1+ 19 $xe1 $e8.

But staying in the middlegame was worse (16 $xf3 $h5 17 $e1 $g3 or 17...$e1+ 18 $xe1 $e8 19 $h4 $f5 and ...$e2).

15 ...

$g2!!

On 15...$xe2 16 $xe2 $b5 the trail runs cold (17 $c2 $xf1 18 $xh4!)

16 $xg2 $xh3+

Based on 17 $xh3 $f5+ 18 $g2 (18 $h4? $e4+ is suicide) $g4+ 19 $h1 $h3+ 20 $g1 $g3+ 21 $h1 $e4!.

17 $f2

Neither of Black’s two previous moves would have been hard for a strong combinational master of the era – a Janowsky or a Marshall. They
would have seen that the only forcing continuation, 17...\textit{f}xf1, is double-edged after 18 \textit{w}xf1 and \textit{w}h3+ or c3-c4. For example, 18...\textit{b}b8 19 c4!? \textit{w}e6 20 c5 followed by \textit{f}f4, c4 and \textit{g}g1.

17 ... f6!!

This is the real heart of the combination. Black eliminates defenses based on \textit{g}5 or \textit{g}5 and prepares to drive back the one vital piece, the knight. After 18 \textit{h}h1 \textit{f}f5 he threatens ...g5-g4 as well as 19...\textit{g}3+! 20 \textit{x}g3 \textit{g}4+.

18 \textit{g}g1 g5

The threats include ...g4 and ...\textit{f}5(+). White would like to play 19 \textit{b}b3 but 19...\textit{e}xe2+ 20 \textit{x}xe2 \textit{w}e4+ 20 \textit{f}f2 g4 or 20 \textit{c}c3 \textit{f}f4 is hopeless.

19 \textit{x}g5

Marco said this was a sad necessity, and no one has found a significant improvement.

19 ... \textit{f}xg5
20 \textit{x}g5 \textit{w}e6
21 \textit{w}d3 \textit{f}f4!

White seems to be a move or two from organizing a defense but never gets a chance. Here 22 \textit{h}h5 \textit{w}g4 and 22 \textit{g}7 \textit{f}5 23 \textit{w}c4 \textit{w}c3+ are lost.

The best try – as silly as it seems to a non-computer – is to put the rook at a5 or b5 where it is safer. Black can win material with 22 \textit{a}a5 \textit{g}3+ 23 \textit{x}g3 \textit{w}g4+ 24 \textit{f}f2 \textit{w}g2+ 25 \textit{e}e1 \textit{w}h1+ 26 \textit{d}d2 \textit{w}xa1. The game would go on after 27 \textit{c}c2 but the outcome is definite.

22 \textit{h}h1 \textit{x}g5
23 \textit{f}f3 \textit{f}f6+
24 \textit{x}f3 \textit{f}5!

The rest was an application of tactics and caution: 25 \textit{c}ch7 \textit{w}g6 26 \textit{b}b5 \textit{c}6 27 \textit{a}a5 \textit{e}e7 28 \textit{h}h5 \textit{g}4 29 \textit{g}5 \textit{w}c2+ 30 \textit{g}3 \textit{xf}3 White resigns

30

That game won a “gold medal presented by the Ladies’ Chess Club for the most brilliant game,” the tournament book noted. Lasker had to wait 36 years for his next brilliancy prize at an international event. His fans were getting used to a different Lasker, the one who traded queens in his matches with Steinitz and grabbed pawns at Nuremberg.

Of course, he was the same player who kept offering rooks to Pillsbury in Game 16. The difference was that Lasker rarely seemed to look for combinations as a means of resolving the tensions of a middlegame. He used combinations primarily as a means of shortening an otherwise difficult technical phase. Case in point:

\textbf{Lee – Lasker}
London 1899

\textit{Ruy Lopez, 5 d3 (C77)}

1 e4 e5
2 \textit{d}f3 \textit{c}6
3 \textit{b}b5 a6
4 \textit{a}a4 \textit{f}6
5 d3

Steinitz had developed this quiet move into a no-think opening, just as the Colle System and King’s Indian Reversed became in later eras. White can almost ignore his opponent’s moves while he maneuvers along his first two ranks – \textit{b}bd2-\textit{f}1-\textit{e}3, as well as \textit{w}c2, c2-c3 and \textit{a}c2. He may belatedly castle long as in Steinitz’s celebrated victory over Tchigorin in their second match.

The Steinitz system fell from favor after 1900 and was described as one of those openings that only a Steinitz could play (much as Anderssen’s system in Game 1 seemed to need an Anderssen). But Fischer used it to beat
Vasily Smyslov at Havana 1965 – even though Smyslov followed theory’s recommendation of a quick ...d5 – and the criticism of the Steinitz system was belatedly softened.

5      ...  d6
6      c3  b5
7      c2  g6
8      a4

This doesn’t fit the Steinitz formula because White is more or less giving up on 0-0-0. It works better in other Lopez positions – with d2-d4, rather than d2-d3 – because then White can mount an attack on the b-pawn with d3 and e2.

8      ...  b7
9      bd2  g7
10     f1  d5
11     e2  0-0

Reinfeld/Fine claimed Black is already better but that is much too generous. If he liquidates the center (...dxe4/dxe4) it is White, if anyone, who has an edge

12     g3  d6
13      0-0  f8
14      h3  a5!

This move looks routine because thousands of games since 1899 have made it routine. Usually ...a5 gains a tempo because of the ...xb3 threat. Here it begins a plan of squeezing the enemy center by advancing his d- and c-pawns.

A model example of that strategy was Milic-Spassky from Lyons 1955, the Student Olympiad in which the Soviets revived the then-virtually-unknown Breyer Variation (1 e4 e5 2 f3 d6 3 b5 a6 4 a4 c5 5 0-0 e7 6 b3 b5 7 b3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 b8) as their secret weapon.

Spassky took the initiative after 10 a4 b7 11 d3 d7 12 c2 e8 13 bd2 f8 14 f1 c5 15 g3 g6 16 g5 c7 17 h2 d5 and White’s center collapsed following 18 f3 g7 19 h4 d4! 20 h5 c4!.

Black won after 21 ac1 wb6 22 axb5 axb5 23 b1 ac8 24 a2 a6 25 hgx6 hxg6 26 ed1 g7 27 d2 d5! 28 dxc4 bx4 29 dxd4 d3! 30 b1 exd4.

15      d2  c5
16      fd1

Kibitzer, annotators and other pests recommended 16 b4. But the queenside demonstration is just a weakening after 16...cxb4 17 cxb4 c6 18 fb1 ac8.

The tactical alternative, 16 c4, fails tactically – 16...dxe4! 17 dxe4 ac4 or 17 dxe4 cxe4 18 axa5 af3 19 wxf3 bx4, winning a pawn.

16      ...  c7

Black anticipates 17 c4 and prepares to push either of his center pawns.

17      c1

This looks as artificial as it is, and 17 f1, which was also recommended, is more so. White stops 17...d4 (by means of cxd4/axa5) but he makes the other push stronger.

The are some tactics to justify 17 e1, such as 17...d4? 18 cxd4 cxd4 19 axa5 wxa5 20 axb5, because
20. $\text{W}x\text{b}5$ allows $21 \text{L}a4$. But Black is better after $17...c4!$ because of $18 \text{exd}5 \text{L}x\text{d}5$ (not $18...\text{L}x\text{d}5 19 \text{d}4$) $19 \text{axb}5 \text{cxd}3$.

The best defense is probably the most passive one, $17 \text{axb}5 \text{axb}5 18 \text{b}3$.

17     ...     c4!

Good strategy creates good tactics: Black threatens $18...\text{exd}3 19 \text{L}x\text{d}3 \text{L}b3 20 \text{L}ab1 \text{L}c5$

18     d4?

This is either an oversight, an overly optimistic sacrifice or an acknowledgment that the alternatives looked awful. White was understandably concerned about opening the e-file ($18 \text{exd}5 \text{cx}d3 19 \text{L}x\text{d}3 \text{c}4!$ wins a piece).

But he should try to keep matters under control with $18 \text{cx}e4$ or $18 \text{axb}5 \text{axb}5 19 \text{L}g5$. The former leads to roughly balanced play after $18...\text{L}x\text{c}4 19 \text{L}x\text{c}1 \text{dx}e4$, as does the latter after $19...\text{cx}d3 20 \text{L}x\text{d}3 \text{L}c4 21 \text{L}xa8 \text{L}xa8 22 \text{ex}d5$.

18     ...     \text{L}xe4

19     \text{L}xe4     \text{dx}e4

Even better is $19...\text{exd}4$ since $20 \text{L}x\text{d}4 \text{dx}e4$ offers White no compensation for a pawn.

20     \text{L}xe5

Not $20 \text{L}xe4 \text{exd}4$, which costs him the pinned bishop.

20     ...     \text{L}xe5

White's position is secure after $20...\text{f}6 21 \text{L}g4$. Winning the pawn is safe because White can never get his queen and bishop to work together to exploit the d4-h8 diagonal.

21     \text{dxe}5     \text{W}xe5

22     \text{L}e3     \text{L}c6

The rest of the game is an example of how a tactician anticipates an opponent's tactics until he gets a chance to finish him off with a shot.

23     \text{b}3

White is desperate to obtain open lines for his bishops, e.g. $23...\text{cx}b3 24 \text{L}x\text{b}3 \text{L}a5 25 \text{L}d4$. But that initiative would only be temporary ($25...\text{W}g5 26 \text{L}e3 \text{W}f5 27 \text{L}c2 \text{L}c4 28 \text{L}d4 \text{W}g5$).

23     ...     \text{L}a5

24     \text{b}4     \text{L}c6

25     \text{L}d7     \text{L}e7

26     \text{L}d1     \text{L}d8

27     \text{L}x\text{d}8+     \text{L}x\text{d}8

28     \text{axb}5     \text{axb}5

29     \text{W}d2

White's scramble for compensation shows the usual short-term results ($29 \text{L}d4 \text{W}f5 30 \text{L}c5$ runs out of fuel quickly after $30...\text{L}e8 31 \text{L}a5 \text{L}c6$).

29     ...     \text{L}c6

30     \text{h}4?

This looks like a "gotta-do-something" move. White should sit on the position with $30 \text{L}d1$, possibly followed by $\text{W}d6$, to avert a positional wipeout from ...f5-f4. The text makes that advance stronger.

30     ...     \text{L}c6

31     \text{L}a6     \text{L}d7

32     \text{W}e1     \text{L}b7

33     \text{L}a5     \text{f}5!
Rudolf Spielmann had just turned 11 when Lasker became world champion and didn’t play him until Lasker was in his 40s. When he got a chance to analyze with the grand old man Spielmann was amazed at how much he saw. “No sooner had I hit on a good idea or a pretty combination than Lasker waved it aside,” he recalled. “For he had already discarded it in his thoughts long ago!” Spielmann’s appreciation of Lasker was evident much earlier, in his analysis of this game.

Burn – Lasker
Paris 1900
Queen’s Gambit Declined,
Semi-Tarrasch Defense (D41)

1. d4
2. c4
3. e4
4. c3
5. cxd5

Janowsky and LaBourdonnais had played 5...cxd5 in the few examples of 5 cxd5 played before this game.

6. cxd4

Eighty-plus years later this position was a favorite of Kramnik and Anand as White, of Adams and Korchnoi as Black, and of Topalov as either color.

But this game didn’t start an immediate trend. The next time this position occurred in big-league chess was in a Nimzovich victory over Tarrasch in 1925 (which continued 7 e3). And the next occasion after that was a 1955 Bronstein-Benko game (with 7 g5).

7. e4!
8. xc3
9. xd8+?
What revived this line was the discovery that $8 \text{dxc3!}$ gives White a slight pull because of Black's difficulty completing development after $8...\text{dxc6} 9 \text{a3 or 9 \text{b5 d7} 10 0-0}.$

8 ... $\text{dxc8}$
9 $\text{bxc3}$

Spielmann indicated in *Wiener Schachzeitung* that White lost the game because of the weakness at $c3$. But there are other significant factors and this becomes clear when you compare this with an Alapin Sicilian position that arises from $1 \text{e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 e5 \text{dxc5} 4 \text{d5 \text{d6} 5 d4 exd4 6 cxd4 d6} 7 \text{c3 dxe5} 8 dx5 \text{xc3 9 \text{dxc8}}$ and 10 $\text{bxc3}$.

This was considered bad – because of the $c$-pawn – until White began to score points tactically in the 1960s. For example, $9...\text{dxc8} 10 \text{bxc3 h6} (to avoid $\text{g5}) 11 \text{b5 e6 12 \text{e3 and a2-a4-a5. Or 9...dxc8 10 bxc3 a6} 11 \text{e3 d6 12 \text{c4 f5} 13 e6! and dxc8.}$

9 ... $\text{e5}$

Black should stop 10 $\text{e3.}$

10 $\text{dxe5}$

Spielmann recommended quick castling in order to create “lively piece play” that would compensate for White's piece problems. He may have meant 10 $\text{g5+ f6 11 0-0+ e7. But neither 12 \text{h4 e5 13 \text{g3 g4 nor 12 \text{h4 c6 13 \text{g3+ e5 14 \text{d4 d8 do the job.}}}}}$

The modern treatment would be 10 $\text{d4 and e3},$ leaving Black with tactical problems to solve ($10...\text{d7} 11 \text{e3 e5 12 \text{f5 dxf5} 13 \text{d1+}$ before his rooks are connected.

10 ... $\text{e7!}$

Quite a few GMs would avoid this in light of White's reply. Lasker may have preferred it to 10...$\text{e8 11 b5+ d7} 12 \text{e2 since 12...a6 13 \text{d7+ d7} 14 \text{xd7 xd7 15 e3 leaves too little material to make the c-pawn significant.}$

Reinfeld/Fine said if Black then avoids trades ($15...\text{a3})) he would get the worst of it 16 $\text{f1+}$ because 16...$\text{e7 or 16...c6 can be met by 17 a1 b5 18 c4!}$

11 $\text{d3!}$

A good idea that drives the bishop off one of the diagonals. White stands nicely after 11...$\text{d6 12 e5 c7 13 \text{a3} and 11...\text{d7} 12 \text{xc5 dxc5 13 \text{a3.}$}$

11 ... $\text{b6}$
12 $\text{a3+ e8}$
13 $\text{e5}$

This is essentially the same position as the one Black could have had with 10...$\text{e8.}$ The differences seem to favor White. He's played $\text{a3}$ while Black retreated...$\text{b6.}$ Even though Black has an extra tempo compared with 10...$\text{e8},$ why did Lasker prefer this position? The answer lies at the next diagram

13 ... $\text{d7}$
14 $\text{b5}$

Now on $14...a6$ White could obtain a promising game by 15 $\text{xd7+ xd7 16 xd7 17 d1+ e8} 18 \text{e2 d8 b1!}$, as Spielmann showed.

Even if we carry the analysis several moves ahead – 19...$\text{c7 20 b3 a7}$ and then 21 $\text{b1 b5 22 c4 bxc4 23 d7+ e6 24 dxf7 c3 25 c1 d2+...}$
26 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 27 \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 28 \( \text{f}3 \) – 
White keeps the advantage.

Why isn’t White better?

14 ... \( \text{e}7 \)!

Because of this. The knight cannot be maintained on e5, and 15 \( \text{c}4 \), recommended by Schlechter, allows 15 ... \( \text{a}6 \) 16 \( \text{x}d7+ \) \( \text{x}d7 \) 17 \( \text{d}1+ \) \( \text{c}6 \) 18 \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{f}6 \) with advantage (Reinfeld/Fine).

That requires another look because White can play 17 0-0-0+ (instead of 17 \( \text{d}1+ \)) and then 17 ... \( \text{c}6 \) 18 \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 19 \( \text{d}4 \) with a threat of \( \text{c}4+ \). But his initiative dies after 19 ... \( \text{b}5 \) 20 \( \text{h}d1 \) \( \text{e}5 \)!

(21 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 22 \( \text{c}5-? \) \( \text{b}6 \)).

15 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{a}6 \)
16 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{b}5 \)
17 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}7 \)
18 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}8 \)

White cannot dissolve the c-pawn (19 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{bxc}4 \) 20 \( \text{e}c4 \) \( \text{a}5-+ \)).

19 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{a}5! \)

This serves two purposes: Black can meet \( \text{c}3-\text{c}4 \) with ... \( \text{b}4 \) and he prepares to drive the bishop off its diagonal (... \( \text{a}4 \)) so he can continue ... \( \text{f}6/ \) ... \( \text{f}7 \).

20 \( \text{ab}1 \)

White threatens 21 \( \text{a}4 \) and Black’s choice is largely limited to 20 ... \( \text{a}6 \), 20 ... \( \text{e}5 \) and 20 ... \( \text{c}6 \)

20 ... \( \text{c}6 \)

The other bishop-move seems more promising because it doesn’t block the c-file. But once Black plays 20 ... \( \text{a}6 \), it will be harder to continue ... \( \text{b}6 \) and ... \( \text{c}4 \) because White will interrupt him with \( \text{c}5 \).

The problem with 20 ... \( \text{e}5 \) is it’s a bad choice to play against a tactician like Burn, who would surely find 21 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 22 \( \text{a}4 \)!. Then 22 ... \( \text{xc}3+ \) 23 \( \text{e}3 \) leaves Black’s king with problems that are not solved by 23 ... \( \text{bxa}4 \) 24 \( \text{xb}7 \) or 23 ... \( \text{a}6 \) 24 \( \text{xb}5+ \).

Instead, Black shows exceptional patience. He seems to waste tempi until he gets his pieces on the right squares – and it suddenly turns out that White is positionally busted.

21 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \)

Now and for the next few moves Black passes up the opportunity to maneuver the knight to c4. That looks favorable but it also may require him to calculate lines such as 21 ... \( \text{b}6 \) 22 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{c}4+ \) 23 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 24 \( \text{b}3 \) and 23 ... \( \text{f}5 \) 24 \( \text{ex}f5 \) \( \text{ex}f5 \) 25 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 26 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 27 \( \text{xd}6 \) \( \text{xd}6 \) 28 \( \text{hd}1 \) that are not worth it. He is getting the upper hand with quiet moves.

22 \( \text{g}3 \)

White frees his king’s rook from the defense of the h-pawn and avoids ... \( \text{f}4+ \) in some lines where it matters. Various annotators give 22 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 23 \( \text{d}3 \) or 22 ... \( \text{xc}5 \) 23 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{f}4+ \) 24 \( \text{e}2 \) as better.

But whenever White tries \( \text{c}5 \) he will be met by ... \( \text{d}6 \), since White’s knight is caught after \( \text{xd}7/... \) \( \text{xa}3 \). That means 22 \( \text{c}5 \?) \( \text{d}6 \) is just a blunder.

22 ... \( \text{f}7 \)
23 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{g}5 \! \)!

Now that his development is complete, we get a glimpse of Black’s
Why Lasker Matters

plan. It’s not the f-pawn he wants to push but ...g4, to undermine the e-pawn, or ...h5-h4, to target g3.

24  g4  h5
25  h3  \&b8!

Threatening another, winning retreat, 26...\&a8! (27 \&b2 b4 or 27 \&d2 \&e5!).

26  \&b2  \&b6
27  \&c5  \&e8
28  \&b3

Again 28 \&a3 fails to 28...\&d6 (29 \&a4 \&xa4 30 \&xd6 \&xc3+).

28  ...  \&c4

Threatening 29...\&xb2 and ...\&xc3. On 29 \&al \&a3 30 \&bc1 \&xf4 White’s defenses give way (31 \&d2 hxg4 32 fxg4 \&d8 33 \&d3 \&c4).

29  \&c1  hxg4

“He does not attempt to directly capture the weakling on c3 but only utilizes it as a basis for further extensive weakening operations,” Spielmann wrote.

30  fxg4  \&e5!

Here 31 \&d2 looks tempting (31...\&xc3 32 \&xc4 bxc4 33 \&b7+ with play or 32. \&xc4 33 \&d3). But Black can safely grab material with 31...\&xd2/...\&xc3.

31  \&d4  \&xd4!

This forces a pawn-up ending that Black figured was won despite the bishops-of-ops.

32  cxd4  \&a3
33  \&xa3  \&xe2+
34  \&d3  \&xa2
35  \&d6  b4
36  \&bc1  \&b5+
37  \&e3  \&g6

Black can meet e4-e5 with ...f5 and create a third passed pawn. He also prepares to answer 38 \&c7 with 38...\&xh3+!.

Black could play that combination immediately (37...\&xh3+ 38 \&xh3 \&a3+ 39 king-any \&xh3). But his winning task would be slightly more difficult after 40 \&c7+ \&g6 41 \&h8 \&h7 42 \&xh7.

38  \&e5  \&a3+

There was a faster win in 38...\&fl! but this was good enough: 39 \&f2 \&d3 40 \&e1 \&xh3 41 \&c7 \&a2+ 42 \&g1 \&h4 43 e5 \&xg4+ 44 \&h1 \&e4+ White resigns.

When you look through old tournament books you can’t escape noticing the group photos of old men. Even Lasker, who was just 31 at the time of Paris 1900, appeared to be well into middle age. Others at Paris included 49-year-old Teichigorin, 51-year-old Burn and 67-year-old James Mortimer.

This is surprising because even then tournaments were tests of physical endurance. London 1899 was a 28-round marathon that lasted six weeks. St. Petersburg 1895/96 was spread over nearly seven weeks. Paris 1900 ran more than five. True, the players enjoyed slower time limits —
but that meant that a 60-move game which lasts six hours today would have lasted eight hours then. Before Lasker had to endure his 87-move and 85-move wins over Marco and Pillsbury, he managed to save some energy in the following.

Lasker – Maroczy
Paris 1900
Queen’s Gambit Accepted (D27)

1 d4 d5
2 c4 e6
3 e3 e5
4 d3 dxc4

There’s a bit of irony here. Steinitz often used this move and contributed a lot to the resulting positions, which we know as the Queen’s Gambit Accepted. But Steinitz criticized 2...dxc4 because "the extra pawn cannot be maintained."

5 e3 c5
6 a4
7 c4 a6

Burn and Lasker paved the way for Rubinstein and Botvinnik in playing a2-a4 as soon as Black threatened ...b5.

8 0-0 exd4
9 exd4 e7
10 e3

"Steinitz always tried to isolate his opponent’s pawns," Schiffer wrote and this capture of his remained in fashion for some time.

11 a5 a5
12 f3 f5
13 a5 a5

Steinitz played ...wa5 to put pressure on the queenside. One of his 1886 championship match victories went 6...cxd4 7 exd4 a5 8 0-0 0-0 9 wa2 e7 10 a3 a6 11 a4 a3 12 a5 and then 12...a5 13 ac1 d4 14 e5 a6 15 a3 a8 followed by ...a8c and ...a6c3 with excellent play.

Here, however, there is no pressure on c3, and the main function of ...wa5 is to clear the first rank for ...a6. It also prepares ...b4 without allowing the space-gaining a4-a5.

Better perhaps is 11...b6 and 12...a4/13...a3. For example, 12 a4 a3 threatening 13 d5. But it is contained by 12...e4 13 a4 a3 and then if 14 a4 then 14...e5 with the idea of targetting the d-pawn (15 f5 a3 f3 a5 16 a3 e3 e5 17 e5 f6).

12 a4 a4
13 c1 a4

Black has to be constantly concerned about d4-d5 (13...d4 14 d5! e3xd5? 15 e3xd5 exd5 16 a5 with the winning threats of a6 and a6xe6/18 a4xe7+).

14 a5 a5
15 a5 a5

There was no rush to put a knight on d5 and this was the wrong one anyway. Better was 14...a6d7 followed by ...a8e or ...a6c6
White covers his queenside weaknesses and can meet 15...\(\text{d}7\) with 16 \(\text{Qxd5}\) and 17 \(\text{d}2\), e.g. 16...\(\text{Qxd5} 17 \text{d2} \text{wb6} 18 \text{Qxd5! exd5 19 a5! (19...\text{wxb2} 20 \text{e7! c4 21 Qxf7! \text{xd1 22 wxe7 and wins).}}\)

15 ... \(\text{Rf8}\)
16 \(\text{g4!}\)

This nice move can be measured by what it avoids (...\(\text{Qxc3}\)) and what it prepares (\(\text{Qg5}\) or \(\text{Qe5}\)).

16 ... \(\text{w8}\)

17 \(\text{f4!}\)

A highly original idea that at first sight just looks silly. White makes his slightly bad bishop significantly worse in an effort to carry out f4-f5 — which Black can stop with ...g6.

Botvinnik used this theme to win a brilliancy prize at Nottingham 1936 against Milan Vidmar — 1 c4 e6 2 \(\text{Qf3}\) d5 3 d4 \(\text{Qf6}\) 4 \(\text{Qg5}\) \(\text{Qe7}\) 5 \(\text{Qc3}\) 0-0 6 e3 \(\text{Qbd7}\) 7 \(\text{Qd3}\) c5 8 0-0 \(\text{Qxd4}\) 9 \(\text{Qxd4}\) dxc4 10 \(\text{Qxc4}\) \(\text{Qb6}\) 11 \(\text{Qb3}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) 12 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qbd5}\) 13 \(\text{Qe5}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) 14 \(\text{Qad1}\) \(\text{Qb4}\) 15 \(\text{Qh3}\) \(\text{Qd5}\) 16 \(\text{Qxd5}\) \(\text{Qbd5}\). White obtained a strong attack that began with 17 \(\text{f4! Qe8 18 f5}\) and ended with a \(\text{Qxf7}\) combination.

17 ... \(\text{b6}\)

Black’s queen’s knight is a “superfluous piece” to use Mark Dvoretsky’s term. Does he benefit from the tournament book’s suggestion of 17...\(\text{Qxe3}\) 18 \(\text{wxe3}\)?

The answer is no because after 19 \(\text{w3}\), White threatens 20 f5 or 20 \(\text{Qc3}\), e.g. 19...\(\text{f6}\) 20 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{b6}\) 21 \(\text{f5!}\) or 19...\(\text{g6}\) 20 \(\text{Qc3}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) 21 \(\text{wxc3}\) and \(\text{d4-d5}\).

18 \(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{b7}\)
19 \(\text{g3}\)

Black can’t ignore the initiative (19...\(\text{d6}\) 20 f5 \(\text{w7}\) 21 \(\text{g1}\) and \(\text{Qe4}\)).

19 ... \(\text{Qe8}\)

This was the last point to insert 19...g6!. White could consider various aggressive plans after that, such as \(\text{Qe4-g5}\) followed by a \(\text{Qxf7}\) sacrifice or \(\text{Qe1}\) and f4-f5. But none are convincing.

For example, 20 \(\text{Qe1}\) \(\text{Qxc8}\) 21 \(\text{Qe4}\) allows 21...\(\text{Qxf4!}\), and the same problem occurs in 20 \(\text{Qe4}\) \(\text{Qc8}\) 21 \(\text{Qg5? Qxf4!}\).

20 \(\text{f5!}\) \(\text{Qxc1}\)
21 \(\text{Qxc1}\) \(\text{exf5?}\)

Botvinnik called this a positional blunder in his game with Vidmar. The same is true here. Black should be willing to recapture on e6 with a pawn.

The most promising defense is 21...\(\text{g5}\). Annotators used to dispose of it with 22 \(\text{Qxb4}\) \(\text{Qxc1}\) 23 \(\text{Qxf8}\) \(\text{wxf8}\) 24 \(\text{Qxd3}\), attacking the bishop as well as e6. Cute — but 22 \(\text{Qxb4}\) achieves little after 22...\(\text{Qxb4}\).

A new generation of annotators looked at 21...\(\text{g5}\) and suggested 22 \(\text{fxe6}\) \(\text{fxe6}\) 23 \(\text{Qf3}\). But again the obvious reply, 23...\(\text{Qxd2}\), has been shortchanged. White has nothing much after 24 \(\text{wxd2}\) \(\text{w6}\). The only way to prove an edge is 24 \(\text{wxe6+ Qh8}\) 25 \(\text{Qxd2}\).

But that turns out to be a blunder because of the crushing 25...\(\text{Qxd3!}\) and 26...\(\text{Qf4}\). If White has any kind of advantage after 21...\(\text{g5}\) it must lie elsewhere, possibly in 22 \(\text{g4}\) \(\text{xd2}\) 23 \(\text{wxd2}\).
It says a lot about the solidity of the QGA that Black could afford to give odds of four tempi (…\textit{\textasciitilde}a5-d8 and \textit{\textasciitilde}d8-f8) and still have a reasonable position after 21...\textit{\textasciitilde}g5!.

But now there are all sorts of winning ideas, beginning with the sack on f7. For instance, 22...g6 23 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7! \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7 24 \textit{\textasciitilde}h6+ \textit{\textasciitilde}g7 25 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7 26 \textit{\textasciitilde}xb4 \textit{\textasciitilde}xb4 27 \textit{\textasciitilde}f1+ \textit{\textasciitilde}g7 28 \textit{\textasciitilde}e6 threatening 29 \textit{\textasciitilde}f7+ wins, e.g. 28...\textit{\textasciitilde}h6 29 \textit{\textasciitilde}f7 \textit{\textasciitilde}a8 30 \textit{\textasciitilde}h3+ \textit{\textasciitilde}g5 31 g3!, threatening \textit{\textasciitilde}h4 mate.

22 ... \textit{\textasciitilde}f6

This was labeled the losing moment and the “only move” was supposed to be 22...\textit{\textasciitilde}c8. But White could beat that defense three ways. There is 23 \textit{\textasciitilde}xc8 \textit{\textasciitilde}xc8 24 \textit{\textasciitilde}xe7+ \textit{\textasciitilde}xe7 25 \textit{\textasciitilde}xb4. And there is the pretty 23 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7! and then 23...\textit{\textasciitilde}xf7 24 \textit{\textasciitilde}xe7+ – or the prettier 24 \textit{\textasciitilde}xe7! \textit{\textasciitilde}xe7 25 \textit{\textasciitilde}xc8!!.

23 \textit{\textasciitilde}xb4!

Black can still fight after 23 \textit{\textasciitilde}g4? \textit{\textasciitilde}h8 24 \textit{\textasciitilde}xb4 \textit{\textasciitilde}xb4 25 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7+ \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7 26 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7 g6 because the d-pawn falls with check.

23 ... \textit{\textasciitilde}xb4

24 \textit{\textasciitilde}f7!

Now 24...\textit{\textasciitilde}xd4+ 25 \textit{\textasciitilde}h1 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7 hangs material (26 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7+ \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7 27 \textit{\textasciitilde}c4+ or 27 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd4 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd4 28 \textit{\textasciitilde}c7+).

24 ... \textit{\textasciitilde}f7

25 \textit{\textasciitilde}e6

Decisive: 25...\textit{\textasciitilde}f8 26 \textit{\textasciitilde}c7 \textit{\textasciitilde}d5 27 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd5 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd5 28 \textit{\textasciitilde}c8 loses, as do 25...\textit{\textasciitilde}d5 26 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd5 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd5 27 \textit{\textasciitilde}c8+ \textit{\textasciitilde}d8 28 \textit{\textasciitilde}c7+! and 25...\textit{\textasciitilde}d5 26 \textit{\textasciitilde}d6 \textit{\textasciitilde}e7 27 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd5! \textit{\textasciitilde}xd4+ 28 \textit{\textasciitilde}h1.

25 ... \textit{\textasciitilde}h8

26 \textit{\textasciitilde}xf7 \textit{\textasciitilde}d4+

27 \textit{\textasciitilde}h1 \textit{\textasciitilde}d3

This allows a winning 28 \textit{\textasciitilde}xd4 since 28...\textit{\textasciitilde}xc1 29 \textit{\textasciitilde}f5! leads to mate.

28 \textit{\textasciitilde}f1!

Simplest. The game ended with 28...\textit{\textasciitilde}xg2+ 29 \textit{\textasciitilde}xg2 \textit{\textasciitilde}g5+ 30 \textit{\textasciitilde}h3 Resigns

Lasker protected the legitimacy of his title by avoiding exhibition games that might seem to be a “match.” When a Chicago club tried to arrange a series of five games between him and Pillsbury in 1901, with generous purses of $300 and $200, he refused. After further attempts, the two men tentatively agreed to play two games but never got together. They did meet, however, in Germany in 1900 when another club arranged a game that was clearly identified as being a show: Each player would have one hour to play 30 moves, after which the game turned into an analysis session. There was plenty to analyze.

Lasker – Pillsbury
Exhibition, Augsburg 1900
Falkbeer Counter-Gambit (C31)

1 e4 e5

2 f4 d5

This was a regular part of Pillsbury’s repertoire but 2 f4 was not in Lasker’s.
He often took greater risks in exhibitions than he would in tournament and matches – that is, in money games.

3 exd5 e4
4 Æc3 Æf6
5 Æe2

An old idea of Steinitz’s, which may force Black to shed a second pawn. A good alternative is 5 d3, which had been discredited since a Morphy brilliancy (5...Æb4 6 Æd2 e3 7 Æxe3 0-0) although Morphy stood worse before his winning combination.

5 ... Æd6

This move enjoyed a good reputation after a Bardeleben game that went 6 Æxe4 0-0.

6 d3 0-0
7 dxe4 Æxe4!
8 Æxe4 Æe8

Here 9 Æf3 was book, based on a Steinitz game that continued 9...f5 10 Æd3. White also has the edge after 9...f5 10 Æe3 fxe4 11 Æg3.

9 Æd2!? Æf5
10 0-0-0 Æxe4
11 Æg4

Now 11...Æxd5? 12 Æc3! Æf8 13 Æc4 c6 14 Æf3 favors White. Black has tried 11...c6 and even won a 1929 game with it after 12 Æc3 f6 13 dxc6 bxc6 14 Æc4+ Æh8 15 Æe2 Æc7 – although there’s no earthly reason why he should.

11 ... f5!

Pillsbury’s idea is to leave the d-pawn on the board because it blocks a diagonal and file White could use better than him. Instead, Black takes aim at f4.

12 Æg3 Æd7
13 Æc3 Æf6

The threat is 14...Æh5.

14 Æh3 Æg4?!

Both players pick the most aggressive options (15 Æg5 Æxg5!)

15 Æe2!

White could have settled for a small plus with 15 Æf2 Æd7 16 Æxg4 fxg4 17 Æb1.

15 ... Æc7?!

It’s hard to criticize this attempt to win the queen (16...Æh4), particularly since everything else leaves White with a very nice position. The chief alternative is 15 Æxd7, which protects g4 as well as threatening a ...Æa4 raid.

After 16 Æd2! Black doesn’t have enough for his pawn (16...Æe5 17 Æxg4 fxg4 18 Æg5). And if he raises the risk level with 16...Æa4 White can allow the 17 a3 Æxa3 sack.

When the dust settles (18 bxa3 Æxa3+ 19 Æb1 Æb3+ 20 Æb2 Æxg3 21 hxg3 Æxg2 22 Æxg4 Æxh1 23 Æxf5) he has excellent winning chances in the ending.

16 Æg4!

White’s position is too good to settle for 16 Æe5 Æh4 17 Æc3 Æxg2 or 17 Æb3 Æxe5 18 fxe5 Æxg2. His main choice was between two queen sacrifices.
The first occurs after 16 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}\texttt{c}4!?}. If Black grabs the queen with 16...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}4?}
17 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}6+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}8} 18 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}c7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}7} White has
19 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}5 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g3} 20 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}xg3} with a threat of
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}h7} mate that defies defense. The key
point is that 20...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}6 allows 21 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}h6+!!
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}h1}} and wins.

But Black can decline the sack with 16 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}4 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}8}. White would have to
settle for another nice endgame
following 17 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}4} 18 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}5 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g3}
19 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}xg3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}xg5} 20 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}xg5} – and that’s
what he most likely would have played in
a money game.

16 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}4

Now 17 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}xg4} 18 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}}–moves
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}c2} favors Black.

17 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}f5! \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g3

18 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}6+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}e6

Otherwise White would recapture on
g3, leaving Black nothing better than
19...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}e6 and a material disadvantage

19 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}x6 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}8

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}xg3??

The tactical elements White has to
work with are (a) \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 with its threat
of havoc on the seventh rank, and
(b) \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}xg3/\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}5}, attacking the bishop and
h-pawn. He probably needs to use both
elements to win.

The virtue of retaking on g3 first is
that White already has material
compensation for the queen and would
be winning after 20 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d8 21 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}d8. But
20 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 makes a more immediate threat.

The key line begins with 20 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d7
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}4} 21 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g7+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}8. White can force
perpetual check (22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}7+) because
22...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}f7 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}x7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g2} loses to
24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}1 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}h3} 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}8+.

But does he have better than a draw?
Yes, in 22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}5! \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}xg5} 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g5. Then
23...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}e6 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}1+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}8} 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}4! and
wins, as does 23...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}}4 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}1+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}8}
25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}2! b6 26 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}6!.

Lasker may have had second
thoughts about 20 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 when he
examined 20...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}e6 and then
21 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g7+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}8 because there is no
perpetual check any more and 22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}xg3
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}a2 favors Black strongly.

What saves 20 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 is the unlikely
retreat 22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}xg3!. White wins after
22...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}6 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}5! \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}f5 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}4+ or
23...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}}2 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}1 and would have the
upper hand following 22...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}}2
23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}4+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}}8 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}1.

20 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}g2!

White didn’t properly evaluate this.
He may have counted on 21 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}e6
22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g7+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}8 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}5 and then the
obscure 23...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}3+ 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}6
25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}7+.

But Black can force a winning
endgame with 21...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{w}}d7! 22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}d7
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}h1.

21 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}}e1 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}h3

22 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}6

The attack is virtually over (23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}c7
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g3 24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}b7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}4+ 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}1 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}3 and
wins).

The game ended with 23 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}8
24 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}5 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}e6 25 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}c7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}g3
26 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}2 h6 27 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}b7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}8 28 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}4
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}2 29 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}}7 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}}c2+ 30 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}1 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}}2
White resigns
No account of Lasker during 1900-1904 would be complete without mentioning Isaac Leopold Rice, the Maecenas of American chess before World War I. Rice was a German-born college teacher and lawyer who, in the 1890s became a major player in what today we call mergers and acquisitions.

That made him a very rich man and, being an avid amateur chessplayer, he helped finance events like Cambridge Springs 1904 and bankrolled his own New York chess club. But he also formed a special attachment to an idea he found in the King’s Gambit. Rather than defend an attacked knight with the automatic 8 d4, he castled. Fascinated by the consequences, he sponsored theme tournaments, “analytical matches,” correspondence competitions, and the like to test “the Rice Gambit.” When the Rice Gambit Association, devoted to its exploration, was founded at Rice’s Manhattan home in October 1904, Lasker became its secretary.

The masters who took part in these events didn’t want to tell Rice the obvious, bad news – that 8 d4! was simply better than 8 0-0?! Instead, they went to extreme lengths to test whether the gambit was sound at all. In the fifth edition of a book devoted to it Lasker wrote: “Let us admit, which is most probably true, that the gambit will not yield to the first player as high a percentage of wins as the Ruy Lopez or the Queen’s Pawn; but let us therefore not sacrifice the beauty hidden in the gambit...White is not lost”

History – or rather historians – has not been kind to Professor Rice and his gambit. He’s been treated as a vain, silly old man who forced a reluctant chess world to take his brainchild seriously. But today, when a new spirit of sponsorship prevails, Rice seems more like a fan who just wanted to find a way to funnel money to the world’s best players. In 1902 he agreed when Lasker asked him to finance a match with Tchigorin to test a new variation Lasker had White in six games beginning with 15 pre-determined moves.

Lasker – Tchigorin
Brighton 1903
King’s Gambit, Rice Variation (C39)
1 e4 e5
2 f4 exf4
3 ∅f3 g5
4 h4 g4
5 ∅e5 ∅f6
6 ∅c4 d5
7 exd5 ∅d6

Since this position began appearing in the 1850s, White had religiously replied 8 d4. By 1900 theory had concluded that 8... ∅h5! was adequate, and after 9 0-0 ∅xh4, White had to take his chances with 10 ∅e1 ∅xe1. That view of the 3...g5 variation hasn’t changed in a century. However in 1903, players didn’t offer the King’s Gambit to play an endgame.

8 0-0?! ∅xe5
9 ∅e1

Johannes Berger recommended 9...xf8 10 ∅xe5 ∅c6 in the Deutsche Schachzeitung, of which he was co-editor. But 11 d4! was found to be a good reply.

9 ... ∅xe7

Black stops 10 d4? because of 10...∅xd4+.

10 c3
In the years of its subsidized fame, this became a tabiya. Each player, master or amateur, who offered analysis, ingenious or routine, saw it enshrined in works like Twenty Years of the Rice Gambit, published after the beneficiary’s death.

10 ... f3

This introduces “Simonson’s Defense,” named after “the well-known librarian of the Manhattan Chess Club,” Dr. Gustave Simonson. It was later discovered that 10...d5 11 d4 d5 12 e4 was best, based on a joint analysis of Capablanca, Burn and Edward Lasker that hasn’t been overturned. (The only time Emanuel Lasker played the gambit in a money game came in the last round at Trenton Falls 1906, when he had already clinched first prize. He drew soon after 12 b5 d8 13 axd7.)

11 d4 De4!

Better than 11...f2+ 12 xf2 d5 13 exf4 4.g3+ 14 xg3 xe4 15 f4, when White has positional compensation for the Exchange.

12 xe4 h2+

13 xh2 xe4

According to Twenty Years, Marco and Adolf Zinkl played a ten-game match to test 13..g5+ (the “Vienna Variation”) 14 xg5 xe4 15 gxf3. But the games failed to reach a verdict about 15...g6+ 16 xf2 f5 17 e2- or 15...g8+ 16 g5.

14 g3

The principal alternatives were the “Phillips Variation” (14...h6), the “Brooklyn Variation” (14...e7), the “Hanham Variation” (14...d7), the “Cosmopolitan Variation” (14...f5) and ...

14 ... 0-0

... the “Manhattan Variation,” named after the chess club.

15 f4

This was the starting point for all six Lasker-Tchigorin games.

15 ... c6

After 15...f5 16 d2! c2 17 xc2 xc2 White has a good endgame (18 f1 and e3), according to Tchigorin.

16 dxc6

In the third game Lasker adopted the superior 16 d3!, which had been recommended by Janowsky. Following 16...x6 17 c2 he obtained excellent chances (17...f5 18 d2 b5 19 e1 f7 20 e5 e6 21 e4!).

16 ... xe6

17 d3 d5

18 d2!

Post-mortem analysis showed that White should not try to stop ...f5 with 18 e2 because of 18...e8 19 d2 f5 20 x5 e2+.

18 ... f5

19 c4! x3

20 x3 xe8

21 e3

The knight plugs up the e-file and prepares for the advance of the center pawns. But that wouldn’t be enough compensation after 21...e4!. Since 22 b5 f5! is too dangerous, White would have to enter a dubious endgame (22 xe4 xe4 23 xg4 e2+ 24 h3 xh2 25 d5 e7).
21 ... \textit{Wd7}
22 \textit{d5} \textit{Qe5}

After his match with Marshall in 1907, Tarrasch said of Lasker, “He is a master of defense. I must even say he is the master of defense.” But in this match, Lasker had to be the attacker and Tchigorin had to defend. Black recognized that the knight should go to g6 and 22...\textit{Qe7} is also a good route. Then 23 \textit{c4} \textit{f6}! and 24...\textit{Qg6} should win.

23 \textit{Wd4}!

Far superior to 23 \textit{Qxe5} \textit{Qxe5} 24 \textit{Wd4} which allows a winning counter-sack (24...\textit{Qxe3} 25 \textit{Wxe3} \textit{Wxd5}).

23 ... \textit{Qg6}?

This gives away most of Black’s winning chances. After 23...\textit{f6}! White’s best is 24 \textit{Qxe5} \textit{fxe5} 25 \textit{Wd4} but he should lose following 25...\textit{Wb5}! (26 \textit{Qd4} \textit{Qh8} or 26 \textit{Qb3} \textit{Qe2}+ 27 \textit{Qh1} \textit{Qxh8}).

24 \textit{h5}! \textit{Qxf4}
25 \textit{Wxf4}

White will get at least one pawn as compensation now and can force a perpetual in some lines. For example, on 25...\textit{Qxe3} he would avoid 26 \textit{Wxe3}? \textit{Wxd5} and play 26 \textit{Wg5+} \textit{Qf8} 27 \textit{Wh6+}.

25 ... \textit{We7}?

The best try was 25...\textit{f5}! and then 26 \textit{Qxf5} \textit{Qxe2}+ 27 \textit{Qh1} \textit{Wxd5} because White is mated after 28 \textit{Wg5+} \textit{Qf8} 29 \textit{Wg7}+ \textit{Qe8} 30 \textit{Wh8}+ \textit{Qd7} 31 \textit{Qxa8} \textit{f2}+.

26 \textit{Qxg4}!

White’s attack would win after 26...\textit{Wd2}+ 27 \textit{Qh3} \textit{f2} 28 \textit{Wf6} \textit{Qf8} 29 \textit{d6}.

26 ... \textit{f5}!

This is the way Tchigorin liked to defend: 27 \textit{Wxf5} \textit{Qf8}! 28 \textit{We6}+ \textit{Wxe6} 29 \textit{dx6} \textit{Qae8} favors him considerably and 27 \textit{Qh6}+ \textit{Qh8} 28 \textit{Qxf5}? (or 28 \textit{Qxf3} \textit{Qe2}+) loses to 28...\textit{Wd2}+ 29 \textit{Qh3} \textit{Qc4}!.

27 \textit{Qe1}!

Sometimes Professor Rice got his money’s worth (27...\textit{Qxe1} 28 \textit{We5}+ \textit{Qf8} 29 \textit{Wf6}+ and 30 \textit{Qh6} mate).

27 ... \textit{Wg7}

Because this allows White to attack the queen with his 29th move, the right defense was 27...\textit{Qf8}! 28 \textit{Qh6}+ \textit{Qh8}.

Then 29 \textit{Qxe8} \textit{Qxe8} 30 \textit{Qxf5} offers him good winning chances and 29 \textit{Qe6} \textit{Qxe6} 30 \textit{dx6} is somewhat better, e.g. 30...\textit{Qe8} 31 \textit{Qf7}+ and \textit{Qf5}.

28 \textit{Qh6}+ \textit{Qh8}
29 \textit{Qxf5}! \textit{Wf6}

Or 29...\textit{Qe2}+ 30 \textit{Qxe2} \textit{fxe2} 31 \textit{Qg7} \textit{e1(\textcolor{white}{W})} and 32 \textit{Wf6}! wins.
30 \( \text{e}6! \)

White’s three pawns should prevail after 30 \( \text{xe}8+ \) and \( \text{xf}3 \) but this decides quickly.

30 \( ... \) \( \text{xe}6 \)
31 \( \text{dxe}6 \) \( \text{e}8 \)
32 \( \text{e}7 \)

The e-pawn is paralyzing. All the \( \text{wh} \)-endings (32...\( \text{xe}7 \) 33 \( \text{xe}7 \)) are lost, and 32...\( \text{f}2 \) (33 \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{xe}7 \)) fails to 33 \( \text{g}2 \).

32 \( ... \) \( \text{h}6 \)
33 \( \text{wd}4! \) \( \text{xd}4 \)
34 \( \text{cxd}4 \) Resigns

The d-pawn can’t be stopped.

This was the only game Lasker won in the match. He lost two and drew the remaining three. But Rice concluded the fault lay in 15 \( \text{f}4 \), not in the Gambit. He continued to finance thematic events, including a Lasker-Schlechter match in 1908 that was played at the leisurely rate of 10 moves an hour. Schlechter won two games, the other three were drawn and all the scores have vanished.

35

The first great American tournament of the 20th century came about in large part because the owner of a hotel, situated exactly midway on the railroad run from New York to Chicago, wanted to attract new patrons. The tournament offered a generous top prize of $1,000 and attracted a fairly strong field of eight Europeans and eight Americans. Lasker accompanied several of the invitees on their transatlantic voyage from Europe to New York during which they passed the time by playing the Rice Gambit.

Lasker – Delmar
Cambridge Springs 1904
Queen’s Gambit Declined (D53)

1 \( \text{d}4 \)

Before 1900 Lasker much preferred 1 \( \text{e}4 \). But like Tarrasch, Schlechter and others, he had to recognize that the chances of obtaining a serious opening edge were much greater after 1 \( \text{d}4 \) thanks to new strategies in the Queen’s Gambit Declined. Inexperienced opponents, like Eugene Delmar, seemed clueless as early as move seven.

1 \( ... \) \( \text{d}5 \)
2 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \)
3 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \)
4 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{bd}7 \)
5 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \)
6 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{h}6 \)

If Black is going to put the question to the bishop he should do it now, since 6...0-0 would enable White to meet 7 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{h}6 \) with 8 \( \text{h}4! \) followed by 9 0-0-0. Then 8...\( \text{hxg}5 \) 9 \( \text{hxg}5 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 10 \( \text{xe}4 \) is considered too risky for Black.

7 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \)
8 \( \text{c}2 \)

An obvious move and yet you’d have a hard time finding anything other than 8 \( \text{d}3 \) being played before this game. The bishop-move has the drawback of allowing the simplifying 8...\( \text{dxc}4 \) and 9...\( \text{dxc}4 \), an old Showalter idea.

Lasker’s move enables him to wage the “battle of the tempo” that seemed such a major theoretical issue well into the 1930s. For example, Rubinstein showed how White could meet 8...0-0-0 with useful passes such as 9 \( \text{d}1 \) a6 10 a3 and then 10...\( \text{e}8 \) 11 \( \text{h}3! \)?.
8 ... dxc4
9  aexe4  b6

The Showalter method, 9..a5, has no punch when White can reply 10 a3g3! Then Black has no chance for ...e5 and must find another way to free his queen’s bishop.

10 a3e2  bbd5
11 a3g3

A strange move that allows White to discourage a second piece trade (...a3h5/ a3e5!?)

11 ... a3xc3
12 bxc3 0-0
13 0-0 a3d7?

The bishop never plays after this. Better was 13..b6 14 a3e5  a3b7 or 14 a4  a3b7 15 a3fb1 c5.

14 a4!

Beginning a relatively original plan of queenside pressure with a3fb1. Depending on how Black defends the b-pawn, White can follow with a3e5/a3f3 or c3-c4-c5/a3c4-d6.

For example, 14..c5 15 a3fb1 and a3e5, e.g. 15..a3c6 16 a3e5 a3e4 17 a3d3 a3xd3 18 a3xd3 a3c8 19 a5, intending a3b5.

14 ... a3d5?

Black’s position gets very bad very quickly. The best that can come of this knight is a trade and that suggests 14...a3h5. After 15 a3e5 f6!? 16 a3d2 he obtains some activity from 16..fxe5 17 a3xh5 exd4 18 cxd4 c5!.

15 a3fb1 a3e8

Black seems to think that if he doesn’t create any weaknesses (15..b6 16 a3e5 and a3a6-b7) he is in little danger.

16 a5!

This prepares progress with 17 c4, now that ...a3b4/a5 can’t be played.

16 ... a3d6
17 c4 a3e7

Black cannot afford 17...a3b4 18 a3a4 (and 18...a3xg3 19 a3xg3 c5 20 dxe5 a3c6 21 a6 or 20...a3a6 21 c6).

18 c5!

Positionally decisive. White obtains pressure against b7 that cannot be relieved safely by ...b6.

18 ... a3xg3
19 h3xg3 a6

White’s edge could be trimmed a bit by 19...a3g6, to stop a3e5. It pays for White to insert 20 a3d3 before 21 a6, e.g. 20...f5 21 a6 bxa6 22 a3xa6 a3xa6 23 a3xa6 or 21...a3c7 22 a3e4 and a3a4-a5.

20 a3e5 a3c7
21 a3b2 a3d8
22 $\text{d}c4$

White’s plan is $\text{d}d6x\text{b}7$. If Black defends with 22...$\text{a}a7$ 23 $\text{c}d6$ $\text{d}d7$ (based on 24 $\text{x}b7$ $\text{b}8$) White wins with 24 $\text{b}6$!.

On the other hand, if Black just passes (23 $\text{f}8$) White has several good ideas including e3-e4 followed by tripling on the b-file ($\text{a}3$-$\text{b}3$). If Black plays ...$\text{w}x\text{a}5$ the queen become trapped by $\text{b}6$ and $\text{a}1$.

22 $\ldots$ $\text{b}8$

This makes $\text{d}d6/\text{x}a6$ possible. If Black had stopped $\text{d}d6$ with 22 $\text{f}5$ White could afford the slight weakness of $g3$-$g4$ to drive him back.

23 $\text{d}d6$

White cashes in. Also good was 23 $e4$ with a bind (23...$\text{d}7$ 24 $\text{d}6$ $\text{c}8$ 25 e5).

23 $\ldots$ $\text{f}5$

24 $\text{x}f5$ $\text{x}f5$

25 $\text{a}a6$ $\text{f}4$!

Only one reply prevents Black from at least equalizing with $\ldots\text{f}5$

26 $\text{b}6$! $\text{w}b6$

27 $\text{x}b6$ $\text{f}x\text{g}3$

28 $\text{f}x\text{g}3$

No reason to get fancy with 28 f3 $\text{e}8$.

28 $\ldots$ $\text{e}8$

29 $\text{w}f2$ $\text{e}6$

Black can do little but hope for a liquidation into an endgame with counterplay, such as 30 $\text{b}1$? $\text{a}8$

31 $\text{x}b7$ $\text{x}b7$ 32 $\text{x}b7$ $\text{a}5$.

30 $\text{c}4$! $\text{f}6$+

31 $\text{g}1$ $\text{a}8$

The threat was 32 a6 $\text{a}8$ 33 $\text{b}1$ $\text{b}a6$ 34 $\text{b}8$, winning a piece.

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This was Lasker’s first money game in four years and he is cautious. Had Tarrasch or Pillsbury been White they might have played the forcing 32 d5 $\text{c}5$ 33 $\text{x}d5$ $\text{b}6$ 34 $\text{c}x\text{b}6$, threatening 35 a6. Black can resign after 34...$\text{g}8$ 35 $\text{c}1$ and $\text{c}7$

32 $\text{e}4$?

33 $\text{g}6$

33 $\text{a}6$

White also wins with 33 $\text{f}1$ $\text{e}6$ 34 d5!, e.g. 34...$\text{c}5$ 35 $\text{c}x\text{d}5$ $\text{g}4$ 36 $\text{x}b7$ $\text{a}5$ 37 d6.

33 $\ldots$ $\text{b}x\text{a}6$

34 $\text{b}1$

Threatening 35 $\text{b}8$. Black played until he saw the d-pawn about to queen: 34...$\text{e}6$ 35 d5 $\text{c}5$ 36 $\text{c}x\text{d}5$ $\text{f}5$ 37 $\text{b}8+$ $\text{h}7$ 38 $\text{a}8$ $\text{b}1$ 39 d6 $\text{f}5$ 40 $\text{d}3$! Resigns

Every player has to deal with the problem of meeting his own opening weapons. Tarrasch had a losing record when facing the Tarrasch Defense QGD as White, for example, and Steinitz lost the only game in which he faced the Steinitz Defense in the Ruy Lopez. Lasker knew it was a good strategy to force an opponent to confront his own arsenal, such as when
he employed Akiba Rubinstein’s new QGD weapon, the Meran Variation, against Rubinstein in Game 86. In the following game the tables are turned.

**Fox – Lasker**  
Cambridge Springs 1904  
*Ruy Lopez, Exchange Variation (C68)*

1  c4  e5  
2  f3  c6  
3  b5  a6  
4  c6  bxc6?  

Recapturing towards the center has been tried, over the years by aggressive players like Alekhine and Alexander Tolush. This is the only example of Lasker trying it.

5  d4  

And the reason he tried it may have been a recent game. Opening theory circa 1904 said 5 ...xe5 favored White in view of 5 ...g5 6 d4 hxg2 7 fxg3 xf3 8 xf3. But that was challenged by a Marco-Schlechter game played in the just-concluded Monte Carlo tournament (8...d6 9 g1 g6) which Black won in 26 moves.

5  ...  exd4  
6  xd4  d6  
7  0-0  c7  

The pawn structure is the same as in a Steinitz Defense Deferred position (1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 b5 a6 4 a4 d6 5 xc6+ bxc6 6 d4 exd4 7 xxd4) that offers Black good chances (...c5 and ...e7-c6)

8  c3  

But in this game White has an extra tempo and he can put it to good positional use with 8 e5, to isolate the c-pawns.

8  ...  g6  
9  e1  f6  

Black has stopped e4-e5 and is one move (...e6) away from securing his light squares.

10  e2  

That’s why Tarrasch recommended 10 c4! followed by d4 and f2-f4. For example, 10...c5 11 e3 b8 12 b3 h4 13 d5 favors White.

10  ...  e6  
11  d3  

Headed for f5 or h5. But 11 c4 followed by 12 b3 and b2 makes better use of his previous move.

11  ...  e5  
12  c3  

The c2-c4 plan is no longer effective because on 12 c3 e7 13 c4 Black obtains good play with 13...e5!.

12  ...  c7  
13  f5  0-0  

14  g5?  

The logic behind this is fine. White should use his lead in development before it disappears. And his calculation is accurate (14...fxg5?? 15 xg7 mate and 14...xf5 15 exf5 e5? 16 d6). But his evaluation of the position after 17 d3 is quite wrong.

14  ...  xf5  
15  exf5  fxg5
16  fxg6  hxg6
17  \( \text{Wd3} \)  \( \text{\textbackslash e5}! \)

White would have the better pawns and pieces following 17...\( \text{Wh7} \) (not 17...\( \text{\textbackslash e8??} \) 18 \( \text{\textbackslash axg5} \) 18 \( \text{\textbackslash wh3+ \text{\textbackslash axg8} \) 19 \( \text{\textbackslash w6d}+ \)

18  g4

The "hara-kiri move" as Tarrasch usually called g2-g4. If White delays regaining the pawn in favor of \( \text{\textbackslash axd2} \) and doubling rooks on the e-file, Black consolidates firmly with ...\( \text{\textbackslash af6} \), ...\( \text{\textbackslash wd7-f7} \) and ...\( \text{\textbackslash e5} \).

18  ...

\( \text{\textbackslash e7} \)

Tempting fate is 18...\( \text{\textbackslash e5?} \) 19 \( \text{\textbackslash axd2} \) and \( \text{\textbackslash w6xg6} \).

19  \( \text{\textbackslash w6xg6} \)

White still seems to be doing well because of his better bishop and more active heavy pieces. After the natural 19...\( \text{\textbackslash wd7} \), White would be content with a slightly superior endgame (20 \( \text{\textbackslash we6} \)).

19  ...

\( \text{\textbackslash f6!} \)

20  c3

This stops ...\( \text{\textbackslash axd4} \) and frees his bishop to move. But it doesn’t solve the problem of defending b2, which is better served by 20 \( \text{\textbackslash b1} \) 21 \( \text{b3} \)

20  ...

\( \text{\textbackslash b8} \)

Again 20...\( \text{\textbackslash wd7} \) looks attractive but after 21 \( \text{b3} \) Black would realize he can’t afford to leave his g-pawn hanging (21...\( \text{\textbackslash e8} \) 22 \( \text{\textbackslash axg5} \)) and would have to admit his error by playing 21...\( \text{\textbackslash w6d8} \).

This part of the game is often glossed over but it is pivotal. Black’s accuracy in using all of his resources, including the queen’s rook and d-pawn makes his advantage manifest within five moves.

21  \( \text{\textbackslash e3!} \)

White needs to use this idea, which prepares \( \text{\textbackslash b1} \), at some point. Purely defensive play such as 21 \( \text{\textbackslash b1} \) 22 \( \text{\textbackslash d2} \) allows Black to expand with 22 ...\( \text{d4} \) and ...\( \text{\textbackslash w5} \).

White could try 21 \( \text{\textbackslash b1} \) 22 \( \text{\textbackslash e3} \) instead. Then 22...\( \text{\textbackslash wd7} \) 23 \( \text{\textbackslash wh5} \) 24 \( \text{\textbackslash ex5+ \text{\textbackslash w6e8} \) 25 \( \text{\textbackslash axg5} \) walks into 25...\( \text{\textbackslash we4} \) 26 \( \text{\textbackslash e6} \) moves g6! 27 \( \text{\textbackslash w5} \)-moves \( \text{\textbackslash e7} \) and wins.

But White can hold with 24 \( \text{\textbackslash wh3} \), rather than 24 \( \text{\textbackslash we8}+, \) in view of 24...\( \text{\textbackslash e1+} \) 25 \( \text{\textbackslash g2} \) g6? 26 \( \text{\textbackslash w6xg6+ \text{\textbackslash e7} \) 27 \( \text{\textbackslash w7} \) and 28 \( \text{\textbackslash e3} \), when he’s turned the tables.

21  ...

\( \text{\textbackslash w6d7} \)

Now 22 \( \text{\textbackslash d5} \) and ...\( \text{d4} \) is poor.

22  \( \text{\textbackslash wh5} \) 23 \( \text{\textbackslash e7} \)

All of these moves (...\( \text{\textbackslash w6d7}, \) ...\( \text{\textbackslash w6e7}, \)...\( \text{\textbackslash d5}, \) ...\( \text{\textbackslash w6d8} \)) have been in the air for some time. Finding the right order was what counts (23 \( \text{\textbackslash w6h3 \text{\textbackslash e1+} \) 24 \( \text{\textbackslash g2} \) \( \text{\textbackslash w6c6+} \) 25 \( \text{\textbackslash f3 \text{\textbackslash w6b5} \) wins}).

23  \( \text{\textbackslash wxe7} \)

At first glance it seems White’s best way of untangling is 23 \( \text{\textbackslash b3} \) and then 23...\( \text{\textbackslash xe3} \) 24 \( \text{\textbackslash xe3} \) 25 \( \text{\textbackslash d1} \). He would enjoy good chances once he takes on g5.

But this is where Black can put all his pieces to work, with 23 ...\( \text{\textbackslash xe3!} \) rather than 23 ...\( \text{\textbackslash xe3} \). Then 24 \( \text{\textbackslash xe3 \text{\textbackslash e1+} \) 25 \( \text{\textbackslash g2} \) \( \text{\textbackslash w6c6}+ \) is a winning attack, e.g. 26 \( \text{\textbackslash h3 \text{\textbackslash f8} \) (threatening ...\( \text{\textbackslash w6f3}+) \) and 26 ...\( \text{\textbackslash w6d5} \) (27 \( \text{\textbackslash e3} \) ...\( \text{\textbackslash w6f8} \) 28 ...\( \text{\textbackslash xe1} \) \( \text{\textbackslash wxe3} \) 29 ...\( \text{\textbackslash g1 \text{\textbackslash w6f2}+)}. \)

23  ...

\( \text{\textbackslash wxe7} \)
Why Lasker Matters

In view of 24 \texttt{f1 \texttt{e4} White decides to shed a pawn temporarily.

\texttt{24 \texttt{d2 \texttt{xb2}}

\texttt{25 \texttt{e1 \texttt{e5}}

\texttt{26 \texttt{xe5}}

White gets counterplay following 26...\texttt{f7 27 \texttt{x}f7+ \texttt{x}f7 28 \texttt{f4}. Then 28...\texttt{xc3 29 e7+ and \texttt{xc7 or 28\texttt{fx6 29 xf6 xf6 30 a4 and f4-f5.}}

\texttt{26 ... \texttt{f8!}}

Based on 27 \texttt{f4 \texttt{a8}}! and wins (28 \texttt{Wh3 \texttt{xc3} or 28 \texttt{e4 \texttt{d4+}}! 29 \texttt{cxd4 \texttt{xc4}}).

\texttt{27 \texttt{h4 \texttt{f7!}}}

The point: White is denied f2-f4.

\texttt{28 \texttt{xf7+ \texttt{xf7}}

\texttt{29 \texttt{e3 \texttt{e2!}}

Black still has ways to go very wrong – 29...\texttt{xa2?? 30 \texttt{f4! \texttt{f6 31 g5 \texttt{d8 32 g6+ or 30 \texttt{hxh2 31 \texttt{g3!}}}}

\texttt{30 \texttt{d8}}

Or 30 \texttt{f4 \texttt{xc3}}.

\texttt{30 ... \texttt{xc3}}

Khalifman/Soloviov say 30...\texttt{xc3} 31 \texttt{xc3 is faster (32 \texttt{xc7 d5 33 \texttt{f4 d4}})

\texttt{31 \texttt{e7+}}

Or 31 \texttt{xc7 \texttt{e5}}! and the c-pawn marches on (32 \texttt{d3 c4 33 \texttt{d1 \texttt{e6}}).

\texttt{31 ... \texttt{f8}}

\texttt{32 \texttt{c7 \texttt{e5}}

\texttt{33 \texttt{g5?}}

White creates the possibility of g5-g6/\texttt{f7+ as well as the creation of a passed h-pawn. But 33 a3 \texttt{c4 34 h3 \texttt{c3 35 g2 holds out a bit longer.}}

\texttt{33 ... \texttt{e8}}

\texttt{34 \texttt{e7}}

34 \texttt{... \texttt{d5!}}

Nicely calculated: The win is trivial after 35 \texttt{a7 \texttt{d4} (36 \texttt{c7 \texttt{xf2!} 37 \texttt{xc5 \texttt{c2+}}).

\texttt{35 \texttt{xc5 \texttt{d2!}}

The bishop is trapped. White resigned after 36 \texttt{a5 \texttt{xc7 37 \texttt{g2}} \texttt{c6 38 \texttt{xa6+ \texttt{f5 39 h4 \texttt{d4 40 \texttt{a8 \texttt{g4! 41 \texttt{f8 \texttt{xa2 42 \texttt{f7 \texttt{xf2+}} 43 \texttt{xf2 \texttt{xf2 44 \texttt{xf2 \texttt{xf4 45 \texttt{\texttt{e3 \texttt{g5}}}}}}}}}}}

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The combination at moves 34-35 in that game was typical of Lasker in his championship years. He tended to avoid forcing variations until he had discernible advantages. This helped him navigate through middlegames against attackers such as Tchigorin, who often seemed frustrated by the lack of a sharp move to count out. This was the case in their final meeting over the board:

Lasker – Tchigorin
Cambridge Springs 1904

\texttt{Ruy Lopez, Exchange Variation (C68)}

1 \texttt{e4 \texttt{e5}}

2 \texttt{\texttt{f3 \texttt{c6}}

3 \texttt{\texttt{b5 a6}}

4 \texttt{\texttt{xc6}}

"As a rule Lasker selected this Exchange Variation when he could be
assured that his opponent wanted to play only for a draw,” Reti later wrote.

The reality is Tchigorin wanted anything but a draw. He had a miserable start at Cambridge Springs and repeatedly avoided moves in this game that would have led to a drawish ending

4 ... dxe6
5 d3 d6
6 e3 e7

7 d4

White was following the lead of Cornelius Trimborn, a former president of the German Chess Union, who adopted this line a year before and continued 7 bbd2 followed by w e2, 0-0-0, and c3.

But 7 bbd2 is unfavorable after 7 c5! Black can continue ... dxe6, ... f6, ... e6 and ... w d7, as Botvinnik demonstrated in a similar (i.e. c3) position in a celebrated game with Romanovsky in 1935.

7 ... g4

On 7... exd4 White has a choice of three recaptures but 8 w x d4 f6 looks most promising. When Black plays c5 White retreats to c3, threatening the c-pawn and preparing to pressure d6 with bbd2-c4 and a d1 or 0-0-0.

Tarrasch said the “only correct way” to parry 7 d4 was 7... f6 8 dxe5 fxe5 But he had little experience with the kind of temporary sack, 9 c4 b6 10 c5?, that today's masters look for. White has good chances once he regains the pawn (10... bxc5 11 bbd2 and c4 or c3).

8 bbd2

The hasty 8 h3 allows 8... exd4! with a nice game, e.g. 9 w x d4 f x f3 10 g x f3 g6 (11 w x g7? h5). Also dangerous for White is 9 w x d4 h5?! 10 w x g7 a g8 11 w d4 f x f3 12 g x f3 c6 g6 and ... f4, ... c5 or ... w g5.

8 ... g6
9 h3 x f3

More ambitious is 9... e6 and 10... f6, especially since the 10 c4 plan doesn't work as well (10... 0-0 11 c5? exd4!).

10 bbd3 w e7
11 w d3

White has the superior pawn structure and Black has surrendered his 2 compensation. If we could jump to a pawn-endgame, White wins.

But since there's a middlegame to play, a lot depends on where the b5 lie. That's a bit of a guessing game because White is waiting for his opponent to commit himself so that he has the option of castling on the other wing.

11 ... 0-0

Black's counterplay is more dangerous after 11... 0-0 12 0-0 b8 than in the game, e.g 13 b e1 exd4 14 a x d4 b e5!.

12 0-0-0 b e8!
13 b e1?!

White is at least one move away from being able to liquidate favorably with 14 dxe5 dxe5 15 b x e5 and f2-f4/ e4-e5. There's not much for him after 13 d5 cxd5 14 w x d5 w e6. But the text is risky because of the coming d-file pin
13 ... exd4!

"Why not ...QR-Q first?" ask Reinfeld/Fine. Nothing is wrong with it but after 13...@ad8 14 #b1 there is little to be gained from 14...exd4 15 @xd4 c5 because of 16 @e3!. That avoids all the unfavorable complications of 16 @c3? #e5! and reaches a dead even endgame after 16 @e3 @xe4 17 @xe4 @xe4 18 @xc5! @xe1 19 #xe1.

And that should tell you what the goals of the two players really were. White rejected 13 d5 because his edge would be tiny. Black rejected 13 ...@ad8 because he, too, didn’t want to draw. Now, however, he would simply have an extra pawn following 14 @xd4 @xe4 or 14 @xd4 @xe4.

14 @xd4

Compared with the 11.. 0-0-0 12 0-0 positions, Black would obtain nothing from 14...@e5 because of 15 @xe5 @xe5 16 @xe5 @xe5 17 @b1 @ad8 18 @e3.

14 ... #f4+

Black can work with three tactical elements: this check, the attack on the bishop with ...c5 and the pinning . @ad8. With 14...@ad8! he would threaten the other two moves.

Then 15 @b1 c5 16 @e3 transposes into the note to Black’s 13th – which Tchigorin avoids because it’s drawish.

The best try is 15...@b4! 16 c3 c5 and then 17 cxb4 exd4. White’s position is a bit loose after 18 @xd4 @xb4 or 18 @c4 @e5. This was Tchigorin’s best chance in the game. But he still wanted more.

15 @b1 c5

16 @c3

This may objectively be no better than 16 @e3 @ad8 17 @c3 and then 17...@xd1+ 18 @xd1 @xe4 19 @xc5. But it preserves most of White’s winning chances and gives Black more to think about.

16 ... @ad8

17 @c2

Now 17...@xe4?? loses outright to 18 @xd8!, and 17...@xd1+ 18 @xd1 allows White to keep a slight advantage due to pawn structure.

17 ... b5

This is the first of a series of suspicious moves. Unfortunately for Tchigorin, he doesn’t have anything sharp to calculate. If he thinks in general terms, he sees that three typical middlegame policies fail him:

(a) Trades will get him closer to an ending in which White’s kingside pawn majority begins to count,

(b) there is no way to favorably change the pawn structure, and

(c) his piece play cannot be greatly improved by maneuvering.

His best may be 17...@e6 so that the kingside becomes a target after 18 g3?! @h6 19 h4 @g4. White should improve his position slowly (18 b3).

18 g3 @d6

Black needs to control e5 (so he can meet 19 e5? with 19...f6!).

19 h4! f6?

This is where Black loses the game. He should play ..@e5, either immediately as suggested by Tarrasch, or after 19.. @b4 20 @d2 a5.
The reason is that White’s advancing kingside pawns become less of a factor when there are no minor pieces for them to push out of the way. White’s knight doesn’t have a particularly good way to avoid a trade (19...e5 20 d2 c6).

20 h5 f8

But now it does: 20...e5 21 h4! and 22 f4.

21 h4! g6?

“The cure is worse than the disease,” wrote Tarrasch, who still felt Black had to remove some wood with 21...e5.

But that’s too late because White can favorably forces matters with 22 f5 e6 23 g4 g6 24 hxg6 hxg6 25 xdx8 xdx8 26 xxe5.

He wins after 26...fxe5 27 g5! e8 28 h1 or 27...d7 28 h6+ g7 29 g4. The same goes for 26...xe5 27 f4 e6 28 h6+ g7 29 f5 d7 30 h1 and 29...c4? 30 hxg6! xhx6 31 h1+ g7 32 h5.

22 hxg6 hxg6

23 f4!

Black can’t trade any minnow and/or the f-pawn, e.g. 23...b4 24 d2 followed by 25 g4 d7 26 f5 g5 27 f4

23 ... f7

24 g4! b4

25 f5!

25 ... c4

Black is lost after 25...e6 26 h6+ g7 27 f5 as Tarrasch pointed out – 27...e8 28 xfx6! xfx6 29 h4+ g7 30 f6+ h8 and now 31 h1 or the pretty 31 f7 e6 32 f5+ h7 33 xhx7+! xhx7 34 h1 mate.

The mundane finish would have been 27...e7 28 fxg6! xhx6 29 h1+ g7 30 h5 xhx6 31 h7+ f8 32 xg6.

26 xfx6

The rest was auto-pilot: 26...d7 27 h6+ h7 28 e5 e6 29 h4 g5 30 xg5 Resigns

38

One of the overlooked areas of chess skill is the “fourth phase.” This is the transition period between the second phase, the middlegame, and the third, the ending. Lasker rarely made a mistake in the fourth phase, such as misjudging when to trade queens or when he should continue to press his opponent instead. But he misfired in the fourth phase of this game, against the eventual winner of Cambridge Springs.

Lasker – Marshall
Cambridge Springs 1904
Sicilian Defense, Marshall Variation (B40)

1 e4 c5

2 f3 e6

3 c3 d5

You’ve never heard of the Marshall Variation? It used to earn itself a whole chapter in books on the Sicilian and French Defenses. It’s essentially a French in which Black plays 3...c5 after 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 c3 just as he might against 3 d2. Marshall, who also used the move order 1 e4 c5 2 f3 e6 3 d4 d5, made it one of his major weapons.

4 exd5 exd5
Now 5 d4 \( \text{c}5 \) 6 dxc5 threatens the d5-pawn. But rather than handle the position like a Tarrasch QGD (6...d4) Marshall played it like a gambit (6...\( \text{e}6 \) 7 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{c}7 \)).

5 \( \text{b}5+ \) \( \text{c}6 \)

Not 5...\( \text{d}7 \) 6 \( \text{e}2+! \) and White wins a pawn.

6 0-0

If he is going to refute the opening White should try something like 6 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 7 d4 and 7...\( \text{e}6 \) 8 \( \text{e}2 \) or 7...\( \text{f}6 \) 8 \( \text{g}5 \).

6 ... \( \text{f}6 \)
7 d4 \( \text{e}7 \)
8 dxc5 0-0

The gambit is illustrated by 9 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{g}4! \) as in one of Marshall’s 1905 match games with Janowsky, which he won after 10 \( \text{xc}6 \) bxc6 11 d4 \( \text{e}4 \) 12 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{g}5 \)

9 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \)

With White’s bishop more aggressively placed on g5 he can ignore ...\( \text{g}4 \) and would answer ...\( \text{xc}5 \) with \( \text{x}f6 \) and \( \text{xd}5 \).

10 \( \text{xc}6 \) bxc6
11 b4

Alekhine’s odd attempt at improvement was 11 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 12 \( \text{c}1!? \). But one gets the impression that since this was a blindfold game he played \( \text{c}1 \) because didn’t realize he still had a pawn at c2.

11 ... \( \text{h}6 \)

Now on 12 \( \text{h}4 \) Black can continue in the same vein, 12...a5 13 a3 axb4 14 axb4 \( \text{x}a1 \) 15 \( \text{x}a1 \) \( \text{b}8 \), as in a 2004 Argentine Championship game. Black obtained good play after 16 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{f}4 \) 17 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{e}4 \).

12 \( \text{xf}6 \)

This sets up a battle between the 2\( \text{e}5 \)s and 2\( \text{c}3 \)s. The knights can be solidly entrenched in a c5-b4-c3 pawn structure but White may do better with 12 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 13 \( \text{c}5 \).

Another of Marshall’s games turned out well for him after 13...a5 14 a3 axb4 14 axb4 \( \text{x}a1 \) 15 \( \text{x}a1 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 16 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 17 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 18 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 19 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 20 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xf}4 \). But that was due more to Marshall than to the merits of Black’s position.

12 ... \( \text{xf}6 \)
13 \( \text{d}2 \)

White wants a knight at d4, protected by a pawn, to reduce the bishops’ scope. But he has to avoid the usual Marshall traps, such as 13 \( \text{d}4 \) a5 14 a3? axb4 or 14 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{c}7 \), which give Black the better game.

13 ... \( \text{a}5 \)
14 a3 \( \text{b}8 \)
15 \( \text{ab}1 \) axb4
16 axb4 \( \text{a}3 \)
17 \( \text{d}4 ! \)

Black’s counterplay gets a bit too unpleasant after 17 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{g}4 \) (18 \( \text{ed}4 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 19 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{c}3 \)).

17 ... \( \text{e}5 \)
18 \( \text{ce}2 \) \( \text{g}4 \)
19 f3 \( \text{d}7 \)
20 c3 \( \text{e}8 \)
"Here, I believe, Black misses his chance," Marshall wrote about 20...\(\text{a}\text{a}8\). But the rooks can’t inflict damage on the file (...\(\text{a}\text{a}2\) is met by \(\text{b}\text{b}2\)). After 21 \(\text{f}\text{f}\) \(\text{w}\text{c}\text{c}7\) 22 \(\text{e}\text{g}\text{g}3\) and \(\text{h}\text{h}5\) White maintains a slight edge, e.g. 22...\(\text{g}\text{g}6\) 23 \(\text{f}\text{f}\) \(\text{g}\text{g}5\) 24 \(\text{w}\text{d}\text{d}3\) \(\text{g}\text{g}7\) and now 25 \(\text{f}\text{x}\text{f}\text{g}6\) \(\text{f}\text{x}\text{g}6\) \(\text{b}\text{b}5\)! \(\text{c}\text{c}5\) \(\text{c}\text{c}6\) in view of 27...\(\text{a}\text{a}\text{x}\text{c}\text{c}6??\) 28 \(\text{c}\text{c}\text{e}\text{e}6+\).

21 \(\text{a}\text{a}1!\) \(\text{a}\text{a}8\)

If White gets control of the a-file (21...\(\text{a}\text{a}x\text{a}1\) 22 \(\text{a}\text{a}x\text{a}1\) and \(\text{a}\text{a}6\) or \(\text{a}\text{a}7\)) his extra pawn becomes a serious asset.

So far White has won the first two phases. He scored minor victories in the opening by securing his extra pawn (10 \(\text{a}\text{a}\text{x}\text{c}\text{c}6\) and \(11\) \(\text{b}\text{b}4\)) and in the middlegame by defusing counterplay (17 \(\text{d}\text{d}4\), 18 \(\text{c}\text{c}\text{e}\text{e}2\), 20 \(\text{c}\text{c}3\)). But his advantage is not great and he needs accuracy in the transition period that covers the next dozen or so moves.

Simply swapping down with 22 \(\text{w}\text{b}\text{b}2\) allows Black too much counterplay, e.g. 22 \(\text{w}\text{e}\text{c}3+\) 23 \(\text{h}\text{h}1\) \(\text{a}\text{a}1+\) 23 \(\text{a}\text{a}1\) \(\text{a}\text{a}1\) 24 \(\text{w}\text{x}\text{a}1\) \(\text{f}\text{f}3!\) and 25 \(\text{h}\text{h}3\) \(\text{d}\text{d}3\) or 25 \(\text{c}\text{x}\text{f}\text{f}5\) \(\text{w}\text{x}\text{e}\text{c}2\) 26 \(\text{d}\text{d}4\) \(\text{c}\text{x}\text{d}4\) 27 \(\text{c}\text{x}\text{d}4\) \(\text{w}\text{e}\text{c}4\) or 25 \(\text{w}\text{a}8+\) \(\text{h}\text{h}7\) 26 \(\text{g}\text{g}\text{1}\) \(\text{d}\text{d}7\).

22 \(\text{a}\text{a}3!\) \(\text{a}\text{a}3\)

23 \(\text{e}\text{e}1?\)

White misses his chance to transform the extra pawn into a passer – 23 \(\text{b}\text{b}5!\) \(\text{c}\text{x}\text{b}5\) 24 \(\text{c}\text{c}6\) \(\text{c}\text{c}8\) 25 \(\text{c}\text{x}\text{b}5\) and \(\text{c}\text{c}\text{d}4\).

23 ... \(\text{w}\text{c}7\)

24 \(\text{c}\text{c}2\) \(\text{a}\text{a}2\)

25 \(\text{a}\text{a}1\) \(\text{w}\text{a}7\)

26 \(\text{w}\text{c}1\) \(\text{f}\text{f}5!\)

Marshall is winning the fourth phase. This bishop, instead of being limited to sentry duty, reaches d3.

27 \(\text{a}\text{a}2\) \(\text{w}\text{a}2\)

28 \(\text{c}\text{c}d4\) \(\text{d}\text{d}3\)

29 \(\text{w}\text{e}3\) \(\text{a}\text{x}\text{d}4!\)

Black had to trade off one of his bishops to break the grip of the knights. Logic suggests he should trade the other bishop and preserve the one that can attack dark squares. But after 29...\(\text{a}\text{x}\text{e}2\) 30 \(\text{a}\text{x}\text{e}2\) \(\text{w}\text{a}1+\) 31 \(\text{f}\text{f}2\) he has no further counterplay

30 \(\text{w}\text{x}\text{d}4\) \(\text{w}\text{a}1+\)

31 \(\text{f}\text{f}2\) \(\text{w}\text{b}2+\)

32 \(\text{g}\text{g}3\) \(\text{f}\text{f}1\)

White has no realistic chances after 33 \(\text{w}\text{f}2\) \(\text{w}\text{x}\text{c}3\) 34 \(\text{w}\text{x}\text{c}6\) \(\text{b}\text{b}5!\).

33 \(\text{f}\text{f}4!\)

"A startling move, demonstrating the champion’s deep insight," Marshall said. "It came within an ace of winning."

33 ... \(\text{w}\text{x}\text{g}2\)

34 \(\text{e}\text{e}5\)

The post-game consensus was that 34...\(\text{w}\text{x}\text{h}2+\) 35 \(\text{f}\text{f}4\) gives White good
winning chances. However, Black should be able to defend as long as he watches for two opportunities — perpetual check and the advance of his own passed pawn.

For example, on 35...\(\text{Wh}5+\) 36 \(\text{Qd6}\) \(\text{Wh}6+\) 37 \(\text{Qc7}\) \(\text{We}4\) 38 \(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{dxe4}\) both players are headed for new queens.

If White avoids the \(\text{Wh}-\text{swap with}\) 38 \(\text{Qd2}\), Black has good survival chances after 38...h5 39 \(\text{Qxc6}\) \(\text{Qc4}\) 40 b5 \(\text{We}8+\) and 40 \(\text{Qd7}\) \(\text{Qf8}\).

\[\begin{align*}
34 & \ldots \quad \text{g6} \\
35 & \text{f4} \quad \text{d3}
\end{align*}\]

There were always traps galore when these two men met. Here they include 35...\(\text{Qh3}\) 36 b5 \(\text{f6+}\) 37 \(\text{Qd6}\) \(\text{We}8\) 38 \(\text{Qxc6??}\) \(\text{Qd7}\) mate and 38 \(\text{bxc6??}\) \(\text{Qd8}\) mate.

Marshall thought White would be winning after 38 \(\text{Qc7}\) but that is by no means certain (38...\(\text{cx}5\) 39 \(\text{Qd6}\) \(\text{We}5\) 40 c6 b4!)

\[\begin{align*}
36 & \text{b5} \quad \text{xb5} \\
37 & \text{xb5} \quad \text{xb5} \\
38 & \text{d4}
\end{align*}\]

Not 38 \(\text{Qxd5??}\) because of checks at e6, c4 and c3. But 38 \(\text{We}3\) was a winning try (38...\(\text{Wh}5+\) 39 \(\text{Qd6}\) \(\text{Wh}2+\) 40 \(\text{f4}\)).

\[\begin{align*}
38 & \ldots \quad \text{Qc2} \\
39 & \text{c6} \quad \text{a4}+ \\
40 & \text{e3} \quad \text{a7}+
\end{align*}\]

Black aims for a perpetual (41 \(\text{Qd4}\) \(\text{We}7+\) 42 \(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{We}6\) 43 \(\text{Qb6}\) \(\text{Qg6}+\)) or more (44 \(\text{Qd4??}\) \(\text{Qg1}\)).

\[\begin{align*}
41 & \text{d3} \quad \text{b4?!} \\
42 & \text{c7} \quad \text{a6+}
\end{align*}\]

The only try is 43 \(\text{c4}\) but it offers White only slim chances after 43...b3

\[\begin{align*}
43 & \text{d2} \quad \text{bxc3+} \\
44 & \text{xc3} \quad \text{c6}+ \\
45 & \text{d2} \quad \text{f6}
\end{align*}\]

Draw

White can keep his advanced pawn but has no way of pushing it.

\[39\]

One of the advantages of being a vagabond world champion was that Lasker met many of his opponents early in his travels and was quite familiar with them when he faced them in games that really mattered. For example, he first played Delmar and Albert Hodges in exhibition games shortly after he first arrived in America in 1892. Lasker first met Alekhine and Grigory Levenfish in exhibitions. And he first faced and Reti and Romanovsky when they took boards against him in simulhs.

**Hodges-Lasker**

*Cambridge Springs 1904*  
*Albin Counter-Gambit (D08)*

\[\begin{align*}
1 & \text{d4} \quad \text{d5} \\
2 & \text{c4} \quad \text{e5}
\end{align*}\]

Lasker played the Albin in at least seven casual and simultaneous games but this was the only time he tried it in a money situation. After losing to Schlechter two rounds earlier, he had virtually no chance for first prize. Marshall led him by 2½ points, with three rounds to go and there was a distinct possibility that Lasker would end up in third place. No reigning world champion had finished that low before — nor would one until Capablanca did it at Moscow 1925.

\[\begin{align*}
3 & \text{dxe5} \quad \text{d4} \\
4 & \text{f3} \quad \text{c6} \\
5 & \text{a3} \quad \text{g4}
\end{align*}\]

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6 \( \text{g}5 \)

 Barely a page worth of Albin theory had evolved since Game 8. Hodges avoids 6 h3, as played by Lasker, and also 6 \( \text{f}4 \), which had had mixed success because the bishop can be attacked by \( \text{\text{g}}7\text{e}7\text{-g}6 \).

 6 ... \( \text{\text{e}7} \)

 7 \( \text{\text{e}7} \)

 But because of Black’s temporary logjam, 7 \( \text{f}4 \) makes some sense here. Black could try to take advantage of it with 7...g5 8 \( \text{\text{g}3} \) \( \text{\text{h}6} \).

 7 ... \( \text{\text{x}e7} \)

 Black can regain the pawn because 8 \( \text{\text{d}x}d4?? \) 0-0 costs a knight.

 8 \( \text{\text{b}d}2 \) 0-0-0

 But not 8 ... \( \text{\text{d}x}e5 \) 9 \( \text{\text{d}x}e5 \) \( \text{\text{d}x}e5 \) because 10 h3 would drive the bishop away and allow \( \text{\text{d}f}3 \). For example, 10 ... \( \text{\text{e}6} \) 11 \( \text{\text{d}f}3 \) \( \text{\text{f}6} \) 12 \( \text{\text{d}x}d4 \) \( \text{\text{d}x}d4 \) 13 \( \text{\text{d}x}d4 \) \( \text{\text{d}x}c4 \) 14 \( \text{\text{f}1} \).

 9 \( \text{\text{a}4} \) \( \text{\text{b}8} \)

 10 0-0-0

 Now 10 ... \( \text{\text{d}x}e5 \) is good enough for equality and 11 \( \text{\text{d}b}3 \) \( \text{\text{d}3} \) favors Black.

 10 ... \( \text{\text{f}6}! \)

 This idea occurs in a variety of Albin positions but rarely meets with any degree of success. Here it works because Black obtains great knight outposts and pressure against the backward e-pawn.

 11 \( \text{\text{e}6} \) \( \text{\text{f}6} \)

 12 \( \text{\text{h}3} \) \( \text{\text{h}5} \)

 13 \( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{\text{e}8} \)

 14 \( \text{\text{w}b}3 \)

 White is beginning to experience difficulties. Nothing good comes of 14 \( \text{\text{g}2} \) \( \text{\text{w}x}e2 \) and he is worse after 14 \( \text{\text{d}b}3 \) \( \text{\text{d}e}4 \) 15 \( \text{\text{h}2} \) \( \text{\text{d}3} \).

 His choices include the problematic 14 \( \text{\text{e}1} \) \( \text{\text{d}4} \) and a tactoff offer of a draw, 14 \( \text{\text{w}c}2 \) \( \text{\text{g}6} \) 15 \( \text{\text{w}a}4 \). Considering the tournament situation, Black would reject it (15...\( \text{\text{d}e}4 \)).

 14 ... \( \text{\text{d}7} \! \)

 With the idea of 15...\( \text{\text{c}5} \) 16 \( \text{\text{w}c}2 \) \( \text{\text{g}6} \) and wins.

 15 \( \text{\text{d}e}1 \) \( \text{\text{e}5} \)

 16 \( \text{\text{w}g}3 \) \( \text{\text{e}5} \)

 17 \( \text{\text{d}3} \! \)

 This would have been a fine defense to 16 ... \( \text{\text{g}6} \) and it’s a deep Exchange check here. But after the game, it was called inferior to 17 \( \text{\text{f}4} \), followed by a move of the e1-knight.

 However, White is obviously worse off than in the game after 17 ... \( \text{\text{d}f}7 \) 18 \( \text{\text{g}2} \) \( \text{\text{a}4} \) 19 \( \text{\text{e}1} \) \( \text{\text{d}6} \) and ... \( \text{\text{d}e}4 \) or 18 \( \text{\text{e}f}3 \) \( \text{\text{a}4} \) 19 \( \text{\text{e}1} \) \( \text{\text{w}c}3 \).

 17 ... \( \text{\text{d}ex}d3 \! \)

 18 \( \text{\text{ex}d}3 \) \( \text{\text{a}4} \)

 Black can get a good ending with Janowsky’s suggestion of 18 ... \( \text{\text{d}f}8 \) 19 \( \text{\text{d}e}4 \) (not 19 \( \text{\text{g}2} \) \( \text{\text{x}f}2 \! \)) \( \text{\text{d}e}4 \) 20 \( \text{\text{d}c}4 \) \( \text{\text{w}x}e4 \) 21 \( \text{\text{d}d}3 \) \( \text{\text{f}4} \).

 19 \( \text{\text{g}2} \)

 White’s compensation lies in the possible fortress he can cobble after 19 ... \( \text{\text{d}x}d1 \) 20 \( \text{\text{d}x}d1 \) and ... \( \text{\text{d}e}4 \). For example, 20 ... \( \text{\text{h}f}8 \) 21 \( \text{\text{d}e}4 \) \( \text{\text{d}e}4 \) 22 \( \text{\text{d}x}e4 \) \( \text{\text{g}5} \! \) (else 23 \( \text{\text{f}4} \) 23 \( \text{\text{c}2} \) \( \text{\text{w}f}4 \) 24 \( \text{\text{w}x}f4 \) and 25 \( \text{\text{f}3} \).

 Note that 20 ... \( \text{\text{h}f}8 \) sets a wonderful trap — 21 \( \text{\text{b}4} \) \( \text{\text{x}f}2 \! \! \) and 22 \( \text{\text{w}f}2 \! \).
20...\texttt{de}1!!

Even though Black has three ways of obtaining an advantage now, this is an inspired defense. The first point is that White can answer 20...\texttt{xd}3 with 21...\texttt{e}4!!.

After 21...\texttt{g}3 22 \texttt{fg}3 \texttt{d}3 he can put up resistance with 23 \texttt{d}5 and \texttt{c}7 or \texttt{hf}1. Better is 21...\texttt{b}3+! 22 \texttt{xb}3 \texttt{xc}4+ (23 \texttt{c}2?? \texttt{d}3) with superior chances compared with the endgame he soon finds himself in.

\begin{itemize}
  \item 20...\texttt{xd}3+
  \item 21 \texttt{e}4
\end{itemize}

Trapping the queen. Now 22...\texttt{xd}2+ 23 \texttt{xd}2 \texttt{h}6 24 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{hf}8 also favors Black. But White should hold (25 \texttt{e}2 b5 26 b3!).

\begin{itemize}
  \item 22...\texttt{xe}4!
\end{itemize}

So after all the excitement it's an equal materiel ending in which Black holds the high cards (passed pawn, bishop vs. knight, f-file pressure). He has to use those assets accurately since White can mount a real defense after 23...\texttt{c}6 24 \texttt{f}3 and \texttt{hf}1.

\begin{itemize}
  \item 23...\texttt{hf}8
\end{itemize}

Now 24 \texttt{c}5 \texttt{c}6 25 \texttt{de}6 seems to help White – 25...\texttt{hx}1 26 \texttt{hx}1 \texttt{c}8 27 \texttt{d}1.

But Black's rook invades after 27...c5! 28 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{e}8! 29 \texttt{xd}8 \texttt{xd}8 or 29 f5 \texttt{d}6 30 \texttt{xc}5 \texttt{e}2.

\begin{itemize}
  \item 24...\texttt{d}2
\end{itemize}

The rook had to move eventually in view of ...\texttt{c}6 and ...\texttt{f}4, e.g. 24 \texttt{c}5 \texttt{c}6 25 \texttt{h}2 and now 25...\texttt{e}8 26 \texttt{xe}8+ \texttt{xe}8 27 \texttt{f}4 \texttt{b}6 28 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{e}3.

It's understandable that White wanted to keep everything protected. But 24 \texttt{hf}1 would at least allow his pieces to play (24...\texttt{f}3 25 \texttt{c}5 and \texttt{e}7, e.g. 25...d3 26 \texttt{d}2 \texttt{c}2 27 \texttt{e}7).

\begin{itemize}
  \item 24...\texttt{e}8!
\end{itemize}

White can't maintain control of the e-file now (24 \texttt{hf}1 \texttt{c}6).

\begin{itemize}
  \item 25 \texttt{d}2
  \item 26 \texttt{g}3
  \item 27 \texttt{xe}1
\end{itemize}

White is playing with just his king after 28 \texttt{d}2 c5 29 \texttt{d}3 \texttt{e}8 (30 b4 b6
31 \text{d}2 \text{c}7 and \ldots \text{d}6-\text{e}5-\text{f}4).

28 \text{f}5 \text{c}5

He has better chances of salvation after 28...\text{e}8+? 29 \text{d}2 (29 \text{f}1 \text{d}3!) \text{e}2+ 30 \text{d}3 or 29...\text{c}5 30 \text{h}4!.

29 \text{g}7 \text{g}8

30 \text{f}5 \text{e}8+

31 \text{d}2 \text{e}2+

And here White would be playing with just a knight after 32 \text{d}3 \text{xb}2 33 \text{d}6 \text{b}3+

32 \text{c}1 \text{d}3

33 \text{e}3 \text{d}2+

Resigns

In view of 34 \text{c}2 \text{d}1(\text{f}!) + 35 \text{xd}1 \text{xf}2+.

40

The following is one of the two or three best known Lasker games and probably the most misunderstood. Since Reti’s widely copied comments in Masters of the Chess Board, readers have been bewildered by the conclusion that:

(a) White played the opening atrociously – intentionally so.

(b) Black responded brilliantly – yet he was barely hanging on, until

(c) He found a great defensive resource at move 21 – which loses by force

Does any of that make sense? And what really happened? Let’s see.

Lasker – Napier
Cambridge Springs 1904
Sicilian Defense, Dragon Variation (B34)

1 \text{c}4 \text{c}5

2 \text{d}c3 \text{d}c6

3 \text{f}3 g6

4 d4 cxd4

5 \text{xd}4 \text{g}7

6 \text{e}3 d6

7 h3 \text{f}6

8 g4

Reinfeld/Fine said the only thing that is certain about White’s last two moves is that they are “objectively bad.”

8 ... 0-0

9 g5

White’s play is in “violation of all rules of chess,” Reti said. He is not fully developed, the center isn’t closed and White has no discernible advantage that justifies attack. OK, that was an arguable point of view, even in 1929 when he wrote Masters But then Reti gets downright silly:

The reason White chose such an outrageous policy, he explains, is “psychological.” Lasker could determine, based on 1...c5, that Black couldn’t defend well. Playing the Sicilian is a “very tedious and difficult” chore, Reti wrote. The player who adopts it wants to reach the endgame and is therefore not inclined to handle sharp positions (!).

9 ... \text{e}8

Black prepares \ldots \text{c}7/.., d5. Modern players would prefer 9...\text{h}5, in order to exploit the White weaknesses after, say, 10 \text{d}2 \text{xd}4 11 \text{xd}4 \text{xd}4.
12 \( \text{Wxd4 We5} \), or 9...\( \text{Qd7} \) 10 \( \text{h4 Wa5} \)
11 \( \text{f4 Qxd4} \) 12 \( \text{cxd4 e5} \) as in Reti-Saemisch, Kiel 1921.

That’s right. The same Reti who denounced White’s opening moves in 1929 had played them himself – in fact, more than once.

10 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{ec7} \)
11 \( \text{f4} \)

Lasker had taken an hour and 25 minutes so far, exceptionally slow for him. White can’t afford too much kingside play (11 h5 d5!) so he prepares to meet 11...d5 with 12 e5. But 11 \( \text{g2} \) serves better.

11 ... \( \text{e5}! \)

A counter-intuitive alternative is 11...\( \text{Qxd4!} \), giving up the bishop that is the heart of Black’s game. Black is better after 12 \( \text{Qxd4 d5} \) 13 \( \text{e5} \)? \( \text{f5} \) and stands well after 13 \( \text{c5} \) dxe4 14 \( \text{Qxe4 b6} \).

12 \( \text{Qde2} \)

On 12 \( \text{fxe5} \) Black’s best may be 12...\( \text{Qxd4} \) 13 \( \text{Qxd4 Qe6} \)

12 ... \( \text{d5} \)

After choosing such a boring opening, Black had shown a “surprising” understanding of how \( g4 \) had altered matters, Reti wrote. But now Black defended “nervously and hastily” with this move instead of 12...\( \text{Qg4} \).

A modern Dragon player would naturally look at 12...\( \text{exf4} \) and 13...\( \text{Qe5} \) and have some doubts about the bishop-move. Zak argued that 12 \( \text{Qg4} \) could be met strongly by 13 \( f5 \). For example, 13...\( \text{gxf5} \) 14 \( \text{exf5 Qxf5} \) 15 \( \text{g3} \) and then 15...\( \text{Qe6} \) 16 \( \text{d3 d5} \) 17 \( \text{Wh5 e4} \) 18 \( \text{Qxe4 dxe4} \) 19 \( \text{Qxe4} \)

It’s more in the Dragon DNA to play...d5, rather than grab a pawn. True, 13...\( d5 \) doesn’t work (14 \( \text{exd5 Qf3} \) 15 \( f6! \) \( \text{Wh8} \) 16 \( \text{h3 Qxd5} \) and now 17 \( \text{c5} \), threatening \( \text{Qd3} \). However, Black seems to be doing well with 13...\( \text{gxh5} \) 14 \( \text{exf5 Qd5} \)

13 \( \text{Qxd5 Qd4}! \)

A modern player would take it for granted that 14 \( \text{Qxd4 exd4} \) 15 \( \text{Qxd4 Qxd5} \) gives Black good compensation for a pawn.

14 \( \text{Qxd4 Qxd5}! \)

After 13 \( \text{Qxd5} \) Black would have played 13...\( \text{exf4} \) ! And here he would have met 15 \( \text{Qxd5} \) with 15...\( \text{exd4} \), e.g.
16 \( \text{Qxd4 Qxd5} \) 17 \( \text{Qxg7 Qxh1} \) 18 \( \text{Qxf8 Qxh4+} \) (Marco). The next two moves are forced.

15 \( \text{Qf5 Qxc3} \)
16 \( \text{Wxd8 Qxd8} \)
17 \( \text{Qe7+} \)

Common sense tells us 17 \( \text{Qxg7} \) cannot be right, and Reti tried to confirm that by saying 17...\( \text{Qxd5} \) 18 0-0-0 \( \text{Qg4} \) favors Black.

But as the game shows, that bishop on \( g7 \) is extraordinarily valuable. After 17 \( \text{Qxg7! Qxd5} \) White keeps matters unclear with 18 \( \text{Qd2 exf4} \) 19 \( c4! \).

17 ... \( \text{Wh8} \)

This is a mild surprise but 17...\( \text{Qf8} \), attacking the knight, can be answered by 18 \( \text{Qc5} \). After 18...\( \text{Qe4} \) 19 \( \text{Qa3 Qd6} \) White wins with 20 \( \text{Qxc8} \) and 21 0-0-0 Better is 19...\( \text{Qg4} \) but 20 \( \text{Qxg6+} \) and 21 \( \text{Qxe5} \) still favors White

18 \( \text{h5!} \)
This is the kind of move, not that difficult for one of today’s Sicilianistas to find, that marveled Lasker’s contemporaries. Clearly 18 bxc3? exf4! favors Black (19 \textit{d}d4 \textit{x}d4 20 \textit{c}xd4 \textit{e}e8) as does 18 \textit{c}xc8 exf4 19 \textit{f}xc4 e8.

The real question is whether the text, which threatens 19 hxg6 fxg6 20 \textit{x}xg6+ and \textit{c}c4+, is stronger than 18 \textit{f}5. The answer is that 18 \textit{f}5 is good but Black can stay in the game with 18 \textit{c}e4 19 \textit{f}6 \textit{c}f8.

18 ... \textit{c}e8!

Traditional defensive policies, such as trading pieces (18...\textit{d}d5? 19 \textit{c}xd5 \textit{c}d5 20 \textit{c}c4) or trying to keep lines closed (18 gxh5? 19 \textit{f}5! \textit{c}e4 20 \textit{h}4 \textit{c}g3 21 \textit{f}6!) will fail.

19 \textit{c}c5

Among the points of Black’s last move are 19 hxg6 \textit{c}xe7 20 \textit{c}e5 \textit{d}7 offers good survival chances, as does 19 \textit{f}5 gxh5 20 \textit{c}xc8 \textit{d}d5!.

By protecting the knight and removing the bishop from ...exf4 attack, White has almost eliminated the tricks. That’s important because once the position is defused tactically, the normal rules of chess should return and White’s material will win.

For instance, 19...\textit{c}e4 20 \textit{b}5! If Black keeps the shots coming – 20 \textit{g}4 21 hxg6 fxg6 22 \textit{c}xe8 \textit{c}xe8 21 \textit{c}xc6+ \textit{g}8 24 \textit{c}e7+ \textit{h}8 25 \textit{a}3 exf4 – he eventually runs out of bullets (26 \textit{h}4! and wins).

19 ... gxh5!

It’s easy to like this game. Whoever makes the last surprising move seems to have the edge. It was once claimed that 19...exf4 would have been refuted by 20 hxg6 fxg6 21 \textit{c}c4. But then 21...\textit{f}5! was found to lead to an unclear situation in which Black’s winning chances were significant (22 \textit{g}7 \textit{e}e4! and 22 bxc3 \textit{c}c8 23 \textit{f}7 \textit{c}c5). Better is 20 \textit{c}c4 so that 20...\textit{f}5 is beaten by 21 \textit{f}x7 \textit{e}e4 22 hxg6. And after 20...gxh5 21 \textit{f}x7 \textit{e}e4 all that Black has accomplished is to transpose into the lost game continuation (22 \textit{c}xe8 \textit{c}xb2 23 \textit{b}1).

But Black has one more improvement and it is 20...b6!! (Sergei Dolmatov), which saves Black and puts the onus on White following 21 \textit{f}x7 \textit{b}7, after which anything can happen.

20 \textit{c}c4??

This was given an exclamation point by several annotators. They agreed that Black has compensation if White tried 20 bxc3 \textit{c}8 21 \textit{b}5 \textit{c}xe7 22 \textit{c}xe7 \textit{c}xe7, so the text had to be better.

But Black deserves compensation. White might not be able to win after 23 \textit{x}h5 \textit{c}f5 24 \textit{f}x5 \textit{c}xc2 or 23...\textit{g}4 24 \textit{h}4 \textit{f}5. But he is the player with winning chances. The same is true of 20 \textit{x}h5 \textit{c}e4 21 \textit{d}3!.

20 ... exf4?

Black had been waiting for a chance to play this. It was a major factor in why White had to reject alternatives earlier in the game, such as 18 \textit{c}xc8 exf4!

Besides, 20...exf4 seemed to fit in with the tactical theme of the last several moves. Black kept the annoying knight at c3 where it couldn’t be taken (20...exf4 21 bxc3?? \textit{c}xc3+).

However, 20...\textit{c}e4! was right Tartakower regarded it as not “altogether satisfactory.” But he
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grossly underestimated Black’s chances after 21...\texttt{xf7} \texttt{xe8} \texttt{xe8}. White may be lost after 23 \texttt{a3} \texttt{xf4} or 23 \texttt{f5} \texttt{xc5} 24 \texttt{f6} \texttt{f8}.

21 \texttt{xf7} \texttt{e4}??

“This ingenious sacrifice was certainly Najdorf’s best chance,” wrote Reti. “Magnificent” said Tartakower, as did Reinfield/Fine. Some annotators give it two exclams. But a move that turns an unclear position into a forced loss doesn’t deserve praise.

The best move was the obvious one, 21...\texttt{f8}! The reason it eluded attention for so long is that 22 \texttt{xe5} \texttt{e4} 23 \texttt{g6} h\texttt{g6} 24 \texttt{xe6}+ and 25 \texttt{xf8} wins.

But 23...\texttt{g8}!! is a magical resource. The game can have any of three outcomes after 24 \texttt{xf8} \texttt{xb2}. The fairest result would be 24 \texttt{e7}+! \texttt{h8} 25 \texttt{g6}+, drawing.

22 \texttt{xe8} \texttt{xb2}
23 \texttt{b1} \texttt{c3}+
24 \texttt{f1} \texttt{g4}

25 \texttt{xe6}!

“Dr. Lasker amazed me by playing the nine moves from 21 to 30 within three minutes,” Napier wrote. But there are no medals for finding the easiest moves of the game. White will have a winning edge in three moves (e.g. 25...\texttt{g3}+ 26 \texttt{t2} \texttt{xh5} 27 \texttt{h4}).

25 \texttt{xe6}++
26 \texttt{g5} \texttt{g3}+

The only other tree branch is 26...\texttt{d2}+ 27 \texttt{e2} \texttt{xb1}, when White wins with 28 \texttt{g6} \texttt{g7} 29 \texttt{d7} \texttt{f6} 30 \texttt{g7}.

27 \texttt{g2} \texttt{h5}
28 \texttt{b7}

White’s pieces dominate (28...\texttt{g7} 29 \texttt{d5} \texttt{e6} 30 \texttt{f7} and 31 \texttt{f6}+).

28 \texttt{a5}

The active 28...\texttt{d8} 29 \texttt{c7} \texttt{d2}+ 30 \texttt{f3} \texttt{xc2} would shorten matters since 31 \texttt{f5} mates.

29 \texttt{b3} \texttt{g7}
30 \texttt{h3} \texttt{g3}
31 \texttt{f3} \texttt{a6}
32 \texttt{xf4}

The rest was 32...\texttt{e2}+ 33 \texttt{f5} \texttt{xe3} 34 \texttt{a3} \texttt{a4} 35 \texttt{e3} \texttt{f8} 36 \texttt{d4}+ \texttt{g7} 37 \texttt{g6}! Resigns

41

Lasker scored 3½ out of four in his finish at Cambridge Springs but his last-round game with David Janowsky was the most important and, in a way, prophetic. Janowsky had been claiming for years that he was world championship material. “He freely announced his resolve to challenge Lasker, whose title he considers open to question, because to use his own words, ‘He has not played me,’” the American Chess Magazine said in 1899.

But when they did play Lasker won five games and drew two. In this, their eighth game, Janowsky comes agonizingly close to winning. In at least three points he felt he missed a win. Afterward he hungered for an opportunity to test Lasker again, and the ultimate result was three matches
between them, including one for the world championship title.

Janowsky – Lasker
Cambridge Springs 1904
Four Knights Game (C48)

1  e4  e5
2  d4  d6
3  c3  f6
4  b5  c5

It's easy to write this off, in the style of Reti, as a bad move that Lasker knew was bad but felt necessary to play to avoid a draw. But 4...c5 wasn't regarded as bad in 1904. A few weeks before Cambridge Springs, Marshall tried it three times, against opening experts Schlechter, Marco and Maroczy, and came away with three draws. And Rubinstein used it to win after he had discovered 4...d4.

5  dxe5

The insertion of 5 0-0 0-0 makes 6 dxe5 stronger, as we'll see.

5  dxe5
6  d4  d6

Janowsky didn't like 6...b4 7 dxe5 dxe4 because of 8 d4 xcx3+ 9 bxc3. However, 8...xc3 9 bxc3 e7 10 g4 is better than its reputation.

7  f4

The main reason 5 0-0 0-0 6 dxe5 was superior is that after 6...dxe5 7 d4 d6 8 f4 Black cannot complicate with 8...c6 9 e5 b4 10 d5! e4 as was possible in the game.

By now you're probably saying, "Yeah, and Muzio Gambit has some finesses too. Who cares?"

But the 4...c5 line keeps being revived. In the 1988 English Championship there were three examples of 5 0-0 0-0 6 dxe5 in grandmaster games. One of them, Nunn-Hodgson, went 6...dxe5 7 d4 d6 8 f4 c6 9 e5 c7 10 d5 b4 11 exf6 xfx6 12 a3. Black eventually got the upper hand (12...xc3 13 bxc3 xdx5! 14 xdx5 c6 15 xd3 exb5 16 f5 f6).

7  g6

Here 7...c6 8 e5 b4 had been analyzed by Bardeleben into a drawish ending (9 d5 e4 10 xd3 xc3 11 bxc3 c7 12 dxc6 dx6 13 xd8+).

His analysis was copied into ECO but there's a huge flaw: 11...a5! wins.

8  e5

This game made such a dramatic impression that at least five of the world's top players – Lasker, Janowsky, Tarrasch, Tchigorin and Marshall – annotated it. This is simply not done today. A top GM is eager to annotate one of his own just-completed victories. But he wouldn't go near a rival's.

8  c6!

The debate began here. Marshall called this move simple and strong while Janowsky said Black had to castle instead.

Neither mentioned Flechsig-Zukertort, Leipzig 1877, which went 8...c7 9 exf6 xf6 and favored Black following 10 0-0 0-0 11 e4 d5 and then 12 xf6+ xf6 13 c3 f5 14 d3? xc8.
But White gets the edge if he pushes his f-pawn. For example, 11 f5! or 11 \( \text{c}e4 \text{d}5 12 \text{c}xf6+ \text{xf}6 13 f5! \)

9 \( \text{c}e4 \)

Lasker felt White’s only dangerous alternative was 9 exd6 cxb5 10 \( \text{w}e2+ \text{f}8 11 f5 \) and then 11 ... \( \text{h}4 12 0-0 \) threatens 13 \( \text{g}5. \) He thought 12 ...h6 13 \( \text{c}xb5 \) b6 could go in any direction.

But Janowsky gave “13 g3!” as winning, along with 12 ...\( \text{b}6 13 \text{w}e7+ \text{g}8 14 \text{d}5! \). This is the first of what he regarded as his missed opportunities.

9 ... \( \text{c}7 \)

10 exf6 \( \text{xf}6 \)

11 0-0

Black can’t afford 11 ...\( \text{c}xf4? \) 12 g3. But he could castle and play an equal middlegame.


11 ... \( \text{d}5! \)

This game was cited to support the mind-game theory. “It was the psychologist rather than the chessplayer at work when Lasker, out of a humdrum opening, steered the game into complications,” wrote Hannak. Some annotators felt that Lasker tried to lure Janowsky into the piece sack at move nine and, when that failed, felt he had to try again.

But how about the alternative explanation – that Lasker was trying to find the best moves and succeeding? If Black had played the natural 11 ...0-0 White would get a reasonable game from 12 \( \text{c}e4 \text{w}7 13 \text{d}3 \text{d}5 14 \text{g}3 \) and 15 c3. Black’s chances are a bit better after 11 ...d5 12 \( \text{b}3 \) 0-0.

12 \( \text{xd}5 \)

Marshall and Janowsky believed this was sound, while Tarrasch thought it offered insufficient compensation.

12 ... \( \text{cxd}5 \)

13 \( \text{c}xd5 \) \( \text{w}d6 \)

14 \( \text{w}e2+ \) \( \text{d}7 \)

“Of course not 14 ...\( \text{c}e6,” \) Marshall wrote, citing 15 \( \text{c}c7+ \text{w}c7 16 \text{f}5 \).

Janowsky thought 14 ...\( \text{f}8 \) was better than 14 ...\( \text{e}7 \) but he underestimated 15 \( \text{c}c7 \text{w}c7 16 \text{f}5 \) \( \text{c}7 17 \text{f}6! \) (17 ...\( \text{f}5 18 \text{fxg}7+ \) and 19 \( \text{f}4, \) or 17 ...\( \text{xf}6 18 \text{h}6+ \text{g}8 19 \text{xf}6 \).

15 \( \text{e}1 \)

White thought he would be better if he won a third pawn, even if it meant reaching an ending (15 ...\( \text{e}6 16 \text{w}b5+ \text{d}8 17 \text{xe}7 \text{xe}7 18 \text{d}5 \text{d}7 19 \text{xe}7 \).

That’s true but Black does better with 18 ...\( \text{w}d7, \) which ensures an advantage. White should play 18 \( \text{w}b7 \) instead, after which anything can happen.

15 ... \( \text{d}8! \)

16 \( \text{c}4 \)
Why Lasker Matters

16 ... f6?

This time Marshall and Tarrasch were on the same side, saying it was too weakening. Tarrasch preferred 16...e6 17...xe7 xe7 18 d5 d7 19...d2 f8!, which he felt was harmless for Black.

However, Janowsky found a much stronger idea for White, 19 b4! and then 19...b6 20...a3 and c4-c5 or 19...xb4 20...b1 c5+ 21...e3 d6 22...d4 b6 23 c5! bxc5 24...e5! and wins.

But there is a better defense and it lies in 16...Rf8! The attack (17...d2 a5 18 b4) runs out of steam quickly (18...d7 and ...dxd5).

17 ... d2 a5
18...h5+ g6!

Lasker felt this allowed White to reload. He preferred 18...Rf8 19 f5 d7, which protects e8 and threatens to cripple the attack with ...dxd5.

But let's carry that a step further, 20...xe7 xe7 21...e4! That not only sets a trap — 21...xf5? 22...e2! — but also creates favorable complications.

For example, 21...g8 22...xe7! xe7 23...e1 and then 23...g6 24 fxg6...e6 25 g7! xg7 26 d5!, Lasker defended better than he thought.

19...c5!

"The winning move," claimed Janowsky (19...xd5?? 20...xd5 and 19...gxf5? 20...xd6 lose).

19 ... a6

The problem with 19...c6 is 20...xe7 xe7 and now 21...e2 c7 22...f5! Janowsky felt that the threat of...d4-d6 must win.

On the contrary, said Tarrasch, who claimed 22...g5 would win Black. That would invite White to keep sacking, such as 23...h5+ f8 24...e6 followed by...a1.

That looks promising in view of 24...xe6 25 fx e6...g7 26...f7+ h6 27...f1...a8 28...xf6+. Unfortunately 28...xe6 29...xc7...xd4+ is a mate. And 27 h4 wd8 28 hxg5+ fxg5 also fails.

But the debate will have to go on without Tarrasch or Janowsky because 24 h4! keeps the attack going. Black may be winning after 19...c6 but it may take another century to prove it.

20...h6!

The post-mortem left the impression that this was one of the loveliest games either of these two men had ever played. In contrast, Lasker's game with Napier was hailed as immortal. But this was turning into one of Janowsky's best. He threatens to win with 21...xe7+, or 21...b6 or 21...xe7...xe7 22...xe7+!...xe7 23...g7+.

20 ... e6

“One of the most famous positions of the start of the century,” wrote Janowsky biographers Dimitry Plisetsky and Sergei Voronkov. White has four tempting moves and none is crystal clear.

Tarrasch and Janowsky thought 21...g7 was best, since it virtually forces 21...xd5 22...xd5+...d7 and White can coast to victory with 23...xh7. But Zak showed that 23...d3! 24...d1...f5 leaves the game up for grabs.
Another natural candidate is 21 \( \Boxxe 7 \) and then 21...\( \Boxxe 7 \) 22 d5. Tarrasch misevaluated 22...0-0-0 23 \( \Boxxe 6 \) \( \Boxxc 5 \) plus as good for Black (24 \( \Boxxh 1 \) \( \Boxxd 3 \) 25 \( \Boxxa 5 \) ! or 24...\( \Boxxb 5 \) 25 \( \Boxxc 3 \) favors White).

Better is 22...\( \Boxxd 5 \) 23 \( \Boxxe 7 \) ! (or 23 \( \Boxwg 7 \) 0-0-0) \( \Boxxe 7 \) 24 \( \Boxwg 7 \) \( \Boxxh 7 \) 25 \( \Boxxe 1 \) \( \Boxxd 7 \) 26 \( \Boxxf 7 \) \( \Boxxc 8 \) 27 \( \Boxxe 3 \) \( \Boxxb 8 \) 28 \( \Boxxf 6 \) “and the position holds a not entirely clear character,” wrote Zak. Better is 27 c6! with at least a draw and likely more.

21 \( \Boxxf 6 \) !

Deutsche Wochenscachch declared this “a mistake” and over the years, a consensus formed to support Tchigorin’s claim that 21 \( \Boxxh 6 \) would have won the brilliancy prize.

White wins swiftly after 21...\( \Boxxb 6 \) 22 \( \Boxxe 6 \) and more slowly following 21...\( \Boxxf 7 \) 22 \( \Boxwg 7 \) \( \Boxxg 8 \) 23 \( \Boxxf 6 \) with ideas of \( \Boxxe 7 \) !, d4-d5-d6 and doubling rooks on the c-file.

However, Black is far from lost after 21...\( \Boxxf 7 \) 22 \( \Boxxe 6 \) \( \Boxxf 5 \) ! (not 22...\( \Boxxe 6 \) 23 \( \Boxwg 7 \) and \( \Boxxe 1 \) !). The zwischengzug helps in the main line, 23 \( \Boxwh 3 \) \( \Boxxe 6 \) 24 \( \Boxwb 3 \) \( \Boxxe 7 \) 25 \( \Boxxe 1 \) \( \Boxxf 8 \) 26 \( \Boxxa 8 \) \( \Boxxa 8 \) 27 \( \Boxxe 6 \) h5! after which White seems to have just enough energy left (28 d5 and 29 b4) to keep the outcome in doubt.

21 ... \( \Boxxf 7 \)

22 \( \Boxxe 4 \)!

At various points White can weigh the line-clearing d4-d5. But it never quite works, e.g. 22 d5 \( \Boxxd 5 \) 23 f5 \( \Boxxf 6 \) 24 fxe6+ \( \Boxxg 8 \) and Black’s material should win.

22 ... \( \Boxxf 5 \)!

This would have also been a strong reply to 22 \( \Boxxe 7 \).

23 \( \Boxwh 3 \) \( \Boxxe 7 \)

Despite the annotators’ claims that White was lost, the chances are in rough balance. Or, to put it another way, in such a position the better tactician will win.

24 \( \Boxxc 3 \)

It’s been claimed 24 d5 \( \Boxxd 5 \) 25 \( \Boxxc 3 \) was best. But it wouldn’t be hard to find a refutation – 25...\( \Boxxe 6 \) 26 \( \Boxxa 8 \) \( \Boxha 8 \) and then 27 \( \Boxxe 3 \) \( \Boxxc 5 \) + 28 \( \Boxxh 1 \) \( \Boxxg 7 \).

24 ... \( \Boxxd 5 \)

25 g4 \( \Boxxh 4 \)

26 \( \Boxxd 6 \) +

Another try is 26 \( \Boxxd 2 \), which stops ..\( \Boxxf 3 \) !, a major defensive resource, and also threatens 27 \( \Boxxe 7 \) + and \( \Boxxe 4 \). After 26...\( \Boxxa 8 \) 27 \( \Boxxe 5 \) \( \Boxxe 6 \) 28 \( \Boxxe 1 \) and \( \Boxxe 4 \) White can still mount threats.

26 ... \( \Boxxf 8 \)!

Not 26...\( \Boxxd 6 \) 27 \( \Boxxe 4 \) \( \Boxxf 8 \) because of 28 f5! with a powerful attack, e.g. 28...\( \Boxxf 5 \) 29 \( \Boxxe 4 \) \( \Boxxf 8 \) 30 \( \Boxxa 8 \) \( \Boxxa 8 \) 31 \( \Boxxe 4 \) ! \( \Boxxe 4 \) 32 \( \Boxxf 5 \) + \( \Boxxe 8 \) 33 \( \Boxwh 5 \) + and wins (Khalifman/Soloviov).

27 \( \Boxxe 7 \)!

“Desperation,” Tarrasch wrote. “Janowsky decides to die prettily.” The alternative was 27 \( \Boxxf 2 \) (27...\( \Boxxf 3 \) ?? 28 \( \Boxwh 6 \) +) which threatens 28 \( \Boxxe 7 \).

But White is dead lost after 27...g5 28 \( \Boxxf 5 \) \( \Boxxe 6 \), e.g. 29 \( \Boxxe 7 \) \( \Boxxe 7 \) 30 \( \Boxxe 1 \) \( \Boxxd 7 \) or 29 \( \Boxwh 6 \) + \( \Boxxg 8 \) 30 \( \Boxxe 4 \) \( \Boxxe 6 \) 31 \( \Boxxd 3 \) \( \Boxxf 8 \).

27 ... \( \Boxxf 3 \) +

28 \( \Boxxf 3 \)

Forced in view of the hopeless 28 \( \Boxxf 2 \) \( \Boxxe 7 \) 29 \( \Boxxe 1 \) + \( \Boxxe 1 \) or 29 f5 \( \Boxxd 3 \).

28 ... \( \Boxxf 3 \)
29...\texttt{\texttt{d7-??}}

White’s only hope — which nearly saves the game — was 29 \texttt{ae1!}, threatening 30 \texttt{f7+} and 31 \texttt{ee7}, or 30 \texttt{d5}.

After 29...\texttt{d5} 30 \texttt{g5!} White threatens a perpetual check (\texttt{e8+}).
Black can avert that with 30...\texttt{c6} but 31 \texttt{xb7}, which eliminates \texttt{b6xc5}, points out how powerless he is.

If he threatens mate with 31...\texttt{h1}, White has at least a perpetual check (32 \texttt{f7+} \texttt{g7} 33 \texttt{g7+1}).

If he liquidates with 31...\texttt{xb7} 32 \texttt{xb7} \texttt{xb7} he is a rook ahead — in an ending — but has the worst of it after 33 \texttt{d5}.

Black’s best is 31...\texttt{h6!} which should win — and it’s a pity we’ll never know how it would have turned out in the mutual time pressure.

29...\texttt{g8}

The audience, who thronged around the table, waited for the dramatic follow-up that Janowsky must have foreseen. But there was none — 30 \texttt{e1}, intending \texttt{ee7}, loses to 30...\texttt{d5} 31 \texttt{e7 f8}.

30 \texttt{d5} \texttt{xd5}
31 \texttt{g7+} \texttt{f8}
32 \texttt{e1} \texttt{c6}
33 \texttt{b4} \texttt{d8}

Faster was 33...\texttt{xb4!} but Black takes the practical route of killing the knight.

34 \texttt{d4}

A trap is set by 34 \texttt{xb7} because White is only slightly worse after 34...\texttt{xd6} 35 \texttt{b8+ \texttt{f7} 36 \texttt{xe8 f6?} 37 \texttt{xf6} and there’s a lot of problems remaining after 36...\texttt{e6}.

But 34...\texttt{xb4!} is a simple win (35 \texttt{g7+ \texttt{g8} 36 \texttt{d4 xd6!}).
34...\texttt{xd6!}
35 \texttt{cxd6}

Hope (35...\texttt{c2??} 36 \texttt{e8+! \texttt{xe8} 37 \texttt{d7+ and wins}) springs.

35...\texttt{h1!}

Resigns

In view of 36 \texttt{e2} \texttt{c1+ 37 \texttt{f2 xf4+}.

42

After Cambridge Springs Lasker decided to remain in America for the foreseeable future. Arrangements for a world championship match in Europe with Maroczy eventually fell through, and a contract to accept a challenge from Tarrasch was also left unfulfilled because the good doctor slipped while ice-skating and suffered a serious injury. Lasker had to content himself with a new literary venture, the money-losing \textit{Lasker’s Chess Magazine}, and occasional exhibition games. In 1905-07 he gave simul in various North American cities, as well as some small towns like Palestine, Texas.

\textbf{Lasker – Corzo}

\textit{Casual game, Havana 1906}

\textit{Ruy Lopez, Open Defense (C80)}

1 \texttt{e4} \texttt{e5}
2 \texttt{f3} \texttt{c6}
3 \texttt{b5} \texttt{f6}
4 \texttt{0-0} \texttt{xe4}
5 \texttt{d4} \texttt{a6}
This finesse, which allows Black to play the Open Defense without allowing the Exchange Variation, dates back to Morphy. White has no hope for advantage after 6 a4 or 6 d3 d5

6 a4 b5
7 b3 d5
8 a4?

This idea of Tchigorin's was in vogue. It was a major reason why the Open Defense had not become popular, like other openings that had Tarrasch's strong endorsement. Roughly a third of all surviving master games played up to 1906 that reached 7...d5 had seen 8 a4, rather than 8 dxe5.

Why? A major reason is that 8...b8 9 axb5 axb5 enables White to play a normal Open Defense with control of the a-file and without fear of ...a5. For example, 10 dxe5 a6 11 c3 and now 11...e7 can be answered by 12 d4!, a move that doesn't work in the normal Open Defense. After 12...exd5 13 f3 exd5 14 e2 White threatens 15 f4.

8 ...

On 8...b4 White favorably continues 9 a5! with the idea of a4, e.g. 9...exd4 10 exd4 exd4 11 wxd4 c6 12 dx2 ex5 13 a4 as in Pillsbury-Tarrasch, Vienna 1898.

But the refutation of 8 a4 is 8...exd4! which gained celebrity status after Schlechter used it against Lasker in the second game of their world championship match (9 exd4 exd4 10 wxd4 e6 11 c3 c5). And as a result, 8 a4 virtually disappeared from master chess.

9 axb5 axb5
10 dxe5 e6

During the heyday of 8 a4, Tarrasch found a pair of cute traps - 10...ex7 allows 11 exd4 with the idea of 11...c5 12 exb5! exb5 13 a4 d7 14 f3! And 11...c6 walks into 12 exd6! exd6 13 a4 e4.

11...

In place of 11 c3, Lasker tries a new idea, attempting to reach a favorable version of an idea of Samuel Mieses, 8 dxe5 a6 9 exd3. The point is to pressure the d-pawn and b-pawn after...

In Mieses’ move order Black can take the initiative with 9...exd3 10 bxc3 exd7 and ...c5-c4. (Or 11 a3 a5! and ...

11 ...

Forced because of threat of exd5.

12 bxc3 e7

In contrast with the 8 exd3 line, Black doesn’t have time for 12...exd7 and 13...c5 because of 13 a3!.

13 w3!

With 13 a6 White gets a plus (13...wd7 14 dd4 exd4 15 exd4) since 14...exd5 favors White considerably after 15 e1. Lasker wants more – the d-pawn after 14 d1.

13...

Black can try to solve his problem tactically (13...0-0 14 d1 b4 15 cxb4 dxb4 or 15 exd5 exd5 16 wxd5 bxc3). But 15 a4! ensures an advantage (15...a8 16 e3).

14 d1 d7

There was no choice because 14...d8 hangs the b-pawn.

15 exd5

The pawn-sack, 15 g5 g5 16 xg5 exd5, is unsound, and the complications of 15 g5 fd8 aren't worth the effort. Besides, the point of 11 exd3/13 wd3 was to play exd5.

15...

Black has some chances in 15...exd5 16 wxd5 wxd5 17 exd5 fd8 because of the doubled pawns. But in a casual
game Black can be excused for not wanting to play a depressing pawn-down ending against the world’s best endgame player.

16 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \)

17 \( \text{d}4! \)

Taking a second pawn (17 \( \text{h}7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \) 18 \( \text{d}4 \)) was too risky because of 18...\( \text{g}6 \) and then 19 \( \text{x}g6 \) \( \text{x}e5 \) or just 19...\( \text{f}xg6 \).

17 ... \( \text{x}e5! \)

Not 17...\( \text{h}6?? \) 18 \( \text{x}c6 \) or 17...\( \text{x}d4 \) 18 \( \text{x}d4 \), when White keeps his extra pawn.

18 \( \text{x}h7+ \) \( \text{h}8 \)

19 \( \text{g}3 \)

White has enough to win against normal resistance (19...\( \text{x}h7 \) 20 \( \text{x}e5 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 21 \( \text{e}4+ \)). The doubled c-pawns are not a significant weakness in many endgames because they aren’t easily attacked.

19 ... \( \text{c}5?! \)

20 \( \text{f}4 \)

Good enough but 20 \( \text{d}3! \) \( \text{x}d3 \) 21 \( \text{x}e6! \) or 20...\( \text{x}d4 \) 21 \( \text{x}e5 \) threatening \( \text{h}5+ \) and mates would ensure a greater advantage. The critical line is 20...\( \text{g}4 \) but that turns out to endure a big White edge after 21 \( \text{f}4! \).

20 ... \( \text{f}6 \)

21 \( \text{x}e5 \) \( \text{x}e5 \)

22 \( \text{x}e5 \) \( \text{d}5 \)

23 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{x}h7 \)

24 \( \text{x}e6 \) \( \text{fxe6?} \)

After this White wins a second pawn. Black can make him work harder with 24...\( \text{xd}1+ \) 25 \( \text{xd}1 \) \( \text{fxe6} \).

25 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{exd}5 \)

26 \( \text{f}5+ \) \( \text{g}6 \)

27 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{c}4 \)

28 \( \text{e}5! \)

Overloading the rook. Now 28...\( \text{f}8 \) 29 \( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{xc}2 \) 30 \( \text{h}5+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 31 \( \text{d}5+ \) \( \text{h}7 \) 32 \( \text{d}4! \) followed by making luft wins (or 32...\( \text{f}7 \) 33 \( \text{h}4+ \) \( \text{g}6 \) 34 \( \text{g}4\!\!\!\!\!).

28 ... \( \text{b}6 \)

29 \( \text{c}3 \)

Play on if you’re interested in how White uses his heavy pieces to create mating threats and opportunities to trade queens. For example, 29...\( \text{d}6 \) 30 \( \text{h}3+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 31 \( \text{a}8+ \) \( \text{f}7 \) 32 \( \text{f}3+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) 33 \( \text{h}5+ \) \( \text{g}6 \) 34 \( \text{h}7+ \) \( \text{e}6 \) 35 \( \text{e}8+ \) \( \text{d}5 \) 36 \( \text{b}7+\).

29 ... \( \text{e}6 \)

30 \( \text{h}3+ \) \( \text{g}8 \)

31 \( \text{a}8+ \) \( \text{f}7 \)

32 \( \text{f}3+ \) \( \text{f}6 \)

Or 32...\( \text{f}6 \) 33 \( \text{h}7+ \) \( \text{e}6 \) 34 \( \text{d}8! \) and the threat of mate in two (35 \( \text{d}5+ \)) wins.

33 \( \text{h}5+! \) \( \text{g}6 \)

34 \( \text{d}5! \)

This is much faster than the 34 \( \text{xg}6+ \) ending. Now 34...\( \text{e}7 \) 35 \( \text{d}8+ \) mates. The finish was: 34...\( \text{xc}2 \) 35 \( \text{a}7+ \) \( \text{f}6 \) 36 \( \text{d}4+ \) \( \text{e}5 \) 37 \( \text{d}6+ \) \( \text{f}5 \) 38 \( \text{f}7+ \) \( \text{e}4 \) 39 \( \text{d}4 \) mate.
Lasker used his simultaneous exhibitions to experiment, to have fun, to play a style of chess he didn’t allow himself in money games. This meant he could try new opening ideas without risk. The earliest example of the Alekhine’s Defense gambit line that runs 1 e4 Qf6 2 c5 Qd5 3 c4 Qb6 4 c5 Qd5 5 Qc4 e6 7 Qc3 seems to be a Lasker simul game played in Denmark in 1927. Lasker employed what we’d call a reversed Saemisch King’s Indian (1 Qf3 d5 2 g3 c5 3 Qg2 Qc6 4 d3 e5 5 c3 f6 and ...Qc6/...Qd7/...0-0-0) as Black in a 1925 simul — a month before Fritz Saemisch introduced the White side version of it at Marienbad. The following isn’t historic. It’s notable only for the combination beginning with his 13th move.

Lasker – Delmonte
Simultaneous exhibition, Havana 1906
French Defense, Rubinstein Variation
(C10)

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 Qc3 exd4
4 Qxe4 Qd7

Black’s intent is ...Qc6, possibly followed by ...Qxe4 and ...c6.

5 Qf3 Qe7!

During the first ten or so trips around the room, the master tries to determine just how strong his opponents are. Or rather, which ones are the stronger. The cleverness of 5...Qe7 is that it seems weak enough to indicate Black is a patzer. Yet it is solid enough to punish White for over-reaching, e.g. 6 Qd3 Qc6 7 0-0 Qd7 8 Qf4 Qd5 9 Qg3 Qb4!, with a good game for Black.

6 Qg5

White stops ...Qd5 and sets a minor trap (6...f6 7 Qxf6!! gxf6 8 Qxf6 Qg8 9 Qe5 and Wh5+ with a nice attack).

6 ...
7 h6
8 Qh4

This is actually hazardous because from now on Black has a potential bishop-trapping ...g5/...f5-f4.

7 ...
8 Qd3 Qd7

But after 9 0-0 g5 10 Qg3 f5, White has 11 Qe5!, threatening Wh5+, and holds the upper hand following 11...Qxe5 12 Qf6+ Qf7 13 Qxe5 Qg7 14 Qh5+ Qg6 15 Qg4.

9 Qe2 Qxe4
10 Qxe4 c6

Once again the bishop-trap, 10...g5 11 Qg3 f5, is bad, this time because of 12 Qxe6 f4?? 13 Qg6 mate.

11 0-0

White might handle this like a Center Counter, with 11 0-0-0 Qa5 12 Qb1. But he retains the possibility of throwing his queenside pawns forward in case Black castles there.

11 ...
12 Qb6

When the possibility of a Q sacrifice first occurred to White it is not known but the mechanism is already in place (12...Qf5 13 Qxf5).

12 c4!

Primers are right when they inveigh against moves like 12...Qxb2. White’s pieces would dominate after 13 Qab1 Qxa2 14 Qxb7. But 12...0-0-0 followed by ...g5 was certainly playable. For example, 12 b4 g5 13 c5 Qxb4 14 Qab1 Qa4 15 Qg3 Qf5 is anything but clear.

12 ... Qf5?
13 \( \text{\textit{exf5!!}} \)

White obtains at least two minor pieces and a strong initiative for the queen. Is it a forced win? No, but Black's best chances lie in trying to confuse his opponent.

13 ... \( \text{\textit{exf5}} \)

One way to muddle matters is \( \text{\textit{g3}} \). But White has two ways to prove his superiority, \( \text{\textit{He1}} \) or \( \text{\textit{c5}} \). At worst, he emerges with an extra pawn or two (14 \text{\textit{c5 wc7}} 15 \text{\textit{g3}} or 14 \text{\textit{wd8}} 15 \text{\textit{xg5!!!}}).

14 \text{\textit{He1}}+ \text{\textit{He7}}

Another try at confusing White was 14 \text{\textit{He5?!}}. Then 15 \text{\textit{xe5+ d7}} 16 \text{\textit{xf5+ wc7}} runs cold.

Better is 15 \text{\textit{xe5 g5}} 16 \text{\textit{c5}} and best of all is 15 \text{\textit{c5!!}}. Black's queen can't retreat to d8 and he needs \text{\textit{c7}} as a flight square for the king. For instance, 15 ... \text{\textit{wc7}} 16 \text{\textit{xe5+ d7}} 17 \text{\textit{xf5}} is mate and 16 ... \text{\textit{xe5}} 17 \text{\textit{xe5 g5}} 18 \text{\textit{He1 He7}} 19 \text{\textit{d5!!}} is a killing attack.

That leaves 15 ... \text{\textit{wa5}} and 16 \text{\textit{xe5}}, threatening a knight-discovery at \text{\textit{c6}} or \text{\textit{d4}}.

15 \text{\textit{xe7+ d8?}}

The third try to stop the impending train wreck would be 15 ... \text{\textit{f8!!}}. White's bishop is trapped once again after 16 \text{\textit{xd7 g5}}. He has the makings of a bind with 17 \text{\textit{xf5 gxf4}} 18 \text{\textit{He5}} (18 ... \text{\textit{He8}} 19 \text{\textit{xe7+ g8}} 20 \text{\textit{d7}}) but no clear way to proceed.

Another idea is 17 \text{\textit{He1}} and doubling of rooks on the seventh. After 17 ... \text{\textit{gxf4}} 18 \text{\textit{He7 h7}} 19 \text{\textit{xe7 wa5}} 20 \text{\textit{a3}} White has strong chances. But 17 ... \text{\textit{He8}} 18 \text{\textit{He5 gxf4}} isn't clear.

16 \text{\textit{xf5}}

Now the choices are all White's and they include the alternative win of 16 \text{\textit{xf7+ g5}} 17 \text{\textit{xf5 gxf4}} 18 \text{\textit{xd7+ He8}} 19 \text{\textit{He1+ f8}} 20 \text{\textit{He5}}.

For example, 20 ... \text{\textit{g8}} 21 \text{\textit{f7+ e8}} 22 \text{\textit{h7+ d8}} 23 \text{\textit{f7+}} and mates.

16 ... \text{\textit{f6}}

17 \text{\textit{xf7}}

17 ... \text{\textit{He8}}

Or 17 ... \text{\textit{g5}} 18 \text{\textit{g3}} (threatening \text{\textit{c7+}} as well as \text{\textit{xf6}}) \text{\textit{xb2}} 19 \text{\textit{He1}} and wins.

18 \text{\textit{xd7+ e8}}

19 \text{\textit{xe7+ d8}}

No better was 19 ... \text{\textit{wb8}} 20 \text{\textit{g3+}}.

20 \text{\textit{xf6+ e7}}

21 \text{\textit{xe7}}

One move faster than the game's: 21 ... \text{\textit{wa6}} 22 \text{\textit{xe5 wxe4}} 23 \text{\textit{f7+ e8}} 24 \text{\textit{d7 mate}} would have been 21 \text{\textit{xe7+ e8}} 22 \text{\textit{He5!}}.
The world championship match with Frank Marshall was a curious affair. The American had a plus score against Lasker. But almost no one thought he had a chance—despite Lasker’s Chess Magazine’s efforts to encourage Marshall’s fans. It was a backup event, a replacement for the collapse of Lasker’s arrangements to play Tarrasch or Maroczy. For Lasker the goal was not beating Marshall but rather bettering the 8-1 score that Tarrasch had racked up against the American in their 1905 match. In that sense, losing a single game would have been a setback.

**Marshall – Lasker**  
World Championship match,  
first game, New York 1907  
*Ruy Lopez, Berlin Defense (C65)*

1. e4  
2. d4  
3. c4  
4. d4  

This was the favorite anti-Berlin weapon of Marshall’s Boston contemporary John Barry, who had tried it twice against Lasker. It enables White to avoid the Berlin lines that Lasker liked, such as 4 0-0 dxe4 5 dxe4 dxe7.

4. ... exd4

After 4...dxe4 White can sidestep transposition (5 0-0 dxe7 or 5...d6). Among his options are 5 whe2 d6 6 e5, e.g. 6...dxe7 7 dxe7 wxe7 8 dxe6 dx e6 9 dxe5 d5f5 10 dxc3 and 0-0-0.

5. 0-0 dxe7  
6. e5 dxe4  
7. dxe4 0-0

A 1903 Barry-Lasker game had gone 8 c3?? dxe5! and Black had a good version of the Open Variation’s Breslau line (9 wh2 d5 10 f3 c5 11 fxe4 cxd4 12 cxd4 d7).  

9. d5  
9. dxc6  

The book recommendation at the time was 9 dxe7+ dxe7 10 f3 d5 but Black’s position after ...c6 is at least equal.

9. ... bxc6  
10. dxe7+ wh7

If Steinitz had been alive to evaluate the position he would have focused on Black’s strengths and weaknesses. Black’s knight is an excellent piece. But his bishop is somewhat bad and he is weak on dark squares. Once White plays f2-f3 he could take control of the a3-f8 with b2-b3 a3.

But the annotators, mindful that White eventually loses, came to a different evaluation. They concluded he had already made an astonishing number of mistakes:

Reinfeld/Fine labeled 4 d4 “weak.” Kasparov seemed to agree Reti called 4 d4 premature and added that 6 e5 “should have been more carefully considered.” Tarrasch said “nothing is gained” by 8 d5 except trades and loss of time, and Teichmann agreed. Nobody seemed to like 9 dxc6 And Janowsky said White has wasted time because he spent six moves on the
bishop and knight that he exchanged off for pieces that Black had developed with one tempo each.

You would think the only good move White found was 1 e4.

11 ... \( e\text{e}1 \)

Yet the position is nothing more than a transposition to a standard Lopez variation (1 e4 e5 2 \( \text{d}f3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 3 \( \text{b}5 \) a6 4 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 5 0-0 \( \text{c}7 \) 6 d4 exd4 7 e5 \( \text{c}4 \) 8 \( \text{xd}4 \) 0-0 9 \( \text{i}5 \) d5 10 \( \text{x}c6 \) bxc6 11 \( \text{x}e7+ \) \( \text{f}xe7 \)). The only difference is the addition of \( e6 \) to a position recognized today as just equal.

11 ... \( \text{h}4 \)

The comparable 12...\( \text{h}4 \) move is never played in the ...a6 version. The book moves are 12...f6 and 12...\( \text{e}8 \).

12 \( \text{c}3 \)

Hoffer led the critics in arguing for 12 f3 immediately. It has merits: 12...\( \text{f}2+? \) 13 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 13 \( \text{c}3 \) drops a piece. But 12...\( \text{c}5 \) 13 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) and \( f6 \) is nothing much.

12 ... \( f6 \)

Tarrasch preferred 12...f5 13 f3 f4. But 14 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 15 \( \text{c}3 \) favors White because of the dark-square bind (\( \text{a}4-\text{c}5 \)). He's also better after 14...\( \text{c}5 \) 15 \( \text{xe}4 \) cxd4 16 \( \text{d}2 \).

13 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{fxe}5! \)

“Lasker at the beginning of this match, indeed for the greater part of it, seems actuated by a ‘superiority complex,’” wrote P. W. Sergeant. According to this view, Black passed up what was considered easy equality (13...\( \text{g}5 \) 14 \( \text{x}g5 \) \( \text{x}g5 \)) because he was feeling invincible.

14 \( \text{f}xe4 \) \( \text{d}4 \)

But there was another view: Black was simply applying a traditional strategy of taking the attack to an attacker. The Year-Book of Chess (1907) said of Black's play:

“...It is, indeed, a rule, which could well be more widely applied, that against an attacking player attack is more likely to succeed than defense, whilst against a defensive player attacking tactics should give way to a more solid style of play.”

15 ... \( \text{g}3? \)

This is a natural reaction when White sees that bishop-retreats fail (15 \( \text{c}1? \) \( \text{f}2+ \) 16 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{g}4' \) or 15 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 16 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{h}3 \) 17 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}2' \) 18 \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{xh}2+ \) and mates).

Instead, Marshall is looking for a way to give the piece back. But he can't play 15 \( \text{xd}4 \) exd4 16 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xe}1 \) mate

The right way to counter-sack was 15 \( \text{d}2! \) dxe3 16 \( \text{xe}3 \) followed by \( \text{d}2-f3 \). Had White gone on to win after 16 \( \text{a}6 \) 17 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 18 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 19 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 17 \( \text{c}3 \) and \( \text{a}5 \) would anyone have condemned his opening play?

More likely they would have turned on Black and ridiculed him for getting into a tactical skirmish with Marshall when he could have equalized with 13...\( \text{g}5 \).

15 ... \( \text{f}6 \)

For decades this move was considered a blunder because of Tarrasch's claim that Black missed a quick win with 15...\( \text{h}3 \) 16 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{f}2' \) or 16 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{xf}2 \)
The truth is that White is not losing after 16 $\textcolor{red}{\text{d}2}$! $\text{dxe}3$ 17 $\text{wx}e3$, which he should play regardless of which 15th move Black chooses. From Black’s point of view, the right $\text{w}-$move was the one that best exploits weaknesses at f3 and h3. That’s why 15...$\text{w}f6$ is best. Black can later play ...$\text{h}3$, to stop $\text{xfi}$, which he cannot do after 15.. $\text{w}h3$.

16 $\text{xd}4$

Reti again influenced his successors when he claimed White had dodged a bullet by avoiding 16 $\text{d}2$ $\text{w}f2+$ 17 $\text{h}1$ because of 17... $\text{h}3$ 18 $\text{g}1$ $\text{h}5$ and ... $\text{g}4$ “and wins” (since 19 $\text{wh}5$? $\text{wxh}1+$! mates).

But this is wrong because White has the remarkable 19 $\text{a}3$ $\text{g}4$ 20 $\text{fi}$!! Then the best Black has is 20... $\text{xd}1$ 21 $\text{xf}2$ $\text{xf}2$ 22 $\text{xd}1$.

Kasparov considered that position to be bad for Black. However, after 22.. $\text{e}2$ 23 $\text{a}5$ he can deliver perpetual check following 23 ..$\text{xf}8$ 24 $\text{xc}7$ $\text{ff}2$.

Kasparov preferred Tartakower’s 18... $\text{ff}1$ to 18... $\text{h}5$. But after 19 $\text{e}1$ $\text{w}3$ 20 $\text{dd}2$ $\text{e}2$ 21 $\text{c}1$ White is threatening to untangle (22 $\text{g}4$ and 23 $\text{g}3$) and therefore Black seems to have nothing better than the perpetual of 21... $\text{f}3+$.

The annotators kept looking for ways for Black to get more than the ending that occurs in the game. Tarrasch was one of the few who thought White, too, could improve. He said 16 $\text{f}1$ was best and leads to excellent drawing chances after 16.. $\text{xf}1+$ 17 $\text{xf}1$ $\text{xf}1+$ 18 $\text{xf}1$ $\text{a}6+$ 19 $\text{xf}2$ $\text{f}8+$ 20 $\text{f}4!$ $\text{xf}4$ 21 $\text{d}2$.

White does have drawing chances after 21.. $\text{xg}3+$ 22 $\text{xg}3$ $\text{h}8$ 23 $\text{b}3$ $\text{f}7$. But a pawn is a pawn. In the game he has much better chances of drawing.

The bottom line is that 16 $\text{d}2$! is at least equal, 16 $\text{w}d2$ is a close second and even 16 $\text{xd}4$ would have been good enough to draw.

16 ... $\text{exd}4$
17 $\text{ff}1$ $\text{xf}1+$

Much better than the 17 $\text{e}5$ 18 $\text{xf}8+$ $\text{xf}8$ 19 $\text{f}3+$/20 $\text{f}4$ middlegame.

18 $\text{xf}1$ $\text{xf}1+$
19 $\text{ff}1$

Reinfeld/Fine called this the start of “one of the most remarkable endgame combinations in the history of chess!” That’s quite a stretch of the word “combination.”

20 $\text{b}3$ $\text{h}5$!

The tempting 20... $\text{a}6$? spoils Black’s initiative and after 21 $\text{g}2$ $\text{h}5$ 22 $\text{a}4$! he has only the tiniest of advantages (22.. $\text{e}5$ 23 $\text{d}2$ $\text{e}5$ 24 $\text{a}2$).

21 $\text{c}4$

Now 21 $\text{a}4$ $\text{e}5$ 22 $\text{a}2$ $\text{g}4$! threatens ...$\text{d}1$ and shows why the bishop should remain on its original diagonal until Black has a constructive place for it (23 $\text{e}1$ $\text{h}5$ 24 $\text{h}4$ $\text{g}5$).

Similarly, 21 $\text{d}2$ $\text{h}5$ 22 $\text{h}4$? $\text{e}5$ and now 23 $\text{e}4$ $\text{a}6$ or 23 $\text{c}1$ $\text{c}3$.

21 ... $\text{h}5$
Black will tie White to the defense of the rooks' pawns while he plays ...c5/...f7-e6-c5.

22  \text{g1}

Not 22 h4? g5 23 hxg5? h1+ and the queenside pieces don't move.

22  ...  e5
23  \text{d2}  \text{f7}

Black would like to bring his rook back into action with 23...h6 but after 24 \text{f1}! his king doesn't play.

24  \text{f1}+?

Tarrasch wrote a book that made the case that Marshall should have won the match (!) because he amassed positions that should have gotten him draws if not wins. Here he found a fundamental difference between the two players in Marshall’s inability to pass up a check, even when it was bad, compared with Lasker's restraint at move 20.

White misses his best chance for counterplay (a2-a3 and b3-b4). After 24 a3 a5 25 \text{b1} Black can keep his hopes alive with 25...\text{g4} and then 26 b4 axb4 27 axb4 \text{e6}, e.g. 28 bxc5 \text{xc5} 29 \text{b8} d3 or 28 \text{b3} d3! 29 \text{xc5}+? \text{xc5} 30 bxc5 d2.

24  ...  \text{e7}
25  a3

An easy move to overlook or underestimate. It explains why White should have kept his rook at a1. Black can refute 26 b4 with 26...\text{a6}! (27 \text{b3} \text{xa3} 28 \text{xc5} \text{e3} 29 \text{a1} a6! or 27 \text{f3} \text{g4} 28 \text{b3} \text{d1} 29 \text{b1} \text{c2} and ...d3).

26  h4

Marshall doesn’t want to admit his error but 26 \text{a1} was best because after 26...a5 27 h4 White has solved the problem of both rook’s pawns.

26  ...  \text{a6}

Now 27 a4 \text{g4} and ...h5 shows why \text{a+g} are usually so much better than \text{b+e} in endings. For instance, 28 \text{f4} h5 29 \text{f2} \text{e6} 30 \text{f3} \text{b6}! 31 \text{d2} \text{e5} and ...\text{f6}.

27  \text{a1}  \text{g4}!
28  \text{f2}  \text{e6}

Black is ready to trade pieces because his king can finally invade (29 \text{f3} \text{xf3} 30 \text{xf3} \text{e5} and ...\text{f6}+).

29  a4  \text{e5}
30  \text{g2}

The elements of Black’s final plan are ...d3/...\text{d4} and a trade of rooks, and he has a choice of move orders. For instance, 30...d3 31 \text{f1} \text{d4} 32 \text{f4} \text{e2} 33 \text{f2} \text{c3} 34 \text{e1} leads to zugzwang soon after 34...\text{f6}!

30  ...  \text{f6}
31  \text{e1}  d3!
32  \text{f1}  \text{d4}
33  \text{xf6}  gx\text{f6}
34  \text{f2}  \text{c6}

It's zugzwang because a king-move allows ...\text{e3}. The rest required only moderate circumspection: 35 a5 a6 36 \text{b1} \text{xe4} 37 \text{e1} \text{e2} 38 \text{d2+ e3} 39 \text{b1} f5 40 \text{d2} h5! 41 \text{b1} \text{f3} 42 \text{c3} \text{g3} 43 \text{a4} f4 44 \text{xc5 f3} 45 \text{e4+ f4} 46 \text{d6} c5 47 b4 \text{exb4} 48 c5 b3 49 \text{c4} \text{g3} White resigns.
Why Lasker Matters

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The Marshall match was divided into three parts: There was the American’s disastrous 0-3 start. Then a middlegame of seven draws and one Lasker win. Finally there was Marshall’s collapse, four straight losses in the endgame.

These sharply different phases are not unusual. Roughly half of all world championship matches have seen them. Botvinnik, Fischer, Karpov and Kasparov won or retained their titles thanks to similar streaks. Lasker learned to appreciate streaks during the Steinitz matches and knew when to go for the jugular.

Marshall – Lasker
World Championship match, 15th game, New York 1907
Queen’s Gambit Declined, Lasker Defense (D53)

1  d4  d5
2  c4  e6
3  e3  f6
4  g5  e7
5  e3  e4

This became the “Lasker Defense” after he used it three times in this match. It became a favorite of Capablanca’s and, in revised form (5...h6 6 h4 0-0 7 f3 e4), of modern GMs such as Artur Yusupov. But it wasn’t well received in 1907.

“This move has been tried before but never with much success,” Teichmann wrote of 5 ... e4. Tarrasch called it a mistake because Black will be forced to exchange on c3, strengthening White’s center. When Leonhardt played ... e4 (after 5 f3 0-0 6 e3) against him at Ostend 1905, he declared it the “decisive error.”

7  cxd5  xc3
8  bxc3  exd5
9  b3

Tarrasch awarded exclams to this and 7 cxd5 because he believed the inevitable c3-c4 would give White a distinct superiority. What Tarrasch didn’t appreciate is that a pawn center declines in value as pieces are traded. Marshall had exploited that concept in what proved to be the decisive game of Cambridge Springs (against Janowsky after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 c3 c5 4 e3 c6 5 f3 f6 6 a3 when he played 6...e4 7 d3 xc3).

9  ...  c6
10  c4

Since Black doesn’t have to take on c4 (and thereby develop White’s bishop), the modern treatment of 10 d3 0-0 11 e2 d7 13 0-0 f6 14 c4 is considered favorable to White.

10  ...  0-0

Now 11 cxd5 cxd5 12 xd5 b4+ is more than a pawn’s worth of initiative.

11  f3  c7

Black can avoid ...dxc4 because of 12 cxd5 a5+ 13 d2 cxd5. Modern theory (with the addition of ...h6) regards 11...e6 as best because 12 c1 d7! is sound (13 xb7 a3!).

12  c1

Tarrasch said that since rooks belonged at b1 and c1 in such positions, this should be avoided in favor of 12 c3.

12  ...  a5+

Marshall was one defeat away from losing the match. That might have prompted him to be cautious and take his slight advantage (13 c3) into the endgame.

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When Kasparov found himself in a comparable situation — one game away from being eliminated in his 1984-85 world championship match — he steadied himself with quick draws of 25, 13 and 20 moves before he attempted a comeback.

When an opponent disturbs the natural balance in a position — such as White’s delayed development here — you have the right if not the duty to try to punish him by opening up the center.

15  cxd5

Tarrasch preferred \( \text{Wa3} \), here or on the previous move. Black could keep the situation sharp with 15...\( \text{Wxa3} \) 16 \( \text{Exa3} \) cxd4 (17 exd4 \( \text{Ee8+} \) or 17 cxd5 \( \text{Eb6} \) 18 e4 f5).

15    
16    cxd4  
17    \( \text{Ee8+} \)

In Game 44 Lasker was highly praised for avoiding 20...\( \text{a6+} \) and keeping the bishop’s options open. This situation is similar because he could have passed up this check in favor of 16...\( \text{Efx6} \). That threatens to obtain a positional edge with (...)\( \text{Exd5} \) while retaining chances for a bigger advantage after ..\( \text{Ee8+} / \ldots \text{Exe4} \). For instance, 17 d6 \( \text{Ee8+} \) 18 \( \text{Ee3} \) \text{Ee4} !

However, there’s a flaw — after 16..\( \text{Efx6} \) 17 \text{c4} \( \text{Ee8+} \) 18 \( \text{Ee3} \) \text{Exe4} White has 19 0-0! (Khalifman/ Soloviov) and can keep an extra, healthy pawn after 19...\( \text{Wxd2} \) 20 d6 \text{Exe6} 21 \text{Exe4}.

17    \( \text{Ee3} \)
18    \( \text{Exe3}+ \)

Black is far superior after 18 \( \text{Wxe3?} \) \( \text{Wxa2} \).

18    
19    \( \text{Ec2} \)

White is looking for a way to castle even if it means shedding his extra pawn. After 19 \text{c4} \text{Exe4} he must defend the knight with his queen. He looks worse following 20 \text{Wc2} \text{Ef5} 21 \text{Ef1} \text{Gf6} and it seems Black is bound to find a shot. But there is nothing clear (22 \text{d3} \text{Ee8} 23 \text{Ef3} \text{Gg5} 24 \text{Gg3} \text{Exd3} 25 \text{Wxd3}).
Going for the kill. Black could have settled for a minor advantage – and no losing chances – after 19...\( \square \)xd5. White's previous move indicates he expected 19...\( \square \)xd5 20 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f3, when he hopes to castle, even after 20...\( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e6 (21 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xb7 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e8 22 0-0).

20 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)d3!??

Marshall lived for tactics. He must have seen that 20 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)b2 enables him to exploit the natural 20...\( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f5 with 21 0-0! and White escapes.

But he would also have noticed that Black can continue 20...\( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)d7 because of 21 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xb7?? \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)d2+. And if White responds 21 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f3, Black can play 21...\( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f5 safely (22 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xe4 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xe4 23 0-0 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xd5 with advantage). Instead, White offers an Exchange sacrifice that gives him prospects of creating a drawing fortress.

20 ...

21 0-0

No turning back. The bid for a swindle, 21 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f1 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)g6 22 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f4 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e8 23 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)h5!? \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f2 24 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xg2 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xg3 25 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xf7+, can be refuted by simple moves such as 23...\( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xd2.

21 ...

22 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xf5

White has fewer chances after 22 e4 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xf1 23 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xf1 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)d7 (24 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)b3 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)b6!).

22 ...

23 ... \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xf5

23 e4

He can resign without regret after 23 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xf5 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xd2 24 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)d3 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xa2

23 ...

24 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e7

24 a3

White seeks a fortress before Black penetrates on the c-file, with ...\( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)c3 or ...

24 ...

25 d6 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)g6

26 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)c4!

White needs to plug the file. Black would win without much trouble following 26 g3 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)c3 27 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e4 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xd3 28 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xa5 and then 28...\( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xd4 29 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xb7 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e5 30 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)b5 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)d2.

26 ...

27 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)g5!

Black tries to exploit the\( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)'s absence from the kingside. This is a bit better than 26 ..\( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)c1+ 27 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f1 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)b5 because of 28 d7! \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)d8 29 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e5, when Black has other problems to solve.

27 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f1

28 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)a5

There are several possible fortresses. White appears to be eyeing one with a pawn on e5 and a knight on c5. But there were also chances in 28 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e3 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)c1 29 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)d5 a6 30 e5 or 28 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)d2 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f4 29 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f3 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)c1 30 e5.

28 ...

29 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f4

Based on 29 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xb5 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)h3+ 30 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)h1 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f2+ 31 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)g1 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e3 and wins.

29 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)g3?

White would be close to establishing the fortress with 29 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)f3 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)e6 30 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)b3 and then 30...a6 31 e5. But one suspects Marshall was still looking for a swindle (29 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)g3 \( \text{\textvisiblespace} \)xg3?? 30 hgx3 when White is not worse).
Why Lasker Matters

29 ... \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Wf6!}}}}

It's not surprising that Lasker was able to tactically outplay positional stylists like Reti, Schlechter and Euwe. But what is remarkable is how often he beat tacticians that way. The critical difference here is Black threatens mate (29...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{De2+}}} 30 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Rxe2}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Cc1+}}}}}).

30 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{We3}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Wxd6}}}}}
31 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Dxb5}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Wb6!}}}}}
32 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Cc4}}}}

Also lost is 32 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Dc6}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Dg6}}}}. White's move keeps hope alive since there is a last-rank mate after 32..\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Wxa5}}} 33 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Wxf4}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Rxh4??}}}}}.}

32 ... \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{De6}}}}
33 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Rxh6}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{fxe6!!}}}}

The rest was: 34 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Db3}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e5}}} 35 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Ef1}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Bb8}}} 36 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Dc5}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{exd4}}} 37 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Wxd4}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Cc8}}} White Resigns.}}}}}

Marshall lost the match without a win and eventually set a record: his two victories over Lasker were separated by 40 years, the largest such interval for world-class players.

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While on tour, Lasker liked to include consultation games, usually against two or three collaborating players, in simultaneous exhibitions, in which he took on 20-35 boards. His consultation opponents were often masters. In one of his last exhibitions, at age 70, he defeated a team of Arnold Denker, Joseph Platz and Harold Phillips on one board while he lost to another team of Manhattan Chess Club veterans on another board. In the following game he is opposed by two of Philadelphia's finest amateurs. Had it been a tournament game it would have become one of Lasker's most famous.

\textbf{Morgan and Stadelman – Lasker}
Consultation game,
Philadelphia 1907
\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Giulco Piano (C54)}}}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
1 & e4  & e5 \\
2 & \textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Df3}}}  & \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Dc6}}}} \\
3 & \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Cc4}}}  & \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Cc5}}}}} \\
4 & c3  & \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Df6}}}} \\
5 & d3  & d6 \\
6 & b4  & \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Db6}}} \\
7 & a4  & a6 \\
\end{tabular}

This position, dating back to MacDonnell-LaBourdonnais, was popular at the end of 19th century and not again until the end of the 20th. The near symmetry allows either side to punish minor errors. For example, Leko got the worst of a 1989 game that went 8 0-0 0-0 9 h3 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{De7}}} 10 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Gg6}}} 11 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Gxe3}}} 12 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Rxh3}}} d5!}}}}.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
8 & 0-0  & \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{De7}}} \\
9 & \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Cc3}}}  & c6 \\
\end{tabular}

The natural continuation is 10 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Dh1}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Gg6}}}}. Then 11 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Wb3}}} 0-0 12 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Gg5}}} \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Gh8}}} goes nowhere and 11 d4 exd4 12 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{Dxd4}}} d5 is equal.}}}}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
10 & \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{We1}}} \\
\end{tabular}
White prepares a4-a5, a2 and c4-b6 to exploit the hole Black just created. If Black responds ...xe3 at some point, White retakes fxe3 and has a nice game with wg3. But the Guido Pianissimo doesn’t respect esoteric moves like 10 we1

10 ... g6
11 bd2 0-0
12 a2 c7
13 a5 d5

This foils c4-b6 at the minor cost of ceding c5 to White pieces.

14 d1 e8
15 g5 e6

With a threat of 16...dxe4 17 xe6 exf3.

16 h4 f4

Black would have the upper hand after 16 h6 17 xf6 (not 17 xg6?? hxg5) xf6. But he decides to keep material on the board.

17 b1

White’s unfortunate w-placement makes him unable to open lines in cases such as 17 d4? exd4 18 e5 d3

17 ... g4

Black wants to embarrass the knight by cutting off a retreat to f3. For example, 18 df3 h6 19 xf4 exf4 20 h3 c8! and 21...g5.

18 f3

No better is 18 h3 c5 (19 bxc5 a5 19 edx5 wxd5).

18 ... d7
19 h1 h6

Black also had a good 19 e6 20 c3 d4 21 edx4 exd4 and 22 c5

20 xf6

The predicament of the h4-knight is illustrated by 20 xf4 exf4 when White plays 21 f2 to meet the threat of 21 g5.

But then 21...h5! contains a winning threat of 22 g3+, e.g. 22 xf5 xf5 23 xf5 gxg3 24 hgx3 fxg3 and ...w4+.

20 ... xf6
21 g4?

Black threatened 21...g5. White wouldn’t be happy with 21 g3 h5 22 g2 because it allows Black to take his time choosing between the...f5 and ...c5 breaks. But White doesn’t deserve to be happy after 21 g4?

21 ... ad8
22 c4

22 ... dxc4!

Now 23 dxc4 c5! crumple White’s queenside. Black could have executed the break immediately with 22...c5!! But White gets more play than he deserves after 23 edx5 cxb4 24 eg4.

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23 \( \text{\textcopyright x} 4 \)  \( \text{\textcopyright e} 6 \)

The knight never gets to f5 as White had hoped, and therefore 24 \( \text{\textcopyright} \text{g} 2 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} 2 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} 2 \) was the best defense (although 25 \( \text{\textcopyright d} 4 \) 26 \( \text{\textcopyright e} 2 \) \( \text{\textcopyright c} d 8 \) solidly favors Black).

24 \( \text{\textcopyright e} 3 \)  \( \text{\textcopyright b} 3 \)

25 \( \text{\textcopyright d} 2 \)  \( \text{c} 5 \)!

Black could have won a pawn by routine means (25...\( \text{\textcopyright d} 4 \) 26 \( \text{\textcopyright b} 2 \) \( \text{\textcopyright c} 6 \)). But he’s entitled to some fun in a consultation game.

26 \( \text{\textcopyright h} 2 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} 4 \)

27 \( \text{\textcopyright b} 2 \)  \( \text{\textcopyright x} 4 \)

There were two tempting alternatives. After 27...\( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \) Black wins swiftly following 28 \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \) or 28 \( \text{\textcopyright x} 4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} 4 \) 29 \( \text{\textcopyright g} 4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright e} 6 \) 30 \( \text{\textcopyright x} 4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright d} 3 \).

However, the zwischenschzug 28 \( \text{g} 5 \)! allows White to grab the Exchange under unclear circumstances (28...\( \text{h} 5 \) 29 \( \text{\textcopyright g} 4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright e} 6 \) 30 \( \text{\textcopyright x} 4 \) and \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \)).

Black’s life also becomes more complicated than need be after 27...\( \text{\textcopyright e} 6 \) 28 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} 4 \) 29 \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} 3 \) because of 30 \( \text{\textcopyright x} 4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright b} 8 \) 31 \( \text{\textcopyright x} a 6 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 2 \) 32 \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \).

28 \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \)  \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \)

29 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 4 \)  \( \text{\textcopyright e} 6 \)

Black had another trick, 29...\( \text{b} 5 \) 30 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \), which costs material after 30...\( \text{\textcopyright x} d 6 \). If White responds 31 \( \text{\textcopyright d} 5 \) – based on 31...\( \text{\textcopyright x} b 4 \) 32 \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \)! \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 4 \) 33 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 4 \) with advantage – Black settles for that mundane extra pawn (31...\( \text{\textcopyright x} d 5 \) !).

30 \( \text{\textcopyright f} 1 \)

Now 30...\( \text{\textcopyright d} 6 \) 31 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 7 \) \( \text{\textcopyright c} 5 \) is appealing because 32 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright d} 7 \) traps the queen. However, Black would find it hard to win after 33 \( \text{\textcopyright d} 5 \)! \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 7 \) 34 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 7 \)

30...\( \text{\textcopyright c} 8 \)!

An amazing move, based on the idea of meeting \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) with ...\( \text{\textcopyright d} 6 \). This time it runs 31 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright d} 6 \) 32 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 7 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) 33 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) and now 33...\( \text{\textcopyright e} 1 \) + 34 \( \text{\textcopyright e} 1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} 1 \) + 35 \( \text{\textcopyright g} 2 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} 3 \) + 36 \( \text{\textcopyright x} c 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} c 2 \) + and wins.

The spectators then (and computers today) like the \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) instead of 32 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 7 \). Then 32...\( \text{\textcopyright x} b 4 \) 33 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright c} 1 \) + 34 \( \text{\textcopyright d} 1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 1 \) + 35 \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright w} 6 \) 36 \( \text{\textcopyright b} 1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright w} d 3 \) loses while 34 \( \text{\textcopyright d} 1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright w} a 2 \) 35 \( \text{\textcopyright e} 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright w} 2 \) 36 \( \text{\textcopyright b} b 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright c} 2 \) mates.

31 \( \text{\textcopyright f} 5 \)!

\( \text{\textcopyright c} d 8 \)!

White’s first rank is again vulnerable because of ...\( \text{\textcopyright d} 1 \) +. For example, 32 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright b} 3 \) 33 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright d} 1 \) + 34 \( \text{\textcopyright e} 1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} e 1 \) + 35 \( \text{\textcopyright g} 2 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} 2 \) + 36 \( \text{\textcopyright g} 1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} a 5 \) !.

Also lost is 33 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) 34 \( \text{\textcopyright x} b 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright d} 1 \) + 35 \( \text{\textcopyright e} 1 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} e 1 \) + 36 \( \text{\textcopyright g} 2 \) \( \text{\textcopyright a} 5 \) 37 \( \text{\textcopyright b} 7 \) \( \text{\textcopyright c} 2 \) + and...\( \text{\textcopyright d} 2 \).

32 \( \text{\textcopyright f} 1 \)

\( \text{\textcopyright d} 1 \) !

This would have been best against 32 \( \text{\textcopyright g} 3 \) as well. Black’s attack would now be strong after 33 \( \text{\textcopyright e} 7 \) + \( \text{\textcopyright h} 7 \) 34 \( \text{\textcopyright d} 5 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 5 \) ! 35 \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 5 \).

33 \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \) ?

White can keep the outcome in doubt with 33 \( \text{\textcopyright c} 5 \) ! and then 33...\( \text{\textcopyright d} 6 \) 34 \( \text{\textcopyright f} 2 \) Black keeps the high cards after 34...\( \text{\textcopyright a} 3 \) 35 \( \text{\textcopyright b} 6 \) \( \text{\textcopyright c} 8 \) (36 \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \) \( \text{\textcopyright x} d 3 \) 37 \( \text{\textcopyright h} 4 \) \( \text{\textcopyright g} 5 \)).

33...

\( \text{\textcopyright f} 3 \) !
34 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xd}3 \)

Black's two pawns for the Exchange give him better prospects (35 \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 36 \( \text{W}xb7 \) \( \text{W}c4 \); 35 \( \text{W}xb7 \) \( \text{xa}5 \) 36 \( \text{W}e7 \) \( \text{W}xe7 \) 37 \( \text{Q}xe7+ \) \( \text{h}7 \)).

35 \( \text{C}1? \) \( \text{xg}4! \)

36 \( \text{Cc}7 \)

Or 36 \( \text{Cc}7+ \) \( \text{h}7 \) 37 \( \text{Cc}7 \) \( \text{d}1+ \) 38 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{h}3+ \) and 38 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{f}6+ \).

36 ... \( \text{x}f5 \)

37 \( \text{ex}f5 \)

If Black is allowed to keep the attack with only an Exchange minus, he must win (37 \( \text{Cc}3 \) \( \text{d}1+ \) and ... \( \text{h}3 \)).

37 ... \( \text{d}1+ \)

38 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{d}5+ \)

39 \( \text{f}2 \)

The finishing touch. Now 40 \( \text{Cc}3 \) \( \text{g}1+ \) 41 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{d}4! \) threatens the queen and ... \( \text{f}4+ \). Also dead is 40 \( \text{Cc}2 \) \( \text{W}h2+ \) 41 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{h}3+ \).

40 \( \text{W}xb7 \) \( \text{f}1+ \)

41 \( \text{W}e3 \)

Black announced mate in five (41 ... \( \text{d}3+ \) 42 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{f}3+ \) 43 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{e}3+ \))

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After Tarrasch crushed Marshall in 1905 he wrote there was "no doubt it is much harder to defeat a young Marshall" than it had been for Lasker to overcome an aging Steinitz. But by the time he and Lasker finally met in a title match in 1908, it was Tarrasch's age (46) that proved a factor. He seemed to be at his peak when he took first prize at Ostend 1907. Only later did it become evident Ostend was his last great victory and the Lasker match began a slow decline.

Lasker defended against Tarrasch's 1 \( \text{e}4 \) with the Steinitz Defense. This was something of a gauntlet. Tarrasch had scored six wins out of seven previous games against the various forms of the Steinitz. In fact, the best known previous example of the Steinitz Defense was this:

Tarrasch-Schlechter, Leipzig 1894 –
1 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 2 \( \text{Cf}3 \) \( \text{Cc}6 \) 3 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 4 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
5 \( \text{Cc}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 6 0-0 \( \text{e}7 \) 7 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{xd}4 \)
8 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{exd}4 \) 9 \( \text{xd}7+ \) \( \text{W}xd7 \)
10 \( \text{W}xd4 \) 0-0 11 b3! \( \text{f}8 \) 12 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{f}8 \)
13 \( \text{a}d1 \) \( \text{Cc}6 \) 14 \( \text{Cc}3 \) \( \text{Cc}6 \) 15 \( \text{d}3 \)
16 \( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 17 \( \text{d}3 \) c6 18 \( \text{W}a4 \)
19 \( \text{W}c7 \) 19 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 20 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 21 \( \text{W}c2 \)
22 \( \text{Cc}3 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 23 \( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{W}a5 \) 24 \( \text{d}1 \)
25 \( \text{W}b6 \) 25 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{Cc}5 \) 26 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 27 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}8 \)
28 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{W}c7 \) 29 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 30 \( \text{d}4 \)
31 \( \text{W}e7 \) 31 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{fg}5 \) 32 \( \text{xf}5 \) g6 33 \( \text{b}5 \)
34 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 35 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{xf}5 \) 36 \( \text{ex}f5 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 37 \( \text{f}g6 \)
Resigns

Tarrasch, the finest strategist of his time, had built a Grand Formation based on \( \text{b}2 \), \( \text{ad}1 \), \( \text{f}e1 \) and pawns at b3, c4 and e4, followed by a rook-lift. It was the "correct" way to punish Black's third move, he said. If he had been able to make strategy, not tactics, the issue in the match, Tarrasch would have become the third official world champion.
Tarrasch – Lasker
World Championship match, fourth game, Dusseldorf 1908

Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Defense (C66)
1  e4  e5
2  d3  c6
3  b5  f6
4  0–0  d6
5  d4  d7
6  c3  e7
7  e1  exd4
8  xd4

Lasker said he liked the Steinitz Defense because of its solidity. But what he did best in this opening was find tactical resources. For example, 8...0-0 9 b3 would prepare the Grand Formation of Tarrasch-Schlechter. But it allows 9...xd4 10 wxd4 xb5 11 xb5 d5! with instant equality.

And if White avoids ...xd4 with 9 de2, Black has 9...a6 10 d3 g4! followed by ...f6 as in a 1909 Janowsky-Lasker match game.

8  ...
9  xd4

The Schlechter game put 8...xd4 under a cloud. But later it was found that 9 xd7+ was inexact because of 9 xd7! and 10 wxd4 f6 11 wb4 xc3! with a solid game.

9  ...

This allows White to reposition his knight to d4. However, trading pieces helps Black because 9...0–0 10 f1! allows White to make better use of his spatial edge, as Tarrasch later demonstrated in a game that went 10 e8 11 b3 e6 12 b2 f8 13 d5

10  xb5 0-0

Now the 11 b3 idea walks into 11 d7 and 12 f6!

11  g5

Capablanca, who inevitably became an expert in Lasker’s favorite openings, argued that 11 wc3 c6 12 xd4 favors White (12...d7 13 d5 f6 14 wg3).

But that edge is partly due to the weakening of d6. Better is 12...a6! 13 xd4 (13 xc7?? ec8) d7 14 f5 f6, with near equality as in Vescovi-Milos, Sao Paolo 2004 – which shows the Steinitz isn’t so antiquated after all.

11 ...

The first new move. Previously 11...e8 12 xe7 xe7 and 11...ec8 12 c3 d7 had been played.

12  h4  e8
13  ad1  d7

“The only move,” according to Lasker. He played 13...h7 in similar positions but here White would have a somewhat better version of the game after 14 xe7 xe7 15 ec4.

14  xe7

Another benefit of 13...d7 is that Black would equalize quickly after 14 g3 f6 15 wc4 a6!. For example, 16 xc7 ec8 17 xd6 e5 and then 18 xe5 xe5 19 wd4 xc7! 20 wxd7 xd7 21 xd7 xc2.

14 ...

Black’s rook seems well-placed here because it can defend c7 after the knight moves. However, the chronic
Why Lasker Matters

problem of the Steinitz Defense is the e4-e5 push. After 15 \textit{\textbf{wc}}3 \textit{\textbf{c}}f6, for example, White would have 16 e5!.

15 \textit{\textbf{wc}}3

There is something to be said for 15 f4, to stop anything from landing on e5. Then 15...a6 16 \textit{\textbf{c}}c3 \textit{\textbf{e}}6 is a small edge for White.

But 15 \textit{\textbf{wc}}3 makes a threat, 16 \textit{\textbf{xc}}7, and, more importantly, it prepares \textit{\textbf{d}}d4-f5 and \textit{\textbf{e}}e3-g3 – a simple, attacking plan that allows Tarrasch to exploit his spatial edge with “principled” moves as in the Schlechter game.

What makes this stage of the game remarkable is the way Lasker finds a way to turn his opponent’s attention away from that plan. Today’s players, in more complex but equally difficult defensive positions, would look for other ways to change the subject – by sacrificing a pawn or the Exchange, or even getting into time trouble in the hopes that their opponent would feel the need to play quickly.

15 ... \textit{\textbf{e}}e5!

Reti bestowed two exclamation points on this move which he called “as original as it is bold.” Why was it original? Because when rooks are lifted in middlegames they generally go to the third rank. On the second there are too many pawns to obstruct them and on the fourth or beyond the rook is vulnerable.

And that’s the point. With 15 ... \textit{\textbf{e}}e5 Black adds a new element to the game, the possibility that the rook will be trapped. Tarrasch, who felt every constricted position contains the germ of its defeat, was being challenged.

16 \textit{\textbf{d}}d4!

The tactics are 16 \textit{\textbf{xc}}7?? \textit{\textbf{c}}5, trapping the knight, and 16 \textit{\textbf{xc}}7 \textit{\textbf{xb}}5 17 \textit{\textbf{xd}}6 \textit{\textbf{xb}}2, when White has no real winning chances (18 \textit{\textbf{xd}}7 \textit{\textbf{xd}}7 19 \textit{\textbf{xd}}7 \textit{\textbf{c}}8!).

16 ... \textit{\textbf{c}}e5!

“Any player in Lasker’s place would return the rook to e8,” wrote U.U. Gorniak, in a Russian book on defense. “However, Lasker puts a wager on Tarrasch’s exceptional stubbornness in defense of his dogma of ‘correct’ play.”

“Correct” play would likely mean 16 ... \textit{\textbf{c}}e5 here, and then 17 f3 g6, to keep the knight off f5. Lasker preferred 16 ... \textit{\textbf{c}}e5 “so as to draw the brunt of the attack.”

17 \textit{\textbf{wb}}3

Inviting trades such as 17 \textit{\textbf{g}}3 \textit{\textbf{g}}5! or 17 \textit{\textbf{h}}3 \textit{\textbf{e}}e5 18 \textit{\textbf{e}}e3 \textit{\textbf{c}}6 19 \textit{\textbf{f}}5 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 would ease Black’s game considerably.

17 ... \textit{\textbf{db}}6

Lasker called this an “only move.” It meets 18 \textit{\textbf{xb}}7 and enables him to exchange knights if White ever maneuvers his to d5. This kind of defense seems so 19th century. But in the most recent Steinitz Defense to figure in the world championship cycle – a Tal-Larsen candidates match game in 1965 – Black also played ... \textit{\textbf{db}}6. Tal took pains to drive it away with a2-a4-a5, followed by getting his knight to d5 and won after \textit{\textbf{ad}}4-c4.

18 f4

Tarrasch felt he had stop ... \textit{\textbf{g}}5 in order to hit at g7. If 18 \textit{\textbf{e}}3 Black has
18...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}}e8!\footnote{intending 19...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}a4 to force queens off.}

White can avoid that with 19 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}f5 based on 19...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}a4? 20 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{R}}}g3. But Black would be safe after 19...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}h7 20 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{R}}}g3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{g}}}6 or 20 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{D}}}de1 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}e6!.

18 ... \texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f6

19 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}e8?\footnote{Black is playing for more tricks (20 b3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}d5!). But, the rook turns out to be better placed at a8. This is where another remarkable armchair analyst, like Sergey Sorokhtin of Game 16, steps in. Although this game had been subject to countless post-mortems by masters, it was Ilya Makariiev, a student of Dvoretsky’s, who found the best defense in 19...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}a4!. This exploits the queen’s absence from the queenside and provides just enough counterplay (20 b3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}c3 or 20 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}b3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b6).}

20 c3!\footnote{This stops 20...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}d5 and anticipates 20...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}a4 21 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{R}}}d2.}

20 ... a5

21 b3!\footnote{So far White has refused to be sidetracked into trying to trap the rook with ideas like 21 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{R}}}b5 22 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}e2, which is met by 22...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}f5! 23 g3 a4 23 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}d4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{R}}}c5.}

21 ... a4

22 b4?\footnote{This tempting move makes sense because it avoids pawn-trades and prepares \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b5, which may catch the rook in a compromising position. Dvoretsky said it shouldn’t be criticized because it leads to the same size of advantage as the “correct” 22 c4.}

That’s true in an objective sense: Both 22 b4 and 22 c4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xb3 23 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xb3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{c}}}6 24 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}f5 give White a small edge. (In the latter line, the attempt to break out, 24...d5, backfires after 25 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f2! \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}d7 26 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}g3! and exd5.)

But this ignores the practical effects of 22 b4. By leaving c3 as a target and surrendering control of c4, it increases the likelihood of Black-friendly tactics — rather than White-friendly tactics as in the 25 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}f2! note above. And, perhaps equally important, this is no longer a “better-strategist-will-win” position.

22 ... \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}c4

Black-friendly tactics include 23 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b5 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{R}}}d8 24 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}e3 d5! and 25 e5 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}xf4.

23 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{G}}}3

White secures his pawns so that he will be free to bring a rook to the third rank followed by \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b5-a3 and c3-c4. That would take Black’s rook and knight out to the game. But in a sense Black’s strategy has already succeeded White has given up on \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}f5/\texttt{\textbf{\textit{R}}}g3.

23 ... \texttt{\textbf{\textit{R}}}d8

Black prepares ...c5, which he couldn’t play immediately because of 24 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b5!.

24 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}e3?!\footnote{Here is where White begins to go very wrong. His position is fundamentally sound, despite 22 b4. But he must deal with a tactical annoyance, ...c5. There are three good ways of doing that, 24 a3, 24 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{W}}}c3, and 24 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b1. The best job of discouraging ...c5 is performed by 24 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b1 (25 bxc5 dxc5 26 e5!) as suggested by Alexander Chernin.}

24 ... \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}c5

But it was the student Makariiev who found a way to both meet ...c5 and advance White’s reorganization plan – 24 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}d3. Then 24...c5 25 bxc5! dxc5 26 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b5 protects everything and leaves Black’s c4-rook in limbo. If, instead, 25...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}xc5, Black is in trouble on the b-file after 26 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{Q}}}b1

24 ... c5
Now on 25 bxc5 $\text{dxc5}$ 26 $\text{bxb1}$ Black can attack the rook with 26...$\text{Qe4}$!. After 27 $\text{a3}$ he has time to solidify his queenside with 27...$\text{b6}$. Chances would be roughly even because White can continue $\text{Qc2-c3}$.

25 $\text{Qb5}$?

Tarrasch’s nerves failed him in this match. He held the advantage through much of the second game and was roughly even until two moves before he resigned. Here he pins his chances on a combination.

25 ... exb4

26 $\text{Qxd6}$

White could have trimmed his losses to a pawn with 26 exb4 $\text{Qxb4}$ 27 $\text{Qc3}$ but his survival chances aren’t great after 27...$\text{Qc8}$.

26 ... $\text{Qxd6}$
27 e5 $\text{Qxf4}$!!

This is what White overlooked. On 28 $\text{Qxf4}$ Black wins the endgame that follows 28...$\text{Qd1+}$ and ...$\text{Qf4}$ and ...$\text{Qd5}$.

28 $\text{gxh4}$

Recognizing that 28 exf6 $\text{Qxf3}$ 29 $\text{Qxf3}$ $\text{Qd1+}$ 30 $\text{Qg2}$ $\text{Qd2+}$ was also lost.

28 ... $\text{Qg6}$+
29 $\text{Qh1}$

Not much better is 29 $\text{Qf1}$ $\text{Qb1+}$ 30 $\text{Qe1}$ in view of 30...$\text{Qd3+}$ 31 $\text{Qxd3}$ $\text{Qxd3}$ 32 $\text{Qe2}$ $\text{Qh3}$ and 33 exb4 $\text{Qd5}$

29 ... $\text{Qb1+}$
30 $\text{Qg2}$ $\text{Qd2+}$

Now 31 $\text{Qh3}$ $\text{Qd5}$ 32 $\text{Qc4}$? $\text{Qd3}$.

31 $\text{Qe2}$ $\text{Qxa2}$
32 $\text{Qxd2}$ $\text{Qxd2+}$
33 $\text{Qg3}$ a3!

White played until 34 $\text{e6}$ $\text{Qe1+}$ 35 $\text{Qg4}$ $\text{Qxe6+}$ 36 $\text{f5}$ $\text{Qc4+}$ 37 $\text{Qd4}$ $\text{Qa2}$ 38 $\text{Qd1}$ $\text{Qd5}$ 39 $\text{Qa4}$ $\text{Qxc3}$ 40 $\text{Qb8+}$ $\text{Qh7}$ 41 $\text{Qh5}$ $\text{a1(Q)}$ White resigns

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The score soon became 5½-1½ as Lasker benefited from the same kind of match-opening spurt that had doomed Marshall. But the games were closer than in the Marshall match and to appreciate that it’s worth playing over this game.

Lasker-Tarrasch, third match game 1908 – 1 e4 e5 2 $\text{Qf3}$ $\text{Qc6}$ 3 $\text{Qb5}$ a6 4 $\text{Qa4}$ $\text{Qf6}$ 5 0-0 $\text{Qe7}$ 6 $\text{Qe1}$ b5 7 $\text{Qb3}$ d6 8 c3 $\text{Qa5}$ 9 $\text{Qc2}$ c5 10 $\text{Qd4}$ $\text{Qc7}$ 11 $\text{Qbd2}$ $\text{Qc6}$ 12 h3 0-0 13 $\text{Qf1}$ $\text{Qxd4}$ 14 $\text{Qxd4}$ $\text{Qxd4}$ 15 $\text{Qxd4}$ $\text{Qxd4}$ 16 $\text{Qg3}$ $\text{Qd7}$ 17 $\text{Qb3}$ $\text{Qb6}$! 18 $\text{Qf5}$ $\text{Qf6}$ 19 $\text{Qe4}$ $\text{Qd5}$ 20 $\text{Qd5}$ $\text{Qa7}$ 21 $\text{Qb3}$ $\text{Qc7}$ 22 $\text{g4}$ $\text{g6}$ 23 $\text{Qh6+}$ $\text{Qg7}$ 24 $\text{Qf5}$ $\text{Qh8}$ 25 $\text{Qh4}$ $\text{fxg5}$ 26 $\text{Qxg5}$ $\text{Qxg5}$ 29 $\text{Qxg5}$ d3! 30 $\text{Qh1}$ $\text{Qc2}$ 31 $\text{Qe3}$ $\text{Qfx2}$ 32 $\text{Qg2}$ d2 33 $\text{Qg1}$ $\text{Qc1}$ 34 $\text{Qe7}$ $\text{Qxg1+}$ 35 $\text{Qxg1}$ $\text{d1(Q)}$ and wins.

Lasker repeated the d-pawn sack the next time he had White, the game below. Since he won, annotators blamed Tarrasch’s failures to equalize when he could have and his weakening of the kingside. But Tarrasch took the same risks in winning the third game. He was damned for being stubborn, for being consistent and for being Tarrasch.
Lasker – Tarrasch
World Championship match, fifth game, Munich 1908
Ruy Lopez, Main Line (C99)

1  e4  e5
2  d4f3  d4c6
3  b5  a6
4  a4  f6
5  0–0  e7
6  e1  b5
7  b3  d6
8  c3  a5

This was the alternative way of reaching the main Lopez lines until the 1950s, when it was supplanted by 8 0–0 h3 a5 10 c2 c5. The chief difference is that White can save a tempo in some 8 a5 lines by avoiding h2–h3.

9  c2  c5
10  d4  c7
11  bd2  c6
12  h3  0–0

Standard policies are (a) closing the center with 13 d5, (b) clarifying it with 13 dxc5, and (c) probing the queenside with 13 a4. Lasker tries a fourth idea, a temporary pawn-sack.

13  f1  cxd4
14  cxd4  xd4

A trade of knights reduces White's kingside chances.

15  xd4  exd4

As Keres later showed in similar positions, Black's piece play compensates for his slightly inferior center (e.g. 16 b3 b6 17 g5 a7 18 d3 d7).

16  g5?!

Some accounts of this game border on the absurd. Hannak said Lasker “won by shrewd psychology” because he repeated the moves of the third game. That made Tarrasch “more and more nervous about the danger of falling into some ‘prepared variation.’” When Lasker finally deviated it happened “when he least expected it, (on the 16th move) and very soon Tarrasch went astray.”

16  ...  h6

In reality, the prepared variation (16 g5) was bad. After 16 ... c5! White's queenside is weak (17 h4 e6 18 c1 b4).

17  h4  b6

Lasker felt this was “much too passive” compared with 17 ... d5!, which equalizes (18 xe7 xe7). But Tarrasch had no reason to simplify. Didn't he win the third game by holding onto the d4-pawn – and queening it?

18  d3

On the previous move ... c6 (followed by ... fc8) would also have been good. But now 18 e6? allows 19 xf6 xf6 20 e5, with a xh7 mate threat.
19  \(\text{g}3\)  \(\text{e}6\)
20  \(\text{ad}1\)

"My opponent believes in beauty," Lasker wrote before the match. "I believe in strength." He added that a strong move is naturally a beautiful one. Here 20 e5 would be a bid for beauty (20...dxe5 21 \(\text{x}e5\)  \(\text{xd}8\) 22 \(\text{xf}6\)  \(\text{xe}6\) 23 \(\text{wh}7+\) \(\text{f}8\) 24 \(\text{wh}6+\) \(\text{e}7??\) 25 \(\text{g}3!\) and \(\text{f}5+\) wins).

But it isn't strong because Black can, for example, repeat the position with 20...\(\text{c}4\) 21 \(\text{f}5\) \(\text{e}6\) 22 \(\text{d}3\) \(\text{c}4\)
20  ...  \(\text{fc}8\)

And 20...\(\text{xa}2\) is downright ugly — yet it's strong. It can't be refuted by the tempting 21 b3 \(\text{fc}8\) 22 e5 because Black keeps his extra pawn after 22...dxe5 23 \(\text{x}e5\) \(\text{c}3\) 24 \(\text{xd}4?\) \(\text{xd}3\) 25 \(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{xd}1\) 26 \(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{c}8\).

Instead, White should maintain his attack with 24 \(\text{f}5!\). Then 24...\(\text{xb}3?\) loses to 25 \(\text{xb}3\) \(\text{xb}3\) 26 \(\text{xd}4\) because the rooks are forked after 26...\(\text{d}6\) 27 \(\text{xf}6\) and 28 \(\text{d}5!\).

White isn't losing after the best defense, 24...\(\text{d}8\) 27 \(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 28 \(\text{xe}7!\) (28...\(\text{xe}7??\) 29 \(\text{wh}7+\) and mates). But neither is he winning (28...\(\text{xf}5!\) 29 \(\text{xf}5\) \(\text{xb}3\)).

21  \(\text{b}1\)

The position remains somewhere on the cusp of equality, and this would be clearer after 21...\(\text{c}6\) and then 22 e5 dxe5 23 \(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{c}4\). There isn't much for White in 24 \(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{c}5\) 25 \(\text{d}2\) (Khalifman/Soloviov) or 24 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}5\) 25 \(\text{d}3\) with another draw by repetition.

21  ...  \(\text{d}7??\)

This is another echo of the third match game when 16...\(\text{d}7\) and 19...\(\text{e}5\) were strong. Here Black prepares to protect the d4-pawn (\(\text{f}6\)) and invites White to call off his attack and enter a balanced ending (22 \(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 23 \(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{e}5\)).

22  \(\text{e}5!\)

But unlike the previous game, Black's kingside is under threats, which ...\(\text{f}8\) doesn't meet.

22  ...  \(\text{f}8\)
23  \(\text{f}3!\)

The next threat is 24 exd6 \(\text{xd}6\) 25 \(\text{f}6\) and the longer-term ones come from \(\text{h}5\) and \(\text{h}2-g4\).

23  ...  \(\text{d}5\)
24  \(\text{h}5\)  \(\text{g}7\)
25  \(\text{f}4\)

Lasker later concluded he had been winning since 20 \(\text{ad}1\) and thought 25...\(\text{g}6\) was the best way for Black to prolong a hopeless cause.

Black has to rely in many cases on ...\(\text{d}3+\), which also happened to be the key to his winning defense in the third match game. For example, 25...\(\text{g}6\) allows him to survive after 26 \(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xf}4\) 27 \(\text{xf}4\) \(\text{xf}4\) 28 \(\text{xf}4\) because of 28...\(\text{d}3+!\) 29 \(\text{h}1\) \(\text{g}5\) 30 \(\text{g}3\) \(\text{d}4\) 31 \(\text{xd}3\) \(\text{h}4\).

If White tries to keep the diagonal closed with 26 \(\text{fx}5\) \(\text{g}5\) 27 \(\text{f}2\), Black is safe enough following 27...\(\text{c}4\), e.g. 28 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{b}4\) 29 \(\text{b}3\) \(\text{c}3\).

But 25...\(\text{g}6\) probably wouldn't save Black anyway because of 26 \(\text{f}5!\). Then
26...d3+ 27 f2! c5 28 e3 is strong in view of 28...f4 29 f6+ h7 30 d3+ xd3 31 xd3 with threats of f5 and g4.

25 ...

"Like an ancient Roman hero, Tarrasch throws himself on his own sword," Lasker wrote. The only other defense was the immediate 25...d3+

It succeeds after 26 h2 g6 27 fxg5 xg5 28 xd3 f4 – but not following 26 f2! For instance, 26...c5 27 xc5 xc5 f4+ 28 h2 gives White an overwhelming initiative (28 f6 29 fxg5 or 29...fxe4 29 h4! d6 30 f6+ h7 31 xd3).

26 exf6+ xf6
27 fxg5 hxg5
28 e5!

This wins the g-pawn and ultimately the game

28 ...
29 h1 g6

After the more exact 29...f7 White can transpose into the game with 30 hxg5+ g6.

30 wxg5

The reason 29...f7 was better is that here 30 xf6+! xf6 31 d3 and f3+ would win faster. For example, 31 h4 32 h6+ f7 33 d5+.

Or 31...f4 32 h6+ f7 33 f3 g8 and the quiet 34 g3 or 34 e5 wins.

30 ...
31 g3 xe5
32 xe5 h8

Or 32...e8 33 h5+ followed by a queen or knight check.

33 xd3 a7
34 de1 f8

35 xg6 xg6
36 e3 e7

37 f5 c6

Shortening matters a bit compared with 37 h5 38 a3+ g8 39 e7+.

38 g5! Resigns

In view of g7 mate or d8+.

In retrospect, the outcome of the Tarrasch match could have been foretold by the results the two players had with common opponents. Against Chigorin, Tarrasch managed a plus-2 score out of 34 games – while Lasker was plus-7 in 21. Tarrasch couldn’t play against Rubinstein, who beat him eight times without a loss. Lasker was plus-1 in his five games with the Pole. Tarrasch was only plus-3 versus Janowsky, compared with Lasker’s astonishing plus-22. Tarrasch was plus one in 16 games with Maroczy while Lasker scored 4½-½.

Tarrasch managed to get good positions against these opponents but didn’t seem to have the killer instinct that Lasker did. He also wasted some excellent middlegames against Lasker, as in this case.
Why Lasker Matters

Lasker – Tarrasch
World Championship match, 13th game, Munich 1908
Queen’s Gambit Declined, Tarrasch Defense (D40)

1  d4  d5
2  c4  e6
3  ñc3  e5

Tarrasch explained in his 1931 The Game of Chess that this defense is “based on the undeniably correct idea that in the Queen’s Gambit ...c5 is the freeing move for Black and must, therefore be made as soon as possible.”

4  ñf3  ñc6
5  e3  ñf6
6  a3  ñd6
7  dxe5

First played by one of Morphy’s U.S. opponents in 1858. White will expand with b2-b4, ñb2, and ñc1.

7  ...  ñxc5
8  b4  ñd6
9  ñb2  0-0
10  ñc1

Schlechter and later Botvinnik obtained reasonable positions with 10 exd5.

by ...dxc4 followed by ...a6/...b5. The rationale was that in such symmetrical positions Black enjoys as many opportunities for the initiative as White, as Rubinstein demonstrated eight months earlier in his “Evergreen” against Rotlewi.

11  b5

White is overextended after 11 c5 axb4! 12 axb4 ñe7 (12 b5 ñb8 or 12 ñb3 b6!).

11  ...  ñe5!

Morphy retreated to e7. Black shouldn’t fear 12 c5 now because of 12...ñxf3+ 13 ñxf3 ñxc5 (14 ñxd5 exd5 15 ñxc5 ñc4).

12  cxd5  exd5
13  ñc2  ñe6

Thanks to ...a5 White has the greater queenside weaknesses and Black can press with ...ñe4. But he should wait until he’s better developed (13...ñe4? 14 ñxc4 dxc4 15 ña4 ñe6 16 ñg5).

14  0-0  ñe7

It still makes sense to delay 14...ñc4 15 ñxc4 dxc4 since White would be a shade better after either 16 ñb1/ñb2 or 16 ñe2, with the idea of ñxf6 or ñf4.

15  a4  ñac8
16  ñd4

White avoids 16 ñxe5 ñxe5 because his queenside will be under heavy pressure (.. ñb4) and he lacks a good square for his queen (17 ñb3? d4 or 17 ñd2 ñfd8/...d4 or . ñc4).

16  ...  ñc4
17  ña1

The opening is over and neither player seems capable of “big” moves. Black would be comfortable with 17 ñxc4 ñxc4 18 ñxe6 ñxe6 because he can solidify with ...b6 and post his knight at e4 or g4. Note that 18 ñxd5, which works after 18...ñxc1 19 ñxe7+
and 18...\(\Box\text{xd5}\) 19 \(\Box\text{xc4}\), is refuted by 18...\(\Box\text{xd5}\) 19 \(\Box\text{f5}\) \(\text{We4!}\).

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
17 & \ldots & \text{b8} \\
18 & \text{g1} & \text{d6} \\
19 & \text{g3} & \text{fd8} \\
\end{array}
\]

Black can think of \(\ldots\text{We5-g5}\) and \(\Box\text{g4}\). White’s best policy seems to be piling up on \(d5\) with \(\Box\text{f1-g2/\Box\text{de2-f4}}\). However, that may allow Black to explode the center with \(\ldots\text{a7}\) and \(\ldots\text{d4!}\). Moreover he needs his bishop at \(e2\) to discourage \(\ldots\text{h}5\)-\(h4\).

\[
20 & \Box\text{b1} \\
\]

Instead, White hints he will work against the a-pawn, with \(\Box\text{d2}\) and \(\text{c3}\).

\[
20 & \ldots & \Box\text{b6?} \\
\]

Black also has an a-pawn to attack. But 20...
\(\Box\text{e4}\) or 20...
\(\Box\text{e5}\) was better.

\[
21 & \text{c3} & \text{e8} \\
\]

This temporarily meets the threat (22 \(\Box\text{xa5}\) \(\text{xc1}\) 23 \(\text{xc1}\) \(\Box\text{xa4}\)). Unfortunately the best Black had was backing down with 21...\(\Box\text{c4!}\) 22 \(\Box\text{d2}\) \(\Box\text{xd2}\).

\[
22 & \text{b3!} \\
\]

Now 22...
\(\Box\text{e4}\) favors White after 23 \(\Box\text{xa5}\) \(\text{c5}\) 24 \(\text{wa3}\) and \(\text{b4}\), e.g. 24...
\(\text{bxa4}\) 25 \(\text{b4!}\) wins material.

\[
22 & \ldots & \text{e4} \\
\]

The knight that went to the wrong square at move 20 is a move late returning to c4. That doesn’t seem like much. After all, Lasker also began a lot of bad plans in his career. But Tarrasch rarely overcame a bad plan the way Lasker did.

\[
23 & \Box\text{xe6!} & \text{xe6} \\
\]

Now 23...
\(\Box\text{xe6}\) or 23...
\(\text{f6}\) drops a pawn to 24 \(\Box\text{xf6}\) and 25 \(\text{xc4}\).

\[
24 & \Box\text{xf6} & \text{gx6} \\
\]

Black may have overestimated his tactical chances from \(\ldots\text{a7/...\Box\text{xe3}}\). For example, 25 \(\Box\text{c3}\) \(\text{c5}\) 26 \(\text{ed1}\) \(\text{b6}\) 27 \(\text{f3}\) isn’t the kind of position he wants to play. But neither is 26...
\(\Box\text{xe3}\) 27 \(\text{h5}\).

\[
25 & \text{ed1} & \text{a7} \\
26 & \text{f3?} \\
\]

The Tarrasch Defense runs on centralization, and White naturally wants to avoid \(\ldots\text{We4}\), which would make \(\ldots\text{xe3}\) stronger. So he forces Black to sacrifice now, having noticed a zwischenzug at move 28 that will ensure him an endgame edge.

But Lasker lets his tactical side get the better of him. With the superior 26 \(\text{c3}\) he would make the sack unsound (26...
\(\Box\text{xe3}\) 27 \(\text{fxe3}\) \(\Box\text{xe3+}\) 28 \(\text{g2}\) \(\text{d4}\) 29 \(\text{xd4}\) \(\text{we2+}\) 30 \(\text{f1+}\) 31 \(\text{f4}\)).

And on 26...
\(\text{we4}\) White can choose between simplification (27 \(\text{d2}\)) and increasing the pressure on \(d5\) with 27 \(\text{d3}\) \(\text{f3}\) 28 \(\text{xe4}\) 29 \(\text{xc4}\) 29 \(\text{c3}\).}

\[
26 & \ldots & \Box\text{xe3!} \\
27 & \text{exe8} & \text{we8} \\
\]

Now 28 \(\text{fxe3}\) \(\text{xe3}\) wins.
28 b6!

White had counted on this (28... ∇xd1 29 bxa7). He would emerge with a significant advantage after 29...e1+ 30 g2 a8 31 ∇xd1 xa7 because another pawn is falling (32 f3 d4 33 xd2).

More pertinent is what happens after 29...xf2! 30 ∇xf2 c5+. Then 31 f1 xa7 32 xd5 a6+ 33 g2 e2+! 34 h3 f2 is getting hard again. But 32 g2 xa7 33 xd5 should eventually prevail.

28 ... ∇xb6?

29 fxe3!

This is the other point. Now on 29...xe3 White can safely capture the bishop.

29 ... ∇xe3

But Black has nothing better (29...xe3+ 30 h1 d4 31 xb7).

30 xb6 ∇xf3

31 xa5 c4

32 wd2

What shortens the game appreciably is Black's porous kingside (32...d4 33 c1 xa4?? 34 c8+ g7 35 g4+).

32 ... f5

33 c1 g4

34 xd5 f4

35 d2 e3

36 f1!

Tarrasch declared that he would speak only three words to his opponent - "check and mate." This is one of the games in which he temporarily forgot how to say "I resign": 36...e6 37 xf4 xd1+ 38 g2 b6 39 wd7 e2+ 40 f2 bh5 41 f3 h6 42 d4 e5 43 wd8+ h7 44 wf8 Resigns

The end of the Tarrasch match is a good point to stop and take stock. What had Lasker shown so far to explain his success? Certainly tactical skill, pragmatism and patience (The five draws of the Tarrasch match lasted a total of 344 moves.)

Many of his attributes - his reliance on calculated risks and his emphasis on specific targets rather than theoretical strengths and weaknesses - don't seem remarkable today. But a century ago they distinguished Lasker from his rivals.

Moreover, Lasker grew as champion. He is the only champion who was stronger in the second half of his reign than in his first. How he managed that is the next chapter in the mystery.

50

Lasker spent the earlier part of 1908 in a European simul tour that crammed more than 70 exhibitions into the first six months. He ended the year with an innovation. The "clock simul" he gave in Vienna in December may have been the first ever held, according to Whyld. Among his opponents was a 19-year-old math student who had just played in his first international tournament.

Reti – Lasker
Clock simultaneous, Vienna 1908
Two Knights Defense (C56)

1 e4 e5

2 f3 f6

3 d4 exd4

4 c4

Before he adopted 1 f3 fifteen years later, Reti was a classical 1 e4 and 1 d4 player. In his international debut in 1908 he had played the Vienna, Four Knights Game and Ruy Lopez (and finished in 20th and last place).

4 ... f6

5 0-0 xe4
This way of avoiding the Max Lange Attack was often given an exclamation point at the time. The Lange (5...\text{Nc}5 6\text{e}5 \text{d}5 7 \text{exf}6 \text{dxc}4 8 \text{Nxe}1+ \text{Nxc}6 9 \text{Ng}5 \text{Wd}5 10 \text{Qc}3 \text{Wf}5 11 \text{Qc}4) was considered a serious weapon and would be further strengthened by Marshall’s victory with it over Tarrasch at Hamburg 1910.

6 \text{We}1 \text{d}5
7 \text{Nxd}5 \text{Wxd}5
8 \text{Qc}3 \text{Wd}8

This was a rare move, compared with 8...\text{Wc}4, 8...\text{Wh}5 and 8...\text{Wf}5. The only move played today, 8...\text{Wa}5, was largely ignored before World War I.

9 \text{Nxe}4

This capture seems automatic. But \text{Nxe}4 only fell out of fashion after the neutralizing 9...\text{We}7 10 \text{Qxd}4 \text{f}5! was found.

\text{Diagram}

\text{We}6?!

Book was 9...\text{We}7 followed by 10 \text{Ng}5 and 11 \text{Nxe}7 \text{Wxe}7 12 \text{Qxd}4.

With his innovation, Black is inviting his young opponent into the complications of 10 \text{Qg}5. Then Black can’t ignore the threat of 10 \text{Qxf}7, nor he can castle queenside as in the 8...\text{Wa}5 line.

That suggests 10...\text{We}7 White can obtain rough equality with 11 \text{Qxe}6 \text{fxe}6 12 \text{Nxe}6 0-0 or try an Exchange sacrifice (11 \text{Nxe}6 \text{fxe}6 12 \text{Qxe}6 \text{Wd}7 13 \text{Qg}7+). But Black’s king will be safe at c8 and White’s compensation is dubious after 13...\text{Wd}8 14 \text{Qxd}4 \text{c}8! or 14 \text{Wd}3 \text{Wc}8 15 \text{Qf}5 \text{Nc}5.

10 \text{c}3

A clock simul is like other exhibitions except that a clock is used for each game, approximating tournament controls. This means the simul-giver could find his time running out on every board if he lingers too long on one position.

But it is likely that White was the one who invested large amounts of time here because there are tempting alternatives such as 10 \text{Ng}5 and 10...\text{f}6? 11 \text{Qxf}6+...gxf6 12 \text{Nxe}6+.

However 10...\text{We}7 11 \text{Nxe}7 \text{Wxe}7 reaches something like the book line (12 \text{Qxd}4 \text{Wd}8 13 \text{Nc}6). Instead, Reti sets a beginner’s trap.

10... \text{dxc}3!

White’s d-pawn and centralized knight may balance the two bishops after 10...\text{We}7 11 \text{Qxd}4 \text{Qxd}4 12 \text{cxd}4. Compare that with the Giuoco Piano line that runs 1 \text{e}4 \text{e}5 2 \text{Nf}3 \text{Nc}6 3 \text{Bc}4 \text{Nf}6 4 \text{c}3 \text{Bf}5 5 \text{d}4 \text{exd}4 6 \text{cx}d4 \text{b}4+ 7 \text{Qd}2 \text{Qxd}2+ 8 \text{Nbd}2 \text{d}5 9 \text{exd}5 \text{Qxd}5 and now 10 \text{Nxd}5 \text{Wxd}5 11 0-0 or 10 \text{Wb}3 \text{Nc}5 11 \text{Wa}4+ \text{c}6 12 \text{Nxd}5, with a small edge in either case.

11 \text{Wd}3

The point. White threatens 12 \text{Wxb}7 and 12 \text{Qe}g5 — and gives the world champion a chance to embarrass himself (11...\text{Wxb}3?? 12 \text{Wd}6 mate).

He also offers a second pawn, e.g. 11...\text{xb}2 12 \text{Wxb}2 and now 12...\text{b}4? 13 \text{Qg}7 and White wins After the natural 11...\text{Wc}8 12 \text{Wxc}3 he would derive more than enough compensation, e.g. 12...\text{Wd}7 13 \text{Ng}5 \text{h}6 14 \text{Wad}1 or 12...\text{b}4 13 \text{Qeg}5! \text{Qd}5 14 \text{We}5 threatening \text{Qxf}7.

11... \text{b}4!!
The king now has a flight square, so
12. ... ♜xb3 is threatened – and White is
lost

12  ♢eg5

12  ...  cxb2!

13  ♢xe6

The only way to keep matters going
until the (lost) endgame was 13 ♢xe6+
fxe6 14 ♜xb2 ♧d5.

13  ...  bxa1(♗)

It must have been tempting to
underpromote, 13...bxa1(♕). Black is
ahead in material after 14 ♩xd8+ ♤xe1 –
but dead lost after 15 ♧xb7.

14  ♩xd8+

White can trap the other queen with
14 ♩xg7+ ♤d7 15 ♜b2. But he is
down an army after 15...♕xe1+ 16 ♤xe1 ♤xe1.

14  ...  ♤xe1

Reti is out of ammunition (15 ♧xb7
0-0).

15  ♤xe6  ♤xc1

Resigns

Ten days later Lasker won another
game against a talented young master,
also with ...bxa1(♗) in the opening.
The final game of his three-game match
with Abraham Speijer of the
Netherlands began 1 e4 e5 2 ♣f3 ♣c6
3 ♤b5 ♤f6 4 0-0 ♤e7 5 ♦c3 ♦d4
6 ♤xd4 exd4 7 e5 dxe3 8 ♦f6 ♦xb2
9 fxe7 bxa1(♗) 10 ♤xd8(♗)+ ♤xd8
11 ♤d4 ♤xa2 12 ♤g4 ♤g8 13 ♤el c6
14 ♤g5+ f6.

After the game Lasker pointed out
that 14 ♤e4! was much better. (It draws
with best play.) What he didn’t realize
is that 8...cxxb2 was a blunder and
9 fxe7, which he praised, threw away a
fairly simple win that follows 9 ♤xb2
♕xf6 10 ♤a3! or 9...gxh6 10 ♤h5.

51

Lasker spent 1907-1910 playing
match games – 66 of them – against
members of his generation who ranged
in age from 30 to 46. But he also played
in a tournament, St. Petersburg 1909,
and faced an array of opponents in their
20s, including Rubinstein, Tartakower
and Milan Vidmar.

Lasker’s games against the younger
generation tended to be much more
complex, like his second round. How
did White go from a bad opening to
obvious superiority by move 22
without any exceptional moves? The
explanation lies once more in the nature
of targets and weaknesses. White’s
various weaknesses were conspicuous
but were not true targets. Black’s were
both.

Lasker – Forgacs
St. Petersburg 1909

Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Defense (C62)

1  e4  e5

2  ♣f3  ♣c6

3  ♤b5  ♤d6

4  d4  ♤d7

5  ♣c3  ♤f6

6  dxe5

This trade solves Black’s most
pertinent opening problem, how to
develop the KB. Lasker’s explanation was “I felt like opening up the game.”

This appears to be another bit of Lasker disinformation. He was trying to find a way to beat one of his own weapons, the Steinitz Defense, and was searching for a new, disguised version of the Dresden Trap.

6  dxe5

Theory recommends 6...Qxe5 7 Qxe5 dxe5 8 Axd7+ Wxd7 9 Wxd7+ Qxd7 (Knezovic-Gligoric, Titograd 1965). But that was not a real game.

7  Qg5?

heads into a similar position that seems just as good.

9  bxc3  h6
10  a4  We7

This is an appropriate moment to evaluate. White’s main problems are his c-pawns, which we know are “weak.” There is no way they can become a target in the next few moves. But if White plays routinely and allows wholesale exchanges his c-pawns might be enough to lose.

Black’s problems are more subtle. He has no weakness per se. But if he castles kingside, White inflicts damage with Qxf6 because ...Wxf6 would hang the d7-bishop. Black can avert that by, say, 11 Wd3 g4. But White can create an exploitable target with 12 Qxc6+ bxc6 13 We4.

This suggests Black must accept some other weakness. The most drastic option is ...g5. But 10...g5 11 Qg3 Qxe4 would favor White slightly after 12 Qxe4! (and then 12...Qxe5 13 Qxe5 or 12...Qxe4 13 Qxc6! Qxc6 14 fxg3!)

11  Wd3  a6
12  Ka4  Kd8

Black can castle kingside now without fear of Qxf6. Castling queenside would have been tricky anyway because of 13 We3!, which stops ...We5 and prepares Qxc6/Wa7.

13  We3!

The instinct moves are to place rooks at b1 and d1. But 13 Qab1 threatens nothing (13...0-0 14 Qxb7 Qc8) Instead, White prepares a stronger plan of doubling on the d-file. Following 13...0-0 14 Qfd1 Qc8 Black can challenge the file. But that allows a strong 15 Qxc6 bxc6 16 Qg3 Qd7 17 Wa7!.

So Black should accept another weakness, 14.b5 and then 15 Kb3 Qc8. White would like to meet ...b5
with a2-a4 whenever it occurs but there's no pressure for him after 16 a4 
$\text{xd}1+ 17 \text{xd1} d8$.

13 ... g5

This is the kind of major decision that is always easy to judge: If Black wins, it was a "brilliant concession." In Capablanca's celebrated game against Winter (1 e4 e5 2 f3 c6 3 c3 f6 4 $\text{b5} b4 5 0-0 0-0 6 $\text{xc}6 dxc6 7 d3 d6 8 $\text{g5})$ the continuation 8...h6 9 $\text{h4} c5 10 $\text{d5} g5$ was called a stroke of strategic genius.

On the other hand, if Black loses this game, then 13 ...g5 will be called a blunder, as 18 ...g5 was in Game 48.

But seriously, Black's real choice is between the unbalanced middlegame of 13 ...g5 and the quieter ones of 13...0-0 14 $\text{fd1} b5$ or 14...e8.

14 $\text{g3}$ b5
15 $\text{b3}$

Black accepted weaknesses on both wings. But they aren't targets until White can threaten them, e.g. 15...0-0 16 a4! and then 16...h5 17 $\text{d5} xg3 18 hxg3 and $\text{e2}$.

15 ... $\text{h5}$
16 $\text{e1}$

One of Lasker's common sense practices was to get as much out of a piece before moving it. Since there was no real pressure on e5, now was a good time to find a new square for the knight. On d3 it can support a bishop going to c5 from f2. The knight can also reach its own outpost at d5 via b4.

16 ... $\text{a5}$
17 $\text{d3} f4$

Not 17... $\text{xb3} 18 \text{axb3} xg3 19 fxg3! because then Black's weaknesses — at a6 and f6 — are becoming exploitable targets (19... $\text{c8} 20 \text{b4} \text{d5}$).

18 f3 $\text{g8}$?

Black must have been thinking of ...c5-c4 for some time but needs to exchange knights on d3 to do it now — and 18... $\text{xd3} 19 \text{exd3} c5 20 d4 favors White.

Black's rook-move makes sense because he can attack with ...h5-h4 and ...g4 and, if need be, defend his rooks' pawns with ...$\text{g6}$. But from now on Black's king becomes a potential target and that counts more than White's theoretically weak c-pawns.

Best was 18...0-0! when his kingside is "weak" but not a target, e.g. 19 $\text{b4} c8 20 \text{d5}?! $\text{xd5} 21 \text{xd5} \text{c6}$ with advantage or 19 $\text{c5} \text{c8} 20 \text{fd1} \text{d6}$.

19 $\text{fd1} g6$
20 $\text{f2}$

White has three strong ideas to work with — $\text{c5}$, $\text{c5}$ and $\text{b4-d5}$. The immediate 20 $\text{b4}$ would also have been good, e.g. 20... $\text{e6} 21 \text{f2}$ or 20... $\text{e8} 21 \text{d5} \text{xd5} 22 \text{exd5} \text{f6} 23 \text{a4}$.

20 ... $\text{c8}$
21 $\text{e1}$

White is ready to plant a piece on c5. Stopping him with 21... $\text{b7}$ creates new problems after 22 c4 or 22 a4. If Black tries 21... $\text{c6} 22 \text{b4} \text{xc3}$, based on 23 $\text{xc3}?! \text{e2}+$, he is answered by 23 $\text{xd8}+, 24 \text{d1}(+) \text{and } 25 \text{d5}$!
21 ... \( \text{Qxd3} \)

22 \( \text{cxd3} \)

Now 22...c5 is met by 23 \( \text{Qd5} \) with a clear edge (23 ...\( \text{Qe6} \) 24 \( \text{c4} \)).

22 ... \( \text{Qxb3} \)

There is logic to trading off this knight, rather than the bishop. After 22...\( \text{Qe6} \) 23 \( \text{Qxe6} \) \( \text{Qxe6} \) 24 \( \text{a4} \) \( \text{Qb3} \) 25 \( \text{Qa2} \) his knight wouldn’t have much of a future. And following 25...\( \text{bxa4} \) 26 \( \text{Qxa4} \) \( \text{Qc5} \) 27 \( \text{Qxc5} \) \( \text{Qxe5+} \) 28 \( \text{d4} \) Black has to defend targets all over the place.

Instead, Black heads for a late middlegame with bishops-of-opsps. His bishop will protect the a-pawn and offer some hope of turning White’s light squares into targets.

23 \( \text{axb3} \)

White plans \( \text{b3-b4} \), \( \text{Qc5} \) and eventually \( \text{d3-d4-d5} \).

23 ... \( \text{e5} \)

24 \( \text{b4!} \) \( \text{cxb4} \)

25 \( \text{cxb4} \) \( \text{g4!} \)

This is what Black had in mind when he traded pieces. After the coming pawn-swap, he has targets to hit on the d- and g-files. But White has more targets—at \( \text{a6} \), \( \text{f7} \), and \( \text{e5} \). Shifting his aim from one to another is what ultimately decides.

26 \( \text{Qc5} \) \( \text{Wg5} \)

27 \( \text{fxg4} \) \( \text{Wxg4} \)

28 \( \text{Qa2!} \)

White prepares to double (or triple) on the f-file and possibly sack on f7.

28 ... \( \text{Qe6} \)

This is the best piece to defend \( \text{f7} \) and \( \text{a6} \) but it can’t cover both at once.

29 \( \text{Wf1} \) \( \text{Qc4} \)

30 \( \text{Wf1!} \)

Quite wrong is 30 \( \text{d4?} \) which dissolves an unexploitable White weakness as well as an exploitable target at \( \text{e5} \). It would also make permanent the outpost for the bishop at \( \text{c4} \).

30 ... \( \text{Qb3} \)

31 \( \text{Wf1} \) \( \text{Qd7} \)

32 \( \text{Qf3} \)

White is trying to chase the bishop to a poor square, such as \( \text{a4} \), while Black tries to keep his queen flexible so it can defend \( \text{e5} \) and \( \text{f7} \).

33 ... \( \text{Wc6} \)

On 32...\( \text{Wf6} \) White has two ideas. One is the \( \text{Wf2-b2} \) maneuver that ultimately wins. Another is to triple on the f-file with 33 \( \text{Qb1} \) and \( \text{Qb2-f2} \). Then \( \text{Wf6} \) or \( \text{Qf5} \), with or without the preparation of \( \text{h2-h3/Qh2} \), would be decisive.

33 \( \text{Wf2} \)

White’s heavy pieces will run all over after 33...\( \text{Qe6} \) 34 \( \text{Qf1} \) (threatening \( \text{Wxf7} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) 35 \( \text{Wf6} \) and \( \text{Qxg6} \).)

33 ... \( \text{Qd7} \)

This loses quickly but 33...\( \text{Wf6} \) 34 \( \text{Wb2!} \) creates the same threat of \( \text{35 d4} \).

After 34...\( \text{Qa4} \) 35 \( \text{Qf1} \) \( \text{Qd7} \) White can win with 36 \( \text{Wf5} \) \( \text{Qg5} \) 37 \( \text{Qf6} \) \( \text{Wb3} \) and now 38 \( \text{Qxh6} \) is pretty but 38 \( \text{Wf2!} \) is stronger. One of the targets (\( \text{h6} \), \( \text{a6} \), \( \text{f7} \)) would fall.

34 \( \text{Wb2} \) \( \text{Wf6} \)
Why Lasker Matters

35 \text{d4!}

And wins (35...\text{c4} 36 \text{d5} \text{g4} 37 \text{xe5+}). The game ended with 35...\text{exd4} 36 \text{xb3} \text{xe4} 37 \text{d3} \text{d5?} 38 \text{xg6! Resigns}

52

The Steinitz Defense was at the height of fashion, and one of the reasons was, ironically, Lasker’s success with the Exchange Variation. Players began to think twice about playing 3...\text{a6}. Maročzy, annotating a 1906 game in which Black played 3. \text{xf6}, wrote “Black avoids the variation 3...\text{a6} 4 \text{xc6} \text{dxc6} 5 \text{d4} in which White gets the better endgame and in which Black only arrives at an even position with considerable difficulty.”

Of the non-3...\text{a6} defenses, the Steinitz Defense had the reputation – until the 1940s, at least – of being Black’s best option. It contains quite a bit of tactical energy once he reorganizes his kingside with ...\text{g6} and ...\text{g7}:

Speier – Lasker
St. Petersburg 1909
Ruy Lopez. Steinitz Defense (C66)

1 \text{e4} \text{e5}
2 \text{f3} \text{c6}
3 \text{b5} \text{f6}
4 0-0 \text{e7}

This move order has the benefit of avoiding lines in which White castles queenside or finds a better use for his king’s rook than putting it on e1.

5 \text{e1} \text{d6}

6 \text{d4} \text{d7}
7 \text{c3} \text{exd4}
8 \text{xd4} 0-0
9 \text{xc6} \text{bxc6}
10 \text{b3} \text{e8}

The reorganization begins. Today’s books prefer 10...\text{d5}, citing a 1918 Vidmar game in which Black equalized after 11 \text{e5} \text{b4!} and got the upper hand after 12 \text{exf6} \text{xc3} 13 \text{g5} \text{e8!}.

11 \text{b2} \text{f8}
12 \text{d3}

Ossip Bernstein, Georg Salwe and Speier himself played this position as Black in this tournament and each continued 12...\text{g6} and 13...\text{g7}. This system was resurrected in two games of the 1987 interzonal playoff between John Nunn and Lajos Portisch. In the first, Black overcame problems after 12...\text{g6} 13 \text{ad1} \text{g7} 14 \text{h3} \text{b8} 15 \text{f3!} \text{e6} 16 \text{e5} \text{d5} 17 \text{c4} to win. In the second he drew after 12...\text{c5} and 13...\text{c6} although he remained slightly worse until the endgame.

12 ...

\text{b8}

Since a basic White plan is to break in the center with \text{e4-\text{e5}}, Black’s wants to preempt it by attacking the pawn while it’s on \text{e4} (...\text{c5/...\text{c6} and ...\text{b7}).

13 \text{de2}

This is a standard maneuver designed to secure the e-pawn’s defense with \text{g3}. It also takes the punch out of ...\text{c5} (13 \text{a4} \text{c5!}). A good alternative is 13 \text{f3} and a reasonable counter is 13...\text{h5} 14 \text{e5} \text{f4} and ...\text{g6}

13 ...
14 \text{g3} \text{g7}
15 \text{ad1} \text{g4!}

170
The e-pawn was defended four times and it would be too much to ask Black to attack it five times. So he sends the knight on a King's Indian-like maneuver to e5 and possibly to d4, after ...c5/.., e6.

16  \[ a4 \]

Not 16 f4?? \[ b6+- \]

16  ...  \[ e5 \]

17  \[ f1? \]

How do you find yourself choosing such a strange move? Usually by talking yourself out of the natural — and usually better — alternatives. White must have been disappointed to see that 17 \[ d2 \] is met by 17...c5, threatening ...\[ xa4 \]. He would have considered the tactical shot 18 \[ xe5 \], based on 18...\[ xe5 \] 19 \[ xe5 \] and \[ xd7 \].

But he would have been further dismayed when he saw that Black could continue 18 \[ g4 \] 19 \[ f3 \] \[ xf3\']. Then on 20 \[ xe5 \] \[ xd1 \] White can get a perpetual check (21 \[ xg7 \] \[ xg7 \] 22 \[ f5+ \] \[ xf5 \]) but no more.

That suggests 17 \[ e2 \], rather than 17 \[ d2 \], since 17...c5 18 \[ xc5 \] \[ g4 \] 19 \[ f3 \] \[ xf3 \] doesn’t work. But 19 \[ b6 \] 20 \[ xg4 \] \[ xe5+ \] 21 \[ d4 \] \[ f3+ \] gives Black compensation for the pawn. Moreover, he can regain his pawn with 18...b5 19 \[ c4 \] \[ xc4 \] 20 \[ xc4 \] bxc5 and be slightly worse after 21 \[ c3 \].

17  ...  \[ c5! \]

White succeeded in confusing himself: This is stronger now because 18 \[ xc5 \] allows 18...\[ b5 \] 19 \[ c4 \] \[ xc4 \] 20 \[ bxc4 \] \[ xb2 \] with advantage to Black.

18  \[ xe5 \]

Relatively best was 18 \[ c3 \] \[ c6 \] 19 \[ a1 \].

18  ...  \[ xe5 \]

Black’s position is so good there was no reason to see what happens after 18...\[ xe5 \] 19 \[ xe5 \] \[ c6 \] 20 \[ d3 \].

19  \[ b2 \]

The knights don’t quite measure up to the bishops because they don’t have permanent outposts (19 \[ c3 \] \[ e8 \] 20 \[ d5 \] c6).

19  ...  \[ e8 \]

20  \[ c4 \] \[ b5 \]

21  \[ a4 \]

White should delay this because Black’s queen has no better square than b7 after 21 \[ d3 \].

21  ...  \[ a6 \]

22  \[ d3 \] \[ b4! \]

The prospect of a very good ending (23...\[ xc4 \]) increases Black’s edge.

23  \[ b1 \]

Having established a textbook advantage Black could have played routinely with 23...\[ ab8 \], e.g. 24 \[ h3 \] \[ xc4 \] 25 \[ xc4 \] \[ xc4 \] 26 \[ xc4 \] \[ b4 \] 27 \[ xb4 \] cxb4.
That corrects his pawns, ruins White’s and creates a good bishop vs-
knigh't ending with ideas such as ...\texttt{b6-b6-a6}. But White has resources
after 28 \texttt{b1 b8} 29 f3.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|}
\hline
23 ... \texttt{aad8!} \\
With a more ambitious, knockout plan of ...c6 and ...d5.
\hline
24 \texttt{e3} \\
White wants to relieve some of the pressure with c2-c3. He can do that
with 24 \texttt{ec1} as well but that allows Black rooks to rule the opened center
after 24...c6 25 c3 \texttt{wb8} 26 \texttt{f3} d5.
\hline
Then he wins quickly after 27 \texttt{e3? dxe4} 28 \texttt{axe4 \texttt{d3}} or 27 \texttt{dd2? dxe4!}
28 \texttt{dxe4 \texttt{d3}} (29 \texttt{f6+ \texttt{h8}} 30 \texttt{wx6 \texttt{e6}}).
\hline
Keeping the rook on the e-file allows him to meet ...d5 with exd5/\texttt{xe8}.
\hline
24 ... \texttt{c6} \\
25 \texttt{c3} \texttt{wb8} \\
26 \texttt{f1} \texttt{e6} \\
This threatens to win a piece with 27...d5. The immediate 26...d5? fails to
27 exd5 cxd5 28 \texttt{xe8+ or 27...xe3}
28 \texttt{dxe3 cxd5} 29 \texttt{dxd5} \texttt{b7} 30 \texttt{d1}.
\hline
27 \texttt{c2} d5 \\
28 exd5 exd5 \\
29 \texttt{xe6} \\
White places some hopes on exploiting the slight weakening of
...\texttt{xe6}. After 29 \texttt{d2} \texttt{e8} and ...d4, the
bishops dominate.
\hline
29 ... \texttt{fxe6} \\
30 \texttt{ce3} \texttt{b7!} \\
Black still plays for a knockout
(31...d4 and ...\texttt{e5-d5}).
\hline
31 b4!? \\
The defensive prescription for battling bishops like these would be
31 f3 and then 31...d4 32 cxd4 cxd4 33 \texttt{c4} although it's not much fun
playing White after 33...d3.
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|}
\hline
31 ... \texttt{c7!} \\
Black would be much closer to a win
in a 32...\texttt{xb4} 33 \texttt{xb4} \texttt{xe2} than in a blocked middlegame
(31...c4 32 \texttt{d2} e5 33 \texttt{f3}).
\hline
32 \texttt{bxc5} \texttt{a6} \\
Threatening to doom the c-pawn with
...\texttt{xe5} and ...\texttt{e8}.
\hline
33 \texttt{c4} \texttt{d4!} \\
White is barely hanging on after
34 \texttt{d1} \texttt{xe5} 35 \texttt{b2} \texttt{f5!} and then
36 \texttt{d3} \texttt{c8} 37 \texttt{g3} \texttt{a5} 38 \texttt{b2}
\texttt{c3}.
\hline
34 \texttt{e4} \\
Desperate and quite hopeless.
\hline
34 ... \texttt{dxe3} \\
35 \texttt{xe6+} \texttt{f7} \\
And \textbf{White resigned} after 36 \texttt{xf7+}
\texttt{xf7} 37 \texttt{xe3} \texttt{c8}
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

53

The greatness of Steinitz, according to Janowsky, lay in his discovery of
enduring principles. The greatness of Tarrasch was in translating those
principles into rules that an amateur could follow. But Lasker didn't believe
that chess could be played by rules, Janowsky concluded. It was games like
the following that gave him that reputation.

Lasker – Salwe
St. Petersburg 1909
Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Defense (C66)

1 e4 e5
2  \!f3 \!c6
3 \!b5 d6
4 d4 \!d7
5 \!e3 \!f6
6 0-0 \!e7
7 \!g5

Lasker refined his move order after the Game 51 misfire. On 7...0-0 he can liquidate with 8 \!xc6!? \!xc6 9 dxe5 into immensely complex lines that can be calculated past move 15, just as in the Dresden Trap

7 ... exd4
8 \!xd4 0-0
9 \!xe6 bxc6

The usual move at the time was 10 \!f3.

10 \!d3

Four rounds later Lasker found himself facing this from the other side of the board (vs. Bernstein). He decided to force matters (10 ...c5 11 \!f5 \!xf5 12 exf5) and should have had good play with 12...\!b8 or 12...\!e8

10 ... \!e8

Seven rounds after that, Lasker was White again when Erich Cohn played another common idea, 10...\!g4 11 \!xe7 \!e7 and then 12 \!ae1 \!h4 13 \!f3 \!h5 14 h3 \!e5 15 \!xe5 \!xe5.

But after 16 f4 \!c5+ 17 \!h2 \!e6 18 b3 Cohn made a fundamental mistake, 18...f5?! 19 e5 d5??, Lasker exploited the difference in a manner that Tarrasch had made famous – 20 \!a4 \!e7 21 \!d4! \!ab8 22 \!c5 a5 23 \!a3 and b2-b4, and White won.

11 \!ae1 \!c5

White has the usual choices here and none of them are clearly wrong. Black is slightly worse after 12 \!f3, 12 \!f5 or 12 \!de2 \!c6 13 \!g3.

12 \!b3

The benefits of this include shielding b2 from ...\!b8 and enabling White to answer ...\!c6 with \!a5.

12 ... \!g4

13 \!xe7 \!xe7

White can gain a tempo with \!d5 but will have to give it back after ...c6.

14 f4 \!b8

There was no great danger in 15...\!f6 16 e5 \!e8 16 \!d5 \!e6. Black's plan is not to pressure the e-pawn (... \!f6 and ...\!c6) but to liquidate it (16...f5 17 e5 \!e6) under better circumstances than in the Cohn game.

16 f5!

This highly double-edged advance seems to violate a slew of Steinitz principles but seizes a huge amount of kingside terrain. In his notes Lasker second-guessed himself and thought 16 g4 "could have achieved more."

16 ... f6
Black prevents f5-f6 and gives his knight a way to reach e5. On the negative side, it weakens e6 considerably and g7 somewhat.

17 \( \text{d5} \)  \( \text{e8} \)
18  \( \text{c4} \)

White hastens to set up the pawn formation that best contains Black’s bishop and queen’s rook.

18  \( \text{...} \)  \( \text{f7} \)
19  \( \text{wC3} \)  \( \text{e5} \)
20  \( \text{Dd2} \)  \( \text{c6} \)

This was another benefit of \( \text{f6/...d7} \). Black can afford the weakening of d6.

21  \( \text{f4} \)  \( \text{b6} \)
22  \( \text{b3} \)

White can also take aim at g7, with a knight at h5 and possibly two heavy pieces. If Black puts his rooks at e7 and g8, that might be sufficient defense Black, meanwhile, will find it difficult to expose the queenside to pressure with \( \text{a5-a4xb3} \).

Does this mean a draw is likely? Not at all.

22  \( \text{...} \)  \( \text{be8} \)
23  \( \text{wg3} \)  \( \text{h8} \)
24  \( \text{h5} \)  \( \text{g8} \)
25  \( \text{f4} \)

White’s first kingside threat is 26 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g5} \) 27 h4.

25  \( \text{...} \)  \( \text{d8} \)

But Black can defend with \( \text{...f8} \). He also stops \( \text{wb4/xf6} \) sacrifices.

26  \( \text{f3} \)

Lasker would be the first to insist that Black’s position, like all merely inferior ones, can be defended. But he also knew that in practice, the defense will likely fail if White can switch back and forth between targets as he did in Game 51. For example, the natural 26 \( \text{ee8} \) allows 27 \( \text{g4} \) and Black has cut off his queen from the defense of g7.

26  \( \text{...} \)  \( \text{e7} \)
27  \( \text{h4} \)  \( \text{e8} \)

Now what? The smothered mate threat (\( \text{f4-g6} \)) is handled by 28 \( \text{h6} \), after which White has to worry about his e-pawn. He can try to create better conditions but there is never a serious chance for \( \text{g6+} \) or \( \text{hxh6} \) to work.

28  \( \text{wF2} \)  \( \text{f8} \)
29  \( \text{wd2!} \)  \( \text{wb8} \)
30  \( \text{h1} \)

Now Black avoids 30 \( \text{...d5} \) because his knight is so vital to him – 31 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) or 31 \( \text{fxe5} \) is met by 32 \( \text{d1} \).
In fact, White is more likely to occupy e5 than Black—because of the e4-e5 sacrifice which Lasker made famous five years later against Capablanca. It can happen after the natural pass of 30...dxe8 and then 31 e5! White gets a nice attack after:
(a) 31...fxe5 32 f6 g6 33 Qg7,
(b) 31...Qxe5 32 Qxg7! (32...Qxf3 33 gxh5 Qxh5+ 34 Qxe1 Qxg7 35 Qg3+)
(c) 31...Qxf5 32 exf6 Qxh5+ 33 Qxe1 g5 34 Qg7! (34...gxh4 35 Qxf5 and Qxh4).

30 ... Qf6
31 Qg4!
Now 31...Qh6 32 Qxf6 works.
31 ... Qg8
32 Qd1!
Nimzovitch and Ludek Pachman considered 32 Qf6 essential. But 33 Qb2 would threaten 34 Qxf6 and lead to a favorable 33...Qxe5 34 Qxe5. For example, 34...Qxe5 35 Qxd6 Qxf5 36 Qxg7 or 34...Qxh5 35 Qf3.

32 ... Qb4
In fact, 33 Qb2 would also be strong here: 33...Qb8 or 33...Qc8 lose to 34 Qxf6 gxh6? 35 Qxf6+. Also 33...Qh6 34 Qh4 and Qxd6.

Black doesn’t lose anything immediately if he plays 33...Qe5 instead. But his outlook doesn’t inspire confidence after 34 Qxe5 dxe5 35 Qf2.

33 Qf2!?

White has a different idea. He can capitalize on the Black queen’s absence (33...Qb8 34 Qh4! and Qxf6).

33 ... Qc3
34 Qh4
The threat of 35 Qf4 Qh6 36 Qxd6! is on again.

34 ... Qh6
35 Qf4 Qf7
36 Qh2

White has faith in the inevitability of his attack. A player who lives or dies by combinations might have burned out trying to calculate brilliancy-prize finishes like 36 Qd4 exd4 37 Qxf6 and then 37...Qh6 38 Qg4, threatening 39 Qxh6!. However Black has simple, and winning, defenses such as 38...Qb8.

Another bid for immortality is 36 e5 since 36...dxe5 37 Qxf6! wins, as does 36...Qxe5 37 Qxf6 gxh6 38 Qxf6+ Qg7 39 Qf8+. But White runs out of gas after 38...Qeg7 in the last line.

36 ... Qge8

Black’s queen, which can no longer play ...Qf8!, is trying to defend from long distance. His best try was 36...Qb2, which keeps an eye on f6 but also creates mating ideas on g2.

37 Qg3! Qg8

Black’s position seems safe enough, especially now that White’s king...
position means that 37 e5 Qxe5 38 Qxf6 fails to 38...Qxf3 with check.

38 Qh4!

It appears that 38 Qg4 Qh6 39 Qh4 would finally succeed (39...Qf7 40 Qf4!). Lasker suggested that Black might save himself with 39...d5 40 cxd5 cxd5 41 Qxd5 Qc6. But 42 Wd6! wins (42...Qxd5 43 We7 Qa8 44 Qxf6).

Black does have a defense – 39...Qxf5! 40 exf5 Qxf5. With two pawns and a rook for the two knights he would still be worse. He’s in better shape than he’s been in some time (41 Wf4 Qh4 42 Qxh4 Qd7 since 43 Qxd6?? g5!) – and better than what happens in the game.

38 ... g5

White’s last move broke through the defenses because it threatened 39 Qf4 and because 39...d5 would have been refuted by 30 cxd5 cxd5 41 Qf4!.

39 fxe6 Qxe6

The change in the pawn structure created a target at f6 that cannot be held for long, in view of 41 Qf4 Qg7 42 Qe2 and Qf4.

40 ... f5

Salwe was a good defender according to Lasker and a “coffeeshouse player” according to Alekhine. Both were right. Here Salwe tries to salvage his failed defense with tactics.

41 Qf4 Qf6
42 Qe2! Wb2
43 Qd2 Wa1
44 Qg3!

Black has no defense to exf5 followed by Qd4 or Qh5. For example, 44...fxe4 45 Qxe4 Qg6 invites 46 Qxh7+ Qxh7 47 Wxh4+.

Also, 44...Qe8 45 exf5 Qxf5 46 Qh5 and either 46...Qe6 or 46...Qh6 are met by 47 Qd4! exd4 48 Wxf5 and wins.

44 ... Qg8
45 Qf5 Qxf5
46 Qd4! exd4
47 Qxf5 Qf8
48 Wxd4

Black lost only a pawn but his various weaknesses cost him the game:

48...Wxd4 49 Qxd4 Qe5 50 Qh5 Qe7 51 e5! dxe5 52 Qxe5 cxd4 53 Qxd4 Qf2 54 Qd8+ Qg7 55 Qa5 Qc2 56 a3 Qe5 57 Qe8 Qb2 58 Qh5 Qf2 59 Qb7+ Qg6 60 Qe6+! Qf6 61 Qxc5 Qa6 62 a4 Qf6 63 Qc3 a6 64 Qg3+ Qh6 65 Qg7 Resigns

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Nimzovich, who was 23 in 1909 and not ready for invitations to events like St. Petersburg, was deeply impressed by the last game. He used it as his final example in My System. Lasker managed, he said, “in spite of the small variety of threats at his disposal, to dominate the whole board.” Nimzovich was also struck by the following game. He liked Lasker’s handling of the “color complex,” and the way Black turns his opponent’s 2-Q’s advantage into a Q-Q disadvantage. “We can appreciate how far ahead of his time Lasker was,” he wrote.

Tartakower – Lasker
St. Petersburg 1909
English Opening (A23)

1 e4

Lasker had only faced this move twice before in money games and he wouldn’t meet it again until he faced the same opponent 15 years later.

1 ... e5
2 Qe3 Qf6
3  g3  \textit{\&}e7
An apparent innovation, with the idea of playing an Old Indian (4  \textit{\&}f3 d6 5 d4 \textit{\&}bd7).

4  \textit{\&}g2  0-0
5  \textit{\&}f3  d6
6  0-0  \textit{\&}bd7
7  d3

Tartakower was hypermodern before there were Hypermoderns. He rejects 7 d4 \textit{\&}e8 8 e4 \textit{\&}f8, the kind of position Tchigorin had shown to be solid for Black.

7  ...  c6
8  \textit{\&}e1

White plans e2-e4 and f2-f4. Black could meet 8 b4 with 8...d5 and 8 \textit{\&}b1 a5 9 a3 \textit{\&}b6 10 b4 axb4 11 axb4 with 11...e4!.

8  ...  \textit{\&}b6!
9  e4  d5
10  cxd5  cxd5
11  exd5

After the game the players post-mortemmed in print to ludicrous lengths. Tartakower claimed he would have gotten an edge with 11 f4. Lasker, however, gave a long variation beginning with 11. exf4 12 e5 \textit{\&}g4 13 gx\textit{\&}  d4 and then 14 \textit{\&}e4 \textit{\&}d5 15 \textit{\&}c2 f6 16 h3 \textit{\&}ge3 17 \textit{\&}xe3 dxe3 18 \textit{\&}b3 \textit{\&}h8 19 \textit{\&}g3 \textit{\&}c5 as good for Black. Tartakower countered that 20 \textit{\&}c2 \textit{\&}c7 21 d4! favors White.

There were bound to be improvements, such as 16 \textit{\&}d6!, which would threaten \textit{\&}xd5+ and turn things in White's favor. But Black improves earliest with 11...dxe4! 12 dxe4 exf4 13 gx\textit{\&}  \textit{\&}c5+ 14 \textit{\&}h1 \textit{\&}g4, with advantage.

11  ...  \textit{\&}bxd5
12  \textit{\&}xd5  \textit{\&}xd5

Now 13 \textit{\&}b3 \textit{\&}b6 and .. \textit{\&}e6-d5 is fine for Black.

13  d4!  exd4
14  \textit{\&}xd4

The dissolution of the center seems to favor White's fianchetto but the queen loses time now. Better was 14 \textit{\&}f3 and 15 \textit{\&}xd4 with roughly equal chances.

14  ...  \textit{\&}e6

With the insertion of h2-h3 and ...\textit{\&}e8, we've transposed into Franklin-Lengyel, Hastings 1963-64, which saw Black's pieces take over the middlegame after 16 \textit{\&}h2 \textit{\&}f6 16 \textit{\&}d3 \textit{\&}b6 and 17...\textit{\&}ad8.

15  \textit{\&}e2  \textit{\&}f6

More exact than 15...\textit{\&}e8 16 \textit{\&}e3 \textit{\&}c5 17 \textit{\&}e4!, with equality.

16  \textit{\&}e4  \textit{\&}a5?

Black sees ghosts. The natural 16...\textit{\&}b6 stops 17 \textit{\&}d4 as well as 17 \textit{\&}b1 (17...\textit{\&}c3). He may have rejected it because of 17 \textit{\&}e3 \textit{\&}ad8 and either misjudged how good 18 \textit{\&}c4 \textit{\&}c7 is or overlooked that 18 \textit{\&}g4 allows 18...\textit{\&}xb2! 19 \textit{\&}b1 \textit{\&}c3!.

17  \textit{\&}d4!  \textit{\&}xd4
18  \textit{\&}xd4  \textit{\&}fd8

Black keeps the other rook free to occupy e8.
Why Lasker Matters

19  \( \text{g5} \)

White’s bishops seem to guarantee an advantage but the dark-squared bishop doesn’t have a good square (19 b3 and 20 \( \text{b2} \) is answered by 19...\( \text{c3} \) and 20...\( \text{d5} \)).

Tartakower said he examined 19 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{b5} \) 20 \( \text{fd1} \) and concluded 20...\( \text{d7} \) would be drawish because he doesn’t have better than 21 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{xc3} \).

Maintaining the bishops or at least the theoretical advantage of \( \text{vs} \)-\( \text{c} \) now becomes important to him – too much so.

19  ...  \( \text{d7} \)

Black avoids weakening e-file squares (19...\( \text{f6} \) 20 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{b5} \) 21 \( \text{fe1} \)). After 19...\( \text{d7} \), he has annoying discovered attacks (20...\( \text{b4} \)).

20  \( \text{a3} \)  \( \text{b6} \)!

21  \( \text{wh4} \)  \( \text{c4} \)

22  \( \text{b4} \)  \( \text{b6} \)

23  \( \text{fe1} \)

Tartakower recalled the “moral satisfaction” of seeing his opponent think more than half an hour here. There’s a lot to consider. Black may slide into a bad position after 23...\( \text{f6} \) 24 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{xe3} \) 25 \( \text{xe3} \) and \( \text{ae1} \) or 23...\( \text{d4} \) 24 \( \text{e4} \). But he must also have been thinking about how he could play for a win.

When Jose Capablanca played to win in an objectively even game, his efforts were “based not on characteristics of the position but on self-confidence,” according to Euwe. Capa simply had faith “he would be able to find better moves than his opponents” if he created the right positions. That’s what great players do – create the right positions.

23  ...  \( \text{h6} \)

24  \( \text{e7} \)

White spends the next few moves trying to avoid trades. He doesn’t fear 24...\( \text{g5} \)? 25 \( \text{wh6} \) \( \text{xe7} \) because he can play for more than perpetual check with 26 \( \text{xg5}+ \) \( \text{f8} \) 27 \( \text{wh6}+ \) \( \text{g8} \) 28 \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 29 \( \text{g5}+ \).

24  ...  \( \text{c7} \)

25  \( \text{c5} \)  \( \text{e5} \)!

Black prepares ...\( \text{d3} \) and invites 26 \( \text{xb7} \)? \( \text{d6} \)!

26  \( \text{e3} \)

When they looked over the game afterwards Tartakower insisted he had an advantage around here. Lasker silently showed him variation after variation in which Black stood at least equal. Then Tartakower exclaimed that the position was really even. Again Lasker demonstrated ways the game could have logically proceeded – except this time White was clearly better.

“What witchcraft!” Tartakower said.

“You just need a head on your shoulders,” Lasker said.

“I need your head on my shoulders,” his opponent replied.

26  ...  \( \text{d3} \)

27  \( \text{ed1} \)  \( \text{b3} \)!

When White begins to see that natural candidates, such as 28 \( \text{d2} \), end up in Black’s favor (28...\( \text{c3} \) 29 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{d5} \), 30 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 31 \( \text{fd1} \) \( \text{xa3} \)), it should be a warning that his position isn’t as good as he thought in the previous diagram.

28  \( \text{f1} \)  \( \text{d5} \)

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Here 29 \( \textbf{h}3? \) \( \textbf{g}e5 \) is bad but the ugly, “principled” 29 \( \textbf{f}3 \) offered better prospects of a draw. White wasn’t ready to think that way.

29 \( \textbf{xa}d5 \) \( \textbf{xd}5 \)

This is the stage of the game that impressed Nimzovich. The knight is the superior piece because White can’t challenge a file by putting a rook at e1 or c1.

30 \( \textbf{we}4 \) \( \textbf{wd}7 \)

A natural move is 30...\( \textbf{aad}8 \) but Black wants to meet 31 \( \textbf{fd}1 \), with 31...\( \textbf{e}8 \) and then 32 \( \textbf{wf}3 \) b6 followed by ...\( \textbf{c}8-c3 \) or ...\( \textbf{f}5-\textbf{c}4 \).

31 \( \textbf{a}2 \) \( \textbf{e}8 \)

32 \( \textbf{g}2 \)

After 32 \( \textbf{c}4 \) Black should choose 32...\( \textbf{e}5 \) (33 \( \textbf{we}2 \) \( \textbf{f}5 \) or 33 \( \textbf{we}4 \) \( \textbf{g}4 \) with advantage) because the 32...\( \textbf{h}5 \) 33 \( \textbf{d}1 \) \( \textbf{h}3 \) sack is not quite sound.

32 ... \( \textbf{b}6 \)

33 \( \textbf{c}2 \) \( \textbf{d}8 \)

34 \( \textbf{e}4 \) \( \textbf{b}5 \)

Black’s advantage will be realized when he exploits a target, either the a-pawn or something on the kingside. Here he prepares ...\( \textbf{f}5-\textbf{f}4 \).

35 \( \textbf{f}4? \)

The speed-chess move, 35 \( \textbf{d}1 \), walks into 35...\( \textbf{xf}2! \). The text is bad but 35 \( \textbf{c}3 \) \( \textbf{f}5 \) 36 \( \textbf{f}3 \) \( \textbf{f}7 \) is also difficult after ...\( \textbf{g}5 \) and ...\( \textbf{f}4 \).

35 ... \( \textbf{e}8 \)

36 \( \textbf{f}3 \) \( \textbf{e}6 \)

So that 37 \( \textbf{xa}7 \) \( \textbf{e}1 \).

37 \( \textbf{f}2 \) \( \textbf{d}7 \)

In order to play ...\( \textbf{f}5 \) and ...\( \textbf{h}5 \) Black first secures the rook (37...\( \textbf{f}5 \) 38 \( \textbf{g}4 \) \( \textbf{g}6?! \) 39 \( \textbf{xd}5 \)). Now on 38 \( \textbf{c}6 \) he should sidestep 38...\( \textbf{b}3 \)? 39 \( \textbf{ex}h6! \) and maintain an edge with 38...\( \textbf{f}5/\textbf{g}1 \).

38 \( \textbf{g}2 \) \( \textbf{b}3 \)

39 \( \textbf{e}6 \) \( \textbf{e}8 \)

40 \( \textbf{e}3 \)

Black shouldn’t allow the queen to centralize. After 40 \( \textbf{c}3 \) \( \textbf{b}2 \) 41 \( \textbf{g}1 \) he is holding.

40 ... \( \textbf{d}5+ \)

41 \( \textbf{g}1 \) \( \textbf{e}4 \)

Black significantly improved his chances since 35...\( \textbf{e}8 \). Now 42 \( \textbf{c}5 \) a5 is bad and 42 \( \textbf{c}6 \) loses to 42...\( \textbf{xf}2! \) 43 \( \textbf{xf}2 \) \( \textbf{d}1+ \) 44 \( \textbf{f}1 \) \( \textbf{xf}1+ \) 45 \( \textbf{xf}1 \) \( \textbf{d}1+ \) 46 \( \textbf{f}2 \) \( \textbf{d}2+ \).

42 \( \textbf{b}3 \)

42 ... \( \textbf{g}5! \)

The most vulnerable target turns out to be the f4-pawn — 43 \( \textbf{f}xg5 \) loses to 43...\( \textbf{e}5! \) 44 \( \textbf{c}5 \) \( \textbf{d}3 \) 45 \( \textbf{wa}2 \) \( \textbf{f}3+ \) 46 \( \textbf{g}2 \) \( \textbf{d}2+ \) or 44 \( \textbf{e}1 \) \( \textbf{d}1 \).

43 \( \textbf{wa}2 \) \( \textbf{xf}4 \)

44 \( \textbf{e}2 \) \( \textbf{g}6 \)
45 \( \text{wc2} \) \( \text{h7!} \)
46 \( \text{wc3} \) \( \text{gg8} \)
47 \( \text{h1?} \)

White can nurse some hope with 47 \( \text{bd2!} \).
47 ... \( \text{wh5!} \)
48 \( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{fxg3} \)
49 \( \text{xg3} \)

Or 49 \( \text{xe1} \) \( \text{df2+} \) 50 \( \text{xf2? whx2} \) mate.
49 ... \( \text{hxg3} \)

And White resigned after 50 \( \text{wc6} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 51 \( \text{we4+} \) \( \text{gg8} \) 52 \( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{gg5} \) 53 \( \text{ec2} \) \( \text{dd8} \).

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One more Steinitz Defense and this time it's a variation that gets smashed. Many of the openings that were in style a century ago do look horrible. But what will the 22nd century say about our tabias? For example 1 c4 \( \text{d4f6} \) 2 \( \text{dc3} \) e6 3 \( \text{dxf3} \) \( \text{b4} \) 4 g4 h6. Or 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 \( \text{dxf3} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 4 \( \text{dc3} \) dx\( \text{c} \) 4 5 a4 \( \text{xf5} \) 6 \( \text{dc5} \) \( \text{bd7} \) 7 \( \text{dxc4} \) \( \text{wc7} \) 8 g3 e5 9 dxe5 \( \text{xe5} \) 10 \( \text{df4} \) \( \text{fd7} \) 11 \( \text{gg2} \) g5 12 \( \text{dc3} \) gxf4 13 \( \text{xf5} \).

To put it another way, Lasker was paid to play the Rice Gambit. What’s our excuse?

Lasker – Vidmar
St. Petersburg 1909

Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Defense (C62)

\begin{tabular}{ll}
1 & e4 & e5 \\
2 & d4 & c5 \\
3 & c3 & d6 \\
4 & d4 & d7 \\
5 & e5 & exd4 \\
6 & xd4 & g6 \\
\end{tabular}

This move order can save two tempi on normal Steinitz lines because Black doesn’t have to play ...\( \text{e7-f8-g7} \) as in Game 52.

7 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g7} \)
8 \( \text{wd2} \)

Lasker wrote that Black’s sixth move was “a new attempt” which allowed him to adopt “an entirely different setup” to attack it. But he had already faced \( \text{e6-g6} \) back in 1892 when he came up with the same strong plan as he does here.

8 ... \( \text{f6} \)
9 \( \text{f3} \)

This setup became known as the Yugoslav Attack when it challenged the Dragon Sicilian in the 1950s. It first gained attention in Kurschner-Tarrasch, Nuremberg 1887 (1 e4 e5 2 d4 \( \text{dxc6} \) 3 \( \text{dc3} \) g6 4 d4 exd4 5 \( \text{dxd4} \) \( \text{gg7} \) 6 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 7 \( \text{wd2} \) 0-0 8 0-0-0 \( \text{h8} \) 9 f3). Tarrasch gave White’s 7th, 8th and 9th moves exclamation points in his Dreihundert Schachpartien.

9 ... \( \text{0-0} \)

Now 10 \( \text{xc6} \) bxc6 11 \( \text{h6} \) ensures White a slight pull.

10 \( \text{0-0-0} \) a6
11 \( \text{e2} \) b5

By transposition we’ve arrived at a position from Game 11 in which Black got the upper hand after 12 g4 b4 13 \( \text{d5} \)?

12 h4

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12 ... \( \text{e}5 \)

Vidmar doesn’t appreciate how strong White’s plan is. But neither did a lot of Dragon players until the 1960s.

White is better off than in Game 11 following 12...\( b4 \) 13 \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{x}d5 \) 14 \( \text{ex}d5 \) \( \text{e}d4 \) 15 \( \text{c}x\text{e}4 \) \( \text{c}x\text{e}4 \), because Black can’t play \( ...\text{w}g5+ \). And 16...\( \text{e}8 \) 17 \( \text{d}e1 \) \( \text{b}5 \) is a gambit (18 \( \text{x}b5 \) \( \text{axb}5 \) 19 \( \text{b}1 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 20 \( \text{x}b4 \) \( \text{a}4 \) 21 \( \text{d}2 \)) that may not be sound.

13 \( \text{h}6 \)

13 ... \( \text{c}4 \)?

Already the losing move. Black needs the punch that only ...\( c5 \) and ...\( b4 \) provides. An appropriate defense is 13...\( e5 \) 14 \( \text{x}g7 \) \( \text{h}xg7 \) 15 \( \text{b}3 \) \( c4 \).

Then 16 \( \text{d}4 \) \( b4 \) 17 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{x}d5 \) 18 \( \text{ex}d5 \) \( \text{a}5 \) is dangerous for both kings – and, surprisingly, 16 \( \text{a}1 \) may be better for White’s (16...\( \text{b}4 \) 17 \( \text{w}d6 \) \( \text{bxc}3 \) 18 \( \text{w}x\text{e}5 \) \( \text{xb}2 \) 19 \( \text{w}x\text{b}2 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 20 \( \text{w}d4 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 21 \( \text{c}5 \)).

White can also try 16 \( \text{w}x\text{d}6 \) \( \text{cxb}3 \) 17 \( \text{w}x\text{e}5 \) (17...\( \text{b}4 \) 18 \( \text{axb}3 \) \( \text{bxc}3 \) 19 ...\( \text{h}5 \)).

14 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{bxc}4 \)

15 \( \text{h}5! \)

A mating template from the 1950s:
15...\( \text{xh}5 \) 16 \( \text{xg}7 \) \( \text{h}xg7 \) 17 g4 \( \text{f}6 \) 18 \( \text{w}h6+ \) \( \text{xg}8 \) 19 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 20 g5 wins.

15 ... \( \text{c}6 \)

Black avoids a killing \( \text{d}5 \).

16 \( \text{xg}7 \) \( \text{xg}7 \)

17 \( \text{h}x\text{g}6 \) \( \text{fxg}6 \)

18 \( \text{de}2 \)

Winning the queen – 18 e5 \( \text{dxe}5 \) 19 \( \text{f}6+ \) \( \text{e}x\text{e}6 \) 20 \( \text{w}h6+ \) \( \text{g}8 \) 21 \( \text{x}d8 \) \( \text{axd}8 \) – is a distant second best.

18 ... \( \text{f}7 \)

19 \( \text{w}x\text{d}6 \) \( \text{b}6 \)

Here 20 e5 \( \text{e}8 \) 21 \( \text{w}d2 \) \( \text{g}8 \) leaves a lot of play.

20 \( \text{w}d4 \) \( \text{c}5 \)

21 \( \text{d}5! \)

The endgame after 20...\( \text{w}x\text{d}4 \) was lost and 21...\( \text{c}x\text{d}4 \) 22 \( \text{xb}6 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 23 \( \text{xc}4 \) is worse.

21 ... \( \text{b}7 \)

22 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{a}8 \)

23 \( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \)

24 \( \text{d}6! \) Resigns

There is no answer to 25 \( \text{f}4 \) and \( \text{xf}6/e4-e5 \) or just 25 \( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 26 \( \text{x}h7 \).

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Amos Burn’s career began two decades before he met Lasker at Amsterdam 1889 and would last until just before World War I. He witnessed enormous changes in the game and in an 1889 interview explained that chess was no longer a matter of just attack and attack. “Now it is a matter of science, careful analysis and logic,” he said.

Lasker said the difference was that the “old masters” believed a weakness on one wing was acceptable if there was a strength on the other. That was why they justified launching a kingside attack even while their queenside was in flame. It was the weakest link that would decide the game.
But as defensive skill improved, there was a tendency to avoid any weakness. “Caution and self-control are all important in the game,” Burn said. In the hands of a Schlechter, this policy could reap great rewards. But for Burn it lead to excessive, sometimes fatal caution.

### Lasker – Burn

**St. Petersburg 1909**

*Ruy Lopez, Main Line (C90)*

1. **e4**
2. **d4**
3. **b5**
4. **c6**
5. **e2**
6. **b3**
7. **c3**
8. **c2**
9. **d1**
10. **e4**

**Ray Lopez, Main Line (C90)**

1. **e4**
2. **d4**
3. **b5**
4. **c6**
5. **e2**
6. **b3**
7. **c3**
8. **c2**
9. **d1**
10. **e4**

Writing two years later, Burn called this “Lasker’s move” and “probably” not as good as 10 d3. His reason was that White can avoid spending a tempo on h2-h3 if he plays 10 d3, as Teichmann had done, followed by a2-a4 and perhaps f2-f4, with considerable success.

11. **bd2**
12. **f1**

In the Tarrasch match Lasker played the more exact 12 h3 0-0 13 **f1**.

The difference is Black can reply 12...**cxd4** 13 **cxd4** **g4**, with fierce pressure on the center (14 **dxe5** **xf3!** 15 **gxh3** **xe5**). White can avoid a serious disadvantage with 14 **d5** but after 14...**d4** 15 **d3** he is still worse.

13. **g4**

The knight protects the c2-bishop so that he can recapture on d4 (13...**cxd4**
14. **cxd4** **xd4** 15 **xd4** **exd4** 16 **xd4**). Black has good piece play with 16...**e6** and ...**f6**/...**d7** as in Game 48.

13. **...**
14. **d4!**

Burn prefers to pressure d4. He would stand well after 14 **d5** **b8** 15 a4 **bd7** or 14 **d5** **a7**.

15. **d4**

But the right way to carry out Black’s idea was 13...**a7** first and 14 **d5**
15. **g4**
16. **e3**

For the next six moves the players weigh strategy options that were new at the time but have been used in thousands of games since. The trade of minor pieces alters matters somewhat but it’s not clear how:

Is the **cxd5** plan better here because Black has one fewer piece to contest d5 and f5? Or is a closed (d4-d5) center plan the superior strategy because Black is stuck with a bad bishop? Lasker decides to postpone a decision.

16. **d7**

The **c-file** is as useful to White as to Black after 16...**cxd4** 17 **cxd4**. Creating a queenside majority with 16...**exd4**
17 cxd4 has never been particularly successful in similar positions and failed badly in the 1990 Kasparov-Karpov match.

Black has a third option based on tactics, 16...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}ac}8 with a threat of 17...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}d}d4!} 18 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}xd}4 exd4, attacking two bishops and trading a pair of pieces. But 17 d5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}d}d4 18 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}d}d}d3! would keep White’s edge.

\begin{align*}
17 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}e}2} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}f}6} \\
18 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}d}1} \\

There’s not enough pressure on d4 to force White to change the pawn structure. He has several semi-pass moves that gradually improve his position.

18 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{...}}} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}e}7} \\
19 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}b}1} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}6} \\
20 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}3} \\

Another standard strategy is to trade pawns on c5 followed by b2-b3/c3-c4, and maneuvering a knight to d5. But White would find it cumbersome to defend the c4-pawn after bxc4 and \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{wc}8-e6.

20 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{...}}} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}6} \\

Black can prepare for \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}5} with \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ff}e}8 and \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{mad}8}}. The dissolution of the center would theoretically favor White’s two bishops. But once rooks are also traded that shouldn’t matter.

21 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}3} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{fe}8} \\

Black is ready for 22...cxd4 23 cxd4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}e}4 24 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}c}1 exd4 followed by \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}5 with equality.

22 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}5} \\

A major decision – and the last one until move 40. White decides to test the kingside plan of h3-h4-h5 and the swinging of rooks to g1 and h1.

22 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{...}} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}7} \\
23 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}2} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}8} \\

Black adopts a super-defensive posture, rather than try for counterplay with \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{.c}4/...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}c}5 (Nimzovich) or ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}5/...b}4.

\begin{align*}
24 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}4} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}7} \\
25 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}5} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}f}8 \\
26 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}1} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}6} \\
27 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{dg}1} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}7} \\
28 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}1} \\

More efficient was 28 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}2} and \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}1 followed by \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}e}1-c2, as in the game.

28 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{...}} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}8} \\
29 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}2} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}8} \\
30 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}e}1! \\

Black’s knights match up well against the bishops (30 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}h}4! as long as the wings are closed. White needs his knight for later occupation of f5, g4 or c4, so he sends it to e3 via c2

30 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{...}} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}8} \\
31 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}2} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}5} \\
32 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}2} & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}6} \\

Black misses a number of chances for counterplay during this phase and the best was \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{...c}4 followed by \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{...c}5. Instead, Black clears his lines of communication so he can meet \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}e3-f}5 with \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}e7.

33 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}3} \\

When you have the two bishops you usually have more chances to open the
position than your opponent. White can open the kingside with \( \text{f2-f4} \) or the queenside with \( \text{a3-a4} \) and he may need both. But that takes preparation because, for example, \( \text{33 f4? b4!} \) ignites counterplay (\( \text{34 axb4 axb4 35 cxb4} \) \( \text{exf4} \) \( \text{36 gxf4} \) \( \text{\textat{xb2}} \)).

33 ... \( \text{\textat{b6}} \)

34 \( \text{\textat{f2}} \) \( \text{\textat{e8}} \)

Fortunately for White, \( \text{Burn} \) allows him plenty of time to probe for the weakest link. Black keeps one knight at \( \text{h7} \) so it will be ready to answer \( \text{g3-g4-g5} \). But one of the knights should have been directed towards \( \text{d3} \), such as after \( \text{34. \text{\textat{d7}} 35 \text{\textat{g2}} \text{\textat{c7}} 36 \text{\textat{h1}} \text{c4} \) and ... \( \text{\textat{e5}} \).

35 \( \text{\textat{g2}} \) \( \text{\textat{d7}} \)

36 \( \text{\textat{h1}} \) \( \text{\textat{e7}} \)

37 \( \text{\textat{h2}} \) \( \text{\textat{b7}} \)

38 \( \text{\textat{f1}} \) \( \text{\textat{e8}} \)

39 \( \text{\textat{e3}} \) \( \text{\textat{g8}} \)

40 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{\textat{d8}} \)

Black decides that after ...\( \text{exf4/gxf4} \) he won't be able to defend \( \text{g7} \) and \( \text{h7} \) against the doubling of rooks on the g-file and \( \text{\textat{g4/c4-e5/wc4}} \).

41 \( \text{\textat{f3}} \)

This is one of the few non-Nimzovich games analyzed in detail in \textit{My System}, and Nimzovich was impressed by White's two-wing strategy. He said White carried out \( \text{f2-f4} \) under favorable circumstances but it is not enough to prove an advantage. What the advance does, however, is prepare \( \text{42 c4} \) and, if \( \text{42 .b4} \), then \( \text{43 \textat{f5}} \) followed by penetrating the queenside on light squares (\( \text{\textat{c2/wd1/\textat{a4}} \).

41 ... \( \text{c4?} \)

This move, which should have been the key to Black's counterplay earlier, is a positional blunder here. Having adopted a passive policy he should stick with it (\( \text{41.. a4 and ...\textat{f6-d8}} \))

42 ... \( \text{\textat{b6}} \)

43 \( \text{axb5} \) \( \text{\textat{xb5}}? \)

Black's kingside pieces play no defensive role on the queenside now, whereas White's queen and minors are well placed to exploit the pawns at \( \text{a5} \), \( \text{c4} \) and even \( \text{d6} \).

42 ... \( \text{\textat{b6}} \)

43 axb5 \( \text{\textat{xb5}}? \)

44 \( \text{\textat{f5}} \)!

45 \( \text{\textat{g4}} \) \( \text{f6} \)

46 \( \text{\textat{e2}}! \)

The bishop finally gets to play via \( \text{a4} \). This is far superior to \( \text{46 \textat{a2 \textat{c7}}.} \)

46 ... \( \text{\textat{c5} \)

47 \( \text{\textat{a1}}! \) \( \text{\textat{eb8} \)

48 \( \text{\textat{c1}} \)

49 ... \( \text{\textat{c7} \)

50 \( \text{\textat{g2} \)

Everything is protected and White can carry out the kind of mop-up strategy, picking off Black pawns, that Lasker loved.

48 ... \( \text{\textat{c7} \)

49 \( \text{\textat{a4} \) \( \text{\textat{b6} \)

50 \( \text{\textat{g2} \)
This looks like an obscure over-protection but it has a tactical point: White wants to win the c-pawn with $\text{We}2$ without allowing $..\text{Exf5/}...\text{Exg3+}$.

50  
51  $\text{We}2$  $\text{Wa}6$
52  $\text{Ac}6$

Even without his wonderful threat (53 b4!) White’s game would be won

52  
53  $\text{Dxe7}$

Thanks to his 50th move, White could also win with 53 b4 $\text{Dxf5}$ 54 $\text{Dxa5}$.

53  
54  $\text{Dxa4}$  $\text{Exf4}$
55  $\text{Gxf4}$  $\text{f5}$
56  $\text{e5}$  $\text{Df6}$

Now 57 b4 or.

57  $\text{Dxc4}$  $\text{Dg4}$?

After 57 $\text{Dxh5}$ 58 $\text{Ah2}$  $\text{Df6}$
59 $\text{Dxc5}$! White wins as in the game but not nearly as easily (59...$\text{Dxe2}$
60 $\text{Dxe2}$ $\text{Dxc5}$  61 d6 $\text{Dc6}$
62 $\text{Af3}$  $\text{Ab8}$
63 $\text{Ac3}$).

58  $\text{Dxc5!}$  $\text{Dxe2}$
59  $\text{Dxe2}$  $\text{Dxc5}$
60  $\text{d6}$  $\text{Dc7}$
61  $\text{d6}$

Black resigned after 61...$\text{Dad6}$ 62 $\text{e7}$! $\text{Df6}$ 63 $\text{d7!}$  $\text{Dxd7}$
64 $\text{Dxd7}$.

57

It was appropriate that the Tchigorin Memorial, as St. Petersburg 1909 was known, marked the transition to a new elite Rubinstein, who tied for first place, was replacing Tchigorin, Tarrasch, Pillsbury and Maroczy as the most likely challenger to Lasker. The identity of the other elite GMs was in dispute in 1909 but Jose Capablanca, who soon joined the group, wrote in 1914 that the top five was composed of himself, Lasker, Rubinstein, Schlechter and one player who is largely forgotten today, Richard Teichmann. It was Teichmann that Lasker faced on the final day of St. Petersburg 1909.

Lasker – Teichmann
St. Petersburg 1909
Ruy Lopez, 6 $\text{We}2$ (C86)

1  $\text{e4}$  $\text{e5}$
2  $\text{Df3}$  $\text{Dc6}$
3  $\text{Ab5}$
4  $\text{Dc4}$  $\text{Df6}$
5  0-0  $\text{Dc7}$
6  $\text{Dc2}$
7  $\text{Ab3}$
8  $\text{e3}$

This plan of $\text{Ad1}$ and d2-d4 was introduced to master chess a year before and Lasker was playing it for the first time.

8  
9  $\text{d4}$  $\text{exd4}$

“The correct way to equalize play is $9\text{...Dg4!} 10 \text{Ad1 exd4} 11 \text{exd4} \text{d5} 12 \text{e5} \text{Dc4 etc}”$ said Las Grandes Partidas de Emanuel Lasker, which failed to notice that this transposes exactly into the game.

10  $\text{exd4}$  $\text{Dg4}$

White can defend $\text{d4}$ with 11 $\text{Ac3}$ (because of 11...$\text{Dxe4}$ 12 $\text{Dd5}$). He would reach a typical Lopez arrangement after 11...$\text{Dc5} 12 \text{Dc2}$ $\text{Dc4} 13 \text{Dc1} \text{c5}$ that is often played with $\text{Dd1}$ in place of $\text{We2}$.

11  $\text{Dd1}$

With 12 $\text{e5}!$ in mind
11  
185
Now 12 exd5 ♕a5! gives Black somewhat the better of it (13 ♕c2 ♙e8 14 ♕c3 ♕b4).

12 e5

White’s apparently easy victory in this game led to the conclusion that Black was justly punished for giving up the center. “Teichmann’s game disintegrates after this unfortunate exchange,” Reinfeld/Fine said of 9...exd4.

But in 1934 Botvinnik scored an impressive victory—as Black—with this line, and the previous extreme view was replaced by another.

12 ... ♕e4

13 ♕c3

Botvinnik claimed that after 13 h3 ♕h5 14 ♕c3 Black would have “rather the better game.” In reality that is roughly equal and, along with 13 ♕c3, is one of critical positions in the ♕e2 Lopez.

13 ... ♕xc3

14 bxc3

White’s greatest asset is the inhibiting effect of the e-pawn and the prospect of launching a general pawn-advance, 15 h3 ♕h5 16 g4 followed by f2-f4-f5.

14 ... f6?

The two players were trying to judge whether a White pawn to e6 would be weak or strong. Lasker recommended 14...♕a5 15 ♕c2 f6 but 16 e6! favors him. That’s why 15...♕d7!?, intending ...♕f5 has done relatively well instead.

15 h3!

Teichmann was right in thinking that White could not maintain the pawn on e6 after 15 e6 ♕d6 16 ♕e1 because the Black knight has not gone offside (16...♕d8!).

15 ... ♕h5

The bishop had seven legal moves but none of them was good. He loses the d-pawn after 15...♕xf3 16 ♕xf3 and also drops material following 15 ...♕e6 16 exf6 ♕xf6 17 ♕g5 ♕g6 18 ♕c2!.

Even 15...♕c8 has a problem, 16 a4!, which threatens both axb5 and ♕a2 and leads to a poor game after 16...♕a5 17 ♕c2.

Note that the d-pawn is Black’s Achilles heel here. It remains so for most of the game. But the weakness that costs Black the game turns out to be g7.

16 g4

By about this point in the round Rubinstein, who led Lasker by a half point, was being squeezed in an ending. Sole first prize now seemed possible for Lasker.

16 ... ♕f7?

Relatively best was 16...♕e8 17 ♕h4 ♕a5! (not 17...fxe5 18 dxe5 ♕xh4 19 ♕xd5 with a winning discovered check) 18 ♕f5 c6.

17 e6 ♕g6

Even a tempo down 17...♕e8 18 ♕h4 ♕a5 was superior.
White wins without incident after 22...gxf5 23 \( \text{Wh5} \) 24 \( \text{Whf6} \) 24 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{Wh6} \) because of 25...\( \text{f7} \) 26 \( \text{xg7!} \) \( \text{Whf7} \) 27 \( \text{h7+} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 28 \( \text{g1+} \) \( \text{f8} \) 29 \( \text{Wh6+} \) \( \text{e7} \) 30 \( \text{g7+} \) or 28...\( \text{f6} \) 29 \( \text{g6+} \).

23 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{gxf5} \)

Now 24 \( \text{xf5?} \) \( \text{c6} \) and Black is back in business after 25...\( \text{e7} \) (25 \( \text{g1} \) \( \text{e7} \) 26 \( \text{g5?} \) \( \text{xf5} \)).

24 \( \text{g1!} \) \( \text{f4} \)

On 24...\( \text{c6} \) 25 \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{Wh7} \) White can win a pawn (26 \( \text{b3} \) or try for more with 26 \( \text{a4!} \)).

25 \( \text{g4} \) \( \text{Wh6} \)

26 \( \text{e7!} \)

Now 26...\( \text{f8} \) 27 \( \text{g6} \) \( \text{Wh8} \) 28 \( \text{xd5+} \) or 27...\( \text{Wh7} \) 28 \( \text{xd6!} \).

26 \( \text{...} \) \( \text{xe7} \)

27 \( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{we6} \)

Also lost was 27...\( \text{f6} \) 28 \( \text{xd5+} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 29 \( \text{xg7+} \) with a mate (29...\( \text{d7} \) 30 \( \text{g1+} \) \( \text{h8} \) 31 \( \text{e5+} \) \( \text{f6} \) 32 \( \text{xf6+} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 33 \( \text{Wh5+} \)).

White wrote down 28 \( \text{xg7+} \) but Black resigned before he could play it (28...\( \text{xg7} \) 29 \( \text{g1+} \) \( \text{f7} \) 30 \( \text{Wh5+} \)). Meanwhile, Rubinstein managed to save his endgame and a share of first place. Lasker turned his attention to matches.
Janowsky first challenged Lasker to a match in 1899 but they disagreed about details, particularly whether it should last until eight wins or ten wins. Janowsky went off to play others but his match record was wildly inconsistent. A crushing 2½-7½ defeat at the hands of Schlechter in 1902 was followed by wins over Jean Taubenhaus in 1903 and Marco in 1904, then a loss to Marshall in 1905.

But after Janowsky defeated Marshall in 1908, under the patronage of the wealthy Parisian Leonardus Nardus, he had to be taken seriously. Nardus was the prime sponsor in three matches between Janowsky and Lasker over a period of 18 months. Although the first of them, a 2-2 draw in Paris in May 1909, was just an exhibition, there has been considerable confusion about the status of the next, played in Paris five months later. Several books say the title was at stake. Lasker, however, had made clear he couldn’t risk the championship against Janowsky because he had already agreed to a title match in 1910 against Schlechter. Janowsky would have to wait his chance – while he and Lasker got an opportunity to learn more about each other, thanks to Monsieur Nardus’ largesse.

**Janowsky – Lasker**
Match, second game, Paris 1909
*Four Knights Game (C49)*

1. e4 e5
2. ≈f3 ≈c6
3. ≈c3 ≈f6
4. d3 d6
5. g5 xc3
6. bxc3 e7

This was Captain Mackenzie’s way of reorganizing Black’s pieces (...g6, ...h6, ...c6). Black’s position had proved quite solid after 9 fx6 gx6 in tests during the 1890s.

9. c4

This “almost amounts to the loss of a move,” said Lasker, who felt the immediate 9 h4 was right.

9. g6

In their May match Lasker adopted a quieter policy of eliminating one of the enemy bishops (9...e6 10 b3 xb3 11 axb3). But he found himself with a lifeless middlegame after 11...d7 12 d4 f6 13 e3 and lost.

10. h4

This is an attractive way of maintaining the pin (11 xg6 and f3)

10. f4

Maroczy introduced 10 h4 against Pillsbury at Vienna 1898 but fared poorly after 11 f3?! h6! 12 xf4 g4! because 13 wg3 exf4 costs a piece and 13 xe3 exf4 14 d2 g5 is stifling.

11. xf4
Black’s goal was to break the pin with ...h6 and the best way to maintain it was 11 \[b3! since 11...h6? allows 12 \[xf4 exf4 13 \[g6.

11 \[... \[xf4
12 \[f3 \[g4!

White has the greater kingside problems now. Black would achieve no more than equality with 12...\[e6 13 \[b3 since 13...d5 invites 14 \[d4!.

13 \[h3

Lasker said 13 \[d2 was better. The Khalifman/Soloviov book agreed – but criticized the same move when Janowsky played it the fourth match game (and lost after 13...\[xf3 14 gxf3 \[h1 15 \[h8 16 \[g1 \[d7 17 \[g5 g6 18 \[ag1 f6 19 \[g4 \[ae8 20 \[c1 f5).

13 \[... \[h5
14 \[b1 b6
15 \[d2

The pin can’t be broken without pain (15 d4? \[xe4 16 \[d5? \[xc3). On 15 \[e1 White isn’t threatening 16 d4/17 \[d3 because Black can respond 16...\[xe4 and ...d5 And the many White weaknesses after 15 g4 fxg3 16 fxg3 also give Black the edge after 16...d5 17 exd5 \[xd5

15 \[... \[xf3
16 gxf3 \[h5
17 \[h2 \[f6

It’s tempting to suffocate the bishop with ...c6 and ...d5. But after an exchange of pawns on d5, White would have a target and open lines for a rook or two. Black’s strategy is much simpler and yet much deeper. He allows White’s rook and bishop to control many squares because none are targets – and only targets matter.

Normally, being able to place a bishop on a hole like c6 or d5 or to double rooks on the g-file would be significant. That’s because we think superior mobility can be translated into other advantages. Here it can’t.

18 \[g1 \[ae8
19 d4 \[h8
20 \[b5 \[h6

White isn’t allowed a chance to analyze more than a move or two into the future until he’s lost. Black avoids 20...c5, which reduces the rook’s scope, because it would set up b6 for assault and allow White to calculate 21 a4! and 22 a5.

21 \[bg5 f6
22 \[g4 g6!

Only Black can open lines without a sacrifice. He should be careful not to create counterplay by 22...f5 23 e5 \[xf5 24 \[e1 \[f8 25 \[xe8 \[xe8 26 \[f7.

23 \[d3 \[e7

White could have posted the bishop at c6 (23 \[b5 \[e7 24 \[c6). But that allows 24...\[g3!, which traps the rook (25 \[e1 f5).

It is based on 25 fxg3?? fxg3+ and \[xd2(+), as well as 25...f5 26 \[xf4 \[h5. The reason the trick works is that the bishop is offside at c6, and that means 25 \[xf4 \[xf4 26 \[xf4 permits the 26...\[e2 fork.
24 c4?

White seems desperate for an idea and tries to open lines with c4-c5.

24 ... g7!

The knight heads for e6 and from there to g5 to attack the targets h3 and f3. The maneuver is made possible by White's last move -- which prevents him from playing 25 c4 e6 26 xex6 -- and by variations such as 25 xf4 e6 and 25 xf4 xf4 26 xf4 e6 27 fg4 xd4.

25 c3

The maneuver is so strong that White would be sorely tempted to take extreme measures. There are two of them and the first is 25 d5, which limits the knight to three squares (h5, g7 and e8).

However, 25 d5 is such a positional horror that it permits Black to play "without an opponent." He can arrange his heavy pieces as he wishes and, for example, prepare a break with ...h5 and ...g5-g4. It might take ten moves before he can execute that plan. But Black can afford more than ten in view of White's passivity after 25 d5.

It's harder to explain why White passed up the other extreme measure, 25 e5! Then 25...dxe5 26 dxc5 bxc5 27 xf4 isn't nearly as bad as it was after 25 xf4. Black may do better to stay in the middlegame with 26 e6 27 cb6 cb6 because White's rooks turn out to be misplaced. But at least Janowsky would be playing chess.

25 ... e6

26 f1

The passive 26 wd1 c5 27 c2 fails to 27...g5 and then 28 h4 f5! (29 xg5 wxh4+ or 29 exf5 gxf5 30 xf4 e6 31 xf4 wxh4+)

26 ... f5!

27 g4 f6

Black, who had reduced the number of forcing variations to a minimum can think about a forced mate, 28...g5 and 29...xh3+! 30 xh3 h6.

28 d3

White puts up better resistance with 28 wd1! g5 29 wh1, which sets a trap (29...xh3+?? 30 xg1).

Another point is that after 29...g4 White can keep enemy lines relatively closed and open his own with 30 exf5 gxf3 31 g4 xf5 32 hg1. Black would maintain his advantage with 29...wh4 but is far from a win.

28 ... g5

29 h1

Or 29 exf5 wh3+! 30 xh3 h6+ 31 xg4 h4 mate.

29 ... g4

30 e2 g5!

It's hopeless in view of 31 xf4 xf4+ 32 xg3 xh4 mate or 31 e5 xh3 32 exf6 (or 32 fxg4 xg6 and ...xf2+) xf2+ 33 xg1 xh1+ 34 f2 g3+.

31 fxg4 f3

And White resigned after 32 xg3 fxe2.
“When he was not playing, he was thinking (not all great masters are capable of this),” Botvinnik wrote of Lasker. But how did he prepare? During his chess-oriented periods he seemed to be up to speed on the latest opening theory. But at other times he appeared remote and cut off. Edward Lasker recalled how, while strolling in Central Park during New York 1924, he discovered that Emanuel was unaware of the Marshall Gambit in the Ruy Lopez – even though it had been introduced in a celebrated game eight years before.

This may explain why Lasker relied on favorite lines such as the Exchange Lopez despite its poor reputation. According to Fyodor Duz-Khotimirsky, he and Lasker played 500 practice games with 4...xc6 over a few months. As Botvinnik said on another occasion, Boris Spassky was “a continuation of the Lasker line. He is little interested in what others are doing but he has his own opinion.”

Lasker – Janowsky
Match, third game, Paris 1909
Ruy Lopez, Exchange Variation (C68)

1 e4 e5
2 ∆f3 ∆c6
3 ∆b5 a6
4 ∆xc6 dxc6
5 d4 exd4
6 wxd4 ∆g4

This move looks dubious but has been played by no less an opening authority than Vasily Ivanchuk. Black’s aim is not ...xf3 but to castle queenside quickly (7... wxd4 and 8. 0-0-0).

7 ∆c3 wxd4

The other ∆x7 trade makes more sense. In a bishops-opposite-color ending Black would have excellent play on the light squares (10 f3 ∆xc3+! 11 bxc3 ∆d7 12 0-0-0 ∆e7 followed by ...c5/...b6 and ...∆b7-c6 or ...∆g6-e5).

10 ∆e2 ∆xe2?!

But giving up both bishops is too much.

11 ∆xe2 ∆xc3
12 bxc3

On the face of it, White’s pawns are worse than Black’s and vulnerable to a king or rook raid. But this is a case when targets are not significant until much later. If either side creates a passer, they may not be significant at all.

White’s queenside pawns are ugly but can do a good job of stopping Black from creating a passer. Black would need to advance his pawns to c4, c5, a5 and b5 and then play ...b4. But the presence of White’s bishop makes those advances problematic.

12 ... f6
13 f3 d7
14 ∆ad1 e5

Black’s knight will reach c6 but 14...b6 followed by 15...c5 was better.
15 \textbf{\textit{d4!}} \textit{b6}

In theory Black should avoid \ldots b5 because of the possibility of a blockade on c5 that cripples his majority. But Janowsky would be truer to his nature if he sought piece play with 15\ldots b5 and 16... \textit{c4}. For example, 16 \textit{hd1 de8} 17 \textit{c1 cd4} and \textit{c7/\ldots f5}.

16 \textit{f4!} \textit{d7}
17 \textit{hd1} \textit{c5}
18 \textit{4d3} \textit{b8}
19 \textit{f3?!} \textit{de8!}

It's in Black's interests to keep rooks on, Pachman recommended 19... \textit{xh3} 20 \textit{xh3} \textit{h8} but after 21 \textit{xh8+} \textit{xh8} 22 e5 and 23 \textit{e4} White's progress is obvious. That's why 19 \textit{xh8+} \textit{xh8} 20 \textit{xh8+} was more exact.

20 \textit{f5!}

A fundamental endgame rule holds that the way to create a passer is to advance the unopposed pawn first. Here that means 20 e5. However because Black retained rooks, 20... \textit{c7} and \textit{c6} would be a solid defense.

After 20 \textit{f5!} White can target the h-pawn via \textit{g2-g4-g5} and \textit{g1-g3-h3}.
20 \ldots \textit{f6?}

Tarrasch recommended 20... \textit{c6} 21 \textit{f4} \textit{c7} 22 \textit{g4} \textit{e8} 23 \textit{e1}. Then 23... \textit{e5+} 24 \textit{xexe5} \textit{exe5} 25 \textit{f4} brings about a key position that recurs in similar forms for the next several moves Black has an iron blockade of the e-pawn and can maintain it until he decides to raid the queenside with \ldots \textit{c4/\ldots a5}. White, on the other hand, can put one rook at e3 to defend c3 and e4 while the other tries to break into the kingside.

And the likely outcome? A draw after best play or even after a few second-best moves by either player. White would lack an important resource that he enjoys in the game, the attack on f6

21 \textit{g4!} \textit{e7}
22 \textit{f4} \textit{e8}
23 \textit{e3} \textit{d6}

Now 24 \textit{h4!} is best. It would lead to the 4\textit{\textg5}-endgame after 24... \textit{e5}+ and likely transpose into the next note. But it would avoid the resource Black's misses in the game (24... \textit{fxg5}).

24 \textit{g5}

This focuses Black's attention on the 4\textit{\textg5}-endgame - 24... \textit{e5}+ 25 \textit{xexe5} \textit{exe5}. Here 26 \textit{gf6} \textit{gf6} 27 \textit{g1} looks natural but after 27... \textit{c4!} Black's e5-rook suddenly gives him queenside counterplay.

Hans Kmoch recommended 27 \textit{c4} instead, and then 27... \textit{g8} 28 \textit{h5}. However, Black would have the advantage after 28... \textit{xh3}! (29 \textit{exe5} \textit{h5} 30 \textit{f4} \textit{h5} or 29 \textit{axe5} \textit{d7} and \ldots \textit{d6})

Well, then, perhaps the exchange on \textit{f6} should be delayed until after 26 \textit{g1} White would threaten 27 \textit{gf6} and \textit{g7} and following 26... \textit{exe7} he can adopt the h2-h4-h5-h6 strategy he uses in the game to create a passed f-pawn

Even the direct plan 27 \textit{gf6} \textit{gf6} 28 \textit{h4} \textit{b7} 29 \textit{h5} \textit{c6} 30 \textit{h6} and \textit{b7} can succeed because Black's king is slow to inflict damage on the other wing. For example, 30... \textit{c5} 31 \textit{f4} \textit{f4} 32 \textit{g7} \textit{a3} 33 \textit{exe7} \textit{exe7} 34 \textit{ex5} \textit{xe5}+ 35 \textit{exe5}. The bottom line is Black should avoid this version of the 4\textit{\textg5}-endgame.
Janowsky was always being criticized for his violation of endgame principles. But in this game he followed several of them – avoiding a blockade of his majority after ...b5, keeping rooks on the board, and trying to restrain White’s pawn with ...f6. Here he makes the “principled” knight-maneuver to occupy a hole.

But he misses an excellent opportunity to violate principles – and obtain dangerous counterplay – with 24...fxg5! 25 hxg5 Oe5+ 26 f4 f7+. Even though this grants White a passed pawn he has trouble meeting 27...h6 28 h4 g5+ or 27...g6 28 f6 h6.

25 h4 Oe4
26 e2 f7
27 g1!

The exciting line was 27...g6! with the idea of obtaining strong play after 28 gxg6 fxg6

The reason it’s exciting is that White can play 28 h5! gxg5 29 g6! – since 29...fxe4+ 30 fxe4 makes the g-pawn a game-winner. After 29...hxg6 White continues with 30 exf5! xex2 31 fxg6! with advantage.

Unfortunately Black can make it much less exciting. In the last line he can hold with 30...Oe5+ 31 xex5 fxe5. And earlier there was 28...fxg5 ...

29 hxg6 hxg6 30 xex5 gxg5 31 exf5 Oxe2 32 xf6 0d6 and again Black defends.

28 h5

White’s plan is to create a passed f-pawn after h5-h6xg7 and gxh6. For example, 28...b5 29 h6 fxg5 30 xex5 gxh6 31 h5 f6e7 32 xex6 e6 33 e1! and d1++.

28...

29 d6

This was the last time that 28...Oe5+ 29 xex5 Oe5 made any sense. Then 30 h6 fxg5 31 xex5 g6 32 f4 d6! is fine for Black, as is 30 g6 hxg6. The critical line is 30 gxh6 gxf6 31 h6, after which g8 or g7 appears to win.

29 h6 fxg5
30 xex5 g6?

Black apparently missed White’s 33rd move. He had to play 30...gxh6 31 h5 Oc8. But as long as White doesn’t push his pawns to f6 and e5 when Black can blockade with ...e6, he should win, e.g. 32 xhx6 Oe4 33 ehe2 e7e8 34 e2h5 and e4-e5.

He quickly went downhill: 31 fxg6 hxg6 32 xex6 e8f8 33 xg7! xex7 34 hxg7 e8g8 35 xg8 xex8 36 xex5 xex5 37 f4 f7 38 f5 resigns

27...

The easy (+7 -1 =2) victory over Janowsky in their second match had the unfortunate effect of making Lasker appear invincible. Ordinarily that is what a champion wants. It discourages sponsors of dangerous challengers. But in 1910 Lasker was already committed to a match with Schlechter and needed sponsors. Ambitious plans to play as many as 30 match games, in Vienna, Stockholm, Berlin, London and New...
York, had to be scaled back due to lack of enthusiasm over what was expected to be a Lasker walkover.

Schlechter was the hardest working man in chess. He took part in virtually every international event from 1895 to 1912. During that period he played more than 850 master games, or roughly twice as many as Janowsky, who was in the busiest period of his career Schlechter also edited the Deutsche Schachzeitung, composed problems, and revised the 1,000-plus-page Handbuch, the bible of chess at the time. Yet despite this and career plus-scores against players from Steinitz to Spielmann, he was regarded as the heavy underdog when the championship match finally began in January 1910.

Schlechter – Lasker
World Championship match, first game, Vienna 1910
Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Defense
(C66)

1.e4 e5
2.\(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}f3\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\) \(c6\)
3.\(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}b5\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\) \(f6\)
4.0-0 d6
5.d4 \(d7\)
6.\(e1\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\) exd4
7.\(dx\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\) \(e7\)
8.\(c3\) 0-0
9.\(x\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\) \(c6\) bxc6
10.\(g5\)

A new mix of ideas by Schlechter, who played the Steinitz Defense himself:

Black threatens 10...\(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}xe4!\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\) 12.\(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}e7\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\) \(xc3\) now that he has 13 bxc3 \(xe7\).

11.\(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}f3\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\)
One of the points is that 11...\(g4\) is refuted by 12.\(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}xc6\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\).

11.\(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}h6\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\)
12.\(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}b4\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\) \(b7\)

But Black always has a way of breaking the pin and this one is based on \(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}f8-g6\) to meet the danger of e4-e5.

13.\(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}xe7\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}\) \(xe7\)
14.\(ad1\) \(f8\)
15.h3 \(g6\)
16.\(g3\) \(g5\!\)

This seems to equalize. In the ending, neither side has an apparent weakness and neither can create a passed pawn.

17.\(xg5\) hxg5
18.f3 f6
19.\(f2\) \(f7\)
20.\(de2\) a5
21.b3

Schlechter’s style had become more conservative since his wildly unsound Moeller Attack against Lasker at London 1899 and his sound bishop-sack against him at Cambridge Springs. His base strategy in the early part of this match was to deny Lasker aggressive moves, such as \(\text{\textquotesingle\textquotesingle}f4\) or an
attack on b2 – or anything remotely threatening. Now Black should try 21...\text{c}5 and ...\text{c}5!.

21 \ldots \text{\text{e}b8} \\
22 \text{\text{d}e1!}

Lasker had never encountered such skilled precaution. White anticipates the attack on b3 even before Black thinks of ...\text{c}5-\text{c}4

22 \ldots \text{\text{e}6} \\
23 \text{\text{d}d3}

If Black passes, White can solidify his queenside much as Lasker liked to do with \text{\text{a}a4} and \text{c}2-\text{c}4, threatening \text{c}4-\text{c}5.

23 \ldots \text{c5}

This anticipates that plan at the cost of granting \text{\text{d}d5}.

24 \text{\text{b}b2!}

White takes time out to meet 24...\text{c}4. He would have a small edge with 25 \text{\text{d}d5} or 25 \text{\text{xc}4} \text{\text{xc}4} 26 \text{bxc}4 \text{\text{b}b4} \text{27 \text{d}d4}.

24 \ldots \text{\text{e}e5} \\
25 \text{\text{d}d5} \text{\text{b}b7} \\
26 \text{\text{e}e3!}

The rook heads for c3 where it can prepare a2-a4 and \text{\text{c}c4xe5}.

26 \ldots \text{\text{e}e6} \\

27 \text{\text{e}c3!}

Now 27...\text{\text{d}d4?} allows 28 \text{\text{xc}7!} \text{\text{xc}7} 29 \text{\text{xd}4}. But 27...\text{\text{b}b4} might have equalized. After 28 \text{a}4 Black should avoid 28...\text{\text{xd}5} 29 \text{exd}5 \text{\text{d}d7} because White can double rooks on the e-file. Instead, Black should sit (28...\text{\text{ba}7}) and wait.

27 \ldots \text{g6?!}

This is risky because it makes e4-e5 a powerful positional idea.

28 \text{a}4 \text{f5} \\
29 \text{\text{c}c3} \text{\text{e}e8} \\
30 \text{\text{c}c4} \text{\text{a}a7}

The threat was 31 \text{\text{xd}6}!.

31 \text{\text{e}e1}

Here the position was adjourned (for three days!).

31 \ldots \text{\text{xc}4}

Black's sealed move shows how worried he was about e4-e5. He is worse after 31...\text{\text{d}d4?} 32 \text{e}5! or 31...\text{\text{e}e5} 32 \text{exf}5 or 31...\text{\text{b}b4} 32 \text{\text{a}a3}

32 \text{\text{xc}4} \text{\text{f}f6} \\
33 \text{\text{e}e3} \text{\text{e}e5?}

Black may not have liked 33...\text{fxe}4 34 \text{\text{d}d5+} but now he gets into major trouble. Bear in mind that Lasker had been deadly at the beginning of his championship matches. He won the opening game of each of his four previous title matches. What was happening here was extraordinary.

34 \text{\text{exf}5!} \text{gxf5} \\
35 \text{g3!}

Now White can carry out a favorable break with 36 \text{f}4.

35 \ldots \text{\text{h}h8} \\
36 \text{f}4

"Very prettily White obtains a valuable asset (a passed pawn) on the extreme king wing, and has now a
concrete advantage,” Tartakower wrote.

36  ...  gxf4
37  ♞d5+  ♟f7
38  ♞xf4  ♞b7
39  ♟g2

Now 44...♗e6 45 ♞d1 threatens ♞e7 mate and would cost Black the game after 45...♗e8 46 ♘h7 or 45...♕g6 46 ♘g7 ♘h6 47 ♛h4 and 48 ♛h5

44  ...  ♗g5
45  ♛h4+  ♘h6
46  ♘e7  ♖f8
47  ♞d1!

Black is just hanging on: 47...♗f8 48 ♝xd6! ♝xd6 49 ♞f5+ loses and 47...♕e7 48 ♘f2 and ♝d4 is bad.

47  ...  ♗f7!
48  ♝xd6+

Tarassch pointed out the “pretty sacrificial combination” of 48 ♞xf5+ ♝xf5 49 ♝xd6+ ♕g6 50 ♚c4 with ideas such as 51 ♝c6 and ♟h3-g4/h4-h5.

But 50...♗f8! 51 ♘h3 ♝g8 and 51 ♛h5 ♝xh5 52 ♝g7 ♘h4+! holds.

48  ...  ♗h7
49  ♝e6

Enormous analytical efforts were made to prove White had a win somewhere. One of the prime candidates was 49 ♝d5 and 49...♕g4 50 ♝c5! and ♝xf5.

But Black always seems to escape. 49. ♝c4! (50 ♝a7! ♝xc2+ 51 ♟f1 ♕g4 52 ♘e1! ♘g2 53 ♝xf5 ♘g1+! 54 ♝e2 ♕g2+ 55 ♝f3? ♝f2+ or 55 ♝d3 ♝xg3+).

49  ...  ♕g6!

Adjourned again. Here 49...♕c4? would lose after 50 ♝xc4 ♝xc4 51 ♝d5 because the rook gets back after 51...♗a7 52 ♝f6 a4 53 ♝xf5 a3 54 ♕f1 and ♝a1.

50  ♝xg6

This liquidates into a rook-ending with an extra pawn and better pieces.

50  ...  ♝xe7
51  ♝gc6  ♝xc7

196
White is ready to crown his masterpiece of caution. The win is almost certain following 54 c3 or 54 c4. For example, 54 c4 a2+ 55 f3 a2 56 f4 or 54... a3 55 a6 followed by advancing both pawns.

54... a3!!

Black sacrifices a second pawn but turns his rook into a powerhouse. There is no way for White to protect and also advance his c- and h-pawns. He eventually had to sack one:

55 e5 f6 56 x a5 c4! 57 a6+ e5 58 a5+ f6 59 a6+ e5 60 a5+ f6 61 a2 e5 62 h2 c3+! 63 g2 f6 64 h3 c6! 65 h8 xc2 66 h6+ g7 67 h5 c4! 68 h6+ h7 69 f6 a4 Draw

No progress is possible after 70 x f5 h6 “Dr. Lasker has furnished a classical endgame defense,” wrote Hoffer.
– It was Black’s 35th move that threw away “an easy draw” and lost (Euwe).

– No, the decisive error was at move 39 when Schlechter refused to deliver perpetual check (Marco)

– Black was only slightly worse if he had found the right 46th move (Schlechter).

Let’s see if the moves clear up the controversies.

Lasker – Schlechter
World Championship match,
tenth game, Berlin 1910
Queen’s Gambit Declined,
Slav Defense (B33)

1  d4    d5
2  c4    c6
3  e3    f5
4  c3    g6

Both men brought opening surprises to the match. Schlechter revived the Open Defense of the Lopez, Lasker introduced what would later be called the Sveshnikov Sicilian, and 4...g6 here was a novelty.

5  c3    g7
6  d3    0-0
7  e2    a6??

This was strikingly original at the time when so many players religiously followed Tarrasch’s condemnation of putting knights on the rim. It gains time (by threatening c3-b4) for b5-b4 and/or c5-c5.

8  a3    dxc4

Black’s idea “cannot possibly be good,” said Capablanca. Better is 8...c5! as in a 1937 Fine game (9 0-0 cxd4 10 exd4 dxc4 11 xc4 c5? and 11...b5).

9  xc4    b5

10  d3    b4
11  e4!

Black’s queenside play works well in similar (e.g. Meran) positions. But here it has the liability of leaving the knight offside. Lasker must have been pleased with the way things are going since he can work with his positional edge and not even consider pawn-grabbing like 11  xa6  xa6 12  b4  c8 and 13  g4!, as Vukovic suggested.

11  ...    bxa3
12  bxa3    b7
13  b1    c7
14  e5    h5

Given time, White will castle and win material with e2.

15  g4

The evidence of the moves so far is surprising: both men are taking risks to win. But why didn’t White play 15 0-0, since Black doesn’t seem to have anything better than the 15  c5 sacrifice? The likely continuation is 16  xc5  xc5  17  xc5  xc5  18  xc5 and then 18...exe5 19  xg2  20  f4  f6  21  e2.

The answer is that White can’t be certain he is winning that ending at various points in this game White – as well as Black – had to choose between different kinds of advantage. It’s unrealistic to make comparisons purely on the basis of the apparent size of an
advantage. The somewhat slim edge White obtains in the game may be more desirable than the plusses of 15 0-0 c5 because Black's margin of error is much greater in the 15 g4 middlegame.

15 ... \( \text{Ax}e5 \)

What is rarely mentioned about this game is the playing conditions. It was repeatedly adjourned, for periods ranging from an hour meal break to overnight, and the first interruption came here. Black quickly recognized that he would be in serious trouble after 15...\( \text{Qf}6 \) 16 0-0 \( \text{Qd}5 \) 17 \( \text{We}2 \).

16 \( \text{gxh}5 \) \( \text{Qg}7 \)
17 \( \text{hxg}6 \) \( \text{hxg}6 \)
18 \( \text{wc}4! \)

The threats are 19 \( \text{Axg}6 \) and 19 \( \text{Exb}7 \text{Exb}7 \) 20 \( \text{Wxa}6 \).

18 ... \( \text{c}8! \)

Black parries (19 \( \text{Axg}6 \) \( \text{e}6 \)).

19 \( \text{Ag}1 \)

Tarrasch recommended 19 \( \text{Ad}2 \) or 19 f4 as ways of maintaining White's edge. However, his position remains loose enough to allow counterplay, e.g. 19 \( \text{Ad}2 \) e5 20 \( \text{Axg}6 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 21 \( \text{Wxa}6 \) fxg6.

19 ... \( \text{wa}5+! \)
20 \( \text{Ad}2 \) \( \text{wd}5 \)

A nice maneuver which relieves some of the queenside problem.

21 \( \text{Ec}1! \) \( \text{b}7 \)
22 \( \text{wc}2 \)

White seems to be saying, "Yes, I know you want to trade queens and I allowed you to do it. But now I'm taking \( \text{Wxc}4 \) out of the picture. Did I err last move? Or did you?"

Actually, neither player erred, since 21...\( \text{Wxc}4 \) 22 \( \text{Exc}4 \) would have been bad for Black because his queenside pieces are still a mess (22...\( \text{b}7 \) 23 \( \text{e}2 \) and 24 \( \text{b}1 \)).

22 ... \( \text{Wh}5 \)

Otherwise 23 \( \text{Axg}6 \) or 23 \( \text{Exg}6 \) (23...hxg6 24 \( \text{c}4 \)) would be dangerous.

23 \( \text{Axg}6? \)

"My 23rd move is refuted by Schlechter in that he surprisingly leaves his knight standing on a6," Lasker wrote.

Kasparov recommended 23 \( \text{Wb}3 \) and then 23...\( \text{Ab}8 \) 24 \( \text{Exg}6 \) \( \text{Wh}2 \) 25 \( \text{c}4 \). But 25...\( \text{Wh}4 \) offers counterplay (26 \( \text{f}3 \) e5). Probably best is 23 \( \text{c}4 \) e6 24 \( \text{Wd}3 \).

23 ... \( \text{Wh}2 \)
24 \( \text{Af}1 \) \( \text{fxg}6 \)
25 \( \text{Wb}3+ \) \( \text{Af}7 \)

![Diagram]

26 \( \text{Wxb}7 \)

The knight is trapped (26...\( \text{Cc}7 \) 27 \( \text{Exc}6 \)) but chances remain even because of:

26 ... \( \text{Af}8! \)

White has been making forced moves since 23 \( \text{Axg}6 \) and must avoid 27 \( \text{Wxa}6?? \text{Af}2 \) which loses quickly.

27 \( \text{Wb}3 \)

By bringing his queen back, he is able to avoid perpetual checks such as 27 f4 \( \text{Wh}4+ \) 28 \( \text{Ad}1 \) \( \text{Gg}4+ \) 29 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{Wf}5+ \) (30 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}8 \)).

Does Lasker's avoidance of a possible draw mean that he had to
because of the match rules? No, because Black could have played to win by meeting 27 f4 with 27..e5!? Lasker may have been seeking a safer way to draw.

27  

28  f4  g5!

On 28...\textit{h}h4+ 29 d1 g4+ 30 c2 f5+ 31 d3 White escapes. Most endgames (31...\textit{x}xd3+) favor White.

Another point of White’s 27th was to create opportunities on the h-file, such as 28...g3+ 29 d1 xf4 30 xf4 xxf4 and now 31 c2.

29  d3  gxf4!

30  exf4

White has to allow a series of checks — but not necessarily a perpetual — because 30 \textit{x}xa6?? fxe3 would be quite lost

30  

31  e2!

The natural response would be to get the king to safety, 31 d1 and 32 c2. However, 31...g4+ and 32.f3! holds.

31  

32  f2

Here is where the puzzle deepens. If White only needed a draw, why didn’t he play 32 e1, repeating the position? And if Black needed to win, why was he giving the checks?

The first question may be easier to answer. If White had repeated (32 e1) Black isn’t committed to a draw. He could roll the dice with a winning attempt (32..c7 33 xc6 d5). And it would make some sense to test White’s intentions first, rather than trying 30..c7 immediately

32  

33  f3

“Here I threaten 34 \textit{h}h1 \textit{wxh}l 35 \textit{h}h3+,” Lasker wrote.

33  

34  e6?

Tarrasch compared this capture with “a general who under a hail of bullets lights up a cigar.” The \textit{w}-vs.-2\textit{w} ending, 34 \textit{h}h1 \textit{wxh}l 35 \textit{h}h3+ \textit{wxh}3 36 \textit{wxh}3+ g8 is no longer favorable in view of 37..d5.

34  

35  d5!

Schlechter regretted not playing 34..d5, which he felt would “probably” have forced a win. But Lasker later pointed out that 35 g6! is at least equal.

35  

36  e4

Of the game’s pivotal moments, this is the most memorable. The possible perpetuals are forgotten and Schlechter is definitely going for a win

He later claimed 35...d8 would have done the job. But he overlooked 36 e1!, after which 36...\textit{h}l+ 37 f1 xf1+ is best and the endgame is even.

This is the kind of position that refutes Tarrasch’s claim that there is always an identifiable “best move.” All that can be said is that the best move to keep pressure on White is 35..d6 36 c5 f5. And the best move to sharpen the position is 35..e5

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But neither leads to a clear outcome. One critical line runs 35...e5 36 dxe5
\text{exf}4 37 e5 \text{d}4+ 38 \text{xf}4 \text{xf}3+ or 37 e1 \text{f}6 38 e5 \text{h}1+ 39 \text{xf}1
\text{h}4+ 40 \text{d}1 \text{d}4 and everything is unclear (Kasparov).

36 \text{xf}4 \text{xf}4
37 \text{e}8+ \text{f}8
38 \text{f}2! \text{h}2+

Schlechter explained afterwards that he had counted on 38...\text{h}4+ 39 \text{e}2 \text{h}2+ 40 \text{e}3 \text{x}f3+ 41 \text{xf}3 \text{h}3+ and \text{xc}8 winning. He also saw 39 \text{g}2 but assumed that 39...\text{g}4+ would win for the same reason.

Too late he realized that he had stopped calculating too soon – 39...\text{g}4+ 40 \text{g}3! \text{xc}8 41 \text{g}6 and White wins.

39 \text{e}1 \text{h}1+?

Marco was right when he said 39...\text{h}4+ would have drawn. In key lines White must accept perpetual check or risk dropping the c8-rook.

40 \text{f}1 \text{h}4+
41 \text{d}2 \text{x}f1
42 \text{x}f1 \text{xd}4+
43 \text{d}3 \text{f}2+

The game was adjourned here with the outcome very much in the balance because of the few pawns and many, many checks.

44 \text{d}1 \text{d}6
45 \text{e}5 \text{h}6
46 \text{d}5 \text{g}8

Capablanca said Lasker played “with remarkable precision” since move 37. Schlechter thought he would have had reasonable drawing chances after 46. \text{a}2 but Kasparov showed that White makes steady progress with 47 \text{h}5 \text{g}7 48 \text{c}5.

47 \text{c}5 \text{g}1+

48 \text{c}2 \text{f}2+
49 \text{b}3 \text{g}7
50 \text{e}6 \text{b}2+

With 50...\text{b}6+! White has to start over (51 \text{c}2 \text{b}2+ 52 \text{d}1 \text{a}1+ 53 \text{c}2 \text{b}2+ 54 \text{f}3).

51 \text{a}4

51 ...
52 \text{f}7?

Kasparov claimed 51...\text{g}2 would still be hard to win (52 \text{x}g7 \text{x}g7 53 \text{d}4+ \text{f}7 54 \text{c}5 \text{e}2!).

52 \text{x}g7 \text{x}g7
53 \text{b}3 \text{e}8
54 \text{b}8+ \text{f}7
55 \text{a}7

The rest is a slow but inevitable decline for Black, who eased White’s task by allowing a trade of queens: 55...\text{g}4+ 56 \text{d}4 \text{d}7+ 57 \text{b}3 \text{b}7+ 58 \text{a}2 \text{c}6 59 \text{d}3 \text{e}6 60 \text{g}5 \text{d}7 61 \text{e}5 \text{g}2+ 62 \text{e}2 \text{g}4 63 \text{d}2 \text{a}4 64 \text{f}5+ \text{e}7 65 \text{c}2+ \text{xc}2 66 \text{xc}2+ \text{b}6 67 \text{e}2 \text{c}8 68 \text{b}3 \text{c}6 69 \text{e}2+ \text{b}7 70 \text{b}4 \text{a}7 71 \text{c}5 Resigns

Throughout his career Lasker managed to win games he needed to – such as the last rounds at Cambridge Springs, St. Petersburg 1909 and 1914 and the Capablanca game at St. Petersburg. But this was his greatest clutch performance.
Regardless of the controversy over the Schlechter match terms or the confusion over the status of the 1909 match, there was no doubt over the final Lasker-Janowsky match. It was a crush.

Janowsky’s great flaw was not his extreme optimism, his obsessive devotion to the two bishops or his haphazard endgame technique. All of those hurt him, to be sure. But his worst failing was his inability to finish off a won game. No example is more glaring than the following. Janowsky obtained a winning game after 11 moves and turned it into a lost one nine moves later.

**Lasker – Janowsky**  
World Championship match,  
fifth game, Berlin 1910  
*Queen’s Gambit Declined,  
Tarrasch Defense (D32)*

1  d4  d5  
2  c4  e6  
3  d4  e5  
4  cxd5  exd5  
5  d4  e6  
6  e4?!  

This recalls a Marshall idea, 5 e4 and then 5...dxe4 6 b5+.

6  ...  dxe4  
7  dxe4  d6!
failed to notice that the simple 13...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}g5 is a killer (14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}e2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xd4 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xd4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}e5+). There hasn’t been a lost position this early in a world championship match since this game.

12 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}}4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}e5

The 12...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{N}}}xb4 13 axb4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xb4 sack fails after 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}c1 and \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}a4

One of those tricks is shown by 13...a6, which seems to win. \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{C}}}hampionship Chess by Sergeant gives 14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}c1 axb5 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xc6 bxc6 16 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xc6+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}c7 and “White can do no more.” But he can – 17 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}a6+ and 18 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}c1. This is why 11...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}ge7!?, overprotecting c6, would have won.

14 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}c1!

White makes no effort to castle. Instead he invites Black to be brilliant – 14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}xd4 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xd4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xe3 16 fxe3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xe3+ 17 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}e2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}xb4+ 18 axb4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}d8.

That rook-sacrifice appears to win (19 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}d2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xd2+ 20 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xd2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}xd4+ 21 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}d3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}f5). However, White has 19 b5! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}xd4 20 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}c2 and holds the edge (20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}c4 21 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xc4).

14 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xe3!

Janowsky must have appreciated that this is one of the best positions he’d had against Lasker in their previous 20-odd games. He could not waste this opportunity (14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xd4? 15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xd4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}f5 16 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}d2!).

15 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}}}xe3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xe3+

16 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}e2

Another false lead is 16...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}b3, which Tarrasch believed would win (17 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xb3? \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xc1+ and 17 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}d2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xd2+ 19 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}xd2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{A}}}b8).

But he missed 17 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xa7+! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}c7 18 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}db5+ and then 18...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{B}}}b6 19 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{W}}}xd8\# 18\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}c8+ and mates.

This shows how 13 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}cb5 changed the dynamic of the game At almost every turn now Black has to see whether he can safely meet \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xa7+ with ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}b8 or ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}e7 – or doesn’t have a good reply.

16 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}c7!

Black prepares 17...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}f6 and perhaps 17...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}h4+ 18 g3 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xg3+ as well. Most of all, he puts the onus back on White by challenging him to calculate \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{Q}}}xa7+.  

203
Both men must have seen that 17 \( \text{Qxa7+} \) 18 \( \text{Qxc6} \) bxc6 19 \( \text{Qxc6+} \) \( \text{Bb7} \) 20 \( \text{Wa4} \) favors White. Then 17...\( \text{Bb8} \) 18 \( \text{Qxc6+} \) bxc6 19 \( \text{Qxc6+} \) \( \text{Bb7} \) is crucial.

Janowsky deserves high praise for allowing this, particularly since 20 \( \text{Qxd8+?} \) \( \text{Bxd8} \) 21 \( \text{Wc2} \) \( \text{Qc8} \) wins for him. We don’t know how far he saw or whether either player spotted 20 \( \text{Wc2!} \).

Black could then draw by perpetual check (20. \( \text{h4}+ \) 21 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{Qxg3+} \)). Or he could take his chances (20...\( \text{Qc8} \) 21 \( \text{Wc3} \)) in a very obscure endgame.

In retrospect, 17 \( \text{Qc3} \) is based on sound defensive principles. It makes a threat. It reinforces the blocking g2-g3 in case of ...\( \text{Qh4+} \). And the rook can relieve the d-file pin with \( \text{Qd3} \). (The \textit{Deutsche Schachzeitung} claimed 17...\( \text{Qe5} \) 18 0-0 \( \text{Qf6} \) wins but overlooked 19 \( \text{Qxa7+} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 20 \( \text{Qxc6} \) bxc6 21 \( \text{Qxe6+} \) \( \text{fxe6} \) 22 \( \text{Qd3!} \))

17 ... \( \text{Qh4+} \)

“It’s difficult to explain why such a brilliant master of combination as Janowsky passes up this possibility,” Tarrasch wrote of 17...\( \text{Qxc3}+ \). But the position after 18 \( \text{Qxc3} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) is opaque in view of 19 \( \text{Qd3!} \)?

An army of annotators claimed it was 17...\( \text{Qxc3+} \) 18 \( \text{Qxc3} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) that would have sealed the point. Black can meet 19 0-0 with 19...\( \text{Qxd4} \) and ...\( \text{Qxc3} \).

“No one doubted it. I smiled,” Lasker wrote. He showed that 19 0-0? was wrong and with 19 \( \text{Qcb5} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) (19...\( \text{Qxd4} \) 20 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 21 \( \text{Qf2} \) “the position is about even though still full of problems.”

18 g3

Because his bishop is hanging on h4, Black must revert to 18...\( \text{Wxc3} \). Instead, he should still try 19 \( \text{Qxc3} \) \( \text{f6!} \) 20 \( \text{Qcb5} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 21 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \).

18 ... \( \text{Wd4} \)

Now 19 \( \text{Qxa7+} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) and Black wins.

19 0-0! \( \text{Qf6} \)

Black had this pin in mind for some time. But 19...\( \text{Qg5}+ \) is better because White must avoid 20 \( \text{Qxa7+} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 21 \( \text{Qab5+} \) \( \text{Qb6} \) and then 22 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qe3}+ \) and 23...\( \text{Qe5} \).

Instead, White could seize the advantage for the first time with 20 \( \text{Qf3} \) and then 20...\( \text{Qxe3}+ \). 21 \( \text{Qh1} \) or 20...\( \text{Qe3}+ \) 21 \( \text{Qxe3} \) \( \text{Qxe3}+ \) 22 \( \text{Qg2} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 23 \( \text{Qd3!} \).

20 \( \text{Qxf6} \! \text{!} \)

The bishop was essential to Black’s initiative. Now there is nothing to interrupt White’s attack.

20 ... \( \text{gxrf6} \)

21 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qe5?!} \)

Janowsky once compared his play to Mary Queen of Scots – “beautiful but unlucky.” In this game he made his own ill luck. He would have held out much longer after 21...\( \text{Qxd4} \) 22 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qe5} \) 23 \( \text{b5} \) \( \text{Qd8} \) 24 bxc6 \( \text{Qxd4} \).

22 \( \text{Qxa7+} \) \( \text{Qc7} \)

Or 22...\( \text{Qb8} \) 23 \( \text{Qxc6+} \) bxc6 24 \( \text{Qxc6+} \) mates.

23 \( \text{Qxc6} \) bxc6

24 \( \text{Qxe6+} \) \( \text{Qb8} \)

25 \( \text{Qb6+} \)

Now 25 \( \text{Qa7} \) 26 \( \text{Qb7+27} \) \( \text{Qa4+} \) mates or 25...\( \text{Qc7} \) 26 \( \text{Qb7+} \).
26  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{W}}c1+}

White goes for mate, rather than the queen (26 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{W}}c2+ \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{D}}d7} 27 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{W}}a4+ \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}e7} 28 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{Q}}c6+}).

26  ...  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{D}}d7}

27  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{D}}xe6}

It’s tempting to relax but 27 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{A}}c6+? \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}e7} or 27 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{W}}c6+? \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}e7} 28 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{B}}b7+ \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}f8} lets almost all of White’s edge evaporate.

27  ...  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{F}}x6}

Or 27...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{B}}b8 28 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{W}}d2+ \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}e7} 29 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{A}}a6}.}

28  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{B}}b7+}  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}e8}

29  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{A}}c6+}  \texttt{Resigns}

The reason White checked at c1 is revealed in 29...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}f8 30 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{W}}h6+}.}

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At the risk of falling into the pop psychology trap, that loss appears to have doomed Janowsky. If he had found the win at move 11 he would have trailed by only 2-1. Even a draw, stemming from one of the might-have-beens at moves 17 and 18, could have kept him in the match. As it was, he drew the sixth game and then lost the final five games. Here is one of his better efforts.

\textbf{Lasker – Janowsky}

World Championship match, ninth game, Berlin 1910

\textbf{Ruy Lopez (C79)}

1  e4  e5

2  d3  d6

3  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{B}}b5}  a6

4  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{A}}a4}  f6

5  0-0  d6

6  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}e1}  b5

7  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{A}}b3}  a5

This line had been introduced to international play by Marco at Cambridge Springs, where he obtained a good position after 8 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{Q}}e3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{X}}xb3} 9 axb3 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{Q}}b7.}

8  d4!  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{X}}xb3}

Black must avoid 8...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{X}}xd4} because of 9 e5! \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{X}}xe5 10 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{Q}}xe5 as}} Lasker showed in a Buenos Aires simul five months earlier (10...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}e6 11 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{A}}xf7 and wins).}

9  axb3  d7

This avoids 9...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{A}}b7 10 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{G}}g5, which}} theory regards as favorable to White.

10  b4

White launches an ambitious plan to create a Grand Formation in the Tarrasch style, with pawns at b4, c4, d4 and e4, and a fianchettoed bishop at b2. The he can squeeze Black with either d4-d5 or c4-c5.

Simpler and better, however, was 10 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{D}}xe5! \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{X}}xe5} (not 10...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{D}}xe5?}

11 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{W}}d5) 11 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{Q}}d4 followed by 12 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{F}}f4.}

10  ...  \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{S}}e7}

11  b3

White needs support pawns at b3 and c4 if he is going to sustain d4-d5. On 11 d5 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{G}}b7 12 \texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{Q}}c3, Black gets}} sufficient counterplay from 12...0-0 and ...\texttt{\textcolor{red}{\textsf{D}}b6/...e6}.

11  ...  0-0

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12 \( \text{a}b2 \) \( \text{a}f6 \)
13 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}8! \)

14 \( \text{w}d2 \)

This is the battle array White envisioned when he chose his 10th move. He can’t play 14 d5 yet (14...bxc4 and ...\( \text{a}xb4 \)). But 14 c5 was possible, e.g. 14...exd4 15 \( \text{d}x\text{d}4 \) threatens \( \text{\text{c}6} \) and obtains the upper hand after 15...\( \text{w}e8 \) 16 exd6 \( \text{c}x\text{d}6 \) 17 \( \text{\text{c}3} \) followed by \( \text{d}5 \) or \( \text{f}5 \).

14 ... \( \text{e}8 \)

Both White’s strengths and Black’s counterplay lie in the broad pawn-center. Black should have played 14...bxc4! 15 bxc4 exd4 immediately since his beloved bishops would favor him after 16 \( \text{d}x\text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}5 \) 17 \( \text{a}3 \) c5! He also stands well after 16 \( \text{d}x\text{d}4 \) c5! 17 bxc5 \( \text{d}x\text{c}5 \).

15 \( \text{d}a3 \)?

That is why 15 d5!, with a small positional pull, was necessary.

15 ... \( \text{b}c4 \)

16 \( \text{b}xc4 \)

The inconsistent 16 \( \text{d}x\text{c}4 \) threatens 17 \( \text{a}5 \) and 18 \( \text{c}6 \). But after 16...\( \text{b}5! \) (17 \( \text{a}5 \) \( \text{b}8 \)) the game might have ended with 17 \( \text{a}3! \) \( \text{b}8 \)! 18 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{b}5 \) draw.

There had never been a draw in fewer than 20 moves in a world championship match – and there wouldn’t be one until the second game of the 1927 Alekhine-Capablanca match.

16 ... \( \text{exd}4! \)
17 \( \text{d}x\text{d}4 \) \( \text{b}7 \)
18 f3

Put Black’s g-pawn at g6 and his bishop at g7 and this looks like the kind of King’s Indian position that gave Black excellent play in the 1990s (...\( \text{e}5 \)/... c5).

18 ... \( \text{e}5 \)?

The immediate 18...c5! favors Black after 19 \( \text{f}5 \) exb4! or 19 bxc5 dxc5 20 \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{e}5 \) because 21 \( \text{d}6? \) \( \text{e}6 \) 22 \( \text{d}6 \) allows 22...\( \text{x}f3+! \) 23 \( \text{x}f3 \) \( \text{b}2 \) and 22 \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{c}6 \) and ...\( \text{a}4 \) is also poor.

19 \( \text{f}5 \)!

This turns 19...c5 from a tactical shot into a positional error (20 b5!).

19 ... \( \text{c}8 \)
20 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{g}5 \)

21 \( \text{xe}5! \)?

This is the kind of move you make when you’re convinced you should have an advantage but can’t prove it by normal means. White wants to bring his a3-knight to c2 but can’t do that immediately because of 21...\( \text{d}xc4 \). He’d also like to develop the queen’s rook but 21 \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{d}7 \) and 22...\( \text{a}4 \) would be annoying.
21 ... \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Exe5!}}}??

Black is at least equal after 21...dxe5 22 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Wxd8 Exd8}}} 23 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qac2 Qxe3+}}} 24 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qxe3 Qd2}}}}. But Janowsky knew his frailties. At New York 1924 Lasker virtually forced him into a favorable 2\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qs}}}-vs-2\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{n}}}es ending – which Janowsky lost.

22 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qac2 Qf4??}}}}

Yes, Black has a queen, rook and two bishops to attack, and White will be forced to loosen his pawn protection after ...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Nh5}}} or ...\textit{\textbf{Wh4}}. However, Black should open lines first. Both 22...f5 (23 exf5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qxf5}}} and 22...c5! (23 bxc5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Exe5}}} are excellent.

23 \textit{\textbf{Wf2 Nh5}}

24 g3!

White dodges 24 h3 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Wg5}}}! 25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qd5 c5}}} (not 25...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qg3??}}} 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Wxa7}}}}).

24 ... \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qe5}}}}

25 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qa3 c6}}}}

It wasn’t too late for 25...c5 and then 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qd5 cxb4}}} 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qxb4 Qb7}}} 28 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qxa6 Qa8}}}}. Instead, Black tries to preserve his bishops against 26 f4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qf6}}} 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qd5}}}.

26 \textit{\textbf{f4}}

Lasker later saw that 26 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qd1}}}, followed by doubling, was more accurate e.g. 26...\textit{\textbf{Qf6??} 27 c5 or 26...\textit{\textbf{Wc7}} 27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qad3}}} and f2-f4.

26 ... \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qf6}}}}

27 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qd1}}}}

White has minor threats of 28 c5, 28 e5 and the space-gaining 28 g4/29 g5 (since ...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Nh4}}} is no longer a skewer).

27 ... \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qe7}}}}

28 \textit{\textbf{c5}}

This is highly hazardous because Black’s dark-squared bishop can find targets on the a7-g1 diagonal after a pawn-liquidation. But Lasker evidently sensed this was the moment when his opponent was mentally beaten and likely to miss tactics. Besides, it’s not certain how White would make progress after, say, 28 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Wf3 Qh6}}}, e.g. 29 g4 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Wc7}}} 30 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qf5??}}} \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qxf5}}} 31 gxf5 c5! with advantage for Black.

28 ... \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Wc7}}}}

29 \textit{\textbf{Exd6 Qxd6}}

30 e5! \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qf8}}}}

Black can’t take the b-pawn (30...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qxb4}}} 31 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qxb4 Qxb4}}} 32 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Wd2}}} and \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Wd8+}}}} because of his vulnerable first rank.

31 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qad3}}}}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_diagram.png}
\end{center}

The game was adjourned here and the progress White has made in the last ten moves must have taken a toll on Black’s equanimity. It’s true White dominates after, say, 31...f5 32 \textit{\textbf{Wf2} and 33 \textit{\textbf{Qd8}}. But Black’s bishops provide him with many resources.

If he safeguards the rook with 31...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qh6}}} it gets back into the game after 32 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qd2 c5}}} 33 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qc3 Qc6}}}!}. Alternatively, Black could have played 31...c5 and 32 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qd5 Wc6}}} 33 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qc3 Qb7}} or 33...\textit{\textbf{Qg4}}.

31 ... \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qh3??}}} \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qh3??}}}}

32 \textit{\textbf{g4!! Qh6}}

33 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qf5 Qh5!!}}}}

Otherwise White simply takes the bishop. Now 34 gxf5 \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Qxf5}} gives Black good compensation since his
dark-squared bishop is alive after \( \text{...Bxc2} \) and \( \text{...Bxb4} \).

34 \( \text{Ng7!} \) \( \text{Nxg4} \)

But it plays no role after 34...\( \text{Bxg7} \) 35 g\( xh5 \) \( \text{f5} \)
36 \( \text{Bxg3} \) or 34...\( \text{Bxg7} \) 35 g\( xh5 \) \( \text{f5} \) 36 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{Bxc2} \) 37 \( \text{Bxc2} \)
38 \( \text{Bxb4} \) 39 \( \text{f5!} \) !

35 \( \text{Bxh5} \) \( \text{Bxh5} \)
36 \( \text{Bd2!} \)

The new threat is 37 \( \text{Nh3} \). It closed the curtain.

36...\( \text{h6} \) 37 \( \text{Bd7} \) \( \text{Bb6} \)
38 \( \text{Bxb6} \) \( \text{Bxb6} \) 39 \( \text{Bd8!} \) c5 40 \( \text{f5!} \) \( \text{Bxb4} \)
41 \( \text{Bg2+} \) \( \text{h7} \) 42 \( \text{Bxf8} \) b3 43 \( \text{Bg8} \)

Resigns

After Garry Kasparov drew his 1987 match with Anatoly Karpov he
apparently counted it as a victory because it meant he kept his title — “...I
won the world championship title three times in three years, a record for chess
history!” he told the magazine Chess.
Actually the record was set by Lasker, who won three championship matches — over
Marshall, Tarrasch and Janowsky during 1907-1910 — and
drew a fourth with Schlechter.

Lasker spent the next three years on
his philosophical work and simul tours
but no “professional” events. His
relations with the emerging star
Capablanca turned frosty as they
disagreed about match terms. Instead,
Lasker reached the framework of an
agreement with Rubinstein. They got as
far as agreeing to hold games in Berlin,
Frankfurt, Moscow, Lodz and Warsaw
and setting a target date in the spring
1914, later pushed back to the fall.

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Lasker benefited from his reputation
for being lucky, just as Mikhail Tal,
Judith Polgar and others did. Their
losing opponents often blamed a defeat
on chance, rather than looking for a
reason in their own play. Even Lasker’s
friend of more than 25 years, Ossip Bernstein, didn’t appreciate this.
While Lasker was in Moscow, en route
to St. Petersburg 1914, he played two
exhibition games with Bernstein. Later
in Chess Review Bernstein recalled that
in one, whose score had disappeared,
Lasker was lucky. Bernstein “managed
to obtain a somewhat better position by
a daring sacrifice of a pawn” and
should have drawn, he wrote. The
score, which was never lost, tells a
slightly different story.

Bernstein – Lasker
Exhibition game, Moscow 1914
Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Defense (C66)

1 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e5} \)
2 \( \text{Bf3} \) \( \text{c6} \)
3 \( \text{Bb5} \) \( \text{Bf6} \)
4 \( \text{0-0} \) \( \text{d6} \)

No, not another Steinitz Defense!
Sorry, but Lasker kept using it for
another seven years, through his match
with Capablanca.

5 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d5} \)
6 \( \text{Cc3} \) \( \text{Cf7} \)
7 \( \text{Ce1} \) exd4
8 \( \text{Cxd4} \) 0-0
9 \( \text{Bxc6} \) bxc6
10 \( \text{Bg5} \) \( \text{h6} \)
11 \( \text{Bh4} \) \( \text{Bh7} \)

This is Lasker’s simplifying idea
from Game 60 but without ...\( \text{Be8} \)
Bernstein knew it well! He introduced
this version to master chess in the first
round at San Sebastian 1911 against
Capablanca.

12 \( \text{Bxe7} \) \( \text{Bxe7} \)
13 \( \text{Bd3} \) \( \text{Be8} \)
Against Capa, Bernstein played 12...\textit{ab} 14 b3 \textit{e}515 \textit{ad}1 \textit{e}5! and obtained a comfortable game. His eventual loss got a lot of press because Bernstein had objected to the relatively unknown Cuban being invited to the tournament.

14 \textit{e}3 \textit{f}8
15 \textit{c}4

White wants to induce ...c5 so he can later occupy d5.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram.png}
\end{center}

15 ... c5

Black could avoid that by means of 15. \textit{ab} 16 b3 c5 since 17 \textit{d}5? loses to 17...\textit{e}5. Black would be only slightly worse after 17 \textit{f}3 \textit{e}6.

The critical line is 16 \textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 17 \textit{wc}6 but Black keeps the balance after 17...\textit{b}6 18 \textit{a}4 \textit{xb}2 (19 \textit{d}5 \textit{e}5 20 \textit{f}4 \textit{b}4!).

16 \textit{d}5

Reinfeld/Fine praised White’s “original and aggressive” play but recommended 16 \textit{f}5 or 16 \textit{f}3 here. Neither move is troubling, e.g. 16 \textit{f}5 \textit{f}6 17 \textit{f}3 \textit{ab}8 or 16 \textit{f}3 \textit{e}6 17 \textit{d}2 \textit{ab}8 18 \textit{d}5 \textit{e}5!.

16 ... \textit{e}5
17 \textit{b}3

This was the sacrifice White remembered. The b3-knight protects his rook, so 17...\textit{xb}2 allows him to continue 18 \textit{xc}7. Then 18...\textit{ab}8 (threat of ...\textit{xb}3) 19 \textit{ac}1 \textit{ac}8 20 \textit{d}5 is a very slight White edge because of the entrenched knight.

17 ... \textit{e}6!

The knight is threatened (18...c6) and Black would be clearly better after 18 \textit{c}3 \textit{xd}5 or 18 \textit{f}4 \textit{xd}5.

18 \textit{e}2?

Bernstein pointed out that 18 \textit{a}4 \textit{xb}2 19 \textit{xc}7! was best. Black must reply 19...\textit{c}4 20 \textit{xe}8 \textit{xb}3.

White may come out materially ahead with 21 \textit{xb}3? \textit{xe}8. But with so much wood left on the board the minor pieces give Black the edge (22 \textit{c}4 \textit{e}7).

He would be slightly worse after 21 \textit{xe}1! and 21...\textit{d}7 22 \textit{xb}3 \textit{xb}3 23 \textit{xb}3 but should be able to draw following 23...\textit{xe}8 24 \textit{xa}7 d5.

18 ... \textit{xb}2!

The other pawn was taboo (18...\textit{xd}5? 19 \textit{exd}5) but this one could be taken since 19 \textit{xc}7? \textit{xb}3 loses.

19 \textit{c}4 \textit{xe}2
20 \textit{xe}2 \textit{xd}5

There was no reason to complicate with 20...\textit{ac}8 21 \textit{a}5.

21 \textit{exd}5 \textit{a}5
22 \textit{a}4?

White may have thought Black’s a-pawn would become the greater target now but this loses the game. Better is 22 \textit{d}2, e.g. 22...\textit{f}5 23 \textit{c}4 \textit{exe}4 24 \textit{ae}1 or 22...\textit{d}7 23 \textit{c}4 \textit{ab}6 24 \textit{xb}6 \textit{xb}6 26 \textit{a}4.

22 ... \textit{d}7
23 \textit{f}3 \textit{eb}8
Black’s plan of ...ňb4 and ...uçb6 is enough to win because he can create a second target with ...f5!.

24 ێییە3 ێییە4

Now 24 ێییە3 ێییە6 or 24 ێییە2 ێییە6 25 ێییە3 f5! (26 ێییە2 fxe4 27 fxe4 ێییە8+ 28 ێییە3 ێییە4+ etc.) are lost.

25 ێییە1 ێییە6

26 ێییە3 f5!

This decides (27 exf5 ێییەxd5) thanks to Black’s coming Exchange sacrifice.

27 ێییە3 fxe4!

28 ێییەxb4 axb4

Good enough was 28...exb4 29 ێییە3 exf3 and ...ێییەxd5.

29 ێییە3 ێییەd5

30 ێییەe4 ێییە3!

Game over: 31 ێییە7 ێب3 32 ێییەc7 ێب2 33 ێییەf1 ێییەa4 White resigns

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Lasker was one of the most widely traveled chess reporters of all time. He launched magazines in New York, London and Berlin and wrote regularly for newspapers in the Netherlands, U.S., Britain and Russia. He covered events ranging from his own championship matches to the 1935 Alekhine-Euwe match. On arrival in St. Petersburg he sized up the competition for the newspaper Ryech. Janowsky was stylishly “the most elegant of chess masters,” he wrote. Capablanca’s “admirers expect much from him” in the tournament —“maybe too much.” Lasker also praised Alekhine’s “great strength of will.” It seemed as if will power alone had enabled the 21-year-old Russian to save a lost position when Lasker met him in the prelims. In the finals it was a different story

Lasker – Alekhine

St. Petersburg 1914

Albin Counter-Gambit (D08)

1 ێd4 ێd5

2 ێc4 ێe5

Alekhine played this opening in only two serious games in his career – both in this tournament, against Tarrasch and Lasker. That wasn’t the insolence of youth. The Albin still enjoyed respect. “Although this counter-gambit is rarely played nowadays,” Capablanca wrote two months before this game, “it does not seem entirely bad.”

3 ێdxe5 ێd4

4 ێf3 ێc6

5 ێa3 ێg4

6 ێbd2 ێw7

7 ێh3

White can afford to push the bishop around after 7...ێh5 8 ێg4 with advantage (8...ێg6 9 ێa4 0-0-0 10 ێb4 ێb8 11 ێg2).

7 ... ێxf3

8 ێxf3 0-0-0

Marshall had White in the only two previous major-league games in this line and each time he made it a permanent gambit with ێg5, e.g. 9 ێa4 ێb8 10 ێg5 ێf6 11 exf6 gxf6 12 ێd2 ێh6 13 ێg3 ێd3! as in a 1912 game won by Janowsky as Black.
Black had to swap off the best defender of his king position and that hands White a queenside plan of pushing pawns (14...g7 15 c5 g6 16 b1 d6 17 b5). The pawns also inhibit Black’s minor pieces (14...d6?? 15 c4 d6 16 c5).

In later postal games Black tried 14...d6 and 14...c6, with mixed success. Alekhine’s preparation for f4 and possibly h5-h4 makes the most sense.

Modern players might be tempted to provoke a weakness (15 f3 c6) before pushing pawns (16 b5 c5 17 b6! axb6 18 b1).

Black’s intent is to allow cxb7+ in hopes the pawn will get in the way of White’s attack. After 16...bxc6 17 a6+d7 18 d1 e7 19 b2 the position is chaotic but what matters most is that Black’s margin of error is much less than White’s.

If White puts the bishop at d2, to watch both c3 and f4, Black can invest a tempo in 18...g5 before 19...f4.

Reinfeld/Fine urged 18 b5 “and in reply if 18...d6; 19 a4 wins quickly.” They cited 19...d8 20 a5 d5 21 a3 and c5 followed by b5-b6.

But this is a fantasy variation. There is no reason to give the bishop a tempo with a3 when Black can play 18...d5 and f4. For example, 19 a4 f4 20 g4 h5 or 19 b2 f4 20 g4 h5 21 g5 h8 (22 xd4?? f3! with advantage).

Too early for 18...f4 19 gxf4 xf4 because of 20 c4 d6? 21 d1.

At some point White should offer a trade. For example, 20 c4! and now both 20...d5? 21 xd4! and 20...c4 21 c4 d5 22 c1 c3 23 f1 are bad for Black.

Black should avoid a trade but after a retreat (20...d7) White gains space and is at last ready to push (21 b5). His improved position offers him better chances after 21...f4 than in the game (although matters remain a bit unclear after 22 gxf4 xf4 23 e3).

White prepares to double against the c7 target and defers making a choice between pushing the queenside pawns and trying to win the d-pawn.
20    ...    f4!

Black has to make sure at every turn that the d-pawn is safe. Without it he has no game, e.g. 20...\texttt{\textit{21 axd4!axedb4 22 axb7 23 w3+ d4 24 wxe6 and White is winning.}}

21    gx4    xf4

Offering a swap now (22 w4) is not as effective because Black has a reasonable endgame following 22...e5 23 f4 f6 24 wxe6xe6 and f5.

22    d1    f5

Here 23 w4 allows an intriguing Exchange sacrifice, 23...w2 24 c1 d3?!

But 25 d3! wxc2 26 xf4 xxd3 27 exd3 favors White after 28 w4 xc4 because Black would be playing without a king. Moreover White would win immediately after 27...xd3?? 28 xc7+! xc7 29 b8(+3).

23    c1?    e3!

White must have overlooked this shot. He is not lost after 24 fxe3? dxe3, as was widely believed, but is worse after 25 e6! xd3 26 xd3.

24    e5!

As Tarrasch said, Lasker sometimes loses a game but never loses his head

24    ...    f6!

After 24...g5 and 25 e1 the position simplifies into a heavy piece ending (25...xg2 26 xg2 xc1 27 exc1 8d7) in which both sides have too many weaknesses to realistically think of winning.

25    w4!

Now 25...xg2 26 xg2 is a slightly better version of the previous note because of the improved position of White’s queen.

25    ...    d1??

Black seems slightly better after 25...e6 26 f3 h2+ 27 xh2 wxf3 28 xf3 xd1 but White’s bishops will compensate after 29 xh6 xf2 30 f4.

26    xf4

This appears strong but Black has two good replies. One is 26...f2 with the idea of 27 xf2 d3! 28 xd3 g5.

Better is 27 x6! as in the game and then 27...xd6 28 w8+ (or 28 w5 d3!) d8 29 w5. White has some edge after 29...xc5 30 xc5 d1 31 e6 e8 32 f6.

But the key move in all these lines is d3 and it works again here – 30...d3! (instead of 30...d1) 31 exd3 xd3, with a murky endgame.

26    ...    c3?

Losing. There is nothing clear after 26...6d7! because Black can keep his extra material and make f2 a target. For example, 27 g3 c3 and f7 offers him good reason to play for a win.

Better is 27 w3! so that 27...f7?? 28 xc7+. Black can’t be disengaged from his defense of c7 – 27...f8 28 g3 f7 or even 28... g7 29 e5 f7 30 d5 xf2+ with a likely draw in the dust-settled rook-ending.

27    xd6!

It's mate after 27...xe4 28 xc7+ xb7 29 xed4+ a6 30 b5, and hopeless after 29...c8 30 e5+

27    ...    xd6
The game is over after 27...cxd6? 28 \(\text{w}c6!\).

28 \(\text{w}e5\) \(\text{wb}6\)

29 \(\text{w}e7\)

There were still technical problems to solve after 29 \(\text{zc}6\) \(\text{wb}7\) 30 \(\text{zg}x6\) \(\text{zb}5\). Were the table turned, Alekhine would surely have tried to calculate a forced win. He can't do it with 30 \(\text{xc}e3??\) \(\text{dxc}3\) 31 \(\text{xb}7\) \(\text{c}2!\). But there was a quicker win in 30 \(\text{e}3\) with the simple threat of \(\text{exd}4\).

Then 30...\(\text{xa}4\) 31 \(\text{zc}xg6\) or 31 \(\text{we}4\) is easy. And 30...\(\text{d}3\) 31 \(\text{xc}e3\) \(\text{d}2\) 32 \(\text{zd}3!\) is pretty – 32...\(d1(\text{w})+\) 33 \(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{zd}1+\) 34 \(\text{h}2\) \(\text{wc}8\) 35 \(\text{wb}5+\).

29 ... \(\text{wd}6\)

Now 30 \(\text{xd}6\) cxd6! becomes hard again.

30 \(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{d}3\)

White makes slow progress after 30. \(\text{xe}7\) 31 \(\text{xe}7\) \(\text{zd}5\) 32 \(\text{ze}5\).

31 \(\text{exd}3\) \(\text{xd}3\)

32 \(\text{z}e3\) \(\text{zd}1+\)

33 \(\text{zd}2\) \(\text{zb}5\)

34 \(\text{zn}6!\)

To stop ...\(\text{wd}6+\) and prepare the winning maneuver.

34 ... \(\text{xa}3\)

35 \(\text{zf}6!\) \text{Resigns}

In view of 36 \(\text{zf}8\).

Why Lasker Matters

Lasker performed several amazing escapes against his chief rivals over the years. These weren't swindles in the usual sense of the word but finding resources that would elude others. "If you seek you will find," he wrote in Common Sense in Chess, "no matter how dangerous the attack may look." Few players might have considered giving up a second pawn with 54...\(\text{ze}4!!\) as he did in Game 60 or playing to win with 13 \(\text{zd}b5\) in Game 62. His save in the ninth round of the St. Petersburg prelims was perhaps the most remarkable.

Lasker – Tarrasch
St. Petersburg 1914

Ruy Lopez, Open Defense (C83)

1 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{e}5\)

2 \(\text{zd}3\) \(\text{zc}6\)

3 \(\text{zd}b5\) \(\text{a}6\)

4 \(\text{za}4\) \(\text{zf}6\)

5 0-0 \(\text{zd}e4!\)

The Open Defense was now making a major comeback, and Tarrasch helped strengthen it with a powerful new idea.

6 \(\text{zd}4\) \(\text{b}5\)

7 \(\text{zd}b3\) \(\text{d}5\)

8 \(\text{zd}xe5\) \(\text{zd}e6\)

9 \(\text{c}3\) \(\text{zd}7\)

10 \(\text{zb}d2\) 0-0

11 \(\text{zd}e1\) \(\text{zd}5\)

As a result of Black's next move, attention turned to 12 \(\text{zd}4\) and 12...\(\text{zd}d4\) 13 \(\text{cx}d4\) \(\text{zd}d3\) 14 \(\text{zd}e3\). But 14...\(\text{zd}f4\) 15 \(\text{zd}e2\) \(\text{c}5!\) is fine for Black

12 \(\text{zd}c2\)

Before the St. Petersburg tournament there was a qualifying event for Russian masters and one of the key
games in it was Alekhine-Nimzovich, which went 12...g4 13 b3!.
Alekhine noted that this followed “the famous game Janowsky-Lasker”
1912, in which Black got a bad game
from 13...e6. Nimzovich tried to
improve with 13...e4 but also got the
worst of it after 14 f4!.

12 ... d4!

Tarrasch’s move gives Black
superiority in space and development.
He carried out the idea in a slightly
different form against Bernstein later at
St. Petersburg (9 bd2 d5 10 c3 e7
11 e2 d4!). This inspired Lasker to try
yet another version against Capablanca
(9 bd2 d5 10 c3 d4) in the finals.

13 cxd4

Or 13 e4 dxc3! with advantage to
Black.

13 ... xd4
14 xd4 xd4

Now 15 h5 is smothered by
15...d3!.

15 b3

Every so often an attempt is made to
revive this line with 15 e2. But that
leads, at best, to a dubious ending after
15...ad8 16 f3 e4

15 ... xb3
16 axb3 xd1
17 xd1 e5

18 d2

White passes up a chance to get his
pawns rolling. After 18 f4 g4 19 fd2
fd8 he has more counterplay than the
game (20 xd8+ xd8 21 xa6 d1
22 f5!).

19 a5 xd1+
20 xd1 f6!

Once Black’s king and dark-square
bishop enter play, the queenside
majority looms large, e.g. 21 exf6 xf6
22 d6 f7 23 xh7 xb3.

21 c3 fxe5

Black shouldn’t liquidate pawns he
may later be able to pluck easily
(21...b4? 33 exf6 bxc3 34 fxe7 or
33...xf6 34 xf6 and d6.

22 xe5 d8
23 xd8+ xd8

Both players must have recalled
Game 23, a quite different Ruy Lopez
in which White had the superior pawn
structure and routinely put his majority
to work. This is a reverse. Black seems
to be winning as long as he doesn’t
make a gross error

24 f4!

Black would like to play 24...g6 to
safeguard his pawns and stop f4-f5. But
25 d6 makes progress difficult
(25 b6 26 f1 f7 27 e2). No better is
24 f6 25 xf6 xf6 26 f2
h6 27 e3 d5 28 g4.

24 ... f7

Now he can meet 25 d6 with
25 e7.

25 f2

Trading pawns with 25 xh7! had to
be better, e.g. 25...g6 26 h3 xb3
27 f5!.

25 ... f6
26 d6? d4+
27. f3 d5+

Suddenly White appears lost. 28 g3 h6 29 d1 e6 and ...d7-c6.

28 g4! e6!

Black wants to avoid 28...xg2 29 xh7 g6 30 g5 d5 31 xg6+ e6 32 f8 xb3 33 f5+ d7 34 h4.

29 f8 f7

30 d6 xg2

We’re following Tarrasch’s sanitized version of the game. According to Whyld and other sources, play went 30.e6 31.f8 f7 32.d6 xg2 33.xh7 e6 34.f8 f7 35.d6 e6 36.f8. Tarrasch omitted the repetitions from the tournament book.

31 xh7 e6

32 f8 d5

33 g5 f6+

Avoiding 33...xb2 34 g6 and xg7, when the f-pawn becomes a factor.

34 g6 e4+

35 f5 e5

36 xg7 xf5+

Now on 37 h6 Black wins with a trade on g7, then on h7 and 39...f6!.

37 f7

“The tournament participants followed the developments of this battle with huge interest, and the closest rivals, Capablanca and Alekhine figured that after 37...e6+ Black’s position was won,” Yakov Rokhlin wrote in Book of Chess, based on witnesses’ accounts. Black just has to trade dark-squared bishops, capture on b3 and give up his bishop for the h-pawn when it reaches the danger zone.

But Lasker “maintained an Olympian calm” and turned to Nimzovich, who sat near him. “Big events lie ahead,” Lasker remarked, according to Rokhlin.

37 ... xg7?

After thinking 15 minutes, Black decided to trade all four bishops. As a Tarrasch biographer put it, why play a won bishop-endgame when there is a won pawn-endgame?

38 xf5!!

Black saw this, of course. He knew his chances were slim in the bishops-offops ending, e.g. 38.h8 39 c8 a5 40 a6 b4 41 e7 d5 42 b7+ d4 43 d6 c5+ 44 c6 c4 45 c8! and draws because of 45...xb3 46 b5.

38 ... xf5

39 xg7 a5

40 h4! g4

Now 41 xf6 c4 promotes a pawn and wins (42 bxc4 bxc4 43 e5 c3!).

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Why Lasker Matters

41...g6!!

The difference is that after 41...g6 White suddenly has winning chances, in the $\text{w}+\text{b}$-vs.-$\text{w}$ endgame after 41...c4 42 h5!.

When he realized he had to play exactly to obtain a draw “Doctor Tarrasch’s face was covered with red blemishes. He asked for an official and demanded absolute silence in the tournament hall,” an observer wrote, according Rokhlin.

41...$\text{xh4}$
42$f5$ $b3$

Or 42...c4 43 bxc4 bxc4 44 $e4$ and White is in the square.

43$e4$ $f2$
44$d5$ $e3$
45$xc5$ $d3$
46$xb5$ $c2$
47$xa5$ $xb3$

Draw

White’s drawing finesse is often compared with Reti’s $\text{w}+\text{b}$ study of 1921. But it is closer to Marshall’s game with Yates from Carlsbad 1929- (White $b4$, $\text{d}2$ vs. Black $b1$, $\text{a4}$). Black is not in the square and cannot save his own pawn. But 1...$b2$!, threatening 2...$a3$, draws (2 $xa4$ $c3$).

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By the time of the 19th Marshall-Lasker game, the battles between those two tactical titans had become what Shirov-Kasparov games were in the 1990s. You knew each would be supercomplex. You knew the likely outcome. But you still wanted to get a front-row seat.

Marshall – Lasker
St. Petersburg 1914

Old Indian Defense (A54)

1$d4$ $d6$
2$c4$ $d6$
3$c3$ $bd7$
4$f3$ $e5$
5$e3$

An extremely modest setup that has been tried by Miles, Benko (and many computers). It has minor benefits over 5 $g5$ $e7$ 6 $e3$, which ruled the opening books since the 1920s.

5...$e7$
6$d3$ 0-0
7$\text{c2}$

White’s strategy is to build up slowly, with $\text{d}2$ or $\text{b}2$ and $\text{a}1$. Black is confined largely to the first two ranks, and ...exd4/cxd4 only helps White.

7...$e8$
8$0-0$ $f8$
9$g5$

Marshall wants to provoke either ...$h6$ – and exploit the diagonal leading to $h7$ after $\text{ge}4$ – or ...$g6$, so that he can open lines with $f2$-$f4$-$f5$.

9...$g6$
10$f4$ exd4
11 $x$ $f4$! followed by $d2$ and $a1$ (11 $h5$ 12 $xf7$; 11...$h6$ 12 $ce4$ $xe4$? 13 $xf7$ and wins).

11 exd4 $g7$
12$f5$! $g4$

Black played ...$f8$ in a similar position in the Showalter-Janowsky match of 1916 but stood worse after $xg6$ and $\text{w}2$. 

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13  \( \text{\textit{Qf3}} \)

White can make up for the loss of the two bishops (13... \( \text{Qe3} \) 14 \( \text{Qxc3} \) \( \text{Qxe3} \)) with a mini-initiative, 15 fxg6, 16 \( \text{Qd5} \) and 17 \( \text{Rae1} \).

But what if White had continued in the sacrificial vein with 13 fxg6 hxg6 14 \( \text{Qxg6} \) ? Then 14...fxg6 15 \( \text{Wxg6} \) distinctly favors him.

The trouble is that Black can force a draw with 14 \( \text{Qxd4}+ \) 15 \( \text{Qh1} \) \( \text{Qf2}+ \) since 16 \( \text{Qxf2} \) allows a last rank mate. Neither side can play for a win after 14 \( \text{Qxg6} \).

13  ...  c5

Quite a daring move considering that it makes both \( \text{Qd5} \) and \( \text{Qe4} \) stronger. But Black doesn't enjoy the luxury of defensive moves like 13 \( \text{Qf8} \), which he could adopt in quieter positions, because White gets too much play after 14 fxg6 and 15 \( \text{Qe4} \).

14  fxg6  fxg6!

With 14...hxg6 Black retains the possibility of ...f6 or ...f5. That seems important in lines such as 15 \( \text{Qd5} \) cxd4 16 \( \text{Qg5} \) f6 — but 17 \( \text{Qxg6} \) fxg5 18 \( \text{Qxe8} \) favors White.

15  \text{h3}?

Tarrasch hadn't done particularly well against Marshall since their 1905 match but felt confident in claiming that “against any other opponent” Marshall would have played 15 \( \text{Qg5} \)!

and then 15...\( \text{Qf6} \) 16 \( \text{Qxg6} \) or 15...\( \text{Qdf6} \) 16 dxc5.

Actually the 16 \( \text{Qxg6} \) sack may not be as clearly favorable as 16 \( \text{Qe4} \) — but either is something for Black to avoid. More pertinent is 15...\( \text{Qdf6} \) 16 dxc5 dxc5 when 17 \( \text{Rae1} \) \( \text{Qxe1} \) 18 \( \text{Qxe1} \) \( \text{Qd6} \) 19 \text{h3} obtains the upper hand — as do 17 \( \text{Qad1} \) and 17 \( \text{Qe4} \).

Marshall also passed up 15 \( \text{Qd5} \), which works well in some lines (15...\( \text{Qb6} \) 16 \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{Qxd4}+ \) 17 \( \text{Qh1} \) and 16...\( \text{Qf6} \) 17 \( \text{Qxg6} \)). But Black is much better off after 15...\( \text{Qdf6} \) 16 \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) and ...\( \text{Qxc6} \) than he would be after 15 \( \text{Qg5} \! \).

15  ...  cxd4

16  \( \text{Qg5} \)

The main alternative is 16 \( \text{Qb5} \) \( \text{Qe3} \) 17 \( \text{Qxe3} \) dxe3. After 18 \( \text{Qxd6} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) 19 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{Qe5} \) or 19 \( \text{Qxc8} \) \( \text{Qxc8} \) 20 \( \text{Qad1} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) White averts major material loss but his prospects are dismal.

16  ...  \( \text{Qe3}! \)

Now 17 \( \text{Qxd8} \) \( \text{Qxc2} \) must favor Black.

17  \( \text{Qf2} \)

Taking on e3 was anathema (17 \( \text{Qxe3} \) dxe3 18 \( \text{Qxg6} \) hxg6 19 \( \text{Wxg6} \) \( \text{Qf8} \) and 18 \( \text{Qd5} \) \( \text{Qf6} \), with obvious Black superiority).

17  ...  \( \text{Wb6}! \)
This is what White most likely overlooked when he chose his 16th move. He would have had plenty of compensation for the Exchange after 17...\(\text{Qf6}\) 18 \(\text{Qxd5}!\) \(\text{Qxf1}\) 19 \(\text{Qxf6+ Qxf6}\) 20 \(\text{Qxf1}\), e.g. 20...\(\text{Qf5}\) 21 \(\text{Qxf5 gxf5}\) 22 \(\text{Wh4}\) and \(\text{Qxd4}\)

Black can decline the offer with 18...\(\text{Qxd5}\) But after 19 \(\text{cx}d5\) he can’t play 19...\(\text{Qxg5}\)? 20 \(\text{Qxg5} \text{Qxg5}\) 21 \(\text{Wf7+}\). And on 19...\(\text{Qe5}\) White has the dangerous 20 \(\text{Qxe5 Qxg5}\) 21 \(\text{Wf7+ Qh8}\) 22 \(\text{Qxg6+}\).

18 \(\text{Qd5}\)

The best try. White’s positional inferiority is clear after 18 \(\text{Rae1}\) \(\text{f8}\) 19 \(\text{Qd5} \text{Qxd5}\) 20 \(\text{cx}d5 \text{Qe5}\) or 19 \(\text{Qxe3 dxe3}\) – especially because of 20 \(\text{Qxe3}\) \(\text{Qxf3}\) 21 \(\text{Qxf3}\) \(\text{Qd4}\) and 21 \(\text{Wxb6 Qxf1+}\) or 20 \(\text{Qxe3}\) \(\text{Qd4}\) 21 \(\text{Rfe1 Qe5}\).

18... \(\text{Qxd5}\)

19 \(\text{cx}d5 \text{Qe5}\)

Black cannot allow 19...\(\text{Qe5??}\) 20 \(\text{Qxe5}\) and \(\text{Wf7+}\). After the text 20...\(\text{Qd5}\) is refuted by 20...\(\text{Rf8}\).

20 \(\text{Rxd1}\)

Thanks to his superior tactics, Black has a material and positional edge. He faces a familiar technical choice: Should he force matters (20...\(\text{Qxd3}\) 21 \(\text{Qxd3}\) \(\text{Qf5}\)) or pause and risk White reforming his ranks?

If he trades, White has tricks after 22 \(\text{Rb3}\), e.g. 22...\(\text{Wc5}\) 23 \(\text{Rxb7}\) \(\text{Qd3}\)? 24 \(\text{Rc1}\) and 25 \(\text{Rc7}\) Black must be winning with 23...\(\text{Wxd5}\) because 24 \(\text{Qxg7+ Qxg7}\) 25 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qd3}\) is unsound. Black prefers caution.

20... \(\text{Qd7}\)!

21 \(\text{Wd4}\)

The best try Black wins the endgame after 21 \(\text{Qb1}\) \(d3\) 22 \(\text{Qxd3 Wxb2}\).

21... \(\text{Qa4}\)!

After 21...\(\text{Qxd3}\) 22 \(\text{Qxd3}\) \(\text{Qb5}\) White again has \(\text{Rb3}\). But 23...\(\text{Wc5}\) 24 \(\text{Rd5}\) \(\text{Qc7}\) comes up short (24...\(\text{Rc8}\) 26 \(\text{Qxg7+ Qxg7}\) 27 \(\text{Qf6+ Qg8}\)).

Black’s choice is simpler and contains less chance of oversight. The point of 21...\(\text{Qa4}\) is to provoke 22 \(\text{b3}\) so he can play 22...\(\text{Qxd3}\) 23 \(\text{Qxd3}\) \(\text{Qb5}\) – White loses because there is no \(\text{Rb3}\). Equally bad is 22 \(\text{Rd2}\) because of 22...\(\text{Qxd3}\) 23 \(\text{Qxd3}\) \(\text{Qc2!}\) 24 \(\text{Rd2}\) \(d3+\).

22 \(\text{Qxg6!}\)

White might as well roll the dice

22... \(\text{hxg6}\)

Black can refute 23 \(\text{Qf6}\) with 23...\(\text{Qc4}\), among others.

23 \(\text{Qd8}\) \(\text{Qxd8}\)!

Black will end up with at least a rook and two minor pieces for the queen.

24 \(\text{Qg5}\) \(\text{Qxg5}\)

25 \(\text{Qxg5}\) \(\text{Qxd1}\)

26 \(\text{Wxg6}\)

Marshall can only contrive swindles (26...\(\text{Qe2??}\) 27 \(\text{Qf7}\) and wins). On 26...\(\text{Rf8}\) 27 \(\text{Qxd1}\) he has better chances than he would after 26 \(\text{Qxd1}\) \(\text{Qh6}\) 27 \(\text{Wf4+}\) \(\text{Qh6}\).

26... \(\text{Qe2!}\)

White has a pawn more now than in the 26 \(\text{Qxd1}\) line but Black can coordinate more easily. This shortens the game by several moves.
27 \( \text{\textit{Wxc2}} \) \( \text{\textit{d3}} \)

White doesn’t even get to check on e6 or f7 now, and Black can win by advancing his d-pawn, e.g. 28 \( \text{\textit{Wc1 \textit{c4}}} \) 29 \( \text{\textit{Wf4 \textit{e7}}} \) and ...d2.

The remainder went: 28 \( \text{\textit{Wd1 \textit{a5}}} \) 29 \( \text{\textit{Wg4 \textit{e5}}} \) 30 \( \text{\textit{d1 \textit{eae8}}} \) 31 \( \text{\textit{Wg6 \textit{e2}}} \) 32 \( \text{\textit{xf1 \textit{d2}}} \) 33 \( \text{\textit{xf8+ \textit{xf8}}} \) 34 \( \text{\textit{Wxd6+ \textit{g8}}} \) 35 \( \text{\textit{Wd8+ \textit{h7}}} \) 36 \( \text{\textit{Wh4+ \textit{h6}}} \) White resigns

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By the end of Tsar Nicholas’s tournament, Tarrasch’s attitude towards his longtime foe had changed “One cannot withhold admiration,” he wrote, as if he wanted to. Tarrasch said Lasker had been paid the staggering sum of more than 4,000 rubles to play but deserved even more “for the splendid games he has played in this tournament.” He called the following, painful defeat “beautifully played.”

\begin{center}
\textbf{Lasker – Tarrasch}
St. Petersburg 1914
Queen’s Gambit Declined,
Tarrasch Defense (D30)
\end{center}

\begin{align*}
1 & \text{\textit{d4}} & \text{\textit{d5}} \\
2 & \text{\textit{\textbf{c3}}} & \text{\textit{c5}} \\
3 & \text{\textit{c4}} & \text{\textit{e6}} \\
4 & \text{\textit{cxd5}} & \text{\textit{exd5}} \\
5 & \text{\textit{g3}} & \text{\textit{\textbf{c6}}} \\
6 & \text{\textit{\textbf{g2}}} & \text{\textit{\textbf{f6}}} \\
\end{align*}

Since Schlechter’s success with White’s setup at Prague 1908, the Tarrasch Defense had been bloodied White’s plan is to take aim at d5 while trying to occupy the dark squares around it, principally d4 and c5. The model for this was Rubinstein-Salwe, Lodz 1908, which comes about after 7 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{c3 \textit{cxd4?}}} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{xd4 \textit{Wb6}}} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{xc6}}} \)

bxc6 10 0-0 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{e7}}} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{a4 \textit{wb5}}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{e3}}} \) and \( \text{\textit{\textbf{c1}}} \). This literally became textbook play and it struck fear in the hearts of Tarrasch Defense specialists.

But they were soon encouraged by the realization that Black need not force matters on d4 and can allow 7 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{c3 \textit{e7}}} \) 8 0-0 0-0 9 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{dxc5}} \) because of 9...d4, with excellent play after 10 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{b5 \textit{xc5}}} \) or 10 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{a4 \textit{f5}}} \) and ...\textit{\textbf{e4}}.

7

0-0

Lasker’s move order was original: He avoids \( \text{\textit{\textbf{c3}}} \) so that there is no tempo for Black to gain after \( \text{\textit{\textbf{dxc5/...d4!}}} \). Instead, White wants to gain the tempo from \( \text{\textit{\textbf{dxc5/...\textit{xe5}}} \) and then \( \text{\textit{\textbf{bd2-b3}}} \).

7 ... \( \text{\textit{\textbf{e7}}} \) 8 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{dxc5}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{xe5}}} \) 9 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{bd2}}} \) \( \text{\textit{d4?!}} \)

“The isolated d-pawn has the choice of being weak on d4 or 5,” joked Nimzovich. This move gains space, eyes a target at e2 and makes sure the isolani will not be blockaded on d5. But as teenager Max Euwe would later show, it was best to wait with 9...0-0 since 10 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{b3 \textit{\textbf{b6}}} \) 11 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{bd4 \textit{e8}}} \) is fine for Black.

10 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{b3}}} \) \( \text{\textit{\textbf{b6}}} \)

In comparison with book (\( \text{\textit{\textbf{c3-a4}}} \)) positions, Black seems to be in better shape because there is no \( \text{\textit{\textbf{xb6}}} \) He would stand well after 11 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{e1 0-0}}} \) 12 \( \text{\textit{\textbf{d3 \textit{e8}}} \) and ...\textit{\textbf{f5-e4!}}
Why Lasker Matters

11 \( \text{Wd3!} \)

"Lasker refrutes the ill-considered pawn push very shrewdly," wrote Tarrasch, who hated to give up his queen bishop, rather than the other, for a knight in this opening. Actually Black’s position is only minutely worse.

11 ... \( \text{Lxe6} \)

Black can avoid losing a pawn with 11...0-0 12 \( \text{Mxd1 Lg4} \) because of 13 \( \text{Qbxd4 Qxd4} \) 14 \( \text{Qxd4 Lxe4} \) 15 \( \text{Wxd4 Lxh2} \). However, White has an obvious endgame edge then after taking twice on d8 and 18 \( \text{Lg5} \).

12 \( \text{Mxd1 Lxb3} \)

No choice: 12...\( \text{Wd7} \) 13 \( \text{Qbxd4 Mxd8} \) allows 14 \( \text{Lxc6! Wxc6} \) 15 \( \text{Qd4 Wa4} \) 16 \( \text{Lc3} \) with a safe extra pawn.

13 \( \text{Wxb3 We7} \)

14 \( \text{Ld2} \)

This and White’s next move are the only way to seek a meaningful edge.

14 ... \( \text{0-0} \)

15 \( \text{a4!} \)

The threat is 16 a5 and 17 a6 with mayhem to follow on the long diagonal. For instance, 15...\( \text{Lfe8} \) (not 15...\( \text{Wxe2??} \) 16 \( \text{Lel Wxa6} \) 17 \( \text{Lfl} \) 16 a5 \( \text{Lc5} \) 17 a6 \( \text{Mab8} \) 18 \( \text{Wb5 Le4} \) 19 \( \text{Lf4} \) with advantage (19...\( \text{Ld6} \) 20 \( \text{Lxd6 Qxd6} \) 21 \( \text{Wc5} \)).

That’s a theme of this game: There are many semi-forcing variations to consider. Almost none lead to a clear edge until several moves into the future and usually involve “creeping” moves like 21 \( \text{Wc5} \). This is an area in which Lasker was Tarrasch’s superior.

15 ... \( \text{Ld4} \)

Tarrasch later felt he should have stopped the a-pawn at some point with ...a6. For example, 15...\( \text{Lc5} \) 16 a5 a6 (17 \( \text{Lac1 La7} \) 18 \( \text{Lh4 Lb8} \) and ...\( \text{Lfe8} \)).

16 \( \text{Lb1} \)

Black has three potential targets to worry about, the b- and d-pawns and whatever is sitting on c6 White makes progress after, for example, 16...\( \text{Qc5} \) 17 \( \text{Wb5! Lxe6} \) 18 a5 \( \text{Lc5} \) 19 a6 \( \text{Mab8} \) 20 axb7.

16 ... \( \text{Lad8} \)

17 \( \text{a5} \) \( \text{Lc5} \)

18 \( \text{a6!} \)

White would have good pressure after 18...\( \text{Lb8} \) 19 axb7 \( \text{Lxb7} \) 20 \( \text{Wc2} \) Black can’t avoid losing material following 20...\( \text{Lc8} \) 21 \( \text{Ld2!} \) or 20...\( \text{Lb6} \) 21 \( \text{Lh4} \).

18 ... \( \text{bxa6?} \)

Black regarded 18...b6 19 \( \text{Wc4} \) and 20 b4 as bad for him, e.g. 19...\( \text{Lc8} \) 20 \( \text{Lb1!? Mfd8} \) 21 b4. But he overlooked 20...\( \text{Ld6} \) and 21 b4 b5! and ...\( \text{Lb6} \). Chances are nearly balanced after 18...b6!.

19 \( \text{Lac1!} \)

White’s expectations are rising and that means he has reason to reject candidates that are merely “promising.” This move, with a threat of 20 \( \text{Lh4!} \), is stronger than 19 \( \text{Lxa6 Lb8} \) 20 \( \text{Lc4 Lb6} \), intending ...\( \text{Lc5} \).

19 ... \( \text{Lc8} \)

Black’s main problem isn’t the weak pawns. If he managed to swap the pawns at a7, a6 and d4 for the b-pawn,
he might draw the endgame. The greatest concern is protecting his loosely connected pieces, which 19...\textit{b8} and ...\textit{d7-f6} would do better.

20 \textit{h4!}

The threat is 21 \textit{xe4 xe4} 22 \textit{xc5}.

20 ... \textit{b6?}

This natural move drops the Exchange Black puts up a better fight with 20...\textit{f6} or 20...\textit{b8}, e.g. 20 \textit{f6} 21 \textit{h3} \textit{xc7} 22 \textit{xf5} \textit{e5}.

21 \textit{f5} \textit{e5}

22 \textit{xe4?}

Lasker violates his most famous rule: When you see a good move, look for a better one. He could have saved himself much work with 22 \textit{f3! fe8} 23 \textit{xe4 xe4} 24 \textit{xe4 xe4} 25 \textit{d6} or 22...\textit{e5} 23 \textit{b4 d7} 24 \textit{wd5}!

22 ... \textit{xe4}

23 \textit{d6} \textit{xe2}

24 \textit{xe8?}

He breaks the rule again. White can get the same kind of ending as in the game with 24 \textit{d2 e5} 25 \textit{xc8 xc8} 26 \textit{dc2!} — but with the important difference that Black has to give up his d-pawn (26...\textit{d3} 27 \textit{wd3} \textit{ad8}) to avoid a quicker loss (26...\textit{e8} 27 \textit{wa4}).

24 ... \textit{xc8}

25 \textit{d5} \textit{e6}

26 \textit{f3}

Both players underestimated 26 \textit{xe6 fxe6} 27 \textit{f4!}. In any of the likely endgames Black’s survival rests on his d-pawn, especially if it is protected by his king or a pawn.

26 ... \textit{h6}

27 \textit{d2} \textit{e5}

28 \textit{xc8+} \textit{xc8}

29 \textit{e4} \textit{d7?}

This makes it relatively easy again. After 29...\textit{g4} White can force a trade of queens with 30 \textit{c1 wd7} 31 \textit{c6}. But he would have a lot of work cut out for him after 31...\textit{xc6} 32 \textit{xc6 \textit{f8}} 33 \textit{f4 \textit{e7}} or 33 \textit{g2 \textit{e5}}.

30 \textit{c1} \textit{f8}

Black is being slowly squeezed to death after 30...\textit{d8} 31 \textit{b4!}, followed by \textit{f5} or \textit{c6-d6}.

31 \textit{xe6!} \textit{e5}

Resignable was 31 ...\textit{gxh6} 32 \textit{g4+} and \textit{xd7}.

32 \textit{g4} \textit{f5}

33 \textit{g6} \textit{f7}

Tarrasch declared himself “hopelessly lost” because White can create a passed pawn. The way he did it was worth noting: 34 \textit{xf7+ xd7} 35 \textit{g5 xd3} 36 \textit{xb1 e6} 37 \textit{b3! xd5} 38 \textit{f3 a5} 39 \textit{h4 dc5} 40 \textit{h5 d3+} 41 \textit{fl a4} 42 \textit{bxa4 xa4}

43 \textit{f6!}

The minor pieces can’t stop the h-pawn after 43...\textit{gxh6} 44 \textit{h6} and they form no fortress after 44...\textit{c3} 45 \textit{a1} d2 46 \textit{h7 d1(+) 47 \textit{xd1 xd1} 48 \textit{h8(+) Black resigned after 43...\textit{xe6} 44 \textit{xe7 f7} 45 \textit{e5 dc5} 46 \textit{d1}.
Despite his praise for Lasker, Tarrasch was driven to accuse him of winning games at St. Petersburg thanks to the dark arts – witchcraft and hypnotism. He said Marshall botched the attack in Game 67 “as if Lasker had exercised a spell on him.” Tarrasch suspected there was “a certain hypnotic influence” that forced his opponents to “suddenly play a losing game,” such as in the following classic.

**Lasker – Capablanca**  
St. Petersburg 1914

*Ruy Lopez, Exchange Variation (C68)*

1. e4 e5  
2. d4 \text{dxc6}  
3. \text{b5} a6  
4. \text{xc6}  

There are two quite different explanations for this move, neither of them entirely convincing. The first comes from Tarrasch, who said that when the game was adjourned for a meal break, he asked Lasker why he chose 4 \text{xc6}. Lasker replied that he had studied Tarrasch’s new idea in the Open Defense and couldn’t find an improvement for White. Lasker feared that Capablanca would use the same opening.

But this sounds like another Lasker smoke screen. Capablanca never played the Open Defense in his career, and Lasker often played the Exchange Variation without a special reason.

5. ... dxc6  
6. d4 \text{exd4}  
7. \text{xd4} \text{d6}  

The second explanation of 4 \text{xc6} comes from Reti. Writing 15 years after the tournament, he said that the real reason was – you guessed it – psychology.

Capablanca wanted a draw, because he was Black and because a half point would virtually clinch first prize. Reti said. But in the Exchange Lopez Black is forced to play aggressively and Capablanca was emotionally unprepared for what follows. GM Nikolai Krogius, a trained psychologist, called Lasker’s choice of opening a “classic” example of “camouflage.” Lulled by his opponent’s fourth move, “Capablanca played passively and through carelessness found himself in a difficult position.”

But this version also has a hollow ring. Black is not playing for a draw, as his next few moves show. And Reti, of all people, knew how good Black’s natural winning chances were. His career record on the White side of 4 \text{xc6} was $\frac{1}{2}$-3$\frac{1}{2}$.

8. \text{c3} \text{c7}  
9. 0-0 0-0  
10. \text{f4}  

“Considered weak by everyone watching the game.” Capablanca wrote.  

10. ... e8!  

If Reti’s theory were correct, Black would have jumped at 10...f5 because...
after 11 e5 he has 11...\textit{c}c5 and \textit{x}xd4. That creates bishop-of-opposite-color and, while White would theoretically have the better of 12 \textit{e}e3 \textit{xd}4 13 \textit{x}xd4, his winning chances are minuscule after simple moves such as 13...\textit{d}d5 and 12...\textit{e}e6/...b6/...c5.

But 10...\textit{e}e8!, on the other hand, threatens to seize an edge with 11...\textit{c}c5 12 \textit{e}e3 \textit{d}d5!.

11 \textit{d}b3 \textit{f}6

Before this game, the move ...\textit{f}6 was considered good for Black in the Exchange Variation, “even necessary” said Vainshtein \textit{After the game}, annotators dismissed ...\textit{f}6 as questionable because “it makes \textit{f}4-\textit{f}5 stronger.”

We got so much smarter over the years that when ...\textit{f}6 is already played, it’s taken for granted that \textit{f}4-\textit{f}5 will be strong. For example, Fischer-Unzicker, Olympiad 1970 – 1 e4 e5 2 \textit{f}f3 \textit{c}c6 3 \textit{b}b5 a6 4 \textit{x}c6 dxc6 5 0-0 \textit{f}6 6 d4 \textit{ex}d4 7 \textit{x}xd4 \textit{e}e7 8 \textit{e}e3 \textit{g}g6 9 \textit{d}d2 \textit{d}d6 10 \textit{c}c4 0-0 11 \textit{d}d3 \textit{e}e5 12 \textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 13 \textit{f}4 \textit{d}d6 14 \textit{f}5! and \textit{f}4 favored White.

12 \textit{f}5

“One of the most famous, paradoxical and deep moves in chess,” wrote Yakov Damsky, co-author of Kramnik’s game collection. Why paradoxical? Because it “immediately destroys three rules of Steinitz’s theory,” Vainshtein wrote. White creates a backward pawn on an open file, he grants Black a wonderful outpost at e5, and he cripples his kingside majority. Tarrasch had ridiculed \textit{f}4-\textit{f}5 when it occurred in a similar position (e.g. Fahrni-Janowsky, Nuremberg 1906).

But Tarrasch’s knee-jerk classicism had been proven wrong when Lasker won Game 53 and the \textit{f}4-\textit{f}5 idea had worked reasonably well in other previous games – including Alekhine-Lasker from the previous round.

12 ... \textit{b}6

From this point on the annotators looked for a way to save Black’s position – a remarkable admission of the strength of 12 \textit{f}5. Reti, Tarrasch, Pachman and countless others wanted Black to go on the defensive with 12...\textit{d}d7 and 13...\textit{a}ad8, followed perhaps by clearing \textit{d}6 for ...\textit{c}c8-d6.

Reti also suggested 12...\textit{g}5 with the idea of 13 \textit{fx}g6 \textit{c}xg6 14 \textit{xf}6 \textit{a}a5. Despite claims that Capa played passively, 12...\textit{g}5 is the only bold alternative that he passed up until his position was bad.

13 \textit{a}a4 \textit{b}7?

“Here it would doubtless seem better to play 13...\textit{xf}4 14 \textit{xf}4 \textit{c}5,” Capa wrote. This has been analyzed well into a minor piece ending. One line runs 15 \textit{d}d1 \textit{b}7 16 \textit{f}2 \textit{a}ad8 17 \textit{xd}8 \textit{xd}8 18 \textit{a}a2 \textit{xd}2 19 \textit{xd}2 \textit{c}c6 20 \textit{d}d5 \textit{d}d4 and so on.

14 \textit{xd}6!

White creates the potential tight lever (...\textit{d}5) and strangler headpawn that becomes a liberating sweeper and ..\textit{Oh, sorry, I slipped into Knoch-speak.

In English, this means White makes the d-pawn the board’s only real target.

14 ... \textit{ex}d6
Capablanca said he didn’t see the knight-maneuver to e6 when he made his 13th move. He doesn’t try to stop it now.

15...Ad8

White’s advantage isn’t great after 15...Ac8 16 Ad1 c5 17 De2 Ad8 18 Bd2 and Ad1. But it is enough to play for a win. Black cannot engineer ...d5 and would be taking major risks with ...g6. That leaves White with the traditional advantage of being able to time when he opens a second front, such as g2-g4-g5.

16 De6 Ad7

Black will be reluctant to play ...d5 if he has to retake on d5 with an isolated pawn. Instead, he can protect d6 and prepare for ...c5...d5.

17 Ad1 Oc8

This gives up on ...d5 and is the “fatal error,” Capablanca said. He thought 17...c5, intending 18...d5, would lead after 18 Dd5 Ox5 19 exd5 b5 to a fine game (...Oc8-b6-c4).

His move analysis is accurate but the evaluation isn’t. White has much the better plan and he can advance it with 20 g4! Oc8 21 f3 Oe6 22 Eg3 followed by Oh1 and h2-h4.

18 Ef2 b5

Black would seem to have an extra move (...Ox8) to pursue his plan. But 18...c5 doesn’t work because after 19 Oxf2 he doesn’t have enough pieces for ...d5, and because 19...b5? allows 20 Ox8.

On the other hand, if Black plays for ...d5 without ...c5 — such as 18...d5 19 exd5 Oxd5 — White enjoys enduring pressure with 20 Ef4 De7 21 g4.

19 Ef2 De7

20 b4 Ef7

21 a3 Oa8?

“I continued to play badly without a fixed plan,” Capablanca said of the final 25 moves of the game. One worthy idea is an Exchange sacrifice (21...Exe6 22 fxg6+ Exe6). Black can establish a semi-fortress, with his king at e7 and knight at c4.

The best way to beat a fortress is break it apart before it is built. That suggests 23 Ad4 so that 23...e5 24 Oe2 Exe5 (not 24...Ob6 25 Oe4) 25 Og3 g6 will give White winning tries of 26 c4! or just 26 Oe2.

But 23 Ad4 can be met by 23...e5! 24 bxc5 dx5 and then 25 Ad7+ e7 followed by Ob6 or 25 Ad8 De7 26 Ad6 Oc6 and...b4. Black is not losing.

22 Oe2 Ad7

Black’s only active play stems from ...a5.

23 g4! h6

24 Ad3 a5

This was criticized because it provides the second front. However, White could open the file from the other end (a2-a4).

25 h4 axb4

26 axb4 Mae7

Now 26...Mx3 and 27...Oxb6 would allow Black a modicum of activity (28 Oxd6? Ox3). But 27 g5! is much too fast. For example 27...hxg5 28 hxg5 Oxb6 would lose to 29 g6+ Mg8 30 Oxd6, e.g. 30...Ox3 31 Oxd8! and mates.

27 Oe3!

White anticipates 27...Ex6 28 dx6+ Exe6, which he can now meet with 29 Oe2 c5 30 Og3, e.g. 30...cx4 31 Ad4 and Mxb4.

27...Mg8

28 Oe4 g6
Why Lasker Matters

29 \( \text{g}3! \)

Capablanca said Lasker played with so much care he “nearly did not win.” He may have been thinking about 29 g5, which saves time in lines such as 29...hxg5+ 30 hxg5 gxf5 31 exf5 fxg5+ 32 \( \text{Q}xg5+ \text{F}f8 33 \text{Q}e6+ \text{F}f7 34 \text{Q}e4 \) and wins.

There is also the flashy refutation of 30...\( \text{h}8 31 \text{gxf6} \text{xf6} 32 \text{xd6}! \text{Q}xd6 33 \text{e}5+. But to play such a forcing line you are betting that White is winning after 32 \( \text{h}4+ 33 \text{g}3 \text{xd6} 34 \text{xh}4 \text{gxf}5 35 \text{xd6} \text{xe}6 36 \text{e}8 \) and then 36...\( \text{b}7 37 \text{f}8+ \) or 36...fxe4 37 \( \text{x}a8 \) e3

With the kind of advantage White has after 29 \( \text{g}3 \) it defies well, common sense, to risk it with 29 g5.

29 ... \( \text{g}5+ \)

Reti and Tarrasch much preferred 29...gxf5 so that Black’s rook is active or traded (30 gxf5 \( \text{Q}xg3 \)). But 30 exf5 clears e4 for a knight, and after the semi-forced 30...d5 White creates the kind of passed pawn (31 g5) that the Exchange Variation is all about.

Following 31 \( \text{Q}d6 32 \text{g}6+ \text{e}8 33 \text{a}1 \) Black is lost, as he is after 31...hxg5+ 32 hxg5 fxg5+ 33 \( \text{Q}xg5+ \text{f}8 34 \text{f}6! \text{a}7 35 \text{e}5.

30 \( \text{f}3! \)

Not 30 hxg5 hxg5+ 31 \( \text{f}3 \text{h}8! \) when White must find an entirely new plan.

30 ... \( \text{b}6 \)

On 30...gxh4 31 \( \text{h}3 \) Black would lose both h-pawns.

31 \( \text{hxg}5 \) \( \text{hxg}5 \)

32 \( \text{h}3! \)

Not 32 \( \text{xd}6? \text{c}4 \) with counterplay.

32 ... \( \text{d}7 \)

33 \( \text{g}3 \)

The e4-e5 break surprises almost everyone who sees it when they first come upon this game. But the idea of clearing e4 for a knight has been in the air for some time. It works because after 33 \( \text{e}5! \text{f}5 34 \text{e}4 \) the defense 34...c5 loses to 35 \( \text{h}7+ \text{e}8 36 \text{c}7+. 

33 ... \( \text{e}8 \)

34 \( \text{dh}1 \)

White is preparing 35 \( \text{h}8 \text{h}8 36 \text{hxh}8+ \text{e}7 \) and then 37 \( \text{e}5! \text{dxe}5 38 \text{c}4, \) after which Black must drop at least the bishop.

34 ... \( \text{b}7 \)

35 \( \text{e}5!! \) \( \text{dxe}5 \)

36 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}5 \)

37 \( \text{c}5 \)

This is not as easy as it may seem. An instinctive but false lead is 37 \( \text{h}7 \text{c}8. \) However, 37 \( \text{h}8 \text{h}8 38 \text{hxh}8+ \text{f}7 \) would win after 39 \( \text{c}4 \text{c}5. 

37 ... \( \text{c}8 \)

38 \( \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{xd}7 \)
The technician’s instinct is to trade (39  \text{h}8). But the presence of both White rooks shortens matters by many moves.

39  \text{f}7  \text{f}8
40  \text{a}1!  \text{d}8
41  \text{a}8+  \text{c}8
42  \text{c}5  Resigns

The threat was 47  \text{b}7+/\text{xc}8 mate. After 42  \text{e}7 White has 43  \text{e}6+.

70

What is often forgotten about St. Petersburg is that Capablanca was still in excellent position to win first prize after Game 69. With three games to go, he had 11 points. Lasker had 12 but only two games remaining.

In the next round Capablanca made one of the worst blunders of his life against tailender Tarrasch – 1  \text{e}4  \text{e}5  2  \text{f}3  \text{c}6  3  \text{c}3  \text{f}6  4  \text{b}5  \text{b}4  5 0-0 0-0 6  \text{d}3  \text{xc}3  7  \text{bxc}3  d5  8  \text{xc}6  \text{bxc}6  9  \text{xe}5  \text{d}6  10  \text{f}4  \text{e}8  11  \text{f}3  \text{dxe}4  12  \text{xe}4  \text{xe}5  and now 13  \text{f}d1?  \text{g}4  14  \text{g}3?  \text{xd}1  15  \text{xe}5  \text{d}2! and Black won. (Lasker used this to illustrate the Four Knights in his Manual of Chess, without mentioning who played it. He said 13  \text{ad}1  \text{g}4  14  \text{xd}6 is “an easy draw.”)

Lasker could only draw against Tarrasch in the next round while Capa won, so on the final day he led the Cuban by a half point. The world champion had White against Marshall while Capablanca was White against Alekhine.

Lasker – Marshall
St. Petersburg 1914
Petroff Defense (C42)

1  \text{c}4  \text{e}5
2  \text{f}3  \text{f}6
3  \text{xe}5  \text{d}6
4  \text{f}3  \text{xe}4
5  \text{e}2

Morphy’s move, played when he was 12 years old, had been forgotten until revived by Marco at Hastings. As usual, it was called a psychological choice because Lasker was coaxing Marshall into an endgame, his supposed weakness.

In reality, Marshall was one of the world’s best endgame players and this move was regarded as very good. Immediately after St. Petersburg Capablanca wrote that the variation “is considered today by Lasker and me to be the strongest continuation for White.”

5  \ldots  \text{e}7
6  \text{d}3  \text{f}6
7  \text{g}5

The minor positional threat of  \text{xf}6 helps White squeeze out an advantage. He will continue  \text{c}3 and 0-0-0, and Black may have to concede a tempo with  \ldots \text{xe}2.

But Burn reflected the modern view that an extra tempo doesn’t matter much in an endgame with symmetrical pawns. Lasker had beaten Teichmann at Cambridge Springs after 7 \ldots \text{xe}2+ 8  \text{xe}2  \text{e}7 but it took several minor errors (9  \text{c}3  \text{d}7  10 0-0-0  \text{c}6  11  \text{he}1 0-0? 12  \text{d}4  \text{g}4? 13  \text{xe}7  \text{xe}7  14  \text{b}5!  \text{xb}5  15  \text{dxe}7 etc.).

7  \ldots  \text{e}6

Marshall had played this move before, including a win over Olrich Duras from a bad position (8  \text{d}4  \text{d}5  9  \text{c}3  \text{c}6  10  \text{e}5  \text{bd}7  11 0-0 \text{b}4?) and a loss to Capablanca six rounds earlier.

8  \text{c}3

Now 8 \ldots \text{c}6 9 \text{e}4! and  \text{xf}6+ favors White slightly.
Why Lasker Matters

Marshall gave up a pawn for dubious compensation in the Capablanca game (8...h6 9...xf6 xf6 10...e7 11...b5+).

By this time in the round Lasker couldn’t help but notice that Alekhine had gone slightly mad against Capablanca – 1...d4 e6 2 e4 d5 3...c3...f6 4...g5 h6? 5...xf6 xf6 6...xd5 with a clear extra pawn for White. That meant Capa would have 13 points. A draw would give Lasker the same score and a tie for first prize.

This and Black’s next move are premature. Black is more or less forced to castle queenside and should do so immediately. After 10...0-0-0 11...d4 he can exploit the hole at c4 (11...g5 12...g3...b6 and...c4).

Not 16...xd5?...d5 17...xd5 because of 17...g5! 18...xg5 hxg5 and the knight is pinned.

Or 16...b8 17...b5 and Black drops a pawn.

There has been considerable debate over what the losing move was. Some argued for 14...d5, others for 20...g5+. A case can also be made for 17...xa6 because of the slim but real drawing chances Black has after 17...b4.

The threats include 20...a7+ and 20...d3/21...b3.

The position seems dicey because 20...c4 21...b3 allows 21...g5+ 22...b1...d2+ and 23...xb3 with check.
White has a prettier try in 21 \( \texttt{Ke}1 \) \( \texttt{Wg}5+ \) 22 \( \texttt{Qb}1 \). Then if Black continues with 22...\( \texttt{Nd}6 \) to protect \( \texttt{c}7 \), White has 23 \( \texttt{Wa}7+ \) \( \texttt{Vc}8 \) 24 \( \texttt{Exd}6+ \) \( \texttt{Exd}6 \) 25 \( \texttt{f}4!! \) and wins.

The tactical points of 25 \( \texttt{f}4 \) include allowing the knight into play with a vengeance – 25..\( \texttt{gx}f3 \) 26 \( \texttt{Qxf}3 \) and \( \texttt{Qe}5 \) followed by a mating check at \( \texttt{a}8 \) (or 26..\( \texttt{Wxg}3 \) 27 \( \texttt{Wa}6+ \) \( \texttt{Qd}7 \) 28 \( \texttt{Qe}5+ \), winning the queen). Another finesse is that 25...\( \texttt{Wf}6 \) 26 \( f \)5! \( \texttt{Qxf}5 \) loses to 27 \( \texttt{Bc}3 \) \( \texttt{We}7 \) 28 \( \texttt{Qxf}5 \). But instead of all this Black seems OK after 21...\( \texttt{Nd}6 \).

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20 \( \ldots \) \( \texttt{Wg}5+ \)

This tries to improve on the previous note by keeping the knight in reserve at \( \texttt{b}6 \). But the argument in favor of 20...\( \texttt{Qd}4 \) 21 \( \texttt{Ke}1 \) \( \texttt{Nd}6 \), based on lengthy analysis, doesn't stand up either – because White can simply fall into the trap and play 21 \( \texttt{Bb}3! \) \( \texttt{Wg}5+ \) 22 \( \texttt{Qb}1 \) \( \texttt{Qd}2+ \) 23 \( \texttt{Qa}1 \) \( \texttt{Qxb}3+ \) 24 \( \texttt{cxb}3 \).

Then Black has nothing left to defend his king: After 24...\( \texttt{Qd}6 \) 25 \( \texttt{Wa}7+ \) \( \texttt{Qc}8 \) 26 \( \texttt{Exd}6+ \) he drops a rook (26...\( \texttt{Qxd}6 \) 27 \( \texttt{Wa}8+ \)). But he's also losing after 26...\( \texttt{cx}d6 \) because of another version of the f2-f4 idea, 27 \( f4! \) \( \texttt{fx}f3 \) 28 \( \texttt{Qxf}3 \) \( \texttt{We}3 \) 29 \( \texttt{Qe}1 \).

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21 \( \texttt{Qb}1 \)
22 \( \texttt{Bb}3 \)

White must use his a-pawn to break down the queenside defense and he could start here with 22 \( \texttt{a}4 \) and 23 \( \texttt{a}5 \), e.g. 22...\( \texttt{Qc}4 \) 23 \( \texttt{Qa}7 \).

22 \( \ldots \) \( \texttt{Hhe}8 \)

The rook plays no role but 22...\( \texttt{We}7 \) 23 \( \texttt{a}4 \) and 24 \( \texttt{a}5 \) was also lost.

23 \( \texttt{a}4! \) \( \texttt{Qf}5 \)
24 \( \texttt{Qa}7 \)

There were no surprises in 24 \( \texttt{a}5 \) \( \texttt{Qxc}2+ \) 25 \( \texttt{Qxc}2 \), which also wins.

24 \( \ldots \) \( \texttt{Qd}7 \)
25 \( \texttt{a}5 \) \( \texttt{Qd}2 \)
26 \( \texttt{axb}6 \) \( \texttt{Qe}1+ \)
27 \( \texttt{Qa}2 \) \( \texttt{c}6 \)
28 \( \texttt{Qb}5! \) \( \texttt{cx}b5 \)
29 \( \texttt{Qa}7+ \) \textit{Resigns}

It's mate – 29...\( \texttt{Qc}8 \) 30 \( \texttt{Qa}8+ \) \( \texttt{Qb}8 \) 31 \( \texttt{Qa}6 \).

\section*{71}

The dramatic finish at St. Petersburg and the outbreak of World War I ended another chapter in Lasker's career. While Marshall, Capablanca and Janowsky continued to play in strong competition in the United States, master chess virtually disappeared in Europe. A single game of Lasker's from 1915 survives and only a handful of simul and consultation games from 1917 have been preserved. Lasker's major event during these years was a benefit match for war charity against his old rival.

\textbf{Tarrasch – Lasker}

\textit{Match, Berlin 1916}

\textit{Four Knights Game (C55)}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
1 & \( \texttt{e}4 \) \\
2 & \( \texttt{Qf}3 \) \\
3 & \( \texttt{Qc}4 \) \\
4 & \( \texttt{Qe}3 \)
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Today this is considered a beginner's mistake. The only notable player to use it in recent decades was a certain
l2-year-old named Fischer, who drew with it at the U.S. Junior in 1955. Yet Tartakower used it to play to win for 30 years

4 ... \( \square x e 4 \! \)

5 \( \square x e 4 \! \)

Not 5 \( \square x f 7 + \)? \( \square x f 7 6 \) \( \square x e 4 \! \) because the knights get kicked around by Black’s superior pawns after 6...d5. Among the many examples of White’s downfall is a 1913 simul game which Lasker won after 7 \( \square e 5 + \) \( \square g 8 8 \) d3 h6 9 \( \square h 3 g 5 ! 10 \) \( \square d 2 \) \( \square h 7 ! 11 \) f3 \( \square x h 3 \) 12 \( \square x h 3 \) \( \square f 7 13 \) \( \square b 3 \) \( \square f 6 14 \) \( \square f 1 \) \( \square e 8 \) 15 \( \square e 2 \) \( \square e 6 ! 16 \) \( \square d 2 \) \( \square d 4 \). \( \square e 4 \! \)

5 ... d5

6 \( \square d 3 \) \( \square x e 4 \! \)

7 \( \square x e 3 \! \)

What Tartakower liked about this position, aside from its rarity, is that natural moves such as 7...\( \square c 5 \) 8 0-0 create a problem for Black in defending his e-pawn (\( \square x c 6 / \square x e 5 \)). For example, on 8...f6 9 c3 0-0 there is 10 \( \square c 2 \! \). Once Black defends against 11 \( \square x h 7 + \), he allows 11 d4, e.g. 10 \( \square h 8 \) 11 d4 exd4 12 cxd4 \( \square x d 4 \) 13 \( \square d 1 \) with advantage.

7 ... \( \square d 6 \! \)

8 d4 \( \square x d 4 \! \)

9 \( \square x d 4 \!

Here 9...\( \square x d 4 \) 10 \( \square x d 4 \! \) followed perhaps by \( \square e 3 \) and 0-0-0 is an ambitious setup that Tarrasch, Tchigorin and Tartakower had tried.

9 ... 0-0!

This gambit was first played at Triberg in 1914. But it is highly unlikely Lasker – or anyone outside Triberg – knew about it. The reason is that the Triberg players were Russian detainees who had been arrested during the early days of World War I and interned in the Black Forest town, where they were allowed to hold tournaments.

10 \( \square e 3 \!

Black can exploit White’s laggard development after 10 \( \square x c 6 \) \( \square h 4 ! \) 11 \( \square f 3 \) \( \square e 8 \) or 11 \( \square f 3 \) \( \square e 8 + 12 \) \( \square f 1 \) bxc6 and ...\( \square a 6 + \) (since 13 \( \square x c 6 ? \) \( \square c 4 + \) loses).

On 11 \( \square e 2 \) Black can try 11...\( \square d 7 \) and 12...\( \square a 8 \). But 12 g3! \( \square f 6 13 \) \( \square a 5 \) and 12...\( \square x e 4 \) 13 \( \square x e 4 \! \) \( \square x c 6 \) are rather dubious. Instead, 11...bxc6 12 \( \square x c 6 \) \( \square b 8 \) offers excellent compensation.

10 ... \( \square h 4 ! \)

It’s not hard to maintain an initiative when all you need do is locate unprotected enemy pieces. White’s choices are not inviting (11 \( \square d 3 \) \( \square b 4 \) or 11 \( \square f 3 \) \( \square g 4 \)).

11 \( \square x c 6 \) bxc6

The opening of the b-file discourages queenside castling. For example, 12 \( \square d 2 \) \( \square b 8 \) 13 0-0-0 c5 14 \( \square c 6 ? \) \( \square b 6 \) 15 \( \square x a 7 \) \( \square b 7 \) or 14 \( \square b 3 \) c4 with advantage.

12 g3

Carlos Torre won a game as Black after 12 \( \square d 3 \) \( \square g 4 ! (13 \) \( \square x c 6 \) \( \square e 8 \) 14 \( \square d 4 \) \( \square x e 3 + ! \) 15 \( \square x e 3 \) \( \square d 7 \) and wins with ...\( \square x c 6 \) or ...\( \square e 8 \)).

12 ... \( \square h 3 ! \)

Lasker outplayed Tarrasch in endings in three of the six games of the match, and here 12...\( \square e 4 \) 13 \( \square f 3 \) \( \square x f 3 \) would certainly be a reasonable choice. But 12...\( \square h 3 \) offers splendid chances for a middlegame knockout.
13  \( \text{We2} \)

There was little reason to like 13 \( \text{Wf3} \text{Ag4} \) 14 \( \text{Xxe6} \text{Ab8} \) 15 \( \text{Ab1} \text{Ac8}! \).

13  \( \ldots \text{ c5} \)

14  \( \text{Qb3} \)

After 14 \( \text{Qb5} \) White can only hope for a mistake that would allow him to castle (14...\( \text{b7} \)? 15 \( \text{Ag1} \text{Xxh2} \) 16 0-0-0). Instead Black would answer 14...\( \text{Ag4}! \) (15 \( \text{Wf1} \text{Wh5} \) 16 \( \text{Wc4} \text{Af3} \) 17 \( \text{Wf1} \text{Af8} \)).

14  \( \ldots \text{Ag4} \)

15  \( \text{Wf1} \text{Wh5} \)

Another cute idea is 22 \( \text{Wb3} \text{Ad1} \), threatening mate on e2. But White can fight on for a few moves with 23 \( \text{g4}! \). However, Black does have a killer in 22...\( \text{Xxg3}! \) 23 \( \text{fxg3} \text{Wh2} \)

22  \( \text{Qxe5} \text{Xd3} \)

23  \( \text{Qxd3} \text{Xxe3+}! \)

This is why the other rook went to \( d8 \). Now 23 \( \text{fxe3} \text{Wh2} \) clears the board

Resigns

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Lasker seemed to have a cavalier attitude towards the opening during the Tarrasch match. In one game he met the McCutcheon French (1 \( \text{e4} \text{e6} \) 2 \( \text{d4} \text{d5} \) 3 \( \text{Qc3} \text{Qf6} \) 4 \( \text{Ag5} \text{Ab4} \)) with the bizarre novelty 5 \( \text{f3}?! \). In two others he defended the Lopez with one of his opponent’s favorite systems. In another he traded queens on the seventh move as White. But it was Tarrasch who tried something unusual in the final game

Lasker – Tarrasch
Match, Berlin 1916

Ruy Lopez, Open Defense (C84)

1  \( \text{e4} \)  \( \text{e5} \)

2  \( \text{Qf3} \)  \( \text{Qc6} \)

3  \( \text{Ab5} \)  \( \text{a6} \)

4  \( \text{Qa4} \)  \( \text{Qf6} \)

5  \( \ldots 0-0 \)  \( \text{Qxe4} \)

6  \( \text{d4} \)  \( \text{Qe7} \)

This is rare but logical – a Berlin with 3...\( \text{a6} \) 4 \( \text{Qa4} \) added – and is sometimes called the Walbrodt Variation. Tarrasch may have tried it because Lasker had played poorly as White against Carl Walbrodt at Nuremberg 1896 and was worse after 7 \( \text{Wf2} \text{f5} \) 8 \( \text{dxes5} 0-0 \)

7  \( \text{Qd1} \text{Wc8} \) 10 \( \text{Ab3}+ \text{Wh8} \) 11 \( \text{Qbd2} \text{Cc5} \) 12 \( \text{Qc4} \text{Wh5} \) 13 \( \text{Qe1} \text{f4} \) 14 \( \text{Qd2} \text{Wg6} \),

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7  xe1  b5!? 
8  xe4  d5 

This was Black's idea. He'll enjoy the two bishops at the cost of a pawn. 
9  xe5! 

Black is better after 9 xb5? axb5 10 xe1 e4. 
9  ...  xe5 

Of course, not 9...dxe4 10 xc6 w d7 11 xe7 which loses material. 
10  xe5 

Alexey Suetin, in his book on the Ruy Lopez, cited a 1965 game of his that went 10 xb5+ axb5 11 xe5 0-0 12 xc3 “and Black must still show that his counterplay on the kingside compensates for the sacrifice of a pawn.” 
10  ...  bxa4 
11  xe3  e6? 

This lands Black in trouble. Ivanchuk has tried 11...0-0 12 xd5 ed6 and obtained reasonable play after 13 g5 w e8. 
12  wh5! 

Much stronger than 12 w f3 because White threatens 13 xe6 and can answer 12...0-0 with 13 xd5 ed6 14 g5! (14...w d7 15 f6+! and wins) 

12  ...  g6 
13  w f3  f6? 

Black had to play 13...e6 before ...f6. Thanks to the kingside weakening White can sacrifice the Exchange with 14 h6, e.g. 14...a3 15 b3 f6 16 ae1 xe5 17 xe5 d7 18 a4 e8 19 c5+ and g5 with advantage (Lasker). 
14  x d5!  x d5 
15  x d5 

Now 15...x d4 16 e4+ and x d4 loses. 
15  ...  g7 

White could wind things up in another ending (16 xc7+ xe7 17 x a8+). 
16  g5! 

But now 16...w d7 17 f6+ xf6 18 xf6 wins (18...0-0 19 h6 and 18...g8 19 e1+) 
16  ...  x g5 

Black is lost, of course, after 16...f6 17 xc7+ x c7 or 17 xf6+ xf6 18 xf6 0-0. But he seemed disgusted enough to end the match with. 
17  xc7+  b8 
18  xa8 Resigns
Before the war ended Lasker won one of the strongest tournaments of all time – for the meagerest of rewards. First prize at Berlin 1918 was 1,000 cigarettes, a valued commodity in tobacco-scarce Germany but hardly what Lasker was used to. In the double-round tournament Lasker won both games from Tarrasch, scored 1½ against Schlechter and drew twice with Rubinstein.

Otherwise his only chess was in exhibitions. One of his opponents in the following game, played in a post-war consultation simul, was Walter Henneberger, an obscure Swiss player who graduated to the 1928 world amateur champion championship, then to a major international, Zurich 1934. There he registered his greatest success at age 51 when he performed creditably and even crushed Nimzovich – on the Black side of a Nimzo-Indian.

**Lasker – Henneberger and Rivier**
Consultation, Bern 1919

*Ruy Lopez, Classical Defense (C65)*

1  e4  e5
2  âf3  âc6
3  âb5  âf6
4  0-0  âc5
5  âc3  d6

This natural move creates a kind of Steinitz Defense in which Black has managed to develop his bishop on a much better square than e7. But it turns out badly

6  d4  exd4
7  âxd4  âd7
8  âb3!?

This takes advantage of the difference from the Steinitz Defense. White’s threat of âxe5 gains a tempo to create an annoying pin (9 âg5) All very logical – but 8 âf5! 0-0 9 âg5 is better.

8  ...  âb6
9  âg5

Now if Black meets the 10 âd5 threat with 9...h6 10 âh4 g5 11 âg3 âe7, White validates his play with 12 âe1 0-0-0 13 a4 and then 13...âa5 14 âd4 or 13...a5 14 âd5 âxd5 14 exd5 âe5 15 âd2 and âxa5.

9  ...  âe5

10  a4!  âxb5

Black can avoid immediate concessions with 11...c6 because 12 âxd6? allows 12...âc7. But after 12 âe2 âe6 13 âxf6 âxf6? 14 âxd6 or 12...âc7 13 f4 is bad news

11  axb5  h6
12  âxf6

If White allows the king to sneak away (12 âh4 g5 13 âg3 âe7 14 âe1 0-0-0) he can maintain an edge with 15 âa4 âb8 16 âxb6

12  ...  âxf6
13  âd5  âd8

The trouble with 13...âg6 is that 14 âxb6 requires 14...cxb6, after which 15 âd4! and âf5 is a big positional plus (and 15...âxe4 16 âe1 âd5 17 f4 costs a piece).
White would readily grab a pawn after 14...\( \Box x d 4 \) 15 \( \Box x d 4 \) 0-0 16 \( \Box x a 7 \) (or 15...b6 16 f4 and \( \Box x g 7 \)).

\( \Box f 5 \) \( \Box h 7 \)

\( \Box a 3 ! \)

The targets are \( g 7 \) and \( h 6 \). For example, 16...g6 allows 17 \( \Box h 3 ! \) and wins (17...\( g x f 5 \) 18 \( \Box x h 5 \); 17...h5 18 \( \Box x h 5 + \) \( g x h 5 \) 19 \( \Box x h 5 + \) and \( \Box h 6 \)).

\( f 6 \)

\( g 3 \) \( f 7 \)

Black loses material outright after 17...\( g 8 \) 18 \( \Box d e 7 \).

\( \Box f 4 ! \)

Exactly played. Usually an attacker is drawn to “long,” aggressive moves such as 18 \( \Box h 5 \). But after 18...\( w f 8 \) and 19...\( e 8 \) Black would weather the worst.

Instead, 18 \( \Box f 4 \) delays a decision about White’s queen and prevents 18...\( w f 8 \) (19 \( \Box x g 7 \) \( \Box x g 7 \) 20 \( \Box e 6 \)).

\( w d 7 \)

Not 18...g6 19 \( \Box x g 6 ! \) \( \Box x g 6 \) 20 \( \Box h 5 \) and wins.

\( w h 5 \) \( h 8 \)

A better try was 19...\( g 8 \) so Black can meet 20 \( \Box h 3 \) and its threat of 21 \( w x h 5 + ! \) with 20...\( h 8 \). Then 21 \( \Box x h 6 ? \) \( g x h 6 \) 22 \( w x h 6 + \) \( h 7 \) 23 \( w x f 6 + \) \( g 7 \) is a dead end.

However, White would still win by switching back to 20 \( \Box d 5 \). Then his threats include 21 \( \Box x b 6 \) followed by 22 f4 and (after the knight moves) 23 \( w g 6 + / 24 \) \( w x h 6 \). And on 20...\( h 8 \) White has 21 \( \Box x h 6 \) \( g x h 6 \) 22 \( w x h 6 + \) \( h 7 \) 23 \( \Box x f 6 ! \).

Or 20...\( w x e 6 \) 21 \( \Box x g 7 + ! \) and mates.

\( f x g 7 ! \) Resigns

In view of 21...\( \Box x g 7 \) 22 \( \Box x g 7 + \) \( \Box x g 7 \) 23 \( \Box f 8 + \).

The return of Lasker to international chess in 1923 was a sensation. Virtually everyone thought he had retired after losing his world championship title to Capablanca in 1921 and repeatedly rejecting tournament invitations afterwards.

By then he was 54, the same age as Alekhine when he died and a year older than Capablanca at the time of his death. Even in our day an active 54-year-old player, such as Karpov in 2005, is extraordinarily rare because it is so difficult to maintain playing quality. When 49-year-old Bobby Fischer made a brief comeback in 1992 he wasn’t nearly the player his fans remembered.

The vehicle for Lasker’s return was a 14-player international tournament at the Czech resort of Moravská Ostrava, or Mährisch-Ostrau as it was better known. His easiest games, naturally, were against the weaker players and those who posed the least theoretical challenge. Max Walter fit both categories.

\[ \text{Why Lasker Matters} \]
Why Lasker Matters

Walter – Lasker
Moravská Ostrava, 1923
Queen’s Pawn Game (D00)

1. \text{d}4 \text{d}5
2. \text{e}3 \text{\vF}6
3. \text{\vA}d3 \text{\vG}4

A simple solution to the queen’s bishop problem: Now 4 \text{f}3 \text{\vH}5 and ...	ext{\vG}6.

4. \text{\vC}f3 \text{e}6
5. \text{c}4 \text{\vB}d7

Also good is 5...\text{c}6 with a better-than-usual version of the Semi-Slav since Black’s queen’s bishop is developed. Because of the odd move order, the game has slipped past heavily analyzed lines, such as 1 \text{d}4 \text{d}5 2 \text{c}4 \text{c}6 3 \text{\vC}f3 \text{\vF}6 4 \text{e}3 \text{\vG}4, when 5 \text{cxd}5 or 5 \text{h}3 are supposed to favor White slightly.

6. \text{\vW}b3

An early threat of \text{\vW}x\text{b}7 usually makes sense when Black can only defend the pawn with clumsy moves such as ...\text{b}6 or ...\text{\vW}c8. But here \text{\vW}b3 disturbs the Steinitzian balance by allowing White’s kingside pawns to be doubled.

6. ...
7. \text{gx}\text{f}3 \text{c}5!

And that prompts Black to attack (rather than 7...\text{\vW}c8).

8. \text{cxd}5

White may have thought this was a necessary prelude to pawn-grabbing because 8 \text{\vW}x\text{b}7 \text{cxd}4 8 \text{exd}4 \text{\vC}x\text{c}4 \text{\vW}c8 lines up his bishops on the file. However, 10 \text{\vC}d2 would have been better than what follows.

8. ...

9. \text{exd}5

Also good is 8...\text{\vC}d5 since 9 \text{\vW}x\text{b}7? gives Black too much play after 9...\text{\vW}x\text{d}4 10 \text{exd}4 \text{\vW}b8. For example, 11 \text{\vW}a6 \text{\vB}b4 or 11 \text{\vW}a7 \text{\vW}c8, threatening ...\text{\vW}a8 as well as ...\text{\vW}x\text{c}1+, lose.

9. \text{\vW}x\text{b}7 \text{exd}4
10. \text{exd}4 \text{\vD}d6

This position is a distant relative of a Queen’s Gambit Accepted line, 1 \text{d}4 \text{d}5 2 \text{c}4 \text{\vC}x\text{c}4 3 \text{\vC}f3 \text{\vF}6 4 \text{e}3 \text{\vG}4 5 \text{\vW}x\text{c}4 \text{e}6 The book refutation for many years was supposed to be 6 \text{\vW}b3. But after 6...\text{\vC}x\text{f}3 7 \text{gx}\text{f}3 \text{\vB}d7! 8 \text{\vW}x\text{b}7 \text{c}5 9 \text{\vC}c3 \text{cxd}4 10 \text{exd}4 \text{\vD}d6 Black has excellent play.

11. \text{\vC}c3 0-0

Giving up a second pawn is a consequence of giving up the first since 11...\text{\vC}b6 would be met by 12 \text{\vW}c6+!.

12. \text{\vC}d5 \text{\vW}a5+
13. \text{\vC}c3 \text{\vW}h5!

Many attackers would check first (13...\text{\vF}e8+) and think later. But the king turns out to be safer after 14 \text{\vF}f1! \text{\vW}h5 15 \text{\vG}2. Black’s move threatens 14...\text{\vF}e8+ 15 \text{\vF}f1?? \text{\vW}h3+ or 15 \text{\vC}c3 \text{\vB}ab8.

14. \text{\vC}e2

The bishop is no more than a pawn here. With 14 \text{\vC}e4 White can fend off threats a bit better (14...\text{\vC}x\text{e}4 15 \text{\vC}x\text{e}4 \text{\vF}e8 16 \text{\vC}e3).

14. ...
15. \text{\vW}a6

There must be an alternative universe out there because the tournament book...
and some databases give this game as continuing 15 \( \text{Wxa7} \text{ b6} \) 16 \( \text{Wa4} \text{ e8} \) 17 \( \text{\&e4} \text{ \&d5??} \) 18 \( \text{\&xd6??} \text{ \&xd6} \) 19 0-0 \( \text{\&e6} \) 20 \( \text{\&e1} \text{ \&h3} \) 21 \( \text{\&h1} \text{ \&xe2} \) White resigns. It's ludicrous to think both players missed 18 \( \text{\&xd7} \), which wins for White, or 19...\( \text{\&xe2} \), which wins for Black

15 ... \text{\&b6} \\
16 \text{\&d3} \text{\&e8?} \\
17 \text{\&e4} \\
Attempts to castle queenside fail (17 b3? \text{\&b4} 18 \text{\&d2? \&e6} and wins).

17 ... \text{\&d5} \\
18 \text{\&xd6} \\
This knight was useful in blocking the e-file (18 \text{\&g3} \text{\&xg3} 19 f\text{\&xg3} \text{\&xe6}) but was about to be kicked (...\text{\&b4+} ...f5).

18 ... \text{\&xd6} \\
19 0-0?

Now we see that White traded pieces for the wrong reason (to avert ...\text{\&xh2} mate). The right reason was to allow him to play 19 \text{\&e3 \&de6} 20 \text{\&d2!}, when he can take a few breaths. Black has a strong initiative after either 20...f5 (and 21...f4) or 20...\text{\&h4} and 21...\text{\&f4}. But there is nothing forced.

He could have kept the game going with 20 \text{\&b5} so that 20...\text{\&h3} 21 \text{\&xd5 \&g6+} can be met by 22 \text{\&g5}. Black would preserve an edge with 20...\text{\&xe2} 21 \text{\&xd7} \text{\&f3.}

20 ... \text{\&h3!} \\
21 \text{\&h1} \text{\&xe2} \\
Resigns

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At Moravská Ostrava Lasker was able to show how he had adjusted to the new opening milieu. In the first round he drew as Black against theoretician Ernst Gruenfeld with 1 d4 \text{\&f6} 2 \text{\&f3} d6 3 c4 \text{\&f5}. He also defeated Euwe’s King’s Indian Defense with another new idea, 1 d4 \text{\&f6} 2 \text{\&f3} g6 3 \text{\&f4 \&g7} 4 \text{\&c1.}

But it was his treatment of the Closed Sicilian that elicited the most comment. Today Black’s play in the following game would be called hackneyed. But the position was relatively new in 1923 and that placed a huge burden on players. Today’s GMs don’t have to make the kind of basic strategic choices that faced Lasker and his contemporaries. They don’t have to choose between kingside and queenside castling as White in the 4 \text{\&f5} Caro-Kann (Game 26), for example Those decisions are made by their opening preparation. In Lasker’s day the players began thinking around move five, not 15. That helped keep Lasker young.

\textbf{Wolf – Lasker} \\
Moravská Ostrava 1923 \\
\textit{Sicilian Defense, Closed Variation} \\
(B25)

\begin{tabular}{ll}
| 1 | e4 | c5 | \\
| 2 | \text{\&c3} | \text{\&c6} | \\
| 3 | g3 | g6 |
\end{tabular}

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Why Lasker Matters

4  \textbullet g2  \textbullet g7
5  d3  d6

How should Black arrange his pawns? Alekhine, in the Nottingham 1936 tournament book, praised 5...e6, as “a promising strategy which could be successfully met only by very energetic play.” But two rounds later Alekhine commented about the reversed position, 1 e4 e5 2 \textbullet c3 \textbullet c6 3 g3 g6 4 \textbullet g2 \textbullet g7 This time Alekhine declared 5 e3 to be weakening and suggested 5 d3 instead.

6  \textbullet ge2  \textbullet f6
7  0-0  0-0
8  h3

An early f2-f4 didn’t come into fashion until the 1950s. Instead, White usually proceeded in quiet ways like this, preparing 9 \textbullet e3/10 d4 now that ...\textbullet g4 isn’t possible. The loss of time didn’t seem to matter because, well, it was the Closed Sicilian, wasn’t it?

Active play by Black, such as 8...b5? 9 e5 or 8...\textbullet d4 9 \textbullet xd4 exd4 10 \textbullet e2 \textbullet wb6 11 c3, would just help White. It was assumed both players could take their time, e.g. 8...\textbullet d7 9 \textbullet e3 h6? and now Tarrasch-Spielmann, Mannheim 1914 went 10 \textbullet wd2?! \textbullet h7 11 f4 \textbullet e8 12 g4 \textbullet c7 13 \textbullet g3 and 14 \textbullet d1.

8  0-0
9  \textbullet e3  \textbullet d4
10  \textbullet h2  \textbullet d7
11  \textbullet wd2  \textbullet c8

Nowadays ...\textbullet b8 and ...b5-b4 is semi-automatic and would be a better way of countering 12 \textbullet ae1 and 13 f4.

12  \textbullet d1  \textbullet c6

Black is ready for ...d5 or ...f5, e.g. 13 c3 \textbullet xe2 14 \textbullet xe2 f5 15 f4 \textbullet d6 or 15...e6 and 16...\textbullet f6.

13  \textbullet g1  d5!
14  c3  \textbullet e6

With a positional threat of 15...d4. Now on 15 \textbullet we2 d4 16 \textbullet d2 Black can work on the loosened pawns with 16...dxc3 17 bxc3 \textbullet wa5 and ...\textbullet e8c7-b5.

15  exd5  \textbullet xd5
16  f3

An ugly move, like the 29 f3 that Tartakower passed up in Game 54. Allowing the trade of bishops is poor (16 \textbullet e2 \textbullet xg2 17 \textbullet xg2 \textbullet wd5+ 18 f3) in view of Black’s center pressure following 18...\textbullet d8, e.g. 19 \textbullet f2 \textbullet d6 20 \textbullet we2 \textbullet f5 or 20 \textbullet f4 \textbullet xf4+ 21 \textbullet xf4 e5.

16  ...  \textbullet d6
17  \textbullet d2  \textbullet f5
18  \textbullet g4

Black must have considered ...h5-h4. He would have calculated 18...h5

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19 机床6+ 机床6 20 机床6 h4, And he would have come to the conclusion that 21 机床2...h5x6 22 机床3 机床6x6 23 机床6 机床6d is a slight edge for him and so is 21 g4 机床d6+ 22 机床h1 机床6x6 22 机床6 机床d4.

18 机床3 机床6!
19 机床3

The virtues of 18 机床6 are largely practical: By making a non-forcing move he gave White more chances to go wrong. For example, Wolf could have played 19 机床f2?!, which prepares 机床3. But the bishop occupies the square he needs for his knight to defend d5 (19...机床c4 20 机床d1 机床d8).

Another candidate is 19 f4?!. But it makes 19...h5! powerful, e.g. 20 机床f2 h4 or 20 机床d5 机床d5 21 机床f2 h4 (22 g4 机床ex5 23 机床ex3 机床x4 24 机床f4?? 机床e5)

White found the best move, 19 机床3, and all that means is that he ends up in something akin to the unfavorable positions of the last note.

19 ... h5!
20 机床6+ 机床6h6
21 机床6h6 h4!
22 机床xg7 机床xg7

Black wants to play ...机床f5 but 22...机床xg7 and ...机床h8 was also quite good.

23 机床f4! hxg3+

The 23...机床f4 24 机床f4 hxg3+ endgame is nice too (25 机床g3 机床e6 26 机床e5 g5 27 机床f2 机床f5+). But there was no reason to give up on the chance for a middlegame knockout.

24 机床g3 e5!
25 机床h1 机床e8
26 机床d1

White battens down the hatches. He would retain hopes for an active middlegame with 26 机床e1 (and f3-f4).

But the hopes are dying after 26...机床f5 27 机床f2 c4!.

26 ... 机床f6
27 机床f2 机床e6
28 机床d2 机床g7!
29 机床h2 机床d8

Somewhat cautious. After 29 机床g5 White has no counterplay while Black piles up on h3, e.g. 30 机床f1 机床h8 31 机床e3 机床h4 followed by ...机床ch8/... 机床e6-f4.

30 a3 机床h8
31 机床e1

The endgame is excellent for Black after 31 机床e3 机床g5 32 机床xg5 机床xg5. But so is the 31...机床g5 or 31...机床h4 middlegame.

31 ... 机床g5
32 机床g1 机床f4+
33 机床h1

“A beautifully consistent game on Lasker’s part,” said Tartakower. White can resign after 34 机床f3 机床f3 35 机床f3 机床d2.

34 机床f3

It’s surprising that Black has nothing quicker after 34 机床e3 than 34...机床e3 35 机床e3 机床xg2+ 36 机床g2 f6. But that would be a relatively routine win because of his extra pawn and White’s two weak ones.
Why Lasker Matters

34 ... \( \text{Q}xh3 \\
35 \text{We}3 \text{Qg5}+ \\
Resigns

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If there was a quintessential Lasker game from Moravska Ostrava it was the following, which helped decide first prize. After a somewhat original opening he embarks on a commonsense, target-oriented plan. But he is outplayed strategically. He correctly senses when the position is becoming critical and decides to complicate – unsoundly, as it turns out. However, he handles tactics and the clock much better than his opponent.

Reti – Lasker
Moravska Ostrava 1923
Slav Defense (D15)

1 \( \text{Q}f3 \) d5
2 d4 \( \text{Q}f6 \\
3 c4 c6 \\
4 \text{Qc3} dxc4 \\
5 e3

This variation is usually named after Alekhine, who wrote in his first game collection that 5 a4 “does not occasion Black any difficulties.”

5 ... b5 \\
6 a4 b4

Previously 6...\( \text{Q}d5 \) had been played and found wanting (7 axb5 \( \text{Q}xc3 \) 8 bxc3 cxb5 9 \( \text{Q}e5 \) and \( \text{Bb1} \)).

7 \( \text{Qa2} \\

This was Alekhine’s improvement over 7 \( \text{Bb1} \text{Aa6}! \) 8 \( \text{Qe5} \text{Wd5} \) and 8 \( \text{Wc2} \text{e6} \) 9 \text{Qxc4} \text{Qxc4} 10 \text{Wxc4} \text{Wd5}

11 b3

Alekhine found it “astonishing” that a strong master would create such a hole at c3. But in a slightly different move order (10 b3 \( \text{b7} 11 \text{bd7} 12 \text{c4} \) favors White and this raised questions about the soundness of 4...dxc4. Lasker’s move was new. It enables Black to obtain good play by meeting c3-e4 with ...c5!

11 ... a5!

12 \( \text{b2} \) c5

13 \( \text{Ffd1} \) \( \text{Wb6} \\
14 \( \text{Qc1} \) \( \text{Aa6} \\

Black is more interested in targets than holes. He wants to work against b3 – or c4 if White recaptures with a pawn following ...\( \text{Qxc4} \). Both players were well aware of the game Gruenfeld-Tarrasch, three rounds earlier, which varied with 7 \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{a6} \) 8 \( \text{Ffd2} \) \( \text{Wd5} \).
9 \(\text{Wc2 e6} 10 \text{\textcolor{red}{c}}\text{xc4 \textcolor{blue}{d}e7} 11 \text{\textcolor{green}{d}bd2 0-0} 12 \text{\textcolor{green}{d}f3 c5} 13 \text{\textcolor{blue}{e}e2 cxd4} 14 \text{\textcolor{green}{x}d4 \textcolor{red}{c}c6} 15 \text{\textcolor{red}{c}xc6 \textcolor{green}{w}xc6} 16 0-0\).

Black obtained excellent play with 16...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ac8}} 17 b3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d5 18 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}b2 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}b6.

But in these positions c4 is a redundant square: White has two pieces that would enjoy being there. The exchange of bishops helps him solve the problem of where to put his other knight. Black does better with 14...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}b7 15 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}d8 and later ...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}e4.

15 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}xc5

There's a small endgame edge in 15 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}xa6 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}xa6 16 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}xa6 and 17 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d3.

15 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}xc5
16 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}e5 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}xc4

Black wants to create a pin on the knight after ...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}a6 and ...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}c8. White could avoid that with 17 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}xc4 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}c8 18 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}f4 but he prefers:

17 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}xc4 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}a6
18 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d4

Because of Black's space edge, White must eliminate an enemy knight. This move is better than 18 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}a2 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}c8 (threat of ...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}xb3) 19 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}xf6 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}xf6 20 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}c2 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}c6 and 21...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}ac8.

18 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}c8
19 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}xc5! \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}xc5
20 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}f3!

White stops ...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}e4-c3 and prepares 21 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}e4. The immediate 20 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}e4 invites 20...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}b7 with a slight edge for Black (21 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}5 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}e4, 21 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d2 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d4 or 21 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}a1 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d8)

20 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}e7!

The bishop is better placed on the f6-a1 diagonal.

21 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d3

Tartakower said White "scorned playing for a draw with 21 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}e2." Actually e2 is the better square regardless of his ambitions because it would watch c3 and wait for a moment when \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d4-b5 will be strong. Reti felt White would be better in any endgame because a5 is more of a target than b3.

21 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d5!
22 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}de5 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}f6

No smothered mate (22...f6 23 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}xd5?) today.

23 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}4 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}c3
24 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d6

White can try the finesse of 24 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}d7 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}a7 (simpler is 24...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}b8) 25 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d6 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b}}b7 26 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}e1. Compared with the game, Black's queen's rook is at a7 so he can't play 26...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}xe5 27 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}xe5 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}c7 because of 28 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d7 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}xe5 29 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}xa7.

But Black can take advantage of the difference and equalize with 27...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}e7.

24 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}b7
25 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}e1

25 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}xe5!

Black can't otherwise extricate himself from the bind since 25...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}a8 26 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}d8+ \textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}d8 loses the a-pawn and 26...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d8 27 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d6 hangs the f-pawn.

26 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}xe5 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}c7

White's first rank suddenly becomes vulnerable (27 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}b3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}c4! 28 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}xe4 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}xd6 29 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}xd6 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}c1+).

27 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}d4 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}5

"A typical Lasker move," wrote Tartakower. He believed Black had to
Why Lasker Matters

stop White from entrenching his pieces with e4-e5. But it turns out that Black can take on a4 because of some cute tactics (not just 27...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{x}a4\) 28 bxc4 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xc}4\)).

One line runs 27...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xa}4\)! 28 e5. Black should avoid the losing 28...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}8\)? 29 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}6\)! and 30 bxa4 in favor of 28...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xb}8\), which simply keeps an extra pawn (29 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a}1\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}5\) 30 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xa}5\)? \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a}8\) and wins or 30 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xa}5\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xb}3\)).

Similarly on 28 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}1\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{f}8\)! 29 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}7\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}5\) Black threatens to consolidate with ...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xb}6\). He would win the endgame after 30 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{b}7\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}6\)! 31 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}7\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e}5\) or 31 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{x}f7\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{x}f7\) 32 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{x}f7\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e}5\) + \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{f}6\) 34 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xc}6\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe}5\).

28 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{f}5\)!

Suddenly White is better, in view of \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}7\) and the threats to the e-pawn.

28 ... \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e}2+?!?\)

This is based on a trap and, most likely, an oversight. At first it appears that 28...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{g}6\) 29 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe}5\) is best because \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}7\) is out of the question and Black regains material equality with 29...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xa}4\).

The first variations you look at are good for Black, such as 30 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a}1\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}5\) 31 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{b}6\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}3!\) 32 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xa}8?\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}1+\) and wins.

If you look further and find 32 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{x}g6+\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{x}g6\) 33 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xc}7\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xc}7\) 34 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xa}8\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}1+\) it wouldn’t take long to conclude that the two passed pawns should win the knight-ending. (They do −35 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xc}1\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xc}1\) 36 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{b}6\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xb}3\) 37 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a}4\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}2\) 38 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{f}3\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}4\) 39 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}5\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{b}6\) and 40...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a}4\)).

The difficulty with deciding to play 28...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{g}6\) 29 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe}5\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xa}4\) is that Black’s position is a house of cards. It’s vulnerable to a quiet move like 30 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{h}3\), which eliminates last-rank mates and threatens 31 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a}1\). The only forcing line to consider is 30...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e}5\) 31 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{b}6\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}3\) but that appears to lose after 32 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xa}8\) and 32...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xa}8\) 33 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{g}6+!\).

This may be what Black saw – and overlooked 32...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}1\)! after which 33 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xd}3!\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe}1+\) 34 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{h}2\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a}8\) 35 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}5\) or 35 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{f}3\) is only a small edge for White.

29 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{f}1\)?

The simple point of Black’s combination was 29 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe}2\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xd}6\). White can then play 30 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xf}7+!\) after which 30...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{h}8\) is best. Bear in mind that White was in bad time trouble here. Some players find it difficult to calculate more than a few moves ahead in zeitnot. But for Reti it was a failure to evaluate 30...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{h}8\) 31 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}5\) as being fairly good for him.

Of the two alternatives, 29 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{f}1\) is what your fingers tell you to play when in time pressure. It attacks the knight and eliminates last-rank tricks. Only after the game was it realized that 29 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{h}1\!) leads to the same forced sequence, 29...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}4\) 30 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe}5\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xb}3\) 31 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{b}6\), but with the vital difference that there is no check at d2.

That would force Black to play 31...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}3!\) 32 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xc}3\) bxc3, when White gets to choose among various favorable endings, including 33 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe}8\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}8\) 34 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{ed}1\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}2!\) 35 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}3\) or 33 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe}8\) c2 34 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c}7\).

29 ... \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d}4\)

30 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe}5\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xb}3\)

White has no choice now since 31 \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e}3\) allows Black to take over with
31...\(\text{Qd}2+\) and 32...\(\text{Qe}8\).

31 \(\text{Qb}6\)

Now 31...\(\text{Qe}8\) 32 \(\text{Qxa}8!\) \(\text{Wc}4+\) 33 \(\text{Qg}1\) and wins.

31 ... \(\text{Qd}2+!\)

32 \(\text{Qg}1\) \(\text{Qe}4\)

From here on White has to choose among unpleasant alternatives, such as 33 \(\text{Qxa}8\) \(\text{Wxd}6\) 34 \(\text{Wxd}6\) \(\text{Qxd}6\) (35 \(\text{Qb}6\) \(\text{Qc}2\) 36 \(\text{e}5\) \(\text{Qe}4\)).

33 \(\text{Qxc}4\) \(\text{Wxc}4\)

Black's protected passed pawn gives him the edge. But what decides the game is time pressure and tactics. Reti has the advantage of 21 years ...

34 \(\text{Wf}5?\)

... but lacks the instincts of a coffeehouse player. Black had no immediate threat so this was a good time for luft, which he knows he's going to need.

Then trades of queenside pawns, such as 34 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{b}3\) 35 \(\text{Qb}6!\) \(\text{Wxa}4\) 36 \(\text{Qg}3\), tend to help White. And 34 \(\text{Qab}8\) 35 \(\text{Qxa}5\) offers White better chances than in the game (35...\(\text{b}3\) 36 \(\text{Qdd}1\) \(\text{Qa}8\) 37 \(\text{Wf}5\) \(\text{Qxa}4\) 38 \(\text{Qd}7\) or 37...\(\text{g}6\) 38 \(\text{Wf}6\)).

Black should keep pawns on and get queens off, 34 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{Wc}3\) 35 \(\text{Wxe}3\) \(\text{bxc}3\). But even then he has only slightly better chances in a likely draw once White swaps his a-pawn for the c-pawn (36 \(\text{Qc}1\) \(\text{Qc}4\) 37 \(\text{f}3\) and 38 \(\text{Qd}5\)).

34 ... \(\text{Qab}8!\)

35 \(\text{e}5\)

White's best chances all involve Black's king. The b-pawn is simply too fast after 35 \(\text{Wxa}5\) \(\text{b}3\) 36 \(\text{Qb}6?\) \(\text{b}2\) 37 \(\text{W}a7\) \(\text{b}1(\text{Q})\) 38 \(\text{Qxb}1\) \(\text{Qxb}1\) 39 \(\text{Qxb}1\) \(\text{Wc}1+\). Trading pawns (36 \(\text{Qd}1\) \(\text{Qa}8\) 37 \(\text{Wf}5\) \(\text{g}6\) 38 \(\text{Wf}3\) \(\text{Qxa}4\)) also loses (39 \(\text{h}3\) \(\text{b}2\) 40 \(\text{Qb}1\) \(\text{Wc}2\)).

35 ... \(\text{b}3\)

36 \(\text{e}6\) \(\text{fxe}6\)

37 \(\text{Qdxe}6\)

White manages to set a few traps. For example, 37...\(\text{Wxa}4??\) 38 \(\text{Qe}7\) \(\text{Wc}4\) 39 \(\text{Qxg}7+!\) and mates.

By nature the tactician looks for tricks such as 37...\(\text{b}2\) 38 \(\text{Qe}7\) \(\text{b}1(\text{Q})\) 39 \(\text{Qxb}1\) \(\text{Qf}8\), which overloads the White queen.

However White has 40 \(\text{Qxg}7+!\) \(\text{Wxg}7\) 41 \(\text{Wg}5+\). Then 41...\(\text{Wxh}8\) 42 \(\text{Wxe}5+\) \(\text{Qg}8\) 43 \(\text{Wg}5+\) is a perpetual – and 41...\(\text{Wf}7\) 42 \(\text{Wf}5+\) \(\text{Qe}7??\) 43 \(\text{Qe}1+\) \(\text{Qd}6\) 44 \(\text{Qd}1+\) allows him to play for the win.

37 ... \(\text{Qf}8\)

Safe – but 37...\(\text{b}2!\) was better because 39...\(\text{g}6!!\), rather than 39...\(\text{Qf}8??\), wins in the last line.

38 \(\text{Wc}5\) \(\text{Wc}2!\)

Not 38...\(\text{b}2??\) when White turns the game around with the 39 \(\text{Qe}7!\) mate threat (39...\(\text{Wg}4\) 40 \(\text{Qb}1\)).

39 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{b}2\)

40 \(\text{Qe}7\) \(\text{Wg}6\)

41 \(\text{f}5\) \(\text{Wf}6\)

Now 42 \(\text{Wxf}6\) \(\text{gxf}6\) 43 \(\text{Qb}1\) \(\text{Qc}8\) 44 \(\text{Qe}1\) \(\text{Qc}4\) and Black wins.

42 \(\text{Wd}5+\) \(\text{Qh}8\)

43 \(\text{Qb}7\) \(\text{Wc}3\)

Resigns

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Why Lasker Matters

In view of 44 \( \text{xf}1 \text{We}3+ 45 \text{vh1 Wc}1 46 \text{vg1 h6!} \) and now 47 g4 \( \text{fd}8 48 \text{We}4 \text{xb}7 49 \text{xb}7 \text{d}1. \)

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Lasker's opponents often attributed their reverses to a single move - "If only I hadn't played that blunder." This thinking served Lasker well by leading his rivals to mistaken conclusions about what they did wrong. They didn't recognize how many little mistakes, how many minor turning points were hidden in the game.

In the following game, the last between these two great rivals, Tarrasch obtains a huge edge by move 14, which he slowly enlarges. Then something goes horribly wrong. But it was difficult to say what. Most annotators can find only one of Black's moves to criticize ("24...\text{ff}5?") and only a few good moves by White.

In reality, there were several pivotal moments. First Lasker managed to halt the momentum of moves 10-14. That improved his situation from "about-to-lose" to "not-losing-now." It took several more moves to arrive at the next level, "not-losing-at-all," and still more to reach the status of "might-win."

\[ \text{Lasker – Tarrasch} \]
Moravská Ostrava 1923
\textit{Alekhine's Defense (B03)}

1 e4 \( \text{ff}6 

For Tarrasch, the ultimate Classical player, playing 1...\( \text{ff}6 \) was as bizarre as it would have been for Karpov and Korchnoi to suddenly switch to the King's Indian Defense.

2 e5 \( \text{dd}5 

3 c4 \( \text{db}6 

4 d4 d6 

5 f4 dx\text{e}5 

6 fxe5 \( \text{dc}6 

7 \text{xe3 \text{f}5} 

This position first arose in a 1921 game in which Euwe obtained a good game with 8 \( \text{f}3 \) e6 9 d3.

8 \( \text{c}3 \) e6 

9 \( \text{f}3 \) b4 

10 d3? 

Lasker's ninth move was new and this one is just bad.

10 ... \( \text{g}4! 

And this is why Giving up the pawn (11 0-0 \( \text{x}d4 \)) is unsound but 11 a3 was worth trying.

11 \( \text{e}2?! \) xf\text{3} 

So that 12 xf\text{3} \( \text{x}c4 \).

12 gxf\text{3} \( \text{h}4+! 

13 \text{f}2 \( \text{f}4 

Black has reached what later became a book position – but with an extra ...\text{b}4. Without that move the position is considered roughly equal after (13) \( \text{c}1 \text{xc}1+ \).

However, with the extra tempo, Black has the initiative whether he goes after the d-pawn (..0-0-0) or plays against c4 (..\text{a}5). For example, 14 \( \text{c}1 \) is met by 14...\( \text{x}c1+ 15 \text{xc}1 0-0-0 and then 16 a3 \text{xc}3+ 17 bxc3 \text{f}6 with a small edge.
14...\textit{g}1?

Characteristically, Lasker defends the d-pawn tactically (\textit{g}4). But better was 14 a3 \textit{xe}3+ 15 bxc3.

14...

0-0-0

Since the d-pawn is more valuable than the g-pawn (or than White's h-pawn), Tartakower recommended
4...h5, threatening \textit{\textit{c}}xd4. Black would be doing very well after 15 \textit{\textit{x}}g7 0-0-0!. But White can escape the worst of it with 15 \textit{\textit{w}}c1

15 \textit{\textit{g}}4 \textit{\textit{xh}}2

16 \textit{\textit{h}}4 \textit{\textit{g}}2

Tarrasch had allowed Lasker to escape too many times in the past. A “luck scoretable,” mimicking what he composed at Nuremberg 1896, would reveal at least a plus-5 for Lasker in his games with Tarrasch. That may explain why he passes up the \textit{\textit{w}}-sack that a modern GM would love – 16...\textit{\textit{w}}xh4!? 17 \textit{\textit{xh}}4 \textit{\textit{xd}}4 18 \textit{\textit{wb}}3 \textit{\textit{xb}}4 19 0-0-0 \textit{\textit{d}}8 or 19...\textit{\textit{h}}2.

17 \textit{\textit{f}}1 \textit{\textit{g}}5

Black threatens 18...\textit{\textit{xe}}5 and invites White into the awful 18 \textit{\textit{wc}}1 \textit{\textit{xc}}1+ 19 \textit{\textit{xc}}1 \textit{\textit{a}}4 endgame.

18 \textit{\textit{wc}}2 h5!

Tarrasch chooses the simplest plan and it is a strong one. He can just push his pawn while White struggles to untangle.

19 \textit{\textit{d}}1 \textit{\textit{h}}6!

Black prepares for both ...\textit{\textit{e}}7-g5-e3 and ...h4.

20 a3 \textit{\textit{e}}7

21 \textit{\textit{h}}3 \textit{\textit{g}}5

White is a move or two away from disaster. He can’t play normally because 22 \textit{\textit{e}}4 \textit{\textit{e}}3 or 22 \textit{\textit{d}}3 \textit{\textit{xd}}4 cost material.

22 \textit{\textit{w}}e4

22...

f6

So far the game has been all Tarrasch. His move is intuitive but misses a nice finesse, 22...\textit{\textit{c}}1!!. White has nothing better than 23 \textit{\textit{w}}x2 after which 23...\textit{\textit{e}}3! trades off the bishop that holds his position together (24 \textit{\textit{w}}e4 \textit{\textit{xf}}2+ 25 \textit{\textit{xf}}2 \textit{\textit{e}}3!).

23 exf6 \textit{\textit{xf}}6

Against any other opponent Tarrasch might have considered 23...\textit{\textit{xf}}6 more seriously, in light of 24 \textit{\textit{w}}x6+ \textit{\textit{b}}8 or 24 \textit{\textit{e}}3 g5 25 \textit{\textit{w}}x6+ \textit{\textit{b}}8 26 \textit{\textit{e}}4 \textit{\textit{hf}}8. But these lines seem to leave White with too many drawing chances.

And that answers the question that puzzled Tarrasch at St. Petersburg. Masters often played weakly against Lasker because he wasn’t just any other opponent. The possibility of beating a world champion or even an ex-champion raised the emotional level beyond what many found comfortable, or even tolerable. They pressed too hard.

24 \textit{\textit{e}}2 \textit{\textit{f}}5

Black decides he can’t mate after all. This move was widely denounced, and that’s a bit unfair. Black still has a winning position in the endgame. But a quiet alternative such as 24...\textit{\textit{b}}8 would serve much better.

25 \textit{\textit{w}}xf5 exf5

26 \textit{\textit{d}}3!

Black may have been counting on winning the d-pawn after 26...\textit{\textit{f}}6 (or
inflict 27 d5 $\mathcal{A}x\mathcal{C}e3+$ damage). But because 26...$\mathcal{Q}xd4?$ loses to 27 $\mathcal{A}xd4$ $\mathcal{Q}xd4$ 28 $\mathcal{A}xf5+$, White buys time for $\mathcal{Q}e2$ and $f3-f4!$.

26 ... g6
27 $\mathcal{Q}e2$ h4

White has gotten past about-to-lose — but he should still lose eventually. Trading bishops is the smoothest win, e.g. 27...$\mathcal{H}he8!$ 28 $\mathcal{F}f1$ $\mathcal{Q}a4$ 29 $\mathcal{M}b1$ $\mathcal{Q}e3!$.

28 f4 $\mathcal{F}f6$
29 b4! $\mathcal{B}b8$
30 d5 $\mathcal{Q}e7$
31 $\mathcal{S}f1$

White signals that he has survived. This move says that he can just try to improve the placement of his pieces ($\mathcal{Q}d4-e6$) and wait for Black to prove that he is winning.

31 ... $\mathcal{D}be8$?

Tarrasch didn’t respond well when confronted with unexpected obstacles. His best games were linear — an opening advantage grew logically and steadily until, by move 30 or 35, it had become overwhelming.

In this game his edge was growing until move 22 or so and seemed to be only a few good moves away from becoming unstoppable. But now he sees he’ll need more than a few good moves. He needs a pawn-break, either from...b5 or...c6. And he sees that 31...c6 can be answered by 32 d6!, after which 32...$\mathcal{H}xe6$ 33 $\mathcal{C}c5$ $\mathcal{A}xd3$ is dubious (34 $\mathcal{A}xd3$ $\mathcal{Q}bd5$ 35 $\mathcal{A}d4$).

Nevertheless 31...$\mathcal{Q}a4!$ and then...c6! would get him closer to a win, e.g. 32 $\mathcal{Q}d4$ c6 33 $\mathcal{Q}e6$ $\mathcal{Q}b2$.

32 b5!

This stops 32...b5/33...$\mathcal{Q}b6$ and discourages 32...c6. On the other hand, 32 $\mathcal{Q}d4$ c6! 33 $\mathcal{Q}e6$ $\mathcal{M}d7$ would have been difficult for White again.

32 ... c6?

Black insists. He would still have a serious edge after 32...$\mathcal{Q}b6$ 33 $\mathcal{Q}d4$ $\mathcal{Q}a4$ or 32...$\mathcal{Q}d6$ and...$\mathcal{Q}e4$. For example, 32...$\mathcal{Q}d6$ 33 $\mathcal{Q}d4$ $\mathcal{Q}e4$ 34 $\mathcal{X}xe4$ $\mathcal{X}xe4$ 35 $\mathcal{Q}e6$ $\mathcal{M}d7$ 36 $\mathcal{X}e3$ $\mathcal{G}f5!$ and then 37 $\mathcal{X}xe4$ h3 38 $\mathcal{G}g1$ $\mathcal{G}d6$.

33 bxc6 bxc6
34 $\mathcal{M}b1+$ $\mathcal{A}a8$

Black loses this game because he is too concerned with keeping his material edge. The tide turns after 34...$\mathcal{A}c7$ 35 $\mathcal{Q}d4$ $\mathcal{A}xd4$ 36 $\mathcal{A}xd4$ $\mathcal{H}h7$ 37 $\mathcal{E}e5+$ $\mathcal{G}d7$ 38 $\mathcal{M}b8$, intending 39 d6 and wins. But Black could save himself with the 36...$\mathcal{X}xd5!$ Exchange sacrifice.

35 $\mathcal{Q}d4!$

White has an attack, but it can be handled by 35...$\mathcal{M}d7$ and 36 $\mathcal{Q}xc6$ $\mathcal{Q}xc6$ 37 $\mathcal{Q}xc6$ $\mathcal{M}c7$.

35 ... $\mathcal{A}xd4?!$
36 $\mathcal{A}xd4$ $\mathcal{H}h7$
37 $\mathcal{A}e5$ $\mathcal{Q}d6$
38 c5! $\mathcal{Q}b7$?

A knight on b7 is always bad, Tarrasch might have said. It was widely believed that White has a clear advantage after 38...$\mathcal{Q}e4$ 39 $\mathcal{X}xe4$ $\mathcal{X}xe4$ 40 $\mathcal{M}b3$ followed by $\mathcal{M}b8+$ or $\mathcal{M}b7.
But the simple 40...a5 holds because of 41 b7 cxd5 42 b8 f5! and then 43 xh7 xb8, when Black can again think about winning.

No better is 39 d6 because of 39...d2+ 40 e2 xbl 41 dxe7 xe7 42 xbl g5.

39 d6 d5
40 e1

The Caro-Kann had grown up since Lasker first encountered it in the 1890s. In the post-war era it became a Hypermodern weapon that Tartakower, Reti and others hinted might make 1 e4 irrelevant. Reti claimed that the Caro-Kann and Burn Variation of the French “make it absolutely impossible for the first player to take any initiative” and give Black “an even game without any difficulties at all.” But as the 1920s unfolded many of the claims of the Hypermoderns turned out to be as exaggerated as those of Steinitz and Tarrasch.

After his minor errors at moves 24, 27, 34 and 35 and the major ones at moves 32 and 38, Black’s position has fallen into the can-lose category. Some observers felt it was much worse than that Teichmann thought Black was “hopelessly lost” three moves ago.

40...

But this is the decisive error. It’s common sense, Lasker might say, that Black should use his badly placed knight (40...a5!) rather than reposition the other one.

41 a6 f6
42 xf6! xf6
43 e3 f8
44 e1!

The rooks rule (44...d8 45 e7!).

44...

hh8
45 d7 b8

Black is also lost after 45...d8 46 e8 b8 (47 xf8 xf8 48 e8).

46 e8+ c7
47 xbl Resigns

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Lasker – Tartakower
Moravská Ostrava 1923
Caro-Kann Defense,
Exchange Variation (B13)

1 e4 c6
2 d4 d5
3 exd5 exd5
4 d3 e6
5 c3 f6
6 f4 g6

Reti’s 6...g4, which he introduced two years before, eventually supplanted the fianchetto.

7 h3

White’s modest goal is to reach a middlegame that favors him because Black’s queen’s bishop lacks a square. This new move avoids 7 d2 g7 8 gf3 g4.

7...

g7
8 f3
Botvinnik’s Gordian-knot solution to the queen’s bishop problem was 8 \textit{\&}f5. Black stands well following 9 \textit{\&}xf5 gxf5 and ...e6/...\textit{\&}e4.

8 ... \textit{\&}e4

Tartakower exploits White’s failure to play an early \textit{\&}bd2 by building a stone wall (...f5).

9 \textit{\&}bd2 f5

But 9...\textit{\&}f5! is still best. Black would threaten 10..\textit{\&}xc3 or 10..\textit{\&}xf2 and accomplish the trade of bishop following 10 \textit{\&}c2 \textit{\&}xd2 and 11...\textit{\&}xd3

10 0-0 0-0

11 \textit{\&}e5

Tartakower, citing Maroczy’s comment in the tournament book, said “most masters would have concentrated on dominating the e-file.” For example, 11 \textit{\&}e1 e6 12 \textit{\&}f1, as Fischer played in a comparable position. If White can eventually drive the knight away with f2-f3, Black’s backward e-pawn would be exposed as a target.

But tactics trump general impressions – 12...g5! 13 \textit{\&}h2 g4, as suggested by Zak, and then 14 hxg4 \textit{\&}xf2! (not 14...fxg4 15 \textit{\&}xe4 dxe4 16 \textit{\&}d2 with a positional plus). Black is better after 15 \textit{\&}xf2 fxg4 16 \textit{\&}d2 e5! 17 dxe5 \textit{\&}b6+.

11 ... \textit{\&}xe5

12 \textit{\&}xe5

White seeks a good bishop-vs.-bad bishop middlegame in which d4 will be a superb outpost after ...\textit{\&}xe5/\textit{\&}xe5. He stands even better after 12...\textit{\&}h6? 13 \textit{\&}f3 \textit{\&}b6 14 \textit{\&}e2 and a2-a4.

12 ... \textit{\&}xe5

13 dxe5

Black faces a dilemma. His knight is the best thing about his position and the main justification for 9...f5. But leaving the pawn structure as it is will hand White an effortless positional edge with \textit{\&}f3-d4 and f2-f3. For example, 13...\textit{\&}c7 14 \textit{\&}f3 e6 15 \textit{\&}e2 \textit{\&}d7 16 \textit{\&}d4 (16...\textit{\&}xe5? 17 f3).

13 ... \textit{\&}xd2

14 \textit{\&}xd2

This was given a question mark by Tartakower, an exclamation point by Vainshtein – and both by Khalifman/Soloviov. The three viewpoints reflect changes in our strategic thinking over the past century.

In the Steinitz era, a dogged defense (14...e6 15 \textit{\&}ad1 \textit{\&}c7 and ...\textit{\&}d7) was considered a valid, if not optimum policy. But by the 1920s passive defense acquired a reputation of defeatism.

The other extreme is 14...f4, which Tartakower called a “burn the boats” approach that deserved a “?.” He liked 14...e6 because the bishop comes to life after 15 \textit{\&}ad1 d4.

If White stops ...d4 with 15 \textit{\&}c2, Black could reply 15...f4, which he claimed would favor Black. But Black is a bit worse after 15 \textit{\&}e2! and 16 \textit{\&}f3. That’s why Vainshtein preferred “14...f4!”

From a modern perspective 14...f4 is neither a good nor a bad move but simply the best practical chance – and so deserves “!?”. 246
15 $\text{ad}1$

Now 15...$\text{c}6$ 16 $\text{e}2$! and $\text{f}3/\text{d}4$ makes the d-pawn a chronic target.

15  

$\text{wc7}$

Black felt that 15...f3 was refuted by 16 $\text{e}4$ and he gave 16...fxg2
17 $\text{xd5}$ $\text{g}7$ 18 $\text{xg2}$ $\text{b}6$ 19 $\text{d}2$
as proof. That's refuted by 19...$\text{d}8$!
20 $\text{xd8}$ $\text{xh}3$+

The fault lies in 19 $\text{d}2$?. After 19 b3 White keeps his pawn (19...$\text{e}6$
20 $\text{xb}7$).

16 $\text{fe1}$  

$\text{e}6$?

This is a major positional concession and inconsistent to boot. Black's position was going to be difficult in any event but 16...$\text{e}6$ was preferable because c3-c4 would lead to a favorable trade of bishops and would not expose a hole at d6

17 $\text{ec1}$!

White will be assured a plus in the late middlegame once he times c3-c4 correctly, e.g. 17...b6 18 c4 d4? 19 $\text{e}4$
or 18...$\text{xc}4$ 19 $\text{xe}4$ $\text{f}7$ 20 $\text{d}6$.
Also 17...f3 18 c4 $\text{xc}4$ 19 $\text{xe}4$ $\text{wd}8$
20 $\text{ee}4$! followed by $\text{ed}4$.

17  

$\text{wd8}$

Can't Black make up his mind? He ends up playing...$\text{c}7$-d8-a5-c7 during moves 15-19. True, he has to get the queen off the c-file. But why not pick a square and stick to it?

Tartakower falls victim to the modern ailment of picking a move purely because it turns out relatively well in a forcing line (17...$\text{wd}8$ 18 c4 $\text{f}3$?)! Things look different when their opponent makes a quiet response.

18 $\text{e}2$!

The bishop belongs on f3 or g4, depending on how Black responds to c3-c4.

18  

$\text{wa5}$

He tries to provoke b2-b4 so he can hit back with ...a5. The natural alternative is to leave the queen where it is (18...$\text{d}7$ 19 c4 $\text{c}6$). Good plans for White include 20 $\text{g}4$ $\text{we}7$ 21 c5
followed by $\text{wd}4$ and pushing the b-pawn.

19  

b4  

$\text{ec7}$

20  

c4!

When a calculator, as Tartakower was, misses something simple like this the result is often a strategic rout. Black could have put up stern defense if White protected his e-pawn with 20 $\text{f}3$ b5, as he expected.

20  

...  

$\text{xe}5$

21  

exd5  

$\text{wd}6$

White occupies the seventh rank decisively after 21...$\text{xd5}$ 22 $\text{wd}5$
23 $\text{f}3$ $\text{d}8$ 24 $\text{c}7$ and 25 $\text{ee}7$.

22  

$\text{f}3$  

$\text{d}8$

Black does no better with 22...$\text{d}7$
23 $\text{wb}2$ or 23 $\text{d}4$, e.g. 23 $\text{d}4$ $\text{ac}8$
24 $\text{xa}7$ or 24 $\text{cd}1$ $\text{fe}8$ 25 $\text{dx}6$
$\text{xd}4$ 26 $\text{x}d4$ $\text{xe}6$ 27 $\text{de}4$.

23  

$\text{xd}4$!

Tartakower again missed something in his calculations. It may have been that 23...exd5 24 $\text{xd}5$+ $\text{wd}5$ loses to 25 $\text{e}8$+.  

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Or it may have been that he intended 23...a5 24 b5 \( \text{d7} \) – but now realized that 24 bxa5 is strong (24...\( \text{xa5} \) 25 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{a3} \) 26 \( \text{c7} \) or 24...\( \text{d7} \) 25 \( \text{b6} \)).

\[
\begin{align*}
23 & \quad \text{...} & \text{d7} \\
24 & \quad \text{w} & \text{e5!} \\
25 & \quad \text{bxc5!} \\
\end{align*}
\]

White is also winning after 25 \( \text{xc5} \), e.g. 25...exd5 26 \( \text{xd5}+ \) and \( \text{xb7} \text{c7} \). But after the text Black must allow a passed c-pawn that decides quickly (25 bxc5 exd5 26 \( \text{xd5}+ \) followed by \( \text{xb7} \) and c5-c6).

25...\( \text{ac8} \)

Black can linger at the board after 26 dxe6 \( \text{c6} \).

Also winning is 32 \( \text{b1} \) and \( \text{b8} \).

\[\text{Black resigned after 32...f7 33 xa7 e7 34 a4! g5 35 ac4 d7 36 c5 xc5 37 xc5 xc7 38 xc7+ xc7 39 t1 d6 40 e2 e5 41 a4 d4 42 f3.}\]

The strongest large tournament between St Petersburg 1914 and AVRO 1938 was organized because efforts to arrange a world championship match had failed. In late 1923 Alekhine tried to obtain American sponsors for a championship challenge to Capablanca. But the likely patrons didn’t think he had much of a chance. Instead they were willing to foot the bill for an international tournament – New York 1924 – featuring Alekhine, Capablanca, Lasker, Marshall and others.

Lasker used the early rounds to catch up on the latest theory, by watching the other players. This was how he was able to create the “New York Variation” of Reti’s new opening when they met in the 16th round. But earlier, when Reti had Black, he was surprised by an innovation on move seven and had to improvise.

Lasker – Reti
New York 1924
French Defense
McCutcheon Variation (C12)

\[
\begin{align*}
1 & \quad e4 & e6 \\
2 & \quad d4 & d5 \\
3 & \quad c3 & c6 \\
4 & \quad g5 & b4 \\
5 & \quad c2 \\
\end{align*}
\]

Tarrasch and Marshall obtained some excellent positions with this variation in their matches with Lasker.

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This was Heinrich Wolf’s new idea and it threatened to put the McCutcheon out of business. White will break the pin with 6 a3 without incurring doubled pawns.

5 ... dxe4

Swaps of minor pieces (5...h6 6 ∆xf6 ∆xf6 7 a3! ∆xc3+ 8 ∆xc3) would emphasize Black’s problem in developing his queen’s bishop.

6 a3

Unlike a comparable position in the Winawer French, Black doesn’t get enough pressure on the center from 6...∆xc3+ 7 ∆xc3 ∆c6 because of 8 ∆xe4 ∆xd4 9 ∆xd4 ∆xd4 10 ∆xf6+ gxf6 11 ∆xf6.

6 ... ∆e7

7 ∆xf6 gxf6!

This was Reti’s innovation, improving on his loss against Bogolyubov earlier in the tournament (7...∆xf6 8 ∆xe4 ∆d7 9 ∆d3 ∆c6 10 0-0-0 ∆xe4 11 ∆xe4).

Black intends to develop his other bishop on the long diagonal as in Burn’s variation (1 e4 e5 2 d4 d5 3 c3 ∆f6 4 ∆g5 dxe5 5 ∆xe4 ∆e7 6 ∆xf6 gxf6).

8 ∆xe4 f5

He acts before White plays 9 c4 f5 10 ∆c3! and can meet ...∆d7-c6 with d4-d5.

Nevertheless Black should scale back his ambitions and settle for 8...b6. For example, 9 c4 ∆b7 10 ∆c3 f5 11 ∆g3 0-0 is fine for him, as is 9 ∆c3 ∆b7 10 ∆f3 c6 11 0-0-0 f5.

9 ∆c4? ∆d7

As in a Burn Variation position, Black has an active plan of ...∆f6 and ...e5. Reti prefers quick development (...∆c6/.. ∆d7-f6).

10 ∆d2

But it’s now evident that after 10...∆c6 11 0-0-0 he cannot stop d4-d5!. Reti decides to develop his queen and castle somewhere.

10 ... ∆d6

11 0-0-0 ∆e7

A bit more ambitious is 11...∆f6 followed by 12 0-0 and ∆d8, with only a minor disadvantage. But White can be more aggressive with 12 ∆g3, intending 13 ∆h5, 14 ∆e2 and f2-f4/∆f3.

12 ∆g3!

Threatening 13 ∆xf5 exf5 14 ∆e1 ∆e6 15 d5 with advantage. After 12. 0-0 White can continue 13 ∆h6!, intending 14 ∆xf5 exf5 15 ∆d5.

12 ... ∆h4

Of course, Black realized he was wasting tempi (...∆e7-d6; ...∆e7-h4). But when you make threats like 13 ...∆f4 you can convince yourself that you are actually gaining time.

13 ∆e1!

Now, however, Black has to meet the threat of 14 ∆xf5. It seems he can do that safely with 13...∆f4+ 14 ∆b1 ∆e6 (15 ∆d5 ∆h6).

But that misjudges 15 d5! For example, 15 ∆e5 16 ∆b5 and 17 ∆d4. Or 15...∆e7 16 dxe6 fxe6 17 ∆b5! (and if 17...c6 then 18 ∆ge2 ∆e5 19 f4 and ∆xd6).
13 ... \( \text{Qe6?} \)

Now was the time for 13...0-0! Black’s major weaknesses are covered and the main question is how strong 14\ d5 would be. Black is distinctly worse following 14...e5 15 \( \text{f3 and Qd3} \) but not after 14...\( \text{Qe8}. \)

14 \( \text{Qxf5!} \)

Lasker always managed to outplay Reti tactically. Black may have expected 14\ d5 \( \text{Qe5} 15 \text{dxe6 fxe6} \) with only a slight disadvantage.

14 ... \( \text{Qf4+} \)
15 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \)

How optimistic should White be? He can be happy with 16 \( \text{Qd2}, \) e.g. 16...\( \text{Qe6} 17 \text{g3 and 18 \text{Qe4 or 18 \text{Qb5}, or 16...e5 17 \text{g3 and Qc4}. But there’s reason to look for something better.} \)

16 \( \text{g3!} \)

For example, he would win after 16...\( \text{Qf6} 17 \text{Qe4 Qe5 18 Qc4 or 17...Qg7 18 Qd5 (18...0-0-0 19 Qxd6+ cxd6 20 Qe3+).} \)

16 ... \( \text{Qe5} \)

Here he faces another choice between candidates that lead to different kinds of advantage. The first to consider is the most forcing, 17 \( \text{f4}, \) and then 17...\( \text{Qg7 18 Qd2} \) seems good, since 18...\( \text{Qc6} \) loses material to 19 \( \text{Qb5}. \)

That means 18...\( \text{c5} \) would be forced, and it seems loosening enough to be punishable by a shot. But as White looks further, neither 19 \( \text{Qc4 Qc7} \) nor 19 \( \text{Qe4 Qe7} \) do damage.

17 \( \text{Qg2!} \)

This only threatens the b-pawn but that’s enough to provoke a panic. Black realizes 17...\( \text{c6?} \) fails to 18 \( \text{Qc4 Qxe1} 19 \text{Qxd6+}. \) And he can guess that 17...\( \text{Qc6} \) costs material after a forcing line like 18 \( \text{f4 Qg7} 19 \text{Qxc6+ Qxc6} 20 \text{Qf5 Qf8} 21 \text{Qb5} \) or 18...\( \text{Qc5 19 Qxc6+ 0xc6} 20 \text{Qe4}. \)

17 ... \( \text{Qc6?} \)

Black talked himself out of 17...0-0-0, probably because of 18 \( \text{f4 Qg7 19 Qc4}. \)

Then 19...\( \text{Qe7 20 Qe5 Qe8} 21 \text{Qe4} \) looks awful (21...\( \text{Qc6} 22 \text{Qb5 and 21...Qc6 22 Qxc6 Qxc6} 23 \text{Qa4}). The same goes for 19...\( \text{Qe5} 20 \text{Qa5 c6} 21 \text{Qe4 Qe7 22 Qe3!} \) and 21...\( \text{Qf8} 22 \text{Qf6 Qb6} 23 \text{Qc4}. \)

But there are defensive resources, such as 19...\( \text{Qe7 20 Qe5 Qc6}, \) now that \( \text{Qa5} \) is out of the question. Of course, Black is worse (21 \( \text{Qxc6 Qxc6} 22 \text{Qxc6}) \) – but Lasker drew much uglier positions at New York.

18 \( \text{f4} \)

More accurate is 18 \( \text{Qc4!} \) because 18...\( \text{Qxe1} 19 \text{Qhxe1 Qe7} \) and Black loses a pawn (20 \( \text{Qd5+ Qd8} 21 \text{Qf6 Qe7 22 Qe4!).} \)

18 ... \( \text{Qg7} \)

Capablanca claimed Lasker played better in their one-sided match than at New York (!). The difference in his results was that Lasker’s young opponents defended so poorly, Capablanca said. This game provides some support for that.

Black can make the game interesting again with 18...\( \text{Wh5!} \) and then 19 \( \text{Qe4 Qe7} 20 \text{Qd5} 0-0-0. \) White has plenty of ideas that might work over the board, such as 21 \( \text{Qxe7+ Qxe7} 22 \text{Qf6 Wh5} 23 \text{Wh3.} \)

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He can also go for broke with 19 \( \square c4 \) and then 19...\( \square e7 \) 20 \( \square x d7! \) \( \square x d7 \) 21 \( \square x c6+ \). He has plenty of compensation after 21...\( \square x c6 \) 22 g4 \( \square h3 \) 23 \( \square e5+ \) \( \square b6 \) 24 \( \square x f7 \) and \( \square x e6+ \), or 21. \( \square x c6 \) 22 \( \square e5+ \) \( \square e8 \) 23 \( \square e4 \) \( \square f8 \) 24 \( \square x c6 \).

All these lines look promising but none are as clean a win as 18 \( \square c4! \).

19 \( \vdash b5! \)

Not 19 \( \square f5 \) \( \square x f4+ \) 20 \( g x f4 \) \( \square x g2 \). After the text Black is lost (19...\( \square f8 \) 20 \( \square c4 \) or 19...0-0 20 \( \square x c6 \) and \( \square x a7+ \)).

19 ... 0-0

20 \( \square x d6 \) \( \square x d6 \)

21 \( \equal x d6 \) \( \equal f d8 \)

The rest is interesting chiefly because of how White outplays his opponent tactically for a second time and shortens the game by 20 moves.

22 \( \square d2 \) \( \square e8 \)

23 \( \square d1 \) \( \square d e 8 \)

Black could reach an endgame but it's a lost one after 23...\( \equal x d6 \) 24 \( \square x d6 \) \( \equal d8 \) 25 \( \square c5 \) \( \square x d1+ \) 26 \( \square x d1 \).

Or 25...\( \square g6 \) 26 \( \square d5 \), threatening 27 \( \equal x c6 \) and \( \square e7+ \).

26 \( \square f5 \) \( \square h8 \)

27 \( \square g5 \) \( \square c 7 \)

28 \( \square x c6! \)

And 29 \( \equal d8 \) must win. Black resigned after 28...\( \equal x c6 \) 29 \( \equal d8 \) \( \equal c c 8 \) 30 \( \square x g7+ \) \( \square x g7 \) 31 \( f x g7+ \) \( \square g 8 \) 32 \( \square e7+ \).

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As Lasker began to face opponents much younger than him he tried to win in the middlegame more often than he had in the past. This may seem strange because his superiority seemed to lie in the endgame. When he faced Alekhine at New York it was their first meeting since winning an 89-move marathon at St. Petersburg. By trying for a middlegame knockout he saved energy because games often ended in 35 moves.

Alekine – Lasker
New York 1924

Queen's Gambit Declined,
Orthodox Variation (D35)

1 \( d 4 \) \( d 5 \)

2 \( e 4 \) \( e 6 \)

3 \( \equal f 3 \) \( \equal f 6 \)

4 \( \square c 3 \) \( \square b d 7 \)

5 \( c x d 5 \) \( c x d 5 \)

6 \( \square f 4 \)

Annotating another game in his first anthology, Alekhine gave “6 \( \square f 4! \)” as best. Later he ridiculed it and said Black could equalize “in several ways”

6 ... \( c 6 \)

7 \( e 3 \) \( \square h 5! \)

White preserves his bishop and holds a slight edge after 7...\( \square e 7 \) 8 \( h 3! \).
8  \( \texttt{\textit{d3}} \)

Alekhine called this the weakest of the three possibilities that includes 8  \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \) and 8  \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \). The alternative he didn’t mention is the most natural, 8  \( \texttt{\textit{g5}} \).

That leads to normal QGD positions in which Black has an extra tempo (8...\( \texttt{\textit{e7}} \) 9  \( \texttt{\textit{xe7}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xe7}} \)). But White would still have a small edge.

8  \( \texttt{\textit{...}} \)  \( \texttt{\textit{xf4}} \)

9  \( \texttt{\textit{exf4}} \)

Now 9  \( \texttt{\textit{e7}}+ \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{f1}} \!) favors White (10...\( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \) 11 \( \texttt{\textit{d2}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{f6}} \) 12  \( \texttt{\textit{c1+}} \) followed by h2-h4, g2-g3 and \( \texttt{\textit{g2}} \)).

9  \( \texttt{\textit{...}} \)  \( \texttt{\textit{d6}} \! \)

His chances are somewhat less after 10  \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{h4}} \) (11 g3 \( \texttt{\textit{h3}} \)).

10  \( \texttt{\textit{...}} \)  \( \texttt{\textit{0-0}} \)

11  \( \texttt{\textit{0-0}} \)  \( \texttt{\textit{e8}} \)

The bind is based on  \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \), e.g. 12  \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \) f6? 13 \( \texttt{\textit{h5}} \)! But Black can defend with 12...\( \texttt{\textit{f8}} \!) and ...f6.

12  \( \texttt{\textit{c2}} \)  \( \texttt{\textit{f8}} \)

A fundamental problem with the bind is that as pieces are traded, the pawn structure becomes a liability, e.g. 13  \( \texttt{\textit{h1}} \) f6 14  \( \texttt{\textit{xe8}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xe8}} \) 15  \( \texttt{\textit{e1}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{h5}} \) favors Black.

13  \( \texttt{\textit{d1}} \)

White dismissed 13  \( \texttt{\textit{g5}} \), with the idea of 13...h6?? 14  \( \texttt{\textit{h7+}} \), because he didn’t like 13...g6 14  \( \texttt{\textit{fe1}} \) f6 15  \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{g4}} \). No better is 14 h4 \( \texttt{\textit{g4}} \!) 15 f3 \( \texttt{\textit{d7}} \).

His main concern is finding a plan. In normal lines of the Exchange QGD, White probes the queenside with b2-b4-b5, while Black works the kingside. Here White’s kingside is solid enough to allow him to concentrate fully on the other wing. But Alekhine doesn’t turn to it until after his 12  \( \texttt{\textit{d1-e3-f5}} \) plan fails to produce results.

13  \( \texttt{\textit{...}} \)  \( \texttt{\textit{f6}} \! \)

14  \( \texttt{\textit{e3}} \)  \( \texttt{\textit{c6}} \)

15  \( \texttt{\textit{b4}} \)  \( \texttt{\textit{c7}} \)

16  \( \texttt{\textit{b4}} \)  \( \texttt{\textit{b6}} \)

17  \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \)

During the early 1920s, the “Rubinstein Bind” became a bad pawn structure, which could arise in a number of variations, much like the Hedgehog in the 1970s-80s. Of course, Black is better off with his pawn at d5, than at e6. But after quiet play, say 9...\( \texttt{\textit{e7}} \) and 10...0-0 White has good chances with \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \), followed by 0-0/g2-g3/h2-h4.

10  \( \texttt{\textit{g3}} \)

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17 ... $\text{g}7$

Black takes aim (... $\text{h}5/...\text{e}6$) at the d-pawn. Defending it with 18 $\text{d}1$ $\text{h}5$ 19 $\text{e}2$ is no fun. Neither is Tartakower’s suggestion of 18 $\text{f}5$ $\text{h}5$ 19 $\text{g}4$ in view of 19...$\text{xe}3$ 20 $\text{x}h5$ $\text{e}4$ followed by ...$f5$ and $\text{e}6$.

18 b5

The $\text{bxc}6$ threat is an illusion in view of ...$\text{e}8$.

18 ... $\text{h}5$!

19 g4

To avoid losing a pawn (19 $\text{e}2$ $\text{x}f3$ 20 $\text{x}f3$ $\text{xd}4$), White surrenders the positional asset of the bind, his pawn control of kingside dark squares.

19 ... $\text{f}7$

20 $\text{bxc}6$ $\text{e}8$

Now 21 $\text{b}5$ $\text{bxc}6$ 22 $\text{xc}6$? $\text{e}6$ loses a piece.

21 $\text{wb}2$ $\text{bxc}6$

The threat of ...$\text{e}6xf4$ provokes another concession.

22 $\text{f}5$ $\text{wd}6$

White should not allow 22...$\text{wf}4$ 23 $\text{g}2$ $\text{c}5$.

23 $\text{g}2$ $\text{c}7$

24 $\text{e}1$ $\text{h}5$!

Black’s best target is $g4$.

25 $\text{h}3$ $\text{h}7$!

This essentially decides the game because there is no defense to $\text{g}5\text{h}3$+. White will not be able to take on $g5$ as things stand because of $\text{h}2+$-$h1$ mate, and that explains his next two moves.

26 $\text{x}e8+$ $\text{x}e8$

27 $\text{e}1$

A trade helps White (27...$\text{xe}1+$ 28 $\text{x}gxe1$ $\text{hx}g4$ 29 $\text{hx}g4$) because 29...$\text{wf}4$ could be answered by 30 $\text{wb}7$! $\text{wx}g4+$ 31 $\text{h}1$ That would allow White to fight into an ending (31...$\text{b}6$ 32 $\text{xc}6$).

27 ... $\text{b}8$!

Lasker passes up the various routine wins – such as 27...$\text{g}5$ 28 $\text{xe}8+$ $\text{xe}8$ and then 29 $\text{e}2$ $\text{hx}3+$ 30 $\text{f}1$ $\text{f}8$ or 29 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{h}2+$ 30 $\text{f}1$ $\text{gx}5$ 31 $\text{wb}7$ $\text{hx}3$ – in order to finish off before move 40.

28 $\text{c}1$ $\text{g}5$!

Now 29 $\text{xe}5$ $\text{h}2+$ 30 $\text{f}1$ $\text{gx}5$ 31 $\text{xe}5$ allows mate after 31...$\text{b}2$/...$\text{h}1$

There’s a wonderful cheapo in 31 $\text{xe}6$ because 31...$\text{b}2$?? allows a mate in five (32 $\text{e}8+$ $\text{h}7$ 33 $\text{g}6+$!). But 31...$\text{a}5$ shuts the door.

29 $\text{e}5$!! $\text{fxe}5$

Black could have accepted the sack because White’s attack ends soon after 29...$\text{hx}3+$ 30 $\text{f}1$ $\text{xe}5$ 31 $\text{dxe}5$ $\text{w}e7$.

30 $\text{wx}g5$ $\text{e}4

31 $\text{f}6$

The last roll of the dice. 31...$\text{wh}2+$ 32 $\text{f}1$ $\text{wh}1+$ 33 $\text{e}2$ $\text{ex}d3+$ 34 $\text{w}x\text{d}3$ and now 34...$\text{wh}3+$ 35 $\text{e}3$ $\text{w}x\text{f}8$ (35...$\text{g}6$ 35...$\text{h}6$ and mates) 36 $\text{wx}g7+$ $\text{w}e8$ 37 $\text{c}2$ wins.

31 ... $\text{g}6$

Alekhine thought 31...$\text{wx}f6$ would have prompted his resignation “very
soon” and indeed 32 \textit{\textcolor{red}{Wxf6}} gxf6 33 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{f1}}}} h\textit{\textcolor{red}{xg4}} 34 h\textit{\textcolor{red}{xg4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{b2}}}} looks convincing.

32 \textit{\textcolor{red}{f4?!}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{hxg4}}

This eliminates all tactics based on gxh5 and is faster than 32...exf3 33 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{e5!}}} or 32...exd3 33 gxh5 (but perhaps not faster than 32...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{b6}}} 33 gxh5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{xd4+}}} 34 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{h2}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{xf6}}}}}}})

33 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{e2}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{gxh3}}

34 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{h5}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{b2}}}}

35 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{h4}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{xf4}}}}

Resigns

The 36 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{Wxf4}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{xf4}}}} ending contains no surprises (37 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{xg6}}}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{xg6}}} 38 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c1xg6}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{b2+}}}}}}).

\textbf{81}

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It was after New York 1924 that Lasker gave an interview to the Dutch newspaper \textit{De Telegraaf} in which he detailed some of the strengths and weaknesses of his opponents. Reti plays better with White than with Black, he said, and Janowsky has difficulty finishing off his opponents. Maroczy defends well but attacks only when he has to, he said. Lasker could have cited his recent experience as evidence. Reti played poorly as Black in Game 79 and that Janowsky failed to exploit his big edge against him in another New York game. As for Maroczy ..

Maroczy – Lasker
New York 1924
\textit{French Defense, Steinitz Variation (C11)}

1 \textit{\textcolor{red}{e4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c5}}}

This is the only time Lasker played Alekhine’s Defense in a money game and was almost certainly influenced by Maroczy’s pathetic handling of it five rounds earlier when he lost after 2 \textit{\textcolor{red}{d3?!}}

\begin{align*}
2 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c3}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{d5}} \\
3 & \textit{\textcolor{red}{e5}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{f6}}}}}

In the few previous examples of 3 \textit{e5}, only Alekhine, at Carlsbad a year before, had played this rather than 3...\textit{d4}

4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{d4}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{e6}}}

But Alekhine got a poor position after 4...\textit{c5} 5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{b5}}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c6}} 6 \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{xf3}} with 6...\textit{a6? 7 \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c4 xcx6}} \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{bxc6}} 8 \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{e6!}}}

5 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c2}}}

“It is truly a psychological riddle why Maroczy would select a variation he himself refuted years ago!” wrote Alekhine. Reinfeld blamed his decision on a “suicide mood.”

5 ... \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{e5}}}

6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{c3}} \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c6}}}}

7 \textit{\textcolor{red}{f4}}

7 ... \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c7}}}}

What Alekhine had in mind was Alapin-Maroczy, Vienna 1908 which went 7...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{w6}}} 8 \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{f3}}}} \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{f6}}} and then 9 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{g3 \textit{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{cxd4}}} 10 \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{cxd4}}} \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{fxe5}} 11 \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{f5}}} \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{d4+}}} 12 \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c3}}} 0-0 13 \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{f4}}} \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{c7}}} 14 \textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{\textbf{\textcolor{Red}{w2}}} g5!}}}} with advantage to Black because White’s center collapses

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That verdict was overturned by the discovery in the 1940s of 14 a3! (14...\textit{\textcopyright}x\textit{\textcopyright}b2?? 15 \textit{\textcopyright}a4). This favors White after 15 \textit{\textcopyright}a4 or 15 b4 and leads to the modern view — that after 9 g3 “Black has to play extremely accurately to avoid landing in a highly unpleasant situation within a short time” (Psakhis).

8 \textit{\textcopyright}f3 0-0

Suetin decided it was Lasker’s “psychological conception” to invite White into an attack that he knew Maroczy couldn’t carry off.

9 g3 cxd4
10 cxd4 \textit{\textcopyright}b6
11 \textit{\textcopyright}h3?

Alekhine said even after 11 \textit{\textcopyright}c3 followed by \textit{\textcopyright}d3, 0-0 and \textit{\textcopyright}e2, White still has problems. But today we know from similar positions that White should be doing well.

For example in the Tarrasch Variation, 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 \textit{\textcopyright}d2 \textit{\textcopyright}f6 4 e5 \textit{\textcopyright}fd7 5 f4 c5 6 c3 \textit{\textcopyright}e6 7 \textit{\textcopyright}d3 cxd4 8 cxd4 \textit{\textcopyright}b6 9 \textit{\textcopyright}e2 followed by \textit{\textcopyright}c3 and \textit{\textcopyright}d3 is considered unclear, even though Black is uncastled and his king is not a factor, as it would be after 11 \textit{\textcopyright}c3! here.

This difference in perception colors the rest of the game. Alekhine felt the onus was on White, who fails the test and is deservedly on the brink of losing by move 16. Today we tend to think the onus is on Black, who needs counterplay to offset White’s space edge.

11 ... \textit{\textcopyright}d7
12 0-0 \textit{\textcopyright}e8

Contemporary accounts bemoaned White’s inability to develop his queenside (13 \textit{\textcopyright}e3 \textit{\textcopyright}c4). But White’s queen’s bishop is not badly placed on c1. He should be ready to play b2-b3 and/or a2-a3 to keep Black’s pieces at bay. In the 1920s, such a policy was considered too weakening but it takes a while for Black to penetrate by means of ...a5-a4 and ...\textit{\textcopyright}a7-b5.

13 g4

Against normal queenside play, 13...\textit{\textcopyright}b4 and ...\textit{\textcopyright}b5, White obtains reasonable chances on the other wing, e.g. 14 f5 \textit{\textcopyright}c2 15 \textit{\textcopyright}b1 \textit{\textcopyright}a4 16 b3.

13 ... \textit{\textcopyright}f6!

Before 13 g4, the exchange ...fxe5/fxe5 would have given White a target at e6 for his h3-bishop and an outpost for a knight on f4. Now Black would obtain a slight edge after, say, 14 b3 fxe5 15 fxe5 \textit{\textcopyright}e8

14 exf6! \textit{\textcopyright}xf6
15 g5 \textit{\textcopyright}e7
16 \textit{\textcopyright}h1

More amateur psychoanalysis: In \textit{Shakhmaty}, Suetin said this move revealed Maroczy’s “catastrophic indecisiveness (on which Lasker had based his calculation!).”

16 ... \textit{\textcopyright}c4
17 \textit{\textcopyright}c3?

Only now does White’s position begin to slip. On c3 the knight plucks up the c-file and stops ...\textit{\textcopyright}b5. But it also gives Black an extra reason for his next move. After 17 \textit{\textcopyright}g3 chances are fairly even.

17 ... \textit{\textcopyright}b4!

With ...\textit{\textcopyright}xc3/...\textit{\textcopyright}e4 in mind as well as ...\textit{\textcopyright}a5-b6.

18 \textit{\textcopyright}e2 \textit{\textcopyright}e8
19 \textit{\textcopyright}d3 \textit{\textcopyright}d6!

Black appreciates that the wonderful knight is in the way on the c-file. Transferring the other knight to f5 — 19...\textit{\textcopyright}e7 20 \textit{\textcopyright}e2! \textit{\textcopyright}f5 — would allow White to rebuild his defenses with 21 a3 \textit{\textcopyright}a5 22 b4 \textit{\textcopyright}b6 23 \textit{\textcopyright}a2! and \textit{\textcopyright}g3.
20      f5?!  

White still has a playable game if he keeps the center closed and plays 20 g6! h6 21 c2, followed by a2-a3 and c5.

20      ...      dxf5

Also good was 20...xc3 21 bxc3 exf5 but Black preferred what Alekhine called “plain butchery.”

21      cxd5      d6!

Black threatens to pocket a pawn with 22...fxd4 22 cxd4 exd5.

22      xf5?

White’s chances for advantage drifted away when he failed to play c3 at move 11 and he got the worst of things after he did play c3 at move 17. He loses the game because of his failure to play 22 c3! and keep the diagonal leading to his king closed.

22      ...      exf5
23      c4

White can hold down his disadvantage by keeping his knight on d5 (23 a3 or 23 d2). Black should win if he gets his bishop on the diagonal (23 d2 e6 25 c4 xf4! 26 xf4 a5, for example).

23      ...      c4!
24      b3+?

White could have kept the game alive with – you guessed it, 24 d5 and 25 c3!.

24      ...      h8

25      c4

Black also wins after 25 g2 xd4 26 xd4 ed4 27 e3 g4.

25      ...      xd4
26      h3      c2!

White’s desperation is aimed at h7. But h2 is more vulnerable.

27      g6      c6
28      f3      h6

Threatening, among other things, 29.. xf3.

29      e6??      x6

Also winning is 29...x6 because 30 xh6 xf3 31 xg7+ xg7 32 h7+ f6 ends White’s fun.

30      x h6

30      ...      h4!

Resigns

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Lasker made a number of contributions to opening theory at New York, and also rewrote endgame books by successfully defending c3-vs a+ against Edward Lasker. What is often overlooked is his original approach in the following game in which he offered a positional pawn-sacrifice in a Sicilian Defense, an idea that was rare at the time.
Lasker – Bogolyubov  
New York 1924  
Sicilian Defense (B40)

1  e4  c5
2  \textit{\&}f3  e6
3  d4  cxd4
4  \textit{\&}xd4  \textit{\&}f6
5  \textit{\&}d3  \textit{\&}c6
6  \textit{\&}xe6

An early exchange of knights on c6 was common when the Sicilian was young. But it became discredited because Black tends to have a good game whether he strengthens his center with ...bxc6 or creates symmetry with dxc6 and ...e5. Attitudes began to change in the 1950s when, for instance, a good answer to Kan's 4...a6 was found in 5 \textit{\&}d3 \textit{\&}c6 6 \textit{\&}xc6!.

6  ...  bxc6
7  0-0  \textit{\&}e7

Lasker called such moves "the odds-giving style": Black provokes White’s e-pawn. After the more solid 7...d5 White retains a slight plus with either 8 \textit{\&}d2 or 8 cxd5/9 e4.

8  e5!  \textit{\&}d5
9  \textit{\&}g4  g6
10  \textit{\&}d2  f5

This bears a distant resemblance to another Sicilian, 1 e4 c5 2 \textit{\&}f3 \textit{\&}c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 \textit{\&}xd4 \textit{\&}f6 5 \textit{\&}c3 g6?! when 6 \textit{\&}xe6 bxc6 7 e5 \textit{\&}g8 8 \textit{\&}c4 \textit{\&}g7 9 \textit{\&}f3 f5 and ...e6 looks so bad that GMs have lost as White because they tried to crush it.

11  \textit{\&}f3

White also retains a slight advantage after 11 exf6 \textit{\&}xf6 12 \textit{\&}h3 and \textit{\&}f3

11  ...  \textit{\&}b4!
12  \textit{\&}c4  \textit{\&}a6

With a threat of ...\textit{\&}xc2...

13  \textit{\&}d2!  
...that White ignores, rather than backtrack with 13 \textit{\&}e2.

13  ...  \textit{\&}xc2
14  \textit{\&}ad1  0-0

Black grabbed the pawn because he had foreseen that his knight is not trapped (15 \textit{\&}c3 \textit{\&}b4 16 \textit{\&}e2 \textit{\&}b8) and there are no immediate threats.

15  \textit{\&}d6!

But White’s conception was broader. He wants to force an exchange of pieces on d6 so that he can open up an attacking diagonal leading to g7 and h8. Even then his compensation is more visual than concrete – in other words, it’s a positional sack.

15  ...  \textit{\&}e4

The diagonal is safer than it seems – 15...\textit{\&}xd6 16 exd6 \textit{\&}d4 17 \textit{\&}e3 \textit{\&}xd3 18 \textit{\&}xd4 \textit{\&}xf1 19 \textit{\&}c3 \textit{\&}f6!.

If White tries 19 \textit{\&}xf1 instead Black has time for 19...\textit{\&}b6! counterplay. White’s best is transposing into the game with 18 \textit{\&}xd3.

16  \textit{\&}e3  \textit{\&}xd3
17  \textit{\&}xd3  \textit{\&}xd6

Alekhine said Black’s move was forced in view of 17...c5 18 \textit{\&}h6 \textit{\&}xd6 19 exd6 rook-moves 20 b4, which regains the pawn with advantage. But it’s another theme of the Sicilian – the
position Exchange sack — that Alekhine and Bogolyubov discounted. Black can play 19...\(\text{Wb6!} \) (20 \(\text{Rx} \text{f8}\) \(\text{Rx} \text{f8} \) and \(\text{Wxd6}\)) with at least fair chances.

18 \(\text{exd6}\)

White seems to have ample compensation in view of 18...\(c5\) 19 \(b4!\); 18...\(e5\) 19 \(c3\) or 18...\(c5\) 19 a4.

But again Black should offer an Exchange sack, with 18...\(\text{Wb6!} \) 19 \(h6\) c5. White would have to decide whether to get back his pawn with 19 \(\text{e3}\) c5 20 \(\text{d}4\) or make the sack permanent with 19 \(\text{c3}\) c5 20 \(b4!\) \(\text{b5}\) 21 \(\text{bxc5!}\) \(\text{Wxc5}\) 22 \(\text{b2}\).

18 ... \(e5\)

Black concludes that it's worth giving back the pawn (19 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{Wb6}\) 20 \(\text{d}4\) \(\text{ex} \text{d}4\) 21 \(\text{Wxd4}\) \(\text{Wxd4}\)) to eliminate the bishop.

19 \(\text{Wf6}\)

But this shows that White has evaluated the situation better. His long-term compensation is excellent. First he stops ...\(\text{Wb}6\)-\(b5\) counterplay by threatening the e-pawn (e.g. 19...\(\text{e8}\) 20 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{Wb6}\) 21 \(\text{e5}\)).

19 ... \(f6\)

On \(f6\) the Black queen protects the kingside and threatens ...\(\text{Wxd6}\).

20 \(\text{c3}\)

But that makes it vulnerable to \(f2\)-\(f4\)\(xe5\), winning a piece. White can also work with ideas of \(\text{c4+}\) and \(\text{xe5}\), e.g. 20...\(\text{Wxd6}\) 21 \(\text{c}4+\) \(\text{h}8\)? 22 \(\text{xe5}\) 21...\(\text{Wh6}\) 22 \(\text{xd}4\); 21...\(\text{f7}\) 22 \(\text{f4}\) and 21...\(\text{d}5\) 22 \(\text{xd}5+\) \(\text{cxd}5\) 23 \(\text{xe5}\).

20 ... \(\text{ae8}\)

21 \(\text{f4}\) \(\text{h4}\)

The queen had to move to avoid \(\text{fxe5}\) with tempo (or 21...\(\text{f7}\) 22 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\)?) 23 \(\text{Wxd4}\) White's superiority is evident now because he gets his pawn back without trading minors.

22 \(\text{c4+}\) \(\text{e6}\)

23 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{f7?}\)

Black apparently feared 24 g3 followed by White putting his bishop on \(c3\) and his queen on \(e5\). The kingmove avoids \(\text{Wb8+}\) before it was a threat. But 23...\(\text{Wd8}\) was superior.

24 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{Wd8}\)

25 \(\text{b3}\)

White has a substantial positional advantage, and the text prepares \(\text{xb7}\) while stopping ...\(\text{Wb6}\) (+). But with 25...\(\text{a8}\)! Black could have mounted stiff resistance.

Can't White get more out of his \(\text{c5+}\) battery? Vainshtein, and most likely his close collaborator David Bronstein, suggested 25 b4 followed by \(\text{b2/\text{Wc3}}\). But Black can hinder this by 25...\(\text{Wb6}\) 26 \(\text{e1}\) a5. White's edge may simply not be enough to force a win.

25 ... \(\text{a5?}\)

26 \(\text{b7}\) \(\text{c5}\)

27 \(\text{d4}\)

Black, no doubt, had counted on 27 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 28 \(\text{xa7}\) \(\text{a8}\) when he has real drawing chances.

27 ... \(\text{d8}\)

But here a trade of queens (27...\(\text{Wxe4}\) 28 \(\text{xd7}\) \(\text{g8}\) 29 \(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{f7}\) 30 \(\text{xf7}\)
is hopeless.

28  b4  \(\mathcal{W}c4\)
29  \(\mathcal{X}c4\)  g5
30  \(\mathcal{X}c7\)

Also winning is 30 \(\mathcal{X}c6\)  \(\mathcal{D}x f4\)
31  \(\mathcal{X}f4\)  gxf4  32  \(\mathcal{X}a7\)  \(\mathcal{W}e6\)
33  \(\mathcal{X}a6\)  \(\mathcal{C}c8\)  34  \(\mathcal{C}c7\).
30  ...  \(\mathcal{D}x f4\)

A bit better is 30... \(\mathcal{G}g6\) although Black’s counterplay is easily contained
(31  \(\mathcal{X}x g5\)  \(\mathcal{D}x g5\)  32  \(\mathcal{A}a4\)  \(\mathcal{F}e8\)  33  \(\mathcal{G}g3\)).

31  \(\mathcal{X}f4\)  gxf4
32  \(\mathcal{X}c6\)  \(\mathcal{G}g8\)

The counterattacking 32... \(\mathcal{A}a8\) fails to
33  \(\mathcal{X}x d7+\)  \(\mathcal{C}c6\)  34  \(\mathcal{X}h7\)  \(\mathcal{X}a2\)
35  \(d7+\)  or  34... \(\mathcal{D}d5\)  35  \(b5\).

33  \(\mathcal{F}f2\)  \(\mathcal{G}g6\)
34  \(b5\)  \(\mathcal{E}e6\)
35  \(\mathcal{C}c2\)  \(\mathcal{G}g8\)
36  \(\mathcal{F}f3?\)

This turns a three-hour game into a
four-hour game. After 36  \(a4!\)  \(\mathcal{A}a8\)
37  \(\mathcal{X}a8\)  \(\mathcal{X}a8\)  38  \(\mathcal{C}c4\)  and  \(\mathcal{F}f3\) Black can call it quits.

36  ...  \(\mathcal{A}a8!\)
37  \(\mathcal{C}c2+\)  \(\mathcal{X}d6\)
38  \(\mathcal{D}d2+\)  \(\mathcal{C}e5!\)
39  \(\mathcal{X}d x d7\)  \(\mathcal{X}b5\)
40  \(\mathcal{X}a8\)

White’s technical problem has grown
(41  \(\mathcal{D}d2\)  \(\mathcal{A}a4!\)). He wants to give up a
pawn for all of Black’s pawns
(42  \(\mathcal{D}d5+\)  \(\mathcal{C}c6\)  43  \(\mathcal{X}f5\)  \(\mathcal{D}d6\)  44  \(\mathcal{H}h5\)
\(\mathcal{X}a2\)  45  \(\mathcal{X}h7\)) but 45... \(\mathcal{D}e5\) is not easy.

41  \(\mathcal{X}h7!\)  \(\mathcal{A}a3++!\)

This makes it a five-hour game.
Black avoids 41... \(\mathcal{A}x a2?\)  42  \(\mathcal{G}g7\)  \(\mathcal{H}a4\)
43  \(\mathcal{G}g5!\), when both Black pawns fall.

42  \(\mathcal{W}x f4\)  \(\mathcal{X}a2\)
43  \(\mathcal{G}g7\)  \(\mathcal{F}f2+!\)
44  \(\mathcal{C}e5\)  \(f4\)

White must avoid simplification such
as 45... \(f3!\)  46  \(gxf3\)  \(\mathcal{X}x f3\).

45  \(\mathcal{G}e4!\)

Now 45... \(f3!\)  46  \(gxf3\)  \(\mathcal{X}x h2\)  47  \(\mathcal{C}c7!\)
cuts off the king and creates a
mismatch between the \(\mathcal{G}+\mathcal{D}\)-vs-\(\mathcal{D}\).

45  ...  \(\mathcal{C}e5\)
46  \(h4\)  \(\mathcal{D}d6\)
47  \(h5\)

Black can try to reach the notorious
f- and h-pawn ending with 47... \(f3\)
48  \(gxf3\)  \(\mathcal{H}h2\)  49  \(\mathcal{G}g5\)  \(\mathcal{G}e6\). However,
White wins with 48... \(\mathcal{F}f1\) with 49  \(\mathcal{G}e 3\)  \(f2\)
50  \(\mathcal{E}e2\).

47  ...  \(\mathcal{F}f1\)
48  \(\mathcal{G}g4?\)

After 48  \(h6!\) White wins easily
because he can avoid the notorious
ending (48... \(f3\)) by means of 49  \(h7\)  \(\mathcal{H}h1\)
50  \(\mathcal{X}f3\) or allow a winning form of it
(49  \(gxf3\)  \(\mathcal{H}h1\)  50  \(\mathcal{F}f5!\)  \(\mathcal{X}x h6\)  51  \(\mathcal{G}g6++\)).
48  ...  \(\mathcal{H}h1?\)

Counter-blunder. After 48... \(f3!\)
49  \(gxf3\)  \(\mathcal{G}e6\) Black achieves notoriety.
Now the game lasts a mere seven
hours.

49  \(\mathcal{G}g5\)  \(\mathcal{H}h4\)
50  \(\mathcal{F}f5!\)
White’s king will reach g6, virtually sealing the point. Because the g-file remains closed Black has no vertical checks to stop the winning plan of h5-h6-h7 and a5-a8. The rest was:

50...cxe7 51 g6 f8 52 a5 a2 53 a3 b3! 54 a8+ e7 55 gxf3 a2+ 56 f5 h2 57 a7+ e8 58 a6 a8+! d7 61 a3 Resigns

No better was 59...h2 60 f4 xh5 because 61 f5 leads to a won Lucena position after 61 h1 62 a8+ d7 63 f7 h7+ 64 a6 h1 65 f6.

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When Richard Reti faced Lasker again in New York his opening was riding a tidal wave of success. Since adopting 1 d4 he had played it 20 times in serious events. On one of those occasions Reti had second thoughts (when he answered 1...d5 with 2 d4 in Game 76). In the other games he scored 14 wins, four draws and one loss. His victims included Spielmann, Rubinstein and Tartakower.

The opening was the terror of New York 1924 because Reti used the knight-move to defeat Capablanca, Alekhine, Bogolyubov, Yates, Janowsky and Edward Lasker. Nothing like this had ever happened before (or since). 1 d4 was, in Tartakower’s words, “the Opening of the Future,” and there was widespread concern that it would replace both 1 e4 and 1 d4.

That’s why you can argue that the following game had a greater impact on opening thinking than any other. As Lasker suspected, the defense always catches up with the offense. Inevitably, somebody would find a way to stem the tidal wave. That someone was Lasker.

Reti – Lasker
New York 1924
Reti Opening (A12)

1 □f3 d5
2 c4 c6

In his Manual Lasker also recommended 2...e6 and then 3 b3 □f6 4 xg2 c5 5 g3 □c6 6 a5! – not appreciating the smothering effect of 6...d4!.

3 b3 □f5

The “New York Variation” is a mirror image of the London Variation (1 d4 □f6 2 □f3 g6 3 xf4) of the King’s Indian, which had come into fashion after London 1922.

4 g3 □f6
5 □g2 □bd7
6 □b2 e6
7 0-0 □d6

Reti won a brilliancy prize against Bogolyubov – you know, the 25 □e8!! Resigns game – four rounds before this. Lasker’s development is the same as Bog’s but with the critical addition of ...xf5. Its absence in the Bog game allowed White to play d2-d4! and later e2-e4, which Alekhine called the refutation of Black’s opening.

8 d3

Later in 1924 Reti entered and won the Argentine Championship, and in one of his games he played 8 d4. But his inability to follow with e2-e4 left Black with a fine game (8...0-0 9 □bd2 □h7 10 □x5 □xe5 11 □xe5 □g4 12 □xf3 □e4)

8 ... 0-0

The ambitious center Black is building requires some caution: 8...e5? 9 e4! creates problems for the d6-bishop (9...dxe4? 10 dxe4 □xe4 11 □h4 and wins).
Black’s idea is 10 e4 \( \text{g}4 \). If e2-e4 doesn’t accomplish something tactically it can be a serious undermining of d3.

10 \( \text{cx}d5 \) \( \text{cx}d5 \)

11 \( \text{Cc1} \)

Here 11 e4 looks right because 11..\( \text{dxe4} \) 12 \( \text{dx}e4 \) \( \text{dx}e4 \)? 13 \( \text{dx}e4 \) costs a piece, 12..\( \text{dx}e4 \) 13 \( \text{dx}e4 \) \( \text{dx}e4 \)

14 \( \text{h}4 \) is risky and 13...\( \text{W}e7 \)

14 \( \text{W}e2/\text{fd}1 \) offers White a slight pull.

The acid test is again 11...\( \text{g}4 \) and then 12 \( \text{ex}d5 \) \( \text{dx}d5 \) 13 \( \text{Cc}4 \). Kasparov regards that as promising – yet there doesn’t appear to be any serious testing of it aside from a Belgian correspondence game in the 1930s.

11 ...

12 \( \text{Cc}2 \)

This striking idea – to put the queen at a1 and attack the center from the most remote square – was instantly famous after Reit beat Yates with it earlier in the tournament.

12 ...

Yates never created a target. Lasker does (13 \( \text{W}a1 \) a4!).

13 \( \text{a}4 \)

Black wasn’t ready for ...\( \text{Cc}5 \) (14 \( \text{dx}e5?! \)). He takes steps first to anticipate \( \text{h}4 \) and e2-e4. Now on

14 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{h}7 \) 15 e4 he would play 14...\( \text{Cc}5 \) with effect.

14 \( \text{W}a1 \)

15 \( \text{Cc}1 \)

For the moment White can still use tactics to push in the center, 15 e4 (15...\( \text{dx}e4 \) 16 \( \text{hx}e4 \)). But after 15...\( \text{h}7 \) he would find himself on the defensive (16 \( \text{hx}h4 \) \( \text{Cc}5 \) or 16 \( \text{W}a1 \) \( \text{dx}e4 \) 17 \( \text{dx}e4 \) \( \text{Cc}5 \) 18 \( \text{Cc}4 \) \( \text{dd}3 \)).

15 ...

16 \( \text{ff}1 \)

17 \( \text{Cc}5 \)

Black looks for a way to change the pawn structure and play for an advantage. A natural method is 16...e4 17 \( \text{dx}e4 \) \( \text{dx}e4 \). But after 18 \( \text{dd}4 \) the most consistent and aggressive move, 18...e3, virtually forces White into an Exchange sack. It’s not hard to see that it’s sound (19 \( \text{dx}e3 \) \( \text{Cc}2 \) 20 \( \text{Cc}2 \) followed by \( \text{Cc}5 \)).

17 \( \text{Cc}5! \)?

This is in step with Tartakower’s view that the Hypermoderns were really “neo-Romantics.” Alekhine thought the sacrifice wasn’t sound. “Rather a dubious outcome for the ‘opening of the future!’” he sneered.

White’s problem is that defending b3 with 17 \( \text{dd}2 \) allows 17...e4!, with advantage to Black. And on 17 \( \text{dd}3 \) Black has 17...\( \text{a}6 \)! and 18...\( \text{b}4 \).

White isn’t losing after 18 \( \text{Cc}3 \) \( \text{Cb}4 \) 19 \( \text{Cxb}4 \) axb4 20 e4 \( \text{Cc}5 \) or 20 \( \text{Cc}3 \) \( \text{We}6 \). But he is worse in view of...b5 or ...

17 ...

18 \( \text{Cc}5 \)

White’s sacrifice made his b2-bishop strong and the d-pawn a target. Black would solve both problems with ...d4 but for the moment that’s not possible. He misses an opportunity for 18...\( \text{d}6 \)!, as suggested by Khalifman/ Soloviov, since 19 d4 \( \text{Cc}4 \) allows him...
to eliminate both White bishops as factors.

19  \( \text{\textit{d}e3} \)  \( \text{\textit{w}e6} \)

20  \( \text{h3} \)

20  ...  \( \text{\textit{d}d6?} \)

Now was the time to get a pawn, either White or Black, to d4. With 20...\( \text{\textit{ed}e8} \) Black threatens to set up a bind with 21...d4 22 \( \text{\textit{\textit{c}e3 \textit{b}6} \) followed by ...\( \text{\textit{d}d5} \)

White can stop that with 21 d4 but after 21 ...\( \text{\textit{b}b4} \) Black's Exchange should prevail (22 \( \text{\textit{c}c3} \) \( \text{\textit{xc}3} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{xc}c3} \) \( \text{\textit{de4} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{xc}c8} \) \( \text{\textit{xc}c8} \)).

21  \( \text{\textit{xc}c8} \)  \( \text{\textit{xc}c8} \)

Or 21...\( \text{\textit{xc}c8} \) 22 \( \text{\textit{\textit{d}d5} \textit{xe5}} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{xc}c5} \) \( \text{\textit{xd5} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{\textit{xd}d5} \textit{xf5}} \) 25 d4 and White is only slightly worse.

22  \( \text{\textit{f}f3?} \)

Here he misses 22 \( \text{\textit{d}d5g4!} \) which would have won a second pawn, e.g. 22...\( \text{\textit{\textit{dg4}} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{h}xg4} \) \( \text{\textit{f}f8} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{xd}d5} \) \( \text{\textit{wd7} \) 25 \( \text{\textit{f}f3} \) after which 25...\( \text{\textit{b}b5} \) offers mixed chances.

White can also try 23 \( \text{\textit{xd}d5!?} \) \( \text{\textit{wd7}} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{\textit{xd}d5}} \) but 24...\( \text{\textit{h}h5} \) 26 \( \text{\textit{\textit{d}d3} \textit{e5}} \) 27 d4 \( \text{\textit{d}d4} \) or 27 \( \text{\textit{g}g2} \) \( \text{\textit{xc}c3} \) is looking bad again.

22  ...  \( \text{\textit{e}e7} \)

23  \( \text{\textit{d}d4} \)  \( \text{\textit{wd7} \)

24  \( \text{\textit{h}h2} \)

White could muster more plausible threats with 24 \( \text{\textit{d}d5} \) followed by 25 \( \text{\textit{d}d4}, \) or 24 g4 and 25 \( \text{\textit{d}d4} \). But Reti is inspired by another "neo-Romantic" idea

24  ...  \( \text{h5!} \)

Target - h2! The definitive Reti game collection, by Jan Kalendovsky, awarded a double exclamation to this move as well as to Black's 31st move.

25  \( \text{\textit{wd1!} \)

Now 25...\( \text{\textit{dd}d8} \) 26 \( \text{\textit{d}d5} \) and \( \text{\textit{d}d4-b6} \) is an improved version of 24 \( \text{\textit{d}d5} \).

25  ...  \( \text{h4!} \)

26  \( \text{\textit{xd}d5} \)

One of the unanswered questions about this game is what were Reti's ambitions around this point. Was he playing for a win or a draw? He would likely have been able to draw following 26 \( \text{\textit{\textit{xd}d5} \textit{xd5} \) 27 \( \text{\textit{wd5} \textit{xd5} \) 28 \( \text{\textit{xd}d5} \textit{c5} \) 29 e4 or 29 \( \text{\textit{\textit{d}d3} \). But he appears to be playing for more.

26  ...  \( \text{\textit{h}xg3} \+

27  \( \text{\textit{fxg3} \)  \( \text{\textit{xd5} \)

28  \( \text{\textit{xd}d5} \) \( \text{\textit{f6!} \)

As the endgame nears both players are concerned with two Black pieces.

Black has to avoid turning his h7-bishop into dead wood (28...\( \text{\textit{dd}d8} \) 29 e4). White has to avoid granting the rook an entry point (28...\( \text{\textit{f6} \) 29 e4?? \( \text{\textit{xd}d4} \) and ...\( \text{\textit{c}c2+c1+}} \).

29  \( \text{\textit{xb7} \)

This is a good way of clearing a path for the queen and repositioning the bishop at b5 or c4.

It's been suggested that 29 \( \text{\textit{f3} \) is superior. However, Black has the better of 29...\( \text{\textit{\textit{xd}d4} \) 30 \( \text{\textit{\textit{xd}d4} \textit{f5}} \) ! Then 31 \( \text{\textit{c4} \textit{\textit{xd}d4} \textit{f3} \) 32 \( \text{\textit{\textit{xf}7+} \textit{xf7}} \) allows the rook to invade – whereas 31...\( \text{\textit{\textit{xd}d4}? \) is wrong because it doesn't play after 32 \( \text{\textit{xf}7/33 \) e4.

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White's best hope is to build a defensive wall, such as 29...\texttt{d}8 30 e3 \texttt{xd}3 31 \texttt{c}3 \texttt{c}7 32 \texttt{c}6. Not 32 e3 \texttt{xd}4 33 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{c}2+ 34 \texttt{h}1 \texttt{d}6 and ...\texttt{wxg}3 wins.

\texttt{29} ... \texttt{c}5!

Now 30 \texttt{a}4 is a good try, based on 30...\texttt{xd}4 31 \texttt{xh}7+ \texttt{hxh}7 32 \texttt{e}4+ and \texttt{xd}4. Black keeps his winning chances with 30...\texttt{xe}4 31 \texttt{xe}4 \texttt{e}5! 32 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{e}8.

\texttt{30} ... \texttt{a}6!?

The rook-move made Black's first rank vulnerable (30...\texttt{xd}4?? 31 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{xd}4 32 \texttt{a}8+).

\texttt{30} ... \texttt{g}6

But it also allowed the rook to play a role on the kingside. The knight is hanging now and protecting it with 31 \texttt{g}1 loses to 31...\texttt{h}5! 32 \texttt{g}4 \texttt{d}5 (33 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{d}6+ and ...\texttt{xa}6).

\texttt{31} \texttt{b}7

It was extremely difficult, even after making the time control at move 30, to evaluate potential endgames. White would likely draw now after 31...\texttt{xb}7 32 \texttt{xb}7 \texttt{xd}4 33 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{c}2 34 \texttt{g}2 \texttt{xe}2+ 35 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{xd}3 36 \texttt{c}3. But he is soon forced into a lost ending.

\texttt{31} ... \texttt{d}8

Kasparov’s suggestion, 31...\texttt{d}6, may be best because 32 \texttt{b}4 allows 32...\texttt{g}5 and because the bishops should win after 32 \texttt{b}5 \texttt{xb}5 33 \texttt{e}8+ \texttt{h}7 34 \texttt{xf}6 \texttt{h}5.

\texttt{32} \texttt{b}4!

Alekhine was impressed by this because after 37 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{xd}4 the b-pawn costs a bishop (38 \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{b}3 39 \texttt{c}4 \texttt{b}2 40 \texttt{a}2 \texttt{xd}3). However, that may not be enough to win following 41 \texttt{a}5 \texttt{b}1 42 \texttt{xb}1 \texttt{xb}1 43 \texttt{a}6 \texttt{c}4+ 44 \texttt{f}2, e.g. 44...\texttt{f}6 45 \texttt{e}3 \texttt{d}5 46 \texttt{f}4

Instead, Black wins by first bringing his bishop into better position – 37...\texttt{f}5! 38 \texttt{f}3 \texttt{d}7 39 \texttt{a}5 \texttt{a}8 or 38 \texttt{b}5 \texttt{b}3 39 \texttt{c}4 \texttt{e}6! 40 \texttt{xe}6 fx\texttt{e}6. The rest was:

\texttt{37} \texttt{xd}4 \texttt{f}5 \texttt{38} \texttt{b}7 \texttt{e}6! \texttt{39} \texttt{f}3 \texttt{b}3 \texttt{40} \texttt{c}6 \texttt{d}6 \texttt{41} \texttt{b}5 \texttt{e}6+ \texttt{42} \texttt{c}3 \texttt{e}6+! \texttt{43} \texttt{f}4 \texttt{e}2 \texttt{44} \texttt{c}1 \texttt{c}2 \texttt{45} \texttt{e}3 \texttt{d}5 White resigns
The two Laskers were distant relatives and had not seen one another since before the Great War. When they met again in New York Emanuel told Edward, "You haven't a chance in this tournament" because opening theory had advanced so far that in every game he would be giving odds of 15 to 20 minutes to his better prepared opponents. But when they met in the 19th round opening knowledge wasn't important. White's downfall lay in his faith in tactics as a solution to chronic endgame problems.

**Ed. Lasker – Em. Lasker**

New York 1924

*Queen's Gambit Declined, Cambridge Springs Defense (D52)*

1. d4 ♘f6
2. c4 e6
3. ♘c3 d5
4. ♗f3 ♗bd7
5. ♗g5 c6
6. e3 ♗a5
7. ♗d2

Alekhine said anyone familiar with the latest theory would know 7 cxd5 was the only move that tests the Cambridge Springs.

7. ... ♘b4
8. ♗c2 ♗e4

And this showed Black's unfamiliarity with 8...0-0 9 ♗e2 e5!, which Bogolyubov had demonstrated to be the right way (10 dxe5 ♘xe4) to reach the pleasant position that occurs in the game at move 14. The difference is that White isn't allowed the chance for an improvement at move 12.

9. ♗dxe4 dxe4
10. ♗f4?!

Much later it became common knowledge that whenever the bishop comes under attack it should retreat to h4, to avoid ...e5 with tempo

10. ... 0-0
11. ♗e2 e5
12. dxe5?

And here the bishop should go to g3, to preserve White's center.

12. ... ♘xe5
13. 0-0 ♘xc3!

14. ♗xc3

A curiosity is the leap frog simultaneous game played by Bobby Fischer and Larry Evans, alternating moves, against the unknown Charles Gersch in 1964. It went 14 bxc3 ♘f5
15 ♗b3 b6 16 ♗fd1 ♗fd8 17 ♗d4 ♘d3
18 ♗g3 c5! and Black outplayed the two GMs in splendid fashion.

14. ... ♗xc3
15. bxc3 ♘e8
16. c5

This stops ...b6/c5. But Edward Lasker blamed his loss on it, saying it violated a basic principle, "Don't move a pawn in the opening unless you are compelled to do so."

This position is hardly still in the opening but he felt White should continue 16 ♗fd1, e.g. 16...♗f5
17 ♘ab1 b6 18 ♗d6 c5 19 ♘bd1, followed by a2-a4-a5. That may be better than 16 c5 but the position favors Black after 19. ♘d3
16 ... \( \text{\textcopyright}d7! \)

The intuitive policy is to undermine the c5-pawn with 16...b6. But that enables White to reach a double-edged situation (17 \text{\textcopyright}xe5! \text{\textcopyright}xe5 18 cxb6 axb6 19 a4 and \text{\textcopyright}fb1) in which both sides have weaknesses.

Note that 16...\( \text{\textcopyright}d3 \) would lead, after 17 \text{\textcopyright}d6 b6 18 cxb6 axb6 19 \text{\textcopyright}fd1 to a position much like ...

17 \text{\textcopyright}d6 b6
18 cxb6 axb6
19 \text{\textcopyright}fd1

... this one except that Black could not offer a trade with ... 

19 ... \text{\textcopyright}a6!

It won’t be clear for many moves how much the trade benefits the knight at the expense of the remaining bishop. For the time being the dark-squared bishop can find targets (20 \text{\textcopyright}fl \text{\textcopyright}xe2+ 21 \text{\textcopyright}e2 \text{\textcopyright}a4? 22 \text{\textcopyright}c7!). But note the words “for the time being”

20 \text{\textcopyright}xa6?

Generals must be respected. In this case, it’s the general principle of preserving the bishop (20 c4! and then 20...\text{\textcopyright}e5 21 \text{\textcopyright}ac1 with roughly even chances)

20 ... \text{\textcopyright}xa6

White knew he would have to defend the a-pawn against 21...\text{\textcopyright}ea8. And he knew that passive defenses (e.g. \( \text{\textcopyright}d2 \)) were bound to fail. With this move he discourages ...b5/...\( \text{\textcopyright}b6 \) and tries to ensure that the b-pawn will become as much of a target as the a-pawn. But he needs to find a way to trade pawns.

21 ... \text{\textcopyright}ea8
22 \text{\textcopyright}fl

One of those ways is 22...\text{\textcopyright}xa4? 23 \text{\textcopyright}xa4 \text{\textcopyright}xa4 24 \text{\textcopyright}c7! when the threat of \text{\textcopyright}xd7 gives White at least an equal game. However, tactics like that are not a permanent solution.

Instead, he needs to force a liquidation. After 22 \text{\textcopyright}c7 \text{\textcopyright}c5 White should avoid 23 \text{\textcopyright}d6 \text{\textcopyright}e6 24 \text{\textcopyright}xe6? (because of 24...\text{\textcopyright}e8!). But he can play 23 a5! bxa5 24 \text{\textcopyright}xa5 \text{\textcopyright}xa5 25 \text{\textcopyright}xa5 thanks to the last-rank mate.

He would still have a problemsome defense after 25...\text{\textcopyright}d3 or even 25...f5 26 \text{\textcopyright}d8+ \text{\textcopyright}xd8 27 \text{\textcopyright}xd8 in view of Black’s faster king (27...\text{\textcopyright}f7 28 \text{\textcopyright}fl \text{\textcopyright}e6).

22 ... f5
23 \text{\textcopyright}ab1?

This is the last moment when tactics would solve the a-pawn problem. Against 23 \text{\textcopyright}c7 \text{\textcopyright}c5 24 \text{\textcopyright}d6 Black no longer has the defense of ...\text{\textcopyright}e6. And 24...b5 isn’t much better in view of 25 a5! \text{\textcopyright}b7 26 \text{\textcopyright}d7 \text{\textcopyright}xa5?? 27 \text{\textcopyright}d8+!.

Black can retain some chances with 23...\text{\textcopyright}f6 (24 \text{\textcopyright}d8+ \text{\textcopyright}xd8 25 \text{\textcopyright}xd8 \text{\textcopyright}f7 26 a5 b5) or 23...\text{\textcopyright}c5 24 \text{\textcopyright}d6 \text{\textcopyright}xa4 (25 \text{\textcopyright}xa4 \text{\textcopyright}xa4 26 \text{\textcopyright}xc6 \text{\textcopyright}d3 27 \text{\textcopyright}g3) but his prospects are doubtful.

23 ... \text{\textcopyright}a7!

This rules out \text{\textcopyright}c7 and dooms the a-pawn, which Black can take when he’s ready (24 \text{\textcopyright}a1 \text{\textcopyright}f7 25 \text{\textcopyright}f4 \text{\textcopyright}c5 26 \text{\textcopyright}d6 b5 27 a5 \text{\textcopyright}b3!).

24 b4!!

This is why Edward Lasker nearly beat Marshall in their 1923 match. He was excellent at finding tactics.
Why Lasker Matters

24 ... fxg4!
25 ¤b4

White’s hope is that Black’s extra kingside pawn won’t be enough to win if he can liquidate queenside pawns (25...hxax4 26 axa4 axa4 27 axc7 and axxb6).

24 ... d6
26 axb8

Now 26...ab7 27 axe5! and axxf6 dooms the e-pawn and offers reasonable drawing chances (27...c5 28 ac4 ab7 29 axxf6 gxf6 30 axe4 axxa4 31 af6).

26 ... da8
27 ad8+ af7
28 ac7!

White’s cleverness deserves a better fate (28...ad5? 29 axe4! dxc7 30 axd7+ and suddenly he is the one with the winning chances).

28 ... axxa4!
29 axa8 axa8
30 axb6

White has the pawn-trade he wanted (but not 30 axb6 ad5 and the pin wins).

30 ... ad5

Another deadly pin is 31 axc6 ac8.

31 ab7 ae6
32 c4 ac7!
33 ab4 aa1+
34 ae2 aa2+
35 ae1 af5

Black’s winning ideas include getting the knight to f3, where it can attack the immobile h-pawn and set up mates, e.g. White king on e2, Black rook on e1.

36 ab6 ad7
37 ae5

But there is no mate after 37...ha4 38 ag3 df3+ 39 ad1 and Black has to start over with 39...da7.

37 ... da4!

A bit of a surprise. Black is willing to swap another pair of pawns (38 ab7+ ac6 39 xg7 xc4) in order to create a passer.

38 c5 ae6
39 ad6?

That pawn-trade is the best White can get out of the position and he should try for it here (39 ab2 ad5 40 ab7 axc5 41 xg7) because what happens is worse.

39 ... ad5

The last trick was 39...ad6? 40 axc6.

40 ab7 h5
41 af8

Now 41 af7 ad6 42 cxad6 loses to 42..aa1+ 43 ae2 ah1 and after axh2 White’s d-pawn is not nearly as fast as the h-pawn (44 axd8 ae6).

And if it becomes a battle of his rook against the king and c-pawn (44 axg7 axd6 45 ag6+ ec7 46 ec6 axh2 47 af1 ab6 48 axe4 c5) he loses the mismatch.

41 ... g6
42 ad7+ ec4
43  \( \text{d}d1 \)  \( \text{a}a3! \)

Black also has a sixth rank plan – 44...\( \text{d}h4 \) 45  \( \text{d}6 \)  \( \text{f}f3+ \) 46  \( \text{f}f1 \)  \( \text{d}d3! \) and wins.

44  \( \text{d}d8 \)  \( \text{h}4 \)

45  \( \text{g}g7 \)  \( \text{f}3+ \)

46  \( \text{e}e2 \)  \( \text{a}2+ \)

47  \( \text{f}1 \)  \( \text{d}2! \)

Simplest. Black uses the mate idea (48  \( \text{d}d6 \)  \( \text{x}c5 \) 49  \( \text{x}g6 \)  \( \text{d}1+ \)) to trade rooks. White resigned after: 48  \( \text{x}d2 \)
\( \text{x}d2+ \) 49  \( \text{g}2 \)  \( \text{c}c5 \) 50  \( \text{h}3 \)  \( \text{gxh3+} \)
51  \( \text{x}h3 \)  \( \text{g}5 \).

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**Tartakower – Lasker**

*New York 1924*

*English Opening (A20)*

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This may seem like one of Tartakower’s little jokes. This was, after all, the tournament in which he played 1  \( \text{b}4 \) because he had been inspired by an orangutan at the Central Park Zoo. But this position had been theory for decades, more commonly via 1  \( \text{a}3 \)  \( \text{c}5 \) 2  \( \text{c}4 \).

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Lasker treats the opening like the Old Indian Defense he and Tartakower played 15 years before in Game 54.

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Another primitive position right? Belongs in the 19th century? But if you reverse the colors you’ll find that this is Aronin-Korchnoi, Soviet Championship 1962, which was eventually drawn.

| 9 | \( \text{d}4 \) |

According to “The Immortal Emanuel,” the opening began slightly differently – 1  \( \text{e}4 \)  \( \text{e}5 \) 2  \( \text{a}3 \)  \( \text{f}6 \) 3  \( \text{c}3 \)  \( \text{c}6 \) 4  \( \text{w}c2 \)  \( \text{c}3 \) 5  \( \text{c}3 \)  \( \text{e}7 \) 6  \( \text{f}3 \)  \( \text{g}6 \)
7  \( \text{e}2 \) 8 0-0 0-0 9  \( \text{d}4 \) 10  \( \text{d}5 \). Then Lasker leaned across the board and said, “Take your six moves now.”

Tartakower did: He played 11  \( \text{h}3 \), 12  \( \text{h}2 \), 13  \( \text{e}4 \), and 14  \( \text{f}4 \). Lasker interrupted the sequence to take on \( \text{f}4 \). There followed 14...exf4 15  \( \text{x}f4 \) 16  \( \text{x}f4 \). White resumed his free moves with 17  \( \text{af}1 \), 18  \( \text{wd}3 \) and 19  \( \text{wg}3 \). Then 19...\( \text{le}8 \) is the position in the real game after 19... \( \text{wd}8 \). After
the game was over, the score was fixed up, with passes by Black, to make it look as if the free moves didn’t exist. Or so Fidlow told us.

9  ...  \textit{g4}

10  \textit{d5}  \textit{e7}

11  \textit{h3}  \textit{d7}

White has a typical queenside space edge. The natural plan is c4-e5, after 12 b4 and perhaps, e3-e4 and \textit{e3}.

12  \textit{h2}

Tartakower goes in the other direction. Annotators have treated him as if he had lost his mind. But Black has no countermoves to stop White from obtaining a space edge on the kingside from 13 \textit{f4}.

12  ...  \textit{c8}!

Black prepares ...c6 and waits for 13 \textit{f4} \textit{exf4} 14 \textit{exf4} \textit{f5}! with a fine game.

13  \textit{e4}  \textit{g6}

14  \textit{f4}?!?

"Horrible," wrote Yasser Seirawan, who used this game to illustrate bad strategy. Black has no kingside weakness to justify 14 \textit{f4}, he said. But we know – by comparing this game with Fidlow’s version – that White has virtually been granted "free" moves. If you were allowed extra tempi during a tournament game, would you play on the queenside – or go for mate?

14  ...  \textit{exf4}

15  \textit{xf4}  \textit{xf4}

16  \textit{xf4}

If Black makes the conventional bid for counterplay, 16...c6 17 \textit{af1} exd5, his inferiority is evident after 18 \textit{xd5} or 18 exd5. But what is more significant is that 17...cxd5 would also invite White to weigh the Exchange sacrifice (18 \textit{xf6}! gx\textit{f6} 19 \textit{xd5 g7} 20 \textit{g4}) that arises later.

16  ...  \textit{e7}!

Black begins shifting furniture to safeguard both f6 and f7. "Typically Lasker-like," wrote Alekhine.

17  \textit{af1}  \textit{f8}

18  \textit{d3}  \textit{e8}

White is nearing the apogee of his attack preparation and it's time to start calculating. The main idea to work with is \textit{xf6} and here it would mean a double Exchange sacrifice – 19 \textit{xf6}! \textit{xf6} 20 \textit{xf6} gx\textit{f6} 21 \textit{g4} \textit{d8} after which 22 \textit{d4}! \textit{g7} 23 \textit{e3} leaves Black with only 23...\textit{g8} 24 \textit{h6+ h8} 25 \textit{xf6 g7}. This is a critical position – and one that appears to be best play since 14 \textit{f4}.

White has no knockout because 26 \textit{gh7} loses to 26...\textit{g6} and ...\textit{g7}. But 26 \textit{g4}! and 27 \textit{f5} would establish a bind. After 26...\textit{c7} 27 \textit{f5 \textit{f8} White evades the 28...\textit{xg2+ trick

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with 28 \h1 or 28 \f1 and wins with
29 C\xh7.

So is Black lost after 26 \g4? Not
necessarily, because he has 26...c6! and
then 27 \f5? \w6+ and 28...\wxb2 will
threaten mate on g2.

However, White again has a strong
king-move, 27 \h1! Then 27...\w6
28 \h5 favors him following 28...\w4
d4 29 \xg7 \xg7 30 \xd6 or 28...\g6
29 \f8+ \g8 30 \xd6. And 14 f4
doesn’t look horrible any more.

19 \g3? \d8
20 \d1

The one uncommitted piece heads to
f5.

20 ... \d7
21 \e3 \g5!

Black’s control of key kingside
squares begins to count. The key
variation is 22 \f5 g6 23 \g4 after
which White is doing reasonably well
following 23...f6 24 \d4 \f7
25 \h3.

But Black has much better in
23...\f6! because he can meet 24 \w3
and its threat of \w6/h4 with 24...h5!
25 \g3 h4 26 \g4 \e5, with
advantage

22 \g4 f6!

The crisis is over and Black can
make his own threats (23...h5). He has
a safe edge after, for example, 23 h4 h5
24 hxg5 hxg4 25 \xg4 fxg5.

23 \f2?

White missed his golden opportunity
at move 19 and loses the game here.
After 23 \f5 it can go either way, even
if Black wins material with 23...h5
24 \f4 g6 25 \d4 \xf4 26 \xf4.

23 ... h5

24 \g3

Now 24...\h4? 25 \xg7+ and
26 \w6h4 gives White more than
enough compensation.

24 ... h4!

White’s traffic jam is evident: 25 \f3
\c5 and ...\e5.

25 \g4 \h5
26 \f5 \xg4

27 \xg4

Now on 27...\e5 Black would find it
hard trying to break out of light-square
prison after 28 \d4 \w7 29 \e6, e.g.
29...\xg4 30 \xg4 \f8 31 \xg5 fxg5 32 \e6+.

27 ... \w8!

Lasker finds a target, the e-pawn,
which counts more than his opponent’s
threat. The attack is dead after 28 \xh4
\w4 29 \f5 \f8.

28 \f3 \e5
29 \x5 \w5
30 \x4 \xh4 \xh4
31 \xh4

White’s chief hope is \g4-e6+.
Black can give back the Exchange
(31...\w6 32 \g4 \ae8 33 \e6+ \xe6) but he has something a bit
clearer.
31 ... f5!
32 exf5 \[xf5
33 \[e1

The queenside pawns cannot be held for long (33 \[f2 \[e8 and ...\[f4/ ... \[d4).
33 ... \[xb2
34 \[g4 \[d4+
35 \[h2 \[af8!
36 \[e7 \[f4+
37 \[h1 \[e5!

Black finds a way to ensure that his king can emerge unscathed after \[e6+, e.g. 38 \[e6+ \[h8 39 \[g1 \[f2 and ...

38 \[xe5 dxe5
39 \[xc7 e4!
40 \[e7 \[f6!

This requires both calculation and visualization. Black can count out the moves that lead to an Exchange-up ending – 41 \[xe4 \[f1+ 42 \[h2 \[f4+ 43 \[xf4 \[xf4. Then he must visualize how White can liquidate pawns to seek a fortress – 44 c5 \[c4 45 c6 bxc6 46 bxc6 \[xc6 47 a4 and \[d1. Finally he had to be sure that that position is a win (It is.) The game that clinched first prize ended with:
41 \[xb7 \[a1+ 42 \[h2 \[e5+ 43 \[g1 \[b8! 44 \[d7 \[b1+ 45 \[f2 e3+ 46 \[e2 \[b2+ 47 \[e1 \[e3+ 48 \[f1 \[c1+ White resigns

The premise that Tartakover and Lasker would test their beliefs in practice games was not farfetched. On the way to New York 1924, aboard the S.S. Cleveland, Lasker tried to prove that the gambit pawn could be accepted in the French Defense’s Albin-Chatard Attack. Tartakover won convincingly in 31 moves.

One of Irving Chernev’s “Curiosities and Wonders” detailed how Lasker lost to several players the first time they met. But aside from opponents he faced only once (Torre, Charousek, Makovets, Fine, and Reshevsky) he was able to use what he learned in those initial games. That enabled Lasker to equalize his record with foes he met only a few times and roll up big scores against others such as Marshall, Tarrasch and Tchigorin. His last game with Rubinstein made their record 2-1, with two draws, in Lasker’s favor.

Rubinstein – Lasker
Moscow 1925
Slav Defense, Meran Variation (D47)
1 d4 d5
2 c4 c6
3 e3

Rubinstein’s favorite move order, avoiding 3 \[f3 \[f6 4 \[c3 dxc4 lines.

3 ... \[f6
4 \[c3 e6
5 \[f3 \[bd7
6 \[d3 dxc4
7 \[xc4 b5
8 \[e2

This quiet approach is based on exploiting Black’s queenside holes with \[e5/\[f3. In the tournament book, Bogolyubov preferred the “usual continuation” of 8 \[d3 a6 9 e4 c5 10 e5. The “usual continuation” wasn’t very usual since the Meran Variation had only come into fashion a year before at Meran 1924 when it was adopted by...Akiba Rubinstein.

8 ... a6
9 0-0

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In the only previous example of this position Teichmann played 9 a4 against Rubinstein, who equalized easily after 9...b4 10 d1 b5 11 0-0 b7 12 d2 e7 13 e4 0-0 14 e5 exd4 15 exd4 a5.

9 ... b7
10 b3

Rubinstein steers away from any recognizable weakness, a la Schlechter – and Ulf Andersson, who later tried to revive White’s play (10...c5 11 b2 e7 12 dx5 xc5 13 c1 e7 14 d4 and f2).

10 ... e7
11 b2 0-0
12 e5

The doubled pawns (12...e5 13 dxe5) are no liability after 13...d7 14 e4 or 13...d5 14 xdx5 cxd5 15 e4 or 13...wxd1 14 fxdl e5 15 e4 c5 16 d6, with a slight edge for White in each case.

12 ... c5
13 f3 e7

The knight cannot be maintained on e5, and the endgame is at least equal for Black after 14 xb7 xb7 15 f3 xf3.

14 xd7

Rubinstein is content to seek the tiniest of advantages (14...wxd7 15 dx5). That is nothing for Black to fear (15...wxd1 16 xf1 xf3 17 gxf3 xc5 18 ac1 ac8).

14 ... xd7

But he has reason to be more ambitious. Black often obtains more space in the Meran and he can quickly take the initiative after, for example, dxc5/...exd4 and ...fxd8.

The only attempt to punish Black’s 14th move is 15 d5 but he can sharpen matters with 15...d8 16 dx6 e5 17 fx7+ fx7 18 d5 b4 or 15...e5 16 dx6 e5+ 17 gxf3 fx6, with excellent chances in either case.

15 e4! ad8

Another curious rook decision. Normally when d- and c-pawns are traded, the c-file is the more valuable one because of the greater likelihood of occupying an outpost on it. White’s aim to plant a piece on c5 or c6, and therefore Black’s rooks would seem to belong on d8 and c8.

But Lasker ignores the c-file for the time being so he can keep his rooks connected and later shift his queen to a8.

16 a1 b8
17 e2 cxd4
18 exd4?!

Rubinstein made his living picking on isolated pawns and knew this was a questionable structure. He also saw that 18 xd4 c5 19 b2 costs material (19...f5 20 c3 e4).

But why did he reject 19 c5? White’s knight is as good as Black’s bishop after 19...xc5 20 xc5 xf3 21 xf3. Perhaps he had doubts about 19...xe7 20 xe7 xe7 and then 21 c5 e4 or 21 fd1 f5 22 xd6 e4 23 h5 g6. However in the last line 23 xf3! turns the tables.

18 ... c8

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Black rules out $\text{c7}$ before he plays ...$\text{wa8}$.

19 $\text{g3}$

White sets up a defensive formation by ruling out ...$\text{d5-f4}$.

19 ... $\text{wa8!}$

20 $\text{g2}$ $\text{fd8}$

21 $\text{xc8}$

Black was ready to seize the initiative with 21 ...$\text{d6}$ and then 22 $\text{c5}$ $\text{xf3+}$ 23 $\text{xf3}$ $\text{xf3+}$ 24 $\text{xf3}$ $\text{c6}$. The rook-swaps, unlike the $\text{w}$-trade, inch the game closer to a draw.

21 ... $\text{xc8}$

22 $\text{c1}$ $\text{c1}$

23 $\text{xc1}$ $\text{h6}$

24 $\text{b2}$ $\text{b6}$

25 $\text{h3}$?

"Why not simply $\text{c5}$?" asked Bogolyubov. Rubinstein would never lose a position like 25 ...$\text{xf3+}$ 26 $\text{xf3}$ $\text{xf3+}$ 27 $\text{xh3}$ a5 28 $\text{e4}$. Black can do better with queens on the board (26 ...$\text{d5}$ and ...$\text{c6}$). But not much better.

25 ... $\text{c8}$

26 $\text{d3}$

...a5-a4. But whenever he plays ...a5 White can foil him by attacking the b-pawn with $\text{c3!}$.

26 ... $\text{d5}$

This is better. Black threatens ...$\text{b4/..wc2}$ and provokes:

27 $\text{a3}$ $\text{b6}$!

Now the ...$\text{d5/..wc6/.. a5-a4}$ plan is much stronger because it will create a target at a3 and an outpost for his knight at c4.

28 $\text{h2}$ $\text{d5}$

29 $\text{g2}$ $\text{c6}$

White is running out of passes. After 30 $\text{h2}$ a5 he can’t play 31 $\text{c3}$ because his bishop hangs. Queen moves would allow ...$\text{xb3,..xe4}$ or ...$\text{c2}$. And after 30 $\text{h4}$, Black can keep passing (30 ...$\text{f8}$) until White has to move a piece.

30 $\text{d2}$ a5!

The older Lasker often made unnecessary concessions that the younger Lasker would have avoided. Euwe said this was because he knew from experience that even awful positions could he held. As a result, Capablanca added, Lasker became too optimistic and sometimes found himself trying to defend the indefensible.

What happens to Rubinstein here seems to be the reverse. His experience in winning positions like Black’s makes him too pessimistic.

31 $\text{c3}$?

On 31 $\text{e4}$, which threatens 32 $\text{c3!}$, Black answers 31...a4, virtually forcing the ugly 32 $\text{b4}$ $\text{c4}$ 33 $\text{c1}$. Rubinstein knew such positions usually get better and victory is just be a matter of time or technique.

But there is no winning plan. For example, 33 ...$\text{e5}$ 34 $\text{dxe5}$ $\text{xc1}$ looks good but after 35 $\text{d6}$! White is solid.
Another try is 33...Qd6 34 Qxd6 Rxd6 35 Qa2 when White is stuck with a bad bishop. But there is nothing clear after 35...f5 36 g4 — or even in 35...e5 36 dx e5 Qxf3+ 37 Qxf3 Qxf3+ 38 Qxf3 Qxe5 because of 39 Qe4, since Black’s bishop is lost following 39...Qb2 40 Qd3 Qxa3 41 Qc2 and Qb1-a2.

Of course, there are other ideas. They include 33...f5 34 Qc3 Qxf3+ 35 Qxf3 Qe3+ 36 Qxe3 Qxc3 37 Qb7 and 33...Qd6 34 Qxd6 Qxf3+ 35 Qxf3 Qxf3+ 36 Qxf3 Qxd6 37 Qg4 followed by 38 Qe4 and 39 Qd5. None are impressive.

Instead, Rubinstein allows a hopeless endgame. Lasker didn’t psych Rubinstein out. Rubinstein did.

31 ...
32 Qxf3

On 32 Qxf3 Qd5 Black wins with ...
32 ...
33 Qxc3 a4

This completes the strategy begun by 26...Qd5. On 34 b4 Qc4 the game would be over.

White seems to be holding instead with 34 Qa5 and then 34...Qd5 35 b4. The key lines are 35...Qc3 36 Qd2 Qf6 37 Qb6 and 36...Qg5 37 f4.

However there is a trick – 34 Qa5 looks adequate after 34...Qxb3 35 Qxb6 b2? 36 Qd2. But the pawn queens after 35...Qa5!.

34 bxa4 bxa4

The a-pawn is decisive (35 Qb4 Qxb4 36 axb4 a3 37 Qd2 a2 38 Qb3 Qf8 etc.).

35 Qf1 Qxa3

Reti said the position after 31 Qc3 “might be offered as an endgame problem, ‘Black to move and win.’” Unlike Reti’s studies, this isn’t over in a few moves:

36 Qe2 Qf8 37 Qd3 Qd5 38 Qe1 Qd6 39 e4 Qe7 40 Qe5 Qxe5! 41 dx e5 Qd7 42 Qd2 h5 43 Qc1 Qc6 44 Qa3 Qb6+ 45 Qd4 Qb5 46 Qf8 Qc4 47 Qc3 g6 48 f4 Qe3 49 Qd3 Qd5 50 Qa3 h4! 51 Qxh4 Qxf4+ 52 Qe4 Qh5! 53 Qf3 Qc4 54 Qb2 Qb3 55 Qa1 a3 56 Qg4 Qc2 57 Qg5 Qd3 White resigns.

In view of 58 Qh6 Qe4 59 Qh7 Qf5 60 Qg8 Qf4 61 Qxf7 Qxh3.

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By the 1920s there were increasing comments in the chess press about Lasker’s skill at “playing the man” rather than the board. “This is true to a certain extent with regard to many players,” Capablanca wrote in 1925. “There is perhaps a great part of truth to it in the case of Lasker, but I do not think that such things can be stated absolutely.” It was only after Reti’s theory appeared that Lasker’s decision-making was explained as psychology. Perhaps no move of his later career fueled this theory better than the Q-sack of this game.

Ilyen-Genevsky – Lasker
Moscow 1925
Sicilian Defense (B50)

1 e4 e5
2 Qc3 e6
3 \( \text{d3} \) d6

Lasker was experimenting with Sicilian lines in which Black doesn’t commit his queen’s knight until he knows whether ...\( \text{d}6 \) or ...\( \text{d}7 \) is best. Later in this tournament his game with Nikolai Zubarev began 1 e4 c5 2 \( \text{d}3 \) e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 \( \text{c}x\text{d}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 5 \( \text{c}3 \) d6 6 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \), opening a new page in opening theory.

4 g3 \( \text{f}6 \)
5 g2 \( \text{e}7 \)
6 0-0 0-0
7 b3

The queen’s bishop fianchetto and delay in d2-d4 was in fashion. Romanovsky won an impressive Soviet Championship game two years later that began 1 e4 c5 2 \( \text{d}3 \) c6 3 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 4 \( \text{e}2 \) d6 5 0-0 e6 6 b3 \( \text{e}7 \) 7 \( \text{h}1 \) d7 8 d4 cxd4 9 \( \text{c}x\text{d}4 \) a6 10 \( \text{h}5 \) f4 \( \text{a}5 \) 12 \( \text{f}3 \).

7 ... \( \text{c}6 \)
8 \( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
9 d4 cxd4
10 \( \text{c}x\text{d}4 \) \( \text{a}5 \)
11 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{a}8 \)

Probably the wrong rook. After 11...\( \text{a}8 \) and 12...a6 Black can continue ...b5 without tactical problems.

12 \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{h}8 \)

This odd-looking move is designed to avoid 13 \( \text{c}x\text{c}6 \) and 14 \( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{x}d2 \) 15 \( \text{x}xe7 \) with check. Nowadays players with Black would consider 12...\( \text{c}x\text{d}4 \) 13 \( \text{x}d4 \) e5 and ...\( \text{h}6 \). But following 14 \( \text{d}2 \) they would still have to deal with 15 \( \text{d}5 \).

13 \( \text{c}e2?! \)

White wants to play f2-f4 but here that allows 13 f4 \( \text{c}x\text{d}4 \) 14 \( \text{x}d4 \) d5 and the threat of ...\( \text{c}5 \) gives Black the advantage. He may have talked himself out of 13 \( \text{db}5 \) because after 13...\( \text{e}8 \) Black will win back a tempo with ...a6, e.g. 14 a3 a6 15 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 16 \( \text{h}d4 \) \( \text{h}f6 \) or 14 f4 a6 15 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{c}x\text{d}4 \) 16 \( \text{x}d4 \) d5 17 \( \text{d}3 \).)

At this point Lasker went into a deep think. Spectator S. Cananykin recalled nearly 50 years later (Sahs 1974) that many members of the audience thought his reply was “a gross oversight.”

13 ... \( \text{xa}2! \)

So did Lasker’s opponent. He “was literally taken aback as if he didn’t believe his eyes.” Cananykin wrote “Then he shrugged his shoulders” and trapped the queen.

It’s hard to appreciate why this was regarded as astonishing. Today, 13...\( \text{x}a2 \) is the kind of move a computer might spit out in a femto-second and a grandmaster might take just a few minutes on. The onlookers would quickly realize that rook, bishop and pawn are ample compensation, particularly when Black also has the two bishops.

Immediately after the game, a consensus agreed that Lasker knew he was taking a risk but realized that any other move would allow White to follow up with c2-c4, the idea he prepared with 13 \( \text{c}e2 \). After
13...\texttt{\textregistered}xd2 14 \texttt{\textregistered}xd2 White would have the better endgame, Spielmann said, since 14...d5? 15 \texttt{\textregistered}xc6 bxc6 16 e5 is a clear edge for him.

Through modern eyes this is much too optimistic. After 14...\texttt{\textregistered}xd4 15 \texttt{\textregistered}xd4 b5 Black stands perfectly well. But 13...\texttt{\textregistered}xa2! is better.

14 \texttt{\textregistered}a1 \texttt{\textregistered}xb2
15 \texttt{\textregistered}fb1 \texttt{\textregistered}b1+
16 \texttt{\textregistered}xb1 \texttt{\textregistered}d8
17 c4

White has the nice pawn structure he wanted when he played 13 \texttt{\textregistered}ce2. But his unfamiliarity with \texttt{\textregistered}-vs-pieces middlegames begins to take its toll.

17 ... \texttt{\textregistered}e8
18 f4

White remains on Sicilian auto-pilot: He continues to play the kind of moves White pursues in a normal 1 e4 c5 middlegame, instead of consolidating his position by putting his rook at c1 or d1 and repositioning the e2-knight. Here, for example, 18 \texttt{\textregistered}xc6 and 19 \texttt{\textregistered}d4 would have left chances roughly even.

18 ... a6
19 \texttt{\textregistered}h1 \texttt{\textregistered}c7
20 \texttt{\textregistered}e3 \texttt{\textregistered}b8
21 \texttt{\textregistered}d1 \texttt{\textregistered}b4!
22 \texttt{\textregistered}c3

White has no plan. He should have played his knight to c2 at move 19 or 20. Black now sets up a solid pawn formation that allows him to take over the initiative with ...\texttt{\textregistered}f6 and ...\texttt{\textregistered}a6-c5.

22 ... a5
23 \texttt{\textregistered}a1

23 ... b6!

Bogolyubov called this game an illustration of Lasker “the great tactician at his very shrewdest.”

24 \texttt{\textregistered}e3?

A blunder. Kasparov claims the position is still equal after 24 \texttt{\textregistered}d1 \texttt{\textregistered}f6 25 \texttt{\textregistered}e3 The same can be said of 24 \texttt{\textregistered}f3 \texttt{\textregistered}f6 25 \texttt{\textregistered}c1.

24 ... e5!
25 \texttt{\textregistered}f5

Also losing was 25 fxe5 dxe5 26 \texttt{\textregistered}f5 \texttt{\textregistered}xf5 27 exf5 \texttt{\textregistered}c2, e.g. 28 \texttt{\textregistered}xe5 \texttt{\textregistered}f6 29 \texttt{\textregistered}xc7 \texttt{\textregistered}xa1 30 \texttt{\textregistered}d5 \texttt{\textregistered}xb3 31 \texttt{\textregistered}xf7 a4.

25 ... \texttt{\textregistered}xf5
26 exf5 \texttt{\textregistered}c2
27 \texttt{\textregistered}e3 \texttt{\textregistered}xa1
28 \texttt{\textregistered}xa1 \texttt{\textregistered}f6
29 \texttt{\textregistered}e1 d5!

Two rooks and a pawn are more than enough to beat the queen because Black can create a queenside passer. It would be easy after 30 fxe5 \texttt{\textregistered}xe5 31 \texttt{\textregistered}c3 \texttt{\textregistered}xc3 32 \texttt{\textregistered}xc3 dxc3. So was: 30 \texttt{\textregistered}xd5 \texttt{\textregistered}xd5 31 fxe5 \texttt{\textregistered}xe5 32 g4 f6 33 h4? b5 34 \texttt{\textregistered}d4 \texttt{\textregistered}e3! 35 \texttt{\textregistered}xe3 \texttt{\textregistered}xd4 36 \texttt{\textregistered}f3 a4 37 h5 a3 38 \texttt{\textregistered}e2 \texttt{\textregistered}bd8 White resigns.
Lasker was 56 at the time of Moscow 1925. Retrograde ratings indicate that he was the strongest 56-year-old in history — as well as the strongest 57-year-old, the strongest 58-year-old, the strongest 59-year-old and so on until he was competing across generations with the 70-plus Viktor Korchnoi. Retro-ratings also indicate his opponents at Moscow were fairly strong. Boris Verlinsky was the world’s 16th best player in 1926, according to the Chessmetrics web site. He doesn’t play that way: White chooses a plan that requires exact calculation to reach enemy targets. But he begins to second-guess himself and everything falls apart.

What is significant here is that this is another example of a logical, if not obvious, move that was considered strikingly original. Developing a knight on a6 so it can go to b4 is common sense. How else does Black exploit 5 a4?

Today ...\( \mathcal{D}a6 \) is played in a number of ...dxc4 Slav positions. This game may have been the first master game with it, as Fine wrote (although Euwe attributes 6...\( \mathcal{D}a6 \) to the Canadian George Marechal). Three years later Walther von Holzhausen, one of Lasker’s former simul opponents, played 5...\( \mathcal{D}a6 \) and it eventually became a major Slav line.

7 \( \mathcal{A}xc4 \) \( \mathcal{D}b4 \)

Tempting now is 8 e4, which is based on 8...\( \mathcal{D}xe4 \) 9 \( \mathcal{D}xe4 \) \( \mathcal{A}xe4 \) 10 \( \mathcal{A}xf7+ \). But Black should fall into the trap, e.g. 10...\( \mathcal{A}xf7 \) 11 \( \mathcal{D}g5+ \) \( \mathcal{D}e8 \) 12 \( \mathcal{D}xe4 \) \( \mathcal{W}xd4+ \) or 11 \( \mathcal{W}b3+ \) e6 12 \( \mathcal{D}g5+ \) \( \mathcal{A}e8 \) 13 \( \mathcal{D}xe4 \) \( \mathcal{W}d5 \) with advantage.

8 0-0

White doesn’t need tactics to achieve e3-e4 because he has \( \mathcal{W}e2 \) coming up.

8 ... e6

9 \( \mathcal{W}e2 \)

Trying to block the push with 9...\( \mathcal{D}e4 \) has been tried by Shabalov but there’s never been much experience with Spielmann’s 10 \( \mathcal{E}e5 \) (10...\( \mathcal{D}d6 \) 11 \( \mathcal{A}xf7+ \)).

9 ... \( \mathcal{E}e7 \)

10 \( \mathcal{D}e5 \) 0-0

11 e4 \( \mathcal{A}g6 \)

12 \( \mathcal{D}xg6 \)

There was no rush to exchange. After 12 \( \mathcal{W}d1 \) Black has to bide time (12...\( \mathcal{W}a5 \) or 12...a5) since 12...c5 invites 13 \( \mathcal{D}xg6 \) h\( xg6 \) 14 dxc5 \( \mathcal{W}c7 \) 15 e5 with advantage.

12 ... h\( xg6 \)

13 \( \mathcal{E}e3 \)

Book, as everyone knows now, is 6...e6 and then 7 \( \mathcal{A}xc4 \) \( \mathcal{A}b4 \). Lasker’s move was new and enjoyed a fleeting summer of popularity.
White will fortify his center by placing rooks at c1 and d1 while Black looks for play from ...c5 or ...a6/...b5. The immediate 13...c5 14 dxc5 Wa5 allows White’s heavy pieces to rule (15 Rfd1 Rxh5 16 Rxh5 Wxc5 17 e5).

13 ... Wa5
14 Rfd1 Rad8

Which rook? White’s last move gave up, at least temporarily, on f2-f4-f5, so Black didn’t have to keep a rook at home to protect f7. He could have played 14...Rfd8 (and ...Rac8).

But Black made the right decision: He doesn’t need a rook to support ...c5. But he could use one on e8 if White responds to the push with d4-d5 and ...exd5.

15 f3

White is a move or two (Rf2 and Rac1) away from a very nice middlegame because Black would find it difficult to play ...c5 safely. If Black settles for ...e5, White can exchange pawns and prepare a strong plan of pushing his e- and f-pawn.

White’s strategic thinking is sound. But 15 Rac1 was the right way to start. After 15...c5 he can continue 16 d5 exd5 17 exd5 and if 17...Rxh5 then 18 Rxb5 favors him, as does 17...a6 18 Wd3.

15 ... c5!
16 d5!

Black is equal after 16 dxc5 Rxh5 now that White has weakened the g1-c5 diagonal. For example, 17 Rac1 Rxd1+ 18 Rxd1 Re8 or 17 b3 Rb6.

16 ... exd5
17 exd5

Bogolyubov, who loved middlegames featuring one bishop for each side, recommended 17 b3xd5 Qhxd5 18 Qxd5 Qxd5 19 exd5. White has an edge but it’s only a theoretical one after 19...Rf8.

17 ... a6
18 Rf2 Rc7

It’s time for White to form a plan. If he thinks in terms of strengths, he will focus on his passed pawn. That suggests doubling rooks with 19 Rd2 Rfe8 20 Rd1 Rd6 21 g3. But there is no way to make progress while Black doubles with ...Rd7-e7.

What if he thinks in terms of targets? Then he would take aim at e5. The pawn won’t be vulnerable after just Rac1 so he should consider a4-a5 and Qa4. But 19 a5 Rd7 20 Qa4 fails to 20...Qbxd5 (21 Rxh5 Wxa5 or 21 Qxc5?? Qxe3).

19 Rac1

For lack of a better idea he begins to rely on tactics – specifically on Qe4 in order to win the c-pawn. But this requires exact calculation.

19 ... Rfe8

Now 20 Qe4 is met by 20...Qbxd5. It’s not difficult to see that 21 Qxd5 Qxd5 22 Rxh5 is dead even. But White doesn’t want to reach the natural conclusion – that he should be content with a draw.

20 g3

White anticipates ...d6xh2+.

20 ... Rd6
21 Rf1

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Bogolyubov, who was trying to justify White’s previous play, recommended 21 \( \text{Q}a2 \). Then 21...\( \text{Q}xg3? \) 22 h\( x \)g3 \( \text{Q}xe3 \) 23 \( \text{Q}xe3 \) \( \text{Q}xg3+ \) and 24...\( \text{Q}g4! \) wins for Black. However the sake fails to 23 \( d6! \), he noted.

But if Black uses a different move order, 21...\( \text{Q}xe3! \) 22 \( \text{Q}xe3 \) \( \text{Q}xg3 \), he gets excellent compensation.

21 ... \( b6 \)

Black’s queenside is iron-clad now, making 22 \( \text{Q}e4? \) pointless.

22 \( a5! \)

"Desperation," wrote Bogolyubov. But this is not a bad move. After 22...\( \text{bxa5!} \) 23 \( \text{Q}c4 \), White’s bishop is secure and he can return to the \( \text{Q}e4 \) idea.

22 ... \( b5! \)

23 \( \text{Q}g2? \)

Having said \( A \) ... White plays \( Z \). The consistent move was 23 \( \text{Q}e4! \). Then 23...\( \text{Q}xh5 \) or 23...\( \text{Q}xf5 \) allows him to play 24 \( \text{Q}xc5 \) with reasonable chances.

The c-pawn is also hanging after 23...\( \text{Q}xe4 \) 24 \( fxe4 \) and the endgames arising after 24...\( \text{Q}xe4 \) 25 \( \text{Q}xe5 \) \( \text{Q}xc5 \) 26 \( \text{Q}xe5 \) \( \text{Q}xc5+ \) or 26...\( \text{Q}d6 \) 27 \( \text{Q}xd6 \) are perfectly playable for White. In addition, 26...\( \text{Q}xa5? \) gets the worst of it after 27 \( \text{Q}a1 \) \( \text{Q}a2 \) 28 \( \text{b4} \) or 28 \( \text{d6} \).

Black can also try 24...\( \text{Q}c4 \) because 25 \( \text{Q}b6 \) \( \text{Q}c8 \) 26 \( \text{Q}d8?? \) loses the queen to 26...\( \text{Q}c5 \). However, 26 \( b3 \) or 26 \( \text{Q}d4 \) give White the upper hand.

23 ... \( \text{Q}f8! \)

Black threatens two pawns as well as ...\( \text{c}4...\( \text{Q}d3 \).

24 \( \text{Q}f4? \)

His position disintegrates after this. White doesn’t have much compensation after 24 \( \text{Q}e4 \) \( \text{Q}xd5 \) 25 \( \text{Q}xf6+ \) \( \text{gxf6} \) or 24...\( \text{Q}xd5 \) 25 \( \text{Q}x \)5. But at least he can play a middlegame.

24 ... \( \text{Q}xa5 \)

25 \( d6 \) \( \text{Q}b6 \)

26 \( \text{Q}e4 \)

There was nothing more promising than allowing a pawn-down ending.

26 ... \( \text{Q}xe4 \)

27 \( fxe4 \) \( \text{Q}xd6 \)

28 \( \text{Q}xd6 \) \( \text{Q}xd6 \)

29 \( \text{Q}xd6 \) \( \text{Q}xd6 \)

30 \( \text{Q}xc5 \) \( \text{Q}xc5 \+)

To have any counterplay White has to activate his bishop. He gets to do that after 30...\( \text{Q}d8? \) 31 \( \text{Q}xd6 \) \( \text{Q}xd6 \) 32 \( e5! \), e.g. 32...\( \text{Q}d2 \) 33 \( \text{Q}c8+ \) \( \text{Q}h7 \) 34 \( \text{Q}e7 \).

31 \( \text{Q}xc5 \) \( \text{Q}d8 \)

The liquidation has worked out well for Black, who should be able to win a second pawn. If it’s the e-pawn (32 \( \text{Q}f1 \) \( \text{Q}d1 \) 33 \( b \)3 \( \text{Q}b1 \) 34 \( \text{Q}c3 \) \( \text{Q}e1 \)) the game can last at least 20 more moves.

32 \( \text{Q}c3 \) \( \text{Q}d1+ \)

33 \( \text{Q}f1 \) \( \text{Q}e1 \)

34 \( \text{Q}c8+ \) \( \text{Q}h7 \)

35 \( \text{Q}c8 \) \( \text{Q}b1 \)

Once the b-pawn falls, the winning task is much easier (36 \( \text{Q}f8 \) \( \text{Qxb2} \) 37 \( \text{Q}xf7 \) \( \text{Q}e6 \))
38 \( \texttt{h8} \) a5 39 h4 a4 40 \( \texttt{h3?} \) \( \texttt{d4} \)
41 \( \texttt{c8} \) \( \texttt{e2+} \) White resigns

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This flawed gem divides neatly into two halves. The first 23 and a half moves are humdrum. Then the game seems to wake up. The final 23 and a half moves contain some of the cleverest traps you're likely to see. The reason the game doesn't get the attention it deserves is because the first half is so routine and because the brilliance of the second half lies mainly in the subjunctive variations.

**Marshall – Lasker**
Moscow 1925
*Queen's Gambit Declined, Exchange Variation (D35)*

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"This exchange is somewhat premature and merely helps the opponent's development," wrote Bogolyubov, who never appreciated the Exchange QGD. It was at Moscow that Marshall unveiled a strong alternative to the minority attack.

7 \( \texttt{\textit{d3}} \)

Marshall's plan works best against the standard \( 7...\texttt{e7 8 \texttt{f3}} \) \( 0-0 \) 9 \( 0-0 \) \( \texttt{e8} \) 10 \( \texttt{\textit{c2 \textit{f8}}} \) and now 11 \( \texttt{\textit{a1}} \), intending \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \) followed by \( \texttt{f2-f4} \) and \( \texttt{c3-e4} \).

After 11 \( \texttt{\textit{xe4}} \) he continued 12 \( \texttt{\textit{x7 \textit{e7}}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{xe7}} \) 13 \( \texttt{\textit{xe4! dxe4 14 \texttt{\textit{d2 f5}}}} \) 15 \( \texttt{f3} \) vs. Rubinstein and won in 10 moves (after 15...\( \texttt{\textit{xf3}} \) 16 \( \texttt{\textit{xf3 \textit{e6}}}} \) 17 \( \texttt{\textit{e4 \textit{fxe4}}}. \)

7 ... \( \texttt{\textit{d6}} \)

Lasker tries to deprive Marshall of the fruits of his preparation. The bishop-move has been tried over the years by Janowsky, Capablanca and Ljubojevic. Black dispenses with simplifying (\( \ldots \texttt{\textit{e7}} \) and \( \ldots \texttt{\textit{e4}} \) or \( \ldots \texttt{\textit{h5}} \)) but gets control of an attacking diagonal.

8 \( \texttt{\textit{f3}} \) \( 0-0 \)

9 \( \texttt{\textit{c2}} \) \( \texttt{h6} \)

10 \( \texttt{\textit{h4}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e8}} \)

Botvinnik later played 11 \( \texttt{g4} \) in a similar position. White has some compensation for his lost pawn after 11...\( \texttt{g5} \) 12 \( \texttt{\textit{g3 \textit{g3}}} \) 13 \( \texttt{\textit{hxg3 \textit{e4}}} \) 14 0-0-0.

11 \( \texttt{0-0} \)

\( \texttt{\textit{f8}} \)

Time to evaluate Black's seventh move. On \( \texttt{\textit{d6}} \) the bishop enables Black to counter the minority attack (12 \( \texttt{\textit{a1}} \)) with a quick \( \ldots \texttt{\textit{g4}}, \) since White cannot reply \( \texttt{\textit{e5}} \). That would also be a good answer to Marshall's system - 12 \( \texttt{\textit{ae1 \textit{g4}}} \) 13 \( \texttt{\textit{\textit{d2 \textit{h5}}} \) and \( \ldots \texttt{\textit{g6}} \). On the other hand, White can try the positional plan of 12 \( \texttt{\textit{g3 \textit{g3}}} \) 13 \( \texttt{\textit{hxg3 \textit{e4}}} \), which fortifies his kingside and gains \( \texttt{c5} \) as an outpost.

12 \( \texttt{\textit{e4}} \)

Marshall may not have looked much further than this when he prepared the \( \texttt{\textit{ael/\textit{e3-\textit{e4}}} \) idea, and was basing his evaluation on an intuitive feeling that isolating his \( \texttt{d-pawn} \) was a minor concern.

12 ... \( \texttt{\textit{dxe4}} \)

13 \( \texttt{\textit{\textit{xe4}}} \) \( \texttt{\textit{e7}} \)

Rubinstein never got pressure against \( \texttt{d4} \). Here Black does \( \ldots \texttt{\textit{e6}} \) and/or \( \ldots \texttt{\textit{g4}} \). White may be slightly worse, for example, after 14 \( \texttt{\textit{g3 \textit{\textit{g4}}} \).
14 \( \text{xf6} \)

On 14 \( \text{ fe1} \) or 14 \( \text{ae1} \) Black equalizes with 14...\( \text{xe4} \) 15 \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 16 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{e6} \).

14 ... \( \text{xf6} \)
15 \( \text{fe1} \) \( \text{g4} \! \! \! \! \!

Not 15...\( \text{xd4} \) 16 \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 17 \( \text{f6} \)\+ and \( \text{xe8} \).

16 \( \text{fxe6} \)\+ \( \text{xf6} \)
17 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{e6} \)
18 \( \text{e3} \)

It’s easy to dismiss White’s play if you’ve seen what happens next. “He isolated a pawn for a very temporary initiative,” you would say.

But compare this with Capablanca-Marshall from the first prelim round at St. Petersburg: 1 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e5} \) 2 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 3 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 4 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 5 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 6 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 7 \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{b4} \)+ 8 \( \text{bd2} \) 0-0 9 0-0 \( \text{xd2} \) 10 \( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 11 \( \text{xf6} \)\? 12 \( \text{fe1} \) \( \text{g4} \) 13 \( \text{e5} \)\! \( \text{xe5} \) 14 \( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{dxc4} \) 15 \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 16 \( \text{ae1} \) \( \text{e8} \) and now 17 \( \text{wb4} \)! favors White distinctly.

In this game, the presence of knights and a slight development lead seem to give Marshall chances at least as good as White’s in the Capablanca game.

18 ... \( \text{ed8} \)

Lasker’s rook moves weren’t as mysterious as Nimzovich called others but they were often odd. This one seems designed to avoid tactics on the e-file after 18...\( \text{ad8} \) 19 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 20 \( \text{ae1} \) such as \( \text{g4} \). But 20...\( \text{e6} \) is safe.

19 \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d5} \)

White’s one significant target is f7. It would become a factor after 19...\( \text{d6} \) 20 \( \text{ae1} \) \( \text{ad8} \) 21 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g5} \) 22 \( \text{e4} \)\! when he is not worse.

20 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{e6} \)

White is in danger of slipping into a late middlegame in which the only real weakness is the d-pawn Bogolyubov said 21 \( \text{f3} \) was imperative, conceding Black a minimal edge with 21...\( \text{xe4} \) and 22...\( \text{d5} \). A bit more hopeful is 21 \( \text{ae1} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 22 \( \text{xe4} \) because then 22...\( \text{g5} \) 23 \( \text{g4} \) is playable and even 23 \( \text{xe3} \) \( \text{f4} \) is safe because of 24 \( \text{d3} \)\! \( \text{xd4} \)? 25 \( \text{e8} \).

21 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h4} \)
22 \( \text{xd5} \)

It’s hard to trust 22 \( \text{e3} \)? True, White avoids the immediate loss of material after 22...\( \text{xe4} \) 23 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 24 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{g5} \) 25 \( \text{h4} \) But his prospects are dim following 25...\( \text{xd5} \) and ...\( \text{ad8} \). On this day Marshall’s plan failed.

22 ... \( \text{xd5} \)

Black wins a pawn because White can’t take on \( f7 \) (23 \( \text{xf7} \)\? \( \text{xe5} \) or 23 \( \text{xf7} \)\? \( \text{xd4} \)).

23 \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{xd4} \)
24 \( \text{fe3} \)

So far it’s been a forgettable affair. But now it becomes a battle between two great tacticians, although most of the warfare is conducted in lines that occur only in the notes.

24 ... \( \text{ad8} \)

The simple trap was 24...\( \text{e6} \)? 25 \( \text{xf7} \) but there was a more complex
one in the natural 24...\(\mathbb{Q}f5\) 25 \(\mathbb{Q}d3\) \(\mathbb{Q}d6\).

That seems to hold everything until you see 26 \(\mathbb{Q}xc6\)! and then 26...\(\text{bxc6} 27 \mathbb{W}xc6\) and White wins. Instead, Black has 26...\(\mathbb{Q}b5\), based on 27 \(\mathbb{Q}e7+\) \(\mathbb{W}xe7\) 28 \(\mathbb{Q}xc3\) 29 \(\text{bxc3} \mathbb{Q}d1+\) and mates.

But the tactics keep coming. White has 27 \(\mathbb{Q}h3!\), since 27...\(\mathbb{W}g5\) 28 \(\text{f4!} \mathbb{W}xf4\) 29 \(\mathbb{Q}e7+\) and 30 \(\mathbb{Q}xd5\) wins. Also, 28...\(\mathbb{Q}xc3\) 29 \(\text{fxg5} \mathbb{Q}d1\) invites 30 \(\mathbb{Q}e7+\) \(\mathbb{Q}f8\) 31 \(\mathbb{Q}xd1\) \(\mathbb{Q}xd1\) 32 \(\mathbb{Q}f5!\) with a slight edge for White.

But Black laughs last with 27...\(\mathbb{Q}xc3\) 28 \(\mathbb{Q}xh4 \mathbb{Q}d1!\)

25 \(\mathbb{Q}e4\) \(\mathbb{W}f6\)

There’s another wonderful trap that 99 percent of the spectators would miss. Marshall invited his old rival to combine with 25...\(\mathbb{W}xe4\) 26 \(\mathbb{Q}xe4\) \(\mathbb{Q}b5!\), attacking the queen and setting up a last-rank mate.

The key point is that 27 \(\mathbb{W}a5 \mathbb{Q}d1+\) 28 \(\mathbb{Q}e1\) allows Black to sever the connection between queen and rook with 28...\(\text{b6!} 29 \mathbb{W}b4 \mathbb{Q}b8d4\) (30 \(\mathbb{Q}c4 \mathbb{Q}xc4\)).

However, the magical 29 \(\mathbb{Q}d7!!\) saves White in the endgame after 29...\(\text{bxa5} 30 \mathbb{Q}xd1\). On 29...\(\mathbb{Q}xd7\) he can reconnect his heavy pieces with 30 \(\mathbb{W}b4 \mathbb{Q}d4 31 \mathbb{W}e7\) and likely save the \(\mathbb{W}v-3\vdash \mathbb{W}^+\vdash \mathbb{Q}+\vdash\) ending.

26 \(\mathbb{Q}g4!\) \(\mathbb{W}g6\)

27 \(h3\)

Another trap. Of course, Black sees the 27...\(f5\) fork and realizes that White must reply 28 \(\mathbb{Q}e5\). But a good tactician wouldn’t stop there. He would check out one more forcing move, 28...\(\mathbb{Q}d3+!?\). It seems to win after 29 \(\mathbb{W}xf3\) \(\text{fxe4}\) or 29 \(\mathbb{Q}h1\) \(\mathbb{W}f6!\) or 29 \(\mathbb{Q}f1\) \(\mathbb{Q}d2\) 30 \(\mathbb{Q}g1\) \(\mathbb{Q}xe4!\).

27... \(\text{h5!}\)

The final point of the trap lies in the 29 \(\mathbb{W}xf3\) \(\text{fxe4}\) line – White regains his pawn with 30 \(\mathbb{Q}xg6\) \(\text{fxf3} 31 \mathbb{Q}e7+\) and has good drawing chances.

28 \(\mathbb{Q}e5\) \(\mathbb{W}d6\)

The complications are over and Black can begin consolidating with ...\(c5\).

29 \(\mathbb{Q}e4\) \(\mathbb{W}b8\)

30 \(\mathbb{Q}e5\) \(c5\)

31 \(\mathbb{W}c1\) \(\mathbb{W}c7\)

Now 32 \(\mathbb{Q}d3\) \(\mathbb{Q}b3\) liquidates into a win.

32 \(b4\) \(\mathbb{Q}e6!\)

Black prepares 33...\(\text{cxb4}\) and sets his own trap – 33 \(\mathbb{Q}xf7\) \(\mathbb{W}xf7\) 34 \(\mathbb{Q}xe6\) \(\mathbb{W}xe6\) 35 \(\mathbb{Q}xe6 \mathbb{Q}d1+\) wins the ending (36 \(\mathbb{Q}xd1 \mathbb{Q}xd1+ 37 \mathbb{W}h2 \text{cxb4} 38 \mathbb{Q}e7 \mathbb{Q}d2 39 \mathbb{Q}xb7\).

33 \(\mathbb{W}a3\) \(\mathbb{Q}d1\)

34 \(\text{bxc5} \mathbb{W}xc5\)?

Black has a technical but by no means automatic win after 34...\(\mathbb{Q}xc5\) 35 \(\mathbb{Q}e3\). His mistake allows Marshall to be Marshall in more than just the notes.
Why Lasker Matters

35 \( \text{Wh3!} \) \( \text{Qg5!} \)

White threatened 36 \( \text{Whxf7+} \) as well as 36 \( \text{Exd1} \), and would have been able to save the game after 35...\( \text{Exe1+} \) 36 \( \text{Exe1 f6} \) 37 \( \text{Qg6} \).

36 \( \text{Whxh5!} \)

Now 36...\( \text{Qxe4?} \) 37 \( \text{Whxf7+} \) is a perpetual check and 36...\( \text{Qd5} \) loses to 37 \( \text{Whxg5} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) 38 \( \text{Whxd8+} \). But what about 36...\( \text{Qc1} \)?

Then 37 \( \text{Qd3} \) looks strong (37...\( \text{Qxd3??} \) 38 \( \text{Qe8 mate} \)). But it isn’t (37...\( \text{Qxe4} \) because of 38 \( \text{Exd1} \) \( \text{Qc2} \)).

The star move is 37 \( \text{Qf1!!} \). Then 37...\( \text{Qd2} \) 38 \( \text{h4} \) leads to another perpetual check and so does 37...\( \text{Qxd2} \) 38 \( \text{Qxf7!} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) 39 \( \text{Qh6+!} \) \( \text{gxh6} \) 40 \( \text{We8+} \).

36 ... \( \text{Q8d2!} \)

37 \( \text{Qd3?} \)

“It seems incredible that as brilliant a combative player as Marshall should fail to see the subtle defense here at his disposal,” wrote Bogolyubov. He meant 37 \( \text{Whxg5!} \) \( \text{Qxe1+} \) 38 \( \text{Qxe1} \) \( \text{Whxf2} + \) 39 \( \text{Qh2} \)

To play it White would have to see that 39...\( \text{Whxel?} \) loses to 40 \( \text{Qf3} \) and conclude that 39...\( \text{f6} \) would be handled by 40 \( \text{Qg6!} \), which should draw.

37 ... \( \text{Qxe4} \)
38 \( \text{Qxc5} \) \( \text{Qxe1+} \)
39 \( \text{Qh2} \) \( \text{Qxf2} \)

The last few moves recall the third game of their 1907 match when, with queen, two rooks and a knight apiece, Lasker outplayed Marshall and mated him after a sacrifice.

40 \( \text{Wh5} \) \( \text{Qe8} \)
41 \( \text{Qxb7} \)

Otherwise Black’s extra pawn wins (41 \( \text{Qd7} \) \( \text{Qe4} \) 42 \( \text{Qe5} \) \( \text{Qd6} \)).

41 ... \( \text{Qd1!} \)

White had one final swindle-41...\( \text{Qxa2} \) allows 42 \( \text{Qd6} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 43 \( \text{Whg5} \) \( \text{Qee2} \) 44 \( \text{Qf5} \) or 42...\( \text{Qh8} \) 43 \( \text{Qc8!} \), when the threat of \( \text{Qe7+} \) and \( \text{Whh5} \) mate allows him to win the a-pawn and soldier on.

42 \( \text{Qe5} \) \( \text{Qe6} \)
43 \( \text{Qe1} \) \( \text{Qe3!} \)

But Lasker has the last tactic (44 \( \text{Whd2} \) \( \text{Qf1+} \)).

44 \( \text{Whc8+} \) \( \text{Qh7} \)
45 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qg6!} \)
46 \( \text{Qxe3} \) \( \text{Qdxg2+} \)
47 \( \text{Qh1} \) \( \text{Q2g3!} \)

Resigns
When a player competes for more than two decades he has to adjust to turnovers in opening theory. Even Fischer, who relied on the King's Indian and Najdorf Sicilian for most of his 15-year international career, periodically widened his repertoire for the sake of variety or surprise or simply because his old weapons had become stale in light of new discoveries. As Lasker's career passed the 35-year mark he had to adjust to the unprecedented turbulence of 1920s opening theory. He adopted the Slav and Sicilian, for example. And he had to adjust to the enormous growth in theory of the weapon he had used more than 100 times since 1891, the Ruy Lopez.

**Lasker – Yates**

Moscow 1925

*Ruy Lopez, Steinitz Defense Deferred (C87)*

1  e4  e5
2  d4  d5
3  Nf3  Nf6

When Lasker was young the Lopez was just one of several respectable openings. At London 1899 there were 27 Lopezes – but twice as many 1 e4 e5 games continued on other paths, including nine Viennas, four Scotchies and two Bishop's Gambits. Blackburne wrote that year that he had never played the "dull and safe" Lopez except "when I feel a little off color and am content with a draw, and then it usually means losing half a point.

3  ...  a6
4  Nc3  d6
5  0-0  Nf6
6  h3  Ne7

This transposes into a variation usually reached by way of 4. Ne5

S 0-0 g7 6 a1 d6 (because Black allows less choice that way). It was revived by Spassky in the 1961 Soviet Championship but hasn't seen much action since.

7  c3  0-0

Later in the tournament Botvinnik delayed castling against Lasker and used the tempo saved to carry out a plan of 7...Qd7 8 d4 Re6 9 Bb2 b5 10 a3 a5 11 c2 c5. He was only slightly worse after 12 e4! Bb7 14 Be3 Bb6 15 axb5 axb5 16 Qg4 but blundered with 16...Qe6? and lost after 17 Rxa8 Rxa8 18 Bxf6+ Qxf6 19 d5! Qa7 20 Qg5 Qg6 21 Bc7 (21...Rae8 22 Bc4).

8  d4  Qd7

Among Spassky's ideas was 8...exd4 9 cxd4 Bg4 10 Bb2 e8 to exert more direct pressure on the White pawns. Yates' intent is truer to Tchigorin's plan of holding onto e5 with both hands.

9  Bd2  f6
10  f1  e8

Tchigorin often tried ...Qc7-g6 but Yates keeps g6 free so that he can fianchetto his bishop. His move stops Be3 (because of ...exd4 and ...Qxe4).

11  h3  b5
12  Bc2

![Diagram](attachment:image.png)

Black would like to play 12...exd4 13 cxd4 Bd4 14 Bb1 c5. But this is
one of those positions in which 15 e5! works. And when it works, it is bad news for Black (15...dxe5 16 cxe4 followed by 17 dxa8 or 17 a3).

12 ... g6

Nevertheless 12...b6, to discourage 13 a4 a4, was better. Now the b-pawn becomes a target.

13 a4 b8

Black’s problem, a traditional one in the Lope, is how to defend b5 while keeping his pieces in communication. This is illustrated by 13 ...b7 14 a5 b5 a5 15 a8x a8 followed by 16 d5 and 17 d3.

14 d3 f8?

This fits in poorly with Black’s setup since ...c6 would allow a pawn-fork. Yates apparently decided that 15 g4 g7 16 h6+ would be too strong and he would have to stop it with ...xg4

15 g4! xg4

16 hxg4

Bogolyubov said Black would have been in good shape after 16...exd4 17 cxd4 b4 18 b1 c5, a freeing maneuver he had used in similar positions.

However, White can interrupt the plan with 17 g5! and then 17 ...g7 18 cxd4 b4 19 ab5 axb5 20 d5!. Instead of preserving his light-squared bishop he follows up with d2-c3 and g4 and enjoys a clear positional edge. Fischer used a similar idea, improving on a Bogolyubov game, to beat Korchnoi at the 1962 Interzonal.

16 ... e8

The queen might play a kingside role after 17 g5 g7 and ...g4, and can add something to the ...exd4/...b4/...c5 plan. In any case, this turns out badly.

17 d5!

A strong move since the knight cannot go to a5 (18 axb5) or a7 (18 c5 e5 19 dxc6 bxc6 20 d6) and would be virtually stalemated on e7.

17 ... d8

18 g5 e7

Time to find targets. Closing the center left White with a choice between attacking the b-pawn or working on the other wing.

A case can be made for the queenside plan (axb5 followed by d3, c2 and 2a5 – and even 2b4 and 2d2-a3 if needed). That would virtually force Black to seek counterplay with ...c5 or ...c6 White comes out ahead in scenarios such as 19 d3 b4? 20 e2 or 19...c6 20 e2 d7 21 dxc6 2xc6 22 axb5 axb5 23 a5 24 b5!.

But Black can also respond 19...c5 after which 20 dxc6 2xc6 21 axb5 axb5 22 c2 enables him to defend with ...c6-d7.

19 h2!

White probes the kingside first and forces Black to stop g4-f6+

19 ... f6

A better defense is 19...d7 20 g4 f8 followed by 21...f6. However, once Black has created new weaknesses with ...f6, White can favorably switch back to the queenside
For example he can meet 19...\(\text{Qd7}\) with 20 \(\text{Ad3}\), after which 20...\(\text{Qf8}\) 21 \(\text{axb5 axb5}\) 22 \(\text{Qg4 f6}\) allows him to extend pressure on both wings (23 \(\text{We2}\) \(\text{Wb7}\) 24 \(\text{gx6 Qxf6}\) 24 \(\text{a5}\) or 24 \(\text{e3}\)).

20 \(\text{gx6 Qxf6}\)

Black’s d8-knight is useful because on 21 \(\text{Qg4 g7}\) 22 \(\text{Qh6+}\) he can just move his king. Trading off a defensive piece (22 \(\text{Qh6}\)) creates no tactical chances and would draw attention to White’s remaining bad bishop.

21 \(\text{d3!}\)

The attack on b5 is stronger now for tactical reasons: ...c5 or ...e6 will allow White to open the diagonal leading to the king (\(\text{dxc6}\) and \(\text{Wb3+}\)) and pick off the b-pawn.

21...

22 \(\text{dx6}\)

How did Black intend to recapture? Probably with 22...\(\text{Wxc6}\). But he must have noticed now that his b-pawn is doomed after 23 \(\text{axb5 axb5}\) 24 \(\text{Wb3+}\) and 25 \(\text{a5}\).

His outlook also looks dismal after 22...\(\text{Qxe6}\) 23 \(\text{axb5 axb5}\). Then 24 \(\text{Wb3+ We6}\) 25 \(\text{d5}\) is good and 24 \(\text{Qe2}\) is better because it prepares \(\text{Wd5+/Qxb5}\) as well as just \(\text{Qxd6}\).

22...

23 \(\text{axb5}\) \(\text{axb5}\)

24 \(\text{Wb3!}\) \(\text{Qh8}\)

Black remains a pawn down after 24...\(\text{Wxc6}\) 25 \(\text{Qg4 g7}\) 26 \(\text{a5}\) and that’s enough to lose.

25 \(\text{Qxb5}\) \(\text{Qc7}\)

26 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{Qxc6}\)

27 \(\text{Wf3}\) \(\text{Qh4}\)

Otherwise Black, with two pieces hanging, can resign.

28 \(\text{Qxc6!}\) \(\text{Wf8}\)

White can win in a variety of ways now, including 29 \(\text{Wd1 Qxf2+}\) 30 \(\text{Qh1}\) \(\text{Qxe1}\) 31 \(\text{Wxe1}\) \(\text{Qe6}\) 32 \(\text{Qd5}\) and b2-b4-b5.

29 \(\text{We2}\) \(\text{Qe6}\)

Better than 29...\(\text{Qxf2+}\) 30 \(\text{Wxf2}\) or 29...\(\text{Wxf2}\) 30 \(\text{Wd1!}\).

30 \(\text{Qf3!}\) \(\text{Wxf3!}\)

Desperation. On 30...\(\text{Qd4}\) 31 \(\text{Qxd4}\) \(\text{Qxf2+}\) 32 \(\text{Wxf2}\) White again wins the \(\text{W-}\) vs.-pieces ending (32...\(\text{Qxf2}\) 33 \(\text{Qxf2}\) exd4 34 \(\text{Qd5}\))

31 \(\text{Wxf3}\) \(\text{Qd4}\)

32 \(\text{Wf7}\)

The killer. Now 32...\(\text{Wxc6}\) 33 \(\text{Qh6}\) \(\text{Qg8}\) 34 \(\text{a7}\) wins immediately. But so does:

32...

33 \(\text{Qh6}\) \(\text{Qg8}\)

34 \(\text{Wc7!}\) Resigns

In view of 34...\(\text{Qc8}\) 35 \(\text{Qg7+!}\) or 34...\(\text{Qxb2}\) 35 \(\text{g3}\) \(\text{Qf6}\) 36 \(\text{Wxc6}\).
After Moscow, Lasker began his longest period away from serious chess. Some of the reasons were personal. He was not invited to New York 1927 after a bitter and bizarre dispute with the organizer, who accused him of using his cigars during New York 1924 to launch "virtual gas attacks on his opponents." Other motives for his absence were practical. He could earn a more steady income by playing contract bridge, which he mastered soon after it was invented. After major simul tours in the U.S. in 1926 and Europe in 1927, he became almost invisible to the chess world. Fewer than 20 Lasker games played between 1927 and Zurich 1934 have been located.

**Jaffe – Lasker**

*Clock game, New York 1926*

**Torre Attack (A46)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Move</th>
<th>Moves</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>d4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>e5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>g5</td>
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</tbody>
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Charles Jaffe was a minor master who nevertheless managed to beat Capablanca, Marshall, Spielmann, Janowsky and Burn during a 30-plus year career. He was well aware that the Torre Attack had scored its most famous victory when Carlos Torre used it to beat Lasker at Moscow.

\[3 \ldots \text{c5} \]

\[4 \text{e3} \]

At Moscow Lasker played 4. cxd4 5 exd4 e5 and obtained a fine position after 6 \( \text{Qd2} \) d6 7 c3 \( \text{Qd7} \) 8 \( \text{Qd3} \) b6.

\[4 \ldots \text{b6} \]

A target (b2) is a target whenever it becomes vulnerable.

\[5 \text{xf6} \]

Obvious, but ...this may be the oldest surviving game in which this move, rather than 5 \( \text{Qd2} \), 5 \( \text{Qc1} \) or 5 \( \text{Qc3} \) was played. It apparently hasn't been played before because masters were unsure who \( \text{xf6} \) ...gx6 would favor. Three years later, however, Nimzovich was Black in a game that continued 5 \( \text{Qc1} \) \( \text{Qc6} \) 6 c3 d5 7 \( \text{Qd3} \) \( \text{Qd6} \) and wrote, “Black has no fear at all of \( \text{xf6} \), and quite rightly so.”

\[5 \ldots \text{gxf6} \]

\[6 \text{Qc1} \]

There were decades of mixed results with 6 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qxb2} \) before this move was revived in a 1986 Soviet game, Kharitonov-Oll.

\[6 \ldots \text{Qc6} \]

\[7 \text{c3} \text{d5} \]

\[8 \text{Qbd2} \]

Torre’s basic idea in this opening was similar to Edgar Colle’s in his: White first completes development (Qd3/0-0) and then opens the center (dxc5/c3-e4!).

\[8 \ldots \text{Qd7} \]

On the other hand Black doesn’t need to rush his development and could take out time for ...f5. That 1986 game went 9 \( \text{Qe2} \) 0-0-0? and now that White had a target he obtained good play with 10 dxc5 \( \text{Qxc5} \) 11 b4! followed by 12 a3, 13 0-0 and 14 c4.
9  
\[ \text{dxc5} \]  
10  
\[ \text{\textit{b3}} \]

Without a king to aim at, White would be worse after 10 b4 \textit{c7} 11 a3 a5! (12 b5 \textit{a7} 13 a4 0-0 and ...\textit{ac8} and eventually ...\textit{e8-d6}).

10  
\[ \text{\textit{e7}} \]
11  
\[ \text{\textit{wd2}} \]
12  
\[ \text{\textit{g8!}} \]

There was nothing wrong with 11..0-0 12 \textit{d3} f5!. The text, which will leave the h-pawn hanging, is more ambitious.

12  
\[ \text{\textit{g3}} \]
13  
\[ \text{\textit{de5}}! \]

The trade of knights favors Black and should be avoided (13 \textit{e2} and 14 \textit{wd4}).

13  
\[ \text{\textit{xe5}}? \]
14  
\[ \text{\textit{e2}} \]

White’s knight is a problem from now on (14 0-0-0 \textit{a4}).

14  
\[ \text{\textit{0-0-0}} \]
15  
\[ \text{\textit{wc2}} \]
16  
\[ \text{\textit{b8}} \]

Black is almost ready to free his bishops but he still doesn’t have much after, say, 16...\textit{f4} 17 \textit{exf4} \textit{exf4} 18 \textit{b3}. 17  
\[ \text{a4} \]

White’s best positional plan is to fix the enemy center. That means \textit{f2-f4} and \textit{d3}, which will stop both of Black’s natural breaks, ...\textit{f4} and ...\textit{d4}. But White can’t push the f-pawn until he’s driven the queen off the diagonal, and that explains \textit{a2-a4-a5}.

17  
\[ \text{\textit{c6}} \]

This would have been a good time for 17...\textit{d4} (18 \textit{dc4} \textit{wc6}) but it works better with more preparation.

18  
\[ \text{\textit{c7}} \]
19  
\[ \text{0-0} \]

White never gets to carry out the dark-square blockade because 19 \textit{f4} is answered strongly by 19...\textit{d4!}.

19  
\[ \text{\textit{f4}}! \]

Black’s attack becomes serious from now on. For the sake of argument consider a silly move like 20 \textit{wh7}. Black is winning after 20...\textit{d4!} because of the threat of ...\textit{dxc3}.

For example, 21 \textit{exd4} \textit{fxg3}! 22 \textit{hxg3} \textit{h8} or 22 \textit{fxg3} \textit{exd4} 23 \textit{exd4} \textit{hxg3+} and Black wins. He is much better following 22 \textit{fxg3} \textit{exd4} 23 \textit{f3} \textit{d3}.

20  
\[ \text{\textit{f1}} \]

White bids to secure the kingside with \textit{f1-g2} and/or \textit{f1}. 20  
\[ \text{\textit{df8}} \]

This game illustrates how much patience the attacker can afford when he has the two bishops. If, instead, 20...\textit{e4} Black threatens 21...\textit{fxg3} 22 \textit{hxg3} \textit{hxg3+}. He is making progress after 21 \textit{exf4} \textit{xf4} in view of ...\textit{c3} or ...\textit{xc5}. But White can clear his second rank (22 \textit{b3} and \textit{f1}) and mount some defense.

21  
\[ \text{\textit{b4?!}} \]

There is no chance White will have time to make \textit{b4-b5} count. But defenses such as 21 \textit{fl} are also doomed (21 \textit{fxg3} 22 \textit{hxg3} \textit{h5} 23 \textit{g2} \textit{h4} 24 \textit{f1} \textit{h5})

21  
\[ \text{\textit{fxe3}} \]
22  
\[ \text{\textit{fxe3}} \]
23  
\[ \text{\textit{g5}} \]
If White keeps the long diagonal closed with 23 \( \text{c4} \text{c5+} 24 \text{h1} \) Black has a choice between three winning ideas – 24...d4, 24...\text{g7} followed by ...	ext{h6} and 24...\text{f2} (25 \text{d3} d4 26 \text{f1} \text{xe2}).

23 \text{f1} \text{f7}

The threat is mate via 24...\text{f2+} 25 \text{h1} \text{xe3} 26 \text{xe3} d4+.

24 \text{g4} h5
25 \text{h3} h4
26 \text{e2} h\text{xg3}
27 \text{hxg3}

Or 27 \text{xe3} \text{b5} 28 \text{e1} h4.

27 ... \text{h8}
28 \text{g2} \text{h5}
29 \text{f2}

White’s defeat was just a matter of time after 29 \text{ae1} \text{b5} 30 \text{f2} \text{xf1} (31 \text{xf1} \text{g4} or 31 \text{xf8+} \text{xf8} 32 \text{xf1} \text{f3}).

![Chess board](image)

34 \text{d1}

Also 34 \text{e1} \text{h1+} 35 \text{f1} \text{xf2} 36 \text{xf2} \text{xc3+} and wins

34 ... \text{h1+}
35 \text{e2} d3+
36 \text{xd3} \text{xd3+}
37 \text{xd3} \text{xf2}

White played another eight moves before resigning.

92

When Lasker returned to chess, the reason was money. He lost his property in Germany and was forced to flee after the Nazis came to power. While looking for a new home he accepted an invitation to Zurich 1934. By then Lasker was considered an artifact, not a player. A poll of readers of the Wiener Schachzeitung in 1932, to determine the world’s top 12 players, didn’t mention him at all, but did include Sultan Khan and Isaac Kashdan.

Zurich 1934 was a curious choice for his return. It was the strongest event of the year. But at 15 rounds in 15 days, it was quite an ordeal for a 65-year-old Lasker knew he could expect to score some fairly easy points against the tournament’s Swiss contingent and he did. He scored 7½-½ against the scoretable’s bottom half, while Nimzovich only managed 5½-2½. But it was against the top-half players, all but Bernstein and Lasker in their prime, that the true test came. It began with this first-round game.

**Euwe – Lasker**
Zurich 1934

**Queen’s Gambit Declined, Orthodox Defense (D64)**

1 \text{d4} \text{d5}
2 \text{c4} \text{e6}
3 \text{d3} \text{d6}

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4 \text{g5} \text{bd7}
5 \text{e3} \text{e6}
6 \text{f3} \text{e7}

If Black plays 5...\text{c6} he should continue 6...\text{wa5}, Alekhine said. But if Black is going into what Tarrasch ridiculed as the “Orthodox Defense” he should play 5...\text{e7} and 6...0-0 so that he can meet an early \text{wc2} with ...\text{c5}.

As a result, within a few moves the position is one you won’t find in many modern opening books, which consider only the more flexible move orders.

7 \text{wc2} 0-0
8 \text{a3} \text{e8}
9 \text{c1} \text{dc4}

Black gives up the battle of the tempo and accepts the usual small disadvantage of the Orthodox QGD. The addition of 8 \text{a3}, an idea of Marshall and Maroczy’s, helps White because Black cannot play ...\text{wb4} after move 12.

10 \text{xc4} \text{d5}
11 \text{xc7} \text{wc7}
12 \text{e4}

In his final Interzonal, Bronstein showed that 12 \text{de2}!, which prepares \text{e3}-\text{e4}, favors White more distinctly, e.g., 12...\text{e5} 13 \text{xd5 exd5} 14 \text{de3}!.

12... \text{sf6}

Black is usually limited to two methods of freeing his game, ...\text{c5} and ...\text{e5}. Among the dangers of ...\text{e5} is that the knight may go strongly to \text{f5} via \text{g3}, as Lasker learned later in the tournament when Alekhine beat him brilliantly in 26 moves – his only win from Lasker.

13 \text{g3}

Here 13...\text{e5}?? 14 \text{ff5} \text{ef8} 15 \text{gg5} is disastrous. Moreover, 13...\text{b6} enables White to play 14 \text{e4} and 15 \text{e5}!, because 14...\text{e5}?? is again bad.

13... \text{c5}

Opening a file for White’s heavy pieces looks extremely hazardous but Black hopes to plug it with ...\text{dd7-c6}.

14 0-0

White can try for an endgame edge with 14 \text{bb5} \text{exd4} 15 \text{xd4} and \text{w-penetration}, e.g., 15...\text{a6} 16 \text{a4} \text{dd8} 17 0-0 \text{b6} 18 \text{b3} and \text{wc7} or \text{wc5}. But Euwe seems determined to wage his fight in the middlegame.

14... \text{xd4}
15 \text{xd4}

Black has no problems after 15 \text{exd4} \text{b6} and ...\text{dd7-c6}.

16 \text{a2} \text{b8}

Another somewhat mysterious rook move. It gives White an opportunity for \text{wd2-a5xa7} and seems to waste a move, since the rook will almost certainly go to \text{e8} later on.

The explanation is that Black wants to meet \text{wc7} with ...\text{dd7} and ...\text{ec8}, and felt he needed to protect the b-pawn. But a younger Lasker might have looked for – and found – 16. ...\text{dd7} 17 \text{wc7 de5!} (18 \text{wb7 eb8}).

17 \text{e4}

Times had changed. Back at the turn of the century, the Steinitz disciples would have played the low-risk 17 \text{wd2}
and $\text{Wa5}$ followed by doubling rooks on the c-file. They believed that a good position would inevitably improve into a better one if White found the best available move at each turn.

But Euwe was of the new breed who recognized that progress was not inevitable. Masters had learned how to defend against slow-pressure strategies such as $17 \text{Wd2}$, and a more vigorous policy was needed. Euwe’s choice looks correct for the next five moves but continuing his mini-initiative leads him into trouble.

17 ... $\text{Ed8}$
18 $\text{Efd1}$ $\text{Ed7}$
19 e5 $\text{Dc8}$?

The intuitive reaction is 19...$\text{Dfd5}$ after which 20 $\text{Eb1}$ gives White a slight positional edge. Lasker’s plan ($\ldots \text{g6}$ and possibly $\ldots \text{Dg7}$) is reminiscent of what Korchnoi would do in similar positions in the 1960s. Black reserves d5 for the other knight.

20 $\text{Eb1}$ g6
21 $\text{We4}$!

And the intuitive White response to the weakening of f6 would be 21 $\text{De4}$. But after 21...$\text{Ebc8}$ the queen doesn’t have a particularly good square and Black would stand well following 22 $\text{Wc2}$ $\text{Aa4}$. White’s plan is to transfer the queen to g4 and begin a kingside attack with h2-h4-h5 and $\text{De4}$, e.g. 21...a6 22 $\text{Wg4}$.

21 ... $\text{Aa4}$!

You might expect 21...$\text{Dd5}$ but after 22 $\text{Aa2}$ $\text{Dc7}$ 23 $\text{Wg4}$ and $\text{De4}$ White has justified his last move. Instead, Black probes for a queenside weakness.

22 b3?

Of course White could simply move his rook to d2 or e1 and retain a tiny edge after 22...$\text{Ebc8}$. But having made several useful moves of apparent progress since 15 $\text{Dxd4}$, he is tempted to make a tempo-gaining reply that seems to continue his initiative. There is, of course, a hole at c3 now but that’s unlikely to become a factor for many moves.

22 ... $\text{Ed7}$
23 a4

The a-pawn was attacked and this move creates a hole at b4 that does carry weight.

23 ... $\text{Dd5}$

Note that if it weren’t for White’s previous two moves, his best chance would be 24 $\text{Aa2}$. Euwe finds a different way to use the bishop.

24 $\text{Dd3}$! $\text{Dc8}$
25 $\text{Ec4}$

Now 25...$\text{Ec7}$ 26 $\text{Wg4}$ is the kind of position White was seeking.

25 ... $\text{Ec6}$
26 $\text{Dxc6}$ bxc6!

Euwe said Lasker loved to imbalance middlegames but this move is not only imbalancing but best. The natural 26...$\text{Exc6}$ would leave White with a nice, centralized position after 27 $\text{Wg4}$ and $\text{Dc4}$. For example, 27...$\text{Dc8}$ 28 $\text{Dc4}$ $\text{Db6}$ 29 $\text{Wf4}$! White can play $\text{Dxd6}$ when he’s ready (or $\text{Df6+}$ in case of a capture on c4). To appreciate why 26...bxc6 is better, put yourself in White’s seat.
You must have the edge, you would think. But how do you prove that? Yes, your knight belongs on a more active square, such as e4. But after you manage to get it there, it won’t be going to f6 or d6 any time soon. Your bishop can probe the queenside with $a6$ but the only target, c6, is easily protected.

The ultimate test is a plan: White doesn’t have clear cut one. But Black does. $c7-d7$, followed by ...$b6$ (or ...$b4$), possibly with ...c5 thrown in

27 $\text{d3}$

This is the kind of a position in which a Karpov would play 27 $\textxd5$ and maneuver a knight to d4, e.g. 27...cd5 28 $\textwe3$ and $\textce2-d4$. It’s not much for White. But it’s something.

27 ... $\text{b4}$

28 $\textf3$

This seems to represent further progress. He’s shifting pieces to the kingside where Black is weak. White didn’t play 27 $\textd3$ in order to continue 28 $\textxd8$ $\textxd8$ 29 $\textwe3$ – even though that may, in retrospect, be his best chance.

28 ... $\textc7$!

29 $h4$ $\texted7$

Now $\textd4$ is threatened.

30 $h5$

White realizes around here he has overreached. He would be able to batter down the hatches after 30 $\textd4$ 31 $\textwe3$ $\texth4$ 32 $\textg6$ and 33 $\textf1$.

30 ... $\textg5$!

The endgames (31 $\textw4$ $\textxf4$ 32 $\textxf4$ a5) begin to favor Black now, a telltale sign that the game has turned a corner.

31 $\texte1$ $\textd4$

32 $\textg6$!

Euwe wasn’t completely wrong about the tactical opportunities (32...$\textxe4$? 33 $\textgx7$+$\textf8$ 34 $\textxe8$($\textf6$)+ $\textxe8$ 35 $\texte4$ with advantage).

32 ... $\textg6$

33 $\textwe2$ $\textd2$

Alekhine belittled White’s 32nd move as a “harmless joke” and said he had nothing better than to enter the “fully defendable endgame” of 34 $\textwe3$ $\textxe3$. The ending leaves both sides with weaknesses and a likely draw, 35 $\textxe3$ $\textec2$ 36 $\textec3$ $\textd4$ 37 $\textfe3$.

34 $\textf1$?

The knee-jerk annotation is: “This is a classic case of playing too hard to win.” But let’s agree that Euwe was a great player who knew that such a retreat could be dubious and who must have seen some variations that made this move make sense: It has a threat (35 $\texte4$) and a natural reply to it is 34...$\textec2$ 35 $\textec4$ $\texth5$.

Eduard Gufeld said that favors Black (36 $\textf6+$ $\textxf6$ 37 $\textxf6$ $\textd4$) and left the matter at that. But what if White starts attacking the unprotected pieces? For instance, 36 $\textd1$ $\textd5$ 36 $\textd3$ $\texta2$ 37 $\textb1$ or 36...$\textb2$ 37 $\textd4$, winning material.

White knows that he can’t be winning after 34 $\textf1$ and Black must be able to do better with 34...$\texta2$ or 34...$\textg4$ 35 $\texte4$ $\texth4$. But he can see that he always gets tactical chances in these variations with $\texte4$ or $\textd1$.

34 ... $\texte2$!!

The attacked rook cannot move because of ...$\textd1$ or ...$\textxe5$

35 $\texte4$ $\textxe5$

Just as in Game 87, this was considered stunning at a time when positional $\textw$-sacrifices were rare. Black gets a rook, knight and pawn for it. But the queen doesn’t play.

36 $\textf6+$ $\textxf6$

37 $\textxf6$
37  ...  \( \text{Qxf6} \)

There is little real difference between the two recaptures. But from a practical viewpoint, this is better than 37...\( \text{Qxe1} \) because it presents White with a tougher choice.

After 37...\( \text{Qxe1} \) White would have readily seen that the pieces would overwhelm the queen in variations such as 38 \( \text{Qxe2} \) \( \text{Qxf6} \) 39 \( \text{Wxe1} \) \( \text{Qxe4} \) and 38 \( \text{Qxg6+ fxe6} \) 39 \( \text{Qxe6+ Qg7} \) 40 \( \text{Wc4} \) \( \text{Qxd6} \).

That means he would have recognized only 38 \( \text{Qf4} \) holds out hope. It's true that the queen has no escape after 38...\( \text{Qd1} \) 39 \( \text{Qh2} \) \( \text{Qd2} \). Black can win it with ...\( \text{Qxf6} \) and create a \( \text{Q+Q+5Qs-Q+Q+4Qs} \) ending with very winning chances. But White would soon realize such an ending is the best he could get.

38 \( \text{Qc1} \)?

White had to choose between a forcing variation that leads into another bad endgame and a more amorphous line. The first option was 38 \( \text{Qe2} \), threatening to make a rook-trade which would greatly ease his defense. White would see 38...\( \text{Qd1} \) 39 \( \text{Qxc2} \) \( \text{Qxf1} \) + 40 \( \text{Qxf1} \) is an uphill fight.

He would also check out 38 \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qe4} \) to see if it improves Black's chances (39 \( \text{Qxd2} \) \( \text{Qxd2} \) 40 \( \text{Qc1} \) \( \text{Qd4} \)). However, White can play 39 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qd1} \) 40 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{Qxf1} \) + 41 \( \text{Qxf1} \), again with some drawing prospects.

So 38 \( \text{Qe2} \) will get him into an ending he knows will be difficult. The attraction of 38 \( \text{Qc1} \) is White can't tell what will happen.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
38 \ldots \text{Qe4} \\
39 \text{Qc2} \text{d4} \\
40 \text{Qf3!}
\end{array}
\]

Euwe also knew how to offer choices. Here he allows Black to be brilliant with 40...\( \text{Qd5} \). Then 41 \( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qe2} + \) can be followed by 42 \( \text{Qh2} \) \( \text{Qh5} \) mate.

White can also play a rook-endgame with 42 \( \text{Wxe2} \) \( \text{Wxe2} \) 43 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \). Kasparov regards that as lost.

But White would be able to put up more resistance than in the game after 44 \( \text{Qc7} \), e.g. 44...\( \text{Qd4} \) 45 \( \text{Qxa7} \) \( \text{Qd3} \) 46 \( \text{Qd7} \) \( \text{Qd2} \) 47 \( \text{Qh2} \) \( \text{Qxf2} \) 38 \( \text{Qg3} \) or 44...\( \text{Qa5} \) 45 \( \text{Qa7} \) \( \text{Qd4} \) 46 \( \text{Qd7} \).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
40 \ldots \text{Qxf2} !
\end{array}
\]

Now it becomes clear White made the wrong choice at move 38: the knights win.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
41 \text{Qc4} \text{d3} \\
42 \text{Qf1} \text{e5} \\
43 \text{Qb4} \text{exf3} + \\
44 \text{gxf3} \text{e2} +
\end{array}
\]

This wins (45 \( \text{Qf2} \) \( \text{Qf4} + \) 46 \( \text{Qe1} \) \( \text{Qe2} \) mate or 46 \( \text{Qe3} \) \( \text{Qd5} + \) or 46 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( \text{g5} !\)) but 44...\( \text{Qd3} ! \) was faster.
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45  \( \text{g2} \)  \( \text{f4}+ \)
46  \( \text{h1} \)  \( \text{d4} \)
47  \( \text{e7} \)

Only slightly better is 47 \( \text{b7} \) \( \text{g7} \) 48 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{8d5} \).
47  ...  \( \text{g7}! \)

With ...\( \text{h8+} \) in mind.
48  \( \text{c7} \)  \( \text{d8d5} \)
49  \( \text{e1} \)  \( \text{g5} \)
50  \( \text{xc6} \)  \( \text{d8}! \)

Resigns

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Lasker predicted that his age would catch up with him at Zurich 1934. He thought he would do well in the tournament's first week. That turned out to be true as he scored 3½-½. But he also knew he would quickly tire. That was evident in his losses to Bogolyubov, Nimzovich and Alekhine. His overall prediction, that he would finish around sixth place was on the money: he was clear fifth, with a 10-5 score. It was at the final banquet that Alekhine toasted him, saying Lasker was “my teacher.” Here is one of his later wins.

Lasker – Mueller
Zurich 1934
Caro-Kann Defense,
Two Knights Variation (B10)
1  \( \text{e4} \)  \( \text{c6} \)
2  \( \text{dxc3} \)  \( \text{d5} \)
3  \( \text{f3} \)  \( \text{dxe4} \)
4  \( \text{gxe4} \)  \( \text{f5} \)

Black confuses this position with 2 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 3 \( \text{dxc3} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 4 \( \text{dxe4} \) \( \text{f5} \). What is surprising is that Hans Mueller was one of the world's opening experts. He was frequently quoted well into the 1950s and ’60s on subjects such as QGD, the English Opening – and the Caro-Kann Defense, based on his well-received 1933 book on it.

5  \( \text{g3} \)  \( \text{g6}? \)
6  \( \text{h4}! \)

This trap has become a staple of simul-givers. Alekhine, for example, won at least three games with it in exhibitions.
6  ...  \( \text{h6} \)
7  \( \text{e5} \)

Black would still be reasonably healthy after 7...\( \text{d6}! \) 8 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d7} \).
7  ...  \( \text{h7} \)

The notoriety of this trap indirectly influenced the main line. For most of the 20th century it was believed that Black must meet 1 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{c6} \) 2 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 3 \( \text{dxc3} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 4 \( \text{gxe4} \) \( \text{f5} \) 5 \( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g6} \) 6 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{h6} \)
7 \( \text{f3} \) with 7...\( \text{d7} \) to discourage 8 \( \text{e5} \). But in the 1980s masters begin to obtain perfectly good positions with 7...\( \text{d6} \) and then 8 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{h7} \) because White couldn’t find a stronger continuation than 9 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 10 \( \text{xd3} \).

8  \( \text{h5} \)

More exact is 8 \( \text{f3} \) so that 8...\( \text{f6} \) 9 \( \text{b3}! \) wins a pawn (or 8...\( \text{f6} \) 9 \( \text{h5}+ \)).
8  ...  \( \text{g6} \)

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A 1937 simul game of Lasker’s went
9...c4! e6 (9...gxh5?? 10 xfx7 mate)
10...e6 11 xfx7! Resigns.

The natural 9...wd5 loses to 10 wxd5
and 11 b5+. At the other extreme is
the unnatural 9...f6, which looks
horrible but keeps Black breathing.

White can keep the initiative with
10 c4!. Then 10...fxe5 11 wff7+ d7
12...e6+ c7 13...xe5+ and...xh8, or
12...c8 13 c4! and...xe5 get ugly.
Similarly, 10...e6 11...g4! fxe5
12 wxe6+.

Black best may be 11...f5 12...e2
in the last line, when White’s advantage
is obvious but not overwhelming.

The first time Lasker sprang this trap
he allowed a simul opponent to reach an
ending (10 d4? e6)

Black could cut his losses with
10...d5 11 xb7 c7 because
12...xa8...b6 traps the queen. But that
would accede to the dreadful 12...xc7
endgame.

White emerges with the Exchange
and a pawn. If it weren’t for the semi-
trapped position of his queen after
13...c7, the game would be over

Black’s compensation is based on the
possibility of enemy mistakes. For
instance, if White insists on extirpating
the queen and winning another pawn
(14 a6 and b7) Black is back in
business after 14...g7 15 b7? 0-0
16 xa7...d7 and 17...b8 or
17...c5.

White finds a smoother way of
extricating his queen (a3-b3) and
advances what is likely to be a passed
pawn. Amateurs often believe the
fastest way to defuse counterplay, after
they’ve won material, is to get queens
off the board. But there are times when
counterplay can be curtailed by
creating a powerful winning plan such
as xa7 and a5-a6

Black does better by stopping the
b3-b7 plan with 15...d7 (threat:
16...b6) and then 16 a5 0-0 followed by...
a6.

But White is winning after 16 a6
0-0 17 b7 xa6 18 xa6 b8 19 c3.
The queen gets back for defense – 22...\texttt{Qxd3}+ 23 \texttt{Qxd3} \texttt{Qxd3} 24 \texttt{Qe3}!.

\texttt{22} ... \texttt{Qd5}

Black stops the \texttt{Q}-retreat with tempo. Now 23 \texttt{Qg4} suggests itself but requires White to calculate 23...\texttt{Qxc3}?! or 23...\texttt{Qxd3}+. Pragmatism suggests:

\texttt{23} \texttt{Qxh7}! \texttt{Qxh7}

\texttt{24} \texttt{Qf5}

White can win on the kingside (with 26 \texttt{Qg4} and a threat of 27 \texttt{c4}) or the queenside with 26 \texttt{Qb7} and \texttt{a4-a5-a6} etc. The game ended with routine fireworks: 24...\texttt{We5} 25 \texttt{Wxc5} \texttt{Wxf5} 26 \texttt{Qg4} \texttt{We6} 27 \texttt{Qxg5} \texttt{f5} 28 \texttt{Qc4} \texttt{Ax6} 29 \texttt{Wf4+} \texttt{Qh6} 30 \texttt{Qxg7+} \texttt{Qxg7} 31 \texttt{Wxh6+} \texttt{Wxf6} 32 \texttt{Qh6+} resigns.

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Until fairly recently no world class player who hadn’t been born in Russia had played them more often than Lasker. He visited the country nine times, for matches, tournaments and simul tours. That made it easier for Lasker and his wife to agree to visit and ultimately settle in Moscow in 1935. He became a member of the Moscow Academy of Science and took quasi-Soviet citizenship, playing under the hammer-and-sickle in his final tournaments. Here he faces a master who was born a few months after St. Petersburg 1909.

\textbf{Kan – Lasker}

\textit{Moscow 1935}

\textit{Slav Defense (D14)}

\begin{array}{ll}
1 & \texttt{d4} \texttt{d5} \\
2 & \texttt{c4} \texttt{e6} \\
3 & \texttt{cxd5} \texttt{cxd5} \\
4 & \texttt{Qc3} \texttt{Qc6} \\
5 & \texttt{Qf3} \texttt{Qf6} \\
6 & \texttt{Qf4} \texttt{Qf5} \\
\end{array}

Marshall had pioneered the Exchange Slav with simple White development: bring out the knights, develop the bishop on \texttt{f4}, then follow with \texttt{e2-e3} and \texttt{Qd3} or \texttt{Qb5}. If Black copied these moves, both sides have an unprotected \texttt{b}-pawn. As a result, White began to play an early \texttt{Wb3} – if Black didn’t anticipate him with \texttt{...Wb6}.

\begin{align*}
7 & \texttt{Wb3} \\
\textit{But this game showed that the} \texttt{W}-move \textit{could be played too early, and attention turned to} 7 \texttt{e3} \texttt{e6} 8 \texttt{Wb3}. \textit{That was hailed as favorable to White} (8...\texttt{Wb6} 9 \texttt{Wxb6} \texttt{axb6} 10 \texttt{a3}) \textit{But Petar Trifunovic showed in 1947 that} 8...\texttt{Qb4}! \textit{equalizes} \textit{Today the Exchange Slav after} 8 \texttt{Qd3} \textit{or} 8 \texttt{Qe5} \textit{is often a prelude to a quick draw.}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
7 & \ldots \texttt{Qa5} \\
8 & \texttt{Qa4+} \texttt{Qd7} \\
9 & \texttt{Wc2}
\end{align*}

White’s triangulation with the queen serves a purpose. It disoriented two Black pieces. Compare this with 1 \texttt{e4} \texttt{c6} 2 \texttt{d4} \texttt{d5} 3 \texttt{exd5} \texttt{cxd5} 4 \texttt{Qd3} \texttt{Qc6} 5 \texttt{c3} \texttt{Qf6} 6 \texttt{Qf4} \texttt{Qg4}. Then 7 \texttt{Wb3} \texttt{Qa5} 8 \texttt{Qa4+} \texttt{Qd7} 9 \texttt{Wc2} has been regarded as favorable for White since Fischer beat Petrosian with it in 1970.

\begin{align*}
9 & \ldots \texttt{Qc8} \\
10 & \texttt{e3} \texttt{h5}!
\end{align*}

But this improvement, over 10...\texttt{e6} 11 \texttt{Qd3} \texttt{Qb4}, enables Black to put...\texttt{Qa5} and ...\texttt{Qd7} to good use. The threat of \texttt{11...b4} prompts a concession, and although it’s minor, it allows Black to entrench a knight on \texttt{c4}. This explains why 9 \texttt{Wd1}! is considered best today – to ensure equality.

\begin{align*}
11 & \texttt{a3} \texttt{e6} \\
12 & \texttt{Qd3} \texttt{e7} \\
13 & \texttt{Qe5} \texttt{Qe4}
\end{align*}

Neither man is in a rush to exchange his outpost knight: If White plays \texttt{Qxc4}, Black recaptures with his \texttt{b}-
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pawn, drives White’s best attacking piece off its diagonal and gives Black’s rooks a target at b2. If, on the other hand, Black initiates the trade by taking on e5, White gets kingside chances regardless of how he retakes.

14  \( \text{\textcommode{c}2}! \)

White prepares to oust the knight and destroy Black’s queenside phalanx with b2-b3 or a3-a4. He wouldn’t mind 14...\( \text{\textcommode{x}a3} \) 15 0-0!, with threats of \( \text{\textcommode{x}d7} / \text{\textcommode{x}b5} \) or just \( \text{\textcommode{f}c1} \) followed by \( \text{\textcommode{x}a7} \) once the knight retreats.

14  ...  0-0
15  0-0  \( \text{\textcommode{e}8}! \)

Black allowed this bishop to become bad in return for his grip on queenside light squares. He retreats so he can play \( \text{\textcommode{d}7xe5} \)

16  \( \text{\textcommode{a}c1} \)  \( \text{\textcommode{d}7} \)

White can allow a double trade on e5 (17 e4 \( \text{\textcommode{x}dxe5} \) 18 \( \text{\textcommode{x}xe5} \) \( \text{\textcommode{x}e5} \) 19 dxe5) but Black should be OK even if he has to sack a pawn with 19...b4 20 axb4 d4.

That suggests 17 \( \text{\textcommode{x}d7} \) \( \text{\textcommode{x}d7} \) 18 e4 is better. White has only a tiny edge, if any, after 18...dxe4 19 \( \text{\textcommode{c}xe4} \) \( \text{\textcommode{c}6} \) or 19 \( \text{\textcommode{x}e4} \) g6 20 \( \text{\textcommode{h}6} \) \( \text{\textcommode{e}8} \) and 21...\( \text{\textcommode{c}6} \).

17 \( \text{\textcommode{x}c4}!? \)

We owe Euwe this insight: As Lasker got older he didn’t have to take the risks he once did in order to imbalance a position. His opponents did it for him. Counterplay was intrinsic in the sharper openings they played. Even in a symmetrical opening, such as the Exchange Slav, Lasker’s opponents often avoided the keep-the-draw-in-hand moves that he encountered 30 years before.

Here, for example, one of his earlier opponents might have played 17 \( \text{\textcommode{f}3} \) – which sends a diplomatic signal (17...\( \text{\textcommode{f}6} \) 18 \( \text{\textcommode{e}5} \) \( \text{\textcommode{d}7} \) 19 \( \text{\textcommode{f}3} \) and perhaps also a warning that White can play for a win after 17...\( \text{\textcommode{b}6} \) 18 b3 \( \text{\textcommode{x}a3} \) 19 \( \text{\textcommode{x}b5} \) or 18...\( \text{\textcommode{x}a3} \) 19 \( \text{\textcommode{h}7+} \)!!.

17  ...  bxc4
18  \( \text{\textcommode{b}1} \)

White disturbed the symmetry based on the solid conclusion that he can defend b2 until he obtains play from e3-e4.

18  ...  f5!

Black knew better than to believe that ...f5 would stop e3-e4. Usually the f-pawn’s advance only makes Black’s light squares, in particular e6, more vulnerable. Here he makes a threat (19...g5) and buys time for queenside play.

19  f3  \( \text{\textcommode{b}6} \)

Returning the knight to the kingside does not restrain White (19...\( \text{\textcommode{f}6} \) 20 h3 and 21 g4). Black looks for a chance for ...\( \text{\textcommode{a}4} \).

20  \( \text{\textcommode{c}2} \)

White has to take some precautions because the immediate 20 e4 dxe4 and ...\( \text{\textcommode{x}d4} \) drops a pawn, while 20 \( \text{\textcommode{c}d1} \) \( \text{\textcommode{a}4} \) 21 e4 allows Black to keep matters under control with 21...\( \text{\textcommode{c}3} \) 22 bxc3 \( \text{\textcommode{x}d7} \).

20  ...  \( \text{\textcommode{d}6} \)

Black’s last three moves seem designed to give him a bad-\( \text{\textcommode{d}6} \) endgame. But he needed to trade the f4-bishop so he could double rooks on the b-file and/or prepare ...e5.

21  \( \text{\textcommode{x}d6} \)  \( \text{\textcommode{x}d6} \)

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22 \text{d}d1 \text{d}7
23 \text{w}d2

From move 22 on White is ready to push e3-e4 but refuses. What was he afraid of? The tournament book said 23 e4 would be met solidly by 23...f4. However, 24 exd5 exd5 25 we5 is quite nice for White. So is 23...dxe4 24 fxe4 f4 25 wh5!, threatening 26 e5.

Black’s best is probably 23...\text{c}6 with roughly balanced chances. As the game goes, White isn’t in a better position for e3-e4 later on. Instead he waits for ...e5.

23 ...
24 ffe1 \text{c}d8
25 \text{e}2

Now 25 e4 dxe4 26 fxe4 fxe4 27 dxex4 is OK for Black (27...dxex4 and ...\text{d}d5).

25 ...
26 \text{c}e1 g6

29 \text{c}dd2! \text{c}7
30 \text{b}1

White has safeguarded b2 so he can attack with \text{wh}4, h2-h3, g2-g4 and the transfer of a rook to g2 or h2. Black, meanwhile, would like to swap off all minor pieces, say on a4, and then break through by tripping on the b-file and advancing ...c3. Even if he is limited to trading knights, he seems to be doing well after, say, 30...\text{b}6 31 \text{c}2 \text{fd}7 (intending ...\text{a}a4) 32 \text{bd}1 \text{c}e8 33 \text{c}b1 \text{d}d6 and ...\text{b}5.

But White posted his heavy pieces with maximum flexibility. He could play 32 e4 instead of 32 \text{d}d1 and then 32...\text{a}a4 33 \text{d}xa4 \text{axa}4 34 exd5 exd5 35 \text{e}6! followed by \text{we}5 is strong.

Black is mated after 35...\text{xe}6?
36 \text{xb}2 \text{xb}2 37 \text{xa}4 \text{xa}4 38 \text{ce}8+.

30 ...
31 \text{g}3

Black undoubtedly wanted to reply 31...\text{wf}6 and 32...f4. But he may have talked himself out of it in view of 32 dxe5 \text{c}e5 33 \text{xd}5 \text{xd}5 34 \text{xd}5.

He could visualize reasonable winning chances after 34...\text{xe}6?
35 \text{xb}2 \text{xb}2 (in view of 36 \text{xe}5 \text{xb}1+ 37 \text{f}2 \text{wh}4+ 38 \text{g}3 \text{b}2+ 39 \text{f}1 \text{wxg}3 and 40...c3 or 36 \text{xe}5! \text{xb}1+ 37 \text{f}2 \text{b}2+ 38 \text{g}1 \text{wd}8!).

31 ...
32 \text{e}6?

Black’s queen doesn’t belong lined up against a rook and this move could only be played if Black thought he had stopped White’s next move.

32 e4!

A powerful move. It would win quickly after 32...dxe4? 33 d5! and more slowly after 32...f4 33 \text{wh}4 (with lines such as 33...\text{ff}7 34 exd5 \text{xd}5 35 \text{xd}5 \text{xd}5 36 \text{c}4).

32 ...
36 \text{exd}4!
This is the best practical chance – if only because it forces White to calculate at least five difficult futures.

The first two are 33 exf5 \(\mathbb{W}f7\) and its relative 33...\(\mathbb{W}f6\). Also obscure are 33 exd5 dxc3??, 33 exd5 \(\mathbb{W}f6\) 34 \(\mathbb{R}e6\) and even 34 \(\mathbb{Q}d1\). Lengthy post-mortemstms established there was one true path to advantage and the rest wander off into muddy-land.

33 \(\text{exf5?}\)

The win begins with 33 exd5! and then 33...\(\mathbb{W}f6\) 34 dxe6 dxc3 35 \(\mathbb{R}xd7\) \(\mathbb{R}xd7\) 36 \(\mathbb{W}xb8+\). Also 35...\(\mathbb{R}xb2\) 36 \(\mathbb{R}xb2\) \(\mathbb{R}xb2\) loses to 30 \(\mathbb{Q}e1\)!

But White would have to see much more, particularly since Lasker by now had a reputation for sacking his queen. Kan would also have to check out 33...dxc3 34 dxe6 cxd2.

That seems to be refuted by 35 \(\mathbb{R}xd2\) \(\mathbb{R}xb2\) 36 \(\mathbb{R}xb2\) \(\mathbb{R}xb2\) 37 \(\mathbb{Q}xf5\). However Black has one further complication – 35...c3??.

There is a White win after all but it requires calculating 36 exd7! cxd2 37 \(\mathbb{Q}a2+\) \(\mathbb{W}g7\) 38 \(\mathbb{W}e5+\) out another ten moves to be sure.

33 ... \(\mathbb{W}f6!\)

Black is a bit worse after 33...\(\mathbb{W}f7\) 34 \(\mathbb{R}xd4\).

34 \(\mathbb{R}e6\)

"There is nothing better," wrote Sergei Belavenets in the tournament book. But later analysis showed that 34 \(\mathbb{Q}d1\) was perfectly playable since 34...c3 35 \(\mathbb{R}e6!\) cxd2? loses (35 \(\mathbb{Q}xf6\) \(\mathbb{Q}xf6\) 36 \(\mathbb{Q}xg6\)) and anything else is, at worst, unclear.  

34 ... \(\text{dxc3!}\)

35 \(\mathbb{Q}xf6\) \(\text{exd2}\)

If White takes time out for 36 \(\mathbb{Q}c2\) Black would consolidate and win with 36...\(\mathbb{R}xf6\) 37 \(\mathbb{W}d6\) \(\mathbb{Q}d7!\).

36 \(\mathbb{Q}xg6+!\) \(\text{hxg6}\)

37 \(\mathbb{W}g6+\) \(\mathbb{Q}f8\)

Black hopes for 38 \(\mathbb{W}h6+\) and 39 \(\mathbb{W}xd2\), when his extra material must win.

38 \(\mathbb{W}d6+?\) \(\mathbb{Q}e8\)

39 \(\mathbb{Q}c2\)

This threatens 40 \(\text{f6!}\) and looks strong. But White should have played it a move earlier – 38 \(\mathbb{Q}c2!\) and then:

(a) 38...\(\mathbb{R}b6\) 39 \(\text{f6!}\), threatening \(\mathbb{W}g7+\text{-}e7\) mate,

(b) 38...\(\mathbb{Q}xb2\) 39 \(\text{f6!}\) \(\mathbb{Q}b1+\) 40 \(\mathbb{Q}f2\) \(\mathbb{Q}e1\) 41 \(\mathbb{Q}e4!\) also favors White, and

(c) 38...\(\mathbb{Q}c8!!\) and now 39 \(\mathbb{W}d6+\) \(\mathbb{Q}g8\) 40 \(\mathbb{W}g6+\) repeats the position. The best try is 39...\(\mathbb{Q}e8\) 40 \(\text{f6}\) \(\mathbb{Q}f8\) and then 41 \(\mathbb{Q}e5+\) \(\mathbb{Q}f7\) 42 \(\mathbb{W}h5+\) \(\mathbb{Q}xf6\) 43 \(\mathbb{W}f5+\) \(\mathbb{Q}e7\) 44 \(\mathbb{W}xc8\) \(\mathbb{Q}xb2\) with good winning chances (45 \(\mathbb{W}f5\) \(\mathbb{Q}e6\) 46 \(\mathbb{Q}d1\) d4 and ...\(\text{c3}\)).

39 ... \(\mathbb{Q}b6!!\)
Black would transpose into the last note after 39. \( \text{c}8 \) 40 \( \text{f}6 \) since the winning line of the game, 40...\( \text{d}8 \) 41 \( \text{f}7 \) \( \text{c}8 \), is not legal.

\[
\begin{align*}
40 & \quad \text{f}6 & \quad \text{d}8 \\
41 & \quad \text{f}7 & \quad \text{c}8 \\
42 & \quad \text{f}8(\text{W})+ & \quad \text{x}f8 \\
43 & \quad \text{w}x\text{f}8+ & \quad \text{b}7 \\
\end{align*}
\]

The pawns run fast (44 \( \text{w}f4 \) \( \text{b}x\text{b}2 \) 45 \( \text{w}x\text{d}2 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 46 \( \text{w}c1 \) c3).

\[
44 \quad \text{w}f6
\]

Now 44...\( \text{a}8 \)? can be met by 45 \( \text{w}d4 \) \( \text{b}x\text{b}2 \) 46 \( \text{w}x\text{d}2 \) and because of the king-position Black cannot play 46...\( \text{a}4 \) in view of 47 \( \text{w}x\text{d}5+ \).

\[
44 \quad ... & \quad \text{a}6!
\]

The next-to-last finesse. Now 45 \( \text{w}d4 \) \( \text{b}x\text{b}2 \) 46 \( \text{w}x\text{d}2 \) \( \text{a}4 \) costs a piece.

\[
\begin{align*}
45 & \quad \text{w}d6 & \quad \text{e}8 \\
46 & \quad \text{h}4 & \quad \text{e}1+ \\
47 & \quad \text{h}2 & \quad \text{c}1! \\
\end{align*}
\]

Without this move Black would have to promote and try to win with 2\( \text{b}8+ \) against the queen and three kingside passers. Now the bishop has no good move, and 48 \( \text{w}x\text{g}6 \) \( \text{a}4 \) is lost.

\[
\begin{align*}
48 & \quad \text{f}5 & \quad \text{d}1(\text{W}) \\
49 & \quad \text{c}8+ & \quad \text{a}5 \\
\end{align*}
\]

Resigns

Because the checks end after 50 \( \text{w}c5+ \) \( \text{a}4 \).

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It was one thing to beat Ilya Kan, who had a reputation for being the Soviet player who could out-calculate Botvinnik. It was another to defeat Vitaly Chekhover, the endgame maestro, in an ending. No one has been able to explain how Black went from an equal opening directly to a won ending without a "losing moment" or even a series of serious White errors. Khalifman/Soloviov didn't criticize a single one of White's moves, except to award an "!?" to his 17th. Chekhover did criticize his sixth and seventh moves - but in retrospect we know they weren't bad at all. Where did White go wrong?

Chekhover - Lasker
Moscow 1935
Queen's Gambit Declined,
Vienna Variation (D39)

\[
\begin{align*}
1 & \quad \text{c}4 & \quad \text{f}6 \\
2 & \quad \text{e}3 & \quad \text{e}6 \\
3 & \quad \text{f}3 & \quad \text{d}5 \\
4 & \quad \text{d}4 & \quad \text{dxc}4 \\
5 & \quad \text{e}4 & \quad \text{b}4 \\
\end{align*}
\]

Wolf introduced this move at Carlsbad 1923 with the idea of meeting 6 \( \text{g}5 \) with 6...\( \text{b}5 \). Others adopted 5 \( \text{b}4 \) with the idea of 6 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{h}6 \)

\[
6 \quad \text{g}5 & \quad \text{e}5! \\
\]

But this made it the Vienna Variation. This position was all the rage in 1935, thanks to analysis and games of Grunfeld and Albert Becker. It usually came about from different move orders - 1 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 2 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 3 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 4 \( \text{g}5 \) and now 4...\( \text{dxc}4 \) 5 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{b}4+ \) 6 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \), or 4...\( \text{b}4+ \) 5 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{dxc}4 \) 6 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \)

\[
7 \quad \text{xf}6
\]

The intuition of a 1 \( \text{d}4 \) player tells him 7 \( \text{dxc}5 \) cannot be right, and that is confirmed by 7 \( \text{w}x\text{d}1+ \) 8 \( \text{w}x\text{d}1 \) \( \text{d}7 \).

The natural focus of attention is 7 \( \text{e}5 \) after which 7...\( \text{cxd}4 \) requires White to choose among complex lines such as 8 \( \text{w}a4+ \) and 8 \( \text{e}x\text{f}6 \), as well as 8 \( \text{d}x\text{d}4 \). During the 1930s it seemed Black was worse, if not lost. When Fine beat Grunfeld quickly at Amsterdam 1936 with 8 \( \text{w}a4+ \) \( \text{c}6 \) 9 0-0-0 \( \text{d}7 \) 10 \( \text{e}4 \) he explained that his opponent was unaware of the newly discovered "refutation."
Only when the Vienna Variation was reexamined in the 1970s, did it become clear that 7 e5 contained no terrors for Black. Grandmasters have been arguing about something entirely different – the merits of 7  \( \text{ex}c4 \) – ever since.

7  \( \ldots \)  \( \text{ex}f6 \)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{A Diagram}
\end{array}
\]

White’s idea is that Black’s queen cannot pressure c3 as it would after 7 \( \text{ex}c4 \text{ ex}d4 \) 8 \( \text{ex}d4 \text{ ex}c3+ \) 9 bxc3 \( \text{wa}5! \).

8 \( \text{ex}c4 \text{ cxd4} \)

Now 9 e5? dxc3! favors Black distinctly and 9 \( \text{ex}d4 \) 0-0 does less so.

9 \( \text{ex}d4 \)

This line still pops up today, e.g. 9 \( \text{ex}d4 \) 10 \( \text{ex}d4 \) a6 11 \( \text{ac}1 \) \( \text{ad}7 \) and \( \ldots \text{ex}c6 \) with equality, Nakamura-L.Aronian, Dos Hermanas internet section 2003.

9  \( \ldots \)  \( \text{ex}c6 \)

10 \( \text{xf}6 \)  \( \text{gxf6} \)

11 \( \text{ac}1 \)  \( \text{ad}7 \)

12  \( \ldots \)  \( \text{cc}8 \)

13  a3

Here 13 \( \text{fd}1 \) and 14 \( \text{e}2 \) would ease White’s game a bit.

13  \( \ldots \)  \( \text{dd}6! \)

The bishop is a super-piece and would be a decisive factor after 14 \( \text{fd}1 \text{ e}7 \) 15 \( \text{d}2? \) \( \text{f}4 \) (Best is 15 \( \text{f}1 \) when White is a little worse.)

14  \( \text{e}2 \)  \( \text{e}5! \)

15  \( \text{xe}5? \)

This is where the game is lost. After 15 \( \text{d}2! \) White is still alive and following 15...\( \text{ex}c4?! \) 16 \( \text{ex}c4 \) he hasn’t a care in the world. Note that 15...b5? boomerangs after 16 \( \text{xb}5! \) (16...\( \text{xc}1 \) 17 \( \text{xd}7+) \).

15  \( \ldots \)  \( \text{xe}5 \)

White realizes it’s time to panic. He could do that with 16 \( \text{fd}1 \text{ b}2 \) 17 \( \text{b}5 \) (17...\( \text{xc}1 \) 18 \( \text{xd}7) \). But he’s just a pawn down after 17...\( \text{ac}6 \) 18 \( \text{ex}c6+ \) bxc6.

16  \( \text{b}5 \)

Chekhov, who composed at least 100 studies, finds another version of the tactic It is grounded in general principles (to eliminate the two bishops) and more forcing than the version in the last note. White threatens \( \text{xe}8+ \) and would be nearly equal after 16...\( \text{e}7 \) 17 \( \text{xd}7 \). However, it leads to a lost endgame.
The bishops eventually beat the rook after 17 $\text{Bxc1 Bxb5}$ 19 $\text{Cc8+ Be7}$ 20 $\text{Bxh8 Bxe2}$.

17 $\text{Bxd7+ Bxd7}$

18 $\text{Bxc1 Bc8!}$

White cannot keep rooks on (19 $\text{Bd1+ Be7}$ 20 $\text{Bd2 Bd8}$) and that means Black’s bishop and faster king offer excellent winning chances. Why did White think he was drawing?

19 $\text{Bxe8 Bxe8}$

20 $\text{b3 Bc7}$

The reason is that Chekhov understood fortresses. He recognized that White is close to sealing the queenside:

If he could play 21 a4 as well as 21 $\text{Bc1}$ he would draw. Once the knight reaches d3, there is no point of entry for the Black king. Black can play it to d6 or c6 and push his pawns to a6 and b5. But White would reply axb5 and sit with $\text{Bf1-e2-d2}$.

21 $\text{Bf1}$

But endgames are the tragedy of one tempo, and White is a move short. After 21 $\text{Bc1? Bb2!}$ he drops a pawn. He also loses in the crucial line, 21 a4 $\text{Cc6}$ 22 $\text{Bc1 Be5}$ 23 $\text{Bd3+ Bd4}$.

21 ...

b5!

Black needs a target but b3 is easily protected. After 21...$\text{Cc6? Bc5}$ 23 $\text{Bd2 Bb2}$ 24 a4 $\text{Bb4}$ 25 $\text{Cc2}$ he gets no further.

The point of 21...b5! is to prevent or exploit a2-a4. Black can also try 21...$\text{Cc6}$ 22 $\text{Bc1 b5}$ since 23 a4 $\text{Bxa4}$ leads into the game. However, White can build a different fortress with 23 $\text{Bd2 Bb2}$ 24 $\text{B4!}$ and 23...$\text{Bxa3}$ 25 $\text{Bc3 a5}$ 26 $\text{Bxa5}$.

22 $\text{Be1 Bb2}$

23 $\text{Bxa4}$

And even the target at a4 isn’t enough after 24...$\text{Bb6}$ 25 $\text{Bd2 Bc5}$ 26 $\text{Bc2 Be5}$ 27 $\text{Bb3}$ because White can build a third fortress after he traps the bishop with 27...$\text{Bxh2}$ 28 g3. He would draw by passing ($\text{Bc3-b3-a3}$).

25 $\text{Bd2 Bc5}$

The difference is that on 26 $\text{Bc2}$ Black does not play 26...$\text{Bc5}$ 27 $\text{Bb3!}$, which is similar to the previous note. Instead, he plays 26...$\text{Bd4!}$ 27 $\text{f3 Bc4}$ and White is soon in zugzwang (28 $\text{Bxd4 Bxd4}$ 29 $\text{Bb3 a5!}$).

26 $\text{Bc3}$

26 ...

$\text{Bb4}$

Yuri Averbakh, a 13-year-old Moscow schoolboy at the time, later wrote, “Lasker does not need to calculate whether the pawn-ending could be won. In endings one should always choose the most clear-cut plan and there is no doubt that the safest way to win lies in the capture of the a-pawn.”

27 $\text{Bb5 a5}$

Khalifman/Soloviov make the rest of game appear close because they give Black’s move as 27...a6. Then Black has to calculate pawn-races in variations such as 28 $\text{Bd6 Bxa4}$ 29 $\text{Bxf7 Bb3}$ 30 $\text{Bd8 Bd4!}$ 31 $\text{Bxe6}$ 32 $\text{g4}$ a5 33 $\text{g5}$ fxg5 34 $\text{Bxg5 a4}$.
However, with the pawn properly placed on a5, there is no race (30...a4 31 \( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{e} \text{e} \text{6} \text{ a3} \).

28 \( \text{Q} \text{d} \text{6} \text{ } \text{c} \text{a} \text{a} \text{4} \)

29 \( \text{Q} \text{c} \text{2} \text{ } \text{c} \text{e} \text{5} \)

In the tournament book, Chekhov stopped analyzing at move 27 and gave the rest without comment: 30 \( \text{Q} \text{x} \text{f} \text{7} \text{ } \text{x} \text{h} \text{2} \text{ } 31 \text{ } \text{Q} \text{d} \text{8} \text{ } \text{e} \text{5} \text{ } 32 \text{ } \text{Q} \text{c} \text{6} \text{ } \text{g} \text{1} \text{ } 33 \text{ } \text{f} \text{3} \text{ } \text{c} \text{e} \text{5} \text{ } 34 \text{ } \text{b} \text{8} \text{ } \text{b} \text{5} \text{!} \text{ } 35 \text{ } \text{g} \text{4} \text{ } \text{e} \text{7} \text{ } 36 \text{ } \text{g} \text{5} \text{ } \text{f} \text{x} \text{g} \text{5} \text{ } 37 \text{ } \text{d} \text{7} \text{ } \text{d} \text{6} \text{ } 38 \text{ } \text{f} \text{6} \text{ } \text{c} \text{e} \text{4} \text{ White resigns.}

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It's getting late in the Lasker story and we're running out of clues to the mystery: How did he remain so strong for so long. After all, he left no theoretical base, like Steinitz, Tarrasch or Nimzovich, that he could rely on. His powerful tactical eye was bound to weaken with age. His legendary patience was undermined by his declining stamina.

Torre thought Lasker's secret was a labor-saving pragmatism. "A practical player with a fine intuition," he said, "can save a lot of time and energy, which permits him to play his games quickly and stay at a high level, even at an advanced age."

Others saw Lasker's genius in his ability to sense the pivotal point in a game. Some 20 years after the Moscow tournament Bronstein noted how a good calculator can defend bad positions by "knowing the critical moment to leave a weak point to the mercy of fate and carry the battle to another sector. Only today does it become clear that precisely that style of battle was characteristic of Emanuel Lasker and it was one of his fundamental advantages, which none of his contemporaries understood."

Another of his advantages was simply an enduring enthusiasm for chess. Unlike other ex-champions, such as Capablanca and Spassky, he remained fascinated by finding new ideas. His originality was reflected in games like this.

\text{Lasker – Pirc}
Moscow 1935
\text{Sicilian Defense.}
\text{Scheveningen Variation (B85)}

\begin{align*}
1 & \text{e}4 \text{ e}5 \\
2 & \text{Q} \text{f}3 \text{ Q} \text{e}6 \\
3 & \text{d}4 \text{ exd}4 \\
4 & \text{Q} \text{xd}4 \text{ Q} \text{d}6 \\
5 & \text{Q} \text{e}3 \text{ d}6 \\
6 & \text{Q} \text{e}2 \\

\text{Veniamin Sozin had played 6 Qc4 a few times in obscure Soviet events but the only mainstream options at the time were 6 Qe2 and the new idea of 6 Qg5.}

\begin{align*}
6 & \ldots \text{ e}6 \\
7 & \text{0-0} \text{ a}6 \\
8 & \text{Q} \text{e}3 \text{ Qc7} \\

\text{The debate over the proper move order in the Scheveningen — assuming that there is a proper move order in the Scheveningen — was just starting. Some authorities said Black must castle quickly. Others insisted he could not afford to allow White to set up an attacking formation with f2-f4 and \text{Qe1-g3. Kan had won an impressive game in the previous Soviet Championship (after 9 f4 Qe7 10 Qe1 0-0 11 Qg3 Qe8 12 Qad1 Qf8) by obtaining a strong initiative from 12 Qf3!).}

9 & \text{f4}

\text{Still other analysts said that whenever Black played ...a6, he was threatening ...b5, which White should stop with a2-a4 And there were some voices who argued that White should safeguard the g1-a7 diagonal with Qb3 or \text{Qh}1 before 9 f4.}

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9 \( \ldots \) \( \text{a}5? \)

But if you could sum up the conventional Scheveningen thinking in 1935 it was that White will have won the battle of the opening if he gets to play 10 \( \text{we}1 \) and 11 \( \text{d}1 \) before Black makes progress on the queenside. When Black belatedly does \( \text{a}5-c4 \), White can retreat the bishop to \( c1 \). “It was just this that Pirc wished to avoid with his new move,” Stahlberg wrote. (Today, 9...\( \text{e}7 \) is standard.)

10 f5!

When John Nunn beat Andrei Sokolov, the world’s No. 3-rated player, in 1986, the veteran Soviet trainer Alexander Nikitin wrote in \textit{Sakk}, “All this is known from the famous game Lasker-Pirc, Moscow 1935.”

Actually what Lasker made famous was a theme that could be used in various Sicilians. The Sokolov game began as a Taimanov Variation –1 e4 c5 2 \( \text{d}f3 \) e6 3 d4 cxd4 4 \( \text{c}xd4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 5 \( \text{c}3 \) a6 – and then 6 \( \text{e}2 \) d6 7 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{wc}7 \) 8 f4 \( \text{a}5 \) 9 0-0 \( \text{c}4 \) 10 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{wc}4 \) 11 f5!

On the other hand, Adorjan-Sax, Hungarian Championship 1972 took the Najdorf route –1 e4 c5 2 \( \text{d}f3 \) d6 3 \( \text{c}3 \) a6 4 d4 cxd4 5 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) – and transposed into Lasker-Pirc after 6 \( \text{e}2 \) e6 7 0-0 \( \text{wc}7 \) 8 f4 \( \text{c}6 \) 9 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 10 f5.

There’s also a Sozin version, Ciocaltea-Soos, Rumanian Champion-

ship 1954 –1 e4 c5 2 \( \text{d}f3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 3 d4 cxd4 4 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 5 \( \text{c}3 \) d6 6 \( \text{c}4 \) e6 7 0-0 a6 8 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}7 \) 9 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 10 f4 b5 11 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 12 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 13 fxe6 fxe6 14 \( \text{xf}6 \).

10 \( \ldots \) \( \text{c}4 \)

Sax played the superior 10...\( \text{e}7 \). But after 11 \( \text{we}1 \) b5 12 \( \text{g}3 \) b4 13 fxe6 fxe6 14 \( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{d}8 \)? 15 \( \text{b}6 \) he was lost.

On 10...\( \text{e}5 \) 11 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}4 \) White can continue 12 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 13 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 14 \( \text{g}5 \) followed by \( \text{ad}1/\text{xf}6 \) as the tournament book recommended. Stahlberg argued that 13...\( \text{h}6 \)! wasn’t so bad for Black. But 14 \( \text{d}2 \) is good because 14...\( \text{b}4 \)? 15 a3 \( \text{xb}2 \)? 16 \( \text{f}2 \) traps the queen.

11 \( \text{xc}4 \) \( \text{xc}4 \)

12 fxe6 fxe6?

Black has to retake with the bishop. Then both 13 \( \text{f}3 \) and 13 \( \text{d}2 \) are solidly in White’s favor, e.g. 13 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 14 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) (14...\( \text{f}6 \) 15 e5 \( \text{dxe}5 \) 16 \( \text{xb}7 \)?) 15 \( \text{d}5 \) and 13 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 14 b3 \( \text{c}7 \) 15 \( \text{f}5 \)

13 \( \text{xf}6! \)

Yeah, right, another rook-takes-knight sack in the Sicilian. What’s the big deal?

But back in the days when the Sicilian was young this was “a remarkable sacrifice of the Exchange” as the tournament book put it. In a
section on advances in middlegame strategy at the tournament, the book gave the sack two exclamation points because it was considered shocking.

13  ...  gxf6
14  \( \text{h5} \)

The key variations are:

(a) 14...\( \text{\#d7} \) 15 \( \text{\#f7+} \) \( \text{\#e7} \) and now 16 \( \text{\#x5}! \) wins (16...\( \text{\#e8} \) 17 \( \text{\#d1} \) d5 18 \( \text{\#xd5}! \)), and

(b) 14...\( \text{\#e7} \) 15 \( \text{\#f5+!} \) \( \text{\#xf5} \) 16 \( \text{\#d5+} \) \( \text{\#xd8} \) 17 \( \text{\#b6+} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 18 \( \text{\#f7+} \) \( \text{\#c6} \) 19 \( \text{\#c7+} \), and wins, and

(c) 14...\( \text{\#e7} \) 15 \( \text{\#f5+!} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 16 \( \text{\#f7+} \) \( \text{\#c6} \) 17 \( \text{\#d4+} \) and \( \text{\#b3+} \).

14  ...  \( \text{\#d8} \)
15  \( \text{\#f7!} \)

The threat is \( \text{\#xf6+} \) Again 15...\( \text{\#e7} \) loses to 16 \( \text{\#f5} \) because of 16...\( \text{\#e8} \) 17 \( \text{\#xd6} \) \( \text{\#xd6} \) 18 \( \text{\#b6+} \) \( \text{\#c7} \) 19 \( \text{\#d1} \).

A more elaborate win is required by 16...\( \text{\#c7} \) and it is 17 \( \text{\#a4!} \) \( \text{\#f8} \) 18 \( \text{\#xh7} \) \( \text{\#e8} \) 19 \( \text{\#b6+} \), e.g. 19...\( \text{\#d7} \) 20 \( \text{\#h5+} \) \( \text{\#f7} \) 21 \( \text{\#g7+} \) and mates.

15  ...  \( \text{\#d7} \)

White will win at least two pawns and the Exchange now.

16  \( \text{\#xf6+} \) \( \text{\#c7} \)
17  \( \text{\#xh8} \)

Threatening 18 \( \text{\#f1} \).

17  ...  \( \text{\#h6} \)

Now 18 \( \text{\#xa8} \) \( \text{\#xe3+} \) 19 \( \text{\#h1} \) \( \text{\#xd4} \) and ...\( \text{\#c6} \) gives Black cheapo chances.

18  \( \text{\#xe6+}! \) \( \text{\#xe6} \)

Or 18...\( \text{\#xe6} \) 19 \( \text{\#xh7} \) (with check) and \( \text{\#xh6} \).

19  \( \text{\#xa8} \) \( \text{\#e3+} \)
20  \( \text{\#h1} \)  Resigns

The following game features yet another “typical Lasker move.” That was how Fyodor Bohatyrchuk described Black's 15th move in the tournament book. Bohatyrchuk was 24 years younger than Lasker but his attitude reflected a 19th century view: When a player had an inferior position he should try to reduce the level of complexity. Tactical chaos should help the attacker, not the defender.

But Lasker's view has prevailed today. Complications are the friend of the player who is otherwise slipping into a bad position. In this game Lasker pulls off a few miracles by confusing his opponent.

**Spielmann – Lasker**

*Moscow 1935*  
Scotch Game (C47)

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The alternative, 5 \( \text{\#xc6} \), had fallen into such disfavor after World War I that only Mieses and Tartakower among major players continued to use it. In fact there were just a handful of Scotch Games played in 1930s international chess before this tournament.

5  ...  \( \text{\#b4} \)
6  \( \text{\#xc6} \)  bxc6
7  \( \text{\#d3} \)  d5
8  \( \text{\#xd5} \)

Spielmann, however, had done well with the main line (8...\( \text{\#xd5} \) 9 0-0 0-0 10 \( \text{\#g5} \) c6 11 \( \text{\#f3} \) \( \text{\#e7} \) 12 \( \text{\#ae1} \) \( \text{\#b8} \) 13 \( \text{\#d1} \) and \( \text{\#e2} \), as in his 1926 win over Yates)
Black's basic idea, which Bohatyrychuk felt was typically Laskerian, was to smooth out his development (17 \e1 \b7) even if it gave White attacking chances. But Lasker's sense of danger is failing him and 16...\b7! was better.

17 \a4! \a5?

This is a consequence of Black's last move. It's based on his evaluation that 18 \e6 \e6 19 \b5+ \b7 20 \e8 \e8 21 \e5 \e6 is playable in view of his bishops. But he should have accepted a slight disadvantage with 17...\d7.

18 \b4!

This opens the queenside – as well as king-hunting season (18...\d7? loses to 19 bxa5+! \xa5 20 \db1+ \a7 21 \b3).

18 ... \axb4
19 \a5+! \b7

There are a remarkable number of mates in this game's notes and the first is 19...\xa5?? 20 \xa5 \xa5 21 \c7+.

20 \cxb4

Analysts believed Black had to play 20...\d7 and recognize he was in trouble after 21 \d1, threatening \xe6! \xe6 23 \b5.

20 ... \e4?!

This and his next are more in the nature of a Lasker move – except that
they’re so tactically flawed that White immediately has a forced win. Why did he play them?

One explanation is they fit so well with his philosophy of defense. Black is in bad shape but with ...De4 he creates winning ideas (...Dc3/...xb4). Often in the past this aggression had restrained his opponents, and it might have helped again here (21 Db1 Dd6!). The other, equally plausible explanation is that Lasker simply miscalculated.

21 Dxc6

The tournament book showed that White had a relatively simple win in 21 a6+! Db6 22 Dc1 Dd7 23 De3!. The point is that 23...Dc7 allows 24 Dxc6 Dxc6 25 b5 Dd6 26 bx6 Exc6 27 Db5. Even easier is 26 f3! Df6 27 Df4+.

21 ... g5!

The overt point is to drive the bishop off its diagonal. The subversive point is to bamboozle White.

22 Dxe4

“Virtually forced” said the tournament book. The comment fails to credit Black for his trap: On 22 De5 Dxc6! Black has some swindle chances (22...Dxc6 23 Ac1+ Dd7 24 Db5+ De6).

That helps explain Black’s 21st move: Without ...g5 and De5, Black could not take the knight (21...Dxc6 22 Ac1+ Dd7 23 Db5+ De6 24 Dxe8 Dxb4 25 Dxd5!! and wins).

22 ... Dxe4

23 Dd8+ Da6

This game created a sensation and, it seemed, everyone tried to find the quick win that White must have missed. A Viennese amateur, Theodor Gerbec, claimed it was “24 Dxd5!!” and his widely copied analysis began 24 Dxf4 25 b5+ Da7 26 Ac1 Db8 27 b6 Db4...

But we’re going to interrupt here because Khalifman/Soloviov found that 27...Dc6+ 28 Dh1 Dc4! should hold.

24 Dxg5

There is, however, a routine win. After 24 De3! and De6 White is virtually two tempi ahead of the game. He is winning after 24...Dd6 25 Dc6 Db5 26 Da7+ or 26 Dd4+ (26...Dxb4?? 27 Db1+ Dc4 28 Dxa4+ and mates)

24 ... De6

Adding to White’s uncertainty is that at several points he can halt the king-hunt and try to squeeze out a win with an extra pawn or two. Here, for example, 25 Dxe6fxe6 dooms the b4-pawn but 26 Ac1 Dxb4 27 Ac6+ retains serious winning chances. Is it enough to win? Spielmann didn’t think so.

25 Dc6 Dg7

Black loses after 25...Dxb4 26 Ab1!.

26 Ac1 Ac4

27 De3

This was a good time to switch to the squeeze, 27 Ac4 Dxc4 28 Dd4.

27 ... Db5

28 Da7+?!

Some advantage is preserved by 28 Dd4+ Dxd4 29 Dxd4, despite the
bishops-of-ops (29...\text{x}c1 30 \text{x}c1 \text{x}xb4 31 \text{d}e2).

28 ... \text{xb}4?

One of the worst blunders Lasker ever made. After 28...\text{a}4! chances are in balance, e.g. 29 \text{x}c4 dxc4 30 a6 \text{xb}4 31 \text{b}1+ \text{a}3! or 30 b5 \text{xa}5 31 \text{b}1 \text{d}5.

29 \text{b}6?

Counter-blunder. White has a cold win in 29 \text{b}1+! \text{a}3 30 \text{d}2!.

29 ... \text{e}3

Activating the king with 29...\text{b}2 30 \text{b}1 \text{b}3 doesn't solve Black's problems (31 \text{d}3+ \text{a}2 32 \text{bd}1 and \text{b}5).

30 \text{b}1+ \text{b}3
31 \text{e}6+ \text{a}4
32 \text{d}4!

White remembers in time that he can still win the old-fashioned way, in a \text{a}+\text{c}-vs \text{a}+\text{d} ending.

32 ... \text{xb}1
33 \text{xb}1 \text{xd}4
34 \text{d}4

Now 34...\text{xa}5?? 35 \text{a}1+ or 34...\text{xa}5 35 \text{a}1+ \text{b}4 36 \text{c}6+ lose.

34 ... \text{a}6

This seems to threaten 35...\text{xa}5. But White would be able to swap into a won pawn-endgame. That means Black is in zugzwang and a good pass should win, as Colin Crouch pointed out. For example, 35 b4 and now 35...\text{xa}5 permits an easy win with 36 \text{a}1+, 37 \text{xa}6+, 38 \text{xe}6 and 39 \text{g}4.

35 \text{a}1+? \text{b}4
36 \text{e}2 \text{d}7

In the press room, Vainshtein predicted White would win with 37 \text{c}3 \text{xa}5 38 \text{c}2+ \text{b}5 39 \text{xa}5+ \text{xa}5 40 \text{d}4 and was surprised to see:

37 \text{c}2+?

He later published his analysis and it was taken for granted White had an easy win in the minor piece endgame. But Zak showed that the bishop has remarkable resources after 40...\text{b}5, e.g. 41 \text{xd}5 \text{c}6+ 42 \text{d}6 \text{xg}2 43 f4 \text{e}4 44 \text{e}3 \text{b}4 45 \text{e}7 \text{c}3 46 \text{xf}7 \text{d}3 47 \text{g}4 \text{e}2 48 \text{f}6 \text{f}3.

There are many other tries, such as 41 \text{e}5 \text{e}5 42 \text{f}4 \text{a}4 and 41 \text{e}3 \text{c}6 42 \text{xd}5 \text{d}6. But perhaps the most pertinent question is whether White can win if Black meets 37 \text{d}3 with 37...\text{a}4!, rather than 37...\text{xa}5.

It was initially assumed that 38 \text{xc}1 \text{xa}5 39 \text{c}6+ \text{xc}6 40 \text{xc}6 \text{a}2 41 \text{f}6 is an easy win. But 41...\text{c}5 is not at all simple, e.g. 42 \text{xf}7 \text{a}3+ 43 \text{e}2 \text{a}2+ 44 \text{f}3 \text{a}3+ 45 \text{f}4 \text{a}2 46 \text{g}3 \text{h}5 and then 47 \text{h}7 \text{d}4 48 \text{xa}5+ \text{c}4 and 49...\text{d}3.

37 ... \text{e}3
38 \text{e}3 \text{b}5+

Simpler is 38...\text{d}4 39 \text{d}1+ \text{c}2.

39 \text{e}1 \text{d}4

40 \text{e}1+!

Black even delivers mate after 40 \text{d}5+?? \text{b}2 41 \text{d}1 \text{e}6+ 42 \text{d}2 \text{e}2.

40 ... \text{d}3

The final trap was 40...\text{b}2? 41 \text{e}5 \text{xa}5 42 \text{c}4+ and wins.

41 \text{d}1+ Draw
The older Lasker was able to preserve his energy by knowing when not to calculate. We saw this in Game 92 when Euwe offered a queen-sacrifice that Lasker rejected quickly. In some of his last games Lasker seemed to turn on his calculating powers only a few times. His battle with Capablanca at Moscow – the first time he had beaten him in 21 years – certainly looked like an energy-saving performance. Only at the crucial point, moves 29-30, did he have to work things out exactly.

**Lasker – Capablanca**
Moscow 1935
*French Defense, Winawer Variation (C15)*

1 e4 e6
2 d4 d5
3 Qc3 Bb4

Lasker indirectly helped bring the Winawer into fashion when Maroczy played 3...Bb4 against him at New York 1924 and obtained excellent play following 4 e5 c5 5 a3 cxd4?! 6 axb4 dxc3 7 bxc3 Qc7.

That prompted Alekhine to give 4 e5 a question mark in the tournament book. (Actually the mistake was 7 bxc3?, rather than 7 Qf3!.)

4 Qe2

But the emerging popularity of the Winawer was threatened at Bled 1931 when Alekhine crushed Nimzovich with 4 Qe2 dxe4 5 a3 Qxc3+ 6 Qxc3 f5 7 f3.

4 ... dxe4
5 a3 Qe7

However, Alekhine later conceded 4 Qe2 was “perfectly harmless” because of the bishop-retreat.

6 Qxe4 Qf6
7 Qc3

This is inexact because the knight blocks the c-pawn. But even after 7 Qg3 Qc6 8 c3 Black has 8...e5, which equalized in another Lasker game in this tournament.

7 ... Bd7

Black begins a series of sound but somewhat passive moves. Better is 7...Qc6! 8 Qe3 0-0, which threatens 9...Qxe4 10 Qxe4 f5 followed by 11...f4.

8 Qf4 Qxe4

Black is OK after 8...Qd5, or 8...0-0 9 Qd2 Qd5.

9 Qxe4 Qf6
10 Qd3 0-0

He threatens the d-pawn and can meet 11 c3 with 11...Qxe4 and 12...c5.

11 Qxf6+

By drawing the bishop off the f8-a3 diagonal White makes ...c5 harder to achieve.

11 ... Qxf6
12 c3

He hasn’t done anything special so far, yet would command a clear edge after 12...Qd7 13 Qe4 and 14 Qf3. Black’s problems are more immediate after 12...b6? 13 Qh5! (13...h6 14 Qxh6! or 13...g6 14 Qf3 Qb8 15 Qxc7?!)
12 ... \( \text{Wd5} \)

Black stops 13 \( \text{Axe4} \) and prepares ...\( c5 \), at the risk of losing his c-pawn. White could have calculated 13 0-0 \( c5 \) 14 dxc5 \( \text{Ad8!} \) 15 \( \text{Ad6} \).

The Wiener Schachzeitung carried that much further, to 15...\( b6 \) 16 \( \text{Wc2} \) \( \text{Ab7} \) 17 \( \text{Axh7+?!} \) \( \text{Ah8} \) 18 f3 \( g6 \) 19 \( \text{Axg6} \) fxg6 20 \( \text{Wxg6} \) \( \text{Wg5} \) 21 \( \text{Wxg5} \) \( \text{Axg5} \) with four pawns for the bishop. But it's impossible to evaluate this over the board – and Lasker didn't try.

13 \( \text{We2} \)

Black's last move has been praised because of the possibility of an ...\( e5 \) break in variations such as 13 \( \text{Wc2} \) \( \text{Wxg2} \) 14 \( \text{Axh7+} \) \( \text{Ah8} \) 15 \( \text{Ae4} \) \( \text{Wg4} \) 16 \( \text{Axc7} \) and now 16...\( e5! \) 17 dxe5? \( \text{Ae8} \), with good counterplay.

But White can safely keep his extra pawn with 17 \( \text{Axex5} \) \( \text{Axex5} \) 18 dxe5 and then 18...\( \text{Wf4} \) 19 \( \text{Ag2} \) \( \text{Wxe5+} \) 20 \( \text{Wc2} \). That suggests that 13 \( \text{Wc2!} \) was best, to punish Black's last move (13...\( g6 \) 14 0-0 \( c5 \) 15 \( \text{Ae4} \)). But again Lasker goes with the practical, low-calculation alternative.

13 ... \( c6 \)

What he had to calculate was limited. He had to have seen that 13...\( \text{Wxg2} \) 14 \( \text{Ae4} \) \( \text{Wh3} \) 15 \( \text{Axex7} \) is a nice positional plus for White and that 13...\( c5 \) doesn't work because of 14 \( \text{Ae4} \) \( \text{Wb3} \) 15 \( \text{Ad6} \) (not 15 dxc6 \( \text{Axex3+} \)).

14 0-0 \( \text{Ae8?} \)

It was time for Black to realize he won't be able to push the c- or e-pawn and he will have to live with a passive middlegame. The best way to do that is with 14...\( \text{Ad7} \) and ...\( \text{Afd8} \)/...\( \text{Ae8} \), as Steinitz would have done.

15 \( \text{Ad1} \) \( \text{Ad7} \)
16 \( \text{Ae1} \)

A Russian master, Abram Rabinovich, pointed out 16 \( \text{Ae5!} \). Black cannot take on \( e5 \) because of 17 \( \text{Axh7}+ \) \( \text{Ah8} \) 18 dxe5 and \( \text{Ad7} \). If he avoids \( \text{Axex6} \) with 16...\( \text{Ae7} \) White has 17 \( \text{Wc2/18 b4} \), after which the queen-trapping threat of 19 c4 forces a retreat like 18...\( \text{Ae8} \).

16 ... \( \text{Wa5} \)
17 \( \text{Wc2} \) g6

Or 17...\( \text{Wh5} \) 18 \( \text{Ae5!} \) and 17...\( h6 \) 18 \( \text{We2} \) followed by 19 b4 and 20 \( \text{We4} \).

18 \( \text{Ae5!} \) \( \text{Ag7} \)

Capablanca doesn't appreciate the jeopardy he's in until move 23 when it's already getting very bad. With 18...\( \text{Wd8!} \) he would delay White's next two moves.

19 \( \text{h4!} \) \( \text{Wd8} \)
20 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{Wg5} \)
21 \( \text{Aeg7} \) \( \text{Ag7} \)
22 \( \text{Ae5} \)

The tournament book said 22...f5 23 \( \text{Aed1} \) \( \text{Wxh5} \) 24 \( \text{Ae4} \) \( \text{Af6} \) 25 \( \text{Ab3} \) favors White. That's true but instead of blindly trying to hold onto his extra pawn Black can play 24...\( \text{Ad8} \) and stand reasonably well.

Why would White want to sack his h-pawn that way? The reason is that after 23 hxg6 hxg6 the h-file can be more useful to Black. White remains better after 24 \( \text{Ae4} \) \( \text{Ah8} \) 25 \( \text{Ad3} \) but not by miles.

22 ... \( \text{Wc7?} \)

Another move that was better than the text was 22...\( \text{Wh6} \), possibly followed by ...\( f6 \). White might be able to keep an edge with 23 \( \text{Ae2} \) followed by \( \text{Wc4} \) or \( \text{Ab3-b4-d6} \), e.g. 23...\( f6 \) 24 \( \text{Aex3} \) \( \text{gxh5} \) 25 \( \text{Wc4} \) and \( \text{Ah3} \).
Capablanca wakes up. White was intending a winning sack on g6 (1e3-g3 followed by hgx6 and xgx6). Alternatively, he could open the h-file with h3 and hgx6/whd2-h6+.

The natural defenses to the first idea (e.g. 23...ed8 24 1e3 1e8) won't work against the other (25 hxg6 hxg6 26 h3 f6 27 whd2).  

24 wc1!  

Stopping the king's escape (24...wh8 25 whh6+).  

24 ... ed8  
25 1e3! 1c8  

Black's idea is ...d5 and/or ...wc8-e8-d7-c7.  

26 h3 wc8  

Vainshtein said the right order of moves was 26...wh8 and 27...wc8. But after 27 h6+ Black is playing without a rook and White should be able to break through elsewhere, such as with wh4, h3, c3-c4 and d4-d5.  

Rokhlin's idea, 26...f5, is desperate. But there is no mate, and White may have to rely on the pressure of wh4/hhe3.  

27 wh6+ gh7  
Black's king is no safer after 27...ge8 28 whxh7.  

28 hxg6 hxg6  

29 xgx6!  

There's more to this than 29...fxg6 30 wh8+ and 31 h3+. Black can reply 29...wf6 and if White has to continue 30 ec2 whxh6 31 whxh6 we7 he must try to win with an extra pawn. Earlier in the tournament Lasker had failed to win a similar endgame (and with the much better bishop, too) against Bohatyrchuk.  

Lasker had good reason to calculate the leading alternative, 29 h3, with its ideas of 30 xgx6 and 30 xg5/xxg6. He may be winning quickly after 29...f5 30 ec4 or 29...wc8 30 xe4 and wh4.  

29 ... wf6  
30 xg5!  

But when Lasker knew he had to calculate he usually found the right idea. Black has no answer to 31 h3 followed by a capture on f7.  

30 ... wc7  

White also had to see what others didn't. The Soviet chess yearbook claimed a simple win for White after 30...xd5 31 hf3 wg5 32 xf7+ and mates, or 31...f5 32 xg5 exf5 33 wh8+ we7 34 xc8.  

But this falls into the trap Capablanca had set. On 30...xd5 31 hf3?? Black turns the game around with 31...wf7! (32 xf3 xg5+ 33 xg5 xg6)  

The right answer to 30...xd5 is 31 xdx5 cxd5 32 wh8+ we7 33 xc8
\textnormal{\textit{Why Lasker Matters}}

\textasciitilde{xg6} 34 \textasciitilde{c7+} or 34...\textasciitilde{xg6} 34 \textasciitilde{h8}.

31 \textbf{\textit{f3}} \textasciitilde{xf3}

32 \textbf{\textit{gxf3}} \textbf{\textit{ddg8!}}

This resource allows Black to reach an ending.

33 \textbf{\textit{xf1}} \textbf{\textit{xxg6}}

34 \textbf{\textit{xxg6}} \textbf{\textit{xxg6}}

35 \textbf{\textit{wh2?}}

White would have saved 30 moves of work with 35 \textbf{\textit{wf4}} and \textbf{\textit{c7+}}. After the text White played until he could seal a move — 35...\textbf{\textit{dd7}} 36 \textbf{\textit{wf4}} f6 37 c4 a6 38 \textbf{\textit{wh4}} \textbf{\textit{cg5}} 39 \textbf{\textit{wh7+}} \textbf{\textit{dd8}} 40 \textbf{\textit{wh8+}} \textbf{\textit{cc7}} 41 \textbf{\textit{wxf6}}.

The game was adjourned for an hour and a half dinner break. In the Pushkin Museum of Art, where the games were played, a special room was set aside for Lasker to relax. But the break wasn’t long enough for him to find the win and he made no effort before adjourning again: 41...\textbf{\textit{ff5}} 42 \textbf{\textit{gg7+}} \textbf{\textit{dd7}} 43 \textbf{\textit{ee2}} \textbf{\textit{ee8}} 44 \textbf{\textit{wh8+}} \textbf{\textit{cc7}} 45 \textbf{\textit{wh2+}} \textbf{\textit{cc8}} 46 \textbf{\textit{wd6}} \textbf{\textit{eh5}} 47 \textbf{\textit{ee3}} \textbf{\textit{ff5}} 48 \textbf{\textit{ee4}} \textbf{\textit{eh5}} 49 \textbf{\textit{ff8+}} \textbf{\textit{cc7}} 50 \textbf{\textit{ff4+}} \textbf{\textit{ee8}} 51 \textbf{\textit{wd6}} \textbf{\textit{ff5}} 52 \textbf{\textit{ee3}} \textbf{\textit{eh5}} 53 \textbf{\textit{dd3}} \textbf{\textit{ff5}} 54 \textbf{\textit{ee2}} \textbf{\textit{eh5}} 55 \textbf{\textit{dd3}} \textbf{\textit{ff5}} 56 \textbf{\textit{ee3}} \textbf{\textit{hh5}} 57 \textbf{\textit{ff8+}} \textbf{\textit{cc7}} 58 \textbf{\textit{ff4+}} \textbf{\textit{ee8}} 59 \textbf{\textit{wd6}} \textbf{\textit{ff5}} 60 \textbf{\textit{wg3}} \textbf{\textit{eh5}} 61 \textbf{\textit{wg4}} \textbf{\textit{ff5}} 62 \textbf{\textit{wg6}} \textbf{\textit{cc7}} 63 \textbf{\textit{wg3+}} \textbf{\textit{ee8}} 64 \textbf{\textit{wg6}} \textbf{\textit{cc7}}

Capablanca resigned after satisfying himself that White can win with \textbf{\textit{ee2}}-d3-c3-b4-a5 followed, after a check on the h2-b8 diagonal, by \textbf{\textit{bb6}}.

\textbf{99}

Today a top grandmaster is accompanied to tournaments by his analytical team. That means a second (or seconds) and a computer (or computers). Lasker had none of this. He relied on other resources, including common sense and observation. That is, he applied simple logic to what he had seen other players do, often in the same tournament, as in Games 76 and 83. In the following game Lasker had even less information to rely on. His opponent, Nikolai Riumin, was considered a potential world-class player and the leading Soviet rival to Botvinnik. But he rarely played the Sicilian Defense and Lasker could not have found an example of him playing the Dragon before. He had to improvise.

\textbf{Lasker – Riumin}

\textit{Moscow 1936}

\textit{Sicilian Defense, Dragon Variation (B74)}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
1 & \textbf{\textit{e4}} \textbf{\textit{c5}} \\
2 & \textbf{\textit{d3f3}} \textbf{\textit{d6}} \\
3 & d4 \textbf{\textit{cxdd4}} \\
4 & \textbf{\textit{xdxd4}} \textbf{\textit{f6}} \\
5 & \textbf{\textit{ee3}} \textit{d6} \\
6 & \textbf{\textit{ee2}} g6 \\
7 & \textbf{\textit{ee3}} \textbf{\textit{gg7}} \\
8 & 0-0 0-0 \\
9 & \textbf{\textit{bb3}} \\
\end{tabular}

The Dragon was entering a new wave of popularity in the 1930s thanks to Botvinnik, Tartakower – and Marcel Duchamp, among others.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
7 & \textbf{\textit{ee3}} \textbf{\textit{gg7}} \\
8 & 0-0 0-0 \\
9 & \textbf{\textit{bb3}} \\
\end{tabular}

At the Moscow tournament a year before Romanovsky omitted \textbf{\textit{ee3}}. That enabled him to play 9 f2-f4 instead and favorably meet 9...\textbf{\textit{ee6}}? with 10 f5! \textbf{\textit{xb3?}} 11 axb3. Fears for the future of the Dragon were allayed when it was pointed out that the absence of \textbf{\textit{ee3}} meant Black has 9...b5! and then 10 \textbf{\textit{xxb5}} \textbf{\textit{xe4}} and ...\textbf{\textit{wb6+}}.

\begin{tabular}{ll}
9 & \textbf{\textit{ee6}} \\
10 & f4 \\
\end{tabular}

White is ready for 11 f5. Black can either stop it with 10...\textbf{\textit{wc8}}, ignore it with 10...\textbf{\textit{xc8}} or play Maroczy’s
10...\(\text{axa5}\), which hangs on a slender tactical thread (11 f5 \(\text{xc4}\)).

10  
11 f5

This is Lasker’s first major decision and as logical and obvious as it is, there is no evidence it was played before.

11  
\(\text{xc4!}\)

If Black has to retreat, 11...\(\text{d7}\)?, he gets an awful position following 12 e5! because of 12...\(\text{dxe5}\) 13 fxe6 hxe6 14 \(\text{xa5}\) \(\text{xa5}\) 15 \(\text{xf6}\) and \(\text{xd7}\).

But after 11...\(\text{c4}\) he has no fear of 12 e5 in view of 12...\(\text{xe2}\) 13 \(\text{xe2}\) \(\text{dxe5}\) 14 \(\text{ad1}\) \(\text{w_c7}\).

12 \(\text{xa5}\)

This was White’s second decision. The only major alternative is 12 \(\text{d3}\) but it doesn’t seem consistent. The international cult we call Dragon players has not come to a conclusion about 12...\(\text{xd3}\) 13 \(\text{cx3}\) \(\text{xb3}\) 14 \(\text{axb3}\) \(\text{d5}\).

12  
\(\text{xe2}\)

Forced. Now 13 \(\text{xe2}\) \(\text{xa5}\) 14 \(\text{d4}\) leads to fairly balanced middlegames (14...\(\text{d7}\) 15 \(\text{xb7}\) \(\text{g7}\) 16 \(\text{d5}\) \(\text{f6}\)).

13 \(\text{xb7}?!\)

And this is the third decision, forcing an extremely double-edged ending. Lasker may only have looked as far as move 15 before playing it.

13  
\(\text{xd1}\)

Otherwise Black is a pawn down with zero compensation.

14 \(\text{xd8}\) \(\text{xc2}\)

15 \(\text{c6}\)

Now 15...\(\text{e4}\) loses to 16 \(\text{xe4}\) \(\text{xe4}\) 17 \(\text{xe7}\) and 18 \(\text{f6}\).

15  
\(\text{xe8}\)

The forcing moves are over and its stock-taking time. Black’s position should be sound because of his two bishops. He can meet a capture on \(\text{a7}\) favorably with 16...\(\text{xe4}\) or 16...\(\text{g4}\).

Lasker sank into thought for 50 minutes (The time limit was the relatively new one of 40 moves in two and a half hours.)

Besides the captures on \(\text{a7}\) White must have considered 16 e5, so that 16...\(\text{dxe5}\) 17 \(\text{xa7}\) gives him a slight pull. However, a good reply to 16 e5 is 16...\(\text{g4}\)! and then 17 \(\text{g5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) (18 \(\text{xe7}\) \(\text{f8}\) or 18 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 19 \(\text{d5}\) \(\text{f6}\) with advantage to Black).

Note that White could insert 18 \(\text{fxg6}\). But then Black would see that 18...\(\text{hxg6}\) is best because after 19 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5}\) 20 \(\text{d5}\) he can play 20...\(\text{f6}\) with advantage.

Lasker may also have considered 16 \(\text{g5}\), which sets up \(\text{xe7}\)+/\(\text{xf6}\) and allows him to meet 16...\(\text{xe4}\) with a \(\text{xe7}\)+. But in the end he played:

16 \(\text{fxg6}?!\)

In principle White doesn’t want to divide his pawns into three islands. But there are tactical benefits as well as the practical one of forcing Black to make a decision that is more difficult than it seems. If he retakes with his f-pawn, he won’t be able to play ...\(\text{f8}\) in some lines. If Black retakes the other way he surrenders resources such as ...\(\text{h6}\).

16  
\(\text{fxg6}\)

This turns out to be a minor mistake.
After 16...hxg6 17 h3 x7 dxe4! Black stands better. White gets a small edge from 17 e5 dxe5 18 x7. But 17...d4! is again good for Black, e.g. 18 x7 x5 or 18...dxe5 19 dxe7+ f8!

Also, Black could meet 17 g5 with 17...h7! because 18 x7 fails to 18...xc3 19 bxc3 xxe4 and 18 dxe7+ loses to 18...h8 19 h4 g5.

The key variation is 17 g5 h7 18 h4 g5 19 f2. In the tournament book Riumin gave 19...xc3 20 bxc3 xxe4 as reasonable for Black. Even better is 20...a5, which favors him.

However, Lasker’s idea might be saved by 17 d4. Znosko-Borovsky later won a game after 17...dxe4 18 x7 x7 19 d5 c5 20 dxe7 c5 21 b4. No better is 19...e5 20 f3 1 and 21 d7, and White is doing very well following 19...d3 20 f1.

20 d5 Black cannot play ...f6 as he could in the note to 15...f8.

18 ... dxe5

When he was thinking about his last two moves Black may have counted on 18...h6 and then 19 h7 dxe5 with advantage (20 dxe5 x7).

But when White played 18 g5 on the board, Black must have noticed that 18...h6 allows 19 dxe7+ h7 20 f6. Then 20...dxe5 21 x7 x7 22 d5 reaches the kind of position White had in mind. It looks roughly even but the White knights are taking charge.

However, Black can do better with 21...dxe7 22 a8 b7 After the text he slips into one of the knight-dominating endgames.

19 dxe7+ h8
20 d5 b8
21 b3

The queens have been off for eight moves but now is the position clarified. “Structurally” White has the better game. In English that means he has fewer weaknesses and some chance of grabbing the d-pawn or a-pawn.

21 ... d3

This is one of three turning points in the game and, like the recapture at move 16, Black’s decision isn’t a major error. But 21...d4! was superior. For example, on 22 h3? d4+ 23 h1 f2+ 24 h2 e4! the pin costs White material.

White does better with 22 f4! but after 22...f5 23 h3 d3 there is nothing much (24 dxe3 x3 25 x5 x3).

What repeatedly hurts Black in this game is that whenever there is a fork in the road, with one path leading to sufficient counterplay, it turns out that he hasn’t seen as far as his opponent.
22  \text{Kfd1}  \text{Kbc8}
23  \text{Kae1}  \text{Kfs5}

Black seems to be doing well because the knight can easily get into trouble, e.g. 24  \text{Kf6}  \text{Kae6!}  25  \text{Kcd5}  \text{Kf8!} or 25  \text{Kfe4}  h6  26  \text{Kf4}  \text{Kf7!} and Black wins.
24  \text{Kf6!}  \text{Kd3}
25  \text{Kxg7+}  \text{Kxg7}
26  \text{Kc2}

The threat of 27 g4 prompts one more trade.

26  \ldots  \text{Kb4}
27  \text{Kced2}  \text{Kxd5}
28  \text{Kxd5}

This looks promising because Black’s other rook gets to the seventh rank and his bishop can take control of the c6-g2 diagonal.

30  \text{Kxe2}  \text{Kxe2}
31  \text{Kc1}

What Black didn’t appreciate is how often his rook and bishop run into tactical problems. For example 31...\text{Kc8} drops a pawn after 32  \text{Kc3!}  \text{Kc5}  33  \text{Kd1}.

31  \ldots  \text{Kc2}
32  \text{Kf4}  \text{Kb5}

The bishop is better placed here than on a6 because 32...\text{Kxa6}  33  \text{Kc7+}  \text{Kh6}
34  \text{Kxa7}  \text{Kxa2}  35  \text{Kh4! puts his pieces in a box, e.g. 35...g5}  36  \text{Kc6}, threatening \text{Kc7 as well as Kxg5.}

33  \text{Kc7+}  \text{Kh6}
34  \text{Kxa7}  g5
35  \text{Kd5}

Again White has seen a bit further: 35...\text{Kc6} looks very good until you realize that 36  \text{Kc7! is another winning pin (and he also has 36  \text{Kd3}  \text{Kc2? 37  Kf5+).}}

35  \ldots  \text{Kc1+}

A draw may still be the most likely result but compared with the position after 21 b3, Black’s task has become harder. His d-pawn will be a constant target and he can’t rid himself of the minor pieces (28...\text{Kc2}  29  \text{Kc1}  \text{Kc4}  
30  \text{Kc7}  \text{Ked8}  31  \text{Kc4 keeps an edge).}

28  \ldots  \text{Kg4}
29  \text{Kfl}

A passive defense, such as 29...\text{Kc6}, is best. White makes progress with 
30 h3  \text{Kf5}  31  g4  \text{Kc4}  32  \text{Kf4}  \text{Kf6}
33 g5  \text{Kf5}  34  h4 but winning will be hard even if he wins the d-pawn.

29  \ldots  \text{Kc2?}

The rook-checks are finite. Black must have been tempted by 35...\text{Kd2}  36  \text{Kc3}  \text{Kc6.} Then instead of getting fancy with 37 g4?  \text{Kc4} White should just push his passed pawns with 37 a4 because 37...\text{Kd3 allows another trick, 38  \text{Kf5+}  \text{Kd5} (38...\text{Kg6? 39  \text{Kd7+}}) 39  \text{Kxh7+}  \text{Kg6}  40  \text{Kc7! and wins.}}

36  \text{Kf2}  \text{Kf1+}
37  \text{Kg3!}

Not 37  \text{Kc3}  \text{Kc1+}  38  \text{Kd4?  Kd1+ 39  \text{Kc4 Kc6.}}

37  \ldots  \text{Kd1}
38  \text{Kc3}  \text{Kc3}
39  \text{Kf2}  \text{Kd2+}
40  \text{Kg1}
Black’s forcing moves are about to end (40...\text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}3}} 41 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}4}}+). He still seems to have enough piece activity to stop White from pushing his pawns.

40 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}2}}

41 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}5}+} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{g}6}}

42 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}4}!}

It’s remarkable how the bishop can be limited to one square – 42...\text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}1}}+ 43 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}2}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}1}+} 44 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}8}}. White would finally be ready to push, 45 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{a}8}} and 46 a4.

42 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}5}}

43 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{a}5}!}

Clearer than 43 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}x}5} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}b}5} 44 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{a}6}}. Black is sentenced to a lost minor-piece ending: 43...\text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}3}} 44 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}x}5} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}xe}5} 45 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}5}} 46 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}2}} h6 47 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}1}} 48 g3 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}6}} 49 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}2}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{g}2}} 50 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}4}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}5}} 51 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}2}} h5 52 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}3}} h4 53 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}1}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}g}3} 54 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{h}x}g}3 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}4}} 55 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}5}} 56 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{b}4}+} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}d}6} 57 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}2}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}8}} 58 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}6}} 59 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}c}2} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{a}6}+} 60 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}5}} 61 a4 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{g}4}} 62 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}2}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}5}} 63 b4 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}4}} 64 h5 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{c}8}} 65 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{b}4}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}4} 66 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}6+}+} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{c}3}} 67 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}e}5!} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{b}4}} 68 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{c}6+}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}5}} 69 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{g}4}} 70 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}5}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}1}} 71 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}d}3+!} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{b}6}} 72 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{b}2}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{b}3}} 73 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}4 Resigns}}

100

Lasker’s last tournament was Nottingham 1936 – to his great regret. He left Russia in 1937 for New York where, he told Alexander Koblenz, he would continue working “on the autobiography I began in Moscow.” He hoped to return to play in a major Soviet tournament in February 1938, along the lines of the Moscow events of 1935-36. But the tournament was never held, and he deeply resented not being considered for AVRO 1938. He retained his enthusiasm for the game until the end. When Spielmann was asked in 1937 who were “the most talented young players” in the world, he replied, “Botvinnik, Reshevsky – and Lasker.”

Thomas – Lasker
Nottingham 1936
Queen’s Gambit Declined,
Orthodox Defense (D66)

1 d4 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}6}}

2 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}3}} e6

3 c4 d5

4 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{c}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}7}}

5 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{g}5}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{bd}7}}

6 e3 0-0

7 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{c}1}} e6

8 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}3}} h6

9 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}4}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{h}5}!}

A month before Nottingham, at a tournament in Zaandvoort, Maroczy inserted 9...\text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}xc}4?} 10 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}c}4} and then 10...\text{\textsf{\textgreek{h}5}} against Fine. He found himself in a bad endgame after 11 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}5}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}xe}5} 12 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}xe}5} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}d}1+} 13 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}d}1}.

10 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}5}}

The Rubinstein Bind, 10 0-0 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}f}4} 11 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{e}f}4}, is a good alternative (11...\text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}xc}4} 12 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}c}4} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{b}6}} 13 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{b}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}5}} 14 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{g}3}}).

10 ... \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}e}5}

More hopeful and double-edged than 10...\text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}6}} 11 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{g}3}} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}g}3/12...\text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}5}}.

11 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}xe}5}

White’s compensation for the loss of the two bishops is slim after 11...\text{\textsf{\textgreek{x}e}5} \text{\textsf{\textgreek{f}6}} 12 0-0 \text{\textsf{\textgreek{d}7}} but the position is approximately equal

315
11 ... g6!

The knight had to get back into play some way, and Black certainly didn’t like the looks of 11...f5 12 exf6 Qxf6 13 Qe5, or transposing into the Fine game after 11...dxc4

12 0-0

White’s kingside is as weak as Black’s after 12 g4 Qg7 13 h4 h5.

13 ... Qd7

White is preparing e3-e4 and Wh6.

13 ... dxc4

Black couldn’t play 13...Wc7? because of the file-pin after 14 cxd5. If he brings the queen out to b6 or a5, his bishop will be unprotected after 14 e4 dxc4 15 Qxc4 and he won’t have time for 15...Qh7

Instead, Black decides to clarify the center so that he can continue with ...Wc7, ...Qad8 and ...Qc8. This comes at the cost of allowing a knight to reach e4.

14 Qxc4 Qc7

15 Qe4 Qad8

Black’s biggest problem is that exiled knight. After 16 Qd6 Qc8 17 Qfd1 he could return it to good graces with 17...Qf6. But White has the dangerous 18 Wd4! so that 18...Qe8 19 Qxe8 and 20 Wxa7 costs a pawn and 18...a6 19 exf6 Qxd6 20 Wh4 endangers his king.

16 Qc3

White can operate with the idea of Qf6+, with or without g2-g4.

16 ... Qc8

Alekhine liked 17 Qfd1, presumably with an endgame edge after 17...Qxd1+ 18 Qxd1 Qd8 19 Qxd8+ Wh8 20 Qd4.

17 g4

But best was 17 Qd4! with the idea of Qe2 or f4. For example, 17...a6, intending ...c5...b5, concedes a slight inferiority after 18 Qe2 f5 19 Qh5 or 18...Qg7 19 f4. And 17...Qxe5 allows 18 Qxc6!.

17 ... f5!!

Black’s kingside turns out to be surprisingly strong after 18 exf6 Qxf6 19 Qxf6+ Qxf6 20 Qc2 Qg7.

18 Qd6

Black is also doing well after 18 gxh5 Qxh5 so the critical line is Alekhine’s suggestion of 18 Qd4. It threatens Qxe6 and prepares a more favorable version of exf5. Since White wouldn’t mind 18...Qg7 19 Qf6+, the only attempt to punish the knight-move is 18...fxe4!.

Then 19 Qxe6 Qxe6 20 Qxe6+ Qg7 21 gxh5 follows, after which 21...Qd3! is a crucial position to evaluate. Black will regain his pawn and have the more active heavy pieces in the bishops-of-ops middlegame (22 Qc4 Qxe5). Then 23 f4! ext3?! 24 Qxd3 Qxe6 25 Qxg6+ is unclear but 23...Wh5 favors Black solidly.

18 ... fxg4

19 Qd4

At first glance it seems White has improved on 18 Qd4. His threat of Qxc8 assures he will regain the pawn. For example 19...Qg7? 20 Qxc8 Qxc8
21 \( \text{wb3} \) gives him, if anything, a tiny edge.

19 \( \text{\textit{\ldots}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd6!}} \)

But White has missed a trick: 20 \( \text{\textit{xe6+}} \) can be met by 20...\( \text{\textit{xe6}} \) 21 \( \text{\textit{exe6}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe5!}} \) with a big edge for Black.

\begin{align*}
20 & \text{\textit{\textit{xe6}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{xe6}} \)} \\
21 & \text{\textit{\textit{xe6+}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{h7}} \)} \\
22 & \text{\textit{exd6}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{xd6}} \)} \\
23 & \text{\textit{\textit{xg4}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{f6}} \)}
\end{align*}

Material is still even but White would be losing at least a pawn after 24 \( \text{\textit{h3 \textit{xe4!}}} \) followed by \( \text{\textit{\textit{d2-f3+}}} \) For example, 25 \( \text{\textit{wa3 \textit{d2}}} \) 26 \( \text{\textit{fd1 \textit{f3+}}} \) 27 \( \text{\textit{xf1 \textit{fd8}}} \) or 27...\( \text{\textit{xld1+}} \) 28 \( \text{\textit{xd1 \textit{d8!}}} \).

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

24 \( \text{\textit{\textit{f3}}} \)

As ugly as it is, 24 \( \text{\textit{f3!}} \) is best since after 24...\( \text{\textit{we7 \textit{w7}}} \) 25 \( \text{\textit{wa3?!}} \) (not 25 \( \text{\textit{ae1 \textit{exg4}}} \) 26 \( \text{\textit{fxg4 \textit{xf1+}}} \) and ...\( \text{\textit{we6}} \) there is nothing certain about Black’s initiative except that it continues.

\begin{align*}
24 & \text{\textit{\textit{\ldots}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{d5!}} \)} \\
25 & \text{\textit{\textit{xd5}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{xd5}} \)}
\end{align*}

The heavy piece attack (26...\( \text{\textit{xf3!}} \)) is strong...

26 \( \text{\textit{f4}} \) \( \text{\textit{wd7}} \)

...and getting stronger (27 \( \text{\textit{e4 \textit{d3}}} \) or 27 \( \text{\textit{h1 \textit{d3} \textit{w5 \textit{d2!}}} \)).

27 \( \text{\textit{we1 \textit{e8!}}} \)

Black’s pressure against the e-pawn must bear fruit, e.g. 28 \( \text{\textit{c2 \textit{d3}}} \) 29 \( \text{\textit{c2 \textit{he4}}} \) threatens to win a pawn with 30...\( \text{\textit{we4+ \textit{h5}}} \) 31 \( \text{\textit{h1 \textit{wh3}}} \).

28 \( \text{\textit{e4}} \)

A bit better is 28 \( \text{\textit{c3 \textit{d2}}} \) 29 \( \text{\textit{b3 \textit{b6}}} \) 30 \( \text{\textit{we3}} \). But after 30...\( \text{\textit{he4}} \) the pressure is suffocating. Similarly 28 \( \text{\textit{we3 \textit{d3}}} \) 29 \( \text{\textit{fe1 \textit{d2}}} \) 30 \( \text{\textit{b1 \textit{he4}}} \).

\begin{align*}
28 & \text{\textit{\textit{\ldots}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{g4+}} \)} \\
29 & \text{\textit{\textit{h1}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{d4}} \)} \\
30 & \text{\textit{e5}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{xf4}} \)} \\
31 & \text{\textit{we3}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{ef8}} \)} \\
32 & \text{\textit{xf4}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{xf4}} \)}
\end{align*}

White is lost because of his weak e-pawn and king (33 \( \text{\textit{xa7?? \textit{f3+}}} \) mates).

33 \( \text{\textit{e1 \textit{f5!}}} \)

34 \( \text{\textit{g2??}} \)

White wanted to stop 34...\( \text{\textit{xf3}} \) 35 \( \text{\textit{we2 \textit{f2}}} \) but the path of greatest resistance was 34 \( \text{\textit{xa7}} \). That would have forced Black to play the long queen-ending (34...\( \text{\textit{f1+}} \)).

34 \( \text{\textit{\textit{\ldots}}} \) \( \text{\textit{g4+??}} \)

A younger Lasker would never have missed 34...\( \text{\textit{we5+ \textit{h1 \textit{f1+}}} \}).

\begin{align*}
35 & \text{\textit{\textit{h1}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{we6}} \)} \\
36 & \text{\textit{d1}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{g5}} \)} \\
37 & \text{\textit{\textit{xa7}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{f7!}} \)} \\
38 & \text{\textit{\textit{c3}}} \text{ \( \text{\textit{c3}} \)}
\end{align*}
38 ... Hxe5!

This queen-ending only looks hard. Black’s king and kingside pawns advance slowly but powerfully, as Reshevsky had shown in a very similar endgame seven rounds earlier. The rest was: 39 Wxe5 Wf3+ 40 Qg1 Wxd1+ 41 Qf2 Wd7 42 Qe1 g5 43 Wf6 Wd5 44 Qe2 Wxa2 45 Wc7+ Qg6 46 Wxb7 We6+ 47 Qd3 Qf5! 48 b4 Wd5+ 49 Qc3 h5 50 Wb6 Qe4! 51 Wh7 h4 52 Wh7+ Qf3 53 Wh5+ Qg2 54 Wf2+ Qh3 55 Wf2 Qg2! White resigns.

We’ve come to the end of the Lasker story. Is there a solution to the mystery? The best answer is that he employed many of the techniques that have become common today. He violated general principles when he felt confident in doing so. He played “practical” moves. He focused on the specifics, such as targets, rather than the theoretical. He didn’t calculate what didn’t have to be calculated. He realized the clock was the 33rd piece. He complicated before his position got bad. He took calculated risks. He sacrificed for purely positional compensation. He used tactics to advance positional goals.

It used to be said that Lasker, unlike his contemporaries, formed no school of thought. But we’re all his students.
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