Winning
Pawn Structures

ALEXANDER BABURIN
With best wishes
from the author

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Symbols

+    Check
++   Double Check
#    Mate
!    Good move
!!   Excellent move
±    Slight advantage to White
≈    Slight advantage to Black
±    Clear advantage to White
≈    Clear advantage to Black
+-   Winning advantage to White
-+   Winning advantage to Black
∞    Unclear position
?    Bad move
??   Blunder
!?   Interesting move
?!   Dubious move
1-0  White wins
0-1  Black wins
½-½ Draw
Ch   Championship
OL   Olympiad
Z    Zonal
IZ   Interzonal
Ct   Candidates event
Wch  World championship
Cht  Team championship
Echt European team championship
Wcht World team championship
Mem. Memorial tournament
s/f  Semifinal
jr   Junior event
wom  Women’s event
rpd  Rapid game
corr. Correspondence game
sim  Simultaneous display game
(n)  nth match game
(D)  Diagram follows
Preface

Introducing this book, which is my first major work in chess literature, I would like to say a few words about its aims. Although I hope that this book will be of interest to my fellow professional players, I believe that my main audience will be that large group of club players who are eager to learn more about positional play, but have problems approaching the subject.

Studying positional play is not an easy matter and there are a few different ways to tackle this problem. This work deals with one of them — studying chess by examining various typical pawn formations. This is the approach taken by professional chess players while working on particular openings, middlegame positions, or even endgames — they study particular patterns and typical techniques. Indeed, it’s more efficient to study standard or typical situations as they are more likely to arise in tournament practice. And when we look for the most standard, most common positions, we should look for the most typical pawn structures. Why is this so? The answer lies in the nature of pawns. When we play chess, we deal with two different kinds of chessmen — the pieces, which are rather flexible and move around quite a lot and pawns, which are much more static and usually form the skeleton of a position. Probably Philidor had this particular quality of pawns in mind, when he called them ‘the soul of chess’. So, our task is to define standard pawn skeletons and learn where the pieces belong within them, what plans are available for both sides, etc. This is the main aim of this work.

When a player knows well the characteristic features of various typical pawn formations, he is better prepared for the game. Then it will be easier to choose an appropriate plan and to implement it. But before that we should learn quite a lot about typical pawn formations themselves, so we can develop so-called ‘pattern recognition’ — when looking at a particular position you compare it with the ones you have seen before and that helps you to come up with a suitable plan. Hopefully this book will help you to develop such pattern recognition.

Of course, there many different typical pawn structures in chess and if I should try to cover all of them in this book, it would probably run to several hundreds of pages. Rather
than merely making only an introduction to the topic, I therefore chose a few popular pawn skeletons and dealt with them intensively. Perhaps, one day I shall continue this work...

As you will see, this book deals with all three phases of the game — opening, middlegame and endgame. The approach of looking at the making of a plan through the lenses of typical pawn structures is probably most applicable and productive in the delicate area of transition from the opening to the middlegame. Therefore I covered opening problems when it was relevant to the theme. Otherwise I did not pay much attention to the opening phase, as this is not our subject matter.

The problems of the middlegame form a major part of this work, but at the same time I examined many endings, as long as they were important to the subject. There is quite a lot of analysis contained here, as this is something I really enjoy in chess. While dealing with any particular theme, I usually tried to avoid categorical conclusions and 'ultimate' verdicts.

In chess, one side wins not because they just happen to get a 'winning' pawn formation by some lucky chance. No, it's done through better planning, superior strategy and more precise play. For example, there are many positions where some great players prefer to play on one side, while some other top players are happy to take the opposite side. This is largely a matter of taste, so I tried not to seek for 'ultimate truth', which may not exist, but to describe typical situations and to give some guide lines on how to deal with them.

Finally I would like mention the selection of the games analysed. There are many very instructive classical games and it is very tempting to stick to them when covering certain themes. Although many classical examples are indeed examined, wherever possible I tried to use lesser-known games, preferably from recent practice. Alas, some of my own games sneaked in here too... Although in terms of quality they may not match the other examples, they nevertheless have that important advantage that I know exactly what I considered while making certain decisions.

That is probably enough for the introduction — let the book speak for itself. It took me a long time to finish it, but I enjoyed working on it and this analytical work has certainly paid off, as my tournament results went up. I hope that this book will help you to improve your chess too. I will welcome and highly appreciate your comments.

Alexander Baburin, Grandmaster.
General Considerations

In the diagram we see a typical example of the isolated d-pawn, which can occur in many openings, e.g. the Queen’s Gambit Accepted, Queen’s Gambit Declined, Nimzo-Indian Defence, Sicilian Defence, Caro-Kann Defence. This pawn structure is probably the most common type of imbalanced (non-symmetrical) pawn formation. Usually such situations lead to interesting strategic play.

The question as to whether the isolated d-pawn is a weakness or a strength, has no answer as such — it all depends on some other features of the position.

As a coach, I find that usually club players are afraid to get an isolated d-pawn, as they believe that it will ultimately turn out to be a weakness. Yet, when they have the opportunity to play against such a pawn, they are unsure how to exploit this ‘advantage’ either.

Here we will examine those ‘other features of the position’ which should help us to assess each particular case correctly and find a sound plan. It is worth mentioning that the position above isn’t the only case of the isolated d-pawn: this pawn could be on d5, while the black pawn would be on e7; Black might have the c6-pawn instead of the e6-pawn, etc. We will examine all these cases, starting with this pawn set-up as the most typical one. Obviously White and Black have different advantages and disadvantages here and should base their plans on them accordingly. Let us list the
main features of the position, which are related to the pawn structure:

**White:**

a) has the open c-file and semi-open e-file, where his rooks can be developed and employed; often the 3rd rank can be used as a track to bring them to the kingside (this is referred to as a 'rook-lift');

b) has an easy development, due to the existence of open diagonals for his bishops and some space advantage;

c) the isolated pawn can support White's pieces (particularly knights) placed on e5 and c5;

d) the d4-pawn may become vulnerable, being attacked by the opponent's pieces, as it lacks pawn protection;

e) the square in front of the isolated (the d5-square in this case) may become a strong post for the opponent's pieces.

**Black:**

a) has a good square on d5 for his pieces, in particular for a knight;

b) may hope to use the weakness of the isolated pawn, tying the white pieces down to its defence, or just winning it; usually any simplification of the position will be in Black's favour;

c) has less space for manoeuvring; usually he has problems with the development of the queen's bishop and quick deployment of his rooks.

From now on we assume for reasons of simplicity that it is White who has the isolated d-pawn, although some positions with Black possessing such a pawn will be examined as well.

So, here are the main plans employed by White in positions with the isolated d-pawn:

1) Pawn break in the centre: with d4-d5.

2) Attack on the king involving sacrifices on e6 or f7; the latter often involves the pawn advance f2-f4-f5 in order to remove the e6-pawn.

3) Attack on the kingside: White often brings one of his rooks to that flank, using a rook lift via the 3rd rank; if necessary the h-pawn advances towards the black king.

4) Play on the queenside, using the c-file and e5- and c5- squares for knights.

Let us start with plan Number 1 — the pawn advance in the centre by d4-d5.
I believe that this plan should be analysed before all others, because usually it is White’s major strategic threat, which ties down Black’s pieces to the d5-square and forces him to consider the possible d4-d5 advance very seriously. As we will see from our examples, he neglects this central thrust at his peril. Thus, often Black moves his knight from f6 to d5 in order to stop d4-d5, which in its turn leads to a weakening of Black’s kingside in some way and may allow White to attack on that wing.

Once d4-d5 is played, the isolated pawn is usually exchanged and we get a new pawn formation: a pawn-free centre. In such a case the mobility and activity of the pieces becomes a major factor. In other words, the side which has its pieces mobilised and actively placed in the centre when the centre is cleared, is going to benefit most from the d4-d5 break.

So we conclude that the chief requirement of this plan is a lead in development. Because White can bring out his pieces more easily, he often has such better development in the opening or just after the opening phase, so not surprisingly this is often the time when the d4-d5 break is most profitable for White. Now let us see all this in action.

De la Villa - Sion
Leon 1995

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 wxd5 4 d4 
\[ \text{\textit{De la Villa - Sion}} \]
\[ \text{\textit{Leon 1995}} \]

The position in the diagram is clearly in White’s favour: all his pieces are well placed and ready for action. White needs to open up the centre with a d4-d5 break and his last
move prepares this thrust. Pay attention to the fact that both white rooks and the a2-bishop are just awaiting this move: the X-rays of the d1-rook will affect the black queen, while the a2-bishop will be pointing to the f7-pawn after the removal of the e6-pawn. Black has to be very careful in defence.

16 ... He8?

After this unnecessary retreat Black gets into serious trouble. Probably Black, when he played this move, thought that the presence of his rook on the same file as White's queen would discourage White from opening up the centre, but this is far from true. Instead of the text, Black should have played 16...f8, although even then White would keep a serious initiative by playing 17 d5! exd5 18 Qxd5 Qxd5 19 Qxd5.

17 d5! exd5
18 Qxd5 Qxd5
19 Qxd5 (D)

A critical position. The centre has been cleared and now Black has to decide where to move his queen from the d-file. In the game he failed to come up with the toughest defence.

19 ... Qb8?

Let us consider some other options available here.

19...Qc7 looks more natural, but it still allows the sacrifice on f7, as White is able to use the position of the black queen to great effect: 20 Qxf7+! Qxf7 and now after 21 Wc4+ Qg7 22 Qf4 b5! 23 Wc3+ Qf6 24 Qxc7 Qxc3 25 Qxe8 Qxe8 26 bxc3 White is a pawn up and may expect to win. However, he should be able to do even better than that: after 20 Qxf7+! Qxf7 he has 21 Qh6! Qd8 22 Qd7! Wc5 23 Qxb7=. Thus, 19...Qc7 would have been no better than the text.

However, another queen move — 19...Qf6! — would have been a better defensive try: Black keeps the queen near the vulnerable kingside. As after 20 Qg5 Qf8 White has nothing decisive, he should choose between 20 Qh6 and 20 Qg5.

The first option is very attractive as White's bishops work well together. Perhaps this is the most practical choice, as after 20 Qh6 White maintains a strong initiative.

However, I will pay more attention to the more forceful move, 20 Qg5. Yet, after a further 20...Qf5, White has to play very precisely in order to maintain his advantage. For example, 21 Qxc6?! (an attempt to win on the spot) fails because of 21...Qxc6 22 Qxe7 Qe6! and Black is even slightly better now, while other tries on move 22, such as 22
\textit{White advances }d4-d5\textit{ }

\texttt{\textsc{Wxe7? \textsc{Exe7} 23 \textsc{Exe7} \textsc{C8!} and 22 \textsc{Dd8? \textsc{Xd8} 23 \textsc{Wxe7 \textsc{Bb8} 24 \textsc{C4d4 \textsc{Wg4} 25 \textsc{Cxc6 \textsc{Bxc6 are even worse for White.}}}}}}

Here I would like to pause briefly to share my experience of working with chess computer programs.

Nowadays it is very common among chess professionals to use computers not just for gathering information, but also for analytical purposes. Of course, certain techniques are required, as chess programs have their own weaknesses. The two most obvious problems are that computers have an horizon in their chess vision and that they tend to overrate material values. However, such work teaches strict discipline as computers do not excuse tactical mistakes and don't buy into bluff attacks. Remember, however, that the computer needs you to guide it in the right direction!

Let us come back to the position after \textbf{19...\textsc{Wf6! 20 \textsc{Gg5 \textsc{Wf5}}}}. In such positions computers can be of great help, since it's almost pure calculation— the centre is cleared of pawns and piece activity decides everything.

Analysing such positions with a good chess program (I use mainly the Fritz 5 and Hiarcs 6.0 analysis modules) running on a fast computer can be great fun. Here I should like to share the fruits of such analysis from a more 'normal', human perspective.

In the position we are analysing, White should continue with \textbf{21 \textsc{Bf4!}}, first of all 'putting a question' to the black queen. I believe that this position merits a diagram and a detailed discussion. (D)

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

Black can choose between three different routes for his queen. After \textbf{21...\textsc{Wg4 22 h3 \textsc{Wh5 23 \textsc{Bxc6 \textsc{Bxc6 White has a nice choice between two winning lines: he can either make an elegant move — 24 \textsc{If1! (threatening both 25 \textsc{Xe7 and 25 g4), or play more forcefully — 24 \textsc{Xe7! \textsc{Xe7 25 \textsc{Xe7 h6 26 \textsc{Be3. When my computer suggested 24 \textsc{If1}, I could not believe my eyes and at first thought that computer's chip was faulty, so unusual is this move for a human player — we are taught to centralise our pieces!}}}}}}}}

Another defence is \textbf{21...\textsc{Aa5}. Then White has a choice between two interesting ideas. The first one is 22 \textsc{Bd5!? — this manoeuvre of the bishop is quite fascinating: it went to e4 and then back to d5, but pushed the black queen away from the kingside in the meantime! Now Black has his standard problems with the vulnerable f7 square, for example:}
22...\textit{a}6 23 \textit{xf}7+ \textit{xf}7 24 \textit{e}6+ \textit{g}7 25 \textit{d}7 \textit{f}5 26 \textit{d}6?! and White wins a piece back, emerging from complications a pawn up after 26...\textit{c}d8 27 \textit{exe}7+ \textit{xe}7 28 \textit{d}4+ \textit{g}8 29 \textit{x}d8 \textit{bl}+ 30 \textit{d}1 \textit{xd}1+ 31 \textit{xd}1+-.

Another possible line is 22 \textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 23 \textit{d}8!. This fantastic blow, which exploits the back rank weakness, is an easy spot for computers, but such a move is hard to find for human beings! White wins in the endgame arising after 23...\textit{x}d8 24 \textit{xe}7 \textit{cd}6 (or 24...\textit{b}8 25 \textit{h}6+-) 25 \textit{x}b7 \textit{d}1 26 \textit{e}7 \textit{x}e1+ 27 \textit{x}e1 \textit{x}e1+ 28 \textit{xe}1.

Perhaps after 21 \textit{e}4! Black should try 21...\textit{e}6 with some chances to survive in the endgame arising after 22 \textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 23 \textit{d}3 \textit{xe}1+ 24 \textit{xe}1 \textit{xg}5.

Now we return to the game after 19...\textit{b}8? (D)

20 \textit{h}6!

Creating the threat of \textit{xf}7+!, which, however, White could have played straight away. As after the text Black is helpless anyway, the choice between these two moves is a matter of taste. The lines after 20 \textit{xf}7+! are as follows: 20...\textit{xf}7 21 \textit{h}6 \textit{g}8 (21...\textit{d}8 22 \textit{xd}8+) 22 \textit{c}4+ \textit{h}8 23 \textit{f}7! \textit{f}8 24 \textit{g}5 (or 24 \textit{d}7--) 24...\textit{exe}1+ 25 \textit{xe}1 \textit{c}7 26 \textit{g}7+! \textit{xg}7 27 \textit{e}8+ \textit{xe}8 28 \textit{exe}8+ \textit{f}8 29 \textit{xf}8#.

20 ... \textit{d}4?

Black loses after 20...\textit{d}8 as well: 21 \textit{xe}7! \textit{exe}7 22 \textit{exe}7 \textit{e}6 23 \textit{e}5+- (23...\textit{c}7 24 \textit{xc}6).

21 \textit{xd}4 \textit{f}8

22 \textit{e}3 1-0

\textbf{Helgi Olafsson - Th.Thorhallsdottir}
\textbf{Reykjavik Z 1995}

1 \textit{c}3 \textit{d}5 2 \textit{d}4 \textit{f}6 3 \textit{c}4 \textit{xc}4 4 \textit{e}3 \textit{e}6 5 \textit{c}3 \textit{c}5 6 0-0 \textit{a}6 7 \textit{d}3 \textit{c}6 8 \textit{c}3 \textit{e}7 9 \textit{a}3 cxd4 10 exd4 0-0 11 \textit{e}1 \textit{b}5

12 \textit{c}2 \textit{b}7

13 \textit{d}3 \textit{g}6

14 \textit{h}6 \textit{e}8

15 \textit{ad}1 \textit{d}6

16 \textit{b}4!?

This is an interesting idea: White establishes more control over the c5-square and at the same time stops a possible ...\textit{c}6-a5-c4 or ...\textit{b}5-b4.

16 ... \textit{ac}8

17 \textit{b}3 \textit{a}5?? (D)

Black did not foresee what was about to happen in the centre and started a tactical demonstration on the queenside — an action which he simply cannot afford here; 17...\textit{f}8 would have been more prudent.
18 d5!

Here, as in the previous example, White is much better prepared for opening up the centre, therefore this pawn break leads to White’s benefit. Black probably expected only 18 \( \text{exd5} \) or 18 \( \text{b5} \), with initiative for him in both cases.

18 ... exd5
19 \( \text{exd5} \)
20 \( \text{exd5} \)

Now Black is lost, as he cannot prevent \( \text{exf7} \). As in the previous game, the d5-bishop is the real hero of the battle.

20 ... \( \text{d8?} \)

After 20...axb4? 21 \( \text{xf7} \) White wins, as he also does after the slightly better 20...\( \text{f6} \) 21 \( \text{g5} \).

21 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{f8} \)
22 \( \text{e8} \) \( \text{e6} \)
23 \( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{f8} \) 1-0

White has developed all his pieces, while Black still has a long way to go in this respect. It can be said that White is playing the middlegame, while Black is still in the opening. Thus White takes advantage of this by the thematic break:

17 d5!
It is worth mentioning that the presence of the major pieces on the e-file is not in Black’s favour, as White simply has more forces on that file.

17 ...  

Other options were no better: 17...\(\text{f7}\)?? 18 \(\text{xe7}\) \(\text{xe7}\) 19 \(\text{xd5+}\), while 17...\(\text{exd5}\) would also lose after 18 \(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{gxf6}\) 19 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{e5}\) 20 \(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{c7}\) 21 \(\text{d4}\).

18 \(\text{dxe6}\)  
19 \(\text{xe6}\)  
20 \(\text{d4}\)  
21 \(\text{xe6}\)  

White is winning, having a healthy extra pawn in a superior position. The rest is quite clear: 21...\(\text{f7}\) 22 \(\text{g3}\) \(\text{bd7}\) 23 \(\text{xd8}\) \(\text{axd8}\) 24 \(\text{d3}\) \(\text{xe1+}\) 25 \(\text{xe1}\) \(\text{e8}\) 26 \(\text{xe8}\) \(\text{xe8}\) 27 \(\text{f3}\) 28 \(\text{d5}\) 29 \(\text{xd5}\) 30 \(\text{c6}\) 31 \(\text{f4}\) 32 \(\text{xa6}\) 33 \(\text{c8+}\) 34 \(\text{e2+}\) 35 \(\text{b3}\) 36 \(\text{g4}\) 37 \(\text{g3}\) 38 \(\text{b4}\) 39 \(\text{e4}\) 40 \(\text{e1+}\) 41 \(\text{h2}\) 42 \(\text{a5}\) 43 \(\text{c8+}\) 44 \(\text{c4}\) 45 \(\text{e4+}\) 1–0.

Now let us examine how White’s threat to play \(\text{d4–d5}\) impinges on Black’s strategy from an early stage of the game. In this case we would like to refer to a classical game, where White exploited the advantages of having the isolani in very nice style.

Boleslavsky - Kotov  
Zurich Ct 1953

1 \(\text{d4}\) \(\text{d5}\) 2 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{dxc4}\) 3 \(\text{\text{xf3}}\) \(\text{\text{xf6}}\) 4 \(\text{e3}\) \(\text{e6}\) 5 \(\text{\text{xc4}}\) 6 \(\text{0–0}\) 7 \(\text{\text{e2\text{xd4}}}\)

8 \(\text{exd4\text{e7}}\) 9 \(\text{\text{c3b5}}\) 10 \(\text{\text{b3\text{b7}}}\)

11 \(\text{\text{g5 0–0}}\)

12 \(\text{\text{f1}}\) \(\text{c6}\)

13 \(\text{\text{d1 (D)}}\)

\[B\]

Black has not done very well in the opening, for example after 7 \(\text{\text{e2}}\) he should have played 7...\(\text{b5}\), while taking on \(\text{d4}\) was an inferior choice.

Theory regards the diagram position as pretty difficult for Black, who now has to find a way to prevent the \(\text{d4–d5}\) break. He should consider the moves which seem to deal with the problem, namely 13...\(\text{\text{b4}}\), 13...\(\text{\text{d5}}\) and 13...\(\text{\text{e8}}\). Let us begin with the first one:

13...\(\text{\text{b4??}}\). This is a losing move, although it looks extremely natural. It was refuted by Rauzer, as Bronstein pointed out in his comments, even prior to the present game. However, in 1995 none other than Karpov fell into this trap against Andersson in a rapid chess event (25 minutes per game). Black’s problem is that his last move does not really prevent the thrust in the centre and after 14 \(\text{d5}\)!
Black is just lost, because of White’s pressure along the e-file. In his game Karpov resigned after 14...\&fxd5 15 \&xd5 \&xg5 16 \&xb4 \&e7 17 \&x5 \&xd5 18 \&xd5.

Another option here is 13...\&d5 (D), blockading the dangerous pawn.

White has a choice between two different ways of capturing on d5:

a) 14 \&xd5 \&xg5 15 \&b6? was recommended by Bronstein in his book on the candidates tournament of 1953. The point is to clear the d5-square for the subsequent d4-d5; however this is an oversight, as the following continuation shows — 15...\&xd4! 16 \&xd4 \&xb6 17 \&g4 \&f6 18 \&xe6 \&c8! and White resigned in the game Shamkovich-Dlugy, New York 1986. Thus, 14 \&xd5 gives White nothing.

b) 14 \&xd5! \&xg5 15 \&e4 \&h6 and now 16 a4! weakens Black’s position on the queenside before advancing the central pawn (instead of the immediate 16 d5 exd5 17 \&xd5 g6 18 h4 \&e8 19 \&h2?! \&g7 when White did not get much in the game Izeta-Magem, Spain 1995). Now, however, if 16...b4 then 17 d5! exd5 18 \&xd5 would be already unpleasant for Black, while after 16...bxa4 17 \&xa4 \&a7 18 \&c5 \&a8 19 \&xe6! \&xe6 20 \&xc6 \&xc6 21 \&xe6+ \&af7 22 \&xc6 White achieved a winning position in the game Wells-Magem, Linares Z 1995.

Finally, we must consider 13...\&e8, a move which aims to discourage White from playing d4-d5, because of the X-ray of the black rook against the white queen. However, this move has not been tried in tournament practice, probably because White has a choice of two promising continuations here:

a) 14 d5! (Anyway!) 14...exd5 15 \&xd5 \&xd5 and now White obtains a big advantage by playing 16 \&xd5! \&c8 (16...\&c7? loses on the spot to 17 \&f5!) 17 \&d1??, whereas 16 \&xd5 \&xg5 17 \&xe8+ \&xe8 18 \&xe8+ \&xe8 19 \&xg5 \&d8 leads to almost complete equality.

b) 14 \&e5?? is another logical move as White immediately threatens \&xf7!, since the rook has moved to e8. 14...\&xe5 15 dxe5 \&d7 16 \&f4 \&c7 17 \&c2 offers good attacking chances for White, as recommended by GM Suetin in his book on Boleslavsky.

This analysis shows how difficult it can be to prevent the d4-d5 thrust without giving White some other advantages.

In this particular case Black’s position is just difficult, as he is seri-
ously behind in development, therefore there is no completely satisfactory remedy for him here, and his next move does not help either:

13 ... \( \mathcal{Q}a5?! \)

This attempt to remove the b3-bishop from its active position fails, but it took energetic play by White to prove it:

14 d5! (D)

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess_diagram}
\end{center}

14 ... \( \mathcal{Q}xb3 \\
15 dxe6 \mathcal{W}b6 \\

The point of White’s play is that after 15 ... \( \mathcal{Q}xf3 \) he wins both pieces back by 16 exf7+ \( \mathcal{W}h8 \) 17 \( \mathcal{Q}xd8 \mathcal{Q}xe2 \) 18 \( \mathcal{W}xa8 \mathcal{W}xa8 \) 19 \( \mathcal{Q}xe2 \), remaining two pawns up.

16 axb3 \( \mathcal{W}xe6 \\
17 \mathcal{Q}d4 \mathcal{Q}d6 \\
18 \mathcal{W}xe6+ \mathcal{W}h8 \\
19 \mathcal{Q}f3 \mathcal{Q}ad8 \\
20 \mathcal{Q}f4! \mathcal{Q}xf3 \\
21 \mathcal{Q}xd6 \mathcal{Q}d6 \\
22 \mathcal{W}xd6 \mathcal{W}xd6 \\
23 \mathcal{Q}xd6 \mathcal{Q}e8 \\
24 \mathcal{Q}xe8+ \mathcal{Q}xe8 \\
25 \mathcal{Q}e5

This endgame is easily winning for White.

25 ... \( \mathcal{Q}c6 \\
26 b4!

Fixing the black pawns on the light squares. As the black knight cannot leave e8 without being taken by the bishop, the presence of the opposite coloured bishops here does not give Black drawing chances.

The conclusion was: 26 ... h5 27 f3 \( \mathcal{W}h7 \) 28 \( \mathcal{Q}e2 \) g5 29 \( \mathcal{W}f2 \) h4 30 g3 hXg3+ 31 hXg3 \( \mathcal{Q}g6 \) 32 g4 \( \mathcal{Q}b7 \) 33 \( \mathcal{Q}e3 \) \( \mathcal{Q}c6 \) 34 \( \mathcal{Q}c3 \) \( \mathcal{Q}b7 \) 35 \( \mathcal{Q}e4 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d5 \) 36 \( \mathcal{Q}c5 \) \( \mathcal{W}f7 \) 37 \( \mathcal{Q}xa6 \) \( \mathcal{Q}e6 \) 38 \( \mathcal{Q}c3 \) \( \mathcal{Q}a8 \) 39 \( \mathcal{Q}c5+ \) \( \mathcal{W}f7 \) 40 \( \mathcal{Q}e4 \) \( \mathcal{Q}g6 \) 41 \( \mathcal{Q}e5 \) \( \mathcal{Q}d5 \) 42 \( \mathcal{Q}d2 \) \( \mathcal{W}f7 \) 1–0.

Here is another example of an early d4-d5 thrust. In this game it was related to some interesting tactics.

Topalov - Gausel

\textit{Moscow OL 1994}

\begin{align*}
1 & e4 & c6 \\
2 & d4 & d5 \\
3 & \text{exd}5 & \text{cxd}5 \\
4 & \text{c}4 & \mathcal{Q}f6 \\
5 & \mathcal{Q}c3 & \text{e}6 \\
6 & \mathcal{Q}f3 & \mathcal{Q}b4 \\
7 & \text{cxd}5 & \mathcal{Q}xd5 \\
8 & \mathcal{W}c2 & \mathcal{Q}c6 \\
9 & \text{a}3 & \text{a}3
\end{align*}

Another option here is 9 \( \mathcal{Q}d3 \), which may lead to a very complicated position after 9 ... \( \mathcal{Q}xc3 \) 10 bxc3 \( \mathcal{Q}xd4 \) 11 \( \mathcal{Q}xd4 \) \( \mathcal{W}xd4 \).

\begin{align*}
9 & \ldots & \mathcal{Q}e7 \\
10 & \mathcal{Q}d3 & \mathcal{Q}f6 \\
11 & 0–0 & 0–0
\end{align*}
White advances d4–d5

12 \textbf{Ad}1 \textbf{a}6? (D)

This move makes little sense. As it cannot be a preparation for ...b5 (which would drop a pawn after \textbf{Qxb}5 and \textbf{Rxc}6), the main point of the text is to cover the b5-square, preparing for ...\textbf{Wd}6 and ...\textbf{Ed}8. However, Black has no time for this slow plan, as White now proves convincingly.

Black did better after 12...\textbf{Qd}7 in the game Topalov-Yudasin, Groningen 1993, which ended in a draw after 13 \textbf{Qe}5 a6 14 \textbf{Qe}3 \textbf{Wc}7 15 \textbf{Qd}x7 \textbf{Wxd}7 16 d5 exd5 17 \textbf{Qf}5 \textbf{Wd}6 18 \textbf{Qe}4 \textbf{We}5 19 \textbf{Qxf}6+ \textbf{Qxf}6 20 \textbf{Qxh}7+ \textbf{Qh}8 21 \textbf{Qd}3 \textbf{Wxb}2 22 \textbf{Ab}1 \textbf{Wc}2 23 \textbf{Qxc}2 d4 24 \textbf{Qf}4 b5.

The fact that Topalov repeated this line raises the question — how did he intend to improve on his play in that game?

We believe that had Black selected 12...\textbf{Qd}7 in the present game, Topalov would have played the more aggressive move: 13 d5! exd5 14 \textbf{Qxd}5 and after 14...h6 15 \textbf{Qxe}7+

White obtains a significant advantage, having the bishop pair in an open position.

13 d5!

Here this well-timed pawn advance wins White a pawn by force. The main feature of this position is the pressure of White's battery on the b1–h7 diagonal and the influence of the d1–rook on the d-file.

13 ... \textbf{exd}5
14 \textbf{Qxd}5 \textbf{Qxd}5
15 \textbf{Qh}8 \textbf{Qe}6
16 \textbf{Qe}4 \textbf{Qe}6
17 \textbf{Qxd}5 \textbf{Qxd}5
18 \textbf{g}6
19 \textbf{Wxd}5 \textbf{Wxd}5
20 \textbf{Qd}5+ \textbf{Yfd}8
21 \textbf{Qd}2!

The rest of the game is the technical work of capitalising on an extra pawn: 21 ...\textbf{Qf}6 22 \textbf{Ab}1 \textbf{Qa}5 23 b3 \textbf{Qg}8 24 \textbf{Qf}1 \textbf{Qac}8 25 \textbf{Qxd}8+ \textbf{Qxd}8 26 \textbf{Qd}2 \textbf{Qd}5 27 a4 \textbf{Qc}6 28 \textbf{Qe}2 \textbf{Qf}8 29 \textbf{Qe}3 \textbf{Qe}7 30 \textbf{Qd}1 \textbf{Qh}5 31 h4 \textbf{Qe}6 32 g3 \textbf{Qe}7 33 \textbf{Qg}5+ \textbf{Qxg}5 34 \textbf{Qxg}5 \textbf{Qh}8 35 \textbf{Qd}3 f6 36 \textbf{Qd}2 \textbf{Qe}7 37 \textbf{Qe}3+ \textbf{Qf}7 38 \textbf{Qc}3 \textbf{Qd}5 39 \textbf{Qc}5 \textbf{Qe}6 40 \textbf{Qc}1 \textbf{Qe}5 41 \textbf{Qd}3 \textbf{Qd}6 42 f3 \textbf{Qf}5 43 \textbf{Qg}5 \textbf{Qb}4+ 44 \textbf{Qc}4 \textbf{Qd}5 45 \textbf{Qd}4 b6 46 \textbf{Qe}1 \textbf{Qc}8 47 \textbf{Qe}5 \textbf{Qc}7 48 \textbf{Qe}7+ \textbf{Qd}7 49 \textbf{Qa}3 \textbf{Qe}6+ 50 \textbf{Qd}3 \textbf{Qe}8 51 \textbf{Qd}5+ \textbf{Qc}7 52 \textbf{Qd}6 a5 53 \textbf{Qc}4 \textbf{Qb}7 54 \textbf{Qd}7+ \textbf{Qc}6 55 \textbf{Qf}7 \textbf{Qc}8 56 \textbf{Qe}7 b5+ 57 axb5+ \textbf{Qb}6+ 58 \textbf{Qd}5 \textbf{Qc}7+ 59 \textbf{Qe}5 \textbf{Qxb}5 60 \textbf{Qe}6+ \textbf{Qb}7 61 \textbf{Qe}7 \textbf{Qc}3 62 \textbf{Qxg}6 \textbf{Qxb}3 63 h5 \textbf{Qe}3+ 64 \textbf{Qf}6 \textbf{Qc}7 65 \textbf{Qf}7 1–0.
Often the side possessing the isolani simply has to go for d4-d5 (or ...d5-d4) when the time is right, as otherwise this chance will be gone and the pawn will be blockaded. Hesitation in strategically double-edged positions, such as those with the isolated d-pawn, often leads to inferior situations. Let us illustrate with an example from my own play.

Baburin - Ryan
Kilkenny open 1996

1 d4 d5
2 c4 dxc4
3 Nf3 c5

Here White’s most aggressive move is 4 d5, but I was surprised by my opponent’s choice of opening and therefore decided to surprise him in return by selecting this less popular reply.

4 e3 cxd4
5 Nxc4 Nc7

This is the point of 4...cxd4 — Black forces White to put his queen on b3, where it is rather awkwardly placed. Should Black play any move other than 5...Nc7, White would have replied 6.exd4 and obtained a very comfortable game.

6 Bb3 e6
7 exd4 Nf6

Instead of the text, 7...Qc6 would have been more precise — as was played in the game Vyzhmanavin-Kaidanov, Norilsk 1987, which continued: 8 Qc3 a6 9 Bd1 (the white queen had to retreat in view of ...

...Qa5) 9...Qf6 10 0-0 Qe7 11 Qg5 0-0 12 We2. This is necessary in order to vacate the d1-square for a rook, but it is already the third queen move in the opening — that is the problem with 6 Nb3. After 12...Qg4!? 13 Qe3 b5 14 Qb3 Black should have continued 14...Qa5! 15 b3 Qxb3 16 axb3 Qf6! 17 Qxb5 Qb8 with slightly better chances for him, as GM Kaidanov recommended in Informator 44. In the game he played instead 14...Qb7? 15 Qc1! Qxe3 16 fxe3 Qb6 17 Qe4! Qa5?, which led to a significant advantage for White after 18 Qc5 Qfc8 19 Qe5! Qxb3 20 axb3 Qxc5 21 Qd7 Qd6 22 Qxc5 Qd5 23 b4.

8 Qc3 a6
9 Kg5 Qe7? (D)

This natural looking move is a serious mistake — Black had to try to catch up in development by playing 9...Qc6!. The point is that in that case Black stands better after 10 Qxf6?! Qa5 11 Wf4+ Qd7 12 Qe5 Wb6 13 Wc2 Qxc4. After 9...Qc6 I would
probably consider 10 \textit{d}3 or 10 \textit{d}1 \textit{e}7 11 \textit{e}2 0–0 12 \textit{d}1.

Now White should consider the future scenario of this game — if he just plays all the natural moves like 0–0, \textit{ac}1, \textit{fd}1, etc., then Black will certainly play \ldots \textit{c}6 and force White to lose time on either moving his queen or the c4-bishop away. Therefore White should think of the immediate thrust in the centre, while his lead in development is great. Otherwise the strategic situation will change and not in his favour.

10 \textit{d}5! \textit{exd}5
11 \textit{xd}5!

After the game I checked my database and discovered that the text was actually a novelty, as White had played the more obvious but less promising 11 \textit{xd}5 in the game Wojtkiewicz-Yermolinsky, Rakvere 1993. Even then after 11...\textit{xd}5 12 \textit{xd}5 0–0 13 0–0 \textit{c}6 14 \textit{xc}6 \textit{bxc}6 15 \textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 16 \textit{c}3 White had an advantage.

The point of recapturing with the bishop is that White keeps more pieces on the board, which is in his favour, as Black cannot take on d5 in view of \textit{xd}5 hitting the queen.

11 ... 0–0
12 0–0 \textit{c}6
13 \textit{fe}1 \textit{f}5
14 \textit{ac}1 (D)

In this position, White has a significant advantage, as he is able to bring his rooks to the centre with comfort while Black cannot do the same. White’s minor pieces are more active too. He threatens to capture on c6 at some point, spoiling Black’s pawn formation. Although Black’s next move is understandable — he wants to release the pressure from the a2-g8 diagonal — his idea is faulty.

14 ... \textit{a}5?

In situations like this (with a pawn-free centre) it is better to keep the pieces centralised. After the text, Black is just lost.

In reply to Black’s best defence, 14...\textit{ad}8, White has a wide choice of promising continuations, e.g. 15 \textit{c}4, but perhaps I would play the useful move 15 h3!?, maintaining all the advantages of my position.

15 \textit{a}4 \textit{c}6
16 \textit{xc}6! \textit{bxc}6
17 \textit{d}4 \textit{g}4

Desperation, but other moves would not be any better.

18 \textit{xf}5 \textit{xh}2+
19 \textit{f}1 \textit{xe}5
20 \textit{xe}4 \textit{h}1+
21 \textit{e}2 \textit{ae}8+
22 \textit{f}3

The king can certainly look after
himself in this situation and Wilhelm Steinitz, who strongly believed in the king’s active role in chess, would be pleased to see this position!

22 ... \( \text{Qxe1} \)
23 \( \text{Qxg5} \) g6
24 \( \text{Qh6!} \) 1–0

The simplest way to win here, although 24 \( \text{Qe4} \) wins too. After the text, as Black would be a piece down after 24... \( \text{gxf5} \) 25 \( \text{Qxh1} \) \( \text{Qxh1} \) 26 \( \text{Qxh1} \), he resigned.

Of course, White often manages to play d4-d5 not only in the opening or just after the opening phase, but also in the middlegame. This thematic break appears on the menu quite often, particularly if Black does not succeed in simplifying the position.

Our next three games will illustrate this case.

Kamsky - Short
Linares Ct (5) 1994

1 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{Qf6} \)
2 \( \text{c4} \) e6
3 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{b4} \)
4 e3 c5
5 \( \text{Qd3} \) \( \text{c6} \)
6 \( \text{Qge2} \) cxd4
7 exd4 d5
8 cxd5 \( \text{Qxd5} \)
9 0–0

However, in this game Kamsky employs this knight in an interesting manner too.

9 ... \( \text{Qd6} \)
10 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{Qc7} \)
11 a3 0–0
12 \( \text{Qc2} \) \( \text{Qe8} \)
13 \( \text{Qd3} \) g6
14 \( \text{Qh6} \) b6
15 \( \text{Qad1} \) \( \text{Qb7} \)
16 \( \text{Qfe1} \) \( \text{Qc8} \)
17 \( \text{Qb3} \)

It is time to put some pressure on the blockading knight.

17 ... a6?! 

Black has a very solid position, but needs to find a plan of future play. Perhaps, 17... \( \text{Qc7} \) should have been preferred, intending to move the rook to d7, putting some pressure on the isolani.

18 \( \text{Q2g3} \) \( \text{Qb8}?! \)

An interesting idea was suggested here by GM Suba: 18... \( \text{Qh4} \), vacating the e7-square for the c6-knight. After the text, which decentralises the knight, White seizes the initiative.

19 \( \text{Qf3!} \) \( \text{Qc7}?! \) (D)

The natural move 19... \( \text{Qd7} \) would have led to the situation similar to
the one in the game after 20 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}h5! \). Then White threatens to play \( 21 \text{\texttt{h}}4! \) with a further 22 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}g5 \), while Black cannot push White's cavalry back, as 20...f5 leads to a disaster after 21 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}c3 \text{\texttt{Q}}f8 22 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5! \text{\texttt{Q}}xh6 23 \text{\texttt{Q}}d6+ \text{\texttt{Q}}xf6 24 \text{\texttt{Q}}xf6+ \text{\texttt{Q}}xf6 25 \text{\texttt{Q}}xb7+- \), where Black's pawns on the queenside are going to fall. Another line — 22 \( \text{\texttt{B}}xe6 \text{\texttt{B}}xe6 23 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5 24 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5 — is less convincing because of 24...\( \text{\texttt{Q}}c5! 25 \text{\texttt{Q}}f4 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5 26 \text{\texttt{Q}}xc5 \text{\texttt{Q}}d6 27 \text{\texttt{Q}}xc5 \text{\texttt{Q}}xc5 28 \text{\texttt{Q}}xf8 \text{\texttt{Q}}xf8 29 \text{\texttt{Q}}h4 \text{\texttt{Q}}c2. 

The text leads to serious trouble, but perhaps Black underestimated White's next move. Thus, 19...\( \text{\texttt{Q}}h4 \) was already absolutely necessary.

20 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}h5! \)

From this square, the knight threatens to jump either to f6 or g7. As Black must now deal with the deadly threat of \( \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5 \) followed by \( \text{\texttt{Q}}gf6+ \), his next move is forced.

20 ... \( \text{\texttt{Q}}d7 \)

20...f5 would have led to a collapse after 21 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}c3 \), as 21...\( \text{\texttt{Q}}xc3? \) is impossible because of 22 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}xe6+ \text{\texttt{Q}}h8 23 \text{\texttt{Q}}g7#. 

21 \text{\texttt{h}}4!+-

White creates the threat of 22 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}g5 \), leaving Black helpless. It is very instructive that with all the pieces on the board Black has no room for manoeuvring, while White enjoys a great space advantage. This is one of the reasons behind Black's desire to simplify the position, when faced with such a pawn formation.

21 ... \( \text{\texttt{Q}}7f6 \)

Black has nothing better than the text, but now he loses control over the d5-square. After 21...\( \text{\texttt{Q}}xh4 22 \text{\texttt{Q}}d6 \text{\texttt{Q}}e7 \) White can choose between 23 g3 gxh5 24 gxh5 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}f8 25 \text{\texttt{Q}}xb7 \text{\texttt{Q}}xb7 26 \text{\texttt{Q}}e5 \) with a strong attack or the even more energetic move 23 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}e4! \), when Black's dark-squared bishop causes him a lot of problems.

22 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}xf6+ \text{\texttt{Q}}xf6 (D) \)

![Chess board diagram]

23 \text{d}5!

This thrust wins the game; the difference in activity between White's and Black's pieces is too great and therefore Black cannot bear the tension thus created in the centre.

23 ... \( \text{\texttt{Q}}xe4 \)

After 23...\( \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5 \) Black would have lost because of the weakness of the f6-square in the following line: 24 \( \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5 25 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd5 exd5 26 \text{\texttt{Q}}f6+ \text{\texttt{Q}}h8 27 \text{\texttt{Q}}xe8 \text{\texttt{Q}}xe8 28 \text{\texttt{Q}}f6+ \text{\texttt{Q}}xf6 29 \text{\texttt{Q}}xe8#. However, the text does not save him either.

24 dx\text{\texttt{e}}6 \text{f}5
25 \text{\texttt{Q}}x\text{d}8 \text{\texttt{Q}}x\text{d}8
26 \text{\texttt{Q}}d1 1-0
White advances d4-d5

Kamsky - Karpov
Elista FIDE Wch (2) 1996

1 e4 c6
2 d4 d5
3 exd5 exd5
4 c4 Qf6
5 Qc3 e6
6 Qf3 Qb4
7 exd5 Qxd5
8 Qd2 Qc6
9 Qd3 Qe7
10 0-0 0-0
11 Bh2 Qf6

The knight moves to the kingside, which needs protection, potentially vacating the blockading d5-square for the other knight. At the same time Black brings some pressure to bear on the isolani.

12 Qe4!? (D)

White’s last move introduces an important strategic problem — it is known that the side possessing the isolated d-pawn usually should avoid exchanges, while the opposite side tries to induce them. However, this principle is often not very well understood by club players. In reality, it is just impossible to avoid simplification altogether and there are definitely cases when certain exchanges should be initiated by the possessor of the isolani. Here for example, White does not mind exchanging a pair of knights, as the black knight on f6 is an important defensive piece. We will discuss this strategic problem in more detail later.

In the meantime, White discourages Black from developing the c8-bishop to the long diagonal, as now 12...b6?? loses to 13 Qxf6+ Qxf6 14 Bh4. The text also solves by tactical means the problem of protecting the d4-pawn, as 12...Qxd4?! leads to White’s advantage after 13 Qxd4 Bh4 14 Qc3 Qd8 15 Qxf6+ Qxf6 16 Bh7 (or 16 Bh7 17 Bh4 g6 18 Bh4 = 17 Qxf6 (17 Bh4 g6 18 Bh4 Bh4 19 Bh7 is in White’s favour too.) 17 Bh4 Bh4 18 Bh7+ Bh7 19 Bh7 Bh7.

12 ... Bh7

Two games later in the match Karpov came up with an improvement over this game — 12 Bh4! 13 a3 Bh7 14 Ba3 Bh8 15 Qxf6+?! Bh6 16 Bh4 g6 17 Bh7 Bh7 — and Black got an advantage and eventually won.

13 Bh1 Bh8?! 

Perhaps Black should have preferred 13 Bh6!? with mutual chances, while 13 Bh4 would have given White an attack after 14 Bh4 g6 15 h4.

14 Bh4 Bh7?!
Better was 14...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xe4} \) 15 \(\text{\textit{W}}\text{xe4} \) g6 and then if 16 a3, preventing the consolidating manoeuvre ...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{c6-b4-d5}, \) Black plays 16...\(\text{\textit{G}}\text{f6} \) with a solid position.

15 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{c3!} \)

An excellent decision — the black bishop did not come to b7 and the d4-pawn was protected. So the white knight has done its work on e4 and therefore Kamsky redeployes it, fighting for control over the vital d5-square.

15 ... \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{f6} \)

Black could try some other moves instead of the text, but all of them would have left White with a significant advantage, e.g. 15...\(\text{\textit{R}}\text{e8} \) 16 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xd5 exd5} \) 17 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{e5!} \) and then Black cannot play 17...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xd4?}, \) which loses to 18 \(\text{\textit{R}}\text{xh7+ Qxh7} \) 19 \(\text{\textit{W}}\text{h5+ Gg8} \) 20 \(\text{\textit{W}}\text{xf7+ Qh7} \) 21 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xd7}. \) If Black takes the c3-knight (15...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xc3}, \) White recaptures with a pawn (16 bxc3) and the arising pawn formation — the isolated pawn couple — is in his favour as he can still count on his attack on the kingside and pressure in the centre. The attempt to utilise the b4-square by 15...\(\text{\textit{R}}\text{cb4} \) 16 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{b1 Qc6} \) would also leave White with the initiative after 17 a3 (17 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{e5!? is interesting as well}) 17...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xc3} \) 18 bxc3 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{d5} \) 19 c4 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{f6} \) 20 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{g5}. \)

16 a3 \(\text{\textit{W}}\text{c7} \)

Eventually the presence of the black queen and white rook on the same file might cause Black problems, so he moves the queen away from the X-rays of the rook. However, finding a safe, yet active position for the queen is always a difficult task for Black in such positions. White does not have this problem at all, as he controls more space.

17 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{g5! W a5? (D)} \)

This loses. However, it is already difficult to give Black any advice here, e.g. after 17...\(\text{\textit{R}}\text{fe8} \) 18 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{bl!} \) White is about to launch a crushing attack with \(\text{\textit{W}}\text{d3} \) and d4-d5.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{w} \\
\end{array}
\]

18 d5!

This time the key factor in the success of this typical blow is the lack of protection of the d7-bishop.

18 ... \(\text{\textit{W}}\text{xd5} \)

19 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xf6 Qxf6} \)

20 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xh7+} \)

Here White had another winning continuation at his disposal: 20 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xd5 Qd8} \) (or 20...\(\text{\textit{R}}\text{e6} \) 21 \(\text{\textit{W}}\text{e4+-}) 21 b4 \(\text{\textit{W}}\text{xa3} \) 22 \(\text{\textit{R}}\text{a1 Qb3} \) 23 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{c4} \) and the black queen is trapped.

20 ... \(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{g5} \)

21 \(\text{\textit{W}}\text{xd5+-\textit{Qe3} \)

22 \(\text{\textit{R}}\text{xa5 Qxa5} \)
Black could not take the pawn by 24...\textcircled{Q}xa5? because of the fork — 25 \textcircled{W}d2.

25 a6! bxa6
26 \textcircled{W}e4 \textcircled{Q}xf3
27 \textcircled{W}xf3 \textcircled{Q}e8 (D)

28 \textcircled{B}a1!

This move lessens Black’s chances of building a fortress, which might be possible should the rooks be exchanged. White is winning:

28...\textcircled{Q}e6 29 h3 \textcircled{Q}d8 30 \textcircled{W}c3 \textcircled{Q}d6 31 \textcircled{Q}b1 \textcircled{Q}d7 32 \textcircled{Q}e4 a5 33 \textcircled{Q}b5 \textcircled{Q}d1+ 34 \textcircled{Q}h2 \textcircled{Q}d2 35 \textcircled{Q}f5 \textcircled{Q}d4 36 \textcircled{Q}c3 \textcircled{Q}dd6 37 \textcircled{Q}c5 \textcircled{Q}f6 38 \textcircled{Q}c4 \textcircled{Q}fe6 39 \textcircled{Q}c5 \textcircled{Q}f6 40 \textcircled{Q}e3 \textcircled{Q}fe6 41 \textcircled{Q}g3 \textcircled{Q}g6 42 \textcircled{Q}b3 \textcircled{Q}gf6 43 \textcircled{Q}b7 \textcircled{Q}fe6 44 \textcircled{Q}c7 \textcircled{Q}f6 45 f4 g6 46 f5 gxf5 47 \textcircled{Q}xf5 \textcircled{Q}de6 48 \textcircled{Q}h5 \textcircled{Q}h6 49 \textcircled{Q}g3+ \textcircled{Q}f8 50 \textcircled{Q}d5 \textcircled{Q}hg6 51 \textcircled{Q}d2 \textcircled{Q}gf6 52 \textcircled{Q}b2 \textcircled{Q}e7 53 \textcircled{Q}h5 \textcircled{Q}h6 54 \textcircled{Q}b5 \textcircled{Q}hf6 55 \textcircled{Q}c3 \textcircled{Q}f8 56 \textcircled{Q}h5 \textcircled{Q}h6 57 \textcircled{Q}f5 \textcircled{Q}hg6 58 \textcircled{Q}f3 \textcircled{Q}g7 59 \textcircled{Q}f4 \textcircled{Q}g8 60 \textcircled{Q}c7 \textcircled{Q}f8 61 \textcircled{Q}c8+ \textcircled{Q}e7 62 \textcircled{Q}d5 \textcircled{Q}f6 63 \textcircled{Q}h8 \textcircled{Q}e4 64 \textcircled{Q}h5 \textcircled{Q}e7 65 \textcircled{Q}h7 1–0.

Here is yet another convincing example of the successful d4-d5 thrust:

\begin{center}
\textbf{Yusupov - Lobron}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{Germany Ch, Nüßloch 1996}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{ll}
1 & d4 \\
2 & c4 \\
3 & \textcircled{Q}c3 \\
4 & e3 \\
5 & \textcircled{Q}d3 \\
6 & \textcircled{Q}f3 \\
7 & 0–0 \\
8 & exd4 \\
9 & \textcircled{Q}xc4 \\
10 & \textcircled{Q}e1 \\
11 & \textcircled{Q}d3
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

White aims the bishop at the kingside, as he believes there is no future for it in eyeing the e6-pawn, while a d4-d5 break isn’t possible yet. The question of the best placement of this bishop is an evergreen problem in such formations, which White successfully solves in this game.

11 ... \textcircled{Q}b6
11...\textcircled{Q}bd7 is a good alternative.
12 a3 \textcircled{Q}e7

Naturally Black does not want to exchange the bishop on c3, as he won’t be able to take advantage of the c3-d4 pawn couple, while his kingside would be vulnerable without the bishop.

13 \textcircled{Q}c2 \textcircled{Q}e8
14 \textcircled{W}d3

White has got a standard battery, which forces Black to weaken his kingside in some way.
14 ... g6
15 h4!?

The march of the h-pawn is a typical weapon from White's arsenal in this pawn formation, as we have already seen in Kamsky-Short.

15 ... d6?

Black is trying to find a safe place for the queen and also to put some pressure on the d4-pawn after the eventual ...ad8 and ...wb8. However, it does not really solve the problem. 15...c8 might be a better choice, meeting 16 g5 with the standard reply 16...d5.

16 g5 ad8
17 ad1 wb8
18 b3! (D)

Excellent judgment — the bishop no longer has anything to do on the b1-h7 diagonal, so White re-deploys it to a better location. The bishop has gone via a long route: f1-d3-c4-d3-c2-b3 and finds itself on the a2-g8 diagonal again, where it supports the d4-d5 thrust. This game is a fine example of handling the isolani: White has brought all his pieces to the centre, avoided any simplification and placed his forces in such a manner that the forthcoming blow in the centre seems to be almost inevitable.

18 ... a6?

After this mistake Black cannot survive. He obviously misjudged the outcome of White's next move, otherwise he would have probably tried 18...g7.

Our analysis shows that another possible defence — 18...a5 — which at first glance looks playable for Black, does not help: White gets an irresistible attack after 19 a2!. The point is that White does not need to get involved in the complications arising after 19 xe6 fxe6 20 xe6, even though they might favour him — the text is strong enough. White renews the threat of d4-d5 after the eventual b2-b4.

The following analysis illustrates Black's difficulties here — after 19 a2! d5 20 b4 Black is facing problems in all lines:

a1) 20 xg5 21 xg5 xc3 22 wc3 c6 when White has two different ways of capitalising on his advantage. Each of them is sufficient:

a11) 23 xe6! fxe6 24 xe6 xe6 25 xe6+ g7 (25...f8 loses on the spot to 26 f3+ g7 27 f7+ h6 28 g4+) 26 d5+ 27 xd3!-(but not 27 c1? a8, where 28 dxc6?? loses because of 28...d1+ 29 xd1 wc3) and White is a healthy pawn up in the endgame arising after 27...wc3 28 xc3 d6 29 dxc6 xc6.
a2) 23 d5! is also good and leads to a winning position after 23...exd5 24 Qxe8+ Qxe8 25 Qxf7 Qe5 26 Qh6+ Qg7 27 Qg4.

b) 20...Qxc3 21 Wxc3 Qc6 leads to a similar scenario — White clears out the centre by 22 d5! exd5 23 Qxd5 and after 23...Qxg5 hits the weak spot on f7: 24 Qxf7+! Qxf7 25 Qxg5+ Qg8 26 Qc4+ Qh8 27 Qxd8 Qxd8 28 Wf7, winning.

In the variations shown above White’s attack goes very smoothly, while it is very hard for Black to come up with a plan of defence. Perhaps the move which was mentioned earlier — 18...Qg7 — would have been the best try; at least Black would have fewer worries on the a2-g8 diagonal. In that case White would maintain the initiative, whereas after 18...a6 he starts a crushing attack.

19 d5! (D)

Once again we see how White capitalises on his advantage after the well-prepared and well-timed d4-d5 breakthrough.

19 ... Qa5?! (D)

Let us check whether Black had any better options here. As 19...exd5?? loses on the spot to 20 Qxe7 and 21 Qxf6, Black can take on d5 only with the knight — 19...Qxd5. Then White has a pleasant choice between the two ways of recapturing:

a) 20 Qxd5 and then:

a1) 20...Qxg5?! 21 Qxg5 exd5 22 Qxf7! Qxe1+ 23 Qxe1 Qxf7 24 Qxd5 Qxd5 25 Qxd5+ is a win for White.

a2) 20...exd5 21 Qxd5 Qxg5.

Here it is much more difficult for White to prove his advantage, e.g. 22 Qxg5 fails to do so in view of 22...Qe5 23 Wb3 Qxd5 24 Qxd5 Qg4! and Black is fine. White has nothing decisive after the tempting sacrifice 22 Qxe8+ Qxe8 23 Qxf7+ either, as after 23...Qxf7 24 Qxg5+ Qg8 25 Wb3+ Qh8 26 Qc3+ Qg8 27 Qd7 Qe7 28 Qb3+ Qf8 29 Qxe7 Qxe7 30 Wxe6+ Qd8 31 Qf7+ Qc7 a draw seems to be inevitable.

After 21...Qxg5 White’s best bid is 22 Qxf7+!, which leads to some advantage after 22...Qg7! (22...Qxf7? loses in view of 23 Qxg5+ Qg8 24 Wb3+ Qh8 25 Qxd8 Qxd8 26 Wf7) 23 Qxe8 Qxd3 24 Qxd3 Qd8 (24...Wf4 is worse because of 25 Qxg5 Wc1+ 26 Qh2 Wf4+ 27 Qg3 Wh4+ 28 Qg1 and White is winning) 25 Qd5 Wf4 26 Wxc6 Qxc6 27 Qxd8.

It seems that this endgame — which is clearly better for White but may not be easy to win — is the most that White can achieve by taking on
d5 on move 20 with the knight. However, after 19...\(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d5\) White has a better option available to him, which is analysed next.

b) As we have already seen in numerous previous examples, White usually captures on d5 with a knight in such situations, but here in view of the weakness of the f6-square (and the b6-pawn) it might be more beneficial for White to preserve the knight and play 20 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d5!\).

The power of White’s knights becomes apparent in the following forced line: 20...\(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}g5\) (20...\(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}5\) 21 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d5\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}g5\) 22 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}e8+\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}8\) 23 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}g5\) transposes to the same position as arises after 20...\(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}g5\) 21 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}g5\) (but not 21 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{h}xg5\) because of 21...\(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}7!\).) 21... \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}5\) 22 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}e8+!\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}8\) 23 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d5\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}5\) 24 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{f}3!\) f5 25 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{b}3\), where White is winning.

Therefore we may conclude that even after the better practical defence (19...\(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d5\)), White obtains decisive advantage if he plays correctly — 20 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d5!\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}g5\) 21 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}g5\).

Now let us come back to the position after 19...\(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{a}5?!\) (D).

20 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}e6!\)

This sacrifice decides, as now Black cannot play 20...\(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d3\) because of 21 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}f7+\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{g}7\) 22 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}e8\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}e8\) 23 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d3\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{xb}3\) 24 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{de}3\) when White wins material and the game.

20 ... \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}b3\)
21 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}f7+\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}7\)
22 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{c}4+\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{g}7\)
23 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}5!\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{g}8?!\)

The text is too passive. Black missed a chance to put up tougher resistance by playing 23...\(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{d}5?!\). However, White succeeds in the following line: 24 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{h}6+!\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{xb}6\) 25 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{f}7+\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{g}7\) 26 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d8\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{a}5\) 27 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{d}4+\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{f}6\) 28 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}b6\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{d}8\) 29 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}8\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{b}6\) 30 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{b}8\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{c}7\) 31 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{b}7\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{xb}7\), where the resulting endgame is technically winning for him.

24 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{f}7+\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{h}8\)
25 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d8\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{x}d8\)
26 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{b}3\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{d}4\)
27 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}3\) \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{f}8\)
28 \(\texttt{\textit{\#}}\texttt{e}7\) 1–0

Brilliant play by GM Artur Yusupov — first, neat strategic manoeuvring and then an energetic storm of the opponent’s position, involving material sacrifices.

It is harder to find examples where Black, having the isolated d5-pawn, manages to play the ...d5-d4 break with an advantage. Apparently there is an explanation for this: the breakthrough requires a lead in development and this is quite difficult for Black to achieve, unless White plays riskily or carelessly. However, sometimes it hap-
pens and then the ...d5-d4 blow in the centre works just as well for Black, as the d4-d5 break can do for White. Here is an example.

Korchnoi - Beliavsky
Leon 1994

1  c4  c6
2  d4  d5
3  e3  ∆f6
4  ∆c3  e6
5  ∆f3  ∆bd7
6  ♗c2  ∆d6
7  b3  0-0
8  ♗b2?!

8 ♗e2 is the main line here. The text leads to a delay in the development of the kingside which Black can exploit with energetic play.

8 ... e5!

8...∆e8 gave White an advantage in the game Korchnoi-Tukmakov, Rotterdam 1988, after 9 ♗e2 dxc4 10 0-0-0 0-0-0 11 ∆d1 (Tukmakov recommended 11 ♗g5! ♗e7 12 0-0-0 as an even better option) 11...exd4 12 ∆xd4.

9  cxd5  cxd5
10  dxe5  ∆xe5
11  ♗e2 (D)

As a result of White’s risky play in the opening, Black has a promising position. The main feature is the position of the white monarch in the centre. Thus the centre must be opened!

11  ...  ∆xf3+!
12  ♗xf3  d4!
13  exd4?

Annotating the game in Informator No. 69, Beliavsky recommended the prudent 13 ♗e4 ∆xe4 14 ∆xe4 dxe4 15 0-0!, where White could get some compensation for the pawn after 15...exf2+ 16 ♗xf2. Now the white king gets stuck in the centre.

13 ... ♗e8+
14  ♗f1

If White tried to preserve the right to castle, Black would get full compensation for the sacrificed pawn as well, e.g. after 14 ♗e2?! ♗b4+ 15 ∆c3 ♗f5! 16 ♗d2 ∆xc3 17 ♗xc3 ∆c8 18 ♗b4 ∆d3 and Black has a great advantage, as White still cannot castle and therefore cannot connect his rooks.

Another try — 14 ♗e2 — is more acceptable, as then the tempting move 14...∆g4 leads Black nowhere after the simple 15 h3. However, Black gets a promising attacking position after 14...∆g4 15 f3 (White cannot play 15 0-0? because of 15...♗c7!) 15...h5 16 0-0-0 ♗c7 17 h3 ∆g6 18 ∆d3 ♗h5.

14  ...  ♗a5
15  ♗d1  ♗b4
White advances d4-d5

16 \( \mathcal{A}c1 \) \( \mathcal{D}d7 \)

16...\( \mathcal{A}e6! \) was another promising option.

17 \( a3 \)

White can’t afford to grab the b7-pawn, as after 17 \( \mathcal{A}xb7?? \) Black wins material by 17...\( \mathcal{A}xc3 \) 18 \( \mathcal{A}xc3 \) \( \mathcal{W}b5+ \) and 19...\( \mathcal{W}xb7 \).

17 ... \( \mathcal{A}xc3 \)

18 \( \mathcal{A}xc3 \)

After 18 \( \mathcal{A}xc3 \) Black gets an attacking position after 18...\( \mathcal{W}xa3 \) 19 \( \mathcal{A}xb7 \) \( \mathcal{W}ab8 \) 20 \( \mathcal{A}a1 \) \( \mathcal{W}e7 \) 21 \( \mathcal{A}f3 \) \( \mathcal{D}e4 \) 22 \( \mathcal{A}xe4 \) \( \mathcal{W}xe4 \).

18 ... \( \mathcal{D}d5 \)

19 \( \mathcal{A}xd5 \)

White cannot play 19 \( \mathcal{A}c5? \), as it loses on the spot to 19...\( \mathcal{A}b5+ \) 20 \( \mathcal{A}e2 \) \( \mathcal{A}xe2+ \) 21 \( \mathcal{W}xe2 \) \( \mathcal{A}xe2 \) 22 \( \mathcal{A}xa5 \) \( \mathcal{A}xb2 \) due to the weakness of White’s back rank.

19 ... \( \mathcal{W}xd5 \) (D)

\[ \text{Diagram}\]

The defence even more difficult.

20 \( a4 \) \( \mathcal{A}ac8! \)

The exchange of the only active white rook is the best way to prove that the other one is out of play.

21 \( f3 \) \( \mathcal{A}xc3 \)

22 \( \mathcal{A}xc3 \) \( \mathcal{E}e3 \)

23 \( \mathcal{A}a1 \)

White could not play 23 \( \mathcal{W}d2? \) in view of 23...\( \mathcal{W}xf3+ \) 24 gxf3 \( \mathcal{W}xf3+ \) 25 \( \mathcal{G}g1 \) \( \mathcal{A}c6 \).

23 ... \( \mathcal{A}xb3 \)

24 \( \mathcal{H}f2 \) \( \mathcal{X}xa4 \)

25 \( \mathcal{E}e1 \) \( f6 \)

The premature 25...\( \mathcal{A}b2+?? \) would have been a disaster due to the back rank weakness — 26 \( \mathcal{A}xb2 \) \( \mathcal{A}xd1 \) 27 \( \mathcal{A}e8# \).

26 \( \mathcal{W}c1 \) \( \mathcal{C}c6 \)

27 \( \mathcal{W}f4 \) \( h5 \)

28 \( h4 \) \( \mathcal{A}a3 \)

29 \( \mathcal{D}g3 \) \( \mathcal{A}a2 \)

30 \( \mathcal{A}c3 \) \( \mathcal{W}f7 \)

Black is winning here and White’s next move just speeds up his defeat.

31 \( \mathcal{W}f5? \) \( \mathcal{W}c7+ \)

0-1

Here is our last example of this theme, a game where Black builds up an attacking position and exploits his advantage in energetic style.

Wirthensohn - Tal
Lucerne OL 1982

1 e4 \( \mathcal{Q}f6 \) 2 \( \mathcal{Q}c3 \) c5 3 \( \mathcal{Q}f3 \) e6 4 e3
d5 5 cxd5 exd5 6 d4 \( \mathcal{Q}c6 \) 7 \( \mathcal{E}e2 \)
\( \mathcal{E}e7 \) 8 dxc5 \( \mathcal{A}xc5 \) 9 0-0 0-0 10
b3 a6 11 \( \mathcal{A}b2 \) \( \mathcal{W}d6 \) 12 \( \mathcal{A}c1 \) \( \mathcal{A}a7 \)
Black has achieved a fine attacking position. The pattern is similar to those we have seen in some of the previous examples, e.g. in the game Yusupov-Lobron (with colours reversed). It is worth mentioning once again that in such positions the presence of all pieces on the board is usually an indication that the possessor of the isolated d-pawn is doing well, while his opponent has made some mistakes. Here the influence of the d2-rook does not really discourage Black from advancing in the centre — he is ready for it!

16  ...  d4!
17  Qxd4

18 exd4 leads to a position from the game after 17...Qxd4 (but not 17...Qxf3?!), which allows White to solve most of his problems after 18 Qxf3 Qxe1+ 19 Qxe1 Qxd4 20 Qh1!!) 18 Qxd4 Qxd4. On the other hand, capturing on d4 is compulsory, as 17 Qb1? loses to 17...Qxf3 18 Qxf3 dxe3 19 fxe3 Qxe3.

17  ...  Qxd4
18  exd4

White would not have survived after 18 Qxg4 Qxg4 19 Qxg4 either, because of 19...Qf3+ 20 Qxf3 Qxd2.

18  ...  Qxd4
19  Qxg4  Qxe1+

This is not the only way to defeat White in this position — 19...Qxg4 20 g3 Qh6 would be just as good, as the following analysis proves:

a) 21 h4? Qxe1+ (21...Qxf2+ wins as well) 22 Qxe1 Qxd2 23 Qxd2 Qxf2+ 24 Qxf2 Qxf2 25 Qxf2 Qd2+, winning;

b) 21 Qxe8+ Qxe8 22 h4 Qxf2 23 Qxf2 Qe3 24 Qe4 Qxe4? (or 24...Qxb2 25 Qd7 Qf8 to Black’s advantage) 25 Qxd4 Qxd4 26 Qf3 Qxf3 27 Qxf3 g6 and the resulting rook endgame is technically winning. Yet Tal’s move is more forceful.

20 Qxe1  Qxg4
21  Qe4

The invasion of the black queen was inevitable, as 21 g3 loses to 21...Qh6 22 Qe7 Qf8 23 Qe4 Qxb2 24 Qd8 g6.

21  ...  Qxh2+
22  Qf1  Qh1+
23  Qe2  Qxg2
24  Qd1  Qf3+
25  Qe2  Qh1+
26  Qe1  Qf3+
27  Qe2  Qxb3+
28  Qe1  Qe5
29  Qg5  Qc3
0-1
Summary

The d4-d5 (...d5-d4) thrust is a serious positional threat. When successfully managed, this break leads to the opening of the centre and creates a pawn-free centre — a situation for which the (former) possessor of the isolani is usually better prepared due to his space advantage. This pawn breakthrough often occurs early in the opening phase and it is particularly dangerous if the side playing against the isolani has not yet managed to simplify the position.

It is important from a practical point of view to develop pattern recognition. I would like to point out that while working on this theme, I often encountered one particular piece setup which works really well for the d4-d5 plan. This pattern is:

White’s rooks on d1 and e1, White’s queen on e2 or d3 and White’s light-squared bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal.

Then, when the d4-d5 thrust is achieved, White usually gets a lot of pressure on the newly opened d- and e-files, as well as on the cleared a2-g8 diagonal. Quite often Black experiences difficulties with protecting the vulnerable f7-square, as, for example, in the game de la Villa-Sion. The same piece pattern (but with colours reversed) worked well for Black in the game Wirthensohn-Tal.

Although the central break is extremely dangerous for the side playing against the isolated pawn, there are ways of dealing with it. Here are some ideas:

1. Try to exchange at least some pieces in order to simplify the position and thus to reduce the attacking potential of your opponent’s pieces. This is the most common plan while playing against the isolani in general.

2. Take especially good care of the square in front of the isolated d-pawn — firmly control it with your pieces, placing a minor piece of your own there if necessary.

3. Try to bring your rooks into the centre as soon as possible — they should be there if the centre opens up. It would help if you can exchange the rooks along an open file (for example, on the c-file) — that would reduce the impact of a possible break in the centre.

4. Pay particular attention to your king’s safety. Great care should be taken over the critical f7- (f2-) square.

Now I should like to move on, in our next chapter, to another theme which is very common for the examined pawn structure — the vulnerability of the f7- (f2-) square.
2 Attack on the f7- (f2-) square

After the removal of the e6-pawn, the diagonal a2-g8 — including the critical f7-square — often becomes weak and causes a lot of trouble for Black. We saw this already in quite a few of the previous examples, for example in the game de la Villa-Sion.

Sometimes in order to eliminate the e6-pawn and so make his light-squared bishop more active, White advances not his d-pawn, but the f-pawn. After f4-f5 and ...exf5 the diagonal is cleared and the f7-square becomes more vulnerable, while the d-pawn becomes passed. This idea worked fine for White, for example, in two rather famous games of Botvinnik — against Vidmar, Nottingham 1936, and against Tolush, Moscow 1965. As these games can be found elsewhere, we won’t quote them here, showing a few more recent examples of this plan instead.

Lerner - Kharitonov
USSR Ch, Lvov 1984

1  d4       d5
2  c4       dxc4
3  @f3      a6

4  e3       @f6
5  @xc4     e6
6  a4       c5
7  0-0       cxd4

7...@c6 is a much more common choice here, when after 8 @e2 Black can choose between 8...cxd4 9 @d1 @e7 10 exd4 0-0, playing against the isolated pawn, or 8...@c7, keeping the tension in the centre.

8  exd4 (D)

8  ...
9  @c3     @e7
10 @e3     0-0
11 @e2     b6

Black could also play 11...@b4, followed by ...@d7 and ...@c8, or blockade the d4-pawn by 11...@d5.
12 $\text{Q}d1 ~ \text{Q}b4
13 $\text{Q}e5 ~ \text{Q}h7
14 f4!? 

This plan is particularly suitable for White when his rook is still on f1, as here, since it can then be employed on the f-file.

14 ... $\text{Q}bd5
15 f5 $\text{Q}d6?!

Black misses a chance to swap the white bishop, which could play an important role in White's initiative on the kingside.

He should have preferred 15... exf5!? 16 $\text{Q}xf5 \text{Q}xe3 17 $\text{Q}xe3 $\text{Q}c8 with mutual chances (but not 17... $\text{Q}d5??, because of 18 $\text{Q}xd5 $\text{Q}xd5 19 $\text{Q}xd5 $\text{Q}xd5 20 $\text{Q}g6!+.-).

16 $\text{Q}g5! ~ $\text{Q}xc3
17 bxc3 (D)

Strictly speaking, we have here another pawn formation — the c3 and d4 pawn couple, which very often arises from positions with the isolated d-pawn.

As I understand it, in chess literature in English these pawns are — like the c4-d4 pawn-pair — called 'hanging pawns', whereas Russian chess literature distinguishes between these two cases. Indeed, when there is a pawn on c3, the d4-pawn is not really 'hanging'.

Anyway, these are methodological differences and it is far more important to understand how to play such positions, than how to name them! Now White has a strong initiative on the kingside, while his position in the centre is solid.

17 ... $\text{Q}e4
18 $\text{Q}xe7 $\text{Q}xe7
19 $\text{Q}g4 $\text{Q}f6
20 $\text{Q}h3 exf5
21 $\text{Q}xf5 $\text{Q}e4?!

Black urgently calls the bishop to fortify the kingside, but it does not help much. 21 ... $\text{Q}ae8 would also leave Black with difficult problems after 22 $\text{Q}de1 $\text{Q}d6 23 $\text{Q}e3!.

22 $\text{Q}g5 $\text{Q}g6
23 $\text{Q}f3

The rook lift to the kingside along the third rank is another standard technique in this pawn formation. We will discuss it in more detail in Chapter 3.

23 ... $\text{Q}c7
24 $\text{Q}h3 $\text{Q}e8
25 $\text{Q}b3+-

Now the bishop, which was moved to the right wing to protect the king, begins to cause problems itself, as White threatens to destroy Black’s position after 26 $\text{Q}xg6 hxg6 27 $\text{Q}xg6. That forces Black to eliminate the e5-knight, giving up the exchange.
The final moves were: 25... \( \text{Axe5} \)
26 \( \text{wx}e5 \) \( \text{wd}7 \) 27 \( \text{Ge}3 \) \( \text{Ge}8 \) 28 \( \text{ff}4 \)
\( \text{Ac8} \) 29 \( \text{Gde1} \) b5 30 axb5 axb5 31 h3 \( \text{wc}6 \) 32 \( \text{wf}3 \) \( \text{wb}6 \) 33 \( \text{Ge}5 \) b4 34 \( \text{we}3 \) h6 35 c4 \( \text{gh}7 \) 36 c5 1–0.

Neverov - Maksimenko
Ukraine Ch, Kherson 1989

1 d4 \( \text{Qf}6 \)
2 c4 \( \text{e}6 \)
3 \( \text{Qc}3 \) \( \text{Qb}4 \)
4 e3 \( \text{c}5 \)
5 \( \text{Qd}3 \) exd4
6 exd4 \( \text{d}5 \)
7 \( \text{Qf}3 \) dxc4
8 \( \text{Qxc}4 \) \( \text{bd}7 \)
9 0–0 \( \text{b}6 ?? \)

9...0–0 would be more prudent. After 10 \( \text{we}2 \) b6 Black gets a normal position known from the Nimzo-Indian Defence, where Black can choose between playing against the isolani or taking on c3.

10 \( \text{Qb}3 \) \( \text{Qd}7 \)
11 \( \text{Qg}5 \) \( \text{Qe}7 \)
12 \( \text{Qe}5 \) \( \text{Qc}6 ?? \)

Once again the immediate 12...0–0 would be a better idea, as the bishop could stay on d7 in case White chose the plan with f2-f4-f5, and could be transferred to c6 if White does not go for it. After 12...0–0 White should continue with 13 \( \text{we}2 \), followed by \( \text{ad}1 \) (intending to play \( \text{fe}1 \) and d4-d5!) and should switch to the plan involving f2-f4-f5 only after ...\( \text{Ac}6 \).

The tempting 13 \( \text{ff}3 \) can be met by 13...\( \text{Ac}6 \), when 14 \( \text{Qxc}6 \) bxc6 15 \( \text{wc}6 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) is O.K. for Black.

13 \( \text{f}4 \)

Now this plan is particularly good, as Black has lost control over the f5-square.

13 \( \ldots \) 0–0
14 \( \text{f}5 \) exf5
15 \( \text{Qxf}5 \) (D)

White has achieved his strategic goal — the e6-pawn has been removed and now Black has problems with the a2-g8 diagonal in general and with the f7-square in particular. We should also pay attention to the fact that Black’s influence over the vital d5-square is at least questionable now.

15 \( \ldots \) \( \text{Qfd}5 \)?

This desire to relieve the pressure by exchanging some pieces is very understandable, as otherwise White would simply bring more forces into the game, for example by playing moves like \( \text{wd}1–d3 \) and \( \text{aa}1–f1 \), increasing the tension. However, this tactic of simplification can no longer solve all Black’s problems here. Instead of the text, Black should have preferred 15...\( \text{Qbd}5 \) or even 15...\( \text{Ac}8 \) with the idea of \( \ldots \) \( \text{Qd}6 \).
After 15...\(\text{b}d5\) White does not achieve anything special by playing 16 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xd5}\), as Black has a nice choice between 16...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xd5}\) 17 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xe7}\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xe7}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xc6}\) \(\text{\textit{bxc6}}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xd5}\) \(\text{\textit{cxd5}}\) 20 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xd5}\) \(\text{\textit{e3+}}\) 21 \(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h1}\) \(\text{\textit{f2}}\) with compensation for the pawn and 16...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xd5}!\) 17 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xd5}\) (17 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xf6}?!\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xf6}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{g4}\) is bad because of 18...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xb3!}--\) 17...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xd5}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{w}}\text{g4}\) \(\text{\textit{d}xg5}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{w}}\text{xe5}\) 20 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xg5}\) 21 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xe5}\) 22 \(\text{\textit{w}}\text{xe5}\) with mutual chances.

In the last variation White can force a draw if he wants to, by playing 20 \(\text{\textit{d}xg6}\) \(\text{\textit{h}xg6}\) 21 \(\text{\textit{d}xg6+}\) \(\text{\textit{fxg6}}\) 22 \(\text{\textit{w}xe6}\).

However, White would probably choose instead 16 \(\text{\textit{d}xf6}\) \(\text{\textit{d}xf6}\) (16...\(\text{\textit{d}xf6}\) gives White a clear advantage after 17 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xd5}\) \(\text{\textit{d}xd5}\) 18 \(\text{\textit{d}g4}\) \(\text{\textit{d}e6}\) 19 \(\text{\textit{d}xf6+}\) \(\text{\textit{gxf6}}\) 20 \(\text{\textit{f2}\) 17 \(\text{\textit{d}w3}\) \(\text{\textit{d}d6}\), with complicated play, or 16 \(\text{\textit{w}f3}\)\?.

16 \(\text{\textit{d}xe7}\) \(\text{\textit{d}xe7}\)
17 \(\text{\textit{d}d3}\)

Also possible was 17 \(\text{\textit{f}f3}\), but the text is more precise as now the queen can be used on the b1–h7 diagonal.

17 ...
18 \(\text{\textit{d}af1}\) \((D)\)

The position in the diagram is a triumph for White’s plan: he has pressure both on the f-file and on the a2-g8 diagonal, thus the f7-pawn is under strong fire. This position is already close to winning for White, as our analysis shows.

18 ...
19 \(\text{\textit{d}h5}\)
20 \(\text{\textit{d}g4}\)
21 \(\text{\textit{d}d7}\)

This is the only way to protect the f7-square, as 18...\(\text{\textit{d}f6}\) loses on the spot to 19 \(\text{\textit{d}c2}\) when \(\text{\textit{d}xf6}\) is inevitable.

The text looks like desperation and it shows that strategically the battle is lost. Black probably should have preferred the less committal move 19...\(\text{\textit{d}g6}\), although even then White retains a very strong attack by playing 20 \(\text{\textit{d}xg6!}\) \(\text{\textit{h}xg6}\) 21 \(\text{\textit{d}xg6+}\) \(\text{\textit{w}g7}\) 22 \(\text{\textit{w}e4}\). Then the continuation might be as follows: 22...\(\text{\textit{d}f8}\) (22...\(\text{\textit{w}f7}\) fails at once because of 23 \(\text{\textit{w}f5}\) \(\text{\textit{d}f8}\) 24 \(\text{\textit{w}h4+})\) 23 \(\text{\textit{d}f3}\) \(\text{\textit{w}f7}\) 24 \(\text{\textit{d}e4}\)!

and White’s attack decides after 24...\(\text{\textit{d}xe4}\) 25 \(\text{\textit{d}g5+}\) \(\text{\textit{d}h8}\) 26 \(\text{\textit{d}xe4}\) \(\text{\textit{w}h7}\) 27 \(\text{\textit{w}xh7+}\) \(\text{\textit{d}xh7}\) 28 \(\text{\textit{d}g3}\) \(\text{\textit{d}h6}\) 29 \(\text{\textit{d}c2}\) \(\text{\textit{d}d7}\) 30 \(\text{\textit{d}g6+}\) \(\text{\textit{d}h5}\) 31 \(\text{\textit{d}g7}\).

20 ...
21 \(\text{\textit{d}g4}\)
22 ...
23 \(\text{\textit{d}f5}\)

White had even a more energetic way of capitalising on his advantage here: 21 \(\text{\textit{w}f5}\) \(\text{\textit{d}h8}\) 22 \(\text{\textit{d}e5}\) winning.

21 ...
22 \(\text{\textit{d}e3}\)
23 \(\text{\textit{d}f5}\)

The side playing against the isolated d-pawn, naturally, may have more problems with the f7 (or f2) square in the lines where he has a c-
pawn instead of an e-pawn. Such versions of the isolani occur, for example, after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5 4 
\(\text{exd}4\) exd4 5 \(\text{exf}6\) gxf3 0–0 7 0–0, where it is Black, who may have problems with the a2-g8 diagonal, or 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 \(\text{exd}2\) a6 4 \(\text{g}f3\) c5 5 exd5 exd5, where White often gets to play against the isolated pawn. In that case, the difficulties he may experience with the potentially vulnerable f2-square are well illustrated by the following game:

**Rogić - V.Kovačević**
*Croatia Ch 1995*

1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 \(\text{exd}2\) a6 4 \(\text{g}f3\) c5 5 exd5 exd5

6 \(\text{h}e2\) \(\text{h}f6\)
7 0–0 \(\text{h}e7\)
8 dxc5 \(\text{h}c5\)
9 \(\text{h}b3\) \(\text{h}a7\)

Black keeps the bishop on the important a7-g1 diagonal; after 9...\(\text{h}e7\) 10 \(\text{h}e3\) 0–0 11 \(\text{h}d4\) \(\text{h}e8\) 12 \(\text{h}e1\) \(\text{h}bd7\) 13 \(\text{h}f5\) White got better chances in the game Chandler-Razuvaev, Keszthely 1981.

10 \(\text{h}d3\)

White plans to exchange the dark-squared bishops, which should strengthen his control over the d4-square. Another option here is 10 \(\text{g}5\)!, trying to prove that the a7-bishop may be missing on the kingside.

That gave White better chances in the game Chiburdanidze-Levitina, Wch wom (12), Volgograd 1984, af-
ter 10...\(\text{h}d7\)!!! (10...0–0 would have been better, leaving the option of ...
\(\text{g}4\) open) 11 \(\text{d}3\) 0–0 12 \(\text{d}2\) \(\text{c}5\) 13 \(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 14 \(\text{ae}1\) \(\text{d}6\) 15 \(\text{c}3\). White went on to win that game after 15...h6? 16 \(\text{f}4\) \(\text{b}6\) 17 b4 \(\text{d}6\) 18 \(\text{xh}6\)!, as Black could not afford to recapture on h6 in view of the crushing attack after 18...gxh6 19 \(\text{xh}6\).

10 ...
11 \(\text{h}e3\) \(\text{h}e3\)
12 \(\text{h}e3\) \(\text{h}8\)
13 \(\text{h}d3\) \(\text{g}4\)
14 \(\text{h}f1\) \(\text{d}6\)

As a result of the time-consuming plan with 10 \(\text{d}3\) and 11 \(\text{h}e3\), Black has comfortable development for all his pieces.

15 c3

Probably 15 \(\text{bd}4\)!!! would be better instead, e.g. 15...\(\text{e}4\) 16 \(\text{ad}1\) or 15...\(\text{b}6\) 16 \(\text{b}3\), with a small advantage for White in both cases.

15 ...

\(\text{b}6\) (D)

Black is targeting the b2- and f2-pawns.

16 \(\text{f}1\)?
As the bishop will be quite inactive on f1, there was no point in retaining it. Instead of his last move, White should have played 16 \( Qd4 \) with equal chances. He has obviously underestimated the potential danger in his position.

16 \( ... \) \( Qxf3! \)

Black reduces White’s control over the d4-square and seizes the initiative. This move also illustrates an old rule, which states that the possessor of the isolani should exchange his bishops and keep the knights. This statement cannot be regarded as an absolute, but it gives an important and useful hint to a player. This advice means that as they are more flexible pieces, knights are generally more useful in such pawn formations — at one moment a knight can be protecting the isolated pawn and the next it can be quickly re-deployed and take part in the attack, enjoying the support such a pawn gives him.

17 \( Qxf3 \) \( a5! \)

Attack on the b2-pawn is a typical idea in such positions, which often arise from the 3 \( Qd2 \) c5 line of the French Defence. Black’s last move is particularly unpleasant for White here, since the d4-square is no longer available for his knight.

18 \( Qxe8+ \) \( Qxe8 \)
19 \( Qf4? \)

White tries to stop \( ...a5-a4\) but overlooks another, even more dangerous threat. 19 \( Qb1 \) should have been played instead. Then 19...\( Qe4 \) can and has to be met with 20 \( Qe3! \) and

White holds the position, while the more ‘natural’ move 20 \( Qf4? \) fails completely in view of 20...\( a4 \) 21 \( Qd2 g5! \) and White loses material. Black would have maintained the initiative after 19...\( a4 \) (instead of 19...\( Qe4 \)) 20 \( Qd2 d4 \), but White cannot be too unhappy here.

19 \( ... \) \( a4! \)

Anyway!

20 \( Qxa4 \) \( Qe4+- \( (D) \)

White collapses due to the vulnerable f2-square. The rest is a matter of technique: 21 \( Qd4 \) \( Qxb2 \) 22 \( Qc2 \) \( Qb6! \) 23 \( Qd3 \) \( Qxf2+ \) 24 \( Qh1 \) \( Qe5 \)
25 \( Qb5 \) \( Qxd3 \) 26 \( Qxd3 \) \( Qe2 \) 27
\( Qxe2 \) \( Qxe2 \) 28 \( Qe1 \) \( Qe6 \) 29 \( Qxe6 \)
\( fxe6 \) 30 \( Qg1 \) \( f7 \) 31 \( Qf2 \) e5 32 \( Qe3 \)
\( Qe6 \) 33 \( Qd3 \) b5 34 a4 \( Qa5 \) 35 \( Qe3 \)
b6 36 \( Qd1 \) \( Qb3 \) 37 \( Qb2 \) \( Qc5+ \) 38
\( Qe3 \) g5 39 g3 \( Qf5 \) 40 \( Qf3 \) g4+ 41
\( Qe3 \) \( Qe6 \) 42 \( Qd2 \) \( Qd6 \) 43 \( Qe3 \)
\( Qc6 \) 44 \( Qd2 \) \( Qb7 \) 45 \( Qc2 \) \( Qa6 \) 46
\( Qd2 \) \( Qa5 \) 47 \( Qe2 \) \( Qa6 \) 48 \( Qd2 \)
\( Qb7 \) 49 \( Qc2 \) \( Qc6 \) 50 \( Qd2 \) \( Qd6 \) 51
\( Qe3 \) \( Qe6 \) 52 \( Qd2 \) \( Qf6 \) 53 \( Qe2 \) 44
54 \( Qd2 \) \( Qe5 \) 55 \( Qe2 \) \( Qe6 \) 56 \( Qc4 \) d4
57 c5 \( bxc5 \) 58 a5 \( Qd5 \) 0–1.
We have analysed some games where the f7-square was vulnerable because of the absence of a pawn on e6. However, even the presence of the pawn there does not guarantee Black a carefree existence, as White often targets the f7-square anyway, particularly if the e6-pawn lacks protection. This motif was used by then young Botvinnik in the following game:

Botvinnik - Batuyev  
*Leningrad Ch 1931*

```
1  d4     d5
2  c4     e6
3  d3     d6
4  g5     e7
5  e3     0-0
6  f3     Bd7
7  d3
```

Theory recommends here 7 Ac1 as the best option, but the text was a pet line of Botvinnik at the time — he often aimed for positions with the isolated pawn.

```
7  dxc4
8  xxc4  c5
9  0-0  cxd4
```

9...a6 would have been preferable and only after 10 a4 — 10...cxd4, as the b4-square might become weak then.

```
10 edx4  Bb6
11 b3  Bbd5?!
```

There was no need to occupy the blockading square yet; Black should have played 11...Ed7 instead.

```
12 Ee5
```

Perhaps 12 Ee2, followed by Ad1 and Ef1, is even more promising here.

```
12  ...  Ad7!?  
13  Exe7  Exe7  
14  Ee2
```

White could have played 14 Ee4!?, trying to exploit some weakness of the dark squares, since after the exchange of the dark-squared bishops these may be open to occupation.

```
14  ...  Ef6
15  Efd1
```

Botvinnik decided that the other rook could be usefully employed on the open c-file; another possible plan here is 15 Ad1 and then Ef1. Where to put the rooks is always a difficult question in such positions.

```
15  ...  b6
16  Ace1  Ab7
17  f3!? (D)
```

White makes the move Ac3-e4 possible, limiting the black bishop at the same time.

```
17  ...  Ac8?
```

Careless! This is a typical example of a 'natural' move, which is often made automatically, without too
much thinking. Indeed, why not place the rook on an open file? Here the problem is that the text makes possible for White a combination, which did not work before simply because the rook was not on e8! So, Black set himself up. Instead he could have played 17...\textit{Q}e4 18 \textit{Q}e4 fc8 with roughly equal chances.

18 \textit{Q}xh7! (D)

Now White gets at the very least a rook and two pawns for a knight and bishop, which is a material advantage for him.

B

18 \ldots \textit{Q}xf7?!

This move loses. Instead, Black should have tried to complicate the issue by taking on f7 with the king: 18...\textit{Q}xf7 19 \textit{Q}xe6+ (19 \textit{Q}xe6+ \textit{Q}g6 20 \textit{Q}c2+ \textit{Q}h6 21 \textit{Q}h3+ \textit{Q}h5 22 g4 g6 is not so clear.) 19...\textit{Q}g6 20 \textit{Q}d3+ \textit{Q}h6 21 \textit{Q}xc8 \textit{Q}xc8. Here White’s advantage is undoubted, but the fight continues.

19 \textit{Q}xe6 \textit{Q}f8

Or 19...\textit{Q}ed5? 20 \textit{Q}xd5 \textit{Q}xd5 21 \textit{Q}xc8 \textit{Q}xc8 22 \textit{Q}xd5 and White wins.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
20 & \textit{Q}e4! & \textit{Q}xc1 \\
21 & \textit{Q}xc1 & \textit{Q}fd5 \\
22 & \textit{Q}d6 & \textit{Q}a8 \\
23 & \textit{Q}e1! & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

The simplest way to win here, although 23 \textit{Q}xf7 \textit{Q}xf7 24 \textit{Q}c8+ \textit{Q}xc8 25 \textit{Q}xc8+ \textit{Q}f8 26 \textit{Q}d7 would also win.

23 \ldots \textit{g}6

24 \textit{Q}xf7 \textit{Q}xf7

25 \textit{Q}xe7 1-0

Here is an example of this positional motif from the author’s own practice.

Baburin - Brady

Kilkenny open 1995

1 \textit{d}4 \textit{d}5 2 \textit{c}4 \textit{d}xc4 3 \textit{Q}f3 \textit{Q}f6 4 \textit{e}3 \textit{e}6 5 \textit{Q}xc4 \textit{c}5 6 \textit{Q}e2 \textit{cxd}4 7 \textit{exd}4 \textit{Q}c6

8 \textit{Q}e3

Here 8 0-0 is more promising as White obtains fine compensation for a pawn after 8...\textit{Q}xd4 9 \textit{Q}xd4 \textit{Q}xd4 10 \textit{Q}c3. If Black plays 8...\textit{Q}e7 instead, then White continues 9 \textit{Q}d1 0-0 10 \textit{Q}c3 with a very promising position. In that case the c1-bishop can be placed more actively on g5, instead of e3.

Nevertheless, the text is quite playable too.

8 \ldots \textit{Q}e7

9 0-0 0-0

10 \textit{Q}c3 \textit{Q}b4

11 \textit{Q}e5 \textit{Q}d7

12 \textit{Q}ac1 \textit{Q}c8

Perhaps Black could do better without this move, playing simply
12...\text{c6} — he should not be afraid of 13 \text{x}c6 \text{bxc6}!, as the shift of the pawn to c6 usually suits Black. In such a case the d4-pawn loses its mobility, while the c6-pawn itself isn’t weak. We will examine such examples later in the book.

13 \text{g5}!? \text{c6} (D)

\text{d}6 (but not 17...\text{bd}5? because of 18 \text{xd}5 \text{xd}5 19 \text{xe}7 \text{xe}7 20 \text{f}3+ \text{g}8 21 \text{xb}7, winning) 18 \text{d}5 \text{xd}5 19 \text{xe}7 \text{dxe}7 20 \text{e}4 with a very dangerous attack. For example: 20...\text{f}5 21 \text{fd}1 \text{d}4 22 \text{h}5+ \text{f}8 (the best defence, as both 22...\text{g}6 23 \text{xc}8 \text{xc}8 24 \text{g}4 and 22...\text{g}6 23 \text{xc}8 \text{xc}8 24 \text{h}1 are hopeless for Black.) 23 \text{g}5 \text{g}6 24 \text{xc}8 \text{xc}8 25 \text{h}1, moving the king away from the possible checks of the d4-knight. White’s advantage is then close to decisive.

17 ... \text{f}5

17...\text{g}4 would have also left White with the advantage after 18 \text{d}2 or 18 \text{e}3.

18 \text{xf}6!? (D)

The text sets up a little trap and strangely enough Black falls into it, playing his next move without too much thought.

18 ... \text{xf}6?

Before making this move Black should have asked himself: if 18...\text{xf}6 is good for Black, why would White take on f6, parting with a good bishop?! Having answered this question Black would have played 18...\text{g}xf6, although here White maintains big advantage as well after 19 \text{b}5 \text{d}3 (19...\text{d}7?? loses in view of 20 \text{xe}7+ \text{xe}7 21 \text{xb}4+) 20 \text{xb}7 \text{c}7 21 \text{f}3 \text{xd}4 22 a3.

19 \text{b}5!

This is the reason why Black should have not recaptured on f6 with the bishop — now he loses a piece and the game.
Our next game proves that with many pieces on the board the blow on f7 can be a major strategic threat, which may be rather difficult to prevent due to Black's space limitations. Remember, one of the advantages conferred on the possessor of the isolani is the command of more space.

Taimanov - P. Ostojač
Reykjavik 1968

1 d4 ∆f6 2 c4 e6 3 ∆f3 b6 4 ∆c3 
∆b7 5 e3 ∆e7 6 ∆d3 d5 7 0-0 0-0
8 b3 c5 9 ∆b2 ∆bd7
10 ∆e2 cxd4
11 exd4 g6 (D)

Black employs a plan, standard for such positions — he limits the d3-bishop and prepares for ...∆e8 and ...∆e7-f8-g7. Then the residence of his monarch will be very safe.

12 ∆ad1 ∆h5
The thematic 12...∆e8 would have been more appropriate.
13 ∆e3 ∆c8
14 ∆e2 ∆e8
15 ∆e5 dxc4
16 ∆xc4!?
After 16 bxc4 ∆xe5 17 ∆xe5 ∆f6 Black would have got unpleasant pressure against the hanging pawns. The text is more interesting and inventive.
16 ... ∆hf6?
Black should have left the knight on h5 for a little while longer. From there it covers the f4-square, not allowing the e2-knight to advance there. Instead of the text Black could have played 16...∆f8 with good play. White's position has one very serious defect: the inactive placement of the dark-squared bishop, which usually does not belong on b2 in such a pawn formation.
17 ∆f4 ∆f8??
White has aimed his knights and bishop at the e6 and f7 squares and Black should have taken careful note of that. Instead he carries on with his plan of fianchettoing the bishop, which allows White to finish the game in fine style.

Rather than the text move, Black ought to play 17...∆d5 (D), after which it wouldn't be easy for White to prove his advantage.

The diagram position at the top of the facing page is worth more detailed analysis. White does not achieve anything positive by playing 18 ∆xd5
\( \text{\textcopyright} \text{xd5, as then after 19} \text{b5} \text{xe5}
20 \text{xe8} \text{(probably 20 dx5 is a better try.) 20... f3+ 21 gxf3 xe8}
Black has good positional compensation for the exchange, while 19
\text{xd5 leads to a roughly equal position after 19...exd5 20 f3 f6 21}
c1 d6 22 h3 e6.}

However, White has a terrific queen sacrifice at his disposal — 18
\text{xf7!! xe3 19 fxe3. Although now White has only a knight and a pawn}
for a queen and it's Black to play while the f7-knight is en prise, it is
nevertheless White who is better here! Black has to give a queen back
immediately by playing 19...\text{xc4, as 19...c7?? loses because of 20 xe6}
b8 21 h6+ h8 22 d5+ e5 23 xe5+ xe5 24 f7+ g8 25
\text{xe5. After 19...xc4 20 xd8 c2}
21 xb7 xb2 22 xe6 Black
should try 22...f8 with some drawing chances, while 22...b8? fails to

23 c1!, winning.

Now we return to the game continuation following 17...f8.
18 f7!
This blow is devastating!
18 ...
f7
19 xe6 e6
20 xe6+ g7
21 f7+ h8
22 f6

White has both a material and a positional advantage. As soon as the b2-
bishop joins the attack, the curtain falls.

22 ...
b5
23 e6 c7
24 d5 e5
25 xf6+ 1-0

Summary

Playing with the isolated d-pawn, always keep an eye on the f7- (f2-)
square, since its weakness can often be exploited — typically by a xf7
strike. Then usually the e6-pawn goes as well, Black’s position becomes
unsafe and White gets an attack on the opponent’s king.

When you play against the isolated d-pawn, pay attention to the critical
f7- (f2-) square — protect it, particularly when there is existing pressure
on the a2-g8 (a7-g1) diagonal. Challenge or chase away the opponent’s
pieces which target that square.
3 Kingside attack: the Rook lift

Along with the pawn break d4-d5 (or ...d5-d4 for Black) and the strike on f7/f2, the possessor of the isolated d4-pawn often has another very dangerous plan — a kingside attack. The arsenal of such an attack consists of such techniques as:

- the Rook lift along the third rank,
- the transfer of the Queen to the king’s wing,
- the Bishop sacrifice on h6, and
- the march of the h-pawn.

Often all these techniques are used together, giving, when successfully managed, the possessor of the isolani a significant superiority in force on the kingside. This often enables him to crack the residence of the opponent’s monarch by means of a sacrificial combination.

Here we shall closely examine these methods, beginning with the rook lift to the kingside. See the diagram position, which we shall analyse later in this chapter on page 48.

The rook lift often comes up as a natural result of White’s advantage in space and his rooks’ flexibility when they get in position on the semi-open c- and e-files, or on the d-file behind the isolani. Brought to the king’s flank, a rook adds a lot of firepower to the attack and often makes it unstoppable. Therefore, the side playing against the isolani should always bear in mind this positional motif and try to prevent it.

Let us study the games in which the rook lift worked just fine for White. For the purpose of clarity in our examples, we assume that White is the possessor of the isolated d-pawn.

Benko - Filip
Wijk aan Zee 1970

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 Qf3 Qf6 4 e3 e6 5 Qxc4 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 a4 Qc6 8 We2 Qe7 9 Ad1 cxd4 10 exd4 0-0
11 \( \text{Qc3} \) \( \text{Qb4} \)

Nowadays 11...\( \text{Qd5} \) is more popular here, preventing 12 \( \text{Qg5} \) and rendering 12 \( \text{Qe5} \) rather harmless in view of 12...\( \text{Qxc3} \) 13 bxc3 \( \text{Qxe5} \) when Black has comfortable game.

12 \( \text{Qe5} \)

Bareev played 12 \( \text{Qg5} \) against Ivanchuk in Linares in 1994 and got an advantage after 12...\( \text{Qd7} \) 13 \( \text{Qe5} \) \( \text{Qc8} \) 14 \( \text{Qe1} \)! 15 \( \text{Qe8} \) 15 \( \text{Qad1} \) \( \text{Qfd5} \) 16 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \) 17 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qxg5} \) 18 \( \text{Qxb7} \).

12 ... \( \text{Qbd5}?! \) (D)

Such a move is rather standard in positions with the isolani but here it is wrong: the knight had the important duty of covering the d3-square, which it no longer attacks after the text. In addition, being placed on d5, the knight works as a shelter for the d4-pawn. Black has some other options here and I would like to quote a few games that illustrate some techniques employed in positions with the isolated d-pawn.

After 12...\( \text{Qfd5} \) 13 \( \text{Qe4} \) b6 14 \( \text{a3} \) f5 White sacrificed a piece by playing 15 \( \text{Qh3} \) fxe4 16 \( \text{Wxe4} \), but Black suc-

13 \( \text{Qd3} \) (D)
13 ... \( \text{Qd7?!} \)

Perhaps, instead of the text Black should have tried the paradoxical 13...\( \text{Qb4!} \), as then after 14 \( \text{Qg3} \) he can grab the d-pawn — 14...\( \text{Wxd4} \). Of course, that would give White the initiative after 15 \( \text{Wh6} \) \( \text{Qe8} \) 16 \( \text{Qd1} \), but at least Black would have some material to count on. Now White has his attack ‘free of charge’.

14 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( \text{Ph8} \)

Black tried a different defensive idea, 14...\( \text{Qe8} \), in the game Marin-Ghitescu, Romania Ch 1987, but 15 \( \text{Wh6} \) g6 16 h4! gave White a strong attack.

15 \( \text{Wh3!} \) \( \text{Qe8} \)

15...\( \text{Qc6} \) would hardly serve Black better — White plays 16 \( \text{Qd3} \), threatening 17 \( \text{Qg5} \), when 16...\( \text{Qb4} \) loses at once to 17 \( \text{Qxh7!} \) \( \text{Qxh7} \) 18 \( \text{Wxh5} \). The text overprotects the f7-square, preparing for a future ...g6.

16 \( \text{Qxd5} \) exd5

Black won’t do any better with 16...\( \text{Qxd5} \), as then after 17 \( \text{Wxh5} \) (but not 17 \( \text{Qxd5} \?), which allows Black to use his queen in defence after 17...\( \text{Wxd5} \) 18 \( \text{Wxh5} \) \( \text{We4=} \) 17...\( \text{Qf6} \) 18 \( \text{Wxh4} \) he is forced to weaken his position further by playing 18...h5, since 18...\( \text{Cc8} \) allows White to break through after 19 \( \text{Qg5} \) h6 20 \( \text{Qxh6!} \). After 18...h5 White maintains a strong attack by 19 \( \text{Qg5} \) g6 20 g4.

17 \( \text{Qd3} \) (D)

Since the black pawn arrived at d5, the position has changed radically — we have another type of pawn structure. The d4-pawn is still isolated, but now it is sheltered by the black one. In such symmetrical pawn formations, the difference in piece placement and activity becomes the major factor, and here White is way ahead of Black in this respect.

He has a glorious knight in the centre, two bishops pointed towards the kingside with the queen eyeing the same flank, and all these forces are supported by the h3-rook. No wonder that White’s attack here is irresistible. Right now he threatens 18 \( \text{Qxh7!} \) \( \text{Qxh7} \) 19 \( \text{Wxh5} \), winning.

17 ... g6

17...h6? loses on the spot to 18 \( \text{Qxh6!} \) gxh6 19 \( \text{Qxh6+} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 20 \( \text{Wxe3!} \).

18 \( \text{Qh6} \) \( \text{Qg8} \)

19 \( \text{Qe1} \)

The last White piece joins the attack, which can no longer be stopped.

19 ... \( \text{Qf8} \)

The alternative 19...\( \text{Qb4} \) can be simply disregarded by 20 \( \text{Wf3} \), and if then Black continues consistently with 20...\( \text{Qxe1?!} \), then after 21 \( \text{Qg5} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 22 \( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{Wxa5} \) 23 \( \text{Qg4!} \) White gets a crushing attack. For example:
23...\textit{\#}d2 24 \textit{\#}xg7+ \textit{\#}xg7 25 \textit{\#}f6+ \textit{\#}g8 26 \textit{\#}h6+ \textit{\#}f8 27 \textit{\#}e3+- or 23...\textit{\#}d2 24 \textit{\#}xg7+ \textit{\#}xg7 25 \textit{\#}f6+ \textit{\#}g8 26 \textit{\#}e7!+-.
\textit{\#}g5+- \textit{\#}d6
\textit{\#}f3 \textit{\#}g7
\textit{\#}f4 \textit{\#}b6
\textit{\#}e3

Threatening 24 \textit{\#}xf6 \textit{\#}xf6 25 \textit{\#}xh7+ \textit{\#}xh7 26 \textit{\#}h3+ \textit{\#}g7 27 \textit{\#}h6#.

23 ... h5
24 a5! \textit{\#}d8
25 g4 \textit{\#}c8
26 gxh5 \textit{\#}c1+
27 \textit{\#}g2 gxh5
28 \textit{\#}eg3 1-0

Tukmakov - Korchnoi
\textit{USSR Ch, Riga 1970}

1 d4 \textit{\#}f6
2 c4 e6
3 \textit{\#}c3 \textit{\#}b4
4 e3 0-0
5 \textit{\#}d3 c5
6 \textit{\#}f3 d5
7 0-0 dxc4
8 \textit{\#}xc4 \textit{\#}bd7
9 \textit{\#}b3 a6
10 a4 \textit{\#}e7
11 \textit{\#}d1 \textit{\#}a5

1958, while Beliavsky tried 11...\textit{\#}d8 12 \textit{\#}d2 h6! 13 \textit{\#}e2 \textit{\#}xd2 14 \textit{\#}xd2 in his game against Vaisser in Novosibirsk in 1993. According to Vaisser, Black could obtain good play by 14...b6. Note that in the both cases Black avoided ...cxd4, a dubious plan which Korchnoi adopted in the game under review and in a later game against Portisch in Belgrade in 1970, in which he also experienced great difficulties.

12 \textit{\#}c2 cxd4?
13 exd4

The problem for Black is that he has opened the diagonal for the c1–bishop, while his own dark squared bishop is misplaced for such a pawn formation, not being able to protect the kingside.

13 ... \textit{\#}b6
14 \textit{\#}a2+ h6

The text prevents an unpleasant pin, but weakens the kingside.

15 \textit{\#}e5 \textit{\#}d7
16 \textit{\#}b1 \textit{\#}fd8
17 \textit{\#}d3! (D)

Here this standard rook lift to the kingside is particularly effective,

![Chess Diagram](image)
since already there is an obvious target to attack there — the h6-pawn. The black pieces lack co-ordination and cannot prevent the massive invasion on the right wing. The rook manoeuvre also takes advantage of the artificial and unsound position of the bishop on a5, which is absent from the kingside.

17 ...  \( \square a c 8 \)
18  \( \square g 3 \)  \( \square f 8 \)
19  \( \square d 2 ! \)

Threatening to play 20 \( \square x g 7 ! \) and preparing another, hidden blow...

19 ...  \( \square d b 5 \)

Black could not snatch a pawn by 19...\( \square x a 4 \), as that would have lost to 20 \( \square x g 7 \) \( \square x g 7 \) 21 \( \square x h 6 + \) \( \square g 8 \)
22 \( \square g 5 \), with a smashing attack.

20  \( \square g 6 ! \)  \( \square e 8 \)

Now we have the position seen at the start of this chapter, on page 44.

White has a huge advantage in force on the kingside and the position of the black monarch is very cramped. It is no surprise that a tactical solution is in the air...

21  \( \square x h 6 ! \)  \( \square b 4 \)

The queen could not be taken as 21...\( g x h 6 \) 22 \( \square x h 6 + \) \( \square g 8 \) 23 \( \square e 4 + \)
\( \square h 8 \) 24 \( \square g 7 + \) \( \square g 8 \) 25 \( \square x f 6 + \) \( \square f 8 \)
26 \( \square x d 5 \) is hopeless for Black.

22  \( \square h 8 + \)  \( \square e 7 \)
23  \( \square x g 7 \)  \( \square x d 4 \)
24  \( \square d 3 \)

Instead of the text White could finish the game much more quickly by playing 24 \( \square x f 7 ! \), for example 24...\( \square x c 3 \) 25 \( \square d 3 ! \) and Black loses a lot of material.

After the text, the game ended:

24...\( \square x c 3 \) 25 \( b x c 3 \) \( \square x c 3 \) 26 \( \square a 3 + \)
\( \square d 7 \) 27 \( \square e 1 \) \( \square c 7 \) 28 \( \square e 7 \) \( \square c d 5 \)
29 \( \square x d 8 + \) \( \square x d 8 \) 30 \( \square e 4 \) \( \square x a 4 \) 31
\( \square x d 5 \) \( \square x d 5 \) 32 \( \square g 5 + \) \( \square c 7 \) 33 \( h 4 \)
\( \square b 5 \) 34 \( \square c 1 + \) \( \square c 6 \) 35 \( h 5 \) \( \square d 4 \) 36
\( \square e 5 \) \( f 6 \) 37 \( \square x c 6 \) \( b x c 6 \) 38 \( \square g 7 + \)
\( \square d 6 \) 39 \( h 6 \) \( \square f 4 \) 40 \( \square g 4 \) \( \square d 2 \) 41
\( \square d 1 \) 1–0.

Keene - Miles
Hastings 1975/76

1 \( \square f 3 \) \( \square f 6 \) 2 \( c 4 \) \( c 5 \) 3 \( \square c 3 \) \( \square c 6 \) 4 \( e 3 \)
\( e 6 \) 5 \( d 4 \) \( d 5 \) 6 \( c x d 5 \) \( \square x d 5 \) 7 \( \square d 3 \) \( c x d 4 \)
8 \( e x d 4 \) \( \square c 7 \)

9 0–0 0–0
10 \( \square e 1 \) \( \square f 6 \)

The text is quite playable, although both 10...\( \square f 6 \) 11 \( \square e 4 \) \( \square c e 7 \), strengthening the d5-square and 10...\( \square x c 3 \)
11 \( b x c 3 \) \( b 6 \), with play against the c3/d4 pawn couple, are more common options here.

11  \( \square g 5 \) (D)

In the game Karpov-Beliavsky, Linares 1995, Black chose 11...\( h 6 \) instead and after 12 \( \square e 3 \) \( \square b 4 \) 13
b1 b6?! 14 \textit{Wd2} White got a strong initiative. Black defended with 14...\textit{Ae8}, as 14...\textit{Ab7?} would have already lost to 15 \textit{Axe6}! \textit{Axf3} 16 \textit{Axg7} \textit{Axg7} 17 \textit{Wg5+} \textit{Ah8} 18 \textit{Wh6+} \textit{Ag8} 19 \textit{Ae5}, as Karpov pointed out in \textit{Informator No. 63}.

The game continued: 15 a3! and Beliavsky wisely avoided the natural 15...\textit{Abd5?}, which would have lost in all lines, as Karpov showed: 16 \textit{Abxd5} exd5 (16...\textit{Abxd5} fails after 17 \textit{Axe6} \textit{gxh6} 18 \textit{Wxe6} 19 \textit{Wg6+} \textit{Ag7} 20 \textit{Abxd5} \textit{Bf6} 21 \textit{Wxd5} \textit{Bc8} 22 \textit{Ab2} \textit{Ab5} 23 \textit{Aa1} \textit{Af6} 24 \textit{Ae3} \textit{Af8} and here according to Karpov the correct 25 \textit{Ah4!} \textit{Ag5} 26 \textit{Ag3} \textit{g4} 27 \textit{Ab5} \textit{Wxd4} 28 \textit{Ac2} would have left White with an advantage.

12 \textit{Ab1} b6

In the game Polugaevsky-Sahović, Belgrade 1969, Black tried 12...\textit{Af6} 13 \textit{Ab7} \textit{Ab4}, but White obtained the advantage after 14 a3 \textit{Abd5} 15 \textit{Ab5} \textit{Ad7} 16 \textit{Wd3} \textit{Ae6} 17 \textit{Wd3} \textit{Ae8} 18 \textit{Ag5} \textit{g6} 19 \textit{Ab2}.

13 \textit{Ab5}

Another interesting possibility here is 13 a3, forcing Black to occupy the blockading d5-square but getting the d3-square for the queen. This move was employed in a very interesting game Karaklajić-Puč, 1978 which continued: 13...\textit{Abd5} 14 \textit{Wd3} \textit{g6} 15 \textit{Ab7} 16 \textit{Ah6} \textit{Ae8}. Then White came up with very instructive manoeuvres.

He played 17 \textit{Ad2}! — the usual technique, as the bishop has little to do on b1, it is being re-deployed on another diagonal, putting some pressure on the blockading knight. After 17...\textit{Ac8} White continued his attack with 18 \textit{Wh3!}, threatening 19 \textit{Ab7}! — yet another familiar motif. Black did not find a suitable defence and lost after 18...\textit{Ab8} 19 \textit{Ag5} \textit{Wc7} 20 \textit{Ab1} \textit{Ab8} 21 \textit{Af5}! \textit{Ab1} 22 \textit{Abxd5}. Here Black resigned as after any recapture on d5 White would have played 23 \textit{Ab7} with a further \textit{Af6+}, winning on the spot.

Let us return to the game Keene-Miles, which saw a different attacking plan used by the commander of the white pieces.

13 ... \textit{Ab7}

14 \textit{Abc8}! (D)

Again White's rook is heading towards the kingside. White is already threatening to employ the 'Greek gift' sacrifice and win after 15 \textit{Af6} \textit{Af6} 16 \textit{Ah7+} \textit{Ah7} 17 \textit{Wh5+} \textit{Ag8} 18

![Diagram](B)
\( \text{h3. Therefore Black must block the dangerous b1-bishop.} \)

14 \( \text{... g6} \)
15 \( \text{cg3} \)

Also interesting was 15 \( \text{Ah6!?} \)
\( \text{Ee8 16 Ag3 Af8 17 Ag5.} \)

15 \( \text{... Ac8??} \)

This is another typical example of a 'natural' move (please compare it to the game Botvinnik-Batuyev), which turns out to be a decisive mistake. As the text brings the rook on to the open file and carries on development, one may ask what's wrong with it?

The answer is that this move does not meet the concrete requirements of the position.

Here the position is so tense that Black has no time to waste on such indifferent moves. Instead of the text he should have put some pressure both on the e5-knight and on the d4-pawn by playing 15...\( \text{Ac6!} \). That would offer Black good chances in defence after 16 \( \text{Ah6} \) \( \text{Exd4!} \)
17 \( \text{Exd4} \) \( \text{Ax} \) \( \text{xf} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{f} \).

16 \( \text{Ah6} \) \( \text{Ac8} \)
17 \( \text{a3!} \) \( \text{Ac6} \)

17...\( \text{Bbd5} \) would lead to a similar result: 18 \( \text{Afxg6} \) \( \text{hx} \) \( \text{g} \) \( \text{6} \)
19 \( \text{Afg6} \) \( \text{Afx} \) \( \text{f} \)
(\text{or} \ 19...\text{fx} \) \( \text{g} \) \( \text{6} \)
20 \( \text{Ad} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{3} \)
+-) 20 \( \text{Bd} \) \( \text{f} \) \( \text{8} \)
\( \text{h} \) \( \text{8} \)
21 \( \text{Axf8} \) \( \text{Axf8} \)
22 \( \text{Bd2} \)
23 \( \text{Ag8} \)
24 \( \text{Axd5} \)
25 \( \text{Axd5} \)
26 \( \text{Bf4} \)

Karpov - Yusupov
Ct (8), London 1989

1 \( \text{d} \) \( \text{d} \) \( \text{4} \)
2 \( \text{c} \) \( \text{c} \) \( \text{4} \)
3 \( \text{b} \) \( \text{b} \) \( \text{3} \)
5 \( \text{d} \) \( \text{5} \)
6 \( \text{d} \) \( \text{5} \)
7 \( \text{h} \) \( \text{h} \)
8 \( \text{e} \) \( \text{e} \)
9 \( \text{e} \) \( \text{e} \)
10 \( \text{A} \) \( \text{c} \) \( \text{1} \)
11 \( \text{A} \) \( \text{c} \) \( \text{3} \)
12 \( \text{d} \) \( \text{xc} \) \( \text{d} \) \( \text{4} \)
13 \( \text{E} \) \( \text{xc} \) \( \text{e} \)
14 \( \text{A} \) \( \text{d} \) \( \text{d} \)
15 \( \text{e} \) \( \text{e} \)
16 \( \text{A} \) \( \text{c} \) \( \text{e} \)
17 \( \text{e} \) \( \text{e} \)
18 \( \text{c} \) \( \text{c} \)
19 \( \text{f} \) \( \text{g} \) \( \text{6} \)
20 \( \text{b} \) \( \text{b} \) \( \text{1} \)

20 \( \text{c} \) \( \text{c} \) \( \text{2} \)

21 \( \text{d} \) \( \text{xe} \) \( \text{5} \)
22 \( \text{d} \) \( \text{xe} \) \( \text{4} \)
23 \( \text{A} \) \( \text{d} \) \( \text{f} \)
24 \( \text{E} \) \( \text{xg} \) \( \text{6} \)
25 \( \text{A} \) \( \text{g} \) \( \text{7} \)
26 \( \text{Bf} \) \( \text{e} \)

The rook's transference to the kingside! Two consecutive blows on g6 have completely destroyed the residence of the black monarch.

Karpov - Yusupov
Ct (8), London 1989
not even consider 15 exd4 here, on the simple grounds that it leads to the isolation of a pawn and therefore it ‘spoils’ the pawn formation. Such a ‘static’ approach would be quite wrong here, as the dynamic advantages which the text gives White right now are worth a lot more than some potential weakness of the pawn.

Indeed, the text is much better than the solid but rather drawish 15 $\text{ xd4}$: White opens the e-file, gains control over the c5 and e5 squares and clears the third rank for the c3-rook. The latter as we will see, is going to play an important part in the game.

15 $\ldots$ $\text{ f6}$
16 $\text{ e1}$ $\text{ d6}$
17 $\text{ e5}$ $\text{ d5}$

Black blocks the a2-g8 diagonal, but moves an important defender away from the kingside. The alternative 17...$\text{ e6}$ would not have completely solved Black’s problems either: after 18 $\text{ xe6 fxe6}$ 19 $\text{ g3}$!? White maintains the initiative.

18 $\text{ g3}$± $\text{ f5}$!?
18...$\text{ e6}$ would have been a better try in this difficult position.

19 $\text{ h5}$! $\text{ h7}$
20 $\text{ g4}$ g5

Black tries to block the g-file, keeping his bishop active in the meantime. The alternative 20...g6 simply looks too ugly.

21 $\text{ h4}$

White must demolish the g5-pawn in order to use his major pieces on the g-file, while Black will try to fortify that pawn by all available means.

21 $\ldots$ $\text{ f6}$

This is the only move as 21...f5 loses after 22 $\text{ h5}$ g4 23 $\text{ xg4}$!, while 21...$\text{ f6}$ is bad because of 22 $\text{ f3}$+–.

22 $\text{ h}x\text{ g5}$! $\text{ h}x\text{ g5}$

This is better than 22...fxg5 23 f4±.

23 f4!?

Here White had a choice between a few promising continuations — apart from the text he could have played 23 $\text{ h5}$ $\text{ ae8}$ 24 $\text{ e3}$ or 23 $\text{ f3}$ $\text{ h8}$ 24 $\text{ e6}$, with a promising attack in each case.

23 $\ldots$ $\text{ ae8}$?!

The desire to develop the rook is understandable but Black could put up more resistance by playing 23...$\text{ h8}$!? After 24 fxg5 $\text{ xe5}$ 25 $\text{ g6}$ $\text{ xg6}$ 26 $\text{ xg6}$ $\text{ xg6}$ 27 $\text{ xg6}$ exd4 28 $\text{ e4}$ $\text{ f7}$ 29 $\text{ xd5}$! cxd5 30 $\text{ h4}$+ $\text{ h7}$ 31 $\text{ xd4}$ White is clearly better in the resulting endgame but Black has some drawing chances. The text allows White to launch a deadly attack:

24 $\text{ fxg5}$! (D)
The g5-pawn has fallen and as a result Black’s position collapses. This is hardly surprising, since all White pieces are well placed and are taking part in the attack.

24 ... fxe5

The logical attempt to keep the g-file blocked by playing 24...Qf5 fails as well, as White has a nice sacrificial combination at his disposal: 25 gxf6+!! Qxf6 26 Qxg4 27 Qf5+ Qxg5 28 Qxh7+ Qxh7 29 fxe5+ Qxe5 30 Qxe5+ and Qxg5.

25 g6 Qxg6
26 dxe5 Qe6
27 Qxd5 cxd5
28 Qxg6+ Qxg6
29 Qxg6+ Qh7
30 Qd6+

The rest is a matter of technique and Karpov’s technical skills are hard to match!

30...Qc8 31 Qe3 Qc2 32 Qd7+ Qg6 33 Qxb7 Qe8 34 a3 d4 35 Qd3 Qxe5 36 Qxd4 Qg5 37 Qd6+ Qh5 38 Qh7+ Qg4 39 Qd4+ Qf5 40 Qd5+ Qg6 41 Qg7+ Qxg7 42 Qxg5+ Qf6 43 Qb5 a6 44 Qb6+

Qe7 45 Qh2 Qd7 46 Qh3 Qc7 47 Qb3 Qd6 48 g4 49 h4 Qf6 50 Qb6+ Qg7 51 Qh5 a5 52 Qb7+ Qg8 53 a4 1–0.

Now I should like to show a little-known game, played between two then young Soviet chess masters. I played in the same tournament and remember being impressed at the way White conducted his attack. Nowadays both these players are well-established Grandmasters.

Varavin - Komarov

*.Ch of the Soviet Army, Novosibirsk 1989*

1 e4 c6
2 d4 d5
3 Qc3 dxe4
4 Qxe4 Qd7
5 Qf3

Today this natural move has been largely replaced by 5 Qc4, 5 Qd3 and 5 Qg5.

5 ... Qgf6
6 Qg3 e6
7 Qd3 c5
8 0–0 cxd4
9 Qxd4 Qc5
10 c3

10 Qb3 is more common here, however the text had been tried in a few games as well.

10 ... Qxd4
11 cxd4 0–0 (D)

This line shows that the Panov-Botvinnik variation is not the only way to get positions with the isolated
d4-pawn from the Caro-Kann Defence. This position is rather specific — Black has exchanged the dark-squared bishop for one of the white knights and has good control over the important d5-square. On the other hand, the absence of the bishop may make the defence of the kingside more difficult.

As for White, he has his knight placed rather unusually on g3, which increases his chances for a kingside attack, as the knight is ready to jump to h5. The d4-pawn will not need protection for a good while, which allows White time to bring his pieces towards the kingside.

Overall we would prefer to be White here: his play is much easier, while Black lacks piece harmony and active counterplay. Let us discuss the latter statement in some more detail.

Black will (after the eventual ...b6) have two knights controlling the d5-square but there is no need for such strong control, since a d4-d5 advance is not on the menu here. It would be much better for Black to have his knight on c6, putting pressure on the isolani.

12  \textit{f4}

In positions with the isolated d-pawn some players like to develop the dark squared bishop not on g5, but on f4 — for example it was a ‘trademark’ of Russian master Nikolai Riumin. Often the bishop then moves to e5, from where it influences both flanks. Here this idea seems to be very natural.

The more common approach 12 \textit{g5} led to a similar position after 12...h6 13 \textit{f4} b6 14 c2 d5 15 e5 wb6 in the game Tal-Flesch, Lvov 1981. After 16 d3 b4 17 d2 xxc2 18 xf6 xa1 19 h5 e5 the position got very messy.

12  ...  \textit{d5}!?

After 12...b6 13 e1 d7 in the game Plachetka-Meduna, Hradec Králové 1981, White seized the initiative by 14 h5 c6 15 e5 b7 16 xf6+ xf6 17 e3.

13  d6  e8
14  e1  f6
15  e5  d7
16  a4!? (D)
At first glance White’s last move makes a very strange impression — one may ask, why does White waste time and weaken the b4-square? When a2-a4 is played in order to stop ...b7-b5, it’s understandable, but why should White play it here? Well, while the standard 16 \( \text{Nh5} \) would give White a promising attack, the text introduces a more interesting approach.

White wants to employ his a1-rook — the only piece which is not active at the moment. However, he believes that just bringing the rook to c1 won’t make much sense as it would only lead to some exchanges after an eventual ...\( \text{Ac8} \). Instead, White wants to transfer the rook to the kingside via the a3-square, and this is the reason behind the ‘strange’ move 16 a4.

In the game, this plan worked just fine; perhaps Black just did not sense the danger.

16 \( \ldots \) \( \text{Ac6} \)
17 \( \text{Aa3} \) \( h6?! \)

Black takes measures against the possible \( \text{Ng3-h5} \), however the text weakens the kingside, since the h6-pawn might become a target. The alternative — 17...\( g6 \) — does not look great either; while limiting the white knight and the d3-bishop, that would make the other white bishop too dangerous, but perhaps it should have been tried anyway.

18 \( \text{Ab4??} \)

Completely wrong! Black has a lot of problems in this position, mainly because he lacks counterplay, but the text just loses. In no instance should Black move this piece away from his vulnerable kingside, where he has few forces. Black should have preferred 18...\( \text{Ac8} \), sitting tight.

19 \( \text{Ax f6!} \)

The text gets rid of the only defender of the kingside, making White’s attack unstoppable.

19 \( \ldots \) \( \text{Bx f6} \)
20 \( \text{Bh5} \) \( \text{e7} \)
21 \( \text{Ag3} \) \( g5 \)

21...\( g6 \) loses on the spot to 22 \( \text{Bxg6! fBxg6} \) 23 \( \text{Bxg6+ Bh7} \) 24 \( \text{Bb1} \).

22 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{f6} \)
23 \( \text{hxg5} \) \( \text{hxg5} \)
24 \( \text{f4+} \) (D)

The same scenario as in the previous game — White demolishes the g5-pawn, cracking the residence of the black monarch.

24 \( \ldots \) \( \text{Ad8} \)
25 \( \text{fxg5} \) \( \text{fxg5} \)
26 \( \text{Be5} \) \( \text{Ad5} \)
Summary

The theme which we have just examined — the rook lift to the kingside along the third rank — is very common for the positions with the isolated d-pawn and the possessor of the isolani should always keep an eye on this idea. When managed successfully, the rook lift usually gives the possessor of the isolani a great advantage in force on the kingside and therefore often leads to a crushing attack. Typically such a lift can be organised using the c-, d-, and e- files, although sometimes the semi-open a- and f- files can be employed for this purpose as well.

If you play against the isolated pawn, be aware of this theme — try to tie down the opponent’s rooks to the d-pawn and to control the important squares on the third rank. Naturally, exchanging pieces, particularly the rooks themselves, would be of great help in preventing this attacking idea.

We shall see the motif of the rook lift in many other games examined in this book, but now I should like to move on and to consider another technique often employed by the player with the isolated d-pawn.
4 The Bishop sacrifice on h6 and the Queen shift

When the possessor of the isolani attacks on the kingside, such an attack often involves sacrifices on the h-file. For example, it can be a bishop sacrifice on h7, which will be covered in our ‘Exercises’ section.

Here I am going to concentrate on another type of bishop sacrifice — on h6 (h3). This sacrifice usually occurs when the side playing against the isolated d-pawn weakens his kingside by playing ...h7-h6 (or h2-h3). The sacrifice usually results in a great exposure of the opponent’s monarch and often leads to the defeat of the defender, whose pieces cannot take care of the exposed king. This motif is very typical for positions with the isolated d-pawn, so knowledge of this attacking pattern is very important for a better understanding of the analysed pawn formation.

Here is an instructive example of such a sacrifice, played at a very high level:

Kamsky - Beliavsky
Linares 1994

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Qc3 Qb4 4 e3 0-0 5 Qd3 c5 6 Qge2 cxd4 7 exd4 d5 8 0-0 dxc4 9 Qxc4 Qc6 10 Qg5 Qe7 11 Qc1 Qa5 12 Qd2 Qd8 13 a3 Qd7 14 Qfd1 Qe8 15 Qa2 h6 16 Qe3 Qd6 17 h3 Qac8? (D)

As we see, earlier in this game Black played 15...h6, chasing away White’s bishop from g5. That move created a potential target for White’s
attack. Yet Black could do well, if he managed to take care of the h6-pawn by playing 16...\textit{f8} or 17...\textit{f8}, as GM Alexander Beliavsky pointed out annotating this game in \textit{Informer 60}. However, his careless move 17...\textit{e8?} allowed White to start a very dangerous attack:

\textbf{18 \textit{xh6!}}

This sacrifice breaks open the position of the black king and gives White a long-term attack. Usually it's very hard to defend in situations like this, while the attack often develops easily and naturally.

\textbf{18 \ldots gxh6}
\textbf{19 \textit{xh6 h7}}

White's attack succeeds quickly after 19...\textit{e7?} 20 \textit{d3} \textit{h5} 21 \textit{d5 e5} 22 \textit{e3}.

\textbf{20 \textit{b1}}

White had to make a very important choice on move 20. It would clearly be unsatisfactory to play 20 \textit{d3?} because of 20...\textit{g5!}, but I think that although 20 \textit{b1} is by no means a mistake, Kamsky missed a more energetic way to proceed with his attack with the thematic break 20 \textit{d5!}.

This move brings the 'sleeper' on a2 into life, at the same time clearing the d-file for White's rook. After the further 20...\textit{f8} 21 \textit{h4 e5} 22 dxe6 (D) we reach the position seen at the top of the next column.

Here Black's defensive task is very difficult, for example: 22...\textit{g7} 23 b4! \textit{xh1+} 24 \textit{h1} \textit{c7} (or 24...\textit{xh3} 25 \textit{d8} \textit{xd8} 26 \textit{xh8 \textit{f6} 27 f4 +-}) 25 \textit{d5 c2} 26 \textit{e7+ h8} 27 \textit{xh7+ c1} 28 \textit{xh1} \textit{xh1+} 29 \textit{h2 fxe6} 30 \textit{xe6} and a queen plus three pawns are stronger here than a rook and two minor pieces.

Compared to the game continuation, 20 \textit{d5!} would have created even more difficulties for Black.

\textbf{20 \ldots f5?}

Here Black missed a chance to put up more resistance by playing 20...\textit{f8!}. Then the continuation could be 21 \textit{e4!} \textit{e7} 22 \textit{f4} (threatening 23 \textit{h5}), where Black defends successfully after 22...\textit{xh4}! (worse is 22...\textit{f5} because of 23 \textit{a2!} with a winning attack).

For example, 23 \textit{h5 e2+} 24 \textit{h2 e5+} 25 \textit{f4 xh5} 26 \textit{xh5 dxc1} with an unclear position or 23 \textit{xh1} \textit{f5} 24 \textit{exd8 h6} 25 \textit{xe8 a4!} and White has to give up the exchange: 26 \textit{dd8 xd8} 27 \textit{xd8}, when his chances are no better than Black's.

\textbf{21 b4!}

This is more energetic than 21 \textit{xh3+ f7} 22 \textit{xf5 xh5} 23
\( \text{\&xf5}, \) which would also be good for White.

21 ... \( \text{\&c7} \)

Much worse is 21...\( \text{\&xa3} \) in view of 22 \( \text{\&xe6+ \&f7} \) (or 22...\( \text{\&h8} \) 23 \( \text{\&xf5 \&d7} \) 24 \( \text{\&b5} \) \( \text{\&xb4} \) 25 \( \text{\&d5} \) \( \text{\&xb5} \) 26 \( \text{\&xc6 \&xf5} \) 27 \( \text{\&xf5+} \) 23 \( \text{\&xf5 \&f8} \) 24 \( \text{\&e4} \) and White wins.

22 \( \text{\&xe6+} \) \( \text{\&f7} \)
23 \( \text{\&xf5} \) \( \text{\&c7} \)
24 \( \text{\&e4 (D)} \)

White should play 25 \( \text{\&xd6!} \) \( \text{\&xd6} \) 26 \( \text{\&xd6 \&e7} \) 27 \( \text{\&b5} \), where he would eventually obtain some material advantage (two rooks and four pawns for a queen and a minor piece). But at any rate we can state that 24...\( \text{\&f8} \) would be a better try for Black.

25 \( \text{\&xe6+} \) \( \text{\&f7} \)
26 \( \text{\&d5} \)

Now it's all over.

26 ... \( \text{\&e5} \)
27 \( \text{\&d4} \) \( \text{\&xc1} \)
28 \( \text{\&xc1} \) \( \text{\&b8} \)
29 \( \text{\&f5} \) \( \text{\&f8} \)
30 \( \text{\&c5} \) \( \text{\&g5} \)
31 \( \text{\&xb7} \) 1-0

In the game which we have just seen, Black's move ...h6 was not absolutely necessary, but now we are going to deal with cases when Black is more or less forced to play it.

How can White achieve this? Usually by creating threats against the \( h7 \)-pawn. For that, White often uses a 'queen shift' — moves his queen along the third rank to \( h3 \), usually via \( d3 \). Then, if White has his light-squared bishop on the \( b1-h7 \) diagonal and the dark-squared bishop on \( g5 \), where it attacks the \( f6 \)-knight, Black may be forced to advance his \( h \)-pawn, thus giving White an even better object for attack.

After discussing this plan in general, let us now see how it works in practice. Our next example is a pretty clear illustration of this attacking plan.
Shamkovich - Dmitrievsky
Moscow Spartakiada 1967

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 c4
\( \text{d}f6 \) 5 \( \text{d}c3 \) e6 6 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 7 cxd5
\( \text{d}x d5 \)
8 \( \text{c}c4 \) \( \text{f}6 \)!!

This is too passive and gives White carte blanche to develop his initiative. With White’s bishop on c4 there is no need for the text, as this knight does not have to defend the kingside yet.

9 0–0
10 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{bd}7 \)
11 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{b}6 \)
12 \( \text{d}3 \)

Also possible is 12 \( \text{b}3 \) with a further \( \text{e}5 \), \( \text{g}5 \) and \( \text{ac}1 \). Then at some stage White might move his rook to the kingside by \( \text{d}1-\text{d}3-\text{g}3 \).

12 ...
13 \( \text{e}5 \)
14 \( \text{f}3 \)!!

The beginning of an interesting manoeuvre.

14 ...
15 \( \text{h}3 \) (D)

White targets the h7-pawn. After a further \( \text{c}1-\text{g}5 \) Black will have to weaken his kingside. From h3 the queen also keeps an eye on the e6-pawn, which might be important in some lines, as we shall see.

15 ...
16 \( \text{xc}3 \)!!

Perhaps Black should have played 15...
16 \( \text{c}6 \) 16 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{g}6 \) (16...
17 \( \text{x} h6 \) \( \text{x} h6 \) 18 \( \text{w} x h6 \), where Black cannot save his king). After the further 17 \( \text{ac}1 \) White’s chances are somewhat better but Black maintains a solid position.

16 \( \text{b} x c3 \)

Strictly speaking, it’s a different pawn formation now. However, these two pawn structures — the isolated d4-pawn and the pawn couple c3/d4 — are so closely related that it’s almost impossible to talk about the isolani without dealing with this type of position. White’s goal remains the same — an attack against Black’s king. He has chances to utilise the semi-open b-file or to advance his pawns in the centre by playing c3-c4 and d4-d5.

16 ...
17 \( \text{a}4 \)!!

Black just helps his opponent to move the d1-rook to a better position.

17 \( \text{e}1 \)
18 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{h}6 \)

After the more stubborn 18...
19 \( \text{c}4 \)!!. Then after 19...
17 \( \text{d}7 \) White can take advantage of the semi-open b-file by playing 20 \( \text{ab}1 \) after which Black experiences serious difficulties.
19 $\text{Qxh6! (D)}$

This move destroys Black’s kingside.

19 ... $\text{Bxc3}$

After 19...gxh6 20 $\text{Be3}$ Black is helpless, for example: 20...h5 21 $\text{Qg3+ Kh8}$ 22 $\text{Bf3}$ $\text{Qd6}$ 23 $\text{Wxh5!}$ $\text{Bxe5}$ 24 $\text{Wh6+ Kg7}$ 25 dxe5 and White wins.

20 $\text{Bxg7!}$

The bishop cannot be stopped from performing its destructive task! This ‘gift’ must be accepted.

20 ... $\text{Kxg7}$

21 $\text{Bxe3}$ $\text{Bxd3}$

22 $\text{Bxd3}$ $\text{Qc2}$

23 $\text{Qg3+}$ $\text{Qg6}$

24 $\text{Bxg6+!}$ fxg6

25 $\text{Bg3+-}$

Finally White’s queen gets a tête-à-tête with the black monarch!

25 ... $\text{Bf8}$

26 $\text{Bxg6+}$ $\text{Kh8}$

27 $\text{Bd1}$ $\text{We8}$

White also wins after 27...$\text{Bd6}$ 28 $\text{Wh6+ Kh7}$ 29 $\text{Qg6+ Kg8}$ 30 $\text{xf8}$ $\text{Qxf8}$ 31 $\text{d5!?}$ exd5 32 $\text{h5}$ $\text{wa5}$ 33 $\text{Bxd5+}$ $\text{Bxd5}$ 34 $\text{Bxd5}$.

28 $\text{Ab1!}$ b6

29 $\text{Bb3}$ $\text{Bxa6}$

30 $\text{Bxg6+}$ $\text{Kh7}$

31 $\text{Bxe7}$ $\text{Kf7}$

32 $\text{Bc6}$ 1-0

Now let us examine yet another example of the same plan — it’s useful to see how different games can be very similar to each other in terms of the positional ideas employed in them. In our next example White used the same attacking pattern that Shamkovich employed in his game against Dmitrievsky.

**Kavalek - Pritchett**

*Haifa OL 1976*

1 $\text{Bf3}$ c5 2 c4 $\text{Bf6}$ 3 $\text{Qc3}$ e6 4 e3 $\text{Qc6}$ 5 d4 d5 6 exd5 $\text{Qxd5}$ 7 $\text{Bxd3}$ cxd4 8 exd4 $\text{Ee7}$ 9 0-0 0-0

10 $\text{Bf1}$ $\text{Bc4}$

11 $\text{Bb1}$ $\text{Bf6}$

12 a3

We came across this position earlier: for example you may remember that in the game Keene-Miles (page 48), White played 12 $\text{Bg5}$ b6 13 $\text{Bxe5}$ $\text{Bb7}$ 14 $\text{Bxe3}$? and achieved a promising attacking position.

12 ... $\text{Bxe5}$

13 $\text{Bd5}$

14 $\text{Bd3}$ $\text{Bc6}$

Also interesting here is 13 $\text{Bd3}!$? and after 13...b6 White obtained a clear advantage in Yagupov-Bombin, Ubeda open 1996, by playing 14 $\text{Bxd5}!?$ $\text{Bxd5}$ 15 $\text{Bg5}$ g6 16 $\text{Bd2}$ $\text{Bd6}$ 17 d5!.

13 ... $\text{Bd7}$

14 $\text{Bd3}$ $\text{Bc6}$

15 $\text{Bh3! (D)}$
The Bishop sacrifice on h6 and the Queen shift

Comparing this game and our previous example, we can clearly see that this is the same pattern — White is preparing to attack the h7-pawn, at the same time creating threats against the e6- and f7-pawns.

This is how pattern recognition works — it helps us to find a good plan in fairly standard situations. The more plans you are aware of, the better your chances of outplaying your opponent!

15 ... \( \text{\textit{Wd6}} \)

Prior to this game Black tried 15 ...\( \text{\textit{Be8}} \) in the game Polugaevsky-Sahović, Belgrade 1969, but White stood better after 16 \( \text{\textit{g5}} \) g6 17 \( \text{\textit{a2}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qh5}} \) 18 \( \text{\textit{Qh6}} \). The text is hardly an improvement for Black.

16 \( \text{\textit{Qg5}} \) g6

This is forced, as 16...h6? loses on the spot to 17 \( \text{\textit{Qxh6}} \) gxh6 18 \( \text{\textit{Wxh6}} \), when Black’s king is too vulnerable.

17 \( \text{\textit{a2!}} \)?

This is an interesting moment. We have already seen many times in this book such shifts of White’s lightsquared bishop between the two diagonals (a2-g8 and b1-h7). We can speak of a pattern here — often when this bishop is limited on the b1–h7 diagonal by Black’s move ...g6, the bishop moves on to the other diagonal. Typically White does it in order to put pressure on d5 or e6; here this shift pursues yet another goal, as White makes way for his a1-rook to come to the centre.

17 ... \( \text{\textit{Kfd8}} \)
18 \( \text{\textit{Kad1}} \) \( \text{\textit{Ke8}} \) (D)

19 \( \text{\textit{Kd3}} \)

A familiar idea — White uses a rook lift to create threats on the h-file by playing \( \text{\textit{Wh4}} \) and \( \text{\textit{Kh3}} \). The text isn’t bad, but White had an even a better option. He could have played 19 \( \text{\textit{Kxd5}} \)!

After 19...\( \text{\textit{Qxd5}} \)? 20 \( \text{\textit{Qe4}} \) \( \text{\textit{Cc7}} \) 21 \( \text{\textit{Cc1}} \) \( \text{\textit{Cc6}} \) 22 \( \text{\textit{Qxf7}} \) (yet another familiar technique!) Black is lost, he has to recapture on d5 with a pawn — 19...\( \text{\textit{exd5}} \). After that White does not achieve much with the forceful move — 20 \( \text{\textit{Qg4}} \), as Black holds after 20...\( \text{\textit{Qd7}} \) 21 \( \text{\textit{Qxf6}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxf6}} \) 22 \( \text{\textit{Qxf6+}} \) \( \text{\textit{Wxf6}} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{Qxd5}} \) \( \text{\textit{Wxf2+}} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{Qxf2}} \) \( \text{\textit{Qxh3}} \). For example: 25 \( \text{\textit{Qe7+}} \)
If $\text{f}_8$ 26 gxh3 $\text{d}_7$ 27 $\text{c}_1$ $\text{x}_e7$ 28 $\text{x}_e7$ $\text{x}_e7$ 29 $\text{c}_7+$ $\text{e}_6$ 30 $\text{x}_b7$ $\text{c}_8$ and it should be a draw. However, White has at his disposal another and deadly move — 20 $\text{h}_4$! — after which Black has no defence. Thus, we can state that taking on d5 would have decided the game by force.

19 ... $\text{xc}_3$

20 $\text{bxc}_3$ $\text{d}_5$

21 $\text{x}_d_5$ $\text{x}_g_5$

22 $\text{x}_b_7$ $\text{ab}_8$

23 $\text{f}_3$ $\text{c}_7$

24 $\text{c}_6$

Black has no compensation for the pawn. The game ended: 24...f6?! 25 $\text{x}_e8$ fxe5 26 $\text{g}_4$! $\text{c}_4$ 27 $\text{x}_g_6$ hxg6 28 $\text{g}_3$ $\text{f}_4$ 29 $\text{x}_g_6+$ 1-0.

Finally, I would like to illustrate this theme — the queen shift to h3 — with yet another example, where White also achieved a great attacking position but failed to capitalise on his advantage. Knowing this game is useful for a better understanding of how White’s attack should be conducted in positions like this.

**Stean - Padevsky**

*Moscow 1977*

1 $\text{f}_3$ c5
2 $\text{c}_4$ $\text{f}_6$
3 $\text{c}_3$ e6
4 e3 d5
5 d4 $\text{c}_6$
6 cxd5 $\text{x}_d_5$
7 $\text{d}_3$ $\text{e}_7$

8 0–0 cxd4
9 exd4 0–0
10 $\text{e}_1$ $\text{cb}_4$
11 $\text{b}_1$ b6?!

In our previous game Pritchett played 11...$\text{f}_6$, vacating the d5-square for the b4-knight. The move 11...b6 means that Black is prepared to take on c3 after the possible a2-a3. Yet, I think that the resulting position is not good for him.

12 $\text{e}_5$ $\text{b}_7$
13 a3 $\text{c}_3$

Black had to take on c3, as 13...$\text{c}_6$? would put his queen in trouble after 14 $\text{x}_d_5$ $\text{x}_d_5$ 15 $\text{c}_4$ $\text{d}_6$ 16 $\text{f}_4$.

14 $\text{bxc}_3$ $\text{d}_5$
15 $\text{d}_3$ $\text{f}_6$?

Here 15...g6 is better, although White’s chances are still preferable after 16 $\text{f}_6$ $\text{f}_8$ 17 $\text{h}_6$ $\text{e}_8$ 18 $\text{a}_2$.

16 $\text{h}_3$! (D)

![Chess Diagram]

The same idea as in our two last examples; here it also gives White a good attacking position.

16 ... $\text{e}_8$
17 $\text{g}_5$ h6
Black could not play 17...g6 in view of 18 \&xf6 \&xf6 19 \&xf7!. This thematic sacrifice, which we have already seen so many times in this book, wins after 19...\&xf7 20 \&xh7+ \&g7 21 \&xg6+ \&f8 22 \&xe8 \&d5 23 \&g6 \&xe8 24 \&e3.

18 \&xh6!

This blow should have brought White the full point.

18 ... gxf6
19 \&e3 h5 (D)

The only move. However, the sad necessity to make moves like this clearly indicates that Black's defensive resources are nearly exhausted. All White needs is to find a final stroke. Alas, this is something he failed to do in the game...

20 \&h4?

White does not harvest the fruits of his previous play. Black's resistance could be destroyed with the following crushing move — 20 \&g6!.

Now Black is helpless, for example: 20...\&xg6 21 \&xe6+ \&h8 22 \&xg6+ (this is even better than 22 \&f7+ \&g7 23 \&xd8 \&xd8 24 \&h3, which also wins) 22...\&g7 23 \&xe7 and White's attack decides. Also after 20...\&f8 21 \&xh5 \&e4 22 \&xf7 \&xh7 23 \&xe6 \&e8 24 \&xe4 \&xe4 25 \&xe4 White's advantage is overwhelming.

20 ... \&d6
21 \&g5+ \&f8
22 \&g6+

This leads to a forced draw.

22 ... fxg6
23 \&h6+ \&g8
24 \&xcg6+ \&f8
25 \&h6+ \&g8
26 \&g6+ \&h5

The queen shift to the kingside is a very typical idea in isolated d-pawn positions and therefore both sides should be aware of this motif. You should look for such shifts in your own games, when an appropriate moment arises.

The h3-square is not the only place where White's queen can appear after its shift to the kingside, as our next game shows:

Velimirović - Rukavina
Yugoslavia Ch 1975

1 e4 c6
2 d4 d5
3 exd5 cxd5
4 c4 \&f6
5 \&c3 e6
6 \&f3 \&e7
7 \&xd5 \&xd5
8 \&d3 \&c6
9 0–0 0–0
10 \&e1 \&d6?!

A rare move and not a particularly convincing idea.
11 \( \text{c2} \)

Gheorghiu simply played 11 \( \text{cxd5?!} \) exd5 12 \( \text{e5} \) in his game vs. Bouaziz at the Novi Sad chess olympiad in 1990. After the further 12...\( \text{x} \)xe5 13 dxe5 \( \text{b} \)6 14 \( \text{c2} \) h6 15 \( \text{e} \)3 d4 16 \( \text{f} \)4 \( \text{d} \)7 17 \( \text{e} \)2 White obtained a promising position.

11 ... \( \text{g6} \)

Also possible is 11...\( \text{f} \)6 12 \( \text{e} \)4 \( \text{x} \)e4 13 \( \text{x} \)e4 h6.

12 \( \text{e} \)4 \( \text{c} \)7

13 a3 \( \text{d} \)7

Perhaps, here Black should have put pressure on the d4-pawn by playing 13...\( \text{b} \)6 — this idea was used in similar positions by Karpov in some of his games against Kamsky at Elista in 1996.

14 \( \text{d} \)2?! (D)

A very interesting idea — White has spotted a weakness in Black’s kingside and shifts his queen there, trying to exploit that weakness.

14 ... \( \text{fe} \)8

15 \( \text{h} \)6 \( \text{f} \)8

16 \( \text{h} \)4 \( \text{ce} \)7?!

By playing this move Black gives up control over the central squares.

Much better would be 16...\( \text{g7?!} \). Then White will probably have to sacrifice a pawn by playing 17 \( \text{d} \)5 (the tempting move 17 \( \text{c} \)4? just drops a pawn after 17...\( \text{x} \)d4! 18 \( \text{x} \)d4 \( \text{x} \)c4+-) 17...\( \text{x} \)d4 18 \( \text{x} \)d4 \( \text{x} \)d4 19 \( \text{ac} \)1. The further play — 19...\( \text{b} \)6 20 \( \text{c} \)4 — leads to a very unclear position, where White has compensation for the pawn.

17 \( \text{eg} \)5! \( \text{h} \)6

18 \( \text{h} \)3

Here White missed a chance to start a dangerous attack by 18 \( \text{xf} \)7?! \( \text{xf} \)7 19 \( \text{e} \)5+ \( \text{g} \)8 20 \( \text{xh} \)6. After the further 20...\( \text{c} \)6 21 \( \text{xf} \)8 \( \text{xf} \)8 22 \( \text{g} \)6 White has three pawns for a knight and good attacking chances.

18 ... \( \text{h} \)7

Maybe 18...\( \text{h} \)5 would be the lesser evil in this situation.

19 \( \text{e} \)5 \( \text{f} \)5?

Black had to play 19...\( \text{f} \)6 when the situation would remain very unclear.

20 \( \text{xf} \)5 exf5

21 \( \text{g} \)5+ \( \text{g} \)8

22 \( \text{g} \)xf7

Now White is winning: 22 ... \( \text{h} \)5 23 \( \text{g} \)3 \( \text{e} \)6 24 \( \text{h} \)6 \( \text{e} \)8 25 \( \text{ac} \)1 \( \text{b} \)6 26 \( \text{x} \)f8 \( \text{x} \)f8 27 \( \text{h} \)6 \( \text{ae} \)8 28 \( \text{c} \)5 \( \text{f} \)6 29 \( \text{wc} \)3! \( \text{de} \)4 30 \( \text{x} \)e4 \( \text{xe} \)4 31 \( \text{ac} \)4 \( \text{wd} \)8 32 d5 \( \text{f} \)6 33 \( \text{g} \)5 \( \text{e} \)7 34 d6 \( \text{xd} \)6 35 \( \text{x} \)d6 1–0.

Although this game is by no means perfect, I still quite like it, since it's rather rich in ideas. Analysing such games we can clearly see how much
inventiveness is required from both sides in positions with the isolated d-pawn.

Let's just recall what happened here — White came up with an interesting plan (14 _WHd2 and 15 _Wh6) which created certain problems for Black. Then Black made one error (16..._Ec7) and White seized the initiative firmly. Perhaps he could have played more energetically on move 18 and then another Black mistake (19..._Ef5?) put him into a lost position.

Summary

The value of each move is very high in positions with the isolani, as every inaccurate, meaningless or passive move can lose the initiative or lead to a difficult position. Both players must handle such positions with energy and yet they should be alert and perceptive regarding the opponent's plans.

Often when the possessor of the isolani attacks on the kingside, a queen's shift to that area adds a lot of power to his attack. A typical route for this manoeuvre is _Wd1-d3-h3 with further threats against the h7-(h6-) pawn and the e6-pawn.

If you play against the isolated pawn, try to prevent such a shift by putting pressure on the d4-pawn or by exchanging pieces. If that fails, consider bringing more of your pieces to the kingside. Be very careful with moves like ...g7-g6 and ...h7-h6 — often they are necessary, but sometimes they just weaken your position.
5 The h-pawn battering-ram

Now let us examine yet another attacking motif, typical for this pawn formation — the advance of the h-pawn. In fact we’ve already seen this theme in action, for example in the game Yusupov-Lobron. All these ideas, such as the rook lift, the queen’s shift, the strikes on e6, f7 or h6 and the advance of the h-pawn are closely related and often make one whole unit, namely a successful attack. However, it’s worth studying some more practical examples where the advance of the h-pawn was one of the main themes.

So, when should the possessor of the isolani push his h-pawn forward? Usually he advances the h-pawn in order to weaken opponent’s pawn position on the kingside — typically when there is a pawn on g6 (g3). Sometimes the reasoning behind such an advance is to establish control over the g5 (g4) square to give additional support to the piece based there. Our next few examples will illustrate these ideas.

Banaš - Navaroszky
Trencianske Teplice 1974

1  e4       c6
2  d4       d5
3  exd5     cxd5
4  c4       d6
5  Qc3      e6
6  Qf3      Qb4
7  cxd5     Qxd5
8  Qc2      0–0
9  Qd3      Qc6
10 0–0       Qf6

In this position Karpov prefers 10...Qe7, leaving the knight on d5 for a while. Later the knight can be
moved to f6, as in Karpov’s games vs. Kamsky at Elista in 1996, or exchanged on c3, as in the game Wahls-Karpov, Baden-Baden 1992.

11  \( \mathcal{Q}g5 \)  \( \mathcal{Q}e7 \)
12  \( \mathcal{Q}e1 \)  b6
12...\( \mathcal{Q}b4 \)  13  \( \mathcal{Q}b1 \)  b6  14  \( \mathcal{Q}e5 \)  would lead to the position from the game Keene-Miles, which we examined earlier on page 48.

13  a3  \( \mathcal{Q}b7 \)
14  \( \mathcal{Q}c2 \)  \( \mathcal{Q}c8 \)
15  \( \mathcal{W}d3 \)  g6
16  \( \mathcal{Q}h6 \)  \( \mathcal{Q}e8 \)
17  \( \mathcal{Q}ad1 \)  \( (D) \)

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White has mobilised all his pieces and managed to avoid any exchanges, which would generally favour his opponent. We have already seen a similar pattern (\( \mathcal{Q}c2, \mathcal{W}d3, \mathcal{Q}h6 \)) in a few games, e.g. in Yusupov-Lobron, on page 25 (where White’s bishop was on g5). The next thing White is likely to do is to redeploy the bishop on b3, threatening to break in the centre at an appropriate moment by d4-d5. I think that White has some advantage here, but both sides must be very precise with their play.

17  ...  \( \mathcal{Q}d5 \)

The text prevents the d4-d5 break radically. Also very interesting here is 17...\( \mathcal{W}c7 \) with the idea of a subsequent ...\( \mathcal{Q}c8 \)d8 and then at the appropriate moment ...\( \mathcal{Q}g4 \), targeting White’s king.

18  h4!

With the black knight gone from the kingside, it’s logical to take advantage of it and increase the tension there. At the moment the battery “\( \mathcal{W}d3 + \mathcal{Q}c2 \)” is pointed to the g6-bulwark; therefore the h-pawn is needed in order to weaken it.

18  ...  a6?

This indifferent move puts Black into a difficult situation. He should have played 18...\( \mathcal{Q}xc3 \) instead. Then after 19 bxc3 Black can choose between 19...\( \mathcal{W}d5 \) or 19...\( \mathcal{Q}f6 \) (19...\( \mathcal{Q}xh4? \) would be bad in a view of 20 d5!); in each case White would have the initiative, but Black would have his own chances.

19  h5  \( \mathcal{Q}xc3? \)

Now it's too late.

20  h\(x\)g6!  h\(x\)g6  \( (D) \)
21 \( \mathcal{A}xe6!! \)

A crushing move, which Black obviously missed, expecting only 21 bxc3. Please pay attention to how much the residence of Black's king has been weakened by the march of the h-pawn. Now White's attack is decisive.

21 ... \( \mathcal{A}e5 \)

The only move, as otherwise Black cannot stop 22 \( \mathcal{A}xg6+ \).

22 \( \mathcal{A}xe5 \) \( \mathcal{A}e4 \)
23 \( \mathcal{A}xg6+! \)

Another devastating blow, which White had to foresee when playing 21 \( \mathcal{A}xe6!! \).

23 ... \( \mathcal{A}xg6 \)

Black must accept this sacrifice, as 23...\( \mathcal{A}h7 \) loses even more quickly after 24 \( \mathcal{A}h3 \) \( \mathcal{A}xg6 \) 25 \( \mathcal{A}xe4 \) \( \mathcal{A}xe4 \) 26 \( \mathcal{A}g5+ \) \( \mathcal{A}g8 \) 27 \( \mathcal{A}e6+ \) \( \mathcal{A}h8 \) 28 \( \mathcal{A}f7+ \) \( \mathcal{A}g7 \) 29 \( \mathcal{A}xd8+ \).

24 \( \mathcal{A}b3+ \) \( \mathcal{A}h7 \)
25 \( \mathcal{A}h3 \) \( \mathcal{A}h4 \)

More stubborn would be 25... \( \mathcal{A}e2+ \) 26 \( \mathcal{A}f1 \) \( \mathcal{A}h4 \), but even then White's attack succeeds after 27 \( \mathcal{A}f7! \) \( \mathcal{A}f5 \) 28 \( g4 \) \( \mathcal{A}xg4 \) 29 \( \mathcal{A}xg4 \) \( \mathcal{A}f6 \) 30 \( \mathcal{A}g5+ \) \( \mathcal{A}xg5 \) 31 \( \mathcal{A}xg5+ \).

26 bxc3 \( \mathcal{A}c7 \)
27 \( \mathcal{A}f7 \) \( \mathcal{A}xf7 \)
28 \( \mathcal{A}xf7 \) \( \mathcal{A}f5 \)
29 \( \mathcal{A}h2 \) \( \mathcal{A}e2 \) 30 \( \mathcal{A}e3 \) \( \mathcal{A}g7 \) 31 \( \mathcal{A}c4 \) \( \mathcal{A}c2 \) 32 \( \mathcal{A}f4 \) 1-0.

Our next game is a more recent example of the same theme. This game also shows that if the possessor of the isolated d-pawn manages to keep most of the pieces on the board, his attack may be more dangerous. This example also illustrates the close connection which exists between the two flanks in chess — as you will see, the firm control over the c5-square which White enjoyed in the game helped him greatly with his kingside attack.

Please pay close attention to this game:

Gulko - Kaidanov

USA Ch 1994

1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 \( \mathcal{A}f6 \) 4 d4 cxd5 5 \( \mathcal{A}c3 \) e6 6 \( \mathcal{A}f3 \) \( \mathcal{A}e7 \) 7 cxd5 \( \mathcal{A}xd5 \)
8 \( \mathcal{A}d3 \) \( \mathcal{A}c6 \) 9 0-0 0-0 10 \( \mathcal{A}e1 \) \( \mathcal{A}f6 \)
11 a3 \( \mathcal{A}d7 \) 12 \( \mathcal{A}c2 \) \( \mathcal{A}c8? \) (D)

[Diagram]

Annotating this game in Informator 62, GM Gulko regarded this move as dubious, suggesting 12... \( \mathcal{A}xc3 \) 13 bxc3 \( \mathcal{A}c8 \) instead. I think that in fact the text is a serious positional mistake, yielding White a significant advantage.

13 \( \mathcal{A}e4! \)

Now White gets to keep more
pieces on the board, which generally favours the side possessing the isolani.

13 ... \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) e7
14 \(\text{\textit{W}}\) d3 g6
15 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) d2

Instead, 15 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) h6? — quite standard for such positions — would be wrong here in view of 15...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\) cb4 16 axb4 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) xb4 17 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) xf8 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) xf8! and Black stands better.

15 ... \(\text{\textit{W}}\) b6? (D)

It is tempting to play 15...f5 here, but it still leaves White with the better chances after 16 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) eg5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) xd4 17 \(\text{\textit{W}}\) xd4 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) xc2 18 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) xe6 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) c6 19 \(\text{\textit{W}}\) h4 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) xg5 20 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) xg5 \(\text{\textit{W}}\) d7 21 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) ac1.

A fine move — White takes care of the weakness of the b-pawn and establishes good control over the c5-square. Here we see how grabbing space on the queenside helps White’s action in the centre and on the opposite wing.

16 ... \(\text{\textit{A}}\) fd8
17 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) b3 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) e8
18 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) ac1

In his annotations, Boris Gulko also mentioned that 18 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) ad1!! is worth considering here. I like this idea too — that move would fortify the d-pawn and would avoid any possible simplifications on the c-file.

18 ... a6?!

Black prepares to utilise the b5-square somehow, but this attempt is very slow. Still it’s hard to suggest a better strategy for Black.

After 18...\(\text{\textit{Q}}\) f6 White avoids unnecessary exchanges by playing 19 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) c5 — a move which also shelters the d4-pawn. Then, if Black tries to weaken the position of the c5-knight by 19...a5?, he loses on the account of 20 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) xe6! fxe6 21 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) xe6+ \(\text{\textit{A}}\) f7 22 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) xc8 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) xc8 23 b5+.

Instead of the text, Gulko recommended 15...a5!, preventing White’s expansion on the queenside. However, it’s very hard to come up with a move like this, as prophylactic thinking is a very difficult area in chess strategy — we generally tend to be quite pushy in our plans and don’t always look closely enough at what our opponent is up to.

16 b4!

White also stands better after 18...a5 19 b5 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) a7 20 a4, as Black’s position is cramped. Maybe that was Black’s best chance in the position after 18 \(\text{\textit{A}}\) ac1. At least in this line Black gets some relief by playing 20...\(\text{\textit{A}}\) xc1 21 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) xc1 \(\text{\textit{Q}}\) c8.

19 h4!

Now it’s time for the march of the h-pawn, whose job is to soften up Black’s pawn chain on the kingside.
19 ... \( \triangle a7 \)
20 \( \triangle c6 \) \( \triangle c6 \)

Black cannot find a suitable defensive plan, while White's attack develops naturally, for example:
20 ... \( \triangle b5 \) 21 \( \wedge b1 \) \( \triangle c6 \) 22 h5 and Black’s kingside comes under fire.
21 h5 \( (D) \)

Here I would like to digress from our theme and talk again about computers in chess. I have mentioned previously that I use chess programs quite a lot in order to prepare for tournaments or to check my analysis.

The difference between a silicon mind and a human brain can be clearly seen in this case — suggest this position to a computer (I mean some chess analysing module) and give it some time. You will probably see that the program assesses this position as roughly equal.

Yet, in Informator, GM Gulko assessed this position as winning for White and I agree with him. Indeed, Black cannot stop the opponent’s attack here without serious positional concessions. The fact that the fruits of this attack will become apparent only a few moves later, should not delude us — we should be capable of this kind of strategic insight.
21 ... \( w a7 \)

Another logical move — 21 ... \( \triangle f6 \) would also lead to a collapse after 22 hgx6 hxg6 23 \( \triangle x e6! \) fxe6 24 \( \triangle x e6 \) \( \triangle g7 \) 25 \( \wedge e4 \). For example:
25 ... \( a f7 \) 26 \( \triangle x d5 \) \( \triangle x e6 \) 27 \( \triangle x e6 \) \( \triangle c7 \) (also bad is 27 ... \( \triangle x d4 \) 28 \( \triangle x c8 \) \( \triangle x f 2+ \) 29 \( \triangle f 1 \) \( \triangle x c8 \) 30 \( \triangle c3+ \) and White wins.) 28 d5 or 25 ... \( \triangle c7 \) 26 \( \triangle x f 6 \) \( \triangle x f 6 \) 27 d5 and White’s attack is devastating.
22 hxg6 hxg6
23 \( \triangle x e 6! \)

Yet another addition to our already extensive collection of sacrificial blows on e6!
23 ... \( f x e 6 \)
24 \( \triangle x e 6 \) \( a f 7 \)

After 24 ... \( \triangle g7 \) 25 \( \wedge e 4 \) \( a f 7 \) 26 \( \triangle x d 5 \) \( \triangle x d 5 \) 27 \( \wedge x d 5 \) \( \triangle d 8 \) 28 \( \wedge e 4 \) \( \triangle x e 6 \) 29 \( \wedge x e 6 \) White has a decisive material advantage. Also hopeless for Black is 24 ... \( \triangle h 8 \) 25 \( \triangle x g 6 \) \( \triangle x g 6 \) 26 \( \wedge x g 6 \).
25 \( \triangle x g 6+ \) \( \triangle f 8 \)
26 \( \triangle h 6 \) \( \triangle e 8 \)
27 \( \triangle e 1 \) 1-0

This is a model game from the possessor of the isolated d-pawn, although Black failed to come up with any counterplay after his mistakes on moves 12 and 15.

In our two previous games the h-pawn was pushed forward in order to attack the g6-pawn and thus weaken Black’s kingside.
Now let us see an example where the possessor of the isolani advances his h-pawn to h4 (h5) in order to establish control over the g5- (g4)-square. I think that the following game is quite instructive:

Dzhandzhgava - Kalegin
Batumi 1991

1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 d4
\( \text{Qf6} 5 \text{Qc3} e6 6 \text{Qf3} \text{ae7} 7 \text{exd5} \text{Qxd5} 8 \text{Qd3} \text{Qc6} \)

9 0–0 0–0
10 \( \text{Qe}4 \text{Qf6} \)
11 \( \text{Qe}4 \text{Qce7} \)
12 h4!? (D)

An interesting idea — this move establishes firm control over the g5-square, enabling White’s pieces to occupy it.

12 ... \( \text{Qd7} \)
13 \( \text{Qd3} \) h6

Also possible is 13...g6 but after the further 14 \( \text{Qh6} \text{ae8} (14...\text{Qg7}!? ) \)
15 h5 \( \text{Qc6} 16 \text{hxg6} \text{hxg6} 17 \text{Qad1} \text{Qc8} 18 \text{Qe5} \text{Qxc3} 19 \text{Qxc6} \text{bxc6} \)
20 bxc3 White stood better in the game Kosić-Cela, 1989.

14 \( \text{Qg5}!? \) g6

This move has the disadvantage that it weakens Black’s kingside.

Obviously Black could not take the knight, as 14...hxg5?! leads to problems, for example: 15 hxg5 \( \text{Qc6} 16 \text{Qh7}+ \text{Qh8} 17 \text{Wh3+-.} \)

Neither could Black disregard the annoying knight — the careless 14...\( \text{Qc6} \) loses on the spot to 15 \( \text{Qh7}+ \text{Qh8} 16 \text{Qg8} \text{g6} 17 \text{Qxf7+.} \)

Probably Black’s defence here is 14...\( \text{Qb4}! \), with a further 15...\( \text{Qf5} \), which leads to positions with mutual chances. For example: 15 \( \text{Wd1} \text{Qf5} 16 \text{a3} \text{Qc6} 17 \text{Qxf5} \text{exf5} 18 \text{Qf3} \text{Qe6} \).

15 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{g7} \)
16 h5

Now this pawn changes its role and is used as a battering-ram.

16 ... \( \text{g5} \)

I think that from a practical point of view the text is better than 16...gxf5 17 \( \text{Qe5} \), where White gets a long-term initiative, as Black’s kingside is seriously compromised.

17 \( \text{Qxg5}!? \) (D)
A very interesting sacrifice! This is an example of a so-called ‘real sacrifice’, as it does not lead to immediate success. Yet, White gets quite enough for his knight — two pawns and a long-lasting attack.

17 ... hxg5
18 hxg5 f6

Here Black could try 18...wb6 19 ad1 f6, but after 20 h6 fxg5 21 h7+ h8 22 hxg7+ xg7 23 xxd5 xxd5 24 wg6+ h8 25 wh6 xf6 26 xg6+ xg8 27 wxc5 White’s attack is still going.

19 h7+ h8
20 h6 fxg5

Also interesting is 20...xc3!? 21 d2!? cd5 22 hxg7+ xg7, where White has a draw after 23 wh3 h8 24 wh6+ f7 25 wh5+, but it’s not clear whether he has more than that.

21 hxg5+ xg5
22 xxd5 exd5??

It might be better to recapture on d5 with the knight — 22...xd5, where after the further 23 wg6+ h8 24 wh6 xg6 Black can defend successfully, for example 25 xg6+ gg8 26 ef5 df4. Then 27 wh7+ f8 28 h5 does not win in view of 28... xf5 29 xg5 xf7!, when the endgame arising after 30 gg8+ e7 31 xxd8 xh7 32 xxa8 df4 is O.K. for Black.

23 e5 (D)
23 ... ff6?

As often happens in practical play, the defender — being under pressure — makes a mistake: 23...g4! would be much better. After the further 24 g5+ h8 25 h5! hg7 26 w3 we reach a critical position. Now 26...xf6 is not satisfactory for Black in view of 27 wg5+ gg6 (or 27... f7 28 e4 wh8 29 d5+ gg8 30 e1, winning for White) 28 e1 where White’s advantage is overwhelming. But after 26...g8! Black can defend. For example: 27 xg8 xg8 (but not 27...xg8? 28 wh6 f7 29 wh7+ e6 30 wg7 df6 31 e1+ d6 32 e7 which is winning for White.) 28 xxd5 and the resulting position is very unclear.

24 ael+

White’s attack is unstoppable now.

24 ...

Also bad is 24...g6 25 xg6 xg6 26 g7+ h6 27 wg3! when White wins by force, for example: 27...b8 28 e5 wc8 29 wh3+ h3 30 e6 wc1+ 31 e1 wc8 32 e7+-.

25 xg5+ h8
26 h5! g7
27 wg3+ f7
28 g6+! xg6
29 h7+ f6
30 wh4+
Here the computer shows checkmate in 6 after 30 ♗d6+ ♔g5 31 f4+ ♔f5 32 ♗xd5+ ♔g4 33 ♗h5+ ♘xf4 34 ♗f3+ ♔g5 35 ♗h5#. The text (30 ♗h4+) is typical for us human beings — it may not win that quickly, but it wins for sure and there is little calculation to do here.

30  ...  ♗g5

Also bad is 30...♕f5 31 ♗f7+ ♗f6 32 ♗h5+ ♔f4 33 g3#.

31  f4 1-0

Quite an interesting game. Even if the whole operation with 17 ♖xg5!? does not give White an advantage, Black’s defensive task in the arising complications is not easy. In practical play such sacrifices usually give excellent winning chances to the attacker. Besides, they make chess much more spectacular!

The plan with the march of the h-pawn was the last attacking motif we have covered in this chapter, as now we will move on to another subject and examine the cases where the owner of the isolated d-pawn plays on the queenside. But before that I would like to sum up with a few observations:

Summary

The possessor of the isolated d-pawn often employs the h-pawn in his attack. Usually it happens when there is an enemy pawn on g6 (g3), which in this case attracts the h-pawn like a magnet.

When White (assuming he is the possessor of the isolani) succeeds with his plan of h2-h4-h5xg6, Black’s position on the kingside often becomes considerably weakened.

As a result of that, various sacrifices (usually on f7 or e6) become possible. Sometimes the h-pawn is advanced in order to establish control over the g5-square, supporting a white piece placed there.

If you play against the isolated pawn, take measures against this plan — counterattack in the centre, try to simplify the position, thus reducing your opponent’s attacking potential, or fortify your kingside by keeping more pieces there.

Be careful with the move ...g6 — make sure it does not give a clear target to your opponent.
6 Queenside activity and play on the c-file

Not only can the side possessing the isolated pawn undertake play in the centre or on the kingside, quite often the pawn can help to develop an initiative on the queenside. Usually in order for the possessor of the isolani to do well on that wing, he needs to meet one of the following conditions:

a) Firm control of the open c-file;
b) Occupation of the important squares on the c-file with his pieces. Typically this applies to the c5-square, particularly when Black’s b-pawn has moved to b5. In this case we again assume White to be the possessor of the isolated d-pawn.

Talking about firm control over the open c-file, we should pay particular attention to those cases where Black’s a6-square falls into the possession of White’s bishop, which then controls the vital c8-square, preventing Black from competing for control of the c-file. The following game illustrates this idea very clearly:

Karpov - Geller
Moscow 1981

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Qc3 Qe7 4 Qf3
Qf6 5 Qg5 h6 6 Qh4 0-0 7 e3 b6 8
Ac1 Qb7 9 Qd3 Qbd7 10 0-0 c5
11 We2 Ac8 12 Qg3 cxd4 13 exd4
dxc4 14 Qxc4 Qxf3 15 gxf3 (D)

On move 14 Black spoiled White’s pawn formation on the kingside by exchanging his b7-bishop. However, that was a rather dubious idea, since White’s kingside is well guarded by
his dark-squared bishop on g3, while Black’s queenside is now seriously weakened.

15 ... \( \text{Qh5} \)
16 \( \text{Qa6!} \) \( \text{Qxg3} \)
17 \( \text{hxg3} \) \( \text{Ac7}??! \)

Later Black tried here 17...\( \text{Ac6} \)
18 \( \text{Af}d1 \) \( \text{Af6} \) 19 \( \text{Ab5} \) \( \text{Fd7} \) 20 a3 \( \text{Ad5} \) 21 \( \text{Ac4} \) \( \text{Ag5} \) 22 \( \text{Cc3} \) and a draw was agreed in the game Torre-M.Gurevich, Leningrad 1987. However, White could play better — 19 \( \text{Ag2}! \), with some advantage.

18 \( \text{Af}d1! \)

White does not hurry to start fighting for the c-file, preparing the d4-d5 break first and thus forcing Black’s knight to move away from the queenside. It would be much too premature to try to invade on the c-file by playing 18 \( \text{Qb5}? \) \( \text{xcl} \) 19 \( \text{xcl} \), as after 19...\( \text{Ab8}! \) Black is better, for example: 20 \( \text{Ab7} \) a6 21 \( \text{Ac8} \) \( \text{Fd7} \) 22 \( \text{Ec7} \) \( \text{We8} \) 23 \( \text{Cc3} \) \( \text{Wd8} \) 24 \( \text{Cc8} \) \( \text{Wxd4} \).

18 ... \( \text{Af6} \)
19 \( \text{Ab5}! \)

Now it’s time to take control of the open c-file.

19 ... \( \text{Axcl} \)
20 \( \text{Axcl} \) \( \text{Ad5} \)

After 20...\( \text{Bb8} \) 21 \( \text{Cc7} \) \( \text{Cd5} \) 22 \( \text{Axal} \) Black has no compensation for the pawn, while after 20...\( \text{Fd5} \) 21 a3 his position is also rather difficult, for example: 21...\( \text{Ad6} \) 22 \( \text{Axal} \) \( \text{Wxd4} \) 23 \( \text{Bb5} \) \( \text{We5} \) 24 \( \text{Wxe5} \) \( \text{Wxe5} \) 25 f4 \( \text{Ab8} \) 26 \( \text{Cc6} \) and White has a pleasant edge in the endgame.

21 \( \text{Axal} \) \( \text{Bb4} \)

22 a3! \( \text{Aa8} \)
23 \( \text{Cc6!} \) \( \text{Wd7} \) 24 \( \text{Wxa6} \) Black has no compensation for the pawn.

23 \( \text{Cc7}!? \) (D)

Perhaps Black should have preferred 23...\( \text{Ad8} \) 24 \( \text{Bb7} \) \( \text{Xa6} \) 25 \( \text{Wxa6} \) \( \text{Af6} \). Then White has a choice. After 26 \( \text{Wxb6} \) \( \text{Xd4} \) 27 \( \text{Cc7} \) \( \text{Xa7} \) 28 \( \text{Xa7} \) \( \text{Wxf3} \) Black has some counter-chances, as White’s king lacks pawn protection.

Therefore White should probably prefer 26 b4?! \( \text{Xd4} \) 27 b5 \( \text{Cc5} \) 28 \( \text{Cc6} \), where he has the advantage, thanks to the dominant position of his knight and his pawn majority on the queenside.

24 \( \text{Ab7}! \)

This is better than 24 \( \text{Ad7} \) \( \text{Ad8} \) 25 \( \text{Wb5}! \) \( \text{Xd7} \) 26 \( \text{Wxd7} \) \( \text{Af6} \) 27 \( \text{Cc4} \) — White should not exchange his rook, which is quite active.

24 ... \( \text{Af6} \)
25 \( \text{Cc6} \) \( \text{Ac8} \)
26 \( \text{De5} \)

White’s play on the queenside,
which started with 16...a6, has brought him a healthy extra pawn, so he can count on winning this position.

26 ...  
27 dxe5  
28 dxe2  
29 d3 a1? 

Black could put up more resistance by playing 29...c7 30 xc7 ecx7, although the resulting ending is also winning for White.

30 e4  
31 xf7!  
32 xg6+  
33 xh6+ 1-0 

Black resigned, as the line 33...e8 34 b5 f7 35 h7+ f8 36 h8+ f7 37 xd8 is self-evident.

In the game which we have just examined White's bishop occupied the a6-square because its counterpart had been exchanged, but sometimes White's bishop can go there even if the black bishop is on b7, as in our next example:

Mikhail Gurevich - Lars Bo Hansen
Taastrup 1992

1 d4 e6 2 c4 b4+ 3 c3 c5 4 e3 cxd4 5 exd4 f6 6 d3 d5 7 f3 0-0 8 0-0 dxc4 9 xc4 b6 10 g5 b7 11 e5 e7
12 e1 c6?! (D)

Black completes his development and puts pressure on both the d4-pawn and e5-knight. Yet, as GM Gurevich convincingly proved in the game, the text is a mistake and in-
21 $\text{Qc3} \text{Dd6} 22 \text{Qe4} \text{Dd5} 23 \text{Qxf6+}
\text{gx6} 24 \text{Wxf6}, but after 24...\text{Wc2}
Black still has sufficient counter-play. Thus, 17 \text{Qb5} is harmless for Black.

Gurevich also mentioned the move
17 \text{Qxf6} as worth considering, but after the further 17...\text{Qxf6} 18 \text{Qe4}
\text{Qxe5} 19 \text{dxe5} Black can play
19...\text{Wc7!} with better chances.

Yet, the simple and most logical
move 17 \text{Qe4} gives White a decisive advantage after the further
17...\text{Qxe4} 18 \text{Wxf7+} \text{Qh8} 19 \text{Qxc6!}.
For example: 19...\text{Qxg5} 20 \text{Wxe7}
\text{Wxe7} (if 20...\text{Qd7}, then White does
not have to take on g5 yet, but instead can play a crushing \textit{zwischenzug} — 21 \text{Qxa7!}, winning on the
spot.) 21 \text{Qxe7} \text{Qxc1} 22 \text{Qxc1}
and the endgame is winning for White.
Slightly more acceptable for Black is
19...\text{Qxc6} 20 \text{Wxe7} \text{Wxe7} 21
\text{Qxe7} \text{Qd6} 22 \text{Qxc6} \text{Qxc6}, although
White should still be able to win this rook endgame arising after 23 g3 \text{Qf6}
24 \text{Qxf6} \text{gx6} 25 \text{Qg2}.

Therefore, I think that 16...\text{Qf7d8?}
would be a mistake too and Black
should have preferred another move,
also mentioned by Gurevich —
16...\text{Qa5!}, immediately taking care
of the pin. After the further 17 \text{Wxb7}
\text{Qxb7} 18 \text{Qb5} White stands better
in the line 18...\text{a6} 19 \text{Qa7!} \text{Qxc1} 20
\text{Qxc1}, but perhaps Black can put up
tougher resistance if he plays 18...
\text{Qb4} 19 \text{Qxd1} \text{Qxc1} 20 \text{Qxc1} \text{Qd5}.

Even though in that position White
can fight for the initiative with 21 a3
or 21 \text{Qc6}, this ending is the best
Black can get after his mistake on
move 12. This analysis shows how
difficult Black’s defensive task is after
13 \text{Qa6} and how easily Black can
go wrong here.

17 \text{Qxd5} \text{Qxg5}
18 \text{Qxc6!} \text{exd5}

The only move, as 18...\text{Qxc1?}
loses on the account of 19 \text{Qde7+}
\text{Qh8} 20 \text{Qxc8} \text{Qd2} 21 \text{Qd6} \text{Wd7}
22 \text{Qd1}.

19 \text{Wxd5} \text{Qxc1}

Black had a tricky move at his dispo-
sal — 19...\text{Qd2} — but it would
eventually lead to the same position
as in the game after 20 \text{Qe2!} \text{Qxc1}
21 \text{Qe7+} \text{Wxe7} 22 \text{Wxe7} \text{Qxb2}.
20 \text{Qe7+} \text{Wxe7}
21 \text{Qxe7} \text{Qxb2}
22 g3 (D)

\begin{center}
\textbf{B}
\end{center}

Ever since 16...\text{Qd5?}, the play has
been forced and this position is the
logical result of that move. White is
winning here, although he has to play
precisely not to allow Black to build
up a fortress.

22 ...
\text{a5}

Black also loses after 22...\text{Qc2} 23
\[ \text{\texttt{xa7 \texttt{d2} 24 \texttt{a4} \texttt{b5} 25 \texttt{a8} \texttt{g6} 26 \texttt{xf8}+ \texttt{xf8} 27 \texttt{xb5+}.} \]

23 \texttt{d7!}

White overprotects the d-pawn and prepares for the further advance of this passed pawn.

\[ \begin{align*}
23 & \ldots & \texttt{b8} \\
24 & \texttt{b3} & \texttt{c1} \\
25 & \texttt{d6} & \texttt{b5} \\
26 & \texttt{e3} & \texttt{g5} \\
27 & \texttt{xa5} & \texttt{f6} \\
28 & \texttt{d5} & \texttt{b4} \\
29 & \texttt{a4} & \texttt{h6} \\
30 & \texttt{d7} & \texttt{f8} \\
31 & \texttt{d6} & \texttt{e6} \\
32 & \texttt{a7} & \texttt{b5} \\
33 & \texttt{a8+} & \texttt{h7} \\
34 & \texttt{f3}?
\end{align*} \]

Much easier would be 34 \texttt{xf7!}, as Black cannot take the d6-pawn — 34...\texttt{xd6?}, because of 35 \texttt{we4+ \texttt{g8} 36 \texttt{we8+ \texttt{h7} 37 \texttt{xb5}.} \]

After the text, the game continued 34...\texttt{b6} 35 \texttt{d3+ \texttt{g8} 36 \texttt{a7 \texttt{ab8} 37 \texttt{d7 \texttt{ad8} 38 \texttt{c7 \texttt{fb8} 39 \texttt{b5 \texttt{e7} 40 \texttt{xb4+ \texttt{d6} 41 \texttt{we4+ \texttt{e6} 42 \texttt{b4+ \texttt{d6} 43 a4 \texttt{d4?\]

As Gurevich mentioned in \textit{Informator}, after the correct 43...\texttt{8xd7 44 \texttt{xd7+ \texttt{xd7 45 a5 \texttt{d4 46 a6 \texttt{e6!} 47 \texttt{g2 \texttt{d7 White would still have to work to win the game.}\]

Now it ended abruptly:

\[ \begin{align*}
44 & \texttt{c4} & 1-0
\end{align*} \]

Sometimes the occupation of the a6-square by White's bishop is of a temporary nature, whose purpose is that of disrupting the harmony of the opponent's pieces. In the following game yet another Danish grandmaster fell a victim to such a plan.

\textbf{Karpov - Cu. Hansen}

\textit{Wijk aan Zee 1988}

\[ \begin{align*}
1 & \texttt{d4 \texttt{f6} 2 \texttt{c4} \texttt{e6} 3 \texttt{c3 \texttt{b4} 4 \texttt{c2}} \\
0-0 & 5 \texttt{a3 \texttt{xc3+} 6 \texttt{xc3 \texttt{b6} 7 \texttt{g5 \texttt{ab7}} 8 \texttt{e3 \texttt{d6} 9 \texttt{f3 \texttt{bd7}}}} \\
10 & \texttt{d3} & \texttt{c5} \\
11 & \texttt{e2} & \texttt{c8} \\
12 & \texttt{d2} & \texttt{cxd4} \\
13 & \texttt{exd4} & \texttt{d5?!}
\end{align*} \]

Shortly after this game Black discovered a better move here — 13...\texttt{a6}, for example: 14 \texttt{c1 d5} 15 \texttt{cxd5 \texttt{xd3} 16 \texttt{dx6 \texttt{xe2} 17 \texttt{xc8 \texttt{xc8} 18 \texttt{exd7 \texttt{xd7} 19 \texttt{xe2 \texttt{d5 with complicated play, as in the game Nikolić-Agdestein, Wijk aan Zee 1988.}} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
14 & \texttt{cxd5} & \texttt{xd5} \\
15 & \texttt{a6! (D)} & \texttt{B}
\end{align*} \]

White is trying to fight for the open file. Although this bishop can be eventually chased away, it will cost Black some time.
15 ... \(\textbf{Ae}6\)

15...\(\text{Ac}7\)? loses the exchange for a pawn after 16 \(\text{Af}4\) \(\text{Ac}6\) 17 \(\text{Ab}7\) \(\text{Fc}4\) 18 b3 \(\text{Ab}d4\) 19 \(\text{Bxa}4\).

16 \(\text{Ab}5\) \(\text{Ac}7\)

After 16...\(\text{Ac}8\)?! 17 \(\text{Bxd}7\) \(\text{Bxd}7\) 18 \(\text{Bxf}6\) \(\text{gx}f6\) 19 \(\text{Bg}3\)? White has good chances to attack Black’s weakened kingside.

17 \(\text{Af}4\) \(\text{Ac}8\)

18 \(\text{Aa}6\) \(\text{Aa}8\)

19 \(\text{Ac}1\)

This is the point of White’s previous play — he now controls the only open file. If Black wants to bring his rook on to it again, he needs to demobilise some of his pieces.

19 ... \(\text{Ab}8\)

20 \(\text{Ad}3\) \(\text{Ab}7\)

21 \(\text{Ag}5\) \(\text{Bbd}7\)

22 0-0 \(h6\)

23 \(\text{Ah}4\) \(\text{Ac}8\)

24 \(\text{Ac}3\) \(a6\)

25 \(\text{Be}2!\) (D)

A great idea. It’s well known that such ‘short’ queen moves are often most difficult, as we associate this piece with long-range movements.

The idea of the text is to force the move ...b5, weakening the c5-square, which then can become an outpost for White’s pieces. As 25...\(\text{Bb}8\) looks quite ugly, Black has to play into his opponent’s hands.

25 ... \(b5\)

26 \(\text{Be}4\)

Now the c5-square is weak and Karpov immediately begins to move his knight to the desired destination. Control over the outpost on c5 promises him a stable advantage.

26 ... \(\text{Bb}6\)

27 \(\text{Cc}5!\) \(\text{Af}e8\)

If he captured the knight — 27...\(\text{Bxc}5\) — Black would get into a very unpleasant position after 28 dxc5 \(\text{Bd}8\) (28...\(\text{Bxc}5\)? loses on the spot to 29 \(\text{Bf}2\) \(\text{Bd}7\) 30 \(\text{Bxc}5\) \(\text{Bxc}5\) 31 b4) 29 b4.

28 b4 \(\text{Cc}6\)

29 \(\text{Bd}2\) \(\text{Bd}5\)

30 \(\text{Be}4\) \(\text{Bf}6\)

31 \(\text{Ae}1\)

Perhaps, having established his knight on the c5-outpost, White should concentrate his forces on the c-file. Thus 31 \(\text{Cc}2!\)?, with a further \(\text{Bf}c1\), was well worth considering.

31 ... \(\text{Bh}7\)

32 \(\text{Bf}2\) \(\text{Bf}8\)

33 \(\text{Bb}1\) \(\text{Ba}7\)

34 \(\text{Be}4\) \(\text{Be}7\)

35 \(\text{Bg}3\) (D)

White’s advantage is of a long-term nature, so he can try various ideas in this position, while his opponent is confined to passive defence.
for example 49...\textit{\textsc{w}}e7 also leaves White with the initiative after 50 \textit{\textsc{a}}ac1 \textit{\textsc{w}}b8 51 \textit{\textsc{c}}c3 \textit{\textsc{h}}h5 52 \textit{\textsc{g}}g3.
\begin{center}
50 \textit{\textsc{c}}c1! ? \textit{\textsc{f}}g6
\end{center}
\begin{center}
51 \textit{\textsc{b}}b1 \textit{\textsc{d}}d8
\end{center}
\begin{center}
52 \textit{\textsc{c}}c5 \textit{\textsc{h}}h8 53 h4 \textit{\textsc{a}}a8 54 h5 \textit{\textsc{f}}f8
\end{center}
\begin{center}
55 \textit{\textsc{x}}xb5 \textit{\textsc{x}}xb5 56 \textit{\textsc{x}}xb5 \textit{\textsc{f}}f5 57
\end{center}
\begin{center}
\textit{\textsc{b}}b4 \textit{\textsc{h}}h7 58 \textit{\textsc{a}}a4 1-0
\end{center}
Black lost on time. He is a pawn down and has no compensation for it.

In this game we saw the importance of the c5-outpost in such positions. We may say that the weakness of this square is quite a common feature of many positions with the isolated d4-pawn, as Black often plays ...b5 in order to develop his bishop to b7.

Let us examine yet another game where White's control of the c5-square played an important role.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Kaidanov - Brunner}
\end{center}
\begin{center}
\textit{Wcht Lucerne 1993}
\end{center}
\begin{center}
1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 \textit{\textsc{f}}6 4 \textit{\textsc{x}}xc4
\end{center}
\begin{center}
e6 5 \textit{\textsc{f}}f3 c5 6 0-0 a6 7 \textit{\textsc{b}}b3 cxd4 8
\end{center}
\begin{center}
\textit{\textsc{e}}e7
\end{center}
\begin{center}
9 \textit{\textsc{c}}c3 0-0
\end{center}
\begin{center}
10 \textit{\textsc{e}}e2 \textit{\textsc{c}}c6
\end{center}
\begin{center}
11 \textit{\textsc{d}}d1 \textit{\textsc{a}}a5
\end{center}
\begin{center}
12 \textit{\textsc{c}}c2 b5
\end{center}
\begin{center}
13 \textit{\textsc{g}}g5
\end{center}

Later White tried here 13 a4 b4
\begin{center}
14 \textit{\textsc{e}}e4 \textit{\textsc{b}}b7 15 \textit{\textsc{c}}c5, and after
\end{center}
\begin{center}
15...d5? 16 \textit{\textsc{e}}e5 \textit{\textsc{a}}a7 17 \textit{\textsc{g}}g5
\end{center}
White seized the initiative in the game Zvyagintsev-Magem, Pamplona 1996. However, Black
could play better — 15...\(\text{xf}3\) 16 \(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{d}5\) — putting pressure on both White’s knight and queen. Then after 17 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}7!\) Black is fine. Therefore we can say that 13 \(\text{a}4\) is no better than the text.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
13 \quad \text{b}7 \\
14 \text{e}5 \quad \text{g}6 \\
15 \text{xf}6!\? (D)
\end{array}
\]

An interesting decision! White cannot manage the \(\text{d}5\)-break and it’s difficult to attack Black’s king here, but GM Kaidanov has spotted the weakness of Black’s queenside in general and the weakness of the \(\text{c}5\)-square in particular.

This is yet another example showing that the possessor of the isolated d-pawn should keep both flanks in mind when considering a plan.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
15 \quad \text{xf}6 \\
16 \text{e}4
\end{array}
\]

A natural follow-up. White needs to exchange the light squared bishops in order to highlight the weakness of Black’s queenside.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
16 \quad \text{xe}4 \\
17 \text{xe}4 \quad \text{g}7 \\
18 \text{ac}1
\end{array}
\]

Perhaps White should have played 18 \(\text{b}4!\) \(\text{b}7\) 19 \(\text{ac}1\). The text is less energetic and allows Black time to consolidate his position.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
18 \quad \text{c}8 \\
19 \text{c}5 \quad \text{d}6?
\end{array}
\]

A serious mistake. Here Black missed the chance to bring his knight into play by 19...\(\text{c}6!\).

Alas, now 20 \(\text{xe}6?\) does not work in view of 20...\(\text{xd}4!\) 21 \(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xc}1\) 22 \(\text{xc}1\) \(\text{xd}4\) and Black is better. White should play 20 \(\text{e}3\), but then after 20...\(\text{e}7\) Black’s knight is heading to f5, from where it will attack the d4-pawn. Black has good play.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
20 \text{e}1! \quad \text{fd}8?
\end{array}
\]

This error loses. It was too late to move the knight to \(\text{c}6\) as 20...\(\text{c}6??\) loses on the spot to 21 \(\text{e}4\) \(\text{d}5\) 22 \(\text{c}5\). Therefore, Black had to play 20...\(\text{c}4\), even though it would not yield him sufficient compensation for the pawn after the further 21 \(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{xc}4\) 22 \(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{d}5\) 23 \(\text{b}3\).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
21 \text{b}4! (D)
\end{array}
\]

This move wins the exchange. 21 \(\text{xf}7!\) \(\text{xf}7\) 22 \(\text{xa}5\) would also be
good, as Black cannot restore material equality by 22...\( \text{\textit{d}xd4} \) on account of 23 \( \text{\textit{d}b7} \text{\textit{d}xf2+} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{d}f1!} \) when White wins.

The game finished as follows:
21...\( \text{\textit{c}c4} \) 22 \( \text{\textit{b}b7} \text{\textit{d}d5} \) 23 \( \text{\textit{d}xd8} \text{\textit{d}xd8} \) 24 \( \text{\textit{d}e2} \text{\textit{h}h6} \) 25 \( \text{\textit{g}g4} \text{\textit{g}g7} \) 26 \( \text{\textit{d}e3} \text{\textit{e}e4} \) 27 \( \text{\textit{d}c2} \text{\textit{f}f4} \) 28 \( \text{\textit{d}xc4} \text{\textit{b}xc4} \) 29 \( \text{\textit{g}g3} \text{\textit{g}g4} \) 30 \( \text{\textit{c}xc4} \text{\textit{d}xd4} \) 31 \( \text{\textit{d}g2} \text{\textit{e}e4+} \) 32 \( \text{\textit{d}f3} \text{\textit{e}e3} \) 33 \( \text{\textit{c}c2} \text{\textit{e}e5} \) 34 \( \text{\textit{e}e2} \text{\textit{g}g5} \) 35 \( \text{\textit{a}xa6} \text{\textit{h}5} \) 36 \( \text{\textit{c}c6} \text{\textit{d}b8} \) 37 \( \text{\textit{a}a3} \text{\textit{g}g7} \) 38 \( \text{\textit{h}h4} \text{\textit{f}f5} \) 39 \( \text{\textit{e}e4} \text{\textit{d}d6} \) 40 \( \text{\textit{d}xd4} \text{\textit{e}exd4} \) 41 \( \text{\textit{d}xd4}+ \) 42 \( \text{\textit{d}xf6}+ \) 43 \( \text{\textit{d}xf6} \) 44 \( \text{\textit{d}e8} \) 45 \( \text{\textit{d}f3} \text{\textit{c}c1} \) 46 \( \text{\textit{e}e2} \) 47 \( \text{\textit{d}d2} \text{\textit{g}g1} \) 48 \( \text{\textit{c}c2} \) 1–0.

Now let us see how White’s control over the c-file can help his attack on the opposite wing. Both flanks are closely related in chess and therefore we should always keep in mind that our superior position or piece activity on one wing may lead to attack on the opposite side.

In our next game we again encounter a familiar line from the Nimzo-Indian Defence — which we saw for example, in the game Karpov-Hansen — and a very familiar player, who now plays against the isolani.

Adianto - Karpov
Jakarta (3) 1997

1 \text{\textit{d}d4} \text{\textit{d}f6} 2 \text{\textit{c}c4} \text{\textit{e}e6} 3 \text{\textit{d}c3} \text{\textit{b}b4} 4 \text{\textit{d}c2} 0–0 5 \text{\textit{a}a3} \text{\textit{xc}c3+} 6 \text{\textit{d}xc3} \text{\textit{b}b6} 7 \text{\textit{g}g5} \text{\textit{b}b7} 8 \text{\textit{e}e3} 9 \text{\textit{f}f3} \text{\textit{d}bd7}

10 \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{c5}
11 \text{\textit{e}e2} \text{\textit{c}c8}
12 \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{(D)}

12 \ldots \text{d5}

Much more common here is 12...\text{\textit{e}exd4} 13 \text{\textit{e}exd4} \text{d5}, where the following complicated game shows how many opportunities are available to both sides in this position:

14 0–0 \text{\textit{d}xc4} 15 \text{\textit{d}xc4} \text{h}6 16 \text{\textit{h}h4} \text{\textit{d}b8} 17 \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{\textit{e}e7} 18 \text{\textit{d}e1} \text{\textit{f}fd8} 19 \text{\textit{d}g3}!! (Sokolov also recommended 19 \text{\textit{d}ad1}) 19...g5! 20 \text{\textit{d}xe6} \text{\textit{f}xe6} 21 \text{\textit{d}f5} \text{\textit{d}f8} 22 \text{\textit{d}xe6} \text{\textit{e}e8} 23 \text{\textit{d}xe8} \text{\textit{d}xe8} 24 \text{\textit{d}g3} \text{\textit{d}d8} 25 \text{\textit{d}e1} \text{\textit{c}c6} 26 \text{\textit{d}e6} \text{\textit{h}h8} 27 \text{\textit{d}d6} and White obtained a decisive advantage in the game I.Sokolov-Almasi, Groningen 1995. Of course, Black could have defended better.

Black also often plays 12...\text{\textit{h}h6} 13 \text{\textit{h}h4} \text{\textit{e}exd4} 14 \text{\textit{e}exd4} \text{d5} and now 15 0–0 \text{\textit{d}xc4} 16 \text{\textit{d}xc4} leads to the position from Sokolov-Almasi, while after 15 \text{\textit{c}c5} \text{\textit{a}a8} 16 \text{\textit{a}a6} \text{\textit{c}c7} 17 \text{\textit{g}g3} \text{\textit{b}xc5}! 18 \text{\textit{d}xc7} \text{\textit{d}xc7} 19 \text{\textit{d}c3} \text{\textit{e}e5} 20 \text{\textit{d}d3} \text{\textit{e}exd4} 21 \text{\textit{d}xd4} \text{\textit{e}e8}+ 22 \text{\textit{f}f1} \text{\textit{b}b6} Black had an upper hand in the game Lautier-Karpov, Linares 1995.

13 \text{\textit{e}exd5} \text{\textit{d}d5}
14 \text{\textit{d}d4} \text{\textit{d}d5}
Also possible was 14...\textit{c}c6 15 \textit{w}d1 \textit{h}6 16 \textit{\&}h4 \textit{b}5.
15 \textit{exd4} \textit{\textit{c}c6}
16 \textit{\textit{w}d1} \textit{b}5
Black needs to play this in order to bring his queen out.
17 0–0 \textit{\textit{w}b6} (D)

Here Black is doing better compared to the game Karpov-Hansen, which we examined earlier, as he has pressure on the d4-pawn and some prospects of play on the queenside.
18 \textit{\textit{\textit{c}c1}} \textit{\textit{\textit{d}d5}}
Perhaps Black should have played 18...\textit{h}6?! , putting the question to the bishop. If White then plays 19 \textit{\textit{h}h4} , then after 19...\textit{\textit{\textit{d}d5}} he has to take care of the weakness of the e3-square.

If the white bishop retreats on the c1–h6 diagonal — 19 \textit{\textit{\textit{d}d2}}?! — then Black has an interesting simplifying move — 19...\textit{\textit{e}e5} , and White is only slightly better after 20 \textit{\textit{b}b4} \textit{\textit{x}xd3} 21 \textit{\textit{x}xd3} \textit{\textit{fe8}} 22 \textit{\textit{c}c5}.
19 \textit{\textit{h}h1} \textit{a5}?! 
This is too slow. As White is about to start a kingside attack, Black should have hurried with action on the opposite wing by 19...\textit{b4}?!.
20 \textit{\textit{w}e1} \textit{b4}
21 \textit{\textit{w}h4} \textit{f5}
Black had to play this move, as 21...\textit{\textit{h}6}?! would have led to a disaster after 22 \textit{\textit{x}h6}! \textit{g}x\textit{h6} 23 \textit{\textit{w}xh6} \textit{\textit{\textit{f}f6}} 24 \textit{\textit{\textit{f}f4}} \textit{\textit{\textit{x}xd4}} 25 \textit{\textit{c}c4} where White's attack is victorious.
22 \textit{\textit{w}g3} \textit{\textit{f}f7}?! 

Black cannot exchange the light-squared bishops by 22...\textit{\textit{b}b5}? because of 23 \textit{\textit{h}6}+ , but he should have preferred 22...\textit{\textit{b}7} to the text.
23 \textit{\textit{\textit{f}f4}}!

White needs to exchange the powerful d5-knight, at the same time his own knight was quite inactive.
23 ... \textit{\textit{\textit{x}xf4}}
24 \textit{\textit{\textit{x}xf4}} \textit{\textit{\textit{d}d5}}
It would be much too risky to take the d4-pawn, as after 24...\textit{\textit{x}xd4}? 25 \textit{\textit{a}a6} \textit{e}5 26 \textit{\textit{c}c4}+! \textit{\textit{d}d5} 27 \textit{\textit{\textit{f}f}d1} \textit{\textit{e}xf4} 28 \textit{\textit{x}xd4} \textit{f}x\textit{g3} 29 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{f}f}d5} White's advantage is decisive.
25 \textit{\textit{d}d6} \textit{\textit{fe8}}
26 \textit{\textit{a}xb4} \textit{\textit{a}xb4}
27 \textit{\textit{c}c7}!
28 \textit{\textit{d}d6} \textit{\textit{b}b7}
29 \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{c}c5}!} (D)
White invades on the open c-file and his advantage is already decisive.

29 ... \textit{e}e7?

Black could not solve his problems by tactical means, playing 29...\textit{d}c6?, as this fails to 30 \textit{x}d5! \textit{wx}c7 (or 30...\textit{ex}d5 31 \textit{wx}d5+ \textit{e}6 32 \textit{c}c4, winning) 31 \textit{xf}5+ and White wins. Black can't solve his problems even with the relatively best 29 ... \textit{g}8 as then after 30 \textit{b}5 \textit{f}8 31 \textit{fc}1 White's pieces dominates the whole board. Yet he should have played that, as the text loses by force.

30 \textit{xb}8! \textit{xb}8

Also hopeless is 30...\textit{xb}8 31 \textit{xd}5 \textit{ex}d5 32 \textit{xd}5+ \textit{f}8 33 \textit{xf}5+ \textit{f}7 34 \textit{x}h7.

31 \textit{fc}1!

White restrains himself from winning material, preferring to attack along the open c-file. Should White choose the more obvious 31 \textit{b}5, Black would have some chances to build up a fortress by playing 31...\textit{xb}5 32 \textit{xb}5 \textit{xb}5.

31 ... \textit{b}6

32 \textit{e}5 \textit{d}8

33 \textit{xf}5!

After this blow, Black's position collapses.

33 ... \textit{xf}5

34 \textit{xf}5+ \textit{f}6

35 \textit{xd}5 \textit{xf}5

36 \textit{xf}5+ \textit{g}6

37 \textit{b}5 \textit{xd}4

38 \textit{b}6+ \textit{f}7

39 \textit{h}3 \textit{e}2

40 \textit{b}7+ \textit{e}7

41 \textit{b}5 \textit{e}2

42 \textit{b}3 \textit{e}3

43 \textit{h}2 \textit{h}5

Black is also lost after 43...\textit{x}b3 44 \textit{c}7+ \textit{f}6 45 \textit{b}6+ \textit{e}5 46 \textit{x}g7.

Now the end was: 44 \textit{b}7+ \textit{e}7 45 \textit{b}6 \textit{e}3 46 \textit{c}7+ \textit{e}7 47 \textit{c}4!

\textit{xc}4 48 \textit{xc}4 \textit{e}2 49 \textit{xb}4 \textit{c}2

50 \textit{h}4 \textit{g}6 51 \textit{g}3 \textit{f}6 52 \textit{b}6+ \textit{f}7

53 \textit{c}6 \textit{g}7 54 \textit{c}8 \textit{f}6 55 \textit{c}5 \textit{g}7 56 \textit{c}6 \textit{f}6 57 \textit{f}4 \textit{g}7 58 \textit{e}5 \textit{e}2+ 59 \textit{d}6 \textit{d}2 60 \textit{c}7 \textit{x}g2 61 \textit{d}8 1–0.

In the game analysed above White first occupied the c-file and then decided the game by launching a devastating blow (33 \textit{xf}5!) on the opposite wing. This is not an uncommon scenario—the dominance of the open file on one side of the board can often help the attack taking place on the opposite wing.

Here I would like to illustrate the above statement by showing a few games beginning with the opening line: 1 \textit{d}4 \textit{d}5 2 \textit{c}4 \textit{e}6 3 \textit{f}3 \textit{f}6 4 \textit{c}c3 \textit{e}5 5 \textit{ex}d5 \textit{xd}5 6 \textit{e}3 \textit{e}6 7 \textit{d}3 \textit{e}7 8 0–0 0–0 9 \textit{a}3 \textit{cx}d4 10 \textit{ex}d4 \textit{f}6 11 \textit{e}4 12 \textit{d}7 (D).
This position is quite important to opening theory, as it may arise not only from the Semi-Tarrasch, but also from the Panov Attack in the Caro-Kann Defence. It is not my intention to analyse this opening line in great depth, as my goal is different — to show some positional ideas available for White here in their historical development and logical interaction.

I believe that the best way to study positions like this (for either side) is by studying games of masters and grandmasters which feature them. Here I would like to use this approach and show a few games which I think are important for the position in question.

In particular, I shall closely examine one particular idea — White’s invasion of the seventh rank via the c-file with his rook and the further use of this rook in the attack on Black’s king. Here is our first model game from this line.

Filip-Platonov
Wijk aan Zee 1970

(1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 f3 f6 4 c3 c5 5 cxd5 exd5 6 e3 e5 7 d3 e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 a3 cxd4 10 exd4 e6 11 e4 d5)

12...d3

Black had to decide which pawn to advance on the kingside. He could play 12...h6, but that would have drawbacks as well, as this move weakens the b1–h7 diagonal and White might exploit this by shifting his pieces on this diagonal by playing We2, c2 and d3.

13 h6 g7
14 xg7 xg7
15 e5 b6
16 d2!? h7
17 f1 c8
18 ac1 c7
19 g4! (D)

White is probing the weakness of the dark squares around the black king.

19 ... h8
White is also slightly better after 19...d8 20 xd5 xc1 21 xc1 xd5 22 xd5.

20 xd5 xc1
21 xc1 xd5?!

Now, although Black’s knight occupies a nice position, it can be always eliminated. Besides which, the knight is pinned. Black should have preferred 21...xd5, when White would still have some advantage after 22 d3!.

22 h6! g8
23 e5 e7?

Black had to play 23...g7, even
though White would still keep the initiative then by playing 24 h4!? \(\text{\#d6} 25 \text{\#h5.}\)

24 \(\text{\#xd5!}\)

Now it's the time to eliminate Black's knight — White is gaining access to the c7-square, as we will soon see.

24 ... \(\text{\#xd5?}\)

Black had to recapture on d5 with the pawn — 24...exd5, trying to fight on in the resulting, quite difficult for him, pawn formation. The text loses.

25 \(\text{\#f4!}\)

White's advantage is decisive.

25 ... \(\text{\#g7}\)

Also after 25...f5 26 \(\text{\#c7!} \text{\#xc7} 27 \text{\#xg6+} \text{\#xg6} 28 \text{\#xc7}\) White is winning.

26 \(\text{\#xf7} \text{\#f6}\)

27 \(\text{\#h6+} 1-0\)

In the game which we have just examined, White only threatened to bring his rook on to the seventh rank (we saw it in the line 25...f5 26 \(\text{\#c7!})\), while in our next example White made this invasion a major part of his opening strategy:

\textbf{Smyslov - Ribli}

\textit{Ct(7), London 1983}

1 \(d4) \text{d5} 2 \text{c4} \text{e6} 3 \text{\#f3} \text{\#f6} 4 \text{\#c3} \text{c5} 5 \text{exd5} \text{\#xd5} 6 \text{e3} \text{\#c6} 7 \text{\#d3} \text{\#e7} 8 \text{0-0} 0-0 9 \text{a3} \text{exd4} 10 \text{exd4} \text{\#f6} 11 \text{\#e4} \text{\#ce7} (D)

12 \(\text{\#e5}\)

Also quite popular here is 12 \(\text{\#c2,}\) for example: 12...g6 13 \(\text{\#e5} \text{b6} 14 \text{\#h6} \text{\#g7} 15 \text{\#xd5} \text{exd5} 16 \text{\#xg7}\)

\(\text{\#xg7} 17 \text{\#f3} \text{\#f5} 18 \text{\#d2} \text{\#d6}\) and Black stood quite satisfactorily in the game Portisch-Ribli, Hungary Ch 1981.

12 ... \(\text{g6}\)

Black would certainly prefer to play this move only in reply to \(\text{\#d3,}\) but he has some problems finding a useful move in the meantime. For example, after 12...b6 Black might not like 13 \(\text{\#g4?!}.\) Instead of the text Black also tried 12...\(\text{\#xc3} 13 \text{bxc3} \text{\#g6,}\) but after the further 14 \(\text{\#xg6} \text{hxg6} 15 \text{\#f3}\) White was better in the game Servat-Sorin, Argentina Ch 1986.

13 \(\text{\#h6} \text{\#g7}\)

14 \(\text{\#xg7}\)

15 \(\text{\#c1!?} \text{b6}\)

16 \(\text{\#xd5} \text{\#xd5}\)

Although the position arising after 16...exd5 is quite unpleasant for Black, he had to settle for it, as the text leads to bigger problems.

17 \(\text{\#xd5!} (D)\)

This reminds us of the question already discussed on page 23 — that of exchanges. I should like to re-emphasise what I wrote there: it is too
much of a generalisation to say that the possessor of the isolated d-pawn should avoid simplification.

The possessor of the isolani should really avoid unnecessary simplification. At the same time there are many cases where he must exchange some pieces! We have already seen some situations like this in this book and here is yet another illustration of this theme.

Although two pairs of minor pieces have already come off, another exchange is required. By swapping his bishop for Black’s knight, White eliminates Black’s only developed piece, which covered many important squares. Now White’s remaining pieces are much more active than Black’s.

17 ... \e2xd5?!

As Smyslov pointed out in his book Letopis Shakhmatnogo Tvorchestva (something like ‘Annals of creative work in chess’), Black should not allow White’s rook on the seventh rank, settling for the thankless position arising after 17...exd5 instead.

18 \c7 \b7

Black could not get rid of the rook, as 18...\d6? would drop a pawn after 19 \x7f7+ \xf7 20 \xf7.

19 \g4 \ad8

Again Black had no time to attack the c7-rook, as 19...\ac8? would lose a pawn for no compensation after 20 \d7 \e4 21 \xe4 \xe4 22 f3 \d5 23 \xa7 \c2 24 b4.

20 \d1 a5

21 h4!

As usual this march of the h-pawn is designed to weaken Black’s kingside.

21 ... \c8

22 \d7 \e4

23 \g5 \c6

What is good for one side is not always good for the other — Black could not bring his rook to the seventh rank here, as 23...\c2? would give White a tempo in the attack and after 24 h5 g8 25 h6 \d5 26 \d8 \c8 27 \d7 White is winning.

24 f3 \f5

This was necessary, as after 24...\e2? 25 \g4 \xd1+ 26 \h2 White’s attack succeeds, while after 24...\c2 25 \c1! \xc1+ 26 \xc1 \xd7 27 \f4 White also has a decisive advantage, as his pieces are much better coordinated.

25 \a7 \a4

After 25...\xg5?! 26 hxg5 the resulting endgame is very unpleasant for Black, since the knight is superior to the bishop here, besides which, the white rook on the seventh rank is very active.
Yet another familiar technique — the rook lift to the king side adds fuel to the attack on f7.

The move 42...\texttt{Wh}1+ was sealed, but Black resigned without resuming play, as after 43 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{Wh}e1+ 44 \texttt{g}4 \texttt{Wh}1 45 \texttt{g}3 \texttt{h}c2 46 \texttt{xf}7+ \texttt{g}8 47 \texttt{g}5! White is winning.

This is a very interesting game, played by White in that crystal-clear style which is so characteristic of Smyslov’s best games.

As Smyslov mentioned in that book, the plan which he used to such great effect in the previous game (14 \texttt{xg}7, 15 \texttt{c}1 and 16 \texttt{xd}5) was new at the time the game was played. Hitherto, he said, White played 14 \texttt{d}2.

I got quite interested in this remark of Smyslov and decided to check my databases, looking for examples of the plan associated with 14 \texttt{d}2. As a result I learned that it was Smyslov himself who won a very nice game playing \texttt{d}1-d2 on move 14 in a very similar position! Obviously Ribli would be well prepared for this scenario if repeated, and therefore Smyslov tried a new idea, adding considerably to the theory of this line.
Now I would like to show that earlier game by Smyslov.

**Smyslov - Padevsky**  
*Moscow 1963*

1 c4 \( \text{d5} \) 2 \( \text{c3} \) e6 3 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 4 d4 c5 5 exd5 \( \text{exd5} \) 6 e3 \( \text{c6} \) 7 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 8 0–0 \( \text{exd4} \) 9 exd4 0–0 10 \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{f6} \) 11 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{c7} \) 12 \( \text{e5} \) g6 13 \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{g7} \)

14 \( \text{d2} \) (*D*)

White is planning to take advantage of the weakness of the dark squares on the kingside after the dark-squared bishops come off.

14 \( \cdots \) \( \text{f6} \)

15 \( \text{ad1} \) \( \text{xe4} \)

16 \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{f5} \)\?

This move allows the standard pawn break in the centre. Better here is 16...\( \text{b6} \) 17 \( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 18 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{f5} \) 19 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{b7} \) 20 d5 with some advantage for White, as recommended by Euwe.

17 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{g7} \) \( \text{g7} \)

18 d5! \( \text{exd5} \)

19 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{e6} \)

20 \( \text{c3} \)!

White has a very significant advantage here, thanks to his dominance in the centre. The game continued: 20...\( \text{xd5} \) 21 \( \text{d7+} \) \( \text{g8} \)?! 22 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{c8} \) 23 \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{g7} \) 24 h3 \( \text{g8} \) 25 g4 \( \text{h4} \) 26 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{c4} \) 27 \( \text{xf7+} \) \( \text{xf7} \) 28 \( \text{e5+} \) \( \text{e7} \) 29 \( \text{g5+} \) 1–0.

Smyslov’s plan of playing on the c-file together with an attack against Black’s king looked so convincing that I was curious to learn whether anyone else had employed a similar idea. After some research in the book *Isolated Pawn* by Mikhailchishin *et al.*, I found a very similar position (see diagram below).

**Antoshin - Nezhmetdinov**  
*Ryazan 1967*

1 d4 \( \text{d5} \) 2 e4 \( \text{e6} \) 3 \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{d5} \) 4 \( \text{c3} \) c5 5 exd5 \( \text{exd5} \) 6 e3 \( \text{c6} \) 7 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 8 0–0 \( \text{cx} \) 9 \( \text{e4} \) 9 exd4 0–0 10 \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{f6} \) 11 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{c7} \) 12 \( \text{d3} \) g6 13 \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{g7} \) 14 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{g7} \) \( \text{g7} \) (*D*)

This position can also arise by various other move orders.
As we can see, the only difference between this position and the one which arose after 14...\(\texttt{\&}xg7\) in the game Smyslov-Ribli is that here White has played \(\texttt{\&}e1\) and \(\texttt{\&}d3\) instead of \(a3\) and \(\texttt{\&}e5\), which occurred in Smyslov’s game. The subsequent play by White is very similar in both games, as you will soon see.

\begin{align*}
15 \ & \texttt{\&}ac1 \quad \texttt{b6?} \\
16 \ & \texttt{\&}xd5! \quad \texttt{\&}xd5 \\
17 \ & \texttt{\&}xd5 \quad \texttt{\&}xd5? \\
18 \ & \texttt{\&}c7! (D)
\end{align*}

Here, compared to Smyslov-Ribli, the invasion of White’s rook is even more destructive, as Black cannot develop his bishop yet — 18...\(\texttt{\&}b7\) immediately loses to 19 \(\texttt{\&}e5\). Perhaps here Black no longer has a completely satisfactory defence against the very straightforward plan involving \(\texttt{\&}e3\), \(\texttt{\&}e5\) and \(\texttt{\&}f4\). His best try here is 18...\(\texttt{\&}d7\) 19 \(\texttt{\&}e5 \texttt{\&}e8\) 20 \(\texttt{\&}e3\), as suggested by Lev Polugayevsky, although even then Black’s position is very difficult.

\begin{align*}
18 \ & \ldots \quad \texttt{\&}xa2? \\
19 \ & \texttt{\&}e5 \quad \texttt{\&}d5
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
20 \ & \texttt{\&}e3 1-0
\end{align*}

Here Black resigned. At first glance his decision may look premature, but Black’s position is indeed lost. He cannot defend his vulnerable kingside in general and the f7-pawn in particular, e.g. 20...\(\texttt{\&}b7\) 21 f3 \(\texttt{\&}ad8\) 22 \(\texttt{\&}f4\) \(\texttt{\&}e8\) 23 \(\texttt{\&}xf7+ \texttt{\&}g8\) 24 \(\texttt{\&}f6 \texttt{\&}xd4+\) 25 \(\texttt{\&}h1 \texttt{\&}xf7\) 26 \(\texttt{\&}xf7+ \texttt{\&}h8\) 27 \(\texttt{\&}e7 \texttt{\&}g8\) 28 \(\texttt{\&}g4\).

It’s worth mentioning that also winning for White is 20 \(\texttt{\&}g3\), when Black cannot play 20...\(\texttt{\&}b7\) in view of 21 \(\texttt{\&}d7\), while White threatens to play his standard move 21 \(\texttt{\&}f4\).

This is a very nice example of White’s strategy in this line and indeed a very important game. The Mikhalevshin book, which I mentioned earlier, contains many very interesting examples, regarding the pawn formation with the isolated d-pawn, but I wanted to see the full text of that game. Finally, thanks to the help of IM Kapengut from Belarus, it was found in the magazine Shakhmatisty Rossi (‘Chess Players of Russia’) No. 7/1967 with annotations by Polugayevsky.

I do not want to create the impression that the possessor of the isolani always has an upper hand in such positions. Although the plan with 15 \(\texttt{\&}ac1\) with the further 16 \(\texttt{\&}xd5\), 17 \(\texttt{\&}xd5\) and 18 \(\texttt{\&}c7\) is very dangerous for Black, there are ways of dealing with it. For example, after 17 \(\texttt{\&}xd5\) Nezhmetdinov ought to have recaptured on d5 with the pawn — 17...\(\texttt{\&}xd5\).
Also on move 15 Black can play better — 15...\(\text{Qf6}\) 16 \(\text{Qe5}\) \(\text{Qxe4}\) 17 \(\text{Wxe4}\) \(\text{d5}\) (D), as in the game Tseitlin-Zhuravliov, Rostov 1976.

The Tseitlin game continued 18 \(\text{Qg4}\) (also interesting is 18 \(\text{Qxd5!}\) ? \(\text{exd5}\) 19 \(\text{Wf4}\) 18...\(\text{d7}\) 19 \(\text{We5+}\) \(\text{f6}\) 20 \(\text{Wg3}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) 21 \(\text{bxc3}\) \(\text{Bc8}\) with unclear play. Perhaps White should have preferred 19 \(\text{Qxd5!}\) ? \(\text{exd5}\) 20 \(\text{We5+}\) \(\text{f6}\) 21 \(\text{wc7}\) with a small, but stable advantage.

**Summary**

While playing with the isolated d-pawn, we should look not only for a kingside attack or a pawn break in the centre, but also for possible play on the queenside. This plan may be particularly attractive for the side possessing the isolani, when he has firm control over the open c-file — often this happens when we can control the c8-square, for example by our bishop from a6. Yet another objective for queenside play can be the possession of the c5 square (c4 for Black), particularly if the side playing against the isolated d-pawn has weakened that square by playing ...b7-b5 (b2-b4).

There is a strong link between queenside play and attack on the other flank and in the centre — once we have established serious control over the c-file, we may consider attacking the kingside using the seventh rank with our rook.

For the side playing against the isolani the advice is fairly standard — try to simplify the position and keep pressure on the opponent’s isolated pawn. Here are some more concrete recommendations, assuming that you are playing Black vs. the isolated d4-pawn:

- make sure that the a6-square does not fall into possession of White’s bishop;
- be careful and think twice when you play ...b5, as often this move leads to a future weakness of the c5-square. Try to keep control over that square;
- develop the c8-bishop sooner rather than later — that would help you to fight back for the control over the open c-file by bringing your rooks to c8.
Play on the e-file

...exd5 the resulting pawn formation would be favourable for him, as Black’s light-squared bishop will be limited by the d5-pawn. Black tries to avoid this pawn structure, but runs into more trouble:

16 \( \text{\textit{W}} \text{xd5?}})!
17 \( \text{\textit{Be5}} \text{d6}
18 \( \text{\textit{Be1}}

Your first impression may be that White’s rooks are facing a wall (the e6-pawn), but in fact that obstruction can be removed by playing d4-d5 at the appropriate moment.

18 \( \text{\textit{d7}}
19 \( \text{\textit{Bg5!}} \text{c6}
20 \( \text{\textit{d5!}} (D)

Darga - O’Kelly
Madrid 1957

15 \( \text{\textit{Bxd5?}} \text{xd5}
16 \( \text{\textit{Bxd5}}

White has been eliminating the pieces which exercised control over the d5-square, hoping that after
White vacates the d4-square, opening the e-file for the rooks at the same time.

20 ... exd5

At first glance it seems that 20...exd5 21 w4 g8 would be more stubborn. Indeed, in the game Novak-Meduna, Czechoslovakia 1981, White did not find anything better than to force a draw by playing 22 wh4 h5 23 dh7 xh7 24 xh5+ gxh5 25 wh5+ g7 26 wg5+ dh7 27 wh5+. However, on move 22 White has a much better option. He can play 22 de4! wd8 23 edx5 exd5 24 df6+ dh8. And then White should continue not with 25 dd7+ f6 26 dxh8 xh8 27 wd5, where he is only slightly better, but with 25 xe3! ec8 26 g4!!, which is winning for him after 26...ec4 27 dh3 h5 28 we5.

Perhaps, this analysis has some importance for the line starting with 15 xd5.

21 wd4 dg8

22 xe7 (D)

Although it's always tempting to invade the seventh rank with a rook, perhaps 22 xe3! should have been preferred instead. Then Black would be defenceless against the two threats — 23 de4 and 23 xh7.

22 ... f6?

Now White is winning. Should Black play 22...ad8?, then 23 le6! would be devastating, but Black had to try 22...d7. Then White would have the pleasant choice between 23 de4 xe7 24 df6+ xf6 25 wxf6 le8 and 23 xf7 xf7 24 wh8+ xh8 25 xf7+ g7 26 xd6, but in both of these variations Black is still fighting.

23 le6 wd8
24 xh7 xe8
25 wh4 1-0

While our examples in Chapter 6 illustrated the benefits of possessing the open c-file, this game shows the importance of the open e-file. As I mentioned earlier, the presence of the semi-open and open files and the opportunity to utilise them is one of the major advantages for the side possessing the isolated d-pawn.

Now let us take a closer look at the cases where the possessor of the isolani takes advantage of the open e-file.

Positions in which the side playing against the isolani does not have a pawn on the e-file are very common. One obvious example is the following popular line from the French Defence: 1 e4 e6 2 d4 d5 3 dd2 c5 4 edx5 exd5. Should then White take on c5 or Black take on d4, we will get the pawn structure
which we are discussing. Positions like this happened in many games between Karpov and Korchnoi and generally the isolani fared well in them.

For those who would like to study this line and the associated pawn formation in more detail, I would like to recommend the following approach: gather the games played in the position after 3 \( \mathcal{E}d2\) \( c5 \) 4 \( exd5 \) \( exd5 \). Select those games where Vaganian and Bareev were Black and study them closely. That would give you a good insight into this system, as both the above-mentioned grandmasters are experts on this line. Should you like to look at this variation from White’s point of view, take a close look at the games played in this opening by Karpov. I believe that this a useful method of studying typical pawn structures in relation to particular opening lines.

As I have said, some positions arising from the French are good illustrations of our theme, but here I would like to concentrate on the cases where White possesses the isolani and takes advantage of the open file. Two openings where such positions arise quite often are the Queen’s Gambit Accepted and the Queen’s Gambit Declined. Let us start with the latter:

\textbf{Andersson - Tal}  
\textit{Malmö (6) 1983}

\begin{align*}
1 & \mathcal{D}f3 \, d5 \, 2 \, d4 & \mathcal{D}f6 \, 3 & c4 & e6 \, 4 & \mathcal{G}5 \ \mathcal{E}7 \, 5 & \mathcal{C}3 & h6 & 6 & \mathcal{X}f6 & \mathcal{X}f6 & 7 & e3 \\
0-0 & 8 & \mathcal{C}c1 & c6 & 9 & \mathcal{D}d3 & \mathcal{D}d7 \\
10 & 0-0 & & dxc4 \\
11 & \mathcal{X}xc4 & & e5 \ (D) \\
12 & \mathcal{B}b3 \\
\end{align*}

Later, after the game Kasparov-Karpov (game 23 of their match in Moscow in 1985), the line \( 12 \, h3 \, exd4 \) \( 13 \, exd4 \) became very popular. White’s hopes for advantage here are related to the pressure on the a2-g8 diagonal and the control over the e-file, where White’s knights can occupy the e4- and e5-squares. At some point White might also break in the centre with d4-d5. Then after \( 13... \mathcal{F}b6 \, 14 \, \mathcal{B}b3 \, \mathcal{F}f5 \, 15 \, \mathcal{E}e1 \) the following game is very instructive: \( 15... \mathcal{G}5?! \, 16 \, \mathcal{H}a1 \, \mathcal{D}d7 \, 17 \, d5! \, \mathcal{C}c8? \, 18 \, \mathcal{D}d4 \, \mathcal{G}6 \, 19 \, \mathcal{C}e6! \, fxe6 \, 20 \, dxe6 \, \mathcal{F}h7 \, 21 \, \mathcal{W}xd7! \, \mathcal{W}b6 \, 22 \, e7 \, \mathcal{F}fe8 \, 23 \, \mathcal{W}g4 \, \mathcal{W}c5 \, 24 \, \mathcal{F}e4 \, \mathcal{W}xe7 \, 25 \, \mathcal{C}c2! \, \mathcal{F}f8 \, 26 \, g3 \, \mathcal{W}d8 \, 27 \, \mathcal{A}d1 \, \mathcal{W}a5 \, 28 \, h4 \, \mathcal{G}e7 \, 29 \, \mathcal{C}c3 \, \mathcal{X}c2 \, 30 \, \mathcal{X}xe7 \, \mathcal{G}g8 \, 31 \, \mathcal{D}d7 \, \mathcal{F}f5 \, 32 \, \mathcal{X}g7+ \, \mathcal{H}h8 \, 33 \, \mathcal{W}d4 \) and Black resigned in the game Kasparov-Short, Brussels 1986.

Later GM Abramović suggested
an interesting idea in this line — 13...\(\mathcal{E}e8\)!, planning the further ...\(\mathcal{Q}f8\) and ...\(\mathcal{A}e6\) and aiming to solve the problem with the a2-g8 diagonal. After 14 \(\mathcal{W}b3\) \(\mathcal{Q}f8\) 15 \(\mathcal{W}c2\) \(\mathcal{A}e8\) 16 \(\mathcal{A}fe1\) (worse is 16 \(\mathcal{W}g6?!\) \(\mathcal{A}e7\) 17 \(\mathcal{A}fe1\) \(\mathcal{Q}f8\) 18 \(\mathcal{W}h5\) \(\mathcal{A}xe1+\) 19 \(\mathcal{A}xe1\) \(\mathcal{A}e6\) 20 \(\mathcal{A}xe6\) \(\mathcal{A}xe6\) and Black obtained a slight advantage in the game Dlugy-Abramovic, New York open 1988) 16...\(\mathcal{Q}f8\) (much worse is 16...\(\mathcal{A}xe1+?!\) 17 \(\mathcal{A}xe1\) \(\mathcal{Q}f8\) because of 18 \(\mathcal{W}b3\)!. After the further 18...\(\mathcal{W}c7\) 19 \(\mathcal{A}e4\) \(\mathcal{A}d8\) 20 \(\mathcal{Q}e5\) \(\mathcal{A}e6\) 21 \(\mathcal{A}xe6\) \(\mathcal{Q}xe6\) 22 \(\mathcal{A}xf7!\) \(\mathcal{W}xf7\) 23 \(\mathcal{Q}d6\) \(\mathcal{W}d7\) 24 \(\mathcal{A}xe6\) \(\mathcal{A}h8\) 25 \(\mathcal{A}e8+\) \(\mathcal{A}h7\) 26 \(\mathcal{W}d3+\) \(g6\) 27 \(\mathcal{W}b3\) Black resigned in the game Hellsten-Olesen, Copenhagen open 1995) 17 \(\mathcal{A}xe8\) \(\mathcal{W}xe8\) 18 \(\mathcal{A}e1\) \(\mathcal{A}e6\) White’s advantage is minimal. Perhaps, White can improve on this line by playing 17 \(\mathcal{W}b3?!\) or 18 d5!?, with some initiative in both cases.

12 ... \(\mathcal{X}d4\)
13 \(\mathcal{X}d4\) \(\mathcal{A}e8\)
14 \(\mathcal{A}d2\) \(\mathcal{Q}b6\)

14...\(\mathcal{Q}f8\) is also possible here. After the further 15 d5! \(\mathcal{A}xc3\) 16 \(\mathcal{A}xc3\) cxd5 17 \(\mathcal{Q}xd5\) \(\mathcal{W}f6\) 18 \(\mathcal{A}d1\) \(\mathcal{A}b8\) 19 \(\mathcal{W}d4\) \(\mathcal{W}xd4\) 20 \(\mathcal{Q}xd4\) White had only a minimal advantage in the game Andersson-Wedberg, Haninge 1989.

15 \(\mathcal{A}fe1\) \(\mathcal{A}xe1+\)
16 \(\mathcal{A}xe1\) \(\mathcal{Q}g4\)
17 \(\mathcal{Q}e5\) \(\mathcal{Q}xe5\)
18 \(\mathcal{A}xe5\) \(\mathcal{Q}d7\)
19 \(\mathcal{A}e3\) \(\mathcal{Q}f6\)
20 \(h3\) \(\mathcal{Q}d7\)

The alternative 20...\(\mathcal{Q}f5\) also leaves White with some initiative after the subsequent 21 \(\mathcal{A}e5\) \(\mathcal{W}d7\) 22 \(\mathcal{W}f4\) \(\mathcal{A}g6\) 23 d5!.

21 \(\mathcal{Q}e4!\) (D)

A very interesting and logical idea. All White’s pieces are more active than their counterparts with the exception of the knights, so White wants to exchange them. Black’s main problem is that he cannot bring his rook out yet. Once again we see that sometimes certain exchanges can favour the side possessing the isolated d-pawn.

A similar situation could arise after 21 \(\mathcal{A}xe5\) \(\mathcal{W}f8\) 22 \(\mathcal{W}e3\) \(\mathcal{A}e8\) 23 \(\mathcal{Q}e4\) \(\mathcal{Q}xe4\) 24 \(\mathcal{W}xe4\), but the text-move is stronger.

21 ... \(\mathcal{Q}xe4\)
22 \(\mathcal{A}xe4\) \(\mathcal{W}f8\)
23 \(\mathcal{W}f4\) \(\mathcal{A}e8\)
24 \(\mathcal{A}xe8\) \(\mathcal{W}xe8\)
25 \(\mathcal{A}h2\)

In this ending the d4-pawn is not a weakness as Black’s pieces cannot attack it. White’s advantage is deter-
minded by his pressure along the a2-g8 diagonal and the more active queen, which may attack Black’s rather vulnerable queenside.

25 ... a5?

Better was 25...\( \text{\#e6} \), although White keeps the advantage after 26 \( \text{\#e5} \) d7 27 \( \text{\#c7} \) c8 28 \( \text{\#d6} \).

26 \( \text{\#c7} \) \( \text{\#e4} \)
27 \( \text{\#xf7} \) !! \( \text{\#xf7} \)
28 \( \text{\#xd7} \) + \( \text{\#g8} \)
29 \( \text{\#g3} (D) \)

Changes in the assessment of certain pawn formations, and the middlegame positions related to them, normally lead to the changes in the assessment and popularity of the opening lines, from which such middlegame positions arise. As an example, I can mention that the King’s Indian Defence was regarded as a dubious opening until Black found new ideas in many of the pawn structures arising from that opening.

This is also very noticeable when we look at some lines of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted. Our next two games will illustrate this thought:

\[ \text{Vaganian - Hübner} \]

\[ \text{Tilburg 1983} \]

1 \( \text{\#d4} \) \( \text{\#d5} \)
2 \( \text{\#c4} \) \( \text{\#dxc4} \)
3 \( \text{\#c3} \) \( \text{\#e5} \)

Some years ago it was believed that once Black manages to play ...e5 at an early stage in the QGA, his opening problems are over, as the pawn formation which arises was regarded as quite favourable for Black. That applied to the variations 1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e5 and 3 \( \text{\#c3} \) e5.

However, modern chess theory does not share such an optimistic view, as the pawn formation with isolated d4-pawn vs. Black’s pawn on c7 (or c6) and with the open e-file are now considered to be more promising for the possessor of the isolani.

It’s interesting that in his blitz match vs. Fritz3 in Munich in 1994
Kasparov chose this particular pawn formation in all of his three ‘White’ games, achieving superior positions in all of them. Here is the only game the champion lost in that match, but the opening had nothing to do with this result:

Kasparov v. Fritz3, Munich 1994: 1 e3 (Obviously in a blitz game vs. a computer such a move makes sense.) 1...d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e4 e5 4 d4 exd4 5 exd4 Qb4+ 6 c3 Qf6 7 Qf3 0–0 8 0–0 Qg4 9 h3 Qh5 10 g4! Qg6 11 e5 Qc6 12 Qe3 Qxe5 13 dxe5 Qd7 (White is also better after 13...Qxc3 14 bxc3 Qe4 15 Qxd8 Qaxd8 16 f4 h6 17 f5 Qh7 18 e6) 14 f4 Qb6. Now, instead of 15 Qb3?, White could win the game on the spot by playing 15 Qxb6! axb6 16 Qxd8 Qaxd8 17 f5 Qd2 18 fxg6 hxg6 19 e6.

Now let us come back to the game Vaganian–Hübner:

4 e3 exd4
5 exd4 Qf6
6 Qxc4 Qe7
7 Qf3 0–0
8 0–0

Also possible is 8 h3. However, Vaganian obviously did not think that Black could solved all the opening problems by exchanging his light-squared bishop.

8...Qbd7

After the alternative 8...Qg4, White also keeps the advantage by playing 9 h3 Qxf3 10 Qxf3 Qc6 11 Qe3. Then after 11...Qxd4 12 Qxb7 Qf5 13 Qad1 the two bishops in the open position and the better pawn formation gave White a long-lasting advantage in the game Mochalov–E. Ruban, Byelorussia Ch, Minsk 1996.

9 Qe1 Qb6
10 Qb3 c6
11 Qg5 Qg4
12 Qd3?! As White now threatens both 13 Qe5 and 13 Qc2, Black is forced to part with his light-squared bishop.
12 ... Qxf3
13 Qxf3 (D)

White can be pleased with the results of the opening as his pieces are very active, particularly the b3-bishop which has no counterpart. White’s rooks can be brought to the centre easily which promises him good prospects both in the centre and on the kingside.

13 ... Qfd5

Also 13...Qe8 would not solve Black’s problems either after the simple 14 Qad1!, threatening to play 15
\( \text{xf6} \text{xf6} 16 \text{De4. If Black then} \) tries to block the a2-g8 diagonal by 14...\( \text{fd5}?! \), he would face a thankless task, defending the position a pawn down arising after the further 15 \( \text{xe7} \text{xe7} \) 16 \( \text{xe7} \text{xe7} \) 17
\( \text{xd5} \text{xd5} \) 18 \( \text{xd5} \text{xd5} \) 19 \( \text{xd5} \).

14 \( \text{xe7} \text{xe7} \)
15 \( \text{He5}! \)

White prepares to double on the open file, simultaneously taking control over the blockading d5-square. Black has to kick the annoying rook, but that leads his knight astray.

15 ... \( \text{g6} \)
16 \( \text{He4} \text{d7} \)
17 \( \text{He1} \text{a5} \)

Black could try to re-establish control over the d5-square by playing 17...\( \text{f6} \) 18 \( \text{e3} \text{e7} \), but then White plays 19 \( \text{He1}! \) and now 19...\( \text{ed5} \) leads to a very unpleasant ending for Black — 20 \( \text{xd5} \text{xd5} \) 21 \( \text{xd5} \text{e7} \) (also good is 21 \( \text{Hxe5} \) 21...\( \text{xd5} 22 \text{xd5} \text{cxd5} 23 \text{He7} \). Black’s main problem in the position after 17 \( \text{He1} \) is his inability to develop his rook.

18 \( \text{He3!} \) (D)

A great move! Moving the rook away from the possible ...\( \text{f6} \), White also vacates the e4-square for the knight, which will be heading to d6 in order to put more pressure on Black’s position in general and on the f7-pawn in particular.

18 ... \( \text{ad8} \)

It is hard to recommend 18...\( \text{f6} \) instead of the text — should Black play it and not hold the difficult position arising after 19 d5 cxd5 20 \( \text{xd5} \text{xd5} \) 21 \( \text{xd5} \text{xd5} \), the commentators of the game would probably say something like this: “instead of 18...\( \text{f6} \) Black had to play the more stubborn move 18...\( \text{ad8} \)”.

Positions like this are very difficult to hold at grandmaster level, so let’s just say that despite Black’s logical defence, White is able to increase his advantage here.

19 \( \text{He4} \text{c7} \)
20 \( \text{h4}! \)

Yet another example of the march of the h-pawn, which is designed to disturb Black’s kingside.

20 ... \( \text{h6} \)

Of course, 20...\( \text{xh4} \)?? would be simply suicidal in view of 21 \( \text{h5} \text{g6} 22 \text{h3} \text{e8} 23 \text{xh7+ f8} 24 \text{f3} \) and White is winning. Black had to put a stopper on the further advance of White’s h-pawn, as after 20...\( \text{b6} 21 \text{h5} \text{f4} 22 \text{h6} \text{bd5} 23 \text{hxg7 xg7} 24 \text{e1} \) the residence of his king would be badly damaged.

21 \( \text{g4} \text{h8} \)
Forced, as the black king must leave the dangerous a2-g8 diagonal in view of the threat of 22 \( \text{wxg6} \). After the alternative 21...\( \text{Qf4} \) White would have decided the game by a direct attack — 22 \( \text{Qf3!} \) \( \text{Qd5} \) 23 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( g6 \) 24 \( h5 \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 25 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \text{cx}d5 26 \text{h}xg6! \( f5 \) 27 \( \text{Qh}4 \) and White wins.

22 \( h5! \)

White does not fall for 22 \( \text{Qxf7} \), as then after 22...\( \text{Qe}5 \) 23 \text{dxe5} \( \text{Qxe}5 \) 24 \( \text{Qxd}8 \) \( \text{wx}d8 \) 25 \( \text{Qh}5 \) \( \text{Qxf7} \) Black would have escaped the main danger.

22 ... \( \text{Qf4} \)

23 \( \text{Qg3} \) \( g5 \)

24 \( \text{hx}g6 \) \( \text{fx}g6 \)

25 \( \text{Qe}1! \)

Vaganian’s play in this position is crystal-clear — his rook had little to do on \( d1 \), so he relocates it to the open file.

25 ... \( \text{Qde}8 \)

The difficulties which Black is experiencing here due to the exposed position of his king, are quite apparent in the following line: 25...\( \text{Qb6} \) 26 \( \text{Qc}5!? \) \( \text{Qxd}4 \) 27 \( \text{Qe}6 \) \( \text{Qxe}6 \) 28 \( \text{Qx}g6 \) \( \text{Qf}4 \) 29 \( \text{Qf}3 \) \( \text{Qg}5 \) 30 \( \text{Qxe}6 \) and White’s positional advantage is decisive, as 30...\( \text{Qxf}3 \) leads to a forced checkmate after 31 \( \text{Qe}8+ \).

26 \( \text{Qge}3 \) \( \text{Qb}6 \)

27 \( \text{Qc}5 \) \( (D) \)

27 ... \( \text{Qc}8? \)

This is a blunder, but Black’s position was lost anyway. After 27...\( \text{Qxe}3 \) White would have the pleasant choice between 28 \( \text{fxe}3 \) \( \text{Qe}7 \) 29 \( \text{Qg}3 \) \( \text{Qfd}5 \) 30 \( \text{Qx}g6 \), with a ma-

terial advantage, and the more thematic (play on the open e-file!) move 28 \( \text{Qxe}3 \), threatening 29 \( \text{Qh}4 \) and 30 \( \text{Qe}7 \). After the further 28...\( g5 \) 29 \( \text{Qe}6 \) \( \text{Qd}7 \) 30 \( \text{Qg}3! \) \( \text{Qf}6 \) 31 \( \text{Qxf4} \) \( \text{Qxf4} \) 32 \( \text{Qe}6 \) \( \text{Qg}7 \) 33 \( \text{Qh}3 \) White is winning.

28 \( \text{Qxf4} \) 1–0

The same pawn formation, but with Black’s light-squared bishop on the board, arose in the following game which illustrates some other ideas available for the possessor of the isolated d-pawn in this structure.

I. Sokolov - Hübner
Wijk aan Zee 1996

1 \( d4 \) \( d5 \)

2 \( c4 \) \( \text{dxc}4 \)

3 \( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{e}5 \)

4 \( \text{Qxe}4 \) \( \text{exd}4 \)

5 \( \text{exd}4 \) \( \text{x}Qf6 \)

6 \( \text{Qf}3 \) \( \text{Qe}7 \)

7 \( 0–0 \) \( 0–0 \)

8 \( h3 \)

White prevents ...\( \text{Qg}4 \), although as we have seen in our previous
game, pinning the knight in positions like this does not guarantee Black equality.

8 ... \text{\textit{\textbf{\$bd7}}}

Perhaps Black should have tried to use the fact that White spent some time on the prophylactic move 8 h3 by playing 8...c5.

9 \textit{\textbf{\$c3}} \textit{\textbf{\$b6}}
10 \textit{\textbf{\$b3}} c6
11 \textit{\textbf{\$e5}} (D)

Karpov, playing vs. Timman in the Euwe Memorial in 1991, preferred 11 \textit{\textbf{\$e1}} and achieved a solid advantage after the further 11...\textit{\textbf{\$fd5}} 12 \textit{\textbf{\$e4}} f5 13 \textit{\textbf{\$e5}} d7 14 \textit{\textbf{\$f3}} xe5 15 dxe5 g6 16 \textit{\textbf{\$g4}}. That game continued: 16...\textit{\textbf{\$a5}}? 17 \textit{\textbf{\$d6}}! \textit{\textbf{\$xd6}} 18 exd6 \textit{\textbf{\$f8}}? 19 \textit{\textbf{\$xe8+}} xe8 20 \textit{\textbf{\$xd5!}} cxd5 21 d7 \textit{\textbf{\$e7}} 22 \textit{\textbf{\$c1}} and White’s advantage became decisive.

Karpov won after the further 22...\textit{\textbf{\$xd7}} 23 \textit{\textbf{\$c8+}} d8 24 b4! \textit{\textbf{\$b6}} 25 \textit{\textbf{\$c7}} xc8 26 \textit{\textbf{\$xb6}} axb6 27 \textit{\textbf{\$xd5}} h6 28 \textit{\textbf{\$xb7}} c1+ 29 \textit{\textbf{\$h2}} c2 30 \textit{\textbf{\$xb6}} xa2 31 \textit{\textbf{\$d4}}.

11 ... \textit{\textbf{\$bd5}}!? This is an improvement compared to the game I.Sokolov-Piket, Corfu 1991, where Black played 11...\textit{\textbf{\$fd5}} and after 12 \textit{\textbf{\$e4}} e6 13 a3 \textit{\textbf{\$c7}} 14 \textit{\textbf{\$el}} ad8 15 \textit{\textbf{\$f3}} \textit{\textbf{\$c8}} 16 \textit{\textbf{\$c2}} f6?! (Black should have played this move earlier) 17 \textit{\textbf{\$h5}}! Sokolov obtained an advantage.

That interesting game went: 17...\textit{\textbf{\$xe5}} 18 \textit{\textbf{\$d6}} f6 19 \textit{\textbf{\$xc8}} \textit{\textbf{\$xh5}} 20 \textit{\textbf{\$xe7+}} \textit{\textbf{\$f7}} 21 \textit{\textbf{\$xe5}} g6 22 \textit{\textbf{\$g5}} \textit{\textbf{\$xd4}} 23 \textit{\textbf{\$ae1}} \textit{\textbf{\$d6}} 24 \textit{\textbf{\$f4}} \textit{\textbf{\$e4}} 25 \textit{\textbf{\$c5}} \textit{\textbf{\$f6}} 26 \textit{\textbf{\$f5}} \textit{\textbf{\$xe7}} 27 \textit{\textbf{\$xc4}} gxf5 28 \textit{\textbf{\$xf5}} \textit{\textbf{\$d7}} 29 \textit{\textbf{\$f4}} and White eventually won.

12 \textit{\textbf{\$e1}} \textbf{\$e6}
13 \textit{\textbf{\$g5}} \textit{\textbf{\$e8}}
14 \textit{\textbf{\$c1}} \textit{\textbf{\$d7}}
15 \textit{\textbf{\$xe7}} \textit{\textbf{\$xe7}}
16 \textit{\textbf{\$e4}} f6?? (D)

White is also better after 16...\textit{\textbf{\$f4}} 17 \textit{\textbf{\$d6}} or 16...\textit{\textbf{\$xe5}} 17 dxe5, but the text is just a blunder, which should lead to a disaster.

17 \textit{\textbf{\$d3}}?

Quite amazingly, such a great attacking player as GM Ivan Sokolov here missed a chance to land a dev-
astating blow — 17 \( \text{B}x\text{c}6!! \).

It takes only seconds for a program like Fritz 5 to come up with this move, but for human beings it’s a lot harder to see the sudden tactical chance in this seemingly quiet position. Now Black is lost, for example:

17...\( \text{B}x\text{c}6 \) 18 \( \text{Q}x\text{c}6 \) \( \text{W}f8 \) (or 18...\( \text{W}b6 \)
19 \( \text{Q}x\text{e}7+ \) \( \text{Q}x\text{e}7 \) 20 \( \text{Q}x\text{f}6+ \) \( \text{Q}x\text{f}6 \)
21 \( \text{B}x\text{e}6 \), winning.) 19 \( \text{Q}x\text{e}7+ \) \( \text{W}x\text{e}7 \)
20 \( \text{Q}g5 \). White also wins after

17...\( \text{f}x\text{e}5 \) 18 \( \text{B}x\text{e}6 \) \( \text{B}x\text{e}6 \) 19 \( \text{B}x\text{d}5 \)
\( \text{Q}f8 \) 20 \( \text{W}b3 \) \( \text{W}b6 \) 21 \( \text{Q}g5 \).

17 ... \( \text{Q}f8 \)
18 \( \text{W}f3 \)

Also worth considering here is 18 \( \text{B}c3 \), with some advantage for White.

18 ... \( \text{W}c7 \)
19 \( \text{Q}g3 \) \( \text{B}d8 \)
20 \( \text{B}c5 \) \( \text{Q}f7 \)??

Sokolov, in the book Sokolov's Best Games, recommended 20...
\( \text{B}c8 \). It appears that then Black would stand well. The text-move leaves White with some initiative.

21 \( \text{B}x\text{e}7 \) \( \text{W}x\text{e}7 \)
22 \( \text{Q}f5 \) \( \text{W}c7 \)
23 \( \text{W}g3! \) \( \text{W}x\text{g}3 \)
24 \( \text{f}x\text{g}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \)
25 \( \text{B}b7 \) \( \text{B}d7 \) (D)
26 \( \text{B}d6 \)??

Much better is 26 \( \text{B}d6 \) \( \text{B}e6 \) 27 \( \text{B}x\text{c}6 \) as here, compared to the game continuation, White does not have problems with the knight on b7. After the possible 27...\( \text{g}6 \) 28 \( \text{B}h6+ \) \( \text{Q}g7 \)
29 \( \text{Q}g4 \) White keeps the advantage.

26 ... \( \text{B}e6 \)
27 \( \text{B}x\text{c}6 \) \( \text{B}e7 \)

28 \( \text{B}c3 \) \( \text{h}5 \)??

A horrible blunder. After the logical 28...\( \text{B}xb3 \) 29 \( \text{B}xb3 \) \( \text{B}e6 \) Black would have good compensation for the pawn, as the white knight on b7 is awkwardly placed.

29 \( \text{B}a4 \) 1-0

Summary

With this game I conclude the coverage of the advantages of possessing the isolated d-pawn.

When the possessor of the isolated d-pawn controls the e-file, he should try to convert this advantage into attack against the enemy king, which may involve the advance of the h-pawn and other attacking techniques. Usually the pressure along the e-file is particularly unpleasant for Black when it is combined with pressure along the a2-g8 diagonal.

You can find more material on this theme in our 'Exercises' Section. Now let us move on and examine the disadvantages associated with the isolani.
Exercises For Part 1

The Exercise sections in this book serve a few purposes: they provide additional material on the subject and give help for those who want to play some of these positions against friends, etc.

Please notice that these examples do not imply only one ‘correct’ solution, as usually there are a few attractive ways you could select from. Perhaps your suggestion may be even better than the actual game continuation.

For the solutions to these Part 1 Exercises, see pages 229-240.

1

How should White play here? What are the plans available to him?

2

Suggest a plan for White and supply some likely variations.

3

Suggest a plan for White.

4

How should Black continue?
5

Find a plan for White and illustrate it with a few possible variations.

8

How would you continue with the white pieces?

6

How should White develop his initiative?

9

Suggest a plan for White, showing some relevant variations.

7

Find White's best continuation.

10

How would you develop White's initiative?
Find White’s best continuation.

How should White play here?

How should White play?

How should White continue?

Suggest a plan for White.

Suggest an appropriate plan for White.
8 The weak isolani in the endgame

Let us examine how to exploit the weaknesses of the isolated d-pawn. It is common knowledge that the isolani is, or may become, weak in the endgame, therefore it is quite logical to study such endings. That should give us ideas about the reasons why possessing the isolani in the endgame is not a great thing, what type of endings are particularly unpleasant for the side having the isolated d-pawn, and the techniques which are used in order to exploit its weakness.

So, we are going to make an excursion into the endgame. This book is not about just the opening and middle-game — it is about pawn structures and surely they are present in many endings as well.

King and Pawn Endings

Naturally, our first stop during this endgame excursion is a pure pawn ending, as in this endgame the weaknesses of the isolated d-pawn are present in the purest form.

Let us state them:

1. The isolani may require protection from its king, thus making the king passive;

Kholmov - Kremenietsky
USSR Trade Unions Ch 1981

2. The square in front of it may fall into the permanent possession of the opponent;

3. Even when it is a passed pawn, advancing it may be very difficult.

All of these points I would like to illustrate in our first example. I came across this position when I was a student of the chess school of GM A.N. Panchenko, who covered a great deal of endgames during his classes. One thing which he recommended was to look for endgames in periodicals and take a note of interesting examples, write them down in a copybook and then analyse them. In my opinion this method of studying chess through
analysing important practical endgames proved to be very successful.

White has a clear advantage in the diagram above due to the potentially more active position of his king, which will occupy the blocking d4-square. From there the king will attack the isolani, thus leaving his black colleague with a passive role. Even if the d5-pawn is exchanged, White’s king will be more centralised and therefore more active than Black’s.

However, it is not quite clear yet, whether White’s advantage is sufficient for a win. The first stage of his plan is to occupy the d4-square and advance pawns on the kingside, gaining space and hoping to provoke some weaknesses in Black’s ranks.

1 ... h5
2 d4 d6
3 h4 g6
4 c3 f6
5 g4 c6?

Such a natural move and yet a serious mistake which leaves Black with no hope of survival. Let us see how the game might have continued after the best defence — 5...b6!. The king must stay on d6 and soon we shall see why. The continuation could be 6 gxh5 gxh5 7 f4! f5! (7...e6? is bad because of 8 b4 d6 9 bxa5 bxa5 10 f5 c6 11 c4 dxc4 12 xc4, where White gains the opposition and wins after 12...d6 13 b5 e5 14 xa5 xf5 15 b6) 8 c4!.

Black can punish this slip by playing an unexpected move — 8...b5!! — which turns the tables completely, as Black is winning now: 9 axb5 a4 10 d3 c7 11 c2 b6 12 b2 xb5 13 a3 c4 14 xa4 xc3 15 b5 d4 16 b6 d3 17 b7 d2 18 b8/ + 19 a5 a1+ 20 b6 b2+ 21 c7 xxb8+ 22 xb8 d4 23 c7 e4+. In situations like this, it is easy to get first overconfident and then careless. Be aware of the hidden danger — keep your concentration high!

In order to be able to counter b3-b4 with ...b6-b5, Black needs to keep his king away from the c6-square, as otherwise White would play axb5 with a check. This is the actual problem with the move 5...c6?, which was played in the game. Now let us come back to the position after 8 c4!.

Play goes 8...dxc4 9 bxc4! c6 10 e5 c5 11 xf5 xc4 12 g5 b5 13 axb5 xb5 14 f5 a4 15 f6 a3 16 f7 a2 17 f8=+ a1= and then after 18 xh5 or 18 f5+ c6 19 xh5 we reach queen endgames, which are theoretically drawn according to Ken
Thompson’s endgame database.

This is probably enough for the analysis of 5...b6!, which clearly is a much better defence. Now let us come back to the game continuation.

6 gxh5 gxh5
7 b4 axb4

The attempt to keep the status quo on the queenside by playing 7...b6 won’t help either, as after 8 f4 d6 9 bxa5 bxa5 10 f5 c6 11 c4 dxc4 12 xc4 White penetrates across the fifth rank with his king and wins.

8 cxb4 d6
9 f4 f5 (D)

The position in the diagram merits a separate discussion. The situation on the queenside has changed radically — White has got a pawn majority there, while the d5-pawn is harmless, if not useless. White needs to advance his pawns, but he should do so with care, as right now both 10 a5? c6 and 10 b5? b6 are no good for White.

Here the so-called theory of corresponding squares helps us to understand the position. Black can still hold the position provided that it is his opponent’s move when the kings are located on the following pairs of squares: d4-d6; c3-c6; d3-c7; b3-b6; c2-c7.

Let’s say, for example, that here after 10 c3 Black plays 10...c7? (10...c6 would be correct). Then after the further 11 b5, followed by 12 b4 and 13 a5, White wins. For a similar reason, the move 10 d3 cannot be answered with 10...c6? as it would lose to 11 c3. Also after 10 d3 d7? 11 b5! d6 (or 11...b6 12 c3 d6 13 b4, winning) 12 a5 c5 13 a6 White wins. This proves that the square corresponding to d3 is indeed c7.

As we can see, for the two corresponding (or ‘critical’) squares — d3 and c2 — available to White, Black has only one corresponding square for his king — namely c7. This suggests a winning plan: by using these two critical squares, White breaks the existing delicate balance and destroys Black’s defence. Now let us see how GM Khalmov did it in the game.

10 e3 c6
11 d3 c7

As we know, the alternative move 11...d7 loses after 12 b5!.

12 c2 d7

After the text Black can no longer meet 13 b3 by occupying the (corresponding) b6-square, but he had no defence anyway, as 12...c6 fails to 13 c3!. Black would be O.K. then, should it would be White to play, but as this is not the case, Black loses after 13...d6 14 d4 b6 15 a5.
13  \( \text{b3} \)

White's goal has been achieved and his pawns are ready to advance:
13...\( \text{d6} \) 14 a5 \( \text{c6} \) 15 \( \text{a4} \) d4 16 b5+ \( \text{c5} \) 17 a6 bxa6 18 bxa6 \( \text{c4} \) 19 a7 d3 20 a8\( \text{\texttt{w}} \) 1-0.

For the better understanding of these tricky pawn endgames with the isolani, let us study another one.

\[ \text{Ehlvest - Rausis} \\
\text{Riga Z 1995} \]

Here Black has serious problems because in addition to the isolani, he has potential weaknesses on the kingside. Nevertheless, correct play could have saved this position.
31 \( \text{d4} \) b6
32 a4 \( \text{e6} \)
33 f3

White could have tried the immediate 33 a5 bxa5 34 bxa5 \( \text{d6} \) 35 f3 — a plan employed later in the game.
33 ... \( \text{d6} \)
34 \( \text{c3} \)

White tries manoeuvring with the king, but this attempt is rather harmless. The immediate 34 a5 was also possible. At some point White will need to advance his a-pawn, trying to gain access to the c5-square.
34 ... \( \text{e5} \)
35 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{e6} \)
36 \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e5} \)
37 \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{e6} \)
38 \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d6} \)
39 a5 bxa5
40 bxa5 \( \text{c6} \)
41 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{b5??} \)

This is the losing mistake. Black could draw with \( 41...\( \text{c5} \). \) Then after 42 \( \text{f6} \) GM Chekhov, analysing this game for ChessBase, considered only 42... \( \text{b5} \), correctly stating that White wins after 43 \( \text{xg6} \) \( \text{xa5} \) 44 \( \text{xh5} \) \( \text{b5} \) 45 \( \text{g6} \) a5 46 h5.

However, Black has a better defence — 42... \( \text{c4} \)!. It's much more important to eliminate the e3-pawn than the one on a5. After 43 \( \text{xg6} \) \( \text{d3} \) 44 \( \text{hxh5} \) \( \text{xe3} \) Black survives in the queen endgame: 45 \( \text{g6} \) (or 45 \( \text{g5} \) d4 46 h5 f4 47 gxf4 d3 48 h6 d2 49 h7 d1\( \text{\texttt{w}} \) 50 h8\( \text{\texttt{w}} \) \( \text{g1+} \) 51 \( \text{f5} \) \( \text{b1+} \) 52 \( \text{e6} \) \( \text{b3+} \) with a draw.) 45... \( \text{f4} \) 46 \( \text{gxf4} \) d4 47 h5 d3 48 h6 d2 49 h7 d1\( \text{\texttt{w}} \) 50 h8\( \text{\texttt{w}} \) \( \text{d6+} \) 51 \( \text{f6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 52 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 53 \( \text{e6} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 54 \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{e4} \) 55 \( \text{c6} \) \( \text{e5} \). The black king will arrive just in time to lock up his white colleague, when the a6-pawn falls.

42 \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{xa5} \)
43 \( \text{c5} \) 1-0

Black resigned, as the line 43... \( \text{a4} \) 44 e4 \( \text{fxe4} \) 45 \( \text{fxe4} \) a5 46 e5 \( \text{b3} \) 47 e6 is hopeless for him.

Now let us consider what would happen if, in the position of our pre-
vious diagram, the white a-pawn had been on a2 (instead of a3). As we will see such a small difference in the placement of just one pawn leads to a very big change in the outcome, thanks to White’s reserve tempo. After 31 ♔d4 b6 32 a3 ♕e6 33 a4 ♔d6 34 a5 bxa5 35 bxa5 (D) we would reach the position in our next diagram:

Black has to play 35...♕c6 36 ♕e5 ♔b5 (here 36...♕c5 makes no sense, as the e3-pawn is rock solid!) 37 ♖xd5 ♖xa5 and after 38 ♕c5! ♕a4 39 f3 ♕b3 (39...a5? is even worse for Black: after 40 ♕c4! ♕a3 41 e4 fxe4 42 fxe4 ♕b2 43 e5 a4 44 e6 a3 45 e7 a2 48 ♕e8 ♕a1 ♕g 49 ♕e5+ White forces a winning pawn ending) 40 e4 fxe4 41 fxe4 a5 42 e5 a4 43 e6 a3 44 e7 a2.

Then both sides promote their pawns at the same time — 45 e8♕ ♕a1♕, but White can exchange the queens by force by playing 46 ♕e6+ ♕c2 47 ♕e2+! ♕b3 48 ♕c4+, obtaining a pawn endgame once again, but this time one that is completely winning for him.

Bishop Endings

Having learned that pure pawn endgames with the isolani can be quite dangerous for its possessor, let us move to endings with more pieces on the board. Our next diagram features a position with the opposite coloured bishops:

Quite clearly, White cannot take advantage of the isolani here and therefore, with correct play, a draw is inevitable. Moving the white bishop from f4 to f3, we get the following position:

Here, compared to the previous position, Black has a lot more problems, since the isolani is under real pressure. Yet, provided that it’s his
move, Black can hold the position by playing 1...\( \mathcal{d}6 \), followed by ...\( \mathcal{b}6 \) and ...\( \mathcal{a}5 \). In that case Black will have only one weakness (the d5-pawn) to worry about and should be able to defend successfully.

However, if in such a situation the possessor of the isolated pawn has another weakness to defend, his task may prove impossible — the opposite side may be able to use the so-called principle of 'two weaknesses'. Let us see how this principle works in practice. For that we will examine the following bishop endgame:

\[ \text{Wojtkiewicz - Khalifman} \]
\[ \text{Rakvere 1993} \]

Here White has better chances for a win than in our previous diagram, as Black's pawn formation on the queenside is compromised. This results in limited mobility of the black pawns on the b-file and one of them (the b7-pawn) may become a second weakness. However, it took precise play from White to handle this case and his next move was right to the point!

30 \( \mathcal{a}4! \)

A great move — the potentially weak pawn on b7 is now fixed. The fact that White places a pawn on the square of the same colour as his bishop is irrelevant here, since Black cannot really attack that pawn. The cliché move — 30 \( \mathcal{d}4? \) — would have allowed Black to solve his problems by playing 30...\( \mathcal{b}5 \) followed by ...\( \mathcal{b}6 \), when Black can successfully defend.

30 ... \( \mathcal{g}5 \)
31 \( \mathcal{d}4 \) \( \mathcal{f}7 \)
32 \( \mathcal{f}3 \)

White prevents ...\( \mathcal{h}5 \), which would have eased Black's defence — it is in White's interest to keep more pawns on the board.

32 ... \( \mathcal{e}6 \)
33 \( \mathcal{f}5! \)

Again White puts a pawn on the square of the same colour as his bishop, and again this is the right decision: the text limits Black's bishop a lot and lessens Black's room for manoeuvring.

33 ... \( \mathcal{f}7 \)
34 \( \mathcal{b}4 \) \( \mathcal{e}8 \)
35 \( \mathcal{b}5 \)

Continuing the same strategy of limiting Black's pieces; as a result Black is close to zugzwang.

35 ... \( \mathcal{f}7 \)
36 \( \mathcal{d}1 \)

Relocating the bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal with a subsequent \( e3-e4 \) finally wins the weak \( d5 \)-pawn. However, Black's defensive resources are not yet exhausted.
Yet another metamorphosis — from the bishop ending the players went into a pawn endgame and now we witness a queen ending!

White's material advantage is decisive, as GM Wojtkiewicz convincingly proved in the game: 51...♔f3 52 ♔b7 ♔g2 53 ♔d3 ♔c1 54 b6 ♔c5 55 ♔b3 ♔h2 56 ♔f3 ♔d4 57 ♔c6! ♔xh3 58 ♔c8 ♔b4 59 b7 ♔f8+ 60 ♔d7 ♔xg4 61 ♔c8 1–0

The endgame was conducted in masterly fashion by White.

Our next example, the diagram above, also involves exploiting the weakness of the isolani in a bishop ending. Once again the attacker succeeds because he has two targets.

Here, as in our previous example, one target is clear — that is the isolated d5-pawn. What could White's second target be? Looking at the kingside, where Black’s pawns are located on light squares and therefore vulnerable, suggests that it could be the h7-pawn. In the game GM Miles
exploited this weakness with great precision.

40  h6!

First of all the target must be fixed! The text serves this purpose fine — in future taking on g6 with the bishop may become a real threat. Notice that Black was about to play 40...gxh5 41 gxh5 h6, thus solving most of his problems. In view of that, a routine advance of the king — 40 c3 — would have been a serious mistake.

40  ...  b5
41  f4
Not 41 c3? e2.
41  ...  d7
42  c3  d6
43  g5  c5
44  a3  c8

The bishop must keep an eye on the f5-square, as 44...b5 loses after 45 f5 e8 46 d3 d6 (or 46...d7 47 fxg6 fxg6 48 xg6!) 47 d4.
45  a4  f5
46  e8  d4+
Or 46...e6 47 a4 d6 48 d4 e7 49 c6 d6 50 b7+.
47  exd4+  d5
48  xf7+  e4
49  d5  xf4
50  xg6! 1-0

Finally overloading Black's bishop. The line 50...xg6 51 d6 f5 52 g6 is clear enough.

Endings with Bishops & Knights

Now let us examine a rather common material correlation — bishop and knight vs. bishop and knight. Adding knights to the position generally makes defence more difficult, as with knights on the board the attacker has more chances of creating a second weakness (target). If that happens, then a pure bishop ending may be winning for him. Our next two games are good illustrations of this possible scenario.

Averbakh - Matanović
USSR-Yugoslavia, Belgrade 1961

Here White has a definite advantage, as apart from the isolated d5-pawn, Black's pawn set-up on the queenside is potentially bad. Strictly speaking, Black should be able to hold this endgame but in practice such passive positions are very difficult to save.

25  f2  f8
26  e1  e7
27  d2  d6

After the attempt to relocate the black pawns on the queenside by playing 27...a5?! White would be able to advance his king along the b-file after 28 c3 d6 29 b4! axb4+ (29...b6? makes the a-pawn very vulnerable after 30 bxa5 bxa5 31 b3
a4 32 \(\mathcal{c}c1\) 30 \(\mathcal{c}xb4\), where White has increased his advantage.

28 \(b4\)

This fixes the pawn pair a6-b7. In the book devoted to the USSR-Yugoslavia chess matches, Druziya i soperniki (‘Friends and Rivals’), Averbakh made the following remark here: “In order to neutralise the pressure, Black needs to find an appropriate piece set-up. It looks to me, that first of all he should play \(\mathcal{d}d7\) in order to make the advance of the a2-pawn more difficult, and then relocate the knight to e7, in order to protect the pawns on the kingside.”

Please note that the great endgame expert, GM Averbakh, did not give any concrete variations — he is talking about a plan. Black’s next move indicates that he failed to find this defensive set-up.

28 \(...\) \(\mathcal{e}e8?!\)

29 \(\mathcal{d}d3\) \(g6\)

The desire to cover the f5-square and thus to limit the d4-knight is quite understandable, but placing pawns on squares of the same colour as the bishop is wrong in principle. Instead of the text, 29...\(h6\) would have been more prudent.

30 \(\mathcal{c}c3\) \(\mathcal{c}c7\)

31 \(a4\) \(b6?!\)

So far on the queenside Black had a potential weakness on b7, but the text turns the a6-pawn into a real/target.

32 \(a5\) \(bxa5\)

33 \(bxa5\) \(\mathcal{c}c5\)

34 \(\mathcal{b}3+\) \(\mathcal{d}d6\)

35 \(\mathcal{b}4\) \(\mathcal{e}e6\)

36 \(g3\)

Instead of this move, White could have played 36 \(f4\) or 36 \(h4\). However he follows a well-known endgame maxim — ‘Do not hurry!’ Using this principle, a player may squeeze some extra points from positions where his opponents lack active play, as they get tired defending and therefore are likely to commit some mistakes.

36 \(...\) \(\mathcal{d}d8\)

Black is opting for a pure bishop endgame — a decision which may be quite risky for him. Perhaps 36...\(h6\) preparing a further \(...g5\), would be more prudent. However, the text is possible too.

37 \(\mathcal{d}d4\) \(\mathcal{c}c6+\)

38 \(\mathcal{d}xc6\) \(\mathcal{d}xe6\)

39 \(f4\) \((D)\)

Let us assess the position. Quite clearly, White has achieved a lot since our first diagram as here, in addition to the d5-pawn, Black now has a weak pawn on a6 and potential weaknesses on the kingside. However, this position is still drawn, as becomes clear from the analysis.

This surprising assessment may
require some explanation. The point is that White has only one real target to attack — the a6-pawn. The d5-pawn cannot be attacked effectively; while the pawns on the kingside remain only as potential targets, as long as they are not fixed. So, White lacks real objects for an attack — as we know, usually two targets are required for successful manoeuvring.

Suddenly, White received help from his opponent, who played:

39 ... f5?

Only this mistake is decisive! The text is extremely bad — having all his pawns fixed on light squares, Black does not have a chance of survival. The game ended rapidly:

40 h4 \(d6\)
41 h5! \(gxh5\)

Black no longer has a defence, as 41...\(\text{c6}\) loses after 42 h6! (fixing the h7-pawn) 42...\(d6\) 43 \(c3\) \(c5\) 44 \(e2\) \(b7\) 45 g4 \(xfg4\) 46 \(xg4\) \(b5\) 47 f5.

42 \(\text{c3}\) 1-0

Instead of 39...f5?, Black should have tried to relocate at least some of his pawns to dark squares by playing 39...h6! (D).

After that, White would have to keep his bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal, keeping an eye on the g6-pawn, as otherwise Black would play ...f6 and ...g5. White’s plan here is to fix the pawns on g6 and f7 by placing his own pawn on g5. However, that leads to further simplification of the position, which helps Black to defend.

Averbakh, in his fundamental work on endgames, analyses two lines where White can try for a win, but in both of these variations Black survives:

a) 40 \(h4\) \(d6\) 41 g4 \(xg4\) 42 \(xa6\) f6 43 \(b7\) (or 43 \(b5\) g5 44 \(hxg5\) \(hxg5\) 45 a6 \(c8\) 46 a7 \(b7\)=) 43...g5 (Black can also draw by playing 43...\(e2\), for example after 44 a6 \(c7\) 45 \(c5\) g5 46 \(hxg5\) \(hxg5\) 47 \(fxg5\) \(fxg5\) 48 \(xd5\) g4 49 \(e4\) g3 26 \(f4\) \(xa6\)=) 44 a6 \(c7\) 45 \(xd5\) \(b6\) 46 \(hxg5\) \(hxg5\) 47 \(c4\) \(c8\) and Black draws after a further advance of the g-pawn.

b) Another try is 40 e4, where White exchanges the isolani in order to activate his king. Black holds the position by playing 40...dxe4 41 \(xe4+\) \(d6\) 42 \(c4\) \(g4\)! 43 \(d4\) \(e2\). Here Black keeps the balance after 44 h4 \(g4\) 45 \(d3\) \(c8\) 46 g4 \(xg4\). Black’s last move is absolutely necessary, as he must not allow the fixing of his pawns by g4-g5. After 47 \(xa6\) f6, with a further ...g5, Black reaches a draw.

On move 44 White has a more tricky attempt at his disposal: 44 \(\text{c2}\). However, it does not win ei-
ther. The key point is that Black must not occupy the g4-square, as 44...\textit{g}4?? leads to zugzwang and defeat after 45\textit{d}3 \textit{c}8 46 h4. In that position, as it is Black to play, he must either place one of his pawns on a light square, which is fatal, or play 46...\textit{b}7, thus allowing White to advance his g-pawn first to g4 and then to g5. After 46...\textit{b}7 47 g4 \textit{c}8 48 g5 hxg5 49 hxg5 \textit{b}7 50 \textit{c}4 Black's position is hopeless.

Instead of 44...\textit{g}4, Black has to play 44...\textit{f}1 45 h4 \textit{e}2 46 \textit{b}1 \textit{c}6 47 \textit{a}2 f6, when he holds the position.

Since isolated d-pawn positions where each player has a knight and bishop are fairly common, it is worth studying yet another ending of this kind. The simplicity of such positions is very deceptive. The defender must be aware of serious problems he may need to solve before he can equalise.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Szabo - Korensky}
\textit{Sochi 1973}
\end{center}

Here Black may expect to draw, but again, as in the game Averbakh-Matanović, Black failed to defend his passive position.

\begin{align*}
27 & \textit{e}2 & \textit{d}6 \\
28 & \textit{d}2 & g6?!
\end{align*}

Again, this set-up is potentially dangerous for Black, as his pawns, placed on light squares, may eventually become targets for White's bishop. More prudent would have been 28...h6 with a further ...\textit{f}6-g8-e7, as GM Averbakh recommended in a similar position.

\begin{align*}
29 & \textit{c}3 & \textit{d}7 \\
30 & \textit{f}4 & \textit{f}8 \\
31 & \textit{e}2 & \textit{c}7 \\
32 & g4 & \textit{h}6 \\
33 & h3 & \textit{d}6 \\
34 & \textit{d}3 & \textit{b}7?
\end{align*}

Instead of the text Black should have kept an eye on the g4-pawn, thus making h3-h4 more difficult for White to manage.

\begin{align*}
35 & h4! & \textit{c}8
\end{align*}

It was already too late to prevent g4-g5, as 35...f6? fails after 36 h5 gxh5 37 \textit{f}5+, winning.

\begin{align*}
36 & g5 & \textit{hxg5} \\
37 & \textit{hxg5} & \textit{e}6?
\end{align*}

This is the decisive mistake. The f8-knight was not a great piece, but going into a pure bishop endgame is a bad decision, as Black already has some weaknesses which are fixed. Pay attention to the fact, that by exchanging the knights, Black allows the white king to occupy the d4-square.

\begin{align*}
38 & \textit{xe}6 & \textit{xe}6 \\
39 & \textit{d}4 & \textit{d}6 \\
40 & \textit{e}2 & a5
\end{align*}

The text leads to a weakening of
the c5-square, but sooner or later White would have forced this advance anyway, for example after 40...\(\text{b7}\) 41 \(\text{d1}\) \(\text{c8}\) 42 \(\text{b3}\) \(\text{e6}\) (or 42...\(\text{b7}\) 43 \(\text{e4}\) and White wins) 43 \(\text{a2}\) \(\text{a5}\) 44 \(\text{a}5\) \(\text{bxa5}\) \(\text{bxa5}\), as 43...\(\text{c6}\) fails as well after 44 \(\text{e5}\) \(\text{b5}\) 45 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 46 \(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xb4}\) 47 \(\text{e4}\) \(\text{b3}\) 48 \(\text{f5}\).

41 \(\text{bxa5}\) \(\text{bxa5}\)
42 \(\text{b5}\) \(\text{e6}\)?

IM Shereshevsky in his book *Endgame Strategy* (Pergamon Press, 1985) quoted GM Szabo who had written in *Shakhmatniy Bulletin* (1974, No. 2) that after the better try 42...\(\text{f5}\) (or 42...\(\text{g4}\)) 43 \(\text{e8}\) \(\text{e6}\) 44 \(\text{b3}\) \(\text{e7}\) 45 \(\text{c6}\) \(\text{d6}\) 46 \(\text{b7}\) \(\text{f6}\) 47 \(\text{gx}\text{f6}\) \(\text{f7}\) White cannot win, because the b3-square is occupied by his pawn and therefore White cannot put a bishop there.

Thus, Shereshevsky believed that only 42...\(\text{e6}\) caused Black’s defeat, while the position would still be drawn after 42...\(\text{f5}\), despite Black’s mistake on move 37. However, I find it very hard to trust that in the position arising after 47...\(\text{f7}\) (D) White cannot win being a pawn up and having two targets to attack. Let us have a closer look at that position:

First of all White needs to relocate his bishop, which he achieves after 48 \(\text{c8}\) \(\text{e8}\) 49 \(\text{g4}\) \(\text{f7}\) 50 \(\text{d1}\) \(\text{e8}\) 51 \(\text{c2}\) \(\text{f7}\). Then, since the b-pawn takes away the square from his bishop, White should get rid of the pawn by playing 52 \(\text{b4}\)!. After 52...\(\text{xb4}\) 53 \(\text{b3}\) White is winning, for example: 53...\(\text{e6}\) 54 \(\text{xd5+}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 55 \(\text{xf7}\) \(\text{xf7}\) 56 \(\text{c4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 57 \(\text{xb4}\) \(\text{d5}\) 58 \(\text{c3}\) \(\text{e4}\) 59 \(\text{d2}\). This analysis proves that 37...\(\text{e6}\) was indeed a decisive mistake.

After I made this analysis, I came across a very interesting and instructive book — *Winning Endgame Technique* by GMs Alexander Beliavsky and Adrian Mikhalchishin (Batsford, 1995). There on pages 107 and 108 the authors analysed the diagram position and came to a similar conclusion that White is winning. In their chapter on 'Bishop Endings', the authors gave many examples of positions with the isolani.

43 \(\text{e8}\) \(\text{e7}\)
44 \(\text{c6}\) \(\text{d6}\)
45 \(\text{b7}\)

Zugzwang.

45 ... \(\text{f6}\)
46 \(\text{gx}\text{f6}\) \(\text{f7}\)
47 \(\text{c8}\) \(\text{g8}\)
48 \(\text{g4}\) \(\text{f7}\)
49 \(\text{c8}\) \(\text{g8}\)
50 \(\text{h3}\) \(\text{f7}\)
51 \(\text{g4}\) \(\text{e8}\)
52 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{f7}\)
53 \(\text{d1}\)
White is going to put the bishop on b3 and play e3-e4.

The rest does not require any comment: 53...\textit{e}6 54 \textit{b}3 \textit{x}6 55 \textit{x}d5 \textit{e}8 56 e4 g5 57 e5+ \textit{f}5 58 fxg5 \textit{x}g5 59 \textit{c}5 \textit{f}5 60 \textit{c}6 \textit{f}7 61 \textit{d}6 \textit{b}3 62 \textit{d}7+ \textit{e}4 63 e6 \textit{d}3 64 e7 \textit{f}7 65 \textit{a}4 \textit{c}4 66 \textit{d}7 \textit{b}4 67 b3 1–0.

So far we have been looking at positions where the isolated d5-pawn somehow restricted Black's light-squared bishop, which was rather passive in the examples analysed. Thinking logically, we may guess that should Black have a dark-squared bishop in such endings instead, he will do better. This must be so, yet there are certain exceptions to the rule, as our next example will illustrate.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Botvinnik - Kholmov}
\textit{Moscow Cht 1969}
\end{center}

In the diagram position, Black controls the d4-square and his bishop is fine. Exchanging the knights by playing \textit{f}3-d4xc6 would lead White nowhere, so he must come up with a different approach to this position.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{28 e4!}
\end{itemize}

This is it! Botvinnik does not attack or blockade the isolani, which won't work in this position anyway. Instead, he simply exchanges it. By removing this pawn he activates his king further.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{28 ... dxe4+}
\item \textbf{29 \textit{e}4 \textit{d}7}
\item \textbf{30 \textit{d}5}
\end{itemize}

Here White has some advantage due to his more centralised and therefore more active king. In the game, Botvinnik managed to increase his advantage further and finally turned it into a full point. Here is the rest of the game with some comments:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{30 ... h5?!}
\end{itemize}

Botvinnik regarded this move as a serious mistake, suggesting \textbf{30... \textit{d}8} instead — with the idea of kicking the white king from d5 by playing ...\textit{e}7+. Perhaps, Kholmov was afraid of the possible move 31 g4!?, which would have fixed his h-pawn.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{31 \textit{g}7! \textit{d}8}
\item \textbf{32 \textit{f}8 \textit{b}6}
\end{itemize}

Botvinnik wrote that Black should have played \textbf{32...\textit{e}7+ 33 \textit{x}e7 \textit{x}e7}. His insight into this ending is very interesting — he commented that in general White should be happy to exchange the bishops here, while Black should be trying to trade off the knights. Thus, it looks as if Kholmov misunderstood this position, playing into White’s hands.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{33 \textit{c}5 \textit{e}7+?!}
\item \textbf{34 \textit{c}4 \textit{x}c5?!}
\end{itemize}
35 \( \mathcal{W}xc5 \) \( \mathcal{W}c7 \)
36 \( e5! \) \( f6 \)
37 \( \mathcal{W}h7 \) \( f5 \)
38 \( h4 \) \( f4 \)

Or 38...\( b6+ \) 39 \( v\mathcal{W}d4 \) \( \mathcal{W}d6 \) 40 \( v\mathcal{W}f8 \)
\( \mathcal{W}c6+ \) 41 \( e3 \) \( e5 \) 42 \( \mathcal{W}f4 \) and the g6-pawn will eventually fall.

39 \( \mathcal{W}f8 \) \( b6+ \)

According to Botvinnik, Black’s best chance lay in 39...\( f3! \) 40 \( g3 \) \( \mathcal{W}f5 \)
41 \( \mathcal{W}xg6 \) \( \mathcal{W}xg3 \) 42 \( \mathcal{W}d4 \), although there White would also have better chances.

40 \( \mathcal{W}d4 \) \( \mathcal{W}f5+ \)
41 \( \mathcal{W}e4 \) \( \mathcal{W}xh4 \)
42 \( \mathcal{W}e6+ \) \( \mathcal{W}c6 \)
43 \( \mathcal{W}xf4 \) \( \mathcal{W}b5 \)

Of course, not 43...\( g5? \) 44 \( g3 \) \( gxf4 \)
45 \( gxf4 \) and White wins.

44 \( g3 \) \( \mathcal{W}f5 \)
45 \( \mathcal{W}xg6 \) \( \mathcal{W}h6 \)
46 \( d5! \) \( a4 \)
47 \( \mathcal{W}e4 \) \( \mathcal{W}b3 \)

Black also loses after 47...\( b5 \) 48
\( \mathcal{W}e5 \) \( \mathcal{W}xa3 \) 49 \( \mathcal{W}c6 \).

48 \( \mathcal{W}xb6 \) \( \mathcal{W}xa3 \)
49 \( \mathcal{W}d5 \) \( \mathcal{W}b3 \)
50 \( f4 \) \( \mathcal{W}c4 \)
51 \( \mathcal{W}c7 \) \( \mathcal{W}xb4 \)
52 \( \mathcal{W}xa6+ \) 1–0

As we see from these examples, the material balance ‘bishop and knight vs. bishop and knight’ is quite unpleasant for the side possessing the isolated pawn.

For those who would like to see more examples of this kind, I can recommend the book *Opening Preparations* (Batsford 1994) where Mark Dvoretsky analysed Polugaevsky-

Mecking, Mar del Plata 1971. There, the same type of ending occurred, so Dvoretsky’s in-depth analysis can help you to understand such positions.

Now let us imagine that the bishop pairs are off and therefore we will examine a pure knight endgame to see how the isolani fares there. Here is a suitable example:

![Chess board diagram](image)

**Korchnoi – Kasparov**

*London Ct (8) 1983*

In this position Black’s problems are not too serious, since a knight is a very flexible piece and can both defend the isolated d-pawn and keep White’s king away from the blockading d4-square. The game continued: 26 \( \mathcal{W}e5 \) \( \mathcal{W}d6 \) 27 \( \mathcal{W}g2 \) \( \mathcal{W}f8 \) 28
\( \mathcal{W}f3 \) \( \mathcal{W}e7 \) 29 \( \mathcal{W}f4 \) \( f6 \) 30 \( h4 \) \( g6 \) 31 \( g4 \)
\( b6 \) 32 \( \mathcal{W}a6 \) \( \mathcal{W}e4 \) 33 \( f3 \) \( \mathcal{W}c5 \) 34 \( \mathcal{W}c7 \)
\( d4 \) 35 \( \mathcal{W}d5+ \) \( \mathcal{W}e6 \) 36 \( \mathcal{W}d4 \) 37
\( \mathcal{W}d3 \) \( \mathcal{W}d5 \) 38 \( g5 \) \( f5 \) 39 \( \mathcal{W}g3 \) \( \mathcal{W}xd3 \)
\( \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2} \).

So, pure knight endgames with the isolani are not too dangerous for its possessor. However, endgames where the owner of the isolated pawn has a bishop vs. the opponent’s
The weak isolani in the endgame

The weak isolani in the endgame

29 $\text{Qd}2$ $\text{Ec}8$

30 $\text{Qb}1$ $\text{Ee}6$

31 $\text{Qc}3$ $\text{Ec}6$

32 $\text{a}3$ $\text{h}6$

33 $\text{g}3$ $\text{h}5$ ($D$

Why does Black put the pawn on a square of the same colour as his bishop? Could he stay idle instead? Averbakh wrote that in that case White can try the following plan suggested by I. Rabinovich:

1. Move his knight to $\text{h}4$;
2. Put his pawns on $\text{f}5$ and $\text{g}4$;
3. Relocate the knight to $\text{f}4$, tying down Black’s bishop to the $\text{f}7$-square, as the bishop would have to watch both $\text{Qf}4$-$\text{e}6$ and $\text{Qf}4$-$\text{h}5$;
4. When Black plays ...$\text{Qc}6$, White’s knight will occupy the $\text{e}6$-square ($\text{Qf}4$-$\text{e}6$), attacking the $\text{g}7$-pawn and therefore forcing ...$\text{Qxe}6$;
5. Then after $\text{fxe}6$ $\text{Qd}6$, $\text{e}7$ $\text{Qxe}7$, $\text{Qxd}5$ White will win the resulting pawn endgame.

On account of this plan, Averbakh gave $33...\text{h}5$ an exclamation mark in his book. However, I am quite sceptical about the Rabinovich plan and therefore about the value of $33...\text{h}5$, as I simply don’t see how White can get his knight to $\text{h}4$! Before that he would have to move his pawns on the kingside, as otherwise the bishop can control the $\text{f}3$- and $\text{g}2$- squares.

A sample line can be as follows: $33...\text{Qd}6$!? $34 \text{Qd}1$ (I do not think that Black should fear $34 \text{f}5 \text{Qxf}5$ $35 \text{Qxd}5 \text{b}5 36 \text{b}4 \text{axb}4 37 \text{axb}4$) $34...\text{g}4 35 \text{f}2 \text{Qd}7 36 \text{g}4 \text{g}5$ and Black seems to be fine here. Black
only needs to avoid cooperative lines like 35...\textbf{\textit{d}}f5? 36 g4 \textbf{\textit{e}}6 37 f5 \textbf{\textit{d}}7 38 \textbf{\textit{d}}d3 h5 39 h3 hxg4 40 hxg4 \textbf{\textit{e}}8 41 \textbf{\textit{f}}4 \textbf{\textit{f}}7 42 b3 \textbf{\textit{c}}6, where White indeed wins the pawn endgame arising after 43 \textbf{\textit{e}}6 \textbf{\textit{e}}xe6 44 fxe6 \textbf{\textit{d}}d6 45 e7 \textbf{\textit{x}}e7 46 \textbf{\textit{x}}d5. For example: 46...\textbf{\textit{d}}d7 47 b4 axb4 48 axb4 \textbf{\textit{c}}7 49 \textbf{\textit{e}}6 \textbf{\textit{c}}6 50 \textbf{\textit{f}}7 \textbf{\textit{b}}5 51 \textbf{\textit{x}}g7 \textbf{\textit{x}}xb4 52 \textbf{\textit{x}}f6 b5 53 g5, winning.

Thus, it appears that 33...h5 was not so necessary, although it holds the position as well.

Now let’s come back to the game.

\textbf{\textit{d}}xd5 \textbf{\textit{x}}xb5 44 \textbf{\textit{x}}xb6 \textbf{\textit{c}}6 White has wasted one reserve tempo (h2-h3), compared to the game continuation.

41 \textbf{\textit{f}}4 \textbf{\textit{e}}8
42 \textbf{\textit{d}}xd5 \textbf{\textit{x}}xb5
43 \textbf{\textit{d}}xb6 \textbf{\textit{c}}6
44 \textbf{\textit{c}}4+ \textbf{\textit{e}}6
45 \textbf{\textit{b}}2 \textbf{\textit{b}}5
46 \textbf{\textit{d}}d1 \textbf{\textit{e}}2
47 \textbf{\textit{f}}2 \textbf{\textit{f}}1!

Black does not allow White’s knight to get to f4.

The game ended: 48 \textbf{\textit{d}}d3 \textbf{\textit{x}}xd3 49 \textbf{\textit{d}}xd3 \textbf{\textit{e}}5 50 \textbf{\textit{e}}2 \textbf{\textit{e}}4 51 h3 \textbf{\textit{d}}d5 52 \textbf{\textit{f}}3 \textbf{\textit{e}}5 \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}.

After this very well-known endgame, let us examine a similar ending from more recent practice.

\textbf{\textit{Kudrin - Gulko}}
\textbf{\textit{USA Ch 1988}}

Although this position \textit{looks} quite similar to our previous example, I think that here White’s pawn formation is somewhat better than in Flohr-Capablanca. The difference is that here White has a pawn on the c-file rather than on the e-file, which makes it risky for Black to play ...a5. In that
event, White could eventually play b2-b4 and after ...axb4 he would recapture with cxb4, obtaining a pawn majority on the queenside. Because of this, White is able to advance his b-pawn here, thereby fixing Black’s a-pawn.

31 a3 e6
32 e3 d6
33 d4 h6
34 f4 f7
35 d3

White is in no hurry to determine his pawn formation on the kingside. One possible plan for him is to move his f-pawn to f5, limiting the bishop, and place the knight on f4.

35 ... g5

Black is trying to prevent this plan from evolving, but the text creates some weaknesses on the kingside. At any rate, this is Black’s best set-up and the fact that he lost this endgame, may simply mean that the ending is lost anyway.

36 g3 h5
37 e3

I would prefer the more direct approach — 37 f4 gxh4 38 gxh4, where White will get his knight to e3 (via b4 and c2, if necessary), attacking the d5-pawn and f5- and g4-squares. However, the text does not spoil anything.

37 ... g6
38 f2 f5?

A very serious error. On f5 the bishop is quite inactive, just observing the empty b1-h7 diagonal. Black had to play 38...h5, targeting the f3-pawn, thus making White’s task more difficult.

39 d4 e6
40 d1 d7
41 e3 e6
42 b3! (D)

Now, when Black’s bishop cannot move, as it has to look after both the d-pawn and the weak f5-square, White has all time in the world to improve his position on the queenside.

42 ... c6
43 b4 d6
44 b5 h5

A sad necessity, but Black was in zugzwang.

45 f4 gxf4
46 gxf4 g8
47 f5+

Now White wants to attack the h5-pawn, put his own pawn on f5 and then relocate the knight to f4. Black can do nothing but merely watch this happening.

47 ... d7
48 g3 f7
49 f5 e7

Also bad for Black is 49 ... d6 50
\[D2 \ne8 51 \nf4 \nx b5 52 \nx h5\]

and White wins.

The game ended 50 \[D2 \ne8 51 \nf4 \xd7 52 \x h5 \xf5 53 \xd5 \xd7 54 \e6+ 55 \d4 \f5 56 \d4 \d6 57 \h5 \b1 58 \h6 \e7 59 \b5+ 60 \x c5 \c2 61 \a4 \f7 62 \a5 \e4 63 \d6 \g8 64 \d5 \d3 65 \b6 \x b6 66 \x b6 \a6 67 \c7 1-0.

A nice demonstration of the power of the knight. Comparing our two last examples, one can only say that it is amazing how much difference such little deviations (white pawn on c3 instead of e3) can make to the outcome of the game!

Rook Endings

Now let us see how the isolated pawn fares in the presence of major pieces. For that purpose we shall first examine two rook endings. Again, one example is an old ending, while the other is taken from fairly recent practice.

In this position apart from the weakness on d4, White has another weak pawn on the a-file. To make things worse, Black has a queenside pawn majority and his rook is very active. Still, some caution is required by Black while exploiting his advantages — rook endings are tricky!

1 ... \[e6!\]

Black prefers to improve the position rather than to win some material. In rook endgames activity is often more important than everything else! The hasty 1...\[\x c3+?\] 2 \e4 would have allowed White serious counterplay. For example: 2...\[\xa3\] 3 \d5 and White’s king has become very active or 2...\[\e6\] 3 \f5+ \d6 4 \a4 \bxa4 5 \b4! (this is better than 5 \b6+?! \c6 6 \b4 \a5! 7 \xa4 \a6, when Black has his rook ideally placed behind his passed pawn) 5...\[\c6\] 6 \xa4 \b5 7 \a1 and nothing is clear.

2 \b3

The alternative 2 \e4 \f5+ 3 \d3 \d5 4 \b4 also loses, as after the further 4...\x b4 5 \x b4 \h6 6 \h3 \h5 7 \h4 \g6 White is in zugzwang.

2 ... \[\d5\]

3 \[\d3\] \f5

4 \h3 \h5

5 \e2

Or 5 \h4 \g6 and White has to give up the d-pawn.

5 ... \[\x d4\]

6 \c3 \e4+

7 \d2 \h4!

Black convincingly converts his extra pawn into a win.
8 Ax7 hxg3 9 Axa7 Axf4 10 Axa3 Axe5 11 Axe2 Ac4 12 Ag6 Aa4 13 Ag3 f4 14 Ab3 Ac4! (Of course, not 14...Ae4?? because of 15 Ab4+! Axh4 16 axb4=) 15 Bd1 Ae4 16 h4 f3 17 Ae1 Af4 18 h5 Ac1+ 19 Af2 Ac2+ 20 Ae1 Ag3 21 h6 Ae2+ 22 Bd1 Ah2 23 a4 b4 24 Axh4 Ah1+ 25 Ad2 f2 26 Ab8 f1W 0–1.

Next comes an example from modern tournament practice. Unlike our previous position, in this ending the possessor of the isolani has only one weakness — the isolated pawn itself. This makes the attacker’s technical task much more difficult:

Annotating this game in Informator 49, Bareev regarded this move as the losing mistake, suggesting 25...a5 instead. Perhaps then, White should seriously consider 26 g4!?, fixing Black’s h-pawn.

26 b4!

Now the a7-pawn will be a source of permanent headache for Black.

26 ... Ae6
27 Ad4 f6

Perhaps Black should have played 27...g6 instead, keeping his pawn formation more compact. Now Black’s g-pawn might become weak (after an eventual ...g6).

28 h4 Af5
29 f3 Ag6
30 a4 Af7
31 a5! Ae6

Exchanging on a5 — 31...bxa5 32 bxa5 — would have weakened the important c5-square. White can take advantage of it in the following line: 32...Ae6 33 Ac6+ Ae7 34 Ac5, winning.

32 a6!

White fixes the a7-pawn, thus keeping Black’s rook passive.

32 ... Ad6
33 b5 Ae6
34 g3 g6
35 Ae8+!

Bareev also mentioned the move 35 g4. Evidently he believed that it would give Black some unnecessary counterplay after 35...hxg4 36 fxg4 Ah7. However, after the further 37 Ac6+ Ad7 38 Af6 Ah4 39 Axa6 White is clearly winning.
35 ... \textit{d6}
36 \textit{f8} \textit{e6}
37 \textit{c8}

Zugzwang.
37 ... \textit{d6}
38 \textit{c6+} \textit{e7}
39 \textit{g4!}

After this thrust White will either create a weakness on h5 (if Black lets him play e4xh5) or obtain a passed pawn after hxg4, fxg4 and the eventual h4-h5.
39 ... \textit{f7}
40 gxf5 \textit{gxf5}
41 \textit{c8}

Now Black has too many weaknesses — on d5, h5 and a7, and therefore cannot survive here: 41...\textit{e6}
42 \textit{e8+ d6} 43 \textit{h8 c7} 44 \textit{d8+ e6} 45 \textit{xd5 f5} 46 \textit{e4 fxe4} 47 fxe4 \textit{h7} 48 \textit{d8 c7} 49 \textit{e8+ f6} 50 e5+ \textit{f7} 51 \textit{h8 c5} 52 \textit{xh5 e6} 53 \textit{h6+ e7} 54 \textit{e4!} \textit{xb5} 55 \textit{f5} 1-0.

White showed impressive technique in this ending, never giving Black any chance to escape.

\section*{Queen Endings}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
&B\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textit{Lisitsyn - Capablanca}

\textit{Moscow 1935}

At first glance it seems that White is O.K. in this position. However, although the isolated pawn on d4 is passed, this pawn is weak and Black's pieces, the queen in particular, are more active. Notice that the weaknesses on d4, b5 and g2 make White's queen rather passive. Of course, that may change, so Black needs a lot of technique to convert his positional advantages into something real. Fortunately for him, Capablanca rarely lacked endgame technique!

1 ... \textit{e6}
2 \textit{h4 f6}

Black is going to try to create a passed pawn on the kingside. He won't mind exchanging queens here, since the pawn endgame would be favourable for him due to his kingside pawn majority.
3 \textit{e3} \textit{c4}
4 \textit{g3?!}

GM Bondarevsky suggested 4 \textit{b1!} here. Then the continuation might be: 4...\textit{c3+} 5 \textit{d3} (or 5 \textit{e2 xd4} 6 \textit{g6 e5+} 7 \textit{f3 xb5} with advantage to Black) 5...\textit{xd3}+ 6 \textit{xd3} when Black has managed to reach a pawn ending, but the fact the isolated pawn is also passed gives White some hope of survival.

Detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this book. Black has to continue with 6...\textit{f5!} 7 \textit{e3 g5} 8 \textit{g4!} 9 \textit{d3 e6} 10 \textit{e4 d6} 11 \textit{f5 d5} and now Averbakh, in the Yu-
goslav Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings, continued 12 \textcolor{red}{\text{\textsf{g6}}}? f5? (the question marks are mine) but Black has a better move in 12...\textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{xd4}}}!, e.g. 13 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{xh5}}} f5 14 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{g5}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{e4}}} 15 h5 e4 16 h6 fxg3 17 h7 g2 18 h8\textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{g1}}} and Black should be able to win this position.

White in turn can do much better with 12 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{xf6}}}! \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{xd4}}} 13 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{g5}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{e4}}} 14 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{xh5}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{f3}}} 15 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{g6}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{xg3}}} 16 h5 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{f4}}} 17 h6 g3 18 h7 g2 19 h8\textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{g1}}} + 20 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{f7}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{c5}}}. As often happens, a complicated queen endgame has transformed via a king and pawn ending into another queen endgame, also quite complicated!

\begin{verbatim}
4 ... g5
5 hxg5 fxg5 (D)
\end{verbatim}

6 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{h2}}?}

This loses immediately. Squares like h2 are very seldom suitable for the queen. In such endgames we should always try to keep her more or less centralised and therefore active. However, Black also should win after 6 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{e4}}} g4 7 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{f4}}} \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{f6}}}! 8 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{e3}}} \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{e6+}}} 9 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{d3}}} \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{d5}}} 10 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{f2+}}} \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{g6}}}.

In the other line — 6 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{b1}}} \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{c3+}}} 7 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{e2}}} \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{xd4}}} 8 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{g6+}}} \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{f6}}} 9 \textcolor{blue}{\text{\textsf{hxe5+}}} — Black’s advantage is also decisive.

6 ... \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{b3+}}}
7 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{e4}}} g4!
8 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{e2}}}

8 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{f2}}} would not be much better than the text after 8...\textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{xb5}}} 9 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{a2+}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{f6}}} 10 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{f2+}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{e7}}}--.

The game now concluded: 8...\textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{xb5}}} 9 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{c4+}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{e7}}} 10 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{c8}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{f3+}}} 11 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{e5}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{f6+}}} 12 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{d5}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{d6+}}} 0-1.

As after 13 \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{e4}}} \textcolor{green}{\text{\textsf{e6+}}} Black swaps off the queens, White resigned.

\textbf{Queens and Rooks}

Having learned how the isolani fares in pure rook and in pure queen endings, let us move on to the positions where there are both queens and rooks.

Usually the isolani is not a good thing to possess when only major pieces are left on the board. The problem for its possessor is that his pieces often get tied down to the defence of that pawn, thus becoming passive. This give his opponent what Nimzowitsch called an ‘ideal advantage’ — advantage in piece activity and mobility.

Such advantage is usually utilised by creating a second weakness or opening a ‘second front’ — then at some point the defender, whose pieces are passive and less mobile, may not be able to cope with his defensive task. Let us look at the following position.
The weak isolani in the endgame

Andersson - Comas
Benasque 1995

Here White has the advantage since his rook is more active than his opponent’s. White cannot win by just putting pressure on the d5-pawn, however. He needs other targets to attack, so that he can use his ‘ideal advantage’. Such targets can be either Black’s king or the a6-pawn.

33 c2 b6
34 c3 a5

Or 34...h7 35 f4!, which leads to similar positions to the game.

35 a1 g8
36 f4! b6
37 e5 b7
38 d4!

GM Ulf Andersson, famous for his excellent technique, masterfully combines attack against Black’s king with play vs. the isolated d5-pawn. Now White threatens to play 39 e4, winning a pawn, as 39...dxe4 isn’t possible because of 40 d8+ and 41 h8#.

38 ... b6?

Now Black is lost. Only 38...c6 could offer some resistance.

39 e4 e6

40 xd5 b2
41 d2 e5
42 d4 g7
43 xe5+ xe5
44 a4

The endgame is winning for White due to the presence of additional pawns on the a-file. Without them Black would have great drawing chances, but his a-pawn is weak and this makes Black’s rook passive: 44...a5 45 f3 f5 46 f4 f6 47 f3 fxe4 48 fxe4 c5 49 h4 e6 50 a3 f6 51 b3 c2 52 e5+ f7 53 b7+ e6 54 b6+ f7 55 f6+ e7 56 xg6 xa2 57 a6 a3 58 h6 a4+ 59 f5 g4 60 h7+ e8 61 f6 1–0.

Spiridonov - T.Stanciu
Bucharest 1973

B

This is a typical example of the isolated d-pawn with major pieces on the board. Piece activity and king safety is what matters in such positions and in this respect the d5-pawn causes Black a lot of trouble, making his pieces defensive.

22 ... ad8
In the variation 22...d4 23 \(\text{Nxd4}\) \(\text{Wxe2}\) 24 \(\text{Nd7}\), Black’s seventh rank is too weak.

23 e3 \(\text{Ne6}\)

Perhaps the pawn sacrifice — 23...d4!? — is worth trying here.

24 \(\text{Nd4}\) \(\text{Nc6}\)
25 \(\text{Nxd2}\) b6
26 \(\text{Nd1}\) \(\text{Ncd6}\)

Now White has to find ways to increase his advantage — he needs a second target. The most promising plan for him is to penetrate with his pieces via the open c-file.

27 h4 \(\text{g7}\)
28 \(\text{Nc3}\) \(\text{Nd7}\)
29 \(\text{Nc1}\) \(\text{Nf6}\)
30 \(\text{Nc8}\) \(\text{Nd8}\)
31 \(\text{Nc8}\) \(\text{Nd7}\)
32 \(\text{Ncd1}\) \(\text{Ncd7}\)
33 \(\text{Nb5}\) \(\text{Nf6}\)
34 \(\text{Ng2}\)

Often moves like this are most unpleasant for the defender, who has to stay passive and sit tight, which is usually very difficult. The text has a purpose too — now White threatens to capture on d5.

34 ... \(\text{Nd6}\)
35 a4!? \(\text{(D)}\)

White’s plan to invade on the c-file did not succeed, so he tries to gain an advantage by advancing his pawns on the queenside.

35 ... \(\text{Nf7}\)
36 \(\text{Nd3}\) \(\text{Nf6}\)
37 \(\text{Nc1}\)

Back to the c-file — in this position White can try various plans, so there is no point in rushing. Besides, such tactics wear the opponent down and lower his resistance.

37 ... \(\text{Ng7}\)
38 b4 \(\text{Nf6}\)
39 b5 \(\text{Nf7}\)
40 \(\text{Nc8}\) \(\text{Nd8}\)
41 \(\text{Nc3}\) \(\text{Nbd7}\)
42 \(\text{Nc2}\) h5
43 \(\text{Nc1}\) \(\text{h6}\)
44 \(\text{h2}\) \(\text{Nf6}\)
45 \(\text{Nc1}\) \(\text{Nf6}\)
46 \(\text{Nc8}\) \(\text{Nbd8}\)
47 \(\text{Nxd8}\) \(\text{Nxd8}\)
48 \(\text{Nd2}\) \(\text{Nbd7}\)
49 \(\text{Nc2}\) \(\text{Nc5}\)

Black could not get rid of the weak d-pawn, as 49...d4 loses after 50 \(\text{Nc7}\).

50 \(\text{Nc6}\)

I think that 50 \(\text{Nc8}\) would be more energetic.

50 ... \(\text{Ng7}\)
51 \(\text{Nc3}\)!

An interesting approach — White believes that he would win the rook ending arising after 51...\(\text{Nxc3}\) 52 \(\text{Nxc3}\). He is probably right, since in the resulting endgame Black has three fixed weaknesses — on a7, d5 and g6.

51 ... d4
52 exd4 \(\text{Nxd4}\)
53 \( \text{W}a1 \) \( \text{Wh}6 \\
54 \text{Ec}4 \text{Ed}5 \\
55 \text{Wxe}5 \text{Wxe}5 \\
56 \text{Ec}7 (D)

The horrible position of Black's king makes survival in this rook ending impossible. The game ended: 56...a6 57 bxa6 \( \text{Na}5 \) 58 a7 \( \text{Nxa}4 \) 59 \( \text{Qf}1 \) g5 60 \( \text{Cc}6+ \) \( \text{Qg}7 \) 61 hxg5 \( \text{Nxa}7 \) 62 \( \text{Nxb}6 \) \( \text{Naa}4 \) 63 \( \text{Nf}6 \) h4 64 gxh4 \( \text{Nxa}4 \) 65 \( \text{Nxf}5 \) \( \text{Ng}6 \) 66 \( \text{Na}5 \) \( \text{Ng}4 \) 67 \( \text{Qe}2 \) \( \text{Nxg}5 \) 68 \( \text{Bxg}5+ \) \( \text{Qxg}5 \) 69 \( \text{Qe}3 \) \( \text{Qf}5 \) 70 \( \text{Qf}3 \) 1–0.

Rook and Minor Piece Endings

Having analysed positions with only major pieces on the board, let us now study how the isolated d-pawn behaves in the presence of both major and minor pieces. Obviously, a lot depends what pieces they are. We will start with the material correlation ‘rook and minor piece vs. rook and minor piece’.

First of all, since a pure knight endgame is the least dangerous one for the possessor of the isolani, we may think that adding rooks won’t change that assessment greatly. However, practice shows that the side playing with the isolated d-pawn has some difficulties defending in such an endgame. Here is an example.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Parma - Puč} \\
\text{Ljubljana 1969}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
22 \ldots \text{e}8 \\
23 \text{d}1
\end{array}
\]

Pay attention to the fact that White is not willing to exchange rooks by playing 23 \( \text{Qe}1 \), as after a further 23...\( \text{Nxe}1 \) 24 \( \text{Qxe}1 \) \( \text{Qf}8 \) Black will have fewer problems.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
23 \ldots \text{a}6 \\
24 \text{d}3 \text{c}8 \\
25 \text{c}3
\end{array}
\]

The immediate 25 \( g4! \) was worth considering.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
25 \ldots \text{f}8
\end{array}
\]

Perhaps Black should have made his kingside pawns safer by playing 25...\( h5! \) with a subsequent ...\( g6 \).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
26 \text{g}4!
\end{array}
\]

Grabbing space, White unbalances the position and creates tension in the position.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
26 \ldots \text{d}7
\end{array}
\]
Black has to defend the d5-pawn, as 29...\textit{We}7 can lead to an unpleasant rook endgame after 30 a4! a5 31 \textit{Axd}5+ \textit{Axd}5 32 \textit{Axd}5 \textit{Axc}3 33 \textit{Ab}5.

Perhaps Black was concerned about White playing g4-g5 at some stage, which would fix his h7-pawn. However, that plan does not seem to be so dangerous and therefore Black should have centralised his king by 30...\textit{We}7.

31 \textit{Ae}2 \textit{h}6

As a result of the very unconvincing manoeuvre ...\textit{Af}8-g7-f6 (instead of ...\textit{Af}8-e7-e6), Black has problems with the d-pawn and in fact he can no longer hold it.

34 axb4

34...\textit{Ac}4+ also drops a pawn after 35 \textit{Ad}3 \textit{Ae}5+ 36 \textit{We}2, but perhaps it was a better try.

35 cxb4 \textit{Ac}6
36 a5 \textit{Ac}8
36...\textit{Ac}4+? 37 \textit{Axc}4 dxc4 38 \textit{Ac}3 is clearly hopeless for Black.

White's material advantage here is sufficient for the win, which he secured in nice style: 49 a7! \textit{Ad}8+ (Or 49...\textit{Axa}7 50 \textit{Ac}4+ and White wins) 50 \textit{Axd}5+! \textit{Ab}7 51 a8\textit{W}+ \textit{Axa}8 52 \textit{Ab}4 \textit{Aa}5 53 \textit{Ac}3 \textit{Ac}6 54 \textit{Ax}b5 \textit{Ax}b5 55 \textit{Ac}5 \textit{Ax}b5 56 \textit{Ad}4 \textit{Ac}6 57 \textit{Ae}5 \textit{Ad}7 58 \textit{Af}6 \textit{Af}8 59 \textit{Ag}7 \textit{Ae}7 60 f6+ \textit{Ae}6 61 h3 1–0.

A very similar position occurred in our next example, but here Black was more active on the kingside and therefore had fewer problems defending his position.

\begin{center}
\textit{Buturin - Shulman}

\textit{Ubeda 1997}
\end{center}
Parma-Puč, where it was attacked and driven away from b6. On the e7-square, the knight is much safer. Also here Black has a much better pawn set-up on the kingside than in our previous example.

36 \( \texttt{Ad1} \) \( \texttt{e6} \)
37 \( \texttt{Ad4+} \) \( \texttt{f7} \)
38 \( \texttt{Ce2} \)

Also logical is 38 \( \texttt{Ce1} \), not disclosing any intentions.

38 ... \( \texttt{e6} \)
39 \( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{Cc6} \)
40 \( \texttt{Cf2} \) \( \texttt{Ad7} \)
41 \( \texttt{Ce3} \) \( \texttt{f7} \)
42 \( \texttt{Ce3} \)

Perhaps White should have preferred the more direct approach — 42 \( \texttt{Dd4!} \), as after 42...\( \texttt{Axd4+} \) 43 \( \texttt{Axd4} \) \( \texttt{e6} \) 44 \( \texttt{Ae2} \) he would have some advantage in the rook endgame.

42 ... \( \texttt{Fb7+} \)
43 \( \texttt{Ff2} \) \( \texttt{Ad7} \)
44 \( \texttt{Gg3} \) \( \texttt{h4} \)
45 \( \texttt{Ce2} \) \( \texttt{Gg6} \)
46 \( \texttt{Ce3} \) \( \texttt{Ad8} \)
47 \( \texttt{Fl1} \) \( \texttt{Ee8+} \)
48 \( \texttt{Dd2} \) \( \texttt{Da5} \)
49 b3 \( \texttt{Cc6} \)
50 \( \texttt{Fl3} \) \( \texttt{Ad8} \)
51 \( \texttt{Ad3} \) \( \texttt{Ff5} \)
52 fxg5 \( \texttt{fxg5} \)
53 \( \texttt{Dd4+} \) \( \texttt{Axd4} \)
54 \( \texttt{Axd4} \)

So, White has exchanged the knights, but this has happened in less favourable conditions than it would have been earlier (after 42 \( \texttt{Dd4} \) \( \texttt{Axd4+} \) 43 \( \texttt{Axd4} \)) — Black's king is more active here.

The game ended: 54...\( \texttt{Ee5} \) 55 \( \texttt{Gg4} \) \( \texttt{Ff5} \) 56 \( \texttt{Ab4} \) \( \texttt{Ad7} \) 57 a4 \( \texttt{Gg7} \)
58 \( \texttt{Gg4} \) b6 59 \( \texttt{Dd3} \) \( \texttt{e5} \) 60 g3 hxg3
61 \( \texttt{Exg3} \) \( \texttt{Ae6} \) 62 \( \texttt{Dd4} \) \( \texttt{Ah7} \) 63 \( \texttt{Axg5} \) \( \texttt{Axh3} \) 64 \( \texttt{Gg6+} \) (64 \( \texttt{Axd5+} \) \( \texttt{Cc6} \) does not offer White much either) 64...\( \texttt{Cc7} \) 65 a5 \( \texttt{Ah4+} \) 66 \( \texttt{Dd3} \)
67 \( \texttt{Ah3+} \) 67 \( \texttt{Cc2} \) \( \texttt{Ah2+} \) 68 \( \texttt{Bb1} \) \( \texttt{Ah1+} \) 69 \( \texttt{Ab2} \) \( \texttt{Ah2+} \) 70 \( \texttt{Fa3} \) \( \texttt{Bxa5} \) 71 \( \texttt{Exa6} \) \( \texttt{Cc2} \) 72 \( \texttt{Bxa5} \) \( \frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2} \).

Knowing that pure bishop endings are much more dangerous for the possessor of the isolani than pure knight endgames, we can assume that the same is correct if we add rooks. Indeed, such positions contain many problems for the side playing with the isolated d-pawn, as our next example proves.

Matanović - Uhlmann

Skopje 1976

White's pieces are much more active and, as usual, all he needs is a second weakness.

28 \( \texttt{Ab3} \) \( \texttt{Ad7} \)

Note that the presence of the bishops on the board in some respects suits Black, as he does not have to
worry about a c3-c4 option (his rook is protected). On the other hand, Black’s bishop is very passive.

29 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{e}2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{f8}}} \)
30 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{e}3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{e7}}} \)
31 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{b}4}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{d6}}} \)
32 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{d}4}} \) b5?!

A serious commitment. The text weakens the c5-square and creates a potential target for White’s attack. More careful would be 32...\( \text{\texttt{\textsf{c}6}} \), although even then White can eventually force ...b5 by playing 33 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{d}1}} \) with a subsequent \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{f}3}} \), when Black would have to play ...b5 in order to stop the threatened c3-c4.

33 a4 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{b}7}} \)
34 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{d}1}} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{d}7}} \)
35 axb5 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{b}5}} \)

After 35...axb5 36 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{e}2}} \) White might be able to utilise the open a-file after a further \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{b}4}} \)-b3-a3.

36 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{xb}5}} \) axb5 (\( D \))

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{W} \\
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\texttt{\textsf{f}3}} \text{\texttt{\textsf{e}6}} \text{\texttt{a}6} \text{\texttt{a}4} \text{\texttt{\textsf{f}3}} \text{\texttt{c}5} \text{\texttt{c}3} \\
\text{\texttt{\textsf{d}4}} \text{\texttt{\textsf{d}4}} \text{\texttt{\textsf{b}5}} \end{array}
\end{array} \]

So, the rooks have come off and we have a pure bishop ending now. The b5-pawn is weak, but as our analysis will show, here White’s advantage is not enough for a win.

38 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{f}3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{e}6} \) 39 h4 f6 40 g3 g5 41 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{e}2}} \) \( \text{\texttt{d}7} \) 42 \( \text{\texttt{h}5} \) \( \text{\texttt{h}3} \) 43 b3 \( \text{\texttt{d}7} \) 44 \( \text{\texttt{f}7} \) \( \text{\texttt{c}6} \) 45 f4 gxh4 46 gxh4 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{b}7}} \) 47 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{h}5}} \) \( \text{\texttt{c}6} \) 48 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{f}3}} \) \( \text{\texttt{a}8} \) 49 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{c}4}} \) (\( D \))

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{B} \\
\begin{array}{c}
\text{\texttt{\textsf{f}3}} \text{\texttt{\textsf{c}6}} \text{\texttt{\textsf{h}4}} \text{\texttt{\textsf{f}6}} \text{\texttt{\textsf{g}5}} \text{\texttt{g}3} \text{\texttt{g}6} \\
\text{\texttt{\textsf{d}4}} \text{\texttt{\textsf{d}4}} \text{\texttt{b}5} \end{array}
\end{array} \]

The last dozen moves needed no comment. White has squeezed the maximum out of his position and now he wins a pawn, but can he win the game?

49 ... dxc4??

This move is hard to explain, as it loses without any resistance. After the logical continuation 49...bxc4 50 bxc4 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{b}7}} \) 51 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{x}d}5} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{c}8}} \) 52 c5+ \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{c}7}} \) we reach a position where Black is able to hold out for a draw. The only line which Black needs to avoid is 50...\( \text{\texttt{\textsf{c}6}} \) 51 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{x}d}5} \) \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{d}7}} \) (51...\( \text{\texttt{\textsf{e}8}} \)), as then White is able to use the position of Black’s bishop on d7 by playing 52 c5+ \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{c}7}} \) 53 c6! \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{g}4}} \) 54 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{c}5}} \). Then White wins, eventually entering the e6- or f5- squares with his king.

Once again, as I discovered afterwards, this analysis is in agreement with the conclusions of Beliaevsky and Mikhachishin in their book.

50 \( \text{\texttt{\textsf{xa}8}} \) cxb3
51  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{e}4}} \text{b2} \)
52  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{h}5} \text{b4}} \)
53  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{c}4} 1-0}} \)

Now let us see how the isolani fares in the endings where one side has a rook and bishop, while the other has a rook and knight. Here is an example of how the isolani can be attacked by a bishop:

Uhlmann - Rogulj
Bucharest 1979

Here White has two targets to attack — the first is the isolated d5-pawn itself and the other one is the a7-pawn. Defending that pawn, Black’s rook remains passive and he cannot create any counterplay. Now White needs to find a plan that improves his position even further. The only area where White can strengthen his position is the kingside and GM Uhlmann begins to play there:

32  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{d}1}} \)

First of all, the bishop is moved to a better position. When Black brings his king to e6, White’s bishop will pin the d-pawn from b3. Secondly, if the isolated d5-pawn later goes, the bishop will have another target to attack — the f7-pawn. Meanwhile the f3-square is being vacated for White’s king. It’s really hard to expect more from one move!

32  ...  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{d}7}} \)
33  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{b}3}} \text{e7}} \)
34  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{f}4}} \text{c7}} \)
35  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{f}3}} \text{e6}} \)
36  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{g}4}} \)

Now it is time to advance White’s pawns on the kingside, chasing away Black’s knight — the main defender of the d5-pawn. Black is absolutely helpless against this plan.

The conclusion of the game was:

36...hxg4+ 37 hxg4 \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{e}7}} \text{38 g5 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{e}4}}}} \)
39  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{a}x}d5 \text{d}6} \text{40 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{a}6}} \text{f}5} \text{41 e}4 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{d}6} \text{42 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{g}4}} \text{c}8} \text{43 f}5 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{b}6}}}}}} \)
(White also wins after 43... gxf5+ 44 exf5 \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{b}6}} \text{45 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{b}3}} \text{d}6} \text{46 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{f}4}}}} \text{44 \text{f}6+ \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{d}6} \text{45 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{f}4}} \text{c}5} \text{46 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{b}3}}}}}}}} \)
(White prefers to finish the game by tactical means) 46... \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{b}5}} \text{47 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{a}xb}6}}+ \text{axb}6 \text{48 e}5 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{c}6} \text{49 \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{a}x}f}7}} \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{a}x}f7} \text{50 e}6}} \text{(The white pawn armada is victorious) 50...\text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{h}7}} \text{51 f}7 1-0}} \)

That endgame is a model of how to exploit the weakness of the isolated pawn in this type of ending.

When the bishop itself cannot attack the isolated pawn, as in the diagram at the top of the next page, the side playing against it may still take advantage of its presence by creating a second weakness.

27  \( \text{\textcolor{red}{\text{\textbf{g}4}} \)

White grabs space on the kingside and prepares to expand there, hoping to activate his bishop. As Black’s
rooks are tied down to the isolated d-pawn, it’s not easy for him to deal with this plan.

27 ... \(\mathcal{W}f7\)
28 \(\mathcal{W}e2\) \(\mathcal{W}e6\)
29 \(f4\) \(f5?!\)

This move increases the scope of White’s bishop. Black had to adopt a more modest approach — 29...\(g6\), although even then White has better chances after 30 \(\mathcal{f}f3\).

30 \(gxf5+\) \(\mathcal{xf}5\)
31 \(\mathcal{f}f3\) \(\mathcal{e}6\)
32 \(h4!\) \(\mathcal{f}8\)
33 \(\mathcal{g}4\) \(g6?\)

Black neglects White’s threat and gets punished for doing this.

34 \(e4!\) \(h5+?\)

Black has panicked. He had to play 34...\(\mathcal{f}d8\), even though after 35 \(exd5+!\) (much worse is 35 \(f5+\) \(gxf5+\) 36 \(exf5+\) \(\mathcal{f}f7\) and the \(d5\)-pawn is not only safe, but is ready to move forward) 35...\(\mathcal{xd}5\) 36 \(\mathcal{xd}5\) \(\mathcal{xd}5\) 37 \(\mathcal{xd}5\) \(\mathcal{xd}5\) 38 \(f5\) \(gxf5+\) 39 \(\mathcal{xf}5\) the resulting endgame is very difficult for Black. For example: 39...

\(\mathcal{e}7+\) 40 \(\mathcal{f}6\) \(\mathcal{g}6\) 41 \(h5\) \(\mathcal{f}4\) 42 \(\mathcal{g}5!\).

Here White could go wrong, as after 42 \(h6?\) \(\mathcal{d}3\) 43 \(\mathcal{g}7\) \(\mathcal{e}6\) 44 \(\mathcal{xh}7\) \(\mathcal{f}7\) it’s a draw, since White’s king cannot get out from \(h7\).

Therefore White must keep the \(h6\)-square vacant, so the king can escape after capturing the \(h7\)-pawn and let his own h-pawn go forward. I doubt that Black can save the position after 42 \(\mathcal{g}5!\). Still, Black had to take that chance.

35 \(\mathcal{g}5\)

Now the fight is over: 35...\(d4\) 36 \(\mathcal{xd}4\) \(\mathcal{d}8\) 37 \(\mathcal{g}7\) \(\mathcal{f}7+\) 38 \(\mathcal{xg}6\) \(\mathcal{h}8\) 39 \(\mathcal{h}6\) \(\mathcal{f}7+\) 40 \(\mathcal{xh}5\) 1–0.

In the two examples analysed above, we saw situations where the possessor of the isolani had a knight vs. a bishop. We may guess that those positions where the isolani is protected by a bishop, while his opponent has a knight, are even more difficult for the possessor of such a pawn.

Let us start with a fairly well known endgame.

\(B\)

Averbakh - Keres
18\textsuperscript{th} USSR Ch, Moscow 1950
This is a classic example of such endings. Black’s winning chances are
great in practical play. Chess analysis is one thing, but defending a dif-
ficult position where your opponent can try various plans is another!

27 ... f6
Black prepares to centralise his king.
28 f1 f7
29 a5 b6
30 c3 d8
31 b2 d6
32 g4!
This is logical, as reducing the
number of pawns generally suits the
defending side.

32 ... hxg4
33 hxg4 e6?
Various annotators, including
Keres himself, criticised this move. I
would like to quote from the book
Paul Keres: The Quest for Perfection
(Batsford, 1997):

"This attempt to free a way for his
king to d5 by a rook exchange is not
the happiest of plans. In the first place
he cannot clear a path for his king to
reach the desirable post on d5 and in
the second place any further exchange
merely relieves the pressure on
White's position. Despite the fact that
the ending, for example after 34 xe6
e xe6 35 e2 d5 36 d3 f4+ 37 e3 e6 (D)

![Diagram]

I spent a few hours analysing this
position and did not find any convinc-
ing way for Black to increase his ad-
vantage. White holds this position by
putting his bishop on c3 and moving
his king between e3 and d3."
34 ... \( \text{De}7 \)
35 \( \text{Cc}1 \) \( \text{Dd}5 \)
36 \( \text{Cd}2 \) \( \text{Dd}6 \)
37 \( \text{Ce}2 \) \( \text{Dd}8 \)
38 \( \text{Cf}2 \) \( \text{Dc}7 \)
39 a4

This weakening move is forced, as White has to prevent 39...\( \text{Db}5 \).
39 ... \( \text{De}6 \)
40 \( \text{Ce}3 \) \( \text{Dd}5 \) (D)

41 \( \text{Cg}3 \)

After 41 \( \text{Ce}2 \) Keres was going to play 41...\( \text{Ce}7 \) with a further ...\( \text{Cd}7 \), ...b6, ...a6 and, at the appropriate moment, ...b5. He wrote: “It seems unlikely that White could have successfully defended himself against this plan, even if he had played entirely passively.”

Yet another valuable comment from a great master. We should note that Keres wants to start actions on the queenside only after a good preparation. The immediate 41...b5?! 42 a5 b4?! would allow White counterplay after 43 a6. For example: 43...\( \text{Cc}7 \) 44 \( \text{Dd}3 \) \( \text{Dxa}6 \) 45 \( \text{Cc}4 \) or 43...\( \text{Da}5 \) 44 d5 cxd5 45 \( \text{Dxb}4 \).

41 ... \( \text{Ce}7 \)

Keres wrote that he did not like the immediate 41...b5 because of the following pawn sacrifice: 42 \( \text{Df}2 \) bxa4 43 bxa4 \( \text{Da}5 \) 44 d5 cxd5 45 \( \text{Dg}4 \) and White’s pieces get active. Therefore, Black wants to move his king to d7 prior to starting any action on the queenside.

42 g5?

Black’s patience has paid off, as White, disliking passive defence, commits an error.

42 ... f5!

This is much better than 42...fxg5 43 \( \text{Dg}4 \) where White gets some activity in compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

43 \( \text{De}5 \) \( \text{Dd}6 \)
44 \( \text{Dxd}5+ \) \( \text{Dxd}5 \)
45 g6!

Obviously such a strong player as GM Averbakh had some reason for playing 42 g5? and the text is such a reason — White fixes the g7-pawn which can become a target for his bishop. The text also sets a trap.

45 ... a5!

White’s clever plan becomes apparent if Black takes the d-pawn — 45...\( \text{Dxd}4 \) 46 \( \text{Dxd}4 \) \( \text{Dxd}4 \) 47 \( \text{Df}4 \). Suddenly, the position arising after 47...b5! 48 axb5 cxb5 49 b4! \( \text{Dc}4 \) 50 \( \text{Df}5 \) \( \text{Dxb}4 \) 51 f4! offers Black few winning chances, for example: 51...\( \text{Cc}3 \) 52 \( \text{Dg}5 \)! b4 53 f5 b3 54 f6 gxf6+ 55 \( \text{Dxf}6 \) b2 56 g7 b1\( \text{D} \) 57 g8\( \text{D} \) and White has great drawing chances in this ending. If 51...\( \text{Cc}5 \) 52 \( \text{Df}6 \) b4 53 f5 b3 54 f6 gxf6 55 g7 b2 56 g8\( \text{D} \) b1\( \text{D} \) 57 c8\( \text{D} \) draw-
ing, while even worse is 51...a5 52 \( \textsf{\texttt{e}4!} \) a4? 53 \( \textsf{\texttt{d}3!!} \).

Keres mentioned that he had not seen all these lines, but simply made a move which improved his position further. Yet another valuable endgame lesson!

46 \( \textsf{\texttt{h}4} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{d}x\texttt{d}4} \)

Much easier would be 46...b5!, improving Black’s position and not giving White any counterplay.

47 \( \textsf{\texttt{h}6}! \) \( \textsf{\texttt{e}6} \)

48 \( \textsf{\texttt{e}3} \) c5

49 \( \textsf{\texttt{h}5} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{e}5}?! \)

Easier would be 49...c4 50 bxc4+ \( \textsf{\texttt{x}c}4 \) 51 \( \textsf{\texttt{x}b}6 \) \( \textsf{\texttt{b}4} \), winning.

50 \( \textsf{\texttt{c}1} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{d}4} \)

Better was 50...\( \textsf{\texttt{d}5}! \) 51 \( \textsf{\texttt{b}2} \) c4 52 bxc4+ \( \textsf{\texttt{x}c}4 \) 53 \( \textsf{\texttt{x}g}7 \) \( \textsf{\texttt{x}g}7+ \) 54 \( \textsf{\texttt{g}5} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{e}8}! \) 55 \( \textsf{\texttt{x}f}5 \) \( \textsf{\texttt{d}5}–+ \).

Now the game ended 51 \( \textsf{\texttt{h}6} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{f}6}?! \) 52 \( \textsf{\texttt{g}5}+ \) \( \textsf{\texttt{e}6} \) 53 \( \textsf{\texttt{h}6}? \) (53 \( \textsf{\texttt{d}8}! \) was better, although after 53...\( \textsf{\texttt{d}7}! \) Black is still winning) 53...\( \textsf{\texttt{x}h}6 \) 54 \( \textsf{\texttt{h}x\texttt{h}6} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{c}6}! \) 55 g7 \( \textsf{\texttt{e}7} \) 56 \( \textsf{\texttt{h}7} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{f}7} \) 57 \( \textsf{\texttt{h}6} \) \( \textsf{\texttt{g}8} \) 58 f4 \( \textsf{\texttt{f}7} \) 0–1.

In this example we had a pure case of the weakness of the isolani, since it was White’s only weakness, while Black’s pawn formation was perfect.

Situations where both players have pawn weaknesses apart from the isolani occur more often in practice. In such cases, the side playing against the isolani may need to find other objects to attack, rather than the isolated d-pawn itself.

I hope that the following game will illustrate this idea.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Pupols - Baburin}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{Los Angeles Open, 1997}
\end{center}

Here we have a more complex situation than our previous example — both sides have weak pawns. The isolated d-pawn is not particularly weak here, but White’s pawns on the queenside are potentially vulnerable. On the other hand, Black’s pawn formation is not perfect either, as his pawns on c6 and a5 need attention and tie Black’s rooks down.

During the game I planned to move my king to d7, freeing at least one rook. But when you think of this plan or rather its goal, then a very important question arises — where should that rook be used? Once this problem is considered, the following move is not too difficult to find:

28 ... \( \textsf{\texttt{g}5}! \)

Black fixes the h3-pawn, planning eventually to play ...\( \textsf{\texttt{h}5} \), ...\( \textsf{\texttt{h}8} \) and ...\( \textsf{\texttt{h}4} \), attacking White’s kingside pawns. If then White allows ...\( \textsf{\texttt{x}g}3 \), he might (after \( \textsf{\texttt{f}xg}3 \)) have problems with the weak e3-square. If instead, he meets ...\( \textsf{\texttt{h}4} \) by \( \textsf{\texttt{g}3-g}4 \), then the \( \textsf{\texttt{f}4-} \)
square falls into the black knight’s possession. In the latter case, Black might be able to transfer his rook to b3, attacking the h3-pawn. In practical play White’s defensive task here is quite difficult.

29 \( \text{c5} \) \( h5 \)
30 \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{aa8} \)
31 \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{a7} \)
32 \( \text{ce2} \) \( \text{b7} \)
33 \( \text{a3} \)

White is better off keeping the b-pawn, as the position arising after 33 \( \text{xe6?!} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 34 \( \text{e6} \) \( \text{xe2} \) 35 \( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{d8} \) 36 \( \text{c5} \) \( \text{b8} \) would be very difficult for him.

33 ... \( \text{e8} \)
34 \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{b6} \)

Black still has to defend his weaknesses, but the moment when he will start kingside play is approaching.

35 \( \text{e4?!} \)

This move plays into Black’s hands. Yet, Black again stands better after 35 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{a6} \) 36 \( \text{ec2} \) \( \text{c8} \), where Black is ready to move his king to d7, followed by ...\( \text{h8} \) and ...h4. Also, ‘wait-and-see tactics’ — 35 \( \text{ec2} \) \( \text{c8} \) 36 \( \text{e2} \) — would allow Black to go ahead with his plan by playing 36...h4.

35 ... \( \text{h4!} \)
36 gxh4 \( f5 \)
37 \( \text{e2} \) gxh4

Compared to the previous diagram, Black has made significant progress — White’s h3-pawn is really weak now, while the scope of Black’s knight has been greatly extended.

38 \( \text{ec2} \) \( \text{b3} \)
39 \( \text{xc6} \) \( \text{xc6} \)
40 \( \text{d6} \) \( \text{g8} \)

Black’s h-pawn may become quite dangerous, while White’s pawn majority on the queenside is not valid. Besides, White’s king might come under attack.

41 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{b3} \)

The immediate 41...f4 was also worth considering.

42 \( \text{a6} \) \( f4! \)
43 \( \text{cc6} \)

The danger which White faces becomes apparent in the following line: 43 \( \text{a7+} \) \( \text{g6} \) 44 \( \text{c6?!} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 45 \( \text{xe6+} \) \( \text{f5} \) 46 \( \text{c6} \) \( \text{e4+} \).

The game ended: 43...\( \text{xb2} \) 44 \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{f3+} \) 45 \( \text{xf6}+ \) \( \text{xf6} \) 46 \( \text{xf6+} \) \( \text{e7} \) 47 \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{e6} \) 48 \( \text{c7} \) \( \text{g5} \) 49 \( \text{e3+} \) \( \text{d7} \) 50 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{a2} \) 51 \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{xa4} \) 52 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{a1+} \) 53 \( \text{f2} \) \( \text{a2+} \) 54 \( \text{f1} \) \( \text{gg2} \) 55 \( \text{hxh4} \) \( \text{gc2} \) 56 \( \text{h7+} \) \( \text{e8} \) 0–1.

With this example I would like to finish the theme ‘The isolated d-pawn in the endgame’. I tried to make this chapter a sort of encyclopaedia of endings with the isolani.
Of course, the isolated d-pawn is not always a handicap in the ending — for example we may recall the game Andersson-Tal (page 94), where the possessor of the isolani had the upper hand in the endgame. Yet in general, the isolated d-pawn in the endgame is liable to cause trouble to its possessor. How much trouble it may bring greatly depends on the nature of the pieces present on the board, as the endings which we examined showed.

**Summary**

- Pure pawn endings with the isolated d-pawn are usually defensible, provided that its possessor does not have a second weakness to defend;
- The same principle applies to endings with same-colour bishops;
- Knight endings are probably least dangerous for the side with the isolani;
- Adding rooks generally makes the defence more difficult for the possessor of the isolani, as, with a rook, his opponent has more chances to generate a second target. Thus, playing against the isolated d-pawn in the endgame, we should think twice before offering to trade off rooks or accepting such a trade;
- The possessor of the isolani usually suffers a lot when he has a bishop, limited by the isolani itself, vs. a knight. In such cases the defender must make sure the bishop does not become completely passive, being blocked by his own pawns.

As a general rule, we may say that the side playing against the isolated d-pawn can rarely win using just the weakness of that pawn — it typically requires a second target to attack as well. Whether that second target can be created or not usually decides the outcome of the battle.
9 The weak isolani in the middlegame

As we mentioned earlier, the presence of the isolated d-pawn may have the following major disadvantages:

1. Such a pawn can be weak itself — in this case the opponent may try to win it. The pieces, tied down to the defence of the isolani, may not be mobile enough to deal with other opponent’s threats, so when his opponent opens up a second front or creates a second weakness/target, the possessor of the isolani may have problems defending.

2. The square in front of the isolani may fall into the permanent possession of the opponent — in this case the opponent might obtain a nice blockading position.

Normally, the play against the isolated d-pawn is usually based on these two factors — we can either try to win the isolated pawn or to blockade it. The third possible way of playing against the isolated d-pawn is in transforming the pawn formation altogether — this method will be covered in Chapter 11. Which strategy is available and which is best depends on the concrete conditions in each particular position.

As usual, we shall examine a few positions with the isolani as a weakness in the middlegame, so we can outline some principles for playing in such situations.

**Positions With Bishops**

![Chess Diagram]

**T. Petrosian - Yudovich
USSR Cht 1966**

In this position the isolated d-pawn is rather weak and this makes Black’s pieces, particularly the bishop, quite passive. White is going to point his bishop at the pawn and bring his queen to d2, after which the threat of e3-e4, exploiting the pin along the d-file, will be difficult to deal with. Black has to prepare for this scenario.

24 ... $Ec8
Black moves his rook away, simultaneously taking control over the open c-file — this is certainly Black's best chance here. White has to combine the pressure on this pawn with neutralising Black's play on the file.

25 \( \text{\textbf{Q}}d2 \) \( g6 \)
26 \( \text{\textbf{Q}}a2 \) \( \text{\textbf{Q}}f5 \)
27 \( \text{\textbf{Q}}b3 \) \( h5 \)
28 \( \text{\textbf{Q}}h2 \) \( \text{\textbf{Q}}b1 \)

A very committal decision. I think that Black should have stuck to passive defence, playing 28...\( \text{\textbf{R}}c5 \). After that White would probably try 29 \( \text{\textbf{R}}b4!? \), weakening Black's kingside. After 29...\( b5 \) (29...\( \text{\textbf{R}}c7 \)? allows White to break in the centre with 30 e4! \( \text{\textbf{R}}e5+ \) 31 f4 \( \text{\textbf{R}}d6 \) 32 \( \text{\textbf{R}}d4 \) and White is winning a pawn) White's rook comes back — 30 \( \text{\textbf{R}}d4! \). Then White threatens to play 31 f4 with the further 32 e4. In this case the fact that Black's rook on c5 can no longer be protected by the b-pawn may play an important role.

29 \( \text{\textbf{R}}g3! \) (D)

This solution is quite typical of Petrosian — he avoids the potentially even more advantageous move 29 e4!?, which would have led to even sharper positions, for example: 29...\( \text{\textbf{R}}c1 \) 30 \( \text{\textbf{R}}g3 \) \( \text{\textbf{R}}h1 \) 31 \( \text{\textbf{R}}xd5 \) \( \text{\textbf{R}}xh3 \) 32 \( \text{\textbf{R}}g5 \) h4+ 33 \( \text{\textbf{R}}f3 \) \( \text{\textbf{R}}g7 \).

In this line White may also try 30 \( \text{\textbf{R}}d1!? \), where after the further 30...h4 31 exd5 \( \text{\textbf{R}}d7 \) 32 d6 he can expect to capitalise on his extra pawn. The text move is designed to deprive Black of any counterplay and is a good example of Petrosian's famous prophylactic technique.

29 ... \( \text{\textbf{R}}c5 \)

If Black had insisted on play on the back rank by 29...\( \text{\textbf{R}}c1 \), then, apart from the move 30 e4, White would have the additional option — 30 \( \text{\textbf{R}}a2!? \) — which leads after 30...\( \text{\textbf{R}}c2 \) 31 \( \text{\textbf{R}}xd5 \) \( \text{\textbf{R}}c7+ \) 32 f4 \( \text{\textbf{R}}c2 \) 33 \( \text{\textbf{R}}d3 \) to a position where White's advantage should be sufficient for a win.

Perhaps instead of the text move Black should have retreated his queen by 29...\( \text{\textbf{R}}f5 \), although then White would continue 30 f4, denying his opponent counter-chances.

30 \( a4 \)

The immediate attack in the centre — 30 e4! — was also worth considering. In that case White should not fear 30...\( \text{\textbf{R}}b5 \), as he can then play 31 \( \text{\textbf{R}}c3 \), winning the d-pawn.

30 ... \( a5? \)

Black had to relocate his queen by playing 30...\( \text{\textbf{R}}f5 \). By refusing to do this, Black loses more quickly.

31 \( e4! \)

This wins the isolated d-pawn and the game: 31...\( \text{\textbf{R}}g1 \) 32 h4!? \( \text{\textbf{R}}h7 \) 33
\( \text{\#} \text{xd5 \#} \text{xd5 34 \#} \text{xd5 \#}c6 35 \#d7 \#f6 36 \#d4 1-0. \)

Having seen how Petrosian exploited the weaknesses of the isolani, let us now examine how his predecessor on the chess throne dealt with a similar strategic situation.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
W \\
\text{Botvinnik - Zagoriansky} \\
\text{Sverdlovsk 1943}
\end{array}
\]

19 \#e5!

When the knights come off, White will be able to utilise the d4-square with his major piece. The text also vacates the f3-post for the bishop.

19 ... \#xe5
20 \#xe5 \#c5
21 \#f3 b6
22 \#b2 \#c8
23 \#e5 \#cd8
24 \#d4 a5

This is the same material balance as in the game Petrosian-Yudovich. Compared to that game, here there is an extra pair of rooks on the board. From one point of view, this fact makes Black’s task of defending the isolani easier, as the threat of e3-e4 is not that dangerous here, but on the other hand the same feature reduces Black’s chances of play on the open c-file, as White’s rooks can control the entry points on it. Now White has to find a way to increase his advantage. As the attack against the isolani and its defence are in balance, White needs to find or create a second weakness in order to benefit from his more active pieces. Botvinnik came up with a great move:

25 g4!! (D)

This is truly excellent. White plans to open the g-file by playing g4-g5, after which Black’s monarch itself will be White’s second target. Black’s pieces, tied down to the weak d5-pawn, are less mobile compared to their white counterparts and therefore may not be able to save their king. The position of the black pawn on h6 helps White to create an attack.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
B \\
\text{The weak isolani in the middlegame} \text{ 141}
\end{array}
\]

The fact that the text weakens White’s king as well, does not matter here as Black’s pieces are passive and cannot use this factor. Computers probably will not be able to come up with such a move for years to come, at least I hope not!
25 ... \( \text{c6} \)
26 g5 \( \text{hxg5??} \)

Better was 26...\( \text{c2} \), bringing the queen to the kingside after 27 gxd7 \( \text{g6}+ \)
28 \( \text{h2} \), leading to a successful defence.

27 \( \text{xf5} \) f6

Here Black could again try to redeploy his queen to the kingside. White would have a pleasant edge in
the endgame arising after 27...\( \text{c2}?! \)
28 \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{h7} \)
29 \( \text{xh7}+ \)
30 \( \text{xh7} \)
31 \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{b2} \)
32 \( \text{d4} \).
This variation demonstrates how dangerous White's attack can be here.

28 \( \text{g6} \)
29 \( \text{g3} \)

In his book *Analiticheskiye i kriticheskiye raboty* ('Analytical and critical works') Botvinnik criticised
this move, yet stating that in any case after the eventual relocation of the white rook from d1 to g1, Black's problems would be insoluble.

He now won as follows: 30 \( \text{g5} \)
31 \( \text{e6} \)
32 \( \text{e5} \)
33 \( \text{g1} \)
34 \( \text{b8} \)
35 \( \text{h4} \)
36 \( \text{h8} \)
37 \( \text{g6} \)
38 \( \text{g7} \)
39 \( \text{g5} \)
40 \( \text{g6} \)
41 \( \text{h4} \)
42 \( \text{d6}+ \)
43 \( \text{e7} \)
44 \( \text{d8}+ \) 1-0.

This game is a very clear demonstration of the principle of two weaknesses, masterfully implemented
by the sixth World Champion in a situation where the second weakness was not very apparent! In the two examples which we have just seen there were not too many pieces on the board, so the positions had been fairly simplified.

Of course, it takes a lot of effort and precision to reach such positions against an opponent who opposes our plans — now let us see how the side playing against the isolated pawn should implement the strategy of simplification. Here is yet another example from the highest level — this time both players have held the world title.

![Diagram](image)

Karpov - Spassky
*Montreal 1979*

Here we may claim that White is better, since the d5-pawn lacks protection and Black’s pieces are not placed harmoniously. In order to increase his advantage, Karpov starts a simplifying operation.

16 \( \text{d5} \)!
This looks very similar to our previous example, does it not? Again we encounter pattern recognition — when an idea or a technical method, shown by one player, is implemented in a similar position by another. Here, as in the Botvinnik game, the knight move both intends simplification and frees the f3-square for White’s bishop.

16 ... \(\text{Qe6}\)

Annotating this game in his book *My 300 Best Games*, Karpov suggests here the move 16...\(\text{Qe8}\), with the further 17 \(\text{Qxc6}\) \(\text{Qxc6}\) 18 \(\text{Qb3}\) \(\text{Qd8}\) 19 \(\text{Qf3}\) \(\text{Qe4}\). However, this recommendation is an oversight, as after 16...\(\text{Qe8}\)? 17 \(\text{Qxd7}\)! \(\text{Qxd7}\) 18 \(\text{Qxd5}\)! \(\text{Qxd5}\) 19 \(\text{Qb3}\) \(\text{Qd8}\) 20 \(\text{Qf3}\) White is winning.

17 \(\text{Qxc6}\) \(\text{Qxc6}\)

Capturing with the pawn would lose the exchange — 17...\(\text{Qxc6}\)? 18 \(\text{Qa6}\).

18 \(\text{Qf3}\) \(\text{Qb6}\)

19 \(\text{Qe5!}\)

White systematically increases the pressure on the d5-pawn.

19 ... \(\text{Qe4}\)

Also after 19...\(\text{Qac8}\) 20 \(\text{Qd4}\) \(\text{Qc7}\) 21 \(\text{Qe2}\) Black would have serious problems, as the d5-pawn is in trouble in view of the threat of \(\text{Qxf6}\) and \(\text{Qxd5}\). Besides, White can improve his position further by playing \(\text{Qd2}\) and \(\text{Qfd1}\).

20 \(\text{Qe2!}\)!

Also interesting was 20 \(\text{Qd4}\) \(\text{Qc5}\), with the following rather forced line: 21 \(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qxe4}\) 22 \(\text{Qxc5}\) \(\text{Qxc5}\) 23 \(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qxb2}\) 24 \(\text{Qa4}\) \(\text{Qe5}\) 25 \(\text{Qf4}\) \(\text{Qb5}\) 26 \(\text{Qb1}\) \(\text{Qa5}\) 27 \(\text{Qxb7}\) \(\text{Qd8}\), where Black has some compensation for a pawn.

20 ... \(\text{Qxc3}\)

21 \(\text{Qxc3}\) \(\text{Qd8}\)

Obviously, not 21...\(\text{Qxa3?!}\), as after 22 \(\text{Qxg7}\) \(\text{Qxg7}\) 23 \(\text{Qxa3}\) Black would have many problems concerning the safety of his king.

22 \(\text{Qd3!}\) \(\text{Qd6}\)

23 \(\text{Qfd1}\) \(\text{Qd6}\)

24 \(\text{Qld2}\) \(\text{Qb5}\)

25 \(\text{Qd1}\)

Pay attention to White’s set-up on the d-file — the most valuable piece is the last in the line. This order is very typical for such positions.

25 ... \(\text{b6}\)

26 \(\text{g3}\)

A useful move, particularly unpleasant for the opponent who does not have any counter-play. White has a very clever plan in mind.

26 ... \(\text{Qf8}\)

27 \(\text{Qg2}\) \(\text{Qe7}\)

28 \(\text{Qh5}\) \(\text{a6}\)

29 \(\text{h3}\) \(\text{Qc6}\)

30 \(\text{Qh2}\) \(\text{a5}\)

31 \(\text{f4}\) \((D)\)
Slowly, but surely White improves his position, squeezing Black, who now has to weaken his kingside.

31 ... f6

This is forced, as 31...\textit{b}5? (with the idea to meet 32 \textit{f}5 with 32...d4) won’t do in view of 32 \textit{a}4 \textit{x}a4 33 \textit{f}5 and White wins a piece.

32 \textit{d}1 \textit{b}5
33 g4

White’s pawn storm on the kingside is very similar to Botvinnik’s plan in his game vs. Zagoriansky.

33 ... g5?!

Black finally got tired of the ‘sit and wait’ tactics but, as often happens, such a pseudo-active move makes things even worse for him.

34 \textit{h}1 \textit{c}6
35 \textit{f}5 \textit{f}7
36 \textit{e}4 (D)

This is the culmination of the siege of the d5-pawn — the pawn can no longer survive. When it goes, Black’s position falls apart as well. A great example of play against the isolani!

The end was 36...\textit{g}7 37 \textit{ex}d5 \textit{c}7 38 \textit{e}2 b5 39 \textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 40 d6 \textit{c}4 41 b3 1–0.

So far we have been looking at positions where Black’s isolated d5-pawn was protected by his light-squared bishop. Usually in such cases, this pawn is reasonably secure, although it makes the bishop rather passive.

Now I would like to show a game where Black had the isolated d5-pawn and the dark-squared bishop left on the board. This game is also quite instructive in the sense that Black (who had a rating of 2320 at the time) did not oppose White’s intentions to trade off the pieces and obtain a simplified position. As a result Black lost the strategic battle to his more experienced and higher rated (then — 2500) opponent.

**Handoko - Z. Rahman**

_Dacca 1995_

1 \textit{e}4 \textit{e}6
2 \textit{d}4 \textit{d}5
3 \textit{ex}d5 \textit{ex}d5
4 \textit{f}3 \textit{f}6

The Exchange Variation of the French Defence had the reputation of a drawish line until White came up with the idea of meeting the possible 4...\textit{d}6 with 5 c4!? dxc4 6 \textit{xc}4, thus unbalancing the position and obtaining quite promising play.

5 \textit{d}3 \textit{g}4

Black seizes the opportunity to introduce the pin first. In the game Kavalek-Korchnoi, Kettler Cup rpd 1997, Black went for the isolated d-pawn himself by playing 5...\textit{c}5. Yet,
after the further 6 dxc5 \( \text{dxc}5 \) 7 0–0 0–0 8 \( \text{g}5 \) h6 9 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 10 \( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 11 \( \text{e}1 \) White stood better in that game. Black can also try to maintain the symmetry for a while, for example: 5...\( \text{d}6 \) 6 0–0 0–0, although after the further 7 \( \text{g}5 \) h6 8 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 9 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{bd}7 \) 10 \( \text{bd}2 \) c6 11 c3 \( \text{xe}1+ \) 12 \( \text{xe}1 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 13 \( \text{e}5 \) g5 14 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 15 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 16 \( \text{f}1 \) h5 17 h3 \( \text{e}6 \) 18 \( \text{e}1 \) White had the initiative in the game Bareev-Speelman, Moscow PCA-Intel qualifier 1995.

6 0–0 \( \text{e}7 \)
7 \( \text{bd}2 \) 0–0
8 c3 \( \text{bd}7 \)
9 \( \text{c}2 \) c5?

This decision to change the pawn formation is incorrect, as the isolated d5-pawn, which appears almost inevitably after the text move, will cause Black some problems and won’t give him enough dynamic advantages. Instead of his last move, Black should have played 9...\( \text{d}6 \), establishing control over the important e5-square.

10 \( \text{f}5 \)

Instead of this, I would have preferred 10 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 11 \( \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{xd}7 \) 12 dxc5 \( \text{dxc}5 \) 13 \( \text{b}3 \), where White has a clear edge.

10 ... \( \text{xd}4 \)
11 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{d}6 \)
12 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{e}5 \)?

Black does not appreciate the fact that with fewer pieces on the board, the static weaknesses of the isolani may become more apparent and thus he plays into White’s hands.

13 \( \text{xg}4 \) \( \text{fxg}4 \)
14 h3 \( \text{xf}3+ \)
15 \( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{e}5 \)
16 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \)
17 \( \text{e}3 \) (D)

Black’s strange desire to exchange pieces while possessing the isolani has led to a situation, which is very unpleasant for him — the isolated d5-pawn will soon require protection, while here it does not offer Black any dynamic compensation.

17 ... \( \text{a}5 \)
18 \( \text{fd}1 \) \( \text{fd}8 \)
19 \( \text{d}4! \)

On the other hand, White has no reason to avoid exchanges — he will either get the d4-square for his bishop or will trade the bishops off. The latter case is hardly acceptable for Black, as then White might triple his pieces on the d-file and play c3-c4 at the appropriate moment. So Black’s bishop must retreat.

19 ... \( \text{d}6 \)
20 \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{c}7 \)
21 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
22 \( \text{g}5! \)
A very good decision. In general, exchanging queens would be in White’s favour, but he wants to use his most powerful piece to weaken Black’s position further. Trading off the queens immediately — 22 \( \text{W}x\text{d7} \text{Xxd7} \) — would ease Black’s defence, as after 23 \( \text{Q}a\text{d1} b5 24 \text{Q}e3 \text{Qad8} \) Black can defend the isolani with both his rooks — something he was not able to do in the game.

22 ... \( f5 \)

Sooner or later this weakening move would be forced.

23 \( \text{Q}a\text{d1} \) \( h6 \)
24 \( \text{W}h5 \) \( \text{W}e6 \)
25 \( \text{Q}e3 \) \( \text{W}e5 \)

Also after 25...\( \text{Q}c7 \) 26 \( \text{W}f3 \) Black can no longer save the d-pawn. Then he has to play 26...\( \text{W}e4 27 \text{X}d5 \text{Xxd5} 28 \text{X}d5 \text{W}b1+ 29 \text{Q}d1 \text{W}xb2, \) but after the further 30 \( \text{Q}xh6! \) Black’s position collapses, e.g. 30...\( \text{Q}xh6 31 \text{W}d5+ \text{Q}h8 32 \text{W}d4+ \text{Q}g8 33 \text{W}c4+ \) and White is winning.

26 \( g3 \)

There was no objective need for such caution, as White wins after 26 \( \text{X}d5 \text{W}h2+ 27 \text{Q}f1 \text{f4} 28 \text{X}d6 \text{X}d6 29 \text{X}d6 \text{f}xe3 30 \text{W}d5+ \text{Q}h8 31 \text{Q}d8+ \text{Q}xh8 32 \text{W}d8+ \text{Q}h7 33 \text{W}d3+ \text{Q}h8 34 \text{f}xe3. \) But the text move does not spoil anything either.

26 ... \( \text{Q}e7 \)
27 \( \text{Q}d4 \) \( \text{W}e6 \)
28 \( \text{Q}e3 \) \( \text{W}f7 \)
29 \( \text{W}f7+ \) \( \text{Q}x\text{f7} \)
30 \( \text{Q}e5 \)

The text is even better than 30 \( \text{Q}xg7 \text{Q}g5 31 \text{f}4 \text{Q}xg7 32 \text{fx}g5 \text{hx}g5 33 \text{Q}e5, \) which should be also winning for White.

30 ... \( g6 \)
31 \( \text{Q}e3 (D) \)

Finally the isolated pawn falls and White achieves a decisive advantage.

The rest of the game is not of great interest to our theme: 31...\( \text{Q}f6 \) 32 \( \text{Q}x\text{d5} \text{X}xd5 33 \text{Q}x\text{d5} \text{Q}e6 \) 34 \( \text{b}5 \) \( b6 \) 35 \( \text{Q}xh6 \) \( \text{Q}h8 \) 36 \( \text{Q}e3 \) \( \text{Q}xh3 \) 37 \( a4 \) \( \text{Q}d8 \) 38 \( c4 \) \( \text{Q}h7 \) 39 \( c5 \) 40 \( \text{a}6 \) \( \text{Q}b3 \) \( bxc5 \) 41 \( \text{Q}xc5 \) \( g5 \) 42 \( \text{Q}b8 \) \( \text{Q}d7 \) 43 \( b4 \) \( f4 \) 44 \( \text{gxf4} \) \( \text{gxf4} \) 45 \( \text{Q}g2 \) \( \text{Q}f5 \) 46 \( \text{Q}f3 \) \( \text{Q}d3+ \) 47 \( \text{Q}e2 \) \( \text{Q}d5 \) 48 \( \text{Q}c8 \) \( \text{Q}g4 \) 49 \( \text{Q}c6 \) \( \text{Q}g5 \) 50 \( \text{Q}f+ \) \( \text{Q}g3 \) 51 \( \text{Q}xh6 \) \( \text{Q}f8+ \) 52 \( \text{Q}d3 \) \( \text{Q}xh3 \) 53 \( \text{Q}g6 \)

\( \text{Q}g4 \) 54 \( \text{Q}d4 \) \( \text{Q}f5 \) 55 \( b5 \) \( f3 \) 56 \( b6 \) \( \text{Q}d5 \) 57 \( b7 \) \( \text{Q}x\text{d4} \) 58 \( \text{Q}xd4 \) \( f2 \) 59 \( b8 \) \( \text{Q}f1 \) 60 \( \text{Q}xg5+ \) \( \text{Q}xg5 \) 61 \( \text{b}5+ \) 1-0.

**Opposite Coloured Bishops**

Now I would like to examine the situation with opposite-coloured bishops on the board. Of course, there are not many positions which would suit our topic (the isolated d-pawn as a weakness in the middlegame), but the
The weak isolani in the middlegame

following game seems to be a perfect match.

Here the isolated d4-pawn itself is not weak, since it is well guarded by White's bishop. But the difference in the activity of the bishops and Black's superiority on the only open file makes Black's advantage quite significant.

Granda - E. Torre
Thessaloniki OL 1988

24 ... \( \text{d}3 \)
25 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{a}6! \)

This is better than 25...\( \text{xd}2 \) 26 \( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{e}2 \), as in that line after the further 27 \( \text{g}3 \) a5 28 \( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 29 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 30 \( \text{f}4 \) Black's advantage is very hard to convert into a full point. The text move prepares an invasion into the second rank, forcing White's reply.

26 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \)
27 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{b}5! \)

Black is planning to advance his a-pawn to a4, which would weaken White's pawns on the queenside.

28 \( \text{g}1 \) a5

29 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{e}3 \)

This little demonstration on the open file is quite harmless, but of course it does not spoil anything — Black is still looking for a way to improve his position.

30 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{e}8 \)
31 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{a}6!? \)

Now Black has found such a way! He wants to play ...b5 and than possibly ...a4, either creating a weakness on b3 or getting access to the c4-square.

32 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{e}6 \)
33 \( \text{f}1 \) b5
34 \( \text{e}2 \)

Also after 34 \( \text{d}1 \) b4 35 \( \text{b}2 \) f6 Black is better, as he has limited White's bishop further and can later go for ...a4. White's decision to trade off the rooks certainly looks logical.

34 ... a4
35 \( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \)
36 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{a}8! \)

A good prophylactic move, whereas the hasty 36...\( \text{xb}3?? \) 37 \( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{xb}3?? \) would lead only to a draw after 38 \( \text{e}8+ \) \( \text{h}7 \) 39 \( \text{e}4+. \) Then Black's try to avoid the perpetual check by playing 39...\( \text{g}6? \) would only be risky for him in view of 40 d5!.

37 \( \text{e}5 \)

Here sacrificing the d-pawn won't solve all White's problems, as after 37 d5 \( \text{xd}5 \) 38 bxa4 (after 38 \( \text{g}3?? \) \( \text{f}8 \) Black threatens both 39...\( \text{c}5+ \) and 39...\( \text{xb}3 \)) 38...\( \text{xa}4 \) 39 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{a}7+ \) 40 \( \text{h}2 \) f6 41 \( \text{xf}6 \) \( \text{xa}2 \) Black should eventually win.

37 ... \( \text{d}5 (D) \)
Restoring the blockade on d5, Black deprives his opponent of a chance to activate his bishop by sacrificing the ill-fated d-pawn.

38 \( \text{Wh}2?! \)

Perhaps White should have preferred 38 b4, although even then after 38...f6 39 \( \text{We}2 \) a3 Black would have very good chances of success.

38 ... \( \text{axb}3 \)
39 \( \text{axb}3 \) \( \text{Wa}3 \)
40 \( \text{Ad}2 \) \( \text{Wxb}3 \)

Of course, here an extra pawn does not automatically guarantee Black a win, because of the presence of the opposite coloured bishops. Yet, with correct play Black should be able to succeed, since his bishop is much more active than his opponent's.

The end was: 41 \( \text{Wg}3 \) \( \text{Wc}2 \) 42 \( \text{Ab}4 \) \( \text{Wh}7 \) 43 \( \text{Af}8 \) f6 44 \( \text{Wc}7 \) \( \text{Wg}6+ \) 45 \( \text{Wf}2 \) \( \text{Wg}5 \) 46 \( \text{Wa}7 \) h5 47 \( \text{Ad}6 \) \( \text{Wd}2+ \) 48 \( \text{Wg}1 \) b4 49 \( \text{Af}8 \) \( \text{Wg}5 \) 50 \( \text{Wxb}4 \) \( \text{Wxf}3 \) 51 \( \text{Wa}2 \) \( \text{Wc}1+ \) 52 \( \text{Wh}2 \)

(Black should also win after 52 \( \text{Wf}2 \) \( \text{Ad}5 \) 53 \( \text{Wd}2 \) \( \text{Wh}1! \) 54 \( \text{Wd}3+ \text{g}6 \) 55 \( \text{Wg}3 \text{g}5) 52...\( \text{Wf}4+ \) 53 \( \text{Wh}1 \) \( \text{Wxd}4 \)

(Black wins easily in this queen endgame) 54 \( \text{gxg}3 \) \( \text{Wxb}4 \) 55 \( \text{Wc}2+ \) \( \text{Wh}6 \) 56 \( \text{Wxc}6 \) \( \text{We}1+ \) 57 \( \text{Wg}2 \) h4 0–1.

This game is a nice demonstration of how the blockade of the isolated d4-pawn can paralyse White’s dark-squared bishop, thus giving the blockading side a significant advantage in piece activity.

**Positions With Knights**

In the games examined above, we saw how the isolated d-pawn fares in middlegame positions with bishops on the board. Now let's see how it fares in positions with knights.

After studying several games on this theme, I can say that in such cases the isolani itself is not usually weak, but the fact that the square in front of it can become a useful base for the opponent’s knight causes the possessor of the isolated d-pawn a lot of problems. In a way, this is similar to the situation in the game Granda-Torre: the isolated pawn is not weak, but the pieces which occupy the blockading square in front of it are very annoying!

In order to illustrate this point, I would like to examine one particular opening variation, from which such middlegame positions occur quite often. That position, seen in the diagram at the top left of the facing page, arises after the following moves: 1 \( \text{Af}3 \) \( \text{Af}6 \) 2 c4 e5 3 \( \text{Ac}3 \) \( \text{Ac}6 \) 4 g3 e6 5 \( \text{Ag}2 \) d5 6 cxd5 \( \text{Ad}5 \) 7 0–0 \( \text{We}7 \) 8 d4 0–0 9 \( \text{Ad}5 \) exd5 10 dxc5 \( \text{Ax}c5 \).

This position became quite popular in the late 1970s and has been a
frequent guest in tournaments of all standards ever since. Compared to similar positions arising from the Tarrasch Defence, here one pair of knights has been exchanged, which generally should be in White’s favour. However the comparison also has some advantages for Black, as in that opening his f6-knight usually gets pinned after $\text{g5}$. White has two different strategies available here — one involves a blockade of the d5-pawn with a subsequent attack on it, while a second plan is connected with forcing Black to advance his d-pawn to d4. Then White tries to utilise the d3-square with his knight. Black’s chances are related to the pressure on the e-file, particularly if his pawn goes to d4.

White has tried many moves in the above position. One attempt to seize the initiative goes $11 \text{c2} \text{b6} 12 \text{g5} g6 13 \text{d2}$. The following is quite instructive: $13...\text{d4} 14 \text{f3} \text{xf3+} 15 \text{xf3} \text{e6} 16 \text{d1} \text{f6} 17 \text{f4} \text{xf4} 18 \text{xf4} \text{ad8} (D)$

In this interesting endgame White has the better prospects, due to the permanent weakness of the isolated d-pawn. For example, $19 \text{a4!?} f6 20 a5 \text{c5} 21 \text{ac1} b6 22 \text{xb6} axb6 23 b4!? \text{xb4} 24 \text{c6} \text{fe8} 25 \text{xb6} \text{c3} 26 h4! h5 27 \text{b7} \text{e5} 28 \text{h6} \text{f7} 29 \text{g2} d4 30 \text{c6} \text{e6} 31 \text{b5} \text{ed6} 32 \text{xf7} \text{xf7} 33 \text{f4} d3 34 \text{fxe5} \text{dxe2} 35 \text{e1} \text{xe5} 36 \text{c4+} \text{e8} 37 \text{xe2} \text{b8} 38 \text{xe5+} \text{d7} 39 \text{b5+} and Black resigned in the game Panchenko-I.Farago, Sochi 1980.

As I am looking at this line just for the sake of our general theme, and not pretending to cover the opening theory, I should like to mention only that for some reason the idea with $11 \text{c2}$ and $12 \text{g5} has lost its popularity. That move, as well as some other White’s tries on move 11, has been largely replaced by $11 \text{g5}$ which we will examine here.

This move has been known for a long time, but its current popularity is largely due to the excellent results achieved with it by grandmaster Bent Larsen. Yet, our first example is from the practice of Vladimir Kramnik, in whose opening repertoire this move also takes a considerable place.
Kramnik - Kengis
Tal Memorial, Riga 1995

(1 \text{\textit{D}} f3 \text{\textit{D}} f6 2 c4 c5 3 \text{\textit{D}} c3 \text{\textit{D}} c6 4 g3 e6 5 \text{\textit{L}} g2 d5 6 cxd5 \text{\textit{L}} xd5 7 0-0 \text{\textit{L}} e7 8 d4 0-0 9 \text{\textit{L}} xd5 exd5 10 dxc5 \text{\textit{L}} xc5)

11 \text{\textit{L}} g5 (D)

11 ... f6

It seems that the more cautious move 11...\text{\textit{W}} d7 might be preferable here.

12 \text{\textit{L}} d2

Also interesting is 12 \text{\textit{L}} c1 \text{\textit{L}} b6 13 \text{\textit{L}} d2 \text{\textit{L}} g4 14 \text{\textit{W}} b3 \text{\textit{L}} h8 15 e3. Then in the game Portisch-Keres, San Antonio 1972, Black got rid of the isolated d-pawn by playing 15...d4 16 exd4 \text{\textit{L}} xf3 17 \text{\textit{W}} xf3 \text{\textit{L}} xd4. However, that did not solve all of his problems and after the further 18 \text{\textit{W}} h5 \text{\textit{W}} d7 19 \text{\textit{L}} c1 \text{\textit{L}} e8?! 20 \text{\textit{L}} xb7 \text{\textit{L}} xe1?! 21 \text{\textit{L}} xa8 \text{\textit{L}} e2+ 22 \text{\textit{L}} g2 \text{\textit{L}} xg3 23 hxg3 \text{\textit{W}} xd2 24 \text{\textit{W}} f7 h6 25 \text{\textit{L}} d5 White achieved a decisive advantage and went to win the game.

12 ... \text{\textit{L}} f5

Also after 12...\text{\textit{L}} e6 13 e3 \text{\textit{W}} b6 14 \text{\textit{L}} c1 d4 15 exd4 \text{\textit{L}} xd4 16 b4 \text{\textit{L}} xf3+ 17 \text{\textit{W}} xf3 \text{\textit{L}} d6 18 a3 \text{\textit{L}} f7 19 \text{\textit{W}} d3 \text{\textit{L}} f8 20 \text{\textit{L}} e3 \text{\textit{W}} d6 21 \text{\textit{W}} b5 White stood better in the game Chernin-Dlugy, Tunis 1985, as his bishops were much more active than their black counterparts. Another try for Black here is 12...d4, but White obtained an advantage in the game Makarov-Dvoiry, Russia Ch 1989, by 13 b4! \text{\textit{L}} b6 14 a4 a5 15 b5. After the further 15...\text{\textit{L}} e5 16 \text{\textit{W}} b3+ \text{\textit{L}} h8 17 e3 \text{\textit{L}} h3 18 exd4 \text{\textit{L}} xg2 19 \text{\textit{L}} xg2 \text{\textit{L}} xf3 20 \text{\textit{W}} xf3 \text{\textit{L}} xd4 21 \text{\textit{L}} ac1 \text{\textit{L}} f7 22 \text{\textit{L}} fd1 \text{\textit{L}} d7 23 \text{\textit{W}} g4 \text{\textit{W}} d5 24 \text{\textit{L}} xa5! b6 25 \text{\textit{L}} b4 f5 26 \text{\textit{W}} f4 h6 27 \text{\textit{L}} e7! his advantage became decisive.

13 \text{\textit{W}} b3 \text{\textit{L}} b6

14 \text{\textit{L}} e3?! \text{\textit{L}} a5

After 14...\text{\textit{L}} xe3 15 \text{\textit{W}} xe3 d4 16 \text{\textit{W}} f4 White would attack the d4-pawn by \text{\textit{L}} fd1, \text{\textit{L}} d2 and \text{\textit{L}} ad1, when Black's knight can be eventually disturbed by playing b2-b4 at some point. The variation 15...\text{\textit{L}} e8 16 \text{\textit{L}} d2 d4 seems to be more acceptable for Black, but White can play better — 16 \text{\textit{W}} b3! \text{\textit{L}} a5 17 \text{\textit{W}} b5 a6 18 \text{\textit{L}} b4 \text{\textit{L}} e4 19 \text{\textit{L}} ac1 \text{\textit{L}} c4 20 \text{\textit{L}} fd1, with advantage, as in Groszpeter-I.Farago, Budapest 1986. Perhaps in that game Black should have tried 16...\text{\textit{L}} xe2 17 \text{\textit{W}} xb7 \text{\textit{L}} c8, so that his d-pawn would become passed.

15 \text{\textit{W}} c3 \text{\textit{L}} xe3

Also after 15...\text{\textit{L}} e8 16 \text{\textit{L}} xb6 \text{\textit{W}} xb6 17 \text{\textit{L}} d4 White's chances are better.

16 \text{\textit{W}} xe3 \text{\textit{L}} e8

17 \text{\textit{W}} c5

Also good would be 17 \text{\textit{W}} f4, but
White wants to provoke some weakening moves from Black — a plan crowned with full success in this game.

17 ... b6?!
Perhaps Black should have preferred 17...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c8}} 18 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a3}}.

18 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b5}} a6
19 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{a4}} b5
20 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{f4}}

The raid of White's queen has been quite successful, as Black's queenside is now weaker than it used to be.

20 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e4}}
21 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{ac1}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c4}}
22 b3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e5}}
23 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d4}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xg2}}
24 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xg2}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b6}}
25 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{fd1}} (D)

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

The position is definitely in White’s favour: although the isolated pawn is not particularly weak here, it is firmly blockaded, giving White’s knight an excellent square. White is controlling the c-file and he has good chances of penetrating into Black’s camp along this road. Pay attention to the difference in the activities of the knights — while Black’s knight is practically idle, White’s is very dangerous.

25 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{ad8}}?

Black is making a serious mistake in not fighting for control over the c-file. The d5-pawn did not require protection yet, so that rook should have been employed on the open file. Thus, Black should have played 25...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ac8}}.

26 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{f5}}!? g6
27 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c2}}

White has control of the c-file and can hope to get on to the 7th rank.

27 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d7}}

After 27...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c8}}? 28 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc8}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc8}}
29 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc8}+ \textbf{f7}} 30 e3 White’s rooks would be a lot more useful than the opponent’s queen.

28 h3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{g7}}
29 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c5}}!

Counting on the fact that the ending arising after 29...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc5}} 30 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc5}} would be very unpleasant for Black, White increases his advantage further.

29 ... \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b7}}
30 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c3}} b4?!

This is yet another weakening move, which Black should have avoided.

31 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c2}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{ee7}}
32 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{dc1}} h5
33 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c8}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{b6}}
34 e3 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{d8}}?

This is a blunder, but Black’s position was already very difficult. For example, after 34...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d6}} White might play 35 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{c7}!} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc7}} 36 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc7} \textbf{xc7}}
37 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc7+ \textbf{xc7}}} 38 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{e6+ \textbf{f7}}} 39 \textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc7}}, where the isolated d5-pawn is destined to fall.
35 \textit{\texttt{De6+!}}

This blow gives White a decisive material advantage. The game ended:
35 ... \textit{\texttt{We6}} 36 \textit{\texttt{Wxd8}} \textit{\texttt{Af7}} 37 \textit{\texttt{Cc8}}
\textit{\texttt{We4+}} 38 \textit{\texttt{Gg1}} \textit{\texttt{Gg5}} 39 \textit{\texttt{Cc7}} \textit{\texttt{Gf3+}}
40 \textit{\texttt{Ff1}} \textit{\texttt{Hh2+}} 41 \textit{\texttt{De2}} 1-0.

I have mentioned that it was Larsen who popularised the line with
11 \textit{\texttt{Gg5}} and now I would like to show
some of his games played with this system:

\textbf{Larsen - Agdestein}

\textit{Gausdal Z 1985}

(1 \textit{\texttt{Gf3}} \textit{\texttt{Gf6}} 2 \textit{\texttt{c4}} \textit{\texttt{c5}} 3 \textit{\texttt{Dc3}} \textit{\texttt{Dc6}} 4
\textit{\texttt{g3}} \textit{\texttt{e6}} 5 \textit{\texttt{Gg2}} \textit{\texttt{d5}} 6 \textit{\texttt{cxd5}} \textit{\texttt{Gxd5}} 7 0-0
\textit{\texttt{Ge7}} 8 \textit{\texttt{d4}} 0-0 9 \textit{\texttt{Gxd5}} \textit{\texttt{exd5}} 10 \textit{\texttt{dxc5}}
\textit{\texttt{exc5}})

11 \textit{\texttt{Gg5}} f6

Larsen faced other moves here as well. For example, in the game
Larsen-Wells, London 1991, Black played 11...\textit{\texttt{Wd7}}, which is probably
the safest move in this position. After
the further 12 \textit{\texttt{Wd3}} h6 13 \textit{\texttt{Gd2}}
\textit{\texttt{Gd8}} 14 \textit{\texttt{Gfc1}} \textit{\texttt{We7}} 15 \textit{\texttt{a3}} \textit{\texttt{Gg4}} 16 \textit{\texttt{h3}}
\textit{\texttt{Gh5}} 17 \textit{\texttt{Gb5}} \textit{\texttt{Gb6}} 18 \textit{\texttt{a4}} \textit{\texttt{Gxf3}} 19
\textit{\texttt{Gxf3}} \textit{\texttt{Gd4}} 20 \textit{\texttt{Wd3}} \textit{\texttt{Gxf3+}} 21 \textit{\texttt{Gxf3}}
Black could have been satisfied with
his position, had he then continued
21 ... \textit{\texttt{We6}} 22 \textit{\texttt{a5}} \textit{\texttt{Gd4}} 23 \textit{\texttt{Cc7}} \textit{\texttt{Dd7}}
with rough equality. Instead of this, Black erred with 21 ... \textit{\texttt{Gac8}},
which allowed Larsen to obtain an advantage after 22 \textit{\texttt{Gxh6}}! \textit{\texttt{We6}} 23 \textit{\texttt{Gg5}}
\textit{\texttt{Gxc1+}} 24 \textit{\texttt{Gxc1}} \textit{\texttt{Ge8}} 25 a5! \textit{\texttt{Gxa5}}
26 \textit{\texttt{Ge3}} and White eventually won
that game.

One of Larsen's later opponents
employed 11...\textit{\texttt{Wb6}} and after the fur-
ther 12 \textit{\texttt{Cc1}} d4 13 \textit{\texttt{Gd2}} \textit{\texttt{Ge8}} 14 a3
\textit{\texttt{Gf8}} 15 \textit{\texttt{Cc4}} \textit{\texttt{Wb5}} 16 \textit{\texttt{Gf4}} \textit{\texttt{Gg4}} 17
\textit{\texttt{Ge1}} \textit{\texttt{Gad8}} Black solved all opening
problems in the game Larsen-L.
Hansen, Denmark Ch 1994. However,
White can improve on this line
by choosing 13 \textit{\texttt{Wc2}}, which was rec-
commended by Korchnoi, who as-
essed the position arising after the
further 13...\textit{\texttt{Gd6}} 14 \textit{\texttt{Gd2}} \textit{\texttt{Ge6}} 15
\textit{\texttt{Cc4}} as better for White.

12 \textit{\texttt{Gd2}} (D)

White plans to play e3, \textit{\texttt{Cc3}} with
a blockade of the d5-pawn. Black
may allow this or he may opt for ...d4,
but in both cases the weakness of the
e6-square might play an important
role in the future fight.

12 ...

\textbf{Ge8}

Two more examples from Lar-
sen's practice in this variation are:

a) 12...\textit{\texttt{Ge6}} 13 \textit{\texttt{e3}} d4 14 \textit{\texttt{exd4}}
\textit{\texttt{Gxd4}} 15 \textit{\texttt{Cc3}} \textit{\texttt{Gxf3+}} 16 \textit{\texttt{Gxf3}} \textit{\texttt{Wb6}}
17 \textit{\texttt{Ff1}} \textit{\texttt{Gxe3}} 18 \textit{\texttt{Wxe3}} \textit{\texttt{Wxe3}} 19
\textit{\texttt{Gxe3}} \textit{\texttt{Ff7}} 20 b3 \textit{\texttt{Gae8}}?! 21 \textit{\texttt{Gael}}
\textit{\texttt{Gd7}} (after 21...b6? 22 \textit{\texttt{Gxe6}} \textit{\texttt{Gxe6}}
23 \textit{\texttt{Gd5}} \textit{\texttt{Gfe8}} 24 f4 \textit{\texttt{g6}} 25 \textit{\texttt{g4}} \textit{\texttt{f5}}
26 \textit{\texttt{g5}} Black would be completely para-
lysed and therefore lost) 22 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text��}}d5+ \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text��}}g6 23 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xb7 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xe3 24 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xe3 and White eventually capitalised on his extra pawn in the game Larsen-Yusupov, Reykjavik 1985.

b) 12...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}f5. This move is already familiar to us from Kramnik-Kengis. After 13 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}b3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}b6 Larsen played 14 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}ad1!? (whereas Kramnik’s game saw 14 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}e3!!). After the further 14...\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}e4 15 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}c3 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}e7 16 e3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}ad8 17 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}d4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xd4 18 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xd4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xg2 19 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xg2 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}e4+ 20 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}g1 White obtained a very favourable position in the game Larsen-Bareev, Næstved open 1988. While taking on d4 would lead to long-term torture for Black, leaving White’s knight alive puts the d5-pawn in danger, as Black’s bishop cannot protect it.

We will see a very similar position in our next game, where we will analyse the idea more closely. In his game Larsen obtained a decisive advantage after the further 20...h5?! 21 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}e2! \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}c4 22 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}f4 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xb3 23 axb3 d4 24 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}e6 dxe3 25 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xd8 exf2+ 26 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xf2 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xd8 27 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xf8 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xf8 28 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}g2 and eventually scored a full point.

13 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}c1 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}b6
14 e3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}f5
15 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}c3 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}e4
16 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}b3 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}h8
17 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}fd1 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}e7
18 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}d4 (D)

Obviously this is the same pattern which was also successfully employed in the later game Larsen-Bareev mentioned above. White’s dark-squared bishop is restricted by the f6-pawn and cannot attack the d5-pawn; therefore exchanging it suits White just fine.

18 ... \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}a5
19 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}c3 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}c4
20 \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\text邬}}xb6 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xb6
21 b3

Also good for White would be 21 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}c7 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}ac8 22 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xe7 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xe7 23 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xc8+ \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xc8 24 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}c1 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}d6 25 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}d4 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}g8 26 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}h3!, with a significant advantage in the endgame.

21 ... \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}a3
22 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}d4 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}ac8
23 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}d2 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xg2
24 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xg2 a6
25 h4!?

Larsen is known for his habit of pushing his h-pawn in various situations. The text is quite useful, as White gains space on the kingside.

25 ... \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}d6
26 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}e2 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xc1
27 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xc1 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}c8
28 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xc8+ \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}xc8
29 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}g4 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}e7
30 \textcolor{blue}{\texttt{\text邬}}f3! (D)

In the ending a king must be active and the text move illustrates this
rule perfectly. Here we can see that if Black’s pawn were still on f7, his problems would be less serious.

30 ... \textit{g}g8
31 \textit{e}e6+! \textit{x}xe6
32 \textit{x}xe6

When we discussed pure knight endings with the isolated d-pawn, we stated that in general they do not contain much danger for the possessor of such a pawn. However, we meant positions with all other conditions being equal, which is clearly not the case here.

32 ... b6
33 \textit{c}c7 a5
34 \textit{e}e2 h5

The only chance — Black is trying to organise some counterplay with ...g5, which should either create a weakness on h4 or give him a chance to create a passed pawn on the h-file.

Unfortunately for Black, his counterplay comes too late...

35 \textit{d}d3 \textit{f}f7

Also 35...g5 36 hXg5 fxg5 37 \textit{e}e6 would be hopeless for Black.

The conclusion was: 36 \textit{d}d4 g5 37 \textit{x}xd5 \textit{f}f5+ 38 \textit{e}e4 \textit{d}d6+ 39 \textit{d}d3 b5 40 e4+ \textit{e}e6 41 f3 b4 42 \textit{e}e3 gXh4 43 gXh4 \textit{e}e5 44 \textit{d}d5 \textit{b}b5 45 f4+ \textit{e}e6 46 \textit{e}e3 1–0.

Knight Versus Bishop
Middlegames

Now let us examine yet another material balance — where the side playing vs. the isolani has a knight vs. the opponent’s bishop.

Knowing that in the endgame such a situation is very difficult for the possessor of the isolated pawn, we may guess that in the middlegame, too, this same balance is unfavourable for the possessor of the isolated d-pawn. This is in fact so, as our next game will illustrate:

\textbf{Khalifman - Lukin}
\textit{St. Petersburg open 1994}

(1 \textit{d}f3 \textit{d}f6 2 c4 c5 3 \textit{c}c3 \textit{c}c6 4 g3 e6 5 \textit{g}g2 d5 6 cxd5 \textit{xd}5 7 0–0 \textit{e}e7 8 d4 0–0 9 \textit{xd}5 exd5 10 dxc5 \textit{xc}5)

11 \textit{g}g5 f6
12 \textit{d}d2 \textit{e}e6
13 e3 \textit{d}d7
14 \textit{c}c1 \textit{b}b6
15 \textit{c}c3 \textit{f}d8
16 \textit{d}d4! (D)

A familiar plan in action! White implements it with even more efficiency than in the games Larsen-Agdestein and Larsen-Bareev, as here he plays it without preparatory moves like \textit{b}b3 and \textit{f}d1.
missed this chance, Black gets into serious trouble.

21 \( \text{杏d}1 \) \( \text{杏f}3 \)
22 \( \text{杏d}3 \) \( \text{杏d}7 \)
23 \( \text{杏}d4 \) \( \text{杏}g4 \)
24 \( \text{杏}e2!? \)

White could have forced a very favourable ending by playing 24 \( \text{杏f}5! \)? \( \text{杏xf}5 \) 25 \( \text{杏}xf5 \).

24 ... \( \text{杏}e4 \)
25 \( \text{杏b}5 \) \( \text{杏d}8 \)
26 a4! \( \text{杏e}7 \)
27 a5 \( \text{杏xd}4 \)
28 \( \text{杏xd}4 \) (D)

White’s strategy is succeeding, as the position is much better for him. As we know from examining such material correlations earlier in this work, in positions with only major pieces on the board, the isolated d-pawn is in great danger. For example, here White might double his pawns on the d-file and then play e3-e4.

28 ... \( \text{杏f}5 \)

In view of that threat, this move was forced, but it inevitably weakens Black’s king.

29 b4 \( \text{杏e}6 \)
30 \( \text{杏d}3 \) a6
31 \[\text{Cc}5\] \[\text{g}6\]

Perhaps Black should have restrained from this move, which weakens the 7th rank even more.

32 \[\text{b}5!?\] \[\text{a}xb5\]
33 \[\text{Rx}b5\] \[\text{Cc}6\]
34 \[\text{R}b3\] \[\text{Cc}1+\]
35 \[\text{R}g2\] \[\text{Cc}6\]
36 \[\text{h}4!\]

White is planning to attack the g6-pawn with a further h4-h5. This is a standard plan for such positions, perfectly illustrating the principle of two weaknesses — the second target for White’s attack here is Black’s king.

36 \[...\] \[\text{g}7\]
37 \[\text{R}b6\] \[\text{Cc}5\]
38 \[\text{R}b5\] \[\text{Cc}6\]
39 \[\text{R}h2\] \[\text{Rh}6\]

After 39...\[\text{R}g8\] 40 h5 Black’s life won’t be any easier either.

40 \[\text{R}b6\] \[\text{Cc}5\]
41 \[\text{h}5\] \[\text{R}xa5\]
42 \[\text{hxg}6\] \[\text{hxg}6\]
43 \[\text{R}b2\]

White’s attack is now decisive.

43 \[...\] \[\text{f}4\]
44 \[\text{R}xf4\] \[\text{d}4\]
45 \[\text{R}h4+\] \[\text{R}g7\]
46 \[\text{R}xb7\] 1-0

Finally, I would like to show one game where the possessor of the isolani has the bishop which protects that pawn, while his opponent has a blockading knight. Obviously, this is a very unpleasant situation for the side which has the isolani. Maybe it’s even more unpleasant for him in the middlegame than it is in the ending, as our example will prove:

V. Fedorov - Panfilionok
USSR Clubs Chl, Podolsk 1990

Here the isolani is quite safe, but the difference in the activity of the minor pieces present on the board is striking. White’s knight is much more useful than Black’s bishop, whose role is narrowed to minding the isolani. This determines White’s decisive advantage.

23 \[...\] \[\text{R}f6\]

Facing the threat of \[\text{R}g3\], Black had to play the text move.

24 \[\text{R}d6!\]

Also quite good would be 24 \[\text{R}xf6\] gxf6 25 \[\text{b}3\] \[\text{R}c7\] 26 \[\text{f}4\], with a further advance of White’s king to d2 and future play on the queenside. However, White’s decision to keep the queens on the board is correct — his queen is much more active than its counterpart. Now White threatens to play 25 \[\text{R}xd5\].

24 \[...\] \[\text{R}d8\]
25 \[\text{R}a3\] \[\text{R}e8\]
26 \[\text{a}5!\]

White weakens Black’s pawns on the queenside. Creating more targets
for attack while having better piece activity is one of the major strategic rules in chess.

26 ...  \text{\textit{\textit{W}}e7}
27  \text{\textit{\textit{W}}xe7}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}xe7}
28  axb6  axb6
29  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}a1}

White has chosen to attack the b6-pawn. Also quite sufficient for a win would be 29 \text{\textit{\textit{Q}}xe6} \text{\textit{fxe6}} 30  \text{\textit{Q}}xe6  \text{\textit{B}}xe6 31  \text{\textit{B}}xe6  \text{\textit{b5}} 32  \text{\textit{B}}b6.

29 ...  \text{\textit{h6}}

After 29...\text{\textit{\textit{B}}c8} 30  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}a6} Black is also lost.

The game now ended: 30  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}a8+}  \text{\textit{\textit{Q}}h7} 31  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}h8}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}a7} 32  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}xb6}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}a1+}
33  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}h2}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}b1} 34  \text{\textit{\textit{Q}}xe6} \text{\textit{fxe6}} 35
\text{\textit{B}}xe6  \text{\textit{d4}} 36  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}e4}  \text{\textit{Bxc3}} 37  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}xc3}  \text{\textit{Bxb6}} 38  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}xd4}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}b2} 39  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}g3}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}g6}
40  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}f3}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}f6} 41  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}e2}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}b8} 42  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}e4}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}e6} 43  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}a2}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}b5} 44  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}f4} 1-0.

As I have been trying to show various material correlations, I would also like to present one example from recent practice involving the opposite situation to our previous example.

The side playing against the isolani has a bishop, attacking that pawn, while the pawn is defended by a knight.

Salov - Anand
\textit{Wijk aan Zee 1998}

White's defence is difficult, as even after the possible exchange of the isolated d4-pawn the resulting position would be much better for Black, whose minor piece would be superior in this case.

27  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}f4?!}

I think that White should have tried to avoid this move, which weakens his kingside. For example, 27 \text{\textit{\textit{B}}g3} looks better than the text.

27 ...  \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}h5}}!

28  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}f2}

Perhaps White should have played 28 \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}h4}}, aiming for a more stable situation on the kingside.

28 ...  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}f6}
29  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}g3}  \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}h4}}

Black has created tension on the kingside, where a second target is now likely to appear.

30  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}d2}  \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}d5}}}
31  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}d1}  \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}g7}}!

Such quiet moves are often the most unpleasant for a defender.

The text move has created an additional possibility of ...\text{\textit{\textit{B}}c4-c8-h8 for Black, while White is nearly in zugzwang.}

32  \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}b3}}  \text{\textit{hxg3+}}
33  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}xg3}  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}c8}
34  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}f3}  \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}d6}}
35  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}b4}  \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}c4}}
36  \text{\textit{\textit{B}}d3}  \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}c7}}}
37  \text{\textit{\textit{\textit{B}}d5}} \text{(D)}

Exchanging the d4-pawn does not bring White any relief, as Black's
Summary

In this chapter we have seen quite a lot of examples of how the weakness of the isolated d-pawn can be exploited in fairly simplified middlegame positions.

Playing against the isolani in such cases, we should look for two main goals:

- further simplification, aiming for a favourable endgame, and
- creating a second target for our pieces to attack.

Naturally, the aims of the side having the isolated d-pawn are quite the opposite.

One particular thing is worth mentioning — having rooks is often a big handicap for the possessor of the isolated d-pawn, as then his rooks often get tied down to the pawn and become passive. Besides this, in such cases the d-pawn usually becomes pinned and therefore more vulnerable to the challenge of an opponent's pawn.

Thus, playing vs. the isolated pawn, try to exchange minor pieces — particularly knights — and retain at least one pair of rooks.

bishop becomes very active.

37 ... 
38 \textbf{exd5} 
39 \textbf{b3} 
40 \textbf{b2} 
41 \textbf{c2} 
42 \textbf{c8} 
43 \textbf{h3} 
44 \textbf{h5} 
45 \textbf{h} 
46 \textbf{c1} 

The knight played an important role in defending White's king, so should have been retained.

Instead of the text move, White had to play \textbf{b3}, as now he cannot survive the attack against his king.

46 ... 
47 \textbf{f2} 
48 \textbf{d3}
10 Combatting the isolani by simplification

Potentially this chapter could be huge, as there are very many examples where the side playing against the isolated d-pawn tries to exploit the weaknesses of such a pawn by exchanging pieces. Yet, this chapter features just a few examples, as we have already come across this technique many times earlier in this work. We saw how it worked in the games Botvinnik-Zagoriansky (19 $\mathcal{Q}e5!$, see page 141) and Karpov-Spassky (16 $\mathcal{Q}e5!$, page 142), to name but two.

The diagram on the right shows a good situation for the defender where all minor pieces have been exchanged; this position arose in a Korchmo-Karpov game and is discussed on page 164.

When pieces are exchanged, the drawbacks of the isolated d-pawn become more apparent. There are a few reasons why this happens. First of all, with fewer pieces on the board (particularly with fewer minor pieces) the potential break in the centre (d4-d5 or ...d5-d4) loses its effect to a great degree and becomes more difficult to implement. Secondly, the fact that the isolated d-pawn provides its possessor with control over certain squares (like c5 and e5, if we talk about White's isolated d4-pawn) becomes less important when the side playing with the isolani has no pieces to put on to those squares. Finally, with fewer pieces on the board, a successful blockade of the isolani followed by its siege is more likely to happen.

Here I would like to illustrate this theme and the above-mentioned points with some more examples. Our first three games feature Karpov playing against the isolani.

Karpov - Spassky

_USSR Cht, Riga 1975_

1  d4  $\mathcal{Q}f6$
2  c4   e6
3  $\mathcal{Q}f3$  b6
4  g3   $\mathcal{Q}b7$
5  \( \text{g2} \)  \( \text{e7} \)
6  \( \text{c3} \)  0–0?!

Deviating from the line with 6...\( \text{e4} \), which is the most common move here, Black takes a greater strategic risk. The problem with the natural-looking text move is that later, in order to control the e4-square, he will have to put his pawn on d5. That would lead to pawn structures favourable for White.

7  \( \text{e2} \)  d5
8  cxd5  \( \text{dxd5} \)!

Perhaps it would be better to keep more pieces on the board, playing 8...\( \text{exd5} \). Yet, after 9 0–0 \( \text{a6} \)-10 \( \text{d1} \) h6 11 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 12 a3 c5 13 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{c7} \) 14 \( \text{h4} \) White seized the initiative in the game Yusupov-G. Kuzmin, 49th USSR Ch, Frunze 1981.

9  0–0  \( \text{d7} \)
10  \( \text{dxd5} \)  exd5

A different pawn structure arises after 10...\( \text{xd5} \). Then 11 \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{b7} \) 12 \( \text{d1} \) \( \text{f6} \) 13 \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{e8} \) 14 \( \text{e3} \) gave White the better chances in the game Ribli-Unzicker, German Bundesliga 1988.

11  \( \text{d1} \) (D)

A very useful move — White anticipates that at some stage Black will need to play ...c5. Meanwhile White can improve his position further, playing \( \text{f4} \) and \( \text{ac1} \).

11  \( \text{..} \)  \( \text{f6} \)
12  \( \text{e5} \)  c5
13  dxc5  \( \text{xc5} \)

A position with hanging pawns would have arisen after 13...\( \text{bxc5} \)?!. Then after 14 \( \text{g5} \) these pawns would come under immediate pressure, for example 14...\( \text{d6} \) 15 \( \text{xf6} \) \( \text{xf6} \) 16 \( \text{c4} \) and Black has lots of trouble with his pawns. Therefore, we can safely say that Black was more or less forced to recapture on c5 with the bishop, isolating his d-pawn.

14  \( \text{d3} \)  \( \text{d6} \)

In his book My 300 Best Games, Karpov claims that also after 14...\( \text{c8} \) 15 \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 16 \( \text{a4} \) White has a pleasant edge.

15  \( \text{f4} \)!

This is a very important move — White wants to simplify the position, as then the drawbacks of the isolated d-pawn would become more apparent.

15  \( \text{..} \)  \( \text{e8} \)
16  \( \text{e3} \)  \( \text{e4} \)

Black wouldn’t do any better avoiding the exchange of the dark-squared bishops, as both 16...\( \text{e7} \) 17 \( \text{e5} \) and 16...\( \text{f8} \) 17 \( \text{g5} \) are advantageous to White.

17  \( \text{xd6} \)  \( \text{xd6} \)
18  \( \text{d4} \)  \( \text{ac8} \) ?!

This move looks attractive, but in fact it makes the Black position
worse, creating tactical problems. Black should have preferred something like 18...\textit{\texttt{W}}e5, which would still leave White with a considerable advantage.

19 \textit{\texttt{W}}a4 (D)

Now Black faces great difficulties, as he cannot parry the threat of 20 \textit{\texttt{W}}xe4 \textit{\texttt{H}}xe4 21 \textit{\texttt{W}}xe4 and protect the a7-pawn at the same time. We can say that White has won the strategic battle of the pros and cons of the isolani.

19 \ldots \textit{\texttt{W}}e7

Also after 19...\textit{\texttt{W}}f6 20 \textit{\texttt{W}}xa7 \textit{\texttt{H}}a8 21 \textit{\texttt{H}}d4 Black does not have compensation for the pawn. The text creates some threats against the f2- and e3-squares, but here White already has various ways of realising his advantage.

20 \textit{\texttt{W}}xa7!

White would be also better after 20 \textit{\texttt{H}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{H}}xd5 21 \textit{\texttt{H}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{H}}xf2 22 \textit{\texttt{H}}fl or 20 \textit{\texttt{H}}xe4 \textit{\texttt{W}}xe4 21 \textit{\texttt{H}}d4, but the text is more energetic, as it forces Black to show his hand.

20 \ldots \textit{\texttt{H}}xf2

21 \textit{\texttt{H}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{H}}xd5

22 \textit{\texttt{W}}xe7 \textit{\texttt{H}}d1?!

White would have a definite advantage in the endgame arising after 22...\textit{\texttt{H}}xe7 23 \textit{\texttt{H}}xd5 (also very interesting is 23 \textit{\texttt{H}}ac1?!?) 23...\textit{\texttt{H}}g4 24 \textit{\texttt{H}}h3 \textit{\texttt{H}}xe3 25 \textit{\texttt{H}}xc8 \textit{\texttt{H}}xd5 26 \textit{\texttt{H}}d1, but this is what Black should have tried anyway, as the text move just loses.

23 \textit{\texttt{H}}cl?\ldots \textit{\texttt{H}}b8

24 \textit{\texttt{W}}b4 \textit{\texttt{H}}xg2

25 \textit{\texttt{H}}xg2 \textit{\texttt{H}}xe3+

26 \textit{\texttt{H}}g1

White is winning, as he can create a queenside passed pawn. The end was: 26...\textit{\texttt{H}}e6 27 \textit{\texttt{W}}f4 \textit{\texttt{H}}d8 28 \textit{\texttt{W}}d4 \textit{\texttt{H}}de8 29 \textit{\texttt{W}}d7 \textit{\texttt{H}}g4 30 \textit{\texttt{H}}c8 \textit{\texttt{H}}f6 31 \textit{\texttt{H}}xe8+ \textit{\texttt{H}}xe8 32 \textit{\texttt{W}}b7 \textit{\texttt{H}}e6 33 \textit{\texttt{W}}b8+ \textit{\texttt{H}}e8 34 a4 g6 35 b4 \textit{\texttt{H}}g7 36 \textit{\texttt{W}}b7 h5 37 h3 \textit{\texttt{H}}f6 38 \textit{\texttt{H}}g2 \textit{\texttt{H}}d6 39 a5 \textit{\texttt{H}}xa5 40 bxa5 \textit{\texttt{H}}e6 41 a6 \textit{\texttt{H}}c7 42 a7 \textit{\texttt{H}}e7 43 \textit{\texttt{W}}c6+ \textit{\texttt{H}}e5 44 \textit{\texttt{H}}f3 1–0.

Our following game is a must for everyone interested in the theme ‘isolated d-pawn’, as in this example the drawbacks of such a pawn were exploited by Karpov masterfully.

\textbf{Korchnoi - Karpov}

\textit{Merano Wch (9), 1981}

1 \textit{\texttt{C}}d4 \textit{\texttt{E}}e6

2 \textit{\texttt{H}}c3 \textit{\texttt{D}}d5

3 \textit{\texttt{D}}d4 \textit{\texttt{C}}e7

4 \textit{\texttt{H}}f3 \textit{\texttt{H}}f6

5 \textit{\texttt{C}}g5 \textit{\texttt{H}}h6

6 \textit{\texttt{H}}h4 \textit{\texttt{H}}e0

7 \textit{\texttt{H}}c1 (D)

This line was one of the main sub-
jverts of a theoretical discussion in that match, being featured in games No. 5, 7, 9 and 17. It's interesting that later Karpov began to play this line with White as well. The main aim of this move is to prepare to play against the hanging pawns which often occur after the possible 7...b6. For example, the 7th game of that match continued: 8 cxd5 Qxd5 9 Qxd5 exd5 10 Qxe7 Wxe7 11 g3 Qa6 12 e3 c5 13 dxc5 Qb7 14 Qg2 bxc5 15 0-0 Qd7 16 Wb3 Qfb8 17 Wa3 and White stood better.

7 ... dxc4

Black tries a very rare move, avoiding 7...b6. Later this move became very popular.

8 e3 c5

9 Qxc4 cxd4

10 exd4

Modern theory favours the less committal 10 Qxd4. Here is a recent example: 10...Qd7 11 Qg3 Qc6 12 Qdb5 e5 13 a4 a6 14 Qa3 Qxa3 15 bxa3 We7 16 Qh4 g5 17 Qg3 Ne6 and Black stood well in the game Korchnoi-Short, FIDE-Wch Groningen 1997.

10 ... Qc6

In the game where the move 7...dxc4 was introduced for the first time — Portisch-Forintos, Hungary Ch 1962 — Black played 10...b6 and after 11 Wd3 Qb7 12 a3 Qh5 13 Qg3 Qg5 14 Ad1 Ad5?! 15 Qxd5 exd5 16 Qe5 White was better. Another interesting try here is 10...Qd7, which was employed in Yusupov-Beliavsky, Linares 1991. In that game White had slightly better chances after the further 11 0-0 Qc6 12 Qe5 Qfd7 13 Qxe7 Wxe7 14 Qxc6 Qxc6 15 d5.

11 0-0 Qh5!?

A key move — Black simplifies the position, reducing the opponent's chances for dynamic play in the middlegame with the isolated d-pawn.

12 Qxe7 Qxe7

13 Qb3

This move is rather inactive. White has several other options here. For example, after 13 d5 exd5 14 Qxd5 Qxd5 15 Wxd5 Wxd5 16 Qd5 a draw was agreed in Knezević-Tal, Porz 1981. Opportunities to get rid of the isolated d-pawn by exchanging it should not be overlooked in such positions — often it's the best chance to avoid an unfavourable position in the future.

However, here there is nothing wrong with White's position and he can still expect to have some initiative. Therefore, 13 Nf6 14 Qe5 Qd7 15 Wb3 is better. Then in Christiansen-Karpov, London 1982,
Black had equal chances after 15...\textit{Ab}8 16 \textit{Ac}d1 b5 17 \textit{A}xd7 \textit{A}xd7 18 \textit{A}d3 \textit{Af}6. However, White might be able to improve on that game by playing 16 \textit{A}xd7?! After the further 16...\textit{A}xd7? (16...\textit{A}xd7? puts Black in trouble in view of 17 \textit{A}xe6!) 17 d5 exd5 18 \textit{A}xd5 \textit{A}xd5 19 \textit{A}xd5 White’s chances are better, as his bishop is superior to the knight in this open position.

Perhaps fearing this last variation, Black instead played 15...\textit{Ac}8?! in the game Dreev-A.Petrosian, Palma de Mallorca GMA 1989. Yet, the cure turned out to be worse than the illness, as after 16 \textit{A}cd1 White obtained a considerable advantage, thanks to the pressure along the a2-g8 diagonal.

13 ... \textit{Af}6
14 \textit{A}e5 \textit{Ad}7
15 \textit{A}e2 \textit{Ac}8
16 \textit{A}e4? (D)

This strange decision leads to a position with better chances for Black; playing 16 \textit{Af}d1, White would have kept the balance. This is a case where the rule of thumb — that exchanges generally favour the side playing against the isolani — does apply.

16 ... \textit{A}xe4
17 \textit{W}xe4 \textit{Ac}6!

Obviously, Black does not mind exchanging some more pieces.

18 \textit{A}xc6 \textit{A}xc6
19 \textit{A}c3?!

Perhaps, the lesser evil would be to exchange rooks by 19 \textit{A}xc6. Then Black would recapture on c6 with a pawn — 19...bxc6! — thus establishing firm control over the d5-square. Then he would play ...\textit{W}b6 and ...\textit{A}d8 with advantage. We will examine such a pawn formation (with Black’s pawns on c6 and e6 vs. White’s isolated d4-pawn) more closely later on in this book.

19 ... \textit{W}d6
20 g3?!

The text move reduces the scope of White’s rook on the 3rd rank.

20 ... \textit{A}d8
21 \textit{A}d1 \textit{A}b6!

Black relocates his pieces in order to increase the pressure on the d4-pawn.

22 \textit{W}e1 \textit{W}d7
23 \textit{A}cd3 \textit{A}d6
24 \textit{W}e4 \textit{W}c6
25 \textit{W}f4 \textit{A}d5
26 \textit{W}d2 \textit{W}b6
27 \textit{A}xd5?

White should have refrained from this exchange, playing 27 a3 instead.

27 ... \textit{A}xd5 (D)

Black has achieved a lot — the isolated d-pawn is a pure weakness here and White is going to have a hard
time defending it. Earlier in this work we have examined several positions with a similar material correlation (only major pieces on the board), for example Spiridonov-T.Stanciu (page 126) and Khalifman-Lukin (page 154), and in all of them the isolani proved to be a hard weakness to defend. This game is yet another illustration of this theme.

Black’s main threat is to triple on the d-file and then to play ...e5. In order to stop this, White must play f2-f4 which in turn badly exposes his king, allowing Black to attack it later. Of course, this sounds simple, whereas in the game it took precise play from Black to capitalise on his advantage.

28  Ab3?!  

This move weakens the d4-pawn, White should have tried to stay passive.

28  ...  Wc6
29  Wc3  Wd7
30  f4  b6!
31  Ab4  b5!
32  a4

Forced, but now the queenside opens up and Black’s pieces obtain routes towards the enemy king. It’s really interesting to see how the advance of Black’s b-pawn on moves 30 and 31 lead to a future attack on the opposite wing.

32  ...  bxa4
33  Wa3  a5
34  Axa4  Wb5
35  Ad2  e5!

This is a decisive break — more files are being opened and White’s monarch will soon be in trouble.

36  fxe5  Axe5
37  Wa1  We8!

Black is winning. The end was: 38 dxe5 Axg2 39 Saxa5 Wc6 40 Aa8+ Wh7 41 Wb1+ g6 42 Wf1 Wc5+ 43 Wh1 Wd5+ 0-1.

A classic example of exploiting the drawbacks of the isolated d-pawn!

When playing with an isolated d-pawn, White and Black have quite different prospects, because White can naturally afford more risk in the opening. For example, in the game which have just examined, it took a few inaccuracies and mistakes (13 Ab3, 16 Ae4?, 19 Ac3?! and 20 g3?!) before White faced really difficult problems. On the other hand, in many cases all it takes for Black is one mistake or dubious move — and he finds himself suffering positionally. That’s why such openings as the Tarrasch Defence require both very energetic and precise play from Black.

We can often see that Black, having the isolated d-pawn, runs into problems without making any apparent mistakes — as was the case with the
first game analysed in this chapter. Here is yet another example of how careful Black should be when he gets the isolated d-pawn in the opening.

Karpov - Korchnoi
Brussels 1988

1 \( \text{d}3 \text{g}6 2 \text{c}4 \text{e}5 3 \text{d}3 \text{c}6 4 \text{d}4 \text{cxd}4 5 \text{\textg{a}}x\text{d}4 \text{e}6 6 \text{g}3 \text{\textb{b}}6 7 \text{\textb{b}}3 \text{d}5 8 \text{cxd}5 \text{\textg{a}}x\text{d}5 9 \text{\textg{a}}x\text{d}5 \text{exd}5 10 \text{\textg{g}}2 \text{\textg{e}}6 11 0-0 (D)


11 0-0

11 ... \text{\textg{d}8}

For some reason Black deviates from the game Krogius-Korchnoi, 32nd USSR Ch, Kiev 1964/5, where he did well after 11...d4 12 \text{\textd{d}}2 \text{\textd}8 13 \text{\textc{c}}1 \text{\textb{b}}4 14 \text{\texta}{a}5 \text{\textw}{x}a5 15 a3 \text{\textw}{b}5 16 axb4 \text{\texta}{a}xb4.

12 \text{\textg}{g}5!

It is useful to provoke ...f6, weakening the e6-square.

12 ... \text{\textf}{6}

13 \text{\textd}{d}2

After 13 \text{\texte}{e}3?! d4 the attempt to win a pawn by playing 14 \text{\textc}{c}6+?! bxc6 15 \text{\textd}{xd}4? loses in view of 15...c5 16 \text{\textw}{a}4+ \text{\textd}{d}7.


13 ... \text{\texte}{e}7?!

Perhaps, only this move can be really criticised, as it does not help Black to fight for the d4-square at all. After 13...a5 Karpov in his book My 300 Best Games recommends 14 \text{\texte}{e}3!?, supporting this move with the following lengthy variation: 14...d4 15 \text{\textc}{c}6+ bxc6 16 \text{\textd}{xd}4 \text{\textc}{c}5 (here 16...c5 does not work, as after 17 \text{\textw}{a}4+ \text{\textd}{d}7 18 \text{\textw}{b}3 the black queen is not protected) 17 \text{\textw}{xe}6 \text{\textd}{x}d1 18 \text{\texta}{a}xd1 \text{\texte}{x}e3 19 \text{\textd}{d}8+ \text{\texte}{e}7 20 \text{\textx}{x}h8, assessing White’s chances as slightly better. Although this line is interesting, I think that after 13...a5 White can simply play 14 \text{\textc}{c}3?!, carrying out a plan similar to the one he used in this game. Probably Black should have played 13...d4, which leads to a position similar to the one from Krogius-Korchnoi.

14 \text{\textc}{c}3

White takes control over the critical d4-square, as now Black cannot play 14...d4? because of 15 \text{\textc}{c}6+ bxc6 16 \text{\texta}{a}5 \text{\textx}{x}b3 17 axb3 and White wins. This is the first sign of the forthcoming blockade.

14 ... 0-0

15 \text{\textd}{d}4 \text{\textd}{xd}4

16 \text{\textw}{xd}4

Also possible was 16 \text{\textd}{xd}4 \text{\textc}{c}5 17 \text{\textc}{c}5 \text{\textw}{xc}5 18 \text{\textw}{d}2, but the text move allows White to keep better control over the d4-square.

16 ... \text{\textc}{c}5

17 \text{\textw}{d}2 \text{\textd}{d}6

18 b4 \text{\textb}{b}6

19 \text{\textd}{d}4! (D)
White has obtained a significant advantage — he controls the d4-square and has good chances of laying siege to the d5-pawn.

19 ...  
20  
21 ??

Not every exchange should be welcomed — the bishop on e4 is centralised but rather useless, while its white counterpart is very active now.

21 ...  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  

Also after 27... 28 29  30  31 White is better.

28  
29  

Black could try to fight for control over the d4-square by playing 29... 30 2 31 , but then he would have to take into consideration — amongst other White replies — the move 31 ??.

In that line Black has immediate problems with the d-pawn and White’s chances are much better, for example: 31... 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 h5 or 31... 32 33 34 (D)

34 ??

This is a blunder, but also after 34... 35 36 a4!? Black’s defence wouldn’t be easy.

35  
36  
37  
38  

This ending is winning for White.

The game concluded: 38... 39 40 41 42 43 e4 b6 44 45 e5 46 47 48 49 50 h5 51 52
$\text{dxg4 53 } \text{gxh5 55 } \text{b5 } \text{hxh6+ } 56 \text{ } \text{c7 } \text{d4 } 57 \text{ b6 } \text{e7 } 58 \text{ b7 } \text{c3+ } 59 \text{ } \text{b6 } \text{h5+ } 60 \text{ } \text{e6 1–0.}$

I would like to finish this chapter by showing one of my own games, where play against the isolani and the methods of simplification were the key factors in Black’s strategy.

G. Rey - Baburin  
2nd Mechanics Institute  
Invitational, San Francisco 1997

1 $d4$ $d5$  
2 $c4$ $xc4$  
3 $a4+$

A very rare move. This check is more common after 3 $\text{dxc3 } f6.$  
3 $\text{... c6}$  
3...c6 would lead to standard play after the further 4 $\text{xc4 } f6$ 5 $\text{f3 } f5.$

4 $\text{d4}$ $\text{g4?!}$

This is the point — Black delays the development of the g8-knight, using this time to put pressure on the d-pawn, thus creating a more unbalanced position.

5 $\text{b3}$

The text offers a pawn, but it would be too risky for Black to accept the offer. I was going to meet 5 $\text{b4}$ with 5...$\text{xf3}$ 6 $\text{xf3 } d5$ and White may have problems getting the pawn back. Also after 5 $e3$ $\text{xf3}$ 6 $\text{gxf3 } e5$? (6...$d5$ is also possible.) 7 $\text{dxe5 } d7$ 8 $\text{xc4 } xe5$ 9 $\text{xd7+ } xd7$ Black is doing quite well.

5 $\text{... } \text{xf3}$

6 $\text{exf3 e6}$

If Black had captured the isolated d-pawn — 6...$\text{xd4?!}$ — White’s lead in development would become frightening after 7 $\text{e3 } e5$ 8 $\text{xc4}.$ For example, 8...e6? already loses because of 9 $\text{a6}!.$ Therefore, I decided not to take on d4, but instead to lay siege to the pawn, waiting for a better moment to snatch it.

7 $\text{e3}$

White could also try 7 $\text{xc4}.$ Then 7...a6?! is not satisfactory because of 8 $d5$ and White is clearly better. Instead of that Black, can either accept the sacrificed pawn by playing 7...$\text{xd4}$ 8 $\text{e3 } d7$ 9 $\text{d1 } d6$ 10 $\text{e4 } e7$ 11 $\text{c5 } c8,$ with interesting play, or choose 7...$\text{ge7}$ followed by ...a6.

7 $\text{...}$

8 $\text{xc4}$ $a6$

9 $\text{d1}$ $\text{b4! (D)}$

Black needs to utilise the b4-square and relocate this knight. After 9...e7? 10 a3! it would have been much more difficult for him to find a good plan. The d4-pawn is
well-protected, so here it's better not to attack it, but to blockade it.

10   0-0   \(e7
11   a1   0-0
12   \(e2   c6
13   \(f1   \(bd5
14   a3?

The text helps Black to exchange pieces and therefore cannot be recommended. Since Black has two knights and only one good square available to them, I was very happy to exchange one of the knights.

14   ...   \(xc3!
15   \(xc3

White could not play 15 \(xc3?, as then the a3-pawn would be lost.

15   ...   \(d5
16   \(cd3   \(f6

Black has a definite advantage here, as the d4-pawn can cause its owner a lot of trouble in the near future. At this stage I made a plan, which fully fits in with Nimzowitsch's slogan — 'Restrain, blockade, destroy!'. Black is going to bring rooks to the d-file and then play ...\(d5-e7-f5, targeting the isolani. In the meantime White will try to attack on the kingside, so Black should take some measures against this.

17   g3!?   \(d7
18   a2   \(ad8
19   \(c2   \(c7
20   \(g2   \(d7
21   h4   h5
22   \(b1   g6
23   \(d2   \(fd8
24   \(g5   \(xg5
25   \(xg5   \(e7
26   \(3d2   \(d5
27   \(e3   \(f5
28   \(xf5   \(xf5
29   b4 (D)

White's strategy is succeeding, as he has managed to force some exchanges, which generally favour him. White's last move was necessary, as otherwise Black would triple on the d-file and win the d-pawn by playing ...c5 (or ...e5).

29   ...   \(d5
30   \(c3   \(d6
31   f4

Here placing a pawn on f4 does not weaken White's king as there is another white pawn on the f-file. However, on the queenside White is going to face serious problems.

31   ...   a5
32   \(b1?!

Better was 32 \(xa5!, trying to organise counterplay against the b7-pawn. However, being short of time, my opponent quite naturally avoided loosening his position any further.

32   ...   \(b6!
33   \(bd1
After 33 \( \text{b}b2?! \) a4 White would lose a pawn.

33 \( \ldots \) axb4

34 axb4?!

In time trouble IM Rey makes a final mistake. I felt that White had to play 34 \( \text{W}xb4 \) when at least he can hope to attack the b7-pawn. If he does not seek counterplay, White is sure to lose.

After 34 \( \text{W}xb4 \) Black would probably go into the rook endgame arising after 34...\( \text{W}xb4 \) 35 axb4. Then, after seizing the a-file by 35...\( \text{b}b5 \) 36 \( \text{b}b2 \) \( \text{d}d8 \) 37 \( \text{f}f3 \) \( \text{a}a8 \), Black would advance his king into the centre and start attacking White’s weaknesses. He should be able to capitalise on his advantage.

34 \( \ldots \) \( \text{d}d8 \)!

The key move — the rook should go to the a-file, since there is nothing to do on the d-file any more.

35 \( \text{a}a3? \) \( \text{b}b5 \)

Black wins the pawn and the opponent’s defence soon collapses.

36 \( \text{b}b1 \) \( \text{x}d4 \)

The pawn which could be taken on move 6 with a great risk for Black now falls as a ripe fruit. The text crowns Black’s strategy in this game.

37 \( \text{a}a8+ \) \( \text{g}g7 \)

38 \( \text{b}d1 \) \( \text{xb}b4 \)

39 \( \text{b}b8 \) c5 40 \( \text{x}d4 \) \( \text{x}d4 \) 41 \( \text{a}a1 \) \( \text{d}d8 \) 42 \( \text{e}e5+ \) \( \text{g}g8 \) 43 \( \text{f}f6 \) c4 44 f5 \( \text{d}d4 \) 0–1

With this game I would like to finish Part Two and move on to other very interesting themes — various transformations of the pawn structure between the isolated d-pawn and associated pawn formations. Before I do so, I’d like to outline some ideas discussed in this chapter.

**Summary**

When playing against the isolated d-pawn always consider exchanging pieces — in order to reduce the dynamic chances of your opponent and so help to exploit the weaknesses of such a pawn. Of course, not all exchanges are beneficial, so you have to judge in each case whether you should or should not trade off any particular piece.

As a guideline, you can use the fact that positions with only major pieces and/or bishops are the most difficult to defend for the possessor of the isolani. Thus, you should seriously consider exchanging knights, rather than keeping them. At the same time it’s often good to keep at least some major pieces on the board.

When you have the isolated d-pawn, you should be very cautious about exchanging pieces. If you see that the board is getting emptier, consider trading off the isolani (usually by advancing it) in order to avoid future blockade and positional suffering.
Exercises For Part 2

The Exercise sections in this book serve a few purposes: they provide additional material on the subject and give help for those who want to play some of these positions against friends, etc.

As with the Exercises for Part 1, these examples do not imply only one 'correct' solution. Perhaps your suggestion may be even better than the actual game continuation.

For the solutions to these Exercises, see pages 240-249.

1

How would you play this ending?
What should be the result?

2

Suggest a plan for White and support it with a few variations.

3

Assess this position and suggest a plan for White.

4

Play this position from either side vs. an opponent of similar strength.
Play this position from either side vs. an opponent of similar strength.

Suggest a plan for White and provide some variations.

Suggest a plan for Black.

How should White continue?

Suggest a plan for White.

Play this position from either side vs. an opponent of similar strength.
11 Transformations of the pawn skeleton

One of the main reasons why positions with an isolated d-pawn are so difficult to play for either side is that numerous transformations are possible in this pawn structure. Therefore, both players often have to deal with the difficult task of evaluating the possible outcome of various changes in the pawn skeleton.

In this chapter we will examine a few of the most common changes that can happen with this formation. Let’s first list these possibilities, assuming that it’s White who possesses the isolated d-pawn. The following transformations may occur:

1) White’s d-pawn moves to d5, when there are no black pawns either on c6 or on e6.
2) Black’s pawn shifts to d5 (from c6 or e6), leading to pawn symmetry in the centre.
3) White’s d4-pawn shifts to e5.
4) Black plays ...f5, blocking the b1-h7 diagonal, but making his e6-pawn backward.
5) Black’s b-pawn shifts to c6, where it becomes isolated.
6) White’s f-pawn shifts to e3, forming the e3-d4 pawn couple.

7) White’s b-pawn shifts to c3, forming the c3-d4 pawn couple.

The last of these cases will be examined in our next chapter, while here we will study cases 1-6.

1. White’s pawn moves to d5, fixing the enemy pawn on the 7th rank

This group of positions is fairly large — they can arise from various openings, e.g. from the Petroff Defence and the Grünfeld Defence. We can distinguish two different cases, depending whether Black has a pawn on c7 or on e7. Please note that we do not examine those cases where the d5-pawn is passed, as it’s hard to
outline general principles applicable for such positions.

We can point out a few particular features of the diagram position — the open e-file, which can be used by both sides; White’s spatial advantage; potential weakness of the d5-pawn; a nice blockading square for Black’s pieces on d6 and the backwardness of the c7-pawn. To see how some of these features influence the strategy of both players, let’s have a look at the following game:

Smyslov - Lilienthal
Moscow Ch 1942

1 d4 ♞f6 2 c4 g6 3 g3 d5 4 cxd5 ♞xd5 5 ♞g2 ♞g7 6 ♞f3 0-0 7 0-0 ♞b6 8 ♞c3 ♞c6
9 d5 ♞b8?!
This is too passive. Nowadays 9...♩a5 is most common here.
10 ♞d4?!
Better was 10 e4 c6 11 ♞g5. The text has tactical drawbacks — while it prevents 10...c6 (which will be met with 11 dxc6!), it allows another attack against the d5-pawn.

10 ... e6!
11 e4 exd5?!
This isolates the d-pawn, but in the sequel this pawn is by no means a weakness. Instead Black should have played 11...c6!, destroying White’s pawn centre.

12 exd5 ♞d7(D)

Here the strategic fight revolves around the d5-pawn — if Black can prove that the pawn is weak or if he can utilise the d6-square, then his strategy will be justified. If Black fails to do so, the d5-pawn will enable White to develop his pieces with great comfort and to organise an attack against the c7-pawn.

13 ♞f4 ♞e5

This move indicates that Black goes for the blockade of the d5-pawn. It’s interesting to try to attack the pawn instead by playing 13...a6 14 ♞e1 ♞f6. While White can then defend the d5-pawn by playing 15 ♞b3, it’s much more critical to play 15 ♞b3! instead. After a further 15...♩fxd5 16 ♞xd5 ♞xd5 17 ♞xd5 ♞xd4 18 ♞ad1 White has a strong initiative. For example: 18...c5
(18...\textit{Wf6}? loses on the spot to 19 \textit{Ax}d4! \textit{Wxd}4 20 \textit{Qxf}7+ \textit{Qxf}7 21 \textit{Qe}8+ \textit{Qg}7 22 \textit{Qe}5+) 19 \textit{Qh}6 \textit{Wf6}
20 \textit{Ax}d4 \textit{cx}d4 21 \textit{Qxf}8 \textit{Qxf}8 22 \textit{Wb}4+ \textit{Qg}7 23 \textit{Qe}8, with a winning position.

14 \textit{h}3 \textit{Qbc}4
15 \textit{b}3 \textit{Qd}6
16 \textit{Qe}1 \textit{Qe}8
17 \textit{Qc}1

Black must now prevent White's threat of \textit{Qc}3-b5. Smyslov wrote that 17...\textit{Qd}7 could be met with 18 \textit{Qc}2 with a further \textit{Qc}2-e2, but perhaps it would be better for Black than the game continuation.

17 ... \textit{a}6
18 \textit{Qa}4!

White immediately changes the route for the knight, which will be well placed on c5.

18 ... \textit{Qb}5?

This allows a tactical blow that radically changes the character of the position.

19 \textit{Qe}6! (D)

This move, which is possible thanks to the d5-pawn and White's pressure on the e-file, gives White a considerable advantage — the d5-pawn disappears and White's pieces launch an attack on the enemy queenside.

19 ... \textit{Qxe}6
20 \textit{dx}e6 \textit{Qxe}6
21 \textit{Qc}5! \textit{Wxd}1

Black could not play 21...\textit{Qd}6 22 \textit{Wc}2 \textit{Qd}4 23 \textit{We}4 \textit{f5}, as after 24 \textit{We}3 he loses material.

22 \textit{Qex}d1 \textit{Qd}6
23 \textit{Qxb}7 \textit{Qxd}1+
24 \textit{Qxd}1

The rest of the game is a technical task of capitalising on the bishop pair and better pawn structure. Smyslov never gave his opponent a chance to recover the damage done by 18...\textit{Qb}5? and exploited his advantage masterfully.

24...\textit{Qb}8 25 \textit{a}4 \textit{Qc}3 26 \textit{Qd}2 \textit{Qe}8
27 \textit{Qc}5 a5 28 \textit{Qc}2!+- \textit{Qd}1 29 \textit{Qd}2 \textit{Qf}8 30 \textit{Qe}4

The variation 30 \textit{Qxa}5 \textit{Qxf}2 31 \textit{Qb}7 is also winning for White.

The game ended: 30...\textit{Qb}8 31 \textit{Qxa}5 \textit{Qxb}3 32 \textit{Qxc}7 \textit{Qd}3 33 \textit{Qf}1!? \textit{Qb}1 34 \textit{a}5 \textit{f}5 35 \textit{Qd}2 \textit{Qa}3 36 \textit{Qc}4 \textit{Qxc}4 37 \textit{Qxc}4 \textit{Qa}1 38 \textit{Qb}6 \textit{Qe}5 39 \textit{Qc}3 \textit{Qb}4 40 \textit{Qc}8+ \textit{Qf}7 41 \textit{Qg}2 1-0.

This game should give you some idea of the plans available for both sides in the structure with White's isolated pawn on d5.

Now let us study the other case — where Black has a pawn on e7 vs. White's pawn on d5. This is featured on our diagram at the top of the facing page.
This is too passive. It is better to play 11 \( \text{Bc}1 \) or 11 \( \text{dxc}5 \), which after 11...\( \text{Qxc}5 \) 12 \( \text{Bc}1 \) a6 13 a3 \( \text{Be}8 \) 14 \( \text{Qd}4 \) \( \text{Qd}6 \) 15 \( \text{Qxd}6 \) \( \text{Qxd}6 \) 16 \( \text{Qd}2 \) \( \text{Qad}8 \) 17 \( \text{Qed}1 \) g6 18 \( \text{Qf}4! \) \( \text{Qxf}4 \) 19 gxf4 led to White’s advantage in the game Gelfand-Karpov, Vienna 1996.

11 ... \( \text{Qd}7 \)
12 \( \text{Qf}1 \) \( \text{Qfd}8 \)
13 h3 \( \text{Qac}8 \)
14 \( \text{Bc}1 \) \( \text{cx}d4 \)
15 \( \text{Qxd}4 \) \( \text{Qc}4 \)
16 \( \text{Qd}1 \) (D)

Black’s pieces are more active than their white counterparts, and he needs to take advantage of this situation. The best way to do so is to expand in the centre.

16 ... \( \text{d}4! \)

Black’s pawn crosses the demarcation line, giving its possessor a spatial advantage.

Here Karpov, in his book *My 300 Best Games*, gives the following alternative line — 16 ... \( \text{Qh}5 \) 17 \( \text{Qe}5 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 18 \( \text{Qxb}7 \) \( \text{Qxb}7 \) 19 \( \text{Qb}5 \) \( \text{Qc}5 \) 20 \( \text{Ax}c5 \) \( \text{bxc}5 \) 21 \( \text{Qa}4 \) f6, claiming that “Black is clearly better”.

However, this line is full of mis-
takes. In particular, 19 \( \text{Q}b5?? \) simply
loses to 19...\( \text{Axc1} \) 20 \( \text{Wxc1} \) \( \text{Axd5} \)-. Instead of this White has to play 19
\( \text{Wd3} \), with a good position. Then, after 22...f6 instead of 22 \( \text{Af4}? \),
White should play 22 \( \text{Ad6} \)!, which
gives him an advantage, as 22...\( \text{Axd6} \) 23 \( \text{Axd6} \) \( \text{Axd6} \) is impossible because
of 24 \( \text{We8#} \). Therefore, 16...\( \text{Ah5} \) would have been a mistake.

17 \( \text{Axb7} \) \( \text{Ab7} \)
18 \( \text{Af4} \) \( \text{Axc1} \)
19 \( \text{Axg6}+ \) \( \text{Af6} \)
20 \( \text{Wxc1} \) \( \text{Ad5}! \)
21 \( \text{Ab1} \) \( \text{Ac5} \)
22 \( \text{Ah2} \) \( \text{f5}! \)
23 \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{D} \)

\( \text{B} \)

23 ... \( \text{d3} \)

Here the move 23...a5!? is also
worth considering — Black fortifies
the position of his knight and keeps
the tension. The variation 24 \( \text{Ac7} \)
\( \text{Axd7} \) 25 \( \text{Axb6} \) \( \text{Aa4} \) is clearly bad for
White, while after 24 \( \text{Af3} \) the
advancement of the d-pawn — 24...d3 —
gains in strength. So, perhaps after
23...a5!? White would face even more
difficult problems than in the game.
Note that the d4-pawn is very safe in
this position and White has none of
the advantages which it might give
him — no blockading knight on d3,
no active bishop on g2.

24 \( \text{Wxd3} \) \( \text{AxGd3} \)
25 \( \text{Axd1} \) \( \text{Wb5} \)
26 \( \text{Af5} \) \( \text{Axg5} \)
27 \( \text{Wxe5} \) \( \text{Wf5} \)
28 \( \text{Ad2} \) \( \text{Ad4} \)
29 \( \text{Cc2} \) \( \text{h4}! \)
30 \( \text{Gc3} \) is worth considering.
30 ... \( \text{Wh3} \)
31 ... \( \text{Wc6} \) \( \text{Axh4} \)
32 ... \( \text{Wg2} \) \( \text{Wf5} \)

Probably better is 32...\( \text{Af4} \) 33
\( \text{We3} \) \( \text{Ah7} \) and it’s hard to suggest a
move for White.

33 \( \text{Wg3} \) \( \text{Ad4} \)
34 \( \text{Wg6}!\) \( \text{fxg6} \)
35 \( \text{Wd3} \) \( \text{Ad5} \)
36 \( \text{Wf1} \) \( \text{Wf4} \)
37 \( \text{Wxf4} \)?

This is a losing mistake, whereas
after 37 \( \text{Ag3} \) Black would still have
to work in order to capitalise on his
advantage. The finish was: 37...\( \text{Wxf4} \)
38 \( \text{Ad5} \) \( \text{Wg4}+ \) 39 \( \text{Ag3} \) \( \text{Wc4} \) 40
\( \text{Ad8}+ \) \( \text{Ah7} \) 41 \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{Ec2} \) 42 \( \text{Wg2} \) 43
\( \text{Ad6} \) \( \text{Wxa2} \) 44 \( \text{Oe4} \) \( \text{Wa5} \) 45 \( \text{Oe}3 \)
\( \text{Oe5}+ \) 46 \( \text{We3} \) \( \text{Wb5} \) 47 \( \text{Ad4} \) 48
\( \text{We3} \) \( \text{Wxb3}+ \) 49 \( \text{Wf4} \) \( \text{Wf3}+ \) 50 \( \text{We5} \)
\( \text{Wf8} \) 51 \( \text{Ag5}+ \) \( \text{Gg8} \) 52 \( \text{We4} \) 53
\( \text{Ad6} \) \( b4 \) 0–1.

The pawn on d4 does not always
bring Black such dividends as in this
game. We have already listed the
problems which it may cause to its
possessor. The following game illus-
trates those problems quite clearly.
Legky - Salaun  

_France Ch., Montpellier 1998_

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Qc3 c5 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Qf3 Qf6 6 g3 Qc6 7 Qg2 Qe7 8 0–0 0–0 9 dxc5 Qxc5 10 Qg5 d4 11 Qxf6 Wxf6 12 Qd5 Wd8 13 Qd2 Qh3?!

This move leads to a rather unpromising position. Usually Black plays 13...Qxe8 here, trying to put some pressure on the e2-pawn.

14 Qxh3 Wxd5  
15 Qg2  

Here a less popular move — 15 Wb3!? — deserves serious attention. As the line 15...Wh5 16 Wxb7 does not offer Black enough compensation for the pawn, he has to settle for the endgame arising after 15...Wxb3 16 Qxb3. This ending is very pleasant for White, as after a further 16...Qb6 17 Qf1 he can increase the pressure by playing Wc1 and Qg2.

15 ...
16 Qb3  
17 a3  
18 Qc1!  

The knight heads for a good square on d3. Here the d4-pawn is over-protected, so White should not attack it. Instead he blockades it, hoping that his minor pieces will be more active than their black counterparts.

18 ...
19 b4

A multi-purpose move: while grabbing space on the queen-side, White also prepares to protect the e2-pawn.

19 ...

h6?!  
I don’t like this move. In positions like this Black should seek active play on the kingside, so if the h-pawn had to move, it should be advanced to h5. I would prefer 19...Qd7, followed by ...Qe5. That should give Black sufficient counterplay.

20 a2  
21 a2  
21...Qe5 is better.

22 Qd3  
23 Wb1!?  
24 a4 (D)

Having placed his pieces well, White goes for queenside expansion. Now it is quite apparent that Black has lacked a plan.

24 ...
25 a5  
26 Qd1  
27 Qxd3  
28 Qf3  
29 Qg2

Though Black has got rid of the blockading knight, he still has many problems here, due to his inferior bishop and White’s control over the open c-file. Black needs to decide
how to arrange his pawns on the queenside. One option is to play ...a6 at some point, but then White will play b4-b5 anyway and the b7-pawn may be much more vulnerable than the a5-pawn. Black's defensive task is not easy, whether he plays ...a6 or avoids this advance.

29  ...  g6  
30  ∑b3  ∑f6  
31  ∑c5  ∑g7  
32  b5  ∑dd7?!  
33  ∑c8  ∑c7  
34  ∑a8!  b6  
35  a6  ∑d6?!  
36  ∑d5

White wins the d4-pawn and having yet another target on a7, he stands to win: 36...∑c5 37 ∑xd4 ∑xd4 38 ∑xd4 ∑e5 39 ∑d5 ∑c2 40 ∑xa7 ∑xa7 41 ∑xe5 ∑f6 42 ∑e8 ∑c5 43 ∑c6 ∑e5 44 ∑b8 ∑xe2 45 ∑xb6 ∑e6 46 ∑b7 1–0.

Before I move onto our next pawn formation, I'd like to give a short summary. With the structure in question, both sides should take into consideration the following motifs:

a) whether the isolated pawn will be weak on d5 (d4) or whether it can be well supported;

b) whether the possessor of the isolani will be able to put pressure on the enemy pawn on the semi-open c- or e-files;

c) whether the side playing against the isolani will be able to utilise the blockading square in front of the pawn and to take advantage of his potentially active king's bishop.

2. Black's pawn shifts to d5 leading to pawn symmetry in the centre.

The pawn formation featured here is very common. In this absolutely symmetrical structure, the only advantage either side can have is due to superior placement of its pieces. Let us assume that it was White who enforced this pawn structure by exchanging some pieces on d5 and list the following advantages which White may have in practice:

1. Better control over the open e-file in general and over the e5-square in particular;

2. Better control over the c-file;

3. Superior minor pieces, e.g. a knight vs. Black's light-squared bishop.

If one of those advantages will be available for White after exchanging on d5, then such exchange must be considered. Our first example of this pawn skeleton illustrates the first advantage that we listed — White's better control over the e-file and the e5-square.
Vaganian - Serper
Groningen PCA 1993

1 c4 c6 2 e4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5
\(\text{\$f6}\) 5 \(\text{\$c3}\) \(\text{\$xd5}\) 6 \(\text{\$f3}\) \(\text{\$c6}\) 7
\(\text{\$b5}\) e6 8 0-0 \(\text{\$e7}\) 9 d4 0-0 10 \(\text{\$e1}\)
\(\text{\$d7}\) 11 \(\text{\$d3}!\) (D)

\(\text{\$xh7}\) 15 \(\text{\$xd4}\) or 13 \(\text{\$f6}\) 14 \(\text{\$f4}\),
but the text is worse.

14 \(\text{\$xe5}\)

This recapture indicates very
clearly that White is after an attack
in this game. Vaganian hopes to take
advantage of his control over the e-
file and of the active position of his
light-squared bishop, which is aimed
at Black's kingside. 14 \(\text{\$xe5}\) would
also be quite good for White.

14 ...

\(\text{\$e6}\)

In ChessBase Magazine No. 39,
GM Blatny recommended here
14...

\(\text{\$f6}\) 15 \(\text{\$xd5}\) \(\text{\$c7}\), with compen-
sation for a pawn, but then after
either 16 \(\text{\$e3}\) or 16 \(\text{\$h5}\) White's
advantage is unquestionable.

15 \(\text{\$h5}\) (D)

\(\text{\$h7}\) 15 \(\text{\$h5}\) or 13 \(\text{\$f6}\) 14 \(\text{\$f4}\),
but the text is worse.

14 \(\text{\$xe5}\)

This recapture indicates very
clearly that White is after an attack
in this game. Vaganian hopes to take
advantage of his control over the e-
file and of the active position of his
light-squared bishop, which is aimed
at Black's kingside. 14 \(\text{\$xe5}\) would
also be quite good for White.

14 ...

\(\text{\$e6}\)

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\(\text{\$f6}\) 15 \(\text{\$xd5}\) \(\text{\$c7}\), with compen-
sation for a pawn, but then after
either 16 \(\text{\$e3}\) or 16 \(\text{\$h5}\) White's
advantage is unquestionable.

15 \(\text{\$h5}\) (D)

\(\text{\$h7}\) 15 \(\text{\$h5}\) or 13 \(\text{\$f6}\) 14 \(\text{\$f4}\),
but the text is worse.

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clearly that White is after an attack
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file and of the active position of his
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at Black's kingside. 14 \(\text{\$xe5}\) would
also be quite good for White.

14 ...

\(\text{\$e6}\)

In ChessBase Magazine No. 39,
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14...

\(\text{\$f6}\) 15 \(\text{\$xd5}\) \(\text{\$c7}\), with compen-
sation for a pawn, but then after
either 16 \(\text{\$e3}\) or 16 \(\text{\$h5}\) White's
advantage is unquestionable.

15 \(\text{\$h5}\) (D)

White launches an attack before
his rook can be chased away by
...\(\text{\$d6}\).

15 ...

\(\text{g6}\)

The only defence, as 15...
\(\text{\$h6}\) loses on the spot to 16 \(\text{\$xh6}\)!
\(\text{gxh6}\) 17 \(\text{\$xh6}\).

16 \(\text{\$h6}\) \(\text{\$g4}\)?

Like it or not, Black had to play
16...

\(\text{\$f6}\) 17 \(\text{\$h5}\) \(\text{\$e8}\). Then after the
hasty 18 \( \text{wxh7+ } \text{xf8 } \text{xg6? Black gets good counter-chances by playing } \text{xe}1+ 20 \text{xc}1 \text{fxg6 } 21 \text{wxg6 f7 22 wh6+ g7 23 wf4 e4.} \\

In this line White should prefer 19 e5, but it's even better not to take on h7 so soon and to prefer 18 d2. Then after 18...b6 19 xh7+ f8 20 xg6 xd4 21 h6+ e7 22 g5+ White is winning.

17 h3!+- f6?!

Here Black missed a chance to set a little trap. He should have played 17...d1, hoping for 18 f4? f6 19 xd1 g7!, where Black is O.K.

Of course, White does not have to fall for this — after the correct 18 d2! f6 (18...c2 19 h5 is curtains for Black) 19 xd1 xe5 20 dxe5 White wins.

18 xg6! hxg6
19 wxg6+ h8
20 e3 1-0

Since checkmate is inevitable after 20...d7 21 g3, Black resigned.

In the pawn formation under consideration, there are two open files and White might be able to take advantage of either of them. We have just seen how Vaganian utilised his control over the e-file; now let's have a look at how the open c-file can be used.

Larsen - Penrose

*Palma de Mallorca 1969*

1 b3 c5 2 ab2 ac6 3 c4 e6 4 af3 af6 5 g3 ae7 6 ag2 0-0 7 ac3 d5 8 cxd5 exd5 9 ac1 ae6 10 d4 \[(D) 

By transposition, Larsen has obtained his favourite set-up against the Tarrasch Defence — the double fianchetto.

This system is not without poison, as White's dark-squared bishop sometimes can be very dangerous on the long diagonal.

10... ec8
11 0-0 ec8
12 dxc5 ec5
13 ae4 ec7
14 dc5 dd7?!

This is too passive. Perhaps Black should have preferred 14... ec5 15 xc5 de4, followed by...e7.

15 xd7

White could also change the pawn formation by playing 15 xe6 fx6 16 e4 dxe4 17 d2, but he prefers to play against the isolated pawn.

15... edx7
16 ed2 ed8
17 fd1 ef6
18 e3 ec7
19 h3 h6
20 xf6 xf6
21 ec3 ef5
22 dc1 cd8
23 $\text{Qd4!}$

This is the only way for White to play for any advantage. Other moves enable Black to solve all his problems with an eventual $...\text{xe4}$.

23 $...$ $\text{Qxd4}$

24 $\text{Wxd4}$

25 $\text{exd4 (D)}$

![Chessboard diagram]

We have arrived at the pawn formation which interests us. White’s advantage here is based on two factors. His bishop is superior and, of the two open files, the one that White’s rooks control is the easier for penetration on to the seventh rank. These advantages are quite significant and Black must be careful.

25 $...$ $\text{Be7?!}$

Faulty idea — in situations like this it’s better to seek counterplay before your opponent strengthens his position. Thus, Black should have tried 25...$\text{Bxe2!}$, with chances for survival. For example, after 26 $\text{Cc7}$ $\text{Bxa2}$ 27 $\text{Bxb7}$ $a5$ the future does not look too dark for Black. Remember: your opponent just loves to have an opportunity to improve his position at his leisure, so don’t give him this chance — defend actively!

26 $g4!$ $\text{Be6}$

After 26...$\text{Be4}$ 27 $f3$ $\text{g6}$ 28 $\text{Bf2}$ it becomes apparent that it’s a lot easier for White to control the points of entry on the e-file than for his opponent to control the c7-square.

27 $f4!$ $f6$

After 27...$f5$? 28 $\text{Be1}$ $g6$ 29 $\text{gx}f5$ $\text{gxf5}$ Black’s bishop would be just awful.

28 $\text{Bf2}$ $f7$

29 $\text{Bf3}$ $f8$

30 $a4!$

White consistently improves his position: he is already more active on the kingside and now he wants to grab space on the opposite wing.

30 $...$ $\text{Bde8}$

Perhaps Black should have tried 30...$g5$, provoking White to show his hand on the kingside.

31 $a5$ $\text{Bd7}$

32 $b4$ $\text{Bed8}$

Black plays consistently, sticking to passive defence, but this allows his opponent to find ways to improve his position without any interruptions. As the $d5$-pawn is well protected, White moves his bishop to the diagonal where it will have better prospects.

33 $\text{Bxe2?!}$ $\text{Be8}$

Also after 33...$\text{Bg6}$ 34 $\text{Cc7}$ $\text{Be7}$ 35 $\text{Bb5!}$ Black’s position is lost, for example: 35...$\text{Bxc7}$ 36 $\text{Bxc7}$ $\text{Bb8}$ 37 $f5$ $\text{f7}$ 38 $\text{Bd7}$ and White’s pieces dominate the board.

34 $\text{Bd3}$ $\text{Be7}$

35 $\text{Cc8}$
This spells disaster for Black.

Botvinnik - Alekhine

**AVRO 1938**

1. **Qf3** d5 2. d4 **Qf6** 3. c4 e6 4. **Qc3** c5 5. exd5 **Qxd5** 6. e3 **Qc6** 7. **Qc4**

cxd4 8. exd4 **Qe7** 9. 0–0 0–0 10. **Qe1** b6?

This is a typical mistake. If Black wants to fianchetto his light-squared bishop here, he should play 10...

10. **Qxc3** 11. bxc3 b6, with mutual chances.

11. **Qxd5**!

The text closes the diagonal a8–h1, after which ...b6 loses any sense, leaving Black only with the weak c6-square.

11. ... **exd5**

12. **Qb5** **Qd7**

After 12... **Qb7** 13. a3 **Qc8** 14. **Qd2** **Qd6** 15. **Qc1** White enjoyed a pleasant advantage in the game Ehlvest-Oll, Podolsk 1993, but perhaps he could have achieved an even bigger edge by playing 13 **Wxa4** **Qc8** 14. **Qf4**.

13. **Wxa4** **Qb8**

This is a sad necessity, but 13...**Qc8** 14. **Qf4** leads to an even worse situation, as Black would have serious problems protecting the a7-pawn.

14. **Qf4** **Qxb5**

15. **Wxb5** a6

16. **Wxa4** **Qd6**

17. **Qxd6** **Wxd6**

18. **Qac1 (D)**

Annotating this game, Botvinnik wrote: "White controls both open files with a good chance of firmly holding one". Now we can see how much damage the move 10...b6 has done to
Black’s position — if he were able to put his knight on c6, it would ease his problems. In practice, defence of such passive positions against a strong opponent is a thankless and usually a hopeless task, so it’s much better to avoid them!

18 ... \textit{A}a7
19 \textit{A}c2!

Here is yet another valuable comment from Botvinnik — “The c-file is more important than the e-file, since the e7-square can be protected by the black king, while the c7-square will remain vulnerable.” Thus, White allows rooks to be exchanged on the e-file, but not on the c-file. We saw a similar positional motif in the game Larsen-Penrose.

19 ... \textit{A}e7
20 \textit{A}xe7 \textit{A}xe7
21 \textit{A}c7 \textit{A}xc7
22 \textit{A}xc7 f6!
23 \textit{A}f1! \textit{A}f7
24 \textit{A}e8+ \textit{A}f8
25 \textit{A}c3 (D)

Black is almost in a zugzwang, as the moves like 25...\textit{A}e8, 25...\textit{A}d7 or 25...\textit{A}f7 can (and will!) be met the return of White’s rook to the seventh rank (\textit{A}c3-c7). Meanwhile White wants to centralise his king and to relocate his knight to a more active position — perhaps to e3, from where it will attack the d5-pawn.

25...g5 26 \textit{A}e1! h5 27 h4!? \textit{A}d7

Also after the alternative —
27...\textit{A}f7 28 \textit{A}f3 g4 29 \textit{A}e1 \textit{A}e6 30 \textit{A}d3 \textit{A}f5 31 g3 — Black’s problems are far from being over.

28 \textit{A}c7 \textit{A}f7 29 \textit{A}f3 g4 30 \textit{A}e1 \textit{f}5 31 \textit{A}d3 f4

Black had to advance his pawn to f4 in order to prevent \textit{A}d3-f4, but now this pawn itself becomes a target.

32 f3! \textit{g}xf3 33 \textit{g}xf3 a5 34 a4 \textit{A}f8
35 \textit{A}c6 \textit{A}e7 36 \textit{A}f2 \textit{A}f5 37 \textit{b}3 \textit{A}d8 38 \textit{A}e2 \textit{A}b8 39 \textit{A}g6 \textit{A}c7 40 \textit{A}e5

White’s position is absolutely winning and Botvinnik could already choose between different ways of capitalising on his advantage.

40...\textit{A}a6 41 \textit{A}g7+ \textit{A}c8 42 \textit{A}c6 \textit{A}f6 43 \textit{A}e7+ \textit{A}b8 44 \textit{A}xd5 \textit{A}d6
45 \textit{A}g5 \textit{A}b4 46 \textit{A}xb4 axb4 47 \textit{A}xh5 \textit{A}c6 48 \textit{A}b5 \textit{A}c7 49 \textit{A}xb4 \textit{A}h6 50 \textit{A}b5 \textit{A}xh4 51 \textit{A}d3 1–0
Again, before I move on to our next pawn formation, I'd like to give a short summary. Heading for the symmetrical pawn structure with pawns on d4 and d5 by exchanging on d5 can be beneficial for White if in the resulting pawn structure he will have at least some of the following advantages:

a) better control over the open e-file and possibilities to utilise the e5-square;

b) better control over the open c-file, particularly if Black has played ...b6;

c) superior minor piece — this usually happens when Black has his light-squared bishop (which is limited by the d5-pawn) on the board.

3. White's d-pawn shifts to e5.

The pawn structure featured above is a frequent guest in tournament practice. Of course, it arises not only from positions with the isolated d-pawn when the d4-pawn shifts to e5, but we will primarily examine this transformation.

The main feature of this pawn formation is White's spatial advantage, due to the advanced position of his e-pawn.

Spatial advantage is a tricky thing. My students often point out to this factor while assessing various positions, but they frequently overestimate its importance — territorial advantage does not matter that much in positions which are greatly simplified.

I often illustrate this with the following comparison: imagine eight people in a room with the dimensions of 3m x 3m. Do they lack space? Certainly. Now imagine the same room, but with only two or three people in it. Obviously they do not have much problem with space.

Something similar can be said about chess positions. The chessboard is that room, while the pieces are its occupants. For example, in the diagram position Black might have serious problems if there are many pieces on the board, but if most pieces have been exchanged, Black is O.K.

Examining this position, we should also mention that the d6-square may become a valuable outpost for White, while the d5-square can be utilised by Black. Now let's see a game where all these factors played a very important role.

Kasparov - Piket
Fontys, Tilburg 1997

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 d6 6 4 65 5 a6
In the game Baburin-Ashley, Bermuda 1998, White obtained some advantage after 9 e4 \( \diamond b7 \) 10 e5 \( \diamond e4! \)
11 \( \diamond bd2 \) \( \diamond xd2 \) 12 \( \diamond xd2 \) cxd4 13 \( \diamond g5 \) \( \diamond e7 \) 14 \( \diamond xe7 \) \( \diamond xe7 \) 15 \( \diamond xd4 \)
0–0 16 \( \diamond c1 \).

9 ... \( \diamond b7 \)
10 e4 cxd4
11 e5 (D)

We have reached the pawn skeleton under examination. The e5-pawn gives White territorial advantage and may help him to organise an attack on the kingside or to occupy the d6-outpost. Though White is a pawn down, he can easily restore the balance later as the d4-pawn is weak.

11 ... \( \diamond d5 \)

It's always difficult to decide where to retreat with the knight in positions like this — to d5, occupying a nice square in the centre or to d7, putting pressure on the e5-pawn.

Black chose the latter route in the game Slipak-Spengenberg, Buenos Aires 1996 and won after 11 ... \( \diamond fd7 \)

12 \( \diamond c4 \) \( \diamond c5 \) 13 \( \diamond g5 \) f6 14 exf6 gxf6 15 \( \diamond fe5 \) h5 16 \( \diamond g6 \) \( \diamond d5 \) 17 \( \diamond d6+ \)
\( \diamond xd6 \) 18 \( \diamond xh8 \) \( \diamond xb3 \) 19 \( \diamond xh5+ \)
\( \diamond d7 \) 20 \( \diamond xf6 \) \( \diamond xal \) 21 \( \diamond f7+ \) \( \diamond e7 \)
22 \( \diamond g6 \) \( \diamond c6 \) 23 \( \diamond xal \) e5.

12 \( \diamond c4 \) \( \diamond c6 \)
13 \( \diamond g5 \)

Here Kasparov's second, GM Dokhoian, recommends 13 \( \diamond xd4 \)
\( \diamond e7 \) 14 \( \diamond xc6 \) \( \diamond xc6 \) 15 \( \diamond g4 \), where White is also better as his opponent has problems with his king.

13 ... \( \diamond d7 \)

Black could not get rid of the e5-pawn by playing 13 ... f6?, as then after 14 exf6 gxf6 15 \( \diamond e1! \) White's attack is devastating, for example:
15 ... fxg5 16 \( \diamond xe6+ \) \( \diamond d7 \) 17 \( \diamond xc6 \)
\( \diamond xc6 \) 18 \( \diamond ce5+ \) \( \diamond c7 \) 19 \( \diamond xc6 \)
\( \diamond xc6 \) 20 \( \diamond xd4+ \) \( \diamond b6 \) 21 a5+ \( \diamond b7 \)
22 \( \diamond e6 \), winning.

14 \( \diamond c1 \) h6
15 \( \diamond h4 \) \( \diamond c5 \)
16 \( \diamond fd2! \) 0–0
17 \( \diamond e4 \) \( \diamond e7 \)
18 \( \diamond g3! \)

Having a spatial advantage, White does not want to trade off pieces. The text move gives extra support to the e5-pawn.

18 ... \( \diamond d8 \)
19 \( \diamond cd6 \) \( \diamond a5 \)

Effectively this is the only move, as the alternative try — 19 ... \( \diamond b6 \) — loses after 20 \( \diamond xd5! \) exd5 21 \( \diamond f6! \)
gxf6 22 \( \diamond f5 \) fxe5 23 \( \diamond g4+ \) \( \diamond g5 \) 24
\( \diamond xh6+ \) \( \diamond h7 \) 25 \( \diamond xg5 \).

20 \( \diamond c2! \) b3
21 \( \diamond b1 \) \( \diamond b6 \)
22 \( \diamond d3 \) (D)
White's spatial advantage has helped him to get a very dangerous attack against the enemy king. Black's next few moves are forced.

22 ... g6
23 Qc5 Qc8
24 h4! Qc6
25 a5!

This pawn sacrifice completely disorganizes Black's forces — it's interesting to see how this action on the queenside intensifies White's attack on the opposite wing.

25 ... Wxa5
26 Qxf7! Qxf7
27 Wxg6+ Wf8
28 Qxe6+ Qxe6
29 Qxe6!+- Wd7

White is also winning after 29... Qc7 30 Wxh6+ Qe8 31 Qxe6 Qxe6 32 Wxe6.

30 Wxh6+ 1–0

Black resigned in view of 30... Qe8 31 e6 Qc6 32 exf7+ Qd7 33 Qf5+.

This game is a fine example of how the pawn formation that we are examining favours White if there are many pieces still left on the board. Black should bear this in mind when he considers transforming the pawn formation with the isolated d4-pawn by exchanging pieces on e5. Here is an illustration of this idea:

Balashov - Yandemirov
Russian Cup, Moscow 1998

1 e4 c6 2 c4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 Qf6 5 Qc3 Qxd5 6 Qf3 Qc6 7 Qb5 e6 8 0–0 Qe7 9 d4 0–0
10 Qe1 Qd7

Also possible is 10... Qf6. Then after 11 Qf4!? Qb4 12 Qe5 a6 13 Qe2 Qbd5 14 Qg3 Qxc3 15 Qxc3 Qe4 16 Qd3 Qxg3 17 hgx3 Wc7 18 a4 White seized the initiative in the game Korchnoi-Serper, Wch Lucerne 1993.

11 Qd3 Qf6
12 Qe4 Qe8?!

Annotating this game in Shakhmaty v Rossii ('Chess in Russia') No. 3/1998, GM Balashov criticised the text move and recommended 12... Qce7 with a further ... Qc6 instead. This would be a logical attempt to use the extra tempo which Black has here compared to the usual position arising from the Panov Attack of the Caro-Kann Defence and the Semi-Tarrasch Defence.

Black has this extra move (... Qd7) because on its way to e4 White's bishop made a short visit to b5. Balashov also made a valuable point that in this pawn structure Black's rook is better off on f8, where it overprotects the f7-pawn.

13 Wd3!
After 13 \( \square xd5 \) exd5 14 \( \square xd5 \) \( \varepsilon x e5 \) 15 \( \varepsilon x e1 \) \( \varepsilon g4?! \) Black is fine.

13 ... \( \varepsilon h6? \)

Black should have played 13...g6 instead, not weakening the b1-h7 diagonal.

14 \( \varepsilon e5! \) \( \varepsilon d b4?! \)

It was better to play 14...\( \varepsilon c8 \). Then White would probably play 15 \( \varepsilon d2?! \), mobilising all his forces and keeping good prospects for attack.

15 \( \varepsilon h7+ \) \( \varepsilon f8 \)

16 \( \varepsilon e4 \) \( \varepsilon x e5? \)

Here the exchange on e5 only helps White’s attack as there are many pieces on the board. Therefore the pawn formation that now arises favours White. Black had to play 16...\( \varepsilon c8 \), though even then his position would be difficult.

17 \( \varepsilon d x e5 \) \( \varepsilon e7 \)

18 \( \varepsilon g4 \) (D)

The e5-pawn divides the board into two parts, making White’s attack on the kingside irresistible. As White threatens to play 19 \( \varepsilon x h6 \), Black’s next move is forced:

18 ... \( \varepsilon g5 \)

19 \( \varepsilon h4! \) \( \varepsilon c6 \)

20 \( \varepsilon h x g5 \) \( \varepsilon h x g5 \)

21 \( \varepsilon d1!+\)

This is even better than winning a pawn after 21 \( \varepsilon x g5 \) \( \varepsilon x g5 \) 22 \( \varepsilon x b4+ \) \( \varepsilon g7 \) 23 \( \varepsilon e4 \).

The end was: 21...\( \varepsilon a5 \) 22 \( \varepsilon x g5 \) \( \varepsilon x g5 \) 23 \( \varepsilon x g5 \) \( \varepsilon x d8 \) 24 a3 \( \varepsilon d5 \) 25 \( \varepsilon e4 \) \( \varepsilon a4 \) 26 b3 \( \varepsilon x b3 \) 27 \( \varepsilon d6 \) \( \varepsilon e8 \) 28 \( \varepsilon b1 \) \( \varepsilon a4 \) 29 \( \varepsilon x d5 \) 1–0.

In this game Black’s decision to change the pawn structure by exchanging on e5 was wrong, as in the resulting pawn formation his opponent quickly obtained an attack on the kingside. Now let’s see a game where altering the pawn skeleton was a correct idea.

Djurhuus - Baburin
Skei Masters, Gausdal 1993

1 \( d4 \) \( d5 \) 2 \( c4 \) \( dxc4 \) 3 \( e3 \) \( \varepsilon f6 \) 4 \( \varepsilon c4 \) \( e6 \) 5 \( \varepsilon f3 \) \( c5 \) 6 \( \varepsilon e2 \) \( d x c4 \) 7 \( e x d4 \) \( e x d4 \) \( \varepsilon e7 \) 8 \( \varepsilon c3 \) a6 9 \( \varepsilon g5 \) 0–0 10 0–0 b5 11 \( \varepsilon b3 \) \( \varepsilon b7 \)

12 \( \varepsilon f e1 \)

We saw this variation while examining the game Boleslavsky-Kotov, which went 12...\( \varepsilon c6 \) 13 \( \varepsilon a d1 \) \( \varepsilon a 5 ? \) 14 \( d5 ! \) and White obtained a decisive advantage. Black’s next move is designed to discourage the d4-d5 break.

12 ... \( \varepsilon b 4 \)

13 \( \varepsilon a 4 \) \( \varepsilon b d 7 \)

After 13...\( \varepsilon d 5 ? \) 14 \( \varepsilon x f 6 ! \) \( \varepsilon x f 6 \) 15 \( \varepsilon x d 5 \) exd5 16 \( \varepsilon c 2 ! \) Black ran into serious problems in Levenfish-Rauzer, 10th USSR Ch, Tbilisi 1937.

14 \( \varepsilon e 5 \) (D)
As White now threatens to strike on f7, Black is practically forced to take on e5. Fortunately, the arising pawn formation is quite acceptable to him, as he can exchange a few pieces later on. It also helps Black that the a4-knight is away from both the d6-square and the kingside.

14 ... \( \text{\underline{Q}}xe5 \)
15 dxe5 \( \text{\underline{Q}}d7 \)

It’s important to limit the a4-knight — after 15...\( \text{\underline{Q}}d5?! \) 16 \( \text{\underline{Q}}c5 \) White would be better.

16 \( \text{\underline{Q}}xe7 \)

More interesting here is 16 \( \text{\underline{Q}}f4?! \), keeping more pieces on the board.

16 ... \( \text{\underline{W}}xe7 \)
17 \( \text{\underline{Q}}e3 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}c6 \)
18 \( \text{\underline{Q}}ac1 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}fc8 \)
19 \( \text{\underline{Q}}b6 \)

More ambitious would be 19 \( \text{\underline{Q}}ed1 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}xa4 \) 20 \( \text{\underline{Q}}xa4 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}c5 \) 21 \( \text{\underline{Q}}c2 \), although after the further 21...\( \text{\underline{Q}}a7 \), followed by ...\( \text{\underline{Q}}ac7 \), Black should be O.K.

19 ... \( \text{\underline{Q}}xb6 \)
20 \( \text{\underline{W}}xb6 \) \( \text{\underline{W}}b7 \)
21 \( \text{\underline{W}}xb7 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}xb7 \)
22 f4 \( \text{\underline{Q}}f8 \) (\( \text{D} \))

Referring to my example with that ‘imaginary room’, we can say that here Black no longer has problems, since so many occupants have left the room! A draw resulted after 23 \( \text{\underline{Q}}f2 \)
\( \text{\underline{Q}}e7 \) 24 g3 a5 25 \( \text{\underline{Q}}ed1 \) a4 26 \( \text{\underline{Q}}xe8 \)
\( \text{\underline{Q}}xe8 \) 27 \( \text{\underline{Q}}c4 \) f6 28 \( \text{\underline{Q}}d6 \) fxe5 29 fxe5 \( \text{\underline{Q}}a5 \) 30 \( \text{\underline{Q}}b6 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}xe5 \) 31 \( \text{\underline{Q}}xb4 \)
\( \text{\underline{Q}}d7 \) 32 \( \text{\underline{Q}}d3 \) h6 33 h4 g5 34 hxg5 hxg5 35 \( \text{\underline{Q}}c2 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}e5 \) 36 \( \text{\underline{Q}}d1 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}c6 \) 37 \( \text{\underline{Q}}e3 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}e5+ \) 38 \( \text{\underline{Q}}f2 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}f5+ \) 39 \( \text{\underline{Q}}e1 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}e5+ \) 40 \( \text{\underline{Q}}f2 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}f5+ \) \( \frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2} \).

Now let us see how a shift to this particular pawn formation can be used as a method of exploiting the drawbacks of the isolated d-pawn.

Anand - Adams
Wijk aan Zee 1996

1 d4 \( \text{\underline{Q}}f6 \) 2 \( \text{\underline{Q}}f3 \) e6 3 c4 \( \text{\underline{Q}}c6 \) 4 b6 \( \text{\underline{Q}}b7 \)
5 \( \text{\underline{G}}g2 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}e7 \) 6 0–0 0–0 7 \( \text{\underline{Q}}e1 \) d5 8
exd5 exd5 9 \( \text{\underline{Q}}c3 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}a6 \) 10 \( \text{\underline{Q}}f4 \) c5
11 \( \text{\underline{Q}}c1 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}e4 \) 12 dxc5 \( \text{\underline{Q}}xc5 \) 13
\( \text{\underline{Q}}d4 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}f6 \) 14 \( \text{\underline{Q}}h3 \)! (\( \text{D} \))

White would also have better chances in the position arising after
14 b4 \( \text{\underline{Q}}xc3 \) 15 \( \text{\underline{Q}}xc3 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}e6 \) 16 \( \text{\underline{Q}}xe6 \)
fxe6 17 \( \text{\underline{Q}}c7 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}f7 \) 18 \( \text{\underline{Q}}xf7 \) \( \text{\underline{Q}}xf7 \) 19
e4!. However, the text move is even stronger — White simply takes control over the important squares on the h3-c8 diagonal, gradually improving his position.

14 ...  

In ChessBase Magazine, I criticised this move, recommending 14...\textit{B}e8 instead, but did not provide any variations. Analysing the same game, GM Dautov paid more attention to the move 14...\textit{B}e8, but gave it a question mark on account of the following variation: 15 \textit{Q}c5 \textit{Q}e5 16 \textit{Q}g2 \textit{Q}x4 17 \textit{Q}x4 \textit{Q}ge6 18 \textit{B}e3 and White is better.

In this line he also mentioned the move 15...\textit{B}e7, stating that then after 16 b4 \textit{Q}e6 17 \textit{Q}xe6 fxe6 18 \textit{Q}c7 White is winning. However, this is incorrect, since after the further 18...e5! it is Black who is better.

Without disagreeing that White still has the better chances even after 14...\textit{B}e8, I still think that it is a better move than the text.

15 \textit{Q}xg5  
16 e3  
17 \textit{B}e2!  

This is the point of White’s previous play — he turns the c6-square into an outpost, threatening to plant his knight there and thus forcing Black’s reply.

18 b4!  
19 \textit{Q}xe4!?  

A very interesting approach — White alters the pawn structure, hoping that the resulting pawn formation will be favourable for him, thanks to the greater activity of his pieces.

Also interesting is 19 \textit{Q}ec2!? with a further \textit{Q}c5, as recommended by Dautov.

19 ...  
20 \textit{Q}d2  
21 b5! (D)  

Also after 22...\textit{B}d8 23 \textit{Q}d7! White stands better.

23 \textit{Q}d7!  
24 \textit{Q}xd7  
25 \textit{Q}c2  
26 \textit{Q}d5  

The rook endgame arising after
26...\textit{e}8 27 \textit{x}c8 \textit{w}xd1 + 28 \textit{x}d1 \textit{e}x8 29 \textit{d}7 \textit{a}8 30 a4 is difficult for Black. Perhaps he should have played 26...a6!?, trying to reduce the material.

27 h4 h5
28 \textit{g}2 \textit{e}6
29 \textit{e}2 \textit{a}3
30 \textit{c}7 \textit{e}7
31 \textit{c}6 \textit{f}e8
32 \textit{c}4 \textit{h}7
33 \textit{d}2 \textit{b}7
34 \textit{d}d6 (D)

White has a significant advantage thanks to the dominant positions of his pieces. Here the e4-pawn causes its possessor only troubles.

Anand masterfully combined the pressure on this pawn with threats against the a7-pawn and the enemy king: 34...\textit{b}2 35 a4 \textit{e}5 36 \textit{d}5 \textit{x}d5 37 \textit{e}xd5 \textit{e}7 38 \textit{d}6! \textit{e}6 39 \textit{d}8! \textit{e}5 40 \textit{c}7 \textit{g}7 41 \textit{xa}7 \textit{d}6 42 \textit{e}7 \textit{d}5 43 \textit{a}8 \textit{d}7 44 \textit{f}8+ \textit{f}6 45 \textit{e}8 1–0.

With this game I’d like to finish our study of this pawn formation. If you consider transforming to this pawn formation from positions with the isolani, you may find the following hint useful:

If there are plenty of pieces on the board, the side having the more advanced e-pawn usually has better chances. If the board is more or less deserted, then the advanced e-pawn does not offer much of an advantage and may become a weakness itself.

4) Black plays ...f5, blocking the b1-h7 diagonal, but making his e6-pawn backward.

The pawn skeleton featured here is fairly common and merits a detailed discussion.

About 15 years ago, a young and inexperienced candidate master had an isolani playing against a stronger opponent who advanced his pawn to f5. ‘Great!’ — thought White — ‘Black has erred badly, weakening the e5-square and making his e6-pawn backward, so I shall now win.’
Alas, he failed to understand the fact that, by playing ...f5, Black limited the scope of White’s light-squared bishop, which was then on b1. Needless to say, having wrong ideas about the game, White soon lost.

That young candidate master was yours truly; my opponent was Yuri Yakovich, now also a GM. I don’t remember the rest of that game and unfortunately I cannot find its scoresheet, but I certainly learned quite a lot from that experience and never again was I so dogmatic about moves like ...f5.

Here comes some proof.

I. Sokolov - Baburin

*New York open 1997*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 dxc4 3 e3 e6 4 ∆xc4 c5 5 ∆f3 a6 6 ∆e2 b5

The text allows Black to avoid the Furman Variation of the Queen’s Gambit Accepted, which could arise after 6...∆f6 7 dxс5 ∆xc5.

7 ∆d3

The alternative — 7 b3 — leads to one of the main positions of the QGA after 7...∆b7 8 0–0 ∆f6 9 ∆c3 ∆bd7. With the text White still hopes to transpose into the Furman Variation, but Black deprives him a chance to play dxс5:

7 ... exd4

8 exd4

In the game Krasenkov-Baburin, ‘Politiken’ Cup, Copenhagen 1996, Black obtained an advantage after 8 ∆xd4 ∆f6 9 0–0?! e5! 10 ∆b3 e4 11 ∆c2 ∆d6 12 f4 exf3 13 gxf3 0–0 14 ∆g2 ∆c6. If White hopes to get any edge, he must recapture on d4 with a pawn.

8 ... ∆f6

9 0–0 ∆e7

10 ∆g5 ∆b7

11 ∆c3 0–0

12 ∆ad1 ∆bd7

13 ∆fe1 (D)

Black had to prevent the d4–d5 break. The careless move 13...∆c8? caused Black a lot of trouble in the game N.Ristić-Baburin, Groningen open 1995, after 14 d5! ∆xd5 15 ∆xd5 ∆xd5 16 ∆hxh7+ ∆xh7 17 ∆xd5! ∆g8 18 ∆d3 exd5 19 ∆xe7 ∆c5 20 ∆d1. Then I found a good chance to complicate the issue by playing 20...∆b6!? 21 ∆xf8 ∆e4. White avoided the most critical line — 22 ∆a3 ∆xf2+ 23 ∆h1 ∆c2 24 ∆g1 a5 — and after 22 ∆f1 ∆xf8 23 ∆e5 ∆f6 24 h3 g6 25 ∆h2 ∆g7 Black solved his problems.
Apart from the text Black can also play 13...b4!? After the game, Sokolov mentioned that he had nonetheless considered meeting this with 14 d5. Alas, nothing is new and this had already occurred in the game Franco-Kharlov, Canete 1994, where Black obtained an advantage after the further 14...bxc3 15 dxe6 Qxf3 16 gxf3 Wa5 17 Qxf6 Qxf6 18 exd7 cxb2 19 we4 g6.

White tries to utilise the c5-square, but Black has enough resources to deal with this plan.

16 ... d5!

Black moves the bishop away from the possible Qe4-c5 and targets the a2-pawn.

17 b3 Qe7
18 Qh5 f5!? (D)

White an outpost on e5, it is quite sound as it limits the scope of White’s bishop. Meanwhile the e6-pawn is not really weak and the e5-knight can be chased away or exchanged.

19 Qg3 Qd7
20 Qe2 Qxe5

Probably it was better to play 20...b4!? 21 Qf1 Qd6, with some advantage for Black.

21 dxe5 Qb4
22 Qf1 Qc7
23 Qh4

Of course, it would be wrong to weaken all the diagonals by playing 23 f4?. The text maintains the balance.

23 ... Qc5
24 Qg3 Qfd8 \!-\!\!\!-

The following game illustrates how White should react to ...f5.

T. Petrosian - Najdorf

Moscow 1967

1 e4 Qf6 2 Qc3 e6 3 Qf3 d5 4 d4 c5 5 exd5 Qxd5 6 e3 Qc6 7 Qd3 Qe7 8 0–0 cxd4 9 exd4 0–0 10 Qe1 Qf6 (D)
We came across this position on page 48, while examining the game Keene-Miles, Hastings 1975/76. Both Keene and Petrosian chose 11 \( \textit{\underline{g}}5 \), but it's worth mentioning that 11 a3 b6 12 \( \textit{\underline{c}}2 \) is more common, building a battery on the b1–h7 diagonal.

11 \( \textit{\underline{g}}5 \)  b6
12 \( \textit{\underline{e}}2 \)  \( \textit{\underline{b}}7 \)
13 \( \textit{\underline{a}}d1 \)  \( \textit{\underline{b}}4 \)
14 \( \textit{\underline{b}}1 \)  \( \textit{\underline{c}}8 \)
15 \( \textit{\underline{e}}5 \)  \( \textit{\underline{f}}d5 \)

15...\( \textit{\underline{b}}d5 \) was worth considering.
16 \( \textit{\underline{d}}2 \)  \( \textit{\underline{f}}6 \)
17 \( \textit{\underline{e}}3! \) (D)

This motif — the queen shift to the kingside — should be familiar to us by now.

17 ... \( \textit{\underline{f}}d5?! \)
18 \( \textit{\underline{h}}3 \)  f5

This move was forced. Black could no longer defend with 18...\( \textit{\underline{f}}6? \), since after 19 \( \textit{\underline{g}}5 \) h6 20 \( \textit{\underline{x}}h6! \) gxh6 21 \( \textit{\underline{x}}h6 \) White's attack is devastating.

After 18...f5 White has to change his plan — he needs to take advantage of the drawbacks of the advance of Black's f-pawn. First of all White needs to activate his bishop, relocating it to another diagonal.

19 a3! \( \textit{\underline{a}}6 \)

This is better than 19...\( \textit{\underline{e}}6 \) 20 \( \textit{\underline{x}}c6 \textit{\underline{x}}c6 \) 21 \( \textit{\underline{a}}2 \), where White's advantage is unquestionable.

20 \( \textit{\underline{a}}2! \) (D)

This is how White should play in such positions — once the b1–h7 diagonal has been closed for your bishop, relocate it on to the neighbouring diagonal!

20 ... \( \textit{\underline{a}}c7 \)
21 \( \textit{\underline{e}}2 \)  \( \textit{\underline{g}}5 \)

Black should not pursue the exchange of the dark-squared bishops — instead 21...\( \textit{\underline{f}}6 \) was worth considering. As then 22 \( \textit{\underline{f}}4 \textit{\underline{x}}f4 \) 23 \( \textit{\underline{x}}f4 \textit{\underline{d}}5 \) is fine for Black, White should prefer 22 \( \textit{\underline{c}}1?! \).

22 \( \textit{\underline{d}}3 \)  \( \textit{\underline{x}}d2?! \)
23 \( \textit{\underline{x}}d2 \)  \( \textit{\underline{e}}8 \)
24 \( \textit{\underline{d}}3! \)

A fine idea — the knight looked nice on e5, but it did not do much there and yet it acted as a screen for
the e6-pawn. After the text this pawn will come under pressure soon.

24 ... g5

This move prevents \( \text{Qd3-f4} \), but it seriously weakens Black’s position.

25 \( \text{Qc3!} \) \( \text{Qg7} \)
26 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{Qxd5} \)
27 \( \text{Qxd5} \) \( \text{exd5} \)
28 \( \text{Be5 (D)} \)

White’s strategy has succeeded — his advantage can be evaluated as almost decisive: 28...a5 29 \( \text{Bd1} \) f4 30 h4! h6 31 hxg5 hxg5 32 \( \text{We2!} \) f3 33 \( \text{We3} \) fxg2 34 \( \text{Xg5} \) \( \text{We8} \) 35 \( \text{Qe5} \) 1–0.

Summing up what we can learn from these games, we can state the following:

The move \( \ldots f5 \) can be a very effective way to release the pressure on Black’s kingside, particularly along the b1–h7 diagonal. When this move has been played, the possessor of the isolani should consider relocating his light-squared bishop onto the a2–g8 diagonal, where it can attack the newly weakened e6-pawn.

5. Black’s b-pawn shifts to c6, where it becomes isolated.

The pawn formation featured on this diagram is quite important, as it often occurs in positions with the isolated d-pawn. For example, it could happen in the game Korchnoi-Karpov, Merano Wch (9) 1981, which we examined. In that game it was very important that the pawn formation arising after the possible 19 \( \text{Xc6} \) bxc6! would actually favour Black. We also saw such a pawn skeleton in the game Pupols-Baburin (page 136).

Let’s outline the results of the shift of Black’s b7-pawn to c6:

a) Black has greater control over the d5-square and the d-pawn is practically immobilised;

b) Black might be able to use the semi-open b-file;

c) The c6-pawn is isolated and can be weak, being placed on the semi-open c-file;

d) The c5-square might become an outpost for White’s pieces.

Such a shift has both advantages
and drawbacks. A general rule is that in fairly simplified positions the c6-pawn causes Black fewer troubles that the d4-pawn causes to White. Let’s examine such a case.

Stanec - Beliavsky
Graz open 1996

1 c4 e6 2 d4 Qf6 3 Qc3 Qb4 4 e3
e5 5 Qd3 Qc6 6 Qge2 Qxd4 7
exd4 d5 8 0-0 dxe4 9 Qxc4 0-0
10 Qg5 Qe7 11 a3 Qd5 12 Qxe7
Qxe7 (D)

This line does not yield White any advantage and the position can be evaluated as equal. Annotating this game in the magazine 64-Shakhmatnoye Obozreniye (‘64-Chess Review’) No. 7 of 1996, GM Beliavsky wrote that around that time White offered a draw. Although Beliavsky evaluated the position as equal, he decided to play on, fighting for the first place in the tournament. It’s interesting to see how a super-GM outplays his opponent in this deceptively simple position.

13 Qxd5

This move shows that White is anxious to break the blockade of the d5-square. The game Rubinetti-Zarnicki, Buenos Aires 1992, went to full equality after 13 Wd3 b6 14
Qad1 Qb7 15 Qa2 Qg6 16 Qg3
Qc7 17 Qxd5 Wxg3 18 hxg3 Qxd5
19 Qxd5 exd5 20 Qc3 Qfd8, but Black could do better in that game — for example 15...Qc8 was worth considering. I think that the position after 12...Qcxe7 is already slightly better for Black. His plan is simple (...b6 followed by ...Qb7), while White has yet to come up with a suitable plan.

I think that instead of 12 Qxe7 White should have played 12 Qxd5!? Qxg5 13 Qxc6 bxc6 14 Wc2, where his two knights are not inferior to Black’s bishop pair.

13...
Qxd5

14 Wb3

White wants to change the existing pawn formation by taking on d5 or by managing the d4-d5 break; the play revolves around these ideas:

14...
Qb6!

15 Qfd1 Qd7
16 Qc3 Qc8
17 Qb5 Qc7!

This is a very useful move — if White trades the bishops, Black will recapture with the rook, putting pressure on the d4-pawn and preventing d4-d5.

18 a4

White could get rid of the isolani by playing 18 d5?!, but the position
arising after 18...exd5 19 Qxd5 Ke6 20 Qxc7 Kxb3 21 Qxd8 Kxd8 would be very dangerous for White, whose knight is stuck on c7.

18 ... Qc6
19 Qxc6 bxc6! (D)

The text prevents the simplifying thrust d4-d5 and gives Black better chances, as the d4-pawn might be more vulnerable than the c6-pawn.

20 Qe4?!

Beliavsky criticised this move, suggesting 20 Qa1 instead, with the idea to meet 20...Qd7 with 21 Qe2, putting pressure on the c6-pawn.

I agree that the text is not quite sound, as it leaves the d4-pawn under-protected. But I believe that even after 20 Qa1 Black's chances would be better, if instead of 20...Qd7 he plays 20...Qc8!? , relocating his knight to e7 with further play against the d4-pawn and on the semi-open b-file.

20 ... Qd7
21 a5?

This is yet another mistake — Black's knight had little to do on b6 and therefore there was no need to chase it away. Not only is the text pointless; it actually worsens White's position, as his pawn structure on the queenside becomes more static. Instead of the a-pawn advance, White should have tried to play b2-b4-b5.

21 ... Qe8
22 Qa4

In his notes, Beliavsky recommended 22 Qc4 with a further b2-b4, which would improve White's pawn configuration.

Yet I doubt that after 22...Qe7 White's problems would be easier than in the game — although b2-b4 is possible, to manage b4-b5 will be difficult. At the same time White's b-pawn will be just as vulnerable on b4 as on b2.

22 ... Qe7
23 Qg5 Qd5
24 Qf3 Qd6
25 h3 Qb8
26 Qd2 Qb4! (D)

Black's position is strategically winning. The text forces the exchange of the queens, after which White's
pawn weaknesses become even more apparent.

27 $\text{Q}x\text{b}4$ $\text{Q}x\text{b}4$
28 $\text{K}c2$ $f6$
29 $a6$ $g7$
30 $\text{K}e1$ $h5$?

Black gains space on the kingside and creates possibilities of future play with ...$g7$-$g5$-$g4$, with an indirect attack against the $d4$-pawn.

31 $h4$ $d6$
32 $g3$ $f5$
33 $g2$ $e7$

The difference in the activity of the kings is crucial here. When Black’s king comes to protect the $c6$-pawn, his rooks will be free to attack his opponent’s weak pawns on $d4$, $b2$ and $a5$.

34 $\text{K}e1$ $d7$
35 $\text{K}a1$ $\text{Q}xd4$+

The game concluded: 36 $\text{Q}xd4$
$\text{A}xd4$ 37 $\text{K}a5$ $\text{A}d5$ 38 $\text{A}a3$ $e5$ 39 $\text{Q}f3$ $\text{A}b6$ 40 $\text{A}a3$ $\text{Q}c7$ 41 $\text{Q}f3$
$\text{A}db5$ 42 $\text{A}a2$ $\text{A}b3$+ 43 $\text{Q}e2$ $\text{A}6b4$
0–1.

In this game we saw the benefits which the $c6$-pawn can bring to its possessor. However, there are downsides too. They become particularly apparent when, with such a pawn structure, Black is left with an inactive light-squared bishop. Here is an example of this scenario.

Helgi Olafsson - Th. Ernst
Reykjavik Z 1995

1 $c4$ $c5$ 2 $\text{Q}f3$ $\text{A}c6$ 3 $e3$ $\text{Q}f6$ 4
$\text{A}c3$ $e6$ 5 $d4$ $d5$ 6 $\text{cxd}5$ $\text{A}xd5$ 7

$\text{A}b5$ $\text{cxd}4$ 8 $\text{exd}4$ $\text{A}e7$ 9 0–0 0–0
10 $\text{K}e1$ $\text{Q}f6$ ($D$)

We already came across this line while analysing the games Vaganian-Serper (p. 179) and Balashov-Yandemirov (p. 186). In both of these games 10 ... $\text{Q}d7$ was played, avoiding the pawn structure which Black allowed in this game.

11 $\text{K}xc6$!

This is very interesting — White does not think about break in the centre or about kingside attack. Instead he transforms the pawn skeleton, hoping that the resulting pawn structure will favour him.

11 ... $\text{bxc}6$

Also after 11 ... $\text{Q}xc3$ 12 $\text{bxc}3$ $\text{bxc}6$
13 $\text{A}a4$ White’s chances are better — Black’s light-squared bishop is inactive, which causes him troubles.

12 $\text{Q}e4$

Now White’s plan, which he began with 11 $\text{K}xc6$, becomes clear. He wants to occupy the $c5$- and $e5$-squares with his knights, thus dominating the centre. If this plan succeeds, Black’s light-squared
bishop will become a miserable creature.

12 ... \( \text{d}e7 \)
13 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{b}6 \)
14 \( \text{c}2 \) (D)

White's plan shapes up nicely. One of the most attractive features of the plan begun with 11 \( \text{c}6 \)! is that it is a lot easier to play for White here. Indeed, White's play develops itself — moves like \( \text{ac}1 \), \( \text{ec}5 \) and \( \text{ke}5 \) can be played in one order or another without much thinking. Yet, for Black it's much more difficult to find an adequate counter-plan. Not surprisingly such thankless positions often result in defender's defeat.

14 ... \( \text{d}7 \)
15 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{fd}8 \)
16 \( \text{c}4 \)

Perhaps 16 \( \text{c}5 \), with total domination in the centre, would be even better.

16 ... \( \text{b}8 \)

Perhaps Black should have tried 16...\( \text{xd}4 \) 17 \( \text{a}5 \) a6 18 \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{a}7 \) 19 \( \text{xd}8 \) \( \text{xd}8 \), changing the character of the position.

17 \( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{e}8 \)

18 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{e}8 \)
19 a3

White continues to build up his position and there is little Black can do about it. If Black gets rid of one of the annoying knights by playing 19...\( \text{xc}5 \), after 20 dxc5 the other one would soon establish itself on the newly-created outpost at d6.

19...\( \text{b}5 \) 20 b4 \( \text{b}8 \) 21 \( \text{e}4 \! \) \( \text{c}7 \) 22 \( \text{de}1 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 23 \( \text{d}3 \) g6 24 g3 \( \text{f}6 \) 25 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 26 h4!\? \( \text{f}6 \) 27 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 28 \( \text{g}5! \) (D)

GM Olafsson masterfully exploits his advantage. White has established firm control in the centre and on the queenside, but to make further progress on those fronts is difficult. So, he begins to create some play on the kingside (24 g3, 26 h4!??) in attempts to soften up Black's position there.

If Black exchanges the bishops, the dark squares in his camp will be very weak. Yet Black also weakens his position when he avoids this exchange.

28 ... \( \text{f}6 \)
29 \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{f}7 \)
30 \( \text{Qe5} \) \( \text{Qxe5} \)  
31 \( \text{bxc5!} \)  
This is better than 31 \( \text{dxc5 e5} \), which might bring Black some relief.  
31 ... \( \text{Cc7} \)  
32 \( \text{Qd6} \)  
White’s excellent strategy brings its fruits — he has acquired an outpost on d6 and has clear play against the e6-pawn.  
32 ... \( \text{Ce7} \) (D)  

33 \( \text{Qd2} \)  
Here White could try 33 \( \text{a6!} \)? \( \text{Ed7} \) (33...\( \text{Cc3} \) 34 \( \text{Cc2 b5} \) \( \text{Qb5} \) won’t solve Black’s problems either after a further 35 \( \text{Qxb5 cxb5} \) 36 c6) 34 \( \text{Qb2} \) or 33 \( \text{Qf3!} \), with the idea to keep an eye on the f6-pawn and to occupy the b-file later. In the latter line, Black cannot contest that file, as 33...\( \text{b8?!} \) 34 \( \text{Qf4!} \) \( \text{Qxf4} \) 35 \( \text{Qxf4} \) leads to a very difficult position for him.  
33 ... \( \text{Qb8} \)  
34 \( \text{Qb1} \) \( \text{Qxb1+} \)  
35 \( \text{Qxb1} \) \( \text{Qc7} \)  
36 a4 \( \text{Qd7} \)  
37 \( \text{Qe1!} \)  
White wants to take advantage of the open file by playing \( \text{Qe2-b2-b7} \).  

37 ... \( \text{Qxd6} \)  
This is practically forced, as otherwise the invasion along the b-file will decide.  
38 \( \text{exd6} \) \( \text{Qxd6} \)  
39 \( \text{Qb7} \)  
Black’s position is lost, as the exchange sacrifice has not solved one of his major problems — the inefficiency of his bishop.  
The end was: 39...\( \text{a3} \) 40 \( \text{Qb8+} \) \( \text{Qg7} \) 41 \( \text{Qb2} \) \( \text{Qxa4} \) 42 \( \text{Qb7} \) \( \text{Qd1} \) 43 \( \text{Qxa7} \) \( \text{xe1+} \) 44 \( \text{Qg2} \) \( \text{Qe3+} \) 45 \( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qf7+} \) 46 \( \text{Qg8} \) 47 \( \text{Qxf6} \) \( \text{Qh1+} \) 48 \( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{e4+} \) 49 \( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qxd4+} \) 50 \( \text{Qxd4} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 51 \( \text{Qf4} \) e5 52 \( \text{Qe4} \) \( \text{Qf7} \) 53 \( \text{Qd3} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 54 \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{Qf5} \) 55 g4 \( \text{Qxh4} \) 56 \( \text{Qxe5} \) 1–0.  
I think that these two games illustrate this particular pawn formation quite well. The following observation, which I made analysing similar positions, might be of some practical value:  
1. When Black shifts his b-pawn to c6 after exchanging his bishop on c6, the resulting pawn formation is usually quite acceptable for him and may in fact be preferable for Black.  
2. If such a shift occurs after exchanging Black's knight on c6, and afterwards Black is left with his light-squared bishop locked inside his pawn chain, White’s prospects are usually superior. The same ideas apply when we reverse the colours.  
This is just an general observation, so please do not rely on it in every case — take it only as a guideline.
6. White's f-pawn shifts to e3, forming the e3-d4 pawn couple.

This schematic diagram introduces yet another quite common and very important pawn structure.

Usually it occurs when Black captures the e3-bishop with his knight. This gives the d4-pawn good protection, which may help White to play along the c-file or on the kingside and along the f-file.

Black's chances are usually related to a further attack on White's pawn centre with ...e5.

This pawn formation occurs particularly often (with colours reversed) in the Tarrasch Defence to the Queen's Gambit and I would like to illustrate it with just one, very instructive, game played with that opening:

**Smyslov - Kasparov**

*Vilnius Ct (12) 1984*

\[d4 \text{ d5} 2 \text{ d3f3} \text{ c5} 3 \text{ c4} \text{ e6} 4 \text{ cxd5} \text{ exd5}

5 \text{ g3 f6} 6 \text{ g2 e7} 7 \text{ 0-0} 0-0 8

\text{ c3 c6} 9 \text{ g5} \text{ cxd4} 10 \text{ dxd4} \text{ h6}

11 \text{ e3} \text{ Se8} 12 \text{ a3} \text{ Se6 (D)}

\]

13 \text{ dx e6}!?

In the game Korchnoi-Kasparov, London Ct (2) 1983, White played 13 \text{ b3} \text{ d7} 14 \text{ e6} \text{ fxe6} 15 \text{ d6}, but after the further 15...\text{ d5}! 16 \text{ c1} \text{ h8} chances were equal. Perhaps, that game gave Smyslov the idea to have a closer look at the positions arising after \text{ dx e6}.

As a result, in the game Smyslov-Kasparov, Vilnius Ct (2) 1984, White introduced a very interesting plan — 13 \text{ h1}!? \text{ d7} 14 \text{ e6} \text{ fxe6} 15 \text{ f4}!?. Black experienced a lot of problems after 15...\text{ ed8}!? 16 \text{ g1} \text{ ac8}

17 \text{ a4} \text{ h8} 18 \text{ d1} \text{ e8} 19 \text{ e4} \text{ d4}

20 \text{ e2} \text{ c5} 21 \text{ b5} \text{ b6} 22 \text{ h3} \text{ e5}

23 \text{ fxe5} \text{ dxe5} 24 \text{ e8} 25 \text{ d4} \text{ c4}. Although Kasparov eventually drew that game, he obviously did not want to repeat the experience. Instead of 21 \text{ b5}, for example, White could have considered 21 e5?.

So Kasparov abandoned the Tarrasch Defence for a while, until he came up with an improvement in the eighth game of the match — 13...

\text{ g4}!??. After the further 14 \text{ f3} \text{ h5}
15 \textit{Ag1} \textit{wd7} 16 \textit{wa4} \textit{Ac5}! 17 \textit{Ad1} \textit{Ab6} 18 \textit{Fe1} \textit{Ag6} Black solved the opening problems. In the present game Smyslov exchanges the e6-bishop immediately, heading for his desired pawn structure straight away. It's worth mentioning that another great strategist — Rubinstein — also liked this exchange in this opening.

13 \ldots \textit{fxe6}
14 \textit{Aa4} \textit{Ac8}
15 \textit{Ad1} \textit{Ah8}
16 \textit{Ah1} \textit{Aa6}
17 \textit{f4} (D)

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

This is the same pattern as in the second game of the match — White wants to put pressure on Black's pawn centre after \textit{Ag1} and e2-e4 or f4-f5.

Black should try utilise the c-file and to exchange the dark-squared bishops, liquidating White's bishop pair.

17 \ldots \textit{Da5}!
18 \textit{f5}?!?

In his book about Kasparov, IM Nikitin (Kasparov's former coach) gives the following line: 18 \textit{Ag1}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

\textit{Cc4} 19 \textit{Wb3} \textit{Ac5} 20 e4 \textit{Xg1} 21 \textit{Xg1} \textit{De3} — stating that Black is better. However, this variation is not convincing, as after a further 22 \textit{Dd2} White is fine. Black can do better by playing 21...\textit{Gg4}!, when he indeed has a dangerous initiative, but White can improve on this line after 20 \textit{Xc5!} \textit{Xc5} 21 e4, when he is better, as 21...\textit{De3} can be met with 22 \textit{Da4}.

Perhaps in this line Black should avoid 19...\textit{Cc5} and play 19...\textit{Wc7} instead, with a threat of 20...\textit{Xxb2}. Anyway, I think that 18 \textit{Ag1} is worth considering.

18 \ldots \textit{b5}?!?

Of course, 18...\textit{Cc4}? 19 \textit{Cc1} is risky for Black, but 18...\textit{Cc4}!? would be a very logical follow-up of Black's previous play. Nikitin says that Kasparov rejected it because in the variation 19 \textit{Wc2} e5 20 \textit{Wd2} d4 21 \textit{Xh6}, he missed a nice reply — 21...\textit{Gg4}! (21...dxc3? 22 \textit{Wg5}!), after which Black is better. The text move allows White to develop dangerous attack on the kingside.

19 \textit{Wh4} \textit{Gg8}! (D)

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}
This retreat was necessary, as after 19...\Dc4? 20 \Dhxh6! \Dh7 21 \Dwh5 gxh6 22 fxe6 \Dxe6 White’s attack is devastating.

20 \Dh3

The text isn’t active enough so the alternative 20 \Dg4!? deserved serious consideration. After the further 20...\Dc4 21 \Dc1 \Dg5! 22 fxe6 \Dxe6 23 \Dxd5 a very sharp position arises, when Black has to make a difficult choice.

After 23...\Dwb6 GM Kupreichik analysed the move 24 \Df7?, correctly stating that after 24...\Dg5 25 \Dxg7 \De5! 26 \Df5 \Dxg7 27 \Dxe5+ \Df6 Black wins.

Nikitin gives a better move — 24 \Df7!, but wrongly claims that after a further 24...\Dg5 25 \Dxg5 \Df6 White should force a draw by playing 25 \Dxg7. In fact White wins after 25 \Df4.

Instead of 23...\Dwb6 Nikitin recommends 23...\De3, claiming that then Black seizes the initiative after 24 \Dxd8 \Dxd8 25 \Df4 \Dc2. However, I believe that White is still better after 26 \Dh3 \Dxf1 27 \Dxf1. Thus, we may state that 20 \Dg4!? would be a better try.

20 ...
21 \Dc1 \Dg5!
22 fxe6 \Dxc1
23 \Dxc1
23 \Dxd5? \Dwa5! 24 \Dxc1 \Dxb2 is hopeless for White.

23 ...
24 \Dxe3

Black had to accept the sacrifice, as 24...\Dxc1? 25 \Dxc1 \Dxd5 26 \Dd1 is bad for him.

25 \Dxf1 \Df8 (D)

26 \Df4?!

Better was 26 \De4, with roughly equal chances.

26 ...
27 \Dg4?

Yet another mistake, after which White’s position goes downhill: 27...\Dg5! 28 \Dh3 \Df6! 29 \Dd3 \Dxf1+ 30 \Dxf1 \Dg7 31 \Dg4 \Dxd5+ 32 \Dxe4 \Dxd4 33 \Dh4 \Df8 34 \De2 \De3 35 \Dg2 \Dg6 36 \Dh5?! \De7 37 \Df4 \Dh7!+ 38 \Dh2 \Dd8 39 e5 \Dxd3 40 \Dxd3+ \Dxd3 0–1.

I hope that the game which have just examined gives a very clear idea about the pawn structure with the pawn couple d5–e6 — the side playing against these pawns should try to attack them with his e- or f-pawn, while its possessor should develop play on the c-file.

Now I would like to show one unconventional way of playing against the isolated d-pawn. Sometimes the side playing against this pawn does not try to win or to
blockade it, but instead it simply exchanges the isolani, clearing the centre. Usually a player chooses this method of play against the isolated d-pawn when he possesses a bishop pair and hopes that it will bring him advantage in the resulting pawn-free centre. Our next game illustrates this point.

**Kasparov - Hjartarson**

*World Cup, Belfort 1988*

1 c4 e5 2 g3 d6 3 g2 c6 4 d4 exd4 5 wxd4 d5 6 df3 ef7 7 cxd5 cxd5 8 0-0 dc6 9 a4 0-0 10 ge3 he6 11 dc3 he7 12 fd1 h6 13 ac1 a6 14 b6 ac8 15 ge1!? he8 16 dd3 dc6 17 df4 xf4 18 xf4 e7 19 a3 b8 20 dd4 bd7 (D)

The diagram is of a particular interest to us. White has acquired some advantage, as his pieces are more active than their black counterparts.

Yet, it’s not obvious how he can develop his initiative — the d5-pawn is well protected, while Black does not have any other weaknesses. Kasparov’s next move introduces a very interesting approach to the problem of the isolated d-pawn:

21 e4!?

We are quite familiar with the scenario when the isolani steps forward and a pawn-free centre arises, but here it’s the side playing against the isolated d-pawn who enforces this major change in the pawn structure. White believes that his bishop pair in the resulting open position will promise him more than the play against the isolani. Beware of such a way of treating the isolated d-pawn!

21 ... dx e4
22 de4 de4

After 22...dd5? 23 wd6 the d5-knight only looks nice, while White’s knight will actually work, when it will enter the d6-square. So, the knights had to be exchanged, but now White gets a lot of pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal.

23 wxe4 xc1
24 xc1 d6
25 e3! b6

After 25...wb8 26 wc3 f6 27 wc7 White’s advantage is also unquestionable.

26 xc6 wb8
27 wc3 f6
28 b4 df5
29 h3 dh7
30 de3

Here White missed a nice possibility to increase his advantage by tactical means — 30 xb6! xb6 31 wc5.
30 ... \texttt{\textbf{d}8} \\
31 \texttt{\textbf{d}4} \texttt{\textbf{e}5}?! \\
32 \texttt{\textbf{x}b6!}

At first sight the variation with 32 \texttt{\textbf{x}d8 \textbf{xd}8} 33 \texttt{\textbf{x}b6} looks very convincing, but a closer look shows that after 33...\texttt{\textbf{d}1+} 34 \texttt{\textbf{h}2} \texttt{\textbf{c}4} Black has serious counterplay. For example: 35 \texttt{\textbf{x}a6} \texttt{\textbf{e}3} 36 \texttt{\textbf{f}xe3} \texttt{\textbf{d}2} 37 \texttt{\textbf{g}1} \texttt{\textbf{d}1+} 38 \texttt{\textbf{f}2} \texttt{\textbf{d}2+} 39 \texttt{\textbf{f}3} \texttt{\textbf{d}3} 40 \texttt{\textbf{e}6} \texttt{f}5.

32 ... \texttt{\textbf{c}8} \\
33 \texttt{\textbf{h}2} \\
Also good is 33 \texttt{\textbf{g}4}.

33 ... \texttt{\textbf{d}8} \\
34 \texttt{\textbf{c}5}?! \\

It’s hard to say why Kasparov rejected 34 \texttt{\textbf{d}6}. After that move his task of capitalising on the advantage would be easier — for example after 34...\texttt{\textbf{d}x6} 35 \texttt{\textbf{x}d6} \texttt{\textbf{c}4} 36 \texttt{\textbf{e}7} \texttt{\textbf{x}a3} White can regain extra pawn by playing 37 \texttt{\textbf{x}h6}! \texttt{\textbf{x}h6} 38 \texttt{\textbf{e}3+} \texttt{\textbf{h}7} 39 \texttt{\textbf{x}a3}.

34 ... \texttt{\textbf{h}3} \\
35 \texttt{\textbf{e}4+} \texttt{\textbf{g}8} \\
36 \texttt{\textbf{x}c8} \texttt{\textbf{x}c8} \\
37 \texttt{\textbf{c}5} \texttt{f}5 (D) \\
38 \texttt{\textbf{b}1}?

Yet another slip, which spoils a well-played game. Better was 38 \texttt{\textbf{a}8}!. Then White can advance his pawns on the queenside, while 38...\texttt{\textbf{c}4}? loses to 39 \texttt{\textbf{b}8}, followed by 40 \texttt{\textbf{b}7}.

38 ... \texttt{\textbf{d}1} \\
39 \texttt{\textbf{a}2+} \\

Perhaps White had planned to play 39 \texttt{\textbf{b}8} \texttt{\textbf{x}b1} 40 \texttt{\textbf{x}c8+} \texttt{\textbf{f}7} 41 \texttt{\textbf{a}8} and only later he noticed that after a further 41...\texttt{g}5! his king might get into trouble.

The final moves were: 39...\texttt{\textbf{h}7} 40 \texttt{\textbf{d}6} \texttt{\textbf{g}4+} 41 \texttt{\textbf{g}2} \texttt{\textbf{b}7+} 42 \texttt{\textbf{f}3} \texttt{\textbf{c}1} 43 \texttt{\textbf{e}6} \texttt{\textbf{c}2+} 44 \texttt{\textbf{g}1} \frac{1}{2}\frac{1}{2}.

With this game I’d like to finish the discussion of the associated pawn formations. We still have one important transformation left — the appearance of the Isolated Pawn Couple (c3-d4 or c6-d5), but we will examine it in our next chapter along with Hanging Pawns.
12 Hanging Pawns and the Isolated Pawn Couple

The diagram features one particular case of the c3/d4 Isolated Pawn Couple (let's call it IPC for short) — the pawn structure which is a close relative of the formation with the isolated d4-pawn.

Indeed, all it takes to get this pawn skeleton from the position with the isolani is to exchange pieces on c3 (usually Black’s d5-knight for White’s c3-knight), recapturing with the b2-pawn. This leads to a major transformation, because the d4-pawn becomes protected whereas its neighbour is liable to be weak. The c-file is closed for White, while Black may be able to attack the c3-pawn down that file. We should also note that the c4- and d5-squares may fall into Black’s possession.

Let us now discuss the plans available for both sides in this pawn structure. The possessor of the IPC has two main plans. One is to advance the c-pawn, bringing about yet another very important pawn formation — Hanging Pawns. The other plan is related to play on the kingside. Black also has two different strategies available — blockade of the c4- and d5-squares and pawn attack against the c3/d4 pawn couple, which involves moves like ...b5-b4 and ...e6-e5.

Playing with the c3/d4 (c6/ d5) Isolated Pawn Couple.

Positions with hanging pawns will be examined later in this chapter, while now I should like to discuss the plan where the possessor of the IPC
plays on the kingside. With this pawn structure, his initiative on that wing is often even more dangerous than in the positions with the isolani, as in this case his pieces do not have to protect the d-pawn. At the same time, the techniques and methods used for kingside attack are very similar in both pawn formations — rook lift, advance of the h-pawn, etc. In fact, we already saw this pawn skeleton earlier in this book, e.g. in the games Lerner-Kharitonov (p. 33) and Stean-Padevsky (p. 62).

Here is an example of the execution of the kingside attack plan, taken from the author’s own practice.

**Baburin - B. Lengyel**

*Budapest 1990*

1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Qc3 Qf6 4 cxd5 Qxd5 5 Qf3 c5 6 e3 Qc6 7 Qd3 exd4 8 exd4 Qe7 9 0–0 0–0 10 Qe1 Qd7 11 a3

Also promising is 11 Qxd5 exd5 12 Qe5 and Black is a tempo down (his rook is not on c8) compared to the game Vaganian-Serper, which we analysed on page 179.

11 ... Qc8

In the game Baburin-Solozhenkin, Cappelle la Grande 1993, Black chose 11...Qxc3 12 bxc3 Qc8 and after 13 Qc2 h6 14 Qb1 Qc7 15 Qe2 a6 16 c4 Qfe8 17 c5 Qcd8 18 Qe4 Qf5 19 Qe3 Qf6 20 c4 g6 21 Qd2? e5! he seized the initiative. However, there were a few places in that game where White could im-
prove, e.g. 13 Qb1, 17 We4 and 21 Qb2 were worth considering.

12 Qc2 Qe8
13 Qd3 g6
14 Qh6

Also possible was 14 Qb3.

14 ... Qxc3
15 bxc3 Qc7 (D)

The pawn formation in question has arisen. While Black will try to attack the c3-pawn and utilise the c4-square, White should carry on with his play on the kingside. His next moves serve exactly this purpose.

16 Qg5! Qd8
17 Qe3!

The rook heads to the kingside, while also taking care of the threatened c3-pawn.

17 ... Wa5
18 Qg3

Now sacrifices on h7 and then on g6 are really in the air, so Black needs to do something about White’s battery on the b1–h7 diagonal.

18 ... Qb5

After 18...Qd6 it would be too early to start a sacrificial attack by
19 ¿xh7? ¿xh7 20 ¿xg6, as after 20...f5 21 ¿e3 ¿xc3 22 ¿g7+ ¿h8 23 ¿xc3 ¿xc3 24 ¿xd7 ¿xc2 25 ¿xd6 ¿f7 White is in trouble. But White can choose between 19 ¿e4 ¿e7 20 ¿g5 and 19 ¿f3, keeping the initiative in both cases.

19 ¿e3 ¿a4
20 ¿xa4 ¿xa4
21 h4! (D)

As usual, advancing the h-pawn adds fuel to White’s attack as after the forthcoming h4-h5 various sacrifices will appear on the agenda again.

21 ... ¿b3?

Black’s defence was already difficult, but this suicidal move makes it impossible. Winning a mere pawn, Black completely neglects his king. Perhaps he should try to gain some space by playing 21...e5, although after 22 dxe5 ¿xh4 23 ¿xh7! White’s attack will still go on. A very neat finish may occur after 22...¿c4?! 23 h5 ¿d6 24 ¿xh7 ¿xe5?! (24... ¿xh7 25 hxg6+ fxg6 26 ¿g5+–) 25 ¿xe5! ¿xe5 26 ¿f6+ ¿h8 27 hxg6 and checkmate is inevitable.

22 h5 ¿b2

23 ¿e1 ¿xa3
24 ¿xh7

Here 24 ¿xf7 and 24 hxg6 would also be sufficient.

24 ... ¿xh7
25 hxg6+ fxg6
26 ¿e5 ¿f8
27 ¿f6 1–0

The move h2-h4 is a very important part of this plan. White often advances his h-pawn — either in order to attack Black’s g6-pawn or to establish control over the g5-square, where his knight might then go. Our next two examples illustrate this attacking pattern.

Razuvaev - I. Farago
Dubna 1979

1 d4 e6 2 ¿f3 ¿f6 3 c4 d5 4 ¿c3 c5 5 cxd5 ¿xd5 6 e3 ¿c6 7 ¿c4 cxd4 8 exd4 ¿e7 9 0–0 0–0 10 ¿e1 ¿xc3 11 bxc3 b6 12 ¿d3! ¿b7 13 h4! (D)

To the best of my knowledge, this direct attempt to attack on the
kingside was GM Rozuaev's invention and he tried it in tournament practice for the first time in this game. Prior to this, the move 13 \( \mathcal{D}c2 \) was popular.

\[ \text{13 \ldots } \mathcal{D}a5?! \]

Black had a wide, but difficult choice. 13...\( \mathcal{A}c8 \)? is unsatisfactory, as after 14 \( \mathcal{D}g5 \) h6 (14...g6? loses on the spot to 15 \( \mathcal{D}xh7! \) \( \mathcal{D}xh7 \) 16 \( \mathcal{W}h5+ \) \( \mathcal{G}g8 \) 17 \( \mathcal{A}xg6 \) \( f \times g6 \) 18 \( \mathcal{W}xg6+ \) \( \mathcal{H}h8 \) 19 \( \mathcal{E}e4 \)) 15 \( \mathcal{W}h5 \) \( \mathcal{W}d7 \) 16 \( \mathcal{E}e3 \) White's attack plays itself.

Black can accept the sacrifice — 13...\( \mathcal{D}xh4 \), but after 14 \( \mathcal{D}xh4 \) \( \mathcal{W}xh4 \) 15 \( \mathcal{E}e3 \) White's pieces become very active. For example, 15...h6? loses after 16 \( \mathcal{H}h3 \) \( \mathcal{W}e7 \) 17 \( \mathcal{W}h5 \) f5 18 \( \mathcal{A}xh6 \) \( gxh6 \) 19 \( \mathcal{W}g6+ \) \( \mathcal{G}g7 \) 20 \( \mathcal{W}xg6+ \) \( \mathcal{H}h7 \) 21 \( \mathcal{D}xf5+ \) \( \mathcal{A}xh5 \) 22 \( \mathcal{W}xf5+ \), while 15...g6 led to White's advantage in the game Anand-Morrison, British Ch 1988, following 16 \( \mathcal{G}g3 \) \( \mathcal{W}f6 \) 17 \( \mathcal{W}g4 \) \( \mathcal{G}g7 \) 18 \( \mathcal{W}h4 \) f5 19 \( \mathcal{A}h6 \) \( \mathcal{W}f6 \) 20 \( \mathcal{G}g5 \) \( \mathcal{W}f7 \) 21 \( \mathcal{E}e1 \) \( \mathcal{D}a5 \) 22 c4 \( \mathcal{A}e4 \) 23 \( \mathcal{A}xe4 \) \( fxe4 \) 24 \( \mathcal{A}c3 \). Black probably should play 15...f5, but after a further 16 \( \mathcal{D}xe6 \) \( \mathcal{D}xh4 \) 17 \( \mathcal{E}e3 \!) (but not 17 \( \mathcal{C}xd4? \) \( \mathcal{W}xd4 \) 18 \( \mathcal{E}e7 \) \( \mathcal{W}xh1 \) 19 \( \mathcal{W}b3+ \) \( \mathcal{A}d5 \) 20 \( \mathcal{W}xd5+ \) \( \mathcal{H}h8 \) 21 \( \mathcal{C}c7 \) \( \mathcal{A}c8 \)) White is better anyway.

Black's other options will be discussed in our next game.

\[ \text{14 } \mathcal{D}g5 \text{ h6?} \]

This leads to insuperable difficulties. The annoying knight had to be eliminated at once — 14...\( \mathcal{A}xg5 \). Then White would have a choice between 15 \( \mathcal{A}xg5 \) \( \mathcal{W}d5 \) 16 \( \mathcal{W}g4 \) f5 17 \( \mathcal{W}g3 \) \( \mathcal{A}ac8 \) 18 \( \mathcal{E}e5 \) \( \mathcal{W}d7 \) 19 \( \mathcal{A}b5 \)? and 15 h\( xg5 \)?, with an advantage in both cases. In the latter line White has a clear plan of attack down the h-file.

\[ \text{15 } \mathcal{W}h5! \text{ } \mathcal{D}d5 \]

Black had to fortify the e6-pawn, as after 15...\( \mathcal{W}c7 \) 16 \( \mathcal{D}h7+ \) \( \mathcal{H}h8 \) 17 \( \mathcal{D}xf7+ \) \( \mathcal{X}xh7 \) 18 \( \mathcal{D}xe6 \) his king would be busted. Alas, the text does not save Black either as now yet another pawn comes under fire.

\[ \text{16 } \mathcal{D}h7! \text{ } \mathcal{A}e8 \]

\[ \text{17 } \mathcal{D}xh6! \text{ (D)} \]

After this blow Black's position collapses, since White's advantage in forces on the kingside is overwhelming.

\[ \text{17 \ldots } \text{g}xh6 \]

\[ \text{18 } \mathcal{W}xh6 \text{ f5} \]

Also bad is 18...\( \mathcal{A}xh4 \) in view of 19 \( g3 \) f5 20 \( \mathcal{G}xh4 \) \( \mathcal{A}e7 \) 21 \( \mathcal{A}f6+ \) \( \mathcal{A}f7 \) 22 \( \mathcal{A}e2+- \).

\[ \text{19 } \mathcal{A}e3! \]

This is simpler than 19 \( \mathcal{A}xe6 \) \( \mathcal{A}xe6 \) 20 \( \mathcal{W}xe6+ \) \( \mathcal{G}g7 \) 21 \( \mathcal{W}xf5 \) \( \mathcal{W}d6 \) 22 \( \mathcal{G}g5 \) \( \mathcal{A}xg5 \) 23 \( \mathcal{W}xg5+ \), although that line is also winning for White.
The conclusion was: 19...\( \text{h} \times \text{xh} 4 \ \text{20} \text{Ag}3+ \text{A} \text{xg}3 \ 21 \text{Ag}6+ \text{h}8 22 \text{A} \text{f}6 \text{h}2+ 23 \text{A} \text{h}1 \text{xf}6 24 \text{xf}6+ \text{Ag}8 25 \text{A} \text{hxh}2 \text{A} \text{ac}8 26 \text{A} \text{h}1 \text{Ac}7 27 \text{Ag}6+ \text{f}8 28 \text{Ag}1 \text{f}7 29 \text{Ag}5 \text{Ag}7 30 \text{Ah}8+ \text{f}7 31 \text{h}5+ 1-0.

After this game, the plan with an early h2-h4 became very popular in such positions. Here is a more recent example of White’s attack in this pawn structure.

Cifuentes - Van der Sterren
Netherlands Cht 1996

1 d4 \( \text{Af}6 \) 2 c4 e6 3 \( \text{Af}3 \) d5 4 \( \text{Ac}3 \) c5 5 cxd5 \( \text{A} \text{xd}5 \) 6 e3 \( \text{Ac}6 \) 7 \( \text{Ac}4 \) cxd4 8 exd4 \( \text{A} \text{e}7 \) 9 0-0 0-0 10 \( \text{A} \text{e}1 \) \( \text{A} \text{xc}3 \) 11 bxc3 b6 12 \( \text{Ad}3! \) \( \text{Ab}7 \) 13 h4! \( \text{Af}6 \) (D)

In our previous game we already saw 13...\( \text{A} \text{a}5 \) and analysed 13...\( \text{A} \times \text{h} 4 \). Black has also tried 13...\( \text{A} \text{d} 5 \), but after 14 \( \text{A} \text{b} 1! \text{A} \text{ac} 8 \) 15 \( \text{A} \text{b} 5 \) White seized the initiative in the game Anand-Timman, Moscow 1992.

In the game Agdestein-Orr, Thessaloniki OL 1984, Black chose 13...g6,

but it also gave White a promising attacking position after 14 \( \text{h}6 \text{A} \text{e} 8 \) 15 \( \text{A} \text{g} 5 \) \( \text{A} \text{f} 8 \) 16 \( \text{A} \text{xf} 8 \text{A} \text{xf} 8 \) 17 \( \text{A} \text{g} 4 \) \( \text{A} \text{f} 6 \) 18 h5.

14 \( \text{A} \text{g} 5 \) g6
15 \( \text{A} \text{g} 4 \) h5
16 \( \text{A} \text{h} 3! \)

In the game Onischuk-Magem, New York Open 1998, White won quickly after 16 \( \text{A} \text{g} 3 \) \( \text{A} \text{d} 7 \)?! (16...\( \text{A} \text{e} 7 \) is better) 17 \( \text{A} \text{e} 4! \text{A} \text{g} 7 \) 18 \( \text{A} \text{g} 5 \) \( \text{A} \text{e} 7 \)? 19 \( \text{A} \text{d} 6! \) \( \text{A} \text{xd} 6 \) 20 \( \text{A} \text{xd} 6 \) f6 21 \( \text{A} \text{xe} 6 \) \( \text{A} \text{d} 5 \) 22 \( \text{A} \text{xe} 7 \) \( \text{fx} 5 \) 23 hgx5 \( \text{A} \text{ad} 8 \) 24 \( \text{A} \text{b} 5 \).

The text move is also promising. By retreating his queen to h3, White keeps an eye on the e6-pawn.

16 ... e5
17 \( \text{A} \text{a} 3 \) \( \text{A} \text{e} 8 \)? (D)

The variation 17...\( \text{A} \text{xg} 5 \) 18 hgx5 \( \text{A} \text{e} 8 \) looks risky for Black, but this is what he should have played.

Now the game has approached its critical moment.

Both players have pursued their plans consistently and the next few moves should tell whose play has been the more adequate.
18 $\text{Qe}4$?! 

In *ChessBase Magazine* No. 56, GM Cifuentes showed that here White could have got a devastating attack by playing 18 $\text{Qxf7!!}$ $\text{Qxf7}$ 19 $\text{Wg3}$.

After 19...$\text{Ag8}$ 20 $\text{dxe5}$ $\text{Qxe5}$ 21 $\text{Axe5}$ $\text{Qxe5}$ 22 $\text{Wxe5}$ $\text{Ad5}$ 23 $\text{Ab5!}$ $\text{a6}$ 24 $\text{Ad1}$ $\text{axb5}$ 25 $\text{Ax}d5$ $\text{Axa3}$ 26 $\text{Ax}d8$ $\text{Ax}d8$ 27 $\text{Wc7+}$ $\text{e}8$ 28 $\text{Wxb6}$ White is winning.

More stubborn is 22...$\text{Ac8}$, but after 23 $\text{Cxd1}$ $\text{e}8$ 24 $\text{Wf4+}$ $\text{g7}$ 25 $\text{Cc4}$ $\text{Bxc4}$ 26 $\text{Wxc4}$ $\text{Cc6}$ 27 $\text{Wd4+}$ $\text{h7}$ 28 $\text{f3}$ White should also win.

This line shows how dangerous White's attack can be in such positions and proves that 17...$\text{Qe}8$ was indeed a mistake.

18 ... $\text{exd4}$
19 $\text{Wd7!}$? $\text{Qe}5$??

This blunder loses, whereas 19...$\text{ Axe4!}$ 20 $\text{Wxd8+}$ $\text{Ax}d8$ 21 $\text{Axe4}$ $\text{dxc3}$ 22 $\text{Ad1!}$ $\text{Axh4}$ 23 $\text{Ax}d8+$ $\text{Qxd8}$ 24 $\text{Ab7}$ $\text{Qxb7}$ would keep Black in the game.

20 $\text{Wxe8+!}$ 1–0

Note that in both the previous games White played 12 $\text{Ad3!}$, relocating his bishop. In this pawn formation, White's light-squared bishop belongs on the b1-h7 diagonal, since from there it attacks Black's kingside.

With this game I should like to finish discussing the plan where the possessor of the Isolated Pawn Couple attacks on the kingside and move on to discuss the drawbacks of the IPC.

**Playing against the c3/d4 (c6/d5) Pawn Couple.**

Methods of play against the Isolated Pawn Couple are very similar to those employed while playing against the isolani. They usually involve simplification and the blockade of these pawns. Let's start with the following classical example.

![Diagram](image)

**Flohr - Vidmar**

*Nottingham 1936*

This endgame is a fine illustration of the drawbacks of the IPC in fairly simplified positions. Here both the c6- and a6- pawns are weak, which makes Black's pieces passive.

33 $\text{Cf3}$ $\text{Cd6}$ 34 $\text{Bxa5}$ $\text{Ba8}$ 35 $\text{Bd4}$ f5 36 $\text{b4}$ $\text{Bb8}$ 37 $\text{a3}$ $\text{Ba8}$ 38 e4!

This is a typical way of playing against the c6/d5 pawn couple: first White blockades these pawns, controlling the c5- and d4-squares, and then he attacks the d5-pawn with e2-e4. The ending is winning for White.

38...$\text{f}xe4$ 39 $\text{f}xe4$ $\text{dxe4}$ 40 $\text{Wxe4}$ $\text{Ca7}$ 41 $\text{Ff4}$ h6 42 h4 $\text{Cf6}$ 43 $\text{Bg4}$
Alekhine demonstrated how such positions should be played.

22...\( \text{N}d5 \) 23 \( \text{e}e3 \) \( \text{b}b5! \) 24 \( \text{d}d2 \) \( \text{d}d5 \) 25 \( \text{h}3 \) e6 26 \( \text{a}a1 \) \( \text{a}a4 \) 27 \( \text{a}a1 \) b5 28 \( \text{d}d1 \) \( \text{c}c4 \) 29 \( \text{b}b3 \) \( \text{d}d6! \)

Black starts to relocate his rooks, trying to force an exchange of queens.

30 \( \text{h}h2 \) \( \text{a}a6 \) 31 \( \text{f}f1 \) \( \text{e}e7 \) 32 \( \text{h}h1 \) \( \text{c}c6 \) 33 \( \text{e}e1 \) \( \text{h}4! \) 34 \( \text{f}f1 \)

White’s rook had to leave the e-file, as 34 \( \text{e}e2? \) loses after 34...

\( \text{w}x\text{b}3! \) 35 axb3 \( \text{a}x\text{a}1+ \) 36 \( \text{a}x\text{a}1 \) \( \text{a}a6 \) 37 \( \text{a}b2 \) \( \text{a}a2 \) 38 \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{g}3. \)

34 ... \( \text{c}c4! \)
35 \( \text{w}x\text{c}4 \)

Sooner or later Black would force this exchange by playing ...\( \text{a}a4 \) and...

\( \text{a}a6. \)
35 ... \( \text{w}c4 \)
36 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \)
37 \( \text{w}f1 \) \( \text{d}6! \)

Alekhine forces White to put yet another pawn on to a dark square, where it may become a target for Black’s bishop later.

38 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{f}8 \) 39 \( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 40 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 41 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 42 \( \text{a}2 \) \( \text{a}4 \) 43 \( \text{a}a1 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 44 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{a}a5 \) 45 \( \text{c}1 \) a6 46 \( \text{b}2 \) h5! 47 h4 f6! (D)

In this position White has no compensation for the weakness of the c4- and d5-squares. His bishop is very passive, though without it the c3-pawn would be very vulnerable. Black’s plan is to get total control over the queenside and enforce further simplifications. In this game...
Black’s pieces are ideally placed and they need more objects to attack. Therefore, Black prepares the ...e5 break, which will allow him to get access to the weak g3-pawn.

48 \(\text{Cc1} \text{e5} \text{49 fxe5 fxe5 50 Cb2}\)

Also after 50 \(\text{dxe5 Cxe5} \text{51 Cf4}\)
\(\text{Cxf4} \text{52 gxf4 Cxf4} \text{53 Cg2 Cg4} \text{54 Cxg4 hxg4 55 Cg1 Ca4}\) White’s position is hopeless.

The finish was: 50...\(\text{exd4}\) 51 \(\text{cx}d4\) \(\text{b}4\) 52 \(\text{axb4 Cxa2}\) 53 \(\text{bxa5 Cxb2}\) 0–1.

Now let us see how the side playing against the IPC tries to get such an ideal blocking position as Alekhine had in the game against Thomas. Our next example is a model game of how to play against the IPC.

Rubinstein - Salwe

\(\text{Lodz 1908}\)

1 \(\text{d4 d5} \text{2 Cf3 c5} \text{3 c4 e6} \text{4 cxd5 exd5} \text{5 Cf3 Cc6} \text{6 g3 Cf6} \text{7 Cg2 cxd4} \text{8 Exd4 Cb6?!}\)

This idea to force the exchange on c6 is dubious as Black falls seriously behind in development, while the pawn formation that comes about suits White anyway.

9 \(\text{Cxc6 bxc6}\)
10 0–0 \(\text{Cf7}\) (\(D\))

Later Salwe tried to improve on this game by playing 10...\(\text{Ca6}\), but after 11 \(\text{Wxa4 Cc4}\) 12 \(\text{b3 Cb5}\) 13 \(\text{Wf4 Cc7}\) 14 \(\text{Cf3 Wb7}\) 15 \(\text{Cxb5 Wxb5}\) 16 \(\text{Cc7!\ Ca3}\) 17 \(\text{Ce5+ Cf8}\) 18 \(\text{b4}\)! White seized the initiative in the game Rubinstein-Salwe, Vilno 1909.

11 \(\text{Ca4!}\)

Also 11 \(\text{e4!}\) is very good here, trying to destroy the c6-d5 pawn couple rather than to blockade it. This move introduces a more modern approach to dealing with the IPC. After the further 11...\(\text{dxe4}\) 12 \(\text{Cc3}\) \(\text{Wxb2}\) 13 \(\text{Cxe4}\) 0–0 14 \(\text{Cc4}\) White obtained a dangerous initiative in the game Boleslavsky-Stoltz, Bucharest 1953.

Both methods of playing against the IPC — the blockade and the challenge with the e-pawn — are good. Which is the better one to implement depends on the particular position. Often it is also a matter of taste.

11 ... \(\text{Wb5}\)
12 \(\text{Cc3}\) 0–0
13 \(\text{Cf3}\) \(\text{Wg4}\)
14 \(\text{f3}\) \(\text{Cc6}\)

In the game Edwards-Wade, York 1959, Black tried 14...\(\text{Cf5}\). Obviously White was not familiar with this classical game by Rubinstein, as he replied poorly with 15 \(\text{b3?!}\) \(\text{Wf8}\) 16 \(\text{Cc5?}\) and got into trouble after 16...\(\text{Wxc5+}\) 17 \(\text{Wxc5 Wxe2}\).

15 \(\text{Cc5}\!\)

This move is a very important part
of White’s plan, as by exchanging the dark-squared bishops he gets firm control over the c5-square and the whole complex of dark squares.

15 ... \( \text{Ef}8 \)

16 \( \text{Ef}2! \)

Yet another fine move — White start to regroup his pieces.

16 ... \( \text{Dd}7 \)

17 \( \text{Exe}7 \) \( \text{Exe}7 \)

18 \( \text{Dd}4 \) \( \text{Ee}8 \)

19 \( \text{Ef}1! \) \( \text{Ac}8 \)

20 e3 \( \text{Bb}7 \)

21 \( \text{Cc}5 \) \( \text{Xc}5 \)

22 \( \text{Xc}5 (D) \)

White will be able to choose between the plan with \( \text{Ef}2 \) and \( \text{Aa}5 \) and the one with e3-e4.

25 \( \text{Aa}5! \)

White is also winning after 25 \( \text{Xd}5 \) cxd5 26 \( \text{Xb}6 \) \( \text{Cc}2 \) 27 \( \text{Xa}6 \), but the line chosen by Rubinstein is easier as it does not give Black any counterplay.

25 ... \( \text{Ab}8 \)

26 a3 \( \text{Aa}7 \)

27 \( \text{Xc}6! \) \( \text{Xc}6 \)

28 \( \text{Xa}7 \) \( \text{Aa}8 \)

29 \( \text{Cc}5 \) \( \text{Bb}7 \)

30 \( \text{Ef}2 \) h5

31 \( \text{Ee}2 \) g6

The end was: 32 \( \text{Dd}6 \) \( \text{Cc}8 \) 33 \( \text{Cc}5 \) \( \text{Bb}7 \) 34 b4 a5 35 \( \text{Cc}7 \) \( \text{Bb}8 \) 36 b5 a4 37 b6 \( \text{Aa}5 \) 38 b7 1–0.

**Summary**

The side playing with the Isolated Pawn Couple should try to advance his c-pawn, obtaining a position with hanging pawns, or should try for an attack on the kingside. The latter plan often involves an advance of the h-pawn, transfer of his king’s bishop to the b1-h7 (b8-h2) diagonal and a rook lift via the e-file to the kingside.

The side playing against the IPC should try to simplify the position as much as possible, hoping to utiliae the squares in front of the IPC.

It’s often beneficial to challenge the opponent’s d-pawn with the e-pawn. That plan is particularly effective if the side playing against the IPC has the more active pieces.
Hanging Pawns

In this diagram, we can see one particular case of Hanging Pawns. This pawn formation is very important, as it occurs in many openings, for example in the Queen's Indian Defence. The strategic struggle in this pawn structure is very rich in ideas and this attracts many strong players to it.

Let us outline the specific characteristics of this pawn skeleton.

The hanging pawns control the important central squares and have good dynamic potential, as they can advance at an appropriate moment. Their possessor has semi-open b- and e-files for his major pieces.

However, hanging pawns have a certain vulnerability and this is the drawback with them. Also, if one of them is forced to advance, the square in front of its companion may become a good post for the enemy pieces.

Now let us examine the good and bad points of hanging pawns more closely. We will start with the advantages they bring to their possessor.

Playing with Hanging Pawns

The main advantage of having hanging pawns is the control of the central squares which they provide. Of course, the side with the pawns often has to take care of them. However, when his pieces are fully mobilised, one of the hanging pawns can advance, pushing the enemy pieces backwards. Usually this role belongs to the d-pawn. This pawn break — d4-d5 or ...d5-d4 — is quite similar to the one occurring in positions with the isolani. The goal is to clear files and diagonals for the pieces located near the advancing pawn.

There is also one difference, since in positions with hanging pawns the d5- (...d4-) thrust usually leads to the appearance of a dangerous passed pawn on the d-file, as in our next example.

Sokolsky - Botvinnik
11th USSR Ch s/f, Leningrad 1938

1 c4 ∆f6 2 ∆c3 d5 3 d4 g6 4 ∆f3
∆g7 5 e3 0-0 6 ∆e2 e6 7 0-0 b6 8
cxd5 exd5 9 b3 ∆b7 10 ∆b2 ∆bd7
11 ∆c2 a6 12 ∆ac1 ∆c8 13 ∆fd1
∆e7 14 ∆b1 ∆fd8 15 ∆f1 c5 16
dxc5?! bxc5 (D)

White played the opening rather passively and should have refrained from 16 dxc5?! Botvinnik wrote that hanging pawns cannot be attacked effectively in positions with many pieces on the board, particularly if the
side playing against them has most of his pieces on the first rank! We can learn a lot from this valuable remark.

17 \( \text{\#e2!} \? \)

As White’s kingside might soon come under attack, it makes sense to shift more pieces there.

17 ... \( \text{\#h6!} \)

Black vacates the a1–h8 diagonal, preparing to play ...\( \text{\#g4} \). At the same time he pins the e3-pawn, threatening also to play 18...d4.

18 \( \text{\#a3} \) \( \text{\#g4} \)

Black prepares to strike on e3. Also quite interesting is the immediate 18...\( \text{\#xe3!?} \) 19 fxe3 \( \text{\#xe3+} \) 20 \( \text{\#h1} \) \( \text{\#e4} \), where after a further 21 h3 \( \text{\#f2+} \) 22 \( \text{\#h2} \) \( \text{\#xd1} \) 23 \( \text{\#xd1} \) d4 Black’s chances are better.

19 \( \text{\#d3} \) \( \text{\#de5} \)
20 \( \text{\#xe5} \) \( \text{\#xe5} \)
21 \( \text{\#g3} \) \( \text{\#f6!} \)
22 \( \text{\#h1} \)

The white knight had to adopt this awkward position, as 22 \( \text{\#c2?} \) would just lose after 22...\( \text{\#h4} \) 23 h3 \( \text{\#xe3} \) 24 fxe3 \( \text{\#xg3} \).

22 ... \( \text{d4!} \)

Black develops his attack, opening a diagonal for the b7-bishop and creating threats against the e3-pawn. This break is one of major motifs in positions with Hanging Pawns.

23 \( \text{\#e2} \) \( \text{\#e5} \)

This is a critical moment in the game. Black threatens to play 24...\( \text{\#e8} \) and White needs to make good use of the opportunity which he now has.

Botvinnik wrote that after 24 \( \text{\#xc5} \) \( \text{\#xc5} \) 25 \( \text{\#xc5} \) Black plays 25...\( \text{\#f3+} \) (the mark is mine) 26 gxf3 \( \text{\#xf3} \) 27 \( \text{\#c2} \) \( \text{\#xd1} \) 28 \( \text{\#xd1} \) \( \text{\#g5+} \) and 29...\( \text{\#xc5} \), winning. However, this is an oversight, as in this line it’s White who wins after 27 \( \text{\#e7!} \). Instead Black should play 25...\( \text{\#f3} \) 26 gxf3 d3 27 \( \text{\#xd3} \) \( \text{\#xd3} \), with better chances.

Perhaps White’s best option is 24 \( \text{\#f4!} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 25 g3. As then 25...\( \text{\#e8} \) 26 \( \text{\#f2} \) \( \text{\#xe3?} \) 27 \( \text{\#g4} \) is bad for Black, he has to play 25...\( \text{\#b6} \), keeping some initiative after a further 26 exd4 cxd4. In the game White chose the least sound move:

24 \( \text{exd4?} \) \( \text{cxd4} \)
25 \( \text{\#xc8} \) \( \text{\#xc8!} \) (D)
Now the d4-pawn is very powerful and can act like a battering-ram, pushing the enemy pieces backwards. Here White had to play 26 $\text{h}4$, but he erred again and lost quickly: 26 $\text{h}6$ 27 $\text{h}1$ $\text{g}4$ 28 $\text{a}1$ $\text{d}2$ 29 $\text{x}e5$ $\text{d}1$ 30 $\text{e}8+$ 31 $\text{x}e8$ 31 $\text{xf}6$ $\text{e}2$ 32 $\text{g}3$ $\text{g}7$ 33 $\text{c}6$ $\text{b}5$ 34 $\text{c}1$ $\text{xc}1$ 35 $\text{xc}1$ $\text{e}1$ 36 $\text{e}3$ $\text{al}1$ 37 $\text{d}3$ 38 $\text{f}4$ $\text{b}1$ 39 $\text{f}2$ $\text{xf}1$ 40 $\text{xf}1$ $\text{xb}3$ 0–1

Let's have a look at yet another classical example of this theme:

**Keres - Taimanov**

19$^\text{th}$ USSR Ch, Moscow 1951

1 c4 $\text{f}6$ 2 $\text{f}3$ $\text{e}6$ 3 $\text{c}3$ $\text{d}5$ 4 $\text{e}3$
5 $\text{e}7$ 6 $\text{b}3$ 0–0 6 $\text{b}2$ $\text{b}6$ 7 $\text{d}4$ $\text{b}7$
8 $\text{d}3$ $\text{xc}4$ 9 $\text{xc}4$ $\text{c}5$ 10 0–0 $\text{cxd}4$
11 $\text{exd}4$ $\text{xc}6$ 12 $\text{e}2$?! It was better to play 12 $\text{ac}1$, preparing to meet ...$\text{xb}4$ by $\text{b}1$, as recommended by Keres.

12 ... $\text{e}8$?!

Of course, 12...$\text{xd}4$? loses in view of 13 $\text{xd}4$ $\text{xd}4$ 14 $\text{d}5$
$\text{c}5$ 15 $\text{xf}6$ $\text{xf}6$ 16 $\text{g}4+$ $\text{h}8$
17 $\text{h}4+$, but Black should have played 12...$\text{xb}4$!

Keres wrote that he intended 13 $\text{xb}1$ $\text{xf}3$ 14 $\text{xf}3$ $\text{xd}4$ 15 $\text{a}3$
$\text{a}6$ 16 $\text{b}7$, winning a piece, but his later analysis showed that after 16...$\text{d}6$! 17 $\text{xa}6$ $\text{hx}2+$ 18 $\text{hx}2$
$\text{h}4+$ 19 $\text{g}1$ $\text{g}4$ it is Black who wins. So, then he recommended 14 $\text{xf}3$ $\text{xd}4$ 15 $\text{e}4$, "with excellent attacking prospects" and 13 $\text{fd}1$
$\text{xd}3$ 14 $\text{xd}3$ when White "is ahead

in development and is threatening such attacking moves as $\text{e}5$ or $\text{e}5$".

However, in the book *The Quest for Perfection*, GM Nunn regarded this assessment as over-optimistic, stating that after a further 14...$\text{xa}6$
15 $\text{e}5$ $\text{c}8$ Black is better. This proves that 12 $\text{e}2$?! was indeed a mistake, which Black should have exploited with 12...$\text{b}4$!

13 $\text{fd}1$ $\text{c}8$
14 $\text{ac}1$ $\text{d}6$?!

Better was 14...$\text{b}4$!, as the line 15 $\text{b}1$ $\text{xf}3$ 16 $\text{xf}3$ $\text{xc}4$ 17 $\text{d}5$
$\text{xc}4$ 18 $\text{a}3$ $\text{c}6$ 19 $\text{a}2$, given by Keres, is not convincing as GM Nunn proved. After a further 19...$\text{e}5$ 20
$\text{h}3$ $\text{c}7$ 21 $\text{xd}5$ $\text{xd}5$ 22 $\text{xd}5$
$\text{xc}1$ 23 $\text{xc}1$ $\text{c}7$ White's compensation for a pawn may not be sufficient even for equality.

15 $\text{b}1$ $\text{f}4$
16 $\text{d}5!$ (D)

Black failed to put early pressure on the hanging pawns and now one of them has moved forward with great effect. The play now is very sharp and requires a lot of calculation from both players. To explain this position,
I used Keres’ and Nunn’s analysis from the above-mentioned book.

16 ... exd5
17 cxd5

Even stronger was 17 dxe5!. Keres wrote that he did not see anything decisive after 17...dxe5 (if 17...cxb5 18 e4 with the initiative) 18 cxd5 f6 19 c2 cxb2 20 dxc6 xc1 21 xh7+ f8 22 cxb7 c8. However, as Nunn showed, White wins here after 23 h8+ e7 24 c1+ d7 25 f3+ xf6 26 xxe8 xxe8 27 xxe8+ xxe8 28 b8++, followed by 29 xa7 and 30 xb5.

In this line, 19 dxc6 also deserves serious consideration. The continuation might be: 19...xc2 20 cxb5 c8 21 xf6 xf6 22 c8 c8 23 b8 c8 24 axa7 and White has good winning chances. Yet, 19 c2! is a simpler way to secure a victory and therefore should be preferred.

17 ... d8
18 d4 d6
19 c1

Now the d-pawn is a considerable force.

19 ... f8?

Necessary was 19...bd7.

20 e4! xe4
21 xxe4 xxe4
22 xe4 (D)
22 ... h6?

22...g6 would have offered better resistance. The game now ended: 23 g5+ d6 24 h4! d7 25 f5 f6 26 xf6 gxf6 27 xf7 c1 28 xh7+ f8 29 x6 d1+

30 h2 xd5 31 xb7 e5+ 32 g3 c7 33 h8+ f7 34 h5 xb7 35 h7+ e6 36 xb7 xh5+ 37 g2 1-0.

This is a very interesting game, which illustrates how both sides should play in positions with hanging pawns. Now I would to show a game from recent tournament practice, where the motif of d4-d5 played a key role in the strategic battle.

Shabalov - Bezold

_Europe vs. Americas, Bermuda 1998_

1 d4 f6 2 c4 e6 3 c3 b4 4 e3 c5 5 d5 d6 6 f3 0-0 7 0-0 bd7 8 d2 cxd4 9 exd4 xc3 10 xc3 b6?!

I think that Black should have preferred 10...dxc4 11 xc4 a6 12 d3 bd5 when he has a conformable position, as White’s dark-squared bishop is misplaced.

11 b3! b7
12 c1 d7
13 bx4

A position with hanging pawns has arisen. Black will try to put pressure
on them and may be able to challenge them with ...e5, while White can play on the queenside by a2-a4-a5 or try to manage the d4-d5 break.

13 ... \( \text{\textbf{e}8} \)
14 \( \text{\textbf{e}1} \) \( \text{\textbf{c}7} \)
15 h3 \( \text{\textbf{ac}8} \)
16 a4 a5

Perhaps better was 16...\( \text{\textbf{xf}3}?! \) 17 \( \text{\textbf{xf}3} \) e5, challenging the hanging pawns.

17 \( \text{\textbf{e}3} \) h6
18 \( \text{\textbf{e}2} \) \( \text{\textbf{h}5} \)
19 \( \text{\textbf{d}2} \) \( \text{\textbf{f}4} \)
20 \( \text{\textbf{f}1} \) \( \text{\textbf{ed}8} \)
21 \( \text{\textbf{ce}1} \) \( \text{\textbf{g}6} \)
22 \( \text{\textbf{b}2} \)

After some interesting manoeuvres, White has prepared everything for the d4-d5 break.

22 ... \( \text{\textbf{xf}3} \)
23 \( \text{\textbf{xf}3} \) \( \text{\textbf{h}4} \)
24 \( \text{\textbf{d}3}! \)

White sacrifices a pawn, since after 24 \( \text{\textbf{fe}3} \) \( \text{\textbf{f}5} \) 25 \( \text{\textbf{f}3} \) Black would have a choice between 25...\( \text{\textbf{d}4} \), repeating the position and 25...\( \text{\textbf{d}6} \), attacking the c4-pawn.

24 ... \( \text{\textbf{xc}4} \)
25 d5 (D)

Finally White has managed to make this thrust, which offers him good attacking prospects.

25 ... e5
26 \( \text{\textbf{g}3}! \) \( \text{\textbf{xd}5} \)
27 \( \text{\textbf{xe}5} \) \( \text{\textbf{f}5} \)
28 \( \text{\textbf{d}3} \) \( \text{\textbf{e}6?} \)

It's hard to defend in situations like this. Black had to play 28...\( \text{\textbf{c}6}! \), when after 29 \( \text{\textbf{c}3} \) \( \text{\textbf{e}6}! \) White has full compensation for a pawn, but probably no more than that. Note that in this line 29...\( \text{\textbf{c}5}? \) is bad because of 30 \( \text{\textbf{x}g7}!! \), when White gets a strong attack after 30...\( \text{\textbf{x}g6} \) (not 30...\( \text{\textbf{x}g7}? \) 31 \( \text{\textbf{g}3} \) \( \text{\textbf{f}6} \) 32 \( \text{\textbf{e}7+} \) 31 \( \text{\textbf{f}6} \) \( \text{\textbf{axa}4} \) 32 \( \text{\textbf{xc}8} \) \( \text{\textbf{xc}8} \) 33 \( \text{\textbf{e}5} \).

29 \( \text{\textbf{d}2}! \)

The text serves two purposes — White protects the e1-rook and pins the d7-knight.

29 ... \( \text{\textbf{c}6} \)
30 \( \text{\textbf{d}5}!+\)

Suddenly the sleeper on f1 is going to come back into play with devastating effect! Black is helpless against the threat of 31 \( \text{\textbf{b}5} \).

30 ... \( \text{\textbf{e}7} \)
31 \( \text{\textbf{d}6} \) \( \text{\textbf{xa}4} \)
32 \( \text{\textbf{x}g7} \) \( \text{\textbf{f}5} \)
33 \( \text{\textbf{a}1} \)

More energetic would be 33 \( \text{\textbf{xh}6}! \), exposing the enemy king.

33 ... \( \text{\textbf{c}2} \)

Obviously 33...\( \text{\textbf{xd}6} \) 34 \( \text{\textbf{xh}6} \) \( \text{\textbf{f}6} \) 35 \( \text{\textbf{e}7} \) is hopeless for Black, but he could play 33...\( \text{\textbf{c}2}! \). Yet, after a further 34 \( \text{\textbf{xc}2} \) \( \text{\textbf{xc}2} \) 35 \( \text{\textbf{d}3} \) \( \text{\textbf{c}7} \) 36 \( \text{\textbf{ed}1} \) \( \text{\textbf{f}8} \) 37 \( \text{\textbf{f}6} \) White should also win.
The game ended 34 \( \text{Wd}3 \text{Wf}4 35 \text{Wxc}2 \text{Qxd}6 36 \text{Wc}7 1-0.

Now let us examine the situation where the side with hanging pawns advances his c-pawn. This is usually done in order to fix the enemy b-pawn on b2 (b7) and attack it later down the b-file. If then the b-pawn goes, the c-pawn may become very dangerous. The advance of the c-pawn does not lead to such sharp situations as that of its neighbour. Yet, this advance can be dangerous too, as can be illustrated quite sufficiently with a single example — the following classical game.

Rubinstein - Nimzowitsch
Karlsbad 1907

1 d4 d5 2 Qf3 e6 3 c4 c5? 4 cxd5 exd5 5 Qc3 Qc6 6 Qf4 cxd4 7 Qxd4 Qb4 8 e3 Qf6 9 Qxc6 bxc6 10 Qd3 0-0 11 0-0 Qd6!

Preparing to play ...c5, Black moves the bishop from b4 where it might be misplaced.

12 Qg3 Qxg3 13 hxg3 c5 14 Qc1 Qe6 15 Qa4 Qb6 16 Qa3 (D)

White forces the c-pawn to step forward, but here this advance is actually good for Black. After ...c4 the b2-pawn will be fixed and the pressure against it will compensate Black for the weakness of the d5-pawn.

16...c4! 17 Qe2 a5! 18 Qfd1 Qb4 19 Qd4 Qfd8 20 Qcd1 Qd7 21 Qf3 Qad8

This position is a good example of dynamic equality: nobody can get the upper hand here. Nimzowitsch wrote that 22 Qf1 Qf8 23 Qg1 Qg8 would be an appropriate finale. However, White tried to disrupt the balance and was punished for this.

22 Qb1 Qb8 23 Qd2 Qxa3!

After 23...Qdb7 White should not play 24 Qc3? Qxc3 25 Qxc3 Qxb2 26 Qxb2 Qxb2 27 Qxd5, as recommended by Nimzowitsch, since White simply loses after a further 27...Qxd5 28 Qxd5 c3. Instead, he should prefer 24 Qc3!, and the chances become equal again.

24 Qxa3 Qf8

Black prepares to double rooks, since the immediate 24...Qdb7? would be met by 25 Qxc4!.

25 e4 dxe4 26 Qxd7 Qxd7 27 Qxe4 Qc5 28 Qd4?

White had to play 28 Qc6!? Qb4! and then not 29 Qd5 Qa4! as mentioned by Nimzowitsch, but 29 Qb5 when, after a subsequent Qc2, White should draw the ending.

Now Black won after 28...Qxe4 29 Qxe4 Qxb2 30 Qxc4 Qb4 31 Qd6 Qxe4 32 Qxe4 Qa2+- 33 Qc3 Qc4 34 Qf4 Qe7 35 Qf2 Qd6 36 Qe3 Qc5
$37 \text{g4} \text{b4} 38 \text{d4} \text{b3} 39 \text{g5} \text{a4} 40 \text{d1} \text{e6} 41 \text{g3} \text{b3} 42 \text{c3} a3 43 \text{d3} \text{g6} 44 \text{d4} \text{c2} 0-1.$

**Summary**

The possessor of hanging pawns should try to develop his pieces harmoniously behind them and look for a chance to advance one of the pawns. Generally it is the d-pawn, which then often becomes passed and disorganises the enemy pieces. Sometimes the c-pawn advances instead, usually in order to fix the enemy b-pawn and later attack it.

**Playing against Hanging Pawns**

The side playing against hanging pawns should try to put pressure on them as soon as they appear in the position. This pressure may include a challenge with the e-pawn, which is a very common motif, or with the b-pawn, which happens sometimes. However, usually the hanging pawns must be attacked with pieces first.

There are different methods of attack; here we will discuss some of them in detail. The basic idea is simple — immediately point your pieces at the hanging pawns and try to put your opponent on the defensive. Then seek a way to win or to exchange one of the hanging pawns or look for a chance to challenge the opponent’s d-pawn with your e-pawn. Often some simplifications are desirable too.

*Yusupov - Ljubojević*

*Tilburg 1987*

1 d4 \text{f6} 2 c4 e6 3 \text{f3} d5 4 \text{c3} \text{e7} 5 \text{f4} 0-0 6 e3 b6 7 \text{c1} c5 8 dxc5 bxc5 9 \text{e2} \text{b7} 10 0-0 \text{bd7} 11 \text{exd5} \text{exd5 (D)}

The opening phase is over and both players have showed their preferences — Black will try to use the dynamic power of the hanging pawns, while White will try to prove their weakness.

With his next move GM Yusupov gets down to business:

12 \text{e5}!

It’s always better to attack the pawns before their possessor completes his development.

White vacates f3 for the bishop, while the exchange of the knights suits him fine: after 12...\text{exf5} 13 \text{xe5} \text{d6} 14 \text{xd6} \text{xd6} 15 \text{e2} or 13...\text{d7} 14 \text{f4} \text{f6} 15 \text{f}3 White’s chances are better.

12...

13 \text{a4}

Also possible was 13 \text{f3}. Now
White wants to disturb the b6-knight. Perhaps, Black could counter this by 13...d4 14 exd4 wxd4 (not 14...cx4d4? 15 Qb5), with roughly equal play.

13 ... a5?
14 Qf3 Ea8
15 Qb5! Qa6

This position for the rook is awkward, but after 15...Ac8 16 Qa7! Qa8 (but not 16...Ac7? 17 Qd3!?) 17 Ac6 Qxc6 18 Qxc6 Wd7 19 Qxe7+ Wxe7 20 Wb3 Black's pawns come under severe pressure.

16 Qd3?!

A hasty move, which lets White's advantage slip. In the book Opening Preparation (Batsford 1994) Yusupov showed the way to keep his edge — 16 b3!. After that move Black would be completely strained, as the c5-pawn would have lost its mobility.

16 ... c4
17 Ac7 Wd7
18 Qe5 Wc8
19 b3!? Qa8
20 bxc4 Qxc7
21 exd5 Qd6
22 Ac4 (D)

22 ... Qe5

In the above-mentioned book, Yusupov pointed out that 22...Ab4 would be the best defence. Then White can choose between 23 Ab2 Ad6 24 Ac4= and the more adventurous move — 23 e4!?.

Yet, the move 22...Ac5 is not a mistake, as our analysis will show.

23 Qxa5

Instead of the text, 23 e4!? deserves serious consideration here — two dangerous pawns and active pieces yield White sufficient compensation for a piece.

23 ... Axa5
24 Ac5 Ad8
25 Qd6 Wxd6
26 Axa5 Qd5?

Only this mistake causes Black's defeat, whereas after 26...Aa6! 27 Ae1 Wb4 28 Axa6 Axa6 he would be O.K.

27 Wd4+ Ae6
28 Acxd5 Qcxd5
29 Ac1 Ac8
30 Ac5 Ac8
31 Qxc5

Black's cavalry lacks secure posts and therefore he is helpless against the rook and the a-pawn.

The finish was: 31...h5 32 a5 We4 33 h3 g6 34 Wc6 Wb4 35 a6 Wa5 36 Wb7 Wa4 37 Ab1 1–0.

The idea of disturbing the b6-knight with the a-pawn worked well for Yusupov in this game, but in our next example he fell victim to the same idea.
Kramnik - Yusupov
Dortmund 1998

1 d3 d5 2 d4 d6 3 c4 e6 4 c3 e7 5 g5 h6 6 h4 0–0 7 e3 b6 8 d3 b7 9 0–0 bbd7 10 e2 c5 11 g3 e4 12 cxd5 exd5 13 ad1 xg3 14 hxg3 a6?! Annotating this game in New in Chess magazine, GM Kramnik was rather sceptical about the text and suggested 14...c4 instead. Now White opts for the pawn formation with hanging pawns.

15 dxc5! bxc5
15...Qxc5? just drops a pawn after 16 c4, while 15...Qxc5 also leads to trouble after 16 c2 f6 17 b3.

16 b1!
A thematic move — the d5-pawn comes under pressure. The text also creates possibilities of play on the b1–h7 diagonal, where White might be able to build a battery.

16 ... b6
After 16...f6?! Kramnik gives 17 e4 d4 18 e5 ‘with the initiative’. I think that Black should not be too unhappy after 18...d5 19 xd5 wxd5, but in fact White has a better move at his disposal — 17 xd5! xd5 18 e4 with the advantage.

17 a4!
White employs the same idea as in the game Yusupov-Ljubojević. Note that taking on d5 does not work here, since after 17 xd5?? xd5 18 e4 c4 Black wins.

17 ... f6?!

Maybe Black should have stopped the a-pawn. Though the position arising after 17...a5 18 w2 g6 19 a2 is in White’s favour, that would probably be the lesser evil for Black.

18 c2 g6
19 a5?!

As Kramnik pointed out, 19 a2?! would also lead to considerable advantage for White after 19...xc3 20 xxc3 xa4 21 c2 b6 22 xc5.

19 ... c4 (D)

Kramnik gives the line 19...c3 20 xc3 c4 21 e4 xa5 22 xc1! g7 (but not 22... dxe4? 23 xh6 xf3 24 xg6 fxg6 25 xg6+ h8 26 d7+-) 23 xd5, claiming that White has a dangerous initiative. This is probably correct, though after 23...b4!? nothing is yet clear.

20 xd5

Probably, White should have transposed into the above-mentioned line by playing 20 e4 xc3 21 xxc3.

20 ... b2
21 xf6+ xf6
22 d2 xf3
23 gxf3 ab8
24 f4!

After 24 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{wxc5 \textcolor{blue}{b5}} 25 \textcolor{blue}{d4} \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{wxd4 \textcolor{blue}{xd4 \textcolor{blue}{xa5}}} White has only a minimal advantage.}

24 ... c4
25 e4 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{fd8}}
26 e5 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{xd2}}
27 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{xd2 \textcolor{blue}{d8}}}
28 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{e2 \textcolor{blue}{d4!}}}
29 e6! \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{d3}}
30 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{c2! \textcolor{red}{fxe6}}}
31 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{exe6+ \textcolor{blue}{g7}}}
32 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{a4 \textcolor{red}{c3?}}}

White has maintained the tension with a series of fine moves and Black finally errs. The text weakens the position of his knight and this is crucial. Kramnik wrote that the best move here is 32...\texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{xf8}}, saying that even then White can fight for the full point, e.g. after 33 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{e8 \textcolor{red}{f6}} 34 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{xc4 \textcolor{blue}{xf2}} 35 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{d7 \textcolor{red}{d6}} 36 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{xf2 \textcolor{red}{xd7}} 37 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{xa6}}}.

Now it is all over: 33 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{c2! \textcolor{blue}{b2}} 34 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{e7+ \textcolor{blue}{g8}} 35 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{e2 \textcolor{red}{xf4}} 36 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{gxf4 \textcolor{blue}{f7}} 37 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{d1}} 1–0.}

Playing against hanging pawns, it is usually best to have your king’s bishop on the long diagonal. If you are White, this will be the g2 square.

In this case White often needs to move his f3-knight away, so the bishop can attack the d5-pawn. That knight has various attractive routes, for example \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{f3-h4-f5}} or \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{f3-e1-d3}} or \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{f3-e5-c4}}.

Let’s examine these typical routes in order, beginning with the manoeuvre \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{f3-h4-f5}}. The following game is a fine example of this motif.

Kramnik - Ribli
Groningen PCA 1993

1 c4 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{d6} 2 \textcolor{red}{d3 c6} 3 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{f3 e5}} 4 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{g3}}
b6 5 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{g2 \textcolor{blue}{d7}} 6 0–0 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{e7}} 7 \textcolor{red}{e1}
d5 8 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{cxd5 \textcolor{red}{exd5}} 9 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{d4} 0–0} 10 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{f4 \textcolor{red}{bd7}}}

After 10...\texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{a6}} 11 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{blue}{c1 \textcolor{red}{e4}} 12}
dxc5 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{axc5} 13 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{d4 \textcolor{blue}{f6}} 14 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{h3}}}
White was better in Anand-Adams, analysed in this book on page 188.

11 dxc5 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{bxc5?!}}

It would be safer to take on c5 with the knight, accepting an isolated d5-pawn. If Black wanted to recapture on c5 with a pawn, he might be better off to develop his knight to a6, as now the d5-pawn is somewhat vulnerable. White’s next move underlines this fact:

12 \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{h4!} (D)}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\node at (0,0) {B};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

This is a very important manoeuvre of which you should be aware. White puts pressure on the d5-pawn, while relocating his knight to a more active position on f5.

12 ... \texttt{\bf \textcolor{red}{h6}}

In the later game Gulko-Shabalov, USA Ch 1994, Black tried to improve
with 12...\textit{\textipa{D}}h5, but after 13 \textit{\textipa{D}}f5! \textit{\textipa{D}}xf4 14 gxf4 \textit{\textipa{D}}b6 15 \textit{\textipa{D}}xd5! \textit{\textipa{D}}xd5 16 \textit{\textipa{D}}xd5 \textit{\textipa{D}}xd5 17 \textit{\textipa{W}}xd5 \textit{\textipa{D}}f6 18 \textit{\textipa{R}}ad1 \textit{\textipa{W}}a5! 19 \textit{\textipa{D}}d6 \textit{\textipa{R}}ad8 20 e4 \textit{\textipa{D}}xb2 21 e5 White obtained an advantage and went to win.

13 \textit{\textipa{D}}f5 \textit{\textipa{A}}e8

Also after 13...\textit{\textipa{W}}d7 14 e4! d4 15 \textit{\textipa{D}}b5 \textit{\textipa{W}}xb5 16 \textit{\textipa{D}}xe7+ \textit{\textipa{W}}h8 17 \textit{\textipa{D}}f5 or 17 b3 White is better, but perhaps that would be the lesser evil.

14 \textit{\textipa{D}}b5 \textit{\textipa{W}}d7

14...\textit{\textipa{D}}h5?! gets Black into trouble after 15 \textit{\textipa{D}}d6 \textit{\textipa{W}}f8 16 e4.

15 \textit{\textipa{D}}bd6 \textit{\textipa{A}}xd6

16 \textit{\textipa{D}}xd6 (D)

The game ended: 20 \textit{\textipa{W}}f4 \textit{\textipa{D}}h5 21 \textit{\textipa{A}}xe6 \textit{\textipa{W}}xe6 22 \textit{\textipa{W}}d4 \textit{\textipa{D}}f6 23 b3 \textit{\textipa{A}}a8 24 f3 \textit{\textipa{C}}c6 25 \textit{\textipa{A}}ac1 \textit{\textipa{D}}fd7 26 bxc4 dxc4 27 \textit{\textipa{A}}xg7 \textit{\textipa{A}}xf3 28 exf3 \textit{\textipa{W}}xf3 29 \textit{\textipa{A}}e4 \textit{\textipa{D}}d5 1–0.

Yet another important route for White’s king’s knight is \textit{\textipa{D}}f3–e1–d3. This manoeuvre is often used when there is a need to vacate the f3-square for the bishop, giving it access to the long diagonal, as in our next example.

Lputian - Dorfman

USSR Ch s/f, Tashkent 1984

1 \textit{\textipa{D}}d4 \textit{\textipa{D}}f6 2 c4 e6 3 \textit{\textipa{D}}f3 d5 4 \textit{\textipa{C}}c3 \textit{\textipa{E}}e7 5 \textit{\textipa{C}}g5 h6 6 \textit{\textipa{D}}h4 0–0 7 e3 b6 8 \textit{\textipa{A}}c1 \textit{\textipa{B}}b7 9 \textit{\textipa{C}}xd5 \textit{\textipa{C}}xd5 10 \textit{\textipa{E}}e2 \textit{\textipa{D}}bd7 11 0–0–0 c5 12 \textit{\textipa{W}}a4 a6 13 dxc5 bxc5 14 \textit{\textipa{A}}fd1 \textit{\textipa{B}}b6 15 \textit{\textipa{W}}b3 \textit{\textipa{W}}xb3

After 15...\textit{\textipa{A}}fd8 16 \textit{\textipa{G}}g3 \textit{\textipa{A}}ac8 17 \textit{\textipa{D}}e5 \textit{\textipa{W}}xb3 18 axb3 \textit{\textipa{A}}b6 19 \textit{\textipa{D}}f3 \textit{\textipa{A}}a8 20 \textit{\textipa{A}}a1 d4 21 exd4 cxd4 22 \textit{\textipa{D}}e2 \textit{\textipa{A}}xf3 23 gxf3! White obtained some advantage in the game Yusupov-Short, Linares 1992.

Perhaps, Black should avoid the exchange of the queens altogether — Kasparov played 15...\textit{\textipa{W}}a7 in the 31st game of his match vs. Karpov in 1984 and against Topalov in Sofia in 1998.

16 \textit{\textipa{W}}xb3 \textit{\textipa{A}}fd8

The attempt to target the b3-pawn by playing 16...\textit{\textipa{A}}c6, with a subsequent...\textit{\textipa{A}}fb8, might be met with 17 \textit{\textipa{D}}xf6 \textit{\textipa{A}}xf6 18 \textit{\textipa{E}}e5 \textit{\textipa{B}}b7 19 \textit{\textipa{D}}f3 and White stands better.

17 \textit{\textipa{D}}e1! (D)
In this pawn formation, White’s light-squared bishop should be placed on the long diagonal, where it will put pressure on the d5-pawn. Meanwhile the knight will be relocated via e1 to d3. From there it will attack the c5-pawn and can also go to f4.

17 ... \(\text{Qb}6\)
18 \(\text{Qf}3\) \(\text{Qd}7\)!

Better was 18...\(\text{Qac}8\).

19 \(\text{Qd}3\) g5

Black could not develop his queen’s rook, as 19...\(\text{Qc}8\)? loses on the spot after 20 \(\text{Qxf}6\) \(\text{Qxf}6\) 21 \(\text{Qg}4\).

20 \(\text{Qg}3\) \(\text{Qc}8\)
21 \(\text{Qe}5\) \(\text{Qdd}8\)
22 \(\text{Qc}4!\)

This is yet another very typical move for positions with hanging pawns, which often occurs when the bishops oppose each other on the h1-a8 diagonal. From c4 the knight often goes to a5 to disturb Black’s bishop.

This idea decides the outcome of the game: 22...\(\text{Qbd}7\) 23 \(\text{Qa}5\) \(\text{Qa}8\)
24 \(\text{Qxd}5+\) \(\text{Qxd}5\) 25 \(\text{Qxd}5\) \(\text{Qxd}5\)
26 \(\text{Qxd}5\) \(\text{Qf}6\) 27 \(\text{Qxd}8+\) \(\text{Qxd}8\)
28 \(\text{Qb}7\) \(\text{Qe}7\) 29 \(\text{Qc}4!\) \(\text{Qd}5\) 30 \(\text{Qd}6\)

\(\text{Qb}6\) 31 \(\text{Qc}1\) \(\text{Qxd}6\) 32 \(\text{Qxd}6\) \(\text{Qd}8\)
33 \(\text{Qf}5\) h5 34 g3 \(\text{Qd}3\) 35 \(\text{Qxc}5\)
36 \(\text{Qxb}3\) 36 \(\text{Qd}4\) \(\text{Qxb}2\) 37 \(\text{Qxg}5+\) \(\text{Qf}8\)
38 \(\text{Qxh}5\) \(\text{Qa}2\) 39 h4 a5 40 \(\text{Qf}5\) \(\text{Qe}8\)
41 \(\text{Qh}8+\) \(\text{Qd}7\) 42 h5 1–0.

I conclude this theme with yet another very typical route for White’s knight — \(\text{Qf}3\)-e5-c4.

Of course, in order to bring his knight to c4, White must have pinned the d5-pawn. This often happens in positions with bishops on g2 and b7. Our final game is a typical example.

Vaganian - Timman
Amsterdam OHRA 1986

1 \(\text{Qf}3\) \(\text{Qf}6\) 2 c4 b6 3 d4 e6 4 g3 \(\text{Qa}6\)
5 \(\text{Qbd}2\) \(\text{Qb}7\) 6 \(\text{Qg}2\) \(\text{Qe}7\) 7 0–0 0–0
8 \(\text{Qc}2\) d5 9 exd5 exd5 10 \(\text{Qe}5\) c5 11 dxc5 bxc5 12 \(\text{Qdc}4\)! (D)

I believe that this was the first occasion that the text move was employed. Prior to this game, White used to play 12 b3, but usually did not obtain any advantage with it.

From c4 the knight eyes the a5-square, but it also might go to e3.

While White has many useful moves at his disposal (e.g. \(\text{Qg}5\), \(\text{Qd}1\), etc.), Black has a harder task choosing a suitable defence.

For example, 12...\(\text{Qc}6\) gave White a clear advantage in the game Groszpeter-Burger, New York 1988, after 13 \(\text{Qxc}6\) \(\text{Qxc}6\) 14 \(\text{Qg}5\) \(\text{Qd}7\)
(or 14...h6 15 \(\text{Qxf}6\) \(\text{Qxf}6\) 16 \(\text{Qe}3\)
with the initiative) 15 \(\text{Qxe}7\) \(\text{Qxe}7\) 16 \(\text{Qa}5\).
12...\textbf{Be}8 also does not work well for Black. After 13 \textbf{Qf}4 \textbf{Wc}8 14 \textbf{Qa}5 \textbf{Qa}6 15 \textbf{Qfd}1 \textbf{Qbd}7?! 16 \textbf{Qh}3 he experienced problems in the game Yusupov-A. Sokolov, Tilburg 1987.

Perhaps, the most critical move here is 12...\textbf{Wc}7. Then the game Yusupov-Dolmatov, Hastings 1989, ended in a draw after some interesting complications: 13 \textbf{Qf}4 g5 14 \textbf{Qxg}5 dx\textbf{Qc}4 15 \textbf{Wf}5 \textbf{Qxg}2 16 \textbf{Qxf}6 \textbf{Qxf}6 17 \textbf{Wxf}6 \textbf{Qxf}1 18 \textbf{Qg}5+ \textbf{Qh}8 19 \textbf{Wf}6+.

However, maybe in this line White can play for an advantage by 15 \textbf{Qxb}7?? \textbf{Wxb}7 16 \textbf{Qh}6.

Now the c5/d4 pawns are well blocked. However, the main problem for Black is his lack of development, as he cannot bring the b8-knight out and this proves to be fatal.

18 ... \textbf{Qd}6
19 \textbf{Qac}4+- \textbf{Qxe}5
19...\textbf{Qxc}4 20 \textbf{Qxc}4 \textbf{Qxf}4 21 gxf4 is also bad for Black.

The end was: 20 \textbf{Qxe}5 \textbf{Qxc}4 21 bxc4 \textbf{Qfd}7 22 \textbf{Qxd}4! exd4 23 e5 \textbf{Qce}6 24 \textbf{Qxc}6 \textbf{Qad}8 25 f4 \textbf{Qb}6 26 b3 d3 27 \textbf{Qf}2 \textbf{Qd}4 28 \textbf{Qe}3 \textbf{Qfd}8 29 \textbf{Qxa}7 d2 30 \textbf{Qe}4 1–0.

\textbf{Summary}

The side playing against hanging pawns should put pressure on them as soon as they appear in the position. This often involves an attack by the king’s bishop along the long diagonal and various manoeuvres of the king’s knight.

If White is the side playing against the c5/d5 pawns, his knight often takes one of the following routes: f3-h4-f5, f3-e1-d3 or f3-e5-c4. Then at some point the hanging pawns are forced to advance, creating holes in Black’s position, or they can be challenged by White’s e-pawn.

Implementing these plans is not easy and requires active and inventive play from both players. The resulting tension makes the pawn structure discussed in this section of the book one of the most interesting in the whole of chess.
Exercises For Part 3

As with the Exercises for Parts 1 and 2, these examples do not imply only one ‘correct’ solution. Usually there are a few attractive plans from which you should select your move. Perhaps your suggestion may be even better than the actual game continuation.

For the solutions to these Exercises, see pages 249-254.

1

W

Suggest a plan for White.

2

W

How would you play with White?

3

W

Suggest a plan for White.

4

W

Suggest a plan for White.
How would you play with Black?

How should White continue?

Suggest a plan for White.

Suggest a plan for White.

How would you play with White?
Solutions to Exercises

Part 1

No. 1

How should White play here? What are the plans available to him?

Savon - Tal
Moscow 1969

13 \textit{Qe5}

The f7- and e6-pawns come under fire, which more or less forces Black to move his knight from b4 to the blockading d5-square.

13 \ldots \textit{Qbd5}
14 \textit{Qd3!} \textit{Qxc3}
15 \textit{bxc3} \textit{Qe4}
16 \textit{Qc1!?} \textit{Qd6}
17 \textit{Qb3} \textit{Qc8}
18 \textit{Qh3} \textit{Qe4}
19 \textit{Qa3} \textit{Qg6}
20 \textit{g4!}

Black has redeployed his light squared bishop on the kingside, but now that very piece starts causing him trouble. Something like this also happ-

ened in the game Lerner-Kharitonov, which we analysed earlier.

20 \ldots \textit{Qc7}
21 \textit{f4} \textit{Qc8}
22 \textit{Qxg6} \textit{hxg6}
23 \textit{Qxd6} \textit{Qxd6}
24 \textit{We1!+} \textit{Qe8}
25 \textit{Wh4} \textit{Qf8} 26 \textit{f5 gxf5} 27 \textit{gxh5 f6}
28 \textit{Qxe6} \textit{Qxe6} 29 \textit{fxe6} \textit{Wh6} 30 \textit{Qe1} \textit{Qd7} 31 \textit{Wh8+} \textit{Qf7} 32 \textit{Wh5+} \textit{Qf8} 33 \textit{Qg6} 1-0.

No. 2

Suggest a plan for White and supply some likely variations.

Korchnoi - Gheorghiu
Romania 1968

18 \textit{Qxf6!}

This exchange opens the centre for White.

18 \ldots \textit{Qxf6}
19 \textit{d5!} \textit{exd5}
20 \textit{Qxd5!}

This is much better than 20 \textit{Qxd5}
Qxd5 21 Qxd5 Wc7, where White’s advantage is not significant.

20 ... Ab8
21 Qb3 Wc7

The endgame arising after 21... Wc6 22 Wxc6 bxc6 23 Ae7 is very unpleasant for Black.

22 Qb5 Wb6
23 Qd6

Now White’s advantage in the centre is overwhelming and the pressure against the f7-pawn cannot be relieved. The end was: 23...Qbd8 24 Qxf7! Qxf7 25 Qxd8+ Wxd8 26 Wxb7 Qd7 27 Ae7 1-0.

No. 3

Suggest a plan for White.

Timman - van der Wiel
Wijk aan Zee 1980

13 Qxd5?!

White has spotted that Black’s rook has been brought out to c8 prematurely and this allows him to seize the initiative.

13 ... Qxd5
14 Aa6 Aa8

Black had to move the rook back to its original location, as 14...Cc6?
15 Bb5 Axf3 16 Wxf3 Cc8 17 d5 cannot be contemplated.

15 Af4 0-0

Black could try to free the bind at once by playing the immediate 15...Qb8, but after the further 16 Qxb8 Qxb8 17 Wa4+ Qf8 18 Qe5 Aa8 19 Ac1 Black’s position would be quite unpleasant.

16 Ac1 Qb8?

From a practical point of view this is a bad decision, as it leads to a position where Black can only fight for a draw. Instead he should have played 16...Qf6. Then White’s best try is 17 Qd6?!. After the further 17...Qe8 (or 17...Qe7 18 Ac7 We8 19 We2 Qb8 20 Ac4 Qxc4 21 Wxc4 and White firmly controls the open c-file and is ready to break in the centre with d4-d5) 18 We5 Qf8 (18...Qxe5?! 19 dxe5 Qg5 20 f3 is clearly better for White) 19 Ac7 We7 20 Wh5?! g6 21 Wh3 Qg7 22 Ac3 White has good prospects of play on both sides of the board.

17 Qc8 Qxc8
18 Axec8 Qxc8

In this position Black has practical chances to survive, but his defensive task is thankless.

19 Aa5 Qc6
20 Ag4?? Qd8
21 Wd3 Aa2?!
22 Aa1 Qxd4
23 Ah6+ Sh8

23...gxh6 is also bad: 24 Wg3+ Kg5 25 h4.

24 Wc3 Qc5
25 \( \text{d}6+ \) \( \text{d}5 \\
26 \text{xc}5 \text{bxc}5 \) 27 \( \text{xf}7+ \text{g}8 \) 28 \( \text{d}6 \text{g}4 \) 29 \( \text{f}3 \) 30 \( \text{f}2 \text{xf}3 \) 31 \( \text{e}1 \text{h}4 \) 32 \( \text{xc}5 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 33 \( \text{xa}7 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 34 \( \text{f}4 \) 35 36 \( \text{d}4 \) 37 38 \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 39 \( \text{f}4 \) 1–0.

No. 4

How should Black continue?

Panov - Bondarevsky

10th USSR Ch, Tbilisi 1937

16 ... \( \text{xh}3! \)

White's kingside lacks protection and this move exploits that fact.

17 \( \text{xf}4 \)

After 17 \( \text{gxh}3 \? \text{xe}2! \) Black's attack is unstoppable, for example 18 \( \text{xe}2 \? \) leads to a forced checkmate after 18...\( \text{e}3+ \) 19 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{xe}3+ \) 20 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xf}2+ \) 21 \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 22 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) while 18 \( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{e}3+ \) 19 \( \text{h}1 \) \( \text{xe}3+ \) 20 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{g}3+ \) 21 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{xf}2+ \) 22 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xf}3+ \) 23 \( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xf}2+ \) 23 \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{xf}2 \) \( \text{d}7 \) is winning for Black.

17 ... \( \text{d}7 \)

18 \( \text{gxh}3 \)?

It's difficult to find the best de-

fence over the board in positions like this. Instead of the text-move White had to play 18 \( \text{xc}4! \). Then Black would have a choice between two promising continuations:

a) 18...\( \text{dxc}4 \) 19 \( \text{gxh}3 \) \( \text{cxb}3 \) 20 \( \text{xd}7 \text{xd}7 \) 21 \( \text{axb}3 \) (21 \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{e}5 \) is even worse for White) 21...\( \text{e}5 \) 22 \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) and Black has a significant advantage in the ending.

b) 18...\( \text{g}4 \) 19 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{xd}5 \) 20 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 21 \( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 22 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 23 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{d}2 \) 24 \( \text{d}2 \) and again Black has better chances in the endgame, thanks to his bishop pair.

18 ... \( \text{h}3 \)

19 \( \text{xe}4 \)

20 \( \text{f}1 \)

20 \( \text{g}3? \) loses after 20...\( \text{xe}2 \) 21 \( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{xe}2+ \) 22 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{h}3+ \) 23 \( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d}4 \) 24 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 25 \( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{h}1+ \) 26 \( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{xe}4 \).

20 ... \( \text{xf}2! \)

Perhaps the text-move makes a stronger aesthetic impression, but 20...\( \text{f}3! \) would also be very good for Black: 21 \( \text{bd}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 22 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 23 \( \text{h}2 \) (23 \( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{f}e8 \) winning) 23...\( \text{xe}1+ \) 24 \( \text{xe}1 \) \( \text{h}1+ \) 25 \( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{h}2 \) and White can resign.

21 \( \text{xf}2 \)

22 \( \text{f}1 \)

23 \( \text{g}1 \)

24 \( \text{h}1 \)

25 \( \text{xd}5 \)

25 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{dxc}4 \) 26 \( \text{e}3 \) would be more stubborn, but there Black wins as well after the further 26...\( \text{xf}3 \) 27 \( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{h}4+! \), for example 28 \( \text{h}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 29 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 30 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{h}6 \).
25 ... ♕f3+
26 ♗h2 ♕g6
27 ♙xf7+ ♕xf7
28 ♕d8+ ♕f8
29 ♕d5+ ♕h8
30 ♙g3 ♔f2+ 0–1

It's mate in 4, so White resigned.

No. 5

Find a plan for White and illustrate it with a few possible variations.

Lukacs - Flesch
Szolnok 1975

13 ♕d3!
White has set-up the ‘♕c2 and ♕d3’ battery, which often works well for him, as we have seen.
13 ... ♕c8
14 d5!

A fine move which starts a dangerous attack. The text is even more energetic and forceful than 14 ♙g5.
14 ... exd5
15 ♙g5 ♙e4
15...g6? 16 ♕xe7 ♕xe7 17 ♙xf6 is hopeless for Black.
16 ♕xe4 dxe4

17 ♕xe4 g6
18 ♕ad1 ♕c7
19 ♕h4 ♕ce8

Moving the other rook to e8 — 19...♕fe8 — does not help either, as after 20 ♙b3! ♕f8 21 ♙f4 ♕xe1+
22 ♕xe1 ♕a5 23 ♕xf7+! White’s attack decides.
20 ♙b3! h5
21 ♕xe7 ♕xe7

Black’s position is lost. 21...♕xe7 22 ♕f6! is also hopeless for him.
22 ♙e5+- ♕d8
23 ♕xd8 ♕xd8
24 ♕xf7 ♕xf7
25 ♕xe7 1–0

No. 6

How should White develop his initiative?

Krasenkov - Rozentalis
Poland Ch, Krynica 1997

13 ♕d3! g6
This was forced, as 13...♗bd7 would have lost a pawn after 14 ♕xf6 ♕xf6 15 ♙g5.
14 ♕h6 ♕e8
15 $\text{Ax}e6!$

White does not allow his opponent any time to organise a defence.

15 ... $\text{fxe}6$

16 $\text{Qg}5$

The main target here is not the e6-pawn but the one on h7 — if that falls, Black's position will collapse.

16 ... $\text{W}a5$

His only chance is to move his queen to f5. Otherwise White will breakthrough along the b1–h7 diagonal, e.g.

16...$\text{Qf}8$ 17 $\text{Qxh}7$ $\text{Qxh}7$ 18 $\text{Wxg}6+$ $\text{Qh}8$ 19 $\text{Qg}5$ $\text{Qbd}7$ 20 $\text{Qe}4+$..

17 $\text{b}4!$

A terrific move which completely destroys Black's defence.

17 ... $\text{Wf}5$

The point of White's previous move can be seen clearly in the following variation: 17...$\text{Qxb}4$ 18 $\text{Qxh}7$ $\text{Wf}5$ and now, as the f6-knight is no longer protected by Black's bishop, 19 $\text{Wxf}5$ wins: 19...exf5 20 $\text{Qxf}6+$ $\text{Qf}7$ 21 $\text{Qxe}8$ $\text{Qxc}3$ 22 $\text{Cc}7$.

18 $\text{W}e3$ 1–0

No. 7

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Knaak - Estevez

_Cuba 1974_

23 $\text{Qg}5!$ 24 $\text{b}7$

24 f3 $\text{h}6$

Sadly, this is forced. Black could not simply vacate the f8-square for the king by playing 24...$\text{Ad}8$, as after 25 $\text{Qg}4!$ White is winning.

25 $\text{Qxh}6!$

A winning move.

25 ... $\text{gxh}6$

26 $\text{Wxh}6$

Black cannot prevent 27 $\text{Qg}4$ and therefore he is lost: 26...$\text{Wd}8$ 27 $\text{Qg}4$ $\text{Qe}4$ 28 $\text{fxe}4$ $\text{Qg}5$ 29 $\text{W}h5$ $\text{Qg}7$ 30 $\text{Qe}5$ $\text{Qe}3+$ 31 $\text{Qh}1$ 1–0.

No. 8

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Stein - Tal

_Pärnu 1971_

14 $\text{Qxd}5!$

This exchange yields White a very significant advantage.

14 ... $\text{Wxd}5$

Also after 14...exd5 15 $\text{Qxe}7$ White is better, as 15...dxe4? is bad
for Black in view of 16 \( \textit{Q} \)xd8 exf3
17 \( \textit{Q} \)c7!.

15 \( \textit{Q} \)xe7 \( \textit{Q} \)xe7
16 \( \textit{Q} \)e5 f6??

The desire to drive away the e5-

knight is understandable, but the text
badly weakens the seventh rank, caus-
ing much damage to Black’s position.

Let us consider the solid-looking
move 16...\( \textit{Q} \)c6. Then after 17 \( \textit{Q} \)h5!
\( \textit{Q} \)xe5 (even worse is 17...\( \textit{Q} \)f8? 18
\( \textit{Q} \)f6+! gx\( \textit{Q} \)f6 19 \( \textit{Q} \)xh6, where both
White’s rooks are ready to join the
attack along via the third rank) 18
dxe5 White has a decisive advantage
thanks to his better development, the
outpost on d6 and the clear prospects
of attack on the kingside. Thus,
16...\( \textit{Q} \)c6 just won’t do.

I think that Black had to grab the
pawn — 16...\( \textit{Q} \)xd4?. This move got
a question mark in the book \textit{Isolated
Pawn} by Mikhailchishin on account
of the following line: 17 \( \textit{Q} \)h5 \( \textit{Q} \)f8
18 \( \textit{Q} \)c4 \( \textit{Q} \)xb2 19 \( \textit{Q} \)f6+! gx\( \textit{Q} \)f6 20
\( \textit{Q} \)xh6 fxe5 21 \( \textit{Q} \)h4 and White wins.

However, instead of 18...\( \textit{Q} \)b2?
Black should defend with 18...g6!,
and although after the further 19
\( \textit{Q} \)f6+ \( \textit{Q} \)g7 20 \( \textit{Q} \)xd4 gxh5 21 \( \textit{Q} \)xh5+
\( \textit{Q} \)h7 22 \( \textit{Q} \)c1 White’s advantage in the
ending is unquestionable, Black
is still in the game.

17 \( \textit{Q} \)c7! \( \textit{Q} \)d7

After 17...\( \textit{Q} \)xd4? White should
not settle for some plus in the end-
game arising after 18 \( \textit{Q} \)xd4 \( \textit{Q} \)xd4
19 \( \textit{Q} \)xe7 fxe5 20 \( \textit{Q} \), but instead
should exploit the advantages of his
position tactically — by playing 18
\( \textit{Q} \)xf6+! gx\( \textit{Q} \)f6 19 \( \textit{Q} \)h5!, winning.

Also after 17...fxe5 18 \( \textit{Q} \)xe7 \( \textit{Q} \)a5
White’s advantage is decisive, for
example: 19 \( \textit{Q} \)e3!? \( \textit{Q} \)b4 20 \( \textit{Q} \)xg7+
\( \textit{Q} \)xg7 21 \( \textit{Q} \)g4+ \( \textit{Q} \)h8 22 \( \textit{Q} \)h4 \( \textit{Q} \)f8
23 \( \textit{Q} \)f3 and Black can resign.

18 \( \textit{Q} \)g4! \( \textit{Q} \)h7
19 \( \textit{Q} \)c3

It would be better to play 19
\( \textit{Q} \)xd7! \( \textit{Q} \)xd7 20 \( \textit{Q} \)xd7 \( \textit{Q} \)xd7 21
\( \textit{Q} \)c5 when after the further 21...\( \textit{Q} \)d5
22 \( \textit{Q} \)xe6 \( \textit{Q} \)g8 23 h3 White has both
a material and a positional advantage.

19...
20 \( \textit{Q} \)xd7 \( \textit{Q} \)xd7
21 \( \textit{Q} \)xd7 \( \textit{Q} \)xd7

Here White went wrong again with
22 \( \textit{Q} \)xe6? and after 22...f5 23 \( \textit{Q} \)e2
\( \textit{Q} \)c6 24 \( \textit{Q} \)e3 \( \textit{Q} \)xd4 25 \( \textit{Q} \)xd4 \( \textit{Q} \)xd4
Black managed to save the day. With
the superior:

22 \( \textit{Q} \)xe6 \( \textit{Q} \)xe6
23 \( \textit{Q} \)xe6

White should have been able to
capitalise on his material advantage.

\textbf{No. 9}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics{chess_board}\n\end{center}

\textit{Suggest a plan for White, showing
some relevant variations.}
Shamkovich - Kolarov  
Varna 1970

At first glance it looks that here White should play something like 19 $\text{Nxc6}$ bxc6 20 $\text{Nxe3}$, but in fact he came up with a different and a very interesting move:  
19 $\text{d5!}$

This sudden break in the centre is justified by the rather awkward position of Black's knights.

19 ...  $\text{Nxd5}$

Black could take on d5 differently — 19...exd5 — but then 20 g4 $\text{Ng7}$ 21 g5 wins the f6-knight, as 21... $\text{Nh5}$ is bad for Black in view of 22 $\text{Wxf7+ Nh8}$ 23 $\text{Nxh5}$.

20 $\text{Nxd5}$ exd5  
21 $\text{Nd1}$

Having temporarily sacrificed a pawn, White is about to break through in the centre — both the d5- and f7-pawns are weak.

21 ... $\text{Nf8}$  
22 $\text{Nxf7! Bb6}$

Black cannot play 22... $\text{Nxf7?}$ because of 23 $\text{Nxh5}+-$.

However, instead of the text he should have played 22... $\text{Nxf7!}$. Then, after the further 23 $\text{Qxf8 Qxf8}$ (23...$\text{Qxf8?}$ 24 $\text{Qg5}$ is bad for Black) 24 $\text{Qg5}$ $\text{Wf4}$! 25 $\text{Qxh7+?}$ $\text{Nh7}$ 26 $\text{Wxd5 Qg7}$ 27 $\text{Wxb7}$+, White is better, but Black's position is without chances.

23 $\text{Qxf8}$ $\text{Qxf8}$  
24 $\text{Qg5}$ $\text{Wxb2?!}$  
25 $\text{Qxd5+}$ $\text{Qxd5}$  
26 $\text{Wxd5+}$ $\text{Nh8}$

27 $\text{Nb1+}$ $\text{Cc3}$  
28 $\text{Nxb7}$ $\text{Qf6}$  
29 $\text{Dd6}$ a5  
30 $\text{De7}$ $\text{Bg8}$  
31 $\text{Wxh7+ 1-0}$

No. 10

How would you develop White’s initiative?

Portisch - de Firmian  
Reggio Emilia 1989

16 $\text{Nxc6!}$

This text refutes Black’s previous move, 15... $\text{Wd5-d7?}$. He should have retreated his queen to d6, a5 or h5.

16 ... $\text{Nxc6}$  
17 $\text{De5}$ $\text{Bb7}$

The only move, as 17... $\text{Wd6?}$ loses on the spot in view of 18 $\text{Qxh7+}$ $\text{Qf8}$ 19 $\text{Wh5}$.

18 $\text{Qxh7+!}$ $\text{Qf8}$

Black also loses if he accepts the sacrifice: 18... $\text{Qxh7}$ 19 $\text{Wh5+}$ $\text{Ng8}$ 20 $\text{Qxf7+}$ $\text{Nh7}$ (or 20...$\text{Nh8}$ 21 $\text{Qxc6!}$ $\text{Cc7}$ 22 $\text{Qxe6 Qf8}$ 23 $\text{Wh5+}$ $\text{Ng8}$ 24 $\text{Qxe8+-}$). Annotating this game in Informator 49, GM Portisch then gave the following line as win-
ning — 21 \( \text{Wg6+} \text{g8} 22 \text{d5} \text{xd5} 23 \text{f7} \text{e5} 24 \text{xe5}, \text{but he missed that Black can defend better with} \ldots \text{f6} 23 \text{xc6} \text{w} 27. \text{Therefore, instead of} 21 \text{w} 6+ \text{White should play} 21 \text{xc6!}, \text{as in reply to} 21 \ldots \text{f8} 22 \text{xe7} \text{xe7} 23 \text{xe7} \text{c2} \text{he has an important zwischenschl"ug} — 24 \text{e3!} — \text{which wins after} 24 \ldots \text{g5 25} \text{c3} \text{xf2} 26 \text{g3}.

19 \text{h5} \text{b4} 
20 \text{d3} \text{g6} 

The best move, as other attempts lose more quickly, for example 20 \text{g2} 21 \text{a6!} \text{c7} 22 \text{xc8} \text{xc8} 23 \text{c1} + - . 

21 \text{h6+} \text{e7} 
Black's king could not come back to the kingside, as 21 \ldots \text{g8} loses because of 22 \text{g4} \text{f5} 23 \text{d5} \text{e5} 24 \text{w} 6+ \text{g7} 25 \text{h6+} \text{h8} 26 \text{xe5}! .

22 \text{d5!} \text{xe1} 
Now Black cannot play 22 \ldots \text{xd5?} because of 23 \text{h4+}, which picks up the b4-bishop.

23 \text{a3+} \text{d8} 
24 \text{h4+} \text{c7} 
25 \text{dxc6} \text{a8} 

A sad necessity. Like a tornado, White's attack has dispersed Black's pieces and they find themselves in awkward positions, being unable to protect their king.

26 \text{f6+} \text{b5} 
27 \text{c5} \text{cd8} 
28 \text{xf7+} \text{c8} 
29 \text{xb5} \text{a6} 
30 \text{d7+!} 1-0 

A neat finish!

No. 11

Find White's best continuation.

Plaskett - K. Arkell
London WFW 1991

14 \text{a6!}

This move wins by force — White has spotted that both Black's knights are in shaky positions.

14 \ldots \text{h6} 
15 \text{hxh6} \text{d5} 
Also bad is 15 \ldots \text{d7} 16 \text{e4} \text{f6} 17 \text{xc6!} \text{xe4} 18 \text{xb7} \text{xc3} (or 18 \ldots \text{w} 7 19 \text{xe7+} \text{xe7} 20 \text{xe4 when both Black's rooks hang}) 19 \text{xd8} \text{e2+} 20 \text{h1} \text{xd8} 21 \text{f1l} \text{xd4} 22 \text{xf8} \text{xf8} 23 \text{a1+} + - .

16 \text{h3} \text{c3} 
17 \text{xb7} \text{e2+} 
18 \text{h1} \text{cxd4} 
19 \text{xf8} \text{xf8} 
20 \text{xa8} \text{xa8} 
21 \text{e3} 

White is about to acquire even more material!

21 \ldots \text{d5} 
22 \text{ae1} \text{d6} 
23 \text{f4} \text{g5} 
24 \text{xe2} 1-0
No. 12

How should White play?

Smagin - Monin
Pinsk 1986

13 \texttt{Q}xh6!

White punishes his opponent’s careless 12...h6. Now Black comes under pressure for a long time.

13 ... gh6
14 \texttt{W}g6+ \texttt{Q}h8
15 \texttt{W}xh6+ \texttt{Q}h7

After 15...\texttt{g}g8?! White obtains a material advantage by playing 16 \texttt{Q}g5 \texttt{Q}f5 17 \texttt{Q}xf7! \texttt{W}xf7 18 \texttt{W}g5+ \texttt{Q}f8 19 \texttt{Q}xf7.

16 \texttt{Q}e4 \texttt{Q}e7
17 \texttt{Q}f6! \texttt{Q}f5
18 \texttt{Q}h5 \texttt{Q}f6
19 \texttt{Q}g5 \texttt{Q}xd4
20 \texttt{Q}xh7 \texttt{Q}xh7
21 \texttt{W}ad1 f5?

Until here everything was forced. Black finally got a moment to do something for his defence, but he used that time badly. The text exposed the seventh rank too much.

21...c5 would also be bad in view of 22 \texttt{H}xd4! \texttt{W}xd4 23 \texttt{Ad}1 \texttt{We}5 24 f4 \texttt{W}xb2 25 \texttt{Q}f6+- but 21...\texttt{Q}g8 could offer good resistance. After 22 \texttt{Q}c2 (after 22 \texttt{Q}xf7? \texttt{W}f8 Black is fine) 22...\texttt{Q}g6 23 \texttt{Q}xg6 fxg6 24 \texttt{Q}f4 \texttt{W}f6 25 \texttt{Q}xg6+ (25 \texttt{Q}xd4 \texttt{W}xd4 26 \texttt{Q}xg6+ \texttt{Q}g8 gives White only a draw after 27 \texttt{Q}e7+ \texttt{Q}h8) 25...\texttt{W}xg6 26 \texttt{W}xg6 \texttt{Q}xf2+! 27 \texttt{Q}xf2 \texttt{Q}xg6 a very unbalanced endgame arises. Although White has the better prospects here after 28 \texttt{H}d6 \texttt{Q}g7 29 g4 with a further advance of his kingside pawns, Black does have some chances.

22 \texttt{Q}fe1!+- \texttt{W}f6

Desperation, but Black could not prevent 23 \texttt{H}xd4 \texttt{W}xd4 24 \texttt{Q}e7.

23 \texttt{Q}xf6 \texttt{Q}xf6
24 \texttt{Q}e6 \texttt{Q}g7
25 \texttt{W}h5 a5
26 \texttt{H}d6 \texttt{H}ac8
27 \texttt{Q}e7 a4
28 \texttt{H}h6 1-0

No. 13

Suggest a plan for White.

Karpov - Timman
Moscow 1981

23 \texttt{C}c2!!
The bishop makes way for the queen.

23 ... \textit{Ffd8}

After 23...\textit{Wd5} 24 \textit{Qb3} \textit{Wd6} White can transpose into the game continuation by 25 \textit{We4!} \textit{Ffd8} 26 \textit{Qc2}.

24 \textit{We4} \textit{Ae8}

25 \textit{Wh7+} \textit{Kf8}

26 h3?!

Karpov’s annotations suggest that White should have played 26 \textit{Ab3!} \textit{We7} (26...\textit{Wb6}? is bad because of 27 \textit{Qg6+!} fxg6 28 \textit{Qxe6} \textit{Ac6} 29 \textit{Qd5} and White is winning) 27 \textit{Qg4} \textit{Ah8} 28 \textit{Wf5} with the advantage. Although 26 \textit{Ab3} looks better than 26 h3, Karpov’s next move in this variation — 27 \textit{Qg4?!} — is not very convincing, as then Black can play 27...\textit{Wb6}!? 28 \textit{Qxf6} \textit{Qxf6} 29 \textit{Qe3} \textit{Wxd4}!.

26 ... \textit{b6}?

Black had to play 26...\textit{Qe7} with a pretty good position.

27 \textit{Ab3!} \textit{Ab7}?

Again, 27...\textit{Qe7} was required.

28 \textit{d5}

White could also win by playing 28 \textit{Qg6+} fxg6 29 \textit{Qxe6}.

28 ... \textit{Wc7}

29 dxe6 \textit{Qxd1}

30 \textit{Qg6+!} 1–0

No. 14 (see top of next column)

Podgaets - V. Zhuravilov

\textit{USSR 1971}

21 \textit{Qxf7}!

White spotted the weakness of the f7- and e6- pawns.

21 ... \textit{Qxf7}

White is also better after 21...

22 \textit{Qxc3} 22 \textit{Qxc3} \textit{Qxc3} 23 \textit{Qxc3} \textit{Qxf7}

24 \textit{Wf5+} \textit{Qg8} 25 \textit{Qxe6+} \textit{Qh8} 26 \textit{Qf5}! \textit{Qg8} (26...g6?! is worse, e.g. 27 \textit{Qxg6} \textit{Qg8} 28 \textit{Qxc8} \textit{Qxc8} 29 \textit{Qxh7} \textit{Qxh7} 30 \textit{Qe8}+ \textit{Qg8} 31 \textit{Qxe7+}) 27 \textit{Qxc8} \textit{Qxc8} 28 \textit{Qc7}.

22 \textit{Qg4}?! \textit{Qd7}?

This move loses by force. Black overestimated his chances; he had to play 22...\textit{Qg8}, although even then White keeps a very dangerous initiative by playing 23 \textit{Qf4}!.

23 \textit{Qxe4} \textit{Qxc2}

24 \textit{Qxc2} \textit{Qxc2}

25 \textit{Wf5+} \textit{Qe8}

26 \textit{Qxe6}

Despite his great material advantage (a whole rook up!), Black is lost.

26 ... \textit{Wa4}

27 \textit{Qd6+}

Also good would be 27 \textit{Qg5} \textit{Qxf2}

28 \textit{Qxf2} \textit{xf6} 29 \textit{Qxf6} gxf6 30 \textit{Qxf6+}.

27 ... \textit{Qd8}

28 \textit{Qf7+} \textit{Qe8}
No. 15

How should White continue?

Tatai - Sanna

Italy Ch 1981

15 \( \text{h}x\text{h}6! \)

This move isn’t difficult to make, once White realises that his attack does not involve much of a sacrifice and will be long-lasting, since Black’s king becomes completely exposed.

15 ... \text{g}x\text{h}6
16 \( \text{h}x\text{h}6+ \) \( \text{f}8 \)
17 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}6 \)

White’s advantage in this position is of a long-term nature. When the f7-pawn falls, he will have rough material parity (three pawns for a bishop) and good chances to attack Black’s exposed king. For example: 17...\( \text{c}8 \) 18 \( \text{h}x\text{f}7 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 19 \( \text{e}1! \) \( \text{f}8 \) 20 \( \text{c}1 \) and Black’s position is lost.

18 \( \text{d}2 \)

White also had another good option here — 18 \( \text{b}3! \) — when after 18...\( \text{d}5 \) 19 \( \text{h}7+ \) \( \text{g}7 \) 20 \( \text{f}5+ \) \( \text{x}h7 \) 21 \( \text{x}d6 \) White is winning.

18 ... \( \text{c}7 \)
19 \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{g}8 \)
20 \( \text{h}6+ \) \( \text{f}8 \)
21 \( \text{h}x\text{f}7 \) \( \text{e}7 \)
22 \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{ae}8 \)
23 \( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{e}2 \) 24 \( \text{h}7+ \) \( \text{f}7 \) 25 \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{g}8 \) 26 \( \text{g}5+ \) 1–0

Black resigned, as after 26...\( \text{x}g5 \)
27 \( \text{x}g5 \) White would have both a material and a positional advantage.

No. 16

Suggest an appropriate plan for White.

Antoshin - Furman

USSR 1970

14 \( \text{e}2! \)
A nice manoeuvre — White is trying to reverse his pieces on the b1-h7 diagonal, as the move ...h6 weakened Black's kingside. This plan was briefly mentioned earlier (page 85) and now we can see how it works in practice.

14 ... b6
15 a2 b7
16 d3 f8
17 h7

From now on Black must be very careful with his king's safety!

17 ... e8

White is also better after 17...
\[ \text{f7} \]
18 e4 c6 19 e3 b3, for example 19...g6 20 h5! f7 21 e5 b5 22 c4 e8 23 g4, with a very dangerous attack.

18 ... e4!

White wants to retain more pieces. 18 b3 would also be interesting.

18 ... f8
19 a4! a6
20 d2 b5
21 b3 e7
22 a4
22 e1 was worth considering.

22 ... b4
23 a5?!

White wants to resume the pin on the a4-e8 diagonal. The awkward position of Black's king affects the play significantly.

23 ... f5
24 a4 dc8

The position arising after 24...fxe4
25 e5! (after 25 g6+ f7 26 xc6 e6 27 xf7+ xf7 28 e5+ f6 29 xc6 dc8 Black avoids the immediate danger) 25...d6 26 ac1 c8 looks quite scary for Black, but this is what he had to play.

25 e5 d8
26 xc6

More energetic would be 26 g6!

f7 27 c5 xc5 28 dxc5 with a decisive advantage.

26 ... e6
27 c5 xc5 e8
28 xc5 c7
29 xb4 c7
30 xd5 ed5
31 e3 b7 32 g6 xc5?! 33 f4 a7 34 xf5 b8 35 e5+ c7 36 xd5 xe5 37 xe5+ b7 38 b4 a8 39 b6 d8 40 xg7 c6 41 b4 xg8 42 b6 xg7 43 g3 e7 44 c3 c4 e2 45 c1 f3 46 f1 c6 47 c3 c6 48 f4 1-0.

Part 2

No. 1

![Diagram](image)

How would you play this ending?
What should be the result?
Pinkus - Szypulski
Porz open 1992

26 ... h5
This seems to be the best move — the queenside pawns should be fixed.
27 a5 d5
28 d3 h5!
White is O.K. after 28...g5 29 g4 f5 30 h3 a6 31 f3 h6 32 e3 e5 33 dxe5 xe5 34 d3.
29 f3!
The key factor in this endgame is control over the e4-square. As White’s king has to look after the c4-square, the f-pawn must take control of the e4-entry point.
29 ... g5
Black has another interesting try here: 29...h4 30 c3 h3?!. Alas, this attempt does not succeed either — in view of 31 gxh3. Of course not 31 g3? as it weakens the f3-pawn whereupon Black could gain access to the critical e4-square and win after 31...g5 32 d3 a6 33 c3 g4 34 fxg4 e4.

Then the following lengthy variation is possible: 31...e5 32 dxe5 xe5 33 d3 f4 34 e2 g5 35 e3 (passive defence is hopeless — after 35 f2? h4 36 a6 xh3 37 g1 g5 38 h1 f5 39 g1 g4 40 fxg4 fxg4 41 h1 g3 Black wins) 35...h4 36 d4 xh3 37 c5 g5 38 xb5 f3 39 c5 f4 40 b5 g4 41 fxg4 f3 42 b6 axb6+ 43 axb6 f2 44 b7 f1 w 45 b8w with a draw.
30 c3 f6
White would have to be more careful after 30...h4 31 d3 a6. Then 32 c3? loses on account of 32...g4! 33 d3 h3 34 gxh3 gxh3 35 h4 f2 36 e2 xd4 37 h5 e5. White has to prevent this scenario by playing 32 h3!.
This move holds the position, for example: 32...e5 33 dxe5 xe5 34 e3 f6 35 d3 f4 36 e2 g3 37 f1.
31 d3 f5
32 c3 g4
33 d3 h4
Black cannot use his reserve tempo on the queenside yet, as 33...a6 34 h4 is safe for White.
34 fxg4 fxg4
35 a6
Now it’s White who has utilised that reserve move. The finish was:
35...e5 36 dxe5 xe5 37 e3 f5 38 d3 f4 39 d4 h3 40 g3+ f3 41 d3 \(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{1}{2}\).

No. 2

Suggest a plan for White and support it with a few variations.

Belavenets - Rauzer
Leningrad 1937

White’s plan can be divided into two parts:
1. Gain more space on the kingside by advancing the pawn to h6. That will create various threats like \( \square xf5 \).

2. Move the knight via b4 to the c6-square, forcing a winning pawn endgame.

1 \( \square g3! \) \( \square d7 \)

If instead of the text, Black had played 1...\( a6 \), then after 2 bxa6 \( \square xa6 \) 3 h5 \( \square e6 \) 4 h6 he would not have been able to prevent 5 \( \square h5! \), which would either win the h7-pawn after 6 \( \square f6 \) or give White’s h-pawn a green light after 5...\( gxf5 \) 6 g6 hgx6 7 h7.

2 a4 \( \square e6 \)

After 2...\( \square e8 \) 3 h5 \( gxf5? \) Black loses in view of 4 \( \square xf5+ \) \( \square e6 \) 5 \( \square g7+ \) \( \square e7 \) 6 \( \square xe8 \) \( \square xe8 \) 7 \( \square xd5 \).

3 h5 \( \square e8 \)

4 h6! \( \square d6 \)

5 \( \square e2! \) 1-0

At that stage the game was adjudicated and White was awarded a win.

A possible line could be: 5...\( \square d7 \) 6 \( \square c3 \) \( \square e6 \) 7 \( \square a2 \) \( \square f7 \) (or 7...\( \square c8 \) 8 \( \square b4 \) \( b7? \) 9 \( \square d3! +/- \) 8 \( \square b4 \) \( \square e6 \) 9 \( \square c6 \) a5 10 bxa6! \( \square xc6 \) 11 a7! (but not 11 \( \square e5? \) \( \square c8 \) 12 a7 \( \square b7 \) 13 \( \square f6 \) \( \square d6 \) 14 \( \square g7 \) \( \square e7 \)) 11...\( \square b7 \) 12 \( \square e5 \). Then White wins after the further 12...\( \square d7 \) 13 \( \square f6 \) \( \square xa4 \) 14 \( \square g7 \) b5 15 \( \square xh7 \) b4 16 \( \square xg6 \) b3 17 h7 \( \square e8+ \) 18 \( \square f6 \) b2 19 h8\( \square \) b1\( \square \) 20 a8\( \square \) \( \square xa8 \) 21 \( \square xe8+ \).

No. 3 (see top of next column)

Tukmakov - Reshevsky
Vilnius 1978

Assess this position and suggest a plan for White.

22 \( \square h3! \)

A clever move — White wants to exchange a pair of minor pieces, thus obtaining a more favourable ending.

22...\( \square f8 \)

23 \( \square xe6 \) \( fxe6 \)

Reshevsky avoided 23...\( \square xe6 \), after which the resulting position would be very similar to the one from the endgame Flohr-Capablanca. It’s hard to say whether his move is better, though — White keeps good winning chances in either case.

24 \( \square e5! \)

White fixes Black’s central pawns, thus leaving Black’s bishop passive.

24...\( \square e7 \) 25 f4 \( \square d6 \) 26 \( \square f2 \) \( \square c5 \) 27 \( \square f3 \) b5 28 \( \square e2 \) b4 29 \( \square d3 \) \( \square d7 \)

30 \( \square d4 \) \( \square d6 \) 31 \( \square f3 \) \( \square c5 \) 32 \( \square d4 \) \( \square d6 \) 33 a3! bxa3 34 bxa3 e5 35 \( \square xe5+ \) \( \square xe5 \) 36 \( \square f3+ \) \( \square d6 \) 37 \( \square d4 \) \( \square f5 \) 38 \( \square e5 \) \( \square e6 \) 39 \( \square d3 \) g5?

Although from the general point of view the text is correct — Black places his pawns on dark squares while having a light-squared bishop
— this move is wrong, since it creates a weakness. Black should have played something like 39...h6 instead.

40 \( \text{Cc5} \ \text{Df5} \)

The pawn ending arising after 40...h6 41 \( \text{Dxe6} \ \text{Dxe6} \) would be lost for Black, as White’s king is more active. For example: 42 g4! \( \text{Dd6} \ 43 \text{e4} \ \text{Dxe4} \ 44 \text{Dxe4} \ \text{Dxe6} \ 45 \text{a4} \ a5 \ 46 \text{h3} \ \text{Dd6} \ 47 \text{Dd4!} \ \text{Dc6} \) (or 47...\( \text{Dd6} \) 48 \( \text{Cc5} \ \text{Dd5} \) 49 \( \text{Dd4} \ \text{Dd5} \) 50 \( \text{Dxe5} \ \text{Dxe5} \) 51 \( \text{Dd5} \ \text{Dd5} \) 52 \( \text{a5} \), winning)

48 \( \text{Cc4} \ \text{Dd6} \ 49 \text{Dd5} \) and White wins the a5-pawn and the game.

Yet, other retreats of the bishop do not help either: 40...\( \text{Dc8} \) drops a pawn in view of 41 e4!, while 40...\( \text{Dg4} \) 41 e4 \( \text{Df3} \) is also hopeless for Black because of 42 e5+ \( \text{Dd7} \ 43 \text{Da6!} \ \text{Dd7} \ 44 \text{Dd4} \ \text{Da4} \ 45 \text{a4} \text{Cc6}. \)

41 \( \text{Db7+} \ \text{Dc6} \ 42 \text{Dd8+} \ \text{Dd7} \ 43 \text{Dd8} \text{Eh5} \)

An important \text{zwischenzug}, which decides the game.

43...\( \text{Dg6} \ 44 \text{Dge6} \ \text{Dc6} \ 45 \text{Dxe5} \ \text{Db5} \ 46 \text{g4} \ \text{Da4} \ 47 \text{h4} \text{h5} \)

Black should have tried 47...

\( \text{Dxa3?!} \ 48 \text{h5} \text{Cc2} \) instead. Then White would have a wide choice (49 \( \text{Dxd5} \), 49 e4, etc.) and therefore more chances to go wrong. Yet, in that line also, White wins by utilising the energy of his pawns on the kingside by playing 49 \( \text{Dxh7!} \ \text{Dxh7} \ 50 \text{g5} \ \text{Dxe4} \ 51 \text{g6} \ a5 \ 52 \text{Df6}. \)

48 gxxh5 \( \text{Dxh5} \ 49 \text{Dh7} \ \text{Dxa3} \ 50 \text{Df6} \ \text{Df7} \ 51 \text{h5} \ \text{Dh3} \ 52 \text{h6} \ \text{Dg6} \ 53 \text{Dd4} \ \text{Dd4} \)

White also wins after 53...a5 54 \( \text{Dxd5} \ a4 \ 55 \text{e4} \ a3 \ 56 \text{Cc3}, \) when his
e-pawn will march, eventually decoying Black’s bishop from g6.

54 \( \text{h7} \ 1-0 \)

No 4.

Play this position from either side vs. an opponent of similar strength.

G. Agzamov - Dolmatov
USSR Ch, Frunze 1981

30 \( \text{De3} \ \text{Dd6} \)

31 \( \text{Dd4} \ \text{b6} \)

GM Sergei Dolmatov is known for his excellent endgame technique — pay attention to how he commands his pawns in this ending.

32 \( \text{Dd2} \ \text{g6} \)

This pawn goes to a light square only in order to cover the important f5-square.

33 \( \text{De3} \ \text{De8} \ 34 \text{f4} \ \text{h6} \ 35 \text{h4} \text{Dg7} \ 36 \text{Db3} \text{De6+} \ 37 \text{De3} \text{Df5} \ 38 \text{g3} \text{g5} \text{h} 39 \text{hxg5} \text{hxg5} \text{f4} \text{Dd2} \text{Dd8} \text{f4} \text{Df1} \text{Df5} \ 40 \text{Dd3} \text{Dd6} \text{a6} \text{e2} \text{f6} \text{e4} \text{Df1} \text{f5} \text{Dd6} \text{a4} \text{Dd6} \text{a4} \text{Gd3} \text{a5} \)

Now all Black’s pawns are placed ideally — on dark squares, while his bishop takes care of the light squares.
49 \( \text{b}5 \) \( \text{b}7 \)

Of course, not 49...\( \text{axb}4 \)?? 50 \( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 51 \( \text{cx}b4 \), where White will be able to create an outside passed pawn.

50 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 51 \( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 52 \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 53 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 54 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 55 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 56 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 57 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{gxf}4 \) 58 \( \text{gxf}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 59 \( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 60 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 61 \( \text{c}2 \) \( \frac{1}{2} \)–\( \frac{1}{2} \)

No. 5

\[ \text{W} \]

Play this position from either side vs. an opponent of similar strength.

Eingorn - Panczyk
Polanica Zdroj 1984

Obviously this position cannot be analysed 'to the end' but we can state that White has an advantage due to his queenside pawn majority and the opportunity to seize the open f-file.

32 \( \text{f}1 \)! \( \text{e}6 \) 33 \( \text{f}3 \)! \( \text{a}8 \) 34 \( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{d}8 \) 35 \( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 36 \( \text{e}3+ \) \( \text{d}7 \) 37 \( \text{g}3 \)!

White masterfully weakens the opponent's pawns. Note how GM Eingorn forced Black's rook to take a passive position.

37...\( g6 \) 38 \( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 39 \( \text{f}7 \) \( h6 \) 40 \( \text{h}4 \) \( h5 \) 41 \( \text{d}3 \)

Now it's time to activate the king.

41...\( \text{e}6 \) 42 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 43 \( a4 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 44 \( b4 \)

White's queenside pawn majority starts to play an increasingly important role in the game.

44...\( \text{e}5 \) 45 \( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 46 \( g3 \) \( \text{e}4 \) 47 \( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 48 \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 49 \( a5 \) \( \text{bxa}5 \) 50 \( bxa5 \) \( \text{b}5 \) 51 \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 52 \( g4 \) \( \text{hxg}4 \)

52...\( \text{xa}5 \)? would be much worse because White manages to keep more pawns on the board by playing 53 \( g5 \).

Then after 53...\( \text{b}5 \) 54 \( \text{f}6 \) \( \text{h}3 \) 55 \( \text{xg}6 \) \( \text{xh}4 \) 56 \( \text{h}6 \) \( \text{h}1 \) 57 \( g6 \) \( h4 \) 58 \( \text{e}6 \) White is winning.

53 \( \text{xg}4 \) \( \text{xa}5 \) 54 \( \text{xg}6 \) \( \text{h}3 \) 55 \( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 56 \( \text{d}6 \)!

According to Ken Thompson's endgame database, White wins this position — with best play from both sides — in 27 moves. Being a human, I can only say that White is trying to move his king to the g-file, simultaneously cutting off the opponent's monarch from that flank.

56...\( \text{h}1 \) 57 \( \text{b}4+ \) \( \text{a}5 \) 58 \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{h}2 \) 59 \( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 60 \( \text{c}6 \) \( \text{a}7 \) 61 \( \text{b}4 \) \( \text{h}1 \) 62 \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{a}6 \) 63 \( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{a}5 \) 64 \( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 65 \( \text{f}6 \) \( \text{c}6 \) 66 \( \text{g}6 \) \( \text{d}1 \) 67 \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{d}6+ \) 68 \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}5+ \) 69 \( \text{h}4 \) \( \text{d}1 \) 70 \( h6 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 71 \( \text{g}5 \) 1–0

No. 6 (see top of facing page)

Chloupek - Stohl
Czechoslovakia Ch, Prague 1992
This position is quite similar to the one which occurred in the game Averbakh-Keres. As we know from that game, in such situations exchanging rooks does not suit the side playing against the isolani, unless his opponent has other weaknesses. Understanding this, GM Stohl played a fine move:

30 \ldots \textbf{Ab8}!

Should Black mechanically occupy the open file by playing 30... \textbf{Ac8} and then trade off the rooks after the further 31 \textbf{Ac1} \textbf{Bxc1+?!} (still better is 31...\textbf{Ab8}!) 32 \textbf{Bxc1} b5 33 a4, his advantage would be greatly reduced. The text move opens up a route for Black’s king into the centre and generates possibilities of further play with ...b5 and ...a4. White’s control over the c-file would give him virtually nothing.

31 \textbf{Ac1} \textbf{Af8}
32 \textbf{Bf1} \textbf{Be8}
33 \textbf{Be2} \textbf{Bd7}
34 \textbf{Bd3} \textbf{g5}!

Black gains space on the kingside. We have seen the same idea in the game Pupols-Baburin (page 136). Perhaps White should have prevented this advance by playing h2-h4 earlier on, although placing a pawn on h4 would have its own drawbacks.

35 f3 h5
36 \textbf{Cc2} g4
37 \textbf{Bf2} f5
38 \textbf{Bc1} b5
39 \textbf{fxg4} hxg4

Black’s advance on the kingside has brought some positive results, as the h2-pawn is a fixed target now.

40 \textbf{Bf4} \textbf{Cc8}
41 \textbf{Bd2}

Perhaps White should have fought for the c-file by playing 41 \textbf{Cc2}?!?, as the rook ending arising after 41...\textbf{Bxf4+} 42 \textbf{gx4} \textbf{Bh8} 43 d5! \textbf{Bh3+} 44 \textbf{Bd4} \textbf{Bxb3} 45 \textbf{dxe6+} \textbf{Bxe6} 46 \textbf{Be6+} \textbf{Be7} 47 \textbf{Bc5} would give him good drawing chances.

41 \ldots \textbf{a4}
42 \textbf{bxa4} \textbf{bxa4}
43 \textbf{Bb4} \textbf{Bc1}
44 \textbf{Bb2} \textbf{Bf6}!

Black redeployed his forces — he wants to play ...e4, ...\textbf{c6} and ...\textbf{d5} and then manoeuvre the knight to f3, if necessary.

45 \textbf{Cc5} \textbf{Be4}
46 \textbf{Bb7+} \textbf{Be6}
47 \textbf{Bb6+} \textbf{Be7}
48 \textbf{Bxe6}?

This loses immediately, but even the more stubborn move 48 \textbf{Be3} would have led to defeat after the further 48...e5 49 \textbf{Bc6} \textbf{Bc3+} 50 \textbf{Bc2} \textbf{Bxc5} 51 \textbf{dxc5} \textbf{Bxa3}.

48 \ldots \textbf{Bxc5}!
49  dxc5  \( \text{dxc5}^+ \)
50  \( \text{d}d4 \)  \( \text{dxe6}^+ \)
51  \( \text{e}e5 \)  \( \text{d}d7 \)
52  \( \text{xf}5 \)  \( \text{d}d4^+ \)
53  \( \text{xg}4 \)  \( \text{b}5 \)
54  \( \text{f}4 \)  \( \text{xa}3 \)
55  \( \text{e}4 \)  \( \text{c}4 \)
56  \( \text{d}3 \)  \( \text{a}3 \)
0-1

This is a clear demonstration of how such endings should be played.

No. 7

Suggest a plan for White.

Westerinen - Hecht
Raach Z 1969

Without the rooks, this ending would be very difficult for Black, but with them it is just lost since White’s rooks are going to be much more active than their counterparts.

23  \( \text{h}d1 \)  \( \text{e}e8 \)

Black is hoping to tie down the knight by putting pressure on the c2-pawn along the c-file, but this plan is easy to meet.

24  \( \text{d}d2 \)  \( \text{c}4 \)
25  \( \text{b}5! \)  \( \text{ac}8 \)

26  \( \text{c}3 \)  \( \text{a}4 \)
27  \( \text{d}d4 \)  \( \text{d}7 \)
28  \( \text{e}1 \)  \( \text{f}8 \)
29  \( \text{c}2!?? \)

Once the d5-pawn is fixed, White is going to attack it — a good example of utilising the blockading d4-square to switch between blockade and direct attack.

29  \( \ldots \)  \( \text{e}8 \)
30  \( \text{e}3 \)

An interesting and probably correct decision — White believes that his rook has better prospects then Black’s.

30  \( \ldots \)  \( \text{e}6 \)
31  \( \text{ed}1 \)  \( \text{b}5 \)
32  \( \text{e}1 \)  \( \text{c}8 \)
33  \( \text{ee}2 \)  \( \text{cc}5 \)
34  \( \text{e}1! \)

White’s king will take care of the b2-pawn, thus freeing his rooks.

34  \( \ldots \)  \( \text{b}3 \)
35  \( \text{d}1 \)  \( \text{g}7 \)
36  \( \text{c}1 \)  \( \text{f}6 \)
37  \( \text{d}4 \)  \( \text{g}5 \)
38  \( \text{ed}2 \)

Also good would be 38 f4, weakening Black’s kingside after 38... gxf4 39 \( \text{xf}4^+ \), as Black cannot play 38...h6? because of 39 f5, winning.

38  \( \ldots \)  \( \text{eb}5? \)

This loses on the spot, but also after 38...\( \text{bb}5 \) 39 h4 h6 40 hgx5+ hxg5 41 f4 Black would soon lose the d5-pawn and then the game.

39  \( \text{a}4 \)  \( \text{c}5 \)
40  \( \text{xd}5^+ \)  \( \text{e}5 \)
41  \( \text{c}2 \) 1-0
No. 8

W

Suggest a plan for White and provide some variations.

Smyslov - Suetin

Bad Wörishofen 1991

22...b4!?

White seizes the initiative, using the temporarily uncoordinated position of the black pieces and Black's back rank weakness.

22...Ab5

This abandons the c-file, but Black did not have any better alternatives, as 22...Ac4? drops a pawn in view of 23 Ax5 Ab4? 24 Ad3, winning. White also stands better after 22...Ab5 23 Ad2! Ac8 24 a3 Ad8 25 Ad4 Ae4 26 Ad3, when the threat of e3-e4 is hard to meet.

23 Ag4! Ae6

The only move, as 23...a5 is bad for Black because of 24 Ac1 h5 25 Ah5 axb4 26 Ag4. An attempt to create an escape square by playing 23...g6 is not satisfactory either in view of 24 a4 Ab6 25 Ax5, when 25...Ax4? results in a disaster after 26 Ad8+ Bh7 27 Ad4+ Bh6 28 Ag8.

24 Af4 h6

25 a4 Ab6

26 Ad4 a6

27 Ac5 Ah7

Perhaps Black should have sought drawing chances in the rook endgame arising after 27...Ac6 28 Ax5 Ab5 29 bxc5 Ab1+ 30 Ah2 Aa1.

28 b5 axb5

29 axb5 Ad6

30 e4! b6

31 Ad4 Ad7

32 Ad3!

White cleverly exploits the position of the black king on h7.

32...d4

33 e5+ Ag6

34 f4 Ad5

35 g4!

Smyslov attempts to exploit the black rook's awkward placement.

35...Ag8

White is also much better after 35...h5 36 g5.

36 f5 Ag5

37 Ad4 Af3

Black cannot restore the material status quo, as 37...Ax5? loses in view of 38 h4.

38 Ad8+ Bh7

39 Ad3 Af4

40 e6 Ae5

40...fxe6 does not save Black either, as after 41 fxe6+ the e-pawn becomes too powerful, e.g. 41...Ag6 42 Ae1 Ab4 43 Ae5 Ae7 44 Ad4 when Black is in zugzwang and therefore must give way to the e-pawn.

41 exf7 Af6

42 Ad7 1-0
No. 9

Better was 24...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}7\), although after the further 25 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}4\) Black’s position would remain very difficult, as all his pieces are tied down to the d5-pawn and therefore are passive.

25 \(\text{\textit{f}}\text{xa7}\) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{a8}\)

The attempt to imprison the enemy queen by 25...\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b4}\) would have lost on the spot after 26 \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{d5}\)!

26 \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{xb6}\) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{a6}\)
27 \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{d}4\)
28 \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{xd}4\) \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{xa2}\)
29 \(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b4}\)

White is winning: 29...\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{a5}\) 30 \(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b6}\) \(\text{\textit{f}}\text{f8}\) 31 \(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b4}\) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{a2}\) 32 \(g\text{g}4\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d}7\) 33 \(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g2}\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}7\) 34 \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{d}4\) \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c2}\) 35 \(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b5}\) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e}6?\) 1–0. After this blunder, Black resigned in view of 36 \(\text{\textit{x}}\text{b7}\)!. However, after 35...\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b}2\) 36 \(h\text{h}4\) he would eventually lose anyway.

No. 10

Play this position from either side vs. an opponent of similar strength.

Gheorghiu - A. Petrosian
Bagneux 1982

White’s advantage is very significant. We saw a very similar situation
in the game Khalifman-Lukin (page 154).

21 Ad1 a4

This leads Black’s queen astray. Perhaps he should have preferred 21...g6, although over the board it’s very difficult for Black to decide which defence is best.

22 b3 a5 23 g3! Ac1 24 g2

White gains space on the kingside, which will be important in the future. Perhaps here Black should exchange the minor pieces, preparing for a difficult defence in a position with only major piece each on the board.

26...b4 27 h5 Ac7 28 f3 Ac5 29 f5! a3 30 d7 f8

After the alternative 30...xa2 31 e8+ h7 32 xf7 Black’s kingside would be weak and would not survive White’s attack.

However, the text move leads to a similar scenario.

31 b5 b4 32 d6 g8 33

White immediately aims to take advantage of the weakened c6-square. Also very promising here is 11 c2 g6 12 e1.

11 a6

12 a6

13 e4

14 f4

15 c6!

After 15...xc6 16 xc6 f6 17 f1 Black is also in trouble, as his knight is completely paralysed.

Suggestions for White.

10 Qxd5!

This is the most practical decision. The tempting alternative — 10 c2 -- could lead to messy complications after 10...b4! 11 xh7+ h8 12 e4 d6.

10 ... exd5

After 10...xd5 White scored a nice victory in the game Podgaets-Elion, USSR 1979: 11 c2 f5 12 c4

13 e1 a6 14 g5 xg5 15

This position arose after 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 cxd5 cxd5 4 c4 f6 5 c3 e6 6 f3 e7 7 cxd5 xd5 8 a3 0-0 9 0-0 b6?!. White went to exploit the drawbacks of Black’s dubious 9th move.
16  afe1  b4
17  d7!  a6
18  c3  f6
19  f5  e8
20  h3!

It's interesting to see how White's play on the queenside has resulted in a sudden attack on the opposite wing.

20  ...  h6
21  xh6!  c8

Black is also helpless after 21...

xe5 22 dxe5 gxh6 23 xh6 e6
24  h7+  f8 25  h8+  e7 26
xe6+  fxe6 27  f6+  d7 28  f7+
xd8 29  f8+  d7 30  d6+  e8
31  xe6+

22  d7  e6
23  xg7  1–0

No. 2

How would you play with White?

Krasenkov - Van der Sterren
FIDE-Wch Groningen 1997

16  e4!
White hits the d5-pawn, using the fact that 16...dxe4 isn't possible because of 17 d6. Meanwhile he threatens to play 17 e5.

16  ...  d8
17  d3  dxe4
18  xe4  g6
19  fd1

White has a big advantage, due to his superior development.

19  ...  b6
20  e3  c7
21  g5!  e8

Of course, not 21...f5? 22 h4
xg5 23 xg5 xbl 24 f6+-.

22  h4  h5
23  xe6  xe6
24  c4

White has converted the activity of his pieces into the possession of the bishop pair, which in this open position gives him a clear advantage.

The rest needs no comment:
24...e7 25 a2 g5 26 xg5
xg5 27 f4 f6 28 e5 e7 29
d6 xf4 30 f1 e4 31 d5
d4+ 32 xd4 xxd4 33 xg6+
h7 34 b6+-f5 35 xb7xb7
36 xb7 a7 37 c8 f4 38 d1
e2+ 39 f2 c3 40 c7+
x7d7 41 xd7 g6 42 x8 b5
43 xaxa6 xaxa3 44 d3+ 1–0.

No. 3
(see top of the facing page)

Mikhalchishin - Lalić
Sarajevo 1985
Suggest a plan for White.

White starts an attack on the kingside, as most Black’s pieces are away from it.

19 ... e5

If 19...e8, White takes the initiative: 20 g5 h5 21 g6! f5 22 e7 e5 23 d6 f7 e7 24 gxf7+ fxf7 25 e4.

20 g5 exd4
21 exd4 f5
22 dxh6 d5

After 22...gxh6? 23 d5 Black’s position would just collapse.

23 e3 g6
24 e5 d8
25 hxg7 b8?

More stubborn would be 25...exg7, when after 26 e5 exd5 27 d5 e5 28 dxe5 dxe5 29 bxc5 bxc5 White has chances to survive.

The end was: 26 d3 d6 27 h4! h5 28 hxg6 h2 29 f3 exg7 30 xh5 fxg6 31 xh2 h8
32 h3 d8 33 e4 1–0.

No. 4 (see top of the next column)

Reshevsky - Szabo
Buenos Aires 1970

Suggest a plan for White.

14 dxd5?!

White gets rid of the blockading knight. Also possible was 14 c2, but than Black could change the pawn formation himself by playing 14...ex3!? 15 fxe3 e5! 16 d3 g6, solving his opening problems.

14 ... exd5

I prefer 14...xd5, although after 15 c2 White is also better.

15 c2!

White goes to exploit the vulnerability of Black’s kingside.

15 ... d6
16 e1! c7?!
17 c1 e6
18 d3 f5
19 d2 f8
20 a4! f7
21 c6 bxc6
22 e5+-

The triumph of White’s strategy: he enjoys pressure along the c- and e-files and has superior minor pieces.

The end was: 22...xe5 23 xe5 g6
24 b4 f6 25 e7 xe5 26 xf6 xf6 27 xc6 g7 28 xf6
xf6 29 a6+ e6 30 b4 1–0.
No. 5

How would you play with Black?

Topalov - Kasparov
Sofia rpd(1) 1998

Black’s pieces are well placed for action, which Kasparov starts with the following typical break:

23 ... d4!
24 exd4 cxd4
25 Qa4?

After 25 Qxd4 Qxd4 26 Qxd4 a5g2 White’s king is weak, but this is what he had to play.

25 ... Qf4–+
26 Qe5

White is lost in all lines, e.g. 26 Qxf6 Qxf6 27 Qc5 Qxe2 28 Qxe2 Qxf3 29 Qxf3 Qd5 30 Qe4 Qxe2+ 31 Qxe2 Qg5=+, or 26 Qf1 Qh3+ 27 gxh3 (27 Qh1? Qe4=+) 27... Qxf3 28 Qe2 Qxe2 29 Qxe2 d3=+
or 26 Qb6 Qa7 27 Qc4 Qe4=–.

26 ... Qxc5
27 Qxf6 d3?

Much easier would be 27...Qb4! (suggested by Seirawan) or 27...Qxf6!

28 Qxc5 Qxe2 29 Qxe2 Qxf3 30 Qxf3 31 Qe8+ Qxe8 32 Qxf3 Qe1=+, pointed out by Kasparov.

28 Qxd3 Qxf3
29 Qxf3 Qd5
30 Qh4?

White had to play 30 Qe4, although after 30...Qxd2 31 Qxd2 Qxe4 32 Qxc5 Qxf6! 33 Qxe4 Qxe4 34 Qc8=+ Qg7 Black also wins.

The game now ended: 30...Qb4
31 Qc3 Qxc3 32 bxc3 Qe8 0–1.

No. 6

Suggest a plan for White.

T. Petrosian - Hort
Sarajevo 1972

21 Qg4!

After this fine move, Black’s position just falls apart. He cannot satisfactorily parry the threat of 22 Qxd5! and take care of the g7-square at the same time.

21 ... g6

The alternative — 21...Qb5? — also loses after 22 f3 Qd6 23 Qxg7! f5 24 Qg3 Qxg7 25 Qh5.

22 Qd1!
Also good is to strike on d5 immediately — 22 \textbf{\textit{dxd5! f5 23 \textit{wxd1 ed8 24 \textit{wxd4+-}}.}

After the text, the finish was:
\textit{22...d6 23 \textbf{\textit{exd5!+- cd8 24 xc6 \textit{c8b8 25 f4 e6 26 wd4 1-0.}}}

\textbf{No. 7}

\textbf{\textit{W}}

\textbf{\textit{How should White continue?}}

\textbf{\textit{T. Petrosian - Beliavsky}}

\textit{41th USSR Ch, Moscow 1973}

\textit{19 \textbf{\textit{wxf5!}}}

This move forces further simplifications, which here suits White.
19 ... \textbf{\textit{e6}}

Alas, Black cannot keep the queens on since \textit{19...h3? loses to 20 xf7+ xf7 21 g5+}.

20 \textbf{\textit{xe6 xe6}}

21 \textbf{\textit{ac1 f6}}

22 \textbf{\textit{c2 e5}}

23 \textbf{\textit{xe5! xe5}}

24 \textbf{\textit{fc1 c8}}

25 \textbf{\textit{c5!}}

The endgame is technically winning for White, as the c6-pawn is too weak: \textit{25...d6 26 1c2 f7 27 f1 e6 28 e1! d4 29 f4 d3 30 d2+- 2 b2 31 xd3 a8 32 xd6+ xd6 33 d3 a5 34 c4 a3 35 a4 c5 36 xc5 xc5 37 b4+ c4 38 a5 a8 39 a3 d3 40 f2 b7 41 c5 a7 42 xc6 a5 43 f3 1-0.}

\textbf{No. 8}

\textbf{\textit{W}}

\textbf{\textit{Suggest a plan for White}}

\textbf{\textit{Gavrilov - Mochalov}}

\textit{Lithuania Open Ch, Vilnius 1983}

17 \textbf{\textit{wd4!}}

White prepares to take control over the c5-square by playing \textit{a4}, which then cannot be answered by \textit{e4}. Black's reply seems to be natural, but in fact it leads him into even greater difficulties.

17 ... \textbf{\textit{c5?}}

18 \textbf{\textit{f4!}}

19 \textbf{\textit{d7}}

Also after \textit{18...xf4 19 xf4 xe1+ 20 xe1 e6 Black is in trouble. Then the most energetic way to exploit White's advantage is to play 21 f5 xf5 22 e7! d6 23 xd5! xd5 24 xf7!+-}.
19 \( \text{ Wa4! } \) \( \text{ We6 } \)

Black cannot get off the hook — 19...\( \text{ Wd6 } \) loses after 20 \( \text{ Ccd1 } \) \( \text{ Ce6 } \)
21 e4 \( \text{ Ad7 } \) 22 \( \text{ Wa3 } \) d4 23 e5.
20 \( \text{ Qxd5!+ } \) \( \text{ Qxd5 } \)
21 \( \text{ Bxc5 } \) \( \text{ Be8 } \)
22 \( \text{ Wc4 } \) 1–0

No. 9

How would you play with White?

Dlugy - Kudrin

New York Open 1986

18 e4!

White also stands better after 18 \( \text{ Qxd5 } \) \( \text{ Qxd5 } \) 19 \( \text{ Bxd5 } \) \( \text{ Bxd5 } \) 20 \( \text{ Wxd5 } \) \( \text{ Wxd5 } \) 21 \( \text{ Qxd5 } \) \( \text{ Bxb2 } \), but the text is even more promising.
18 ... d4

After 18...\( \text{ Qxe4 } \) 19 \( \text{ Qxe4 } \) dxe4 20 \( \text{ Wxe6 } \) fxe6 21 \( \text{ Bg6 } \) Black is in trouble, e.g. 21...\( \text{ Bg5 } \) 22 \( \text{ Bxb8 } \) \( \text{ Bxc1 } \) 23 \( \text{ Be5 } \) with the initiative.
19 \( \text{ Bd5! } \) \( \text{ Bd8 } \)
20 \( \text{ Bh3! } \) \( \text{ Bxh3 } \)

After 20...\( \text{ Wd6? } \) 21 \( \text{ Bc4 } \) the black queen gets trapped, while 20...\( \text{ Bxd5 } \) 21 \( \text{ Bxe6 } \) \( \text{ Bxa2 } \) 22 \( \text{ Bxa2 } \) also leaves Black in a ruined position.

The final moves were: 21 \( \text{ Qxf6+ } \) \( \text{ Qxf6 } \) 22 \( \text{ Wxf7+ } \) \( \text{ Bh7 } \) 23 \( \text{ Wxb7+ } \) \( \text{ Wf6 } \) 24 \( \text{ Qc6 } \) \( \text{ Bdc8 } \) 25 \( \text{ Qxa7 } \) \( \text{ Be8 } \)
26 e5 \( \text{ Bg5 } \) 27 \( \text{ Bxg5 } \) \( \text{ hxg5 } \) 28 b4 \( \text{ cxb4 } \) 29 axb4 \( \text{ Qxb4 } \) 30 \( \text{ Wxd4 } \) \( \text{ Bxa2 } \)
31 \( \text{ Bc7 } \) \( \text{ Wxe5 } \) 32 \( \text{ Bdd7 } \) \( \text{ Bg8 } \) 33 \( \text{ Bb1+ } \) \( \text{ Bh8 } \) 34 \( \text{ Bxa2 } \) \( \text{ Bgf8 } \) 35 \( \text{ Bc1 } \) g4 36 \( \text{ Wd2 } \) \( \text{ Bab8 } \) 37 \( \text{ Bc6 } \) 1–0.
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