

Cyrus Lakdawala

The Scandinavian

move by move



EVERYMAN CHESS

The Scandinavian: Move by Move

by Cyrus Lakdawala



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The Scandinavian: Move by Move

This series provides an ideal platform to study chess openings. By continually challenging the reader to answer probing questions throughout the book, the *Move by Move* format greatly encourages the learning and practising of vital skills just as much as the traditional assimilation of opening knowledge. Carefully selected questions and answers are designed to keep you actively involved and allow you to monitor your progress as you learn. This is an excellent way to study any chess opening and at the same time improve your general chess skills and knowledge.

In this book, International Master Cyrus Lakdawala invites you to join him in studying the Scandinavian Defence. In recent years this opening has become a very popular choice for club and tournament players. Lakdawala focuses on the modern lines with 3...Qd6 – an approach championed by grandmasters and Scandinavian experts such as Sergei Tiviakov. Lakdawala outlines a reliable repertoire for Black, examines the major positional and tactical ideas, answers all the key questions and tells you everything you need to know about playing the Scandinavian.

- Essential guidance and training in the Scandinavian
- Important ideas absorbed by continued practice
- Utilizes an ideal approach to chess study

Cyrus Lakdawala is an International Master, a former National Open and American Open Champion, and a six-time State Champion. He has been teaching chess for 30 years, and coaches some of the top junior players in the US.

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EVERYMAN CHESS SERIES (formerly Cadogan Chess)

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Series Foreword

Move by Move is a series of opening books which uses a question-and-answer format. One of our main aims of the series is to replicate - as much as possible - lessons between chess teachers and students.

All the way through, readers will be challenged to answer searching questions and to complete exercises, to test their skills in chess openings and indeed in other key aspects of the game. It's our firm belief that practising your skills like this is an excellent way to study chess openings, and to study chess in general.

Many thanks go to all those who have been kind enough to offer inspiration, advice and assistance in the creation of *Move by Move*. We're really excited by this series and hope that readers will share our enthusiasm.

John Emms
Everyman Chess

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ChessBase 10

Chesslive database

The Week in Chess

Introduction

My happy association with the Scandinavian began in the mid 1980's (it comes as quite a shock to suddenly realize you have been playing an opening since Ronald Reagan's presidency). I was paired with the black pieces against the monster 2600-rated IM, and friend, Doug Root, who I trailed in the tournament standings by a half point and rating wise by over 100 points. I had never beaten him, and my two defences, French and Alekhine's, felt woefully inadequate. He opened the game with 1 e4. Then a Cat Stevens song (before he became Yusuf Islam!) suddenly popped into my head: "I'm looking for a hard headed woman, one that will make me do my best. And when I find my hard headed woman, I know the rest of my life will be blessed, oh yes, yes it will!"

So based on this intuitive data alone, as if by its own volition, my right hand impulsively reached out for my d-pawn and to my horror pushed it two squares, and soon my hard headed woman emerged on d5 (and yes, I realize that by making this confession, you now regard your writer as slightly unbalanced).



The only Scandinavian game I was familiar with was Larsen's masterpiece (a 3...Qa5 Scandi) against Karpov played in Montreal, 1979. In an unbelievably good stroke of fortune, Doug chose the same line as Karpov (the single variation I knew), and overextended, much the same as Karpov did against Larsen. Well, I was hooked. But the question arose: How did I arrive in the situation where good fortune bubbled over? Was it dumb luck, or was the Scandinavian a better opening than people give it credit for? I chose to believe the latter. I didn't care that at the time (and even today) many strong players considered the Scandinavian borderline sound. In fact, the late GM Rosendo Balinas, after beating down my Scandi, scolded me: "Your first move was an error!" He warned me that Black's early queen excursion walked that precarious tightrope between reason and irrationality. I didn't believe him then and I don't now.

A Violation of all that is Sacred



With the Scandinavian, we issue a flagrant challenge to long established doctrine. Our charmed opening mockingly blasphemes against the sacred verities of the most holy of principles and we must learn to live with a stigma attached. After all, in playing our second and third moves, ...Qxd5 and ...Qd6, Black violates no less than two principles:

1. Don't bring your queen out early, since your opponent's pieces or pawns may give chase, at your loss of time and discomfort.
2. Don't fall behind in development.

However, normal laws of physics collapse when entering this anomalous pocket of space. In this universe, rapid development and central control are arbitrarily punished, while egregious violations like bringing out one's queen early, and moving her over and over again, is blessed with reward! The Scandinavian is a dark alien technology, which doesn't function under any set of mechanical principles with which I am familiar. It's a bit like the hard-working government clerk who finishes his work early, and as a consequence must complete the unfinished work of lazy co-workers. Well, we are the lazy co-workers! The reasons?

First, White has a terrible time opening the position any further, since our Caro-Kann set-up: ...c6, ...Bf5 (or ...Bg4), and ...e6 renders the structure rather rigid, which in turn deflates White's much publicized development lead.

Secondly, your opponent lacks specific targets, despite an often massive development lead.

Lastly, your opponent often believes you are crushed, when in reality he or she may only hold only a mild '+=' or even '=' assessment.

From my experience our opening represents an agency unconstrained by normal chess laws, and we, the faithful, are inexplicably granted amnesty for past, unpunished (and future) crimes, in perpetuity. Ironically, it is precisely our flagrant and defiant violations which plant the seed for the defeat of our law abiding opponent. Our secret? We drizzle temptation before our opponent's eyes. It is in his extravagant attempt to bring us to justice - that very moment is normally when our opponent's guard finds itself at its lowest ebb - and it is precisely then that we counter strike, and White finds his rage channelled into diversionary byways.

Have faith. Our opening is sound. At the time of writing, Black scores just above 46% after 3...Qd6 - slightly above average for a black opening. So the stats just don't bear out the theory that the Scandinavian is some disreputable byway. The opening is legit and here to stay. When you take it up, you discover a mysterious woman you simply fail to fathom, yet still love.

Our Great Hurdle



In the diagrammed position, we have little to no margin for error. Our defence must be comp-perfect or we face Old Testament style divine retribution. We cover this line and its offspring in Chapters [Two](#), [Three](#) and [Four](#). It represents no less than an attempt at total eclipse of the ...Qd6 lines and constitutes an existential threat to our very survival. So study these chapters as if your life depends upon it - because it does! If you do study these chapters carefully, you discover that your resources are more than adequate against White's coming assault.

Here is an early Scandinavian game which caught my eye. Note how Lasker just couldn't seem to get his arms around his dream attack.

Game 1

E.Lasker-R.Breckenridge

New York (simul) 1894

([View in Game Format](#))

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qa5

Question: Aren't we exclusively covering the 3...Qd6 lines in this book?

Answer: Please keep your voice down or I risk an outraged email from the editor! We are, but the ...Qd6 lines didn't really begin to appear until the 1970's, so I add this game for a historical perspective. Even if we don't cover the ...Qa5 lines in the book, the middlegame position reached in this game appears quite similar to many of the structures we will examine.

4 Nf3 Bg4

4...Nf6 and 4...c6 are also played here.

5 Be2

Probably too meek to get much of an edge. 5 h3 Bh5 6 d4 e6 7 g4 Bg6 8 Ne5 Nf6 reaches the critical position of the ...Qa5/...Bg4 Scandinavian. According to theory, White stands clearly better, but I disagree and defend Black with religious fervour, as do a few strong GMs, like Christian Bauer.

5...e6 6 0-0 Nf6 7 d4 c6

Now we reach positions similar to the ones arising from the 3...Qd6 lines, which we examine in detail in this book.

8 Ne5!?



He allows Black to swap a bad bishop for White's good bishop.

8...Bxe2 9 Nxe2

9 Qxe2 is, of course, also playable.

9...Bd6

It's actually better to post the bishop on e7, but they didn't know this in 1894.

10 f4!?

Aggressive and in Lasker's style, but he also weakens his light squares and places pawns on the same colour as his remaining bishop, two factors which haunt him later in the game. I can see why Lasker rejected the boring 10 Nc4 Qc7 11 Nxd6+ Qxd6.

10...Nbd7 11 Kh1 Rd8 12 Bd2 Qc7 13 Qe1 0-0 14 Qh4



Question: Isn't White better? He has an entrenched knight on e5 and looks like he builds an attack as well.

Answer: I actually prefer Black, who controls the central light squares and owns the better bishop. As for White's attack, we shall see...

14...Ne4

The light squares are the commodity to be bartered for and traded.

15 Be3 Ndf6 16 Nd3 Nd5!

Black's knights, an infection, begin a slow affliction on the weakened light squares.

17 Rf3

Undaunted by strategic woes, Lasker pushes forward for mate.

17...f5!

Dual purpose:

1. Black anchors his knight on e4.
2. Tossing in ...f5 keeps his king safer since Black begins to challenge White's kingside space advantage.

18 Rg1!?

Also possible is 18 Rh3 h6 19 Bg1.

18...Be7 19 Qh3?!

Consistent, but dubious. Lasker isn't a likely candidate for the apologetic but correct 19 Qe1.

19...c5!



Principle: Counter in the centre when menaced on the wing. I never heard of Breckenridge before digging up this game, but he possessed uncanny strategic and defensive instincts for a person living in his time.

20 Bc1

The bad bishop remains a serious strategic impediment.

20...c4?!

20...Ndf6! is virtually winning after 21 c3 cxd4 22 cxd4 (White also loses after 22 Nxd4 Ng4! threatening ...Bc5) 22...Ng4! 23 Ng3 Rf6! 24 Nxe4 Rh6!, picking up material.

21 Ne5 c3 22 b3 Nb4

White's queenside pawns are en prise. He must generate something on the other wing to compensate, and quickly.

23 Ng3 Nxg3+

Houdini likes 23...Nd6 24 Nh5 g6 25 g4, but the position around Black's king begins to grow turbulent.

24 Rxg3 Nd5!

He sees through Lasker's tricks:

- a) 24...Nxc2?? drops a piece to 25 Rxc3.
- b) 24...Nxa2? 25 Qh6 Bf6 26 Ba3 when Black must give up an exchange.

25 Rf3

25 Qh6 leads nowhere after 25...Bf6.

25...Rf6 26 g4 Rh6

Here Lasker's scheming mind began to weigh the pros and cons of a psycho sac.

27 Qxh6?



Warfare, by its very nature, offers each side license to inflict savage acts upon the other, which would be deemed criminal in times of peace. Chaos asserts itself. Out of nowhere, the queen materializes on h6, as if beamed down by Scotty himself, from the USS Enterprise. She plunges into the murky depths, without thought of retreat or mercy, in a final defiant act of a defiant life. One can never accuse Lasker of an impoverished imagination, and the shocking effect of this move is the equivalent to President Obama delivering a State of the Union speech wearing sandals, shorts, a Bob Marley t-shirt and dreadlocked hair - and his new wardrobe's effect on the New York Stock Exchange the following day.

Question: I don't understand. Isn't this sac, to put it mildly, a bit on the rash end of the scale? Is it madness or veiled calculation?

Answer: Perhaps a little of both. Clearly the move courts death. The sac unleashes one of Lasker's shady yet maddeningly difficult to refute ideas. In a sense, there is no basis for understanding, since Lasker sometimes deliberately chose "bad" moves to confuse his often confused adversaries, as he attempts in this instance. His sac is more an article of faith in his own remarkable calculation abilities, rather than from logic or empiricism. Lasker rejected truisms in chess and confounded many an opponent this way. His philosophy: It is simple to put forth difficult and even unsound obstacles in an opponent's path; much more difficult, however, is the actual refutation of the problems by the defence.

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Lasker just can't help himself from such extemporaneous indulgences, especially in a simul game, when he is in no mood for manoeuvring niceties. Technically, the move is an error, but if Lasker plays it, maybe it isn't an error! Presumptions are sometimes misinterpreted as facts. Now the gates of hell open around Black's king. Tormented shadows and spirits, pulsing and vibrating with life, writhe in terrible images which labour to take form and come to life in the corporeal realm of materiality. Lasker's idea comes tantalizingly close to fulfilment, but in the end, the key simply fails to fit the lock. With hindsight, Lasker should have played the prosaic 27 Qg2, but then we would have been deprived of a very interesting game.

27...gxf6

Capture of the queen is no cause for rejoicing just yet. Black feasts sombrely, realizing the food consumed may also be poisoned, since ingress into the black king's inner sanctum will not be denied to White, who concedes a dear price for the rights. Over the board it isn't such an easy matter to navigate Black's side without capsizing one's equilibrium.

28 gxf5+ Kf8

28...Kh8?? isn't much of a consideration, since 29 Nf7 is mate.

29 Rfg3

Threatening mate in one.

29...Nf6 30 fxe6 Rxd4 31 Rg7 Ke8 32 Ba3!



Threat: Rg8+ mating. Lasker cunningly advances in dispersed formation, coming at Black on all sides.

Question: Did Lasker succeed in whipping up compensation for his sacrifice?

Answer: More or less, but mainly less! He doesn't get enough. The high priest on a3 appears terrifyingly magnificent behind the Aztec war mask, yet, somehow, the blandness of his actual face seeps through.

32...Rd6!

The only move, but a good one. In such positions, stasis is an illusion. Either you gain ground or lose it.

33 f5 b5!

Idea: ...b4 and ...Qb7+. Black exudes a confidence not generally seen in a mere master who faces down a newly crowned world champion, even if in a simul game.

34 Bxd6

White is forced to release the tension.

34...Qxd6 35 Nf7 Qd5+

At long last, Black seizes the initiative.

36 R7g2



"Victory has a hundred fathers, but defeat is an orphan," lamented John F Kennedy, after the Bay of Pigs fiasco. We sense a loss of control from White. Have you ever been handed a shocking revelation, and then paused and realized you subconsciously knew it all along? Well, we all knew White's attack was waning. The once great undertaking continues its dreary decline to mediocrity and the proximate success of White's dreams recede with

undertaking continues its dreary decline to mediocrity and the proximate success of White's dreams recede with each move. Lasker's gamble failed and White's success seems contingent upon Black's level of confusion, which thus far has been non-existent.

Exercise (combination alert): Find a trick to win more material.

Answer: Double attack. Black threatens both ...Nf2 mate and also ...Ne3, winning an exchange.

36...Ng4!

Houdini also likes 36...Bc5!.

37 h3 Ne3 38 Kh2 Nxf2 39 Rxf2 Bd6+

Lasker's truculent resistance arrives near its end.

40 Nxd6+ Qxd6+ 41 Kh1 Qd1+ 42 Kh2 Qf1 43 Rg8+ Ke7 44 Rg7+ Kd6 45 e7 Kd7 46 Rf7 a5

46...Ke8 47 Rg7 Qxf5 is the simplest path.

47 f6 Qf4+ 48 Kg2 Qe4+ 49 Kf1 Qf4+ 0-1



A panorama of White's lonely kingside tells the story without words. His king throws down his sword and kneels before the hated black queen, who achieves unchallenged ascendancy. He laments the rashness of his beloved queen's earlier self-sacrifice. Sometimes even the greats endure attacking Waterloos. Lasker accepts the aftermath of the misadventure with good grace and resigns, seeing Black's position laden with bounty. The moral of this game: Sometimes crass consumerism and the accruing of wealth really is the way to inner peace and happiness!

Question: Those White passers are deep. How does Black make progress?

Answer: Let's turn this into an exercise:

Exercise (combination alert): Come up with a clear path to Black's victory.

Answer: The cockroach on f4 peers through the crack in the wall and spies a crumb on the open floor on f7. All that is required is to take it. The vengeful queen lords it over White by weaving her way to the rook: 50 Kg2 (the meek king has the good sense to obey the queen's demands) 50...Qe4+ 51 Kf1 (the social pressure on the ostracized king grows out of control; he flees, not from danger, but from what others think of him, and replies, but to no one but the taunting voices in his head) 51...Qf5+! 52 Ke2 (52 Kg1 Qg6+ is the same) 52...Qe6+.

Summary: The Scandinavian often resembles a Caro-Kann-like defensive wall, which time and time again frustrates attackers.

Many thanks as always to editors, GM John Emms and IM Richard Palliser, to Nancy for proofreading, and Tim for comp support.

May your opponents rub their hands with unjustified glee upon seeing you meet 1 e4 with 1...d5!.

Cyrus Lakdawala,
San Diego,
May 2013

Lasker,E
 Breckenridge,R
 New York (simul)
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

1894

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♗c3 ♖a5

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4.♗f3 ♗g4

[4...♗f6 and]

[4...c6 are also played here.]

5.♗e2 Probably too meek to get much of an edge.

[5.h3 ♗h5 6.d4 e6 7.g4 ♗g6 8.♗e5 ♗f6 reaches the critical position of the ...Qa5/...Bg4 Scandinavian. According to theory, White stands clearly better, but I disagree and defend Black with religious fervour, as do a few strong GMs, like Christian Bauer.]

5...e6 6.0-0 ♗f6 7.d4 c6 Now we reach positions similar to the ones arising from the 3...Qd6 lines, which we examine in detail in this book.

8.♗e5!? He allows Black to swap a bad bishop for White's good bishop.

♗xe2 9.♗xe2

[9.♖xe2 is, of course, also playable.]

9...♗d6 It's actually better to post the bishop on e7, but they didn't know this in 1894.

10.f4!? Aggressive and in Lasker's style, but he also weakens his light squares and places pawns on the same colour as his remaining bishop, two factors which haunt him later in the game.

[I can see why Lasker rejected the boring 10.♗c4 ♖c7 11.♗xd6+ ♖xd6 .]

10...♗bd7 11.♗h1 ♗d8 12.♗d2 ♖c7

13.♖e1 0-0 14.♖h4 QUESTION: Isn't White better? He has an entrenched knight on e5 and looks like he builds an attack as well.

ANSWER: I actually prefer Black, who controls the central light squares and owns the better bishop. As for White's attack, we shall see...

♗e4 The light squares are the commodity to

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15.♗e3 ♗df6 16.♗d3 ♗d5! Black's knights, an infection, begin a slow affliction on the weakened light squares.

17.♖f3 Undaunted by strategic woes, Lasker pushes forward for mate.

f5! Dual purpose:

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[Also possible is 18.♖h3 h6 19.♗g1 .]

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23.♗g3 ♗xg3+

[Houdini likes 23...♗d6 24.♗h5 g6 25.g4 , but the position around Black's king begins to grow turbulent.]

24.♖xg3 ♗d5! He sees through Lasker's tricks:

[a) 24...♗xc2?? drops a piece to 25.♖xc3 .]

[b) 24...♗xa2? 25.♖h6 ♗f6 26.♗a3! when Black must give up an exchange.]

25.♖f3

[25.♖h6 leads nowhere after ♗f6 .]

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28.gxf5+ ♕f8

[28...♕h8?? isn't much of a consideration, since 29.♖f7# is mate.]

29.♖fg3 Threatening mate in one.

♖f6 30.fxe6 ♖xd4 31.♖g7 ♕e8 32.♠a3!

Threat: Rg8+ mating. Lasker cunningly advances in dispersed formation, coming at Black on all sides.

QUESTION: Did Lasker succeed in whipping up compensation for his sacrifice?

ANSWER: More or less, but mainly less! He doesn't get enough. The high priest on a3 appears terrifyingly magnificent behind the Aztec war mask, yet, somehow, the blandness of his actual face seeps through.

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♠xd6 35.♖f7 ♖d5+ At long last, Black seizes the initiative.

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EXERCISE (combination alert): Find a trick to win more material.

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♖g4!

[Houdini also likes 36...♠c5! .]

37.h3 ♖e3 38.♕h2 ♖xg2 39.♖xg2 ♠d6+ Lasker's truculent resistance arrives near its end.

40.♔xd6+ ♚xd6+ 41.♕h1 ♚d1+ 42.♕h2
 ♚f1 43.♖g8+ ♕e7 44.♖g7+ ♕d6 45.e7
 ♕d7 46.♖f7 a5

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ANSWER: Let's turn this into an exercise:

EXERCISE (combination alert): Come up with a clear path to Black's victory.

[ANSWER: The cockroach on f4 peers through the crack in the wall and spies a crumb on the open floor on f7. All that is required is to take it. The vengeful queen lords it over White by weaving her way to the rook: 49...♚f4+ 50.♕g2 (the meek king has the good sense to obey the queen's demands) ♚e4+ 51.♕f1 (the social pressure on the ostracized king grows out of control; he flees, not from danger, but from what others think of him, and replies, but to no one but the taunting voices in his head) ♚f5+! 52.♕e2 (52.♕g1 ♖g6+ is the same) 52...♚e6+ .

Summary: The Scandinavian often resembles a Caro-Kann-like defensive wall, which time and time again frustrates attackers.]

0-1

Chapter One

The Main Line without 6 Ne5

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 c6



Before we enter the terrifying 6 Ne5 lines of Chapters [Two](#), [Three](#) and [Four](#), let's begin the book with a relaxing vacation in the non-critical sixth move alternatives. In this chapter, White's hope of a long-lasting opening advantage (or, indeed, any advantage at all) is spent, flavourless gum, chewed too long. The variations we arrive at in this chapter will probably occur against opponents who don't know Scandinavian opening theory and are just basically winging it. Let's keep things simple by remaining within Caro-Kann-like structures. In each instance, White gets nothing from the opening, and his efforts to force an advantage are wasted.

[Sulskis-Tiviakov](#)

[Arutyunov-Lakdawala \(6 Be2\)](#)

[Macieja-Tiviakov](#)

[Abrahamyan-Stopa](#)

[Vega Gutierrez-Tiviakov](#)

[Huschenbeth-Tiviakov](#)

[Campos-Tiviakov](#)

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1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 (3...Qa5 – [Lasker-Breckenridge](#)) 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 c6

6 h3 – [Sulskis-Tiviakov](#)

6 Be2 – [Arutyunov-Lakdawala \(6 Be2\)](#)

6 g3 – [Macieja-Tiviakov](#)

6 Bc4 – [Abrahamyan-Stopa](#)

6 Be3 – [Vega Gutierrez-Tiviakov](#)

6 Bd3 – [Huschenbeth-Tiviakov](#)

6 Bg5 – [Campos-Tiviakov](#)

1.e4 d5 QUESTION: Don't we violate principle right from the starting gate by indulging in an early queen excursion?

ANSWER: Please see my lengthy monologue on this topic in the introduction! As I mention there, the Scandi should be unsound, but by the caprice of some chess god or goddess, it just isn't, and remains perfectly sound – although I can't give you the reason for its soundness if my life depended on it!

[1...c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 is the mainline Caro starting position, which is similar to what we get with the ...Qd6 Scandinavian.]

2.exd5 ♖xd5 Welcome to the other Caro-Kann!

QUESTION: If the position is destined to be Caro-Kann-like, then why not just go ahead and play the real Caro-Kann?

ANSWER: This is a facsimile of the positions we reach from the Caro. But if you play the Caro, you must also face the Advance Variation, the Panov-Botvinnik and about a half-dozen others, all different from one another and all loaded up with nearly a century of theory. The Scandinavian avoids such a theoretical nuisance. We tend to get the same mainline Caro structure over and over. Also, most 1 e4 players are heavily booked up on the Caro, and anything but booked up against the rarely played Scandinavian.

3.♗c3 ♖d6

[QUESTION: Are we covering 3...♗a5 lines as well in this book?

ANSWER: We don't have the space to cover both lines, and Everyman remains irrational in its insistence that my books remain under 1,000 pages. 3...Qa5 was my main Scandi for about two decades, but in the last few years I added the ...Qd6 lines.

QUESTION: What is the difference between the two lines?

ANSWER: Black's queen runs the gauntlet in both variations, but to my mind, there is less danger for her in the 3...Qd6 lines. I think White extracts an edge against the 3...Qa5 lines with an early Bd2. I haven't yet found a path to full equality there. So in

essence, my heart is with 3...Qa5, but my mind goes with 3...Qd6 as a safer, more logical choice.]

4.d4 ♗f6 5.♗f3 c6 6.h3 QUESTION: I take it that after such a meek response, we have nothing to fear?

ANSWER: Basically, we should be able to equalize after any of White's seven non-critical, sixth-move responses in this chapter.

QUESTION: What is White's idea behind his last move?

ANSWER: Essentially he wants to cut out ...Bg4, but there is more to it. If Black develops his bishop to f5, White's may want to keep g4 attacking options open as well.

♗f5 Well, our choice between g4 or f5 development was made quite simple for us in this line!

[6...g6 is also possible, but in this book I try and hone the positions as closely to the Caro structure as possible, just to keep things simpler. After 7.♗e5 ♗bd7 8.♗f4 ♗d5! 9.♗xd5 ♖xd5 we reach a position we cover in Chapter Three, but with the inclusion of the moves h3 and ...g6, which seems to be a better deal for Black, D. Hrisanthopoulos-S.Tiviakov, Vrachati 2011.]

7.g4!? QUESTION: Isn't his move weakening?

ANSWER: To play for a win, one must sometimes take on reasonable risk as well. I think this rare but ambitious move, designed to take over both the initiative and bishop-pair, is White's only real try for an edge, and if failing that, then at least a sharp fight.

Alternatives:

[a) 7.♗d3 ♗xd3 8.♖xd3 ♗bd7 9.♗g5 e6 10.0-0-0 ♗e7 11.♗b1 . Now Black has a choice of 0-0-0 , which is not very ambitious but good enough for equality, E.Inarkiev-S. Tiviakov, Moscow 2009, (or the more enterprising but riskier 11...0-0!?, going opposite wings.)]

[b) 7.♗c4 ♗bd7 (the most accurate move; Black covers e5) 8.0-0 e6 9.♗g5 (this rote move gives White nothing; perhaps he can try to sharpen the game by going after the bishop-pair with 9.♗h4 ♗g6 10.♗xg6 hxg6 , but we Scandinavian players are used to such structures) 9...♗e7 10.♖e2 0-0 11.♗ad1 h6 12.♗h4 ♖c7 is equal, Yu Ruiyuan-O.Barbosa, Ho Chi Minh City 2012.]

7...♗g6 8.♗e5 ♗bd7 Our mantra: Quickly challenge a white knight on e5.

9.f4 Threatening to smother our bishop.

[QUESTION: Should Black be worried about 9.♟f4 ?

ANSWER: Not in this position. When White plays a similar Bf4 on us in Chapter Three, a critical chapter, that is the time for worry! Here ♖xe5 10.♟xe5 ♜b4 11.♜d2 e6 12.0-0-0 0-0-0 is balanced.]

9...e6 10.♟g2 ♜c7 11.♜e2 Threat: Nxd7 followed by f5.

♖xe5 12.dxe5 He keeps f5 possibilities open this way.

♖d7! QUESTION: Why not to d5 instead?

ANSWER: By playing to d7, Black increases the pressure on e5. This in turn will make White think twice about playing any f5 later on, since that would weaken his e5-pawn.

[Black's position has the look of an Advance Caro line after the also playable 12...♖d5 13.♟xd5 cxd5 14.♟e3 .]

13.0-0

[White can also play 13.♞f1 , intending to castle queenside.]

13...h5! Dual purpose:

1. Black offers his g6-bishop air.
2. Black reminds White that he too may fall under attack.

14.f5 Thematic, but also weakening. White commits to sac'ing his e-pawn.

♟h7 15.♟g5

[Houdini says tossing in 15.fxe6 first is more accurate.]

15...♜xe5

[I like Black's position after 15...♖xe5!

16.♟f4 f6 17.fxe6 hxg4 when White's king has an unhealthy pallor.]

16.fxe6 ♟c5+ 17.♖h1 ♜xe6 18.♜xe6+

[Black looks good after 18.♞ae1 0-0! .]

18...fxe6 19.♞ae1 ♟g8!? QUESTION: What? Black ties himself up for a measly, weak e-pawn?

ANSWER: We Scandi folk tend to be a greedy lot. Perhaps you are right. Tiv's last move gives the impression of a guy too lazy to do the laundry on a regular basis who decides to make do with the least dirty shirt in the pile.

[19...e5 looks a lot more natural and is the move I would have gone for as well. But it's hard to criticize King Tiv, since he gets away with his move.]

20.♟e4 Threatening a nasty check on g6.

♖f8 21.♞xf8+!/? We all want to skip the Brussels sprouts and go straight to the ice cream. The question arises: Did White just obliterate the fragile boundary between ambition and folly? Sulskis mimics a show of

bravery, which according to the comps rings hollow inwardly as much as it impresses us humans outwardly! One can easily become a captive in the drive to find the perfect move each turn. Sometimes it's just better to cross your fingers and guess. It's also hard to fault White for this speculation, since he gets a long-lasting initiative for the exchange.

[White can also try 21.♖b5!/? ♞c8!

(nobody said Black was forced to cooperate and accept the sac) 22.♞d1 (threatening mate in two moves, starting with a knight check on c7) ♟e7 23.♖d6+ ♟xd6 24.♞xd6 hxg4 25.h4 ♟h7 when I prefer Black, but Houdini says White gets enough compensation for his material.]

21...♟xf8 22.♟g6+ Here we go. Tiviakov's king is indicted and remanded for trial. He runs his tongue over dry lips and swallows in an unconscious gesture, reflecting frayed nerves.

♖d7

[22...♟f7?? hangs a piece to 23.♞xe6+ ♖d7 24.♟xf7 .]

23.♞d1+ ♖c7 24.♟f4+ ♖b6 25.♟e3+ ♖a5!/?

One is grimly reminded of the Rush song: "Fly by night, away from here. Change my life again. Fly by night, goodbye my dear. My ship isn't coming and I just can't pretend."

QUESTION: Is this what awaits us in the Scandinavian?

ANSWER: I freely admit that the situation looks eerily close to one of those Morphy versus the Duke and Count bloodbaths we all played over as kids. Zero development and Black's only developed piece happens to be his king. But remember, this isn't a one-sided equation:

1 We are in an ending.

2. There is no forced mate and Black remains up a ton of material. So there is heavy pressure on White as well. Houdini assesses at '=+', an edge for Black. So for the sake of argument, let's grant Black the maximum degree of good faith in his rather outrageous premise that he stands better! I get the feeling the White collective's air of confident ease is belied by a tiny bead of perspiration on the forehead.

26.g5 In order to shut Black's h-rook out.

♟h7! Every swap brings Black further away from checkmate and closer to victory.

27.♟xh7 ♞xh7 28.♞d7 ♖a6 One must sit back and admire King Tiv's mercantile spirit. After the initial barrage, Black manages to

recover his composure by slow, painful degrees. His remarkable king weaves and bobs with a survivalist cunning which continually modifies itself to the course of events. For now, Black's king retreats into that silent, still place within himself, where the tumult of the outside world is unable to follow – or so he hopes!

29.♖e4 ♜h8 30.g6 ♞e8 Black remains completely tangled up, and yet at the same time one feels a subtle unravelling taking place as well. We sense that White engages his opponent in revolver-like fashion, firing indiscriminately at nothing, into the void. Sometimes it isn't enough just to tie down an opponent; one must also produce a clear target as well, which in this case White continues to seek.

31.c4 h4! Nice. He plans to activate his rook via h5.

32.a3 ♜h5 33.♙g5! Oh, no you don't! The bishop boxes in the rook by erecting a barrier on g5.

b5!? 34.cxb5+ cxb5 35.b4

[QUESTION: Isn't 35.♙e3 deadly?

ANSWER: Not really. Black's rook, without shame, simply returns home with ♜a8 .]

35...♙b6! 36.♙g2!

[Avoiding the trap 36.♙e3+?? ♙c6 37.♞xa7 ♞e5! , winning.]

36...a5! Slowly, slowly, Black unwinds.

37.♙f3 axb4 38.axb4 ♙c6! 39.♞a7 ♜h8

40.♞a6+ ♙d5 The corpse, which the murderer so casually dumped in the river, now rises to the surface in its new, bloated form to testify against him.

41.♞a7 ♙c4! White's once terrifying initiative goes into cardiac arrest. Amazing! Black's king, exalting in his glory, throws head back and arms out, Leonardo di Caprio/Titanic style, when he declared: "I'm the king of the world!" In this bizarre Scandiworld meritocracy, it is Black's king, of all pieces, who outshines the rest of his sleeping army. Now the outcome is clear and without protraction.

42.♙e3 ♙xb4 43.♙d3 ♜h5 44.♞a1 ♞c8

45.♞a7 ♙b3 46.♞a6 EXERCISE (planning): Just one strong move is required and Black's pieces emerge in force. What should he play? ANSWER: Overload.

♞c4! Black threatens 47...Rxe4. This in turn collapses White's semblance of counterplay. Summary: Prepare yourself for the upside down, alternate reality, also known as the Scandinavian, where development is optional,

and Dukes and Counts smack down Morphy. Having gone over this game, it feels like White did everything right and Black did everything wrong, yet the forces of chaos won anyway. For some reason, I am reminded of Bill Clinton's assertion that he "didn't inhale" when reflecting deeper on this game.

0-1

B01

□ **Arutyunov,N**

■ **Lakdawala,C**

San Diego (rapid)

2012

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♞xd5 3.♙c3 ♞d6 4.♙f3 c6 5.d4 ♙f6 6.♙e2 QUESTION: Why would White post his bishop on e2 when d3 or c4 is open?

ANSWER: This is a question I also ask myself! White's choice may be disgustingly passive, but essentially there is nothing wrong with it. Equality, which our opponents hand to us on a shiny platter, is not the issue. But if we are playing for a win against a lower-rated player, determined not to lose, then matters are not so easy for Black.

QUESTION: Do we play our bishop out to g4 or f5 in this case?

ANSWER: In this instance, either one is fine. In fact I play both.

QUESTION: So how does one go about winning from such sterility?

ANSWER: The answer is to relax, don't push too hard for the win and cultivate patience. Just keep one eye open for a place to create a favourable imbalance later on. You will see that in most games like this, opportunity always seems to unfurl before you if you remain alert. Now a period of strained silence ensues with neither party willing to take radical action to sever the stasis.

♙f5 Alternatives:

[a) 6...♙g4 7.h3 ♙xf3 8.♙xf3 .

QUESTION: Why did you give up the bishop-pair?

ANSWER: Don't be afraid to swap here. In such positions, my Caro-Kann and Scandinavian experience says the bishop-pair doesn't necessarily constitute an edge for White in this rigid structure. In fact, White's f3-knight is usually deemed the more dangerous piece once it reaches e5. e6 9.♙g5 ♙bd7 10.♞d2 ♙e7 11.0-0-0

♖b6 (threatening ...Nc4, followed by ...Qb4)
 12.♙f4 ♖b4 13.a3 ♗a5 . Now White saw
 nothing better than 14.♗e4 ♗xd2+ 15.♖xd2
 ♗xe4 16.♙xe4 ♗d5 17.♙xd5 (if he tries to
 hang on to the bishop-pair with something
 like 17.♙g3?? then Black has ♙g5)
 17...cxd5 . Advantage Black, who may later
 utilize his queenside minority attack, open
 the c-file and has the remaining superior
 bishop, K.Griffith-C.Lakdawala, San Diego
 (rapid) 2012.]

[b) 6...g6 (Tiviakov sometimes develops this
 way when playing for the win) 7.0-0 ♙g7
 8.♙g5 0-0 9.♖d2 ♙f5 10.♙c4?!
 (one wonders why he didn't play here in the
 first place; this move just represents a
 tempo loss) b5 11.♙f4 ♖d8 12.♙b3 a5
 13.a4 b4 14.♗e2 ♙g4 15.♗e5!? ♙xe2
 16.♖xe2 ♖xd4 17.♙g3 . White gets some
 pressure for the pawn, but given a choice, I
 would still take Black, M.Aanstad-S.Tiviakov,
 Vadso 2010.]

7.0-0

[White got nothing after 7.♗e5 ♗bd7 8.♙f4
 ♗xe5 9.♙xe5 ♖d7 10.0-0 e6
 in C.Lindemann-S.Kasparov, Bad
 Wörishofen 2011. Taking on f6 is not a real
 issue since this hands Black the bishop-pair,
 strengthens both his centre and his control
 over the dark squares, and gives him an
 open g-file.]

7...♗bd7 8.a4!? QUESTION: What would you
 do if your opponent chased your bishop to g6
 and then followed with f4?

[ANSWER: I had no intention of retreating
 my bishop if my opponent played 8.♗h4
 . I had intended ♙g6!? to sharpen the game.
 After 9.♗xf5 gxf5 Black's newly-opened g-
 file and increased central control give him a
 nice position.]

8...e6

[I also thought about 8...h6 here.]

9.b3

[QUESTION: Well how about 9.♗h4 now?
 ANSWER: This time I would have no choice
 but to retreat to g6: ♙g6 and on 10.f4
 I had intended to play 0-0-0 11.f5 exf5
 12.♗xf5 ♙xf5 13.♖xf5 ♖c7 , intending ...
 Bd6.]

9...♖c7 10.♙d3 Ugh! Lack of ambition (or
 perhaps ambition to draw) seems to be
 White's core motivation for the better part of
 this game. It is pretty clear after his last move
 that White just wants to swap down and score
 the draw.

[I expected 10.♗h4 .]

10...♙g6 I agreed to the swap, but on my
 terms not his.

11.♗e2 ♙d6 12.c4 0-0

[I also considered the immediate 12...c5 .]

13.♙xg6 hxg6 14.♙a3?! This move deserves
 a dubious mark. He may be working too hard
 for swaps.

QUESTION: Isn't that his plan?

ANSWER: When one side works overtime to
 achieve a swap (which isn't such a big
 achievement in the first place), he often loses
 time in doing so. In this instance, White loses
 several moves with his rook, just for a swap,
 and weakens b4 to boot.

♙xa3 15.♖xa3 a5 16.♖a1 ♖ad8 Reminding
 my opponent that his d-pawn is a little tender
 and needs support.

17.♖d2 Going to c2 looks like a more logical
 square for his queen.

e5 The correct timing for the break. After the
 swap, White's queenside dark squares b4, c5
 and b6 are weakened.

18.♖c3 exd4 19.♖xd4!? It isn't an easy
 process to suppress your inner nature. My
 opponent, normally a very aggressive attacker
 and tactician, tries an experiment this game
 by trying to out-dull your writer, unchallenged
 king of dullards. Now he senses his position
 beginning to degenerate, due to his
 weakened queenside dark squares, so he
 trusts in the healing power of redemption and
 switches gears, abruptly going after my king.
 He plans Qh4 and Ng5, but I don't know how
 to follow up to this not-very-scary attacking
 scheme.

♖fe8 20.♗g3 ♗e5 Principle: Counter in the
 centre when threatened on the wing. I
 eliminate his f3-knight, the would-be attacker.

21.♖f4 ♗xf3+

[More accurate is 21...♖d3! 22.♗xe5 ♖xe5
 23.♖xe5 ♖xe5 24.♖fb1 ♗d7 25.b4 axb4
 26.♖xb4 ♗c5 when White faces serious
 defensive challenges in dealing with his two
 weak queenside pawns.]

22.♖xf3 ♖e5 23.h3 ♗d7 Preparing to
 transfer into that juicy hole on c5.

24.♖fe1!? Something in my opponent's
 demeanour precluded a quiet response. This
 was a practical decision which I
 underestimated, after which my rooks looked
 a bit clumsy. Also, it wasn't so easy to hang
 on to all my queenside pawns anymore.

♖xe1+ 25.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 26.♗h2 ♖de8

27.♖c3 b6 28.♖d4 EXERCISE (planning):

Can Black get away with 28...Nc5 here?
Factor in that White can then play 29 b4 axb4
and 30 a5. Evaluate the line.

1e7?! Low on time I misassess the correct line.

[ANSWER: Black can indeed play 28...c5!
. If White goes ahead with 29.b4?? axb4
30.a5 b3! 31.axb6 a4 , Black's b-pawn
costs him the game.]

29.f4! His best drawing or winning chance is
to engage in a direct assault on my king.
Principle: Queen and knight make a potent
attacking team.

c5 Now I realize my previous error and
correctly post the knight to its optimal square.

30.f5

[30.b4?? is the same old story: axb4 31.a5
b3 32.axb6 a4 33.f1 b2 34.d2 e2
35.b1 e1 36.d3 c5 37.c2 e8e2
and wins.]

30...d7 31.g4 d6 To further buttress c6-
and g6-pawn weaknesses and stabilize before
the next wave of the attack.

32.h4! Suddenly, Black finds himself on the
defensive.

gxf5

[I should snatch the pawn with 32...xb3!
and if he persists with 33.h5? then d4!
34.g5 f6! 35.xg6 h4+ 36.g1 e1+
37.f2 e7 leaves White paralyzed.]

33.f5 g6 34.f3

[Houdini points out the following impossible-
to-spot drawing resource for White:
34.e7+!! e7 35.c8+ h7 36.f5!
(threat: h5) h6 37.f4+ h5 38.f5+
and if Black insists on playing for the full
point with xh4 39.g3+ xg3 40.h7+
g5 41.xg7+ f5 42.xg3 , the position
should be drawn.]

34...e4 35.h5

[Not 35.g4?! e6! .]

35...g5 36.g4!? True believers never flinch
when asked to pay a heavy tithe, a small price
to gain entry to heaven. My opponent decides
upon this shaky endeavour, perhaps swayed
more by raw emotion than rational rumination.
I ascribe this move to White's philosophy:
Shoot first; aim later! White frantically
attempts to absolve himself from the mess of
his own creation, and now makes matters
worse. We were both in time trouble by now.

f6 37.fh6+ White seems to turn his
initiative on and off, like a tap.

[37.f3?? is met with e3 .]

37...gxh6 38.xf6 After the stumble, the

queen hopes to recover her balance and
poise.

e6 39.d8+ g7 40.d4+ e5 41.g3

[The queen gives b6 a cursory glance,
deciding it isn't worth the toil involved in
stealing the pawn. But perhaps she should
indeed bag the pawn to partially defray
mounting costs on the other side of the
board. Black still holds an advantage after
41.xb6 xg4 42.h3 gg5 43.xc6
xh5+ when White's queenside pawn
majority isn't going anywhere soon.]

41...c5 42.b2 g8 43.f4 e1 44.c3?

Outwardly, the queen stands defiant, yet
onlookers notice the tremor in her lower lip,
which betrays her true feelings of self-
condemnation.

[He had to try 44.d2 f1+ 45.g3 g1+
46.f3 x1g4 47.d8+ g7 48.xb6 .]

44...f1+ 45.g3 g1+ The downward
facing corners of the rook's mouth reverse
themselves into a broad smile.

46.h3 Sometimes when a wanted criminal
is finally nabbed by the law, he behaves in a
civil, conciliatory manner to his jailers. They
hold all the power. White's king finds he lacks
the strength to neither fight nor endure the
problem, and so he passively awaits his fate.

1xg4 Black ends the game with a deluge of
threats and insinuations. The kingside is a
tenantless plot of land, ripe for purchase and
occupation. White drops both kingside pawns
and doesn't have perpetual check.

47.d3 d4 48.f3 d6 49.e2 e6

50.f3 e5 Just one pawn is insufficient
payment to placate Black.

Summary: A lifeless Scandinavian opening
doesn't mean the game is preordained to be a
draw in the end. If you wait, opportunity
usually arises.

0-1

B01

□ **Macieja,B**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Remco Heite

2008

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 xd5 3.f3 d6 4.d4

f6 5.f3 c6 6.g3 A very popular set-up.

QUESTION: White's idea?

ANSWER: Twofold:

1. He prepares to gain a tempo with Bf4.
2. He plans to fianchetto, to keep his king

safe and aim his light-squared bishop at d5.

QUESTION: Is there a downside?

ANSWER: I believe there is. White's fianchettoed g2 bishop often finds itself hitting a wall on d5. Somehow, this line lacks dynamism for White.

♟g4 QUESTION: Is there some rule of thumb to pick ...Bf5 or ...Bg4? It seems to alternate from game to game.

ANSWER: The reason it alternates from game to game is that in most cases both are playable. I tend to prefer ...Bg4 and then eventually chop the f3-knight. A white knight on e5 gets me a lot more nervous than the loss of the bishop-pair. As mentioned before in this chapter, I don't consider loss of the bishop-pair a negative in such a rigid structure. In fact, I often rely on this imbalance to play for a win versus lower-rated players who overconfidently believe too highly in the worth of their not-so-great bishop-pair.

[In this instance I don't like my bishop on f5, mainly because of tricks like this one: 6...♟f5 7.♟g2 h6 8.0-0 e6 9.♟e5 ♟bd7 10.♟c4 ♟b4 11.♟e2 ♟b6 12.♟e3 ♟h7 13.d5! . Any time White achieves this break, it usually spells danger for Black, who lags behind in development, R.Antonio-R.Dableo, Tagaytay City 2010.]

7.♟g2 e6

[IM John Watson suggests 7...♟bd7 when Black can toy with castling long and ...e5 in one shot, but this may be a risky idea, since Black lags behind in development. I am not in any rush to free Black's position with ...e5: for example, 8.0-0 0-0-0 9.♟f4 ♟xf3 10.♟xf3 e5 11.dxe5 ♟xe5 12.♟g2 with an edge for White. This time his bishop-pair counts, since the game opens up a notch.]

8.0-0 ♟e7

[Alternatively, 8...♟bd7 9.a3 (now Bf4 is a serious threat; instead after 9.♟f4 ♟b4 10.♟d2 ♟xf3 11.♟xf3 ♟e7 12.a3 ♟a5 13.b4 – I generally like to provoke this from White, but it may be argued that I do him a favour by handing him free moves, left and right – ♟d8 14.♟e4 ♟xe4 15.♟xe4 ♟f6 16.♟g2 ♟d5 Black equalized, 'growly'-C. Lakdawala, Internet (blitz) 2012) 9...♟c7 10.♟f4 ♟d6 11.♟e2 0-0 12.c4 ♟xf4 13.♟xf4 ♟ad8 14.♟b3 ♟xf3 15.♟xf3 e5 16.dxe5 ♟xe5 . The position may be equal, but I already favour Black's knights over White's minor pieces, since e5 and d4 have

been weakened, V.Krishnan-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2012.]

9.♟f4 ♟d8 QUESTION: Shouldn't he play to b4, as you did in the above note?

[ANSWER: It's a matter of taste, b4 being the riskier of the two. After 9...♟b4 10.♟d2 (Houdini suggests the immediate 10.a3! when it would probably be too risky to grab b2) 10...0-0 11.a3 ♟b6 12.♟e5 ♟h5 13.b4?! ♟d8 14.♟e3 ♟bd7 15.♟c4!? ♟a6! 16.♟b2 ♟e5! 17.♟fb1?! (he was probably better off playing passively with 17.f3 ♟c4) 17...♟f3+ 18.♟xf3 ♟xf3 White suffered from his punctured light squares in the earlier A.Valsecchi-S.Tiviakov, Bratto 2007.]

10.h3 ♟h5!? I usually take on f3.

QUESTION: Is g4 now an attacking move or a prelude to overextension for White?

ANSWER: A debatable point. I suppose one player's attack is the other's hoped for overextension. Clearly, playing to h5 as Black sharpens the game considerably.

11.g4 ♟g6 12.♟e5 ♟fd7?! This unnatural retreat looks unnecessary.

[He can just play 12...♟bd7 13.♟xg6 hxg6 . My friend and neighbour (he lives a half mile from me) John Watson, in a burst of love for the bishop-pair, assesses as an edge for White.

QUESTION: Your evaluation?

ANSWER: I actually prefer Black, but believe the assessment should be dynamically balanced here.

QUESTION: Who am I supposed to believe?

ANSWER: In all such contradictory evaluations like this you should believe me, of course!]

13.♟xg6 hxg6 14.♟e4 In order to expand with c4 later on.

♟f6 15.♟c5 b6! Tiv tries an original idea. Sometimes in the opening it's easy to get caught in the trap of unthinkingly playing only 'natural moves', as politicians going through the motions of legislative enactments, concocted solely for show and the purposes of re-election. Here, Tiviakov mixes it up with a startlingly unnatural but strong idea.

[QUESTION: Can Black get away with 15...♟xc5 , playing against both bishops?

ANSWER: I believe he can. His superior pawn majority should compensate after 16.dxc5 ♟xd1 17.♟axd1 ♟a6 18.♟d6 (Black looks at least equal in the line 18.♟e3 ♟d7 19.b4!? ♟xb4 20.♟b1 ♟xc2

21. ♖xb7 ♜xe3 22. fxe3 ♜e5) 18...0-0-0 with ...Ne8 to follow.]

16. ♟xb8!? Maciejka is up for the challenge.
[Black looks just fine after the passive 16. ♜b3 ♟d6 .]

16... ♖xb8 17. ♟xc6+ ♜f8 18. ♜a6

QUESTION: Doesn't this move voluntarily place the knight badly offside?

ANSWER: It does, but the trouble is any other response allows ...Rxb3, when Black stands better.

♖c8

[Not a bad continuation, but Watson points out an interesting and perhaps even stronger alternative: 18... ♖xh3! and if White bites with 19. ♜xb8?! ♟xb8 (threatening mate on h2) 20. f4 ♖h4! with tremendous compensation for the small material investment.]

19. ♟g2 ♜d5 20. c3 ♜f4 21. ♟f3 ♟d6

22. ♖fe1 g5 QUESTION: Does Black have full compensation for his pawn?

ANSWER: He does indeed:

1. An entrenched, powerhouse knight on f4.
2. Domination of the dark squares.
3. Opposite-coloured bishops, in this case favouring Black, since he is the likely attacker.
4. For now, White's knight sits helplessly offside on a6.

23. ♖e3 A good move which frees White's queen from her burden of covering h3.

g6 24. ♟b7!? Going after a second pawn.

[Perhaps he should consider 24. a3! to return his wayward knight back into the folds of polite society, via b4.]

24... ♜g7! Correctly ignoring the 'threat' to a7.

25. ♟xa7?! Greed, a longstanding member of the seven deadly sins club, can sometimes be taken too far. In this case, White underestimates Black's coming counterplay.
♖e8! Threat: ...Re7.

26. ♟b7 ♖e7 27. ♟e4 ♖a7! Black's pieces move purposefully, as if on important errands.

28. ♜b4

[28. ♟f1 ♖ca8 fails to alter the dynamic.]

28... ♟xb4 29. cxb4 ♖c4 Black regains one of his lost pawns, while maintaining his strategic edge.

30. ♖a3!?

[30. ♖d1 ♖xa2 31. ♖b3 ♖a4 doesn't look like much fun either.]

30... ♖ac7?! Too cute. Black gives away his advantage. It's tough to reconcile Black's desire to complicate and the actual effectiveness of such measures.

[He should simply play 30... ♖xa3! 31. bxa3 ♖xd4 when we feel a trickle-down effect from Black's sac. Advantage Black:

1. The knight dominates over White's Leukaemia-stricken bishop.
2. Black controls the d-file and threatens ... Rd3 next move.]

31. ♖c3 ♜h7 32. ♖xc4 ♖xc4 33. ♖d1 ♖xb4 34. b3 ♟c7?

[Instead, 34... ♖xd4?! 35. ♖xd4 ♟xd4 36. ♟xd4 ♜e2+ 37. ♜f1 ♜xd4 38. ♜e1 is a tough ending for Black to hold, since White's queenside majority soon produces an outside passed pawn,]

[but 34... ♖b5! , freeing his rook, is Black's best move.]

35. ♟f1! There are no mirrors inside a death row prison cell, yet the haggard occupant of cell b4 doesn't need one. He feels a picture of himself – sallow, emaciated, cadaverous – through his mind's eye. Suddenly, Black is in serious danger. His b4-rook is frozen, in terrible danger, and unable to return to the game.

♜d5? EXERCISE (combination alert): We reach the darkest hour of Black's vast tribulation. Tiv loses the thread of the position and his last move is a blunder. How can White exploit Black's rook, which remains in an uneasy stasis?

36. ♟e1?! A missed opportunity.

[ANSWER: 36. ♟f3! with the deadly threat a3, trapping Black's rook. So this compels Black into the undesired ♟f4 37. ♟xf4 gxf4 when his rook remains a terrible anomaly in the ending, (but not 37... ♜xf4?? 38. ♟c4! when there is no cure to the coming a3.)]

36... b5?

[36... ♟d6 was necessary. Black reduces the scope of his rook even further. For a workaholic, the boundary between work and him or herself becomes blurred; indeed, becomes an extension of the self. Such is the case of Black's unfortunate rook here. He is so caught up in his own work that he simply forgets to come home. Now, from both sides, erupts a chaotic merging of swapped blunders.]

37. ♟d2?

[Now White misses 37. ♟g2 , which threatens to win the rook by Bxd5, and if ♜c3 (after 37... ♟d6?? 38. ♟xd5 exd5 39. ♟c3 Black can resign) 38. ♖d2! when Black has no way to stop Rc2 next move.]

37...♖e7 38.♞e1? White continues to hesitate.

[38.♞c2! (threat: a3) ♖a7 39.♞b2! e5 (no choice) 40.dxe5 wins a second pawn.]

38...♖a7 39.♞d1 ♖e7 40.♙g2

[40.♞c2! repeats the same winning plan.]

40...♟f4 41.♟f1 e5 Black's desperate forces fight the upstream current.

42.♞e3? Once again, the queen opens her mouth, as if to make a declaration, thinks better of it and snaps it shut. If two such formidable grandmasters are capable of blundering so many times in the space of a single game, perhaps there is hope for the rest of us.

[42.♞e1! is still winning,]

[and is superior to 42.dxe5?! ♞xe5 .]

42...♖a7! Suddenly, the game turns around for Black.

43.dxe5 ♞xa2 44.♙d5 ♞c2!?

[Stronger is 44...♟xd5! 45.♞xd5 ♞xb3 .]

45.♞d2!? White decides to enter an inferior ending, which he is unable to hold.

♞xd2 46.♞xd2 ♟g7 47.f3 ♟f8

The watchdog on f4 has a long tether. After Black's queen falls, the upstart knight inherits the title of de facto leader of the uprising.

Virtually all of White's pawns are on the wrong colour to his remaining bishop.

48.♟f2 ♟xh3+ The knight defiles everything it touches, the way a snail leaves a trail of slime in its wake.

49.♟e3 ♟f4 50.♟f2 ♟e7 51.♞d1 ♟xd5

Tiv heads for a pawn up ending.

52.♞xd5 ♞xb3 The angel, once banished from heaven, now out of spite seeks chaos upon those who live below on earth.

53.♞d6 b4 54.♞b6 Principle: Place your rook behind an opponent's passed pawn.

♞b1 55.♟e3 b3 EXERCISE (critical decision): White must decide which direction to go with his king. Should he play to f2 and remain kingside, or go to d3 to hunt down Black's passer? One draws; the other loses.

56.♟f2? The wrong way. White violates the golden rule of endings: Passivity is a death sentence. Now White wilts, the way an obviously guilty criminal would under the glare of cross examination in court, when faced with irrefutably damning evidence before the jury. In this case, White's king takes refuge in that which is imagined. He cannot hold the ending by remaining passive.

[ANSWER: White draws by boldly abandoning his kingside pawns with

56.♟d3! b2 57.♟c3 ♞f1 58.♞xb2 ♞xf3+ 59.♟d4 ♞f4+ 60.♟d5 ♞xg4 61.♞b7+ ♟f8 62.e6 fxe6+ (unfortunately forced: 62...f5?? loses to 63.♟e5, intending to head for f6) 63.♟xe6 ♞f4 64.♟e5 and holds.]

56...b2 Threat: 57...Rh1!.

57.♟g2 ♟d7 58.♟h2 ♟c7 The sixth rank barrier is broken and Black's king may now enter the fray.

59.♞b3 ♟c6 60.♟g2 ♟d5 61.♞b5+ ♟e6! Zugzwang! White's next move is forced.

62.♟h2 EXERCISE (planning): Come up with a clear plan for Black to consolidate.

ANSWER: Swap his b-pawn for White's f and e-pawns.

♞f1! The Dickensian, child pickpocket grabs White's wallet and then runs between the legs of passers-by, to merge and disappear into the crowd.

63.♞xb2 ♞xf3 64.♟g2 Unable to bear the din of anguished screams from his wounded and dying pawns, White's king sinks to his knees and covers his ears with blistered hands.

♞f4 65.♟g3 ♟xe5 66.♞b5+ ♟f6 67.♞b6+ ♟g7 68.♞b7 ♞d4 69.♞a7 ♞d3+ 70.♟g2 ♞c3 71.♟f2 ♞c4 72.♟f3 ♞f4+ 73.♟g3 ♟h6! Black's last task is to achieve ...f5.

74.♞a8

[74.♞a6 ♞e4 75.♟f3 ♞e6 76.♞a5 f5 does the trick as well.]

74...f5 75.gxf5 gxf5 Summary: Study 6 g3 carefully. It may be somewhat harmless, but it is also quite popular, so be ready for it.

0-1

B01

□ **Abrahamyan, T**

■ **Stopa, J**

Los Angeles

2011

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♞xd5 3.♟c3 ♞d6 4.d4 ♟f6 5.♟f3 c6 6.♙c4 A very natural move, and therefore one which you may face often at club level, especially if your opponent doesn't know any Scandinavian theory (my guess is 90% of all your opponents!).

QUESTION: Why isn't it played more often at a higher level?

ANSWER: The bishop simply hits a wall after Black plays ...e6, so it's questionable if it's posted on the correct diagonal. Secondly, the 6 Ne5 lines, which we examine in the next

three chapters, are so scary for Black that there really is no question which line poses the most danger to the ...Qd6 Scandinavian. There is something mild and nondescript about the 6 Bc4 line. Essentially, the move oozes neutrality, and therefore, by proxy also tacit equality.

g4 Black's best response.

QUESTION: What about posting the bishop on f5?

[ANSWER: I would stay away from f5 in this instance. White extracts a clear advantage after 6...f5 7.e5 e6 8.g4! g6 9.h4! b7 10.d7 x7 11.h5 e4 12.e4 xe4 13.e3 . White's bishop-pair and space all across the board are meaningful in this instance, A.Belozarov-S.Kljucharev, Novokuznetsk 2011.]

7. e3

[QUESTION: Doesn't the combination 7.xf7+ xf7 8.e5+ work?

ANSWER: The "combination" does indeed work, for Black – not White! We steal a piece after xe5+! 9.dxe5 xd1

. This is a trap with which you should be thoroughly familiar. I give you a written promise that at some point in your life one or more of your unfortunate opponents will, in rather delightful lemming-like fashion, play right into it, and into your hands.]

[QUESTION: If White challenges us with 7.h3 then should we grab the pawn with xf3 8.xf3 xd4 ?

ANSWER: I would. White gets compensation, but we Scandi folk, as mentioned in the first game of this chapter, are a greedy lot! Think of the suffering Tiviakov was willing to endure for material in the first game of the chapter. He would most certainly grab the pawn and hang on to it for dear life in comp-like style. So maybe we should follow suit. Practice such positions against the comps at home, taking White and learn how the comps defend Black. This prepares you for the real thing when it comes across over the board in a tournament game. After 9.b3 e6 10.e3 e5 11.0-0-0 b7 12.e1 , as in T. Wurm-K.Stuart, correspondence 2008, Black looks okay after b4 . Maybe I just don't have a dynamic bone in my body, and underestimate White's compensation, but I would take Black in a flash, with the expectancy of survival and conversion in such a position.]

7... b7

[QUESTION: Why not 7...e6 instead?

ANSWER: We talked about this point earlier in the chapter in a similar situation. I feel it is the most accurate way to play Black, who clamps down on any Ne5 notions from White, basically his bread and butter theme in such positions.]

8.h3 h5

[Superior to chopping on f3. After 8...xf3 9.xf3 e6 10.0-0 b6 11.b3

White holds the edge due to his bishop-pair and greater central space, O.Kaupila-J. Parkkinen, Espoo 2004.

QUESTION: When do we take and when do we play ...Bh5?

ANSWER: It varies from variation to variation, so there is no pat answer, and in the end, the decision is often stylistically formulated. Also, this is where your judgement comes in. It improves as you play more Scandinavians and accrue experience.

Here are some points to think about when playing ...Bxf3:

1. We hand over the bishop-pair.
2. But keep in mind, in such structures this doesn't always constitute an advantage for White, since the structure for now remains rigid, benefiting our side.
3. Exchanging on f3 also veers the position along strategic lines.

When playing ...Bh5:

1. White usually plays g4, perhaps followed by Ne5 or Nh4.
2. This sharpens the game considerably and tactics likely come to the forefront.
3. White gains space, possibly also heightened attacking chances.
4. White also risks overextension.]

9. e2

[9.g4 g6 10.h4 e6 11.xg6 hxg6 12.f3 d5 13.d2 b4 14.0-0-0 xd4!? sees the queen swallow the d-pawn the way a hungry rat ravens a discarded crust of bread off the street.

QUESTION: This pawn grab looks crazy. Is it sound?

ANSWER: I don't know. Houdini says it is. If Ivanchuk is willing to take such a pawn, then so should we as well. After all, our pieces work the same way as his. 15.e2 e5 16.e4 c5 17.f3 d5 18.b1 d8 . By now you are thoroughly familiar with my pro-greed Scandi stance and will not be

surprised when I tell you I prefer Black's position, A.Grischuk-V.Ivanchuk, Beijing (rapid) 2011.]

9...e6 10.♟b3 ♚c7 11.0-0-0 0-0-0

Black plays a model opening and achieves what seems to be a rather pleasant-looking Caro-Kann.

QUESTION: What makes this a good Caro for Black?

ANSWER: White's c3-knight normally locates on the superior g3-square in a Caro. In this instance, it sits awkwardly on c3 for a couple of reasons:

1. By sitting on c3, this in a strange sense turns White's d4-pawn into a virtual isolani since c3 isn't available. I have picked off that vulnerable d-pawn many, many times in Scandinavians.

2. Once again, the out-of-sync c3-knight provides Black opportunities for ...Bb4 and ...Bxc3, just as Tiviakov does in his game against Lahno in the next chapter.

12.g4 ♟g6 13.♞d2?! Inconsistent.

[If White commits to some degree of weakening with g4, then she should follow through with 13.♞h4 to go after Black's bishop.]

13...♟b4! Pointing to the heart of the issue, White's dorky c3-knight.

14.♞a4?! The surly knight is willing to walk on broken glass to avoid ...Bxc3, but in doing so, wastes time and goes offside, under the assumption that ...Bxc3 is an actual threat. White's pieces begin to drift to strange posts, in an attempt at course correction, rather than a game change.

[Perhaps White should allow the 'threat', since she picks off the bishop-pair after 14.♞f3 ♟xc3 15.bxc3, although this decision obviously comes with its own set of troubles as well.]

14...♞d5 Eyeing f4, always a sensitive square once White commits to g4, just as we witnessed last game.

15.a3 ♟e7 16.♞he1 h5! After ...hxg4, Black's h-rook enters the game.

17.♞c5?! A sign that matters have gone awry. To a person with a heart defect, there lies in the back of her mind the following thought: The future may never happen, so I must act, and act now. So White modifies, hoping to come up with a feasible alternative. But in doing so, the knight takes a dangerous route. White agrees to deterioration to her structure in an attempt to untangle.

[QUESTION: Shouldn't White boot the interloper on d5 with 17.c4 ?

ANSWER: The trouble is White isn't really threatening to take on d5. Black wins after hxg4! 18.hxg4 (18.cxd5?? cxd5+ regains the piece with a crushing position; Black's queen points an accusatory finger in the direction of White's king, while glaring at him with unapologetic antagonism) 18...b5! 19.♞c5 ♞xc5 20.dxc5 ♟xc5! , and if 21.♟xc5?? ♞f4 when suddenly the white queen's tenure in power, normally a lifetime post, is in danger of sudden termination. 22.♞e3 ♞d3+ picks off a rook.]

17...♞xc5 18.dxc5 hxg4 19.hxg4 ♞h3!

Every black piece participates.

20.♟xd5 EXERCISE (planning): Which recapture increases Black's advantage the most?

ANSWER: **cx d5!** A multipurpose recapture:

1. Black threatens to roll the centre forward with ...e5 and ...d4.

2. Black eyes c5 with predatory longing.

21.♞b3 e5 Here they come. Black prods his central pawns forward. Also, ...d4 is in the air. The motion, once begun, is irrevocable and momentum completes the remainder.

22.♞b5

[22.f3 was the toughest defence. Black can't immediately play d4? , since it allows 23.♟xd4! .]

22...f6 Black has all day.

23.♟d2 The bishop, a low level cleric with no pretensions of advancement, decides to avert his gaze and back off.

♞c6!? Offering to enter a favourable ending.

24.♞b4? EXERCISE (combination alert):

White's queen, refusing to cooperate, opens and closes her fingers in rude mimicry of her older sister's lecturing tone. She soon regrets her impertinence. How can Black make White pay for her refusal to swap queens?

ANSWER: Pin.

b6! Under the oak tree, the hanged c5-corpse sways gently in the wind.

25.f4?! ♟e4

[Even stronger was 25...♟xc5! 26.♞xc5 a5! (zwischenzug!) 27.♞a4 ♞xc5 with the horrific threat of ...b5.]

26.♟e3 bxc5

[26...d4 is also winning.]

27.♞a5 Everyone realizes the harried queen, devoid of social graces, is now in a thoroughly foul mood. None of her underlings wants to

divert her raging emotion in his own direction. Difficulty after vexing difficulty lines up in array before White. Recaptures fail:

[a) 27.♙xc5?? ♖xb3! .]

[b) 27.♘xc5?? d4! .]

27...c4 White jots down the license plate number of the truck which just ran over her queenside.

28.♘d2 ♗g6

[Perhaps Black should just keep driving forward with 28...d4! when White's forces flee in terror: 29.♙xd4 ♗xc2 30.♙xc2 ♖xd4 with a crushing position.]

29.f5 ♗f7 30.c3 ♖d7 QUESTION: Why did White resign?

[ANSWER: Black's pawns plough forward after 30...♖d7 31.♙xa7 d4 32.♘b1 d3 , and the d- and e-pawns surge forth.

Summary: 6 Bc4 may be natural, but it's too straightforward to earn White an edge.]

0-1

□ **Vega Gutierrez,S**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Benidorm (rapid)

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2008

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘c3 ♖d6 4.d4

♘f6 5.♘f3 c6 6.♗e3 QUESTION: Why

develop to e3, rather than g5?

ANSWER: In both cases White intends Qd2 and a future Bf4, so White reasons: Why not post the bishop on e3, where it adds protection to her d-pawn?

♗f5 Once again we must make a decision if we want to encourage h3 and g4 by developing our bishop to g4 instead.

QUESTION: Which one is better?

[ANSWER: In this instance, both are fully playable for Black. As usual, placement on g4 sharpens the game. For example, 6...♗g4 7.h3 ♗h5 8.g4 ♗g6 9.♘e5 ♘d5 10.♘xd5 ♖xd5 11.♖g1 ♘d7 12.c4 and just as the game was getting interesting, they abruptly agreed to a premature draw in S.Fedorchuk-S.Tiviakov, Sibenik 2009. Black looks fine after ♖a5+ 13.♗d2 ♖c7 14.♘xg6 hxg6 .]

[QUESTION: Can Black chase the bishop with 6...♘g4 ?

ANSWER: I think this isn't wise, since White can ignore it with 7.♗c4 to open the f-file when Black captures on e3. (Or White can simply play 7.♗g5 when Black's knight looks

rather confused on g4.)]

7.♘e5

[After 7.♖d2 there emerges the second point of 6 Be3. White can harass Black's queen with Bf4 any time now: ♘bd7 (as mentioned before, I consider this the more accurate move order; covering against Ne5 is Black's top priority) 8.0-0-0 e6 9.♘h4 ♗g6 10.f3 ♖c7 11.♘xg6 hxg6 12.♘e4 ♘d5 13.♗f2 b5! and Black's powerfully entrenched d5-knight should give him equal chances, P.Enders-S.Cicak, German League 2005.]

7...♘bd7 8.♘c4 ♖c7 9.♖d2 ♘b6 10.♗f4

♖d8 QUESTION: Doesn't Black stand worse? He wasted three moves with his queen, only to end up on her birth square!

ANSWER: Yet Black isn't behind in development! Mysterious are the ways of the Scandi.

QUESTION: Why isn't Black behind in development after giving away so many tempi?

ANSWER: Keep in mind, White moved her g1-knight three times and her dark-squared bishop twice. This explains the optical illusion that Black is behind in development, when he actually isn't.

11.0-0-0 e6 12.f3 Dual purpose:

1. White eliminates all ...Ne4 ideas.

2. White prepares g4, increasing space and also attacking chances, should Black castle kingside.

♗e7

[Tiviakov isn't interested in the mass simplification which arises after 12...♗b4 13.a3 ♗xc3 14.♖xc3 ♘fd5 15.♖d2 ♘xf4 16.♖xf4 ♘xc4 17.♗xc4 .]

13.g4 ♗g6 14.♘b1 ♘fd5 15.♘e4

[Alternatively, 15.♘xd5 cxd5!? (15...♘xd5 is safer) 16.♘e5 ♖c8! 17.♗b5+ ♘f8 18.♖c1 ♘c4 19.♗xc4 dxc4 when ...c3 is in the air.]

15...♘xc4 16.♗xc4 h5

[QUESTION: Why didn't Black take the bishop-pair with 16...♘xf4 ?

ANSWER: Tiv likes his d5-knight, which looks no worse than either white bishop.]

17.h3 ♖d7 18.♗e5 f6 19.♗g3 ♗f7 20.♗b3

b5! QUESTION: Isn't this weakening?

ANSWER: I admit that Black's last move leaves an appearance of an ugly, ineradicable stain which defiles his queenside, yet it is necessary. Don't be afraid to play this thematic anchoring move, borrowed from the

Caro-Kann. The comps don't like it, but we humans know better.

21.c4!? QUESTION: Why open the b-file for Black?

[ANSWER: I agree. White should play something like 21.g5! which deprives Black's king of safe shelter across the board.]

21...bxc4 22.♟xc4 a5 QUESTION: I understand that White's king may not be so safe, but where will Black's king go?

ANSWER: The black king's transient state is precisely his edge. White, at this point (and I suspect Black as well) has no idea where Black's king will go in the end, and it's difficult to formulate an attacking plan if you don't know the target's home address.

23.♞a1 ♜b6 24.♟e2 0-0 At last, the black king declares residency.

25.f4

[I prefer White slightly after 25.g5! .]

25...♟b4 26.♟c1 ♟d5 27.♞c3?! White loses the initiative after this move.

[Necessary was 27.♟f3 .]

27...♟xc3! 28.♟xc3 EXERCISE (planning): Black has a method of taking firm control over the initiative. How?

ANSWER: Target a2 and threaten mate in one.

e5! 29.♟a3 exf4 30.♟xf4 ♟e4!

Double attack.

31.♟c7

[Black is also in control after 31.♟f3 ♟fe8 32.♟h2 ♟e6 33.♟a3 ♞d5 .]

31...♟xe2 32.♟xb6 QUESTION: Why does this position favour Black?

ANSWER: Opposite-coloured bishops favour the attacker. In this case, Black's attack is the more dangerous of the two. The adversarial pair share nothing in common except a remorseless, mutual desire to obliterate the other's king.

♟fe8 33.♟c3 ♟e6 34.d5!

A good investment. White, tired of dancing about, industriously ejects ballast in an attempt to keep her attack afloat. So she sacs a pawn to clog the a2-g8 diagonal and also open d4 for her own bishop. Her king, observing the proceedings inculcated with mounting discomfort, does his venal best by offering a pawn to ease the pressure.

cx d5 35.♟d4 ♟ac8 36.♟g3

[If White takes a5, she clears the a-file for Black's major pieces, but there was something to be said for that course as well,

since a pawn is a pawn. After 36.♟xa5!?

♟a8 37.♟c3 ♟ec8 38.♟b3 ♟c4

White's forces scrunch together, huddled in a muttering, emergency council meeting, and Black attains long-term initiative/attacking chances.]

36...♟c4 37.♟hg1 h4! Interference. An instructive moment. Tiv shifts, alters, corrects and reconfigures, always aware of the long-term goal: Get White's king before the opponent gets mine. So Black sacs a pawn back to buy some time for his king. Speed of attack, not material gain, is the decisive factor in such opposite-wing attacks.

38.♟xh4 EXERCISE (critical decision): Black's pieces crawl with hidden menace. His attacking plan is clear: Break the d4 blockade and then play ...d4, clearing an attacking line to a2. Black has a choice. He can play 38...Qe4, or he can play 38...Qc6, leaving e4 clear for his e-rook. One of the versions wins.

Which one?

♟e4?! The corners of the queen's mouth curl down in menace, yet this isn't as effective as it looks and is actually just a missed opportunity.

[ANSWER: 38...♟c6! 39.♟f2 ♟e4 40.a3 ♟a4! 41.♟c3 (after 41.♟e3 d4 42.♟c1 ♟b3! red, malevolent eyes peer inside the white king's humble dwelling) 41...♟xc3! 42.bxc3 ♟xa3+ mates quickly.]

39.♟f2 ♟c2 40.♟f5

[White holds it together after the more accurate 40.♟d2! .]

40...a4 41.a3 ♟g6 42.♟d7 ♟c4 43.♟a7 ♟e7 44.♟b6 ♞h7 45.h4 ♟e6 46.♟xe6 ♟xe6 Black stands better, but the existence of the opposite-coloured bishops gives White excellent drawing chances.

47.♟c3 ♟ee4 48.h5 ♟f7 49.g5 fxg5

50.♟xg5 ♟g4 51.♟g1?

[51.♟xg4! ♟xg4 52.b4! axb3 53.♞b2 should offer White sufficient counterplay to hold the draw with her newly created, passed a-pawn.]

51...♟xg5 52.♟xg5 d4 Covering g7 and smashing the d4-blockade to boot.

53.♟d2 ♟c2 54.♟f4?

[After 54.♟f5 ♟b3 55.♟f2 rook and bishop cling to one another in sombre congregation, fearful of Black's next wave. This line puts up more resistance, but he is busted anyway after ♟c5! and if 56.♟h2 ♟f5! 57.♟c1 d3 when White can barely move.]

[EXERCISE (combination alert/planning):

The obviously guilty bishop nevertheless continues upon his pointless exculpatory oration, continuing to falsely claim his innocence with 54.♟f4 . After this blunder, White experiences a blossoming of the opponent's threats. Find a way to force Black's d-pawn through.]

ANSWER: Weak back rank/double attack.

54...♟f2! The rook/bishop co-dependency shatters and the bishop's head snaps back, reeling from the blow. He has no place to go but c1. White's troubles stem from the placement of her unfortunate trapped king.

55.♟c1 d3 The unchained d-pawn comes hurtling forth, hell bent for trouble.

Summary: We reach a standard issue Scandi position after 6 Be3, which doesn't have enough force behind it to scare us.

0-1

□ **Huschenbeth,N**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Bad Wörishofen

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2011

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♟c3 ♖d6 4.d4

♟f6 5.♟f3 c6 6.♟d3 Once again our choice is made easy. White cuts off f5 for our bishop so our next move is self-evident.

♟g4 We renew our "threat" of ...Bxf3 and ...Qxd4.

QUESTION: You say we should grab the pawn, but I just know if I did, I would get crushed. Can't Black decline if White chooses to sac?

ANSWER: Sure, you can decline, but I promise you that you will lose your fear of such risky grabs if you just practice such position against the comps. Take White, and Fritz, Houdini, et al, will eat your d-pawn and survive 100% of the time! Just watch how they do it and imitate them. If you follow Tiviakov's games, he often plays exactly like a comp in the opening stage. The reason? He simply mimics them, having played against them in practice games so often – just as we should too.

7.♟e3 White decides not to tempt fate and covers d4.

[Instead, 7.h3!? ♟xf3 (if you remain adamantly opposed to the Scandi/greed philosophy, then you can always decline and play 7...♟h5) 8.♖xf3 ♖xd4 9.♟e3

was E.Janev-H.Vatter, French League 2008. Now Houdini likes a line like ♖d8 10.0-0-0 ♟bd7 11.♟he1 e6 . Obviously, White gets full compensation for the pawn, but then again, we are up a pawn! Essentially, it's anybody's game to win or lose.]

7...e6 8.h3 ♟h5 Nobody in White's camp dares talk openly about the coming mad plan.

9.♖d2!? QUESTION: Why does White allow damage to his structure?

ANSWER: His last move is tantamount to a declaration of war. White believes the dynamic potential of the open g-file compensates for the disfigurement of his structure.

QUESTION: Should we cooperate and chop on f3?

ANSWER: Absolutely. We Scandinavian players are a hardy folk, survivalists, not easily intimidated. We adapt to unforgiving environments with pleasure. If we survive to an ending, or even a late middlegame, we are likely to make White pay dearly for his radical decision. I think our odds are good in achieving just that.

[A safer, duller course for White would be 9.♖e2 ♟g6! (a swap of light-squared bishops generally deflates the dynamism from White's side) 10.0-0-0 ♟bd7 11.♟xg6 hxg6 12.g3 ♟e7 13.a3 ♖c7 with a pleasant-looking Caro-Kann structure for Black, D.Bojkov-S.Tiviakov, Kallithea 2009.]

9...♟xf3 10.gxf3 The creature's lips curl back to reveal blistered gums and row upon row of razor-sharp, jagged, rotting teeth. The negotiations end with both parties in common accord. This testy exchange implies equivalence between structural surplus and enhanced piece activity. White's position carries the air of an implosive quality. It isn't the opponent White should fear, as much as his own unrestricted ambitions, whose reach may soon exceed the grasp of the positional requirements. The final assessment resembles one of those amorphous psychiatrist's ink blots, awaiting shape in the imaginings of the viewer.

♟bd7 11.♟e4

[11.0-0-0 may be slightly more accurate.]

11...♖b4 Of course there isn't a chance in a million White will swap. Tiv simply transfers his queen over to a5 to prevent White from castling queenside.

12.c3 ♖a5 How annoying. No queenside

castling for White.

13.b4!? White's forces, seething with energy and inculcated with lust for war, expand in the direction of Black's territory. This unapologetically garish lashing out is also quite dangerous for Black, whose passivity level increases in equal proportion to White's aggression.

QUESTION: White's last move looks insane.

Where does he plan to put his king now?

ANSWER: Well, we can ask the same question of Black as well. White's last move was the nuclear option. His own king is, indeed, deprived of safe haven, but think about this: Black's king is certain to fall under attack, no matter where he goes or doesn't go. What need is there to mention that the prefix "dangerous" should be inserted before White's attacking chances?

[13.a3 is the safer choice.]

13...♖h5 14.♘g3! ♗d5

[14...♗xf3 15.c4! threatens a draw by repetition with Be2 and Bf1 over and over again.

QUESTION: What do you mean "threatens a draw"? Shouldn't White be playing for the win? He had the first move?

ANSWER: Ratings matter. White in this game is rated 2465, and Black rated at 2624. If a puny IM like me was in a situation as White, in an unclear position where I could force a strong GM into a draw, I would jump on it in a heartbeat.]

15.c4 ♗d6 16.c5 ♖c7

[16...♗d5 is dangerous, since 17.♗e2! threatens Bc4.]

17.♙f4 The cruel school children continue to taunt the odd loner on c7.

♗d8 Overtly, the queen remains polite, yet she manages to throw a surreptitiously caustic glare in the direction of her harassers. QUESTION: After 17 moves, Black has made a startling nine (!) queen moves, just over 50%, only to arrive at home court. How is it possible that he isn't busted?

ANSWER: Yet Houdini judges the game equal! Can you find one other opening in chess where one side commits such nonchalant, egregious violations of our most sacred law (develop your pieces at the start of the game) and lives to tell about it? Learn to believe: The Scandi is a blessed opening, its faithful protected by powerful, arcane magic. The reason is White also moved many of his pieces more than once. And all his 'free' pawn

moves may later come to haunt him in an overextended aftermath.

18.♙c4 ♙e7 19.♖g1 g6 The kingside looks like Black's best bet to hide his king.

20.♙f1

[QUESTION: Why not keep Black's king trapped in the centre with 20.♙h6 ?

ANSWER: In that case, Black conjures powerful counterplay like this: b5! 21.♙b3 a5 22.♙f1 axb4 23.♗xb4 ♘b6!

. Advantage Black:

1. Who soon lodges an eternal knight on d5.
2. White's pawns and his structure in general represent a dysfunctional repository of rejects.
3. Black's king (White's alleged compensation for his terrible structure) looks safe for now.
4. White's bishop-pair fails to impress in the crystallized structure.]

20...0-0 21.a4 a6 22.♖e1 ♘d5 Principle: Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing.

23.♙xd5 EXERCISE (critical decision):

White's bishop performs ritual ablutions in holy water, hoping to wash away the stench of the d5-hole, and seal it with a pawn. But which pawn? One recapture gives Black a nice game; the other allows White dangerous piece activity around the black king. Decide wisely.

exd5? The wrong recapture, since it allows White's knight entry to f5.

[ANSWER: 23...cxd5! is correct, keeping White's knight out of f5. I played Alekhine's Defence through the 80's and 90's, and White's structure reminds me of such positions.]

24.♙g2?

[White misses a huge opportunity with 24.♙f5! ♙f6 (24...♖e8?? 25.♙c7! ♗xc7 26.♖xe7 ♖xe7 27.♗h6! f6 28.♙xe7+ wins) 25.♘d6 which leaves Black on the defensive.]

24...♖e8 Now Black looks just fine.

25.♖b1 In order to play b5, but this doesn't bother Black much.

♙f6 26.♖gd1 ♖c8 27.b5 axb5 28.axb5 h5 29.♙d6 ♘b6!? The elusive knight sits in plain view, yet through the force of some hidden magic remains invisible to the enemy multitude surrounding him. He weaves, bends and flexes in startling sinuosity. In the coming time scramble, Tiv finds a clever method of

slipping a knight to c4, and upping the complications as well. But it doesn't come without risk.

[Safer and possibly stronger was the simple 29...♖f8 .]

30.♖bc1? A modification isn't much of a modification if the net result is diminished energy, rather than enhancement. White's last move drains the life force from his game, as if turning a spigot on in an office water cooler.

[Better is 30.bxc6 ♖xc6 when White can at least work on the weak b7-pawn.]

30...h4

[30...cxb5! is also strong.]

31.♖f4?? EXERCISE (combination alert): The confused queen wanders the corridors, not really sure of her own location. f4 proves to be a dubious sanctuary for the queen, who soon discovers she cannot outrun an oppressor. White's last move, most certainly under the influence of the clock, is a huge blunder. In a single instant, frozen in time, White's dreams are about to explode in sudden finality. How? ANSWER: Skewer.

♙g5! 32.♖g4

[The queen thrashes its limbs about in flailing, spastic terror, just as a small animal would when caught in the death grip of a predator. After 32.♖g4 , the database has Black playing the ridiculous f5?? , and then White promptly resigning when White can simply sac his knight, with a winning position. (I strongly suspect this to be a simple notation error. I bet Tiviakov actually played the painfully obvious 32...♙xc1 . The satiated bishop grows languid and replete, digesting its prey. This leaves Black up a full rook for no compensation. Summary: Once in a while, White allows us ...Bxf3; gxf3, under the theory that his open g-file compensates for the horrible gash in his structure, in which case I nearly always chop on f3. I just don't believe in White's full compensation, but be careful. White does, indeed, receive an activity spike immediately afterward.)]

0-1

B01

□ **Campos,R**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Ajuela

2008

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♗c3 ♖d6 4.d4 ♗f6 5.♗f3 c6 6.♙g5 QUESTION: What is the point of this move when White doesn't really threaten to take on f6?

[ANSWER: White's intent is similar to the 6.♙e3 , but just a bit more aggressive. He wants to play Qd2, castle queenside and also menace Bf4.]

6...♙g4 Black threatens ...Bxf3 and ...Qxd4, but as we have seen, such pawn grabs require a strong nervous system and a high degree of self-confidence in our defensive abilities.

[Alternatively, 6...♙f5 7.♖d2 e6 8.♗h4 ♙g6 9.♗xg6 hxg6 10.g3 ♖c7 11.♙g2 ♗bd7 12.♗e2 ♙e7 13.h4 with perhaps a minimal edge for White if any at all, V. Aveskulov-A.Nosenko, Alushta 2008.]

7.♙e2

[QUESTION: So on 7.h3

do you recommend we accept White's dare?

ANSWER: Absolutely! Take the money and run. ♙xf3 8.♖xf3 ♖xd4 9.♙e2 ♗bd7 10.0-0 e6 11.♖ad1 was I.Sidorenko-I.Caspi, Petah Tiqwa 2007. Now I would play ♖b6 and take my chances, taking solace in the extra pawn and the inherent solidity of Black's structure.]

7...♗bd7 8.♖d2 e6 9.♙f4

[9.0-0-0 h6 10.♙f4 ♖b4 11.h3 ♙xf3 12.♙xf3 ♙d6 13.a3 ♙xf4 14.♖xf4 ♖a5 15.h4 (15.♖d6?! , halting kingside castling, is easily met with 0-0-0!) , and now 15...0-0-0! is much better than castling kingside and walking into g4-g5 ideas. The game is even, A.Strikovic-S.Drazic, EI Sauzal 2007.]

9...♖b4 10.a3

[After 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.a3 ♖a5 12.h3 ♙h5 13.♖fe1 0-0 14.g4! (Scandinavian players love to see this move when White has already committed to kingside castling) ♙g6 15.♗e5 ♗xe5 16.♙xe5 ♖ad8 I don't buy Houdini's equal evaluation. White's game feels like it's on the cusp of overextension, S.Dhar Barua-S.Tiviakov, Vlissingen 2007.]

10...♖b6 QUESTION: Can Black get away with the pawn grab on b2?

[ANSWER: The trouble is it isn't a real pawn grab since White regains the pawn with

advantage after 10...♖xb2? 11.0-0! ♕f5 12.♖fc1! (threatening to trap Black's queen with Na4) ♖b6 13.♖cb1 ♖d8 14.♖xb7 when Black is in bad shape.]

11.0-0 ♕e7 12.♘a4!? Chasing the queen, but at the same time, posting his knight offside.

♖d8 Once again, Black moves his queen, over and over again, only to end up where she began – and yet Black isn't behind in development!

13.c4 The point of Na4. White wants to expand on the queenside.

0-0 14.♖fd1 ♘b6 15.♘xb6 axb6 16.h3

♕f5 QUESTION: Why not take on f3?

ANSWER: White's bishop-pair becomes much more meaningful in positions in which he already achieved c4.

17.♖e3

[QUESTION: Why can't White go after the bishop-pair anyway with 17.♘h4 ?

ANSWER: It's a trap! ♘e4 wins on the spot.]

17...♖e8 Discouraging d5 ideas.

18.♖b3

[QUESTION: Why not just expand with 18.b4 ?

ANSWER: Black has tricks, like b5! . If White bites with 19.cxb5?! ♘d5 20.♖c1 (or 20.♖d2 ♖xa3!), then 20...cxb5! threatening ...Rc8 followed by Rc2.]

18...♘e4 19.♕e3 ♖c7 20.♘d2 ♘d6!?

QUESTION: Why did Tiviakov dodge the swap?

ANSWER: Normally swaps favour the cramped side (Black in this case), but keep in mind that Tiviakov greatly outrates his opponent and so desires to keep the position more complex to play for the win.

21.♖ac1 Both c5 and d5 are in the air, so Black takes a stand.

c5! 22.♕f3 Mysteriously, White's position begins to degrade slowly after this natural move.

[Perhaps he should just go back with 22.♘f3 .]

22...♕f6 23.d5?! A mistaken plan begets future errors, since the root itself is corrupted.

[He should retain central pawn tension with 23.♘b1 .]

23...e5! QUESTION: Why on earth did Black just hand his opponent a protected passed pawn?

ANSWER: Black's last move shows excellent strategic understanding. With it, he created

an imbalance of kingside versus queenside pawn majorities. The difference is Black's majority easily rolls forward, while White's rests dormant and blockaded.

24.♘b1 Intending Nc3 and Nb5 to challenge the d6-blockade.

♕xb1!

[Superb strategic judgement. Now he hands over the bishop-pair, a more radical, and I believe stronger, alternative than 24...e4 .]

25.♖xb1 e4 The e-pawn dismisses the bishop with an annoyed wave of the hand.

26.♕g4 In order to prevent any ...Nf5 and ...Nd4 notions Black may have entertained.

g6 27.♕f4?! The bishop's outwardly brusque manner belies his nervousness. If White has the bishop-pair, he shouldn't be in a hurry to exchange one of them, especially his good bishop.

♕e5 Triple purpose:

1. He breaks the pin.
2. He clears the path for his majority with ...f5.
3. He encourages a bishop swap.

28.♕xe5 White approves the contractual agreement with lingering distaste.

♖xe5 Advantage Black, whose embryonic plans begin to take form:

1. Black owns a mobile, advancing pawn majority.
2. This in turn may allow him to generate a kingside attack.
3. Knight and bishop are magnets exuding reversed polarity. Black's knight dominates its counterpart, a mountain over a valley; white's purposeless bishop is only there for show, the tattered remains of a political poster of a long-dead campaign. Now the question arises: How did Tiv pull this off after such a dry opening? I don't know. The magician is not one who readily divulges his secrets.

29.♖c3 ♖e7 Now ...f5 is in the air.

30.f4?! In attempting to deal with one problem, he inadvertently creates a larger one.

[Admittedly, his position doesn't look so hot after 30.♖e1 either.]

30...exf3 31.♕xf3 ♖e8 32.♖b3 ♖e3!

Go ahead, make my day!" Tiv dares the queen to grab b6.

33.♖d3

[Wise, since after 33.♖xb6?? the queen abandons her king for another: ♖xf3!

34.gxf3 (the shredded kingside looks like old wallpaper which needs to be taken down and replaced) ♘xc4 35.♖b5 ♖g5+ 36.♘h1 ♖e2 37.♖g1 ♖f4 38.♖g2 ♖xf3 39.♖bg1

♖xh3+ and White's king suffers distinct unease at the black queen's approach.]

33...♖e1+! 34.♖xe1 ♖xe1+ 35.♔h2

EXERCISE (combination alert/planning): Black has two paths which leave White helpless. Find one of them.

ANSWER: The fallout drifts west.

b5!

[Strong, but even more crushing was 35...♖f2! with the threat: 36...Re1. This forces 36.♖d1 ♖e3! (double attack on b3 and f3) 37.♖f1 ♖xg2+! 38.♔xg2 ♖xb3 when White's position collapses.]

36.♖d1

[36.cxb5?? c4 ends the game instantly.]

36...♖e5+ 37.♔g1 bxc4 38.♖b6 ♖c8 39.a4 h5 40.a5 ♔g7 41.♔h1 ♖f6 42.♖e1 ♖d8!

Black continually makes the necessary amendments. Tiv simplifies down to a won ending.

[Also winning was 42...c3! 43.bxc3 ♖xc3 44.♖e2 ♖c1+ 45.♔h2 ♖f4+ 46.♔g1 c4 .]

43.♖xd8 ♖xd8 44.♖e7 ♔f6 45.♖c7 ♔e5!

The black king's eyes fill up with the resplendent glory all around him and preparations are complete. White may be equalizing material on his next move, but he certainly isn't equal. Black's active king and superior minor piece decide the game.

46.♖xc5 ♖d7! Stalemating White's rook. His next move is forced.

47.a6 bxa6 48.♖c6 ♖a7 49.♔g1 a5

50.♔f1 ♖b7 51.♖a6 ♖xb2 52.♖xa5 c3

53.♖c5 c2 54.♔e1 EXERCISE (combination alert): White's jittery king, desperate to reach d2, looks back over his shoulders, starting at every sound. How do we finish the game?

ANSWER: Interference. Black's king continues his smooth undulations.

♔d4!

[Black cuts off White's rook with 54...♔d4 55.♖c6 ♔c4 . The knight twists and turns. White's rook awakens from his nightmare with a start, shaking and weeping. As he surveyed the ruins all around him, he realized: It was no dream.

Summary: Black should be able to achieve equality after 6 Bg5.]

0-1

Chapter Two

The 7 Nc4 Variation

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 c6 6 Ne5 Nbd7 7 Nc4



Part of the magic of chess is the fact that two strong players with equal IQ levels and chess ability can examine a position and come to opposite conclusions on an assessment. Most strong players may look at the diagrammed position above and tell you Black is in serious trouble. After all, White leads in development in a somewhat open position. We Scandinavian players know better, and I state with confidence, mainly based on GM Tiviakov's games: Black holds his own.

The next three chapters, all stemming from the exceedingly dangerous 6 Ne5 line, will be our greatest theoretical challenge in the book. If there is a refutation to the ...Qd6 Scandinavian, then this is it. Yet, I just don't believe in the opening's refutability, and from my experience Black thrives surprisingly well within the admittedly hostile environment.

This is not a chapter we can wing. If we enter the 6 Ne5 lines under prepared, we can quickly find ourselves disoriented, unable to swim, flailing about, instinctively attempting to grab hold of something, anything. If we prepare well, we find that White furiously chases our queen about, yet does little damage to the inherent stability of our position. There is nothing tangible for White to grasp on to, except for his primal desire to chase us about. If we deeply study our lines - from my perspective, Black tends to know and understand the 6 Ne5 lines far better than White, since we deal with it far more often than our opponents - then the genie, who hoped to create havoc and mischief, gets unceremoniously stoppered in his bottle, to lie dormant.

[Arutyunov-Lakdawala \(6 Ne5\)](#)

[Lahno-Tiviakov](#)

[Perez Candelario-Caspi](#)

[Ganguly-Tiviakov](#)

[Dzhumaev-Tiviakov](#)

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9...Qd7 10 0-0-0

10 Nxb6 – [Lahno-Tiviakov](#)

10 Be5 – [Ganguly-Tiviakov](#)

10 h3 – [Dzhumaev-Tiviakov](#)

10...Qg4

11 Qe3 – [Arutyunov-Lakdawala \(6 Ne5\)](#)

11 Qxg4 – [Perez Candelario-Caspi](#)

□ Arutyunov, N
 ■ Lakdawala, C
 San Diego
 [Cyrus Lakdawala]

2012

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♗c3 ♖d6 4.♗f3 ♗f6 5.d4 c6 6.♗e5 We arrive at Black's most critical position in the entire book. If we manage to effectively neutralize this exceedingly dangerous line, then the rest of the book will seem easy by comparison. QUESTION: Doesn't White's last move violate a principle stating: Avoid moving the same piece more than once in the opening? ANSWER: It does, but it also happens to be White's most effective line versus the ...Qd6 Scandinavian. Also, remember we violated the same principle by moving our queen twice (in fact, in moving our queen at all!), so White feels fully justified in following suit. **♗bd7** We logically challenge White's advanced outpost. QUESTION: What is the idea behind 6 Ne5? ANSWER: White has a choice of three plans, each of which we examine in detail in this and the following two chapters. Plan A, this chapter: Harass Black's queen. **7.♗c4** The other two:
 [Plan B, Chapter Three: Prepare a bishop's discovery on Black's queen with **7.♗f4** .]
 [Plan C, Chapter Four: Back up the knight with the f-pawn, **7.f4** .]
7...♖c7 8.♖f3 QUESTION: What is the point of White's last move? ANSWER: Multipurpose:
 1. White prepares the tempo-gaining **Bf4** next.
 2. White clears the pathway for queenside castling.
 Sidelines:
 [a) After **8.g3 ♗b6 9.♗f4 ♖d8 10.♗e5** (it is in White's best interests to avoid swaps) **g6 11.♖d2 ♗fd5 12.♗xd5?! (dropping a pawn; however, 12.♗g2 ♗xf4 13.♖xf4 f6 14.♗d3 ♖d6** also looks perfectly fine for Black, who just bagged the bishop-pair) **12...♖xd5 13.f3 (13.♗g1 f6! wins the d-pawn) 13...f6! 14.c4 ♖g8!** (cleverly retaining a bead on White's c-pawn) **15.♗g4 ♗xc4 16.♗xc4 ♖xc4** White's hoped-for compensation fell short, S. Van Eijk-R.Ekstroem, Budva 2009.]
 [b) **8.♗g5 b5! 9.♗d2 ♗b7 10.♗d3 e6 11.♖e2 a6!** (preparing the freeing break ...c5) **12.a4** was A.Strikovic-D.Milanovic,

Vrnjacka Banja 2010. Now Black, undeterred, should play **c5!** anyway, with dynamic equality.]
 [c) With **8.d5** White hopes to open the game, but one important point to note: White does not lead in development at this stage. **g6** (Ivanchuk simply ignores White's provocation and proceeds to develop) **9.♖d4 ♗g7 10.♗f4 (10.d6 ♖d8** fails to bother Black too) **10...♖d8 11.dxc6 bxc6 12.0-0-0** with approximately even chances in the sharp battle ahead. Black's weakened c6-pawn is compensated by the open b-file, L. Dominguez Perez-V.Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2010.]
 [d) **8.♗e2 g6** (this is okay, but much more to the point is **8...b5! 9.♗e3 b4 10.♗a4 e6** with equality; Black completes development, then plays ...Bb7 and ...c5 at some stage) **9.h4!? h5 10.g3 ♗g7 (10...♗b6!** , preventing d5 tricks from White, looks more accurate) **11.♗f4 ♖d8 12.d5 0-0!?** (Houdini claims **12...cxd5! 13.♗xd5 0-0 14.♗c7 e5** is quite playable for Black) **13.dxc6 bxc6 14.0-0 ♗a6 15.♖e1 ♖c8 16.♗f1 ♗xc4 (Houdini likes 16...♗d5) 17.♗xc4 ♗b6 18.♗f1 ♗fd5 19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.♗c1 ♖d8 21.♖f3 ♗f6** and White's bishop-pair gave him a slight edge in D. Aldama-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2012.]
8...♗b6 9.♗f4
 [In the final game of the chapter, Sveshnikov-Tiviakov, we look at **9.♗e5** .]
9...♖d7!
 [In my opinion, an improvement over **9...♖d8 10.♗e5 ♗g4 11.♖g3 h5!? 12.f3 ♗e6 13.♗e3 ♗bd5 14.♗cxd5 ♗xd5 15.♗xd5 ♖xd5 16.♗d3 f6!? 17.♗b8 h4 18.♖c7 ♗f7 19.♖xb7 c5** . Oddly enough, White can't hang on to his extra pawn and Houdini assesses at even, A.Grischuk-S.Tiviakov, Sochi 2006.]
 QUESTION: I don't see the logic of playing your queen to d7, where she blocks the c8-bishop. What is the idea?
 ANSWER: Black suddenly produces a second threat besides ...Qxd4 with his last move: Black also would like to play ...Qg4!.
 QUESTION: What is the benefit of ...Qg4?
 ANSWER: As you will see how the game unfolds, Black either forces queens off the board – beneficial since it is White who holds space and attacking chances – or forces the win of material.

10.0-0-0

[QUESTION: Doesn't White get tremendous compensation after 10.♖e5 ♜xd4 11.♞d1 ?

ANSWER: My opponent said this was his actual intention, but thought better of it when he examined the line ♜b4 12.♞d8+?? (12.♙c1 is uninspiring but probably White's best move) 12...♜xd8 13.♖xf7+ ♕e8 14.♖xh8 and then realized White is completely busted, since his h8-knight eventually falls.]

10...♜g4 Forcing queens off the board.

11.♞e3!? Hey, I said "forcing queens off the board". What? I had just studied this line the day before and was 100% certain this move was not mentioned by any database or comp. A challenge hangs in the air.

[White fails to extract an advantage in the endgame line 11.♜xg4 ♙xg4 12.f3 ♙e6 . A draw was agreed here for tournament purposes in B.Baker-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2012. If the players continue, you can expect something like this: 13.♖xb6 axb6 14.♙c7 b5 15.d5 ♙d7 16.a3 e6 and Houdini assesses at even, D.Pavasovic-N.Sedlak, Nova Gorica 2009.]

[EXERCISE (critical decision): White's last move, 11.♞e3 , a theoretical novelty in the position, isn't as much an alteration as a radical, paradigm shift. He insists on retaining queens on the board despite the ... Nd5 threat. But is 11...Nfd5 or 11...Nbd5 actually a threat? White intends to respond with 12 Nd6+. Work out the ramifications. Should Black go for it or make a defensive move, negating the Nd6+ threat?]

ANSWER: It's one thing to inadvertently do something crazy; it's quite another to do something crazy wilfully! White's last move, although adventurous, is also dubious and the complications favour Black, who should indeed take up the challenge. White's last move strikes one as missing yin and an overdose of yang! His insatiable appetite for war possibly gets the better of his good judgement. Sometimes we lie to ourselves and then expend all our energy working to convert the lie into the truth! In this instance, I got the feeling that White did just that. Yet he nearly managed to turn a rather shady attack into a terrifyingly close facsimile of the real thing by sheer force of will. But in this instance, his demands are just too onerous for reality to fulfil, even if he gets very real

practical chances for his decision. In the next few games, we look at the duller and far saner course of simply swapping queens, either in this position or ones closely resembling it.

11...♖fd5! The correct knight, as we shall later see. The knight eyes e3 and f4 with a glint of greedy admiration.

[Instead, if 11...♖bd5?! 12.♖d6+ ♕d7 13.♖xf7 ♖xe3 14.fxe3 and now Black lacks the resource ♞e6? , since White responds with the devastating 15.♙c4! with a powerful attack and more than enough compensation for the missing queen. The c4-square is this game's United Nations, a body to which both warring countries passionately plead their arguments and virtues with unabashed theatrics.]

12.♖d6+ ♕d7 13.♖xf7 ♖xe3 14.fxe3!

[No choice since 14.♖e5+ ♕e8 15.♖xg4?? ♖xd1 leaves Black up a full rook in the ending.]

Wow, Byronic stuff. Methinks he doth sacrificeth too much, yet this move may be White's best practical chance. I believe it was Oscar Wilde who once wrote: "Nothing succeeds like wild excess." Dr. Frankenstein is just sick and tired of those stupid, finger wagging "one-dare-not-tamper-with-the-forces-of-nature!" lectures. So he defies his critics, gathering together all the necessary parts to fashion a living, breathing whole.

QUESTION: Shouldn't White just be resigning?

ANSWER: Don't dismiss White's practical chances. His attack may be unsound, but only if Black is a comp. We shouldn't allow ourselves to be ruled by the spirit of mercantilism in this case. If we tally up the numbers dispassionately, then, yes, Black up a queen for a piece, is winning as you say. But just look at Black's position, a nightmarish, pulsing patchwork of misery, akin to strewn wounded littering the battlefield, with the ones who are conscious all pitifully crying for help. Such a position is not going to be so easy to navigate, especially in a G/40, with the clock running down and taking its toll. I am actually sympathetic to his decision due to a mitigating factor: My friend Nikolai plays to his personal strength. My opponent has come close to beating me several times when he managed to complicate the game, but he lost every time when we landed in dull, strategic positions and endings, even when on an

equal footing. As the game goes, White continues his policy of unrelenting harassment, the way one of those irritating telemarketers calls you, hawking his unwanted wares by reading his tiresome pitch off a laminated card from some other state.

14...♖e6 15.♜g5!? White's knight, skipping and twirling in time, gestures my queen to take a seat. Her invisible yet potent exertions influence the colour of the game, all from the shadows. In a grandiose gesture of compassion, the knight bestows clemency to my helpless h8-rook, if only to impress upon him just how fortunate he really is. The position veers distinctly in the direction of bedlam, with both sides desperately scrambling to get a bearing on the essential requirements. White's psycho alternatives:

[a) After 15.♜xh8 ♖g8 16.d5 ♜e8

17.dxc6 bxc6 White's wayward h8-knight is trapped and I just don't believe in his fictional compensation.]

[b) During the game I was terrified by 15.d5 and had the feeling I was going to be on the wrong end of an Evergreen Partie or a Game of the Century. After ♖xf7 16.dxc6+ I considered three lines and did find in my analysis the correct path: ♜e6! . Foot by foot, inch by inch, the climber gains altitude, displacing rocks and pebbles, which dislodge and bounce away down the mountain into the yawning chasm below.

(However, not 16...♜e8?? 17.cxb7 and if Black recaptures with ♜xb7? then 18.♜b5+ ♜d7 19.♜xd7+ ♜d8 20.♜e6+ wins.; Finally, after 16...♜xc6!/? (despite the darkness, Black's king is aware of and sees the whites of a dozen malevolent eyes watching him, waiting) 17.♜b5+ ♜c5 Houdini says Black is winning, but I would have gotten mated here for certain! The Pink Floyd song from the Animals album comes to mind: "So have a good time as you're going down, all alone, dragged down by the stone.")]

[c) 15.♜e5+! is White's most dangerous line. Houdini says everything is under control, but I'm not so confident I would have found all the right defensive moves over the board.

Analysis runs: ♜e8 16.d5 ♖g8

(the move I had intended; Houdini likes the atonal 16...♖f6 which I rejected due to a Ne4 tempo loss) 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♜b5! ♜d5 19.♜c4 (19.e4? a6! wins) 19...e6 with a colossal mess, but one which still

favours Black – barely!]

15...♖g8 Welcome to the Scandinavian, where up is down and down is up!

QUESTION: Why is it that virtually the entirety of your rather sorry, ragtag army congregates along the first rank?

ANSWER: Well, with the lone exceptions of the edifice jutting out on b6 and my champion of a king on d7, I admit the rest just stand around, and gape. My queen sulks into g8, cowering like a beaten dog. Yet she assumes control over f7, e6, d5 and c4 with the proprietary air of a person determined to maintain control over a newly acquired gain. Black's position would be a nightmare if not for the extra queen to provide comfort in his time of need!

16.d5 White's endless threats and coercions rise and fall.

♜e8 Black's king drifts, a curling iron on the ice, after a bad push. Despite the vast destruction all around him, Black's tattered flag continues to fly, proudly fluttering in the wind.

17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♜b5!? Richard Nixon may have been brought up a Quaker, yet this didn't hold him back from bombing Cambodia back to the Stone Age. White's pieces sac themselves into oblivion, falling by the wayside. The arid landscape defies all of White's frantic attempts at cultivation and growth, and his attack creeps inevitably toward dissipation, but only on condition that we find the correct continuation.

EXERCISE (critical decision): Should Black take the offered knight, or should he calmly decline with a move like 18...Bd7? Be careful. One of them wins; the other loses.

ANSWER: Black should accept the gift.

cx b5

[It's mate after 18...♜d7?? (about 50% of the students I tested on this position chose this losing move) 19.♜c7+ ♜d8 20.♜ge6+ ♜c8 (20...♖xe6 21.♜xe6+ is hopeless as well) 21.♜a6+ ♜b8 (an advanced dementia patient's sense of self dies before the body actually dies: he is mourned by loved ones while still alive; Black's king, shorn of support, flops and crumples) 22.♜e8# . White's knight tells Black's king: "I see dead people."]

19.♜xb5+ ♜d7 20.♞d4 EXERCISE

(planning): White continues to operate in a rapturous delirium, perhaps forgetting that material is a concrete, substantial entity, while

attack and initiative are merely abstractions if no mate or win is to be found. Time for Black to unravel. How do we transform the scattered and fragmentary parts into a seamless whole? ANSWER: Ignore all of White's 'threats' and finally bring out some pieces. At last, Black's ponderous position begins to unravel and experience ease of movement.

e5

[For the record, the banal and rather greedy 20...♞xa2! also gets the job done.]

21.♙xe5

[21.♙c4 exd4 is hopeless as well for White.]

21...♙e7 22.♘f3 ♞e6 The d7-square is secure. The comps all like taking a2 even more. The once shy, demure queen again enters polite society. Black unravels while his opponent's attack grows fat and lazy.

23.♙c4

[23.♞hd1 is a better try, but White remains completely busted since he lacks a pathway to increase pressure.]

23...♞xe5 Of course. We reach the finish line with minimal fanfare by returning some – but not all! – of the material to break the attack and remain two pieces up in the ending. Sifting through the ashes, we find the charred bones of what was once White's attack.

24.♘xe5 ♘xe5 25.♙b5+ ♔f7 26.♞f1+ ♙f6 27.♞d5 Threatening one last vulgar cheapo on e5.

♙e7 Summary: The bold novelty 11 Qe3?! is quite dangerous for Black, but in the end, still good for our side. Some Scandinavian games have the look and feel of a Morphy versus amateur game – except eerily, sometimes the amateur takes all of Morphy's pieces and wins!

0-1

□ **Lahno,K**
 ■ **Tiviakov,S**
 Benidorm (rapid)
 [Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2008

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♞xd5 3.♘c3 ♞d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 c6 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘c4 ♞c7 8.♞f3 ♘b6 9.♙f4 ♞d7 10.♘xb6

QUESTION: Why exchange and open Black's a-file?

ANSWER: White's logic:

1. By eliminating the b6-knight, White

weakens Black's control over d5, to possibly play d5 herself.

2. As we saw last game, if White dodges a queen trade with Qe3, then Black has the resource of either knight to d5. By exchanging on b6, White eliminates the possibility of the b6-knight jumping to d5 at an opportune moment.

axb6 11.♙e5 With threefold intent:

1. White covers the d-pawn.

2. White prevents ...e6.

3. White prevents ...g6.

QUESTION: Why not the natural move, castling queenside?

[ANSWER: That is also possible but it allows Black ...e6, as in the following game:

11.0-0-0 e6! (clamping down on White's d5 ideas) 12.♙e5 ♘d5 (threatening the defender of a2) 13.♙c4 f6! .

QUESTION: But doesn't this weaken e6?

ANSWER: It does, but in this case Tiv displays uncanny Scandi judgement, correctly intuiting that it will be very difficult for White to take advantage of the

weakening of the e6-square. After 14.♙f4 ♙e7 15.♞he1 b5 16.♙b3 b4 17.♘xd5 exd5 18.♞h5+ g6 19.♞h6 ♔f7

Black stands equal, mainly due to the sorry state of White's unemployed light-squared bishop, V.Kotronias-S.Tiviakov, Vrachati 2011.]

11...♞f5! Having no social life of her own, Black's queen becomes the emotional leech to her sister. The now familiar theme: Black goes after a much desired queen swap, as well as c2.

12.♞xf5 After the exchange, White's attackers, now so diffracted from their original goal, lie sprawling about in ungainly fashion.

[QUESTION: Why give in so easily when White can play 12.♞e2 ?

ANSWER: e2 is an awkward square since White's queen blocks development of the f1-bishop. ♙e6 13.f3 was A.Skripchenko-T. Ivanova, Eilat 2012. I prefer Black's position after ♘d7 14.g4 (14.♙g3 h5 leaves White passively placed; Black unravels with ...g6, ...Bg7, ...b5 and ...Nb6) 14...♞g6 15.♙f4 h5 16.g5 b5 when White's game has an overextended feel to it.]

[QUESTION: Okay then, how about 12.♞d1 instead?

ANSWER: Black still equalizes with ♘e4 , threatening mate in one. After 13.♘xe4 ♞xe4+ 14.♙e2!? (14.♞e2 ♙f5 is at least

equal for Black) 14...♖xg2 15.♟f3 ♖g6 16.d5 Black has the stunning defensive shot ♟g4!! . This theme and position is hauntingly close to Anand-Tiviakov from the next chapter. I don't have any faith in White's compensation for the missing pawn.]

12...♟xf5 Black stands at least equal, with a very nice looking Caro-Kann-like ending, with the bonus of an open a-file for his rook.

13.0-0-0 ♜d7 14.♟c7 e6 In order to end White's hopes of a quick d5. In fact, the d5-square is the prize, the critical pulsing gateway to advantage for whichever side seizes control.

15.♟d3 ♟xd3 16.♖xd3 b5 Threat: ...b4 and ...Rxa2.

17.♜b1 ♜f6 18.♞e1?! EXERCISE (planning): Tiviakov outrates his opponent by 200 points and would like to play for a win, despite the mutual solidity and drawish nature of the position. White's natural last move is inaccurate. How would you play for a win against a lower-rated player in this position? ANSWER: Create a favourable imbalance of minor pieces.

♟b4! QUESTION: Why do you believe Black's knight will be superior to White's bishop?

ANSWER: The knight is the superior minor piece, due to its unchallenged access to d5.

19.♟e5 ♟xc3 20.♖xc3 ♜d5 No manners. The obnoxious knight is the teenager who chats amiably on her cell phone in the darkened movie theatre, inducing raised blood pressure in those nearby.

21.♖d3 f6 22.♟g3 ♜f7 23.c3 h5!

Black gains kingside space.

QUESTION: Black's knight doesn't look any better to me than White's bishop. What is the flaw you see in White's position?

ANSWER: It isn't so much that White has a bad position. More, she has nothing to do, whereas Black leisurely continues to expand on both wings while White merely spectates. This lack of useful strengthening moves means that soon White's position is destined to drift to inferiority, and so exudes inferiority in the present as well.

24.h3 h4 25.♟h2 b6 Keeping options open for ...c5.

26.♖d2 g5 27.♖de2 ♞he8 The e6-pawn, the source of White's single target, is easily defended.

28.♞e4 c5 29.♖d1 Alternatively:

[a) 29.dxc5?! bxc5 30.c4?! doesn't really

work, since Black has f5! 31.♞4e2 bxc4 with the superior position.]

[b) An attempt to shake up the kingside with 29.f4? fails miserably to gxf4 30.♟xf4?? f5! .]

29...c4 Black weaves a multicoloured array of strategic plusses:

1. Tiviakov fixes many of his opponent's pawns on the same colour as her rapidly degrading bishop. Soon the bishop transforms into one of those wraith-like people, who is born, passes through an uneventful life, and dies, without anyone remembering him a year later.

2. Tiv ensures a lifetime appointment for the knight or even a rook if he chooses on d5. In fact, if White's worries emanate from a localized point of origin, it is d5.

[The alternative is to keep the position more fluid with 29...♞a4 .]

30.a3? EXERCISE (combination alert): A target stands immutable, awaiting the inevitable. White just blundered. How did Tiviakov exploit it?

ANSWER: Fork. Black's rook and the a3-pawn are helplessly drawn to one another like a small town, shy courting couple, whose parents disapprove, and so they meet in clandestine fashion.

♞xa3! 31.bxa3 Making matters even worse.

[Marginally less hopeless is 31.♞c1 ♞b3 32.♟d6 ♖d8 33.♟a3 ♜f4 34.♞g1 ♞a8 35.♟d6 ♜d3 36.♞e2 ♜e8! when Black dominates.]

31...♜xc3+ 32.♜c2 The white king's car breaks down. His new mode of transportation: his feet!

♜xe4 33.f3 ♜g3 34.♜c3 White's king, a man who hates change, now struggles to come to grips with the violent socio-political upheaval all around him.

♞a8 35.♜b4 ♞a4+ 36.♜xb5 ♞xa3 37.♟xg3 hxg3 The heroic knight, having sacrificed his life for a cause greater than himself, now feels his disembodied spirit being slowly transported to paradise on a canopy of golden light.

38.♜xc4 ♞a2 39.♞g1 Black basks in gratitude with the understanding that life granted all he asked for. White is a pawn down and hopelessly passive in the rook and pawn ending. White's rook must submit to silent, prancing attendance to his pampered brother's whims. The ending isn't even close. Black's game is the current day pentium

processor; White's is the dinosaur 386 we all
slogged by on in the 1990's.

**♟g6 40.♟b5 ♞b2+ 41.♟c6 ♟f5 42.♟d6
♞d2 43.♟c6 ♞xd4 44.♟xb6 ♞d2**

A ship, no matter how large or powerful, is a
mere plaything to the sea in a storm. Now her
king is cut off as well, relegated to the
wasteland of irrelevance by Black's
inquisitorial rook. One look at White's sorry
rook tells you: Candidate for Zolof, who
drowns in obsolescence and low social status.

45.♟c5 ♟f4 Threat: ...Ke3 and ...Kf2.

46.♞e1 ♞xg2 The rook snatches the base
pawn.

47.♞xe6 f5 48.♟d4 Summary: Tiviakov's
play is quite convincing and White is hard
pressed to prove even a small edge after 10
Nxb6.

0-1

 **Perez Candelario,M**
 **Caspi,I**

Andorra

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2008

**1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♞xd5 3.♟c3 ♞d6 4.d4
♟f6 5.♟f3 c6 6.♟e5 ♟bd7 7.♟c4 ♞c7
8.♞f3 ♟b6 9.♟f4 ♞d7 10.0-0-0 ♞g4**

The mortal enemy queens, with grotesquely
artificial smiles, hug in equally insincere,
strained fashion.

11.♞xg4 The saner, if duller choice from
Arutyunov's psycho queen sac. IM Dionisio
Aldama and I reached this position in analysis.
He claimed an edge for White due to his extra
space, while I felt the position was completely
even.

QUESTION: So who is correct?

ANSWER: Me, of course! Actually, it's hard to
say if White's extra space constitutes an edge
or a liability. The stats have White at a dismal
45%, although from admittedly a small sample,
but still having played the Caro-Kann for years,
I just feel it in my bones that this position is
dead even without even a trace of an edge for
White. Queens are off the board, negating
White's attempts to attack, his single trump in
such positions.

♟xg4 12.f3 ♟e6 13.♟a5 Wisely choosing to
avoid a swap on b6, which opens the a-file for
Black's rook.

0-0-0 QUESTION: Is this move legal?

ANSWER: Castling is legal, as long as the

king doesn't pass through a check square.
However, as in this case, it is okay for the
rook to pass through.

14.♟e5 QUESTION: What is White's idea
behind this mysterious move?

♟f5

[ANSWER: Possibly he intends to meet
14...g6 with 15.♟e4 ♟xe4 16.fxe4
where he increases his central influence.
But even here Black looks fine after f6
17.♟g3 ♟g4 18.♞d3 f5! 19.e5 (19.exf5
♟xf5 20.♞d1 ♟d5 looks slightly better for
Black) 19...♟h6+ 20.♟b1 f4
when I actually prefer Black's game since
White's rook looks quite clunky on d3.]

15.♟d3

[QUESTION: Is it worth it for White to play
15.g4 ?

ANSWER: I doubt it. White's extra space
is dampened by his risk of overextension
with Black tossing in a quick ...h5.]

15...♟xd3 16.♞xd3 e6 17.a3

Wisely preventing ...Bb4.

♟e7 18.♟e4 ♟xe4!?

[Black can also hold off on this swap and
play a useful move like 18...♞d7

. An exchange on f6 doesn't help White in
such positions.]

19.fxe4 f6 20.♟g3 ♞d7 21.♞hd1 ♞hd8

The position is about even. White now
assumes his space edge gives him an
advantage and continues to expand. As I
mentioned before: One player's space
advantage is another's overextension.

22.b4!? **♟a4** The fifth rank seems to be an
agreed upon demarcation point, which neither
side at this point is willing to violate until now.

[Black can also challenge White's imposing
centre with 22...f5 .]

23.♟b3 b6 24.c4 Aspiration mixed with lack
of a clear plan can be a deadly cocktail. We
sense that White's plan of unbridled
expansion, although consistent, lacks
specificity, the nuts and bolts required to
reach his aim. Note how White's territorial
ambitions don't seem to bother Black much in
this game.

a5!? Finally, Black begins to chip away at the
edges.

25.♟e1

[Houdini gives 25.bxa5 b5! 26.cxb5 cxb5
with equal play.]

25...axb4

[Stronger was 25...c5! and if 26.bxc5 ♟xc5!
yields Black the advantage.]

26.axb4 c5! 27.♖c2!? This sac may mark a possible presumption on White's part. Soon, he experiences a co-mingling of faith and doubt in equal parts in his decision. I'm not sure just how discernible White's compensation really is, but Houdini claims White is still okay.

[Perez Candelario rejects drawish equality after 27.bxc5 ♜xc5! 28.♜xc5 ♙xc5 29.♙c3 e5 30.d5 .]

27...cxb4 28.♙a1 ♙a7 29.♙h3 h6 30.♙h5 e5! Having lived a constricted life for so long, Black is finally set free. White's game, that which was once a demand, seamlessly and quickly morphs into a plea. Now the advantage begins to swing to Black, whose king is the safer of the two.

31.dxe5 fxe5 32.♙g3 EXERCISE (planning): This is a case of a dual endgame attack, with both sides striving to reach the other's monarch. Black's attack is the more potent, but only if you find the correct plan.

ANSWER: Open lines to White's king.

QUESTION: What if White just pushes by?

ANSWER: In that case, Black gets to anchor his knight on a4 with his b-pawn, which is exactly what occurred in the game.

b5! 33.c5

[33.cxb5?? is dealt harshly by ♙c7+ 34.♖b1 ♙d1+ 35.♖a2 ♙c2# .]

33...♙g5! The bishop waves away the h5- nuisance with a languid motion of one accustomed to power.

34.♙e1

[34.♙xe5? ♙e7! is decisive.]

34...♙f8 This move looks inaccurate.

[I would have used the less active rook for the f-file, with 34...♙f7 .]

35.♙h3 ♙c7

[Black's counterattack is a mosaic of inclusion, with each member doing his part. Still, 35...♙af7! was much stronger, threatening ...Rf2+, with a killing attack.]

36.♙d3 ♙f4! We begin to see a stinging consequence to White's overextension. Suddenly Black whipped up a nasty initiative/attack. What once looked like drifting smoke begins to coalesce, solidify and take form into the creature, as if given life by Black's imaginings.

37.♙xb4? This looks like the result of time pressure. We hear the receding echo of the bishop's footsteps. He unwisely abandons control over f2 to grab material.

[37.♙e3 was forced.]

37...♙f2+ 38.♖b1?

[A mistake, but 38.♜d2 ♜xc5 is also completely hopeless.]

[EXERCISE (combination alert): This is a test of your alertness. White's king, though desperately ill, attempts to conceal his degeneration from those around him. What would you play after 38.♖b1 ?]

ANSWER: It's mate on the move!

38...♙b2# Once a person passes away, there can be no new memories of her. The cocky rook walks about with the air of one to whom such extraordinary feats are common place occurrences, yet feels it incumbent upon himself to display at least an outward show of modesty. Meanwhile, White's chronically depressed king, believing himself to be a morally upright man, living in a degenerate society, comes to the conclusion that it is society, not he, who is the sick one!

Summary: This and the next game are examples of queenless middlegames commonly reached in this variation. The main thing to realize is White doesn't stand better, despite his territorial advantage.

0-1

B01

□ **Ganguly,S**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Khanty-Mansiysk

2007

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♙xd5 3.♜c3 ♙d6 4.d4 ♜f6 5.♜f3 c6 6.♜e5 ♜bd7 7.♜c4 ♙c7 8.♙f3 ♜b6 9.♙f4 ♙d7 10.♙e5 QUESTION: Isn't this an awkward way for White to defend his d-pawn?

ANSWER: The move is made with two points in mind:

1. It prevents Black from developing smoothly with ...e6 or ...g6.

2. White now can retain queens on the board.

♙g4 Tiviakov proceeds with the unravelling plan typical of the line.

11.♙xg4!? QUESTION: Why did he swap when he can keep queens on the board?

[ANSWER: Perhaps he should have, but White possibly feared tempo loss after

11.♙e3 . The queen says "no thanks" in a tone which implies she is not about to give in to Black's whims. After ♜fd5 12.♜xd5 ♜xd5 13.♙d2 h5! (intending to dissuade h3, g4 expansion ideas from White) White

sac'ed with 14.♔e2!? (14.f3 ♖e6 15.0-0-0 is met with the annoying ♗h6! , with equality) 14...♗xg2 15.0-0-0 f6 16.h4? (unsound; 16.♞hg1 offers White dynamic compensation for his pawn) 16...fxe5 17.♜xe5 g6! (the move White probably missed; Black menaces ...Bh6!) 18.♙b1 ♙h6 19.♖e1 ♞f8 20.♙d3 ♙f5 21.♞g1 ♗h2 22.♙xf5 ♞xf5 23.♞xg6 ♙f8 , and Black went on to consolidate in D. Swiercz-S.Tiviakov, Wroclaw 2010.]

11...♙xg4 12.♜e3 The point of White's queen swap: He gains a bit of time on the bishop. **♙e6** Black covers against line opening d5 ideas.

QUESTION: But doesn't Black's last move block ...e6 and the natural flow of development?

ANSWER: We have to be flexible in this line. Black intends to develop his dark-squared bishop via ...g6 instead.

13.a4 Looking to gain more space, and possibly disrupt with a5 and a6 later on.

♜bd7 14.f4!? Risky. White is intent on squeezing something out of the opening, yet such moves tend to be more potent with queens still on the board.

[14.♙g3 can be met with g6 (or 14...♜h5 , in either case with equality at a minimum.)]

14...♜g4! Principle: The cramped side should seek trades.

15.♜xg4 ♙xg4 16.d5!? I feel like White is on the cusp of over pressing. He follows a principle and breaks one by opening the game when ahead in development, but he also opens when Black has the bishop-pair.

♜xe5 17.fxe5 0-0-0 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.a5 ♞d4! Cutting out Ne4 possibilities.

20.♔e2!? Still playing for the win.

[I would bail out with opposite-coloured bishops with the line 20.♙d3 ♙e6 21.0-0 g6 22.♜e2 ♞d5 23.♜f4 ♞xe5 24.♜xe6 fxe6 .]

20...♙f5 21.♙f3?!

[21.♙d3! may have been his last shot at equality.]

21...♙c7 22.♜e2 EXERCISE (planning): Black has a path to winning White's e-pawn. Try and work it out.

♙b4?! This move allows White equality again. [ANSWER: Tiv missed 22...♞c4! 23.c3 ♞c5 24.0-0 ♞xe5 25.♜d4 ♙d7 . White's slight development lead fails to compensate for the missing pawn, compounded by the fact that Black also owns the bishop-pair.]

23.0-0-0 g6 24.♜d4 ♙d7 25.c3!?

[White once again declines to enter an opposite-coloured bishops ending after 25.e6! ♙xe6 26.♜xe6+ fxe6 when 27.♞he1 ♙h6+ 28.♙b1 e5! 29.♞xe5 ♞xb2+! 30.♙xb2 ♙g7 31.♞de1 ♜d6 32.♞d1+ ♜c7 33.♞de1 ♜d6 is drawn.]

25...♞a4 26.b4 c5! 27.♜b3! Threat: Rxd7+ followed by a fork on c5.

e6 28.bxc5 ♙g7 29.c6 ♙c8!? It's unwise to trifle with a wild and unpredictable force. Tiviakov puts himself at great risk in going for the win.

[I would have gone for the freeing line 29...♙xc6 30.♙xc6 ♜xc6 31.♞hf1 ♙xe5 32.♞xf7 ♞b8 .]

30.♞d4! ♞a2 31.♙b1 ♞f2 32.♞hd1!?

Ganguly goes for it. His move is the precursor to a dangerous exchange sac.

[He rejects the safe and probably equal 32.♞e1 . The ambitious do not react kindly to delay or rejection, when it comes to the fulfilment of their integral desires. White's last move exudes distinct discomfort. White's sac sets in motion guarantees of increased heart rate. Now the black king's breathing grows ragged in anticipatory stress from the assailant's approach on d7.]

32...♙xe5 33.♞d7+ ♙xd7 34.♞xd7+ ♜c8

35.♞xa7 ♙xc3 36.♜c5 White has a dangerous attack, but at the cost of material. He threatens Na6 and Ra8 mate.

QUESTION: So is Black losing?

ANSWER: Material also matters. Houdini assesses at 0.00 – dead even!

♞b2+?! Inaccurate.

[Black retains the balance with 36...♙d4! 37.♞a8+ ♜c7 38.♞a7+ ♜d6! (38...♜c8 is just perpetual check) 39.♜e4+ ♜e5 40.♞b7 (covering against ...Rb8+; 40.♞xf7?? ♞b8+ 41.♞b7 ♞xb7+ 42.cxb7 ♞b2+ 43.♜c1 ♞xb7 is winning for Black) 40...♞xf3! 41.gxf3 ♞c8 .]

37.♜c1 ♙d4 38.♞xf7 ♞e8? EXERCISE

(critical decision): I never claimed the Scandinavian was easy to navigate from Black's side! Tiv loses his bearings with his last move. White has a choice between 39 Na6 and 39 Bg4. One of them wins on the spot. Can you find the continuation which the Indian Grandmaster missed?

39.♙g4? Ganguly blunders right back.

[ANSWER: If you promise your 6-year-old daughter a magic pony, then come Christmas time, you had better deliver. After

39. ♖a6! White threatens the deadly Rb7!, as his knight ricochets off the side. Following ♗e5 40. ♗g4! ♜xg2 41. ♗xe6+! (exploiting Black's weak back rank) ♔d8 (Black's king, having landed on his royal derriere, gathers his dignity, as well as his body off the floor) 42. c7+ ♗xc7 43. ♖xc7 ♜e7 44. ♜xe7 ♔xe7 45. a6! the a-pawn costs Black his rook.]

39...♜f2! Forcing rooks off the board. Now Black's king rests easier.

40.♜xf2 ♗xf2 41.♖xe6 ♜e7 42.♔c2 ♔b8 43.♔d3 h5 44.♗h3 ♗g1 45.♔c4?

Ganguly keeps at it for the win when he shouldn't, by fattening hope of promotion or checkmate on the queenside, the end result of which turns out to be the antithesis of all of his aspirations.

[It was high time to bail out to a draw with 45. c7+ ♜xc7 46. ♖xc7 ♔xc7 .]

45...♗xh2 Covering c7. Black's position, for so long associated with drab deprivation and want, suddenly undergoes a miraculous transformation to abundance and the fulfilment of desires.

46.♖d4 ♗c7 47.a6 Surreptitiously, the pawns creep forward, drawing closer and closer to their goal of promotion.

♔a7 48.♗c8 ♔b6 49.♖e6

[49. ♖b5 ♜e4+ , preparing to swing over to a4, halts the a-pawn's ambitions.]

49...♜e8 50.♗d7 ♜a8 51.♖c5 g5!

White's armada has been stymied. Meanwhile, Black activates his kingside majority. White remains with the numbing realization that everything that could possibly go wrong, did go wrong, and his old, once happy life is now no more than a set of wistful recollections.

52.♖e4 ♜xa6 The eight-year-old denies theft of the cookies cooling on the kitchen counter, but is betrayed by the crumbs on her face. Tiv steals an important pawn.

53.♖f6

[53. ♖xg5 ♜a2 54. ♗h3 ♔xc6 picks off White's remaining passer.]

53...♜a4+ 54.♔d3 The music ends and the feet which once danced, must now walk.

♗e5! 55.♖xh5 White's knight dangles in a nowhere of its own making, a helium balloon suspended in a windless atmosphere, neither heading up nor down.

g4 Preventing g4 ideas from White. It's going to be close, since Black needs to hang on to his final pawn or else White gets excellent drawing chances.

56.♔e3?

[Black's win is not so simple after 56. g3! since he is tied down to both his own g-pawn and White's c-pawn.]

56...g3! A move which has the effect of firmly banishing White's remaining hopes to the nether regions. Tiv dissects the remainder with clinical dispassion.

57.♔f3 ♔c7 58.♗e8 EXERCISE (planning): How does Black force the win of White's g-pawn?

ANSWER: The rook had been waiting for White's king all along.

♜a2! There is no remedy for ...Rf2+.

59.♔e4 ♜xg2 60.♔xe5 ♜e2+ 61.♔f4 g2 Summary: Black continues to hold equality if he manages to take the queens off the board. Perhaps White's only chance at an advantage after 10 Be5 is to keep queens on the board and sac his g-pawn as in Swiercz-Tiviakov in the notes, but then he risks loss as well.

0-1

B01

□ **Dzhumaev, M**

■ **Tiviakov, S**

Mashhad

2011

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♜xd5 3.♖c3 ♜d6 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♖f3 c6 6.♖e5 ♖bd7 7.♖c4 ♜c7

8.♜f3 ♖b6 9.♗f4 ♜d7 10.h3 White takes the nuclear option by preventing ...Qg4. In doing so he leaves his d-pawn en prise.

QUESTION: This is the move I worried about. Is that d4-pawn for free or is its capture suicidal for us?

ANSWER: Suicide or not we must take the pawn or else White gets everything he wanted out of the opening, namely avoidance of a queen swap, while retaining a development lead.

♖xc4 Played for two reasons:

1. Every swap from this point on will be in Black's favour, since we will be up a pawn.
2. Black gains a tempo on White's loose c4-bishop.

11.♗xc4 ♜xd4 Tiv, grasping hold of the prize, mutters a prayer asking to be delivered from evil, as he proceeds with his dark, twisted vision. I remember vividly grabbing a similar pawn in one of my online blitz games. My grandmaster opponent sent me the following snarky tell: "You play anti-chess!"

12.♗b3 e6 13.♜d1 ♜b6 QUESTION: How

can Black survive this far behind in development for only one pawn's payment?
ANSWER: While it is true that Black lags dangerously behind in development, he also has one powerful factor in his favour: A lack of a clear target for White. Black's position remains iron solid and basically White must go with the abstract compensation of the promise of a future kingside attack, but even that will not be so easy for him. In the matrix of attack, speed and efficiency are two crucial elements for success – both of which White lacks at the moment.

[Miranda Mikadze was twice successful with 13...♖c5!? which may well constitute an improvement over 13...Qb6.

QUESTION: How would this improve Black's chances for a successful defence?

ANSWER: In this variation, Black often plays ...Rd8, then White trades and Black recaptures with ...Bxd8. With Black's queen on c5, she can return quickly to the defence with either ...Qe7 or ...Qf8. After 14.0-0 ♕e7 15.♗fe1 (15.♘e4 ♘xe4 16.♗xe4 was A.Gara-M.Mikadze, Konya 2011; now Houdini likes ♗h5 17.♕e5 0-0 18.♗d3 ♗d8 19.♗xd8+ ♕xd8 and claims the position is roughly even) 15...0-0 16.♗e5 ♖b6 17.♘a4 ♗a6 18.♘c5 ♖b6 19.♘a4 ♗a6 White refused the repetition offer and went for it with 20.c4 ♗d8 21.♗xd8+ ♕xd8 22.♖d3 ♕e7 23.♕c2 b6! 24.♕g5 h6! 25.♕f4 (perhaps a better try would be 25.♕xf6 ♕xf6 26.♗e1 g6 27.♘c3 ♗a5 28.♗f3 ♕xc3 29.bxc3 ♕d7 , but I still prefer Black's material and structure over White's initiative, which may soon come to an end) 25...♕b7 , but by now Black was ready for ...Rd8 and White lacked meaningful compensation for the missing pawn, S.Melia-M.Mikadze, Anaklia 2011.]

14.0-0 ♕e7 15.♘e4 ♘xe4 16.♗xe4 0-0

17.♕e5 White begins to aim his forces kingward, hoping to induce weakness from Black.

♗d8!

[Tiviakov's improvement over 17...c5?! 18.♗fe1 a5 19.♗e3! ♗d8 20.♗xd8+ ♖xd8 21.♗d3 ♖f8 22.♕a4 f6 23.♕c7 . Houdini claims this is even, but we humans know better: Black can barely move and Tiviakov was unable to save himself, V.Bologan-S. Tiviakov, Sibenik 2010.]

18.♕c4 Perhaps heading for d3.

♗d7! Now ...Qd8 is possible.

19.♗g4

[Black continues to defend after 19.♕d3 g6 20.♖f4 ♖d8 .]

19...♕f8 Suddenly, White finds it difficult to come up with a way to further attacking ambitions.

20.a3 ♖c5 21.♗e4 g6 QUESTION: Why did Black voluntarily weaken his king position?

ANSWER: He did so in anticipation of Bd3 next from White.

22.b4 ♗e7 23.h4 h5 24.♗xd7 This move only helps Black catch up somewhat in development, but White was out of attacking ideas.

♕xd7 25.♖f4 ♕e8 Clearing the pathway for ...Rd8. It is instructive to see Tiviakov patiently unravelling, all the while hanging on to his extra pawn. His king, now inured to pain of any magnitude, perseveres to survive the crisis. His new refurbished residence feels a lot more cosy with added defenders at his side.

26.♕f6 ♖d6 27.♕e5 ♗e7 28.♕f6 ♖d6

29.♕e5 ♖d8 No draw!

30.♕f6 ♕h6! The rabbit pokes his head from his hole in the forest, looking warily forth for signs of predators. This slick deflection shot further weakens White's attacking force.

31.♖f3 ♖d2! Principle: Centralize when under attack.

32.♕b3 ♖f4 Principle: Attempt swaps when under attack and ahead in material.

33.♖c3 ♗c8 Slowly, slowly, Black unravels.

[Perhaps even stronger was the immediate central challenge with 33...c5! 34.bxc5 ♕f8 .]

34.♗e1 c5 EXERCISE (critical decision): We feel an indefinable undercurrent of turmoil and upheaval, about to bubble up just under the surface. Tiviakov allows White the combination 35 Rxe6. Was he correct in doing so? Should White strike by taking e6, or should he hold back, with the risk of being accused of Hamlet-like indecision?

ANSWER: Tiviakov foresaw that he stood better in the aftermath by allowing the faulty combination.

35.♗xe6? When Wile E. Coyote busied himself hunting the road runner, he always felt confident when he sidestepped the falling anvil – only to be clobbered the very next moment by the falling piano. White should refrain from the combination, but who among us could resist the lure? White's flawed combination, no matter how tempting, also

contains within itself the secreted essence of its own rebuttal. Very soon, White's energy grows concave, lurching inward into itself.

fxe6

[Even stronger than 35...c4 36.♖e1 ♕d7 .]

36.♕xe6+ ♖h7 37.♕xc8 ♖c1+ 38.♖h2 ♕f4+! 39.g3 ♕c6 Threatening mate in one.

40.♖a1 ♖d2! The black queen's vanity is only surpassed by her ostentation. She sweeps in with a dramatic entrance into the room, vowing that one day soon her tormenting brother on h2 shall suffer, just as she was made to suffer earlier in the game. **41.♖g1?** "Her majesty's a pretty nice girl, but she doesn't have a lot to say." It's too late to lock the house after the burglary. Having been banished to servility, the queen resorts to tantrums, tears and recriminations, but to no avail.

[White puts up more resistance after the correct **41.♖f1 cxb4! 42.axb4 ♖xb4!** when White must still fight hard to save himself, since Black's a-pawn soon runs down the board.]

41...♕e3! Vectors of force converge with terrifying uniformity of intent toward f2.

42.♕g5 The only move. White desperately attempts to dam the imminent rupture.

♕xg5 43.hxg5 cxb4 44.axb4 ♖xb4!

Material may be even, but White is completely busted. His king remains at grave risk and Black simply pushes his passed a-pawn down the board.

45.♖a1 ♖e4 46.♕h3 a5! Here he comes.

47.♖d1 a4 48.f4 ♖e3! Threat: ...Qf2+ and mate next.

49.♕f5!? White incurs more debt, but if you are already in the process of filing for bankruptcy, then isn't the extra burden moot?

gxf5 50.♖xh5+ ♖g7 51.♖h6+ ♖f7 52.g6+ ♖e7 53.♖g7+ ♖d6 54.♖f8+ ♖c7 55.♖h3

[If 55.g7 ♖e2+ 56.♖h3 ♖h5# .]

55...♖e6! 56.♖g7+ ♖b6 57.♖h4 ♖a6

58.♖g5 ♕e8 59.g4 EXERCISE (combination alert): How can Black consolidate?

ANSWER: Return the piece to exorcise g6 and win the queening race by one tempo.

♖xg6+!

[After 59...♖xg6+ 60.♖xg6+ ♕xg6

61.♖xg6 fxc4 62.f5 g3 63.f6 g2 64.f7 g1♖+ Black queens with check.

Summary: We must grab White's d-pawn and pray in this line. Also keep in mind the move 13...Qc5, which may be an

improvement and needs further testing.]

0-1

B01

□ **Sveshnikov,E**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Moscow

2011

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♖c3 ♖d6 4.d4 ♖f6 5.♖f3 c6 6.♖e5 ♖bd7 7.♖c4 ♖c7 8.♖f3 ♖b6 9.♖e5 QUESTION: Why would White refuse to gain a tempo by posting his bishop to f4?

ANSWER: We saw in earlier games the havoc Black's ...Qd7 and ...Qg4! manoeuvre caused, so White reasons there is no rush for the tempo-gain. He takes care of business first, preparing to castle long and only then will he play Bf4 which isn't running away. In essence, White's last move prevents the dreaded ...Qd7.

♕e6 Practiced familiarity is synonymous with masterful control. Tiviakov knows and understands this line better than anyone else in the world and doesn't get confused by White's tricky move order. He discourages the coming Bc4. Remember, always be flexible about ...g6 and ...Bg7 development. We look at the fianchetto lines later in the book, which will actually help you understand this and other chapters better as well, since in some cases we do fianchetto our dark-squared bishop.

10.♕f4 ♖d8 QUESTION: Why isn't Black getting blown away? So far he moved his queen three times to end up where she started from.

ANSWER: You just described the great Zen koan of the Scandinavian. I can't explain why Black is able to survive, other than he just does! Perhaps the reason is twofold:

1. White has great difficulty in opening the position in the Scandinavian. This in turn, has a way of dampening his impressive development lead.

2. The second reason lies perhaps within the psyche of many who face Scandi as White: They act like they are winning when they actually are not. The net result of this is overextension, which happens to White on a regular basis in the Scandi.

11.0-0-0 g6 12.♕d3 Alternatives:

[a) 12.h4 ♕g7 (Black feels no great urgency

to play ...h5, since he can grab it and perhaps castle queenside later on) 13.♔e2 ♖fd5 14.♔d2 (perhaps White should proceed forward with 14.h5 ♖xc3 15.♗xc3 ♖d5 16.♗f3 ♗a5 17.a3 ♖xf4 18.♗xf4 when Black still must deal with issues of where to place his king) 14...♖xc3 15.♗xc3 ♗d5 16.♗a3 0-0! with equal chances, since g2 is too dangerous a grab, T.L.Petrosian-S.Kasparov, Bhubaneswar 2011.]

[b) 12.h3 ♔g7 13.♖g4 isn't very effective, since Black hasn't committed to kingside castling yet, T.Paehtz-S.Kasparov, Arco 2011. Black looks fine after ♖fd5 .]

12...♔g7 13.h4 ♖bd5 14.♔c4 ♖xf4 15.♗xf4 ♔xc4 16.♖xc4 ♖d5 17.♗f3 ♖xc3 18.bxc3!? A theoretical novelty and a radical approach. A soldier is obliged to follow orders from a commanding officer, even when he realizes it may be sheer folly. Sveshnikov refuses to lose time with his queen, and allows serious damage to his structure around his king. There is something unsettling and incongruous about White's idea.

[Still, his move is understandable, since after the milquetoast 18.♗xc3 ♗d5 19.g3 0-0 Black stood at least equal in H.Tirard-K.Pytel, La Fere 2007.]

18...e6!? Tiviakov also thinks about attacking.

[18...♗d5 19.♗xd5 cxd5 20.♖e3 e6 21.c4 dxc4 22.♖xc4 0-0-0 23.♖e5 is equal.]

19.h5 ♗g5+ 20.♖e3 0-0!? QUESTION: Isn't he castling into it?

ANSWER: I agree. After Black's last move, his most aggressive option is kill or be killed. Houdini likes the move, so intrinsically it's probably very playable.

21.♗h3 ♔fd8 Centralizing and clearing a haven on f8 for his king.

22.hxg6 hxg6 23.f4 ♗a5 Tiviakov isn't much tempted by the dangling temptation on f4.

24.♔d3! Triple purpose:

1. The rook covers c3.
2. The rook clears a pathway to d2 for White's king.
3. The rook may later participate in a kingside assault.

[QUESTION: Why not the simple 24.♖b2 ?

ANSWER: Well, matters don't look so simple for White after c5 , after which Black looks clearly faster.]

24...♗xa2 To his left, the white king hears the unsettling exhalation of the serpent's hiss.

25.f5!? White increases his intensity level up

a notch, yet Black is able to withstand the increment.

[His attack falls short after 25.g4? c5 26.f5 cxd4 27.cxd4 ♔xd4! 28.fxg6 (28.♔xd4 is met with ♗a1+) 28...♔xe3+! 29.♗xe3 ♗a1+ and Black wins a rook.]

25...exf5 26.♖xf5!? To some, sacrifice is a craved intoxicant. If anger were converted to heat, this knight would burst into flames. The delusional knight feels he is all-powerful, beyond the reach of law or agency, and so with this attitude perseveres in his suicide mission.

gxf5 27.♔g3 Threat: Qh8 mate!

♖f8 28.♗h7 EXERCISE (combination alert): White's attack is close and yet a great distance away. Attackers pour forth in enveloping waves of rage. Terrible menace surrounds Black's king, but he need not worry: The white king's worries are greater. Proceed with Black's attack.

ANSWER: ♗a1+! **29.♖d2 ♔xd4+!**

All that remains of white's king position is twisted, splayed girders, the facade having been torn asunder. If not for this adjunct Black would be busted. The rook hangs in mid air. Material is irrelevant. Only the race to the opposing king matters.

30.cxd4 ♗xd4+ 31.♔d3 ♗b4+ 32.♖d1 ♔e8 33.♔d7 ♗g4+ 34.♖c1 ♗f4+ 35.♖d1

A draw offer.

♔e4! Nyet!

36.♔d8+? White frantically ransacks the home, yet fails to find the jewel he seeks.

[He had to try 36.♗h5 ♔d4+ 37.♔xd4 ♗xd4+ 38.♖c1 and pray he holds things together.]

36...♖e7 Black's king continues to evade White's overtures.

37.♔d3 EXERCISE (combination alert): Find a method to finish White off.

ANSWER: Engage the last attacker. The threat is mate on the move.

♖b2! The assassin slips past the somnolent, inept king's guard to approach his target.

38.♗h6! Now is not the time to issue challenge, so White's queen backs off, according her more powerful sister reluctant deference.

[38.♔d2 ♗g4+ mates next move.]

38...♗g4+ 39.♔f3 ♔d4+

[The white king reconciles himself to his new downgraded status with grudging resignation. 39...♔d4+ 40.♖e1 ♔c3+! wins.

Summary: Theoretically, we continue to hold
our own if White delays Bf4 by playing 9
Ne5.]

0-1

Chapter Three

The 7 Bf4 Variation

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 c6 6 Ne5 Nbd7 7 Bf4



We continue our examination of the 6 Ne5 line with another dangerous subset. White develops his bishop to f4, backing up his e5 post and threatening future mischief with discoveries on our queen, whose eyes narrow into slits of deep suspicion from the bishop's approach. If you land here without deep knowledge of the position, then it is indeed a palpable moment of anxiety. Optically, the position looks grim for Black, but the actual reality just doesn't bear this out. In fact, our queen, stubbornly demands squatter's rights, refusing to budge. Indeed, we counterattack with 7...Nd5, after which we seem to be easily holding our own theoretically.

[Gao Rui-Ni Hua](#)

[Ivanchuk-Tiviakov](#)

[Anand-Tiviakov](#)

[Caruana-Milanovic](#)

[Mastrovasilis-Tiviakov](#)

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8...Qxd5 9 Be2

9 Nf3 Nb6 10 Be2 Bf5 11 c3 Qe4

12 Bg3 – [Gao Rui-Ni Hua](#)

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9 Qd3 – [Stojanovic-Tiviakov](#)

9 Bc4 – [Baker-Lakdawala](#)

9...Nxe5 10 Bxe5 Qxg2 11 Bf3 Qg6

12 d5 – [Anand-Tiviakov](#)

12 Qe2 – [Caruana-Milanovic](#)

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♗c3 ♖d6 4.d4 ♗f6 5.♗f3 c6 6.♗e5 ♗bd7 7.♗f4

Scary stuff. White smoothly develops and at the same time gets us nervous with knight discoveries on our queen.

♗d5

[QUESTION: Shouldn't we just move out of the way and play 7...♖b4 ?

ANSWER: This line works out in White's favour after 8.♗c4 ♗e4 9.a3 ♗xc3 10.♖f3! ♖b5 (10...♖a4 11.♖xc3 b5 12.♗e3 looks awful for Black) 11.♗d6+ exd6 12.♗xb5 ♗xb5 , E.Martinez Ramirez-P.Cruz Lledo, Linares 2010. Despite receiving a hefty three minor pieces for the queen, Black is in deep trouble due to his development lag after 13.0-0-0! ♗c7 14.♖g3 ♗e6 15.♗xd6 when his king gets caught in the centre.]

8.♗xd5

[Later in the chapter we examine the dangerous line 8.♗g3 .]

[QUESTION: Can White try and confuse the issue with 8.♗xd7 ?

ANSWER: There is nothing to get confused about. Black looks just fine after ♗xf4 9.♗xf8 ♖xf8 10.♖d2 ♗f5 11.0-0-0 0-0-0 , M.Kouvatsou-Z.Iordanidou, Katakolo 2009.]

8...♖xd5

[QUESTION: Since swaps benefit Black, shouldn't he then toss in 8...♗xe5 ?

ANSWER: In theory you are correct, but in this instance Black's position is rather joyless after 9.♗xe5 ♖xd5 10.c4 ♖a5+ 11.♖d2 ♖xd2+ 12.♗xd2 ♗f5 . I would think Black should be okay here, but in this game Nakamura convincingly demonstrates that White holds a long '+=' , due to his queenside space, and active king: 13.♗c3 e6 14.♗e2 0-0-0 15.♖ad1 f6 16.♗f4 g5 17.♗e3 h5 18.h3 ♗d6 19.b4! ♗c7 20.a4 a6 21.♗b3 ♗g6 22.♖hf1 (perhaps entertaining ideas of f4) e5 23.dxe5 ♗xe5 24.b5! axb5 25.cxb5 cxb5 26.axb5 (somehow Black's king feels less secure than White's) ♗b8 27.♗c4 ♖c8 28.♗b4! ♖he8 29.b6! (back rank issues may later plague Black) g4 30.hxg4 hxg4 31.♖fe1

♖c6 32.♗c5! ♗c8 (32...♖ec8? 33.♖xe5! fxe5 34.♗d6+ ♖xd6 35.♖xd6 when White soon picks off a kingside pawn) 33.♖e3 (Black is already in deep trouble and his next move is a blunder) ♖d8? 34.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 35.♗d5 and White won quickly, H. Nakamura-F.Vallejo Pons, San Sebastian 2009. The mysterious part of this game was I had trouble pinpointing just where Black's game went from slightly worse to just lost. In any case I would take this game as a precedent and avoid 8...Nxe5.]

[QUESTION: Why can't Black play 8...cxd5 ? I don't see a great discovery for White.

ANSWER: One of my creative students forgot the analysis we studied in our lesson, thought your dubious suggestion was book, and played it against the reigning State Champion (another student). The game went 9.♗d3! ♖b6 10.c3 e6 . Black ended up in a sour version of the Exchange Caro-Kann, but managed to hold the draw anyway in V.Krishnan-V.Iyer, San Diego (rapid) 2012.]

9.♗f3 This is White's main move and I think it is lame. Black tends to equalize with ease.

QUESTION: Which move do you think is more dangerous?

[ANSWER: I feel the critical line for Black is 9.♗e2 , Anand's idea, a dangerous pawn sac, to which we have strong antidotes, and examine in the next few games.]

[We also look at the not-very-scary 9.♖d3 ,]

[and end the chapter with the speculative and somewhat dubious 9.♗c4 .]

9...♗b6 10.♗e2 ♗f5 11.c3 QUESTION:

Wouldn't it be better to castle first, to leave the c-pawn uncommitted?

ANSWER: A trap! Pay close attention because some lucky day you too can pull this one off on an unsuspecting opponent. Let's do an exercise here:

EXERCISE (combination alert): White's most natural last move is in reality a big blunder which drops a pawn for zero compensation. What would you play here as Black after 11 0-0?

[ANSWER: Double attack f4 and c2. Black's queen approaches with false geniality. After 11.0-0?? ♖e4! 12.♗c7 ♖xc2 White got less than nothing for his pawn in M.Parligras-S.Tiviakov, German League 2008. If a 2611-rated player can fall for this one, then your opponents will also.]

11...♖e4! Anyway, the vain queen, above all else, requires never ending adulation and attention to keep her happiness intact.

QUESTION: What is the point now that there is no double attack?

ANSWER: Please see Black's next move!

[You can also delay it a move with 11...e6 12.0-0 ♖e4! 13.♗g3 ♜c2! with equality, Y. Quesada Perez-V.Ivanchuk, Havana 2012.]

12.♗g3

[Next game we look at 12.♜d2 .]

12...♜c2! The point. Black removes queens from the board, and as we all understand by now, this means he achieves equality as well.

13.♜xc2 ♗xc2 14.♗e5!? e6 15.♗d3

Perhaps White hopes to bag the bishop-pair, which probably doesn't hurt Black at all. In fact, if I played Black against a lower-rated player, I would be happy to chop White's knight, just to attain an imbalance.

♗a4 16.♗d1 ♗xd3 17.♗xa4 0-0-0 18.0-0-0 ♗c4 QUESTION: I agree that Black achieved equality, but how does one win such a position from Black's side?

ANSWER: It isn't easy. Caro-Kann players face this dilemma as well when they achieve sometimes arid equality. The trick is to cultivate patience and superior endgame technique. In this game, Ni Hua gives a terrific demonstration of how to take down an unambitious lower-rated player, whose heart's desire is basically to score the draw.

19.♗b3 ♗d5 If White swaps on d5, he hands Black the superior remaining bishop. Not much to go on, I admit, but it constitutes progress.

20.f3 Threatening c4.

b5! Almost imperceptibly, Black begins to make headway on the light squares.

21.♗c2 ♗b7 22.a4 a6 23.♗xd5 White tires of the waiting game.

♗xd5 The superior recapture.

[QUESTION: Can Black play for a queenside minority attack with 23...cxd5 ?

ANSWER: That is possible, but I have found that the minority attack is less effective with knights off the board. In this case White isn't even worse after 24.axb5 axb5 25.♖a1 b4 26.♖a5 ♖a8 27.♖xa8 ♗xa8 28.♖a1+ ♗b7 29.♗b3 bxc3 30.bxc3 which is an almost guaranteed draw.]

24.♖he1 ♗e7 25.♖e5 ♖hd8 26.♖de1 ♗b6 27.b3 ♖5d7 28.♗f2 ♗b7 29.♖1e2 g6

Every single black pawn on the board is on the correct colour: Opposite of the remaining

bishop.

QUESTION: I have heard this principle, but why is it important?

ANSWER: When you own a single bishop, it covers only one colour. By switching the colour of your pawns, you increase your influence on your weak colour.

30.♖5e4 White is content to await Black's attempt to win.

h5 31.♗g3

[If dullness is the goal, then 31.♗g1 constitutes the more accurate waiting move.]

31...b4! Black seizes his chance to create a small imbalance while White twiddles his thumbs in the interim. Black's game is like a piece of music which at first seems to contain no discernible pattern, but only later do we begin to anticipate, as the subtle melody reveals its inner nature to our ears.

32.♗e5 The socially inept bishop nervously seeks a proper line of conduct.

bxc3 33.♗xc3 f5!? ♜f5! Black longs to break free of the fetters of non-doing. He tempts White by deliberately weakening e6, but in lashing out with his f-pawn, he also induces White's rooks into awkward postings.

34.♖4e3 c5! 35.♖d3 ♖d5 36.♗f4?

White pulls a 180 and strives for the win, despite the sense that there lies a wide gulf between desire and the fulfilment of the wish. White's rook gazes up at e6 with the floating eyes of a devotee before his goddess. Suddenly White gets ambitious, going after e6, a move born of an ambitious psyche, who seeks in anarchistic fashion, to disrupt. For so long, White fought for the draw, but now, gripped by a turbulent aspiration, he goes for the compelling desire for the win.

[Instead, he should be content with 36.♗g7 and dare Black to make progress.]

36...cxd4+ 37.♗b2 EXERCISE (combination alert): It looks as if e6 is doomed. It isn't. How can we utilize tactics to complete the delicate transaction?

ANSWER: Discovered attack.

♖e8! 38.♗e5

[Black's idea: 38.♖xe6?? ♗a3+ picks off the exchange. After a brief hiatus, the two sides squabble over rights to d4. White, having been robbed of a pawn, seeks indemnifying compensation in the form of piece activity. Why is it we all spend large portions of our chess games attempting to extricate ourselves from the consequences

of our own previous folly? White realizes matters have gone awry and switches to full damage-control mode.]

38...g5! 39.h4 Otherwise:

[a) 39.♖xd4?? ♖xe5! 40.♖xe5 ♕f6 ends the game.]

[b) 39.♕xd4? ♕b4! 40.♖e5 ♖d6 leaves White helpless against the coming doubling of rooks on the d-file.]

39...gxh4 40.f4 ♖ed8 There is great toil ahead in the realization of Black's advantage, even here.

41.♖c2 ♕b4 42.♕f6 ♕c3+ 43.♔a3 ♖g8

44.♕xh4 Back to one pawn, but Black's position improved significantly.

a5 45.♕f6 ♖g6 46.♕h4 ♖c5 47.♖e2 ♔c6 Ni Hua centralizes his king before engaging in any attempt at an ...e5 break.

48.g3 Note how White's two pawns on the kingside are stuck on the wrong colour.

♔d6 49.♕d8 ♔d7 50.♕h4 ♖d5 51.♔a2 ♔e8 52.♔a3 ♔f7 53.♔a2 ♖g8 Freeing the rook for queenside duty.

54.♖c2 ♖c8 55.♕g5 ♖cc5 56.♖h2 ♔g6

57.♕e7 ♖c7 58.♕a3 e5! The time has arrived.

59.fxe5 ♖xe5 60.♕b2?

[60.♖c2 put up greater resistance, but White was busted in any case.]

[EXERCISE (planning): Come up with a consolidation plan for Black after 60.♕b2 .]

ANSWER: Create a deeply passed e-pawn.

60...♖e3! 61.♖xe3

[61.♖d1 ♖xg3 is resignable as well.]

61...dxe3 62.♕xc3

[62.♖c2 fails to ♕e5! .]

62...♖xc3 63.♖e2 h4! 64.♔b2 ♖c8 65.♖xe3

[Of course, 65.gxh4 f4 is beyond hope.]

65...h3! The passed h-pawn ties down White's rook.

66.b4 axb4 67.a5 h2 68.♖e1 The rook walks about in a daze from the realization of the termination of hope.

♖h8 Black's king marches to g3.

Summary: Remember the ...Qe4 trap and also the ...Qe4-c2 trick to take queens off the board in this line.

0-1

□ **Ivanchuk,V**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Wijk aan Zee

2010

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♔c3 ♖d6 4.d4 ♔f6 5.♔f3 c6 6.♔e5 ♔bd7 7.♕f4 ♔d5 8.♔xd5 ♖xd5 9.♔f3 ♔b6 10.♕e2 ♕f5 11.c3 ♖e4 Just like last game, events unfold outside the radius of the queen's influence, yet she labours diligently to insert herself into the proceedings by going rogue.

12.♖d2

[QUESTION: Is there much difference between this move and 12.♕g3 , which we looked at last game?]

ANSWER: Not a whole lot. In both cases Black plugs ahead with his ...Qc2 plan. So in sync are the identical twin lines, that upon encountering them we get the eerie feeling of meeting the same person twice. The only minor difference is if White wants his bishop posted on f4 or g3.]

12...♖c2! The same old story: Trades benefit the cramped side, namely us!

13.♖xc2 ♕xc2 14.♔e5 h5!? There he goes again. Tiv, whose Scandis are inevitably an odd amalgam of genius and rapturous lunacy, just loves to push forward his h-pawn. The odd thing is this move is also Houdini's first choice.

QUESTION: What is Black's idea behind the move?

ANSWER: I'm stumped as well. Everyman should consider placing a clairvoyant on the payroll for situations just like this. Perhaps Tiv just wants to expand on the kingside.

[The second reason may be he doesn't want to give Ivanchuk the bishop-pair with 14...e6 15.♖c1 ♕e4 16.f3 ,]

[but the question still remains: why not 14...h6 instead? I don't know, but the move just looks passive when compared to 14...h5.]

15.0-0 e6 16.♖fe1 ♕e7 17.h3 ♖d8 18.g3 ♕d6

[He can also play 18...♕f5 19.♔g2 g5 20.♕d2 f6 21.♔c4 g4! . In this line we see that ...h5 can be a useful kingside space accumulating move.]

19.♕e3 ♔d5 20.♕d2 h4! Yet another clever argument for ...h5 over ...h6.

21.♖ac1 ♕h7 22.♕f3

[22.♕h5 is met with the introverted,

Bronsteinian ♖g8! 23.♖g4 hxg3 24.fxg3 ♜f6! when Black picks off the bishop-pair.]
[QUESTION: Why not just bypass with 22.g4? ?

ANSWER: The move weakens f4. Black takes advantage of it with ♜f6 23.♜d3 ♖f7 , and if 24.c4 ♖xd3! 25.cxd5 (25.♖xd3 ♖b4! favours Black as well; White's d4- and f4-squares have been weakened) 25...♖xe2 26.dxe6+ ♜xe6 27.♖xe2+ ♜d5!? .
(The safer, less radical move 27...♖f7 leaves White with a weak d4-pawn, as well as a weakened d5-square.)]

22...hxg3 23.fxg3 0-0 Nobody understands the subtleties of the ...Qd6 Scandinavian as deeply as Tiv. Here we see him effortlessly equalize against a world-class player.

24.♖g2 c5! Tiviakov decides the moment has arrived to challenge White's central point.

25.a3 Ivanchuk decides to take on an isolani, dangerous in an endgame since he lacks attacking chances due to the absence of queens.

[QUESTION: Doesn't 25.c4 simply win a pawn?

ANSWER: No. b7 is immune after ♜e7 . Now White would be well advised to avoid the 'free' pawn on b7: 26.♖xb7? ♖b8 and White is busted.]

25...cxd4 26.cxd4 ♖fe8 27.♜c4

[QUESTION: Why not just give Black an isolani right back with 27.♖xd5 ?

ANSWER: The trouble is after exd5 Black not only has the bishop-pair, but also a grip on the light squares and a hook for his bishop on e4.]

27...♖c7

[27...♖b8! 28.♜a5 ♖d7 looks slightly more accurate.]

28.♜e3! Principle: Apply pressure to the square directly in front of the isolani.

♜xe3+ 29.♖xe3 ♖b6 30.d5

[30.♖xb7 ♖xd4 is also equal. The text move has the freeing effect of an anti-coagulant on White's position. Ivanchuk just wants to liquidate and rid himself of his sickly isolani in the hopes of smoothing out the crisis, the way a person irons a wrinkled shirt.]

30...e5?! A misguided attempt to go for the win. In theory the plan to keep White's d-pawn an isolani looks good, but when examined in detail, appears mathematically dyslexic. Tiv soon comes to regret his decision and contemplates the fact that the gallows are the

rendezvous point for those who incite insurgency against the regime and fail. Now White's isolani becomes a passed pawn as well.

[Black should just simplify with 30...♖xe3 31.♖xe3 ♖f8! 32.dxe6 ♖d2+ 33.♜g1 ♖f5! 34.♖c7 ♖xe6 35.♖xe6 ♖xe6 36.♖xb7 ♖xh3 when the game is most likely headed for a draw.]

31.♖xb6 axb6 32.♖ed1 e4 33.♖e2 e3!?

The possibly mad e-pawn constantly monitors his mind for signs of psychosis and finding none, decides upon a suicide mission. In this totalitarian society, those who make trouble, who refuse to live life with a low profile, have a nasty habit of disappearing without a trace, as if they never existed.

34.♖f3 The advantage swings to White, who now enjoys the superior structure.

♖e4 35.♖d4! ♖xf3+ 36.♜xf3 Advantage White:

1. Who has the more active king. Here we watch White's king and rook speak and chuckle in soft tones as if sharing a cruel joke. It seems Black's e-pawn provides them with the very gist of such a joke. In comparison it becomes clear that Black's reclusive king is manifestly uncomfortable around human beings.

2. The active king factor also means Black's e-pawn is in danger.

3. Black's set of doubled isolanis on the b-file provide an alluring target for White's rooks.

♖d6 37.♖e1 ♖f6+ 38.♖f4 ♖d6 Tiv's burning torch keeps the yelping wolf pack at bay, but for how long?

39.♖xe3 ♖xe3+ 40.♜xe3 ♖xd5

Somehow Tiv manages to pick off White's d-pawn in exchange for his doomed e-pawn, but his troubles are far from over.

41.♖d4 White's king motions with his eyes, ordering his subordinate rook to deal harshly with the presumptuous intruder on d5.

♖e5+ Black's rook returns his brother's greeting with a sardonic nod of the head, as if to an inferior. Of course, the king and pawn ending is dead lost for Black, since White's king would waltz over and mop up the b6-pawn.

42.♜d3 ♖f5 43.♜c4 b5+ 44.♜b4 ♖f3

Black's once wilting activity feels the refreshing renewal of life energy, as rain drops begin to patter off its leaves. This indomitable rook remains unwavering in his obsessive animosity toward all things White.

He saunters about, creating trouble with a marked sense of urgency. Tiv follows rook and pawn scripture, keeping his rook annoying and active at all times.

45.♖g4 f6 46.♟xb5 ♖b3+ 47.♖b4 ♗xg3 48.h4 ♖d3 49.a4 f5 Black's incessant search for counterplay wears smooth the tough exterior of White's ambitions. The f-pawn is destined to be the bearing on which the engine runs efficiently. The kingside passer generates just enough play to hold the draw.

50.♟b6 ♖d7 51.a5 ♗f7! The prodigious rook is the village simpleton who suddenly displays a vast reservoir of hidden intellect. Model rook and pawn ending defence. Principle: Place your rook behind your passed pawn. Notice how Tiviakov's rook functions both offensively and defensively.

52.♗f4 ♟h7 Black's king arrives at the completion of his lengthy, torturous indenture from g8.

53.b4 g5! 54.hxg5 ♟g6 55.b5 ♟xg5 56.♗f1 f4 57.a6 Soon, only two kings will remain on the board since both sides must hand over their rook to eliminate the opponent's corresponding passed pawn. Summary: 12 Qd2 is virtually synonymous with 12 Bg3. In both cases we follow the same plan of ...Qc2 forcing queens off the board. Also, keep in mind ...h5, with which Black accumulates useful space rather than the passive ...h6 in such endings.

1/2-1/2

□ **Anand,V**
 ■ **Tiviakov,S**
 Wijk aan Zee
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2006

1.e4 d5 GM Alex Finkel writes: "Tiviakov has been playing the Scandinavian Defense pretty often lately, but you've got to have a very strong belief in yourself to play this opening against Anand!" I add: If the Scandi is able to withstand Hurricane Vishy, then it can survive any geological event. When this game was first played, it blew my mind and I instantly became a convert to the ...Qd6 Scandi. In fact, it is my favourite of the entire book.

2.exd5 ♗xd5 3.♟c3 ♗d6 4.d4 ♟f6 5.♟f3 c6 6.♟e5 ♟bd7 7.♟f4 ♟d5 8.♟xd5 ♗xd5 9.♟e2!? Anand eschews all thoughts of a safe route, offering his g-pawn as bait to further

increase his development lead. White solves the problem of how to develop his light-squared bishop by simply moving it, offering his g-pawn. He hopes to divert the black queen's attention with a gift, which she promptly accepts, with thanks.

♟xe5 In order to reduce material, our universal healing balm in the Scandi.

10.♟xe5 QUESTION: Well, should we accept g2 or not?

ANSWER: I think we should be bold and grab it, or else White just gets a pleasant edge at no risk to himself.

♗xg2! Ah, now we understand Black's primary motivation, greed, manifesting itself. The principled move. Which destiny awaits us? Heaven or hell?

QUESTION: Isn't it just too risky to take such a pawn?

[ANSWER: To criticize such a move seems to me a specious argument, since not taking the pawn allows White to develop a problem piece without cost or labour. For example, 10...♟f5 is playable, but just feels too chicken in my opinion: 11.0-0 ♖d8 12.c3 e6 13.♖e1 f6 14.♟h5+ ♟g6 15.♟f3 ♗d7 16.♟g3 . Advantage White. If I must play such nauseating positions from Black, then I insist on a pawn's bribe for my troubles! In this situation, Black labours without pay, G.Popilsky-E.Deutsch, Petach Tikva 2010.]

11.♟f3 ♗g6

[Sidestepping with 11...♗h3 is also possible: 12.♗e2 ♟e6 (12...f6 13.♟f4 ♗e6 – from e6, Black discourages queenside castling – 14.♟e3 , T.Kosintseva-Huang Qian, Sochi 2009, is once again unclear after ♟d7) 13.0-0-0 f6 14.♟g3 was J.Castiblanco-C.Lakdawala, Internet (blitz) 2012. The position looks sharply unbalanced after ♖d8 .]

[11...♗g5 is suggested by Michael Melts in his book 'Scandinavian Defense: The Dynamic 3...Qd6'. This interesting idea needs more testing.

QUESTION: What is the idea?

ANSWER: Black prevents d5, since now White's e5-bishop would hang, but on the down side, he gives White a useful, free tempo on his next move. After 12.h4 ♗f5 13.♗e2 ♟e6 14.♟e4 (14.♖g1 ♟d5 also looks okay for Black) 14...♗g4 15.f3 (15.♟f3 ♗f5 16.♟e4 is drawn by repetition if White chooses to do so) 15...♗h5 16.0-0-0 f6 17.♟f4 ♟d5 18.c4 ♟xe4

19.♖e4 g6 20.d5 ♖f5 21.♖xf5 gxf5
22.dxc6 bxc6 White gets some
compensation, but Black's extra pawn
should give him the slightly better chances,
G.Dulic-S.Jefic, Zupanja 2010.]

12.d5

[Next game we look at 12.♖e2 .]

[EXERCISE (combination alert): Principle:
Open the position when leading in
development. However, 12.d5 also allows
Black a startling defensive shot. How did
Tiviakov respond?]

ANSWER: **12...♗g4!** I cringe when the bored
postal worker helping me, casually flings my
package clearly marked 'Fragile' into a bin, 10
feet away. Tiv does just the same with his
bishop, with a luminous and startling
defensive shot, without which Black would
indeed be in serious trouble.

13.dxc6

[Black's clever point is revealed in the line
13.♗xg4?? ♖e4+ 14.♔d2 ♖xe5
when White is busted: for example, 15.dxc6
f5! 16.♗e2 0-0-0+ 17.♗d3 ♖f4+! 18.♔e1
e5! 19.cxb7+ ♗b8 with a winning attack.
Black's king looks as snug as can be,
whereas White's languishes in exactly the
opposite state.]

13...bxc6 14.♖e2 QUESTION: Why must
White squander a tempo rather than pin the
bishop on the g-file?

[ANSWER: Be careful to avoid lines in the
abstract. Always calculate the ramifications,
no matter how self-evident a line may
appear at first. It loses instantly: 14.♗g1??
♗xf3! and White can resign.]

14...♗xf3 15.♖xf3 ♗d8 Tiviakov cleverly
prevents castling for White on either side of
the board.

[Finkel suggests the rather outrageous, yet
quite possibly playable 15...♖xc2!? 16.0-0
♖g6+ 17.♔h1 ♗c8 adding: "It's not so clear
how White should continue his attack, but it
looks quite dangerous for Black."

QUESTION: Surely computer analysis will
destroy Black from this point?

ANSWER: Apparently not. Houdini says
even, while Fritz, in capitalistic frenzy,
awards Black an edge.]

16.♗d1 ♖e6 White courts a fickle woman,
who neither commits to "Yes" or "No" to his
pleas. Tiv is a cool customer. Massively
behind in development versus a fearsome
opponent, he retains his composure and
apparently is in no rush to take queens off the

board.

QUESTION: How can he take queens off?

[ANSWER: Like this: 16...♗xd1+ 17.♔xd1
♖e6! 18.♗e1 ♖d5+ . After this move,

White's dream of delivering checkmate falls
down and injures itself. The trouble is White
still leads massively in development and
regains his pawn with 19.♖xd5 cxd5
20.♗d4 a6 21.♗e3! e6 22.♗b3 ♗d6
23.♗b6 ♗xh2 24.♗xg7 ♗g8 25.♗c3
. Black's a-pawn is lost when it will be a
race between wing passers. Houdini
continues to evaluate at even.]

17.0-0 ♗xd1 The more pieces that come off
the board, the better for Black.

18.♗xd1 QUESTION: This is ridiculous. It
looks as if a complete beginner plays the
black pieces. How can Black be okay here?

ANSWER: Well, the complete beginner drew
with a world champion playing this way. Be
careful or I may erupt in another lengthy
lecture on the fact that the Scandinavian, as if
a visitor from a parallel universe, fails to
operate under normal laws of chess physics.
Just look at the diagram! It does indeed look
like Black should resign, as it appears he
desperately clings to life. Yet, Sage Houdini,
in its marvellous silicon wisdom, correctly
assesses it at even – in fact, at 0.00! Fritz
obstinately continues to contradict and
assesses with advantage to Black.

h5! There is his favourite ...h5 move again,
but this time it is very effective, in fact, dual
purpose:

1. Tiv gets Anand nervous about queen swaps
on g4.

2. Black prepares to engage his sleeping rook
via, of all places, h6!.

19.♖d3 The Rottweiler strains her tether to
the snapping point, salivating wickedly in the
direction of d8. When in doubt, nothing lifts
the spirits like the threat of a cheap, one
move mate. The threat which was once only
implied, is now openly expressed. White
continues to chase the attack, as a
schizophrenic would the chimera of false
reality, while jettisoning reality itself. Believe
it or not, there just is no attack here, despite
all the self-evidence pointing to the contrary.

♖c8! Black's queen is content to sway
dreamily within her king's embrace. Tiv takes
his previously wild spirit of adventure and
tames it into the practical. White, despite his
massive surfeit of development, finds nothing
to attack! What is more irritating to him is the

fact that Black's clear lack of contrition, coupled with imagined, mocking laughter for past misdeeds, ring hollow to White's burning ears. The Taoist sage Lao Tzu asked: "Do you have the patience to wait until your mind settles and the water is clear?" Black swims laps in a cryptic pulse between taking action and waiting. The difference between the queens' power is starkly manifest: One has nothing and wants nothing; the other has everything but is dissatisfied, desiring even more.

[QUESTION: Why not create a cubby hole on f7 by playing 19...f6 ?

ANSWER: A blunder! 20.♖g6+ ♜f7

21.♞d8+! picks off Black's queen.]

20.h4 Anand halts ideas of ...h4, followed by ...Rh5.

♞h6 21.♠h2 ♞g6 22.♙g3 ♞g4

[Also possible is 22...e6 23.♞f3 ♙e7

24.♞xh5 ♞h6 . Black doesn't stand worse here either.]

23.a3 Silence isn't much of a weapon if the other side ignores you as well. It becomes more and more clear that White has no easy path to progress. His attack is without substance, just a sweet, empty daydream. In fact, Black may even stand better at this point. **a6**

[Black can also speculate with the line 23...g6 24.b4 ♙g7 25.c3 (to halt ...Rd4) ♙f6 26.f3 ♞xh4+ 27.♙xh4 ♙xh4 with two pawns for the exchange and mutual chances.]

24.♞e1 c5 25.c3 ♞g6!?

[Tiv inexplicably agrees to a slightly inferior but very holdable ending by returning the pawn, but why not go for the win with 25...e6 instead?]

26.♞e5 e6 27.♞xh5 ♞h6 28.♞xh6 gxf6 29.♞f3 c4! Fixing White's queenside majority on dark, the same colour as his remaining bishop.

30.♙f4 ♞c5 31.♞a8+ White goes for it, but one senses, with the anaemic, blanched enthusiasm of uncertainty as well, when contrasted with his glowing prospects after the opening.

♙e7 32.♠g1 ♞f5! Covering f7. Black's queen, the star of this game, does her coquettish best to bewitch all around her with her charms.

QUESTION: Why not protect everything by placing the queen on b5?

[ANSWER: Finkel gives the line 32...♞b5?!

33.♙d6+ ♠xd6 34.♞xf8+ ♠d5 35.♞xh6 adding, "White might be able to promote his h-pawn!"]

33.♙g3

[If 33.♙d6+ and Black holds the ending after ♠xd6 34.♞xf8+ ♠d7 35.♞xh6 ♞b1+ 36.♠g2 ♞xb2 37.♞g7 ♞xa3 38.h5 ♠e8 39.h6 ♞f8 .]

33...♞b1+ 34.♠h2 ♞xb2 35.♞xa6

EXERCISE (critical decision): Can Black get away with 35...Qxc3? Examine both 36 Bd6+ and 36 Qd6+.

ANSWER: The c-pawn is taboo.

♠f6!

[Tiviakov avoids Anand's clever trap: 35...♞xc3?? loses to 36.♞d6+! (the queen points an accusing finger at Black's king; instead, 36.♙d6+? ♠f6 37.♙xf8 ♞e5+! is perpetual check) 36...♠e8 37.♞b8+ ♠e7 38.♙d6+ .]

36.♞xc4 ♞xa3 37.♞d4+ ♠e7 38.c4 ♠e8

39.♞b6 ♞c5 40.♞xc5 ♙xc5 A passed c-pawn just isn't enough for White to make anything of it and the game is duly drawn.

41.h5 ♙d4 42.♠g2 ♠d7 43.♙f4 ♙g7 44.♙e3 ♠d6 45.♠f1 e5 46.♠e2 f5 47.f3 ♠c6 48.♠d3 ♙f8 49.♙c1 ♙g7 50.♙a3 ♙f6

Summary: The Scandi, like no other opening, truly defies the laws of physical reality, as displayed by Black's staggering unconcern for development in this game. As in my game against Arutyunov from the last chapter, we once again see the hated amateur casually refuse to develop his pieces, and this time easily hold Morphy to a draw!

1/2-1/2

B01

□ **Caruana,F**

■ **Milanovic,D**

European Championship, Budva

2009

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♞xd5 3.♠c3 ♞d6 4.d4 ♠f6 5.♠f3 c6 6.♠e5 ♠bd7 7.♙f4 ♠d5 8.♠xd5

[Next game we look at 8.♙g3 .]

8...♞xd5 9.♙e2 To the ruthless, any means are justifiable to achieve the ends. Once again, White aims for the grand in scope and imagination, eager and willing to hand over a pawn to open lines and increase development lead. He relies on a philosophical artefact from Morphy's golden era: Material is

secondary. Sac and keep sac'ing until you mate or run out of ammunition!

♟xe5 10.♟xe5 ♖xg2 To take that which is not ours – the larceny gene! – has been ingrained into our DNA since our ancestral forefather and foremother creatures stepped out of the primordial muck from which they were formed, on to dry land. Have faith in Black's defensive resources. This abstruse line contains the power to confuse an overconfident opponent.

11.♟f3 ♖g6 12.♞e2

[An attempt to improve upon Anand's 12.d5 and avoid Tiviakov's clever ♟g4! trick, which we looked at last game.]

[QUESTION: What is White planning with 12.♞e2 ?

ANSWER: White's last move is multipurpose:

1. He prepares queenside castling.
2. He prevents ...f6?? due to his Bh5 pin trick.
3. Lastly, he avoids the Anand-Tiviakov continuation which allows Black a freeing bishop swap on g4.]

12...h5! Once again we see Tiviakov's beloved h-pawn push, except here Tiv isn't playing the black pieces.

QUESTION: What is the point of 12...h5?

ANSWER: Several points:

1. Black renews the ...Bg4 swap idea.
2. Black can now play ...f6, since White no longer has access to his Bh5 pin cheapo.
3. Black gives his queen room on h7 in case of a future eviction from the g-file with Rhg1: [12...♞e6?! has also been tried, hoping to prevent queenside castling, but the move looks dubious due to White's next move, which short circuits the plan: 13.d5! cxd5 14.0-0-0! f6 15.♟xd5 ♞xe5 16.♞c4 e6 17.♞he1 . The strength of White's attack compels Black to give up his queen, J. Degraeve-I.Smirnov, Cappelle la Grande 2009.]

13.0-0-0 A theoretical novelty at the time.

[After 13.h3 ♞h6 (preventing queenside castling; 13...f6 14.♟f4 is mentioned by Melts, and Black's position looks okay here) 14.d5 ♟d7 15.♞g1 ♞c8 16.d6 ♟e6! 17.dxe7 ♟xe7 18.♟xg7 ♞g8! 19.♞e5 ♟f6! 20.♟xh6 ♞xg1+ 21.♟e2 ♟xe5 22.♞xg1 ♟xh3 23.♟xh5 Black equalized, M. Roganovic-S.Saric, Valjevo 2011.]

[QUESTION: Isn't 13.d5 more thematic?

ANSWER: Black is well prepared for this

move: for example, ♟g4! 14.dxc6 ♟xf3 15.♞xf3 ♞xc6 16.♞xc6+ bxc6 when White finds himself a pawn down, with little to show for it.]

13...♟g4 Ah, relief! Black's point of ...h5. He achieves a precious swap.

14.h3 ♟xf3 15.♞xf3 ♞e6

[15...e6 16.♞hg1 doesn't look as good, J. Maurer-R.Schnelzer, German League 2012. White looks a shade better after ♞f5 17.♞xf5 exf5 18.♟xg7 ♟xg7 19.♞xg7 , although even here, Black may well have enough to easily hold a draw after ♟e7 .]

With the text, Black's queen, knowing when she isn't wanted or loved, removes herself off the g-file, seeing the coming Rhg1.

QUESTION: I know I sound like a broken record, but do we actually some day get to develop a piece or two besides the queen in the Scandinavian?

ANSWER: By now you should realize we Scandi denizens are above the law. The key factors to why this position is equal rather than crushing for White are:

1. White, despite his massive development lead, has trouble opening the position.
2. White has trouble nailing down a concrete target from Black's side. White's fearsome pieces lack anything to focus on to vent their pent up aggression. We witness this bewildering Scandi phenomenon again and again in multiple games, just from this book. The positions simply look lost for Black, when in reality the assessment may be closer to even. This often leads overconfident opponents to plunge off the cliff, chasing an attack which just may not be there, as we see White do in this game.
3. Let's not forget: White is still down a pawn and also has an inferior pawn structure. All Black has to do is to survive the next dozen or so moves and he may stand clearly better.
4. The existence of numbers 1, 2 and 3 mean that all swaps are poison for White and desirable for Black. So this means Black may in essence bully White with the threat of trade, as he does later in this game.

16.♟b1 f6

[Watson suggests 16...♞d5!? 17.♞d3 0-0-0 and adds: "Maybe White is a little short of full compensation, but he certainly has free play." I add: But worth a full pawn? Not likely.]

17.♟h2 ♞d5

[Black probably wanted to avoid 17...0-0-0

18.♖a3 when White forces dark-square weakness after a6 .]

18.♖d3 EXERCISE (planning/critical decision): White plans to open the position with c4 and d5. Can we get away with the line 18...e6 19 Qg6+?

ANSWER: We certainly can!

e6! Great judgement. Black calmly begins to develop, allowing White's fearsome queen into his position. But he has seen deeply that it goes nowhere.

19.♖g6+ ♕e7 QUESTION: I sincerely hope you aren't going to claim that Black is okay here?

ANSWER: I do, indeed. Appearances suggest that Black tries to commit suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning by running his car in the garage. However, he fails in the attempt since he owns an electric car! Houdini's

assessment: 0.09 – essentially dead even! I actually prefer Black's side. White's queen is only there for a visit, to be evicted shortly by ...Rh6!.

20.♖he1

[QUESTION: Well, if White foresees the coming ...Rh6, then why not halt it simply with 20.♕f4 ?

ANSWER: Not so simple. Black begins to disrupt with ♖f5! 21.♖g3 . White's queen, angered by the rebuff from her sister, narrows her eyes fractionally as she backs away. After ♕f7 22.h4 ♖d8 23.♕b8 ♖d7 if White regains his material, he does so at the cost of initiative and structure after 24.♕xa7 ♕d6 when his once fearsome initiative disappears and his structural weaknesses remain. Black stands better.]

20...♖d8?!

[Black should have seized his chance to eject the annoying queen with 20...♖h6! 21.♖g3 ♖d8 22.c4! ♖f5+! (22...♖xc4?? 23.♖c7+ ♕e8 24.d5! wins) 23.♕a1 ♖d7 24.♖b8 ♕f7 25.♖c8 e5! 26.♖c1 ♕g8! . Surprisingly, White has no method of exploiting either pin. Now if White plays to open with 27.dxe5 fxe5 28.♕xe5 ♖f7! Black stands slightly better due to his superior structure.]

21.♕a1?!

[Timing is everything. Here, Caruana should have seized upon the chance to play 21.♕f4! to prevent ...Rh6.]

21...♖h6! Now Black's hiding king breathes a bit easier when he hears the diminishing sound of the white queen's receding footsteps.

22.♖d3 ♕f7 At last. Having lived so long in cramped quarters, the king's muscles feel somewhat atrophied from lack of use. Black completes the unravelling process, hanging on to his extra pawn and superior structure in the process.

23.c4 ♖f5 24.♖e3 No thanks. Of course, White must avoid an ending at all costs, so White's queen backs off and bides her time, dreaming of a vengeful future.

♖d7 25.a3 ♕e7

[25...♖g6! was better, to activate his dormant rook.]

26.♖d3 ♖h8?!

[Black stands better in the ending after 26...e5! 27.♖e2 e4! 28.♖xe4 ♖xe4 29.♖xe4 ♖h8 .]

27.♖e2 ♖hd8

[Now 27...e5 is met with 28.♖f3 .]

28.♖f3 ♖h7?! The daydreaming queen hums a tuneless cadence, while her king fights for his life, thinking: "Where is she when I need her?" This is essentially the loss of a critical tempo. Black needs his queen for defence and should keep her as close as possible to the king.

[Better is 28...♖g6! 29.♖xe6+ ♕f8 which is about equal, since 30.♖fe3?! ♖f7 forces queens off the board, which can only be helpful for Black.]

29.♖xe6+ The queen skips to e6 in giddy anticipation. I get the feeling that Caruana misassessed here, thinking he was winning, when the position remained closer to even.

♕f8 30.♖fe3 ♖g6 31.d5? With this overoptimistic lashing out, White strikes a discordant chord. In the words of Eliza Doolittle (and all Scandinavian players, who dream of the overextended opponent): "Wouldn't it be lovely?" A typical overextension blunder for White in the Scandinavian. The air congeals with menace. All of Caruana's instincts whisper in his ear to go for the kill, when in reality, there is no kill there. White's attacking attempts come and go in spasmodic gusts, rather than a flowing stream. His last move looks no doubt like simple frustration in a position where he fails to exercise patience.

[The position remains roughly balanced after the correct 31.♕b8! a6 32.♕a7! .]

31...cxd5 32.cxd5 ♖f7! The f7-square proves to be the perfect vantage point to get a bead on her target on d5. Of course. White's d-pawn is soon to be buried six-feet under.

[Black can also play 32...♙c5! , and if 33.♙c3?? ♜e7 .]

33.♙e4 The d-pawn won't last.

♙c5 34.♞3e2 ♞xd5 Black is up a solid pawn, with superior structure and White has absolutely nothing to show for it.

35.♙c2 b6 36.♙f4

[36.♙h7?? walks into back rank trouble after ♜d1+ .]

36...♞d3! Deadly centralization. The river's rise encroaches upon the rapidly receding shoreline, threatening to engulf White's enclave in a watery grave: ...Qd5 is next. In painful steps, White's game degenerates from order to an unruly, anarchic dystopian society, and finally to dissolution. With his last move, Black leaches away all traces of White's remaining power and authority.

37.♞d2?

[Eliminating Black's dominant bishop with 37.♙e3 was his last slim hope.]

37...♙d5 38.♞ed1

[38.♞xd3 ♙xd3 39.♙xd3 ♞xd3 is a completely hopeless ending.]

38...♞xd2 39.♙xd2

[Voluntarily entering a death pin, but after 39.♞xd2 ♙h1+ 40.♙a2 ♞xd2 41.♙xd2 ♙xh3 42.♙d8+ ♙f7 43.♙c7+ ♙g6

White has no chance against Black's passed h-pawn.]

39...♙d3 40.♙a4 a5 41.h4 EXERCISE

(planning): We are in the mopping up stage, exactly the area where many of us (your writer included) tend to make a mess of it. What is Black's best path to consolidation? ANSWER: Eliminate all White's cheapos by placing your king on a light square.

♙g8!

[I sincerely hope you weren't tempted into 41...♙xf2?? 42.♙b4+ which would be a nightmarish way for Black to lose.]

42.♙a2 ♙xf2 Summary: 12 Qe2, an attempt to improve upon Anand's play from last game, should be met with our now familiar h-pawn push, 12...h5!.

0-1

□ **Mastrovasilis,D**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

European Championship, Budva

2009

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♙xd5 3.♙c3 ♙d6 4.d4 ♙f6 5.♙f3 c6 6.♙e5 ♙bd7 7.♙f4 ♙d5

8.♙g3 Another very dangerous white continuation.

QUESTION: Why would White deliberately allow structural damage with ...Nxc3 next?

ANSWER: He swaps structural integrity for increased dynamism. After 8...Nxc3 9 bxc3, White gets the following:

1. A strengthened d4-point.

2. An open b-file, which means Black's queenside castling options are virtually eradicated.

3. By refusing to swap on d5, Black's queen remains under the gaze of that nasty g3-bishop, now secure. Suddenly White threatens knight discoveries on Black's queen. **♙xc3** Otherwise Black receives no benefits from White's decision.

9.bxc3 ♙xe5 Eliminating the problem of discoveries and also reducing material, our eternally soothing balm in the Scandinavian.

10.♙xe5 ♙a3 QUESTION: Oh, no! Are we off on another harrowing pawn-grabbing adventure?

ANSWER: "Same as it ever was." This is Black's most principled move, in that we flaunt principle once again and dare White to do his worst! Black's queen raids the queenside and forces the win of a pawn at the cost of allowing White a huge development lead.

QUESTION: Is there a safer alternative?

[ANSWER: "Safer" isn't a word normally associated with the Scandinavian! There is an alternative but it is hardly safer. Black can try 10...♙g6 intending to tie down White's bishop to g2. Of course, White won't comply and we will reach positions similar to the g-pawn grabs we have already examined in the chapter: for example, 11.♞b1 f6 12.♙g3 was E.L'Ami-G. Grotenhuis, Hilversum 2006. Now Black can try the untested ♙e4+ 13.♙e2

(Black should be fine if White suddenly loses his courage and plays the cowardly 13.♙e2 allowing a queen swap, but this is highly unlikely: anyone willing to play this line with White is also willing to sac)

13...♖xg2 (what are we to do? we can't help ourselves – we were just born with the criminal gene) 14.♙f3 ♖h3 15.♗e2 with play similar to the Anand-Tiviakov game. However, I would avoid this version. I don't like that white rook staring at us down the open b-file and somehow this feels like a superior version of what Anand got.]

11.♗d2! QUESTION: Isn't f3 a more aggressive square for White's queen?

[ANSWER: 11.♗f3?! isn't as accurate. Following ♙g4! (exploiting the fact that White's queen is glued to her defence of c3) 12.♗e3 ♖b2 13.♖c1 ♗xa2 14.c4 (after 14.♙d3 f6 15.♙g3 ♗e6! 16.♙e4 f5 17.♙d3 ♗xe3+ 18.fxe3 I'm sceptical of White's alleged compensation for the pawn, since queens have come off the board) 14...f6 15.♙g3 e5! both ...Bb4+ and ...Ba3 are in the air. Now: 16.-- (a) 16.dxe5?? ♙b4+! 17.c3 ♙a3 18.exf6+ ♔f7 and White can resign.; b) 16.♙d3! ♙a3 17.0-0! ♙xc1 18.♖xc1 ♙e6 19.dxe5 f5 offers White some compensation for the material, but I would take my chances with Black if given a choice.; 16.f3?! ♙f5 17.♙xe5?? ♗a5+! 18.♔f2 fxe5 and White can resign her attacking misadventure, A. Skripchenko-C.Marcelin, Asnieres sur Seine 2006.)]

11...♗b2 A hand pokes out from the doorway and motions the intruder to enter.

QUESTION: Must we?

ANSWER: Tiv goes pawn grabbing with larceny in his heart. If we are going to live the life of a criminal, then let us be principled, honourable criminals! White simply stands better without an iota of risk to himself if we don't go pawn hunting. We must commit ourselves and take it.

12.♖d1 ♗xa2 13.♙d3

White's compensation:

1. A massive development lead.
2. The open e-file.
3. Open queenside files, which virtually eliminate all black long castling options. But always remember our trump: White has nothing yet to attack. Our position is a bit like an introverted Fort Knox French Defence. Houdini again assesses at near even.

f6! 14.♙f4 ♗e6+! This clever interpolation forces one of White's bishops back to a more passive post.

15.♙e2 ♗f7 16.0-0 e6 QUESTION: Doesn't this give White a target on e6?

ANSWER: True enough, but in many cases, as in the last game, Black is willing to return the e6-pawn to swap pieces and complete his development. In the end he still retains the superior structure.

17.c4 e5!? A creature like a Moray eel may look perfectly normal in its own habitat, but remove it from the ocean's floor and place the same eel in a pond in the park, and then it truly transforms into a thing created out of our nightmares. Not every crisis (and we are in crisis mode immediately after 1 e4 d5!) requires a vigorous solution. Sometimes by patience alone, the menace dwindles and passes of its own accord. This looks like a rare case of a questionable Scandi-decision by Tiviakov, normally a master of accuracy, timing and nuance in Scandinavians, who gets a bit carried away with a misguided freeing idea and opens the game for White's pieces. His move, although perhaps not technically a mistake, certainly forces him to play with great accuracy just to hold the balance.

[Black looks perfectly fine if he plays in typical Scandi/Hedgehog fashion. He should nurse his weak e6-pawn as if it were a mortally ill saint: 17...♙e7 18.d5 e5 19.d6 ♙d8! 20.♙e3 ♙e6 and castle to safety on the kingside. All red-blooded Scandinavian players would prefer Black in such a position.

The comps assess at even.]

18.dxe5 Threatening mate on the move.

♙e7 19.exf6 ♗xf6 20.c5! 0-0 21.♙c4+ ♙e6 22.♙xe6+ ♗xe6 23.♙d6 ♖f7?!

After this move, Tiv falls under pressure.

[Black holds the balance with 23...♗f7! 24.♗b4 a5! 25.♗xb7 ♙xd6 26.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 27.♖xd6 a4! when his surging a-pawn allows him to hold the game.]

24.♖fe1 ♗f6 25.♖e4! ♖d8 26.g3 ♗g6

27.♗e2 ♙xd6? There is no reason to bow to this concession.

[Why not 27...♙f8 when Black remains only slightly worse?]

28.cxd6 ♖xd6 29.♖e8+ ♖f8 30.♗c4+! ♖d5 31.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 32.♖xd5 cxd5 33.♗c5+! ♔f7 34.♗xd5+ ♔e8 35.♗xb7 ♗xc2 36.♗b8+ ♔f7 37.♗xa7+ QUESTION:

Shouldn't this ending be drawn?

ANSWER: I think you are correct. One pawn up on the same side in a queen ending shouldn't be enough. Of course, White can play on to torture for an eternity, just as Mastrovasilis did. Tiviakov is normally a phenomenal endgame player, who plays that

stage of the game above his rating, but not in this game. We conclude: Tiv just had a bad day.

♙f8 38.♖a8+ ♙f7 39.♗d5+ ♙f8 40.♙g2 h6 41.g4 ♖b2 42.h3 g5! Principle: All pawn trades favour the defending side. Tiv ensures a trade with his last move, but it wasn't without cost: Black allows White easy access to a passed pawn.

43.h4! gxf4 44.♗d8+ ♙g7 45.♖xh4

Now White owns a passed f-pawn.

♗e2 46.♗g3 ♗e4+ 47.♗f3 ♗d4 48.♗f5 ♗c3 49.♗d7+ ♙f6 50.♗h7 ♗c6+ 51.♙g3 ♗c1 52.♗f5+ ♙g7 53.♗d7+ ♙g6 54.♗d6+ ♙g7 55.♗e5+ ♙g6 56.♗e4+ ♙g7 57.♗e3 ♗c6 58.f3 ♗d6+ 59.f4 ♗d8 60.♗e5+ ♙f7 61.♗f5+ ♙g7 62.♗e5+ ♙f7 63.♗e4 ♙g7 64.♙h3 ♗d2 65.♗e5+ ♙f7 66.♗c7+ ♙f6 67.♗c6+ ♙g7 68.♗f3 ♗d4 69.♖b7+ ♙f6 70.♗c6+ ♙g7 71.♗f3 ♙f7 72.f5 At last, White gets on with it.

♗f6 73.♗d5+ ♙g7 74.♗d7+ ♙f8 75.♗e6 ♗g5 76.f6!? White, frustrated by the lack of progress, splits his passer from its base on g4. Black should draw this game.

♗g6

[76...♗c5! should draw as well, creating a fifth rank barrier: 77.♙h4 ♗h5+! with the stalemate cheapo. White can't make progress after 78.♙g3 ♗c5 . I played Black against Houdini at this point and held the draw.]

77.♙h4

[This allows Black to transpose to the drawing line, but if 77.♗e7+ ♙g8 78.♙h4 ♗g5+ 79.♙g3 ♗g6 .]

77...♗g5+

[I prefer the flashier 77...♗h5+! if only for show. Black's churlish queen, always dissatisfied with her lowly social position, strives to move up in society, mainly by making trouble for those above her.]

78.♙g3 ♗c5! 79.♙h4 ♗g5+ 80.♙h3 ♗g6 81.♗e7+ ♙g8 82.♙h4 ♗g5+ 83.♙g3 ♗g6 84.♗e6+ ♙f8 85.♙f4 ♗g5+ 86.♙e4 ♗c5!

Tiv defends with comp-like precision. After the quarrel, the competing sisters remain with hurt feelings and overlapping mutual apologies. They busy themselves in protracted, baroque evolutions, reminding one of the Pink Floyd song: "We will zigzag our way through the boredom and pain, occasionally glancing up through the rain. Wondering which of the buggers to blame."

87.♗d5 EXERCISE (critical decision): To

paraphrase Hamlet: To trade or not to trade? That is the question. Is the king and pawn ending drawn?

♗xd5+?? Not this way.

[ANSWER: 87...♗c7 88.♙f5 ♗h7+ 89.♙e5 ♗a7! is drawn.]

After this error, Black's Bolshevik dream of absolute equality for all in society goes up in a haze of acrid smoke. The king and pawn ending is dead lost for Black. Tiv, probably fatigued from his long defence, decided upon a suicidal decision. For Mastro, the miracle occurred. His hopeless prayers for victory were suddenly granted in profusion by a powerful, hidden benefactor. Thus far White only struck his opponent with the flat of his sword as a warning. Now he deems it necessary to give him a taste of the sword's edge.

88.♙xd5 This marks the beginning of an evil alliance between White's king and his two thug underlings. They form a dark cabal, sworn to overthrow Black's king.

♙f7 Having lost his beloved companion queen, Black's king pounds fists to forehead, as if to beat back the dreadful images forming in his fevered brain. Black returns to the bargaining table, but this time with greatly diminished leverage.

89.♙e5 ♙f8 90.♙e6 ♙e8 91.f7+ ♙f8

The king lies down for a final time on f8, his eternal, sepulchral resting place.

92.♙f6 Almost stalemate, but not quite! Black's sick king relinquishes all authority to his evil brother on f6.

h5 EXERCISE (combination alert): This one is easy. White to play and mate in three moves.

ANSWER: 93.g5 Of course.

[I hope nobody opted for 93.gxf5?? and stalemate!]

93...h4 94.g6 Black's king looks for mercy, only to be met by his ruthless brother's averted eyes and cruel silence. When we are lowered into the grave, the time for redemption has passed. In the end, ultimate destiny reposes with the king and the king alone. If he falls, so does his kingdom with him.

Summary: After 8 Bg3, I think we should grab White's a-pawn as Tiviakov did in this game. His position looks fine if he plays ...Be7, rather than 17...e5!? as played in the game. Also, regard 'freeing' pawn breaks with deep suspicion in situations where our side remains

way behind in development.

1-0

□ **Stojanovic,D**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

European Championship, Budva

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2009

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♟c3 ♗d6 4.d4
♟f6 5.♟f3 c6 6.♟e5 ♟bd7 7.♟f4 ♟d5
8.♟xd5 ♖xd5 9.♗d3 QUESTION: Why does
White bring out his queen this way?

ANSWER: Sometimes by refusing to answer a
question, you inadvertently answer it. He
seeks to dodge mainline theory while
preventing ...Qe4+ and also ...Bf5. But his
artificial move fails to develop, and may walk
into a future ...Bf5, the very move he hopes to
prevent.

g5! QUESTION: What is going on? This
lashing out looks very un-Scandinavian to me.
ANSWER: Black breaches tradition to
meander off on a strange byway. Sometimes
common sense must be overruled in order to
embrace chaos. In this case I believe Black's
excellent move is a case of superb opening
preparation greeting opportunity. Better to
characterize it as forceful, rather than a
lashing out.

[His forceful amendment looks justified over
the rote 9...♟xe5 which also looks good
enough for equality as well: 10.dxe5
(10.♟xe5 f6 11.♟g3 ♟f5 also gives White
less than nothing) 10...♗a5+ 11.c3 g6!
(...Bf5, developing with tempo, is in the air)
12.♗e3 ♟e6 13.♟e2 ♟g7 14.a4 0-0 15.b4
♗d5 16.0-0 ♖fd8 and White didn't have
anything, D.Howell-S.Tiviakov, Ottawa
2007.]

10.♟g3 QUESTION: Can White just take on
g5?

[ANSWER: The move has never been tried.
After 10.♟xg5 ♟xe5 11.dxe5 ♗xe5+
12.♟e3 ♟f5 13.♗d4 ♖xd4 14.♟xd4 ♖g8
I prefer Black due to his greater central
influence and development lead.]

10...♟g7 11.♗e3 ♟xe5 The knights slap
each other on the back with easy cordiality.

12.dxe5

[12.♟xe5 ♗a5+ 13.c3 ♟xe5 14.dxe5 ♟e6!
, and if 15.♗xg5!? 0-0-0 when Black's
massive development lead and open lines
offer him more than enough compensation

for the pawn.]

12...♟f5 White's problem is he can't castle on
either wing.

13.c3 Maybe the position is equal, but
somehow I just don't like White's game. He
fell behind in development and it is in
question whether his advanced e-pawn
constitutes a virtue or vice.

h5!?

[Black can also consider 13...0-0-0 14.♗xg5
♟h3! 15.f3 h5 16.♗e3 ♟h6 17.♟f4 ♟xf4
18.♖xf4 ♟e6 with terrific compensation for
the pawn.]

14.h4

[Here g5 can't be touched, since 14.♗xg5??
♟h6! is a game-ender.]

14...g4 15.f3?!

[Aggressive defence may be required here.
White, enjoying superior development,
should be gladly disposed to engagement of
any kind: 15.♖d1! ♖xa2 16.♟d3 ♟h6
17.♗e2 ♟e6 18.0-0 when he earns some
compensation for his missing pawn and
roughly a dynamic balance.

QUESTION: What compensation? I just see
White down a pawn for nothing.

ANSWER: Threefold:

1. White has a development lead.
2. White may open the game further with f3
or f4 (intending f5), and if Black takes en
passant, the f-file opens.
3. Black's king will be insecure on both
kingside and queenside.]

15...gxf3 16.gxf3 f6

[White finds himself on the defensive and
scrambling to cover multiple pawn
weaknesses after 16...♟h6! 17.♟f4 ♟xf4
18.♖xf4 ♟e6 19.♖h2 0-0-0 .]

17.b3?! Too slow.

[White improves defensive chances with
17.exf6 ♟xf6 18.♟e2 .]

17...♟h6! 18.♟f4 ♟xf4 19.♖xf4 ♗xe5+

20.♗xe5 fxe5 QUESTION: Shouldn't White
easily hold this position? Black's doubled
isolani on e5 isn't looking so impressive.

ANSWER: It may not look so impressive, but
an important point to remember is, it is extra!
And White can only claim equality if and when
he manages to regain it.

21.♖g1 ♟f7 22.♖d1 ♟f6 23.♟e2

[I think White should strive for a rook ending,
traditionally the one with high drawing
chances for a defender, so perhaps 23.♟d3
is worth a thought.]

23...a5 24.♟f2 a4! 25.b4 a3! Fixing a target

on a2.

26.♙c4 b5 27.♙d3 ♙e6 28.♙e4 EXERCISE (critical decision): Black would like to increase his advantage into something more substantial. Should he gamble with 28...Bxa2 29 Rg6+ Kf7 30 Rxc6? Or should he play it safe with 28...Rac8?

♙ac8?! ANSWER: A missed opportunity.

[Black should gamble with 28...♙xa2!

29.♙g6+ ♔f7 30.♙xc6 ♙e6 31.♙c5 ♙ad8 32.♙a1 a2 when his deeply entrenched a-pawn is a cause of grave concern for White.]

29.♙g6+ ♔f7 30.♙g5 ♙hd8 31.♙dg1 ♙d2+

32.♙e3 ♙xa2 The a3-pawn, an unremoved tumour, grows in size and also danger each day left unchecked.

33.♙g7+?!

[33.♙g6+! ♔f6 34.♙xh5 forces Black to bail out with ♙g8 35.♙xg8 ♙xg8 36.♙xg8 ♙a1 37.♙g6+! ♔f5 38.♙g5+ with perpetual check.]

33...♙e8 34.♙7g6? Crossing the line from defiant to incoherent.

[34.♙g6+ ♔f8 35.♙h7 had to be tried.]

34...♙c4! With a mate threat on e2.

35.f4 exf4+ 36.♙xf4 ♙f2+ 37.♙e5 ♙e2

38.♙f4 ♙f2+

[Why all these labyrinthine checks when the simple 38...♙d5! wins?]

39.♙e5 ♙d2?? Playing the rook to e2 prevents White's coming combination and is an easy win for Black. On d2, the rook chases an abstraction, an illusion, quite divorced from the realities of the position. How delicate the distinction between joyful success and abject fiasco! And why is it that our woes on the board are so easy to create and so difficult to resolve?

EXERCISE (combination alert): White resigned here (or did he flag?), possibly believing resistance hopeless due to Black's a-pawn. But his resignation was hasty. Black's last move was a blunder (as was White's decision to resign!), which allowed a combination. In truth, the position remains unclear, but only if White unearths a combination. White has been afforded a single, miracle opportunity to save the game. What did both players miss?

[ANSWER: The position after 39...♙d2?? is one of those Matrix fight scenes where Neo moves with hallucinatory slowness, and yet his opponents react much slower, catatonic, almost frozen, when juxtaposed

with Neo's speed. Now, a former intangible suddenly appears quite tangible! After 40.♙g8+! (if not for this indispensable resource, White would indeed be busted) ♙xg8 41.♙xg8+ ♔d7 42.♙f5+ the bishop points a stabbing, accusing forefinger in the direction of d7 and c8.

The mean-spirited bishop and rook work feverishly to weave their complicitous plot against Black's king and rook. Oops! This leaves White up a piece and it is anyone's game, despite the deadly a-pawn: ♔c7 (Black's king, having been shriven and absolved by the stern but fair f5-bishop, goes off by himself to perform penance for past sins) 43.♙xc8+ ♔b7 44.♙g8 ♙d1 45.♙g2 ♙c1 46.♔d4 ♙d1+ 47.♙d3 e5+ 48.♔e4 ♙e1+ 49.♔f5 ♙e3 50.♙e4 ♙xc3 51.♔xe5 ♔b6 with a total mess, which Houdini claims is dead even.

Summary: 9 Qd3 lacks punch and shouldn't give Black any trouble. I would try Tiviakov's ambitious response, 9...g5!.]

0-1

□ **Baker,B**
■ **Lakdawala,C**
San Diego (rapid)
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2012

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♙xd5 3.♔c3 ♙d6 4.d4 ♔f6 5.♔f3 c6 6.♔e5 ♔bd7 7.♙f4 ♔d5 8.♔xd5 ♙xd5 9.♙c4!? What the hay!?

I didn't realize his move was playable! The bishop tacks, weaves and sails on gusts of optimism, severing the connection between black's queen and f7, but at a high price.

QUESTION: Is this move sound?

ANSWER: Just barely, if at all. The bishop inhales valour, while exhaling contradiction. I can't help but think the move works against White's self-interest, a bit like if McDonalds, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken and other fast food purveyors of clogged arteries waged an advertising campaign featuring happy heart attack victims and morbidly obese actors. White's last move is a new idea in the position and has all the hallmarks of a prepared line, designed to confuse your easily confused writer. But in the end, I feel White struggles for equality.

QUESTION: If this is true, then why not give your opponent a '?!' mark after his move?

ANSWER: The move may be dubious under Houdini's glaring light, but remember, his move is also a theoretical novelty, which compels Black to find the correct path over the board, which is not so easy, especially in a G/40. So his move certainly contains the seed of practical chances.

♖e4+ 10.♖e2 The only move.

♖xf4 The principled move, played with the philosophy: "I'm frequently in error, but never in doubt!" Once again, we take an unrepentant bite from forbidden fruit, and once again we play a dangerous game of patently ignoring the position's flashing imperative: Develop your pieces.

QUESTION: Can't you just avoid the complications and swap queens, with an approximately equal ending?

[ANSWER: Possibly, but why? The complications after grabbing the f4-bishop are slightly in our favour. Also, I have grave doubts about the alleged equality of the ending after 10...♖xe2+?! 11.♔xe2 ♕xe5 12.♕xe5 ♕f5 13.d5! with a scary looking development lead. I think Black struggles here and really has no choice but to enter the complications.]

11.♕xf7 Close proximity to an unpredictable force tends to bring on bouts of nervous tension for those caught in the periphery.

♕b6

[Houdini prefers to keep the material with 11...♖g8 and offers the line 12.g3 ♖f6 13.0-0-0 ♕b6 14.♕d6+ ♔d7! 15.♕xb7 e6 16.♕c5+ ♕xc5 17.dxc5+ ♕d5 . White clearly gets compensation for the piece, but full compensation? I doubt it.]

12.♕b3! The complex framework begins to outline and take shape.

QUESTION: What is wrong with taking the rook immediately? White is up material.

[ANSWER: From White's perspective, initiative is the beginning, the middle and the end of his desires. His position sours quickly after 12.♕xh8?! ♕xc4 13.♖xc4 ♖e4+ 14.♔f1 ♕e6 15.♖c3 ♕d5 16.f3 ♖f4 . The cornered knight is a goner and when Black picks it up, he will have the bishop-pair and initiative for White's not-so-hot rook and two pawns.]

12...♖g8 13.g3 ♖f6 We must cover against Nd6+.

[Certainly not 13...♖f5?? 14.♕d6+ .]

14.♕d6+ ♖xd6 15.♕xg8 I wish I got the license plate of the bishop who just recently

ran over my rook! The tension increases. White does his curmudgeonly best to defy Black at every turn.

♕f5 QUESTION: Can we grab his d-pawn?

[ANSWER: Congratulations! At long last, you wholeheartedly embrace our Scandi/greed philosophy! Houdini likes your suggestion, but I didn't trust it, since the move opens lines for White. However, Houdini proves you right: 15...♖xd4! (all hail shameless, unapologetic greed!) 16.c3 ♖f6 17.0-0-0 (17.♕xh7? g6 18.♕g8 ♕h3 , and if 19.0-0-0? ♕h6+ 20.♔b1 ♖f5+ 21.♔a1 ♕g4 wins) 17...♕d7 followed by queenside castling, when Black stands clearly better.]

16.0-0-0 0-0-0 17.♖he1 ♕d5 18.♖f3?!

The beginning of an incorrect plan.

[White looks only a shade worse after 18.♕e6+! ♕xe6 19.♖xe6+ ♖xe6 20.♖xe6 .]

18...♖g6?! Letting him off the hook. Black should exercise patience. Resources must be accumulated before a counterblow can be organized.

[18...g6! threatens ...Bh6+ followed by ...Rxc8. This forces White's next move: 19.♕xd5 cxd5 when White is busted.]

19.c4? This weakening move gets him into big trouble.

[White should continue with his opaque, clandestine activities, designed to stir up turmoil in the enemy camp: 19.♖xf5+! ♖xf5 20.♕e6+ ♖xe6 21.♖xe6 transposes to the above note, where White may be on the slightly worse end of okay.]

19...♕b4?! The knight yaws about ponderously to face his accuser.

[19...♕c7! covers the e6-square when White is busted, since Black threatens ...Bg4 and also ...e6, after which White's wandering bishop is desperately low on squares.]

20.♖xf5+! Resourceful defence and his only move. I must confess I completely missed this shot. Luckily for me, Black remains better.

♖xf5 21.♕e6+ I may have caged this bishop, but failed to tame him!

♖xe6 22.♖xe6 ♕xa2+ 23.♔c2 ♕b4+ 24.♔c3 ♕a6 25.♖d3 ♕c7 26.♖e4 g6!

Developing the slumbering bishop and also targeting White's weakest point: d4.

27.♖f3 EXERCISE (planning): Black's trouble is 27...Bg7?! is met with 28 Rxe7, with serious counterplay on his seventh rank. The alien

geometry presents us with a topological challenge of the highest degree. How can Black unravel?

ANSWER: Recruit the king's help. Black's defenders outnumber his strategic woes.

♟d7! 28.♟f7 EXERCISE (combination alert): White's natural last move was a mistake in an already sour position. Black has a tricky method of covering all his weak pawns and picking off d4. How can he accomplish this task?

ANSWER: The fork threat on g5 sends White's forces into spinning disarray.

♟e6! If this knight ever manages to reach his wished-for destination on d4, it spells disaster of inconceivable proportions for White.

29.h4 ♟g7! A move enshrining Black's unravelling idea. To paraphrase Ben Franklin, everyone in Black's camp remains healthy, wealthy and wise. Threat: ...Ke8, followed by ...Nxd4.

30.♟b4

[QUESTION: Isn't your last move a blunder? White has 30.♟xe6 with a draw.

ANSWER: Incorrect. Black wins with the zwischenzug **♟xd4+!**, the hidden point of Black's combination, winning on the spot.

The only thing bishop and knight have in common is their uncanny deviousness.]

30...♟e8 Expelling the boarding party.

31.♟f3 ♟xd4 The dark-square contagion finally metastasizes into a vital organ, after which hope of survival dies.

Summary: The novelty 9 Bc4 is actually a questionable move, if we know the analysis of how to deal with it.

0-1

Chapter Four

Shirov's Variation: 7 f4

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 c6 6 Ne5 Nbd7 7 f4



Be afraid. Be very afraid. In this chapter we catch a terrifying glimpse of damnation, scary enough to make good little boys and girls of us all - but only if we are unprepared. However, we haven't entered a universe without joy or hope. It may not look like it, but our position seethes and pulses with concentrated counterattack energy, the floodgates as yet unleashed. When we know our stuff, we welcome White's challenge with a cocky grin.

White usually follows in mad dog fashion with g4 and even g5 next, but in doing so, he also faces the spectre of overextension. The e5 point is White's holy grail, yet after fulfilling his desire, I'm not so convinced about just how holy the square really is. Black simply works around it, allows White's forces to soak in the marinade for a while, and then counterattacks, transforming a once tough piece of meat into a tender cut.

[Shirov-Nisipeanu](#)

[Brkic-Saric](#)

[Shirov-Tiviakov \(Hoogeveen, 2010\)](#)

[Yunguo Wan-Tiviakov](#)

[Lorenzo de la Riva-Caspi](#)

[Shirov-Tiviakov \(Benidorm, 2008\)](#)

[Barrientos Chavarriaga-Tiviakov](#)

Index

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 c6 6 Ne5 Nbd7 7 f4 Nb6 8 g4 Nbd5

8...g6 9 g5

9...Nfd5 – [Shirov-Nisipeanu](#)

9...Nh5 – [Brkic-Saric](#)

8...Be6 9 Bg2 g6 10 0-0

10...Bg7 – [Shirov-Tiviakov \(Benidorm, 2008\)](#)

10...Rd8 – [Barrientos Chavarriaga-Tiviakov](#)



9 Bg2

9 g5 – [Lorenzo de la Riva-Caspi](#)

9...g6 10 g5 Nxc3 11 bxc3

11...Nd5 – [Shirov-Tiviakov \(Hoogeveen, 2010\)](#)

11...Nd7 – [Yunguo Wan-Tiviakov](#)

 **Shirov,A**
 **Nisipeanu,L**
 Foros
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2007

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♟c3 ♖d6 4.d4 ♟f6 5.♟f3 c6 6.♟e5 ♟bd7 7.f4 Whenever I see our mailman, Russ, walking up our driveway to our door, I realize what he brings is future potentials. Will he bring forth a bill, a court summons, a coupon for discount pizza, a check from a student, a winning sweepstakes announcement? I don't know. Shirov's line of the Scandi evokes similar anticipatory stress.

QUESTION: What is so scary about White's last move?

ANSWER: Shirov's line, beginning with 7 f4, is to my mind White's most dangerous variable of the 6 Ne5 mainline. Black has resources but must thread the needle perfectly to survive.

White's advantages and Black's coming troubles:

1. White anchors his treasured centrepiece ornament on e5.
2. In most variations Black is unable to play ... Nxe5.
3. Black, lagging in development, has a hard time engineering ...c5 as well.
4. White plans the set-up: g4!, Bg2, g5 followed by Ne4, which often leaves Black in complete disarray if he doesn't have this line down perfectly.

♟b6 Black's best response.

QUESTION: What is the knight doing on b6?

ANSWER: It covers c4, an important square, it reinforces d5, so that White has a difficult time achieving that break, and it frees Black's light-squared bishop in an attempt to unravel. Black's alternatives appear lame in comparison:

[a) All Black achieves with 7...e6?! is a rancid facsimile of the ...Nd7 Smyslov line of the Caro-Kann: 8.g4! (watch for this move, a repeating theme in Shirov's variation) c5 9.g5 ♟d5 10.♟e4 ♖c7 11.c4 ♟xe5 12.dxe5 ♟b4 13.♟g2 ♟d7 14.0-0 0-0-0 15.♟d6+ ♟xd6 16.exd6 saw White pick up the bishop-pair and attacking chances, A.Shirov-K.Kurkowski, Toronto 2010.]

[b) 7...g6 8.♟c4 e6 (8...♟d5 9.♖f3 ♟7b6 10.♟b3 ♟g7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♟e4

also looks good for White) 9.0-0 ♟g7 10.a4 0-0 11.b3! . Advantage White, who owns more space and threatens Ba3, D. Svetushkin-S.Kasparov, Vrachati 2011.]

8.g4! This disruptive move is a key element in Shirov's line.

QUESTION: Doesn't White risk overextension?

ANSWER: To urge Shirov toward restraint is time wasted. With his last move, White nods his head in assent to a declaration of war. He certainly does risk overextension; however, we risk something just as bad: underextension! It is very easy to get pushed off the board in this line. Also, as long as White's centre remains stable, it will be very difficult for us to generate central play against his impressive e5-knight and space advantage.

g6

[In this chapter we also examine Black's two other main branches: 8...♟bd5]
[and 8...♟e6 .]

9.g5 White makes further spatial inroads and boots the f6-knight to clear e4 for his own knight.

QUESTION: But didn't he just create a hole on f5 in doing so?

ANSWER: Correct. With each gain from White also comes erosion of squares and an increasing risk of overextension.

♟fd5

[Next game we examine the odd-looking but interesting idea 9...♟h5!? .]

10.♟e4 ♖d8 11.c4! ♟c7 We are compelled to go along for the bumpy ride.

[**QUESTION:** Why are we always retreating when we can go forward and fight back? How about 11...♟b4 ?

ANSWER: Don't think of Black's reverse motion as retreat. Think of it as laying in wait. I don't see a game in the database with your suggested move. White looks better after 12.a3 ♟f5 13.♖e2 ♖xd4 14.♟g2 ♟xe4 15.♟xe4 ♟a6 16.♟g2 ♖d8 17.♟e3 ♖d6 18.0-0 . I don't like Black's game: he lags in development; White has the bishop-pair and attacking chances as well.]

12.♖e2! ♟g7

[GM Mikhail Golubev suggests 12...♟e6 , blocking the-file, but it seems to me like Black simply loses time after 13.♟c5 ♟c8 14.♟e3 .]

[**QUESTION:** What am I missing? Why can't Black simply take on d4 on his 12th move?

ANSWER: Let's do an exercise on 12...♖xd4?? and find out.

EXERCISE (combination alert): Black just ingested a poisoned pawn. White to play and win.

ANSWER: Deflection/fork: 13.♘f6+!

. Now follows the throb of the black king's enlightenment to his own plight: exf6 (or 13...♙d8 14.♘xf7#) 14.♘xc6+ wins the queen.]

13.c5! No one ever claimed Shirov was a predictable quantity. Indeed, the only predictable aspect to his play is its inevitable unpredictability. White refrains from tempering his previous outbursts with any kind of restraint in the present as well. By ramming his c-pawn, he hopes to force disarray and contraction in Black's camp with astringent potency.

EXERCISE (critical decision): No time to rest. We just completed an exercise only to immediately begin another. Shirov's position apparently has a malfunctioning reverse gear and only drives forward. Should we play 13...Nbd5, occupying the hole, or should we play 13...Ne6 sac'ing a piece? Be careful. One leads to a messy position, the other to immediate loss. Which knight move should we play?

ANSWER: There is no choice. Black must sac to create diversion in the middle.

♘e6! The only move. The e-file must be blocked.

[Black loses instantly if you chose 13...♘bd5?? 14.♘d6+! . The knight, having risen to precipitous heights, merely needs two more squares to reach the summit. Last time the knight raided via f6; this time he enters through d6.]

14.cxb6 ♘xd4 15.♖f2

[White can also attempt to improve upon his line with 15.♖d3! ♙xe5 16.fxe5 ♖xb6 17.♙e3 ♘c2+! 18.♖xc2 ♖xe3+ 19.♖e2 ♖f4 20.♙g2 0-0 21.♖f2 ♖xe5 22.0-0 . The position is hard to assess, but I prefer White's extra piece over Black's three pawns, which don't have much influence on the position at the moment.]

15...♙xe5 He eliminates the powerful knight, sealing e5 with a pawn, with a similar feeling of luxurious rest as one's tired muscles feel in a hot bath.

16.fxe5 ♖d5! 17.♙g2 ♖c4! Inventive play. Dual purpose. Black disrupts White's castling and also threatens ...Nc2+.

18.b3

[18.♘c3 ♙f5 19.♙f1 ♖b4 20.a3 ♖xb6 21.♙e3 ♘c2+ 22.♖xc2 ♖xe3+ 23.♖e2 ♖xg5 looks okay for Black.]

18...♖d3 Black queen and knight project single-minded purpose.

19.♖d2 No choice. The body language of the two queens is formal, as if they just met for the first time.

♘c2+ 20.♙f2 ♖xd2+ 21.♙xd2 ♘xa1

22.♖xa1 axb6 QUESTION: How would you assess this position?

ANSWER: About even. Black's rook and two pawns compensate for White's bishop-pair. Houdini assesses at 0.23, which is pretty much even.

23.♙e3 ♙e6! Black doesn't bother defending, but counterattacks b3 instead.

24.♙xb6?!

[24.a4!? ♖a5! 25.♙xb6 ♖xe5 looks more accurate for White.]

24...♙xb6 25.♘c3 h6! Black's unravelling looks rife with logistical impediments, yet Nisipeanu manages to navigate them all, one by one. He is quick to pounce on the fact that White's bishop left e3, and in turn, coverage of h6. So Black finds a way to activate his sleeping rook. Now Black's spasms wane, receding into a restoration of full health.

26.♖b1 ♙d5!?

[Black also holds his own in the line 26...♙e6 27.♙e3 hxg5 28.♖xb7 ♖xh2 29.♙g1 ♖h4 30.♙xg5 ♖c4 31.♖xe7+ ♙f8 32.♘d1 ♖xa2 .]

27.♘xd5 ♖xa2+ 28.♙g1 cxd5 29.♙xd5 ♖d2 30.♙xb7 hxg5 31.♙g2 ♖h4!

The h8-rook awakens.

32.♙a5 ♖c2 33.♖b8+ ♙d7 34.♙d5?!

Now White risks loss.

[34.♖b7+ held the balance: ♙e6 35.♙d8 ♙f5 36.♖xe7 f6! 37.exf6 ♖g4 38.f7 ♖gxf2+ is perpetual check.]

34...e6 35.♙b3 EXERCISE (critical decision): Black has a choice. 35...Rcxh2 forces a draw, but he can also play 35...Rc5, going for the win. Should he risk it or take the immediate draw?

♖cxh2?! Black feels cause for concern since White's wards on b3, a5 and b8 continue to lick their lips, all the while gazing hungrily in the black king's direction. An understandable, but an incorrect decision. Nisipeanu restrained the urge to embellish and took the immediate perpetual check, but he was unwise to do so. He underestimated the latent

force within his own position.

[ANSWER: Black's rooks, in garish display of raw power, bring the full might of their authority down on White after 35...♖c5! when the twin initiatives function at disparate ratios. Black begins to take over after 36.♖a8 ♖xe5 37.♙d1 ♖b5! , and leaves White struggling and unlikely to attain a draw.]

36.♖b7+ ♙c6 37.♖xf7 ♖h1+ 38.♙g2 ♖1h2+ 39.♙g1 Summary: In my opinion, Shirov's 7 f4 line is currently the ...Qd6 Scandinavian's most looming menace. We must be exceedingly well prepared if we are to survive the coming onslaught.

1/2-1/2

□ **Brkic,A**

■ **Saric,I**

Bosnian Team Championship

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2009

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♙c3 ♖d6 4.d4 ♙f6 5.♙f3 c6 6.♙e5 ♙bd7 7.f4 ♙b6 8.g4 g6 9.g5 The Shirov variation's philosophy:

There is no problem which can't be fixed with another weakening move!

♙h5!? QUESTION: This looks incorrect. Why decentralize when d5 is available?

ANSWER: I actually like this rare idea and was tempted to give the move an exclamation.

There is sound reasoning behind the decentralization:

1. White's last move, although seizing space, also created a gaping hole on f5. Black plans an eventual ...Ng7 and ...Nf5 to occupy the hole.

2. If he plays the knight to d5, as we saw last game, it just gives White invitation to continue the chase with c4 and c5, all with tempo, just as Shirov played last game.

3. Why duplicate and play to d5 when Black's b6-knight can do so?

10.♙e2 QUESTION: Doesn't this move gain a tempo?

ANSWER: Not if Black wanted to be chased to g7. Remember, h5 is just a rest stop, not the final destination.

[White can also challenge the h5-knight with the following manoeuvre: 10.♙e4 ♖c7 11.♙g3 ♙g7 12.♖e2 ♙e6 13.a4 ♙d7 14.a5 , as in A.Istratescu-G.Ardelean, Predeal 2007. I like Black's game after ♙d5

15.♖g1 h6!? with tremendous complications to follow.]

10...♙g7 11.♙e4 ♖d8

[I prefer 11...♖c7 in order to leave d8 vacant for a black rook.]

12.c3 ♙f5 Success! The knight moves into his comfortable new home on f5.

QUESTION: I concede that Black controls f5 – but little else! Isn't he just getting squeezed?

ANSWER: There is a chance of that happening, but I actually prefer Black, due to future possibilities of White overextending. It feels to me like White's alleged advantage in space is without substance, and for now, unable to convert to anything more tangible. But I also realize this is a tough argument to sell.

13.♖d3 h5!? QUESTION: Why did Black toss in this move?

ANSWER: He probably wanted to deny White access to the g4-square.

[I would play 13...h6 instead, to open the h-file and activate the h8-rook.]

14.♙d2 ♙g7 15.0-0!? QUESTION: Is it safe for White to castle kingside with the kingside so breezy?

ANSWER: I tend to agree with you that it looks safe enough for now, but of course he must remain vigilant for future infiltration attempts. The reason White's king may castle kingside is the principle: The cramped side should not attack. Black simply lacks the space and activity to get at White's king, for now. But in chess, as in life, things change, and later Black does indeed whip up an attack. The alternative is to castle long, but in that case, Black's king looks quite safe on the sealed kingside and Black can slowly try to build for a queenside attack.

0-0 16.♙c5 In order to deny Black ...Be6 ideas.

♖c7 17.a4 White continues accruing territorial wealth but Black's position remains solid and full of future counterattack potential.

♙d7 Principle: The cramped side should seek exchanges.

18.♙cxd7 ♙xd7 19.a5 QUESTION: Is it worth considering swapping on d7 and grabbing the bishop-pair?

ANSWER: I doubt it. White's entire game revolves around the strength of his e5-outpost. Also, every swap benefits Black, the cramped side.

♖fd8 Black may be preparing a ...c5 freeing break.

20.b4 He reads his opponent's mind and immediately clamps down on the c5-square. Still, Black may slowly be able to work it in with ...b6 first.

e6 21.♟f3 ♟e8 Black's light-squared bishop hobbles about, dreaming of freedom.

22.♞e2 ♞ab8 23.♞a2 b6 He begins to build a road to c5.

24.♞fa1 Planning to infiltrate to a7.

♞c8 25.axb6 axb6 26.♞c4 Forcing Black's next move, which he intended anyway.

c5! Houdini assesses at equal, but I prefer Black, due to his dynamic potential. The more the game opens, the more exposed White's king looks.

27.bxc5?!

[White gets a better version of the game's continuation after the correct **27.dxc5 ♟xe5! 28.fxe5 ♟c6 .**]

27...♟xe5! Great judgement. The e5-knight's once formidable coercive powers fade away. No longer is he able to intimidate. Black eliminates White's best piece and sees that his weakening is in reality just cosmetic. QUESTION: Why? Black's last move looks like an awful strategic decision which punctures his dark squares.

ANSWER: Those dark squares are only weak if White's pieces and especially his dark-squared bishop get easy access to them, which they don't, mainly because White's g- and e-pawns block avenues of entry.

28.fxe5 ♟c6! The once introverted bishop inveigles his way into White's camp. A swap of light-squared bishops sucks dry the remainder of White's life force, to leave a husk rather than a corpse of the remaining bishop on d2. Following two principles:

1. When the opponent has the bishop-pair, eliminate one of them.
2. Force your opponent's pawns on the same colour as his remaining bishop. White's alleged powerhouse, his dark-squared bishop, begins to see that his reputation far outstrips his actual abilities.

29.♟xc6

[No choice since **29.♟e2??** loses to **♟d5** when Black's bishop requests the queen to step aside, in dangerously understated, unspoken menace.]

29...♞xc6 Black's queen and knight prepare ambush against White's king, who still believes himself insulated from the outside world. The power differential between knight and bishop is self-evident.

30.♞a6? The rook, needed for defence, goes off on his own little adventure. Now the light squares sag and collapse, leaving White's king vulnerable and demoralized. His position shudders.

[His best chance to hang on lay in a line like **30.♟e1** , covering h4 and allowing the a2-rook easier access to his king.]

30...♞e4! Threat: ...Nh4, with terrible dual menaces on g2 and f3.

What is wrong with this picture? Few openings are more generative of irony and pure, befuddling paradox than the Scandinavian. It becomes painfully obvious that White overreached in his insatiable lust for space, earlier in the game. Now, gusts of misery blow White's way and his king soon gets pelted with a hail of threats.

31.♞f1

[At this stage there is no meaningful defence: for example, **31.♞6a2 bxc5 32.♞xc5 ♞b1+ 33.♟f2 ♟h4** mates.]

31...♞g4+ 32.♟f2 Running like the wind, but one might ask: In the middle of an apocalypse, why run when there is no place on earth to hide?

bx5 33.♞e2 The queen backs away from her post with the wary respect one only offers a more powerful foe.

♞b2!? Opting for a circumspect pathway, yet understandable since practically speaking it is just as winning.

[Most players would keep queens on with **33...♞h4+ 34.♟g1 ♞b2** when White has no chance of survival.]

34.♞xg4 hxg4 35.♟e1 cxd4 36.c4

White attempts to close lines, frantically scheming to evade his fate, to no avail.

♟h4 The knight opts for actual participation in the proceedings, rather than that of passive observer. Black uncloaks all his power in the direction of White's king.

[**36...♟e3** is also deadly.]

37.♞d6 ♞a8 Threatening a nasty check on a1.

38.♞xd4 ♟f3+ The knight's tentacles of control pervade the white king's consciousness.

39.♞xf3 gxf3 40.c5 EXERCISE

(combination alert): The war is over yet there remains a pocket of resistance. Find the most efficient method of ending White's resistance.

ANSWER: **♞a1+ 41.♟f2 ♞aa2**

[**41...♞aa2 42.♟e3 f2!** overloads White's king and picks off the bishop.

Summary: **9...Nh5!?** is an appealing (and, in

my opinion, more logical) alternative to the 'book' move 9...Nd5. The move needs further trials and may be an improvement over playing to the d5-square.]

0-1

□ **Shirov,A**
■ **Tiviakov,S**
Hoogeveen
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2010

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♟c3 ♗d6 4.d4 ♟f6 5.♟f3 c6 6.♟e5 ♟bd7 7.f4 ♟b6 8.g4 ♟bd5 A logical response to 8 g4, which follows the principle: Counter in the centre when challenged on the wing.

QUESTION: But why not move the f6-knight to d5, since it is going to be kicked anyway by the coming g5?

ANSWER: By playing his b6-knight to d5, Black for the moment continues to control e4 and deny White's knight use of that square.

[8...♟fd5!? doesn't make as much sense to me, but may well be playable. It has only been tried in one game: 9.♟e4 ♗c7 (the only move; 9...♗d8? 10.♟g5! left Black in big trouble in A.Delorme-H. Vatter, Differdange 2008) 10.c4 forces Black into f6 11.cxd5 fxe5 12.fxe5 ♟xd5 with a messy position where I still prefer White since Black may experience difficulties developing.]

9.♟g2 A new move at the time.

[Shirov hoped to improve over the immediate 9.g5 which we look at later in the chapter.]

9...g6 10.g5 ♟xc3 11.bxc3 ♟d5?!

[GM Gawain Jones didn't like this move and suggested 11...♟d7! which is exactly what Tiviakov played in his very next encounter in this position, and which we examine next game.]

12.c4 ♟c7 13.c5 ♗d8 14.d5!!

Shirov ploughs forward, with savage disregard for human life – his opponent's or his own! George Orwell's '1984' theorized: In totalitarian times, to utter the truth is a revolutionary act. The position remains opaque; its inner mysteries seemingly impenetrable, yet here lay a deeply hidden solution – the truth. Shirov notices a broken link in the chain of momentum and seizes upon a quirk of geometry which dismantles

the position and reconstitutes it to his liking. QUESTION: A bold sac or a case of ambition exceeding practicality? Is the sac really effective? It just looks like White gave away a pawn for nothing.

ANSWER: The assassin's fundamental goal is to seek out and eliminate the target. How he does so is immaterial. The cryptic decision to sac does, indeed, look that way to the naked eye, but computer analysis proves it absolutely sound. The sac's effectiveness is partially contingent upon Black's degree of confusion in its aftermath, and indeed our book's hero, Tiviakov does in fact lose his way. Now Black must adjust, regroup and recast his intentions.

cx d5

[14...♟xd5 fails to extricate Black from his troubles as well: 15.c4 f6 (only move) 16.cxd5 fxe5 17.♗a4! ♟g7 18.dxc6 b5 19.♗xb5 ♗c7 20.♖b1 exf4 21.0-0 ♟e5 22.♗c4 when Black's position is on life support since Rb7! is in the air.]

15.c4! e6?! This move fails to efficiently quell the violent uprising.

[Perhaps Black should resign himself to 15...♟g7 16.cxd5 0-0 and just live with an unpleasant but playable position where he may get very real chances of White overextending later on.]

[QUESTION: Why not just bypass with 15...d4 ?

ANSWER: A trap. White wins after 16.♗a4+! ♟d7 17.c6 bxc6 18.♟xc6 .]

16.♟b2 Threatening nasty discoveries along the a1-h8 diagonal.

♟g7

[No better is 16...♖g8 17.♟g4 ♟xc5 18.♟f6+ ♟f8 19.♟xh7+ ♟e8 20.♟f6+! when Black is unlikely to survive. White's knight is worth a lot more than Black's g8-rook.]

[EXERCISE (combination alert): After 16...♟g7 find White's trick to dominate the dark squares. How?]

ANSWER: Clearance.

17.♟c6! bxc6 18.♟xg7 The bishop lunges down the diagonal.

♖g8 19.♟e5 QUESTION: Doesn't Black's extra pawn count for anything?

ANSWER: In this case, domination of the dark squares completely overwhelms the issue. Jones writes: "White completely dominates the dark squares and has more than enough compensation for the pawn. c6

is vulnerable while Black is exceedingly passive and cannot coordinate his pieces, and so it's not a surprise that Black does not last long."

d7 20.0-0 Bb8

[QUESTION: Why doesn't Black play 20...dxc4 in order to post his knight on d5, next?

ANSWER: The dark squares well up after 21.f6! Bb8 (the offended queen flounces from the room in her theatrical manner; or 21...Bc8 22.Bd6 when the pestilential pair march forward, leaving only suffering in their wake - White's queen approaches e7 with the air of an ancient priestess preparing to sacrifice a baby (Tiv's king!) to appease the gods and urge them to deliver a good harvest) 22.Bb1 Bb5 23.Bxb5! cxb5 24.c6 , winning.]

21.Ba4 Bb7 22.Bab1 Bc8 The efficiency gulf between the two parties deepens and Black's queen looks as out of place as the anachronous 1950's rock group Sha Na Na at Woodstock. In fact, Black's entire game suffers a constant sense of estrangement from his past happiness.

23.Bxb7 Bxb7 EXERCISE (planning): If White can seize control over the b-file for his rook, Black's game collapses. How did Shirov manage it?

ANSWER: Take control via b2.

24.Bf2! d4 Total desperation.

25.Ba5!? The queen continues her mesmerizing gyrations, which have the effect of heaping confusion among Black's ranks.

[Of course the obvious 25.fxd4 with Rb2 to follow is crushing as well.]

25...Bd8 Black's game is a by-product of nightmares and this game serves as a dire warning of what can happen when matters go awry for Team Scandi. My unfortunate childhood friend, Michael, was cruelly forced by his parents to practice accordion for an hour each day. He feared October more than death itself, his month of suffering and trial. During Oktoberfest, in the dark underbelly of the dreaded Biergarten, my humiliated friend, garbed only in lederhosen and a leather cap with stylish feather inserted, would meekly administer a solo accordion performance to the admiring crowd of beer drinking, sausage eating well wishers. The cruelty of my unfortunate friend's plight still gives me shudders when reflecting upon it. Similarly, Tiv's embarrassed, reluctantly misplaced

pieces, forced to perform equally distasteful tasks, remind me of my accordion-toting, lederhosen-wearing friend.

26.fxe4 The bishops whet their blades until they sparkle with menace.

QUESTION: Why did Black resign?

ANSWER: No avenging saviour will come cascading from the heavens to save Black. He is virtually in zugzwang and his position is utterly hopeless. Houdini's evaluation: +6.29, the equivalent of a full rook up for White.

Summary: 11...Nd7! may be an improvement over the game's 11...Nd5.

1-0

B01

 **Yunguo Wan**

 **Tiviakov,S**

Moscow

2011

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Bxd5 3.Bc3 Bd6 4.d4 Bf6 5.Bf3 c6 6.Be5 Bbd7 7.f4 Bb6 8.g4

The gun-toting criminal dreams of living in a world without sheriffs. Here we go again. Well, they say tribulation endured gives birth to character, and a life devoid of enemies may be pleasant, but also dull. They also say the most important skill an actor must master is to fake sincerity. At the board we may feign shock, but if well prepared theoretically inside, we are in reality, delighted, and welcome the challenge.

Bbd5 9.Bg2 g6 10.g5 Bxc3 11.bxc3

White continues to subsidize his attacking chances, depositing pawn structural checks in Black's bank account, with the only tangible return being extra space.

Bd7!

[Tiviakov's improvement over 11...Bd5?! .]

The activity disjunction between the two sides couldn't be more pronounced, yet, oddly enough, Black's game remains impervious to sudden attacks.

QUESTION: What is the difference between d5 and d7?

ANSWER: Three differences:

1. By playing his knight to d5, Black loses time from White's coming c4 tempo-gaining thrust.
2. By playing to d7, Black increases the pressure on e5, meaning White may have a difficult time engineering an f5-break.
3. By playing to d7 Black has the chip-away

plan ...h6! followed by ...hxc5 and after White recaptures, his e5-knight loses one of its bases of support.

12.0-0 QUESTION: Castling into it?

ANSWER: White's king really has no other place but kingside.

[If he tries something like 12.♖c4?! , which looks to me like a waste of time, then comes ♖c7 (the provocative 12...♗e6+!? is also possible: 13.♗e3 h6 and if White ploughs ahead with the natural 14.d5?! cxd5 15.♗d4 ♖h7 16.♙xd5 ♗a6 then his game has the feel of coming overextension), and now he saw nothing better than castling: 13.0-0 ♖b6 and White's knight returned to e5 with tempo loss. Indeed, after 14.♗e5 Black was in good shape in S.Didenko-S.Kasparov, Pardubice 2012.]

12...h6! QUESTION: Why is Black, behind in development, helping White open the f-file?

ANSWER: It is also a reminder to White that he is not the only one attacking. Black threatens to open the h-file and zone in on h2.

[Black's move is more ambitious than 12...♙g7 13.♗c4 ♖c7 14.f5 gxf5 15.♗e2 ♖b6 16.♗e3 h6 17.♗xf5 ♙xf5 18.♖xf5 hxc5 19.♙xc5 ♖xh2+ 20.♙f2 ♖d6 21.♖e1 (J.Baron Rodriguez-F.Lopez Gracia, Spain 2011), when White gets attacking chances for the pawn. Black should now play e6 with an unclear position.]

13.♗e2

[Perhaps an improvement is 13.♗f3! , with the intention of discouraging Black from opening the f-file: ♗xe5! (Black can also try the crazy 13...hxc5?! which may be too risky; White has a powerful sac with 14.♗xf7! - the knight nods gravely, reaching a decision and gives the signal for the attack to begin - ♙xf7 15.fxc5+ ♙e8 16.♗f7+ ♙d8 17.♙f4 e5 18.dxe5 ♗e7 19.♗xc6 ♗h7! 20.♗xh7 ♖xh7 when the pressure on Black's compressed position elevates to life-threatening levels, and for his piece, White gets three pawns and a growing attack) 14.fxe5 ♗e6 (the butler clears her throat in disapproval, refusing entry to the white pieces to f7, since they don't have an appointment) 15.a4 hxc5 16.♙xc5 ♙h6 17.♙xh6 ♖xh6 was P.Svidler-V.Zolotukhin, Oljinka 2011. We reach a classic case of activity versus structure. Houdini says the game is even and whose position you prefer probably depends upon style.

QUESTION: Can't White just keep increasing pressure on f7?

ANSWER: Not so easy. Black can simply play ...Rh7, but the open b-file may also be a concern for Black and matters will not be so easy for either side in the coming moves. If White's initiative doesn't pan out, he may lose an ending due to his shakier structure.]

13...hxc5 14.fxc5?! Believe it or not, Black stands better after this natural recapture.

QUESTION: What else is there?

[ANSWER: Houdini suggests the wacky line 14.♗c4!? ♖c7 15.fxc5 ♖xh2+ 16.♙f2 (threat: Rh1) ♙g7 (or 16...♗h4+ 17.♙g1 ♗h2+ with perpetual check) 17.♖h1 ♖c7 18.♖xh8+ ♙xh8 19.♙a3 ♗f4+ 20.♗f3 ♖xf3+ 21.♙xf3 ♖b6 22.♗a5 and claims full compensation for the pawn. I would still take Black at this point.]

14...♗xe5 15.♙f4 ♙g7 16.♖ae1 ♙f5 17.♗f2 ♗a3! QUESTION: Oh, no! Not again!

ANSWER: I'm afraid so. As you well know by now, we Scandiites are easily enticed by pawn offers and are quick to gorge ourselves when given the chance. From time to time, we reinforce our reputations as master criminals of the chess board. In this instance Tiv's larcenous queen sneaks off on an attempted burglary in the neighbourhood to pick off an unguarded queenside pawn. It is an attempt by Black to concretize that which was once abstract (our superior pawn structure) to that which is real (we are up a pawn!).

QUESTION: But isn't Black going to get killed on the other wing?

ANSWER: Computer analysis proves Tiv's thievery sound!

18.♙xe5 ♙xe5 The bishops intersect, criss-cross, merge, and disappear.

19.♖xe5 ♖xc3 All tourists desire to leave with a souvenir. Tiv borrows a pawn under the philosophy: What was once yours is now mine!

20.♖c5

[I don't believe in White's full compensation after 20.♖b1 b6 21.♖b3 ♖c4 either.]

20...♗b2! To halt Rb1.

21.♖xc6 Clever. White regains his pawn, but not full equality. The hoped for debilitating blow fails to unnerve Tiv. It is clear that White's initiative arrives at its terminus. Now both sides' pawns grow fragile.

0-0?! White may be able to hold the game after this move.

[Black ends up on the superior side if he just

goes ahead and takes the rook: 21...bxc6! 22.♙xc6+ ♔f8 23.♙xa8 ♚xa2 . Advantage Black, who has the superior structure and possibly the safer king. Also, this line is a vindication of Black's judgement from his earlier theft of the c3-pawn.]

22.♙c5!?

[White can also try 22.♙c7 ♖ac8 23.♙xb7 ♚xa2 24.c4 ♚xf2+ 25.♙xf2 ♖xc4 26.♙xe7 ♙xd4 27.♙xa7 ♖b8 28.♙e1 when he should hold the game.]

22...♖ac8 23.c4 ♚xf2+ 24.♙xf2 ♖xc5 25.dxc5 ♖c8 26.♖b2 ♖xc5 27.♙xb7 a6! 28.♙xe7 ♙e6! Double attack on c4 and g5. 29.♙d5 ♙xd5 30.♙e5

[30.cxd5 ♙xd5 31.h4 ♙d4 also wins a pawn.]

30...♖xc4 31.♙xd5 ♖c1+ 32.♙g2 ♖c2+ 33.♙g3 ♖xa2 34.♙d8+ ♙g7 35.♖a8

Black's extra pawn will not be so easy to convert. This position should be drawn.

♖a3+ 36.♙g4 a5 37.h4 ♖a1 38.♙g3 a4 39.♙g2 f5 40.gxf6+!? White reduces pawns but at the heavy cost of activating Black's king.

[A simpler path to the draw lies in 40.♖a7+! ♙f8 41.♖a8+ ♙f7 42.♖a7+ and Black can't win if he returns his g-pawn: for example, ♙e6 43.♖a6+ ♙e5 44.♖xg6 ♙f4 45.♖a6 and Black must take perpetual check since White's g- and h-pawns are dangerously advanced.]

40...♙xf6 41.♖a5 a3 42.♙h2 This is the position White had counted on. Black's king is cut off – for now.

♙e6 43.♙g2 ♖a2+ 44.♙g3 ♖a1 45.♙g2 ♙d6 46.♖a6+ ♙c5 47.♖xg6 ♖c1!

Black's only chance for a win in this drawn position.

[47...a2? 48.♖a6 allows White to draw, since Black's king will get bombarded with check each time he attempts to free his trapped rook.]

48.♖a6 ♙b4 EXERCISE (critical decision): Black's pawn is more advanced and also supported by his king. Yet the ending is still drawn, but only if White finds the correct path. Should he push with 49 h5, or should he activate his king with 49 Kg3? Be careful. Only one path leads to the draw.

49.h5? That which was once a draw, transforms quickly into a loss.

[ANSWER: Activation of his king was key to scoring the draw. 49.♙g3! ♖c2 50.♖b6+! (not 50.h5?? a2 and White loses, the same way he does in the game) 50...♙a5

51.♖b1! a2 52.♖a1 ♙b4 53.h5 ♙b3 54.♙g4 is drawn, since the surging h-pawn costs Black his rook.]

49...♖c2+ 50.♙g3 a2 51.h6 EXERCISE (combination alert): Black has access to a simple manoeuvre which wins the game. Do you see it?

ANSWER: Interference. Now the opposing queening races proceed at asynchronous paces.

♖c3+! A move which hints at hidden and undisclosed treachery lying ahead.

52.♙g2 ♖a3

[52...♖a3 53.♖xa3 ♙xa3 54.h7 a1♚ and close doesn't cut it. Black wins by a tempo.

Summary: 11...Nd7!, when Black hopes to shed himself of the vexing encumbrance on e5, constitutes an improvement over 11...Nd5?!.]

0-1

B01

□ Lorenzo de la Riva,L

■ Caspi,I

Barcelona

2009

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♚xd5 3.♙c3 ♚d6 4.d4 ♙f6 5.♙f3 c6 6.♙e5 ♙bd7 7.f4 ♙b6 8.g4 ♙bd5 9.g5

[QUESTION: What is the difference between the immediate 9 g5 and 9.♙g2 , which we looked at in the last two games?]

ANSWER: In the case of 9 g5, as played here, White refuses to commit to an early post for his light-squared bishop. He may later develop the bishop to g2, d3 or c4.

9...♙xc3 10.bxc3 ♙d5 QUESTION: Didn't you say this was dubious a couple of games ago?

ANSWER: I did, but not in this position. White had already committed his bishop to g2.

QUESTION: How does that make a difference?

ANSWER: The difference is White's bishop is now free to move to c4.

[After 10...♙d7?! 11.♙c4! e6 12.0-0 Black already had a passive, sour-looking position in A.Pijpers-P.Ypma, Groningen 2011.

QUESTION: How am I going to possibly remember all these minute details?

ANSWER: It isn't easy, but the most

complex subjects become easy with practiced familiarity. Just go through Chapters 2, 3 and 4 more than any others in the book. The Scandinavian isn't the easiest opening in chess, but it may well be the most entertaining!]

[Actually, there is a third possibility: You don't have to move your knight at all and can toss in the zwischenzug 10...♖d5 11.♖g1 ♕d7 , as in S.Kudrin-J.Stopa, Richardson 2008. Now White can try 12.c4 ♖a5+ 13.♗d2 ♖c7 14.♕f3 g6 , but Black looks okay in this Alekhine's Four Pawn Attack-like position.]

11.c4 ♕c7 12.c5 QUESTION: Isn't this bad for Black? This looks like the Alekhine's Defence from hell!

ANSWER: Hang in there. At this stage the half-fullness or half-emptiness of Black's glass remains inconclusive. Matters are not as clear cut as they appear. Remember, White pushed pawns and created holes, like on f5, all at the cost of potential overextension. There is also pressure on White if we happen to survive the next 20 moves or so without our position deteriorating. Your optimistic opponent may well later come to regret his rash pawn forays in the opening.

♖d5 13.♖g1 f6! Get off my property!

14.♕c4

[QUESTION: Why not gain a tempo with 14.♗g2 ?

ANSWER: White walks into a trap. Black has the odd-looking but very effective ♖e6! which leaves White embarrassed. He must cough up a pawn to save his knight with 15.f5 ♖xf5 (the queen views her would-be attacker with the detached amusement of a researcher observing the antics of one of her more aggressive lab rats) 16.♕d3 ♖e6+! when White is on the border of busted, if not already there.]

14...♗e6 Logical and multipurpose. Black develops a piece, reinforces d5, discourages Bc4 and prepares queenside castling – quite a bit for one little move.

[Houdini likes the never-tried 14...g6 to develop the kingside.]

15.♗e3 White in turn develops and backs up d4.

0-0-0?!

[No fear of commitment. A more chickenhearted individual like myself may have kept options open with 15...g6 .]

QUESTION: Isn't Black going to get killed

castling into an open b-file?

ANSWER: On first glance, it kind of looks that way to me too, and comp analysis seems to back us both up! But the lines are rather knotted and difficult to find. For a human, White's attack isn't as quick or as decisive as it first appears.

16.♕d2? The knight is the comedian with a case of stage fright, unable to remember any of his long practiced material, who now freaks out and begins to tell "knock, knock" jokes to his disgruntled audience. The black king's respiration slows now that he realizes he is out of danger. In music, as well as conversation, silent pauses can take on as crucial a meaning as sound. Such a passive retreat in such a tense, open struggle is clearly not in White's best interests.

[He should push forward with the thematic 16.♕a5! . The resources and citizenry of White's society find themselves commandeered toward the war effort. No expense is spared for the necessary armaments required for victory: ♗f5 17.c4 ♖e6 18.♖b3! . Now all hell breaks loose after b6 19.d5! cxd5 20.cxb6 axb6 21.cxd5 ♖xd5 (21...♕xd5?? 22.♖c1+ wins instantly) 22.♕c4 ♕d8 23.♖c1 with advantage to White in what is admittedly a rather irrational position for a human.]

16...♗f5 17.c4 Now White is unable to play Rb1.

[Black also looks better after 17.♗c4 ♖d7 .]

17...♖d7 18.♖a4 ♕a6! 19.0-0-0 EXERCISE (planning): Come up with a plan for Black which yields him the advantage.

ANSWER: Multipurpose:

1. Principle: Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing.
2. Undermine the c5 point, after which Black's pieces explode in demonic activity.

e5! Black relied upon this move, the bellwether for future success. Caspi intercepts and diffuses White's plan (whatever it is!) before it has time to flourish and gain strength. After a seemingly endless counterplay fast, Black feels the bloom of renewal and the winds alter in his favour.

20.♕b3 No real choice.

[White overextends after 20.fxe5 fxe5 21.dxe5? ♗xc5 .]

20...exd4 21.♖xd4 White's weak pawns just sit there in a heap.

♖e6 22.♙xd8+ ♕xd8 23.♚a5+

[23.♙g3 ♖e4 24.♜d2 ♗e7 25.♚a3
is another convoluted attempt to keep his
position from falling apart.]

23...♜c8 24.♚c3 ♜b4! Overload. White
views the dark vista of approaching attackers
with apprehension, but also firm resolve in the
belief of his continued survival.

25.♜b2 ♖e4 26.♜d2 ♚c2+! QUESTION:
Has Black basically abandoned attacking in
favour of the pursuit of an endgame win due to
his superior structure?

ANSWER: Partially, but even with queens off
the board, Black still retains some attacking
chances. An old blade, encrusted with rust
and age, kills as effectively as a newly forged
sword.

27.♚xc2 ♜xc2 28.gxf6 gxf6

[Black can also try the enterprising 28...g6!?
29.♙f2 ♙h6 30.♙g3 ♙d8 31.♜c3 ♜d4 .]

29.♙f2 ♙h6 30.♙g3 ♙d8 31.♜b3?!

[31.♜c3 ♜d4 32.♜b3 puts up better
resistance.]

31...♜d4

[31...♜e3! 32.♙e2 ♙d3! puts White under
strong pressure.]

32.♙g2 ♜e6 33.♙f2 ♙f8! The serpent's
forked tongue flicks out and in. He tastes the
air in anticipation of his cornered prey. Finally,
c5 falls.

34.♙h4? White's frantic attempts to evade
destiny continue to no avail. Black refuses to
relinquish his iron grip on the position. We get
a growing sense of the white pieces'
ineffectiveness to get the job done.

♜xc5 35.♙xf6? The environment grows so
harsh that any form of life becomes
unsustainable. Have you noticed that the
most private, remote place in the world is
when you are congregated within a crowded
city street, engulfed by a humanity of
complete strangers, and totally alone. White's
seemingly well protected king experiences
just such feelings at this very moment.

EXERCISE (combination alert): White just
blundered in a lost position. How do we put
him away?

ANSWER: An assailant remains swaddled in
the mist, ready to engage his target.

♜a4+!

[Understanding soaks in and it becomes
clear White won't survive: 35...♜a4+
36.♜c1 (36.♜a1 ♙d1+ mates) 36...♙a3+
ends resistance.

Summary: Important points to remember in

the 8...Nbd5 variation:

1. When White plays an early Bg2, we
develop our knight to d7.
2. When White plays g5 before Bg2, we
develop our knight to d5.]

0-1

B01

□ **Shirov,A**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Benidorm (rapid)

2008

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

**1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♚xd5 3.♜c3 ♚d6 4.d4
♜f6 5.♜f3 c6 6.♜e5 ♜bd7 7.f4 ♜b6 8.g4**

IM John Watson, a man of great wisdom, who
like us understands that the Scandinavian is
not such a bad opening for Black, writes:

"Shirov's approach is typically dynamic, but
no great threat to Black's system."

♙e6 A stockbroker only shares his knowledge
for a price. Tiviakov tends to move around in
this line, playing every Black sub-variation.

QUESTION: Why block our e-pawn and walk
into possible tempo loss after f5?

ANSWER: Multipurpose:

1. In Shirov's line, we rarely develop our dark-
squared bishop with the traditional ...e6 and ...
Be7. We almost always fianchetto, so we
really aren't blocking anything with the move.
2. The intention of Black's last move is to cut
off White's options on c4.
3. More importantly, Black seizes firm control
over d5.
4. Lastly, we have access to exchanging ideas
(by now we all know that trades in general are
the good friends of most Scandi positions as
Black) with ...Bd5.

9.♙g2 g6 10.0-0

[After 10.g5 ♜fd7 (no one has tried
10...♜h5!?, the idea we looked at earlier in
the chapter which looks interesting and is
evaluated at even by Houdini; still, it looks
a little less logical here since White has
the tempo-gain ideas Ne4 and Nc5) 11.♜e4
♚c7 12.b3 ♙g7 13.♙b2 f6! Black achieved
a very playable game in M.Illingworth-H.
Poetsch, Budapest 2011.]

10...♙g7

[Next game we examine 10...♙d8 .]

11.f5!? The never-shy Shirov confronts the
arduous tasks awaiting him.

QUESTION: Isn't this risky, since White allows
the opening of the g-file?

ANSWER: It certainly is, but Shirov is one of those passionate GMs who follows his heart more than his mind. The move does have the one benefit of creating a crisis, but unfortunately the crisis seems to rest on White's end, not Black's!

gxf5 12.gxf5 ♖c4!?

[QUESTION: Isn't 12...♙d5 a more thematic idea in such positions?

ANSWER: The motive behind Black's last move is open to conjecture. I like Black's game after your suggestion and would agree, but Tiviakov was probably in an adventurous mood and decided to speculate. That said, I also like Tiv's move. The Scandinavian should be fun, and not just taken as medicine to relieve opening pains. The spirit of experimentation of new concepts should be embraced as well, when it pops into your head during a game. Who can blame Tiv for his choice? Who among us isn't addicted to the exultation felt upon defeating a higher-rated opponent?]

13.♙xc4!? I'm not sure this is correct.

[I prefer Watson's suggestion 13.♙e1 ♖d8 14.a4!? and after ♙a6 15.a5 ♙bd5 16.♙a4! h5! 17.♙c5 ♙g4! the game is completely unclear.]

13...♙xc4 14.♙d3?! A mistake after which Black takes over the initiative.

♙g4! Double attack on d4 and h2. Tiviakov attempts a voodoo-like transformation, attempting to take an inanimate effigy and through dark magic and will, transfer pain to the flesh-and-blood target of his enmity: White's king.

15.♙f4 EXERCISE (combination alert): White's Humpty Dumpty-like pieces barely hold. If you find Black's trick, White's game grows critical. What is it?

ANSWER: Overload! This is a fight to the death and Black is winning.

♙xb2! The knight nestles on its precarious perch on b2. The c1-bishop bristles at the insult, vowing impotent revenge, knowing the intruder is untouchable.

16.♙g3 ♙xd4+ 17.♙h1 EXERCISE (critical decision): We arrive at a crossroads where Black readies himself for multiple eventualities. He has a choice of a couple of tempting possibilities. Should he play 17...Nf2+ or 17...Bxc3? Both are advantageous, but one is clearly better than the other. Think carefully. This one is really tough. What does your intuition tell you?

♙f2+ The blow proves disabling, but not lethal.

[ANSWER: 17...♙xc3!! . The devil offers White's queen fulfilment of her wildest dreams. All he asks for in return? The eternal damnation of her soul. After 18.♙xc3 ♙g8! 19.♙xb2 (White has nothing better) ♙d1+! (the queen is the intimidating boss who tells lame jokes and awaits the forced laughter from her underlings) 20.♙f1 (Here White also has 20.♙f1?? .

EXERCISE (combination alert): White's rook raises both hands, as if supplicating the invading queen to spare him. After White's move, his king gets a thrashing at the whims of Black's cruel attackers. Black to play and mate.

ANSWER: Deflection. ♙xf1+! 21.♙xf1 ♙f2# . One is reminded of that savage photograph of the young Muhammad Ali, looming over the supine form of Sonny Liston in the ring.) 20...♙e3! (threat: 21...Qd5+) 21.♙e5 ♙xf1 22.♙xe7+! ♙xe7 23.♙a3+ ♙d6 24.♙e4+ ♙d7 25.♙xd6 ♙xd6 26.♙d1+ ♙c5 27.♙xf1 ♙ae8 White is down a pawn, somewhat overextended as well, and Black's king is active and on the prowl.]

18.♙xf2 ♙xg3! Cutting the legs out under the f2-rook's protection.

19.hxg3 ♙xc3? Black wanders, lost in a morass of intersecting ideas and plans. This is a serious misevaluation. Now Black's initiative, by its innately ephemeral nature, is destined to remain only for a brief duration and soon compelled to disappear forever. Now follows an incoherent stream of events and misadventures which neither side could possibly predict.

[Black stands better after 19...♙xf2! 20.♙xb2 ♙g8 , picking up a third pawn, for his rook versus the bishops. Watson adds: "Although it won't be easy to gain a serious advantage in the face of White's bishops."]

20.♙b1 ♙c4 21.♙xb7 The advantage swings to White, whose bishop-pair and rook on the seventh rank far exceeds the worth of Black's puny extra pawn.

♙a5 22.♙c7 ♙d8!? A frantic final push to attempt to rescue the dream of what should have been.

[Black can also try 22...♙e5 23.♙xc6 ♙d8 24.♙a6 ♙c4 .]

23.♙xa7 ♙d7 24.♙a8+ ♙d8 25.♙xd8+ ♙xd8

26.♞f3 ♘e5 27.♞a3 ♘c4 28.♞a7 ♘d6?!]

[His last chance to try and draw lies in the line 28...♞b8! 29.♞a6 ♘e5 30.♞b2 ♘c8 31.♞xc6+ ♘xc6 32.♞xh8 ♘d7 33.♞xc6+ ♘xc6 34.♞g2 .]

29.♞xc6 ♘xf5 30.g4?!

[30.♞f4! eliminates Black's best defender. After ♞xf4 31.gxf4 ♘d6 32.c4 White dominates.]

30...♘d4 31.♞a4 h5 32.g5!?

[Shirov liked his dominant rook and rejected the line everyone else in the universe would play: 32.♞a8+ ♘c7 33.♞xh8 ♞xh8 34.gxh5 .]

32...♘e2?! A blunder in a bad position.

[32...♘e6 33.♞d7+ ♘c8 34.♞xe7 ♞d8 35.♞e8! wins as well.]

33.♞d7+

[Or 33.♞e3! threatening a nasty check on b6, and if ♘c8 34.♞xe7 .]

33...♘c8 34.♞xe7 ♘g3+ 35.♞g2 ♞c7?

EXERCISE (combination alert): In that hallucinatory, dream-like state we call time pressure, snippets of thought, fragmented ideas and partial notions flow in the stream of consciousness before the bewildered, rational portion of our adrenalin-fuelled brains. Black's last move, undoubtedly a time pressure error, loses more material. How?

ANSWER: Elimination of the defender.

36.♞xc7+! ♘xc7 37.♞xg3 h4+ 38.♞h3

♘d6 39.♞b3 ♘e7 40.♞b2 Summary:

Although Black lost this game, he achieved an excellent opening after 9...Be6, against the father of this chapter's line.

1-0

□ Barrientos Chavarriaga,S

■ Tiviakov,S

Bogota

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2010

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♞xd5 3.♘c3 ♞d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 c6 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.f4 ♘b6 8.g4 ♞e6 9.♞g2 g6 10.0-0 ♞d8

Black logically applies pressure to White's weakest link, d4.

QUESTION: Why not castle long instead?

[ANSWER: Believe it or not, Black's king may actually be safer in the centre or kingside, rather than the queenside. After 10...0-0-0 White can leave d4 as bait with 11.♞f3! , and if we bite with ♞xd4+?? we get slaughtered after 12.♞e3 ♞d6

13.♘b5! ♞d5 14.♘xa7+ ♘c7 15.♞f2 ♞a5 16.♘xc6! .]

11.a4 QUESTION: What is White's intention behind 11 a4?

ANSWER: The intention is to chase our b6-knight with a5 in Alekhine's Defence-fashion, and possibly loosen up our queenside with a6 as well. But just as in Alekhine's Defence, being chased doesn't necessarily mean our position gets any worse. White's extra space may later haunt him as the ghost of overextension.

QUESTION: Then what do you think is a more likely continuation for White?

[ANSWER: White's g-pawn, ignoring shouts of reproach, boldly continues forward into enemy territory. 11.g5 is more likely what you will get. ♘fd7! (Crouch's 11...♘h5 is also possible, but not as accurate, since it allows White tempo gain with Ne4 and Nc5) 12.♘e4 ♞c7 13.♞f3 ♞g7 14.a4 0-0 15.c3 was F.Tsiros-H.Torkkola, Athens 2012. An attacker may prefer White, but I like Black's position after f6 which reminds me of a promising-looking Alekhine's Defence for Black.]

11...♞g7 12.g5 ♘fd7! Dual purpose:

1. Tiv covers the c5-square against Ne4 and Nc5.

2. Tiv adds pressure against e5, perhaps thinking about undermining with ...f6 or ...c5 later on.

13.a5 ♘d5 14.♘e4 ♞c7 15.♞e2 0-0

As mentioned earlier, the kingside may be the safest spot for Black's king, despite White's advanced pawns.

[However, here I think Black could be more enterprising and try 15...h6! .]

16.c4!? QUESTION: Isn't Black getting overrun?

ANSWER: I don't think so. In fact, I think White dances on the edge of overextension. The two parties take divergent paths and are destined to reap divergent fortunes as well.

[16.c3 is a lot safer for White.

QUESTION: How do we attain central counterplay in this position?

ANSWER: I would try b6 with an eye for the undermining ...c5 at the right time.]

16...♘b4 17.♞e3 b6! At long last we fight back and begin to chip away at White's monolithic centre. Black angles for ...c5. The attacking market, artificially high, now begins to correct itself. As a result, White's hoped-for blue chip stocks start to plummet in value.

18.axb6 axb6 19.♖c3!? White begins to lose the initiative after this move.

QUESTION: What do you suggest instead?

[ANSWER: He can speculate with an interesting exchange sac here, starting with 19.♖a4 c5 20.♖xb4!/? (White can also go for 20.dxc5 bxc5 21.♖xc5 ♖xc5 22.♖xb4 ♗xe5 23.fxe5 ♗xe5 with equal chances in a very sharp situation, but, somehow, White's position looks harder to play) 20...cxb4 21.♖c6! ♖de8 22.d5 ♗f5 23.♖g3 e6 24.♖xb4 when Houdini claims the position is equal.]

19...♗f5! Threat: ...Nxe5, followed by ...Bd3.

20.♖fc1?!

[He should try 20.♖a2! ♖xe5 21.♖xb4 ♖g4 22.♖xc6 ♖xe3 23.♖a7 ♗g4 24.♗d3 ♗xa7! 25.♖xa7 ♗f5 26.♗e2 ♗xd4 27.♖c6 ♖xf1+ 28.♖xf1 ♗c5 29.♖xd8 ♖xd8

. The comps say even, but I would take Black's side. It doesn't look so easy to navigate White, who must nurse multiple infiltration attempts from Black's incredibly active pieces.]

20...♖xe5 21.dxe5 f6! The invaders are met with a column of flame. We see the foreshadowing of White's overextension now.

22.♖a4? Multiple, partial solutions may confuse the issue and are sometimes worse than no solution at all.

[His last hope to muck matters up was with 22.♖d5! . Desperation is a perfect time to sac! cxd5 23.cxd5 ♗d7 24.d6 fxe5 25.♗c4+ (this is delicate stuff) ♗e6 26.♗xb4 ♗xd6 27.♗xd6 ♖xd6 28.fxe5 ♗xe5 , but even here White finds he isn't able to pave over the damage so easily, as he struggles down a pawn.]

22...♖d3 23.♖ca1 fxe5 After the rain, the gutters, choked with leaves and twigs, overflow and flood the street. The once proud centre collapses.

24.♖a7 ♗d6 25.fxe5 ♗xe5?!

[More accurate was 25...♗xe5! taking aim at h2.]

26.♗xc6?

[He had to try 26.♗xb6 ♖b8 27.♗xe5 ♗xe5 28.c5 ♗d4+ 29.♖h1 ♖xc5 30.♖a4 ♖b3 31.♖e1 e6 .]

26...♗g4! Tiv relentlessly pokes and probes the wound.

27.♗d2 EXERCISE (combination alert): Intimate knowledge of an illegal act can get you killed. White's game is on the verge of free-fall. How can we push it over the edge?

ANSWER: Discovered attack/overload. Yet another affront to the unfortunate white queen's dignity.

♖xb2! Black's pieces are everywhere, an invading hoard, covering the horizon to the limits of White's eyesight.

28.♗d5+ ♖h8 It feels like White's entire army hangs.

29.♖a8 EXERCISE (combination alert): If we were able to look into the mind of a chronically depressed person, it would look a lot like White's dismal position. White believes the a-file is his thin connection to civilization, but he overlooks something. Find the blow which renders further resistance futile.

ANSWER: Pin.

♖xc4! The cruel knight tramples upon all that White holds precious. White regurgitates another pawn.

Summary: Don't sweat when White kicks our knights around with his pawns. Pawns, once moved, never retreat, and White risks overextension, as he did in this game.

0-1

Chapter Five

Fifth Move Alternatives

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 d4 Nf6



After the harrowing experience of the last three chapters, this one feels like a relaxing soak in the hot tub. From the diagrammed position we examine a set of fifth move alternatives: 5 Nb5, 5 Bc4, 5 Bd3 and 5 Nge2, none of which give us any particular cause for worry. Yet our antidotes tend to fluctuate from variation to variation. On 5 Nb5 we must remember to play our queen to b6, rather unusual for the Scandinavian. On 5 Bd3, we bang out the strange response 5...Nc6!, completely alien to our normal Scandi itinerary. On the other two, 5 Bc4 and 5 Nge2, we play our normal ...c6 set-ups.

Our problem for this chapter isn't the inherent danger of the lines themselves, as much as the remembering of the ones which constitute the anomalies and which ones do not. The only solution is to go through the book over and over again, until the lines percolate down and drip toward understanding.

[Lahno-Motylev](#)

[Browne-Lakdawala](#)

[Naiditsch-Tiviakov](#)

[Manolov-Spasov](#)

[Bartel-Tiviakov](#)

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5 Nb5 – [Lahno-Motylev](#)

5 Bd3 – [Manolov-Spasov](#)

5 Nge2 – [Bartel-Tiviakov](#)

5...Nf6 6 Nge2 Bf5

7 Bf4 – [Browne-Lakdawala](#)

7 0-0 – [Naiditsch-Tiviakov](#)

□ Lahno, K
 ■ Motylev, A

Wijk aan Zee

2012

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♟c3 ♗d6 4.d4

♟f6 5.♟b5 QUESTION: Isn't this rather amateurish on White's part since she really doesn't gain a tempo, as Black will later regain time on the knight?

ANSWER: Well, you are correct that White fails to gain time by the manoeuvre, but that is not her point. White's point is to engineer c4 next and increase central space.

QUESTION: Is this idea dangerous for Black?

ANSWER: We are okay. Black gains counterplay on White's d4-pawn, which loses its c3 support.

♗b6 The queen can also retreat to d8, but this doesn't seem quite as logical, since Black then deprives himself of ...Rd8 ideas.

6.c4 White's point.

[Instead 6.d5 e6 7.♟e3 ♟c5 8.♟xc5 ♗xc5 9.d6 ♟a6 10.dxc7 0-0 11.c3 ♟d7 12.♟d4 ♟xc7 13.♟gf3 e5 14.♟b3 ♗e7

reaches the c3-Sicilian position from hell. All of White's efforts merely led to his lagging grievously behind in development. After 15.♟e2 Black has ♟fd5! .

Multipurpose:

1. White must deal with ...Nf4 ideas. To keep the knight out, White would have to weaken all his light squares with g3.

2. ...e4-e3 is in the air.

3. Black clears the way for his majority to roll forward with ...f5 later on.

Following 16.0-0 ♟f4 17.♟e1? (after this passive response White is busted) ♖ad8

18.♗c2 ♗f6 19.♟f3 ♟f5 20.♟e4?

it's time for an exercise.

EXERCISE (combination alert): Black to play and win.

ANSWER: Deflection/double attack. ♟h3+! , F.Armbrust-S.Tiviakov, Neustadt an der Weinstrasse 2009.]

[QUESTION: How does Black deal with 6.♟f4 ?

ANSWER: Simply ♟d5 does the job of protecting c7, and with tempo. If 7.♟g3 a6 8.c4 axb5 9.cxd5 e6 with an excellent position for Black.]

6...c6

[The bizarre Budapest Gambit-like idea 6...a6 7.♟c3 e5!? may actually be sound.

8.dxe5 ♟g4 9.♟h3 ♟c5 10.♗c2

was M.Gavric-B.Kurajica, Neum 2005, when Houdini thinks Black stands equal after ♟e6 .]

7.♟c3 g6 The most logical to my mind. Black trains forces upon d4. Others:

[a) 7...♟g4 8.♟e2 ♟xe2 9.♟gxe2 e6

10.0-0 . White's space may offer a sliver of an edge, since Black failed to apply pressure to d4, F.Amonatov-A.Zhigalko, Moscow 2009.]

[b) 7...e5!? (once again, the early ...e5 idea looks playable) 8.dxe5 ♟g4 9.♗e2 ♟c5 10.♟e4 0-0 11.♟xc5 ♗xc5 12.f4 ♗b4+ 13.♗d2 ♟a6 and Black's dangerous development lead compensates for the missing pawn, A.Khruschiov-N.Sulava, Ohrid 2001.]

8.♟f3 ♟g7

[With 8...♟g4 Black takes the opportunity to eliminate a defender of the tender d4-point. However, after 9.♟e2 ♟g7 10.0-0 0-0 11.a3 ♖d8 12.♟e3 ♟bd7 (12...♗xb2??

13.♟a4 traps the presumptuous queen)

13.b4 ♗c7 14.h3 ♟xf3 15.♟xf3

White's bishop-pair and extra space probably mean more than Black's counterattack against d4, M.Parligras-V. Epishin, Seville 2007.]

9.♟e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♟a6!?

[I would play 10...♖d8 and leave the knight uncommitted for the moment.]

11.a3 ♟f5 12.♟h4!? This decentralizing move strikes me as suspicious, since Black's bishop is perfectly happy to back up a square.

[However, if White follows with the logical looking 12.b4 then Black looks good after ♟e4 .]

12...♟e6 13.♟e3

[QUESTION: Why not 13.f4?! intending to ram the f-pawn forward?

ANSWER: White can't afford such distractions with her centre so loose. She would drop her d-pawn after ♖ad8 14.♟f3 ♟g4! .]

13...♖ad8 My intuition would be to swing the f8-rook to d8 and preserve the other one for c8.

14.h3 ♗c7 15.♖c1 Now d5 is in the air, but it isn't clear if this would hurt White more than Black, since she may well drop the d-pawn in doing so.

♗c8 He opens c7 for his wayward a6-knight.

[Also possible would be a line like 15...♟e8 16.b4 ♗b8 17.b5 cxb5 18.♟xb5 ♟ac7

19. ♖c3 . I prefer White, despite Black's pressure upon the centre.]

16.b4 White continues to annex space at a Napoleonic pace, but as Napoleon, Hitler and Bush discovered, it's easy to invade; not so easy to hold on to the gains.

♟c7 17. ♖a4 a6 18. ♖a5! Clearing the path for Na4 followed by Nc5 or Nb6.

h6 19.d5!? The enemies gaze into one another's eyes, mirror images of imminent, explosive violence. White forces the issue, deciding the time for half-measures has passed. The aggression dysfunction between the two sides couldn't be more pronounced, yet oddly enough, Black's position remains impervious to such sudden lunges.

cx d5 20. cx d5 ♟x d5! 21. ♟f4

[21. ♟x d5?! ♟fx d5 22. ♟f3 ♖b8 23. ♟b6 ♟xb6 24. ♖xb6 ♟b5! favours Black.]

21... ♟e6! In such anarchistic situations, it's best not to conjecture on disastrous futures which may or may not eventuate and just play what is correct, despite appearances. The knight dodges the barrage of pins with practiced expertise and Black's pieces begin to assume a fighting stance with a well-thought out queen sac, which really isn't much of a sac since Black gets full material compensation.

22. ♟x d5 ♖x d5 23. ♖xc8 ♖xc8! 24. ♖b6 ♟xf4 25. ♟f3 ♖b5 26. ♖a7 ♟h7!

QUESTION: Didn't White come out ahead in the deal?

ANSWER: No. Black got rook, knight, pawn and an active position for the queen. I prefer Black. Also, White fails to dent b7, a square clearly guarded by archaic magical charms.

27. ♖d1 e6 28. ♟xb7? Hey, I said "White fails to dent b7!" This is a miscalculation, probably in time pressure.

♖c7 29. ♖e3

[29. ♖xa6 ♖xb7 is lost for White, who simply allowed Black too much for the queen. The text is an attempt to airbrush over her previous error, but it fails since f4 isn't really hanging due to ...g5, which regains the piece.]

29... ♖xb7 30. ♖xf4 a5?! What? Black plays it safe and eliminates the queenside pawns rather than win a piece.

[Inexplicably (well, not inexplicably; this had to be one of those hallucinatory, perplexing time pressure decisions which makes no sense when you later go over the game) Motylev rejects the obvious and strong

30...g5! 31. ♖c4 gxh4 , possibly fearing 32. ♖c2+ , but Black has the simple block ♖f5! when White will be hard-pressed to save the game since Black gets too much for the queen. Perhaps Motylev feared the loss of his a-pawn, after which White would attain two connected queenside passers.]

31. bxa5 ♖xa5 32. ♟f3 ♖xa3 Black stands a shade better, but White should hold the game, with some difficulty. She lacks targets of any kind, while Black can work on f2 and also the dark squares.

33. ♖h4 ♖a5 34. ♟h2 ♖b2 35. ♖d2 ♖xd2 36. ♟xd2 ♖a2 37. ♟f3 ♟d5 38. ♟g5+?!

Going nowhere. She should just sit tight and see how Black plans to proceed.

♟g8 39. ♟e4? Returning to f3 and covering e5 was correct.

♟e5+! Inducing further weakening of White's structure. The old bishop begins yet another weary sermon, railing against the degenerating moral turpitude of White's structure and of society in general.

40.g3 ♟g7 41. ♖d8 ♖e2! Now f2 is the holy grail, the axis of Black's strivings.

42. ♖h4 EXERCISE (combination alert): The chain of White's logic comes apart, losing integrity. There are two ways for Black to pick off a pawn and destroy White's structure. You only need to find one of them.

ANSWER: Interference. The knight spews its effluent by-product upon White's position.

♟f4! The knight cuts a swath of destruction in whichever trajectory his angry gaze lies. Now White's wound opens further. The remaining white pieces can only helplessly watch as their pawns' lives ebb away.

[Also strong was 42... ♟f6! 43. ♟xf6 ♖xf2+ 44. ♟g1 ♟xf6 .]

43. gxf4 ♖xe4 44. ♖d8 ♖xf4 White is busted since in such positions the lone queen, with nothing to attack, remains quite inept in the unaccustomed role of defender. Rook, bishop and two pawns, plus multiple pawn targets for Black are too difficult a defensive task to overcome.

45. ♟g2 ♟d4 46.f3 ♟f6 47. ♖a5 ♖f5 48. ♖b4 ♖g5+ 49. ♟f2 h5 50. ♖c4 h4!

Gaining entry to g3.

51. ♟e3 ♖g2 52. ♖f1 The queen reverently supplicates the rook.

♖h2 White is virtually in zugzwang. Her debased queen must babysit h3 at Black's whim. She is meaningless now and obsolete.

53. ♟f4? ♟d4! 54. ♟e4 ♖d2! Mating nets,

starting with ...f5+, are in the air. This marks the beginning of an unspoken allegiance between rook and bishop, whose common bond is their enmity toward White's king.

55.♔f4 EXERCISE (combination alert): Black orders the white king's execution in a chilling whisper, as if the sound he emits modulates in synch with the condemned king's terror at the verdict. This one is not so easy to solve. Black has a cleverly hidden method of forcing the cornered white king into a mating net. How?

ANSWER: Seize control over g5 by introducing a new attacker: Black's king.

♔h6! **56.♚b5 f5!** **57.♚xf5** The dying queen's eyes stare at nothing and at no one, with empty serenity. The hearing represents no more than an empty formality, since the white king's guilt has already been established. White's last move appears permeated with hopeless fatuity, but when we are busted with no real options, we can only do what we can, given our hopelessness.

EXERCISE (combination alert): White's stalemate trap fails if you find the correct response.

ANSWER: **e5+!** Zwischenzug. Now the queen can be taken with impunity.

Summary: The 5 Nb5 lines can lead to Grünfeld-like positions where we challenge White's imposing centre from the wings. Also, the 7...e5 pawn sac mentioned in the notes looks quite sound and may take White unaware.

0-1

□ **Browne,W**
 ■ **Lakdawala,C**

US G/30 Championship, Pleasanton 2012
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 My old friend, GM Walter Browne, a favourite opponent, possesses that Warholian, innate ability to be at the centre of conversation when he enters the room.

d5 Practicing what I preach, even with a national title on the line and against a GM. I apologize for slipping this rather insipid draw into the book, but it's a good example of how to keep at bay a very strong opponent with the Scandi. I promise to add another game with this line (a real game this time, not a 17-move draw) next in the book.

2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘c3 ♗d6 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♙c4

In the hotel bar after the game, Walter confessed he basically smelled a rat and decided to avoid the ultra-sharp, ultra-theoretical 6 Ne5 lines (the mean spirited Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in this book), adding he didn't feel confident enough to trot it out in an important game. Moral: The Scandi is a supremely practical choice. Even GMs don't know the Scandinavian as well as they would a mainstream, blue-blooded brother or sister opening, like the King's Indian, or Najdorf Sicilian.

QUESTION: Isn't White's last move actually his most natural move on the board?

ANSWER: It is if you don't know the 6 Ne5 theory! As mentioned in the introduction to this book, in my opinion the 6 Ne5 lines are White's only theoretical threat for the Scandinavian player. All others should allow Black comfortable equality if we understand and are familiar with the theory (and since you possessed the brilliant judgement and foresight to purchase this delightful and instructive book, you do know the theory!).

c6 6.♘ge2 QUESTION: Why place the knight on the passive e2-square rather than centralize it further on f3?

ANSWER: On e2, White's knight serves a dual function:

1. White prepares to gain yet another tempo on Black's queen with a coming Bf4.
2. White can even play for the plan Ng3, f4 and f5, prying open the f-file and opening the game to assist his superior development.

♙f5 QUESTION: Is the g4-square an option to provoke f3?

[ANSWER: It is and Tiviakov tried it.

Essentially, we allow White the free move f3.

QUESTION: Does f3 help or hurt White?

ANSWER: Both. f3 helps if White plays the manoeuvre Ng3 and Ne4. Now if we play something like ...Nxe4 in response, White can recapture with his f-pawn, opening the f-file and also strengthening his central control. On the down side, if White is induced into f3, he can't make use of the f3-square for his queen as Browne did in this game, and the move also weakens the e3-square.

After 6...♙g4 (Tiv tries your plan!) 7.f3 ♙f5 (7...♙h5 allows White 8.♘f4 options) 8.♙f4 ♗b4 9.♙b3 e6 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.♙c7 ♖c8 (Tiviakov isn't about to fall for the cheapo 11...♙e7?? 12.a3 , trapping the queen) 12.a3 ♗e7 13.♙f4 ♗d8 14.♘g3 ♙g6

B01

15.♖e1 ♗e7 a draw was agreed. I don't believe White had anything in the final position, which has the appearance of nice Caro-Kann for Black, E.Berg-S.Tiviakov, British League 2011.]

7.♗f4 The alpha male bishop establishes primacy in the social pecking order over my now subservient queen. His bullying tone and manner continue to be a lightning rod for resentment for some time to come. Of course, we are used to this. Tempo losses fall in staccato, numbing sameness in the Scandi – our lot in life!

QUESTION: Can White try a Ng3/f4/f5 plan here?

ANSWER: He can, but must take care not to walk into cheapos.

QUESTION: What cheapos?

[ANSWER: This one: 7.0-0 e6 8.♘g3 ♗g6 9.f4? (9.♗b3 should be played first; Black can reply with ♖c7 10.f4 ♗d6! which prevents the intended f5) 9...♗xc2! , stealing a pawn in broad daylight, P. Charbonneau-A.Zatonskih, Reykjavik 2004.]

7...♗b4! I give him no time for a quick d5.

QUESTION: This undoubtedly loses more time. Why not to d8 instead?

[ANSWER: It does appear as if the queen wastes her time and charms on the c4-bishop, who refuses to give her a second look. Still, I feel the move played is Black's most accurate. We shouldn't allow White to open the position after 7...♗d8 8.d5! . I really don't like the looks of Black after cxd5 9.♘xd5 ♘xd5 10.♗xd5 ♗xd5 11.♗xd5 ♘c6 12.0-0-0 ♖c8 13.♗xc6+ ♖xc6 14.♘d4 ♖c5 15.♘xf5 ♖xf5 16.♗c7 with a dangerous development lead, M. Wach-P.Velicka, German League 2000.]

8.♗b3 e6 9.0-0 Once again, White has a massive development lead, but is frustrated by the fact that he lacks avenues to open the game.

♗e7?

[Correct is 9...♘bd7! 10.♖e1 ♗e7 and if 11.♗c7 Black is just fine after ♗d8! .]

[EXERCISE (combination alert): We reach that perilous intersection between life and death, success and failure. I banged 9...♗e7 out too quickly, hoping to increase my time advantage, and realized the move was an error right away. How can White take advantage?]

10.♘g3

[ANSWER: c7 is an open sore, a repository

for pain. 10.♗c7! has the threat: a3! trapping our queen. This in turn forces the rather nauseating move ♗d8 (10...♗f8 is too humiliating to contemplate) 11.♗xd8 ♘xd8 , as in K.Roederer-T.Lentrodt, German League 1998, when Black's silly-looking king faces potential for serious trouble. Black will have to endure something like ...Ke7, ...Rd8 and ...Kf8, after which he increased White's already formidable development lead.]

10...♗g6 11.♖e1?!

[Last chance for 11.♗c7! .]

11...0-0 Now Black is fine again. When I saw such a gift come my way, beautiful, soothing opiates, manufactured by my own body, flooded my blissed-out brain.

QUESTION: Doesn't this mean that the author of this book, an "expert" on the opening, fell for a book Scandinavian trap and simply lucked out because his opponent wasn't aware of the trap?

ANSWER: Basically, yes! I make no pretence of remembering everything I write! In my defence, I quote Louis XIV, the Sun King: "Do as I say, not as I do!"

12.♘ce4

[Too late for 12.♗c7 , after which ♗d8! is fine for Black.]

12...♘xe4 13.♘xe4 ♘d7 14.c3 ♗a5?!

Another shallow move on my part, which I immediately began to regret.

[Black secures counterplay with 14...♗b6! 15.♘d6 a5! .]

15.♗f3 ♘f6 16.♘d6! Destination e5.

♗b6 The street vendors continue to haggle, quibble and jostle for position.

[16...♗a6 would save a tempo, but place the queen on an offside square,]

[and I felt that handing over the dark squares with 16...♗xd6!? was too large a concession to eliminate the pesky knight.]

17.♘c4 The fact that a draw allows both players a share of first place is like one of those watering holes on the African savannah, where predator and prey agree to a state of truce while quenching their thirst. It is the only time the lion and the gazelle live in momentary harmony. Browne, as is his usual custom at the board, was way behind on the clock, 11 minutes to my 20 and quaking. He offered a draw which allowed us to share first place in the tournament, so I quickly took up his offer. White's forces, wafting for so long in reverie on past glories and dreams of a sunny

future, now come face to face with a somewhat disagreeable present of equality. White doesn't have much here, if anything. QUESTION: I think your Grandmaster opponent let you off the hook too easily, didn't he?

ANSWER: How so?

[QUESTION: After 17.♖c4 ♗d8 18.♘e5 White's knight feels completely at ease on e5. How does Black deal with the rather straightforward strategic threat: h4, g4 and h5?

ANSWER: Not a problem. The plan is too slow. Black can play a5 (18...♘d7?? 19.♗xg6 hxg6 20.♙xe6! wins). 19.-- (If 19.h4 ♘d5! when Black's game coughs and sputters its way apologetically, in a slow shuffle toward dreary equality – exactly what I was playing for.

; Here he can also try 19.♙d2 ♘d7!

(challenging the powerful e5-knight and also covering the h4-square) 20.♗xg6 hxg6 , but we Scandi players are not so afraid of giving up the bishop-pair in such positions. I realize the books all say this is '+=', but from my experience in such structures from Slav, Scandi and also the Fort Knox French, Black can still hold his own and White has great difficulty in proving a tangible advantage.

QUESTION: I see a winning combination for White here. What if he now plays 21.♙xe6 ?

ANSWER: Black responds with a counter combination, declining with the zwischenzug a4! 22.♙c4 ♘b6 . Suddenly two white pieces hang simultaneously and 23.♙ae1 ♙f6 wins material.

Summary: In situations when your queen is off by herself on b4, keep constant vigilance over White's Bc7! tricks.]

1/2-1/2

□ Naiditsch,A

■ Tiviakov,S

Croatian Team Championship

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2009

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♗xd5 3.♗c3 ♗d6 4.d4 c6

QUESTION: Isn't this is an odd move order?

ANSWER: We examine the ramifications of this move order next chapter. The idea is to prevent 5 Nb5.

5.♙c4 ♗f6 6.♗ge2 ♙f5 7.0-0 e6 8.♗g3 ♙g6 9.♗ce2!? QUESTION: Why a passive

retreat?

ANSWER: Not so passive. White plans Nf4, going after the bishop-pair and also targets e6 for potential sacs.

♗bd7

[QUESTION: Is 9...♙e7 more accurate, since Black can now play his queen back to d8?

ANSWER: Your move is a theoretical novelty in the position, but also quite logical. White can also switch to the f4-f5 plan after 10.f4 (10.♙f4 ♗d8 also looks okay for Black and justifies your idea) 10...♗d7 11.f5 exf5 12.♙d3 ♗e4 13.c3 0-0 14.♗c2 ♗xg3 15.♗xg3 and now the central counter c5! should equalize.]

10.♙f4

[After 10.♙b3 0-0-0 11.♙f4 ♗b4 12.c4 e5! 13.♙d2 ♗b6 14.c5 ♗c7 Black equalized since he broke up White's imposing centre, S.Del Rio Angelis-J.Pinheiro, Leon 2001.]

10...♗b4 11.♙b3 ♙e7 12.♙g5!?

QUESTION: What is the point of White's last move, which moves an already developed piece?

ANSWER: He clears f4 for his knight, the original idea behind his ninth move.

♗a5 13.h4?! QUESTION: Overly ambitious?

ANSWER: It's a tricky matter to dangle the bobble of temptation before an unpredictable force. Wishing and determined effort are not enough to mend and alter destiny's stubborn dictates. In this instance, loyalty to one's initiative doesn't win returned fealty from the object of trust. White places more faith in his attacking chances than the actual reality of the position is willing to return. White points his gun and fires. Unfortunately for him, the target, Black's king, is a hologram. White takes refuge in that eternally comforting narcotic: The attack. But to attack, one first needs a stable target. In this case Black refuses to cooperate, sending his king in the other direction. White's last move certainly is ambitious, perhaps borderline reckless, especially since Black hadn't yet committed to kingside castling.

0-0-0! Black adds pressure to White's d-pawn and asks him just why he pushed his h-pawn in the first place.

[This is much stronger than 13...h6 which Naiditsch probably expected: 14.♙d2 ♗c7 15.♗f4 ♙h7 16.♙xe6! fxe6 17.♗xe6 with clear compensation for the piece.]

14.♗f4 EXERCISE (planning): This is the

position White counted on. Black is unable to play ...h6, since Nxg6 would wreck his structure. How can Black implement a plan involving ...h6, without ruining his structure in the process?

ANSWER: Cover the g6 bishop first.

♟f8! 15.c3

[QUESTION: Can White target the g6 bishop with 15.♟xf6 ♟xf6 16.h5 ?

ANSWER: Two problems: First, your line drops the d-pawn, and secondly, f5 remains a stable square for the bishop, who isn't so inconvenienced after ♞xd4 17.♞f3 ♟f5 .]

15...h6 16.♟xf6 ♟xf6 17.♞f3 ♟h7 18.♟fh5

♟d7 19.♞fe1 ♞c7 Black achieved an excellent Caro-Kann-like position, mainly due to White's rather rash 13th move.

20.♟e4 ♟xh4! Excellent judgment. Black allows damage to his pawn structure to inflict even more damage to White's.

21.♞xf7 ♟xe4 22.♞xe4 ♞df8 23.♞xe6

[Of course, White declines the invitation to open the g-file with 23.♞xg7? ♟xf2+ 24.♟h1 ♞hg8 .]

23...♟xf2+ 24.♟h1 To the chronically depressed white king, the simple act of getting out of bed in the morning feels like a project of monumental scope.

♟b8 25.♞e2 ♟f6 26.♟xg7?!

[26.♞xf2 ♟xh5 also looks better for Black, but not as much as the game continuation.]

[EXERCISE (combination alert): The kingside bristles in an agitated vortex of energy. After 26.♟xg7 White's king isn't as secure as he may believe. Black has a clever combination which exploits this fact to win material. Let's see if you can find this difficult idea.]

ANSWER: Deflection.

26...♟g4!! 27.♞xg4 ♞f4! Thus begins the marginalization of the white queen's once unchallenged authority. The deadly rook check on h4 costs White his queen.

28.♞h5 ♞h4+ 29.♞xh4 ♟xh4 30.♟f5 ♟g5 White has rook, knight and pawn for the queen, which is enough materially, but his trouble remains a nagging weakness on the dark squares.

31.♞f1 ♞f8 32.♞f3 a6 33.♟e6 ♟a7 34.c4 ♞a5 Tiv plumbs the queenside, probing and testing for weakness.

35.b3 ♞a3 36.♞ef2 ♟d8 37.d5?!

Those who live in poverty become adept in fixing ailing household appliances and machinery.

QUESTION: How can White's last move be wrong? He creates a passed d-pawn and anchors his bishop.

ANSWER: Believe it or not, the move actually benefits Black since now dark-square punctures spew forth in an ugly discharge. But I agree that it is certainly the human move. Houdini may frown upon it, but which human could resist the creation of an advanced, passed d-pawn?

cx d5 38.cxd5 ♟b6 On this diagonal, the bishop transmutes old, beat-up furniture into gold.

39.♞c2 ♞b4 40.♞e2?

[40.♞c1 was necessary.]

40...♞g4! Threatening a nasty check on h5. The vain queen inserts herself. She cannot imagine a universe without herself at its central core.

41.♟h2 The king commits grave impositions on those who love him.

♞f6! 42.♞c2

[42.♞ef2 is also hopeless.]

[EXERCISE (combination alert): The geometry smiles upon Black after 42.♞c2 . How can he pick up more material?]

42...♞g6 This wins the d-pawn, but he could have had more.

[ANSWER: After 42...♞h5+! there follows the awful sound of bolts unhinging and popping, of chains snapping. The genetically altered psychopath, now free of her maker's asylum bonds, roams the countryside, to kill as she pleases. 43.♞h3 ♞d1! 44.♞hc3 ♟g1+ 45.♟h3 ♞xf5! 46.♟xf5 ♞h5+ (double attack) 47.♟g3 ♞xf5 is all over.]

43.♟g3 ♞h4+ 44.♟h3 ♞d4! The nimble queen hops about with easy grace. Double attack on d5, and also, the queen discharges a pulse of malevolent energy in the direction of g1.

45.♟e2 ♞xd5 46.♟f4 ♞d1

[Once again settling for just a pawn when he had much better with 46...♟g1+! 47.♟xg1 ♞xf3 48.♟xg6 ♞d1+ 49.♟h2 ♞xc2 .]

47.♟xg6 ♞xc2 48.♟f5 ♞xa2 49.♟h3

The king paces in agitation.

♞a1 50.♟f4 ♟c7 51.g3 ♞h1+ 52.♟g4

♞d1 53.♟e4 ♞d4 54.♟f5 ♞g7+ 55.♟h3

♞e5 56.♟e6 ♟b6 57.♟g4 The king watches mesmerized, unable to move or react in a meaningful manner.

♟e3 58.♟f4 EXERCISE (planning): Come up with a concrete winning plan for Black.

ANSWER: Push the queenside majority and create a passed pawn.

b5 59.♖g2 ♙c1 60.♗f4 a5 61.♗d3 ♜d4+ 62.♗f4 a4 White is curiously tangled and nothing can be done about the surging a-pawn.

63.bxa4 bxa4 64.♞d3 ♜g7+ 65.♙f3 a3 66.♗e6 ♜f7 Summary: Remember that we have queenside castling options if White begins to push pawns on the kingside with reckless abandon.

0-1

□ **Manolov,I**

■ **Spasov,V**

Sunny Beach

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2012

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♜xd5 3.♗c3 ♜d6 4.d4 ♗f6 5.♙d3 QUESTION: Why develop the bishop to d3, rather than the more aggressive c4-square?

ANSWER: White reasons that Black will probably castle kingside. If this is the case, he wants his bishop to aim directly at h7, rather than post it on c4, where it stares at a wall on e6.

QUESTION: So are you saying the move is more accurate than playing to c4?

ANSWER: No. The d3 posting contains a problem as well: d4, although not hanging, has been weakened. Black takes full advantage of this with his next move.

♗c6! Target: d4.

[Of course the d-pawn isn't really hanging. 5...♜xd4?? 6.♙b5+ drops the queen.]

6.♗e2

[6.♗f3 is hardly ever played, and with good reason. It isn't logical since Black can play ♙g4, intending queenside castling and possibly ...e5.]

6...e5! The second point of developing our knight to c6: We achieve an instantaneous freeing ...e5 break and with it, possibly the better end of equality.

7.dxe5 Others:

[a) 7.0-0 is perhaps White's most logical course. He sacs a pawn, hoping to utilize his development lead: ♗xd4 8.♗xd4 ♜xd4 (8...exd4?! walks into 9.♗b5 ♜b6 10.♗xd4) 9.♞e1 ♙d6 10.♙g5 ♙e6 11.♜f3 . Now Black returned the pawn and achieved a good position by castling queenside in A.

Sokolov-I.Nikolaidis, Athens 2005.]

[b) 7.♗b5 ♜e7! 8.dxe5 ♗xe5 9.0-0 a6 10.♗bc3 ♙g4 11.h3 ♙h5 (Black is ready to castle queenside, taking over the initiative) 12.♙f5!? g6 13.♙g5 (threat: Nd5) ♞d8 14.♜c1 ♙xe2 15.♞e1 h6 16.♙h4 ♙g7 17.♞xe2 0-0 18.♙g3 ♗h5 and Black survived the complications with a nice position. White has no good method of exploiting the pin on the e-file, D.Kilgour-P. Spitz, correspondence 2007.]

7...♗xe5 I think Black already stands a shade better. He threatens to pick off the bishop-pair and damage White's structure as well.

8.♙b5+ c6 9.♜xd6 ♙xd6 10.♙a4

QUESTION: Isn't this position drawish?

ANSWER: A lot of pieces still remain on the board, even if queens are off. Also, Black has something concrete on his plate, namely queenside expansion, while White, although solid, lacks meaningful counterplay.

b5! 11.♙b3 a5 Black generates a queenside space edge and some initiative.

12.a4? White's fortunes plummet after this move.

[12.a3 was necessary to avoid getting shoved around as he did in the game. What was once the free-flowing motion of White's pieces slowly grows viscous.]

12...b4 QUESTION: Didn't Black just create a hole on c4?

ANSWER: He did, but it is highly unlikely White will ever seize control over that square. Black, on the other hand, looks upon the untilled soil of the queenside, envisioning his pleasure garden.

13.♗d1 ♙a6! A deadly bacillus enters the bloodstream, travelling along the a6-f1 diagonal. White's game is clearly in a downward spiral and continues to drift rudderless, unable to formulate an unravelling plan.

14.♙a2?! QUESTION: What is the point of White's last move?

ANSWER: I don't have a clue. White needs to bring something, anything, out.

[I would go for something like 14.♙f4 0-0 15.♗e3 . I don't claim to like White's position, but this is certainly better than what he gets in the game continuation.]

14...0-0 15.♗e3 ♞fe8 16.h3 ♙c5 17.♙d2?! [17.♗g3 g6 18.♙d2 ♙c4! was White's dim, final chance.]

17...♗e4 This is a nightmare for White! The ship begins to recede deeper and deeper into

the water. Soon, the terror-stricken submerged crew screams bubble in futile protest.

18.♖d1 ♜ad8 19.♗c1 EXERCISE (planning/combination alert): We have all been here. It goes without saying that Black's forces eclipse their introverted counterparts. Our position is overwhelming but where is the concrete, winning idea?

♙b6 Of course he is still winning after this move, but Black has an elegantly simple (but infuriatingly difficult to find!) attacking idea with:

[ANSWER: 19...♗g5!! . The knights are drawn to f3, a mate threat. White's defenders remain faultlessly loyal to their king, and also utterly useless in his defence. If 20.f4 he gets obliterated after ♗ef3+ 21.gxf3 ♗xf3+ 22.♙f2 ♜xd2+ .]

20.♙b1 Speculation flourishes in environments with an absence of concrete data. I don't claim to understand the driving motivation behind this move. The bishop's infatuation with contraction continues unabated. There is an acting term called "flop sweat", where the stage actor realizes he is losing his or her audience, and begins to sweat and also forget lines. This seems to be the case for the introverted bishop. White's position begins to look like one of my games! It seems he suffers from conflicted fealties between cautious restraint and outright passivity, and his demoralized defenders sit around in glum apathy.

♗c4! Black's forces stare transfixed at d2. The d2-bishop's cries of righteous indignation ring hollow and the remainder follows in the nature of an anti-climax.

21.♗d3 ♗cxd2 22.♜xd2 ♗xd2 23.♙xd2 ♙d4 24.b3 Just look at that unhappy lad on b1, a relic, eternally unemployable.

♜d6 25.♜d1 ♜de6 Summary: I feel that Black equalizes quite comfortably in this line, but there is only one problem: It is hard to remember to play ...Nc6!, since we Scandi people tend to toss in ...c6 as an autopilot reaction to all white set-ups. This one is an exception, so remember: On 5 Bd3 we react with the atypical 5...Nc6!.

0-1

B01

□ **Bartel,M**
■ **Tiviakov,S**

Wroclaw

2010

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♜xd5 3.♗c3 ♜d6 4.d4 ♗f6 5.♗ge2 QUESTION: Why didn't White first bring out his light-squared bishop before playing Ne2?

ANSWER: White isn't sure where he wants to place the bishop yet, so he stalls. He will gain the standard Bf4 tempo, move his e2-knight, and only later decide where to develop his light-squared bishop.

QUESTION: Can White try a plan of Bg5 followed by Qd2 and queenside castling?

ANSWER: Yes, that plan is also common. We usually end up in Caro-Kann-like positions.

For example:

[a) 5.♙g5 (intending Qd2 and 0-0-0) c6 6.♜d2 ♙f5 7.0-0-0 ♗bd7 8.♗f3 e6 9.♗h4 ♙g6 10.♗xg6 hxg6 11.g3 ♜c7 and Black achieved an acceptable Caro-Kann-like position, I.Smirin-V.Nevednichy, Turin Olympiad 2006.]

[b) 5.♙e3 leads to similar positions: ♙f5 6.♜d2 c6 7.♗f3 ♗bd7 8.0-0-0 e6 9.♗h4 ♙g6 10.f3 ♜c7 11.♗xg6 hxg6 12.♗e4 (intending to raid the dark squares with Bf4) ♗d5! 13.♙f2 b5! . Black entrenches his d5-knight and achieves a decent position, P. Enders-S.Cicak, German League 2005. Now if White continues with his plan 14.♙g3 ♜b6 15.♗d6+ ♙xd6 16.♙xd6 ♜d8 (Black can also try 16...c5!? 17.dxc5 ♗xc5 18.♙e5) 17.h4 ♗f6 leads to a sharp game where the knights hold their own against White's pair of bishops.]

5...c6 6.♙f4 ♜d8 This sober move is best.

[Tiv took his theft or death philosophy a tad too far with the experimental 6...♜b4?! 7.a3! ♜xb2 (consistent but he should decline with 7...♜b6) 8.♙c7! (threat: Ra2! trapping the queen) ♙e6 (after 8...♗d5? 9.♗xd5 cxd5 10.♜b1 ♜xa3 11.♜b3 ♜a6 12.♗f4 ♜h6 13.♗xd5 ♜e6+ 14.♗e3 Black fell dangerously behind in development in P. Szablowski-S.Tiviakov, Bad Wörishofen 2011) 9.♗a4 ♜b5 10.♗c5 b6 11.♗xe6 fxe6 with a shady-looking structure for Black.]

7.♜d3 ♙g6! A slight violation of our Scandinavian opening protocol, yet necessary.

[QUESTION: Why not the traditional

development with 7...♔g4 and ...e6 soon?

ANSWER: White crosses this plan with

8.♘g3! intending h3 next.]

8.♘g3 ♕g7 9.0-0-0 ♖e6 Black's position is bedrock solid and he has at least equal attacking chances on the queenside.

10.h4 h6

[QUESTION: Why didn't Black respond with 10...h5 which puts an end to White's h-pawn pushing ambitions?

ANSWER: The trouble is pushing the h-pawn two squares to h5 also weakens the g5-square. Tiviakov probably didn't like 11.♘ge4 ♘xe4 12.♘xe4 when a2 isn't really hanging and White's knight may soon jump into g5. However, Houdini thinks the game is still even, so maybe it's just a matter of taste.]

11.f3 Intending Nge4.

[QUESTION: Can White weaken the f5-square with 11.h5 ?

ANSWER: Black looks okay after g5 12.♔d2 ♖d7! which covers the f5-square. Play may continue 13.f4 gxf4 14.♔xf4 ♘a6 with a decent game for Black.]

11...♖a5 12.♘b1 ♘bd7 13.♘ge4 ♔d8

Now White's queen gets nervous along the d-file.

14.♖e3 ♘b6 Both d5 and c4 are tender squares for White.

15.♘xf6+ ♕xf6! 16.a3

[16.♔xh6?! ♘d5 17.♘xd5 ♖xd5 18.b3 ♕xd4 regains the pawn with interest.]

16...♘d5 17.♘xd5 ♖xd5 18.c4 ♖a5

19.♖e2

[19.♔xh6?! ♖b6! regains the pawn, once again with the superior position, since 20.c5?? fails miserably to ♖b3 21.♖xb3 ♔xb3 22.♔d3 ♕c4 .]

19...♖a4 20.♖e5! A good move, eliminating Black's most annoying piece.

♕xe5 21.♖xe5 0-0 QUESTION: Didn't Black just castle into a mating attack?

ANSWER: Black's defensive resources are adequate to the challenge in this position.

22.h5 g5 23.d5

[23.f4 ♕xc4 24.♕xc4 ♖xc4 25.fxg5 ♔d5 26.♖xe7 ♔xg5 looks fine for Black.]

23...cxd5 24.cxd5 ♕c8 25.♔d4

[25.♖xe7?? drops a piece to ♔fe8 .]

25...♖d7 26.♕d3 ♖d6 27.♖e4 f5 28.♖e3

e5! Principle: Meet a wing attack with central counters. Now we have a new imbalance: Black's kingside pawn majority versus White's passed d-pawn.

29.♖b4 b6 30.♖e1 ♔de8 31.g4!

White attempts to puncture a hole for his pieces on e4. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to track and decipher White's insinuations: He plays for mate.

♘g7

[31...fxg4 32.fxg4 ♕d7 33.♖e4 ♖e7 34.♖g6+ ♖xg6 35.hxg6 ♘g7 36.♖be4 ♔fe8 looks okay for Black.]

32.♖c4 ♖xd5!? Understandable in that he rids himself of the pesky d-pawn, but in doing so, he allows a white rook to the seventh rank.

[32...♖e7 looks like a better choice.]

33.♖c7+ ♘h8

[No choice, since 33...♔f7?? walks into 34.♕c4 .]

34.♖xa7 fxg4?? There is hidden structure within the chaos, its meaning opaque and alien, like whale song. It isn't enough to just head in the right direction. The specifics of how to maintain the upward trajectory is cause for grave concern.

EXERCISE (planning): With his last move, Black underestimated the force of White's attack. Find a continuation which slices open a rich vein of attacking potential.

35.♕c2? White submits to the cannibalization of his kingside to feed his kingside attacking ambitions. In a position of multiple possible futures, White's attack, now just a mirage, was an outcome which failed to surface into a reality over the board.

[ANSWER: Bartel could have won the game with 35.♖h7+! ♘g8 36.♖xh6 . Now g5 is hanging and ♔f4 37.♕e4 ♖f7 38.fxg4 ♕xg4 39.♖g6+ ♘f8 40.♖xg5 is completely hopeless for Black.]

35...♖xf3

[Stronger was 35...♕e6! 36.♕b3! ♕f5+! 37.♘a2 ♖d4 when Black forces a superior ending.]

36.♖xb6 ♕e6 37.♖c7?? Another time pressure blunder. This is like knocking on the door of a vacant house. No one ever answers.

[Instead, 37.♖h7+! ♘g8 38.♖xh6 g3 39.♔d1 ♖a2+ 40.♘c1 ♔f2 41.♖g6+ ♘h8 42.♖h6+ leads to perpetual check.]

37...♔f7! 38.♖a5 The embarrassed, rebuffed queen apologizes for the presumption with bowed head.

♖xa7 39.♖xa7 Black's forces tense and coil before the spring.

♖a2+! The queen's flashing, angry eyes take in the images of those who would oppose her, making a mental note to execute them soon.

A deadly counterattack begins. Now the long festering light-square wound turns septic.

40.♔c1 The king gesticulates wildly to order a cease fire, but his decimated army can't hear, since the dead don't follow orders.

♚a1+ 41.♔d2 ♖d8+

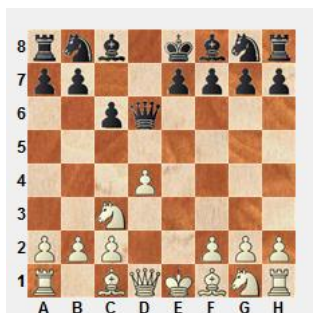
[The scale of the devastation becomes painfully apparent: 41...♖d8+ 42.♔e2 ♕c4+ 43.♔f2 (when a condemned man approaches the scaffold, the time for regrets for past crimes comes too late) ♖d2+! picks off a rook and with check, so White has no time to deliver mate on h7 himself. To the white king, it feels like a dozen armed demons, carrying a dozen weapons each, slash simultaneously in every direction, with impossible quickness and accuracy. Summary: One of the most difficult things to organize is when to play ...g6 and when to play our standard ...Bf5 (or ...Bg4) and ...e6 set-ups.]

0-1

Chapter Six

The Early ...c6 Move Order

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 d4 c6



In this chapter, the reader is offered an optional move order designed to prevent the Nb5 lines. When the mood suits you, sometimes toss in 4...c6!? rather than the traditional 4...Nf6. In essence, we raise an arm to knock on the door, pause to think better of it, and lower our arm, veering away from traditional move orders. The idea, which appears impromptu, in reality is crafted by careful design. Normally White just transposes to normal lines, but there is one independent option: He can play 5 Ne4!? when we must respond with the bizarre 5...Qe6 6 Qe2, reaching a dark thicket, which offers scope for original play - but only if you allow it.

[Bologan-Tiviakov](#)

[Felczer-Alber](#)

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1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 d4 c6 5 Ne4 Qe6 6 Qe2 Nf6

7 f3 – [Bologan-Tiviakov](#)

7 Nxf6+ – [Felczer-Alber](#)

□ Bologan, V

■ Tiviakov, S

Croatian Team Championship

2009

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♗c3 ♗d6 4.d4 c6

QUESTION: You mentioned this move order is used to prevent the early Nb5 lines, but other than that, doesn't it simply transpose back to normal lines?

ANSWER: There is a single independent variation from White which he may use in an attempt to punish Black's move order. We examine this deviation in this chapter.

5.♗e4!? White's point: He takes advantage of the fact that Black fails to develop a knight to f6, and attacks Black's queen.

QUESTION: What is the problem? Why can't we simply retreat to d8?

ANSWER: Then we reach a Caro-Kann position with one nasty change: White is up a full tempo over book lines!

QUESTION: If that is the case, doesn't it follow that the early ...c6 line is completely unplayable for Black?

ANSWER: Not if he plays his next move.

♗e6 The only move if Black doesn't want a move-down Caro-Kann.

QUESTION: But isn't Black's move terribly artificial?

ANSWER: It certainly is, yet fully playable only because it forces White into an equally awkward response.

6.♗e2 ♗f6 The e4-point should be quickly challenged.

[No one has tried 6...♗d7 which looks fully playable to me, but may just transpose to a later note.]

7.f3 QUESTION: Isn't White getting all tangled up? Why not just exchange knights?

ANSWER: That is also possible and we look at that line next game. The trouble with exchanging on f6 is that after ...exf6, Black frees his position and develops smoothly.

g6 Black has two other untangling ideas in the position, both of which may be superior to the one played in the game:

[a) 7...♗bd7 8.g3 ♗xe4 (8...♗d5!? 9.c3 e5!? is an untried idea which looks quite reasonable for Black) 9.fxe4 ♗g6 prepared ...e5 in M.Linker-V.Gergel, Pardubice 2011. Play may continue 10.e5 ♗b6 with a reasonable position for Black, due to his control over the central light

squares.]

[b) 7...♗d5 (an attempt to untangle with tempo on d4) 8.c3 ♗f5 9.♗g3 (9.♗xf6+?! gxf6 gives Black a very nice looking Bronstein-Larsen Caro position, where White's Qe2 and f3 moves make little sense) 9...g6!? was V.Nevednichy-G. Ardelean, Brasov 2011. (Also possible is 9...♗g6 10.♗h3 ♗bd7 11.♗f4 ♗d6 12.h4 ♗d5 13.♗e4 ♗xe4 14.♗xe4 ♗7f6 when Black looks perfectly okay, despite White's bishop-pair.)]

8.g3! White threatens a nasty trick next with Bh3.

♗xe4?! QUESTION: Why did Black fix White's pawn structure?

ANSWER: After Black's last move, a concession, he cedes a long-term edge to his opponent.

[Perhaps Tiviakov wants to avoid 8...♗bd7 9.♗h3 ♗d5 10.♗d2! when the d4-pawn is immune and White threatens c4! next. However, after ♗xe4 (10...♗g7?? loses on the spot to 11.c4! ♗xd4 12.♗c3 ♗b6 13.♗xd7+!) 11.fxe4 ♗b5 12.♗xb5 cxb5 the ending looks quite playable for Black, despite White's impressive centre.]

9.fxe4 Over the coming moves both sides manage to untangle.

♗g7 10.♗h3 f5 11.♗f3 0-0 12.♗g5 ♗d6?!

[12...♗d7 is more accurate, but I still dislike Black's game after 13.exf5 gxf5 14.♗e3 .]

13.c3 Unnecessary.

[White can play 13.♗f4! ♗xd4 14.c3 ♗c5 15.exf5 gxf5 16.0-0-0 with a powerful initiative for White. In fact, Houdini claims Black is completely busted here.]

13...h6 14.♗f4 ♗d7!

[Avoiding the cheapo 14...♗d8?? 15.♗c4+! , winning material.]

15.♗f3 ♗e6 16.♗e5 ♗d7 Black challenges the e5 stronghold.

17.exf5 gxf5 18.0-0!?

[Bologan wants more than just a better ending after 18.♗d3 , the move I would play.]

18...♗xe5 19.dxe5 Black achieved a minor concession by plugging up the e5 hole with a white pawn. Now White only has a space edge and Black's position remains solid.

♗g6 20.c4! Halting any ...Be6 and ...Bd5 idea even before its conception.

♗e6 21.♗g2 ♗fd8 22.b3 ♗d7 23.♗f3 ♗f7 24.♗ad1 ♗ad8 25.♗xd7 ♗xd7 26.h4!

White grabs yet more space.

♞e6 27.h5 ♞d8 28.♞e1 ♞e8! In order to play ...Qd7 without allowing a pawn fork on e6.
29.a4 ♞d7! Tiv sets a drawing trap, which Bologan avoids.

30.♞e3! Double attack on a7 and h6.

a6! 31.♟f2!

[Bologan isn't interested in 31.♞d1 which only leads to freeing swaps for Black.]

[QUESTION: I ask the obvious: Why not pick off a pawn with 31.♞xh6 ?

ANSWER: Bologan sees through Tiv's rather deep trap. Grabbing the pawn leads to a drawn ending after ♞xh6 32.♞xh6 ♞d2! 33.♞xd2 ♞xd2 . Now if 34.♞d1 ♞xd1+ 35.♞xd1 ♟g7 36.♟f2 ♟h6 37.g4 fxd4 38.♞xg4 a5! and Black regains the lost pawn.]

31...♟h7 The king sits in solitary confinement, suffering from sensory deprivation.

32.♞e2 ♞d4 Based on the principle: Every trade helps the side which is cramped.

33.♞xd4 ♞xd4 34.e6! The e8-bishop is the dead pharaoh's servant, destined to be entombed into the darkness to serve his god/king master in the afterlife. What may seem like a risky winning attempt which may lead to overextension, is in reality White's best practical chance to pull off a win.

[Black should draw comfortably after 34.♞d1 ♞xd1 35.♞xd1 ♟g8 36.♟e3 e6 37.♟d4 ♟f8 , preventing king entry.]

34...♞e4 35.♞f3 ♞d4+ 36.♟f1 ♞xe1+

37.♟xe1 A frustrating position for Black. The e6-pawn is there for the taking, but there is nobody to do the job since Black remains tied up.

EXERCISE (planning/critical decision): Black cannot drift planless. We must take action, but where? We reach the fulcrum moment. One plan loses, the other puts up much greater resistance and should probably hold on to the draw.

Plan A: Should Black play 37...b5, to reduce the number of queenside pawns?

Plan B: Or should he remain passive on the queenside and try to slowly untangle on the kingside, with a manoeuvre like ...Kg7, ...Bf6 and ...Bg5?

We arrive at a crossroads between the rational and the intuitive. Decide carefully.

b5? After a period of dormant lull, Black initiates a rash, attempted resurgence, based on the mistaken assumption: What was once believed to be untillable, arid soil, in reality

contains a hidden aquifer of counterplay. This isn't the path to absolution and he should lose after this impatient lashing out. This plan, contains shape, form and substance on the exterior, yet when examined deeper, remains hollow on the inside.

[ANSWER: The passive plan may hold the draw after 37...♟g7! . It appears on the surface that Black's pieces struggle about in claustrophobic quarters, unfit to sustain human life, but by some quirk, this is the only prayer to save Black. After 38.♟e2 ♞f6! (intending ...Bg5) 39.g4 fxd4 40.♞xg4 ♞g5! 41.♞e5+ ♞f6 42.♞g3 White's bishops jerk and spasm. It is exceedingly difficult for White's king to infiltrate the queenside. Also, White must watch out for his own weaknesses on h5 and e6. I defended Black versus Houdini and held the position.]

38.cxb5 cxb5 39.a5! Dual purpose:

1. White must preserve as many queenside pawns as possible.

2. Black hoped to scour the queenside of pawns, yet after White's last move stubborn grime remains on a6.

b4

[Alternatively, 39...♞c3+ 40.♞d2 ♞xd2+ 41.♟xd2 ♟g7 42.♞b7 ♟f6 43.♞xa6 ♟xe6 44.♞c8+! ♟d6 (of course, 44...♟f6?? loses immediately to 45.a6 ♞c6 46.♞b7) 45.♞xf5 ♞xh5 46.♟c3 when White's outside passer is too formidable for Black to hold the position.]

40.♞e2! Cracking the vertebrae which held Black's game together. Now a6 falls and what was once a sound queenside structure lies in a twisted heap, a vile coagulum unfit for habitation.

♟g7

[Or 40...♞b5 41.♞xb5 axb5 and the a-pawn once again costs Black a piece.]

41.♞xa6 No need for words. The bishop's blood-flecked sword explains it all. Having constructed and refurbished his new home on a6, the time for occupancy arrives.

♞xh5 Black is busted since he can't effectively deal with the outside passed a-pawn supported by White's bishops.

42.♞b7 ♟f6 43.a6 ♟xe6 44.♟d2 ♟d7 45.♞b8 ♞f7 46.♟c2 h5 47.a7 ♞xa7

48.♞xa7 Black's two pawns are not enough compensation for White's extra bishop.

♟d6 49.♞f3 e5 50.♞e3 ♞g6 51.♟c1 h4 A desperate attempt to achieve counterplay with his own passers. There seems to be no

end to the bloodletting. Physicians in the middle ages failed to comprehend: The patient needs his own blood to give him the strength to survive the illness.

52.gxh4 f4 53.♙d2 ♘c5 54.h5 ♙h7

55.♙g4 ♘d4 56.♙xb4 e4 57.♘d2

Summary: 4...c6 5 Ne4 leads to original positions. Both 7...Nbd7 and 7...Qd5 look like improvements over Tiviakov's 7...g6. This system comes in handy if you know an opponent favours the early Nb5 lines, and can be used to throw him off his preparation.

1-0

□ **Felczer,K**

■ **Alber,H**

Kaufungen

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2003

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♗xd5 3.♘c3 ♗d6 4.d4 c6 5.♘e4 ♗e6 6.♗e2 ♘f6 7.♘xf6+

[White refuses to play contorting moves like 7.f3 , and goes ahead and swaps.]

7...exf6 QUESTION: This move seems like an odd choice. Why does Black recapture away from the centre?

ANSWER: He allows White a healthy queenside pawn majority and inflicts upon himself a crippled kingside majority, but he does so to develop rapidly. Think about this: We have the Exchange Ruy Lopez, which goes 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Bxc6. Now, isn't Black doing exactly the same thing (capturing away from the centre to free his position) with 4...dxc6? The position we reach after 7...exf6 closely resembles a line of the Caro-Kann which goes: 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Nf6 5 Nxf6+ exf6!?.

QUESTION: Why can't Black recapture on f6 with queen or with his g-pawn for that matter?

ANSWER: Strangely enough, there isn't a single example of either of those two suggested recaptures. So let's take a look:

[a) After 7...♗xf6 8.c3 (8.♘f3?! is met with ♙g4 when Black inflicts damage to White's structure on f3) 8...♙f5 Black's position looks perfectly playable to me and Houdini says even too.]

[b) However, following 7...gxf6 8.♙e3 that black queen on e6 looks out of sorts. On the other hand, White can develop his kingside smoothly with Nf3, g3, Bg2 and 0-0.]

8.♘f3 Alternatives:

[a) 8.♙f4 ♙e7 9.♘f3 ♘d7 10.♗xe6 fxe6 11.0-0-0 ♘f7 12.h4 h5 and I don't believe White's extra space constitutes any real problem for Black, whose position remains very solid, T.Luther-V.Nevednichy, Predeal 2007.]

[b) 8.g3 b6 9.♙h3 (forcing the issue) ♗xe2+ 10.♘xe2 ♙a6+ 11.♘d1 ♘d7 12.♘e2 0-0-0 when Black's superior piece activity and development eclipse White's structural portfolio, U.Kersten-H.Alber, Kaufungen 2003.]

8...♙d6 9.♗xe6+!? QUESTION: Why did he agree to fix Black's structure?

ANSWER: White decided to rely on his slight space edge. The trouble was his own queen was rather awkwardly placed on e2, so he decided to swap.

[Of course, he could also play 9.♙e3 0-0 10.♗d2 , but decided against the loss of time involved.]

9...fxe6 10.♙d3 0-0 11.0-0 c5 The freeing break, after which Black looks fine.

12.♙e3 Essentially agreeing to opposite wing pawn majorities.

[It would take a brave person to risk an isolani position with queens already off the board, with 12.c3 cxd4 13.cxd4!? .]

12...♘d7 13.c4

[I would avoid this early c-pawn push and play with the pieces, with something like 13.♗fd1 .]

13...♗e8

[Black also unravels after 13...b6 14.♙e4 ♗b8 15.♗fd1 ♗d8 .]

14.♗fd1 a6 15.dxc5?! A violation of the principle: Don't release central pawn tension without good reason. In this instance, he simply hands over tempi to Black.

♙xc5 16.♙xc5 ♘xc5 There we go. Opposite wing pawn majorities.

QUESTION: What are the principles in this situation?

ANSWER: Very simple:

1. Stall your opponent's majority.
2. Push yours forward!

17.♙c2 a5! See the first point in the above list!

18.b3 e5 See the second point in the list! I already prefer Black, who enjoys the more robust majority and the superior remaining bishop.

19.♗d5 b6 20.♗d6 ♗b8 21.♗ad1

White's control over the d-file brings him little

benefit.

g4 Now ...e4 is in the air.

22.f1d5 e6!?

[QUESTION: Why on earth did he reject 22...xf3 23.gxf3 ?

ANSWER: Black probably feared loss of control over the light squares.]

23.f2 e8 24.a4? White fears ...a4, but the remedy proves far healthier than the feared disease. This accommodating gesture is a strategic error, violating the principle: Don't fix pawns on the same colour as your remaining bishop. Now his dark squares begin to leak, and b4 and c5 are the ugly effluvium emanating from his unfortunate decision. Also, the priest on c2, an unwitting accomplice in a crime he never intended to commit, upon entering the gateway of hell, realizes that within this realm, prayer is futile. After all, who is there to grant him grace?

f7 25.e1 e7 26.f1

[Of course h7 isn't really hanging, since White's structure is in shambles after 26.xh7?? xb3 27.f1 d4! which wins the exchange.]

26...g5 27.f3 More pawns on the wrong colour! Houdini incorrectly evaluates the position at equal.

h6 28.f2 f8 29.xd8 xd8 30.xd8 xd8 31.e3 f5 It is almost as if Black is up a pawn, since his pawn majority is fluid, whereas White's remains cryogenically frozen. **32.d3 f4+ 33.d2**

[33.e2?? leads to a lost king and pawn ending after f5! 34.xc5 xc2 35.d2 bxc5 36.xc2 e7 37.d3 f6 38.e4 when White's king nervously makes a warding, crucifix sign with his hands, as if facing down the king vampire in a nest of undead (Black's soon-to-be-queening pawns!). After e6 White soon runs out of pawn moves, allowing Black's king into f5, then a timely ...e4 shot wins: 39.d3 (all pawn moves lose easily as well) f5 40.d2 e4 and Black wins.]

[EXERCISE (planning): Everything runs smoothly for Black, but how to make further progress after 33.d2 ?]

ANSWER: Activate the kingside pawn majority.

33...e4! The e-pawn, a pebble tossed into a waveless pond, disturbs the stillness.

34.fxe4

[34.xc5?? e3+ 35.e2 bxc5 is completely hopeless for White, despite Houdini's delusional, near-equal

evaluation.]

34...xe4+ 35.e2 c5 36.d2 e4+ 37.e2 g4+ 38.e1 c5 39.e5 e6 40.d2 c7 Finally, Black gets on with it and centralizes his king.

41.c3 d6 42.f3 d7 If we compare achievements over the last 20 moves, we see that Black achieved a lot, whereas White's game, to the contrary, lost ground:

1. Angry dark welts rise up on b4 and c5, the psoriatic dark squares, coupled with White's corrupted, unwieldy structure.

2. Black is in essence a pawn up, even though technically he stands even, since his majority rolls while White's remains stagnant.

43.b4!? Not every problem has a given solution. Sometimes the problem is simply terminal. That which is done cannot be undone. White's game, just clinging to life, now approaches the outskirts of death.

QUESTION: How would Black win if White just sat tight?

[ANSWER: A sample versus Houdini: 43.h3 c6 44.e1 e5 45.d1 e4+ 46.c2 f2 47.f3 (47.e2? d4 is even worse for White) 47...xf3 48.fxf3+ e4 (the king seeps through a complex warren of hidden tunnels and byways, past the defensive barrier, to the doorstep of the kingside) 49.d2 (or 49.c5!? bxc5 50.c3 d1+ 51.c4 e3+ 52.xc5 xg2 53.b4 xf3 54.bxa5 g3 55.a6 f3 56.a7 f2 57.a8 when White wins the queening race, but loses the game after f1) 49...d3 50.dh2 (the knights swing from tree to tree with primate grace) d5 51.c3 e3 52.dg4+ e2 53.fh6 f2 54.f7 d6 and g2 falls, after which it is an easy win for Black.]

43...xa4+ 44.xa4 xa4 45.c5+ bxc5 46.bxa5 c6 Not only is Black up a pawn, but his bishop dominates as well. This isn't a pluralist rule, with each minor piece controlling 50% of the authority. Warnings, insinuations and outright threats pour torrentially over the leaky defences until water swills and sloshes ankle deep.

47.e1 b5 48.g3 fxg3 49.hxg3 d5

50.g4 e4 The king is granted diplomatic dispensation to freely enter enemy territory in absolute safety.

51.d2 a6 52.c2 f4 53.e3 c4

54.d5+ xg4 55.c7 b7 56.a6 c6

57.a7 h5 Summary: Readers, give 7...exf6!? a try. It looks fully playable and is guaranteed

to surprise your opponent.
0-1



Chapter Seven

The 5...g6 Scandinavian

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 d4 Nf6 5 Nf3 g6



The biggest complaint about the ...c6 lines is not that they are unsound, but that they tend to veer toward the overly solid, and therefore can be very difficult to win as Black. So to alleviate this issue, a sharper, little studied sideline is offered: 5...g6. In Alekhine's Defence/Grünfeld fashion, we hand White the centre, with the understanding that eventually we strike back with either:

1. Direct piece pressure on White's d-pawn with ...Nc6, ...Rd8, ...Bg4 and ...Bxf3. This plan tends to be more effective when White tries Nb5 and c4 lines, which undermine his c3 support for the d4-pawn.
2. Black plays for a ...c5 break, but only when we catch up with White in development. We all understand not to open the position when behind in development in the Scandinavian!
3. We play for an ...e5 break, sometimes with ...Bg4 and ...Bxf3 tossed in, to weaken White's control over e5, at the cost of the bishop-pair, which rarely scares the seasoned Scandinavian player.

So if you are in the mood to play harder for a win, or just desire a change (or plan wanton opening treachery upon the opponent!), then the 5...g6 line is an interesting diversion which is almost certain to catch your opponents off guard theoretically, after which the recoil from our opening surprise may throw off his or her aim.

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[Crisologo-Lakdawala](#)

[Caspi-Motylev](#)

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□ Boros,D

■ Motylev,A

European Championship, Rijeka

2010

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♟c3 ♖d6 4.d4 ♟f6 5.♟f3 g6 The starting position of the ...g6 variation.

QUESTION: What is the difference between this line and the traditional ...c6 Caro-Kann-style lines?

ANSWER: As we have seen, the ...c6 lines sometimes bog down into positions which can be hard to win for either side. The ...g6 line is sharper but also riskier, and so ideal if you want to play sharply for a win with the black pieces.

QUESTION: What is Black's main strategy?

ANSWER: If Black has time, we try for ...a6, ...b5, ...Bb7, ...Nbd7 and ...c5, chipping away at White's centre from the wing. After a swap of our c-pawn for White's d-pawn, Black often gets excellent play along the open c-file, similar to a favourable Sicilian style structure.

6.♟b5 Kramnik gave the ...g6 line a go in the World Blitz Championship, and most of the top players chose this line as White, a good indicator that it may be our most challenging line.

QUESTION: What is White's idea?

ANSWER: White clears the way for c4 to increase his space advantage, but the downside is he also weakens his d-pawn.

♖b6 QUESTION: Isn't the queen at risk on b6?

ANSWER: Reward often follows risk. Black plans the set-up ...c6, ...0-0 and ...Rd8, applying maximum pressure upon White's d-pawn.

[I once tried 6...♖d8 , but found it too passive.]

7.♟f4

[Developing with tempo, but most of the world's elite like 7.c4 c6 8.♟c3 ♟g7 9.♟e2 0-0 10.0-0 and now: -- (10...♞d8 11.h3 ♟f5!? 12.♖b3 ♟a6 13.♟e3 ♖xb3 14.axb3 ♟b4 15.g4!? White expands his space advantage dramatically, but increases the risk of overextension as well, V.Anand-V. Kramnik, Moscow (blitz) 2009.; 10...♟g4 (logical; Black goes after a defender of d4, but pays the price of the bishop-pair to do so) 11.h3 ♟xf3 12.♟xf3 ♞d8 13.d5 cxd5 14.cxd5 , M.Carlsen-V.Kramnik, Moscow

(blitz) 2009. Now Black should play ♟c6 with a dynamic and unbalanced game.]]

7...♟d5 Defending with tempo.

8.♟d2 A new move in the position.

[QUESTION: Isn't 8.♟e5 more logical, since it induces weakening in Black's camp?

ANSWER: Black seems to hold his own after f6 9.♟g3 a6 10.c4 axb5 11.cxd5 e6 12.♟d3 , as in T.L.Petrosian-B.Kurajica, Plovdiv 2010. Perhaps here Black can go for ♟b4+ 13.♟f1 exd5 14.♖b3 ♟a5 15.♖xd5 ♟e6!? when he obtains excellent compensation for the pawn after 16.♖xb5+ ♟c6 .]

8...c6 9.♟a3

[White can also speculate with 9.c4!? ♟f6 10.♟c3 ♟f5 (threatening to take on b2) 11.♟a4 ♖c7 when I think Black gets a slightly better version of those Kramnik blitz games in the above note. White's knight looks a little strange on a4.]

9...♟g7

[9...♖xb2?? 10.♟c4 ♖b5 11.♟d6+ exd6 12.♟xb5 would be a really boneheaded way to lose the game.]

10.♟c4 ♖c7 The position reached is similar to ones we get in the ...g6 lines of Alekhine's Defence: 1 e4 Nf6 2 e5 Nd5 3 d4 d6 4. Nf3 dxe5 5 Nxe5 c6 and Black can play ...g6 in these lines. White still owns some extra space, but Black is in no hurry to engineer ...c5.

11.♟ce5 0-0 12.♟c4 b5!? The higher-rated Motylev begins to look for trouble on the queenside.

[GM Gawain Jones offers the safer line 12...♟d7 13.♟xd7 (13.♟d3?! is too slow after ♟5b6! 14.♟b3 c5 15.dxc5 ♟xc5 when Black looks slightly better) 13...♟xd7 14.0-0 ♟g4 15.c3 ♟b6 16.♟e2 ♟xf3! (control over e5 is the key fight in this line) 17.♟xf3 e5 18.dxe5 ♟c4 with equality.]

13.♟b3 a5 14.a4 b4 QUESTION: Hasn't Black created a few holes, such as on c4 and c5?

ANSWER: The hole on c4 may be a bit of a concern, but remember that Black also annexed considerable queenside territory. I don't really see a path for White to exploit the potential weakening.

15.0-0 ♟b7 Angling for ...c5.

16.♖c1!? ♟d7

[QUESTION: Shouldn't Black have gone for the immediate freeing break 16...c5 ?

ANSWER: I think you are right. It looks like the thematic move. Moreover, I like Black's

game after 17.♔h6 cxd4 18.♔xg7 ♖xg7 19.♚d2 ♜d7 (19...f6?! is met with the trick 20.♜xd4!) 20.♚xd4 ♜5f6 21.♚fe1 ♔xf3 22.♜xf3 ♜c5 .]

17.♔h6?! This attacking try is a waste of time. [Instead, 17.♜xd7 ♚xd7 18.♔h6 retains equality.]

17...♜xe5 18.♔xd5!? This may make matters worse, but I think White is already in trouble:

[a) 18.♜xe5 c5 19.♔xg7 ♖xg7 when ...c4 is in the air, as well as ...cxd4.]

[b) 18.dxe5 c5 19.♔xg7 ♖xg7 and ...c4 worries White once again.]

18...♔xh6! 19.♚xh6 ♜g4 20.♚h4 cxd5

21.♚xg4 EXERCISE (planning): Can Black get away with a pawn snatch on c2? There is no right or wrong answer here and the one you pick is more an indicator of your style. What does your intuition tell you?

♔c8! ANSWER: Black, apprising himself of the complications stemming from grabbing on c2, thinks better of it, and decides to give the line a pass. GM Jones gave Motylev's move a dubious mark, citing that Black should take c2, while I give Black's choice an exclaim, since the way he played looks more practical. The queenside pressure grows unrelenting and his position looks considerably easier to play than after taking c2.

[Following 21...♚xc2! (Black refuses to adhere to the letter of the law and decides to steal a pawn; a good move, but one which also may give White practical chances, since it greatly increases the complications) 22.♚h4 (22.♚d7?! ♔a6 23.♚fe1 ♚xb2 is a safe extra pawn for Black) 22...♔a6! 23.♚fe1 ♔a7 24.♜g5 h5 25.g4 Black must find a few good moves: ♔e2! (the bishop attempts to insulate Black's king from the growing unrest on the kingside) 26.f3 ♚xb2 27.gxh5 ♔d3! sees Black spy a flicker of motion on the periphery and immediately take evasive action, as defenders pour forth. Black should be able to withstand the attack and win. Yet from a practical standpoint, this line looks far more dangerous to him than the line Motylev chooses.]

22.♚g5 ♔f5 23.♚fc1 ♚fc8 24.♚h6 f6

If you walk through a bad part of town and someone follows you (White's queen!), then be careful. It could mean your death if you ease vigilance. White's attacking zeal prompts Black to proceed in a mode of wisely cautious distrust. Black's queenside pressure continues, while White fishes for elusive

counterplay in the neighbourhood of Black's king.

25.♚e3!? Suffering is not always an ennobling experience. Sometimes the opposite effect occurs, and malice and dreams of reprisal arise.

[White probably felt he couldn't survive the passive line 25.c3 bxc3 26.bxc3 ♚ab8 in the long run.]

[EXERCISE (planning): Contradictory energies preclude peaceful coexistence between the parties. After 25.♚e3 find a plan which greatly increases Black's queenside pressure and wins a pawn as well.]

ANSWER: Triple on the c-file.

25...♚a6! Black surveys the battlefield and notes with approval the progress of his coalition. Seizure and impoundment of the doomed c-pawn remains the critical component in Black's plan.

26.c3 ♚c6 27.♜h4 The knight attempts to clamber up and over the obstacle.

bxc3 28.b3

[28.bxc3 ♚xc3 29.♚xc3 ♚xc3 30.♚xc3 ♚xc3 31.♜xf5 gxf5 is a hopeless rook and pawn ending, since White's rook sits passively and Black eyes pawn targets on a4 and d4,]

[while 28.♜xf5?? doesn't cut it after cxb2 29.♜xe7+ ♚xe7! .]

28...♚e6 29.♚f3 The queen responds to the ejection with a wintery smile.

♔e4 30.♚h3 ♚b6 31.♚e1 c2 The deeply embedded c-pawn encroaches upon White's dream of attack while threatening to promote.

32.♚ac1 f5 QUESTION: Isn't Black's bishop running low on squares?

ANSWER: The bishop perches comfortably on his seat on e4, with the gubernatorial air of one accustomed to command. Tactics protect the bishop.

33.♚e3

[33.f3? is met with ♚xb3 .]

33...♚c3 34.♚g5 ♚xd4 35.♚xe7 ♚f6!

36.♚xf6 Swapping queens is the equivalent of resignation. Now fighting on against hopeless odds only brings about a quality of pathos to the remainder.

♚xf6 37.f3 g5!?

[The simple 37...♔d3 works as well. We detect evasiveness in the bishop's demeanour.]

38.fxe4 fxe4! The wizard recites an incantation of power, placing the hapless

knight in a passive, enchanted stupor on h4.

39.♟f3 The unfortunate knight spirals down.

exf3 40.♞e5 d4 41.♞d5 f2+ 42.♟f1

EXERCISE (combination alert): After much weaving, meandering and squirming from White, the position arrives at a resolution point. How can Black force the promotion of one of his deeply entrenched passers?

ANSWER: Exploit the back rank.

♞e8!

[It's all over after 42...♞e8 43.♞xd4 ♞e1+!

44.♞xe1 fxe1♞+ 45.♟xe1 c1♞+

. GM Gawain Jones writes: "A success for Black and I wonder if 5...g6 will see more high rated adherents?"

Summary: White's space advantage doesn't appear all that scary in the 6 Nb5 line.

Black achieves Alekhine's Defence-like play against White's imposing centre.]

0-1

 **Crisologo,R**
 **Lakdawala,C**

San Diego (rapid)

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2010

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♞xd5 3.♟c3 ♞d6 4.d4

♟f6 5.♟f3 g6 6.♞e2 You may face this ultra-safe, annoying line from lower-rated players who hope to draw. White envisions the coming ...a6, ...b5 and ...Bb7. He plans to mute dynamism with Ne5 and Bf3, challenging Black's powerful bishop along the h1-a8 diagonal and injecting the game with as much dullness as possible.

QUESTION: Isn't c4 a more natural square for the bishop?

[ANSWER: It is, but in a way it is also the move Black wants, since we follow with ...a6 and ...b5, chasing down the bishop. Later on, when White's bishop posts on b3, we play ...c5 and after dxc5, recapture with a d7-knight, once again harassing his bishop. For example: 6.♞c4 ♟g7 7.0-0 0-0 8.h3 (preventing ...Bg4) a6 9.a4! (disallowing Black easy expansion with ...b5) ♟c6 10.♞e3 ♟f5 11.♞e2 ♟b4! (here is the down side of a4: it allows Black's knight to nest on b4) 12.♞b3 ♟bd5 (seeking freeing exchanges) 13.♟xd5 ♟xd5 14.♟g5 ♞ae8 15.♞fe1 h6 (15...♟f4 16.♞d2 ♟e6 17.♞e3 ♞d8 looks like a safer plan for Black) 16.♞h4 ♟f4!? 17.♞e3 g5!? 18.♟g3

e6 19.h4 , P.Leko-V.Kramnik, Moscow (blitz) 2009. White may have a shade of an edge after ♟f6 , since Black has yet to achieve either ...c5 or ...e5 breaks.]

6...♟g7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♟g5 QUESTION: Can White go for a delayed version of the Nb5 and c4 plan here?

[ANSWER: Yes, we must be ready to make the switch if White so chooses. The 8.♟b5 ♞b6 9.c4 c6 10.♟c3 ♟f5 11.♞b3 ♟a6 12.♞e3 ♞xb3 13.axb3 ♟b4 14.♞a4 a5 15.h3 of I.Cheparinov-V.Bologan, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009, is similar to positions we analysed in the preceding game.]

8...a6 9.♞d2 He allows ...b5.

[QUESTION: How would we play it if White tossed in 9.a4 the way Leko did in the note above?

ANSWER: Then I would apply pressure upon White's d-pawn like this: ♟c6 10.♞d2 ♞d8 11.♞fd1 (11.♟f4 ♞b4 12.♟xc7 ♞d7 favours Black) 11...♟f5 12.h3 ♞ac8 , intending ...Nb4 and ...c5, or the freeing ...Ne4.]

9...b5 10.♟f4 He hopes to pepper the queen with tempo loss, yet this doesn't really constitute a tempo gain, since White moves his bishop twice.

♞b6 11.♟e5 The annoying point of this line: White's bishop challenges the h1-a8 diagonal, extracting much of the dynamism from the position.

♟b7 12.♞ad1 ♟bd7

[12...♞d8 is met with 13.♞e3 .]

13.♟xd7 All very annoying and all according to White's plan: Make the game as tedious as possible.

♟xd7 14.♞e3 ♞fe8 15.♞g3!? Suddenly, White gets ambitious, deciding to terminate the peace negotiations and go to war.

[Instead, 15.♟f3 e5 (15...c5?? drops a piece to 16.dxc5 ♟xc5 17.♟xb7) 16.dxe5 ♟xe5 17.♟d5 ♞xe3 18.♟xe3 is dull and equal.]

15...♞ac8

[I also considered the line 15...e5!? 16.dxe5 ♟xe5 17.♟d5 ♞c5 18.♞e3 ♞xc2 19.♞d2 ♞xd2!? (or 19...♞c6 20.♟g5 when White claims some pressure for the pawn) 20.♟xd2 ♟xd5 when Black receives full compensation for the queen with rook, knight and pawn.]

16.d5?! Increasing the d-pawn's vulnerability.

[Better was 16.♞fe1 . I wasn't planning to play ♟xd4?! 17.♞xd4 ♞xd4 18.♞d1 ♞b4 19.♞xd7 ♞xb2 when White's minor pieces

outweigh Black's rook and pawns, mainly due to my insecure king.]

16...♟f6 At last, Black finds a solid a target: d5.

17.♟f3 b4 Undermining a defender.

18.♟e2 ♖c5 Double attacking d5 and c2.

[If 18...♖a5 then White responds with 19.♟e5 , although Black may stand better there as well.]

19.c3 ♟xd5 20.cxb4 ♖c6 21.♖c1 ♖b7

My repelled queen refused to submit to the unwanted advances of White's pieces.

22.♟e5!? White decides to sac a pawn.

[Perhaps he has a better chance of stabilizing his position after 22.a3 ♟xf3 23.♖xf3 ♖xf3 24.gxf3 ♟d5 25.♖c2 ♟xf4 26.♟xf4 ♖ed8 when the chances remain dynamically balanced.]

22...♟xf3 23.♖xf3 ♖xb4 A subtext to White's plan: He hopes his activity, combined with Black's pawn weaknesses compensate him fully for his missing pawn.

24.♖c6?! EXERCISE (combination alert): In his zeal, White hopes to affect a crude form of parliamentary legitimacy to his tyrannical reign over the queenside, yet his last move is an error. Tactical alertness is perhaps the single most important characteristic to chess improvement. Do you see the simple trick which your unobservant writer missed?

♟d7?! Dang. Johnnie Cochran, O.J. Simpson's attorney, would agree: "If the glove don't fit you must acquit!"

[ANSWER: Double attack. Black picks off another pawn after 24...♖a5! 25.♟c3 ♖xa2 .]

25.♟xg7 ♟xg7 26.♖c3+ QUESTION: Why is White willing to enter an ending a pawn down? ANSWER: He continues to exert considerable pressure on Black's crippled queenside pawns, so doesn't fear the queen swap.

♖xc3 27.♟xc3 ♟b8 In a burst of nostalgia, the knight returns to his childhood home to contemplate his roots. Black is forced into contortions to hang on to his extra pawn.

28.♖c5 ♖ed8 29.♖c1 ♖d2 30.b3 c6

QUESTION: Can Black convert this position? Your pieces look pretty passive.

ANSWER: I admit that the disparity between White's activity and Black's utter absence of it appears stark. With each passing move, White's intrusions grow bolder in inverse motion to Black's hasty retreats. Still Black, who is a pawn up, subscribes to the philosophy: If two parties market comparable

products, the one at lower cost tends to sell.

For now, the queenside is an autonomous zone, not controlled by either side, since White exerts pressure and ties Black down to pawn weaknesses on a6 and c6, yet is unable to regain the lost pawn. It won't be easy, but don't underestimate the value of patience and human toil, valuable commodities in any market. In such positions, don't be in any rush, and expect the turnaround to conversion to take a long, long time.

31.g3 ♖cd8 32.a4?? Thank goodness for the clock! The diligent student, after having passed the first test, flunks out in the second. With this accommodating move, White blunders away a pawn in time trouble. White's newly weakened b-pawn is forced to recapitulate his urgent desire: "For the love of God: Keep me safe!"

[After 32.♖a5 conversion would have been a problematic chore for Black.]

32...♖b2 The rook refuses to delegate duty to an underling and sees to the matter himself. Now b3 falls, constituting a crushing impediment of White's hopes to save the game.

33.♖e1 e6 34.♟e4 ♖xb3 Delicious. The police attained a grainy, low resolution surveillance video of the perpetrator, but not enough to identify or apprehend him. From this point on, the insurgency remains one step ahead of the governing authority.

35.♖c4 a5 In order to use b4 as a potential outpost.

36.♟c5 ♖b6 37.♟g2 ♖d5 Black's plan: Challenge occupation of c5 and swap off the pathetic b8-knight for its towering c5 counterpart.

38.h4 ♖b4 39.♖c2 The rook reluctantly agrees to back off with wan assent.



[If 39.♖xb4 axb4 40.♖c1 ♟d7! , and if 41.♟xd7 ♖xd7 42.♖xc6 ♖a7 43.♖b6 ♖xa4 with two extra pawns.]

39...♟d7 40.♟xd7 ♖xd7 41.♖xc6 ♖xa4 42.♖b1 ♖a2 43.♖c3 h5 44.♖b5 ♖a7

Principle: Place your rook behind your passed pawn. White's rooks can only watch, unable to participate, as life speeds by without them.

45.♖b8 a4 Summary: You get easy equality after 6 Be2, but may have some problems complicating if facing a lower-rated player determined to draw.

0-1

 **Caspi,I**
 **Motylev,A**
 European Club Cup, Eilat
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2012

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘c3 ♜d6 4.d4 ♜f6 5.♘f3 g6 6.g3 QUESTION: What is White's intention behind the fianchetto? If Black plays a future ...c6, then his bishop hits a wall.

ANSWER: It's a multipurpose move:

1. White may later play Bf4, gaining a tempo on our queen.
2. After Bg2, White hopes to mess up our ...a6, ...b5 and ...Bb7 plan by beating us to the punch and placing his bishop on the long diagonal first.

♙g7 7.♙g2 ♜a6! This is an inherent flaw for White with his fianchetto line. Black's last move disrupts, no matter how White reacts.

8.♙f1

[QUESTION: I don't see the need for such retro-concessions. Why can't White simply play 8.♙f4 and then prepare to castle queenside?

ANSWER: He can, but White's king isn't so secure on the other side: for example, c6 9.♜d2 0-0 10.♙h6 ♙xh6! 11.♜xh6 ♙f5 12.0-0-0 b5 (Black's queenside attack looks faster than White's on the other side) 13.a3 b4! 14.axb4 ♜a1+ 15.♘b1 ♘a6 16.♘h4 ♙xc2! . The bishop harangues the congregation with talk of eternal damnation. After 17.♙xc2 ♘xb4+ 18.♙d2 ♜ad8 19.♙e2 ♜a6+! (oh, no you don't! White's king isn't going to slip out of trouble on f1 that easily) 20.♙f3 c5 21.g4 ♜xd4 22.♜xd4 cxd4 23.♜d1 ♘d3 24.♜d2 e5! White's game was a wreck, K.Berbatov-B. Chatalbashev, Albena 2010.]

8...♜b6 9.♙g2 ♜a6 10.♙f1 "I offer a draw." ♜a5 The queen indulges in a theatrical pause, perhaps to intensify the effect of her disclosure: "Nyet! No draw!"

11.♙g2 0-0 12.0-0 ♜d8 As always in the ...g6 lines, White's vulnerable d-pawn remains a source of anxiety. He must watch out for ...c5, ...e5 and ...Nc6 tricks from Black.

13.♙d2 ♘c6! QUESTION: Isn't it dangerous for Black to allow a discovery on his queen? ANSWER: Not if every white option looks like a dud. Just as in many variations of the ...Qa5 Scandinavian, Black isn't intimidated by the d2-bishop's angry glare.

14.♘e2 Seeing that all other discoveries achieve less than nothing, White meekly covers d4.

♜a6! Preventing c4.

15.♜e1 ♙g4 Black steadily goes after a defender of d4.

16.♜c1 To the queen's consternation, she gets induced into a detour from her regularly scheduled route, mainly due to the intimidating influence of that black rook on d8.

♙xf3 17.♙xf3 e5! The e-pawn is prodded forward and reminded that delay will not be tolerated in Black's camp.

QUESTION: But isn't this just opening the position for White's bishop-pair?

ANSWER: In this case Black's centralization and superior piece activity override that principle.

18.dxe5

[QUESTION: Doesn't White pick off a pawn after 18.♙xc6 ♜xc6 19.dxe5 ?

ANSWER: Not if we examine the line further: ♘g4 20.♙c3 (White must return the pawn since 20.f4?? ♜f3 wins on the spot) 20...♘xe5 21.♙xe5 ♙xe5 22.c3 ♜d6 and White continues to fight for equality.]

18...♘xe5 19.♙g2 ♘fg4! Black's hovering knights prove superior to White's bishops, despite the open position.

20.♙g5

[Otherwise, 20.h3 ♘xf2! and if White accepts with 21.♙xf2?? then ♘c4 22.♙c3 ♜b6+ 23.♙f1 ♙xc3 24.♘xc3 ♘d2+ wins. The pawn structures are simulacrum of one another...until now.]

20...♘xf2! The knight is in command, while all those around him perform subsidiary tasks. Here f2 is the connection point, a canal between two bodies of water. Black just sac'ed a knight with an exchange hanging on d8 as well. The ramifications of this action are for now, beyond conjecture, and the compensation represents an unknown quantity – neither harmful nor beneficial. EXERCISE (critical decision): White has four candidate defences, but only one works. This one is tough and the position isn't exactly a safe haven for normalcy. Embedded within the position lie multiple potentialities, multiple futures:

a) 21 Kxf2 sees the king, with only a slight inclination of his head, gives instructions to his henchmen to dispense with the intruder. Accept the knight and dare Black to prove himself.

b) 21 h3, cutting off the knight's retreat square on g4.

c) 21 Bxd8, taking the exchange rather than the full piece.

d) 21 Rf1, making a temporizing move. Which one would you play?

21. Rf1? This move presages a dire outcome.

[With so many difficult choices, the odds were against White. For a start, the knight can't be touched: 21. Qxf2?? Bb6+ 22. Qe3 Qg4+ 23. Qf3 Bc6+ sees Black's turbulent queen's emotional state fails to subside, while White's king, all alone, wanders about with his guard nowhere in evidence. Now the ground beneath opens up and swallows him into the abyss. After 24. Qxg4 Bxg2 White is completely busted. Once an attack like this is turned on, there is no off switch.]
[Instead, 21. Qxd8?? Bb6! threatens a smothered mate, and so Black wins.]

[ANSWER: 21. h3! . Time to take the asylum back from the inmates. This is White's best chance: 21. Qxh3+ 22. Qxh3 Qf3+ 23. Qf2 Qxe1 24. Qxd8 Bb6+ 25. Qxe1 Qxb2 26. Qxc7! (resistance begins to materialize and take solid form) Bf6 27. Qe3 Qxa1 with chances for both sides. Clearly, this position is a far more appealing fate than that offered in the other lines.

If you got this one wrong, don't feel bad.

Sometimes a glut of data doesn't necessarily mean an easy decision follows. There are some positions where I feel completely out of my depth, a bottom feeding fish suddenly thrust to the surface of the water – and this is one of them.]

21... Qf4 22. Qxd8 Bxd8 White's problem: His knight hangs on e2 and Black also threatens ...Qb6+. He can't cover both.

23. Qc3

[23. c4 almost works, but fails to Bb6+ 24. c5 Bb5 25. Qf4 Qc4 .]

23... Bb6+

[Houdini says 23... Qh6! is even stronger.]

24. Qh1 Qf2+ 25. Bxf2 Bxf2 Black regained his investment, with interest of an extra pawn and a crushing position.

26. Qe4

[26. Qxb7?? Qf3! ends the game.]

26... Bb6 27. h3

[If White had repeated with 27. Qc3 Black would probably go for Bf2 28. Qe4 Bb6 .]

27... c6 28. Bg5 Bb4 29. Bf4 Cheapo alert. Threat: Nf6+.

Bd1+ 30. Bxd1 Bxd1+ 31. Qh2 Bxc2

32. Qf6+ Qxf6 33. Bxf6 Bxb2 Summary:

Remember the disruptive ...Qa6! idea against the fianchetto line.

0-1

B01

□ **Okhotnik,V**

■ **Sedlak,N**

Hungarian League

2011

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1. e4 d5 2. exd5 Bxd5 3. Qc3 Bd6 4. d4

Qf6 5. Qf3 g6 6. Qe5 QUESTION: Why

move the knight, unforced?

ANSWER: For the same reason White plays it in Chapter Three: Bf4 is in the air.

Qg7 7. Qc4

[QUESTION: How do we deal with 7. Qf4 ?

ANSWER: Immediately challenge it with

Qh5! . Here we see a benefit to the ...g6

line: Black can play ...Nh5 at will, when

challenged like this on f4. 8. Qb5 Bd8

9. Bf3 (9. Qxf7!? leads to a mess after Qxf7

10. Qc4+ Qf8 11. Bf3 Qxf4 12. Bxf4+ Qf6

13. Qxc7 g5 14. Bg3 Bxd4 ; Houdini

helpfully says the game remains even in

this indecipherable position) 9...0-0

was R. Pokorna-V. Schneider, Vrbnik 2008.

(Here, Black can simply play 9... Qxf4

10. Bxf4 0-0 absconding with the bishop-pair.)]

7...0-0 8.0-0

[Once again 8. Qf4 is met with Qh5! 9. Qb5

(9. Qxf7!? Bxf4 10. g3 Bxf7!? 11. Qxf7+

Bxf7 and Houdini claims this is wonderful for

White, but I like Black's three minor pieces

for the queen and pawn) 9... Bb6 10. Qe3

c6 11. Qc3 Bxb2! when White didn't get

enough compensation for the pawn, G.

Kosztolanczi-E, Stifter, Heviz 2012.]

8... Qc6! The equalizer. White gets no time for f4 or Bf4.

9. Qxc6

[9. Qf4?! is too little, too late: Bxd4 10. Qxc6

Bxf4 11. Qxe7+ Qh8 favours Black.]

9... Bxc6 10. Bb2 a6 11. d5! He hopes the advanced d-pawn may cramp Black, but as things turn out it fails in this respect.

Bd6 12. h3 b5 13. Qb3 c5! Threatening ...c4. White has no choice but to swap away his d-pawn for Black's c-pawn.

14. dxc6 Bxc6 15. Bd1 QUESTION: Isn't e7 just hanging?

[ANSWER: No! Black has a tricky sequence in 15. ♖xe7 ♙b7 16.f3 a5! with the dual threats: ...Rae8 and also ...a4. After 17.a4 ♖ae8 18.axb5 ♖b6+! 19. ♙e3 ♖xe3+ 20. ♖xe3 ♖xe3 21. ♖xa5 Black's extra piece and control over the dark squares looks more meaningful than White's three pawns.]

15...e6 Advantage Black, who reached his ideal in the position. He may be able to generate something on the queenside, with Grünfeld or Reversed Catalan-like pressure, as well as weaken White's king position after ...Bb7. Meanwhile White finds no discernible counterplay or point of attack. Also, his bishop looks misplaced on b3 and would be better off on the h1-a8 diagonal.

16. ♖f3!? White's queen, applying lipstick and pressing her lips together in the mirror, isn't listening.

QUESTION: Why on earth did White allow his opponent to dismantle and devalue his kingside structure?

[ANSWER: Inaction breeds boredom; boredom breeds restlessness. His decision looks like overreaction, rechristened as defence. White agrees to the damage as partial remittance of his king's security debt. He probably feared ...Bb7: for example, 16. ♙e3 ♙b7 17.f3 ♘h5 with growing counterplay on the dark squares. But perhaps you are right: I would rather suffer this position rather than the one he adopted in the game.]

16... ♖xf3 17.gxf3 ♙b7 18. ♘g2 ♖fc8

19. ♙e3 ♙c6! In order to play ...a5, to get his minority attack rolling.

20.a4 b4 21. ♘e2 ♙d5! Eliminating a defender of c2.

22. ♖ac1

[QUESTION: Why inflict upon himself a crippled pawn majority when he can play 22. ♙xd5 ?

ANSWER: The trouble is after ♙xd5 the b2- and c2-pawns hang, with no way to protect them both.]

22... ♙xb3 23.cxb3 Black is almost up a pawn, since his kingside pawn majority can produce a passed pawn, while White's three pawns fail to budge Black's two on the other wing.

♙d5 24. ♙d4 ♙xd4 Every swap helps. Now Black wins a king and pawn ending, should it reach that stage.

25. ♖xd4 ♖xc1 26. ♘xc1 a5 27. ♘d3

QUESTION: Why didn't White's rook seize the open c-file?

[ANSWER: He may have feared the line 27. ♖c4 ♖d8 28. ♖c5 ♘f4+ 29. ♘g3 ♘d3 30. ♘xd3 ♖xd3 31. ♖xa5 ♖xb3 . Black wins a pawn, but if the queenside pawns are eliminated, White receives reasonable chances of holding the three versus four ending, despite the doubled pawns, which don't seem to hurt his defensive chances.]

27... ♘g7 28.f4 ♘f6 29. ♘f3 h6 30. ♖c4 g5!?

Black voluntarily eliminates White's doubled pawn weakness to activate his own majority on the kingside.

31.fxg5+ hxg5 32.h4 A swap of pawns favour the defender, White, while a swap of pieces favours Black.

gxh4 33. ♖xh4 ♘e7 34. ♖d4 ♖c8 35. ♘e2 ♘f5 36. ♖d7 e5 Threat: ...Nd4+.

37. ♘d1?!

[White has defended well and should have held the draw after 37. ♖d5! ♘d4+ 38. ♘e3 ♘xb3 39. ♖xe5 .]

37...e4 38. ♘f4 ♘e5 39. ♘e2 f6 40. ♖a7 ♖c5

We arrive at White's worst case scenario: Black's majority rolls, while White's remains dormant.

41. ♖a8 ♘g7! The knight's brow glistens with sweat, legs and arms hanging flaccid from his exertions. Multipurpose:

1. The knight prevents annoying rook checks with deliberate malice.

2. Black prepares to roll his f-pawn forward.

42. ♘g3 f5?! This inaccuracy could have cost Black a half point.

[42... ♘e6! kept the advantage.]

43. ♘f1! Idea: Nd2 and Nc4, going after Black's only weakness, a5.

♘f4 Targeting f2, yet White commands resources enough to hang on to it.

44. ♘d2 Cutting off Black's king, as well as eyeing the c4-square.

♘e6 EXERCISE (critical decision): Should White play 45 Nc4, which wins a5, but also allows Black's king into f3?

45. ♖h8? Two leaders at cross purposes can be more detrimental than no leader at all.

[ANSWER: White can deal with the king intrusion on f3. He should go after Black's a5-pawn: 45. ♘c4! ♘f3 46. ♘e1 ♘f4 47. ♘d2+ ♘g4 48. ♘c4 and Black can't make progress.]

45... ♖d5! Target: b3. Black attempts emendations, hoping to finagle his way to a full point. The rook, activated at last, offers a salute of comprehension and gingerly settles on d5, while keeping vigil over the weak a5-

pawn. The fire of White's defence, now down to embers, is in desperate need of fresh fuel to revive the flame.

46.♖h4+

[Alternatively, 46.♕e2 ♖d3! 47.♞a8 ♜d4+ 48.♕e1 ♜xb3 (with persistence, Black's rook and knight gnaw on b3 and crack it open) 49.♜xb3 ♞xb3 50.♞xa5 ♞xb2 51.♞b5 b3 52.a5 e3 53.fxe3+ ♕xe3 54.♞e5+ ♕d4 55.♞b5 ♕c3! and Black wins.]

46...♕g5 47.♞h7 f4 48.♕e1 ♜c5 49.♞e7 ♕f6 50.♞e8 ♕f7 51.♞c8 f3!

White's defenders look as awkward and out of place as your writer when I appear at my wife's conservative family's Thanksgiving dinner wearing a "Free Mumia!" t-shirt.

Somehow Black managed to hang on to his a5-pawn and soon White's pawns fall.

52.♜f1 The knight plugs along with a decidedly slouching gait. Black's boldness seems to further accentuate White's caution.

[Instead, 52.♜c4 ♜d3+ 53.♕f1 ♞h5 54.♕g1 ♜f4! mates.]

52...♜xb3 53.♞c4 ♜c5 54.♜e3 ♜d3+ 55.♕f1 ♞h5 56.♕g1 ♜f4! 57.♞c7+ ♕e6 58.♞g7 EXERCISE (combination alert):

White's rook stutters for words to an idea which may not exist. Black to play and force mate.

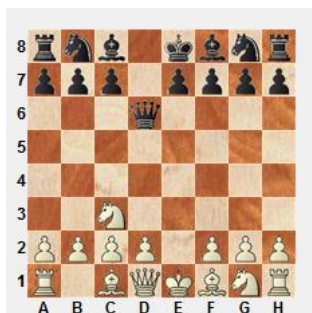
[ANSWER: It's mate in three moves after 58.♞g7 ♜e2+ 59.♕f1 ("Air...must have air!") ♞h1+ 60.♞g1 ♞xg1# .

Summary: 6 Ne5 isn't nearly as dangerous as it is in Chapter Three, one reason being that we meet Bf4 with ...Nh5!.]

Chapter Eight

White Refrains From an Early d4

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6



White's d4-pawn tends to function as a fulcrum for both sides in the Scandinavian. For White, it promises attacking chances based upon a hook for Ne5, as we saw in Chapters [Two](#), [Three](#), and [Four](#). For Black, the d4-point represents a potential target for attack, and failing that, a target for ...c5 and ...e5 counters. But how do we respond when White holds back on an early d4? We examine this question in this chapter. The lines tend to be quite harmless for our side, with the possible exception of the diagrammed position:



This position may be a bit of dilemma since White plans the automatic 0-0, Ng3, f4 and f5. We can simply allow it and live with a '+=' position, or we can try Ardelean's bizarre idea which he may have seized upon as a chance opportunity in his game against Mihailidis. In [this game](#) White's initiative screeched and slammed to a jarring halt, rousing our interest. This route should be explored further, and if we decide to enter, we allow the consequences to drop where they may.

[Zschischang-Zatonskih](#)

[Litsas-Nikolaidis](#)

[Galiana Salom-Tiviakov](#)

[Varga-Tiviakov](#)

[Mihailidis-Ardelean](#)

[Liu-Garcia Palermo](#)

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1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qd6 4 Nf3

4 Bc4 – [Mihailidis-Ardelean](#)

4 g3 – [Liu-Garcia Palermo](#)

4...Nf6

5 Bc4 – [Zschischang-Zatonskih](#)

5 Be2 – [Litsas-Nikolaidis](#)

5 h3 – [Galiana Salom-Tiviakov](#)

5 g3 – [Varga-Tiviakov](#)

□ Zschischang,M

■ Zatonskih,A

German League

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2010

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♗c3 ♖d6 4.♗f3 c6 5.♗c4 White decides upon the most natural spot for the bishop, yet this line fails to worry me.

QUESTION: Why?

ANSWER: If you are careful and avoid some devastating sac on e6 or f7, then White's c4-bishop tends to simply hit a wall on e6. To my mind the move feels too primitive to give Black any real trouble.

♗f6 6.♖e2 Fighting for control over the e5-square, since she isn't planning to play d4.

♗bd7! QUESTION: Why didn't Black develop her light-squared bishop first to g4 or f5?

ANSWER: I believe Black's flexible response is best. She went with a plan common in the ...Nd7 Smyslov lines of the Caro-Kann, where Black fianchettoes the bishop with ...b6 or sometimes even ...b5, then plays for ...c5.

Let's take a look at your suggestions:

[a) 6...♗g4?? is a huge blunder, which walks into the trap 7.♗xf7+! , which leaves Black red faced, down a pawn and in a miserable position as well.]

[b) 6...♗f5 is playable, but after 7.d3 the bishop stares at a wall on d3, A. Areshchenko-A.Mastrovasilis, Moscow 2004.]

7.d3 QUESTION: I don't understand the philosophical motivation of such passivity. Why play a pawn meekly to d3, when the more aggressive and more central d4-square is available?

ANSWER: Everything you said was correct: d4 is, indeed, a more aggressive square and seizes more space as well. However, the point you didn't mention is that White's d4-pawn is also a potential weakness and a source of Black's counterplay in Scandinavians, especially with White's knight posted on c3, denying him the c3 stabilizing pawn push. By holding the pawn back to d3, White in essence, deprives Black of even a trace of counterplay, while admittedly reducing his own options as well.

[7.d4 tends to lead to Caro-Kann style play after ♗b6 8.♗b3 e6! (Tiv wisely avoids 8...♗f5 9.♗e5 e6 10.g4 ♗g6 11.♗e3 ♗bd5 12.h4 which looks quite dangerous

for Black) 9.♗e4 ♗xe4 10.♖xe4

and Tiv equalized with a timely ...c5 break, E.Berg-S.Tiviakov, Heraklion 2007.]

7...e6 Relying on the Caro-Kann, fianchetto plan.

8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♗g5 0-0 10.♖ad1 QUESTION: The rook looks meaningless behind the d3-pawn. What is the point?

ANSWER: Perhaps White contemplates Ne4, and if Black takes on e4, then after dxe4, White's rook is posted on the newly opened d-file.

b5! The emergence of the Caro-Kann plan. Black's bad bishop isn't so bad once it arrives on b7.

11.♗b3 ♖c7 12.♖fe1 ♗b4!?

[Also possible was 12...♗c5 to pick off the bishop-pair.]

13.d4 White decides to stake his fair share of the centre.

♗b7 14.♗e5 a6! Black is all set to play ...c5, with a very nice position.

15.♗xf7!? QUESTION: Do you consider this pseudo sac a sound decision from White?

ANSWER: It's one of those sacs which defies arithmetic and to my mind, injects a liberal measure of wrath, mingled with vivid imaginings. Houdini thinks it's okay, but I wouldn't have played it. White receives full mathematical value: rook and two pawns for two minor pieces. The trouble is Black's minor pieces feel extremely active in the early middlegame and I prefer her position to White's, despite Houdini's thumbs up for White's sac.

♖xf7 16.♗xe6 ♗f8?!

[16...♖af8! is the more accurate move.]

17.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 18.♗xf6 ♗xc3!

This zwischenzug inflicts damage to White's structure and ensures future light-square counterplay.

19.bxc3 gxf6?! I'm not so sure about this recapture.

QUESTION: Why deliberately damage her own structure?

ANSWER: Black's play is based upon a light-squared strategy. She wants her queen on f7 and doesn't want to waste time recapturing with the queen. But I think you are correct in stating this move may be self-inflicted trouble. EXERCISE (planning): Come up with a logical plan for White in this unbalanced situation.

20.♖e7?! Playing for an ending and desiring queens off the board doesn't make sense from White's perspective.

[ANSWER: She should play for a direct kingside attack with something like 20.h4! followed by Rd3 and Rg3, after which White looks better.]

20...♖g6 21.♗xf7+?! Consistent and wrong.

[White should backtrack with 21.♗d6 , retaining queens on the board. After the queen's departure, a terrible stillness falls upon the members of White's camp, who soon begin to suffer acute loneliness from her absence.]

21...♗xf7 22.f3 ♖d8 23.♗f2 ♕c8!

The bishop feigns indifference, yet his heart is fixed firmly upon acquisition and enslavement of c4 and d5.

24.g4 ♕e6 Black's minor pieces now acquire access to juicy holes on c4 and d5, and White stands worse.

25.a3

[Better to play 25.a4! to eliminate the weak a-pawn.]

25...♖f4 The knight takes a circuitous route to d5.

26.♗g3

[It's not too late to retrace her steps with 26.a4! , but White just can't bring herself to repent.]

26...♖d5 27.♖d3 A move which fails to salve White's worries in connection with her c-pawns. The rook begins to get badly tied down to pawn weaknesses.

f5! 28.♖e5 ♖g8 29.♖d1?!

What an annoyance when the bad gets worse.

[Better to toss in 29.h3 h5 to reduce the number of kingside pawns.]

29...fxg4 30.f4 The f-pawn thrusts his arm out in a placation gesture.

♗f6 31.♖de1 White's rooks walk about with the easy manner and glint of those long accustomed to power and privilege. That is about to change. Externally, the rooks radiate power and confidence. Internally, White's position trembles with foreboding.

♕f5 White's pawns begin to fall.

32.c4? A move which fails to convey reassurance in White's prospects for survival.

bxc4 Thanks! Now the c4-pawn becomes a queening threat. Black gladly accepts the gift, bolstered by her fiery unbelief in White's compensation.

33.♖e8 ♖xe8 34.♖xe8 ♕xc2 35.♗xg4

♕d1+ 36.♗g3 c3 The c-pawn's insinuations: Black plans to promote to a new queen. The rook is out of position and the white king's haunted eyes appear as pools of despair, with

the terrible realization he too remains out of reach of the surging pawn.

37.♖c8 ♖e7 38.♖f8+ White's enfeebled and faltering rook and king scatter and waft away, gliding further and further away from the queening c-pawn.

♗g7 39.♖e8 ♗f7 40.♖h8 c2 Only a few pushes are required.

41.♖xh7+ The rook arrives at his final resting place, exhausted, drained of resources and hope as well.

♗e8 Summary: Keep in mind the Caro-Kann, queenside fianchetto development scheme for your light-squared bishop.

0-1

B01

☐ **Litsas,I**

☒ **Nikolaidis,I**

Nikea

2004

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♗xd5 3.♖c3 ♗d6 4.♖f3 ♖f6 5.♕e2 QUESTION: Why such a passive square?

ANSWER: Such decisions are a matter of taste. One player's passivity is another's safety. White is a 2145-rated player facing a GM, so he basically creates a fortress and announces to his opponent: "Come and get me!"

♕f5 At night all cats look Black. Nikolaidis doesn't really care how White sets up and chooses the more traditional posting for the light-squared bishop, but be warned: In doing so, we ensure an equal but dull position. QUESTION: Is there a way for Black to spice up the position?

ANSWER: Yes, a couple of methods:

[a) 5...a6 tends to be a more aggressive system for Black.

QUESTION: So why don't we cover it in the book?

ANSWER: At the time of this writing, the ...a6 lines in general sit on theoretically shaky ground, but in this case White sets up so passively that ...a6 becomes fully playable: 6.0-0 b5 7.a3 ♕b7 8.d3 e6 9.♖g5 c5 10.♕f3 ♖c6 . I already prefer Black, who is more aggressively posted, L.Ptacek-R. Hasangatin, Chrudim 2002.]

[b) 5...g6 echoes the last chapter and tends to lead to sharper positions as well.]

6.d3 Once again White refuses to offer targets

of any kind to his opponent. Black's light-squared bishop also seems somewhat confused, looking dreamily at the bedrock point on d3.

QUESTION: So are you saying White stands better?

ANSWER: Not at all. White configured much too passively to extract an advantage. The trouble lies in if Black wants to play for a win – not such an easy proposition.

♖bd7 7.♗e3

[QUESTION: Are we to just hand over the bishop-pair on 7.♖h4 ?

ANSWER: Yes, handing over the light-squared bishop isn't something a Scandinavian player should be afraid to do. Black's compensation:

1. It creates bishop versus knight imbalance, in a rather (for now) rigid structure. More often than not, the knight easily holds its own.

2. When White's knight captures the bishop, often on g6, this opens the h-file and improves our structure. Sometimes Black can even respond with ...g6!?: for example, g6!? 8.♖xf5 gxf5 which drastically sharpens the game. Black's rook posts on the newly opened g-file and his king may castle long.]

7...c6 The safest and dullest possible formation. Most Scandinavian players feel comfortable here.

8.♖d2!?

[8.0-0 would be more normal.]

8...e6 QUESTION: Why not to e5 instead?

ANSWER: I prefer playing the e-pawn to e6, since by playing ...e5, it allows White future f4 pawn challenges.

9.♗f3!? I'm not really sure what White is up to, but in such non-clash positions there is great leeway for strange set-ups.

♞c7 10.♞e2 ♖e5

[More adventurous than 10...♗e7 .]

11.♗e4 ♗g4 The grandmaster is tired of White's dodges and insists on some kind of clash.

[Instead, 11...♖xe4?? 12.dxe4 ♗g6 13.f4 ♖d7 14.f5! wins on the spot.]

12.f3 ♗h5 13.g4 Ah, there we go.

Provocation achieved. The game suddenly sharpens.

♗g6 14.g5!? The mild mannered pawn drinks the formula, and begins to spasm and thrash about. What a seamless transformation from Jekyll to Hyde. Such pawn pushes offer

the aggressor a rush of power, but also risk future overextension.

♖d5 15.♗d4

[15.♗xd5 cxd5 16.♗f4?? is met with ♖xd3+ .]

15...♖xc3 16.♗xe5!?

[16.♗xc3 would probably be met with 0-0-0 .]

16...♖xe2

[16...♞xe5?? drops the queen to 17.♗xc6+ .]

17.♗xc7 ♖d4 18.0-0-0 ♖f5 White controls more space, but also must nurse a hole on f5. Chances look about even.

19.h4 Threat: h5.

♖d6!? The knight cartwheels away from the approaching menace with acrobatic grace.

[19...♗d6 is also possible.]

20.h5 ♗f5 21.♗xf5

[Question: Why didn't White inflict damage to Black's structure with 21.♗xd6 ♗xd6 22.♗xf5 exf5 , and then ruin castling with 23.♞de1+ ♖d7 ?

ANSWER: The end position is deceptive.

Black's bishop and control over f4 may actually give him the better chances.]

21...♖xf5 22.♖e4 ♗e7 23.♗e5 ♞f8

Contemplating ...f6. The air above the battlefield is permeated with expectancy.

White now dares to disturb the fragile balance with his next move.

24.h6!? White's plan uncoils and flows into motion. For a rebellion to be successful, there must first arise a unity of hate toward an oppressive, ruling authority. White's forces march south like Sherman's army. He yearns with ardour for conquest of f6. His move unleashes contradictory energies into a single environment, with only adaptability enough for one species to survive. Either White drops a pawn, or he generates play based on the opening of files and the weakening of f6.

gxh6 EXERCISE (critical decision): White decided to sac a pawn to increase piece activity and seize control over f6. He faces a decision. How should he continue?

Plan a): 25 Bf6, immediate infiltration.

Plan b): 25 f4, back up the critical g5 point.

One version offers White compensation; the other offers decline.

25.♗f6? After this move White's forces experience a sudden diminution, an intolerable loss of face, and his compensation for his pawn becomes a fiction. What could have been audible counterplay now turns into

harmless white noise.

[ANSWER: He still had dynamically equal chances after 25.f4! , after which Black suffers lacerations and tender wounds on the dark squares, while White pays the price of one pawn. Chances look dynamically balanced.]

25...♟xf6

[Also strong was 25...hxg5 26.♟xh7 ♟xf6 27.♟xf6+ ♟e7 28.♟e4 ♟g8 29.♟g1 ♟d4 .]

26.♟xf6+ ♟e7 27.♟g4 A position once so firm, so solid, quickly destabilizes, with liquid oozing from its edges.

[Instead, 27.♟e4 hxg5 transposes to the last note.]

27...hxg5 28.♟xh7 ♟h8 29.♟dh1 ♟h4!

Interference.

30.♟g7? The rook feels that Black's pieces lack suitable deference for their betters – chiefly himself! But he may be overestimating his own powers and soon comes to regret the decision to avoid a swap.

♟h5!

[The rescue attempt with 30...♟h5 31.♟e5 is met with ♟f6! snagging a piece. The king chases rook and knight. White's g7-rook, shorn of its nimbus of power, gets cut off from his comrades and now stands before his enemies a mere mortal.

Summary: You can meet passivity with passivity, as in this game, or play for ...a6 or ...g6 set-ups if you seek a more dynamic game.]

0-1

□ **Galiana Salom,J**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Calvia

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♟xd5 3.♟c3 ♟d6 4.♟f3 ♟f6 5.h3 QUESTION: Is ...Bg4 so terrifying for White that he wastes a tempo to cover against it?

ANSWER: I think the idea is that White doesn't want to worry about ...Bg4 at any time in the future. Players who toss in an early h3 may believe that by doing so they wrench Black from book positions.

c6

[Once again, if you desire to veer away from our familiar formation and sharpen the game,

then both 5...a6]

[and 5...g6 are decent options.]

6.♟c4 ♟f5 7.♟e2 ♟bd7

[QUESTION: Can Black take on c2, since White can't trap the piece after 7...♟xc2 8.d3 b5 ?

ANSWER: The suggestion doesn't lose a piece, as you say, yet Black still ends up with a clearly inferior position if White returns the piece with 9.♟xf7+! ♟xf7 10.♟xc2 .]

8.d3 e6

[QUESTION: This allows White to pick off the bishop-pair. Is 8...h6 playable?

ANSWER: Yes, if you don't like the idea of Nh4, then ...h6 is also very playable. But remember, King Tiv, rated 2680 this game, allows Nh4, so handing over the bishop-pair isn't so terrifying to him. Just keep in mind that we Scandi players normally don't balk at giving away the bishop-pair, since this is an intrinsic quality of the opening itself.]

9.♟d2 We reach a position similar to the last game in the book.

[White declines the offer of 9.♟h4 ♟g6 10.♟xg6 hxg6 when Black achieves a decent position from the knight versus bishop imbalance.]

[Alternatively, 9.♟e4 ♟c7 10.♟xf6+ ♟xf6 11.♟d2 0-0-0 12.0-0-0 ♟d6 with equality, R. Alarcon Casellas-V.Papadopoulou, Sitges 2011.]

9...♟e7

[Once again, Tiv invites the Nh4 imbalance, refusing to make room for the bishop with 9...h6 .]

10.♟b3 ♟c5 QUESTION: Is Black suddenly interested in the bishop-pair himself?

ANSWER: Possibly, but I believe his true intention is to try to destabilize the b3-bishop with a coming ...a5.

11.♟e5 h6! The correct timing.

[We must be careful to avoid robotic play, like 11...0-0? which walks headlong into 12.g4! ♟g6 13.h4! when Black is in deep trouble.]

12.f4 ♟fd7 A Scandinavian rule of thumb: Never allow e5 occupation without immediate challenge.

13.0-0 a5! Black's point behind ...Nc5: All of a sudden, White's clumsy b3-bishop feels out of place. It is in grave danger, and a3 escape outlets allow serious damage to his structure.

14.d4?! The d-pawn is the politician who loses re-election. His solution to the problem

B01

2006

is to petition the city council to alter the laws of mathematics. This move has all the earmarks of panic and it feels like his emotions rise like heat.

[White can try 14.♔e3! a4 15.♔c4 , and if b5 he has an escape outlet with 16.d4! ♖e4 17.♔d3 ♖xc3 (perhaps White feared 17...♗g3?!, but the complications work out in his favour after 18.♗f3 ♔xd3 19.cxd3! ♗xf1 20.♗xb5!) 18.bxc3 0-0 .]

14...♗xb3?! White gets a little play for his pawn after this move, which opens the a-file.

[An important mercantile principle: The consumer is in control, dictating the nature of the product. The immediate 14...♗xd4+! 15.♔e3 ♗d6 16.♗ad1 ♗c7 looks like a superior method of nabbing the pawn. I don't see any compensation for White.]

15.♔c4 ♗xd4+ 16.♔e3 ♗f6 17.axb3 ♔b4 18.♗fd1 ♗e7 19.♗xd7 Some combinations are not that scary. White gives up an exchange and gets one back.

♗xd7

[He can also consider the riskier 19...♔xd7!? 20.♔b6+ ♔c7 21.♔xa8+ ♗xa8 22.♗f2 . White's coming counterplay on b6 gets me nervous.]

20.♔b6 ♗d8 21.♗d1 ♗b8 One's dignity dissipates quickly when the opponent forces you to prance about purely for his own amusement.

EXERCISE (critical decision): White is down a pawn, desperate for counterplay. Should he just take immediately on a8? Or can he try 22.Nb5? Only one of them equalizes.

22.♔b5? All heads turn to view the approaching menace, as if cranked by levers. Tricky, but a suspect construct. Black's simple response takes the air out of White's idea. He fights on with that drunken euphoria felt by those who consider themselves engaged in a doomed fight, resolved to die a hero's death.

[ANSWER: White requires a dual component plan, one useless without the other. After 22.♔xa8! ♗xa8 he generates serious counterplay with 23.♔a4! 0-0 24.♔b6 ♗a6 (unfortunately the only way to hang on to the exchange; the once beautiful queen observes with distaste the growing lines of crow's feet wrinkles flanking her eyes, viewing them as scars) 25.♗xa6 bxa6 26.c3 ♔e7 27.♗a1 ♔c2 28.♗xa5 ♔xb3 29.♗xa6 , equalizing. Is it not a miraculous thing when a player, through an incorrect plan, somehow stumbles and zigzags his

way through the chaos, and as if by chance, arrives at the correct conclusion?]

22...0-0 Of course! The intended target simply flees the scene of danger.

23.♔d7 ♗d8 24.♔b6

[If 24.♔xf8 ♗xf8 25.♔d4 ♔h7 and White gets nothing for his missing pawn.]

24...♗h4 25.♔xa8 ♗xa8 26.♔d6 ♔xd6

27.♗xd6 EXERCISE (combination alert): Perhaps White counted on the opposite-coloured bishops to save him. However, Black has a little trick which wins even more material. Do you see it?

a4

[ANSWER: Not so bad, but Tiv also had 27...♔xc2! . Deflection, which wins a second pawn.]

28.bxa4 ♗xa4 29.♔c1? EXERCISE

(combination alert): White's bishop drives past his intersection, well on his way to irrelevance. He approaches with his hands held palms up, to indicate he carries no weapons and comes in friendship. Black, however, holds no such peaceful inclinations. White's last move was a serious blunder. How can we end the game with one powerful move?

ANSWER: **♗e4!**

[The rook feels righteous. Black wins more material after 29...♗e4 30.♔e3 (with this block, White's king wins himself a reprieve, albeit a temporary one, merely a stay of execution) ♗g3 31.♗d3 ♔xh3 and more pawns spill forth.

Summary: In such structures, keep in mind the idea ...Nc5 and ...a5 to harass a bishop posed on b3.]

0-1

B01

□ **Varga,C**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Hungarian League

2008

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♗xd5 3.♔c3 ♗d6 4.♔f3 ♔f6 5.g3 My feeling is if White wants to play fianchetto lines, then he should post his knight on e2, rather than on f3, a set-up we examine later in the chapter.

QUESTION: What is the difference in g3 positions with White's d-pawn on d4, and the ones where the pawn stands on d3?

ANSWER: Two-fold:

1. With the pawn on d4, positions we examined earlier in the book, White stakes out more central space and gives himself a hook to plant a piece on e5. However, the pawn on d4 can also be a target for Black and a weakness for White.

2. When White plays his pawn to d3, he deprives Black of targets, and himself of central space as well. The positions tend to exude a reversed King's Indian flavour.

g4 6.g2 c6 Just to remain in familiar territory.

QUESTION: What other set-up is there for us?

[ANSWER: In this case, Black can play more ambitiously with 6...c6!? (intending to castle queenside) 7.h3 e6+!

. This intermezzo check gives White a headache. After 8.f1!? (QUESTION: Why does White give up castling rights rather than block with a knight?

ANSWER: Black equalizes on the block as well, after 8.e2 xf3 9.f3 0-0-0 when White has fallen behind in development.) 8...h5 9.d3 0-0-0 10.e3 h6 11.d2 xf3! 12.f3 e5 the dual threats on f3 and c4 ensure that Black regains the bishop-pair, with a good position, R.Mamedov-B.Kurajica, Sarajevo 2010.]

7.0-0 e6 8.h3 h5 Of course, Black would love it if White tossed in g4.

9.b4 Hoping to soften up the h1-a8 diagonal with a future b5. Be aware of these b4 tricks when your bishop is away from c8.

[Instead, 9.d3 c7 10.e1 xf3 (now is a good time to swap and unload the light-squared bishop) 11.f3 bd7 and as is normal in the Scandinavian, it isn't so easy to make use of White's bishop-pair in such situations, M.Savic-D.Milanovic, Zupanja 2008.]

9...e7 10.Bb1 0-0 11.d3 c7 12.f4 d6 Exchanges nearly always tend to help the more cramped Scandi side.

13.fxd6 Bxd6 14.e4?! Blatantly playing for exchanges against a higher-rated opponent doesn't ensure a draw by any means.

[More thematic would be 14.b5 bd7 15.bxc6 bxc6 , with an equal game.]

14...xe4 15.dxe4 c7 16.e5!?

The steepest psychological hurdle for an attacker is to conquer his natural revulsion for passive defence. In this case, White lashes out pre-emptively, despite material debt and

low likelihood of success in his risky venture. It feels almost to me like White fights secret guilt over his 14th move.

QUESTION: Is this sac sound?

ANSWER: I doubt it, but I do know this:

Malevolent intent alone is insufficient reason. White begins an abstruse plan, which, when examined deeply enough, does contain the seed of logic, despite outer appearances. On the other hand, White's sac looks like a temporary feel-good fix, rather than an actual attempt at a cure for what ails him: The pathology of which points to his dubious decision on his 14th move. It isn't easy to be an addict's spouse. In the case, the e-pawn is an enabler, allowing White free reign to follow his addiction: The initiative.

[It may be a reasonable practical try, but is also a sign that White's game has already gone sour. Both Black and White are subject to identical data, yet arrive at very different conclusions. He charitably donates a pawn for activity, throwing his e-pawn overboard, in order to reject a passive line like 16.Bd4 Bd8 17.c3 xf3 18.f3 d7 , when I prefer Black's knight over the slightly anaemic bishop.]

16...xf3 17.Bxf3 d7 18.f1 xe5

19.f4 f6 20.b5 White hopes his slight development lead and newly energized bishop compensate for the sac'ed pawn.

QUESTION: Do you believe this is so?

ANSWER: Houdini says White gets full compensation, but your more materialistic writer doesn't buy the claim, and declares: Black stands better.

f8 21.bxc6 bxc6 22.e3 Threat: f4.

d6 23.Bb3 Renewing the f4 threat, as well as toying with b7 infiltration. White's pieces continue their glare at e6 with stony silence.

e8 24.f4

[24.Bb7 a5 keeps everything together.]

24...d7 25.f5? Overly ambitious. Once again, White makes another reckless pawn push, handing Black full title and deed to e5 in pursuit of an elusive initiative. White's last move isn't so much of a change as it is a relapse of a recurring illness.

[He should stay calm and play 25.Bd1 f8 26.fxd6 Bxd6 when Black still has a lot of work ahead of him.]

25...e5 Hi, I'm back!

26.f4 c5 27.Bb7!? Bxb7 28.Bxb7 exf5 29.f2

[Not 29.f4 d2! 30.faxa7? f3+!

when entrapment of white's king is the object of Black's ministrations. Even in death, the white king's face, a picture of contentious rage, refuses to be void of emotion.]

29...Bxa6 30.Bc7 Ba3! 31.Qf2 Qf8! 32.Qd5

EXERCISE (planning): The bishop perches uneasily upon the flimsy branch on d5. What is Black's easiest path to victory?

ANSWER: Reign in the bishop's influence over a2 by cutting off the only defender. Black introduces a new thread in his continuing weave of the tapestry.

c4! 33.Bxe5 Complete desperation. He decides to siphon himself dry.

[After 33.Qxc4?? Bc3 Black's ruse pays dividends.]

33...Bxe5

[Of course, Tiviakov isn't about to fall for 33...fxe5?? 34.Bf7+ Qg8 35.Bxa7+ .

Summary: Also keep in mind the ...Nc6 and queenside castling set-up against this variation, which is a bit of a dud for White and constitutes obsolete technology. If White wants to fianchetto, it is better for him to develop his knight to e2, rather than f3.]

0-1

 **Mihailidis,A**

 **Ardelean,G**

Kavala

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2011

1.e4 d5

[Compare the following game with our Scandinavian one: 1...e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.c4 Qf6 5.Qc3 Qe7 6.Qd3 dxc4 7.Qxc4 0-0 8.Qge2 Qbd7 9.0-0 Qb6 10.Qb3 c6 11.Ba1 Qf5! 12.Qg3 Qg6 13.f4?! (he mistakenly accepts the challenge) Qd6 14.Bf3 (14.f5? Qxg3 favours Black) 14...Qd7 15.Bf1 Qf5! (a similar idea to our Scandinavian game) 16.Qxf5 Bxf5 17.h3 h5! and Black stood well and went on to win, R.Bruno-C. Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2006.]

2.exd5 Bxd5 3.Qc3 Bb6 4.Qc4 c6 5.d3 Qf6 6.Qge2 A popular set-up, especially at club level, since White's game remains safe and his plan rather easy to follow. Also, Black's path to equality is not as clear as in other sidelines.

QUESTION: What is White's plan?

ANSWER: Meet ...Bf5 with 0-0, Ng3, f4 and f5.

QUESTION: This looks unpleasant for Black. How do we deal with it?

ANSWER: I actually like the way Black dealt with it in the game.

Qf5

[QUESTION: This seems conciliatory to allow White his plan. Why not play 6...Qg4 ?

ANSWER: I don't like playing the bishop to g4 in this situation since Black normally ends up on g6 later on, at a cost of time: 7.f3 Qh5 8.Qg3 Qbd7 9.0-0 e6 10.Qh1 Qg6 11.f4 with the same type of position we got in the game, except Black wasted tempi to get to g6, L.Petzold-J.Brustkern, German League 2009.]

[QUESTION: Is 6...e5 possible?

ANSWER: I'm not a fan of this move either, since it gives White a natural hook to open the position after 0-0 and f4. Remember, don't allow White to open early in the Scandi. It is a certain path to an early grave if you violate this most sacred law!]

7.Qg3 Qg6 8.0-0 e6 9.f4 Qf5!? I like this idea, which has the effect of throwing a spanner into White's machinery, after which White's intended attack becomes non-existent.

QUESTION: Black's last move looks quite radical. Is there an alternative if we don't want to play this way?

[ANSWER: Sure, you can just go along with White's intention and play 9...Qe7 10.f5 exf5 11.Qxf5 Qxf5 12.Bxf5 Qbd7 with at most a tiny edge for White, due to the bishop-pair. I would be willing to play Black here as well.]

10.Bb2

[QUESTION: Isn't Black just busted after 10.Qxf5 ?

ANSWER: I don't think so. After exf5 11.Bb2+ Qe7 12.Ba1 Qbd7 13.a3 Qf8 14.Qd2 Qg6 Black unravels.

QUESTION: But how can Black be okay when White has both bishop-pair and a healthy queenside pawn majority?

ANSWER: In the Scandi we are used to giving up bishop-pairs! While it's true that White does have the healthy queenside majority, our majority serves a purpose as well: Our king remains shielded from attack and absolutely safe. In the end, you may be right, and White may indeed have an edge.

Still, my intuition says Black is okay.]
10...♗e7 11.♘ce4! White prefers to straighten his structure.

♗xe4 12.dxe4 ♖c7 13.e5 ♘d5 Once again the position looks a little bit like an Alekhine's Defence. White holds an edge due to his extra space and bishop-pair.

14.♗b3

[QUESTION: Shouldn't White strike with 14.f5 ?

ANSWER: Black defends after ♘d7

15.♗xd5 (15.fxe6 fxe6 16.♖g4?! ♘xe5 looks good for Black) 15...cxd5 16.fxe6 fxe6 17.♖g4 . Now he deals with the double attack with ♖b6+ 18.♙h1 g6 when he will castle queenside with an acceptable position.]

14...♘d7 15.c4 ♗c5+ 16.♙h1 ♘e7

17.♗e3?! This doesn't look right. White should strive to hang on to both bishops.

[17.♘e4 looks more natural.]

17...♖b6 18.♗xc5?!

[It isn't too late for 18.♗d2 .]

18...♘xc5 19.♖ad1 g6! QUESTION: Why didn't Black take the free pawn on b3?

[ANSWER: First, that is not a very good bishop, and secondly, White gets excellent play for the pawn after 19...♘xb3 20.axb3 ♖xb3 21.f5! .]

20.♘e4 ♘xe4 21.♖xe4 ♘f5 Suddenly Black's knight is superior to White's bishop.

22.♖d3 Covering against e3 cheapos.
h5 Entrenching himself on f5.

23.♗d1 ♖d8 24.♖b3 ♖c5! 25.♖xb7?

White tries to pull off a combination, overlooking Black's own counter combination.

♘e3! Falling for White's trap. Black's combination, like any self-perpetuating mechanism, once started, can't be turned off.

26.b4 EXERCISE (combination alert): This is the trick White intended. It appears that everything is in place and all systems are go. Unexpectedly, the launch is delayed due to mechanical difficulties. The position teams with possible futures, yet only one pathway leads to victory. Do you see Black's counter trick?

ANSWER: Fork/weak back rank. In for a penny... The knight approaches with the undeviating resolve of a man on a suicide mission.

♘xd1!

[White banked on 26...♖d4?? which lets him off the hook after 27.♖xd4 ♖xd4 28.♖e1 . Black doesn't have time to take the

bishop on d1, since White threatens Rb8+.]
27.♖f3

[27.bxc5 ♘f2+! regains the queen with a piece interest. The knight ruins everything.]

27...♖d4 Black hangs on to the piece and White lacks compensation.

28.♖xc6+ ♘f8 Black threatens to mate, starting with ...Nf2+.

29.h3

[Certainly not 29.♖c7?? ♘f2+ 30.♙g1 ♘h3+ . White carries memories of past mistreatment at the hands of this agile knight. His trapped king remains a helpless cog in Black's vast machine.]

29...♘f2+ 30.♙h2 ♖g8?! Black's king security is also of grave concern. He confines himself within a strictly circumscribed perimeter in his compound.

[30...♙g8! prevents White's tricks and should win.]

31.♖c7?!

[The win isn't so easy after 31.a4! .]

31...♖xf4+ 32.♙g1 ♖d2?? Plans may be written in poetry yet details must be worked out in prose. In the hallucinatory blur of time pressure, emotions begin to substitute rational thought. It is a place where we attempt to mould reality and stuff it into our preconceived notions. The chain of command breaks down in the anarchy and no distinct body of authority remains to issue orders.

[Instead, the correct 32...♙g7! 33.♖e7 ♘h6! secures the win.]

[EXERCISE (combination alert): After 32...♖d2 Black threatens ...Nxh3+.

Unfortunately for him it is White's move.

The solution is in front of us, begging to be found.]

33.♖b8+?? There is no teacher like suffering. The proud queen thinks to herself: "I will defeat the enemy forces singlehandedly. Children will sing songs of this day and fables of my prowess will be retold." Sadly, none of this comes to pass. In an unrealistic attempt to stitch past glories and suture them to the present, the queen proclaims her lofty ambitions, which as of yet remain unrecognized.

[ANSWER: White was handed a gift, but doesn't accept it. He wins with the trick 33.♖e7+ ♘g7 34.♖f6+! (removal of the defender) ♖xf6 35.exf6+ ♘xf6 (the black king's retinas burn from the sickening sight of the slaughter of so many of his beloved subjects) 36.♖xa7 .]

33...♗g7 Now Black is winning again.

34.♖xf7+ ♜xf7 Summary: When White tries the Ng3 and f4 plan, one of White's best in this chapter, consider the atonal counter ... Bf5!?, which has the effect of radically altering White's intention.

0-1

□ **Liu,E**
■ **Garcia Palermo,C**
New York
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2008

This was the penultimate round of a tournament at the Marshall club and my student Elliott Liu needed one point from his final two games to achieve his second IM norm. We decided not to try and draw both. Instead, we opted to go all out for wins in both, hoping for a single win, which he achieved in this game.

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♜xd5 3.♗c3 ♜d6 4.g3

In this game we examine the g1-knight's development to e2, rather than f3. The positions flow with a reversed King's Indian flair, which suits Elliott perfectly, since he plays the KID as Black.

QUESTION: What is the difference with the knight on e2?

ANSWER: The difference is his unfettered kingside pawns are free to roam forward. Also it's much easier to break a ...Bg4 pin when the knight nests on e2.

♗f6 5.♗g2 ♗g4

[Alternatively, 5...c6 6.h3!? ♗f5 7.♗f3 h6 8.d3 e6 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♖e1 0-0 11.♖b1 a5 12.a3 ♗a6 13.♗f4 ♜d8 14.♜e2 and Black equalized, A.Miltner-S.Tiviakov, Vienna 2009.]

6.♗ge2 c6 7.h3 ♗xe2 As usual, Black is agreeable to the bishop for knight swap.

8.♜xe2 e6 9.d3 ♗bd7 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.f4 Playing it in KID style, with kingside pawn expansion.

0-0 QUESTION: Didn't Black just castle into an attack?

[ANSWER: Black's kingside fortress isn't so easy to crack, but if you carry such concerns you can try the more risky 11...0-0!? . Be warned, White attacks quickly in such positions with a prepared b4 and b5.]

12.♗d2 ♖fe8 13.♖ae1 a5 14.g4 ♜d4+?! The queen chases a subsidiary afterthought. I

don't understand the GM's idea behind this move, which looks like a pure waste of time.

QUESTION: What would you suggest?

[ANSWER: Either 14...♗f8 , adding defenders,]

[or 14...♗d8 , rerouting the bishop to a more active diagonal.]

15.♗h1 g6?! The beginning of an overly ambitious plan. Black decides that he, not White, will do the attacking!

16.a3 This move is to prepare Be3 at some timely point. "If I play Be3 without a3, Black may respond with the annoying ...Qb4" writes Elliott.

♜b6 17.♗d1! Triple purpose:

1. Defending b2.
2. Transferring an attacker to the kingside.
3. Clearing c3 for his bishop.

h5?! A decision which may cut the black king's life expectancy short. Some people just have a predilection for confrontation. This is a dangerous neighbourhood and it's the middle of the night, but realize this: When an (attacking) addict's need arises, he must score his drug, or suffer withdrawal agonies.

[Elliott writes: "Way too aggressive. I was shocked by this move, and it is a mistake.

All along my opponent was planning to go after my king when I thought I was the one trying to kill his! 17...♗f8 -g7 would have been thematic and a lot better for Black as it would have been very difficult for me to crack his fortress."]

18.♗f3 hxg4 19.hxg4 ♗c5!? Still in attack mode. The bishop indicates he won't participate in the defence.

QUESTION: What do you suggest?

[ANSWER: I would add a defender with 19...♗f8 .]

20.♗g2 e5?! Logical yet incorrect.

QUESTION: Doesn't Black follow the principle: Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing?

ANSWER: This is the intention, but the trouble is White simply bypasses and the centre doesn't open.

21.f5 gxf5 22.g5! Elliott writes: "This is the move Palermo must have missed, but this pawn sacrifice is what I had been planning all along. In fact, I think it is the only move in the position!"

QUESTION: Why not just recapture on f5?

[ANSWER: On 22.gxf5? Black responds with ♗f8! intending ...Ke7, when it may be White's king who gets hammered.]

22...♠h7

[Otherwise, 22...♠d5 23.♙e4!! , and if fxe4 24.♚h5 threatening f7 and also Rh1. Black is helpless.]

23.♙h5! The bishop skirts the edges of civilization.

f4 EXERCISE (combination alert): White has a method of obliterating Black's defences. How?

24.♚g4

[ANSWER: This is okay, but White had 24.♙xf4!! exf4 25.♙xf7+! ♠xf7 26.♚h5+ ♠g8 27.♚g6+ ♠h8 28.♙xe8+ .]

24...♠df8 25.♙c3 The bishop sulks, remaining hidden in the shadows, biding time until the moment of retribution.

[However, the moment was now if White had found 25.♙xf4!! exf4 26.♙xf7+!

. Some positions are so chaotic, so atonal, that their complexity overwhelms our puny mental grasp. After ♠xf7 27.♚xf4+ ♠g8 28.♚f7+ ♠h8 29.♙xe8 ♙xe8 30.♚xe8 ♚c7 31.♙f7 White has a winning attack.]

25...♚c7 26.♚f5! Notice how White's exposed yet perfectly safe king witnesses the proceedings with disinterested eyes.

♙d6 EXERCISE (planning): Find a plan which gives White a winning attack.

ANSWER: Enter the Dragon.

27.♠f2 ♚d7 28.♠g4! The sword handle's crucifix shape lacks the potency to ward off the approaching undead. From this point on, combinational arpeggios descend and ascend at the conductor's command. From Black's perspective the hellscape is rife with demonic, part human, part animal forms swirling about, as in a 15th Century Hieronymus Bosch painting. With preternatural swiftness, White's elusive attackers flicker in and out of reality, atomizing and then ebbing into the void, like apparitions from another dimension of space and time.

♙e6

[28...♚xf5 loses to 29.♠h6+ ♠h8 30.♠xf5 (too many things are hanging for Black at once) ♙c7 31.♙xf7 ♠xg5 32.♙xe8 ♙xe8 33.♙xf4 .]

29.♙xe5

[29.♙xf4! is even stronger. Black's structure grows unstable. Elliott writes: "I was getting low on time here, so I understandably wanted to make the simplest moves possible. I have to admit I was praying for Nh6 checkmate at some point".]

29...♙ae8 30.♚xf4 ♙8e7 EXERCISE

(combination alert): Black's earlier attempted coup comes to a fitful end. The mutineers cede authority to the vengeful captain. White has access to a winning sequence.

ANSWER: **31.♙xd6!** The bishop's sermon trails off with ellipses, toward dead silence.

♙xe1 32.♙xe1 ♙xe1 EXERCISE

(combination alert): Find a method of breaching Black's defence.

ANSWER: **33.♙xf7+!**

[The time of sequestration upon a long held debt arrives. Now 33.♙xf7+

A) or 33...♠g7 - the king looks lost, a de-contextualized anomaly; he staggers, as if backhanded across the face, and finds himself encircled and harassed by sycophants and government functionaries, all the while longing for freedom -

34.♙xf8+! and both recaptures lose: ♠xf8 (or 34...♠xf8 35.♙e6+) 35.♚f6+ ♠h7 36.♚h6#;

B) 33...♚xf7?? 34.♠h6+ forks, as a shared sense of loss bring king and queen closer together as a couple.

Summary: This line allows White a KID-style position, but Black has ample resources to defend against the coming attack.]

1-0

Chapter Nine

White Avoids an Early Nc3

1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5



In this chapter we cover a parade of not-so-terrifying theoretical dodges from White. The key factor we must keep in mind is these lines shouldn't be met with the standard ...c6 and ...Bf5 or ...Bg4 plan, which we may accidentally play out of habit. Instead, e5 is the square through which all our blessings flow, so we should opt for more aggressive set-ups, based on ...Nc6 and ...e5!. Keep in mind also that most of the lines in this chapter lead to more open positions than we are normally used to in the traditional ...c6, ...Bf5 chapters, so even though you may land equality, you may not be as comfortable with the *type* of equality which you achieve.

When our opponents avoid an early Nc3, we must be well prepared and also treat the resulting positions with the suspicion of a general who sees erratic enemy troop configurations massing along our border.

[Davila-Lakdawala](#)

[Hart-Lakdawala](#)

[Nakamura-Tiviakov](#)

[Leko-Ivanchuk](#)

[Alberto-Munoz Pantoja](#)

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1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nf3

3 d4

3...Nc6 – [Davila-Lakdawala](#)

3...e5 – [Hart-Lakdawala](#)

3 c4 – [Alberto-Munoz Pantoja](#)

3...Bg4 4 Be2 Nc6

5 h3 – [Nakamura-Tiviakov](#)

5 d4 – [Leko-Ivanchuk](#)

□ Davila,C
 ■ Lakdawala,C
 San Francisco (rapid)
 [Cyrus Lakdawala]

2012

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.d4 This line is generally used as a surprise weapon. Most of us are willing to work hard on our theory, but only if there is a reward, our pot of gold, at the end of the rainbow. In this line, if we remain well prepared, we certainly receive our reward of dynamic equality.

QUESTION: What is the point in not gaining a tempo on Black's queen?

ANSWER: White reasons that the tempo isn't running away, and also he increases options with c4 tempo gains, rather than the traditional Nc3 lines.

♟c6 Black logically gains a tempo on the d-pawn.

[Next game we look at the more radical 3...e5!? .]

4.♟e3

[After 4.♟f3 ♟g4 5.♟e2 0-0-0 6.c4 ♖f5 7.♟e3 (now Black has a bizarre, computer-generated idea which wins a pawn) ♟xf3 8.♟xf3 ♟xd4! 9.♟xd4 ♖e6+ 10.♟e2 ♖e4 (Black regains the piece) 11.0-0 ♖xd4 12.♖a4 e6 13.♟c3 White gets some attacking chances for the pawn, but, still, a pawn is a pawn and chances look balanced, J.Becerra-C.Lakdawala, Internet (blitz) 2010.]

4...e5 5.c4

[5.♟c3?! allows Black to take over the initiative with ♟b4 6.♖d2 ♖a5 7.dxe5 ♟ge7 8.a3 ♟f5 9.0-0-0 0-0 10.♟d3 ♖fd8 11.♟ge2 ♟xd3 12.cxd3 ♟xc3 13.♖xc3 ♖xe5 . Black stands clearly better, S.Drazic-S.Tiviakov, Trieste 2007.]

5...♟b4+

[Black can also play 5...♖a5+ 6.♟c3 (or 6.♟d2 ♟b4 7.d5 ♟d4 8.♟d3 ♟f6 9.♟e2 ♟g4 with dynamic equality at the very minimum, D.Abarca-M.Sierra, Callao 2007) 6...exd4 7.♟xd4 ♟xd4 8.♖xd4 ♟f6 when his bishop-pair gives him an edge, 'Entomologe'-C.Lakdawala, Internet (blitz) 2010.]

6.♟d2 ♖a5?! I hate it when you land in some theoretical position and no matter how much you dredge your memory, the variations previously diligently studied stubbornly refuse to appear.

[Black should play 6...♖d6! 7.d5 ♟d4 , with dynamic equality.]

7.d5 ♟d4 8.♟e2? Both parties strive mightily for second place.

[White missed 8.♟xd4! exd4 9.a3 ♟e7 (9...♟xd2+ 10.♖xd2 ♖xd2+ 11.♟xd2 c5 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.♟f3 c5 14.b4 looks slightly better for White as well) 10.b4 ♖a6 when that d4-pawn may fall at a later date.]

8...♟f5! Black stands better. Now begins the bizarrification of the position.

9.a3 ♟xe3 10.fxe3

[10.axb4?? ♖xa1! wins material.]

10...♟e7 Black is willing to get pushed around to preserve his dark-squared bishop, who roams unencumbered by a white counterpart.

11.b4 ♖b6 12.c5 QUESTION: Aren't you losing a lot of time with your queen?

ANSWER: To paraphrase Churchill: Never have so few wasted so much time to effect so little. Did I mention somewhere else in the book that Black's queen may occasionally get pushed around in the Scandi? True, White does kick the queen around, but only with pawn moves, not constituting development. Black stands better due to his bishop-pair and dark-square potential. The Scandinavian is certainly a tempo-devouring opening. Yet the question lingers: Why doesn't Black reap the punishment we Scandi players so richly deserve? This is the great mystery of our opening. Principles be damned and flaunted! I am a Scandi player, therefore above the law!

♖h6 The beginning of a dark-square campaign. Black's seductive queen approaches the kingside with a fiery red rose clenched between her teeth.

13.♖b3?! He loses more time with this move.

[Rather than this embellishment, White should probably keep it simple with 13.♟c4 ♟f6 14.d6 cxd6 15.cxd6 ♟e6! which also favours Black who now ironically remains far ahead in development.]

13...♟g5 14.♟c4 ♟f6 15.♖d3 0-0 16.e4

The f1-bishop sits inside, a disappointed child gazing out the rain-streaked window, longing for sun and play.

♖h4+

[The comp found a very strong idea in 16...b5!! 17.♟a5 ♟g4 and White is busted.]

17.♟g3? White's silver ends up a demonstratively worthless hulk, not even worth the paper of the deed of ownership.

[He should just give up a pawn with 17.g3 ♖xe4 18.♗xe4 ♜xe4 19.♙g2 ♜f6 20.♜c3 with some compensation for the pawn.]

17...♙f4 18.♜d2 ♜g4

[18...♜h5! is even stronger. I am not a person predisposed to extremes. In this instance, your normally cautious writer goes on an attacking binge. White's position sags on the weakened dark squares and the damage looks extensive. Then there is the problem on White's side of unavailability of necessary parts required to fix the machinery.]

19.♙e2 ♜e3

[The silly self-pin 19...♜xh2? allows White back into the game after 20.♜df1 .]

20.♜f2 EXERCISE (planning): Black's attackers swarm the enemy king. Find a path which flares up the attack further.

ANSWER: Open the f-file to pry open the centre, to discombobulate the defenders.

f5! 21.♜f3 ♜g4+!

[I wasn't interested in winning an exchange with 21...♙xg3+ 22.hxg3 ♜g4+ 23.♜g1 ♗xh1+ (23...♗xg3! is very strong) 24.♜xh1 ♜f2+ 25.♜g1 ♜xd3 26.♙xd3 when White can continue to resist for a while.]

22.♜g1 The captain hides from the invading pirates in the aft cabin.

♗h6!

[Houdini found 22...♙xg3!! 23.♜xh4 ♙f2+ . The bishop's power blocks out the sun: 24.♜f1 fxe4 25.♗xe4 ♜e3+ regaining the queen with interest. Unfortunately, the latest triumph contributes to the knight's growing conceit.]

23.♜f1 EXERCISE (combination alert): Black either mates or wins heavy material. How?

ANSWER: **fxe4 24.♗xe4 ♙f5**

[The queen can't move. If 24...♙f5 25.♗c4 ♙e3+ and mates.

Summary: Don't get caught by surprise in this line. Black easily equalizes, but must know and understand some of the tricky analysis.]

0-1

□ **Hart,D**

■ **Lakdawala,C**

San Diego (rapid)

2007

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♗xd5 3.d4 e5

[A more radical approach than 3...♜c6 .]

[QUESTION: With 3...e5 aren't you violating the principle: Don't open the game when behind in development?

ANSWER: I don't think so. Black isn't really behind, and Nc3 can be met with the pin ...Bb4.]

4.dxe5 The most popular, and in my opinion, the weakest of White's possible responses, since it rebels against the rational.

QUESTION: Why don't you like the move? After you recapture on e5, White blocks the check and then gains time on your exposed queen.

ANSWER: Black has no intention of recapturing the pawn, as in the game continuation.

White's alternatives:

[a) 4.♜f3 exd4 5.♗xd4 ♗xd4 6.♜xd4 ♜f6 7.♙d3 (7.♜b5 ♜a6 is no problem for Black) 7...♙c5 8.♜b3 ♙d6 and Black equalized without breaking a sweat, A. Ramos-S.Tiviakov, Luanda 2011.]

[b) 4.♙e3 ♜c6 5.♜c3 (5.c4 transposes to my game against Davila) 5...♙b4 6.a3 ♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♜f6 and Black attained an excellent position in M.Ivakhin-D.Milanovic, Paleochoira 2008. Now if White proceeds forward with 8.c4?! he is well on his way toward overextension after ♗a5+ 9.♙d2 ♗a4 10.d5 ♜d4 11.♙d3 . Black has e4 with a clear advantage after 12.c3 ♗xd1+ 13.♗xd1 exd3 14.cxd4 b5! which smashes the once impressive cluster.]

[c) 4.♜c3 .

QUESTION: White is willing to sac a pawn?

ANSWER: This isn't a real sac, since White immediately wins it back. But at the end, White is unable to extract an advantage: ♗xd4 5.♗xd4 exd4 6.♜b5 ♜a6 (6...♙b4+ 7.♙d2 ♙xd2+ 8.♜xd2 ♜d8 is also possible; after 9.♜xd4 c6 10.♙c4 ♜h6 White stood a shade better due to his development lead, W.Hasberger-M.Djurkovic, Feffernitz 1998) 7.♜xd4 ♙c5 8.♙e3 was L.Blondet-S.Zeidler, Mendoza 1985. Now Black should continue with ♜b4! 9.♜gf3 c6! (putting an end to all Nb5 and Bb5+ tricks) 10.♙c4 ♜f6 11.0-0

♟bd5 with equality.]

Returning to 4 dxe5:

4...♟xd1+ The gunfighter out draws her not-so-quick rival and then blows smoke which emanates from her gun muzzle. The point: Black isn't interested in regaining his pawn just yet.

QUESTION: Does Black get compensation? Queens are off the board.

ANSWER: More than enough compensation. In fact, Black scores 54% from this position. By grabbing the pawn at a cost to his development, White enters a dubious marriage, derived from contradictory expectations. I realize that 'better' and 'worse' are often subject to opinion, with even world-class players entrenched in polarities. Yet in this case, the evidence of Black's huge compensation looks overwhelming:

1. Black leads in development, with an open centre. This development lead grows, since White must see to the needs of both king and e5-pawn.

2. White's king looks insecure. Black soon castles long and c2 isn't a safe haven for his king either, since Black may post a bishop on f5.

3. White's extra pawn remains pretty flimsy and if he tries to hang on to it permanently with f4, he loses more time and weakens his light squares further.

5.♟xd1 White's king promulgates the dubious notion that all who swear allegiance to him will attain the kingdom of heaven in the afterlife. "The world is a white canvas on which we paint our own story." Wise words, but unfortunately they were the ones uttered by Captain Ahab, the obsessive/compulsive who risked all to chase the white whale. In this case I feel like he risks too much just for a measly pawn.

♟c6 6.♟f3 Alternatively:

[a) With 6.f4?! White broadcasts his plan to hang on to his gains at any cost. However, the white king's health is more important than money. He falls too far behind in development, just to hang on to a pawn.

After ♟f5 7.c3 0-0-0+ 8.♟e1 f6! 9.♟b5 fxe5 10.♟xc6 bxc6 11.fxe5 ♟c5 12.♟f3 ♟f6! White's king sits uneasily upon his throne with an open centre, N.De Firmian-J. Granda Zuniga, Amsterdam 1996.]

[b) 6.♟f4 ♟c5 regains the pawn, since 7.♟g3 is met with ♟d4! , as in M.

Wiedenkiller-D.Cramling, Gavle 1982.

(Maybe Black can also play more ambitiously with 7...♟ge7 , intending ...Nf5 next, when White wobbles on unstable ground.)]

6...♟g4 7.♟f4 0-0-0+ 8.♟bd2 ♟c5

White is already in trouble. Black's development lead outweighs White's material.

QUESTION: Can't White simply return the pawn with equality?

ANSWER: First of all, White has no choice but to return the pawn! Secondly, when Black regains the pawn, he still leads in development and White's king remains no more secure. So there is no easy path to White's now modest goal of equality.

9.♟e1

[9.♟g3 ♟xf3+ 10.gxf3 ♟d4 regains the investment, with the better game.]

9...♟b4 10.♟c1 ♟xa2 White returns his extra pawn in penance of previous sins.

11.♟a1 ♟b4 12.♟c1 Silence is tacit assent.

The rook is at the knight's beck and call.

♟e7 The e5-pawn is the new target of Black's attentions.

13.♟c4 ♟bd5 14.♟g3 h6 Just so Black can play ...Rhe8 without fear of a sudden Ng5.

15.♟e2 The lazy white king reproaches his servants for awakening him before noon.

White intends to unravel with Rhe1, followed by Kf1, but this looks cumbersome and

suddenly a vista of promising potentialities appears before Black's forces.

EXERCISE (planning): Can you crack the encryption code and work out a sequence for Black to win a second pawn?

ANSWER: Step 1: Eliminate a key defender of e5, White's g3-bishop.

♟f5! 16.♟he1 ♟d4! Step 2: Double attack b2 and e5.

17.c3 ♟xg3+ 18.hxg3 ♟xe5 White's king safety, at a premium, cost him another pawn. However, with me on the winning side, there is always hope for the opponent!

19.♟f1 ♟f6 20.♟e4 ♟e7 21.♟d4

White defends well, centralizing his pieces as much as possible.

♟b8 QUESTION: This move looks meaningless. Aren't you in violation of the principle: Centralize your king in an ending?

ANSWER: True, but the violation is justified. I anticipate the opponent's intentions. Black sees f3 coming and makes room for the bishop on c8.

22.f3 ♟c8 23.♟cd1 c6 24.g4 In order to curtail Black's ...f5 and to secure e4 for his

knight, but the move contains a downside. It allows Black a connection point to open the game with his next move.

h5 25.♟f5? EXERCISE (combination alert): White's last move was a time pressure error. Black to play and win more material.

ANSWER:

♟xf5 Step 1: Eliminate the knight.

26.gxf5

[26.♟xd5?? fails to cxd5 .]

Step 2: Fork/overloaded piece.

26...♟e3+! 27.♞xe3 ♞xd1+ 28.♝e2 ♞b1?

EXERCISE (combination alert): The minutes which pass in time pressure are like the minutes before our execution, with time oddly supercharged and also compressed, as if imploding. My opponent, down an exchange and a pawn, resigned here. A consequential decision, since my last move was a time pressure blunder, which might allow him back into the game. What did we both miss?

[ANSWER: 28...♞b1?? 29.♟d2!

. Oops! Double attack! Both my rook and bishop hang. This is one of those jarring moments of realization, as when a classically trained musician suddenly realizes he has been whistling a Village People song for the past five minutes. However, after ♞xb2 30.♞xe7 ♞d8 31.♟d3 kindly Houdini eases my anguish by informing that Black should probably still be winning after a5! when the a-pawn enters with the pomp and circumstance of a future coronation on a1.

Summary: 3...e5 is perfectly playable and if White tries to hang on to the pawn, perhaps even better for Black.]

0-1

□ **Nakamura,H**

■ **Tiviakov,S**

Wijk aan Zee

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B01

2010

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♞xd5 3.♟f3 White takes a wait-and-see attitude, leaving both Nc3 and c4 options on the table.

♟g4 QUESTION: What is the point of pinning if White simply breaks the pin next move?

ANSWER: White's opening set-up is solid, but also quite passive. There is no need for us to play our normal ...c6 Caro-Kann-like formation. Instead, we opt for a bolder set-up with ...Bg4,

...Nc6, ...0-0-0 and ...e5, if allowed.

4.♟e2 ♟c6 5.h3 Some important alternatives:

[a) We'll consider 5.d4 next game.]

[b) 5.0-0 0-0-0 6.h3 (Black welcomes this move now that the parties agreed to castle on opposite wings) ♟f5!? 7.♟c3 ♞d7 8.♞e1 (8.♟b5 is met with f6!) 8...e5 9.♟b5 f6 10.d3 a6 11.♟a4 ♟c5 12.♟e4 ♟a7 13.♟e3 ♟xe3 14.♞xe3 ♟ge7 15.♟h4 ♟xe4 16.♞xe4 g5 17.♟f3 h5 left Black's attack well underway in C.Mania-H. Hamdouchi, Montpellier 2009.]

[c) 5.♟c3 ♞d7 6.h3 ♟xf3 (6...♟f5 7.♟b5! is annoying for Black) 7.♟xf3 0-0-0 8.0-0 e5 9.d3 f5!? (very aggressive; Black usually goes for ...f6 ideas which bolster e5) 10.♞e1 ♞e8 11.a3 ♟f6 12.b4 ♟d4 13.♟g5 ♟d6 14.♞b1 ♟b8 15.a4 h6 16.♟xf6 gxf6

. Chances are roughly even, A.Morozevich-V. Kramnik, Moscow (blitz) 2009.]

5...♟xf3 6.♟xf3 ♞e6+! This move has the effect of disrupting White's smooth flow of development.

7.♞e2 Otherwise:

[a) 7.♟e2 is met with ♟d4 .]

[b) 7.♟f1!? 0-0-0 8.♟c3 g6! 9.d3 ♟h6!

. Principle: If your opponent has the bishop-pair, then swap one of them off if possible.

I prefer Black's position, K.Moutousis-I.

Nikolaidis, Athens 2001.]

7...♞xe2+ 8.♟xe2 ♟d4 9.♟d1 e5

QUESTION: Shouldn't White's bishop-pair give him the edge here?

ANSWER: I don't think so. A cursory glance at the position may suggest a white edge, but a more detailed examination reveals otherwise. Black's compensating factors for White's bishop-pair:

1. Black now leads in development.
2. He also owns greater central space.
- 3 White must eventually play c3 to eject the d4-intruder, after which he must endure a weakened backward d-pawn.
4. Unfortunately for White, the most salient feature of his bishops is their current state of ineptitude.

10.0-0 0-0-0 11.d3 g6 QUESTION: What is the point of fianchettoing, rather than developing the bishop to c5?

ANSWER: Of course development to c5 is also possible. Tiviakov probably rejected it because he may have been concerned with a3, b4 space-gaining ideas from White. The fianchetto of the bishop bolsters the e-pawn

and increases Black's grip on d4 as well.
 [After 11...♗c5 12.♞e1 f6 13.♟d2 ♟e7
 14.♟c4 ♟dc6 15.g3 I don't think White's
 bishops mean much here. Black owns extra
 space and is weakness-free as well, Y.
 Kuzubov-H.Danielsen, Reykjavik 2012.]

12.♞e1

[QUESTION: Doesn't 12.f4 open the
 position favourably for White?

ANSWER: Black is ready for this and now
 we see another idea behind his 11th move:

♟h6! 13.♟a3 ♟xf4 (the elimination of
 White's bishop-pair) 14.♟xf4 exf4 15.♞xf4
 f5 is at least equal for Black, G.Beikert-E.

Prié, French League 1997.]

12...♟g7 13.♟d2 ♟e7 14.c3 QUESTION:

Why does White saddle himself with a
 backward d-pawn after this move?

ANSWER: c3 must be played sooner or later.
 He can't allow a knight to lounge about on d4
 for the entire game.

♟e6 15.♟f3 ♟c6 16.♟c2 Black achieved a
 decent position out of the opening and White
 won this game only because his name is
 Nakamura, and certainly not from anything
 attained from the opening stage.

♞d6 17.♟g5 ♟cd8 18.♟f3 ♟c6 19.♟d2

The higher-rated Nakamura plays on for the
 win.

♞d7 20.♟e4 f5 21.♟g5 ♟c5 Tiv continues
 to hammer away at White's only weakness,
 d3.

22.♞d1 h6

[22...♞hd8 is also possible. Black looks
 quite healthy there as well.]

23.♟e3 hxg5

[Black also can try 23...♟d4 24.cxd4 exd4
 25.♟d2 hxg5 26.♟xg5 ♟h6 with a decent
 position.]

24.♟xc5 b6 25.♟e3 ♟f6 26.a4 ♟b7 27.♟f1 ♞e8 28.♞e1 ♞ed8 29.b4 a5

[Also to be considered was the line 29...e4
 30.d4 a5 31.b5 ♟e7 .]

30.bxa5 ♟xa5 31.♞ab1 ♟a6 32.♞ed1 ♞d6

33.♟e2 ♞c6 34.♟d2 ♟a7 35.g4 Hoping to
 provoke ...f4 at some point.

♟b7 Rerouting to aim at d3.

36.♟b3 ♞cd6 37.♟f7 ♟e7 38.♟c1 ♟c5

39.♟c4 ♟b7 40.♟a3 c5!? Tiv may be
 playing for the win now.

[40...♞d7 41.♟c1 ♞d6 would repeat the
 position and force White to come up with
 something else if he still wants to go for
 the full point.]

41.♟f1 ♟a5 42.♟b5 ♟f6 43.♟g2 ♟b7

44.♞e1 ♟c7 45.♞bd1! Is chaos a principle
 which can be harvested and weaponized? If
 so, Naka knows the secret. Temptations,
 temptations. White provokes ...e4 which looks
 almost winning for Black, but isn't. This is the
 start of an amazingly deep trap which strains
 credibility, yet somehow it works. White
 deliberately walks into a trap which drops a
 pawn, for which he attains excellent
 compensation. In essence, Naka lures the
 trapper into his own trap.

e4?! In the absence of empirical data, what
 else can one do but take a wild guess? This is
 a mistaken decision. Black should disengage,
 refusing to fight until he is ready. The tourists
 view the locals with amusement, completely
 unaware that the feeling is mutual, with the
 locals deriving their own secret pleasure at
 the tourists as well. The command goes up
 the chain of authority until it reaches Black's e-
 pawn, who gives the misguided order to
 march forward. White can't make progress if
 Black temporizes. Instead, Black wins a pawn,
 but White gets dangerous compensation, as
 the game begins to open for his bishops.

46.d4 ♞d5 47.♞b1 cxd4 48.cxd4 ♞xd4

49.♟a6! ♞b8 50.♞ec1+ ♟d7 EXERCISE

(combination alert): The normally quiet
 neighbourhood of black's king seethes with
 unwanted activity and attention from White's
 attackers. White has a method of regaining
 his pawn, while retaining strategic plusses.
 How can he accomplish this goal?

ANSWER: Pin/double attack.

51.♟c5! Black's once fierce defenders are
 now about as intimidating as kittens in a
 basket.

♞d5 52.♟xb6 Houdini likes taking on b6 with
 the rook.

♟c6?!

[52...♟e6 kept White's advantage to a
 minimum.]

53.♟c4

[53.a5! intending Bb5 was stronger.]

53...♞d2 54.♞d1 ♟c3 55.♟e3 ♞xb1

56.♞xb1 ♞c2 57.♟b3 ♞e2 58.♟f1 ♞b2

59.♞xb2 ♟xb2 60.gxf5 gxf5 61.♟xg5

Black's resistance, for so long on the perilous
 verge, soon comes to a shuddering stop,
 halting at the edge of a steep precipice. Black
 stands busted:

1. Down a pawn.
2. Facing a nasty pair of bishops.
3. Unable to deal with white passers on the a-
 and h-files.

4. White's once lowly bishops enter, radiating grace in their wake. The crowd parts, creating a gap of respect for their terrible powers.

4.d4 62.4.d1 4.c3 63.h4 4.e6 64.h5 4.f7 65.4.e3 4.c6 Knight and bishop must keep vigil over the a-pawn, and his king is unequal to the task of singlehandedly halting the h-pawn.

66.4.b3+ 4.f6 67.4.d5 4.e5 68.4.b6!

White's mesmerizing bishops flow back and forth. Now the a-pawn marches.

4.g5 69.a5 4.d7 70.4.c7 4.c5 71.4.f7 4.a6 This poor knight is sick and tired of living under the dark thrall of those nasty white bishops.

72.4.d8+ 4.h6 Black renews his vigil over the surging a- and h-pawns' ambitions with a sense of urgency.

73.4.g6 4.c5 74.4.b6 4.b4 75.4.xf5 4.xh5 EXERCISE (combination alert): White can win the e-pawn with 76 Bxc5?! Bxc5 77 Bxe4, but this would allow Black hope with the opposite-coloured bishops. White need not oblige. He has a method of winning the e-pawn while hanging on to his bishop-pair. How?

ANSWER: Just take it!

76.4.xe4! An action doesn't constitute gratuitous violence if the victim is already dead.

4.xe4

[Black's last move has the effect of accentuating the knight's utter worthlessness as a defender, and allows White to promote, but 76...4.g4 77.4.b7! is equally hopeless.]

77.a6 4.d2+ 78.4.g2 4.c4 79.4.d4

Summary: White's opening scheme is too passive for him to attain anything. A good rule of thumb is to go for the ...Nc6, ...Bg4 and ...0-0-0 set-ups if White responds sluggishly in the opening.

1-0

 **Leko,P**

 **Ivanchuk,V**

6th matchgame, Mukachevo (rapid)

2009

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 4.xd5 3.4.f3 4.g4 4.4.e2 4.c6 5.d4 Unlike Nakamura last game, Leko commits to an early central push, a riskier option than holding back.

QUESTION: Why would anyone hold back on

d4, a move which establishes central control?

ANSWER: It does that, but it also provides Black with a convenient target, which he can pile up on and challenge with ...0-0-0 and ...e5. Also, strangely enough, Black, for now, leads in development, meaning White should be careful about early confrontation.

0-0-0 6.4.e3 White simultaneously develops while reinforcing his centre. Other options:

[a) 6.c4 4.f5 7.4.e3 (now Black has a computer-generated trick) 4.xf3! 8.4.xf3 4.xd4! 9.4.xd4 (9.4.g4? drops a pawn to 4.c2+ 10.4.xc2 4.xg4) 9...4.e6+!

(all comp analysis; I wouldn't be able to find such moves on my own if given an eternity) 10.4.e2 4.e4! and Black regains the piece with one pawn interest, F.Torres-C.

Lakdawala Internet (blitz) 2010. White may have some compensation for the pawn, but I doubt full compensation.]

[b) 6.c3?! is much too passive: e5 7.c4 4.e4 (White essentially wasted a tempo, taking two moves to play c4) 8.4.bd2 4.b4 9.d5 4.d4! 10.4.xd4 exd4 11.f3 4.xf3 gave Black a blistering attack after 12.gxf3 4.h4+ 13.4.f1 d3 14.4.xd3 4.h3+ 15.4.e1 4.e8+ 16.4.e2? (16.4.e4 f5 was White's slim, remaining chance) 16...4.h4+ 17.4.f1 4.c5 in R.Krulich-S.Sulskis, Bad Wiessee 2003. Now 18.4.e1 is met with 4.h3# .]

[QUESTION: Why can't White just switch over to piece play with 6.4.c3 ?

ANSWER: This leads to a rather sour version of the ...Qa5 Scandinavian for White, where the d4-pawn is under heavy pressure.

For example, 4.a5 7.4.e3 4.f6 (7...e5 8.4.xe5 4.xe2 9.4.xe2 4.xe5 10.dxe5 4.xe5 is equal) 8.0-0 e5 9.d5 (or 9.4.b5?? 4.xf3 – I think my opponent simply forgot about this move, which wrecks his position – 10.gxf3 exd4 11.4.xd4 4.xd4 12.4.xd4 4.h5 and White's position is resignable, B. Baker-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2013) 9...4.xd5 10.4.xe5 4.xe2! 11.4.xc6 4.xd1 12.4.xa5 4.xc3 13.bxc3 4.xc2

. Black had a completely won ending with an extra pawn, the bishop-pair, and a shattered queenside pawn structure for White, B.Barquin-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2010.]

6...e5 7.c4 4.a5+ 8.4.d2 4.b4 9.d5 4.xf3 10.4.xf3 4.d4 11.4.c3 4.a6! A key move and to my mind an equalizer in this important line.

[Instead, after 11...4.c5?! (on c5 Black's queen gets in the way of White's future

B01

pawn roller) 12.♗e2 ♖f6 13.0-0 ♜he8
14.♞c1 ♜b8 15.a3 ♙xc3 16.♙xc3 ♖xe2+
17.♞xe2 White is ready for b4 and stands
clearly better, S.Movsesian-J.Tomczak,
Warsaw 2009.]

12.b3 A move which veers slightly from the
normal tenets of the position.

[Perhaps White's most accurate move is the
meek retreat 12.♗e2 , but even then Black
should hold his own. After ♖f6 (12...♞g6?!
13.0-0 ♖f6 14.♞c1 ♜he8 15.♗e3
was A.Morozevich-C.Lakdawala, Internet
(blitz) 2010; White's attack is faster after
♖xe2+ 16.♖xe2!) 13.a3 we have:

A) 13...♜he8!? 14.axb4 ♞xa1 15.♞xa1
♖c2+ 16.♜f1 ♖xa1 17.♙d1 c6!
was S.Movsesian-M.Petr, Czech League
2010. This is anybody's game after
18.♜e2 b5! 19.dxc6 bxc4 when Black's
stranded a1-knight evades capture.
Houdini assesses as equal.;

B) 13...♙xc3 14.♙xc3 ♖xe2 15.♞xe2
♜he8 16.0-0-0 (more accurate than
16.♙d1 c6! when Black stood at least
equal due to his development lead, S.
Movsesian-H.Nakamura, Banska Stiavnica
(blitz) 2010; note too that 16.0-0?
walks into ♞xd5!) 16...♜b8 17.♜he1 ♖d7
18.♞g4 ♞g6 19.♞xg6 hxg6 . Perhaps
White may be a bit more comfortable with
his extra space and bishop versus knight,
but I would be fine taking on Black here,
A.Morozevich-A.Grischuk, Moscow (blitz)
2012.;

C) 13...--]

12...♞a5! Luring White's rook away from a1,
which in turn hinders him from playing a3, to
eject the intruder from b4.

[Also playable is Greet's suggestion
12...♞g6 13.0-0 ♖f6 14.a3 ♙d6 15.♗e2
e4 , S.Movsesian-F.Grafl, German League
2006. Black may be okay after 16.♗e3
♖xe2+ 17.♞xe2 a6 , but that soon-to-be
rolling White queenside pawn majority
makes me nervous.]

13.♞c1 Now White finds it difficult to engineer
a3.

f5 Energizing his kingside pawn majority and
grabbing control over e4.

14.0-0

[QUESTION: Can't White sacrifice his a-
pawn to open the a-file after 14.a3 ?

ANSWER: Your sac fails in the attempt to
mitigate White's defensive burden and
looks unsound. White doesn't have time to

attack after ♞xa3 , since b3 is loose.]

14...♖f6 15.g3!? This looks awfully slow.

[Perhaps the position requires a more
violent solution. Now may be the correct
timing for 15.a3! , a suggestion of Tibor
Karolyi and a move which triggers far
reaching implications. Crazy complications
arise after ♞xa3 (or 15...♗e7!? 16.♖b5
♖xf3+ 17.gxf3 ♞b6 18.♗e3 c5!?
and it's anybody's game to win or lose, but
I prefer White here) 16.♖b5 ♖xb5 17.♞a1
♞b2! (perhaps an improvement over
Greet's recommendation 17...♞xa1
18.♞xa1 ♙xd2 19.cxb5 e4 20.♙d1 ♙f4
21.♗e2 ♜b8 ; White may stand better here,
but even this may be playable for Black due
to his power on the dark squares) 18.♙xb4
e4 with an irrational mess all across the
board. Houdini assesses as equal.]

15...♜b8 16.♗g2 ♜he8 17.♜e1 h6!

In preparation of a future ...g5.

18.♜e3 a6 19.h3 ♖d7 QUESTION: Who
stands better?

ANSWER: I like Black's chances:

1. Due to White's inability to get his
queenside pawn majority going, while Black's
is ready with ...g5 and ...e4 or ...f4.

2. Black's pieces dominate the dark squares
a5, a3, b4, c5 and possibly soon f4.

20.♗e1 Leko hopes to achieve his aims
surreptitiously, rather than by any overt
display of force. His plan to undermine the d4-
knight is revealed in a few moves.

[Instead, 20.♖b1 ♙xd2 21.♞xd2 ♞b6

, and if 22.b4 f4! with advantage to Black.]

20...♖c5 21.♜h1 g5 Black's pawns approach
with dark undertones of hostility toward
White's king.

22.f4! After a quiet interlude, hostilities arise
once more in the centre. Leko, sensing a rout,
wakes up, fights back and attempts to
destabilize the d4-knight.

exf4!? The magisterial d4-knight remains
impervious to intimidation and remains where
he stands. Ivanchuk's appetite for war has yet
to be appeased, and he refuses to renounce
his hostile ways. In my opinion Ivanchuk is
the most strategically creative top-level GM of
the present day. Here he commits his fortunes
on the rise or fall of an exchange sac for a
pawn, for which he receives dominion of the
dark squares.

[Houdini gives the psycho line 22...gxf4
23.gxf4 ♖de6! (Black declines to sac his d4-
knight with polite regret) 24.fxe5 ♖f4

25.♟f3 ♘xg2 26.♙xg2 ♙xc3 27.♙xc3
 ♟xa2+ 28.♟e2 ♟xb3 , claiming the position
 is even.]
 [Instead, 22...♙c6 is drawn by repetition of
 moves.]

**23.♙xe8 ♙xe8 24.♟xd4 ♙xe1+! 25.♙xe1
 ♙xc3 26.♙e8+ ♙a7 27.♟f2 fxg3 28.♟xg3
 ♙d4** The allure of attack dangles soothingly
 before Black, who dominates the dark squares.
 One gets the feeling that evolution left White's
 poor bishop behind and threw its weight
 behind the development of his dark-squared
 brother on d4 instead.

EXERCISE (planning): It appears as if White
 is in great danger, and it feels like the force of
 Black's initiative is greater than White's by
 several orders of magnitude. However, this is
 an illusion: White has a miracle save. Find
 one potent move and White forces a draw.
 How?

ANSWER: It is written that Jesus fed a crowd
 of hundreds with only two fish and five loaves
 of bread. This feast amazed everyone except
 the pair of fish, who were just kind of bummed
 out about the whole thing. Moral: One
 person's miracle can be another's misfortune.
 Here Leko pulls off his defensive miracle.

29.d6! Dual purpose: White activates his
 bishop and erodes the Black king's pawn
 cover.

cx d6 No choice. If Black plays for the win it
 backfires. For example:

[a) 29...c6?? (a murderer who then donates
 money to a charity to soothe conscience,
 still remains a philanthropic murderer)
 30.♟e1! ♟xa2 31.♟d1 ♙xb3 32.d7
 winning.]

[b) 29...f4?? 30.♟e1! ♟xe1+ 31.♙xe1
 cxd6 32.♙e7 and Black can't save himself
 since his kingside pawns are vulnerable.]

30.♟xd6 ♟c3 Threatening all sorts of nasty
 back rank checks. It appears as if the queen
 cradles the white king's very life in her hands.
 One tiny gesture from her and he may die, or
 be restored to life. The trouble is the queen
 arrives fashionably late – in fact, too late to
 score the full point. White's perpetual check
 arrives first.

31.♙h2

[White can take the immediate draw with
 31.♟b8+ ♙b6 32.♟d8+ ♙a7 33.♟b8+ .]

31...♟a1 Threatening mate on the move.
 White must take the perpetual check.

32.♟b8+ ♙b6 33.♟d8+ ♙a7 34.♟b8+
 The salivating hounds are frustrated in their

attempts to corner the weaving fox.

♙b6 35.♟d8+ ♙a7 Summary: The 5 d4 line
 is both popular for White and very tricky.
 Study it well.

1/2-1/2

B01

□ **Alberto,M**

■ **Munoz Pantoja,M**

Montcada

2011

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♟xd5 3.c4?! White, rather
 than go for the traditional development lead,
 opts for a central space edge instead.

QUESTION: Shouldn't White get an edge with
 it?

ANSWER: On the contrary, I think it is the
 most inferior option of the chapter and fully
 deserves the dubious mark.

♟a5 Preventing the immediate d4 and I
 believe Black's strongest move.

[Another very tempting path for Black is the
 simple 3...♟e4+ which may actually be his
 best option in the position. After 4.♟e2
 ♟xe2+ 5.♙xe2 (if 5.♙xe2?! ♙c6 6.♙f3 e5
 and White already stands worse in the
 ending, since he must nurse a hole on d4 as
 well as a backward d-pawn; in my database,
 White scores a statistically rotten single
 draw from six outings here) 5...e5 6.d4 ♙c6
 White fights for equality, M.Blaga-M.Golubic,
 Bjelovar 2008.]

4.♙c3 ♙c6! I like this ambitious idea against
 White's set-up.

[QUESTION: Why did Black allow d4 when
 he could have stopped it with 4...e5
 instead?

ANSWER: Your suggestion is also playable,
 but with 4...Nc6! Black tempts the white
 centre forward in Alekhine's Defence style.
 Matters are not so easy for White, who soon
 falls behind in development. Instead, after
 your idea, 5.♙f3 ♙c6 6.d4 exd4 7.♙xd4
 ♙xd4 8.♟xd4 ♙f6 9.♙d2 ♟c5 10.♟xc5
 ♙xc5 11.♙b5 0-0! 12.♙xc7
 was R.Pakhomov-J.Gorzhankina, Moscow
 2012. Now ♙g4! 13.♙e2 ♙ac8 14.♙d5
 ♙fe8 gives Black more than enough
 compensation for the pawn.]

5.d4 ♙f5 A move leading to tricky play. Both ...
 Nb4 and ...0-0-0 are in the air and White's
 centre represents a huge liability. Yet Black's
 last move isn't the best.

[Better is 5...e5! 6.d5 ♖b4! (threat: ...Bf5) 7.♙d2 ♙f5 8.♞c1 ♙c5! when 9.a3 is met with ♜b6! .]

6.♙e3?

[White should respond with the comp-like move 6.♙d2! ♖xd4 (not 6...♖b4? 7.♖d5! e6? as in J.Mateu Farre-O.Perez Mitjans, Barcelona 2012, when White has the simple 8.♖e3! with a winning position) 7.♖d5 ♜c5 8.♙b4 ♖c2+ 9.♜xc2 ♜xd5 10.cxd5 ♙xc2 11.♞c1 ♙e4 12.♞xc7 a6 13.♞xb7 ♙xd5 14.♞b6 ♖f6 with equal chances in a sharp ending.]

[EXERCISE (combination alert): Rare, indeed, is a combination alert on move 6! Black's pressure on the centre may appear like a trivial exasperation, but when compiled and tallied with other problems into a grand total, constitutes real damage to White's position. After 6.♙e3? Black has a method of winning a pawn. How?]

6...♖f6? Black offers his now lost opportunity a good-natured wave as he walks by.

[ANSWER: Black missed 6...♖b4! (fork/double attack) 7.♞c1 ♖xa2 8.♞a1 ♖xc3 9.♞xa5 ♖xd1 10.♖xd1 e6 with an extra pawn in the ending.]

7.a3! ♖e4 8.♜b3? White's turn to falter.

[He has a promising continuation in 8.♖ge2! e5 9.b4 ♖xc3 10.♖xc3 ♙xb4 11.axb4 ♜xb4 12.d5! ♜xc3+ 13.♙d2 ♜d4 14.dxc6 b6 15.♙e2 when Black lacks full compensation for the piece.]

8...0-0-0 Now Black is doing well again.

9.♖f3 e6

[Black gets tremendous compensation for a pawn after 9...e5 10.d5 ♖d4 11.♙xd4 exd4 12.♖xd4 ♞e8 13.♙e2 ♙g6 , and if 14.0-0 ♖d2 picks off an exchange.]

10.♞c1?! A waste of time, since the rook must move again very soon to defend his d-pawn.

♙e7 11.♙e2 ♙f6 Black's pressure on the d-pawn increases.

12.♞d1 g5! Black authors a plan of hypermodern simplicity: Undermine the centre from the wings.

13.0-0

[13.h3 h5 fails to alter anything.]

13...g4 14.♖xe4? Dropping his d-pawn.

[14.d5! may yet save White after ♖xc3 15.bxc3 ♜xc3 16.♜xc3 ♙xc3 17.♖h4 ♖e5 18.♖xf5 exf5 when he has compensation for the pawn.]

14...♖xe4 15.♖d2 ♖xd4 When a passenger on board a ship in the middle of an ocean

disappears, there is only one place the body can be.

16.♙xd4 ♞xd4 17.♖xe4 After getting knocked to the ground, the knight heaves himself erect and fights back.

♞xe4 QUESTION: Shouldn't the bishops of opposite colour save White?

ANSWER: Maybe if this were an ending, but queens remain on the board, in which case the principle reverses: Opposite coloured bishops favour the attacking side, in this case Black, who has the more aggressive position. White's meek bishop just has the look of a guy who walks up to the bartender and orders a glass of milk.

18.♜c2 ♜e5 19.♙d3 ♞f4 20.b4 ♜b2!?

21.♜a4!? The universal prescription for transmuted grief to rage is the quest of revenge over an oppressor. White refuses to swap queens and grovel for a draw a pawn down with a bad position in an ending.

QUESTION: If the principle is opposite-coloured bishops favour the defender in an ending, shouldn't he swap queens?

[ANSWER: White's only criterion: Can he survive after the queen swap? You may be right, but holding the draw is no trivial task here since Black's remaining bishop continues to dominate, even with queens off the board. For example, 21.♜xb2 ♙xb2 22.a4 ♙a3! (forcing more pawns on the same colour as White's remaining bishop and further eroding White's receding hold over his dark squares) 23.b5 (23.♞b1 ♞d8 24.♞fd1 a5! 25.bxa5 ♙c5 is also good for Black) 23...h5 and I would bet Black can still convert this position.]

21...♙d4! A grim foreshadowing of what is to come. Dual purpose: He covers a7 while adding another attacker on f2.

22.♙c2 ♞d8 23.♖h1 The king falls into an uneasy, fitful slumber on h1.

[23.♞b1 ♜c3 24.♜b3 ♜d2 25.♞bd1 ♙xf2+ 26.♖h1 ♙d4! is also hopeless.]

23...♞xf2 24.♙e4? If you tell a gangster "No" when he wants to hear "Yes", this simple difference may cost you your life.

♞xf1+ 25.♞xf1 EXERCISE (combination alert): White, having overindulged in the previous evening's revelries, now deals with the dyspeptic aftermath. How can Black end the game in a single move?

ANSWER: Double attack. The celebrations begin. Black's queen raises her glass and toasts the en prise white bishop and rook with

calls of "Skoal!" and "Cheers!"

♔e2 I pity the poor soul this domineering queen married.

Summary: 3 c4?! is one of White's worst options of the chapter. Black gets the choice of a promising Alekhine's Defence-type position, or simply the better ending after 3... Qe4+!.

0-1

Chapter Ten

Odds and Ends

1 e4 d5



Well, mostly odds in this chapter, where White's bizarre choices sometimes make onerous demands upon logic or common sense. In every case you should get an edge or stand equal, at the very minimum. When I was in first grade I tried to pull off a scam and made "crystals" for a chemistry project, but I was outed by this bugger named Michael, who saw through it and announced: "Mrs. Kelly, that looks like the rock salt which my dad uses to melt ice and snow on our driveway. I don't think Cyrus actually did his project! He just grabbed a handful of rock salt and now says they are crystals." Damn him! I, like OJ Simpson, indignantly proclaimed both my innocence and also my chemistry prowess.

Well, in this chapter, your opponents are like me with my first grade chemistry project. They don't know or like Scandinavian theory and insist on veering toward the goofy, just to get us out of our theory. The trouble is their scheme, like mine in the first grade, doesn't work because this chapter familiarizes us with the goofy non-theoretical lines.

[Ekebjærg-Van Oosterom](#)

[Dimitrov-Szabo](#)

[Ellrich-Khenkin](#)

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2 d3 – [Haub-Bauer](#)

□ Ekebjærg, O
 ■ Van Oosterom, J

Correspondence
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

2002

1. ♖c3 QUESTION: What?

[ANSWER: Please remain calm. Our move order would be 1.e4 d5 2.♖c3 .]

1...d5 2.e4 Now we transpose.

d4 Black's most ambitious option.

[QUESTION: This move leads to structures I am not so familiar with. Wouldn't 2...dxe4 keep us in Scandinavian territory?

ANSWER: It would and you achieve equality after 3.♖xe4 ♖d7 4.♖f3 ♖gf6 5.♖xf6+ (5.♖g3 e6 6.d4 c5 transposes to a line of the Caro-Kann, except with Black up a full move since he didn't waste a tempo with ... c6) 5...♖xf6 6.♖c4 ♖f5 7.0-0 e6 8.d4 ♖e7 with a favourable Scandi-like position, since we haven't wasted any time with our queen, D.Andreikin-A.Shirov, Saratov 2011. Black also has a few other options:]

[a) 2...e6 leads to the French Defence.]

[b) 2...c6 would be a Caro-Kann.]

[c) 2...♖f6 transposes to a line from Alekhine's Defence.]

3. ♖ce2

[3.♖d5?! smacks of the artificial and looks like an attempt to lure Black out of theory: e5 4.c3 c6 5.♖b4 ♖e6 6.♖d3! dxc3 7.dxc3 ♖d7 8.♖e3 ♖c7 9.♖c2 ♖gf6 10.f3 ♖e7 11.♖e2 h5! . White's knights are misplaced for this particular structure, R.Crisologo-C. Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid) 2007.]

3...e5 4.♖g3 ♖e6 QUESTION: Why develop a bishop before our knights?

ANSWER: We anticipate the coming Bc4, White's only active spot for his light-squared bishop, and prevent it.

5. ♖f3 f6 6. ♖e2

[QUESTION: Can White play 6.♖b5+ , intending to reroute to b3 and swap off Black's good bishop?

ANSWER: He can, but it costs time, which Black exploits the following way: c6 7.♖a4 ♖a6! 8.♖b3 (8.d3? ♖a5+ wins a pawn) 8...♖xb3 9.axb3 d3! is awkward for White. His remaining bishop gets buried on c1 for some time to come, T.Lammens-J.Ehlvest, Vlissingen 1996.]

6...♖h6 QUESTION: Why play the knight to the edge of the board?

ANSWER: Black's move is logical, since in

essence he gets a white side of a King's Indian Sämisch formation. He soon plays ...c5 and possibly later breaks with ...c4. In this case, Black's knight looks handy on d6 to help out with the break.

[Previously, after 6...♖d7 7.0-0 ♖e7 8.d3 ♖g6?! (this commits the knight too early)

9.h3 ♖d6 10.♖h2! (intending Bg4; a swap of light-squared bishops helps White, who rids himself of his own bad bishop for Black's good bishop, and eases his cramped game as well) 0-0 11.♖g4 c5 12.♖xe6+ ♖xe6 13.♖f5 ♖e7 14.♖xe7+ ♖xe7 15.f4 ♖c6 16.f5 ♖f7 White stood a shade better in O.Ekebjærg-A.Volchok, correspondence 1999.]

7.0-0 c5 8.♖b5+ White is determined to rid himself of his bad bishop, tempi be damned! ♖d7 9.♖e2 g6 Denying White's knight an outpost on f5.

10.♖c4 QUESTION: Doesn't White seize the edge now that he forces a swap of light-squared bishops?

ANSWER: At long last, White achieves his bishop debarfification dream, but no great victory since he wasted many moves to do so. Black still owns the greater share of space and may expand on either wing, so I still prefer his position.

♖e7

[Fighting for the light squares is more logical than the 10...♖xc4 11.♖xc4 of O.Ekebjærg-S.Kofidis, correspondence 1999.]

11.♖xe6 ♖xe6 12.d3 ♖f7 13.c4 ♖e7

14.♖e1 h5! Terrific positional play. Black continues to encroach territory and deny White's knights a single good square. Black's forces, creatures of the night, favour dispatching enemies by stealth and poison, rather than face them on the battlefield head on in the sunlight.

15.♖h4 ♖g8 16.h3 0-0-0 17.a3 ♖df8

18.b4 White offers a pawn to open lines on the queenside.

QUESTION: Should Black accept such an offer?

ANSWER: Despite Houdini's pitiful pleas to accept the pawn, most humans wouldn't consider the offer, since it would turn attention to the queenside and away from the kingside, the area of Black's ambitions.

♖d8 The bishop, feigning fear, puts on an acting performance beyond reproach of the sternest theatre critic.

19.♖h1 ♖c6 Now ...f5 is in the air.

20.b5!? QUESTION: This looks crazy. Why did White block his own queenside play?

ANSWER: Two possibilities:

1. White plans a5 and a6, hoping infiltrate the light squares with his queen later on.

2. White heeds his comp's council in a blocked position – generally a questionable practice, since we humans put the machines to shame when the game remains closed!

20.b6!? QUESTION: What is the point of Black's last move?

ANSWER: Black, a world-class correspondence player, must have had a good reason, but I'm damned if I know what it is, other than it is the same move Houdini likes! The problem is comps have the planning capacity of a below-average intelligence chimp in closed games.

[20...20.d6 looks more logical.]

21.a4 White's pawn storm rages on, to little effect since he has difficulties opening lines, unlike Black on the other wing.

f5 Out, buddy boy! Time to give notice to the obnoxious interloper on h4.

22.a5 22.f6 23.d6!? Apparently the knight's firm belief in his own invulnerability may have been a tad premature. This is desperation, but also a decision to engage in a bit of cold-blooded opportunism. White searches for a small measure of solace and refuge within the din of battle with this sac, hoping to seize the initiative, but who can blame him.

[White risks asphyxiation after 23.d6 f4 24.d7 f1 g5 .]

23...23.g6 24.exf5 24.h7 Now the f6- and d6-squares are vulnerable to tempo loss to a future Ne4.

25.a6 EXERCISE (critical decision): White's last move is a brazen attempt to smuggle in contraband. It feels like he attacks from habit more than deliberate doctrine. A couple of unforeseen eventualities lay ahead for Black. He can respond with either 25...a6 or 25...Nd6. Think carefully. Only one of them works.

ANSWER: **25.d6!**

[Not 25...b6?? . Sometimes the natural move can also be a bad one. This turns a win into a loss after 26.f3 when the queen deftly slips in behind enemy lines: 26.c7 27.b7+ (a bullet sings dangerously past the king, grazing his forehead) 27.d8 28.xa7 and we see the faintest hint of a smile curl upon her lips, as the queen witnesses the black king's sweaty

discomfiture.]

26.f3 26.b8 27.d5 27.c7 Everything is secure.

28.h4 28.f7 29.f3 EXERCISE (planning/critical decision): What do you think about an exchange sac on g3? Is it worth the investment?

ANSWER: It certainly is.

29.g3! Excellent strategic judgement. The rook savagely cuts down White's best defender and then spits on the corpse. Incrementally, the once vague plan emerges into detailed solidity. Black eliminates the one defender who held White's position together. The commotion is brief and the attempted insurgency on the queenside finds itself quelled before it has a chance to gather momentum of any sort. Now Black's pieces, haughty lords over awed serfs, loom over their meek white counterparts.

30.fg3

[30.fg3 30.f5 31.a2 e4 is also crushing. Inside the walled compound, the nervous white king's changing moods cannot be concealed from watchful eyes.]

30...30.f5 31.f5 White's queen mutters a despondent farewell to her family, who face a hopeless ending.

31.f5 White's rooks are separate entities, yet share a similar trait, in that they are both ineffective at their given tasks, and unable to deal with Black's minor pieces.

32.g4

[32.h2 e4 is of no help.]

32...32.hg4 33.g5 EXERCISE (combination alert): Find Black's breakthrough.



ANSWER: **e4! 34.dxe4 34.xh4! 35.axb7**

[35.xh4 35.h8 regains the piece with a winning position.]

35...35.g6 36.a6 36.ge5 Once c4 falls, Black's central passers have their say.

Summary: 2 Nc3 is a rather lame line, where virtually any response equalizes. I like 2...d4, simply because it is Black's most ambitious. Also, correspondence players should stop listening to their comp's advice in blocked positions!

0-1

 **Dimitrov,P**
 **Szabo,G**
 Sunny Beach
[Cyrus Lakdawala]

B21

2009

1.e4 d5 2.e5 Another not-so-impressive option. White optimistically thrusts his e-pawn forward, hoping to establish an independent principality within Black's borders.

QUESTION: What is wrong with this move? White takes space, similar to the Advance French or Advance Caro Kann.

ANSWER: This is not the same. With the move, White violates divine proscription:

1. In the Advance French, Black already commits to blocking in his light-squared bishop with ...e6. In our game continuation, Black's 'bad' bishop is free to roam as he pleases on f5 or perhaps g4, if White tosses in Nf3.

2. In the Advance Caro, Black does indeed get to move his light-squared bishop outside the pawn chain, but at the cost of a thrown-away tempo in ...c6.

QUESTION: Why is ...c6 a wasted tempo?

ANSWER: Black inevitably needs to challenge the centre with ...c5 at some point or another, so having played ...c6 is a pure waste of time with zero benefit for Black.

c5 Black achieves ...c5 even before White has a chance to back up his e-pawn with d4.

QUESTION: I am not even superficially familiar with the Advance French or Caro. Is there a way for Black to avoid such a structure?

ANSWER: No there isn't, but fear not. We enter a highly favourable version, so in a sense, we are handed a head start in such positions, even when unacquainted.

[QUESTION: Shouldn't Black jump on the chance to play 2...f5 ?

ANSWER: This is also a very tempting option for Black. After 3.d4?! e6 4.f3 c5 5.c3 f6 6.e2 we reach a position of Short's Variation of the Advance Caro-Kann, except that Black is up a full move over theory, H.Vonthron-S.Krivoshey, Salou 2005.]

3.f4 Others:

[a) 3.c3 f6 4.d4 cxd4 5.cxd4 f5 (I think this is more accurate than 5...b6 6.f3 fxd3 7.fxd3 e6 and all White achieved was a terrible Advance French, sans attacking light-

squared bishop, S.Agdestein-Wang Yue, Amsterdam 2008.]

[b) 3.d4?! (undaunted, White tosses in d4 anyway) cxd4 4.f3 (White decides to turn the tables on us and play a Scandinavian himself, albeit a lousy version!) f6 5.f5 e6 6.f2 (in order to back up the e-pawn with f4 later on) f7 7.c3 f7 . Now White was obliged to hand over his good bishop and also strengthen Black's central control with 8.f6 bxc6 , with a sorry looking French position for White, G.Ariete-M.Ferro, Italian Team Championship 2004.]

3...f6 4.f3

[4.f5 f7 (threat: ...Nxe5) 5.f6 f6 6.d4 e6 7.c3 cxd4 8.cxd4 is yet another awful French position for White, who is missing his good, light-squared bishop, Z. Jusic-A.Brkc, Rabac 2003.]

4...g4 Black directs his bishop outside his pawn chain, before he tosses in ...e6.

5.c3

[Or 5.e2 e6 6.c3 f7 with no worries for Black, P.Oliveira-A.Fernandes, New York 1993,]

[while 5.f5 is simply met with b6 .]

5...e6 6.f5 QUESTION: Is White willing to hand over his good bishop?

ANSWER: In this game he hopes to transfer it over to c2 in Ruy Lopez style, at a loss of time.

[I would just play the less ambitious 6.e2 .]

6...f7 7.0-0 a6 8.a4 f7

[8...b5 9.f2 b6 is how I would continue as Black.]

9.d3

[QUESTION: Why not back up his centre with 9.d4 ?

ANSWER: White lacks the fire power over d4 to do so and he simply drops a pawn to cxd4 10.cxd4 b5 11.f3 (or 11.f2 fxd4!) 11...f5 .]

9...f5 10.f1 f3 Eliminating his bad bishop.

11.f3 h5 Backing up the f5-knight by preventing g4.

12.f2 f7 13.f1 b5 14.f2 b6 Black stands slightly better:

1. He annexed considerable queenside territory.

2. For now, White's bishops are less than impressive.

3. White isn't going to achieve d4 anytime soon.

15.♟f3 g6 16.g3 QUESTION: What is the point of this move?

ANSWER: White dreams of a future Kg2, h3 and g4, which sometimes has the effect of contributing to exposing his own king.

c4+!? This solidifies White's central control, but also allows Black a pawn storm target on c3.

[I would probably play 16...a5 .]

17.d4 b4 18.♙g2 a5 Now the undermining ...a4-a3 is in the air.

19.a4 QUESTION: Isn't White violating the principle: Don't focus attention on the opponent's strong wing?

[ANSWER: If he plays something like 19.h3 , patiently preparing an eventual g4 break, then Black continues with a4 , with ...a3 undermining ideas. This would probably induce 20.a3 bxa3 21.bxa3 with a similar position to the game.]

19...bxa3 20.bxa3 a4 Clearing the path for a future ...Na5 and ...Nb3, or even ...Rb8 and a future ...Rb3!?

21.♞b1 ♞a7 22.h3 Finally, White prepares for g4.

♙d7 23.♞h1 h4! 24.g4 ♙g3 It isn't so easy to rid himself of this pest on g3.

25.♞g1 ♞hb8 26.♞xb8 ♞xb8 27.♞d1?!

A waste of time.

♞a5! Black goes after the base of White's chain on c3.

28.♞e1 EXERCISE (planning): Find a concrete path for Black to pierce the position's opacity and increase his advantage.

ANSWER: Reroute the knight to b5.

♙a7! 29.♙g5

[Black is also winning in the line 29.g5 ♙b5 30.♙xh4 ♙e4 31.♙xe4 dxe4 32.♙d2 ♙xa3 .]

29...♙xg5 30.fxg5 ♙c8?! Not necessary.

[Better was 30...♙b5! 31.♞f2 ♙e8 32.♞f6 ♞xc3! , and if 33.♞h8+ ♙d7 34.♞xb8 ♞xc2+ 35.♙f3 ♞e2+ 36.♙f4 ♞e4# .]

31.♙d2 ♞b2 32.♞c1 ♞b7? The rook inexplicably runs back to her room and slams the door shut, with only the sound of her muffled sobs to be heard. Black drifts, probably in time pressure.

[The simple 32...♞a2! threatens ...Nb5 next.]

33.♞e1 ♙b5 34.♞e3 Suddenly White holds everything together.

♙e4!? **35.♞xe4!?** Perhaps an ambitious attempt to win. White's choice produces a mess of great implications.

[The game looks unclear after 35.♙xe4 dxe4 36.♞xe4 .]

35...dxe4 36.♙xe4 ♞c7 37.♞e1?!

[37.♙e1 looks correct. The mercurial and calculating queen is first indifferent then hostile. She refuses to waste resources or energy on troubles not of her own. So she leaves her a-pawn to die, unassisted, chasing after glory on the other side of the board. White stakes too much on his attack. Giving up the a-pawn isn't such a trivial matter, since Black soon threatens to promote.]

37...♙xa3 38.♞xh4 ♞d7 39.♙c6 ♞xd4!

40.♙e3 The consortium of White attackers examine the financial ledger and realize they failed to extract a profit from their joint venture.

[If 40.cxd4 ♞xd2+ 41.♞f2 c3 42.♞xd2 cxd2 43.♙xa4 ♙b5! threatens ...Nc3 and d1Q.]

40...♞d3 41.♞h8+ ♞d8 42.♞xd8+ ♙xd8

43.♙b6+ White's bishops protrude like veins on the back of a thin old woman's hand.

♙c8 44.♙xa4 ♞xc3 45.h4 The soon-to-be passed h-pawn is White's last prayer.

♞b3?!

[After 45...♞d3! 46.h5 c3 47.h6 c2 48.♙xc2 ♙xc2 49.h7 it looks like White is about to promote to a new queen, but he isn't.

EXERCISE (combination alert): How does Black halt the queening attempt?

ANSWER: ♙e1+! 50.♙h2 (he must cover against ...Rh3) ♙f3+ 51.♙g2 ♞d2+! and the rook bullies its way over to the h-file.]

46.♙xb3 cxb3 47.♙d4 ♙d7 48.h5 ♙c2

EXERCISE (critical decision): Where to move the bishop: c3 or b2? One of them draws, the other loses.

49.♙c3? This unfortunate move is destined to terminate in failure, the unpleasant side effects of which include death.

[ANSWER: 49.♙b2! holds the game after ♙e1+ 50.♙f2! ♙d3+ 51.♙e2! (51.♙e3?? ♙xb2 52.h6 ♙c4+ 53.♙d3 ♙xe5+ 54.♙c3 f6! halts the queening attempt) and now: 51...-- (Black loses if he gets greedy and grabs the bishop: 51...♙xb2?? 52.h6 ♙c4 53.♙d1! wins for White. By some magician's trick of reversal, the power in the position changes hands.; 51...♙f4+! (the effort of survival in an unforgiving environment generally entails a compromising of one's dignity; even a starving prince may elect to

eat a rat for dinner) 52.♔e3 ♘h3 53.h6
♘xg5 54.♔d3 should end in a draw.]]

49...♘e3+ 50.♔f3 ♘d1! 51.♙d4

[After 51.h6? ♘xc3 52.h7 b2 53.h8♙

White's disorganized and mistimed
promotion plan arrives in a nondescript
clutter. b1♙ doesn't help White a bit.]

51...♔e8! Crawling within the square of
White's passer. h8 is the juncture of mutual
desire: White's obsession is to promote;
Black's to blockade.

52.h6 ♔f8 53.♔e4 b2 54.♙xb2 ♘xb2

55.♔e3 ♔g8 56.♔e4 ♘c4 57.♔d4 ♘b6

58.♔e4 EXERCISE (planning): Black is up a
piece, but that irritating, passed h-pawn ties
him down. This small pocket on the h-file is a
seedy refuge for riffraff and those running
from the law. Time to close it down. Come up
with a conversion plan for Black.

ANSWER: Transfer the knight to h7, where it
not only stops White's passed h-pawn, but
also ties White's king down to g5.

♘d7! 59.♔f4 ♘f8 60.♔f3 ♘h7 At long last,
the h-pawn nuisance abates, this time for
good.

61.♔f4 ♔f8 As the white king's depression
deepens, each new day is the worst one of his
life. It's zugzwang, and so g5 falls.

62.♔g3 ♘xg5 The tiresome, imperious
knight once again enters the picture.

Everything is about him and him alone.

63.♔f4 ♘h7 64.g5 ♔e7 65.♔g4 ♔d7

66.♔f4 ♔c6 67.♔g4 ♔d5 68.♔f4 ♔d4

Summary: Both 2...c5 and 2...Bf5 equalize at
a minimum.

0-1

D00

□ Ellrich, J

■ Khenkin, I

Bad Homburg

2007

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

1.d4 d5 2.e4 The Blackmar Diemer Gambit.

QUESTION: Is it sound?

ANSWER: I would love to tell you "No! The
Blackmar Diemer is a shady opening!" except
that it could cost me my life. These Blackmar
Diemer guys are cult members who worship at
the altar of their opening they believe is
infused with arcane magic, and are driven into
a paroxysms of rage if you even hint that their
cherished gambit is unsound. My student, Bob,
has been playing it since the early 1990's, and

I have never been able to talk him off the
ledge to give up his beloved opening gambit.

QUESTION: If they love their opening to this
degree, don't they also know it very well?

ANSWER: Exactly! And every time they win a
17-move game, they only crave more.

Essentially, I believe the opening can be
neutralized, but we must be very careful, since
we enter their theoretical neighbourhood. So
we must be well prepared. White controls, if
not actual authority or advantage, then at least
a psychological elevation over the opponent
(us!).

Emotionally, I am quite sympathetic to the
anti-establishment BDG enthusiasts out there.
Your writer, like the typical BDG player, also
cultivated a peevish, uneasy relationship to
those in authority. When I was eight-years-old
my mother (authority figure), seeking to make
me a good citizen, brow-beat me into joining
the Cub Scouts of Canada organization (yet
more authority). I rebelled against this rude
attempt at indenture and achieved the notable
distinction of earning exactly zero Cub Scout
badges in the two year period of my tenure –
pretty impressive when you consider that most
of my Cub Scout buddies earned
approximately a badge a month during the
same period.

dx e4 3.♘c3

[QUESTION: Can White play the immediate
3.f3 ?

ANSWER: No, this line is awful for White.

Black simply declines with e5!

. White scores a horrid 14% in the database
after this move. 4.dxe5 (4.d5 ♘f6 5.♙c4
c6! is terrible for White; we Blackmar Diemer
him back!) 4...♙xd1+ 5.♔xd1 ♘c6 6.f4?
(6.fxe4 is awful, but necessary for White's
continued survival) 6...♙e6 7.♙e3 (if 7.c3
then f6!) 7...♘h6 (White has fallen too far
behind in development to survive) 8.♙b5
0-0-0+ 9.♔e2 ♘d4+ 10.♙xd4 ♙xd4
(threat ...Rb4) 11.h3? ♘f5 12.♔e1 ♘e3
and White's position completely fell apart in
K.Griffith-C.Lakdawala, San Diego (rapid)
2010.]

3...♘f6 4.f3

[If you don't believe this gambit is dangerous,
then witness the following unspeakably
humiliating loss your unfortunate writer
suffered at the hands of a mean-spirited
GM: 4.♙g5 ♙f5 5.f3 ♘bd7 6.♙e2!? exf3
7.♘xf3 c6?! (too slow; I should have played
7...e6 8.0-0-0 ♙e7) 8.0-0-0 e6 9.d5!

(simple: open the position when leading in development) cxd5 10.♟xd5 ♖c8 11.♟d4 ♟g4?? .

EXERCISE (combination alert): Your confused writer is about to be sent packing to the afterlife. How did Morozevich pull it off?

(Instead 11...♟g6 was necessary.

) ANSWER: Deflection.

12.♟xf6+ ♟xf6 13.♞xg4! (gulp!) ♟xg4 14.♟b5+ ♞d7 15.♟xe6 . Take heed reader!

This could be your fate as well if you don't prepare for the BDG! 1-0, A.Morozevich-C. Lakdawala, Internet (blitz) 2010. ♞xb5?? is met with the Morphy versus Duke and Count mate, the most humiliating in all of chess: 16.♟c7+! ♖xc7 17.♞d8# .]

4...exf3 5.♟xf3 g6! In my opinion, Black's best defence, after which White struggles.

6.♟c4 ♟g7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♞e1 All book so far.

QUESTION: What is the idea behind White's last move?

ANSWER: He plans to attack with Qh4 and Bh6. The trouble is he also weakens his d-pawn in doing so.

Others:

[a) 8.♟g5 ♟c6 (Black's universal cure: Increase the pressure on d4) 9.♞d2 ♟g4 10.♞ad1 ♟xf3 11.♞xf3 ♞d7 12.♞f4 ♞ad8 13.♟e2 ♞g4 . White doesn't have enough for the pawn, W.Trumpf-C.Herbrechtsmeier, correspondence 2004.]

[b) 8.♟e5 ♟c6! (removing the pest on e5 is more important than the doubling of Black's c-pawns) 9.♟xc6 bxc6 10.♟f4 (10.♟g5 ♟g4! 11.♟e2 ♞d6! 12.♟f4 e5! 13.dxe5 ♟xe5 14.♟b3 ♟a6 when Black has initiative plus extra pawn) 10...♟d5 11.♟xd5 cxd5 12.♟b3 c6 with zero compensation for White, M.Preussner-B.Bester, correspondence 2009.]

8...♟f5

[Also very tempting is the line 8...♟g4 , undermining d4: 9.♞h4 ♟c6 10.♟e3 ♟xf3 11.♞xf3 e5! (principle: Counter in the centre when attacked on the wing) 12.d5 ♟d4! 13.♟xd4 exd4 14.♞xd4 ♟e8 15.♞d2 ♟d6 and Black stands better. White's attack is at an end and Black's minor pieces outshine their counterparts, W.Trumpf-M.Godena, Lugano 2008.]

9.♞h4 ♟c6 QUESTION: What about the free pawn on c2?

[ANSWER: Well, it isn't so free if we waste time in its capture. I would avoid avarice

and generate a healthy respect for the gambit (please refresh your memory and see the above note for my game against Morozevich). The comps tell me your suggestion 9...♟xc2 is playable, but I would avoid it.]

10.♟h6

[10.d5?! drops a second pawn to ♟a5 11.♟d4 ♟c8 12.♟e2 ♟xd5 .]

10...♟g4! White scores a sorry 10% after this move.

11.♟xg7 ♟xg7 12.h3!?

[The complications favour Black, but if 12.d5 ♟ce5 13.h3 ♟xf3+ 14.♞xf3 ♟e5 15.♞f2 f6 when Black remains up a pawn with a good position.]

12...♟e3 Triple attack.

13.g4? EXERCISE (planning): Somehow this move is an apt commentary on the innate, dark compulsions which drive the BDG player's psyche. How quickly a joyous past melts and drips into a putrid present. We sense angry motion. White's desperado last move attempts to distract and confuse Black. Unfortunately for him, Black has two good continuations to solidify his advantage. You only need to come up with one of them.

ANSWER: ♟xd4!

[Also very strong is 13...e5! 14.♞xd8 ♞axd8 15.d5 ♟xf1 16.dxc6 ♟e3 when Black emerges up an exchange.]

14.♟g5!?! Outbound traffic from the city is far more congested than the inbound lanes. A disreputable gaggle of thugs approaches Black's king with an air of illegality about to occur.

[Instead, 14.gxf5 ♟dxf5 leaves Black up material.]

14...h6 15.♟xf7 Danger always accents the thrill of sacrifice. The landscape erupts in flames and White's forces spew forth in lateral, horizontal and diagonal hate. The psycho knight imagines he is the infant alien, who after the incubation period, bursts through the chest of its agonized host in a spray of blood. ♞xf7 16.♟xf7 ♟xf1 17.♞xf1 ♟xf7 Black's king may have felt a brief moment of nervous confusion.

18.♞xh6 ♞h8! Black's queen wants to fit in. White's attack, emptied of all meaning, is now just a shell of its former vitality.

19.♞e3? White's temperamental queen, intent on suicide, gives her sister a disapproving sniff and goes off by herself in exasperation, seeking her own elusive attack.

I guess such moves are simply coded in the BDG player's DNA. This is one of those positions where the natural course of action may also be the least productive.

[QUESTION: Why didn't White enter the line 19.♖xh8 ♜xh8 20.gxf5 ♜xf5 ?

ANSWER: Blackmar Diemer gambiteers don't approve of grovelling a pawn down. Their philosophy is kill or be killed, and in this game the "be killed" portion prevails. So many things in life are unpleasant – the hated visit to the proctologist comes to mind! In this instance White should just bend over, swap queens and get it over with!]

19...♜xc2 20.♖f3 ♜d4+ By now Black must have felt the lifting of a pervasive oppression from his position. Centralization is the secret elixir which keeps even the sickest king alive.

21.♜h1 ♜e3 22.♞e1 EXERCISE (planning): White's attacking instincts haven't exactly been vindicated. His once feared pieces are useless. How can Black consolidate gains?

ANSWER: Simplification.

♜xg4! 23.hxg4 ♜xg4 Now ...Rh8+ becomes a horrendous threat.

24.♜d5+!? Hey, I said "Simplification!" White, in faithful BDG fashion, refuses to die slowly in a hopeless ending.

e6 25.♜d7+ ♜g8 No more checks and it is White's king who feels the chill.

26.♜xc7? EXERCISE (combination alert): If your bus passes through a dangerous part of town, you would be wise not to debark at any of those stops. Here is an easy one for you. White's queen just wandered off, a blunder in a hopelessly lost position. She leaves Black's queen in command of her own jurisdiction. How did Black force his opponent to resign?

ANSWER: Double attack.

♜h4+ When all possible permutations boil down to a single choice, then it really isn't a choice.

Summary: We underestimate the Blackmar Diemer Gambit at our own peril. Let's be ready for it.

0-1

□ Haub,T

■ Bauer,C

Vandoeuvre

[Cyrus Lakdawala]

C44

2004

1.e4 ♜f6 Remain calm and subside all protests! We soon transpose.

[Our move order runs 1...d5 2.d3 ♜f6 (2...dxe4 3.dxe4 ♜xd1+ 4.♜xd1 is equal and boring.)]

2.d3 d5 3.♜d2 QUESTION: Will this lead to a King's Indian Attack?

ANSWER: More than likely we reach a Reversed Philidor, unambitious for White, but very solid.

QUESTION: What do we do if they push on our knight?

[ANSWER: After 3.e5 we tend to reach French-like positions which favour Black since White's pawn sits on d3, not d4: ♜fd7 4.f4 (4.d4 e6 leads to a French position a move down for White, since he spent two tempi to achieve d4) 4...e6 5.♜f3 c5 6.c3 ♜c6 7.♞e2 ♞e7 8.0-0 0-0 and Black is ready for ...f6, undermining White's centre. If White responds with d4, we reach a pure Tarrasch French a full move up for Black, J.Lillo Ferrer-M.Marin, Benasque 2009.]

3...e5 If White offers us central space, let's take it.

4.♜gf3 ♜c6 5.♞e2

[QUESTION: What do we do if White plays KIA style with 5.g3 ?

ANSWER: I believe this move leads to an inferior KIA for White. There is a line in the French where we get this position for Black, except a move down, since he played ...e6 and only later ...e5. After ♞c5 6.♞g2 dxe4 7.dxe4 0-0 8.0-0 a5! 9.c3 (perhaps better is 9.h3, but I still dislike White's game after b6) 9...b6 (intending ...Ba6!) 10.♜e2?! (hey, I said "intending ...Ba6!") ♞a6 11.♜c4 White was already uncomfortable in O.

Richter-C.Lakdawala, San Diego 1999.]

5...♞c5 The most active square for the bishop.

6.0-0 0-0 7.c3 a5 QUESTION: Why does Black play this move?

ANSWER: White intends b4, gaining useful queenside space. Our move slows down his intention.

8.a4

[After 8.b3 ♞g4!? (Malaniuk's Nimzowitchian dark-square plan appeals to

me; a more traditional path for Black would be 8...♖e8 9.a3 b6 10.♙b2 ♘d6 11.♖e1 ♙b7 12.♙f1 dxe4 13.dxe4 ♘e7 14.♗c2 ♘g6 15.♘c4 ♙f8 16.♖ad1 ♗c8

with equal chances in the strategic fight ahead, P.Bontempi-D.Kuljasevic, Split 2011) 9.♖e1 ♙xf3! 10.♙xf3 d4! 11.c4 I already prefer Black. White's less-than-impressive bishops are ill-suited for the blocked position, I.Tjutjunnikov-V.Malaniuk, Alushta 1994.]

8...♖e8 9.h3 ♙a7 10.♖e1 h6 11.♙f1 ♙e6 Black achieved equality and possibly then some.

12.b3?! Strategically suspect. I remain dubious about this plan's viability.

QUESTION: Why?

ANSWER: Generally this move doesn't mix well with a4. Black may be able to engineer a future ...d4, after which White suffers an additional hole on b4.

[I would temporize with 12.♗c2 .]

12...♗d7 Bauer opts to retain central tension.

[Another thematic Philidor idea is 12...d4!?

13.cxd4 ♙xd4 (he hands over his powerful bishop to seize control over d4) 14.♘xd4 ♘xd4 15.♙b2 and I prefer Black.]

13.♙b2 ♖ad8 14.♗b1!? QUESTION: What is the idea behind this move?

ANSWER: Apparently White seeks to engineer b4.

♘h5! Thematic. f4 will be a juicy outpost for the knight. By imperceptible degrees, White's position continues its degeneration in a decaying orbit.

15.b4!? Fastidiously sticking with his hypermodern game plan, where he seeks to undermine e5.

dxe4 16.dxe4?! He may have been better off recapturing with the knight to seek exchanges.

♘f4! The duplicitous knight is not to be trusted. His perceptions are honed for war, not diplomacy. Black's control over f4 turns isn't as inconsequential as White may have believed. The attackers speak in quiet, confidential tones, all the while surreptitiously eyeing White's king.

17.b5 A wisp of counterplay from White? It looks like Black just hung his e-pawn.

However, strong GMs don't just give pawns out of a charitable nature.

EXERCISE (planning/combination alert): The kingside teams with arrivals, and soon, some departures. Bauer contrives a deep attacking idea of an unbalanced poet. A key component

to Black's attack is missing. The position, pregnant with tension, reaches the limits of tolerance before giving birth to war. Unlock the missing element and Black's becomes supercharged.

ANSWER: The white king's shelter is torn away in a torrent of attackers.

♙xh3!! The startled white king's mouth forms into a large 'O' of astonishment at the turn of events. An emphatic reminder that Black's forces are coming to town for an extended visit. The nature of this attack is that it requires considerable investment of capital, but Black's judgement is vindicated. Soon he recoups his losses by acquiring rights to White's kingside.

18.gxh3

[18.bxc6 ♗g4 leaves White curiously helpless.]

18...♙xh3+ 19.♙h2 The forest traveller evades the wolf pack by wading into a stream. But for how long can he remain in the frigid water while the wolves patiently await on both sides for their future meal? Many of White's defenders churlishly await on the other side of the board, refusing to participate in the defence.

[After 19.♙xh3 ♗xh3 there is no reasonable defence to a rook lift to g6.]

19...♙f4 An assassin is hardly likely to balk at the taking of the second life of his c6-knight, to his mind collateral damage, to ensure the prime target (the white king, who he regards as a blot upon the scenery, to be expunged from the world) is terminated in the process.

[Instead, Houdini says 19...♘xf2!

is crushing. A sample line: 20.♙g2 ♗g4 21.bxc6 ♖xd2! 22.♘xd2 ♗h4+ 23.♙g1 ♘xe4+ 24.♙f1 ♗f2# .]

20.bxc6 ♗g4 Threat: ...Bxf2, with a quick mate.

21.♖e3 ♖e6! Intending to park over on g6.

22.♘d4 ♗h4+ 23.♙g1 exd4 24.cxd4 ♖g6+ Not a pretty picture for White!

25.♖g3 ♖xg3+ 26.fxg3 ♗xg3+ 27.♙h1 EXERCISE (combination alert): Black's forces, swirling and eddying around White's king in a twisting motion, reform their ranks, awaiting orders for a second run at the enemy. Meanwhile, White's queen, too far away to help her king (her view of her king is obscured), erupts in a shrill explosion of expletives (which I am unwilling to paraphrase in this book) at the attackers. Find a way to force mate.

ANSWER: Step 1: Lure the king to g1.

♔h4+! 28. **♚g1** Step 2: Clear the g1-a7 diagonal.

♜xd4! Summary: White is lucky to remain equal in the 2 d3 line.

0-1

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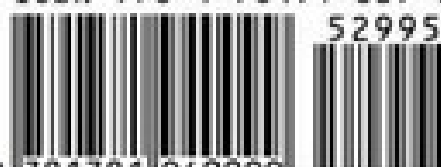


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