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Introduction

Hello, dear reader!

This is Sergey Kasparov, grandmaster from Belarus (not to be confused with Russia!). We may have met before – in previous books or articles.

First a couple of words about geography. This is relevant to the subtitle and an important theme of this book. Belarus is a country in Eastern Europe situated between Poland and Russia. The territory is mostly plain and covered with wilds.

Let me hasten to inform you about something I forgot to mention in my previous book, *Steamrolling the Sicilian*: the technical part of the work on this book is performed by my wife Tatiana (WIM) and the translation from Russian into English was done by my daughter Eva. You may also know them, if we have met in some tournament.

The initial moves of this book's subject are as follows: **1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5!?**. Now please don't put the book back on the shelf! Take a few minutes and let me give you a couple of good arguments to study this opening, which looks so strange at first glance.

Firstly, 3...e5!? is applied even by chess players whose Elo is over 2600-2700 – just look at the game list at the end of the book.

Secondly – well, can you name an opening where Black has no problems at all? Not? Quite.

Thirdly, a well-known publishing house like New in Chess wouldn't get involved with any senseless topics, would they? From several options, this one was chosen.

If all this doesn't satisfy you, then allow me to try and explain the essence of the 'strange' move 3...e5!?

Chess is a model of war. The white and black pieces represent armies which are equal in their material supplies and placed in the same way, and opposite one another. The basic difference lies in the military leaders (the chess players) and the advantage of the first move. The white army is the first to strike, it seizes the initiative at least temporarily.

Perhaps the author should present the facts as neutrally as possible, as if he were an anchorman with Euronews or CNN. But gradually you will realize that I mostly investigate this opening from Black's point of view. For one, because I use it myself from time to time. So I won't sail under false colours, and I will show my hand from the very beginning. Yes, I aim to convince you to play this structure with black!

Let's go back to the war model. The enemy is approaching us and we are to organize a defence, taking into account the peculiarities of the environment. Black's development in this opening is reminiscent of warfare in swampy lowlands. Do you know what a swamp is? If you are from the United States, England or Poland, I think you can. For all other readers, here is a definition, taken from Wikipedia:

A **swamp** is a wetland that is forested. Other names for swamps include 'bog', 'mire' and 'muskeg'. A swamp is a mire that accumulates peat, a deposit of dead plant material – often mosses. Water flowing out of swamps has a characteristic brown colour, which comes from dissolved peat tannins.

So, you see, it is difficult to wage an attack in a swampy area. Even simply walking is dangerous there! One wrong move and you may die, getting sucked down in the bog by natural powers.



We know from World War II that the Wehrmacht, during its offensive in 1941-42, practically ignored the part of the territory situated in Ukraine and Belarus which is called 'Polesye' – especially because of these barely negotiable swamps.



If you look at the maps of the actions of that period, you will see that raids of the Armies Group Centre and South were directed along diverging lines. There is no ‘shoulder-to-shoulder connection’ between them, these two groupings were separated by up to 300 kilometers(!). During its three-year occupation, many regions of Polesye remained under the control of partisans (the resistance movement). They say that there were even autonomous Soviet bodies there.

Now let’s return to our opening. When applying **3...e5**, Black as it were draws the enemy fire. In fact, after the principled **4.dxe5 dxe5 5. ♖xd8+ ♔xd8** Black has lost his castling rights; White is on move again and he can later develop with 0-0-0+. This means that he will be about two moves ahead of his opponent. But that is exactly the catch. You get the impression that Black is balancing on the precipice, and that it will suffice for White to just strike a couple of crucial blows in order to win. Alas, reality is often much more prosaic.

White’s pieces are being ‘sucked’ into several echelons of the enemy defence, as if in a swamp. His legs are growing sluggish because they get stuck in the slime. Each move is arduous for him, his breathing gets heavy and rapid. And then a thick green mass closes over his head... A nightmare, isn’t it?

Have I managed to convince you to buy the book? If yes, then hurry, for it may be the last copy on the shelf.

The treacherous ‘ending’ I have just described, is dealt with in Part I of this book. If the white player prefers a full-blooded, complicated struggle – something like warfare in regions with good transport infrastructure (highways, railway) – then he usually chooses not to transfer to an ending, but plays **4. ♖f3** (Part IV) or something like that (Part II and III). Especially after **4. ♖f3**, the fight continues in the spirit of the Philidor Defence. Here Black has to decide whether he wants to stick to central strategy or, sooner or later, to surrender the centre with **...e5xd4**, gaining access to the half-open e-file.

In conclusion I’d like to mention – to those who are not acquainted with me – that I do not claim to present you with the ultimate truth. The opening under scrutiny does not so much rely on tempo-play as the Sicilian Defence, the Marshall Attack, and others. That is why in our opening, the move order is usually not so critical, with the exception of some positions.

You can never please everyone, so I will try to cater for the majority. And I dare guess that a great number of amateur chess players prefer to create at the board rather than swot long variations of 15-20 moves. That is why I have tried to cover the main lines and explain the plans for both sides, which will considerably facilitate your search for the right paths during the game.

If you have any remarks about the book, please send them to me, at tkasparova@rambler.ru. Your ideas may be presented in an updated later version of the book. Besides, I may be able to use them in my lessons.

If possible, please try to read the book with a more or less fresh head, when you are not too tired. Then everything will be clear and easy for you!

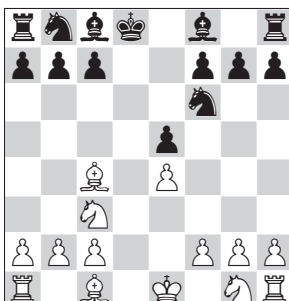
I wish you a pleasant, useful and splendid time with this book!

Sergey Kasparov,
Mogilev, Belarus, January 2015

Chapter 2

Pressure on f7: 6. ♖c4

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♙xd8+ ♚xd8 6.♖c4



This is also a quite logical move. White instantly starts pressing on the f7-pawn, which has been left undefended. There are only two ways to save it: by covering it with the bishop on e6 (Section 1, 6...♗e6) or by returning the king to e8 (Section 2, 6...♚e8). The counter-thrust 6...♗b4 is sporadically applied and doesn't have independent significance. Two examples for this line are given in the notes to Game 22 (Korneev-Kabanov).

Section 1: 6... ♖e6

6... ♖e6

This is the move which suggests itself first as a reaction to White's aggression.

7. ♖xe6

Do you see any other options?

7... fxe6



Let's compare the pros and cons of the position. Black's pawn structure has ceased to be flexible, which is usually undesirable. However, the new pawn on e6 takes under control several important light squares: f5 and d5. I'd like to emphasize that there are only dark-squared bishops left on the board, and that is why this is especially important. It is difficult for White to trade off this valuable pawn as the 'breakwater' e5 is standing in front of it. It looks a bit like the battery at the entry to the Oslo fjord – one that cannot be ignored.

White can point out the weakness of the doubled pawns only with the opponent's collaboration. Usually, placing the knights on d3 and c4 is unpleasant for Black, while the white bishop exerts pressure on the diagonal a1-h8.

Let me open this chapter with some examples from my own practice.

The first game was played at the Zonal tournament for the World Championship (sounds not bad, doesn't it?). Black equalized easily and could have forced a draw. But my underestimation of the future Moldavian grandmaster (at that time Alexey was considerably inferior in Elo) led to a deplorable result.

18

Alexey Khruschiov (2281)

Sergey Kasparov (2465)

Minsk zt 2000 (1)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 6.♙c4 ♙e6 7.♙xe6 fxe6 8.♙e3 ♙d6 9.f3 a6 10.♗ge2 ♖e7 11.♗c1

White has a natural desire to redeploy the knight from the poor e2-square to a more active one, where it will have an impact on the further struggle. An alternative route is ♗g1-h3-f2-d3.

11...♗bd7 12.♗d3 c5



Don't be confused by the positioning of the pawn on a dark square, blocking its own bishop. The infantryman is going to move to c4, thus grabbing space and chasing away the enemy knight which has just arrived in the centre.

13.a4

A preventive measure. Not being able to avert ...c5-c4 effectively, White tries to

isolate the enemy outpost as much as possible. The intention is to cut off the provision chain by preventing ...b7-b5. No advantage I promised by 13.b3 c4!? 14.bxc4 (14.♗b2 ♙b4 15.♙d2 ♖hc8 16.♗xc4 b5 17.♗d1 ♙xd2+ 18.♗xd2 ♖xc2 with counterplay) 14...♖hc8 15.♗b2 ♙b4 16.♙d2 ♗b6 with initiative. I doubt that it is pleasant to play with such a pawn structure (c2, c4, a2)...

13...c4 14.♗f2 ♙c5

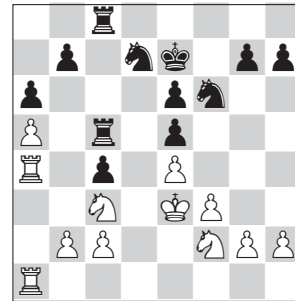
14...♖ac8!?

15.♙e2

15.♙xc5+

15...♖ac8 16.a5 ♙xe3 17.♙xe3 ♖c5

18.♖a4 ♖hc8 19.♖ha1



What a strange concentration of rooks on closed files! The moral is that so as to maintain the status-quo Black tries to exert pressure on the advanced pawn on a5. He has the possibility to transfer his cavalry detachment from the kingside. Meanwhile, the white knights lack manoeuvring space.

19...♗e8 20.♗fd1 ♗d6 21.♗d2 g5

The minority attack is double-edged. Weaknesses will appear on both sides. The pacific 21...♗b8 was more careful.

22.♗e3 h5 23.h4!?

Typically, the Moldavian player reminds me that he is not going to wage a blind defence.

23...gxf4 24.♖h1 ♗b8

Preferring active play. The ‘boring’ 24...♟f6 was also acceptable.

25.♟xh4 ♜h8 26.g4 ♟c6

The material balance is preserved. Neither side has crossed the line.

27.♞xh5 ♞xh5 28.gxh5 ♟d4

The f3-pawn can't be protected.

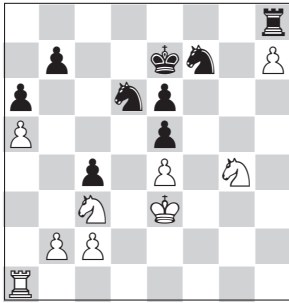
29.♟g4 ♟xf3+ 30.♞e3 ♟d4 31.♟d2 ♟b5 32.♞e3

32.♟xb5 axb5 is unclear.

32...♟d4 33.♟d2 ♟f3+ 34.♞e3

The repetition of moves would have been a reasonable end to the game. But I wanted to start the Zonal tournament in a more aggressive way. Such decisions are often regretted later...

34...♟g5?! 35.♞a1 ♟g7 36.h6 ♞c8 37.h7 ♞h8



I have to retreat in all directions. Was it worth it to avoid the draw?!

38.♞h1 ♟e8

38...♟g5 39.♟xe5 ♞xh7 40.♞xh7+ ♟xh7 41.♟d4±.

39.♟a4 ♟f6 40.♟xf6 ♟xf6 41.♟c5+–

The misfortune comes from the other side. I have to admit that Alexey has played well. The remainder doesn't need any comment.

41...♞e7 42.♟xb7 ♞c8 43.♞g1 ♞h8

44.♞h1 ♞c8 45.b4 cxb3 46.cxb3 ♟h8

47.b4 ♞c3+ 48.♟d2 ♞b3 49.♞g1 ♞h3

50.♟c5 ♞xh7 51.♟xa6 ♟f7 52.♟c5

♟d6 53.♞g6 ♟d8 54.♟d3 ♞e7

55.♞c4 ♟c6 56.♞b5 ♟a7+ 57.♞b6 ♟c8+ 58.♞a6 ♟c6 59.♞xe6+ ♞xe6 60.♟xe6 ♟d6 61.♟g5 ♟b5 62.♟f7 ♟c7+ 63.♞a7 ♞b5

63...♟b5+ 64.♞b8.

64.♟xe5 ♟xb4 65.♞b6 1-0

So that the reader doesn't get the impression that one side has a substantial advantage in this variation, here is a game where Black was successful.

19

Daniel Hristodorescu (2253)

Sergey Kasparov (2458)

Den Helder 2002 (3)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♟f6 3.♟c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♞xd8+ ♟xd8 6.♟c4 ♟e6 7.♟xe6 fxe6 8.f3

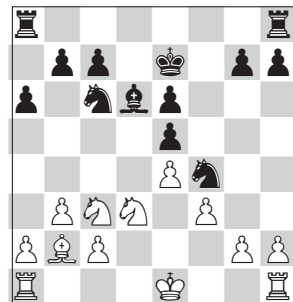
Or very simply 8.♟f3 ♟d6 9.h3 ♞e7 10.♟e3 a6 11.a3 ♟bd7 12.0-0 b5 13.♟d2 ♟c5 14.♟xc5+ ♟xc5 15.♟b3?! (creative, but not dangerous for the opponent, Zarinfam-S.Kasparov, Ahvaz 2007). For instance, 15...♟xb3 16.cxb3 ♞ad8 is enough for equality.

8...♟d6 9.b3

Preparing to exert piece pressure on e5.

9...a6 10.♟b2 ♞e7 11.♟h3 ♟c6

12.♟f2 ♟h5 13.♟d3 ♟f4



A multifunctional knight manoeuvre. Firstly, it trades off its counterpart, re-

leasing the pressure in the centre. Secondly, the e5-pawn will move to f4, vacating a perfect square for a piece.

14. ♖xf4 exf4 15. 0-0-0 ♙e5 16. ♖he1 ♜f6 17. ♜e2 ♙xb2+ 18. ♜xb2 e5

18...g5!? was interesting, leaving the e5-square open for the knight, as suggested above.

19. ♖d7 ♖ac8 20. ♜c3 ♖hd8 21. ♖ed1

Here we have an example of the ‘swamp’, where you may be dragged to the bottom. It seems like only White is fighting for victory. But that is exactly the point: he mustn’t overstep the mark.

21... ♖xd7 22. ♖xd7 ♜e7 23. b4?!

White could have maintained the initiative with 23. ♜d5+ ♜xd5 24. exd5 h5 25. c4±.

23... ♜e6

Now chances are equal.

24. ♖d2 b5 25. a4 c6 26. ♜e2 bxa4

An attempt to revive the play on the queenside, which is suddenly successful. The alternative was 26...c5!?

27. ♜a3

Better 27. ♜c3 c5.

27... c5

Creating a remote passed pawn which, together with the activity of Black’s pieces, gives the second player the better chances.

28. ♜xa4 cxb4 29. ♜xb4 ♜c6+ 30. ♜a3?

Better was 30. ♜a4.

30... ♜a5

When the knight gets to c4 it will dominate.

31. ♜b4 ♜c4 32. ♖d1 ♜e3 33. ♖c1 ♖xc2 34. ♖xc2 ♜xc2+ 35. ♜a5 ♜e1 36. ♜xa6 ♜xg2 37. ♜b6 ♜e1 38. ♜g1 ♜c2 39. ♜c5 ♜d4 40. ♜c4 g5 41. ♜d3 h5 42. h3 ♜d6 43. ♜c4 ♜c2 44. ♜d3 ♜a3 45. ♜e2 ♜c5 46. ♜c3 ♜b5 47. ♜e2 ♜b4 48. ♜d2 ♜c4 49. ♜e1

♜d4 50. ♜g1 ♜d3 51. ♜f2 h4 52. ♜f1 ♜e3 53. ♜g2 ♜e2 0-1

In the following duel and the example added in the notes, we can see White’s ‘blue dream’. The opponent plays passively and doesn’t prevent White from developing an initiative. In both games the e5-pawn turns out to be vulnerable.

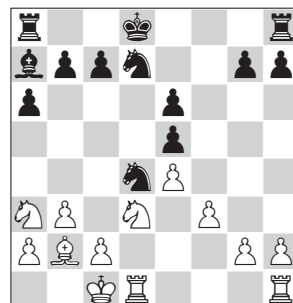
20

Sergey Kasparov (2491) Dragan Paunovic (2505)

San Sebastian 2006 (9)

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♜f6 3. ♜c3

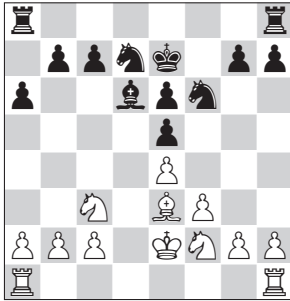
Please don’t be lazy and take note of the following game. It shows some mistakes for Black and their woeful implications, on the theme of how *not* to play in this line. **3. f3 e5 4. dxe5 dxe5 5. ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 6. ♙c4 ♙e6?!** In the given situation, I suppose 6... ♜e8 is more accurate. **7. ♙xe6 fxe6 8. b3** The Belarussian player doesn’t develop the knight at c3, but directs it along a more promising route. **8... ♜c6 9. ♜e2 ♙c5 10. ♙b2 a6 11. ♜c1 ♜d4?!** **12. ♜d3 ♙a7?!** Obviously bad is 12... ♜xc2+? 13. ♜d2 ♜xa1 14. ♜xc5± but more careful was 12... ♜d7, though it doesn’t equalize. **13. ♜a3 ♜d7 14. 0-0-0**



analysis diagram

White is clearly far ahead in development. The e5-pawn will fall. **14... c5**

15.♖c4 ♖e7 16.♗dxе5 ♗хе5 17.♗хе5±
 Tihonov-S. Kasparov, Minsk 1996.
 3...e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♖xd8+ ♖xd8
 6.♗c4 ♗e6 7.♗xe6 fxe6 8.f3 ♗d6
 9.♗e3 a6 10.♗h3 ♖e7 11.♗f2 ♗bd7
 12.♖e2



One of the basic positions in this variation. Up to this point both sides have played quite logically.

12...♗c5

This move is possible, however White doesn't oblige by capturing as we are not playing draughts.

13.♗cd1

Suggesting to the enemy to spend another tempo with 13...♗xe3 14.♗xe3±. The knights are dreaming of attacking the e5-pawn by settling down on c4 and d3.

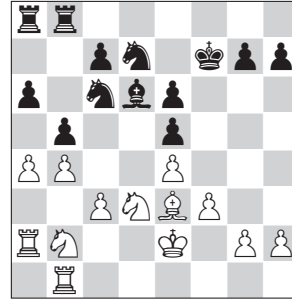
13...♗hd8 14.♗d3 ♗d6

Admitting his mistake. Nothing terrible has happened, but the waste of two tempi is unpleasant.

15.b3 ♗b8 16.♗b2

Now the knight is on b8, the sharp thrust 16.c4!? was worth considering, hurrying to cross the 'chess Rhine' (a3-d6) while the opponent is regrouping: 16...b6 17.b4 with the simple idea c4-c5, catching the bishop. Earlier on, c2-c4 didn't appeal to me because of the rebuttal with ...c7-c5.

**16...♗c6 17.c3 b5 18.a4 ♗db8
 19.♗hb1 ♗d7 20.b4 ♖f7 21.♗a2±**



One way or another, White has gained a certain superiority. With the last move he aims for a doubling of the rooks on the a-file, after which the threat of a4xb5 becomes really dangerous.

21...♗g8 22.axb5

In reply to 22.♗ba1 the black rook would evade the opposition with 22...♗ad8 (22...♗ab8 23.axb5 axb5 24.♗a6±) 23.axb5 axb5 24.♗a6, and now 24...♗db8, showing the uninvited guest the door.

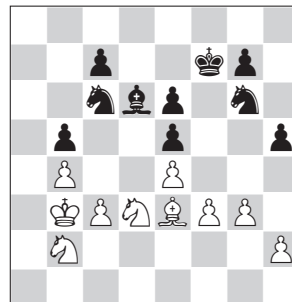
22...axb5 23.♗ba1 ♗xa2

Paunovic decides to simplify the position. The alternative was 23...♗ad8.

**24.♗xa2 h5 25.♗a6 ♗db8 26.♗a8
 ♗d7 27.♗xg8 ♖xg8**

Can White win this ending? With optimal defence, it seems he can't. But Black has no prospects at all, and so he may make a mistake.

**28.♗d2 ♖f7 29.♖c2 ♗f8 30.♖b3
 ♗g6 31.g3**



White's flexible pawn structure (g3, f3) prevents the opponent from getting counterplay. At the same time the white king is ready to participate in an attack on the queenside.

31...♗e8 32.c4 bxc4+ 33.♖xc4 ♕d7 34.b5 ♖d8 35.♗a4 ♗f7 36.♗a5 h4 37.♗a6 hxg3 38.hxg3

Disaster is near. White's king manoeuvre up the flank has added to Black's troubles.

38...♙e7 39.♙c1 ♙d6 40.♙d2 ♗e7 41.♙c3 ♗g6

It seems there are several roads to success here.

42.♗xd6 ♗xd6

Or 42...cxd6 43.b6 and the passed pawn will cost Black his knight; 42...♗xd6 43.♗b7 ♕d7 44.♗c5+ is no remedy either.

43.♗xe5+ ♗xe5 44.♙xe5 ♗c4 45.♙xg7 ♗d2 46.f4

The most efficient. Now the passed g-and, eventually, b-pawns will be too much for Black.

46...♗xe4 47.g4 ♗c8 48.♙d4 ♗d6 49.♙e5 ♗c4 50.g5 ♗e3 51.g6 ♗f5 52.g7 ♗h6 53.♗a7 ♗g8 54.♙xc7 1-0

Now b6-b7-b8♖ is inevitable.

In the next game, a Spanish grandmaster with an Elo rating of 2635 couldn't cope with a strong woman player from Ukraine. The Elo-favourite even found himself in a hopeless position and was saved only with some help of his opponent.

21

Ivan Salgado Lopez (2635)

Svetlana Cherednichenko (2293)

Helsingor Politiken Cup 2012 (3)

1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♗f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 6.♙c4 ♙e6

7.♙xe6 fxe6 8.♙e3 ♙d6 9.f3 ♗e7 10.♗h3 ♗bd7 11.♗f2 ♙c5 12.♗e2 ♙xe3 13.♗xe3 a6 14.a4 g5

No reservations due to the Elo gap.

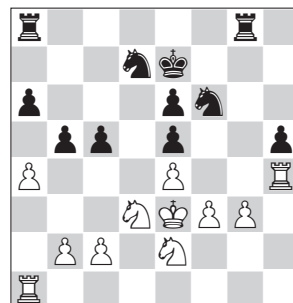
15.h4

Attacking the pawn before Black plays ...h7-h5, when he could respond with ...g5-g4.

15...gxh4

15...♖ag8 16.hxg5 ♖xg5 leads to the same type of position.

16.♖xh4 h5 17.♗e2 ♖hg8 18.g3 b5 19.♗d3 c5



Black is fighting with strong and simple means. The position favours White, but how can he convert his advantage? For example, it is difficult to increase the pressure on the h-pawn. And there are no other black weaknesses in sight.

20.♖hh1 ♖gc8 21.axb5 axb5 22.♖hd1 ♖g8 23.♗f2 ♖gb8 24.b3 b4 25.♖db1 ♗e8 26.♗b2 ♗d6 27.♖h1 ♗b5

In reply to 27...♗f6, 28.♗d3 ♖xa1 29.♖xa1 ♗d7 30.♖a7 ♗b5 31.♖a5± is unpleasant.

28.♗c4 ♗d4

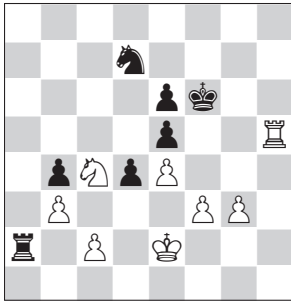
More accurate is 28...♖xa1 29.♖xa1 ♗a3.

29.♗xd4 cxd4 30.♗e2 ♗f6?!

The first more or less serious mistake which, however, doesn't make a significant change. There is a large safety margin in the position.

30...♖xa1 was better.

31.♖xa8 ♖xa8 32.♖xh5 ♖a2



33.♖h6+?

33.♔d1 probably wasn't winning, but still it was noticeably stronger: 33...♖a1+ 34.♔d2 ♖g1 35.g4 (35.♖h6+) 35...♖g2+ 36.♔c1 ♖g1+ 37.♔b2 ♖g2 with the threat ...d4-d3.

33...♔g7! 34.♖xe6 ♔c5

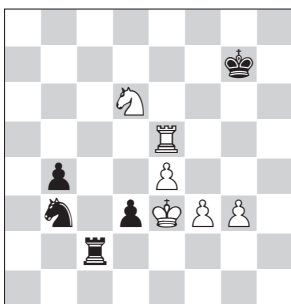
34...d3+.

35.♖xe5 d3+ 36.♔d2 ♖xc2+ 37.♔e3

Retreating is simply bad: 37.♔e1 ♔xb3-+. The white knight is attacked, while the passed pawn is very powerful.

37...♔xb3 38.♔d6

38.♔xd3 ♖c3+.



38...♔c1

The Ukrainian player misses a winning chance. Correct was 38...♔c5!. Here are some variations:

A) 39.g4 b3-+;

B) 39.♔f5+ ♔f6 40.♖xc5 ♖xc5 41.♔d4 ♖c3 42.♔d2 ♔e5-+;

C) 39.♖d5 b3.

39.♔f5+ ♔f6

Now a series of mutual mistakes follows (time trouble, perhaps?).

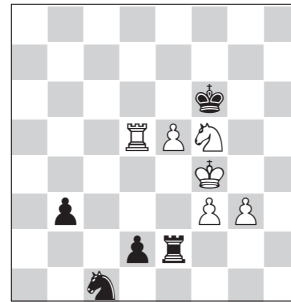
40.♖b5?!

40.♖d5.

40...♖e2+

40...d2!

41.♔f4 d2 42.♖d5 b3 43.e5+??



Stepping from the path into the swamp. The Spanish player could have drowned, but, miraculously, he will escape from the clutches of the bog. 43.♖d6+ would have led to a draw.

43...♔f7

Also good was 43...♖xe5 44.♖d6+ ♖e6 45.♖xd2 b2! 46.♖xb2 ♔d3-+.

44.♖d7+ ♔e8 45.e6 b2?

Here it is – a bough offered to a drowning man. 45...♔d3+ 46.♖xd3 (46.♔g5 ♖xe6) 46...b2-+.

46.♖e7+ ♔d8 47.♖d7+ ♔e8

Or 47...♔c8 48.♔e7+ ♔b8 49.♔c6+ ♔c8 (49...♔a8 50.♖a7#) 50.♔e7+.

48.♖e7+ ♔d8 49.♖d7+ ♔e8 ½-½

The next example (with the move 6...♔b4 mentioned in the notes) is taken from an open tournament in Voronezh (Russia). I used to study in this city, so I try to lobby for the interests of the lo-

cal chess players when I can. Those who like extremes (Russia is not only Moscow and St. Petersburg) I advise to visit Voronezh. The tournament organizer is the well-known chess writer and coach Alexander Raetsky.

You can also meet him in the open tournament in Cappelle la Grande. Alexander performs as an arbiter there. In a red coat, on the scene – observing the games of the leaders.

Oleg Korneev achieves an advantage with confident play, but once again we see that Black's set-up is hard to breach.

22

Oleg Korneev (2617)

Nikolay Kabanov (2472)

Voronezh Open 2013 (3)

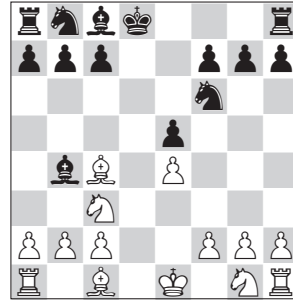
1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5.♞xd8+ ♔xd8 6.♙c4 ♙e6

Here are a couple of fragments on the topic of 6...♙b4. This is a very rare continuation. Black is going to destroy White's pawn structure.

(see analysis diagram next column)

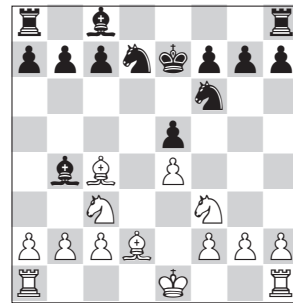


Alexander Raetsky



analysis diagram

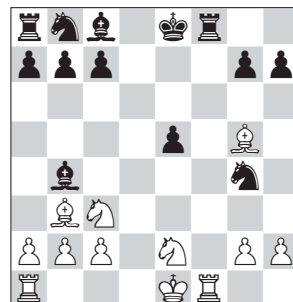
A) 7.♙d2 ♖e7 8.♗f3 ♘bd7



analysis diagram

9.♗d5+?! (more accurate seems to be 9.0-0-0!? c6 10.♗d5+ ♗xd5 (10... cxd5 11.♙xb4+) 11.exd5 ♙xd2+ 12.♗xd2 with initiative) 9...♗d5 10.♙xd5 ♙xd2+ 11.♗xd2 c6= Sanduleac-Delchev, Albena 2011;

B) 7.♙xf7 ♖f8 8.♙b3 ♗xe4 9.♗e2 ♗xf2 10.♖f1 (weaker is 10.0-0 ♙c5) 10...♗g4 11.♙g5+ ♖e8



analysis diagram

(Korneev-Torres Ventosa, Linares 2013; or 11...♘f6 12.0-0-0+ with an attack even without queens) 12.0-0-0 with more than enough compensation for the pawn.

7.♙xe6 fxe6 8.f3 ♘d6 9.♙e3 a6 10.♘h3 ♖e7 11.♘f2 ♘bd7 12.♖e2 ♘h5

I am not quite sure about this move. After the natural g2-g3 the knight is doing nothing here.

13.g3 ♖hf8



14.b3

Interesting is 14.♘b1, transferring the knight to d2 in order to defend the f3-pawn. This may be useful if Black doubles his heavy artillery on the f-file. In principle, on c3 the knight is passive.

14...h6 15.♘a4

Oleg is actually doing the same thing, only the knight is travelling via b2.

15...♙a3 16.♖ab1 b5 17.♘b2 ♙xb2 18.♖xb2 ♖fb8 19.♖c1



White has been quite successful. His pawn chain is elastic and his bishop, working on both flanks, is stronger than either of the enemy knights. On the agenda is c2-c4, opening the c-file. Otherwise the pawn can move further.

19...♘hf6 20.c4 b4

Of course, Nikolay doesn't wish to open up the game, but here is another problem.

21.♖a1

21.♘d3 is also quite nice.

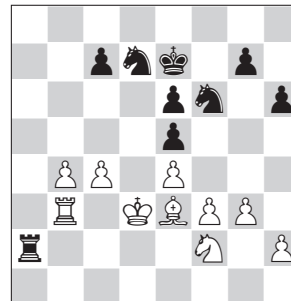
21...a5 22.a3 a4

Not the best choice. 22...bxa3 was likely the lesser of evils, though after 23.♖xa3 a4 this is also not quite satisfactory due to 24.♘d3±.

23.axb4 axb3

23...♖xb4 is bad because of 24.♘d3 a3 (after 24...♖b7 25.♖xa4 the rook on b2 is protected) 25.♖xa3 ♖xa3 26.♘xb4±.

24.♖xa8 ♖xa8 25.♖xb3 ♖a2+ 26.♖d3



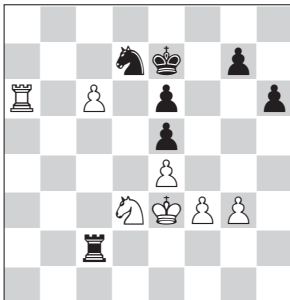
White has a big advantage. A plus pawn, a better structure, and his bishop is stronger than either knight – just look at the 'handsome man' on f6.

26...♘b6 27.♙xb6

Significantly stronger was 27.♘d1! as 27...♖xh2?! is not good because of 28.c5 ♘bd7 29.c6+- and White's queenside pawns are unstoppable.

27...cxb6 28.♖e3 ♖c2 29.♘d3 ♘d7 30.♖a3 ♖xh2 31.♖a7 ♖d8 32.♖a8+

♔e7 33. ♖a7 ♖d8 34. c5 bxc5 35. bxc5
 ♖c2 36. ♖a6 ♔e7 37. ♖a7 ♖d8 38. ♖a6
 ♔e7 39. c6



78. ♖f8+ ♔e7 79. ♖h8 ♖g1 80. ♖h5
 ♖g2 81. ♔h7 ♔f8 82. ♖f5+ ♔e7 83. g7
 ♖h2+ 84. ♔g6 ♖g2+ 85. ♖g5 ♖xg5+
 86. ♔xg5 ♔f7 87. ♔f5 1-0

From time to time the author has had to struggle against his 'own' opening with the white pieces, and I must admit that it was never easy. I did get a pleasant position against the current leader of Georgian chess.

23

39... ♖c5

We can conclude that the Spanish grandmaster hasn't realized his advantage in the best way and here 39... ♖b8! could have balanced the position: 40. ♖a7+ ♔d6 41. ♖xg7 ♖xc6=.

40. ♖a7+ ♔d6 41. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 42. ♖xg7
 ♖xc6 43. ♖h7 ♖c2?

It is strange for a good blitz player to make such a move. The h6-pawn could have been saved by 43... ♖c3+ 44. ♔e2 ♖c2+ 45. ♔f1 ♖c1+ 46. ♔g2 ♖c2+ 47. ♔h3 ♖f2 48. ♔g4 ♖h2.

44. ♖xh6

Please allow me to give the rest without comment. The analysis of rook endings may be something for a future book.

44... ♖g2 45. g4 ♔e7 46. ♖h7+ ♔f6
 47. ♖d7 ♖a2 48. ♖d2 ♖a3+ 49. ♔f2
 ♖b3 50. ♔g3 ♖b1 51. ♖h2 ♖g1+
 52. ♔f2 ♖a1 53. ♖h6+ ♔f7 54. g5 ♖b1
 55. ♖f6+ ♔e7 56. ♔g3 ♖h1 57. ♔g4
 ♖h2 58. ♖h6 ♖f2 59. ♖h7+ ♔f8
 60. g6 ♖g2+ 61. ♔h5 ♖g3 62. ♖f7+
 ♔e8 63. ♔h6 ♖h3+ 64. ♔g7 ♖g3
 65. f4 exf4 66. ♖xf4 ♖e3 67. ♖h4 ♖g3
 68. ♔h7 ♔f8 69. ♖f4+ ♔e7 70. e5
 ♖h3+ 71. ♔g7 ♖h1 72. ♖f7+ ♔e8
 73. ♔f6 ♖f1+ 74. ♔xe6 ♖g1 75. ♔f6
 ♖f1+ 76. ♔g7 ♖g1 77. ♖f5 ♖h1

Sergey Kasparov (2464)

Baador Jobava (2640)

Bad Zwosten Open 2005 (8)

1. e4 d6 2. d4 ♖f6 3. ♖c3 e5 4. dxe5
 dxe5 5. ♗xd8+ ♔xd8 6. ♖c4 ♖e6
 7. ♖xe6 fxe6 8. f3 ♖c5 9. ♖d1

This retreat is not often seen at such an early stage. But in this case the bishop's development on c5 suggests the reply ♖c1-e3 and ♖d1xe3.

9... ♔e7 10. ♖e3 ♖b6 11. ♖h3 ♖c6
 12. c3

A solid preventive move. Now the knight feels uneasy on c6.

12... ♖ag8 13. ♖hf2 g5 14. ♖xb6 axb6
 15. ♖e3

Strengthening his control of g4.

15... h5 16. h4 g4 17. ♔e2

It seems to be more reasonable to keep the king in the centre. Besides, it is comparatively safe on e2. The squares f4 and d4 can be defended.

17... ♖d8 18. a4 gxf3+ 1/2-1/2

I also obtained some initiative against a Bulgarian woman player. But like the Spanish grandmaster in the above game I had to look for an escape soon. Fortunately, the lady turned out to be gracious and favoured me with a draw. Well, is the book's content worth its title?

24 20...a4 21.♠d2 bxa3**Sergey Kasparov (2462)****Margarita Voiska (2356)**

Campobasso Open 2002 (3)

**1.d4 d6 2.e4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.dxe5
dxe5 5.♖xd8+ ♜xd8 6.♙c4 ♙e6
7.♙xe6 fxe6 8.f3 ♙b4**

A quite possible sally. Is it any use? It disturbs White's development a little, but later on Black will have to spend a tempo on the bishop's return.

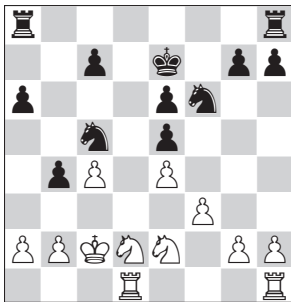
**9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.♙e3 a6 11.0-0-0 ♗e7
12.♘b1 b5 13.♘d2 ♙d6**

13...♙c5 14.♘f1.

14.c4

It is not desirable to allow the advance ...c7-c5-c4. Generally White has every reason to fight for space on the queenside.

14...♙c5 15.♙xc5+ ♗xc5 16.♗c2 b4



The knight is perfectly placed on c5, but it isn't entirely stable there. White has enough resources to chase it away.

17.♗c1

17.♘b3.

17...a5 18.♘db3 ♘b7

Or 18...♘fd7 19.♘xc5 ♘xc5 20.♘d3 ♘xd3 21.♖xd3 with initiative. The pawn ending is not always satisfactory for Black due to the weak a-pawn.

19.♘d3 ♘d7 20.a3

20.c5 is interesting, but also risky as the pawn may be surrounded and destroyed.

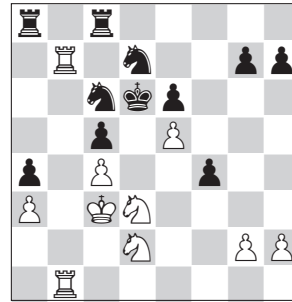
21...b3+!? is possible, but the a4-pawn may become weak in the future.

**22.bxa3 c5 23.♗c3 ♘a5 24.♖b1 ♗c6
25.♖b7 ♗d6 26.♖hb1 ♖hc8**

The white rooks have been activated along the b-file. The d3-knight is also fully engaged. Now only the last reserves have to join the battle.

27.f4 exf4 28.e5+

Vacating e4 for the knights. 28.♘xf4±.

**28...♗e7**

Black mustn't capture either way: 28...♘cxe5 29.♘e4+ ♗e7 (29...♗c6 30.♘xe5+ ♘xe5 31.♖1b6#) 30.♘xe5+— or the very short line 28...♘dx5 29.♘e4#.

29.♘xc5?!

29.♘e4 might have kept some initiative.

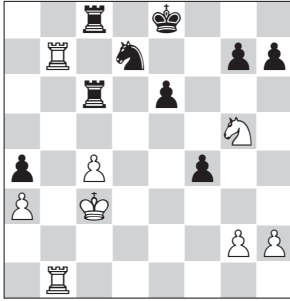
29...♘xe5 30.♘xd7 ♘xd7 31.♘e4

White has enough compensation for the pawn, but not more.

31...♗d8 32.♘g5 ♖a6 33.♘f7+

More reasonable is 33.♘xh7 with a dynamic balance, but as my opponent was in time trouble I tried to play more aggressively. However, I can recall a mitigating circumstance. It was the only time in my chess career (I am writing this in March, 2014) when the counting was as follows: win=3 points, draw=1 point, loss=0. So now you may understand why I played like this.

33...♗e8 34.♘g5 ♖ac6



Margarita doesn't agree to a repetition of moves and I'm already standing with my feet in the swamp. I have to get out urgently!

35. ♖b4 ♜f6 36. ♜b2 h6 37. ♜f3?!

More stubborn was 37. ♜f7, intending to move the c-pawn, for example 37... ♜g4 38.c5 with counterplay.

37... ♜xc4 38. ♜xc4 ♜xc4 39. ♜xg7 ♜e4 40. ♜c2

Silently asking the Bulgarian girl to let me go in peace.

40...e5 41. ♜d2 ♜d4 1/2-1/2

...which is what she did! Objectively White's position is bad.

A Ukrainian player equalized easily when playing in the Greek club championship. What else can I add? It was a good advertisement for the variation.

25

Dmitry Svetushkin (2597)

Alexander Zubarev (2600)

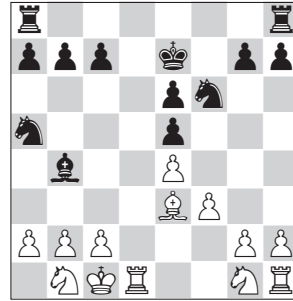
Greece tt 2012 (7)

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♜f6 3. ♜c3 e5 4.dxe5 dxe5 5. ♜xd8+ ♜xd8 6. ♜c4 ♜e6 7. ♜xe6 fxe6 8.f3 ♜c6 9. ♜e3 ♜b4 10.0-0-0 ♜e7 11. ♜b1

After 9... ♜b4 this manoeuvre looks logical.

11... ♜a5

Wow – where will this knight go?



12. ♜d2

Attractive is 12.b3!? ♜c6 (if, by analogy to the game, 12... ♜d6 13. ♜h3 c5 then 14. ♜a3± c4? (14...a6) 15. ♜b5+–) 13. ♜h3, and later c2-c3 may follow.

12... ♜d6 13. ♜h3 c5

Now the idea becomes clear: the pawn is going to advance further.

14. ♜f2

You will have guessed that opposing with 14.c4 can hardly give chances for an advantage as long as the e6-pawn is safely protecting the key points f5 and d5.

14...c4 15.c3 ♜hd8 16. ♜c2 b5 17.h4

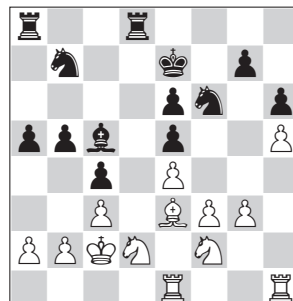
17.b4!? cxb3+ 18.axb3.

17... ♜b7 18.h5 h6 19.g3 ♜c5=

The h5-pawn fixes two enemy pawns simultaneously. But in this opening this is not dangerous for Black. For instance, White must take into consideration that he will have to use a strong piece for the protection of the outpost.

20. ♜de1 a5?!

20... ♜xe3 21. ♜xe3 ♜c5=.



21.g4?

Then why did he play g2-g3 ? It is strange that Dmitry didn't play the common advance against such structures (c4-b5-a5): 21.a4! bxa4 22.♘xc4±. However, we cannot rule out that the

Moldavian player disliked the following line: 21...♙xe3 22.♞xe3 ♜d6 23.axb5 a4 24.♞ee1 a3 25.b6±, though the computer is optimistic about White's position.

21...a4 22.a3 ♙xe3 23.♞xe3 ♜c5 1/2-1/2

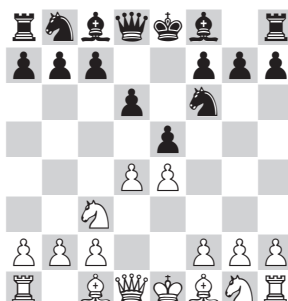
Conclusion

Apparently, we can conclude that by playing 6...♙e6 Black doesn't take much risk – with more or less careful play, of course. From time to time, in search of advantage White will overstep the mark and will run into problems.

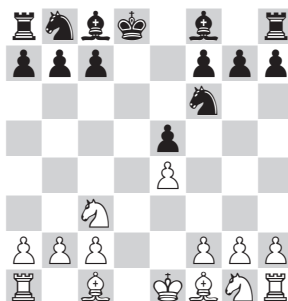
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7.♖e1



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