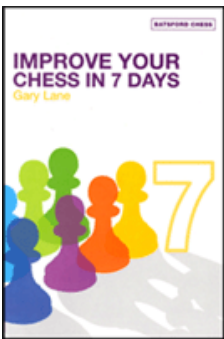




COLUMNISTS

Opening Lanes

Gary Lane



CHESTHEATRE

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Enter the Dragon

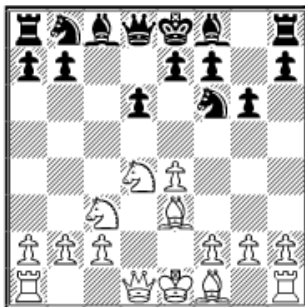
Rick Aeria from the USA asks, "What is the Chinese Dragon, and what is your opinion of it?"

The Chinese Dragon is the name given to the move 10...Rb8 in the main line of the Sicilian Dragon. It has been known for a long time, but no name was established for it. Then, in 2001, the Belgian player Luc Henris wrote an article about the variation in *New in Chess Yearbook 62*. The line became fashionable, and with a handy name in place, the idea stuck and proved to be an instant success in tournaments.

Here is a good introduction to the line:

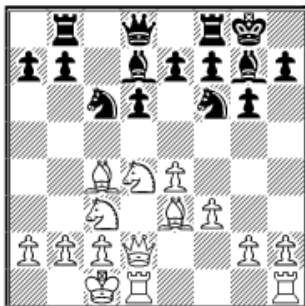
Giuseppe Coratella-Lawrence Trent
Porto San Giorgio 2006

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 This is the move that real Dragon players use to enter their beloved system. The alternative 2...Nc6 allows White to employ another system against the Dragon set-up: 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 g6 5 c4 Bg7 6 Be3 Nf6 7 Nc3, when the move c4 proves to be an effective way of clamping down on the pawn break ...d6-d5, and of course it helps to further control the square. This system for White is known as the Maróczy Bind, and traditionally Black needs a patient approach to make progress, rather than the usual wild counterattacks associated with the main line Dragon. **3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 g6 6 Be3**



6...Bg7 There are plenty of inexperienced Dragon players who have tested 6...Ng4? only to find they failed their opening exam to 7 Bb5+! which wins material: 7...Bd7 (7...Nc6 is not much better upon 8 Nxc6 bxc6 9 Bxc6+ Bd7 10 Bxa8 Qxa8 11 Bd4 e5 12 Nd5! is very good news for White.) 8 Qxg4 and only now is it obvious for Black that the bishop on d7 is pinned by the bishop on b5. **7 f3 0-0 8 Qd2 Nc6 9 Bc4** This

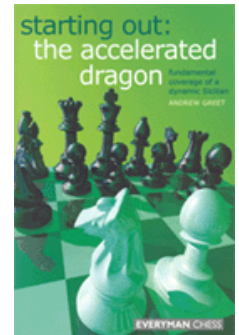
position is known as the Yugoslav Attack if you want to look it up in the books. **9...Bd7 10 0-0-0 Rb8**



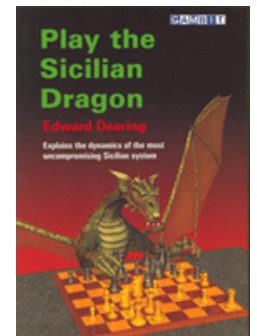
This move signifies the Chinese Dragon; basically the idea is to play ...b5 in the right circumstances. **11 Nde2?! White** is rated 2204 and it is understandable that he has no wish to test an international master in a line of the Dragon where knowledge will be important. Then again, this really is a weak alternative because it makes it easier for Black to make use of his bishop on g7, as the diagonal is no longer obstructed by a

piece on d4. Instead, 11 h4, 11 Kb1 and 11 Bb3 are considered the main alternatives. **11...Na5** This is a difference that catches some people out, Black is content to leave his knight on the edge of the board rather than the more familiar e5-square. **12 Bb3 b5 13**

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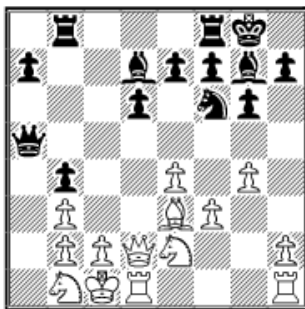


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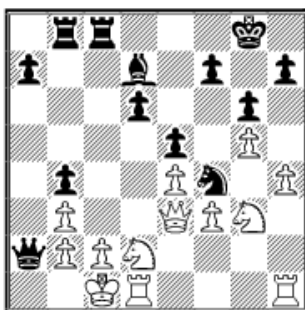
[The Modern Morra](#) by Hannes Langrock

g4 b4 The consistent approach, which is easy for the Englishman to spot being an expert in this line. **14 Nb1** Or 14 Nd5 Nxb3+ 15 cxb3 Nxd5 16 exd5 (16 Qxd5 Bb5 17 Nd4 e6 18 Qg5 Bf6 19 Qh6 Qc8+ 20 Kb1 Qa6 favours Black) 16...Qa5 17 Kb1 Rfc8 18 Rc1 Rb5 puts pressure on the d5-pawn 19 Rxc8+ Bxc8 20 Rc1 Bb7 with the superior chances. **14...Nxb3+ 15 axb3** It is dangerous to try 15 cxb3, because with a knight on b1 there is no escape square for the king upon 15...Rc8+, winning a piece. **15... Qa5**



This theme of attack in the Chinese Dragon is the perfect way to create danger at the earliest opportunity. The knight has taken on b3 allowing the black queen to infiltrate along the a-file. **16 g5 Nh5 17 Ng3 Qa2** It is always good news to threaten checkmate. It also helps to improve Black's position, because White must now compromise his pieces and the dream of somehow attacking on the h-file has to be

forgotten. **18 Bd4** Or 18 c3? bxc3 19 bxc3 Qxb3 winning. **18...Bxd4 19 Qxd4 Nf4** The knight on f4 is handily placed, but White is oblivious to any danger and decides to resurrect an attack based on advancing on the h-file. **20 h4 Rfc8** The king's rook is added to the onslaught and the immediate threat is 21...Qxb3, making use of the pinned c-pawn. **21 Nd2 e5!** The white queen is nudged out of the way to allow Black to wreak havoc. **22 Qe3**



22 Qxd6 is answered by 22...Be8, threatening ...Rb6 to trap the queen, which is very strong. **22...Rxc2+! 23 Kxc2 Rc8+ 24 Nc4 Rxc4+ 25 bxc4 Ba4 + 0-1**

The Chinese Dragon still has many enthusiastic supporters, but the latest fashion is for Black to play the main lines. I think this is because of the increasing number of computer moves popping up in top-level preparation. The computer finds the new moves in immensely complicated lines and the one who is better prepared wins. Another factor is that the Norwegian genius Magus Carlsen has started playing the Dragon and just about everybody wants to play like him.

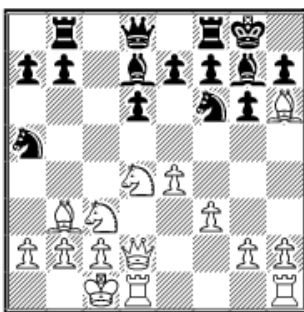
I think the Chinese Dragon will soon enjoy another spurt of popularity and is certainly very good at club level, where it continues to shock White in the opening. Here is another example of how it can win:

Roman Yankovsky-Sergey Solovjov
St. Petersburg 2007

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 g6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 d6 6 Be3 Bg7 7 f3 0-0 8 Qd2 Nc6 9 Bc4 Bd7 10 0-0-0 Rb8 The Chinese Dragon returns. Just for the record, in the recent encounter J.Polgar-M.Carlsen, Mainz 2008, Black was more than willing to take on the complications of the main line: 10...Rc8 11 Bb3 Ne5 12 g4 the idea is to stop any chance of ...h7-h5, although it can be argued that it is a slow strategy 12...b5 13 g5 (13 Ncxb5? is well met by 13...Nxf3 14 Nxf3 Bxb5, with the better chances) 13...b4 14 Nce2 (14 gxf6 bxc3 15 bxc3 Bxf6 and white's queenside has been severely disrupted) 14...Nh5 15 f4 (15 Ng3 is a critical test, when 15...Nc4 leads to a similar position to the game) 15...Nc4 16 Bxc4 Rxc4 17 b3 Rc7 18 Ng3 Rc3 19 Nxb5 gxh5 20 Kb1 Qa5 21 f5 Rfc8 22 f6 e5 23 Nf5 Bxf5 24 exf5 Rxc2! 25 Qxc2 Rxc2 26 Kxc2 Qxa2+ 27 Kd3 Bf8 28 Rc1 d5 with victory in sight. **11 Bb3 Na5 12 Bh6**

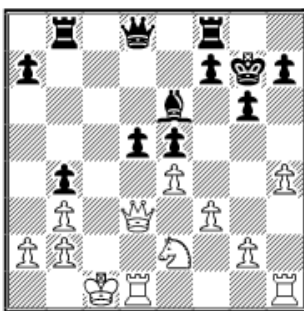


This direct approach is the line that



Black should worry about. The other attempts to refute the line still need tinkering with to claim a consistent advantage, but the aim here is simple – checkmate. 12 Kb1 b5 13 h4 Nc4 14 Bxc4 bxc4 15 Ka1 Qb6 slightly favours Black who has grabbed the initiative. **12...b5** This is the logical reply to make the most of the rook being on b8. Other moves: a) 12...Bxh6 13 Qxh6 b5 and

now there is some debate as to how White should continue: a1) 14 h4 e5 15 Nde2 b4 16 Nd5 Nxb3+ 17 axb3 Nxd5 18 Rxd5 Be6 19 h5 Rb7 20 Rb5 Qc7 21 Rxb7 Qxb7 22 g4 Qe7 led to roughly equal chances in A. Zhigalko-Bu Xiangzhi, Moscow 2004, although Black eventually won. a2) 14 g4 e5 15 Nf5 gxf5?! (Black might win a piece, but it comes at a heavy price because the king is exposed. Thus 15...Bxf5! 16 gxf5 b4 is a much better idea) 16 g5 Nxb3+ 17 axb3 Ne8 18 Nd5! f6 19 Rhg1 Rf7 20 gxf6+ Kh8 21 Ne7 1–0, G.Gopal-Li Chao, Martuni 2007. a3) 14...e5 15 Nde2 b4 16 Nd5 Nxb3+ 17 axb3 Nxd5 18 Rxd5 Be6 19 h5 Rb7 20 Rb5 Qc7 21 Rxb7 Qxb7 22 g4 Qe7 led to roughly equal chances in A. Zhigalko-Bu Xiangzhi, Moscow 2004, although Black eventually won. b) 12...Nxb3+ 13 axb3 (13 Nxb3 Bxh6 14 Qxh6 b5 is about equal; 13 cxb3 Bxh6 14 Qxh6 b5 15 Kb1 b4 16 Nce2 a5 17 g4 with attacks raging on both sides of the board in the fine tradition of the Dragon) 13...Qa5 14 Bxg7 (14 Kb1 is also possible, intending h2-h4) 14...Kxg7 15 h4 b5 16 b4 Qa1+ 17 Nb1 Be6 18 Nxe6+ fxe6 19 h5 Rbc8 (19...Nxb5 20 Rxb5 gxf5 21 Qg5+ Kh8 22 Qxe7 looks good for White) 20 Qg5 Kf7 21 hxg6+ hxg6 22 Rd3 with a double-edged position, M.Srebrnic-M.Cebalo, Nova Gorica 2008. **13 Bxg7** Also possible: 13 h4 Nc4 (13...Nxb3+ 14 axb3 b4, intending ...Qa5, looks promising) 14 Qg5 Rc8?! (the argument for this move is that ...Rc5 will attack the white queen, but it is hardly in the spirit of the Chinese Dragon) 15 Bxg7 Kxg7 16 Kb1 Rc5 17 Qc1 Qc7 18 Bxc4 bxc4 19 g4 Rb8 20 h5 g5?! 21 Nf5+! Bxf5 22 h6+ Kh8 23 gxf5 Qb7 24 Rhg1 Qb4 25 Ka1 Rc6 26 a3 Qb7 27 Rxb2 28 Rg7 Rxb2 29 Rxf7 with the advantage) 28...Rxb2 29 Rg7 Qb6 30 Na4 Qa5 31 Qg5 (31 Rxf7! is strong in view of 31...Qxa4 32 Qxb2 Rxb2 33 Rf8+ Ng8 34 Rfxg8 checkmate) 31...Qe5 32 c3, when White won in a few moves presumably on time, M.Dejmek-M.Shridhar, Stillwater 2007. **13...Kxg7 14 h4** Another line that needs further testing is 14 g4. **14...e5 15 Nde2 b4 16 Nd5 Nxb3+ 17 cxb3** Or 17 axb3 Nxd5 18 Qxd5 (18 exd5? Qa5 19 Kb1 Rb6 with the simple plan of ...Ra6 and White can give up) 18...Be6 19 Qxd6 Qa5 20 Kb1 Rb6 21 Rd5! (the only way to avoid a calamity with ...Rb6 on the horizon) 21...Bxd5 22 Qxe5+ Kg8 23 Qxd5 Rb5 24 Qd2 Rd8 when I prefer Black. **17...Nxd5 18 Qxd5 Be6** If Black is looking for something different, then I would recommend 18...Rb6 at this point. **19 Qd3 d5!**



Solovjov is relentless in presenting White problems, which is the beauty of this line. **20 h5** 20 exd5 Rc8+ 21 Kd2 Bf5 22 Qe3 Qxd5+ 23 Ke1 Qc5 gives Black good chances. **20...Qg5+ 21 f4** If 21 Kb1, then 21...Rfd8, with the threat of ...dxe4, and Black has the initiative. **21...Qxg2** Now the idea of Black taking a pawn on g2 with the queen seems rather incredible. He can get away with it because White has been so slow in

starting an attack on the kingside. Or 21...exf4 22 Qd4+ Kg8 23 h6 f6 24 Kb1 with a gloriously complicated game. **22 f5? dxe4** Black is too good to fall for the obvious 22...gxf5?!, when 23 Rhg1 wins. **23 Qe3** The vague White attack is hopeless, because there are not enough reinforcements to help make a breakthrough. **23... Qf3 24 f6+** 24 Qxf3 exf3 25 fxe6 fxe2 26 Rde1 fxe6 27 Rxe2 Rbc8+ 28 Kb1 Rf5 29 hxg6 hxg6 30 Rd1 might represent a practical chance to try and draw, but the reality remains that the position is lost. **24...Kh8 25 Qh6 Qxf6** Black grabs the important pawn on f6, which is essential

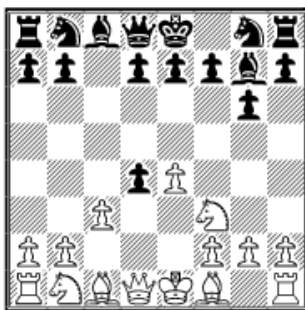
because 25...Rg8?? is devastated by 26 hxg6, with checkmate threatened on h7. **26 hxg6 Qxg6 27 Qe3** It really is time White started to count the pawns. Then again, nowadays with the fast time limits it makes sense to carry on just in case you get lucky. **27...f6** A defensive posture is adapted allowing a rook to guard h7 along the seventh rank. I prefer something more energetic, such as 27...Rbc8+ 28 Kb1 Rfd8 29 Rdg1 Bg4 with a big advantage. **28 Rdg1 Qf7 29 Kb1 Rbd8 30 Ng3 Rd3 31 Qe2** Or 31 Qxe4 Rd4 32 Qe3 Qg6+ 33 Ka1 Rf7 is good for Black. **31...Rg8** There are times when it seems that Black is not being completely accurate, but it is not necessary to find perfect moves when you are doing so well. **32 Nxe4 Rxxg1+ 33 Rxxg1 Rd8** 33...Rd4 is probably a superior choice to keep up some pressure against the knight on e4. **34 Rf1 Qg6 35 Rxf6 Qg1+ 36 Rf1 Bg4 37 Rxxg1 Bxe2** Black finally gets his way of exchanging queens and the extra pawn ensures the advantage. **38 Nf6 Bd3+ 39 Kc1 Bg6 40 Ng4 Rd5 41 Ne3 Rd4 42 Rg5 Re4 43 Nc4 Kg7 44 a3 Kf6 45 Rg1 bxa3 46 bxa3 Re2 47 a4 Bd3 48 Rf1+ Ke6 49 Rh1 Kd5 50 Rh6 Kd4 51 Nd2 Bg6 52 Rh3 e4 53 Kd1 Rg2 54 Nf1 Bf5 55 Rh6 Bg4+ 0-1**

Mike Ridge from the **United Kingdom** e-mailed, "Since you had some nice coverage of the hyper-accelerated in your July [column](#), here is a quick move order follow up question for those trying to build a 'hyper repertoire' What about 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 g6 3 d4 cxd4 4 c3? Now, of course, Black can transpose into a main line of the Morra Gambit with ...g6 by taking the pawn, but what if Black does not trust those lines – is there no way for someone who doesn't trust those lines against the Morra to play 'hyper' with confidence?! Curious to see what you think about this little move order nuance!"

I think you are right to avoid the Morra Gambit. This is not because you will be dragged into defending against a tricky attack, but because most people do not play systems with ...g6 against the Morra. This means that you might be ready with your favourite system upon 1 e4 c5 2 d4 cxd4 3 c3 by playing e6 at some point, but that will be wasted if you have already prepared a kingside fianchetto with ...g6. Therefore, I think you need to be smart enough to answer this attempt of transposition with your own system. The next example is a model game:

Jerzy Kot-Grzegorz Gajewski
Warsaw 2006

1 e4 c5 2 d4 cxd4 3 c3 g6 4 Nf3 Bg7!?

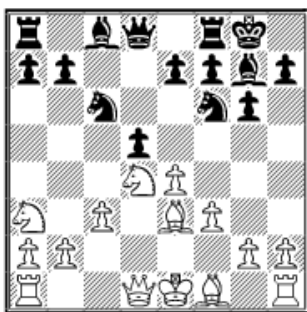


I like this move, as it is in keeping with the usual formation of the Accelerated Dragon. Instead, 4...d5 5 exd5 Qxd5 6 cxd4 Bg7 transposes to a c3-Sicilian, which normally occurs after 1 e4 c5 2 c3 d5 3 exd5 Qxd5 4 d4 g6 5 Nf3 cxd4 6 cxd4 Bg7. **5 Nxd4!?** Well, this does not lose, but it hardly inspires confidence. I think White realised he did not know what to do and tries to confuse his grandmaster opponent by playing

something different. I am all for making strong players sweat with a nice pet line, but trying something new after only five moves is asking a bit much. After 5 cxd4, then the main move is 5...d5 to contest the centre: a) 6 exd5 Nf6 7 Bb5+ Nbd7 8 0-0 (8 d6 exd6 9 Qe2+ Qe7 10 Qxe7+ Kxe7 11 0-0) is a good way to play if you prefer risk free chess, because Black will find it hard to win such a quiet position.) 8...0-0 9 d6! (an idea borrowed from the Caro-Kann to slightly disrupt Black's pawn structure while he has the chance, but if 9 Nc3, then 9...Nb6 helps win the d5-pawn) 9...exd6 10 Nc3 a6 11 Bd3 with a slight edge, I.Kovalenko-V.Aridov, Simferopol 2004. b) 6 e5 Nc6 and now: b1) 7 h3 Bf5 8 Nc3 Be4 9 Be2 Nh6 10 0-0 Nf5 11 Be3 0-0 12 Qd2 f6 13 exf6 Bxf6 14 Nxe4 (14 Rac1 offers equal chances) 14...dxe4 15 Bc4+ Kg7 16 Ng5 Bxg5 17 Bxg5 Qxd4 18 Qxd4+? (White needs to start

thinking about how to draw the game, so aiming to take back one of the pawns with 18 Bd5! would be a sound policy) 18...Nfxd4 19 Rad1 Rad8 20 Bd2 b5 with a big advantage in the ending, F.Rayner-S.Ansell, Newcastle on Tyne 1995. b2) 7 Nc3 Bg4 8 Be2 Nh6 9 Be3 Nf5 10 0-0 0-0 11 Qb3? (an ambitious attempt to overcome the tactics) 11...Bxf3 12 Bxf3 Nfxd4 13 Bxd4 Nxd4 14 Qxd5 e6 15 Qxb7 (or 15 Qxd8 Nxf3+ 16 gxf3 Raxd8 17 f4 Rd4! 18 Ne2 Rd2 is very strong) 15...Rb8 16 Qe4 (the chase for pawns with 16 Qxa7 is suitability exploited after 16...Nxf3+ 17 gxf3 Qg5+ 18 Kh1 Bxe5 with violent threats against h2) 16...Nxf3+ 17 Qxf3 Bxe5 led to a brisk victory in W.Hoyt-J.Bellon Lopez, Haifa 1976.

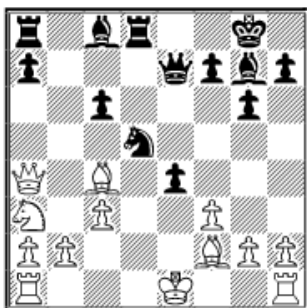
5...Nc6 6 Be3 Nf6 The good thing about this line for someone like Mr. Ridge is that against something unusual in the opening he is able to employ the usual set-up. Now, of course, when I implied in the introduction of the game it is easy to imitate Black, I meant the set-up rather than every move played by the grandmaster. **7 f3 0-0 8 Na3?!** It is true that the c3-square is not available for the knight on the edge of the board, it requires another move to bring it back towards the centre. An improvement is 8 Nd2, when 8...d5 can be met by 9 Be2, although 9...Bd7, intending ...e7-e5, is promising. **8...d5!**



This surge in the centre is well known in the Accelerated Dragon, and here it works particularly well because White's pieces lack harmony. **9 exd5** Or 9 Nxc6 bxc6 10 e5 Ne8 11 f4 f6, it makes sense to break up the extended pawn chain before White can get the rest of his pieces into play. 12 exf6 Nxf6 13 Be2 Rb8 14 Qc1 Bg4! is good for Black, as his lead in development will make it difficult for White to safely castle

kingside. **9...Nxd5 10 Nxc6 bxc6 11**

Bd4 e5 The Polish grandmaster understandably has no wish to exchange his cherished bishop. He blocks the diagonal, but at the same time manages to push back White's only active piece. **12 Bf2** If 12 Bc5, then 12...Re8 is good for Black, because the bishop on c5 can soon be ousted with a gain of time. For example, 13 Bc4 Qa5 14 Bf2 e4! with a brilliant position. **12...Qe7 13 Bc4 Rd8** The threat of discovered attack by moving the knight on d5 demands that White takes evasive action. **14 Qa4 e4**



You have to admire Black's energetic performance to put White under pressure move after move. Now, if given the chance, he will snare the white king in the middle of the board. **15 0-0-0** My mantra for improvers when coaching is 'develop and castle,' but here it is too late to save White. Then again, it is difficult to see any improvements: 15 fxe4 Qxe4+ 16 Kf1 (16 Kd1? allows the amusing line 16...Nxc3+ 17 Kc1 Bh6+

18 Be3 Bxe3 checkmate) 16...Bh3!! I

think this is a knockout blow because of 17 Rg1 Ne3+ 18 Bxe3 Qf3+! 19 Bf2 Rd2 with checkmate to follow. **15...exf3** I suspect 15...e3 is even better, especially after 16 Rhe1 Nxc3! 17 bxc3 Rxd1+ 18 Kxd1 (18 Rxd1 breaks the pin, allowing 18...exf2; 18 Qxd1 Qxa3+ 19 Kb1 Rb8+ forces checkmate) 18...Qd6+ winning. **16 gxf3 Bf5 17 Nc2** The best chance to prolong the game has to be 17 Bxd5, when 17...cxd5 18 Rhe1 Bh6+ 19 f4 Be4 still admittedly favours Black. **17...Rab8 18 Bxd5 cxd5 19 Qxa7??**



There is normally a very good reason why top players offer you a free pawn and that is because it seriously damages your game. 19 Rhe1 would still give Black some work to do before ensuring a positive result. **19...Bh6+ 20 Kb1 Bxc2+**



0-1

Finally, **Mark Green** from the **USA** wants to know of any openings where you can win a queen in the opening. I

have to confess that would be an opening secret worth knowing, but there is no magic answer. It is true that plenty of strong players have lost in the opening and I even once managed to beat a grandmaster in ten moves after trapping his queen. However, the game that stuck in my mind from my junior days is one I am still waiting to copy.

NN-Kunzel
Vienna 1924

1 e3 This looks silly, but I have seen many players, including Belgian international master Michel Jadoul, play it as a prelude to c4, transposing to the English. **1...e5 2 Nc3 d5 3 Qf3 e4**



I managed to track down a couple of games with this line, but curiously no one tried the cunning trap of advancing the pawn. 3...Nf6 and now: a) 4 Bb5+?! (the check merely allows Black to bolster his pawn chain, but it is worth seeing that this line exists at tournament level) 4...c6 5 Be2 (this is one way to block the escape route of the white queen) 5...Bd6 6 d3? e4! 7 dxe4 Bg4 8 Qxg4 Nxg4 9 Bxg4 dxe4 10 Nxe4 0-0,

when White should have done the nice thing and resigned with honour, but instead carried on as long as possible: J.Tkacova-L.Fidrikova, Slovakia 1993. b) 4 Nh3 Nc6 5 Ng5 h6 6 Nh3 h5 7 Bb5 Qd6 8 Ng5? Bg4 9 Qg3 h4 with a massive advantage because the queen is trapped, S.Benavides Maseda-R.Musalov, Burgas 2003. **4 Qf4 Bd6 0-1**

I understand that there is some doubt whether this stunning game was ever played thanks to the diligent work of renowned chess historian Edward Winter, but it still looks impressive.

Opening Lanes is based in large part on readers' questions. Do you have a question about a particular opening line? Baffled by a branch of the Benoni or Budapest? Submit your questions (with your full name and country of residence please) and perhaps Gary will reply in his next [ChessCafe.com](#) column...

[Yes, I have a question for Gary!](#)

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