

**1.e4!**  
**The Chess Bible**

**Volume 1**

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**Justin Tan**

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## Key to Symbols

!	a good move	±	White stands slightly better
?	a weak move	∓	Black stands slightly better
!!	an excellent move	±	White has a serious advantage
??	a blunder	∓	Black has a serious advantage
!?	an interesting move	+−	White has a decisive advantage
?!	a dubious move	−+	Black has a decisive advantage
□	only move	→	with an attack
N	novelty	↑	with initiative
☉	lead in development	↔	with counterplay
⊙	zugzwang	Δ	with the idea of
=	equality	▷	better is
∞	unclear position	≤	worse is
∞	with compensation for the sacrificed material	+	check
		#	mate

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*Mega Database 2020*, Chessbase 2019

*International Correspondence Chess Federation (ICCF)*, 2020

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# Preface

If there is one characteristic that binds all great modern chess players, it is their burning desire to discover the truth. Needless to say, all such players analyse their own games (or other games for that matter) with tremendous rigour and pinpoint precision. Objective analysis is fundamental for the development, not only of the player, but also of theory more generally.

Yet, for most of us, 'the truth' isn't necessarily the most important thing in chess praxis: what is important is simply that we defeat our opponents! The beauty of chess lies in the reality that we are imperfect beings striving to play the perfect game.

An awareness of our human imperfection - your opponent's innate fallibility, as well as your own – is a crucial factor in modern chess preparation. When choosing which line to employ, a strong practical player considers their opponent's strengths and weaknesses, preferences and aversions, biases and so on, all the while asking, "*who has the easier position?*" These psychological factors, which we have known from as early as Lasker, are inseparable from the game of chess.

This book aims to marry the two necessary aspects of objectivity and practical play into a workable and durable repertoire. It strives for the truth while seeking to exploit the limitations of human nature. I hope my recommendations are comprehensible to the reader, while at the same time, I have chosen lines which I believe are most challenging for the human opponent.

## **Why 1.e4?**

I have chosen 1.e4 for various reasons. First and foremost, it is the move I have played for the entirety of my chess-playing life. In the database, I have recorded approximately 400 white games, of which 350 began with 1.e4! I have also heavily researched the openings covered in this volume, through my column "*1.e4*" for ChessPublishing (some of the material in this book expands upon existing analysis from that column).

Secondly, I believe that Black has a wider margin of error in the closed games than in the open games. Even if they do not know all the details of a certain line in the

former case, they will end up with only a slight disadvantage in the majority of cases. The same cannot be said about the defenses to 1.e4. In this book, you will find that Black must tread carefully if they play an offbeat system, as I have discovered several refutations to the most popular and widely accepted lines within them.

## **All Men Are Created Equal**

Even though this is a White repertoire, I believe it is important to note from the outset that Black does not need to *achieve* equality – they were ‘born’ equal! The traditional assumption that White is better by virtue of having the first move is slowly but surely subsiding. There is now a realization that, in fact, there are *several* viable ways for Black to maintain the balance and it is just a matter of deciding which one is more playable in practice.

From White’s perspective, this does not mean you shouldn’t try. The point of my repertoire is to demonstrate that Black must be accurate if they seek to prove equality after 1.e4, and while the defenses in this volume might be plausible, they tend to be difficult for Black to play against. This equates to a tangible practical advantage for the first player.

## **Methodology**

For every opening, I have adopted the same method of research. Firstly, I undertake a detailed examination of human games, alongside correspondence/email games, with particular regard to the highest percentage of White wins and the number of games played. The human games allowed me to gain a natural feeling for the practical elements of the opening in question, while the correspondence games (essentially human-assisted engine games) covered the necessary element of objectivity.

The next stage consisted of my own engine analysis, using the Chessbase Engine Cloud to examine critical but unexplored positions.

Regarding neural networks, I should make a cautionary remark: while it is clear that Leela Zero (Lc0) and other AIs are revolutionizing chess, the versions available to us are still relatively basic, and Lc0 – according to the Top Chess Engine Championships



– is currently weaker than Stockfish (SF). Alas, she is still in her infancy! My analysis therefore uses *both* Cloud SF (CPU: 96) and Cloud Lc0 (v.26.0, RTX 2080). My evaluations approximate between the two engines' evaluations, although I sometimes find it more helpful to conclude that White has an attack, initiative or other advantage.

Finally, I engage as critically as possible with the existing literature, as I hope others will do with my work in the future.

## **Structure**

At the beginning of every chapter is an overview of the opening, which serves to give the reader some basic foundations and highlights the general concepts, extracted from the analysis section. If the reader is in need of a brief summary of a particular opening, I suggest you focus on the overviews.

The analysis section contains the main body of work. The reader is not expected to memorize everything by heart; in fact, that is probably not a productive exercise. When going through a variation, it is best to stop at a point you think is appropriate, and that should *always* be the point at which you find that you have fully understood the position.

Each sub-chapter ends with a model game, which gives the reader a simplified picture of the variation at hand. Similar to the overview chapter, this section is largely illustrative.

## **Acknowledgements**

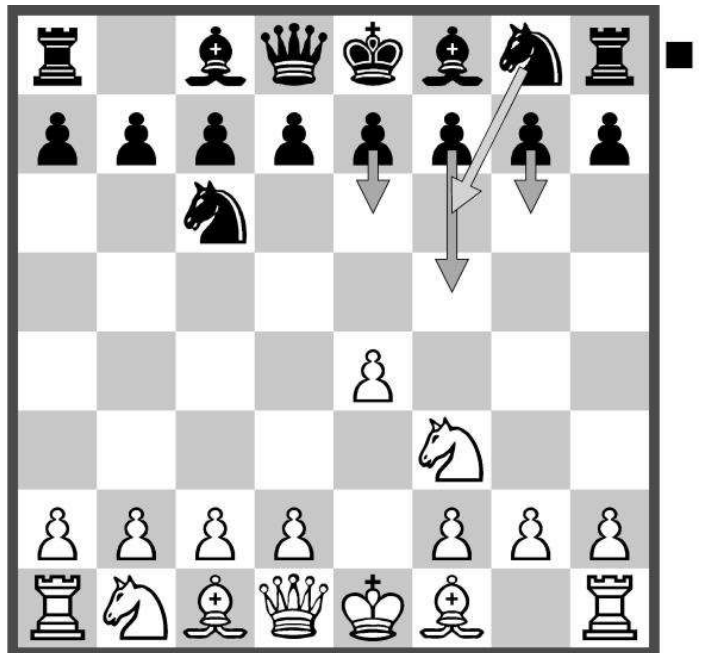
Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the following people: Thinkers Publishing, for approaching me in the first place, and giving me the time to complete my law degree along the way; my good friend Edmund Player, who took the time to proof-read my work and provide feedback; and last but not least, my parents, my sister Helena, and Sol, for their ongoing love and support.

Justin Tan,  
Melbourne, 2021





## 2nd Move Alternatives

1.e4 c6 2. f3



# Chapter Guide

## Chapter 1 – 2nd Move Alternatives

1.e4 c6 2. f3

A) Various ..... 85

B) 2... f6..... 87

## A) Various

1. e4 c6 2. f3



Position after: 2. f3

2... g6

A) The so-called Colorado Gambit 2... f5?! 3. exf5 d5 is strategically incorrect. Instead of hanging onto the pawn, White should proceed with 4. b5 xf5 5. e5



Position after: 5. e5

5... d7 [5... d6 does not help. 6. d4 f6 7. 0-0 d7 8. f4 etc.] 6. xc6 xc6 7. d4 f6 8. c3 e6 9. e2 leaving Black with a fragile structure.

B) 2... e6 3. d4 d5 4. e5 is a dubious French position. 4... f6 5. b5



Position after: 5. b5

5... d7 [5... a6 6. xc6+ bxc6 7. 0-0±] 6. 0-0 a6 7. d3 fxe5 8. dxe5±

3. d4 g7 4. c3 d6

4... d5? 5. exd5 b4 6. b5+ d7 7. e2



Position after: 7. e2

A) The most prosaic response to 7... xd5 8. xd5 c6 is 9. 0-0 cxd5 [9... cxb5 10. f4+-] 10. e5 f6 11. e1 and on 11... a6 there is 12. xd7



Position after: 12. Nxd7

**A1)** 12... Nxd7? 13. Qg5! f6 14. Qf4! sets up the nasty threat of Qf4-c7. 14... e5 [14... axb5 15. Qc7!] 15. dxe5 fxe5 16. Qxe5+-

**A2)** 12... axb5 13. Nb6! Ra6 14. Qxb5+ Qf8 15. Na4

**B)** 7... a6 8. Qc4 Qf5 9. Qb3 Nf6 10. Nh4! Nbx5 11. Nxd5 Nxd5 12. Nxf5 gxf5 13. 0-0 e6 14. Rd1±

5. Qe3



Position after: 5. Qe3

**A)** Now Black's best move is 5... Nf6 which transposes to variation B.

**B)** Otherwise, both 5... Qg4 6. Qb5 a6 7. Qxc6+ bxc6 8. h3 Qxf3 9. Qxf3 Rb8 10. 0-0-0± Alekseev, E – Onischuk, V Kazan 2013; and

**C)** 5... e5?! 6. dxe5! give White a clear advantage.



Position after: 6. dxe5!

**C1)** 6... dxe5 7. Qxd8+

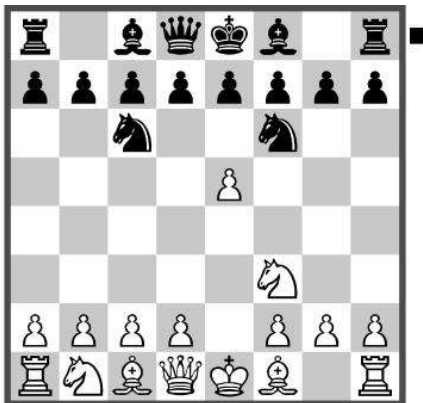
**C1.1)** 7... Nxd8?! 8. Nd5 Ne6 9. Ng5! and wins.

**C1.2)** 7... Qxd8 8. Qc4±

**C2)** 6... Nxe5 7. Nxe5 Qxe5 [7... dxe5 8. Qxd8+ Qxd8 9. 0-0-0+ Qd7 10. Qc4+-] 8. Qd2 Qe6 9. 0-0-0 Ne7 10. f4 Qg7 Vastrukhin, O – Mamedov, E Sochi 2019, 11. h3+-

## B) 2... ♞f6

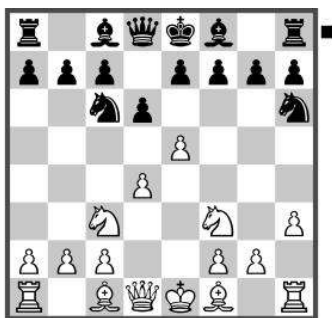
1. e4 ♞c6 2. ♞f3 ♞f6 3. e5



Position after: 3. e5

3... ♞d5

3... ♞g4?! 4. d4 d6 5. h3 ♞h6 6. ♞c3



Position after: 6. ♞c3

A) 6... e6 7. exd6 ♙xd6 [7... cxd6 8. d5 exd5 9. ♞xd5 is also hopeless.] 8. ♙g5 is decisive: 8... ♙e7 9. ♙xh6 gxh6 10. ♙b5

B) 6... a6 7. g4 e6 8. ♚e2± gives White an optimal attacking position.

4. d4 d6



Position after: 4... d6

We've now transposed to a sideline of the Alekhine Defense, 1.e4 ♞f6 2.e5 ♞d5 3.d4 d6 4.♞f3 ♞c6. True, I recommend the Four Pawns Attack against the Alekhine; however, 4...♞c6 is considered to be risky in light of the positional pawn sacrifice

5. c4 ♞b6 6. e6! fxe6

6... ♙xe6?? of course loses to 7. d5

7. ♞c3



Position after: 7. ♞c3

**7... g6**

The immediate 7... e5 is inferior: 8. d5  
 ♞d4 9. ♞xd4 exd4 10. ♚xd4 e5 11.  
 ♚e4 g6 12. ♞d3 ♞g7 13. ♚e2±



Position after: 13. ♚e2±

Kuhne, D – Zanolin, H corr WS/Master  
 class 2012.

**8. h4 ♞g7 9. ♞e3**

Position after: 9. ♞e3

**9... e5**

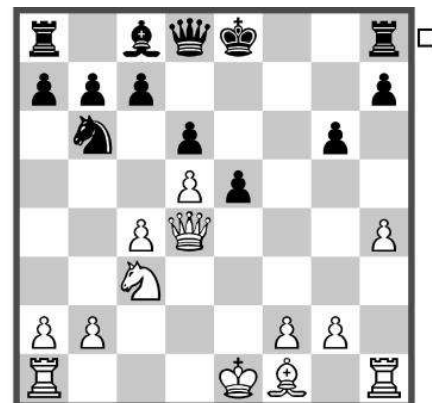
9... 0-0 10. h5 e5 11. d5 ♞d4 12. ♞xd4  
 exd4 13. ♞xd4 transposes to 9...e5 af-  
 ter 13... ♞xd4 14. ♚xd4 e5 while oth-  
 er options are questionable, for exam-

ple 13... g5? 14. ♞xg7 ♚xg7 15. h6+  
 ♚g8 16. ♚h5! e5 17. ♚d2



Position after: 17. ♚d2

17... g4 [17... ♞f5 18. ♚xg5+ ♞g6 Sac-  
 erdotali, S – Stilman, E LSS email 2009,  
 19. c5 dxc5 20. 0-0-0+–] 18. ♚g5+ ♚xg5  
 19. ♚xg5+ ♚h8 20. ♚g7 Ponomarev,  
 R – Ivanchuk, V Moscow 2002.

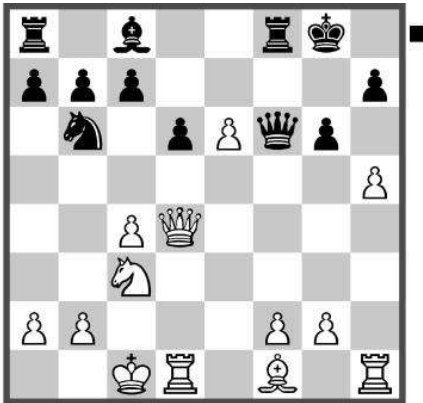
**10. d5 ♞d4 11. ♞xd4 exd4 12. ♞xd4  
 ♞xd4 13. ♚xd4 e5**

Position after: 13... e5

**14. dxe6**

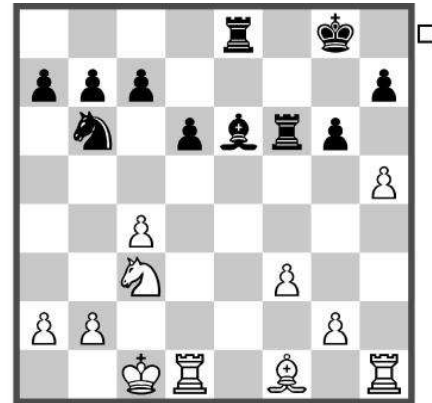
For those of you who prefer direct at-  
 tacking chess, it's worth considering  
 14. ♚e3!?

14... 0-0 15. h5 ♖f6 16. 0-0-0



Position after: 16. 0-0-0

17. f3 ♖ae8 18. ♕xf6 ♖xf6

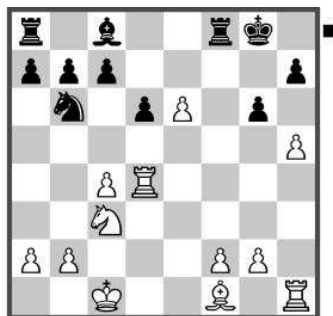


Position after: 18... ♖xf6

16... ♗xe6

A) 16... ♕xf2?? 17. e7

B) It makes little sense to improve the position of White's rook voluntarily with 16... ♕xd4? 17. ♖xd4



Position after: 17. ♖xd4

**B1)** 17... ♖xf2? 18. c5! dxc5 19. ♖d8+ ♖f8 [19... ♔g7 20. h6+ ♔f6 21. ♖f8+] 20. e7+–

**B2)** 17... ♗xe6 18. hxg6 hxg6 [18... ♖xf2 19. ♖e4 ♖f5 20. gxh7+ ♔h8 21. ♗d3 ♖f4 22. b3+–] especially as White has 19. ♖dh4! ♔g7 20. ♖h7+ ♔f6 21. ♖xc7+–

19. b3

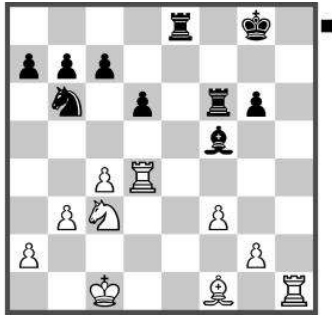
A good moment for some pause. White has a better pawn structure and more mobile pieces; they have pressure along the h-file which they can always trade in for h6 (to fix Black's pawns on light-squares). The engines give White an advantage here, but the more important consideration is that Black is forced to suffer in defense.

19. ♖d4 ♔g7 20. hxg6 hxg6 21. ♖dh4 looks quite promising although Black seems to hold on with 21... ♗g8 22. ♗d3 ♖e5! followed by ...d5. Gonzalez Vidal, Y – Narciso Dublan, M Montcada 2011.

19... ♔g7

On 19... ♗f5 20. hxg6 hxg6 [Or 20... ♗xg6 21. ♖d4 followed by ♔d2 and ♗d3.] 21. ♖d4! is now more effective as the f5-bishop is precluded from the defense of the h-file.

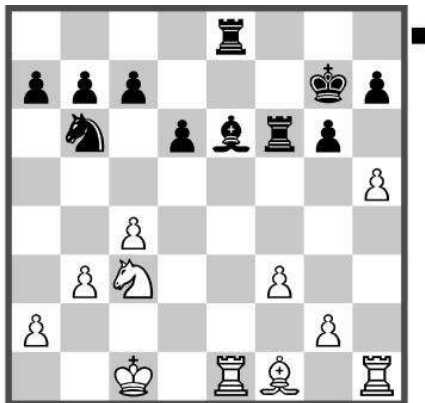




Position after: 21. ♖d4!

At this point, Black cannot hope to be active with 21... ♜e1+?! as 22. ♔d2 ♜a1 23. ♜dh4 is decisive.

### 20. ♜e1!?



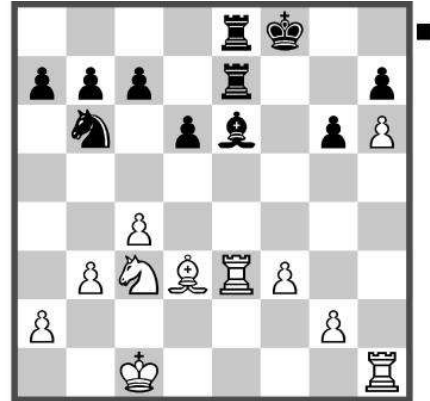
Position after: 20. ♜e1!?

### 20... ♜f7!

Preempting White's plan of ♞c3-e4-g5.

20... ♞f7 21. ♜xe8 ♞xe8 22. h6+ ♔f8 23. ♞d3±

21. ♞d3 ♜fe7 22. h6+ ♔f8 23. ♜e3±



Position after: 23. ♜e3

White is happy to exchange a pair of rooks as the plan ♞e4-g5 only increases in strength in that case. Meanwhile, if Black maintains the impasse along the e-file, White will gradually improve the position (starting with the moves ♔c1-d2 and g2-g4). Note that the natural

### 23... d5??




loses to

### 24. cxd5

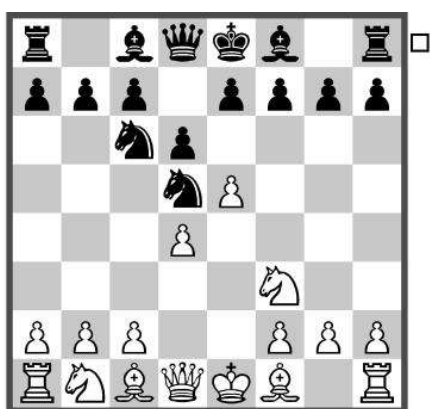
Or even 24. ♞xg6! hxg6 25. h7 ♔g7 26. cxd5+—

24... ♞xd5 25. ♜xe7 ♜xe7 26. ♞xg6!+—





### Model game

 Gonzalez Vidal, Yuri (2504)  
 Narciso Dublan, Marc (2532)  
 Montcada 2011

1. e4 f6 2. e5 d5 3. d4 d6 4. f3 c6




Position after: 4... c6

This is the usual move-order for the position we reach in the line 1.e4 c6 2.f3 f6 3.e5 d5 4.d4.

Now take note of the misplaced knight on c6. It immediately gives White the possibility of a strong positional pawn sacrifice:

5. c4 b6 6. e6! fxe6

6... xe6?? fails to 7. d5

7. c3 g6



The only sensible way to develop the dark-squared bishop.




Position after: 7... g6

8. h4!


Of course, now that Black has weakened his kingside, we should undermine it at the first opportunity.

8... g7 9. e3

Black hopes for 9. h5 e5 10. d5 d4.

9... 0-0 10. h5 e5 11. d5 d4



Position after: 11... d4

Black is forced to return the pawn.