

# An Extremely Rare Double-Gambit from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

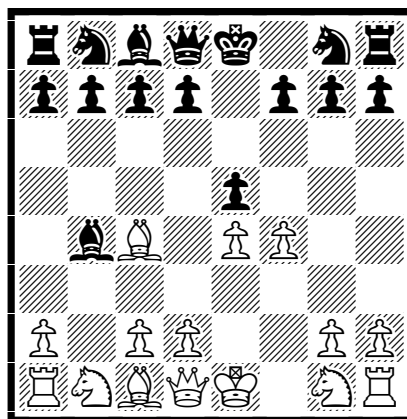
By IM Nikolay Minev

This is the story of a gambit that comes from 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a gambit which is original and extremely rare, probably the rarest opening ever played. It will be rejected by the skeptics, but probably adopted by the adventurous. This is a gambit that incorporates both the “Evans Gambit” and the “King’s Gambit” together in one controversial opening.

## C23 1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4

- |                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| (A) The Original Idea   | 3...Bxb4 4.f4 |
| (B) The Improved Idea   | 4.c3 Ba5 5.f4 |
| (C) The Declined Gambit | 3...Bb6       |

### (A) The original idea 1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.f4



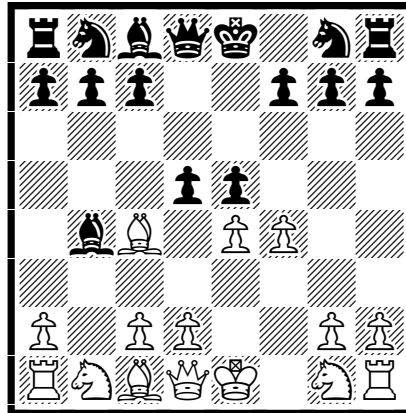
The following example is the first known game with this double-gambit.

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**Alexander McDonnell**  
**Louis de la Bourdonnais**  
London (m-24) 1834

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.f4 d5!**



This is the only continuation that is given by the theory. Moreover, recent theory recommends it as the best continuation, which gives the advantage to Black. This assessment is based only on this game.

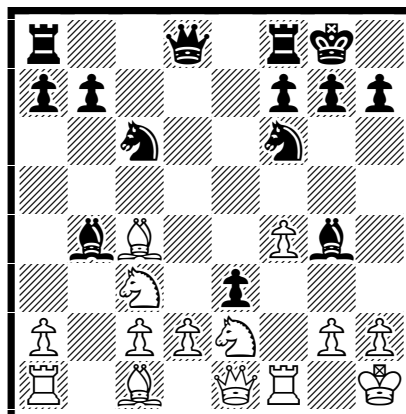
**5.exd5**

Instead 5.Bxd5 exf4 6.Nf3 Nf6 seems to be in Black's favor.

**5...e4 6.Ne2 Nf6 7.O-O**

For 7.c3, which is probably better – see next game.

**7...O-O 8.Nbc3 c6! 9.dxc6 Nxc6 10.Kh1 Bg4 11.Qe1 e3!**



This is the position in which according the theory (old and recent). Black has the advantage. We should agree with that.

**12.dxe3?**

Loses instantly.

**12...Bxe2 13.Bxe2 Ne4 14.Bb2 Qa5 15.Bd3 Bxc3 16.Bxc3 Nxc3 17.Qh4 f5 18.Rf3 Ne4 19.Rh3 h6 20.Rf1 Qc5 21.Qh5 Qd6 22.g4 Rae8 23.Bc4+ Kh7 24.g5 Na5 25.gxh6 g6 26.Qe2 Nxc4 27.Qxc4 Nd2 28.Qc3 Qc6+ 29.Qxc6 bxc6 30.Rd1 Rd8 0-1**

Twenty five years later another historical game is played which is totally neglected by the theory. I don't know why.

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**Augustus Mongredien**

**Paul Morphy**

Paris (m-1), 1859

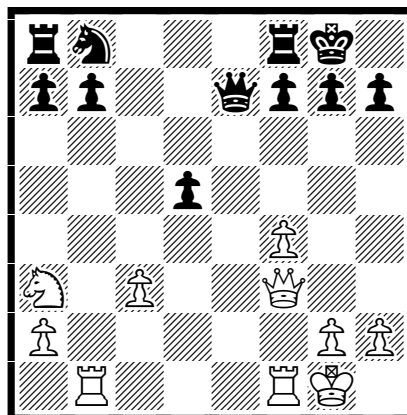
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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.f4 d5! 5.exd5 e4 6.Ne2 Nf6 7.c3 Bc5 8.d4 exd3 9.Qxd3 O-O 10.Ba3 Bxa3 11.Nxa3 Bg4 12.O-O**

12.O-O-O!?

**12...Bxe2 13.Qxe2 Nxd5 14.Qf3 c6 15.Rab1 Qe7 16.Bxd5 cxd5**

I think that Morphy avoids 16...Qxa3 because after 17.Be4 or 17.Bb3 White has initiative as compensation for the pawn.



**17.c4! dxc4 18.Rxb7 Nd7 19.Kh1 Rfe8 20.Nxc4 Qe6 21.Ne5 Nxe5 22.fxe5 Rf8 23.Qb3 Qxb3 24.axb3 Rab8 25.Rxa7 Rxb3 1/2-1/2**

Unfortunately, the other five existing games of this variation are of very poor quality and they can be considered only as historical facts.

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**Serafino Dubois**

**M. Lecrivain**

Paris 1855

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.f4 exf4 5.Nf3 Nc6? 6.c3 Bc5 7.d4 Bb6 8.Bxf4 d6 9.O-O Nge7? 10.Ng5 O-O 11.Qh5 h6 12.Nxf7 Rxf7 13.Qxf7+ Kh8 14.Bxh6 gxh6 15.Rf6 Ng8 16.Rg6 1-0**

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**W. Steinitz**

**W. Oudshoven**

Haarlem (simul) 1896

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.f4 Bd6? 5.Nf3 exf4 6.d4 Bb4+ 7.c3 Ba5 8.O-O Bb6 9.Bxf4 d6 10.Ng5 Be6 11.Bxe6 fxe6 12.Nxe6 Qf6 13.Qg4 g6 14.Bg5 Qxf1+ 15.Kxf1 Kf7 16.Nd2 Nc6 17.Ke2 Ke8 18.Nc4 h6 19.Nxb6 cxb6 20.Nc7+ Kf7 21.Rf1+ Kg7 22.Ne6+ Kh7 23.Rf7# 1-0**

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**W. Steinitz**

**Reyne**

Haarlem (simul) 1896

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.f4 Nc6? 5.Nf3 exf4 6.c3 Ba5 7.d4 g5 8.h4 f6? 9.Nxg5 Qe7 10.Qh5+ Kf8 11.O-O Bb6 12.Bxf4 Nxd4 13.cxd4 Bxd4+ 14.Kh1 Bxa1 15.Bxc7 Kg7 16.Nd2 Nh6 17.Rxa1 d5 18.Bxd5 Bg4 19.Ne6+ Bxe6 20.Bf4 Nf7 21.Rf1 Bxd5 22.exd5 Ne5? 23.Bh6+ Kg8 24.Ne4 Ng6 25.Nxf6+ Kf7 26.Nxh7+ 1-0**

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**W. Steinitz**

**H. de Nie**

Haarlem (simul) 1896

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.f4 d6 5.c3 Bc5 6.Nf3 Be6 7.Bxe6 fxe6 8.Qb3 Qc8 9.fxe5 Nc6 10.d4 Bb6 11.exd6 cxd6 12.O-O Nf6 13.Nbd2 O-O 14.Ba3 Rd8 15.Kh1 Kh8 16.Ng5 Qd7 17.Qxe6 Qxe6 18.Nxe6 Rd7 19.Rae1 Re7 20.Ng5 Ba5 21.Nb1 b5 22.d5 Ne5 23.Ne6 Rc8 24.Nd4 a6 25.Nf5 Rf7 26.Re3 Nfg4 27.Re2 1/2-1/2**

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**W. Steinitz**

**Aleksandrov**

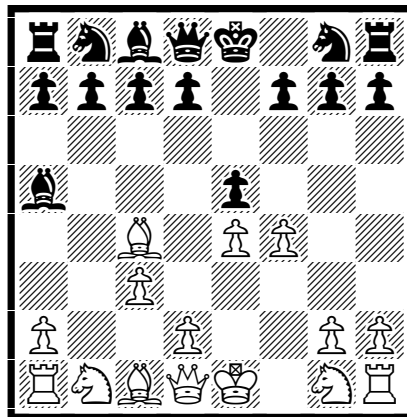
Moscow (simul) 1896

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.f4 d6 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.O-O Bg4?? 7.Bxf7+! Kd7 8.Bd5 Bc5+ 9.Kh1 Nf6 10.Bxc6+ bxc6 11.fxe5 Bxf3 12.Qxf3 dxe5 13.Qf5+ Kd6 14.d4 Bxd4 15.c3 c5 16.cxd4 cxd4 17.Nc3 Re8 18.Ba3+ c5 19.Nb5+ Kc6 20.Rab1 Qe7 21.Nxd4+ Kc7 22.Nb5+ Kd8 23.Bxc5 1-0**

**(B) The improved idea**

**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.c3 Ba5 5.f4**



The examples presented below are very instructive for the tactical possibilities in this variation for both sides.

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**Serafino Dubois**

**Nicola di Leuchtenberg**

Rome 1873

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.c3 Ba5**

I believe that someday someone will try 4...Be7.

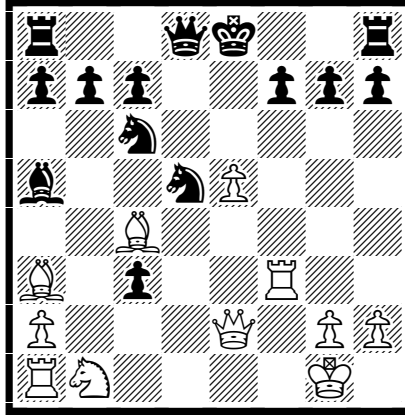
**5.f4 Nf6**

If 5...d5 6.exd5 e4 7.Ba3 White stands better, or 5...d6 6.Qb3 (6.Nf3 Nf6!) Qd7 7.Nf3 Nc6 unclear.

**6.Qe2 d6 7.Nf3 Bg4 8.O-O Nc6 9.d4! exd4**

Maybe 9...O-O!?

**10.e5 Bxf3 11.Rxf3 dxe5 12.fxe5 Nd5 13.Ba3! dxc3**



**14.Rxf7!! Kxf7 15.Qf3+ Ke6**

No better is 15...Ke8 16.Bxd5 Qd7 17.e6 etc.

**16.Nxc3 Bxc3 17.Rf1!**

A fine intermediate move that decides the game.

**17.. Nd4 18.Qf7+ Kxe5 19.Qxg7+ Ke4 20.Qg4+ Ke5 21.Bd3 Nf6 22.Rf5+! Nxf5  
23.Qxf5+ Kd4 24.Bc5# 1-0**

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**Matsov**  
**Stoilov**  
Bulgaria 1975

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.c3 Ba5 5.f4 Qe7?! 6.Nf3 exf4 7.d4!? Qxe4+**

If 6...d5 8.Bxd5, threatening 8.Qa4+

**8.Kf2 Nf6 9.Ng5!**

Stronger than 9.Bxf7+ Kf8 or 9.Re1 Ng4+ 10.Kg1 Ne3.

**9...Qf5 10.Re1+ Kf8 11.Qe2! Nc6 12.Nxf7 d5**

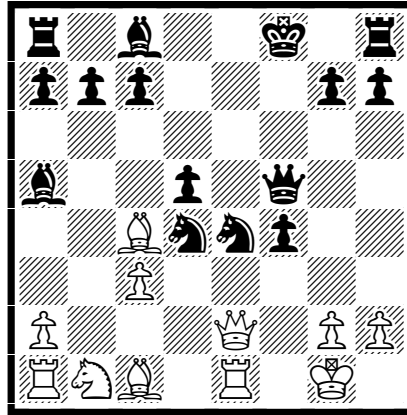
Or 12...Rg8 13.Ba3+ d6 14.Nxd6! and wins.

**13.Nxh8 Ne4+**

If 13...dxc4 14.Ba3+ Kg8 (15...Bb4 16.cxb4 intending b5+) 15.Qe8+ and wins.

**14.Kg1 Nxd4!?**

What a picture! Who attacks whom?



**15.Ba3+!**

But not 15.cxd4 Bxe1 16.Qxe1 dxc4 17.Ba3+ c5 18.dxc5 Be6 with dangerous counterplay for Black.

**15...Ke8**

Or 15...Kg8 16.Qxe4!

**16.cxd4 Bxe1 17.Qxe1 f3 18.Qe3 f2+ 19.Kf1 Qh5 20.Nd2 Qxh2 21.Nxe4 Qg1+ 22.Ke2 Bg4+ 23.Kd2 Qxa1 24.Nf6+ 1-0**

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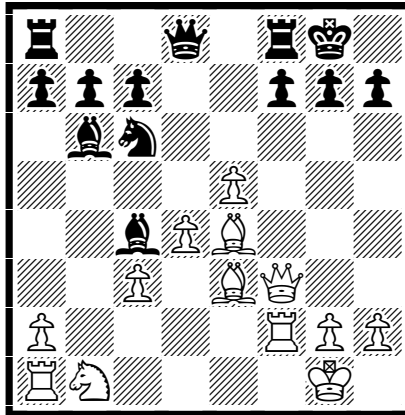
**Siegfried Heil**  
**Jakiv Podolny**  
Bad Wiessee 2003

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bxb4 4.c3 Ba5 5.f4 Nc6 6.Nf3 Nf6 7.fxe5 Nxe4 8.Qe2 Ng5 9.O-O O-O 10.d4**

Deserves attention 10.Ba3!?

**10...Nxf3+ 11.Qxf3 d5 12.Bxd5 Be6 13.Be4 Bc4 14.Rf2 Bb6 15.Be3**

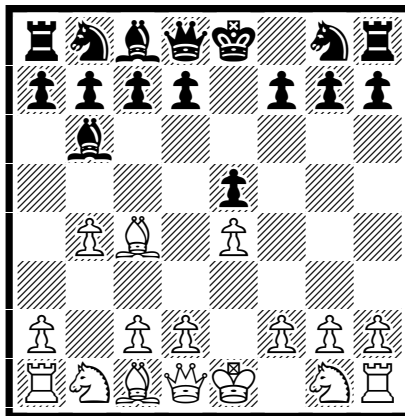


**15...Nxe5 16.Qh5**

After 16.Bxh7+ Kxh7 17.Qh5+ Kg8 18.Qxe5 Re8 19.Qf4 Qe7 Black stands better.

**16...Ng6 17.Nd2 Be6 18.Bxb7 Rb8 19.Be4 Qd7 20.Nf3 Bg4 21.Ne5 Qe6 22.Qxg4 Nxe5 23.Qxe6 fxe6 24.Bf4 Ng4 25.Rff1 e5 26.Bd5+ Kh8 27.Be6 1/2-1/2**

**(C) The declined gambit  
1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bb6**




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**P. Morphy**  
**J. Freeman**  
Birmingham (simul) 1858

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4 Bb6 4.Nf3 d6**



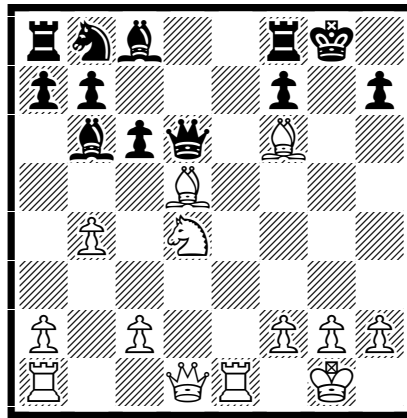
Instead 3...Nc6 transposes into “Evans Gambit Declined” (C51).

### 5.d4

Deserves attention 5.a4!? – see next game.

**5...exd4 6.Nxd4 Nf6 7.Nc3 O-O 8.O-O Nxe4 9.Nxe4 d5 10.Bg5 Qe8 11.Bxd5 c6  
12.Re1 Qd7 13.Nf6+ gxf6 14.Bxf6 Qd6**

If 14...Qxd5 15.Rg5 or 14...cxd5 15.Re3 and White wins.



**15.Ne6! Bxe6 16.Qh5 Bxf2+ 17.Kh1 Qf4 18.Rxe6 Nd7 19.Bb2 Bd4 20.g3 Nf6 21.gxf4  
Nxe4 22.Bxd4 Nxf4 23.Rg1+ Ng6 24.Rexg6+! hxg6 25.Rxg6+ Kh7 26.Rg7+ Kh6  
27.Be4 f5 28.Bd3 b6 29.Rg3 Rf7 30.Be5 Re8 31.Bf4+ Kh7 32.Rg5 Re1+ 33.Kg2 Rg7  
34.Bxf5+ Kh8 35.h4 Rxg5+ 36.Bxg5 Re8 37.Kf3 1-0**

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**R. Spielmann**

**O. Duras**

Breslau 1912

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**1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.b4!? Bb6 4.a4 a5?!**

Usual and better is 4...a6.

**5.b5 Nf6 6.d3 d5?!**

Better is 6...d6!?

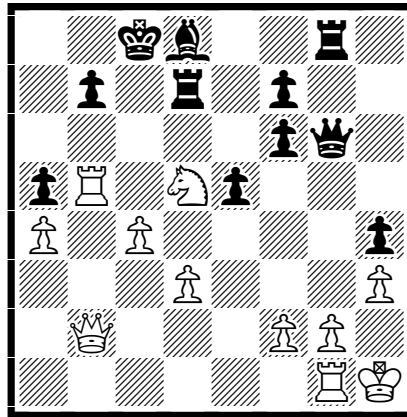
**7.exd5 Nxd5 8.Ba3 Qf6 9.Qf3! Bg4 10.Qg3 Be6 11.Bxd5 Bxd5 12.Nc3 Be6 13.Nge2  
Nd7 14.O-O Qg6?!**

According to Hoffer, Black should try 14...O-O-O!?

**15.Qf3 O-O-O 16.Nd5 Bxd5 17.Qxd5 Nf6 18.Qc4 Rd5?**

Maybe 18...Qg4!?

**19.Be7 Re8 20.Bxf6 Rc5 21.Qb3 gxf6 22.c4 h5 23.Kh1 h4 24.h3 c6 25.bxc6 Rxc6  
26.Rab1 Re7 27.Nc3 Rd7 28.Nd5 Bd8 29.Rfe1 Re6 30.Qc3 Re8 31.Rb5 Rg8 32.Rg1  
Kb8 33.Qb2! Kc8**



**34.f3! Qxd3 35.Rb1 e4**

If 35...Qg6, then not 36.Rxb7 Qxb1+, but 36.Ne3! and Black is helpless.

**36.Rb3! 1-0**