

# Mini-Lessons From Short Games Of 21st Century

By IM Nikolay Minev

New Exciting Short Stories Among the Elite

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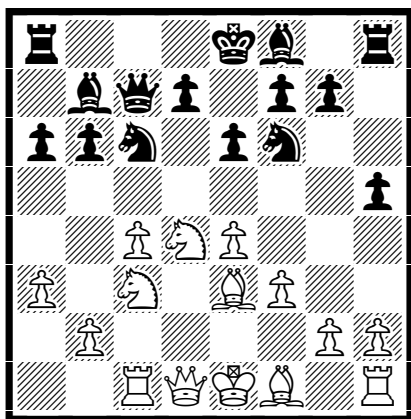
**B41 B. Gelfand – R. Ponomariov**  
Khanty-Mansiysk (World Cup) 2009

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**1.d4 e6 2.c4 c5 3.Nf3 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Nc3 Qc7 6.e4 Nf6**

This is a controversial variation, with opinions divided as to who is better! According to some grandmasters, sooner or later Black will promote d5 and have a good game, while many others consider that White has a positional advantage due to more space.

**7.a3! b6 8.Be3 Bb7 9.f3 Nc6 10.Rc1 h5?**



**11.Nd5! exd5 12.cxd5 Nxd5 13.exd5 Qe5 14.Kf2 Ne7**

If 14...Qxd5 then 15.Bc4, followed by 16.Re1 with a decisive attack.

**15.Qd2 Nxd5 16.Bg5 Ne7**

This looks very dangerous. Perhaps 16...Be7 17.Re1 Qd6 (18.Nf5?! Qc5+) offers better resistance.

**17.Bc4 f6**

After this, White wins by force. However, Black is already lost.

### 18.Bf4

Surprisingly now White wins the Queen.

**18...Qa5 19.b4 Qa4 20.Bb3 Qxa3 21.Ra1 1-0**

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### B42 H. Nakamura – V. Epishin

Gibraltar (Catalan Bay) 2007

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**1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 5.Bd3 Bc5 6.Nb3 Be7**

A relatively new idea, instead of 6...Ba7.

**7.Be3 d5 8.exd5 Qxd5**

8...exd5!?

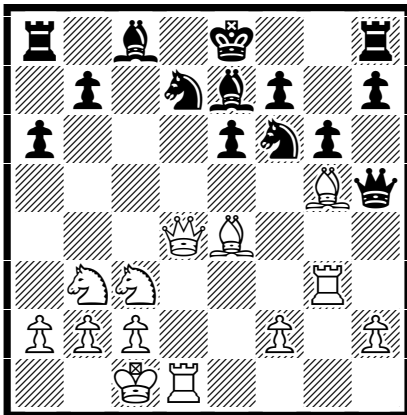
**9.Nc3!**

Modern chess – initiative first and foremost! For a pawn White gains several tempi and of course, attacking chances.

**9...Qxg2 10.Be4 Qh3 11.Qd4 Nf6 12.O-O-O Nbd7 13.Rhg1 g6?**

Maybe Black should try 13...e5, because after the text the situation of his Queen becomes critical.

**14.Rg3 Qh5 15.Bg5!**



There is no defense against the threat 16.Bf3 Qxh2 17.Rh1 and the Queen is trapped.

**15...h6 16.Bf3 Qxh2 17.Be3**

Stronger than 17.Rh1.

**17...e5 18.Qa4 e4 19.Nxe4 Nxe4 20.Bxe4 Qh4 21.Nc5 b5 22.Qd4 Bf6 23.Qd5 Nxc5**

Or 23...Ra7 24.Rh1.

**24.Bxc5 1-0**

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**C18 E. Sutovsky – S. Dyachkov**

Moscow 2007

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**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 c5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 Qc7 7.Qg4 f6**

The theory considers this to be a weak continuation, recommending instead 7...f5 or 7...Ne7.

**8.Bb5+ Kf8**

This novelty was most likely prepared in advance, but it looks to me more like a misguided adventure. Natural and better is 8...Nc6.

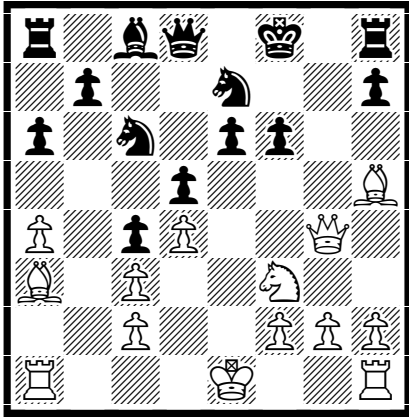
**9.Nf3 c4**

This is the idea behind the novelty. At first glance White's Bishop at b5 looks lost, but this is far from the truth.

**10.a4 a6 11.Ba3+ Ne7 12.Be8! Qd8**

After 12...Kxe8 13.Qxg7 Rg8 14.Qxh7 Rf8 15.Qh5+ Kd8 16.exf6 White wins.

**13.Bh5 Nbc6 14.exf6 gxf6**



**15.Ng5! Qa5**

If 15...fxg5 16.Qf3+ Kg7 17.Qf7+ Kh6 18.h4 and White wins.

**16.O-O f5**

Or 16...e5 17.Ne6+ and wins.

**17.Qh4 1-0**

There is no defense against the threat 18.Nxe6+.

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**C77 M. Godena – A. Naiditsch**  
Crete (European Team championship) 2007

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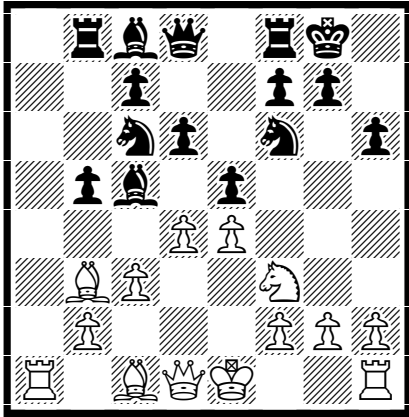
**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.d3 b5 6.Bb3 Bc5 7.a4 Rb8**

A frequent alternative here is 7...Bb7.

**8.axb5 axb5 9.Nc3!?**

An interesting rare idea. Usual is 9.c3 and after that White has some problems with the development of his Queen's Knight.

**9...d6 10.Nd5 h6 11.c3 O-O 12.d4**



**12...exd4**

In case of 12...Ba7 13.Nxf6+ Qxf6 14.Bd5 and White wins a piece.

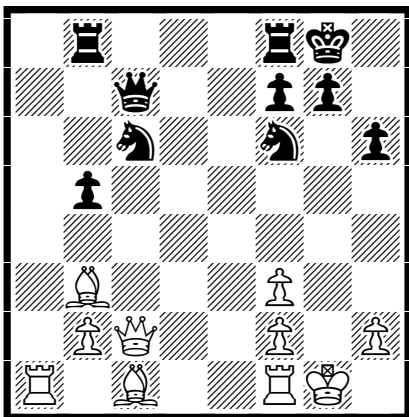
**13.cxd4 Nxd5 14.dxc5 Nf6 15.cxd6 Nxe4**

After 15...cxd6 16.O-O Re8 17.Re1 White stands better.

**16.dxc7 Qxc7 17.O-O Bg4**

The center is without pawns and all pieces are playing with full force. This means that the position is full of tactical opportunities, and a quick end to the game can be expected. And this is exactly what happens!

**18.Qc2! Bxf3 19.gxf3 Nf6**



**20.Bxh6! 1-0**

Because of 20...gxh6 21.Qg6+.

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**D43 H. Nakamura – J. Gustafsson**

Ansfelden (Austria Team championship) 2009

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**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 e6 5.Bg5 h6 6.Bh4**

A controversial gambit. Usual is 6.Bxf6 Qxf6 7.Qb3, intending e2-e4 with a slight edge.

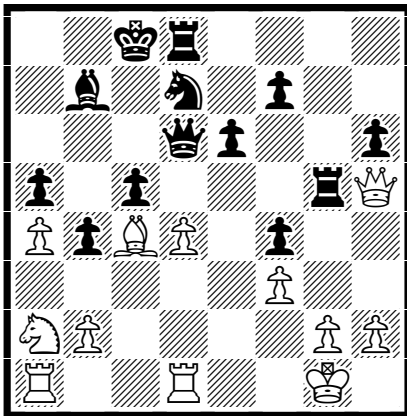
**6...dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.Bg3 b5 9.Be2 Bb7 10.e5 Nd5 11.Nd2**

The other, sharper continuation is 11.h4!?

**11...Nd7 12.O-O Qb6 13.a4 a5! 14.Nde4 b4 15.Na2 O-O-O 16.Bxc4 Nf4**

Returning the pawn, Black seizes the initiative. The immediate double threats are 17...Nxe5 and 17...c5.

**17.Nd6+ Bxd6 18.exd6 c5 19.Bxf4 gxf4 20.Qh5 Qxd6 21.Rfd1 Rhg8 22.f3 Rg5!**



**0-1**

Because after 23.Qxh6 Rdg8 or 23.Qh3 cxd4, followed by Ne5, White's position is hopeless. An important game for the theory of this gambit.

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**E71 A. Obukhov – D. Petrosian**

Alushta 2008

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**1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3 g6 3.e4 d6 4.d4 Bg7 5.Bg5 O-O 6.h3 c5 7.d5 b5!**

This is the trend of today's chess – the fight for initiative begins as early as possible!

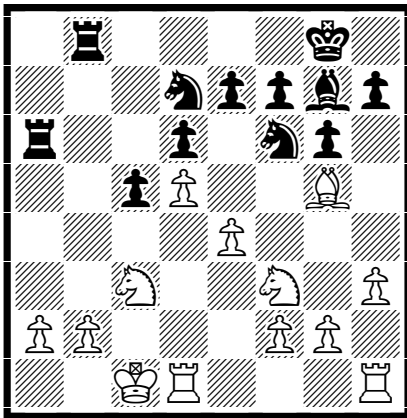
**8.cxb5 a6 9.bxa6**

9.a4!?

**9...Qb6 10.Qd2 Nbd7 11.Nf3 Bxa6 12.Bxa6 Qxa6 13.Qe2 Rfb8 14.Qxa6 Rxa6**

White is already in trouble. His heroic attempt to save the extra pawn makes the things even worse.

**15.O-O-O?**



**15...Nxe4! 16.Nxe4 Rxa2 17.Nc3 Raxb2 18.Bd2 c4 19.Rdf1 Nc5 20.Ne1 Ne4! 0-1**

Because of 21.Nxe4 Rb1+ 22.Kc2 R8b2#