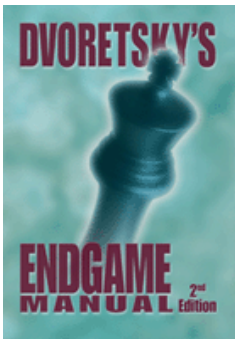




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The Instructor

Mark Dvoretsky



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Greed is Good

It's not a surprise when a grandmaster suffers defeat against high-class opposition. But when he does more than just carry a negative score against him, when he loses every game – now it's time to start thinking about whether his playing style possesses some inherent shortcomings, or whether his understanding of the game is somehow defective.

Frank Marshall was one of the strongest players of his time, scoring many victories in tournaments and matches. But all his matches against Siegbert Tarrasch, José Raúl Capablanca, and Emanuel Lasker ended badly for him: in each of them, he lost eight times, winning only one game out of the first two matches; and against Lasker, he couldn't win a single one.

Such enormous superiority, however, did not mean that the games were won automatically, "on class," without any special effort. Sometimes, the outcome of the struggle remained unclear for a long time; the winner had to display all his skill. That's what happened in the following encounter, played at the start of a match for the world championship, which had a great influence on the match's further course.

[In this article and the next, several analyses are labeled "Vainshtein"; these are from Boris Vainshtein's great study of Emanuel Lasker, titled simply, *The Thinker* – Tr.]

Lasker – Marshall

New York Match (2), 1907

1 e2-e4 e7-e6 2 d2-d4 d7-d5 3 Nb1-c3 Ng8-f6 4 Bf1-d3?!

These days, it's likely that no one remembers anyone ever playing anything other than the two main moves, 4 Bg5 and 4 e5.

In his opening play, Lasker of course considered the principle formulated in his *Manual of Chess: knights should be developed before bishops*. But great chessplayers were never slaves to any formal rules – they could break them easily when they saw a concrete basis for it. And in general, in chess, *rules are a wonderful servant, but a terrible master* – that's a pithy statement from the English player and trainer Steven James (which I found in Jonathan Rowson's excellent book, *The Seven Deadly Chess Sins*).

4...c7-c5!**5 e4xd5?!**

This careless opening play was a characteristic of the second World Champion. Savielly Tartakower wrote – *Lasker is the only grandmaster who, even in the opening phase, can allow himself the luxury of making second-rate moves*.

In his next two "white" games of this match, Lasker played 5 Nf3, and won all three – but not, of course, because of any advantages of his chosen opening. He opened this way in later games, too. For example, against Efim Bogoljubow (Zurich 1934), or Andor Lilienthal (Moscow 1935).

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5...c5xd4! 6 Bd3-b5+

White could also have played 6 Nb5 Nd5 7 Nxd4. A game Ljubojevic – Padevsky (Amsterdam 1972) continued: 7... Bb4+ 8 Bd2 Qg5 9 Bxb4 Nxb4 10 Ngf3 Nxd3+ 11 Qxd3 Qa5 +, with equality.

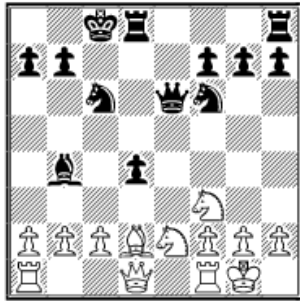
6...Bc8-d7 7 Bb5xd7+

Of course not 7 de? Bxb5 8 Nxb5 Qa5+. 7 Qxd4 Bxb5 8 Nxb5 Nxd5 9 Ne2 Nc6 10 Qa4 a6 11 Nbd4 Nb6 12 Nxc6 Nxa4 13 Nxd8 Rxd8 led to a more pleasant endgame for Black in Steinitz – Blackburne, Vienna 1873.

7...Qd8xd7 8 d5xe6

8 Qxd4 Nc6 9 Qd1 ed=/+ (Paoli – Wade, Bucharest 1954).

8...Qd7xe6+ 9 Nc3-e2 Nb8-c6 10 Ng1-f3 Bf8-b4+ 11 Bc1-d2 0-0-0 12 0-0



Even a cursory glance at the board will convince you that Black has a noticeable advantage here (Dawid Janowsky). In fact, the position is still about equal, although it probably would be easier and more pleasant to play Black.

12...Rh8-e8 13 Ne2-f4

White could maintain equality without difficulty after 13 Bxb4!? Qxe2 14 Bd2 or 14 a3, but Lasker avoids simplification. If that's what he wanted, however, it would have been more accurate to continue 13 Re1!?, maintaining the pressure on d4 for the time being.

13...Qe6-g4

13...Qf5!?=/+ at once was simpler. Marshall provokes h2-h3, to obtain a target for opening lines on the kingside by g7-g5-g4.

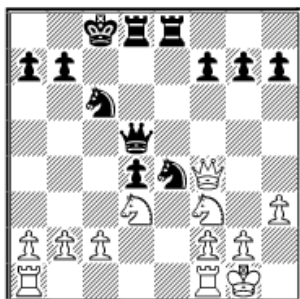
14 h2-h3 Qg4-f5 15 Nf4-d3

White's position is so bad, that it's hard to find any other move (Janowsky). No, his position certainly isn't bad; on the other hand, the text move is indeed strongest. On 15 Re1, there follows 15...Rxe1+ (the immediate 15...g5 would be much worse, as White first exchanges on e8 and b4 before retreating the knight) 16 Nxe1 Bxd2 17 Qxd2 Ne4 18 Qc1 g5 19 Nfd3 h5, when Black holds the initiative.

15...Bb4xd2 16 Qd1xd2?!

An imperceptible, but significant inaccuracy. 16 Nxd2 (preparing 17 Qf3) was correct, and if 16...Ne5, then 17 Nxe5 and 18 Nf3, with roughly equal chances.

16...Nf6-e4 17 Qd2-f4 Qf5-d5!



Of course, Black doesn't want to trade queens: right now, he's threatening a kingside attack, beginning with g7-g5 or f7-f5.

18 Qf4-g4+!

A typically Laskerian heroic solution. He bravely snatches the g7-pawn, granting his opponent an open line against his own king, and apparently making it easier for him to mount his attack.

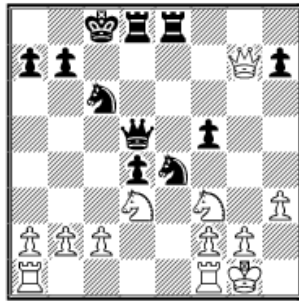
But Black is going to get his attack anyway, and Lasker could see no immediate loss after the pawn capture – which meant that it would be up to Marshall to choose among several tempting continuations, to seek out the accurate moves. **In fact, Black's task becomes more complicated than it would be if the attack were allowed to develop quietly. This not only increases the likelihood of errors, but also their cost (the consequence of his opponent having a pawn more). In addition, having a material advantage adds to the arsenal of defensive resources: possibilities now include the sacrifice of a pawn, or two, or the exchange, etc.**

White's decision is based as much on purely chess calculating as on psychological considerations. And we're certainly not speaking here of Marshall's peculiarities of character or style of play (Lasker's opponent was an aggressive player who loved to attack, which would ordinarily mean that one should prefer a quieter game against him). Here we're working with "the psychology of the opponent in the abstract," in which we confront our opponent (any opponent, including Marshall) with more difficult problems from a practical standpoint.

18...f7-f5

After the cautious 18...Qe6, it would no longer be a good idea for White to grab the pawn: 19 Qxg7? Rg8 20 Qxh7 Rh8 21 Nf4 (21 Qg7 Rdg8→) 21...Rhx7 22 Nxe6 fe, when Black would be up a piece (for two pawns). But then, the exchange of queens by 19 Qxe6+ Rxe6 would have transposed into an approximately equal endgame. Marshall was a courageous player; understandably, he preferred a more principled approach.

19 Qg4xg7

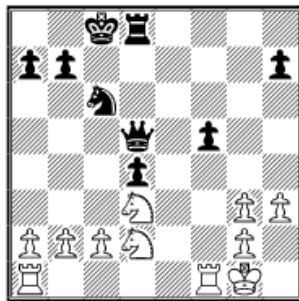


19...Re8-g8?

A natural move, but a mistake. Black had a strong and attractive shot at his disposal: **19...Nd2! 20 Nxd2 Rg8.**

Undoubtedly, Lasker had foreseen this possibility. He had seen not only the counterstroke 21 Nf4!?, but also the "fallback exit":

21 Qg3!? Rxcg3 **22 fg** (and it was this line that he had intended to play).



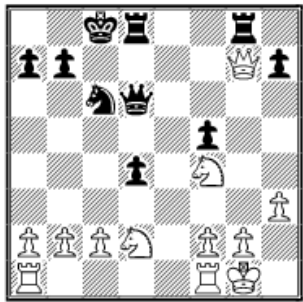
For the queen, White has rook, knight and pawn; his pieces are well placed, Black's attack is over – he could rightly have faced the future with confidence, even though, objectively speaking, Black's position would still have been preferable. Later Tarrasch, who wrote a book about the

match, demonstrated that Black was winning here. Lasker, however, disagreed with his assessment, and pointed out errors in several of his variations. It would have been interesting to have tested the grandmasters' analysis; unfortunately, I do not have the record of this discussion.

It's worth noting that, once we find a reserve possibility like 21 Qg3!? over the board, which doesn't require much calculation, we avoid the necessity of making a close study of the principal continuation (21 Nf4). This in turn means that we can come to our decision much more easily and quickly: in this case, we can establish that the pawn at g7 may be taken, because the 19...Nd2 shot is not fatal. The search for the "fallback exit" is an important practical technique, which renders decision-making quicker and easier.

Now, why didn't Marshall follow this line? Perhaps he simply failed to see 19...Nd2!, or perhaps he didn't like the position after 21 Qg3, or he hadn't been able to calculate fully the consequences of 21 Nf4 – or finally, the grandmaster might have been led astray by some other idea when he selected the continuation 19...Rg8.

By the way, White's position holds after **21 Nf4!? Qd6**, as well. However, this requires extraordinary accuracy.



On 22 Qxh7 Qxf4, White's in bad shape. 23 Nb3? Qf3! 24 g3 Rh8 would lose immediately. 23 Rad1 Qg5 24 g3 wouldn't be much better: the most energetic response is 24...Rd7! 25 h4 Qg4 26 Qh6 f4 27 Ne4 fg 28 Nxc3 Ne5+ (Dvoretzky).

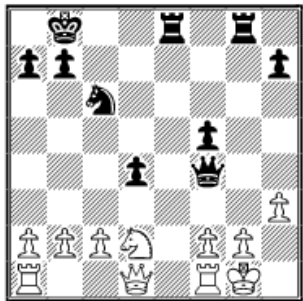
Another possibility, which was mentioned in the old annotations, is

24...Ne5 (threatening 25...Rh8 or 25...Rd7) 25 h4 Qf6 26 Qh5 Rg4+, with 27...Rdg8 to follow – of course, in this case, Black would have to consider the queen sacrifice 25 Rfe1 Rh8 26 Qxh8 Rxh8 27 Rxe5-/+.

White must play **22 Qf7! Qxf4**, and now the knight has to be defended, one way or another. The question now is whether or not to check on e6.

A) 23 Qe6+ Kb8

A1) 24 Qe2 Rde8 25 Qd1

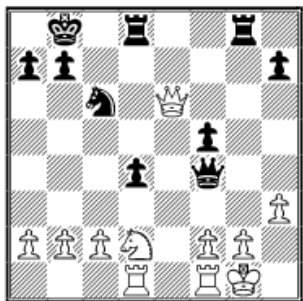


Vainshtein suggests 25...Rxc2+? 26 Kxc2 Rg8+ 27 Kh1 Qh4, but this is clearly wrong: after 28 Qf3! Ne5 29 Qxf5 or 29 Qb3, it's White who is winning.

Black maintains a very dangerous attack with 25...Ne5 26 f3 (the only defense to the threatened 26...Qxd2! and 26...Rxc2!) 26...

d3 or 26...Ng6. Another very strong line is 25...Qg5 26 g3 Re3! 27 Kh1 (27 Nf3 Qf4!-+) 27...Qh4! 28 Nf3 (there's nothing else) 28...Qxh3+ 29 Nh2 Re6-/+.

A2) 24 Rad1

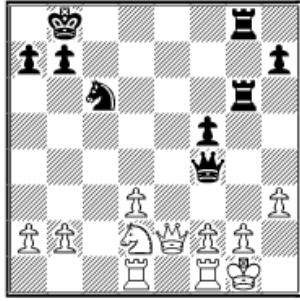


The following variation is from Vainshtein's book (and, like many other variations, it was probably found decades earlier): 24...Qg5 25 g3 Rge8 26 Qb3 Re3! The rook is taboo, or else a quick mate follows: 27 fe? Qxc3+ 28 Kh1 Qxh3+ 29 Kg1 Qg3+ 30 Kh1 Rd6. And 27 Nf3! Rxb3 28 Nxc3 Rxb2 leads to a difficult endgame for White.

The defense can be strengthened by the intermediate move 26 Nf3! (instead of 26 Qb3?), when Black has a choice between a roughly equal endgame after 26...Rxe6 27 Nxc3 Re2, or an unclear middlegame after 26...Qh5 27 Qb3 – Black no longer has 27...d3, and 27...Qxh3 is met by 28 Rfe1.

Black needs to attack in a different way: 24...Rg6! 25 Qe2 (other retreats are still worse: 25 Qb3 d3!, or 25 Qe1 Rdg8 26 g3 Qh6, threatening to catch the queen by 27...Re6) 25...d3! 26

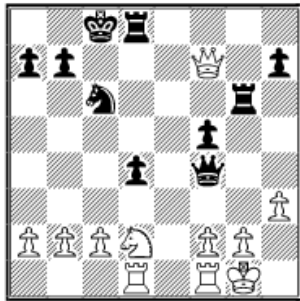
cd Rdg8.



On 27 g3, 27...Nd4 28 Kh1 (28 Qe1 Re6+) 28...Nxe2 29 gf Rh6 decides. And 27 Qf3 Qd6! 28 Nc4 Nd4!+ or 28 Nb3 Ne5+ is no better.

B) **23 Rad1!** This move must be made first, in order to give Black no time to double his rooks on the g-file.

B1) 23...Rg6

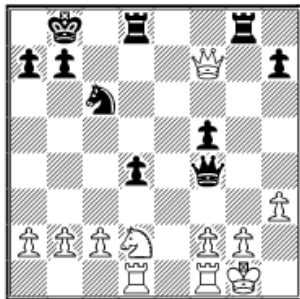


Here is where Vainshtein ends his analysis – too soon, as White now has new defensive possibilities.

The variation 24 Kh1 Qg5 25 Rg1 Ne5 26 Qb3 d3! 27 cd Ng4 28 Rgf1! Ne3 29 Rg1 Nxd1 30 Qxd1 Kb8 would leave Black with winning chances.

But after 24 g3!, he is worse after either 24...Rdg8?! 25 Kh1 or 24...Qg5?! 25 Rfe1. He would have to give perpetual check by 24...Rxxg3+ 25 fg Qxxg3 + 26 Kh1 Qxxh3+ 27 Kg1, as he can't bring either the other rook or the knight into the attack.

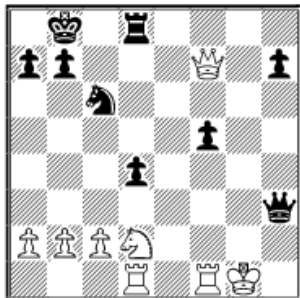
B2) **23...Kb8!?**



A well-known technique: such quiet king moves sometimes improve one's general strategic position, and they can also prove useful in some concrete variations.

For example, the defensive maneuver that works well after 23...Rg6, could here be put in doubt.

24 g3? Rxxg3+! 25 fg Qxxg3+ 26 Kh1 Qxxh3+ 27 Kg1



The only way to play for the win here must involve the move Ne5. But the immediate 27...Ne5?! allows White a successful defense by 28 Qe6! or 28 Qg7!. Both of these squares have to be brought under control, by moving the queen to h6 (to my mind, a subtle and beautiful maneuver!).

27...Qg3+ 28 Kh1 Qh4+! (on 28...Rg8? there is the only, but sufficient defense 29 Rf2! +-) 29 Kg2 Qg5+ 30 Kh1 (30 Kf2? Rg8+!) 30...Qh6+! 31 Kg2 Ne5! (clearly, with the king still on c8, this move would fail because the capture on f5 comes with check) 32 Qb3 d3!



A simple plan: a check with the queen, followed by Rg8, which practically forces White to give up his queen for the rook. Black keeps an extra pawn or two, which means he can go



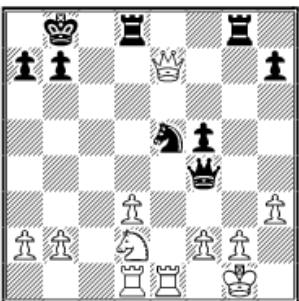
on trying to win.

On 33 Rf3 f4! is strong:
34 cd Qg6+ 35 Kf1 Rg8,
and if 36 Rf2, then 36...
Nxd3 37 Qd5 Nxf2 38 Qe5

+ Ka8 39 Kxf2 Qg3+ 40 Ke2 Qg4+! 41 Kf1 f3+-.

33 Nf3 is better: 33...Qg6+ 34 Kh1 Nxf3 35 Rxf3 Rg8 36 Qxg8
+ Qxg8 37 Rfxd3 (or 37 cd) 37...Qxa2-/+.

On the other hand, White doesn't have to allow the rook sacrifice on g3. By playing the simple **24 Rfe1!**, he maintains a secure position. For example, 23...d3 25 cd Ne5 26 Qe7 (26 Qf6 Nxd3 27 Re2 Rd6 28 Qf7 = is also possible)

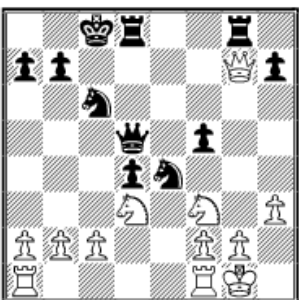


On 26...Nxd3?!, there's a pretty riposte: 27 Nf3! Qxf3 28 Qxd8+! Rxd8 29 gf Rg8+ 30 Kh2 (or 30 Kf1) 30...Nxe1 31 Rxe1, when White has the better of the rook endgame. Black holds the balance after 26...Rge8 27 Qa3 (or 27 Qf6 Rxd3 28 Re2 a6 =) 27...Rg8! 28 d4!? (28 Qe7 =) 28...Qxd4 (28...Rxd4 29 Qb3!±) 29 Nf3 Qxd1

30 Rxd1 Rxd1+ 31 Kh2 Rd3 32 Qe7 Nxf3+ 33 gf Rd2 (but not 33...Rxf3?? 34 Qe2!+-) 34 Qe3 Rc2.

To sum up: after 19...Nd2! 20 Nxd2 Rg8, Lasker was not forced to sacrifice his queen – he would only have had to find three accurate moves: 21 Nf4!? Qd6 22 Qf7! Qxf4 23 Rad1, and the position would have remained approximately equal. And that means he made the right choice, not just from the psychological standpoint, but objectively, as well.

Rejecting the tactical shot 19...Nd2! (or else failing to notice it), Marshall got into serious difficulties.



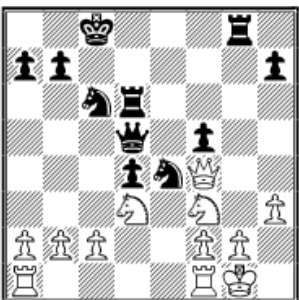
20 Qg7-h6

White would lose after 20 Qxh7? Nf6! (20...Nd2 21 Nh4, or 20...Rxc2+ 21 Kxc2 Ng5 22 Qh5 Nxf3 23 Kh1! are less convincing) 21 Qh4 Qxf3 22 Ne1 Qh5! (just not 22...Rxc2+? 23 Kh1!) 23 Qxf6 Rg6, as he loses his queen.

20...Ne4-d2

Delayed, this shot leads only to the exchange of knights; and exchanges are, in principle, good for the defender.

But even after 20...Rd6 21 Qf4, there seems to be no effective means of continuing the attack.



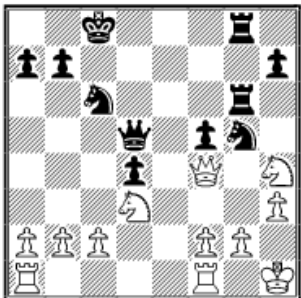
21...Nd2 22 Qxd2 Qxf3 23 g3 Rdg6 is useless: White replies with either 24 Nf4!?, or 24 Kh2!?, with no fear of 24...Rxc3? 25 fg Qxc3+ 26 Kh1+-.

On 21...Rdg6, there follows 22 Nh4 Ng5 (22...Rxc2+? 23 Nxc2 Ng5 does not work, in view of 24 Kh1! Nxc3 25 Qh2+-) 23 Kh1! (threatening 24 Qxf5+); less accurate).

23 Kh2 Ne6 24 Qf3 Rxc2+ would be



The line 23...Nxc3 24 Qxf5



+ Qxf5 25 Nxf5 Rxc2 26 Ng3 R8xc3 27 fg Rxc3 or 27...Rxc2 leaves Black the exchange down for the endgame, with only minimal saving chances.

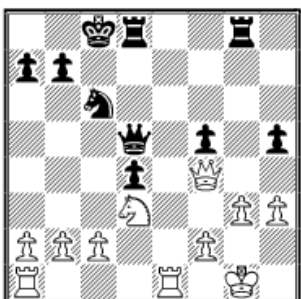
On the other hand, protecting the pawn by 23...Rf6 also fails to cure Black's troubles.

White keeps the better position with either 24 Nf3 or 24 Rae1 Nxc3 25 Qf3 Qxf3 26 Nxf3 Ng5 27 Nxg5. And the simple 24 Kh2! is stronger still; for example, 24...Ne6 25 Qf3 Qd6+ (25...Qe4 26 g3 Ng5 27 Qh5 ±) 26 Kh1 Ng5 27 Qg3! Qxc3 28 fg Ne4 29 Kh2! Nxg3 30 Rf3 ±. It's amusing that White can solve his problems by simply shuffling his king back and forth – exactly as set forth in Steinitz's theory that: **The king is a strong piece, and can take care of itself.**

21 Qh6xd2 Qd5xf3 22 g2-g3

Of course not 22 Nf4?? Rxc2+ 23 Nxg2 Rg8--.

22...h7-h5 23 Qd2-f4 Qf3-d5 24 Rf1-e1



24...Rd8-e8

24...h4 25 Qxh4 Rh8 would be useless, in view of 26 Qf6! (but not 26 Nf4? Qf7 27 Qg5 Rdg8--+) 26...Rxc3 27 Qe6+ Qxe6 28 Rxe6 Rdh8 29 Rae1+- (Vainshtein).

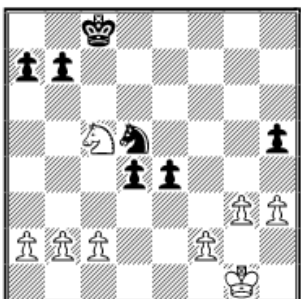
**25 Re1xe8+ Rg8xe8
26 Ra1-e1 Re8-e4**

Here's one more variation out of the old commentaries: the queenside sortie 26...Rxe1+ 27 Nxe1 Nb4 28 a3 d3 is easily refuted by 29 cd (29 Nxd3 would also be good) 29...Nxd3 30 Qd2+-.

27 Qf4-g5 Nc6-b4 28 Re1xe4

Perhaps 28 Rc1!+- would have been simpler, or 28 Rd1!? Nxd3 29 cd+-.

28...f5xe4 29 Qg5xd5 Nb4xd5 30 Nd3-c5



Now we have reached a knight endgame, with White a pawn up. Lasker confidently realizes his advantage, though not without some help from his opponent.

30...e4-e3 31 Nc5-d3 h5-h4?

A nervous move, which makes White's task significantly easier. Marshall gives up a pawn for some reason, while also granting White an outside passed pawn. Of course he should have centralized the king by 31...Kd7.

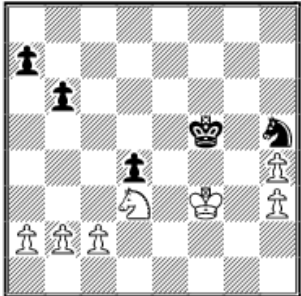
32 g3xh4 Kc8-d7 33 Kg1-f1 Kd7-e6 34 Kf1-e2 e3xf2

If 34...Kf5, then 35 fe Nxe3 36 c3+-.

**35 Ke2xf2 Ke6-f5 36 Kf2-f3 Nd5-f6 37 Nd3-c5 b7-b6
38 Nc5-d3 Nf6-h5**



39 Nd3-c1!



The knight relocates to e2, where it attacks the d4-pawn, and then to g3, in order to set his passed pawn in motion.

39...Nh5-f6 40 Nc1-e2 Kf5-e5 41 Ne2-g3 Nf6-d5 42 h4-h5 Nd5-e3

Of course 42...Nb4 43 h6 Kf6 would have been no help: White continues either with 44 h7 Kg7 45 Nf5+ Kxh7 46 Nxd4, or with 44 Nf5 Kg6 45 Ke4.

43 h5-h6 Ke5-f6 44 c2-c3! Ne3-d1

44...dc 45 Kxe3 cb 46 Ne4+, and the knight gets back in time to stop the pawn at b2.

45 c3xd4 Nd1xb2 46 Ng3-f5 Kf6-g6 47 d4-d5 Nb2-c4 48 Kf3-e4 Nc4-a5 49 d5-d6 Na5-b7 50 Ke4-d5 Nb7-d8 51 d6-d7 a7-a5 52 Nf5-e7+ 1-0

Teichmann, Janowsky, Schlechter and Tarrasch demonstrated, with variations almost 20 half-moves deep, that Marshall was winning this game. But Lasker had his own opinion on that score: there was a win indeed, but the path to victory was inaccurately drawn by the commentators... (Vainshtein)

But here's a miracle! My own analyses not only show no win – I don't even see a path to any sort of clear advantage for Black!

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