Playing the Queen’s Gambit
— A Grandmaster Guide
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— a grandmaster guide

By

Lars Schandorff

Quality Chess
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This book provides White with a hard-hitting repertoire against all Black's answers to 1.d4 d5 2.c4, the Queen's Gambit, including classics like the evergreen Queen's Gambit Declined, the highly fashionable Slav, and the rather obscure Chigorin.

The repertoire is based entirely on big mainlines, which guarantees its reliability and strength. Firstly, you cannot expect to get anything against well-respected openings like the Queen's Gambit Accepted and the Semi-Slav by trying a little sideline or just by playing safe. The main lines, on the other hand, have not become main lines by chance. They have slowly but surely evolved and proved their strength over the years, so by choosing main lines you gain reliable weapons.

Secondly, the main lines are sharp and put the maximum pressure on the opponent, both theoretically and in practice. This corresponds perfectly with the philosophy behind this work, which is that White should strive for the initiative and show that moving first matters. Developing the pieces fluidly to active squares and trying to take the centre with pawns to seize space — these are key elements in the various White set-ups presented here.

Playing White is like serving in tennis. I remember when I started to play a few years ago — tennis that is! — a good friend of mine explained that the serve should be a great offensive weapon. Actually this is quite a cruel thing to tell a beginner, because the serve is by far the most difficult stroke in tennis. But it is true of course, and the right attitude. With a good serve you either win directly or, if the opponent manages to return the ball, at least you get the chance to take the initiative and dictate the rest of the duel.

In this book I offer you an excellent first serve. And it will be an effective offensive weapon, I promise that. But every tennis player knows that it is important to have a decent second serve as well. This may also be true in chess, especially in this computer age, so having a safe alternative is a good idea. Thus, throughout the book I offer hints of where you could devote some of your further investigations.

Enough. Let's hit the engine and start rolling — I hope you enjoy the films, the songs and the moves.

Lars Schandorff
Denmark, January 2009
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Key to symbols used

± White is slightly better
† Black is slightly better
± White is better
† Black is better
→ White has a decisive advantage
← Black has a decisive advantage
equality
|| with compensation
➡️ with counterplay
unset

? a weak move
?? a blunder
! a good move
!! an excellent move
!? a move worth considering
?! a move of doubtful value
# mate
(n) n-th match game
→ with an attack
↑ with an initiative
N new move

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I have explained the principles of the repertoire – aggressive reliable mainlines that seize space – but after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 how does that translate into moves? Against some openings the choice seems obvious, in others there are several possible lines that could fit the bill. Where there was a real choice I have used my judgement to select the most principled continuation – no compromises!

Let’s take it one opening at a time in the order I have arranged the chapters:

**Chapter 1: Queen’s Gambit Declined**

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\(\triangle c3\) \(\triangle f6\) Against the *Queen’s Gambit Declined* my choice is: 4.cxd5 exd5

Critical, yes, but how does it take space? The answer is that in many of my lines White will later play f3 and e4. 5.\(\&g5\) The great Botvinnik will be our guide of how to play this line.

**Chapter 2: Queen’s Gambit Accepted**

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 The *Queen’s Gambit Accepted* is a rough opening to meet, but it is obvious my space-gaining choice must be: 3.e4 Black has various ways to challenge White’s central dominance, so we will leave the details till later.
Chapter 3: The Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.g3 g6 4.c3 dxc4 5.a4 g5 Naturally, Black also has moves such as 5...g4, 5...a6 and 5...e6, and I cover them all. But 5...g5 is the mainline of the Slav, and I answer with the mainline: 6.e5 As against the Queen's Gambit Declined, I will usually build my centre with f3 and e4.

Chapter 4: The Semi-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.g3 g6 4.c3 e6 The Semi-Slav will be met by the most aggressive reply: 5.g5 Naturally if Black takes on c4 then White seizes the centre with e2-e4.
Chapter 5: The a6-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\f3 \f6 4.\c3 a6 Against the a6-Slav achieving e2-e4 is more difficult (though it will happen in one of my key lines!). This time I claim a space advantage by playing: 5.c5 At this point Black has a choice, so we will leave further explanation to the chapter itself.

Chapter 6: The Tarrasch

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\c3 c5 The Tarrasch is the joker in our pack: White will not have a space advantage but we will have easy development and the sounder pawn structure by following the main line: 4.cxd5 exd5 5.\f3 \c6 6.g3 White's play will be more about control, whereas the rest of the repertoire is more attacking.
Chapter 7: The Chigorin

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Qc6 In the Chigorin Black chooses piece-play over supporting his centre, so it is relatively easy for us to secure a space advantage – the trick is to find an accurate move order that limits Black’s counterplay. My solution is: 3.Qc3 Qf6 4.f3 dxc4 Now 5.e4 looks like our kind of move, but it allows Black to play 5...g4, so I opt to develop first with: 5.Qg5 This is an old favourite of mine, and I will show how to use it as an effective weapon.

Chapter 8: Minor Lines

The final chapter is a hotchpotch of minor lines.

The lines covered include the Triangle Variation (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 c6), the Albin Counter-Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5) and the Von-Hennig-Schara Gambit (1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 c5 4.cxd5 cxd4). Naturally this chapter also covers many other lines, as this is a complete repertoire.

I have explained the ideas behind the repertoire and shown a few moves, so it’s time to dive into the details.
Chapter 1

Queen's Gambit Declined

*And did we tell you the name of the game, boy*
*We call it Riding the Gravy Train*
– Pink Floyd

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6

Follow the Patriarch \(\text{page 13}\)
The 3...\(e7\) move order \(\text{page 16}\)
The mainline \(\text{page 21}\)
3...\(e7\) \(\text{page 28}\)
1. \( d4 \) \( d5 \) 2. \( c4 \) \( e6 \)

The real Queen’s Gambit: Black defends \( d5 \) and stays solid. It is one of the most respected openings in all chess theory and has been used by every World Champion. Fortunately, they have also had to face it, so we will have some of the greatest guides possible.

3. \( \text{dxc3} \) \( \text{dxc6} \)

Black plays according to the old philosophy: first equalize, and then play for a win. Black’s choice of opening should not be thought of as unambitious, but rather as realistic. After all it is White who must come up with something. It is only fair: he has the serve, remember.

Translated to moves, Black will continue \( ...\text{e7} \) and \( ...0-0 \) with a safe king. Afterwards the queenside can be attended to. Here the bishop on \( c8 \) needs special care. It is the real problem child of the entire Queen’s Gambit Declined, because its natural route to freedom was blocked by \( 2...\text{e6} \). Often it can come fully alive on \( b7 \). The knight on \( b8 \) can go to \( d7 \) and help Black to increase his influence in the centre with \( ...\text{c5} \).

One mainline is 4. \( \text{dxf3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 5. \( \text{g5} \) \( 0-0 \) 6.\( \text{e3} \) and now instead of the ancient masters’ solid but rather passive 6...\( \text{bd7} \), the modern elite throws in the little move 6...\( \text{h6} \). Then 7.\( \text{xf6} \) does not do much for White other than lose the bishop pair, while after the standard 7.\( \text{h4} \) Black can either release the tension with the Lasker variation 7...\( \text{e4} \) or play the flexible Tartakower system with 7...\( \text{b6} \). Generally speaking, White’s pieces quickly get to good squares and he has a slight positional initiative, but Black has no real weaknesses, so it is difficult to gain anything tangible. In the new century White has had some success with 5.\( \text{h4} \). Even so, after 5...\( 0-0 \) 6.e3 both the old move 6...\( \text{c5} \) and the popular 6...\( \text{bd7} \) seem viable. Fortunately there is a third option. One that immediately changes the nature of the battle.

4. \( \text{cxd5} \) \( \text{exd5} \) 5.\( \text{g5} \)

The Exchange Variation. White fixes the pawn structure in a way that gives him a slight but long-lasting positional edge. Usually Black safeguards \( d5 \) with \( ...\text{c6} \) and we have the typical Carlsbad structure.

5...\( \text{c6} \)

White has tried to play on both flanks. Usually he begins with 6.\( \text{c2} \) to prevent Black’s problem bishop from going to the great square \( \text{f5} \), then White continues with \( \text{c3}, \text{d3}, \text{f3} \) and either castles long and launches an offensive on the kingside with \( h3 \) and \( g4 \), or castles short and begins positional play on the
queenside with $b1 followed by b2-b4-b5, the so-called minority attack.

It is true that Black does not have immediate counterplay. For example, the natural strike in the centre with c6-c5 will most likely lead to severe problems if White just takes it and isolates the black d-pawn. But you don’t play the Queen’s Gambit with Black to get active piece-play, do you? No, you play it to get a firm position, and that is exactly what you get after the normal moves ...$e7, ...0-0 and ...$bd7 followed by the clever regrouping ...$e8 and ...$f8. The king’s position is well defended and, although placed on the last few ranks, the black pieces are ready to counter any aggression. In the early days of this variation White often ran headfirst into a wall.

However, the legendary World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik found, almost by accident, an interesting set-up for White based on his flair for dynamic pawn play. After the moves $c2, e3, $d3 he developed the knight more flexibly with $ge2 and after 0-0 came the key move f3! preparing the break e3-e4. So White could also play in the centre. This strategy is very promising and was also a favourite of Botvinnik’s pupil, the brilliant attacking player Garry Kasparov.

As an appetizer, let’s see three famous Botvinnik wins that show White’s prospects in full bloom.

**Follow the Patriarch**

Botvinnik was well known for his deep opening preparation, but you can’t work out everything in the lab: chess is a practical game. Even in our computer age you still have to make your own decisions at the board – at least sometimes! In the following masterpiece Botvinnik was provoked by the creative Estonian, Paul Keres, and had to come up with something new. In fact, he came up with the foundation for our whole system.

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**Botvinnik – Keres**

Moscow 1952

1.d4 $f6 2.c4 e6 3.$c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.$g5 $e7 6.e3 0-0 7.$d3 $bd7 8.$c2 $e8 9.$ge2 $f8 10.0-0 c6 11.$ab1

Preparing the typical minority attack.

11...$d6?!

This threatens 12...$xh2† 13.$xh2 $g4† and ...$xg5, but the move is inaccurate.

12.$h1

Now on ...$xh2 White has the intermediate move $xf6 winning instantly.

12...$g6 13.f3!

---

We are witnessing the birth of a profound strategy. Black was ready to gain the bishop pair with ...h6, so White needed an active continuation. 13.f3 prepares play in the centre with e3-e4.

13...$e7

Black admits his failure. After 13...h6 14.$xf6 $xf6 15.e4 White already has a serious initiative.
14.\texttt{Be1}

Botvinnik adapts to the new situation. No minority attack today! The plan is to play e3-e4, but first he improves his pieces and at the same time prevents any counterplay: prophylactic play in its very essence. The break will come eventually and with extra force if it is properly backed up. Too hasty was 14.e4 dxe4 15.fxe4 \texttt{g4} when Black gets good counterplay.

14...\texttt{d7} 15.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe7} 16.\texttt{g3} \texttt{f6} 17.\texttt{f2} \texttt{e6} 18.\texttt{f5} \texttt{xh5} 19.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{b6} 20.e4!

Finally.

20...\texttt{dxe4} 21.\texttt{xh5+}

White has strong pressure. The further advance e4-e5 is in the air, gaining more space and establishing an outpost on d6 for the knight.

21...\texttt{d8} 22.e5 \texttt{d5} 23.\texttt{e4}

Simple stuff: the knight is going to d6.

23...\texttt{f8} 24.\texttt{d6} \texttt{c7} 25.\texttt{e4}

Botvinnik wants to eliminate the strong knight on d5 and at the same he vacates f5 for his own knight.

25...\texttt{e6} 26.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g6} 27.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{cxd5} 28.\texttt{c1} \texttt{d7} 29.\texttt{c3+--}

The positional dominance transforms into a strong attack. Black is beyond salvation.

29...\texttt{f8}

30.\texttt{f5! gfe8}

Or 30...\texttt{xh5} 31.\texttt{g7} 32.\texttt{xf6} and mate on g7.

31.\texttt{h6+}

Even stronger than taking the exchange. Soon Black will lose everything.

31...\texttt{f8} 32.\texttt{f6} \texttt{g7} 33.\texttt{c3} \texttt{c8} 34.\texttt{xf7} \texttt{e6} 35.\texttt{g5} \texttt{f5} 36.\texttt{h6} \texttt{g7} 37.\texttt{g4}

1-0

After this game Botvinnik refined the system, so when the opportunistic Danish fighter Bent Larsen allowed it some years later, the Patriarch was more than ready.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Game 2}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
Botvinnik – Larsen
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{Noordwijk 1965}
\end{center}

1.e4 e6 2.\texttt{c3} d5 3.d4 \texttt{f6} 4.cxd5 exd5 5.\texttt{g5} c6 6.e3 \texttt{e7} 7.\texttt{c2} 0-0 8.\texttt{d3} \texttt{bd7} 9.\texttt{ge2} h6
This looks natural but it is a small weakening of the kingside. Better is the standard ...\texttt{Qe}8 and ...\texttt{Qf}8.

10.\texttt{Qh}4 \texttt{Qe}8 11.\texttt{f}3!

This time Botvinnik hurries to take the desired set-up.

11...\texttt{c}5

Now that White has softened the pawns in the centre somewhat, especially the pawn on e3 is loose, this counter-strike gains in strength.

12.0–0 \texttt{a}6 13.\texttt{Ad}1 \texttt{b}5

Black quickly seeks counterplay on the queenside before White can make use of his superiority in the centre and on the kingside. Botvinnik had the chance to play dxc5 with a small positional advantage, but he had a fondness for closed positions.

14.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{c}4 15.\texttt{f}5 \texttt{Qb}6?!

Here Black should have taken the opportunity to disturb White a little more with 15...\texttt{b}4! with acceptable play.

16.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{f}8 17.\texttt{a}3

Now it will not be so easy for Black to play ...\texttt{b}4.

17...\texttt{b}7 18.\texttt{e}4

The typical break. Apparently, as soon as it comes White has promising play.

18...\texttt{g}6 19.\texttt{h}3 \texttt{a}5 20.\texttt{e}5

Simply taking more space.

20...\texttt{b}4 21.\texttt{ce}2 \texttt{Qh}7 22.\texttt{f}4

The offensive on the kingside will dictate the rest of the game. Mate, after all, is valued above all else in chess.

22...\texttt{c}6 23.\texttt{Aa}1 \texttt{Aa}4 24.\texttt{Wb}1 \texttt{f}5

White was ready to play \texttt{f}4–\texttt{f}5 himself.

25.\texttt{AXB}4 \texttt{AXB}4
An instructive piece sacrifice: White removes any obstacles in front of his pawns. Black is badly coordinated and it is difficult for him to organize a defence.

27...\textit{e}7 28.\textit{g}3

Even stronger was the direct 28.\textit{g}6! \textit{e}ed8 29.f5 followed by f6.

28...\textit{d}7 29.\textit{x}d7 \textit{d}xd7 30.\textit{g}6\textup{\textdagger} \textit{g}7
31.\textit{c}6+ \textit{e}xa1 32.\textit{e}xa1 \textit{f}7 33.\textit{a}7 \textit{d}xe5?!

The text loses, but 33...\textit{b}8 34.\textit{b}6 \textit{d}d7 35.\textit{a}5 \textit{e}e7 36.f5 was also pretty hopeless.

34.dxe5 \textit{e}6 35.\textit{x}xe6\textup{\textdagger} \textit{x}xe6 36.\textit{f}5 \textit{c}6 37.\textit{f}1 c3 38.bxc3 bxc3 39.\textit{c}3 \textit{c}5
40.\textit{x}c5 \textit{x}c5 41.\textit{e}a1 \textit{f}8 42.\textit{e}e2 \textit{e}6 43.g3 h5 44.\textit{d}3 d4 45.\textit{d}d6 \textit{c}7 46.\textit{e}4 \textit{h}7 47.f5 \textit{d}8 48.\textit{f}6\textup{\textdagger} \textit{h}6 49.\textit{d}5 \textit{b}7
50.e6 \textit{c}6 51.\textit{a}6 \textit{e}5\textup{\textdagger} 52.\textit{x}d4

1-0

The 3...\textit{c}7 move order

Annoyed by the normal Exchange variation, Black began to play the cunning move order 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}7. Here the exchange 4.cxd5 exd5 is not so scary because White cannot follow up with \textit{g}5 and after the normal 5.\textit{f}4 Black can play 5...c6 6.e3 \textit{f}5, solving the problem of his light-squared bishop. Still, it is not so easy as it looks at first sight. White can throw a spanner in the works as demonstrated by – of course – none other than Botvinnik.

![Diagram](image)

5.\textit{f}4 c6 6.e3 \textit{f}5 7.g4!

Immediately irritating the bishop. If 7...\textit{g}6 then 8.h4 is very annoying, because the pawn is taboo: 8...\textit{x}h4 9.\textit{b}3 b6 10.\textit{x}h4! \textit{x}h4 11.\textit{d}xd5 winning. There will be more about this in the Theory section.

7...\textit{e}6 8.h3

A quiet move that simply secures the new space White has gained on the kingside. Botvinnik kept working on the system, and in 1970 he launched the more energetic 8.h4?! against Spassky – this time it is a genuine pawn sacrifice! The complications seem to favour White and it will be our mainline.

8...\textit{f}6 9.\textit{d}3

A few games later in the match the opening was repeated and Botvinnik now varied with 9.\textit{f}3 \textit{bd}7 10.\textit{d}3 \textit{bd}6?! 11.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}4 12.\textit{f}1 \textit{d}6 13.\textit{d}2 \textit{c}8 14.\textit{g}2 \textit{d}7 15.\textit{f}3 g6 16.\textit{a}c1 \textit{b}6 17.b3, Botvinnik – Petrov, Moscow (18) 1963. Again White was slightly better, but in a long manoeuvring game Botvinnik misplayed just before the time control and suddenly found himself in a bad ending. Petrov took the point and later the match as well.

![Game 3](image)

**Botvinnik – Petrov**

**World Ch., Moscow (14) 1963**

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}7 4.cxd5 exd5

9...c5 10.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}6 11.\textit{f}1 0-0 12.\textit{g}2 cxd4
In another World Championship match, nearly 20 years later, 12...\texttt{Ec8} was played, but White was still better after 13.\texttt{Ac1 Ec8} 14.\texttt{dxc5 Bxc5} 15.\texttt{Bb5 Ff8} 16.\texttt{Bfd4\#}, Korchnoi – Karpov, Merano (13) 1981. An alternative was 12...\texttt{c4}.

13.\texttt{Bxd4 Bxd4} 14.\texttt{exd4\#}

White has a pleasant position; Black stands rather passively and can only think about defending. Although the pawn structure is symmetrical, it is not so easy for Black to play, and even the great master of defence did not manage to hold the game.

14...\texttt{Bd7?!}

Better was 14...\texttt{Ec8} or 14...\texttt{Bd6}.

15.\texttt{Ec2 Ff6} 16.\texttt{Bf3 Ec8} 17.\texttt{Be5 Bd6} 18.\texttt{Bb1 Bxe5} 19.\texttt{Bxe5 g6} 20.\texttt{Bf2 Bd7} 21.\texttt{Bc2 Bb6} 22.\texttt{Bb1 Cc4} 23.\texttt{Bxc4 Bxc4} 24.\texttt{Bd2}

It is knight against bad bishop. Black is slowly but surely outplayed.

24...\texttt{Ec8} 25.\texttt{Bc3 a6} 26.\texttt{Bb3 Ec6} 27.\texttt{Bxa4 b6} 28.\texttt{Bb2 a5} 29.\texttt{d3 f6} 30.\texttt{h4 f7} 31.\texttt{Exe8\#} 32.\texttt{Bc3 Bf7} 33.g5!

Softening the dark squares and giving the white pieces more potential entry points.

33...\texttt{Be6} 34.\texttt{Bf4 Bf7} 35.\texttt{Bd3 Be6} 36.\texttt{Bxf6 Bxf6} 37.\texttt{Bxg5 Bxg5} 38.\texttt{hxg5 a4} 39.\texttt{Bxa4 Ec4} 40.a5 Bxa5 41.Bc5 Bf5 42.Bg3 a4 43.Bf4 a3 44.Be5 Bb4 45.Bd3 Bb5 46.Bd6 Bf7 47.Bc6 Bxd3 48.Bxd3 Bb2 49.Bxa3 Be2 50.Bxd5 Bxg5 51.Bc6 h5 52.d5 Bg2 53.d6 Cc2 54.Bd7 h4 55.f4 Bf2 56.Bc8 Bxf4 57.Ba7+

1–0

After this remarkable lesson we are ready to get to work. The Botvinnik games are rather old, but their essence is as true today as it was back then. Ideas with \texttt{f3} and \texttt{e4} are very much alive and kicking in modern chess, which we will witness in three more games.

Black often tries to avoid these lines by varying early, so first the theory leading to the mainline will be examined in detail. And at the end of the chapter the popular 3...\texttt{Bb7} move order will get its own treatment, both with a theory section and three further illustrative games.

\textbf{Theory}

The Exchange Variation is especially rich with move orders and transpositions. Usually you get to the mainline one way or another, but here is an overview of the various sidelines.

1.\texttt{d4 d5} 2.\texttt{c4 e6} 3.\texttt{Bc3 Bf6}

The move order 3...\texttt{Bb7} is covered at the end of the chapter.

Naturally Black has other possible third moves, but they will be covered in later chapters:

If 3...\texttt{c6} then 4.\texttt{Bf3} when 4...\texttt{Bf6} is a Semi-Slav (Chapter 4) or 4...\texttt{dxc4} leads to the Noteboom (Chapter 8).

3...\texttt{c5} leads to the Tarrasch Defence (Chapter 6).
3...dxc4 naturally allows 4.e4 when 4...c5 5.d5 leads us into the Queen's Gambit Accepted (Chapter 2).

3...b4 is covered in Chapter 8.

4.cxd5 exd5

On 4...Qxd5 White takes the centre by 5.e4 Qxc3 6.bxc3 with advantage. The position then resembles a Semi-Tarrasch – see Chapter 8 for more details.

5.Qg5 c6

The question is if Black can do without this move.

5...Qe7 6.e3 0–0

But definitely not 6...Qf5? 7.Qxf6 Qxf6 8.Wb3 attacking b7 and d5, while 6...Qbd7 7.Qd3 Qf8 looks a bit too sophisticated. After 8.Qc2 Qe6 9.Qh4 g6 10.Qge2 Qg7 11.f3± White is better.

7.Qd3 Qbd7

Here 7...h6 8.Qh4 b6, as in the Tartakower, leads to a normal small plus for White after 9.Qge2 Qb7 10.0–0 Qbd7 (or 10...Qe4 11.Qxe7 Wxe7 12.Qc1±) 11.f3 c5 12.Qf2!?±.

8.Qge2 Qe8 9.0–0

9.Qc2

9...Qf8

Now 10.Wc2 will most probably transpose to the mainline after 10...c6 but White has an interesting possibility in:

10.b4! Qxb4

Or 10...Qg6 11.b5 with extra space on the queenside.

11.Qxf6 gxf6 12.Qxd5! Qxd5 13.Qa4

Attacking e8 and b4, so White wins the piece back.


With an advantage in the endgame because of the much better pawn structure. Black should stay passive with 16...Qe6. Instead after the active:

16...c5?! 17.Qxc5 Qc6 18.Qa1 Qc8 19.Qf5 Qxc5 20.Qxe6 Qxe6 21.Qxf7+ Qxf7 22.Qxc1 Qe8 23.Qf1 Qd2 24.a4 Qa2 25.Qc4

White was a pawn up in Bareev – Lputian, Montecatini Terme 2000.

An important trick to know arises after 5...Qbd7:

![Diagram](image)

At first sight it drops a pawn, but in fact after 6.Qxd5? Qxd5! 7.Qxd8 Qb4† 8.Qd2 Qxd2† 9.Qxd2 Qxd8 it is White who drops a piece.

Therefore the right way to react is simply 6.e3 when play will most likely transpose to the mainline. There is a unique set-up though, which is reached after 6...c6 7.Qd3 Qd6! but White should be able to gain a plus in many ways. For example, 8.Qc2 h6 9.Qh4 0–0 10.Qge2 (or 10.Qf3) 10...Qe8 and here
a simple positional solution is $11.\Box g3\pm$. If Black continues his experiment and answers $8.\Box c2$ with $8...\Diamond f8$, with the idea ...$\Box g6$ and ...$h6$, then we can play $9.\Box ge2$. (The standard move in our repertoire. In this exact position alternatives such as $9.\Box f3$ or $9.0-0-0$ also look good.) $9...\Box g6$ 10.\Box g3 (again 10.0-0-0?! is tempting) 10...0-0 11.0-0 $h6$ 12.\Box xf6 $\Box xf6$ 13.f4 $\Box e7$ 14.f5± Zaichik – Arkhipov, Moscow 1987.

6.\Box c2

Preventing ...$\Box f5$. 6.e3 usually transposes, but Black can try 6...$\Box f5$! 7.\Box f3 $\Box g6$ 8.\Box xf6 $\Box xf6$ 9.\Box xf6 $gxf6$ which, I admit, looks awful at first sight. Actually White is only marginally better and Nigel Short has almost made a living out of defending it.

6...$\Box e7$

The only way to try to take advantage of the early $\Box c2$ is:

6...$\Box a6$

With the idea to play ...$\Box b4$ and ...$\Box f5$. If White stops the manoeuvre with 7.a3 the knight jumps to $c7$ and $e6$ instead, with unclear play. It is best just to allow the knight move.

7.e3 $\Box b4$

![Chess Diagram]

Where should the queen go?

8.\Box b1!

After the natural 8.\Box d2 \Box f5 9.\Box c1 a5

10.a3 $\Box a6$ it is not so easy for White to get anything. Even Kasparov did not succeed: 11.\Box ge2 $h6$ 12.\Box f4 $\Box d7$ 13.\Box g3 $\Box e6$ 14.e4 $\Box b6$ 15.exd5 $\Box xd5$ 16.\Box xd5 $\Box xd5$ 17.\Box c4 $\Box xg2$ 18.\Box e3 0-0 0-0 19.\Box xe6† $fxe6$ 20.\Box xe6† $\Box d7$ 21.\Box e8† $\Box d8$ 22.\Box e6† $\frac{1}{2}-\frac{1}{2}$ Kasparov – Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

On 8.\Box d1 $\Box f5$ 9.\Box c1 the surprising queen sortie 9...\Box a5?!∞ gave Black lots of counterplay in Ehlvest – Short, Manila (ol) 1992.

8...g6 9.\Box d1!!

Very refined. White has voluntarily lost a tempo, but Black’s free move was ...g6 and it ties his queen to the defence of the knight, thus ruling out all ...\Box a5 possibilities.

9...$\Box f5$

9...a5 10.a3 $\Box a6$ 11.\Box d3± was pleasant for White in Dokhoian – Vaganian, Tilburg 1994.

10.\Box c1 a5 11.a3 $\Box a6$ 12.\Box b3!

But this was even worse! Actually Black played 12...\Box c8, admitting her failure, in Srebrnic – Repkova, Sibenik 2007.

7.e3 $\Box bd7$

Here Black could try to get the bishop out with 7...\Box g4 but after the energetic 8.h3! $\Box h5$ 9.f4 $h6$ 10.\Box xf6 $\Box xf6$ 11.g4 $\Box g6$ 12.f5 $\Box h4$† 13.\Box d2 $\Box h7$ 14.\Box f3 it is still trapped, now just on the other side of the board!

8.\Box d3 0-0

An important alternative is:

8...$\Box h5$ 9.\Box xe7 $\Box xe7$

Black gets rid of some of the pressure on his position, but the price is high. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops guarantees White a long-lasting positional plus because his remaining bishop is better than Black’s.

10.\Box ge2

With Kasparov as our guide, we will stick to this set-up, but there is no need to make the move automatically. The knight could also be
strong on f3 in this particular variation, as in
10.0–0–0  b6 11.h3 g6 12.f3 g7 13.g4
e6 14.b1 0–0–0 15.a4 h5 16.e5 hxg4
17.hxg4 c7 18.c5 b8 19.a4 with a big
advantage, Khairullin – Nepomniachtchi,
Plovdiv 2008.

10...g6 11.0–0–0
The most aggressive. Simply 11.0–0 is of
course also possible.

11...b6 12.g3
12.h3 followed by g4 is interesting, or just
12.b1.

12...g7 13.b1 d7
Or 13...e6 14.c1 0–0–0 15.a4 with
similar play, while 13...h5 invites a break in
the centre with 14.he1 e6 15.e4!?

14.c1 0–0–0

15.a4! xa4 16.xa4 b8 17.c3
White has the initiative. His heavy pieces
exert strong pressure on the black king's
position.

17..b6 18.a6
Also good is 18.a3 or 18.hc1.

18...e6 19.hc1 he8 20.b3 d6 21.f1
a8 22.d2?
A key moment: Kasparov leaves the h-pawn
en prise. If Black takes it he can play f3
and e5 with tempo. Andersson focused
too much on the defence and did not dare
to try his luck, although the complications
were okay for him.

22...c7 23.f1 e6?! 24.g3 e8 25.g2 c7

26.h4 d8 27.f3
White has creatively regrouped and Kasparov
finishes the game in his well-known style:
calculating like a monster.

27...c8 28.a4 c5 29.g5! xg5 30.hxg5
b7 31.dxc5 bxc5 32.f4! xf4 33.gxf4 d4
34.xc5 xc5 35.xb7+ xb7 36.xc5 dx3
37.fxe3 e8 38.e5! xe5 39.fxe5 c6 40.c2
d5 41.b4 xe5 42.a4 f6 43.gxf6 xf6 44.b5
1–0
This was Kasparov – Andersson, Reykjavik

9.ge2
This is the most flexible and is our repertoire
choice. 9.f3 is of course legal, and is also very
popular.

9..e8 10.0–0
Black gets his share of the chances if White
castles long. Instead White keeps control and
retains slightly better prospects.

10..f8 11.f3
We have reached the mainline.

Conclusion: Black can vary his moves a lot
early on, but he cannot disturb the soundness
of White’s position, and it seems that to
every black try there is an antidote. The most
important sideline is without a doubt 8...h5.
It is easy to play for Black and quite solid. Still,
the positions in which both players castle long
are somewhat in White’s favour.
The mainline

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3...c3...f6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.g5 c6 6...e2...e7 7.e3...bd7 8...d3 0–0 9...ge2...e8 10.0–0...f8 11.f3

White intends to take the centre with e3–e4. If he succeeds, this is an extremely powerful strategy as we have seen Botvinnik demonstrate. Positionally speaking there are some pros and cons of the move 11.f3. Let’s take the positive first. On f3 the pawn covers the important square e4 and thereby prevents Blacks liberating move ...d4e4 for good. On the negative side the pawn on e3 is weakened, which often gives Black the chance to strike in the centre with c6–c5, because if White takes with dxc5 then ...xc5 attacks e3.

Black has three normal moves in this position – he can develop with 11...e6, try to simplify with 11...h5, or improve his pieces with 11...g6 – and they will be covered in Game 4–6. Seldom seen lines are:

11...h6 12...h4...e6 13...ad1 White is very comfortable, while the knight on e6 looks clumsy.

11...g6 12...ad1...e6 13...h4...h5 14...xe7...xe7 15...d2...d6 16...c2...d7 17.e4!...f8 18...b3 dxe4 19.fxe4...f6 20.d5 cxd5 21...xd5

...c5† 22...h1...f7 23...c1...b5 24...d4...a6 25...c4...a4 26.b3...a3 27...c7!...xc7 28...xf7†...xf7 29...xc7 White won material in Peralta – Lettieri, Badalona 2006.

11...c5 12...xf6!...xf6 13.dxc5...x e3 14...ad1±

Now d5 is weak. 14...e6 15...e4 The point. 15...d4 16...b5 d3 17...xd3...e7 18...d6 b6 This was Mozetic – Abramovic, Novi Sad 1995, and here 19...e4!...d8 20...f4 would have been crushing.

The young World Champion Garry Kasparov crushed many of his opponents in the 80s with his trademark dynamic style. The Exchange Variation of the Queen’s Gambit was very suitable for that purpose.

Game 4

Kasparov – Andersson

Belfort 1988

1.d4...f6 2.c4...e6 3...c3...d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.g5...c6 6...e2...e7 7.e3...bd7 8...d3 0–0 9...ge2...e8 10.0–0...f8 11.f3...e6

11...h6 12...h4...e6 13...ad1 White is very comfortable, while the knight on e6 looks clumsy.

11...g6 12...ad1...e6 13...h4...h5 14...xe7...xe7 15...d2...d6 16...c2...d7 17.e4!...f8 18...b3 dxe4 19.fxe4...f6 20.d5 cxd5 21...xd5

Black develops a piece and prepares ...c8 and ...c5 with counterplay.
12.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{a}e1}}}}

It is the classic dilemma: where to put the rooks. White wants to break with e3-e4 and expects Black to take with \texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{d}xe4}}, when he will take back with fxe4 and open the f-file. Therefore the king’s rook should stay on f1, but what about the other one? Well, it would also be good on d1 protecting d4 but, true to his style, Kasparov chose the most aggressive square.

12...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}8}}} 13.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{h}1}}}

Prophylaxis – the king steps away from the a7-g1 diagonal.

13...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{6}d7}}}

A typical way to release some of the pressure. Black was not quite ready for the counter-strike...c5 because White just takes and switches to positional mode with play against the isolated queen’s pawn. 13...c5 14.dxc5 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}c5}}} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{d}d4}}+} or 15.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{b}5}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{8}d7}}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}d2}}}. 13...a6?! was a possible waiting move.

14.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{x}c7}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{x}c7}}}

After 14...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{w}xe7}}} 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{g}3}}} (or 15.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{f}4}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}d6}}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}d2}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{c}d8}}} as in Sakaev – Asian, Dubai 2000, and now White could have tried 17.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{h}5}} with annoying pressure} 15...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{b}6}}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}f2}}} c5 17.a3 a6 White found a very imaginative thrust: 18.f4?! f6 19.e4 dxe4 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{c}xe4}}} cxd4 21.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{h}5}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}f7}}} 22.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}h4}}}! Black was in big trouble and after 22...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{\textsc{c}4}}} 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{d}6}} he lost material in Bareev – Yusupov, Frankfurt 2000.

15.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{f}4}}}

15...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{c}7}}?!}

Too clumsy. More natural was:

15...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{f}6}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}d2}}} 16...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{g}6}}}

This looks solid instead of 16...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{b}5}}?} 17.e4! b4 18.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{a}4}}} dxe4 19.fxe4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}xd4}}} 20.e5! winning material. 20...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{f}5}}} 21.exf6 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{e}x}e1}} This was Bareev – Asian, New York 1998, when the simplest was 22.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{e}xe1}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{d}d8}}} 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{c}c1}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{xd}3}}} 24.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{d}d1}}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}xf6}}} 25.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{h}d}3}} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{e}d4}}} 26.b3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}d6}}} 27.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{ab}2}}}. 27...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{b}7}}}

Even after the text White can force matters:

17.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{x}e6}}} fxe6 18.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{x}g}6}} hxg6 19.e4 dxe4 20.fxe4 e5 21.d5

When Black should still be careful, for example:

21...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{c}xd5}}} 22.exd5 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}d6}}} 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}g}5}}!

16.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textsc{w}f2}}}

Prophylaxis, prophylaxis! You can almost feel the proud teacher standing behind his favourite pupil.
16...\d6 17.e4!

Finally.

17...dxe4 18.fxe4

Now Black could play 18...\g4 19.\wgl \g6, but after 20.\axe6 \exe6 21.\c4 the bishop is a monster and f7 is weak.

18...\c7

\d5!

This highlights the dynamic possibilities of such central pawns.

19...\cxd5 20.\b5 \c7

Black did not have a good way to give up material:

20...dxe4 21.\xd7 \xd7 22.\xe6 \xe6 23.\xe4 \xe4 24.\xe4±

20...d4?! 21.\xd7 \c4 22.\xd4 \xf1 23.\xf1 \xd7 24.\xa7 with a pawn more.

21.\cxd5 \d7 22.\e2!

Threatening d6, but not 22.d6? \xe1 23.\xe1 \xc3.

22...\c8 23.\xa7

White has simply won a pawn.

23...b6 24.\a6 \e4 25.d6?! \xd6 26.\fd5

\e5 27.\xb6

Kasparov has managed to get two connected passed pawns and he quickly gets the point as well.

27...\f5 28.\xd8 \xd8 29.\d3 \xe1 30.\xe1 \g6 31.a4 \d4 32.a5 \f8 33.\xg6 \xg6 34.\d1 \e6 35.\b6 \c6 36.\xd8 37.\b4 \x6 38.\b5

1–0

Conclusion: The solid Swede Ulf Andersson was blown away by Kasparov’s energetic play in the centre, but from a theoretical point of view 15...\f6 is more critical. Also worth noting is the possibility to play 12.\ad1 instead of 12.\ae1. It is nice to be able to vary.

In the next game Black tries to simplify but his knight drifts to the rim and White forces e3–e4 through.

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Game 5

Bernasek – Talla

Czech Republic 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\c3 \f6 4.\cxd5 \xd5 5.\g5 \e7 6.e3 0–0 7.\d3 \bd7 8.\ge2 \e8 9.0–0 \f8 10.\c2 c6 11.f3 \h5
Black releases some of the pressure.

12. $\text{dxe7}$ $\text{dxe7}$

After:

12... $\text{dxe7}$

I once played:

13. $\text{d2}$ $\text{f5}$

More solid is 13... $\text{de6}$ 14. $\text{ad1}$ $\text{g6}$.

14. $\text{ae1}$ $\text{e8}$

My opponent really wanted to prevent $\text{c3}$-$\text{e4}$...

15. $\text{e4}$

...but for tactical reasons it is still possible.

15... $\text{fxe4}$ 16. $\text{fxe4}$ $\text{dxe4}$ 17. $\text{dxe4}$ $\text{e6}$

Not 17... $\text{dxe4}$? 18. $\text{dxe4}$ $\text{xe4}$ 19. $\text{f4}$ $\text{f5}$ 20. $\text{e5}$.

18. $\text{d2}$ $\text{c3}$ 19. $\text{d8}$! $\text{h6}$ 20. $\text{h4}$ $\text{h7}$ 21. $\text{c5}$

White has overwhelming pressure.

21... $\text{g5}$ 22. $\text{d.hl7}$ 23. $\text{d7}$ 24. $\text{b1}$ $\text{e7}$ 25. $\text{xe7}$ 26. $\text{g6}$ 27. $\text{g7}$ 28. $\text{d1}$ $\text{h1}$ 29. $\text{d6}$ $\text{g5}$ 30. $\text{g6}$ 31. $\text{d4}$ 32. $\text{f6}$ 1–0

Schandorff – Lauridsen, Copenhagen 1997.

Instead of 13. $\text{d2}$, more straightforward is:

13. $\text{e4}$ $\text{dxe4}$ 14. $\text{fxe4}$ $\text{g4}$

Or 14... $\text{de6}$ 15. $\text{d5}$ $\text{c5}$ 16. $\text{ad1}$.

15. $\text{ad1}$

White is better with his dynamic pawn centre.

15. $\text{d7}$

15. $\text{d6}$ 16. $\text{c1}$ $\text{d8}$ 17. $\text{g5}$! $\text{f5}$ 18. $\text{e5}$ $\text{d7}$ 19. $\text{xh5}$ 20. $\text{xf5}$ $\text{e8}$ 21. $\text{g4}$ $\text{g6}$

22. $\text{xh5}$ and White was winning in Lesiege – Khassanov, St Augustin 1999.

16. $\text{e5}$ $\text{g6}$ 17. $\text{c4}$ $\text{c6}$ 18. $\text{e4}$ $\text{xe2}$ 19. $\text{xe2}$ $\text{b6}$ 20. $\text{xf7}$! $\text{xf7}$ 21. $\text{f1}$ 22. $\text{g7}$ $\text{e7}$ 23. $\text{b3}$

With an attack, Aleksandrov – Denker, Reno 1999

13. $\text{e4}$ $\text{dxe4}$

If Black keeps it closed with 13... $\text{b6}$ White grabs more space with a huge advantage:

14. $\text{e5}$

14. $\text{fe4}$

The safest move. It is tempting to play more actively, but the position cannot bear it as the knight on the rim is especially in danger. I will offer two examples:

14... $\text{e6}$

15. $\text{g4}$! 15. $\text{e5}$!

$\text{f2}$ followed by $\text{af1}$ is also good, but 15. $\text{e5}$ is more forcing.

15. $\text{ad8}$ 16. $\text{e4}$

On the way to $\text{d6}$: $\text{f7}$ is the weak spot in Black's camp and it can also be attacked by $\text{d4}$.

16. $\text{e6}$

16... $\text{e6}$ 17. $\text{d6}$ $\text{xd6}$ 18. $\text{xd6}$ $\text{xd6}$

19. $\text{d7}$ $\text{f8}$? (19... $\text{d8}$ 20. $\text{f5}$) 20. $\text{g6}$ 1–0 Aleksandrov – Jasnikowski, Warsaw 2005.

17. $\text{ad1}$

There was no reason to allow 17. $\text{d6}$ $\text{xd6}$ 18. $\text{xd6}$ $\text{xd6}$ with compensation for the exchange, but maybe 17. $\text{c4}$ was even better.

17... $\text{e8}$ 18. $\text{h3}$ $\text{xe2}$ 19. $\text{xe2}$ $\text{h4}$ 20. $\text{c4}$ $\text{d8}$
20...\textit{\underline{d}d5} 21.\textit{\underline{f}f3} \textit{\underline{g}g}4 was more stubborn, but White is clearly better anyway. If nothing else he can always play \textit{\underline{d}d6}.

21.\textit{\underline{f}f3} \textit{\underline{f}f}6 22.\textit{\underline{e}xf6} \textit{\underline{g}xf6} 23.\textit{\underline{g}g}3

The position was very promising for White in Ivanchuk – Yusupov, Brussels 1991.

14...\textit{\underline{w}g}5 15.e5!

And White even threatens \textit{\underline{c}e}4 with tempo.

15...\textit{\underline{e}g}4 16.\textit{\underline{d}e}4 \textit{\underline{w}e}3 17.\textit{\underline{h}h}1 \textit{\underline{a}d}8

17...\textit{\underline{x}e}2 18.\textit{\underline{x}e}2 \textit{\underline{f}f}4 19.\textit{\underline{a}c}4 \textit{\underline{d}d}e6

20.\textit{\underline{d}d}6+–

18.\textit{\underline{a}e}1 \textit{\underline{x}e}2?!

18...\textit{\underline{w}h}6 19.\textit{\underline{w}b}3 \textit{\underline{e}e}7 20.\textit{\underline{d}c}4 gives White pressure.

19.\textit{\underline{a}e}2 \textit{\underline{w}h}6 20.\textit{\underline{b}b}3 \textit{\underline{e}e}6 21.\textit{\underline{d}d}6

White was winning, Chiong – Delay, Geneva 1993.

15.\textit{\underline{f}f}2

Just planning to double rooks, but again the simple advance deserved attention: 15.e5 \textit{\underline{a}d}8 16.\textit{\underline{d}e}4 \textit{\underline{d}d}5 17.\textit{\underline{f}f}2 \textit{\underline{x}e}4 18.\textit{\underline{x}e}4 \textit{\underline{g}6} 19.\textit{\underline{a}f}1+ and \textit{\underline{f}7} was not easy to protect, Bruzon – Soppe, Buenos Aires 2005.

After 15.e5, instead of 15...\textit{\underline{a}d}8, Black could try:

15...\textit{\underline{f}6}?!?

This gives some counterplay.

16.\textit{\underline{a}e}1 \textit{\underline{a}d}8 17.\textit{\underline{g}e}4! \textit{\underline{x}e}5 18.\textit{\underline{d}xe}5 \textit{\underline{d}d}5

19.\textit{\underline{\underline{c}c}3}

19.\textit{\underline{\underline{d}d}6}? looks like a good try. Black does not quite get enough for an exchange: 19...\textit{\underline{w}xe}5 (19...\textit{\underline{w}g}5 20.\textit{\underline{d}d}4 \textit{\underline{x}e}5 21.\textit{\underline{f}f}7! \textit{\underline{x}xf}7 22.\textit{\underline{f}f}3) 20.\textit{\underline{a}x}e8 \textit{\underline{w}e}3† 21.\textit{\underline{h}h}1 \textit{\underline{x}e}8

22.\textit{\underline{a}c}4

19...\textit{\underline{\underline{w}xe}5}! 20.\textit{\underline{d}f}6† \textit{\underline{w}xf}6 21.\textit{\underline{a}xf}6 \textit{\underline{e}e}1† 22.\textit{\underline{f}f}1 \textit{\underline{e}f}1† 23.\textit{\underline{x}xf}1 \textit{\underline{f}f}6

Black had good compensation for the queen in Krush – Johannessen, Bermuda 2002.

15.\textit{\underline{\underline{f}f}6} 16.\textit{\underline{h}h}3 \textit{\underline{g}g}6

16.\textit{\underline{a}d}8 17.\textit{\underline{a}f}1 \textit{\underline{g}6} transposes.

17.\textit{\underline{a}f}1 \textit{\underline{a}d}8 18.a3

Preparing to take more space with \textit{\underline{b}4}.

18...\textit{\underline{c}5}?

One week later the same two players met again and now Black had an improvement ready:

18...\textit{\underline{f}8} 19.\textit{b}4

19.\textit{\underline{a}a}4?! \textit{\underline{b}6}?

19...\textit{\underline{b}6}!

19...\textit{\underline{a}6} 20.\textit{\underline{a}a}4± \textit{\underline{\underline{d}d}7} 21.e5 \textit{\underline{w}h}4 22.\textit{\underline{f}f}4 was good for White in Bareev – Ahlender, Naestved 1988, but 19...\textit{\underline{a}5}! was possible.

20.\textit{\underline{a}a}4

20.\textit{\underline{d}d}1± is a good way to regroup, keeping some advantage. If Black plays actively with 20...\textit{\underline{a}a}5 then simply 21.\textit{b}5.

20...\textit{\underline{d}d}7 21.\textit{\underline{g}g}3 \textit{\underline{e}e}6!

This was a little annoying for White in Bernasek – Tall, Czech Republic 2007, because he did not want to take the repetition with 22.\textit{\underline{d}e}2.

19.e5 \textit{\underline{\underline{d}d}5} 20.\textit{\underline{a}xd}5 \textit{\underline{\underline{x}d}5}

Black would rather play 20...\textit{\underline{\underline{x}d}5} when 21.\textit{\underline{d}f}4 \textit{\underline{x}f}4 22.\textit{\underline{x}x}h7† \textit{\underline{h}8} 23.\textit{\underline{x}f}4 \textit{cxd}4 was considered satisfactory for him since the game Vaiiser – Bricard, France 1998. However it did not take mankind's new helper more than a second to come up with 21.\textit{\underline{c}c}3! \textit{\underline{e}6} 22.\textit{d}5!
\[\text{\textbackslash xd}5 \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash xd}5 \text{\textbackslash \textbackslash xd}5 \text{\textbackslash c}4\text{ when the threats are overwhelming. If f7 falls, everything falls. Black could give an exchange with 22...\text{\textbackslash xd}5 23.\text{\textbackslash xd}5 \text{\textbackslash xd}5 \text{ but it is not good enough. White plays 24.\text{\textbackslash d}1 with a big advantage.}\]

21.\text{c}4

Here Black should give up the exchange and play 21...cxd4, but I can only repeat myself: it is not good enough. After 22.\text{\textbackslash xd}5 \text{\textbackslash xd}5 23.\text{\textbackslash xd}4 \text{\textbackslash xe}5, as in Luciano – Brunello, Riga del Garda 2004, 24.\text{\textbackslash a}4! \text{\textbackslash d}8 25.\text{\textbackslash e}2 would have been strong.

21...\text{\textbackslash d}d8?

22.\text{\textbackslash xf}7! \text{\textbackslash xf}7 23.\text{\textbackslash xf}7 \text{\textbackslash xf}7 24.\text{\textbackslash xf}7+ \text{\textbackslash xf}7 25.\text{\textbackslash xc}5

It is over.

25...b6 26.\text{\textbackslash c}4+ \text{\textbackslash f}8 27.e6

1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} The plan with the early e3-e4 gives a strong initiative. It is interesting to follow up with a quick e4-e5 as well, gaining more space and securing more squares for the white pieces.

In our next game the Danish grandmaster Curt Hansen first improves his f8-knight before developing the queenside. Still, he quickly runs out of good moves.

\begin{game}
1.d4 \text{\textbackslash f}6 2.c4 \text{\textbackslash e}6 3.\text{\textbackslash c}3 \text{\textbackslash d}5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.\text{\textbackslash g}5 \text{\textbackslash c}6 6.\text{\textbackslash w}c2 \text{\textbackslash e}7 7.e3 \text{\textbackslash bd}7 8.\text{\textbackslash d}3 0–0 9.\text{\textbackslash ge}2 \text{\textbackslash e}8 10.0–0 \text{\textbackslash f}8 11.\text{\textbackslash f}3 \text{\textbackslash g}6

Black improves the position of the knight. It covers the squares f4 and h4, so the bishop on g5 won’t get back again, but why should it?

12.\text{\textbackslash x}d1

You should sit on your hands and keep saying “Prophylaxis” to yourself. 12.e4 is premature as Black answers 12...dxe4 13.fxe4 \text{\textbackslash e}6 14.\text{\textbackslash x}d1 \text{\textbackslash g}4! with counterplay.

12...\text{\textbackslash e}6

Black has the chance to get the bishop pair with the interesting: 12...h6? 13.\text{\textbackslash xf}6 \text{\textbackslash xf}6

The problem is White gives up his second bishop as well and gets a passed pawn in the centre:
Chapter 1 - Queen's Gambit Declined

14.\textbf{xg6}! fxg6 15.e4 g5 16.e5 \textbf{xe7} 17.f4

With a firm initiative.

17...\textbf{gxf4} 18.\textbf{xf4} \textbf{xf8}

18...\textbf{g5} 19.\textbf{g6}

19.\textbf{g6} \textbf{xf1}† 20.\textbf{xf1} \textbf{e6} 21.\textbf{e2}

The knights are indeed very good!

21...\textbf{d7} 22.h4 \textbf{e8} 23.\textbf{g3} \textbf{f7}?! 24.\textbf{xe7}†

\textbf{xe7} 25.\textbf{f5} \textbf{e6} 26.\textbf{d6}±

Kasparov – Barua, Internet 2000.

If instead:

12...\textbf{h5}

Black succeeds in exchanging the dark-squared bishops, but White gets the break e3-e4 in a little too easily.

13.\textbf{xe7} \textbf{xe7}

13...\textbf{xe7} 14.e4 \textbf{hxf4} 15.e5 \textbf{xd3} 16.\textbf{xd3} \textbf{e8} 17.f4 f5 18.\textbf{c1} \textbf{e7} 19.b4± White was better on both flanks and even had knight against bad bishop, Schandorff – Bank Friis, Bellinge 1991.

14.e4 \textbf{g5} 15.f4!

15.\textbf{d2} with a slightly better endgame is also possible.

15...\textbf{hxg4} 16.\textbf{xf4} \textbf{xf4} 17.\textbf{d2} \textbf{h3}†

18.\textbf{h1} \textbf{xd2} 19.\textbf{xd2} \textbf{g5} 20.\textbf{exd5} \textbf{cx}d5

21.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{e}d8 22.\textbf{c7}! \textbf{b8} 23.d5 \textbf{f}6 24.d6

\textbf{f}7 25.\textbf{c4} \textbf{f}8 26.\textbf{e}1\# 27.\textbf{xe}5


13.h3

Taking control of g4 and preparing the break e3-e4. There were sensible alternatives in 13.\textbf{h}1 and 13.\textbf{g}3.

13...\textbf{c}8

Black continues to develop his pieces. The c-file in connection with the break c6-c5 could give counterplay. Less ambitious would be the by now standard plan to exchange bishops:

13...\textbf{h}5 14.\textbf{xe7} \textbf{xe7} 15.g4?!

White responds in a non-standard way, but on closer inspection the move makes perfect sense. White takes more space on the kingside and he keeps his positional advantage. The weaknesses the move creates can hardly be exploited by Black’s passive forces.

15...\textbf{xf6} 16.\textbf{d2} c5 17.\textbf{g}3

17.dxc5 \textbf{xc5} 18.\textbf{b}5 \textbf{ed}8 19.\textbf{d4}±

17...\textbf{d}6 18.f4 \textbf{cx}d4

18...\textbf{c}4 19.\textbf{c}2 \textbf{h}4 20.\textbf{de}1

19.\textbf{ex}d4 \textbf{dx}d4 20.g5 \textbf{e}4?!

20...\textbf{xh}3 21.\textbf{xh}6 \textbf{xf}1 22.\textbf{xf}1 \textbf{xf}6

23.\textbf{b}5 \textbf{d}8

21.\textbf{xe}4 \textbf{dx}e4 22.\textbf{g}xe4±

White has won a pawn, Marzolo – Neuillet, Montlucon 1997.

13...\textbf{d}7 14.\textbf{xe}7 \textbf{xe}7 15.e4 \textbf{dx}e4 16.fxe4 \textbf{b}6 This was Studnicka – Knochel, Aschach 2003, and 17.\textbf{f}4 \textbf{xf}4 18.\textbf{xf}4 \textbf{ad}8 19.\textbf{f}2 is a little better for White.

14.a3

White hesitates, but he could and should strike at once: 14.e4! \textbf{dx}e4 15.fxe4± with a typical advantage. In the only two games to reach this position, Black tried to generate play on the queenside with ...b5 or ...\textbf{a}5, but in both cases White kept good positional control with the move \textbf{e}3.

14...\textbf{b}6?!
This is just weakening.

14...\textit{d}d7 15.\textit{\textbf{x}}xe7 \textit{\textbf{w}}xe7 was the most solid, although White probably keeps a slight edge with quiet play. The tempting 16.e4 would backfire after 16...dxe4 17.fxe4 e5! with the point 18.d5 \textit{\textbf{x}}h3! 19.gxh3 c4 winning back the piece with good play.

15.e4! dxe4 16.fxe4

White has achieved the thematic break and Black already has big problems.

16...\textit{\textbf{w}}c7

Now it was too late for 16...\textit{\textbf{d}}d7 17.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}}xe7 \textit{\textbf{w}}xe7 because 18.a6! highlights the downside of the move ...b6: 18...\textit{\textbf{c}}d8 19.d5 or 18...\textit{\textbf{c}}c7 19.b5.

17.e5

Or 17.a3 with good centralization.

17...\textit{\textbf{d}}d5 18.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}}xe7 \textit{\textbf{w}}xe7 19.\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}}xd5 cxd5?!

Better was 19...\textit{\textbf{c}}xd5 20.\textit{\textbf{c}}c3±.

20.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2 \textit{\textbf{d}}f8 21.\textit{\textbf{e}}e3±

White can slowly regroup and intensify the pressure on the kingside.

21...\textit{\textbf{h}}h4 22.\textit{\textbf{f}}f3 \textit{\textbf{c}}ce8 23.\textit{\textbf{d}}f1 f6

Black is seeking counterplay but he only ends up with a very tangible weakness.

24.exf6 \textit{\textbf{x}}xf6 25.\textit{\textbf{x}}xf6 gxf6 26.\textit{\textbf{g}}g3! \textit{\textbf{g}}g5 27.\textit{\textbf{h}}h2 \textit{\textbf{x}}g3† 28.\textit{\textbf{x}}g3 \textit{\textbf{f}}f8 29.\textit{\textbf{h}}h5 \textit{\textbf{f}}5 30.\textit{\textbf{g}}3

White takes control of the dark squares and in the end the king penetrates to e5 and decides the game.

30...\textit{\textbf{d}}e7 31.\textit{\textbf{c}}c1 \textit{\textbf{c}}c8 32.\textit{\textbf{x}}xc8† \textit{\textbf{x}}xc8 33.\textit{\textbf{f}}f4 \textit{\textbf{f}}f7

Or 33...\textit{\textbf{g}}g6† 34.\textit{\textbf{g}}g5 \textit{\textbf{f}}f7 35.\textit{\textbf{g}}g3.

34.\textit{\textbf{e}}e5 \textit{\textbf{c}}c6† 35.\textit{\textbf{x}}xd5 \textit{\textbf{b}}b7 36.\textit{\textbf{d}}f4 \textit{\textbf{f}}f6 37.\textit{\textbf{e}}e4 \textit{\textbf{g}}g5 38.g3 h5 39.d5 \textit{\textbf{a}}a5† 40.\textit{\textbf{d}}d4 h4 41.\textit{\textbf{e}}e2 hxg3 42.\textit{\textbf{d}}xg3 \textit{\textbf{f}}f4 43.\textit{\textbf{d}}e2† \textit{\textbf{f}}f3 44.\textit{\textbf{c}}c1 \textit{\textbf{c}}c8 45.b4 \textit{\textbf{b}}b7 46.\textit{\textbf{e}}e5 \textit{\textbf{f}}f4 47.\textit{\textbf{e}}e2 \textit{\textbf{x}}h3 48.\textit{\textbf{x}}xf4 \textit{\textbf{d}}d7 49.\textit{\textbf{e}}e6 1–0

**Conclusion:** This game is another excellent example of how good White’s position is when he manages to play a well-timed e3-e4.

3...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}}e7

We now turn to the interesting 3...\textit{\textbf{\textbf{x}}}e7 move order. Many things are similar, yet many things are different.
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3 Qc7 4.exd5 exd5 5.Qf4

5...e6

Since Black has been unable to solve all his problems in the mainline, the experimental 5...Qf6 6.e3 Qf5?! has become very fashionable. See game 9 for details.

6.e3

The standard move 6.Qc2 to prevent ...Qf5 should be an obvious idea by now, and it is playable of course. Usually Black answers 6.g6 followed by the bishop move anyway. Another way of getting the problem bishop into play is 6...Qg4 7.e3 Qh5 8.Qd3 Qg6. The real reason that we play 6.e3 is that in this particular instance we do not want to prevent ...Qf5. On the contrary, we hope for it!

6...Qf5

Sometimes Black plays solidly with...

6...Qd6

...although it loses a tempo and exchanges his better bishop. White should be content with the positional benefits that are handed to him on a silver plate. Having said that, White needs a little sense of reality as well, because he is only slightly better and the battle is yet to come.

7.Qge2

A flexible move that has been popular with world-class players. Instead 7.Qxd6 Qxd6 8.Qd3 is a straightforward way to play and 7.Qg3, keeping the tension and inviting Black to open the h-file for the white rook, is a good choice as well.

7...Qe7

Black also chooses the most flexible method. On 7...Qf6 Grischuk came up with a creative and aggressive set-up 8.h3?! (8.Qxd6 Qxd6 9.Qf4 is safe) 8...Qc8! (8...Qe8 9.Qxd6 10.Qg2) 9.Qxd6 11.Qg3 Qc6 12.Qc2 (12.g5 Qfd7 13.Qb3 Qc7 14.0-0-0 c5=) 12...a5 13.Qd3 Qa6 14.a3 g6= 15.Qe2 Qac8?! (15...Qe8) 16.Qd2 Qa8 17.Qc1 Qc7 18.f3 Qc8 19.Qf2= Qac8?! 20.Qxa5 Qc8 (21.Qf1 Qe6) 22.Qb4 Qd8 23.Qg2 Qg7 24.Qd2 Black did not have enough for a pawn in Grischuk – Kasimdzhanov, Tripoli (5.4) 2004.

8.Qxd6 Qxd6 9.Qg3 0-0 10.Qd3= Qd7 11.Qc2

11.Qf6 12.0-0-0!

The most dangerous line for Black.

12.Qd7 13.Qb1

White is positionally better and can slowly build up an offensive on the kingside. Black's problem is that if he advances his pawns on the queenside, he will create new weaknesses in his own camp and give White extra possibilities.

13...c5?! 14.dxc5 Qxc5 15.e4!

This blows the position open.

15...d4


16.Qce2 Qb6 17.Qxd4!

Winning a pawn because of 17...Qxd4 18.Qb5 Qe5 19.Qxd7.

17.Qg4 18.Qh3 Qae8 19.Qc2 Qc5 20.Qc2 Qg6 21.Qb3

This was Morozevich – Topalov, Nice 2008.
Black can also just develop with 6...\( \text{Qf6} \) but this move is unambitious and does not even try to gain any of the possible advantages of the 3...\( \text{Qe7} \) move order. White continues normally with 7.d3 0–0 8.c2 \( \text{Bd7} \) 9.ge2 (or 9.gf3) with a pleasant position.

7.g4

Botvinnik's concept, but 7.ge2 is also possible and less forcing.

7...\( \text{g6} \)

The safe retreat. Instead 7...\( \text{g6} \) 8.h4 is highly unpleasant for Black:

8...h5 9.g5 \( \text{d6} \) 10.ge2 \( \text{e7} \) 11.b3 is good for White.

8...\( \text{exh4}?! \) 9.b6 10.xh4! xh4 11.xd5! is decisive, as mentioned in the introduction, but let's continue the analysis a little: 11.cxd5 12.b5† (or 12.xd5 e7 13.xa8 0–0 14.xb8 xg4 15.g2 c8 16.xa7 xxb8 17.xb8 xxb8 18.c1 and we have an ending with a pawn more) 12.d7 13.xd7† fb8 (13.xd7 14.xd5†) 14.xd5 xd8 15.d6† e6 16.b7 Black is completely tied up and will soon lose material.

8...h6 9.h5 (9.gf3 d7 10.d3 is also good for White) 9.h7 10.d3 xd3 11.xd3 f6 12.f3± We can already fantasize about a white knight on f5. That actually didn't happen in the game, primarily because Black sought quick counterplay, and ended up with new problems. 12.b6 (12.d6 13.ge2) 13.ge2 a6 14.0–0–0 c5?! 15.e5 cxd4 16.xd4 c6 17.b1 c7 18.f5 d8 19.f4 0–0 20.g5 White had a strong attack in Dreeve – Miralles, France 2008.

8.h4!
\[ \text{xg6 22.fgx6 f7 23.Cf5 c7 24.ede1 d8} \\
\text{25.Ce7+ d7 26.ee8 Black was completely tied up in Yakovich – Arlandi, Saint Vincent 2000.} \\
\]

8...\text{b6} 9.b1 and 8...h6 9.b3 \text{b6} 10.f3 does not change much compared to the mainline.

9.h5

Taking yet more space.

9...\text{b6}

With normal moves Black will soon find himself in a precarious situation. He should seriously consider Karpov's imaginative:

9...\text{h6}

When after 10.xh6 gxh6 Black's shattered pawns would effectively stop White's expansion on the kingside. Instead:

10.e2 \text{b6} 11.e1

Or 11.\text{h3} g5f2.

11...\text{d6}

11...c4! was more in the spirit of the position. 12.xc4 dxc4 13.xh6 gxh6 is fine for Black. 14.h3 d6 15.f4 f6 16.f2 ee7 17.d2 0-0-0 18.b4 b4 19.c2 he8 20.he1 c5 with active play, as in Mueller – Daurelle, e-mail 2001, so 12.b3 d6∞

with a complicated and demanding position should occur. Another benefit of the knight on h6 is that Black can throw in the counter-strike f7-f5 at an appropriate moment.

12.h3 xf4 13.xf4 d7 14.g1 g5 15.hxg6

15.d3?

15...hxg6 16.d2 e7 17.b3 g5 18.d3 0-0-0 19.h1 f6 20.g1 f7 21.g3 d6 22.xd6 xsd6 23.f3

White had a good ending though it was later drawn in Kasparov – Karpov, Moscow 1985.

10.b1 g6 11.f3

White has the better chances. His far advanced pawns will always be a thorn in Black's eye. They can advance further with many direct threats, especially if Black castles kingside, and his dilemma is that he probably has to castle right into the fire because the alternatives are even worse. The king cannot stay much longer in the middle and castling queenside is not really an option with the white bishop covering c7 and b8 and the rook already behind the b-pawn: White would play b2-b4 very fast with a big attack. Statistics back up this evaluation. The position after 11.f3 has been played a dozen times and White has a huge score. See Game 8 for more details.
Conclusion: The theory after 3...\( \text{d}7 \) is rather complicated, but in general Black has had problems coming up with a proper response to White's expansion on the kingside. 9...\( \text{d}6 \) is very interesting though, and leads to highly original positions. In practical play you will probably meet 6...\( \text{d}6 \) more often, but it leads to the well-known Exchange structure play that is comfortable for White.

When you sacrifice a pawn, you should always ask yourself: what happens if my opponent takes it?

**Game 7**

**Gulko – Lputian**

Glendale 1994

1.\( c4 \) \( e6 \) 2.\( \text{d}3 \) \( d5 \) 3.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 4.\( \text{cxd}5 \) \( \text{exd}5 \) 5.\( \text{f}4 \) \( c6 \) 6.\( e3 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 7.\( g4 \) \( e6 \) 8.\( h4 \) \( \text{xh}4 \)

9.\( \text{b}3 \)!

This is very annoying for Black, who cannot answer with 9...\( \text{b}6 \) because the pawn-grabbing bishop would be en prise. This means Black has to weaken his position.

The smallest concession, but a better practical choice may be the bizarre looking:

9...\( g5?! \\
And then there are three options:

10.\( \text{xb}7 \)N 11.\( \text{hx}4 \) \( d7 \) 12.\( \text{f}3 \) \( fxe3 \) 13.\( fxe3 \) \( b8 \) 14.\( \text{xc}6 \) \( xh2 \)

10.\( \text{e}5 \) \( f6 \) 11.\( \text{h}2 \)
11.\( \text{xb}7 \)N 12.\( \text{a}8 \) \( b6 \) 13.0-0-0 \( \text{xf}2 \) 14.\( \text{d}3 \) !+ \( c4 \) 15.\( \text{a}4 \) \( \text{b}5 \) 16.\( \text{h}3 \) \( \text{exd}3 \) 17.\( \text{xf}2 \) \( d7 \) 18.\( \text{xd}2 \) \( b4 \) 19.\( \text{c}1 \) \( e1 \) 20.\( \text{d}1 \) \( g3 \) 21.\( \text{b}7 \) \( e7 \) 22.\( \text{h}3 \) \( d6 \) 23.\( \text{e}2 \)

11...\( \text{xb}4 \) 12.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{c}7 \)

Black saves himself with an unsuspected counterattack:

13.\( \text{xa}8 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 14.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{xf}2 \) 15.\( \text{f}1 \)

Not 15.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 16.\( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{e}3 \) #.

15...\( \text{h}4 \) 16.\( \text{xb}8 \) \( f7 \) 17.\( \text{d}1 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 18.\( \text{xe}2 \) \( \text{f}3 \) 19.\( \text{g}1 \) \( \text{xe}2 \) 20.\( \text{g}3 \) \( g4 \)

21.\( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{xd}4 \)

Probably a mistake in the database: 21...\( \text{e}4 \) # is more forcing and my guess as the actual move in the game.

22.\( \text{h}2 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 23.\( \text{h}8 \) \( \text{g}3 \) 24.\( \text{g}3 \) \( 1/2-1/2 \)


10.\( \text{h}2 \) \( b6 \)

10...\( b6 \) 11.\( \text{f}3 \) must be good for White and 10...\( \text{xb}4 \), trying to copy Geller's play, is a mistake due to a little difference: 11.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 12.\( \text{xa}8 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 13.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{xf}2 \) (Or 13...\( \text{xf}2 \) 14.\( \text{f}1 \) \( \text{h}4 \) 15.\( \text{xb}8 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 16.\( \text{xd}5 \) #! and here is the difference! 16.\( \text{xd}5 \) 17.\( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 18.\( \text{b}5 \) #) 14.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{c}3 \) 15.\( \text{xg}3 \) \( \text{g}3 \) 16.\( \text{xg}4 \) and White was winning in Vaisser – Diaz, Havana 1985.

11.\( \text{f}3 \)
11.\( \text{xb}6 \) \( \text{axb}6 \) 12.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 13.\( \text{hxh}4 \) \( \text{gxh}4 \) 14.\( \text{e}5 \) \( f6 \) 15.\( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 16.\( \text{hxh}4 \) \( h5 \)

11...\( \text{xb}3 \) 12.\( \text{axb}3 \) \( \text{xc}4 \) 13.\( \text{hxh}4 \) \( \text{gxh}4 \)

14.\( \text{e}5 \)
14. \textit{fxb8} \textit{AXB8} 15. \textit{fxh4} h5 16. \textit{xa7} e7
14...f6 15. \textit{fxb8} \textit{AXB8} 16. \textit{fxh4} h5 17. \textit{xa7} c7

Black has good chances to hold the ending.

10. \textit{d3} c7 11. d5

White has great compensation for the pawn. We see the effect of the little move b7-b6: now the c6-pawn is a new soft spot and Black cannot develop the knight from b8. On the kingside the open h-file is significant and also gives Black some headaches.

11...d6

Two years later Lputian tried to improve with 11...g5 12. \textit{g3} d6 13. \textit{c2} c8 14. \textit{c1} but was nevertheless caught in White's grip. After 14...\textit{bd7}?! 15. \textit{b5}! it was already more or less over: 15...\textit{c5} 16. \textit{dxc5} cxb5 17. \textit{xb5}+ \textit{f8} 18. \textit{c6} d4 19. \textit{xe7} \textit{xe7} 20. \textit{d6}+ \textit{f6} 21. \textit{b4} g7 22. \textit{c6} \textit{xd6} 23. \textit{xd6} With a strategically winning position, Yusupov – Lputian, Baden-Baden 1996.

12.g5 d6?

13.g6!

A spectacular breakthrough: on 13...fxg6 White has 14. \textit{dxc6}!

13...\textit{dxe5} 14. \textit{xe5} f6 15. \textit{xe7} 0-0 16. g3

\textbf{fxg6} 17. \textit{h2}

"Harmony", the ancient choir hummed in the background. Look at the position. White's play is fluid and coherent. He is ready to castle long, play \textit{d3} and \textit{d1} with enormous pressure. Black's forces, on the other hand, are badly coordinated.

17...\textit{d7} 18.0-0 \textit{h8} 19. \textit{d1} \textit{h8}

20.e4!

White keeps his opponent busy.

20...\textit{d5}

Or 20...\textit{xe4} 21. \textit{c4} with a decisive attack.

21. \textit{e1} \textit{d7} 22. \textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 23. \textit{d5} cxd5

24. \textit{g2}

Winning d5 and the game.

24...\textit{c8} 25. \textit{b1} e8

Or 25...\textit{c4} 26. \textit{b5}.

26. \textit{xd5}+ \textit{f8} 27. \textit{h1} \textit{f5} 28. \textit{a1} \textit{e7} 29. \textit{a3} \textit{d8} 30. \textit{d6} \textit{c2} 31. \textit{c6} \textit{f5} 32. \textit{c7}+ \textit{e7} 33. \textit{d6}+

1–0

\textbf{Conclusion}: You should not lose sleep because you have left the h-pawn en prise. Taking it is extremely dangerous for Black, but maybe
9...g5 keeps him alive.

The next game shows that White’s offensive on the kingside often leads to a direct attack.

**Game 8**

**Knaak – Geller**

Moscow 1982

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘c7 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f4 c6 6.e3 ♘f5 7.g4 ♘xe6 8.h4 ♙d7 9.h5 ♚b6 10.♗b1 ♘gf6 11.f3

11...h6

A difficult decision: the h6-pawn halts the white pawns for now, but at the same time it creates a target in Black’s camp. A year after this game Geller tried to do without it:

11...0–0 12.♗d3 c5 13.♗ge2 ♚ac8

Apparently with good counterplay.

14.♗f1

14.g5?!

14...cxd4 15.exd4 ♘d6

**ECO** suggests the regrouping 15...♗b8?!

16.♗g2 ♘c6 17.a3 ♙a5 with unclear play. To me White seems much better after 18.g5 ♙d7 19.♗c2 ♃f 20.♕e1.

16.♗d2 ♙e8 17.♗g2

White nevertheless had a pleasant position while Black lacked a plan, Beliavsky – Geller, Moscow 1983.

12.♗d3

The most natural. In the game that started it all Black found counterplay on the queenside by advancing all of his pawns, or did he in fact create weaknesses?

12...♗a5 13.♗ge2 b5 14.♗c1 ♔d8 15.♗b3

Maybe ♔c2 and ♔d3 is a better way.

15...0–0 16.♗e2

Too much manoeuvring: sometimes the Patriarch was a little too fond of keeping the position closed. 16.g5 hxg5 17.♗xg5 was more to the point and looks good for White – compare it to the main game.

16...a5 17.♗g3 a4 18.♗c1 c5

Suddenly Black is very active.

19.♗f5

19.♗xb5? ♔a5†

19...♗xf5 20.♗xf5 cxd4 21.exd4 ♔b6 22.♗e2 ♘d6 23.♗d2 ♗xf4 24.♗xf4 ♔e8† 25.♗f1 ♘b8 ½–½


13.♗ge2 ♚c8
13...cxd4 14.exd4 c8 15.dfl was Krupp - Kolesnik, Minsk 2000, but 14.xd4 seems simpler.

13...c4 14.c2 a5 15.f2 b5 16.a3 b6 17.b3 cxb3 18.xb3 a6 was played in Riazantsev - Sanikidze, Dresden 2007, and now 19.g3 seems correct, aiming at f5.

14.dfl 0-0

White is ready for an assault along the g-file. Black should foresee a scenario like this when contemplating whether to play 11...h6.

21...f6 22.c2

White sees that d5 is a little weak and regroups to exploit this.

22.e7 23.b3 c8 24.bd1 g5 25.f4

Increasing the pressure on d5.

25.bd6 26.d3 b5 27.g4 d7 28.h6!

Black's position is falling apart.

28.g6 29.cxd5 a5 30.h7† g7 31.xg6!

1-0

Black lost on time, but 31.xg6 32.e7† wins quickly for White anyway.

**Conclusion:** It is very unpleasant for Black to be so cramped on the kingside. With the pawn on h6 White has a clear target and can open the position when he feels like it.

The modern way for Black to play, with ...d6 and ...f5, leads to sharp play but, as demonstrated in the following fine correspondence game, White apparently has a way to keep control and secure a slight edge.
7...\(\text{Q}g2!)?

A flexible choice. The move White wants to play to exploit Black's early bishop move is 7...\(\text{Q}b3\) but after 7...\(\text{Q}c6!\) things are not so clear:

8.a3

This is a drastic way to prevent 8...\(\text{Q}b4\).

8...\(\text{Q}a5\) 9.\(\text{Q}a2 \) 9.\(\text{Q}a4\)† c6

9...0–0 10.\(\text{Q}f3\) c5! 11.dxc5 \(\text{Q}xc5\) 12.\(\text{Q}d1\)  

Or 12.\(\text{Q}b5\) \(\text{Q}c6\) 13.\(\text{Q}e2\) a6 14.\(\text{Q}c3\) d4 and Black has no problems whatsoever: 15.exd4 \(\text{Q}xd4\) \(\frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}\) Volkov – Khalifman, Dagomys 2008.

12.b4 \(\text{Q}b6\) 13.bxa5 \(\text{Q}xa5\) 14.\(\text{Q}e5\) \(\text{Q}c8\) 15.\(\text{Q}c1\) \(\text{Q}e4\) 16.\(\text{Q}b2\) f6 17.\(\text{Q}d4\) \(\text{Q}xc3\) 18.\(\text{Q}xc3\) \(\text{Q}c7\) and Black wins is the tactical justification.

12...\(\text{Q}c2\) 13.\(\text{Q}d2\) \(\text{Q}b3\) 14.\(\text{Q}b1\) \(\text{Q}c8\)

Black had the upper hand in Sasikiran – Ponomariov, Khanty-Mansyisk 2007.

8.\(\text{Q}xb7\) \(\text{Q}b4\)

This is risky for White.

9.\(\text{Q}c1\)

9.\(\text{Q}b5\)† is tempting but after 9...\(\text{Q}f8!\) White has some problems getting his queen back to safety. A recent example continued: 10.\(\text{Q}c1\) a6 11.\(\text{Q}e2\) \(\text{Q}e8!\) 12.a3 Accepting the inevitable fate. 12...\(\text{Q}b8\) 13.\(\text{Q}a7\) \(\text{Q}a8\) 14.\(\text{Q}b7\) \(\text{Q}b8\) 15.\(\text{Q}a7\) \(\text{Q}a8\) \(\frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}\) Moiseenko – Shomoev, Moscow 2007.

9...0–0 10.a3?!  

Or 10.\(\text{Q}xc7\) \(\text{Q}xc7\) 11.\(\text{Q}xc7\) \(\text{Q}fc8\) 12.\(\text{Q}g3\) \(\text{Q}e4\) and Black is very active. 13.a3 \(\text{Q}xc3\) 14.\(\text{Q}xc3\) \(\text{Q}a2!\) In Djurhuus – Olafsson, Reykjavik 1996, White had to surrender the c-file or sacrifice an exchange. Best is probably 10.\(\text{Q}f3\) \(\text{Q}c2\)† 11.\(\text{Q}xc2\) \(\text{Q}xc2\) 12.\(\text{Q}xc7\) \(\text{Q}c8\) 13.\(\text{Q}a6\). Now in Lopez Martinez – Gongora Reyes, Varadero 2000, Black rather naively tried to copy Yusupov's play with 13...\(\text{Q}xb7?\)  14.\(\text{Q}xb7\) \(\text{Q}ab8\) 15.\(\text{Q}xb8\) \(\text{Q}xb8\) 16.\(\text{Q}c6\) \(\text{Q}xb2\) 17.0–0 only to find himself a clear pawn down. Correct was the computer solution 13...\(\text{Q}b4!\) with adequate play.

10...\(\text{Q}c2\)† 11.\(\text{Q}xc2\) \(\text{Q}xc2\) 12.\(\text{Q}xc7\) \(\text{Q}c8\) 13.\(\text{Q}a6\) \(\text{Q}xb7\) 14.\(\text{Q}xb7\) \(\text{Q}ab8\) 15.\(\text{Q}xb8\) \(\text{Q}xb8\) 16.\(\text{Q}a6\) \(\text{Q}xb2\) 17.\(\text{Q}ge2\) \(\text{Q}b6\) 18.\(\text{Q}c8\) \(\text{Q}xa3\)

Black was clearly better with the bishop pair and strong passed a-pawn in Ehlvest – Yusupov, Linares 1991.

7...0–0 8.\(\text{Q}c1\)

Directed against a quick c7–c5 from Black.

On the natural 8.\(\text{Q}g3\) \(\text{Q}e6\) 9.\(\text{Q}d3\) Black immediately counters with 9...c5! 10.dxc5 \(\text{Q}xc5\) 11.0–0 \(\text{Q}c6\) 12.\(\text{Q}c1\) d4! trying to liquidate the whole centre. White has some initiative after both 13.\(\text{Q}b5\) \(\text{Q}b6\) and 13.\(\text{Q}ce4\)
\( \text{\#c7} \) so it is not dead equal yet and maybe some improvement can be found.

8...c6 9.\( \text{\#g3} \) \( \text{\#e6} \)

After 9...\( \text{\#g6} \) 10.h4 is strong, e.g. 10...h6 11.h5 \( \text{\#h7} \) 12.\( d3 \) \( \text{\#xd3} \) 13.\( \text{\#xd3} \) and the white knight has the great attacking square f5.

10.\( \text{\#d3} \)

10...\( \text{\#bd7} \)

In a clash with his great rival Kasparov, Karpov played:

10...\( \text{\#e8} \)

The game was a quick draw but White seemed better all the way and had several opportunities to play differently.

11.\( \text{\#b3} \)?

11.0–0 seems more natural when 11...\( \text{\#bd7} \) transposes to the main game.

11...\( \text{\#b6} \) 12.\( \text{\#c2} \)

White's claim is that the black queen is misplaced on b6.

12...\( \text{\#bd7} \) 13.0–0 g6 14.h3

Very modest. 14.a3 was interesting, and if 14...a5 then 15.h4!? with play all over the board: 15...\( \text{\#ac8} \) 16.h5 c5 17.\( \text{\#xg6} \) \( \text{\#xg6} \) 18.\( \text{\#xg6} \)! This looks crushing but Black can decline the offer: 18...\( \text{\#xd4} \) 19.\( \text{\#xd4} \) \( \text{\#xd4} \) 20.\( \text{\#ge2} \) \( \text{\#b6} \) and everything is still possible.

14...\( \text{\#f8} \) 15.\( \text{\#ge2} \) \( \text{\#ac8} \) 16.\( \text{\#d2} \)

Here 16.\( \text{\#a4} \) or 16.\( \text{\#g5} \) were good alternatives.

16...\( \text{\#h5} \) 17.\( \text{\#h2} \) \( \text{\#g7} \) 18.g4

Preventing \( \text{\#f5} \).

18...\( \text{\#d8} \) 19.f3 \( \text{\#b6} \) 20.b3 \( \text{\#a3} \) 21.\( \text{\#c2} \) ½–½


11.0–0 \( \text{\#e8} \) 12.\( \text{\#b3} \)!

12...\( \text{\#b5} \)

This looks strange at first sight, but then you realise that there is a tactical problem with the natural way to protect b7:

12...\( \text{\#b6} \) 13.\( \text{\#b5} \)! That's it: the rook on c1 takes part in the execution of the queen after 13...\( \text{\#xb5} \) 14.\( \text{\#c7} \) \( \text{\#a6} \) 15.\( \text{\#xb5} \+–

12...\( \text{\#b6} \) runs into the same: 13.\( \text{\#b5} \) \( \text{\#f8} \)

(not 13...\( \text{\#xb5} \) 14.\( \text{\#c7} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 15.\( \text{\#xb5} \) \( \text{\#c8} \) 16.\( \text{\#xb6} \) 14.\( \text{\#c7} \) \( \text{\#c8} \) 15.\( \text{\#xe6} \) \( \text{\#xe6} \) 16.\( \text{\#e2} \) and White is better.)
13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{B}}f5} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xf5}}} 14.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xf5}}} g6 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{h3}}} a5 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e2}}}

Straightforward positional play: White puts pressure on the weak c6-pawn.

16...a4 17.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{B}}d3} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{b6}}} 18.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{ac2}}} b4 19.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} 20.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{fc1}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{ac8}}} 21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b3}}} axb3 22.axb3 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f8}}} 23.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{g3}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e6}}} 24.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xf4}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xf4}}} 25.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xf4}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{b7}}}

The position has simplified, but the static elements are the same. Black is tied to the defence of the backward pawn on c6, and White can switch his attention to the kingside and try to open a new battleground there.

26.h3 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{b6}}} 27.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{cd1}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{b7}}} 28.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f3}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{a6}}} 29.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xe5}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xd8}}} 30.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{h4!}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{hxh4}}} 31.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{g4}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{e7}}} 32.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{d7}}}

White has activated his queen with tempo and now wins the pawn back on c6 when all his pieces are very active.

32...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{a3}}} 33.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xc6}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xc1}†}}

Or 33...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{cd8}}} 34.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b7}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xb3}}} 35.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{c7}}}

White controls the seventh rank, for example 35...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f8}}} 36.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f6!}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xf6}}} 37.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xf7†}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{g8}}} 38.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{xh7}}} \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f8}}} 39.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{cc7}}}.

34.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{xc1}}} 35.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{h2}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{cc8}}}

White collects a free d-pawn: the game is decided.

36.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f8}}} 37.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b5}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{e6}}} 38.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{f4}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{a8}}} 39.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{d5}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{ea6}}} 40.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e4}}}

1–0

**Conclusion:** The flexible 7.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{ge2?!}} leads to typical Queen's Gambit Exchange play, where White has some positional advantage. There are also some strong tactical possibilities – notice the strength of 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{b3}!!}}.

**Chapter Conclusion:** The Exchange Variation is a simple and strong way for White to meet the orthodox Queen's Gambit Declined. The fixed pawn structure is slightly to White's advantage and at the same time contains enough positional and tactical venom to worry Black. The plan with f3 and e4 in particular is surprisingly difficult for Black to meet, as we have seen time and again throughout the chapter. Therefore, many players choose the 3...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{e7}}} move order, but also here the exchange structure gives White good prospects.

The play is often strategically deep with few forcing lines, so it is important to know the standard plans and typical middlegame scenarios. Remembering the exact moves is secondary.
Chapter 2

Queen's Gambit Accepted

You're gonna need a bigger boat
– Chief Brody, Jaws

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. e4

The 3...b5 Variation
The 3...c5 Variation
The 3...e5 Variation
The 3...c6 Variation
The 3...f6 Variation
are more dangerous for Black. White has had some success with the interesting 10.\texttt{g5} 0-0 11.\texttt{Wd2}, and 10.\texttt{e1} is also a good try. Still, it is complicated and double-edged to put it mildly, and Black can also refrain from taking on d4 and instead play, for instance, 7...b5.

However there is an obvious solution for White: just take the centre and play:

\textbf{3.e4}

White takes all the space he can and gets two wonderful central pawns. That is something! Instead of the narrow lines with just a tiny edge, White goes for the big fish.

On the downside, the impressive centre has no backup and White has not regained the pawn yet, so more time will have to be wasted. In other words, White is a bit overstretched just now, but only for a few more moves, then everything will be in order. Black should use the momentum and strike at once at the centre, trying to force White to make a concession. Many believe that Black's most logical options are the natural pawn strikes, 3...c5 or 3...e5, but seeking more sophisticated piece-play with 3...\texttt{c6} or 3...\texttt{f6} also has many fans. Trying to keep the pawn with 3...b5 cannot be recommended, because it gives White a free hand to build a strong initiative, but of course it deserves to be examined.
The 3...b5 Variation
– Isn’t that just a pawn?

Game 10

Ponomariov – I. Sokolov

Zafr 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 b5

4.a4
Immediately confronting Black’s pawn phalanx.

4...c6
Or 4...b7 5.axb5 a xe4 6.a3 c3 b7 7.d3 f5 f6 8.xc4 e6 9.0–0 e7 10.e5 and White was better in Ribli – Pr. Nikolic, Reykjavik 1988.

5.axb5 cxb5 6.e3 a5 7.d3
This looks awkward, but he had to protect the pawn. Natural moves like 6...a6 7.d5 or 6...b6 7.d5 b7 8.f4 are clearly insufficient.

7.d3
The most natural move, but Hans Berliner in The System claims that 7.d5! is probably even stronger. One point being 7...e6 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.xb5! where the queen protects the knight via the check on h5.

7...e6 8.e2 f6 9.0–0 e7
No better is 9...b4 10.d5! xxc3 11.bxc3 exd5 12.exd5 0–0 13.e5 f5 14.xf3 a5 15.d4 with strong positional compensation for the pawn, Zarnicki – Slipak, Villa Martelli 2007. Black can hardly move as ...bd7 allows the terrible c6.

10.d5!

10...exd5
The stem game went 10...b4 11.d6! and Black either had to give up his important dark-squared bishop or withdraw further. Zaltsman choose the latter: 11.f8 12.e5 bxc3 13.exf6 and Black’s development was horrible, Yermolinsky – Zaltsman, St Martin 1993.

11.exd5
Also possible was 11.e5 e4 12.xd5 c6 13.xd8+ xxd8 14.d4 xc3 15.bxc3 with an initiative in the endgame.

11...b6 12.f4
Now 12...d6 seems solid after 13.xd6 xd6 14.d4 b6 but then 15.b3! destroys the nice pawns and after 15...b4 16.a4 xxa4
Playing the Queen’s Gambit

17...c3 18.b5† bd7 19.e1† Black is rather exposed.

12...c5

13.xc4!? An amazing sacrifice. Ponomariov calculates that his long-term threats are more important than a piece. Very bravely played indeed.

13...bxc4 14.e2† d8
14...d8 15.e5 is worse.

15.e5 f5?
Black does not have time for this. 15...g8, to get the king out of the way, was more sensible, but 16.g5 keeps a lot of play for the piece.

16.a4 b5 17.xc5 xc5 18.xc4 Threatening d6†.

18.d4 19.e5 d3 20.d2 xd5
Or 20...xc4 21.f1 xd5 22.c8† and taking on h8.

21.fd1
21.xf6 was also good.

21...xc4 22.ac1 a6

23.xf6!
Simple and effective. Black cannot take back:
23...xf6 24.c8† or 23...gxf6 24.h6†.

23...d7 24.c3
Calmly played. Black is still a piece up, but it is impossible to keep everything together.

24...b5 25.g5
Attacking g7.

25...f6
25...f6 26.d5 b8 27.b4† e8 28.e1†

26.c5† g8 27.xf6
Again this move, and again Black does not take back: 27...xf6 28.c8† or 27...gxf6 28.c3.

27.h6 28.c3
And calmly back, almost like déjà vu.

28.e8 29.d6 b7 30.f5
With strong pressure. Black will never solve the problem with his king and the opposite-coloured bishops only make things worse. Facing nothing but difficulties, Black blunders a piece.

30...e7 31.xb5
1–0
Conclusion: Yes, a pawn is a pawn, and an initiative is an initiative! The problem with 3...b5 is that it gives White too much free play in the centre.

The 3...c5 Variation

For a long time this was thought to be a good countermeasure. These days it is found to be too lightweight.

Game 11

P.H. Nielsen – Karjakin

Hastings 2002

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 c5

4.d5


4...Qf6

4...e6 is the safe option, and it is examined in the next game.

5.Qc3 b5

Very sharp and consistent.

6.Qf4!

The forcing 6.e5 b4 7.Qxf6 bxc3 8.Qxc3 is tempting but not convincing. 8...Qd7 (or even 8...Qa5!?) 9.Qa4 Qxf6 (9...Qxf6) 10.Qf4 Qb6 11.Qxc4 Qd6 and Black is okay.

6...Qa6

This looks strange: one gets the feeling that Black is asking too much, so it is no great surprise that the move is practically refuted in this game. Black had some problems because the other ways to protect b5 had drawbacks too:

a) 6...a6 7.e5 b4 8.Qxf6 bxc3 9.Qxc3

White is a tempo up compared to the variations after 6.e5. Still it is not totally clear:

a1) 9...Qa5 10.Qc1 Qxf6 11.Qxc4 is pleasant for White. 11...h5?! (11...Qd7) 12.Qf3 Qd7 13.0–0± Qb6?! 14.Qc7! Qa7 15.d6 White was already winning in Legky – Peric, Cannes 2000.

a2) 9...Qxf6 10.Qxc4 is of course good for White.

a3) 9...Qd7 10.Qa4 Qb6

10...Qxf6 11.Qxc4
10...exf6? 11.\(\text{Wc6!}\) a7 12.b1 leaves Black tied up, e.g. 12...c7 13.d6.

11.fxe7

11.xc4 xf6 12.e2 seems simple and strong.

11...xe7 12.xc4 wb2 13.e1 d6 14.e3

This was Markeluk – Juarez, Buenos Aires 1989, and now 14...0-0! offers compensation after 15.wb3 eb8 16.xb2 xxb2.

b) 6..a5 7.d2 (avoiding 7.e5 xe4)

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

With the following possibilities:

b1) 7...e5?! 8.dxe6

8.f4 bd7 9.e3 a6 is okay for Black.

8..xf6 9.e5 df7 10.wg4 is dangerous for Black.

9.e5 df7 10.f4

10..f3 db6 11.a4 b4 12.db5 da6 13.xc4?! is an interesting improvement, when 13..xc4 14.wc6+ e7 15.d6 gives White a big attack, e.g. 15..d5 16.f5+ d8 17.g5+ f6 18.exf6! xc6 19.fxg7 xg7 20.g5h8=w c4 21.xh7+ d7 22.f4+ db7 23.e3 and White should be able to convert his extra material into a full point.

10..g6 11.db3 db6 12.ee4 wa6 13.f6+ fd8

The position was unclear in Komperda – Hebrard, corr. 2000.

b2) 7..bd7?! 8.wf3

Again 8.f4 is not convincing: 8..b4 9.e5 bxc3 10.xc3 wc7 11.exf6 xf6∞

8..b4 9.e5 g4 10.e6!

This blow tips the balance in White’s favour.

10..fxe6 11.dxe6 db6 12.g5! df6 13.wf3 bxc3 14.wc6+ fd7 15.xc3 wa4 16.exd7 xd7 17.db3 wb6 18.wf7+ d8 19.0-0-0


b3) 7..b4 8.e5 bxc3

8..g4 9.e6! Again we see this resource.

9..f6 10.xc3! 11..fxe6 12.db7 (11..bxc3 12.db3 wc7 13.wa4 db6 14.f3 db7 15.0-0-0 and Black will not survive) 12..d5 db6 (12..xd5 13.db5 db5 14.wh5+ g6 15.wxd5+) 13.db4! wb8 (13..xb4 14..xf6+ exf6 15.wd7#) 14.dbx5 dbx5 15.dbx5 wbx5 16.dbx5 White was winning in Van Wely – Azmaiparashvili, Istanbul 2000.

9..xc3

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

9..wa6

After 9..c7 10.exf6 xf6 11.dbx4 wd6 (on 11..d6 12.db2+ is annoying) 12.db2 e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.db3 White had an overwhelming position and quickly won:

14..f4 15.db6! edx4 16.db7 xeg8 17.db3 wa6 18.db5 1-0 Sherbakov – Shaginjan, St Petersburg 1999.
10.exf6 exf6 11.b3
Winning back the pawn with a positional advantage.
11...\texttt{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{\texttt{12...Qe7}}}} 12.Qxc4 Qd6 13.Qe2 0-0 14.0-0 f5
15.Qd3
Shirov once played 15.Qe1 Qd7 16.Qg3 g6 17.Qxe7!? sacrificing an exchange. 17...Qxe7
18.d6 And gaining good compensation.
18...Qh4 19.Qd5 Qb8 20.Qxf5?! And now gave away a piece as well. 20...gxf5 21.Qe1 In
Shirov - Kramnik, Linares 1993, White had active play for the rook, but Black should
have been able to get out of the grip.
15...g6 16.Qd2 Qf6
16...Qd7 17.Qf4 Qe5 18.Qg3
17.Qf4 Qe5 18.Qxe5 Qxe5 19.Qe3
White was strategically winning in Lempert – Bukhman, St Petersburg 1993.

7.\texttt{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textit{\texttt{Df3!}}}}}
A strong novelty at the time.

7.e5 b4 8.exf6 bxc3 9.bxc3 Qxf6∞
This has been played with great success by
Ponomariov.
10.Qb1 Qg7 11.Qg4?! Qxd5! 12.Qe2
Not 12.Qxg7 Qe4†.
12...Qe4 13.Qxb8† Qxb8 14.Qxb8 Qb1†
15.Qd1 0-0
With good play for the piece.
16.Qc7 Qc8 17.Qxf4?! Qb7 18.Qa5 Qb5
19.Qc7 Qb2 20.Qe2 e5 21.Qxe5 fxe5
Black was winning in Khalifman – Ponomariov, Neum 2000.

Or instead of 10.Qb1, 10.Qe2 Qd7 11.Qa4
b6 12.g3 Qb5 13.Qc2 Qb6 14.Qg2 Qb7
15.Qd1 e6! and White had problems with his d-pawn in Volkov – Ponomariov, Ohrid

7...b4

8.Qxb8!
The beginning of a long forced variation.

8...bxc3 9.Qa4† Qd7 10.Qxa6 cxb2 11.Qb1
Qxb8 12.Qxc4!
12.Qe5 Qb7? 13.Qxb2 1-0 Shirov – Motylev,
Moscow 2001, was a quick knockout.
The improvement soon came: 12...Qc7!
13.Qa4† Qd7 14.Qxc4 g6 15.Qc6 Qd8
16.Qxch7† Qxc7 17.Qxb2 Qxb2 18.Qxb2
Qg7 This was good for Black in Ivanisevic – Chatalsbashev, Antalya 2002.

12.Qb6
12...Qb7 lets the b-pawn live: 13.Qa4†
Qd7 14.0-0 but White has a strong initiative.
14...Qb4 15.Qc6 Qd8 (not 15...Qxc4 16.Qxb2
Qd8 17.Qe5) 16.a6 with a firm grip: 16...h5
17.e5 Qb6 18.e6 fxe6 19.Qd1 is winning.
13.\textbf{a}3 \textbf{dxe}4 14.\textbf{xb}2 \textbf{b}7

If 14...\textbf{d}6 to keep the position closed then 15.\textbf{xb}6 \textbf{axb}6 16.\textbf{e}5 \textbf{b}7 and now White has a brilliant combination: 17.\textbf{b}5†! \textbf{xb}5
18.\textbf{a}4 \textbf{xd}5 19.\textbf{xb}5† \textbf{d}8 20.\textbf{xb}6† \textbf{c}8 21.0–0! \textbf{xe}5 22.\textbf{d}1 Winning. 22...\textbf{c}7
23.\textbf{a}6† \textbf{b}7 24.\textbf{a}4 Threatening \textbf{e}8†.

Black has a much more positional approach, but it does not seem sufficient either.

\textbf{Game 12}

\textit{Greenfeld – Gyimesi}

\textit{Tel Aviv 2001}

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dx\textbf{d}4 3.e4 c5 4.d5 e6 5.\textbf{xc}4

Another popular road leading to Rome is 5.\textbf{xc}3 exd5 6.\textbf{xd}5 \textbf{d}e7 7.\textbf{xc}4 \textbf{xd}5 8.\textbf{xd}5.

5...\textbf{xf}6

After 5...exd5 6.\textbf{xd}5 the position is already tricky for Black because 6...\textbf{d}f6? allows 7.\textbf{xf}7†.

6.\textbf{c}3 exd5 7.\textbf{xd}5 \textbf{d}e7 8.\textbf{xd}5 \textbf{e}7

This looks like a fantastic position for White with the great bishop on d5. Then you realise that Black can kick it away or exchange it with ...\textbf{d}7–b6 or ...\textbf{e}6. In fact White has to play exactly to keep a positional edge.

9.\textbf{de}2

Going to c3, so White can take back on d5 with the knight and keep a piece on this fine outpost. However, 9.\textbf{f}3 is also playable.

\textbf{Conclusion:} The ultra-sharp variation with 3...c5 and 5...b5 was effectively put out of business by the Danish theorist Peter Heine Nielsen's powerful play.
9...0-0 10.0-0 a6
Planning ...c7 next.

10...d7 11.c3 b6 12.f4
This will often transpose, but there are exceptions:
12...g5 13.f3
13.d6!? c7 14.e5 was proposed by Sakaev. After 14...xd6 15.exd6 the pawn is taboo and remains a thorn in the middle of Black's position. This line does indeed look good.
13...xf4 14.xf4 e7 15.a4 e6 16.a5 xd5 17.exd5 c8 18.fel wd7 19.c4! d6 20.xe5
White won a pawn in Winants – Afek, France 2002.

10...b6 11.e3

11.c6
11...g4 12.d2 c6 13.f3 c6 14.f4 is very pleasant for White. 14...b4 15.xe6 fxe6 Solozhenkin – Kallai, France 1996, and now 16.c3! seems strong. The queen eyes the weak c-pawn and is ready to go to the excellent square c4.
In Granda Zuniga – Gandler, Yerevan 1996, White's bishop pair and better pawn structure secured him a good ending.

11.f4 c7
The creative player Yochanan Afek has a special liking for this variation. His results however are poor.
The following is a recent disaster: 11...b6 12.d2 e6 13.c3 b4 14.a3 xd5 15.exd5 xad8? (15...d7 was forced but then 16.d6 is great for White) 16.e2 1-0 Rogers – Afek, Hoogeveen 2006. White wins a piece on the e-file.

12.c3 xd5 13.xd5 d6

14.e5!
Pushing Black further back.

14...b8
14...c7 15.e6! wins an exchange. 15.xf4 16.e7 xh2+ 17.h1 xd6 18.exf8+ xdf8 19.h5 e5 20.fel (perhaps stronger is 20.xae1 so the rook is not attacked on a1) 20...xb2 21.xh7 xh6+ 22.xh6 gxh6 23.ab1 d4 24.c7 b8 25.e8+ g7 26.b5 f5 27.xb8 xb8 28.xd4 cxd4 29.xb7 axa7 30.xa7 b1 31.ad7 d3 32.g1 f6 33.f3 c2 34.f2 With good winning chances in the endgame, although Black managed to hold in Galgas – Nemeth, Budapest 2001.

15.b3
15.\,f3\,g4 16.\,e4 kept the central control in Gofshtein – Afek, Tel Aviv 1996, but 15...f6!? could be tried.

15...\,e6 16.\,a\,d1\,b6 17.\,g3
Preparing f2-f4.

17.\,f3\,xd5 18.\,xd5\,e7 19.\,fd1\,b7 was Orr – Afek (here he is again), Gausdal 2003, when 20.\,g3 looks good for White.

17...\,c7 18.\,f4\,xd5
There is no way to avoid this exchange: the knight is too powerful on d5 and must be removed. The price is high though, as surrendering this bishop leaves Black’s light squares rather weak.

19.\,xd5\,e7 20.\,f5
Keeping all the positional trumps.
20.\,a4, eyeing d7 and a7, was tempting but after 20...\,d8 21.\,xd8+\,xd8! 22.\,xa7\,d2 23.b3\,d8 Black has compensation for the pawn.

20...\,a\,d8 21.\,f1\,d5 22.\,f5\,d8 23.\,d3\,d5 24.\,xd5

![Diagram](image)

White’s centralized queen completely dominates the position. Black lacks counterplay or even a plan, while White can slowly but surely advance his pawns on the kingside and activate his king.

24...h6
24...\,d8 25.\,xd8+\,xd8 leads to a very passive bishop ending, where White keeps good winning chances after 26.\,f4\,g6 27.\,f8\,e8 28.\,f2\,e8 29.\,c3\,d7 30.\,e4.

25.\,f4\,h7 26.g3\,g5!? This transforms his position, but does not improve it. Psychologically it is difficult to remain passive for very long.

27.\,xg6+\,xg6 28.\,g4\,g7 29.\,g2\,b5 30.\,g3\,h7 31.h4 a6 32.g5\,hxg5 33.hxg5 c4 34.a3
White has all the time in the world and maybe takes it a bit too easy: 34.e6!\,xg3 35.xg3\,g8 36.b3\,f8 37.d5 seems winning.

34...\,g7 35.\,f4\,f8 36.\,b3\,c3!? The last chance was 36...\,d8.

37.bxc3\,xa3 38.\,c6
White finally breaks through.

38...\,d8?! 39.e6
The credits can begin. The film is over.

39.\,g8 40.\,d6
1–0

Conclusion: White gets a pleasant position if Black just stays solid. The popularity of 3...e5 is over, which is easy to understand. The sharp tactical variations and the more quiet positional ones are all just better for White. As simple as that!

The 3...e5 Variation

The most popular move by far. It is direct and concrete, yet positionally founded as well.
Game 13

Sauberli – Bilsel

Correspondence 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5

The ending 6.\texttt{\textit{w}}xd4 \texttt{\textit{w}}xd4 7.\texttt{\textit{a}}xd4 \texttt{\textit{a}}f6 8.f3 could also be tried.

6.\texttt{\textit{d}}e7

There is an alternative:
6.\texttt{\textit{w}}e7?! 7.\texttt{\textit{a}}xc4 \texttt{\textit{a}}f6
7...\texttt{\textit{w}}xe4↑ 8.\texttt{\textit{f}}f1 \texttt{\textit{a}}xc3 9.bxc3 is extremely dangerous, for instance 9...\texttt{\textit{a}}e6 10.\texttt{\textit{a}}a4↑ \texttt{\textit{b}}c6 11.\texttt{\textit{g}}g5 \texttt{\textit{a}}xc4↑ 12.\texttt{\textit{a}}xc4 \texttt{\textit{d}}e7 13.\texttt{\textit{e}}e1 \texttt{\textit{g}}g6 14.h4 \texttt{\textit{f}}f8 15.\texttt{\textit{a}}xc7 \texttt{\textit{f}}6 16.\texttt{\textit{h}}h3 \texttt{\textit{w}}d3↑? 1–0. A big mistake in a hopeless position, Shirov – Huebner, Dortmund 1992.

8.0–0 0–0

And now:
9.\texttt{\textit{f}}f4

With the idea e4–e5, looks good, especially since Black still hardly can take the bait:
9...\texttt{\textit{a}}xc3 10.bxc3 \texttt{\textit{a}}xe4 11.\texttt{\textit{e}}e1±

7.\texttt{\textit{a}}xc4 \texttt{\textit{a}}bc6 8.\texttt{\textit{e}}e3 0–0

It is legal to simplify with:
8...\texttt{\textit{a}}xd4

But there is no guarantee that life will be simpler.

An easy solution for White is: 9.\texttt{\textit{w}}xd4 \texttt{\textit{w}}xd4 10.\texttt{\textit{a}}xd4 0–0 11.a3 \texttt{\textit{a}}xc3↑ 12.\texttt{\textit{a}}xc3 \texttt{\textit{e}}e6 13.\texttt{\textit{e}}e2 In Topalov – Kharlov, Tripoli 2004, the pair of bishops gave White the advantage in the ending.

More complicated but probably also stronger is:
9.\texttt{\textit{a}}xd4 0–0 10.a3
10.0–0 \texttt{\textit{a}}c6 11.\texttt{\textit{e}}e3 \texttt{\textit{w}}xd1 12.\texttt{\textit{a}}fxd1 \texttt{\textit{a}}xc3 13.bxc3 \texttt{\textit{e}}e6 was played in Van Wely – Azmaiparashvili, Ohrid 2001. Now 14.\texttt{\textit{a}}xe6 fxe6 15.\texttt{\textit{a}}d7 \texttt{\textit{a}}ac8 16.f4 \texttt{\textit{f}}f7 17.\texttt{\textit{a}}ad1 would give White an edge.

10...\texttt{\textit{a}}a5 11.0–0 \texttt{\textit{a}}b6
11...\texttt{\textit{g}}g6 12.\texttt{\textit{a}}c5 \texttt{\textit{e}}e8 13.\texttt{\textit{w}}a4± was Grunberg – Penrose, corr. 1987, and on 11...\texttt{\textit{c}}c6 12.\texttt{\textit{a}}c5 is disruptive.

12.\texttt{\textit{a}}xb6 axb6 13.f4
This is pleasant for White, who has a strong majority on the kingside, Van Wely – Romanishin, Moscow 2004.

9.\text{\texttt{Q}}db5

This knight move is the modern favourite. It attacks c7 and thus swapping queens is a threat.

In the early 1990s White had some success with:

9.a3 \text{\texttt{Q}}xc3\textsuperscript{+} 10.bxc3 \text{\texttt{Q}}a5 11.\text{\texttt{Q}}e2 \text{\texttt{Q}}g6

An interesting improvement for Black could be 11...\text{\texttt{f}}5?! 12.exf5 (12.\text{\texttt{Q}}b3 \text{\texttt{Q}}ec6) 12...\text{\texttt{Q}}xf5 (12...\text{\texttt{Q}}d5) 13.\text{\texttt{Q}}xf5 \text{\texttt{Q}}xf5 14.0–0 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd1 15.\text{\texttt{Q}}axd1 \text{\texttt{b}}6.

12.0–0 \text{\texttt{Q}}e7 13.\text{\texttt{Q}}c2

White was slightly better in Bareev – Ivanchuk, Dortmund 1992. His pair of bishops and good central control has more weight than the somewhat shattered pawn structure.

9.\text{\texttt{Q}}a5

Protecting c7.

9...\text{\texttt{Q}}d7 is too passive. 10.a3 \text{\texttt{Q}}a5 11.b4 \text{\texttt{Q}}b6 12.\text{\texttt{Q}}xb6 axb6 13.\text{\texttt{Q}}f4 \text{\texttt{Q}}a7 14.\text{\texttt{Q}}xa7 \text{\texttt{Q}}xa7 15.0–0 This is clearly better for White: 15...\text{\texttt{Q}}g6 (or 15...\text{\texttt{Q}}h8 16.\text{\texttt{Q}}b3 \text{\texttt{Q}}e8 17.\text{\texttt{Q}}ad1 with strong pressure, Vyzmanavin – Bagirov, Podolsk 1992) 16.\text{\texttt{Q}}f3 With good prospects on the kingside, Bacrot – Lautier, Val d’Isere 2002.

10.\text{\texttt{Q}}h5!

A surprising queen sortie. It is rather active on h5 and at the same time it vacates d1 for the rook.

The mainline is:

10.0–0 a6 11.\text{\texttt{Q}}d4 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd4 12.\text{\texttt{Q}}xd4 \text{\texttt{Q}}d6

But White has no advantage whatsoever, as Rublevsky in particular has often demonstrated.

13.\text{\texttt{Q}}c3

13.\text{\texttt{Q}}c1 \text{\texttt{Q}}e6 14.\text{\texttt{Q}}xe6 \text{\texttt{Q}}xe6 15.\text{\texttt{Q}}c5 \text{\texttt{Q}}fd8 16.\text{\texttt{Q}}b3 \text{\texttt{Q}}xb3 17.axb3 \text{\texttt{Q}}xc3 18.\text{\texttt{Q}}xe7 \text{\texttt{Q}}d7 19.\text{\texttt{Q}}xc3 \text{\texttt{Q}}xe7 20.\text{\texttt{Q}}d1 \text{\texttt{Q}}f8 ½–½ Volkov – Rublevsky, Saint Vincent 2005.

13...\text{\texttt{Q}}e6 14.\text{\texttt{Q}}b3

14.\text{\texttt{Q}}e2 \text{\texttt{Q}}xc3 15.bxc3 \text{\texttt{Q}}c6 16.\text{\texttt{Q}}d4 \text{\texttt{Q}}fd8 17.\text{\texttt{Q}}b4 \text{\texttt{Q}}g6 18.\text{\texttt{Q}}fd1 \text{\texttt{Q}}e5 19.\text{\texttt{Q}}d4 \text{\texttt{Q}}d6 20.\text{\texttt{Q}}ad1 a5 21.\text{\texttt{Q}}a3 \text{\texttt{Q}}c4 22.\text{\texttt{Q}}xc4 \text{\texttt{Q}}xc4 23.f3 \text{\texttt{Q}}xd4 24.\text{\texttt{Q}}xd4 b5 25.\text{\texttt{Q}}b2 f5 26.d5 \text{\texttt{Q}}d7 27.\text{\texttt{Q}}f5 \text{\texttt{Q}}xf5 ½–½ Dao Thien Hai –
14...\textit{xc}4 15.\textit{xC}4 \textit{c}c6 16.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 17.\textit{d}d5 \textit{f}e8 18.f3 ½–½

10...a6
The master of this variation played instead 10...\textit{c}6, so this move is probably preferable. Still, after 11.\textit{xe}6 \textit{f}xe6 12.\textit{d}d1 \textit{e}8 13.\textit{xe}8 \textit{exe}8 14.\textit{e}2 White had a better endgame in Bologan – Rublevsky, Tomsk 2006.

11.\textit{d}d1 \textit{e}8 12.\textit{d}d4 \textit{xd}4 13.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}6 14.0–0 \textit{e}6

15.\textit{d}xg7!
A deep sacrifice that destroys the opponent's king position.

15...\textit{d}xg7 16.\textit{g}5\textit{f} 17.\textit{f}6\textit{g} 18.\textit{d}5!
There will be no perpetual check of course. White has calculated a long way, and judged that Black's pieces are too scattered and uncoordinated to help the defence in time.

18...\textit{d}d8
18...\textit{xd}5 19.\textit{xd}5 loses at once.

19.\textit{h}6 \textit{f}6 20.\textit{d}d3
A typical rook shift along the third rank.

20...\textit{h}8 21.\textit{g}3 \textit{f}7

22.\textit{d}f4!
The final blow.

22...\textit{e}5
Not 22...\textit{xc}4 23.\textit{g}6\textit{f} 24.\textit{e}5\textit{f} and mates.

23.\textit{xe}6
White has won the piece back and is a pawn up with an attack. The game is over, or at least it would be if this was an old-fashioned correspondence game: nobody wants to spend stamps on a position like this. But it was a modern e-mail game, so Black continued.

23...\textit{f}8 24.\textit{h}4 \textit{g}7 25.\textit{f}5 \textit{f}7 26.\textit{h}3 \textit{e}8 27.\textit{d}d1 \textit{c}6 28.\textit{h}5 \textit{g}6 29.\textit{x}f6 \textit{x}f6 30.\textit{x}f6 \textit{e}c7 31.\textit{e}g6 \textit{x}g6 32.e5 \textit{h}6 33.f4 \textit{g}7 34.g4 \textit{c}7 35.\textit{g}2 \textit{xe}5 36.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xe}5 37.\textit{h}1\textit{f} 38.\textit{d}8\textit{f} 39.\textit{h}d3 \textit{d}5 40.\textit{e}8\textit{xd}5 \textit{cxd}5 41.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}6 42.\textit{b}3 \textit{xb}3\textit{f} 43.\textit{axb}3 \textit{e}6 44.\textit{f}4 \textit{d}4 45.\textit{e}4
1–0

Conclusion: White played a great attacking game, but it does not bury the whole variation with 4...\textit{b}4\textit{f}. Black can and probably should follow the expert Rublevsky's example and take the somewhat worse ending on move 10.
We now turn to the more normal 4...exd4.

**Game 14**

Grote – Thelen

Correspondence 1998

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5 4.Of3 exd4 5.Oxc4

Quick development is the essence of White’s opening strategy. There is no need to be concerned about the sacrificed d-pawn. Most probably it will be won back with some positional advantage and if not... well at least Black will be forced into some extreme measures which will add strength to White’s initiative.

5.Ob4†

The mainline 5...Oc6 will come into focus in the next games, while protecting the pawn with 5...e5 backfires after 6.Oe5 Oe6 7.Oxe6 fxe6 8.Oh5† g6 9.Oxg6 Oxf6 10.Oh3.

6.Obd2

The most complicated. Also playable is of course 6.Od2.

6...Oc6 7.0–0 Of6

The most straightforward. The alternatives are not too encouraging.


7...Oe6 8.Oxe6 fxe6 9.Ob3 d3 (not 9...e5 10.Oxe5! Oxe5 11.Oh5† Og6 12.Ob5† c6 13.Oxb4) 10.Oe3 Of6 11.Obd4 Oxd4 12.Oxd4 This is good for White: Oa4† is a threat and 12...Od7 13.Ob3 or 12...Oe7 13.Oxd3 both seem convincing.


8.e5

This is a special feature of the 3...e5 variation: the white e-pawn can go ahead and disturb the knight on f6, gaining time for the initiative.

8...Od5 9.Ob3 Ob6 10.Og5

The most forcing. The alternative 10.Ob5 is well answered by 10...Od5 with equal chances.

10...Oe7 11.Oxe7 Oxe7 12.Ob5 Od7 13.Oxe6 Oxe6 14.Ofxd4 Od5 15.Og4 0–0

The critical position. White has space on the kingside, a very threatening queen, and a great outpost on f5 for the knight. In practical play, however, Black’s defences have been difficult to overrun. It seems that if he protects against the mate on g7 by simply playing ...g6, he is
asking White to come up with a new threat, and it has not been easy to find one.

16.\texttt{\texttt{Af}e1}
16.f4 g6 has been played more often, but it has not scored as well.

16...\texttt{\texttt{W}d7}
16...g6 17.\texttt{\texttt{D}f5} \texttt{\texttt{W}d7} just transposes, but 16...\texttt{\texttt{D}e6} is probably the safest, though 17.\texttt{\texttt{D}xe6 fxe6} 18.\texttt{\texttt{D}d4} \texttt{\texttt{A}ae8} 19.\texttt{\texttt{A}ad1\pm} gives White an edge based on the space advantage and the weak e6-pawn, Hnatovsky – Vujanovic, corr. 2002.

17.\texttt{\texttt{D}f5} g6 18.\texttt{\texttt{D}h6\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{D}g7}
18...\texttt{\texttt{D}h8} 19.\texttt{\texttt{W}f4} \texttt{\texttt{W}e7} 20.\texttt{\texttt{C}c5!} puts Black under heavy pressure.

19.\texttt{\texttt{W}g5}

![Chess Diagram]

Black's position is rather delicate. One wrong move and it will immediately be over!

19...\texttt{\texttt{D}xb3?!}
A mistake!

Also bad is 19...\texttt{\texttt{f}6?!} 20.\texttt{\texttt{e}xf6\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{W}xf6} 21.\texttt{\texttt{E}e7\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{W}xe7} 22.\texttt{\texttt{D}f5\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{W}xf5} 23.\texttt{\texttt{D}xe7\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{W}f7} 24.\texttt{\texttt{W}e5\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{D}g8} 25.\texttt{\texttt{C}c5} and White should win, although he only drew in Kasparov – Huebner, Skelleftea 1989.

The only chance is:
19...\texttt{\texttt{W}e6}

There can follow:
20.\texttt{\texttt{C}c5} \texttt{\texttt{W}d8} 21.\texttt{\texttt{h}4}
White keeps his space.
21...\texttt{\texttt{D}d5} 22.\texttt{\texttt{A}ac1} b6 23.\texttt{\texttt{D}xe6\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{f}xe6} 24.\texttt{\texttt{E}c6!}
Right in the middle of it all.
24...\texttt{\texttt{W}d7} 25.\texttt{\texttt{A}ec1} \texttt{\texttt{A}ac8} 26.\texttt{\texttt{G}g4} \texttt{\texttt{F}f5} 27.\texttt{\texttt{D}f6}
27.\texttt{\texttt{W}d2\pm} keeps the pressure.
27...\texttt{\texttt{A}xg5} 28.\texttt{\texttt{D}xd7} \texttt{\texttt{F}f5} 29.\texttt{\texttt{D}f6} \texttt{\texttt{A}xe5} 30.\texttt{\texttt{D}xd5} \texttt{\texttt{A}xd5} 31.\texttt{\texttt{A}xc7\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{A}xc7} 32.\texttt{\texttt{A}xc7\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{A}h6} 33.\texttt{\texttt{A}xa7} \texttt{\texttt{D}d1\uparrow} 34.\texttt{\texttt{A}h2} \texttt{\texttt{D}d2} 35.f3 \texttt{\texttt{A}xb2}
Black held the rook ending in Sherbakov – Blauert, Calcutta 2002.

20.\texttt{\texttt{W}f6\uparrow}!
A spectacular refutation of 19...\texttt{\texttt{A}xb3}.

20...\texttt{\texttt{A}xh6} 21.\texttt{\texttt{E}e4}
Preventing the threat of \texttt{\texttt{A}h4} mate will cost Black a lot of material.

21...\texttt{\texttt{D}d1} 22.\texttt{\texttt{f}3} \texttt{\texttt{A}xf3} 23.\texttt{\texttt{G}xf3} \texttt{\texttt{W}h3} 24.\texttt{\texttt{D}d1} \texttt{\texttt{W}h5} 25.\texttt{\texttt{W}h4} \texttt{\texttt{X}h4} 26.\texttt{\texttt{W}xh4\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{D}g7} 27.\texttt{\texttt{W}e7} \texttt{\texttt{A}ac8} 28.\texttt{\texttt{h}4} \texttt{\texttt{E}fe8} 29.\texttt{\texttt{F}f6\uparrow} \texttt{\texttt{G}g8}

![Chess Diagram]

30.\texttt{\texttt{h}5!} \texttt{\texttt{G}xh5}
Black could not allow the pawn to come to h6, but now his structure collapses and the queen gains access to his position.
31.f4
Better was 31...f2 e6 32.g1 f8 33.g7 e7 34.g5 f8 35.xh5 with an easy win.

31...e6 32.d8+ xd8 33.xd8+ g7 34.xc7 d5 35.xb7 xf4 36.xa7 xe5

Now Black can continue the fight. In the end the white pawns decide though.

37.xc7 e4 38.f2 e6 39.c3+ g6 40.b4 f4 41.e2 h4 42.b5 f4 43.f1 h1+ 44.f2 h2 45.g1 xa2 46.c6+ g5 47.b6 f5 48.xc8 e2 49.f1 g3+ 50.e1 a1+ 51.d2 e4 52.c2 a2 53.b1 a4 54.b7 b4 55.c2 h4 56.b8=xe8 b8 57.xb8 g4 58.d3 f3 59.e5 d3 60.d5 f4 61.d8 g4 62.g8+ f3 63.xh7 1-0

Conclusion: This is a sharp variation where White is always slightly on top. Black could chicken out with 16...c6, but White would keep some positional advantage anyway.

The check on b4 is always debatable, but the main move is 5...c6.

Game 15

Bareev – Estrada Nieto

Canada 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 e5 4.f3 exd4 5.xc4 c6 6.0-0
The normal move. White simply completes his kingside development as quickly as possible. I have to admit I changed the move order to make it fit. In reality Bareev played 6.b3 when 6...d7 7.d2 f6 8.0-0 led to the game. Against 6.b3 critical is 6...b4 7.bd2 e7 with unclear play.

6...f6
The mainline 6...e6 is covered in the next game.

7.b3!
It is important to play actively. 7.e5 c4 8.e1 c5 9.g5 c7 10.xe7 xe7 11.xd4 xd4 12.xd4 c6! is just equal. 13.xe6 (or 13.f1 d8 14.c3 0-0 15.c3 a5 16.ad1 c6 17.e2 b6 18.f4 xd1 19.xd1 d8 20.d4 xd4 21.xd4 f6 ½-½ Lofgren – Vayser, corr. 2003) 13...xc6 14.e4 0-0 15.c3 d4 16.e3 g5 17.xg5 xg5 18.ac1 a6 19.e2 xd8 ½-½ Karpov – Lautier, Monte Carlo 1999.

7...d7 8.d2!
Preventing ...a5.

Kasparov once played the more direct 8.g5 in an exhibition game against a computer. But it was way back in 1985, so there was no Centrino processor to worry about! 8...e5 9.b5 c6 10.f4 eg4 11.c4 h6 12.d2 c5 13.df3 With good compensation for the pawn, Kasparov – Comp Constellation 36K, Hamburg 1985.
8...c5
Protecting the extra d-pawn. Several other moves have been tried:

8...a6 9.e1! b5

10.d5 exd5 11.exd5† e7 12.xd4 b7
13.c6! xc6 14.dxc6 xc6 15.a4 With a strong initiative. 15...0–0 16.axb5 axb5
17.c1 WD5 This was Khalifman – Bauer, Istanbul 2000, and now 18.c3 would create overwhelming threats.

8...a5 9.e1 a4 10.b5! d8 11.e5 g4
11.g8 12.xd4 e7 13.c3 c6 14.b6
and Black was completely outplayed in Sakaev – Lautier, Las Vegas 1999.
12.xd4
Taking the pawn back.
12.e6 13.xe6
Even better was 13.xe6! fxe6 14.h3. e.g.
14.c5 15.xe6! xb5 16.d7† d7
17.xb5 c6 18.c1c3 winning.
13.fxe6 14.h3 xb5 15.xb5† c6 16.xc6† bxc6 17.hxg4
With a pawn more in Morovic – Stevic, Pula 1999.

8...g4 9.d5
9.b5 a6 10.xc6 bxc6 11.h3 h6 12.g5
secures active play, and looks promising for White.
9...c5 10.e5 0–0 11.e1 b6 12.xc6 bxc6
13.h3 h6 14.xh6 gxh6 15.bd2
This gave White some positional compensation for the pawn, but it was far from convincing, so 9.b5 should be tried. Mrkvicka – Thomas, corr. 2001.

9.c5 e4 10.e1 xd2 11.bxd2
Black is far behind in development. He would love to play 11...0–0 but then 12.e6 is a killer.

11...e7

12.e6!
Cutting Black’s position in two.

12.f5
Forced. 12...fxe6 13.xe6 ends in a disaster on the e-file.

13.d3 0–0 14.b3 b6 15.bxd4
Winning the pawn back with all the positional plusses remaining. In particular, the passed pawn on e6 makes Black’s position utterly hopeless.

15.xd4 16.xd4 xd4 17.xd4 c5
18.d5 g6 19.xc1 a5 20.a4 a7 21.c6 d5 22.c6 c7 23.xb6 c7 24.b3 e7 25.e5
1–0
**Conclusion:** This variation with 6...\(\text{d}f6\) is a sideline and after this game it will remain a sideline!

The big mainline is of course 6...\(\text{d}e6\).

**Game 16**

**Schandorff – A. Rasmussen**

*Denmark (ch) 2008*

1.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{d}5\) 2.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{d}xc4\) 3.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{e}5\) 4.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{exd}4\) 5.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 6.0–0 \(\text{e}6\)!

8.\(\text{b}4\)!

Very energetic play. White gains a tempo by harassing Black’s bishop and prepares to play \(\text{b}2\) conquering the important \(\text{d}4\)-pawn. Also very popular is 8.\(\text{bd}2\) \(\text{ge}7\) 9.\(\text{g}5\)! with complications.

8...\(\text{b}6\) 9.\(\text{a}4\)!

Complications are also what we have on the board now. By threatening to trap the black bishop, White hopes to force his opponent to weaken his queenside. It is important to gain some positional concessions, as 9.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{ge}7\) 10.\(\text{xd}4\) 0–0 leads to exchanges but no advantage.

9...\(\text{a}6\)

The alternative is:

9...\(\text{a}5\) 10.\(\text{bxa}5\) \(\text{bxa}5\)

Which at first sight might seem like a blockade on the queenside. However after:

11.\(\text{bd}2\) \(\text{ge}7\)
12.\(\text{d}g5\)!

Black has problems. White will simply remove the light-squared bishop and thereby get the excellent c4-square for his knight.

12...0–0

12...\(\text{d}d7\) 13.\(\text{d}xe6\) \(\text{xe}6\) 14.\(\text{c}c4\) 0–0 (14...\(\text{a}8\) 15.\(\text{xb}6\) \(\text{xb}6\) 16.\(\text{xd}4\)+)

15.\(\text{xa}5\) \(\text{xa}5\) 16.\(\text{a}3\) and Black did not have enough for the exchange in Ushenina – Korbut, St Petersburg 2004.

13.\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{h}6\) 14.\(\text{d}xe6\) \(\text{fxe}6\) 15.\(\text{c}c4\) \(\text{a}8\) 16.\(\text{h}6\)!

A spectacular sacrifice. Preparing it a little more with 16.\(\text{a}3\) also made sense.

16...\(\text{g}xh6\) 17.\(\text{a}xh6\) \(\text{a}7\) 18.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{d}3\) 19.\(\text{d}d2\) \(\text{f}7\) 20.\(\text{a}xd3\) \(\text{f}8\) 21.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{g}7\) 22.\(\text{a}c4\) \(\text{d}d4\) 23.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{xe}6\) 24.\(\text{f}y6\) \(\text{f}7\) 25.\(\text{a}xg7\) \(\text{a}xg7\) 26.\(\text{e}e5\) \(\text{f}f6\) 27.\(\text{a}xh7\)

With too many pawns for the piece.

27...\(\text{b}6\) 28.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{g}6\) 29.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{f}8\) 30.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{c}5\) 31.\(\text{a}5\) \(\text{f}7\) 32.\(\text{h}4\) \(\text{f}4\) 33.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{xg}5\) 34.\(\text{xg}5\) \(\text{e}7\) 35.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{e}5\) 36.\(\text{g}2\) 1–0


10.\(\text{a}x\text{c}6\)† \(\text{bx}\text{c}6\) 11.\(\text{a}5\)

11.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{f}6\) is usually just another way to reach the game position after 12.\(\text{a}5\) \(\text{a}7\), but Ponomariov has experimented with 11.\(\text{a}\text{bd}2\) \(\text{f}6\) 12.\(\text{c}2\) 0–0 13.\(\text{xc}6\), as in Ponomariov – Sasikiran, Khanty-Mansyisk 2007, when he regained the pawn although the position is very double-edged.

11...\(\text{a}7\) 12.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{f}6\)

The critical position.

13.\(\text{xd}4\)

The other capture is interesting as well:

13.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 14.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xe}4\) 15.\(\text{g}7\)

15...\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{d}5\) 16.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{c}5\) 17.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{cxd}4\)

18.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{b}3\) 19.\(\text{xd}4\) was positionally great for White in Onischuk – Nisipeanu, Foros 2007, but the simple 15...\(\text{f}6\) is solid.

15...\(\text{g}8\) 16.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{h}3\) 17.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{xd}3\) 18.\(\text{h}xg3\)

\(\text{xd}1\) 19.\(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{e}6\)

Black's pawns are scattered, but actually they are difficult to attack. The opposite is the case with the b4-pawn as we shall see.

20.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{g}4\) 21.\(\text{ab}1\) \(\text{ab}8\) 22.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}5\) 23.\(\text{b}2\)

\(\text{xg}3\) 24.\(\text{da}4\) \(\text{f}8\) 25.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{a}8\)

White had to give up a pawn, but he gained excellent compensation. The black rook is passive on a8, however his bishop is quite strong and there are few entry points in the position, so Black should be able to hold it.

26.\(\text{f}2\) \(\text{c}3\) 27.\(\text{bd}2\) \(\text{c}4\) 28.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{xd}4\) 29.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{e}7\)

And it should be a draw. White kept the initiative and little by little Black made some inaccuracies that could have cost him the game in Aronian – Shirov, Elista 2007. It is much easier to attack than to defend.
Topalov just ignored the d4-pawn and played:
13.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d2}}\) 0–0 14.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{w}c2}}\)

With pressure on c6. Actually this was my primary focus when preparing for the game. I wanted to play like Topalov, but the more I looked at it, the less I could make it work. In the game Black immediately answered with a mistake losing a tempo.

14...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{g}g4?}}\)

What I didn’t like was 14...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{h}h5!}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{w}xc6 \texttt{\textbf{f}f4}} with very tricky counterplay.} \)16.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{x}xa6 \texttt{\textbf{f}f6}} 17.g3 (17.\text{\texttt{\textbf{f}fc1 \texttt{\textbf{x}g2!}} initiates tactical complications that seem okay for Black:} 18.\text{\texttt{\textbf{xc7 \texttt{\textbf{h}h4}} 19.\texttt{\textbf{hxh4 \texttt{\textbf{g}g5+}} 20.\texttt{\textbf{g2 \texttt{\textbf{x}xd2}} 21.\texttt{\textbf{xa7 \texttt{\textbf{x}xb2}}}}) 17...\texttt{\textbf{h}h3\dagger 18.\texttt{\textbf{g}g2 \texttt{\textbf{g}g5}} Threatening ...\texttt{\textbf{h}h3\dagger winning the queen.} 19.\texttt{\textbf{xd3 \texttt{\textbf{h}h3\dagger}} 20.\texttt{\textbf{g1 \texttt{\textbf{x}xf1}} 21.\texttt{\textbf{x}xf1 \texttt{\textbf{x}f3\dagger}} 22.\texttt{\textbf{xf3}} c5 With fine play for Black because of the finesse 23.\texttt{\textbf{b}5? \texttt{c}4!\)\).

15.h3 \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{f}f6}}\)

Sad, but 15...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{e}e3 16.\texttt{\textbf{f}xe3 \texttt{\textbf{d}dxe3}} 17.\texttt{\textbf{b}b3 e2\dagger}}\) 18.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{f}f2}}\) was not good enough.

16.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{e}e5 \texttt{\textbf{d}d7}} 17.\texttt{\textbf{e}e1}}\)

Even better was 17.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{f}fd1! \texttt{\textbf{e}e7}} 18.\texttt{\textbf{df3}}\) when the rook is more active.

17...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{w}e7}}\) 18.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d3}}\) c5 19.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{b}c5 \texttt{\textbf{xc5}} 20.\texttt{\textbf{d}d2 \texttt{\textbf{e}e7}}} 21.\texttt{\textbf{a}a3 c5 22.\texttt{\textbf{x}xd4}}\) White regained the pawn with a positional advantage, Topalov – Nisipeanu, Vitoria Gasteiz 2007.

13...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{e}xe4}}} 14.\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{x}xa7 \texttt{\texttt{xa7}}}\)

A new move, but it was safer to exchange queens first:
14...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{w}xd1}}\) 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{x}xd1 \texttt{\texttt{xa7}}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{e}e5 \texttt{\textbf{b}b7}} 17.\texttt{\texttt{xc6}}\) In my preparation I thought that White had an edge in the ending, I still believe so.

17...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d6}}\)

White threatened mate on d8 and 17...0–0 18.\(\text{\texttt{f3 \texttt{\texttt{d}d6}} 19.\texttt{\textbf{c}c3\pm just moved the king further away.}\)

18.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\textbf{c}c3}}\)

The new Chinese star Wang Yue tried 18.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{a}a3 \texttt{\textbf{d}d7}} 19.\texttt{\textbf{a}a1}}\) and protected the c6-knight just in time. After 19...\(\text{\texttt{f6}} 20.\texttt{\textbf{c}c4! \texttt{\textbf{xc4}} 21.\texttt{\textbf{xc4 \texttt{\textbf{b}b5}}} 22.\texttt{\textbf{f3 \texttt{\textbf{e}e8}} 23.\texttt{\textbf{c}c2}} he had a small but long-lasting advantage, Wang Yue – Zhang Pengxiang, Beijing 2008.

18...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d7}}\)

The knight on c6 restricts Black so he tries to kick it away.
19.\(\text{\texttt{e}e5\dagger \texttt{c}c8 20.\texttt{\textbf{a}a1! \texttt{f6}} (20...\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{x}xb4?} 21.\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{x}xd6}} 21.\texttt{\textbf{e}e6 \texttt{e}e8 22.\texttt{f3}}\) Lybin – Mrazik, corr. 2003. The knight is back on c6 and White keeps some pressure in the ending.

15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d4 0–0}}\)

Immediately returning the pawn. Worse was 15...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d5}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{f}b3 \texttt{\textbf{g}g5}} 17.\texttt{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3\!) or 15...\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{x}d5}} 16.\texttt{\textbf{f}b3 \texttt{\textbf{g}g6}} 17.\texttt{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3}} with a strong initiative.

16.\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{x}xc6 \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f}f6}}}\)

Defending tactically by attacking the rook on a1. It was not too late to head for an ending:
16...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{x}xd1}} 17.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}xd1}}\)

17.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{d}d2}}\)

17.\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{a}a3 \texttt{\textbf{b}b7}}}\) was unclear.

17...\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{x}xd2}}\)

Interesting was 17...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{c}c3}}\) but a safe solution for White seems to be 18.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{e}e1 \texttt{\textbf{b}b7}} 19.\texttt{\texttt{e}e4! \texttt{\textbf{\texttt{x}xe4}} 20.\texttt{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{x}xe4}}}\) which is similar to the game.

18.\(\text{\texttt{\texttt{x}xe2\dagger \texttt{\textbf{b}b7}} 19.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{a}a1 \texttt{\textbf{b}b5}}} 20.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}f1}}}\)
White has a small but definite edge. In the following moves I concentrate the play on the dark squares, where Black’s bishop can be of no use.

20...\textit{\texttt{h8}} 21.\texttt{Ee}3 \textit{\texttt{h6}} 22.\texttt{Ef}3 \textit{\texttt{Wf4}} 23.\texttt{Ed4}!

A perfect centralization of the queen, especially since Black can hardly exchange it.

23...\textit{\texttt{Wg5}}
23...\textit{\texttt{Wxd4}} 24.\textit{\texttt{Wxd4}}+

24.\textit{\texttt{Cc3 \textit{\texttt{Ee8}}}} 25.\textit{\texttt{Gg3}}!

The culmination of White’s dark-squared strategy: Black is forced to ruin his pawn structure on the kingside as well.

25...\textit{\texttt{Wf6}} 26.\textit{\texttt{Wxf6}} \textit{\texttt{gx}}f6 27.\textit{\texttt{Ed3 \textit{\texttt{f5}}}} 28.\textit{\texttt{Ad4 \textit{\texttt{Ee4}}}} 29.\textit{\texttt{Ff3 \textit{\texttt{Ff5}}}}
29...\textit{\texttt{Wxc6}} 30.\textit{\texttt{Wxc6 \textit{\texttt{Ee2}}}} 31.\textit{\texttt{Wxc7 \textit{\texttt{Wg5}}}} 32.\textit{\texttt{Gg4+–}}

30.\texttt{Wf2} \textit{\texttt{Wg7}} 31.\texttt{Ac3} \textit{\texttt{Wae6}} 32.\texttt{Ee3} \textit{\texttt{Wxa8}}
33.\texttt{Wb3} \textit{\texttt{Wc6}} 34.\texttt{Wc3} \textit{\texttt{Wc6}} 35.\texttt{Wc2} \textit{\texttt{f5}}

Desperately seeking some activity.

36.\texttt{Wd2} \textit{\texttt{Wf6}} 37.\texttt{Wh4} \textit{\texttt{Wg5}} 38.\texttt{Wbd4} \textit{\texttt{Wf6}}
39.\texttt{Wd3} \textit{\texttt{Wf8}} 40.\texttt{f4}

White has a strategically winning position, as Black has too many weaknesses on both flanks to withstand the pressure forever. With my last move I created the possibility of quickly transferring my rooks from one flank to the other via the third rank.

40...\textit{\texttt{Wc8}} 41.\texttt{Wf3} \textit{\texttt{Wg7}} 42.\texttt{Wf3} \textit{\texttt{Wc6}} 43.\texttt{Wf2}
\textit{\texttt{Wxa8}} 44.\texttt{Wf5} \textit{\texttt{Wxe5}} 45.\texttt{Wxe5}

Also possible was 45.\textit{\texttt{fxe5?! \texttt{Wxe8}}} (45...\texttt{f6})
46.\texttt{Wf3} \textit{\texttt{f6}} 47.\texttt{Wd8} \textit{\texttt{Wxd8}} 48.\texttt{Wxd8} \textit{\texttt{Wd5+}}
49.\texttt{Wf4} \textit{\texttt{Wxg2}} 50.\textit{\texttt{Wxe6+ \texttt{Wf7}}} 51.\texttt{Wxc7} and White is winning.

45...\textit{\texttt{Wb3}} 46.\texttt{Wd3} \textit{\texttt{Wc4}} 47.\texttt{Wc3} \textit{\texttt{c6}} 48.\texttt{Wd2}
\textit{\texttt{Wb8}} 49.\texttt{Wg3} 50.\texttt{Wc3} 51.\textit{\texttt{Wc5}}

Hopeless was 50...\textit{\texttt{Wb7}} 51.\textit{\texttt{Wd3 \textit{\texttt{Wg7}}}} 52.\textit{\texttt{Wd7 \textit{\texttt{Wxd7}}}}

51.\texttt{bxc5} \textit{\texttt{f6}} 52.\texttt{Wc4} \textit{\texttt{Wc6}} 53.\textit{\texttt{b5}} 54.\textit{\texttt{h4}}

Simpler was 54.\texttt{Wxf5}.

54...\textit{\texttt{Wb1}} 55.\textit{\texttt{Wxf5}} \textit{\texttt{Wb5}} 56.\textit{\texttt{Wc4 \texttt{Wxa5}}}
57.\textit{\texttt{Wb3}}

And here 57.\textit{\texttt{Wd7}}.

57...\textit{\texttt{Wxa4}} 58.\textit{\texttt{Wb4}}

\texttt{58...Wd5+?}

We were in time trouble.

58...\texttt{Wxa1} was the only move.
59.\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd5}}}! e\textit{\textit{x}}\textit{\textit{b4}} 60.\textit{\textbf{\textit{c6}}}

The passed pawn decides.

60...\textbf{\textit{b5}}! 61.\textbf{\textit{c6}}

Better was 61.\textit{\textbf{\textit{xd6}}} e\textit{\textit{x}}\textit{\textit{f5}} 62.\textit{\textbf{\textit{c7}}} e\textit{\textit{x}}\textit{\textit{f4}} 63.\textit{\textbf{\textit{c8}}}=e\textit{\textit{h4}} 64.\textit{\textbf{\textit{e7}}}=+ g\textit{\textit{g}4} 65.\textit{\textbf{\textit{xf5}}}+ h\textit{\textit{h}6} 66.\textit{\textbf{\textit{xf6}}}+ g\textit{\textit{g}6} 67.\textit{\textbf{\textit{h8}}}+ g\textit{\textit{g}5} 68.\textit{\textbf{\textit{f7}}}

and it is over. The text is okay though, but in the end wins by just a single tempo.

61...\textbf{\textit{c5}} 62.\textbf{\textit{c7}} a\textit{\textit{5}} 63.\textbf{\textit{d6}} \textbf{\textit{c1}} 64.\textit{\textbf{\textit{c7}}} a\textit{\textit{d1}}+ 65.\textit{\textbf{\textit{c5}}} \textbf{\textit{c1}}+ 66.\textit{\textbf{\textit{d6}}} b\textit{\textit{d1}}+ 67.\textit{\textbf{\textit{d5}}} c\textit{\textit{c1}} 68.\textit{\textbf{\textit{d7}}} a\textit{\textit{4}} 69.\textit{\textbf{\textit{c8}}}=e\textit{\textit{h8}} 70.\textit{\textbf{\textit{xc8}}} a\textit{\textit{3}} 71.\textit{\textbf{\textit{b4}}} \textbf{\textit{g6}} 72.\textit{\textbf{\textit{d7}}} f\textit{\textit{5}} 73.\textit{\textbf{\textit{e7}}} \textbf{\textit{xf4}}

74.\textit{\textbf{\textit{xf6}}} g\textit{\textit{g}4}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
& & & & & & & \\
\hline
1 & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

75.\textit{\textbf{\textit{g3}}!} \textbf{\textit{xg}3} 76.\textit{\textbf{\textit{g}5}} f\textit{\textit{3}} 77.\textit{\textbf{\textit{xh}5}} e\textit{\textit{2}}

78.\textit{\textbf{\textit{g}5}} d\textit{\textit{2}} 79.\textit{\textbf{\textit{h}5}} c\textit{\textit{3}} 80.\textit{\textbf{\textit{h}6}}

1–0

**Conclusion:** What to think of a game like this one? Well the word “fight” comes to mind, and I think this is the key to understanding the popularity of this variation. With 6...\textit{\textbf{\textit{e6}}} Black is creating very unbalanced play that will never be dull. White has certain positional plusses as always, but he has to constantly strive for the initiative to maintain an advantage.

From a theoretical point of view the position after 12...\textit{\textbf{\textit{f6}}} is extremely important. I think White has an edge because of his better structure, but it is playable for Black, who often has active pieces to compensate for the positional deficits.

**The 3...\textit{\textbf{\textit{c6}}} Variation**

So far Black has attacked the centre with pawns. He can also use his pieces and force tense play from the very beginning.

![Game 17](https://example.com/game17.png)

Sargissian – Hillarp Persson

Copenhagen 2007

1.\textit{\textbf{\textit{d4}}} d\textit{\textit{5}} 2.\textit{\textbf{\textit{c4}}} d\textit{\textit{x}c}\textit{\textit{4}} 3.\textit{\textbf{\textit{e4}}} \textbf{\textit{c6}}

![Game 17](https://example.com/game17.png)

A provocative and popular move that creates associations with the Chigorin, 1.\textit{\textbf{\textit{d4}}} d\textit{\textit{5}} 2.\textit{\textbf{\textit{c4}}} \textbf{\textit{c6}}\textit{?!}. Black attacks the white centre with pieces and apparently does not mind tactical complications, but in reality he is aiming to achieve a sound set-up. However White does not have to be cooperative.

4.\textit{\textbf{\textit{f3}}}

Allowing the pin after 4...\textit{\textbf{\textit{g}4}}.
4.d5 će5 is more messy than good and after 4.će3 ćf6 5.ćf3 će5 6.d5 će7 7.ćc3 ćg6 8.ćxc4 a6 9.ćge2 ćd6 Black has his desired formation.

4...ćg4 5.ćxc4?
A sharp try.

5.d5 će5 6.ćf4 ćg6 7.će3 će5 8.ćxc4 a6 9.0-0 ćf6 10.ćc3 ćd6 is more standard. Experience has shown that 11.će2 0-0 12.ćd2 ćd7 is playable for Black, who has good piece coordination and he can often get his share of the play on the queenside with ...b5 or ...ćc6. Still, objectively speaking, White has chances of a small positional advantage after a natural move like 13.ćc1.

a) 7...ćxd4 8.0-0 (8.ćc3N ćd6 9.će3 ćf6 10.ćxc6† bxc6 11.će2=) 8...ćd6 9.ćc3 ćge7 10.će3 će5 11.ćh3 g5 With double-edged play, Piesina – Vorotnikov, Soviet Union 1979.

b) 7...ćb4† 8.ćc3 ćxd4 9.ćxc6† bxc6 10.0-0 White is ahead in development and he has good compensation for the pawn. Also the doubled pawns on the c-file are rather vulnerable. With a further split:

b1) 10.će7 11.će3
11.ćf4? ćc8 12.ćfd1 ćf6 13.će3
11...ćf6 12.ćg3 0-0
Muschik – Krallmann, Germany 2002.

b2) 10.ćf6 11.će3 ćc4 12.ćfc1 ća6
This was J. Christiansen – L. Hansen, Aalborg 1994, and now:
13.ćd4! će7 14.e5
This is awkward for Black.
14...ćd7
Or if 14...ćd5 then 15.ćxd5 exd5 16.ćg3.
15.će2 ćb8
What else?
16.b3 0-0 17.ćc4
With a big positional advantage.

5...će6
Perhaps safer is:
5...ćxf3 6.ćxf3 e6 7.d5 će5 8.ćb5† c6 9.ćc3 cxb5 10.ćxe5 ćd6 11.ćxd6 ćxd6
Black is okay in the ending: 12.dxe6 fxe6 13.ćc3 a6 14.će3 ćf6 15.f3 ćc8=

After 5...ćxf3 6.ćxf3 e6, instead of 7.d5, White can try:

7.ćb5?!
Sacrificing a pawn. Now there is a split:

6.će3
6.ćb5 is also possible.
Black takes the opportunity to weaken White's pawns.

6...\(\text{Qxf6}\) 7.\(\text{Qc3}\) \(\text{Qb4}\)
This would transpose to a well known position from the Chigorin that more often arises after the move order 1.d4 d5 2.c4 \(\text{Qc6}\) 3.\(\text{Qc3}\) dxc4 4.\(\text{Bf3}\) \(\text{Qxf6}\) 5.e4 \(\text{Qg4}\) 6.\(\text{Qe3}\) e6 7.\(\text{Qxc4}\) \(\text{Qb4}\). To be known is not the same as to be respected and after:

8.\(\text{Qc2}\) 0–0 9.\(\text{Qd1}\)
White is slightly better.

9.0–0–0 also looks strong, but after the surprising 9...\(\text{Qxc3}\) 10.bxc3 \(\text{Qe7}\) 11.\(\text{Qh3}\) \(\text{Qxf3}\) 12.gxf3 \(\text{Qf8}\)! 13.\(\text{Qd3}\) b5 Black has created counterplay out of nothing. 14.\(\text{Qd5}\) 15.\(\text{Qh7}\) 16.\(\text{Qxe4}\) b4 17.\(\text{Qxd5}\) exd5 18.\(\text{Qd2}\) \(\text{Qa5}\) 19.\(\text{Qe2}\) \(\text{Qc4}\) 20.\(\text{Qd2}\) c5
With good play for the pawn in Shirov – Morozevich, Amsterdam 1995.

Returning to 9.\(\text{Qd1}\), we will consider three replies:

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\hline
1 & & & & & & & & \\
2 & & & & & & & & \\
3 & & & & & & & & \\
4 & & & & & & & & \\
5 & & & & & & & & \\
6 & & & & & & & & \\
7 & & & & & & & & \\
8 & & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

9...\(\text{Qxf3}\) 10.gxf3 \(\text{Qh5}\) 11.e5 \(\text{Qe7}\) 12.0–0 c6
13.\(\text{Qh1}\)
Planning \(\text{Qg1}\). White is slightly better.

13.\(\text{Qd5}\) 14.\(\text{Qxd5}\) cxd5 15.\(\text{Qd3}\) g6 16.\(\text{Qc1}\) \(\text{Qa5}\) 17.\(\text{Qa4}\) \(\text{b6}\) 18.\(\text{Qg1}\)
With play on both flanks.

18.\(\text{Qg7}\) 19.\(\text{Qb4}\) \(\text{Qb8}\) 20.\(\text{Qg4}\) f6?
Allowing a killing blow:

21.\(\text{Qxg6}\)! 1–0 Persson – Boucher, corr 2004. Black resigned because:

21...hXg6 22.\(\text{xg6}\)
This would be hopeless. For example:

22...\(\text{Qh7}\) 23.\(\text{Qh6}\) \(\text{Qg8}\) 24.\(\text{Qg1}\) \(\text{Qf7}\) 25.\(\text{Qxf6}\) \(\text{Qxf6}\) 26.\(\text{Qg5}\) \(\text{Qxh6}\) 27.\(\text{Qxd8}\) \(\text{Qxd8}\) 28.\(\text{Qe7}\) \(\text{Qh7}\) 29.\(\text{Qxe6}\) \(\text{Qh8}\) 30.\(\text{Qf6}\)

9...\(\text{Qe7}\) 10.\(\text{Qe2}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) 11.bxc3 c5 12.0–0 \(\text{Qc7}\) 13.\(\text{Qb1}\) b6 14.h3 \(\text{Qh5}\) 15.g4 \(\text{Qg6}\) 16.\(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qfd8}\) 17.\(\text{Qe5}\) \(\text{Qb7}\) 18.\(\text{Qxg6}\) \(\text{Qxg6}\) 19.\(\text{Qxc5}\) \(\text{Qxe5}\) 20.\(\text{Qc2}\) \(\text{Qc4}\) 21.\(\text{Qc1}\) \(\text{Qc6}\) 22.\(\text{Qxb6}\)
Black does not have enough for the pawn.

22...\(\text{Qxb6}\) 23.e5 \(\text{Qfd5}\) 24.\(\text{Qxh7}\) \(\text{Qh8}\) 25.\(\text{Qe4}\) \(\text{Qxc3}\) 26.\(\text{Qf1}\)
White had control in Elwert – Gather, corr. 1999.

26...\(\text{Qxh3}\)? 27.\(\text{Qd3}\) \(\text{Qxg4}\) 28.\(\text{Qg3}\) \(\text{Qh5}\) 29.\(\text{Qg2}\)
Followed by the decisive \(\text{Qh1}\).

9...\(\text{Qe7}\) 10.\(\text{Qb5}\) e5 11.\(\text{Qxc6}\) bxc6 12.0–0 (12.dxe5 \(\text{Qd7}\) 12...\(\text{Qd6}\) 13.dxe5 \(\text{Qxe5}\) 14.\(\text{Qe2}\) \(\text{Qxf3}\) 15.gxf3 \(\text{Qe6}\) 16.\(\text{Qg3}\) and White was clearly better, Belozerov – Bigaliev, Kolostoaev 1997.

6...\(\text{Qb4}\)? 7.\(\text{Qc3}\) \(\text{Qf6}\) is the same.

7.gxf3
7...b4†
A natural move. Black wants to complete his development and castle kingside as quickly as possible. 7...h6 with the idea of casting long has also been popular. The d-pawn is suddenly a target. White has tried many things, but probably he should fight hard for the initiative and be ready to sacrifice a pawn with 8.\(\text{c}3\) 0–0–0 9.\(\text{a}4\) and now 9...\(\text{xf3}\) (or 9...\(\text{xd4}\) 10.0–0–0) 10.\(\text{g1}\) with good compensation.

8.\(\text{c3}\) g\(\text{c7}\)
A flexible set-up, but White’s centre must count for something.

9.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{d6}\)
9...\(\text{a5}\), to put the bishop on b6, falls foul of the typical break in the centre: 10.0–0–0 \(\text{b6}\) 11.d5! exd5 12.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 13.\(\text{xd5}\) \(\text{c8}\) 14.\(\text{hg1}\) The threats were impossible to parry. 14...\(\text{e7}\) 15.\(\text{xe7}\) \(\text{xe7}\) 16.\(\text{xg7}\) \(\text{xe3}\)† 17.\(\text{fxe3}\) \(\text{e6}\) 18.\(\text{b4}\)† \(\text{xf6}\) 19.\(\text{c3}\)† \(\text{e7}\) 20.\(\text{c5}\)† \(\text{e8}\) 21.\(\text{g5}\) White won in a few moves, Komljenovic – Ehlvest, Linares 1994.

10.\(\text{e2}\) 0–0 11.0–0–0

11...\(\text{a5}\) 12.\(\text{c2}\) c6 13.\(\text{a4}\) b6 14.\(\text{b1}\)
This is not really necessary, but White spends some time improving his king’s position. It is prophylactic thinking, and should by now be quite familiar.

14...\(\text{e8}\) 15.\(\text{h4}\)!

The h-pawn is a ram to knock holes in the enemy’s fortress.

15.\(\text{b7}\) 16.\(\text{h5}\) \(\text{d8}\) 17.e5 \(\text{b8}\) 18.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{\(\text{f5}\)}\)

Giving up a pawn, which was more or less forced. 18...g6 19.\(\text{c3}\) with the plan of \(\text{e4}\) exploiting the weak dark squares around the black king. 18...h6 19.\(\text{xh6}\) gxh6 20.\(\text{dg1}\)† \(\text{h8}\) 21.\(\text{d2}\) and mate on h6.

19.\(\text{xf5}\)
19.\(\text{hg1}\)?? seems even stronger. Black can hardly move without making some concession.

19...\(\text{xf5}\) 20.\(\text{xf5}\) \(\text{f6}\)
Now Black has some counterplay.

21.\(\text{xf6}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 22.\(\text{g4}\) \(\text{f7}\) 23.\(\text{c3}\)
Back into play.

23...\(\text{d6}\) 24.\(\text{g5}\) \(\text{c8}\) 25.d5 c5 26.h6 \(\text{g6}\)
27.\( \text{De4} \) \( \text{Wf8} \) 28.\( \text{He1} \) \( \text{Ef5} \) 29.\( \text{f4} \) \( c4 \) 30.\( \text{Wf3} \) \( \text{Ee8} \) 31.\( \text{Dxd6} \) \( \text{Dxd6} \) 32.\( \text{Wc3} \) \( \text{Exe1} \) 33.\( \text{Wxe1} \) \( \text{xf4} \) 34.\( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{xf4} \)

35.\( \text{d6!} \)

The strong passed pawn quickly decides the issue.

35...\( \text{Wf5}\uparrow \) 36.\( \text{a1} \) \( \text{Wd7} \) 37.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{Ef7} \) 38.\( \text{d4} \) \( b5 \) 39.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{c6} \) 40.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{d7} \) 41.\( \text{e8}\uparrow \)

1–0

**Conclusion:** 3...\( \text{Cc6} \) leads to sharp and complex play. White can try to keep control with 5.\( \text{d5} \), but I like to take up the challenge and answer with a double-edged strategy as well. The complications seem to be advantageous for White but beware of the transposition to the Chigorin, where the play is rather messy. In chess, psychology is an important factor. After all, you are facing a guy who plays the QGA, so he is probably disciplined and not a fan of chaos. If you reached the position via the Chigorin, then I would prefer to play more safely – which you can see in the chapter about this bizarre opening.

**The 3...\( \text{Qf6} \) Variation**

A profound move. Black invites the e4-pawn forward.

This line is as provocative as 3...\( \text{Cc6} \), but positionally more sound. Black attacks the centre with a piece and tries to lure White into advancing the pawn with tempo, when the knight will have a fine square on d5. Nevertheless White should take up the challenge. After all, he gains more space and that will determine the play for a long time.

4.\( \text{e5} \) \( \text{Dd5} \) 5.\( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{Dc6} \)

Black keeps developing his pieces. Unfortunately for him, he will be pushed back within a few moves. The slightly more sophisticated 5...\( \text{b6} \) is the mainline and will be examined in the next game.

6.\( \text{Cc3} \) \( \text{b6} \)

Best. 6...\( \text{xc3} \) 7.\( \text{bxc3} \) and 6...\( \text{e6} \) 7.\( \text{f3} \) both give White too much freedom.

6...\( \text{e6} \) continues the fight for the important d5-square, but after 7.\( \text{b3} \) it is difficult for Black to untangle.
Chapter 2 - Queen’s Gambit Accepted

7.\(\text{b}5\) \(\text{d}7\) 8.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}6\)

White’s extra space has already influenced the play: to keep control over the key square d5, Black played ...\(\text{e}7\)-\(\text{e}6\) before his light-squared bishop had time to develop, so it seems it will remain passively placed on d7. In reality, the bishop is on its way to the excellent square c6. Black will move his knight from c6 to b4 or e7, clearing the bishop’s path.

9.0-0

Accepting his fate. 9.a3 \(\text{c}7\) 10.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{c}6\) is no big achievement for White: the knight on \(\text{e}7\) can go to d5, f5 or g6!

9...\(\text{b}4\)

The natural route to d5: 10.\(\text{d}3\) is discouraged. And 9...\(\text{b}4\) also avoids sealing the bishop on f8, as the alternative does:

9...\(\text{e}7\) 10.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{c}6\)

Black is effectively a tempo down compared to the line given above (as White’s 0-0 is far more relevant than a2-a3). I will offer two completely different ways of combating it:

a) 11.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{h}6\) 12.\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{g}6\) 13.\(\text{e}4!\) \(\text{g}7\) 14.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{f}5\) 15.\(\text{e}3\)

Black has still not solved his king’s problems, Beliavsky – Portisch, Thessaloniki 1984.

b) 11.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{d}7\) 12.\(\text{e}3\) 0-0 0-0 13.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{b}8\) 14.a3 \(\text{bd}5\) 15.\(\text{e}4!\) \(\text{f}5\) 16.b4 \(\text{b}6\)? 16...\(\text{fxe}3\) 17.\(\text{fxe}3\) \(\text{f}5\) is unclear.

17.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{fxe}3\) 18.\(\text{fxe}3\) \(\text{f}5\)

This was Campora – Borges Mateos, Madrid 2007, and now White could win instantly with the little combination:

19.\text{exf6} \text{gxh6} 20.\text{xf6!} \text{xf6} 21.\text{e5}

10.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{c}6\) 11.a3 \(\text{d}4\) 12.\(\text{e}2\)

Preparing the standard move \(\text{e}4\).

After the immediate:

12.\(\text{e}4\)

Black can reply:

12...\(\text{f}4\)! 13.\(\text{xf4}\) \(\text{xe4}\)

Removing the knight that White had hoped would be a lasting influence.

14.\(\text{g}5\) \(\text{g}6\) 15.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{b}8\)

This seemed solid enough for Black in Korchnoi – Sadler, Arnhem 1999. A possible continuation is:

16.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 17.\(\text{h}3\) 0-0 18.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 19.\(\text{xc}6\) \(\text{hxg6}\)

Followed by ...\(\text{d}5\).

12...\(\text{xc}3\)

A risky decision. In the long run Black will have difficulties holding back White’s central pawns.

As ever, there are alternatives:

12...\(\text{e}7\) 13.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{h}6\) 14.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{a}6\) 15.\(\text{c}5!\) \(\text{xc}5\)

16.\(\text{dxc}5\) \(\text{d}7\) 17.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{e}7\) 18.\(\text{e}4\) White’s space gave him a clear advantage in Gavrikov – Brunner, Biel 1995.

12...\(\text{d}7\) 13.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{b}5\) 14.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 15.\(\text{dxc}5\)

16.\(\text{xc}2\) 17.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{e}7\) 18.\(\text{c}1\) Again the extra space secures some positional advantage. The knight on d5 is good of course, but you can play around it.

13.bxc3 \(\text{e}7\) 14.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{d}7\) 15.\(\text{c}4\)
28.e6!
Very energetic and direct play by Sakaev. He weakens the white squares around the black king. The final assault is not far off.

28...\texttt{d6} 29.e5 \texttt{xe5} 30.xe5 \texttt{f6} 31.e3 \texttt{w7} 32.xc4 \texttt{e8} 33.w4 \texttt{g6} 34.xg3 \texttt{w7} 35.c2?!

Probably time trouble. 35.c7 \texttt{d6} 36.xg6! \texttt{xd6} 37.xg6 \texttt{g6} 38.xg6 won at once.

35...\texttt{d6} 36.xe2 \texttt{a5} 37.xg6!
Now he sees it.

37...\texttt{xg6} 38.xg6 \texttt{g6} 39.xg6
The e-pawn will cost Black a rook.

39...\texttt{xa3} 40.e7 \texttt{a8} 41.e8=\texttt{w}↑ \texttt{xe8} 42.xe8↑ \texttt{g7} 43.e4 1–0

Conclusion: A good illustration of what extra space can do. Black has the nice square d5, but White’s extra room to manoeuvre tells.

Probably 5...\texttt{b6} is Black’s best bet.

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**Game 19**

**Bu Xiangzhi – Karjakin**

**Bilbao 2007**

1.d4 \texttt{d5} 2.c4 \texttt{dxc4} 3.e4 \texttt{f6} 4.e5 \texttt{d5} 5.xc4 \texttt{b6} 6.d3

6.b3 is also popular and leads to complex play, but I think 6.d3 is more positional, especially in connection with the following move.

6...\texttt{c6} 7.\texttt{e3}
Instead 7.\texttt{e2} is seen in most games, when 7...\texttt{g4} 8.f3 \texttt{e6} is the mainline. I like 7.\texttt{e3}
because it causes Black some trouble figuring out what to do with the light-squared bishop, which cannot go to f5 or g4.

The point – White will have to make a concession. If Black plays less boldly, say 8...c6, then White’s extra space should, as usual, secure an edge.

9.exf6
Nobody has allowed 9.a3 f4! 10.exf4 f5 with numerous threats.

9...exf6 10.f3
10.a3 allows 10...f5 with good counterplay.

10...f5 11.b1
Karpov has ventured 11.b3 but did not really get anything: 11...d5 12.d2 b6 13.h3 c7 14.0-0 0-0 15.e1 c7 16.f5 d5 17.d7 18.g5 f6 19.exf6 xf6 20.b3 c6 Karpov – Shirov, Wijk aan Zee 2003.

11...d6
11...d5 12.b3 d6 transposes.

12.f3 d5

7...g6 8.c3 g7 This time it is the dark-squared bishop that Black is trying to improve.

9.ge2 0-0 10.e4 b4 11.b3 a5 12.f4 e6 13.a3 d5 14.fxd5 exd5 15.xd5 a4 16.a2 a5 17.c4 xc4 18.xc4 White is a pawn up, Timman – Korchnoi, Pula 1997.

13.g5
Disrupting Black’s development.

13.d7
Clumsy, but 13...e7 loses a tempo: 14.d2 0-0 15.0-0 with a pleasant position for White.
For example, 15...\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xc3 16.bxc3 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)e6 17.e1 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)d5 18.d3 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)c4 19.e4 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xe4 20.e5 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f7 21.xf7 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xf7 22.b3\(±\) Shirov – Ponomariov, Linares 2002.

14.0–0 0–0 15.e1

A natural developing move. Interesting was 15.a4 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f7 16.a2 when the bishop comes alive. 16...\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)e6 17.a5 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)d7 18.b5\(±\) \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f6 19.xe6 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xe6 20.c1 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)e8 21.c2 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)d5\(±\) 22.xd6 cxd6 23.xc8\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f7 1–0 Saunders – Milligan, corr. 2001. Black threw in the towel a bit early. 23...\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)c8 24.xc8\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f7 25.c7 was not much fun, though it is far from over.

15.h6 16.d2 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f7 17.a4

Preparing to chase the knight with a4-a5. Also playable is 17.xd5 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xd5 18.e2 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)d7 19.e5 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xe5 20.xe5 c6 and now 21.b3 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)e8 22.xd5 cxd5 23.f4 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xe5 24.xe5 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)c8 was not enough to win in Anastasian – Van den Doel, Gothenburg 2005, but simply 21.b3 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)e8 22.ae1 and White is better.

17...\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)e6 18.b5!

Bu relentlessly harasses his opponent. Black's opening play has left a hole on e5 and somewhat weakened his kingside, but now Bu also points at the queenside as a possible new frontier.

18...\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f6

There is no easy solution.

18...\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)c4 19.a2 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xd2 20.xd2 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)fd8 is not satisfactory, as 21.e2 offers pressure.

18...a6 19.xd6 cxd6 23.xd6 23.xc8\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f7 25.c7 was not much fun, though it is far from over.

19.a5 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)bd5 20.a6

Very instructive play: White fixes a permanent weakness on a7. Later it will decide the game.

20.b6 21.e2 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)e4

Giving up a pawn, as instead 21...\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)e8 22.e5! \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xe5 23.dxe5 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)d7 24.b3 was horrible.

22.xe4 fxe4 23.xe4 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f5 24.h4 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)d3

24...d7 25.xd6 cxd6 26.g3, hitting d6, is also good for White.

25.c3 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xc3

25...\(\text{\textct{Q}}\)e4\(??\), to introduce some complications, was maybe a better try.

26.xc3 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)f4 27.xf4 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)xf4 28.e5 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)b5 29.g3 \(\text{\textct{Q}}\)h8 30.f4
This was a blindfold rapid game, but White exploits his pawn advantage in exemplary style.

30...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{A}}d8} 31.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{c}}}g2 \textit{c5} 32.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{d}}xc5} \textit{\textsc{A}xc5} 33.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{h}}}4 \textit{\textsc{Fe8}} 34.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{h}}}5 \textit{\textsc{d}6} 35.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{h}}}3 \textit{\textsc{A}xe5}

Of course the opposite-coloured bishops give Black some drawing chances, but maybe this is not the wisest thing to do anyway. Now \textit{a7} is really weak and difficult to defend, and White can keep pressing for the full point without any risk.

36.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{A}}xe5} \textit{\textsc{A}xe5} 37.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{A}}xe5} \textit{\textsc{f}7} 38.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{g}}}4 \textit{\textsc{B}d3}\
39.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{h}}}4 \textit{\textsc{B}d7} 40.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{b}}}b8 \textit{\textsc{A}e2} 41.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{b}}}4 \textit{\textsc{A}b5} 42.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{e}}}5 \textit{\textsc{A}e6} 43.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{e}}}a3 \textit{\textsc{f}7} 44.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{g}}}5 \textit{\textsc{hxg5}} 45.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{f}}}xg5 \textit{\textsc{B}e7} 46.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{g}}}6 47.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{g}}}8 48.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{g}}}3 \textit{\textsc{B}e8}\

This looks like a mouse slip. 48...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{B}e7}} 49.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{f}}}4\

49.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{A}}xa7} \textit{\textsc{Ba8}} 50.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{A}}xb6}

1–0

\textbf{Conclusion}: Positionally, 3...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{A}}f6} is not completely sound. White simply gets too much space for Black to equalize, and the move 5...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textsc{A}}b6} does not alter this view.

\textbf{Chapter Conclusion}: The Queen’s Gambit Accepted is a very concrete opening, so it is fitting to answer sharply and resolutely with 3.\textit{e}4. The variations are rich and complicated: every line contains difficult positional and tactical motifs, and you have to know a lot to be confident with White. However, I think the games show that at the bottom line White is on top! I admit that 3.\textit{e}4 is a demanding move to play, but sometimes you need bigger equipment.

The key elements to mastering 3.\textit{e}4 are to make use of the extra space and to always fight for the initiative.
Chapter 3

The Slav

Good news for the people who love bad news
– Modest Mouse

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

The Rare 3...dxc4
The 5...Ng6 Variation
The 5...Ng4 Variation
The 5...e6 Variation
The Mainline: 5...f5 6.Qe5
The 6...Nc6 Variation
The Mainline – Part One:
The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0–0–0

The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0–0
The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...b5 etc.
Kramnik’s ending
The Mainline - Part Two:
The Classical Move – 11...f6
Morozевич’s 11...g5
Sokolov’s Variation – 7...Nb6

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page 90  page 93  page 95  page 97  page 99  page 102  page 105
1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

The Slav. One of the most popular openings in modern chess. Black protects d5 and secures his influence in the centre. If White takes on d5 with cxd5 then Black just takes back with his c-pawn and the status quo is maintained. In contrast to the Queen’s Gambit Declined with 2...e6, Black does not close the diagonal for his light-squared bishop and hopes to bring it out to f5 or g4. This is all fairly easy to grasp but the real secret of the Slav is much deeper. Actually Black plans to play ...dxc4 voluntarily! It turns out that the innocuous looking move 2...c6 not only protects d5, but can also help to follow up ...dxc4 with ...b5 securing the pawn.

3.±f3 6f6

Black can disrupt matters by venturing 3...dxc4. On 4.e3 he can continue sharply with 4...b5 or try the interesting 4...±e6?!. Game 20 shows that White gets the upper hand but 3...dxc4 should not be underestimated.

3...e6 4.±c3 is a frequently employed move order to reach the Semi-Slav or the Triangle variations, which are both covered later in the book.

4.±c3

4...dxc4

The Slav move. Black breaks the symmetry to get chances of his own. 4...e6 would of course lead to the Semi-Slav – see Chapter 4. 4...a6 is the a6-Slav – see Chapter 5. A few alternatives need to be mentioned:

4...g6 is a mix between the Slav and the Grunfeld. A simple answer is 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.±f4± with a good Exchange Slav, as the bishop is misplaced on g7.

4...±f5 is premature, as 5.cxd5 cxd5 6.±b3 is annoying.

4...±b6 is occasionally played. A simple reaction is 5.e3 ±f5 (safer but not satisfactory is 5...±g4 6.h3 ±xf3 7.±xf3± and White enjoys the pair of bishops) 6.±e5! with the idea 6...e6 7.±g4 ±g6 8.h4±.

5.a4

Preventing b7-b5. Afterwards White will win the pawn back.

5...±f5

Again the main Slav move. Black develops the light-squared bishop to an active post and fights for control over the important e4-square. However there are many other possible moves:
5...\(\square a6\) The knight is perhaps on its way to the good square \(\text{b}4\). The problem is that it does nothing to fight for the centre. White naturally continues 6.e4 – see Game 21.

5...\(\square g4\) is an alternative way to develop the bishop, but there is a drawback: White can activate his knight with 6.\(\square e5\) and gain the better prospects – see Game 22.

5...e6 almost looks too modest, but it is a very solid line – see Game 23.

Occasionally Black tries to confuse his opponent with 5...\(\square d5\), but a good response is 6.e3 \(\square xc3\) 7.bxc3 b5 8.\(\square e5\) \(\square d5\) 9.\(\square e2\) \(\square f5\) 10.\(\text{f}3\)±.

Also possible is 5...c5 when 6.e4 cxd4 7.\(\square xd4\) \(\square xd4\) 8.\(\square xd4\) e5 9.\(\square db5\) \(\square a6\) 10.\(\square xc4\)± leads to a pleasant endgame for White.

Finally, 5...a5 6.e4 \(\square g4\) 7.\(\square xc4\) e6 8.0–0 \(\square b4\) 9.\(\square d3\)?? \(\square xf3\) 10.\(\text{gxf3}\) \(\square bd7\) 11.\(\text{f}4\) looked promising for White in Avrukh – Welling, Kemer 2007.

6.\(\square e5\)

![Chess Diagram]

This is our repertoire choice. White plans to play \(\text{f}3\) followed by e4, taking the centre. Black has many counter-ideas and the play generally becomes very sharp.

More balanced is 6.e3 e6 7.\(\square xc4\) \(\square b4\) 8.0–0 0–0 with a typical Slav position. White can try to expand in the centre with 9.\(\square e2\) but even after 9...\(\square bd7\) 10.e4 \(\square g6\) Black is very solid, as has been confirmed in hundreds of games. 6.\(\square e5\) is a more direct way of playing. It will be covered in great detail in Games 24-31, but first I will deal with the rare Slav lines.

**The Rare 3...dxc4**

**Game 20**

**Delchev – Sommerbauer**

European Team Championship, Leon 2001

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\(\square f3\) dxc4

4.e3 b5

The most natural, but there is another move:

4...\(\square e6\)!!

By protecting the pawn, Black disturbs the harmony of White’s play. Fortunately the bishop also obstructs Black’s own development. The most promising reply is:
5. \( \text{c3} \)
Fighting for the initiative.
White can go for the c-pawn: 5.a4 \( \text{\textit{f6}} \)
6.\( \text{\textit{a3}} \) but then Black gets counterplay with
6...c5 and is close to equality.

5...b5
5...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 6.\( \text{\textit{g5}} \) \( \text{\textit{d5}} \) 7.e4 h6 8.exd5 hxg5
9.dxc6 \( \text{\textit{xc6}} \) 10.d5 \( \text{\textit{e5}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{xg5}} \) is good
for White.

6.\( \text{\textit{c2}} \)
Taking advantage of the clumsy bishop on
e6. White just develops: he is not afraid of
being a pawn down.
6.a4 b4 7.\( \text{\textit{e2?!}} \) \( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 8.\( \text{\textit{f4}} \) is an interesting
new way of playing that also looks quite
good.

6...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 7.0-0 g6
7...\( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 8.a4 b4 9.\( \text{\textit{e5}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe2}} \) 10.\( \text{\textit{xe2}} \) was
good for White who is ready to take his

8.\( \text{\textit{g5}} \) \( \text{\textit{c8}} \)
Similar is 8...\( \text{\textit{d7}} \) 9.b3 h6 10.\( \text{\textit{ge4}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) 11.\( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) cxb3 12.axb3 \( \text{\textit{g7}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{d2}} \) 0-0
14.\( \text{\textit{a5}} \) \( \text{\textit{c8}} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{c1}} \) with great positional
compensation for the pawn, Nikitin –
Chuprikov, Russia 2008.

9.b3
9.a4 is another way to get good play for the
pawn.
9...h6 10.\( \text{\textit{ge4}} \) b4 11.\( \text{\textit{xf6}} \) e6 12.\( \text{\textit{e4}} \) f5
13.\( \text{\textit{c5}} \) c3 14.a3 \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) 15.dxc5 \( \text{\textit{a6}} \) 16.\( \text{\textit{c2}} \)
0-0 17.axb4 \( \text{\textit{xe2}} \) 18.\( \text{\textit{xe2}} \) \( \text{\textit{d5}} \) 19.\( \text{\textit{c2}} \) a5
20.bxa5 \( \text{\textit{xc5}} \) 21.\( \text{\textit{d2}} \) \( \text{\textit{a6}} \) 22.\( \text{\textit{xc3}} \)

Wang Yue – Zhang Pengxiang, Shandong
2007.

5.a4 e6

A key position that can also be reached from
the Queen’s Gambit Accepted. In fact, that is
how it came about in this particular game. I
changed the move order to make it fit, but in
reality it was 1.c4 e6 2.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) d5 3.d4 dxc4 4.e3
b5 5.a4 c6.

6.axb5
The most straightforward.

Interesting alternatives are 6.b3 and 6.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \).

6...\( \text{\textit{cxb5}} \) 7.b3
White wins the pawn back. If ...\( \text{\textit{xb3}} \) then
b5 hangs with check.

7.\( \text{\textit{b4}} \)
This forces complications, but it probably
is an unsound approach. Even so, it was too
late for safe alternatives. 7...\( \text{\textit{f6}} \) 8.bxc4 bxc4
9.\( \text{\textit{xc4}} \) has been seen in several games. With
good development, an extra pawn in the
centre and a potential weakness on a7, White
is better.

8.\( \text{\textit{d2}} \) \( \text{\textit{xd2}} \) 9.\( \text{\textit{bxd2}} \) a5 10.bxc4 b4
This is Black's cunning idea. He gets two connected passed pawns on the queenside, but they are not so dangerous. White is ahead in development and his big centre should count for more.

11...d3

11.e5 dxe5 12.dxe5 has been suggested, but after 12...exd7 13.c5 0-0 14.dxe4 dxe5 15.dxe5 b6 16.xe6 a6! 17.xa6 xa6 18.0-0 f6 19.d3 xc6 Black held in Adams – Rausis, Yerevan 1996. Furthermore Black can try 12...d7.

However White can also vary. After 11.e5 dxe5 interesting is 12.e2 0-0 13.f3 a6 14.0-0.

11...f6 12.0-0 0-0 13.c2

A good alternative is 13.e4 e5 14.c2! exd4 15.e5 dxe5 16.xh7† h8 17.e4 when the d4-pawn is weak. 17...a6 18.b3 c7 19.f3 a4 20.bxa4 dxe5 21.xa4† xf3† 22.xf3 xaq4 23.xa4 xc4 This was Kakageldyev – Ivanov, Ashkhabad 1996, and now 24.a5! with the threat h5† was very strong.

13...b7

If 13...b7 then 14.e4 creates a big centre: 14...h5 15.e5 h6 16.h7† h8 17.e4+ Lannaioli – Raessell, corr. 2002.

14.c5 b7

15.b5

15.e4 h6 16.b5 c7 17.a2 c6! 18.xc6 xc6 19.xa6 was very good for White in L.B. Hansen – Engqvist, Gausdal 1990, but Black should have tried 17...a6.

15...c7 16.f1 e6 17.xc6 xc6

18.a4!

Blockading the pawns.

18...a6 19.ca1 xa8 20.b3 c7 21.e4†

The black pawns are effectively blocked; now the big white centre can show its muscles.

21...b8 22.e5 c6 23.xc6 xc6 24.f3 wc7 25.d2 h5!
26.d5!
The breakthrough.

26...exd5 27.exd5 h4 28.d6 c6 29.g5 d7 30.xa5 h3 31.xd4 xax5 32.xa5 c8 33.f5 xax5 34.xg7# 1–0

Conclusion: It is risky for Black to give up the centre with 3...dx4 and 4...b5. The black pawns on the queenside can be blocked while the white centre is much more dynamic.

The 5...a6 Variation

Game 21

Mikhailovskii – Rabinovich

Dieren 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.f3 f6 4.c3 dx4 5.a4 a6

6.e4 g4 7.xc4 xf3

Destroying the white pawn chain. Playing more quietly with 7...e6 8.0–0 e7 9.e3 0–0 10.e2 b4 11.acl a5 12.h3 h5 13.tf1 looks like a more typical Slav position, where White has the usual better chances due to his extra space.

8.xf3 e6

8...b4 9.0–0 e6 10.h1 a5 11.g1 h6 12.e3 0–0–0 13.b3 h8 14.e2 also seemed promising for White in Avrukh – Kogan, Israel 2008.

It is easier for White to get something going against the black king than the other way around.

9.e3

White could wait a little with this move. 9.0–0 e7 10.h1 0–0 11.g1 g6 12.f4 is a good alternative, for instance 12...a5 13.f3 e5 14.e3 b4 15.e2 c7 16.a5! seemed very promising for White in Rogozenko – Shirov, Germany 2001.

9...b4 10.0–0 e7 11.h1!

Once again we see this instructive manoeuvre.

11...0–0 12.g1

A sideline, but not without its logic. The knight has a fine square on b4 and the bishop can still be developed to an active post at g4. The drawback is that White gets the chance to grab the centre. A chance he should definitely take.
The rook gets to the open file and hits Black's king position.

12...\textit{h}8

The king steps out of the way; 12...g6 13.f4 just increases the problems.

13.f4 e5

Black naturally tries to find counterplay.

14.dxc5 \textit{c}8

14...\textit{c}7 is worse: 15.e5 \textit{d}7 Stefansson – Gretarsson, Alborg 1998, and now 16.\textit{b}5 \textit{c}6\textdagger 17.\textit{g}2 \textit{xc}5 18.\textit{d}6 b6 (or 18...\textit{xd}6 19.exd6 with the idea \textit{d}4) 19.f5 gives White a strong initiative.

15.e5 \textit{d}7

The intermediate check with 15...\textit{c}6\textdagger is nothing: 16.\textit{g}2 \textit{ad}8 17.\textit{b}3 \textit{fd}5 18.\textit{b}5 \textit{c}7 19.e4 Black has not regained the pawn.

In his notes for ChessBase the winner suggested 15...\textit{fd}5, but it is refuted by 16.\textit{xd}5! \textit{exd}5 17.\textit{b}5 \textit{xc}5 18.\textit{c}1 b6 19.\textit{d}6 \textit{c}6 20.\textit{d}4.\textdagger

16.e4 b6?!

On 16...\textit{xc}5 White had 17.\textit{d}6, but 16...\textit{c}6 should have been tried. Now White gets a promising attacking position.

17.\textit{h}5! \textit{b}7

Or 17...\textit{xc}5 18.\textit{xc}5 \textit{bxc}5 19.\textit{g}3! with overwhelming threats. The other rook can come to g1 and the rook on the third rank can switch to h3 as well.

18.f3

Now Black had to try 18...g6, but he totally misses White's biggest threat.

18...\textit{c}2?
Black gets the bishop out. Of course White can take the centre with 6.e4, but it is even more tempting to win a tempo on the newly developed piece.

6.\(c5\) \(d5\)

The standard move. However White should be aware of the tricky line:

6...\(d7\)!

With the point 7.\(xg4\) \(xg4\) 8.e4 e5 9.\(xg4\) exd4 with good compensation for the piece. This line was suggested by Palliser as a surprise weapon for Black in Dangerous Weapons: The Queen’s Gambit. A safe choice for White is 8.e3 \(gf6\) 9.\(xc4\) e6 10.0-0 \(b4\) which looks like a normal Slav where Black has given up his light-squared bishop for a knight. His structure is solid, but with the pair of bishops and more space White should be better after something like 11.\(c2\) 0-0 12.\(d1\) \(a5\) 13.e4±.

White can just take the pawn back with:

7.\(xc4\)

After:

7...\(c7\) 8.g3 e5 9.dxe5 \(xe5\) 10.\(f4\)

Play is very similar to the \(f5\)-Slav which will be covered below.

10.\(d8\)

10...\(d7\) 11.\(xe5\) \(xe5\) 12.\(d4\) highlights the difference: the bishop on g4 hangs.

Now Palliser’s analysis goes: 12.\(xe5\) \(xe5\) 13.\(f6\) 14.\(f4\) \(e6!\) Which seems fine for Black, for instance: 15.b3 b6 16.fxe5 \(c5\) 17.\(c1\) \(xc4\) 18.\(xc4\) \(xe5\) and Black has compensation.

In light of this, the simple 12.\(g2\) springs to mind. It must be better for White, but the position should be carefully compared with the \(f5\)-lines.

7.f3

Preparing to seize the centre.

7...\(d7\)

The refined move.

On 7...e6 White could continue automatically with 8.e4 but there is a more interesting possibility:

8.g4!

And now there are three options:

8...\(d7\) 9.h4 \(e7\) 10.\(e3\) \(xe5\) 11.dxe5 \(xh4\) 12.\(xh4\) \(xh4\) 13.\(f2\) \(h2\) 14.\(e4\) \(xe5\) Beliavsky – Corrette, Linares 2003.

15.\(d6\) 16.\(xc4\) \(d5\) 17.\(b3\) \(d8\) 18.\(xb7\) \(d7\) 19.e4 \(g5\) 20.gxh5 White is winning material.

8...\(d5\) 9.e4 \(h4\) 10.\(e2\) \(xc3\) 11.bxc3 \(g6\)
Chapter 3 - The Slav

After 11...f6 12.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xc}4\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{f}7\) 13.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{e}3\) the black queen is feeling uncomfortable.
12.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{f}4\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}7\) 13.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{b}1\) 0–0–0 14.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{g}3\) \(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{f}6\) 15.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xc}4\) h5 16.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{h}3\) h4 17.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}6\) g6 18.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xd}6\) \(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{g}5\) 19.\(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{b}4\) ± Joppich – Kribben, corr. 2005.

8...\(\text{\textit{e}}\!\!\text{g}6\) 9.h4 h6 10.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{x}g6\) fxg6 11.e4 c5 Sosonko – Timman, Tilburg 1983, and now 12.d5! exd5 13.e5 is very promising.

8.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xc}4\) e5

A typical counter-strike.

9.e4

If White takes the pawn with 9.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xe}5\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xe}5\) 10.dxe5 then 10...\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}7\) 11.\(\text{\textit{f}}\!\!\text{f}4\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{b}4\) follows with great compensation.

The big mainline is 9.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{e}4\) \(\text{\textit{b}}\!\!\text{b}4\) 10.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}2\) \(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{e}7\) when the simplest is 11.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xe}5\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xe}5\) 12.dxe5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}7\) 13.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}6\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xd}6\) 14.exd6 \(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{xd}6\) 15.\(\text{\textit{c}}\!\!\text{c}3\) with the pair of bishops in an open position.

However, after some study, I like 9.e4 more and more. It has been neglected by theory basically because the complications have been misjudged. In fact it is very poisonous, as some correspondence games show.

9...\(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{h}4\)†

The main move, but after this game Black will probably be forced to search in new directions:

9...exd4 10.\(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{xd}4\) is no good: White is positionally dominant.

9...f6 10.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{e}3\)

10...\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{f}7\)

10...\(\text{\textit{b}}\!\!\text{b}4\) is also possible, but White can secure an edge in various ways. For example:
11.dxe5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xe}5\) 12.\(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{b}3\) \(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{e}7\) 13.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xe}5\) fxe5 14.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{c}4\) ± Romanko – Sergienko, Russia 2008.
11.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{e}2\)

11.a5±, taking b6 from the black knight, is a good alternative.
11...\(\text{\textit{b}}\!\!\text{b}6\) 12.d5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}7\)

The wild 12...\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}5\) 13.exd5 cxd5 is countered by 14.\(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{b}3!\) dxc4 15.\(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{b}7\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}7\) 16.0–0–0 \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{c}8\), Zpevaková – Dolgov, corr. 2002, and now 17.\(\text{\textit{f}}\!\!\text{f}4\) to open lines looks very strong.

13.0–0

Maybe better is 13.a5 \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{c}4\) 14.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xc}4\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{c}5\) 15.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xc}5\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xc}5\) 16.\(\text{\textit{b}}\!\!\text{b}4\) when White has taken over the initiative: 16...\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{d}7\) 17.0–0 0–0 18.\(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{d}3\) and White's extra space gives room for optimism.
13...\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{c}4\) 14.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xc}4\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{c}5\) 15.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xc}5\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{c}5\) 16.a5 0–0 17.b4 cxd5 18.\(\text{\textit{w}}\!\!\text{xd}5\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xd}5\) 19.\(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{xd}5\) \(\text{\textit{d}}\!\!\text{e}6\)
20...c1  h8 21...c7  xc7 22...xd8  fxd8
23...xc7
White had the more active rook in Izeta Txabarri – Lima, Leon 1997, but Black held the game.

9...b4 10.dxe5 0–0 11...e3
Just developing. White has also had success with the sharper moves 11.h4 and 11...f4.
11...c7 12...e2  xe5 13...xe5  xe5
14.0–0±  c7
Or 14...xc3 15.bxc3  xc3 16...d4 with excellent compensation.
15.a5  d7 16...b3  c5 17...xc5  xc5 18...c4  c8 19...d1  h8 20...b4  d8 21...f1  f6
22...a4  xa4  23...xc7  xc7  24.xa4  f7
25...d6  e7  26...d4  g8 27...d7  xd7
28...xd7  b8 29.b4±
With a great ending, Grischuk – Korotylev, Moscow 2006.

10.g3
10...e2 is interesting and probably also fine, but White can already force matters.

10...f6 11.dxe5  xf3
11...dxe5 is very rarely tried. Probably because 12...xe5  xe5 13...f4 gives White very good play, for instance 13...a5 14.h4 h6
15.g4  g6 16.h5  h7 17...b3±.

12...d6†

12...d8
The alternatives are not attractive:
12...xd6 13...xd6!  xh1
Black has a rook more, but after:
14...g5
His king is in dire straits. In fact White wins by brutal force:
14...f6 15...xf6  xf6
Or 15...gx6 16...xf6  xf6 17...e6†.
16...xf6  gx6 17...e6†  f8
Or 17...d8 18...xf6†  c7 19...e5†  d7
20...xh5 followed by casting long.
18...xf6†  g8 19...g5†  g6 20.0–0–0  f3
21...e7
The most precise.
21...a6 22...c4†  f7 23...d7  g7
23...f8 24...g5#
24...g5†  f8 25...xb7 1–0
Vayser – Wickens, corr. 1990. Material will soon be pouring in. A possible continuation is:
25...b8 26...h6†  g8 27...xf7†  xf7
28...xf7  xf7 29.e5
The other move also fails to impress:
12...e7
Again White should be ready to sacrifice the rook:
13...b3  c5 14...c4  xh1 15...xc5
It does not look nice for the black king.
15...d7 16...g5†  f6 17.exf6†  xg6 18...xf6†!
xf6 19...e5†  d7 20...f5†  e7 21.e5!  f3
22...xf6†  xd6 23...d1†  xd1†
Losing, but 23...c7 24...a5†  b6 25...e5† leads to mate.
24...xd1  xe8†  25...e2  e5 26...f4  xd1
27...c4  c5 28...f7  g7 29...d2†  c7 30...xd1
h5 31...d3  d8 32...g6  f8 33...f6  d6
34...f3  f8 35.h3  e1 36...g4  h1 37...g
xh3† 38...f2  h2†  39...g1  h4 40...e6  f4
41...f5  c4 42.g6  c5†  43...g2  f2†  44...g3
h4†  45...xh4  h2†  46...g3  1–0
13.\textit{\textbf{Wxf3}} $\textit{\textbf{xf3}}$ 14.\textit{\textbf{Wxf7}}† $\textit{\textbf{e8}}$ 15.\textit{\textbf{e6}}! $\textit{\textbf{c5}}$
Not 15...$\textit{\textbf{Wh1}}$? 16.\textit{\textbf{exd7}}† $\textit{\textbf{xd7}}$ 17.\textit{\textbf{Wh8}}.

16.\textit{\textbf{Wg1}} $\textit{\textbf{b3}}$
Attacking the other white rook. If Black saves his own with 16...$\textit{\textbf{Wg8}}$ then White just plays 17.\textit{\textbf{c4}}†.

17.\textit{\textbf{Ab1}} $\textit{\textbf{c5}}$

Again attacking a rook! Like before, bad is 17...$\textit{\textbf{Wg8}}$ 18.\textit{\textbf{c4}}.

18.\textit{\textbf{Wxh8}}
White had finally had enough.

Interesting was 18.\textit{\textbf{c4}} $\textit{\textbf{xg1}}$ 19.\textit{\textbf{xb3}} $\textit{\textbf{f8}}$ 20.\textit{\textbf{d6}}† $\textit{\textbf{e7}}$ 21.\textit{\textbf{xb7}} which looks crushing. To begin with, $\textit{\textbf{g5}}$† is a threat. 21...$\textit{\textbf{h6}}$ 22.\textit{\textbf{f4}} and now $\textit{\textbf{d6}}$†. It seems winning.

18...\textit{\textbf{xc1}} 19.\textit{\textbf{xc1}} $\textit{\textbf{xg1}}$ 20.\textit{\textbf{e2}} $\textit{\textbf{xe2}}$ 21.\textit{\textbf{xe2}} $\textit{\textbf{d4}}$

The two players played a theme match in this variation. Also tried was 21...$\textit{\textbf{b6}}$ but after 22.\textit{\textbf{xf1}} $\textit{\textbf{a6}}$ 23.\textit{\textbf{f7}} it was even worse.

22.\textit{\textbf{f7}} $\textit{\textbf{e7}}$ 23.\textit{\textbf{d1}} $\textit{\textbf{xc3}}$ 24.\textit{\textbf{bxc3}} $\textit{\textbf{a6}}$

Not 24...$\textit{\textbf{xe6}}$ 25.\textit{\textbf{d8}}† $\textit{\textbf{e7}}$ 26.\textit{\textbf{xb7}}.

25.\textit{\textbf{d6}} $\textit{\textbf{c5}}$

26.\textit{\textbf{xb7}}! $\textit{\textbf{xa4}}$
26...$\textit{\textbf{xb7}}$ 27.\textit{\textbf{d7}}† $\textit{\textbf{xe6}}$ 28.\textit{\textbf{xb7}} is a lost rook ending, but 26...$\textit{\textbf{xe4}}$ was the best chance to stay in the game.

27.\textit{\textbf{d7}}† $\textit{\textbf{xe6}}$ 28.\textit{\textbf{xc7}}
Now White is a clear pawn up.

28...$\textit{\textbf{a5}}$
Or 28...$\textit{\textbf{xc3}}$† 29.\textit{\textbf{d3}} $\textit{\textbf{b5}}$ 30.\textit{\textbf{xb7}}.

29.\textit{\textbf{d3}} $\textit{\textbf{b6}}$ 30.\textit{\textbf{c5}}† $\textit{\textbf{f6}}$ 31.\textit{\textbf{xb7}} $\textit{\textbf{a4}}$
32.\textit{\textbf{c7}}
1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} The once popular 5...$\textit{\textbf{g4}}$ faces a serious crisis after 6.\textit{\textbf{e5}} $\textit{\textbf{h5}}$ 7.\textit{\textbf{f3}} $\textit{\textbf{fd7}}$ 8.\textit{\textbf{xc4}} e5 9.e4.

\textbf{The 5...e6 Variation}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Game 23}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Eljanov – Drozdovskij}
\end{center}

Ukraine (2) 2006

1.\textit{\textbf{d4}} d5 2.c4 c6 3.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{f6}} 4.\textit{\textbf{c3}} dxc4 5.a4 $\textit{\textbf{e6}}$
Attacking e4. Black must go in for the fight, as 6...c5 7.\textit{\textit{c}}xc4 is simply good for White.

7.e5
The most forcing. Good alternatives are 7.\textit{\textit{c}}c2 and 7.\textit{\textit{g}}g5. In all cases White has decent compensation.

7...\textit{\textit{d}}d5
The great attacking player Alekhine was confronted three times with:

7...\textit{\textit{e}}e4 8.\textit{\textit{c}}c2 \textit{\textit{d}}d5
He simply continued:
9.\textit{\textit{e}}e2
Planning to castle. Black is badly coordinated and behind in development.

9...c5
9...0-0 10.0-0 \textit{\textit{c}}xc3 11.bxc3 \textit{\textit{e}}e7 12.\textit{\textit{d}}d2 c5 13.\textit{\textit{c}}xc4 \textit{\textit{d}}d8 14.\textit{\textit{c}}c4 cxd4 15.cxd4 \textit{\textit{d}}d7 16.\textit{\textit{d}}d3 g6 17.\textit{\textit{a}}a3 Alekhine – Helling, Dresden 1936.
10.0-0 \textit{\textit{c}}xc3 11.bxc3 cxd4 12.cxd4
Later he varied with 12.\textit{\textit{d}}xd4 \textit{\textit{c}}c5 13.\textit{\textit{f}}f3 \textit{\textit{d}}d7 14.\textit{\textit{d}}d1 \textit{\textit{c}}c6 15.\textit{\textit{c}}xc4\textit{±} Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Nottingham 1936, when 15...\textit{\textit{f}}xf2\textit{+} 16.\textit{\textit{c}}xf2 \textit{\textit{c}}xc4 17.\textit{\textit{a}}a3 would have left the black king stranded in the centre.

12...c3 13.\textit{\textit{d}}d2 \textit{\textit{a}}a5 14.\textit{\textit{c}}xc3 \textit{\textit{c}}xc3 15.\textit{\textit{a}}a3 \textit{\textit{c}}c6 16.\textit{\textit{c}}xc3 \textit{\textit{d}}d7 17.\textit{\textit{b}}b1\textit{±}
Alekhine – Euwe, Holland (19) 1935.

8.\textit{\textit{d}}d2 b5
The most straightforward. The alternatives are inferior:

8...\textit{\textit{c}}xc3 9.bxc3 b5 10.\textit{\textit{g}}g5
This is a much better version of the main game for White. It can quickly be transformed into an attack. For example:

10...h6
10...f6 11.exf6 \textit{\textit{f}}xf6 12.\textit{\textit{e}}e2 a6 13.\textit{\textit{f}}3 with annoying pressure. Black blundered with
13...h6 14...h5†! ➊xh5 15...xh5† ❼d7 16...f7 ➊e8 17...g6 ❼g8 18...f4 and White was completely winning in yet another Alekhine game, Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany 1929.

11...e4 0–0 12...h5 ❼e7 13...g5! ❼c7 14...f6†!

Winning by force.

14...xf6 15...xf6 ❼d8 16...h4 ❼d5 17.fxg7 ❼e4† 18...e2 ❼e8 19...xh6 ❼h7 20...xh7† ❼xh7 21.axb5 ❼b7 22...xc4 ❼xg7 23...h5 ❼xb5 24...xb5 ❼xg2 25...h6† ❼h7 26...g1 ❼c6 27...f6 ❼xb5 28...g7† 1–0


But the immediate 9...e2 with long-term compensation is of course possible.

9...❼e7

A good defensive move. Very dangerous is 9...0–0 10...c2 f5 11...xf6 ❼xf6 12...e2 with good compensation. 12...❼e7 13.0–0 ❼b7 14...g4! h6 15...xe6† ❼h8 16...ae1 hxg5 17...xg5 White had very powerful play for the piece in Jakubowski – Loeffler, Gausdal 2005.

One of the experts of this line, the Israeli grandmaster Postny, has tried 9...❼e7. After 10...d7 11...e2 c5! Black liberates himself: 12...xb5 cxd4 13.0–0 d3 14...f3 0–0 15...xb4 ❼xb4 16...xd5 exd5 17...c7 ❼xe5 18...xa8 ❼b8† Rodstein – Postny, Israel 2008. 10..h4 was too nonchalant. White should instead try 10...e2, which looks good. A tempo is very important.

Speaking of a tempo, 9...h6 just helps the knight to get to e4.

10...h5 g6 11...h6 ❼b4

Safer was 11...❼f8 12...h3 ❼e7 inviting a repetition. White declines of course! 13...e4 f5 14...xf6 ❼xf6 was Vazquez Igarza – Gonzalez Garcia, Casar de Caceres 2007, and now I like 15...c5. The question is whether Black can enter the complications after 15...❼xd4 16...cxe6 ❼xb2. After 17...d1 the tension is high and a small inaccuracy would mean a zero on the scoreboard. A possible continuation is 17...b4 18...c7† ❼d8 19...g3 ❼bd7 20...xc4 bxc4 21...xb4 ❼xb4† 22...f1 with a strong attack for the piece and at least a draw.

12...0–0–0!

Time is crucial in such sharp positions. White develops and simultaneously protects against the fork on c2. The king’s position is a bit open though, so you should be careful.

A very aggressive idea. 9.axb5 ❼xc3 10.bxc3 cxb5 11...g5 ❼c6 12...h5 ❼e7 13...e2 b4 gives Black adequate counterplay.
12...\text{f}8 13.\text{h}3 \text{h}6

A critical position. I believe White has two simple and very promising lines, and a third which just gives fair compensation. Unfortunately Eljanov chose the latter. Well, he did not have all the time he needed and a computer to aid him. He was not writing a book either, he was just playing a game.

14.\text{c}c4
14.axb5 \text{a}5 15.\text{x}c4± or 14.\text{g}e4 \text{e}7
15.axb5 \text{b}6 16.\text{x}c4 \text{xd}4 17.\text{g}4± both look good.

14...\text{e}7 15.axb5
15.\text{d}6† \text{xd}6 16.\text{exd}6 \text{d}5 17.\text{c}4 \text{f}5 seems fine for Black: 18.\text{g}5 \text{a}5 19.\text{c}5 \text{c}3

15...\text{a}5
Black penetrates with his queen, and the game should end in a perpetual check.

16.\text{xb}4 \text{a}1† 17.\text{c}2 \text{a}4† 18.\text{c}1 \text{a}1† 19.\text{c}2 \text{a}4† 20.\text{d}2?! 

The year this game was played, the Ukrainian Championship was organized as a knock-out tournament. Eljanov had lost the first game and had to play for a win, even if he knew it was suicidal.

20...\text{xb}4† 21.\text{e}3?
21.\text{c}1 was still a draw.

21...\text{xd}1
Now Black wins.

22.\text{xc}4 \text{hx}1 23.\text{xf}7 \text{c}1† 24.\text{f}3 \text{xf}7
25.\text{h}4 \text{g}5 26.\text{h}5† \text{g}7 27.\text{g}3 \text{xc}4 0–1

Conclusion: The sharp gambit 6.e4 is worth a try. White quickly gets a great attacking position in most lines, but he should study Postny’s 9...\text{e}7 which seems to be Black’s best bet. However, even here, the new move 10.\text{e}2 gives White good compensation.

The Mainline: 5...\text{f}5 6.\text{e}5

1.d4 \text{d}5 2.c4 \text{e}6 3.\text{f}3 \text{f}6 4.\text{c}3 dxc4 5.a4 \text{f}5 6.\text{e}5

Black has two major lines. The complicated 6...\text{e}6 which will be covered in Part One, and the old 6...\text{bd}7 which will be covered in Part Two. Before that we will look at quite a tricky sideline: 6...\text{a}6 — see Game 24.

6...\text{e}6 7.\text{f}3

White prepares to take the centre with e4, shutting the black bishop out of the game.
7.\textit{\textit{\textbf{Q}}xc4} \textit{c5} was nothing.

7...\textit{\textbf{b}4}

Black defends tactically. He allows \textit{White} to carry out his plan because he has an interesting piece sacrifice ready. Instead of retreating, Black will part with the problem f5-bishop, get three pawns in the process, and at the same time force the white king out into the open. For a long time this sharp approach was considered satisfactory for Black, but in the computer age the advantage has definitely tipped to the white side and the popularity of this line has declined.

8.e4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe4 9.fxe4 \textit{\textbf{Q}}xe4 10.\textit{\textbf{d}2} \textit{\textbf{W}}xd4 11.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xe4 \textit{\textbf{W}}xe4† 12.\textit{\textbf{e}2} \textit{\textbf{Q}}xd2† 13.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xd2 \textit{\textbf{W}}d5† 14.\textit{\textbf{c}2} \textit{\textbf{a}6} 15.\textit{\textbf{Q}}xc4

After some pretty forced moves (as I have no interest in trying to force a draw with 10.\textit{\textbf{W}}f3) we have arrived at this interesting position, which can be considered the starting point of the bishop sacrifice line. Apparently Black is very active and \textit{White} has problems with both his king and his development. That is a superficial judgement though. In reality, \textit{White} has good chances to untangle and in the long run, especially in endings, the bishop has proved to be stronger than the three pawns. This line was a vital part of Vladimir Kramnik's \textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{W}}}White repertoire} when the young Russian made his way into the world elite in the 90s. I have collected a trio of his games that show how he handles three different set-ups for Black: long castling, short castling or the direct assault 15...\textit{b5}. They are Games 25-27. Enjoy.

Speaking of Kramnik, he has also influenced the black side and recently promoted a sideline.

1.d4 \textit{\textbf{d}5} 2.c4 \textit{\textbf{c}6} 3.\textit{\textbf{f}3} \textit{\textbf{f}6} 4.\textit{\textbf{c}3} dxc4 5.a4 \textit{\textbf{f}5} 6.\textit{\textbf{e}5} \textit{\textbf{e}6} 7.f3 \textit{\textbf{c}5}

This used to be considered dubious.

8.e4 \textit{\textbf{g}6}

But the bad reputation was because \textit{White} generally tried 8...\textit{cx}d4, which is indeed rather loose. The bishop move was thought to be a positional disaster.

9.\textit{\textbf{e}3} \textit{\textbf{c}xd}4 10.\textit{\textbf{w}xd}4 \textit{\textbf{w}xd}4 11.\textit{\textbf{w}d}7 \textit{\textbf{f}d}7 12.\textit{\textbf{c}xd}7 \textit{\textbf{c}xd}7 13.\textit{\textbf{c}xc}4 \textit{\textbf{a}6}

14.\textit{\textbf{e}2} \textit{\textbf{g}8}

The ending looks good for \textit{White} but in the notorious World Championship match against Topalov, Kramnik drew fairly easily with \textit{Black}. However \textit{White} can safely press for the full point. See Game 28 if you want to know how it is best done.
The 6...\textit{a}6 Variation

Game 24

Navrotescu – Itkis

Romania 1998

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\textit{d}f3 \textit{d}f6 4.\textit{c}c3 dxc4 5.a4 \textit{f}f5 6.\textit{e}5 \textit{a}6

9.0–0

A tricky line that scores quite well, but only because many White players answer automatically with 7.f3, but in this unusual case 7.e3 is the correct path.

7.e3

On 7.f3 Black plays 7...\textit{d}d7 and gets good counterplay after 8.\textit{d}xc4 e5! with one point being 9.dxe5 \textit{w}h4† and ...\textit{w}xc4.

7...\textit{b}4

The idea: Black activates the knight and threatens ...\textit{c}c2†.

8.\textit{x}c4

White can also use tricks.

8...e6

Not 8...\textit{c}c2† 9.\textit{w}xc2 \textit{w}xc2 10.\textit{w}xf7#.

9...\textit{e}7

The normal solid approach. There are two other possibilities, however they are somewhat speculative.

9...\textit{d}d6 10.\textit{w}e2 \textit{c}c2 11.\textit{b}b1 \textit{w}xe5

11...\textit{d}d5 12.\textit{d}d2 \textit{b}6 and now the new move 13.\textit{b}3 is very promising. For instance: 13...\textit{w}xe5 14.dxe5 \textit{e}3 15.\textit{g}g4 \textit{xf}1 16.\textit{x}g7 \textit{f}8 17.\textit{xf}1 \textit{wd}2 18.\textit{d}d1 \textit{wd}1† 19.\textit{xd}1 \textit{d}a1 20.\textit{xe}6! \textit{f}xe6 21.\textit{xb}7 \textit{dd}8 22.\textit{c}c3†

The queen and lots of pawns completely dominate the two rooks and knight.

12.dxe5 \textit{g}4

This used to be a pet line of Pia Cramling. She had to search for something else, because in this game her opponent refuted it!

13.e4! \textit{d}d4 14.\textit{d}d3 \textit{xe}5 15.\textit{g}3

And there is trouble all over.

15...f6 16.\textit{w}g7 \textit{f}8 17.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xc}4 18.\textit{xb}7 \textit{dd}6 19.\textit{w}h7 \textit{d}6xf5 20.\textit{d}e3†

White had a pawn more in Gyimesi – P. Cramling, Gibraltar 2006.

9...\textit{c}2!? 10.\textit{w}e2 \textit{d}d7

This was recently played by Kramnik against Carlsen, although just in a blitz game! At least White should be able to get the standard advantage based on space.
11.\(\text{\textit{Q}}\text{xd7} \text{\textit{Q}}\text{xd7} \) 12.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{5} \text{\textit{a}}\text{e7} \) 13.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{a2} \text{\textit{a}}\text{xa2} \) 14.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xa2} \text{\textit{a}}\text{g6} \) 15.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d1} \) 0–0 16.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{4} \text{\textit{a}}\text{d8} \) 17.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{3} \) \(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h8} \) 18.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{f4} \) \(\text{\textit{f5}} \) 19.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{xf5} \) \(\text{\textit{xf5}} \) 20.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{e5±} \) c5?!

Carlsen – Kramnik, Moscow (blitz) 2008, and here the rising star missed the winning: 21.g4 \(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g6} \) 22.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xe6}! \)

10.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{e2} \) h6

Giving the bishop a retreat square. 10...0–0 11.e4 \(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g6} \) 12.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{d1} \) is worse for Black. In addition to his space superiority White can take the bishop pair with \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xg6} \) whenever he likes.

11.e4 \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{h7} \) 12.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{d1} \) 0–0 13.\(\text{\textit{f}}\text{4} \) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{a5} \)

13...\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e8} \) 14.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{ac1} \) \(\text{\textit{f}}\text{8} \) was too passive: 15.\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b3} \) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e7} \) 16.\(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g3±} \) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d7} \) 17.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{g4} \) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{d8} \)
18.\(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h3} \) \(\text{\textit{g}}\text{g6} \) 19.\(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e2} \) \(\text{\textit{f}}\text{6} \) 20.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{h4} \) \(\text{\textit{f}}\text{7} \) 21.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{f4} \) \(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h7} \) 22.\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b3} \) and White was winning in Ruck – Ivanišević, Kladovo 2001.

14.\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b3} \) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{d8} \) 15.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{ac1} \)

Black has great difficulties improving his position. The lack of space begins to tell, and the bishop on h7 is a headache that just won’t go away.

15...\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{d7} \)

Trying to exchange White’s strong knight, but it can move in a new direction.

16.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c4} \) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{a6} \)

The queen found the last square available.

17.\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b3} \) \(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h8} \)

On 17...c5 White’s biggest problem is choosing between 18.d5 or 18.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{b5} \).

18.\(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c7}! \) \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c8} \) 19.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d6} \) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e8} \)

Not 19...\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xd6} \) 20.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xd6} \) attacking c8 and f7.

20.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{g3} \)

The pressure is already decisive. Black tries to get some counterplay, but only hastens his downfall.

20...c5 21.\(\text{\textit{b}}\text{b5} \) \(\text{\textit{c}}\text{c6} \) 22.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xa7} \) \(\text{\textit{xe4}} \) 23.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xe7} \) \(\text{\textit{xa7}} \) 24.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{d6} \) \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e2} \) 25.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{ac8} \)

Trapping the rook.

25...\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{d3} \) 26.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xe7} \) \(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xcl} \) 27.\(\text{\textit{d}}\text{xcl} \) cxd4
28.b4 \(\text{\textit{e}}\text{e5} \) 29.f4

Unfortunately he missed the spectacular 29.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xe5}! \) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xe5} \) 30.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xf7} \) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xf7} \) 31.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{c8} \) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{g8} \) 32.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{g6} \) \(\text{\textit{h}}\text{h7} \) 33.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xe5}. \) In the end the extra piece decides, though the technical phase is not as convincing as the opening phase.

29...\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{c6} \) 30.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xc6} \) bxc6 31.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xc6} \) \(\text{\textit{a}}\text{xb2} \) 32.\(\text{\textit{a}}\text{c7} \)
32.\(\text{Exf7}\)\(\uparrow\) \(\text{Exf7}\) 33.\(\text{Dc8}\)\(\uparrow\) \(\text{g8}\) 34.\(\text{Dxe6}\) and game over.

32...\(\text{Dg6}\) 33.\(\text{Dh2}\) \(d3\) 34.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{exf5}\) 35.\(\text{Dxf7}\)\(\uparrow\) \(\text{Exf7}\) 36.\(\text{Dxf7}\) \(\text{Exf7}\) 37.\(\text{Dxf7}\) \(\text{Wb4}\) 38.\(\text{Dh5}\) \(\text{xa4}\) 39.\(\text{Dh3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 40.\(\text{Df3}\) \(d2\) 41.\(\text{Dxb3}\) \(g5\) 42.\(\text{Dd1}\) \(\text{d4}\) 43.\(\text{Dg3}\) \(g4\)\(\uparrow\) 44.\(\text{Dh2}\) \(h5\) 45.\(\text{Dc7}\) \(\text{f2}\) 46.\(\text{Dd8}\)\(\uparrow\) \(\text{h7}\) 47.\(\text{Dg5}\) \(\text{d4}\) 48.\(\text{Dxh5}\)\(\uparrow\)

1–0

Conclusion: 6...\(\text{Dxa6}\) should be answered by 7.e3 \(\text{Db4}\) 8.\(\text{Dxc4}\) threatening mate. White will castle next and get the usual advantage based on space.

The Mainline – Part One

1.\(\text{Dd4}\) \(d5\) 2.\(\text{e4}\) \(c6\) 3.\(\text{Df3}\) \(\text{Df6}\) 4.\(\text{Dc3}\) \(\text{dxc4}\) 5.a4 \(\text{Df5}\) 6.\(\text{De5}\) \(e6\)

It is time to study the mainline of 6...\(e6\). As explained in the introduction to this chapter, the key position is on move 15. Black has to make a choice between 15...\(0–0–0\), 15...\(0–0\), or a more rare 15th move. We shall thus consider this line in three sections.

The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...\(0–0–0\)

Black gets the king out of the way and activates a rook at the same time. Sounds good, but the drawback is that it will not be easy to create serious threats against the white monarch without weakening his own king's pawn shelter.

16.\(\text{De3}\)

Attacking \(a7\). A refinement from the often tried 16.\(\text{Dc5}\) \(f6\) 17.\(\text{De3}\) when 17...\(\text{Db8}\) 18.\(\text{De2}\) \(e5\) is quite solid for Black.

16...\(\text{Dc5}\)

Black has alternatives:

16...\(c5\)

A solid choice, but a bit inflexible.
17.\(\text{Db3}\) \(\text{Db4}\) 18.\(\text{Dc1}\) \(\text{Cc6}\) 19.\(\text{Da3}\)
The king heads for some kind of safety.
19...b8?! 20.g3† e5 21.xg7
Grabbing a pawn.
21.f5 22.b3 h8 23.c3 d4 24.a5 g6 25.b3
Eliminating the knight with a clear advantage.
25.b6 26.xd4 exd4 27.b3 d3 28.xd5 
xd5 29.b3 g4 30.d1. c4† 31.c3 b5
32.b3 cxb5 33.axb5 xb5 34.xd3 c5†
35.xb3 xg2 36.fd1 g5 37.f3
White wins the f5-pawn and holds onto his own last pawn, Schandorff – Jelling, Denmark 1996.

16..b8 17.e2 a8 18.g4
This gives White a nice grip of the position.
18..f6 19.h1 g2 20.xd8+ xd8 21.xe6 
xh2 22.d1+ b8 23.a5 c7
Black allows a spectacular finish:
24.b6†! axb6 25.axb6 a6
25..xe6 26.a1#
26.a1 d8 27.e7 d6 28.ca6† b8
29.xd6† x6d6 30.a3

16..b4† 17.b3 c5 18.c1 transposes to 16..c5.

17.e2

A strong novelty at the time, which more or less finished Black's interest in this variation. Kramnik's move was thought to be impossible because of the obvious strike 19..d3, but the Russian found a remarkable countermeasure.

19..d4?!
Shirov comes up with a creative try. He sacrifices a rook but gets five(!) pawns and some attack. However when the initiative is over, White's heavy pieces take control.

If 19..d3 then 20.h1! is the only move, but such a strong one that it immediately turns the tables: 20.xh1 21.xd3 d5 22.xf7± and Black is left with some weak pawns.

20.xd4 xe2† 21.d2 d8 22.xc5
Kramnik protects his king. Then he is ready to go for the black pawns.

25...\textit{We}4

25...\textit{Wd}3† is nowhere near a perpetual check. After 26.\textit{Wxd}3 \textit{Wxd}3† 27.\textit{Wb}2 \textit{Wd}2† 28.\textit{Wb}3 \textit{Wd}3† 29.\textit{Wc}3 \textit{Wd}5† 30.\textit{Wb}2 \textit{Wg}2† 31.\textit{Wa}3 the white king easily escapes.

26.\textit{Wb}3 \textit{b}6 27.\textit{Wb}8† \textit{Wb}7 28.\textit{Wxf}7† \textit{Wa}6 29.\textit{Wf}3 \textit{Wxf}3?! 

More resistance could have been made with the queens still on the board.

30.\textit{Wxf}3 \textit{Wa}5 31.\textit{Wf}4 \textit{Wd}3† 32.\textit{Wb}2 \textit{Wh}3 33.\textit{Wc}1 \textit{Wh}2† 34.\textit{Wb}3 \textit{Wh}3† 35.\textit{Wc}2 \textit{Wh}2† 36.\textit{Wd}3 \textit{Wh}6 37.\textit{Wf}4 \textit{c}5 38.\textit{Wxe}6 \textit{Wh}3† 39.\textit{Wxe}3 \textit{Wh}1 40.\textit{Wxe}4 \textit{Wh}3† 41.\textit{Wc}4 \textit{Wg}3

Or 41...\textit{Wxa}4 42.\textit{Wf}1 \textit{Wa}3 (42...\textit{Wb}4† 43.\textit{Wb}6 \textit{Wxe}4† 44.\textit{Wxe}4 \textit{a}5 45.\textit{Wf}1 \textit{Wa}3 46.\textit{Wb}1 is easy) 43.\textit{Wb}1 followed by 44.\textit{Wf}7.

42.\textit{Wh}6 \textit{a}6 43.\textit{Wh}7 \textit{Wg}5 44.\textit{Wb}7 \textit{Wh}5 45.\textit{Wb}6 \textit{Wh}4† 46.\textit{Wd}5 \textit{Wb}4 47.\textit{Wc}6 \textit{Wd}4† 48.\textit{Wc}5 \textit{Wb}4 49.\textit{Wb}8 1–0

Black is in zugzwang. On 49...\textit{Wb}1 White has 50.\textit{Wxc}5†.

\textbf{Conclusion:} After 15...0–0 16.\textit{Wc}3, attacking a7, is rather uncomfortable for Black, especially since 16...\textit{Wc}5 17.\textit{Wc}2 \textit{Wxg}2 18.\textit{Wxg}1 \textit{Wxh}2 19.\textit{Wxg}7† with the point 19...\textit{Wd}3 20.\textit{Wh}1! leads to a clear advantage for White.

\textbf{The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...0–0}

\textbf{Game 26}

Kramnik – Haba

Germany 1993

1.\textit{d}4 \textit{d}5 2.\textit{Wf}3 \textit{Wf}6 3.\textit{c}4 \textit{c}6 4.\textit{Wc}3 \textit{dxc}4 5.\textit{a}4 \textit{Wf}5 6.\textit{Wf}5 \textit{e}6 7.\textit{f}3 \textit{Wb}4 8.\textit{e}4 \textit{Wxe}4 9.\textit{fxe}4 \textit{Wxe}4 10.\textit{Wd}2 \textit{Wxd}4 11.\textit{Wxe}4 \textit{Wxe}4† 12.\textit{Wd}2 \textit{Wxd}2† 13.\textit{Wd}5 14.\textit{Wc}2 \textit{Wd}6 15.\textit{Wxc}4 0–0

Black evacuates his king to the other side compared to the previous game. It makes a lot of sense – the king protects the pawns on the kingside, which were rather vulnerable in the aforementioned game. As a benefit, Black can also play aggressively on the queenside, throwing his pawns in the face of the wandering white king. So White also needs a change of strategy.
16.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e5}}}

Also possible is 16.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e3}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c5}}} 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b4}}} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e2}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ad8}}} 19.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d4}}} 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a3}}} and White has got his king out of the way and developed both rooks. Still, after 20...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{fd8}}} Black is very active. Kramnik easily defended the position with Black: 21.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g4}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g5}}} 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b3}}} a5 23.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h4}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g6}}} 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c2}}} 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a2}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b4}}} 26.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c2}}} \frac{1}{2}−\frac{1}{2} Van Wely – Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 1999.

16.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e3}}} does not impress much. 16...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{fd8}}} 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e2}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b4}}} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b3}}} b5! Very nice. Unfortunately it leads almost by force to a draw. 19.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xb4}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xc4}}} 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xc4}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ab8}}} 21.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c3}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{a5}}} 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c2}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d2}}}! 23.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd2}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xb2}}} 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xb2}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd2}}} 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b3}}} a5 26.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{hc1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b4}}} \frac{1}{2}−\frac{1}{2} Blomstrand – Johnsen, corr. 1997.

16...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{fd8}}}

The eternal chess question: where to put the rooks?

16...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ab8}}} 17.a5 (preventing ...b5) 17...f6 18.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd5}}} cxd5 19.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e5}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c8}}} 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c7}}} 21.a3 White again manages to develop smoothly. 21...f5 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e2}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e4}}} 23.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d1}}} ± Onischuk – Grischuk, Biel 2007.

16...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ac8}}} 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e2}}} f6 18.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e3}}}

White could not exchange queens, but now it turns out that the black queen is not safe in the middle of the board.

18...b5

18...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f5}}} 19.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b3}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c5}}} 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a2}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xa4}}} 21.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c2}}} 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f2}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b6}}} 23.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d6}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{c8}}} 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f3}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{a4}}} 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xa1}}} 26.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xa1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd6}}} 27.g4 White gradually won in Price – Ratering, corr. 1999.

19.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ad1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f5}}} 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d3}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g4}}}


23.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd6}}} 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd6}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{exf5}}} 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e6}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{h8}}}

26.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xc6}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{b8}}} 27.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ec8}}}

White was winning in Gretarsson – Bjornsson, Iceland 1993.

17.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e2}}}

![Diagram of chessboard]

17...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f6}}}

This is the move Black wants to play. Seen in the light of what follows, he could consider the relatively unexplored 17...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c5}}} when 18.g3 ± seems like a plausible answer.

18.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd5}}} cxd5 19.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a5}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{ec8}}} 19...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{ac8}}} ± is much the same.

20.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b1}}}

![Diagram of chessboard]
A typical ending for this variation. It seems that the bishop is always stronger than the three pawns, and here White also has a small initiative on the queenside that is actually quite annoying for Black.

20...b4?!  
Sacrificing the b-pawn for some activity.

The normal move is:
20...c5
But after:
21.a1c
White has pressure.
21...d8
21...b6?! 22.b4 bxa5 23.bxc5±
22.a3 e4?  
22...b6 23.e1c3
23.xc8+ xc8 24.exb7 e7 25.a5 e5
26.d3 d4 27.b3 e7 28.d1 b7 29.a2 e7 30.e1
This was Vujadinovic – Marez, corr. 2000, and Black did not have enough compensation.

21.e7b7 e7b8 22.a5 e2 23.e1
Protecting everything. White will untangle with the usual move e1a3.

23.e2d2
Another try is:
23...e5 24.a3 xxb2+  
24...e5 25.b3 e2 26.a5 d4 27.a4 d3 28.f3 f8 29.e1 f5 30.b3 e8 31.xg2 xbd3 32.d5 e7 33.a6 was good for White in Zawadka – Gardarsson, corr. 2006.
25.e2b2 e2d3+ 26.a3 e1
Black has again gained a third pawn for the piece, but his knight is stranded on the wrong side of the border.
27.g3 f7 28.e2 g2 29.a2 d4 30.c6 b1 31.e7c7 e3 32.a5 1–0
Runtung – Alingh Prins, corr. 1994

24.e2a3

24...e2c2
Again 24...e2b2+ 25.xb2 d3+ 26.a3 e1 27.g3 leaves the knight in trouble.

25.e1c e2e2
In another game Black tried 25...e2a3 26.e2d2 e2b2+ 27.e2c e2b8 but his knight was still in trouble. 28.e2d3 e5 29.e2a1 e2c8+ 30.b3 e2c4 31.xc4 dxc4+ 32.e2c4+ With a winning position, Winkler – Benassi, corr. 1998.

26.e2e2 e2a3 27.e2b3 e2a6 28.e2c2
White is winning.

28...e2a6 29.e2c5 e2f7 30.e2b2 e2e7 31.e2c3 e2d7 32.e2b5 e5 33.e2b4 h5 34.e2b7+ e2c8 35.e2f7
1–0

Conclusion: On 15...0–0 White plays 16.e5 with the intention of exchanging queens and getting a good ending. That is exactly what happens in the mainline after 16...e2f8 17.e2f6 18.exd5 exd5 19.a5 with pressure on the queenside.
The Bishop Sacrifice – 15...b5 etc.

Game 27

Kramnik – Shirov

Linares 2000

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♗c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♘f5 6.♗e5 e6 7.♗f3 ♘b4 8.e4 ♗xe4 9.fxe4 ♘xe4 10.♘d2 ♤xd4 11.♗xe4 ♤xe4† 12.♗e2 ♣xd2† 13.♘xd2 ♤d5† 14.♗c2 ♣a6 15.♘xc4 b5

Very sharp. Black tries to exploit the white king’s risky position.

There are some rare alternatives:

15...♗f5† 16.♗c3 White follows up with ♤e5 next, with good control. One example is 16...0–0 17.♗e5 ♤f2 18.♗e3 ♤xe3† 19.♘xe3 with a pleasant ending, Schandorff – Jelling, Silkeborg 1988.

15...♗b4† 16.♗b3 and the check has been given prematurely.

15...♗e7

Black anticipates an ending, and so places his king actively in the centre.

16.♗e5 ♤h6 17.♗e2 ♦f6

Better is 17...♗xe5 18.♘xe5 ♣b4† 19.♘b3 ♤d2 20.♘f3 ♤c2 21.♗ad1 ♤d4† 22.♘c3 ♤xf3 23.gxf3 ♤d5 24.♘c4= Herbst – Piermattei, corr. 1999.

18.♗e3!

Now it will not be an ending and the king is ridiculous on e7.

18...♗b4† 19.♘b3 a5 20.♗ad1 ♤f5 21.♘c3± ♤b5 22.♘xa5! c5 23.♘xb5 ♤xa5 24.♗h1 ♤h5 25.g4 ♤e5 26.♘xe5 fxe5 27.♗xd8 ♤xd8 28.♘c4 ♤c7 29.♘xc5 ♤d5 30.b4 ♤a8 31.♘c6 ♤c8 32.b5 e4 1–0


16.axb5 ♣b4†

Not 16...cxb5 17.♗xa6.

17.♘c3 cxb5 18.♗d1!

The most convincing.

18.♘xb4 bxc4 19.♘xc4 ♤b8† 20.♗a3 has been played by Karpov, but 20...♗c5† 21.♗a4† ♤xa4† 22.♗xa4 ♤xb2 looks like a position Black can easily defend.

18.♗b6 is a tactical blow that peters out to a draw. 18...♗c5† 19.♗b3 ♤c6! 20.♗xb5 ♤e3† 21.♗c2 ♤f2† 22.♗c3 (not 22.♗e2 0–0)
22...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textdollar}}}d4 \text{½--½} Shirov – Khalifman, Ter Apel 1997.

18...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textdollar}}}c5

Black could also try: 18...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbullet}}}}}xc4!? 19.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textdollar}}}xd5 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbullet}}}}}xd5\text{½} A surprising but also very speculative queen sacrifice.

White has a decision to make: in the line’s famous debut Topalov did not find a way to make progress: 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}c2 0–0 21.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textdollar}}}e4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textb}}}e8 22.h4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textdollar}}}c5 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textdollar}}}hh3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textf}}}ac8 24.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\texta}}}a3 a5 25.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}c1 h5 26.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d4 \text{½--½} Topalov – Anand, Dos Hermanas 1997.

20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textdollar}}}xc4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textb}}}b8 is unpleasant, but a computer may get away with it. For a human the best move is certainly:

20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d2! Just going to the kingside with the king. 20...0–0 21.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textdollar}}}e5 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}ac8 22.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}e2 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textf}}}fd8 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}c1 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textf}}}b6\text{½} 24.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}e1 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d5 25.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}e3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}} 26.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}c2 g6 27.g4 White finally has time to start some active operations. The material advantage should decide, especially if combined with an initiative. 27.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}cc5 28.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d2 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}d5 29.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}e5 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textb}}}b3 30.h4 h6 31.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}f2 a5 32.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}f3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d3 33.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}e2 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textb}}}b3 34.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d6 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textb}}}b4 35.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}e4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d3\text{½} 36.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}f1 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textb}}}e5 37.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}c7 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}c5 38.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d8\text{½} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}g7 39.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d4\text{½} e5 40.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d6 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textb}}}bb5 41.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}xd3 1–0 Salov – Illescas, Dos Hermanas 1997. This game was played only a few days after the Topalov – Anand game.

19.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}e5 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d5\text{½} 20.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}xd5 b4\text{½}

20...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}xd5 21.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d6\text{½} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}f8 22.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}xd5 exd5 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}xb5\text{½} also gives White good winning chances, but maybe Black also has more chances to hold!

21.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}b3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}xd5 22.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}e2 0–0 23.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}xd5 exd5 24.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\texta}}}a5 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textb}}}f8 25.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textb}}}f3

White will win at least one of Black’s weak pawns to begin with, and the white pieces coordinate very well, so Black will be forced onto the defensive. Rooks are not good defenders, and Shirov always strives for counterplay anyway so he takes some chances and goes down with a bang. However, the position would be tough to hold even by more sturdy play.

25.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}c8 26.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d1\text{½} \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}e3\text{½} 27.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}a4 b3 28.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}xd5 g6 29.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}d7\text{½}

There are weak points at a7, b3 and f7.

29...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}c2 30.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}a3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textg}}}g7

30...\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}xf3!? 31.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textf}}}xf3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textf}}}xf2 and running with the h-pawn looks desperate and it is, but it was the last chance.

31.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textf}}}xa7 h5 32.h3 h4 33.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}b7 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}c5 34.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}b4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}c5 35.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}c7 g5 36.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textf}}}xb3 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textf}}}d4\text{½} 37.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}c4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}xc4\text{½} 38.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}xc4 h5 39.\texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textc}}}d4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\textd}}}f6 40.b4 \texttt{\textbf{\textit{\texte}}}e1 41.b5
\[ \text{Conclusion: } 15...b5 \text{ looks like great fun, but in the end it is White who is laughing.} \]

**Kramnik's ending**

**Game 28**

**Maletin – Amonatov**

Russia 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\( \text{\&}f3 \) \( \text{\&}f6 \) 4.\( \text{\&}c3 \text{dxc4} \) 5.a4 \( \text{\&}b5 \) 6.\( \text{\&}e5 \) e6 7.f3 c5

This move had a bad reputation, but Kramnik launched a very deep defensive idea in the World Championship match against Topalov, so now it needs to be taken seriously.

8.e4 \( \text{\&}g6! \)

This was considered a positional mistake because the bishop is buried here.

The sharp alternative is 8...\( \text{cxd4} \) This leads to complications that favour White after: 9.exf5

9...\( \text{\&}c5 \) 10.\( \text{\&}xc6 \text{bxc6} \) 11.fxe6 fxe6 12.\( \text{\&}e2 \) \( \text{dxc3} \) 13.\( \text{\&}xe6\)† \( \text{\&}e7 \) 14.\( \text{\&}xe7 \)† \( \text{\&}xe7 \) 15.\( \text{bxc3} \) \( \text{\&}d5 \) 16.\( \text{\&}xc4 \) \( \text{\&}xc3 \) 17.\( \text{\&}d2 \) \( \text{\&}d5 \) 18.\( \text{\&}b1 \) \( \text{\&}b6 \) 19.\( \text{\&}b3 \) 0–0–0† 20.\( \text{\&}c2\)† White had a pleasant ending with a strong pair of bishops in Saul – Parisi, corr. 2001. Furthermore 16.\( \text{\&}d2 \) is interesting.

9...\( \text{\&}b4 \) 10.\( \text{\&}xc4 \) \( \text{dxc3} \) 11.\( \text{\&}xd8\)† \( \text{\&}xd8 \) 12.\( \text{\&}xf7\)

12.\( \text{\&}e2 \) is safer and should give a small plus, but why not force the play if it is good?

12...\( \text{\&}e7 \)

No easier is 12...\( \text{\&}e8 \) 13.\( \text{bxc3} \text{\&xc3}† 14.\( \text{\&}e2 \) \( \text{\&}xa1 \) 15.fxe6 \( \text{\&}g8 \) 16.\( \text{\&}a3 \) \( \text{\&}d4 \) 17.\( \text{\&}b1\)† b6 18.\( \text{\&}b5\)† \( \text{\&}bd7 \) 19.\( \text{\&}c6 \) \( \text{\&}c8 \) 20.\( \text{\&}d6\)† \( \text{\&}e7 \) 21.\( \text{\&}xc8† \) \( \text{\&}xe6 \) 22.\( \text{\&}xa7 \) and White had won a pawn in Alekseev – Wang Yue, Nizhnij Novgorod 2007.

13.\( \text{bxc3} \text{\&xc3}† 14.\( \text{\&}e2 \) \( \text{\&}xf7 \) 15.fxe6† \( \text{\&}e8 \) 16.\( \text{\&}b1 \)

With good compensation for the piece. Black has major problems coordinating his forces.

16...\( \text{\&}c6 \) 17.\( \text{\&}xb7 \) a6 18.\( \text{\&}a3 \)

Black's position looks precarious.

18...\( \text{\&}e5 \) 19.\( \text{\&}d1 \) h5 20.\( \text{\&}d3 \)

Simply winning.

20...\( \text{\&}d8 \) 21.\( \text{\&}xg7 \) \( \text{\&}a7 \) 22.\( \text{\&}f5\)† \( \text{\&}e8 \) 23.\( \text{\&}xa7 \) \( \text{\&}xa7 \) 24.e7† \( \text{\&}c7 \) 25.f4 \( \text{\&}xf4 \) 26.\( \text{\&}b2 \) \( \text{\&}g5 \) 27.\( \text{\&}e5\)† \( \text{\&}b6 \) 28.\( \text{\&}d8 \) \( \text{\&}e8 \) 29.\( \text{\&}xf6 \) \( \text{\&}xe7† \)
30.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}x}c7 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}x}c7 31.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}h8 1–0

Klausen – Alfredsson, corr. 2007.

9.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}e3

9.d5 keeps the game in a middlegame, but the text leads almost by force to a slightly better endgame.

9...\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd4 10.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd4

Apparently simple and strong, but Kramnik’s deep preparation will soon reveal that it is not so easy. Possible was 10.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd4 but after 10...\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}fd7 Black seems okay.

10...\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd4 11.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd4 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}bd7

11...\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}fd7 is the more common move order, but it just transposes.

Not to be recommended is 11...\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c6 12.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xc6 bxc6 13.a5 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}d7 14.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xc4 e5 15.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}e3 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}b4 16.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}e2 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}e7 17.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}hc1 with advantage to White, Huebner – Pelletier, Germany 1998.

12.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd7 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd7 13.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xc4

This looks good for White who has more space and some very active bishops. Black is behind in development and the bishop on g6 is out of play, just like the old books said.

A little inaccurate because White gets an extra option.

In the famous stem game Kramnik played: 13...a6 14.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}e2 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}g8! The point. Black protects g7 and is ready to move the bishop out and put the king on e7 with normal harmony. Later he can play...f6 and bring the light-squared bishop back into the game via f7 or e8. It is a slow manoeuvre, but Black has no real weaknesses and White has difficulty finding anything to shoot at. Anyway, Topalov couldn’t. 15.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}hd1 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c8 16.b3 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c5 17.a5 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}e7 18.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}a4 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}b4 19.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}b6 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xb6 20.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xb6 f6 21.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}d3 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c6 22.h4 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}gc8 23.g4 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c5 24.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}ad1 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xb6 25.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}ed7† \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}f8 26.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xb6 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xb6 27.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}d1d6 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd6 28.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd6 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c6 29.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xc6 bxc6 30.b4 e5 31.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xa6 \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2} Topalov – Kramnik, Elista (6) 2006.

Very convincing, but lately White has had success against 13...a6 with an interesting idea:

14.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c1 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c8 15.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}e2!? \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}g8 16.h4 h6 17.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}f2 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c6 18.b4! \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}d8 (18...\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xb4 19.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xa6!) 19.h5 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}h7 20.b5 axb5 21.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xb5 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xc1 22.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xc1 g5 23.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd7 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xd7 24.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}e5 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}d8 25.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}c7 f6 26.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}d4 \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xe4 27.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xe6† \textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}e8 28.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xe4 fxe5 29.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}xb7 1–0 Gyimesi – Bindrich, Germany 2008.

14.\textbf{\textit{\textgoth{}}}b5!

If the bishop retreated Black would gain the option of playing a7-a5 in one move.
14...a6 15.\texttt{\textxc}d7+ \texttt{\textxe}d7 16.\texttt{\textxc}e2 f6 17.\texttt{\textxc}d1 \texttt{\textxe}8 18.\texttt{\textac}1\texttt{\textxf}3

White has some positional pressure. Black's king is floating and a constant problem. The bishop wants to go back to f7, but where should the king be then? And also b7 is weak. Instead 18.\texttt{\textcb}6 \texttt{\textxc}5 19.\texttt{\textxc}x5 \texttt{\textxc}x5 20.\texttt{\textcd}6 \texttt{\textxc}7 21.\texttt{\texted}1 \texttt{\textxe}8 22.\texttt{\texted}d3 a5 23.\texttt{\textce}3 \texttt{\textce}6 did not achieve much in Bocharov – Amanatov, Voronezh 2007.

18...\texttt{\textxc}6 19.\texttt{\textfa}2 \texttt{\textxc}1 20.\texttt{\textxc}x1 \texttt{\textxc}e7 21.\texttt{\textbd}6 c5 22.\texttt{\textdd}3 \texttt{\textff}7?

Correct was 22...\texttt{\textff}7 23.\texttt{\textcc}1 \texttt{\textdd}6+ and Black blocks the door. White probably continues 24.\texttt{\textcc}5 or \texttt{\textcc}7 with a pull.

23.\texttt{\textcc}1\texttt{\textxf}8 24.a5

Black is completely tied up. If 24...\texttt{\textdd}7 then 25.\texttt{\textcc}5\texttt{\textxf}7 wins on the spot.

24...\texttt{\textee}7 25.\texttt{\textcc}8 \texttt{\textee}8 26.\texttt{\textbb}8

Winning a pawn.

26...\texttt{\textcc}4 27.\texttt{\textxb}7+ \texttt{\textfb}8 28.\texttt{\textee}3 \texttt{\textee}7 29.\texttt{\textcc}5 \texttt{\textbb}5 30.b4

And now with a winning position.

37.h3 h5

37...\texttt{\textfa}8 was passive and White could open a second front with g3 followed by f4.

38.\texttt{\textxa}6 \texttt{\textdd}3\texttt{\textxf}2 39.\texttt{\textff}2 \texttt{\textdd}2\texttt{\textxf}2 40.\texttt{\textee}1 \texttt{\textee}2\texttt{\textxf}2 41.\texttt{\textdd}1 \texttt{\textxe}g2 42.\texttt{\textcc}5 \texttt{\textfa}2 43.\texttt{\textaa}6 \texttt{\texth}7 44.\texttt{\textcc}1 \texttt{\texthh}6 45.\texttt{\textbb}7 h4

If 45...\texttt{\textxa}6 46.\texttt{\textfa}7 \texttt{\textcc}4 47.\texttt{\textxa}2 \texttt{\textxa}2 48.b5 and the pawn goes all the way.

46.a7 \texttt{\textgg}5 47.\texttt{\textbb}1 \texttt{\textff}4 48.b5 g5 49.\texttt{\textaa}6 1–0

Conclusion: Kramnik's endgame variation should not be underestimated, but its value shouldn't be exaggerated either. White is slightly better and, if it isn't Kramnik you are facing, you have good winning chances. If it is Kramnik, then take the draw and get on with your life.

The Mainline - Part Two

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\texttt{\textdf}3 \texttt{\textff}6 4.\texttt{\textcc}3 dxc4 5.a4 \texttt{\textff}5 6.\texttt{\textee}5 \texttt{\textbd}7

This old move is currently riding a wave of popularity. The foundation for the grand comeback was laid by a series of discoveries from the creative mind of the Russian star Alexander Morozevich.
7.\(\text{Nx}c4\) \(\text{e}c7\)

The classical move. The modern interpretation is 7...\(\text{Qb}6\) 8.\(\text{e}e5\) \(a5\), often referred to as the Sokolov Variation. On the one hand, a deserved tribute to the great Slav fighter, Ivan Sokolov, but on the other, maybe also an urgent need to name a variation in the modern Slav after someone other than Morozevich.

Speaking of Morozevich, he even came up with 7...\(\text{Qd}5\)!:

And it is doubtful if Black has enough for the pawn.

7...\(\text{Qd}5\) is ultimately a surprise weapon. If White is not paralysed by shock, he should get a safe edge. With 7...\(\text{Qb}6\) it is another story. In Game 31 it will come under close scrutiny.

A much simpler issue is 7...\(e6\), which is too cooperative: after 8.f3 \(\text{Qb}4\) 9.e4 \(\text{Qg}6\) 10.\(\text{Qc}2\) \(+\) White gets what he wants.

8.g3

White wants to fianchetto his light-squared bishop and at the same time \(\text{Qf}4\) is prepared.

8...\(e5\) 9.\(\text{dxe}5\) \(\text{Qxe}5\) 10.\(\text{Qf}4\) \(\text{Qfd}7\) 11.\(\text{Qg}2\)

The starting position for an old variation that had been tested in hundreds of games. Then along came Morozevich and pang! A whole new concept saw the light of day: a stunning idea that mixed deep positional understanding with a flair for the extravaganza.

11...\(g5\)

Black's best move. It has almost completely replaced the classical set-up with 11...\(f6\). But of course the old variation should not be forgotten. In Game 29 it will be examined.
12.\textit{\textbf{De}3}

This was Kasparov's reaction when confronted with Morozevich's novelty over the board. Later White has tried many sharper things based on 12.\textit{\textbf{Dxe}5} or 12.\textit{\textbf{Dxe}5}, but Black seems to have adequate countermeasures. Kasparov's knight move seeks a small but stable positional advantage.

12...\textit{\textbf{Gxf}4} 13.\textit{\textbf{Dxf}5} 0–0–0 14.\textit{\textbf{Wc}2}

A key position that has been heavily debated over the last few years. White hopes that the knight on \textit{f5} will give him the better chances but it is much more complicated than that – see Game 30 for the details.

**The Classical Move – 11...\textit{\textbf{F6}}**

**Game 29**

\textbf{Aronian – I. Sokolov}

\textit{Wijk aan Zee 2006}

1.d4 \textit{\textbf{d}5} 2.c4 \textit{\textbf{c}6} 3.\textit{\textbf{f}3} \textit{\textbf{f}6} 4.\textit{\textbf{Dc}3} \textit{\textbf{dxc}4} 5.a4 \textit{\textbf{f}5} 6.\textit{\textbf{Df}5} \textit{\textbf{bd}7} 7.\textit{\textbf{Dxc}4} \textit{\textbf{wc}7} 8.g3 \textit{\textbf{e}5} 9.dxe5 \textit{\textbf{Dxe}5} 10.\textit{\textbf{Df}4} \textit{\textbf{fd}7} 11.\textit{\textbf{g}2} \textit{\textbf{f}6}

The classical move: Black protects the knight on \textit{e5}.

There are a number of rare options:

a) 11...\textit{\textbf{e}6} 12.\textit{\textbf{Dxe}5} \textit{\textbf{Dxe}5} 13.\textit{\textbf{Wd}4} \textit{\textbf{f}6} 14.a5 \textit{\textbf{a}6} 15.\textit{\textbf{Df}4} \textit{\textbf{d}5} 16.0–0 \textit{\textbf{c}7} 17.\textit{\textbf{f}6} \textit{\textbf{d}8} 18.\textit{\textbf{Wc}3} \textit{\textbf{x}e}4

A sad necessity because 18...0–0 19.\textit{\textbf{Dxd}5}! \textit{\textbf{x}d}5 20.\textit{\textbf{xf}6}+ \textit{\textbf{x}f}6 21.\textit{\textbf{x}d}5+ drops a pawn.

19.\textit{\textbf{Dxe}4}

White had a large advantage with the pair of bishops in Browne – Unzicker, Wijk aan Zee 1981.

b) 11...\textit{\textbf{d}8} 12.\textit{\textbf{Dc}1} \textit{\textbf{f}6} 13.0–0 \textit{\textbf{e}6} 14.\textit{\textbf{De}4}! is good for White:

14...\textit{\textbf{b}4} 15.a5 0–0 16.a6 \textit{\textbf{bxa}6}?! 17.\textit{\textbf{Dxe}5} \textit{\textbf{Dxe}5} 18.\textit{\textbf{Dc}5} \textit{\textbf{xc}5} 19.\textit{\textbf{Wxc}5}± Euwe – Alekhine, Holland 1937.

14...\textit{\textbf{xc}4} 15.\textit{\textbf{Wxc}4} \textit{\textbf{xc}4} 16.\textit{\textbf{xc}7} \textit{\textbf{c}8} 17.\textit{\textbf{f}4}+ \textit{\textbf{e}7} and now 18.\textit{\textbf{fc}1} or 18.\textit{\textbf{h}3} gives White both a strong initiative and a positional advantage.

14...\textit{\textbf{c}7} 15.a5 \textit{\textbf{a}6} 16.\textit{\textbf{Dxe}5} \textit{\textbf{Dxe}5} 17.\textit{\textbf{Dc}5} \textit{\textbf{c}8} 18.\textit{\textbf{Wc}3} 0–0 19.\textit{\textbf{Dfd}1}± In Smet – Pletanek, corr. 1984, the structure on the queenside was very favourable for White.

c) 11...\textit{\textbf{e}7} 12.0–0 0–0 13.\textit{\textbf{Wc}1} \textit{\textbf{f}6} 14.\textit{\textbf{Dxe}5} \textit{\textbf{fxe}5} 15.\textit{\textbf{Dd}5}! \textit{\textbf{wd}8} 16.\textit{\textbf{Dxe}7}+ \textit{\textbf{xe}7} 17.\textit{\textbf{g}5} \textit{\textbf{e}6} 18.a5 \textit{\textbf{h}6} 19.\textit{\textbf{g}5}± Razuvaev – Bronstein, Yaroslavl 1982. The bishops are nice.

11...\textit{\textbf{g}5} is of course the big mainline these days. It will be examined in the next game.

12.0–0 \textit{\textbf{Dc}5}

Morozevich's attempt to revive the old mainline. The move was a necessary lifeline because the known moves were clearly in crisis.

Let's have a look:
12...a6 13.bxe5 fxe5
13...dxe5 14.dxe2 d6 15.e4 with good play for White, Timman – Hebert, Rio de Janeiro 1979.
14.g5
A finesse designed to make Black weaken himself.
14.e3 c5 15.c1 is also fine and should give White a small but safe advantage.
14.h6
Or 14.c5 15.e4.
15.e3 c5
If 15...e7 then 16.c2 is annoying for Black because 16...0–0 loses to 17.xh6.
16.c2
The effect of the move ...h6 is seen: g6 has been weakened and makes an excellent entry square for the white queen.
18.a5! e3
19.fxe3 c5 20.a3
White has the initiative.
20...a6? 21.xb3 1–0
On 21...xb3 follows 22.e6+ b8 23.xb3.

12...0–0–0
This is risky and it was severely punished in the following game:
13.e1 g5 14.xe5 dxe5 15.c3 c4 16.xa7 a6 17.b5!
This initiates a long tactical sequence.
17...cxb5 18.axb5 b5 19.a5!
A brilliant blow.
19.xa5 20.xc4+ c7 21.b5 d6
22.xf5+ d8 23.d4 e7 24.1a1+ e8
25.d5 d8 26.e4 d7 27.f3 g4 28.b3 h5 29.a8+ d8 30.b6 xxb6 31.xb6 e7
32.b4+ e8 33.b8 d7 34.a4+ 1–0

Finally, 12.d8 13.c1 e6 transposes to the last note.

13.e3

White regroups with tempo and is ready to kick the black knight back with b2-b4. 13.e4 also looks like a decent try.

13.g6
The most popular.

The intermediate move 13.d8?! has a tactical flaw: 14.c5! d7 15.b4 c5 16.xf5 xf5 17.bxc5 xxc5 18.b3 with a very promising

The other retreat is:
13...\(\text{\underline{e}}\)e6

This is best met by:
14.b4 \(\text{\underline{d}}\)d8 15.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)b1

The text is stronger than 15.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)c2 \(\text{\underline{d}}\)a6 16.b5 \(\text{\underline{b}}\)b4\(\infty\).

15...\(\text{\underline{b}}\)b3

15...\(\text{\underline{a}}\)a6 16.b5 \(\text{\underline{b}}\)b4 is not so attractive now that it does not come with tempo. 17.bxc6 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)xc6 18.\(\text{\underline{e}}\)c1 a5 19.\(\text{\underline{b}}\)b5\! \(\text{\underline{d}}\)d7 20.\(\text{\underline{e}}\)d1 \(\text{\underline{c}}\)c8 21.\(\text{\underline{d}}\)d4 \(\text{\underline{c}}\)c5 22.\(\text{\underline{e}}\)xe6 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)xd1\(\dagger\) 23.\(\text{\underline{x}}\)xd1 \(\text{\underline{w}}\)xc6 24.\(\text{\underline{c}}\)c1\(=\) Wells – Hanley, Scarborough 2001.

16.\(\text{\underline{d}}\)ed5! \(\text{\underline{c}}\)xd5 17.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)xb3

To relieve some of the pressure Black must enter an inferior ending.

17.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)c4 18.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)xc4 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)xc4 19.\(\text{\underline{f}}\)fd1 \(\text{\underline{xb}}\)4 20.\(\text{\underline{d}}\)xd5 \(\text{\underline{a}}\)a5 21.\(\text{\underline{ac}}\)1\(=\)


14.b4 \(\text{\underline{e}}\)e6

14...\(\text{\underline{f}}\)d8 can be answered with by now familiar 15.\(\text{\underline{d}}\)ed5! \(\text{\underline{c}}\)xd5 16.bxc5 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)xc5 17.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)b3 and White regains the pawn with an active position. 17...0–0 18.\(\text{\underline{f}}\)fd1 \(\text{\underline{h}}\)h8 19.\(\text{\underline{d}}\)xd5 \(\text{\underline{f}}\)f7 20.h3 \(\text{\underline{g}}\)g5 21.e4 \(\text{\underline{e}}\)e6 22.a5\(\pm\) b6 23.axb6 axb6 24.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)c3 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)c8 25.\(\text{\underline{c}}\)c3! Now b6 is weak, Alekseev – Fressinet, Khanty-Mansyisk 2007.

15.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)b3

A new attempt. Previously 15.b5 \(\text{\underline{d}}\)d8 16.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)b3 \(\text{\underline{d}}\)d4 17.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)b2 \(\text{\underline{c}}\)c5, with complicated play, had been seen in a lot of games.

15...\(\text{\underline{f}}\)f7

15...\(\text{\underline{d}}\)d4 16.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)b2 \(\text{\underline{d}}\)d8 is too loose because of the well known tactic 17.\(\text{\underline{c}}\)cd5! \(\text{\underline{d}}\)d3\(\dagger\) 18.\(\text{\underline{x}}\)xf3 \(\text{\underline{c}}\)xd5 19.\(\text{\underline{x}}\)xd5 and White was winning in Conquest – N. Berry, Turin (ol) 2006.

16.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)b1 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)xf4

Again 16...\(\text{\underline{d}}\)d8 could be considered, but then 17.\(\text{\underline{c}}\)c1 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)xf4 18.gxf4 \(\text{\underline{d}}\)g6 19.b5 \(\text{\underline{w}}\)xf4 20.bxc6 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)d6 21.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)e4\(\dagger\) \(\text{\underline{w}}\)xe4 22.\(\text{\underline{c}}\)xe4 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)xc6 23.\(\text{\underline{d}}\)xd6\(\dagger\) \(\text{\underline{x}}\)xd6 was Pogorelov – Peralta, Seville 2006, and now the simple 24.\(\text{\underline{x}}\)xc6\(\dagger\) \(\text{\underline{f}}\)f8 25.\(\text{\underline{a}}\)ab1 \(\text{\underline{x}}\)d8 26.\(\text{\underline{b}}\)b7 is clearly better for White.

17.gxf4 \(\text{\underline{d}}\)g6 18.b5!

Active play with direct threats.

18.\(\text{\underline{w}}\)xf4 19.\(\text{\underline{c}}\)d1 \(\text{\underline{d}}\)d6

In another game Black tried 19...\(\text{\underline{c}}\)c5 but after 20.bxc6 0–0 21.cx\(\text{\underline{b}}\)7 \(\text{\underline{a}}\)ab8 22.\(\text{\underline{d}}\)cd5 Zhao Xue – Gerasimovitch, Kemer 2007, it was already over.

20.\(\text{\underline{x}}\)xd6!

A spectacular exchange sacrifice.
20...\texttt{\textit{W}}xd6 21.bxc6

Now White gets what he wants: a protected passed pawn on the seventh rank.

Better is 21..bxc6 when 22.\texttt{\textit{Q}}b5 \texttt{\textit{W}}d7 23.\texttt{\textit{W}}b4 is not quite as deadly as it appears: 23...\texttt{\textit{Q}}e7 24.\texttt{\textit{Q}}d1 \texttt{\textit{Q}}d5 25.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xd5 cxd5 26.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xd5 \texttt{\textit{Q}}xd5 27.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xd5 \texttt{\textit{Q}}e7 28.\texttt{\textit{Q}}d6† \texttt{\textit{Q}}f8 29.\texttt{\textit{Q}}c4 h5 30.\texttt{\textit{Q}}f5 \texttt{\textit{Q}}e8 31.\texttt{\textit{Q}}d3 \texttt{\textit{Q}}h7 32.\texttt{\textit{Q}}d7 White has good compensation for the exchange, but Black is not in the coffin yet. 32...\texttt{\textit{W}}e6 33.\texttt{\textit{Q}}e7 \texttt{\textit{Q}}c6 34.h4 \texttt{\textit{Q}}e8 35.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xa7 \texttt{\textit{Q}}e4 36.\texttt{\textit{Q}}b3 \texttt{\textit{Q}}g4† 37.\texttt{\textit{Q}}h1 \texttt{\textit{Q}}e4† 38.\texttt{\textit{Q}}f3 \texttt{\textit{Q}}e6 39.\texttt{\textit{Q}}b7 \texttt{\textit{Q}}g8 40.\texttt{\textit{Q}}e7† \texttt{\textit{Q}}xe7 41.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xe7 \texttt{\textit{Q}}h3† 42.\texttt{\textit{Q}}g1 ½−½ Verleur – Turkov, corr. 2006.

22.\texttt{\textit{Q}}b5

In a later game White took at once on b7: 22.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xb7 \texttt{\textit{Q}}ab8 And only then the knight move: 23.\texttt{\textit{Q}}b5 \texttt{\textit{Q}}b6 24.a5 \texttt{\textit{Q}}a6 25.\texttt{\textit{Q}}c7 \texttt{\textit{Q}}xe2 26.\texttt{\textit{Q}}b5 \texttt{\textit{Q}}f4 27.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xe2 \texttt{\textit{Q}}xe2† 28.\texttt{\textit{Q}}f1 \texttt{\textit{Q}}f4 29.\texttt{\textit{Q}}c4 f5 30.\texttt{\textit{Q}}c6 \texttt{\textit{Q}}g6 31.\texttt{\textit{Q}}c1 \texttt{\textit{Q}}e5 32.a6 The protected pawn on b7 was a decisive factor in Babula – Ribi, Austria 2008.

22...\texttt{\textit{Q}}c5 23.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xb7 \texttt{\textit{Q}}ab8 24.\texttt{\textit{Q}}f5

If White could exchange queens Black would have no counterplay whatsoever and he could fully enjoy the passed pawn.

24...\texttt{\textit{Q}}e5 25.\texttt{\textit{Q}}c2 \texttt{\textit{Q}}b6 26.\texttt{\textit{Q}}c7

He insists.

26...\texttt{\textit{Q}}fd8 27.\texttt{\textit{Q}}c1 \texttt{\textit{Q}}a6 28.\texttt{\textit{Q}}f5

The defence creaks.

28...\texttt{\textit{Q}}b6

29.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xb8!

An elegant finish.

29...\texttt{\textit{Q}}xb8 30.\texttt{\textit{Q}}c8† \texttt{\textit{Q}}d8 31.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xa7 \texttt{\textit{Q}}e8 32.\texttt{\textit{Q}}xd8 \texttt{\textit{Q}}xd8 33.\texttt{\textit{Q}}d5† \texttt{\textit{Q}}f7 34.\texttt{\textit{Q}}e7† \texttt{\textit{Q}}f8 35.\texttt{\textit{Q}}ec6 1−0

Conclusion: Aronian’s direct approach is a serious blow to the whole variation and it will probably scare away the last believers in the classical set-up.

**Morozevich’s 11...g5**

**Game 30**

Volokitin – Inarkiev

Russia 2008

1.\texttt{\textit{d}}4 \texttt{\textit{d}}5 2.\texttt{\textit{c}}4 \texttt{\textit{c}}6 3.\texttt{\textit{f}}3 \texttt{\textit{f}}6 4.\texttt{\textit{c}}3 dxc4 5.a4 \texttt{\textit{f}}5 6.\texttt{\textit{e}}5 \texttt{\textit{b}}bd7 7.\texttt{\textit{c}}xc4 \texttt{\textit{c}}7 8.g3 \texttt{\textit{e}}5
9...dxe5 10...b4 f4 d7 11...g2 g5!

This crazy but creative move of Morozevich is the current mainline.

12...e3

The positional approach. 12...xe5 dxe5 13...d4 f6 has held up fine for Black and 12...xe5 gxf4 13...xd7 0–0–0 14...d4...xd7 15...xf4 d6 gives good play for the pawn. Black’s dominance on the dark squares makes it difficult for White to get anything going.

12...gxh4 13...xf5

A nice square for the knight.

13...0–0–0 14...c2

We have already reached a strategically complicated position. The opposite-coloured bishops give both sides a clear dominance on each colour complex. Furthermore, White will most probably castle kingside so there are attacks and counterattacks in the air as well. Black has tried a variety of moves here.

14...c5

The mainline. The knight is on its way to e6 and at the same time White is prevented from castling long, just in case. However there are many interesting alternatives.

14...b4 15.0–0 fxg3 16.hxg3 h5 17...f1 Threatening...d5.

17...f6 18...e3

18.a5?! a6 19...e4 is another way to play.

18...b8 19...f5...e7 20...f4 a5 21...d1

White was slightly better in Grischuk – Tukmakov, Odessa 2007.

14...b8 15.0–0 fxg3 16.hxg3 h5

This is similar.

17...f1 f6 18.a5 h4 19...xh4...xh4

A typical blow in this line.

20...xh4...e4 21...d1...e8 22...f5...h6

23...d3...h2† 24...f1...g8 25.e4

Apparently White has control, but Black finds another hidden resource.

25...h5 26...xh5...xf2 27...d8†...xd8

28...xf2...g8 29...f3

This was Babula – Ragger, Germany 2008, and here he had:

29...e3† 30...xe3...g3 31...xg3†...xg3† 32...f3...xh4†

Black has chances to draw. Okay, in this position the attack after ...xh4 was not convincing, but beware of the idea. An alternative for White is the perhaps more exact 17...fd1.

14...g6 15.0–0 fxg3 16.hxg3 h5 17...f1

And here we are again.
17...\(\texttt{\textcopyright}8\) 18.b4!
18.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}5\) \texttt{\textcopyright}b6 is not so clear.
18...h4
Not 18...\(\texttt{\textcopyright}xb4\) 19.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}d5\) \texttt{\textcopyright}a5 20.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}xb4\) \texttt{\textcopyright}xb4
21.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}ab1\) with a winning attack.
19.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}b5!\)
This strike is a vital part of White’s arsenal.
19...\texttt{\textcopyright}c8
19...\texttt{\textcopyright}b6 20.a5 \texttt{\textcopyright}xb5 21.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}d4\) \texttt{\textcopyright}a6 22.b5+ is a nice variation.
20.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}b3\) h3 21.\texttt{\textcopyright}e3 c5 22.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}e4\) \texttt{\textcopyright}f6 23.bxc5±
\texttt{\textcopyright}g4 24.c6!
Spectacular!
24...\texttt{\textcopyright}d1† 25.\texttt{\textcopyright}xd1 \texttt{\textcopyright}xe3 26.\texttt{\textcopyright}xe3 bxc6
27.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}ab1\) cxb5 28.\texttt{\textcopyright}xb5† \texttt{\textcopyright}c7 29.\texttt{\textcopyright}d5† 1–0

Finally, 14...\texttt{\textcopyright}xg3 15.hxg3 might be a little premature because White can still castle long.

15.0–0 \(\texttt{\textcopyright}e6\)
Interesting is the more positionally founded:
15...\texttt{\textcopyright}xg3 16.hxg3 a5
It seems White can get a small advantage:
17.\texttt{\textcopyright}fd1 h5 18.\texttt{\textcopyright}xd8† \texttt{\textcopyright}xd8 19.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}e4\)
The obvious 19.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}d1\) gives Black good counterplay which enables him to keep the balance: 19...\texttt{\textcopyright}f6 20.e4 h4 for instance 21.f4
\texttt{\textcopyright}g6 22.e5 \texttt{\textcopyright}xe6 23.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}e2\) hxg3 24.\(\texttt{\textcopyright}d6†\) \texttt{\textcopyright}xd6
25.\texttt{\textcopyright}xd6 \texttt{\textcopyright}g4 26.\texttt{\textcopyright}xc5 \texttt{\textcopyright}xe2 27.\texttt{\textcopyright}xc6† bxc6
28.\texttt{\textcopyright}xc6† \texttt{\textcopyright}d8 29.\texttt{\textcopyright}b6† \texttt{\textcopyright}e8 30.\texttt{\textcopyright}b8† \texttt{\textcopyright}d7
31.\texttt{\textcopyright}d6† \texttt{\textcopyright}c8 ½–½ Johannessen – L’Ami,
Germany 2006.
19...\texttt{\textcopyright}xe4 20.\texttt{\textcopyright}xe4 \texttt{\textcopyright}f6 21.\texttt{\textcopyright}d1 \texttt{\textcopyright}b4 22.\texttt{\textcopyright}h3
\texttt{\textcopyright}b8 23.\texttt{\textcopyright}d4 \texttt{\textcopyright}e8
And now the endgame after:
24.f4 \texttt{\textcopyright}g4 25.\texttt{\textcopyright}xg4 \texttt{\textcopyright}xd4† 26.\texttt{\textcopyright}xd4 hxg4
27.\texttt{\textcopyright}f1 \texttt{\textcopyright}c7 28.\texttt{\textcopyright}c4 \texttt{\textcopyright}d8
Llorente Zaro – Andriasian, Herceg Novi 2006, was unclear but more or less balanced.
I think White can improve with 24.\texttt{\textcopyright}g2 keeping an edge.

16.\texttt{\textcopyright}e4

17...\texttt{\textcopyright}b5

17...\texttt{\textcopyright}c5

17...\texttt{\textcopyright}b4

17.\texttt{\textcopyright}e4 \texttt{\textcopyright}b4 is known to be satisfactory for Black. For example, 18.\texttt{\textcopyright}c1
fxg3 19.hxg3 \texttt{\textcopyright}xd1 20.\texttt{\textcopyright}xd1 \texttt{\textcopyright}d8 21.\texttt{\textcopyright}h3 \texttt{\textcopyright}b8
22.\texttt{\textcopyright}g2 a5 23.b3 ½–½ Kramnik – Morozevich, Astana 2001.

16...\texttt{\textcopyright}xg3 17.hxg3
19...\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{b}}b}8} 20.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{a}}d}1} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}6} 21.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{e}}3} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{c}}}5} 22.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{h}}}6} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{h}}}8} 23.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}d}8} 24.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}d}8} 25.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}5} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}8} 25.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{d}}}1} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textit{J. Rodriguez – Lafarga Santorroman, corr. 2003:}}} 20.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{a}}d}1} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}d}1} 21.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}d}1} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}6} 22.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{e}}3} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}5} 23.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}4} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{c}}}7} 24.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}3} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{h}}5} 25.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{d}}}6}! \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}d}6} 26.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}f}7}+ \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}7} 27.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}g}6} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{c}}}5} 28.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{f}}4} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}6} 29.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{c}}}x}6 \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{c}}}x}6 30.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}2}+ \textcolor{red}{\text{	extit{Grischuk – P.H. Nielsen, Internet 2004.}}} 18.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{b}}4} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{h}}4} 25.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{b}}}4} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{d}}}4} 26.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}7} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{b}}}8} 27.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{e}}3}+− \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{h}}}6} 28.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{d}}}5} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}c}6} 29.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}4} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}4}+ 30.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}f}4} \textcolor{red}{\text{	extit{White has repelled Black’s tricks and has a won ending.}}} 30...\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{h}}}2} 31.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{a}}}2} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{g}}8} 32.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}1} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{d}}4} 33.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}7} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{g}}8} 34.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{c}}}6}+ 35.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}c}6} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{h}}}6} 36.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{a}}}c}2 \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}c}6} 37.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}c}6} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{d}}}8} 38.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}6} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{d}}}7} 39.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{b}}}3} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{c}}}7} 40.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{h}}}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}5} 41.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}7} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}4} 42.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}2} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}3} 43.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}d}7}+ \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}d}7} 44.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}7} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}6} 45.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{d}}}3} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{c}}5} 46.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{f}}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}5} 47.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{a}2}} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{1–0}} \textcolor{red}{\text{	extit{Conclusion: Morozevich’s 11...g5 leads to extremely demanding positions. With 12.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{e}}}3} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{gxf}}4} 13.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}f}5} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{White gets a wonderful knight on f5 that can help both to defend and to attack. However the opposite-coloured bishops make many of the variations rather balanced and unfortunately all three results are possible.}}} 19.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{b}}}5}! \textcolor{red}{\text{	extit{Kind of standard, yet always spectacular.}}} 19...\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}b}5} \textcolor{red}{\text{	extit{Of course Black tests the sacrifice: on 19...\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{b}}}}8 follows 20.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{d}}}a7}+ \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textfrak{a}7} 21.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{w}}}e}5.}}} 20.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{f}}}c}1 \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{c}}}6} 21.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{x}}b}5} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{h}}}x}3 22.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{b}}}xc}6 \textcolor{red}{\text{	extit{He even had time for 22.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{d}}}x}3.}}} 22...\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{gxf}}2}+ 23.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{g}}}x}2 \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{b}}6} 24.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{a}}}6! \textcolor{red}{\text{	extit{The culmination of Volokitin’s powerful play. He simply threatens \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{a}}}c1} and Black has no defence.}}} 24...\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{a}}}x}4 25.\textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{c}}}a1} \textcolor{red}{\text{	exttt{\textfrak{b}}}8} 26.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textfrak{a}7} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textfrak{a}7} 27.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textfrak{a}7} \textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textfrak{a}7}} 28.\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}4} and the queen quickly gets in and decides.}}
An increasingly popular line pioneered by the fighter Ivan Sokolov. The line is suggested by Vigué in his book *Play the Slav*, so it is very important to know.

8.\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{e}5 \)

White does best to keep some pieces on the board.

8...a5

Black has a rather rare alternative.

8...e6 9.a5!? 

Not the only move, but a logical way to exploit Black's omission of the usual 8...a5.

9...\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{bd}7 \)

This was played by Huebner, who is a Slav expert, so his choice is significant.

The other way is 9...\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{bd}5 \) 10.f3?! (10.a6 \( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{b}4 \) is a messy line for those who like to analyse). The position after 10.f3 is almost unexplored, but White seems to have promising play with ideas of e2-e4 or a5-a6. For example: 10...\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{b}4 \) 11.\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{d}2 \) \( \text{\textsc{a}} \text{a}5 \) 12.e4 \( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{xc}3 \) 13.bxc3 \( \text{\textsc{g}} \text{g}6 \) 14.a6! A neat trick to undermine e6.

It would be more usual for a5-a6 to perform this role, and that's one reason why Black generally blocks the a4-pawn with 8...a5.

10.a6 \( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{xe}5 \) 11.axb7 \( \text{\textsc{b}} \text{b}8 \) 12.dxe5 \( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{xd}1 \)
13.\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{xd}1 \) \( \text{\textsc{e}} \text{e}4 \) 14.\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{xa}7 \) \( \text{\textsc{b}} \text{b}4 \)
15.\( \text{\textsc{c}} \text{c}3 \) \( \text{\textsc{c}} \text{c}5 \)
16.\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{xa}7 \) 17.\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{d}6 \)

White had excellent compensation for the exchange in Veingold – Huebner, Finland 2007, and went on to win.

9.\( \text{\textsc{g}} \text{g}5 \)

The modern try.

The obvious 9.f3 is not so clear after 9...\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{fd}7 \)
10.\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{xd}7 \) 11.e4 \( \text{\textsc{g}} \text{g}6 \). Often Black will strike at the white centre with ...c7-e5 leaving White rather vulnerable on the dark squares.

Instead many players go for a small but safe edge with 9.g3. After 9...e6 10.\( \text{\textsc{g}} \text{g}2 \) \( \text{\textsc{b}} \text{b}4 \) 11.0-0 0-0 12.e3 h6 13.\( \text{\textsc{w}} \text{e}2 \) \( \text{\textsc{h}} \text{h}7 \) 14.\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{d}1 \) \( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{fd}7 \) then 15.\( \text{\textsc{d}} \text{d}3 \) keeps some pieces on the board and e4 will come next with a slightly more pleasant position for White because of the extra space. However, Black has a firm structure and good chances of counterplay. In the practical games with this line Black has held on very well and scored almost fifty percent. With the more direct 9.\( \text{\textsc{g}} \text{g}5 \) White develops actively and quickly. He is ready to answer 9...e6 with 10.e4 so Black is immediately under some pressure.

9...h6

A necessary prelude to playing ...e6. Another move is currently on the cutting edge of theory and that is the Gruenfeld-like:

9...\( \text{\textsc{g}} \text{g}6 \)??

White has a couple of options, 10.f3 and 10.e3:
10...f3
This sharp move is worth a try, but it is also risky.

10...g7
Worse is 10...h6?! 11.h4 g7 12.e4 e6 13.e2 0–0 14.f2 c7 15.0–0 h5 16.g3
\( \text{f}6 \) 17.e2 \( \text{f}6 \) 18.f4 Babula – Kulaots, Dresden 2007, and h6 turned out to be a weakness.

11.e4 e6 12.e3 0–0 13.e2 \( \text{d}6 \) 14.0–0 \( \text{f}3 \) 15.f4 \( \text{c}8 \) 16.d1
This was unclear in Daus – Bergmann, corr. 2007. Black could consider 16...f5.

10.e3
White should be able to get a positional plus with this modest move.

10...g7 11.d3 e6
11...xd3 12.xd3 is pleasant for White:
12.db5 13.b6 14.xb6 \( \text{xb6} \)
15.a3 \( \text{d}7 \) 16.e2 0–0 17.b3 c8 18.f4 \( \text{a}7 \) 19.d1 With a better ending, Sargissian – Felgaer, Lugo 2007.

12.e2
Vacating d3 for the knight.

12...bd5
12...d5 13.d3 b4 was Sargissian – Sokolov, Zafra 2007, when 14.c5 must be better for White.

13.h4 0–0 14.0–0 c5 15.b5 e4 16.f3 cxd4 17.e4 e5
Grischuk – Carlsen, Baku 2008, and now:
18.exd4!
This gives White the initiative after either
18.g7 19.c1 or 18.f4 19.f3.

Instead of 9...g6, Black could also try the tricky:
9...f5?!
White responds sharply:
10.e4 \( \text{x}3 \) 11.bxc3 \( \text{xe}4 \) 12.b3 d5 13.e4 e4 14.e3 f5 15.e2
This gives good compensation for the pawn.

15...h6
If 15...d7 then 16.g4! e6 17.d5! is strong because 17...cxd5 18.cxd5 x5 19.b5 c6 20.xc6 bxc6 21.d1 wins for White.

16.h4 g5 17.h5 e6 18.f3 h7 19.d3 f7 20.g3
White’s position was easier to play in Kuljasevic – Milman, Washington 2006.

10...e6
If instead:
10...b5
White can get a good ending with:
11.b6 12.xb6 \( \text{xb6} \) 13.f3 d7
Interesting is 13...c2 14.e4 e6 when the bishop will be surprisingly safe on b3 in the middle of the white camp. Still 15.d3 b3 16.f2 b4 17.e2 \( \text{d}7 \) 18.xd7 xd7 19.a2! xa2 (not 19.xa4 20.c1 or 19...xa4 20.xb4 axb4 21.d5) 20.xa2+ P.H. Nielsen – Dziuba, Plovdiv 2008, and White had the bishops and the space.

14.xd7
14.e4 x5 15.dxe5 e6 16.f2 d7 f4 g6 eventually held for Black in Cmilyte – Ruan, Ekaterinburg (2.1) 2006, but the extra space certainly makes White’s position much easier to play.

14...xd7 15.e4 g6 16.0–0 e5? 17.dxe5 x5
This happened between the same two players, and now Cmilyte effectively decided the outcome with a tactical blow: 18.\texttt{d}5! cxd5 19.\texttt{b}5\texttt{c}6 20.exd5 \texttt{b}4 21.dxc6 0–0 22.c7 \texttt{ac}8 23.\texttt{g}3  
White won in Cmilyte – Ruan, Ekaterinburg (2.6) 2006.

Instead of the unfortunate 16...e5 Black should play the more modest 16...e6 and just accept having less space. White has no reason to complain though. He – or rather she – is the only one who can play for a win.

The alternative 10...g5 weakens the kingside:

11.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{g}7 12.e3 \texttt{fd}7 and now 13.\texttt{d}3!± Harikrishna – Becerra Rivero, Lubbock 2008.

11.e4 \texttt{h}7 12.f3 \texttt{e}7 13.\texttt{f}2 0–0  
The immediate 13...\texttt{fd}7 will most probably lead to the same position after 14.\texttt{d}3.

14.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{fd}7  
The standard reaction for Black in this variation: White withdraws his knight rather than exchanging it, to keep maximum pressure on Black and use the extra space.

15.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{d}6  
The other option is:

15...\texttt{c}8 16.0–0 c5  
This has been popular, but White can liquidate to a pleasant ending, where Black feels the absence of the h7-bishop:

17.dxc5 \texttt{xc}5 18.\texttt{xc}5 \texttt{xc}5 19.\texttt{xc}5 \texttt{xc}5 20.\texttt{x}d8 \texttt{xd}8 21.\texttt{f}d1 \texttt{e}8 22.\texttt{ab}1  
Preparing b4.

22...\texttt{f}8 23.\texttt{xd}8+ \texttt{xd}8 24.\texttt{b}4 \texttt{d}4 25.\texttt{x}a5 \texttt{a}4 26.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{d}2 27.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{d}7 28.\texttt{c}1±

Gelfand – Felgaer, Khanty Mansyisk 2005. The knight on a4 and bishop on h7 do not coordinate very well.

Later Kozubov showed that Black had better chances to hold with the active: 22...f5 23.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{xe}4 24.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{f}8 Grigorian – Kozubov, Kirishi 2007.

However White can improve on 17.dxc5: the latest word is: 17.\texttt{xb}5!? cxd4 18.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{c}4 19.b3 \texttt{d}6 20.\texttt{w}d2 \texttt{xb}5 21.axb5 e5 22.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{c}5 23.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{d}7 24.\texttt{b}6! \texttt{a}8 25.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{xb}6 26.\texttt{a}5 \texttt{d}7 27.\texttt{d}5 \texttt{c}7 28.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{f}6 29.\texttt{xc}7 \texttt{xc}7 30.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{xe}5 31.\texttt{xe}5

Black did not have enough for the pawn in Sargissian – Wang Yue, Pamplona 2007.

16.\texttt{c}1  
A very exact move. White is ready to meet ...\texttt{c}7 with \texttt{b}5.

On the immediate:

16.0–0  
Black has prepared a typical liberation plan with:

16...\texttt{c}7 17.g3 e5  
White maintained a small plus after:

18.\texttt{d}1 exd4 19.\texttt{b}5 \texttt{b}8 20.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{d}8 21.b3 \texttt{e}5 22.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{xd}3 23.\texttt{xd}3 \texttt{d}7 24.\texttt{fd}1  
But Black had the usual firm Slav structure, Kasimdzhanov – Ki. Georgiev, Khanty-Mansyisk (2.3) 2007.

16...\texttt{e}7 17.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{c}7 18.0–0  
Now White is clearly better: Black has no obvious counter-strikes:

18...\texttt{ac}8 19.\texttt{h}1 \texttt{h}8 20.\texttt{f}1 \texttt{g}5 21.\texttt{f}1
He has all the time in the world and slowly regroups. Black, on the other hand, lacks space and has difficulties in improving his pieces.

**Conclusion:** The new line 9...g5 could soon be making headlines. The best answer is probably 9...g6 where theory is still in its infancy.

**Chapter Conclusion:** You will often have to face the Slav. This opening is popular at all levels and, after having seen the illustrative games in this chapter, it is easy to understand why. Although our focus is on the white side of the board, one cannot help noticing that this opening is full of deep positional subtleties, and the tactical motifs are almost unlimited. So strategic understanding and concrete preparation will pay off.

After 5.a4 the minor lines will remain minor. If White knows what he is doing, he can count on a plus. The real test is 5...Af5. Here our repertoire with 6.Qe5 is a reliable line that gives good chances of gaining an advantage. You especially have to be ready to face Morozevich’s 11...g5 and Sokolov’s 7...Qb6. They both lead to very demanding positions and nothing is completely clear, so be careful out there!
Chapter 4

The Semi-Slav

Karma Police arrest this man
he talks in maths
he buzzes like a fridge
he's like a detuned radio

– Radiohead

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.dıf3 dıf6 4.dıc3 e6

- The Botvinnik Variation page 112
- The Moscow Variation page 113
- The Cambridge Springs page 114
- Queen's Gambit Declined page 114
- Theory: Botvinnik Variation page 114
- Theory: Moscow Gambit page 133
- Theory: Cambridge Springs page 147
- Theory: QGD page 158
1.\textbf{d4 d5} 2.\textbf{c4 c6} 3.\textbf{\underline{\textit{d}f}3 \underline{\textit{d}f}6} 4.\textbf{\underline{\textit{c}c}3 e6}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
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8 & & & & & & & \\
7 & & & & & & & \\
6 & & & & & & & \\
5 & & & & & & & \\
4 & & & & & & & \\
3 & & & & & & & \\
2 & & & & & & & \\
1 & & & & & & & \\
\hline
 & & & a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

The Semi-Slav, one of the most computer analysed and debated openings in the new millennium. Black reinforces his d5-strongpoint, but most importantly he also activates the typical Slav-idea of ...dxe4 followed by ...b5.

5.\textbf{\underline{\textit{g}g}5}

The most active and critical response. It often leads to extreme complications and the resulting positions are very double-edged to put it mildly, so you should be willing to gamble a little to play it. And you shouldn’t be allergic to computers either. With good knowledge of the basics, at least some of the current theory, and a lot of self-confidence, then 5.\underline{g}g5 is a tremendous weapon. Many of the variations are balancing on the cutting edge and a new move can always overturn the evaluations. Therefore it is absolutely essential to follow closely what is happening in the chess world. Suddenly a stunning idea will turn the common belief upside down. Fortunately it is fun to research. And in these modern times it can be fun to analyse as well. It is important to realise that chess is no longer a deep strategic game where you try to be creative at the board. It has become a much more concrete game, and a lot of clashes are decided right in the opening. This will also be the case in the Semi-Slav, so if you have a problem with that then 5.\underline{g}g5 is not suited for you. If, on the other hand, you don’t mind letting Fritz analyse a critical position while you have a beer in the bar, then we are speaking the same language.

The modest 5.\textbf{e3} is a simple and popular alternative. Here too the play can quickly become rather sharp if both sides insist. After 5...\underline{\textit{d}d}7 6.\underline{\textit{d}d}3 dxe4 7.\underline{x}xc4 b5 8.\underline{\textit{d}d}3 we have the starting position of the Meran. And the fancy 6.\underline{\textit{c}c}2 \underline{\textit{d}d}6 7.g4 is also an interesting approach by White. Both variations deserve further investigations and could serve as an alternative to 5.\underline{g}g5. But you shouldn’t be deceived: they are also very theoretical and difficult to play for both sides. It seems there are no shortcuts. If White is unable to keep his initiative then all hopes for an opening advantage will vanish. This is very much the characteristic of the whole Semi-Slav complex.

After 5.\underline{g}g5 the play divides into several big lines.

\textbf{The Botvinnik Variation}

1.\textbf{d4 d5} 2.\textbf{c4 c6} 3.\textbf{\underline{\textit{d}f}3 \underline{\textit{d}f}6} 4.\textbf{\underline{\textit{c}c}3 e6} 5.\textbf{\underline{\textit{g}g}5}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
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7 & & & & & & & \\
6 & & & & & & & \\
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 & & & a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
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5...dxc4

The Botvinnik variation: Black goes all-in. White should be better and has to call. That is why there is no need to search for easy sidelines already. I will mention a few of them in the Theory section on the way down mainstreet anyway, because they give the possibility of varying the play, which could be useful if some problems should arise in one of the mainlines — and that is a real possibility. Actually, so real that it is more or less bound to happen.

6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.h4 g5 9.xg5 hxg5
10.xg5 bd7

White wins the piece back and is going to be a pawn up. It is not clear what Black has got in return, but his big pawn majority on the queenside is a factor that should not be underestimated. White's free h-pawn could also tell, but in practice it has been surprisingly difficult to get it going. Generally, normal chess logic ceases to apply in the Botvinnik variation and the tactical skirmish is just about to begin. We will return to it in the Theory section.

The Moscow Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.f3 f6 4.c3 e6 5.g5 h6

The Moscow variation: a sophisticated improvement of the Botvinnik. Of course White can play solidly and take on f6, but it is more natural to withdraw the threatened bishop.

6.h4 dxc4 7.e4 g5

The difference.

8.g3 b5

Here it is White who has sacrificed a pawn. This time the compensation is obvious. White is ahead in development and Black's kingside is weakened and can be attacked with h4. Still, is it worth more than a pawn, that's the question.
The Cambridge Springs

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_3\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_6\) 4.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}}_3\) e6 5.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}}_5\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}}_d7\)

The Botvinnik and Moscow variations both lead to chaotic play, so some Black players instead try to have more control. A popular move is ...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}}_d7\).

6.e3 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{a}}}_5\)

Finally Black can choose just to play a Queen's Gambit Declined position. It looks firm, but ...c6 has been played prematurely and White has no difficulties getting some positional advantage.

It may seem odd at first glance to cover the Cambridge Springs and the QGD in the chapter on the Semi-Slav rather than, say, Chapter 1 – the Queen’s Gambit Exchange Variation. However, there is logic to my choice: with my repertoire Black can only reach the Cambridge Springs and the QGD via the Semi-Slav move-order. If Black had played 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}}_3\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_6\) we would of course play 4.cxd5.

With the structure explained, it is time for the wild Botvinnik Variation.

Theory: Botvinnik Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_3\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}}}_6\) 4.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}}}_3\) e6 5.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}}}_5\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}}}_7\)

6.e4

The natural move. White takes the centre and simultaneously threatens to recapture the pawn on c4 and exploit the pin on the dark knight by e5.

An alternative is 6.a4 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}}}_4\) 7.e4 where White can answer 7...b5 with 8.e5 and 7...c5.
with 8...\textit{xc4}. Black's most solid approach is 7...\textit{xc3} $^\text{\texttt{t}}$ 8.bxc3 $^\text{\texttt{w}}$a5 9.e5 $^\text{\texttt{d}}$e4 10.$^\text{\texttt{d}}$d2 $^\text{\texttt{w}}$d5 and now 11.a5 gives White some initiative.

\textbf{6...b5 7.e5}

Again an alternative is 7.a4, but now Black can hold onto the pawn with 7...$^\text{\texttt{w}}$b6 which has scored very well for him.

\textbf{7...h6}

Black has to break the pin.

\textbf{8.$^\text{\texttt{h}}$h4 g5}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{figure}

\textbf{9.$^\text{\texttt{d}}$xg5}

An alternative was suggested in \textit{Dangerous Weapons}:

9...exf6 gxh4 10.$^\text{\texttt{e}}$e5 $^\text{\texttt{w}}$xf6 11.g3

The problem with these sidelines is that they often turn out to be dangerous for the wrong player.

Instead 11.$^\text{\texttt{e}}$e2 $^\text{\texttt{d}}$d7 12.$^\text{\texttt{d}}$xc6 $^\text{\texttt{b}}$b7 13.$^\text{\texttt{f}}$f3 a6 gives Black good play.

The main move is 11.a4 when 11...$^\text{\texttt{b}}$b7 and the wild 11...c5 both lead to complications that seem okay for Black.

After 11.g3 play can continue:

11...$^\text{\texttt{d}}$d7 12.$^\text{\texttt{w}}$e2 c5 13.$^\text{\texttt{c}}$c6

Planning $^\text{\texttt{d}}$d5, but if Black is willing to sacrifice material he will get good counter chances.

\textbf{13...$^\text{\texttt{b}}$7}

Black could also try Grischuk's 13...$^\text{\texttt{g}}$7 14.$^\text{\texttt{g}}$g2 cxd4 15.$^\text{\texttt{d}}$d5 $^\text{\texttt{w}}$f5 16.g4 $^\text{\texttt{w}}$g5 17.f4 d3 18.fxg5 dxe2 19.$^\text{\texttt{c}}$c7 $^\text{\texttt{f}}$f8 20.$^\text{\texttt{a}}$xa8 \textit{b}b7 21.$^\text{\texttt{c}}$c7 $^\text{\texttt{b}}$b8 22.$^\text{\texttt{w}}$xb8 $^\text{\texttt{g}}$xg2 23.$^\text{\texttt{c}}$xe2 $^\text{\texttt{e}}$7 24.$^\text{\texttt{a}}$ba6 hxg5 with strong bishops and some pawns for the rook, Rychagov – Grischuk, Moscow 2007.

14.$^\text{\texttt{d}}$d5 $^\text{\texttt{a}}$xc6 15.$^\text{\texttt{d}}$xf6 $^\text{\texttt{d}}$xf6 16.d5 $^\text{\texttt{c}}$xd5 17.$^\text{\texttt{g}}$g2 $^\text{\texttt{g}}$g7 18.a4 0–0 19.axb5 $^\text{\texttt{a}}$xb5 20.0–0 a6 21.$^\text{\texttt{w}}$h5 hxg3 22.fxg3 $^\text{\texttt{a}}$ad8 23.$^\text{\texttt{f}}$f2

Jobava – Cheparinov, Wijk aan Zee 2006, and now Vigorito suggests:

23...c3 24.bxc3 $^\text{\texttt{a}}$xc3 25.$^\text{\texttt{b}}$b1 $^\text{\texttt{g}}$7

Black should be fine.

\textbf{9...hxg5}

Sometimes Black tries the tricky 9...$^\text{\texttt{d}}$d5 but it is not correct. White answers 10.$^\text{\texttt{d}}$xf7! and gets the upper hand. Game 32 shows how.

\textbf{10.$^\text{\texttt{x}}$xg5 $^\text{\texttt{a}}$bd7}

The standard reaction. Possible is 10...$^\text{\texttt{e}}$e7 11.exf6 $^\text{\texttt{a}}$xf6 12.$^\text{\texttt{w}}$xf6 $^\text{\texttt{w}}$xf6. The exchange of the dark-squared bishops has left Black with big holes on c5 and d6, which could be useful for the white knight. Game 33 highlights this issue.

\textbf{11.g3}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board2.png}
\end{figure}
An important moment. White could take on f6 immediately by 11.exf6 when 11...\textit{\textit{a}b7} 12.g3 e5 13.d5 \textit{\textit{b}b6} 14.\textit{g}2 \textit{0–0} 15.0–0 is just another way to reach the mainline.

Black gets some additional possibilities on move 13 though, of which 13...\textit{h}6 and 13...\textit{c}7 deserve to be mentioned, but especially 13...\textit{xf}6 has been a problem. The spectacular mainline goes: 14.\textit{g}2 \textit{e}7 15.0–0 \textit{x}d5 16.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 17.\textit{xb}5 \textit{b}6 18.\textit{a}3 \textit{h}4! 19.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}4! 20.\textit{xc}4 \textit{a}6

12.\textit{g}2 \textit{b}6

The normal move, but also seen is:
12...\textit{c}7 13.exf6 c5 14.d5

And White has been unable to prove anything but a draw:

21.\textit{xb}7 \textit{h}3\textit{f} 22.\textit{g}2 \textit{xb}7\textit{f} 23.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}8 24.\textit{c}2 \textit{xc}4 25.\textit{xc}4 \textit{xc}2\textit{f} 26.\textit{h}1 \textit{f}2\textit{f} 27.\textit{g}1 \textit{h}3\textit{f} 28.\textit{h}1 \textit{f}2\textit{f} 29.\textit{g}1 \textit{h}3\textit{f} 30.\textit{h}1 \textit{f}2\textit{f} \textit{½–½} Potkin – Yakovich, Novokuznetsk 2008.

21.\textit{fc}1 \textit{g}8 22.\textit{xb}7 \textit{xb}7 23.\textit{d}6\textit{f} 24.\textit{e}5\textit{f} \textit{c}7 25.\textit{xc}5\textit{f} \textit{f}6 26.\textit{e}5\textit{f} \textit{e}7 27.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}2\textit{f} 28.\textit{f}1 \textit{xc}1 29.\textit{f}5\textit{f} \textit{d}7 30.\textit{d}6\textit{f} \textit{e}8 31.\textit{xc}1 \textit{exf}5 32.\textit{gxh}4 \textit{h}1\textit{f} 33.\textit{e}2 \textit{xc}1 34.\textit{b}8\textit{f} \textit{e}7 35.\textit{xg}8 \textit{c}4\textit{f} 36.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}4\textit{f} 37.\textit{e}1 \textit{c}1\textit{f} 38.\textit{e}2 \textit{c}4\textit{f} 39.\textit{d}2 \textit{f}4\textit{f} \textit{½–½} Jobava – Rodshtein, Pamplona 2007.

11...\textit{b}7

Here Black has a chance to prove the downside of the move-order 11.g3, namely by playing 11...\textit{g}8 12.h4 \textit{g}5 13.hxg5 \textit{d}5.

White must think more about the initiative than material, and respond actively with 14.g6 \textit{f}xg6 15.\textit{g}4. See Game 34 for the current status of this interesting line.

The other try, 11...\textit{a}5 12.exf6 b4 13.\textit{e}4 \textit{a}6, may be a little disturbing for White, but if he knows his stuff he will be able to castle comfortably and Black’s operations on the queenside might be premature. See Game 35.
Instead of 14...\textbf{We}5\textdagger Black can try:
14...b4

But then comes:
15.d6! \textbf{Wb}6 16.\textbf{Ec}e4 0–0 0–0 17.0–0 \textbf{Dd}5
17...\textbf{De}5 18.\textbf{Wf}2 \textbf{Dd}5 19.\textbf{Ffd}1 is just good for White who is more than willing to give up an exchange to get rid of Black’s light-squared bishop:
19...\textbf{Cc}6 20.a3 b3 21.\textbf{Ex}d5! exd5 22.\textbf{Cc}3 \textbf{Xxd}6 23.\textbf{Ex}d5\texttildelow Filippov – Bocharov, Tomsk 2004.
Or 19...\textbf{Cc}6 20.\textbf{Fa}c1 \textbf{Xxd}6 21.\textbf{Xxc}4! \textbf{Xxc}4 22.\textbf{Xxc}4 with good play, as in P.H. Nielsen – Smeets, Wijk aan Zee 2005.
18.a3 b3 19.\textbf{Ff}4 \textbf{Cc}6 20.f3
White is better.
20.\textbf{Ex}e4
Or 20...\textbf{Ah}6 21.\textbf{Wd}2 \textbf{Xf}4 22.\textbf{Wxf}4\texttildelow Arakelov – E. Volkov, Dubna 2007.
21.\textbf{Fxe}4 e5
Kaidanov – Hillarp Persson, Turin 2006, and now I like 22.\textbf{Dd}2 \textbf{Xxd}6 23.\textbf{Cc}3\texttildelow

13.exf6 0–0–0
13...c5 14.d5 leads to the same thing.

14.0–0

The normal way of seeking counterplay. Black should confront White in the centre and on the queenside, where he has a massive pawn superiority. A few other moves have been tried, but they do not solve the demands of the position.

14...\textbf{De}5 15.\textbf{Dxe}5! \textbf{Ex}d1 16.\textbf{Fx}d1

After the positional queen sacrifice White is clearly in the driver’s seat. He has almost total dominance and Black cannot use his queen for much.

One example is 16...\textbf{Ec}5 17.\textbf{De}4 \textbf{Dd}4 18.\textbf{Dd}6\textdagger \textbf{Cc}7 19.\textbf{Xxf}7 \textbf{Ef}8 20.\textbf{Dd}6 \textbf{Xxe}5 21.\textbf{Dc}3 \textbf{Wa}6 22.\textbf{Dd}4 \textbf{Ec}8 23.\textbf{Cc}5 \textbf{Xf}6 Vilela – Frey Beckman, Havana 1985, and now 24.\textbf{Dd}7! \textbf{Ef}7 25.\textbf{Dd}8\textdagger \textbf{Db}8 26.\textbf{Cc}5 would have trapped the queen.

14...\textbf{Ah}6 15.\textbf{Ax}h6 \textbf{Xh}6 16.b3
White opens the position.
16...\textbf{Xb}3 17.\textbf{Xxb}3 \textbf{Df}6 18.\textbf{Dd}2 \textbf{Ah}5 19.\textbf{Ffd}1 c5 20.\textbf{Dc}2 exd4 21.\textbf{Df}4 \textbf{Fhh}8 22.b4
With a positional grip. Black feels the absence of his dark-squared bishop.
22...\textbf{Db}8 23.\textbf{Dd}3 \textbf{Dd}6 24.\textbf{Cc}5 \textbf{Hh}8 25.h4
Run Forrest, run!
25...\textbf{Cc}8 26.\textbf{As}3 \textbf{Dd}5 27.\textbf{Dda}1 \textbf{Cc}3 28.\textbf{Axa}7 \textbf{Wxa}7 29.\textbf{Axa}7 \textbf{Cc}7 30.h5 \textbf{Db}6 31.\textbf{We}1 \textbf{Da}2 32.\textbf{De}4 \textbf{Dd}5 33.\textbf{h}6 1–0
Withey – Perrin, corr. 2007.
15.\textit{d5 b4}

A fantastic position. White is a rook down and everything hangs everywhere.

Another important crossroads.

16.\textit{a4}

This move gives Black the most problems.

The alternative is the stunning:
16.\textit{b1}

This leads to extremely sharp variations full of sacrifices and counter-sacrifices. Black seems to hold in the critical positions, but let’s have a quick look. 16...\textit{xc3 17.bxc3 is too dangerous for Black. Instead he should play:
16...\textit{a6 17.dxe6 \textit{g2 18.e7 \textit{xf1
18...\textit{b7 and 18...\textit{a8 are interesting attempts.
19.\textit{d5

27.\textit{c4+}

Playing for more than a draw is risky: 27.a4 \textit{bxa3 28.\textit{c4+ \textit{xc4 29.wxc4 a2
27...\textit{b5 28.d6+ \textit{b6 29.\textit{c4+ \textit{b5 \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2}
Topalov – Kramnik, Dortmund 1996.

16...\textit{b5}

The queen had to be moved, but where to? 16...\textit{b5 has been the traditional answer, but also interesting is 16...\textit{a6 – see Game 36.

16...\textit{d6}, however, cannot be recommended. 17.\textit{f4 e5 18.\textit{e3 \textit{h6 19.\textit{c1 \textit{xe3 20.wxe3 is just good for White. 20...\textit{a6 21.a3 \textit{b8 22.h4 \textit{dg8 23.\textit{xc5 \textit{xc5 24.axb4 \textit{b7 1–0
Kramnik – Ivanchuk, Novgorod 1996. An early resignation by Chucky. The finish could be 25.\textit{a3 \textit{c7 26.\textit{fa1 \textit{b5 27.\textit{xa7 \textit{b8 28.\textit{a5 \textit{d7 29.\textit{a6 and wins.

17.\textit{a3}

Trying to open the queenside for the white pieces. 17.dxe6 \textit{g2 is complicated, but Black has done well in the games that have been played with it.

17...exd5
Almost the only move left.

a) 17...hx6 18.xhx6 xhx6 is known to be risky:

19.dxe6 xg2 20.exd7+ xd7 21.c1 This is given by Pedersen as good for White. If we continue a bit with: 21...xf1 22.xh6 xa4 23.xf1 c3 It seems that Black gets good counterplay. Instead White could play:

19.axb4 cxb4 20.b3 c3 21.d4

This looks promising.

21...xd5 22.xc3! bxc3 23.xxc3+ b8 24.d4 xg2 25.d6+ b7 26.xa7 xxa7 27.c7+ b7 28.a1+ a6 29.xa6+ a6 30.xd8

With a winning position: the pawns begin to tell.

30.c6 b5 31.c7 e5 32.f4 b3+ 33.f1 f1+ 34.f1 b2 35.e2 b5 36.d2 f1+ 37.c3 xg3 38.xf7 e2+ 39.d2 d4 40.xh5 1–0


b) 17...xd5 18.xd5 exd5 19.xd5 xa4 20.axb4

Vigorito likes 20.xd1 and after 20...b5 21.axb4 xb7 22.xf7 you can understand why.

20.b6 21.xf7 xh7 22.xa7

This is an idea of Korchnoi.

22.xf7 cxb4 23.axe6 e3 25.xd7 xdx7 26.xe1 xf6 27.xc4+ d7 28.d4

The ending does not win by itself, but the three pawns give White good practical chances as the following game confirms.

29.g2 e6 30.xc6+ d6 31.e3 h5 32.f4 d5 33.h4 e4 34.f6 b3 35.xd6 xdx6 36.xb3 d2 37.xf3 xfx2 38.e3+ f5 39.e2 xe2 40.xe2 e4 41.xf3 d2+ 42.g2 g4 43.b4 c4 44.b5 b6 45.f2 c4 46.g1 b6 47.f2 c4 48.e2 b6

49.e3 d7 50.d4 1–0


c) 17...b8 18.axb4 cxb4 19.d4 19.g4 is also possible, but 19.d4 and the following queen sacrifice is very strong.

19...c6 20.dxc6! xd4 21.cxb7

This protected passed pawn on the seventh rank will be a constant nuisance for Black.

21.c7

21...b8 makes little difference. After 22.e3 e5 23.b3! c3 24.f1 d6 25.xd4 exd4 26.xd4 c2 27.xc4 the best Black can get is a bad ending: 27.xc4 28.xc4 c1=wb+ 29.xc1 xxc1 30.c5 a5 31.d5± 22.e3 e5 22.d5 23.xa7 xb7 24.b6 or 22..c5 23.xc5 xxc5 24.xa6 b8 25.xc6 is worse.

23.c3! bxc3 24.bxc3 c5 25.xd4 xdx4 26.f1 c5 27.a6 b8
28.\textit{c1!}

The bishop goes the other way around and decides the game.

28...c3 29.\textit{\texttt{c}a3} 30.\textit{\texttt{c}d6\dag} 31.\textit{\texttt{c}e6\dag} 32.\textit{\texttt{b}b5} 33.\textit{\texttt{f}xf2\dag} 34.\textit{\texttt{f}d4\dag} 35.\textit{\texttt{e}e1} 36.\textit{\texttt{f}e2} 37.\textit{\texttt{f}h2\dag} 38.\textit{\texttt{c}c7\dag} 39.\textit{\texttt{c}c4\dag} 40.\textit{\texttt{x}a7\dag} 41.\textit{\texttt{c}c7\dag} 1–0


18.\textit{a}xb4 \textit{c}xb4

This is the main position in the Botvinnik variation and it will be analysed in Game 37. Sometimes Black has tried to confuse matters with:

18...d4?!

But after:

19.\textit{\texttt{b}xb7\dag} 20.\textit{\texttt{c}c5\dag} 21.\textit{\texttt{b}b6} 22.bxc5\dag 23.\textit{\texttt{d}d2} 24.\textit{\texttt{x}b4} 25.\textit{\texttt{a}a6\dag} 1–0 Michenka – Talla, Frydek Mistek 2003.

21.bxc5 \textit{\texttt{x}c5} 22.\textit{\texttt{e}e1}

the black king’s position is too open and White has won some convincing correspondence games.

22.\textit{\texttt{e}e6}

Or 22...\textit{\texttt{b}b3} 23.\textit{\texttt{e}e7\dag} 24.\textit{\texttt{f}f3\dag} 25.\textit{\texttt{a}a1} 26.\textit{\texttt{f}f5} 27.\textit{\texttt{c}c5} 28.\textit{\texttt{d}d2} 29.\textit{\texttt{d}d5} 30.\textit{\texttt{x}a5} 31.\textit{\texttt{e}e4} 32.\textit{\texttt{e}e1} 33.\textit{\texttt{x}d7} 34.\textit{\texttt{e}e7} 1–0 Hayakawa – Tanti, corr. 2006.

23.\textit{\texttt{d}d2} 24.\textit{\texttt{h}h5} 25.\textit{\texttt{e}e1} 26.\textit{\texttt{d}d5} 27.\textit{\texttt{x}e4} 28.\textit{\texttt{f}f1} 29.g4 30.\textit{\texttt{a}a6} 31.\textit{\texttt{b}b3} 32.\textit{\texttt{c}c3} 33.\textit{\texttt{x}xc} 34.\textit{\texttt{c}c1} 35.\textit{\texttt{f}f1}

Kund – Jimenez

Correspondence 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\textit{\texttt{f}f3} \textit{\texttt{f}f6} 4.\textit{\texttt{c}c3} e6 5.\textit{\texttt{g}g5} dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.\textit{\texttt{h}h4} g5 9.\textit{\texttt{x}xg5} \textit{\texttt{d}d5}\dag?

A tricky line to face over the board, but the good news is that if White knows his stuff, he wins.

10.\textit{\texttt{x}xf7!} \textit{\texttt{x}xh4} 11.\textit{\texttt{x}xh8}

The knight is difficult to trap.

11...\textit{\texttt{b}b4} 12.\textit{\texttt{c}c1}

12...c5

Black strikes at the centre. The text is probably the best move, but if you did not know the variation the move you would fear would of course be:
Chapter 4 - The Semi-Slav

12...\textit{\texttt{d}c4}\textsuperscript{+}

The problem seems to be:

13.\textit{\texttt{d}e2} \textit{\texttt{f}f4}

This looks grim. In fact it is good for White.

14.a3 \textit{\texttt{x}xg2}\textsuperscript{+} 15.\textit{\texttt{f}f1} \textit{\texttt{e}c3}\textsuperscript{+} 16.fxe3 \textit{\texttt{x}h1}\textsuperscript{+}

17.\textit{\texttt{d}f2} \textit{\texttt{x}h2}\textsuperscript{+} 18.\textit{\texttt{e}e1} \textit{\texttt{e}e7}

Or 18...\textit{\texttt{g}g1}\textsuperscript{+} 19.\textit{\texttt{d}d2} \textit{\texttt{x}d1}\textsuperscript{+} 20.\textit{\texttt{x}d1} \textit{\texttt{x}xc3}\textsuperscript{+} 21.bxc3 \textit{\texttt{d}d7} 22.\textit{\texttt{g}g1}. White penetrates the kingside before Black is fully coordinated. 22...\textit{\texttt{b}b7} 23.\textit{\texttt{g}g8}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{e}e7} 24.\textit{\texttt{g}g7}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{d}d8} 25.\textit{\texttt{f}f7}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{c}c7} 26.\textit{\texttt{g}g4} c5 27.\textit{\texttt{e}xe6} \textit{\texttt{b}b8} 28.\textit{\texttt{x}h6} \textit{\texttt{c}c8} 29.\textit{\texttt{x}d7} 1–0


19.\textit{\texttt{d}d2} c5

Or 19...a5 20.\textit{\texttt{g}g1}.

20.\textit{\texttt{x}xb5} cxd4 21.\textit{\texttt{x}c4} \textit{\texttt{a}a6} 22.\textit{\texttt{x}d4} \textit{\texttt{c}c5} 23.\textit{\texttt{f}f1} \textit{\texttt{x}d4} 24.\textit{\texttt{f}f7}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{d}d8} 25.\textit{\texttt{x}d4} \textit{\texttt{g}g2} 26.\textit{\texttt{f}f8}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{d}d7} 1–0


13.\textit{\texttt{d}xc5} \textit{\texttt{d}d7}

13...\textit{\texttt{g}g5} 14.\textit{\texttt{e}e2} is not good enough: the check on h5 is disturbing for Black.

14.\textit{\texttt{e}e2} \textit{\texttt{xe}5} 15.0–0

The simplest. 15.\textit{\texttt{h}h5}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{e}e7} is less clear.

15.\textit{\texttt{b}b7}

If 15...\textit{\texttt{x}xc3} then 16.\textit{\texttt{x}xc3}\textsuperscript{!} is strong because 16...\textit{\texttt{xc3}} 17.\textit{\texttt{h}h5}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{f}f8} 18.\textit{\texttt{d}d6}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{g}g8} 19.\textit{\texttt{xe}5} is winning for White, as in Nemet – Karaklajic, Yugoslavia 1979.

16.\textit{\texttt{x}xb5} 0–0–0

Other moves have had a hard time.

16...\textit{\texttt{xc}5} 17.\textit{\texttt{g}g6}\textsuperscript{!} \textit{\texttt{x}g6} 18.\textit{\texttt{xc}4} \textit{\texttt{d}f4} (or 18...\textit{\texttt{e}e7} 19.\textit{\texttt{h}h5}) 19.\textit{\texttt{xc}5} \textit{\texttt{d}d8} 20.\textit{\texttt{d}d6}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{x}d6} 21.\textit{\texttt{b}b5}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{f}f7} 22.\textit{\texttt{x}d6} \textit{\texttt{g}g4} 23.\textit{\texttt{c}c7}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{g}g8} 24.\textit{\texttt{xb}7} \textit{\texttt{h}h3}\textsuperscript{+} 25.\textit{\texttt{h}h1} \textit{\texttt{x}f2}\textsuperscript{+} 26.\textit{\texttt{x}f2} 1–0


16...\textit{\texttt{d}d8} 17.\textit{\texttt{a}a4} (17.\textit{\texttt{h}h5}\textsuperscript{!} \textit{\texttt{d}d7} 18.\textit{\texttt{d}d6} just wins) 17...\textit{\texttt{f}f4}\textsuperscript{?} (17...\textit{\texttt{c}c6} should have been tried) 18.\textit{\texttt{d}d4}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{f}f8} 19.\textit{\texttt{xe}6}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{xe}6} 20.\textit{\texttt{xb}4} \textit{\texttt{xc}6} 21.\textit{\texttt{f}f4} \textit{\texttt{g}g8} 22.\textit{\texttt{e}e1} \textit{\texttt{xc}1} 23.\textit{\texttt{exe}1} 1–0

Gulko – Vera, Yucatan 1999.

17.\textit{\texttt{c}c6}!

\begin{center}
\begin{figure}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chessboard}
\end{figure}
\end{center}

This smart intermediate move quickly decides the issue.

17...\textit{\texttt{f}f4}

Unfortunately he could not take on \textit{\texttt{c}6}: 17...\textit{\texttt{xc}6} 18.\textit{\texttt{xa}7}\textsuperscript{+} followed by \textit{\texttt{xc}6} or 17...\textit{\texttt{xc}6} when 18.\textit{\texttt{xa}7}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{xa}7} 19.\textit{\texttt{xc}4}\textsuperscript{+} wins the black queen.

18.\textit{\texttt{c}c2}!

The most precise.

18...\textit{\texttt{d}d2} 19.\textit{\texttt{h}h7} \textit{\texttt{e}e7}

19...\textit{\texttt{xe}2}\textsuperscript{+} 20.\textit{\texttt{h}h1} \textit{\texttt{e}e7} 21.\textit{\texttt{xb}7} \textit{\texttt{b}b8} 22.\textit{\texttt{e}e4} \textit{\texttt{d}d3} 23.\textit{\texttt{c}c6} \textit{\texttt{xb}7} 24.\textit{\texttt{e}e8}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{c}c8} 25.\textit{\texttt{xc}8}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{xc}8} 26.\textit{\texttt{xc}4}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{b}b7} 27.g3 and White wins.

20.\textit{\texttt{e}e1} \textit{\texttt{xe}2} 21.\textit{\texttt{g}g8}\textsuperscript{+} \textit{\texttt{d}d8} 22.\textit{\texttt{d}d6}\textsuperscript{+} 1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} 9...\textit{\texttt{d}d5}?! is refuted by 10.\textit{\texttt{xf}7}!.
Game 33

Castellano – Parkes

Correspondence 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Ʌf3 Ʌf6 4.Ʌc3 e6 5.Ʌg5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.Ʌh4 g5 9.Ʌxg5 hxg5 10.Ʌxg5 Ʌe7

11.exf6 Ʌxf6 12.Ʌxf6

White could also withdraw the bishop to e3, but it makes sense to exchange them as Black is left with a lot of holes on the dark squares.

12...Ʌxf6 13.g3 Ʌa6

13...Ʌb7 14.Ʌg2 Ʌa6 transposes.

14.Ʌg2 Ʌb7 15.Ʌe4

White centralizes the knight and drives the black queen away from the good square f6. If instead 15.0–0 0–0–0 the d-pawn already hangs. White has also tried to sharpen the play with the more direct 15.a4 or 15.Ʌxb5, but I think the text move is the most convincing.

15...Ʌe7 16.0–0 0–0–0 17.a4

After completing development White starts active operations on the queenside. Black has no real attacking chances on the kingside, so he should turn to the centre for counterplay. Also, he would like to activate the knight, but it is easier said than done. If it moves from a6 to b4 the white knight gets a great outpost on c5.

17...Ʌb8

A good way to start: Black improves his king’s safety.

Keeping the position closed with 17...b4 is a positional concession. After 18.Ʌc1 Ʌf 19.Ʌd2 Ʌxd4 20.Ʌxc4 Ʌhd8 21.Ʌxd4 Ʌxd4 22.Ʌc2 as in Brewer – Cody, corr. 1992, White is well coordinated and the free h-pawn is a real factor.

The other alternative is 17...f5, when it is tempting for White to force the play with 18.axb5 cxb5 19.Ʌxa6 Ʌxa6 20.Ʌc5 This looks very strong, but by giving back material Black can get an unclear ending: 20...Ʌxc5! 21.dxc5 Ʌxd1 22.Ʌxd1 b4 Also interesting is 22...Ʌb8 23.Ʌa1 Ʌb5 24.Ʌxa7 c3 25.bxc3 bxc3 The c-pawn enables Black to hold.

The right way to meet 17...f5 is:

18.Ʌc3 b4

Not 18...e5 19.axb5 cxb5 20.Ʌxb5 Ʌxg2 21.Ʌxa6!

19.Ʌe2 c5
19...e5 20.\texttt{c2} exd4 21.\texttt{xc4=} is pleasant for White. Also 19...\texttt{c5?!} 20.\texttt{c2} \texttt{b3} 21.\texttt{ad1 a6} as in Bartholomew – Becerra Rivero, Philadelphia 2008, could be tried, but it looks suspicious.

20.\texttt{c2}

Careless is 20.\texttt{xb7} and Black threatens ...\texttt{xb2}.

20...\texttt{gx2}

20...\texttt{h7} 21.\texttt{h4 d5} Rodrigues – Boino, Lisbon 2000, and now 22.\texttt{ad1 b8} 23.\texttt{f4=} was strong.

21.\texttt{xg2 b7} 22.\texttt{f3 d5} 23.\texttt{ad1 b3} 23...c3 24.\texttt{bxc3 b3} 25.\texttt{b2} is not enough.

24.\texttt{c3 b4} 25.\texttt{f4 c6} 26.\texttt{xc4=}


18.\texttt{d2}

The queen plans to enter on the dark squares. Because of the early bishop exchange, Black has difficulties covering them all.

18...\texttt{b4}

Smyslov once played 18...b4 in a Candidates match against a very young Kasparov. The veteran drew the game, but after 19.\texttt{ac1 f5} 20.\texttt{g5 e5} 21.\texttt{xc4 c5} 22.\texttt{xb7 \texttt{xb7} 23.\texttt{e3 exd4} 24.\texttt{e5=} Kasparov – Smyslov, Vilnius (5) 1984, White could have taken the pawn with 25.\texttt{xf5=}.

19.\texttt{fd1}

The ending after 19.\texttt{b4+ c7} 20.\texttt{xc7=} \texttt{xc7} is pretty unclear.

19...\texttt{d3}

A tempting square, but this knight move is tactically refuted.

19...e5 20.\texttt{c5} wasn't much better though. A simple variation is 20...\texttt{d3} 21.\texttt{xd3 cxd3} 22.\texttt{xe5 \texttt{xe5} 23.axb5 (23.a3 is also good) 23...\texttt{xb5} 24.\texttt{xb7 \texttt{xb7} 25.a5 \texttt{c5} 26.a6=} \texttt{b8} 27.b4= as pointed out by Khalifman. We can analyse a bit further: 27...\texttt{b6} 28.\texttt{xb6+ axb6} 29.a3 \texttt{d4} 30.\texttt{ad1 \texttt{xb4} 31.\texttt{d7} and I think White wins the rook ending.

20.axb5 cxb5 21.\texttt{a5 c6}

22.\texttt{xd3! cxd3} 23.\texttt{c5}

Finally the knight arrives on this wonderful square. For the exchange White gets a long-term attack.

23...\texttt{gx2} 24.\texttt{xg2 a8} 25.\texttt{xb5 d6} 26.\texttt{xd3}

And two pawns.

26...\texttt{c7} 27.\texttt{c3 \texttt{h5} 28.b4 \texttt{hd5} 29.\texttt{f3 f5}

A mistake in a bad position.

More stubborn was 29...\texttt{b6} but White should be winning. The computer fancies 30.\texttt{g1!!}. Black can't take on b4 because of \texttt{a6} and on 30...\texttt{e7} 31.\texttt{e1} with the threat \texttt{xd5} is very annoying.

30.\texttt{xe6 \texttt{b7} 31.\texttt{c5 \texttt{xb4} 32.a6 \texttt{b8} 33.h4}

Black is helpless.

33...\texttt{d8} 34.\texttt{e6}

1–0
Conclusion: The 10...\( \text{e} \text{e} \text{7} \) variation is interesting, but the exchange of the dark-squared bishops benefits White.

Game 34

Cheparinov – Pavašovic

Dresden Olympiad 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\( \text{\#.f3} \) \( \text{\#.f6} \) 4.\( \text{\#.c3} \) c6 5.\( \text{\#.g5} \) \( \text{\textit{dxc4}} \) 6.e3 b5 7.e5 \( \text{\#.h4} \) 8.\( \text{\#.g5} \) hxg5 10.\( \text{\#.xg5} \) \( \text{\#.b7} \) 11.g3 \( \text{\#.g8} \)

12.h4

12.h4 misplaces the bishop, but interesting is 12.\( \text{\#.xf6} \) \( \text{\#.xf6} \) 13.exf6 \( \text{\#.xf6} \) 14.\( \text{\#.g2} \) \( \text{\#.b7} \) 15.a4. However following 15...0–0 16.axb5 \( \text{\#.xb5} \) 17.\( \text{\#.xb7} \) \( \text{\#.xb7} \) 18.\( \text{\#.b5} \) \( \text{\#.b4} \) Black gets adequate counterplay after 19.\( \text{\#.c3} \) \( \text{\#.xd4} \) or 19.\( \text{\#.f1} \) a5.

12...\( \text{\#.xg5} \)

The point.

13.hxg5 \( \text{\#.d5} \)

Black has a very compact position. White must grasp the initiative by any means: otherwise Black’s two pieces for a rook will begin to tell.

14.g6!

Destroying Black’s pawn structure and giving White some concrete targets.

14...\( \text{\#.xg6} \) 15.\( \text{\#.g4} \) \( \text{\#.e7} \)

15...\( \text{\#.a5} \)?! 16.\( \text{\#.xe6} \) \( \text{\#.xd8} \) is refuted by a strong piece sacrifice: 17.\( \text{\#.g2} \) \( \text{\#.xc3} \) 18.\( \text{\#.f1} \) \( \text{\#.d5} \) 19.\( \text{\#.xc6} \) \( \text{\#.b6} \) Knaak – Van der Wiel, Lugano 1989, and here 20.e6 is crushing, for instance 20...\( \text{\#.b8} \) 21.e7\( \text{\#.xe7} \) 22.\( \text{\#.h7} \) with a mating attack.

16.\( \text{\#.g2} \)

White simply develops and intensifies the pressure. Instead 16.\( \text{\#.xg6} \) \( \text{\#.f7} \) could lead to an unclear ending where Black certainly has no reason to complain.

16...\( \text{\#.d8} \)

The latest trend: Black wants to get his majesty into safety on the queenside.

Several other moves have been tried:

16...\( \text{\#.g7} \) 17.\( \text{\#.g6} \) \( \text{\#.f7} \) 18.\( \text{\#.g4} \) \( \text{\#.f8} \) 19.\( \text{\#.e4} \) has been known to be good for White since Dautov – Gabriel, Altenstein 1994. Black could try 17...\( \text{\#.d8} \), but then again it would make more sense to begin with 16...\( \text{\#.d8} \), as in the main game.
16...a7b6 17.a4 bxb4 18.xg6† d8
19.xf7!
This looks very strong, judging from a new correspondence game.
19...d7
Or 19...xc3 20.xxc6.
20.xxd5 xxd5 21.xf1 e8 22.xxd5 xf7
23.xxb4 xxb4 24.eh8† e8 25.axb5 c3
25...xc5 26.a6†
26.bxc3 xxc3 27.xc1 xxd4 28.xxc6 xe5
1–0
29.xxe8† xe8 30.xxe6† xf7 31.xxe5 and it is all over.

16...b7 17.xg6† f7 18.xf7† xf7
19.e4
19.h7† also looks pretty good.
19.e7
No better is 19.d4 20.e2 f8 21.h6 e7 22.f4 d8 23.ah1† g7 24.h5 b4 (24...b4 25.g5) 25.g5 d7?
26.xxe6† xe6 27.h8† g8 28.h8† f7 29.h1h7† g7 Redpath – Rainfray, Dublin 2000, and here best is 30.h3 d8 31.e6†
g6 32.h6#.
Or 19...g7 20.g5 b4† 21.e2 f8 22.h4 e7 23.g4 xg5 24.xg5† f7
25.h1 e7 26.h6† Cade – Canizares Cuadra, corr. 2005. The rooks are coming.
20.d6† xdx6 21.h7† g8
21...e8 22.exd6+ 22.xd7 xbd4† 23.e2 e8 24.d8† f8 25.xd5 cxd5 26.xh1 b7 27.d7 c6
28.c7 e8 29.f4 e8 30.g4
Black has no counterplay and White’s rooks and pawns easily finish him off.
30.e7 31.e8 e7 32.f5 d7 33.exf8† xf8 34.f6 e8 35.h8† f7 36.h7† 1–0

16.a6 17.xg6† f7 18.e4 xg6
On 18...b4 the novelty 19.a3 is strong:
19...xc3† 20.bxc3 f8 21.xf7† xf7
22.d2† and White’s play on the kingside will dictate events.
19.xg6† d8 20.xxd5 cxd5 21.f7! b4† 22.xe2 f8 23.a3 e7 24.f4 c8
This was Ploenes – Ax, corr. 1996, and now the correct way is:
25.g4†

16...f7 17.e4 e7 18.xb5 Forcing the play.
18.0–0–0 a6 was fine for Black in Beliavsky – Kramnik, Linares 1993, but 18.h8 is a serious alternative.
18...xb5 19.axa8 b6 20.e4 d7
20...d5 21.f3? (The recommended move was 21.h8, but the American expert comes up with an interesting new concept.)
21...d8 22.f2 c7 23.h8† g7 24.h7 b6 25.a1 d7 26.a3 a5 This was Yermolinsky – Onyewkere, Las Vegas 2006, and with 27.h6! e8 28.xg7
xg7 29.xxe6† c6 30.h1+ he could have reaped the harvest.
21.h8 b6 22.f3!
White intends to take back with the pawn if Black exchanges bishops, thereby keeping the key square d5 under control.

22.d7
22...bd5 23.f2 b4 24.a3 d3† 25.xd3 cxd3 26.d1† f5 27.xf5 gxf5
28.xd3 d5 29.c3 c6 30.e3 f7 31.h7† g7 32.h2 g6 33.hc2 a5
34.b7 a6 35.a7 c4† 36.e2 a5 37.b3
38.a3 38.e8 h6 39.g8† h5 40.h7 1–0 Shirov – Morovic, Las Palmas 1994, was another victory for the rooks.
23.c2 g7
23...f5 24.f2 g7 25.h7 does not change much.
24.h7 bd5
White has an open line to work with and the rooks are difficult to keep down.
25.a3
25.a1 is also natural.
25...\textit{f5}
Schmidt – Treiber, corr. 1996. A possible continuation is:
\begin{itemize}
\item 26.\textit{xf5} exf5 27.\textit{g5} f4 28.\textit{h6} xhx6
\item 29.\textit{xf7}\# e6 30.\textit{h7} e5 31.g4 a5 32.\textit{ah1} b4 33.axb4 axb4 34.\textit{g7} e7 35.\textit{h8} d7
\item 36.b8 c3 37.bxc3 bxc3 38.b3 c2 39.c3 a4 40.d5
\end{itemize}
White wins – analysis by me, and Fritz!

17.\textit{xd5}!
An important decision. White improves Black’s pawn structure, but also takes away many of the dynamic possibilities in the position and renders Black’s queenside rather passive.

The immediate 17.\textit{xg6} would allow 17...\textit{b4} with counterplay.

17...\textit{cx}d5 18.\textit{xg6} g7
Best.

18.b8 \textit{h7} e8 20.\textit{xe8}\# xe8 21.\textit{f4}\# gives White the usual pull in the ending: 21...b4 22.\textit{c}e6 e6 23.g4 c3 24.b3 d3 25.xf5 b6 26.\textit{f4} e4 Bacrot – Fressinet, Val d’Isere 2002, and here 27.\textit{h8} with the idea 27...exf5 28.g5 would have been very strong.

18.a6 19.a4 \textit{e8} 20.\textit{xe8}\# xe8 21.axb5
\textit{b7} happened in Antic – Ivanisevic, Budva 2003, and now 22.\textit{h7}\# was the right way.

19.\textit{xb5}

Pavasovic had the diagram position earlier in 2008 and ventured:
\begin{itemize}
\item 19...\textit{b4}\#
\end{itemize}
After:
\begin{itemize}
\item 20.\textit{c}3 \textit{xb2} 21.\textit{g5}\# c7 22.\textit{c}1 e8
\item 23.0–0 \textit{b6} 24.\textit{g6}\# d7\#
\end{itemize}
This was Pr. Nikolic – Pavasovic, Plovdiv 2008, and Black was happy, but after analysing the opening some more he probably became afraid of:
\begin{itemize}
\item 20.\textit{f1}! \textit{xb5} 21.\textit{g7} \textit{xb2} 22.\textit{e}1 \textit{b6}
\item 23.\textit{h6} a5 24.\textit{g8}\# c7 25.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6
\item 26.\textit{xe}6 c5 27.e7\# d8 28.\textit{e}7 e6
\item 29.\textit{b}1
\end{itemize}
This looked very promising for White in Skeels – Simmelink, corr. 2006, although the game was eventually drawn.

20.\textit{g4}
Or 20.\textit{c}2 \textit{b4}\# 21.\textit{c}3 \textit{b}8 22.0–0\#.

20...\textit{b}8 21.\textit{d}6 \textit{xb2} 22.0–0 \textit{h}6 23.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}2 24.\textit{ab}1 \textit{b}6 25.\textit{xb}6 \textit{axb}6 26.\textit{a}3 \textit{a}5
White was threatening to penetrate on the queenside, but Black managed to close the door just in time. Then Sargsian switches to the other flank.

27.\text{\textit{\textsc{g}2}} 28.\textit{\textsc{g}6} 29.\textit{\textsc{h}7} 30.\textit{\textsc{c}1}

And now it becomes difficult to cover all the squares.

\textbf{\textit{Conclusion:}} The \ldots\textit{\textsc{g}8} and \ldots\textit{\textsc{x}g5} idea leads to a permanent material imbalance. White should strive for the initiative by playing 14.g6 followed by 15.\textit{\textsc{g}4}. Later on the rooks can flash their muscle power.

\textbf{\textit{Game 35}}

\textbf{Raffel – Roth}

\textbf{Correspondence 1958}

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\textit{\textsc{f}3} 4.\textit{\textsc{f}6} 5.e5 \textit{\textsc{x}4} 6.\textit{\textsc{e}4} b5 7.e5 h6 8.\textit{\textsc{h}4} g5 9.\textit{\textsc{x}g5} hxg5 10.\textit{\textsc{x}g5} \textit{\textsc{b}d}7 11.g3 \textit{\textsc{a}5}

With a quick offensive on the queenside, Black hopes to disrupt White's normal development.

\textbf{\textit{12.exf6 b4}}

Sometimes Black starts with:

\textbf{\textit{12..\textit{\textsc{a}6}}}

After the normal moves 13.\textit{\textsc{f}3} b4 14.\textit{\textsc{e}4} this transposes to the recommended mainline – see the next note. Since I propose a different set-up as our repertoire move, we need to vary here as well. The obvious way to do so is by playing:

13.a3
When Black may regret not playing ...b4 when he had the chance.

Play continues:
13...0–0–0 14.\texttt{\textipa{g}}3 c5 15.0–0 \texttt{\textipa{b}}3 16.\texttt{\textipa{f}}3 \texttt{\textipa{b}}7
16...\texttt{\textipa{xd}}4 17.\texttt{\textipa{e}}4 looks good for White who is much better coordinated.

17.\texttt{\textipa{ad}}1 b4 18.\texttt{\textipa{e}}4 bxa3 19.bxa3 \texttt{\textipa{xa}}3

Cheparinov has tried 19...\texttt{\textipa{d}}5 but after
20.\texttt{\textipa{e}}3 \texttt{\textipa{xa}}3 21.h4 c3 22.\texttt{\textipa{c}}2 \texttt{\textipa{b}}2 23.\texttt{\textipa{c}}2 \texttt{\textipa{a}}1 24.\texttt{\textipa{xxa}}1 \texttt{\textipa{xa}}1 25.\texttt{\textipa{c}}5 \texttt{\textipa{xc}}5 26.dxc5 \texttt{\textipa{b}}2 27.\texttt{\textipa{d}}1+ Nakamura – Cheparinov, Cuernavaca 2006, White was in charge.

The h-pawn is much more dangerous than Black’s pawns on the queenside.

20.\texttt{\textipa{a}}1?! A new move that seems very intriguing.
20.\texttt{\textipa{e}}3 \texttt{\textipa{h}}5 21.\texttt{\textipa{hxh}}5 \texttt{\textipa{hxh}}5 leads to a double-edged ending.

20...\texttt{\textipa{xa}}1 21.\texttt{\textipa{xa}}1 \texttt{\textipa{xd}}4 22.\texttt{\textipa{xa}}3 \texttt{\textipa{d}}1†
23.\texttt{\textipa{xd}}1 \texttt{\textipa{xa}}3 24.\texttt{\textipa{d}}6† \texttt{\textipa{b}}8 25.\texttt{\textipa{xf}}7 \texttt{\textipa{f}}8
26.\texttt{\textipa{e}}5

White has great positional compensation for the queen.

13.\texttt{\textipa{e}}4 \texttt{\textipa{a}}6

Black intends to meet 14.\texttt{\textipa{g}}2 with 14...c3 preventing castling.

14.\texttt{\textipa{d}}2?! A forgotten move. I first noticed it when the young Russian grandmaster Inarkiev used it at the end of 2008. It has only been played in a handful of games, but White has won them all, so I guess we will see more of it.

The recommended line by Pedersen and Khalifman is 14.\texttt{\textipa{f}}3 0–0–0 15.\texttt{\textipa{e}}2 and White manages to castle. The mainline goes 15...\texttt{\textipa{b}}7 16.0–0 \texttt{\textipa{d}}5 17.\texttt{\textipa{e}}3 c5 18.\texttt{\textipa{d}}2 \texttt{\textipa{xf}}6 19.\texttt{\textipa{xc}}5 c3 20.\texttt{\textipa{xc}}3 bxc3 21.c6 \texttt{\textipa{xc}}6 22.\texttt{\textipa{ac}}1 \texttt{\textipa{d}}5 23.\texttt{\textipa{d}}4 and White is better, Mikhailvski – N. Pedersen, Aarhus 1997.

Black may have an improvement up his sleeve since they keep playing the line. It could be 18...\texttt{\textipa{cxd}}4 19.\texttt{\textipa{exd}}5 \texttt{\textipa{exd}}5 20.\texttt{\textipa{xd}}4 c5! and Black is definitely still alive.

14...\texttt{\textipa{d}}5

The standard centralization of the queen.

Inarkiev’s opponent instead played:
14...0–0–0 15.\texttt{\textipa{g}}2 \texttt{\textipa{e}}5 16.0–0
If 16.dxe5 then 16...c3.
16...\texttt{\textipa{xd}}4 17.a3
Or 17.\texttt{\textipa{xb}}4?! \texttt{\textipa{b}}6 18.\texttt{\textipa{d}}2.
17...\texttt{\textipa{b}}6 18.axb4 \texttt{\textipa{xb}}4 19.\texttt{\textipa{e}}1 \texttt{\textipa{xd}}2
20.\texttt{\textipa{xd}}2 \texttt{\textipa{hd}}8 21.\texttt{\textipa{de}}4 \texttt{\textipa{d}}3 22.\texttt{\textipa{e}}3
Again there is another interesting option: 22.\texttt{\textipa{wa}}5?! 22...\texttt{\textipa{b}}7

Inarkiev – Yu Yangyi, China 2008, and here 23.h4 seems to give White the upper hand in a complicated position.

14...c3 15.bxc3 bxc3 16.\texttt{\textipa{xc}}3 is rubbish.

15.\texttt{\textipa{g}}2 \texttt{\textipa{xd}}4 16.0–0

16.\texttt{\textipa{f}}4 is another move. Black did not survive after 16...\texttt{\textipa{xb}}2 17.0–0 in Gros – Burguet, San Jose 1997, but 16...\texttt{\textipa{xd}}1†
17.\texttt{\textipa{xd}}1 \texttt{\textipa{b}}5 18.h4 \texttt{\textipa{c}}5 19.\texttt{\textipa{xc}}5 \texttt{\textipa{xc}}5 20.\texttt{\textipa{e}}5 0–0 is maybe not so clear.
16...0-0-0 17...e3!

Simple and strong. The queen exchange does not make the positional advantage go away. On the contrary.

That said, 17...c2 also looked good.

17...xd1

17...xb2 is no better: 18...d6+ xd6
19...xd6 b8 20...c5±

18...xd1

White has good control and is much better. In the game Black blunders and loses more or less instantly, but it was not easy to find a lasting defence anyway. Maybe a move like 18...h5 should be tried.

18...b6? 19...xd8+ xd8 20...g5

Just winning.

20...c7

On 20...e8 there was 21...xb6 axb6 22...xc6†.

21...f4† e8 22...f7 g8 23...xc6 d5
24...e5 g6 25...d1 b7 26...xb7† xb7
27...d8†

1-0

Conclusion: The new old move 14...d2!? puts the traditional f2-a5-line out of business, that is with 12...b4, but Black can still try 12...a6 when 13.a3 is natural.

Game 36

A. Kovacevic – Simmelink

Correspondence 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3...f3 f6 4...c3 e6 5...g5

White has good control and is much better. In the game Black blunders and loses more or less instantly, but it was not easy to find a lasting defence anyway. Maybe a move like 18...h5 should be tried.

18...b6? 19...xd8+ xd8 20...g5

Just winning.

20...c7

On 20...e8 there was 21...xb6 axb6 22...xc6†.

21...f4† e8 22...f7 g8 23...xc6 d5
24...e5 g6 25...d1 b7 26...xb7† xb7
27...d8†

1-0

17.a3...xd5

That’s it.

18...xd5 e5

Winning the piece back.

19...e2...xd5 20.axb4 cxb4
Black succeeded with his little operation, but his queen is momentarily vulnerable on a6, which White exploits to activate his knight.

21. $\text{Dc3}$

Actually c4 is also rather weak. A new try is 21... $\text{Fc1?}$ $\text{Wc6}$ 22. $\text{Af4}$ $\text{Dd3}$ 23. $\text{Wxc4!}$ $\text{Wxc4}$ 24. $\text{Dc1}$ $\text{Wxc1}$† 25. $\text{Dxc1}$ $\text{Dd7}$ 26. $\text{Dd3}$ and White was better in Braun – Naumann, Nuernberg 2008.

21... $\text{Fa5}$

Black could also offer the exchange with 21... $\text{Wc6}$ but White is not forced to take it. 22. $\text{Af4}$ $\text{bxc3}$ 23. $\text{Dxc5}$ $\text{Dd2}$ 24. $\text{Fh1}$ $\text{c5}$ 25. $\text{bxc3}$ With $\text{Dd4}$ coming. 25... $\text{Dd3}$ (or 25... $\text{Dhd8}$ 26. $\text{Dd4}$ $\text{Db2}$ 27. $\text{Dxc5}$ $\text{Wxc5}$ 28. $\text{Fe4}$+ Alexa – Nenecany, corr. 2005.) 26. $\text{Dd4}$ $\text{Ff3}$ 27. $\text{Fa5}$ $\text{b6}$ Rahman – Straim, Calcutta 2001, and now 28. $\text{Fa4}$ $\text{Dd5}$ 29. $\text{Dxb6}$ axb6 30. $\text{Fa1}$ is decisive.

22. $\text{Dxa5}$ $\text{xga5}$ 23. $\text{Dd4}$ $\text{Dd3}$ 24. $\text{Fh5}$

White introduces the threat of $\text{Dg5}$. Other moves such as 24. $\text{b3}$ and 24. $\text{Dd1}$ have not been very successful.

24... $\text{Wf5}$

This threatens mate and offers an ending where the strong pawn majority on the queenside would be a significant factor.

Fortunately White can parry both.

25. $\text{f3}$

White is ready to undermine the black knight with b2-b3. In the game Black tries to defend tactically. The question is if he has any alternatives.

25... $\text{a5}$

25... $\text{b3}$ 26. $\text{g5!}$ $\text{Dd7}$ 27. $\text{h4}$ paralyses the black queen. In Mueller Alves – Simmelink, corr. 2006, White won quickly: 27... $\text{b4}$ 28. $\text{g4}$ $\text{Wf7}$ 29. $\text{c1}$! $\text{g5}$ (29... $\text{Dxc1}$ 30. $\text{Wxc4}$ or 29... $\text{Ec8}$ 30. $\text{Dxc4}$ $\text{Dxc4}$ 31. $\text{Dxd3}$ 30. $\text{Dxc4}$ $\text{d8}$ 31. $\text{h5}$ 1–0

26. $\text{b3}$

Going for the black queen with 26. $\text{g5}$ looks tempting just like in the last note: 26... $\text{Wf3}$ 27. $\text{g4}$ $\text{a4}$ 28. $\text{c1}$ $\text{Dc5}$ 29. $\text{Wxc4}$† $\text{Dxc4}$? (29... $\text{Dd7}$ was forced) 30. $\text{Wc4}$† 1–0 Luhn – Noble, corr. 2007.

26... $\text{a4}$

Not 26... $\text{cxg3}$ 27. $\text{h4}$.

27. $\text{h4!}$ $\text{bxg3}$

A mistake. Black should get the queen out while it was still possible, however total satisfaction was far off: 27... $\text{Dc5}$ 28. $\text{bxc4}$ $\text{Dc5}$
29.\textit{g}2 \textit{g}8 (29...\textit{xe}4 30.\textit{f}4) 30.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 31.\textit{d}1 b3 32.h5± Daus – Moreno Carretero, corr. 2007.
27...\textit{f}5 28.bxc4 is similar.

28.\textit{g}5
The queen is out of play.

28...\textit{g}6

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29.\textit{E}c1!
The tactics work in White’s favour.

29...\textit{b}2
29...\textit{xc}1 30.\textit{xc}4† \textit{b}7 31.\textit{b}5† \textit{c}8 32.\textit{c}6† \textit{d}8 33.\textit{e}3 mates.

30.\textit{xc}4† \textit{c}5† 31.\textit{xc}5†! \textit{xc}5 32.\textit{c}2 \textit{b}1=\textit{b}† 33.\textit{xb}1 \textit{xe}4 34.\textit{xe}4
Black defended well, but his open king’s position and the bad coordination of the heavy pieces makes it a hopeless task.

34...\textit{b}3 35.\textit{f}4 \textit{h}5 36.\textit{xb}3 \textit{c}5† 37.\textit{g}2 \textit{e}5 38.\textit{g}5 \textit{d}4 39.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}8 40.\textit{h}5
White is no longer afraid of an ending.

40...\textit{a}1 41.\textit{g}4 \textit{e}1 42.\textit{e}3 \textit{b}4 43.\textit{h}6 \textit{h}8 44.\textit{c}1† \textit{d}7 45.\textit{d}2† \textit{xd}2 46.\textit{xd}2
1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} The sideline 16...\textit{a}6 is in deep trouble, and even if White does not want to enter the complications then Braun’s 21.\textit{fc}1!? looks like an interesting new path to follow.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Game 37}
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\begin{center}
\textbf{Strangmueller – Sakai}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\textit{Correspondence 2004}
\end{center}

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}6 4.\textit{c}3 e6 5.\textit{g}5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.\textit{h}4 g5 9.\textit{xg}5 \textit{hxg}5 10.\textit{xg}5 \textit{bd}7 11.g3 \textit{b}7 12.\textit{g}2 \textit{b}6 13.\textit{exf}6 0–0–0 14.0–0 c5 15.d5 b4 16.\textit{a}4 \textit{b}5 17.a3 \textit{exd}5 18.\textit{xb}4 \textit{xb}4

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19.\textit{f}4
A relatively new move. White takes control over the dark squares around the black king and it is not easy to find an adequate answer. There are, as ever, alternatives:

19.\textit{e}1
This is another interesting try. White creates the possibility of putting the rook on c7, which could be a bomb in the middle of Black’s position. In his book on the Semi-Slav Vigorito praises the idea, but unfortunately it is a good illustration of what happens
over and over again in such an ultra-sharp opening as the Botvinnik variation: a new move completely changes the verdict. The thematic line goes:

23...\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e4! 24.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d5 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xh2†! 25.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xh2 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xf2†
26.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h3 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d6! 27.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}b5†
Not 27.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xd6 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h8†.
27...\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}b6 28.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h4 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e8 29.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xb6 axb6
Despite being an exchange up, White’s position is very uncomfortable with no shelter for the king.

30.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d5 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}b7 31.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}ad1 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h8! 32.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xd6 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xh4†
33.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xh4 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h2† 34.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}g4 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xb2

Black has good winning chances.

35.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h3 b3 36.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d7† \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}c6 37.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d6† \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}b5
38.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}f1 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e5 39.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}dd1 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h5† 40.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}g2 b2
41.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e1 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d5† 42.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h3 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d3 43.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d1 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h7†
44.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}g2 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}c4 45.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e1 b5 46.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}f4† \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}c5 47.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}f1
\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}b4 48.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}f4† \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}a5 49.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}f1 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}a4 50.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}g1 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}c2†
51.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}f3 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}c6† 52.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}g4 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xf6 53.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}g1 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}g6†
54.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h3 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}a3 55.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}f3† \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}a2 56.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}f2 b4 0–1


20.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xc5 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xc5 21.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e1

White even has a promising alternative in:

21.h4
This threatens \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}h3†.
21...\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}c6 22.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e1 d4
Vigorito suggests 22...\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}b7 as an improvement, but then 23.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e7† looks thematic, for instance 23...\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xc7 24.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xe7
\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}de8 25.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d4 a5 26.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e5† with great play for the exchange.

23.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}g4† \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}d7 24.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}a5! \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}b6
24...\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xa5 25.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xc6
25.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}f1 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xe2 26.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xc5† \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}c6 27.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}e7 \textcolor{red}{\textdollar}hd8
28.\textcolor{red}{\textdollar}xf7
White is winning, Porper – Lock, Guernsey 2006.
21...a6  
21...Wd7  22.EXe7  EXe7  23.fxe7  Wxe7  
24.Wd4 a6  25.Wb6 is no better.

22.EXe7

This is the sharpest choice, which is known as the Anti-Moscow Gambit. The normal Moscow 6.Exf6  Wxf6  7.e3  Ed7  8.Ed3  dxc4  
9.Exc4  g6  10.0-0  Eg7 has been tested in many 
games and so far Black’s pair of bishops seems 
to balance White’s extra space and freer play.

6.Eh4

6...dxc4  7.e4  g5  8.Eg3  b5

The Moscow Variation’s similarity to the 
Botvinnik is striking, but so are the differences. 
Here Black is a pawn up instead of being 
one down! White has long-term positional 
compensation though; a strong centre with 
the further advances d4-d5 or e4-e5 constantly 
in the air gives a lot of dynamic quality. 
Furthermore Black has exposed himself on 
both flanks and almost invites White to play 
a4 and h4. Let’s stop a moment at that last 
point: the weakening of the kingside is the 
most significant and therefore a quick h2-h4 
could be strong.

9.Ee2

A good developing move.

The mainline Botvinnik is also in 
dire straits after the simple but strong 19.Ef4. 
Notable is the rook manoeuvre to e7, where 
White gives up an exchange for complete 
dominance on the dark squares.

Conclusion: The mainline Botvinnik is also in 
dire straits after the simple but strong 19.Ef4. 
Notable is the rook manoeuvre to e7, where 
White gives up an exchange for complete 
dominance on the dark squares.

Botvinnik conclusion: The Botvinnik 
Variation leads to many fascinating lines, but 
at the moment White seems to be on top in all 
of them, so it is no wonder that the world’s top 
players have already left the sinking ship and 
climbed on board the Moscow.

Theory: Moscow Gambit

1.d4  d5  2.c4  c6  3.Ef3  Ef6  4.Ec3  e6  5.g5  h6

Also possible is the immediate 9.h4 or the 
more sophisticated:

9.Ee5  Eb7  10.h4

White sidesteps some of the problems in the
mainline. But typically he also creates a new one, namely:

10...g4 11.\(\text{dxg4} \text{hxg4} 12.\text{wxg4} \text{xd4}

Taking the central pawn.

13.\(\text{b1} \text{g7} 14.\text{f4} \text{a6} 15.\text{c2}

White just wants to castle with good compensation; he has scored very well from this position. A recent example from the Olympiad in Dresden continued:

15...\(\text{c7} 16.0-0 \text{d5} 17.\text{e5} \text{g6} 18.\text{d4} \text{d8}

19.\text{fd1} \text{d5}?!?

Better is 19...\text{xd4}.

20.\text{xe3} h5 21.\text{f3} a6 22.b4 \text{cxb3} 23.axb3

a5 24.\text{e4} \text{xe4} 25.\text{xe4} \text{h6} 26.\text{f4} \text{g7}

27.\text{xd5} \text{exd5} 28.\text{g5} \text{g8} 29.f4 \text{g6} 30.\text{d2}

c5 31.\text{xe7} \text{d4} 32.\text{g5} 1-0

Aronian – Caruana, Dresden (ol) 2008.

9...b4 10.\(\text{a4} \text{xe4}

Black wins a central pawn but neglects normal development.

11.\(\text{e5} \text{f6}

On 11...\text{g8} there follows 12.\text{c2}. Then

12...f5 13.\text{xc4} g4 14.\text{d2} \text{xd2} 15.\text{xd2}

\text{g6} 16.\text{c1} \text{a5} 17.\text{c5} \text{d7} 18.\text{d3} and

Black’s position is full of holes, Rodriguez – Pecha, corr. 2001. That means Black has to withdraw the knight with 12...\text{f6} when

13.0-0 or \(\text{xc4} \text{gives White a pleasant initiative}.

A few rounds later in the same tournament

Aronian repeated the line against Kramnik and the Russian came up with 13...\text{xf6}?! 14.\text{e5} \text{f5}

15.\text{d4} \text{e7} 16.b3 c5 17.\text{e3} \text{c6}! 18.bxc4

\text{b4} 19.\text{f4} \text{c2}† 20.\text{e2} \text{xf4} 21.\text{xf4}

bxc4 22.f3 \(\text{d4}† 23.\text{f2} \text{d5}† and Black had

won the opening duel, Aronian – Kramnik, Dresden (ol) 2008.

9...\text{b7}

The best move. Other tries can quickly lead to trouble, especially if Black is driven by greed.

12.\(\text{c5}! \text{g8}

12...\text{xc5} 13.\text{dxc5} \text{bd7} 14.\text{d6}†

Or 12...\text{g7} 13.\text{xc4} 0-0 14.\text{c2} \text{bd7}

15.h4 gxh4 (15...g4 16.\text{g5}†) 16.\text{dxd7}

\text{dxe7} 17.\text{dxe4} Sakaev – Kobalia, St

Petersburg 1998. White can castle queenside and launch a big attack.

13.\text{c2} \text{bd7} 14.\text{xd7} \text{dxd7} 15.0-0 \text{d5}

16.\text{d2}†?

16.\text{xc4}

16...\text{f6} 17.\text{g3} \text{f7} 18.\text{h7}† \text{g8} 19.\text{h5}†

\text{c7} 20.\text{hxh6} \text{c8}

P.H. Nielsen – T. Thorhallsson, Reykjavik


21.\text{g4} c3 22.bxc3 bxc3 23.\text{c4}†

Another way is:

9...\text{b4} 10.\text{c2} g4 11.\text{e5} \text{xd4} 12.0-0

\text{xc3} 13.bxc3 \text{xe4} 14.\text{d2}

Black is three pawns up, but terribly weak on
the dark squares: White just has to open up
the position with f2–f3 to get going.
14...\( \text{\#bd7} \) 15.f3 \( \text{\#d5} \) 16.\( \text{\#f4} \) \( \text{\#c5} \)
16...\( \text{\#g8} \) 17.\( \text{\#xd7} \) \( \text{\#xd7} \) 18.\( \text{\#xf4} \) e5
19.\( \text{\#xh6} \) + Goldin - Ippolito, Philadelphia
1999.
17.\( \text{\#h1} \) \( \text{\#e7} \) 18.\( \text{\#xf4} \) \( \text{\#d5} \) 19.\( \text{\#xf7} \) + \( \text{\#xf7} \)
20.\( \text{\#xf7} \) ±

This has been tested in some correspondence
games. White has a strong initiative after either:

20...\( \text{\#h7} \) 21.\( \text{\#d6} \) + \( \text{\#d8} \) 22.a4 \( \text{\#xa4} \) 23.\( \text{\#xc4} \)
\( \text{\#c3} \) 24.\( \text{\#h4} \) + \( \text{\#c7} \) 25.\( \text{\#e8} \) + \( \text{\#b7} \) 26.\( \text{\#fb1} \) +
\( \text{\#b6} \) 27.\( \text{\#e2} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 28.\( \text{\#f6} \) \( \text{\#f7} \) 29.\( \text{c4} \) e5 30.\( \text{c5} \)

Or 20...0–0 21.\( \text{\#xh6} \) + \( \text{\#h7} \) 22.\( \text{\#xf8} \) \( \text{\#xf8} \)
23.g5 \( \text{\#xc3} \) 24.\( \text{\#f3} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 25.\( \text{\#g4} \)

9...\( \text{\#h5} \)
This is a tactical mistake:
10.\( \text{\#e5} \)
This misplaces the rook.
10...\( \text{\#g8} \) 11.\( \text{\#xb8} \) \( \text{\#xb8} \) 12.\( \text{\#e5} \) \( \text{\#f4} \) 13.\( \text{\#xc6} \)
\( \text{\#b6} \) 14.\( \text{\#xb8} \) \( \text{\#xg2} \) + 15.\( \text{\#f1} \) \( \text{\#f4} \) 16.\( \text{\#xc4} \) !
a6
16...\( \text{\#xc4} \) 17.\( \text{\#a4} \) + \( \text{\#c7} \) 18.\( \text{\#xa7} \) + ! \( \text{\#xa7} \)
19.\( \text{\#c6} \) + \( \text{\#d7} \) 20.\( \text{\#xa7} \) is nice.
17.\( \text{\#b3} \) \( \text{\#xb8} \) 18.a4 b4 19.\( \text{\#e2} \) ±

With an exchange more.

9...\( \text{\#bd7} \) is also imprecise. With 10.d5 White
gets promising play – see Game 38.

10.h4

This thrust is the most direct and disruptive
for Black who will have to pay for moving
his pawns on the kingside. In practice White
has often chosen a different path with 10.0–0
\( \text{\#bd7} \) 11.\( \text{\#e5} \) \( \text{\#g7} \) 12.\( \text{\#xd7} \) \( \text{\#xd7} \) 13.\( \text{\#d6} \),
but after the cool 13...a6 all attempts to
generate a serious advantage have so far failed
and White seems stuck.

10...\( \text{\#g4} \)
Black tries to keep the position closed.

Again greed backfires:
10...b4 11.hxg5 bxc3 12.bxc3!
A spectacular piece sacrifice.
12...\( \text{\#xc4} \)

On 12...\( \text{\#fd7} \) 13.g6! \( \text{\#xg6} \) 14.\( \text{\#h4} \) is good.
14...\( \text{\#g8} \) 15.\( \text{\#xg6} \) \( \text{\#a5} \) (15...\( \text{\#xg6} \) 16.\( \text{\#h5} \)
\( \text{\#f7} \) 17.\( \text{\#xf6} \) + \( \text{\#xf6} \) 18.\( \text{\#h5} \) + \( \text{\#h7} \) 19.\( \text{\#f7} \) +
\( \text{\#h8} \) 20.\( \text{\#h4} \) \( \text{\#c8} \) 21.\( \text{\#g5} \) + ) 16.\( \text{\#h4} \)
\( \text{\#xc3} \) + 17.\( \text{\#f1} \) \( \text{\#b6} \) 18.\( \text{\#h5} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 19.\( \text{\#h3} \)
\( \text{\#b2} \) 20.\( \text{\#f3} \) + \( \text{\#d6} \) 21.e5 \( \text{\#a3} \) 22.\( \text{\#b1} \)
\( \text{\#xa2} \) 23.\( \text{\#a1} \) \( \text{\#b2} \) 24.\( \text{\#xa3} \) c3 25.\( \text{\#f3} \) \( \text{\#c7} \)
26.\( \text{\#f8} \) c2 27.\( \text{\#f7} \) + \( \text{\#d7} \) 28.\( \text{\#xe6} \) + \( \text{\#b6} \)
29.\( \text{\#f4} \) \( \text{\#a6} \) + 30.\( \text{\#g1} \) \( \text{\#c4} \) 31.\( \text{\#c5} \) \( \text{\#b1} \)
32.\( \text{\#h2} \) c1 = \( \text{\#c1} \) 33.\( \text{\#xb1} \) \( \text{\#xb1} \) 34.\( \text{\#f7} \) \( \text{\#xg2} \)
35.\textdaggerdbl xg2 f1\textdaggerdbl 36.h2 xf7 37.d8\textdaggerdbl 1–0
13.e5

21..\textdagger xd4\textdaggerdbl 22.xd4 c6 23.d6\textdaggerdbl xd6
24.g6+ d8 25.f6\textdaggerdbl .
16.gxh6 xh6 17.h7!
Even stronger than 17.xh6.
17...g6 18.xh6 xh6 19.\textdagger xh6 d7 20.d6
f6 21.h1 xh6 22.xh6 0–0–0 23.g5
White wins the pawn back with a better ending, for instance:
23.f6 24.xe6 e8 25.d2 xe6 26.h8\textdaggerdbl f8 27.xf8\textdaggerdbl d7 28.c5±

11.e5

The starting position of the h4-variation:
Black is in a serious dilemma.

As should be clear by now the aggressive ...	extbf{b}5-b4 cannot be recommended:
11.b4 12.a4 xe4 13.xc4 xg3
No better was 13.h5 14.e2 xg3 15.fxg3
h6 16.0–0 f5 17.d5! a5 18.xf5! xa4
19.xf8\textdaggerdbl xf8 20.f2\textdaggerdbl e7 21.f7\textdaggerdbl d6
22.xf8\textdaggerdbl c7 23.d6\textdaggerdbl b6 24.b3 b5
25.d8\textdaggerdbl c5 26.c1\textdaggerdbl d4 27.g5 1–0
14.fxg3 d7 15.xf7! xf7 16.xg4 e7
17.0–0\textdaggerdbl e8 18.xe6 e8
This was Khalifman – Dreev, Elista 1998.
Khalifman continued 19.ae1 and won a nice game, but the computer claims that
White can win on the spot:

13...\textdagger xc3
Black has passed the point of no return, as simply moving the rook will not work:
13...h7 14.b1 This highlights the power of the queen: it attacks black pieces all over the board. 14...a5 15.d2! And after this precise blow it is all over. 15...f5
(15...xd2 16.xb7 or 15...xc3 16.0–0)
16.gxf6 c5 17.xe4 xe4 18.h5\textdaggerdbl d8
19.xe4 xc3\textdaggerdbl 20.e2 xd3\textdaggerdbl 21.xd3
cxd3\textdaggerdbl 22.xd3 With a winning position,
Returning to 13...xc3:
14.c2 xe2 15.xe2 g8
Black could also sacrifice the rook: 15.d7
16.xh8 xg5 17.h7 a5 Only move. (17...
g4 18.e5 e5 19.xe5 a5 20.ah1 c5
21.xf7 e4\textdaggerdbl 22.xe4 xe4 23.xd4
24.h8 b8 25.xd4 d3\textdaggerdbl 26.e3 b1
27.c5 e1\textdaggerdbl 28.f4 e4\textdaggerdbl 29.g3 1–0
Stohl – Kuczynski, Germany 2002) 18.b1
a6 19.f1 g4 20.e5 e5 21.xe5 a3
And now first 22.h8\textdaggerdbl d7 23.h7\textdaggerdbl e8
depriving Black of the right to castle, then
24.d1 b5 25.g1±.
Or 15...c5 16.hxg5 17.ad1 c7
18.e5 xg2 19.h7 cxd4 20.xd4 c6
21.xf7 1–0 Seipel – Tokmachev, corr.
2003, was a quick KO. The finish could be
19.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xf7}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xf7}}}
19...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{dd6}}} 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xe1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d8}}} 21.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}}
22.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xc5!}}}
20.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xf7}}+} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xf7}}} 21.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xf1}}}+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{e8}}} 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{we4}}}+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{d8}}}
23.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d5}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{cxd5}}} 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{wd4}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g8}}} 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd5}}}
Attacking both rooks.

Black has three respected options. First of all it is tempting to speed up development and offer the g4-pawn as bait. That could be done by either 11...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{bd7}}} – see Game 39 – or 11...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g8}}} – see Game 40. Finally Black can protect g4 with 11...h5. That is covered in Game 41.

**Game 38**

**Ferrini – Richardson**

Correspondence 2003

1.d4 d5 2.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xf3}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{f6}}} 3.c4 e6 4.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c3}}} c6 5.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g5}}}
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h6}}} 6.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h4}}} g5 7.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g3}}} dxc4 8.e4 b5 9.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e2}}}
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{bd7}}}

10.d5!
Seizing the initiative.

10...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b7}}}
Taking on d5 is not good:

10...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b7}}}

This has been played in several games, but the complications tend to lead directly to a positional advantage for White:
11.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{exe6}}} bxc3 12.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}}+ \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}}
Worse is 12...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd7}}} 13.bxc3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{xe4}}} 14.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d4}}}
\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xg3}}} 15.hxg3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g8}}} 16.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xd1}}} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{g7}}} 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{xc4}}}

Finally we have 10...b4:
11. dxe6 fxe6 12. d4 c5

13. e5 d5 14. h5+

The king is forced to take a walk.

14... d7

Running towards safety on the queenside. Staying in the centre with 14... e7 leaves Black without many prospects: 15.0-0 g7 16. wg4 wd7 17. ad1+ d3 18. e4 f5 19. xf4 xd4 20. xg5! xf4 21. xe6+ d8 22. xd3! c7 (or 22... cxd3 23. d6+ c8 24. f7) 23. e7+ b6 24. e6 xe5 25. e3 c8 26. xf8 xf8 27. xe5 and White won in Vermeulen – Sherwood, corr. 2004.

15.0-0 c7

Weakening the structure further with 15... b4 16. e2 has not gone well for Black.

16. e4!

Nice. On 16... e4 there is 17. e6+.

16... c8 17. d6! xd6 18. edx6+ b7 19. a4! xa4 20. xa4 bxa4 21. xa4 d7 22. xc4

Black is busted. The knight goes to b3 next and then lands on c5 with devastating effect.

22... f8 23. b3 b8 24. c5+ a8 25. a1

The strongest: it threatens xa7+ and mate next move. In the stem game White also won after 25. wa6 wb6 26. wa3 Stohl – Ziegler, Germany 1999, when 26... bd8 could have prolonged the fight a bit, but probably not changed the result.

25... b5 26. a2 f7 27. a4

Winning the exchange back, while the grip on the position remains. The end comes quickly.
Conclusion: 9...\(\mathcal{Q}bd7\) is an inaccuracy that White can immediately punish by 10.d5! with a strong initiative.

15.b3

This move is the right way to challenge Black's typically very compact pawn structure in the Moscow. If Black takes on b3 then lines are opened for White and he can calmly intensify the pressure, while it is not obvious how Black can liberate himself and get counterplay.

15...b4

On 15...cxb3 16.axb3 b4 White activates the knight by 17.\(\mathcal{Q}xf6\) \(\mathcal{Q}xf6\) 18.e5 \(\mathcal{Q}xh4\) 19.\(\mathcal{Q}e4\) with good compensation: 19...g3? (or 19...\(\mathcal{Q}e7\) 20.g3 \(\mathcal{Q}h5\) 21.\(\mathcal{Q}a6\) and Black's queenside will be exposed) 20.\(\mathcal{Q}f6\)\(\uparrow\) 21.\(\mathcal{Q}d8\) 21.\(\mathcal{Q}xg3\) \(\mathcal{Q}xg3\) 22.\(\mathcal{Q}h5\) \(\mathcal{Q}e3\) 23.\(\mathcal{Q}xf4\) \(\mathcal{Q}e7\) 24.\(\mathcal{Q}c4\)\(\uparrow\) The black rook in the middle of White's position misses its friends.

16.\(\mathcal{Q}a4\) c3

It is risky for Black to open the position before he has completed development: 16...\(\mathcal{Q}xe4\) 17.\(\mathcal{Q}xc2\) c5 18.\(\mathcal{Q}xc4\) \(\mathcal{Q}g7\) 19.\(\mathcal{Q}xg7\) \(\mathcal{Q}xg7\) 20.\(\mathcal{Q}a1\) \(\mathcal{Q}d6\) 21.\(\mathcal{Q}xc5\) \(\mathcal{Q}xc4\) 22.\(\mathcal{Q}xc4!\) \(\mathcal{Q}c6\) Riazantsev – Vitiugov, Moscow 2008, and now 23.\(\mathcal{Q}d3\) \(\mathcal{Q}xh4\) 24.d5 \(\mathcal{Q}d7\) 25.\(\mathcal{Q}e5\)\(\uparrow\) would put Black in a precarious position.

17.\(\mathcal{Q}d3\) \(\mathcal{Q}d7\) 18.\(\mathcal{Q}g3\) c5 19.\(\mathcal{Q}ad1\) \(\mathcal{Q}g7\) 20.d5

Black makes no attempt to hold onto the extra pawn and instead gives priority to finishing his development and getting rid of the strong knight on e5. Of course White is not obliged to take on g4.

12.\(\mathcal{Q}xd7\) \(\mathcal{Q}xd7\) 13.\(\mathcal{Q}e5\) \(\mathcal{Q}e7\) 14.0–0

Grischuk prefers to keep playing a gambit.

14...\(\mathcal{Q}g8\)

Actually Grischuk had previously lost a game, also in rapid, to another Semi-Slav expert, Dreev, but after 14...h5 15.\(\mathcal{Q}c2\) \(\mathcal{Q}h6\) 16.b3 cxb3 17.axb3 he had fine compensation, Grischuk – Dreev, Mainz 2005. Also, instead of 15.\(\mathcal{Q}c2\), why not play 15.b3.
White tries to open the position while Black’s king is still stuck in the centre.

20...\(\text{\textit{d6}}\) 21.\(\text{xg4}\)
Finally he takes it.

21...\(\text{cxd5}\) 22.\(\text{exd5}\) 0–0–0
It was of course tempting to get the king away from the centre, but maybe he chose the wrong flank.

Possible was 22...\(\text{\textit{c8}}\) 23.\(\text{\textit{c2}}\) 24.\(\text{\textit{f5}}\) \(\text{\textit{f8}}\) and anything can still happen.

23.a3! \(\text{\textit{a6}}\) 24.\(\text{\textit{e3}}\)
Black’s queenside is full of holes.

24...\(\text{h5}\)
Not 24...\(\text{\textit{xh1}}\) 25.\(\text{\textit{xa7}}\).

25.\(\text{\textit{f5}}\) \(\text{\textit{b8}}\) 26.\(\text{\textit{fe1}}\) \(\text{\textit{h6}}\) 27.\(\text{\textit{f3}}\) \(\text{\textit{d2}}\)
28.\(\text{\textit{AXB4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe1}}\) 29.\(\text{\textit{xe1}}\)
White has excellent compensation for the exchange: \(\text{e5}\) is weak and the knight has a key square on \(\text{c5}\).

29...\(\text{\textit{xb4}}\) 30.\(\text{\textit{e4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xb3}}\) 31.\(\text{\textit{xd7}}\) \(\text{\textit{g3}}\)
32.\(\text{\textit{fxc3}}\) \(\text{\textit{wb1}}\) 33.\(\text{\textit{h2}}\) \(\text{c2}\)

\[\text{\textit{c7}}\) \(35...\text{\textit{c8}}\) 36.\(\text{\textit{c4}}\) 36.\(\text{\textit{xe5}}\) \(\text{\textit{d6}}\)
37.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\) \(\text{\textit{d7}}\) 38.\(\text{\textit{c5}}\) \(\text{\textit{d8}}\) 39.\(\text{\textit{h8}}\) \(\text{\textit{c7}}\)
40.\(\text{\textit{xa6}}\) \(\text{\textit{xa6}}\) 41.\(\text{\textit{c4}}\) \(\text{\textit{d7}}\) 42.\(\text{\textit{c8}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\)
43.\(\text{\textit{xa6}}\)

34...\(\text{\textit{b7}}\)
The last chance was 34...\(\text{\textit{c1}}\) but then 35.\(\text{\textit{xa6}}\) \(\text{\textit{b7}}\) 36.\(\text{\textit{b4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xb4}}\) 37.\(\text{\textit{xb4}}\)
\(\text{\textit{xd7}}\) 38.\(\text{\textit{d6}}\) and White still has a dangerous initiative.

35.\(\text{\textit{f6}}\) \(\text{\textit{b6}}\) 36.\(\text{\textit{xe5}}\) \(\text{\textit{c7}}\) 37.\(\text{\textit{xc7}}\) \(\text{\textit{xc7}}\)
38.\(\text{\textit{c4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd5}}\) 39.\(\text{\textit{xc2}}\) \(\text{\textit{d6}}\) 40.\(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{b8}}\)
41.\(\text{\textit{d3}}\)
1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} A tense game where White always had the initiative. Pay attention to the typical idea 15.\(\text{\textit{b3}}\): a great way to combat Black’s otherwise impressive pawn structure.

\textbf{Game 40}

\textbf{Ruiz – L. Andersen}

Correspondence 2006

1.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{d5}\) 2.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 3.\(\text{\textit{d3}}\) \(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 4.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\) \(\text{e6}\) 5.\(\text{\textit{g5}}\)
\(\text{h6}\) 6.\(\text{\textit{h4}}\) \(\text{dxc4}\) 7.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{g5}\) 8.\(\text{\textit{g3}}\) \(\text{b5}\) 9.\(\text{\textit{e2}}\) \(\text{\textit{b7}}\)
10.\(\text{h4}\) \(\text{g4}\) 11.\(\text{\textit{e5}}\) \(\text{\textit{g8}}\)

Black puts everything on this passed pawn.

34.\(\text{\textit{c5}}\)
34.\(\text{\textit{f6}}\) won instantly: 34...\(\text{\textit{xd7}}\) 35.\(\text{\textit{h8}}\)
12.\( \Box xg4 \)
Actually I like another move-order more:
12.0–0 \( \Box bd7 \) 13.\( \Box xg4 \)
This is because it takes away Black’s extra possibility with ...b4 and ...c5 — see next note. If Black does not transpose to the main game with 13...\( \Box xg4 \) 14.\( \Box xg4 \) he can instead try:
13...b4?!  
Then there could follow:
14.\( \Box a4 \) \( \Box xe4 \) 15.\( \Box xc4 \)
Once again Black’s strategy of opening up the position with his own king in the centre is at least questionable. The evaluation should be based on concrete analysis though and things are not so clear:

15...\( \mathbb{W}a5 \) 16.\( \mathbb{Cc1} \) 0–0–0 17.\( \mathbb{Sh2} \) \( \mathbb{Dd6} \) 18.\( \mathbb{Dd3} \) \( \mathbb{Dxh2} \)† 19.\( \mathbb{Dxh2} \) \( \mathbb{Df6} \) 20.\( \mathbb{Dxe4} \) \( \mathbb{Dxe4} \) 21.\( \mathbb{Dc5} \) \( \mathbb{Dxc5} \) 22.\( \mathbb{Dxc5} \) \( \mathbb{Wxa2} \) 23.\( \mathbb{Bb3} \) \( \mathbb{Wb2} \) 24.\( \mathbb{Df3} \) \( \mathbb{Gg4} \) 25.\( \mathbb{Cc2} \) \( \mathbb{Gxd4} \) 26.\( \mathbb{Wxa5} \) 26.\( \mathbb{Dxe5} \) \( \mathbb{Gxd4} \) 27.\( \mathbb{Wf3} \) 26.\( \mathbb{Dxd4} \) \( \mathbb{Gxd4} \) 27.\( \mathbb{Wf5} \)†  

And outright bad is: 15...\( \Box xg3 \) 16.\( \mathbb{Ff3} \) \( \mathbb{Wf7} \) 17.\( \mathbb{Dc5} \)† Vitiugov – Stripunsky, Internet 2005.

However interesting is:
15...h5 16.\( \mathbb{Dxe3} \) \( \mathbb{Wf6} \)  
Avrukh – Akopian, Crete 2007, when the critical line is:
17.\( \mathbb{Wxh5} \) \( \mathbb{Wh6} \) 18.\( \mathbb{Wxh6} \) \( \mathbb{Dxh6} \) 19.\( \mathbb{Ff1} \) \( \mathbb{Dxg3} \) 20.\( \mathbb{Fxg3} \) 0–0–0 21.\( \mathbb{Dh2} \)  
And Black has some compensation after:
21...\( \mathbb{Gg7} \)

12.\( \Box xg4 \) 13.\( \Box xg4 \) \( \mathbb{Dd7} \)
Instead Black can try to solve his problems by force:
13...b4 14.\( \Box a4 \) c5  
And after:
15.\( \mathbb{Dd5} \) \( \mathbb{Exd5} \) 16.\( \mathbb{Exd5} \) \( \mathbb{Wxd5} \) 17.\( \mathbb{Wxd5} \) \( \mathbb{Dxd5} \) 18.0–0–0 \( \mathbb{Dxg4} \) 19.\( \mathbb{Dd5} \) \( \mathbb{Dd7} \) 20.\( \mathbb{Ee1} \)† \( \mathbb{Dd8} \) 21.\( \mathbb{Ded1} \) \( \mathbb{Dd4} \) 22.\( \mathbb{Dxd4} \) \( \mathbb{Exd4} \) 23.\( \mathbb{Dxd4} \) \( \mathbb{Ec8} \) 24.\( \mathbb{Dd6} \)
An ending is reached that looks slightly better for White, but probably it should be nothing.
24.\( \mathbb{We8} \) 25.\( \mathbb{Dd4} \)† \( \mathbb{Dd8} \) 26.\( \mathbb{Dxf8} \) \( \mathbb{Dxf8} \) 27.a3 \( \mathbb{Bxa3} \) 28.\( \mathbb{Bxa3} \) \( \mathbb{Ec6} \) 29.\( \mathbb{Bb2} \) \( \mathbb{Hf6} \) 30.\( \mathbb{Ee2} \)
White had good winning chances because the black c-pawn is very weak, Grischuk – Anand, Mexico City 2007.

Later Black improved with 24...\( \mathbb{Dxd6} \) 25.\( \mathbb{Dxd6} \) \( \mathbb{Dc7} \) 26.\( \mathbb{Dhxh6} \) ½–½ Riazantsev – Karjakin, Dagomys 2008. After 26...\( \mathbb{Dg8} \) 27.\( \mathbb{G3} \) \( \mathbb{Df6} \) White’s rook is out of play and 27.\( \mathbb{Dxa6} \) \( \mathbb{Dg2} \) 28.\( \mathbb{Dxa7} \) is about equal.

14.0–0

14...\( \mathbb{Wb6} \)
14...\( \mathbb{Df6} \) 15.\( \mathbb{Df3} \) \( \mathbb{Wb6} \) 16.\( \mathbb{Dd2} \) \( \mathbb{Dd8} \) 17.\( \mathbb{Df4} \) \( \mathbb{Gg7} \) 18.\( \mathbb{Dfd1} \) was good for White in Vermeulen – Richardson, corr. 2003.

14...b4 15.\( \mathbb{Dc4} \) \( \mathbb{Da6} \) 16.\( \mathbb{Hh5} \) \( \mathbb{Db5} \) 17.\( \mathbb{Dc5} \) \( \mathbb{Dxc5} \) 18.dxc5 \( \mathbb{We7} \) 19.\( \mathbb{Ee1} \) \( \mathbb{Dxg3} \) 20.\( \mathbb{Fxg3} \) \( \mathbb{Dxc5} \)† 21.\( \mathbb{Dh2} \) 0–0–0 22.\( \mathbb{Dxf7} \) and Black did not have enough for the exchange, Ronczkowski – Mercadal Benejam, corr. 2004.
15.\textbf{b}5
A key move: the bishop attacks Black’s weak spot on f7 and makes it harder for him to castle long. Another standard try is 15.a4 with play on the queenside.

15...\textbf{d}f6 16.\textbf{c}e5 \textbf{d}xh5 17.\textbf{x}h5
The queen replaces the bishop.

17\ldots\textbf{b}4
Seeking counterplay. Instead 17...\textbf{d}d8 18.\textbf{a}d1 \textbf{d}d7 19.\textbf{f}e1\pm was Atalik – Markus, Jahorina 2003.

18.\textbf{a}a4 \textbf{b}5 19.\textbf{c}c5!
A great positional pawn sacrifice.

19...\textbf{g}c5 20.\textbf{d}c5 \textbf{c}xc5 21.\textbf{f}d1

The black king will remain in the centre and White’s super-bishop on e5 is from another planet from its rival on b7, so White has more than enough for the pawn. Also, opposite-coloured bishops tend to favour the side with the initiative.

21...\textbf{g}6 22.\textbf{d}d2 \textbf{b}5
Or 22...c3 23.bxc3 bxc3 24.\textbf{e}c2 \textbf{a}5 25.\textbf{x}c3\pm Zpevakova – Jones, corr. 2007.

23.a4 bxa3 24.\textbf{b}xa3 a5 25.\textbf{a}1

Also strong is 25.\textbf{f}3\pm.

25...\textbf{c}5 26.\textbf{b}3 \textbf{c}6 27.\textbf{e}1
1–0

Black resigned – still a pawn up but with no prospects whatsoever.

\textbf{Conclusion:} If Black wants to return the pawn then 11...\textbf{g}8 is probably not the way to do it. White gets equal material and keeps a strong initiative, which is almost too much to ask for.

\textbf{Game 41}

\textbf{Grischuk – Karjakin}

Sochi 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\textbf{f}f3 \textbf{f}6 4.\textbf{c}c3 e6 5.\textbf{g}5\textbf{h}6 6.\textbf{h}4 dxc4 7.e4 g5 8.\textbf{g}3 b5 9.\textbf{e}5

An experimental move-order, which in this game just transposes. For more details about the pros and cons please see the Theory section. 9.\textbf{c}2 \textbf{b}7 10.h4 g4 11.\textbf{e}5 h5 is the normal way.

9...\textbf{h}5 10.h4 g4 11.\textbf{e}2 \textbf{b}7
Black is guarding his g-pawn, but having moved his pawn-chain from h6-g5 to h5-g4 has certainly not hidden the holes on his kingside, and the pawns can still be attacked.

12.0-0

Here, and again on the next move, it was also possible to confront Black's pawn-chain with f2-f3 to open the position, but I like Grischuk's style. He develops smoothly and makes all his pieces work well together.

12...\(\text{\textgobble}d7\) 13.\(\text{w}c2\)

13...\(\text{\textgobble}xe5\)

Black must get rid of the annoying knight. And you don't have to write home to your Mom and tell her about the alternatives:

13...\(\text{\textgobble}g7\) 14.b3 (14.\(\text{\textgobble}ad1\) is also natural) 14...cxb3 15.axb3 a6 16.\(\text{\textgobble}ad1\) 0-0 17.\(\text{\textgobble}d3\) c5 (17...\(\text{\textgobble}b6\) 18.e5 \(\text{\textgobble}d5\) 19.\(\text{\textgobble}xd5\) cxd5 20.\(\text{\textgobble}f4\) and h5 falls) 18.\(\text{\textgobble}xc5\) \(\text{\textgobble}xc5\) 19.dxc5 \(\text{\textgobble}c8\) 20.b4± Skroental – Lovik, Norway 2008.

13.\(\text{\textgobble}b6\) 14.\(\text{\textgobble}ad1\) \(\text{\textgobble}e7\) 15.b3 cxb3 16.axb3 \(\text{\textgobble}c8\) 17.\(\text{\textgobble}xd7\) \(\text{\textgobble}xd7\) 18.e5 a6 19.\(\text{\textgobble}b1\)! (anticipating ...c5) 19...c5 20.d5± exd5 21.\(\text{\textgobble}xd5\) \(\text{\textgobble}xd5\) 22.\(\text{\textgobble}xd5\) \(\text{\textgobble}e6\) 23.\(\text{\textgobble}fd1\) \(\text{\textgobble}b6\) 24.\(\text{\textgobble}d6\) White is winning, Zontakh – Dlugosz, Krakow 2000.

14.\(\text{\textgobble}ad1\)

Which rook? 15.\(\text{\textgobble}fd1\) looks just as good.

14...\(\text{\textgobble}g8\)

The most natural, but it has also been popular to put the rook on the g-file.

14...\(\text{\textgobble}g8\) 15.\(\text{\textgobble}ad1\)

15...\(\text{\textgobble}d7\) 16.\(\text{\textgobble}g3\) \(\text{\textgobble}b6\) 17.b3 cxb3 18.axb3 \(\text{\textgobble}a6\) 19.\(\text{\textgobble}b4\)

18...a6 19.e5 c5 20.d5 exd5 21.\(\text{\textgobble}xd5\) \(\text{\textgobble}xd5\) 22.\(\text{\textgobble}xd5\) \(\text{\textgobble}e7\) 23.\(\text{\textgobble}fd1\) \(\text{\textgobble}f8\) 24.e6! \(\text{\textgobble}xe6\) 25.\(\text{\textgobble}e5\) \(\text{\textgobble}c6\) 26.\(\text{\textgobble}e1\) \(\text{\textgobble}g6\) 27.\(\text{\textgobble}xh5\) \(\text{\textgobble}d8\)
19.e5 \xc3 20.\wxc3
White has a significant positional advantage despite the missing pawn, Gilimshin – Petrulis, corr. 2004.

Black has also tried:
15...\=g6
But this is artificial.
16.\=f4 \=e7 17.b3
On the recommended move 17.g3, as played by Sakaev, Black should try either 17...\=a5 or 17...\=b4.
17...\xsb3
17...\xsb4 18.\=a4 c3 gives Black impressive pawns, but White succeeded in breaking them up and building a direct attack in the following game: 19.\=c5! \=c8 20.\=c4 \=a5 21.\=d3 \=b7 22.\=e5 \=g7 23.a3! \xbx3 24.b4 \xbx4 25.\=b3 \=b6 26.\=h6 \=h7 27.\=g5 \=e7 28.\=xc3 \=xe4 29.\=c3 \=d6 30.\=xe7 \=xe7 31.\=g5\+= f6 32.\=g6 \=ah8 33.\=xe6\+= \=d8 (33...\=xe6 34.\=e1) 34.\=d7 1–0 Dhanish – Dothan, corr. 2006.
18.\xsb3 a6 19.g3 \=b6 20.e5 \=d5 21.\=xd5 \=xd5 22.f3
Very illustrative: the kingside is easily opened and White both wins material and penetrates the black position.
22...\=c8 23.\=b1 gxf3 24.\=xf3 \=d7 25.\=h5 \=g7 26.\=h6! \=xg3\+= 27.\=h2 \=cg8 28.\=h7 1–0

14...\=h6
This looks a bit extravagant.
15.b3 \xsb3 16.\xsb3 0–0
But is in fact not so clear.
17.\=fd1
17.\=d3 is possible.
17...\=e7
17...\=e8 and 17...\=d7 can be answered with
18.\=g3 with good long-term compensation.
18.\=g3 \=d7 19.e5 f5 20.exf6 \=xf6
Krush – Erenburg, Las Vegas 2007, and now 21.\=d3\+= would emphasize White’s good control of the white squares. The pawn-chain h5-g4 is actually quite loose.

15.b3!
Very standard by now.

15...\xsb3 16.a\=xb3 0–0

17.\=g3
A very important decision. Grischuk has a flair for attacking chess, no doubt about that. He knows it must be very risky for Black to take on d4 with the queen, so he doesn’t waste time with the preliminary 17.\=ad1, but moves the bishop immediately creating the threat e4-e5.

Actually 17.\=ad1 is also quite good. It is a move you can make automatically without thinking, and a dozen players have done that – made the move I mean, I don’t know about the thinking part – with good results. White always has fine long-term compensation for the pawn in these types of position.

Grischuk’s move forces the pace more and looks promising, but let’s check the other option:
17.\=ad1

Black has tried different moves:
17...\textit{d}d7 18.\textit{x}g7 (18.\textit{g}3?!?) 18...\textit{x}g7 19.e5 \textit{f}5 20.\textit{e}x\textit{f}6 \textit{g}xf6 21.\textit{d}e1 \textit{d}d5 22.\textit{x}d5 exd5 23.\textit{d}d3 \textit{h}4 24.e6 \textit{f}6 25.g3 \textit{g}5 26.e5 \textit{h}6 27.e7 28.\textit{c}e1 \textit{c}8 29.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}6 30.\textit{e}x\textit{f}7 \textit{xf}7 31.e5 \textit{f}6 32.e7 1–0 Daus – Blauhut, corr. 2006.

18...\textit{x}g7 19.e5 \textit{f}5 20.\textit{e}x\textit{f}6 \textit{g}xf6 21.\textit{d}d3 \textit{f}5 22.\textit{x}f5 exf5


17...\textit{e}5

This liberates the passive bishop on \textit{b}7 and seeks active counterplay. Black does not mind that material equality will be restored.

17...\textit{b}4 18.\textit{a}4 \textit{d}d7 19.\textit{ad}1 \textit{c}7 20.\textit{c}5 \textit{xc}5 21.\textit{d}x\textit{c}5 \textit{fd}8 22.\textit{ed}8+ \textit{d}4 23.e5 \textit{xd}6 24.\textit{c}xd6 \textit{f}8 25.\textit{e}4 \textit{b}6 Avrukh – Sargissian, Germany 2007. Now 26.\textit{xb}4 takes the pawn back and leaves Black with a miserable position.

After 17...\textit{b}4 18.\textit{a}4, instead of 18...\textit{d}d7, Black’s most recent try is: 18...\textit{c}5! 19.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}8 This is an intelligent way to try to solve the opening problems. 20.\textit{d}3 \textit{xc}5 21.\textit{d}x\textit{c}5 \textit{xe}4 22.\textit{xd}8 \textit{xd}8 23.\textit{xa}7 \textit{xc}5 24.\textit{d}1 \textit{xd}1+ 25.\textit{xb}1 \textit{d}5 26.\textit{c}7 1/2–1/2

This was Leitao – Matsuura, Sao Paulo 2008. In the game Black succeeded, but White could instead try: 20.\textit{c}4 \textit{xc}5 21.\textit{d}x\textit{c}5 \textit{xe}4 22.\textit{xf}1

17...\textit{xd}4 is indeed extremely risky: 18.\textit{fd}1 \textit{b}6 19.e5 \textit{d}5 20.\textit{e}4 is a good answer.

18.\textit{g}3?? \textit{f}5 19.\textit{ex}f5 \textit{ex}f5 20.\textit{c}1 \textit{f}6 21.\textit{f}4 with good positional compensation, Neto – Avotins, corr. 2004.
17...\textit{d}d7 18.e5 f5 19.exf6 \textit{x}xf6 20.\textit{e}ad1 \textit{e}7 21.\textit{g}6 \textit{f}7 22.\textit{g}5 maintained strong pressure. Black tried to return the pawn with 22...\textit{e}4 23.\textit{a}a4 c5 24.\textit{x}xc5 \textit{e}4 25.\textit{w}e3 \textit{xc}5 26.\textit{d}xc5\pm but it was no longer satisfactory, Pashikian – Ter Sahakyan, Yerevan 2008.

17...\textit{e}8 18.e5 \textit{xd}4 19.\textit{ad}1 \textit{c}5 20.b4! \textit{xb}4 21.\textit{e}4 is a good illustration of how dangerous this set-up is. White has sacrificed his entire queenside, so the attack had better work. 21...\textit{h}6 22.\textit{ed}7 \textit{c}8 23.\textit{ed}8 \textit{b}7 24.\textit{xe}8! \textit{fxe}8 25.\textit{f}6\texttt{\textdagger} \textit{f}8 26.\textit{wh}7 \textit{d}2 27.\textit{x}g4! \textit{e}7 (27...\textit{x}g4 28.\textit{h}5 \textit{ed}8 29.\textit{h}4) 28.\textit{hx}5 \textit{f}8 29.\textit{e}4 c5 30.\textit{d}6 \textit{d}5 31.\textit{xf}7 1–0 Dhanian – Misiunas, corr. 2006.

18.e5
18.dxc5 b4 19.\textit{ad}1 \textit{c}8 20.\textit{b}5 \textit{xe}4 21.\textit{d}6 \textit{d}8 is unclear.

18...\textit{d}5
In a recent game Black tried 18...\textit{d}7 but after 19.\textit{e}4 \textit{xe}4 20.\textit{xe}4 cxd4 21.\textit{d}3\pm it ended in a massacre on the light squares. 21...f5 22.exf6 \textit{xf}6 23.\textit{xe}6\texttt{\textdagger} \textit{h}8 24.\textit{w}f5 \textit{d}5 25.\textit{e}5 \textit{ae}8 26.\textit{fe}1 \textit{e}7 27.\textit{a}6 \textit{g}8 28.\textit{ae}2 \textit{c}5 29.g3 \textit{c}1\texttt{\textdagger} 30.\textit{h}2 \textit{c}5 31.\textit{e}6 \textit{ff}7 32.\textit{cc}2 1–0 Shulman – Baramidze, Dresden (ol) 2008.

19.\textit{xb}5 cxd4 20.\textit{d}6 \textit{bb}8

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (7,7);
\fill[lightgray] (1,1) rectangle (2,2);
\fill[lightgray] (2,2) rectangle (3,3);
\fill[lightgray] (3,3) rectangle (4,4);
\fill[lightgray] (4,4) rectangle (5,5);
\fill[lightgray] (5,5) rectangle (6,6);
\fill[lightgray] (6,6) rectangle (7,7);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21.\textit{dd}2
In a correspondence game White successfully employed 21.\textit{dc}4 and after 21...\textit{bb}4 22.\textit{dd}5 23.\textit{fe}1 a5 24.\textit{ac}1 \textit{b}6 25.\textit{ec}4! was strong: 25...\textit{xe}4 26.\textit{xe}4 d3 27.\textit{ff}4 \textit{h}7 28.\textit{gg}5 f6 29.exf6 \textit{xf}6 30.\textit{xe}6 \textit{gg}5 31.hxg5 \textit{wd}6 32.\textit{cc}4 g3 33.\textit{xg}3 \textit{xg}3 34.\textit{ee}7\texttt{\textdagger} \textit{gg}6 35.\textit{wb}2 1–0 Van Unen – Lanc, corr. 2007.

The problem is that 24...\textit{xc}4 25.\textit{xc}4 \textit{dd}5 seems to hold without any problems.

21...\textit{cc}3 22.\textit{dd}3 a5
22...\textit{dd}5 23.\textit{xa}7 \textit{xb}3 would simplify but White would keep the pressure with 24.\textit{fa}1\pm.

23.\textit{bb}3 \textit{dd}5 24.\textit{cc}2
A nice regrouping; the bishop move protects \textit{b}3 but also prepares \textit{dd}3.

24...\textit{bb}6
The position is very complicated and it is hard to find the right plan. Here Black had a couple of alternatives.

24...f5 25.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 26.\textit{dd}3 \textit{h}6 27.\textit{xa}5 \textit{xb}3 28.\textit{xb}3 \textit{xb}3 29.\textit{gg}5\pm and Black will have to pay for the open king's position.

24...a4?! was perhaps best. 25.\textit{dd}3 (25.\textit{xa}4 \textit{bb}2 is unclear: Black is ready to sacrifice the exchange) 25...f5 26.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 and now finally 27.\textit{xa}4 and White could come out on top in this tense position. After all, he can also flirt with sacrificing the exchange with \textit{xc}3.

25.\textit{ee}1 a4
Now it probably comes too late, but the position was difficult anyway. 25...f5 26.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 27.\textit{cc}4\pm is the normal way while 25...\textit{xd}6 is a more drastic solution that hardly is sufficient after 26.\textit{ed}6 f5 27.\textit{d}3 followed by \textit{cc}4.

26.\textit{dd}3 f5 27.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 28.\textit{cc}4 \textit{xc}4
Not good. 28...axb3 29.\(\text{Wh}7\)† \(\text{Kf}8\) 30.\(\text{Ka}7\) lost instantly, for instance 30...\(\text{Kb}7\) 31.\(\text{Kxb7}\) \(\text{Kxb7}\) 32.\(\text{Kd}6\)†, but 28...\(\text{f}5\) to block the dangerous diagonal was the best chance, even though it costs at least an exchange: 29.\(\text{Kxb6}\) \(\text{Kxb6}\) 30.\(\text{Kd}2\)

29.bxc4

White threatens \(\text{Kxc3}\). Black has to move the queen away, which loses the important d4-pawn.

29...\(\text{e}7\) 30.\(\text{Kxd4}\) \(\text{Ka}3\) 31.\(\text{Kxb6}\) e5 32.\(\text{Kd}8\)† \(\text{Kf}8\) 33.\(\text{Kxa}5\) e4

Karjakin finds the last resource.

34.\(\text{Kxe}4\)

But Grischuk keeps it simple. 34.\(\text{Kxc3}\) \(\text{Kxf2}\) 35.\(\text{Kc}5\) \(\text{Kg}5\) 36.\(\text{Kxg}7\) \(\text{Kxc}2\)† 37.\(\text{Kd}4\) \(\text{Kxd}4\)† 38.\(\text{Kxd}4\) \(\text{Kxc}4\) was unnecessary, especially since 39.\(\text{Kxe}4\) enters a pin and 39...a3 draws.

34...\(\text{Kxe}4\) 35.\(\text{Kxe}4\) a3 36.\(\text{Kc}3\) \(\text{Kf}7\) 37.\(\text{Kxa}3\) \(\text{Kxc}4\) 38.\(\text{Kxa}5\)

Attacking h5.

38...\(\text{Kf}7\) 39.\(\text{Kc}5\) \(\text{Kh}6\) 40.\(\text{Kd}8\)† \(\text{Kg}7\) 41.\(\text{Ke}7\)

1–0

On 41...\(\text{Kf}5\) 42.\(\text{Kc}7\) \(\text{Kg}6\) 43.\(\text{Kc}5\) wins at once.

**Conclusion:** Another great performance by Grischuk. The Russian star is like a fish in the water in these complicated affairs. So could you be. Play over the game a few more times and get a feel for this dynamic initiative. It is notable that Grischuk again uses the 15.b3 break.

**Moscow Variation Conclusion:** The Moscow Variation is at the very cutting edge of modern opening theory. Many of the lines are strangely balanced: White has a good long-term initiative for the pawn, but perhaps not more than that. In a practical game, however, it will be difficult for the black player to find his way through this tactical maze. And that’s why it often pays off to play razor-sharp chess with White – you will dictate events and psychologically it is much more pleasant to attack than to defend. Of course the Moscow and the Botvinnik Variations both lead to hair-raising complications and there is a lot of theory, but you don’t have to know everything by heart to play them. And please remember that even though FIDE has made the game faster and faster over the years, you are actually still allowed to think at the board.

**Theory: Cambridge Springs**

1.d4 \(\text{d}5\) 2.c4 \(\text{c}6\) 3.\(\text{Kf}3\) \(\text{Kf}6\) 4.\(\text{Kc}3\) \(\text{e}6\) 5.\(\text{Kg}5\) \(\text{Kbd}7\) 6.\(\text{e}3\)

White could transpose to a Queen’s Gambit Exchange variation with 6..cxd5 \(\text{exd}5\) 7.e3. This structure is rightfully considered easier for White to play, so it could be a good practical choice. However, when I recommended the Exchange variation in Chapter 1 it was with the knight on \(e2\). Here it is on \(f3\), so that would create some discrepancy and also the Cambridge Springs is hardly something to be afraid of.

6...\(\text{a}5\)
It was also possible to transpose to a Queen’s Gambit Declined with 6...\textit{e}7 while other bishop moves such as 6...\textit{b}4 or 6...\textit{d}6 do not quite meet the positional demands of the situation. On 6...\textit{b}4 a simple answer is 7.cxd5 and no matter how Black takes back he will get an inferior Exchange Variation, and on 6...\textit{d}6 there is nothing wrong with 7.\textit{d}3.

This is symmetrical, but the knight is passive on d7.
8.\textit{d}2
Directed against ...\textit{e}4.
8.\textit{d}3 \textit{e}4 9.0–0 was also possible.
8...\textit{b}4 9.\textit{b}3 0–0 10.a3 \textit{d}6
If 10...\textit{xc}3 11.\textit{bxc}3 \textit{b}6 then 12.\textit{b}4.
11.\textit{d}3 a6 12.0–0 b5 13.e4 dxe4 14.\textit{d}xe4 \textit{e}7 15.d5!
A thematic break.
15...\textit{e}5
15...\textit{exd}5 16.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{b}6
18.\textit{a}2! \textit{e}6 19.\textit{b}4 \textit{a}4 20.\textit{e}2 and the black queen is in trouble.
16.d6 \textit{d}8
16...\textit{xd}6 17.\textit{xd}6 \textit{xd}3 18.\textit{x}f6 \textit{gxf}6 19.\textit{ce}4 wins.
17.\textit{xf}6\textup{f} \textit{xf}6 18.\textit{e}4 \textit{a}7 19.\textit{h}6 \textit{e}8 20.\textit{c}2 \textit{b}4 21.a\textit{xb}4 \textit{xb}4 22.\textit{a}4 \textit{xd}6 23.\textit{xh}7\textup{f} \textit{h}8 24.\textit{h}4 \textit{f}5 25.\textit{h}3 \textit{g}4 26.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xh}6
Gritsak – Grabarczyk, Glogow 2001, and here 27.\textit{c}1 would have won instantly.

7.cxd5
This creates a QGD Exchange structure after all, but with the queen misplaced on a5.
8.\textit{d}3 \textit{e}4
Otherwise the queen’s position does not make sense:
9.0–0

Black now has various options, but White will come out on top:

7.\textit{d}5
The sharpest. If White wants a more positional game he can opt for 7.\textit{d}2 instead, but the chances to get an opening advantage will be much smaller.

7...\textit{xd}5
The real CS move, but of course it is possible to take back with a pawn.

7.cxd5

The old Cambridge Springs line has regained some popularity, primarily because many Black players want to play the Semi-Slav and are ready to enter the various Meran lines but are reluctant to try the chaos of the Botvinnik or Moscow Variations. They are therefore in search of something solid. With the queen move Black pins the white knight and creates the possibility of ...\textit{e}4.
9...\(\text{cxd3} \text{cxe3}\)

Taking the pawn is too risky.

10.bxc3 \(\text{cxc3}\) 11.e4 dxe4 12.e1 f5 13.c1 \(\text{cxc3}\)

13...b4 14.e4 d5 15.exf6 gxf6 16.\(\text{e}5\) \(\text{e}8\) 17.d4 e6 18.g4 e7 19.xh7 \(\text{b}6\) 20.g5 \(\text{b}4\) 21.ed1 c3 22.xe3 xe3 23.h1 d6 24.e5! \(\text{b}6\) 25.b1 \(\text{f}8\) 26.xh8 1–0 Tummes – Klugstedt, corr. 1993.

14.h4 \(\text{cxf6}\)

Or 14...b6 15.e5 \(\text{h}5\) g6 16.xg6 hgx6 17.xh8 xh8 18.g8 \(\text{a}3\) 19.c5 d6 20.h6.

15.xf6 gxf6 16.e5 d8 17.xc4 \(\text{b}4\) 18.ed1 \(\text{d}2\) 19.c2 \(\text{g}5\) 20.d5

Opening the position.

9...\(\text{d6}\) 10.xf6 \(\text{xf6}\) 11.e5 \(\text{d6}\) 12.f4±

9...\(\text{xg5}\) 10.xg5 \(\text{f6}\)

On 10...\(\text{d8}\) or 10...\(\text{e7}\) White gets 11.f4 in and on 10...\(\text{h6}\) 11.e5 is strong.

11.h3

Black was ready to play ...\(\text{h6}\) followed by ...\(\text{g4}\).

11...\(\text{d6}\) 12.f3 \(\text{b}4\)

Or 12...d6 13.e5 0–0 14.e4 c5 15.f3 cxd4 16.xd4 \(\text{b}4\) 17.e2 \(\text{d}8\) 18.a3 \(\text{f}8\) 19.ad1 \(\text{d}7\) 20.c3± Borovikov – Eggert, Nettetal 2004. White quickly launched a pawn offensive on the kingside.

13.xc2 0–0 14.a3

14.e5 is also fine.

14...\(\text{xg3}\) 15.bxc3 c5 16.xb2 \(\text{c}7\) 17.a4±


There is yet another approach:

7...\(\text{e}4\)

This is tricky, but not that good.

8.dxe6 fxe6 9.d4 \(\text{b}4\) 10.e2 \(\text{d}3\) 11.bxc3 \(\text{bxc3}\) 12.c1 \(\text{d}6\)

Worse is 12.e5 13.e4 or 12...0–0 13.c2 \(\text{b}4\) 14.e3.

10...\(\text{d3} \text{d7}\) 14.e2 \(\text{c}5\)

14...\(\text{c}5\) loses a pawn after 15.xf6 gxf6 16.e5 and \(\text{xc}5\).

15.dxe5 \(\text{xe}5\) 16.0–0

Gorelov – Novopashin, Volgodonsk 1981, and the threat of \(\text{c}4\) gives White the initiative.

8.\(\text{d2}\)

8...\(\text{b}4\)

Black intensifies the pressure on the c3-knight. Another way to do that is: 8...\(\text{a}7\) 9.d3 \(\text{xc3}\) 10.bxc3 \(\text{d}5\) (or 10...\(\text{a}4\)) 11.0–0 \(\text{xc}3\) 12.e2

A typical scenario in the Cambridge Springs: Black has won a pawn by his consistent exploitation of the pin on the c3-knight, but he has fallen way behind in development. Game 42 shows how it can continue.
9...c1 h6

Usually Black wins this tempo on the bishop by playing ...h6 but it is possible to do without it. In their famous Candidates match Smyslov tried some other moves against Kasparov, but he was severely punished.

9...e5 10.a3! ¤d6 (10...¤xc3 11.bxc3 ¤xa3 12.e4 5b6 13.¤d3¤c5) 11.dxe5 ¤xe5 12.¤xe5 ¤x5 13.b4! ¤xc3 14.¤xc3 ¤xc3 15.bxa5 ¤c4 16.¤f4 0–0 17.f3 ¤f6 18.e4 ¤e8 19.¤f2 a6 20.¤c2 ¤e6 21.¤b1 ¤e7 22.¤hd1 ¤ae8 23.¤b2 ¤c8 24.¤bd2 ¤d7 25.¤xd7 ¤xd7 26.g4 ¤c5 27.¤e3 ¤d7 28.g5± In Kasparov – Smyslov, Vilnius (9) 1984, Black lacked counterplay.

9...f6 10.¤h4 e5 11.¤d3 0–0 12.0–0 exd4 12...¤e8 13.¤c2
13.exd4 ¤d8 14.a3! ¤xc3 15.bxc3 ¤f8
15...¤xa3 16.c4 ¤b4 17.¤f5 ¤a6 18.¤a1 ¤b4 19.¤c2 ¤f8 20.¤e4
16.¤g3 ¤e6 17.¤f1 ¤f7 18.c4 ¤xd2 19.¤xd2 ¤b6 20.¤b3 ¤a4 21.¤f1 ¤d7 22.¤a5 ¤e6 23.d5 ¤d4 24.dxc6 ¤xc6 25.¤xc6 bxc6 26.c5±

Kasparov – Smyslov, Vilnius (3) 1984. The bishop pair is very strong.

The most interesting line is:
9...c5 10.a3 ¤xc3 11.bxc3

As usual, it is dangerous to try:
11...¤xa3

When Khalifman gives:
12.e4 5f6 13.¤d3 ¤a5 14.d5! exd5 15.exd5 0–0
15...¤xd5 16.¤c4
16.0–0 ¤xd5
16...h6 17.¤xh6! gxh6 18.¤xh6 wins.
17.¤xh7+ ¤xh7 18.¤xd5 ¤g8 19.¤e7 ¤e8 20.¤f1

White's impressive bishop dominates the black position and he will have good attacking chances on the kingside.

But Black can play:
11...b6

Then 12.¤d3 h6 will transpose to something in the mainline that we try to avoid. Instead we can take the ending, when a recent example went:
12.c4 ¤xd2+ 13.¤xd2 ¤f6 14.¤e2 ¤a6 15.f3

With ...h6 and ¤h4 included, the bishop often returns to f2 where it coordinates well with the other troops, so here it is maybe a slight disadvantage to have the bishop on g5.
15...0–0 16.¤f2

16.0–0 was more natural and looks slightly better for White.

White again gets a good play for a pawn. Game 43 shows how the initiative can unfold.

10.¤h4 c5

After: 10...0–0 11.a3 ¤xc3 12.bxc3 ¤xa3 13.e4

Standard by now.
11...\textit{dxc3} 12.bxc3 b6

The positional choice: Black prepares ...\textit{a}6 to exchange his problem bishop. Even worse than before is:

12...\textit{wx}a3 13.e4 \textit{5f6} 14.\textit{d}d3 \textit{wa}5 15.d5! \textit{exd5} 16.e5 \textit{De}4 17.\textit{exe}4 dxe4 18.\textit{wd}6

Threatening mate.
18...g5 19.\textit{hx}g5! \textit{b}6
19...\textit{hx}g5 20.\textit{hx}g5 f6 21.\textit{exf}6 and it is over.
20.\textit{exe}4 \textit{xd}6 21.\textit{xd}6\textdagger \textit{f}8 22.\textit{f}4\textpm \textit{b}6 23.0–0 \textit{g}8 24.\textit{f}5


This move prevents \textit{d}d4–b5–d6 and prepares b6–b5 followed by ...\textit{e}4.

13.\textit{c}4

This is nothing.

13...\textit{5f}6 14.\textit{d}d3 \textit{b}7 15.d5 c4! 16.dxe6 cxd3 17.\textit{ex}d7\textdagger \textit{xd}7 18.\textit{wd}3

This position has been considered fine for Black since an old game between Kramnik and Ivanchuk. A later correspondence game confirmed this:

18...\textit{c}5\textdagger 19.\textit{d}6 f6

Now White could not find anything better than giving up a piece.

20.\textit{xf}6 \textit{gxf}6 21.\textit{xf}6 \textit{f}8

Rost – May, corr. 2001, and the finish could have been:

22.\textit{c}5\textdagger \textit{f}7 23.\textit{c}7\textdagger \textit{g}8 24.\textit{g}3\textdagger

With perpetual check.

13...\textit{xd}2\textdagger 14.\textit{xd}2

13.c4

The modern solution. White is content with a slightly better ending, where the pair of bishops hopefully can claim their right. Traditionally White has played:

13.\textit{d}3 \textit{a}6 14.0–0 cxd4 15.\textit{xa}6 \textit{xa}6 16.\textit{xd}4

16.cxd4 0–0 17.e4 \textit{5f}6 18.\textit{e}3 \textit{ac}8 should be okay for Black who is ready to swap rooks on the c-file.

16...0–0 17.e4 \textit{f}4 18.\textit{xd}7 \textit{e}2\textdagger 19.\textit{h}1 \textit{xc}1 20.\textit{xc}1 \textit{xa}3 21.\textit{d}2 \textit{ac}8 22.\textit{d}4

But this position is considered fine for Black these days.

22...\textit{a}6
Black must withdraw the knight to e7 or f6. White continues with the flexible f3 and e2. The other bishop can always return to f2 with a harmonious position. Game 44 tells more.

**Game 42**

Mehlhorn – Drosson

Correspondence 2003

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 d6 4.♗c3 e6 5.♗g5 ♙bd7 6.e3 ♙a5 7.cxd5 ♙xd5 8.♗d2 ♙b6 9.♖d3 ♙xc3 10.bxc3

10...♗d5

Black can also win the pawn with:

10...♗a4

Because 11.♗c1 allows 11...♗xc3 and 11.c4 ♙b4 is even worse.

White should of course just give up the pawn and accept the inevitable.

11.0–0 ♙xc3 12.♗e2

The knight looks funny on a4, but Black can harass the white queen by keep threatening to exchange. A pawn down, White prefers to wait a little before going into an ending.

12...♗b2 13.♗c2 ♙b5

Another line is: 13...♗c3 14.♗d3 ♗d5 15.♗b3 h6 16.♗h4 ♗c3 17.♗e2 ♗a3 18.♗e5 with good compensation.

14.♗d1 ♗c3 15.♗d2 ♗e2†

Or 15...♗b4 16.♖d3 when 16...♗a5 is a mistake after Khalifman’s 17.♖a3 ♘xa3 18.♖b1 b5 19.♖b3 b4 20.♖xa3 bxa3 21.♗xc3 ♗xc3 22.♖xc3 a2 23.♖a3+ and 16...♗a4 17.♖a3 ♗a5 18.♖b2 f6 19.♖h4 ♗d5 20.♖fc1 was Magerramov – Sherbakov, Cheliabinsk 1991. The black queen is not safe and White is ready with moves such as ♗c2, threatening ♗xh7.

16.♖h1 ♗b4 17.a4! ♗xd2 18.axb5 ♗c3 19.♖a2

Black has to go to extremes to avoid losing his knight.

19...♗d7

19...h6 20.bxc6 bxc6 (20...hxg5 21.♗e4†) 21.♗a4 ♗d7 22.♖h4 g5 23.♗xe2 gxh4 24.♖c2 ♗a5 Pankratov – Kariz, corr. 1997.

25.♗e5† 26.♗d3

20.♗e4 also looks good.

20...h6 21.♖h4 g5 22.♗xe2 gxh4 23.♖c1 ♗b4 24.♗e5 ♗d6 25.♗xd7 ♗xd7 26.bxc6† ♗xc6 27.♗f3 ♗hc8 28.♖a6†


11.0–0 ♙xc3 12.♖c2

Black has no real weaknesses, but he is terrible behind in development, and his
vulnerable queen almost guarantees that he will lose even more time getting her back to safety. White has more than enough for the pawn and should be in no hurry. The compensation is of a long-term positional kind: the extra space, the easy piece-play. Black will without doubt be able to castle, but he will have great trouble developing his queenside.

12...\textit{\texttt{d}d6}

12...\texttt{e}c7 13.\texttt{xe}e7 \texttt{xe}e7 14.\textit{	exttt{c}e}5 \texttt{g}6 15.\texttt{x}xg6 hxg6 16.a4!? (16.\texttt{f}c1) 16...\texttt{a}5 17.\texttt{f}c1 g5 18.h3 f6 19.\textit{\texttt{c}c}4 \texttt{c}7 20.e4= Eingorn – Meister, Bad Wiessee 2008.

13.\textit{\texttt{d}d2}

Activating the knight.

13...\texttt{a}5

Black should be alert. A careless move like 13...0–0? would after 14.\texttt{c}c4 \texttt{c}7 15.\texttt{ab}1 cost the queen because there is no satisfactory defence against \texttt{b}3 or \texttt{fc}1.

14.\textit{\texttt{c}c}4 \texttt{c}7 15.\textit{\texttt{xd}d6}†

A simple decision. White just takes the bishop pair and secures good play, especially on the dark squares. 15.\texttt{h}5 has also been tried but it is not as clear-cut.

15...\textit{\texttt{xd}d6} 16.\texttt{h}4 0–0 17.\textit{\texttt{g}3}

The bishops exert strong long distance pressure. Poor Black still has to develop the queenside.

17...\texttt{d}7

Protecting c6 and preparing ...b7-b6 followed by ...\texttt{b}7. On 17...\textit{\texttt{e}7} White could try the new move 18.e4=.

18.\textit{\texttt{ac}1}

Also possible is 18.\texttt{f}c1 \texttt{b}4 19.\texttt{c}4 b6 20.e4 a5 21.a3 \texttt{a}6 22.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{b}7 23.\texttt{e}2 b5 24.\texttt{e}5 f6 25.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{ad}8 26.\texttt{d}1 f5 27.f3 a4 28.\textit{\texttt{ac}1}† Innocenti – Fleischanderl, corr. 2004. Black’s position does not impress.

18...b6 19.\textit{\texttt{fd}1}

White centralizes the rooks and finishes his development. The compensation will not go away and he is in no hurry. The stem game continued 19.\texttt{b}1 \texttt{b}7 20.\textit{\texttt{d}d}3 g6 21.\textit{\texttt{fd}1} \texttt{ad}8 22.\texttt{e}2 f5 23.\texttt{e}5 with compensation, Gligoric – Shengelia, Panormos 1998. But as Panczyk and Ilczuk proclaim, 20...f5 would have been better with unclear play.

19...f5

A double-edged decision, but on 19...\texttt{b}7 comes 20.e4 \texttt{c}7 21.\textit{\texttt{b}2} when play can continue 21...f5 22.f3 \texttt{ad}8 23.\textit{\texttt{c}2}.

20.e4 \texttt{e}7

20...fxe4 21.\texttt{xe}4 g6 creates a weakness. White can put the queen on g4, play the bishop to e5, and then h2-h4-h5.

21.\texttt{e}5

Nice bishop.

21...\texttt{b}7 22.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{ad}8 23.\textit{\texttt{c}2} fxe4

Otherwise the rook would go to h3 with an attack.

24.\texttt{a}3 a5 25.\texttt{b}3
First he creates some new weak spots in the black camp.

25...b5 26.â xe4 â f5 27.â c3 h6 28.f4 a4

Another pawn sacrifice, another initiative.

9

13...â e7
13...â b6 14.â d3 â e8 15.0–0 e5 16.â g3 exd4 17.cxd4 just opened the position to White’s advantage in Kramnik – Lobron, Frankfurt 1995.

14.â d3 â g6 15.â g3 e5
Seeking influence in the centre.

The alternative is:
15...b6 16.0–0
And 16.h4 would very likely have been even stronger.
16...â b7
But with:
17.e5 â e7 18.h4
White took the initiative.
18...c5 19.h5 â xf3 20.gxf3 â h4 21.â f4 â f5
22.â xf5 exf5 23.â xf5 â e6 24.â e4 f5 25.d5!
â e8 26.â f4+


16.0–0

16.h4 was also possible, but Kramnik just finishes development. It is clear he believes in the long-term prospects of White’s position.

16...â e8

**Conclusion:** A typical display if Black goes for an early win of a pawn. His bad development and the strong pair of bishops will make the rest of the game an unpleasant uphill struggle.
16...\textit{We}7 has been played in a correspondence game, but it does not change much. White can continue 17.\textit{Af}1 like Kramnik or even 17.h4!?.

17.\textit{Af}1 \textit{Aa}5 18.\textit{Ab}2 \textit{Ad}8

Black got his queen home, but Kramnik still doesn’t hurry. Slowly but surely he improves his pieces. He has a nice centre and good prospects on the kingside, while Black’s majority on the queenside will not be a real threat for long.

19.\textit{Ab}1! a5 20.\textit{Ac}d1 a4 21.\textit{Aa}2

Kramnik has coordinated his pieces beautifully. He found an active post for the light-squared bishop where it points all the way down to the weak spot f7 and at the same time blocks Black’s passed a-pawn.

21...\textit{Wc}7 22.\textit{Ac}1 \textit{Aa}5

Black tries to get his rook out without developing the c8-bishop at all.

23.\textit{Wd}2 \textit{Exd}4

Releasing the tension mainly benefits White, but Black’s position was not easy to play. 23...b6 could be answered by 24.h4 when Black should perhaps try 24...\textit{Af}6 25.\textit{Ax}e5 \textit{Axe}5 26.\textit{Axe}5 \textit{Axe}5 27.dxe5 \textit{We}5 with some compensation for the exchange.

24.\textit{Ax}d4

The most dynamic option.

24...\textit{Wc}5
24...\textit{Ad}e5 25.f4±

25.\textit{Ac}7 \textit{Aa}8

26.\textit{Ax}f7!

The culmination of Kramnik’s remarkable handling of this bishop.

26...\textit{Wx}f7 27.\textit{Ad}a2† \textit{Af}8

In his notes in \textit{Informant} the winner mentions the nice detail 27...\textit{Af}6 28.\textit{Ad}8†! with mate in a few moves.

28.\textit{Ad}e6† \textit{Ax}e6 29.\textit{Wxe}6

The black king is caught: White will follow up with \textit{Ae}3 and \textit{Af}3. Black cannot move the knight from d7 because of the weak back rank.

29...\textit{Ad}e7 30.\textit{Ae}3 \textit{Ae}8 31.\textit{Af}3 \textit{Wh}5 32.\textit{Ad}6 1–0

On 32...\textit{Wg}5 then 33.\textit{Af}7 decides.

\textbf{Conclusion:} This game is another illustration of the long-term dangers that await Black if he takes the pawn. Such positions are almost impossible to defend over-the-board.
Game 44

Bubir – Nemec

Correspondence 2006

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗c3 ♘f6 4.♗f3 e6 5.♗g5 ♘bd7 6.e3 ♘a5 7.exd5 ♘xd5 8.♗d2 ♗b4 9.♗c1 h6 10.♗h4 c5 11.a3 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 b6 13.c4 ♘xd2+ 14.♔xd2

17.♗d3 is of course also fine.
17...♗a6 18.dxc5 bxc5 19.e4 ♘e8 20.♗e2 ♔b7 21.♗d2 ♖b6 22.a4 ♖c7 23.a5 ♖d7 24.♖h1 f6 25.♖c3±

Tasic – Norman, corr. 2006. Space and bishops!

15.f3

A key move, but White could also develop the light-squared bishop first.

15...♗b7 16.♗e2

14...♗5f6

This is the most solid option.

Black has an alternative that looks tempting:
14...♗e7

The knight can jump to f5 and harass the white bishop. However, the bishop does not really mind returning to f2, and Black’s knights may be misplaced. These are the words; let’s translate them into some practical examples:

15.f3 ♘f5 16.♗f2 ♘d6

Or 16...♗a6 17.♗d3 ♘c8 18.g4! ♘d6 19.♗g3 ♘e7 20.♕f2± ♕h8 21.♕h1 ♘b8 22.♖h4 ♘b7 23.d5! exd5 24.♗f5 ♘d7 25.cxd5 g6 26.♖b1 c4 27.h5 ♘dc5 28.e4 g5 29.♕f1 ♘b3 30.♗c3 ♖d6 31.a4 ♖f6 32.♗e3± Potkin – Malakhov, Russia 2008.

17.♗b3

16...♕c8

The right square for the rook, but both sides could just as well have started by castling short and then Black could have played ...♕ac8 with a transposition.

The following games took a more original course:

16...0–0 17.0–0 ♘xd4

17...♗f8 18.♗e1 ♗ac8 19.♗f1± Vaganian – Krasenkow, Barcelona 2007.

18.♖xd4 e5 19.c5! bxc5 20.dxe5

With the idea 20...♗xe5 21.♖xc5.

20...♗e8

Grischuk – Filippov, Tripoli 2004, and now both 21.♗c4 and 21.f4 would have been very good for White.
16...\(\textsf{\textesmall d}c7\)
Keeping the king in the centre is not necessarily a good idea.
17.\(\textsf{\textesmall 0-0}\) \(\textsf{\textesmall h}d8\) 18.\(\textsf{\textesmall e}c2!\)
18.\(\textsf{\textesmall d}b3\)
18...\(\textsf{\textesmall c}ac8\) 19.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}c1\) \(\textsf{\textesmall c}8\) 20.\(\textsf{\textesmall b}1\) \(\textsf{\textesmall f}8\) 21.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}2\)
\(\textsf{\textesmall d}d7\) 22.\(\textsf{\textesmall c}3\) a6 23.a4\pm
Black did not find a plan and now he suffers, Babula – Ashton, Pardubice 2008.

17.\(\textsf{\textesmall 0-0}\) 0–0

18.a4
A good positional idea. The further advance a4-a5 would attack Black’s pawn chain. It was also possible just to centralize the other rook and see what Black intends to do. 18.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}d1\) \(\textsf{\textesmall f}e8\) 19.\(\textsf{\textesmall d}3\) \(\textsf{\textesmall a}6\) 20.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}1\) cxd4 21.exd4 \(\textsf{\textesmall c}6\) 22.a4 \(\textsf{\textesmall c}8\) 23.\(\textsf{\textesmall a}1\) e5 Obviously this is the plan, but there was never a good time to execute it. 24.d5 \(\textsf{\textesmall d}6\) 25.a5 \(\textsf{\textesmall c}5\) 26.\(\textsf{\textesmall d}b1\pm\) Zontakh – Romanko, Russia 2008.

18.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}d8\) 19.\(\textsf{\textesmall b}3\) g5 20.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}2\) a5
A drastic decision, but otherwise White would play a5 himself.

21.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}d1\) cxd4 22.exd4 \(\textsf{\textesmall f}8\) 23.\(\textsf{\textesmall e}3\) \(\textsf{\textesmall e}7\)
24.\(\textsf{\textesmall d}2\) \(\textsf{\textesmall c}6\) 25.\(\textsf{\textesmall a}1\) \(\textsf{\textesmall h}5\) 26.\(\textsf{\textesmall e}1\) \(\textsf{\textesmall f}8\) 27.g3 \(\textsf{\textesmall g}7\) 28.\(\textsf{\textesmall g}4\)
Taking squares from the knight.

28...\(\textsf{\textesmall f}6\) 29.h4 \(\textsf{\textesmall f}7\) 30.h5\pm
White does not mind closing the position. He fixes the black pawn on h6, where it might later be hit by the unopposed dark-squared bishop. Furthermore, the weakness on b6 will always be there and the dynamics are on White’s side in the centre and on the kingside, so there will be good winning chances.

30...\(\textsf{\textesmall d}e8\) 31.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}2\) \(\textsf{\textesmall b}7\) 32.\(\textsf{\textesmall a}b1\) \(\textsf{\textesmall a}6\) 33.\(\textsf{\textesmall e}c1\)
\(\textsf{\textesmall d}6\) 34.\(\textsf{\textesmall d}3\) f5 35.\(\textsf{\textesmall c}3\) \(\textsf{\textesmall c}7\) 36.\(\textsf{\textesmall e}1\) \(\textsf{\textesmall d}c8\)
37.\(\textsf{\textesmall g}5\) \(\textsf{\textesmall f}5\) 38.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}3\) \(\textsf{\textesmall f}4\) 39.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}2\)

39...\(\textsf{\textesmall g}8\)
It was difficult to find a move. 39...\(\textsf{\textesmall x}c4\) 40.\(\textsf{\textesmall x}c4\) \(\textsf{\textesmall x}c4\) 41.\(\textsf{\textesmall e}c1\) lost an exchange and on 39...\(\textsf{\textesmall f}8\) White advances 40.d5.

40.\(\textsf{\textesmall e}6!\)
Penetrating Black’s position.

40.\(\textsf{\textesmall x}c4\) 41.\(\textsf{\textesmall g}6\) \(\textsf{\textesmall f}8\) 42.\(\textsf{\textesmall x}c4\) \(\textsf{\textesmall x}c4\)
43.\(\textsf{\textesmall x}h6\)
Not only winning the black h-pawn, but also creating a strong passed pawn.

43...\(\textsf{\textesmall e}7\)
Not 43...\(\textsf{\textesmall x}d3\) 44.\(\textsf{\textesmall h}8\)\# 45.\(\textsf{\textesmall x}c8\).

44.\(\textsf{\textesmall h}7\) \(\textsf{\textesmall d}6\) 45.\(\textsf{\textesmall f}5\) \(\textsf{\textesmall f}6\) 46.\(\textsf{\textesmall h}6\) \(\textsf{\textesmall f}8\)
47.\(\textsf{\textesmall g}6\) \(\textsf{\textesmall d}5\) 48.\(\textsf{\textesmall x}c7\) \(\textsf{\textesmall x}c7\) 49.h6 \(\textsf{\textesmall x}f3\)
50.\textit{d5!}
Decisive.

50...\textit{\textit{h}5}
Or 50...\textit{\textit{\textit{x}d5}} 51.\textit{\textit{\textit{d}4}} \textit{\textit{d}7} 52.\textit{\textit{h}7}.

51.\textit{\textit{xg5}} \textit{\textit{\textit{h}8}} 52.\textit{\textit{h7}} \textit{\textit{\textit{x}h7}} 53.\textit{\textit{xh5}} \textit{\textit{g}8乏}
54.\textit{\textit{f1}} \textit{\textit{f6}} 55.\textit{\textit{e6}} \textit{\textit{g}6} 56.\textit{\textit{f5}} \textit{\textit{g}4}
57.\textit{\textit{f7乏}} \textit{\textit{d}6} 58.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}b6}} \textit{\textit{e}3乏} 59.\textit{\textit{x}e3} \textit{\textit{f}e}3
60.\textit{\textit{e}2}
1–0

\textbf{Conclusion}: The ending is probably the best Black can get, but still it is nice for White.

\textbf{Cambridge Springs Conclusion}: The Cambridge Springs is not the easy solution to the question posed by 5.\textit{\textit{g}5} that Black might have hoped for. It is solid on the surface, but with active and coherent moves White gains the initiative. He should not be afraid to sacrifice a pawn on the way. If Black takes it, he will suffer. Black does best by keeping his structure intact and trying to develop, but even here he cannot solve all the problems and ends up in an inferior ending.

\textbf{Theory: QGD}

1.\textit{d4} \textit{d5} 2.\textit{c4} \textit{c6} 3.\textit{\textit{f}3} \textit{\textit{f}6} 4.\textit{\textit{c}3} \textit{e6} 5.\textit{\textit{g}5} \textit{\textit{e}7}

Black just develops and plays a classical Queen's Gambit Declined. The move ...\textit{c6} makes it quite passive though, and White gets a rather free game just by making natural moves.

6.\textit{e3} 0–0
Or 6...\textit{\textit{\textit{b}d7}} first will be the same thing.

7.\textit{\textit{d}3} \textit{\textit{\textit{b}d7}} 8.0–0 \textit{h6}

Winning a useful tempo, but actually also giving White an important extra possibility. The alternative is the old liberating manoeuvre: 8...\textit{\textit{d}xc4} 9.\textit{\textit{\textit{x}c4}} \textit{\textit{\textit{d}d5}} 10.\textit{\textit{\textit{x}e7}} \textit{\textit{\textit{x}e7}} 11.\textit{\textit{\textit{c}1}} \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{d}xc3}}} 12.\textit{\textit{\textit{a}xc3}}

Here play divides.

12...\textit{c5}
This try to solve his positional problems leaves Black with a rather passive position after:

13.\textit{\textit{b}5} \textit{\textit{\textit{x}d4}} 14.\textit{\textit{\textit{c}xd4}} \textit{\textit{f}6} 15.\textit{\textit{\textit{d}1乏}

When it is not clear how the problem child on c8 shall be developed.

15.\textit{\textit{b}6}
On 15...\textit{\textit{a}6} 16.\textit{\textit{e}2} \textit{b5} 17.\textit{\textit{\textit{e}5}} is annoying.

16.\textit{\textit{e}5}
Khalifman proposes 16.\textit{\textit{\textit{d}c1}} when 16...\textit{\textit{d}8}

17.\textit{\textit{\textit{e}5}} is a possible continuation.

16...\textit{\textit{d}8}
Gotti – Long, Nice 1938. Now:

17.\textit{\textit{\textit{d}4}} \textit{\textit{d}5} 18.\textit{\textit{c}7} \textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{x}c7}} 19.\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{\textit{c}c7}}} \textit{\textit{\textit{a}d7}}}
20. \( \text{dx}d7 \) \( \text{dx}d7 \) 21.\( e4 \) \( \text{d}d6 \) 22.\( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{xc}6 \) 23.\( \text{dx}c6 \) \( \text{c}c5 \) 24.\( f3 \)

This gives White a pleasant ending with more space and active pieces.

12...\( b6 \)

Developing the bishop makes Black regret that the pawn is still on h7.
13.\( \text{d}d3 \) c5 14.\( \text{c}c2 \)

Winning a tempo.
14...h6 15.\( \text{h}h7+ \) \( \text{h}h8 \) 16.\( \text{e}e4 \) \( \text{b}b8 \) 17.\( \text{c}c1 \)

It is difficult for Black to free himself.
17...\( \text{b}7 \)

Or 17...f5 18.\( \text{c}6 \).
18.\( \text{x}b7 \) \( \text{xb}7 \) 19.\( \text{d}x\text{c}5 \) \( \text{xc}5 \)
19...\( \text{b}x\text{c}5 \) 20.\( \text{d}d1+ \)
20.\( b4 \) \( \text{a}a6 \) 21.\( a3+ \)

Black has no counterplay and White will press for the rest of the game.

12...\( e5 \)

The standard break.
13.\( \text{b}3 \)

This is a good prophylactic answer. Again Black has a choice:

13...\( \text{xd}4 \) 14.\( \text{xd}4 \)

White quickly develops a strong initiative on the kingside.
14.\( \text{f}6 \) 15.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d}6 \) 16.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{d}5 \)

It is wise to block the dangerous diagonal.
16...\( \text{f}5 \) 17.\( \text{xf}7! \) \( \text{xf}7 \) 18.\( \text{xf}7+ \) \( \text{xf}7 \)
19.\( \text{b}3+ \) \( \text{f}8 \) 20.\( \text{xb}7 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 21.\( \text{xa}7 \) \( \text{xb}2 \) 22.\( \text{xc}6 \) \( \text{b}4 \) (22...\( \text{xc}6 \) 23.\( \text{a}3+ \) 23.\( \text{ec}1+ \))


And 16...\( \text{e}6 \) 17.\( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{fxe}6 \) 18.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{d}5 \)
19.\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 20.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{ae}8 \) 21.\( \text{g}4 \) \( \text{g}7 \)
22.\( \text{ge}4+ \) with strong pressure, Kacheishvili – Petrosian, Batumi 2003.

17.\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \)

On 17...\( \text{f}5 \) 18.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 19.\( h4! \) is strong:
19...\( \text{f}6 \) and now the novelty 20.\( \text{g}5! \) renews the threat to play \( h5 \).
18.\( \text{h}5+ \) \( \text{b}4 \) 19.\( \text{e}4 \) \( \text{d}2 \) 20.\( \text{d}3 \)

White nicely combines active operations with a positional grip.
20...\( \text{ae}8 \) 21.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 22.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 23.\( \text{xe}6 \)
\( \text{xe}6 \) 24.\( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{fxe}6 \)


25.\( \text{e}2+ \)

13...\( \text{e}4 \) 14.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 15.\( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 16.\( \text{b}1 \)
17.\( \text{d}7 \)
16...\( \text{e}2 \) 17.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 18.\( \text{c}2 \) \( \text{xc}2 \)
19.\( \text{xc}2+ \)

17.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{ae}8 \)

18.\( \text{xe}4! \)

A nice transition into a favourable endgame.
18...\( \text{xe}4 \) 19.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xe}4 \) 20.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 21.\( \text{xf}3 \)
\( \text{ee}8 \) 22.\( \text{d}5! \) \( \text{xd}5 \) 23.\( \text{dx}d5 \) \( b6 \) 24.\( \text{c}7 \)

Keeping the structure with 24.e4 was also possible.
24...\( \text{f}6 \) 25.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 26.\( \text{xa}7 \) \( g5 \)

Lobron – Fahnenschmidt, Germany 1993,
Now 27...\textit{c}4 would have secured White's advantage.

If Black instead keeps the tension and just tries to finish development with:

8...b6

\textbf{Diagram}

He will still be pushed on the defensive.

9.cxd5

A good moment to release the tension: White gets much freer piece play.

9...cxd5

The typical QGD move 9...exd5 also fails to equalize: 10.\textit{c}2 \textit{b}7 11.\textit{d}ad1?! h6 12.\textit{h}4 \textit{c}8 13.\textit{e}c1 \textit{e}4 14.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xh}4 15.\textit{h}7\textsuperscript{+} \textit{h}8 16.\textit{e}5 \textit{c}7 17.\textit{e}4! dxe4 18.\textit{exe}4 \textit{g}8 19.\textit{e}5\textsuperscript{+} \textit{f}6? 20.\textit{xf}7! \textit{xf}7 21.\textit{xf}6 \textit{gxf}6 22.\textit{b}3\textsuperscript{+} \textit{h}8 23.\textit{h}3 \textit{b}4 24.\textit{xh}6\textsuperscript{+} 1–0 R. Krueger – Gschwendtner, Bad Wiessee 2002.

10.\textit{c}1 \textit{b}7 11.\textit{e}2

The position is reminiscent of an Exchange Slav. White's admittedly slight positional pressure is very hard to meet in practice.

11.\textit{e}4 12.\textit{f}4 \textit{df}6 13.\textit{e}5

Also strong is 13.\textit{b}5 \textit{e}8 14.\textit{c}2 \textit{c}8 15.\textit{f}c1 \textit{xc}2 16.\textit{xc}2 \textit{a}8 17.\textit{b}3 a6 18.\textit{c}7 \textit{xc}7 19.\textit{xc}7 \textit{d}8 20.\textit{c}2\textsuperscript{+} Solari – Arias Duval, corr. 2003.

13.\textit{xc}3 14.\textit{xc}3 \textit{c}8 15.\textit{fc}1 \textit{xc}3 16.\textit{xc}3 \textit{d}6 17.\textit{g}5\textsuperscript{+}

White has the c-file and attacking chances; Black now blundered:

17...\textit{xe}5? 18.\textit{dxe}5 h6 19.\textit{xf}6 1–0

Black resigned in Lerner – Auvinen, Helsinki 1992, realising that ...\textit{hxg}5 is answered by \textit{h}5.

The waiting move 8...\textit{e}8 does not make much sense, as White has even better waiting moves himself in \textit{c}1 or \textit{c}2.

The typical Slav idea 8...\textit{d}xc4 9.\textit{xc}4 \textit{b}5 is covered in the next note, because here it makes good sense to include the moves ...h6 and \textit{h}4.

9.\textit{h}4 \textit{d}xc4 10.\textit{xc}4 \textit{d}5

Interesting is the modern interpretation:

10...b5?! 11.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}7

On 11...a6 12.\textit{a}4 is annoying. Then 12...\textit{b}4 13.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 14.\textit{e}4\textsuperscript{+} or 12...\textit{b}7 13.\textit{c}1 \textit{e}8 14.\textit{c}2\textsuperscript{+} and it is not easy for Black to get in the freeing move c6–c5.

12.\textit{c}1 \textit{e}8 13.\textit{c}2

\textbf{Diagram}

13...\textit{b}4 14.\textit{a}4 c5

14...\textit{a}5 15.b3 c5 quickly turned out badly for Black: 16.\textit{b}5 \textit{c}6 17.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 18.\textit{dxc}5 \textit{xc}5 19.\textit{e}5 \textit{c}7 20.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 21.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 22.\textit{xf}6 \textit{gx}f6 23.\textit{d}7 \textit{d}8 24.\textit{xf}6\textsuperscript{+} \textit{g}7 25.\textit{h}5\textsuperscript{+} \textit{f}8 26.\textit{c}1 And a pawn was lost, Ki. Georgiev – Houska, Gibraltar 2008. Black's play could be improved, no doubt,
but besides this, 16.\(\&e5\) is also promising for White.

15.\(\&a6!\)

Black managed to play ...c5, but after this fine positional move the light-squared bishops will be exchanged and White will gain some entry points on the queenside.

15...\(\&xa6\) 16.\(\&xa6\) \(\&e4\) 17.\(\&xe7\) \(\&xe7\)
18.\(\&c2\)± e5

Not 18...\(\&cd8\) 19.\(\&c6\) f5 20.dxc5± Goldin – Barua, Reno 1999. 20...\(\&c8\) 21.\(\&b5\) \(\&dxc5\)
22.\(\&xb4\)
19.\(\&fc1\) exd4 20.exd4 \(\&fe8\) 21.h3 \(\&b8\) 22.\(\&d3\) \(\&d7\)

Kazhgaleyev – Gurevich, Dresden 2008, and now 23.\(\&d2\) \(\&xd2\) 24.\(\&xd2\) would win the c-pawn for nothing.

11.\(\&g3!\)?

The normal move is 11.\(\&xe7\) \(\&xe7\) 12.\(\&c1\) \(\&xc3\) 13.\(\&xc3\) when we have a position from the QGD Lasker variation. Here too White has good chances to achieve a small advantage, but why not go for more? With more space it is common knowledge that it is good to keep many pieces on the board, that’s the logic behind 11.\(\&g3\). See Game 45 for the conclusion.

15.\(\&e1\)
Natural development. White has also had success with 15.\texttt{\textbf{d}d3} b5 (15...\texttt{\textbf{f}f6} 16.\texttt{\textbf{a}d1} c5?! 17.d5\texttt{\textbf{+}} Ruether - Soergel, Bavaria 2001) 16.\texttt{\textbf{b}b3} c5 17.\texttt{\textbf{c}c2} c4 (17...\texttt{\textbf{c}xd4} 18.e5 g6 19.\texttt{\textbf{d}d4} with an attack) 18.\texttt{\textbf{e}e2} a5 19.\texttt{\textbf{a}d1} \texttt{\textbf{e}e8} 20.\texttt{\textbf{f}f1\texttt{\textbf{=}}} Agdestein – Adianto, Novi Sad 1990.

15...\texttt{\textbf{f}f6} 16.\texttt{\textbf{c}c2} \texttt{\textbf{e}e8} 17.\texttt{\textbf{a}d1} \texttt{\textbf{c}c8} 18.a4

This takes more space and prevents some of Black’s active operations on the queenside. Additionally, White prepares the bishop manoeuvre \texttt{\textbf{c}c4-a2-b1} when the canon is pointing directly at the black king. It is clear that White has won the opening duel.

18.\texttt{\textbf{d}d7} 19.\texttt{\textbf{a}a2} b5 20.\texttt{\textbf{b}b1} a6 21.d5!

Opening lines: the queen eyes h7.

21...\texttt{\textbf{f}f8} 22.d6 \texttt{\textbf{d}d8} 23.\texttt{\textbf{e}e5} \texttt{\textbf{d}d7}

\texttt{\textbf{xf7!}}

A spectacular finish.

\texttt{\textbf{xf7}} 25.e5 \texttt{\textbf{f}f8}

Apparently everything is covered.

26.d7!

But now the knight is forced back again and the white queen can enter the position and decide the outcome.

26...\texttt{\textbf{xf7}} 27.\texttt{\textbf{g}g6\texttt{\textbf{+}}} \texttt{\textbf{f}f8} 28.\texttt{\textbf{h}h7} \texttt{\textbf{b}b6}

29.\texttt{\textbf{g}g6}

1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} With 11.\texttt{\textbf{g}g3} (okay, 12.\texttt{\textbf{g}g3} with this game’s funny move order) White keeps the pieces on the board. It’s simple and promising.

\textbf{QGD Conclusion:} Transposing to the old solid QGD is the same as accepting a slightly inferior game from the beginning. Black is close to equality in the various ...\texttt{\textbf{d}xc4} lines. Close: yes! But still far away.

\textbf{Chapter Conclusion:} With 5.\texttt{\textbf{g}g5} against the Semi-Slav White follows the strategy outlined for the entire book: swift and active development, and a preference for taking the centre should the opportunity arise. And it sure does. In the Botvinnik and Moscow variations Black puts all his money on early flank operations of a somewhat suspicious nature. White gets the centre and a lot of dynamic possibilities to attack the far-advanced black pawns. Especially the Botvinnik seems in crisis, but White can also expect an initiative against the popular Moscow, although it is never totally clear. If Black tries to chicken out with a Cambridge Springs or classical Queen's Gambit, then White will come out on top anyway, often with a slight but long-lasting positional edge.

So with 5.\texttt{\textbf{g}g5} you really send a message to your opponent. Let's continue the brilliant Radiohead song quoted in the beginning of the chapter: “This is what you get, this is what you get, this is what you get, when you mess with us.”
Chapter 5

The a6-Slav

*This whole world is wild at heart and weird on top*
– Lula, *Wild at Heart*

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\(\text{\#}f3\) \(\text{\#}f6\) 4.\(\text{\#}c3\) a6

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The 5...\(\text{\#}g4\) Variation ....................... page 166
The 5...g6 Variation .......................... page 169
The 5...\(\text{\#}f5\) Variation ....................... page 171
The 5...\(\text{\#}bd7\) Variation ....................... page 175
1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. f3 f6 4. c3 a6

This is post-modern chess. Although the point of the little move ...a6 is obscured by the clouds, no one is surprised any longer when it appears on the board. The a6-Slav was introduced into top level tournaments back in the 90s and, despite several attempts to refute it, this provocative sideline has become a well established and respected opening enjoying enormous popularity at all levels. Its name still varies though. From just the basic facts like “The a6-Slav” to “The Chebanenko Slav”, celebrating its Moldavian roots, to the eccentric but meaningful “The Chameleon” because Black adopts very different set-ups depending on what White does.

It is true that the further course of the game is still very much in disguise, but we can make a few statements about the nature of the position after ...a6. The light-squared bishop is always an issue in the Queen’s Gambit. Here, after the preliminary move ...a6, Black is ready to develop the bishop to f5 or g4 because he no longer needs to fear \( \text{b3} \) by White as it can now be answered by the cool \( \text{\text{\text{a7}}} \). Also, given the chance Black can consider advancing with ...b7-b5 grabbing space on the queenside. Or he can take on c4 in typical Slav style and protect the pawn with ...b5. On the kingside there are different scenarios too. Black can play ...e7-e6 and get a kind of Queen’s Gambit Declined position or he can play ...g7-g6 and fianchetto the dark-squared bishop with some resemblance to the Gruenfeld.

Korchnoi once gave 4...a6 a question mark and called it a waste of time. Instead you could see it as an intelligent waiting move forcing White to show his hand. Well I won’t make you wait any longer. Here is what we play!

5. c5

A principled move. White closes the position and takes away many of Black’s dynamic possibilities. With 5.c5 White gains more space and highlights a clear defect of the move ...a7-a6: the weakening of b6. Another principled move is 5.a4, which effectively stops all Black’s expansions on the queenside, and lately White has had success with 5.e3 b5 6.c5!? as well. Generally speaking, White can expect a little positional plus in most of the lines, but Black has a very solid structure and his flexible position gives good possibilities for counterplay.

After 5.c5 the position is strategically very demanding. Black can hope to attack the white centre with ...b7-b6 or ...e7-e5 at an appropriate moment, and he is also free to develop the problem child from c8 to f5 or
g4, either at once or perhaps a little later. Translated to moves, we will examine in turn 5...b6, 5...\&g4, 5...g6 and end with the two most common tries, 5...\&f5 and 5...\&bd7.

**The 5...b6 Variation**

*Game 46*

**Soln – Crepan**

Slovenia 1999

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\&f3 \&f6 4.\&c3 a6 5.c5 b6

![Chess Diagram](image)

Trying to "exchange" the hole on b6.

6.cxb6 \&xb6

Often Black plays the flexible:

6...\&bd7

The idea is not to follow up with ...\&xb6 because the knight is somewhat misplaced there, but rather to quickly play ...e6 and ...c6-c5, and thereby get rid of the backward c-pawn. Play can continue:

7.e3 e6

7...\&xb6 8.\&d3 g6 is not clever, as 9.b3 \&g7 10.\&a3! emphasizes: 10...\&a5 11.\&c1 and Black did not know how to get rid of the pressure on e7, Inarkiev – Onoprienko, Moscow 2008.

8.\&d6 c5 9.0–0 \&xb6 10.b3 cxd4 11.exd4 \&d6 12.\&b2 0–0 13.\&e2 \&b7

With 13...a5 14.\&a4 \&a7 15.\&ac1 \&a6 Black tries to simplify. Still 16.\&x6 \&xa6 17.\&xa6 \&xa6 18.\&c2 \&b8 19.\&e5 \&fd7 20.\&fc1 f6 21.\&d3 \&f7 22.f4 gave White a nice ending with good control in Kamsky – Navara, Baku 2008.

14.\&a4 \&a7 15.\&e5 \&fc8 16.\&ac1

White has a good grip on the position and it is difficult for Black to find counterplay.

16...\&f8 17.\&xd7 \&xd7 18.\&xc2 \&xc2 19.\&xc2 \&f6 20.\&c5 \&e8 21.b4 a5!? 22.\&a4 \&e4 23.\&c1 \&a8 24.a3 \&c7 25.f3 \&d6 26.\&xa5 \&xa5 27.bxa5+

With a pawn more, Koneru – Cramling, Russia 2008.

7.\&a4

Very logical. White points his finger at the new hole on c5. A quiet move like 7.e3 was of course also playable.

7...\&c7

![Chess Diagram](image)

8.g3!

White plans \&f4 to kick the black queen away and take even more control over the dark squares.
8...\textit{\texttt{d}e4}
8...\textit{\texttt{g}g4} 9.\textit{\texttt{f}f4} \textit{\texttt{w}a7} 10.\textit{\texttt{a}e5} \textit{e6} was played in Duriez – Braakhuis, corr. 2001, and now White could have continued with the forceful 11.\textit{\texttt{f}f3} \textit{\texttt{f}f5} 12.\textit{\texttt{g}g4} \textit{\texttt{b}b4} 13.\textit{\texttt{a}a2} \textit{\texttt{g}g6} 14.\textit{\texttt{h}h4}±.

8...\textit{\texttt{e}6} has not been played yet, perhaps because 9.\textit{\texttt{f}f4} \textit{\texttt{d}d6} 10.\textit{\texttt{a}axd6} \textit{\texttt{w}xd6} 11.\textit{\texttt{a}a3} \textit{\texttt{b}bd7} 12.\textit{\texttt{c}c2} looks positionally depressing for Black.

9.\textit{\texttt{g}g2} \textit{\texttt{d}d7} 10.0–0 \textit{\texttt{e}6} 11.\textit{\texttt{f}f4} \textit{\texttt{w}a7}

It was safer to exchange the dark-squared bishops with 11...\textit{\texttt{d}d6} but it would leave Black positionally inferior.

12.\textit{\texttt{d}d2}

Removing the strong knight on e4.

12...\textit{\texttt{f}f5}
12...\textit{\texttt{w}xd4} 13.\textit{\texttt{a}xe4} \textit{\texttt{w}xd1} 14.\textit{\texttt{a}fxd1} \textit{dxe4} 15.\textit{\texttt{a}xe4} was absolutely horrible.

13.\textit{\texttt{a}xe4} \textit{\texttt{f}xe4} 14.\textit{\texttt{c}c1} \textit{\texttt{b}b7} 15.\textit{\texttt{h}h3}!

With Black’s pieces diverted on the queenside, this attack on the lonely e6-pawn is very unpleasant. In fact Black can only protect the pawn with his king.

15...\textit{\texttt{f}f7} 16.\textit{\texttt{f}f3}

Opening lines towards the black king and quickly creating decisive threats.

16.\textit{\texttt{a}f6}

Or 16...\textit{\texttt{e}xf3} 17.\textit{\texttt{xf}f3} \textit{\texttt{g}g6} 18.\textit{\texttt{e}e5} \textit{\texttt{g}g7} 19.\textit{\texttt{w}d3} with overwhelming play.

17.\textit{\texttt{f}xe4} \textit{\texttt{dxe4}} 18.\textit{\texttt{a}e5} \textit{\texttt{d}d8} 19.\textit{\texttt{e}e3} \textit{\texttt{h}h5} 20.\textit{\texttt{w}b3} \textit{\texttt{d}d5} 21.\textit{\texttt{c}c3}

Winning material.

21...\textit{\texttt{h}h6} 22.\textit{\texttt{a}xe4} \textit{\texttt{g}g6} 23.\textit{\texttt{c}c3} c5 24.\textit{\texttt{a}xd5} \textit{\texttt{a}xd5} 25.\textit{\texttt{b}b8} \textit{\texttt{w}xb8} 26.\textit{\texttt{x}xb8} \textit{\texttt{c}xd4} 27.\textit{\texttt{e}xd4} \textit{\texttt{a}xa2} 28.\textit{\texttt{c}c7} † \textit{\texttt{g}g8} 29.\textit{\texttt{e}e8} \textit{\texttt{f}f7} 30.\textit{\texttt{a}a1} \textit{\texttt{d}d5} 31.\textit{\texttt{x}xa6} \textit{\texttt{e}e7} 32.\textit{\texttt{a}a7} \textit{\texttt{e}e8} 33.\textit{\texttt{f}f1} \textit{\texttt{h}4}

34.\textit{\texttt{b}b5} \textit{\texttt{f}f6} 35.\textit{\texttt{d}d6} \textit{\texttt{g}g5} 36.\textit{\texttt{a}xe7} † \textit{\texttt{g}g6} 37.\textit{\texttt{d}d3} † \textit{\texttt{h}h5} 38.\textit{\texttt{f}f4} \textit{\texttt{x}xg3} 39.\textit{\texttt{x}xg5} \textit{\texttt{g}xh2} †
40.\textit{\texttt{x}xh2} 1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} 5...\textit{\texttt{b}6} displays a kind of domino effect: whenever Black gets rid of one hole, a new one appears.

\textbf{The 5...\textit{\texttt{g}g4} Variation}

\textbf{Game 47}

\textbf{Topalov – I. Sokolov}

\textbf{Wijk aan Zee 2004}

1.\textit{\texttt{d}d4} \textit{\texttt{d}d5} 2.\textit{\texttt{c}c4} \textit{\texttt{c}c6} 3.\textit{\texttt{a}a3} \textit{\texttt{f}f6} 4.\textit{\texttt{c}c3} a6 5.\textit{\texttt{c}c5} \textit{\texttt{g}g4}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw (1.5,0.5) rectangle (7.5,7.5);
\node at (0.5,0.5) {1}; \node at (1.5,0.5) {2}; \node at (2.5,0.5) {3}; \node at (3.5,0.5) {4}; \node at (4.5,0.5) {5}; \node at (5.5,0.5) {6}; \node at (6.5,0.5) {7}; \node at (7.5,0.5) {8};
\node at (0.5,1.5) {a}; \node at (1.5,1.5) {b}; \node at (2.5,1.5) {c}; \node at (3.5,1.5) {d}; \node at (4.5,1.5) {e}; \node at (5.5,1.5) {f}; \node at (6.5,1.5) {g}; \node at (7.5,1.5) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

This looks dubious: Black provokes the knight to jump to a great square with tempo.

6.\textit{\texttt{e}e5}

We say thanks.

6...\textit{\texttt{h}h5}

The most natural, but Black has two other tries.
6...\textit{\&}e6

This seems rather clumsy and after:

7.\textit{\&}f4 \textit{\&}bd7 8.\textit{\&}d3!

Black lacks space and has a peculiar bishop on e6.

8...g6 9.e3 \textit{\&}g7 10.\textit{\&}c2 0–0 11.0–0 \textit{\&}e4

In a more recent game Black tried to improve with 11...\textit{\&}f5 12.\textit{\&}e5 \textit{\&}xe5 13.\textit{\&}xe5 \textit{\&}e4 14.\textit{\&}xg7 \textit{\&}xc3 15.bxc3 \textit{\&}xg7 16.g4! \textit{\&}e6

17.gxb1 \textit{\&}d7 18.f4 f5 19.h3± Drozdovskij – Degtiarev, Differdange 2008. White will have a small plus forever, with chances on both flanks. A good practical alternative was 12.f3?! to keep the pieces on the board.

12.f3 \textit{\&}xc3 13.bxc3 f5 14.\textit{\&}b1 \textit{\&}a7 15.\textit{\&}d2 \textit{\&}e8 16.\textit{\&}b3±

This was great for White in Halkias – Degtiarev, Hamburg 2005. White can double rooks on the b-file to begin with and later switch the attention to the kingside as well.

6...\textit{\&}f5

This is an active move, but after:

7.f3

The bishop is also exposed.

7...\textit{\&}bd7

7...\textit{\&}g6 allows 8.e4 when 8...dxe4? 9.\textit{\&}xb3 \textit{\&}xd4 10.\textit{\&}f4 is too dangerous and 8...\textit{\&}e6 9.\textit{\&}e3 is simply good for White who will develop quickly and probably castle queenside.

8.g4 \textit{\&}e6

8...\textit{\&}g6? 9.h4 is awful.

9.\textit{\&}d3

Again keeping the pieces on the board and making the e6-bishop look funny.

9...\textit{\&}b8 10.\textit{\&}e3

In his book on the Chebanenko Slav, Bologan proposes 10.\textit{\&}a4 \textit{\&}c8 (10...\textit{\&}bd7 11.\textit{\&}f4) 11.\textit{\&}b6 \textit{\&}a7 12.\textit{\&}d2 \textit{\&}bd7 13.\textit{\&}a5 \textit{\&}c7 14.\textit{\&}d2 \textit{\&}b8 and Black is desperately trying to survive on the back ranks. He continues the analysis with 15.g5 \textit{\&}h5 16.\textit{\&}xe8 \textit{\&}xe8 17.\textit{\&}h3± which indeed looks very convincing.

10...\textit{\&}c8 11.\textit{\&}g2 e6 12.\textit{\&}d2 \textit{\&}e7 13.\textit{\&}c1 \textit{\&}fd7 14.0–0±


7.\textit{\&}b3

This is always disruptive for Black, and most players tend to defend b7 with ...\textit{\&}a7. The rook looks really silly there, but it is a built-in paradox of the a6-Slav that this is mostly a cosmetic impression. Later the rook goes back and joins the battle. In the meantime it is out of play, sure, but we must remember that it actually is the white queen that is forcing the rook to take this awkward position, and the queen is not that great on b3 in the long run either. Quid pro quo. The alternative way to protect the pawn is ...\textit{\&}c8, but that loses control over b6 and is not very flexible.

7...\textit{\&}a7

8.e4!

True to his style Topalov hits hard if he is given the chance. Okay, sometimes the Bulgarian star plays a little too wildly, but here the move is justified. A quieter approach like 8.\textit{\&}f4 \textit{\&}bd7 9.\textit{\&}d3± would give the typical small advantage based on space.

8...\textit{\&}e6
If Black takes the bait with 8...dxe4 then 9.\(\text{\textit{d}c4}\) is strong. After 9...e6 10.\(\text{\textit{xe5}}\) \(\text{\textit{xh5}}\) 11.0-0 White’s play has a nice flow and Black’s pieces are rather badly coordinated – check out the rook on a7 and the knight on h5! 11...\(\text{\textit{f6}}\) (11...\(\text{\textit{xd4}}\)?! 12.\(\text{\textit{c4}}\) is too dangerous.) 12.\(\text{\textit{g5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 13.\(\text{\textit{ad1}}\) 0-0 14.\(\text{\textit{fe1}}\) \(\text{\textit{bd7}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{c4}}\) \(\text{\textit{e8}}\) 16.h3 \(\text{\textit{d5}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{xe7}}\) \(\text{\textit{exe7}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) \(\text{\textit{f7f6}}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{ed6+}}\) Iotov – Tzekov, Sunny Beach 2005. The control over d6 is more significant than over d5.

9.exd5 exd5 10.\(\text{\textit{d}d3}\)

Quick development. In a semi-open position like this the misplaced rook on a7 will be inconvenient for Black for a long time. It does not contribute to the fight for the open e-file, which White easily conquers.

10...\(\text{\textit{bd7}}\) 11.\(\text{\textit{f4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xe5}}\) 12.\(\text{\textit{xe5}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\) 13.0-0 0-0 14.\(\text{\textit{fe1}}\) \(\text{\textit{g6}}\)

Or 14...\(\text{\textit{d7}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{c7}}!\) \(\text{\textit{xc7}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{xe7}}\) \(\text{\textit{d8}}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{ae1}}\) and the e-file gives White the upper hand, Svoboda – Karhanek, Stade Mesto 2004.

15.\(\text{\textit{xe6}}\) \(\text{\textit{hxg6}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{e2}}\)

Preparing to double rooks with a clear advantage. However Black’s response gives new possibilities.

16...\(\text{\textit{g4}}\)

17.\(\text{\textit{b6}}!\)

Using the vulnerable b6-square to penetrate Black’s position.

17...\(\text{\textit{a8}}\)

Voluntarily going to the corner just shows that something has gone wrong. The problem was that heading for the ending with 17...\(\text{\textit{xb6}}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{xb6}}\) \(\text{\textit{aa8}}\) failed to the tactic 19.\(\text{\textit{xc7}}\).

18.\(\text{\textit{c7}}\) \(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{d6}}\) \(\text{\textit{d8}}\) 20.\(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{h6}}\) 21.\(\text{\textit{a5}}\) \(\text{\textit{c8}}\) 22.\(\text{\textit{h3}}\) \(\text{\textit{f5}}\) 23.\(\text{\textit{ae1}}\) \(\text{\textit{d3}}\)

Sokolov is desperately searching for counterplay and, unexpectedly, it is provided by Topalov: after his fine play he fails to reap the harvest.

24.\(\text{\textit{e8}}\)†

Convincing was 24.\(\text{\textit{c7}}\) \(\text{\textit{af8}}\) 25.\(\text{\textit{b6}}\) \(\text{\textit{f5}}\) 26.\(\text{\textit{d7}}\) and White is winning, e.g. 26...\(\text{\textit{aa8}}\) 27.\(\text{\textit{xf8}}\) \(\text{\textit{xf8}}\) 28.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\) \(\text{\textit{b5}}\) 29.\(\text{\textit{xb5}}\) axb5 30.\(\text{\textit{e5}}\) with an exchange more.

24...\(\text{\textit{xe8}}\) 25.\(\text{\textit{xe8}}\)† \(\text{\textit{h7}}\) 26.\(\text{\textit{e5}}\)

This lets the last chance slip away. 26.\(\text{\textit{b6}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) 27.\(\text{\textit{b8}}\) \(\text{\textit{f5}}\) 28.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\) and the rook is trapped, but Black is very active.

26...\(\text{\textit{xe5}}\) 27.\(\text{\textit{dxe5}}\) \(\text{\textit{b1}}\)† 28.\(\text{\textit{h2}}\) \(\text{\textit{e4}}\)

Black holds the draw.
29.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{wc}2 30.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{d}f5 31.\texttt{w}d8 \texttt{de}3\texttt{f} 32.\texttt{g}1 \texttt{wd}1\texttt{f} 33.\texttt{h}2 \texttt{df}1\texttt{f} 34.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{de}3\texttt{f} 35.\texttt{fxe}3 \texttt{we}2\texttt{f} \\
$\frac{1}{2}\text{-}\frac{1}{2}$

	extbf{Conclusion}: After 5...\texttt{g}4 the white knight jumps to e5 with tempo and secures White a firm initiative.

\textbf{The 5...g6 Variation}

\textbf{Game 48}

\textbf{Eljanov – Kamsky}

Russia 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{df}6 4.\texttt{c}3 a6 5.c5 \texttt{g}6

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Black wants to fianchetto his dark-squared bishop and then just castle. This gives White the opportunity to develop his dark-squared bishop to a very nice position reinforcing the control over the important e5-square.

6.h3 \texttt{g}7 7.\texttt{f}4

With the little move h3 thrown in, White will not be bothered by \ldots\texttt{dh}5 by Black, because he then simply withdraws the bishop to h2.

7...0–0 8.e3 \texttt{f}5!!

An interesting fighting idea. The normal – and probably best – move is 8...\texttt{bd}7 which would transpose to the 5...\texttt{bd}7 line as covered in Game 50.

9.\texttt{wb}3

This disturbs Black.

On 9.\texttt{e}2 could follow 9...\texttt{e}4 10.0–0 \texttt{xf}3 11.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{bd}7 and Black will get in \ldots\texttt{e}7–e5 with good counterplay.

9...\texttt{xa}7

On 9...\texttt{wc}8 10.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{e}4 Eljanov suggested the following line in his notes to the game in New in Chess Magazine: 11.\texttt{h}4! \texttt{fd}7 12.\texttt{g}3 e5 13.\texttt{fd}1± Black managed to play \ldots\texttt{e}7–e5, but his pieces stand clumsily and especially the knights are in each other’s way.

10.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{e}4!!

The key move. Kamsky wants to give up the bishop for the white knight. 10...\texttt{e}4 11.0–0 \texttt{d}7 was Mikhalchishin – Lobzhanidze, Groningen 1996, when 12.\texttt{fd}1± looks normal.

11.0–0 \texttt{xf}3 12.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{bd}7 13.\texttt{ad}1

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

A critical position for the evaluation of the \texttt{f}5–e4xf3 idea.
13...\texttt{c8}  
Kamsky refrains from the obvious plan: playing ...e7-e5.

The natural move was 13...\texttt{e8}, but then White can advance first in the centre: 14.e4 dxe4 15.\texttt{x}xe4 e6 16.\texttt{f}e1 \texttt{d}5 17.\texttt{g}3± with more space and the pair of bishops.

14.\texttt{f}e1 e6 15.e4 dxe4 16.\texttt{x}xe4!

It is important to keep the knight. After 16.\texttt{x}xe4 \texttt{x}xe4 17.\texttt{x}xe4 \texttt{f}6 18.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{d}7 Black would be very solid and have the good d5-square for his knight.

16...\texttt{a}5  
Not 16...\texttt{x}xe4 17.\texttt{x}xe4 when there is a big hole on d6.

17.\texttt{f}3

The opening stage is over and White can be satisfied. He has maintained the extra space he took with 5.c5 and in the meantime he has also gained the pair of bishops. Both factors are long-term assets. Here and now, a little manoeuvring game takes place and White’s spatial superiority makes it easier for him to regroup, while it is evident that Black has more difficulties coming up with a plan.

17...\texttt{a}6 18.a3 \texttt{d}8 19.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{e}8 20.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{d}f6 21.\texttt{a}4 \texttt{d}7 22.h4!

The opening of the h-file could be an important achievement for White.

22.\texttt{c}7 23.h5 \texttt{b}5 24.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{c}7 25.hxg6  
A bit hasty: better was 25.\texttt{c}1 \texttt{b}5 26.\texttt{e}3±.

25...\texttt{x}g6 26.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{d}5 27.\texttt{x}d5?!  
Somewhat surprisingly, White gives away the bishop pair, but the knight on d5 was strong and White can still make something out of the d6-outpost.

27...\texttt{x}d5 28.\texttt{h}4  
28.\texttt{c}3 a4 29.\texttt{b}5 \texttt{c}6 30.\texttt{d}6±

28...\texttt{e}8  
On 28...\texttt{e}8 comes 29.\texttt{c}3.

29.\texttt{c}3 b6  
Black finally gets some counterplay.

30.\texttt{e}7 \texttt{e}8 31.\texttt{d}6 bxc5 32.dxc5 \texttt{x}c3?!  
It is very risky to exchange the strong fianchetto bishop that protects the king. Better was 32...\texttt{d}8 33.\texttt{c}1±.

33.bxc3 \texttt{c}6 34.\texttt{d}3! \texttt{x}c5 35.\texttt{h}3
The positional advantage has led to a direct attack.

35...e5
Only move.

35...\textit{xd6 36.\textit{e5 or 35...\textit{e4 36.\textit{e5 f6 37.\textit{g4 g7 38.\textit{xe4 dxe4 39.\textit{xf6+ xxf6 40.\textit{f4+ g7 41.\textit{e5 and Black is mated.}}}}}}}}

36.\textit{xc5 xxc5 37.\textit{e3 f6 37...f5 38.\textit{h6 f7 39.\textit{g3 e6 40.\textit{b1 and Black cannot defend against the inclusion of the second rook into the attack: 40...\textit{c7 41.b8! xb8 42.h7+ e8 43.h8+ d7 44.xb8 and wins.}}}}}}

Finally, 37...c6 38.h6 f6 39.h7+ f8 40.h8+ xh8 41.xh8+ e7 42.xe5+ wins a whole rook.

38.\textit{h6 f7}
Or 38...e7 39.xg6+ g7 40.h5.

39.h7+ e6 40.xg6 e4
Not 40...g8 41.xe5+! xe5 42.e3+ d6 43.xf6+ c7 44.e7+ winning.

41.h5 h8 42.f5 f8

\textbf{Game 49}

Schandorff – Buhmann

\textbf{Germany 2006}

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.d3 f3 f6 4.e3 a6 5.c5 f5

The most solid way. Black solves the problem with the light-squared bishop which often has an insecure future on c8, and always risks being locked out of the game. Furthermore 5...f5 avoids immediate infighting, so both
sides can finish their development without too much concern. The extra space guarantees White a small plus in the ensuing middlegame but Black’s structure is very solid and he has good chances to hold the balance.

6.\( \text{Qf4} \)

Natural development, but 6.\( \text{Qb3} \) to disturb Black on the queenside is also possible.

6...\( \text{Qbd7} \) 7.e3 e6

The great a6-Slav connoisseur Gata Kamsky has been experimenting with 7...g6 8.h3 \( \text{Qg7} \) 9.\( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qe4} \)? with the point that 10.\( \text{Qh4} \) e5! gives good counterplay.

For example: 11.dxe5 \( \text{Qh5} \) 12.\( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qxf3} \) 13.\( \text{Qxf3} \) \( \text{Qxf4} \) 14.\( \text{Qxf4} \) \( \text{Qxc5} \) = Alekseev – Kamsky, Moscow 2007.

Or: 11.\( \text{Qg3} \) \( \text{Qxd4} \) 12.\( \text{Qxd4} \) 0–0 13.\( \text{Qf3} \) \( \text{Qf5} \) 14.\( \text{Qxf5} \) \text{gx}f5 15.\( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qh5} \) 16.\( \text{Qf2} \) \text{f4} 17.0–0–0 \( \text{Qxe8} \) 18.\( \text{Qhe1} \) \( \text{Qf8} \) 19.\( \text{Qd3} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) And Black seemed okay in Mamedyarov – Kamsky, Moscow 2007.

Instead of 9.\( \text{Qe2} \), White should consider the sharp 9.g4! when White was somewhat better after 9...\( \text{Qe4} \) 10.\( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qxf3} \) 11.\( \text{Qxf3} \) 0–0 12.0–0 \( \text{Qe8} \) 13.e4 dxe4 14.\( \text{Qxe4} \) \( \text{Qc7} \) 15.\( \text{Qg2} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) 16.\( \text{Qe3} \) in Rusev – Diaz Nunez, Spain 2008.

In his new book about the Chebanenko Slav, Bologan proposes:

7...\( \text{Qh5} \)

Play can continue:

8.\( \text{Qe5} \) f6

8...\( \text{Qxe5} \) gives White easy play: 9.\( \text{Qxe5} \) \( \text{Qf6} \) 10.\( \text{Qd3} \) \( \text{Qxd3} \) 11.\( \text{Qxd3} \) with a pleasant space advantage.

More stubborn is 8...\( \text{Qhf6} \) but again the simple 9.\( \text{Qd3} \) \( \text{Qxd3} \) 10.\( \text{Qxd3} \) gives White a plus.

9.\( \text{Qg3} \) e5 10.\( \text{Qh4!} \) \( \text{Qg6} \)

Not 10...\( \text{Qxg3} \) 11.\( \text{Qxg3} \) \( \text{Qe6} \) 12.\( \text{Qg6} \) \( \text{Qg8} \) 13.\( \text{Qxh7} \).

11.\( \text{Qb3} \)

Bologan only analyses 11.\( \text{Qxg6} \) \( \text{hxg6} \) 12.\( \text{Qc2} \) \( \text{Qh6} \) 13.\( \text{Qd3} \) e4 14.\( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qxg3} \) 15.\( \text{f} \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c7} \) which is absolutely fine for Black.

11...\( \text{Qc7} \) 12.0–0–0 \( \text{Qf7} \) 13.\( \text{Qe2} \) \( \text{Qb8} \) 14.\( \text{Qc2} \) \( \text{b6} \) 15.cxb6 \( \text{Qxb6} \) 16.\( \text{Qg4} \)

White set up some annoying threats in Pappier – Riedener, corr. 2006.

8.\( \text{Qe2} \)

The most precise move order is 8.\( \text{Qd2} \) \( \text{Qe7} \) 9.\( \text{Qe2} \) which would transpose to the game.

8...\( \text{Qe7} \)

Because here Black had the extra option 8...\( \text{Qe4} \), which reduces the pressure by exchanging a knight.

9.\( \text{Qd2}! \)

A promising way to regroup. It prevents the aforementioned ...\( \text{Qe4} \) idea and opens the way for a pawn storm on the kingside if Black should be so naive as to castle without taking precautions. Later White will probably expand on the queenside with b2-b4 and a2-a4, the knight can go to b3 and from there maybe even to a5, attacking the soft spot in Black’s camp – b7.
9...\textit{g}6

Let's see what happens if Black castles into the storm:
9...0–0 10.g4! \textit{g}6 11.h4

With a strong initiative.
11...h6 12.g5 hxg5 13.hxg5 \textit{h}7 14.\textit{h}5 \textit{x}g5

Or 14...\textit{f}5 15.\textit{g}4 \textit{g}6 16.\textit{b}3 \textit{a}7 17.0–0–0 \textit{x}g5 18.\textit{d}g1 with good play for the pawn on the open g- and h-files. The white queen can come back via \textit{d}1 and join the other forces.
15.\textit{x}g6 fxg6 16.\textit{g}4 \textit{f}5 17.\textit{x}g5 \textit{x}g5 18.f4 \textit{f}6 19.\textit{g}2 \textit{h}6 20.\textit{x}g6

With an overwhelming position, Kopasov – Nikologorsky, St Petersburg 2006.

Also popular is 9...h6 10.0–0 0–0 11.b4 with play similar to the main game.

10.0–0

White could also keep the tension for another move with:

10.b4

When Black has to worry if it is safe to castle or if it is still answered by g2–g4. Here is a typical example of the resulting middlegame from my own practice:

10...h6 11.0–0 0–0 12.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}8 13.\textit{b}3 \textit{c}7 14.a4 \textit{h}4 15.\textit{x}h4 \textit{x}h4 16.f4

Preventing ...\textit{c}5 and keeping the space advantage.

16.\textit{e}7 17.\textit{d}3 \textit{xd}3 18.\textit{xd}3 \textit{f}6 19.\textit{d}2 \textit{fb}8 20.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}8 21.\textit{ab}1 \textit{h}7 22.e4! dxe4 23.\textit{xe}4 \textit{e}7 24.\textit{e}5 f5 25.\textit{d}6+ \textit{f}6 26.\textit{be}1 \textit{cd}5 27.\textit{g}6 \textit{d}7 28.\textit{e}2

Winning material.

28...\textit{e}8 29.\textit{e}5 \textit{c}7 30.\textit{exe}8 \textit{exe}8 31.\textit{b}2 \textit{ed}8 32.b5 \textit{axb}5 33.\textit{xb}5 \textit{e}4 34.\textit{f}3 \textit{h}7 35.g3 \textit{e}8 36.bxc6 bxc6 37.\textit{b}3 \textit{d}8 38.\textit{a}1 \textit{dc}3 39.\textit{b}4 \textit{d}5 40.\textit{a}7 \textit{d}8 41.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}2† 42.\textit{g}2 1–0


10...0–0 11.\textit{c}1

A slightly unusual move. Of course I knew that the standard move is 11.b4, when Black answers 11...\textit{w}8, but by putting my rook on c1, maybe Black would have second thoughts about placing his queen on the same file. At least it gave him something to think about and, with hindsight, he lacked this time for the crucial moves before the time control at move 40. Anyway, the position is closed and there is plenty of time to regroup and manoeuvre. But let's see the more direct 11.b4 as well.

11.b4 \textit{c}8

11...\textit{e}8 could be an improvement.

12.a4 b6 13.\textit{xb}6

13.a5! b5 14.g4?! was played in a rapid game between Mamedyarov – Buhmann, Pardubice 2008. With the queenside closed, White expands on the kingside. This idea looks very promising.

13...\textit{xb}6 14.a5 \textit{bd}7 15.\textit{wa}4 \textit{wb}7 16.\textit{a}2 \textit{fc}8 17.\textit{fc}1 \textit{h}5


11...\textit{e}8 12.\textit{g}3 \textit{c}8 13.b4 \textit{d}8

A standard reaction. Black plans \textit{e}7–d8–c7 to exchange White's powerful bishop on g3.
14.\textipa{\textd{b}3}

Piket once played 14.f4 to prevent Black’s intended bishop exchange, but his own bishop on g3 looked rather artificial. 14...b6 15.cb6 \textipa{\textd{x}b6} 16.\textipa{\textd{a}4} \textipa{\textb{b}7} 17.\textipa{\textb{b}3} \textipa{\textd{d}8} 18.\textipa{\textf{c}3} \textipa{\texte{c}7} 19.\textipa{\textc{5}} \textipa{\textxc{5}} 20.bxc5 \textipa{\textd{d}7}= Piket–I. Sokolov, Amsterdam 2000. Black has the freeing move ...\textipa{\textd{e}4} whenever he likes.

More natural is 14.a4 but with 14...e5 15.b5 axb5 16.axb5 exd4 17.exd4 \textipa{\textc{7}} Black solved most of his problems in the blitz game Grischuk – Movsesian, Moscow 2008.

14...\textipa{\textc{7}} 15.\textipa{\textxc{7}} \textipa{\textxc{7}} 16.f3?!

Another practical decision, just like 11.\textipa{\textc{1}}. I allow Black to play ...e6–e5 because it leads to complicated play with chances for both sides. The standard move is 16.f4 and after 16...\textipa{\texte{4}} the position is about equal, but it would have been much more difficult for me to play for a win.

16.e5 17.\textipa{\textd{2}} h6 18.\textipa{\textf{e}1} \textipa{\texte{7}} 19.a4 \textipa{\textf{8}}
20.b5 axb5 21.axb5 \textipa{\texta{e}8} 22.b6!

Fixing the b7-pawn, which can later be attacked by \textipa{\texta{7}} and \textipa{\textc{5}}.

22...\textipa{\textc{8}} 23.\textipa{\texta{1}} \textipa{\textf{5}} 24.\textipa{\texta{5}} \textipa{\textg{5}} 25.\textipa{\texted{1}}
\textipa{\texte{6}} 26.\textipa{\textf{1}} h5

Black has his trumps on the kingside. The position is highly unclear and both players were drifting into time trouble.

27.\textipa{\texte{2}} h4 28.\textipa{\textb{3}} \textipa{\texth{5}}?!

Misplacing the bishop. Black had a good chance with 28...h3! when the obvious 29.g3 runs into the spectacular 29...\textipa{\textc{2}}! with the nasty point 30.\textipa{\textxc{2}} \textipa{\textxc{3}}† 31.\textipa{\texth{1}} \textipa{\textxf{3}}† 32.\textipa{\textg{1}} \textipa{\textg{4}} winning.

29.\textipa{\textd{e}5} \textipa{\textxc{5}} 30.\textipa{\texted{4}} \textipa{\textf{8}}?!

Black is losing track, but it was not so easy anymore. A model variation is 30...\textipa{\textxd{4}} 31.\textipa{\textxd{4}} \textipa{\textxc{3}}† 32.\textipa{\textxe{3}} \textipa{\textxe{3}} 33.\textipa{\textf{5}} \textipa{\texte{5}}
34.\textipa{\textd{6}} \textipa{\textb{8}} 35.\textipa{\texta{7}} \textipa{\texte{7}} 36.\textipa{\texta{6}}! where the importance of fixing b7 is highlighted.

31.\textipa{\texte{1}} \textipa{\textg{5}} 32.f4 \textipa{\textg{6}} 33.\textipa{\textd{3}} \textipa{\texte{4}} 34.\textipa{\textxe{4}}
\textipa{\textxe{4}}

35.\textipa{\textc{2}}!

Trapping Black’s queen and forcing a good ending where the weakness on b7 really can be felt.

35...\textipa{\textxc{2}} 36.\textipa{\textxc{2}} \textipa{\textg{6}} 37.\textipa{\texted{4}} \textipa{\textd{7}}

Or 37...\textipa{\textxe{3}} 38.\textipa{\textxe{3}} \textipa{\textxe{3}} 39.\textipa{\texta{7}} \textipa{\texte{7}}
40.\textipa{\textxc{6}}.

38.\textipa{\texta{7}} \textipa{\textf{6}} 39.f5 \textipa{\texth{5}} 40.\textipa{\texta{5}} \textipa{\textxe{3}}
41...\textbf{\textit{a6}} 42.\textbf{\textit{xb7 \textit{e1}}}
43.\textbf{\textit{f2 \textit{d1}}}
44.\textbf{\textit{f3}}

With control.

Not so convincing was 44.\textbf{\textit{xc6 \textit{g4}}}
45.\textbf{\textit{xf3 \textit{e5}}}

44...\textbf{\textit{e4}} 45.\textbf{\textit{e3 \textit{h3}}}
46.\textbf{\textit{g4! \textit{xc4}}}
47.\textbf{\textit{d6 \textit{xb3}}}
48.\textbf{\textit{b7 \textit{b1}}}
49.\textbf{\textit{xa8 \textit{h7}}}
50.\textbf{\textit{b8=\textit{w}}}
\textbf{\textit{xb8}}
51.\textbf{\textit{xb8 \textit{g5}}}
52.\textbf{\textit{xf7 \textit{xf7}}}
53.\textbf{\textit{xf3}}

White is winning: the rook is superior to the knight which lacks a secure outpost.

53...\textbf{\textit{e5}}
54.\textbf{\textit{g3 \textit{h6}}}
55.\textbf{\textit{xe8 \textit{d3}}}
56.\textbf{\textit{h4 \textit{g5}}}
57.\textbf{\textit{xc5 \textit{xc5}}}
58.\textbf{\textit{xe8 \textit{e4}}}
59.\textbf{\textit{xc6 \textit{h5}}}
60.\textbf{\textit{g6 \textit{g4}}}
61.\textbf{\textit{g2 \textit{d4}}}
62.\textbf{\textit{e6 \textit{g5}}}
63.\textbf{\textit{d6 \textit{f3}}}
64.\textbf{\textit{g3 \textit{g5}}}
65.\textbf{\textit{f6 \textit{g6}}}
66.\textbf{\textit{g4 \textit{hxh2}}}
67.\textbf{\textit{f4}}
1–0

**Conclusion:** 5...\textbf{\textit{xf5}} is a very solid way to play for Black: with the clever manoeuvre \textbf{\textit{e7-d8-c7}} Black neutralizes most of the pressure. Still White can use his extra space on the queenside to push for the point.

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### The 5...\textbf{\textit{bd7}} Variation

**Game 50**

**Shirov – Bologan**

Germany 1993

1.\textbf{\textit{d4 \textit{d5}}}
2.\textbf{\textit{c4 \textit{c6}}}
3.\textbf{\textit{c3 \textit{f6}}}
4.\textbf{\textit{f3 \textit{a6}}}
5.\textbf{\textit{c5 \textit{bd7}}}

The mainline. Black fights for the important e5-square. Generally if he can achieve the break ...e7–e5 then he is happy.

6.\textbf{\textit{f4 \textit{g6}}}

The classical approach. These days it has almost completely been replaced by 6...\textbf{\textit{h5}} which we will examine in the next game.

7.\textbf{\textit{h3}}

Giving the bishop a retreat on h2.

7...\textbf{\textit{g7 \textit{e3}}}
8.\textbf{\textit{0–0}}

The starting position of this old variation. Many roads leads to Rome, and in this particular game Bologan actually chose the move order 5...\textbf{\textit{g6}} 6.\textbf{\textit{f4 \textit{g7}}}
7.\textbf{\textit{h3}} 0–0 8.\textbf{\textit{e3 \textit{bd7}}} as discussed earlier in Game 48. In the beginning of the history of the a6-Slav these ...g6-setups were quite common, but they are rather passive and lately attention has switched to more direct and forcing lines. However we could be witnessing a comeback of ...g6 because the position is still a hard nut to crack for White, at least theoretically. In practical play, though, he scores very well. The distinct space advantage and the good bishop on f4 gives at least a slight positional plus.

9.\textbf{\textit{e2 \textit{e8}}}

This deep manoeuvre shows the potential in Black's position. He wants to continue ...\textbf{\textit{c7}} and ...\textbf{\textit{e8}} followed by the desired thrust ...e7–e5. Other moves are somewhat inferior, but let's check the main alternatives.

9...\textbf{\textit{e4}}
10.\textbf{\textit{0–0 \textit{e5}}}

10...\textbf{\textit{f5}} secures the knight. A good way to play for White was shown in the following game:
11.\text{\texttt{Ze}}c1 \text{\texttt{Ze}}e8 12.\text{\texttt{Da}}a4 e5 13.\text{\texttt{Dx}}e5 \text{\texttt{Wc}}7 14.\text{\texttt{Bx}}e5 15.\text{\texttt{Db}}b6 \text{\texttt{Sb}}8 16.a4 h6 17.b5 axb5 18.axb5 \text{\texttt{Dg}}5 19.\text{\texttt{Dd}}4\mp With strong pressure in Mikhailovski – Roussel, Las Vegas 2006.
11.\text{\texttt{Dx}}e5 \text{\texttt{Dxc}}3 12.\text{\texttt{Bxc}}3 \text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 13.\text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 \text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 14.\text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 \text{\texttt{Ze}}e8 15.\text{\texttt{Wd}}d4 \text{\texttt{Wf}}7 16.f4 f6 17.\text{\texttt{Exf}}f6 \text{\texttt{Wx}}e3\dagger 18.\text{\texttt{Zf}}2 \text{\texttt{Wxd}}4 19.\text{\texttt{Cxd}}4 \text{\texttt{Wf}}8 20.g4 \text{\texttt{Dxf}}6 21.\text{\texttt{Dbl}}\mp

With a better ending for White, Bareev – Burmakin, Elista 1995. Huebner suggests 21.\text{\texttt{Dd}}3 \text{\texttt{Ze}}6 22.\text{\texttt{Ff}}3, restraining Black, as even better in his ChessBase analysis.

9...b6 10.cxb6 \text{\texttt{Wxb}}6 11.\text{\texttt{Cc}}2 c5 12.0–0 cxd4 13.exd4 \text{\texttt{Dd}}7 14.\text{\texttt{Dc}}4 \text{\texttt{Da}}7 15.b4\mp Movsziszian – Foisor, Lorca 2001.

9...\text{\texttt{Ee}}8 10.0–0 \text{\texttt{Df}}6 11.b4 \text{\texttt{Dd}}6\texttt{d7}

This is another way to get in ...e7–e5.
12.\text{\texttt{Wd}}3 e5 13.\text{\texttt{Dx}}e5 \text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 14.\text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 \text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 15.\text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 a5

Or 15...\text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 16.e4 with an initiative.
16.a3 \text{\texttt{Wc}}7 17.f4 \text{\texttt{Dd}}8
17...\text{\texttt{Ef}}6 18.e4\mp
18.\text{\texttt{Dad}}1
18.\text{\texttt{Dd}}3\mp
18...axb4 19.axb4 \text{\texttt{Wh}}4 20.\text{\texttt{Df}}3 \text{\texttt{Ce}}6 21.\text{\texttt{Da}}1

White kept the extra pawn in Izeta – Burmakin, Cappelle la Grande 1998.

10.0–0 \text{\texttt{Dc}}7

11.\text{\texttt{Bb}}4

The normal move, but a brand-new try was 11.\text{\texttt{Ze}}e1?! \text{\texttt{Ze}}e8 12.e4 \text{\texttt{Dxe}}4 13.\text{\texttt{Dxe}}4 \text{\texttt{Dd}}5 14.\text{\texttt{Dh}}2 which looks quite interesting. After 14...b6 15.\text{\texttt{Dc}}4! \text{\texttt{Db}}7 16.\text{\texttt{Dd}}2 h6, Rusev – Arnould, Athens 2008, White could have secured his big advantage with 17.\text{\texttt{Dac}}1. 14...\text{\texttt{Dd}}6 must be better, but even here White seems on top.

The sophisticated 11.\text{\texttt{Dc}}4 \text{\texttt{Ze}}e8 12.\text{\texttt{Dh}}2 should be met by the standard thrust 12...e5 when 13.\text{\texttt{Dxb}}6 \text{\texttt{Dxb}}6 14.\text{\texttt{Cxb}}6 \text{\texttt{Dc}}6 15.\text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 \text{\texttt{Dxb}}6 16.\text{\texttt{Dxg}}7 \text{\texttt{Dxg}}7 17.\text{\texttt{Dd}}2 \text{\texttt{Df}}5 18.b4 \text{\texttt{Dd}}6 19.\text{\texttt{Cc}}3 \text{\texttt{Df}}5 was okay for Black in Eljanov – Dovzick, Simferopol 2003.

11...\text{\texttt{Ee}}8

12.\text{\texttt{Wd}}2

This leads to a slightly better position, but one that Black should be able to hold.

There is an alternative to stir up some more complications:
12.\text{\texttt{Dg}}5?!

Pinning the e-pawn.
12...a5
12...\text{\texttt{Ef}}6 13.\text{\texttt{Dh}}4 e5 14.\text{\texttt{Dxe}}5 g5 15.\text{\texttt{Dg}}3 fxe5 16.e4! d4 17.\text{\texttt{Cc}}4\dagger \text{\texttt{Dh}}8 18.\text{\texttt{Dd}}4 \text{\texttt{De}}6 19.\text{\texttt{Dxe}}6 \text{\texttt{Dxe}}6 20.\text{\texttt{Dd}}2 \text{\texttt{Df}}6 21.\text{\texttt{Db}}6 \text{\texttt{Db}}8 22.\text{\texttt{Ee}}1 \text{\texttt{Wc}}8 23.\text{\texttt{Dc}}4\mp This looks to me
like a horrible King’s Indian, Franic – Samojojska, Makarska Tucepi 1995.
13.a3 b6 14.cxb6 axb6 15.Wb3 a6
   Nicely solving the problem with the bishop.
16.Wxa6 axa6=
   with an edge.

12...e5 13.Wxe5 Wxe5 14.Wxe5 Wxe5
15.dxe5 a5
   15...Wxe5 16.e4 a5 will transpose.

16.a3
   The automatic answer. Instead 16.Wa4 axb4
   17.Wb6 Wb8 18.f4 f6 gives Black excellent
   counterplay.

16...Wxe5 17.e4 axb4
   17...Wf6!? 18.f4 Wc8 19.e5 Wh4 P. Horvath
   – Burmakin, Balaguer 2005, was an interesting
   attempt by the great a6-Slav expert Vladimir
   Burmakin. Black seems fine. One of his
   possibilities is ...Wh3 and if White takes back
   there is a perpetual check.

18.axb4 Wxa1 19.Wxa1 Wf6 20.Wd1
   Instead 20.exd5 Wxd5!= was Gelfand –

20...dxe4 21.Wd8† Wxd8 22.Wxd8† Wxe8
23.Wxe8† Wxe8 24.Wxe4
   A fairly simple ending has been reached. With
   more space and good bishop vs. bad, White
   has some winning chances but objectively it
   should just be a draw.

24.We6 25.f4 Wc7 26.Wc3 Wd5?
   A little too cooperative, but easy to
   understand: Bologan believes that the bishop
   ending is a dead draw. But a bad bishop issue
   is always tricky. In a later game Black played
   26...Wh7 27.Wf2 h6 28.We3 f5 and eventually

27.Wxd5 Wxd5 28.Wf2 f6 29.Wg4 f5 30.We2
   Wf7 31.g3 We6 32.Wc3 Wg2 33.Wc4† Wd5
   34.Wf1 h6 35.h4 h5 36.Wd4

36.Wh1 37.b5! cxb5 38.Wxb5 Wc6 39.Wc4†
   Wh6?
   39...Wc7 40.Wc5 is unpleasant, but it is not
   easy to make progress for White because the
   pawn ending 40...Wf3 41.Wd5 Wxd5 42.Wxd5
   Wd7 is just a draw: 43.Wd4 Wd8 44.Wc4 Wc8
   45.Wb5 Wc7

40.Wd5!
   Now it just wins.

40...Wxd5
   There is no salvation in 40...We7 41.Wc6
   bxc6 42.Wc5.

41.Wxd5 Wc7 42.Wc5 Wd7 43.Wf6 Wc6
44.Wxg6 Wxc5 45.Wxf5 b5 46.We6 b4
47.f5 b3 48.f6 b2 49.f7 b1=Q 50.f8=Q†
   Wc4 51.Wf4† Wc3 52.Wc5† Wd2 53.Wxh5
   Wb6† 54.Wf7 Wc7† 55.Wg6 Wc8 56.Wf3
   Wd6† 57.Wf5 Wd7† 58.Wf4 Wd6† 59.Wg4
   Wc6† 60.Wf5 Wc8† 61.Wh3
1–0

Conclusion: 5...Wbd7 followed by ...g6 is a
   solid set-up for Black, but again White's extra
   space should count for something.
However the last word may not have been said yet. Bologan proposes the new move 14.\textit{g}2!? to be able to play h2-h3 and thereby prevent the annoying ...\textit{g}4: 14...f6 15.h3! \textit{e}6 16.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}7 17.\textit{h}1 White is better, so perhaps the 7.e3 variation will have another boost of popularity. 14...f6 15.\textit{ae}1 \textit{g}4 16.\textit{h}4 e5 17.fxe5 fxe5 18.dxe5 \textit{xe}5 Black was already better in Huebner – Schandorff, Germany 2003.

Also popular is saving the bishop: 7.\textit{d}2 \textit{hf}6 8.\textit{c}2
Here 8.\textit{c}1 g6 9.h3 \textit{c}7 10.g3, with the idea \textit{f}4, gives White a small advantage. 8...\textit{c}7 9.e4
A very direct way of playing, but maybe White is not strong enough to force matters. 9...\textit{xe}4 10.\textit{xe}4 dxe4 11.\textit{xe}4 \textit{f}6 12.\textit{c}2 \textit{e}6 13.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}5 14.0-0 \textit{xf}3 15.\textit{xf}3 \textit{e}6 Black was extremely solid in Krasenkow – Grabarczyk, Poland 2005.

Finally the finesse 7.\textit{g}5 h6 8.\textit{d}2 was recently met by 8...\textit{hf}6 9.\textit{c}2 \textit{c}7 10.e4 e5!? and the complications seemed okay for Black: 11.exd5 cxd5 12.b4 \textit{c}7 13.g3 0-0 14.\textit{g}2 a5 White could not keep his structure intact in Navara – Bacrot, Baku 2008.

With 7.\textit{d}2 White goes for quick development and active play, not minding giving up the pair of bishops.

7...\textit{b}6
7...\textit{xf}4 8.\textit{xf}4 e6 9.e4 b6 will transpose to the main game.

8.e4
Active play is the theme.

8...\textit{xf}4
Bacrot came up with:
8...bxc5!? 9.exd5 cxd4 10.\textit{W}xd4 c5! 11.\textit{W}d2 \textit{Q}xf4 12.\textit{W}xf4 g6

And had some kind of Benoni-structure. After:
13.\textit{Q}e5 \textit{Q}xe5 14.\textit{Q}xe5 \textit{Q}g8! 15.\textit{Q}c4 \textit{Q}g7
16.\textit{Q}e2 \textit{Q}d4 17.0-0 \textit{Q}f8

He had lost the right to castle, but the strong dark-squared bishop gave him fine play, Mamedyarov – Bacrot, Baku 2008.

Instead of 13.\textit{Q}e5, White could try the sharp:
13.d6!? exd6 14.0-0-0

With great compensation, for instance:
14...\textit{Q}b7 15.\textit{Q}c4 \textit{Q}f6 16.\textit{Q}he1+ \textit{Q}d8 17.\textit{Q}xf6+ \textit{Q}xf6 18.\textit{Q}e5 \textit{Q}c7 19.\textit{Q}xf7 \textit{Q}g8 20.\textit{Q}e6 \textit{Q}e8
21.\textit{Q}d5+ \textit{Q}xd5 22.\textit{Q}xd5±

Probably Black should answer 13.d6 with the cool 13...e6!, when the d6-pawn in the middle of his position could be a nuisance but could also turn out to be a weakness. Black’s bishop will again be strong on g7 and his rook can use the open b-file.

9.\textit{Q}xf4 e6 10.exd5 exd5

An inaccuracy is 10...exd5 because of 11.c6! \textit{Q}f6 12.\textit{Q}d3 \textit{Q}d6 13.\textit{Q}e5 \textit{W}c7 14.0-0 0-0
15.\textit{Q}e1 and White keeps the pawn on c6:
15...b5 16.\textit{Q}c2 b4 17.\textit{Q}a4 a5 18.\textit{Q}c5 \textit{Q}xc5
19.\textit{Q}xc5 \textit{Q}a6 20.\textit{Q}xa6 \textit{Q}xa6 Czakon – Aliavin, Rewal 2007, and now 21.f3+ takes away e4 from the black knight, when the strong passed pawn ties Black down and gives White a big long-term advantage.

11.b4 \textit{Q}e7 12.\textit{Q}d3 0-0 13.0-0 a5 14.a3 g6

Or 14...\textit{Q}f6 15.\textit{Q}d6 \textit{Q}b8 16.\textit{W}xd8 \textit{W}xd8
17.cxb6 \textit{Q}xb6 18.b5 \textit{Q}g4 19.\textit{Q}a4 \textit{Q}d8 20.\textit{Q}e5 cxb5 Prohaszka – Bui Vinh, Budapest 2008, when 21.\textit{Q}xb5 \textit{Q}f5 22.g4 \textit{Q}e6 23.\textit{Q}e5 would give White strong pressure.

15.\textit{Q}fe1

Krasenkow has also played more directly:
15.h4 \textit{Q}b7 16.h5 \textit{Q}f6 17.cxb6 axb4 18.axb4 \textit{Q}xb6 19.\textit{Q}xa8 \textit{Q}xa8 20.\textit{Q}a4 \textit{Q}c7 21.\textit{Q}c5 \textit{Q}c8 22.\textit{Q}a1± Krasenkow – Movsesian, Ostrava 2007.

15...\textit{Q}b7

16.h4!

White is very active with the queen on f4 and he starts active operations on the kingside; Black lacks counterplay and has to sit tight.

16...\textit{Q}e8 17.h5 \textit{Q}b8 18.\textit{W}d2 axb4 19.axb4 \textit{Q}xa1 20.\textit{Q}xax1 \textit{Q}f6 21.\textit{Q}a4 \textit{Q}c7?!

With 21...bxc5 22.bxc5 \textit{Q}f8 Black would have had good chances to defend.

22.cxb6 \textit{Q}xb6 23.\textit{Q}xb6 \textit{Q}xb6 24.\textit{Q}f4

Back to this nice square.

24.\textit{Q}d8?!

Removing a key defender. Better is 24...\textit{Q}g7!
25. \( \text{Re}5 \) \( \text{Cc}7 \) 26. \( \text{Ra}7 \) f6

Conclusion: With 5... \( \text{Qbd}7 \) 6. \( \text{Qf}4 \) \( \text{Qh}5 \) Black seeks active counterplay at once. However, the little explored move 7. \( \text{Wd}2 \) sets him completely new problems and gives White the initiative. The last word is Bacrot’s Benoni-like approach, which should be studied carefully. Otherwise White could always return to 7.e3 or 7. \( \text{Qd}2 \). Both seem to lead to a safe edge.

Chapter Conclusion: The a6-Slav is a good fighting opening with many hidden layers. The logical 5.c5 leads to complicated play but is at the same time a rather simple antidote. It secures more space and makes White’s position more pleasant in all variations.

27. h\text{Xg}6!
This strong knight sacrifice blows Black away.

27...f\text{Xe}5 28. g\text{Xh}7\uparrow \text{Qh}8 29. d\text{Xe}5 \text{Wg}7 30. \text{Qa}6!
The point. White immediately wins material back.

30...f\text{Xf}8 31. \text{We}3 d4
31...f\text{f}7 32. e6 \text{We}7 33. \text{Xxb}7 \text{Xxb}7 34. \text{Ra}8 \text{Wf}6 35. e7 \text{Wxe}7 36. \text{Wxe}7 \text{Wxe}7 37. \text{Xxd}8\uparrow \text{Qxh}7 38. \text{Cc}8 with a won rook ending.

32. \text{We}4 \text{Wf}7
Or 32...\text{Cc}7 33. \text{Xxb}7 \text{Wxe}5 34. \text{Wxe}5\uparrow \text{Qxe}5 35. \text{d}3 and White holds onto the h7-pawn with an easy win.

33. \text{Wxd}4 \text{Wa}2 34. e6\uparrow \text{Qf}6 35. e7
1–0
Chapter 6

The Tarrasch

*You don’t need a weatherman  
To know which way the wind blows*  
– Bob Dylan

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\(\text{c3}\) c5

Positional Play  
Theory  
The 9...c4 Variation  
The 9...\(\text{c6}\)e6 Variation  
The 9...\(\text{cxd4}\) Variation  

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1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ∆c3 c5

The Tarrasch. Black plays actively from the beginning and does not mind getting an isolated queen's pawn, as he counts on quick development as dynamic compensation.

The problem with such an approach is that perhaps the activity and dynamic features will come to a halt and then all that is left is a weakness on d5 that just won't go away.

4. cxd5 exd5

The romantic 4...cxd4 is known as the Von Hennig-Schara Gambit. It has nothing to do with a traditional Tarrasch and is covered in the last chapter in the book, where strange gambits and other antiquities are stored.

5. ∆f3 ∆c6 6. g3

The most natural development: from g2 the bishop will exert pressure on Black's vulnerable d5-pawn.

6... ∆f6 7. g2 ∆e7

Not much need be said – both sides complete development.

8. 0–0 0–0 9. ∆g5

By threatening the knight on f6, a defender of the d5-pawn, White renews his pressure against the soft spot in Black's camp. This is more or less the starting position of the Tarrasch. It has been heavily debated for many years without reaching a final verdict. The opening had its peak of popularity in the 80s when a young Garry Kasparov used it on his way to the World Championship. However, as we will soon see, it did not stand the test of Anatoly Karpov's persistent positional play in their first match. As a result, Kasparov abandoned the Tarrasch and the feeling that White is somewhat better lingered on. The opening is still a frequent guest in modern tournament play though, so it pays to have at least some idea of how to handle it. To show us, I have naturally chosen Karpov as our role model.

Positional Play

Anatoly Karpov was a master of maintaining and increasing small advantages. This is an integrated part of great positional play in general and of the following game in particular. The game also showcases the characteristic Tarrasch elements: the key to understanding the opening is of course the isolated d-pawn. From White’s point of view this game nicely illustrates that the d-pawn is a structural
deficiency in Black’s position that can influence the course of play from beginning to end.

Game 52

Karpov – Kasparov

Moscow (9) 1984

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗f3 ♘c6 6.g3 ♘f6 7.g2 ♘e7 8.0–0 0–0 9.♗g5 cxd4 10.♖xd4 h6 11.♗e3 ♙e8

15.♖d4!

Karpov is the first to deviate. He intensifies the pressure without premature exchanges.

Two games earlier in the match he played the natural:
15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 16.♗ad1

But after:
16...♗e8

Black had adequate counterplay.
17.h3 ♖h5 18.♖xd5

Karpov at least takes a pawn, but parting with the light-squared bishop that should be comforting the king is not without risk.
18...♕g6 19.♕c1 ♖xd5

Or 19...♗c4 and Black seems to hold the balance: 20.♖d2 ♖xd5 21.♖xd5 ♖xd5 22.♗xd5 ♖c4 23.♖c5 ♕e5 24.♗xc4 ♖xc5 With activity for the pawn, for instance 25.♗d3 ♕e6 hitting a2 and h3.
20.♖xd5 ♖c4 21.♗d4 ♖c7 22.b3 ♔b6 23.♖e5 ♖d7 24.♖e3 ♖f6 25.♖c5 ♖xc5 26.♖xc5 ♔xh3 27.♖d1

White keeps some initiative, but Black should hold. Kasparov chooses to weaken his position:
27...♖h5?! 28.♖d4! ♖d7 29.♗d6 ♕f7 30.♖d5 ♖xd5 31.♖xd5

White is still only marginally better, but in severe time trouble, Black blunders:
31...a6 32.♖f4 ♕f8 33.♖d3 ♕g4 34.f3 ♕g6

12.♗b3

An interesting move that was specially prepared by Karpov for the match. White puts d5 under pressure and forces Black to misplace his knight to kick the annoying queen back. For our repertoire I propose the even more aggressive queen sortie 12.♕a4, hitting the knight on c6. There will be much more said below when we get to the theory.

12...♕a5 13.♕c2 ♕g4 14.♗f5! ♕c8

Pinning the knight. Absolutely terrible was 14...♕xf5 15.♖xf5 when d5 is hopelessly weak. The modern solution however is 14...♗b4 15.♗d4 ♖xc3 16.♖xc3 ♕xe2 when White has good compensation after 17.♖d3 or 17.♖d1, but nothing is clear.
35. $\text{Qf2}$ $\text{Cc2}$?
Kasparov should have chosen the ending; he won't get a second chance.
36. $\text{Qe3!}$ $\text{Cc8}$ 37. $\text{Qe7}$ $\text{b5}$ 38. $\text{Qd8}$ $\text{xd8}$ 39. $\text{Qxd8}$
$\text{Qf7}$ 40. $\text{Qd6}$
Black is tied up and loses material.
40...g5 41. $\text{Qa8}$ $\text{Qg7}$ 42. $\text{Qxa6}$ 1–0
Karpov – Kasparov, Moscow (7) 1984.

15...$\text{Cc5}$ 16. $\text{Qxc5}$ $\text{xc5}$

The first phase is over. White has managed to exchange the dark-squared bishops, which is quite serious progress. He gains control over the important $d4$-square in front of the isolated pawn, and with every exchange Black's possibilities to play actively are drastically diminished.

17. $\text{Qe3}$
Attacking $d5$. White allows 17...$d4$ when the pin 18. $\text{Qad1}$ is awkward to meet. At the time Kasparov bought the argument, but in his new book about the match he claims that Black can survive the complications and therefore should have tried the active move.

17...$\text{e6}$ 18. $\text{Qad1}$
White has control. The difference between the two armies is striking. White's pieces shoot at $d5$, while Black's are forced to defend. The opening has ended to White's advantage. Although objectively speaking White is probably still only slightly better, the trend is going up. Basically Black's initial activity is gone and he is just left with a weakness. That is not to say he can't hold, but the rest of the game will be a struggle and it will be played on conditions dictated by White.

18...$\text{Cc8}$ 19. $\text{Qa4}$ $\text{Qd8}$ 20. $\text{Qd3}$ $\text{a6}$ 21. $\text{Qfd1}$
$\text{Qc4}$
Good active defending.

22. $\text{Qxc4}$ $\text{Qxc4}$ 23. $\text{Qa5}$
23. $\text{Qb3}$ was an interesting alternative.

23...$\text{Cc5}$ 24. $\text{Qb6}$
Or here 24. $\text{Qa3}$ to keep the queens on.

24...$\text{Qd7}$ 25. $\text{Qd4}$ $\text{c7}$ 26. $\text{Qxc7}$ $\text{Qxc7}$

The second phase is over. The queens have been exchanged, but the characteristics of the position are the same in the endgame. White's persistent pressure on $d5$ completely ties up Black, but it is not easy to break through. However it is obvious that there are only two possible results: either White wins or it is a draw. Always a nice scenario in a practical game.
27.h3

Because of the great impact the finish of this game made, players were tempted to try this line themselves. A correspondence game even reached this very position, when White chose to deviate by just bringing his king to the centre. The rest of the game is rather instructive and shows that these simple endings are far from simple to defend:

27...f8 28.e1 c4 29.e3xd4 30.xd4 c5 31.d2 a5 32.a3 b6 33.b4 axb4 34.axb4 c4 35.xc4 dxc4 36.h3 c7 37.e4 d7 38.f4 f6 39.b5!± Black got rid of the isolated pawn but the c-pawn is not looking too good either. White's spatial dominance also tells: Black can hardly improve his position and quickly goes down. 39...f5 40.e5 g6 41.d4 gxf4 42.gxf4 f8 43.f1 g6 44.e3 c3 45.d3 h4 46.f2 d7 47.g3 1–0

Raupp – J. Andersen, corr 1986. On 47...g6 the simplest is probably e2 and xc3.

Please note that the taking the pawn with 27.d5 xd5 28.xd5 xd5 29.xd5 xd5 30.exd5 xc2 just leads to a draw.

27...h5 28.a3 g6

Black puts all his pawns on the same colour as his bishop – the good thing about a bad bishop is that it can at least protect your pawns.

29.e3 g7 30.h2

Karpov is an expert in slow regrouping. He plans f3 and therefore protects the h3-pawn with the king, but here it is too slow. Instead he could have played the much more straightforward 30.f1, followed by f2-f3 and g3-g4 seizing more space on the kingside and maintaining the advantage.

30...xc4

Kasparov uses the chance to simplify.

31.f3 b5 32.g2 c5 33.xc4

Practical chess. Karpov gives Black a difficult choice. How should he take back?

33...xc4

It was tempting to get rid of the d-pawn with 33...xc4 but then White has the d-file and can penetrate with his rook. Also 33...xc4 has its points but then 34.d4 followed by g4 is promising for White. In the end Kasparov just takes back with the rook maintaining the structure. He can safely do that because if White takes on d5 the black rook again gets to c2 and draws.

34.d4

Karpov needed a new plan.

34...f8 35.e2 xd4 36.exd4.

Phase three is over. The position has transformed into a symmetrical pawn structure. White is still slightly better because Black is left with a passive bishop that has to defend d5. Karpov of course keeps playing. He risks absolutely nothing and he can hope to get knight against bad bishop when there would be serious winning chances.

36.c7 37.a2 c8 38.b4 d6 39.f3 g8 40.h4 h6 41.f2 f5 42.c2
The game was played in the good old days, so it was adjourned here. Black sealed his next move.

42...f6 43.\(\text{d}3\) g5

Black defends actively, allowing White to get the knight vs. bishop ending. A defensive strategy could easily worsen Black’s chances: 43...\(\text{c}7\) 44.\(\text{e}3\) Perhaps threatening g4. 44...f5?! 45.\(\text{g}2\) \(\text{d}7\) 46.\(\text{e}3\) With big holes on f4 and g5.

44.\(\text{xf}5\) \(\text{xf}5\) 45.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{b}1\) 46.b4

![Diagram](image)

The game has reached its final phase. White closes the queenside leaving Black with a permanent weakness on a6. That pawn can be attacked by the white knight from the great outpost c5, but then the black bishop defends it from c8 and so what? The only winning chance is to break in with the king and that can only happen on the seemingly closed kingside. Karpov nevertheless manages to do exactly that in amazing fashion. The next move is simply chess history. No more, no less. It is one of the most famous sequences from a World Championship match.

46...\(\text{gxh}4\)?

Blindly expecting White to take back, when Black withdraws the bishop to g6 and easily holds the position. True, White has the f4-square but his king and knight cannot both use it at the same time and therefore there is no real chance of making progress. In the light of what happens it is clear that Black should have played 46...\(\text{e}6\) with good drawing chances.

47.\(\text{g}2!\)

White sacrifices a pawn to get access to the black fortress. This famous ending has been analysed by many experts including Dvoretsky, Marin, Mueller and of course Kasparov. This is an opening book and big chapters have been written on this ending – I just want to give some of the flavour of what is happening.

47...\(\text{hxg}3\)† 48.\(\text{xg}3\) \(\text{e}6\)

Or 48...\(\text{g}6\) 49.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{f}7\) 50.\(\text{h}4\) followed by \(\text{d}xh5\).

49.\(\text{f}4\)† \(\text{f}5\) 50.\(\text{xh}5\) \(\text{e}6\)

White was threatening \(\text{g}7\)† followed by \(\text{e}8-c7\).

51.\(\text{f}4\)† \(\text{d}6\) 52.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{c}2\)

![Diagram](image)

53.\(\text{h}5\) 54.\(\text{f}6\) \(\text{e}7\)

The best chance, as 54...\(\text{xf}3\) 55.\(\text{xf}6\) was hopeless. White will regroup the knight so that he can give a check and then gain e5 for his king. Then some more regrouping with the knight
and the d5-pawn drops. Translated to moves it could be something like 55...\(\textit{g}4 \ 56.\textit{g}6 \textit{f}3\) 57.\(\textit{h}4 \textit{g}4\) 58.\(\textit{f}5\) \(\textit{c}6\) (58...\(\textit{x}f5\) 59.\(\textit{x}f5\) is a lost pawn ending) 59.\(\textit{e}5 \textit{f}3\) 60.\(\textit{e}7\) \(\textit{b}7\) 61.\(\textit{x}d5\) and wins.

55.\(\textit{xd}5\)\(\textit{t}\)?

The temptation was too great: a free pawn with check! However it turns out that the move is inaccurate. Correct was 55.\(\textit{h}5\), when White is winning even against the tough toughest resistance, as the experts have shown.

55...\(\textit{e}6\) 56.\(\textit{c}7\)\(\textit{d}7\)?

Missing 56...\(\textit{d}6\) 57.\(\textit{xa}6 \textit{xf}3\) 58.\(\textit{xf}6 \textit{d}5\) and Black holds the draw.

57.\(\textit{xa}6 \textit{xf}3\) 58.\(\textit{xf}6 \textit{d}6\) 59.\(\textit{f}5 \textit{d}5\) 60.\(\textit{f}4\)

The king wins a tempo on the bishop and gets back in time to defend d4.

60...\(\textit{h}1\) 61.\(\textit{e}3 \textit{c}4\) 62.\(\textit{c}5 \textit{c}6\) 63.\(\textit{d}3 \textit{g}2\) 64.\(\textit{e}5\)\(\textit{c}3\) 65.\(\textit{g}6 \textit{c}4\) 66.\(\textit{e}7 \textit{b}7\)?

This loses rather quickly, whereas with 66...\(\textit{h}1\) Black could put up some resistance and it is generally accepted that the position is still drawn! Kasparov believes that, as shown in his analysis in the aforementioned book.

67.\(\textit{f}5 \textit{g}2\)

The toughest defence was 67...\(\textit{d}5\) although it still loses: 68.\(\textit{d}3 \textit{e}6\) and now Mueller proved that 69.\(\textit{g}7\)\(\textit{t}\) was the way to win. Marin had previously claimed White could win with 69.\(\textit{e}3\), but Dvoretsky found a way to draw.

Sounds complicated? That's because it is. Even famous analysts can lose their way in such positions. If you enjoy this sort of thing, then check out the specialist books.

68.\(\textit{d}6\)\(\textit{b}3\) 69.\(\textit{xb}5 \textit{a}4\) 70.\(\textit{d}6\)

1–0

A good practical game. Actually, after the impressive opening play Karpov did not do much until the spectacular finish. Or so it seemed. In fact he managed to keep the game going without ever letting Black fully neutralize the weakness on d5, and it paid off in the end. So the game confirms the general belief that White has good chances of getting a small but long-lasting positional advantage against the Tarrasch.

**Theory**

Usually Black enters the long mainlines that we cover below, but here is a mini-guide to early deviations.

1.\(\textit{d}4 \textit{d}5\) 2.\(\textit{c}4 \textit{e}6\) 3.\(\textit{c}3 \textit{c}5\) 4.\(\textit{xd}5 \textit{exd}5\) 5.\(\textit{f}3 \textit{c}6\) 6.\(\textit{g}3 \textit{f}6\)

Sometimes Black tries:

6...\(\textit{c}4\) 7.\(\textit{g}2 \textit{b}4\) 8.0–0 \(\textit{ge}7\)

A very flexible system. The disadvantage is that it does nothing to hinder White from expanding in the centre with e2–e4: 9.\(\textit{e}4\)

Here it makes sense to look at two lines. The main option is 9...0–0, but we should not neglect the alternative, 9...\(\textit{dxe}4\) 10.\(\textit{xe}4\), which is more risky. Black has three options:

a) 10...\(\textit{g}4\) 11.a3 \(\textit{a}5\) 12.\(\textit{c}5 \textit{b}6\) 13.\(\textit{xb}7 \textit{c}7\) 14.d5 \(\textit{xb}7\) 15.\(\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6\) 16.\(\textit{f}4\) 0–0

17.\(\textit{e}5 \textit{xe}2\) 18.\(\textit{xe}2 \textit{xd}1\) 19.\(\textit{fxd}1\)
Black had problems with his c-pawn in Drozdovskij – Jakimov, Kharkov 2007.

b) 10...\textstill{f}5 11.\textstill{h}h4 \textstill{e}6 (11...\textstill{xe}4?! 12.\textstill{xc}4 \textstill{wd}4 13.\textstill{wc}2) 12.a3 \textstill{a}5 13.\textstill{c}c5 \textstill{wd}4 14.\textstill{xe}6 fxe6 15.\textstill{h}h5\textdagger g6 16.\textstill{we}2 \textstill{d}d8 17.\textstill{xe}6 \textstill{d}d6 18.\textstill{e}2 \textstill{d}d3? (18...0–0 19.\textstill{h}h6) 19.\textstill{xc}6\textdagger 1–0 Arencibia – Bruzon, Santa Clara 2005. On 19...bxc6 comes 20.\textstill{e}5 hitting a5 and h8.

c) 10...0–0 11.\textstill{wc}2

11...\textstill{g}4

11...\textstill{f}5 12.\textstill{h}h4 and Black is in trouble, or 11...\textstill{wd}5 12.\textstill{ae}3 \textstill{g}6 13.\textstill{h}h4 \textstill{wb}5 14.\textstill{xe}6 hxg6 15.a3 \textstill{c}c7 16.d5! \textstill{da}5 17.d6 \textstill{d}d8 18.\textstill{c}c3 \textstill{wa}6 19.\textstill{ad}1\textdagger Reshevsky – Stahlberg, Zürich 1953. The d-pawn is a monster.

12.\textstill{wc}4 \textstill{xf}3 13.\textstill{xf}3 \textstill{wd}4 13...\textstill{xd}4 14.\textstill{g}2 \textstill{c}8? 15.\textstill{wb}4 \textstill{c}2 16.\textstill{h}h6\textdagger gx6f 17.\textstill{g}4f \textstill{g}6 18.\textstill{b}1\textdagger Gual – Moskalenko, Paretana 2000.

14.\textstill{wb}3\textdagger

14.\textstill{we}2 is also possible.

14...\textstill{ec}5

On 14...\textstill{f}5?! 15.a3 \textstill{e}7 White can choose between 16.\textstill{ed}1 \textstill{wb}6 17.\textstill{xb}6 axb6 18.\textstill{c}c3\textdagger with a pleasant ending, or the pawn grab 16.\textstill{xb}7 \textstill{ec}5 17.\textstill{g}2 \textstill{ab}8 18.\textstill{wa}6.

15.\textstill{g}2 \textstill{wc}4 16.\textstill{wc}4 \textstill{xc}4 17.a3 \textstill{a}5 18.\textstill{c}c5\textdagger Black could not defend b7 in Gordenko – Arutiuinov, Kiev 2002.

We have seen the problems with 9...\textstill{d}xe4, so let's return to the position after 9...0–0:

10.exd5 \textstill{xd}5 11.\textstill{g}5

This is the most annoying line for Black.

11.\textstill{xd}5 \textstill{wd}5 12.\textstill{ae}3 \textstill{f}5 13.\textstill{ec}5 also looks promising for White although Black has scored okay after either 13...\textstill{wb}5 or 13...\textstill{e}4.

11...\textstill{wa}5

11...\textstill{f}6 is somewhat inferior: 12.\textstill{xd}5 \textstill{wd}5 13.\textstill{ec}5 \textstill{wb}5 14.a4 \textstill{wa}6 15.\textstill{xc}6 bxc6 16.\textstill{wd}2 \textstill{xd}2 17.\textstill{wd}2\textdagger \textstill{e}6 18.\textstill{fe}1 \textstill{f}7 19.\textstill{e}7 \textstill{ad}8 20.\textstill{c}3 \textstill{fe}8 21.\textstill{xe}8\textdagger \textstill{exe}8 22.\textstill{f}1 \textstill{ed}8 23.a5 \textstill{wb}5 24.\textstill{c}1\textdagger The weak pawns on the c-file begin to tell, Tregubov – Moskalenko, Alushta 1994.

Also 11...\textstill{xc}3 12.bxc3 \textstill{e}7 13.\textstill{xe}7 \textstill{xe}7 14.\textstill{ec}5 \textstill{d}5 15.\textstill{c}1 \textstill{e}6 16.\textstill{e}2 \textstill{ec}8 17.\textstill{fc}7 18.f5 \textstill{c}8 19.\textstill{f}3 \textstill{f}6 20.\textstill{f}4\textdagger gave White a good grip, Brooks – Parkkinen, corr. 2000.

12.\textstill{xd}5 \textstill{wd}5 13.a3 \textstill{a}5 14.\textstill{e}5 \textstill{wb}5 15.a4 \textstill{wa}6 16.\textstill{xc}6 bxc6 17.\textstill{c}2 \textstill{e}6 18.\textstill{fc}1 \textstill{ab}8 19.\textstill{f}1\textdagger \textstill{wb}6

Black forces a lot of exchanges, but the problems remain.

20.\textstill{xc}4 \textstill{wd}4 21.\textstill{xe}6 \textstill{xb}2

Or 21...\textstill{fxe}6 22.\textstill{ec}3.

22.\textstill{e}3 \textstill{xc}2 23.\textstill{xd}4 \textstill{xc}1\textdagger 24.\textstill{xc}1 \textstill{xe}6 25.\textstill{xc}6 \textstill{eb}8 26.\textstill{xa}7 \textstill{b}4 27.\textstill{a}6 \textstill{xa}4 28.\textstill{g}2 \textstill{ea}1 29.\textstill{d}4 \textstill{d}1 30.\textstill{a}8\textdagger \textstill{f}7 31.\textstill{a}7\textdagger \textstill{eb}8 32.\textstill{xc}7\textdagger
White managed to win the ending in Timoschenko – Tseitlin, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

7.\( \text{\#g2} \text{\#e7} \)

In the old days many Black players did not understand the subtleties of the opening and prematurely exchanged pawns in the centre just opening the position for White’s initiative:

7...cxd4 8.\( \text{\#xd4} \)

8...\( \text{\#b6} \)

Safer but not quite good enough is 8...\( \text{\#c5} \)

9.\( \text{\#b3} \text{\#b4} \) (or 9...\( \text{\#b6} \) 10.0–0 d4 11.\( \text{\#a4} \)

0–0 12.\( \text{\#xb6} \) axb6 [12...\( \text{\#xb6} \) 13.\( \text{\#g5} \)]

13.\( \text{\#d3} \) \( \text{\#e8} \) 14.\( \text{\#d1} \) \( \text{\#g4} \) 15.f3 \( \text{\#h5} \)

16.\( \text{\#xd4} \) \( \text{\#xd4} \) 17.\( \text{\#xd4} \) \( \text{\#xd4} \)

18.\( \text{\#xd4} \) \( \text{\#xe2} \) 19.\( \text{\#d2} \) with a good ending, Breazu – Jensen, corr. 1991) 10.0–0 \( \text{\#xc3} \) (10...\( \text{\#e6} \)

11.\( \text{\#g5} \) could transpose) 11.bxc3 0–0 12.\( \text{\#g5} \) \( \text{\#e6} \) (or 12...\( \text{\#g4} \) 13.h3) 13.\( \text{\#c5} \)

\( \text{\#e7} \) 14.\( \text{\#xe6} \) fxe6 15.c4 \( \text{\#xc6} \) bxc6 16.\( \text{\#d4} \) \( \text{\#d8} \) (no better is 17...\( \text{\#b4} \) 18.\( \text{\#xf6} \)

\( \text{\#xf6} \) 19.\( \text{\#ab1} \) \( \text{\#a4} \) 20.\( \text{\#b7} \) with an initiative, Varnusz – Lengyel, Budapest 1958) 18.\( \text{\#xf6} \)

\( \text{\#xf6} \) 19.\( \text{\#xc4} \) \( \text{\#d5} \) 20.\( \text{\#ac1=} \) Rubinstein – Marshall, Breslau 1912. White has the better pawn structure and a nice positional advantage. Of course the great Rubinstein won the ending.

9.\( \text{\#xc6} \) bxc6 10.0–0 \( \text{\#e6} \)

Worse is 10...\( \text{\#a6} \) 11.\( \text{\#a4} \) \( \text{\#c4} \) 12.b3 \( \text{\#b5} \)

13.\( \text{\#f4=} \) \( \text{\#e7} \) 14.\( \text{\#e3} \) \( \text{\#b7} \) 15.\( \text{\#xb5} \) \( \text{\#xb5} \)

16.\( \text{\#c7} \) \( \text{\#a3} \) 17.\( \text{\#e5=} \) \( \text{\#f8} \) 18.b4! \( \text{\#xb4} \)

19.\( \text{\#ab1} \) \( \text{\#d6} \) 20.\( \text{\#c3} \) 1–0 Rubinstein – Salwe, Vilnius 1909.

11.e4!

Another classic game continued 11.\( \text{\#a4} \)

\( \text{\#a5} \) 12.\( \text{\#e3} \) \( \text{\#c8} \) 13.a3 c5 14.\( \text{\#xc5} \).

A fine positional combination that looks very promising. 14...\( \text{\#xc5} \) 15.b4 \( \text{\#xb4} \) 16.axb4

\( \text{\#xb4} \) 17.\( \text{\#d4} \) 0–0 18.\( \text{\#xf6} \) \( \text{\#xf6} \) 19.\( \text{\#xa7} \)

But it turns out that there are too few pieces left. 19...\( \text{\#c4} \) 20.e3 \( \text{\#fc8} \) 21.a1 d4 22.exd4

\( \text{\#xd4} \) 23.\( \text{\#f3} \) \( \text{\#g7} \) 24.\( \text{\#fb1} \) \( \text{\#d6} \) 25.\( \text{\#h3} \) \( \text{\#c2} \)

26.\( \text{\#d1} \) \( \text{\#a2} \) 27.\( \text{\#ac1} \) \( \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2} \) Rubinstein – Tarrasch, San Sebastian 1912.

11...\( \text{\#d8} \) 12.exd5 cxd5 13.\( \text{\#a4=} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 14.\( \text{\#e1=} \)

\( \text{\#c7} \)

15.exd7! \( \text{\#xe7} \) 16.\( \text{\#a3=} \) \( \text{\#d6} \)

Another game went 16...\( \text{\#e8} \) 17.\( \text{\#e3} \) d4 18.\( \text{\#xd4=} \) \( \text{\#xd4} \) 19.\( \text{\#b5} \) \( \text{\#xb5} \) 20.\( \text{\#e1=} \)

\( \text{\#e4} \) 21.\( \text{\#xe4=} \) \( \text{\#xe4} \) 22.\( \text{\#xe4} \) and White won in Divanbaigyzand – Kaminski, corr. 1999.

17.\( \text{\#xa7=} \)

With a pawn for the exchange and the black king caught in the centre, White is much better.

17...\( \text{\#a8} \) 18.\( \text{\#d4} \) \( \text{\#c6} \) 19.\( \text{\#f4} \) \( \text{\#e6} \) 20.\( \text{\#h3} \)

An elegant finish.

20.\( \text{\#xh3} \) 21.\( \text{\#c5=} \) \( \text{\#d8} \) 22.\( \text{\#b6=} \) \( \text{\#e7} \)

23.\( \text{\#xc6} \) \( \text{\#h8} \) 24.\( \text{\#c5=} \) \( \text{\#e8} \) 25.\( \text{\#e1=} \) \( \text{\#e6} \)

26.\( \text{\#xe6=} \) \( \text{\#xe6} \) 27.\( \text{\#c7} \) \( \text{\#d7} \) 28.\( \text{\#c6} \) \( \text{\#f7} \)

29.\( \text{\#xa8} \) \( \text{\#xc7} \) 30.\( \text{\#b8} \) 1–0

Black can also try to develop the light-squared bishop to either e6 or g4:

7...\textit{e}6 8.0–0 h6 Black is preventing \textit{g}5, so White just takes the bishop out on the other flank: 9.b3 a6 10.\textit{b}2 \textit{c}8 11.e3 \textit{e}7 12.dxc5 \textit{xc}5 13.\textit{e}2 0–0 14.\textit{f}4 \textit{e}4 15.\textit{c}1 \textit{e}7 16.\textit{d}4 \textit{xd}4 17.\textit{xc}8 \textit{xc}8 18.\textit{xd}4 \textit{wc}6 19.\textit{wa}1 \textit{af}6 20.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 21.\textit{ec}1 \textit{wd}7 22.\textit{wc}3± This is a dream position against the isolated d-pawn, Roiz – Akobian, Khanty-Mansyisk 2007.

7...\textit{g}4 8.\textit{e}3 cxd4 9.\textit{xd}4 \textit{b}4 10.0–0 0–0 And now, for instance, White can create positional pressure with the new move 11.\textit{b}3±.

Finally, 7...\textit{c}4 8.0–0 \textit{b}4 is a mix-up of two ideas. It could be met by 9.\textit{g}5 \textit{xc}3 10.bxc3 h6 11.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 12.\textit{d}2 followed by e2–e4 with pleasant play.

\textbf{8.0–0}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw [help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textbf{8...0–0}

8...cxd4 9.\textit{xd}4 0–0 10.\textit{g}5 transposes to the mainline.

There is an independent option: 8...\textit{e}6 9.dxc5

The text is more promising than 9.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}4!
10.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 11.\textit{c}1 \textit{xc}3 12.\textit{xc}3 \textit{c}4 which is okay for Black.
9...\textit{xc}5 10.\textit{g}5 d4
10...0–0 transposing to the 9...\textit{e}6-line is better.
11.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 12.\textit{e}4 \textit{e}7 13.\textit{xc}5 \textit{xc}5 14.\textit{c}1 \textit{wb}6 15.\textit{g}5!

White takes the opportunity to play aggressively.
15...\textit{xa}2
Not 15...0–0 16.\textit{xc}6 bxc6 17.\textit{wc}2 g6 18.\textit{xc}6 fxe6 19.\textit{wc}6± Tukmakov – Guera, Crans Montana 1999.
16.\textit{xc}6
The novelty 16.\textit{wd}3 h6 17.\textit{xc}6\# bxc6 18.\textit{we}4\# \textit{f}8 19.\textit{xc}6 also seems strong.
16...bxc6 17.\textit{a}4 \textit{b}3 18.\textit{xc}6\# \textit{d}8 19.\textit{wa}3
White has good compensation.
19...\textit{xc}6 20.\textit{xb}3 \textit{e}8 21.\textit{xf}7 \textit{d}7 22.\textit{f}4 h6 23.\textit{f}7\# \textit{c}7 24.\textit{c}5 \textit{e}6
This was Yaksin – Rakhmanov, Voronezh 2007, and now 25.\textit{a}1 keeps the pressure.

9.\textit{g}5

And we are back where we started. Black must react to the strong pressure on d5, and so he has three sensible moves: 9...\textit{c}4, 9...\textit{e}6 or 9...cxd4. Much less sensible is 9...h6?! when 10.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 11.dxc5 is simply good for White. We will study these moves later in this chapter.
Conclusion: Black has an interesting set-up with 6...c4 7...g2 b4 8.0–0 gge7, but with 9.e4 White takes the initiative and gets the better chances. Otherwise there are few sensible ways to deviate. An early ...xd4 opens the position to White’s benefit and a premature development of the light-squared bishop tends to increase the problems rather than solve them.

The 9...c4 Variation

This was once a popular sideline, but Black’s results with it have faded. Often White seems to get a small but nagging positional advantage. The following game is an excellent display by the young Chinese super-talent Wang Hao.

Game 53

Wang Hao – Iuldachev

India 2008

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3...c3 c5 4.exd5 exd5 5.a3
c6 6.g3 f6 7...g2 c7 8.0–0 0–0 9.g5 c4

White continues the aggressive strategy and does not give Black time to consolidate.

11...a5

Black answers with an active move and tries to defend tactically.

11...xb3 is a slight positional concession and after 12...xc6 bxc6 13.axb3 White is better. Play can continue 13...h6 14...xf6 xf6 15.a4 f5 16.d2 d6 17.c5± P.H. Nielsen – Rogers, Turin (ol) 2006.

12.d2!

Precisely played. 12...xc6 bxc6 13.a4 has been played hundreds of times, but after 13...ab8 14.c2 fc8 Black has good counterplay.
12...\texttt{b4}

Black again tries to be active.

The alternative is the cunning 12...\texttt{ad8}. Now if 13.bxc4 \texttt{xd4!} then this unexpected trick solves the problems in the centre. 14.\texttt{xd4} dxc4 15.\texttt{e3} \texttt{c5} Black wins the piece back, and White can hardly keep the game going. 16.\texttt{f4} \texttt{xc3} 17.\texttt{xf6} gxf6 18.\texttt{xf6} This was Malakhato – Meinhardt, Paris 2005, and now Black has a simple solution in 18...\texttt{d6} when White does not have anything better than 19.\texttt{g5}+ \texttt{h8} 20.\texttt{f6}+ \texttt{g8} with a draw.

Therefore on 12...\texttt{ad8} White should play:

13.\texttt{xc6} bxc6 14.\texttt{fd1}

14.bxc4 dxc4 15.\texttt{xc6} \texttt{b4} 16.\texttt{fc1} \texttt{b6} and Black wins the pawn back with fine play.

14.\texttt{a4?!} \texttt{xd2} 15.\texttt{xd2} cxb3 16.axb3 is a tempting try, but 16...\texttt{e4} 17.\texttt{a5} \texttt{b8} 18.\texttt{fb1} \texttt{f5} gave Black enough counterplay in Brodsky – Ikonnikov, Le Touquet 2007. A possible improvement is 17.\texttt{f4}.

14...\texttt{b4}

This is Black’s typical way of seeking active piece play. Now White can take the opportunity to disrupt Black’s kingside pawns with \texttt{xf6}. However it is also possible to protect c3 with a rook, but which one?

\begin{itemize}
  \item[(a)] 15.\texttt{ac1} c5! 16.\texttt{xf6} gxf6 was fine for Black in Golod – Kristensen, Bornholm 2008. 17.bxc4 is answered by 17...\texttt{d4!} 18.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xc3} 19.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{xc3} 20.\texttt{xc3} dxc4 and Black’s strong passed pawn even gives him the better chances in the ending.
  \item[(b)] The new move 15.\texttt{dc1} is interesting though:
    \begin{itemize}
      \item[(b1)] Now 15...c5 is well met by 16.\texttt{xf6} gxf6 17.bxc4 dxc4 18.\texttt{d5!} a\texttt{xd5} 19.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{xc3} 20.\texttt{xc3} \texttt{xc3} 21.\texttt{xf7}+ \texttt{xf7} 22.\texttt{xc3}+ with a good rook ending. In this variation 17...\texttt{cxd4} 18.\texttt{xd4} is no good because \texttt{f6} hangs.
      \item[(b2)] So after 15.\texttt{dc1} Black should probably try 15...\texttt{a3}, yet 16.\texttt{c2} \texttt{f5} 17.\texttt{e4} looks good for White. Compared to the variation below, Black cannot play 17...\texttt{g6} 18.\texttt{xd5!} \texttt{xd2} 19.\texttt{xf6}+ \texttt{xf6} 20.\texttt{xd2} \texttt{xd4} 21.\texttt{e3}±. This means Black is forced to take on e4 with the pawn, when White can play \texttt{xf6} followed by \texttt{xe4}.
      \item[(c)] 15.\texttt{xf6} gxf6 Black cannot take on c3 because of \texttt{g5} followed by mate. 16.\texttt{dc1} \texttt{a3} 17.\texttt{c2} \texttt{f5} 18.\texttt{c4} \texttt{g6} 19.bxc4 dxc4 20.\texttt{e3} \texttt{e8} 21.\texttt{h4!}? (21.\texttt{d1} is more normal: 21...\texttt{f5} and now 22.\texttt{b1} \texttt{f8} 23.\texttt{xc4} or 22.\texttt{xf1!} \texttt{xe4} 23.\texttt{xc4} both look slightly better for White, but it is complicated and the advantage is far from stable.) 21...\texttt{f5} 22.\texttt{b1} \texttt{f8} 23.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xe4} 24.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{wd5} 25.\texttt{ac1} c5 26.\texttt{b3} cxd4 27.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{e5} 28.\texttt{xd8} \texttt{xd8} 29.\texttt{xa7} With a pawn more and some winning chances, Loginov – Yevseev, St Petersburg 2002.
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

13.\texttt{xf6} gxf6

Not 13...\texttt{xc3}? 14.\texttt{g5} g6 15.\texttt{h6} and Black’s ears will become red. Very red.

14.\texttt{xc6} bxc6 15.\texttt{fc1}
Black's active possibilities have more or less been exhausted and he is left with a permanently weakened pawn structure.

15...\textit{\eac8}

15...\textit{\eaa3}, with the hope 16.\textit{\ed1 \eab8}, is refuted by 16.\textit{\ec2 \ef5} 17.e4.

16.\textit{\exc4 dxc4} 17.\textit{\eaa3! \exc3}

The text is too submissive, but 17...\textit{\eaxa3?} did not work either. The pin on the a-file is lethal after 18.\textit{\eaa2}.

17...\textit{\ee7} is somewhat passive. On the other hand it does not simplify into a worse endgame, so probably Black should try it. 18.e4 \textit{\efd8} 19.d5 \textit{\exd5} 20.\textit{\exd5 \ef5} 21.\textit{\ef4 \eg6} and Black was okay, Muhammad – Bluvshtein, New York 2003. White should settle for a move such as 18.e3, just securing his structure and keeping a positional edge.

18.\textit{\exc3}

White goes for the ending.

He could also keep the pieces on:

18.\textit{\exc3 \efd8} 19.\textit{\eac1 \ed6}

Better is 19...\textit{\eg7} 20.\textit{\ef4 \eg5}, but 20.e3 keeps some advantage.

20.\textit{\ef4 \ecd8} 21.e3 \textit{\eg7} 22.\textit{\eh4??} c5 23.d5! \textit{\exd5} 24.\textit{\exd5 \bx d5} 25.\textit{\exc4 \eb6} 26.\textit{\eg4+ \eh8} 27.\textit{\ef3}

White has an initiative in the heavy piece middlegame.

27...\textit{\ef5}

A better try was 27...\textit{\eg7}.

28.e4! \textit{\fxe4} 29.\textit{\exc7 \ed6} 30.\textit{\exc5 \exc5} 31.\textit{\exc5 \exc5} 32.\textit{\ef6† \eg8} 33.\textit{\xd8†}

With a won queen ending.

33.\textit{\ef7} 34.\textit{\xd7†} 35.\textit{\eh7} 36.\textit{\eaxa3} 37.\textit{\edx4 a5} 38.\textit{\g6†} 39.\textit{\g7†} 40.\textit{\g2} 41.h6 42.d5† 42.\textit{\f3} 1–0


18...\textit{\exc3} 19.\textit{\exc3 \efd8} 20.e3 c5 21.d5! \textit{\exd5} 22.\textit{\edx5} \textit{\exd5} 23.\textit{\exc4}

White has a pleasant rook ending. He can double rooks on the c-file and put pressure on the weak c5-pawn. At the same time the rook on c4 is exceptionally well placed because it can switch to the kingside along the fourth rank and shoot at the weak black pawns there as well.

23...\textit{\bb8} 24.\textit{\eac1 \bb5} 25.\textit{\ege2 \eg7} 26.\textit{\eh4 \ef8} 27.\textit{\ef1c2 \ea5} 28.\textit{\ea4 \ed6} 29.\textit{\ef4}

29.\textit{\exc5 \eaxa4} 30.\textit{\eb7}, to get on the seventh rank, was not so clear after 30...\textit{\aa6} 31.\textit{\ea7 \f5} 32.\textit{\exc7 \ef6}.

29...\textit{\eg7} 30.\textit{\ef3 \eg6} 31.\textit{\ez4† \ed7} 32.\textit{\ege4\eg7} 33.\textit{\ege7} 34.\textit{\exc4 \eb6} 35.\textit{\exc6 36.\eg4 \ef8 37.\exc4 \eh6!}

It was better to stay passive with 37...\textit{\eg7} when 38.\textit{\eh5 \ea6} 39.\textit{\eg4† \ef8} is nothing for White because of 40.\textit{\eh6? \f5†}.

38.\textit{\ef3 \eb6} 39.\textit{\ef5 \eb6}

39...\textit{\exa6} 40.\textit{\eh5 \eg7} 41.\textit{\eg4† \eh7} 42.\textit{\edx5 \ec7} 43.\textit{\eh3}

40.\textit{\edx5 \ec6} 41.\textit{\edx8† \ez7} 42.\textit{\edx5 \ef8} 43.\textit{\eh5 \eg7} 44.\textit{\eg4† \ef8}
Giving up the h-pawn, but 44...\textit{h}7 45.\textit{d}d5 \textit{e}c7 46.\textit{e}e2 was also bad. The black pieces are scattered all over without any communication.

45.\textit{e}e2

There is no hurry. First the king takes the enemy passed pawn under control.

45...\textit{a}a6 46.\textit{x}xh6 c4 47.\textit{x}xh8+ \textit{e}e7 48.\textit{e}e4+ \textit{d}d6 49.\textit{d}d4+ \textit{c}c5 50.h5

White is winning.

50...\textit{f}5 51.\textit{f}f8 \textit{x}xa4 52.\textit{x}xf7 \textit{a}a2+ 53.\textit{d}d2 \textit{a}a1 54.\textit{d}d1 \textit{a}a2+ 55.\textit{d}d2 \textit{a}a1 56.\textit{x}xf5+ \textit{b}b4 57.\textit{b}b2+ \textit{c}c3 58.\textit{b}b5 \textit{a}a2+ 59.\textit{f}f3 \textit{b}b2 60.\textit{b}b5 \textit{b}b6 61.g4 \textit{d}d3 62.g5 c3 63.h6 c2 64.h7

1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} 9...c4 solves the problem with the isolated d-pawn, because Black doesn't get one! What he often gets instead is a weak c-pawn, so at the end of the day he has not achieved anything.

\textbf{The 9...\textit{e}e6 Variation}

This looks like a solid choice, but White can force a very favourable ending.

10.\textit{d}xc5

Keeping the tension with 10.\textit{c}c1 is of course also possible.

10...\textit{x}xc5

Not 10...d4 11.\textit{x}xf6 \textit{x}xf6 12.\textit{e}e4.

11.\textit{x}xf6 \textit{xf}6 12.\textit{x}xd5 \textit{xb}2

Restoring material equality. There now follows an instructive transition to an interesting endgame.

13.\textit{c}c7 \textit{ad}8 14.\textit{c}c1! \textit{xc}1 15.\textit{xc}c1
15...\(\texttt{\textit{\texttt{c}7}}\)

Black wants to redeploy the bishop to \(f6\) where it stands well. Let's have a closer look at the alternatives.

15...\(\texttt{h}6\) 16.\(\texttt{\texttt{d}e}6\) \(f\texttt{xe}6\) 17.\(\texttt{c}4!\) A nice square: White is slightly better. The following is a typical development of events: 17...\(h6\) 18.\(\texttt{h}4\) \(\texttt{d}d6\) 19.\(\texttt{e}4\) \(\texttt{f}6\) 20.\(\texttt{h}3\) Putting pressure on \(\texttt{e}6\) 20...\(\texttt{g}7\) 21.\(\texttt{g}2\) \(\texttt{e}7\) 22.\(\texttt{b}1\) \(\texttt{d}5\) 23.\(\texttt{b}2\) \(\texttt{d}6\) 24.\(e3\) \(\texttt{e}5\) 25.\(\texttt{d}4\) \(\texttt{d}3\) 26.\(\texttt{e}2\) \(\texttt{xd}4?\) 27.\(\texttt{exd}4\) \(e5?\) Black tries to solve all his problems in one go, but he missed White’s next: 28.\(\texttt{xd}2!\) Winning material. 28...\(\texttt{xd}4\) 29.\(\texttt{xd}4\) \(\texttt{exd}4\) 30.\(\texttt{xd}3\) And White won in L.B. Hansen – Antonio, Novi Sad (ol) 1990.

15...\(\texttt{b}6\) 16.\(\texttt{\texttt{d}e}6\) \(f\texttt{xe}6\) 17.\(\texttt{e}3\) \(h6\) 18.\(\texttt{c}4!\) \(\texttt{d}6\) 19.\(\texttt{e}4\)

Once again we see this maneouvre.
19...\(\texttt{f}5\) 20.\(\texttt{h}4\) \(\texttt{f}7\)

In some correspondence games Black has played 20...\(\texttt{f}d5\), but it does not really alter the position. White can play 21.\(\texttt{b}1\) \(\texttt{f}7\) 22.\(\texttt{f}1\) and have the usual small positional pull.

21.\(\texttt{\texttt{h}2}\) \(\texttt{e}7\) 22.\(\texttt{g}4\)

White can expand on the kingside.
22...\(\texttt{f}8\) 23.\(\texttt{g}5\) \(\texttt{d}5\) 24.\(\texttt{h}3?!\) \(\texttt{d}6\)

Or 24...\(\texttt{\texttt{xd}f3}\) 25.\(\texttt{\texttt{xe}6}\) \(\texttt{d}7\) 26.\(\texttt{g}6\)
25.\(\texttt{g}3\) \(\texttt{e}8\) 26.\(\texttt{c}1\) \(\texttt{d}8\) 27.\(\texttt{\texttt{c}c}4\)

White keeps finding new ways to regroup. Black can never completely neutralize the pressure.
27...\(\texttt{a}5?!\) 28.\(\texttt{a}4\) \(\texttt{d}7\) 29.\(\texttt{e}c1\) \(\texttt{d}5\) 30.\(\texttt{f}1\)!

There is a nice square on \(b5\).
30...\(\texttt{e}7\) 31.\(\texttt{b}5\) \(\texttt{c}7?\)

Necessary was 31...\(\texttt{e}6\) 32.\(\texttt{g}2\) \(\texttt{c}5\) but then 33.\(\texttt{e}c4\) and White will still have all the fun.
32.\(\texttt{d}4!\) \(\texttt{d}8\) 33.\(\texttt{c}4\)

Winning at least a pawn.
33...\(\texttt{\texttt{d}d}6\) 34.\(\texttt{g}4\) \(\texttt{c}5\) 35.\(\texttt{d}1\) \(\texttt{h}xg5\) 36.\(\texttt{h}xg5\) \(\texttt{e}8\) 37.\(\texttt{\texttt{d}e}6\) \(\texttt{d}e6\) 38.\(\texttt{\texttt{xe}d}6\) \(\texttt{\texttt{x}g}5\) 39.\(\texttt{h}4\) \(\texttt{g}6\) 40.\(\texttt{d}xe6\) \(\texttt{h}6\) 41.\(\texttt{g}5\) 1–0

Huzman – Stripunsky, Simferopol 1990.

16.\(\texttt{\texttt{d}e}6\) \(\texttt{f}xe6\)

The position looks completely equal, especially with the opposite-coloured bishops. In fact, that is exactly wrong – because of the opposite-coloured bishops, White has a long lasting positional initiative.

I know this may be hard to believe, but I will explain the details in depth within the next few moves.
17.\textit{e}4!

A key move. On \textit{c}4 the rook is excellently placed. It can shift between the two flanks on the fourth rank, and it is very safe on a light square – as a consequence of the opposite-coloured bishops, White is clearly superior on the light squares. If you played through the two examples in the last note then this move would not come as a big surprise, but you are probably lazy like me and just skimmed the text. That’s a pity! Go back! Set up the position on your board or find the games in your database and see them for real. They will help you to get a feeling for the position. This particular variation is about excellent endgame technique and profound chess understanding.

17...\textit{f}6

Also possible is 17...\textit{d}6 18.\textit{f}c1 \textit{fd}8 to exchange rooks. 19.\textit{h}4 \textit{d}1† 20.\textit{h}2 \textit{xc}1 21.\textit{xc}1 \textit{h}6 22.\textit{e}1!? (22.e3= was the normal set-up) 22...\textit{d}2 23.\textit{xc}6 \textit{xc}6 24.\textit{xc}2 \textit{xc}2 25.\textit{xc}2 Kharitonov – Legky, Spasskoe 1996, and White had a better technical endgame.

18.e3!

Taking control of \textit{d}4 and preventing the black knight from landing there to simplify. If there only remained opposite-coloured bishops the draw would be inevitable, but as long as there are other pieces on the board the opposite-coloured bishops actually help the aggressor because the weaker party cannot neutralize the bishop.

18...\textit{d}6 19.\textit{h}4!

White has a pawn majority on the kingside so it is natural to take some more space there. Furthermore White plans \textit{h}3, but it would be a bit silly to put the bishop in front of the h-pawn.

19...\textit{h}6 20.\textit{e}4

A strong centralization and it also prevents Black from playing ...\textit{e}5, a move that so far has been impossible anyway because it would lose the b7-pawn.

20...\textit{fd}8 21.\textit{h}3

With concrete pressure on the weak spot \textit{e}6.

21...\textit{f}7 22.\textit{g}2 \textit{e}8 23.\textit{c}1 \textit{e}7 24.\textit{c}2

Note the pattern in the diagram: White puts his pieces on white and his pawns on black to restrict Black’s forces.

24...\textit{b}6 25.\textit{f}4 \textit{g}6 26.\textit{g}4

The next phase begins. White cannot enjoy his position forever: he has to do something.

26...\textit{a}1 27.\textit{c}1 \textit{b}2 28.\textit{c}2 \textit{a}1 29.\textit{a}4

He could also have played the sharper 29.\textit{h}5† \textit{h}7 30.\textit{g}5 with an initiative.

29...\textit{e}5

Black uses the opportunity to exchange the knights and simplify.

30.\textit{x}e5† \textit{x}e5 31.\textit{f}8 \textit{dd}7 32.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}7 33.\textit{d}2 \textit{c}3 34.\textit{d}6

But White still has his rooks and he keeps finding active possibilities.
34...\textit{h}7 35.g5 \textit{hxg5}
A careless exchange. Better was 35...g6 with chances to hold.

36.hxg5 \textit{b}4
Or 36...g6 37.\textit{xe}6 \textit{b}4 38.\textit{xd}1! (that’s the difference with an open h-file) 38...\textit{xe}6 39.\textit{h}1\textit{g}7 40.\textit{fh}8 and now to avoid mate Black has to play the drastic 40...\textit{c}2\textit{f} 41.\textit{f}3 \textit{xe}3\textit{f} 42.\textit{xe}3 \textit{f}7 or maybe he should just resign.

37.\textit{d}d8
Yusupov misses the wonderful mate 37.g6\textit{f}! \textit{g}x6 38.\textit{f}5\textit{h}6 39.\textit{h}8\textit{h}. However, the move played wins rather easily all the same.

37...\textit{g}6 38.\textit{f}3 \textit{f}7 39.\textit{h}8

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[ultra thick] (0,2) -- (1,2) -- (1,1) -- (2,1) -- (2,0);
\draw[ultra thick] (0,3) -- (1,3) -- (1,4) -- (2,4) -- (2,5) -- (3,5) -- (3,6) -- (4,6) -- (4,7) -- (5,7) -- (5,8) -- (6,8) -- (7,8) -- (7,7) -- (8,7);
\draw[ultra thick] (1,0) -- (1,1) -- (2,1) -- (2,0);
\draw[ultra thick] (3,0) -- (3,1) -- (4,1) -- (4,0);
\draw[ultra thick] (5,0) -- (5,1) -- (6,1) -- (6,0);
\draw[ultra thick] (7,0) -- (7,1) -- (8,1) -- (8,0);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

The black king is trapped in a danger-zone. White has \textit{g}4-h5 ready.

39.e5 40.\textit{g}4 \textit{exf} 41.\textit{d}5!
Now there is no defence against \textit{h}5\textit{f}.

41...\textit{fxe}3\textit{f} 42.\textit{g}3
1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} Who says endings are boring?

\textbf{The 9...\textit{cxd}4 Variation}

Finally we have reached the big mainline.

\textbf{Game 55}

\textbf{Bocharov – Bezgodov}

\textbf{Kazan 2006}

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\textit{c}3 c5 4.\textit{cxd}5 \textit{exd} 5.\textit{f}3 \textit{c}6 6.g3 \textit{f}6 7.\textit{g}2 \textit{c}7 8.0–0 0–0 9.\textit{g}5 \textit{cxd} 4

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw[ultra thick] (0,2) -- (1,2) -- (1,1) -- (2,1) -- (2,0);
\draw[ultra thick] (0,3) -- (1,3) -- (1,4) -- (2,4) -- (2,5) -- (3,5) -- (3,6) -- (4,6) -- (4,7) -- (5,7) -- (5,8) -- (6,8) -- (7,8) -- (7,7) -- (8,7);
\draw[ultra thick] (1,0) -- (1,1) -- (2,1) -- (2,0);
\draw[ultra thick] (3,0) -- (3,1) -- (4,1) -- (4,0);
\draw[ultra thick] (5,0) -- (5,1) -- (6,1) -- (6,0);
\draw[ultra thick] (7,0) -- (7,1) -- (8,1) -- (8,0);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

The mainline. Black releases the tension and accepts the isolated d-pawn. He follows up by hitting the bishop on g5 and thereby removing most of the imminent pressure on d5. However, as we saw in the Karpov – Kasparov game, the d-pawn is a long-term weakness.

10.\textit{d}4 \textit{h}6
This is almost universally played.

Instead 10...\textit{d}8 is well answered with 11.\textit{a}4 \textit{d}7 12.\textit{f}d1, as in the main game, while the seemingly aggressive 10...\textit{b}6 quickly backfires after 11.\textit{b}3 \textit{e}6 12.\textit{e}3± with control over the important squares d4 and c5.
Akobian, Las Vegas 2001. After 15...\textit{c}5? 16.\textit{xd}5 \textit{fxd}5 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 18.\textit{wd}5 \textit{wc}7 19.\textit{zd}3 \textit{xd}4 20.\textit{xd}4 \textit{sc}6 21.\textit{wd}6 \textit{xd}6 22.\textit{xd}6 \textit{se}4 23.b3 the advantage was transformed into an endgame with a pawn more.

13...\textit{c}5 This looks active but costs the pair of bishops after 14.\textit{de}6! \textit{fxe}6 15.\textit{xe}5 b6 16.\textit{zd}6. White is on top, for instance: 16...\textit{da}5 17.\textit{wd}4 \textit{dc}4 18.\textit{xe}5 \textit{ec}8 19.\textit{ab}1 \textit{w}7 20.h3 \textit{xc}5 21.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 22.\textit{xf}6 \textit{gxf}6 23.\textit{de}4 dxe4 24.\textit{dx}d7+ 1–0 Wang Yue – Petrosian, Tiayuan 2005.

14.\textit{w}c2

![Chess Diagram]

White’s position is harmonious, while the black bishop on d7 is passive and the knight on a5 is temporarily out of play. In addition to all that, d5 is hanging.

14...\textit{ec}8

Pinning the c3-knight is the most obvious move.

Instead 14...\textit{c}4 15.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 16.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xe}3 17.fxe3 hardly gives Black enough for a pawn: 17...\textit{g}5 18.e4 \textit{wb}6 19.\textit{wb}3 \textit{xb}3 20.axb3 White had some serious defending ahead of him in Birarov – Soltau, corr. 2001.

15.\textit{zb}5!

A standard move in such positions. Either Black must sacrifice the d5-pawn or part with the dark-squared bishop.

15...\textit{eb}8

He chooses the former, as most players do. Instead 15...\textit{ec}6 16.\textit{xe}7+ \textit{xe}7 17.\textit{zd}4 \textit{zd}7 18.\textit{ac}1 was very promising for White in Cvitan – Handoko, Zagreb 1985.

16.\textit{xd}5

Winning a pawn. White should not be afraid to give up this otherwise important bishop as Black cannot generate a dangerous attack.

16...\textit{xd}5

Black takes the bishop and gets some positional compensation. The alternatives have received rough treatment:

16...\textit{ec}5 17.\textit{zh}6! \textit{gh}6 18.\textit{zh}6+ \textit{gh}8 19.\textit{xf}7 \textit{xe}3 This is Coelho – Cavalcanti, Guarulhos 2005, and here the computer likes 20.\textit{xd}7! \textit{xd}7 21.\textit{zd}5! when White is winning.

16...\textit{dc}4 This is the last word from a stubborn Tarrasch player. 17.\textit{wb}3 \textit{xd}5 18.\textit{xd}5 \textit{be}5
19.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xe5 \texttt{\textbackslash A}xe5 Verleur – Soltau, corr. 2006, and now 20.\texttt{\textbackslash D}d1 must be better for White.

17.\texttt{\textbackslash D}xd5 \texttt{\textbackslash D}c4

Now Khenkin has tried to keep the bishop with 18.\texttt{\textbackslash D}f4 and Ionov was tempted to take a second pawn with 18.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xa7, but Bocharov has other intentions.

18.\texttt{\textbackslash A}ad1! \texttt{\textbackslash R}xf5 19.\texttt{\textbackslash R}xf5 \texttt{\textbackslash D}xe3 20.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xe3 \texttt{\textbackslash A}b6

21.\texttt{\textbackslash D}d7!

Going for the attack.

21...\texttt{\textbackslash R}xb2

21...\texttt{\textbackslash R}xe3\textdagger 22.\texttt{\textbackslash R}g2 \texttt{\textbackslash D}e6 defends f7 but drops the b-pawn.

22.\texttt{\textbackslash R}xf7\textdagger 23.\texttt{\textbackslash A}d5?!?

White missed the great move 23.\texttt{\textbackslash A}1d6! when the threat is \texttt{\textbackslash A}xh6\textdagger mating, and ...\texttt{\textbackslash A}xd6 is impossible because of the pressure on g7. The forced 23...\texttt{\textbackslash A}e7 24.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xe7 \texttt{\textbackslash D}xe7 25.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xc7 \texttt{\textbackslash A}xc3 26.\texttt{\textbackslash A}d8\textdagger 27.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xd8\textdagger 28.\texttt{\textbackslash A}h7 29.\texttt{\textbackslash R}d3\textdagger 29.exd3 leads to a lost pawn ending for Black.

23...\texttt{\textbackslash R}xa2 24.\texttt{\textbackslash A}f3

White still has active play on the light squares and in the end Black succumbs to the pressure.

24...a5 25.\texttt{\textbackslash A}f4 \texttt{\textbackslash C}c2 26.\texttt{\textbackslash A}1d3 \texttt{\textbackslash D}c6 27.\texttt{\textbackslash D}g4 \texttt{\textbackslash D}e4 28.\texttt{\textbackslash G}g6\textdagger 29.\texttt{\textbackslash G}g8 30.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xe4 \texttt{\textbackslash A}xe4 31.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xb7 a4 32.\texttt{\textbackslash A}dd7 \texttt{\textbackslash A}g4?

The astonishing 31...\texttt{\textbackslash A}xe3! 32.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xf8 \texttt{\textbackslash A}xe2 holds.

32.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xf8 \texttt{\textbackslash A}xf8 33.\texttt{\textbackslash A}a7

Now White has good winning chances.

33...\texttt{\textbackslash A}e8 34.\texttt{\textbackslash G}f2 \texttt{\textbackslash A}f8\textdagger!

Better was 34...\texttt{\textbackslash A}h8 so g7 does not drop with check.

35.\texttt{\textbackslash D}g2 \texttt{\textbackslash A}e8 36.\texttt{\textbackslash G}f3 \texttt{\textbackslash G}ge4 37.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xg7\textdagger 2\texttt{\textbackslash A}h8 38.\texttt{\textbackslash A}h7\textdagger 2\texttt{\textbackslash A}g8 39.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xh6 1–0

Conclusion: With 12.\texttt{\textbackslash A}a4 White immediately puts pressure on Black’s position. After 12...\texttt{\textbackslash A}d7 13.\texttt{\textbackslash A}d1 \texttt{\textbackslash A}a5 14.\texttt{\textbackslash A}c2 \texttt{\textbackslash D}e8 the key move 15.\texttt{\textbackslash A}f5! is very strong.

\underline{Game 56}

Leotard – Romanov

Correspondence 2001

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\texttt{\textbackslash D}c3 c5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.\texttt{\textbackslash A}f3 \texttt{\textbackslash D}c6 6.g3 \texttt{\textbackslash A}f6 7.\texttt{\textbackslash D}g2 \texttt{\textbackslash A}c7 8.0–0 0–0 9.\texttt{\textbackslash A}g5 cxd4 10.\texttt{\textbackslash A}xd4 h6 11.\texttt{\textbackslash A}e3 \texttt{\textbackslash A}e8 12.\texttt{\textbackslash A}a4 \texttt{\textbackslash A}a5
13...\textbf{ad1}!

This time White takes the other rook to d1. Black's knight is on its way to c4, so White plans to retreat the bishop to c1 and still wants his rooks to be connected.

13...\textbf{c4}

The alternative is:

13...\textbf{d7} 14.\textbf{c2} \textbf{c8} 15.\textbf{b1} The queen steps out of the pin. 15...\textbf{c4}

And now there are two options:

16.\textbf{f4} \textbf{a5} 17.\textbf{b3} \textbf{a6} 18.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{xd5} 19.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{h3} 20.\textbf{fe1} \textbf{f6} This was Bocharov – Reutsky, Moscow 2007, where Black was very active. Instead White could take the pawn:

16.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{xd5} 17.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{xe3} 18.\textbf{exe3} \textbf{xf6} As in Lechtnsky – Damjanovic, Vilnius 1978, when White has a strong novelty: 19.\textbf{xf6}! \textbf{xf6} 20.\textbf{f1} \textbf{e5} 21.\textbf{xf8+} \textbf{h8} 22.\textbf{xe8} \textbf{xe3+} 23.\textbf{g2} \textbf{xe8} 24.\textbf{d3} White is a pawn up.

14.\textbf{c1}

As planned, the bishop gets out of the way.

14...\textbf{d7}

There is no ideal alternative:

14...\textbf{b6}

Black becomes too passive and the weakness on d5 tells more and more.

15.\textbf{b3} \textbf{g4} 16.\textbf{e3} \textbf{c5} 17.\textbf{h3} \textbf{d7} 18.\textbf{c2}! \textbf{g7} 19.\textbf{xc5} \textbf{xc5} 20.\textbf{xd4}

White has managed to exchange the dark-squared bishops and has the typical small but clear anti-IQP advantage.

20...\textbf{ac8} 21.\textbf{fd1} \textbf{e6} 22.\textbf{b4} \textbf{xa5} 23.\textbf{bxd5} \textbf{fxd5} 24.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{c5} 25.\textbf{e3} \textbf{xd5} 26.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{b5} 27.\textbf{d3} \textbf{xd5}

Or 27...\textbf{xb2} 28.\textbf{xe6} \textbf{fxe6} 29.\textbf{g6} \textbf{xf8} 30.\textbf{xe6+}.

28.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{xd5} 29.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{b6} 30.\textbf{b3}


15.\textbf{b3} \textbf{a5} 16.\textbf{c2}

15.\textbf{b3} \textbf{a5} 16.\textbf{c2}

White has managed to coordinate very well and d5 is ripe.

16...\textbf{b4}

Black defends tactically. The pin 16...\textbf{c8} is well answered with 17.\textbf{d3} but the sharper 17.\textbf{f5} also seems good: 17...\textbf{b6} 18.\textbf{xd5} \textbf{xd5} 19.\textbf{xd5} And White was a pawn up in Skembris – Martidis, Nea Makri 1990.

17.\textbf{xd5}!

White is up to the challenge. Instead 17.\textbf{f5} \textbf{xc3} 18.\textbf{bxc3} \textbf{xf5} 19.\textbf{xf5} \textbf{c8} is unclear.

17...\textbf{xd5} 18.\textbf{xd5}!
A strong novelty. Lautier once played 18.a3?!  
\[ \text{\$c8 19.\$d3} \] but he probably missed 19...\$a4! though he managed to hold: 20.b3 \$c3  
21.bxa4 \$a6x1 22.axb4 \$a6x1 23.bxa5 \$b2  
24.\$d5 \$e2x1† 25.\$e4x1 \$d1 26.\$e2d3 \$e2b2  
27.\$d5 \$d1 28.\$f3 \$f3b2 With a repetition,  

18...\$h3 19.\$f5!

White sacrifices the exchange. Instead 19.\$g2 was nothing: 19...\$xg2 20.\$xg2  
\$d5† 21.\$g1 \$xa2 and Black has regained  
the pawn.

19...\$f6 20.e4 \$xf1 21.\$xf1

![Chess Diagram](image_url)

White has a pawn and a fantastic bishop on  
d5 for the exchange.

21...\$f8 22.\$f7

White goes for a second pawn, but allows  
some counterplay. 22.\$d2 \$ac8 23.\$a4 \$c6  
24.\$c3±, with play all over the board, was  
probably more convincing.

22.\$c6 23.\$xb7 \$b4 24.\$b3 \$d3  
25.\$e3 \$c5 26.\$xc5 \$xc5

The opposite-squared bishops give Black  
some hope of holding. However, that White  
is still much better is beyond all reasonable  
doubt.

27.\$c1 \$ac8 28.\$g2 \$f8 29.\$c3  
The rook is on its way to f3 to increase  
the pressure on Black’s soft spot f7, but it  
is not as clear as it may appear. I would prefer  
a move like 29.\$d5, just stabilizing the  
position.

29...\$h7 30.\$d5 \$fd8! 31.\$x7 \$x2d2  
Suddenly Black becomes active. Who would  
have believed that a few moves ago?

32.\$xf6 \$xf6 33.\$c3 \$xb2 34.\$d5 \$xf2†  
35.\$h3

However it turns out that White keep some  
initiative even in the ending. To begin with,  
\$f4 is threatened.

35...h5 36.\$f4 \$d2 37.\$xh5 \$h6 38.\$f4  
\$dd8 39.\$e6 \$e7 40.\$f3

![Chess Diagram](image_url)

White’s pieces begin to swarm around the  
naked black king. Suddenly it is clear that the  
opposite-coloured bishops help the attacker,  
just like the books tell us. White has the  
cunning idea of bringing the rook into a direct  
assault via f4 and then to g4 or h4.

40...\$h8 41.\$g2 \$g6 42.\$f4 \$h5 43.\$g4†  
\$g5

Desperation, but 43...\$h7 44.\$g7† \$h8  
45.\$xe7 lost instantly as did 43...\$f7 44.\$c7†
\textit{\#f8 45.\textit{\#g8}. Finally, on 43...\textit{\#h6} decisive is 44.\textit{\#g7} \textit{\#g5} 45.\textit{\#f5}†.}

44.\textit{\#xg5} \textit{fxg5} 45.\textit{e5}

White releases his rook and wins easily with the two extra pawns.

45...\textit{\#e5} 46.\textit{\#e6} \textit{a5} 47.\textit{\#d4} \textit{\#e5} 48.\textit{\#f3} \textit{\#f5} 49.\textit{h4} \textit{gxh4} 50.\textit{gxh4} \textit{\#g6} 51.\textit{\#g4} \textit{\#g7} 52.\textit{\#c4} \textit{\#f8} 53.\textit{\#f4†} \textit{\#e8} 54.\textit{\#b3} \textit{\#d8} 55.\textit{\#d4} \textit{\#f6} 56.\textit{\#c4} \textit{\#d8} 57.\textit{\#c2} \textit{\#h8} 58.\textit{\#d2†} \textit{\#e8} 59.\textit{\#f2} \textit{\#e4†} 60.\textit{\#f4} 1–0

**Conclusion:** After 12.\textit{\#a4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\#a5}} the move 13.\textit{\#ad1!} keeps Black under pressure.

**Chapter Conclusion:** To be honest I think the Tarrasch is unsound. The isolated queen’s pawn is no joke, so it is a nice opening to face. The biggest problem is mental: you must be able to shift to a positional mode and be content with a small but long-term advantage. If you can do this you have every reason to look ahead with optimism as the games in this chapter show.
Chapter 7

The Chigorin

*I don’t wanna be a product of my environment, I want my environment to be a product of me.*
– Frank Costello, The Departed

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6

The System  
page 206  
The a6-variation  
page 210  
The active 4...g4  
page 212  
Early Deviations  
page 214
1. d4 d5 2. c4 \textit{d}c6

A provocative move. Quick development and direct confrontation: that’s the game Black is playing. He is not hiding his aggressive intentions. As early as move 2 he initiates sharp piece-play full of tactics and allsorts of stuff. If you are looking for a quiet day at the office with the usual safe edge for White, then this is very annoying.

The Chigorin was considered unsound for a long period. The black knight’s early outing seemed naive and mainly attracted romantics and hustlers, but then Morozevich started to play it and everything changed almost overnight. Some Russian imagination, coupled with many new ideas, and suddenly everybody wanted to be Moro. The theory of the Chigorin expanded and the opening had a much needed makeover. Many strong players got lost in the chaotic maze and the message to the rest of the world was clear – work had to be done! There was no simple route to a clear advantage for White.

3. \textit{d}c3

The other main lines are 3. cxd5 \textit{w}xd5 4. e3 e5 5. \textit{d}c3 \textit{b}b4 or 3. \textit{f}f3 \textit{g}g4. Black develops quickly and is very active: he is more than willing to concede the bishop pair in the fight for the initiative.

3...\textit{f}6

3...dxc4 is usually just an alternate move order, but we will see more about this topic below.

4. \textit{f}3 dxc4

A critical position. The normal 5. e4 leads to very complicated play after 5...\textit{g}g4, as we saw in the chapter on the Queen’s Gambit Accepted. Since I have a choice, I prefer a more stable positional advantage that is as solid as a helmet while my opponent is throwing all his pieces at my face. After all, Black seems eager to burn his bridges and he could incur structural problems that will never go away. The move 5. e3, and then regaining the pawn with \textit{xc}4, is solid alright, but it seems too calm to really threaten Black. Before the Danish Championship some years ago, where I knew one of my opponents was a Chigorin aficionado, I did some serious work on this opening and found an active yet positional approach that has served me well ever since.

The System

It is 9 o’clock in the morning in Germany. You are sitting at the board, but would rather have stayed in bed for at least another hour. The Bundesliga match is about to begin.
Fortunately you are White against a lower rated opponent and you intend just to play a quiet positional game waiting for an error. But then he surprises you with the sharp Chigorin. You had no idea that he even had this wild opening in his repertoire, so you didn’t prepare for it at all. Thank God you have a system to rely on.

**Game 57**

**Schandorff – Willsch**

Germany 2004

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Cc3 dxc4 4.Cf3 Cxc4 5.Cg5

That’s it! White develops the bishop to an active post and is ready to continue with e2–e3 and Cxc4 with a good position.

5...Cf6

Black immediately disturbs the bishop. This is by far the most common move, but there are others. The main alternative is 5...a6, with the idea of protecting the pawn with ...b7–b5. This is covered in the next game.

The speculative 5...Cd5 6.e4 Cxc3 7.bxc3 Ca5 has been tried by the Chigorin expert Miladinovic. A simple solution for White is 8.Cxc4! Cxc4 9.Wa4† c6 10.Wxc4† with more space and a pleasant position. A recent game of mine continued 10...g6? 11.Ce5 Cc6 12.Cd5 cxd5 13.Wb5† Cd7 14.Wxd5 Ce6 15.Wxb7 Cc8 16.Wb5† Cd7 17.Cb3 Ce6 18.Cb5† Cd7 19.Cxd7 Wxd7 20.Cb1 and White was a clear pawn up, Schandorff – Olsson, Helsingor 2008. This is an opening book, so I suggest we leave the game here.

The active 5...Cg4 will backfire. 6.d5 Cxf3 7.exf3! Ce5 8.Wd4 Cd3† 9.Cxd3 cxd3 10.0–0–0 and White regains the pawn with a very nice attacking position, Zhukova – Fakhiri, Yerevan 1996.

6.Exf6

White gladly gives up the bishop for a knight to gain time and weaken Black’s pawn structure.

The sharper 6.h4 a6 is more unclear. Black hopes to benefit from the inclusion of the moves ...h6 and Cc4, but White still gets interesting play for the pawn with 7.e4, as analysed in detail by Avrukh in his brand-new book...

6...Exf6

The right recapture. After 6...gxf6 Black will never have a safe king, and if he later seeks active play with ...e5 he seriously weakens the light squares, especially the important square f5.

7.e3 Cd6


Dubious is 7...Ca5 because after 8.Wa4† c6 9.b4! cxb3 10.axb3 the knight is in trouble.
10...\textit{b}6 11.\textit{x}a5 \textit{x}xa5 12.\textit{x}a5 \textit{b}4 13.\textit{c}5! wins material: 13...\textit{e}6 14.\textit{d}2 \textit{xc}5 15.dxc5 b6 16.\textit{d}1 \textit{e}7 17.\textit{c}2± Gyimesi – Korpics, Hungary 1999.

Safer is 10...b5, but 11.\textit{x}b5! \textit{d}7 12.\textit{c}3 \textit{b}8 13.\textit{a}2 \textit{b}7 14.\textit{d}3± is positionally undesirable for Black, Knudsen – Millstone, corr. 2001.

\textbf{8.\textit{xc}4 0–0}

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A rare moment – both sides were striving for exactly the same position! When I play 5.\textit{g}5 I hope for 5...h6 so I can take on f6. For my opponent, something similar is the case. He plays 5...h6 and is probably a little afraid of the sharp 6.\textit{h}4 so he also hopes for 6.\textit{xf}6. At first sight you can understand him, as Black seems fine. He has easy development, the bishop pair, and perhaps some possibilities on the kingside later on. However after closer study I think White is slightly but distinctly better. White has a superior pawn structure which is very visible in the centre. Maybe even more important from a practical point of view is that White can generate some positional pressure on the queenside, while it is more difficult for Black to use his pawns on the kingside.

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Other natural moves are 9.0–0 and 9.a3 and often they will lead to the same position. The game is slow and strategic, so concrete moves are less important than plans.

\textbf{9...a}6 10.a3 \textit{f}5 11.0–0 \textit{f}6 12.\textit{ad}1 \textit{e}8 13.\textit{fe}1

In another game White regrouped the knight with 13.\textit{d}5 \textit{d}8 14.\textit{f}4. After 14...\textit{f}6 15.g3 \textit{d}7 16.b4± he had some positional pressure, Agrest – Brynell, Skara 2002.

\textbf{13...\textit{d}7}

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Both sides have completed their development without much drama. The strong centre is a long-term advantage, but it also gives some dynamic possibilities connected to the break e3–e4.

\textbf{14.b4±}

Simply taking more space on the queenside.

\textbf{14...g5?!}

Black is eager to gain counterplay and he similarly takes more space on the kingside. The difference between the two pawn moves is striking though. Black seriously weakens his own king’s position by advancing its shelter. Instead he should have stayed calm with a move such as 14...\textit{ad}8 or 14...\textit{g}6.
15.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}1}}
A clever defensive move. White clears a good square for the f3-knight before it is kicked away.

Immediate action with 15.b5 \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{a}5}} 16.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}1}}
axb5 17.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}b}5} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}b}5} 18.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}b}5} c6 19.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{d}3}} or 15.e4 fxe4 16.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}e}4} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}6}} was not so clear.

15...g4 16.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{d}2}} h5 17.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{c}4}}+ \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{e}7}?!}

18.e4!
The break. White's pieces coordinate excellently.

18...fxe4 19.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}e}4} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}6}} 20.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{d}3}}
White is already winning. Equally strong was 20.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{e}5}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}e}5} 21.dxe5 \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}5}} 22.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{d}3}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}e}4}
23.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}e}4} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{b}6}} 24.e6! fxe6 25.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{c}1}} followed by \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}5}†}.

20...\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{h}6}}
A better try was 20...\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}5}} because the combination 21.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}d}6} cxd6 22.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{e}7}†} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}d}3}
23.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}e}8†} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}e}8} does not work due to back rank problems. Instead 21.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{e}5}}! is strong, as in the previous note.

Not to be recommended was 20...\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}5}}
21.cxd6 cxd6 22.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}3}} and the pin decides.

21.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{c}xd}6}
Also good was 21.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{ex}d}6} cxd6 22.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{b}6}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{a}d}8}
23.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{c}7}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{e}6}} 24.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}b}7}.

21...cxd6

22.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{c}7}}
Now I am winning material.

22...\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{a}4}} 23.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{xa}6}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{d}1}} 24.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{xe}8}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{xe}8}}
25.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{xe}7}}
The text simplifies, but just as good was 25.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{xd}1}}.

25...\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{xe}7}} 26.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{xe}7}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{d}2}} 27.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{e}3}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{b}2}}
28.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{c}4}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{a}4}} 29.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{h}3}}
The extra pawn should decide.

29...\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}xh}3} 30.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{gxh}3}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{b}1†}} 31.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{h}2}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{c}2}}
Black could put up more resistance with 31...\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}5}} although he always seems to end up in a difficult bishop ending: 32.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}3}!}
\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{d}7}} 33.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{h}4}} (probably even stronger was 33.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}1}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}8}} 34.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}4}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}6†}} 35.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{h}4}}) 33...\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}6†}}
34.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}5†}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}g}5†} 35.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}g}5} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}h}3} 36.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{x}h}5}.

32.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{d}5}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{c}6}} 33.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}5†}} \texttt{\textipa{\textbf{f}8}} 34.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{xc}6} bxc6}
Not 34...\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{xf}2†}} 35.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{g}2}}.

35.\texttt{\textipa{\textbf{c}5†}}
With an easily won pawn ending.
35...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}}c5 36.dxc5 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}e7 37.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{g}}}}3 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}}}6 38.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f}}}}4 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}}5  \\
38...f6 39.h4 is no better: 39...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}}}7 40.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f}}}}5 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f}}}}7 41.f4 and the king penetrates next.

39.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{g}}}}5 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}4 40.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{x}}}}xh5 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}3 41.h4  \\
1–0

Conclusion: After 2...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c6 3.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c3 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f}}}}6 4.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f}}}}3 dxc4 the 5.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{g}}}}5 variation is interesting. If Black answers 5...h6, just take on f6 and enjoy the much better pawn structure.

**The a6-variation**

The Queen’s Gambit is not usually a real gambit, but it becomes one if Black takes on c4 and is able to follow up with ...a6 and ...b5.

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**Game 58**

Ivanchuk – Arencibia  
Havana 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c6 3.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}}c3 dxc4 4.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f}}}}3 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{f}}}}6 5.\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{g}}}}5 a6

**Diagram:**

A consistent try. Black prepares ...b5 protecting the c-pawn, so White must play actively.

6.d5 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}}a7

Another benefit from the little move ...a6: the knight has an extra square.

Instead

6...\textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}}}5

leads to trouble after:

7.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}}}4+ c6 8.b4 cxb3 9.axb3 e6 10.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}}2!  

The knight on the rim is more or less lost, but some accuracy is required, as 10.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}xa5? \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}xa5 11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}b4 would be embarrassing.  

After 10.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}}2! Black gets three pawns for the piece, but it should be good for White:

10...b6

Or 10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}xd5 11.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}xd5 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}b3 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}c7+ \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}xc7 13.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}xb3+ 11.b4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}xb4 12.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}xb4 cxd5 13.e3 c5 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}a3?? 0–0 15.e2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}c4 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}a2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}}e6 17.0–0 b5∞ 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xc4?? dxc4  

And now the pawns were a real factor in P. Horvath – Antal, Budapest 2003, but much better would have been 14.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}b2+ 0–0 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{a}}}a4.

7.e4 \textcolor{blue}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}}5

Bringing the knight back into play and at the same time indirectly threatening White’s e-pawn.

Bad was 7...b5 8.e5.

8.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}a4?}

Winning the pawn back, which is always nice.

On the other hand it also made good sense to be fast and furious with:

8.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{w}}}c2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xc3 9.bxc3 b5 10.a4 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}b8

Or 10...\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{b}}}b7 11.e2 h6 12.e4 and now 12...g5 would seriously weaken the kingside, while looking for counterplay with 12...c6 13.dxc6 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{c}}}xc6 14.e5! \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{e}}}e4 15.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}d2 \textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}d5 16.\textcolor{red}{\textit{\textbf{\textit{d}}}d4 leaves Black’s pieces rather vulnerable.**
11.axb5 axb5 12.\( \text{\textbd{d}d4} \text{\textbd{d}d7} \) 13.\( \text{\textbd{e}e2} \)

White has excellent compensation for the pawn.

13...\( \text{\textbd{c}c8} \) 14.0–0 \( c5 \) 15.\( \text{\textbd{d}xc6} \text{\textbd{xc6}} \) 16.e5 \( \text{\textbd{e}e4} \)
17.\( \text{\textbd{d}d2} \text{\textbd{d}d5} \) 18.e6! \( g6 \) 19.\( \text{\textbd{x}xf7?} \text{\textbd{x}xf7} \)

This was Berkvens – Bromann, Esbjerg 2003, and now the stunning 20.\( \text{\textbd{g}g4!} \) creates irresistible threats, for example 20...\( \text{\textbd{x}xg4} \)
21.f3 \( \text{\textbd{d}d7} \) 22.fxe4+ \( \text{\textbd{f}f6} \) 23.e5 winning.

\[ \text{\textbf{8...\textbd{d}d7 9.\textbd{xc4} \text{\textbd{xc3}}} } \]

9...\( h6 \) 10.\( \text{\textbd{h}h4} \) \( g5 \) 11.\( \text{\textbd{g}g3} \) \( \text{\textbd{g}g7} \) 12.e5 \( \text{\textbd{h}h5} \)
13.e6 \( \text{\textbd{x}xe6} \) 14.\( \text{\textbd{d}xe6} \) \( \text{\textbd{c}c6} \) 15.\( \text{\textbd{d}d1} \) \( \text{\textbd{d}d6} \) 16.\( \text{\textbd{d}d3} \)
0–0 was fine for Black in Campora – Martin, Madrid 2007; but better was 10.\( \text{\textbd{f}f4} \)
as in the main game.

\[ \text{\textbf{10.\textbd{b}xc3 \text{\textbd{h}6}}} \]

11.\( \text{\textbd{f}f4} \)

Probably the strongest, not just because it attacks \( c7 \), but it is also more flexible than the alternatives.

11.\( \text{\textbd{h}h4} \) \( b5 \)

Not 11...\( e6? \) 12.e5, but 11...\( g5!? \) 12.\( \text{\textbd{g}g3} \)
\( \text{\textbd{g}g7} \) is possible.

12.\( \text{\textbd{d}d3} \) \( c6 \) 13.\( \text{\textbd{e}e2} \) \( \text{\textbd{cxd5}} \) 14.\( \text{\textbd{exd5}} \) \( g5 \)

An improvement could be 14...\( g6!? \) 15.\( \text{\textbd{xf6}} \) \( \text{\textbd{exf6}} \) and Black is okay after 16.\( \text{\textbd{e}e3\dagger} \) \( \text{\textbd{e}e7} \)
17.\( \text{\textbd{d}d4} \) \( \text{\textbd{d}d6} \) 18.0–0 \( \text{\textbd{e}e7} \).

\[ \text{\textbf{15.\textbd{g}3 \text{\textbd{c}c8} 16.\textbd{e}e5 \text{\textbd{g}g7} 17.\textbd{d}d4 \text{\textbd{a}a5} 18.0–0 0–0}} \]

This was Malmstroem – Migliorini, corr. 2002. Now after:
19.\( \text{\textbd{f}f1} \) \( \text{\textbd{f}f8} \) 20.\( \text{\textbd{d}d3} \)

White has some pressure, especially since he can always confront Black’s kingside with the move h2-h4.

Finally, 11.\( \text{\textbd{xf6}} \) \( \text{\textbd{exf6}} \) followed by \( \text{\textbd{d}d6} \) is okay for Black.

\[ \text{\textbf{11...e6}} \]

11...\( b5!? \) 12.\( \text{\textbd{d}d4} \) leaves White nicely centralized. Yet after 12...\( e6 \) it is not so easy
and following 13.\( \text{\textbd{e}e2} \) \( \text{\textbd{exd5}} \) 14.\( \text{\textbd{exd5}} \) \( \text{\textbd{d}d6} \)
15.\( \text{\textbd{e}e5} \) 0–0 16.0–0 \( c5 \) 17.\( \text{\textbd{d}xc6} \) \( \text{\textbd{xe5}} \) 18.\( \text{\textbd{xe5}} \)
\( \text{\textbd{xc6}} \) Black has almost equalized. Still, instead of 16.0–0, by playing 16.\( \text{\textbd{f}f3} \) White could prevent Black’s sudden liberation and keep some pressure.

12.\( \text{\textbd{xc7}} \) \( \text{\textbd{exd5}} \) 13.\( \text{\textbd{exd5}} \) \( \text{\textbd{e}e7\dagger} \) 14.\( \text{\textbd{e}e2} \)

\[ \text{\textbf{14...b5}} \]

On
14...\( \text{\textbd{b}b5} \)

Ivanchuk has calculated well. The tactical motifs are on White’s side and it is hard for Black to justify his sacrifice.
White has
15.d6! ♕xe2† 16.♕xe2 ♖xe2 17.♖xe2 ♕d5 18.♗ab1!

A nice tactical solution.
18...♕xc3† 19.♖d3 ♖xb1 20.♖e1† ♕d7
21.♕e5† ♔e6
21...♕c8 22.♖b6 ♖xd6 23.♖c1† ♔b8
24.♖d7#
22.♖g6† ♕d5!

It is not over yet.
23.♖xh8 ♖xd6 24.♖xh8 ♖xh8 25.♖b4
25.♖xb1 ♖xd6 26.♖xh7 ♖d8!
25...a5 26.♖xa5 ♖a8 27.♖b4 ♗a3 28.♖e7 ♗c4
29.a3 b5 30.♖c3 ♖xa3 31.♖xf7

And White is better in the ending.

15.♗d4

White is a pawn up, but Black can still put up a fight.

15...♖c5?!

But he chooses not to.

The only move was 15...♖e4 16.♗e5 ♖xd4
17.♖xh8 ♖xd5 18.♗f3 0–0–0! 19.♖x5 ♖xe8
20.0–0 ♖xe5 21.♖xf7 ♖xd6 and the bishop pair gives some compensation.

White should consider playing for the initiative with 16.♖d1 ♖xd4 17.♖xd4 ♖xd5
18.♖a5 ♗f4 19.♖f3 ♖c8 20.0–0 which is probably stronger.

16.♖e5† ♖e7 17.d6!

Now everything goes White’s way and Ivanchuk quickly picks up the point.

17...♖xe5 18.♖xe5 ♖d5

Or 18...♖d8 19.0–0–0 ♖xc7 20.♖xc7 ♖xc8
21.♖xd7 ♖xd7 22.♖xb51 ♖xc7 23.♖e1† ♖d8
24.♖xa6 ♖xc3† 25.♖b2+— with a pawn more.

19.♖xc7 ♖xc7 20.♖f3 ♖c8 21.0–0–0 ♖e6
22.♖c6

Threatening ♖d8†.

22...♖d7 23.♖e1 h5 24.♖a7 ♖b8 25.♖c6
1–0

Conclusion: After 2...♖c6 3.♖c3 dxc4 4.♖f3
g6 5.g5 Black’s flank play with 5...a6 is well tamed by White’s expansion in the centre: 6.d5 ♖a7 7.e4 ♖b5. As a bonus White can even choose between regaining the pawn with 8.♖a4!! or playing for quick development with 8.♖c2. Both seem good.

The active 4...♖g4

So far we have focused on 4...dxc4. Instead, the aggressive bishop move 4...♖g4 is appealing to many Chigorin fans, but it is probably inaccurate. Let’s have a look.

**Game 59**

Ribli – Wittmann

Dubai (ol) 1986

1.d4 d5 2.c4 ♖c6 3.♖c3 ♖f6 4.♖f3 ♖g4

The desired move. Unfortunately for Black, his influence in the centre is not secure and White can release the tension and take the initiative.

5.cxd5 ♖xd5 6.e4 ♖xf3
At least this weakens the white pawns. 6...\texttt{\textbackslash}xc3 7.bxc3 e5 8.d5 \texttt{\textbackslash}b8 9.\texttt{\textbackslash}a4+ \texttt{\textbackslash}d7 10.\texttt{\textbackslash}xe5 \texttt{\textbackslash}f6, with the idea 11.\texttt{\textbackslash}xd7? \texttt{\textbackslash}xc3†, has been tried. However 11.\texttt{\textbackslash}e2!± is simply good for White.

7.\texttt{\textbackslash}gxf3 \texttt{\textbackslash}xc3

7...\texttt{\textbackslash}b6 8.d5 \texttt{\textbackslash}e5 9.f4 is overwhelming for White. The following is a very convincing example: 9...\texttt{\textbackslash}ed7 10.a4 c6 11.a5 \texttt{\textbackslash}c8 12.a6 (with a series of aggressive pawn moves Khalifman crushes his opponent) 12...\texttt{\textbackslash}c7
13.axb7 \texttt{\textbackslash}xb7 14.\texttt{\textbackslash}a6 \texttt{\textbackslash}c7 15.\texttt{\textbackslash}a4 cxd5
16.\texttt{\textbackslash}xd5 \texttt{\textbackslash}d6 17.\texttt{\textbackslash}b7 \texttt{\textbackslash}b8 18.e5 White was completely winning. The finish came quickly: 18...\texttt{\textbackslash}cb6 19.\texttt{\textbackslash}xa7 \texttt{\textbackslash}xb7 20.\texttt{\textbackslash}xb7 \texttt{\textbackslash}xd5
21.\texttt{\textbackslash}a8†! \texttt{\textbackslash}xa8 22.\texttt{\textbackslash}c8# 1–0 Khalifman – Kaftan, Bad Wiessee 1997.

8.bxc3 e5 9.\texttt{\textbackslash}b1!

A key move. The pressure on b7 is not so easy to parry and Black feels the absence of the light-squared bishop.

9...\texttt{\textbackslash}d6

Black accepts the inevitable and just develops.

The alternatives are truly horrible:

9...\texttt{\textbackslash}a5? turns out badly after 10.\texttt{\textbackslash}b5 b6
11.\texttt{\textbackslash}a4 \texttt{\textbackslash}d7 (or 11...c6 12.\texttt{\textbackslash}xe5† \texttt{\textbackslash}e7
13.\texttt{\textbackslash}a3) 12.\texttt{\textbackslash}xa5 1–0 Burkart – Haubt, Germany 1989.

9...\texttt{\textbackslash}b8? 10.\texttt{\textbackslash}a4 is also precarious for Black, for instance 10...\texttt{\textbackslash}f6 11.dxe5 \texttt{\textbackslash}xf3 12.\texttt{\textbackslash}xb7!+-

Finally on 9...cxd4 both 10.\texttt{\textbackslash}xb7 and 10.\texttt{\textbackslash}a4 seem very strong.

10.d5

A surprising decision.

Taking the pawn is obvious but double-edged: 10.\texttt{\textbackslash}xb7 0–0

Black has some compensation, primarily because the white king will never be satisfied. The only practical example I could find is not of much value though:

11.\texttt{\textbackslash}a4

Possible is 11.d5 \texttt{\textbackslash}e7 12.\texttt{\textbackslash}g1 \texttt{\textbackslash}g6 13.\texttt{\textbackslash}g5
\texttt{\textbackslash}d7 14.\texttt{\textbackslash}b3.

11...\texttt{\textbackslash}e7 12.f4!? \texttt{\textbackslash}exf4 13.e5?

13.\texttt{\textbackslash}g2 was forced.

13...\texttt{\textbackslash}xe5! 14.\texttt{\textbackslash}g2

14.dxe5? \texttt{\textbackslash}d5, hitting both rooks, is a fun line and probably what White overlooked.

14...\texttt{\textbackslash}d6 15.\texttt{\textbackslash}xa7 \texttt{\textbackslash}xa7 16.\texttt{\textbackslash}xa7 \texttt{\textbackslash}g6

Now Black is better.

17.\texttt{\textbackslash}a3? \texttt{\textbackslash}e7† 18.\texttt{\textbackslash}d1 \texttt{\textbackslash}xa3

And now he was a piece up in Vareille – Dubois, Marseilles 2001.

White could try to benefit from the second open line and use the other rook to hit g7 with 10.\texttt{\textbackslash}g1!! when Black cannot castle because of \texttt{\textbackslash}h6. Then 10...cxd4 11.cxd4 \texttt{\textbackslash}e7 12.\texttt{\textbackslash}b5
(12.d5) 12...\texttt{\textbackslash}f8 13.\texttt{\textbackslash}e3 \texttt{\textbackslash}xh2 14.\texttt{\textbackslash}h1 \texttt{\textbackslash}d6
15.\texttt{\textbackslash}xc6 bxc6 16.\texttt{\textbackslash}a4 \texttt{\textbackslash}f6 17.\texttt{\textbackslash}e2 \texttt{\textbackslash}e6
18.\texttt{\textbackslash}hc1 \texttt{\textbackslash}f6 19.\texttt{\textbackslash}xc6† and White had some pressure in Hoffmann – Hermann, Germany 1992.

10...\texttt{\textbackslash}b8?
The only move was 10...\textit{Q}a5 when 11.\textit{W}a4+ \textit{c}6 12.\textit{g}g1 \textit{g}6 13.e4 0–0 14.d2 \textit{b}6! is quite solid for Black. With 15.\textit{g}h3 cxd5 16.cxd5 \textit{b}7 17.\textit{d}7! \textit{c}5 18.\textit{x}d8 \textit{xd}8 19.\textit{e}2± White keeps an edge in the ending with the bishop pair. If that is not enough, then worth a try is 11.\textit{g}g1 \textit{g}6 and now 12.\textit{g}5 or 12.\textit{h}6.

\textbf{11.\textit{g}g1! \textit{g}6 12.\textit{xb}7±}

Now there is not much to show for the pawn.

12...\textit{xd}7 13.\textit{g}5 \textit{f}6 14.\textit{h}6 \textit{e}7 15.\textit{h}4 \textit{ac}5 16.\textit{ab}5 \textit{a}6 17.\textit{d}7 18.\textit{c}4 \textit{ab}8 19.\textit{e}2 \textit{a}4

Very cooperative: there was no reason to exchange queens. Black could have tried 19...\textit{xb}1 20.\textit{wh}1 \textit{wa}4 although 21.\textit{b}3 keeps White's advantage.

\textbf{20.\textit{xa}4 \textit{xa}4 21.\textit{d}2}

Now Black has no counterplay.

21...\textit{a}8 22.\textit{d}3 \textit{ab}8 23.\textit{c}2 \textit{b}6 24.\textit{e}3 \textit{c}5 25.\textit{b}4 \textit{ab}8 26.\textit{gb}1 \textit{d}8 27.\textit{f}1 \textit{c}7 28.\textit{h}3 \textit{a}5 29.\textit{xb}6 \textit{cb}6 30.\textit{h}5 \textit{g}5

\textbf{31.\textit{h}6}

Fixing the weakness on \textit{h}7.

31...\textit{f}8 32.\textit{d}2 \textit{b}7 33.\textit{c}8 \textit{b}8 34.\textit{f}5 \textit{b}7

\textbf{35.\textit{x}h7!}

A drastic solution. The position remained very closed and White was in desperate need of an entry point.

35...\textit{x}h7 36.\textit{x}b6 \textit{b}7 37.c4

The queenside pawns are very strong. If Black tries to use his rook to stop them he has to leave the \textit{h}-pawn and that will prove to be fatal.

37...\textit{b}4+

Or 37...\textit{c}7 38.c5 \textit{xc}5 39.\textit{xc}5+ \textit{xc}5 40.\textit{b}8+ \textit{f}7 41.\textit{h}7 and wins.

38.\textit{e}2 \textit{f}7 39.\textit{c}6

Preparing \textit{c}4–\textit{c}5.

39...\textit{g}8 40.\textit{c}5 \textit{h}7 41.\textit{d}3

The king joins the other forces and secures the victory with an impressive finish.

41...\textit{xh}6 42.\textit{c}4 \textit{h}5 43.d6 g4 44.\textit{c}7!

\textit{d}8 45.d5 \textit{xf}3 46.c6 \textit{g}6 47.\textit{xf}7 \textit{xf}7 48.\textit{c}5

1–0

\textbf{Conclusion:} The tempting 4... \textit{g}4 is just asking for trouble and after 5.cxd5 \textit{xd}5 6.e4 \textit{xf}3 7.\textit{gxf}3 \textit{xc}3 8.\textit{xc}3 \textit{e}5, Ribli's 9.\textit{b}1! is the punisher.

\section*{Early Deviations}

Black has few possibilities to avoid the lines presented above, so here is a quick overview of the lines to know.

\textbf{1.d4 d5 2.c4 \textit{c}6 3.\textit{c}3 \textit{f}6}

A logical move, but Black has two other options.

Firstly he could take on \textit{c}4 at once. This could actually be the most precise move order:
3...dxc4 4.\f3

But now Black should definitely play 4...\f6 transposing to the main line. Other tries are insufficient.

a) 4...a6 5.d5 is promising for White no matter where the knight goes:

a1) 5...\a5 lands the knight in trouble as usual. 6.\a4\c6 7.b4 cxb3 8.axb3 e6 9.\d2! (not 9.\xa5? \xa5 10.\xa5 \b4) 9...b6 10.b4±

a2) 5...\a7 We know this finesse by now. 6.e4 b5 7.a4 and the black pawns are under pressure. 7...b4 8.\a2 e6 9.\xc4± White has regained the pawn with advantage.

a3) 5...\b8 6.a4 Preventing ...b5 and thereby restricting Black and trying to win the pawn back. (6.e4 b5 7.\f4 was the alternative) 6...e6 7.e4 exd5 8.\xd5 \c6 9.\xd8\f8 gives White the better ending.

b) 4...\g4 5.d5 \xf3 6.exf3! Once again this is the right capture. 6...\e5 (6...\a5? 7.\a4\c6 8.b4+-) 7.\f4 \g6 (after 7...\d3† 8.\xd3 exd3 White can choose between 9.\b5, 9.\xd3 and 9.0-0: they all seem very strong) 8.\xc4! With the point 8...\xf4? 9.\b5\c6 10.dxc6 and wins. Instead Black must play 8...\f6 and now the main line is 9.\g3 while Ivanchuk has tried 9.\e3. I will propose a third move, the novelty 9.\a4\f7 10.\e3 a6 11.\e2 b5 12.\b3 \f6 13.0-0± and Black won't survive for long.

c) 4...e6 5.c3 (5.c4 is also good of course) 5...\f6 6.\xc4 \d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.\b5± Preventing ...\e5 and keeping control, Schandorff – Olesen, Denmark 2004.

Black’s second option is to play the Albin-like:

3...\e5

This is romantic, but hardly correct. After 4.cxd5 \xd4 5.e3 \f5 it already starts to look suspicious. Play can continue 6.\f3 \d6 7.e4 \f7 8.\b5\d7 9.\b3± and White has a small, but very pleasant, advantage.
4.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}f3}\)

Actually it is not only Black who can deviate.

White has the interesting possibility 4...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}xd5}\) 5.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}f3}\). Then Black’s two most obvious moves transpose to favourable lines for White: 5...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}f5}\) 6.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}b3}\) as shown below and 5...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}g4}\) 6.e4 which we know from the Ribli game.

However, the discussion is rather academic because Black can always use the 3...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}xc4}\) 4.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}f3}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}f6}\) move order as mentioned above.

4...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}f5}\)?

The last attempt. Just like the 4...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}g4}\) variation, it is rather risky though: Black’s best move is 4...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}xc4}\) transposing to our mainlines. Worth mentioning is 4...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}e6}\) 5.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}g5}\) with a nice Queen’s Gambit Declined for White, as the knight is misplaced on c6.

5.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}xd5}\) 6.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}b3}\)!

Taking the initiative with direct threats.

6...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}e6}\) 7.e4

Not 7.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}xb7}\)? \(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}db4}\).

7...\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}xc3}\) 8.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}exf5}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}d5}\)

\(88\)

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chess-board.png}
\end{center}

This was Sargissian – Miladinovic, Plovdiv 2008, and now after the improvement:

9.\(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}d2}}\)!

White is completely winning. The knight on c6 is hanging and \(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}b5}\) and \(\text{\texttt{\textdollar}e1}\) are coming.
Conclusion: Black sometimes tries 3...dxc4, but after 4.\(\text{	extit{f}3}\) he does best to get back in line and transpose to the main variation with 4...\(\text{	extit{f}6}\). The alternatives are clearly worse. Also after 3...\(\text{	extit{f}6}\) 4.\(\text{	extit{f}3}\) the attempt to avoid the dxc4-line with the seemingly active 4...\(\text{	extit{f}5}\) was blown to pieces by Sargissian's brilliant play.

White should be aware that he can also vary! After 3...\(\text{	extit{f}6}\) he has 4.cxd5 \(\text{	extit{d}5}\) 5.\(\text{	extit{f}3}\) as an interesting extra option.

Chapter Conclusion: The 5.\(\text{	extit{g}5}\) variation is an easy-to-learn and rather attractive way of meeting the Chigorin. White fights for the initiative while also keeping a sound structure. As you have probably guessed by now, I don't think too highly of the Chigorin in general, so I am quite sure White can get an advantage in several ways. If you already have an antidote to it, then just stick with that, or else you can try 5.\(\text{	extit{g}5}\) and see if you like it.
Chapter 8

Minor Lines

Convince me that the truth is always grey
– The Killers

1.d4 d5 2.c4

The Albin Counter-Gambit page 220
The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit page 223
The 2...\textit{f}5 Variation page 226
The Symmetrical 2...c5 page 229
The Triangle Variation page 231
The Semi-Tarrasch page 236
The QGD with 3...\textit{b}4 page 238
In this final chapter we will briefly examine Black's various other tries after 1.d4 d5 2.c4. These openings are very different from each other, but what they do have in common is that they are too small, too rare or too bad to have their own chapter.

We start with a classic.

**The Albin Counter-Gambit**

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5

A simple and very strong move: White plans b4 and a2 hitting the d-pawn. The traditional mainline has been 5.g3, but I believe the future belongs to 5.a3.

5...Ng7

The choice of Morozevich. Black intends ...Qg6 and capturing on e5. This will be examined in Game 60. Here we will take a look at the alternatives.

5...a5 Stopping White's expansion. 6.Bbd2 Threatening Qb3 with an attack on the d-pawn. 6...Qg4 7.h3 Qxf3 (on 7...Qh5 8.Qb3 is strong) 8.Qxf3 Qc5 9.h4!? Qge7 10.h5± White has prevented ...Qg6 and is much better. 10...Qc8 11.Qf4 Qb6 12.Qc2 a4 13.Qh4! Qe7 14.g3 Qe6 15.Qc1 Qa5 16.Qh3 Qc6 17.e6! fxe6 18.Qe5 Qd6 19.Qg6 White was winning in Kujoth – Stoppel, corr. 1948.

5...f6 6.exf6 Qxf6 7.e3 Qg4 8.Qe2 and Black has nothing for the pawn.


5...Qg4 6.Bbd2 Qe7 7.h3 Qh5 8.Qa4 0–0–0 9.b4 Qxe5 (9...Qb8 10.Qb2) 10.Qxe5 Qxe5
11...b2 b8 12.g4 g6 13...g2 f6 14.f3 f4 15.0-0 White simply wants to take on d4 and if Black takes back with the rook then e2-e3 is winning. 15...h5 16.xd4! xhx4 17.e3 d6 18.xd4 hxg4 19.fed1 gxh3 20.c6+ bxc6 21.xd6 bxd6 22.xc6 h5 23.c5 h2+ 24...h1 1-0 P.H. Nielsen – Rasmussen, Denmark (ch) 2008.


9.xd4 has also been tried, but is less clear.

9...xe5 10.e3 e6 11.xd4 xc4 12.wc2

Game 60

Topalov – Morozevich

Monte Carlo 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.f3 c6 5.a3

dge7

6.b4 g6

Black goes for the weak e5-pawn.

6...g4 7.b5 b5 8.d3 g6 has been played a couple of times. Avrukh suggests 9.e4! xf3 10.xf3 h6 11.f4 0-0 12.xd2+.

7.b2 a5

First he weakens White’s pawn structure. The immediate 7...gxe5 8.xe5 c5 9.e3 x6 10.xd4 is definitely not better.

8.b5 xce5 9.xe5

12.d6

Nigel Davies suggests 12...w5 in his book Gambiteer 2. It is hard to understand, as 13.c3 w5 14.f4 w6 15.d3 f5 16.0-0+ is just good for White.

13.d3 w5 14.f4

14.0-0 xxb5 is unclear.

14...h4

Another try was 14...w5 15.c3 w3 but after Avrukh’s precise 16.wf2 f5 17.xf5 xf5 18.e4 0-0-0 19.0-0 (not 19.exf5 xc5!) 19...c4 20.d5!+ Black is in dire straits because 20...xe4 drops the queen to 21xb6+ cx6 22.xc1.

15.g3 w5

Better is 15...w3 when 16.wf2 e7 17.d2 0-0 18.xc7 xfe8 gives Black some compensation.
Instead Avrukh suggests: 16.e4 \text{d}8 17.f5 \text{c}xe4 (17...\text{c}c4 18.\text{c}c3 \text{xd}3 19.\text{wx}d3 \text{c}e7 20.\text{d}d5!) 18.\text{fx}e6 \text{xe}6 19.\text{c}c4 \text{e}7 20.\text{e}3 \text{x}g3 21.hxg3 \text{xe}3! 22.\text{e}e2+ White’s extra piece is stronger than the three pawns in the ending.

16.\text{c}c3 \text{d}5 17.0-0 0-0-0

Missing White’s next, but the alternatives were not worth much anyway.
17...\text{d}6 18.\text{xf}5 \text{xf}5 19.\text{e}4 \text{h}3 20.\text{e}5 \text{e}7 (20...\text{xf}1 21.\text{ex}d6 \text{h}3 22.\text{e}e4† wins) 21.\text{d}d5†.

Or 17...\text{xd}4 18.\text{ex}d4 0-0-0 19.\text{f}5 \text{d}d7 20.\text{d}d5 \text{d}6 21.\text{xc}7!+ \text{xc}7 22.\text{ac}1 winning.

18.\text{a}7!

A wonderful move that simultaneously preserves the bishop and takes away a vital escape route for the black king.

18...\text{g}4 19.\text{e}e4

This was a rapid game and Topalov misses the brilliant 19.\text{a}4! which threatens mate in one with \text{b}6. The only move is 19...\text{d}7 but then comes 20.\text{ad}1 and it will soon be curtains.

Topalov begins to stumble. 20.\text{f}2 \text{g}6 21.\text{fc}1 was still overwhelming.

20...\text{f}3 21.\text{g}5 \text{xe}3! 22.\text{xf}3 \text{xc}2 23.\text{xc}2 b6

Trapping the bishop and making certain that he wins the piece back. Remarkable defence by Morozevich, but there is no reason White should get into trouble.

24.\text{e}5†!

24.\text{xd}7 \text{xd}7 25.\text{a}4 \text{b}7 26.\text{e}5 \text{c}5† 27.\text{g}2 \text{e}8 28.\text{xb}6 \text{xb}6 29.\text{e}4† and 24.\text{g}5 \text{xd}1† 25.\text{ex}d1 \text{c}4 26.\text{xb}6 \text{xb}6 27.\text{f}5† were two variations where White surely would not lose.

24...\text{xd}1† 25.\text{xd}1 \text{xa}3!

The turning point: Black just takes this important pawn to begin with. The trapped bishop will not run away.

26.\text{f}5 \text{a}2 27.\text{a}1 \text{c}5† 28.\text{f}1 \text{e}8 29.\text{e}1?!

29.\text{xa}2 \text{xe}5 30.\text{d}3 \text{b}7 31.\text{e}2 was the last chance. Opposite-coloured bishops always give hope of a draw.

29...\text{f}6 30.\text{d}3 \text{xe}1† 31.\text{xe}1 \text{d}6 32.\text{c}1 \text{d}5 33.\text{b}3 \text{c}4

It is all over.

34.\text{xb}6 \text{xb}6 35.\text{e}6† \text{c}7 36.\text{e}2 \text{e}5 37.\text{d}3 \text{d}6 38.\text{e}3 \text{d}5

0–1

Conclusion: 5.a3 seems to be a direct and dangerous weapon against the Albin Counter-Gambit.

We move straight on to another gambit.
Chapter 8 - Minor Lines

The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c} \) 4.cxd5 cxd4

The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit uses a similar move order to the Tarrasch, but these two lines have little else in common. In this case, Black gives up a central pawn for quick development, but it is hard to believe it can be good.

5.\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{xd}4 \)
5.\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{a}4\text{\textdagger} \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}7 \) 6.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}4 \text{\textit{exd}}4 \) 7.\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{d}x \text{d}4 \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}6 \) just transposes.

5...\( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}6 \) 6.\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{d}1 \text{\textit{exd}} \text{d}4 \) 7.\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{d}x \text{d}4 \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}7 \)

Play now takes on a surprisingly forced character.

8.\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}3 \) 9.\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}6 \) 9.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}1 \)

9.\( \text{\textit{b}} \text{b}3 \) has also been tried, but then the queen is in the way – when you see the mainline you will understand why.

9...\( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}5 \) 10.e3 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{e}7 \) 11.e2 0–0–0

Jonny Hector, the Swedish fighter with the mythological name, has been experimenting with 11...g5?! 12.0–0 g4 13.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}4 \) \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{e}5 \), but after 14.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{x} \text{c}6 \text{\textit{d}} \text{x} \text{c}6 \) White can get away with taking a second pawn with 15.\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{xg}4+ \). At least my computer believes so.

12.0–0 g5

Black’s offensive can quickly become rather uncomfortable for White. Fortunately he can strike back and wrench the initiative out of his opponent’s hands.

13.\textbf{b}4!

That’s it. One of the big advantages of being a pawn up is that you can return it at an appropriate moment. White’s attack on the queenside turns out to be more dangerous than Black’s on the kingside.

See Game 61 for the continuation:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}[scale=0.8]
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

Illescas – Rodriguez Vargas

Catalonia 1996

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c} \) 4.cxd5 cxd4
5.\( \text{\textit{w}} \text{a}4\text{\textdagger} \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}7 \) 6.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}4 \text{\textit{exd}}4 \) 7.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}x \text{d}4 \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}6 \)
8.\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}3 \) 9.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{f}6 \) 9.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}1 \) 10.e3 \( \text{\textit{w}} \text{e}7 \) 11.e2 g5 12.0–0 0–0–0 13.\textbf{b}4! \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{x} \text{b}4 \)

Black must take the bait. 13...g4 14.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}4 \) \( \text{\textit{d}} \text{x} \text{b}4 \) would just transpose, while 13...\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{x} \text{b}4 \) looks wrong. A good answer is 14.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{d}4 \).
14.\textbf{b}2

Developing the bishop to a great diagonal. If 14.\textbf{b}3 then 14...\textbf{e}6 would be a little annoying.

White has won a pawn, Ezat – Pisk, Tanta 2000.
17...axb5 18.\textbf{x}f6 \textbf{x}f6 19.\textbf{xc}5+
18.\textbf{c}3+ \textbf{xf}2?! 19.\textbf{xf}2 \textbf{xe}3 20.\textbf{f}1 \textbf{xf}2†
21.\textbf{xf}2 \textbf{xf}2† 22.\textbf{x}f2 g4 23.\textbf{h}4 \textbf{c}8 24.\textbf{e}4+

White’s two pieces were much better than Black’s rook and two pawns, Barrance – Fitzpatrick, corr. 2002.

15.\textbf{d}4 \textbf{b}8

15...\textbf{xd}4 16.\textbf{xd}4 \textbf{c}5 17.\textbf{d}5! \textbf{xd}5
18.\textbf{fc}1 and Black is being crushed: 18...\textbf{hg}8
19.\textbf{xc}5† \textbf{xc}6 20.\textbf{xg}4† \textbf{b}8 21.\textbf{e}5† \textbf{a}8?! 22.\textbf{xd}5 1–0 Comas Fabrego – Martin, Benasque 1995.

15...h5 or 15...\textbf{hg}8 are both answered by 16.\textbf{cb}5 when 16...\textbf{b}8 would transpose to the next note.

16.\textbf{cb}5

Most promising seems:
15.\textbf{c}2 \textbf{b}8 16.\textbf{fd}1 g4 17.\textbf{d}4 \textbf{xd}4
18.\textbf{xd}4 \textbf{c}6 19.\textbf{b}5!

Pay attention to this manoeuvre.

19...\textbf{e}4?

Black can play better moves, but White still has the advantage: 19...\textbf{c}8 20.\textbf{f}5 \textbf{xb}5
21.\textbf{xb}5 \textbf{c}3 22.\textbf{xc}3 \textbf{xc}3 23.\textbf{f}4† \textbf{a}8
24.\textbf{d}6† For instance, 24...\textbf{e}4 25.\textbf{d}7 \textbf{c}5 26.\textbf{f}1.

20.\textbf{xb}4! \textbf{xb}4 21.\textbf{e}5† \textbf{d}6 22.\textbf{xd}6 \textbf{xd}6
23.\textbf{b}1 1–0

This was Comas Fabrego – J. Rodriguez, Catalonia 1996. On 23...\textbf{a}3 24.\textbf{xc}6 exploits two pins.

White can even try:
15.\textbf{b}5 a6 16.a3! \textbf{c}5 17.\textbf{c}1 \textbf{e}4

Or 17...g4 18.\textbf{d}2 \textbf{g}6 19.\textbf{xf}6 \textbf{xf}6
20.\textbf{xc}5 \textbf{xc}5 21.\textbf{e}4 \textbf{e}7 22.\textbf{xf}6 \textbf{xf}6
23.\textbf{d}6! \textbf{xd}6 24.\textbf{xd}6† \textbf{c}7 25.\textbf{xf}7 and

The critical position. The battle is very tense, but White’s progress on the queenside always seems to be a little ahead of Black’s on the kingside. And the initiative matters, as we know by now. It has been a guiding star throughout the whole book.

16.\textbf{e}5
This is hardly the best move, judging from the fact that this game is over in four moves!

Black had two serious alternatives:

16...h5 17.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{\text{f}}}}}4 a6 18.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}}xc6↑

The text has always been played. I will take the opportunity to suggest the new move 18.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{\textbf{a}}}}}b1?! when play can develop something like this: 18...\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}e4 19.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}3! \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}xd3 20.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{f}}}}xc6↑
\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}xc6 21.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}xb4 \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}d5 22.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{e}}}}e5↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{a}}}}8 23.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{b}}}}2
\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{b}}}}6 24.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}d4±

18...\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}xc6 19.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{f}}}}xf6 \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{e}}}}e4!

19...\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}xf6 20.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}xb4 axb5 21.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}xb5 was just a pawn down for Black in Polugaevsky – Zaitsev, Soviet Union (ch) 1968.

20.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}3 \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}xc3↑ 21.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{h}}}}1 \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}x2

21...\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}2?! is an interesting survival attempt.

22.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}xb4 \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{g}}}}xf3 23.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{f}}}}4↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{a}}}}8 24.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}7↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{a}}}}7
25.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{g}}}}xf3? \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{h}}}}g8 26.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{g}}}}5 \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}3

And Black was winning in Krush – Kapnisis, Oropesa del Mar 1999. However with 25.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}d4↑
\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{b}}}}6 26.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{f}}}}2 \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{g}}}}xg2↑ 27.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{g}}}}1 the result would have been reversed. The finish could be 27...\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{b}}}}3
28.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{e}}}}6! \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}xe6 29.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{d}}}}c7↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{b}}}}7 30.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}xb6↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{b}}}}8
31.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}7↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}8 32.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}1↑.

16...\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{h}}}}8 17.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}1

The natural 17.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{a}}}}4 just leads to a perpetual after 17...a6 18.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}xc6↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}xc6 19.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{f}}}}xf6 \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{e}}}}e4!
20.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{e}}}}5↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{a}}}}8 21.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{c}}}}7↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{a}}}}7 22.\textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{b}}}}5↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{\textbf{a}}}}8.

Also 17.\textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}3 has been tried frequently, but it is not so clear after 17...\textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}4.

17...a6 18.\textit{\text{\textbf{c}}}xe6↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{c}}}xc6 19.\textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}d4 \textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}d5 20.\textit{\text{\textbf{c}}}c4
\textit{\text{\textbf{g}}}5 21.\textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}xd5

Also possible was 21.\textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}3±.

21...\textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}d5

Or 21...\textit{\text{\textbf{g}}}xd5 22.\textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}3.

22.\textit{\text{\textbf{c}}}c2 \textit{\text{\textbf{h}}}5 23.\textit{\text{\textbf{f}}}5± \textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}d6 24.g3 \textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}4 25.\textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}1
\textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}7 26.e4 \textit{\text{\textbf{f}}}8

First – Pisk, Czech Republic 1998, and here 27.\textit{\text{\textbf{f}}}d1 \textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}8 28.\textit{\text{\textbf{e}}} xd8↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{e}}} xd8 29.a3 is winning a piece after either 29...\textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}d3 30.\textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}1 or 29...\textit{\text{\textbf{c}}}c6 30.\textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}xc6.

17.\textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}3 \textit{\text{\textbf{g}}}8

17...a6 is countered with the spectacular 18.\textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}6! \textit{\text{\textbf{f}}}3↑ 19.\textit{\text{\textbf{f}}}xf3 \textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}xe6 20.\textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}5↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}d6
21.\textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}2±.

18.\textit{\text{\textbf{a}}}b1±

White has strong pressure after the text, but 18.\textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}6 was again also possible.

18...\textit{\text{\textbf{c}}}8?! 

19.\textit{\text{\textbf{xa}}7! \textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}4

Or 19...\textit{\text{\textbf{xa}}7 20.\textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}5↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}8 21.\textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}xb4 \textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}xb4
22.\textit{\text{\textbf{xe}}}5↑ winning.

20.\textit{\text{\textbf{d}}}c6↑!

1–0

On 20...\textit{\text{\textbf{xc}}}6 21.\textit{\text{\textbf{xc}}}6↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{b}}}xc6 there follows 22.\textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}5↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{a}}}8 23.\textit{\text{\textbf{a}}}4↑ \textit{\text{\textbf{a}}}7 24.\textit{\text{\textbf{e}}}xb4 and White is completely winning.

Conclusion: The Von Hennig-Schara Gambit is surprisingly unclear, but with the precise 13.b4! White gives the pawn back and in return gets the initiative, which is much more important in such a sharp position.

Next we will consider a couple of rare second moves by Black. First, we have a provocative bishop move.
The 2...\textit{\textbf{f5}} Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 \textit{\textbf{f5}}

To complete the repertoire, we must look at an extravaganza of odd moves.

3.\textit{\textbf{c3}}

As I have emphasized earlier in the book, I like to meet these strange outbursts by Black in a positional way. Black hopes to provoke a tactical mess like 3.\textit{\textbf{w}}b3 e5, and even the often played 3.cxd5 \textit{\textbf{x}}xb1 4.\textit{\textbf{w}}a4† c6 5.\textit{\textbf{x}}xb1 \textit{\textbf{w}}xd5 6.\textit{\textbf{f3}} is only slightly better for White, as Black's position is solid.

3...e6 4.\textit{\textbf{f3}} c6

The most natural choice.

If Black instead chooses to stay in the department of bizarre chess with:

4...\textit{\textbf{c6}}

Then White should not have too many problems gaining a positional advantage.

5.\textit{\textbf{f4}}

The immediate 5.cxd5 also looks fine. In such QGD Exchange structures the knight is usually misplaced on c6.

5...\textit{\textbf{f6}} 6.e3 \textit{\textbf{c7}}

6...\textit{\textbf{b4}} is more active. Then 7.\textit{\textbf{c1}} when 7...0–0 8.a3 stops Black's momentum and

7...\textit{\textbf{e4}} 8.cxd5 exd5 9.\textit{\textbf{d3}} 0–0 10.0–0 is also a little better for White.

7.cxd5 \textit{\textbf{x}}xd5 8.\textit{\textbf{g3}} 0–0 9.\textit{\textbf{e2}} \textit{\textbf{b4}} 10.\textit{\textbf{c1}} \textit{\textbf{d6}}

10...\textit{\textbf{c7}} 11.0–0 \textit{\textbf{d6}} 12.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{c8}} 13.e4 \textit{\textbf{xg3}} 14.hxg3 \textit{\textbf{c3}} 15.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{g6}} 16.\textit{\textbf{d1}}± Horta – Vostrotin, corr. 2005.

11.0–0 \textit{\textbf{g3}} 12.hxg3 \textit{\textbf{d6}} 13.\textit{\textbf{d2}} \textit{\textbf{g6}} 14.\textit{\textbf{f3}} \textit{\textbf{ce7}} 15.\textit{\textbf{d1}}± c6 16.\textit{\textbf{c4}} \textit{\textbf{c7}} 17.e4 \textit{\textbf{b6}} 18.\textit{\textbf{e5}}


If 4...\textit{\textbf{f6}} then 5.\textit{\textbf{b3}} \textit{\textbf{c6}} 6.\textit{\textbf{g5}} is simple and strong. 6...\textit{\textbf{b4}} is answered by 7.\textit{\textbf{c1}} and after 6...\textit{\textbf{a5}} 7.\textit{\textbf{a4}}† c6 8.\textit{\textbf{xf6}} \textit{\textbf{gxf6}} 9.cxd5 exd5 10.e3 \textit{\textbf{b6}} 11.0–0–0 0–0–0 12.\textit{\textbf{d3}}± Black has no compensation for his weakened pawn structure.

5.\textit{\textbf{b3}}

It turns out that the early bishop development has left b7 rather weak.

5...\textit{\textbf{b6}}

On 5...\textit{\textbf{c7}} White has the tactical finesse 6.\textit{\textbf{f4}}! when 6.dxc4 7.\textit{\textbf{x}}xc7 \textit{\textbf{xb3}} 8.e4 \textit{\textbf{g6}} 9.a3 leads to a pleasant endgame. White will win the pawn back with \textit{\textbf{f3–d2}} and prefers not to weaken his pawn structure. 9...\textit{\textbf{c7}}
(9...a5 10.\d2 a4 protects b3 but allows
11.\xa4 \xa4 12.\xb8 1f6 13.f3 \xd4
14.\xb3 \xe4 15.e2 Sutkus – Ruefenacht,
corr. 1996.) 10.d2 d8 11.xd8 \xd8
12.\xb3 d7 13.e1 c7 14.f3 \xc8 15.e6
Kramnik – Hertneck, Germany 1995. As is
so often the case, Black lacks space.

5...b6?! is too weakening and can be punished
immediately with 6.cxd5 exd5 7.e4! dxe4 (or
7...\xe4 8.\xe4 dxe4 9.e5 \xe7 10.c4
\xb4† 11.e2 \xb3 12.\xb3 and Black
managed to exchange queens, but f7 will
still fall with devastating effect) 8.e5 \xe6
(8...\xe7 9.e4 \xe6 10.f4 \xb7 11.\xb5!
\xb5 12.d5 \xb4† 13.f1 \xe7 14.c1
\d7 15.\xa8 winning material, Nittschalk
– Ganz, corr. 2000) 9.e4 \xc4 10.xc4
\xe7 11.\xc6 \xc7 12.d5 White already had
a winning position in Ribli – Kurajica, Novi
Sad 1982.

6.c5 \xc7
This is the main move and will be covered
in Game 62, but we will first check out the
alternative.

6...\xb3 7.axb3
This is good for White.
On 7...\d7 comes 8.b4 a6 9.b5! cxb5
10.\xb5, so the more common choice is:

7...a6
Black tries to hold back the white pawns.
8.f4 f6
After 8.f6 the safe choice is 9.e3 \b4
10.\d2†, but White could try for more with
9.\xa6?! bxa6 10.e3 \h5 11.c7 followed
by \xa6 with great positional compensation
for the exchange.

9.e3 \b4 10.a4! \d3† 11.\xd3 \xd3
12.\d2†
With a big lead in development. On
12...g6 White has b3-b4 and b5, so Black
must misplace the bishop. A game of mine
continued:

12...\b5 13.a1 g5? 14.xg5!
White scores a pawn, because on 14...fxg5
there is 15.e5 picking up the rook on h8.
14...e5 15.e6
I was winning in Schandorff – S. Petersen,
Denmark 2008.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Game 62}
\end{center}

Kramnik – Gelfand

Wijk aan Zee 1998

1.d4 d5 2.c4 \f5 3.\c3 e6 4.\f3 c6 5.b3
\xb6 6.c5 \xc7

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ch08-06.png}
\end{center}

7.f4!
Once again we see this tactical motif. Black
cannot take the bishop because it would allow
\xb7 and the rook on a8 is gone.

7...\c8 8.h4
Kramnik goes for the bishop pair, which has
always been one of his trademarks.

There was also a simple solution in 8.e3 \f6
9.h3 \e7 10.e2 \bd7 11.\d1 0–0 12.b4±
with play similar to the a6-Slav.

8...g6
Black could choose between different variations of the same unpleasantness:

8...\(\textsf{\texttt{c7}}\) 9.\(\textsf{\texttt{ xf5} \textsf{xf5}}\) 10.\(\textsf{e3} \textsf{\texttt{d7}}\) 11.\(\textsf{\texttt{d3\pm}}\) \(\textsf{e7}\)
12.\(\textsf{\texttt{c2} \textsf{g6}}\) 13.0–0 0–0 14.\(\textsf{\texttt{b4} \textsf{f6}}\) 15.\(\textsf{\texttt{xf5}}\) exf5 16.b5 White had the initiative, Schlosser – Khalifman, Germany 1997.

8...\(\textsf{\texttt{g4}}\) 9.h3 \(\textsf{\texttt{h5}}\) 10.g4 \(\textsf{\texttt{e7}}\) 11.\(\textsf{\texttt{e5! \textsf{f8}}\) 12.\(\textsf{\texttt{g3\pm}}\) Khenkin – Gleizerov, Stockholm 2004.

8...\(\textsf{\texttt{e4}}\) 9.f3 \(\textsf{\texttt{g6}}\) 10.\(\textsf{\texttt{xg6}}\) hxg6 11.e4\(\pm\) Gausel – Rowson, Oxford 1998.

8...\(\textsf{\texttt{f6}}\) 9.\(\textsf{\texttt{xf5}}\) exf5 10.e3\(\pm\)

9.\(\textsf{\texttt{xg6}}\) hxg6 10.e4

The most active. 10.e3 was of course also playable.

10...\(\textsf{\texttt{f6}}\)

10...\(\textsf{\texttt{dxe4}}\) 11.\(\textsf{\texttt{xe4}}\) and there is a big hole on d6.

11.exd5

Opening the position.

In a previous game Kramnik had played 11.\(\textsf{\texttt{d3}}\) dxe4 12.\(\textsf{\texttt{xe4}}\) \(\textsf{\texttt{xe4}}\) 13.\(\textsf{\texttt{xe4}}\) \(\textsf{\texttt{e7}}\) 14.0–0–0 \(\textsf{\texttt{d7}}\) 15.\(\textsf{\texttt{b1 \textsf{f6}}\) 16.\(\textsf{\texttt{f3 \textsf{d5}}})\), but Black was very solid in Kramnik – Short, Dos Hermanas 1997.

11.\(\textsf{\texttt{xexd5}}\)

If 11...\(\textsf{\texttt{exd5}}\) then 12.0–0–0 \(\textsf{\texttt{e7}}\) 13.\(\textsf{\texttt{e1}}\) is very awkward for Black.

12.\(\textsf{\texttt{xexd5}}\) cxd5 13.\(\textsf{\texttt{b5\dagger}}\)

Again White chooses the sharpest line. 13.\(\textsf{\texttt{xb8 \textsf{axb8}}\) 14.\(\textsf{\texttt{b5\dagger}}\) \(\textsf{\texttt{d8}}\) 15.\(\textsf{\texttt{g3}}\) \(\textsf{\texttt{e7}}\) is not so clear. Black has lost the right to castle, but he will get counterplay after 16.0–0 \(\textsf{\texttt{f6}}\) 17.\(\textsf{\texttt{ad1 \textsf{c7}}\) 18.\(\textsf{\texttt{fc1}}\) b6? as pointed out by Huebner in his ChessBase annotations.

13...\(\textsf{\texttt{c6}}\) 14.0–0–0 \(\textsf{\texttt{e7}}\) 15.h4

White grabs space all over the board. Later he can maybe play h4–h5 and open the position under favourable circumstances. It is too dangerous to castle, so Gelfand’s king is forced to remain in the centre. That is seldom a good sign.

15...\(\textsf{\texttt{f8}}\) 16.\(\textsf{\texttt{b1 a6}}\) 17.\(\textsf{\texttt{a4 \textsf{a5?!}}})\)

Seeking counterplay, but it just backfires.

Better was 17...\(\textsf{\texttt{g8}}\) but Black’s position is difficult to play.

18.\(\textsf{\texttt{f3}}\) b6?!

Continuing the wrong plan.

19.\(\textsf{\texttt{xb6 \textsf{b7}}\) 20.\(\textsf{\texttt{c1?!}}\)

This works well in the game, but is actually a small slip.

The violent 20.h5 g5 21.h6! was very strong: 21...\(\textsf{\texttt{xb6}}\) 22.\(\textsf{\texttt{e5}}\) f6 and now 23.\(\textsf{\texttt{c1}}\)! increases the pressure and puts Black in a hopeless position. He cannot get the knight back into play because 23...\(\textsf{\texttt{c4}}\) simply loses to 23.\(\textsf{\texttt{xc4}}\).

20.\(\textsf{\texttt{xb6}}\) 21.\(\textsf{\texttt{c7}}\)

Striking with 21.h5 was still interesting.
21...\textit{\texttt{b8}}?!  
21...\textit{\texttt{d8}} was rather unclear and should have been tried.

22.\textit{\texttt{wc3}} \textit{\texttt{c4}} 23.\textit{\texttt{xc6}} \textit{\texttt{xb2\dagger}} 24.\textit{\texttt{xb2}} \textit{\texttt{xb2\dagger}} 25.\textit{\texttt{a1}}

Black has miscalculated: he is completely lost, because he cannot parry both White's threats of \textit{\texttt{xc4}} and \textit{\texttt{c8\dagger}}.

25...\textit{\texttt{g8}} 26.\textit{\texttt{xc4}} \textit{\texttt{xf2}} 27.\textit{\texttt{c8\dagger}} \textit{\texttt{h7}} 28.\textit{\texttt{xb8\dagger}} \textit{\texttt{fxh8}} 29.g3 \textit{\texttt{a3}} 30.\textit{\texttt{d1}} \textit{\texttt{g8}} 31.\textit{\texttt{d3}} \textit{\texttt{c7}}

Or if 31...\textit{\texttt{f1\dagger}} then 32.\textit{\texttt{d1}}.

32.\textit{\texttt{c7}} g5 33.\textit{\texttt{hxg5}} \textit{\texttt{xg5}} 34.\textit{\texttt{b1}} \textit{\texttt{c7}} 35.\textit{\texttt{c2}} g5 36.\textit{\texttt{a4}} f5 37.a5 \textit{\texttt{f6}} 38.\textit{\texttt{b6}} f4 39.\textit{\texttt{gxg4}} \textit{\texttt{fxf4}} 40.\textit{\texttt{d1}} 1–0

\textbf{Conclusion}: The experimental 2...\textit{\texttt{f5}} is well answered by 3.\textit{\texttt{c3}} e6 4.\textit{\texttt{f3}} c6 5.\textit{\texttt{b3}} with good play in all variations.

Next is another unusual second move by Black. It poses the relevant question, what happens if your opponent does the same as you?

The Symmetrical 2...\textit{\texttt{c5}}

1.\textit{\texttt{d4}} d5 2.\textit{\texttt{c4}} c5

Black tries to equalize by liquidating the centre. Pawns will inevitably be exchanged, but the advantage of moving first will be visible: White gets a pleasant positional initiative.

3.\textit{\texttt{cxd5}}

The most natural choice.

3...\textit{\texttt{f6}}

3...\textit{\texttt{xd5}} will lose time due to the exposed queen: 4.\textit{\texttt{f3}} cxd4 5.\textit{\texttt{c3! a5}} 6.\textit{\texttt{xd4}} shows what I mean. 6...\textit{\texttt{f6}} and now the simplest is probably 7.g3\textit{\texttt{f}}. For instance, 7...e5 8.\textit{\texttt{b3}} \textit{\texttt{c7}} 9.\textit{\texttt{g2}} with ideas such as \textit{\texttt{g5}} gaining control over the key square d5.

4.\textit{\texttt{e4}}

This is the sharpest and most promising line.

Instead 4.\textit{\texttt{f3}} cxd4 5.\textit{\texttt{xd4}} \textit{\texttt{xd5}} 6.\textit{\texttt{c3}} \textit{\texttt{xd4}} 7.\textit{\texttt{xd4}}\textit{\texttt{f}} leads to a slightly better endgame, but because of the many exchanges and the pawn symmetry, the risk of drawing is quite high.

4...\textit{\texttt{dxe4}} 5.\textit{\texttt{dxc5}}
5...\textit{x}c5

Not a great square for the knight.

The alternative is 5...\textit{a}5\textdagger. This looks too risky though: 6.\textit{d}d2 \textit{x}xd2 7.\textit{w}xd2 \textit{w}xc5 8.\textit{a}3

With the threat of \textit{c}c1. 8...\textit{d}d7 9.\textit{c}c1 \textit{b}b6

10.\textit{c}c4 White has a strong initiative. 10...\textit{w}f6

11.\textit{f}f3 g5 12.\textit{c}ce5 \textit{h}h6 This was Goossens – Zaitsev, Belgium 2007, and now 13.\textit{b}b4 is clearly better for White.

Or 10...\textit{h}h6 11.f4

11.\textit{x}xh6 gxh6 12.\textit{f}f3 cannot be bad either.

11...\textit{a}6

11...e6 12.d6 \textit{c}c6 13.\textit{f}f3 f6 was suggested by Breutigam. A simple response is 14.\textit{c}c2 e5 15.\textit{f}xe5 \textit{x}xd2\textdagger 16.\textit{c}cxe2 fxe5 17.\textit{h}he1\textdagger.

12.\textit{e}e5 \textit{d}d6 13.\textit{c}cxd7 \textit{b}xd7 14.\textit{f}f3 e6

15.\textit{x}xa6 \textit{b}xa6 16.0–0 \textit{d}d8 17.\textit{w}e2 \textit{w}xd5

18.\textit{f}fd1 \texti\textit{a}5 19.\textit{e}e8\textdagger \textit{w}xd8 20.\textit{w}xa6 \textit{b}b6\textdagger

21.\textit{w}xb6 axb6 22.\textit{f}f1 \textit{f}6

H. Olafsson – Westerinen, Reykjavik 1997, and now White has 23.\textit{c}c7\textdagger.

6.\textit{c}c3

The most active move, which we will check out in Game 63. For those who love a small but steady positional advantage, it is worth considering 6.\textit{b}b3 e6 7.\textit{c}c3 exd5 8.\textit{w}xd5 with an initiative in the ending.

6...e5

Black wants to close the position. This was recommended in a survey in ChessBase Magazine, but my guess is that the author Breutigam did not know this game.

Trying to keep liquidating pawns in the centre by means of 6...e6 runs into 7.b4! \textit{w}f6 8.\textit{w}c2 \textit{c}ca6 9.a3 exd5 (otherwise Black’s position is just awful) 10.\textit{x}xd5! \textit{w}e5\textdagger 11.\textit{e}e3 \textit{e}e6 (He still cannot take the rook: 11...\textit{w}xa1 12.\textit{w}xc8\textdagger \textit{c}c7 13.\textit{f}f5\textdagger \textit{f}f6 14.\textit{d}d8\textdagger 1–0 Zambo – Papp Zoltan, Hungary 2002. 14...\textit{c}c5 15.\textit{d}d3\textdagger and mate in a few moves.) 12.\textit{b}b2 \textit{w}c7 13.\textit{b}b5\textdagger \textit{c}c6 14.\textit{f}f3\textdagger

7.b4!

Anyway. Of course. Strangely this obvious idea is not mentioned by Breutigam. 7.\textit{b}b3 \textit{d}d6 is less clear.
Chapter 8 - Minor Lines

7...\( \text{Ca6} \) 8.a3

The knight on a6 gives Black some positional headaches. It is not so easy to bring it back into the game, especially since its colleague on b8 also needs to get out. Actually, in the rest of the game neither of them moves!

8...\( \text{d6} \) 9.\( \text{f3} \) 0–0 10.\( \text{c4} \) e4

Maybe better is 10...\( \text{f5} \).

11.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{c7?!} \)

And here 11...\( \text{e8} \).

12.\( \text{b3?!} \)

12...\( \text{xh2?!} \)

This loses. 12...\( \text{e7} \) had to be played when 13.\( \text{db5} \) leaves White on top.

13.\( \text{cb5} \) \( \text{e5} \) 14.\( \text{b2} \)

Black will not get out of this mess.

14...\( \text{e3} \)

If 14...\( \text{h5} \) then 15.\( \text{e6! fxe6} \) 16.dxe6 \( \text{h8} \)

17.e7 \( \text{e8} \) 18.\( \text{f7} \) could follow.

15.\( \text{f3} \)

This wins a piece.

15...\( \text{xf2?!} \) 16.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{f4} \) 17.\( \text{xh2} \) \( \text{g4} \)

18.\( \text{e5} \)

1–0

Conclusion: 2...\( \text{c5} \) is too naive. White's lead in development gives him the edge in all variations.

And now for something completely different – a well respected opening system.

The Triangle Variation

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\( \text{c3} \) c6

The Triangle: a younger relative of the Semi-Slav. The Triangle is a popular move-order for many Black players who want to sidestep
annoying variations like the Exchange Slav or the Catalan and still reach the well-trodden paths of the Semi-Slav. There are some original roads as well, as we will soon see.

4.\(\square f3\)

Natural development.

White could also try the interesting Marshall Gambit 4.e4 dxe4 5.\(\square xe4 \square b4\)† 6.\(\square d2 \square x d4\) 7.\(\square x b4\) \(\square x e4\)† 8.\(\square e2\) with a fantastic dark-squared bishop as compensation for the pawn. I think in our repertoire it fits better just to develop. After all, we are not afraid of the Semi-Slav.

If we were Meran supporters we would of course play 4.e3 when 4...\(\square f6\) 5.\(\square f3\) transposes. Black, for his part, could vary with 4...\(\square f5\)†.

4...\(\square x c4\)

The Noteboom Variation, in which Black strives for complications. Most players opt for 4...\(\square f6\) with a normal Semi-Slav, but there are other lines.

4...\(\square f5\) is a kind of Stonewall Dutch which basically is outside the scope of this book. A simple and good way to continue is 5.\(\square f4\)† with control over e5: 5...\(\square f6\) 6.e3 \(\square c7\) (on 6...\(\square d6\) White is not forced to take, but can play 7.\(\square d3\) 7.\(\square d3\) 0–0 8.h3?! (also 8.\(\square c2\) and 8.0–0 are normal) 8...\(\square e4\) 9.g4 This is an interesting idea of Dreev, with play all over the board.

Sometimes Black even plays 4...\(\square d7\) or 4...\(\square d6\), but the problem with such moves is that they do nothing to fight for the centre and White can play e4 for free of charge. Let’s see:

4...\(\square d7\) 5.e4 dxe4 6.\(\square x e 4\) \(\square g f 6\) 7.\(\square x d 3\) \(\square x e 4\) 8.\(\square x e 4\) \(\square f 6\) 9.\(\square c 2\) \(\square b 4\)† 10.\(\square x d 2\) \(\square a 5\) 11.a3 (also fine is 11.0–0) 11...\(\square x d 2\)† 12.\(\square x d 2\)

\(\square x d 2\)† 13.\(\square x d 2\) \(\square c 7\) 14.\(\square h e 1\)† White had a comfortable ending in Karpov – Korchnoi, Vienna 1986.

4...\(\square d 6\) 5.e4 dxe4 6.\(\square x e 4\) \(\square b 4\)† 7.\(\square d 2\) \(\square x d 2\)† 8.\(\square x d 2\) looks even worse.

5.a4

Preventing ...\(\square b 5\) and expecting to win the pawn back with a pleasant space advantage, but Black has a way to get in ...\(\square b 5\) after all.

5...\(\square b 4\) 6.e3 \(\square b 5\) 7.\(\square d 2\)

\(\square x d 2\)† 13.\(\square x d 2\) \(\square c 7\) 14.\(\square h e 1\)† White had a comfortable ending in Karpov – Korchnoi, Vienna 1986.

4...\(\square d 6\) 5.e4 dxe4 6.\(\square x e 4\) \(\square b 4\)† 7.\(\square d 2\) \(\square x d 2\)† 8.\(\square x d 2\) looks even worse.

5.a4

Preventing ...\(\square b 5\) and expecting to win the pawn back with a pleasant space advantage, but Black has a way to get in ...\(\square b 5\) after all.

5...\(\square b 4\) 6.e3 \(\square b 5\) 7.\(\square d 2\)

Unpinning the knight and putting severe pressure on the black pawns.

7...\(\square a 5\)

The mainline. Black has a deep positional manoeuvre planned that leads to highly unbalanced positions. He has tried many other moves though. Let’s see the most important of them.

a) 7...\(\square b 6\) 8.\(\square e 5\)

This is dangerous for Black.
8...\(\square d 7\) 9.axb5 \(\square x e 5\) 10.dxe5 \(\square x b 5\) 11.\(\square e 4\) \(\square c 7\) 12.\(\square g 4\) \(\square f 8\) 13.\(\square f 4\)

This gave White excellent compensation for the pawn because Black’s uncastled king in an old Alekhine game. The master of attack
finished in his usual sparkling style:
13...a5 14...e2...e7 15.0–0...h5 16...g5...xg5
17...xg5...h6 18...e4!...h4? 19...xax5!...f6 (19...xax5
20...b4†) 20...exf6...xf6 21...xb5 1–0

In this line 8...xf6 is no better: 9.axb5...xb5
10.b3...d5 11.axb5!...c3 12...xc3...xc3
13...c2...c6 14...xc3 (14...c4† was strong)
14...xe5 15.dxe5...xb7 16...c4...xg2 17...g1
...e4 18...xe4...xc3† 19...xe2 0–0? (19...xd8)
20...xg7†!...xg7 21...h1†...h8 22...d3...f5
23...xf6...c7 24...g7 White was winning in

b) 7...e7 8.axb5...xc3 9...xc3...xb5 10.d5!
This shows the bishop’s potential. 10...xf6
11.d6...b7 12...xf6 (12.b3...e4 is more
complicated) 12...gxf6 13...e2...a6 14.b3...xb3
15...xb3± Beliavsky – Feygin, Germany 2001.
The d6-pawn is phenomenal and Black’s pawns
are seriously weakened.

c) 7...b7 8.axb5 (8.b3 is also possible)
8...xc3 9...xc3...xb5 10.d5! Again we see this
motif. 10...xf6 11.dxe6...xd1† 12...xd1...xf3
12...fxe6 (13...d4†) 13...xf7†...xf7 14...xf7...c6
White’s bishops and active rooks are a strong
force. One example continued: 15...d6...ac8
16...g1...he8 17...h3...c7 18...g5!...b8 19...c5
...b6 20...a5...xa5 21...xc7†...g6 22...xb6
axb6 23...e6...d3 24...b7...c5 25...xb6 1–0

d) 7...xf6 8.axb5...xc3 9...xc3...xb5 10.b3
0–0 11.bxc4...xc4 12...xc4...c7 13...b3± a5
14.0–0...b7 15...fc1...g4? 16.d5† Piket –
Kupreichik, Lvov 1988. On 16...exd5 comes
17...d3 with numerous threats.

8...b1?
This relatively little known but very subtle
move poses new problems for Black, as we
shall see in Game 64.

The traditional mainline is 8.axb5...xc3 9...xc3
xcxb5 10.b3...b7 11.bxc4 (11.d5†?) 11...b4
12...b2...f6 13...d3 0–0 14.0–0...bd7 and
now White’s most popular move is 15...e1
planning to expand further in the centre. The
variation is still far from resolved. Despite
hundreds of tries White has not been able to
find anything clear-cut yet. The big centre and
the pair of bishops are important, but so are
Black’s two connected passed pawns!

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**Game 64**

**Elwert – Binder**

Correspondence 1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3...c3 c6 4...f3 dxc4 5.a4...b4 6.e3 b5 7...d2 a5 8...b1

A difficult move to understand at first, but
it is the surprising result of some aggressive
prophylactic thinking. Here is the reasoning
behind it: a key move for Black in the
Noteboom is...xc3 to save the b5-pawn, but
now White introduces the idea of taking back
with the pawn on c3 and opening the b-file for
the rook, thus renewing the attack on b5.

8...a6
Therefore Black defends b5 in advance. There are other ways to do so.

a) 8...\(\text{d}d7\)

This looks clumsy, but is without a doubt Black’s most solid option. White can easily finish his development and get the usual good long-term compensation for the pawn, but perhaps no more than that, as Black’s position is rather solid.

9.\(\text{e}e5\) \(\text{f}f6\) 10.\(\text{w}f3\)

Activating the queen.

The more modest 10.\(\text{f}e2\) 0–0 11.\(\text{f}f3\) \(\text{e}a7\)
12.0–0\(\text{e}\) was a good alternative.

10...\(\text{a}a7\) 11.\(\text{e}e2\) 0–0 12.0–0 \(\text{d}d5\) 13.\(\text{c}e4\) \(\text{b}b6\)
Or 13...\(\text{e}xc3\) 14.\(\text{b}xc3\) \(\text{d}d6\) 15.\(\text{f}f4\).

14.\(\text{g}g3\)

Also interesting is the new move 14.\(\text{f}d1\) which increases the pressure. Black probably has to answer 14...\(\text{e}e8\). Taking the second pawn with 14...\(\text{e}xc3\) 15.\(\text{b}xc3\) \(\text{a}xa4\) can be punished tactically with 16.\(\text{w}g3\) \(\text{f}6\) 17.\(\text{e}xc4!\) \(\text{b}xc4\) 18.\(\text{h}h6\) \(\text{e}7\) 19.\(\text{e}xb8\) \(\text{e}xc3\) 20.\(\text{e}xh8\) \(\text{e}xh8\) 21.\(\text{e}xc3\) \(\text{g}xh6\) 22.\(\text{e}xc4\) \(\text{a}4\) 23.\(\text{w}g3\) \(\text{h}h8\) 24.\(\text{f}fb1\) with good play.

14...\(\text{f}f6\) 15.\(\text{d}xd7\) \(\text{w}xd7\) 16.\(\text{f}bd1\) \(\text{a}a6\) 17.\(\text{a}xb5\) \(\text{cxb5}\) 18.\(\text{d}5!\) \(\text{d}d6\)

Or if 18...\(\text{e}xd5\) then 19.\(\text{g}g4\).

19.\(\text{w}h3\) \(\text{e}xd5\) 20.\(\text{w}g4\) \(\text{w}e8\) 21.\(\text{e}e6\)! 12.\(\text{w}f3\)

Even stronger was first 21.\(\text{f}f5\).

21.\(\text{h}h8\) 22.\(\text{e}e3\) \(\text{c}c5\) 23.\(\text{e}xd5\)

White seemed better, although the position was still fairly unclear, Mayo – Riera, Mataró 2005.

b) 8...\(\text{w}b6\) defends with the queen. 9.\(\text{a}xb5\)
(9.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{cxb3}\) 10.\(\text{w}xb3\) \(\text{e}xc3\) 11.\(\text{a}xc3\) \(\text{b}4\) 12.\(\text{d}5!\)
\(\text{f}f6\) 13.\(\text{e}xf6\) \(\text{g}xf6\) 14.\(\text{w}b2\) \(\text{cxd5}\) 15.\(\text{w}xf6\) \(\text{f}f8\)
was unclear, but seemed okay in Beaumont – A. Shaw, corr. 1998) 9...\(\text{cxb5}\) 10.\(\text{b}3\) Actually a new move, but the most obvious one in the position.

10...\(\text{e}xc3\) 11.\(\text{a}xc3\) \(\text{cxb3}\) (not 11...\(\text{b}4\) 12.\(\text{b}xc4\))
12.\(\text{w}xb3\) \(\text{b}4\) 13.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{f}f6\) 14.\(\text{d}d4\) \(\text{w}b7\) 15.\(\text{xf6\} \(\text{g}x\) 16.\(\text{c}c4\) With good play for the pawn.

c) 8...\(\text{e}xc3\) 9.\(\text{bxc3}\) The point. 9...\(\text{w}d5\)
10.\(\text{e}4!\) \(\text{w}xe4\) 11.\(\text{w}e2\) \(\text{f}f6\) (if 11...\(\text{w}d5\) then 12.\(\text{e}e5\) with the threat of 13.\(\text{e}f3\)) 12.\(\text{a}xb5\)
\(\text{cxb5}\) 13.\(\text{e}xb5\) 14.\(\text{e}e5\) \(\text{c}c6\) 16.\(\text{f}f3\) \(\text{h}4\) 17.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{h}3\) 18.\(\text{e}xa8\) \(\text{e}a8\)
19.\(\text{f}a4\) \(\text{d}5\) 20.\(\text{f}f2\) White was winning in Grachev – Doric, Pardubice 2005.

d) 8...\(\text{f}f6\) is a mistake: 9.\(\text{a}xb5\) \(\text{e}xc3\) 10.\(\text{b}xc3\)
\(\text{cxb5}\) 11.\(\text{e}xb5\) Once again we see the effect of the little rook move.

e) 8...\(\text{b}xa4\) is a radical way to solve the problem with the b-pawn. White wins the pawn back and gets a distinct positional plus. 9.\(\text{e}xc4\)
\(\text{f}6\) 10.\(\text{a}xa4\) 0–0 11.0–0 \(\text{b}d7\) 12.\(\text{c}c1\) \(\text{f}5\) 13.\(\text{e}e2\) \(\text{e}7\) 14.\(\text{a}xb4\) \(\text{e}b4\) 15.\(\text{e}e1\) \(\text{a}6\)
16.\(\text{d}d3\) \(\text{e}xd3\) 17.\(\text{e}xd3\) \(\text{b}6\) 18.\(\text{c}c5\) \(\text{b}d7\)
19.\(\text{a}a4\) \(\text{b}6\) 20.\(\text{b}3\) Babula – Matlak, Czech Republic 1997.

9.\(\text{e}e5\)

\[
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\]

The position was already full of poison.

9...\(\text{w}c7\)

The position was already full of poison.

9...\(\text{e}f6\) 10.\(\text{e}xc6\) A surprising strike. (10.\(\text{w}b3\)
would be a good, more traditional, alternative)
10...\(\text{e}xc6\) 11.\(\text{a}xb5\) \(\text{e}xd4\) (better was 11...\(\text{b}7\))
12.\(\text{b}xc6\) \(\text{e}xc6\) 12.\(\text{b}xa6\) \(\text{b}3\) 13.\(\text{e}xc4\) \(\text{e}xd2\)
14.\(\text{w}xd2\) \(\text{f}e4\) 15.\(\text{e}e2\) \(\text{f}f2\)
Delchev – Nikolov, Bulgaria 1991. And now 17...hxf1 when White’s strong a-pawn gives good winning chances.

9...a7 10.xc6 (again we see this small combination, and again a good alternative is 10.f3) 10...xc6 11.axb5 b7 12.bxc6 xc6 13.xc4 (13.f3 would secure a positional edge) 13...g5 Black had counterplay in Moskalenko – Malisaukas, Norilsk 1987.

10.g4

White wants to provoke some weaknesses. The immediate 10.f3 has also been played, but the text move is stronger.

10...g6

10.f5 loses material: 11.h5 g6 12.xg6 f7 (12...f6 13.h3 g8 14.f4+) 13.axb5 hxg6 (not 13...xb5 14.f3 and both rooks are hanging) 14.xb8 cxb5 Black did not have anything for the exchange, Bernal Moro – Candela Perez, Ponferrada 1997. A simple way to make progress is 15.h4 followed by h5.

11.f3 a7 12.e4!

And now we see the effect: Black is very weak on the dark squares.

12.f5

12...xd2† 13.xd2! is no better.

13.xb4 axb4 14.c5

A nice square. White is clearly better.

14.b3 15.e2 c8 16.0–0 e7 17.f1 d6

17...0–0 should have been tried.

18.f4 d7

Now it was too late: 18...0–0 19.xg6 xf4 20.xf4 with horrible pawns.

19.axb5 cxb5 20.cxd7 xd7 21.h6

The queen enters on the kingside.

21.c6 22.a1

And the rook on the queenside.

22.c7 23.g7 f8 24.xh7 a1

25.xa1 d8 26.g7 g8 27.f6 c3

28.a7!

A nice blow.

28.b7

Or 28.xa7 29.xc6†.

29.xe6

1–0

On 29...cxb2 White plays 30.f7† e8
31.\textit{d}d6† \textit{w}xd6 32.\textit{x}xb5† \textit{f}8 33.\textit{w}xd6 \textit{b}1=\textit{w} 34.\textit{f}1 and wins. This variation is quite possible to calculate in a correspondence game, so Black did not feel like seeing it played out. It reminds me of a little anecdote. In the Dresden Olympiad it was illegal to accept a draw before move 30. My Danish team-mate Peter Heine Nielsen suggested that then it should also be forbidden to resign before move 30!

**Conclusion:** The interesting move 8.\textit{b}1 is a promising way to combat the Noteboom Variation.

The Semi-Tarrasch offers Black a way out of the normal Queen’s Gambit Exchange Variation.

**The Semi-Tarrasch**

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.\textit{c}c3 \textit{f}6 4.cxd5 \textit{xd}5

Black avoids the typical Exchange Variation pawn structure with 4...\textit{xd}5 and tries instead to play the solid Semi-Tarrasch.

5.e4

Of course White takes the centre.

5...\textit{xc}3 6.bxc3 c5

Black seeks simplification. After the natural 7.\textit{f}3 we have a genuine Semi-Tarrasch, where Black usually continues 7...\textit{xd}4 8.\textit{xd}4 \textit{b}4† 9.\textit{xd}2 \textit{xd}2† 10.\textit{xd}2 0–0 with a slightly passive but very solid position. However White does not have to be so cooperative. He can use the particular move order to his advantage by preventing the ...\textit{b}4† idea. One way to do that is 7.\textit{b}1, the other is:

7.a3!

White hopes to use his extra space to build up some serious pressure on Black’s kingside. Which is exactly what happens in the following game.

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<td>e</td>
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<td>f</td>
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Nice prophylaxis against ...\textit{b}4†. White has the centre and much more space, so of course he is interested in keeping as many pieces on the board as possible.

7...\textit{e}7

7...\textit{xd}4 8.\textit{xd}4 \textit{e}7 9.\textit{f}3 will just transpose.

8.\textit{f}3 0–0 9.\textit{d}3 \textit{xd}4

And so will 9...\textit{c}6 10.\textit{b}2 \textit{xd}4 11.\textit{xd}4.

10.\textit{xd}4 \textit{c}6

10...\textit{b}5 just creates a weakness, so White can shift to positional mode: 11.0–0 \textit{b}7 12.\textit{f}4 \textit{a}6 13.a4! \textit{d}7 14.\textit{e}2 \textit{bxa}4 15.\textit{xa}4 \textit{f}6 16.\textit{b}1± I. Sokolov – Teske, Calatrava 2007.

11.\textit{b}2

Dynamic chess. The bishop is placed on the long diagonal pointing towards the black king.
All that is needed is the pawn break d4-d5 to make it come alive.

11...a5†

Black tries to disturb White before his army is fully developed. White could play safe and just offer the exchange of queens with 12.d2, but Bareev comes up with a very creative attacking scheme.

12.f1! d8 13.h4!

The rook can enter the fight via h3 and g3, adding further pressure against Black’s king position. The threats can quickly become serious. Both white bishops are ready to join the attack after pawn moves such as d4-d5 and/or e4-e5.

13...b6

Preparing ...a6.

14.e2

Preventing it.

14...b7

The most natural. Black could be insistent with 14...b8, but then 15.e5 a6 16.xa6 xxa6 17.xa6 xa6 18.c6 d7 19.c1+ gives White a pleasant positional advantage, Lafuente – Lopez Martinez, La Massana 2008.

15.d1 f8

Passive play will not save Black. However there was no easy solution: 15...d7 16.h3 b8 And now the powerful pawn sacrifice: 17.d5! exd5 18.e5! This opens lines and leaves Black’s king rather vulnerable. 18...h6 19.g5! xg5 (or 19...hxg5 20.h5 g6 21.xg6 winning) 20.hxg5 d4 21.f4 It is all over. 21...g6 22.xh6 e7 23.g4 f8 24.f5 1-0 Raykin – Rogemont, corr. 1999.

16.h3 ac8 17.g1 e7 18.h5 h6 19.d5!

Again we see this instructive pawn sacrifice.

19...exd5 20.e5 d4

Black returns the pawn hoping for some simplifications – a hope, it turns out, which has nothing to do with reality.

21.xd4 d5 22.g3 c6

This allows the white knight access to the dream-square f5, when the attack will be irresistible. However, Black’s position was beyond repair anyway.

23.f5 h8

Every likely combination wins.

24.xh6

Just as strong was 24.xg7 xg7 25.g4 g8 26.f5 with a nasty threat of mate on h7.

24...e6 25.xf7† xf7 26.e6 f4 27.h6

The bishop on b2 is really the hero of the day.

27...d4

Or 27...xh6 28.h3.

28.hxg7† xg7 29.h5† h6 30.xh6† xh6 31.e7

The final blow.
31...\textit{d}5

Nothing works: 31...\textit{e}8 32.\textit{xe}d4\textit{f} or 31...\textit{e}d6 32.\textit{f}5.

32.\textit{e}4

1–0

\textbf{Conclusion}: Black's attempt to reach a normal Semi-Tarrasch is countered by the clever 7.a3, when White benefits from his extra space and quickly gets a very promising position.

Our final line is a QGD-Nimzo hybrid.

\textbf{The QGD with 3...\textit{b}4}

1.d4 \textit{d}5 2.c4 \textit{e}6 3.\textit{c}3 \textit{b}4

8.\textit{d}3 \textit{h}6 9.0–0 \textit{a}6 10.\textit{c}xd5 \textit{exd}5 11.\textit{xa}6 \textit{xa}6 12.\textit{d}3 \textit{c}8 13.\textit{c}4 \textit{dxc}4 14.\textit{xc}c4±

I. Sokolov – Giorgadze, Debrecen 1992

8.\textit{d}3 \textit{bc}6 9.0–0 \textit{dxc}4 10.\textit{xc}c4 \textit{c}7 A Nimzo-Indian with a strange knight: 11.\textit{d}3 \textit{e}5 12.\textit{w}c2 \textit{h}6 13.e4±

6.e3

Play has now transposed to a real Nimzo position, which can be reached with the move orders 1.d4 \textit{f}6 2.c4 \textit{e}6 3.\textit{c}c3 \textit{b}4 4.a3 \textit{xc}3\textit{f} 5.bxc3 \textit{d}5 6.e3 or 4.e3 \textit{d}5 5.a3 and so on. In both cases Black has refrained from the most intriguing lines, and the game position is rightfully judged as somewhat more pleasant for White.

6...0–0

6...\textit{c}5 7.\textit{cxd}5 \textit{exd}5 8.\textit{d}3 leads to the same position as later in the text, as does 6...\textit{b}6 7.\textit{cxd}5 \textit{exd}5 8.\textit{d}3.

An independent line is 6...\textit{c}6 with the idea of taking back on \textit{d}5 with the c-pawn. The evaluation however is the same: 7.\textit{f}3 0–0 8.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}6 Black prepares ...\textit{a}6. 9.\textit{cxd}5 \textit{cxd}5 10.\textit{w}e2 And White prevents it. 10...\textit{b}7 11.\textit{b}2 \textit{c}6 (or 11...\textit{w}c8 12.\textit{xc}1 \textit{a}6 13.\textit{d}4 \textit{dxc}4 14.\textit{xc}c4 \textit{xc}4 15.\textit{xc}c4±


7.\textit{cxd}5

White clarifies the pawn structure in a favourable way, just like in the Queen's Gambit Exchange Variation.

7...\textit{exd}5 8.\textit{d}3 \textit{b}6

8...\textit{c}5 9.\textit{e}2 \textit{b}6 10.0–0 \textit{a}6 is another transposition. If Black instead drops the desired exchange of the light-squared bishops and opts for 9...\textit{c}6 he will nevertheless face the same white set-up: 10.0–0 \textit{e}8 11.f3 \textit{b}6 12.\textit{g}3
An instructive rook transfer. 13...\textit{\textbackslash}textbullet\_e8 14.e2 cxd4 15.cxd4 \textit{\textbackslash}textbullet\_a5 16.e1+ c7 (16...c6 17.f5 b5 18.e4+) 17.h1 g6? 18.e4 dxe4 Peralta – Ibarra Jerez, Barcelona 2008, and now 19.xe4 xe4 20.xe4 a6 21.d3 xe2 22.xe2 xd3 23.xd3 looks promising for White, for instance 23...d5 24.e8+ g7 25.e3+.

9.e2 a6

The culmination of Black's grand positional scheme. He exchanges White's good bishop and ends up with a knight against the passive remaining bishop on c1. The knight even has a potentially great outpost on c4. So what is wrong? Has White been outplayed so quickly? No! In this case the first impression does not last. Actually White's position is preferable and the reason lies in the dynamic pawn structure. White has a concrete plan of playing f3 and e4 with an initiative. Then the bishop will wake up and there are serious prospects on the kingside, just like we saw in the first chapter of this book. White's pawn power is very similar to the situation in the Exchange Variation of the QGD.

10.xa6 xa6 11.d3

Politely asking the knight what it intends to do.

11.c8

Probably best. Regrouping with 11...b8 12.0–0 c6 13.f3 a5 takes time and White can execute his own expansion in the centre: 14.a2 e8 15.g3 c5 16.e4! cxd4 17.cxd4 c8 18.e5 d7 19.f4 c7 20.f5 c3 21.e2 c6 22.d2 c4 23.b4 cxe2 24.xe2 De Santis – Iotti, Arvier 2002.

12.f3

The most exact. 12.0–0 will usually transpose, but Black gets the extra option 12...b8 13.f3 a6!? which is a little annoying.

12...c5

Or 12...e8 13.0–0 c5, which is just a transposition.

13.0–0 e8 14.g3 b7

The fight for control over e4 continues.

15.b2

Also popular is transferring the rook with 15.a2 followed by e2, but I like the bishop move more. I think White is slightly better, which I will back-up with a few examples.

15...c4 This is seldom a good idea – see the instructive final game. 16.d2 c7 17.ae1 b5 18.f2! e6 And now the break 19.e4 is made possible by the pressure along the f-file, Jurkiewicz – Romantowski, Olkusz 1995.

15.c7 16.ae1 a6 17.d2 cxd4 18.d4 b5 19.e4! xa3 20.f5 With a strong attack. 20.h6 21.f4 c4 22.c1 b5 23.xg7! xg7 24.xh6+ g8 25.e5+ Winning the piece back with interest, Hoi – Sanchez Martin, Copenhagen 2002.

15.e6 16.ae1 e8 17.c4 Opening lines for the bishop. I said it could turn out to be good. 17...cxd4 18.xd4±
The time has come to leave. This book started with some outstanding games by Botvinnik, so what better way to end it than by presenting another masterpiece by the Patriarch, created by his profound feeling for dynamic pawn structures.

**Game 66**

Botvinnik – Capablanca

Holland 1938

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘b4

Many places in the book I have changed the real move order of a game to explain my repertoire, but I cannot fiddle with this classic.

4.e3 d5 5.a3 ♘xc3† 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♕e2 b6 10.0-0 ♘a6 11.♗xa6 ♘xa6 12.♗b2?! 

Imprecise. Better was 12.♕d3.

12...♘d7 13.a4

Now on 13.♕d3 Black would have the rather annoying queen move 13...♖a4 already infiltrating on the queenside.

13...♗f68?!

Black could have played more actively with 13...cxd4 14.cxd4 ♘f68 followed by ...♗c4 and ...♖a8 with a fine position. White could seriously consider 14.♕xd4, but of course Black is okay.

14.♕d3

Back to normal.

14...c4?!

Capablanca makes a deep strategic mistake. From a strictly positional view the move is desirable. Black closes the position and intends to follow up with the knight manoeuvre ♘a6-b8-c6-a5-b3, when the a4-pawn would be difficult to defend. However Capablanca completely misjudges the dynamic features in the position. If White manages to advance in the centre with f3 and e4 he will get a strong initiative that can quickly be transformed into a fierce attack.

In that light, Black should have chosen 14...♗b7.

15.♖c2 ♘b8 16.♗ae1 ♗c6 17.♗g3 ♗a5

On 17...♖e4 White answers coolly with 18.♗h1 followed by f3, and then the white knight would return.

18.f3 ♘b3 19.e4! ♕xa4

![Chessboard diagram](image)

Black has won the pawn, but White's advance in the centre leads to a direct offensive.

20.e5!

Gaining more space.

20...♗d7 21.♗f2 g6

Black is on the defensive. From now on he will have no spare time to breathe or consolidate. Here he is preventing the white knight from jumping to f5 and d6.

22.f4 f5

Otherwise White plays f5 himself.
23...exf6 24.fx6 e5 25.\textit{ex}e1

Black simplifies by trying to exchange all the rooks.

25.\textit{ex}e1 \textit{e}e8

25...\textit{e}e8 26.\textit{f}f4 was not easy to defend, for instance 26...\textit{d}d7 27.\textit{e}e6\# with strong pressure.

26.\textit{e}e6!

Now the exchange will come at a high price: the passed e6-pawn will be very strong.

26...\textit{ex}e6 27.\textit{x}xe6 \textit{g}g7 28.\textit{f}f4

Activating the queen. Black is very vulnerable on the dark squares and White is already threatening 29.\textit{f}f5\# gxf5 30.\textit{g}g5\# and \textit{xf}6.

28...\textit{e}e8 29.\textit{e}e5

A little inaccurate, because now Black had the chance to put up some resistance with 29...h6. Simpler was 29.\textit{c}7\# \textit{g}8 30.\textit{e}e5, but then we would not have the following historic finish.

29...\textit{e}e7

30.\textit{a}a3! \textit{xa}a3 31.\textit{h}h5\#!

A spectacular combination. White sacrifices two pieces to open the way for the e6-pawn.

31...\textit{gx}h5 32.\textit{g}g5\# \textit{f}f8 33.\textit{xf}6\# \textit{g}g8

Not 33...\textit{e}e8 34.\textit{f}f7\# \textit{d}d8 35.\textit{d}d7\#.

34.\textit{e}7

There is no perpetual check.

34...\textit{c}c1\# 35.\textit{f}f2 \textit{c}c2\# 36.\textit{g}g3 \textit{d}d3\# 37.\textit{h}h4 \textit{e}e4\# 38.\textit{x}xh5 \textit{e}e2\# 39.\textit{h}h4 \textit{e}e4\# 40.\textit{g}g4 \textit{e}e1\# 41.\textit{h}h5

1–0

**Conclusion:** White should meet 3...\textit{b}b4 with 4.\textit{a}a3 and get a good Nimzo-Indian. The dynamic pawn structure is known to us from the QGD Exchange Variation: White plays a quick \textit{f}3 and hopes to follow with e4 gaining the initiative.

**Chapter Conclusion:** It is hardly surprising that White does not have many problems gaining the upper hand against Black’s various minor lines. The exception is the Triangle move order leading to the Noteboom Variation, which is worthy of serious study.

We have been on a long journey through very different openings, which require skills ranging from positional and strategic understanding to hardcore calculation. Together, the chapters in this book give a good picture of how varied and complex the modern game has become. But it is also a collection of excellent chess, and I hope that will be the final impression. So long.
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Index of Variations

This index is self-explanatory with one exception – some of the variations have two page numbers next to them. This is because the coverage of some variations is split – an introduction to the themes of the line at the start of a chapter, and in-depth theoretical coverage later.

Chapter 1 – Queen’s Gambit Declined

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Qc3

a) 3...d6 4.cxd5 exd5
  4...Qxd5 5.e4 Qxc3 6.bxc3 (18)

5.Qg5 c6
  5...Qe7 6.e3 0-0 7.Qd3 (18)
  5...Qbd7 6.e3 c6 7.Qd3 Qd6 8.Qc2 (18)

6.Qc2 Qe7
  6...Qa6 7.e3 Qb4 8.Qb1 (19)

7.e3 Qbd7
  7...Qg4 8.h3 (19)

8.Qd3 0-0
  8...Qh5 (19)

9.Qge2 Qe8 10.0-0 Qf8 11.f3 Qe6 (21)
  11...Qh5 (23)
  11...Qg6 (26)
  11...h6 (21)
  11...g6 (21)
  11...c5 (21)

9.h5 Qb6
  9...Qh6 (31)
  10.Qb1 Qg6 11.f3 h6 (34)
  11...0-0 (34)

Chapter 2 – Queen’s Gambit Accepted

1.d4 d5 2.c4 Qxc4 3.e4

3...e5
  3...b5 4.a4 (41)

3...c5 4.d5 e6 (43)
  4...Qf6 5.Qc3 b5 6.Qf4 (43)

5.Qxc4 Qf6 6.Qc3 (46)

3...Qc6 4.Qf3 Qg4 5.Qxc4 (61)
  5.d5 (61)

5...e6 (61)
  5...Qxf3 (61)

6.e3 Qf5
  6...Qd6 (29)
  6...Qf6 (30)

7.g4 Qe6
  7...Qg6 (30)

8.h4 Qd7
  8...Qxh4 9.Qb3 b6 (32)
4. \( \text{a3} \) exd4
4...\( \text{a4} \) b4\( \) 5. \( \text{c3} \) (49)
5. \( \text{xc4} \) a6
5...\( \text{b4} \)\( \) 6. \( \text{bd2} \) (52)
6.0–0 \( \text{e6} \)
6...\( \text{f6} \) 7. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{d7} \) 8. \( \text{d2} \) (54)
7. \( \text{b5} \) (56)
7. \( \text{xe6} \) (56)

Chapter 3 – The Slav

1. d4 \( \text{d5} \) 2. c4 c6 3. \( \text{a3} \) \( \text{f6} \)
3...\( \text{xc4} \) 4. \( \text{c3} \) b5 (73)
4...\( \text{e6} \) (73)

4. \( \text{c3} \) dxc4
4...g6 (72)
4...\( \text{b5} \) (72)
4...\( \text{b6} \) (72)

5. a4 \( \text{f5} \)
5...\( \text{a6} \) 6. e4 \( \text{g4} \) 7. \( \text{xc4} \) (76)
5...\( \text{g4} \) 6. \( \text{e5} \) \( \text{h5} \) (78)
6...\( \text{bd7} \) (78)
7. f3 \( \text{fd7} \) (78)
7...\( \text{e6} \) (78)
8. \( \text{xc4} \) e5 9. e4 (79)
5...\( \text{e6} \) 6. e4 \( \text{b4} \) 7. e5 \( \text{d5} \) (82)
7...\( \text{e4} \) (82)
8. \( \text{d2} \) (82)

5...\( \text{d5} \) (73)
5...\( \text{c5} \) (73)
5...\( \text{a5} \) (73)

6. \( \text{e5} \)
6...\( \text{a6} \) 7. e3 \( \text{b4} \) 8. \( \text{xc4} \) e6 9.0–0 \( \text{e7} \)
(86)
9...\( \text{d6} \) (86)
9...\( \text{c2} \) (86)

a) 6...\( \text{e6} \) 7. f3 \( \text{b4} \)
7...c5 8. e4 \( \text{g6} \) (85, 95)

8...\( \text{xd4} \) 9. exf5 \( \text{c6} \) (95)
9...\( \text{b4} \) (95)
9. \( \text{e3} \) (96)
8. e4 \( \text{xe4} \) 9. fxe4 \( \text{xe4} \) 10. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{xd4} \)
11. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 12. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{xd2} \) 13. \( \text{xd2} \)
\( \text{d5} \) 14. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{a6} \) 15. \( \text{xc4} \) 0–0–0 (88)
15...0–0 (90)
15...b5 (93)
15...\( \text{b5} \) (93)
15...\( \text{e7} \) (93)

b) 6...\( \text{bd7} \) 7. \( \text{xc4} \) \( \text{c7} \)
7...\( \text{d5} \) (98)
7...\( \text{e6} \) (98)
7...\( \text{b6} \) 8. \( \text{e5} \) a5
8...\( \text{e6} \) (106)
9. \( \text{g5} \) (106)
9. f3 (106)
9. g3 (106)
9...h6 (106)
9...\( \text{g6} \) (106)
9...\( \text{d5} \) (107)

8. g3 e5 9. dxe5 \( \text{xc5} \) 10. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{fd7} \) 11. \( \text{a2} \)
g5
11...\( \text{e6} \) (99)
11...\( \text{e8} \) (99)
11...\( \text{e7} \) (99)
11...\( \text{f6} \) 12.0–0 \( \text{c5} \) (99)
12...\( \text{e6} \) (100)
12...0–0–0 (100)

12. \( \text{e3} \) gxf4 13. \( \text{xf5} \) 0–0–0 14. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{c5} \)
(103)
14...\( \text{b4} \) (103)
14...\( \text{b8} \) (103)
14...\( \text{g6} \) (103)
14...\( \text{xg3} \) (104)
Chapter 4 - The Semi-Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.d3 f3 d6 4.c3 e6 5.g5
5...e7 6.e3 0-0 7.d3 d7 8.0-0 h6
(158)
 8...dxc4 (158)
 8...b6 (160)
 8...e8 (160)

a) 5...bd7 6.e3 a5 7.cxd5 xd5
7...cxd5 (148)
7...xd5 (148)
7...e4 (149)

8...d2 b4
8...d7b6 (149, 152)

9.c1 h6
9...e5 (150)
9...f6 (150)
9...e5 (150)

10.h4 c5
10...0-0 (150)

11.a3 xcx3 12.bxc3 b6
12...xa3 (151)

13.c4
13.d3 (151)
13.e4 (151)

13...xd2+ (151)

b) 5...dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.h4 g5
9.xg5
9.exf6 (115)

9.hxg5
9...d5 10.xf7 (115, 120)

10.xg5 bd7
10...e7 (115, 122)

11.g3
11.exf6 (116)

11...b7
11...g8 (116, 124)
11...a5 (116, 127)

12.g2 b6
12...c7 (116)

13.exf6 0-0-0 14.0-0 c5
14...e5 (117)
14...h6 (117)
Chapter 5 – The a6-Slav

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. ∆f3 ∆f6 4. ∆c3 a6 5. c5 ∆bd7
  5... ∆f5 (171)
  5... b6 6. cxb6 axb6 (165)
    6... ∆bd7 (165)

  5... ∆g4 6. ∆e5 ∆h5 (166)
    6... ∆e6 (167)
    6... ∆f5 (167)
  7. ∆b3 ∆a7 8. e4 (167)
    8... ∆f4 (167)

  5... g6 (169)
  6. ∆f4 ∆h5
    6... g6 (175)
  7. ∆d2
    7. e3 (178)
    7... ∆d2 (178)
    7... ∆g5 (178)
  7... b6 8. e4 ∆xf4
    8... bxc5 (179)
  9. ∆xf4 e6 10. exd5 exd5 (179)
    10... exd5 (179)

Chapter 6 – The Tarrasch

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. ∆c3 c5 4. cxd5 exd5 5. ∆f3 ∆c6 6. g3 ∆f6
  6... c4 (187)
  7. ∆g2 ∆e7
    7... cxd4 (189)
  8. 0–0 0–0
    8... ∆e6 (190)
  9. ∆g5 cxd4
    9... c4 (190, 191)
    9... ∆e6 (190, 194)
    9... h6 (190)
  10. ∆xd4 h6 11. ∆e3 ∆e8
    11... ∆g4 (198)
  12. ∆a4
    12... b3 (183, 198)
    12... ∆c1 (198)
  12... ∆a5
    12... ∆xd4 (198)
    12... ∆d7 13. ∆fd1 (198)
    13... ∆c1 (198)
    13... ∆a5 (198)
    13... ∆b4 (198)
    13... ∆c5 (199)
  13. ∆ad1 ∆c4 (201)
    13... ∆d7 (201)
Chapter 7 – The Chigorin

1. d4 d5 2. c4 \( \text{\&c6} \) 3. \( \text{\&c3} \) \( \text{\&f6} \)
3...e5 (215)
3...dxc4 4. \( \text{\&f3} \) a6 (215)
4...\( \text{\&g4} \) (215)
4...e6 (215)
4. \( \text{\&f3} \)
4.cxd5 \( \text{\&xd5} \) 5. \( \text{\&f3} \) (216)
4...dxc4
4...\( \text{\&f5} \) (216)
4...\( \text{\&g4} \) 5.cxd5 \( \text{\&xd5} \) 6.e4 \( \text{\&xf3} \) (212)
6...\( \text{\&xc3} \) (213)
7.gxf3 \( \text{\&xc3} \) (213)
7...\( \text{\&b6} \) (213)
8.bxc3 e5 9.\( \text{\&b1} \) (213)
5. \( \text{\&g5} \) h6
5...\( \text{\&d5} \) (207)
5...\( \text{\&g4} \) (207)
5...a6 6.d5 \( \text{\&a7} \) (210)
6...\( \text{\&a5} \) (210)
6. \( \text{\&xf6} \) exf6 7.e3 \( \text{\&d6} \)
7...\( \text{\&b4} \) (207)
7...\( \text{\&a5} \) (207)
8...\( \text{\&c4} \) 0–0 (208)

Chapter 8 – Minor Lines

1. d4 d5 2. c4
2...e6 3. \( \text{\&c3} \) c5 4.cxd5 cxd4 (223)
2...\( \text{\&f5} \) (226)
2...e6 3. \( \text{\&c3} \) \( \text{\&b4} \) (236)
2...e6 3. \( \text{\&c3} \) \( \text{\&f6} \) 4.cxd5 \( \text{\&xd5} \) (236)
2...c5 (229)

a) 2...e5 3.dxe5 d4 4. \( \text{\&f3} \) \( \text{\&c6} \) 5.a3 \( \text{\&ge7} \)
5...a5 (220)
5...f6 (220)
5...\( \text{\&e6} \) (220)
5...\( \text{\&g4} \) (220)
6.b4 \( \text{\&g6} \)
6...\( \text{\&g4} \) (221)
7.\( \text{\&b2} \) a5
7...\( \text{\&gxe5} \) (221)
8.b5 \( \text{\&cxe5} \) 9.\( \text{\&xe5} \)
9.\( \text{\&xd4} \) (221)
9...\( \text{\&xe5} \) 10.e3 \( \text{\&e6} \) 11.\( \text{\&xd4} \) \( \text{\&xc4} \) 12.\( \text{\&c2} \)
\( \text{\&d6} \) (221)
12...\( \text{\&d5} \) (221)

b) 2...e6 3. \( \text{\&c3} \) c6 4. \( \text{\&f3} \) dxc4
4...f5 (232)
4...\( \text{\&d7} \) (232)
4...\( \text{\&d6} \) (232)
5.a4 \( \text{\&b4} \) 6.e3 b5 7.\( \text{\&d2} \) a5
7...\( \text{\&b6} \) (232)
7...\( \text{\&c7} \) (233)
7...\( \text{\&b7} \) (233)
7...\( \text{\&f6} \) (233)
8.\( \text{\&b1} \)
8.axb5 (233)
8...\( \text{\&a6} \)
8...\( \text{\&d7} \) (234)
8...\( \text{\&b6} \) (234)
8...\( \text{\&xc3} \) (234)
8...\( \text{\&f6} \) (234)
8...bxa4 (234)
9.\( \text{\&e5} \) \( \text{\&c7} \) (234)
9...\( \text{\&f6} \) (234)
Playing the Queen’s Gambit
— A Grandmaster Guide

By Lars Schandorff

The power of the Queen’s Gambit is beyond question, even though it allows some serious defences — the Slav and Semi-Slav are favoured by the elite, Kasparov was playing the Queen’s Gambit Accepted until he retired, and the Queen’s Gambit Declined has been trusted for a century.

The principled way for White to build a repertoire after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 is to play the critical main lines. Take as much space as possible — no compromises. That is Lars Schandorff’s attitude and so his choice is clear:

5.\textit{g5} against the Semi-Slav
6.\textit{De5} versus the 5...\textit{f5} main line Slav
3.e4 against the Queen’s Gambit Accepted
The Exchange Variation versus the Queen’s Gambit Declined
5.c5 against the 4...\textit{a6}-Slav

The Tarrasch, Chigorin, Albin and all minor lines are also met with the same vigour — this is a complete White repertoire after 1.d4 d5 2.c4.

\textbf{Lars Schandorff} is a grandmaster from Denmark who is renowned on the international circuit for the depth of his opening preparation.

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