Victor Mikhalevski
The Open Spanish

Tired of bad positions? Try the main lines!

QUALITY CHESS
The Open Spanish

By

Victor Mikhalevski

Quality Chess
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By the Author

My elder brother Sasha, IM Alex Mikhailevski, taught me to play chess when I was 4, just before he started his Soviet Army service. He returned from the army two years later and then I began to train seriously under his guidance. You may be wondering why I have started this Introduction with something unrelated to the Open Spanish? However, it is related as I have been playing the Open Spanish ever since I started playing chess and it was my brother who taught me this variation. Curiously enough, he played the French Defence when he joined the army, but returned from it playing the Open Spanish. In the army he had the privilege of being trained by a great theoretician, and in his prime one of the best players in the world, Isaac Boleslavsky. Boleslavsky recommended that he play this system. So it is quite possible I would not be writing this book, nor playing the Open Spanish, were it not for this great man, who died when I had barely learned how the pieces move.

In January 1991 I moved with my family to Israel. Only two months later I played my first tournament there, the Israel Open Championship. I won a decisive last-round game against the famous GM Yehuda Gruenfeld with the help of the Open Spanish, crushing my opponent in good style. It was the first of numerous encounters with Yehuda in this system.

Since my childhood right up to the moment of writing these words, the Open Spanish has served me faithfully and helped me to win many important games, so when Quality Chess asked me to write a book on this opening system I didn't have to think twice. I would also like to add that the book is not only about the Open variation, as it is a repertoire book that starts after 4.a4 d6. Therefore all White's side lines, such as 5.d3 and 5.e2 and other deviations from 5.0–0, are also covered with no less attention than the Open variation itself.

I hope everyone enjoys the book and if a few of you decide to take up the Open Spanish then I shall consider my mission to be accomplished.

Victor Mikhailevski
Beer-Sheva, December 2012
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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
≈  unclear

?  a weak move
??  a blunder
!  a good move
!!  an excellent move
!?  a move worth considering
?!  a move of doubtful value
#  mate

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Sidelines

5.\(\text{\textit{xc6}}\) and 5.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\)

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{\textit{f3}}\) \(\text{\textit{xc6}}\) 3.\(\text{\textit{b5}}\) a6 4.\(\text{\textit{a4}}\)

4...\(\text{\textit{f6}}\)

A) 5.\(\text{\textit{xc6}}\) dxc6
   A1) 6.0–0
   A2) 6.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\)
   A3) 6.d3 \(\text{\textit{d6}}\)
      A31) 7.0–0
      A32) 7.\(\text{\textit{bd2}}\)
B) 5.\(\text{\textit{c3}}\) b5 6.\(\text{\textit{b3}}\) \(\text{\textit{e7}}\)
   B1) 7.a4
   B2) 7.0–0 d6
      B21) 8.a4
      B22) 8.\(\text{\textit{d5}}\)
   B3) 7.d3 0–0
      B31) 8.\(\text{\textit{d2?!}}\)
      B32) 8.\(\text{\textit{d5}}\)
      B33) 8.0–0

A2) after 8.\(\text{\textit{xd4}}\)
A32) after 11.d4
B1) after 13.d3
In this chapter we will address the minor options of A) 5.\( \textsf{dx}c6 \) and B) 5.\( \textsf{c}3 \).

Other rare moves have little to recommend them. Here is one such example:
5.c3?! \( \textsf{dx}e4 \! \)

White already has to play accurately in order to maintain the balance.

6.\( \textsf{e}2 \! \)

6.0-0?! \( \textsf{e}5 \) 7.\( \textsf{xc}2 \) (7.\( \textsf{xc}6 \textsf{dx}c6 \) 8.\( \textsf{xe}5 \textsf{d}3\!\!\!\) 7...\( \textsf{e}4 \) 8.\( \textsf{e}1 \) \( \textsf{e}7 \! \) 9.\( \textsf{xe}4 \) \( \textsf{xe}4 \) 10.\( \textsf{xe}4 \textsf{d}5\!\!\!\)

Black is better thanks to his bishop pair and the weak light squares in White's camp.

6.d4?! \( \textsf{xd}4 \) 7.\( \textsf{e}2 \) (7.\( \textsf{xd}4 \) \( \textsf{b}4\!\!\!\) 8.\( \textsf{d}2 \) \( \textsf{e}7\!\!\!\) 7.0-0 \( \textsf{e}7 \) 8.\( \textsf{xd}4 \textsf{d}5 \)

9.\( \textsf{e}5 \) \( \textsf{d}7\!\!\!\) White does not have sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.)
7...\( \textsf{e}7 \) 8.\( \textsf{xd}4 \) (8.0-0 \( \textsf{e}5 \) 9.\( \textsf{d}1 \) \( \textsf{d}8\!\!\!\)

10.\( \textsf{xd}4 \) \( \textsf{xa}4 \) 11.\( \textsf{xa}4 \textsf{d}5\!\!\!\)

8...\( \textsf{b}5 \) 9.\( \textsf{b}3 \) \( \textsf{f}6\!\!\!\) 10.\( \textsf{e}3 \) \( \textsf{a}5 \) 11.\( \textsf{bd}2 \textsf{xb}3 \) 12.\( \textsf{xb}3 \textsf{g}6 \) 13.\( \textsf{c}2 \) \( \textsf{g}7\!\!\!\) 14.0-0 0-0 15.\( \textsf{xc}7 \textsf{d}5 \) 16.\( \textsf{c}1 \textsf{d}6\!\!\!\) with an obvious positional advantage for Black.

6.\( \textsf{xc}5 \) 7.\( \textsf{xc}5 \)

7.\( \textsf{xc}6\!\!\!\) \( \textsf{dx}c6 \) 8.d4 This attempt to obtain a favourable pawn structure does not work: 8...\( \textsf{e}6 \) 9.\( \textsf{xe}5 \) \( \textsf{c}5\!\!\!\)

The strong knight move prepares ...\( \textsf{d}3 \), underlining the weakness of the \( \textsf{d}3 \)-square.

7...\( \textsf{xc}5 \) 8.\( \textsf{xe}5 \textsf{f}7\!\!\!\)

The more entertaining 8...\( \textsf{e}7\!\!\!\) is also promising for Black: 9.\( \textsf{g}7 \) (After 9.\( \textsf{c}2 \) \( \textsf{e}6 \) 10.d4 \( \textsf{d}5 \) 11.0-0 0-0= Black is fine.)
9...\( \textsf{f}6 \) 10.\( \textsf{g}4 \textsf{a}4 \) 11.\( \textsf{xa}4 \) \( \textsf{e}7\!\!\!\) 12.\( \textsf{d}1 \textsf{b}5 \) 13.\( \textsf{f}4 \textsf{d}5\!\!\!\) Black's compensation is not in doubt; White's king is stuck in the centre, his light squares are weak and most of his pieces are still undeveloped.
9.\( \textsf{xe}7\!\!\! \textsf{xe}7 \) 10.\( \textsf{c}2 \textsf{d}5 \) 11.d4 \( \textsf{e}6 \)


A) 5.\( \textsf{xc}6 \)

The idea behind this delayed exchange is to exploit the position of the knight on \( \textsf{f}6 \). The point is that in the main line of the Exchange Variation after 4.\( \textsf{xc}6 \textsf{dx}c6 \) 5.0-0 Black usually protects the e5-pawn by means of 5...\( \textsf{f}6 \), which is now impossible. Moreover the knight would usually go to \( \textsf{e}7 \), where it enjoys greater flexibility than on \( \textsf{f}6 \).
Chapter 1 – 5. \( \textit{dxc6} \) and 5. \( \textit{c3} \)

5...\( \textit{dxc6} \)
From this position it is worth considering
A1) 6.0–0, A2) 6.\( \textit{c3} \) and A3) 6.\( \textit{d3} \).

A1) 6.0–0

This promises no advantage against Black's obvious reply.

6...\( \textit{dxe4} \)
The knight, which was supposed to be misplaced, has captured the central pawn.

7.\( \textit{we2} \)
7.\( \textit{d3} \) \( \textit{d6} \) 8.\( \textit{dxe5} \) \( \textit{d7} \) 9.\( \textit{xe1} \) transposes to 7.\( \textit{xe1} \) below.

7.\( \textit{dxe5} \) \( \textit{d7} \) 8.\( \textit{wxe2} \) \( \textit{d6} \) 9.\( \textit{xe1} \) \( \textit{d6} \) (9...\( \textit{d5} \)?)
10.\( \textit{c3} \) \( \textit{d5} \) 11.\( \textit{c4} \) 0–0 Black enjoyed a comfortable position with the bishop pair in Gufeld – Tal, Leningrad 1954.

7.\( \textit{xe1} \) \( \textit{d6} \)! This looks like the best retreat, heading to a nice square on \( \textit{f5} \). 8.\( \textit{dxe5} \) \( \textit{e7} \) 9.\( \textit{d3} \) 0–0 Black was doing fine in Castro – Kurtic, Uruguay 1983.

7...\( \textit{d6} \) 8.\( \textit{dxe5} \)
8.\( \textit{xe5f} \) 9.\( \textit{d5} \) \( \textit{d5} \) 10.\( \textit{xd5} \) occurred in Sanz Calzada – Vargas, Barcelona 2001, and now 10...\( \textit{cxd5N} \) promises a slight edge for Black, for example: 11.\( \textit{e1} \)

11...\( \textit{d6} \)! 12.\( \textit{xe6} \) \( \textit{f6} \) 13.\( \textit{dxe6} \)?! (13.\( \textit{d3} \) is better, though after 13...0–0 14.\( \textit{xe6} \) \( \textit{g4} \) 15.\( \textit{h3} \) \( \textit{xf2} \) Black retains some initiative.)
13...\( \textit{d7} \)! 14.\( \textit{e1} \) \( \textit{ae8} \) 15.\( \textit{f1} \) \( \textit{g4} \)! 16.\( \textit{h3} \) \( \textit{xf2} \)! White is in trouble as the knight is untouchable.

8...\( \textit{d6} \) 9.\( \textit{xe1} \) \( \textit{c5} \)!
Black has a fine position, as the following tactical strike does not work:

10.\( \textit{xf7} \)!! \( \textit{xf7} \) 11.\( \textit{xe6} \)!! \( \textit{g6} \)
Despite the king position, Black is clearly better thanks to his huge lead in development.

12.\( \textit{xe5} \)
12.\( \textit{e4} \) \( \textit{h5} \)! 13.\( \textit{e5} \) \( \textit{d6} \) is similar.

12...\( \textit{d6} \) 13.\( \textit{f5} \)!! \( \textit{f7} \) 14.\( \textit{e1} \) \( \textit{ae8} \)
Black obviously has more than enough play for a pawn.
Another option is:
7.0-0 \text{g}4!

The pin is rather annoying. Here is an illustrative line:

8.\text{e}2

This is slightly inaccurate, as Black will not be forced to move his bishop.
8.d3 occurred in Varlamov – Volkov, Vizantia 2006, and now 8...\text{d}7N 9.h3 \text{h}5 transposes to 8.h3 below. (But note that 9...\text{h}5? would be a mistake in view of 10.\text{x}g4 \text{x}g4 11.\text{g}5.)
8.h3 is better, although after 8...\text{h}5 9.d3 \text{d}7 Black is still doing fine as the knight on c3 is misplaced. (With the knight on b1 White would have the option of \text{bd}2 to relieve the pressure on the f3-knight).

8...\text{d}7 9.h3 \text{h}5! 10.d3 \text{f}6 11.\text{e}3 \text{xf}3 12.\text{xf}3 \text{xf}3 13.\text{x}f3 \text{g}8! 14.\text{e}2 \text{e}6

Black has a slight edge due to the weak square on f4 and the damaged pawn structure on the kingside.

The dubios 8.\text{xd}4?!N remains untested, and with good reason: 8...\text{e}5 (Also the simple 8...0-0? is good for Black.) 9.\text{de}2 (9.\text{e}3 \text{g}4 10.\text{f}3 \text{xc}3 11.bxc3 \text{xd}1 12.\text{xd}1 \text{xe}3 13.fxe3 0-0?) is clearly in Black’s favour.)
Chapter 1 – 5.\textit{xc}6 and 5.\textit{c}3

9...\textit{xd}1\textit{f} 10.\textit{xd}1 \textit{g}4! 11.\textit{e}1 \textit{f}5! with initiative.

8...\textit{e}7\textit{N}

Black develops his queen and prepares ... \textit{c}5. This is an obvious improvement over 8...\textit{e}7? 9.\textit{f}4! 0–0 10.0–0–0! \textit{xd}4 11.\textit{xd}4 and White was slightly better in Treybal – Lustig, Prague 1928.

9.0–0

9.\textit{e}3 threatens to win a piece with e4–e5, but after 9...\textit{c}5! 10.\textit{d}3 \textit{g}4 11.0–0–0 0–0–0 Black obtains a comfortable position.

9...\textit{c}5 10.\textit{d}2

 Apparently this is the best square for the queen, having in mind the \textit{g}5 idea.

10...0–0 11.\textit{e}5 \textit{g}4 12.\textit{g}5

12...\textit{xg}5 13.\textit{xg}5 \textit{e}6 14.\textit{e}4 \textit{b}6 15.h3 \textit{d}5 16.\textit{ae}1 \textit{f}6! 17.\textit{ex}f6 \textit{xf}6

Black is doing fine.

A3) 6.d3

The most popular move is also the most flexible, as it leaves open the options of both \textit{bd}2 and \textit{c}3.

6...\textit{d}6

After this natural reply White sometimes castles immediately with A31) 7.0–0, but by far the most common move is A32) 7.\textit{bd}2.

Here are a few other sidelines:

7.b3 \textit{e}7 (Black can also play 7...\textit{e}6 8.\textit{b}2 \textit{d}7 9.\textit{bd}2 \textit{b}5 10.0–0 0–0 transposing to
8...b5!N Taking away the c4-square. 9...b2 0–0 10.d1 h5! Since the knight is misplaced on f6, rerouting it to a better position is a typical idea in this system. 11.e3 f4 12.0–0 d7 Black has a good position.

7.g5
The early pin isn’t dangerous for Black.
7...h6 8.h4 e7 9.bd2 g5
This ambitious move works well, although 9...e6 is also fine.
10.g3 g4
Another typical idea. After driving the enemy bishop back to g3 Black pins the f3-knight, while also having in mind the ...h5–g6 manoeuvre.

11.h3
11.c4 may be met by 11...h5 (11...0–0–0 12.e3 e6 is also playable) 12.e3 g6 followed by long castling and Black is by no means worse.
11...h5 12.c4 0–0–0 13.e2 d7 14.h2 f6
Black had the more pleasant position in Gufeld – Geller, Tashkent 1958.

A final sideline is:

7.c3
Here I like the idea of:

7.e6!?
7...h6 is possible, but at this stage the bishop need not fear harassment from a knight on g5.
I also have to mention an old World Championship match game which continued: 7...c5 8.h3 e6 9.e3 h6 10.a4 c4 (10...d7?!N bringing the knight to c6 via b8 deserved serious attention.) 11.d4 exd4 12.xd4 b4 13.0–0 c6 This was Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Germany (16) 1934, and here White had a strong manoeuvre:
14.e1! (instead of 14.e5) 14...0–0 15.e4 with a slight edge for White.
8.g5!?
This has been White’s choice in both games, but it does not make a good impression.
8.h6 9.h4
Maze – Renet, Besancon 2006. Now I would recommend:
9.e7!N
Preparing long castling. In the game Black played 9...c5, but we will see that there is no real need to prevent d3-d4.

10.\textit{c}e2 0-0-0 11.\textit{g}3 \textit{d}7 12.d4

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\draw [line width=0.3mm] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\t\foreach \i in {0,...,8} {
\t\foreach \j in {0,...,8} {
\t\node at (\i,\j) {\textcolor{white}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
\t}\n\t}\n\t\node at (4,4) {\textcolor{black}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
\t\node at (2,2) {\textcolor{black}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
\t\node at (6,6) {\textcolor{black}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
\t\node at (2,6) {\textcolor{black}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
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\t\node at (3,3) {\textcolor{black}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
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\t\node at (5,1) {\textcolor{black}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

12...\textit{b}8!

Ignoring the attack on e5. Play may continue:

13.dxe5

Or 13.\textit{xe}5  \textit{xe}5 14.\textit{xe}5  \textit{b}4 15.0-0 \textit{xc}3! 16.bxc3 \textit{e}5 17.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}2 with initiative.

13...\textit{b}4 14.0-0  \textit{b}6 15.\textit{fd}1 \textit{xc}3 16.bxc3 \textit{xd}1\texttt{+} 17.\textit{xd}1 \textit{f}a4!

Black has the better prospects thanks to White's damaged pawn structure on the queenside and misplaced bishop on g3.

A31) 7.0-0

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\draw [line width=0.3mm] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\t\foreach \i in {0,...,8} {
\t\foreach \j in {0,...,8} {
\t\node at (\i,\j) {\textcolor{white}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
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\t\node at (1,5) {\textcolor{black}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
\t\node at (5,1) {\textcolor{black}{\textit{\textbullet}}};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

9...\textit{d}7

Now the positional threat of ...h6 more or less forces White's hand.

10.\textit{f}4 \textit{xf}4 11.\textit{xf}4

11.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}4 also favours Black, as it is not clear how White can regain his pawn.

11...\textit{xf}4 12.\textit{xf}4 \textit{e}7!

White's unstable pieces will cost him material one way or another.
This has been by far the most popular continuation.

7...\text{\textit{e6}} 8.0-0

Once again 8.\textit{\textit{g5}} doesn't make much sense: 8...\textit{\textit{g4}} 9.f3?! (9.\textit{\textit{gf3}} is the lesser evil) 9...\textit{\textit{c8}} 10.\textit{\textit{c4}} (After 10.f4 exf4 11.\textit{\textit{c4}} 0-0 12.\textit{\textit{f3}} \textit{\textit{e8}} White's compensation is insufficient.) 10...h6 11.\textit{\textit{h3}} \textit{\textit{hxh3}} 12.gxh3 \textit{\textit{h5}} With a damaged structure and the black queen coming to h4 next, White has real problems.

8.b3 does not have much independent significance: 8...b5 (In my opinion this is the most accurate move order as it prevents the option of \textit{\textit{c4}}. Nevertheless there is nothing wrong with 8...\textit{\textit{d7}}, which was played in the majority of games from this position.) 9.\textit{\textit{b2}} \textit{\textit{d7}} 10.0-0 Now Black should play 10...0-0 transposing to the main line below, rather than 10...g5?! 11.d4! f6 12.c4! g4 13.\textit{\textit{h4}} which gave White the better position in Byway – Flear, Torquay 1982.

8...0-0

Black can also start with 8...\textit{\textit{d7}}.

9.b3 \textit{\textit{d7}}

Black can also consider 9...b5?! which eliminates the \textit{\textit{c4}} idea entirely and transposes to the main line after 10.\textit{\textit{b2}} \textit{\textit{d7}}.

10.\textit{\textit{b2}}

10.\textit{\textit{c4}} doesn't promise any advantage in view of: 10...\textit{\textit{x}c4} 11.bxc4 (or 11.dxc4 \textit{\textit{c5}} 12.\textit{\textit{e2}} \textit{\textit{e6}} and Black is doing fine.) Kristol – Haraldsson, corr. 1969, and now 11...b5?! with easy equality.

10...b5?!

This is Carlsen's idea. Black takes away the c4-square and thus reduces the mobility of the d2-knight.

11.d4

11...\textit{\textit{f6}}!N

Improving on Carlsen's play. This way Black connects the rooks, protects the e5-pawn and brings the queen to the kingside.

The game continued: 11...f6 12.h3 c5?! (According to GM Postny Black had to play 12...\textit{\textit{e8}}! bringing the queen to the kingside.) 13.d5 \textit{\textit{f7}} 14.a4 \textit{\textit{b6}} 15.c4 c6 16.\textit{\textit{h4}}\textit{\textit{f6}} Nakamura – Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2010.

12.\textit{\textit{e2}}

12.dxe5 \textit{\textit{xe5}} 13.\textit{\textit{xe5}} \textit{\textit{xe5}} 14.\textit{\textit{xe5}} \textit{\textit{xe5}} is okay for Black thanks to the weakness of White's dark squares.
12...exd4
12...\texttt{exf8}?! is a worthy alternative.

13.\texttt{exd4} h6 14.\texttt{d2f3}
14.h3 is not an improvement due to
14...\texttt{exf8}! 15.\texttt{fe1} (15.\texttt{exc6}?! is strongly
met by 15...\texttt{exe4}! 16.\texttt{xf1} \texttt{exe4}+ 15...\texttt{d5}
16.\texttt{ad1} \texttt{d7} with pressure on e4.

14...\texttt{eae8} 15.\texttt{eae1}
Now 15.\texttt{exc6}? loses to: 15...\texttt{d5} 16.\texttt{d5}
\texttt{exe4}++

15...\texttt{exe5} 16.h3 \texttt{g6}
The knight would love to visit the f4-square.

17.\texttt{c1} \texttt{h5}! 18.\texttt{exe6}
18.\texttt{exe6} gives Black a pleasant choice:

18...\texttt{exe6}?? (There is also 18...\texttt{d7} 19.\texttt{d5}
c5 20.\texttt{g5}! \texttt{exe2} 21.\texttt{exe2} \texttt{c6}! 22.\texttt{g3} f6
23.\texttt{f3} \texttt{exe4} 24.\texttt{f3} \texttt{exe4} with an equal
ending.) 19.\texttt{gxe3}

19...\texttt{d4}! (19...\texttt{exe6}?! is less accurate in view
of 20.\texttt{e5}!) 20.\texttt{xf4} \texttt{xf4} 21.\texttt{d4} \texttt{exe3} 22.\texttt{f3}
\texttt{exe3} 23.\texttt{exe3} \texttt{exe3}+ 24.\texttt{h3}+ The

game ends in perpetual check.

18...\texttt{exe6}

19.\texttt{g5}
19.\texttt{d4} \texttt{e5}! 20.\texttt{f3} \texttt{h5}=

19...\texttt{exe2} 20.\texttt{exe2} \texttt{c7} 21.\texttt{d3} \texttt{d8}
22.\texttt{f1} \texttt{b4} 23.\texttt{d2} \texttt{exe6} 24.\texttt{exe2} f6=
The endgame is balanced, as Black's activity
and pressure against the e4-pawn make up for
his doubled \texttt{c}-pawns.
This natural developing move, which has been known since the middle of the nineteenth century, and was a favourite weapon of the 10th World Champion, Boris Spassky, is a rare guest in modern tournament practice. One of its main drawbacks is the fact that it blocks the c-pawn, making the typical retreat of the light-squared bishop to c2 impossible.

5...b5
5...e7 is also playable, and after 6.0-0 b5 7.b3 d6 we transpose to the line B2 below. However, I do not see any reason to give White the extra option of 6.xc6?.

6.b3 e7

From here Black's typical plan involves exchanging White's light-squared bishop by means of ...x,a5, which will normally ensure him of a comfortable game. Usually he will have to start with ...d6 to protect the e5-pawn. This idea has good chances to work thanks to the position of the knight on c3.

We will analyse B1) 7.a4, B2) 7.0-0 and B3) 7.d3.

The aggressive 7.d4 promises no advantage: 7...exd4 8.d5 (8.xd4? falls into a well-known trap. 8...xd4 9.xd4 c5 10.d1 c4 trapping the bishop. 11.e5 xg8+ and White's compensation for a piece is insufficient.) Janosevic – Haag, Budapest 1965.

8.b7!!N 9.0-0 (9.e5? xxe5!) 9...0-0 10.e1 d6 11.d2 d7 12.a4 2c5 13.axb5 axb5 14.xa8 xxa8 15.d2 d7 Black is just fine.

B1) 7.a4

This way White is trying to avoid an exchange of the light-squared bishop.

7.b4 8.d5 0-0
8...xe4? is a playable alternative, although White should get adequate compensation for the pawn.
Another possible continuation is: 9.d3 a5 10.e7 (After 10.a2 d5 11.a2 d6 the position is equal.) 10...e7 11.a2 d6 12.0-0 b8

With ...e6 coming soon, Black equalizes easily. Attempting to pin the f6-knight is not dangerous, as the following game shows:

13.g5 h6 14.h4?! b3! (14...g4!? is also strong.) 15.xb3 cxb3 16.xb3 c4 The weak b-pawns yield Black more than sufficient compensation, T. Paetz - Postny, Dresden 2007.

9.xf6 10.c3

White wants to preserve his bishop.

Another possible continuation is 10.0-0 a5 11.a2 (11.d5 c6 12.a2 d5 is good for Black) 11...b7 12.d3 d5= with full equality.

10.b8 11.0-0 d6 12.a5

Taking away the a5-square from Black's knight.

12.e7 13.d3

This position was reached in Yurtaev - Peng Xiaomin, Istanbul 2000. Now instead of prematurely exchanging on c3, I found a logical improvement.

13.g4!N

Black's idea is to exploit the loose bishop on b3.

14.c4

After 14.xb4 xb4 15.a3 c5 White's queenside pawns are weak.
14...\texttt{d}b1 is met by 14...\texttt{b}xc3 15.bxc3 \texttt{\texttt{c}}c6! and White has to worry about his a-pawn.

14...\texttt{d}5! 15.exd5 \texttt{b}xc3! 16.bxc3 \texttt{g}xd5 17.\texttt{f}d2 \texttt{w}d6\texttt{t}

White is under some pressure.

\textbf{B2) 7.0–0}

7...\texttt{d}6

Black protects the \texttt{e}5-pawn and prepares ...\texttt{a}a5. Now we will analyse both \textbf{B21) 8.a4} and \textbf{B22) 8.\texttt{f}d5}.

Several other moves have been played, but none of them are dangerous. Here are two examples:

8.\texttt{d}4?

This overambitious move can be punished.
8...\texttt{c}xd4! 9.\texttt{f}xd4 \texttt{exd}4

White already has a problem as the \texttt{d}4-pawn is poisoned.

10.\texttt{d}5?!

10.\texttt{w}xd4?? \texttt{c}5 wins material.
10.\texttt{e}d5 \texttt{c}5 (10...\texttt{b}7??\texttt{t}+?) 11.\texttt{w}xe7!! \texttt{w}xe7

White had no compensation for the pawn in Baird – Schlechter, Vienna 1898.
10...\texttt{g}xd5 11.\texttt{x}xd5 \texttt{f}6 12.a4 \texttt{d}7 13.\texttt{d}d3 0–0 14.\texttt{e}d1

This was Nikonov – Valner, corr. 2005, and now Black can try:

8.\texttt{d}3 does not lose a pawn, but can hardly threaten Black:

8...\texttt{a}5 Black carries out his main plan of eliminating the light-squared bishop, and obtains an equal position. 9.\texttt{e}e2 0–0 10.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{xb}3 11.axb3 \texttt{c}5 12.h3 \texttt{e}6 13.\texttt{d}d2
13...a5?!N (This looks like a reasonable improvement over Delgado Ramirez – Melkumyan, Internet 2009, which continued 13...h6) 14...e1 a4 15.bxa4 ...xa4 16...xa4 bxa4 17...e2 ...c7 18...a1 ...b8 19...c3 ...c6 The position remains equal.

B21) 8.a4 b4 9...d5

13...c3
13...d5 ...b8 14.d3 occurred in M. Szabo – A. Alekseev, Internet 2010, and now after 14...0–0?!N intending 15...e6 Black solves all his problems.

13...b8 14...d5 0–0 15.d4
White's play seems consistent, but Black is ready with a strong and quite instructive reply.

B22) 8...d5

15...xd4! 16.cxd4 c4! 17...e3 ...e6! 18...xe6 fxe6 19.d5 e5
Black had a comfortable position in Alekhine – Bogoljubow, Bad Piskyan 1922, thanks to his powerful queenside majority.
8...\textit{d}a5

Black proceeds according to the standard recipe.

9.\textit{x}c7

9.d4 \textit{xb}3 10.\textit{xf}6\dagger (10.axb5 \textit{xd}5
11.exd5 e4 12.\textit{e}1 0–0 is good for Black.)
10...\textit{xf}6 11.axb3 \textit{exd}4 12.\textit{xd}4 \textit{b}7 13.c4
0–0! gave Black a comfortable position in Grundherr – Gyimesi, Germany 2003.

9...\textit{xe}7 10.\textit{e}1

With this move White prepares to play d2-
10...h6!
d4 in one move, without wasting a tempo
10.d3 0–0 11.g5 putting the pawn on d3.

11...h6! 12.b4 (12.xf6 xf6 13.d2 d7
was equal in Spassky – Beliavsky, Tilburg
1981.) 12...b7 13.d2 This was Spassky –
13...g5!N 14.b3 c5 15.e1 e8! With the
Short, Linares 1990, and now the simplest
 knight coming to g7 and the b3-bishop about
to perish, White has no way to prevent ...f5.
to equalize easily. A possible continuation is:
13...\textit{c}5!N

16.f3 g7 17.f2
14...dxe5
13.c5!N

By forcing a clarification of the central
structure, Black equalizes easily.

After the less accurate 13...b7?! 14.d5
Black's bishop found itself restricted by the
enemy pawns in Neikirkh – Petrov, Sofia
1945.

14.dxe5

14.d5 \textit{b}8 intending ...f5 is good for Black.
14...dxe5 15.a5 \textit{b}7 16.d3 \textit{e}6=
Black is fine.

White can also consider the tricky option:
10.d4?!
Chapter 1 – 5.\textit{\textbf{x}}c6 and 5.\textit{\textbf{c}}c3

5...\textit{\textbf{d}}xd2

Now Black has a strong plan of pushing the f-pawn, for example:

15.bxc5 \textit{\textbf{x}}xc5 16.\textit{\textbf{b}}b4 f5! 17.\textit{\textbf{x}}xc5 dxc5
18.\textit{\textbf{e}}xf5  \textit{\textbf{g}}xf5 19.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2  \textit{\textbf{h}}h4=
Black's kingside initiative compensates for the weak pawn on e5.

B3) 7.d3 0–0

7...d6 has been the most common move and will usually transpose. However, I have chosen to recommend the text move as there have been a few rare instances when Black has been able to play ...d7-d5 in one move. We will analyse B31) 8.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2?! B32) 8.\textit{\textbf{d}}d5 and B33) 8.0–0 in detail.

8.a4 b4 9.\textit{\textbf{d}}d5  \textit{\textbf{a}}a5 transposes to 9.d3 in the note to variation B1.

B31) 8.\textit{\textbf{d}}d2?!

This tricky move was an idea of the late Armenian GM Karen Asrian. White wants to take away the a5-square from the enemy knight.

8...d6

Before playing ...\textit{\textbf{a}}a5 Black has to protect the e5-pawn.
Improving over the game continuation. Black creates a threat of ...\(\mathcal{d}d4\) and thus either gets access to \(a5\) or simplifies the position by exchanging knights and light-squared bishops.

It is worth mentioning the game continuation:
9...\(\mathcal{d}xd5\) 10.\(\mathcal{a}xd5\) \(\mathcal{e}e8\)

Black wants to solve his problems by playing ...\(\mathcal{e}e6\) next.

10.\(h\)3

10.\(c\)3 \(\mathcal{a}a5\) 11.\(h\)3 \(\mathcal{d}xd5\) 12.\(\mathcal{a}xd5\) \(\mathcal{a}xf3\) 13.\(\mathcal{w}xf3\) \(c6\) 14.\(\mathcal{a}b3\) \(\mathcal{g}g5\)= is absolutely equal.

10.\(c\)3 \(\mathcal{a}a5\) 11.\(\mathcal{d}xe7\)† \(\mathcal{w}xe7\) 12.\(\mathcal{c}c2\) is more interesting, but after 12...\(c5\) 13.\(h\)3 \(\mathcal{d}d7\) 14.0–0 \(\mathcal{c}c6\) the position is roughly balanced, as Black’s extra space and harmonious pieces are enough to counter White’s bishop pair.

11.a4!

This way White sets some problems.

The stem game continued: 11.0–0 \(\mathcal{e}e6\) 12.a4 (12.\(c\)4?!\(\mathcal{N}\) deserved attention, though after 12...\(\mathcal{b}b8\) Black should have no problems equalizing.) 12...\(\mathcal{f}f6\) 13.\(a\)xb5 \(a\)xb5 14.\(\mathcal{z}xa8\) \(\mathcal{w}xa8\) 15.\(c\)4 \(\mathcal{b}xc4\) 16.\(\mathcal{d}xc4\) \(\mathcal{b}b8\) 17.\(\mathcal{c}c3\) \(\mathcal{d}xd5\)


White was slightly better due to his control over the a-file and the misplaced knight on \(c6\) in Spasov – Ponomariov, Zafra 2007.
13...a5! 14.c3 \(\triangleleft\)xb3 15.axb3 a4! 16.bxa4 bxa4 17.0-0 \(\triangleright\)b8=
Black is fine, as the pawn on b2 is just as weak as the one on a4.

B32) 8.\(\triangleright\)d5

8...\(\triangleright\)a5!
In this particular position Black does not need to play ...d6 first.

9.\(\triangleleft\)xe7\#N
This untested move was the most interesting option to analyse.

9.\(\triangleleft\)xe5?! is dubious in view of 9...\(\triangleleft\)xb3 10.axb3 \(\triangleright\)xd5 11.exd5 \(\triangleleft\)b4\#! 12.c3 \(\triangleright\)c7! 13.d4 f6! 14.cxb4 fx5 15.0-0 \(\triangleleft\)b7! with a marginal edge for Black.

Szumilas – Klykow, Wroclaw 2004, and now 13...\(\triangleright\)c7\#N 14.\(\triangleleft\)d2 a5 15.\(\triangleright\)e1 a4! 16.bxa4 \(\triangleright\)xa4\# leads to equality.

9...\(\triangleright\)xe7 10.0-0 \(\triangleleft\)xb3 11.axb3 d5!
This active move is the main reason for the earlier decision to delay ...d6.

12.exd5 \(\triangleright\)xd5 13.\(\triangleright\)e2

13...\(\triangleleft\)f5!
Exploiting the vulnerability of White's queenside.

14.\(\triangleright\)e1
14.\(\triangleleft\)xe5\? loses material after 14...f6\#.
14.\(\triangleright\)xe5 is strongly met by 14...\(\triangleleft\)xe5 15.\(\triangleleft\)xe5 \(\triangleleft\)b4! 16.c3 \(\triangleleft\)c2! 17.\(\triangleright\)a5 f6 18.\(\triangleleft\)c6 \(\triangleleft\)xd3 19.\(\triangleleft\)d1 \(\triangleleft\)e4 when Black has slightly the more comfortable side of equality.

14...f6 15.\(\triangleleft\)h4
15.d4? \(\triangleleft\)b4\#?

15...\(\triangleleft\)d7
Black is fine, as shown by the following illustrative continuation.

16.d4 \(\triangleright\)ae8! 17.\(\triangleleft\)d2 exd4 18.\(\triangleright\)d3 \(\triangleright\)c5 19.\(\triangleright\)f3 \(\triangleright\)xe1\# 20.\(\triangleright\)xe1 \(\triangleright\)e8 21.\(\triangleright\)xe8\# \(\triangleright\)xe8 22.\(\triangleright\)xd4 \(\triangleright\)xd4 23.\(\triangleright\)xd4 \(\triangleright\)f7=
B33) 8.0–0

8...d6
Once again Black creates a positional threat of ...a5.

9.a4
9.Qxe2 a5 leads to a position that was covered on page 18 – see the 8.d3 line given in the notes to variation B2, after 7.0–0 d6.


9.h3 a5
This position was popular at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, but nowadays it is a rare guest at grandmaster level, which is hardly surprising. The ensuing positions are dry and Black experiences no problems after obtaining the two-bishop advantage.

10.Qg5
10.Qe2 c5 11.Qg3 c4!N 12.dxc4 Qxc4 13.Qe2 Qc7 14.c3 Qb7 15.Qe1 g6=

10...c6
Taking control over the d5-square.

11.Qe2 Qh5!? 12.Qxe7 Qxe7
Now instead of the weakening 13.g4, I also quickly checked:

13.Qd2!? N Qxb3 14.axb3 f5
Intending ...Qf6 and Black obtains a promising position.

9...b4 10.Qd5 a5!
We see another version of a thematic pawn sacrifice.

11.Qxb4
11.Qxe7 Qxe7 12.a2 transposes to the 9.d3 line given in the notes to variation B1, on page 17.

Perhaps White can consider 11.Qa2N, although after 11...Qxd5 12.Qxd5 c6 13.Qa2 c5 (13...Qb8?!) 14.Qd5 Qb8 15.Qe3 Qe6 Black has comfortable equality.

11...Qb8 12.Qd2
Or 12.Qd5 Qxb3 13.Qxe7 Qxe7 14.Qxb3 Qg4! 15.Qa3 Qd7! with strong compensation for a pawn.

12...c5 13.Qd5 Qxb3 14.Qxf6
14.Qxe7 Qxe7 15.cxb3 Qe6 is also fine for Black.

14...Qxf6 15.cxb3 Qe6 16.Qa3 Qb6?
Black succeeded in winning back his pawn while keeping a positional advantage in Kalygin – Potapov, Alushta 2003.
Conclusion

The 5.\textit{xc6} system gives Black a choice between several different set-ups, but the one involving the dark-squared bishop on d6 followed by the thematic regrouping with \textit{\textit{xe6}} and \textit{d7} looks like the most natural and reliable. According to my analysis Black has no problems at all.

The system with 5.\textit{c3} also promises no advantage for White. Black's plan is straightforward: he prepares \textit{\textit{a5}} – usually with a preliminary \textit{\textit{d6}}, but sometimes without it – and exchanges the b3-bishop at the appropriate moment. If White creates an escape square on a2, then Black can always exchange the bishop with \textit{\textit{e6}}, resulting in easy equality.
Sidelines

5.d4 exd4 – Introduction and 6.e5

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.\( \text{\textit{d}} \text{f}3 \text{\textit{c}} \text{c6} \text{3.\textit{b}} \text{b}5 \text{a} \text{a}6 \text{4.\textit{a}} \text{a}4 \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}6 \text{5.\textit{d}} \text{d}4 \)

5...exd4 6.e5 \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}4 \)

A) 7.\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{d}4 \)?
B) 7.0–0 \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}7 \)

B1) 8.\( c \text{c}3 \)!
B2) 8.\( b \text{b}4 \)!
B3) 8.\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{c}6 \)
B4) 8.\( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}1 \)
B5) 8.\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{d}4 \) 0–0!

B51) 9.\( c \text{c}3 \)!
B52) 9.\( \text{\textit{e}} \text{e}1 \)
B53) 9.\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}4 \)
B54) 9.\( \text{\textit{f}} \text{f}5 \) \( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}5 \)!
B541) 10.\( \text{g} \text{g}4 \) \( g \text{g}6 \)
B542) 13.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g}5 \)
B543) 13.\( \text{\textit{g}} \text{g}3 \)

A) after 9.\( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}3 \)
B2) after 11.\( \text{\textit{x}} \text{d}4 \)
B543) note to 14.\( \text{\textit{c}} \text{c}1 \)
1.e4 e5 2.d4 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 Bf6 5.d4
The central attack is not theoretically dangerous, but Black should be well prepared for it.

5...exd4
From here the most important move is 6.0–0, which will be considered separately in the next chapter. In the present chapter we will concentrate on White’s other options, the main one being:

6...c4
6.e5
With this move White avoids losing a piece, but the ensuing position after 9...e7 10.e4 (or 10.d5 d6 11.e6 f6 12.exd7+ Bxd7+ 13.d7) 10...d6 11.Bf4 Be6† is in Black’s favour.

Another questionable line is:
6.Bc2?! Bd6†
Surprisingly, this development of the bishop seems to be the best. Black’s idea is to keep the e-file open for his heavy pieces.

The natural 6...e7 is playable but less clear: 7.e5 (7.0–0!? transposes to line A of Chapter 3.) 7...d5 8.0–0 Cao Sang – Macieja, Budapest 1996. 8...b6†N (instead of 8...0–0) 9.Bb3 (9.Bxc6 dxc6 is also pleasant for Black) 9...d5 10.exd6 Bxd6 11.Bg5 f6 12.Bh4 Bg4 Followed by long castling with a slight edge for Black.

7.0–0
7.e5 is answered by: 7...0–0! 8.0–0 Be8† 7...0–0†
With ...Be8 coming next, Black keeps an extra pawn as well as some pressure on the e-file.

6...Bc4
We will also check a couple of minor alternatives.

6.Bxd4?! Bxd4 7.Bxd4 b5 8.Bb3 (8.e5 is already losing to 8...c5!+ 8...c5 9.Be5†

A) 7.Bxd4?
This presents Black with an immediate tactical opportunity.

7...\texttt{xf2}! 8.\texttt{xf2}

After 8.\texttt{xc6?! \texttt{h4}}! 9.\texttt{d4 \texttt{xd4}} 10.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{exf1} it will cost White too much time to trap the knight:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessDiagram1.png}
\end{center}

11.c3 b5 12.\texttt{d1} \texttt{b7} 13.\texttt{f1} 0–0–0 14.\texttt{d2} d6= Martin – Velasco Blasco, Catalonia 1996.

8.\texttt{h4}† 9.\texttt{e3}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessDiagram2.png}
\end{center}

9...\texttt{b5}!N
This new move is a try for an advantage.

9...\texttt{xd4}†
This move wins back the piece but only leads to a level endgame if White plays correctly.

10.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 11.\texttt{xd4} c5† 12.\texttt{c3}!
12.\texttt{d3} is less accurate: 12...\texttt{b5} 13.\texttt{c3} (After 13.\texttt{b3} c4† 14.\texttt{xc4} bxc4† 15.\texttt{xc4} d6= White's king comes under attack.)
13...\texttt{bxa4} 14.\texttt{d5} Gunsberg – Cohn, Hannover 1902, 14...\texttt{b8}N 15.\texttt{c3} \texttt{b7} 16.\texttt{d1} \texttt{c6} with a slight edge for Black.

12...\texttt{b5} 13.\texttt{b3} c4 14.\texttt{xc4} bxc4
Now we see the importance of the king's positioning on c3 instead of d3. Since there is no check, White has time to develop his knight.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessDiagram3.png}
\end{center}

15.\texttt{d2}! \texttt{b7} 16.\texttt{xc4} \texttt{g2}
16...\texttt{c8}?!N does not change the evaluation:
17.\texttt{b3} \texttt{g2} 18.\texttt{d1} \texttt{f3} 19.\texttt{d2} \texttt{e7}
20.\texttt{b2} f5 21.\texttt{d6}† \texttt{xd6} 22.\texttt{xd6=}
17.\texttt{g1} \texttt{h3} 18.\texttt{d6}† \texttt{xd6} 19.\texttt{exd6=}
Grekh – Bagrationi, Odessa 2008.

10.\texttt{b3}
10.g3 \texttt{c7}†

10...\texttt{c5}!
Black is playing for an attack. 10...\texttt{xd4}† 11.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 12.\texttt{xd4} c5† 13.\texttt{c3} reaches the 9...\texttt{xd4}† line noted above.

11.c3 \texttt{b7}! 12.\texttt{d5}
The main alternative is: 12.g3 \texttt{g5}† 13.\texttt{f2} \texttt{f5}† 14.\texttt{f4} g5 15.\texttt{c2} \texttt{h3} 16.\texttt{g5} \texttt{xe5} 17.\texttt{h1}
Chapter 2 – 5.d4 exd4 – Introduction and 6.e5

17...Wf2! 18.Wxe2 Wxe2+ 19.Wf3

19.Wf1 doesn’t help after 19...Wxe8! 20.cxd4
Wxd4 21.e3! Wxe3 22.c3 Wxb2 23.d1
Wd2 24.Wxe3 Wxa1† when Black’s pawns are
more important than White’s extra piece.

19...Dc2 20.Wxa6 Dxa1 21.Wxb5 Df2
22.Wxd7 Dd8†

B) 7.0–0

7...Dc7

7...Dc5 is the main alternative, but I have
chosen to concentrate on the bishop move. We
will analyse five replies: B1) 8.c3?!, B2) 8.b4?!
B3) 8.Wxc6, B4) 8.Wc1 and B5) 8.Wxd4.

B1) 8.c3?!
This pawn sacrifice has been known since the very first games in the 5.d4 system, around 1860! The best reaction is to accept the offer.

8...dxc3 9.\x03xc3
9.\x02c2?! \xb2 10.\x02b2 d5! leaves White struggling:

11.exd6 (11.\x02bd2?! \x02c5\textsuperscript{=} Richter – Sämisch, Berlin 1937.) 11...\x0dxd6 12.\x02xc6 (Or 12.\x02c2 g6 13.\x02h6 \x0e8 14.\x02ad1 \x02xe5 15.\x02xe5 dxe5 16.\x02g3 \x0d6\textsuperscript{=} Sokolovsky – Provotorov, Voronezh 2007.) 12...\x0bc6 13.\x02a3 Kendall – Parker, Birmingham 2002, and now 13...c5 leaves White a pawn down with a poor bishop on a3.

11...d6
White’s last move was directed against this, but Black can play it anyway. 11...d5?! also looks quite promising.

12.\x02e1 \x02g4 13.h3 \x02xf3 14.\x02xf3 \x02xe5 15.\x02xe5 dxe5 16.\x02ad1 \x02d6 17.\x02xb7 \x02c7
Black keeps his extra pawn, but his winning chances are not great.

B2) 8.b4?!

Other moves are insufficient, for instance:

11.\x02f4!N
Other moves are insufficient, for instance:
9.\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{e}}1} d5 occurred in Wakselman – Duratti, Bourbon Lancy 1998. Best play from here seems to be 10.exd6 $\Box$xd6 11.$\Box$xc6 bxc6 12.$\Box$xd4 $\Box$f6 13.c3 (13.$\Box$xc6 $\Box$d7 14.$\Box$e5 $\Box$f5 15.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{f}}}4$ $\Box$e8 is also in Black’s favour) 13...$\Box$d7 14.$\Box$e2 a5 and Black is better.

It is also worth mentioning: 9.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{d}}}3$ b5! 10.$\Box$xe4 bxa4 11.$\Box$xd4 $\Box$xd4! 12.$\Box$xd4 (12.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{w}}}xa8$ ? $\Box$xc2+)

12...d6! Black opens up the position for his bishops. 13.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{w}}}c4$ (13.$\Box$c3 dxe5+) 13...$\Box$b8! 14.$\Box$d1 $\Box$b5! Intending 15...$\Box$b7 with better prospects for Black, Stefl – Skyva, Brno 1974.

Another important line is 14.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{e}}}3$ $\Box$d6† with the idea 15.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{d}}}5$ $\Box$b7 16.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{e}}}7$ $\Box$xe7 17.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{d}}}xb7$ $\Box$ad8†.

14...$\Box$e7 15.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{e}}}3$
15.$\textit{\textsubscript{\textgreek{d}}}5$ $\Box$d8† wins material.

15...$\Box$b7†
Black keeps an extra pawn.

B3) 8.$\Box$xc6 dxc6

9.$\Box$xd4
White is struggling to equalize after other moves too.

9...\(\text{Rf5!}\) (9...\(\text{Rc5}\) transposes to line B4 below, but Black can go for something even better.) 10.\(\text{Rxd4}\) \(\text{Rg6}\) 11.\(\text{Re3}\) 0–0 12.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{Rg5}\) 13.\(\text{Rc2}\) \(\text{c5}\) 14.\(\text{Rb3}\) \(\text{Re6}\)

15.\(\text{Re3}\) (15.\(\text{Rd1}\) \(\text{Rc8}\) 16.\(\text{Re3}\) \(\text{b6}\) is also comfortable for Black.) 15...\(\text{Rd4}\) 16.\(\text{Rxd4}\) \(\text{cxd4}\) 17.\(\text{Re4}\) \(\text{Rd5}\) with a slight edge for Black.

9.\(\text{Rxd4}\) \(\text{Rf5!}\) 10.\(\text{Re3}\)

10...\(\text{Rxd4}\)\(!\)N (This is an improvement over an old game of Paul Morphy. That encounter continued 10...\(\text{Rc5}\) 11.\(\text{Rxd8}\)\(!\) [11.\(\text{Rc4}\)!?] 11...\(\text{Rxd8}\) 12.\(\text{Rh4}\) \(\text{RxRc3}\) 13.\(\text{RxRf5}\) \(\text{Re2}\)\(!\) 14.\(\text{Rh1}\) Lowenthal – Morphy, London 1859, and now Black could have retained a slight edge by means of: 14...\(\text{Rxc1N}\) 15.\(\text{Raxc1}\) 0–0 16.\(\text{Rg3}\) \(\text{Rfe8}\) 17.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{f6}\) 18.\(\text{Rxf6}\) \(\text{gxRf6}\) 19.\(\text{Rc1}\)

10...\(\text{f5}\)

10...\(\text{c5}\)!N 11.\(\text{Rxe4}\) \(\text{f5!}\) is also a reasonable attempt to fight for the advantage:

12.\(\text{Rxe1}\) \(\text{cxd4}\) 13.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{d3}\) 14.\(\text{Re3}\) \(\text{Rd5}\) 15.\(\text{Rxd3}\) \(\text{Rxd3}\) 16.\(\text{Rxd3}\) \(\text{RxRf6}\) 17.\(\text{Rd2}\) \(\text{Rd8}\) 18.\(\text{Rxd8}\) \(\text{Rxd8}\) Black has the initiative
II. Wfd3!?N

Attempting to exploit the weakness of the a2-g8 diagonal seems like the only challenging idea.

11.exf6 Qxf6 (11...Qxf6!? 12.Qxe4 c5 13.c3 cxd4 14.cxd4 Qf5 is also in Black's favour.)
12.Qf4 This was played in Mikhailchishin – Dorfman, Tbilisi 1978, and now the logical continuation would have been:


12.Qe2

After 12.Qb3+ Qd7 13.Qe2 (or 13.Qf3 b5) 13...b5 Black has the initiative.

12...Qxd3 13.cxd3 Qg5 14.Qbc3 Qd8 15.Qxg5 Qxg5 16.Qed1 Qf7

Black is slightly better thanks to his bishop pair.

B4) 8.Qe1

12...c5!N 13.Qf3 Qxd1 14.Qxd1 Qf5! 15.c3 (or 15.c4 Qe4! 16.Qxc7 Qf6 17.Qe5 Qxf2! and Black is on top) 15...Qad8 with a slight edge for Black.

11...c5!

It transpires that Black can continue with his plan while safely ignoring the check.

8...c5 9.Qxc6 dxc6 10.Qxd4

10.Qxd4?! is dubious in view of 10...Qf5!
11.Qc4 Qd5 (11...Qe6?!N is also good for
I decided to recommend this move, although 10...0-0 has been a more popular choice.

11.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}f5} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}xd1} 12.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}xd1} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}f8}

12...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}d8} is also equal.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chess_board.png}
\end{center}

13.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}c3}

One high-level game saw: 13.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}c3} h5 Black intends to seize space on the kingside, and perhaps to develop his rook via the h5-square. (13...g6?!N looks like a reasonable alternative: 14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}h6} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}g7} 15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}g4} h5 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}f6}+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}e7}=) 14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}g3}! Intending to bring the knight to e4. 14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}c5}?! Black adjusts his set-up accordingly. 15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}c3} h4 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}ge2} h3 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}g3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}g4} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}d4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}f5} The position remained balanced in Gashimov – Tkachiev, Warsaw (rapid) 2010.

13...h5!

This is the most flexible move. Black is not in a hurry to determine the position of his king, which feels pretty safe in the centre. Meanwhile he wants to take space on the kingside with ...h4 and develop his rook on h5.

14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}e4}

White can block the h-pawn by means of 14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}h4}N but then Black can, at the minimum, repeat the position by playing 14...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}e7} 15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}f5} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}f8}.

14.h4 can be met by 14...g6, when Black has benefited from the inclusion of the mutual h-pawn moves, as White cannot continue with \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}h6}-g4-f6(†). Instead he must settle for something like 15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}d4}, and after 15...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}xd4} 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}xd4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}c5} 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}e4} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}f5} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}e2} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}e7} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}g5} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}xg5} 20.hxg5 0–0–0 Black is doing fine.

14...h4!

Now Black is already fighting for the advantage. Apart from the aforementioned ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}h5} idea, he can also consider ...c5 followed by ...b6 and ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}b7}, reaching a fantastic version of the Berlin Endgame.

15.f4?!

15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\text{\texttt{Q}}}e3} is an improvement, although after 15...c5 followed by ...b6 Black is doing well.

We have been following the game Hess – Karklins, Philadelphia 2006, and now Black’s play can easily be improved.
White should probably do something else, but I mention this natural move just to illustrate the danger.

16...c5!
Suddenly the f5-knight is in danger. Obviously ...g6?? would allow mate in one, but ...d8 is a serious threat.

17.g3 b7
Black is clearly better.

B5) 8.d4

This is the main line by far.

8...0–0!
8...d4 has been played more frequently, but the text move is more flexible and has scored significantly better. We will analyse four responses, the last of which is by far the most popular: B51) 9.c3!, B52) 9.e1, B53) 9.f4 and B54) 9.f5.

9.xc6 dxc6 takes us back to variation B3.

9.xc6?! is pretty feeble: 9...dxc6 10.c3 Saving the light-squared bishop from exchange. 10...xd1 11.xd1 c5 12.c2 d8 13.d2 d3 14.f3 g4 Black was better in Meister – Gustafsson, Bad Koenigshofen 2007.

B51) 9.c3?!

This fails to develop a piece and offers Black a chance to take the c-pawn – an invitation that he should be happy to accept.

9...x5! 10.e1 d5 11.f3 c5!
This intermediate move allows Black to save a piece and claim an advantage.

12.xe4
12.c2? allows Black to trap the light-squared bishop: 12...b5 13.xe4 dxe4 14.xd8 xd8 15.b3 (15.xe4 d3++) 15...c4+

12...d4 13.cxd4
The other capture is worse.
13. exd5?
It turns out that Black can ignore the attack on the knight.
13... dxc3! 14. exd5
Or 14. dx e3N fxe5+ and Black will win an exchange.

14... cxb6†??
14... e6!N+ is even stronger.
15. e3 d5 16. fxe3 fxe3† 17. f h1 f f4
18. e4 h6 19. g1 f5 20. e7 b5 21. b3 d6
Black was clearly better in Wolf – Leonhardt, Barmen 1905.

14... f c4!
One old game went 14... g6 15. e5?! (15. exd5N is better) 15... f6! 16. e xf6 b x f6 with an edge to Black, Alekhine/Levenfish – Konstansky/ Kosopalov/Ovs, Russia (cable) 1914.

15. f4
White preferred 15. d3 in Vachal – Borkovec, Czech Republic 1996, but after
15... dxe4N 16. x e4 (16. xc4? b5†)
16... b4! 17. x c3 h5 Black is better thanks to his bishop pair and the weakness on d4.
Chapter 2 – 5.d4 exd4 – Introduction and 6.e5

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16.exd5 \textit{h4!} 17.g3 \textit{f6} 18.c3 b5 19.b3 \textit{b6}

Black has a strong initiative for the pawn.

B52) 9.e1

9...\textit{x}d4 10.e4

The other capture is no better:

10...\textit{x}d4 11.c5 12.c6! 12.f4

12.exd6 \textit{x}d6 13.e3 f5 is good for Black. Also after 12.b3N c6! White has to fight for equality as Black will soon have the advantage of the bishop pair.

12...\textit{g}6 13.e4 \textit{xf4} 14.\textit{xf4}

This was Blatny – Stulik, Podebrady 1956, and now Black could have obtained a slight advantage with the natural move:

14...d5!\textsuperscript{+}

10...\textit{c}6

For the moment Black's position is rather compact, but he will soon free himself by undermining the e5-pawn.

11.c3 c5 12.d4

12.e1N has never been played, with good reason as 12...d5! gives Black an obvious edge.

12...\textit{f}6!

13.xd7!

The only way to maintain the balance.
13...\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{\textbf{x}d7}}} 14.e6 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{x}e6}}} 15.\textbf{\textit{x}d7} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{w}e8}}} \\
Now the threat of \ldots \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{d}6}} forces a retreat.}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.png}
\caption{Diagram 1}
\end{figure}

16.\textbf{\textit{f}d3} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{d}6}}} 17.\textbf{\textit{e}e3} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{c}6}}} 18.\textbf{\textit{d}d2} f5! \\
With an equal position in Botvinnik – Ragozin, Moscow (training match) 1946.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure2.png}
\caption{Diagram 2}
\end{figure}

B53) 9.\textbf{\textit{f}f4} \\

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{Diagram 3}
\end{figure}

9...\textbf{\textit{c}c5} 10.\textbf{\textit{c}c3} \\
10.\textbf{\textit{b}b3} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{x}b3}}} 11.axb3 f6! 12.\textbf{\textit{xc}c6} dxc6 13.\textbf{\textit{c}c3} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{x}d1}}} 14.\textbf{\textit{axd1} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{f}f5}}} 15.\textbf{\textit{d}d2} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{d}d8}}}! \\

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure4.png}
\caption{Diagram 4}
\end{figure}

10...\textbf{\textit{\textbullet{x}a4}} 11.\textbf{\textit{\textbullet{w}xa4}} \\
Palermo – Bolbochan, Buenos Aires 1965. Now Black’s play can be improved by means of:

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure5.png}
\caption{Diagram 5}
\end{figure}

11...\textbf{\textit{b}b5!N} 12.\textbf{\textit{d}d1} \\
After 12.\textbf{\textit{x}xb5} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{b}b8}} Black wins back the b2-pawn with a fine position.

I also analysed: 12.\textbf{\textit{c}c2} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{b}b7}}} 13.\textbf{\textit{f}f5} (Or 13.\textbf{\textit{d}d2} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{x}d4}}} 14.\textbf{\textit{c}c4} d6 and Black is slightly better thanks to the strong light-squared bishop.) Now Black has a strong idea:

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure6.png}
\caption{Diagram 6}
\end{figure}

13...f6! Not for the first time this undermining move works perfectly. 14.exf6 (14.\textbf{\textit{xc}c7†} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{x}e7}}}! 15.\textbf{\textit{xf6} \textbf{\textit{xf6}}†}) 14...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{xf6}}} 15.\textbf{\textit{d}d2} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{g}g5}}†}

12...\textbf{\textit{b}b7} \\
Black has a fine position, based on the following tactical line:

13.\textbf{\textit{f}f5} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{g}g5}}}! 14.\textbf{\textit{g}g4} f6! 15.\textbf{\textit{e}e1} \\
The spectacular 15.\textbf{\textit{x}xg7†} is met by 15...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{x}e5}}}! 16.\textbf{\textit{xe5} fxe5} 17.\textbf{\textit{h}h5} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textbullet{h}h8}} and Black is on top.
15...\textit{\underline{f7}}!  
White must fight to equalize, and I am not sure if he can manage it.

\begin{center}
\textbf{B54) 9.\underline{d5}}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image1}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
9...\textit{\underline{c5}}!?  
9...d5 is recommended in most theoretical manuals. It is a decent enough move, but I find the text more interesting.

10.\underline{g4} \textit{g6}
\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image2}
\end{center}

11.\underline{x}xc6  
White almost always makes this exchange. Here are two harmless alternatives:

11.\underline{xc}xc\textit{7}  
11...\underline{xc}xc\textit{7} 12.\underline{c3} (12.\underline{xc}xc6 dxc6 transposes to the main line below.) 12...\underline{xe}xe5

13.\underline{f}f4 \textit{d6} 14.\underline{wh}4 \underline{f}5 15.\underline{xc}xc6 bxc6 White does not have enough for the pawn.

11.\underline{h}h6\textit{+ h}8  
11...\underline{g}7 is likely to lead to a move repetition after 12.\underline{f}f5\textit{+ g}8.

12.\underline{xc}xc6 \textit{bxc}6!

12...\textit{xc}xc6 13.\underline{g}3 is about equal, but the text move enables Black to fight for the advantage.

\begin{center}
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\end{center}

13.\underline{c}c3

13.\underline{wc}c4N \underline{e}e6 14.\underline{dd}2 \f5! 15.exf6 \underline{xf}6

16.\underline{f}f3 \textit{c}5! 17.\underline{dd}5 \underline{b}8 18.\underline{de}5 \underline{e}8

19.\underline{e}e1 \underline{g}7\textit{+} is also in Black's favour.

13...\textit{d}5

13...\f5?N also looks promising.

14.\underline{g}3 \underline{b}8! 15.b3

Diaz Hernandez – Guerra Mendez, Havana 2010, and now:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image4}
\end{center}

15...\f5!N 16.exf6
Otherwise the h6-knight is in trouble. 16...dxc6! 17.exf6 gxf6 18.exf6† exf6 19.e3 \(\textit{h6}\) 20.e2 c5

With a slight edge for Black.

We will check three queen moves: B541) 13.e2, B542) 13.g5 and B543) 13.g3.

\begin{center}
\textbf{B541) 13.e2}
\end{center}

Against this rare move I propose an immediate novelty:

13...\(\text{\textit{f5}}\)!

13...e8 has been played in a few games, but I was not entirely satisfied with the following line: 14.c3! (14.e1 \(\textit{f5}\)!) 15.c3 \(\textit{ad8}\) 16.h3 [16.g4? \(\textit{e6}\) 17.e3 deserved attention.] 16...h5 17.h6?! [17.g4?] 17...e6† and Black was better in Godena – Ivanchuk, Reggio Emilia 2011.) 14.xe5 15.xe5 \(\textit{xe5}\) 16.b4! d7 (Or 16...e6 17.f4 h5 18.e4 \(\textit{f8}\) 19.b2 with good compensation for the pawn.) 17.f4 e8 18.e1 f6 19.e5 d5 20.xd5 cxd5 21.xc7= I think Black should be striving for more than an equal endgame in this line.

14.c3 h5

I would rate Black’s chances as slightly better. Here is an illustrative line.

15.h3 \(\textit{ad8}\) 16.e1 e6 17.e3

17.e4 d4 18.f6† xf6 19.xf6 \(\textit{xe2}\)† 20.xe2 \(\textit{fe8}\) is also better for Black.
17...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{b4}}}! 18.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}b1}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{d}4}} 19.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{x}d}4} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{w}x}d}4

\textit{\texttt{20.\texttt{\textbf{e}d1}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{h}4}}

The e5-pawn will be a target.

\textbf{B542) 13.\textit{\texttt{g}5}}

13...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}8}}! 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{x}e}7}

14.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}1}} does not fully solve White's problems: 14...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{w}x}g5} (14...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{f}5}}?! N might be more precise as after 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{x}e}7} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}x}e}7 16.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{g}5}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}d}7}! Black takes the d-file.) 15.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{w}x}g5} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{f}5}} 16.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}a}3} b5! By restricting the knight Black obtained a slight edge in Yudovich – Lilienthal, Moscow 1942.

14...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}e}7} 15.\textit{\texttt{f}4}

15.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}e1}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{f}5}} transposes to the 14.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}e1}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{f}5}} line in the previous note.

15...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{f}5}} 16.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}a}3} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{d}7}}! N

I like this move the most, although Black’s play in the following game was also quite interesting: 16...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{f}6}}! 17.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}xf}6} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}e}2} 18.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{f}f}2}

18...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{x}xf}2}! N (Black could have played for a win, instead of settling for a repetition after 18...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}e}1}} 19.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{f}f}1}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}e}2} \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2} O’Kelly de Galway – Smyslov, Zagreb 1955.) 19.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{x}xf}2}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{e}e}4}} 20.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{g}1}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{d}8}} 21.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{g}3}} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{\textit{x}xf}6}} Black is better thanks to the misplaced knight on a3.

17.\textit{\texttt{h}3} \textit{\texttt{h}5} 18.\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}e}3} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{a}a}4} 19.\textit{\texttt{b}3} \textit{\texttt{\textbf{c}c}3} F

All of Black’s pieces are superior to their counterparts.

\textbf{B543) 13.\textit{\texttt{g}3}}

13...\textit{\texttt{\textbf{e}8}}!

This seems best. Now White must decide how to meet the attack on the e5-pawn.
14.\textit{\textbf{Be1}}

This has been the most common move by far, although three others have been tested:

14.\textit{\textbf{Cc3?! \textit{\textbf{f5}}}! (14...\textit{\textbf{exe5} transposes to the note to Black's 13th move in variation B541, which ended up being equal.) Now I do not see anything better than 15.\textit{\textbf{Be1}} transposing to the main line below.

14.\textit{\textbf{f4 \textit{\textbf{f5}}} 15.\textit{\textbf{Cc3 \textit{\textbf{d4}}} 16.\textit{\textbf{d8}}} (16...\textit{\textbf{f6}?!}) 17.\textit{\textbf{Cc3}}

17...\textit{\textbf{b4}}! 18.\textit{\textbf{exe4 \textit{\textbf{exe4}+}} White was under pressure in Gdovin – Skala, Czech Republic 1995.

14.\textit{\textbf{f4 \textit{\textbf{f5}}} 15.\textit{\textbf{a3 \textit{\textbf{e6}}} Black has the more harmonious position, and we will see a couple of practical encounters in which he increased his advantage.

14...\textit{\textbf{f5}} 15.\textit{\textbf{Cc3}}

16.\textit{\textbf{Cc3}} 16.\textit{\textbf{ae1 \textit{\textbf{ad8}}} 17.\textit{\textbf{c1b5}} 18.\textit{\textbf{f4 \textit{\textbf{c5}+}} 19.\textit{\textbf{f2}}} (19.\textit{\textbf{Cc3 \textit{\textbf{b4}}}) This was Ris – Baramidze, Liverpool 2008, and now the simple 19...\textit{\textbf{xf2}+} 20.\textit{\textbf{xf2 \textit{\textbf{d7}+}} would have left White facing an unpleasant endgame.

16...\textit{\textbf{b4}} 17.\textit{\textbf{ab1 \textit{\textbf{ad8}}} 17...\textit{\textbf{d4N}} also looks good.

18.\textit{\textbf{c3 \textit{\textbf{a4}}} 19.\textit{\textbf{bc1 \textit{\textbf{d7}}} 20.\textit{\textbf{fe1 \textit{\textbf{ed8}}} 21.\textit{\textbf{f3}}} Dhar Barua – Sundararajan, Kolkata 2000, Black was already clearly better, and after this mistake he could have secured a winning position with:

21...\textit{\textbf{d2}+} 22.\textit{\textbf{xd2 \textit{\textbf{xd2}–+}}

With an overwhelming position for the exchange, as White's queenside pawns are doomed and ...\textit{\textbf{f4} is a terrible threat.
15...a3?! e6 16.c3 occurred in Platz – Padevsky, Halle 1954. Now I would like to offer:

16...b5!N Black restricts the a3-knight and obtains the better chances. 17...e3 ad8

15...g5 runs into 15...f6! 16.f4 xc2. This was Valsecchi – Canova, Bergamo 2006, and now White’s best chance of saving the game would have been:

17...e6!
Preventing g5. The weakness of Black’s dark squares on the kingside is of surprisingly little consequence.

16...e4 xxe4 17.xe4 ad8 18.e3 wd7?! 18...d5!?N looks promising as well.

19.f3 wd5!
Black’s strong knight and control over the d-file gave him a comfortable position in Burstow – Vukcevich, Lincoln 1969.

Conclusion

Black is doing fine throughout this chapter, and the Berlin-style positions from line B54 provide a particularly fresh and fertile battleground in which White seems to face the more difficult problems.
Sidelines

5.d4 exd4 6.0–0

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.大夫 f3 c6 3.大夫 b5 a6 4.大夫 a4 f6 5.d4 exd4 6.0–0

6...e7

A) 7.大夫 e2!!
B) 7.大夫 e1 b5!
   B1) 8.大夫 b3 d6
       B11) 9.a4
       B12) 9.大夫 d5! 大夫 xd5 10.exd5 大夫 e5 11.大夫 xd4 0–0
           B121) 12.f4
           B122) 12.大夫 c3
           B123) 12.a4 大夫 g4!
               B1231) 13.f3
               B1232) 13.大夫 d2
   B12) 9.大夫 d5! 大夫 xd5 10.exd5 大夫 e5 11.大夫 xd4 0–0
       B2) 8.e5 大夫 xe5!
           B21) 9.大夫 xe5
           B22) 9.大夫 xe5 d6!
               B221) 10.大夫 g5?!
               B222) 10.大夫 e1 bxa4
                   B2221) 11.大夫 g5
                   B2222) 11.大夫 xd4 大夫 d7
                       B22221) 12.大夫 e2
                       B22222) 12.e4
                       B22223) 12.大夫 f3
Chapter 3 – 5.d4 exd4 6.0-0

1.e4 c5 2.Qf3 Qc6 3.d4 a6 4.Qa4 Qf6 5.d4 exd4 6.0-0

6...Qc7

6...Qxe4 is an important alternative, so I decided to show you the main line: 7.Qe1 d5 8.Qxd4 Qxd6 9.Qxc6 Qxh2+ 10.Qh1! (10.Qxh2 leads to a perpetual: 10...Qh4† 11.Qg1 Qxf2† 12.Qh2 Qh4† 13.Qg1 Qf2† 14.Qh2 Qh4† ½–½ Kiprov – Popov, Sofia 1945.) 10...Qh4 11.Qxe4† dxe4 12.Qd8† Qxd8 13.Qxd8† Qxd8 14.Qxh2± This endgame has been known since Lasker's German simul tour in 1908. Seven years later the position occurred in Capablanca – Lasker, New York 1915, and since then it has been considered to be in White's favour.

From here we will check the interesting sideline A) 7.Qe2!? before moving on to the much more common B) 7.Qe1.

7.e5 is another popular move, but after 7...Qe4 we have transposed to variation B of the previous chapter.

7.Qxd4?! is dubious: 7...Qxd4 8.e5 (8.Qxd4? loses a piece: 8...c5 9.Qd3 b5 10.e5! Qg8 11.Qg3 Qf8† White did not have enough compensation for the trapped bishop in De Pinto Paiva – Cotta, Belo Horizonte 1966.)

8...b5!N (Improving over 8...Qe6 as played in Gross – Kashdan, Los Angeles 1954.) 9.exf6 (9.Qxd4? runs into 9...c5 10.Qd3 Qg8 transposing to 8.Qxd4? above.) 9...Qxf6 10.Qc3 Qe6 11.Qc2 Qb7 and Black is a pawn up.

A) 7.Qe2!!

In this rare but interesting line, White is looking for active play to compensate for his missing pawn.

7...0-0 8.e5 Qd5

9.Qb3!? This rare move is arguably White's best chance to obtain sufficient compensation.

The more common 9.Qd1 fails to impress after: 9...d6!N (9...Qb6 proved to be satisfactory in
Cao Sang – Estrada Nieto, Budapest 1996, but Black can play for more.) 10...xc6 bxc6 11...xd4 d7! 12.c4 b6 13...d5† Black has bright prospects with ...c5 coming next.

9.c3?
This gambit is interesting, but it shouldn't be too dangerous for Black.

9...dxc3 10...b3 cxb2 11...xb2 d7! with the idea of ...d5 is a reasonable alternative.

12...e4 g6
12...e6?!N deserves attention.

13...c3 d6! 14...d1
Cao Sang – Macieja, Budapest 1996. Now I'll try to improve upon Black's play by means of:

14...a5?!N
14...e8?!N and 14...d7?!N are both interesting, but I prefer to go after the bishop.

15...c2
I also checked: 15...d5 cxb3 16.axb3 e6 17...xe7† e7 18...xb7 b8 19...c6 xb3 20.exd6 cxd6 21...xd6 a4 22...c3 xb2! 23...xg6 hxg6 24...xb2 a5† Black is a healthy pawn up.

15...e6
Now Black is threatening ...c4, so...

16...a1
16...d5 xd5 17...xd5 c6 18...d4 d5† White does not have enough for two pawns.

16...e8 17...d5 c6
Black's two extra pawns should eventually tell.

9...b6 10.c3!
Fast development is the key here. Now in Lee/Leonhardt – Gunston/Shoosmith, England – USA (cable) 1905, Black should have gone for the principled approach:

10...dxc3!N 11...xc3 d6!
Challenging White to prove his compensation. I analysed the following line.

12...d1 g4! 13...f4
After 13.exd6...xd6 14...e4 e7 15...g5 e5! 16...xe5...xe2 17...xd6 cxd6 18...xc6 bxc6 19...xd6...d5† White's compensation for the exchange is insufficient.

12...d1 g4! 13...f4
13...e8! 14.h3 f5! 15.d5 exd5 16...xd5
Wd7 17...a1 e6
White's initiative is approaching the value of a pawn, but it seems to me that the most he can hope for is to equalize by restoring material equality.

B) 7...e1

7...b5!
After this forcing move White only has two sensible options: B1) 8.b3 and B2) 8.e5.

B1) 8.b3 d6
This is Black's only reasonable move as White was threatening e4-e5. (Now we can see why Black had to break the pin on the previous move – otherwise White would still be able to advance the e-pawn here.) We will analyse the rare B11) 9.a4 followed by the main line of B12) 9.d5!.

Obviously 9...xd4?? is no good due to 9...xd4 10...xd4 c5 when Black wins a piece.

A rare but interesting gambit idea is:
9.c3
White sacrifices a pawn for the sake of fast development.
9...dxe3 10...xe3 0–0

B11) 9.a4

11.d5
Another game continued: 11.h3 e5 12...h2?? (12...f4 is better than the text, although after 12...g6 13...g3 b7 Black retains slightly better chances) 12...b7 13.f4 e4 White did not have enough for the pawn in Brooks – Wedberg, New York 1989.
The present position was reached in Savchenko – Smirnov, Olginka 2011. Now Black could have restrained his opponent's initiative with:

B11) 9.a4

9...\textcolor{red}{$\mathcal{g}4$}!
This calls White’s last move into question. Black defends his queenside while developing a piece and making it difficult for White to reclaim the d4-pawn.

10.axb5
I checked two other moves:
10.h3 $\mathcal{xf}3$ 11.$\mathcal{xf}3$ 0–0 12.$\mathcal{e}2$ $\mathcal{b}8$! 13.axb5 $\mathcal{AXB}5$ 14.$\mathcal{d}2$ $\mathcal{d}7$! Black regroups his forces: the knight goes to c5, while the dark-squared bishop will protect the d4-pawn from f6. 15.$\mathcal{f}3$ $\mathcal{f}6$ 16.$\mathcal{d}2$ $\mathcal{c}5$ 17.$\mathcal{d}5$ $\mathcal{e}7$ 18.$\mathcal{a}2$ $\mathcal{g}6$! Zapata – Smejkal, La Valetta 1980. Black’s chances are higher thanks to his extra pawn.

10.c3 $\mathcal{dxc}3$ 11.$\mathcal{lx}c3$ 0–0 12.$\mathcal{d}5$ (12.$\mathcal{f}4$N $\mathcal{xf}3$ 13.$\mathcal{xf}3$ $\mathcal{d}4$ 14.$\mathcal{d}1$ $\mathcal{xb}3$ 15.$\mathcal{xb}3$ c6 16.$\mathcal{ad}1$ $\mathcal{b}6$! Black returns his extra pawn and obtains a better position: 17.$\mathcal{xd}6$ $\mathcal{xd}6$ 18.$\mathcal{xd}6$ $\mathcal{c}5$ 19.$\mathcal{de}2$ $\mathcal{fe}8$+) Egin – Savon, Orel 1998. Now I would like to bring to your attention the following idea:

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\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
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& a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
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12...$\mathcal{xa}4$!N 13.$\mathcal{xa}4$ $\mathcal{de}5$ 14.$\mathcal{xe}5$! $\mathcal{xd}1$ 15.$\mathcal{c}6$ Winning back the queen, but the story does not end there. 15...$\mathcal{xd}5$! 16.$\mathcal{xd}8$ $\mathcal{xa}4$ 17.$\mathcal{ex}d5$ $\mathcal{xd}8$ 18.$\mathcal{ea}4$ $\mathcal{f}5$! Black retains some winning chances in the endgame.
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10...axb5 11.$\mathcal{xa}8$ $\mathcal{xa}8$ 12.$\mathcal{xa}3$
12.$\mathcal{d}3$?N might be better although 12...$\mathcal{xf}3$ 13.$\mathcal{xf}3$ 0–0 still favours Black.

12.$\mathcal{a}5$ 13.$\mathcal{d}2$
13.$\mathcal{d}2$ $\mathcal{xb}6$ also favoured Black in Tsyrennimaev – Buldaev, Ulan Ude 2010. For example, 14.h3N $\mathcal{xf}3$ 15.$\mathcal{xf}3$ $\mathcal{de}5$ 16.$\mathcal{e}2$ c6 17.$\mathcal{f}4$ $\mathcal{g}6$ 18.$\mathcal{h}1$ 0–0 19.$\mathcal{e}5$ $\mathcal{dx}e5$ 20.$\mathcal{fx}e5$ $\mathcal{de}8$! and Black keeps his extra pawn.

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\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
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& a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
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13...$\mathcal{xf}3$ 14.$\mathcal{gf}3$ 0–0
14...$\mathcal{xd}2$?N 15.$\mathcal{xd}2$ $\mathcal{de}5$ 16.$\mathcal{g}2$ c6$^*$
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15.$\mathcal{xa}5$ $\mathcal{xa}5$ 16.$\mathcal{xb}5$ $\mathcal{xb}3$ 17.$\mathcal{xb}3$ c5 18.$\mathcal{f}4$
Volokitin – Dorfman, Bad Wiessee 2001. Black’s play can be improved by means of:
Chapter 3 – 5.d4 exd4 6.0–0

18...\textit{b8}?N 19.\textit{xd6} \textit{xd6} 20.\textit{xd6} \textit{xb3} 21.\textit{xa1} \textit{h6}

With decent winning chances in the endgame.

B12) 9.\textit{d5}!

The main line. White wins back the d4-pawn and hopes to exploit the weakened c6-square along with his slight spatial advantage.

9...\textit{xd5} 10.\textit{exd5} \textit{e5} 11.\textit{xd4}

11.\textit{xe5}? is bad as after 11...\textit{dxe5} 12.\textit{xe5} 0–0 Black wins either the d5-pawn or an exchange.

11...0–0

This natural move is best, as White cannot exploit the weakening of the c6-square. We will analyse B121) 12.\textit{f4}, B122) 12.\textit{c3} and B123) 12.\textit{a4}, after first checking a couple of rare moves:

12.\textit{b3}? \textit{f6} 13.\textit{c3} (13.\textit{f4}? \textit{g6} 14.\textit{c4}? \textit{g4}! 15.\textit{d2} \textit{e8} led to a decisive advantage for Black in Warszawski – Romanishin, Warsaw 2011.) 13...\textit{b7} 14.a3 \textit{e8} 15.\textit{e5} c5 (15...\textit{g6}?N 16.\textit{d3} \textit{d7}? is also good for Black) 16.\textit{xc6} \textit{xc6} The strong bishops gave Black better chances in Pares Vives – Pablo Marin, Malgrat del Mar 1991.

12.\textit{f4}!?
Sidelines

still after 14...\*d6! 15.\*dxe7\*f6 15.\*dxe7\*f6 Black is better as the d5-pawn is vulnerable.) 13...\*c4! 14.\*bc3 \*f6 (Black is also better after 14...\*xb2 15.\*b1 \*c4 16.a4 \*f6 17.axb5 \*d7\*f6) 15.\*b1 \*e8\*f6 Black is in full control, Fressinet – Kramnik, Paris 2002.

B121) 12.f4

This is not dangerous for Black due to the following intermediate move.

12...\*g4 13.\*d2 \*c4 14.\*d3

14.\*f2?! \*h4! provokes 15.g3, which weakens the light squares on the kingside: 15...\*f6 16.\*c3 (After 16.\*c6?! \*d7 17.\*c3 \*xc3 18.bxc3 \*ae8 Black's advantage was even larger in Balanel – Filip, Marianske Lazne 1956.) 16...\*e8 Black has an obvious advantage, Rendi – Olarasu, Brasov 2004.

14...\*h4!

Before coming to f6 the bishop provokes a weakening of White's kingside.

15.\*f1

This awkward move is the least of the evils.

15.g3 \*f6 16.\*c3 \*e8 gave Black a clear plus in Georg – Halasz, Dortmund 1991.

15.\*e4 was played in S. Marin – Adla, Zaragoza 2006, and here the simple 15...\*e8\*N should decide, for instance: 16.\*d2 \*e4 17.\*xe4 \*e8 18.\*c6 \*e8 19.\*d4 Otherwise ...\*f5 is devastating. 19...f5\* White cannot hold his position together.

15...\*f6! 16.\*d2 c5?! 17.\*c6

Perhaps White should have preferred 17.dxc6\*N, although after 17...\*b6 18.c3 \*fe8 Black's chances are higher.

17...\*d7 18.\*e4 \*xb2 19.\*xb2 \*xb2

Surad Radja – Torre, Dubai 1986. Now White's best chance would have been:

20.\*g3\*N

But even this is not enough to equalize.

20...\*ae8 21.\*fe1 f5! 22.\*g5 h6! 23.\*e6 \*g6\*
Despite the strong knight on e6, Black's extra pawn should eventually tell.

**B122) 12.\(\text{Ne}3\)**

12...\(\text{N}\text{e}8!\)

First played by Spassky, this developing move seems to be the best. Black brings the rook into play and leaves the light-squared bishop on the c8-h3 diagonal in order to meet 13.\(f4\) with 13...\(\text{Ng}4\).

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

13.a4 is worse due to 13...\(\text{b}4\) 14.\(\text{N}\text{e}4\) \(\text{b}7\)

17...\(\text{N}\text{e}8!\) (17...\(\text{f}6?\) runs into 18.\(\text{N}\text{x}6!\)) 18.\(f3\) \(f5\) 19.\(\text{Ng}3\) \(\text{c}7\) and the weakness of the d5-pawn combined with Black's better pieces yields the second player a comfortable edge, Timman – Spassky, Hilversum 1983.

13...\(\text{Ng}4!\)

Black tries to provoke a weakening pawn move.

14.\(\text{Nc}1\)

14.\(f3\) \(\text{d}7\) 15.\(\text{b}3\) occurred in Roche Simon – Lafarga Santorroman, Aragon 2003, and here Black's play can easily be improved: 15...\(\text{Ng}6\) 16.\(\text{Ne}3\) \(\text{b}8\) 17.\(\text{a}3\) \(\text{b}7\)

The main move was played in Thipsay – Flear, Torquay 2002. Here the only way for Black to retain a slight advantage is:

14...\(\text{f}6!\)N 15.\(\text{Ne}4\) \(\text{d}7\) 16.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{Ng}6\)
12...\textit{g4}!

Once again this move works well. Now White faces a difficult choice between weakening his dark squares with \textbf{B1231) 13.f3} and placing his queen clumsily with \textbf{B1232) 13.d2}.

\textbf{B1231) 13.f3}

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13...\textit{d7} 14.c3

The alternative is:

14.f4 \textit{g6}

14...\textit{g4} is also playable, although compared with the earlier variation B121, the extra move a2-a4 will improve White's prospects to some degree.

15.c3 b4 16.e4

16.a2?! misplaces the knight, and after 16...\textit{b8} (16...\textit{a5}?! 17.c3 \textit{b8} is the same.) 17.c3 a5 18.cxb4 axb4 Black was better in L. Milov - Smagin, Podolsk 1990. Here I found a slight improvement over the game Bakhtiyary - Dovlatov, Baku 2006.

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16...\textit{e8}?! N

With the following possible continuation:

17.f5 e5 18.b3 c6 19.dxc6 \textit{xc6} 20.dxc6 \textit{xc6} 21.b2 \textit{f8}

Black retains slightly better chances.

14...b4 15.e4 \textit{e8}

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16.b3

16.f4 is well met by 16...\textit{b8}! intending ...\textit{b7} to target the d5-pawn, as in Vetoshko - Huda, Lviv 2010.
Another game continued: 16.f4 \( \text{g}4 \) 17.b3 (or 17.c4 bxc3 18.bxc3 \( \text{b}8 \) 19.\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 20.\( \text{x}f6+ \text{xf6+} \)) 17...\( \text{f}6 \)!

18.\( \text{x}f6+ \) (18.c4 \( \text{x}e4 \) 19.\( \text{xe}4 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) is also in Black's favour.) 18...\( \text{x}f6 \) 19.\( \text{xb}2 \) \( \text{xe}1+ \) 20.\( \text{wx}e1 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 21.\( \text{wb}7 \) 22.\( \text{wb}3 \) \( \text{b}8 \) Black was better in Makarichev – Kholmov, Tallinn 1983.

16...\( \text{h}4 \)! 17.g3 \( \text{f}5 \)!
An important intermediate move.

18.\( \text{f}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 19.\( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 20.\( \text{f}4 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 21.\( \text{xe}8 \) \( \text{xe}8 \) 22.\( \text{x}g4 \) \( \text{fxg}4 \)

The exchanges have not fully solved White's problems.

23.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}7 \)! 24.\( \text{c}4 \) \( \text{e}8 \)

Black was better in Zapata – Bruzon Batista, Merida 2006, thanks to his control over the e-file, pair of bishops and the unpleasant pin along the h8-a1 diagonal.

13...\( \text{d}7 \)!
Having provoked White's unfavourable queen move, the bishop drops back to cover the c6-square.

14.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{b}4 \) 15.\( \text{e}4 \)
15.\( \text{ce}2 \) \( \text{b}8 \) 16.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}7 \) 17.\( \text{g}3 \) (White is not helped by 17.c4 bxc3 18.\( \text{xc}3 \) \( \text{c}8 \) 19.\( \text{b}2 \) \( \text{g}6 \) 20.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{f}6+ \) Perez Rodriguez – De la Paz Perdomo, Santa Clara 2005.)

Now in Belavenets – Honfi Gurszky, corr. 1984, Black could have maintained the better
chances with 17...\(\text{g}6!\)N with ideas of ...\(\text{xf}6 \) and ...\(\text{ae}8\).

15...\(\text{b}8\) 16.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{g}4\) 17.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{b}7\) 18.\(\text{b}2!\)

Only this move allows White to maintain the balance.

18.\(\text{f}3?!\) is dubious. 18...\(\text{f}6\) (18...\(\text{c}6?!\))
19.\(\text{xf}6\) \(\text{xf}6\) 20.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{e}4\) 21.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{c}3\)
22.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{e}8\) 23.\(\text{b}2\) \(\text{e}4\) 24.\(\text{d}3\)

Kiewra – Bojkov, Berkeley 2011, and now
24...\(\text{b}6!\)N 25.\(\text{h}1\) \(\text{e}3\) 26.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{ae}8!\)
yields Black the upper hand.

18...\(\text{xd}5\) 19.\(\text{c}4!\) \(\text{a}5\)

19...\(\text{b}7?!\)N looks like an interesting alternative: 20.\(\text{c}5!\) \(\text{dxc}5\) 21.\(\text{xe}7\) \(\text{ad}8\) Black has chances to obtain a slight edge.

20.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{ae}8!\)N

Black should not become too attached to his extra pawn.

The greedy 20...\(\text{ab}8?!\) allows White to develop a promising initiative: 21.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{h}6\)
22.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{h}8\) (22...\(\text{c}6\)N may be a slight improvement, although 23.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{f}6\) 24.\(\text{g}5\) still gives White good play.) 23.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{h}4\)
Kunzelmann – Brandhorst, e-mail 2004. Here White should have played:

24.\(\text{d}4!\)N \(\text{g}8\) (24...\(\text{f}6\) 25.\(\text{c}5!) 25.\(\text{c}5!\) With some initiative; the main threat is \(\text{c}4\), but Black also looks slightly vulnerable on the kingside.

21.\(\text{xb}4\) \(\text{f}5\) 22.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{f}6\)

The position is roughly equal.
B2) 8.e5

This is the simple way to defuse White's central attack. Now we must consider B21) 9.\(\text{x}e5\) and B22) 9.\(\text{xe}5\).

B21) 9.\(\text{xe}5\) bxa4 10.\(\text{xd}4\) 0–0

10...\(\text{b}8\) 11.\(\text{xa}4\) 0–0 transposes to the main line, but it seems more logical to castle first.

11.\(\text{xa}4\)

Let's have a look at the alternatives:

11.\(\text{c}3\) is less accurate as it allows Black an additional option: 11...a3?! (11...\(\text{b}8\) 12.\(\text{xa}4\) transposes to the main line). 12.b4 \(\text{b}8\)

13.\(\text{xa}3\)!! (13.\(\text{d}3\) d6 14.\(\text{xa}3\) \(\text{f}5\) is slightly better for Black.)

13...a5! 14.\(\text{a}7\) \(\text{b}7\) White faced difficult problems in Plat – Votava, Czech Republic 2008.

11.a3

A justifiably rare continuation. The idea behind the move is to take away the b4-square from Black's rook and prevent the ...a3 idea as we saw above. But if White wants to stop ...a3, why not just capture the a4-pawn immediately?

11...\(\text{b}7\)?N

I like this move, although 11...\(\text{b}8\) 12.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{e}8\) (12...\(\text{b}6?!\)?) 13.\(\text{xa}4\) \(\text{d}6\) was also better for Black in Liwak – Jakubowski, Poraj 1997.

12.\(\text{xa}4\) \(\text{e}8\)!

Preparing ...d6.
Black has a slight edge thanks to the centre and the bishop pair.

Finally there is:

11. \texttt{g5}

This move has been played in quite a lot of games, but is certainly not to be feared.

11... \texttt{b8}! 12. \texttt{d2} \texttt{h6} 13. \texttt{h4} \texttt{e8} 14. \texttt{ad1}


14... \texttt{b6}!\texttt{N}

Bringing the rook to e6.

15. \texttt{dc4}

Or 15. \texttt{d3} a3 16. \texttt{c4} \texttt{e6} 17. \texttt{xe6} dxe6
18. \texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 19. \texttt{xd8} \texttt{xd8} 20. \texttt{xa3} a5! 21. \texttt{c4} a4 with a slight edge for Black thanks to the bishop pair.

15... \texttt{e6} 16. \texttt{f4}

16. \texttt{e3} \texttt{b7} 17. \texttt{f5} \texttt{f8}\texttt{N}

Now in Winkelmann – Wossning, corr. 1995, Black should have played:

11... \texttt{b8} 12. \texttt{c3}

12.a3 \texttt{e8} 13. \texttt{c3} \texttt{d6} transposes to the 11.a3 \texttt{b8} line mentioned above.

Another idea is:

12. \texttt{d3}

This way White prevents the ... \texttt{b4} idea and protects the b2-pawn in order to develop the dark-squared bishop.

12... \texttt{d5}!\texttt{N}

This novelty is an attempt to fight for the advantage.

A few games have seen 12... \texttt{d5} which is enough for equality: 13. \texttt{d2} \texttt{f6} 14. \texttt{c3} (14. \texttt{a3}?! d6! 15. \texttt{a5} \texttt{b7} 16. \texttt{c4} \texttt{b6} was better for Black in Reshevsky – Unzicker, Dubrovnik 1950.) 14... \texttt{xc3} 15. \texttt{xc3} \texttt{xc3} 16.bxc3 d6 with roughly equal chances in Fuderer – Euwe, Beverwijk 1952.

13. \texttt{f4} \texttt{f5}!

A temporary pawn sacrifice. 13... \texttt{b6} 14. \texttt{d2} c5 is playable but less energetic.
14.\(\text{\#xa6}\) \(\text{\#b6}\) 15.\(\text{\#a7}\) \(\text{\#d6}\) 16.\(\text{\#xd6}\) \(\text{\#xd6}\) 17.\(\text{\#a3}\)

17.b3?? loses to 17...\(\text{\#g4}\) 18.g3 \(\text{\#xd3}\) 19.\(\text{\#xd3}\) \(\text{\#f6}+\).
17...\(\text{\#xa3}\) 18.\(\text{\#xa3}\) \(\text{\#fb8}\)!

With some initiative. One of Black's ideas is:
19.b3?! \(\text{\#a8}\) 20.\(\text{\#b1}\) \(\text{\#xd3}\) 21.\(\text{\#xd3}\) \(\text{\#xb3}\)!

12...\(\text{\#b4}\)

The mobile rook gives Black a lot of dynamic possibilities involving swinging to the kingside.

13.\(\text{\#a5}\) \(\text{\#b7}\) 14.\(\text{f3}\)
14.\(\text{\#d3}\) \(\text{\#g4}\)! 15.g3 \(\text{d6}^+\) Wertjanz – Schreiner, Jenbach 2009.

14.h3 was played in Capelan – Unzicker, West Berlin 1971, and now 14...\(\text{\#h4}\)!N promises a slight edge for Black, for example:

15.\(\text{\#d3}\) \(\text{\#h5}\) 16.\(\text{\#xe5}\) \(\text{\#xe5}\) 17.\(\text{\#xe5}\) \(\text{\#e8}\) 18.\(\text{\#e3}\) \(\text{\#d6}\) 19.\(\text{\#a5}\) \(\text{\#c8}\)!

14...\(\text{\#h4}\) 15.\(\text{\#d3}\) \(\text{\#h5}\)!N

This is the only way to retain some advantage.
I also examined the alternative, and found some amazing possibilities:
15...\(\text{\#d6}\) 16.\(\text{\#g5}\)!

Galkin – Yemelin, St Petersburg 1994. Now Black could have accepted the pawn sacrifice.
16...\(\text{\#xh2}\)!N

17.\(\text{\#e5}\)!!

The best defence.
17.\(\text{\#f4}\) is met by 17...h6 18.\(\text{\#xh2}\) hgx5 19.\(\text{\#xg5}\) \(\text{\#h7}\) 20.\(\text{\#xd8}\) \(\text{\#xd8}\) 21.g3 \(\text{\#g5}\) 22.\(\text{\#f1}\) \(\text{\#xf3}\)+ with a strong initiative.
17...h6 18.\(\text{\#xf6}\) \(\text{\#xf6}\) 19.\(\text{\#xh2}\) \(\text{\#e8}\) 20.\(\text{\#ae1}\) \(\text{\#xe5}\) 21.\(\text{\#xe5}\)
21.\(\text{\#xe5}\)?? loses to 21...\(\text{\#h4}\)†.
21...c5!

22.h3!!
22.f4? is a mistake due to 22...\(\text{xe5} 23.\text{fxe5}\) \(\text{g5}\) and Black wins.
22...\(\text{xe5} 23.\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xe5} 24.\text{d8}\) \(\text{h7}\)
25.\(\text{xd7}\) \(\text{h5}\) 26.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{g6}\) 27.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{c6}\)
With a roughly level endgame.

16.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{d6}\) 17.\(\text{f4}\) \(\text{h4}\) 18.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{xf4}\)!
The rook concludes its eventful journey with a fine sacrifice.

19.\(\text{xf4}\)
After 19.gxf4 \(\text{xf3}\) Black has a strong initiative for the sacrificed material due to the vulnerable position of White's king.

19...\(\text{xf3}\)
Black has fantastic play for the exchange.

B22) 9.\(\text{xe5}\)

9...d6!
A small finesse – Black jabs at the rook before taking on a4. We will analyse the tempting but misguided B221) 10.\(\text{g5}\)!! followed by the correct B222) 10.\(\text{e1}\).

10.\(\text{xb5}\)? axb5 11.\(\text{xb5}\) c5 left White's rook looking stupid in Mare – Oksanen, corr. 1992.

10.\(\text{xe7}\)? \(\text{xe7}\) 11.\(\text{b3}\) c5 is clearly in Black's favour thanks to his avalanche of pawns, Nogueiras Santiago – Frey Beckman, Bogota 1979.

B221) 10.\(\text{g5}\)!! bxa4 11.\(\text{xe7}\)
This implies a material sacrifice, but it is arguably already too late for White to turn back.

After 11.\(\text{xd4}\)? 0–0 there is no justification for the weird position of White's rook.

11.\(\text{c4}\) \(\text{e4}\)!N
The most aggressive move, which refutes White's strategy.
11...0–0 led to a safe but modest edge for Black after 12.\(\text{c3}\) \(\text{d7}\) 13.\(\text{f5}\) \(\text{xf5}\)
14.\(\text{xf5}\) a3?! in Perez Perez – Spassky, Amsterdam 1964.
12. \( \text{c6} \)

After 12. \( \text{ex} \text{g7} \) \( \text{f6} \) the rook is trapped. My analysis continues 13. \( \text{h6} \) \( \text{xg7} \)
14. \( \text{xg7} \) \( \text{g8} \) 15. \( \text{c3!} \) \( \text{h4!} \) 16. \( \text{b3} \) \( \text{g4!} \) 17. \( \text{x} \text{f3} \) 18. \( \text{x} \text{f3} \) \( \text{xg7} \) 19. \( \text{xe4} \uparrow \) \( \text{f8} \) 20. \( \text{xa4} \) \( \text{b7} \) and White’s compensation is insufficient.

12... \( \text{d7} \) 13. \( \text{xe7} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 14. \( \text{xg7} \)

Or 14. \( \text{a5} \) 0–0 with a big development advantage for Black.

14... \( \text{f6!} \)

Once again the rook finds itself trapped. The best that White can do is:

15. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g7} \) 16. \( \text{xe4} \uparrow \) \( \text{f5!} \) 17. \( \text{c6} \uparrow \) \( \text{e7!} \)
18. \( \text{xc7} \uparrow \)
19. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d7} \) 19. \( \text{xc7} \) \( \text{hc8} \) reaches the same position.
18... \( \text{d7} \) 19. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{hc8} \) 20. \( \text{b7} \) \( \text{ba8} \) 21. \( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{xc2} \)

Black has good chances of converting his material advantage.

11. \( \text{h5} \)

Trapping the rook right away.

There is a second promising line:
11... \( \text{c5?!} \) 12. \( \text{c3} \) \( \text{h6!} \)

Before going after the rook, Black takes away the \( \text{g5} \)-square.

13. \( \text{xd4} \)

13. \( \text{e1} \) prevents the intended ...\( \text{h5} \). In this case Black can continue: 13...\( \text{d5!} \) 14.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{e4!} \) Creating the threat of ...\( \text{f6} \). 15.\( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xc5}! \) 16.\( \text{d3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 17.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{g7} \) 18.\( \text{xe} \text{e}4 \) \( \text{e7} \) Black keeps the better prospects.

13...\( \text{h5} \) 14.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{g3} \) 15.\( \text{hxg3} \)

Vogt – Margolin, Germany 2005. Now despite his extra exchange Black has to be precise to prove his superiority. I suggest the following improvement:

15...\( \text{f8!N} \) 16.\( \text{f4} \) \( \text{g7} \)
Improving the king's position, with slightly better chances.

12...$g5

This is virtually forced – if the rook is going to perish, it should at least trade its life for that of the important enemy bishop, rather than a humble knight.

12...$xg5 13...$xg5 $d7!

13...$f6 is less clear. My main line continues: 14...$xg4! (This is better than 14...$xd4 as in the Rogers – Hebden, London 1988, after which 14...$b7!N 15...$bd2 0–0 16...$h6 $f7 17...$xa4 $d7 leaves White without enough for the exchange.) 14...0–0! Escaping from a check on h5.

16...$b8!N although after 17...$c3 (17...$c6?! is met by 17...$e8!) 17...$d7! 18...$d5 $f7! 19...$e1 $e8! 20...f1 White keeps some initiative for the exchange.

14...$xd4

Now 14...$xd4 can be met by 14...$g4 15...$e1† $e6† although this may be the best White can do.

14...0–0! 15...h3 $b7†

In Rogers – J. Howell, London 1988, Black was well on the way towards consolidating his material advantage.

15...h6 $g7 16...f3 Reshevsky – Euwe, Dubrovnik 1950. Now Black should play

10...$xa4
From here White sometimes plays B2221) 11.\(\text{g}5\) but the main line is B2222) 11.\(\text{d}4\). though after 14...\(\text{e}7\) 15.\(\text{e}7\) Black is on top thanks to the following tactical idea:

11...0–0!
Black shouldn’t be greedy.

11...c5?! 12.\(\text{x}f6\) gxf6 13.c3 dxc3 14.\(\text{d}3\) \(\text{e}6\) was played in Wittmann – Rodriguez Cespedes, Prague 1980. Now White could have obtained a powerful initiative with the help of 15.\(\text{h}4\)!N 0–0 16.\(\text{h}5\)! followed by either \(\text{f}5\) or \(\text{d}5\).

12.\(\text{e}2\)
12.\(\text{x}d4\) \(\text{d}7\) can be compared with line B2222 below. There is no good reason for the bishop to have gone to \(g5\) so early, and Black stands better.

12...h6!
A strong intermediate move, which allows Black to seize the initiative.

13.\(\text{h}4\)
13.\(\text{e}7\) hgx5 leaves Black with an extra pawn.

13...\(\text{g}5\)! 14.\(\text{d}4\)
14.\(\text{e}7\)N is probably the lesser of the evils,

14...\(\text{d}7\)!
Guarding the c6-square while setting up an indirect defence of the \(e7\)-bishop.

15.\(\text{g}3\)
15.\(\text{e}7\)?! is of course impossible in view of 15...\(\text{e}8\).

Another game continued: 15.\(\text{c}3\) \(\text{e}8\) 16.\(\text{f}3\) (16.\(\text{g}3\) is the best chance, but it immediately transposes to the main line below, where Black is better.) 16...d5!\(\text{f}8\) Pisk – Volzhin, Canberra 2001.
15...\textit{e}e8 16.\textit{c}c3
A. Rodriguez – Sorin, Sao Paulo 1991. Now the most precise continuation is:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{chessboard1.png}
\end{center}

16...\textit{b}b8!N
I analysed the following plausible continuation.

17.b3 axb3 18.axb3 \textit{b}b4! 19.\textit{d}d1 \textit{f}f8
20.\textit{d}d2 c5 21.\textit{e}e2
And here there is a small finesse:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{chessboard2.png}
\end{center}

21...\textit{b}7\texttt{+}
Based on the following idea.

22.\textit{x}d6? \textit{c}6! 23.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}d8→
Black wins a piece.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{chessboard3.png}
\end{center}

B2222) 11.\textit{xd}4

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{chessboard4.png}
\end{center}

11...\textit{d}d7
Obviously Black needs to guard the c6-square. From this position we reach a final division between B22221) 12.\textit{e}e2, B22222) 12.c4 and B22223) 12.\textit{f}3.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{chessboard5.png}
\end{center}

B22221) 12.\textit{e}e2

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{chessboard6.png}
\end{center}

It turns out that Black has no problem dealing with the pin along the e-file.

12...c5 13.\textit{d}2?!
This tricky move threatens \textit{a}a5, but Black is ready with a strong counter.
13.\( \text{ xf3} \) is met by 13...\( h6! \) to take away the g5-square, and after 14.\( \text{ c3} \) \( \text{ e6} \) Black was ready to castle with slightly better chances thanks to the bishop pair in Davletbayeva – Kuderinov, Astana 2011.

13...\( 0-0!! \) 14.\( \text{ xexe7} \) \( \text{ b8}! \)

Effectively refuting White’s play. It turns out that White cannot save the knight due to the threat of \( ...\text{ e8} \) trapping the queen.

15.\( \text{ e8}! \) 16.\( \text{ c3} \)

16.\( \text{ a3} \) \( \text{ cxd4} \) 17.\( \text{ xexe8} \) \( \text{ bxe8} + \) 18.\( \text{ xxd6?} \) \\
\( \text{ e2} \) 19.\( \text{ h3} \) \( \text{ e8} \) +

16...\( \text{ xexe1} \) + 17.\( \text{ xexe1} \)

Now Black has at his disposal a strong intermediate move:

17...\( \text{ d5}! \) 18.\( \text{ a3} \) \( \text{ cxd4} \) 19.\( \text{ d2} \) \( \text{ b6} \)

Black keeps an extra pawn and a clear advantage.

13.\( \text{ xf3} \) is met by 13...\( h6! \) to take away the g5-square, and after 14.\( \text{ c3} \) \( \text{ e6} \) Black was ready to castle with slightly better chances thanks to the bishop pair in Davletbayeva – Kuderinov, Astana 2011.

13...\( 0-0!! \) 14.\( \text{ xexe7} \) \( \text{ b8}! \)

Effectively refuting White’s play. It turns out that White cannot save the knight due to the threat of \( ...\text{ e8} \) trapping the queen.

15.\( \text{ e8}! \) 16.\( \text{ c3} \)

16.\( \text{ a3} \) \( \text{ cxd4} \) 17.\( \text{ xexe8} \) \( \text{ bxe8} + \) 18.\( \text{ xxd6?} \) \\
\( \text{ e2} \) 19.\( \text{ h3} \) \( \text{ e8} - +

16...\( \text{ xexe1} \) + 17.\( \text{ xexe1} \)

Now Black has at his disposal a strong intermediate move:

17...\( \text{ d5}! \) 18.\( \text{ a3} \) \( \text{ cxd4} \) 19.\( \text{ d2} \) \( \text{ b6} \)

Black keeps an extra pawn and a clear advantage.

B22222) 12.\( \text{ c4} \)

This has achieved a positive score for White in practice, but I do not rate it highly.

12...\( 0-0! \) 13.\( \text{ c3} \) \( \text{ b8}! \) 14.\( \text{ xxa4N} \)

This untested move seems like a logical one to analyse.

14.\( \text{ f3} \) is well met by: 14...\( \text{ g4}! \) 15.\( \text{ f5} \) (15.\( \text{ c6} \) Polacek – Findlay, Toronto 1990, 15...\( \text{ xc6N} \) 16.\( \text{ xc6} \) \( \text{ f6} \) Black is clearly better as 17.\( \text{ xa4?} \) runs into 17...\( \text{ d4} \).) 15...\( \text{ e5} \) 16.\( \text{ e4} \) \( \text{ f6} \) 17.\( \text{ d5} \) Khaled – Perez, Novi Sad (ol) 1990. Black has several good moves here, but I like the simple option: 17...\( \text{ e8N} \)

14.\( \text{ h3} \) was played in Polacek – Kasinski, Toronto 1990, and here Black should have played: 14...\( \text{ c5!N} \) 15.\( \text{ f3} \) (Or 15.\( \text{ c2} \) \( \text{ e8} \) 16.\( \text{ e3} \) \( \text{ f8}! \) 17.\( \text{ b3} \) \( \text{ g6}! \) 18.\( \text{ b2} \) \( \text{ c6}! \) 19.\( \text{ c2} \) \( \text{ g7} \) with a better position for Black.) 15...\( \text{ e8} \) 16.\( \text{ b3} \) \( \text{ axb3} \) 17.\( \text{ axb3} \) \( \text{ b6} \) 18.\( \text{ g5} \) \( \text{ xb3} \) 19.\( \text{ d3} \)
19...\texttt{xf5!} 20.\texttt{xf5} \texttt{xc3} 21.\texttt{ec1} \texttt{b4} 22.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 23.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{xb2!} 24.\texttt{f1} \texttt{e2!} Black keeps an extra pawn and good winning chances.

14...\texttt{g4!}

14...\texttt{b4} fails to reach the goal due to 15.b3 \texttt{xa4} 16.\texttt{f5!} \texttt{e8} 17.\texttt{d2!} \texttt{b6} 18.bxa4 with a roughly equal position.

15.\texttt{h3}

After 15.\texttt{c3} the surprising 15...\texttt{h4!} is awkward for White: 16.\texttt{f1} (16.g3 \texttt{f6} strongly favours Black.) 16...\texttt{e8!} 17.\texttt{f3} \texttt{e5+} Black has two bishops and an active position.

15...\texttt{e5} 16.\texttt{c5}

After 16.\texttt{c3} \texttt{xc4} 17.b3 \texttt{xb6} White's initiative is not worth a pawn.

15.\texttt{xa4}

The other main option is:

And White has no time for 17.cxd6? in view of 17...\texttt{b4}!+ with a decisive double attack on a4 and d4.

This is the main line. White's plan is to exchange one of the enemy bishops.

12...0–0 13.\texttt{c6} \texttt{xc6} 14.\texttt{xc6} d5

I remember my brother showed me this line when I was a young boy, and it still seems to be the best.
15...\textit{b4} is a reasonable alternative. Black's idea is to provoke \textit{c2-c3} and create pressure along the b-file. \textit{16.c3} \textit{d6} \textit{17.xd6} \textit{xd6} \textit{18.xa4} Herlin – Martynov, Rovaniemi 1999. Here Black should have played:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textit{18.xd6} \textit{xd6}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

17...\textit{cxd6} Despite having two pairs of double pawns Black is better. For example:

\textit{18.d2}

\textit{18.f3} may be a better chance although Black remains on top after \textit{18...xc8} or \textit{18...fb8}.

\textit{18.fc8! 19.xc1}

\textit{19.xc1??}

\textit{19...ab8 20.ab1 g6??}

White faced a difficult defence and he failed to hold the endgame in Petrossian – Kravtsiv, Marseille 2009.

After the text move I would like to propose a move which is technically a novelty in this position, even though it immediately transposes to a bunch of existing games.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textit{15...\textit{b8?!N}} Black offers the a-pawn and prevents White from developing his bishop.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\textit{15...\textit{e4}} used to be the main line, but I was unable to find much advantage after: \textit{16.c3!} (Better than \textit{16.d2 c5} \textit{17.g4 f6} \textit{18.b3 e8?} with a slight edge for Black in Brendel – Van den Doel, Germany 2009.) \textit{16.xc3} \textit{17.bxc3} Despite the doubled c-pawns Black had no more than a tiny advantage in Trani – Lo Nigro, corr. 1998. I checked the possible continuation \textit{17...f6N}
18...d2 c5 19.ab1 when White is in no real danger.

16.e3
Correctly rejecting the pawn sacrifice.

16.xa6?! is dubious and leads to some initiative for Black: 16...c5! 17.e3! Otherwise ...g4 would be very strong. 17.xe3 18.xe3

Ardeleanu – Grivas, Athens 1984. Now the simple 18...xb2!N promises Black some advantage, for instance 19.d3 c5 20.a4 b6 21.d1 a8 and the passed a-pawn is more of a weakness than a strength.

16...c5!
This strong move sets up ideas such as ...b4 and ...g4.

17.h3
17.a3?! h6! 18.h3 d6 transposes.

17...d6 18.a3
White’s last two moves have guarded against both the aforementioned ideas. This position was reached in Capoccia – Larsson, e-mail 1999, and here I think Black should have played:

18...h6!?N
Taking a square away from White’s bishop. Black has a more harmonious position and White still needs to find a way to develop his queenside pieces.

Conclusion

The 5.d4 exd4 6.0-0 line contains some tricks, but it cannot cause any serious opening problems against a well-prepared adversary. Moreover, in most of the lines it is Black who is fighting for the advantage.
Sidelines

Worrall System

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2...f3 d6 3...b5 a6 4...a4 d6 5...e2

5...b5 6...b3 c5

A) 7.a4 b7
   A1) 8.d3
   A2) 8.axb5 axb5 9...xa8 xxa8

B) 7.c3 0–0
   B1) 8.d3
   B2) 8.0–0 d5!?
      B21) 9.d3
      B22) 9.exd5

C) 7.d3 h6!?
   C1) 8...c3
   C2) 8.h3
   C3) 8.0–0
   C4) 8...bd2
   C5) 8.c3 0–0
      C51) 9.h3
      C52) 9.0–0
      C53) 9...bd2
68 Sidelines

1.e4 e5 2.d3 c6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 c5 5.e2

According to the database this system dates back to 1849, when it was introduced by one of the first Russian masters named Schumov. Nevertheless, it has the name of the American player T.H. Worral. The pros and cons of the queen move are apparent from the outset. On the one hand, White develops the queen at an early stage, to a square where she might become vulnerable. On the plus side, White avoids the Open Variation while retaining the option of playing c2-c3 and d2-d4 without wasting a tempo on d2-d3, as occurs in the 5.d3 system of the next chapter. The central advance may also be supported by a rook from the d1-square. By coincidence, my editor for this book, IM Andrew Greet, has written a repertoire book (referenced in the bibliography) in which he advocated this system for White.

5...b5 6.b3 c5

The most aggressive move, which Greet refers to as the “Anti-5.e2 Variation”. The bishop is more active on c5 than on e7, as it takes control over the important a7-g1 diagonal and makes the d2-d4 advance more difficult. Concerning the relative disadvantages of this system, it can be pointed out that if White somehow succeeds in advancing the d-pawn to d4, the bishop will fall under attack and Black will lose a tempo. White may also try to set problems by pinning the f6-knight. So my task will be to demonstrate that advantages of the active bishop on c5 are more significant than its drawbacks.

For those who are interested in the 6...c5 system, I can refer you to the books of Andrew Greet and Mihail Marin (both listed in the bibliography), who offer repertoire coverage from, respectively, the white and the black side of the position. I have chosen not to go down this path, as after 7.0-0 we transpose to the 5.0-0 e7 6.e2 b5 7.b3 system, where Black has missed the opportunity to initiate the Open Spanish with 5...dxe4.

Here White has three main continuations: A) 7.a4, B) 7.c3 and C) 7.d3.

7.0-0

This will almost always transpose to one of the other main variations in which White castles over the next few moves. Here is one independent line:

7...0-0

Black makes a flexible move without determining his plans.

8.a4

8.d3 h6 (8...e8!? is also sensible) transposes to variation C3 – see 7.d3 h6 8.0-0 0-0 on page 84.
8.c3 transposes to line B2 with 7.c3 0–0 8.0–0, as featured on page 75.

8...b4!? Black can also play 8...b7 transposing to the 8.0–0 0–0 line in the notes to variation A (after 7.a4 b7).

9.d3N

9.a5 d6 with the idea of ...g4 was fine for Black in Hrusovsky – Hartl, Slovakia 1995.

9...d6!

This time 9...h6 is unnecessary, as Black's last move created an unpleasant threat of ...g4 followed by ...d4, and so White has no time for 10.g5.

10.e3 g4 11.xc5 dxc5 12.bd2 d4 13.e3

13...xf3! 14.xf3 g4 15.d2 xf3† 16.gxf3 d4

Forcing a draw. If Black is feeling more ambitious, he may prefer 16...f6!? 17.f4 d4 when everything is to play for.

17.fxg4 xg4†= With perpetual check.

A) 7.a4

7...b7

Black makes a useful developing move, based on the fact that the b5-pawn is not really threatened. Note that 7...b4 would be risky due to 8.xf7†!

Now White can choose between maintaining the tension with A1) 8.d3, and releasing it with A2) 8.axb5.

A1) 8.d3 h6

It is useful to prevent the annoying pin. We will see the same idea occurring in variation B as well.

9.axb5

Here are two other ideas:

9.c3 0–0!? (9...d4?! also makes sense.)

10.axb5 This position arose in Bisguier – Trifunovic, Bled 1961, and here Black missed a chance to take over the initiative:
10...\(\text{\#d4}\)N 11.\(\text{\#xd4}\) exd4 12.\(\text{\#b1}\) axb5 13.\(\text{\#xa8}\) \(\text{\#xa8}\) 14.0–0 \(\text{\#e8}\) Followed by ...d5 with excellent prospects.

9.0–0 0–0 10.e3 (10.c3 \(\text{\#e8}\)! 11.e3 \(\text{\#f8}\)! intending ...d5 was also fine for Black in Monteban – Van Dongen, Leiden 2000.)

The present position was reached in Titova Boric – Urbanec, Bratislava 1994, and here I would like to offer the following idea:

9...axb5 10.\(\text{\#xa8}\) \(\text{\#xa8}\) 11.e3 \(\text{\#b8}\) 12.e3

This position occurred in Van der Wiel – Van der Sterren, Amsterdam 1994. Here I recommend a move that we can now consider quite thematic for this line:

14.0–0 15.0–0 d5! 16.e5 \(\text{\#e8}\) 17.f4

After this move Black gets to showcase some nice ideas.

The alternative is: 14.\(\text{\#f4}\) \(\text{\#b4}\)† (The simple 14...0–0 is fine.) 15.\(\text{\#d2}\) (15.c3! dxc3 16.0–0 looks like the right way for White to preserve dynamic equality.) 15...\(\text{\#xd2}\)† 16.\(\text{\#xd2}\) c5! 17.\(\text{\#a5}\) \(\text{\#c6}\)† The misplaced knight on a3 allows Black to claim a slight edge.
Chapter 4 – Worrall System

A2) 8.axb5 axb5 9.\textxb8 \textxa8

White should be careful here.

\text10.\textc3
10.\textxb5?!

This greedy move was played in Lane – Kosten, Saint Affrique 1995. I recommend the simple reply:
10...\textxe4N 11.\text0–0!

After 11.\textxf7?! \textxf7 12.\textc4\texte8 13.\textxe4 Black has a pleasant choice between the immediate 13...\textd4!? 14.\textxe5\textd8\textf7 with a strong initiative, and the even stronger preparatory move 13...\textd6\textf7 with ideas of ...\texta1 and ...\textd4.

11...\textxf2\textf7!

This is strongest, although Black should be at least a bit better after other moves too.

12.\textxf2 \texta7 13.d4!
13.\textc2? is bad in view of: 13...\textxf2 14.\textxf2 \texta1! 15.\textxf7\textd8–+
13...\textxd4 14.\textxd4 \textxd4 15.\texte2 \textxf2 16.\textxf2 \textd1\textf1 17.\textf1 \textxf1\textf1 18.\textxf1 d5

Black’s rook and two extra pawns should outgun White’s two minor pieces in this endgame.

The following line is safer for White, but still harmless: 10.0–0 \texta5! 11.\textd5 (11.\textxe5 \textxb3 12.\textxb3 0–0 13.d3 \texte8 14.\textg4 \textxg4 15.\textxg4 d5 is slightly better for Black.)

11...\textxf2!

This position occurred in Ortiz–Meulemans, Internet 2010. Now the natural 11...\textxd5N 12.exd5 0–0! 13.\textxb5 \textb6 promises Black at least equal chances.

After the text move I would like to offer the following pawn sacrifice:
10...0–0!
This move was brought to my attention by my editor Andrew Greet, although it has been tested in a few games. I checked numerous possibilities but found no route to equality for White.

11.\textit{Wxb5N}

The only debate here is whether one of the following options is a lesser evil for White.

11.d3?! \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 12.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} exd4 13.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} occurred in Preinfalk – Puc, Ljubljana 1945. Now the best way to prove Black’s superiority is:

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

13...d5! 14.e5 \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 15.0–0 \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} Followed by advancing the c-pawn.

Also after 11.0–0N \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} is strong: 12.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} exd4 exd4 13.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 14.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 15.exd5 \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 16.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}

16...d3! 17.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 18.cxd3 \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 18.cxd3 \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} Black has more than sufficient compensation for the pawn.

11.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} also doesn’t work in view of:

11...\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 12.0–0 (12.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} is strongly met by 12...\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 13.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 14.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} with a big advantage for Black.)

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

12...\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 13.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 14.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 14.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 16.d3 \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 17.cx\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} d6+

11...\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}!

Now there is no good defence against ...\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}. For example:

12.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}

12.0–0 is met by 12...\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} of course.

12...\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} 13.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} exd4 14.\textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet} \textit{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}
15. \( \text{xd5} \) e8 16. \( \text{c4} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 17. \( \text{xd5} \) c6
18. \( \text{e5} \) d5??
Black will regain his pawn while keeping a positional advantage.

B) 7. c3

This logical system of development was introduced by one of the best players in the world in the middle of the 19th century, Howard Staunton. White hints at a possible d2-d4 advance in the future, while also creating an escape square on c2 for the bishop.

7...0-0
After this natural move we will analyse both B1) 8.d3 and B2) 8.0-0, after first checking a harmless sideline.

B2) 8.0-0

This combines oddly with White's previous move, and is not at all dangerous.

...b4 9.0-0
McDermott – Vaughan, Nashua 2009. Here I would like to offer an improvement:

...d5??N 10.exd5
10.d3 bxc3 (10...\( \text{a5} \)?) 11.bxc3 (11.\( \text{xc3} \) \( \text{g4} \)!) 11...\( \text{b8} \) 12.\( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{e6} \) is also more pleasant for Black.
0...\( \text{a5} \)! 11.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{e8} \)!
Black will regain the d5-pawn with dividends. One of the more interesting possible continuations is:

12.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{g4} \) 13.\( \text{e1} \)

13...b3! 14.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 15.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{h7} \) \( \text{h7} \) 16.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{d6} \)??
Black has a substantial lead in development.

B1) 8.d3

8...d5!?
Black has a perfectly acceptable alternative in 8...h6, which transposes to the later variation C5 on page 86.

9.\( \text{exd5} \)

If there is a way to punish Black’s last move, then opening the centre must surely be it. The following alternatives certainly hold no fear for Black.
9.0–0 transposes to the variation B21 which can be found on page 75, after 8.0–0 d5!? 9.d3.

9.\textit{g}5 has been the most popular move, but it is toothless: 9...\textit{dxe}4! (Note that 9...\textit{d}4?! is inaccurate in view of 10.\textit{d}5! \textit{d}6 11.\textit{x}c6 and Black loses a pawn.) 10.dxe4 \textit{h}6 11.\textit{h}4 \textit{d}6 Preparing the following knight move. 12.\textit{g}3 \textit{h}5 Black was already slightly better in Popovic – Adhiban, Amsterdam 2011.

9.\textit{bd}2

This move was played in Tiviakov – El Taher, Doha 2002. At this point I would like to borrow an idea from my analysis of variation B21, which we will come to shortly on page 75.

9...\textit{d}4!N

After this move I see no good way for White to challenge Black’s space advantage. Play may continue:

10.0–0 \textit{dxc}3! 11.bxc3 \textit{h}5!

Black attempts to provoke a weakening of the light squares on the kingside.

12.\textit{b}1

This retreat confirms the wrongness of White’s set-up.

12.g3 \textit{f}6! intending ...\textit{g}4 is also great for Black.

12...\textit{g}4!

Black has at least equalized. White’s problem is that he cannot attack the light-squared bishop with 13.h3 in view of 13...\textit{g}3.

9...\textit{xd}5 10.\textit{e}4

This is the consistent move, but it fails to present any problems.

10.0–0 was played in Hori – Hayashi, corr. 2009, and here Black can take over the initiative with 10...\textit{d}6N 11.g5 \textit{f}6! 12.d2 \textit{g}4! followed by ...\textit{ad}8.

10...\textit{d}e7!

This defence has been known since the beginning of the 20th century.

11.\textit{xc}5

This gives Black a strong initiative, but it is hard to suggest anything better.
11.\textbf{\textit{g}}5 \textit{\textit{f}}5 12.\textbf{\textit{w}}xf5 \textit{\textit{x}}xf5 13.\textbf{\textit{x}}xd8 \textit{\textit{a}}xd8
gave Black a good endgame in Albin – Schlechter, Monte Carlo 1903.

11...\textit{\textit{e}}5 12.\textbf{\textit{w}}xe5 \textit{\textit{d}}6 13.\textbf{\textit{e}}4?! 
Although this move is not the best, it was played in an instructive game which beautifully illustrates Black's chances in this line.

13.\textbf{\textit{w}}e2 is a better try, but even here after 13...\textit{\textit{b}}7 14.0–0 \textit{\textit{g}}6 Black had fantastic compensation for a pawn and went on to win in Hedrera – Bericat, corr. 1995.

13...\textit{\textit{f}}5 14.\textbf{\textit{w}}f3 \textit{\textit{d}}7 15.d4 \textit{\textit{g}}6 16.0–0 \textit{\textit{g}}4 17.\textbf{\textit{d}}3 \textit{\textit{c}}5!
White is threatened on all sides, and in the game he swiftly collapsed.

18.\textbf{\textit{c}}2? \textit{\textit{c}}4 19.\textbf{\textit{d}}2 \textit{\textit{f}}4 20.\textbf{\textit{e}}1 \textit{\textit{ae}}8

\textbf{21.\textit{e}}3

\textbf{21...\textit{f}}3!
\textbf{0–1}

B2) 8.0–0

8...\textit{d}5?!
Black plays in the style of the Marshall Attack. I like this aggressive continuation, although I should mention that there is nothing wrong with the waiting move 8...\textit{\textit{e}}8, after which 9.d3 \textit{\textit{h}}6 transposes to the later variation C52 on page 87.

After the text move we will analyse both B21) 9.d3 and B22) 9.\textit{exd}5.

B21) 9.d3

\textbf{8...\textit{d}5?}
Black plays in the style of the Marshall Attack. I like this aggressive continuation, although I should mention that there is nothing wrong with the waiting move 8...\textit{\textit{e}}8, after which 9.d3 \textit{\textit{h}}6 transposes to the later variation C52 on page 87.

After the text move we will analyse both B21) 9.d3 and B22) 9.\textit{exd}5.
This gives White a solid and stable central position, but does not offer any advantage.

9...d4!
I like this space-gaining move. The same plan has occurred in many games in the analogous position with the black bishop on e7, but having it on the more active c5-square represents a definite achievement for Black.

10.\(\text{a}5\)g5
10.cxd4 \(\text{a}5\)xd4 11.\(\text{b}5\)xd4 \(\text{a}5\)xd4 is pleasant for Black.

Also after 10.h3 h6 11.a4 \(\text{b}7\) 11...\(\text{b}8\)?! 12.axb5 axb5 13.\(\text{a}5\)xa8 Wxa8 Black was fine in Danielian – Sargissian, Yerevan 2004.

10...h6 11.\(\text{h}4\)
The alternative is 11.\(\text{x}6\)f6 \(\text{xf}6\) 12.\(\text{x}5\), against which I see at least two good options for Black:

a) 12...dxc3 13.\(\text{a}5\)xc3 (13.bxc3 \(\text{d}7\) was played in Ljubojevic – Sokolov, Linares 1995, but just this leads to a better version of the following 12...\(\text{g}4\) line for Black, since the h-pawn is back on h2.)

13.\(\text{x}4\)g4! 14.\(\text{x}5\)c6 This is forced, otherwise the knight’s arrival on d4 will hurt. 14...\(\text{xf}3\)! 15.\(\text{xf}3\) \(\text{xc}6\) 16.\(\text{ac}1\) \(\text{d}6\) 17.\(\text{d}5\) c6 Black was just fine in Baumgardt – Geissler, corr. 1999.

b) 12...\(\text{g}4\)?!N
1 also found this new and interesting alternative.

13.\(\text{h}3\)
No better is: 13.\(\text{x}6\)c6 \(\text{xc}6\) 14.\(\text{xe}5\) \(\text{xe}5\) 15.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{xe}6\)! 16.\(\text{ae}1\) \(\text{ae}8\) 17.\(\text{xd}4\) \(\text{xe}4\) 18.\(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{xc}6\) 19.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xe}1\)† 20.\(\text{xe}1\) \(\text{d}8\) Black ends up with the more comfortable endgame since his rook and bishop are superior to White’s rook and knight.

13...dxc3!
This is a somewhat unusual type of combination.

14.hxg4
14.bxc3 \(\text{d}7\) is fine for Black, despite being a tempo down on the previous line with 12...dxc3.

14...\(\text{d}4\)†! 15.\(\text{xd}4\) cxb2! 16.\(\text{b}3\)
16.\(\text{xb}2\)?! is dubious in view of: 16...\(\text{xd}4\) 17.\(\text{c}3\) c6†
16...bxa1=\(w\) 17.\(\Box\)xa1 c6 18.\(\Box\)b3 \(\Box\)ad8

Black is at least not worse thanks to his pressure along the d-file and the potential outpost on d4.

17...\(\Box\)d6!

Black unpins the knight.

12.\(\Box\)g3

12.\(\Box\)xf6 may be the lesser evil, after which 12...\(\Box\)xf6 transposes to the 11.\(\Box\)xf6 line noted above.

12...\(\Box\)h5

12...dxc3?!N 13.bxc3 \(\Box\)h5 14.\(\Box\)d5 \(\Box\)g4! might be even more precise.

13.\(\Box\)d5 \(\Box\)xg3 14.hxg3 \(\Box\)g4 15.\(\Box\)c2

15.\(\Box\)xc6 \(\Box\)xc6 16.\(\Box\)xe5 \(\Box\)xe2 17.\(\Box\)xc6 \(\Box\)xd3?! reaches an almost identical position as in line 'b' of the 11.\(\Box\)xf6 variation, except that White now has a pawn on g3 instead of h2. This small change does little to alter the evaluation, and Black is still slightly better.

15...dxc3! 16.\(\Box\)xc6 cxb2! 17.\(\Box\)xb2

This position was reached in Matikozian – Bisguier, Connecticut 2004. Here I found a strong novelty:

17...\(\Box\)ad8!N

This promises Black the upper hand since White is unable to keep his extra piece. For example:

18.\(\Box\)bd2 \(\Box\)xc6 19.\(\Box\)xe5 \(\Box\)e6 20.\(\Box\)xg4
20...d4! 21.b3 \(\text{exg}4\)

Black is better, as \(\text{exg}3\) is a troublesome threat while the d3-pawn will remain a constant weakness.

B22) 9.exd5

Accepting the sacrifice is the principled choice, and the unbalanced nature of the ensuing positions makes it difficult to evaluate them precisely. Nevertheless I believe in Black’s chances.

9...e4 10.dxc6

White hardly has anything better:

10.d4?! exf3 11.exf3 \(\text{exd}4\)! 12.cxd4 \(\text{exd}4\) gives Black a comfortable position, for instance:

13.c3 \(\text{c}4\) 14.e4 \(\text{c}5\)! 15.\(\text{c}3\) d6 16.\(\text{d}4\) e8 \(B. Socko – Wahls, Hamburg 1996\).

10.\(\text{g}5\) is well met by: 10...\(\text{g}4\)! 11.e1 \(\text{a}5\)! 12.c2?! (A better chance seems to be: 12.e4N e8 13.d3 \(\text{xb}3\) 14.axb3 \(\text{xd}5\) 15.c4 \(\text{xc}4\) 16.\(\text{xc}4\) \(\text{c}6\) 17.b3 \(\text{xe}4\) 18.dxe4 \(\text{f}5\)!

Black wins back the pawn and obtains slightly better chances.)

12...e8! 13.b4 \(\text{xd}5\) 14.bxc5 \(\text{xd}5\) Black had an obvious initiative in Cap – Masek, Rakovnik 2011.

10...exf3

10...\(\text{g}4\)? doesn’t work in view of 11.d4!, vacating the d2-square for the queen’s knight with gain of tempo.

11.xf3 \(\text{g}4\) 12.g3
12.\textsuperscript{W}f4? Galvao – Bochecha, Portugal 1997, is strongly met by 12...\textsuperscript{W}d3!N paralysing White's queenside: 13.\textsuperscript{W}g3 (13.\textsuperscript{B}e1 \textsuperscript{B}e8\textsuperscript{+-}) 14.\textsuperscript{W}h4 transposes to the main line below after 12...\textsuperscript{B}d6.

12...\textsuperscript{B}d6

I also analysed the alternative:

12...\textsuperscript{B}e2

This also leads to reasonable play, although it does give White the extra option of defending with the \textsuperscript{W}h3 move, as in the following line:

13.d4

White must sacrifice an exchange since 13.\textsuperscript{B}e1? loses to 13...\textsuperscript{B}e4\textsuperscript{+}. 13...\textsuperscript{B}d6 14.\textsuperscript{W}h3

This has the point of avoiding the ...\textsuperscript{B}d5 idea, which is available after 14.\textsuperscript{W}h4.

13.\textsuperscript{W}h4 \textsuperscript{B}e2 14.d4

The same position could also be reached via the 12...\textsuperscript{B}e2 line noted above, but here the queen is already on h4. In other words, by choosing the 12...\textsuperscript{B}d6 move order Black avoided the possibility of 14.\textsuperscript{W}h3.

15.\textsuperscript{W}e7

15...\textsuperscript{B}e8? was tested in Poulse – Grazinys, corr. 2004, and also seems quite playable. 16.\textsuperscript{B}e3 \textsuperscript{W}e4 17.\textsuperscript{B}d2 \textsuperscript{B}xc6

Sidelines

compensates for the material deficit. 15.\textit{d4} \textit{e8}!

16.e3! (Obviously 16..\textit{xe8}†?? \textit{x}e8 17.\textit{x}d3 \textit{e4}N [17.\textit{e3} \textit{g}4! is also hopeless] 17...\textit{e}1\textit{f} 18.\textit{f}1 \textit{h}2†! is not an option for \textit{White}.)

This position was reached in Reig Alberó – Fons Cervero, Valencia 1995. Now Black has a pleasant choice between 16...\textit{e}4N 17.d3 \textit{xc}6 and 16...\textit{f}5N 17.h3 \textit{e}4, both of which offer him full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

14...\textit{xf}1 15.\textit{xf}1 \textit{e}8 16.\textit{e}3

16.\textit{g}5?!N \textit{e}7 17.\textit{e}3 prevents the \ldots\textit{d}5 idea which features in the main line, but White pays a price in the form of the lost tempo. Black has a strong reply in 17...a5! 18.\textit{d}2 h6!, intending ...a4 and keeping a slight edge.

We have been following the game Safarli – Geske, Pardubice 2010. In this position I found an attractive new idea:

16...\textit{d}5!N

Intending to exchange \textit{White}'s dark-squared bishop. 16...\textit{c}8?!N 17.\textit{d}2 \textit{g}4 is a reasonable alternative which leads to a position of dynamic equality.

17.\textit{x}d8

In the event of 17.\textit{g}5 \textit{e}7 18.\textit{xe}7 \textit{xe}7 the threat of a discovered check forces \textit{White} to move the queen, which leads to the loss of the c6-pawn: 19.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}8! 20.\textit{d}2 \textit{xc}6 and \textit{Black} is better.

17...\textit{xe}3† 18.\textit{fx}e3 \textit{axd}8 19.\textit{f}2 \textit{h}2
20.\( \text{d}2 \)!
Attempting to trap the bishop leads nowhere:
20.g3 \( \text{d}6 \) 21.\( \text{d}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \)† 22.\( \text{f}3 \) \( g5 \)† 23.\( \text{g}2 \) \( \text{xg3} \) 24.\( \text{xg3} \) \( \text{e}3 \) 25.\( \text{d}1 \) \( h5 \)† Black is the clear favourite thanks to his three connected passed pawns.

20...\( \text{d}6 \)
Despite White's strong centre, Black should not be worse.

C) 7.\( \text{d}3 \)

With this move White acknowledges the reality that \( \text{d}2-\text{d}4 \) is unlikely to be possible in the early stages of the game. Instead he plays flexibly and hopes to set up a troublesome pin with \( \text{g}5 \).

Let me point out a subtle drawback of White's scheme. The way I see it, White is getting an inferior version of the 5.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{b}5 \) 6.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{c}5 \) variation seen in the next chapter, as 7.\( \text{e}2 \), which transposes to the present position, can hardly be the best move available there.

7...\( \text{h}6 \)!
This is not the most popular continuation, but I like it for a few reasons. Firstly, Black prevents the potentially troublesome \( \text{g}5 \) pin once and for all. And secondly, by avoiding the \( \text{d}6 \) move for now, Black maintains the possibility of advancing with \( \text{d}5 \) in one move.

We will analyse five replies in detail: C1) 8.\( \text{c}3 \), C2) 8.\( \text{h}3 \), C3) 8.0--0, C4) 8.\( \text{bd}2 \) and C5) 8.\( \text{c}3 \).

Another idea is:
8.\( \text{e}3 \)
This simplifying move has never been tested at grandmaster level, except in an old game of Euwe.
8...\( \text{xe}3 \) 9.\( \text{fxe3} \)
9.\( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{d}6 \)=
9...\( \text{d}6 \)!
9...\( \text{d}5 \) is less precise due to the weakness of the \( \text{c}5 \)-square. As a general rule, I would advise you not to play this move in positions where the dark-squared bishops have already been exchanged. 10.\( \text{exd}5 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 11.0--0 (11.\( \text{c}3 \)?) 11...0--0 Maroczy – Euwe, Bad Aussee 1921. Now White could have obtained the upper hand with 12.\( \text{bd}2 \)N \( \text{e}6 \) 13.\( \text{ac}1 \)! intending c2-c4.
10.0--0 \( \text{a}5 \)!
After eliminating White's light-squared bishop Black was fine in Daspres – Cheron, Pau 2008.

C1) 8.\( \text{c}3 \)

This is an improvement.
This move has hardly ever been played, but fighting for the d5-square makes a certain amount of sense.

8...d6!
Since the ...d5 advance is not on the agenda anymore, it is the right time for this natural move.

9.\(\text{d5}\)N
This logical move is technically a novelty, although it immediately transposes to another game.

9.a4 b4 10.\(\text{d5}\) was played in Donovan – Uche, Hastings 2008, and now I would like to offer an obvious improvement:

9...\(\text{e6}\)N
I prefer this over 9...\(\text{g4}\), as played in E. Gonzalez – Mitsakos, Corte Ingles 1998, which loses some of its point after 10.c3N.

10.0-0 0-0 11.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{xd5}\)! 12.\(\text{xd5}\)
The alternative is 12.exd5 \(\text{xe3}\) 13.dxc6 (After 13.fxe3 \(\text{e7}\) White remains with a stupid bishop on b3.) 13...\(\text{b6}\) with a balanced position.

12...\(\text{xd5}\) 13.exd5 \(\text{e7}\) 14.\(\text{xc5}\) dxc5

15.\(\text{xe5}\)
15.c4 is met by 15...\(\text{f6}\) intending ...c6 and Black is fine.
15.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) is also equal.

15...\(\text{xd5}\)
With a roughly equal position.

C2) 8.h3
This funny-looking move has only been used in a single game, but considering that the player in question was Tiviakov, the world’s foremost expert on the Worrall System, the move cannot be ignored. It can be viewed as a useful waiting move, which prevents a future ...\(\text{g4}\) and hints at a possible g2-g4 expansion on the kingside.
Chapter 4 – Worrall System

8...0–0!?N

This is my new and rather provocative idea. 8...d6 is another sensible move which was played in Tiviakov – Xie Jun, Beijing 1998.

9.g4!?

This aggressive move is surely the reason why Black refrained from castling in the aforementioned game.

9...d5!

Black answers with a counterattack in the centre. Now the position becomes rather sharp.

10.g5!

10...c3 is met by 10...dxe4! 11...xe4 (11.dxe4?d4++! 11...dxe4 12...xe4 b7 13...d5...d6 intending ...ad8 and Black is fine.

10...dxe4 11.dxe4

11.gxf6! is dubious due to 11...exf3 12...xf3 e4! 13...h5

11...hxg5 12...xg5

12...d6!

Unpinning the knight.

13...c3...h7

The ensuing ...d4 should yield Black a good game, for instance:

14...e3

14...d2...d4 15...xd4...xd4 is also roughly equal.
9.c3 and 9...\textbackslash bd2 \textbackslash e8 10.c3 both reach variation C52 at the same respective move numbers.

9...\textbackslash e3 d6 10.\textbackslash e3 was played in Hommes – Solleveld, Leeuwarden 2001. Here I propose the natural continuation:

10...\textbackslash e4!N 11.\textbackslash d5 \textbackslash d4 12.\textbackslash x d4 \textbackslash x d4 13.c3 \textbackslash a7 and Black is fine.

After the text move I would like to introduce an interesting novelty.

9...d6?!N

9...\textbackslash x e3 10.fxe3 d5 occurred in Davies – Solleveld, Haarlem 2001. I have already mentioned the drawback of playing ...d5 after the dark-squared bishops have been exchanged, and this is no exception. After the correct 11.exd5N \textbackslash x d5 12.\textbackslash b d2! the weakness of the c5-square, along with the possibility of opening the c-file by means of c2-c4, gives White the better chances.

10.\textbackslash x e5?!

This striking move deserves to be analysed, even though it is not very good.

Objectively White should prefer a quieter alternative such as 10.a4 \textbackslash g4 11.h3 \textbackslash x f3 12.\textbackslash x f3 \textbackslash d4 13.\textbackslash x d4 \textbackslash x d4= with a roughly equal position.
Chapter 4 – Worrall System

10...\( \text{dxe5} \) 11.d4

![Chess Diagram](image1)

11...\( \text{e7!} \)

11...\( \text{xd4?!} \) 12.\( \text{xd4} \) c5 13.\( \text{xe5} \) dxe5 14.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{b6} \) 15.\( \text{d5} \) c4! is also fine for Black, but the text move enables him to fight for the advantage.

12.\( \text{dxc5} \) dxc5 13.c4 \( \text{xe4} \) 14.\( \text{xb5} \) \( \text{b7?!} \)

Black prevents \( \text{d5} \) and creates the threat of ...\( \text{axb5} \). The strong position of Black's minor pieces promises him the upper hand.

C4) 8.\( \text{bd2} \)

![Chess Diagram](image2)

This time White prioritizes the development of his knight.

8...0–0 9.\( \text{f1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 10.c3

White saves his light-squared bishop from exchange.

After 10.\( \text{g3} \) Black can play 10...\( \text{a5}! \) 11.0–0 (Or 11.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{f8?!} \) followed by ...\( \text{xb3} \) and ...\( \text{d5} \) with a slight edge to Black.) 11...\( \text{xb3} \) 12.axb3 \( \text{d5} \) with a slight advantage thanks to the bishop pair.

10...\( \text{d5!} \)

Black establishes a space advantage in the centre, as planned and without making any concessions. I already rate his prospects as slightly better.

11.\( \text{g3} \)

This position arose in the game Tiviakov – Cherniaev, Port Erin 1998. Now I like the aggressive continuation:
11...a5!N
Taking space on the queenside and making the life of the b3-bishop a bit less comfortable.

12.a4
12.0–0 a4 also favours Black.

12...b4 13.0–0 \text{b\texttt{8}}
Black is better.

C5) 8.c3

8...0–0
The same position sometimes arises via a 7.c3 0–0 8.d3 h6 move order, although we saw in variation B1 that 8...d5?! was a good independent alternative in that line.

At this juncture we will consider the three main options of C51) 9.h3, C52) 9.0–0 and C53) 9.\text{bd}2.

C51) 9.h3
This resembles the earlier variation C2, except that here White has wasted time on c2-c3, which is hardly an essential part of his kingside attacking plans. Therefore Black already has every reason to feel confident.

9...d5 10.g4?!

This may seem like a principled move, but it seems to me that it is riskier for White than for Black.

The safer 10.0–0 was played in Tiviakov – Bauer, Mondariz 2000. Now I like 10...dxe4?!N, preventing the exd5 idea, and after 11.dxe4 \text{\texttt{e}}7 12.\text{\texttt{e}}3 \text{\texttt{a}5} Black intends to play ...\text{\texttt{b}7} with a good game.

10...dxe4 11.dxe4 \text{\texttt{b}7}? 12.\text{\texttt{c}2}
The point of Black’s last move is that 12.g5? is refuted by 12...\text{\texttt{xe}4}! 13.\text{\texttt{wx}e}4 \text{\texttt{a}5} 14.\text{\texttt{e}2} (14.\text{\texttt{f}g}4 \text{\texttt{h}5}?) 14...\text{\texttt{x}b}3 15.axb3 \text{\texttt{d}5} when Black wins back the piece and obtains a clear advantage.

The present position was reached in Mikhaletz – Jedryczka, Swidnica 1999, and here Black missed a strong idea.

12...\text{\texttt{c}7}!N
Intending to put the knight on g6, where it will fortify Black’s kingside while eyeing the weak f4-square.

13.g5
How else can White try to make sense of the earlier g2-g4 move? Certainly not with the greedy 13.\text{\texttt{xe}5} \text{\texttt{e}8}, when the disappearance of the e5-pawn merely opens a crucial attacking file for Black.
13...hxg5 14.hxg5 Qg6 15.Bbd2
The attempt to attack with 15.h4 is ruined by the simple 15...Nd6! (threatening ...Nh5) 16.h5 Nh4 17.Bxf4 exf4 with a clear advantage.

15...Nd6!
Black unpins the f6-knight and prepares ...Nh5 again.

16.0-0-0 Nb6!
Black has some positional advantages while White's attack is unlikely to happen.

C52) 9.0-0

9...Be8
This maintains the possibility of playing ...d5 in one go. The rook move also vacates the f8-square for the dark-squared bishop, while creating the faintest hint of a threat against the white queen.

10.Bbd2
This seems best. Other moves give Black chances to take over the initiative, as you can see in the following lines:

10.h3 d5 Everything is ready for this advance. 11.ed1 Ne6 12.Bbd2 Qd7 With ...Qad8 coming soon, Black was already more comfortable in Lorenzini - Sorin, Rosario 2000.

10.c3 Nf8 11.h3 d5 12.ed1 was played in Figueroa - Mitkov, Monterrey 2010, and now Black could have obtained some advantage by means of: 12...Ne5!N 13.Bc2 c5= With a useful space advantage.

Finally 10.a4 b4 11.a5 Bb8! 12.c4 occurred in Fogarasi - Almasi, Hungary 1997, and now 12...d5!N would have brought Black some initiative:

13.exd5 Qxd5 14.Bc4 Bc6 15.Bxe5 (After 15.Bxa6 Qd6= White is under strong pressure, while the development of his queenside remains difficult.) 15...Be5 16.Bxe5 Bd6 17.Qe4 Bd7 Black has a strong initiative for the pawn thanks to his far superior development.
10...d6

This is one of the few occasions in the chapter where I decided to settle for moving the d-pawn a single square. The slight problem with 10...d5 is revealed after 11.exd5 Qxd5 12.Qe4, when the otherwise desirable 12...Qf8? allows White to win a pawn with 13.Qxh6. For this reason Black would be forced to play 12...Qe7, when his position is playable, but he has lost a bit of coordination.

11.e4

After 11.e4 (or 11.e5) 11...Qg4 12.Qf1 Black can either come back to f6 if he is satisfied with a draw or play the useful waiting move 12...Qb6!? as in Berezinuk – Plachetka, Slovakia 1998.

11...Qb8 12.axb5 axb5

This position has been reached in several games, via a few different move orders. It seems to me that the position is of a non-forcing character, so I have chosen one example between the two highest-rated players to illustrate how the play may continue.

13.Qe2 Qb6 14.Qb3 Qe7 15.d4 Qg6
16.dxe5 Qxe5 17.Qxe5 Qxe5=

Black’s pressure along the e-file compensates for White’s slight space advantage in the centre, Salgado Lopez – Inarkiev, Barcelona 2010.
This is an admission of failure, but White cannot play 13...c2? in view of 13...dxe4 14.dxe4 c4:

15...d1 (Or 15...d2 b8! with ideas of ...xb8 and ...a7.) 15...xd1† (The spectacular 15...xe4?! is also strong.) 16.xd1 xf2† with a clear extra pawn for Black.


It is necessary to improve on 12...f8? 13.xh6! when Black lost a pawn in Brzeski – Nurkiewicz, Krakow 2005.

Black could, however, consider 12...e7?N 13.0–0 f5 which leads to a roughly equal position.

Now Black has a positional threat of ...a5, when the bishop will not be able to vacate the a2-g8 diagonal on account of the pinning ...f5.
16.\(\text{f}g5!\)
A nice tactical idea.

I also checked the quieter 16.a3 intending to keep the bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal. In this case Black can reply with 16...\(\text{a}5\) 17.\(\text{a}2\) \(\text{c}4!\), intending to bring the knight to d6 and later exchange the strong knight on e4. Play may continue:

16...\(\text{d}5!\)

16...hxg5? is refuted by 17.\(\text{h}5!\) \(\text{e}5\) 18.\(\text{x}g5++\).

18.\(\text{ad}1\) \(\text{d}6\) 19.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{d}7!\) The queen is coming to f5 to put even more pressure on e4. 20.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{f}5\) 21.\(\text{b}1\) \(\text{ad}8=\) Black is doing fine.

17.\(\text{h}5\) \(\text{d}5!\)

Blocking the key attacking diagonal enables Black to maintain the equilibrium. We are already well into uncharted territory, but since the position remains rather complex, I extended the analysis for quite some way.

18.\(\text{f}3\)
White hopes that the instability of the black pieces on the fifth rank will force a concession of some kind.

18.\(\text{xd}5\)
This is the only reasonable alternative, but it promises no advantage.

18...\(\text{xd}5\) 19.\(\text{f}3\)
19.\(\text{f}6??\) \(\text{gxf}6\) 20.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{g}7\) 21.\(\text{d}4\) meets with a cute refutation:

21...\(\text{f}5!\)++

Black protects the queen and forces an exchange on e5. 20.\(\text{x}e5\) \(\text{x}e5\) 21.\(\text{g}4\) \(\text{h}7\) 21...\(\text{e}6\) is a safe alternative, and 22.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{xe}6\) is about equal.
22.\textit{d}d2
In the event of 22.\textit{x}xf4 \textit{ae}8 23.\textit{ed}1 \textit{f}5 24.\textit{g}g3 \textit{c}7 Black obtains sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn, thanks to his control over the e-file and the strong positions of all his pieces.
22...\textit{xe}1\textasciitilde 23.\textit{xe}1 \textit{xd}3 24.\textit{xf}4 \textit{d}8
Black has slightly the easier side of equality.

22...\textit{xb}3 19.\textit{xe}5
White must avoid 19.axb3? \textit{xd}3\textasciitilde.

19...\textit{d}d5!
19...\textit{d}d5 is playable, but I prefer the text move.

20.axb3
I checked two other moves as well.

20.d4?!
This attempt to maintain the knight on e5 is not quite justified.
20...\textit{c}c2!
But not 20...\textit{xa}2? 21.\textit{f}f5 \textit{e}6 22.\textit{xf}4 \textit{g}3\textasciitilde intending \textit{f}5 when White is better thanks to the dominating position of his pieces.
21.\textit{f}f3
21...\textit{ad}8!
21...\textit{xe}4 22.\textit{xe}4 \textit{f}6 doesn't win a piece due to the simple 23.\textit{ee}1.
22.\textit{d}d2 \textit{xf}3 23.\textit{dx}f3 \textit{e}6!
Black's bishop pair gives him chances to press in the endgame, despite the slight damage to his kingside structure.

20.\textit{d}d2?!
This seems to lead to a forced draw after accurate play.
20...\textit{xa}2 21.c4

18...\textit{xb}3 19.\textit{xe}5
White must avoid 19.axb3? \textit{xd}3\textasciitilde.

19...\textit{d}d5!
19...\textit{d}d5 is playable, but I prefer the text move.

20.axb3
I checked two other moves as well.

20.d4?!
This attempt to maintain the knight on e5 is not quite justified.
20...\textit{c}c2!
But not 20...\textit{xa}2? 21.\textit{f}f5 \textit{e}6 22.\textit{xf}4 \textit{g}3\textasciitilde intending \textit{f}5 when White is better thanks to the dominating position of his pieces.
21.\textit{f}f3
21...\textit{ad}8!
21...\textit{xe}4 22.\textit{xe}4 \textit{f}6 doesn't win a piece due to the simple 23.\textit{ee}1.
22.\textit{d}d2 \textit{xf}3 23.\textit{dx}f3 \textit{e}6!

21...\textit{xc}4!!
A beautiful move!
22.dxc4
22.\textit{dx}c4?! is strongly met by 22...\textit{a}7! intending ...\textit{f}6, for example: 23.\textit{ac}1 \textit{f}6 24.\textit{f}f3 \textit{xf}3 25.\textit{xf}3 \textit{xe}1\textasciitilde 26.\textit{xe}1 \textit{bxc}4 27.\textit{xc}4 \textit{b}8\textasciitilde
22...\textit{xd}2 23.\textit{xf}7\textasciitilde \textit{h}7 24.\textit{g}6\textasciitilde \textit{g}8 25.\textit{f}7\textasciitilde \textit{h}7=
Neither side can avoid the repetition.
20...\(\text{Bxe5}\) 21.\(\text{Bf3}\)

21.\(\text{g4}\) is inaccurate in view of 21...\(\text{e6!}\) and White has nothing better than 22.\(\text{Bf3}\) \(\text{d8}\). The upshot is that Black has a slightly improved version of the main line since his rook is securely placed on \(\text{e6}\), instead of \(\text{e5}\) where it can be tactically vulnerable.

21...\(\text{Be8}\) 22.\(\text{b4}\)

Again I analysed a couple of other tries for White.

22.\(\text{f6}\)†

This tactical solution doesn't promise any advantage.

22...\(\text{gx6}\) 23.\(\text{Bxd5}\) \(\text{exf5}\)† 24.\(\text{Bxf5}\) \(\text{e1}\)† 25.\(\text{h2}\) \(\text{xf6}\) 26.\(\text{g3}\) \(\text{xg3}\)† 27.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{e2}\)†

Black is at least equal as the attempt to escape the checks leads only to misery for White.

22.\(\text{Bxa6}\)

This move should lead to equality after the following sequence.

22...\(\text{xb3}\) 23.\(\text{d4}\) \(\text{e6}\)

24.\(\text{h2!}\) \(\text{c2}\) 25.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{b1}\)† 26.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{xb2}\)
27.\(\text{e6}\) \(\text{f6}\) 28.\(\text{g6}\)

Another drawing line is: 28.\(\text{a8}\) \(\text{xa8}\) 29.\(\text{xa8}\) \(\text{f7}\) 30.\(\text{f3}\) \(\text{xf2}\) 31.\(\text{e5}\)† \(\text{e7}\) 32.\(\text{g8}\) \(\text{g3}\)† 33.\(\text{g1}\) \(\text{e1}\)†
28...\(\text{e8}\) 29.\(\text{xe6}\)† \(\text{h8}\) 30.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{b4}\)

By now White has nothing better than to force a draw by means of:

31.\(\text{e6!}\) \(\text{bxc3}\) 32.\(\text{e8}\) \(\text{xa8}\) 33.\(\text{xa8}\)† \(\text{h7}\) 34.\(\text{xc3}\) \(\text{xc3}\) 35.\(\text{e4}\)† \(\text{g8}\) 36.\(\text{e8}\)†=

22...\(\text{e6}\)!

This way Black prepares \(\text{f5}\) and takes control over the e-file. The immediate 22...\(\text{f5}\)?? loses to 23.\(\text{f6}\)†!
Chapter 4 – Worrall System

23...\( \text{eb}1 \)

The alternative is: 23...\( \text{f}f1 \) \( \text{b}3 \) 24...\( \text{eb}1 \)
(After 24...\( \text{d}d1 \) \( \text{d}5 \) White has nothing better than 25...\( \text{f}3 \) repeating.)

24...\( \text{e}8! \) Black needed a good waiting move.
25...\( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{d}5 \) 26...\( \text{f}d1 \) \( \text{f}5 \) 27...\( \text{g}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 28...\( \text{d}2 \)
\( \text{g}6 \) Black maintains an adequate initiative for the sacrificed pawn.

23...\( g5 \)

With this move Black defends the \( f4 \)-pawn and prepares ...\( \text{g}7 \) and ...\( f5 \).

24...\( \text{d}2 \)

24...\( \text{xf}3 \) 25...\( \text{xf}3 \) \( \text{e}2 \) 26...\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 27...\( \text{xa}6 \)
\( \text{c}2 \) 28...\( \text{el} \) \( \text{d}2 \) 29...\( \text{f}1?! \)

29...\( \text{f}3 \) \( \text{c}2 \) is a move repetition. The text move is a final attempt to prolong the game, but Black has a good answer.

29...\( \text{ee}2 \) 30...\( \text{d}3! \) \( \text{e}4! \) 31...\( \text{e}1 \)

31...\( \text{xd}4! \) 32...\( \text{cxd}4 \) \( \text{xd}3= \)

Black has full compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

Conclusion

The early development of the queen to \( e2 \) has both good and bad points, but overall it is hard to believe it can be the best way to conduct the opening. Nevertheless, the privilege of the first move means that White can still hope for an interesting game. Black’s set-up with \( 5...b5 \) and \( 6...\text{c}5 \) has a proven track record, and throughout the chapter we have seen Black obtaining healthy prospects with the help of the active plan involving ...\( d5 \) whenever the chance presents itself.
Sidelines

5.d3 – Introduction and Sidelines

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.â3 âc6 3.âb5 a6 4.âa4 âf6 5.d3

5...b5 6.âb3 âc5

A) 7.âg5 96
B) 7.a4 97
C) 7.âc3 d6 101
   C1) 8.âg5 101
   C2) 8.âd5 h6! 102
       C21) 9.âxf6† 102
       C22) 9.c3! 104
D) 7.c3 d6 107
   D1) 8.âbd2 107
   D2) 8.âe2!? h6 108
       D21) 9.0–0 109
       D22) 9.âbd2 111

A) after 9.c3

9...âh8!? N

C21) after 14.âe1

14...âb6! N

C22) after 13.âc1!

13...âe6!? N
Chapter 5 – 5.d3 – Introduction and Sidelines

This is the most popular alternative to 5.0–0, so it is essential for us to find a reliable set-up against it. I have encountered this system a lot of times, and I decided to recommend Black’s most active set-up involving the development of the dark-squared bishop to c5. Apart from being objectively strong and solid, this also ties in nicely with the recommendation from the previous chapter.

5...b5 6.a3 c5

The other main line here is 6...e7, but this leads to the realm of the Closed Ruy Lopez, which is not part of the recommended repertoire in this book.

After the text move White has several options available, and the job of classifying them is complicated by the plethora of transpositions that may occur. In order to simplify the task, I decided to make the main line of 7.0–0 the subject of a separate chapter, beginning on page 113 immediately after the present chapter. All other related move orders featuring early castling from White will also be classified under that chapter.

In the present chapter we will consider all major variations in which White either does without castling, or postpones it for long enough to avoid a simple transposition. We will consider four main branches, arranged in roughly ascending order of importance:

A) 7.g5, B) 7.a4, C) 7.c3 and D) 7.c3.

Of course we also have the usual selection of rare moves that can be covered more briefly:

Amusingly, the database only contains a single game in which 7.e2 was played in this position, even though it immediately transposes to variation C of the previous chapter, accompanied by a rise in the game count to over 170.

7.h3 d6 is almost certain to transpose to a line considered elsewhere. For example, 8.c3 leads to 8.h3 in the note to variation D on page 107, while 8.0–0 takes us to the start of the next chapter – see the 8.h3 move noted on page 114.

The peculiar 7.d5?! was played in Seidov – Bayramov, Dos Hermanas 2004, and now after the natural 7...cxd5N 8.exd5 b4 9.0–0 (9.e5 0–0! 10.0–0 cxd5 11.c4 d6! 12.e1 b6+! 9...0–0 (9...cxd5!?) 10.e4 bxc4 11.dxc4 e4 12.e1 a5 13.c3 f5 Black has a good position.
7.\(\text{dxe5}\)! is also dubious and after 7...\(\text{dxe5}\)
8.d4, Shirazi – Balinas, Chicago 1989, 8...\(\text{xd4}\)N 9.\(\text{we4}\) d6 10.\(\text{we3}\) c5 11.c3 \(\text{b6}\) 12.\(\text{d2}\) 0–0 13.0–0 \(\text{e8}\) Black is doing well.

7.\(\text{bd2}\) 0–0 8.\(\text{f1}\) (8.c3 d6 reaches line D1 on page 107) is met by 8...d5! 9.exd5 \(\text{xd5}\) 10.\(\text{g5}\) Galiana Salom – Vidarte Morales, Son Servera 2004, and now:

10...\(\text{f6}\)N 11.\(\text{e3}\) (11.\(\text{d2}\) \(\text{d4}\)!!?) 11...\(\text{e6}\) 12.\(\text{xh5}\) \(\text{xh5}\) with a slight edge for Black.

7.\(\text{e3}\) is playable but rather harmless: 7...d6 8.c3 (After 8.\(\text{xc5}\) dxc5 9.c3 0–0 10.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{d6}\) the pressure along the d-file promised Black a comfortable position in Del Rio Angelis – Jedryczka, Casteldefels 2006.) 8.0–0 9.0–0 \(\text{xe3}\) 10.\(\text{xe3}\)

10...\(\text{a5}\) (10...\(\text{e7}\)N 11.\(\text{bd2}\) \(\text{g6}\) is also roughly equal.) 11.\(\text{c2}\) c5 12.\(\text{bd2}\) c4 13.b4

cxd3 14.\(\text{xd3}\) \(\text{c6}\) Black was at least not worse in Pelletier – Ponomariov, Biel 2004.

A) 7.\(\text{g5}\)

This move is slightly premature as the pin does not cause Black any discomfort.

7...h6 8.\(\text{h4}\) d6 9.c3

9.\(\text{d5}\) makes no sense as after 9...\(\text{d7}\) White is forced to exchange one of his bishops, Wahl – Pragua, Tiefenbach 2004.

More interesting is:

9.\(\text{c3}\)

As played in Malloggi – Mariano, Crema 2000. Now the following line leads to interesting complications.

9...\(\text{a5}\)!!N

9...g5 is a safe alternative.

10.d4? exd4
11. \( \text{d}5 \) g5 12. \( \text{d}x\text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}x\text{d}5 \) 13. \( \text{h}5 \) \( \text{f}6 \)
14. \( \text{h}7 \) \( \text{g}7 \) 15. \( \text{xd}5 \)
After 15. \( \text{xd}5 \) \( \text{xh}7 \) 16. \( \text{xa}8 \) 0–0
White’s queen is in trouble.
15 ... \( \text{e}x\text{h}7 \) 16. \( \text{xa}8 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 17. \( \text{d}5 \)

The present position was reached in Kritz – Rainfray, Lausanne 2003. Now I would like to offer the following idea for your attention:

9 ... \( \text{b}8 \)!
A good waiting and prophylactic move. Black is waiting for his opponent to castle, in which case he will play ...g5 without fearing a subsequent h2–h4. The rook move also avoids the potential pinning action of a bishop on d5.

10. \( \text{bd}2 \) \( \text{a}7 \)
Black employs another waiting move. A possible continuation is:

11. \( \text{fl} \) a5 12. \( \text{e}3 \) a4 13. \( \text{c}2 \) g5 14. \( \text{g}3 \)

14 ... h5! 15. h4 g4
Black is doing well thanks to the following point:

16. \( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{g}8 \)!
The white knight is in trouble, with ...f6 on the way.

B) 7. a4
7...\textit{b}8

7...\textit{b}4 is also playable, but generally speaking the above rook move will be my preferred antidote to \textit{a}2-\textit{a}4 in the present chapter.

\textbf{8.axb5}

8.0-0 \textit{d}6 transposes to line B in the next chapter – see 7.0-0 \textit{d}6 8.a4 \textit{b}8 on page 116.

Other moves are also likely to transpose, three examples being 8.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}6, 8.c3 \textit{d}6 and 8.g5 \textit{h}6 9.h4 \textit{d}6. In all these cases I do not see anything better for \textit{White} than exchanging on \textit{b}5, which will lead to one of the lines given below.

\textbf{8...axb5}

\begin{center}

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\hline
 8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textbf{9.\textit{c}c3}

Both 9.0-0 \textit{d}6 and 9.c3 \textit{d}6 10.0-0 \textit{h}6 transpose to variations considered in the next chapter; see variations B2 and C2 on pages 118 and 124 respectively.

There are, however, two bishop moves that deserve attention.

9.\textit{e}3 \textit{d}6 10.\textit{xc}5 \\
10.bd2 0-0 11.0-0 \textit{xe}3 12.fxe3 transposes to line B21 of the next chapter, on page 199.

10...\textit{d}xc5

\begin{center}

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\hline
 8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textbf{11.\textit{h}3}

11.c3 0-0 12.0-0 \textit{w}d6 with pressure along the \textit{d}-file is fine for \textit{Black}, Sedlak – Erdos Hungary 2009.

11...0-0 12.0-0 \textit{w}d6 13.\textit{c}3 \textit{h}6 14.\textit{e}2

Now in Vachier Lagrave – Fontaine, France 2008, Black had the following interesting idea available:

\begin{center}

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\hline
 8 & 7 & 6 & 5 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 1 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textbf{14...\textit{c}4?!N}

The game continuation of 14...\textit{d}8 is also good for \textit{Black}.

15.dxc4 \textit{dxe}4

\textit{Black} has at least equal chances.

9.\textit{g}5 \textit{h}6 10.\textit{h}4

10.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 11.\textit{c}3 \textit{e}7 is in \textit{Black}'s favour.

10...\textit{d}6 11.\textit{bd}2

11.\textit{c}3 \textit{g}5 12.\textit{g}3 \textit{g}4 13.\textit{h}4 occurred in Arakhamia-Grant – Motwani, Edinburgh 1999. Now \textit{Black} could have done well with:
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13...\(\text{g}5\)!N 14.exg5 hxg5 15.f4 d4 16.c3 \(\text{xf}3\) 17.gxf3 The doubled pawns leave White with a dead bishop on g3, and after 17...\(\text{xb}3\) 18.eb3 c6 19.e3 \(\text{f}6\) 20.e2 \(\text{xe}3\) 21.e3 \(\text{f}8\) followed by ...\(\text{g}7\) Black's chances are higher.

1...\(\text{g}5\) 12.e3 \(\text{g}4\)

We already know this typical idea.

\(\text{d}6\) 10.e5

The main drawback of \(\text{g}5\) is the weakening of the f5-square, so White is trying to bring his knight there.

1...\(\text{f}4!\) 15.exf4 gxf4

Black prevented his opponent's idea and obtained a good position in Kosashvili - Orchmai, Curacao 2002.

10...f3 11.fxe3 h6 12.d5 \(\text{g}5\) 13.exd5 \(\text{e}6\) 14.e4 \(\text{g}6\) 15...0-0 transposes to the 12.e3 line in the notes to line B21 in the next chapter - see page 119.

White's only other significant option is:

10.d5 \(\text{h}6\)

Preventing the pin.

11.e3

I also analysed: 11.e3 0-0 12.0-0 \(\text{e}6\) 13.xe5 (Or 13.c3 \(\text{xd}5\) 14.exd5 \(\text{e}6\) 15.xc6 \(\text{b}6\) 16.d4 \(\text{e}8\!) \text{and Black was better in Shabalov - Friedel, Las Vegas 2003.}) 13...dxc5 14.xf6\(\text{d}1\) 15.e6 \(\text{xe}6\) 16.e7 17.e8\(\text{d}a8\) 18.e3 \(\text{d}6\) 18.eb3

18...b4! 19.e6 \(\text{d}4\) 20.exd4 \(\text{xd}4\) with full equality in Ki. Georgiev - Kasimdzhanov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007.

11...0-0 12.d4 exd4 13.exd4 \(\text{xd}5\) 14.e5

Or 14.exd5 \(\text{b}4\!) 15.d2 \(\text{xd}2\) 16.xd2 \(\text{e}7\) 17.e3 \(\text{g}4\) followed by ...c5 and
Black experiences no problems. The main position was reached in Godena – Naiditsch, Heraklio 2007, and here I propose:

14...\text{e}d\text{b}4!\text{N} 15.c\text{x}d6 \text{w}\text{x}d6 16.\text{w}\text{x}d6 cxd6 17.0–0 \text{e}e8 18.\text{f}f4 \text{e}e6! 19.\text{xe}6 \text{xe}6 20.\text{d}d1 \text{e}d8

Black has no problems in this endgame.

10...h6 11.\text{x}f6 \text{w}\text{x}f6 12.\text{d}d5

Ponomariov – Adams, Sofia 2005. Here I found a nice new idea for Black:

12...\text{g}6!\text{N} 13.0–0

Certainly not 13.\text{x}c7\text{f} 14.d5 \text{w}\text{x}g2\text{F}.

13...0–0!

Making it into a real gambit.

14.c3

14.\text{d}d\text{c}7 \text{h}3 15.\text{h}4 (or 15.\text{e}e1 \text{g}4 16.\text{d}d2 \text{d}d4 17.\text{d}d5 \text{w}h5 with initiative) 15...\text{w}g5 is good for Black.

Also after 14.\text{h}1 \text{g}4 15.c3 \text{w}h5 16.\text{d}c7 b4 Black’s initiative is enough for a pawn, for example: 17.\text{d}d5 bxc3 18.bxc3

18.\text{x}xb3! 19.\text{x}xb3 \text{xf}3 and White has to accept the perpetual: 20.gxf3 \text{xf}3\text{f} 21.\text{g}1 \text{w}g4\text{f}=

14...\text{h}3 15.\text{e}e1 \text{g}4 16.\text{d}d2 \text{e}e6!

Black defends the c7-pawn indirectly, for the last time.

17.\text{a}6 \text{x}d5 18.\text{x}d5 \text{e}e7=

The position is balanced.
7...d6

From here White would love to set up the combination of a bishop on g5 and a knight on d5, but of course we will not allow both of these moves to be played. We will analyse both C1) 8.g5 and C2) 8.d5 in turn.

8.a4 is well met by 8...g4! (There is also 8...b8 with a probable transposition to variation B above after 9.axb5 axb5.) 9.axb5 axb5 10.xa8 bxa8 11.d5 a7! and Black was fighting for the advantage in Nyzhnyk – Karpatchev, Bad Woerishofen 2010.

C1) 8.g5

8...h6 9.xf6

9.h4 transposes to variation A above.

9...xf6 10.d5

We have reached the same position as in variation B above, except that here the moves a2-a4 and ...b8, followed by a pawn exchange on b5, have not taken place. This leads me to recommend a different course of action for Black, for reasons that will be explained.

10...d8

10...g6?!N

This was the recommendation in the aforementioned line. It remains playable and leads to an unclear position, but White has one key resource that was less appealing in the other variation.

11.e2!

11.xc7? d8 12.xa8 g2 13.f1 g4 is nasty for White.

11.h4?! is playable, although after 11...g5 12.xc7? d8 13.xa8 h4 14.f1 g4 15.d2 d7 16.c3 b8 the complex position should not be unfavourable to Black.

11...0–0

12.e2

12.c3?! is another idea.

12...e7 13.d5 d4?! 14.xd4 xxd4 15.0–0–0!

The position is rather unclear, but compared with the analogous situation from variation B,
White has certainly benefited from the absence of an open a-file.

11.c3 0–0 12.0–0
After 12.d4 a7 13.a4?! exd4 14.axb5 axb5 15.cxd4 g4 16.a6 b6 17.xa8 xa8 White’s centre was under fire in Iturrizaga Bonelli – Michelen, Bogota 2006.

The text move was played in Marco – Spielmann, Bad Pistyan 1922. At this point my preferred continuation would be:

12...a5N 13.c2 c6 14.e3 xe3 15.fxe3 c5=
With a roughly equal position.

8...h6!
Black should prevent g5. The two main options are C21) 9.xf6† and C22) 9.e3!

9.a4 b8 (9...a5??) 10.axb5 axb5 transposes to 10.d5 h6 in the notes to variation B on page 99 above.

9.0–0 allows 9...a5 which should equalize easily, for instance: 10.e3 xb3 11.axb3 xd5 12.exd5 (12.xc5 dxc5 13.exd5 xd5 14.xe5 0–0 is also equal.) 12...xe3 13.fx3 0–0 14.c4 b7= Black prepares ...c6 with a comfortable position, Riascos – Madariaga, Medellin Cuartas Memorial 2011.

C21) 9.xf6† xf6
10. \( \texttt{d5} \)

There is no other way to make sense of White's previous move.

10. \( \texttt{d7} \) 11. \( \texttt{e3} \)

I also analysed:

11. \( \texttt{c3} \) \( \texttt{b8} \)

Black unpins the knight and prepares ... \( \texttt{e7} \).

12. \( \texttt{b4} \) \( \texttt{b6} \) 13. \( \texttt{a4} \)

11... \( \texttt{d8} \)

11... \( \texttt{b8} \)? also makes sense.

12. \( \texttt{xc6} \) \( \texttt{xc6} \) 13.0–0

13. \( \texttt{xc5} \) dxc5 14. \( \texttt{e2} \) 0–0 15. \( \texttt{e3} \) \( \texttt{e7} \) was equal in Hernández Guerrero – Lugo, Lubbock 2007.

13...0–0 14. \( \texttt{e1} \)

Zvjaginsev – Ganguly, Moscow 2005. Now Black could have played:

14... \( \texttt{b6} \)?

Preparing ...d5. The minor damage to Black's pawn structure is not important here.

15. \( \texttt{xb6} \) cxb6 16. \( \texttt{e3} \)
Or 16...dxe4 followed by ...d5 at an appropriate moment.

16...d5! 17.exd5 exd5!
This should solve all Black's problems, for instance:

18...\(\text{W}\)xb6 \(\text{d}\)6 19...\(\text{W}\)e3 \(\text{fx}\)3 20...\(\text{W}\)xf3 \(\text{W}\)xf3 21...\(\text{g}\)xf3

\[\text{Diagram 1}\]

...\(\text{W}\)c8! 22...\(\text{W}\)ac1 \(\text{g}\)6†! 23...\(\text{h}\)h1 \(\text{W}\)gc6 24...\(\text{c}\)3 \(\text{d}\)8 25...\(\text{d}\)fd1 \(\text{cd}\)6= Black regains the pawn to reach an equal endgame.

C22) 9...\(\text{c}\)3!

16.g4?! \(\text{c}\)5 17.c4?! bxc4 18.dxc4 \(\text{d}\)4 Black was clearly better thanks to his protected passed pawn and the vulnerable position of White's king in Lahno – Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2006.

11...\(\text{d}\)xe3?! cannot promise any advantage, and in the following game Black gradually took over: 11...\(\text{b}\)6 12...\(\text{e}\)2 \(\text{e}\)7! Transferring the knight to f4. 13...\(\text{d}\)1 \(\text{g}\)6 14...\(\text{f}\)5 \(\text{d}\)5 15...\(\text{h}\)3 \(\text{e}\)8

\[\text{Diagram 2}\]

11...\(\text{e}\)3\! 12...\(\text{x}\)d5 \(\text{d}\)xe5 13...\(\text{x}\)e5 \(\text{d}\)6 14...\(\text{x}\)xc6 \(\text{g}\)6 15...\(\text{e}\)1 \(\text{e}\)7 With ...\(\text{e}\)6 coming next, the position is equal and the players agreed a draw in Kindermann – Ragger, Gmunden 2005.
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11...æe1 a5?! 12.d4 Æa7 13.Æe3 Æg4 14.h3 Æxe3 15.Æxe3 occurred in Aguirre – Kis Kos, Internet 2010, and here I suggest:

15...a4N 16.Æd5 Æa5! 17.a3 c6 18.Æa2 ßf6 with equality.

11...Æa7

I also analysed:
11...exd4

Initially I thought this move would be more precise, as it takes away White’s option of recapturing on d4 with a piece, as seen in the 12...exd4 variation in the notes to the main line. However, I found that Black still has some problems to solve after:

12.cxd4 Æa7 13.Æe3!N

After the inaccurate 13.e5?!, as played in Movsisian – Ragger, Herceg Novi 2005, Black can fight for the advantage by means of:

13...exd5 14.Æxd5 Æe7 15.Æb3 d5?! 15...b7 16.Æc2 c5 17.dxc5 Òc8 18.Æad1 Æxc5 19.Æxc5 Æxc5 20.Æd3± is slightly better for White due to the weakness of the d6-pawn.

16.e5

16...Æe5?! is also interesting.

16...Æf5 17.Æc1

White retains slightly better chances.

12.Æe3

This is the most challenging move, and the only one to have been tested so far. White can afford to leave the e4-pawn hanging.

12...Æxe4
Black continues on the principled path. According to my analysis it should lead to a simplified position where Black has to be careful, but should be able to equalize without too many problems.

After 12...exd4 13.\texttt{\textgreek{xd}4!} \texttt{\textgreek{xd}4} 14.\texttt{\textgreek{xd}4 \textgreek{xd}4} 15.\texttt{\textgreek{xd}4=} Black was under some pressure in Asrian – Yegiazarian, Yerevan 2005.

I also investigated a new idea: 12...\texttt{\textgreek{g}4!?} 13.dxe5 \texttt{\textgreek{xe}3} 14.\texttt{\textgreek{xe}3 \textgreek{xe}5} 15.\texttt{\textgreek{xe}5 dxe5} 16.\texttt{\textgreek{h}5 \textgreek{xe}3} 17.fxe3 \texttt{\textgreek{e}7} 18.\texttt{\textgreek{ad}1}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \texttt{18...\textgreek{e}6?!N}
\end{enumerate}

The only game on the database continued 13...\texttt{\textgreek{f}6} 14.\texttt{\textgreek{xf}6} \texttt{\textgreek{x}f6} 15.dxe5 dxe5 16.\texttt{\textgreek{xa}7 \textgreek{xa}7} 17.\texttt{\textgreek{xe}5 \textgreek{c}6} 18.\texttt{\textgreek{h}5 \textgreek{xe}5} 19.\texttt{\textgreek{xe}5 \textgreek{xe}5} 20.\texttt{\textgreek{xe}5=} and White retained a slight endgame advantage in Akopian – Harikrishna, Sochi 2007.

The text move leads to a more complex position where I believe Black is doing okay. White has a few playable moves, but the following forcing line looks to me like the critical continuation:

\begin{enumerate}
\item 14.dxe5 \texttt{\textgreek{xe}3} 15.\texttt{\textgreek{xe}3 \textgreek{c}5} 16.exd6 \texttt{\textgreek{xd}6} 17.\texttt{\textgreek{b}4}
\item 18...\texttt{\textgreek{e}6!} 19.\texttt{\textgreek{xe}5 \textgreek{be}8} 20.\texttt{\textgreek{f}4 \textgreek{xb}3} 21.\texttt{\textgreek{xe}7 \textgreek{xe}7} 22.axb3 \texttt{\textgreek{e}8} I believe Black should be able to hold this endgame, although some care is still required.
\end{enumerate}

13.\texttt{\textgreek{e}1!}

In this tense position I would like to propose a logical novelty.
22.a3
22...exd3 exd3 23.Qe5 Qd2 24.Qxf7 Qxf7= is equal.

22...Qxb2 23.Qe5 Bf4 24.g3 Qfd4 25.Qc1 Bf1†
Black equalizes.

**D) 7.c3**

7...d6
Black cannot treat the position the same way as the We2 lines of the previous chapter, as here 7...h6?! can be answered by 8.d4!N exd4 9.e5 Qe4 10.Qd5! with advantage to White. After the text move we will pay particular attention to **D1) 8.Qbd2** as well as the tricky **D2) 8.We2†**.

Most other plausible moves will transpose to variations considered elsewhere in either this or the next chapter. Here are some examples:

8.Qg5 h6 9.Qh4 transposes to variation A.

8.0–0 transposes to line C of the next chapter with 7.0–0 d6 8.c3, as found on page 122. Indeed, most other instances involving early casting will be considered under the same section.

8.a4 Qb8 9.axb5 axb5 10.0–0 h6 transposes to variation C2 in the next chapter – see page 126 for the continuation from this position.

8.h3 is flexible, but Black can return the ball over the net with 8...h6, when a transposition is almost inevitable. The main examples are:

a) 9.Qbd2 0–0 reaches 9.h3 in the notes to line D1 below.

b) 9.Qe2 is met by 9...0–0. Now 10.0–0 reaches the 10.h3 move given in the notes to variation D21, while 10.Qbd2 takes us to the 10.h3 move in the notes to line D22.

c) 9.0–0 0–0 transposes to line C3 of the next chapter on page 135.

**D1) 8.Qbd2 0–0 9.Qf1**

9.0–0 h6 leads to variation C of the next chapter on page 122.

Another game continued: 9.h3 h6 10.Qf1 d5! Black can afford to lose a tempo with the d-pawn as White has played the opening rather timidly. 11.Qg3 (11.We2 a5?! gave Black good prospects in Urbina – Lodhi, Khanty-Mansiysk 2010.)

11...dxe4!N 12.dxe4 Qxe4 13.dxe4 Qa5! 14.Qc2 Qxd1† 15.Qxd1 Qc4 with an initiative for Black.) 12...Qxd1† 13.Qxd1 Qe6 leads to a slight plus for Black.
9...d5
Once again Black can afford to lose a tempo. 9...h6?! is not a bad alternative.

10.exd5
10.\\textit{We}2 dxe4 11.dxe4 a5 12.\\textit{Ac}2 \textit{Dc}4! gives Black the initiative.

10.\\textit{Gg}3 is similar to the Perunovic – Sokolov game. The absence of the moves \textit{h}2-\textit{h}3 and ...\textit{h}6 does not change much, so Black should once again play 10...dxe4 11.\\textit{Dxe}4??N (11.dxe4 \textit{Wxd}1\# 12.\\textit{Dxd}1 \textit{h}6 was at least equal for Black in Wilson – Deschenaux, Biel 2002.) 11...\textit{Dxe}4 12.dxe4 \textit{Dc}5 13.\\textit{Cc}2 \textit{Wxd}1\# 14.\\textit{Dxd}1 \textit{Dc}4 with some initiative.

10...\textit{Dxd}5 11.\\textit{Gg}3
Degraeve – Mounier, Bastia 1999. Here I found an interesting new idea:

![Diagram of the position after 10...\textit{Dxd}5 11.\\textit{Gg}3]

11...\textit{a5}??N
Black takes some space on the queenside and prepares to drive away the light-squared bishop from its comfortable home on \textit{b}3. Play may continue:

12.\\textit{De}4 \textit{Aa}7 13.a4 \textit{b4} 14.0–0 \textit{Ab}8 15.\\textit{Ac}4 \textit{Gf}5
With a roughly equal position.

D2) 8.\\textit{We}2?!
According to my database this is an exceedingly rare move, having been chosen in just three out of more than 140 games. Nevertheless the game count immediately rises to more than 250 after 8.\\textit{We}2 has been played! It is quite a tricky line for our repertoire, as we immediately transpose to a Worrall System with Black already committed to ...d6, instead of the more active ...d5 that I was keen to recommend in the previous chapter.

Despite this inconvenience Black should not experience any serious problems, so let’s see how he should handle the position.

8...\textit{h}6
We start by preventing the troublesome pin. Here White’s main options are D21) 9.0–0 and D22) 9.\\textit{Dbd}2, although we will also check a few sidelines.

After 9.h3 I favour the slightly unusual move 9...\textit{Axb}6?!, with the idea of transferring the queen’s knight to \textit{g}6. (The immediate 9...\textit{De}7 is answered by 10.d4.) 10.\\textit{Dbd}2 \textit{Dc}7 11.a4

![Diagram of the position after 10.\\textit{Dbd}2 \textit{Dc}7 11.a4]

This was Dgebudzade – De Jong, Gent 2002, and here I suggest 11...\textit{Ab}7N 12.\\textit{Df}1 \textit{Gg}6 13.\\textit{Gg}3 \textit{c5} 14.0–0 0–0 with an equal position.

9.\\textit{De}3 \textit{Dxe}3 (Black can also ignore White’s last move with 9...0–0?!) 10.\\textit{Wxe}3 (10.fx\textit{e}3 0–0
11.0–0 transposes to the 11.fxe3 line given in the notes to variation D21 below.) 10...\texttt{a}5 11.\texttt{c}c2 \texttt{c}5 12.\texttt{bd}2 0–0 Black was fine in Bitansky – Golod, Israel 2004. In this position White’s most natural move would appear to be 13.0–0N which immediately transposes to variation D21 below.

9.a4
This doesn’t make much sense here as it can be answered by:

9...b4
This move tends to work best when c2-c3 has already been played.

10.a5 0–0 11.0–0

...\texttt{b}8!? 
This leads to complicated play.
A safer approach is 11...\texttt{e}6 12.\texttt{xe}6 fxe6 intending ...\texttt{d}7 and ...\texttt{ab}8 when Black is by no means worse, Fogaras – Sandor, Budapest 1995.

2.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{a}7 13.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{xe}3 14.\texttt{xe}3

14...\texttt{b}3N 14...\texttt{e}6 was played in Svidler – Anand, Monte Carlo (blind/rapid) 2006, and here White could have continued 15.\texttt{xa}6N \texttt{bxc}3 16.\texttt{xc}3 \texttt{a}8 17.\texttt{b}7 \texttt{xa}5 18.\texttt{bd}2 \texttt{xa}1 19.\texttt{xa}1 \texttt{c}7 20.d4 retaining a slight edge.

15.\texttt{bxc}3 \texttt{d}5! 16.\texttt{exd}5 \texttt{xd}5 17.\texttt{e}4 \texttt{f}4!

18.\texttt{bd}2
18.\texttt{xe}6? is bad in view of 18...\texttt{b}7 19.\texttt{c}5 \texttt{xf}3 20.\texttt{xe}5 \texttt{g}5! with the idea 21.\texttt{xf}3? \texttt{d}7!–+

18...\texttt{f}6 19.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{h}3† 20.\texttt{g}2 \texttt{d}8!
In this complicated position the chances are roughly equal.

D21) 9.0–0

9...0–0 10.\texttt{e}3
10.\texttt{bd}2 \texttt{e}8 takes us back to variation C52 of the previous chapter – see page 87.

10.a4 b4 11.a5 transposes to 9.a4 above.

10.h3 \texttt{e}8 11.\texttt{e}3 is harmless: 11...\texttt{xe}3 12.fxe3 (12.\texttt{xe}3 \texttt{a}5 13.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{c}5 14.\texttt{bd}2 \texttt{c}7 15.\texttt{ac}1 \texttt{c}6 was good for Black in Ritscher – Frantz, Darmstadt 1996.)

12...\texttt{a}5 13.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{c}5 14.\texttt{bd}2 \texttt{e}6 15.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{e}8 16.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{d}5 Black equalized easily in Reichstein – Kaidanov, Philadelphia 1999.

10.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{e}8

This useful move is directed against d3-d4.

11.h3

11.\texttt{bd}2 can be met by 11...\texttt{g}4, as noted on page 88 of the previous chapter (note to White's 10th move in line C52).

11...\texttt{d}5!

This leads to a tempo-down version of the

12.\texttt{bd}2

The greedy 12.exd5 \texttt{xd}5 13.\texttt{e}4?! \texttt{e}6 14.\texttt{xe}5? was played in Martinez Salas – Argaya Urdaniz, Orvina 2006, and here Black could have obtained a clear advantage with:

14...\texttt{xe}5N 15.\texttt{xe}5 (Or 15.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{f}6! 16.\texttt{c}2 \texttt{f}3†! 17.gxf3 \texttt{d}6† with a strong attack.) 15...\texttt{g}4! 16.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{xd}1† White loses an exchange for virtually no compensation.

12...\texttt{e}6

Turn back to page 87 in the previous chapter, and see the 10.h3 line in the note to White's 10th move in line C52. There it is Black to move, but it is hardly the kind of position where White can use his extra tempo to any great advantage.

13.\texttt{f}1

Sanz Alonso – Fernandez Saavedra, Vila Real 2001. Here I suggest:
13...\(\text{d7}\)N 14.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{a6}\)

The position is equal.

17...d5?!

Shirov goes for an active approach, but Black would also have been perfectly okay after a quiet move such as 17...\(\text{e6}\)N.

18.\(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{exd5}\) 19.\(\text{e4}\) \(\text{e6}\) 20.\(\text{e2}\) \(\text{e8}\)

In this equal position a draw was agreed in Tiviakov – Shirov, Hoogeveen 2010.

10...\(\text{xex3}\) 11.\(\text{exe3}\)

11.\(\text{exe3}\) looks harmless after 11...\(\text{a5}\) 12.\(\text{c2}\) c5 13.\(\text{bd2}\). Black has tested several moves here, but I rather like 13...\(\text{b8}\)? intending to create counterplay on the queenside, Bruned – Karpatchev, Metz 2008.

11...\(\text{a5}\) 12.\(\text{c2}\) c5

Again this Chigorin-style set-up works especially well after the dark-squared bishops have been exchanged.

13.\(\text{bd2}\) \(\text{c6}\) 14.a4 \(\text{b8}\)

14...\(\text{d7}\)N also looks quite reliable.

15.axb5 axb5 16.\(\text{fd1}\) \(\text{b6}\) 17.\(\text{f1}\)

9...0–0 10.\(\text{f1}\)

White delays castling in order to bring the knight to g3 without moving the rook.

10.0–0 \(\text{e8}\) transposes to line C52 of the previous chapter – see page 87.

The other main candidate is 10.h3, as played in Yagupov – Mainka, Groningen 1995. Here I would like to offer the following idea: 10...\(\text{e7}\)N In order to transfer the knight to g6. There is no need to fear d3-d4 as we will soon see. 11.\(\text{f1}\) (After 11.d4?! exd4 12.cxd4 \(\text{b6}\) White’s centre is fragile and can be easily attacked by means of ...\(\text{g6}\) followed by ...\(\text{b7}\) and ...\(\text{e8}\).) 11...\(\text{g6}\) Black has obtained a comfortable version of a Worrall System. He has completed the knight manoeuvre to g6 and saved some time by doing without the prophylactic ...\(\text{b6}\) move.
10...\(\text{b6}\)!!

A logical transfer of the knight to \(g6\), using the fact that White is behind in development and thus cannot benefit from \(d3-d4\).

11.\(\text{g3}\)

After 11.\(\text{d4? exd4 12.cxd4 b6}\) (12...\(\text{b4}\)† is also decent) 13.\(\text{g3 e8}\) White's centre comes under heavy pressure.

11...\(\text{g6}\) 12.0–0

Tiviakov – Fayard, Paris 1991. Now I would like to offer:

12...\(\text{b6}\)!!

The game continuation of 12...\(\text{e8}\) was also reasonable, but I prefer a different method of safeguarding against the \(d3-d4\) push. The idea is shown in the short illustrative line below:

13.\(\text{a4 e6}\) 14.\(\text{xe6 fxe6}\) =

The rook turns out to be quite happy on the f-file.

**Conclusion**

5.\(d3\) is not just a sideline, but a serious move with which White can legitimately fight for an advantage. In this chapter I would highlight variations C22 and D2 as demanding particular attention, although my analysis indicates that Black should be doing fine after accurate play. In the next chapter we will see if White can cause more problems by castling early.
Sidelines

5.d3 – Main Line with 7.0–0

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{\textexclamdown}f3\) \(\text{\textexclamdown}c6\) 3.\(\text{\textexclamdown}b5\) a6 4.\(\text{\textexclamdown}a4\) \(\text{\textexclamdown}f6\) 5.d3 b5 6.\(\text{\textexclamdown}b3\) \(\text{\textexclamdown}c5\) 7.0–0

7...d6

A) 8.\(\text{\textexclamdown}c3\)

B) 8.a4 \(\text{\textexclamdown}b8\)
   B1) 9.h3
   B2) 9.axb5 axb5
      B21) 10.\(\text{\textexclamdown}e3\)
      B22) 10.h3

C) 8.c3 h6
   C1) 9.\(\text{\textexclamdown}e3\)
   C2) 9.a4 \(\text{\textexclamdown}b8\) 10.axb5 axb5 11.d4 \(\text{\textexclamdown}b6\)
      12.\(\text{\textexclamdown}a3\) 0–0 13.\(\text{\textexclamdown}xb5\) \(\text{\textexclamdown}g4\)
         C21) 14.\(\text{\textexclamdown}e1\)
         C22) 14.\(\text{\textexclamdown}c2\)
         C23) 14.d5
         C24) 14.\(\text{\textexclamdown}e3\)

C3) 9.h3 0–0
   C31) 10.a4
   C32) 10.d4
   C33) 10.\(\text{\textexclamdown}e3\)
   C34) 10.\(\text{\textexclamdown}bd2\)
1.e4 e5 2.d3 c6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 f6 5.d3 b5 6.b3 c5 7.0-0

This can be viewed as the main line, especially when we factor in the various transpositions noted in the previous chapter, whereby White starts with some other move but then castles in the near future.

7...d6

Black acknowledges that an early ...d5 is not likely to happen, and thus chooses the most flexible move. Now we will analyse A) 8.c3, B) 8.a4 and C) 8.c3 after first dealing with a few miscellaneous lines.

8.e3 xe3 9.fxe3 8.a5 10.c3 transposes to variation A below.

The rare 8.a3 is designed to preserve the bishop on the a2-g8 diagonal. Now I would like to introduce a logical novelty: 8...e6!?N Immediately targeting the bishop in question. (8...g4!? is another sensible idea that was seen in Loskutov – Nozdrachev, Moscow 2012.) 9.xe6 fxe6 10.e3 xe3 11.fxe3 0-0= With a near-symmetrical pawn structure the position is absolutely equal.

8.g5 This pinning move tends not to be dangerous in positions where Black has not yet castled. 8.h6 9.h4 g5 10.g3 g4 A typical idea. After unpinning his own knight Black creates a pin of his own. 11.c3 0-0 Black is fine. Later he may consider transferring the bishop to g6, especially if White nudges it with h2-h3. The ...h5-f4 manoeuvre will also be an attractive idea in many positions.

8.h3 a5! allows Black to eliminate White’s light-squared bishop at a moment of his choosing: 9.c3 h6 10.e2 0-0 11.g3 e8 12.d2 b6 13.e2 c6

With an equal position in Movsesian – Adams, Hastings 1996. It is important to mention here that 14.h4N can be met by 14...xb3 15.axb3 xe4! 16.xe4 (or 16.xe4? d5+= winning a pawn.) 16...d5! 17.f3 dxe4 maintaining the balance.

A) 8.c3
8...\(\text{a}5\) 9.\(\text{e}3\)

9.h3 transposes to the 8.h3 line noted above.

9.h1!?

This move has been played by the current World Champion. The purpose is of course to prepare f2-f4.

9...c6 10.h3

This was Anand – Topalov, Las Palmas 1996, and here I recommend:

10...\(\text{h}6\)

I believe this move is more useful than Topalov’s 10...\(\text{a}7\). For example:

11.\(\text{h}2\) 0–0 12.f4 \(\text{e}7\) 13.fxe5 dxe5 14.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}7\)

Followed by ...\(\text{g}5\) and Black is okay.

9...\(\text{xe}3\) 10.\(\text{fxe}3\) 0–0 11.\(\text{e}1\)

After the harmless 11.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 12.\(\text{xd}5\) c6 13.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{xb}3\) 14.axb3 \(\text{g}4\) 15.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{xf}3\)

\(\text{xf}3\) a5 17.\(\text{a}2\) the players agreed a draw in Spassky – Godena, France 2002.

11...\(\text{c}5\)

Threatening ...\(\text{c}4\), which would damage White’s pawn structure.

Another sensible idea is 11...c6 to guard the d5-square, as in Zigo – Kotan, Czech Republic 2007.

12.\(\text{d}5\)

The text move was played in Asrian – Ivanchuk, Kemer 2007. Now I would like to offer the natural improvement:

12.\(\text{d}5\) \(\text{xd}5\) 13.exd5 f5! 14.a3 \(\text{d}7\)

15.h1 \(\text{b}7\) 16.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{e}7\) was roughly equal in Illescas Cordoba – Malaniuk, Yerevan 1996.

15...\(\text{f}6\)

Black should not experience any real problems as the knight on f5 can be exchanged whenever it becomes necessary.

B) 8.a4
8...\textit{Eb}b8

The main line. Another possibility is 8...\textit{Ag}4 9.c3 0–0 10.h3 \textit{xf}x3 11.\textit{W}xf3 \textit{Da}5 12.\textit{Ac}2 b4 13.\textit{D}d2 \textit{Eb}8 14.\textit{Ab}1! as seen in Leko – Kasimdzhano\v, Moscow (blitz) 2007. It seems to me that in this line Black might come under some positional pressure due to White's bishop pair.

After the rook move it is worth considering \textbf{B1)} 9.h3 and \textbf{B2)} 9.axb5. There are many possible move orders with White exchanging on b5 on one move or another, but my general rule has been to group all lines with an early axb5 under variation B2.

9.c3 h6 transposes to line C2, but Black may try to do better with 9...b4?.

9.\textit{Ac}3 \textit{xe}3 10.fxe3 0–0 leaves White with nothing better than 11.axb5 axb5 transposing to variation B21.

9.\textit{Ag}5 is premature: 9...h6 10.\textit{Ah}4 g5!

11.\textit{D}xg5? White isn’t ready for this sacrifice. (11.\textit{Ag}3N was necessary, but after 11...\textit{Ag}4 Black is fine.) 11...hxg5 12.\textit{D}xg5 \textit{G}g8 13.h4 \textit{Ag}4 14.\textit{W}d2 \textit{D}d4 15.\textit{D}c3 \textit{W}d7! With a decisive advantage for Black, Evans – Adams, Ebbw Vale 1998.

9.\textit{Cc}3 \textit{G}g4 10.h3 \textit{xf}x3 11.\textit{W}xf3 \textit{D}d4 12.\textit{W}g3

This position occurred in J. Polgar – Anand, Moscow (blitz) 2009. Here I found an important improvement:

12...\textit{W}e7!N

In the game Black exchanged on b3, but the text move preserves the strong threat of ...b4, when the knight cannot move due to the fork on e2. Play may continue:

13.axb5 axb5 14.\textit{Ag}5 c6

Now 14...b4?! is met by 15.\textit{D}xf6 followed by \textit{D}d5 with some initiative for White.

15.\textit{W}h4 h6 16.\textit{A}a6 \textit{W}b7 17.\textit{D}f1

Another interesting line continues: 17.\textit{D}xf6 \textit{W}xa6 18.\textit{D}xg7 \textit{G}g8! 19.\textit{W}xh6 \textit{D}xb3 20.\textit{W}h7 \textit{G}e7 21.cxb3 b4 22.\textit{D}a4 \textit{D}d4

And now White has nothing better than 23.\textit{W}h4\texttt{#} \textit{G}e8 24.\textit{W}h7 \textit{G}e7= with a repetition.

17...\textit{D}xb3 18.cxb3
18...hxg5! 19.Wxh8+ g7 20.Wxg7 g8 21.h6 g6 22.Wxh8 g8=
With a repetition.

B1) 9.h3

9...h6
Black responds with a useful pawn move of his own, preventing the g5 pin before casting.

10.c3
10.Qc3 was played in Ris – Markus, Amsterdam 2004, and here Black’s most convincing equalizer would have been: 10...b4!N (The game continuation of 10...0–0 is also playable, and in the event of a subsequent exchange on b5 the game transposes to the 11.Qc3 line given in the notes to variation B22 – see page 120.)

11.d4 Qa5 12.Qe3 Qxe3 13.Qxe3 Qxb3 14.cxb3 0–0 15.Qc1 c5 with equality.

10...0–0
With this move we transpose to a position that could also be reached via the move order 8.c3 h6 9.h3 0–0 10.a4 Qb8 – see the note to Black’s 10th move in variation C31 on page 135. The only difference is that, via that move order, I have a minor preference for 10...Qb7 instead of 10...Qb8 as has been played here. Nevertheless Black should have no particular problems if he plays accurately.

I should also mention that, via the present move order, 10...b4N looks insufficient for equality in view of 11.d4 Qa7 12.Qe3 bxc3 13.bxc3 exd4 14.cxd4 0–0 15.Qc3 Qe8 16.a5 Qb4 17.e5±.

11.axb5 axb5 takes us to B22, but we will continue checking to see if White can benefit from delaying the exchange.

11.Qb2 Qb6 12.Qe1 Qe8 is considered under the 11.Qe1 move order given immediately below.

11.Qe1 Qe8 12.Qbd2 Qb6
From this position it is worth mentioning two directions for White:

a) One logical continuation is 13.\(d\)f1 \(d\)e7 14.\(d\)g3 \(d\)g6, which takes us to variation C34. The move order in question is 8.c3 h6 9.h3 0–0 10.\(b\)bd2 \(d\)b6 11.\(e\)e1 \(d\)c7 12.\(d\)f1 \(d\)g6 13.\(d\)g3 \(e\)e8 14.a4. Via that move order I have chosen to recommend 14...\(b\)b7 as the main line, but on page 140 I mention that 14...\(b\)b8 is a playable alternative, and it is the latter move to which we have transposed here. And in the event that White exchanges with 15.axb5 axb5, we immediately transpose to variation B22.

b) White should definitely avoid 13.\(h\)h4? in view of the following neat refutation:

13...\(g\)g4! 14.hxg4 \(x\)h4 and Black won a pawn in Jakovenko – De Vreugt, Yerevan 2000.

11...\(b\)b6 12.\(e\)e3 \(e\)e8

12...b4=N is a fresh idea, but I have chosen to wait for one more move before offering my main improvement.

13.\(d\)bd2

13.axb5 axb5 once again transposes to variation B22.

The knight move was played in Ding Linlin – Petronic, Tianjing 2001. At this point I would like to play by analogy with line B22, where the position is identical except for the exchange of pawns on b5.

13...\(e\)e5

14.\(d\)e3 \(d\)e8

12...b4=N is a fresh idea, but I have chosen to wait for one more move before offering my main improvement.

15.axb5 axb5

We have transposed to variation B22 – see page 122 for the continuation from this position. If for some reason White continues to postpone the exchange on b5, Black can just carry on playing in the same manner as in that line.

B2) 9.axb5 axb5
After the exchange on b5 White’s main options are B21) 10.\textit{\textbf{e}}3 and B22) 10.\textit{\textbf{h}}3.

10.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 \textit{\textbf{h}}6 takes us to variation C2.

10.\textit{\textbf{g}}5 is premature, just as it was on the previous move (compare the 9.\textit{\textbf{g}}5 note on page 116): 10...\textit{\textbf{h}}6 11.\textit{\textbf{h}}4 (This is consistent, although objectively White should probably admit his mistake and play 11.\textit{\textbf{e}}3.) 11...g5! 12.\textit{\textbf{g}}3 \textit{\textbf{g}}4 13.c3 \textit{\textbf{h}}5 14.\textit{\textbf{d}}5 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 15.\textit{\textbf{d}}4 exd4 16.cxd4 \textit{\textbf{b}}6 17.\textit{\textbf{b}}3

This was Gayer – Fedorchuk, Warsaw 2004. Now after 17...\textit{\textbf{c}}6!N White experiences problems with the d4-pawn, for example 18.\textit{\textbf{h}}3 \textit{\textbf{x}}g3 19.\textit{\textbf{x}}g3 \textit{\textbf{d}}xd4 20.\textit{\textbf{x}}f7+ \textit{\textbf{e}}7 21.hxg4 \textit{\textbf{f}}xf3+ 22.\textit{\textbf{h}}1 \textit{\textbf{e}}5 23.\textit{\textbf{h}}5 \textit{\textbf{f}}8 24.\textit{\textbf{f}}5 \textit{\textbf{a}}8 25.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 \textit{\textbf{c}}6 and White has some problems.

10.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 \textit{\textbf{g}}4 11.\textit{\textbf{e}}3 (11.\textit{\textbf{h}}3 \textit{\textbf{x}}f3 12.\textit{\textbf{f}}xf3 \textit{\textbf{d}}4 13.\textit{\textbf{g}}3 was played in Spata – Della Morte, Asuncion 2010, and here Black should play 13...\textit{\textbf{e}}7! transposing to the 9.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 line covered on page 116.)

11...\textit{\textbf{d}}4! After forcing the exchange of White’s dark-squared bishop Black equalizes easily. 12.\textit{\textbf{x}}d4 \textit{\textbf{x}}d4 13.\textit{\textbf{h}}3 \textit{\textbf{x}}f3 14.\textit{\textbf{f}}xf3 0–0 15.\textit{\textbf{e}}2 c6 16.\textit{\textbf{e}}2 \textit{\textbf{b}}6 17.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 18.\textit{\textbf{g}}3 In this equal position a draw was agreed in Iordachescu – Looshnikov, Moscow 2008.

B21) 10.\textit{\textbf{e}}3

10.\textit{\textbf{e}}3 \textit{\textbf{x}}e3 11.\textit{\textbf{f}}xe3 0–0 12.\textit{\textbf{bd}}2

12.\textit{\textbf{c}}3 \textit{\textbf{e}}6 13.\textit{\textbf{d}}5 \textit{\textbf{x}}d5 14.\textit{\textbf{e}}xd5 (14.\textit{\textbf{xd}}5 \textit{\textbf{d}}xd5 [14...\textit{\textbf{e}}7?N] 15.\textit{\textbf{e}}xd5 \textit{\textbf{e}}7 16.\textit{\textbf{e}}4 c6 17.\textit{\textbf{d}}xc6 \textit{\textbf{xc}}6 was equal in Organdziev – Godena, Ohrid 2001.) 14...\textit{\textbf{e}}7 15.\textit{\textbf{e}}4 \textit{\textbf{g}}6 16.\textit{\textbf{d}}2 \textit{\textbf{a}}8 17.\textit{\textbf{a}}5
This position was reached in Fressinet – Grischuk, Internet (blitz) 2004, and here Black could have started fighting for the advantage by means of 17...\texttt{\textbar}xa5\texttt{\textbar} 18.\texttt{\textbar}xa5 \texttt{\textbar}d7, with good chances on the kingside.

12...\texttt{\textbar}e7 13.\texttt{\textbar}e4

13.h3 \texttt{\textbar}g6 14.\texttt{\textbar}a7 c5 15.\texttt{\textbar}a1 occurred Kamsky – Anand, Moscow (blitz) 2007. Now the simplest route to equality seems to be: 15...\texttt{\textbar}e7\texttt{\textbar}?!\texttt{\textbar} Intending to reposition the knight on c6. 16.\texttt{\textbar}a5 (16.\texttt{\textbar}a2 h6=) 16...\texttt{\textbar}xa5 17.\texttt{\textbar}xa5 \texttt{\textbar}c6 18.\texttt{\textbar}a3 \texttt{\textbar}b4! Black is not worse.

13...\texttt{\textbar}e6 14.\texttt{\textbar}h1 c6=

White has obtained no advantage from the opening, and in the following game he came up with a dubious idea.

15.c4? bxc4 16.\texttt{\textbar}xc4

Karjakin – Svidler, Moscow (blitz) 2009. Here Black should have played:

16...d5\texttt{\textbar}! 17.\texttt{\textbar}b3 \texttt{\textbar}b4\texttt{\textbar}+

With a clear advantage.

B22) 10.h3

This keeps more tension in the position than the previous line.

10...h6

As usual Black prevents the troublesome pin before castling.

11.c3

11.\texttt{\textbar}c3 can be compared with the 10.\texttt{\textbar}c3 line given on page 117 in the notes to variation B1 – the difference is that here the pawns on a4 and a6 have been exchanged. This means that Black lacks the strong option of ...b4 followed by ...\texttt{\textbar}a5, but he still experiences no problems. 11...0-0 12.\texttt{\textbar}e3 \texttt{\textbar}xe3 13.fxe3 \texttt{\textbar}e6 14.\texttt{\textbar}d5 \texttt{\textbar}xd5 15.\texttt{\textbar}xd5 \texttt{\textbar}xd5 16.\texttt{\textbar}xd5 \texttt{\textbar}e7 17.e4 c6! 18.dxc6 \texttt{\textbar}b6\texttt{\textbar} followed by ...\texttt{\textbar}xc6 and Black was fine in J. Polgar – Tkachiev, Moscow (blitz) 2009.

11...0-0 12.d4

I checked three other moves as well.
12...\textit{c}e1 transposes to the 11...\textit{c}e1 line given in the notes to line C2 (via the move order 8...c3 \textit{h}6 9.a4 \textit{b}b8 10.axb5 axb5 11...\textit{c}e1 0–0 12.h3).

12...\textit{c}e3 \textit{xe}3 13.fxe3 occurred in Thipsay - Pon, New Delhi 2010. Black has a solid position and his only misplaced piece is the knight on c6, so the following thematic manoeuvre looks logical:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{image}
\end{center}

12...\textit{c}b6 13...\textit{c}e3

13...\textit{c}e7!N Not only preparing ...\textit{g}6, but also ...\textit{c}5. For example, after 14...\textit{h}4 Black plays 14...\textit{c}5 15...\textit{d}2 \textit{c}4! and obtains the better chances.

12...\textit{c}2 \textit{b}4 13.d4 bxc3 14.bxc3 \textit{b}6 15...\textit{a}3 \textit{e}8 16...\textit{c}e1 was seen in Malakhov - Tkachev, Sochi 2006, and here I found a way to improve Black's play:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{image}
\end{center}

12...\textit{b}6 13...\textit{e}3

13...\textit{c}e1 can be met by 13...\textit{b}4!? transposing to a note in variation C2, reached via the move order 8...c3 \textit{h}6 9.a4 \textit{b}b8 10.axb5 axb5 11...\textit{c}e1 0–0 12.h3 \textit{b}4? 13.d4 \textit{b}6 – see the 11...\textit{c}e1 line given on page 126.

13...\textit{c}e8 14...\textit{b}d2

We have reached a position from the Archangelsk Variation with one key difference: it is Black to move! (See for instance the games Navara - Tkachev, Wijk aan Zee 2011, where White played 15...\textit{c}e1 here, as well as Kamsky
Sidelines

- Svidler, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011, where he preferred 15...c2."

14...exd4 15.cxd4 b4!? 
It was too early for 15...e4? in view of 16.xe4 xe4 17.d5, but after the text move Black is threatening to take the pawn.

16.xf7† 
Also after 16.e2 d7! Black is fine.

16...xf7 17.b3†

17...bd5! 
The knight was about to perish anyway, so Black should take the opportunity to damage the enemy centre.

18.exd5 d7! 19.b1! 
The knight hurries towards c3. After other moves Black simply plays ...b7 and captures on d5 with a positional advantage.

19...f5 
19...b7?!N also makes sense, intending 20.c3 xd5! 21.axb5 (21.axb5 e6 is better for Black) 21...d8! with some initiative.

20.c3 h5 21.h2 d7 
Black had good compensation for the sacrificed pawn in Onoprienko – Todorovic, Budva 2009.

C) 8.c3

8...h6 
As usual Black prevents the g5 pin before castling. Now we will focus on three main paths: C1) 9.e3, C2) 9.a4 and C3) 9.h3.

9.bd2 has little independent value after 9...0–0, when 10.e1 transposes to the 9.e1 line noted below, while 10.h3 reaches the main line C3.
9.d4
The central advance is premature as it leads immediately to the Archangelsk Variation with an extra tempo for Black.

9...b6 10.e3
10.dxe5 is harmless: 10...dxe5 11.xe5 dx5 12.xd8 + xd8

13.d2 (After 13.xf7, Nesovanovic – Zdravkovic, Belgrade 2007, 13...xf8N 14.d5 xd5 15.exd5 xb7 the position is equal although it is White who will have to be slightly more careful.) 13.e7 14.f3 xe5 15.xe5 xb3 16.axb3 xe4 17.f4 he8 = Glaser – Bohak, corr. 2010.

10...g4 11.dxe5

11...xf3!?N
11...dxe5 12.xb6 cxb6 was also okay for Black in Sevillano – Zilberstein, Reno 2007.

12.xf3 dxe5 13.e2 xe3 14.xe3 0–0
Black is doing well; the plan is ...e8 with pressure against White's centre.

Finally there is:

9.e1 0–0

10.bd2
10.h3 takes us to variation C3.

10...b6 11.f1 e7 12.e3
12.a4 h7 13.g3 g6 14.h3 e8 reaches the main line of C3, reached via the move order 9.h3 0–0 10.bd2 b6 11.e1 e7 12.f1 g6 13.g3 e8 14.a4 b7.

12.g3 g6 13.h3 is another route to variation C3.

12...c5!
Black is fighting for the centre and restricting White's dark-squared bishop.

13.h3 g6 14.g3 d5 15.exd5 xd5 16.d2 e8 17.d4 c4 18.c2 exd4 19.xe8 + xe8 20.xd4
Adams – Naiditsch, Heraklio 2007. Now the most accurate continuation would have been:
With a good position for Black.

C1) 9.\( \mathcal{c} \mathcal{e} 3 \)

9...0-0

9...\( \mathcal{c} \mathcal{e} 3 \) is quite playable, but there is nothing wrong with allowing an exchange on c5.

10.\( \mathcal{b} \mathcal{d} 2 \)

10.\( \mathcal{b} \mathcal{c} 5 \) dxc5 gave Black a good position in Pecchiari – Grosar, Nova Gorica 2009, in view of the easy plan of ...\( \mathcal{d} 6 \) and ...\( \mathcal{d} 8 \) with pressure on the d-file.

10...\( \mathcal{e} \mathcal{c} 3 \)

I don’t like 10...\( \mathcal{b} 7 \) as the bishop will be more useful on the c8-h3 diagonal where it guards the f5-square.

11.\( \mathcal{x} \mathcal{e} 3 \) \( \mathcal{a} 5 \)

The bishop is strong on the a2-g8 diagonal, where it puts pressure on f7, so it makes sense to drive it away.

12.\( \mathcal{c} 2 \) c5 13.\( \mathcal{w} e 1 \)

Bojkov – Predojevic, Plovdiv 2008. White would like to develop some initiative on the kingside, but I don’t believe it will be too dangerous for Black. In this position I recommend:

13...\( \mathcal{b} 8 \)N

I prefer this to 13...\( \mathcal{c} 6 \), which was played in the aforementioned game as well as a few others. The text move has a few purposes, one of which is preparing to answer a future a2-a4 with ...b4. Additionally, the knight is left on a5 in order to prepare ...c4, which also combines well with the rook on the b-file. A possible continuation is:

14.\( \mathcal{h} 4 \) c4 15.\( \mathcal{d} 4 \) b4

With a balanced middlegame.

C2) 9.a4 \( \mathcal{b} 8 \)

White has tried several different moves in this position, but in my opinion there is only one clear favourite.
10...\textbf{axb5}!

If White neglects to make this exchange then Black will more than likely be able to play ...b4, with good chances to exploit the weakening of White's queenside. (On the previous move 9...b4?! would have been met by 10.d4 when the weakness of the b4-pawn causes Black some problems.) A summary of the alternatives will illustrate this point quite convincingly.

Firstly, let us note that 10.d4 \textbf{xb6} 11.a3 0–0 leaves White nothing better than 12.axb5 axb5 transposing to the main line below – see 10.axb5 axb5 11.d4 \textbf{b6} 12.a3 0–0.

After 10.e1, as played in Carlsson – Subirats Ruiz, Barbera del Valles 2011, 10...b4!N 11.d4 \textbf{a7} 12.a5 0–0 Black is fine as White's centre is becoming vulnerable.

10.h4 occurred in Kryvoruchko – Cheparinov, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009. This move can also be also met by 10...b4!N 11.d2 0–0 when the position of the knight on h4 doesn't look great.

10.a2 was seen in Kostenko – Peiris, Ravana 2009. This way White is preparing b2-b4, so once again Black can play 10...b4!N 11.d4 exd4 12.cxd4 and here there is another nice idea:

12...\textbf{dx}d4?! A temporary piece sacrifice.
13.\textbf{xd}d4 \textbf{xd}d4 14.\textbf{xf}d4 (14.\textbf{xf}7t \textbf{xf}7 15.\textbf{xe}d4 \textbf{e}e8=) 14...b3 Black wins back the piece. 15.\textbf{xb}3 (15.e5 dxe5 16.\textbf{xe}5t \textbf{xe}6 is also fine for Black.) 15...\textbf{xb}3 Black has no problems.

10.e3 was played in Efimenko – Karjakin, Kramatorsk 2002. This is better than some of White's other attempts to do without the exchange on b5, but Black is still fine after: 10...\textbf{xe}3N 11.\textbf{exe}3 \textbf{e}a5 12.a2

12...b4! 13.\textbf{bd}2 0–0 White is equal at best, given his inflexible pawn structure and queenside weaknesses.

10.bd2 has been played in several games including Grigoriants – Allahverdiev, Abu Dhabi 2006. Here the idea of 10...b4!N works well again, for example: 11.\textbf{c}c4 bxc3 12.bxc3 \textbf{e}e6 13.a2 0–0
Black is fine. It's important to note that 14...\textit{c}xe4! 15.\textit{d}d3 (15.dxc5 \textit{c}xc5 16.\textit{c}c2 \textit{x}a2 17.\textit{x}a2 \textit{a}a5 18.\textit{f}d2 \textit{f}c4 19.\textit{c}xc4 \textit{b}b4++) 15...\textit{c}xc3! 16.\textit{x}c3 \textit{d}xd4+ and Black wins material.

10...\textit{a}xb5 11.\textit{d}d4

This is the most forcing continuation. I also checked three other moves:

11.\textit{b}bd2 0–0 12.\textit{e}e1 \textit{b}b6 Before bringing the knight to g6 Black retreats the bishop, anticipating an advance of the enemy d-pawn.

11.\textit{f}f1 \textit{e}7 14.\textit{e}3

14...c5! 15.\textit{h}3 \textit{g}6 16.\textit{g}g3 \textit{c}4! 17.\textit{x}b6 \textit{x}b6 18.\textit{c}c2 \textit{xd}3 19.\textit{x}d3 \textit{e}6 with a pleasant position for Black in Akopian – Adams, Yerevan 2008.

11.\textit{a}3 0–0 12.\textit{c}c2 \textit{b}4 13.\textit{e}e3 \textit{bxc}3 14.\textit{bxc}3 \textit{e}8?! 15.\textit{a}a4 (15.\textit{h}3??) 15...\textit{d}7 16.\textit{c}c4

16...\textit{c}7 Black transfers the knight to g6.

17.\textit{d}4 exd4 18.\textit{c}xd4 \textit{b}4 19.\textit{e}5 \textit{fd}5 20.\textit{d}d2 \textit{a}a4 21.\textit{x}a4 \textit{xd}2 22.\textit{c}xd2 A draw was agreed in this equal position in Hrcek – Kurnosov, Rijeka 2010.

11.\textit{e}1 0–0 12.\textit{h}3 \textit{b}4?!

I like this move, which aims to simplify the queenside and open the b-file for the rook. 12...\textit{b}6?! transposes to an unfavourable version of the 10.\textit{e}e1 line mentioned under variation C3, which occurs after the moves 9.\textit{h}3 0–0 10.\textit{e}e1 \textit{b}6 11.a4 and now 11...\textit{b}8? (instead of the recommended 11...\textit{b}7) 12.\textit{xb}5 \textit{xb}5 as discussed on page 135.

However, 12...\textit{e}8?! is a worthy alternative.

13.\textit{b}d2

White can snatch a pawn by means of 13.\textit{d}4 \textit{b}6 14.\textit{d}5 \textit{a}a5 15.\textit{xb}4, but this allows Black to obtain strong counterplay with
Chapter 6 – 5.d3 – Main Line with 7.0–0

15...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}}xb3} 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xb3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}}5!} 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}e3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}}5!}.
13...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}xc3} 14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}xc3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{d}}7} 15.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{f}}f1} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}6} 16.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}e3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}7} 17.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}c2} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}}6} 

With a roughly equal position in Leko – Anand, Moscow (blitz) 2009.

\textbf{11...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}b6}}

Not for the first time in this chapter, we have transposed to an Arkhangelsk Variation with White having wasted a tempo on d3-d4. However, on this occasion Black's 'free' tempo has been spent on ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}}7-\texttt{h}6, which is not always the most useful move, although we will see some lines where it adds definite value to Black's position.

\textbf{12.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}}a3}}

This is White's usual plan. The following alternative is pretty harmless: 12.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}}3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}b7} 13.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}e1} 0–0 14.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}e3} exd4! 15.cxd4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{a}}a5} 16.d5 

Becerra Rivero – Godena, Havana 1999. Now the immediate 16...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}c6}N equalizes without problems, for example: 17.dxc6 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}}xc6} 18.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}c3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}}xe3} 19.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}}xe3} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}xb3} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xb3} b4 21.d5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}xd5} 22.exd5 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}e8} 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{x}}xe8}+ \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{w}}xe8} 24.d4 \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}e4} 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{c}}c6} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{e}}e8}=

12...0–0 13.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{b}}xb5} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{g}}4#}

Black obtains good compensation for the sacrificed pawn. The position is almost identical to the main line of the Arkhangelsk Variation, except for the extra move ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}}6 which is only likely to help Black.

From here I had to decide in what level of detail to analyse the position – not an easy decision at all! On the one hand I found only two games on the database, and given that Black has a clear extra tempo over a known line, it was tempting to make a quick summary with the conclusion that Black was doing well.

On the other hand, Black does indeed have an extra tempo, but the ensuing positions are altogether different from the ones that occur throughout most of this book. The play can be extremely double-edged, and in such situations, would the majority of readers really take much comfort from the knowledge that they have been granted the free move ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\texttt{h}}6?
In the end, after consulting with my editor, I decided to offer a relatively detailed analysis, not only covering the two moves that have been played from this position, but also checking some of the other critical moves which have been played many times in the Archangelsk position without ...h6. Some might consider this overkill, but others will want to know how to handle this part of the repertoire. Thus we will now examine four paths:

C21) 14.\texttt{Be1N}, C22) 14.\texttt{c2N}, C23) 14.d5 and C24) 14.\texttt{e3}.

I checked a couple of rook moves as well:

14.\texttt{a4?!N} is a mistake both here and in the Archangelsk for similar reasons: 14...\texttt{d7}! Now the rook turns out to be misplaced on a4. 15.\texttt{e1} Retreating the rook from a4 would allow Black to take the e4-pawn. 15...\texttt{a5}! 16.c4 \texttt{xb3} 17.\texttt{xb3} exd4 Black is better.

14.\texttt{a3N}

This move allows Black to take advantage of the position of the pawn on h6. In fact, Karjakin once reached the analogous position with the pawn on h7, and chose to spend a tempo moving it to h6, so in the present game we really are a full tempo up. Black can exploit this as follows:

Taking the bishop away from a potential attack from a knight on b4.

Another possible line is 18.\texttt{a4} d5 19.e5 \texttt{c4} 20.\texttt{c3} \texttt{xe5} 21.dxe5 \texttt{xf2+} 22.\texttt{h1} \texttt{xf3} 23.\texttt{gxf3} \texttt{xc3} 24.bxc3 \texttt{xe1} 25.\texttt{xe1} \texttt{wh3}! and Black has the initiative.

18...\texttt{c7}! 19.\texttt{wa4}

In the analogous position from the Archangelsk Variation White has the strong option of 19.\texttt{c3} \texttt{g6} 20.\texttt{g5}, but here the extra ...h6 move makes that impossible.

19...\texttt{g6}

Black has full compensation for the pawn.

C21) 14.\texttt{Be1N}

The main line in the analogous position from the Archangelsk Variation is 17.\texttt{g1} with
the idea to meet 17...exd4 with 18.e6, which is impossible here, so White must settle for a more modest scheme of development.

17.e3 exd4 18.cxd4 a5 19.d5

I also analysed:
19.g1 xb5 20.a4

20...xb8!

Once again Black takes advantage of the ...h6 move. With the pawn on h7 this move would not work due to the back rank problem.

21.xb5 xb5 22.e2 a7 23.d5 xb2 24.g1

The alternative is 24.e5! xe5 25.d3! b5 26.xa7 xb5 and Black obtains sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

24...b6 25.xb6 cxb6 26xa7 xf3† 27.g2

27...g3†! 28.hxg3 h5† 29.h2 f3† With perpetual check.

The text move was once played by Anand in the position with the pawn on h7, against Piker in 1998. Here the position of the pawn makes no real difference, so we can just copy Black’s play for a few moves.

19.xe1 20.xc6 d5! 21.c1

21.a6 enables Black to force a draw in a similar manner: 21...dx e4 22.xe1 xf3† 23.g1 g4† 24.f1 h3†

Now 25.e2? leads to disaster: 25...f4† 26.d1 (or 26.d2 d3 27.a1 b4++) 26...h5† 27.e2 d3 28.c3 xb5++

Correct is therefore: 25.g1 g4†=

21...dx e4!

This strong intermediate move seems to work also with the h-pawn on h7, though Piker retreated the bishop to a5 and was able to draw.
22.\textit{\textit{x}}e1

22.fxe4 leads to the same result: 22...\textit{\textit{x}}f2
23.\textit{\textit{x}}xf2 \textit{\textit{x}}xf2 24.\textit{\textit{x}}xh5 \textit{\textit{b}}6! 25.\textit{\textit{f}}5 \textit{\textit{e}}3
26.\textit{\textit{f}}1

26...\textit{\textit{c}}xc6! 27.\textit{\textit{c}}xc6 \textit{\textit{e}}xe4t 28.\textit{\textit{g}}2 \textit{\textit{e}}1† with a perpetual.

22...\textit{\textit{c}}f3† 23.\textit{\textit{g}}1 \textit{\textit{g}}4† 24.\textit{\textit{f}}1 \textit{\textit{h}}3†

C22) 14.\textit{\textit{c}}2N

This move has been played in over a hundred games in the position with the pawn on h7.

14...d5?!

14...exd4 is the most popular continuation in the Archangelsk position. It is playable here too, but I couldn't find a way to make much use of the extra ...h6 move. The text move is rare, but it gives Black more chances to make use of ...h6.

15.exd5

White's other logical option is:

15.h3 \textit{\textit{h}}f3 16.\textit{\textit{x}}xf3 exd4

In the analogous position with the pawn on h7 Ivanchuk moved his bishop to g5, which is impossible here.

25.\textit{\textit{e}}2??

For illustrative purposes, we will see what happens if White tries too hard to play for a win. He should of course settle for 25.\textit{\textit{g}}1 \textit{\textit{g}}4† and a draw.

25...\textit{\textit{f}}4†! 26.\textit{\textit{d}}2 \textit{\textit{d}}3 27.\textit{\textit{f}}1 \textit{\textit{f}}5! 28.d5 \textit{\textit{d}}8! 29.\textit{\textit{c}}2 \textit{\textit{d}}5 30.\textit{\textit{x}}d5 \textit{\textit{x}}d5 31.\textit{\textit{c}}3

With a decisive attack.
17.exd5
17...exd5 leads to a forced draw: 17...gxh6 18.exd5 d3! (18...exd5?! is worse, although in the rather forced line 19.e4! d3 20.exd3 gxf6 21.g3 h8 22.g4 g7 23.ad1 e7 24.e1 c5 25.e3 h5 26.e4 f6 27.h4 h5 28.d4! g5 29.xg5 h5 30.c6 xe3 31.xb8 xxb8 32.fxe3 xxb2 33.ad3 f6 Black retains chances for a draw thanks to his active rook.)

17...exd5 18.exd5 c6 19.cxd3 cxb5 20.e4 c7 21.c4 e6 22.cxd5 exf5 23.g3 h8 24.e5 g8 25.g3 h7; 7...exd5 8.exd5
This position is known with the h-pawn on h7, where Black generally manages to solve his problems. It’s obvious that the pawn on h6 can’t do any harm for Black, moreover it might be useful there, for example:
9.e4 f6 20.d1 c7 21.f4

15...fxd5 16.dxe5 xxb5 17.a4
With the pawn on h7 White could play 17.exf6 b8 followed by capturing on h7, but that is not an option here. Instead play may continue: 18.e1 f8 19.e3 xf3 20.gxf3 b6!

Black has some initiative as 21.fgx7?! only leads to trouble for White: 21...e5! 22.d1 xe3 23.fxe3 xb2 24.e2 d2 25.e2 (or 25.b1 xc3+) 25...d3 26.xd3 xxf2\^
17...\texttt{xf3} 18.\texttt{xf3}

I also analysed: 18.\texttt{xb5} \texttt{xd1} 19.\texttt{xc6} (19.\texttt{xf6}? \texttt{a7\texttt{+}}) 19...\texttt{g4} 20.\texttt{xd1} \texttt{xf2\texttt{+}} 21.\texttt{fl} (21.\texttt{h1} \texttt{xe5=})

21...\texttt{e3!} 22.\texttt{b4} \texttt{b6} 23.\texttt{d7} \texttt{xc1} 24.\texttt{dxcl} \texttt{xe5} With a roughly equal position.

18...\texttt{exe5} 19.\texttt{xb5} \texttt{xf3\texttt{+}} 20.\texttt{gxf3} \texttt{xf2\texttt{+}}

This line seems to represent the critical test of 14...d5?! White is marginally better, but I do not believe Black should have much trouble holding the endgame.

C23) 14.d5

This was played in one of the two games I found on the database from the previous position.

14...\texttt{e7} 15.\texttt{c2}

Now I would like to introduce a novelty, although the same move is well known from the position with the pawn on h7.

15...\texttt{d7\texttt{N}}

This gives good attacking chances, and the pawn on h6 proves to be of great value in several key lines.

I also checked 15...\texttt{g6} 16.h3, Petrosian – Karthikeyan, Al Ain 2008, and now 16...\texttt{xe3!} 17.\texttt{xd3} \texttt{d7} is critical, although White does have the option of 18.\texttt{xd6!} (18.c4? \texttt{h3\texttt{+}}) 18...\texttt{cxcl} 19.\texttt{h2} leading to an unclear situation. Black has obvious compensation for the pawn, but White has his chances too.
16.\( \text{a}a3 \)

The alternative is risky for White:

16.\( \text{c}c4 \text{\texttt{g}}g6 \)

Black has a dangerous initiative, as shown by the following illustrative line:

17.\( \text{h}h3? \)

White should prefer one of the following alternatives, although neither of them is great for him:

17.\( \text{d}d3 \text{\texttt{h}}h5 18.\text{\texttt{b}}b3 \text{\texttt{h}}h4 19.\text{\texttt{x}}xf4 \text{\texttt{x}}xf4 20.\text{\texttt{d}}d1 \text{f}f5 \)

with good attacking chances.

After 17.\( \text{a}a3 \text{\texttt{h}}h4 \) White will be forced to sacrifice an exchange on f3.

17...\( \text{x}xh3! 18.\text{gxh3? \texttt{x}xh3=} \)

In the analogous position from the Archangelsk White's only defence is \( \text{g}g5 \), which is obviously not going to work here.

16...\( \text{g}g6! \)

Once again the ...\( \text{h}6 \) move is useful as White is unable to prevent ...\( \text{h}h4 \) by putting his bishop on g5. Play may continue:

17.\( \text{c}c4 \text{\texttt{h}}h4 18.\text{\texttt{c}d}2 \text{\texttt{x}g}2! \)

This forces a draw.

A riskier alternative is 18...\( \text{h}h5? 19.\text{\texttt{h}}h3 \text{\texttt{f}f4 20.\text{hxg}4 \text{\texttt{w}xg}4 21.\text{\texttt{h}xh}4 \text{\texttt{c}c}2 \text{t} 22.\text{\texttt{w}xe}2 \text{\texttt{w}xe}2 \)

with double-edged play in a position with a queen against three minor pieces.
Finally we come to the move that was chosen by Peter Leko, albeit in a rapid game.

14...d5!
This strong blow in the centre is the best way to make use of Black's extra tempo.

15.exd5 Qxd5
In the corresponding position from the Arkhangelsk with the pawn on h7 instead of h6, White would have the strong option of g5! here.

16.h3 Bh5 17.g4 Bh6

18.Qa3?
This error might have landed White in hot water.

18.Qe1 N
This developing move is better, although Black can continue in a similar fashion regardless.

18...exd4 19.cxd4
19.Qbxd4 also leads to approximate equality: 19...Qxe3 20.Qxe3 (20.fxe3 Qd6 is fine for Black.) 20...Qxd4 21.cxd4 (Or 21.Qxd4 Qd6! with an equal position as White can't keep his knight on d4.) 21...c5! (21...Qd6?!) 22.Qe5 cxd4 23.Bf3 Qd6 24.Qxg6 Qxg6 with a roughly balanced position.

19...Qxe8! 20.Qc3 Qxe3 21.Qxe3 Qxd4
21...Qxe3!? 22.fxe3 Qa5 gives Black some initiative for the pawn.
22.Qxe8† Qxe8 23.Qxd4 Qxd4 24.Qxf7† Qxf7 25.Qxd4 Qxb2=
With obvious equality.

18...exd4 19.cxd4
Now in the game Leko – Kramnik, Miskolc (rapid) 2007, Black missed a good opportunity.

19...Qd6! N
This gives Black some advantage, as pointed out by Berkes and Meszaros. In their annotations they present the following lines:

20.Qg2
20.Qc4? Qxe3! –

20...Qf4† 21.Qxf4 Qxf4†
That concludes the coverage of the Archangelsk comparison with Black’s extra ...h6 move. For some this will be complete overkill, but for others I hope it will be useful and/or interesting.

**C3) 9.h3**

This has been White’s most popular move order, although a plethora of transpositions await us.

9...0–0

Here I analysed C31) 10.a4, C32) 10.d4, C33) 10.e3 and C34) 10.bd2. The major theoretical branches can be found in the last of these.

The other move worth mentioning is:

10.e1

This has actually been the most popular move order, but it almost always transposes to variation C34 at some point.

10...b6 11.a4

11.bd2 immediately takes us to variation C34 on page 137.

11...b7!

This is an important moment. In the event of 11...b8 White can cause problems with:

12.axb5 axb5 13.a3! (13.bd2 e7 14.f1 g6 15.g3 transposes to the 11.a4 line given in the notes to variation C34, via the move order 10.bd2 b6 11.a4 b8 12.e1 e7 13.f1 g6 14.axb5 axb5.) 13.e8 Critelli – Friedel, Peabody 2007, and now 14.d2!N a6 15.h4 brings White some initiative.

12.bd2 e7

Here White has nothing better than the thematic knight manoeuvre:

13.d1 g6 14.g3 e8

We have reached a position that will be considered under the move order 10.bd2 b6 11.e1 e7 12.d1 g6 13.g3 e8 14.a4 b7 – see variation C34, with the relevant position occurring on page 140.

**C31) 10.a4**

10...b7

10...b8 is the main alternative, and was considered in variation B1 via the move order 8.a4 b8 9.h3 h6 10.c3 0–0. Black is doing okay there, but given the choice, I slightly prefer the bishop move in the present position.

11.e3

11.e1 b6 transposes to the 10.e1 b6 11.a4 b7 line noted immediately before the start of this variation.

11.e3 xe3 12.fxe3 occurred in Parkanyi – Bagi, Budapest 2010, and now the thematic
manoeuvre 12...\(\text{\textsl{d}e}7\)N 13.\(\text{\textsl{c}}\text{d}2 \text{\textsl{g}}6\) would have given Black a pleasant position.

11...\(\text{\textsl{d}}\text{d}7!^N\)

After 11...\(b4\) a draw was agreed in Mihok – Roussel Roozmon, Budapest 2008, but I prefer the text move.

12.\(\text{\textsl{d}}\text{d}2 \text{\textsl{e}}7\) 13.\(\text{\textsl{c}}\text{c}2 \text{\textsl{g}}6\)

Black experiences no problems at all.

C32) 10.d4

This move is premature and leads to another form of Archangelsk with an extra tempo for Black. Fortunately this one does not require as much analysis as the version we encountered earlier in variation C2.

10...\(\text{\textsl{b}}\text{b}6\) 11.\(\text{\textsl{e}}\text{e}3\)

This position appears in several games in the database, but usually with White to move. At this point in the game Palos – Gorelov, Werfen 1992, Black could have made best use of his extra tempo with:

11...\(\text{\textsl{e}}\text{d}4\)!N 12.cxd4

Or 12.\(\text{\textsl{x}}\text{d}4\) \(\text{\textsl{a}}\text{a}5\)! 13.\(\text{\textsl{c}}\text{c}2\) \(c5\) 14.\(\text{\textsl{f}}\text{f}3\) \(\text{\textsl{e}}\text{c}4\) 15.\(\text{\textsl{c}}\text{c}1\) \(\text{\textsl{b}}\text{b}7\) 16.\(\text{\textsl{x}}\text{e}1\) \(\text{\textsl{e}}\text{e}8\) 17.\(\text{\textsl{b}}\text{b}3\) \(\text{\textsl{e}}\text{e}5\) and Black is better.

12...\(\text{\textsl{a}}\text{a}5\)! 13.\(\text{\textsl{c}}\text{c}2\) \(\text{\textsl{b}}\text{b}7\) 14.\(\text{\textsl{b}}\text{d}2\) \(\text{\textsl{e}}\text{e}8\)

15.\(\text{\textsl{b}}\text{b}1\) \(\text{\textsl{e}}\text{e}7\) 16.a4?!

16.\(\text{\textsl{e}}\text{e}1\) \(\text{\textsl{x}}\text{e}4\) 17.\(\text{\textsl{x}}\text{h}6\) \(f5\) favours Black.

16...\(\text{\textsl{c}}\text{c}4\)
16...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\) doesn't work, as after 17.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\) 18.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\) 19.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\) 20.axb5 the natural recapture 20...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xb5}\) is impossible due to 21.b4 and White wins a piece.

17.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xc4}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xc4}\) 18.\(\text{a5}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a7}\) 19.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a2}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\)

Black is fine.

**C33) 10.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e3}\)**

Another rare and pretty harmless move.

10...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe3}\) 11.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe3}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e6}\) 12.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{bd2}\) \(\text{d5}\)!

At this point I advise the reader to turn back to page 81 in Chapter 4, and regard the comments after the \(8.\text{\text{Q}}\text{e3}\) move given in the note before the start of variation C1. There I cautioned the reader against playing the move \(d5\) in positions after the dark-squared bishops had been exchanged, on account of the weakness of the \(c5\)-square. The present case is an exception, mainly because Black is already quite well developed.

That being said, there is nothing wrong with normal moves such as 12...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d7}\)N and 12...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e7}\)N.

13.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e2}\)

In the event of 13.d4 Black can answer with the coldblooded 13...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e8}\)!

Attempting to play in the manner described in the aforementioned Worrall line given on page 81 will not work. For one thing, after 13.\(\text{exd5}\) Black has the option of 13...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xd5}\) when White is unlikely to be able to make use of the \(c5\)-square, and must instead take measures against the positional threat of ...\(e4\).

13...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\)

13...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d7}\)N is also decent.

14.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xe4}\) 15.\(\text{dxe4}\)

This position was reached in Ugodnikov – Shirov, Toronto (simul) 2010. Here I would like to introduce the following novelty:

Another rare and pretty harmless move.

15...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e7}\)N 16.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d5}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{a5}\)!

An important resource.

17.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xh7}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c4}\) 18.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{h1}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{f1}\) 19.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{d5}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{c4}\)

20.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{xd5}\) 21.\(\text{exd5}\) \(\text{\text{Q}}\text{b7}\)

With a roughly equal position.

**C34) 10.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{bd2}\)**

Finally we come to the main theoretical path.

10...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{b6}\)

Black makes the typical prophylactic retreat before employing the ...\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e7-g6}\) manoeuvre.

11.\(\text{\text{Q}}\text{e1}\)
11...\textit{e}b8
The inclusion of these moves doesn't seem to change much.
11...\textit{b}7!? also looks quite playable.
12.\textit{e}e1 \textit{c}7 13.\textit{f}f1 \textit{g}6
13...c5!?N deserves attention.

14.axb5 axb5 15.\textit{g}3 \textit{e}8 16.\textit{h}2
An unfortunate idea.
After 16.\textit{e}3N the position is roughly balanced.
16...d5! 17.\textit{g}4?
This is already a serious mistake.
17.exd5 is better, although after 17...\textit{xd}5
Black is at least equal.

17...\textit{x}g4 18.hxg4 \textit{h}4!
White must have missed this move.
19.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}4
Black was a healthy pawn up in Dominguez Perez – Caruana, Khanty-Mansiysk 2009.

11...\textit{c}7
A typical manoeuvre for both the Spanish and the Italian. Black transfers the knight to g6 from where it will get access to f4.

12.\textit{f}1
White can go for a different knight move:
12.\textit{h}4 \textit{e}6
12...\textit{c}6!?N is cheeky but playable.
13.\textit{f}1 \textit{d}7 14.\textit{f}3 \textit{g}6

15.\textit{x}e6
15.\textit{f}5 \textit{xf}5 16.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 17.exf5 was played in H. Hunt – Emms, Southend 2006, and now 17...\textit{f}4!?N is the simplest route to equality.
15...\textit{xe}6
15...\textit{xf}4?? is refuted by 16.\textit{xf}6!.
16.\textit{f}5
The game continued with 16...d5, but I prefer to give this move proper support in order to take away some of White's tactical resources. I analysed the following logical line:

17.h4 d5 18.h5 dxe4 19.dxe4 f4 20.xf4 exf4 21.xf4 fe8! 22.dg3 ec5! 23.xe5 ex5 24.c2 ad3!

With ideas including ...f4 and ...g6, Black has good compensation for the pawn.

16...ad8!N

13...e8 14.a4

After 14.dh2 in Akopian – Leko, Yerevan (rapid) 2008, the immediate 14...d5!N looks strong. For example, 15...f3 h4 16...e2 e6! and Black is by no means worse.

White has also tested: 14...e3 xe3 15...xe3 e6 16...c2 (16...xe6 fxe6=) 16...c5 17...d2

14...d4

This position occurred in a few games, including Akopian – Kasimdzhanov, Sochi 2007. Now I would like to offer a novelty.

12...d6 13...g3

If we took back the ...b5 move and put the dark-squared bishop on a7 we would get a well-known theoretical position from the Italian.

13...e8 14...e2

The game put the queen on b6 and got a good position, but I slightly prefer 17...c7N with the idea of ...d5, when I don't see a single problem for Black, to say the least.

14...exd4!N

This dynamic approach is an interesting departure from the solid alternatives of
14...c5 and 14...\textit{b7}.

15.cxd4 c5

Black mobilizes his queenside and puts pressure on White's centre.

16.\textit{e}3 \textit{b7} 17.\textit{c}2

17...cxd4!

17...\textit{tt::lxe4}?! is strongly met by 18.\textit{tt::lxe4} \textit{xe4} 19.\textit{gg5} hxg5 20.\textit{xe4} \textit{c8} 21.\textit{gg6} fxg6 22.\textit{b3}! c4 23.\textit{a3} with a serious initiative, as it is difficult for Black to protect his weaknesses.

18.\textit{xd4} \textit{c8}=

The position bears some resemblance to the Chigorin System, although the bishop does not normally find its way to the b6-square in that line. Black's active pieces and pressure on the e4-pawn fully compensate for his weakness on d6.

14...\textit{b7}

Comparing this variation to the analogous position from the Italian, one of the advantages of having the b-pawn on b5 is the availability of the b7-square for the light-squared bishop.

14...\textit{b8}?! is also reasonable, and in the event of 15.axb5 axb5 we transpose to the earlier 11.a4 variation noted on page 138.

15.\textit{xf5}?!

This sharpens the position. The ensuing complications could be dangerous over the board, but after precise play Black should obtain good prospects. We should check two other continuations:

15.\textit{h2} d5 16.\textit{g4} \textit{xe4} 17.\textit{w4} \textit{f6} 18.\textit{xe3} \textit{ad8}! 19.\textit{ff5} This position occurred in Petrosian – Fressinet, Moscow 2006. Here I would like to offer the following improvement, which seems to equalize the position.

15...\textit{c8}!N 20.axb5 axb5 21.\textit{xb6} cxb6! The point of this recapture is to retain pressure on f5. 22.g3 Preventing the ...\textit{ff4} idea, but the knight has a good secondary option. 22...\textit{e7} 23.\textit{f3} \textit{xf5} 24.\textit{exf5} \textit{xf5} 25.\textit{xd5} \textit{xf3} 26.\textit{xh3} \textit{d3}= Black is fine.

15.\textit{e3} \textit{xe3} 16.\textit{xe3} (Or 16.\textit{xe3} d5 17.\textit{exd5} \textit{xd5} 18.\textit{exd5} \textit{xd5} 19.e4 Morgado – Pinus,
Cordoba 1994, 19...b7?! N 20.axb5 axb5 21.\text{x}a8 \text{xa8} with roughly equal chances.)

16...d5 17.axb5 axb5 18.\text{x}a8 \text{xa8} 19.ee1 f5 20.exd5

Carlsen – Tkachev, Moscow (blitz) 2008. Now after 20...\text{x}d5N Black’s chances are higher, for instance 21.d4 exd4 22.cxd4 \text{xe}1f 23.\text{xe}1 c4f with a better pawn structure for Black.

15...d5 16.\text{xe}h6?!

This interesting piece sacrifice is a logical follow-up of the previous move. Unfortunately for White, it does not quite achieve the goal against precise defence.

16...\text{gxh}6 17.\text{d}2

This seems to be the best defence. In the game Fedorchuk – Rizouk, Navalmar 2008 Black opted for 17...\text{h}7 18.exd5 \text{f}6 19.\text{xe}h6f f8 20.axb5 axb5 21.\text{x}a8 \text{xa8}, which led to an unclear position with mutual chances.

18.g3

18.\text{xe}h6f f8 19.\text{xe}5 \text{h}6 20.\text{xf}7 \text{h}4 reaches a wild position where Black’s chances are higher.

After the seemingly strong 18.\text{xe}5?! Black has a powerful reply: 18...\text{h}6 19.\text{xe}h6f f7 20.\text{eg}4 (20.\text{xf}7 \text{h}4!f \rightarrow is highly unpleasant.) 20...\text{xe}4 21.\text{xf}7 \text{g}5f! With a decisive advantage. Black’s extra piece is much more important than White’s pawns.

By the way, the inclusion of the moves 18.a5 \text{a}7 does not change much, as 19.\text{xe}5 is still met by 19...\text{h}6f f5f with the initiative.

18...\text{xe}4!

This tactical strike gives Black a fine game.

19.dxe4 dxe4 20.\text{xf}7f

White has nothing better.

20...\text{xf}7 21.\text{xe}5f \text{xe}5 22.\text{xf}4
22...\text{xf5}! 23.\text{xf5}+ \text{xf6} 24.\text{x f6}+

Otherwise White would experience problems with his king.

24...\text{xf6} 25.\text{axb5 axb5} 26.\text{xa8 xa8}+

Black has some winning chances in this endgame.

Conclusion

We have reached the end of a rather exhaustive investigation into the 5.d3 b5 6.b3 c5 system. Black must be ready for various types of positions, including a sharp version of the Archangelsk Variation where it is important to know how best to make use of the extra ...h6 move. These and other nuances make the ...c5 system a tough one to master, but the reward for doing so will be an active yet reliable repertoire, as well as a greater understanding of chess in general.
5.0–0

5.0–0 ��xe4 – Sidelines

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.��f3 ��c6 3.��b5 a6 4.��a4 ��f6 5.0–0

5...��xe4

A) 6.��xc6
B) 6.��e2
C) 6.��e1 ��c5
   C1) 7.��xe5
   C2) 7.��c3!? 
   C3) 7.��xc6 dxc6
      C31) 8.d4
      C32) 8.��xe5 ��e7
         C321) 9.b3
         C322) 9.d4 ��e6
             C3221) 10.c3
             C3222) 10.��e3 0–0
                C32221) 11.��c3
                C32222) 11.c4!

B) after 14.f4

C3) note to the 8th move

C321) after 10.��a3!?
1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.d5 a6 4.a4 d5 5.0-0 exd4

What can be more logical than capturing a central pawn? Of course the issue is not quite that simple, as Black is behind in development with his king still two moves away from castling. In the remaining part of the book my task will be to demonstrate the correctness of Black's policy.

One of the additional positive features of the Open Spanish is that it reduces White's options compared to the closed positions occurring after 5...e7. Nevertheless there are a number of sidelines available, and in this chapter we will look at three of them: A) 6...xc6, B) 6.e2 and C) 6.e1.

6.e5 is a funny move order, but after 6...e5 7.e1 e5 8.e5t e7 we reach variation C1 which can be found on page 147.

A) 6.xc6 dxc6

This does not compare favourably with White's other options.

7.d4

7.e2 c5 transposes to variation B below.

7.d3 c5 8.xe5 e7 can be compared to variation C, but here White has prematurely committed himself to a modest set-up with d2-d3, so the most he can hope for is equality.

7.e1 can be met by 7.d6? (7.c5 transposes to variation C3, but Black can try to exploit his opponent's decision to exchange on c6 prematurely.) 8.xe5 e7 9.d4 0-0 with a comfortable position for Black, as in Von Schuetz - Wemmers, Berlin 1881.

7...exd4!

The position before this move has occurred in approximately 170 games, but in the overwhelming majority of them it has been White to play. Clearly Black should be comfortable after any sensible move, but the text is the most ambitious.

8.e1 f5 9.g5 e7 10.h5 N

This seems like a better attempt than 10.xe4 fxe4 11.h5† g6 12.h6 f5† as played in Lebedev - Neimanis, Soviet Union 1986.

10.g6 11.h6

Now Black can secure some advantage with the following accurate continuation:
taking the pawn on b7, but he will still be a long way from equality due to his opponent’s mighty bishops.

B) 6.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}e2

\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\node at (1,1) {1}; \node at (2,1) {2}; \node at (3,1) {3}; \node at (4,1) {4}; \node at (5,1) {5}; \node at (6,1) {6}; \node at (7,1) {7}; \node at (8,1) {8}; \node at (1,2) {a}; \node at (2,2) {b}; \node at (3,2) {c}; \node at (4,2) {d}; \node at (5,2) {e}; \node at (6,2) {f}; \node at (7,2) {g}; \node at (8,2) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}

6...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}e5 7.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xe6

A questionable alternative is:

7.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xe5?!

Unfortunately for White, this gives up the bishop pair for little compensation.

7...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xe5 8.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xe5 \texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}e7 9.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}f4

9.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xe7 10.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xe7 10.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xb3 11.axb3 d5 is slightly better for Black.

9.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}d4 was played in the old game Schliemann – Beger, Berlin 1866, and now after the most accurate 9...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}b6!N (9...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}a4 10.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xa4 transposes to the main 9.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}f4 line) 10.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}c3 11.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}d5 12.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}e1 13.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}e6 13.c4 0–0–0!\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}} Black obtains some advantage.

9...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xa4 10.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xa4

Now Black has a pleasant choice.

10...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}b5!

Safer but less ambitious is 10...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}b4 11.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}e1 \texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}d8 12.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xb4 \texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xb4 with roughly equal chances, Tardif – Demarre, Issy les Moulineaux 2009.

11.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}f4

\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\node at (1,1) {1}; \node at (2,1) {2}; \node at (3,1) {3}; \node at (4,1) {4}; \node at (5,1) {5}; \node at (6,1) {6}; \node at (7,1) {7}; \node at (8,1) {8}; \node at (1,2) {a}; \node at (2,2) {b}; \node at (3,2) {c}; \node at (4,2) {d}; \node at (5,2) {e}; \node at (6,2) {f}; \node at (7,2) {g}; \node at (8,2) {h};
\end{tikzpicture}

11...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}e6!

Black fights for the advantage by offering a pawn.

12.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}xc7

Otherwise Black will play ...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}d6 anyway, with good chances in a position with equal material.

12...\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}d6 13.\texttt{\textit{\textsf{\textsc{\textbf{}}}}}c3 0–0

Black has a serious initiative for the sacrificed pawn.
7...dxc6 8.d4
This has been White’s usual plan, intending to secure a kingside majority by taking on e5 with the d-pawn. Other moves are harmless:

8.\(axc5\) e7 (8...\(dxe5\)!N also makes sense) was fine for Black in Sauter – Giacomi, Davos 2008, as he was able to complete development while keeping the bishop pair.

The other possibility is: 8.\(Wxe5t\) l0e6 9.e5 !J.e7 (8 ... l0e6!?N also makes sense) was fine for Black in Sauter – Giacomi, Davos 2008, as he was able to complete development while keeping the bishop pair.

8...l0e5 9.dxe5 l0f6 10.l0e4 0-0 11.d3 l0e8\(+\) with some edge for Black in Diaz Barrios – Korneev, El Sauzal 2004.) 9...e7 (But not 9...d6?? 10.Wxg7+- Zapata – Calle Soto, Yucay 2001.) 10.d4 0-0

11.l0c3? (White should settle for 11.c3 as in Yumpo – Vasquez, Peru 1996, although Black retains a good position after 11...l0e8N.) 11...l0f6 12.l0e4 \(\text{xd4}\) 13.l0x4 \(\text{xd4}\) \(+\) Black had a useful extra pawn in Winawer – Makovetz, Dresden 1892.

8...\(dxe5\) 9.dxe5 l0d4! 10.l0xd4 \(\text{xd4}\)
After exchanging these knights Black’s remaining pieces will develop smoothly, and his strong bishops – especially the unopposed light-squared one – should ensure him of at least equal chances. The pawn structure is the same as in the famous Berlin Endgame, but here there is a huge difference as Black still has the right to castle, which should guarantee both the safety of his king and the ability of his rooks to develop quickly and actively.

It is worth noting that an almost identical position can be reached via the Berlin Defence after the moves 3...l0f6 4.0-0 \(\text{dxe4}\) 5.d4 \(\text{dxd6}\) 6.l0xc6 l0xc6 7.l0xe5 l0f5 8.l0e2 l0d4 9.l0xd4 \(\text{xd4}\). The only difference is the position of the black pawn on a6 instead of a7, which is unlikely to alter the evaluation in any serious way.

11.h3
11.l0d2 l0f5! 12.l0f3 \(\text{e4}\) 13.l0xe4 l0xe4 gave Black a slightly better endgame in Mamatov – Geldimamedov, Riga 1975. The light-squared bishop is tremendous.

The reason for White’s last move can be seen in the following line: 11.l0d1 l0g4! (11...l0g4!? 12.f3 l0g6 13.l0e3 l0f5 was also fine for Black in Lurie – Bykhoovsky, Tel Aviv 2002.) 12.l0xd4 l0xe2 13.l0c3 l0h5 14.l0g5 h6 15.l0f4 l0d8 Black was slightly better in Barstatis – Lein, Soviet Union 1967.

11...l0f5 12.c3
White is also struggling after: 12.l0d1 l0e4 13.l0xe4 l0xe4 14.c4 l0c2! Inviting the rook to a bad square. 15.l0d2 l0f5 16.l0c3 l0b4\(+\) Dueckstein – Karaklajic, Zagreb 1955.
12...\textbf{Wh}4!
Black removes the queen from her vulnerable position in the centre of the board.

13.\textbf{Fe}3 0–0–0 14.f4

This is the only really significant alternative to 6.d4. White will try to exploit his development advantage, but the drawback is that he will have to trade his valuable light-squared bishop.

6...\textbf{Dc}5
After this natural move we will examine C1) 7.\textbf{Dxe}5, C2) 7.\textbf{Dc}3?! and C3) 7.\textbf{Dxc}6.

7.\textbf{Db}3? makes no sense. In Le Nguyen Nhu – Nguyen Khanh Ngoc, Hanoi 1995, Black should have responded with 7...d6N 8.d4 \textbf{Dxb}3 9.axb3 \textbf{De}7 10.dxe5 0–0 11.exd6 \textbf{Dxd}6+ with better chances thanks to the bishop pair in an open position.

C1) 7.\textbf{Dxe}5

14...\textbf{Dg}3?!N
Black should not be satisfied with equality. The only game on the database to reach this ended quickly after 14...\textbf{xh}3 15.\textbf{gxh}3 \textbf{Dg}3+ 6.\textbf{Dh}1 \textbf{Dxh}3\textbf{\#} 17.\textbf{Dg}1 \textbf{Dg}3\textbf{\#} 18.\textbf{Dh}1 and a draw was agreed in view of the perpetual in \textbf{Seidman} – \textbf{Bisguier}, New York 1954.

5.\textbf{Df}3 \textbf{Dg}6 16.\textbf{De}1 \textbf{h}5\textbf{\#}
Black's chances are higher thanks to his bishop pair and control over the light squares.

C) 6.\textbf{De}1

7...\textbf{Dxe}5 8.\textbf{Dxe}5\textbf{\#} 9.\textbf{Dc}3
After 9.\textbf{Dc}3 \textbf{Dxb}3 10.axb3 0–0 11.d4 d5 12.\textbf{Df}4 c6 Black was at least not worse in Babic – Gazarek, Croatia 2009.

9...0–0
Black must avoid the well-known trap: 9...\textbf{Dxa}4?? 10.\textbf{Dd}5!+–

10.d4
10.\textbf{De}2? is bad in view of 10...\textbf{Dd}6 11.\textbf{Dh}5\textbf{\#} (11.\textbf{De}3? \textbf{Dxa}4 12.\textbf{Dxa}4 \textbf{Dh}4++ with a decisive
advantage, Barletta – Gentile, Imperia 2003.)
11...\texttt{e}e8 12.\texttt{Wf}1 g6 13.\texttt{Wh}3 \texttt{e}5!— and White must lose material one way or another.

In the event of 10.\texttt{Ab}3 I would like to offer an improvement over the existing move order. 10...c6N (After 10...\texttt{Axb}3 11.\texttt{axb}3 c6 White can play 12.d3 [12.d4 d5 transposes to 10...c6] taking control over the light squares. Black’s position is still slightly better after 12...d5, but the version seen below is more favourable still.)

11.d4 (Now 11.d3 can be met by 11...d5 when Black postpones or omits entirely the exchange on b3. White’s light-squared bishop is now out of play and he must worry about ideas such as ...a5-a4.) 11...\texttt{Axb}3 12.\texttt{AXB}3 d5 Now we transpose to a few known games, including the following: 13.\texttt{Ae}1 \texttt{d}6 14.\texttt{Ah}5 \texttt{f}6 15.\texttt{Ae}3 \texttt{f}5\textsuperscript{#} Black was better in Quispe Santacruz – Sorin, Rosario 2001.

11...\texttt{Axa}4 11.\texttt{Axa}4

Now out of several playable moves, I particularly like the following idea:

11...\texttt{b}5!

Intending to post the light-squared bishop on the long diagonal.

12.\texttt{Cc}3

12.\texttt{Bf}3N \texttt{Bb}8 13.\texttt{Cc}3 \texttt{f}6\textsuperscript{#} does not solve White’s problems.

12...\texttt{d}6 13.\texttt{Ah}5

13.\texttt{Ae}1N \texttt{Bb}7 14.\texttt{Afh}5 \texttt{f}6 also favours Black.

13...\texttt{Bb}7 14.\texttt{Bf}3 \texttt{g}6!

14...f5 is promising and soon led to a winning position after White faltered in Oskam – Euwe, Amsterdam 1920. Nevertheless the text move, which has the idea of taking over the e-file, is even better.

15.\texttt{Ah}6

Perhaps White should prefer 15.\texttt{Ae}3N although 15...\texttt{e}e8 intending ...b4 preserves a clear advantage for Black.

15...\texttt{f}5

15...\texttt{Be}8?N 16.\texttt{Ae}3 b4 17.\texttt{Ae}2 \texttt{Af}6 is another strong plan, but Black instead decides
to gain space on the kingside and keep the e8-square free for the queen's rook.

16.h4
This was Felix – Macharacek, Brno 1998, and now Black should have played:

16...\textit{We}8N 17.\textit{Wg}5 \textit{f4±}
Intending ...\textit{Wf}5. White's kingside demonstration has achieved nothing and the rook on h6 is more of a liability than an asset.

C2) 7.\textit{Cc}3!?  

Quite a tricky move. In essence, White is playing for a more sophisticated version of the 9...\textit{Wxa}4?? 10.\textit{Wd}5! trap noted in line C1 above.

7...\textit{We}7
7...\textit{Wxa}4 8.\textit{Wxe}5! \textit{We}7 9.\textit{Wd}5! is playable but unnecessarily risky for Black.

8.\textit{Wd}5
Other moves have little independent value. For instance, 8.\textit{Wxe}5 \textit{Wxe}5 9.\textit{Wxe}5 0–0 takes us to variation C1, and 8.\textit{Wxc}6 \textit{dxc}6 9.\textit{Wxe}5 \textit{We}6! transposes to the 9.\textit{Cc}3 line given on page 153, in the notes to variation C32.

There is an interesting alternative in 8...\textit{Wd}6? as played in Farmer – Reuter, e-mail 2000, but I will focus on the tried and tested solution.

9.\textit{Wxc}6 \textit{dx}c6
9...\textit{bxc}6 does not equalize: 10.\textit{Wxe}7 \textit{We}7 11.d3! (11.d4 \textit{Wb}7 12.\textit{Wg}5?! \textit{f6} 13.\textit{Wd}2 d5 14.\textit{Wf}4 0–0 15.\textit{f}3 \textit{f5±} Lorenzo Duran – Baron Rodriguez, La Roda 2005.) One line that I checked continues 11...0–0 12.\textit{Wxe}4 \textit{We}8 13.\textit{Wd}4! with a slight edge to White.

10.\textit{Wxc}7 \textit{Wxe}7 11.d4!
This is White's only real chance to cause problems.

11.b4 promises no advantage in view of the strong intermediate move: 11...\textit{We}6! 12.\textit{bxc}5 (12.\textit{Wxe}5 \textit{Wxa}4 13.\textit{Wxe}4 0–0 is also good for Black.) 12...\textit{exf}3 13.\textit{Wxf}3 \textit{Wxc}5 14.\textit{Wb}2 \textit{Wg}5 15.\textit{Cc}3 (15.d3? may be an improvement although I am still not impressed by White's position.) 15...0–0–0 16.\textit{Wxe}5 \textit{Wg}6 17.\textit{We}3

This was Kengis – Tal, Jurmala 1983, and now the cold-blooded 17...\textit{Wh}e8!N promises a slight edge, for instance 18.\textit{Wg}5 \textit{Wxc}2 19.\textit{Wxg}7 \textit{Wg}8! 20.\textit{Wxg}8 \textit{Wxg}8 and White's compensation for a pawn isn't sufficient.

11.\textit{Wd}7 12.\textit{Wg}5
12.\textit{Wg}5 is not dangerous: 12...\textit{f}6 13.\textit{Wd}2 0–0 14.\textit{Wxe}4?! (14.\textit{Wf}4=N) Schweber – Savon,
Mar del Plata 1971, and now Black could have obtained the upper hand with a paradoxical move:

14...\(\text{d}8!!\)N Now White has a problem with his bishop. 15.\(\text{f}4\) g5 Now we see why the queen is needed on d8: to protect the c7-pawn. 16.\(\text{h}5!\) (After 16.\(\text{e}6?\) f5 17.\(\text{f}6\) \(\text{f}6\) the verdict is clear.) 16...\(\text{b}6!\) (16...\(\text{xf}4?\) 17.\(\text{g}5!) is too dangerous.) 17.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{f}5\)! One way or another, White must give up material for questionable compensation.

12...\(\text{f}6\) 13.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{e}6\)
This developing move should promise equal chances.

14.\(\text{f}xe4??\)N
I decided to investigate this untested move. After 14.fxe4 0–0–0 Black has few problems as White’s centre is not stable, De Lisa – Pannekoek, e-mail 2005.

14...\(\text{xe}4\) 15.\(\text{fxe}4\)
15.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{d}7\) (or 15...0–0!? immediately) followed by short castling is equal.

15...0–0–0 16.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{b}8\) 17.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{d}7\) 18.\(\text{c}3\)
The middlegame with opposite-coloured bishops holds balanced chances.

C3) 7.\(\text{xc}6\) dxc6
Exchanging is the main line. From here we will consider the slightly unusual C31) 8.d4 followed by the main line of C32) 8.\(\text{xe}5\).
Taking with the rook looks strange since it will soon have to move again: 8...<wbr/>dxe5† <wbr/>e7 9.d4 This was Dahl Pedersen – Hartman, Copenhagen 1996, and here my suggestion would be 9...<wbr/>g4!N 10.<wbr/>bd2 <wbr/>d7 11.<wbr/>e1 0–0 and the position is equal.

This resembles the earlier variation B.

Another possible continuation is: 11.<wbr/>e3 0–0 12.<wbr/>c3 <wbr/>e8 13.<wbr/>d2 (13.<wbr/>e4 transposes to the main line below.) 13...<wbr/>b4 14.a3 <wbr/>xc3 15.bxc3

8...<wbr/>e6
8...<wbr/>e4?! is playable, but Black has absolutely nothing to fear from the Berlin structure after dxe5, so I would not go out of my way to prevent it.

9.dxe5
9.<wbr/>xe5 gives Black the option of 9...<wbr/>e7 which transposes to variation C322 on page 154. However, given this move order I would be tempted to try the more active 9...<wbr/>d6?.

9...<wbr/>xd1 10.<wbr/>xd1 <wbr/>e7
Black has a great version of the famous Berlin endgame. His knight is well placed on e6 and, more importantly, he can still castle. Thus king safety will not be an issue, and the black rooks will be able to develop easily.

11.<wbr/>c3 12.<wbr/>e4
12.<wbr/>e3 transposes to 11.<wbr/>e3 above.

12...<wbr/>e8 13.<wbr/>e3 <wbr/>f8!
Black opens the path for the light-squared bishop and transfers the knight to g6 in order to attack the e5-pawn.
This position was reached in Hoffmann - Steiner, Austria 1997, and here I suggest:

14...\textit{g}4!?N

With the following possible continuation:

15.\textit{e}1 \textit{g}6 16.h3 \textit{e}6 17.f4 d5 18.c3 b4! 19.f2 xc3 20.bxc3 f6 21.exf6 gxf6

With a slight edge for Black, thanks to White's damaged pawn structure on the queenside and weak light squares.

I will present some brief analysis of the other main move, to show why I was not completely happy with it:

8...\textit{e}6!? 9.h5!

I believe this is the only way to set problems.

9.d3 \textit{e}7 10.c3 transposes to 9.c3 in the note to White's next move in the main line below.

9.d4 \textit{e}7 transposes to variation C322 on page 154, but the more active 9...d6!? looks to be a simpler route to equality.

9.f3 f6! leads to complex play after the queen exchange, but according to my analysis Black is doing quite well. The doubled pawns do not harm his chances too much, and in some lines the open g-file can become an important avenue of counterplay.

9...\textit{f}6!

After 9...g6 10.f3 f5 (I also analysed 10...f6 11.xc6 bxc6 12.xc6\dagger and concluded that Black cannot equalize) 11.b3 \textit{e}7 12.b2 0-0 13.a3 a5 14.c4 a4 15.e3 White obtains a slight edge.

10.d4!

C32) 8.xe5

10...g6!?N

I also checked 10...d6 11.c3 Moran - Vincifori, Buenos Aires 2003, followed by 11...0-0N 12.e4 d8 13.c7 14.g3 with a slight edge for White.

11.d1 g7 12.d2 0-0 13.d3 d8! 14.e3 f6 15.d3 b6 16.c4 a5 17.b3 e8

Black reaches a playable position, though it seems to me that White keeps a slight edge.
After the text move we must consider C321) 9.b3 and C322) 9.d4, after first checking some rare alternatives.

9...e2?! doesn't make sense in view of 9...e6.

9.c3 e6! prevents d2-d4, and after 10.d3 0-0 11.e3 f6 12.d3 f5 13.h3 f6 14.g1 c5! Black obtained a useful space advantage in Boehm – Brandner, Vienna 2006.

9.d3 is likely to transpose to the aforementioned 9.c3 line after 9...0-0 10.c3 e6.

C321) 9.b3

This has scored surprisingly high in practice, but fortunately it is not too difficult to improve Black's play.

9...0-0 10.a3?!

It makes sense for White to attempt to trade a pair of bishops.

10.a3 has been played in several games, but so far nobody has tested what I believe to be the most logical reply: 10...e8!N 11.d3 (11.h5 e6 12.d3 f6 13.c4 f7 is fine for Black.) 11...f8 12.d2 f6 13.c4 xex1† 14.xe1 d7 15.e3

15...b5! Forcing the knight to an unfavourable position. 16.a5 e8! Black transfers the queen to the kingside with good play.

The text move was played in Popovic – Prasad, Subotica 1987. Here Black has an effective way to delay or even prevent the bishop exchange.

10...f5!N 11.d3 e8 12.d2 f8!

Suddenly Black has created the threat of ...xd3.

13.b2

13.c4 d7 14.f3 f6 is fine for Black.

13.f3 e6 intending ...f6 is similarly comfortable for the second player.

13...h4!! 14.df3 h5

Black can afford the luxury of playing slightly
adventurously with his queen. His next move is likely to be ...f6, so White has nothing better than the following line:

15.\textit{\textipa{d}d}4 \textit{\textipa{w}xd}1 16.\textit{\textipa{a}xd}1 \textit{\textipa{c}c}8 17.\textit{\textipa{c}c}4 \textit{\textipa{d}d}7 =

C322) 9.d4

C3221) 10.c3

9...\textit{\textipa{e}e}6

After this natural move White has another choice. The most popular move has been C3221) 10.c3, but more challenging is C3222) 10.\textit{\textipa{e}e}3.

Retreating the knight does not seem logical illogical: 10.\textit{\textipa{f}f}3 0-0 11.\textit{\textipa{c}c}3 b5!? 12.\textit{\textipa{e}e}3 \textit{\textipa{b}b}7 Black’s set-up works well thanks to the following idea: 13.\textit{\textipa{e}e}4 As played in Baumgardt – Exler, e-mail 2001. Here Black should have played:

11.\textit{\textipa{e}e}3 transposes to the harmless 11.c3 line as given in the notes to variation C3222 below.

11.\textit{\textipa{b}b}3 was played in Schnegg – Kanonier, Austria 2011, and now after 11...\textit{\textipa{e}e}8!N 12.\textit{\textipa{d}d}2 \textit{\textipa{d}d}5 13.\textit{\textipa{f}f}1 \textit{\textipa{f}f}8 14.\textit{\textipa{e}e}3 a5 Black is doing fine.

11.\textit{\textipa{f}f}3 f6 12.\textit{\textipa{d}d}3 \textit{\textipa{e}e}8 (12...\textit{\textipa{d}d}5!?=) 13.\textit{\textipa{f}f}4?! (13.\textit{\textipa{d}d}2= would be better.) 13...\textit{\textipa{d}d}6! 14.\textit{\textipa{x}e}6?! \textit{\textipa{x}e}6= Black was better in Velikhanli – Graf, Dubai 2003, thanks to the bishop pair.

11.h3 \textit{\textipa{d}d}5! Black prepares ...c5, opening up the position for his bishops. 12.\textit{\textipa{b}b}3 \textit{\textipa{d}d}8! 13.\textit{\textipa{f}f}3 \textit{\textipa{x}b}3 14.\textit{\textipa{a}xb}3
Now in Drazic – Beikert, Sofia 1994, Black should have played 14...c5!N 15.dx{c5}+ with a slight edge.

Finally, 11.\(\text{d}d2\)! has been White's most popular choice, which I find strange as after 11...c5! Black is already fighting for the advantage: 12.dxc5 (12.\(\text{d}f3\) cxd4 13.cxd4 \(\text{d}d5\) is just better for Black thanks to his bishop pair and the weak pawn on d4, K. Lee – Lagerman, Reykjavik 2012.) 12...\(\text{d}xc5\) 13.\(\text{d}d3\) (13.\(\text{f}f3\) is better, but after 13...f6 14.\(\text{d}e4\) \(\text{e}8\) Black is fine.) 13...\(\text{x}d1\) 14.\text{exd1} f6 15.d4 \(\text{e}6\). The two bishops in an open position yield Black the upper hand, Kobayashi – Mikhailvski, Sao Paulo 2002.

11...\text{d}e8!

This coldblooded move prepares a retreat square for the knight and takes the sting out of White's attack.

12.\text{f}5 \text{f}8 13.\text{h}5 \text{g}6?!

This ambitious move seems to work well, although the safer 13...\text{d}5N also leaves Black at least equal.

14.\text{fxg}6

This position occurred in Langrock – Duy, Germany 1998, and now Black should have preferred:

14...\text{hxg}6!N

It turns out that Black need not fear the following 'brilliant' continuation.

15.\text{h}8+!

15.\text{f}3 \text{d}5 gives Black a slight plus thanks to his strong pair of bishops.

15...\text{e}h8 16.\text{xf}7+ \text{g}8 17.\text{xd}8 \text{b}8!

Black protects the b7-pawn and prepares to develop his light-squared bishop.

18.\text{h}6

18.\text{g}5?! \text{xd}8 19.\text{xe}8 \text{g}5 gives Black slightly better chances as well, despite the awkward pin along the eighth rank.

18...\text{f}5 19.\text{xf}8 \text{xf}8 20.\text{e}6+ \text{f}7 21.\text{f}4 \text{d}6 22.\text{fl} \text{e}4 23.\text{h}5 \text{e}2!
Black has more than enough play for the sacrificed pawn.

\[
\text{C3222) 10.\text{c}3}
\]

This developing move allows White to choose a more active set-up than the previous one.

10...0-0

Now we reach a final division between C32221) 11.\text{c}3 and C32222) 11.\text{c}4, after first checking a couple of harmless alternatives.

The modest 11.\text{c}3 promises White little chance of an advantage: 11...\text{f}6 12.\text{d}3 (12.\text{f}3 \text{d}5 13.\text{bd}2 \text{b}5 14.\text{a}4 \text{d}7 15.\text{b}3 \text{fe}8 16.\text{c}2 \text{f}8 17.\text{c}4 \text{f}5 18.\text{e}4 \text{bxc}4 19.\text{bxc}4 \text{g}6! with slightly better chances for Black.)

\[
\text{C32221) 11.\text{c}3}
\]

12...\text{a}5?!N 13.\text{a}4 \text{e}8 14.\text{d}2 \text{b}6 15.\text{f}4 \text{d}6 16.\text{c}3 \text{xf}4 17.\text{xf}4 \text{e}6!=

11.\text{f}4 \text{f}6 12.\text{f}3 \text{d}6 13.g3 (Or 13.\text{d}2 \text{e}8 14.\text{c}4 \text{c}5 15.\text{d}5 \text{f}8 16.\text{c}3 \text{g}6 and Black was fine in Belostozkaja – Pankiewicz, Wroclaw 2004.)

\[
\text{Vonk – Stelter, Goch 2003. 13...\text{e}8!N 14.\text{d}3 \text{f}8 15.\text{f}5 \text{d}7 16.\text{h}4 \text{b}6 17.\text{d}2 \text{b}7 and Black is at least not worse due to the weak light squares.}
\]

\[
\text{C32222) 11.\text{c}4}
\]

11...\text{f}6 12.\text{f}3

Two other retreats have been played:

12.\text{c}4 \text{b}4! 13.a3 (or 13.\text{d}3 \text{b}6 14.a3 \text{xc}3 15.\text{xc}3 \text{b}7=) 13...\text{xc}3 14.\text{bxc}3
This was Zhuravlev – Kuprijanov, Cherepovets 2002. Now I would like to offer
14...\texttt{d7?!}N 15.\texttt{d3 \texttt{b6} 16.\texttt{ad1 \texttt{d7} 17.\texttt{d2 \texttt{ad8} 18.c4 \texttt{fe8} with an equal position.}

12.\texttt{d3 \texttt{e8} (12...a5?!N also makes sense) occurred in Kanceljak – Kruljac, Sibenik 2009. Here I checked a new idea for White:

13.\texttt{h5?!N Protecting the d4-pawn indirectly. 13...b6! (In the event of 13...g6 the queen shows her agility by zipping to the opposite flank: 14.\texttt{a5 b6 15.\texttt{a4 b5 16.\texttt{b3 b4 17.f4!} with some edge for White.) 14.\texttt{ad1 \texttt{b7 15.\texttt{g4 d7 16.f4 f8 17.e1 c8! Black has no problems equalizing.

12...\texttt{e8}

I decided to recommend this rare move instead of the more common 12...f5, which has the drawback of weakening the e5-square.

13.\texttt{d5}

1. I also checked 13.\texttt{d3 \texttt{f8} 14.\texttt{f4} (or 14.d5 cxd5 15.\texttt{d5 \texttt{e6} 16.c4 \texttt{d5 17.cxd5 c6 18.\texttt{b3 d5} 19.\texttt{b7 b5 20.\texttt{xb5 cxb5=} 14...\texttt{e6 15.f3 d7 16.e1 \texttt{ad8} with equal chances.

13...\texttt{xd5} 14.\texttt{d5}

14.\texttt{d5}N is slightly better, but the position after 14...d6 15.\texttt{d3 b5! 16.e1 b7 remains about equal.

14...\texttt{xd5} 15.\texttt{d5}

This position occurred in Arias Castaneda – Korneev, Zaragoza 1999, and here Black could have equalized easily with the simple move:

15...\texttt{d7}

Followed by ...\texttt{c6}.

C32222) 11.\texttt{c4!}
Preparing d4-d5 is the only serious attempt to cause Black problems.

11...f6
This is my main recommendation although 11...d6!? also deserves consideration.

12.\text{\textit{f3}} f5
Black's idea is to restrict White's bishop. 12...\textit{g5}?!N is also interesting.

13.\textit{c3}
Other moves appear less dangerous:

13.d5 f4 14.\textit{c1} cxd5 15.cxd5 (15.\textit{xd5} is answered by 15...c6! 16.\textit{xd8} \textit{xd8} 17.\textit{c3} \textit{c5} and Black is fine.) This occurred in Gavazov – Dimov, Albena 2010, and now Black could have played:

15...\textit{g5}!N 16.\textit{c3} \textit{g4} Black is fine as the following critical line leads nowhere for White: 17.b4 \textit{d7} 18.\textit{b3} \textit{d6} 19.\textit{e4} \textit{xf3} 20.\textit{xf3} \textit{xb4} 21.\textit{ed1} \textit{d6}! Black is better.

13.\textit{d2} f4
13...\textit{f6}?!N is a reasonable alternative, for example, 14.\textit{c3} b5! 15.\textit{b3} \textit{b8}! (15...\textit{xc4}?! 16.\textit{xc4} \textit{d5}) 16.cx\textit{b5} \textit{xb5} 17.\textit{a4} \textit{d5}=

14.\textit{c3}
14.\textit{c3} transposes to the 13.\textit{c3} f4 14.\textit{d2}?! line given in the note to the main line below.

14...\textit{g5} 15.\textit{xg5}
A playable alternative is: 15.\textit{bd2} \textit{g4} 16.\textit{b3} (Or 16.\textit{e2}?!N \textit{f6} 17.\textit{d3} \textit{xf3}† 18.\textit{xf3} \textit{d7} 19.\textit{e5} \textit{xe5} 20.\textit{exe5} \textit{ae8} 21.\textit{ae1} \textit{xe5} 22.\textit{xe5} \textit{e8} 23.\textit{xe8}† \textit{xe8} and Black shouldn't have problems holding this position.) 16...\textit{xf3}† 17.\textit{xf3} \textit{xf3}

Radulski – Lubczynski, Plovdiv 2008. Now Black should have played the modest 18.\textit{b8}N, followed by 19.\textit{ad1} \textit{f6} 20.\textit{h1} \textit{d7} = with roughly equal chances.

15...\textit{xf5}

16.f3?!
16.\textit{f3}N is a better try, but Black should be okay after 16...\textit{f6} 17.d5 \textit{d7} 18.\textit{d2} \textit{xc3} 19.\textit{xc3} \textit{f6}.

16...\textit{f5}=
Black was better in Gipslis – Averbakh, Riga 1958, since the following natural move loses material for White:
17.\( \text{d}2 \text{N} \) \( \text{h}4! \) 18.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 19.\( \text{e}6 \) \( \text{d}7 \)
20.\( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{f}6 \)
White must lose an exchange.

16.\( \text{d}4 \text{N} \)
This is White's only attempt to fight for the advantage.

16...\( \text{cxd}5 \)
16...\( \text{a}5 \) allows White to sacrifice an exchange in return for a long-term initiative: 17.\( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 18.\( \text{w}d4 \) \( \text{e}6! \) 19.\( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \).

13...\( \text{f}4 \) 14.\( \text{c}1 \)
14.\( \text{d}2?! \) \( \text{f}6 \) 15.\( \text{e}2 \text{N} \) (15.\( \text{d}5 \) was good for Black in the following game: 15...\( \text{c}5 \) 16.\( \text{e}5?! \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 17.\( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{d}3 \text{N} \) Vitolinsh - Mikhalchishin, Uzhgorod 1988.)

15...\( \text{g}5! \) 16.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{e}6! \) With the idea 17.\( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xf}3 \text{N} \) 18.\( \text{gx}f3 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 19.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{d}7! \) with good compensation for the pawn, thanks to White's damaged kingside structure.

14...\( \text{f}6 \) 15.\( \text{d}5 \) \( \text{c}5 \)
Now we will depart from the game Rossetti - Urbaniak, Internet 2010, in order to examine the critical continuation.

19.\( \text{b}4! \) \( \text{g}4! \)
19...\( \text{a}4 \) 20.\( \text{a}3! \) \( \text{g}4 \) 21.\( \text{wg}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \)
22.\( \text{ad}1! \text{±} \)
20.\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{wh}xg4}}

20.f3 can be met by 20...\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{da}a4}}! intending 21.fxg4?! (21.c5 is better, but Black is still fine after 21...\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{ae}e8}} 22.\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{xe}e8}} \texttt{\textipa{\textsc{xe}e8}} 23.fxg4 \texttt{\textipa{\textsc{ed}d8}=}) 21...\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{ad}d8}} leading to Black's advantage.

20...\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{xd}d4}}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\SetUpBoard[Styling=InChess, BoardColor=light-yellow, SideColor=white, LineColor=gray20, InitialPosition={{a1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{wh}e1}}}, {b1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{bb}b1}}}, {c1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{cb}c1}}}, {d1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{db}d1}}}, {e1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{eb}e1}}}, {f1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{fb}f1}}}, {g1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{gb}g1}}}, {h1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{hb}h1}}}}]
\piece{b1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{wh}e1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{wh}e1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{wh}e1}}}
\piece{c1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{bb}b1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{bb}b1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{bb}b1}}}
\piece{d1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{cb}c1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{cb}c1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{cb}c1}}}
\piece{e1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{eb}e1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{eb}e1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{eb}e1}}}
\piece{f1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{fb}f1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{fb}f1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{fb}f1}}}
\piece{g1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{gb}g1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{gb}g1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{gb}g1}}}
\piece{h1}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{hb}h1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{hb}h1}}}{\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{hb}h1}}}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21.\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{ee}e3}}! \texttt{\textipa{\textsc{dd}d7}}!
An important defence, which saves a piece.

22.\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{xd}d7}} \texttt{\textipa{\textsc{dd}d7}} 23.\texttt{\textipa{\textsc{d}d4}} \texttt{\textipa{\textsc{fe}e8}}
Black should hold this endgame without much difficulty.

\textbf{Conclusion}

We have examined various attempts by White to launch a quick attack using the open e-file. This is a perfectly natural reaction to Black's fifth move, but the main drawback is that White's valuable light-squared bishop becomes an early casualty, which is likely to harm his chances in the ensuing middlegame. Nevertheless Black should take care, especially in the critical C32222 variation examined at the end of the chapter.
5.0–0

6.d4 b5 – Sidelines

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.ffd3 d6 3...b5 a6 4.a4 ff6 5.0–0 dxe4 6.d4

6...b5

A 7.d5
B) 7.e1
C) 7...xe5 dxe5 8.dxe5!
   C1) 8...d5
   C2) 8...b7!?
From this position the main line is of course 7.b3, coverage of which will begin in the next chapter. In this chapter we will deal with three rare alternatives: A) 7.d5, B) 7.e1 and C) 7.xe5.

A) 7.d5

This line entered the theory books thanks to the efforts of the strong German player Curt Richter in the 1930s, although Vidmar was the first to introduce it in 1902.

7...bxa4 8.dxc6 d6

Black ensures the integrity of his pawn structure.

9.e1

9.c4 has also been tested in practice. Here I like the untested 9...f5!N intending to meet 10.xa4 with 10...e7 11.e1 c5 12.a5 d3 13.d1 xc3 14.xc1 e4+ when Black's advantage is beyond any doubt.

9...f5!

I like this ambitious move more than the popular 9...f6.

10.c4

Other moves also fail to solve White's problems.


10.d5 e7 11.c3 c5 (11...xc3 12.bxc3 f6) 12.b4 axb3 13.axb3 e6 14.d1 0–0 Black's bishop pair and central pawn majority gave him the upper hand in Pinasco – Medveski, e-mail 2000.

I also considered 10.fd2N xd2 11.xd2 e6 12.c3 e7 13.d5 0–0+ and Black is better.

10...e7 11.xa4

11.c3!N xc3 12.bxc3 0–0 13.d5+ h8 intending ...f6 is also better for Black.
11...0–0 12.\textit{d}d2 \textit{c}c5\textit{f}

In Huguet – Demarre, Charbonnieres 1968, Black’s strong centre and bishop pair made him the clear favourite.

\textbf{B) 7.\textit{e}e1}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard1}
\end{center}

7...bxa4

I believe Black should take the chance to secure the advantage of the bishop pair. Nevertheless there is a perfectly playable alternative:

7...d5 8.\textit{b}b3 \textit{e}e6 9.\textit{d}xe5?!  
White should prefer 9.dxe5 transposing to the rare but interesting 9.\textit{e}e1? variation in the main line of the Open Spanish – see Chapter 11 on page 193.

The text move meets with a convincing reply.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard2}
\end{center}

8.\textit{x}xe4

White should stick with the obvious move, as attempts to do without it may easily backfire:

8.d5 \textit{x}xf2! 9.\textit{x}xf2 \textit{c}c5\textit{f} 10.\textit{e}e3 \textit{xe}3\textit{f} 10.\textit{c}3N is another idea, but after 10...\textit{c}xb3 11.axb3 \textit{xc}3 12.bxc3 \textit{d}d6 13.\textit{f}4 0–0 White is a pawn down for not much. 10...\textit{c}5 11.\textit{d}d1

This position was reached in Rusu – Ignat, Romania 1994, and here Black should have played:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard3}
\end{center}

11...\textit{x}f2\textit{f} 12.\textit{f}f1 12.\textit{h}1? \textit{g}3\textit{f}–– 12...\textit{x}e1 13.\textit{xe}1 0–0

With a rook and two pawns again two minor pieces, plus the safer king and a dominating knight on e4, Black is better.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard4}
\end{center}

8.\textit{x}xe4

White should stick with the obvious move, as attempts to do without it may easily backfire:

8.d5 \textit{xf}2! 9.\textit{x}f2 \textit{c}c5\textit{f} 10.\textit{e}3 \textit{xe}3\textit{f}
11.\{e3 c7 12.\{xe5 (12.\{xe5N d6 13.\{e1 0–0 is no better for White) 12...0–0 Black is a pawn up, Almeida – Maes, corr. 1994.

8.\{xe5N looks clever, but Black has an equally cunning reply: 8...d5! 9.\{xc6 \{f6 10.f3 \{xc6

10...d6N (10...\{e7N 11.\{e5 \{xe5 12.dxe5 \{f5 is also excellent for Black) 11.\{xa4 \{d7+

Black has two bishops and a powerful pawn centre.

11.c4!N (11.fxe4 dxe4 is also in Black’s favour.)
11...\{xc4 12.fxe4 \{b4 Black completes development and retains an extra pawn.

11...\{xc4 12.fxe4 \{b4 Black completes development and retains an extra pawn.

12.\{xa4 \{d7+ 11...0–0 is enough for equality, but I like the idea of using the isolated a-pawn to make a positive contribution.

12.\{xa4 \{d7+ 13.\{c2 0–0 14.cxd5 exf3
15.dxc6 \{e6

Despite being a pawn down, Black is at least equal thanks to his safer king and mighty light-squared bishop.

C) 7.\{xe5

8...d5

Now Black takes the centre with the pawns.

9.\{e1 e4 10.c4!N

White’s only chance is to undermine the centre.

The feeble 10.c3 was played in Katz – M. Goldberg, Guilderland 2003, and now after
This temporarily gives up a piece, but White can regain it soon enough.

7...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}e5}}\) 8.dxe5

Once again the obvious capture is the best.

8...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}3}}\)N has never been tested. The best reply looks to be 8...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}4}}\) 9.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}1}}\) d5 10.f3 f5 11.fxe4 dxe4 12.a4 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}7}}\) with an extra pawn for Black.

8.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}1}}\)?

This was White's choice is the only game that deviated from 8.dxe5. It is hardly surprising that it has not been repeated, as the move is just bad.

8...d5

8...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}7}}\)? 9.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}4}}\)! 10.g3 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}6}}\) also promises Black a big advantage.

This was Pelzer – Dimer, Amsterdam 1899, and here Black could have refuted his opponent's play with:

9.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}3}}\)

This was Pelzer's – Dimer, Amsterdam 1899, and here Black could have refuted his opponent's play with:

9...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}5}}\)!N

This wins a piece by force, for example:

10.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{f}4}}\)

After 10.f3 c4! 11.fxe4 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}6}}\)! The bishop on b3 is trapped and the game is over.

10...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}4}}\)!

11.f3 \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}6}}\)! is also hopeless for White.

11...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{g}6}}\) 12.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}d}5} \texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}d}5}}\) 13.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{c}3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}5}}\) 14.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{e}7}}\)

Black retains an extra piece.

After the text move it should be noted that 8...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}a}4}}\) 9.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}5}}\) regains the piece and leads to an unclear situation. However, Black has at least two good alternatives, and I will present both C1) 8...d5 and C2) 8...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}7}}\) in turn.

C1) 8...d5

From this position play should normally transpose to the 7.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}3}}\) d5 8.dxe5 variation, as considered in variation D of the following chapter. In this section we will see what happens if White tries to avoid that path.

9.exd6?!?

This independent move only speeds up Black's development. The correct 9.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}3}}\) reaches the aforementioned variation from the next chapter, coverage of which begins on page 176.

9...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{x}d}6}\) 10.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}3}}\) \(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{b}7}}\) 11.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{d}2}}\)

This position occurred in Borgo – C. Flear, Eupen 1994. Now Black missed a chance to seize the initiative:

11.\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}4}})!N 12.h3

12.f3 is met by 12...\(\texttt{\textit{\textbf{h}5}}\) with excellent attacking chances.
12...g3
Black is well equipped to deal with this move:
12...hxg3! 13.fxg3 hxg3!

14...xf7!
14.fxg3 0-0-0! leaves White nothing better than returning the piece: 15.d4 xf3 16.xf7+ xg4 17.xxf7 h3 18.xf3 e5! 19.g5 xb2+ Black has a healthy extra pawn.
14...e7!
And not 14...xf7?? 15.e5† when White wins.
15.fxg3 e5† 16.g2 ad8

17.h3! xd1 18.hxg4 xf1 19.g5†! xf7 20.xf1 f8= White may have staved off the mating threats, but he still faces a miserable endgame against Black’s mighty bishop pair.

12...0-0-0
Black is obviously better thanks to his development advantage. I conducted some further analysis to see how the game may develop from here.

13.g4†
Exchanging queens is an obvious idea, but it does not solve White’s problems.

13...xg4 14.hxg4 c5!
Intending to secure the advantage of the two bishops. The justification of Black’s last move is seen in the following line:

15.xf7 ed8! 16.b4
After 16.b3 h5! 17.g4 h4! followed by ...h3 Black launches a decisive attack along the h-file.
16...\texttt{Exf7} 17.bxc5 \texttt{Exc5+}

Black has restored material equality and obtained a big advantage thanks to his bishop pair and pressure along the f-file.

\textbf{C2)} 8...\texttt{b7}?!?

Although there is nothing at all wrong with the previous line, I decided to offer some coverage of this independent alternative, in case the reader does not wish to allow a transposition to the next chapter with 8...d5 9...\texttt{b3}.

\texttt{9...b3 c5}

Black develops actively and takes aim at the f2-pawn. Interestingly, we have now transposed to a separate line of the Spanish, which is normally reached after the following move order: 3...\texttt{f6} 4.0-0 \texttt{c5} 5...\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 6.d4 a6 7...\texttt{a4} b5 8...\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 9...\texttt{b3} \texttt{b7}.

\texttt{10.d5}

This is the most popular continuation, which leads to double-edged positions. Here are two other ideas:

\texttt{10...c3?!} should be met by: 10...\texttt{xc3N} (Instead 10...\texttt{h4} occurred in Short – Onischuk, Wijk aan Zee 1997, and here White should have played 11...\texttt{f3}!N 0-0 12.g3 \texttt{xc3} 13...\texttt{xb7} \texttt{e2}† 14.g2 with slightly better chances.) 11.bxc3 \texttt{e7} This position has not yet been reached in practice. One sensible move is 12...\texttt{g4}, transposing to 10...\texttt{g4} below.

10...\texttt{g4}?! should be met by 10...\texttt{e7}! when play may continue: 11...\texttt{c3}! \texttt{xc3} 12.bxc3 0-0-0 13...\texttt{e1}! \texttt{h5} (13...\texttt{f6}?!N gives, roughly equal chances and deserves consideration.)

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
8 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
7 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
6 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
5 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
4 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
3 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
2 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
1 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

14...\texttt{h3} (14...\texttt{f5}N is more accurate although 14...\texttt{f6}! maintains the balance.) This position was reached in Capablanca – Pulvermacher, New York 1907, and here Black should have played 14...\texttt{f6}! with good chances to take over the initiative.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
8 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
7 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
6 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
5 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
4 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
3 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
2 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
1 &  &  &  &  &  &  &  &  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

14...\texttt{xf1}?! This exchanging operation has been Black’s most popular choice and it seems to be the best.
According to my database, all games have continued with the more obvious 13...\text{\text{\texttt{c}}}d5, which leads to a complicated game with mutual chances: 14.\text{\texttt{x}}d5 0–0 15.\text{\texttt{d}}d2 \text{\texttt{x}}h2 16.\text{\texttt{f}}f3 \text{\texttt{h}}h1† (16...\text{\texttt{h}}5?! also leads to a double-edged position.) 17.\text{\texttt{f}}f2 d6 18.b3

18...\text{\texttt{h}}5! As played in Lovakovic – Oestergaard, e-mail 2002. I believe White’s best from here is 19.\text{\texttt{b}}2N \text{\texttt{ad}}8 when the position remains rather unclear.

Conclusion

None of the variations examined here have much to offer White other than surprise value. In many lines, if Black plays accurately then the question is not whether he can equalize, but rather if he can claim an advantage at an early stage of the game.
5.0–0

7.♗b3 d5 – without 8.dxe5

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0–0 ♘xe4 6.d4 b5 7.♗b3

7...d5

A) 8.c3?! 170
B) 8.♗e1 171
C) 8.a4 ♗xd4 9.♗xd4 exd4 172
   C1) 10.axb5 173
   C2) 10.♗c3?! 174
D) 8.♗xe5 ♗xe5 9.dxe5 c6 176
   D1) 10.c3 176
   D2) 10.♗e3 178

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note to 8th move options

A) after 12.f4

C1) after 11.c3?!
1.e4 e5 2.\textit{d}f3 \textit{c}6 3.\textit{b}5 a6 4.\textit{a}4 \textit{f}6
5.0-0 \textit{\textit{e}}xe4 6.d4 b5 7.\textit{\textit{b}}3 d5

From this common position the main move is of course 8.dxe5, and we will deal with it in the third and final section of the book, beginning in the very next chapter. Before that we must first look at the four sidelines: A) 8.\textit{\textit{c}}3?!, B) 8.e1, C) 8.a4 and D) 8.\textit{\textit{d}}xe5.

White's other rare options are just bad. Here is one such example:

8.c4? \textit{\textit{g}}4!
8...dxc4 should also be good for Black, but I find the text move even more convincing.
9.cxd5
9.h3N \textit{\textit{xf}3} 10.gxf3 dxc4! 11.\textit{\textit{c}}2 \textit{\textit{g}5} should be winning for Black.
9.dxe5 dxc4 10.\textit{\textit{c}}2 (or 10.\textit{\textit{e}2} Caruso - Ruzzier, Padova 1998, 10...\textit{\textit{c}5}N++)
10...\textit{\textit{c}5} (10...\textit{\textit{x}d}1N is just as good)
11.a4 This occurred in Berkley – Wurm, e-mail 2002, and now the simple 11...\textit{\textit{x}d}1
12.\textit{\textit{xd}1} (12.\textit{\textit{xd}1} \textit{\textit{b}4}) 12...\textit{b}4 13.\textit{\textit{bd}2} \textit{\textit{e}6}+ gives Black an extra pawn and a clear advantage.
9...\textit{\textit{xd}4} 10.\textit{\textit{e}1} \textit{f}5!
This ambitious move should refute White's play, if followed up correctly.
11.h3

Now in Harksen – Fahlander, corr. 1915, Black could have justified his previous play with:

11...\textit{\textit{c}5}N 12.hxg4 \textit{\textit{xf}3}† 13.\textit{\textit{x}f}3 \textit{\textit{xf}2}† 14.\textit{\textit{f}1} \textit{\textit{xe}1} 15.\textit{\textit{xe}1} \textit{\textit{h}4}† 16.\textit{\textit{d}1} 0–0!–
Black's overwhelming development advantage should decide the game.

A) 8.\textit{\textit{c}3}?!

This move is questionable, but it demands an accurate response.

8...\textit{\textit{x}c}3 9.bxc3 e4

Apart from being a pawn down, White faces the strategic problem of having the b3-bishop stuck in a 'cage'. If Black manages to complete development, relocate his knight and lock the cage door with ...\textit{c}6, there will be no way out other than a desperate c3-c4 sacrifice. Still, we should not get ahead of ourselves – Black still needs to navigate the opening while behind in development.

10.\textit{\textit{g}5} \textit{\textit{f}5}! 11.f3 \textit{\textit{e}3}! 12.\textit{\textit{f}4}!

We have been following the game Homs – Lehmann, Germany 2008. White has done everything possible to make his position work, but Black could still have retained the upper hand with the following precise continuation:
Chapter 9 – 7.b3 d5 – without 8.dxe5

Material is level but White is under some pressure due to his vulnerable king and weak d4-pawn.

B) 8.e1

8...e6 9.dxe5

9.dxe5 transposes to 8.dxe5 e6 9.e1! – see Chapter 11 beginning on page 193.

9...fxd4!

Exposing the drawback of White’s move order, namely the unprotected f2-pawn.

10.xd4

After 10.d2?! Nxd2 11.exd2 xxb3

12.cxb3 d6 13.c6 xfd7 14.e1 0–0 White has some positional compensation for the pawn, but he is fighting for a draw at most.

Another game continued: 10.f3? xxb3

11.axb3 c5† 12.e3 xe3† 13.e3
This was Montavon – Kreuzer, Berlin 1993, and here 13...\(\text{g5}\)N+ would have left White without much chance to resist.

10...\(\text{e5}\) 11.\(\text{d1}\)

11.\(\text{d3? xxf2}\uparrow 12.\text{f1} \text{xe1}\) was hopeless for White in D. Reid – C. Benson, Dunedin 1999.

The present position was reached in Rusu – Ignat, Romania 1994. Here the right path for Black would have been:

11...\(\text{xf2}\uparrow 12.\text{f1} \text{xe1}\)

12...\(\text{f6}?!\) can also be considered, but the straightforward approach works well. In the ensuing middlegame White’s two extra minor pieces will be no match for Black’s rook and two pawns.

13.\(\text{xe1} \text{d6}\) 14.\(\text{f3}\)

I also analysed: 14.\(\text{f4} \text{g5}\) 15.\(\text{g3} \text{c5}\) 16.\(\text{c3} 0-0-0\) 17.\(\text{d2} \text{xg3}\uparrow 18.\text{wxg3} \text{f6}\) 19.\(\text{ef3} \text{wg3}\) 20.\(\text{hxg3} \text{he8}\uparrow\) The endgame is much better for Black.

14...0–0 15.\(\text{e3}\)

15...\(\text{c5}\!\)

It is time for Black to start putting his extra pawns to use.

16.\(\text{c3} \text{f5}\) 17.\(\text{bd2} \text{ae8}\uparrow\)

Followed by ...\(\text{f4}\). White faces an uphill struggle to resist.

C) 8.a4

This system was developed by the best Russian player at the end of the 19th century, Mikhail Chigorin. White’s idea is to use the b5-pawn as a hook for his play on the queenside. In the beginning it scored extremely well, but since then Black found ways to fight against it. Nowadays it is not considered particularly dangerous, but there are still some important lines of which Black must be aware.

8...\(\text{xd4}\) 9.\(\text{xd4}\)

9.axb5? makes no sense in view of 9...\(\text{xb3}\) 10.\(\text{cx}b3 \text{b7}?!\) with a clear advantage for Black.

9...\(\text{exd4}\)

From this position White’s usual continuation has been C1) 10.\(\text{axb5}\), but we must not ignore the striking possibility of C2) 10.\(\text{c3}?!\).

Here are two rare and inferior moves that quickly be dismissed:

10.\(\text{e1}?! \text{e6}\) 11.f3 \(\text{c5}\) 12.\(\text{xd4} \text{xb3}\) 13.\(\text{cx}b3 \text{c5}\) 14.\(\text{d1} \text{c7}\uparrow\) Mara – Dunlop, Timaru 1911.
10...\texttt{exd}4?! is dubious in view of: 10...\texttt{e}6!
11.c3 c5 12.\texttt{e}5

12...\texttt{b}b8 (12...\texttt{f}f6?!) 13.\texttt{xb}8\texttt{b}b8 14.axb5
axb5 A pawn down in the endgame, White was fighting for a draw in Lasker – Schlechter, Germany (2) 1910.

C1) 10.axb5

10...\texttt{c}c5 11.c3?!

This seems to be White's best try.

11.\texttt{c}c3 is less appealing here than on the previous move, and Black has a convincing reply: 11...0–0! 12.\texttt{xe}4 (12.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{b}7\texttt{f}f) 12...\texttt{xe}4\texttt{f} 13.\texttt{h}5 \texttt{b}6 White was struggling in City Berlin – City Riga, corr. 1911.

The following alternative is a bit more interesting, but still unimpressive:

12.\texttt{h}5 \texttt{e}6 12.\texttt{e}1

12.bxa6 A. Popovic – Jovanovic, Belgrade 2011. 12...0–0!N 13.\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{f}f6 14.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{c}6
15.\texttt{f}f3 \texttt{b}b6 16.\texttt{f}f4 \texttt{e}4\texttt{f}
12.\texttt{xa}6\texttt{N} 0–0\texttt{f} is also better for Black thanks to his strong centre and the weakness of the b5-pawn.

12...0–0\texttt{f}

It turns out that Black has no need to fear the following capture:

13.\texttt{xe}4?!N

Objectively White should prefer 13.bxa6 as played in Mary – Colsaet, Internet 2003, although here Black could have obtained a clear advantage with 13...\texttt{d}6\texttt{f}.

13...g6! 14.\texttt{g}4

The only defence, but Black has a neat way of refuting it.

14...\texttt{xb}5! 15.\texttt{xa}8 \texttt{xa}8

White is powerless against the threats along
the first rank, as his heavy pieces are stuck on the kingside. For example:

16...\texttt{g}3 \texttt{a}1 17.\texttt{d}1 \texttt{xb}1−+

The main line continuation was played in Lasker – Schlechter, Germany (8) 1910, and several subsequent games. At this point I found a new and strong reply for Black:

11...\texttt{a}7!N

This is a clear improvement over the usual 11...0–0.

12.\texttt{h}5

After 12.cxd4 axb5! 13.\texttt{x}a7 \texttt{xa}7 Black keeps an extra pawn.

12...0–0! 13.\texttt{x}d5 \texttt{b}7 14.\texttt{x}d8 \texttt{x}d8
15.cxd4 axb5! 16.\texttt{x}a7 \texttt{xa}7

Black has the advantage thanks to his more active pieces. Here is an illustrative line:

17.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{xd}4 18.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{a}6! 19.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{xb}5
20.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{xf}2!

The knight is untouchable, as you can see in the following line:

21.\texttt{xf}2? \texttt{d}5! 22.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{f}5! 23.\texttt{f}3 \texttt{c}5!
24.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{c}2! 25.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{xf}2† 26.\texttt{xf}2 \texttt{c}1†

By now White can resign.

C2) 10.\texttt{c}3!!

This bold move is based on the weakness of the d5-pawn and Black's hanging pieces on a8 and e4. However, Black is not without resources of his own.

10...\texttt{xc}3 11.\texttt{xc}3 \texttt{c}5!

Black wants to exclude the light-squared bishop from the game.

11...\texttt{e}6 has given Black good positions in a few games, but it seems to me that White can obtain decent counterplay with the untested 12.f4!N.

12.\texttt{xb}5

The inclusion of the moves 12.\texttt{e}1† \texttt{e}7 only helps Black, for instance 13.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{e}6 14.\texttt{xe}7 \texttt{xe}7 15.cxd4 \texttt{c}4 16.\texttt{a}2 \texttt{d}6 intending ...\texttt{he}8 and Black has excellent chances to convert his extra pawn.

12.\texttt{h}5?! is unimpressive and has only been played in one game: 12...\texttt{c}4 13.\texttt{e}1† \texttt{e}7 14.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{e}7 15.\texttt{c}5 (I also analysed: 15.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{f}6 16.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{d}7 17.\texttt{a}2 \texttt{b}7† The buried bishop on a2 is a major handicap for White.)
15...\texttt{e}7 16.\texttt{e}5 \texttt{f}6 17.\texttt{xd}4 Now in Pedersen – Keemink, corr. 1930, Black could have obtained excellent chances for victory with:
17...0–0 18...b6 e8 19...a2 bxa4+ Even if Black's two extra a-pawns were magically removed, White would still face a major strategic problem as his light-squared bishop is trapped in a tight cage.

12...e7 13.f3
I analysed three other moves:

13.bxa6N 0–0! 14.cxd4 c4 15.a4 gxe5+ gives Black a positional advantage due to his extra space and the misplaced bishop on a4.

13.c4 0–0! 14.cxd5 b7! and Black's chances are higher. For example, 15.bxa6 xa6 16.gxe6 xe6 17.e1 f6 18.c4 dxe3 19.e3 d6+ and Black was a pawn up in Schubert – Kaufmann, Trebic 1915.

13.cxd4 c4 14.a4 0–0 15.f4! f5! 16.c3

19...b7!N Protecting the rook on a8 and thus threatening to place the bishop on b2. 20.e3 d3! 21.e1 e4! 22.f3 xe8 23.fxé4 xe4 24.exé4 dxe4+ Black has an extra pawn and the c3-pawn is weak.

13...e6 14.xa6

The weak 14.cxd4? was played in Moewig – Wagner, Cologne 1911, and here Black missed the strong reply 14...c4!N 15.a4 0–0 when White either loses a pawn or experiences problems with his light-squared bishop.

14...0–0 15.cxd4 c4 16.a2
16.\texttt{a4} runs into the witty reply 16...\texttt{d7},
17.\texttt{xaxa8} \texttt{xaxa8} 18.\texttt{a3} \texttt{xa3} 19.\texttt{xa3} \texttt{a5} 20.\texttt{d6} \texttt{e8}+ and Black is going to win the
bishop.

Black will soon recoup the a6-pawn with ...	exttt{xa8xa6}, or perhaps even ...	exttt{c8} and ...	exttt{xa6}.
Meanwhile he keeps an obvious positional
advantage due to White's stranded light-
squared bishop, Spielmann – Tarrasch, San
Sebastian 1912.

D) 8.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 9.dxe5

Compared with the main 8.dxe5 line, the
disappearance of the knights on f3 and c6
should simplify Black's defensive task, although
as we will see, a certain degree of accuracy will
be required.

9...\texttt{c6}

Securing the centre and immediately
highlighting one of the ways in which Black
has benefited from the early knight exchange.
We will analyse the two main branches: D1)
10.\texttt{c3} and D2) 10.\texttt{e3}.

A tame alternative is:
10.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xd2} 11.\texttt{xd2} \texttt{e7} 12.\texttt{h5}
12.a4 \texttt{f5} 13.c3 0–0 14.\texttt{c2} \texttt{d7} 15.\texttt{b1}
\texttt{xc2} 16.\texttt{xc2} occurred in Sugden – Collins,
Hastings 2007, and here my suggestion
would be 16...\texttt{f6N} (or 16...\texttt{e8N}) 17.\texttt{exf6}
\texttt{xf6} with easy equality.

D1) 10.c3

This creates a threat of ...	exttt{g4}, so White has
no time to prevent the bishop from coming
to f5.
14.\texttt{g5} \texttt{f5}
14...\texttt{g4}!N might be even more accurate:
15.\texttt{h4} \texttt{f5} 16.\texttt{xe7} \texttt{xe7} 17.\texttt{f4} \texttt{e6}
18.\texttt{b4} \texttt{e7}=
15.\texttt{e1} \texttt{g6} 16.\texttt{h4} \texttt{g5} 17.\texttt{g5} 0–0 18.\texttt{ad1} \texttt{e8}

Black does not experience a single problem,
White secures an escape square for the bishop.

10...\textit{c}5 11.\textit{d}2

Another idea is:

11.\textit{e}2

This way White prepares to exchange the dark-squared bishops while keeping the knights on the board.

11...0-0 12.\textit{x}e3

12.\textit{h}1? is bad in view of 12...\textit{h}4! 13.\textit{e}3 \textit{g}4! 14.\textit{e}1 \textit{xe}3 15.\textit{x}e3 \textit{ae}8 16.\textit{g}1! \textit{e}6! and Black was clearly better in Cherbak - Bakhmatov, Kiev 1960.

12.\textit{e}8

A draw was agreed here in Smirin - Ivanchuk, Moscow 1988, although I would rate Black's chances as slightly higher. Play could have continued as follows:

13.\textit{x}c5 \textit{xc}5 14.\textit{c}2

14...d4! 15.\textit{d}1 d3! 16.\textit{x}d3 \textit{g}5! 17.\textit{e}2 \textit{g}4 (17...\textit{f}5??) 18.f3 \textit{xe}5 19.\textit{f}1 \textit{e}3† 20.\textit{f}2 \textit{xf}2† 21.\textit{xf}2 \textit{f}5 22.\textit{x}f5 \textit{xf}5 23.\textit{d}a3=

A draw is the most likely outcome.

11...\textit{xd}2 12.\textit{xd}2 \textit{f}5

12...\textit{h}4!? also equalizes, as illustrated by the following old game: 13.\textit{h}1 0-0 14.f4 \textit{g}4! 15.\textit{e}1 \textit{xe}1 16.\textit{xe}1 \textit{f}5! 17.\textit{e}3 \textit{xe}3 18.\textit{xe}3 \textit{ad}8 19.\textit{d}1 \textit{d}7 20.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}5 21.\textit{d}2 \textit{fd}8 Black was fine in Bird – Steinitz, Vienna 1873.

13.\textit{e}1

White prepares to exchange bishops. Another way to do it is:

13.\textit{f}3 \textit{d}7 14.\textit{e}3 \textit{xe}3 15.\textit{xe}3 0-0

16.\textit{fe}1 (16.a4 is premature as after 16...\textit{ab}8!)
17.axb5AXB5 the b2-pawn is in danger.) 16...AXB8? (The simple 16...AXB8N is also good.) 17.f3 XB8 18.Cc5 A6 19.Ce3 Axe7 (19...h5?!N) Black was fine in Petrosian – Teschner, Oberhausen 1961.

13...0-0 14.Ce3
I also briefly considered 14.Ac2N Axc2 15.Axc2 Ae8= and Black is fine.

14...Axe3
Probably the best solution, although Karpov once played 14...Ae7?! keeping the dark-squared bishops on the board. The game continued 15.a4 (15.Ac2?! B7 16.Bb1! Axc2 17.Axc2 looks like a better try, although here too Black should have few problems equalizing.) 15...B7 16.Bd2 In this roughly equal position a draw was agreed in Hort – Karpov, Bugojno 1980.

15.Bxe3 Ae8
15...B7 has been played, but I prefer the text move slightly as the queen may prefer another square.

16.Bd4N
The slightly odd 16.Bh5 was played in Randa – Sheers, e-mail 1996. The most logical reply is 16...B7N 17.Bae1 Aed8 when Black is well mobilized and can start thinking about advancing his queenside pawns, while it is hard to see what the queen is doing on h5.

16...B7 17.Bae1 Aed8 18.Bc5 Ae6
With equal chances.

D2) 10.Ce3

I believe that covering the a7-g1 diagonal and anticipating ...Ac5 is White’s only real chance to fight for the initiative.

10...Bf5?!
This move is rare, but I believe it to be a convincing equalizer. I will present some brief analysis of the alternatives to show that White’s set-up is not as harmless as it may appear.

10...Ac5 11.Bd2! Bxd2 (11...Axe3 12.Bxe4!±)
12.\textit{xc5!N} (Only 12.\textit{xd2} has been played, but it is not especially dangerous.) 12...\textit{xf1} 13.\textit{xf1} In my opinion Black is under long-term pressure, as the dark-squared bishop is stronger than either of the black rooks.

10...\textit{e7}
This has been the most popular choice. It is certainly playable, but Black must demonstrate some precision.

11.\textit{c3!}
11.\textit{d2} \textit{c5} 12.\textit{c3} enabled Black to grab a pawn with 12...\textit{d3!} in Boey – Mikhailvski, Antwerp 1998.

11...0–0
This ‘automatic’ move is inaccurate! The right way is 11...\textit{f5!}, transposing to the 11.\textit{c3} line given in the notes to the main line below.

12.\textit{f3!}
12.\textit{d2} \textit{xd2} 13.\textit{xd2} \textit{f5} is equal, and transposes to our main line below.
12...\textit{c5} 13.\textit{c2} \textit{f5} 14.\textit{exf6} \textit{xf6}

15.\textit{d2!N}
The less accurate 15.\textit{d4?!} was seen in Barle – Tukmakov, Krk 1976. The best response would have been 15...\textit{h6!N} 16.\textit{f4} (or 16.\textit{e3} \textit{e6!} 17.\textit{d4} \textit{d6} 18.\textit{g3} \textit{h6} with a comfortable position for Black) 16...\textit{d6!} 17.\textit{e1!} \textit{f8!} 18.\textit{d2} \textit{f5} and Black is fine.
15...\textit{c7} 16.\textit{d4} \textit{h6} 17.\textit{f4} \textit{e6} 18.\textit{e5} \textit{c5}†
19.\textit{h1} \textit{d6} 20.\textit{f3} \textit{xe5} 21.\textit{fxe5}
White is slightly better.

11.\textit{d2}
11.\textit{a4} was played in Nikitinyh – Pukhansky, Leningrad 1980. The simplest reply looks to be 11...\textit{e7} when Black has no problems.

Another game continued: 11.\textit{c3} \textit{e7} 12.\textit{c2} \textit{d7} 13.\textit{f3} \textit{c5} 14.\textit{d2} Kholmov – Unzicker, Kislovodsk 1972. Now the most precise is:
14...e3!N 15.f2 (15.e1 Wf5! is also good for Black.) 15...0-0 16.b3 xc2 17.xc2 da4! Black prepares ...c5 and maintains an equal position.

11.xd2 12.xd2 e7 13.c3N

Technically this is a novelty, but the move is thematic and we quickly transpose to a known position.
13.c3 c8 14.c5 xc5 15.xc5 e7 16.e3 0-0 was comfortable for Black in Rosenhek – Mesko, corr. 2010.

13...0-0

This position has occurred in a dozen games, most of which featured the 10...e7 move order. (See the relevant note above, where 12.d2 was played instead of the more challenging 12.f3!)

14.f1 14.c2 d7=

14...d7 15.ad1 ae8!

Preparing ...f6.

16.c2N

White may as well admit he has no advantage and settle for simplifying the position.
16.d4 f6 17.f4 fxe5 18.xe5 f6 19.xf6 xf6 20.a4 was agreed drawn in S. Larsen – Lannaioli, e-mail 1998, and after 20...f6 21.xe6 xe6 Black is certainly not worse.

16...xc2 17.xc2 f6 18.exf6 xf6=

Following by ...d6.

**Conclusion**

Black has no worries in any of the variations examined here. Nevertheless he should not neglect them, as they all present certain challenges and could be quite troublesome to tackle when unprepared, especially variations C and D.
Main Lines

Sidelines

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d5 3.b5 a6 4.a4 f6 5.0-0 dxe4 6.d4 b5 7.b3 d5 8.dxe5

8...d6

A) 9.e1
B) 9.c3
C) 9.a4 b4
   C1) 10.c3
   C2) 10.a5 c5!
      C21) 11.e3
      C22) 11.g5

C21) after 19.gxf3

C22) note to 13.h4

C22) after 18.hc1

19...d8!N

14...g5!N

18...ab8!N
1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 d5 5.0-0 dxe4 6.d4 b5 7.b3 d5 8.dxe5 d6

We have arrived at the main tabiya of the Open Spanish. Here is a brief list of White's major options and where they can be found in the book.

9.\texttt{e1!} can be found in the next chapter, beginning on page 193.

9.\texttt{e3} is the subject of Chapters 12 and 13, on pages 209 and 216 respectively.

9.\texttt{e2} can be found in Chapters 14 and 15 on pages 235 and 246.

9.\texttt{c3} is considered in Chapters 16 and 17, pages 270 and 295.

9.\texttt{bd2} is the most critical theoretical path. This move is the subject of Chapters 18 and 19 – see pages 317 and 339.

The present chapter is devoted to White's minor options, namely A) 9.\texttt{e1}, B) 9.\texttt{c3}, and C) 9.\texttt{a4}.

9.\texttt{f4!}?

This rare move is too provocative.
9...g5! 10.\texttt{e3}

After 10.\texttt{g3?! h5} Black is already clearly better as there is no convenient way to meet the threat of ...h4, Nathan – Collett, Bath 1963.

10...\texttt{g4}

Black drives the knight away from the defence of the central pawn.
11.\texttt{fd2 dc5} 12.\texttt{f4}
12.c3 \texttt{d3!} wins the e-pawn.

12...\texttt{d4!} 13.\texttt{f2}

Now in Tolnai – Duemmke, Velden 1994, Black should have restrained his opponent's counterplay by means of:
13...\texttt{f5N}

With full control over the position.

A) 9.\texttt{e1}

This weird-looking move has only ever been tried in a couple of games. White was successful both times, but Black's play can easily be improved.

9...\texttt{e7}

Compared with the 9.\texttt{e2} line of the next chapter, White does not have the \texttt{d1} idea available here.

10.\texttt{c3N}

This seems to me to be the only logical follow-up of White's previous move.
10.\text{\textipa{q}}bd2N doesn't make sense, as after 10...\text{\textipa{q}}c5 the queen is misplaced on e1.

The strange 10.\text{\textipa{q}}f4?! was played in Moranda – Yahya, Belfort 2005. Here Black should borrow an idea from the 9.\text{\textipa{q}}f4?! line analysed above and play 10...g5! 11.\text{\textipa{q}}e3 g4 12.\text{\textipa{q}}fd2 \text{\textipa{q}}c5 with better chances.

10.\text{\textipa{c}}3

This was White's choice in Wohl – D. Ledger, Birmingham 2002. Here I recommend the improvement:

10...\text{\textipa{q}}c5!N 11.\text{\textipa{q}}c2 d4

The same idea is often seen in the 9.\text{\textipa{q}}bd2 line. Here White has substituted the knight development with the strange queen move to e1, which is hardly likely to improve his chances.

12.cxd4

In the analogous position with the knight already on d2 White can meet the ...d4 move with \text{\textipa{q}}b3 or \text{\textipa{q}}e4, but here no such options exist.

12...\text{\textipa{q}}xd4

13.\text{\textipa{q}}xd4

The attempt to utilize of the queen's presence on e1 with 13.\text{\textipa{q}}e4?! does not make much sense, as after 13...\text{\textipa{q}}xe4 14.\text{\textipa{q}}xe4 \text{\textipa{q}}xf3\dagger 15.\text{\textipa{q}}xf3 0–0\dagger Black's bishop pair gives him the advantage.

13...\text{\textipa{q}}xd4

Black has a comfortable position and is already threatening to win an exchange with ...\text{\textipa{q}}c4.

10...\text{\textipa{q}}c5!

Exchanging on c3 would be too compliant.

11.\text{\textipa{e}}2?!?

Preparing to bring the knight to d4 or f4. It is hard to suggest a better idea.

11...0–0 12.\text{\textipa{f}}4

12.\text{\textipa{d}}d4 is harmless. 12...\text{\textipa{q}}xd4 13.\text{\textipa{q}}xd4 \text{\textipa{q}}d7 14.c3 \text{\textipa{q}}xb3 15.axb3 c5 Usually when Black manages to advance his c-pawn to c5 in the Open Spanish he is doing fine, and the present position is no exception.
12...\(\text{dx}b3\) 13.\(\text{dx}e6\)
13...\(\text{ax}b3\)? \(\text{f}5\) is better for Black.

13...\(\text{fx}e6\) 14.\(\text{ax}b3\) \(\text{we}8\)!
Black transfers the queen to \text{h}5 and obtains a comfortable position.

B) 9.\(\text{ac}3\)

This old move was first introduced by the maestro Mieses in his match against Minckwitz in 1871. White’s idea is to exchange the strong knight on \text{e}4, without regard for the soon-to-be doubled \text{c}-pawns or the potential problems liberating the \text{b}3-bishop. The latter will practically be dead if Black manages to advance his \text{c}-pawn to \text{c}6 or \text{c}4.

9...\(\text{dx}c3\) 10.\(\text{bc}3\) \(\text{ae}7\)
This position can also arises via the move order 8.\(\text{cc}3\) \(\text{dx}c3\) 9.\(\text{bc}3\) \(\text{ae}7\) 10.\(\text{dx}e5\), although given the choice I would prefer 9...\text{e}4! as recommended in the previous chapter. So if White is aiming to reach the current position, he should prefer the move order given in the present chapter.

11.\(\text{dd}4\)
This line was advocated by the Brazilian IM Van Riemsdijk. It makes sense as White is trying to improve his \text{p}awn structure and free the light-squared bishop.

11.a4 is an interesting alternative which has the aim of creating objects of attack in the centre and on the queenside. 11...0–0 12.\(\text{ax}b5\) \(\text{ax}b5\) 13.\(\text{ex}a8\) \(\text{xa}8\) 14.\(\text{dd}3\) (14.\(\text{xd}5\)? \(\text{d}8\) 15.\(\text{xc}6\)?? \(\text{xc}6\) is clearly in Black’s favour.)

This position occurred a long time ago in Gelbfuhs – Steinitz, Vienna 1873. Now it would be best to continue with 14...\(\text{wa}5\)N 15.\(\text{dd}1\) (15.\(\text{xd}5\)? \(\text{d}8\)-+) 15...\text{h}6 with a roughly equal position.

11...\(\text{dx}d4\)
11...\(\text{wd}7\)? is a reasonable attempt to avoid improving White’s structure. Now White has to sacrifice a pawn to maintain the balance: 12.\(\text{dx}e6\)!N (12.\text{f}4 \(\text{xd}4\) 13.\text{cx}d4 occurred
in Roselli Mailhe – Korneev, Sao Paulo 2002, and now 13...\textit{g4}!? 14.\textit{Wxe5} 0–0 gives Black a slight edge.) 12...\textit{fxe6} 13.\textit{Wxe5+} \textit{g6} 14.\textit{Wxe6} \textit{f5} 15.\textit{Wxe5} \textit{f7} 16.\textit{a4} \textit{f8} 17.\textit{Wf6} \textit{e7} 18.\textit{Wxe5} Noneither side can avoid themove repetition.

12.\textit{cx}d4 0–0 13.\textit{d}d2

13.f4 \textit{f5} 14.c3 \textit{c5} 15.\textit{e}c3 \textit{c4} 16.\textit{c}c2 \textit{xc2} (16...\textit{d}d7=) 17.\textit{Wxe5} \textit{f5}= 18.a4?! was played in Van Riemsdijk – Slipak, Buenos Aires 1990, and now after the obvious 18...\textit{b}4 19.\textit{xc}b4 \textit{xb}4 Black has the advantage as his passed pawn is the more dangerous of the two.

13...\textit{c}5 14.\textit{dx}c5 \textit{xc}5

Black had the slightly better prospects in Van Riemsdijk – Milos, Bogota 1992.

\textbf{C) 9.a4}

This move was introduced way back in Baden-Baden 1870! The a2-a4 thrust is thematic for all Ruy Lopez lines where ...\textit{b}5 has been played, but here it fails to cause Black problems.

9...\textit{b}4

This is my main recommendation, but I will also mention a second satisfactory line:

9...\textit{c}5!? 10.\textit{axb}5
14...\textit{Wd}8\textit{N} 15.\textit{Qf}4 \textit{Wxd}1 16.\textit{Exd}1 \textit{\textit{Bxb}3}
Black has no problems.

From this position we will analyse \textbf{C1) 10.c3} and \textbf{C2) 10.a5}, after briefly checking a couple of alternatives.

10.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}7 11.\textit{b}d2

11...\textit{Bxd}2! Simple and strong, 12.\textit{Wxd}2 \textit{a}5
As played in the first game to feature 9.a4, Stern \textendash{} Minckwitz, Baden-Baden 1870. Black intends to play \textit{...c5} obtaining a good position.

10.\textit{b}d2 can be compared with the main line that we will meet in Chapter 18, but it makes less sense after the mutual pawns moves on the queenside. Here is one example: 10...\textit{c}5 11.\textit{Ce}1 \textit{e}7 12.\textit{f}f1 0–0 13.\textit{e}3 \textit{\textit{Bxb}3} 14.\textit{cxb}3

\textbf{C1) 10.c3}

14...\textit{a}5! 15.\textit{d}d4 \textit{c}5 16.\textit{exe}6 \textit{fxe}6\textit{f} With a comfortable position for Black in Brieussel-Baron, Cergy Pontoise 2004. It is usually the case that when Black manages to move the knight away from \textit{c6} and play \textit{...c5}, he obtains a good position.

\textbf{C1) 10.c3}

This attempt to play a main line with the inclusion of the moves a2-a4 and \textit{...b4} makes more sense than the two alternatives mentioned above. Here I would like to offer a new but highly logical idea:

10...\textit{Bb}8\textit{N}

Black forgets about any parallels with the main lines of the popular 9.c3 variation, and instead focuses on a specific feature of the present position, namely the unstable bishop
on b3. The game could go in many possible directions from here, but I will focus on the line that looks most logical to me.

\[11.\text{d}4 \text{d}7! 12.\text{x}e6 \text{fxe6 13.}\text{c}2 \text{c}5\]

I will leave it for the reader to analyse the risky-looking but playable 13...\text{xe5}! if he wishes.

\[14.\text{xe4 dxe4 15.}\text{d}2\]

15.\text{xd}7\text{xd}7 16.\text{d}1\text{c}8 favours Black.

\[15...\text{e}3 16.\text{fxe3 bxc3 17.bxc3 }\text{xe3} \text{18.h}1\]

\[21...\text{f}7 22.\text{d}1\]

22...\text{g}6!

The immediate 22...0–0?? loses to 23.\text{e}3!.

23.\text{g}4 0–0

Black is fine. White has just about enough activity to make up for the missing pawn, but he cannot hope for more than equality.

\[C2) 10.a5\]

\[21.\text{h}5+\]

18.\text{xd}2! 19.\text{xd}2 \text{b}b2 20.\text{f}2 \text{xe}5

21.\text{e}2 \text{f}8\text{+}!
Covering the a4-square and preparing to eliminate the bishop where it stands. From here we will analyse two bishop moves, C21) 11...\textit{c}3 and C22) 11...\textit{g}5, after first dealing with some minor alternatives.

11...\textit{g}5?! 12...\textit{xb}3 12...\textit{xb}3?! (12...\textit{xe}6 \textit{fxe}6 13...\textit{xb}3 \textit{wd}7 14...\textit{e}1 \textit{c}5 is also more pleasant for Black.)

This position was reached in Vilches del Castillo – Morales de la Rosa, Linares 1991, and now Black could have saved the light-squared bishop and obtained a clear advantage with 12...\textit{f}5!N+.

If White saves the light-squared bishop from exchange with 11...\textit{a}2, as in Lenier – Divyasri, New Delhi 2007, Black can play 11...\textit{d}4?!N obtaining the d5-square for his queen. For example:

12...\textit{bd}2 \textit{xa}2 13...\textit{xa}2 \textit{e}7 14...\textit{b}3 \textit{d}5 15...\textit{c}4 0–0 with a comfortable position for Black.

11...\textit{c}3 was once played in an exhibition game by the second World Champion. 11...\textit{xb}3 12...\textit{xb}3 Lasker – Meyer, Prague (simul) 1900. Now I propose the logical improvement:

12...\textit{d}7!N 13...\textit{d}4 \textit{b}8! 14...\textit{d}1 \textit{xd}4 15...\textit{cxd}4 \textit{c}5±

Finally there is 11...\textit{bd}2 \textit{e}7 12...\textit{c}3 0–0 13...\textit{c}2 as played in Sulek – Federic, Bratislava 2008. Here Black missed a good opportunity to claim the advantage:

13...\textit{d}4!N 14...\textit{cxd}4 \textit{xd}4 15...\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 Black has obtained a considerably improved version of a position type which is usually associated with the 9...\textit{bd}2 main line. (Compare variation C4 of Chapter 18, page 326.)
Chapter 10 – Sidelines

11...\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c3}}} 12.\textit{cxb3} \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{d7}}}

It is not uncommon in the Open Spanish for Black to mobilize his queen in this way before developing the kingside pieces.

13.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{e1}}}

13.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c2}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{f5}}}, 14.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{e1}}} is not an improvement for White: 14...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{b8}}}! 15.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{h4}}} \textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e6}}} 16.\textit{f4} \textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{e7}}} 17.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{e1}}} \textit{d4} with a clear advantage for Black in Movsesian – Motwani, Hastings 1996.

14.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{bd2}}}

It is too early for White to try and occupy the c5-square: 14.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{c5}}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{xc5}}} 15.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{xc5}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{b5}}} 16.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{c1}}} 0–0 17.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{bd2}}} \textit{d4} Black was dominating in Lind – Ebenfelt, Linkoping 1984.

Another game continued: 14.\textit{d1} \textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{e7}}} 15.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{bd2}}} 0–0 16.\textit{h3}

This position was reached in Povah – Watson, Torquay 1982, and now after 16...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{b5}}}! Black is in full control.

13...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{b8}}}!

It is useful to have the ...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{b5}}} move available. In this unusual pawn structure both sides have weaknesses, but it seems that Black is better equipped for the battle that lies ahead.

14...\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{b5}}} 15.\textit{d1} \textit{\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{e7}}} 16.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{e4}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{g4}}}! 17.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{c5}}} \textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{xc5}}} 18.\textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{xc5}}} \textcolor{blue}{\textbf{\textit{xf3}}} 19.\textcolor{red}{\textbf{\textit{gxh3}}}

We have been following the game Wemmers – Van Wessel, Netherlands 2000. At this point my preference would be for the natural manoeuvre:
19...\texttt{\texttt{d}d8!N}

The knight is coming to e6, where it will drive the white bishop away and thus facilitate castling, allowing Black to enjoy his positional advantages.

By the way, the game continuation of 19...h5!? is the computer's top choice and should also be good for Black, although the plan of developing the rook on h6 is a bit unorthodox.

C22) 11.\texttt{\texttt{g}g5}

11...\texttt{\texttt{d}d7} 12.\texttt{\texttt{bd}2} \texttt{h6}

Before deciding how to continue his development, Black forces the enemy bishop to make a decision.

13.\texttt{\texttt{h}h4}

The two other candidates have also been tested.

13.\texttt{\texttt{e}e3} \texttt{d4} 14.\texttt{\texttt{f}f4} occurred in Reissmann-Ofstad, Munich 1958. Now Black could have played:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{chessboard1.png}
\end{center}

14...\texttt{g5!N} 15.\texttt{\texttt{g}g3} 0–0–0 Black prepares ...d3 and obtains the better chances, for instance: 16.\texttt{\texttt{xe}xe6 fxe6} 17.\texttt{\texttt{e}e1} d3!?

13.\texttt{\texttt{f}f4}

With this move White sets a little trap.

13...\texttt{\texttt{e}e7!N}

In a couple of games Black has tried to transpose to the note to move 13 in the main line below with 13...g5!? The trick is seen after 14.\texttt{\texttt{e}e3} when 14...d4 fails to win a piece, although it is still perfectly playable: 15.\texttt{\texttt{xe}xe6 fxe6} This is the real mistake. (Black should prefer 15...\texttt{\texttt{xe}xe6N} 16.\texttt{\texttt{e}e4! \texttt{gg7} 17.\texttt{\texttt{d}d2 \texttt{d}d5 when he is fine.)}
16.\( \text{cxd4} \) Black fell into this trap in both of the games to have featured White's 13th move. 16...\( \text{cxd4} \) 17.\( \text{Wh5}+ \) \( \text{d8} \) (17...\( \text{f7\#} \) is the lesser evil.) 18.\( \text{Rad1} \) \( \text{c8} \) 19.\( \text{c4\#} \) White regains the sacrificed piece to reach a winning position, Zaitsev - Honfi, Moscow 1971. Despite the improvement noted for Black at move 15 in the above line, I like the novelty on move 13 even more. A plausible continuation is:

14.\( \text{a2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 15.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{h5\#} \)

Followed by short castling, with the more comfortable position for Black.

15...0-0 16.\( \text{a4} \)

Another game continued: 16.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{g4} \) 17.\( \text{h3} \) \( \text{h5} \) 18.\( \text{e1} \) bxc3 19.bxc3 Kindermann - Tukmakov, Biel 1988. Now I would like to offer:

19...\( \text{ab8?\#} \) What could be more natural than placing a rook on an open file? 20.\( \text{xd4} \) (20.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{b2} \) 21.\( \text{b1} \) \( \text{e8} \) 22.\( \text{g4} \) \( \text{g6\#} \) 20...\( \text{xd4} \) 21.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{e6} \) 22.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{b2} \) 23.\( \text{fc1} \) \( \text{g5\#} \) Black creates a threat of ...\( \text{f4} \) and obtains better chances.
16...\(\text{Q}a4\) 17.\(\text{Q}a4\) \(\text{d}7\) 18.\(\text{Q}f1\)

Now I would like to improve upon my own play in the game Lima – Mikhailovski, Sao Paulo 2002.

\[\begin{array}{c}
18...\text{ab}8!N 19.\text{c}2 \text{bxc}3 20.\text{bxc}3 \text{c}5 \\
21.\text{b}3 \text{c}4 22.\text{b}d2 \\
22.\text{fd}2 \text{b}5 23.\text{d}4 \text{reaches the same position.}
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{c}
22...\text{b}5 23.\text{d}4 \text{b}2 24.\text{xb}2 \text{xb}2 \\
25.\text{f}3 \text{b}8 \\
\text{Black has a healthy position thanks to his control over the b-file.}
\end{array}\]
Main Lines

9.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\)!

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{\textit{d3}}\) \(\text{\textit{c6}}\) 3.\(\text{\textit{b5}}\) a6 4.\(\text{\textit{a4}}\) \(\text{\textit{f6}}\) 5.0-0 \(\text{\textit{xe4}}\)
6.d4 b5 7.\(\text{\textit{b3}}\) d5 8.dxe5 \(\text{\textit{e6}}\) 9.\(\text{\textit{e1}}\)!

A) 11.h3
B) 11.\(\text{\textit{e3}}\)
C) 11.\(\text{\textit{bd2}}\) \(\text{\textit{c5}}\)
   C1) 12.\(\text{\textit{d4}}\)
   C2) 12.\(\text{\textit{c2}}\)
D) 11.\(\text{\textit{d4}}\)! \(\text{\textit{h4}}\)!N
   D1) 12.\(\text{\textit{xe4}}\) dxe4
   D2) 12.\(\text{\textit{e2}}\)
   D3) 12.\(\text{\textit{xc6}}\)
   D4) 12.g3!?

note to 11th move options

D) after 11.\(\text{\textit{d4}}\)!

D4) after 13.\(\text{\textit{d2}}\)!

images of chess boards with various moves and annotations.
1.e4 e5 2.\( \text{d}f3 \text{c}5 3.\text{d}b5 a6 4.\text{d}a4 \text{d}f6 5.0-0 \text{d}xe4 6.d4 b5 7.\text{d}b3 d5 8.dxe5 \text{d}e6 9.\text{e}e1? \\

This used to be a pet line of GM Kupreichik and was subsequently tested by Nigel Short in a couple of games. Although it is comparatively rare, it presents some interesting problems and you will see later that I had to find some radical new ideas for Black in the critical main line.

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

In Chapter 16 we will see Black answering the more common 9.\( \text{c}3 \) with the active 9...\( \text{c}5 \), so you might say White is trying to get an improved version of that line – although the downside is of course that he has already invested a tempo putting his rook on e1.

10.\( \text{e}3 \) transposes to the rare 9.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 10.\( \text{e}1 \) as mentioned in Chapter 12 on page 210.

10.\( \text{bd}2 \\

This position may also arise via the main 9.\( \text{bd}2 \) variation, if White answers 9...\( \text{e}7 \) with 10.\( \text{e}1 \) instead of the more popular 10.\( \text{c}3 \). However, there is no transposition to our repertoire here, as in Chapters 18 and 19 we will be meeting 9.\( \text{bd}2 \) with 9...\( \text{c}5 \).

10...\( \text{c}5 \) 11.\( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 12.\( \text{e}3 \)

12.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}4 \) 13.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d}3= \) repeated the position in Garbisu de Goni – Sorin, Benasque 1992.

12...\( \text{xc}1 \) 13.\( \text{xc}1 \) 0-0 14.\( \text{d}d4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 15.\( \text{cxd}4 \\

We have transposed to a position normally reached via the move order 10.\( \text{c}3 \) 0-0 11.\( \text{bd}2 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 12.\( \text{d}d4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 13.\( \text{cxd}4 \) \( \text{d}3 \) 14.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{xc}1 \)! 15.\( \text{xc}1 \) – see variation C1 below.

10...0-0 \\

From this position White's main ideas are A) 11.\( \text{h}3 \), B) 11.\( \text{e}3 \), C) 11.\( \text{bd}2 \) and D) 11.\( \text{d}4 \).

11.\( \text{c}2 \)!

Judd – Pollock, New York 1889. Here Black already has a chance to fight for the initiative with:\n
11...\( \text{c}5 \)N 12.\( \text{e}3 \)

Or 12.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 13.\( \text{exf}6 \) \( \text{xf}6 \) 14.\( \text{e}3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 15.\( \text{x}e3 \) \( \text{e}5 \) and White is under pressure.

12...\( \text{xe}3 \) 13.\( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{g}4 \)

Suddenly White starts to experience problems with the e5-pawn.
14.\( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{cxe5} \) 15.\( \text{xe4} \)

After 15.\( \text{xe4} \) dxe4 16.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{e8} \) 17.\( \text{e2} \) f6

Black is slightly better.

15.\( \text{x} f3 \)!

This strong intermediate move preserves an edge for Black.

16.gxf3 dxe4 17.\( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 18.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{c4!} \)
19.\( \text{e2} \) f5! 20.\( \text{b7} \) \( \text{f6} \)

Black is better thanks to White's misplaced bishop on b7 and damaged pawn structure.

A) 11.\( \text{h3} \)

An extremely rare waiting move. White creates “luft” for the king and prevents ...\( \text{g4} \), avoiding the problems seen in the above note.

11.\( \text{d7} \)

Black just continues developing.

12.\( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{c5} \) 13.\( \text{c2} \) d4!

We will see a lot more of this thematic break when we get to the 9.\( \text{bd2} \) system in Chapters 18 and 19.

14.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 15.\( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 16.\( \text{h5} \)

16.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{xd1} \) 17.\( \text{h3} \) reaches a position from the 9.\( \text{bd2} \) system where White has played h2-h3 instead of more challenging alternatives. See page 327 for the comparison; in the position after 15...0-0, the move 16.h3 makes no sense at all there.

16.\( \text{e2} \) was seen in Cork - R. Smith, Sunningdale 2007, and now 16...\( \text{ad8} \) N 17.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c4=} \) leads to an equal endgame.

16...g6!\( \text{?N} \)

This simple new move works fine, although 16...\( \text{d3} \) is also enough for equality: 17.\( \text{xd3} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 18.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{ad8=} \) 19.\( \text{f4} \)! (19.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{xg5} \) 20.\( \text{xg5} \) h6 21.\( \text{xe6} \) fxe6 would have maintained the balance.) Bologan – Fressinet, Bastia 2005. Now Black could have caused some problems by means of: 19...\( \text{c2} \)! N 20.\( \text{e2} \) \( \text{a4} \)! 21.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{xg5} \) 22.\( \text{xg5} \) h6 23.\( \text{xe6} \) fxe6 Black has a slight plus, as his active pieces are more significant than the slight damage to his pawn structure.

17.\( \text{e2} \)
17.\( \text{Wh} \text{h6?} \) is well met by 17...\( \text{\textit{d5!}} \) 18.\( \text{\textit{b3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xb3}} \) 19.\( \text{axb3} \) \( \text{\textit{exe8!}} \) and White has to look for equality.

17.\( \text{\textit{f3}} \) can be answered by 17...\( \text{\textit{xf2!}} \) (or 17...\( \text{\textit{xb2?!}} \) ) 18.\( \text{\textit{xf2}} \) \( \text{gxh5} \) with a roughly equal position.

17...\( \text{\textit{e8}} \) IS.\( \text{\textit{c3}} \) \( \text{\textit{mc4}} \) Black obtains a comfortable endgame position. Once again a comparison can be made with variation C4 in Chapter 18.

B) 11.\( \text{\textit{e3}} \)

11...\( \text{\textit{d5!}} \)

This practically forces an exchange of the strong light-squared bishop, as retreating it to \( \text{c2} \) is dubious.

11...\( \text{\textit{d7}} \) is playable, but in that case White can transpose to the main line of the 9.\( \text{\textit{e3}} \) system with 12.\( \text{\textit{bd2}} \). In Chapter 13 I avoid this in favour of a different approach, so I see no sense in allowing it here.

12.\( \text{\textit{d4}} \)

After 12.\( \text{\textit{bd2}} \) as played in Byfield – E. Brown, Kingston 1997, Black should simply play 12...\( \text{\textit{xb3!N}} \) 13.\( \text{axb3} \) \( \text{c5} \) with the possible continuation:

14.\( \text{\textit{xe4}} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 15.\( \text{\textit{xd8}} \) \( \text{\textit{fxd8}} \) 16.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{\textit{xg5}} \) 17.\( \text{g5} \) \( \text{\textit{d3}} \) Although a draw is the most likely outcome, the symbolic advantage is on Black’s side.

12.\( \text{\textit{c2?!}} \)

This natural move turns out to be a mistake.

12...\( \text{\textit{c4}} \) 13.\( \text{\textit{c1?}} \)

13.\( \text{\textit{c1}} \) is the lesser evil. 13...\( \text{\textit{g4}} \) 14.\( \text{\textit{d4}} \) Suleimanova – Antoshkova, Ufa 1996, and now 14...\( \text{\textit{h4!}} \) is strong, intending to meet 15.g3?! with 15...\( \text{\textit{c5!}} \) 16.\( \text{\textit{b3}} \) \( \text{\textit{xe5}} \).
According to Postny this is already a decisive mistake, and it’s hard to disagree with him. Black is also clearly better after 14.\( \texttt{xe4} \texttt{dxe4} \)
15.\( \texttt{d4} \texttt{xe5} \) 16.\( \texttt{exe4} \texttt{d5} \) 17.\( \texttt{e2} \texttt{c6} \texttt{#.} \)
14.\( \texttt{f1} \) in Znosko Borovsky - Silverman, Birmingham 1937, could have been met by the strong 14...\( \texttt{g4} \texttt{N} \) 15.\( \texttt{h3} \texttt{xf3} \)
16.\( \texttt{xf3} \) (16.\( \texttt{gxf3} \) loses by force to 16...\( \texttt{h4} \texttt{!} \)
17.\( \texttt{f4} \) \( \texttt{g3} \texttt{+} \) 18.\( \texttt{h1} \texttt{xh3} \texttt{+} \) 19.\( \texttt{g1} \texttt{xe5} \texttt{+} \)

14...\( \texttt{xf2} \) 15.\( \texttt{xf2} \texttt{h4} \texttt{+} \) 16.\( \texttt{g1} \texttt{g4} \)
17.\( \texttt{xe2} \texttt{xe2} \) 18.\( \texttt{exe2} \texttt{xd4} \texttt{+} \) 19.\( \texttt{x} \texttt{cxd4} \texttt{xd4} \texttt{+} \)
20.\( \texttt{f2} \texttt{xf2} \texttt{+} \) 21.\( \texttt{xf2} \texttt{xe5} \texttt{+} \)

Black duly converted his advantage in Efimenko - Kaidanov, Moscow 2003.

13...\( \texttt{c5} \texttt{+} \) 14.\( \texttt{d4} \texttt{?} \)

12...\( \texttt{c5} \texttt{?} \) has been played a few times and is also quite playable, but I find this untested move quite appealing.

13.\( \texttt{x} \texttt{c4} \texttt{N} \)

White has a couple of other sensible replies.

13.\( \texttt{c1} \texttt{d7} \) (The provocative 13...\( \texttt{h4} \texttt{?} \)
14.\( \texttt{g3} \texttt{g5} \texttt{N} \) 15.\( \texttt{f4} \texttt{e7} \) is also interesting.) 14.\( \texttt{f3} \texttt{g5} \) 15.\( \texttt{c2} \texttt{g6} \texttt{!} \) Black restricts both the light-squared bishop and the knight on d4. 16.\( \texttt{d2} \texttt{c5} \) 17.\( \texttt{xc4} \texttt{bxc4} \) 18.\( \texttt{e2} \texttt{c6} \) with a roughly equal position.

13.\( \texttt{c6} \texttt{d7} \) 14.\( \texttt{xc7} \texttt{+} \) 15.\( \texttt{xc7} \texttt{w} \) 15.\( \texttt{c1} \texttt{?} \)
(15.\( \texttt{xc4} \texttt{bxc4} \) transposes to 14.\( \texttt{c6} \texttt{+} \) in the notes to the main line below.) 15...\( \texttt{f5} \texttt{+} \) with better chances for Black thanks to his better development. It should be noted that the d5-pawn is untouchable.
16.\wxd5 \a8 17.\wb7 (or 17.\c6 \a5! 18.\xa6 \a8 19.\xb5 \xf8 → and Black wins a piece) 17...\c5 18.\f3 \xb3 19.\xb3 \xe5 20.\e2

18...\ab8! 19.\db2 a5!

Black has a promising position, despite the seemingly bad bishop on e6. He has useful pressure on the queenside, and another key point is that the white knight will not manage to settle on the d4-square, as ...c5 will come at some point.

C) 11.\bd2 \c5

Now we immediately face another division between C1) 12.\d4 and C2) 12.\c2.

C1) 12.\d4

16...\f5! 17.f3 f4! 18.\c1 \h4! Black has a serious initiative, for instance 19.fxe4? f3! 20.gxf3 \xf3 21.\xa3 \xe1† 22.\xf1 \xe4 and White has no good defence.

14.\c5 15.\c6 \d7 16.\xe7† \xe7 17.\xc5 \xc5 18.\f3

This move has scored quite well for White, but Black can obtain a good position with the
help of a recent idea from the talented young Hungarian grandmaster Richard Rapport.

12...\square x d 4 13.c x d 4 \square d 3 14.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}e} 3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}c} 1!!!
15.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}x c 4 a 5 !
Most previous games have continued 15...c 5, but White has good chances for an advantage there. The text move aims to gain additional space on the queenside while keeping the ...c5 break in reserve.

16.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}e c 3
16.a 4N runs into 16...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}b 8 (16...b 4? also looks playable) when the open b-file promises Black good counterplay. A possible continuation is 17.a x b 5 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}x b 5 18.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}e c 3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}b 8! with the idea 19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}x c 7? \textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}g 5! 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}c 2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}x b 2??.

16...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}e 8 17.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}f 3
17.a 4N should be met by 17...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}b 4, and if the rook leaves the c-file Black will play ...b x a 4 followed by ...c 5 with a good position. Therefore I see nothing better for White than 18.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}c 6, and after 18...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}d 7 19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}e c 2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}f 5 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}c 6= we have a repetition of moves.

17...a 4 18.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{C}}}c 2 g 6 19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}d 3 b 4 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}c 6 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}d 7

21.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}x a 4?!
This positional exchange sacrifice looks tempting, but it does not work out quite as

White hopes. Instead he should have settled for one of the following alternatives:

21.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}a 6N c 5 22.d x c 5 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{x}}c} 5 is equal.

21.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}6c 2N b 3 22.a x b 3 a x b 3 23.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}e 2! (23.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{D}}}d 2?! \textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}g 4! is awkward for White; 23.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}c 3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}b 4! 24.a x b 3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}x c 3 25.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}x c 3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}e 7 leaves White with questionable compensation.) 23...c 5 with equality.

21...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}a 8! 22.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}b 3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}x c 6 23.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}x c 6 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}a 5! 24.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{H}}}h 3 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}d 7 25.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{G}}}c 2 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}x a 2 26.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{E}}}x c 7 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{B}}}e 6
White had slightly less than full compensation for the exchange in Almasi – Rapport, Gibraltar 2012.
12...d4!
This move was introduced by Tarrasch almost a hundred years ago, and was later picked up by the fifth World Champion Max Euwe. Since then it has become thematic for many lines of the Open Spanish. Nowadays it most frequently occurs in a similar position without the inclusion of the moves \( \text{e}1 \) and \( ...0-0 \).

13.cxd4
We should also consider two knight moves:

13.\( \text{e}4 \) dxc3 14.bxc3 (14.\( \text{xc}5 \) transposes to 13.\( \text{b}3 \) below) 14...\( \text{xd}1 \) 15.\( \text{xd}1 \)

13...\( \text{xd}4 \) 14.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{xf}4 \)

The text move is untested, but it may be White’s best. It offers a pawn sacrifice which should be declined:

14...\( \text{b}4 \)!
After eliminating White’s light-squared bishop Black obtains a good position.

15.bxc3 \( \text{xc}2 \) 16.\( \text{xc}2 \) \( \text{d}5 \! \) 17.\( \text{f}5 \) \( \text{xf}3 \) 18.gxf3 \( \text{e}8 \) 19.\( \text{d}1 \) \text{c}8 20.\( \text{a}3 \) \( \text{f}8 \! =

13...\( \text{xe}4 \) 14.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \)
White has tried several moves here, none of which are especially threatening to us.

15.\( \text{f}3 \)
I have analysed three alternatives below.

15...\( \text{h}5 \! \)?
This is dubious due to the strong reply:

15...\( \text{d}3 \)!
16.\textit{c}e4?

16.\textit{d}xd3 is the lesser evil. 16...\textit{w}xd3 17.\textit{e}e4

Now in Lipnawski – Babb, Winnipeg 2003, the right continuation would have been

17...\textit{f}d8\textit{N} 18.\textit{g}5 \textit{d}d4! 19.\textit{e}e3 \textit{c}2

20.\textit{e}xe4 \textit{e}xe4 21.\textit{f}f3 \textit{d}d5 with a slight advantage for Black.

16...\textit{g}6 17.\textit{h}h6

17.\textit{d}d1 was seen in Sere – Grafl, Budapest 2004, and here Black missed an obvious opportunity: 17...\textit{e}xe1!N 18.\textit{w}xd4 \textit{c}c2

19.\textit{d}d1 \textit{a}xa1 20.\textit{g}5 \textit{x}g5 21.\textit{x}g5 \textit{a}d8

22.\textit{w}xa1 \textit{d}d4! 23.\textit{f}f3 \textit{d}d5+=

The main move occurred in Solmanis – Keres, Riga 1944. Here Black could have refuted his opponent's play with the following coldblooded defence:

17...\textit{f}6!N 18.\textit{f}f4 \textit{f}d8! 19.\textit{f}xd8\textit{f} (or 19.\textit{e}e1 \textit{f}5!) 19...\textit{x}d8= The position is equal as the a6-pawn is untouchable: 20.\textit{a}xa6?? \textit{f}f5!–

15.\textit{e}e2 \textit{a}a8 16.\textit{c}c3

17.\textit{c}e3

17.b3 \textit{w}xe2 18.\textit{w}xe2 \textit{a}g4 19.\textit{e}e3 De Haas – O'Mahony, Haarlem 1994. 19...\textit{a}d5??\textit{N}

20.\textit{f}f2 \textit{x}xf3 21.gxf3 \textit{e}xe5 22.\textit{f}f4 \textit{g}g5!

23.\textit{e}xe5 \textit{xd}d2 24.\textit{xc}c7 \textit{c}e6 with some advantage for Black.

17...\textit{w}xe2 18.\textit{w}xe2 \textit{c}c4 19.\textit{f}f2 \textit{c}e6
20...b3?
A better idea is 20.a4N d5 when the position remains equal.
20...xb3 21.axb3 b4
Black was slightly better in K. Georgiev – Piket, Biel 1993.

15...Nxd1 16.Nxd1
Suddenly we have arrived at a position that has more commonly been reached via the move order 9.d2 c5 10.c3 e7 11.c2 d4 12.cxd4 cxd4 13.b4xd4 xxd4 14.b3 xd1 e5 15.exe5 0–0, which is considered satisfactory for Black. Here the situation is even better, as White is a full tempo down, having moved his rook from f1 to e1 before capturing on d1. This does not secure Black an advantage, but it definitely gives him a more comfortable version of equality.

16..f6 17.d4
17.e3 was played in Da Silva – Becker Filho, Brasilia 2006, and now after 17...d5?!N 18.d4 g6= Black equalizes without any problems.

Another game continued: 17.g5 xg5 18.xg5 h6 19.f3! (19.xe6N xe6=) Ait Hamidou – Amin, Tripoli 2003, and now Black missed a good opportunity:

19...xd1?! 20.d1 x2 21.xa1 d5 22.b4 d7 23.xa6 xf3 24.xf3 xe5
Black keeps an extra pawn and good winning chances.

17...e8 18.b3 g4!
A useful finesse.

19.f3 e6 20.c6?!
20.\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{xe6}\)N is the lesser evil although 20...\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{xd1}\)\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{xe6}\) is still quite pleasant for Black.

20...\(\text{\textsc{c}}\text{c5}\)\(\text{\textsc{f}}\text{f1}\) \(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{xd1}\)\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{xe6}\)\(\text{\textsc{f}}\text{f5}\)\(\text{\textsc{f}}\text{f4}\)

White was facing a difficult endgame in Garcia Vasquez – Amin, Batumi 2006.

**D) 11.\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{d4}\)!**

This is the more challenging move, which makes good use of the rook on e1. After analysing the main continuations I was not entirely happy with Black's prospects, so I returned to this position and found a radical new approach.

11...\(\text{\textsc{h}}\text{h4}\)\(\text{\textsc{f}}\text{f4}\)N

I discovered and developed this striking novelty with the help of our iron friend.

The piece sacrifice 11...\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{xe5}\)!? 12.f3 \(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{d6}\) \(\text{\textsc{xf4}}\) \(\text{\textsc{g4}}\) has been tested in several games, but I am not completely convinced by Black's compensation.

I also checked: 11...\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{xd4}\) 12.cxd4 \(\text{\textsc{h}}\text{h4}\)\(\text{\textsc{f}}\text{f4}\) (The main line is 12...\(\text{\textsc{b}}\text{b4}\) 13.\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e2}\)! c5 14.f3 cxd4 15.\(\text{\textsc{xf4}}\) \(\text{\textsc{g4}}\) with complications which seem to be in White's favour, Grischuk – Sutovsky, Sochi 2006.)

13.\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e3}\)!N (13.\(\text{\textsc{f}}\text{f1}\) was played in Maroczy – Weenink, Scheveningen 1923, and now 13...\(\text{\textsc{xf2}}\)! would have transposed to variation D2 below.) 13...\(\text{\textsc{f}}\text{f5}\) 14.\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{d2}\) c6 15.\(\text{\textsc{c}}\text{c1}\) with some advantage for White.

In this fresh position I analysed White's four plausible options: D1) 12.\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{xe4}\), D2) 12.\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e2}\), D3) 12.\(\text{\textsc{xc6}}\) and D4) 12.\(\text{\textsc{g}}\text{g3}\)!

**D1) 12.\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{xe4}\) dxe4 13.\(\text{\textsc{xc6}}\)**

13...\(\text{\textsc{xb3}}\)! 14.\(\text{\textsc{xb3}}\) \(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{d7}\) 15.\(\text{\textsc{d}}\text{d4}\) c5

Black has temporarily given up two knights for a rook, but the justification for his play will soon become apparent.

16.\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e2}\)?

The lesser evil for White would be to make an exchange sacrifice with 16.\(\text{\textsc{e}}\text{e3}\), which would give him reasonable chances to equalize.
16...\textit{ad}d8

Now it becomes obvious that White has a hard time defending his first rank.

17.\textit{d}2
17.\textit{d}2 \textit{g}5! 18.\textit{e}1 c4 19.\textit{c}2 \textit{d}1=\textit{f}!

17...\textit{e}3! 18.\textit{f}xe3 \textit{d}3!

White is in serious trouble.

\textbf{D2) 12.\textit{e}2}

12...\textit{x}d4 13.cxd4 \textit{xf}2!

It turns out that Black can ignore the defence.

14.\textit{xf}2 \textit{xf}2† 15.\textit{xf}2 \textit{f}6!

It is vital to open the kingside before White can mobilize his pieces.

16.\textit{g}1

16.exf6?? is impossible as after 16...\textit{xf}6† White either gets mated or loses his queen.

16...\textit{f}xe5 17.dxe5

The position after 17.\textit{e}3 e4 18.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}6 is also about equal. Black will double his rooks along the f-file, and when necessary the c-pawn will go to c6 to support the centre.

17...\textit{c}5 18.\textit{e}3 \textit{e}7! 19.\textit{d}2 \textit{d}4=*

In view of his strong centre, Black is fine in this position with rook and a pawn against two minor pieces.

\textbf{D3) 12.\textit{xc}6}
12...\texttt{xf2} 13.\texttt{f1}

13.\texttt{h1?!} is worse: 13...\texttt{d7!} 14.\texttt{xe4}

(14.\texttt{d4?} is bad in view of 14...\texttt{g4} 15.\texttt{f3}

\texttt{xe4} and the threat of \texttt{g3!!} forces White to sacrifice an exchange: 16.\texttt{xe4} \texttt{dx e4} 17.\texttt{c2}

\texttt{ad8} 18.\texttt{e2} \texttt{fxf3} 19.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{xe5+})

14...\texttt{dxe4} White is forced to go into an inferior ending:

15.\texttt{xd7} \texttt{xd7} 16.\texttt{e7} 17.\texttt{d5 c6}

18.\texttt{e3} \texttt{ae8+}

13...\texttt{h4}

Of course Black should not bother taking the rook yet. Instead he brings the heavy artillery into the attack.

14.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xd2} 15.\texttt{xd2} \texttt{f6!}

This small tactical finesse enables Black to bring another heavy piece into the attack. Now White must find an extraordinary resource if he is to survive.

16.\texttt{e4!!}

16.\texttt{e2?} is no good, as after 16...\texttt{b6} 17.\texttt{g3}

\texttt{h3+} 18.\texttt{e1} \texttt{fxe5+} Black's attack should decide the game.

16...\texttt{xe4} 17.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{fxe5} 18.\texttt{g1} \texttt{f6}

19.\texttt{e3} \texttt{ae8} 20.\texttt{d2} \texttt{exe3} 21.\texttt{xe3}

21...\texttt{d4!}

Even after the queen exchange Black must continue playing energetically, this time targeting the hanging knight on c6.

22.\texttt{g5!} \texttt{xb3} 23.\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 24.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{f7!}

25.cxd4 \texttt{e6}

The endgame should be drawn, although it is White who will have to be more careful.

D4) 12.\texttt{g3}!
This critical reply leads to a tactical melee, which seems to result in equality after best play.

12...\(\text{\textit{0}}\text{x}e5\)!

A surprising and strong piece sacrifice.

I also briefly checked 12...\(\text{\textit{0}}\text{x}d4\) 13.cxd4 \(\text{\textit{0}}\text{e}7\) 14.f3 \(\text{\textit{g}5}\) 15.h4 \(\text{\textit{h}3}\) 16.g2 h5. Even though I don’t see a direct way for White to exploit the misplaced knight on h3 here, Black’s position looks much too risky to recommend.

13.\(\text{\textit{0}}\text{d}2\)!

This developing move is critical. Immediate attempts to win material lead to trouble for White.

13.gxh4?? is hopeless, as after 13...\(\text{\textit{w}}xh4\) 14.\(\text{\textit{f}1}\) \(\text{\textit{h}3}\) Black already has a decisive attack.

13.f3 c5!

With two pieces en prise, Black ignores both threats and goes after one of White’s best-placed pieces.

14.\(\text{\textit{0}}\text{x}e6\)

Taking the other bishop does not help: 14.gxh4 \(\text{\textit{w}}xh4\)! Black does not bother taking the knight on d4, as it is more important to bring his queen into the attack. 15.\(\text{\textit{g}1}\) (15.fx4 cxd4 16.\(\text{\textit{f}1}\) dxe4 17.\(\text{\textit{w}}x4\) \(\text{\textit{g}4}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{h}1}\) \(\text{\textit{h}3}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{d}2}\) \(\text{\textit{g}4}\) 20.\(\text{\textit{g}1}\) e5 is also excellent for Black.) 15...cxd4 16.cxd4 16...\(\text{\textit{w}}x3d4\) 17.\(\text{\textit{w}}x3\) \(\text{\textit{w}}x3\) 18.g2 \(\text{\textit{d}3}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{d}4}\) \(\text{\textit{h}6}\) 20.\(\text{\textit{f}3}\) \(\text{\textit{e}8}\) with a strong attack.

14.fx e6

Black has two pieces under attack but, as Tal once observed, “He can only take them one at a time!”

15.\(\text{\textit{g}5}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{e}2}\)

Or 16.\(\text{\textit{x}5}\) \(\text{\textit{w}}x5\) 17.\(\text{\textit{g}2}\) c4 18.\(\text{\textit{c}2}\) \(\text{\textit{f}3}\) with serious threats.

16.\(\text{\textit{x}c1}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{x}c1}\) c4 18.\(\text{\textit{c}2}\) d4 19.cxd4 \(\text{\textit{w}}x4\) 19.\(\text{\textit{c}2}\) d3 20.\(\text{\textit{h}1}\) \(\text{\textit{d}3}\)

Black keeps a strong initiative for the sacrificed piece.

The text move is more challenging, as White strives to mobilize his queenside pieces while exchanging one or more of Black’s attacking pieces, while preserving the option of winning material afterwards. It is here that Black needs to find a truly extraordinary idea.
13...c8!!
Black 'undevotes' his bishop just to save it from being exchanged.

14.\texttt{2f3}
There are two other candidates:

White can spoil the party with 14.\texttt{exe4 dxe4 15.\texttt{exe4} (after 15.\texttt{gxh4? Wh4} the attack is too strong) 15...\texttt{f6} when the position is equal.

Obviously we must see what happens if White grabs the bishop:
14.\texttt{gxh4 Wh4 15.\texttt{e2 h3} 16.\texttt{f3}}
Here Black must rely on a familiar resource:

16...\texttt{c5! 17.\texttt{xd5}}
Or 17.\texttt{exe4 cxd4 18.\texttt{g3 xf3} 19.\texttt{h1}} g4 with a dangerous attack.
17...\texttt{cxd4 18.\texttt{xe4}}

18.\texttt{exe4 \texttt{ad8}!!}

18...\texttt{d3! 19.\texttt{xa8 Wh5\dagger 20.\texttt{h1 dxe4} 21.\texttt{xe2}} \\texttt{xa8}}
Black has an excellent position as the following move does not win a piece for White:
22.\texttt{c4 Wh5\f5! 23.\texttt{xe5 He8}}
Black regains the knight with an obvious advantage due to his much safer king. Note that the following move only worsens White's plight:
24.\texttt{f4?! f6}
The knight on e5 still drops, and White's king will be even more exposed than it was before.

14...\texttt{g4}!
Black's light-squared bishop has become the star of the show.
15.gxh4
I will take this move as the main line, although we will see that Black easily regains the piece.

Objectively White's best continuation looks to be 15.h3?!, and after 15...gxh3† 16.gxh3
hxg3 17.hxg3 g5 18.hxg5 hxg5 19.xd5
xd5 20.xe4 xe4 21.xe4 xe8 he keeps a minute edge in the double-rook ending, although Black should have no difficulty holding the draw.

15...xf6 16.g5
This is forced, as 16.e3 c5! leaves White without a good defence.

16.xg5 hxg5 hxg5† 18.hxg5 fxg5
19.xf3 xf3
Black has emerged with a temporary extra pawn, but the position quickly becomes equal after White captures it.

Conclusion
9.xe1 has still not been played in a huge number of games, but that may be set to change, as it can lead to rich positions containing considerable scope for creativity. On that note, I was especially pleased to discover the 11...h4?! move as presented in variation D, and look forward to seeing my recommendation and subsequent analysis tested in practice.

20.e3 g4 21.f3 g6 22.xd5 ad8=
Main Lines

9.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{e}3}} \) – Introduction

Variation Index

1.\( \texttt{\texttt{e}4 \texttt{e}5} \) 2.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{f}3 \texttt{c6}} \) 3.\( \texttt{\texttt{b}5 \texttt{a6}} \) 4.\( \texttt{\texttt{a}4 \texttt{f6}} \) 5.0–0 \( \texttt{\textit{xe}4} \)
6.\( \texttt{d4 \texttt{b}5} \) 7.\( \texttt{\texttt{b}3 \texttt{d}5} \) 8.\( \texttt{\texttt{dxe}5 \texttt{\textit{ee}6}} \) 9.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{e}3}} \)

9...\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{c}7}} \)

A) 10.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{d}3}?!} \)
B) 10.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{bd}2 \texttt{c}5}} \)
   B1) 11.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{g}5}?!} \)
   B2) 11.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{e}1}} \)
   B3) 11.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{xc}5}} \)

note to move 10

B2) note to 12.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{f}1}} \)

B2) after 17.\( \texttt{\texttt{\textit{c}2}} \)
9...\textit{\textbf{c}7}

9...\textit{\textbf{c}5} is playable but I generally prefer not to exchange the dark-squared bishops in the early stages of the Open Spanish. After the text move the main reply by far is 10.c3, which will receive dedicated coverage in the next chapter. Before then we will turn our attention to the sidelines 

A) 10.\textit{\textbf{d}3}? and

B) 10.\textit{\textbf{b}d2}, after first sweeping away a few rare options.

10.a4 b4 transposes to 9.a4 b4 10.\textit{\textbf{e}3} as covered on page 186.

10.\textit{\textbf{e}2} 0–0 11.\textit{\textbf{d}1} transposes to variation A in Chapter 15 – see page 247.

The rare 10.\textit{\textbf{e}1} is met by 10...\textit{\textbf{e}7}, after which 11.\textit{\textbf{c}d2} \textit{\textbf{c}5} transposes to the 10.\textit{\textbf{b}d2} \textit{\textbf{c}5} 11.\textit{\textbf{e}1} 0–0 line as considered in variation B2 on page 213, while 11.c3 leads to the 11.\textit{\textbf{e}1} sideline in the notes to 10.c3 \textit{\textbf{c}5} on page 217 in the next chapter.

10.\textit{\textbf{c}3} is weak as the following exchange leaves the light-squared bishop in a cage: 10...\textit{\textbf{x}c3} 11.bxc3 0–0 12.h3 \textit{\textbf{a}5} 13.\textit{\textbf{a}4} \textit{\textbf{c}5} \\


10.\textit{\textbf{e}1}?!

This weird-looking move has the purpose of preparing \textit{\textbf{c}3}. Nevertheless it is hard to imagine that such an artificial-looking approach can be good.

10...0–0 11.\textit{\textbf{c}3} \textit{\textbf{b}4}!

Black intends to capture on c3 and leave the b3-bishop in a cage.

12.\textit{\textbf{d}1}

Here I found an attractive new idea for Black:

12...\textit{\textbf{a}5}!N

Unfortunately Black has no time for 12...\textit{\textbf{x}c3}? 13.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{a}5} because of 14.\textit{\textbf{d}4}! \textit{\textbf{c}5} 15.\textit{\textbf{e}2} \textit{\textbf{c}4} 16.\textit{\textbf{f}3}!± and Black’s knight is also trapped.

12...\textit{\textbf{e}8}?! 13.\textit{\textbf{d}3}?! \textit{\textbf{e}7}± was better for Black in Zaitsev – Unzicker, Moscow 1982, but White’s last move can be improved.

The point of the text move is to prepare...\textit{\textbf{e}7} followed by ...\textit{\textbf{c}5}. The immediate 12...\textit{\textbf{e}7} 13.\textit{\textbf{g}5}! \textit{\textbf{x}c3} 14.bxc3 \textit{\textbf{a}5} 15.\textit{\textbf{e}2} gives White a reasonable position with c3-c4 coming next. By retreating the bishop first, Black intends to get an improved version of this line.

13.\textit{\textbf{a}3} \textit{\textbf{e}7} 14.\textit{\textbf{g}5}!
White has to prevent the advance of the c-pawn to c4.

14...\(\text{\textit{d}xc3}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{b}xc3}\) c6! 16.\(\text{\textit{w}e2}\)!

16...\(\text{\textit{f}5}\)!

16...\(\text{\textit{x}xc3}\)?? runs into 17.\(\text{\textit{w}d3+\text{\textit{c}c7}}\).

After the text move Black is doing well, as the following attempt to free the arrested bishop does not fully solve White's problems:

17.\(\text{\textit{c}c4}\) \(\text{\textit{b}xc4}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{d}xd4}\) \(\text{\textit{c}c7}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{x}xa6}\) \(\text{\textit{w}xe5}\) 20.\(\text{\textit{x}e5}\) \(\text{\textit{w}d6+}\)

A) 10.\(\text{\textit{w}d3}\)!!

With this rather unusual move White prepares \(\text{\textit{d}d1}\) and provokes the following knight lunge.

10...\(\text{\textit{b}b4}\)

It is also worth considering 10...\(\text{\textit{a}a5}\)??N preparing to advance the c-pawn, and after

11.\(\text{\textit{c}c3}\) \(\text{\textit{d}xc3}\) 12.\(\text{\textit{w}xc3}\) \(\text{\textit{c}c4}\) Black has a decent position.

11.\(\text{\textit{w}e2}\) c5 12.\(\text{\textit{c}c6}\) 13.\(\text{\textit{d}d1}\)

13.a4 was played in Adrian – Wetzel, Ludwigshafen 1996, but this attack can safely be ignored:

13...0–0!!N Based on the following line:

14.\(\text{\textit{a}xb5}\) \(\text{\textit{a}xb5}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{a}xa8}\) \(\text{\textit{w}xa8}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{w}xb5}\)?? \(\text{\textit{b}b8}\) 17.\(\text{\textit{a}a4}\) \(\text{\textit{b}b7}\) 18.\(\text{\textit{d}c2}\) \(\text{\textit{a}a8}\) 19.\(\text{\textit{b}b3}\) \(\text{\textit{c}c7}\) 20.\(\text{\textit{b}b5}\) \(\text{\textit{b}b8}\) 21.\(\text{\textit{a}a4}\) \(\text{\textit{x}xe5}\) Black emerges with equal material and a notable positional advantage, with better central control and pressure along the b-file.

13...0–0 14.\(\text{\textit{b}d2}\)

14.\(\text{\textit{c}c2}\) \(\text{\textit{c}c8}\) 15.a4 \(\text{\textit{b}b7}\) looks equal.

14...\(\text{\textit{c}c7}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{f}f4}\) \(\text{\textit{x}xd2}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{b}xd2}\)
This position occurred in Haznedaroglu – Erdogdu, Kusadasi 2004. At this point Black should have played:

16...c4!N 17.\textit{c}2 b4 18.\textit{w}e3 \textit{ab}8\textit{c}2
With good play on the queenside.

B) 10.\textit{bd}2

10...\textit{c}5
Now it is worth analysing B1) 11.\textit{g}5?!,
B2) 11.\textit{e}1 and B3) 11.\textit{xc}5.

White’s most popular move has been 11.c3?!
transposing to variation C in the next chapter,
where 11...\textit{d}d3! gives Black excellent prospects – see page 220 for more details.
16.\texttt{b3} (16.fxe3 h5) 16...e2! 17.\texttt{fe1} \texttt{xb3} 18.\texttt{we6+} \texttt{f8} 19.\texttt{f5+} \texttt{e8} Black escapes the checks and enjoys an extra piece for two pawns.

12...fxe6

13.\texttt{f4}

After 13.\texttt{wh5+N g6} 14.\texttt{f3} \texttt{xe5} 15.\texttt{f4} \texttt{c6} 16.\texttt{f3} Black can choose between repeating moves with 16...\texttt{e5=} and playing on with 16...\texttt{d7?!}.

13...0–0 14.\texttt{g4} \texttt{d7+}

Milde – Herzog, Internet 2010. Black has the more comfortable position. He can exchange White's light-squared bishop at any moment, and he also has the tempting plan of \texttt{...e5} attacking the e5-pawn.

B2) 11.\texttt{e1}

White supports the e5-pawn and makes the f1-square available for the knight.

11...0–0 12.\texttt{f1}

Three other moves have been tested.

12.h3?! is too slow. 12...d4! 13.\texttt{f4} \texttt{f5}! Black was better in Avgousti – Takashima, Thessaloniki 1984.

12...\texttt{g5}! was played in Aagaard – Van der Veen, Hoogeveen 2000, and here Black missed a strong reply: 12...\texttt{d4}!

13.\texttt{h5}! The only way to avoid losing a piece. 13...\texttt{xg5}! 14.\texttt{xd5} \texttt{d7} Material is equal but Black's position is more comfortable.

Finally there is 12.\texttt{xc5}?! \texttt{xc5} 13.c3 as played in Rantanen – Lehmusvaara, Tampere 2003. Here I think Black should have played: 13...\texttt{b6}!N 14.\texttt{c2} \texttt{f6} 15.\texttt{exf6} \texttt{xf6} with roughly equal chances.

12...\texttt{xb3} 13.\texttt{xb3} \texttt{g4} 14.\texttt{f4} \texttt{d4}!

Vacating the d5-square for the queen.

15.\texttt{h3} \texttt{h5} 16.\texttt{g3} \texttt{g6} 17.\texttt{e2}

Meyer – Rhodin, Germany 1994. Here the consistent continuation would have been:
17...\texttt{\texttt{d5!}}\texttt{N}
Intending \ldots\texttt{\texttt{f6}}\texttt{d8}, when Black's strongly centralized pieces give him the upper hand.

**B3) 11.\texttt{x}c5 \texttt{x}c5**

It is hard to believe that White can fight for an advantage after exchanging his dark-squared bishop for an enemy knight.

12.c3 0–0 13.\texttt{c}2
Another game continued:
13.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{f}5 14.\texttt{ad}1
Handke – Smeets, Amsterdam 2002. Now the most precise would have been:
14...\texttt{e}8\texttt{N}
Putting pressure on the e5-pawn.

15.\texttt{f}e1 \texttt{b}8!
The point of this weird-looking move is revealed in the following line: 15...\texttt{h}6
16.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{e}4 17.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{x}f3 18.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{\texttt{c}xe5}

19.\texttt{\texttt{xe}5}! \texttt{\texttt{xe}5} 20.\texttt{xd}5 The rook on a8 is under attack, so Black is forced to settle for 20...\texttt{\texttt{xd}5} 21.\texttt{\texttt{xd}5} \texttt{d}6 22.\texttt{f}5 with some initiative for White.

16.\texttt{f}f1 \texttt{e}4 17.\texttt{d}1\texttt{d}2
White does not seem to have anything better. After 17.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{x}f3 18.\texttt{xf}3 \texttt{\texttt{c}xe5} 19.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{\texttt{xd}5} 20.\texttt{xd}5 \texttt{c}6 it is White who will have to be careful to maintain the balance in the endgame.
17...\texttt{g}6=
And in the event of 18.\texttt{f}1 Black can choose between a draw by repetition and playing on in an equal position with a move such as 18...\texttt{e}7.
Black settled for 16...\texttt{d7} in Zaitsev – Vlasov, St Petersburg 1999, but taking the pawn works out well for him.

\texttt{17.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{c5}}! \texttt{18.\texttt{x}e5}
\texttt{18.\texttt{x}c5 \texttt{d}5 \texttt{19.\texttt{x}e5} is met by 19...\texttt{d}6 \texttt{20.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{d}6} with a comfortable position for Black.}

\texttt{18...\texttt{cxd}4} \texttt{19.\texttt{b}d}4 \texttt{\textasciitilde}c7 \texttt{20.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{e}8} \texttt{21.d2}
\texttt{Or 21.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{d}6 22.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{d}7 with Black's initiative.}

\texttt{16...\texttt{b}6 14.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{g}4 15.\texttt{d}3}
\texttt{15.e1?! \texttt{f6}! 16.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{g6} 17.exf6 \texttt{xf3}!}
\texttt{18.xf3 \texttt{d}6! 19.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{xf6} left White having to deal with pressure against \texttt{f}2 in Marjanovic – Stean, Smederevska Palanka 1980.}

\texttt{15...\texttt{g}6 16.\texttt{d}d4?!}
This tempting pseudo-sacrifice has been tested in a couple of games.

White should prefer 16.\texttt{ae1N} when both 16...\texttt{d}7 17.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{ae8} and 16...\texttt{xf3}?! 17.xf3 \texttt{f6}?! (17...\texttt{d}7=) offer Black good prospects.

\texttt{21...\texttt{d}6 22.g3 \texttt{b}6 23.\texttt{f}e1 b4!}
\texttt{City Hamburg – City Berlin, corr. 1883. With his last move Black takes advantage of the fact that 24.cxb4? \texttt{f6}! is awkward for White, and thus clears some space on the queenside. The d5-pawn is not really weak and Black will have chances to press in the endgame with his two bishops.}

\textbf{Conclusion}

There is nothing here for Black to fear, and if White wishes to fight for an advantage after 9.\texttt{e}3 \texttt{e}7, his only serious attempt is 10.c3 as considered in the next chapter.
Main Lines

9.\(\text{\texttt{c3}}\) \(\text{\texttt{e7}}\) 10.\(\text{\texttt{c3}}\)

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f3}}}}\) \(\text{\texttt{c6}}\) 3.\(\text{\texttt{b5}}\) a6 4.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{a4}}}}\) \(\text{\texttt{f6}}\) 5.0-0 \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{x}}}}\)xe4 6.d4 b5 7.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{b3}}}}\) d5 8.dxe5 \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{e6}}}}\) 9.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{e3}}}}\) \(\text{\texttt{e7}}\) 10.\(\text{\texttt{c3}}\)

10...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{c5}}}}\)

A) 11.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g5}}}})!? \hspace{1cm} 218
B) 11.h3 \hspace{1cm} 219
C) 11.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{b2}}}})!? \hspace{1cm} 220
D) 11.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{c2}}}}\) \(\text{\texttt{d7}}\)
   D1) 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{d4}}}})!? \hspace{1cm} 222
   D2) 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f4}}}}\) \hspace{1cm} 222
   D3) 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{d4}}}})!? \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{dxe5}}}}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xe6}}}}\) fxe6 14.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{d2}}}}\) 0-0 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f4}}}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f7}}}}\) N \hspace{1cm} 225
      D31) 16.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{b3}}}}\) \hspace{1cm} 226
      D32) 16.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g4}}}}\) \hspace{1cm} 227
   D4) 12.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{e1}}}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{dxe5}}}}\) 13.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xe5}}}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xe5}}}}\)
      D41) 14.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f4}}}})!? \hspace{1cm} 228
      D42) 14.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{d4}}}}\) \(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{g6}}}}\)
         D421) 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{h5}}}}\) \hspace{1cm} 229
         D422) 15.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{xe7}}}}\) \hspace{1cm} 231

B) after 13.\(\text{\texttt{b4}}\)

D3) after 15.\(\text{\texttt{f4}}\)

D421) after 22.\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{c3}}}}\)

13...a5N

15...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{f7}}}})!N

22...\(\text{\texttt{\textbf{\texttt{e8}}}})!!
1.e4 e5 2.d4 d6 3.e5 a6 4.d5 c5 5.b5 dxe5 6.dxe5 b5 7.d6 e6 8.b3 dxe5 9.b4 c4 10.c3

Chapter 13 - 9.e3 exd 10.c3

This is the main line by far. Before developing any more queenside pieces, White restrains the enemy d-pawn and creates a retreat square on c2 for his bishop.

10...c5

This has proven to be one of Black’s most reliable answers. The idea if that if the bishop retreats to c2, the knight will drop back to d7 where it hits the e5-pawn. We will consider four main replies, arranged in ascending order of popularity: A) 11.g5??, B) 11.h3, C) 11.bd2?? and D) 11.c2. Here are a few minor alternatives:

11.xc5 xc5 12.xd3 0-0 13.d1 e7! 14.bd2 Now I would like to improve with:

14..f8!N Black leaves the other rook on a8 to defend the queenside. (14..ad8 was seen in Gurbanov – Mamedyarov, Baku 2000, and here White could have played 15.a4!N with some pressure.) Now 15.a4 can be met by 15...b4 and Black is fine.

11.d4 is a rare line which can easily transpose to variation A below. 11.c5 12.xe6 fxe6 13.d4 (13.e2 xb3 14.axb3 0–0 15.d4 reaches line A.)

13..xb3 (13...g6??N is an interesting alternative. This position can also arise via the 11.g5 move order of variation A.) 14.axb3 f7 We have reached the 14.d4 line in the notes to variation A below.

11.e1

This final option occurred in Mestel – Bernal, Thessaloniki (ol) 1984. Here Black should have begun by eliminating the opponent’s light-squared bishop.

11..xb3!N 12.axb3
12...\textit{g}4! 13.\textit{bd}2 0–0 14.\textit{h}3 \textit{h}5
Now the threat of ...\textit{xe}5 forces a concession of some kind.
15.\textit{g}4
This weakens the kingside, but after 15.\textit{f}4 d4! 16.\textit{we}2 \textit{d}7 Black is in good shape.
15...\textit{g}6 16.\textit{b}4 a5
Black has a good position, for example:

17.\textit{we}2 \textit{d}7! 18.bxa5
18.\textit{xb}5 axb4 19.c4 \textit{ad}8! is roughly equal.
18...\textit{xa}5 19.e6 \textit{xe}6 20.\textit{xa}5 \textit{xa}5 21.e5 \textit{e}8 22.\textit{xg}6 \textit{hxg}6 23.d4 \textit{d}6 24.\textit{xe}6\textdagger  
\textit{xe}6 25.\textit{xe}6 \textit{f}7 26.\textit{e}2 c5=

The endgame is balanced.

A) 11.\textit{g}5!?  

This interesting move was seen in Mithrakanth – G. Garcia, Thessaloniki 1984. Black's most straightforward reply is:

11...\textit{xb}3\textdagger
11...\textit{xe}5 is likely to transpose to the above 11.\textit{d}4 line after 12.\textit{xe}6 \textit{fxe}6.

12.\textit{xe}6 \textit{fxe}6 13.axb3 \textit{xe}5 14.\textit{we}2
14.\textit{d}4 \textit{f}7
14...\textit{g}6?  
15.\textit{xe}1
15.\textit{we}2 0–0–0 transposes to the main line – see 14.\textit{we}2 0–0 15.\textit{d}4 \textit{f}7 below.
15.\textit{xe}7 \textit{g}8 16.\textit{d}4 e5 17.\textit{e}3 \textit{d}7 favours Black who has the strong centre.

15...0–0 16.\textit{b}4
In the event of 16.\textit{xe}6 c5 17.\textit{e}3 d4! 18.cxd4 cxd4 19.\textit{xd}4 \textit{g}5! White starts to experience problems.
16...a5! 17.\textit{e}2 e5! 18.\textit{xa}5! \textit{d}6! 19.\textit{e}3 c6 20.\textit{xa}8 \textit{xa}8
Black is slightly better thanks to the strong centre.
14...0–0
Another idea is 14...c6? 15.\(\text{b}b6\) \(\text{d}d6\)
16.\(\text{x}xg7\) 0–0–0 17.\(\text{c}xh7\) \(\text{d}b7\) when Black’s strong centre offers positional compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

15.\(\text{x}d4\) \(\text{f}f7\)
Despite the novelty on move 11, we have now transposed to an existing game.

16.\(\text{b}xe6\) \(\text{c}5\)
Another idea is 16...\(\text{d}6\)?N with roughly equal chances.

17.\(\text{c}e3\) \(\text{d}4\) 18.\(\text{e}d1\)

Leow – Torre, Thessaloniki (ol) 1984. At this point the right path would have been:

18...\(\text{g}5\)?N 19.\(\text{c}xd4\)
Or 19.\(\text{x}g5\) \(\text{x}g5\) 20.\(\text{c}d2\) \(\text{fe}8\) with an equal position.

19...\(\text{e}e8\) 20.\(\text{x}g5\) \(\text{x}g5\) 21.\(\text{d}c6\) \(\text{c}xd4=\)
The position is balanced. It should be noted that grabbing a pawn is risky for White.

22.\(\text{c}xa6?!\) \(\text{e}ac8\) 23.\(\text{d}d7\) \(\text{e}e5\) 24.\(\text{d}d5+\) \(\text{h}8\)
Black has an extremely strong initiative; the immediate threat is ...\(\text{x}c1\).

B) 11.\(\text{h}3\)

This prevents the ...\(\text{x}g4\) idea, but allows Black to eliminate the \(b3\)-bishop and thus offers White little chance of obtaining an advantage.

11...\(\text{d}xb3\) 12.\(\text{d}xb3\) 0–0 13.\(\text{b}4\)
White has tried three other moves.

13.\(\text{e}e1\) Paulakos – Patterson, Ybbs 1968,
13...\(\text{f}5\)?N 14.\(\text{e}e2\) \(\text{d}7\) 15.\(\text{d}d2\) \(\text{fe}8\) with a good position for Black.

13.\(\text{d}d4\) \(\text{d}xd4\) 14.\(\text{c}xd4\) should be harmless, as long as Black opens the position for his bishops:

14...f6! 15.f4 \(\text{f}xe5\) 16.\(\text{f}xe5\) \(\text{xf1}\) 17.\(\text{x}f1\) c5! 18.\(\text{c}c3\) \(\text{c}4\) with roughly equal chances in Damjanovic – Lehmann, Beverwijk 1966.
13.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}a}3 b4} (13...\texttt{\textit{\textsc{f}6}}?N 14.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}xf6}} \texttt{\textit{\textsc{g}xf6}} 15.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{g}5} g6} 16.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{xe}7} \texttt{\textit{\textsc{xe}7}}} is also good for Black.)
14.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{c}2 a5}} 15.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{cd}4}}

15...\texttt{\textit{\textsc{x}d}4} 16.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{ex}d}4} (16.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{xd}4} \texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}7}}} 17.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{f}4 c5}} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{xe}6 fxe6}} is also roughly equal.) This position occurred in Magomedov - Sagalchik, Frunze 1989, and now I recommend 16...\texttt{\textit{\textsc{h}6N}} intending ...\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}7}} without allowing the dark-squared bishops to be exchanged.

13...\texttt{\textit{\textsc{a}5}}!N
13...\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}7}} gave Black a decent position in Kuzmin - Sorokin, Blagoweshchensk 1988, but the text move is more forcing.

14.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{bxa}5 \texttt{\textit{\textsc{x}a}5}}} 15.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{bd}2}}
15.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}4 c4!}} 16.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{xa}8 \texttt{\textit{\textsc{xa}8}}}+}

15...\texttt{\textit{\textsc{c}5}}
Black is doing fine.

\textbf{C) 11.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{bd}2}}?!}

Surprisingly, this natural move is a mistake. The same position has frequently arisen v the 10.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{bd}2 c5}} 11.c3?! move order, as noted in the previous chapter on page 212.

11...\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}3}}!

The double attack on e5 and b2 is not easy to meet.

12.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{b}1}}

White has tried several other moves, none which solve his opening problems.

12.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}4 \texttt{\textit{\textsc{xd}4}}} 13.cxd4 \texttt{\textit{\textsc{xb}2}}} 14.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{e}2 \texttt{\textit{\textsc{d}5}}} left Black with a clear extra pawn in Bernard Flear, Narbonne 2008.

12.\texttt{\textit{\textsc{c}2}}
This was seen in Mashian – Grinshpun, Tel Aviv 1993, and now 12...\( \text{dx}b2! \)N 13.\( \text{e}2 \text{a}4! \) is another safe extra pawn. Given the choice between taking on b2 and e5, Black should generally prefer the former to keep the centre closed.

12.\( \text{e}b1 \text{dxe}5 \) 13.\( \text{dxe}5 \text{dxe}5 

14.\( \text{d}4 \) (14.f4 \( \text{d}c4 \) 15.\( \text{xc}4 \) [15.\( \text{d}4 \text{f}5\#] 15...\( \text{dx}c4 \) 16.\( f\)5 \( \text{d}5 \) 17.\( \text{g}4 \text{d}7! \) 18.\( \text{xg}7 \text{f}0–0–0\#] 14...\( \text{c}6 \) 15.\( \text{xg}7 \text{g}8 \) Black obtained an improved version of the main line in Abreu Delgado – Gomez Fontal, Havana 2010.

12.\( \text{e}2 \text{xb}2 \) 13.\( \text{ab}1 \) (13.\( \text{d}4 \text{xd}4 \) 14.\( \text{xd}4 \) transposes to 12.\( \text{d}4 \) as noted above.)

13...\( \text{a}4! \) (13...\( \text{c}4? \) allows White to develop a serious initiative with 14.\( \text{xc}4 \text{dxc}4 \) 15.\( \text{c}2 \) followed by \( \text{bd}1 \) and \( \text{e}4. \) 14.\( \text{xa}4 \text{bxa}4 

14.\( \text{d}6! \) 15.\( f\)4 \( \text{g}4 \) 16.\( \text{xg}7 \text{g}8 \) 17.\( \text{h}7 \text{h}0–0–0\#) Despite being a pawn up White is in trouble, for instance: 18.\( \text{ae}1? \text{xg}7! \) 19.\( \text{xg}7 \text{f}6 \) 20.\( \text{h}7 \text{h}8\# \) White's queen was trapped in Gustavsson – Majer, Hessen 1991.

12...\( \text{dxe}5 \) 13.\( \text{dxe}5 \text{dxe}5 \) 14.\( \text{d}4 \text{g}6 \) 15.\( \text{xg}7 

15.f4?! is even worse: 15...\( \text{c}5 \) 16.\( \text{xg}7 \text{g}8 \) 17.\( \text{h}6 \text{h}4 \) 18.\( f\)5 \( \text{xg}2\# \) 19.\( \text{h}1 \text{c}7 \) 20.\( \text{f}4 \) (20.\( \text{f}4 \text{d}6\#) Osinovsky – Vorobiov, St Petersburg 2003.
Main Lines

20...\texttt{Exh}2!\texttt{N} 21.\texttt{hxh}2 \texttt{xf}5 Black is completely winning.

15...\texttt{g}8 16.\texttt{d}4
16.\texttt{h}6 \texttt{g}5\texttt{#} is not helping White.

16...c5 17.\texttt{e}3 d4 18.cxd4 cxd4 19.\texttt{h}6

19...d3! 20.g3 \texttt{xb}3 21.axb3 \texttt{d}5!
Black keeps some initiative in the position with equal material.

D) 11.\texttt{c}2

White has to keep the light-squared bishop in order to retain chances for an advantage.

11...\texttt{d}7
Black continues with his plan and targets the e5-pawn. We will analyse D1) 12.\texttt{d}4?, D2) 12.\texttt{f}4, D3) 12.\texttt{d}4? and D4) 12.\texttt{e}1 in detail.

D1) 12.\texttt{d}4? \texttt{g}4!
This seems to be both the safest and the best way to meet White's last move.

13.\texttt{e}1 \texttt{xd}4 14.cxd4
14.\texttt{xd}4N allows 14...\texttt{xf}3 (14...\texttt{e}6 15.h3 c5 16.\texttt{f}4 0–0= is also fine for Black) 15.gxf3 \texttt{c}5 16.f4 \texttt{e}6 17.e3 g6 with an equal position.

14...\texttt{f}8!
Black brings the knight to e6 and equalizes easily.

15.\texttt{d}3 \texttt{e}6 16.\texttt{bd}2
Iordachescu – Golod, Port Erin 2007. Now I would like to correct Black’s play by offering:

16...c5!N 17.dxc5 bxc5 18.b3 a7!
Black has a comfortable position, since the white knights cannot settle on the d4-square, as shown by the following brief line:

19.fd4! xd4 20.xd4 b6\+$
White must shed a pawn.

D2) 12.f4

An interesting and rather provocative move.

12...g5
Black should accept the challenge.

13.e3
13.g3?!
This pushes the provocation a step too far as White may fall under attack.

13...h5 14.h3 g4 15.xg4
15.d4? xd4 16.cxd4 occurred in Pereda de Pablo – Martin Luis, Tenerife 2005, and now the simple 16...gxh3N 17.gxh3 xh3\+$ leaves Black with an extra pawn.

15...hxg4 16.d4
Now I would like to improve on my own play from the game Panarin – Mikhailovski, Internet (blitz) 2003.
13...\texttt{dxe5} 14...\texttt{xe5}

14...\texttt{d4} \texttt{xd4} 15...\texttt{xd4} reaches the same position.

14...\texttt{xe5} 15...\texttt{d4} \texttt{f6} 16...\texttt{e1}

This seems to be the most accurate move order, although White has a couple of other ways to attempt to demonstrate compensation.

16...\texttt{d2} was the move order seen in the A. Sokolov – Kaidanov game quoted at the end of the main line. That encounter continued 16...\texttt{d6} 17...\texttt{e1} 0–0 transposing to our main line, but Black can also consider 16...\texttt{c5}!N 17...\texttt{xe5} \texttt{fxe5} 18...\texttt{e1} \texttt{f6} 19...\texttt{h5}\texttt{f8} 20...\texttt{h6}\texttt{f8} which reaches a double-edged position.

After 16...\texttt{h5}\texttt{f8} Black’s most precise answer seems to be: 16...\texttt{f7}!N (16...\texttt{d7} 17...\texttt{e2} \texttt{c5} 18...\texttt{xe5} \texttt{fxe5} 19...\texttt{xe5} \texttt{d6} was also good for Black in Dabetic – Todorovic, Bela Crkva 1987.) 17...\texttt{h6} \texttt{c5} 18...\texttt{xe5} \texttt{fxe5} 19...\texttt{c4}! \texttt{d6}! 20...\texttt{xd6} \texttt{xd6} 21...\texttt{cxd5} \texttt{c4} and Black keeps slightly better chances.

17...\texttt{d2}

Now we transpose to another game which featured the 16...\texttt{d2} move order.

17...0–0 18...\texttt{h4}?! 18...\texttt{f3}\texttt{N} is better. After 18...\texttt{xf3}\texttt{t} 19...\texttt{xf3} \texttt{d7} 20...\texttt{d3} \texttt{e8} White retains some compensation for the pawn, though Black’s chances are not worse.

18...\texttt{c5}! 19...\texttt{xe5}

19...\texttt{h5}\texttt{f8} reduces Black’s options although 19...\texttt{c7} still gives leaves him with some advantage.

19...\texttt{fxe5} 20...\texttt{h5}

20...\texttt{f6}! 21...\texttt{xe4} \texttt{dxe4} 22...\texttt{xe4} \texttt{a7} 23...\texttt{xg5} \texttt{e7\texttt{f}}

Black was better in A. Sokolov – Kaidanov, Vilnius 1984.

16...\texttt{d6}\texttt{N}

I prefer this over 16...\texttt{d6} as was played in Smirin – De Jong, Kemer 2007. And unlike
This rare move was introduced by the great Tal against Timman.

12...dxe5 13.dxe6!

This important improvement was introduced in 2011 by the young Polish grandmaster Swiercz, who went on to become World Under-18 Champion the following year.

The older 13.f4 leads by force to an equal endgame: 13...c4! 14.exd6 exd6 15.axd8

16...e3! 17.exd7 18.xa8 xc2 19.d2 (Another game continued 19.b6+ c6 20.xd5 c5+ 21.h1 xd5 22.d2 xa1 23.xa1 e8 24.d1 e2 and Black had full compensation for a pawn, Denis – Flear, Le Touquet 1988.) 19...c5† 20.h1

17...e8!?N (After 17...e7 18.c5! Black fell under pressure in Swiercz – De Jong, Wijk aan Zee 2011.) The text move protects both the knight on g6 and the e6-pawn, but even
so, after 18...e1 19.f6 21.b7
Black is still under some pressure. In particular the knight on g6 feels misplaced.

The point of my new idea is to transfer the knight to f5, instead of the passive g6-square.

Next we will look at D31) 16.d3 and D32) 16.g4

D31) 16.d3

16...d6
Black improves the bishop and anticipates g4, which can now be met by ...e7.

17.d3
17.a4 h6 18.d3 g6 is just another move order.

17...g6 18.a4 h6
Black does not mind returning a pawn on the queenside; it is more important to improve the position of the knight.

19.g3
If White hopes to achieve anything then he should keep the tension in the position.

I also checked: 19.axb5 axb5 20.exa8 xa8
21.xb5 g4! 22.e2 xe3 23.xe3

23.e5! 24.d3 (24.f5?! is strongly met by 24...e4?) 24...xf4 25.xd5+ g7 26.xf4 exf4 and Black is fine.

19...bxa4 20.xa4 a5
The position is complex and double-edged White has about enough compensation for the sacrificed pawn, but I think Black is okay.
This logical move was a suggestion from Nikos Ntirlis. White attacks the e6-pawn before the black queen can get to e7.

16...d4!
An important central break.

17.cxd4
I also considered the tricky 17.\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}3$}, with the idea of preventing ...\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}6$}, but it promises White no advantage after: 17...g6 18.cxd4 \textcolor{red}{$\text{xd}4$} 19.\textcolor{red}{$\text{e}4$} \textcolor{red}{$\text{e}8$} 20.\textcolor{red}{$\text{ad}1$} c5 21.\textcolor{red}{$\text{f}3$} \textcolor{red}{$\text{f}6$}

18...\textcolor{red}{$\text{c}8$}!
The alternative is 18...\textcolor{red}{$\text{f}5$} 19.\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}3$} \textcolor{red}{$\text{c}8$}, but I think Black should avoid committing himself to a knight retreat at this stage. The energetic 20.g4! leads to some advantage for White, as interested readers with an analysis engine may checks for themselves.

19.\textcolor{red}{$\text{ad}1$}
19.\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}3$} g6 transposes to the 17.\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}3$} line noted above.

White can also try 19.\textcolor{red}{$\text{b}3$}, though after 19...\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}6$} 20.\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}3$} \textcolor{red}{$\text{df}5$} 21.\textcolor{red}{$\text{ad}1$} \textcolor{red}{$\text{d}6$} 22.\textcolor{red}{$\text{f}2$} c5 Black seems to be able to solve his problems.

19...c5
19...\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}6$} 20.\textcolor{red}{$\text{h}3$} c5 21.\textcolor{red}{$\text{b}3$} reaches the same position.
20. \( \text{b3} \)?

After 20. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{h6} \)! 21. \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{xf3} \)† 22. \( \text{xf3} \) \( \text{c7} \) Black’s extra pawn compensates for White’s initiative.

20... \( \text{h6} \) 21. \( \text{h3} \) \( \text{b6} \)!

Black keeps the e6-pawn.

22. \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 23. \( \text{xd4} \)

White has regained his pawn, but Black has simplified the position and a drawish endgame is likely to ensue.

23... \( \text{c5} \) 24. \( \text{e3} \)

I also checked 24. \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xc5} \)† 25. \( \text{h1} \) \( \text{c4} \)!
26. \( \text{e1} \) \( \text{a2} \) 27. \( \text{b1} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 28. \( \text{xe6} \)† \( \text{h8} \)
29. \( \text{xa6} \) \( \text{cd8} \) with roughly equal chances.

24... \( \text{xd4} \) 25. \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{xd4} \)† 26. \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{fd8} \)
27. \( \text{f1d1} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 28. \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{f5} \) 29. \( \text{ed2} \) \( \text{bc4} \)
30. \( \text{b7} \) \( \text{a5} \)

Black should not have much trouble holding this endgame.

D4) 12. \( \text{e1} \)

The main line. White intends to exchange his central pawn for the one on g7.

12... \( \text{dxe5} \) 13. \( \text{xe5} \)

13. \( \text{d4} \) gives Black a choice. The easiest option is 13... \( \text{xd4} \) 14. \( \text{xd4} \) as in Bergvoll – Geske, Arco 2005, after which 14... \( \text{g6} \) immediately transposes to the main line.

An independent alternative is 13...0–0?!N
14. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 15. \( \text{d2} \) \( \text{d6} \) 16. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{d7} \) although in this case White retains decent compensation for the pawn.

13... \( \text{xe5} \)

Now we will analyse the rare D41) 14. \( \text{f4} \)?!

and the main line D42) 14. \( \text{d4} \).

D41) 14. \( \text{f4} \)?!

This sideline is rather dubious.

14... \( \text{c4} \) 15. \( \text{d4} \) 0–0 16. \( \text{b3} \)!

16. \( \text{f5} \)?! \( \text{d7} \) (16... \( \text{c8} \)?!N is also strong.)
17. \( \text{xe7} \)? (17. \( \text{d2} \)? is better, but after
17... \( \text{xb2} \) 18. \( \text{f3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 19. \( \text{xd5} \) \( \text{c6} \)! Black keeps the advantage.) 17... \( \text{xe7} \) 18. \( \text{g4} \)† \( \text{h8} \) 0–1 White resigned as he had no compensation for the sacrificed piece, Ferreira – Korneev, Lisbon 2000.

16... \( \text{d6} \) 17. \( \text{h5} \) \( \text{e4} \)!

It is essential to neutralize White’s light-squared bishop.

17... \( \text{g6} \)? loses outright to 18. \( \text{e5} \)!, while
17... \( \text{h6} \)? is strongly met by 18. \( \text{xe7} \)† \( \text{xg7} \)
19. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{h8} \) 20. \( \text{e5} \)!
18.f5
18.\textit{f}xe4?N dxe4 19.\textit{xe}4 may be White's best chance, although after 19...h6! 20.\textit{xa}8 \textit{xa}8 21.d2 e8! 22.e1 \textit{f}8 Black keeps a slight edge thanks to his bishop pair.

18...\textit{d}7 19.\textit{xe}4 dxe4 20.d2

Xu Yuhua – Wang Yu, China 2010. Now I would like to improve Black's play by means of:

20...c5!N 21.f6
Also after 21.c5 \textit{x}f5 22.xf5 xd2 23.e4 \textit{g}5! White does not have enough compensation for a pawn.

21...cxd4 22.\textit{x}e7 \textit{xe}7 23.e4 \textit{a}3!
24.xd4 \textit{c}6 25.e4 \textit{b}2 26.f1 \textit{xe}4

27.e4 \textit{xc}3 28.e7 g6
Black keeps an extra pawn and some winning chances in the major piece ending.

D42) 14.\textit{d}4

14...\textit{g}6!
14...\textit{c}6 is riskier as it leaves the kingside unprotected. After the text move we will analyse the rare D421) \textit{h}5 followed by the usual D422) \textit{x}g7.

D421) 15.\textit{h}5

This move has been tested only once, but it should not be ignored. I analysed it quite deeply and found some lovely resources.
15...0-0 16.f4 c5 17.Ke2 d4!N

This new idea invites complications which ultimately work well for Black.

The stem game continued 17...f5!? which seems playable, although I would be a little worried about the weakening of the e5-square. 18.g3 (18.exd5 is impossible in view of 18...exf4--) 18...c8 19.d2 d7 20.f6 b7 Kapengut – Chekhov, Minsk 1981. White retained some compensation for the sacrificed pawn thanks to the weakness of the e5-square and the misplaced knight on g6.

Another nice line continues 18.e4 f5! 19.xa8 xa8 20.g3 d5! when Black has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange due to the weak light squares.

18.f5
18.cxd4 is met by the strong intermediate move 18...xf4! when Black is better. The main point is that 19.f5? does not work due to 19...xd4!.

Another nice line continues 18.e4 f5! 19.xa8 xa8 20.g3 d5! when Black has more than sufficient compensation for the sacrificed exchange due to the weak light squares.

18...d3! 19.xd1 d2! 20.e3 c4!

Now White starts to experience problems with the first rank.

21.h3

After 21.b3 f4! 22.g4 e2! 23.xe2 xe2 fxe2† 24.xe2 g5! Black keeps the d2-pawn and obtains better chances.

21...h6 22.e3

I also analysed: 22.fxg6 fxg6 23.g4 (23.wxg6 is bad due to 23...fxg6! 24.d3f2 h4† 25.g1 g7 with a decisive attack.)

23.g5! 24.f3 e8+!

A brilliant way to keep the initiative alive.

22.e8!!

Black exploits the weakness of the first rank.

23.xd2 g5!

24.e5! 25.g3 xe3† 26.xe3 d8
27.f6 d3† 28.xf3 xe3† 29.xe3 xd2*

With a powerful rook on d2, Black keeps some chances to press in the endgame.
This is the only way to stop Black’s attack along the g-file. 16...d4? is never played, as 16...h4 17.g3 g4 is unpleasant for White.

16...xg7 17.xe6!
White keeps the g-file closed. 17.h5 f8 18.d2 d6 (18...d6!?N 19.f3 f6 also looks fine for Black) 19.f1 f6 20.f3 d8 brought Black a good position in Morozevich – Flear, Hyeres 1992.

17...hxg6

18.e1 is wrong as White will need to move the rook again in order to double along the e-file.

After 18.e3 as played in Sisniega – C. Toth, Bogota 1991, I suggest 18...h7N 19.d2 f8 20.f3 f6 and compared with the main line I don’t see any advantage of having the rook on e3 instead of e2.

18.e5?! This move makes little sense as Black will gain a tempo by putting his bishop on f6, which he plans to do anyway.
18...c6 19.d2 f8 20.f3 h7 Black’s plan includes ...f6, ...g7 and ...d6. Generally the rook on h7 will rejoin the action via h8, although occasionally Black will aim for a rook lift with ...h5.
21.d3
21.e2 g7 22.a4 f6 23.d2 h8 led to a similar scenario in Ganguly – Roussel Rozmon, Turin (ol) 2006, as White lost a tempo on e5-e2.
21.f6 22.e2 g7 23.e1
Kranan – Mikhalevski, Kapuskasing 2004. Now I should have played:

23.d6!N The position can be compared with the game Balogh – Mikhalevski, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010, as referenced in the 19.d3 variation in the note to White’s next move in the main
line below. The position here is identical to that occurring after move 22 in Balogh – Mikhalevski, except that Black has been presented with the extra move ...c6, which can hardly harm his prospects and may be of some benefit.

18...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{f8}}}}

Obviously the king should vacate the open file.

19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d2}}}}

The knight is heading for f3. Two other moves have been tried.

19.a4 \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{h7}}}} 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d2}}}} occurred in Van den Doel – Motwani, Belgium 2002, and now I suggest:

20...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{f6}}}}!N In my opinion the bishop belongs on this square, rather than d6 where it went in the aforementioned game. Now the most likely continuation is 21.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{f3}}} which transposes to our main line – see 19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d2}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{h7}}} 20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{f3}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{f6}}} 21.a4 below.}}}}

19.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d3}}}}

This move doesn't change much.

19...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{h7}}}}

I have already mentioned that Black's best set-up involves ...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{f6}}} ..., \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{g7}} ..., \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d6}}} and usually ...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{hh8}}}.

20.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d2}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{f6}}} 21.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{f3}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d6}}}}}}}}}}

In a couple of other games Black has preferred 21...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{g7}}} first, which also seems fine.

22.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{ae1}}}}

I also checked: 22.a4?N \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{b8}}} 23.axb5 axb5 24.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{a5}}} c6 25.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{a6}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{g7}}} 26.g3}}}}

26...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d7}}}! 27.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{d4}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{c8}}} 28.h4 (28.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xb5}}} is refuted by 28...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{ch8}}}! 28...\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{hh8}}}! 29.\textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xb5}}} \textit{\textbf{\texttt{\textcolor{red}{xh4}}}! with roughly equal chances.}}}}}}}}
22...\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dg}}7 23.h3 \textit{\textcolor{black}{Dd}}8!?

23...\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dh}}5N is perfectly playable, but after careful consideration I decided there was no need to prevent White's next move.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard1.png}
\end{center}

24.\textit{\textcolor{black}{De}}5 \textit{\textcolor{black}{Dh}}5!

The rook enters the game from the fifth rank.

The immediate 24...d4 is premature in view of 25.cxd4 \textit{\textcolor{black}{Dx}}d4 26.\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dc}}2, although even here 26...\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dd}}6! should enable Black to equalize.

25.\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dg}}4

During the game my main worry was 25.f4, but Black is fine after 25...d4!:

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard2.png}
\end{center}

26.\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dxf}}6 \textit{\textcolor{black}{Dxf}}6 27.cxd4 \textit{\textcolor{black}{Dx}}d4 28.\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dc}}3 c5 29.b3 \textit{\textcolor{black}{Dh}}5

Black had the better chances in the major piece endgame in Balogh – Mikhailovski, Khanty-Mansiysk (ol) 2010.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard3.png}
\end{center}

19...\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dh}}7

19...\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dg}}8 is a possible alternative, but I prefer the rook on the h-file.

19...\textit{\textcolor{black}{Df}}6 is likely to lead to the same position after a subsequent ...\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dh}}7, but it seems more natural to move the rook first, as this piece is in more obvious need of relocation.

20.\textit{\textcolor{black}{Df}}3 \textit{\textcolor{black}{Df}}6

The pieces go to their best spots. I once tried 20.\textit{\textcolor{black}{Dd}}6 against Jakovenko, but now I prefer the text move.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{chessboard4.png}
\end{center}
21.a4
White is trying to put pressure on the queenside.

21...d2 d6 22.e1 g7 ½–½ was the rather uneventful course of Cabrilo – Todorovic, Valjevo 2011.

21.h3 g7 (21...h8) 22.d3 h8 23.d1 c6 24.e5 d6 Black has completed his regrouping and equalized.

Magem Badals – Flear, Palma de Mallorca 1991. Now the most precise continuation would have been 27...c5!?N 28.xf6 xf6 with equal chances as the black king is in no real danger.

21...g7 22.b3
Previously White played 22.d3, which doesn't promise any advantage either. 22...c6 23.h3 h8 In this roughly equal position a draw was agreed in Kastner – Lyne, corr. 2005.

22...c6
Black can also start with 22...h8N since the attempt to win a pawn by means of 23.axb5 axb5 24.xa8 xa8 25.xb5? backfires after 25...b8 26.d3 a1† 27.e1 xb2† with a slight edge for Black.

23.b4
White is trying to take control over the dark squares, but Black continues with his plan.

23...h8 24.e1
This position occurred in the game Ponomariov – Roiz, Saratov 2011, which I followed live, being Michael's second during the tournament. Here I recommend the following minor improvement:

24...f8!?N 25.e4
25.e7? is bad in view of 25...a5! 26.d6 e8! 27.d7 xe1† 28.xe1 xd6 29.xd6 bxa4+- with a winning position for Black thanks to the plan of ...b8xb2.

25...b8 26.d2 d6–
Black obtains his desired set-up.

Conclusion
Black does not have many problems in the main line of the 9..e3 system, and the plan of ...c5-d7xe5 continues to hold up well. Variation D3 with 12.d4!? awaits further testing, although I believe Black's position should be resilient enough after my new 15...f7! move. In the more popular variation D4 with 12.e1, I believe Black should be absolutely fine as long as he arranges his pieces in the correct way, as demonstrated in the final part of the chapter.
Main Lines

9.\text{e}2 – Introduction

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}}f3 \text{c}6 3.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}}}5 a6 4.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}}}4 \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash f}}}6 5.0–0 \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash x}}}e4

6.d4 b5 7.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}}}3 d5 8.dxe5 \text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}}6 9.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}}2

9...\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}}7

A) 10.c4?! 237
B) 10.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}}}d2 238
C) 10.c3 0–0 240
   C1) 11.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash c}}}2 240
   C2) 11.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}}}d2 241
   C3) 11.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash d}}}4 243

A) after 15.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash c}}}5

C1) after 13.\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}}}d2

C3) after 13.f3

15...\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash b}}}7!N

13...\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash a}}}d8!N

13...\text{\textit{\texttt{\textbackslash e}}}5!N
Main Lines

1.e4 e5 2.d3 d6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 b5 5.0-0 \(\text{\textit{dxe4}}\) 6.d4 b4 7.b3 d5 8.dxe5 \(\text{\textit{dxe6}}\) 9.\(\text{\textit{f2}}\)

With this queen move White vacates the d1-square for the rook and pre-empts the possibility of ...\(\text{\textit{c5}}\), which can now be met by \(\text{\textit{e3}}\). This plan was introduced early in the previous century in the game Izbinsky – Rubinstein, Kiev 1903.

9...\(\text{\textit{e7}}\)

I have always preferred this line over 9...\(\text{\textit{c5}}\), as I don’t like to exchange the dark-squared bishops in this pawn structure. From here the main move by far is 10.d1, which will receive dedicated coverage in the next chapter. Over the following pages we will analyse three rare but interesting alternatives: A) 10.c4?!, B) 10.dbd2 and C) 10.c3.

Other moves do not require too much attention.

10.d3 0–0 hardly leaves White anything better than 10.d1 leading to variation A of the next chapter, which can be found on page 247.

10.a4 b4 can be compared with variation C of Chapter 10, and it seems to me that the inclusion of the moves \(\text{\textit{c2}}\) and ...\(\text{\textit{e7}}\) is likely to favour Black. Here is an illustrative example:

11.c3 \(\text{\textit{c5}}\) 12.d2 b3!

13.d3 (Also after 13.d1 N d4! 14.cxd4 \(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) \(\text{\textit{xd4}}\) Black's advantage is not in doubt.) 13...\(\text{\textit{d7}}\) 14.d3 \(\text{\textit{d3}}\) 15.\(\text{\textit{xd3}}\) \(\text{\textit{f5+}}\). Black's domination over the light squares gave him the better chances in Rautenberg – Czaya, Weidenau 1947.

10.f1 doesn't make much sense as the rook would be better on d1. 10...0–0 11.d1 \(\text{\textit{c5}}\) 12.d1 I. Polgar – Bukacek, Dresden 1969. Now Black's best continuation would have been:

12...\(\text{\textit{g4!N}}\) 13.d1 d4 14.d3 d3! Forcing the following inadequate exchange sacrifice. 15.\(\text{\textit{xd3}}\) (15.cxd3? \(\text{\textit{d4+}}\)) 15...\(\text{\textit{xd3}}\) 16.\(\text{\textit{xd3}}\) \(\text{\textit{c5}}\) White cannot hope for sufficient compensation after the light-squared bishop is eliminated.
10.\( \text{f4} \)

The combination of White's last two moves does not make much sense.

10...0-0 11.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{a5} \) 12.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{c5} \)

13.\( \text{xd5!} \)

This is the only chance to make sense of White's position, although ultimately Black is still doing well.

13.\( \text{xe6?} \) \( \text{fxe6} \) 14.\( \text{g4} \) was played in Leal – Henriques, Amadora 2000, and here it is easy to improve Black's play: 14...\( \text{xf4!N} \)

15.\( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{c4} \)

I also checked the following line: 15.\( \text{xf4} \) \( \text{xe7} \) 16.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{g6!} \) 17.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{g5} \) 18.\( \text{c3} \)

18...\( \text{xf3!} \) 19.\( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xe2} \) 20.\( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \)

21.\( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{e8!} \) with some superiority for Black.

Black has a positional advantage and White's extra pawn is hardly relevant.

A) 10.\( \text{c4?!} \)

This move is dubious, but it has the aim of causing concrete problems which is why I gave it the status of a main line.

10...\( \text{bxc4} \) 11.\( \text{a4} \)

This is the only serious attempt to justify White's last move.

11.\( \text{xc4} \) is pretty feeble: 11...\( \text{dxc4} \) 12.\( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xd5} \) 13.\( \text{f4} \)

Now in Panchenko – Kharitonov, Sochi 1979, the simple 13...0-0!N would have led to Black's advantage, for instance: 14.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{d3} \) 15.\( \text{d1} \) \( \text{c2} \) 16.\( \text{g3} \) (or 16...\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{g6} \) 17.\( \text{d5} \) \( \text{b4}! \))
16...\text{h}d8 17.\text{b}e1  \text{ab}8 18.\text{h}3  \text{g}6\#! The overriding theme of these positions is that Black's bishop pair and active pieces are more significant than the token weakness of the doubled c-pawns.

11...\text{d}7 12.\text{c}3
White needs to get more pieces involved in the game.

The attempt to force an immediate breakthrough is doomed to fail: 12.\text{e}6  \text{fxe}6 13.\text{xc}6  \text{xc}6 14.\text{e}5  \text{b}7 15.\text{h}5\#  \text{g}6 16.\text{xg}6  \text{f}6! 17.\text{h}3  \text{g}8\#
In Keres – Bronstein, Moscow 1946, Black's strong centre and open g-file gave him an obvious advantage.

12...\text{c}5! 13.\text{e}6
13.\text{xc}6  \text{xc}6 14.\text{d}4  \text{d}7 15.\text{f}3  \text{b}7 also left White without enough compensation in Lundin – Backe, Hallsberg 1981.

13...\text{fxe}6 14.\text{xc}6  \text{xc}6 15.\text{e}5
This position was reached in Abroshin – Radchenko, corr. 1954, and here Black's most accurate continuation would have been:

15...\text{b}7\!\!\!N
The game continuation of 15...\text{d}6 was also pretty good and led to broadly similar play, but I slightly prefer this way of doing things.

16.\text{h}5\#  \text{g}6 17.\text{xg}6
Now Black does not have the option of ...\text{f}6 as in the note to move 12, but he has a more than adequate alternative.

17...\text{hxg}6! 18.\text{xh}8\#  \text{d}7\#
Black dominates the centre and White's extra exchange is of little significance.

B) 10.\text{bd}2

This rare move doesn't promise White any advantage. The same position sometimes arises via the move order 9.\text{bd}2 \text{e}7 10.\text{e}2, although in Chapter 18 and 19 we meet 9.\text{bd}2 with 9...\text{c}5, so it is only the present move order that is relevant to us.
10...c5 11.d1
11.c3 is strongly answered by 11...f5! making use of the weak d3-square. 12.d1 d3 13.e3 This position occurred in Elez – Rade, Bihac 2010, and now I would like to offer:

```
13...0-0!?N 14.d4 d7 15.d2 f4 16.xc6 xc6 17.d4 d7 18.c2 ae8!
With the idea of ...f6 and Black is doing fine.
```

11...0-0 12.c3
12.f1 has been tried by a few strong players including Grischuk, albeit in a blitz game. I recommend the rare 12...f6! as the opening of the f-file will favour Black. For example: 13.exf6N (13.g3 fxe5 14.xe5 dxe5 15.xe5 d6 was more pleasant for Black in T. Lee - Currie, e-mail 2001.) 13...xf6 14.c3 d6! Followed by ...ae8 and Black is better.

12...d7
12...f5 is a reasonable alternative which has the idea of preventing c2.

13.c2 f6
Black chooses a good moment to execute this thematic freeing move, as White's pieces are still not particularly well developed.

14.exf6 xf6 15.b3 a4

With approximate equality in Dervishi – Vallejo Pons, Palermo 2007. Black intends ...d7-e5 over the next few moves.
16...\textit{f\textsubscript{5}}

Exchanging the light-squared bishops is a typical plan for Black in the Open Spanish, especially in the 9.c\textsubscript{3} variation which can be found in Chapters 16 and 17.

17.\textit{e\textsubscript{3}}

This position occurred in Vasiukov – Lutikov, Moscow 1982. Now Black’s easiest route to equality seems to be:

17...\textit{x\textsubscript{c2}}\textsubscript{N} 18.\textit{Wx\textsubscript{c2}} \textit{Le5} 19.\textit{Lx\textsubscript{e5}} \textit{xe\textsubscript{5}}=

With \ldots \textit{ae8} to follow.

C) 10.\textit{c3}

This position can also arise via the 9.c\textsubscript{3} \textit{e\textsubscript{7}} 10.\textit{ue2} move order, but once again this alternative sequence is of little interest to us, as in Chapter 16 we will be meeting 9.c\textsubscript{3} with 9...\textit{c\textsubscript{5}}.

10...\textit{0–0}

From this position I will analyse C1) 11.\textit{e\textsubscript{c2}}, C2) 11.\textit{bd2} and C3) 11.\textit{d\textsubscript{4}} in detail.

11.\textit{d\textsubscript{1}} will be analysed later under the move order 10.\textit{d\textsubscript{1}} 0–0 11.c\textsubscript{3} – see variation B in the next chapter on page 249.

The rare 11.a\textsubscript{4}?! \textit{c\textsubscript{5}} 12.\textit{c\textsubscript{2}} occurred in Niephaus – Cortlever, Utrecht 1954, and here Black’s strongest continuation would have been 12...\textit{xa\textsubscript{4}}!N 13.\textit{xa\textsubscript{4}} \text{bxa\textsubscript{4}} 14.\textit{xa\textsubscript{4}} a\textsubscript{5}! intending \ldots \textit{d\textsubscript{7}}. Black has the upper hand thanks to his bishop pair and control over the light squares, and the incidental threat of \ldots \textit{xe\textsubscript{5}} will also force White to lose some time.

C1) 11.\textit{c\textsubscript{2}}

\textit{d\textsubscript{7}}! 12.\textit{d\textsubscript{1}}

12.\textit{d\textsubscript{4}} transposes to variation C3 below.

12.\textit{x\textsubscript{e\textsubscript{4}}}! is a dubious pawn grab as it leaves White seriously weak on the light squares.

12...\textit{dxe\textsubscript{4}} 13.\textit{xe\textsubscript{4}} \textit{d\textsubscript{5}} 14.\textit{d\textsubscript{3}} (14.\textit{e\textsubscript{3}}
Chapter 14 - \textit{9.\textcolor{black}{\textit{We}2 -- Introduction}}

13...\texttt{ad}8!N 14.\texttt{b}b3

14.\texttt{xe}4? is bad: 14...\texttt{fxe}4 15.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{dxe}4 16.\texttt{xd}7 \texttt{exf}3

17.\texttt{xd}8? (17.\texttt{gx}f3 \texttt{xd}7\texttt{t} is depressing, but still White’s best chance.) 17...\texttt{fxe}2 18.\texttt{xf}8\texttt{t} \texttt{xf}8 19.\texttt{xe}3 \texttt{b}4! 20.\texttt{e}e1 \texttt{c}4! 21.\texttt{xd}2 \texttt{c}2 22.\texttt{c}c1 \texttt{d}3\texttt{t} White’s situation is hopeless.

14.\texttt{d}4 \texttt{xd}4 15.\texttt{cxd}4 \texttt{c}5! is also good for Black.

14...\texttt{f}7!

Black moves the bishop away from attack and towards the h5-square.

15.\texttt{bd}4 \texttt{xd}4 16.\texttt{cxd}4 \texttt{e}6=

Followed by ...\texttt{h}5 with a good position for Black.

\textbf{C2) 11.\texttt{bd}2}

Not for the first time in the chapter, we arrive at a position that can be reached via at least one other move order. This time the alternative routes are 9.\texttt{bd}2 \texttt{e}7 10.\texttt{c}3 0-0 11.\texttt{e}2 and 9.\texttt{c}3 \texttt{e}7 10.\texttt{bd}2 0-0 11.\texttt{e}2, although it must be said that 11.\texttt{e}2 is a relative sideline in that position, with 11.\texttt{c}2! being the main try for an advantage.

I should add that neither of these move orders are relevant to our repertoire, as we will be meeting 9.\texttt{c}3 with 9...\texttt{c}5 and 9.\texttt{bd}2 with 9...\texttt{c}5.

11.\texttt{f}5

I like this move against \texttt{e}2 set-ups, as it prevents White from playing \texttt{c}2 in view of ...\texttt{xc}3.

12.\texttt{d}1

After 12.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{dxe}4 13.\texttt{d}2 Black has a pleasant choice:
13...\textit{Wd3}!? An interesting exchange sacrifice. (There is a safe alternative in 13...Dxe5 14.Dxe4 \textit{Wd3} =) 14.Wxd3 exd3 15.Wxe5 16.Bxe1 Qg6 17.Qxa8 Qxa8 Black has good compensation.


After 15.Qc3 Qe4 I do not see anything better for White than 16.Qd2 Qg6 17.Qf3 offering a repetition of moves.

We have been following the game Houna – Takashima, Thessaloniki 1984. Now I would like to improve upon Black’s play with:

15...\textit{Qg6}?!N

Black moves the bishop to a more secure position and prepares to transfer his knight to e6.

16.b4

16.c4?! is strongly met by 16...Qb4!!

16.Qf4 Qd8! 17.c4 Qe6 18.Qe3 c6= is also pleasant for Black.

16...\textit{Qfd8}

Black strengthens his centre and prepares the following idea.

17.h3 a5!=

Based on the following line:

18.Qxb5 Qxb5 19.Qa6 axb4 20.c4 Qe6

Black is fine.
C3) 11.\(\mathcal{D}d4\)

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

11...\(\mathcal{D}d7!\)

Black should avoid exchanging on \(e4\) here, as it would leave the \(d4\)-knight short of squares.

12.\(\mathcal{A}c2\)

I checked two other moves:

12.\(\mathcal{D}d2\) 13.\(\mathcal{D}xd4\) 13.\(\mathcal{D}xd2\) 14.\(\mathcal{D}xd2\) \(c5\)

15.\(\mathcal{A}e3\) (Or 15.\(\mathcal{D}xc5\) \(\mathcal{A}xc5\) with a roughly balanced position in Gerenski – Popov, Sofia 1957. For example, 16.\(\mathcal{A}c1\) \(\mathcal{A}c8\) 17.\(\mathcal{A}xc5\) \(\mathcal{A}xc5\) 18.\(\mathcal{A}b4\) \(\mathcal{A}bc8\) 19.\(\mathcal{A}xc5\) \(\mathcal{A}xc5\) 20.\(\mathcal{D}d1\) \(\mathcal{A}c7\) 21.\(\mathcal{A}e3\) \(h6\) with equality.)

12...\(\mathcal{E}f5\) 13.\(\mathcal{D}f3\)

13.\(\mathcal{D}f6?!\) is dubious due to 13...\(\mathcal{D}xd4!\)

14.\(\mathcal{D}xd4\) \(\mathcal{D}xf6\).

13.\(\mathcal{A}d1\) \(\mathcal{D}xd4\) 14.\(\mathcal{D}xd4\) \(c5\) 15.\(\mathcal{D}d2\) occurred in...
Sethuraman – Bulski, Legnica 2010. Now I would like to offer:

Another interesting line is: 14.\(d1\)\? 15.\(f4\)\(f4\) I like this recapture, which allows us to retain the integrity of the pawn chain. 16.\(d3\)\(d5\)

15.\(x7\)!N 16.\(d4\)\(f4\) 17.\(e3\)\(d8\) Black is doing fine.

The main line position was reached in Byrne – Unzicker, Hastings 1971. At this point I would like to introduce an interesting piece sacrifice.

13...\(c5\)!N

An attractive and powerful idea, which I have discovered while working on this book.

14.\(d1\)

White should reject the sacrifice: 14.\(f4\)\? \(d4\) 15.\(x4\)\(f4\)\# 16.\(e3\) \(xb2\) 17.\(x5\) \(x1\) 18.\(x6\) \(x1\)\# 19.\(d3\) \(d6\) 20.\(d2\) \(g4\) 21.\(e2\) \(d7\) 22.\(h1\) \(xe5\) 23.\(xe5\)\(c4\) followed by ...\(d2\) and Black develops some initiative.) 17....\(g4\) 18.\(w2\) \(d6\) 19.\(g3\) \(xe3\) 20.\(xe3\) \(h3\) 21.\(xf8\)# \(xf8\) With two pawns and a strong pawn centre for a piece, Black's chances are good.

14...\(d5\)

14...\(a7\)! could be considered here too.

15.\(h1\)\(d8\)!

Black intensifies the pressure by bringing his last piece into play.

16.\(a4\)

After 16.\(f4\)\? \(f4\) Black's threats turn out to be too strong, for example: 17.\(d1\) (17.\(d6\) \(d4\) 18.\(d2\) \(d4\) 19.\(f1\) \(x1\) 20.\(d5\)\# 21.\(d6\) \(d6\) 22.\(c3\) \(g7\) 23.\(x4\) \(f8\)# Black's chances are higher.

15...\(x7\)!
19...\texttt{g4!} 20.\texttt{d2} \texttt{d6} 21.\texttt{g3} \texttt{xg3} 22.hxg3 \texttt{x}d4 23.cxd4 \texttt{f2}+ With complete domination.

16.\texttt{b3} \texttt{g4}! Black insists on opening the f-file at the cost of a piece. (The quiet 16...\texttt{h8}! also promises good play.)

17...\texttt{h5}!
Finally the tension on the kingside is too much to bear, and a forcing sequence ensues.

18.\texttt{f4}!
18.fxe4? \texttt{g4}! is too dangerous.

18...\texttt{x}d4! 19.cxd4 \texttt{g6} 20.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{f7}! 21.b6

19...\texttt{f7}!
Intending to transfer the queen to h5.

17.axb5
After 17.fxe4 fxe4 18.h3 \texttt{g6}! Black creates a strong threat of ...\texttt{g4} and obtains a serious initiative.

21.\texttt{xc7}! 22.\texttt{x}e4 \texttt{f4}! 23.\texttt{f2}
After 23.\texttt{e3} \texttt{c6} 24.\texttt{d3} \texttt{xd3} 25.\texttt{x}d3 \texttt{xb6} Black is okay.

23...\texttt{c6} 24.\texttt{c2} \texttt{xb6}=
With roughly equal chances.

**Conclusion**

The variations examined here are pretty rare but they should not be underestimated, and there were a number of places where I was forced to find improvements over existing theory. I am especially pleased to have found the 13...\texttt{c5}!N idea in the final variation of the chapter, and am now satisfied that Black is at least holding his own in the ensuing complications.
Main Lines

9.\he2 \he7 10.\hd1

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.\he3 \hc6 3.\hb5 a6 4.\ha4 \hf6 5.0-0 \he4
6.d4 b5 7.\hb3 d5 8.dxe5 \he6 9.\he2 \he7 10.\hd1

10...0-0

A) 11.\he3 247
B) 11.c3 \hc5 12.\he2 \hg4
   B1) 13.\hd2 249
   B2) 13.b4 251
C) 11.c4 bxc4 12.\xc4 \hc5 13.\he3 \xe3 14.\he3 \hb8 15.\hb3 \ha5 254
   C1) 16.\hd4 255
   C2) 16.\he3 255
   C3) 16.\he1 257
   C4) 16.\hd2 \ha7 258
      C41) 17.\he2 259
      C42) 17.\hd4 261
      C43) 17.\he4 263
      C44) 17.\he7 266

A) after 16.\he5

B2) after 26.\he3

C41) after 18.\hd2
1.e4 e5 2.\( \mathcal{N} \)f3 \( \mathcal{N} \)c6 3.\( \mathcal{B} \)b5 \( \mathcal{a} \)a6 4.\( \mathcal{B} \)a4 \( \mathcal{N} \)f6 5.0-0 \( \mathcal{B} \)xe4 6.d4 b5 7.\( \mathcal{B} \)b3 d5 8.dxe5 \( \mathcal{B} \)e6 9.\( \mathcal{B} \)e2 \( \mathcal{B} \)e7 10.\( \mathcal{B} \)d1

This is the main line, and certainly the most natural follow-up to the previous move. White is hoping to make use of the pressure along the d-file.

10...0-0

Here we will consider A) 11.\( \mathcal{B} \)e3 and B) 11.c3 before analysing the main line C) 11.c4.

11.\( \mathcal{B} \)bd2 \( \mathcal{N} \)c5 transposes to variation B in the previous chapter – see page 238.

11.\( \mathcal{B} \)c3?! is dubious: 11...\( \mathcal{B} \)xc3 12.bxc3 \( \mathcal{N} \)a5 13.a4 Cappello – Kchouk, Lugano 1968.

A) 11.\( \mathcal{B} \)e3

12.\( \mathcal{B} \)bd2

Moving the other knight does not cause Black problems:

12.\( \mathcal{B} \)d4 c5 13.\( \mathcal{B} \)xe6 fxe6 14.\( \mathcal{B} \)g4

After 14.c3 Black exchanges the dark-squared bishops, which could result in a forced drawing line: 14...\( \mathcal{B} \)g5! 15.f3 \( \mathcal{B} \)xe3† 16.\( \mathcal{B} \)xe3 \( \mathcal{B} \)g5 17.\( \mathcal{B} \)e2

11...\( \mathcal{N} \)a5!

Preparing ...c5, which normally brings Black a good game.

12.\( \mathcal{B} \)bd2

13.c5!N 14.axb5 axb5 15.\( \mathcal{B} \)xb5 \( \mathcal{B} \)xb3
14...\textit{\texttt{b6}} 15.c3
It's important that 15.f3? doesn't work in view of 15...\textit{\texttt{g5}}! 16.fxe4 \textit{\texttt{xe4}} 17.\textit{\texttt{h1}} c4 and Black wins.

15.\textit{\texttt{d2?!}} may be White's best, and after 15...\textit{\texttt{xd2}} 16.\textit{\texttt{xd2}} \textit{\texttt{c4}} 17.\textit{\texttt{c4}} bxc4 18.c3 \textit{\texttt{ad8}} the position is equal.

15.\textit{\texttt{xb3}} 16.\textit{\texttt{xb3}} \textit{\texttt{f5}} 17.f3 \textit{\texttt{g5}}! 18.\textit{\texttt{c5}} c4! 19.\textit{\texttt{d4}} \textit{\texttt{c5}} 20.\textit{\texttt{c4}} \textit{\texttt{c4}} 21.\textit{\texttt{e3}} \textit{\texttt{c5}}
Black had the better chances in Kvon – Egin, Tashkent 2008.

12...\textit{\texttt{xd2}} 13.\textit{\texttt{xd2}} \textit{\texttt{xb3}} 14.\textit{\texttt{axb3}} c5
The position is roughly balanced. White has the more active rooks, while Black can point to his bishop pair and mobile queenside pawns.

15.c3
Another game continued: 15.\textit{\texttt{g5}} \textit{\texttt{g5}} (15...h6? is a good alternative.) 16.\textit{\texttt{d5}} h6 (16...\textit{\texttt{f5}}? is also equal.) 17.\textit{\texttt{f3}} a5 18.\textit{\texttt{f4}} \textit{\texttt{c7}}

19.\textit{\texttt{g3}}?! d4! and Black seized initiative in Zhang Zhong – Torre, Jakarta 2011.
18...c4! Obvious and strong. Now the b4-pawn becomes a target. 19.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{a}4\)! with better chances for Black in Krantz – Ek, Falkoeping 1965.

The main move was played in Parma – Peters, Luxembourg 1971. At this point I would like to improve Black’s play with:

16...\(g5\)?N

Luring one of the white pieces away from the centre.

17.\(xg5\) a5

Black intends ...b4, which would not only prevent White from blockading on the dark squares, but would also fix the b3-pawn as a target for a future endgame. The critical line continues as follows:

18.b4? axb4 19.cxb4 \(\text{xa}4\) 20.\(\text{xa}1\) cxb4 21.\(\text{d}2\)

21.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{b}8\) 22.\(h3\) \(\text{c}8\)=

21...\(\text{c}4\) 22.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{e}4\) 23.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{c}4\) 24.\(\text{c}1\)=

Neither side benefits from avoiding the repetition.

B) 11.\(c3\)

I happened to meet this line once, in a game that will be referenced in the note to move 19 in variation B2 below. Almost two decades later, I am happy to recommend the same path for Black.

11...\(c5\) 12.\(c2\) \(g4\)

At this point we will analyse the simple developing move B1) 13.\(bd2\) followed by the more critical B2) 13.\(b4\).

B1) 13.\(bd2\) f6! 14.\(h3\)

14.\(xf6\) \(xf6\) 15.\(b3\) was seen in Stanchev – Dzhogov, Sofia 1945, and now Black’s play can be improved by means of 15...\(e8\)!N 16.\(e3\) \(a4\) 17.\(h3\) \(h5\) 18.\(d3\) \(g6\) 19.\(d2\) \(h5\)! with an equal position.

14...\(h5\)
15...\texttt{b4?!} \hfill 18...\texttt{d3??} \texttt{b6+} Black was clearly better in Ozsvath – Honfi, Budapest 1958.

This was played in the only game to have reached the previous position, but it is inaccurate. A better continuation is 15...\texttt{g4??}N \texttt{g6} 16...\texttt{xg6 hgx6} 17...\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 18...\texttt{b3} \texttt{e4} 19...\texttt{e3} \texttt{d6} 20...\texttt{bd2} \texttt{ae8} with roughly equal chances.

15...\texttt{a4} \hfill 25...\texttt{e3!}

15...\texttt{e6??}N is also decent.

16...\texttt{xf6} \texttt{xf6} 17...\texttt{e4} \texttt{e6} \hfill 21...\texttt{d6!} 22...\texttt{f4!} dxe4 23...\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xc3} 24...\texttt{c2} \texttt{xd1} 25...\texttt{xh1}

18...\texttt{e3N} \hfill 25...\texttt{e3!}

I mainly analysed this new move, as it is the only real chance to justify White's previous play.

This strong move destroys White's pawn structure on the kingside. 25...\texttt{d5??} would
be a mistake in view of 26.\textit{\textbf{b3}} intending 26...\textit{\textbf{h8}} 27.\textit{\textbf{xg7+}} and \textit{\textbf{White wins}}.

26.\textit{\textbf{fxe3 \textit{\textbf{f8!}}}}

\textit{\textbf{Black}} gives back the material and retains a better position thanks to the weaknesses in \textit{\textbf{White}}'s pawn structure.

\textit{\textbf{B2)}} 13.\textit{\textbf{b4}}

13...\textit{\textbf{a4!}}

\textit{\textbf{Black}} has no need to fear doubled pawns, as exchanging on a4 would leave \textit{\textbf{White}} seriously weak on the light squares, especially after b2-b4 has been played.

14.\textit{\textbf{f4}}

14.c4?! as played in Markus – Van Buuren, corr. 1985, should not turn out well for \textit{\textbf{White}}: 14...\textit{\textbf{xb4!N}} 15.\textit{\textbf{xa4 bxa4}} 16.a3 \textit{\textbf{c6}}

17.\textit{\textbf{xd5}} (In the event of 17.cxd5 I would like to correct \textit{\textbf{Ftcnik}}'s analysis and offer the immediate 17...\textit{\textbf{exe5!}} with a big advantage for \textit{\textbf{Black}}.) 17...\textit{\textbf{c8}} \textit{\textbf{Black}}'s chances are higher thanks to his development advantage and bishop pair.

14.h3?! \textit{\textbf{xf3}} 15.\textit{\textbf{xf3}} occurred in Marcotulli – Lombart, e-mail 2001, and now the consistent continuation would have been: 15...\textit{\textbf{exe5!N}} 16.\textit{\textbf{f5}} (16.\textit{\textbf{h5 g6}} 17.\textit{\textbf{xd5 c8}} 18.\textit{\textbf{e3 c6+}} and \textit{\textbf{Black}} seizes the initiative thanks to the weakness of the c3-pawn.)

14.\textit{\textbf{d3N}}

I checked one other idea for \textit{\textbf{White}}: 14.\textit{\textbf{d3N}}

This attempt to win a pawn doesn't lead to the desired result.
14...g6 15.\textit{\texttt{x}}xa4  
If 15.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd5?! \textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 16.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{w}}x\textit{\texttt{f}}3 17.\textit{\texttt{g}}x\textit{\texttt{f}}3 \textit{\texttt{c}}b6 Black wins back the pawn and obtains slightly better chances as pointed out by Ftacnik.

15...\textit{\texttt{b}}xa4 16.\textit{\texttt{h}}6 \textit{\texttt{e}}8 17.\textit{\texttt{f}}4!  
17.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 18.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{w}}x\textit{\texttt{f}}3 19.\textit{\texttt{g}}x\textit{\texttt{f}}3 \textit{\texttt{e}}ad8 20.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd8 \textit{\texttt{w}}xd8 21.\textit{\texttt{d}}2 \textit{\texttt{c}}xe5  

17...\textit{\texttt{f}}6!  
This move would be even stronger with the rook on f8, hence the earlier 16.\textit{\texttt{h}}6 move.

18.\textit{\texttt{h}}3 \textit{\texttt{f}}5 19.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd5† \textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 20.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{e}}ad8! 21.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd8 \textit{\texttt{w}}xd8 22.\textit{\texttt{d}}bd2 \textit{\texttt{c}}xe5! 23.\textit{\texttt{d}}xe5 \textit{\texttt{f}}xe5 24.\textit{\texttt{e}}3 \textit{\texttt{c}}5! 25.\textit{\texttt{b}}xc5 \textit{\texttt{c}}xc5 26.\textit{\texttt{x}}c5 \textit{\texttt{b}}xd2  
Black is certainly not worse in this endgame.

14...\textit{\texttt{d}}7?!  
I find this the most natural move, even though it implies a pawn sacrifice.

15.\textit{\texttt{w}}d3 g6 16.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 17.\textit{\texttt{w}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{f}}6 18.\textit{\texttt{f}}d1  
White’s only real attempt to fight for an advantage is the untested move:

18.\textit{\texttt{d}}2!N  
But here too Black should be okay after accurate play.

18...\textit{\texttt{c}}4 19.\textit{\texttt{e}}2 \textit{\texttt{a}}5 20.\textit{\texttt{e}}4 \textit{\texttt{a}}6  

21.\textit{\texttt{a}}4! \textit{\texttt{a}}xb4 22.\textit{\texttt{x}}c6 \textit{\texttt{a}}xc6 23.\textit{\texttt{x}}b5 \textit{\texttt{b}}6 24.\textit{\texttt{c}}xb4 \textit{\texttt{c}}xb4 25.\textit{\texttt{c}}2  
Another nice line continues: 25.\textit{\texttt{e}}4 \textit{\texttt{e}}6 26.\textit{\texttt{a}}4 \textit{\texttt{c}}5! 27.\textit{\texttt{b}}xc6 \textit{\texttt{d}}5 28.\textit{\texttt{d}}4 \textit{\texttt{x}}c6 29.\textit{\texttt{e}}2 \textit{\texttt{e}}5! 30.\textit{\texttt{e}}4 \textit{\texttt{b}}1† with equality.

25...\textit{\texttt{e}}6! 26.\textit{\texttt{g}}5 \textit{\texttt{d}}5 27.\textit{\texttt{c}}3 \textit{\texttt{x}}c3 28.\textit{\texttt{x}}c3 \textit{\texttt{b}}xb5 29.\textit{\texttt{e}}4 \textit{\texttt{g}}7  
Black will have to be slightly careful due to the weak dark squares on the kingside, but he should not have too much trouble holding the endgame.
Chapter 15 - 9.\text{e}2 \text{e}7 10.\text{d}1

18...\text{xd}8! 19.\text{e}1

Fracnik considered this move to be dubious, though in my opinion it’s better than the following alternative which Sax played against me:

19.\text{xd}8 \text{xd}8 20.\text{e}6 \text{d}5 21.\text{exf}7+ \text{g}7?!

Black avoids being pinned along the a2-g8 diagonal.

Nevertheless 21...\text{xf}7 also looks playable, and after 22.\text{b}3 \text{xf}3 23.\text{gxf}3 \text{f}6 24.\text{xc}7 \text{d}7 Black has some initiative for the sacrificed material.

My idea was to keep the king in the cage.
Black is also doing fine after 24...\text{f}5?!
25.a4 \text{h}4 26.axb5 \text{xf}3+ 27.\text{h}1 axb5

22.\text{g}5

22.\text{e}5 doesn’t promise any advantage either: 22...\text{xc}b4! 23.\text{xb}4 \text{xf}4 24.\text{xg}4 \text{h}5 25.\text{e}3 \text{f}6 26.\text{g}3 \text{e}6 27.\text{b}3 \text{d}6 28.\text{xe}6 \text{xe}6 29.\text{c}3 \text{xc}3 30.\text{c}1 \text{e}5=

The position is equal.

22...\text{xf}3 23.\text{xe}7 \text{exe}7 24.\text{gxf}3 \text{f}4?!

25.a4 \text{f}5 26.axb5 axb5

Sax – Mikhaevski, Benasque 1993. Now White should have played:
27.\text{a}7N \text{d}7=

With equal chances.

19...\text{d}5 20.\text{h}6

After 20.\text{g}3 f5! 21.h3 \text{xf}3 22.gxf3 f4 23.\text{h}2 \text{h}8?! a complicated position arises.
Black intends ...\text{f}e8 and ...\text{f}8 to hit the e5-pawn, while White also has to worry about whether the caged bishop on h2 will ever see the light of day.

20...\text{f}e8 21.a4 \text{xf}3 22.gxf3 \text{f}8?!

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Black won the e5-pawn and took over the initiative. Short – Timman, El Escorial (6) 1993.

C) 11.c4

This is the main line by far. White attempts to seize the initiative by attacking the centre.

11...bxc4 12.\textit{xe}4 \textit{c}5

Some alternatives have been tried, but I like this active option the most. White's next few moves are virtually forced.

13.\textit{e}3 \textit{xe}3

Black deflects the queen from the defence of the b2-pawn.

14.\textit{xe}3 \textit{b}8

15.\textit{b}3

15.\textit{xd}5?? loses to 15...\textit{xd}5 16.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xb}2 17.\textit{xe}4 Bacholke – Grimm, Germany 2005, and now 17...\textit{ad}8!N is the most precise. Black is an exchange up without allowing any compensation.

15.b3?! is questionable in view of: 15...\textit{xf}2 16.\textit{xd}5 (or 16.\textit{xf}2 dxc4 and Black is a pawn up, Houtsonen – Alava, Kuopio 1992) 16...\textit{g}4! 17.\textit{c}5 \textit{xd}5 18.\textit{xd}5

Hartmann – Oechslein, Germany 1976. Now 18...\textit{b}4!N is strong, based on the line 19.\textit{xa}8 \textit{d}8! 20.\textit{f}1 (20.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}3!–+) 20...\textit{d}3! 21.\textit{e}7 \textit{f}4! 22.\textit{bd}2 \textit{x}a8 with a decisive advantage for Black thanks to the vulnerable king on f1.

15...\textit{a}5

I prefer this over the less popular 15...\textit{b}6. We have now reached a key juncture where White has four main options: C1) 16.\textit{d}4, C2) 16.\textit{c}3, C3) 16.\textit{e}1 and C4) 16.\textit{bd}2.

16.\textit{xd}5 allows Black to force a draw immediately if he wishes it: 16...\textit{xd}5 17.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xb}2 18.\textit{d}4 \textit{c}1 19.\textit{d}1 \textit{b}2 (If Black wants to play for a win then 19...\textit{xd}1\textit{f} 20.\textit{xd}1 \textit{f}d8 leads to an equal endgame where the stronger play could win from either side.) 20.\textit{d}4 \textit{c}1\textit{f} ½–½ Sharif – Strobel, Skopje (Ol) 1972.
Chapter 15 – 9.\textit{e2 e7} 10.\textit{d1} 255

C1) 16.\textit{d4}

16...\textit{b6} 17.f3
17.\textit{c3} \textit{xc3} 18.bxc3 occurred in Rapatinski – Beckmann, Germany 1987. Here I suggest 18...\textit{c5?!N} 19.\textit{f3} \textit{xb3} 20.axb3 \textit{xb3} 21.\textit{db1} \textit{c4} 22.\textit{d2} d4 23.\textit{xc4} dxe3 24.\textit{xe3} a5 with roughly equal chances.

17...\textit{c5} 18.\textit{c3}\textit{N}
This untested move seems to be White's best, so I promoted it to my main line.

An old game of mine continued: 18.\textit{d2}? \textit{xcxb3} 19.axb3 \textit{c6}? 20.a4

Lederman – Mikhelevski, Beersheba 1991. Now I should have played 20...\textit{b4?!N} 21.\textit{c1} a5\textit{N} when Black's advantage is not in doubt.

18...\textit{xb3} 19.axb3 \textit{c5}!
Mobilizing the c-pawn is an important theme in many Open Spanish lines, and this one is no exception.

20.\textit{f5}
I also analysed 20.\textit{xd5} \textit{xd5} 21.\textit{f5} \textit{e6} 22.\textit{d6} \textit{b5} 23.\textit{g7!} \textit{g7} 24.\textit{g5\textsubscript{+} h8} 25.\textit{f6\textsubscript{+} =}

20...\textit{d4!} 21.\textit{g5} \textit{xf5} 22.\textit{d5} \textit{d8} 23.\textit{f6\textsubscript{+} h8} 24.\textit{xf5} \textit{gxf6}
Now White has nothing better than forcing a draw.

C2) 16.\textit{c3}

25.\textit{xa5!} \textit{xa5} 26.\textit{xf6\textsubscript{+} g8} 27.\textit{g5\textsubscript{+} =}
The game ends in perpetual check.
With this rare move White gives up a pawn in the hope of developing an initiative, but the idea does not cause Black many problems.

16...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}xb3} 17.axb3 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}xb3} 18.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}d4} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash b}7} 19.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}4}

19.f3

This move was played in Gajsin – Vokarev, Ekaterinburg 2008, and here I found a nice new idea:

19...c5!?N 20.fxe4

20.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}xe6} 21.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}c3} 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d1} 23.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d1}

22...c4!= The knight on f8 is trapped and so the position is equal.

20...cxd4

21.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}xd4}

21.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d4} dxe4 22.b4 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}7}! 23.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}e4} (23.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}e4} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}c8} is also good for Black.) 23...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}e5} 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}5} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}7} 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}5} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash e}7} 26.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}6} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}6} and Black isn't worse.

21...dxe4 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}e4} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}b8} 23.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}2} h6 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}5} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash b}5}

The position is equal, for example:

25.h3 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}fd8}! 26.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d8t} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d8} 27.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}d8t} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash h}h7} 28.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}e6} fxe6 29.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}6} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}b2} 30.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}xa6} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}1t} 31.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash h}h2} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}4t}=

19...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}7}! 20.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash b}3}!!

20.f3 \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}xa4} 21.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}a4} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}5} 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}3} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}e8} is also preferable for Black.

20...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}xa4} 21.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}a4} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}e8} 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}3} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash d}6}!

A simple but nonetheless pleasing manoeuvre.

23.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash f}4} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}4} 24.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}5} \texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}b2}

Also in Black's favour is 24...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}a5}!?N 25.\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash a}5} c6? with the ideas of ...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash x}b2} and ...\texttt{\textit{\textbackslash c}7}. 
25.\( \text{dxc4} \text{ dxc4} \) \( \text{26.} \text{\textbf{f3}} \)

Jakel – Mikhailovski, Antwerp 1999. Here I should have played:

![Chess Diagram]

26...\( \text{c3!N} \)

Black is better, for instance:

27.\( \text{\textbf{xf7}} \text{+} \text{ h8} \) 28.\( \text{\textbf{g3}} \text{ g8} \) 29.\( \text{\textbf{f1}} \text{ c2} \)

30.\( \text{\textbf{c4}} \text{ ad8} \) 31.\( \text{\textbf{c3}} \text{ \textbf{d2}} \) 32.\( \text{e6} \text{ h6+} \)

The endgame is complex but more dangerous for White.

C3) 16.\( \text{\textbf{e1}} \)

White creates a threat of \( \text{f2-f3} \) while the knight eyes the \( \text{d3} \)-square.

16...\( \text{\textbf{xb3}} \) 17.\( \text{\textbf{axb3}} \text{ f5!} \)

Black's idea is to meet 18.\( \text{f3} \) with 18...\( \text{f4} \) saving the knight.

18.\( \text{f3} \)

This has been tested in some correspondence games and has made a plus score for White, but it hardly presents any problems for Black. I checked three other moves as well:

18.\( \text{\textbf{d3}} \text{ d4!} \) 19.\( \text{\textbf{e2}} \text{ \textbf{xb3}} \) 20.\( \text{\textbf{c1}} \) Brenjov – Iordachescu, Zlatibor 2007. Now I would like to improve upon Black's play with:

![Chess Diagram]

20...\( \text{\textbf{d8}} \text{N} \) 21.\( \text{\textbf{d2}} \text{ \textbf{d5}} \) 22.\( \text{\textbf{c2}} \text{ \textbf{c5+}} \) with slightly better chances.

18.\( \text{exf6} \) has been White's most common move, but it seems toothless: 18...\( \text{\textbf{xf6}} \) 19.\( \text{\textbf{f3}} \text{ \textbf{d6}} \)

20.\( \text{\textbf{d2}} \)

![Chess Diagram]

20...\( \text{\textbf{f5}} \) 21.\( \text{\textbf{ac1}} \text{ \textbf{b5}} \) 22.\( \text{\textbf{f1}} \text{ c6+} \) Black's pieces were doing a better job of controlling
the important squares in Azarov – Golod, Ohrid 2001.

Finally 18.\text{\texttt{d2}} was played in Notzold – Goth, corr. 1985, and here I found a modest improvement:

18...\text{b5}N19.\text{\texttt{ac}1} \texttt{\texttt{ac}8} 20.\text{\texttt{e}f3} \texttt{c5} 21.\text{\texttt{xe}4} \texttt{dxe4} 22.\text{\texttt{d}6} \texttt{\texttt{xb}3} 23.\text{\texttt{g}5} \texttt{\texttt{xe}3} 24.\text{\texttt{xe}3} \texttt{\texttt{xb}3} 25.\text{\texttt{c}3} \texttt{h6} 26.\text{\texttt{xe}4} \text{\texttt{fxe}4} 27.\text{\texttt{xb}3} \texttt{\texttt{b}8}= with a roughly equal endgame.

18...\texttt{f4} 19.\texttt{\texttt{d}4} \texttt{c5} 20.\texttt{\texttt{d}3} \texttt{\texttt{g}5} 21.\texttt{\texttt{c}2}

21.\text{\texttt{x}a}6? is poor: 21...\text{\texttt{x}a}6 22.\text{\texttt{xa}6} This was Pierquin – Mathieu, corr. 1977, and now the simple 22...\texttt{\texttt{xb}3}N 23.\texttt{\texttt{c}2} \texttt{\texttt{f}5}! vacating the e6-square for the knight leads to a virtually decisive advantage for Black.

21.\texttt{c3} occurred in Miriello – Casabona, corr. 1980. Here I would like to improve Black's play with the following natural idea:

21...\texttt{c8}N 22.\text{\texttt{d}3} \texttt{d4} Followed by ...\texttt{xb}3 and Black is better.

The text move was played in Oechslein – Preinfalk, corr. 1977. At this point Black could have obtained a comfortable advantage with:

21...\text{\texttt{f}8}N 22.\text{\texttt{d}3} \texttt{\texttt{f}5}! 23.\texttt{d}2 \texttt{d4}!

24.\texttt{xf}4 \texttt{\texttt{x}d}3 25.\texttt{\texttt{xd}3} \texttt{\texttt{f}7}!

Black wins back the pawn and keeps some advantage.

\textbf{C4}) 16.\texttt{bd}2

This position has been known since 1948! White is fighting for the c5-square.
Korchnoi’s idea – Black intends to simplify into an equal endgame. At this final branching point we will analyse four main options: C41 17.\(\text{e}2\), C42 17.\(\text{d}4\), C43 17.\(\text{x}e4\) and C44 17.\(\text{x}a7\).

17.\(\text{a}c1\) \(\text{x}e3\) 18.\(\text{f}xe3\) \(c5\) 19.\(\text{x}e4\) \(\text{xb}3\)

20.\(\text{axb}3\) (20.\(\text{f}6\)† \(\text{gxf6}\) 21.\(\text{axb}3\) \(\text{fxe5}\) 22.\(\text{x}e5\) \(\text{xfb}8\) 23.\(\text{x}c5\) \(\text{xb}3\) 24.\(\text{d}3\) \(a5=\) Black advances the pawn to \(a3\) and equalizes.)

20...\(\text{dxe4}\) 21.\(\text{d}2\) \(\text{xb}8\) 22.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{xb}3\) 23.\(\text{x}c5\) \(\text{xe}3\)

24.\(\text{xa}6\) (24.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{xe}1\)† 25.\(\text{xe}1\) \(\text{xb}8=\) Mrdja – Vocaturo, Turin 2008.) 24...\(\text{x}e5\) We have arrived at a surprising transposition to a line given in the note to White’s 18th move in line C44 – see 17.\(\text{xa}7\) \(\text{xa}7\) 18.\(\text{ac1}\) \(c5\) 19.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{xb}3\) 20.\(\text{axb}3\) \(\text{dxe4}\) 21.\(\text{d}2\) \(e3\) 22.\(\text{fxe}3\) \(\text{xb}7\) 23.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{xb}3\) 24.\(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{xe}3\) 25.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{xe}5\) on page 266.

16...\(\text{e}7\)

17...\(\text{xd}2\) 18.\(\text{d}2\)

I checked the two other captures as well:

18.\(\text{xd}2\) \(\text{xb}3\) 19.\(\text{axb}3\) \(c5\) 20.\(\text{d}5\) \(h6\) 21.\(\text{xe}6\) (21.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{fb}8=\) Lichtenstein – Elyakim, corr. 1990.) 21...\(\text{xe}6\) The exchange on \(e6\) has strengthened Black’s pawn centre. 22.\(\text{g}4\) Johansen – Pyrich, corr. 1990. 22...\(\text{b}6=\) Black is better thanks to his superior pawn structure.

18.\(\text{xd}2\) Moreno Ramos – Heller, corr. 1983.

18...\(\text{xb}3\)! \(\text{N}\) Black should eliminate the bishop before it drops back to \(c2\), which would give White some play on the kingside.

19.\(\text{xb}3\) \(\text{fb}8\) 20.\(\text{b}4\) \(\text{b}6\) 21.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}7\) 22.\(\text{a}5\)
At this point Black has a pleasant choice between repeating the position with 22...\texttt{e6} 23.\texttt{a4} d7, and playing for a win with 22...c6!? 23.\texttt{a4} g4.

18...\texttt{fb8}!N

Improving over 18...\texttt{b6} as played in Berndt – Stockfleth, Germany 1989. With the text move Black prepares the advance of the c-pawn and claims the upper hand, as shown in the following lines.

19.\texttt{d3}

White wants to retreat the bishop to c2, but he will not get the chance.

19.\texttt{f3} attacks the d5-pawn, preventing ...c5 for the moment. 19...\texttt{xb3} 20.axb3 \texttt{b4}! Taking the b3-pawn gives White some initiative thanks to his pressure along the c-file.

21.\texttt{d3} h6! After preventing \texttt{g5} Black is ready to apply pressure along the b-file. 22.\texttt{a4} \texttt{xa4} 23.bxa4 c5 Black’s advantage is obvious.

19...\texttt{xb3} 20.axb3

20.\texttt{xb3} c5

20...c5 21.\texttt{e5} \texttt{c7} 22.\texttt{c3} \texttt{c8} 23.\texttt{a1}

23...h6!?

Again this move is useful, and here it comes with the following idea:

24.\texttt{xa6}

24.\texttt{c1}?? loses to 24...d4! 25.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{b7}→.

24...\texttt{xa6} 25.\texttt{xa6} d4 26.\texttt{g3} \texttt{b7}

White’s extra pawn is irrelevant here and he faces an unpleasant endgame.

27.\texttt{a1} \texttt{a8} 28.\texttt{c1} \texttt{a2}!
Chapter 15 – 9.\textit{\textit{\textsf{w}}2} e2 \textit{\textit{\textsf{\textit{d}}}}7 10.\textit{\textit{\textsf{d}}1}

17.\textit{\textsf{d}}4

Taking with the rook is dubious:

18.\textit{\textsf{x}}d2?! c5 19.\textit{\textsf{d}}f3?!

Objectively White should prefer 19.\textit{\textsf{x}}e6 fxe6 20.\textit{\textsf{c}}2 g6\# as in Guedon – Marzolf, Metz 2011. We have encountered similar positions already, and here too Black’s chances are higher thanks to her better pawn structure.

This position occurred in Ivanovic – Beckemeier, West Berlin 1988. At this point Black could have safely won some material:

19...\textit{\textsf{d}}4!N 20.\textit{\textsf{e}}4 \textit{\textsf{x}}b3 21.\textit{\textsf{g}}5 g6 22.\textit{\textsf{h}}4 h5 23.\textit{\textsf{e}}4

23.g4? doesn’t work in view of the simple 23...\textit{\textsf{d}}5 24.gxh5 \textit{\textsf{c}}c4 25.\textit{\textsf{e}}2 \textit{\textsf{e}}7\#.

19.\textit{\textsf{c}}2

White has tried some other moves, but in all cases advancing the c-pawn offers Black at least an equal game.

19.\textit{\textsf{e}}2 c5 20.\textit{\textsf{x}}e6 fxe6 21.\textit{\textsf{c}}2

Janosevic – Haag, Birmingham 1975. Now Black has a number of good options, for example: 21...\textit{\textsf{d}}7\# N 22.b3 g6 23.\textit{\textsf{e}}3 \textit{\textsf{c}}6\#.

19.\textit{\textsf{c}}3 c5 20.\textit{\textsf{x}}e6 fxe6 21.\textit{\textsf{c}}2 \textit{\textsf{a}}7 22.b3 \textit{\textsf{a}}7 23.f3

Perhaps this is the detail that Black overlooked in the aforementioned game.

24.\textit{\textsf{f}}6\# \textit{\textsf{x}}f6 25.\textit{\textsf{e}}xf6 \textit{\textsf{e}}8\#.

18...\textit{\textsf{b}}6

Black protects the knight and prepares 19...c5.

19.\textit{\textsf{c}}2

White has tried some other moves, but in all cases advancing the c-pawn offers Black at least an equal game.

19.\textit{\textsf{e}}2 c5 20.\textit{\textsf{x}}e6 fxe6 21.\textit{\textsf{c}}2

Janosevic – Haag, Birmingham 1975. Now Black has a number of good options, for example: 21...\textit{\textsf{d}}7\# N 22.b3 g6 23.\textit{\textsf{e}}3 \textit{\textsf{c}}6\#.

19.\textit{\textsf{c}}3 c5 20.\textit{\textsf{x}}e6 fxe6 21.\textit{\textsf{c}}2 \textit{\textsf{a}}7 22.b3 \textit{\textsf{a}}7 23.f3

Perhaps this is the detail that Black overlooked in the aforementioned game.

24.\textit{\textsf{f}}6\# \textit{\textsf{x}}f6 25.\textit{\textsf{e}}xf6 \textit{\textsf{e}}8\#.

18...\textit{\textsf{b}}6

Black protects the knight and prepares 19...c5.

19.\textit{\textsf{c}}2

White has tried some other moves, but in all cases advancing the c-pawn offers Black at least an equal game.
In this position a draw was agreed in Romanishin – Luczak, Polanica Zdroj 1980, but I think Black has good reason to continue the game, for example: 23...c4! 24.h1 c7+

19...ac1
This is better than the two previous alternatives, though Black is still doing fine.

19...c5! 20.xe6
20.b3?! makes no sense. 20...xb3 21.axb3 Patrici – Muttoni, corr. 1981, and now after the simple 21...ab8N 22.c2 fc8 23.g5 g6 Black is better.

20...xb3!

20...fxe6 can be met by 21.xd5! exd5 22.xd5† h8 23.xc5 xc5 24.xc5 b7 25.c7 when White’s pawns are at least a match for Black’s knight.

21.xd5
White should avoid 21.axb3?! fx6 as played in Corby – Garcia Vicente, corr. 1981. The exchange on e6 has improved Black’s pawn structure and given him some advantage, just as in several other variations in this chapter.

21...xc1 22.xf8 e2† 23.f1 xf8 24.xe2 xb2†
The position was equal and a draw was soon agreed in Donnelly – Lilloni, corr. 1971.

21...c5 20.f5

20...xf5 21.xf5 ad8 22.b3
After 22.e1 c6! 23.ad1 d4 24.b1 a5 the strong position of the knight on d4 promises slightly better chances for Black, Jansa – Stean, Vrsac 1979.
22...\text{f}e8! 23.\text{e}1 \text{c}4
23...\text{g}6?=

24.\text{g}5 \text{c}7 25.\text{e}6 \text{f}6 26.\text{h}4 \text{g}6 27.\text{e}7
27...\text{c}2 \text{g}7 is also equal.

27...\text{d}6 28.\text{g}3?!
A risky but (barely) playable attacking move.

The safer 28.\text{e}6 leads to equality: 28...\text{xe}6
29.\text{xe}6\text{g}7 30.\text{xd}5 \text{cxb}3 31.\text{axb}3 \text{c}5!
32.\text{a}4 \text{xe}7 33.\text{c}4 \text{xc}4=

28...\text{xe}7 29.\text{xg}6 \text{hxg}6 30.\text{g}6\text{f}8
31.\text{h}6\text{f}=

31...\text{g}7
Black can take an immediate draw with
31...\text{g}8, as White can hardly avoid the
repetition.

32.\text{e}3 \text{f}5!
Kavalek – Karpov, Montreal 1979. Now
White should have continued:

33.\text{h}3\text{N}
Although after accurate play his attack will
only yield him a draw at best.
18...\textit{xb3} 19.\textit{xb3} dxe4 20.\textit{d4} c5 21.\textit{xe6} fx6

The double-rook endgame can be compared with variation C44 below, the only differences being the positions of the black rook on a8 instead of a7 and the white pawn on e3 instead of f2. Although the latter might seem like a weakness for White, in some lines it might favour him as the pawn on f2 can become weak. In the coming variations we will see Black relying on two key plans to secure equality: the timely exchanging of one pair of rooks, and the activation of his king via f7 and g6.

\underline{22.\textit{d6}}

This continuation occurred only once in Czarnota – Landa, Cappelle la Grande 2005. Now Black can play:

22...\textit{ab8}!\textup{N} 23.\textit{xa6}

\begin{itemize}
\item 23.\textit{a3} \textit{d8} 24.\textit{xd8}† (or 24.\textit{d6} \textit{xd6} 25.\textit{exd6} \textit{f7} 26.\textit{xa6} \textit{xb3}+) 24...\textit{xd8} 25.\textit{xa6} \textit{f7}=
\end{itemize}

\underline{23...\textit{f7}!}

An important intermediate move, which fully equalizes.

24.\textit{d2} \textit{xb3} 25.\textit{e2} \textit{fb7} 26.\textit{exe6} \textit{xb2} 27.\textit{xb2} \textit{xb2} 28.\textit{c6} \textit{e2} 29.\textit{xc5} \textit{xe3} 30.\textit{e6} \textit{f8} 31.\textit{c7}

31.\textit{c8†} \textit{e7} 32.\textit{c7†} \textit{xe6} 33.\textit{xg7} h6 34.\textit{g6†} \textit{f5} 35.\textit{xb6} \textit{a3} is equal. The only way for White to avoid the perpetual is to move his king away from the e-pawn, which is dangerous only for him.

31...\textit{a3} 32.\textit{f7†} \textit{g8} 33.\textit{f4} e3 34.\textit{f1} \textit{a6} 35.\textit{e7} \textit{a8}= Followed by ...\textit{e8} with a dead draw.

\underline{22...\textit{fb8} 23.\textit{a3}}

23.\textit{exe6} \textit{xb3} takes most of the tension out of the position and led to a quick draw in the following game: 24.\textit{exa6} \textit{xa6} 25.\textit{xa6} \textit{xe3} 26.e6 \textit{f8} 27.\textit{a7} \textit{b3} 28.\textit{f7†} \textfrac{½–½}{} Mansson – Wheeler, corr. 2001.

After the text move we arrive at a position that can also be reached via a 20...\textit{fb8} move order. Black is under only mild pressure, and can secure a draw with a few accurate moves.

\underline{23...\textit{f7}! 24.\textit{f2}}

White has tested two other moves.

24.\textit{c6} \textit{c8}!\textup{N}
Black has numerous paths to equality, one example being 24...\texttt{b}5 25.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{a}5 as in Manzini – Javaro, corr. 1984. Nevertheless, exchanging one pair of rooks seems to be the easiest method.

25.\texttt{a}xa6 \texttt{a}xa6

26.\texttt{c}xc8
26.\texttt{a}xa6 \texttt{b}8=  
26...\texttt{b}6 27.\texttt{c}xc5 \texttt{xb}3=

24.\texttt{h}4

24...\texttt{d}8!?  
The same idea as in the 24.\texttt{c}6 line above. Black exchanges a pair of rooks and secures the draw without difficulty.  
24...\texttt{a}5?!N also deserves attention, with the point that 25.\texttt{f}2 \texttt{a}7 26.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{c}4 transposes to the main line below.

25.\texttt{c}6 \texttt{d}c8?!N  
25...\texttt{d}5= is another solution which led to an eventual draw in Yudovich – Omelchenko, corr. 1982.

26.\texttt{a}xa6 \texttt{a}xa6 27.\texttt{c}xc8  
Or 27.\texttt{a}xa6 \texttt{b}8 28.\texttt{a}3 \texttt{g}6! 29.\texttt{g}4 \texttt{h}5 and Black is fine.

29...\texttt{g}6 28.\texttt{c}xc5 \texttt{b}6 29.\texttt{c}3  
29.\texttt{c}4 \texttt{xb}3 30.\texttt{e}xe4 \texttt{h}5! is an easy draw.

29...\texttt{h}5=!  
Despite White's two extra pawns he cannot make progress, as his king needs to remain on the kingside to protect his pawns there.

24...\texttt{h}7!  
Black guards the seventh rank and prepares to double rooks along the b-file.

25.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{a}5 26.\texttt{h}4 \texttt{c}4! 27.\texttt{b}xc4 \texttt{xb}2 28.\texttt{d}d4  
In the event of 28.\texttt{h}5?! \texttt{c}2 29.\texttt{d}d4 Black solves his problems with: 29...\texttt{g}6! 30.\texttt{e}e4
This leads to a slightly different version of the endgame we encountered in variation C43 above. Again Black should have few problems as long as he plays carefully.

A harmless alternative is 18.\textit{d}d4  \textit{xd}2 19.\textit{x}d2  c5 20.\textit{e}2 (20.\textit{xe}6?  fxe6 improves Black's pawn structure as usual, and after 21.g3  \textit{b}8 he was clearly better in Mueller - Mikhailievski, Berlin 1994.) 20...\textit{x}b3 21.axb3  \textit{b}8 with a roughly equal position in Sanz Alonso - Naranjo Moreno, Santa Cruz de Tenerife 2006.

Another pretty tame continuation is:
18.\textit{ac}1  c5 19.\textit{xe}4  \textit{xb}3 20.axb3  \textit{xe}4 21.\textit{g}5 21.\textit{d}2  e3 22.\textit{xe}3  \textit{b}7 23.\textit{e}4  \textit{xb}3 24.\textit{xc}5  \textit{xe}3 25.\textit{xa}6  \textit{xe}5 is equal and the players agreed a draw a couple of moves later in Matanovic – Korchnoi, Sukhumi 1966. (The same position can also arise via the rare 17.\textit{ac}1 move order, as noted earlier on page 259.)

The main move was played in Svend – Comp WChess, Sweden 1995. Now I would like to recommend:

21.e3!N

With the idea to damage White's pawn structure.

22.\textit{xe}6

22.\textit{xe}3  \textit{xb}3 23.\textit{d}6  c4 is equal.

22...f2 \textit{f}1 fxe6 24.\textit{xc}5
Black transfers the rook to the b-file, which should lead to simplifications and a draw. For example:

\[ 25.\text{e}6 \text{d}6 \rightarrow \text{f}7 \ 26.\text{e}cc6 \text{b}7 \ 27.\text{e}xa6 \text{f}b4! \ 28.\text{d}2 \text{xb}3 \ 29.\text{xf}d5 \text{e}7 \ 30.\text{e}2 \text{b}5 \ 31.\text{e}2 \text{f}7 = \]

The king comes to f5 and White’s chances of converting his extra pawn are virtually nonexistent.

18...\text{xb}3 19.a\text{xb}3

19.\text{f}6\text{f}7 is an interesting new idea, although after 19...\text{gxf}6 20.a\text{xb}3 \text{g}7 21.\text{exf}6\text{g}xf6 Black’s broken kingside is balanced by the weakness of White’s b-pawns so Black should not have too many problems.

19...\text{dxe}4

20.\text{d}4

20.\text{d}d2 occurred in Ravi – Gokhale, Kolkata 1999. Now Black could have equalized comfortably with 20...\text{c}3!N 21.\text{xe}3 \text{h}6! followed by attacking the weak pawns on the b- and e-files.

20...\text{c}5 21.\text{xe}6

It is also worth considering:

21.\text{c}6?N

Now Black has a choice.

21...\text{e}7?

21...\text{b}7 22.b4! White closes the b-file.

22...\text{x}b4 23.\text{a}6 \text{c}4 24.\text{a}5 \text{d}3 25.\text{f}4? \text{b}8 26.\text{d}4 \text{e}3 27.\text{a}1 \text{e}4 28.\text{f}1

Now I would like to improve upon Radulski – Erdos, Warsaw 2010, with: 28...g5!N 29.\text{f}xg5 \text{e}7 30.\text{a}1 \text{x}c1 31.\text{x}c1 \text{e}5 32.h4 \text{b}7! =

22.\text{a}6 \text{a}3 23.\text{c}1 \text{c}4 24.\text{f}1
24.\(Bb6\) allows Black to equalize with 24...g6 followed by ...\(Be8\).

24...h6
24...g6!?N also makes sense.

25.\(Bb6\) \(Be8\) 26.\(Be2\)
I tried to improve upon White's play with 26.\(Bd4\)!N, but Black seems to hold after 26...\(Ba2\)! 27.\(e6\)! (27.\(Ba6\) is met by 27...\(Bd7\)=) 27...fxe6 28.\(Bb5\) \(Bc8\) 29.\(Cc3\) \(Bb3\) 30.\(Bxe4\) \(Bb8\)! and the counterattack against b2 promises equal chances.

26...\(Bd7\)! 27.\(Ba5\)
27.\(e3\) \(Bd3\)= 28.\(Bxe4\) \(Bd2=\)
27...\(Bxe5\) 28.\(Bb8\)= \(Bh7\) 29.\(Bxc4\) \(Bxc4\)= 30.\(Bxc4\) f5!
Black equalized in Lelenko – Armani, e-mail 2001.

21...\(fxe6\)
We have arrived at a well-known rook endgame in which Black has little to fear.

22.\(Be1\)
22.\(Ba5\)! is dangerous only for White: 22...\(Ba7\) 23.\(Bf1\) e3 24.\(f3\) \(Bb7\) 25.\(Bxa6\) \(Bxb3\) 26.\(Bxe6\)! (26.\(Bb1\) is a better defence, but Black's chances are still higher after 26...c4 27.\(Bc6\) \(Bf4\) 28.\(Bf1\) \(Bd4\).) 26...\(Bxb2\) 27.\(Be1\) \(Ba8\) White was in trouble and failed to hold the position in Chiburdanidze – Chekhov, Riga 1980.

A decade ago I faced 22.\(Bd6\) in Svendsen – Mikhailovski, Biel (rapid) 2002. Now 22...\(Ba7\)!N seems to be the easiest route to equality, for instance:

23.\(Bxe6\) \(Bxb3\) 24.\(Ba2\) e3 25.\(fxe3\) \(Bxe3\) 26.\(h4\) \(Be2\) 27.\(Bxa6\) \(Bf2\) 28.\(Ba8\)= \(Bf7\) 29.\(Bb8\)= \(Bf8\) 30.\(Bb8\)=

22...\(Ba8\) 23.\(Ba3\) \(Bab7\) 24.\(Bxa6\)
I also analysed: 24.\textit{e}e3 \textit{c}4! 25.bxc4 \textit{xb}2 26.h4 \textit{f}8 27.f3 \textit{xf}3 28.\textit{xf}3 \textit{xf}3 29.gxf3 \textit{c}2 30.\textit{xa}6 \textit{xc}4 31.\textit{f}2 \textit{hx}4 32.\textit{xe}6 \\

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\matrix{
\t0 & & & & & & & & \\
\t1 & & \textcolor{red}{-} & & \textcolor{red}{-} & & \textcolor{red}{-} & & \textcolor{red}{-} \\
\t2 & & & & \textcolor{red}{-} & \textcolor{red}{-} & \textcolor{red}{-} & \textcolor{red}{-} & \\
\t3 & & & & & & & & \\
\t4 & & & & \textcolor{red}{x} & \textcolor{red}{x} & \textcolor{red}{x} & \textcolor{red}{x} & \\
\t5 & & & & & & & & \\
\t6 & & & & & & & & \\
\t7 & & & & & & & & \\
\t8 & & & & & & & & \\
\t & a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

32...\textit{xf}4! 33.\textit{e}e3 \textit{xf}7! 34.\textit{a}6 \textit{g}5= and a draw could be agreed.

24.\textit{xb}3 25.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xb}2 26.\textit{xc}6 \textit{f}8 27.\textit{e}6 \textit{xf}2 28.\textit{ec}8+ \textit{f}8 29.\textit{xc}5 \\

Boada Llombart – Velker, corr. 2005. Now I would like to offer the simple solution:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\t\matrix{
\t0 & & & & & & & & \\
\t1 & & \textcolor{red}{-} & & \textcolor{red}{-} & & \textcolor{red}{-} & & \textcolor{red}{-} \\
\t2 & & & & \textcolor{red}{-} & \textcolor{red}{-} & \textcolor{red}{-} & \textcolor{red}{-} & \\
\t3 & & & & \textcolor{red}{x} & \textcolor{red}{x} & \textcolor{red}{x} & \textcolor{red}{x} & \\
\t4 & & & & & & & & \\
\t5 & & & & & & & & \\
\t6 & & & & & & & & \\
\t7 & & & & & & & & \\
\t8 & & & & & & & & \\
\t & a & b & c & d & e & f & g & h \\
\};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

29...\textit{h}6?! \textbf{N}  \\

Taking away the g5-square. The finish might be:

30.\textit{e}7 \textit{e}8 31.\textit{xe}4 \textit{b}7 32.\textit{xe}5 \textit{xf}7=  \\

With a dead draw.

\textbf{Conclusion}

9.\textit{w}e2 is not quite considered one of the 'absolute' main lines against the Open Spanish, but in conjunction with 10.\textit{wd}1 it constitutes quite a potent weapon which Black must take seriously. The main line of this chapter led to a tricky endgame requiring a good level of technical accuracy. Both sides will face their own challenges, but it seems to me that Black's position continues to hold up well.
Main Lines

9.c3 – Introduction

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.\textit{d}f3 \textit{d}c6 3.\textit{b}b5 a6 4.\textit{a}a4 \textit{f}f6 5.0–0 \textit{x}xe4
6.d4 b5 7.\textit{b}b3 d5 8.dxe5 \textit{e}e6 9.c3

9...\textit{c}c5

A) 10.\textit{d}d4?! 271
B) 10.a4 272
C) 10.\textit{f}f4?! 272
D) 10.\textit{c}c2 273
E) 10.\textit{e}e2 275
F) 10.\textit{d}d3 0–0 277
   F1) 11.\textit{e}e3 \textit{f}6 277
       F11) 12.\textit{d}bd2 278
       F12) 12.exf6 278
       F2) 11.\textit{bd}2 \textit{f}5 12.exf6 \textit{x}xf6 281
           F21) 13.\textit{g}g5?! 283
           F22) 13.a4 284
               F221) 13...\textit{g}6!? 285
               F222) 13...\textit{b}8 286
G) 10.\textit{bd}2 0–0 290
   G1) 11.\textit{xe}4 291
   G2) 11.\textit{e}e2 \textit{f}5 292
       G21) 12.\textit{a}a4 292
       G22) 12.\textit{xe}4 293
1.e4 e5 2.d3 c6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 f6 5.0-0 Exe4 6.d4 b5 7.b3 d5 8.dxe5 fxe6 9.c3 c5

White has tried a lot of different moves here. From the present position the absolute main line is 10.bd2 0-0 11.c2, which will receive dedicated coverage in the next chapter. Over the following pages we will analyse all of White's significant alternatives, arranged as follows: A) 10.d4?!, B) 10.a4, C) 10.f4?!, D) 10.c2, E) 10.e2, F) 10.d3 and G) 10.bd2 (without 11.c2).

10.e1 is seldom seen, although after 10...0-0 11.e3 f6 12.bd2 xdx2 13.xd2 we transpose to a branch of the 10.d3 line – see variation F11 on page 278.

A) 10.d4?!

This pawn sacrifice is dubious.

10...Exe5 11.a4

11.e1N is refuted by 11...h4! 12.g3 f6 13.f4 g4 14.xd5 xdx5 15.xg4 0-0+.

After 11.h5 as in Piana – De Francisci, Bratto 2006, Black can keep his extra pawn with 11...xd4N 12.cxd4 d3.

I also checked 11.d2N xdx2 12.axd2 0-0 13.xe6 fxe6 14.e2 f6 15.e1 c4 and

Black keeps some advantage.

11...0-0 12.axb5 axb5 13.xa8 xa8 14.xb5

White regained his pawn in Metger – Weiss, Frankfurt 1887, but both players missed the following point:

A sad necessity.

18...xf3! 19.xf3

White has little chance of saving the game.
B) 10.a4

10...0-0 11.\text{\text{\textbf{b}d}2}

11.axb5 axb5 12.\text{\text{\textbf{x}xa8}} \text{\text{\textbf{w}xa8}} does not achieve much for White, since 13.\text{\textbf{x}xd5?} loses to 13...\text{\text{\textbf{xf}2}}! 14.\text{\text{\textbf{xf}2}} \text{\text{\textbf{e}d}8} 15.\text{\text{\textbf{d}4}} \text{\text{\textbf{x}xd5+-}} as seen in Virostko – Macionis, Moravka 1994.

11...b4 12.\text{\text{\textbf{c}c}2} bxc3 13.\text{\text{\textbf{d}xe4}} dxe4 14.\text{\text{\textbf{xe}4}} \text{\text{\textbf{w}xd1}} 15.\text{\text{\textbf{x}xd1}}

The ensuing endgame should be equal, as demonstrated by the following sequence.

15...\text{\text{\textbf{g}fd}8!} 16.\text{\text{\textbf{e}e}1!} cxb2 17.\text{\text{\textbf{x}xb2}} \text{\text{\textbf{e}ab}8!}

This hardly sets Black any problems either.

C) 10.\text{\text{\textbf{f}4}?!}

10...\text{\text{\textbf{g}5}!} 11.\text{\text{\textbf{e}e}3}

After 11.\text{\text{\textbf{g}3}? h5--} White already has no good defence, for instance 12.\text{\text{\textbf{d}d}4} h4 13.\text{\text{\textbf{x}xc6}} (13.\text{\text{\textbf{x}h}4 \text{\text{\textbf{x}d}4--+}) 13...hxg3 and Black soon won in Richter – Barnes, Frankfurt 1887.

10...\text{\text{\textbf{e}e}3} 12.\text{\text{\textbf{f}xe3}} g4
This wins a pawn, although that is not the end of the story as Black also weakens his kingside. Let’s see how he should deal with that issue.

13...\textit{g3}N

A surprising and strong novelty. It turns out that the knight on c6 is untouchable.

14...hxg3

14...\textit{xc6} is refuted by 14...gxh2\textsuperscript{+} 15...xh2 (15...h1 \textit{g3}+ 16...xh2 \textit{h4}+ 17...\textit{g1} \textit{g4} 18...\textit{d3} \textit{e2}+ →) 15...\textit{h4}+ 16...\textit{g1} \textit{g8}! with a decisive attack.

Another nice line continues: 14...h3 \textit{g5}! 15...\textit{e2} (Or 15...\textit{xc6} \textit{xe3}+ 16...\textit{h1} \textit{f2}+ 17...\textit{xf2} gxf2 18...\textit{d2} \textit{g8}! 19...\textit{f3} \textit{e4}+ with the idea of ...\textit{hxh3}.)

15...\textit{g4}!! 16...\textit{f3} \textit{xf3} 17...\textit{xf3} \textit{f2} 18...\textit{xd5} \textit{h6}! Black keeps the better chances.

14...\textit{g5}! 15...\textit{xc6}?

White should prefer 15...\textit{f4} although 15...\textit{xe5} leaves Black on top.

15...\textit{xe3}+ 16...\textit{h2}

16...\textit{h1} \textit{g3}+ 17...\textit{h2} \textit{h4}! →

16...\textit{g3}+ 17...\textit{g1} \textit{e3}+ 18...\textit{h2} \textit{g8}
19...\textit{f3} \textit{h6}+ 20...\textit{g1}

20...\textit{g4}! →

Followed by ...\textit{h4} with decisive threats.

D) 10...\textit{c2}
10...0–0 11.\textit{\&}e2

11.\textit{\&}bd2 leads to the main line as examined in the next chapter. Against the text move I would like to introduce a surprising pawn sacrifice.

11...\textit{\&}g4!N 12.\textit{\&}bd2

After 12.\textit{\&}xe4 dxe4 13.\textit{\&}xe4 \textit{\&}xf3 14.gxf3 \textit{\&}d7 Black has a strong initiative, for example: 15.f4 \textit{\&}ae8 16.\textit{\&}e3 (or 16.\textit{\&}d2 \textit{f}6 17.\textit{\&}f3 \textit{\&}g4+ 18.\textit{\&}h1 \textit{\&}xe5\text{=} 16...\textit{\&}xe3 17.fxe3 f6\textsuperscript{+} Black regains the pawn with better chances.

12...\textit{\&}xe5 13.\textit{\&}xe4 \textit{\&}e8?!

This leads to interesting complications which eventually peter out to equality.

The safe and simple alternative is 13...\textit{\&}xf3 14.gxf3 dxe4 15.\textit{\&}xe4 (15.\textit{\&}xe4 \textit{\&}e8\text{=} and here the straightforward 15...\textit{\&}g6 and the more striking 15...\textit{\&}h4? are both good enough for equality.

14.\textit{\&}d1 f5! 15.\textit{\&}g5 \textit{\&}xf3\textsuperscript{+} 16.gxf3 \textit{\&}xg5

17.\textit{\&}xg5

17.fxg4?! dxe4 18.\textit{\&}d5 \textit{\&}e7 19.\textit{\&}f5 \textit{\&}g6 20.\textit{\&}b3+ \textit{\&}h8 21.\textit{\&}f7 \textit{\&}h4 is slightly better for Black due to the vulnerabiltiy of White's king.

17...\textit{\&}xe2 18.\textit{\&}d3

18.\textit{\&}b3 c6 19.fxg4 \textit{\&}f8! 20.gxf5 \textit{\&}xf5 21.\textit{\&}h3 \textit{\&}xf2\textsuperscript{+} 22.\textit{\&}h1
The idea of this move is to prepare to exchange the dark-squared bishops by means of \( \text{xe}3 \).

10...0-0 11.\( \text{xe}3 \)

11.\( \text{c}2 \) transposes to variation D above, while 11.\( \text{bd}2 \) transposes to the later variation G2 on page 292.

11...f6!

Black begins his standard counterplay.

12.exf6

12.\( \text{bd}2 \) \( \text{xd}2 \) 13.\( \text{xd}2 \) reaches a position that will be examined under the 10.\( \text{d}3 \) move order – see variation F11 on page 278. Apart from that there are two other moves worth considering:

12.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{xd}4 \) 13.\( \text{cxd}4 \) fxe5 14.\( \text{dxe}5 \) \( \text{e}7 \) 15.\( \text{f}4 \) After 15.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{xc}3 \) 16.\( \text{bxc}3 \) \( \text{xe}5 \) 17.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{c}4 \) 18.\( \text{xc}4 \) dxc4 a draw was agreed in Gligoric – Unzicker, Oberhausen 1961, although Black could have played on for a while without risking anything.

15.\( \text{c}5! \)N

15...\( \text{d}8 \) gave Black a reasonable position in Mascarinas – Shanmugam, Singapore 2010, but the text move enables him to fight for the initiative.

16.\( \text{c}1 \) \( \text{xb}3 \) 17.\( \text{xb}3 \) \( \text{d}7 \) 18.\( \text{c}2 \) d4!

19.\( \text{xc}6 \) dxe3 20.\( \text{xd}7 \) \( \text{xd}7 \)

White faces some difficulties in the endgame, for instance:

21.g3

21.\( \text{xc}7 \) \( \text{e}6 \) 22.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{xf}4 \) 21...b4!
Black has better chances thanks to the misplaced knight on b1.

Another harmless continuation is:
12.\text{\textit{xc5}}  \text{\textit{xc5}}

13.\text{\textit{c2}}
13.\text{\textit{xf6}}N  \text{\textit{xf6}} is slightly better for Black thanks to his lead in development and active pieces.
13.\text{\textit{bd2}} occurred in Simacek – Virostko, Czech Republic 1999, and now I would like to offer 13...\text{\textit{e8}}N (13...\text{\textit{f7}}!N is equally good) 14.\text{\textit{xf6}}  \text{\textit{f7}} 15.\text{\textit{d1}}  \text{\textit{xf6}} 16.\text{\textit{c2}}  \text{\textit{ad8}} \# with the more comfortable position for Black.

13...\text{\textit{d4}}!N
Breaking through in the centre.
This is much better than the slow 13...\text{\textit{e7}}?! as played in Van Leent – Nieuwelink, Vlissingen 2001.

14.\text{\textit{xd4}}  \text{\textit{xd4}} 15.\text{\textit{xd4}}  \text{\textit{xd4}} 16.\text{\textit{exe}}  \text{\textit{e4}}
17.\text{\textit{xd1}}  \text{\textit{xf6}}
Black has the initiative.

12...\text{\textit{xf6}} 13.\text{\textit{bd2}}  \text{\textit{xe3}} 14.\text{\textit{exe3}}?N
I decided to check this interesting new approach for White.

14.\text{\textit{xe3}} reaches a position from variation F12 beginning with 10.\text{\textit{d3}}; see page 280 for the continuation from move 14.

The alternative is: 14.\text{\textit{xe4}}  \text{\textit{dxe4}} 15.\text{\textit{exe6}}\#  \text{\textit{xe6}} 16.\text{\textit{exe3}}
16...\text{\textit{g6}}! Black has at least enough activity to make up for the isolated e-pawn. Play may continue 17.\text{\textit{d2}} (or 17.\text{\textit{d4}}  \text{\textit{e5}}!) 17...\text{\textit{eae8}} with the idea of ...\text{\textit{e5}}.
Black has to be slightly careful; the e3-pawn is not really weak, and White can try targeting the queenside. Fortunately the problems are not serious, and I found a convincing path to an equal endgame.

15...\textit{h6}!

Here the main options are F1) 11.e3 and F2) 12.bd2.

11...\textit{f6}

This move from the game Cizek – Haba, Karvina 1986, can be strongly met by:

12...\textit{xe5}!N 13.\textit{xe5}

Or 13.\textit{xe4} dxe4 14.\textit{xe6}? \textit{h8} 15.\textit{xd8} \textit{xd8} 16.\textit{d4} \textit{c6}! 17.\textit{d2} \textit{xd4} 18.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} 19.\textit{xd4} \textit{xd4} with an endgame advantage for Black.

13...\textit{xe5}

14.\textit{xe4}

After 14.\textit{xd5}? \textit{xd5} 15.\textit{xc5} \textit{xc5} 16.\textit{xd5}† \textit{xd5} 17.\textit{ad8}! Black is much better as White has no time to finish...
development without suffering material losses.

14...dxe4 15.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xe6† \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}}8 16.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xd8 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xd8 17.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}x4 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xe4 18.fxe3 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d3

The endgame is slightly better for Black.

F11) 12.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}bd2

12...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xd2 13.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xd2

This position can arise via the 10.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}e2 and 10.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}e1 move orders as well.

13.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xe3 14.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xe3 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xe5 15.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xe5 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}xe5

16.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xe5 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d7

The immediate 16...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f7?!N with the idea of ...	extbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c5 also makes sense.

17.a4

17.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}fe1 occurred in Almasi – Gyimesi, Kecskemet 1993. Now I would like to offer 17...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}e8N 18.a4 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f7 19.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d4 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d6 followed by ...	extbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c5 with an equal position.

17...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f7 18.axb5 axb5 19.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}ad1

19.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c2 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c5 20.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f5 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c6=

19...\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c6=

Black is absolutely fine. There is one potential nightmare scenario with all major pieces exchanged, white king on d4 and pawn on b4, but Black would have to make some serious mistakes for all that to happen. We will follow a top-level game which reached this position.

20.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c2 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}e8 21.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d4 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}}a2 22.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d2 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d6 23.b4 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}}a3 24.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c1 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g6

A draw was agreed here in Shirov – Anand, Mallorca 2004, although by this stage Black has slightly the more comfortable position.

F12) 12.exf6 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{w}}}}xf6

20.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c2 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}e8 21.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d4 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}}a2 22.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d2 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}d6 23.b4 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a}}}}a3 24.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c1 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}}g6

It is important to note that grabbing the d5-pawn is dubious for White:

13.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xd5?! \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}d8! 14.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xe6† 14.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xe5 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xc5 15.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xe6† \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}xe6 16.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}}c2 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}}f4 17.\textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}}bd2 \textbf{\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}}e5! leaves Black with a strong initiative.
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14...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}}\text{\textit{\textbf{e}}}}6

15.d4

15.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}2?}} was refuted in the following game: 15...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}3!}} 16.gxf3 (16.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}5 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}5}} 17.gxf3 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}3!}} is also hopeless for White.)

16...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}6}}↑ 17.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h}}}1}}

15.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}5!}}↑ 16.dxc6

After 16.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}2 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}2}} 17.bxc5 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}4 18.bx4 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}4}} 19.bxd4 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}4}} 20.bxc3 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}5}}}} White faces an unpleasant endgame.

16...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}3}} 17.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}5}}

16...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}8!}} I missed this idea in the old game Widera – Mikhailovski, Katowice 1990.

17.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}f2 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}5}} 18.b4 (or 18.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}1 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}3}}!} 19.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}3}} \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}5!}}↑) 18...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}8!}} 19.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}1}} (Also after 19.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}2 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}5!}} 20.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}5 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}5}}}} Black wins easily.) 19...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}3}} 20.bxc3 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}4}}↑ White soon had to resign in Christiansen – From, corr. 1956.

The main move was played in Medina Garcia – Karaklajic, Casablanca 1974. Now I would like to improve Black’s play with:

15...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}5!}}↑ 16.dxc6

After 16.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}2 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}2}} 17.bxc5 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d}}}4 18.bx4 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}4}} 19.bxd4 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}4}} 20.bxc3 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c}}}5}}}} White faces an unpleasant endgame.

16...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}3}} 17.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}5}}

17...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g}}}3!}}↑ 18.hxg3 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}2}} 19.bxc5 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}2}} 20.a3 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}3}} 21.bxc1 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}3}}↑ 22.g1 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}d5}}↑ Matanovic – Te Velde, Groningen 1965.

15.\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}2?}} is also bad: 15...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}2!}} 16.e1

17...\text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e}}}3!}} 18.d7 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f}}}2!}} 19.bxc5 \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}f1}}↑

20.bx{f1} \text{\textit{\textbf{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{x}}}c5}}

White should be able to hold the endgame, but he will have to play carefully for at least a few more moves.
13...\textit{x}xe3 14.\textit{xe}e3

After 14.\textit{x}xe4?! dxe4 15.\textit{xe}e6+ \textit{xe}e6 16.\textit{xe}e3 \textit{g}g6 17.\textit{d}d2 \textit{ae}8 Black's active pieces count for more than the isolated e-pawn, for instance:

18.\textit{ae}1 \textit{e}e5! An important resource. 19.\textit{g}g3 \textit{x}g3 20.\textit{h}xg3 \textit{d}d3 21.\textit{xe}e4 \textit{xb}2 Now it is Black who has the advantage thanks to his superior pawn structure.

14.\textit{xd}2 15.\textit{xd}2 \textit{ad}8 16.\textit{fe}1

This is the main line, although White has tested a few other moves.

16.\textit{g}g5 occurred in Harman - Varnam, Swansea 2006, and here the simple 16...\textit{f}f5!N is fine for Black as the d5-pawn is untouchable: 17.\textit{xd}5?? (17.\textit{fe}1 is better, although after 17...\textit{a}a5! Black certainly has no problems.)

17...\textit{h}8→ There is no good defence against 18.\textit{e}e7.

16.\textit{d}d4 \textit{f}f7

16...\textit{a}a5?! is also equal.

17.\textit{a}4

17.\textit{c}c2 occurred in Ivkov - Geller, Zagreb 1955, and here Black's play can be improved by means of 17...\textit{a}a5!N 18.\textit{ae}1 \textit{c}5 19.\textit{f}f3 \textit{c}4 20.\textit{c}c1 \textit{d}4 and Black is on top.

17...\textit{e}e5! 18.\textit{ax}b5 \textit{ax}b5 19.\textit{f}4

19.\textit{xb}5?! is answered by 19...\textit{b}8 20.\textit{a}a4 \textit{c}6 21.\textit{d}d4 \textit{c}4 22.\textit{c}c1 \textit{c}5! 23.\textit{b}b5 \textit{g}6! with a strong initiative for the pawn.

19...\textit{c}4 20.\textit{f}f2 \textit{c}5! 21.\textit{xb}5 \textit{d}4!

17...\textit{le}5

18.\textit{a}4

18.\textit{a}a7!N \textit{le}3 19.\textit{xf}7 \textit{xf}7 20.\textit{xf}7+ \textit{xf}7 21.\textit{e}e1 \textit{c}4 22.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 23.\textit{e}e2 \textit{d}3 28.\textit{xe}3 \textit{xb}5 with equality.

22.\textit{xd}4!N

Best play would have been 22.\textit{a}a7!N \textit{e}3 23.\textit{xf}7 \textit{xf}7 24.\textit{xf}7+ \textit{xf}7 25.\textit{e}e1 \textit{c}4 26.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 27.\textit{e}e2 \textit{d}3 28.\textit{xe}3 \textit{xb}5 with equality.
22...\(\text{wb6}\)! 23.\(\text{xc4 \text{xc4}}\) 24.\(\text{c3 \text{xd4}}\)!
25.\(\text{fe1 \text{xd4}}\) 26.\(\text{c2 \text{f6+}}\)


\[\text{F2) 11.\text{bd2}}\]

This is the other main line. White challenges the strong knight on e4.

16...\(\text{g4!}\)

This move has not been played in many games and Black's practical results have been poor, but in the games in question the mistakes came later. According to my analysis Black should be able to solve his problems with ease.

17.\(\text{e3}\)

17.\(\text{xd5+}\) is bad as after 17...\(\text{h8}\) the pin along the d-file counts for much more than a pawn.

17.\(\text{g5N a5! 18.\text{e4 g6 19.\text{g3 c4=}} is comfortable for Black.}\)

17...\(\text{a5 18.\text{e5 h5 19.\text{c2}}\)}

I also checked 19.f3N \(\text{xb3 20.axb3 c5=}\) when Black is doing fine.

19.\(\text{c4 20.\text{xc4 dxc4 21.\text{e1}}\)}

We have been following the game Kirwald – De Homont, e-mail 2003. Black has several decent moves here, but perhaps the simplest is:

21...\(\text{fe8=}\)

Black's active pieces compensate for his doubled c-pawns and the position is equal.

11...\(\text{f5 12.exf6}\)

This is almost always played.

12.\(\text{c2?!}\)

This rare move leads to a different type of game. White intends to play \(\text{bd4}\) followed by either \(\text{b3}\) or \(\text{e3}\).

12...\(\text{d7}\)

Black connects the rooks and leaves the e7-square available for other pieces.

13.\(\text{b3 a7=}\)

It looks logical to keep the dark-squared bishop from being exchanged.

13...\(\text{a7 was once played by Max Euwe, but}\)
after 14.\( \text{c}3 \) \( \text{xe}3 \) 15.\( \text{xe}3 \) White was better thanks to his control over the dark squares.
15...\( \text{d}8 \)? (15...\( \text{ae}8 \) was necessary.) Now in Pilnik - Euwe, Buenos Aires 1947, White could have obtained a big advantage by means of 16.\( \text{fd}4! \)N \( \text{c}5 \) 17.\( \text{e}2! \).

14.\( \text{bd}4 \)

This is the most consistent move. From here I analysed the following natural continuation:
14...\( \text{xd}4 \) 15.\( \text{xd}4 \) \( \text{c}5 \) 16.\( \text{xe}6 \) \( \text{xe}6 \) 17.\( \text{f}3 \) c4 18.\( \text{we}2 \) \( \text{c}5\dagger \) 19.\( \text{e}3 \)

After 19.\( \text{h}1?! \) \( \text{g}3\dagger \) 20.\( \text{hxg}3 \) \( \text{f}4 \) 21.\( \text{xf}4 \) \( \text{xf}4 \) 22.\( \text{e}2 \) \( \text{f}7\dagger \) White must lose the exchange for insufficient compensation.

19...\( \text{f}4 \) 20.\( \text{xc}5 \)

Black is fine after 20.\( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{xd}4\dagger \) 21.\( \text{cxd}4 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 22.h4 \( \text{f}7\dagger \) with the idea of transferring the knight to either e6 or c6.
20...\( \text{xc}5 \) 21.\( \text{ad}1 \) \( \text{ad}8 \)

Black supports the d5-pawn and prepares to bring his knight to e6. The position is roughly equal.

12.\( \text{xf}6 \)

From here White sometimes tries F21) 13.\( \text{g}5?! \), but the main line is F22) 13.\( \text{a}4 \). We will analyse both moves after briefly checking two minor alternatives:

13.\( \text{c}2 \) occurred in Stoltz - Lundin, Stockholm 1930. Here I would like to deviate with 13...\( \text{d}6\dagger \)N 14.\( \text{b}3 \) \( \text{b}6 \) 15.\( \text{e}3 \) (15.\( \text{g}5 \) \( \text{d}7\dagger \) intending ...\( \text{e}5 \) is better for Black) 15...\( \text{xe}3 \) 16.\( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{g}4! \) and the position is roughly equal.

13.\( \text{e}1 \) \( \text{d}7 \)

14.\( \text{f}1 \)
14. \( \text{fxe6} \) may seem tempting, but it leads to Black’s advantage. 14... \( \text{fxe6} \) 15. \( \text{dxe4} \) \( \text{fxe6} \) 16. \( \text{dxe4} \) \( \text{dxe4} \) 17. \( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{h8} \) 18. \( \text{dxe4} \) \( \text{h6} \) 19. \( \text{g5} \) \( \text{d6} \) 20. \( \text{d5} \) \( \text{d6} \)

14. \( \text{dxe4} \) is playable, and leads to equality after: 14... \( \text{dxe4} \) 15. \( \text{dxe4} \) \( \text{d8} \) 16. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 17. \( \text{f4} \) \( \text{f5} \) 18. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{a5} \) 19. \( \text{c2} \) \( \text{xc2} \) 20. \( \text{xf8} \) \( \text{xf8} \) 21. \( \text{xe2} \) \( \text{c4} \)

14... \( \text{h8} \) 15. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d6} \) 16. \( \text{g3} \)

Black had a good position in Yurtaev – Sasikiran, Kolkata 1998. His ideas include ...\( \text{g4} \), ...\( \text{g4} \) and ...\( \text{a5} \).

**F21) 13. \( \text{g5} \)?!**

This aggressive move doesn’t promise any advantage, to say the least.

13... \( \text{e5} \) 14. \( \text{g3} \)

We can easily dismiss 14. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xd3} \) 15. \( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{d8} \) when Black is clearly better due to the pressure against \( f2 \).

Another harmless sideline is: 14. \( \text{e2} \) \( \text{d6} \) 15. \( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xe6} \) 16. \( \text{e4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 17. \( \text{xe4} \)

18... \( \text{xf2} \) 19. \( \text{h4} \) \( \text{h6} \) 20. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 21. \( \text{xe4} \) \( \text{xe4} \) 22. \( \text{xc5} \) \( \text{xc5} \) 23. \( \text{d4} \) \( \text{xd4} \) 24. \( \text{xd4} \) \( \text{d3} \) 25. \( \text{e3} \) \( \text{xb2} \) 26. \( \text{c1} \) \( \text{h6} \) Black kept some endgame advantage in Zagorovsky – Taimanov, Leningrad 1947.

Finally, 15. \( \text{d3} \) \( \text{xf3} \) 16. \( \text{xf3} \) was played in Blau – Trifunovic, Hilversum 1947. Now I would like to introduce a new idea: 16... \( \text{e8} \) 17. \( \text{xd6} \) \( \text{xd6} \) I don’t see a single problem for Black.
15...\texttt{d}d7

Black preserves the light-squared bishop.

16.\texttt{b}3

In the event of 16.\texttt{d}f3N \texttt{x}f3\texttt{t} 17.\texttt{x}f3\texttt{w}xg3 18.hxg3 \texttt{a}e8 Black has the more comfortable endgame.

16...\texttt{b}6 17.\texttt{d}4

17.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{a}e8 18.\texttt{d}4 (18.\texttt{a}e1N is also strongly met by 18...\texttt{h}5\texttt{t}+) 18...\texttt{h}5! transposes to the main line below.

17...\texttt{a}e8 18.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{h}5!

Initiating complications which turn out favourably for Black.

19.\texttt{x}e5

I also checked 19.\texttt{w}h4N g6 20.\texttt{g}3 \texttt{c}5 21.\texttt{d}f3 \texttt{xf}3\texttt{t} 22.\texttt{x}f3 \texttt{x}g3 23.hxg3 \texttt{e}2 which results in a clear edge for Black.

19.\texttt{x}h7\texttt{t} \texttt{h}8 20.\texttt{x}e5 (20.\texttt{w}h4? is refuted by 20...\texttt{x}f4 21.\texttt{w}xh5 \texttt{w}h6\texttt{t}+ and Black wins a piece.) 20...\texttt{x}e5 transposes to the main line below.

19...\texttt{x}e5 20.\texttt{x}h7\texttt{t} \texttt{h}8 21.\texttt{w}h4

21...\texttt{h}6!

21...g6 brought Black a decent position in Khalifman – Kaidanov, Kuibyshev 1986, but the text move is stronger.

22.\texttt{d}f3 \texttt{x}g5 23.\texttt{x}g5 \texttt{f}4!

23...\texttt{f}4?! is dubious in view of 24.\texttt{x}f4 \texttt{x}f4 25.\texttt{f}7\texttt{t} \texttt{x}h7 26.\texttt{x}h6 \texttt{x}h6 with a complicated endgame, as in Tiemann – Weiner, corr. 1971.

24.\texttt{x}h6 gxh6\texttt{t}

Black’s two pieces are stronger than a rook and he eventually won in Trautmann – Antoszkiewicz, corr. 1978.

F22) 13.a4
This was a pet line of Andrei Sokolov, who once reached the final of the candidates matches. White uses the position of the queen on d3 to exert pressure on the queenside. From this position I analysed two continuations of roughly equal strength, and I decided to present both of them so that the reader can choose whichever option he prefers. Thus we have F221) 13...g6?! and F222) 13...b8.

F221) 13...g6?!

This extremely rare move was played in just one correspondence game. Black’s idea is to prepare ...f5 to harass the enemy queen.

14...d4!

This is White’s only attempt to fight for the advantage. The other natural continuation is 14.axb5 f5 15.e2 e8 16.d1 axb5 17.xa8 xa8 18.e1 f5! 19.e8† xe8 20.d c4 and Black is doing fine.

14...xd4

This was Black’s choice in the aforementioned correspondence game, and it seems good enough to equalize.

14...xd4?N

Exchanging the bishop is a reasonable alternative, despite the obvious strategic risk.

15.cxd4 f5 16.c3 d6 17.axb5 axb5 18.xa8 xa8 19.f3 a5 20.d1 b4 21.c3 c4 22.h6 a1†

Black’s activity compensates for his dark-squared weaknesses, for example:

23...g8 26.g5 xf1† 27.xf1 f7 28.e1 d3† 29.e4=

Black should not lose this endgame.
15...\textit{f}5 16.\textit{c}3 \textit{d}6 17.\textit{f}3
Stammberger – Wiesen, corr. 1988. Now I would like to improve upon Black’s play with:

17...\textit{b}4!N 18.\textit{c}6 \textit{e}8! 19.\textit{x}d5†
After 19.\textit{x}e8 \textit{x}e8 20.\textit{h}6 Black comes with a strong exchange sacrifice:

20...\textit{e}2! 21.\textit{x}f8 \textit{x}f8 with full compensation.

I also analysed 19.\textit{e}5 \textit{xc}6 20.\textit{xc}6 \textit{g}7 21.\textit{xe}1 \textit{ae}8 22.\textit{g}5 \textit{d}7 23.\textit{e}5 \textit{c}8 and here White must take measures against ...\textit{c}5: 24.\textit{x}f6† \textit{x}f6 25.\textit{c}6 (Or 25.\textit{f}4 \textit{g}7 26.\textit{g}3 \textit{c}5 and Black is fine.) 25...\textit{xe}1† 26.\textit{xe}1 \textit{e}6 With a roughly equal position.

19...\textit{x}d5 20.\textit{xd}5† \textit{e}6 21.\textit{e}4 \textit{c}4 22.\textit{xe}8 \textit{axe}8 23.\textit{xe}1 \textit{xe}1† 24.\textit{xe}1

24...\textit{c}5! 25.\textit{e}3 \textit{xd}4 26.\textit{xd}4 \textit{d}8
Black’s strong bishops provide sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

F222) 13...\textit{b}8
This is the tried-and-tested move.

14.axb5 axb5 15.\textit{g}5
A couple of other moves have been tried.

15.\textit{c}2 \textit{f}7 16.\textit{b}3 \textit{b}6 17.\textit{bd}4 \textit{xd}4 18.\textit{xd}4 \textit{g}6 19.\textit{d}1 \textit{xc}2 20.\textit{xc}2† (20.\textit{xc}2N \textit{d}6=) 20...\textit{d}7 Black had a slight edge in G. Garcia – C. Toth, Bogota 1991.

15.\textit{a}6 is another reasonable alternative.
15...\texttt{d}7! 16.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{e}5! (16...\texttt{f}5? can be punished by 17.\texttt{g}e4\texttt{e}x\texttt{e}5) 17.\texttt{e}2 \texttt{d}6

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

18.\texttt{x}e6 (18.\texttt{d}e4?! \texttt{d}xe4 19.\texttt{f}xe6 \texttt{d}x\texttt{c}3! 20.bxc3 \texttt{w}x\texttt{e}6 21.\texttt{e}4 dxe4 22.\texttt{f}xe6\texttt{f}h8 with a slight edge for Black in Molnar – Sandor, Budapest 1996.) 18...\texttt{w}x\texttt{e}6 19.\texttt{d}e4 \texttt{c}4! 20.xf6! \texttt{w}xf6 Black has easily solved his opening problems, Simeone – Herzog, e-mail 2006.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

17.\texttt{c}2

17...\texttt{f}g4! 18.\texttt{d}e4 dxe4 19.\texttt{f}xe6\texttt{f}h8 20.\texttt{f}e3 \texttt{xf}2 21.\texttt{w}h4 (Or 21.xh7 \texttt{xc}3 22.xf8 \texttt{xf}8 23.xc3 \texttt{w}x\texttt{e}6 24.f1 \texttt{d}e3 with some edge for Black.) 21...h6 22.\texttt{f}xe4 \texttt{d}e4 23.\texttt{w}e4

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[help lines] (0,0) grid (8,8);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

15...\texttt{e}5!

This is the only decent move, but it is good enough to equalize.

16.\texttt{w}g3 \texttt{d}6

Compared with the earlier variation F21, the opening of the a-file helps White slightly but does not change the evaluation in a serious way. For a concrete example of how the open a-file can affect the play, see the note to Black's next move below.

17...h6?! Black takes the bishop away from a potential attack from a knight on b3. This move does not seem to have been tested over the board, but it has occurred in some correspondence games.
In the earlier variation F21, we reached the same position without the moves a2-a4, ...\textsuperscript{a}b8 and an exchange on b5. In that position I recommended:

17...\textsuperscript{a}d7

The same move is playable here too, although Black should not follow the exact same path.

18.\textsuperscript{a}b3 \textsuperscript{a}b6 19.\textsuperscript{a}f4 \textsuperscript{a}be8 20.\textsuperscript{a}d4 \textsuperscript{a}h5

20...h6? also looks playable.

21.\textsuperscript{a}xh7+ \textsuperscript{c}h8 22.\textsuperscript{a}xe5 \textsuperscript{a}xe5 23.\textsuperscript{a}h4

23...g6!

This is where the paths diverge. Black must avoid 23...\textsuperscript{a}h6? 24.\textsuperscript{a}df3 \textsuperscript{a}xg5? 25.\textsuperscript{a}xg5 \textsuperscript{a}f4? due to 26.\textsuperscript{a}xf4!+- when the open a-file helps White to exploit the weakness of the back rank.

24.f4

I also analysed: 24.g4 \textsuperscript{a}xg5 25.\textsuperscript{a}xg5 \textsuperscript{a}f4!

An important move, which solves all Black’s problems. 26.\textsuperscript{a}xf4 \textsuperscript{a}xf4 27.\textsuperscript{a}fe1 \textsuperscript{a}f7? 28.\textsuperscript{a}f3 \textsuperscript{a}xh7! 29.\textsuperscript{a}g5+ \textsuperscript{a}g7 30.\textsuperscript{a}xf7 \textsuperscript{a}xf7

I prefer Black thanks to his strong pieces.

24...\textsuperscript{a}xg5 25.\textsuperscript{a}xg5 \textsuperscript{a}xh7 26.f5 \textsuperscript{a}g8

27.g4 \textsuperscript{a}f6 28.fxg6+ \textsuperscript{a}xg6 29.\textsuperscript{a}xg6+ \textsuperscript{a}xg6

30.\textsuperscript{a}f7+ \textsuperscript{a}g7 31.\textsuperscript{a}xd7 \textsuperscript{a}xd7 32.gxh5 \textsuperscript{a}e7=

The endgame is equal.

18.\textsuperscript{a}b3

This has been White’s usual reply.

18.\textsuperscript{a}xe6!! \textsuperscript{a}xe6† left White facing some kingside pressure in Prestini – Alcerisio, e-mail 1998.

The untested 18.\textsuperscript{a}df3?!N \textsuperscript{a}xf3† 19.\textsuperscript{a}xf3 \textsuperscript{a}xg3 20.hxg3 \textsuperscript{a}be8 leads to a roughly equal endgame.

18...\textsuperscript{a}e4!

It turns out that opening the a-file is not exclusively beneficial to White. In this instance, the strong knight move is only possible thanks to the looseness of the knight on b3.

19.\textsuperscript{a}xe4

In the event of 19.\textsuperscript{a}h4 \textsuperscript{a}xg5 20.\textsuperscript{a}xg5 \textsuperscript{a}f5

21.\textsuperscript{a}xf5 \textsuperscript{a}xf5± Black obtains a comfortable position after exchanging the light-squared bishops.

White’s only other option is:

19.\textsuperscript{a}xe4 dxe4 20.\textsuperscript{a}d4

20.\textsuperscript{a}xe4?? is impossible in view of 20...\textsuperscript{a}xf2†!++.
20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c3}}} also fails to impress after 20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xe3}}}
21.fxe3 (21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{wxe3}?! \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g4}}}↑}) 21...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c4}}}!
followed by ...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d3}} and Black is better.
20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xd4}}} 21.cxd4
Skala – Petr, corr. 1990. Now Black's play can be easily improved:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\foreach \i in {0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7} {
  \draw[thick] (\i,0) -- (\i,8);
  \draw[thick] (0,\i) -- (8,\i);
}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

21...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d3}}}!N 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c3}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d5}}}!
It is White who must worry about equalizing.

19...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{dxe4}}} 20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{dxe4}}}
20.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d4}}} was played in Haufe – Bericot, corr. 1999, and here Black could have obtained a fine position with: 20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d5}}}!N 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb5}} (21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d3}}} h6 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h3}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d3}}}↑ is better for Black thanks to the misplaced knight on h3.) 21...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f6}}↑} Black has more than enough activity for a pawn, for example:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\foreach \i in {0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7} {
  \draw[thick] (\i,0) -- (\i,8);
  \draw[thick] (0,\i) -- (8,\i);
}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c3}}} h6 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb6}}} (or 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{h3}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c4}}−−) 23...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb6}}} 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc7}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c4}}} 25.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{exe4}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{e7}}} 26.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{a5}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d3}}}↑ White is in trouble as 27.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d2}}}? \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f4}}}! wins for Black.

The main move was played in Canibal – Van Wieringen, e-mail 2003. At this point Black's best continuation would have been:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\foreach \i in {0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7} {
  \draw[thick] (\i,0) -- (\i,8);
  \draw[thick] (0,\i) -- (8,\i);
}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c6}}}!N
This strong novelty should lead to Black's advantage.

21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{ed2}}}
Here is a nice variation: 21.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xe5}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xb3}}} 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d2}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{b8}}} 23.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{g3}}}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (0,0) grid (8,8);
\draw (0,0) rectangle (8,8);
\foreach \i in {0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7} {
  \draw[thick] (\i,0) -- (\i,8);
  \draw[thick] (0,\i) -- (8,\i);
}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

23...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{c4}}}! 24.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xc4}}} \textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xf2}}}↑−− Black obtains a decisive advantage.

21...\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d5}}}! 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{xe5}}}
It is important to see what happens when White accepts the temporary piece sacrifice.
22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{d4}}} may be better although after 22.\textit{\textcolor{red}{\textbf{f6}}↑} Black still has the initiative.
Black maintains a strong initiative, and White has nothing better than returning his extra pawn:

\[ 25. \text{e}3 \text{xf}3 26. \text{gx}f3 \text{xf}3 \]

Perhaps White can hold the endgame, but he will have to suffer for quite some time.

**G) 10. \text{bd}2 (without 11. \text{c}2)**

\[ 10... \text{0-0} \]

As I mentioned in the chapter introduction, by far the most important option from this position is 11. \text{c}2, which can be found in the next chapter beginning on page 295. Over the final few pages of the present chapter we will deal with the sidelines **G1) 11. \text{xe}4** and **G2) 11. \text{e}2**.

11. \text{a}4 transposes to the earlier variation B – see page 272.

11. \text{h}3 wastes an important tempo. In Karabayeva – Dudas, Kemer 2009, Black could have exploited this by means of:

\[ 11... \text{e}8! \text{N} \]

Intending to meet 12. \text{c}2 with 12... \text{f}5 when the e5-pawn is becoming vulnerable.

11. \text{e}1 This artificial move cannot offer White any opening advantage. 11... \text{f}5 12. \text{xe}4 \text{dxe}4 (12... \text{xe}4 is also good for Black.) 13. \text{c}2 Doucin – Haba, Toulouse 1990. Now I would like to offer:
13...exf3?! N 14.\textit{x}xf5 \textit{e}e8! 15.\textit{x}xh7+ \textit{g}h8! 16.\textit{x}c2 \textit{fxg2} 17.\textit{g}xg2 \textit{d}xe5 18.\textit{w}e4 \textit{d}g6 19.\textit{w}g4 \textit{d}d5+ 20.\textit{g}xg1 \textit{g}g8! and Black is slightly better.

\underline{G1) \text{11.\textit{d}xe4 \textit{d}xe4}}

The exchange is premature for White.

12.\textit{g}g5
12.\textit{x}xe6? \textit{fxe6} 13.\textit{w}b3 occurred in He - Hristov, Kemer 2009, and now the simple 13...\textit{d}d5!N 14.\textit{g}g5 \textit{e}ae8\!+ gives Black a clear advantage.

After 12.\textit{w}xd8 \textit{e}axd8 13.\textit{g}g5 \textit{d}xe5 14.\textit{d}xe6 \textit{fxe6} 15.\textit{d}xe4 \textit{b}6\!+ Black's superior pieces more than made up for his isolated e-pawn in De Souza Mendes - Charlier, Sao Paulo 1943.

12...\textit{x}xb3! 13.\textit{w}h5?!
This is an interesting attempt to complicate the game. Other moves enable Black to claim at least equal chances without much difficulty.

13.\textit{w}xb3? is refuted by 13...\textit{e}3! as in Kuljanin - Khalifman, Bela Crkva 1989.

13.\textit{x}xb3? e3! 14.\textit{w}h5?! (White should prefer 14.\textit{x}xe3!N \textit{xe3} 15.\textit{w}xd8 \textit{fxd8} 16.\textit{f}xe3 \textit{d}xe5 when he just about clings to equality.)

14...exf2+ 15.\textit{h}h1 \textit{w}d3! Black was clearly on top in Dergausov - Panush, Chisinau 2007.

13...\textit{e}f2+?!

This new move looks attractive, although it is not clear if it is objectively best. The good news is that Black is fighting for an advantage in both of the critical lines, so the reader can happily choose whichever one he prefers.

13...\textit{h}6 has been played previously, and also makes sense if followed up correctly. 14.\textit{x}xe4 \textit{c}4 15.\textit{x}xh6 Now in Niermann - Schemmann, Germany 2005, Black should have played:

After 12.\textit{w}xd8 \textit{e}axd8 13.\textit{g}g5 \textit{d}xe5 14.\textit{d}xe6 \textit{fxe6} 15.\textit{d}xe4 \textit{b}6\!+ Black's superior pieces more than made up for his isolated e-pawn in De Souza Mendes - Charlier, Sao Paulo 1943.

13...\textit{x}xb3! 13.\textit{w}h5!?
This is an interesting attempt to complicate the game. Other moves enable Black to claim at least equal chances without much difficulty.

13.\textit{w}xb3? is refuted by 13...\textit{e}3! as in Kuljanin - Khalifman, Bela Crkva 1989.

13.\textit{x}xb3? e3! 14.\textit{w}h5?! (White should prefer 14.\textit{x}xe3!N \textit{xe3} 15.\textit{w}xd8 \textit{fxd8} 16.\textit{f}xe3 \textit{d}xe5 when he just about clings to equality.)

15...\textit{e}7\!N 16.\textit{w}g4 \textit{g}6 17.\textit{f}d1 \textit{w}c8 18.\textit{w}f4 \textit{w}f5 19.\textit{w}xf5 \textit{gx}f5 20.\textit{h}xh8 \textit{e}xf8 21.\textit{g}g3 f4 With two bishops versus a rook, Black has reasonable winning chances in the endgame.
14.\textit{Exf2}

14.\textit{Exf2} is strongly met by 14...\textit{e3!!} 15.\textit{exe3 c2} when Black neutralizes the attack and keeps a clear positional advantage.

14...\textit{d1++} 15.\textit{xd1} \textit{xd1} 16.\textit{exe4} {\textit{exe8}}

17.\textit{f4} \textit{h5}

White is under some pressure and must battle for equality.

\textbf{G2) 11.\textit{e2}}

\textbf{11...\textit{f5}}

Exchanging on d2 would only facilitate the development of White's queenside pieces, so instead Black supports the knight and activates his bishop. Now the two main options are \textbf{G21) 12.a4} and \textbf{G22) 12.\textit{exe4}}.

12.\textit{c2?} is bad in view of 12...\textit{xc3!} 13.\textit{bxc3 xxc2} and Black won a pawn in Englund - Loewy, Barmen 1905.

12.\textit{e6?!} is questionable due to 12...\textit{f6!} 13.\textit{exf7+} \textit{xf7} and White experiences problems with the development of his queenside, Kalezic - Caruana, Budva 2009.

The strange 12.\textit{d1??} occurred in Motylev - Caruana, Wijk aan Zee 2009. Black has a wide choice of good replies, one of them being 12...\textit{e6??N} repeating the position, so the line is of no theoretical value for White.

12.\textit{d1??} is weird and leads to Black's advantage. 12...\textit{b6} 13.\textit{b3 g4}! White starts to experience problems with the e5-pawn. 14.\textit{f4} Ciruelos Clerencia - Baena Canada, Linares 1998.

\textbf{14...\textit{exe8!!N}} This simple move wins a pawn, for instance 15.\textit{c2 xf3} 16.\textit{xf3??} (16.gxf3 \textit{h4!!}) 16...\textit{exe5} 17.\textit{exe4} (17.\textit{xe5 exe5+}) 17...\textit{dxe4} 18.\textit{exe4?? d3!!} with a winning endgame in sight.

\textbf{G21) 12.a4 \textit{b8} 13.axb5 axb5 14.\textit{exe4}}

This leads to a position resembling the 12.\textit{exe4} variation without the a-pawns – see variation G22 below for the comparison.
The attempt to utilize the open a-file with 14...a6 is not dangerous for Black. 14...b6
15.axe4 dxe4 16.g5 cxe5 17.cxe4 e8! 18.c2 Kosten – Martin, Toulon 1999. Now Black should have played

Black was at least equal in Dragomirescu – Kiselev, Split 2012. It is also worth mentioning that 17..f5?N leaves White with nothing better than 18.e2= repeating the position, so take your pick.

G22) 12.xe4 dxe4

With ...d3 coming next, Black is clearly better.

14.dxe4 15.g5

15.d1? does not work: 15...fxe3 16.xf3 d7 17.e6 fxe6 18.xe6† e6 19.xd8 Kozel – Olsarova, Karvina 2010, and now after 19..xd8N White is completely lost.

13.g5

13.d2? was played in Damjanovic – Honfi, Pecs 1964, and here Black missed an immediate refutation with 13...e3!N 14.fxe3 d3++; leading to both a material and a positional advantage.

13.d1? does not work. 13...xf3 14.xf3 d7 15.g3 (15.d5? is even worse: 15...g4!+ Boleslavsky – Sokolsky, Sverdlovsk 1942.)

Now in Garcia Cardenas – Paez Medina, Santiago de Chile 2010, Black could have refuted his opponent’s play with:

13...dxe5 16.xe4 g4 17.c2

Now Black has a pleasant choice.

17..b6
15...\textit{e}e7!N 16.e6 \textit{fxe6} 17.\textit{f}xe6† \textit{f}xe6 18.\textit{f}xd8 0-0-0 19.\textit{f}xd8+=Black has too much material for the queen.

13...\textit{f}xe5 14.\textit{g}xh4 \textit{g}xh4 15.\textit{h}c2
15..\textit{f}d2 \textit{f}xd2 16.\textit{f}xd2 \textit{b}b6 led to a tiny edge for Black in Horowitz – Pilnik, Hollywood 1945.

15...\textit{b}b6!?
This can be compared with variation G21 above; here too, this move is a reasonable attempt to play for a win.

Once again Black can practically force a repetition with 15...\textit{f}f5 16.\textit{e}e2 \textit{g}g4 17.\textit{c}c2= as occurred in Averbakh – Flohr, Moscow 1944.

16.\textit{g}f4
16.\textit{f}g3?! \textit{f}f6 gave Black the initiative in Bezkorovaina – Severina, Kharkiv 2012.

16.\textit{f}g5 \textit{c}c7 17.\textit{h}h1 occurred in Schnider – Kotz, Austria 2010, and now after 17...\textit{a}e8!N 18.f3 \textit{f}f5† Black obtains slightly better chances.

Finally I encountered 16.\textit{f}g5 \textit{d}d3 17.\textit{e}e3 almost two decades ago in Lengyel – Mikhalevski, Budapest 1993. At this point I should have played: 17...\textit{c}c5!N 18.c4 \textit{h}6 19.\textit{e}e4 \textit{f}f5 20.f3 \textit{a}a7 intending ...\textit{d}d7 and keeping a slight edge.

16...\textit{a}a6! 17.\textit{h}h5 \textit{f}d7 18.\textit{f}h1
This was Damjanovic – Honfi, Pecs 1964. At this point Black’s most accurate continuation would have been:

18...\textit{a}a8!!N 19.f3 \textit{e}e6
Black has the more harmonious position and it is White who must struggle to equalize.

\textbf{Conclusion}

We have dealt with several rare lines here. To some extent, the purpose of this chapter was to clear the debris along the path leading to the most important lines of the 9.c3 system, namely those occurring after 9...\textit{c}c5 10.\textit{d}d2 0–0 11.\textit{c}c2, which can be found in the next chapter. Of the variations examined in the present chapter, line F with 10.\textit{f}d3 tends to lead to the most interesting and complex positions, although we have seen that Black should have little to fear if he knows what he is doing.
Main Lines

9.c3 â€‘c5 10.â€‘bd2 0–0 11.â€‘c2

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.â€‘f3 â€‘c6 3.â€‘b5 a6 4.â€‘a4 â€‘f6 5.0–0 â€‘xe4 6.d4 b5 7.â€‘b3 d5 8.dxe5 â€‘e6 9.c3 â€‘c5 10.â€‘bd2 0–0 11 â€‘c2

11...â€‘f5

A) 12.â€‘xe4 296
B) 12.â€‘b3 â€‘g6 297
   B1) 13.â€‘f4 298
   B2) 13.a4 301
   B3) 13.â€‘xc5 302
   B4) 13.â€‘fd4 â€‘xd4 302
      B41) 14.â€‘xd4!? 303
      B42) 14.cxd4 a5 305
         B421) 15.â€‘d3?! 305
         B422) 15.a4 306
         B423) 15.â€‘e3 a4 307
            B4231) 16.â€‘d2 307
            B4232) 16.â€‘c1 a3! 309
               B42321) 17.bxa3 310
               B42322) 17.b3! f6! 311
                  B423221) 18.f3 311
                  B423222) 18.exf6 313
                  B423223) 18.â€‘d3 314
1.e4 e5 2.d4 d6 3.dxe5 dxe5 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.0-0 Nxe4 6.d4 Nc6 7.Bb3 Be7 8.fxe5 Bb4+ 9.d2 c5 10.b2 0-0 11.a1

This is the big main line of the 9.c3 system, and Black has three major ways to play against it. In my own games I have mainly chosen the aggressive 11...exf2 and achieved good results, and I have also used 11...f5 successfully a few times. However, for this volume I took a fresh look at the different lines and decided to recommend a third option.

11...f5

Although I have done well with the two alternatives, I regard the text move as perhaps the most reliable of all. We will begin by examining White’s attempt to force the play with A) 12.Nxe4, before moving on to the main line of B) 12.Nb3.


A) 12.Nxe4

12...dxe4!

In four of the five available games Black took with the bishop, but I prefer the pawn capture.

13.Nf4?N

For the time being the knight on f3 is indirectly defended due to the loose bishop on f5, so I think White should protect the e5-pawn before moving the knight.


13.Nc1 occurred in Reynolds – Zachowski, e-mail 1993. This move actually transposes to the 11.Nc1 line given in the notes to variation G in the previous chapter – see page 290, where 13...exf3?!N leads to an edge for Black.

13...g5 14.g5 Nxd1 15.Nxd1

Also after 15.Nxd1 e3! 16.Ng6 exf2† 17.Nh1 hxg6 Black is fine.

15...e3

15...xf2†? 16.Nxf2 e3† 17.Nxe3 Nxe2 18.Rd7 Rac8= is a reasonable alternative.

16.Ng6 exf2† 17.Nf1 fxg6 18.Ne6 h5

Black is not worse.
Here we see a rare case in the Open Spanish where Black is willing to exchange his dark-squared bishop for an enemy knight. The point is that an exchange on c5 will lead to an unavoidable exchange of the light-squared bishops. From here we will consider four main moves, the last of which is by far the most important:

B1) 13.\textit{f}4, B2) 13.\textit{a}4, B3) 13.\textit{xc}5 and B4) 13.\textit{fd}4. Here is a roundup of three minor options:

13.\textit{xe}4 promises multiple exchanges but no advantage: 13...\textit{d}xe4 14.\textit{fd}4 (14.\textit{xc}5 \textit{exf}3 15.\textit{xf}3 16.\textit{g}3 17.\textit{c}4 is equal.)

14...\textit{xd}4!? (14...\textit{d}5N also looks perfectly decent.) 15.cxd4 Zimmermann - Koester, e-mail 1992, and now the simplest continuation is 15...\textit{b}4N followed by ...\textit{d}3 and Black is fine.

13.\textit{bd}4 14.\textit{xd}4

14.\textit{xd}4 transposes to the later variation B41 on page 303.

The text move can be compared with variation B42 (page 305). The present version is an improvement for Black as the f2-f3 move is not available, and he can obtain good prospects as shown below.
20...\texttt{e}7!
Intending ...\texttt{g}6 with good play for Black.

13\texttt{e}2
This move was tested just once.

13...\texttt{e}8 14.\texttt{x}c5 \texttt{d}xc5 15.\texttt{g}xg6 h\texttt{x}g6 16.\texttt{g}5 \texttt{d}7 17.\texttt{ad}1
Now we can improve on Black's in Ljubojevic – Timman, Hilversum 1987.

17...\texttt{e}4!N 18.\texttt{w}xe4
Or 18.\texttt{h}4 g5! 19.\texttt{w}xe4 dxe4 20.\texttt{xd}7 \texttt{xf}3 21.\texttt{x}g5 \texttt{ac}8 22.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{xe}5 and Black is fine.
18...dxe4 19.\texttt{xd}7 \texttt{xf}3 20.\texttt{xc}7 \texttt{xe}5 21.\texttt{ed}1 \texttt{id}3! 22.gxf3
22.b3 \texttt{ed}1?! 23.\texttt{xe}1 \texttt{xe}1 24.g4 \texttt{e}8 reaches a roughly equal endgame.
22...\texttt{xb}2 23.\texttt{dd}7 \texttt{f}8=
White's bind is only temporary, as Black can relieve the pressure by transferring his knight to b6 via c4.

B1) 13.\texttt{f}4

13...\texttt{b}6 14.a4
White wants to create an object of attack on b5.

14.\texttt{bd}4 was played in Szalanczy – Meurs, Budapest 2011, and now after the simple 14...\texttt{xd}4!N 15.cxd4 \texttt{c}5 Black is fine.

A slightly different approach is demanded by 14.\texttt{fd}4 as seen in Popovic – Skembris, Bar 1997: 14...\texttt{e}7!N

Black intends to advance with ...\texttt{c}5 next. Note that 15.f3?! does nothing to prevent this plan in view of 15...\texttt{c}5! 16.\texttt{fxe}4 \texttt{cxd}4 17.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{ec}8! and Black is slightly better.

14...\texttt{d}7 15.axb5?!
This move appears consistent and it was once tested in a game between two top grandmasters. Nevertheless, it is not dangerous for Black to say the least.

Closing the queenside with 15.a5?! doesn't make much sense either: 15...a7 16.Qd4 £ae8! 17.Qxc6 £xc6 18.Qd4 £b7 19.h4 c5+ Cis – Van der Houwen, corr. 2002.

15.Qbd4N presents few problems after 15...Qxd4 16.cxd4 £h5 with equal chances.

15.Qe2?!
This dubious move occurred in one game, in which White had to resign just eight moves later!

15...£g4! 16.axb5 axb5 17.£e3 £g3 19.hxg3 £c4 is also in Black's favour.

18...£xe5! 19.Qxb6 £xb6 20.Qd4 £xf3† 21.Qxg5? This is a loss, although the simple 21...£xg3 22.gxf3 £c5† retains a slight edge for Black.

21...£g5! 22.£h1
22...£xg6 loses to 22...£h3†! 23.£h1 £f4—.
22...£xc2 23.£e1

Or 23.£xc2 £xf3 24.gxf3 £xf3† 25.£g1 £e8 and Black wins.

23...£e4! 0–1 Swathi – Tania, New Delhi 2008.

There is one final option worth mentioning:

15.Qh4?N

This interesting novelty virtually forces the following sequence:

15...Qxf2 16.Qxf2 £xf2† 17.Qxf2 bxa4!
Black takes a concrete approach to exploit the power of the queen on d7.

18.£xa4 £xe5 19.Qc5

After 19.Qd4? £c2 20.£xc2 £c4 21.Qf5 £e7 22.Qg5 £d6 23.£f4 Black can choose between repeating the position with 23...£c6?, and playing for a win with 23...£e7, intending £ab8.

19...£e7 20.Qxe5 £xc5† 21.Qd4 £e7 22.Qf5 22.£f3 £xc2 23.£xc2 £c5 24.Qe5 £e8 is fine for Black.
22...£xf5 23.Qxf5 £g6 24.Qg4 £c5 25.Qe3 £ab8!
26.Qc1 £fd8
Black's last move prepares...d4. The position is dynamically balanced.
15...axb5 16.axa8 axa8 17.fd4 b4! 18.d3!

Threatening a nasty pin. There is no other way for White to pose problems, for instance 18.xc6 xc6 19.xe4 (19.cxb4?? fails to 19..xf2!–+) 19...xe4 20.cx4 and Black's advantage is not in doubt.

19...bxc3!

It turns out that Black need not fear ghosts.

19..b5 xf2

Black faces a difficult though pleasant choice here, as he has two good alternatives available: 19...c2?!N 20.xc2 e6 (20..xf2?? 21.xd4 transposes to the main line below.) 21.cd4 (21.e3 a7! 22.xb6 xb5??) 21...xd4 22.xd4 xd4 23.xd4 c5

20...xd4 h6? Black has a comfortable position thanks to his strong centre.

19...cxb2?!N 20.xc6

20...xf2!! 21.xf2 xc6! 22.xb2 (22.xc6 b1=Q 23.xb1 xf2† 24.xf2 xb1 25.e7† h8=Q 22..a4 23.e3 c5 24.e2 d4 25.f2 c4 Black retains slightly better chances.

20.xf2

We have been following the game Short - Timman, Tilburg 1988. Here Black's most accurate continuation would have been:

20...c2!N 21.xc2 xf2† 22.xf2 f5

23.g3

23.g3 h5 24.d2 xe5?

23..h5 24.xd5

24.d2 xe5?
24...\texttt{xc}2\texttt{\textdagger} 25.\texttt{xd}2 \texttt{d}8 26.\texttt{xc}6 \texttt{xd}2\texttt{\textdagger} 27.\texttt{xd}2 \texttt{xd}2\texttt{\textdagger}

White should be able to hold this position, but Black can keep playing with a draw in hand for at least a few more moves.

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\textbf{B2) 13.a4}
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Black can safely ignore this flank activity.

13...\texttt{b}6 14.\texttt{bd}4

Black has nothing to fear from exchanges:
14.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{xb}5 15.\texttt{xa}8 \texttt{xa}8 16.\texttt{xd}5
(16.\texttt{bd}4 \texttt{e}8 17.\texttt{f}4 \texttt{xd}4 18.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{a}2! is good for Black, Dragun – Kolosowski, Warsaw 2012.)

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16...\texttt{xc}3! 17.\texttt{xc}3 \texttt{xc}2 18.\texttt{xb}5 \texttt{b}8! 19.\texttt{c}5! \texttt{e}4 Black was fine in Tukmakov – Savon, Moscow 1969.

14...\texttt{xd}4 15.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{d}7 16.\texttt{e}3 c5??

I find this more logical than 16...\texttt{c}5 as was played in Van der Wiel – Korchnoi, Wijk aan Zee 1983. The continuation might be:

17.\texttt{b}3 \texttt{c}7 18.\texttt{xb}5

18.f3?! \texttt{d}4! gives Black a better version of the main line below.

18...\texttt{xb}5 19.\texttt{xa}8 \texttt{xa}8 20.f3

After 20.\texttt{xd}5? \texttt{d}8\texttt{\textdagger} the queen is trapped.

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20...\texttt{d}4! 21.\texttt{xe}4 \texttt{xe}4 22.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{xd}4 23.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{d}8\texttt{\textdagger} 24.\texttt{f}xe4 \texttt{xd}4\texttt{\textdagger} 25.\texttt{xd}4 \texttt{c}4!=

The tactical sequence has resulted in an equal endgame.
B3) 13.\(\mathcal{Q}x\text{c}5 \mathcal{Q}x\text{c}5\)

14.\(\mathcal{Q}\text{xg}6\)

14.\(\mathcal{Q}\text{g}5\) doesn't make sense as it forces the queen to a better square, while the bishop isn't doing much on g5. After 14...\(\mathcal{W}d7\) Black was fine in Zelic – Mihalincic, Zadar 1995.

14.\(\mathcal{E}e1\) was played in Sanfeliu Fabregas – Korneev, Manresa 1996. Here I would like to recommend 14...\(\mathcal{Q}x\text{c}2\)N 15.\(\mathcal{W}x\text{c}2\) \(\mathcal{E}e8\) 16.\(\mathcal{Q}e3\) \(\mathcal{E}e4\) 17.\(\mathcal{Q}f4\) \(\mathcal{E}e7\) 18.\(\mathcal{K}ad1\) \(\mathcal{W}c8\) with a roughly equal position.

14...\(\mathcal{H}x\text{g}6\) 15.\(\mathcal{Q}e3\) \(\mathcal{E}e4\)

Black intends to attack the e5-pawn with ...\(\mathcal{E}e8\).

B4) 13.\(\mathcal{Q}d\text{f}4\)

16.a4!N

Only with this move can White present a challenge.

16.\(\mathcal{W}d3\) \(\mathcal{E}e8\) 17.\(\mathcal{Q}d4\) occurred in Jirovsky – Virostko, Plzen 1997. Now the most precise is 17...g5!N 18.h3 \(\mathcal{D}d7\) 19.\(\mathcal{F}f1\) g4 20.\(\mathcal{H}x\text{g}4\) \(\mathcal{W}x\text{g}4\) and Black is doing fine.

16...\(\mathcal{B}4\) 17.\(\mathcal{C}4\) \(\mathcal{E}e8\)

17...\(\mathcal{D}x\text{c}4\)? is slightly riskier but may also be playable.

18.\(\mathcal{X}d5\) \(\mathcal{D}x\text{e}5\) 19.\(\mathcal{D}x\text{e}5\) \(\mathcal{X}x\text{e}5\) 20.\(\mathcal{W}d4\) \(\mathcal{W}x\text{d}5\) 21.\(\mathcal{W}x\text{b}4\) \(\mathcal{C}5\)

The position is roughly equal. White has a bishop against a knight, but Black is well centralized.
As mentioned previously, this is by far the most important option.

13...\xd2
Black ‘sacrifices’ his dark-squared bishop, trusting in the activity of his other pieces. We will analyse both B41) 14.\xd2? and B42) 14.cxd4.

B41) 14.\xd2?

This move is less common, but nevertheless rather poisonous.

14...\xd7! 15.f4
Other plans are less dangerous.

15.a4 \xc5 (15...\xe5 is also playable, but on this occasion one good move is enough.) 16.axb5 axb5 17.\xa8 \xa8 18.\xc6 \xc6 19.\xc3


15.\xc6 \xc6 16.\xc3 \xe8

17.\xd4?!N
White should hold back his f-pawn, as demonstrated by the following two games: 17.f3? loses a pawn to 17...\xc3! 18.\xd2 \xc2 19.\xc2 \xe5 20.\ae1 \xe2! 21.\xe2 \xc2 22.\xc2 \xe3 23.\xc7 \g6 as seen in Speelman – Timman, London (6) 1989. 17.f4?! \xc3! 18.bxc3 \xc3 19.f5 \xe3! 20.\h1 \xe5 21.fxg6 hxg6 With four pawns for a piece Black was better in Korchnoi – Karl, Switzerland 1982.

17...\g5 18.\xb3 \xe6
With roughly equal chances.
15...\(\text{Bxd4}\) 16.cxd4 f6

16...\(\text{Bf5?!}\) is an interesting alternative which could also be considered.

17.\(\text{Be3}\)

17.g4 f5! 18.\(\text{Bxe4?!}\) (18.h3N a5 and 18.g5N a5 are both about equal.) 18...\(\text{dxe4}\) With ...\(\text{Bf7}\) on the way, Black's control over the light squares gave him the upper hand in Ronneland - Wedberg, Stockholm 1992.

18...\(\text{Bd8!}\)

I prefer this over 17...\(\text{fxe5}\). It is worth considering both of White's responses here:

a) 18.fxe5 is not too dangerous for Black.

18...\(\text{Bxf1}\)† 19.\(\text{Bxf1}\) \(\text{Bf8}\) 20.\(\text{We2}\) \(\text{We6}\) 21.\(\text{Bf1}\)

(After 21.\(\text{Bc1!}\)? c6 I don't see how White can make progress, although this still looks like his best chance to play for a win.)

b) 18.dxe5! is stronger:

18...\(\text{Bf5?!}\)N

18...\(\text{Bf5?!}\)N

(This was my attempt to improve over 18...\(\text{Bd8}\) 19.g4! when Black faced tricky problems in Mauro - Quattrocchi, corr. 1996.) 19.\(\text{Bc1}\) \(\text{Bd8}\) 20.\(\text{Bd4}\)† Black is still under some pressure.

18.\(\text{We2}\)

Now I would like to offer an improvement.

18...\(\text{Bf5?!}\)N

To understand the main point of this move, we should first examine the immediate
18...fxe5 19.dxe5! when 19...d4? does not work in view of 20.\textit{ad}1! c5 21.\textit{xd}4! cxd4 22.\textit{xe}4+. With the bishop on f5, the same idea will not work for White as the move \textit{ad}1 can always be met by ...\textit{g}4.

18...\textit{h}8 was played in Klovans – Dorfman, Soviet Union 1981, but this move hardly seems to be necessary. After the text move I analysed the following illustrative line:

19.\textit{ac}1 c6 20.\textit{d}3 a5 21.\textit{d}1
21.a4!? can be met by 21...\textit{bxa}4! 22.\textit{c}2 \textit{e}6! 23.\textit{xa}4 c5! with counterplay.

21...a4 22.\textit{e}2
Threatening g2-g4, so the time has come to release the central tension.

22...fxe5 23.fxe5
23.dxe5? is bad here due to 23...d4\textsuperscript{+}.

23...\textit{e}6=
Black has built a fortress.

B42) 14.cxd4

The rare 15.f4 leads to a forcing sequence: 15...a4! 16.f5! axb3 17.\textit{x}b3 \textit{xf}5 (17...\textit{d}7?! 18.f\textit{g}6 hx\textit{g}6 also looks okay for Black.) 18.\textit{xf}5 \textit{d}7 19.\textit{f}1

Here Black can improve on the game Acs – Gyimesi, Hungary 1998, with 19...\textit{f}6N 20.ex\textit{f}6 \textit{xf}6 21.\textit{xf}6 \textit{xf}6 22.\textit{d}3 \textit{a}5 23.\textit{c}2 \textit{c}6? when I do not see any more than equality for White.

B421) 15.\textit{d}3?!

This rare move was introduced by Tsekhovsky. He won a couple of games with it in 1980, but modern analysis casts a dark shadow over it.

15...a4!
Initiating a forcing sequence.

14...a5
Black must hurry to obtain counterplay, otherwise he will just be positionally worse. We will examine three replies: B421) 15.\textit{d}3?!, B422) 15.a4 and B423) 15.\textit{e}3.
16.\textit{\textbf{x}}b5 axb3 17.\textit{\textbf{x}}c6 \textit{\textbf{a}}a6!

This important intermediate move attacks the light-squared bishop in order to grant the queen access to the a8-square. 17...\textit{\textbf{xa}}2? is bad in view of 18.\textit{\textbf{xa}}2 bxa2 19.\textit{\textbf{a}}a4± and White wins the a2-pawn.

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18.f3


18.\textit{\textbf{b}}5?N \textit{\textbf{xa}}2 is in Black's favour, for example: 19.\textit{\textbf{xa}}2 (19.\textit{\textbf{e}}3 \textit{\textbf{xb}}2+) 19...bxa2 20.\textit{\textbf{a}}4 \textit{\textbf{a}}8! 21.\textit{\textbf{a}}6

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21...\textit{\textbf{g}}3!! 22.hxg3 \textit{\textbf{d}}3 23.\textit{\textbf{xa}}2 Otherwise ...\textit{\textbf{xa}}6 will save the a2-pawn, giving Black a serious endgame advantage. 23...\textit{\textbf{xf}}1 24.\textit{\textbf{xf}}1

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18...\textit{\textbf{xc}}6

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19.fxe4 bxa2 20.\textit{\textbf{xa}}2 \textit{\textbf{xe}}4

Black kept a slight edge in Ljubojevic – Tal, Niksic 1983, thanks to his superior bishop.

B422) 15.a4

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This rare move promises no advantage.

15...\textit{\textbf{d}}4! 16.\textit{\textbf{b}}1

16.\textit{\textbf{xe}}4 is better, but Black experiences no problems after: 16...dxe4 17.axb5 \textit{\textbf{d}}3!

18.\textit{\textbf{e}}3 \textit{\textbf{d}}7 19.\textit{\textbf{xa}}5 \textit{\textbf{xb}}5 20.\textit{\textbf{a}}4 \textit{\textbf{xa}}4
21...f6! White will have to return his extra pawn to reach an equal endgame.

16...bxa4! 17.d2
No better is: 17.xa4 xf2! 18.xf2 xb1 19.xa5 xa5 20.xa5

This was Hall – Richter, Internet 2010, and now after 20... wb8!N I prefer Black.

The main move occurred in Sarfati – Green, New Zealand 1985. At this point I would like to improve with:

17...c5!?N
Preparing ...c5. A possible continuation is:

18.xa4 c5 19.xe4 dxe4 20.e3 cxd4 21.xd4 fd8 22.c3 d3
With approximately equal chances.
16...a3
This is my recommendation, although 16...f6 is a valid alternative.

17.\texttt{\textit{x}}e4
17.\texttt{\textit{b}}1 axb2 18.\texttt{\textit{x}}e4 \texttt{\textit{x}}xe4 reaches the same position.

17...axb2 18.\texttt{\textit{b}}1 \texttt{\textit{x}}e4 19.\texttt{\textit{b}}2
19.\texttt{\textit{e}}xe4N is worse as it vacates the d5-square for the black queen. Nevertheless after 19...dxe4 20.\texttt{\textit{x}}xb2 \texttt{\textit{d}}5 21.\texttt{\textit{b}}3 \texttt{\textit{f}}d8 22.\texttt{\textit{b}}5 \texttt{\textit{b}}5 23.\texttt{\textit{b}}5 \texttt{\textit{x}}d4 24.\texttt{\textit{b}}4 c5 25.\texttt{\textit{c}}4 White retains equality.

19...\texttt{\textit{d}}7!
Black defends the b5-pawn indirectly.

20.\texttt{\textit{d}}3
This line became popular in the eighties, before fading into obscurity after Black’s best methods became established. White would like to force the bishops off without allowing a favourable change in Black’s pawn structure. Compare the following game: 20.\texttt{\textit{e}}xe4 dxe4 21.\texttt{\textit{b}}5 \texttt{\textit{d}}5 22.\texttt{\textit{c}}5 \texttt{\textit{d}}8 23.\texttt{\textit{d}}4 \texttt{\textit{d}}4 24.\texttt{\textit{d}}4 \texttt{\textit{d}}4 25.\texttt{\textit{c}}7 h6 (Or 25...h5 26.\texttt{\textit{c}}2 and in this equal position a draw was agreed in Mortensen – Fries Nielsen, Silkeborg 1980.) 26.\texttt{\textit{c}}2 \texttt{\textit{e}}8 27.\texttt{\textit{c}}5 \texttt{\textit{a}}8 28.\texttt{\textit{c}}2 \texttt{\textit{e}}8= J. Polgar – Anand, Monte Carlo (rapid) 1995.

By the way, 20.\texttt{\textit{f}}3?! is unsatisfactory due to 20...\texttt{\textit{x}}c2 21.\texttt{\textit{c}}2 \texttt{\textit{a}}5! when the knight takes up a dominating position on c4, P. Jorgensen – C. Johansson, corr. 1986.

20...\texttt{\textit{x}}d3 21.\texttt{\textit{x}}d3 \texttt{\textit{b}}4
This idea from Korchnoi seems to be the most precise.

21...\texttt{\textit{f}}b8 should also be enough for equality, since after 22.\texttt{\textit{b}}5 \texttt{\textit{b}}5 23.\texttt{\textit{b}}5 Black has at his disposal: 23...\texttt{\textit{e}}5!

20...\texttt{\textit{d}}7?! (24.\texttt{\textit{b}}7N leads to equality after 24...\texttt{\textit{c}}6 25.\texttt{\textit{c}}6 \texttt{\textit{d}}6 26.\texttt{\textit{c}}1 \texttt{\textit{f}}6=) 24...\texttt{\textit{x}}d7 25.\texttt{\textit{b}}1 \texttt{\textit{a}}2 26.\texttt{\textit{x}}c7 \texttt{\textit{a}}1† with a tiny advantage for Black in Garrido Dominguez – Korneev, Seville 2006.

22.\texttt{\textit{c}}1
22.\texttt{\texttt{d}2} \texttt{\texttt{f}b}8 23.\texttt{\texttt{f}b}1 \texttt{\texttt{g}4}! 24.\texttt{\texttt{e}3} \texttt{\texttt{b}6} led to a roughly equal position in Hüblner – Korchnoi, Lucerne 1982. White's pressure along the c-file can be countered by an attack along the a-file.

22.\texttt{\texttt{f}b}8

Once again Black brings the rook to b6 and equalizes.

23.\texttt{\texttt{b}1}

23.\texttt{\texttt{b}c}2? is strongly met by: 23...\texttt{\texttt{b}3}! 24.\texttt{\texttt{a}x}b3 (24.\texttt{\texttt{e}x}c6!? \texttt{\texttt{b}2}+ is also better for Black.) 24...\texttt{\texttt{a}b}4 25.\texttt{\texttt{e}e}2 \texttt{\texttt{e}x}c2 26.\texttt{\texttt{w}x}c2


The text move was played in Lobron – Korchnoi, Meudon 1984. Now I see nothing wrong with the following simple reply:

23...\texttt{\texttt{b}6}\texttt{N} With a balanced position.

\texttt{B4232) 16.\texttt{\texttt{c}1}}

I believe this is White's only serious attempt to fight for an advantage.

16...\texttt{\texttt{a}3}!

The a-pawn advances for the third move in a row! White can respond with \texttt{B42321) 17.\texttt{b}xa3} or \texttt{B42322) 17.\texttt{b}3!}.

17.\texttt{\texttt{b}1}\texttt{!} occurred in Unzicker – Korchnoi, Beersheba 1984, and here 17...\texttt{\texttt{b}4}!\texttt{\texttt{N}+} is strong: 18.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}3 \texttt{\texttt{e}x}c2 19.\texttt{\texttt{w}x}c2 \texttt{\texttt{c}5}!\texttt{!+}

Black has the better chances; his last move is justified by the line 20.dxc5 \texttt{\texttt{d}4}! 21.\texttt{\texttt{f}4} (21.\texttt{\texttt{f}4} \texttt{\texttt{d}x}c5\texttt{!+)} 21...\texttt{\texttt{f}5}! 22.\texttt{\texttt{b}d}1 \texttt{\texttt{g}3}!\texttt{!+} and White is in trouble.
B42321) 17.bxa3

17...EXa3
Black can also start with 17...Ec3?!N 18.Ed2 Exa3 when the position remains equal.

18.Ee2!
I believe this rare move to be the strongest one available to White.


18.Ed3?!

This has been tested at a high level, but White risks becoming worse.

18...Ec3 19.Ed2 b4 20.Ed3
20.Ee2N Exe2† 21.Ee2 Ea5 also favours Black.
20...Exd3 21.Ed3 Ea8!
The a2-pawn is extremely weak.
22.Ed2

The players agreed a draw here in Nunn – Marin, Thessaloniki (ol) 1988, but in a subsequent correspondence game Black played on and won quickly:
22...Exa2 23.Exa2?
White had to try 23.Eb1N, although 23...Ea8! (preparing ...Ec3) 24.h3 Ea7! still leaves Black on top.
23...Exa2 24.Ec1?
24.Ec5 Ea1†
24...Ea1 25.Ed5 Ea1† 26.Ed1 g6 27.Ed3 Ea1†
0–1 Rajmaekers – Roering, corr. 1991.
18...c3 19.d2?!
Instead of wasting time with the queen, White should prefer 19.xc3 Nxc3 20.xg6 hxg6 21.a4! b4 22.a5! reaching a position of dynamic equality.

19...b4 20.fcl
I also examined: 20.xc3?! Nxc3 21.c1 e7 22.b3

22...b4! 23.xd5 a6! Thanks to the strong c-pawn, Black’s chances are slightly higher.

Now in the game Bogut – Gazarek, Pula 1997, Black missed a good opportunity:

17...f6!
In this rather tense position we reach a final branching point, where we will consider

B423221) 18.f3, B423222) 18.exf6 and
B423223) 18.d3.

B423221) 18.f3
This move is rarely seen due to Black’s strong reply.

18...fXe5!
A brave and a correct piece sacrifice.

19.fx4 xf1† 20.xf1
20.fx1? is already a decisive mistake: 20...exd4 21.xd4 dx4 22.e3 (22.e2 doesn’t save White: 22...f8† 23.g1 d8=+)

20...xa2†! 21.xg6 xcl 22.xc1 hXg6
23.xc6 b3 24.xc1 a8† 25.xc7 xcl†
The b-pawn is extremely dangerous.
22...\textit{\texttt{W}}f6\textdagger 23.\textit{\texttt{B}}g1 \textit{\texttt{W}}d8! 24.\textit{\texttt{W}}g4 \textit{\texttt{W}}c3 0-1

\textbf{20...exd4 21.\textit{\texttt{W}}xb5}
After 21.\textit{\texttt{B}}f2N dxe4 22.\textit{\texttt{W}}xb5 \textit{\texttt{W}}d7! Black is doing fine with two connected passed pawns.

21.\textit{\texttt{B}}f4? dxe4 22.\textit{\texttt{W}}xb5 d3!

23.\textit{\texttt{Q}}e2!N
Only this spectacular move can keep White in the game.
23.\textit{\texttt{B}}c4?! occurred in Wonnacott – Blaisot, e-mail 1999. Now Black can force a win with: 23...\textit{\texttt{W}}f7!N 24.\textit{\texttt{W}}xe4 (24.\textit{\texttt{W}}xc6 \textit{\texttt{W}}d4\textdagger 25.\textit{\texttt{B}}h1 \textit{\texttt{W}}f8!–+) 24...\textit{\texttt{W}}xc2 25.\textit{\texttt{B}}d3 (25.\textit{\texttt{W}}xc6 \textit{\texttt{W}}d4\textdagger 26.\textit{\texttt{B}}f1 \textit{\texttt{B}}d5\textdagger) 25...\textit{\texttt{W}}f6 26.\textit{\texttt{B}}f1 \textit{\texttt{B}}e8 27.\textit{\texttt{B}}a4 \textit{\texttt{W}}d8! 28.\textit{\texttt{W}}e4 \textit{\texttt{B}}xb3! with a decisive advantage.

23...\textit{\texttt{W}}xc2
This seems strongest, although 23...\textit{\texttt{W}}f6? is an interesting alternative.

24.\textit{\texttt{B}}f1!
24.\textit{\texttt{W}}xc6? \textit{\texttt{W}}d1\textdagger 25.\textit{\texttt{B}}f2 e3\textdagger 26.\textit{\texttt{B}}g3 \textit{\texttt{B}}e8 wins for Black.

24...\textit{\texttt{B}}c7! 25.\textit{\texttt{B}}c4\textdagger 26.\textit{\texttt{W}}xc7 \textit{\texttt{B}}d7 27.\textit{\texttt{B}}f4 \textit{\texttt{B}}f7 28.\textit{\texttt{B}}xd5 \textit{\texttt{B}}c8! 29.\textit{\texttt{W}}xc2 \textit{\texttt{B}}xd5! 30.\textit{\texttt{B}}d6 \textit{\texttt{W}}d6! 31.\textit{\texttt{B}}c5 e3\textdagger
Black is better thanks to the pin along the c-file, the strong e-pawn and the weakness of g2.

21...\textit{\texttt{B}}a7!
An important resource!

22.\textit{\texttt{B}}c5?!
This dubious move was played in two correspondence games.
22...\textbf{xd}5\textsuperscript{!}N is necessary and after 22...\textbf{xd}5 23.exd5 dxe3 24.\textbf{xg}6 hxg6 the endgame turns out to be equal.

22...dxe3 23.\textbf{e}2

Also after 23.\textbf{xe}3 \textbf{c}6 24.\textbf{c}3 dxe4! 25.\textbf{e}2 \textbf{f}6 Black maintains some advantage.

22...\textbf{d}6! 24.\textbf{xe}3 \textbf{c}6!

The knight is heading to b4. Black is somewhat better, and in the following game his advantage quickly grew:

25.\textbf{f}4? \textbf{b}4 26.\textbf{d}3

Aikio – C. Johansson, corr. 1986. Now the most precise would have been:

20...\textbf{fe}8\textsuperscript{!}N

This untested move seems like the most logical to me. The rook won’t be needed on f8 too much, whereas the other rook will be useful on a8 protecting the a3-pawn, anticipating a move like \textbf{c}1.

With a large advantage to Black, as the e4-pawn is doomed and the knight on b4 dominates.

20...\textbf{fe}8\textsuperscript{!}N

This exchange releases the tension prematurely and enables Black to become quite active.
Other continuations include 20...\textit{e}7 as featured in Karpov – Korchnoi, Merano (6) 1981, and 20...\textit{ae}8 as played in Liberzon – Stean, Beersheba 1982, but I find the text move more convincing than either of them.

21.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}4 \textit{c}5!
Black’s pieces are active enough to support this tactical solution.

22.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}x\textit{g}6
I also analysed 22.\textit{xe}4 \textit{xe}4 23.dxc5 \textit{dc}2 24.\textit{c}1 d4 25.\textit{d}2 d3 26.\textit{g}4 \textit{d}4! with good compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

22...\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}c3! 23.\textit{d}2 cxd4 24.\textcolor{red}{\textit{g}}5 \textit{xb}1!
Another important intermediate move.

25.\textit{axb}1 \textit{xg}6 26.\textit{xb}4 \textit{xg}5
Black has sufficient counterplay, mainly due to the weakness of the a2-pawn. Note the importance of the rook on a8.

27.\textit{xb}5
27.\textit{xd}4? \textit{e}2 favours Black.

27...\textit{f}5 28.\textit{bd}1 d3! 29.\textit{xd}3
29.\textit{xd}3?! \textit{xd}3 30.\textit{xd}3 \textit{e}2 31.\textit{a}1 \textit{e}8 is better for Black.

29...\textit{ab}8 30.\textit{xd}5†

30.\textit{a}6 \textit{a}8 31.\textit{b}5 \textit{ab}8= repeats the position.

30...\textit{xd}5 31.\textit{xd}5 \textit{e}2

32.\textit{a}1 \textit{c}8 33.g3 \textit{f}8 34.f4 \textit{c}8=
With ...\textit{cc}2 coming next, Black is in no danger whatsoever.

B423223) 18.\textcolor{red}{\textit{d}}3

I consider this the most challenging move.

18...\textit{b}4?  
The idea behind the move is to connect Black’s queenside pawns and secure the outpost on c3.
It is also worth mentioning the more popular main line. It leads to an endgame with opposite-coloured bishops, where Black is a little worse but should be able to hold.

18...f xe5 19.\textit{d}xe5

19.dxe5? is dubious due to: 19...d4! 20.\textit{d}d2 \textit{c}c3! 21.\textit{e}e1 b4+ 19...\textit{d}xe5 20.\textit{d}xe4!

With this important intermediate move, White eliminates the knight before it can do any damage.

20.d xe5? is strongly met by 20...\textit{d}c3! 21.\textit{d}d2 d4! 22.\textit{d}xg6 h xg6 23.\textit{a}a1 c5 (23...b4??) with better chances for Black.

20...dxe4?!

This move was introduced by Timman back in 1995. Black's idea is to exchange heavy pieces.

21.d xe5 \textit{b}xd1

21...\textit{e}e8 22.\textit{c}c1 \textit{e}xe5 23.\textit{a}a1+ \textit{e}xd8 24.\textit{b}b5 \textit{b}e5 25.\textit{d}d4 did not fully solve Black's problems in Karjakin – Kaidanov, Moscow 2005.

22.\textit{f}fxd1 \textit{f}d8 23.\textit{d}d4?!

After 23.\textit{h}h3 \textit{f}f7 24.\textit{f}fxd8+ \textit{e}xd8 25.\textit{c}c1 \textit{e}e8 26.\textit{c}c5 \textit{d}d5! 27.\textit{f}f1 c6 28.\textit{f}f3 \textit{f}f7 29.\textit{e}e3 \textit{h}h6 30.\textit{d}d6 \textit{a}a8 Black equalized and a draw was soon agreed in Ivanchuk – Timman, Novgorod 1995.

The text move was mentioned by Wedberg in his annotations to that game. White's plan is to target the \textit{c}7-pawn, and the move was tested in the game P. Smith – Somborski, corr. 1997. My recommendation for Black would be:

23...\textit{a}a8N 24.\textit{c}c2

Or 24.\textit{e}e5?! c6 25.e6 \textit{d}d6 26.\textit{b}b1 \textit{d}d8 27.\textit{h}h4 \textit{x}xe6 28.\textit{b}b6 \textit{e}e6 29.\textit{b}b6 \textit{e}e1+ 30.\textit{h}h2 \textit{a}a1 and Black should hold the draw.

24...\textit{f}f7!

Improving on 24...\textit{f}f7 as mentioned by Wedberg.

25.\textit{e}e1 \textit{d}d5!

25...\textit{d}d3?! is also interesting but the text move is more reliable. Black intends ...c6, with a fortress that seems unlikely to be breached.

19.\textit{e}e1!

This seems like White's best try, and was played in Chekhov – Gorelov, Wisla 1992,
and two subsequent games. In all cases Black exchanged on e5, but I would like to deviate with:

19...\(\textit{\textbf{e}}7\)N 20.exf6
I also analysed: 20.\(\textit{\textbf{f}}4\) fxe5 21.\(\textit{\textbf{x}}g6\) hxg6 22.\(\textit{\textbf{x}}e4!\) dxe4 23.d5 \(\textit{\textbf{d}}4\) 24.\(\textit{\textbf{c}}1\) \(\textit{\textbf{a}}d8\) 25.\(\textit{\textbf{d}}2\) \(\textit{\textbf{x}}d5\) 26.\(\textit{\textbf{x}}b4\)

21.\(\textit{\textbf{f}}4\) \(\textit{\textbf{c}}3\) 22.\(\textit{\textbf{x}}g6\) hxg6 23.\(\textit{\textbf{e}}2\) \(\textit{\textbf{e}}4!\)

Black intends to follow up with ...\(\textit{\textbf{e}}8\). The potential weakness of the backward c-pawn is compensated by Black’s activity and the long-term potential of the advanced queenside pawns.

Conclusion

We have reached the end of quite a complex chapter. In general I prefer to avoid variation labels such as “B423223” but here I found no good way to avoid it, so I hope the chapter structure was not too confusing. The chess content was also quite challenging, especially the main lines. Here we saw Black giving up the bishop pair and accepting a backward pawn on the c-file, in return for dynamic counterplay based on his active pieces and space advantage on the queenside. My overall conclusion is that Black’s chances are quite satisfactory in the main lines of the 9.c3 system.
Main Lines

9..bd2 – Introduction and Sidelines

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.f3 c6 3.b5 a6 4.a4 f6
5.0–0 e4 6.d4 b5 7.b3 d5 8.dxe5 e6 9.bd2

9...c5

A) 10.e1
B) 10.e2
C) 10.c3 e7
   C1) 11.e2
   C2) 11.d4
   C3) 11.a4
   C4) 11.c2 d4 12.cxd4 xd4 13.xd4 xd4
        14.f3 xd1 15.xd1 0–0
   C41) 16.g5
   C42) 16.e3
   C43) 16.g5
   C44) 16.d4

A) after 15.e5
C1) after 13.bd2
C3) after 13.f3
1.e4 e5 2.\!d\!f\!3 \!d\!\!c\!\!6 3.a\!b\!5 a\!6 4.a\!a\!4 \!f\!6
5.0-0 \!d\!xe4 6.d\!4 b\!5 7.a\!b\!3 d\!5 8.d\!xe5 \!e\!6
9.\!d\!bd\!2

This move falls behind 9.c3 in the overall frequency table, but in theoretical terms it can be considered the absolute main line of the Open Spanish. White develops another piece and challenges the knight on e4.

9...\!d\!c\!5

We will start by moving the knight out of harm’s way. From this position the main line of our repertoire continues 10.c3 \!e\!7 11.a\!c\!2 d\!4 12.a\!b\!3, and this will form the starting position for the next and final chapter of the book. In this chapter we will consider all significant deviations up to that point, organized as follows: A) 10.e1, B) 10.e2 and C) 10.c3.

10.h3 is hardly the most useful move available to White. Play may continue 10...\!e\!7 (10...g6?!N is an interesting attempt to exploit the slowness of White’s last move.) 11.c3 and we have transposed to the rare 10.c3 \!e\!7 11.h3 line, as covered in a later note on page 321.

**A) 10.e1**

14...h6?!N (14...g6?!N is also interesting.) 15.a\!x\!e6 a\!x\!e6 16.a\!c\!3 \!x\!b\!3 17.a\!b\!3 d\!4
18.a\!d\!2 a\!c\!5 19.a\!a\!6 a\!b\!6 Black has sufficient compensation for the sacrificed pawn; the plan is to push with ...d3 next.

The text move prepares \!c\!2. This position has been known since the first quarter of the 20th century, when Euwe defended Black’s position no less than three times.
12...\text{\textbf{\textbullet}}\text{\textbullet}x\text{\textbullet}b3 13.axb3 d4!N

Euwe preferred 13...b4 but scored just half a point out of the three games on the database.

Although I find the proposed novelty to be the most convenient solution, I will also mention a playable alternative:
13...\text{\textbullet}d7 14.h3

Curiously, after suffering on the black side of this variation, the future fifth World Champion decided to give it a shot with White. He continued 14.g5 and eventually won in Euwe – Sonnenburg, Amsterdam 1923, but after 14...xg5!N 15.xg5 h6 16.df3 a5= I don’t see any problems for Black.

The text move was played in Mamedov – Rafieli, Teheran 2005. Here I found an improvement for Black:
14...d4!N 15.xxd4

Or 15.cxd4 \text{\textbullet}d5! 16.e3 \text{\textbullet}fd8 with excellent compensation thanks to Black’s full control over the light squares.

15...\text{\textbullet}xd4 16.cxd4

16.xd4 \text{\textbullet}xd4 17.cxd4 xxb3 is also pleasant for Black.

16...\text{\textbullet}fd8 17.e3 \text{\textbullet}b4 18.d2

After 18.e2 \text{\textbullet}d5 19.d2 c5! White is under pressure.

18...c5! 19.g5

19.dxc5? is refuted by: 19...xd2 20.c6 \text{\textbullet}d3! 21.c7 \text{\textbullet}d5!++

19...xd4 20.xd8 xd2 21.b6 \text{\textbullet}e1

22.xd4 cxd4 23.e1 xb3

23...d3?!

24.xd4 a5

The endgame is equal.

14...\text{\textbullet}xd4

The alternative is: 14.cxd4 \text{\textbullet}d5 15.e3 \text{\textbullet}d7 16.g3

16...f6! 17.cf6 xf6 18.g5 eae8 19.d3 xg5 20.xg5 xe1† 21.xe1 \text{\textbullet}f7= Black regains the pawn with an equal position.

14...\text{\textbullet}xd4 15.cxd4 c5! 16.xc5 xc5 17.e3 xe7 18.g3 \text{\textbullet}b4

Black has sufficient compensation and will soon restore material equality.
B) 10.\textit{e}2

This can be compared with the 9.\textit{e}2 system of Chapters 14 and 15, although mixing the queen move with an early \textit{bd}2 promises nothing good for White.

10...\textit{e}7 11.\textit{e}1

This has been an extremely rare choice, but the logical alternatives are both covered under separate move orders: 11.c3 transposes to variation C1 on page 322, while 11.\textit{d}1 takes us back to variation B of Chapter 14 – see page 239 for the continuation from here.

11...0–0 12.c3 \textit{g}4!

13.\textit{h}3

13.\textit{c}2 d4! gives White some problems.

13...\textit{h}5 14.\textit{f}1 d4!

This thematic break is also strong here.

15.\textit{f}4

Butkiewicz – Simacek, Wroclaw 2010. Now I think Black should simplify with:

15...dxc3!?N 16.bxc3

16.\textit{ad}1?!

This intermediate move leads to trouble for White after:

16...d4! 17.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xd}4 18.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xe}2

19.\textit{xe}2

Or 19.\textit{xe}2 \textit{xb}3 20.axb3 cxb2 21.\textit{bl} \textit{a}3 22.\textit{d}4 \textit{d}8 23.\textit{c}2 b4!+ and the strong b2-pawn yields Black a clear edge.
19...cxb2 20.\textit{\text{c}}c2
The pawn cannot be captured, as 20.\textit{\text{exb2?! \text{d}d3 wins material.}}
20...\textit{\text{a4! 21.\text{d}d2 c5 22.\text{f}f5 \text{fe8}}}+
Followed by ...c4 when the queenside pawns are likely to decide the game.

16...\textit{\text{d}d3!}
Now White has some problems, for instance:

17.\textit{\text{xd}d3}
17.\textit{\text{e}e3 \text{ad8}} is also better for Black.

17...\textit{\text{xd}d3 18.\text{d}d5 \text{xf}4 19.\text{xc}c6 \text{ad8}}+
Black has a pair of bishops, active pieces and the pawns on a2 and c3 are weak.

C) 10.c3

Let us recall from the introduction that the main theoretical continuation is 11.\textit{\text{c}c2 d4 12.\text{b}b3}, which will be analysed in the next chapter beginning on page 339. In the remainder of the present chapter we will analyse the following alternatives: C1) 11.\textit{\text{e}e2, C2) 11.\text{d}d4, C3) 11.a4 and C4) 11.\textit{\text{c}c2} (without 12.\textit{\text{b}b3}).

11.\textit{\text{xe}1 0–0} leads to variation C of Chapter 11, which can be found on page 198.

A harmless sideline is:
11.h3 d4
11...\textit{\text{f}f5?!N looks like a reasonable alternative.
12.\textit{\text{xe}6}
The alternative is: 12.cxd4 \textit{\text{xd}d4 13.\text{d}d4 \text{xd}d4 14.\text{xe}6 \text{xe}6 15.\text{b}b3 \text{xd}1 16.\text{xd}1 \text{c}c5 17.\text{f}f1 \text{e}e7 18.\text{e}e2 \text{hd}8 19.\text{e}e3 \text{xe}3 20.\text{xe}3 c5 and Black equalized easily in Korbuzov – Kharitonov, Tallinn 1983.
12...\textit{\text{xe}6 13.cxd4 \text{xd}d4}

A similar sequence can occur in the sharp 10...d4 variation. Here the insertion of the moves h2-h3 and ...\textit{\text{e}7} is clearly in Black's favour, for instance:

14.a4
This is the main line in the aforementioned system.
14.\textit{\text{xd}d4 \text{xd}d4} transposes to the note to move 12 above.
14...0–0
This simple solution is impossible with the bishop on f8. Black was at least equal in Rayner – Flear, Eastbourne 1990.

C1) 11...e2

Black stops e2 and homes in on the weak d3-square.

11...e5!
Black forces the queen to a bad square.

12.d1
12...e3?! misplaced the queen in Lowitz – Schulz, Germany 2004. I would suggest 12...0–0N 13.d1 e6 14.b3 f6! with good play for Black.

12...d3!
Black forces the queen to a bad square.

13.e3 d7
13...0–0 is likely to transpose to the main line after 14.d4 d7.

14.d4
The natural 14.f1? loses a pawn: 14...xb3 15.axb3 c2! 16.d2 xb3

17.d4?! This seems like the best try, but it is still not good enough to ensure full compensation. (17.g3 a5 clearly favours Black.) 17...xg4 18.xd4 c4 19.g3 b4 Black saves his light-squared bishop and enjoys an extra pawn.

14...0–0! 15.e2
This position was reached in Elez – Rade, Bihac 2010. Now I would like to improve Black’s play with:

19.xb3 c5
With an equal position.
Chapter 18 – 9._bd2 – Introduction and Sidelimes

C2) 11.\textit{d}d4

This rare move offers a pawn sacrifice which Black should accept.

11...\textit{d}xe5 12.\textit{c}c2

This may seem rather slow, but White's more energetic attempts to justify his play also fail to impress:

12.\textit{e}e2 was played in Hatanbaatar – Munhbayar, Erdenet 1994. Here I suggest 12...\textit{d}d6!N when best play continues: 13.\textit{f}f4 (13.\textit{c}c2 \textit{d}g6 leaves White with little to show for the pawn.) 13...\textit{d}ed3 14.\textit{f}5 \textit{g}d7

15.\textit{f}6! gxf6 16.\textit{c}c2 \textit{d}xc1 17.\textit{e}axc1 0–0–0 18.\textit{e}e1 \textit{d}de8\textsuperscript{\texttt{?}} Although White can claim some compensation here, Black's chances are higher.

12.\textit{f}4 \textit{g}g4!

A strong intermediate move.

13.\textit{e}e1 \textit{c}c4 14.\textit{f}5?

14.\textit{g}g3!N is better, but after 14...h5 15.\textit{h}x\textit{c}4 dxc4 16.\textit{h}3 \textit{e}e6 17.\textit{g}x\textit{g}7 \textit{f}f6 18.\textit{e}xe6 \textit{g}x\textit{g}7 19.\textit{d}xd8 \textit{x}xd8\textsuperscript{\texttt{?}} Black has the better endgame.

The attempt to trap the bishop was seen in Walsh – Souto, Buenos Aires 1988.

14...0–0!

After this obvious improvement Black is clearly better, for example:

15.\textit{c}xc4

15.\textit{h}3? \textit{h}h4! 16.g3 \textit{d}d3 traps the queen. 15.\textit{g}g3?! h5 16.\textit{c}c6 \textit{d}d6! gives Black a decisive advantage.

15...dxc4 16.\textit{c}c2

16.\textit{e}e8! 17.\textit{h}g3 h5 18.\textit{h}h3 \textit{h}h4 19.\textit{f}f4 \textit{e}e2

The bishop escapes, leaving Black with both a material and a positional advantage.
12...\textit{Wd6} 13.\textit{Qb3}

Caruana mentions that 13.b4 $\textit{Qa4}$ is fine for Black. White can regain his pawn, but doing so will cost him his valuable light-squared bishop.

Caruana also notes 13.f4 $\textit{Qc6}$ as satisfactory for Black, although in my opinion 13...$\textit{Qg4}$ deserves serious attention.

The text move occurred in the game Gashimov – Caruana, Khanty-Mansiysk (rapid) 2009.

16.\textit{f4}

16.\textit{f4} 0–0 17.\textit{Re1} $\textit{Qf6}$ is noted by Caruana.

16...\textit{Qg4}

Caruana states that “only Black can be better.” I would have to agree with him, as White remains a pawn down for uncertain compensation.

C3) 11.\textit{a4}

13...\textit{Qg4}!N

This improvement was also offered by the Italian super star.

14.\textit{f3} $\textit{Qxb3}$!

An important intermediate move.

15.\textit{axb3} $\textit{Qd7}$

11...\textit{Qxb3}

Caruana chose 11...b4?! in a rapid game against Gashimov, but after 12.\textit{Qd4}! White began to develop some initiative. 11...0–0?! makes a bit more sense, but I prefer the text move.

12.\textit{Qxb3}!N

This untested move is clearly best, as Caruana pointed out in his annotations.

The dubious 12.\textit{Wxb3}?! was seen in Morozevich – Carlsen, Morelia/Linares 2007. Here both Marin and Caruana point out that 12...d4!N is good for Black, and I fully agree with them. A possible continuation is:
13...g4?
Black initiates complications, making use of his unopposed light-squared bishop.

There is a safe alternative in 13...b4, which leads to roughly equal play.

14.axb5 $\text{	extit{dxe5}}$ 15.bxa6 $\text{	extit{wc8}}$ 16.$\text{	extit{xd5}}$
16.a7?! is strongly met by: 16...$\text{	extit{xf3}}$ 17.gxf3 h3 18.$\text{	extit{d2}}$ d6 19.f4 $\text{	extit{g4}}$ 20.f3

20...c6! 21.c4 $\text{	extit{f6!}}$ 22.cxd5 cxd5+ Black has a dangerous initiative. His threats include ...d4 and ...$\text{	extit{xe3}}$ followed by ...$\text{	extit{c5}}$.

13...$\text{	extit{d1}}$ dxc3 14.bxc3 0–0 15.$\text{	extit{e2}}$ $\text{	extit{f5}}$! Black's advantage is not in doubt.

12...0–0 13.$\text{	extit{e3}}$
White is trying to take control over the dark squares.
The alternative is:
13.axb5 axb5 14.$\text{	extit{xa8}}$ $\text{	extit{xa8}}$ 15.$\text{	extit{g5}}$
Caruana stops here and remarks that "White might have a slight edge, but Black is pretty solid..."
I decided to extend the analysis slightly:

15...g4! 16.$\text{	extit{xe7}}$ $\text{	extit{xe7}}$ 17.$\text{	extit{bd4}}$
17.h3?! is dubious due to 17...$\text{	extit{xf3}}$ 18.$\text{	extit{xf3}}$ $\text{	extit{xa2!}}$+
17...$\text{	extit{c5?!}}$ 18.h3
Or 18.$\text{	extit{xb5}}$ $\text{	extit{wc6}}$ 19.$\text{	extit{d6}}$ $\text{	extit{g6}}$ 20.$\text{	extit{e1}}$ f6! and Black is fine.
18...d7= With an equal position. (18...$\text{	extit{xe3?!}}$ is also playable.)
21.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{W}}xg6 \textit{fxg6} 22.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}d2 \textit{B}a8}\}

Despite the queen exchange, Black maintains adequate compensation thanks to the weakness of White's first rank, not to mention the doubled f-pawns and Black's bishop pair.

\begin{center}
\textbf{C4) 11.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{B}}}c2}
\end{center}

With his last move White safeguards the bishop, which has now set its sights on the kingside.

\textbf{11...d4}

I have tested both this move and 11...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{W}}}g4 in my own games. Pushing the d-pawn is a thematic idea to force the play. In this particular case it may lead to positions where White has a slight endgame advantage, but where Black is not in any real danger. See the next chapter for more details.

\textbf{12.cxd4}

As I mentioned previously, the main theoretical move is 12.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}b3, which forms the subject of the next and final chapter.}


\textbf{12...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}}xd4}

\textbf{13.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}}xd4}

The alternatives don't make much sense.

13.b4? \texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}}xc2 14.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{W}}}xc2 was played in Salazar – Acosta Cruz, Bogota 2010, and now the simple 14...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{W}}}d3\texttt{\textit{\textbf{W}}} leads to a clear advantage for Black.


13.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{B}}}e4 was seen in Bar – Mazziotti Irigoyen, San Bernardo 2002. This is the best of the three sidelines, but still a clear inaccuracy. 13...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{B}}}b8N 14.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}}xd4 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{W}}}xd4 15.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{B}}}c6\texttt{\textit{\textbf{W}}}d7 16.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}}xd7\texttt{\textit{\textbf{B}}}xh8 17.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}}f3 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}}d3! Black intends...c5-c4 with a slight advantage.

\textbf{13...\texttt{\textit{\textbf{W}}}xd4}

\begin{center}
\textbf{14.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}}f3}
\end{center}

Once again this is obviously the best move for White, who will try to exploit the slight weakening of Black's queenside in the endgame. Here are some deservedly rare sidelines:

14.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{B}}}f3?! makes no sense. 14...0-0 15.\texttt{\textit{\textbf{B}}}e1 \texttt{\textit{\textbf{D}}}ad8\texttt{\textit{\textbf{W}}} Kaiser – Ferrari, Seefeld 1999.
14. \( \text{c}e4? \) is an unjustified pawn sacrifice:

14...\( \text{W}xe5 \) 15.\( \text{E}e1 \) (15.\( \text{c}x5N \text{ c}x5 \) 16.\( \text{W}f3 \) 0–0 17.\( \text{W}f4 \text{f}f6 \) 18.\( \text{E}e1 \)\( \text{B}ac8\+)

15...\( \text{d}d8! \) 16.\( \text{W}e2 \) 0–0 17.\( \text{f}4 \)\( \text{d}5\+) Black was a healthy pawn up in Kutzner – Gremeda, Budapest 2005.

14.a4?! was played in I. Popov – Ripsov, Cherepovets 2001. Here Black’s play can easily be improved with: 14...\( \text{W}xa4\)N (14...0–0N 15.axb5 axb5 16.\( \text{B}xa8 \text{a}xa8 \) 17.\( \text{W}f3 \)\( \text{W}xd1 \) 18.\( \text{W}xd1 \text{b}4 \) is also good for Black.) 15.\( \text{W}xa4 \text{b}xa4 \) 16.\( \text{W}xa4\)\( \text{W}xa4 \) 17.\( \text{W}xa4 \) 0–0\+ Black is slightly better thanks to the bishop pair.

14.\( \text{W}e2\)?! \( \text{d}8 \)

15.\( \text{W}f3\)

15.\( \text{h}1 \)\( \text{d}3 \) 16.\( \text{b}3 \)\( \text{c}x1 \) 17.\( \text{f}xc1 \)\( \text{b}xb2 \) 18.\( \text{f}4 \) Castellanos – Vedreno Rios, Mislata 2003. Now I would like to offer 18...\( \text{d}5\)!N and White has insufficient compensation for the pawn.

15.\( \text{d}1 \) 0–0 16.\( \text{b}3 \)\( \text{c}4 \) 17.\( \text{W}xc4 \text{xd1} \) 18.\( \text{W}xd1 \)\( \text{xc}4 \) left Black with the more comfortable position in Arvola – Benning, Goch 2009.

15...\( \text{W}c4 \) 16.\( \text{W}xc4 \)\( \text{xc}4 \)

Only Black can be better, Martin Perez – Baron Rodriguez, Madrid 2006.

15...\( \text{W}xd1 \) 16.\( \text{W}xd1 \) 0–0

After getting some rare sidelines out of the way, we have arrived at the main starting position for the 12.\( \text{c}xd4 \) variation. White has tried four moves here: C41) 16.\( \text{g}5 \), C42) 16.\( \text{c}3 \), C43) 16.\( \text{g}5 \) and C44) 16.\( \text{d}4 \).

C41) 16.\( \text{g}5 \)

This was introduced by Svidler in 2004, but it has not really caught on. White is going for a version of the main 16.\( \text{g}5 \) line without dark-squared bishops on the board.

16...\( \text{xg}5 \) 17.\( \text{xg}5 \) \( \text{h}6 \) 18.\( \text{h}7\+)

18.\( \text{exe6}N \text{exe6} \) should give Black a slightly easier version of the main line, with his king one square closer to the centre.

In a subsequent game White attempted to improve upon Svidler’s play with:
18.\(\text{c}e4\) \(\text{dx}e4\) 19.\(\text{xe}4\) \(\text{ad}8\)

White fixes the queenside, but gives away his a-pawn. The idea is playable, but hardly a serious try for an advantage.

After the seemingly principled 20.f4 Black answers with 20...\(\text{g}4!\) seizing the d-file:

21.\(\text{xd}8\) (21.\(\text{dc}1\) \(\text{d}4\) 22.\(\text{b}7\) \(\text{c}8!\) 23.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{xf}4\) 24.\(\text{xc}7\) \(\text{d}4\) is equal.) 21...\(\text{xd}8\) 22.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{d}4\) 23.\(\text{b}7\) \(a5=\) and Black cannot be worse.

20...\(\text{xa}2!\)

Taking advantage of the weak first rank.

21.\(\text{f}3!\)

21.\(\text{f}4?\) \(\text{xd}1\) 22.\(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{f}6!\) left White struggling in Panchanathan - Ernst, Maastricht 2009.

The text move is safer and should lead to equality.

21...\(\text{xd}1\) 22.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{c}4\) 23.\(\text{a}1\) \(\text{f}6\)

23...\(f5?!\) 24.\(\text{c}2\) \(f4\) 25.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{e}8\) is also equal.

24.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{xe}5\) 25.\(\text{a}7\) \(\text{c}8\) 26.\(\text{f}5\) \(\text{f}8\) 27.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{c}8=\)

The game ends in a repetition.

18...\(\text{h}8\) 19.\(\text{xe}6\) \(\text{xe}6\) 20.\(\text{e}4\) \(\text{ad}8\)

Compared with the later variation C43 (which begins on page 330), the absence of dark-squared bishops does not seem to harm Black's chances. We will follow the example of Kramnik, who equalized without any noticeable problems.

21.\(\text{g}3\)

21.\(\text{a}c1\) is slightly more challenging, but Black is safe enough after: 21...\(\text{c}5\) 22.\(\text{b}3\) \(\text{f}8\) 23.\(\text{f}1\) \(g5!\) 24.\(\text{b}7\)

24...\(\text{b}4!\) Based on the following line: 25.\(\text{xa}6\) \(\text{xd}1\) 26.\(\text{xd}1\) \(\text{d}4\) 27.\(\text{c}4\) \(\text{g}7\) 28.\(\text{e}1\) \(\text{a}8\) 29.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{c}2\) 30.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{d}4=\)
Black begins to target the weak pawn on e5.

22.\texttt{\textit{c6 e7 23.a4 \textit{d4 24.axb5 axb5}}}

A draw was agreed here in Svidler – Kramnik, Dortmund 2004, as the queenside pawns are likely to be exchanged. Note that 27.\texttt{\textit{d5 exd5}} (27...\texttt{\textit{xe5??}}) 28.\texttt{c4 exd5 29.exd5 \textit{e5}}

would not have changed much.

\texttt{C42) 16.\texttt{e3}}

This is a sensible developing move, but not a dangerous one.

16...\texttt{\textit{f8}}

17.\texttt{d4 \textit{d5 18.e2 (18.f5 \textit{f8 leads to line C44 below – see 16.d4 \textit{f8 17.e3}} \texttt{\textit{d5 18.f5 \textit{f8 on page 334.) This can be met by 18...\textit{c4! 19.c3 \textit{f8 intending ...\textit{d3 and Black equalizes.}}}}}}}

White was threatening to take on h7. Apart from that, it is useful to take the g5-square away from White’s pieces.

18.\texttt{\textit{d4}}

18.\texttt{xc5} leads to an equal rook endgame:

18...\texttt{\textit{xc5 19.e4 \textit{d5 20.xc5 \textit{xe4}}}}

\texttt{21.xc7 \textit{xf3 22.gxf3 ed2 23.b3 \textit{e8 24.e1 \textit{xa2= Saric – P. H. Nielsen, Aix-les-Bains 2011.}}}
Otherwise the knight retreats to e6, leaving everything in order for Black.

20...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{x}c}5} 21.\texttt{\texttt{o}d}1! \texttt{\texttt{\texttt{f}b}8}} 22.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{c}c}7}
White has won a pawn, but in return Black has the bishop pair and enough prospects for counterplay.

22...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{e}e}6} 23.\texttt{\texttt{d}d}3 \texttt{\texttt{b}b}2 24.\texttt{\texttt{c}c}2
24.b3N \texttt{\texttt{a}d}8 gives Black plenty of activity.

24...\texttt{\texttt{a}d}8
24...g5!?N is an interesting way of restraining White's kingside pawns.

25.h4 \texttt{\texttt{e}e}2
Black prepares to double on the second rank. I would also consider 25...h5!?N with balanced chances.

26.b3 \texttt{\texttt{a}a}3 27.\texttt{\texttt{b}b}1
We have been following the game Robson – Kaidanov, Saint Louis 2009. Now I would like to improve Black's play with:

27...\texttt{\texttt{a}5}!N
Preventing b3-b4.

28.h5 \texttt{\texttt{f}f}8!
Black has at least full compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

With this move White forces the exchange of one of the enemy bishops.

16...h6 17.\texttt{\texttt{h}h}7t?
Before coming to e4 White worsens the position of the black king.

The immediate 17.\texttt{\texttt{e}e}6 is not an improvement.

17...\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{d}d}6} 18.\texttt{\texttt{e}e}3 Now in Schnoor – Geske, Dresden 2007, Black could have continued as in the main line with:

18...\texttt{\texttt{g}g}5!N 19.\texttt{\texttt{\texttt{g}g}5} hxg5 20.\texttt{\texttt{b}b}3 (Both 20.\texttt{\texttt{e}e}4 and 20.\texttt{\texttt{f}f}5 can be compared with the main line below; the only difference is that here the black king is on g8 instead of h8, which is obviously not harming his chances.) 20...\texttt{\texttt{a}d}8 21.\texttt{\texttt{x}x}e6 Otherwise ...\texttt{\texttt{e}e}8 comes.
21...fxe6 22.\(\text{f1}\) \(\text{f7}\) 23.\(\text{ac1}\) \(\text{xd1}\) 24.\(\text{xd1}\) \(\text{e7}\) 25.\(\text{d3}\) \(\text{f5}\) Black equalizes.

17...\(\text{h8}\) 18.\(\text{xe6}\) \(\text{xe6}\) 19.\(\text{e4}\)

White tried a different approach with 19.\(\text{f5}\) in Baramidze – Belikov, Dortmund 2003. Here Black should respond with:

Now I would like to improve Black’s play with:

25...g5!?N (25...\(\text{g8}\)!N also should suffice.) 26.\(\text{xf7}\) \(\text{d3}\)! 27.\(\text{e6}\) \(\text{e5}\) 28.\(\text{xc7}\) \(\text{xf7}\) 29.\(\text{xf7}\) \(\text{g7}\) 30.\(\text{a7}\) \(\text{c8}\) The best White can hope for is to eliminate all the queenside pawns, resulting in a rook endgame with three pawns against two on the kingside, which should be an easy draw.

21.\(\text{xe5}\) \(\text{hxg5}\) 22.\(\text{f1}\)

White plans to bring the king to e3 to support a kingside advance with g2-g3 and f2-f4.

The immediate 22.g3 doesn’t set many problems: 22...\(\text{f8}\) (22...\(\text{d4}\)!N 23.\(\text{b7}\) \(\text{f8}\) equalizes easily.) 23.\(\text{c6}\) \(\text{e7}\) 24.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{xd5}\) 25.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{d4}\) 26.\(\text{xd1}\) \(\text{c5}\) 27.\(\text{g2}\) \(\text{e5}\) 28.\(\text{xf7}\) \(\text{a5}\) 29.\(\text{a4}\) \(\text{b4}\) Black was fine in Timofeev – Movsesian, Sarajevo 2007.

19...\(\text{ad8}\) 20.\(\text{e3}\) \(\text{g5}\)!

It is important to exchange at least one of White’s strong bishops.

20...\(\text{c5}\)! is a reasonable alternative, and the logical continuation of 21.\(\text{xc5}\) \(\text{xc5}\) 22.\(\text{d5}\) \(\text{a4}\) 23.\(\text{b3}\) \(\text{xd1}\) 24.\(\text{xd1}\) \(\text{xb2}\) 25.\(\text{d7}\) occurred in Nyysti – Norri, Finland 2008.
22...g6 23.\textcircled{e}e2  
This was White's latest attempt at 2700 level.

23.\textcolor{red}{d}d5N efe8 24.\textcolor{red}{x}xe6 \textcolor{red}{x}xd1† 25.\textcolor{red}{x}xd1 efe6  
26.\textcolor{red}{x}d7 \textcolor{red}{g}g7 27.\textcolor{red}{x}c7 \textcolor{red}{x}xe5= leads to an equal  
rook endgame.

The other serious move, which was once played  
by Anand, is:

23.\textcolor{red}{a}c1  
A logical attempt to target Black's weaknesses  
on the c-file.

23...\textcolor{red}{g}7 24.g3  
Here Black's most precise move order is:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

24...efe8!N  
The game continued 24...g4 25.\textcolor{red}{d}d5 efe8,  
reaching a position that we will come to  
shortly. The problem is that White had the  
extra possibility of 25.\textcolor{red}{b}b7!N a5 26.\textcolor{red}{d}d5,  
when the loosening of Black's queenside  
pawns complicates the defence, although  
even here Black retains good chances for a  
draw after 26...\textcolor{red}{h}h6! activating the king.

25.\textcolor{red}{d}5  
25.\textcolor{red}{c}c6 \textcolor{red}{e}e7 26.\textcolor{red}{x}xd8 \textcolor{red}{x}xd8 27.\textcolor{red}{g}g2 \textcolor{red}{d}e6  
28.b4 g4! 29.h3 gxh3 30.\textcolor{red}{x}xh3 \textcolor{red}{d}d4  
31.\textcolor{red}{g}g2 \textcolor{red}{x}e5 32.\textcolor{red}{x}c7 \textcolor{red}{f}f6 reaches an equal  
endgame.

25...g4  
We have now transposed back to the Anand  
game without allowing the 25.\textcolor{red}{b}b7!N  
opportunity noted above.

26.\textcolor{red}{c}c6 \textcolor{red}{h}8  
26...efe7!? is also equal.

27.\textcolor{red}{g}g2 \textcolor{red}{d}d4 28.\textcolor{red}{b}b7 c6!  
Cutting the bishop off.

29.\textcolor{red}{c}c8!  
This position was reached in Anand – Greenfeld, Haifa (rapid) 2000. Here I believe the  
most accurate continuation would have been:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

26...\textcolor{red}{x}e7  
27.\textcolor{red}{g}g2 \textcolor{red}{d}d4 28.\textcolor{red}{b}b7 c6!  
With equal chances.

29.\textcolor{red}{f}f3N 30.\textcolor{red}{g}g4 \textcolor{red}{x}xe5 31.\textcolor{red}{e}e2 g5  

23...g7 24.g3 efe8  
With this move Black creates a threat of  
...\textcolor{red}{x}xd1 followed by ...\textcolor{red}{c}c5 with a double  
attack.

24...c5!?N 25.\textcolor{red}{e}e3 g4! also looks fine for Black.

25.\textcolor{red}{e}e3 \textcolor{red}{x}xd1 26.\textcolor{red}{x}xd1 \textcolor{red}{c}c5!
This seems to be the simplest route to equality.

27.f4

I checked two other ideas, neither of which lead to any advantage for White.

Against 27.b4N Black can play: 27...\(\text{Qxe4}\) 28.\(\text{Qxe4}\)

27...\(\text{Qxe4}\) 28.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qxe4}\) 28.\(\text{Qxe4}\)

28...\(\text{Qxe4}\) 29.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qf5}\) 29.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qf5}\)

29.\(\text{Qf5}\) 29.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qf5}\) 29.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qf5}\)

30...\(\text{Qe6}\) 30...\(\text{Qe6}\) 30...\(\text{Qe6}\) 30...\(\text{Qe6}\)

27...\(\text{Qxe4}\) 28.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qf6}\) 28.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qf6}\)

Another possibility is: 28.gxf4 \(\text{Qh8}\) 29.\(\text{Qxe4}\) \(\text{Qf6}\) 30.\(\text{Qf6}\) 28.\(\text{Qf6}\)

By now it is obvious that Black has equalized, and the rest of the game was pretty uneventful.

33.\(\text{Qf6}\) 33.\(\text{Qf6}\) 33.\(\text{Qf6}\) 33.\(\text{Qf6}\)

Efimenko – Caruana, Poikovsky 2011.

The notes to this and the earlier Anand – Greenfeld game indicate that Black should
not have too much trouble maintaining the balance against 16.\textit{g}5.

\textbf{C44) 16.\textit{d}4 }

Compared with the previous line this fails to gain a tempo against the h7-pawn, but on the plus side for White, the knight gets some other options besides taking on e6.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{16...\textit{f}d8 17.\textit{e}3 }
\end{enumerate}

In the 2011 Women's World Championship final White tried a different approach, which has not yet been repeated.

\begin{enumerate}
\item 17.b4!\textit{a}4 18.\textit{c}6 \textit{Exd1+} 19.\textit{xd1} \textit{f}8  \\
20.\textit{f}3 \textit{Ee8} 21.a3 \textit{b}6!
\end{enumerate}

The knight is heading to c4.

22.g3

This was Hou Yifan – Koneru, Tirana (5) 2011, and here I recommend:

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{22...g6!N }
\end{enumerate}

Preparing an attack on the e5-pawn. Play may continue:

\begin{enumerate}
\item 23.\textit{g}5 \textit{g}7 24.\textit{g}2  \\
24.\textit{d}8? is met by 24...\textit{xe}5!.
\end{enumerate}

24...h6 25.\textit{f}6

25.\textit{e}3 f6 26.\textit{xf6} \textit{xf6} 27.\textit{c}1 \textit{h}7 is also balanced.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{17...\textit{d}5! }
\end{enumerate}

The bishop covers the c6-square and vacates e6 for the knight.

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textbf{18.\textit{f}5 }
\end{enumerate}

The only drawback of Black's last move is that it left f5 unguarded. If White is to obtain any hope of an advantage, he had better make use of this. Three harmless alternatives have been tried:

\begin{enumerate}
\item 18.b3 can be met by 18...g6, taking away the f5-square. 19.f3 \textit{e}6 20.\textit{f}2 In this roughly equal position a draw was agreed in Zupe – Stamnlov, Skopje 2012.
\end{enumerate}

\begin{enumerate}
\item 18.\textit{ac1} \textit{e}6 19.\textit{xe}6 (19.\textit{f}5 \textit{f}8=) 19...f\textit{x}6  \\
20.\textit{b}3 \textit{xb}3 21.axb3 \textit{Exd1+} 22.\textit{Exd1} \textit{Ed}8  \\
23.\textit{Exd}8\textit{+} \textit{xd}8 was equal in Marinkovic – Bodic, Cacak 1991.
\end{enumerate}
18...f4 occurred in Pablo Marin – Baron Rodriguez, Barcelona 2005. Here I would recommend 18...g6!?N to guard the f5-square, after which play may continue:

19...e5 20...xe6 (20...xe2 b4! 21...f2 a5 is fine for Black.) 20...fxe6 21...b3 xb3 22.axb3 dxe1d + 23...xd1 d8 24...xd8+xd8 with an equal bishop endgame.

18...f8 19.g5

With this move White attempts to exploit the hanging position of the bishop on d5. Curiously, the exact same position once arose from the 9...bd2 e7 variation, after White lost a tempo on e1xd1 but saved one by playing g5 in one move, without going to e3 first.

Two other moves have been tested, the second of which deserves particular attention.

19...d6!?

20...b4!?N 21.axb4 xb4 22...d1 a5 23.f3 c6 With a roughly equal position.

We must also examine a tactical possibility:

19...d6?

19...xg2! 20.xc5

20.xf7N may lead to a beautiful drawing finale: 20...xd1 + 21...f3 22...d4 e6 (22...e7?! ) 23...b3! xd4 24...h6+ h8 25...f7+ with a perpetual.

20...xd6 21.exd6

White’s only chance is to create a passed pawn.

In the event of 21...xd6 f3 22...d2 ac8= Black is fine.

21...f3 22...d2 g6

Black prepares ...h6 at the appropriate
moment, while also taking the f5-square away from White's light-squared bishop, thus preparing to double on the d-file.

23.a4
23...\(\mathcal{E}e1\) \(\mathcal{E}d7\) 24...\(\mathcal{E}d1\) \(\mathcal{E}xd1\) 25...\(\mathcal{E}xd1\) \(f5\) 26.b4 \(\mathcal{E}f7\) 27.\(\mathcal{E}f1\) \(\mathcal{E}c8\) 28.a3 \(\mathcal{E}e8\) 29.h3 \(\mathcal{E}e5\) 30.\(\mathcal{E}g2\) \(\mathcal{E}e6\) was equal in Hindicky – Feco, corr. 2005.

23...\(\mathcal{E}ac8\)
23...\(\mathcal{E}d7\)!?N is also equal.
24.b4 \(\mathcal{E}h6\) 25.\(\mathcal{E}d3\)
This is the only option, as 25.e4? \(\mathcal{E}g7\) is no good for White.

25...\(\mathcal{E}c6\)
25...\(\mathcal{E}e4\)!?N=
26.axb5 \(\mathcal{E}xb5\) 27.\(\mathcal{E}dd1\) \(\mathcal{E}f8\) 28.a4
White simplifies to a draw. Protecting the bishop with 28...\(\mathcal{E}a2\)!N doesn’t change much:
28...\(\mathcal{E}d7\) 29.\(\mathcal{E}g2\) \(\mathcal{E}cd8\) 30.\(\mathcal{E}b6\) \(\mathcal{E}e8\) 31.\(\mathcal{E}c5\) \(\mathcal{E}ed8=\)

22...\(\mathcal{E}xa4\) 29.\(\mathcal{E}xa4\) \(\mathcal{E}c6\) 30.\(\mathcal{E}a3\) \(f6\) 31.\(\mathcal{E}g2\) \(\mathcal{E}f7\) 32.\(\mathcal{E}da1\) \(\mathcal{E}xd6\) 33.\(\mathcal{E}xa6\) \(\mathcal{E}xa6\) 34.\(\mathcal{E}xa6\) \(\mathcal{E}xc5\) 35.\(\mathcal{E}xc5\) \(\mathcal{E}c8=\)
A draw was agreed a few moves later in Volokitin – Sutovsky, Poikovsky 2008. A well-played game by both players!

19...\(\mathcal{E}d7\) 20.\(\mathcal{E}e7\)† \(\mathcal{E}xe7\) 21.\(\mathcal{E}xe7\) \(\mathcal{E}e6\)!

The position after White’s 21st move was first reached in the game Shirov – Ivanchuk, Sofia 2009. On that occasion Black played 21...\(\mathcal{E}xe7\)!?, but failed to equalize and White eventually won the ending.

The text move was recommended by Mihail Marin. Although the conventional advice when playing against the bishop pair is to eliminate one of the bishops when given the opportunity, the Romanian grandmaster pointed out that, in this particular position, it is more important for Black to preserve his own bishop, in order to bolster his control over the light squares. Two subsequent games have followed this path, and it seems to me that Black is doing fine.

22.\(\mathcal{E}e4\)
Marin points out the line 22.\(\mathcal{E}xd5\)? \(\mathcal{E}xd5\) 23.\(\mathcal{E}e4\) \(\mathcal{E}ad8\) 24.\(\mathcal{E}xd8\) \(\mathcal{E}xd8\)† when Black is doing well.
The other possibility is: 22...b3 c6 23...d6 (23...xd5 occurred in Vutov – Dimov, Albena 2011, and now 23...Exd5N transposes to the main line below.)

23...xb3 24.axb3 a5 Black is fine according to Marin. I agree with his assessment, and would only add that Black’s next move is likely to be 25...f6, undermining the enemy bishop and making room to activate the king.

25...h5!? Black prepares to activate his king via h7 and g6.

I also checked 25...f4?! but was less than happy with the ensuing endgame after: 26.d1 c8 27.g3 c1 28.exc1 e2 29.h1 xc1 30.b4! White retains some winning chances due to the passive king on g8 and the vulnerable pawns on the queenside.

Marin offered a reasonable alternative: 25...e8N 26.d6 g5 27.c6 g7 28.f1 (or 28.xa6 c8) 28...h5 and Black has counterplay thanks to the strong knight on e6.

26.f3 26.f1N h7 27.d6 g5 is similar to Marin’s line above.

26...h7 26...f4?N promises roughly equal chances, for instance: 27.c2 (or 27.d1 c8 28.d6 c8 with counterplay) 27...e8 28.d6 d3 29.d2 e5 30.xd5 d8 31.e5 xd6=

27.f2
27...\texttt{d4!} 28.\texttt{d1}

Another possibility is 28.\texttt{c2 e8} 29.\texttt{d6 d4} 30.b4 \texttt{g6} 31.\texttt{d2 e8} 32.\texttt{e5 e6} and once again White has to be accurate to equalize.

28...\texttt{e8} 29.\texttt{d2 d4!}

Svidler – Caruana, Amsterdam 2009. Black has gradually obtained the upper hand, and he went on to win in good style.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The sidelines after 10.c3 \texttt{c7} have occasionally attracted the interest of top grandmasters, and contain enough interesting points to make them worthy of attention. Nevertheless, it is hard to see any of them rivalling 11.\texttt{c2} for main-line status.

After 11.\texttt{c2 d4}, the 12.cxd4 line does not seem to offer White any serious chances for an advantage against correct defence. So far all attempts to improve on Anand’s play have failed, and so the ball remains in White’s court.
Main Lines

9.\( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{c5} \) 10.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 11.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{d4} \) 12.\( \text{b3} \)

Variation Index

1.e4 e5 2.\( \text{f3} \) \( \text{c6} \) 3.\( \text{b5} \) a6 4.\( \text{a4} \) \( \text{f6} \) 5.0–0 \( \text{xe4} \) 6.\( \text{d4} \) b5 7.\( \text{b3} \) d5
8.\( \text{dxe5} \) \( \text{e6} \) 9.\( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{c5} \) 10.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 11.\( \text{c2} \) \( \text{d4} \) 12.\( \text{b3} \)

12...d3

A) 13.\( \text{xc5} \) dxc2 14.\( \text{xd8} \) \( \text{xd8} \) 15.\( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{fxe6} \) 16.\( \text{e3} \) \( \text{d5} \)

A1) 17.\( \text{c4} \)!

A2) 17.\( \text{f3} \)\( \text{ac1} \)

A3) 17.\( \text{fc1} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 18.\( \text{xe5} \) \( \text{xe5} \) 19.\( \text{xc2} \)

A31) 19...0–0

A32) 19...\( \text{f7} \)!

B) 13.\( \text{b1} \) \( \text{xb3} \) 14.\( \text{AXB3} \) \( \text{f5} \)

B1) 15.\( \text{b4} \)

B2) 15.\( \text{e3} \) 0–0

B21) 16.\( \text{e1} \)

B22) 16.\( \text{d4} \)

B23) 16.\( \text{d4} \) \( \text{d5} \) 17.\( \text{e1} \) \( \text{d2} \!\)!

B231) 18.\( \text{xd2} \)

B232) 18.\( \text{e3} \)

B233) 18.\( \text{xf5} \)!

B234) 18.\( \text{e2} \)

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1.e4 e5 2.\textit{d3} \textit{c6} 3.\textit{b5} a6 4.\textit{a4} \textit{f6} 5.0-0 \textit{exe4} 6.d4 b5 7.\textit{b3} d5 8.dxe5 \textit{e6} 9.\textit{bd2} \textit{d5} 10.c3 \textit{f7} 11.e2 d4 12.\textit{b3}  

With this ambitious move White retains the tension and dares the black d-pawn to advance one square further, in the hope that it will become vulnerable on d3.

12...\textit{d3}  
Other moves fail to equalize, so we will accept the challenge. From this position both A) 13.\textit{xc5} and B) 13.\textit{b1} are serious options. Each move has its own appeal, and both have been tested at high levels. The former aims for a risk-free endgame edge, while the second is more complex and ambitious, but also potentially double-edged.

A) 13.\textit{xc5}  
By simplifying the position, White attempts to torture Black in a slightly better endgame.

13...\textit{dxc2} 14.\textit{xd8\#} \textit{xd8} 15.\textit{xe6}  
For the sake of completeness I also analysed a poor alternative:
15.\textit{xa6}N  
This is a mistake as it allows Black to keep both the c2-pawn and the bishop pair.
15...\textit{c4} 16.\textit{e1} \textit{d1} 17.\textit{e3} \textit{e2}!  

18.\textit{xc7\#}  
18.\textit{d4} \textit{xd4} 19.cxd4 \textit{d7} 20.f3 \textit{a8} 21.\textit{c5}+ \textit{xc5} 22.dxc5 \textit{xe1\#} 23.\textit{xe1} \textit{d1} 24.a3 \textit{b4\#}  
18...\textit{d7} 19.\textit{xb5}  
19.\textit{a6?} loses to 19...\textit{a8} 20.\textit{c5}+ \textit{xc5} 21.\textit{xc5} \textit{xa2!} 22.\textit{c1} \textit{xb2}!+ with ...\textit{b1} to follow.  
19...\textit{xa1} 20.\textit{xa1} \textit{xb5} 21.\textit{e1} \textit{xe5} 22.\textit{xc2} \textit{a8\#}  
Black's extra piece is more significant than White's three pawns, even though the latter are both passed and connected. Black's pieces (including his king) are actively placed, and the pawns are a long way back.

15...\textit{fxe6} 16.\textit{xe3}  
White's plan is to bring a rook to c1 and pick up the c2-pawn. The other bishop move makes little sense:
16.\textit{f4} 0-0 17.\textit{g3}  
White should prefer 17.\textit{xe3}N although
Black can then proceed by analogy with the main line and enjoy having an extra tempo.

17...g5!
With the unpleasant threat of ...g4.

18.h3
Perhaps White should prefer 18.a4 although Black is fine here too: 18...g4 19.e1 h5 20.h4 gxh3:

\[
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\end{array}
\]

21.gxh3 (21.xc2 hxg2 22.xg2 h4 23.h2 a2! is clearly in Black’s favour; also after 21.xc2?! hxg2 22.xg2 a2 23.e2 h4 24.h2 a1! 25.a3 a5! Black brings the knight to c4 and obtains better chances.) 21...f5 22.xc2 xex5=

18...xex3!N
This strong positional exchange sacrifice is made possible by the misplaced bishop on g3.

18...h5 gave Black equal chances in G. Pinsky – Kuhl, corr. 1999, but he can play for more.

19.gxf3 b4! 20.xf3 zd2 21.f1! bxc3 22.bxc3 a3
Winning back the exchange.

23.e1 xc1 24.xc1 zd5
Black has restored the material balance and obtained a slight edge, thanks to his active rook and better pawn structure.

16...zd5
Black prepares to pick up the e5-pawn. This will lead to a position with equal material (after the c2-pawn drops) and the question is whether White will be able to make anything of his slightly better pawn structure. We will analyse three logical attempts: A1) 17.c4?, A2) 17.a4 and A3) 17.xc1.

A1) 17.c4?

With this highly ambitious move White tries to damage Black’s pawn structure. At the same time White weakens his own queenside, and the ensuing struggle will be far from one-sided.

17...bxc4 18.a4 xd4!
This strong idea was shown to me by Boris Gelfand. Previously most games had continued with 18.xe5, with Black struggling for equality and not necessarily succeeding.

When I first played the text move in 2004 I believed it was a novelty, although during my
research for this book I noticed it had been played in an e-mail game from 1998.

19.a3

My opponent chose 19...d2, which has not been repeated. The game continued: 19...d3 20.xc2 d7! 21.xc4 xb2 22.g4 g6

Black is comfortable and I soon took over the initiative: 23.g5 (23.e3!? d3 is also fine for Black.) 23...d3! 24.xe7+ Ehlvest – Mikhalevski, Philadelphia 2004.

The only other move to have been tested is: 19.d2

19...f7?!N 19...xa2 leads to equal play after: 20.xc2 b4 21.xc4 d7 22.b1 d3! Vacating the d5-square for the knight. 23.d2 Inconsistent. 23.d5 24.d4 d4 25.xd4 b8 Black had a slight edge in Hudec – Wojcik, e-mail 2006.

Nevertheless I believe the text move is more accurate. Black waits for the white knight to occupy the c4-square before grabbing the a2-pawn, while the f7-square makes a better home for the black king than d7, as the d-file can be occupied by the other rook.

20.xc4 xa2 21.xc2 b4

Now White's rook does not have the c4-square available.

22.e2 d3! 23.a1 b4!

With ...a5 coming next, Black cannot be worse. Please note that gobbling the a-pawn leads to immediate disaster for White:

24.xa6? c1++

19...d3 20.xc2 d7!

The point of Black's play. Now White's queenside pawns turn out to be vulnerable.
21.\textit{d}4

21.\textit{c}c1?! N \textit{b}8 is equal.

21...\textit{b}b8 22.\textit{c}c3

This seems best. The other continuation to have been tested is:

22.h3. \textit{c}5!

In the first game to feature 18...\textit{b}b4! Black went astray by making two unnecessary pawn moves: 22.g6 23.\textit{c}c3 h6?! 24.\textit{d}d2; Bucker – Barkwell, e-mail 1998.

23.\textit{x}x\textit{c}5

23.\textit{c}c3 \textit{f}8 is also fine for Black.

23...\textit{x}xc5 24.\textit{d}d1

This position was reached in Freytag – Koehler, e-mail 2004, and here Black can improve with:

24...\textit{c}6! N 25.\textit{d}d4†

25.\textit{d}d2 is strongly met by 25...\textit{xb}2!

26.\textit{xb}2 c3. Black will take one of the rooks followed by the e5-pawn, leaving him with an extra pawn and some winning chances.

25...\textit{d}d5 26.\textit{f}3 \textit{b}b3†

Intending ...\textit{cb}5 and Black's chances are higher.

We have been following the game Hou Yifan – Koneru, Tirana (4) 2011. At this point Black's play can be improved with the following natural move:
24...\texttt{Qxf2}! 25.g3 The knight was untouchable due to mate on the first rank. 25...\texttt{Qg4}\
26.\texttt{Qg2} \texttt{xf1} 27.\texttt{xf1} \texttt{d4}!\texttt{f4}\

23...\texttt{Bb8} 24.\texttt{g5}\
24.\texttt{g2} h6 25.\texttt{e2} \texttt{b8} is equal.

24...\texttt{h6} 25.\texttt{e4} \texttt{b6}!

The immediate 25...\texttt{d4} is inaccurate due to 26.\texttt{xd4} \texttt{xd4} 27.\texttt{d2} \texttt{xe5} 28.f4 \texttt{d3} 29.\texttt{xc4} with a slight edge to White.

The retreat to b6 carries the following attractive idea:

26.\texttt{g2}\
This is the most obvious attempt for White to improve his position. 26.h4 can be met by 26...h5 or 25...a5, when not much has changed.

26...\texttt{d4}!\
We will soon see why this works better with the king on g2.

27.\texttt{xd4}\
Continuing by analogy with the aforementioned 25...\texttt{d4} line.

If White avoids it with 27.f4 then 27...\texttt{b8} 28.\texttt{b1} c5= still results in a balanced position.

27...\texttt{xd4} 28.\texttt{d2}\

28...\texttt{xf2}! 29.\texttt{xf2} \texttt{e1} 30.\texttt{h3} \texttt{xc2}\
31.\texttt{f3} \texttt{d3}!\texttt{f3}\
Black is fine.

A2) 17.\texttt{ac1}\

According to the database this position has been known for at least 67 years!

17...\texttt{xe5} 18.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 19.\texttt{xc2}\

The immediate 19.c4N is likely to transpose to the main line after 19...b4 20.\texttt{xc2} \texttt{f7}.

19.\texttt{d4}? is inadvisable due to the simple 19...\texttt{e2} when White already has to worry about equalizing, for instance:
20.\(\text{e}f1\) \(\text{exe}1^\ddagger\) 21.\(\text{exe}1\) \(\text{g}5\) 22.\(\text{erce}3\) \(\text{exe}3\) 23.\(\text{exe}3\) \(\text{e}7\) 24.\(\text{c}1\) \(\text{d}8\) 25.\(\text{xc}2\) \(\text{d}1^\ddagger\) 26.\(\text{f}2\) \(c5^\ddagger\) Black can press for a long time in this endgame.

19...\(\text{f}7\) 20.\(\text{c}4!\)

This is the only real attempt to cause problems. Two harmless alternatives have been tried:

20.\(\text{f}4\) \(\text{c}5\) Black is ready to take the d-file with ...\(\text{d}8\). 21.\(\text{d}2\) (21.\(\text{e}3\) \(\text{c}6\) is also equal, as ...\(\text{d}8\) is coming next.) 21...\(\text{d}8\) 22.\(\text{xd}8\) \(\text{xd}8\) 23.\(\text{d}1\) \(\text{d}5\)

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

Black keeps the c-file closed to avoid problems with the backward pawn on the c-file. The drawback is the fixing of a pawn on a dark square, but it is not too hard to work around this problem.

21.\(\text{b}3\)

White’s strongest move is 21.\(\text{d}1!\) transposing to variation A32 – see page 353 for the continuation from this position.

21...\(\text{d}8!\)

Black takes the only open file.
From here Black has to solve two small problems: safeguarding the e6-pawn and improving the position of the rook on c5. I do not believe either of them should present much difficulty.

23.\texttt{Ee1}

This position was reached in Fishbein – Esserman, Seattle 2003. Here I found a nice idea:

\begin{align*}
23 \ldots a5!N \quad 24. \texttt{Efl} \quad a4! \quad 25. \texttt{Ece2} \quad \texttt{Ec6}\texttt{c5} \\
\end{align*}

Black maintains the balance thanks to the counterattack on the b3-pawn.

A3) 17.\texttt{Efc1}

Theory and practice have demonstrated this move to be more accurate than 17.\texttt{Eac1} for two reasons. First, the rook on a1 might help to support a2-a4, and second, the f1-square is now available for the king. It is true that the two lines may transpose to one another, as mentioned in the note to move 21 in line A2 above. Nevertheless, the difference in rook placement may benefit White in those lines where the transposition does not take place.

17.\texttt{Dxe5} \quad 18.\texttt{Dxe5} \quad \texttt{Dxe5} \quad 19.\texttt{Dxc2}

This endgame promises White a slight edge with little risk, where he can attempt to exploit his better pawn structure. Nevertheless, after investigating the position thoroughly I do not believe Black should be in much danger of losing.

19.a4?!N has nothing to recommend it. At the very least, Black can play 19.\ldots \texttt{Ef7} when 20.\texttt{Exc2} transposes to the harmless 20.a4 sideline, as given in the notes to variation A32 on page 352.

There is even a second good answer in 19.\ldots \texttt{Ec5}?! with the point that after 20.\texttt{Exc5} \texttt{Exc5} 21.axb5 Black can safely play 21...axb5!, as 22.\texttt{Ea8}\texttt{?} \texttt{Ee7} 23.\texttt{Exh8}\texttt{?} \texttt{Dd5} backfires on White.

A more sensible alternative for White is:
19.\textit{\textbf{d4 \textit{g5}}}

19...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{e2}}}}!? is a reasonable alternative if followed up correctly: 20.\textit{\textbf{f1 \textit{d2}}} 21.\textit{\textbf{e3 \textit{d1}}}†! Exchanging one pair of rooks eases the defensive burden. 22.\textit{\textbf{xh1 \textit{xd1}}}=\textit{\textbf{f8}} Black intends to put the rook on f5. 24.\textit{\textbf{e2}} (Or 24.\textit{\textbf{g4}}?N \textit{\textbf{d6}} 25.\textit{\textbf{e2 \textit{d7}}} 26.\textit{\textbf{h4 \textit{c6}}} and Black's position looks defendable.) 24...\textit{\textbf{xf5}} 25.\textit{\textbf{d4}} Pruijssers - De Jong, Hilversum 2008. Now I suggest 25...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{f6}}}}?N 26.\textit{\textbf{e4}} (26.\textit{\textbf{d3 \textit{d5}}}=) 26...\textit{\textbf{d7}} and Black should be able to hold.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20.\textit{\textbf{xc2 \textit{f7}}} 21.\textit{\textbf{a4}}

21.\textit{\textbf{e3 \textit{e5}}} transposes to line A32 with the move count increased by two on each side; Black could also consider moving the rook to f5 or h5, although the general evaluation is similar.

21...\textit{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{d5}}} 22.axb5 axb5 23.g3 \textit{\textbf{h8}}} 24.\textit{\textbf{g2}}

Benjamin – Kaidanov, San Diego 2004. Now I would recommend:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20.g3

White solves the back rank problem and gives himself the option of placing the bishop on f4. This seems to be the most challenging option, although I analysed three others as well:

20.\textit{\textbf{d4 \textit{d5}}} 21.\textit{\textbf{e1}}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

24...\textit{\textbf{c5}}!N

The exchange of bishops makes Black's task easier.

25.\textit{\textbf{xc5 \textit{xc5}}}

The position can be compared with some of the various endgames we will encounter later in the chapter. Black should have no problems holding a draw.

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\begin{tikzpicture}
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

A31) 19...0–0

From this position Black intends to exchange the dark-squared bishops, which would simplify his defensive task.
By attacking the e-pawn White avoids an exchange of bishops.
21.\textit{Be}2 c5 22.\textit{Be}e3 \textit{B}fd8 23.\textit{Ba}e1 \textit{B}d1
Exchanging a pair of rooks makes it easier to protect the e6-pawn. 24.\textit{B}f1 \textit{B}f7= Eriksson – Henriksson, Gothenburg 2005.

21...c5
Black gains space.

22.\textit{Be}e3
Jurkovic – Zilic, Rabac 2003. Now I would like to improve Black’s play with:

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (1.5,1.5) grid (8,8);
\draw [ultra thick] (3,3) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (2,4) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (4,2) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (1,5) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (5,1) circle (0.05);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

22...c4N
This is the consistent follow-up to the previous move. Black gains space and fixes at least one enemy queenside pawn on a dark square.

23.g3 \textit{B}f7 24.\textit{B}e2 \textit{B}fd8 25.\textit{B}d4 \textit{B}d8= Intending \ldots \textit{B}f6 with easy equality.

20.c4
This move does not prevent Black’s plan of exchanging bishops.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (1.5,1.5) grid (8,8);
\draw [ultra thick] (2,3) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (3,4) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (5,5) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (6,6) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (4,7) circle (0.05);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

20...c5! 21.cxb5
21.\textit{B}e1 \textit{B}xe3 22.\textit{B}xe3 \textit{B}d8! 23.\textit{B}f1 \textit{B}xe3
24.fxe3 b4 Black’s pawn structure is no longer worse and so the position is equal, Krzyzanowski – Adamek, Szczawno Zdroj 2008.

21.\textit{B}xe5N White goes for a rook endgame with a better pawn structure, but allows heavy simplifications: 21...\textit{B}xc5 22.\textit{B}ac1 \textit{B}xc4 23.\textit{B}xc4 bx\textit{B}c4 24.\textit{B}xc4 \textit{B}d8 25.g3 \textit{B}d2 26.\textit{B}b4 a5 27.\textit{B}b7 a4 Black has good chances to exchange the queenside pawns and secure a draw, although a bit of accuracy is still required.

21.\textit{B}xe3 22.\textit{B}e3 axb5 23.\textit{B}xc7 \textit{B}xe3
Black has solved most of his problems and in the one game that reached this position he drew without much difficulty.

24.\textit{B}d1 h6!
Avoiding any issues on the back rank.

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw (1.5,1.5) grid (8,8);
\draw [ultra thick] (2,3) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (3,4) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (5,5) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (6,6) circle (0.05);
\draw [ultra thick] (4,7) circle (0.05);
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

25.h3 \textit{B}f5!
Now the g7-pawn can be protected from the front.

26.\textit{B}d2 \textit{B}h7
½–½ By now the position is equal and a draw was agreed in Luther – Beckemeier, Germany 1990.

20.a4!?
White is trying to activate his rook from a1.
Chapter 19 - 9.\b3d2 \c5 10.c3 \e7 11.c2 \d4 12.b3

20...\bxa4! ?N
A concrete approach. Black exploits the weakness of the first rank to force a bishop exchange, damaging White's structure on the kingside.
20...\c5 has been tested and also seems satisfactory.
21.\xa4 \g5 22.g3
22.\e2 a5 23.\c4 \xe3 24.\xe3 (24.\xe3 \xe3 25.\xe3 \b8=) 24...\f7 is similar to 22.g3.
22...\xe3 23.\xe3 a5 24.\c4 \f7 25.e4 g5
26.\g2 \g7
Black has a marginally worse, but definitely tenable position.

The alternative is:
21.\xc5 \xc5
In my opinion White's advantage is not enough to generate real winning chances.
22.\d2
22.\e1 \f7 23.\ce2 \c6 24.\g2 \d8 25.h4 \d5 26.g4 \d6 was equal in Stellwagen - L'Ami, Wijk aan Zee 2007.'
22...\d5 23.\xd5 \xd5 24.a4 \d8!
Preparing the fully-equalizing ...d4.

25.axb5 \xb5 26.\f1 \d4 27.\d1 \d3
27...\c5! ?N 28.\xd4 \c4 is also good for a draw.
28.\b4 \d5 29.\e1
This move prevents the liquidation of the queenside pawns.
After 29.\BN with the idea of \f2-e3
Black exchanges the queenside pawns and reaches a theoretically drawish position with two pawns versus three on the kingside:
29...\f7 30.\f2 c5 31.\xc5 \xc5 32.\xd3 \g5? (32...\c4??) 33.\e3 \c4! 34.\d2 \b4!
35.\xb4 \xb4= 29...\e5! 30.\d2 \e2 31.\xd3 \xf2

20...\c5 21.\f4!
In my opinion this is the only real try to set problems.
32. \( \text{d}4 \)

32. \( \text{d}2 \) leads to an equal pawn endgame:
32...\( \text{xd}2 \uparrow \) 33. \( \text{xd}2 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 34. \( \text{d}3 \) \( \text{e}6 \)
35. \( \text{d}4 \) \( \text{d}6= \)
32...\( \text{xb}2 \) 33. \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{h}3 \) 34. \( \text{xb}5 \) \( \text{g}3 \) 35. \( \text{c}4 \)
\( \text{h}5 \) 36. \( \text{c}6 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 37. \( \text{c}1 \)

I also checked: 37. \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{xb}4 \) 38. \( \text{xc}7 \) \( \text{f}7 \) 39. \( \text{c}6 \) \( \text{g}5 \) 40. \( \text{d}6 \) \( \text{g}4 \) 41. \( \text{c}7 \) \( \text{c}4= \) Black will give up his rook for the c-pawn at the appropriate moment and run with his king to support his kingside pawns.

Now Black will have to weaken his position in order to achieve the desired bishop exchange.

22...\( \text{g}5 \) 23. \( \text{e}3 \)

Here I believe Black's best chance to hold the endgame is:

23...\( \text{e}5\uparrow! \)

The alternative is 23...\( \text{xe}3 \) 24. \( \text{xe}3 \) \( \text{f}7 \), when it is worth considering two approaches for White.

a) 25. \( \text{ce}2 \) \( \text{e}8 \) 26. \( \text{e}5 \) \( \text{h}5 \) 27. \( \text{h}3 \) was played in Sutovsky – Krasenkow, Shenyang 1999. Now Black can improve with:

27...\( \text{xe}5\uparrow! \)

This enables Black to equalize easily after the following sequence: 28. \( \text{xe}5 \) \( \text{f}6 \) 29. \( \text{c}5 \) \( \text{d}8\uparrow \) 30. \( \text{xc}7 \) \( \text{d}1\uparrow \) (30...\( \text{d}2\uparrow \) is worse because of 31. \( \text{a}7\) and White retains
some winning chances.) 31.\( \texttt{g2} \) 3a1! 32.a3 3a2 33.xa7 xxb2 34.xa6 xxb3=

b) More problematic for Black is: 25.xd2!N

25...f6 26.xed3± Black is under some pressure. This is why I chose to focus on a new idea on move 23, although as we will see, even this does not fully solve the problems.

24.xe2 xxe3 25.xe3 xxe3 26.xe3 f7 27.e5!

After 27.xf3† xxf7 28.xf8 xxf8 29.xg2 xg7 30.xf3 e5! Black will put his c-pawn on c6, enabling him to hold the pawn endgame without much difficulty.

27...f6 28.e5 xld8! 29.xc7 ld2 30.ax7 xxb2 31.xa6 g4!

Black fixes the kingside pawns.

32.a4

This exchange cannot be avoided.

32...bxa4 33.xa4 h5±

I cannot tell for sure whether or not Black holds this endgame. His drawing chances seem good, but White can press for a while longer.

A32) 19...f7!

This has been slightly less popular than 19...0–0, but I think it is the better move. The king is better placed on f7 where it protects the e6-pawn.

20.c4!

White takes away the d5-square. I checked two other moves as well.
20.a4 was seen in Salgado Lopez – Martínez Martín, Madrid 2005. Here I suggest the immediate 20...\texttt{\textbf{c}5}\texttt{!?N} based on the following lines:

\begin{center}
21.\texttt{f4} (After 21.\texttt{xc5} \texttt{xc5} 22.axb5 axb5 23.\texttt{d2} \texttt{b8}! Black prepares to advance the b-pawn, while the appearance of a rook on d7 causes no problems. 24.\texttt{d4} \texttt{b6}! 25.\texttt{f1} \texttt{d6}–) 21...\texttt{e4} 22.\texttt{xc7} \texttt{c8} 23.\texttt{g3} \texttt{xa4}= Black will either take over the d-file or exchange the queenside pawns.

20.g3 \texttt{d8} 21.a4 \texttt{ed5} 22.\texttt{g2} \texttt{c5}!

Once again exchanging bishops should ease the defence.

\begin{center}
23.\texttt{xc5}

23.\texttt{f4}?N I think White should try to keep the bishops on the board, although Black still seems to be okay. 23...e5 24.\texttt{g5} \texttt{d7} 25.b4 h6 26.c1 \texttt{b6} 27.a5 \texttt{a7}

28.c4 \texttt{xc4} 29.\texttt{xc4} 30.\texttt{b1} \texttt{e6}! 31.\texttt{h4} (31.\texttt{e3} \texttt{b5} 32.\texttt{xd4} exd4=) 31...\texttt{c5} Black equalizes in view of 32.b5 axb5 33.\texttt{xb5} \texttt{d6}= followed by \ldots\texttt{d5}.

23...\texttt{xc5} 24.axb5 axb5 25.\texttt{e2} \texttt{cd5} 26.\texttt{a7} \texttt{d7}

In spite of White's slight superiority the position should not be difficult for Black to hold, as demonstrated by the game continuation:

27.\texttt{b7} c6 28.\texttt{b6} \texttt{d6} 29.\texttt{h4} \texttt{f6} 30.\texttt{e3} h5 31.b3 \texttt{f5} 32.\texttt{b8} \texttt{f7} 33.\texttt{b7}+ \texttt{f6} 34.\texttt{b8} \texttt{f7} 35.\texttt{b7}+ \texttt{f6} 36.\texttt{b8}

\texttt{1/2–1/2} Hou Yifan – Saptarshi, Zürich 2009. White ran out of ways to improve her position.

20...\texttt{b4}

Black has to keep the c-file closed.

21.\texttt{d1}
White has also tried:

21.\(\text{gf}4\)
This attempt to drive the rook to the passive c5-square does not reach the goal.
21...\(\text{e}e4!\) 22.\(\text{g}3\) \(\text{d}8!\)
Black takes the d-file.

23.\(\text{g}2\)
23.\(\text{xc}7\) \(\text{c}c8\) is nothing for White, and
23.\(\text{c}5\) \(\text{d}5\) 24.\(\text{c}6\) \(\text{d}6\) is also equal.

23...\(\text{g}5\) 24.\(\text{e}3\)
Once again 24.\(\text{xc}7\) \(\text{c}8\) 25.\(\text{f}3\) \(\text{d}4\)
26.\(\text{b}6\) \(\text{d}xc4\) is completely equal.

24...\(\text{e}5!\)
Not the only move, but a logical one. Black prepares to exchange bishops.

25.\(\text{h}3\) \(\text{c}5\) 26.\(\text{xc}5\) \(\text{xc}5\) 27.\(\text{e}1\)
Now I would prefer:

27...\(\text{f}6!\)\footnote{N}
The immediate 27...\(\text{e}5\) is also possible, and after 28.\(\text{b}3\) a5 29.\(\text{e}3\) a4= Black equalized in Kharlov – Sorokin, Kazan 2005.

28.\(\text{ce}2\) e5 29.\(\text{b}3\) a5=

21...\(\text{d}8\) 22.\(\text{xd}8\) \(\text{xd}8\) 23.\(\text{f}1\) \(\text{g}5\)
24.\(\text{a}7!\)
If White is to preserve winning chances he needs to keep the bishops on the board, and this is the best way to do it.

In one game White chose a different plan:
24.\(\text{d}4\) \(\text{a}5\) 25.\(\text{b}3\) Potkin – Amin, Abu Dhabi 2006. Now the most accurate seems to be:

25...e5!\footnote{N} Black takes advantage of the bishop on d4 and advances his pawn to e4.
26.\(\text{a}7\)
(After 26.\(\text{a}1\) \(\text{f}6!\) Black intends ...\(\text{a}3\) followed by advancing the a-pawn.)
26...\(\text{e}4!\)
27.\(\text{e}2\) \(\text{e}6\) From here play may continue:
Main Lines

24...\(\texttt{e7}\)

Black has a viable alternative in 24...\(\texttt{\text{e}f5}\)? as played in Xie Jun – Z. Polgar, Jaen (10) 1996. I chose to concentrate on the text move in order to pursue the thematic plan of exchanging bishops.

25.\(\texttt{\text{e}e2 \text{f}f5}\!\!\)!

Black must decline the rook exchange, as the resulting bishop endgame with a fixed pawn weakness on b4 would be unpleasant.

26.\(\texttt{\text{e}e3}\)

26..\(\texttt{\text{b}3 h5 27.h3 h4 28.\texttt{\text{d}d2 \text{d}6}\)} leaves Black looking solid.

26...\(\texttt{\text{b}5 27.g3}\)

This position was reached in Sutovsky – Sorokin, Sochi 2005. Here Black could have equalized with:

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
& & & & & & & \\
8 & & & & & & & \\
7 & & & & & & & \\
6 & & & & & & & \\
5 & & & & & & & \\
4 & & & & & & & \\
3 & & & & & & & \\
2 & & & & & & & \\
1 & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

27...\(\texttt{\text{c}5!N}\)

As suggested by Postny. Here is a possible continuation:

28.\(\texttt{\text{f}4 \text{d}6 29.\text{d}2 a5?! 30.\texttt{\text{g}2 a4 31.b3?!}\)}

Otherwise Black could play ...\(\texttt{b3}\), leading to a probable exchange of the pawn on b3 for the one on c4. In that case the draw would be almost certain. The text move prevents that idea, but allows a different one.

31...\(\texttt{a\!x\!b3 32.a\!x\!b3 \text{a}5!=}\)

Black obtains enough counterplay on the queenside.

Overall the 13.\(\texttt{\text{d}x\!c5}\) line does lead to a better endgame for White, but I believe Black has a pretty comfortable drawing margin.

B) 13.\(\texttt{\text{b}1}\)

13...\(\texttt{\text{d}x\!b3 14.a\!x\!b3 \text{f}5}\)

Now the main question is whether the d3-pawn will be more of a weakness or a strength. From here we will analyse both B1) 15.\(\texttt{\text{b}4}\) and B2) 15.\(\texttt{\text{e}3}\), the latter being the main line.

15.\(\texttt{\text{e}e1 0–0}\) has little independent value, as 16.\(\texttt{\text{b}4}\) leads immediately to line B1 and 16.\(\texttt{\text{e}3}\) to line B21.

B1) 15.\(\texttt{\text{b}4}\)

This move was introduced by Karjakin against Mamedyarov at the end of 2009. White wants to fix the queenside pawn structure.

15...\(\texttt{0–0 16.\texttt{\text{e}1 \text{d}7}\)}

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
& & & & & & & \\
8 & & & & & & & \\
7 & & & & & & & \\
6 & & & & & & & \\
5 & & & & & & & \\
4 & & & & & & & \\
3 & & & & & & & \\
2 & & & & & & & \\
1 & & & & & & & \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]
Better than Mamedyarov's 16...d5?! which left the queen too exposed.

It is also worth mentioning that the immediate 16...a5?! runs into the following nice idea: 17.bxa5 Bxa5 18.Bxa5 Bxa5 19.d4 g6 20.Bxd3 Bxd3 21.Bxd3 c5

22.Wxb5! cxd4 23.Bd2!! It transpires that Black's material advantage is only temporary.

17.h3

The alternative is:
17.e3 Bd8 18.d4?!N

18.h3 is well met by: 18...a5! 19.bxa5! Bxa5 20.Bxa5 Bxa5 21.Bd4 Now Black's play in De Vreugt – De Jong, Leeuwarden 2005, can be improved by means of 21...Qc4!N with better chances for Black.

The text move is a better attempt to fight for the advantage.
17...\=g6!?
With this clever move Black prepares to meet \=e3 with ...a5. The point is that after exchanges on a5 White will not be able to play \d4 with gain of tempo.

18.\=a2
White creates an obvious threat of e5-e6. I analysed two other possibilities.

18.\=e3N a5! 19.bxa5 (19.e6? fxe6 20.bxa5 e5! 21.a6 e4 22.\=d2 \=h8 23.a7 \=d6= With the strong pawns on e4 and d3 Black should not be worse; his plan for the next two moves is to bring the queen to e5 via e8.) 19...\=xa5

20.e6! \=d5! (White’s idea would work after: 20...fxe6? 21.\=xa5 \=xa5 22.\=e5 \=d5 23.\=xg6 hxg6 24.\=xd3\# 21.exf7\# \=xf7 22.\=xa5 \=xa5= Black is fine.

18.\=f4!? a5!

19.bxa5
After 19.e6 fxe6 20.\=a2 \=f7 21.\=b1 \=g6= the position is equal.

19...\=xa5 20.e6! fxe6 21.\=xa5 \=xa5 22.\=e5 \=d5 23.\=xg6 hxg6

24.\=xc7
I also analysed 24.\=e5N \=c4 25.\=e3 \=d8 26.\=d4 d2! 27.\=xg6 \=xd4 28.exd4 \=c1 29.\=c2 (or 29.\=h5 \=c4\#) 29...\=c6 30.\=xb5 \=xd4 31.\=b8\# \=f7 32.\=a4 \=d6 and Black has sufficient compensation for the exchange.

24...\=c5! 25.\=g3
Das – Ashton, Hastings 2011. Now I would like to improve upon Black’s play with:

25.d2?! N 26.\=e2 \=c4 27.b3 \=g5! 28.bxc4 After 28.\=h1 \=b2 29.\=xd2 \=xg3! 30.\=xb2 \=xf2 31.\=c1 \=f6!= Black is fine.

28.\=h2? is strongly met by: 28...\=xf2! 29.\=xf2 (29.\=xf2 \=e3! 30.\=xf8\# \=xf8
Chapter 19 - 9.\( \text{bd2} \) \( \text{c5} \) 10.\( \text{c3} \) \( \text{e7} \) 11.\( \text{c2} \) \( d4 \) 12.\( \text{b3} \)

31.\( \text{f3} \)  32.\( \text{xe3} \) \( \text{d1=xd1} \)  29...\( \text{xf2}! \)  30.\( \text{xf2} \) \( \text{c3} \)  31.\( \text{xd2} \) \( \text{f1=xf1} \) \( \text{xd2=xd2+} \) White faces a difficult struggle for a draw.

28...\( \text{Wxg3} \) 29.\( \text{Wxd2} \) \( \text{bxc4} \) 30.\( \text{e4} \) \( \text{h7=} \)
Black's weakened kingside structure is balanced out by his pressure on the f2-pawn.

19.\( \text{f4} \)
19.\( \text{e6N} \) is not dangerous, and after 19...\( \text{fxe6} \) 20.\( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{d6} \) Black has a good position.

19...\( \text{a5} \)  20.\( \text{bxa5} \)
In the event of 20.e6N Black plays 20...\( \text{d8=} \) with the following idea in mind: 21.\( \text{bxa5} \) \( \text{fxe6} \) 22.\( \text{d2} \) \( \text{e5=} \)

20...\( \text{xa5=} \)
After 20...\( \text{xa5=} \) White can play: 21.\( \text{e6!} \) \( \text{fxe6} \) 22.\( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{d8=} \) 23.\( \text{g3} \) \( \text{f6} \) 24.\( \text{e5} \) Exploiting the absence of the knight from c6. 24...\( \text{xe5} \) 25.\( \text{xe5} \) with a slight edge for White.

21.\( \text{b4} \) \( \text{b4} \)  22.\( \text{b3} \)
22.e6N \( \text{fxe6} \) 23.\( \text{xe6} \) \( \text{xa1} \) 24.\( \text{xa1} \) \( \text{d8=} \) is roughly equal.

22...\( \text{xa1} \)  23.\( \text{xa1} \) \( \text{d8=} \)
Black intends to transfer his knight to a nice blocking position on e6.

24.\( \text{a7=} \)!
This position was reached in Shirow – Caruana, Wijk aan Zee 2010. So far both sides have played strongly and consistently, but here I believe Black should have modified his plan, in response to his opponent’s last move.

24...Hh5!N
The game continuation of 24...Hf6 25.Hd2 Hf8 can be met by 26.Hb7??N (Shirov’s 26.Hxe6?! also gave White an edge which he eventually converted.) 26...c6 27.Hxd7 Hxd7 28.Ba1= with better chances for White.

25.Bd4

30...Hg6! 31.Hd7 Bh4 32.Bxb5 Hxg3 33.fxg3 He6= and Black is fine.

25...Hc6!
The knight abandons its plan to occupy the e6-square, in order to force the exchange of its white counterpart.

26.Bxc6
With a roughly equal position.

B2) 15.Be3
This is the main line. White’s plan is to bring his bishop to d4 and devour the d3-pawn.
15...0-0

From here I analysed three main options:
B21) 16...e1, B22) 16.d4 and B23) 16.d4.

I also considered 16.b4N but after 16...d5
White has nothing better than 17.e1 transposing to variation B21.

**B21) 16.e1**

16...d5 17.b4

17.d4 transposes to the main line B23 – see page 362.

17.h3?!N is an interesting waiting move, after which Black must avoid ending up in an inferior version of the main line. The right response is: 17...e4 18.d4 (Or 18.f4 g6!
19.b4 a5! and Black equalizes.) 18...xd4
19.cxd4 xf3 20.xd3 g6 21.xf3 xd4

18...d7 19.d4

I analysed two alternatives.

19.g5 h6! 20.e6?N (Attempting to improve over 20.xe7 xe7 21.d2 e6 when Black was fine in Smirnov – Iordachescu, Khanty-Mansiysk 2008.) 20...xe6 21.xe7 xe7
22.e3 d6 23.xe6 fxe6 24.b3 f7 25.ae1
25...\textit{d}5! 26.\textit{xd}5 \textit{xd}5 27.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xb}4! 28.\textit{xb}4\textit{d}2 The resulting endgame is equal.

19.\textit{h}3?!N is a useful waiting move. 19...\textit{e}6 20.\textit{xe}6 \textit{xe}6 21.\textit{d}4 \textit{g}6 22.\textit{e}3 22...\textit{a}5! Thanks to this thematic move Black equalizes easily. 23.\textit{xd}3 \textit{xd}3 24.\textit{xd}3 \textit{axb}4 25.\textit{xa}8 \textit{xa}8 26.\textit{e}3 \textit{d}8=

\textbf{19...\textit{xe}5?!N}

I prefer this move slightly, although Black comes close to full equality with the game continuation: 19...\textit{xd}4 20.\textit{xd}4 \textit{xb}4 21.e6! \textit{xe}6 22.\textit{xe}6! \textit{xe}6 23.\textit{g}4 \textit{h}8 24.\textit{xe}6 \textit{e}7 25.\textit{cb}4 \textit{xd}4 \frac{1}{2}–\frac{1}{2} Robson – Ernst, Hoogeveen 2008.

\textbf{20.\textit{g}5}

20.\textit{f}4 \textit{g}6 21.\textit{xf}5 \textit{xf}5 22.\textit{xc}7 \textit{d}7 is good for Black thanks to the strong d-pawn.

\textbf{20...\textit{f}6!}

It is always difficult to foresee such a move over the board. From here my main line leads to a move repetition.

21.\textit{xf}6 \textit{gx}6 22.\textit{wd}2 \textit{g}6 23.\textit{f}4 \textit{c}6 24.\textit{e}6 \textit{e}8 25.\textit{c}5 \textit{d}6
Chapter 19 - 9.\bb2 10.\cc5 11.\cc2 \dd4 12.\bb3

26.\bb7!

Attempting to play on with 26.g4 allows 26...a5! with some initiative for Black.

26...\wd7 27.\cc5 \wd6=

B22) 16.\dd4

16...\dx4 17.\cc4 \cc5 18.\dx3

18.\fx3 occurred in Romero Araya – Von Dessaver, Santiago de Chile 2009. Here Black can equalize easily with: 18...\dx4N 19.\dd2 (19.\dx4? \wd4 20.\fx5 \dd8\dplus is clearly better for Black.) 19...\wd7 20.\dx3 \dx3 21.\dx3 We have now transposed to the 19.\ff4 line given in the notes to the main line below, with the move count being one lower. As we will soon see, 22...f6! offers Black a good game.

18...\dx4 19.\dx4!

This is White’s only real try for an advantage.

I faced 19.\ff4 almost a decade ago: 19...\wd7 20.\bb1 \gg6?! 21.\dd2 \dx3 22.\dx3 f6!

Black gets rid of the e5-pawn and equalizes easily. 23.\fe1 \fx5 24.\xx5 \ff6 25.\he5 \gg6 26.\ee5 \gg7= Luther – Mikhailovski, Port Erin 2003.

I also considered: 19.\xx5N \dx3 20.\xx3 (20.\xd8?! \xad8! 21.\xx3 \gg6! 22.\ce4 \cc5

20...\bb6! 21.\ff3 \aad8 Black obtains sufficient compensation thanks to White’s pawn weaknesses. For example: 22.b4 \gg6! 23.\ce2 \gg5=

19...\dx4 20.\xx5 \xb2!

20...\xx5?! is strongly met by 21.\hh5 \gg6 22.\xxg6\dplus and Black faces a tough defence.

21.\dd5 \ff8

21...\aad8?!N 22.\dd7 \xa3! is an interesting alternative but the text move seems reliable enough.

22.\dd7 \xa7 23.\ce6 \hh8! 24.\ff3!

Ganguly – Najer, Moscow 2005. Now I would like to improve Black’s play with:
24...fxe6N 25.exb5 axc5 26.c4
I also considered 26...exa6 27...exa6 e8b8 28...e3 (28...e2 exb3=) 28...e5 intending 29...d3 e4! 30...c4...d2= with an equal position as neither side can make progress.

26...e8b8 27...c6...xf2+ 28...h1 a5 29...xe6 Baa8
White has slightly more active pieces, but the position is heavily simplified with opposite-coloured bishops, so a draw is by far the most likely result.

B23) 16...d4

This is the main line. White simply threatens to capture on d3.

16...d5
Black counters with an attack on b3.

17...Fxe1
The rook is coming to c3 in order to attack the d3-pawn.

Exchanging b3 for d3 does not bring White any advantage.
17...xd3 18...xd3 ebx3 19...e4...e6
Black retains a solid position, for instance:
20...e3
20...f4 Ffd8 21...fe1 a5 22...ad1 a4 was fine for Black in Michalczak – Zarges, Recklinghausen 2002.

B23) 16...d4

20...f5! 21...f4 a5!
Black improves his pawn structure on the queenside.

22.Ffd1
After 22...d4?! Qxd4 23.cxd4 a4= the change in the pawn structure favours Black, who will create a passed pawn on the a-file.

22...Ffd8 23.h4 Fxd1+ 24...xd1...d8=
Black has fully equalized and a draw was soon agreed in Frolyanov – Vokarev, Khanty-Mansiysk 2011.

17...d2!
This clever tactical idea is intended to disrupt White’s coordination. From here we will consider four options: B231) 18...xd2, B232) 18...e3, B233) 18...f5?? and B234) 18...e2.
This leads to similar play as the 17...\texttt{xd3} line noted above. Here too Black has few problems.

18...\texttt{xb1} 19.\texttt{xb1} \texttt{xb3} 20.e6

20.\texttt{xe3} was played in Franklin – Talsma, England 2010, and here I prefer the simple 20...\texttt{ad8N} 21.\texttt{e4} \texttt{d5=} intending ...a5.

20...\texttt{fxe6} 21.\texttt{e4}

21.\texttt{e2N} a5 22.\texttt{xe6+} \texttt{xe6} 23.\texttt{xe6} \texttt{d6} is roughly equal.

21...\texttt{ad8} 22.\texttt{e2} \texttt{f6}

23.\texttt{xe6}?!  

White should have preferred 23.\texttt{xf6N} \texttt{xf6} 24.h4 when he retains sufficient compensation for a pawn, for example: 24...h6 25.\texttt{e1} \texttt{d6}

26.\texttt{h2}! e5 27.\texttt{g4} \texttt{f5} 28.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 29.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xe5} 30.\texttt{xe5} \texttt{xb2} 31.\texttt{e8+} \texttt{h7} 32.\texttt{e4+} The game ends in perpetual check.

23...\texttt{xd4} 24.\texttt{xd4}

24.cxd4N \texttt{xd4} 25.\texttt{xa6} \texttt{b6} 26.\texttt{e1} \texttt{d3} also results in a slight edge for Black.

24...\texttt{xd4} 25.cxd4 \texttt{xd4}

26.\texttt{e7}?!  

26.\texttt{xa6N} was better. After 26...\texttt{d5} Black keeps some initiative, but White should be able to hold the ending with careful defence.

26...\texttt{d5}
White had insufficient compensation for the pawn and eventually lost in Brkic – Iordachescu, Plovdiv 2008.

**B232) 18.\(\text{Re3}\)**

White had insufficient compensation for the pawn and eventually lost in Brkic – Iordachescu, Plovdiv 2008.

21...c5 22.\(\text{Qxd2 \text{Qxd2}}\) 23.\(\text{dx5 \text{Wxc5}}\) 24.\(\text{Exd2 \text{Wxe5}}\)

Black has a miniscule edge although the position should, of course, be drawn.

19...\(\text{Qxd4} \) 20.\(\text{cx4 \text{Qb4}}\) 21.\(\text{Qd3?!}\)

The immediate 21.\(\text{Qxd2N}\) had to be played, and after 21...\(\text{Wxd4} \) 22.\(\text{Qf3 \text{Wxd1+}}\) 23.\(\text{Qxd1 \text{Qad8}}\) 24.\(\text{Qed3 \text{Qxd3}}\) 25.\(\text{Qxd3 f6!}\) Black has just a marginally better endgame.

The inaccurate rook move was played in Rodriguez Cespedes – Baron Rodriguez, Aragon 2005. Now Black could have exploited the hanging position of the rook on d3 with:

21...\(\text{Qxe5!} \) 22.\(\text{Qc2}\)

22.\(\text{Qxd2 \text{Qxe5+f}}\) is the idea behind Black’s previous move.

22...\(\text{Qad8!}\)

Black’s chances are higher. The following line looks like White’s only chance to challenge this assessment.

23.\(\text{Qxd2 \text{Qxe5}}\) 24.\(\text{Qh3 \text{Qxd4}}\)

24...\(\text{Qh5??}\)

25.\(\text{Qxh7+ \text{Qf8}}\)

The attack is not dangerous, as Black’s superbly-centralized pieces cover all the important squares.
The king is safe and Black has some positional advantages which he can try to exploit.

27...f6

The king is safe and Black has some positional advantages which he can try to exploit.

**B233) 18...xf5?**

White sacrifices an exchange in the hope of exploiting his central control and powerful light-squared bishop.

18...dxe1=\# 19.xe1 xb3!

Black has to accept the sacrificed material. Here I think White should look to improve on the one existing game.

20.xe2 P

The aforementioned game continued:

20...b1?! This is not the best position for the queen.

20...g6 21.e4 xe6 22.a2? xd4

23.xa8

White’s best chance was 23.cxd4 xa2 24.xa2 e7 25.e6 when the misplaced rook on a7 offers him some compensation, although Black can start to untangle himself with 25...b8! 26.d5 a5! when he keeps some winning chances.

23...b3 24.d5 xd5 25.d4 xe5 26.xb3 c5

Black obtained an extra pawn and eventually converted his advantage in Amonatov – Sverushkin, Moscow 2007.

20.e6?N also makes sense and requires some analysis: 20...xd4 21.xd4 xb2 22.exf7+ h8 Black takes advantage of the hanging rook on a1. 23.b1 a3
24.\textit{c2!} 25.\textit{e6} 26.e7! The only defence, but it is good enough. 26.h3 h4! (26.g6?! 27.xg6 hxg6 is also at least enough for equality.) 27.g3 xf7 Black’s chances are slightly higher.

The text move is perhaps White’s best chance. Compared with the Amonatov – Svetushkin game, the queen is better on e2 than b1, and this should enable White to claim enough positional compensation for the sacrificed exchange.

\begin{center}
21...g6 21.d7
21.b1 xd4 22.xd4 d5 23.a2 b7 24.b1 b6 25.e4 a8 followed by \ldots c5 looks slightly better for Black.
\end{center}

21...d8!
A strong manoeuvre. Black brings the knight to e6.

\begin{center}
22.e3 e6 23.c6 b8
White keeps a reasonable level of compensation but Black should not have problems.
\end{center}

21.g3
Preparing f2-f4 is the most logical plan.
21.b4?!  
This dubious move was played in Solleveld – De Jong, Hilversum 2006, and here Black's play can easily be improved.

21...\textsf{Be8}!N 22.\textsf{d}3?!

22.h4 is better, although after 22...\textsf{h}6!  
23.g3 \textsf{Bxe}5 24.f4 \textsf{Bxe}2 25.\textsf{Bxe}2 c5 26.bxc5  
\textsf{Bxc}5 27.\textsf{h}2 g6 28.\textsf{Bxd}2. \textsf{g}7 Black keeps a positional edge.

22...\textsf{Ba}8!  
It turns out that Black can ignore the attack, and in fact White has nothing better than returning with the knight to d4.

23.\textsf{d}4

23.\textsf{xg}5? is bad due to the unexpected  
23...\textsf{Ba}2! and it turns out that White has no good way of stopping ...\textsf{Bxb}1.  
23.\textsf{a}1 \textsf{f}4 maintains an edge for Black.  
23...a5! 24.bxa5 b4!+  
White is under pressure.

21...c5 22.\textsf{d}5 \textsf{d}3!  
Black has also played 22...\textsf{e}6?! 23.\textsf{d}6 \textsf{g}6 reaching the same position. The move order should not matter too much: retreating to e6 gives White the extra possibility of 23.\textsf{c}2?!N although this should not be too dangerous; still, it would seem easier to eliminate this option altogether.

23.\textsf{d}6 \textsf{g}6!  
The queen must go here in order to interfere with the f2-f4 plan.

24.\textsf{h}4

White offers the h-pawn in order to lure the bishop away from defending the one on d2. So far this is the only move to have been tested, but I also analysed a couple of alternatives.

24.\textsf{h}1N unpins the g-pawn and renews the threat of f4, but Black is ready to answer with 24...f6! 25.e6 \textsf{ad}8 26.e7 \textsf{ed}6 27.\textsf{xf}8=\textsf{xf}8 28.\textsf{a}1

28...\textsf{d}3!= The mighty passed pawn on d2 gives Black full compensation for the exchange. In fact, I don't see a single idea for White to make progress.

24.\textsf{f}1?!N \textsf{f}4! 25.\textsf{d}1 \textsf{e}5! 26.\textsf{e}4 \textsf{ae}8?!  
26...\textsf{c}6 27.\textsf{xd}2 is close to equal, although White can claim a modest initiative.
27...\(\text{dxc5}\)
27...\(\text{edxgd2?}\) is refuted by 27...\(\text{f4!}\).

27...\(\text{f4}\)
27...\(\text{Wh5?!}\) 28...\(\text{exd2 xg3!}\) 29...hxg3 \(\text{Wxc5}\) is slightly worse for Black, although the position should be defendable.

28...\(\text{d3!}\)

28...\(\text{exe8 exe8}\) 29...\(\text{d3}\) is met by 29...\(\text{h5!}\) 30...\(\text{gxf4 xg4+}\) 31...\(\text{h1 f3+}\) 32...\(\text{g1 xg4+}\) with a perpetual.

28...\(\text{h6}\)

28...\(\text{xg3}\) 29...\(\text{hxg3 xxd3}\) 30...\(\text{exe8 xxf1+}\) 31...\(\text{xf1 exe8}\) 32...\(\text{xzd2}\) is slightly better for White, although once again Black should hold a draw.

29...\(\text{exe8 exe8}\) 30...\(\text{f4 e6}\)

30...\(\text{xf4!}\) 31...\(\text{xf4 c2}\) 32...\(\text{g2 a5}\) 33...\(\text{f3 h6}\) 34...\(\text{f2 xbd2}\) leads to an endgame that will be tough to win for White, but it is hardly necessary for Black to risk this.

31...\(\text{xd2 xbd3}\) 32...\(\text{c5 d2}\) 33...\(\text{d3 g6}\)
34...\(\text{g2 f8}\) 35...\(\text{b4 a1}\) 36...\(\text{e4 g7=}\)

Black should not have much trouble extinguishing White’s temporary initiative.

24...\(\text{h4!}\)

This is the latest word of theory.

I also considered 24...\(\text{f4?}\) but found that after 25...\(\text{h5}\) 26...\(\text{e4}\) 27...\(\text{exf5}\) 28...\(\text{xd6 xxd6}\) 29...\(\text{xd6 h6}\) 30...\(\text{a1}\) White keeps a nagging initiative.

24...\(\text{h6}\) is met by: 25...\(\text{h5!}\) 26...\(\text{e6}\) 27...\(\text{e7}\) 28...\(\text{xf8=}\) 29...\(\text{a1 xbd3=}\) leads to a position resembling the 24...\(\text{h1N}\) line noted above, Stellwagen – Svetushkin, Dresden [ol] 2008; 25...\(\text{a1?N}\) is interesting though.) 25...\(\text{xf8}\) 26...\(\text{xd2 xex5}\) 27...\(\text{d5 xde6}\) 28...\(\text{f5=}\) with some pressure for White.
25...\texttt{exd2}

The destruction of the d2-pawn brings a sense of normality to the position. The strong knight on d6 promises slightly better chances for White, but Black should be able to equalize with precise play.

25...\texttt{e7!}

Black's counterplay is connected with undermining the strong knight with ...\texttt{f6}, so White will not be able to have everything his own way.

26.\texttt{a1}?!\texttt{N}

This new move seems to be White's best chance for a meaningful advantage.

We must also consider another rook move, which was tested in a high-level game. 26.\texttt{d5} \texttt{f6}! 27.\texttt{e6} \texttt{f5}

29...\texttt{xf6}?!\texttt{N}

Safeguarding the bishop and preparing ...\texttt{ad8}.

In the game Black fell under some pressure after: 29...\texttt{ad8} 30.\texttt{e3!} \texttt{xe3} 31.\texttt{xe3} \texttt{xd5} 32.\texttt{cxd5} \texttt{d8} 33.\texttt{f4} Caruana – L’Ami, Reykjavik 2012. I believe the position should still be defensible at this stage, but...
the practical problems proved too much and Black eventually succumbed.

30.\(\text{Qe3}\)

30.\(\text{Bd1}\)  \(\text{Qe5}\)  31.\(\text{Qe3}\)  \(\text{Bae8}\)  32.\(\text{Qe1}\)  \(\text{Qc6}\)

33.\(\text{Bxe2}\)  \(\text{Bxe6}\) also looks about equal.

27.\(\text{Qf3}\)!

27.e6 is unconvincing: 27...\(f5\)  28.\(\text{Qe2}\)  \(\text{Qf6}\)

29.\(\text{Qxb5}\) (29.\(\text{Qe1}\)?? \(f4\)!)  30.\(\text{Qe5}\)  \(\text{fxg3}\)  31.\(\text{Qxg3}\)

\(\text{Qd8}\)  32.\(\text{Qe4}\)  \(\text{Bxd2}\)  33.\(\text{Qxd2}\) \(h5\)! gives Black some initiative.) 29...\(f4\)! Black obtains sufficient counterplay, for example:

30.\(\text{Qc7}\)  \(\text{fxg3}\)!  31.\(\text{fxe5}\)  \(\text{Bxe5}\)

Black has solved most of his problems and White has no more than a miniscule edge.

26...\(f6!\)

26...\(\text{Qe6}\) may lead to an unpleasant rook endgame after: 27.\(\text{Qd5}\)!  \(f6\)  28.\(\text{Qxc5}\)  \(\text{fxe5}\)

29.\(\text{Qd5}\)!  \(\text{Bxd5}\)  30.\(\text{Bxd5}\)  \(\text{Qad8}\)  31.\(\text{Qad1}\)  \(\text{Bxd6}\)

32.\(\text{Bxd6}\)  \(\text{Bxd6}\)  33.\(\text{Bxd6}\) An important point is that 33...\(\text{Qf6}\)?  34.\(\text{Bxf6}\)  \(\text{gxf6}\)  35.\(\text{b4}\) \(\text{Qf7}\)

36.\(\text{b3+}\) reaches a winning pawn endgame for White.

27...\(\text{fxe5}\)  28.\(\text{Qd5}\)?? \(\text{Qh8}\)  29.\(\text{Qxe5}\) \(\text{Qg5}\)!

There is a second line that deserves serious consideration:

29...\(\text{Qxd6}\)  30.\(\text{Qxd6}\)

The alternative is: 30.\(\text{Bxd6}\)  \(\text{Qc2}\)  31.\(\text{Qxc5}\)

\(\text{Bxb2}\)  32.\(\text{Bxa6}\)  \(\text{Bae8}\)  33.\(\text{Bxe6}\)  \(\text{Bd8}\)

34.\(\text{Bad6}\)  \(\text{Bc8}\)  35.\(\text{Bc6}\)  \(\text{Bcd8}\) White must either agree to a threefold repetition or permit a counterattack on the \(f2\)-pawn after 36.\(\text{b4}\)  \(\text{c1}\)?  37.\(\text{Qg2}\)  \(\text{d1}\)  38.\(\text{Qe3}\)  \(\text{Bd2}\) and
after an exchange on f2 I doubt that White can win.

30...\textit{W}xd6 31.\textit{W}xd6 \textit{a}e8

Black seems to have just enough to equalize, as shown by the following lines:

\begin{align*}
32.\textit{W}f1 &\textit{W}e3 33.\textit{W}\text{xa}6 \\
33.\textit{W}dxa6 &\textit{e}f3= \\
33...\textit{W}e3 &34.\textit{W}d2 b4! 35.\textit{c}4 \textit{W}xg3 36.\textit{e}c6 \\
\textit{e}g5 &37.\textit{W}d5 \textit{W}d5 38.\textit{W}x\textit{d}5 \textit{W}f8 39.\textit{W}f2 \textit{f}5 \\
40.\textit{W}x\textit{c}5 &h5 41.\textit{W}e3 h4=
\end{align*}

30.\textit{W}dd1

30.\textit{W}d5 \textit{f}4 31.\textit{W}e4 \textit{W}xd6 32.\textit{W}xg6 \textit{hxg}6 \\
33.\textit{W}xd6 reaches the same position.

30...\textit{W}f4 31.\textit{W}e4 \textit{W}xd6

Unfortunately 31...\textit{W}xg3? 32.\textit{W}xg3 \textit{W}xg3† \\
33.\textit{W}g2 \textit{W}e3† 34.\textit{W}h1 \textit{f}3 is insufficient due to 35.\textit{W}f7! \textit{g}8 36.\textit{W}g5 and White wins.

32.\textit{W}xg6 \textit{hxg}6 33.\textit{W}xd6 \textit{W}f6

34.\textit{W}d5

I checked two other attempts, neither of which enable White to achieve his goal.

34.\textit{W}ad1 b4! 35.\textit{c}4 \textit{W}e8 36.\textit{W}xf6 \textit{gx}f6 37.\textit{W}f1 \\
\textit{e}6

38.\textit{W}d8† \textit{g}7 39.\textit{W}c8 \textit{W}d6 40.\textit{W}e2 \textit{W}e6† \\
41.\textit{W}d3 \textit{e}5 Black can hold the endgame without too much trouble, as the loss of the a-pawn is of little significance.

34.\textit{W}xf6 \textit{gx}f6 35.\textit{W}a5 \textit{g}7 36.\textit{c}4 (Otherwise Black brings the king to the queenside freeing the rook from defence: 36.\textit{W}g2 \\
\textit{f}7 37.\textit{W}f3 \textit{e}6 38.\textit{W}f4 \textit{d}5=) 36...\textit{bxc}4 \\
37.\textit{bxc}4
Conclusion

This brings our investigation of the Open Spanish to a close. The 13.\(\text{c}5\) line leads to a slightly better endgame for White, but I do not believe Black has much to fear. The 13.\(\text{b}1\) variation seems to represent the biggest challenge to our repertoire in the 9.\(\text{bd}2\) system, but here too I hope I have demonstrated that Black can neutralize White's slight initiative. I have endeavoured to anticipate as many potential improvements for White as possible, and I look forward to seeing my recommendations tested in practical play.

37...\(\text{g}5!\) 38.\(\text{Exc}5\) 39.\(\text{a}5\) 40.\(\text{xa}6\) 41.\(\text{c}6\) g4!= The draw is rather easy as the king approaches the c-pawn.

34...\(\text{e}8\)

34...\(\text{h}7!\!) also looks okay.

35.\(\text{f}1\) c4 36.\(\text{xc}4\) bxc4\(\text{f}\)

Despite White's slight superiority, Black's counterplay against the b2-pawn makes a draw the most likely result by far.
Chapter 1

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{d}f3\) \(\text{d}c6\) 3.\(\text{b}5\) a6 4.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{d}f6\)

A) 5.\(\text{x}c6\) dxc6 8
   A1) 6.0–0 9
   A2) 6.\(\text{c}c3\) 10
   A3) 6.d3 \(\text{d}d6\) 11
      A31) 7.0–0 13
      A32) 7.\(\text{b}d2\) 14
B) 5.\(\text{c}c3\) b5 6.\(\text{b}b3\) \(\text{e}7\) 16
   B1) 7.a4 16
   B2) 7.0–0 \(\text{d}6\) 18
      B21) 8.a4 b4 9.\(\text{d}d5\) 19
      B22) 8.\(\text{d}d5\) 19
   B3) 7.d3 0–0 21
      B31) 8.\(\text{d}d2\)? 21
      B32) 8.\(\text{d}d5\) 23
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Chapter 2

1.e4 e5 2.\(\text{f}f3\) \(\text{c}c6\) 3.\(\text{b}5\) a6 4.\(\text{a}4\) \(\text{f}f6\) 5.d4 exd4 6.e5 \(\text{e}4\)

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   B1) 8.c3?! 29
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B1232) 13.Ød2 53

B2) 8.e5 Øxe5! 55

B21) 9.Øxe5 55
B22) 9.Øxe5 d6! 58

B221) 10.Øg5?! 58
B222) 10.Øe1 bxa4 60

B2221) 11.Øg5 61
B2222) 11.Øxd4 Ød7 62

B22221) 12.Øe2 62
B22222) 12.c4 63
B22223) 12.Øf3 64

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1.e4 e5 2.Øf3 Øc6 3.Øb5 a6 4.Øa4 Øf6 5.Øe2 b5 6.Øb3 Øc5

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A1) 8.d3 69
A2) 8.axb5 axb5 9.Øxa8 Øxa8 71

B) 7.c3 0-0 73

B1) 8.d3 73
B2) 8.Øe5! 75

B21) 9.d3 75
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   C1) 8.\textit{\textbf{N}}g5 101
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   D1) 8.\textit{\textbf{N}}bd2 107
   D2) 8.\textit{\textbf{N}}e2!? h6 108
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   B2) 9.axb5 axb5 118
      B21) 10.\textit{\textbf{N}}e3 119
      B22) 10.h3 120
C) 8.c3 h6 122
   C1) 9.\textit{\textbf{N}}c3 124
   C2) 9.a4 \textit{\textbf{B}}b8 10.axb5! axb5 11.d4 \textit{\textbf{N}}b6 12.\textit{\textbf{N}}a3 0-0 13.\textit{\textbf{N}}xb5 \textit{\textbf{N}}g4 124
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10.\(\text{bd}2\) 0–0 11.\(\text{c}2\) \(\text{f}5\)

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1.e4 e5 2.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{c5}}}\) \(\textit{\textbf{\text{c6}}}\) 3.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{b5}}}\) a6 4.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{a4}}}\) \(\textit{\textbf{\text{f6}}}\) 5.0-0 \(\textit{\textbf{\text{xe4}}}\) 6.d4 b5 7.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{b3}}}\) d5 8.dxe5 \(\textit{\textbf{\text{e6}}}\) 9.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{bd2}}}\) dxc5 10.c3 \(\textit{\textbf{\text{e7}}}\) 11.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{c2}}}\) d4 12.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{b3}}}\) d3

A) 13.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{xc5}}}\) dxc2 14.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{xd8}}}\) \(\textit{\textbf{\text{xd8}}}\) 15.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{xe6}}}\) fxe6 16.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{e3}}}\) \(\textit{\textbf{\text{d5}}}\) 340
  A1) 17.c4!? 341
  A2) 17.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{ac1}}}\) 344
  A3) 17.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{fc1}}}\) \(\textit{\textbf{\text{xe5}}}\) 18.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{xe5}}}\) \(\textit{\textbf{\text{xe5}}}\) 19.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{xc2}}}\) 346
     A31) 19...0-0 347
     A32) 19...\(\textit{\textbf{\text{f7}}}!\) 351

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  B1) 15.b4 354
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     B22) 16.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{d4}}}\) 361
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        B231) 18.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{xd2}}}\) 363
        B232) 18.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{e3}}}\) 364
        B233) 18.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{xf5}}}!\) 365
        B234) 18.\(\textit{\textbf{\text{e2}}}\) 366
Creating the Grandmaster Repertoire series seemed a natural idea. There has been a glut of opening books offering simplistic coverage of a subject. Apart from a few exceptions, it almost seemed like the concept of a high-level repertoire book had been forgotten. As chess players and fans, we felt we were missing out, and because we can, we decided to do something about it.

The books in the Grandmaster Repertoire series are written by grandmasters, edited by grandmasters, and will certainly be read by grandmasters. Of course, this does not mean that players who are not grandmasters cannot benefit from them. We have worked hard to make our books clear in their presentation and to make it possible for the readers to decide the depth to which they want to study them.

It is our conviction that most players will eventually enjoy greater success by playing the main lines, simply because they are, in most cases, based on stronger moves. Instinctively most players know this, but for one reason or another they employ easy-to-learn but unambitious systems, or dubious gambits. These approaches may yield success from time to time, but we would argue that they are less conducive to a player's overall development.

In these days of multi-million game databases, we all have access to information. The difficulty comes from trying to navigate through the ever-expanding jungle of games and variations. In this groundbreaking new series, readers will be guided by the insights of grandmasters, each chosen for their special expertise in the opening in question.

We are immensely excited about this series, and we hope that the readers will share our enthusiasm.

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The Open Spanish is one of Black's most direct methods of fighting against the Ruy Lopez. Instead of subjecting himself to the so-called "Spanish torture" of the Closed Ruy Lopez, Black boldly captures the e4-pawn and provokes an early confrontation.

Grandmaster Repertoire 13 – The Open Spanish provides a complete repertoire for Black after 1.e4 e5 2.ªf3 ³c6 3.ªb5 a6 4.ªa4 ³f6, based on the Open Variation which occurs after 5.0–0 ³xe4. Black's system is built on the principles of fast and active development, and fighting for the initiative whenever the opportunity arises.

- Hundreds of novelties
- Expert coverage of a dynamic counterattacking system
- Covers all sidelines after 4.ªa4 ³f6

Victor Mikhailevski is an Israeli grandmaster with a peak rating of 2632. He has represented Israel at Olympiads and other major team events, and has won many international tournaments. He is renowned as one of the world's foremost opening experts.